

State Government Employee Telework Policies

Fostering an environment conducive to in-person collaboration and teamwork while ensuring consistency across agencies and positions.

I.	Introduction	2
II.	Executive Summary	2
III.	Goals	3
IV.	Background – Positives and Negatives of Telework	4
V.	Decision Framework	5
VI.	Benefits of this Approach	10
VII.	Risks of this Approach	11
VIII.	Conclusion	12

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I. Introduction

As state governments navigate the evolving landscape of 21st century work, the adoption of telework policies has become essential for enhancing operational efficiency and employee satisfaction. This white paper outlines a comprehensive framework for implementing statewide telework policies that balance the benefits of remote work with the need for in-person collaboration. By focusing on consistency, fairness, and effectiveness, these policies aim to attract and retain a high-quality workforce while maintaining strong organizational performance. We will explore the goals, potential positives and negatives, a decision-making framework, and key strategies to ensure successful telework implementation.

II. Executive Summary

The primary goal of this initiative is to implement statewide telework policies that foster an environment conducive to in-person collaboration and teamwork while ensuring consistency across agencies and positions. Specifically, the goals include promoting in-person collaboration, enhancing telework effectiveness, establishing consistent and fair practices, retaining talent, and mitigating risk of teleworking. Recognizing that effective telework arrangements are often very specific to agency and program level responsibilities, this initiative aims to reassign the approval responsibility to the agency head level while creating standards that successive administrations can rely on for ensuring agency mission and policy initiative success. The framework outlined in this document aims to equip successive administrations, the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), and individual state agencies with the resources they need to effectuate those goals. These resources will include model statewide and agency specific telework policies, sample DHRM guidance to state agencies, decision matrices for agencies in assessing position eligibility for telework, and recommended reporting criteria with major decision points for optional Administration input or approval.

Several principles throughout this initiative are the focus on in-office time, position-based eligibility, and tracking the effectiveness of teleworking. Because of the unique benefits that in-person collaboration provides, our focus is on creating recommended thresholds of in-office time (in-office day approval rather than telework day approval), with the remainder being eligible as telework time. This ensures employees will maximize the benefits of in-person collaboration. To promote fairness, telework or in-office days should be consistent for each position, based on the unique responsibilities of that role, rather than specific to individuals. Agencies will still need resources for holding individuals accountable, including reduced or eliminated telework based on performance. This involves both effective performance tracking measures and clear accountability standards that employees can self-monitor.

III. Goals

The primary goal of this initiative is to implement statewide telework policies that foster an environment conducive to in-person collaboration and teamwork while ensuring consistency across agencies and positions. Specifically, the goals include:

1. **Promoting In-Person Collaboration:** Balance remote work with effective in-office interaction to strengthen teamwork and communication. This requires focusing in-person activities as a positive good and ensuring agencies effectuate strategies to maximize in-person benefits.
2. **Enhancing Telework Effectiveness:** Utilize telework to improve continuity of operations and deliver measurable results. Telework can improve organizational effectiveness and ensure business continuity if properly implemented. Agencies should be equipped and trained to capitalize on these benefits.
3. **Establishing Fair Practices:** Telework policies should be fair and uniform between employees with similar positions and fair in the criteria and standards used to measure their success.
4. **Retaining Talent:** Attract and retain a high-quality workforce through flexible work arrangements. Employees view voluntary telework as a benefit which factors into recruitment, job satisfaction, and retention. Clear and fair telework policies can attract a high quality workforce and consistency between agencies can reduce job hopping among state employees.
5. **Mitigate Risk:** Equip agencies with the resources they need to effectively mitigate the potential challenges that widespread teleworking can create. All major decisions of organizations involve trade-offs. Teleworking involves some organizational risk, which can be effectively mitigated through intentional execution of targeted strategies. Agencies should be equipped with tools to recognize these risks and strategies to mitigate them.

The groups perspective on the existing telework policy is that while the statewide DHRM policy lays a strong foundation, it does not create a detailed enough framework for agencies to implement consistent and fair telework processes. Through the framework and resources laid out in this paper and associated presentation, our group expects to add enough detail and resources to the existing foundation that state agencies will be able to execute telework policies in a consistent manner in line with the goals above.

We believe these goals can be achieved through implementation of the following:

1. Revised state telework policy: This policy will be amended to include agency level approvals and required supervisor training.
2. Agency Telework policies: At the agency level, this policy should specify how approvals occur, how position eligibility will be determined, loss of telework privileges, standard equipment issued, agency adopted risk mitigation strategies.
3. Telework approval by position using a tool such as our Telework Decision Guide.
4. Productivity Metrics for each position

5. Clearly defined accountability measures
6. A customizable suite of reporting requirements that can be adjusted by successive administrations and agency heads

By executing a detailed plan with required training and supporting resources for state agencies, we believe the Commonwealth can achieve consistency across agencies and positions while fostering an environment conducive to in-person collaboration and teamwork.

IV. Background - Positives and Negatives of Telework

Any discussion of telework should be clear-eyed in its assessment of both its positive and negative effects on an organization and individual employees. Below is a summary of benefits and drawbacks to teleworking. These attributes are based on recent evidence-based meta-studies¹² (eb) of telework effectiveness as well as observations from state program managers (o).

