



**EVALUATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S
TELEWORK PROGRAM**

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS & GLOSSARY.....ii

EXECUTIVE SUMMARYiv

BACKGROUND 1

PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY..... 2

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 4

Finding A: OASAM Has Developed and Implemented a Telework Program
 for DOL, But Can Do More to Encourage Individual DOL
 Agency Assessment of Telework..... 4

Finding B: OASAM Can Work More Closely With DOL
 Agencies To Eliminate Identified Barriers to its Telework
 Program Through Education and Marketing Efforts..... 8

OASAM RESPONSE AND OIG CONCLUSIONS..... 14

APPENDICES

Appendix A: OPM Report on Telework as Reported on the
 OPM Website – October 2001 15

Appendix B: DOL’s Response to the OPM Survey on
 Establishing Telework Policies – April 2001 18

Appendix C: DOL’s Response to the OPM Survey on
 Establishing Telework Policies – October 2001..... 22

Appendix D: Agency Response..... 25

ACRONYMS & GLOSSARY

ACRONYMS

AWS	-	Alternative Work Schedule
DOL	-	Department of Labor
GSA	-	General Services Administration
AFGE	-	American Federation of Government Employees
NCFL	-	National Council of Field Labor Locals
OASAM	-	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management
OPM	-	Office of Personnel Management
PL	-	Public Law

GLOSSARY

Flexiplace	Flexible work place; indicating working one or more days at home or at a work station other than the traditional office, often using a computer and a modem to transmit data or information over telephone lines back to the traditional work site which saves the employee a more lengthy commute by reducing vehicle trips to a main worksite. Flexiplace arrangements may be formal with written agreements or informally episodic.
Local 12	Local 12 of the American Federation of Government Employees AFL-CIO, represents the U.S. Department of Labor employees in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
Telecenter	A telecenter provides an alternative office closer to the customer or worker's home than their traditional office. The center may contain cubicles, open workspaces, conference areas, and even individual offices of varying sizes. Equipment and services may include personal computers with software and modems for connecting to the employee's agency network and the Internet: shared fax machines, printers, copiers, and other office equipment;

and telephone systems with voice mail, teleconferencing and video conferencing capabilities.

Telecommute Synonym for FLEXIPLACE

Telework Synonym for FLEXIPLACE

Virtual Office With a portable computer, pager, and cellular phone, as needed, a mobile worker can work anywhere such as at home, while traveling, or at a customer's site.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 359 of the 2001 Department of Transportation appropriations bill (Public Law 106-346) required “each Executive agency to establish a policy under which eligible employees may participate in telework to the maximum extent possible without diminished employee performance.” It further instructed each agency to ensure that telework is offered to 25 percent of its workforce in 2001, and 25 percent each year thereafter.

In 1997 and 1998, the Department of Labor (DOL), through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM), developed permanent telework guidelines. OASAM continues to have general oversight responsibilities for DOL’s telework program, but has decentralized implementation responsibilities to each DOL agency.

Telework participation is slowly increasing in the federal government. However, there are still many barriers that need to be addressed before telework is fully implemented. At a visit to a telework center in January 2002, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) stated: “Quite frankly, it's a management imperative that we start making better use of telework in the federal government if we are going to be competitive employers in the 21st Century. ”

This study focused on DOL’s compliance with the requirements of PL 106-346, Section 359, OASAM’s oversight of the Department’s telework program, and identifies areas where improvements can be made.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OASAM developed and implemented a Department-wide telework program, but can do more to encourage agencies to individually assess their implementation of telework policies. In response to OPM surveys, OASAM identified barriers to the success of the Department’s telework program, and to increased participation in the program. As the oversight agency OASAM cannot eliminate barriers on its own, but can interface more with individual DOL agencies to ensure that barriers to telework are examined and action plans are designed to eliminate the barriers. Our findings and recommendations identified below should help OASAM’s oversight of the Department’s telework program.

Finding A: OASAM Has Developed and Implemented a Telework Program for DOL, But Can Do More to Encourage Individual DOL Agency Assessment of Telework

OASAM negotiated permanent telecommuting programs with its union partners in 1997 and 1998. The programs provide that all bargaining and non-bargaining unit employees throughout the Department may be considered for telecommuting in accordance with stated eligibility criteria. OASAM reported DOL’s participation in telework in response

to two OPM surveys conducted in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001. Although agency-specific formal agreements are tracked and reported, non-formal agreements are only reported on an as needed basis. Additionally, agencies have not been asked to assess their implementation of telework policies.

Finding B: OASAM Can Work More Closely With DOL Agencies To Eliminate Identified Barriers to its Telework Program Through Education and Marketing Efforts

While OASAM has taken the lead in identifying general barriers to telework, they can work more actively with individual DOL agencies to identify strategies for eliminating the barriers.

Recommendations:

We recommend that OASAM provide additional oversight to DOL agencies regarding the Department's telework program. Specifically, we recommend OASAM:

1. Begin routine tracking and internal reporting of formal and informal telework participation when the automated People Time system is implemented. We suggest that OASAM generate both Departmental and individual agency reports, to be distributed to each agency and program head.
2. Request that each DOL agency assess its effectiveness in promoting, considering, and granting telework requests. As needed, interface with agencies to assist them in developing and implementing strategies to promote the Department's telework programs and eliminate identified barriers to the program.

OASAM's RESPONSE AND OIG's CONCLUSIONS

OASAM responded, "on the whole, the report is fair and balanced. You have presented the program from a positive viewpoint with suggestions that we find worthwhile." The agency agreed to implement the recommendations, and suggested two points of clarification, which are incorporated in the report.

