

Overview of Work-Life Programs

Background

Work-life is the business practice of creating a flexible, supportive environment to engage employees and maximize organizational performance. When consistent with agency mission, offering work-life programs can provide critical management tools for the Federal community as we strive to address the on-going budgetary situation while maintaining an excellent, engaged workforce. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has oversight responsibilities with respect to some programs, and in other instances consults with agencies in developing and improving their work-life programs. When implemented according to today's best practices, work-life programs can demonstrate significant benefits for agencies, employees, and our communities.

Agency Benefits: Improved productivity; recruitment and retention of the best talent with diverse backgrounds; reduced overhead costs; reduced healthcare costs; reduced absenteeism; reduced workplace accidents; emergency preparedness and continuity of operations; desirable employer reputation

Employee Benefits: Improved employee engagement & morale; improved work-life effectiveness; improved employee health and well-being; financial savings; reduced stress

Across all work-life programs OPM does the following:

- assists senior leadership and agency work-life coordinators in strategically setting goals, creating action plans, and conducting evaluations;
- consults on policy development and successful implementation;
- facilitates cost-saving opportunities for partnership, collaboration, and learning through trainings and communities of practice;
- establishes Governmentwide policies, guidance, & research tools; and
- collects, analyzes, and shares Governmentwide data to support program development and drive strategic decision-making.

TELEWORK is a tool that can support robust agencies capable of better serving the public. It is a work flexibility that allows an employee to perform the duties and responsibilities of his or her position from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work. Telework in the Federal Government is governed by a series of enactments, including, most recently, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (the Act). That Act assigns several roles to

OPM in support of Federal telework implementation, including an annual report to Congress, providing policy guidance for Federal agencies on various aspects of telework, and maintaining the telework resource website, telework.gov.

WORKSITE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS empower employees to improve their physical and mental well-being. The top leading causes of premature death and disability in the United States (e.g., heart disease, cancer, and accidents) are largely preventable and responsive to interventions provided through the workplace. Worksite health and wellness programs can include a wide range of services, including both direct health and wellness services and educational opportunities. OPM supports Federal worksite health and wellness programs by providing resources, policy guidance, and data analysis on Federal programs. These efforts include assisting agencies with implementing nursing mother provisions in the Affordable Care Act, partnering with the National Prevention Council to understand prevention interventions in the Federal workforce, collecting data on worksite health and wellness programs through the WellCheck initiative, and partnering with the Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) Program to provide Federal employees with preventive services and health education.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (EAPs) optimize human capital by helping employees and their dependents resolve personal issues that negatively affect job performance, productivity, and/or health and by consulting with organizational leaders to identify and resolve risk factors that negatively affect the work environment. EAPs have a long history in the Federal Government, and their availability to employees is reinforced by legislation. While EAPs were originally developed, by statute, to address the negative effects of drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace, many agencies' EAPs now also cover a wide-range of behavioral, mental health, and organizational issues.

DEPENDENT CARE: Since an increasing number of American employees are responsible for the care of a child or adult dependent, it is important the Federal Government offer programs, policies, and initiatives to assist employees who are currently or who will be responsible for providing care to a dependent. OPM provides guidance and support for Federal dependent care programs such as on-site child care, child care subsidies, emergency child care, and elder care.