

# CREATING VALUES-BASED POLICIES



Policies are a core part of ensuring your organization is mitigating risk, has clear guidelines for responding to issues, and putting into words how your organization wants to work.

A lot of policies include language that is inaccessible to most people without legal backgrounds or experience with formal policies. This formal language is often used in an effort to ensure the organization is not inadvertently over-promising or that it's not leaving itself open to being taken advantage of. Unfortunately, this often leads to people needing to “interpret” policies - instead of following them - and often creates a disconnect and distrust between employees and employers. It can signal to staff that policy exists to protect the organization instead of to support the people. But can it be both?

What if policies were different? What if policies were written in a way that people to feel seen and supported when they read them? What if policies included clear, accessible language that didn't require “reading between the lines”? What if policies centered the interests of people, what if they accomodated diverse teams?

**What would it look like if an organization wrote policies that were aligned with their values?**

At IONS we're committed to exploring ways of working together that are sustainable, rooted in justice and equity, and are focused on meeting the needs of our people. In this document, we've provided some examples of IONS policies, the template we follow, and some tips for how you can make these your own.

# Policy Title

**Purpose:**

Include some language about why this policy exists, what gaps it is meant to bridge, and why you felt it was needed.

**Scope:**

Who does this policy apply to? (Examples: Volunteers, paid staff, part-time / full-time / contract staff, board members, contractors, etc.)

**Date of Approval:**

When was the policy approved first/most recently?

**Date to Review:**

When do you need to review it again? (we recommend at least annual reviews)

**Relevant Processes:**

Are there formal processes that this policy follows? If so, link.name them here.

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## Policy

**Background:**

This “background” section is where we provide more detail into the purpose and history of the policy. We expand on the gaps the policy is meant to bridge, provide insight into the conversations or scenarios that may have highlighted the need for the policy (or the resource(s)/research we adapted it from).

**Values and Principles:**

How is this policy rooted in your organization’s Values? What values does it represent more strongly? How does it do this? Which principles would need to be employed to follow this policy?

*For example: At IONS, our Values are “Abundance, Courage, and Trust” - a policy that is rooted in Trust would rely on providing autonomy and flexibility to the people it applies to. We also hold to the principle of “Self Leadership” and a policy that allows for flexibility would require staff to employ Self Leadership to follow it.*

*Developed (month, year)*

*What month / year was the policy developed/ drafted?*

**Terms and Conditions:**

*This header may change based on what the policy language required (see the 4-Day Work Week policy as an example)*

What are the details of the policy? Some questions to answer here include:

- What scenario(s) would this policy be relevant to?
- Would following this policy look different for different people? If so, spell out those differences.
- Are the Eligibility criteria?
- What about timelines, dates, or process triggers?

*Provide clear detail in this section - be careful not to dig into process here though!*

**Additional Considerations:**

*This header may change based on what the policy language required (see the 4-Day Work Week policy as an example)*

Is there anything else that people need to know about this policy that hasn't been covered in the above sections?

- Is this policy subject to a trial period?
- Is it tied to the annual budget?
- Is there a similar scenario / trigger event that could fall under this policy but actually has it's own policy or process?

# Home Office Setup Policy

**Purpose:**

This policy guides the procurement practices related to office furniture and other needs (except computer hardware) for IONS staff in relation to ensuring they have an adequate home office setup for remote work.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to full time staff only.

This policy would not be reviewed with part time staff

**Date of Approval:**

June 27, 2023

**Date to Review:**

June 2024

**Relevant Processes:**

IONS Home Office Expense Claim (Form)

We use SharePoint at IONS, internally this policy has a URL link to the form that applies to this policy here

## Policy

**Background:**

As a provincial organization, IONS encourages and supports remote full-time staff to enable a regional presence for sector engagement. Remote staff are entitled to a home office set-up parallel to those offered to staff with access to the Halifax-based office.

IONS is also a hybrid working environment and offers staff the ability to work from home. This enables the organization to keep office rent costs lower and offers the benefit of flexibility to staff.

This policy has been designed to enable full time staff to make purchasing decisions for the set up of their home office with autonomy, based on their individual needs. It also aims to mitigate the administrative burden on IONS associated with procurement and equipment management.

**Values and Principles:**

- This policy is rooted in the value of trust. Employees are trusted to know best which home office needs are most important for setting them up for a successful working environment.
- Autonomy and self-leadership are principles of this policy. Generally speaking, employees do not need to seek permission to purchase home office furniture and supplies. Exceptions include purchases outside the employee's allocated budget, as well as when uncertainty exists about whether the expense is deemed reasonable.

Name the values / principles and expand on how they apply.

**Terms and Conditions:****x Fully Remote Staff:**

Full-time, remote IONS staff are entitled to an annual budget of \$1,000 (inclusive of HST) to purchase home office furniture and equipment needed to do their work.

**x Hybrid Staff:**

Full-time IONS staff based in Halifax but working at home part-time are entitled to an annual budget of \$500 (inclusive of HST) to purchase home office furniture and equipment needed to do their work. Purchases may be made on the employee's corporate Visa. In cases where they do not have a corporate VISA, another IONS employee may make the purchase on their behalf, or a personal credit card can be used and reimbursed.

This budget is effective as of the employee's start date for the initial set-up for their home office and the annual budget renews each year in line with IONS' fiscal year (April 1) (pending budget availability). The annual amount is not prorated based on start date. Unused amounts cannot be rolled forward to future years.

Furniture and equipment purchased by remote staff in relation to this policy are the property of the employee. The employee is responsible for any damages, maintenance, or other care related to the items purchased. Should the costs exceed the annual budget allocated, the employee must incur the overage expense. If an item purchased under this policy is damaged, additional budget will not be made available until the next fiscal year.