Based on OASAM's response, we consider all recommendations resolved. The recommendations will be closed pending OIG's receipt of appropriate documentation specified in the report.

The agency's complete response is found in Appendix D.

BACKGROUND

Over the past several years Congress has increasingly sought to encourage more widespread use of telework in the federal government. With a federal workforce of more than 1.7 million employees, and an anticipated 281,000 eligible for retirement over the next 4 years, it is increasingly evident that the future success of Government requires finding creative ways to attract, manage and retain talented employees. Numerous studies on teleworking have reported that it is beneficial to both employers and employees for a wide variety of reasons including: improving quality of work and increasing productivity, improving morale and reducing stress, saving hours of commuting time, extending employment opportunities to people with disabilities, and providing a valuable tool for recruitment of new employees as well as a retention incentive for experienced employees to remain with the government.

During the last decade there was a wave of legislative interest in telework, including:

- A 1990 telecommunications bill authorized federal agencies to spend money for extra telephone lines, related equipment, and computer connection fees for federal teleworkers. This temporary authorization was re-enacted annually and made permanent in 1996.
- Public Law (PL) 105-277, Omnibus Appropriation Act, Title IV, Section 630, 1999, states: “For fiscal year 1999 and each fiscal year thereafter, of the funds made available to each Executive agency for salaries and expenses, at a minimum, \$50,000 shall be available only for the necessary expenses of the Executive agency to carry out a flexiplace work telecommuting program.”
- Also in 1999, the House Workforce and Education Committee held a series of hearings that looked at the reasons why telework was not more widely used by federal agencies.
- Finally, and most significantly, Section 359 of the 2001 Department of Transportation appropriations bill (PL 106-346) required that each Executive agency establish a telecommuting policy, and that the participation requirements of Section 359 be applied throughout the federal workforce.

In 1997 and 1998, as the policy agent for DOL, OASAM issued telework guidelines for all employees. In 2000, the Secretary of Labor held a conference in New Orleans to support and promote telework in both the private and public sectors. OASAM continues to have oversight responsibilities for the Department’s telework program, but individual agencies have responsibility for implementation of the program.

PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the Telework Program in DOL. We explored program implementation throughout the Department, barriers that may deter participation, as well as best practices that encourage it.

SCOPE

The study focused on DOL's compliance with the requirements of PL 106-346, Section 359, and OASAM's oversight of the program.

METHODOLOGY

We conducted qualitative analysis through:

- Interviews with DOL Headquarters and Regional Telework Coordinators; selected managers from various agencies within the Department; and selected Telework coordinators from other federal agencies:

DOL Interviews

- 14 Headquarters coordinators
- 8 Regional coordinators
- 2 Occupational Safety & Health Administration managers
- Benefits Review Board manager

External Interviews

- Department of Agriculture telework coordinator
 - Department of Education telework coordinator
 - Department of Energy telework coordinator
 - Bowie Telework Center manager, Southern Maryland Telework Centers
 - Operations Manager, Southern Maryland Telework Centers
 - Office of Personnel Management, Office of Workforce Relations
- In addition, we conducted research and analysis on numerous reports related to telework, including:
 - Status of Telework in the Federal Government, OPM Survey, October 1, 2001—focus on DOL information
 - Federal Agency Efforts to Promote & Use Telework Centers, OPM Survey, December 1, 1999—DOL's response
 - Federal Agency Efforts to Promote & Use Telework Centers, OPM Survey, December 1, 2000—DOL's response
 - Federal Agency Efforts to Promote & Use Telework Centers, OPM Survey, December 1, 2001
 - Southern Maryland Telework Centers Operational Statistics
 - Number of Teleworkers by Agency, OPM Survey, October 30, 1998

- Department of Labor Employment, May 2002
- The Washington Post, *More Area Workers Commute 1 Per Car*, May 31, 2002

This review was conducted according to the *Quality Standards for Inspections* published by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding A: OASAM Has Developed and Implemented a Telework Program for DOL, But Can Do More to Encourage Individual DOL Agency Assessment of Telework

OASAM negotiated permanent telecommuting programs with its union partners in 1997 and 1998. The programs provide that all bargaining and non-bargaining unit employees throughout the Department may be considered for telecommuting in accordance with stated eligibility criteria. OASAM reported DOL's participation in telework in response to two OPM surveys conducted in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001. Although agency-specific formal agreements are tracked and reported, non-formal agreements are only reported on an as needed basis. Additionally, agencies have not been asked to assess their implementation of telework policies.

Identification of DOL Employees Eligible for Telework

In October 2001, OASAM responded to an OPM survey and reported that all 16,477 of its employees were eligible for telework. Of that total, 471 were on formal telework agreements, and 1,092 were utilizing episodic/ad hoc/situational telework, for a total of 1,563 (9.5%) of the DOL population. There were 15 other federal agencies with participation rates greater than DOL's, and 23 agencies were below. The average survey participation rate was 4.22% (see Appendix A for a summary of responses). This OPM survey was the second of two conducted by the agency (see Appendices B and C). The first survey requested information only on "formal" telework arrangements in each agency. OASAM took the lead and encouraged OPM to add "informal" telework participation to future surveys, because formal arrangements normally account for a small number of teleworking employees. Subsequently, in their October 2001 survey, OPM requested information on both "formal" and "informal" telework participation.