Benefits

- **Higher Job Satisfaction:** Employees report greater job satisfaction, particularly with voluntary telework arrangements. (eb, o)
- **Increased Organizational Performance:** Evidence suggests a link between telework and enhanced organizational performance, especially in similar task environments. (eb)
- **Lower Turnover Rates:** Telework can contribute to reduced turnover by improving employee retention. (eb)
- **Increased Commitment to Organization:** Telework approval is regarded as an indication of organizational support for an individual and studies found lower turnover and increased organizational performance from the employee's increased commitment to the organization. (eb)
- **Perceived and Higher Measured Productivity:** Many studies indicate increased productivity, particularly in roles focused on creativity and analysis. (eb)
- **Improved Work/Life Balance:** Telework arrangements often lead to a better balance between professional and personal commitments. (eb, o)
- **Cost Savings:** Organizations can reduce expenses associated with office space and utilities. (eb, o)

Drawbacks and Risks

- **Best Results from High-Quality Supervision:** Telework is less effective without strong managerial support and oversight. (eb, o)

¹ **A dual pathway model of remote work intensity: A meta-analysis of its simultaneous positive and negative effects, March 1, 2024**, Ravi S. Gajendran, Ajay R. Ponnappalli, Chen Wang, Anoop A. Javalagi

² **A systematic review of the research on telework and organizational economic performance indicators, December 20, 2022**, Jean Claude Mutiganda, Birgitta Wiitavaara, Marina Heiden, Sven Svensson, Arne Fagerström, Gunnar Bergström, Emmanuel Aboagye*

- **Lower Team Performance:** Remote work may diminish team performance due to reduced interaction. (eb)
- **Employee Isolation:** Remote work can lead to feelings of isolation among employees. (eb)
- **Variability in Productivity:** Some studies indicate lower productivity, particularly related to poor supervision and lack of social support. (eb, o)
- **Diminished Organizational Culture:** A decrease in in-person interactions can weaken organizational culture. (eb, o)
- **Onboarding Challenges:** Telework may complicate the onboarding process for new employees. (o)

The discussion and resources provided with this project aim to enhance the positives of telework while mitigating the negatives of telework. The examples and tools provided are meant to be sample resources and are not comprehensive in addressing each negative.

V. Telework Decision Guidance

There are several different modes of telework. For consistency, we will categorize these work modes as follows:

- Onsite – no teleworking and work is conducted in the office
- Hybrid – a mix of teleworking and in-office work
- Remote – full teleworking
- Field based – five days a week in the field without an assigned office.

In order to implement consistent effective telework policies, state agencies will need to apply specific analysis in their decision-making on teleworking. The following items should be taken into consideration by state agencies when analyzing which positions may be eligible for teleworking:

1. Identifying Benefits and Risks of Telework
2. Accurate and Realistic Productivity Measurements
3. Retaining Teamwork and Collaboration
4. Telework Approval Authority and Accountability
5. Support Resources
6. Executive Branch Reporting

Below are discussions of each of these factors, including specific strategies for analyzing the factor. These factors attempt to incorporate four key strategies for effective telework programs.

- **Focus on In-Office Time:** Designate office days to prioritize in-person collaboration while allowing flexibility for telework on remaining days.
- **Position-Based Telework Opportunities:** Define eligibility for telework based on position requirements rather than the individual.

- **Accountability Measures:** Implement performance evaluations that account for both telework and non-telework productivity.
- **Intentional Team Building:** Develop structured opportunities for collaboration and culture-building among remote and in-office teams.

1. Identify Benefits and Risks

- **State-Level:** Assess the general benefits and risks of telework, as outlined above.
- **Agency/Position Level:** Identify specific benefits and risks for each position type within agencies. Included in this project is a Telework Decision Guide which can assist agencies in identifying risks associated with their positions.

2. Productivity Measurements

- Define key outcomes for each position type and establish regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms, involving supervisors in the development process.
- For routine, output based positions (such as processing, phone center, or customer serviced based positions), measurements should include reporting on output volume both during telework and in-office. Managers should establish regular reporting periods and work with appropriate staff to address imbalances in productivity.
- For qualitative positions, productivity can be measured by performance goals and program success.

3. Retaining Teamwork and Collaboration

To promote teambuilding in a hybrid or remote telework model, organizations can implement a variety of strategies that foster collaboration, connection, and a cohesive team culture. Here are some effective approaches:

Structured In-Person Meetings

- **Regular Team Days:** Designate specific days for all team members to be in the office together, allowing for face-to-face interaction and collaboration.
- **Mandatory All-Hands Meetings:** Schedule regular all-staff meetings that require in-person attendance to discuss team goals, celebrate successes, and encourage open communication.

Virtual Team-Building Activities

- **Online Workshops and Games:** Organize virtual team-building exercises, such as problem-solving challenges, trivia games, or escape rooms, to enhance camaraderie among remote team members.
- **Virtual Coffee Breaks:** Create informal online gatherings where team members can connect over coffee or lunch, promoting casual conversations and relationship building.

Collaborative Projects

- **Cross-Functional Teams:** Encourage collaboration by forming cross-functional teams for specific projects, ensuring team members from different roles and locations work together towards common goals.
- **Shared Goals and Objectives:** Set team goals that require input and cooperation from both remote and in-office members, fostering a sense of shared purpose.

Mentorship and Buddy Programs

- **Peer Mentoring:** Implement a mentorship program where experienced team members guide new hires, facilitating connections and enhancing the onboarding experience.
- **Buddy Systems:** Pair employees from different locations to encourage regular check-ins and support, fostering relationships and collaboration.

Recognition and Celebrations

- **Celebrate Achievements:** Acknowledge both individual and team accomplishments publicly, whether through virtual announcements or in-person recognition events.
- **Team Celebrations:** Organize virtual or hybrid celebrations for milestones, such as project completions or anniversaries, to enhance team spirit.

Intentional Collaboration Tools

- **Unified Communication Platforms:** Utilize collaboration tools (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams) that enable seamless communication and file sharing between remote and in-office employees.
- **Project Management Software:** Implement tools like Trello or Teams to keep track of team projects and responsibilities, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Feedback and Input Mechanisms

- **Regular Check-Ins:** Schedule frequent one-on-one and team check-ins to discuss progress, address concerns, and gather feedback on team dynamics and collaboration.
- **Suggestion Boxes:** Create anonymous channels for team members to provide input on improving collaboration and addressing challenges in the hybrid model.

Cultural Initiatives

- **Values Workshops:** Conduct workshops focused on reinforcing organizational values and culture, helping remote and in-office employees align on shared principles.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Programs:** Promote diversity and inclusion initiatives that celebrate different perspectives and backgrounds, fostering a more connected and understanding team environment.

