

Telework in the Commonwealth 2010

A Report to the Governor and General Assembly of Virginia

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Current staffing for the report is provided by the Center for Innovative Technology through the Office of Telework Promotion and Broadband Assistance staffed by Deputy Secretary of Technology, Karen Jackson (Karen.jackson@governor.virginia.gov or 804-692-2580).

The Commonwealth currently lacks an “official” position and goal for the adoption of telework/alternative work schedules. The previous goal (20% of eligible employees teleworking by 2010 established by § 2.2-2817.1. *State agencies to establish alternative work schedules; reporting requirement*) was surpassed at the time of expiration (24%) in part due to the top-down commitment from Kaine that his cabinet offices would fully participate and report on telework participation as part of their weekly reporting process. Legislative initiatives introduced (2010 session shown below) to re-establish/expand employee telework goals were unsuccessful:

- **HB1144 (James Scott) – State employee telecommuting and alternative work schedule goals. Increases the target for eligible state employee participation in telecommuting and alternative work schedules to 40 percent in each respective program by January 1, 2012.**
- **HB1015 (Tim Hugo) - Secretary of Administration; telecommuting and alternative work schedules for state employees; effectiveness.** Provides that the Secretary of Administration, in cooperation with the Secretary of Technology, shall measure the effectiveness of the comprehensive statewide telecommuting and alternative work schedule policy. The bill provides that the head of each agency shall report annually to the Secretary on the status of any programs or policies developed and implemented pursuant to this section. Any agency head failing to comply with the requirements of this section shall forfeit one percent of the moneys appropriated for the operation of the agency as provided in the appropriation act. The Secretary shall so notify the Comptroller, who shall take such moneys and deposit them into the Literary Fund. The bill also requires the Department of Human Resource Management to notify state employees by email, or other method deemed appropriate by the Department, of the statewide telecommuting and alternative work schedule policy.

Despite the lack of an official “position” and legislated goals for telework, the Commonwealth continues to have employees participate in both alternative schedules and telework programs – both on a regular basis and as a component of COOP/Pandemic plans. The Commonwealth had (according to DHRM statistics) approximately 33% of eligible employees participating in teleworking/telecommuting on a REGULAR¹ basis and another 56% of positions eligible for alternative work schedules² participating (as of August 1, 2010). In the private sector arena, Telework!VA currently has 165 employers participating in the program resulting in the reduction of almost 30,000,000 (annually) Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) that are directly attributable to the program.

¹ As defined in § 2.2-2817.1. “Telecommuting” means a work arrangement in which supervisors direct or permit employees to perform their usual job duties away from their central workplace at least one day per week and in accordance with work agreements.

² As defined in § 2.2-2817.1 Alternative work schedule" means schedules that differ from the standard workweek, 40-hour workweek schedule, if such schedules are deemed to promote efficient agency operations. Alternative work schedules may include, but not be limited to, four 10-hour days, rotational shifts, and large-scale job sharing.

Agencies/entities in the Commonwealth continue to actively promote telework activities including the Secretaries of Administration, Technology, and Transportation; The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (Telework!VA); The Department of Accounts (guidance/policies related to payments for telework expenses); VITA; The Center for Innovative Technology (staffing for the Office of Telework Promotion and Broadband Assistance) and the Department of Human Resource Management.

Telework activities including legislation, news, and resources are documented on www.otpba.vi.virginia.gov (aka www.wired.virginia.gov) which is hosted by Virginia Interactive (VI) and maintained by CIT. Funding for the promotion and support of telework initiatives remains solely within Telework!VA (DRPT) for private sector telework activities in NOVA, Hampton Roads, Richmond and Roanoke (primarily). There are currently no funds to support/promote state-employee teleworking in the Commonwealth.

Two initiatives previously conducted to promote teleworking were tabled in 2010 in deference to the establishment of an official administration position on telework participation

- The Commonwealth (state-wide) “telework day” to promote telework participation for both public and private sector employees (in partnership with the Telework Exchange (www.teleworkexchange.com). Initiative description and outcomes can be found on page 4).
- Governor’s awards for telework (formerly announced at COVITS) to reward outstanding telework awards in the public and private sector. (for award descriptions and winners see page 5)

Virginia has an established a leadership position in promoting/practicing telework as a congestion mitigation/green alternative capable of producing significant cost savings and increased quality of life for employees and it is anticipated that this position will be retained in the future. Governor McDonnell’s Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring is currently examining expanding the role of telework and/or the adoption of a four-day workweek as possible recommendations (final report due 10/15).

Commonwealth Telework Day – August 3, 2009

On June 10, 2009, VA Governor Timothy Kaine issued an Executive Order to “green” Virginia – calling for reductions in energy consumption and efficiency in state government operations as well as a statewide telework day to conserve energy typically consumed by commuters. The Commonwealth, Telework!VA, and the Telework Exchange (<http://www.teleworkexchange.com/>) encouraged organizations and individuals to telework from home or a remote location on Monday August 3, 2009 – Telework Day.

Challenges

Telework Exchange’s main objective for supporting the “telework day” campaign to provide the Commonwealth with a platform to raise awareness and adoption of telework within the state. Telework Exchange worked with Virginia to encourage local employers to offer telework to their employees on one day – as a catalyst to drive more pervasive telework adoption across Virginia.

Solution

On July 15, 2009, in coordination with the Commonwealth of Virginia and Telework!VA, Telework Exchange launched the Telework Day landing page at www.teleworkexchange.com/teleworkday. Individuals and organizations could visit their site to pledge their support to telework on August 3, 2009 as well as to access telework value calculators and resources. Following Telework Day, the Telework Exchange analyzed data collected from an online survey of Telework Day pledges and leveraged survey results to develop the “what we saved; what we learned” report. The report garnered broad local and national media coverage.

Results

- Secured 69 article placements following the launch of the "What We Saved; What We Learned" study
- Engaged Congressional support (public endorsement of the initiative including, John Sarbanes (MD), and Jim Moran, and Rob Wittman (VA).
- Secured 4,267 individual and 52 organizational pledges to participate in Telework Day.

Governor's Technology Awards - Telework

Best Private Sector Telework Initiative - Awarded to the corporation (for profit or not-for-profit) that most clearly and effectively demonstrates the strategic use of telework to benefit its employees, the environment, the community and society and other stakeholders. (2009 winner – *Noblis*; 2008 winner – *Orange Business Services*)

Best Public Sector Telework Initiative - Awarded to the local, federal or state government entity that most clearly and effectively demonstrates the strategic use of telework to benefit its employees, the environment and other stakeholders. (2009 winner – *State Board of Elections*; 2008 winner – *VA Department of Taxation*)