There are three types of telework available to DOL employees:

- **Formal telework** occurs when an employee enters into a written Telework Work Agreement with their agency. They also complete a Home Office Self-Inspection Guideline and Checklist attesting to safe conditions in their home office. An agreement can include telework arrangements for medical purposes as well.
- **Informal Telework** occurs when the employee and supervisor agree, without written notice, that work can be accomplished at a site other than the office.
- **Road Warriors** perform their work at a variety of non-traditional sites, including: a business office or worksite, hotels, restaurants, or other worksites. Typical Road Warriors include inspectors, investigators and auditors.

The information supplied by OASAM to OPM in response to their surveys did not include the number of “Road Warriors”¹ participating in telework. OASAM estimated 3,413 “Road Warriors” were teleworking in October 2001. OASAM sought to have OPM include this category of employees as a separate count in their surveys. However, in interviews with OPM we learned they do not plan to request such information from agencies, and suggested that these employees be included in the “informal” telework count, when appropriate. OPM’s current stance on this group of employees is that they may now be included as ad hoc teleworkers only in those circumstances when these workers file their reports from a site other than their official office. It is worth noting that the International Telework Association and Council and some industry leaders classify these types of employees as teleworkers.

In February 2001, OPM issued guidance to heads of executive agencies directing them to establish eligibility criteria and to assess positions available for telework. The memorandum stated that:

“...many of you already have telework policies, but this does not necessarily mean you are in compliance with the new law. The purpose of the law is to require that each agency take a fresh look at the barriers that currently inhibit the use of this flexibility, act to remove them and increase actual participation. The law recognizes that not all positions are appropriate for telework; therefore, each agency must identify positions that are appropriate in a manner that focuses on broad objective criteria. Once an agency has established eligibility criteria, subject to any applicable agency policies or bargaining obligations, employees who meet them and want to participate must be allowed that opportunity if they are satisfactory performers.”

During our evaluation OASAM explained that all DOL employees continue to be eligible for telework. In determining this eligibility, OASAM examined broad criteria and fulfillment of the mission of DOL, rather than categorizing eligibility through specific job classifications. They stress that each request for telework should be an individual assessment between the employee and the supervisor. When considering telework requests, supervisors should consider aspects such as those listed below, which are contained in DOL’s handbooks on telework:

- 1) Whether the work can be performed at the proposed site and whether the arrangement would be consistent with the mission of the agency;
- 2) Costs of such arrangements;
- 3) Existing performance, conduct, or leave restriction situations;
- 4) Technology requirements; and
- 5) Office coverage, access to the customer, team involvement, and access to the supervisor.

¹ Although Road Warriors perform many of their duties away from the defined office, they usually return to the office to file their reports and do other work. In these cases they are not counted as teleworkers. However, if they write their reports from a site other than their office, they are by definition considered part of the telework force.

Since its initial assessment of eligibility, OASAM has not changed its position that all DOL positions are eligible for telework. Therefore, all DOL employees remain eligible for some form of telework, based on individual assessment of each request by DOL agency supervisors. This strategy allows for the broadest participation in telework, and allows all employees in DOL to be considered for some form of telework experience.

Tracking of Telework Participation

OPM surveyed all executive branch agencies in order to report to Congress on the status of telework in the federal government². DOL's telework coordinator (in OASAM) responded to OPM's survey requests regarding telework participation. Analysis of OASAM's April response reveals that 6.9% of DOL employees were on some form of telework at that time, while 9.5% were on telework as of the October 2001 period.

Through interviews with DOL headquarters and agency telework coordinators we learned that DOL does not have an accurate system for routinely capturing all telework-related information, and such information is accrued only upon request from OPM. OASAM informed us however, that when the new electronic time and attendance system (People Time) is implemented, the system will allow employees to input use of telework in a designated reporting field. While People Time does not allow for differentiation of the various types of DOL telework (i.e., formal, episodic, road warrior), OASAM reports that they expect to have the ability to calculate accurate figures for both formal and episodic/informal telework.

Oversight Responsibilities

While OASAM is DOL's agent for developing telework policy and issuing guidance to agencies, DOL agencies have telework coordinators at headquarters and regional or field locations. These 24 coordinators have assigned responsibility for relaying and disseminating telework information within their respective agencies and are the point of contact when the Department telework coordinator needs information to compile reports. When such information is requested, coordinators tally the number of formal agreements and contact supervisors to determine: (a) the number of times informal telework occurred in the specified time period, (b) the job classification of field workers, and (c) the number of times reports were filed from job sites away from the office.

We also found that these agency coordinators can work more closely with their agency heads, managers and supervisors who make the day-to-day assessments in response to

² The surveys asked agencies to provide data on the number of teleworking and telework eligible employees, agency policy development, barriers in implementing telework, and steps being taken to overcome those barriers and increase the number of teleworkers. Although the initial survey explored formal and informal telework programs, OPM refined future surveys to collect additional information regarding episodic, medical and other categories of informal teleworking.

telework requests from employees, in order to educate employees on the benefits of telework in DOL, to eliminate barriers to the program, and to help market the program.

OASAM could encourage individual agencies to promote telework with posters and other advertising methods, through agency-sponsored brown bag meetings, and through *Spotlight* features on Labor Net.

DOL Telework at Telework Centers

In the 1999 Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government appropriations bill, Congress authorized federal telework centers. The 1999 Conference Report accompanying Public Law 105-277 required agencies to make at least \$50,000 available annually to pay for telework at the centers.

We examined DOL's use of telework centers through interviews and a review of OPM surveys. In November 2001, OPM surveyed³ executive agencies complying with Public Law 105-277 §630(a) to rate their experience as: very positive, satisfactory or very negative. If they did not use the work center, they were asked for an explanation. The survey was distributed to 20 agencies, including DOL, and 19 responded. Eight agencies rated their experience as very positive, two rated the experience as satisfactory, nine agencies responded but did not answer the question, and one did not respond.