Training and Development Opportunities

- **In-person Onboarding Programs:** Onboarding new employees can be particularly difficult via teleworking due to variations in learning style and supervisor availability.
- **Team Development Workshops:** Offer workshops focused on communication skills, conflict resolution, and collaboration techniques to equip teams with tools for effective teamwork.
- **Skill-Sharing Sessions:** Encourage team members to share their expertise in specific areas through short presentations or skill-sharing sessions, enhancing knowledge and collaboration.

By consideration of these strategies, organizations can effectively promote teambuilding and collaboration in a hybrid telework model, ensuring that employees feel connected and engaged, regardless of their work location.

4. Approval and Accountability

- Establish a clear approval process at the agency head level. Agency heads ideally would be approving manager/director recommendations for positions.
- All supervisors of teleworkers must complete required training before managing teleworkers, including
 - the Managing Virginia Program trainings
 - DHRM Training Resources
 - DHRM and Agency Specific Telework Policy Review
- Incorporating progressive systems for addressing telework performance issues.

5. Resources

Provide agencies with resources, including

- A. Revised DHRM statewide telework policy
- B. Example Agency-level telework policy
- C. Telework Decision Guide
- D. Resources for managers, including existing DHRM documents
 1. [Telework training and materials](#)
 2. [Making Telework Work](#)
 3. Managing Telework online module of the Managing Virginia Program with Commonwealth of Virginia Learning Center
 4. [Tips for Managing Teleworkers](#)
 5. [Quick Guide: Managing Teleworkers](#)
 6. [Guidelines for Managing by Results from Telework!VA](#)
 7. [Telework Fundamentals for Managers](#)
 8. [VITA's Telework Resources](#)
- E. Example Executive Branch Reporting Criteria on telework productivity, and
- F. Temporary telework policies to facilitate implementation.

6. Executive Branch Reporting

To effectively monitor organizational and employee effectiveness in a telework environment, executives should establish a comprehensive reporting framework that includes the following types of data and metrics:

1. Telework Participation Metrics [Sec. level]

- **Number of Teleworkers:** Track the total number of employees participating in telework across each agency.
- **Days of Telework:** Report on the average number of telework days per employee, segmented by department, position, or pay band.

2. Productivity Measurements (agency head or designee)

- **Performance Outcomes:** Monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) specific to each position, such as project completion rates, quality of work, and efficiency metrics.
- **Comparative Productivity Data:** Analyze productivity levels of teleworking employees versus in-office employees to identify trends and variances.

3. Employee Engagement and Satisfaction (agency head or designee)

- **Employee Surveys:** Conduct regular surveys to assess job satisfaction, engagement levels, and perceived work/life balance among teleworkers.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement anonymous feedback tools to gather insights on telework policies and their impact on employee morale and productivity.

4. Retention and Turnover Rates (secretary or agency head)

- **Turnover Analysis:** Monitor turnover rates among teleworkers compared to in-office employees, identifying patterns and potential areas of concern.
- **Exit Interviews:** Collect data from exit interviews to understand the reasons behind employee departures, focusing on telework-related factors.

5. Collaboration and Team Dynamics (agency head or designee)

- **Team Interaction Metrics:** Measure the frequency and quality of team interactions, both virtual and in-person, using collaboration tools analytics.
- **Project Success Rates:** Track the success rates of collaborative projects that involve both teleworking and in-office teams.

6. Training and Development Participation (agency head or designee)

- **Training Completion Rates:** Monitor participation in professional development and training programs among teleworkers to ensure equitable access to growth opportunities.

- **Skill Development Metrics:** Assess improvements in employee skills and competencies through evaluations pre- and post-training.

7. Health and Well-being Metrics (agency head or designee)

- **Wellness Program Participation:** Track participation rates in wellness initiatives aimed at supporting mental health and well-being.
- **Absenteeism Rates:** Monitor absenteeism among teleworkers, which may provide insights into employee well-being and engagement.

8. Compliance and Accountability Data (secretary or agency head)

- **Telework Policy Adherence:** Report on adherence to telework policies, including compliance with productivity measurements and performance expectations.
- **Performance Management Outcomes:** Track the outcomes of performance reviews and any disciplinary actions related to telework performance issues.

9. Cost-Benefit Analysis (secretary or agency head)

- **Cost Savings:** Analyze the financial impact of telework on operational costs, such as reduced office space needs and utilities.
- **Return on Investment (ROI):** Evaluate the ROI of telework initiatives in terms of increased productivity, reduced turnover, and enhanced employee satisfaction.

By implementing a robust reporting framework that encompasses these metrics, executives can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of telework policies, enabling informed decision-making and continuous improvement of organizational practices.

VI. Benefits of this Approach

With a more rigorous and structured approach to managing telework across the state, agencies will be empowered to utilize telework more effectively. The focus on in-office collaboration will allow agencies to capture the benefits of that work mode. By creating a more fair and consistent approach across the various executive branch agencies, it will reduce some dissatisfaction among state employees. Additional benefits include:

- **Enhanced Employee Engagement:** By offering flexibility, employees are likely to feel more valued and engaged.
- **Increased Efficiency:** Telework can streamline processes and enhance productivity when managed correctly.
- **Improved Talent Attraction:** Flexible work options make positions more attractive to potential candidates.

VII. Risks of this Approach

As identified, there are several notable risks associated with teleworking. The section below identifies those evidence based risks and provides multiple strategies to mitigate those risks.

1. Potential Decline in Collaboration

Risk: If not managed properly, telework could lead to a breakdown in teamwork and organizational cohesion.

Mitigation:

- **Structured In-Person Engagement:** Implement mandatory in-office days and regular team-building activities to ensure that employees maintain connections and collaboration.
- **Scheduled Meetings:** Encourage regular virtual and in-person meetings to foster communication and collaboration among team members.
- **Utilize Collaborative Tools:** Leverage technology such as video conferencing and project management software to facilitate ongoing interaction and teamwork.

