



# Peace Corps

Life is calling.  
How far will you go?

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## Telework at Peace Corps

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## Federal Agency - Volunteer Service

- Peace Corps is small, independent, excepted service government agency
- Established by JFK in 1961: “Still asking what you can do for your country?”
- Celebrating 50th anniversary in 2011
- 3 Goals:**
  - Help people of interested countries meet needs for trained men & women
  - Promote better understanding of Americans on part of peoples served
  - Promote better understanding of other peoples on part of Americans



## Direct Hire Staff

### Approx. 900 Direct Hires employees

74 posts = 200 overseas employees

530 in HQ including 30 political employees

9 Regional recruiting offices, approx 120 Direct hires

### Staff Jobs support Volunteer programs

#### HQ Departments, Washington DC

- 3 Regions:
  - Africa, Inter-America/Pacific & Europe, Mediterranean/Asian
- Director's staff, CIO, CFO, IG
- Volunteer Services includes Medical services
- Management includes HR, Admin Services
- Safety & Security
- Contracts
- Training Center
- Volunteer Recruitment & Selection



## Unique Challenges at Peace Corps

### Term appointments:

Initial appointment 2.5 years,  
2 appointments total of 5 years

PC Director can offer a “6th year” extension

PC Director can offer 15% of employees “third tour”

Maximum time at PC is usually 8.5 years



## Agency Policy

Telework Policy Statement since 3/06

Continuing Telework Agreement—routine basis

Non-recurring Agreement – specified # days to accomplish task, e.g. prepare report

- Telework Agreement Form
- Self-Certification Safety Checklist



## Telework Challenges

**Term Appointments create High turnover rate challenges:**

- 26% overall new hires annually, approx. 200
  - Average years of service currently 3 years
- Use of hiring alternatives: Experts, interns, contractors, volunteer employees
- On-going orientation to Peace Corps
- Employees often getting new managers
- Built in challenge in continuous change in management
- Automation/technology challenges
  - Need budget approval to increase technology



## Telework Challenges Cont...

- Determining work conducive to telework
- Determining employees best suited to telework
- Perception – Is employee working?
- Need for Leadership Support
- Need to Provide Information – Information sessions, on-line tools



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## **Actions towards increasing Telework Participation**

**Information Sessions for all Managers and employees on Telework and AWS  
Participation in AWS, 9/5/4 has increased**

**Increase in budget allotted for Technology, “tokens” and “virtual desktop”**

**Identification of work conducive to telework**

Policy Development, Research, completion of reports  
Review of job applications  
Online training courses, WebEx sessions, etc.

### **Success stories:**

Recruiters – work requires travel to colleges to interview  
Short term telework for employees with short term disabilities,  
i.e. operation requires limited walking for period of time  
IT related work, i.e. troubleshooting  
Labor relations work, development of discipline, case development  
HR Policy Specialist, creation and updating policies  
HR Program Manager for automated system, i.e. development of market  
analysis, system guidelines, trend analysis, strategic planning



## Peace Corps Telework

### Employee traits conducive to telework:

- Organized, self disciplined, flexible
- Comfortable working alone, minimal supervision
- Effective communicator, team player
- Self starter, completes assignments on time
- Possess integrity, history of being trustworthy
- Successful in present position; proven producer
- Interested in achieving results
- Backup available for in-office issues



## SUCCESSFUL TELEWORKER

- Establish a routine
- Establish goals
- Set deadlines
- Avoid Distractions
- Maintain Regular Communication with Your Manager
- Be accessible: Stay in touch/set up System
  - Have calls forwarded home
  - Response to emails
  - Participate via Webex in meetings



## Telework Requirements

### Creative ways of introducing telework

Make it Project Based

Designate One day a month on a 3-month pilot basis

Make Requirements Clear for employees:

- Safety Checklist
- Telework Agreement: outline work that will be done, agree # times employee will check in,

*Example, 2 times a day, in morning and end of day*

*Manager may email or call employee any time*



## Benefits of Telework

- Environmental benefits – less employee driving, using office space, less traffic congestion, less utilities, etc.
- Increased Productivity - Employees can often achieve more work without interruptions, increased concentration
- Increased morale
- Less stress for employee, work/life balance
- Less unscheduled leave
- Recruitment, retention tool



## •Barriers to telework

- All employees not suitable to telework
- All positions not suitable for telework
- All employees do not desire to telework or have right home environment
- Manager has to manage through results
- Manager has to trust employees
- Some managers are more open to change than others
- Insufficient technology tools



## Terminating Telework

Reasons for terminating:

- Agreement no longer supports defined work assignment
- Performance or conduct issues
- Technology changes no longer support agreement
- Employee does not comply with terms of agreement
- May not appeal management's decision



## Participation in PC Telework Program

### Lessons Learned:

- Take it slow -
- “Practice” telework
- Be clear on expectations
  - Communicate program policies
- Increase use of technology (e.g., tokens, email)
  - eOPF, automate Performance Appraisal system



## Next Steps

Ongoing upgrading and availability of technology

Continuous education:

Share success stories

Ensure employees know expectations – ongoing guidance

Evaluate Effectiveness

- Telework is a benefit, not a right–REQUIRE BUSINESS CASE

*Provide template for business case*

- Employee must produce results-managers need to monitor results

*Employee must be available when needed*



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## Questions?