Non-users were asked for their reasons and 55% of survey respondents cited cost as the main reason for not using telework centers to a greater extent. Three agencies specifically identified employee inconvenience as a reason for not using the centers, while six agencies cited lack of employee interest. In almost all cases, teleworking employees preferred to work from home instead of a remote location. Only DOL identified the quality of equipment as a reason for not using telework centers. Review of the surveys revealed that one DOL employee used a telework center for almost two months in FY 2000, over the three-year period surveyed. In our interviews, only one person stated they would opt to use a telework center, preferring to separate work and home life, while all other interviewees stated they would prefer working at home.

In March 2002, GSA made an offer to allow federal employees use of telework centers for 60 days at no cost in an effort to generate more interest in telework. According to GSA statistics, as of June 27, 2002, 130 federal employees from the Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Transportation and Treasury departments, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and GSA, all took advantage of the free trial offer.⁴ There were no participants from DOL despite several efforts to encourage trial testing by employees. The Department coordinator sent electronic mailings to telework coordinators in headquarters and the regions advertising the free use of telecenters. However, the general consensus was participants preferred to telework at home.

³ US Office of Personnel Management, *Federal Agency Efforts to Promote and Use Telework Centers, FY 1999 – 2001*.

⁴ GovExec.com, *Free Telework Trial Period Attracts Feds, July 25, 2002*.

Finding B: OASAM Can Work More Closely With DOL Agencies To Eliminate Identified Barriers to its Telework Program Through Education and Marketing Efforts

While OASAM has taken the lead in identifying general barriers to telework, they can work more actively with individual DOL agencies to identify strategies for eliminating the barriers.

Barriers to Telework in DOL—Identified by OASAM

In its April 2001 survey response to OPM (Appendix B), OASAM identified the following problems/ barriers associated with increasing the numbers of telecommuters in DOL:

- Program funding:
 - As the number of teleworkers increases, agencies anticipate additional costs⁵.
 - Computer equipment and support provide additional challenges associated with costs as well as concerns in providing technical support/assistance to remote workers⁶.
- General Services Administration (GSA) regulations on the disposition of used personal computers are a disincentive to agencies that might wish to convey surplus computers to employees for use at alternate work sites.
- Major upgrades to communication technology – there must be a greater capacity for real-time access to data and easy transfer of information so that there is minimal to no impact on the work flow stemming from where the work is performed.
- Employee resistance:
 - Employees who prefer the office structure to help stay focused on their work.
 - Employees who feel they miss important information about work by not being in the office.
 - Employees unable to work independently.
- Office coverage (telephones, customer service).
- Difficulty in planning meetings to include flexiplace participant on conference calls.

⁵ Specifically mentioned were: (a) space rental charges where telecenters are used; (b) purchase of non-ADP equipment (fax machines, additional telephone lines); (c) long distance charges where credit cards are used rather than government telephone lines; (d) maintaining two workstations (1) official duty stations and (2) alternate work site (since most teleworkers work 1 or 2 days per week at an alternate work site).

⁶ Specifically mentioned were: (a) purchase of a computer for use at two work sites (1) official duty station and (2) alternate work site (long term goal to replace desktop computers with laptops requires a major outlay of money to rewire and reconfigure offices, and for computer purchases); (b) expansions for hardware and software licensing is necessary to allow for additional remote access; (c) technical assistance—employees must have the capability to be on-line and on the telephone simultaneously since issues and problems will need to be “talked” through; (d) employee training on basic troubleshooting, especially hardware issues since IT staff cannot make house calls; (e) security procedures implemented to ensure data security.

- Resistance on the part of some supervisors and managers:
 - Lack of understanding of program;
 - Lack of funding to fully support teleworkers;
 - Lack of training.

With the addition of the barrier of negative management attitude toward telework, which was identified by OPM, we agree with the barriers to telework identified by OASAM.

Actions Taken by DOL to Overcome Barriers—Identified by OASAM

In its October 2001 survey (Appendix C), OPM requested that agencies identify actions taken to overcome the barriers that were identified in the April 2001 survey. OASAM's response to this request was:

- Increase training of supervisors.
- Increase communication between supervisors and employees.
- Increase funding for government computers and equipment, where feasible.

We requested documentation of these identified actions, and learned that: (1) OASAM did not conduct training because they were working with OPM to develop web-based training. OPM recently informed us that this training is temporarily on hold, and that each Department should continue with internal training until they hear otherwise; and (2) OASAM will continue to encourage greater communication between supervisors and employees, and greater participation in the Department's telework program.

We agree with the actions identified by OASAM to overcome barriers to telework, but OASAM could work more closely with DOL agencies to eliminate the barriers. OASAM did take several proactive measures to market telework, such as: a Transportation Fair held on June 16, 1999, which emphasized alternate transportation modes and teleworking options; dissemination of worklife brochures featuring telework; posters highlighting telework were distributed to telework agency coordinators; and "brown-bag" lunches were held in response to requests from individual agencies. OASAM should request agencies to identify additional barriers that may be unique to their agency, and encourage agencies to find workable solutions to eliminate the barriers.

Actions Taken to Increase Telework Participants—Identified by OASAM

OPM requested that each agency identify the actions taken to increase telework participants between April and October 2001. OASAM identified the following actions taken by DOL to increase telework participation:

- Increase marketing of program.
- Development of Telework web site for all DOL employees.
- Increase training of supervisors.
- Refine information technology (data base access and reporting systems).
- Research ways to address computer security issues.

