

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 22nd, 2011

Dear Director Berry,

Thank you for continuing to focus on implementation of the Telework Enhancement Act. Your leadership has been exemplary. We recently requested that the Congressional Research Service (CRS) survey federal agencies to learn more about their telework implementation plans, and have enclosed their responses for your review. They suggest that some agencies are more focused on telework implementation than others, and that some agencies need to improve telework implementation plans while others are making great progress. Unfortunately, the Departments of Transportation, Justice, and Housing and Urban Development refused to respond to CRS's survey, so we do not have information on implementation of their telework program.

We have highlighted some of the notable findings from CRS's survey.


1. The Department of Agriculture (USDA), Patent Trademark Office (PTO) and the General Services Administration (GSA) have a relatively high rate of total work hours accomplished through telework, despite the fact that many USDA employees spend a great deal of time in the field. PTO employees, in aggregate, completed a laudable 40% of all work hours under a telework arrangement. This suggests that PTO, USDA and GSA are integrating telework into daily operations, consistent with the goals of the Telework Improvements Act.
2. Veterans Affairs (VA) has classified 87.5% of employees as ineligible for telework and does not track the number of employees who telework or the total number of labor hours composed of telework. The department failed to provide any detailed information to justify an extraordinarily high rate of telework ineligibility. While it is obvious that the VA has some positions that require on-site work, such as direct care for veterans, it seems unlikely that 87.5% of employees work on-site for all their work hours.
3. Several agencies such as the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have classified a high percentage of employees as eligible for telework, yet a relatively small percentage of total work hours are completed through telework. This suggests that while some agencies are doing good work to improve eligibility many also need to ensure that telework is routine. Frequent telework is critical for Continuity of Operations preparation and to achieve real estate and utility cost savings.
4. Even some agencies with a high percentage of desk jobs have fairly prohibitive telework eligibility and abysmally low rates of telework participation. For example, the

Department of the Treasury has classified 53% of positions as ineligible for telework and a mere 1% of work hours are completed through telework. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has classified 70% of employees as ineligible, and an average of 0.016% of employees teleworked during the average pay period. This abysmal telework performance is inexplicable in light of the large number of DHS office positions, and could prove to be a threat to national security if DHS is unable to implement a Continuity of Operations Plan because its employees are unaccustomed to telework. Unfortunately, some agencies have a great deal of work to do to comply with the goals of the Telework Improvements Act, and we would appreciate the opportunity to work with you to help laggard agencies catch up to their higher performing counterparts.

5. Many agencies reported difficulty quantifying energy and real estate cost savings which result from telework. Perhaps there are methods of quantifying cost savings which PTO and GSA have used which could be emulated by other agencies. Considering that PTO has saved \$4.36 million in real estate costs by avoiding construction of individual offices for 3,464 employees, savings government-wide could be substantial and should be quantified.

These are just some examples of potentially useful information that the Congressional Research Service survey produced. We hope that you will find these studies helpful and would welcome the opportunity to work with you in the future on Telework Enhancement Act implementation.

Sincerely,


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John Sarbanes
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