**Eligible Expenses:**

This policy covers expenses related to setting up a home office with comfortable working conditions.

Eligible expenses include:

- Office furniture (desks, office chairs, filing cabinets, shelves, etc.)
- Printers, ergonomic keyboards, etc.
- Office lighting (lamps)
- Desk/file organizers

Purchases in these categories do not require prior approval from the employee's supervisor but intention to purchase should be shared in advance. If an employee is uncertain about whether a purchase is reasonable for home office set up, a conversation should be had with their supervisor.

**Additional Considerations:**

In cases where an employee has identified additional accommodations needed for accessibility purposes that exceed the budget allotted in this policy, options can be explored with their supervisor. This policy may be amended at any time should IONS funding not allow for this expense. Should the amount available change, efforts will be made to provide as much advance notice to staff as possible.

Outlining how this policy applies to 2 different types of employees / scenarios clearly

Clearly stating the timelines / triggers within which the policy applies to staff members.

Listing / sharing the eligibility at a high level

Noting the one exception as well as providing clear expectations to staff should the policy change

# Home Office Expense Form

Instructions for use:

All eligible purchases/expenses related to the IONS Home Office Policy require this form to provide details related to the purchase as well as the receipt(s). This form is to support overall budgeting and review of these expenses – not to “approve” or “deny” the purchases.

1. Complete this form to indicate the total and details of your purchase
2. Attach the completed form to the receipt(s) and submit via Dext

**NOTE:** If you have multiple receipts to claim in the same period for personal reimbursement, attach them all to this form and submit as one expense. For expenses purchased using an IONS VISA each receipt needs to be provided as a separate expense with this report for each expense attached.

## Section 1: Claimant Information

Employee / Claimant Name:

Location of Expenditure:

*City, Province*

## Section 2: Expense Information

Vendor Name:

Detailed Description of  
Expense:

Home Office Budget:

Fully Remote       Hybrid

Date of Expense:

Total Cost:

Taxes:  
(for IONS VISA expenses only)

Method of Payment:

\*Budget Balance Remaining:

## Section 3: Employee Declaration

Claimant Signature:

Date:

**REMINDER:** Attach original receipts to this form.

\*Home Office Expense budget is based on Fiscal Year. [See policy for full details.](#)

Home Office Expense Claim Form

Created: August 10, 2023  
Approved: September 20, 2023

# 4-Day Work Week Policy

**Purpose:**

This policy guides the practice and outlines rules for IONS' 4-day work week.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to full time staff only.

**Date of Approval:**

March 22, 2023

**Date to Review (annual):**

March 2024

**Relevant Processes:**

N/A

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## Policy

**Background:**

In the context of JEDDI, the 4-day work week policy seeks to affirm decolonial values of valuing people and the ability to live in community and nature, as well as support personal wellness and healing. A 4-day work week resists oppressive values of “quantity over quality”, uplifts justice for people over profit for organizations, and supports increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion for people who are sidelined by standard work weeks and practices. Practically, the IONS 4-day work week policy is meant to recognize the intensity, passion, and productivity demand of community impact work, and reduce burnout, increase recruitment and retention, and improve quality of life for staff.

**Regular Days of Work:**

IONS works a 4-day, 32-hour week, typically Monday-Thursday. Workdays are considered 8 hours including 30 minutes of paid break time, which can be taken throughout the day at the employee's discretion. Break times are meant to be taken each day and do not accrue to time in lieu. Should an employee wish to take additional break time they can do so at their discretion and add time to their day to make it up.

As a flexible workplace, Fridays may be worked if staff wish to spread out the 32 hours across 5 days, however this is not encouraged as a regular practice to protect the wellness benefits of having 3 consecutive days off.

In cases where an employee requires accommodations related to the 4-day work week for health, accessibility or other reason, they should discuss options with their supervisor.

Hours worked in excess of 32 hours per week may not be counted as overtime but extra time may be taken in lieu within a 7-day period of the additional hours worked. In extreme cases (over 48 hours/week or in the case of special events, etc.), employees can discuss options for banking time in lieu beyond the 7-day window. If actual work hours are regularly exceeding 32 hours per week, employees are encouraged to raise it as an issue with their supervisor to explore other options for reducing workload.

**Vacation:**

Vacation allowances at IONS are scaled to reflect the 4-day work week. For example, 1 week of vacation is equal to 4 days and 4 weeks of vacation is equal to 16 working days.

**Holidays:**

IONS observes a number of statutory and non-statutory holidays each year. Statutory holidays are legislated through the federal or provincial government.

When statutory holidays occur in a week, both the holiday and the Friday in that week will be taken as days off.

When non-statutory holidays occur in a week, the holiday replaces the Friday off. This is to reduce the number of 3-day weeks in a year.

<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Statutory or Non-Statutory<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>What Happens in That Week?</b>
New Year's Day	Statutory	Following Friday is a day off
Heritage Day / Family Day	Statutory	Following Friday is a day off
Good Friday	Statutory	Observed on the Friday (additional day is not allotted)
Easter Monday	Non-statutory	Following Friday is a working day
Victoria Day	Non-statutory	Following Friday is a working day
Canada Day	Statutory	Following Friday is a day off
Natal Day / Civic Holiday	Non-statutory	Following Friday is a working day
Labour Day	Statutory	Following Friday is a day off
Day for Truth and Reconciliation	Non-statutory	Following Friday is a working day
Thanksgiving Day	Non-statutory	Following Friday is a working day
Remembrance Day	Non-statutory	Following Friday is a working day
Christmas Day	Statutory	Not applicable - part of regular office closure during holiday period
Boxing Day	Non-statutory	Not applicable - part of regular office closure during holiday period

<sup>1</sup> As denoted by the NS Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration:  
<https://novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights/holidaychart.asp>.