We found that OASAM: (1) took several actions to market the Department's telework program, including the Transportation Fair, development of posters, and sponsoring information sessions upon request; (2) added some information to the existing OASAM web site on "Flexiplace"; (3) did not conduct training of supervisors to encourage increased telework participation because they were anticipating a web-based training format from OPM; (4) has access to data base information but has not developed or implemented reporting systems to capture all aspects of telework. However, they expect to resolve tracking issues through People Time implementation; and (5) does not feel it is responsible for researching ways to address computer security issues, but rather each agency needs to address this issue individually.

We agree with the actions to increase telework participation identified by OASAM, but suggest that OASAM encourage each DOL agency to increase participation in telework when possible.

Training

Lack of current training on telework issues was a concern to many interviewees. Currently, DOL does not provide training to employees or supervisors on telework issues. Of 22 interviews with DOL headquarters and regional coordinators, 12 stressed a need for managerial training relating to the telework program. Also, 16 individuals said managers needed to be educated and/or obtain some practical experience with the telework program so they would be less apprehensive about employee participation. In interviews with telework coordinators from other Federal agencies, we learned their list of "best practices" all include training for both managers and employees so all would know what to expect from the other in terms of communication, work planning, emergencies and production. One agency tried pilot programs to encourage participation and made it mandatory for managers to telework one day per month, at a minimum. Early in the telework program, DOL did provide introductory information, and from March through August 2000, general training for supervisors and employees was provided.

Figure 1 reflects comments from our interviews with DOL telework coordinators. Most of the comments were management-related concerns: 37% felt promotion by management would contribute to program success; 21% advocated educating managers about telework; and 15% recommended training for supervisors. Nine percent of the comments reflected contentment with the existing DOL telework program, while 18% thought more technical support would enhance the program.

Factors Contributing to Program Success

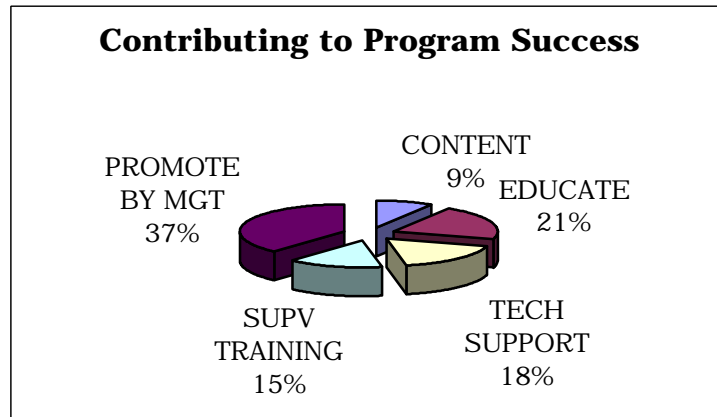


FIGURE 1

Eligibility versus Participation

As explained by OPM in its February 2001 guidance to executive agencies, the purpose of Public Law 106-346, Section 359, is to require that each agency take a fresh look at the barriers that currently inhibit the use of telework, act to remove them, and increase actual participation in the program.

While DOL has offered eligibility to 100% of its employees in agreement with its union partners, many agencies have not made aggressive attempts to eliminate barriers to increase telework participation. The last survey of DOL telework participation was 9.5% in October 2001. This was up 2.6% from the April 2001 survey. More recent information is not available. The 9.5% represented 471 employees on regularly scheduled telework agreements, and 1,092 participating in episodic/ad hoc/situational arrangements from a total of 16,477 eligible employees. No data was maintained by OASAM on how many telework days were actually worked during the episodic telework.

OPM states they are working to change the largely negative attitude management has regarding Telework. Our interviews reflect this attitude is impeding participation in many agencies within the Department. Total telework participation in the federal government is currently at 74,487, or 14.28% of the eligible workforce.⁷

Marketing Telework

OPM is partnering with the GSA to promote telework for federal employees. They have extensive website information posted on the subject at <http://www.telework.gov/index.htm>, and encourage widespread use of telework for employees. The current Director of OPM is quoted on the OPM "Work/Life Programs" home page as saying, "I'd like to say to federal managers, in case you haven't gotten the message, telework is here to stay ... It's not just a perk or a special privilege, it's an opportunity to increase employee morale and increase

⁷ Status of Telework in the Federal Government, OPM Survey, October 1, 2001.

the attractiveness of working for the Federal government.” The following is a compendium of ideas from a variety of sources to encourage and market telework participation:

- Telework helps recruit and retain good employees without having to rely on location as a factor.
- Surveys of federal workers show that telework and flexible hours appeal to them and may reduce employee turnover. That means improved quality of work and lower human resource demands for retraining and replacing personnel.
- The effort to change federal managers’ thinking about telework is worthwhile for reasons beyond improving the quality of life of government workers, addressing traffic gridlock and improving air quality in the region. The government often functions as a role model for private businesses and sets the stage for the rest of American industry⁸.
- Since the September 11th terrorist attacks, the workforce paradigm has changed dramatically. Federal employees have become aware of the need to establish off site locations to be able to continue the government’s work, especially through a secure e-mail system. A telework infrastructure should be in place in the event federal agencies need to disperse employees and decentralize operations because of security concerns.
- Accommodations of persons with disabilities can often be made easier through telework arrangements. In August 2001, the OPM director said, “In a recent speech about Americans with disabilities, the President said, “... the greatest challenges are often not in the job itself, but in the distance between your job and your home.” Extending employment opportunities to people with disabilities is one of many reasons for supporting teleworking.”