2. Supervisory Challenges

Risk: Increased reliance on remote work requires effective management practices to ensure productivity and accountability.

Mitigation:

- **Training for Supervisors:** Provide training programs for managers on best practices for supervising remote teams, focusing on communication, performance tracking, and employee engagement.
- **Clear Performance Metrics:** Establish clear, measurable outcomes for each position that are regularly monitored and reviewed. Include supervisors in the development of these metrics to ensure alignment with team goals.
- **Regular Feedback Loops:** Create mechanisms for frequent feedback and check-ins between supervisors and employees to address performance issues proactively.

3. Diminished Organizational Culture

Risk: A decrease in in-person interactions can weaken organizational culture, leading to disengagement.

Mitigation:

- **Intentional Culture Initiatives:** Develop initiatives that actively promote the organization's values and culture, such as recognition programs, virtual social events, and cultural workshops.

- Onboarding Strategies: Implement robust onboarding programs that integrate new hires into the company culture, emphasizing team values and norms from the outset.
- Culture Champions: Designate team members as culture champions to help reinforce organizational values and encourage participation in culture-building activities.

4. Employee Isolation

Risk: Remote work can lead to feelings of isolation among employees, affecting morale and mental health.

Mitigation:

- Regular Check-Ins: Encourage managers to conduct regular one-on-one check-ins with employees to provide support and foster a sense of connection.
- Peer Support Programs: Create peer mentoring or buddy systems that pair employees together for regular interaction, whether virtual or in-person.
- Wellness Initiatives: Implement wellness programs that focus on mental health, including resources for stress management and social engagement.

5. Onboarding Challenges

Risk: Telework may complicate the onboarding process for new employees, leading to longer adjustment periods.

Mitigation:

- In-Person Orientation: Offer in-person orientation sessions for new hires where possible, allowing them to meet colleagues and understand organizational culture.
- Clear Onboarding Plans: Develop structured onboarding plans that include virtual and in-person components, ensuring new hires receive necessary training and support.
- Mentorship Programs: Pair new employees with experienced mentors to guide them through their initial weeks and facilitate connections within the organization.

By proactively addressing these risks through thoughtful mitigation strategies, state governments can create a telework environment that enhances productivity and collaboration while fostering a positive workplace culture.

VIII. Conclusion

By adopting a well-structured telework policy, state governments can leverage the benefits of remote work while maintaining the essential elements of collaboration and teamwork that are

critical to effective governance. This balanced approach aims to create a responsive and adaptable workforce that meets the needs of both employees and the state.

Appendices

1. **Revised State Policy Under This Framework:** A draft of the new telework policy.
2. **Elements of an Agency Policy:** A model agency policy for implementing telework.
3. **Telework Decision Guide:** A tool for agencies to assess position eligibility for telework.
4. **Role Assessment for Position Approval:** Example Role Eligibility Assessment form.
5. **Agency Reporting Recommendation:** Specifications for agency reporting on telework metrics.

GROUP 5

DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION TELEWORK POLICY

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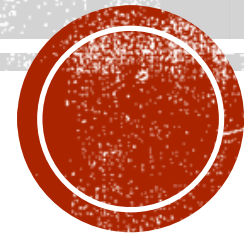
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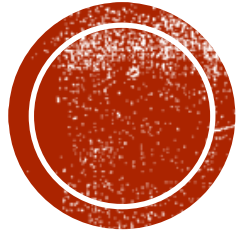
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Problem Statement

