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County Telework Program Fact Sheet

Telework is defined as working at least one day every other week (or twice a month) at home or at an alternate location near home. Telework is based on the concept that moving the work to the worker is a more productive option than having the worker commute each day to the work location. Telework is an effective way to reduce the mobile emissions generated by less commute day(s) for the teleworker and helps the County comply with the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Rule 2202 regulation regarding employee commute reduction.

This work option reshapes traditional organizational work practices. It requires management to look beyond an employee's attendance record and more appropriately towards evaluating employee productivity and performance standards.

Sponsored by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, the County's Telework Program was established in September 1989 with 78 participants. Today's Telework Program has over 5,000 employees that telework an average of 1.4 days per week. The County's teleworkers range from department heads to entry level staff.

Below is a list of facts and frequently asked questions about the County's award winning Telework Program:

1. How does the County's Telework Program work?
 - a. Participants are primarily volunteers, participation is not mandatory. Most employees telework part-time, one day a week. Participation is open to both represented and non-represented employees. Selection by management is based on the suitability of the job and the employee. Participation may also be terminated at any time by either the employee (teleworker) or the supervisor (telemanger). Telework is a management option, not a universal employee benefit. Employees are not "entitled" to participate in the Telework Program.



2. Why has the County implemented a Telework Program?
 - a. In response to the Board of Supervisor's 1989 motion and in an effort to address air quality and traffic mitigation issues, the Chief Executive Office coordinated implementation of a Countywide program. Enhanced productivity, better management of resources and employee personal savings quickly broadened program participation and departmental support. Departments are encouraged to implement telework as a direct strategy in the Employee Commute Reduction Program (ECRP) to increase its Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR) target mandated by SCAQMD's Rule 2202.
3. How does Telework affect productivity?
 - a. Survey results show improvements in productivity. An average increase in productivity of 10 percent has been documented by most participants. Productivity increases because employees have fewer interruptions and distractions, work at their peak times and are less stressed.
4. Can Telework result in reduced sick leave?
 - a. Yes. County Teleworkers have documented an average reduction in absenteeism of 3.8 days. An employee working in a traditional work setting usually takes four hours off for a medical or dental appointment. A teleworker can take an hour or two, commute to a nearby medical office and shift the working schedule into the evening or weekend.
 - b. Also, an employee who doesn't feel well enough to drive to work can sometimes work at home and still be productive.
5. Will loyalty to the County diminish as a result of time away from the office?
 - a. No. In actuality, loyalty is likely to improve as a result of greater employee satisfaction with working conditions. Employee morale also improves as a result of increased flexibility on the job.
6. What are the advantages of Telework for employees?
 - a. Employees benefit from personal savings related to reduced travel expenses, reduced travel time and reduced stress. Employees enjoy a more flexible work environment and an enhanced quality of life.
7. Is Telework the answer to child care or elder care problems?
 - a. No. Telework is not a substitute for child care or elder care. Employees with young children or elderly persons that require care must arrange for independent care. However, telework can provide employees with greater flexibility in meeting their child care and elder care needs.



8. What kind of jobs and what type of employees are best suited for Telework?
 - a. Most jobs or parts of jobs are suitable for telework. Tasks which are focused on processing information, writing, reading, telemarketing, computer data entry tasks and administrative tasks are best suited for the teleworker. Employees who are self-motivated, conscientious, responsible, and knowledgeable are the best teleworkers.
9. How are Teleworkers selected?
 - a. Managers identify employees and tasks most appropriate for telework. Employees may fill out questionnaires which have been developed to assist departments in selecting employees whose jobs and personal characteristics make them good candidates for the telework program. To be selected, an employee must have the endorsement of their supervisor. All teleworkers must have a performance evaluation of "Competent" or higher for the most recent Performance Evaluation.
10. What does the County do to prepare employees to be effective teleworkers?
 - a. The Chief Executive Office coordinates training for participants and their managers. Training sessions cover many areas, including how to successfully telework and how to manage teleworkers. Telework training is mandatory for all teleworkers and telemanagers.
11. What does an employee need to telework?
 - a. Equipment needs for teleworkers vary from just a telephone, paper and pencil to a computer, modem, printer and fax machine.
12. Who provides the equipment?
 - a. Each department determines what equipment, if any, it will loan or purchase for the teleworker. To assist employees in purchasing computers, the County has developed a Consolidated Computer Purchasing Program, whereby County employees can purchase equipment at a substantial discount. Departmental Chief Information Officers or coordinators should be contacted for additional information.
13. How will a supervisor (Telemanager) know that an employee who works at home is actually productive?
 - a. Supervisors are trained in managing by objectives, rather than by observation. Managers of teleworkers must manage by focusing on the quality, quantity and timeliness of the employee's work product. Frequent communication between the telemanager and the teleworker is required to ensure that tasks and performance expectations are clearly defined. Failure to meet targeted goals is cause to terminate an employee's telework arrangement.



14. How will a Teleworker keep in touch with his or her office?

- a. Teleworkers arrange with their managers how often they must call their office and establish “core” hours of availability. While working at home, teleworkers are simply working at a different location.

15. What are the Telework program costs?

- a. While some departments may have minimal start-up costs for optional items such as installation of telephone lines or purchase of a modem, there has not been any significant overall cost to the County for implementation of the Telework Program. The initial costs departments may incur will be more than matched by the cost savings achieved by the County through employee productivity increases and reduced absenteeism.

16. How will the County evaluate the effectiveness of this program?

- a. The Chief Executive Office conducts a periodic assessment of the Telework Program to determine how successful it is in increasing employee productivity, reducing County costs and reducing employee commuter trips. Departments are required to provide a quarterly report to the Chief Executive Office with data regarding the number of teleworkers, the average number of days employees telework, and the type of assignments or projects teleworkers complete.

17. Does fraud exist in the Telework Program?

- a. Any County program has the potential for fraud. However, there have been no documented occurrences of fraud in the Telework Program. If you have reasonable suspicion to believe that a teleworker is committing fraud, please contact the County fraud hotline at (800) 544-6861 or Hotline@auditor.lacounty.gov. Or you may write a letter to:

Office of County Investigations
500 W. Temple St., Room 515
Los Angeles, CA 90012

For further information about the County’s award winning Telework Program, please contact Juan Arredondo of the Chief Executive Office, Office of Workplace Programs at (213) 974-1182 or jarredondo@ceo.lacounty.gov.