Telework for persons with disabilities was also addressed by DOL in their May 9, 2002, “Report to the President on Executive Order 13217”, the New Freedom Initiative. The initiative, signed by President Bush on February 1, 2001, is a comprehensive plan that represents an important step in working to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to learn and develop skills, engage in productive work, make choices about their daily lives and participate fully in community life. In its May 2002, “Summary of Proposed Department of Labor Actions”, the agency highlighted the need to “increase the number of people with disabilities in the federal workforce,” by taking the following actions:

- a. Work across DOL agencies to facilitate access to qualified applicants with disabilities, including applicants with significant disabilities.
- b. Ensure provision of reasonable accommodations and assistive services to people with significant disabilities in the DOL.
- c. Increase the participation of young adults with significant disabilities, including those transitioning to the community from institutions, in internship and mentoring programs.

⁸ The New York Times, *Telework’s Big Experiment*, May 9, 2001.

- d. Collaborate with DOL agencies to increase telework awareness and opportunities for federal employees with disabilities and conduct a research effort to learn more about telework's potential impact on workers, employers and the American workforce.

CONCLUSION

We recognize and agree that telework does not and cannot work for all DOL employees in all situations. However, as the agency responsible for oversight of the telework program, OASAM should continue to encourage DOL agencies to eliminate barriers and increase participation in the telework program when feasible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that OASAM provide additional oversight to DOL agencies regarding the Department's telework program. Specifically, we recommend OASAM:

1. Begin routine tracking and internal reporting of formal and informal telework participation when the automated People Time system is implemented. We suggest that OASAM generate both Departmental and individual agency reports, to be distributed to each agency and program head.
2. Request that each DOL agency assess its effectiveness in promoting, considering, and granting telework requests. As needed, interface with agencies to assist them in developing and implementing strategies to promote the Department's telework program and eliminate identified barriers to the program.

OASAM'S RESPONSE AND OIG'S ONCLUSIONS

OASAM's Response

“On the whole, the report is fair and balanced. You have presented the program from a positive viewpoint with suggestions that we find worthwhile.”

In response to the specific OIG recommendations, OASAM agrees to the following:

- *“Within the limits of the new automated time and attendance system (People Time) when it is fully implemented, OASAM will: Begin routine tracking and internal reporting of formal and informal telework participation. OASAM will generate Departmental and individual agency reports.”*
- *“Request that each DOL agency assess its effectiveness in promoting, considering, and granting telework requests. As needed, we will interface with agencies to assist them in developing and implementing strategies to promote the Department's telework programs and eliminate barriers to the program.”*

OASAM also offered two points of clarification, which are incorporated in this report.

OIG's Conclusion

We consider these recommendations resolved. The recommendations will be closed upon receipt of the following information by January 31, 2003:

- A copy of the first Departmental telework report that is generated from the newly automated time and attendance system.
- A copy of the memorandum to DOL agencies requesting their assessment of the telework program.

APPENDIX A

**OPM REPORT ON TELEWORK AS
REPORTED ON THE OPM WEBSITE
OCTOBER 2001**

TELEWORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

AGENCY	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES	TELEWORKERS	ELIGIBLE PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Agency for International Development	2122	1430	43	3.01%	2.03%
Agriculture (USDA)	110546	34085	1847	5.42%	1.67%
Broadcasting Board of Governors	1857	1857	22	1.18%	1.18%
Commerce	39419		6494		16.47%
Defense (DOD)	679194	21914	11111	50.70%	1.64%
Education	4872	4872	1075	22.06%	22.06%
Energy	14983		1137		7.59%
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	17886	17059	3868	22.67%	21.63%
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)	2886	1669	599	35.89%	20.76%
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	1994	1994	422	21.16%	21.16%
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	6297		1019		16.18%
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	8406	2894	130	4.49%	1.55%
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)	1186	1133	283	24.98%	23.86%
Federal Reserve System	1700	1650	21	1.27%	1.24%
Federal Trade Commission (FTC)	1049	6	6	100.00%	0.57%
General Services Administration (GSA)	14265	12149	2579	21.23%	18.08%
Health & Human Services (HHS)	64343	64343	4924	7.65%	7.65%
Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	10600	9400	553	5.88%	5.22%
Interior	73568	46887	4680	9.98%	6.36%
Justice (DOJ)	125000	80000	1442	1.80%	1.15%
Labor (DOL)	16477	16477	1563	9.49%	9.49%
National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA)	18171	6253	732	11.71%	4.03%
National Archives & Records Administration	3059	1500	38	2.53%	1.24%

AGENCY	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES	TELEWORKERS	ELIGIBLE PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT OF TOTAL
National Credit Union Administration	1007	1007	745	73.98%	73.98%
National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)	2034	975	352	36.10%	17.31%
National Gallery of Art	1100	300	4	1.33%	0.36%
National Science Foundation (NSF)	1359	1359	151	11.11%	11.11%
Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)	2826	2826	35	1.24%	1.24%
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	3576	3576	1379	38.56%	38.56%
Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO)	6549	778	653	83.93%	9.97%
Railroad Retirement Board	1177	197	65	32.99%	5.52%
Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC)	3066	3066	85	2.77%	2.77%
Small Business Administration (SBA)	4302		138		3.21%
Social Security Administration (SSA)	65595	10212	2581	25.27%	3.93%
State	20197	20197	189	0.94%	0.94%
Transportation (DOT)	55607	28002	1738	6.21%	3.13%
Treasury	151000	113000	19845	17.56%	13.14%
Veterans Affairs (VA)	220000	3700	930	25.14%	0.42%
Other Smaller Agencies (less than 1000 employees)	6800	4775	1009	21.13%	14.84%
Totals	1766075	521542	74487	14.28%	4.22%

APPENDIX B


**DOL'S RESPONSE TO THE
OPM SURVEY ON ESTABLISHING
TELEWORK POLICIES
APRIL 2001**



APR 17 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR TERESA M. JENKINS

FROM:


TALI R. STEPP
Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: Establishing Telecommuting Policies

In response to your memorandum dated March 6, 2001, enclosed is OPM Form 1651, Reporting Form - Establishing Telecommuting Policies.