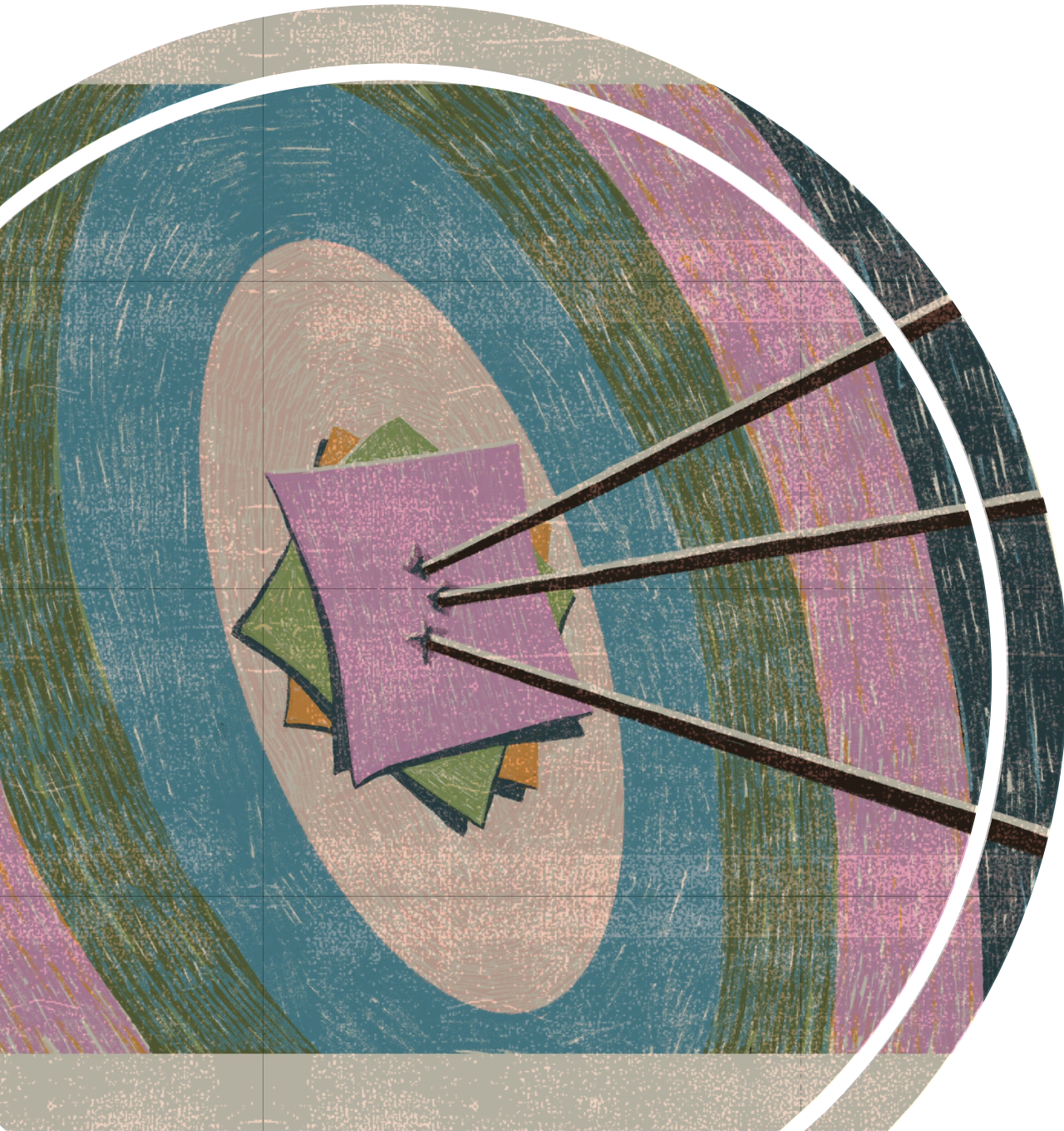


How can we develop and implement telework policies and practices that promote the benefits of in person collaboration and teamwork, more consistency between agencies and positions, and fair and equitable practices?

Sponsor: Janet Lawson: Director, DHRM

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING TELEWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focus on in-office time (set “office days” rather than “telework days”). Office time is the priority.
- Telework opportunities are position based (rather than individual based).
- Productivity measurements for each position and reporting for each employee.
- Accountability measures for deficient performance.
- State-wide principles which provide a consistent agency level execution.



GOALS

- **Consistent Implementation of Policy**
- **Promoting In-Person Collaboration**
- **Enhancing Telework Effectiveness**
- **Establishing Fair Practices**



DELIVERABLES

- White Paper
- Example State Policy
- Example Agency Policy
- Role Assessment Form
- Performance
Accountability
- Agency Reporting
Recommendation



TELEWORK TERMINOLOGY

On-Site

In Office

Hybrid

(1) 3-4 Days in Office/Field: (2) 2-3 Days in Office/Field:(3) 1-2 Days in Office/Field

Remote

100% telework

Field Based

5 days a week in the field job site reporting without assigned office.



EVIDENCE BASED PROS & CONS OF TELEWORKING

▪ **Benefits**

- Higher Job Satisfaction
- Increased Organizational Performance
- Lower Turnover Rates
- Increased Commitment to Organization
- Perceived and Higher Measured Productivity
- Improved Work/Life Balance
- Cost Savings

▪ **Drawbacks**

- Supervision Challenges
- Lower Team Performance
- Employee Isolation
- Variability in Productivity
- Diminished Organizational Culture
- Onboarding Challenges



RISK MITIGATION STRATEGY

- **Potential Decline in Collaboration**
 - Implement a variety of strategies that foster collaboration, connection, and a cohesive team culture.
- **Supervisory Challenges**
 - Equip supervisors with resources, required training, and objective productivity measures.
- **Diminished Organizational Culture**
 - Focus on in-office days and establish routine activities that build and strengthen culture.
- **Employee Isolation**
 - Utilize recommended strategies that foster collaboration and interaction.
- **Onboarding Challenges**
 - In-person onboarding programs and teleworking blackout periods when starting with an agency



PROMOTING IN-PERSON COLLABORATION

- **Structured In-Person Meetings**
- **Virtual Team-Building Activities**
- **Collaborative Projects**
- **Mentorship and Buddy Programs**
- **Recognition and Celebrations**
- **Intentional Collaboration Tools**
- **Feedback and Input Mechanisms**
- **Cultural Initiatives**
- **Training and Development Opportunities**





TOOLS

- **Sample Policies**
- **Role Assessment Form**
- **Eligibility to Telework Form**
- **Performance Accountability**



SAMPLE POLICIES

- **DHRM Policy**
- **Agency Specific Policy**
- **Agency Reporting Recommendations**



EVALUATION OF OFFICE BENEFITS BY ROLE ASSESSMENT FORM

■ Customer Service

- Consider the internal and external customer service tasks that are performed, and are they more effective in person?
- Does the role involve delivering sensitive or complex information to customers that would require in-person interaction?

■ On-Site Operations

- Does this role require physical presence to manage office operations, such as building security, access control, or maintenance?

■ Collaboration

- Does the role require frequent face-to-face collaboration for effective decision-making or problem-solving?

■ Leadership

- Does the role involve supervising employees or providing leadership within the agency?

■ Work Tasks and Technology Reliance

- Do technology or security limitations require in-office work for efficiency?



EVALUATION OF AN EMPLOYEE'S ELIGIBILITY TO TELEWORK

- Has the employee consistently demonstrated the ability to work independently and manage their time effectively without direct supervision?
- Has the employee consistently demonstrated the ability to work independently and manage their time effectively without direct supervision?
- Does the employee manage deadlines, prioritize tasks, and maintain productivity without direct supervision?
- Is the employee an effective communicator, especially in remote or virtual settings (e.g., via email, video calls, or instant messaging)?
- Can the employee maintain clear, consistent communication with team members and supervisors while working remotely? Have they shown the ability to keep others informed of progress, seek help when needed, and be accountable for their work without requiring constant follow-up?



PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

- Tools and Options
 - Weekly Plan and Weekly Reconcile
 - Larger Work Plan (Ex. Provided)
 - Workload Study
 - Assign time for certain tasks
 - Assign expectations for task per day/week/month





NEXT STEPS

- DHRM Review & Approve New Guidelines
- Executive Approval
- Additional Agency Feedback
- Training
- Implementation Timeline including temporary policy

1. **White Paper**
 2. **Revised State Policy Under This Framework:** A draft of the new telework policy.
 3. **Example Agency Policy:** A model agency policy for implementing telework.
 4. **Role & Eligibility Evaluation Forms**
 5. **DHRM Guidance and Resources:** <https://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/teleworking>
 6. **Administration Reporting Considerations**
-

RESOURCES





**THANK YOU FOR THE
OPPORTUNITY... QUESTIONS??**

QUESTIONS

ANSWERS



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

POLICY 1.61 TELEWORKING

Overview

The Commonwealth adopts policies and practices that bring people together in the workplace. The goal of our administration is to deliver best-in-class government services across all agencies. We are committed to excellence and operating efficiently, and to encouraging employees to work in an office-centric environment where all benefit from more direct mentorship, collaboration, and peer-to-peer learning.

To promote general work efficiencies and worksite flexibility, telework may be an option for certain eligible positions. Eligible positions are determined by the type of work and job requirements of the position, as defined by heads of agencies. Determinations for telework eligibility must be focused on the job requirements and the ability of the individual employee to perform assigned work duties and continue team collaboration.

Agencies will determine work schedules in accordance with the Commonwealth's telework policy and the Standard Telework Agreement. This policy takes precedence over and supersedes all prior agency specific policies.

Policy

Telework is granted via a work agreement in which state employees perform their job duties away from permanently or temporarily assigned state-owned or managed facilities.

Each Agency Head is tasked with the following steps.

- Recognize that teamwork, collaboration, and productivity skills need continuous rejuvenation.
- Discuss the telework framework with employees to reaffirm the benefits of office-centric work environments.
- Promote best practices to demonstrate that the strongest teams are best cultivated, and learning is most enhanced, in an in-person setting.
- Highlight and inform employees that teleworking is an opportunity offered to employees, rather than an obligation of the Commonwealth.
- Determine positions where telework is appropriate for managing the affairs and operations of their agency and recognize that telework may not be a suitable alternative for certain positions.
- Assess individual and team objectives and overall performance expectations of the team when approving new telework agreements.

- Ensure that individual telework agreements reflect the specific number of days of on-site work that are consistent with effective delivery of services and team collaboration.
- Allowable telework days should also reflect the impact of alternative work schedules and the specific number of on-site work days necessary to effectively fulfill the needs of the Commonwealth.
- Ensure that legal requirements are met for employees who have unique workplace considerations.
- Telework agreements shall be approved by the agency head.
- After approval, verify that any teleworking arrangement does not impede an employee's ability to fulfill the fullness of the duties outlined in the position description and or compromise productivity or performance.
- Agency HR enters the information into the HR System of Record.

Conditions of Employment

- If telework is approved, assignment of telework does not change the conditions of employment or required compliance with policies. Approved telework agreements may be superseded when an employee is notified by their supervisor of activities that require an employee to work on-site.

Hours of Work

- The total number of hours employees are required to work will not change, regardless of work location.
- Agencies will ensure that procedures are in place to document the work hours of employees who telework and ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Use of Leave

- Whether work is performed in the office, on-site, or remotely, leave policies and practices do not change. Personal time off is recorded as leave.
- Agency Human Resource Officers may determine whether it is appropriate to offer temporary telework prior to return to work from illness/injury or for disability accommodations based on agency policy. Ensure that legal requirements are met for employees who have unique workplace considerations.

Equipment and Materials

- State owned and issued equipment and material must be used while teleworking.
 - Commonwealth-owned or issued equipment may be used only for authorized agency purposes by authorized employees.
 - Employees are responsible for protecting Commonwealth owned or issued equipment from theft, damage, and unauthorized use.

- Agencies are not obligated to assume responsibility for operating costs, home maintenance, or other costs incurred by employees in the use of their homes or other alternate work locations for telework.

Note: See VITA's Information Technology Standard for the Use of Non-Commonwealth Computing Devices to Telework.

Security of Commonwealth Information

- Employees must safeguard Commonwealth information used or accessed while teleworking.
 - Agency supervisors must grant permission according to state IT security and agency procedures for employees to work on restricted-access information or materials, as defined by agency policies, at alternate work locations.
 - Employees must follow all applicable security procedures to ensure confidentiality and security of data.

Agency Responsibilities

- Work performed remotely is considered official state business; therefore, agencies will establish specific conditions that apply to employees working in alternate locations.

Agency Procedures

- Each agency may establish internal procedures that are fully consistent with this telework policy. Such procedures should consider the appropriate use of telework agreements without diminishing employee performance or the services delivered.
- Agency procedures should also:
 - Identify position eligibility that supports use of telework.
 - Ensure compliance with local zoning regulations.

Telework Agreements

- All employees applying for telework must submit a Standard Telework Agreement (attached) to their Agency's Human Resources department, preferably as part of onboarding for new hires.
 - Approved teleworking agreements remain effective for one year, subject to termination by the agency. Agencies will review telework agreements annually when completing the employee evaluation process. See Renewal of Agreement section below.
- Telework agreements will include information in which employees:
 - Notify their supervisors immediately of any situations which interferes with their ability to perform their jobs.
 - Maintain safe work conditions and practice appropriate safety habits.
 - Confirm that the work location is free from hazards.
 - Notify their supervisors immediately of any injury incurred while working.
 - Absolve the agency from liability for damages to real or personal property

resulting from participation in the telework program; and

- Secure all information, documents, and records in their possession or used while teleworking and not take restricted-access material home without the written consent of their supervisors.
- ***All telework agreements will be approved as described above.***

Renewal of Agreement

- Agencies must review each employee's telework agreement on an annual basis and determine whether to renew or update the agreement for the upcoming year.
- Agencies can determine the time of year to perform this review.
- Agencies should review the employee's job duties and performance to determine if any changes need to be made to the telework agreement. Management must inform employees if their telework agreement will be renewed or changed. If changes are needed to the telework agreement, the agreement will need to be approved through the defined process above.
- Annual renewals of existing telework agreements may be approved by the Agency Head.

