



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, May 7, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies

FROM: John Berry
Director

Subject: New Telework Initiative

Telework has been available in the Federal Government for a couple of decades now, under various program names and guises, but always with the same basic concept – getting employees out of the office and working at least some of the time from an alternate location. Depending on individual agency goals and needs, a vital telework initiative can help recruit and retain valuable employees, enhance morale, support Continuity of Operations, reduce real estate costs, and mitigate environmental impact.

With the concern over a possible H1N1 virus pandemic, now is an especially important time for agency leadership to be looking at ways to improve upon their telework programs. A fully performing telework program means critical agency functions can continue to operate effectively, with employees working on regular agency business at their homes or telework centers, even when they are unable to come to the office because of public health restrictions or family care responsibilities. But those telework programs need to be in place and employees and managers experienced in teleworking before the crisis hits.

Our annual Call for Telework Data has shown some growth in Federal telework over time, but progress has been slow and not always steady. Congress has taken note and has demonstrated a desire to increase participation, with pending legislation in both the House and Senate. I am now committing OPM to moving the Federal Telework Program forward, with an ambitious agenda that will require support and assistance from you and your staff.

The Initiative

This initiative consists of five key elements:

1. **Advisory Group:** Agencies already have a long track record of telework program and policy development; we will draw on this knowledge and expertise in formulating standards.
2. **Policy Review:** We believe that strong, consistent policies are critical to program success and will work with agencies to promote best practices.
3. **Telework Managing Officer:** We recommend that all agencies establish a Telework Managing Officer position, and we will work intensively with these Telework Managing

Officers to provide the support and assistance they need and to cultivate a community of practice.

4. **Appeals Process:** We strongly encourage all agencies to ensure they have an effective, transparent appeals process for employees whose requests for telework or other flexible work arrangements are denied
5. **Training:** We commit to working with Congress to assure the provision of high-quality, broadly-accessible telework training that will provide the baseline everybody needs to achieve success.

Agency Action Steps

Over the next few months, I will ask you to take several actions related to these five elements. At this time, OPM is focusing on the first two: the advisory group, and the policy review.

Based on information provided in the most recent Call for Telework Data, as well as agency missions and telework program development, my staff will select a small group of agency telework coordinators to assist us in building a framework for policy excellence. **Action: If your telework coordinator is invited, we ask you to provide them with the resources they need to fully participate.**

Using standards developed by this group, OPM will then evaluate all agency telework policies and will provide feedback and consultation on bringing them all up to these standards. In advance of this review we need to compile all of the policies and prepare them for assessment.

Action: Submit your agency telework policy by May 25, 2009, via email to: worklife@opm.gov. Please provide the name and contact information for the staff person you wish us to work with as we evaluate the policy.

As we move forward with the telework program, setting and achieving the goals we need to demonstrate success, I look forward to collaborating with all of you.