The Department of Labor (DOL) was one of the first Federal agencies to implement telecommuting programs in the early 1990s, by negotiating two pilot telecommuting programs with our union partners. Permanent telecommuting programs negotiated in 1997 and 1998 provide that all bargaining and non-bargaining unit employees throughout the Department may be considered for telecommuting in accordance with stated eligibility criteria. We are, therefore, already in compliance with one of the primary provisions of PL 106-346 and the OPM directive.

With a workforce of 16,119 employees nationwide, DOL has a number of job categories that meet the definition of "Road Warrior," i.e., employees who function in multiple locations or environments, including customer sites, hotels, cars, and at home. This definition includes categories such as Inspector, Investigator, Auditor and number approximately 3,200, which represents approximately 20% of DOL employees that are not typically on the highways during the rush hour commute.

Telecommuting serves as one of many management tools used by the Department to remain competitive in hiring and retaining the best employees. Eighty-five percent of DOL employees participate in some type of alternate work schedule (AWS), such as core hours, 5-4/9 and 4/10. These work schedules allow employees to be at home and off the major highways at least one day every two weeks, and for some, one day each week. Some of these same employees telecommute which means even fewer days on our nation's highways. And although many may choose not to telecommute, they are still contributing to a cleaner environment by commuting to work fewer days.

As the recipient of the Commuter Connections 2000 Employer Recognition Award for our Flexiplace Program, you can be assured that the Department will continue to promote telecommuting among our employees. In addition, we will continue to provide other workplace alternatives that contribute to a cleaner environment and balance work and personal lives for our employees, while accomplishing the Department's mission.

If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Gail Guest, the Department's Telecommuting Coordinator at 202-693-7614.

Attachments

Reporting Form - Establishing Telecommuting Policies

AGENCY NAME: Department of Labor
 REPORTING DATE: April 13, 2001
 AGENCY CONTACT
 Name:
 Address: 200 Constitution Ave, NW Rm N5454
 Washington, DC 20210
 Phone Number:
 Email Address:

1. Total Number of Employees in your Agency: 16,119
2. Total Number of Employees Participating in Regularly Scheduled Telecommuting (averaging at least one day per week): 374
 Total Number of Employees Participating in Non-Regularly Scheduled Telecommuting (averaging at least one day per week): 736*
 (Do not count typical work that involves travel most of the day.)
3. Does your agency have a telecommuting policy? Yes No
4. Does your policy cover all agency employees? Yes No
5. If your answer to Question 4 is No, what percentage of your total workforce is covered by the policy?
 • Percentage of Total Workforce Covered: _____
 • Number of Employees Covered: _____
6. Does your policy include the following basic elements?
- | | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Identification of Positions Suitable for Telecommuting | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Definition of "Telecommuting": | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Definition of "Eligible Employee": | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Provision for Union participation: | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Performance Issues: | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Time and Attendance Issues: | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • References to telecommunications, equipment, services: | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Liability and responsibility issues: | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Reporting Requirements | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Conditions of a Pilot Program (if appropriate) | N/A | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

IN ADDITION: Provide – (1) a narrative discussion of your plans for developing policies for covering 100 % of your workforce if your existing policy covers only a portion (if you wish, you may attach a copy of your policy); and (2) identify problems/barriers associated with increasing the number of telecommuters in your agency.

RETURN BY APRIL 2, 2001, TO:

Office of Workforce Relations
 (Attention: Mallie Burruss)
 Office of Work/Life Programs
 U.S. Office of Personnel Management
 1900 E. Street, NW, Room 7316
 Washington, DC 20415-2000
 OR
 FAX to: (202) 606-2091

Questions may be referred to Mallie Burruss at (202) 606-5529 (email: mtburrus@opm.gov) or Ron Patterson at (202) 606-1740 (email: repatter@opm.gov).

* 12 to 49 days per year at alternate worksite - 609
 50+ days per year at alternate work site - 127

OPM 1651 (01/01)
 REVISED 2/27/01

(1) Narrative discussion of your plans for developing policies for covering 100% of your workforce if your existing policy covers only a portion (if you wish, you may attached a copy of your policy).

N/A - Department of Labor Flexiplace Programs cover all DOL employees.

(2) Identify problems/barriers associated with increasing the number of telecommuters in your agency.

-- Program funding.

As the number of teleworkers increases, agencies anticipate additional costs associated with:

- space rental charges where telecenters are used;
- purchase of non-ADP equipment (fax machines, additional telephone lines);
- long distance charges where credit cards are used rather than government telephone lines;
- maintaining two workstations (1) official duty station and (2) alternate work site (since most teleworkers work 1 or 2 days per week at an alternate work site).