Termination of Agreement

- The agency may terminate the telework agreement at its sole discretion. Agencies should endeavor to give employees documented advance notice (two weeks is recommended) if a decision is made to terminate the agreement; however, advance notice is not required.

Telework Reporting

- Agencies must maintain current teleworking data in the human resource system of record. Agency Heads will review data to determine the continued effectiveness and efficiency of telework in their agency.

Emergency Closings of the Central Workplace

- Emergency closings of the central workplace may require expanded telework to meet customer demand and continuity of government services during an emergency closing. Agencies must communicate this expectation to employees when an emergency closing for inclement weather is anticipated, and again when a closing is announced.

Effective Date

March 23, 2023 (Revised)

July 5, 2022 (Original Publication)

Elements of an Agency Telework Policy

Purpose: [Utilize DHRM purpose tailored to specific agency]

Policy: Include the following elements

- Address who needs/does not need a telework policy
- Identify who makes decision regarding number of days in the office versus telework days
- Identify who must approve telework policy for each employee
- Identify who is able to approve temporary increase of allowable telework days
- Address how often telework agreements will be reviewed [recommend it is done at the time of evaluation]

State of Emergency/Office Inaccessibility Statement:

- Address telework requirements when agency closed for inclement weather, loss of electricity, or another emergency situation
- Address need to take home laptop computers each night in case an emergency situation renders offices inaccessible

Discontinuation of the Telework Statement [may be discontinued at any time by the agency head]

General Provisions: Include the following elements

- **Alternate work location:** The alternate work location is specified in the telework agreement. Teleworkers require supervisory approval for any temporary change in approved alternate work location and must submit an updated telework agreement for a permanent change in the alternate work location.
- **Conditions of employment:** Telework has no effect on an employee's required compliance with the [agency] and the Department of Human Resource Management's policies and procedures.
- **Compensation and benefits:** Telework has no effect on an employee's compensation and benefits.
- **Hours of work:** The total number of hours that an employee is expected to work will not change whether the hours are worked in the office or alternate work location. Managers/supervisors are responsible for determining the schedules for staff to ensure adequate staff coverage in the office.
- **Restricted-access materials:** A teleworker shall protect confidential mater from unauthorized disclosure.
- **Termination/suspension of telework agreement:** The employee's manager/supervisor may rescind or amend a telework agreement at any time. The telework agreement may be terminated at the discretion of [identified staff], with out without cause, upon reasonable notice thereof to the employee. An employee may terminate a telework agreement by giving written notice to the manager/supervisor. [Agency head] may temporarily suspend telework due to operational needs.

- Unplanned or temporary circumstances: An employee's manager/supervisor may approve teleworking for unplanned circumstances such as day care or school closings, family illness, etc. While telework may be approved for unplanned/temporary circumstances, telework shall not be used as a substitute for child/elder care on routine or regular basis. A manager/supervisor must obtain approval from [agency head] for unplanned or temporary circumstances for longer than 10 business day.
- Use of leave: Telework is not intended to be used in place of paid leave, including sick or annual leave. Employees covered under the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP) who are actively using sick and disability leave must follow the procedures outlined by the VSDP policy. Employees who request an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), where telework is agreed accommodation by the agency, the telework agreement is not required to be completed. All ADA requests, including those which include telework, shall be managed by the agency's human resources staff in collaboration with the employee's manager/supervisor.

Equipment: Include the following elements

- Authorized equipment
- Authorized use/users: Agency-issued equipment may be used only for authorized purposes and by authorized employees.
- Telephone services
- Maintenance
- Internet Access
- Other costs

Responsibilities of Employees:

- Secure all information, documents, and records in their possession or used while teleworking and not take restricted-access material to an alternate work location without supervisory approval.
- Comply with all state and agency policies and procedures.
- Understand and fully utilize VPN.
- Notify manager/supervisor immediately of any situation that interferes with ability to perform job.
- Maintain safe work conditions and practice appropriate safety habits.
- Confirm that alternate work location is safe and free from hazards.
- Notify manager/supervisor immediately of any injury incurred while working.
- Absolve or hold harmless, [Agency] from liability for damages to real or personal property resulting from participation in the telework program.

Definitions: [Utilize DHRM definitions as provided in state policy or as referenced in agency specific policy]

Telework Decision Guide

Category 1 – Job Responsibilities

Basic Requirements – Likely disqualifying if answered yes

- Is the position all or predominantly a public-facing customer service role?
- Does the position require regular face-to-face interactions with clients, stakeholders, and/or colleagues?

Do the responsibilities of the position have responsibilities to support on-site facility operations? (For example, alarms, access, keys to cars)

If yes, are the responsibilities split between a team or an individual role.

Supplemental Requirements – May limit allowable days out of office

- How often do job tasks depend on unscheduled collaboration with colleagues and/or other stakeholders?
- Are there tasks that cannot be effectively performed without a physical presence in the workplace?
- If so, how often do these tasks arise and can they be scheduled for specific days of the week?

Category 2 – Equipment Requirements

Basic Requirements

- Does the role require specialized equipment that will not be made available outside the workplace?
- Does the telework location have adequate phone and broadband internet available?

Category 3 – Communications

Basic Requirements

- Will the remote worksite create a challenges to effective and timely communication with colleagues, customers, stakeholders, subordinates, etc....?

Supplemental Requirements

- Has the employee demonstrated they can use available communications tools to connect with colleagues, subordinates, customers and others in a timely and effective manner?

Category 4 – Productivity Metrics

Basic Requirements

- Are they key performance indicators that can be used to adequately and effectively evaluate the employee's productivity in a remote work environment?

Supplemental Requirements

- Can these key performance indicators be monitored and assessed regularly while the employee works remotely?
- Has the employee or other employees similarly situated demonstrated that these metrics can be met from a remote worksite?

Category 5 – Supervision

Basic Requirements

- Can the supervisory responsibilities of the position be effectively conducted remotely?