Computer equipment and support provide additional challenges associated with costs as well as concerns in providing technical support/assistance to remote workers:

- purchase of a computer for use at two work sites (1) official duty station and (2) alternate work site (long term goal to replace desktop computers with laptops requires a major outlay of money to rewire and reconfigure offices as well as purchase of computers);
- expansions for hardware and software licensing is necessary to allow for additional remote access;
- technical assistance - employees must have the capability to be on-line and on the telephone simultaneously since issues and problems will need to be "talked" through;
- employee training on basic troubleshooting, especially hardware issues since IT staff cannot make house calls;
- security procedures implemented to ensure data security.

-- GSA regulations on the disposition of used personal computers are a disincentive to agencies that might wish to convey surplus computers to employees for use at alternate work sites.

-- Major upgrades to communication technology - there must be a greater capacity for real-time access to data and easy transfer of information so that there is minimal to no impact on the work flow stemming from where the work is performed.

-- Employee resistance:

- employees who want the structure of coming to the office to stay focused on their work;
- employees who feel they miss important information about work by not being in the office;
- employees unable to work independently.

-- Office coverage (telephones, customer service).

-- Difficulty in planning meetings to include flexiplace participant on conference call.

-- Resistance on the part of some supervisors and managers:

- lack of understanding of program;
- lack of funding to fully support teleworker;
- lack of training.

APPENDIX C

**DOL'S RESPONSE TO THE
OPM SURVEY ON ESTABLISHING
TELEWORK POLICIES
OCTOBER 2001**

**OPM SURVEY REPORTING FORM
AGENCY TELEWORK AND AWS PRACTICES
As of October 1, 2001**

Agency Name U.S. Department of Labor

Agency Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: OASAM/HRC/WorkLife Center, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N5454
Washington, DC 20210

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Total Number of Employees in Agency: | <u>16,477</u> |
| 2. Total Number of Employees Eligible to Telework : | <u>16,477</u> |
| 3. Total Number of Employees Teleworking: | <u>1,563</u> |
| Regular/Regularly Scheduled | <u>471</u> |
| Episodic/AdHoc/Situational | <u>1,092</u> |
| Medical | <u>*</u> |
| Other (specify) <u>"Road Warriors"</u> | <u>3,413</u> |
| 3(a). Number Teleworking <u>within</u> the Washington, D.C. Metro Area | <u>523</u> |
| 3(b). Number Teleworking <u>outside</u> the Washington D.C. Metro Area | <u>1,040</u> |

4. Form of Telework Policy (check all that apply):

Written (handbook, memorandum, letter, etc.)

X
X

Informal

5. Scope of Telework Policy (check all that apply):

Agency wide

X

Headquarters

Regional

Bureaus/Departmental/Subdivision

6. Does your agency policy allow the following categories of employees to telework? (check all that apply):

Executives

X
X
X
X
X

Managers

Supervisors

Temporary

Employees on AWS

Other (specify) _____

**OPM SURVEY REPORTING FORM
AGENCY TELEWORK AND AWS PRACTICES**

As of October 1, 2001

Page 2

Agency Name U.S. Department of Labor

7. Types of Telework Arrangements Permitted by Agency Policy (check all that apply):

Regular/Regularly Scheduled

Episodic/AdHoc/Situational

Medical

X
X
X

8. Number of Employees on an Alternative Work Schedule

14,005

9. Number of Employees on a Compressed Work Schedule

25

10. What actions has your agency taken to increase telework participants since our April 2001 survey?

Increase marketing of program.

Development of Telework web site for all DOL employees.

Increase training of supervisors.

Refine information technology (data base access and reporting systems).

Research ways to address computer security issues.

11. What actions has your agency taken to overcome barriers that were identified in our April 2001 survey to increase telework participation?

Increase training of supervisors.

Increase communication between supervisors and employees.

Increase funding for government computers and equipment, where feasible.

RETURN BY DECEMBER 3, 2001

via email to:

pdlucak@opm.gov

*We do not track medical telework as a separate category. These arrangements are included in the regular/regularly scheduled count.

APPENDIX D
AGENCY RESPONSE



SEP 18 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SYLVIA T. HOROWITZ

Acting Deputy Inspector General
Office of Communications, Inspections and Evaluations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Hugler", written over the typed name.

FROM:

EDWARD C. HUGLER
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Administration and Management

SUBJECT:

Evaluation of the Department of Labor's Telework Program
Report No. 2E-50-598-0005

This responds to your September 3, 2002, request for comments on the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) evaluation of the Department's Telework Program. On the whole, the report is fair and balanced. You have presented the program from a positive viewpoint with suggestions that we find worthwhile.

Within the limits of the new automated time and attendance system (People Time) when it is fully implemented, OASAM will:

- Begin routine tracking and internal reporting of formal and informal telework participation. OASAM will generate both Departmental and individual agency reports.

We also agree that OASAM will:

- Request that each DOL agency assess its effectiveness in promoting, considering, and granting telework requests. As needed, we will interface with agencies to assist them in developing and implementing strategies to promote the Department's telework programs and eliminate barriers to the program.

In addition, we offer two points of clarification. Both in the Executive Summary and on page 4, the report states that DOL agency-specific participation is not tracked or reported. OASAM has always tracked formal telework agreements by agency and reported participation by agency on ad hoc basis. For accuracy, the final report should reflect this practice.

Page 5 of the report states that the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) current stance is non-inclusion of our "road warriors" in DOL telework statistics. You may wish to note in the report that the International Telework Association and Council (ITAC) and industry leaders classify these types of employees as teleworkers. Including DOL "road warriors" as episodic teleworkers would boost the Department's participation rate in the program to over 30 percent.

cc: Patrick Pizzella