Supplemental Requirements

- Is the positions supervisor adequately equipped and capable of effective remote supervision?

Position/Role Based Telework Eligibility Assessment

Department of Human Resources

This form is to document the Agency's evaluation of the State Roles and Working Title groups reliance on in office attendance to support customer service, role responsibilities, and collaboration.

Notes:

- This form is not intended for the assessment of State Roles or Working Roles that are considered Remote or Mobile.
- This does not assess specific employee's eligibility for teleworking.

Directions:

I. State Role and Working Titles:

List the State Role Title and Working Titles applicable to this assessment sheet. Agencies may have different State Role Titles and/Working Titles that perform similar functions and chose to document their assessment on the same form.

II. Role Assessment

When selecting Yes, Hybrid, and No applying the following definitions:

- Yes, means that an in office presence significantly increases the efficiency and effectiveness of performing the responsibilities of the role. Tasks are best completed on-site due to collaboration, physical tools, or proximity to others.
- Hybrid, means that an in office presence, most of the time, significantly increases the efficiency and effectiveness of performing the responsibilities of the position. In office, presence is needed for most activities but certain activities can be completed remotely.
- No, means that in office presences does not significantly increase the effectiveness and efficiency of performing the responsibilities of this role. Most tasks can be completed remotely without a significant impact on performance.

Position/Role Based Telework Eligibility Assessment

I. Roles Assessed

State Role Title(s)	
Working Title(s)	

II. In Office Assessment

Role Assessment	Does being in Office enhance performance?		
A. Customer Service	Yes	Hybrid	No
Consider the internal and external customer service tasks that are performed, and are they more effective in person?			
Does the role involve delivering sensitive or complex information to customers that would require in-person interaction?			
B. On-Site Operations			
Does this role require physical presence to manage office operations, such as building security, access control, or maintenance?			
C. Collaboration			
Does the role require frequent face-to-face collaboration for effective decision-making or problem-solving?			
Does the role have to implement policies and procedures consistently with coworkers?			
Is the work subject to frequent changes, which requires constant communication within the role?			
Do the individuals in this role have coworkers in the same role that reside in the same office location?			
C. Leadership			

Does the role involve supervising employees or providing leadership within the agency?			
Does the role supervisor employees?			
Does the role provide technical support to co-workers in the same office location?			
D. Work Tasks and Technology Reliance			
Do technology or security limitations require in-office work for efficiency?			
Do the work processes for this role need to occur or take less time in the office whether do dues to technology and security limitations?			
E. Agency Specific Criteria			

III. In Office Hybrid Assessment

Summary of Answers	Yes	Hybrid	No
Number			

Agency leadership should assess the importance of 'Yes' responses to determine if an in-office presence is critical to fulfilling the mission.

In general:

- If all the answers are yes, the responsibilities of the role are more efficient and effective in-office, and therefore is not a candidate for telework.
- If all of the answers Hybrid, then there may be the opportunity where a hybrid agreement limited to a day or two a week do not impact the over efficiency and effectiveness of the position.
- If all the answers are No, then the position is a candidate for teleworking.

IV. Conclusion

_____ In-office presence is essential for this role due to customer service, operational, or leadership needs.

_____ In-office presence is essential for this role due to customer service, operational, or leadership needs; however, limited telework is appropriate.

Limited Telework Amount: _____

_____ This role can telework in accordance with **{INSERT POLICY}** efficiently and effectively complete the responsibilities of this position.

Comments:

Signature Blocks

Administration Reporting Considerations

1. Telework Participation Metrics (secretary or agency head)

- **Number of Teleworkers:** Track the total number of employees participating in telework across each agency.
- **Days of Telework:** Report on the average number of telework days per employee, segmented by department, position, or pay band.

2. Productivity Measurements (agency head or designee)

- **Performance Outcomes:** Monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) specific to each position, such as project completion rates, quality of work, and efficiency metrics.
- **Comparative Productivity Data:** Analyze productivity levels of teleworking employees versus in-office employees to identify trends and variances.

3. Employee Engagement and Satisfaction (agency head or designee)

- **Employee Surveys:** Conduct regular surveys to assess job satisfaction, engagement levels, and perceived work/life balance among teleworkers.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement anonymous feedback tools to gather insights on telework policies and their impact on employee morale and productivity.

4. Retention and Turnover Rates (secretary or agency head)

- **Turnover Analysis:** Monitor turnover rates among teleworkers compared to in-office employees, identifying patterns and potential areas of concern.
- **Exit Interviews:** Collect data from exit interviews to understand the reasons behind employee departures, focusing on telework-related factors.

5. Collaboration and Team Dynamics (agency head or designee)

- **Team Interaction Metrics:** Measure the frequency and quality of team interactions, both virtual and in-person, using collaboration tools analytics.
- **Project Success Rates:** Track the success rates of collaborative projects that involve both teleworking and in-office teams.

6. Training and Development Participation (agency head or designee)

- **Training Completion Rates:** Monitor participation in professional development and training programs among teleworkers to ensure equitable access to growth opportunities.
- **Skill Development Metrics:** Assess improvements in employee skills and competencies through evaluations pre- and post-training.

7. Health and Well-being Metrics (agency head or designee)

- **Wellness Program Participation:** Track participation rates in wellness initiatives aimed at supporting mental health and well-being.
- **Absenteeism Rates:** Monitor absenteeism among teleworkers, which may provide insights into employee well-being and engagement.

8. Compliance and Accountability Data (secretary or agency head)

- **Telework Policy Adherence:** Report on adherence to telework policies, including compliance with productivity measurements and performance expectations.
- **Performance Management Outcomes:** Track the outcomes of performance reviews and any disciplinary actions related to telework performance issues.

9. Cost-Benefit Analysis (secretary or agency head)

- **Cost Savings:** Analyze the financial impact of telework on operational costs, such as reduced office space needs and utilities.
- **Return on Investment (ROI):** Evaluate the ROI of telework initiatives in terms of increased productivity, reduced turnover, and enhanced employee satisfaction.