

TELEWORK:

Weighing the Information,
Determining an Appropriate Approach



A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States
by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

OCTOBER 2011

THE CHAIRMAN



U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

1615 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20419

The President
President of the Senate
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Sirs:

In accordance with the requirements of 5 U.S.C. § 1204(a)(3), it is my honor to submit this U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board report, *Telework: Weighing the Information, Determining an Appropriate Approach*. Federal organizations continue to be interested in the role that telework can play in efficient and effective use of the workforce. This report uses survey data from Federal employees and supervisors, and other information, to provide a holistic depiction of the key benefits, concerns, and implementation considerations for organizations to weigh when determining how to integrate telework into their business strategy.

The results of our study confirm that telework can result in many benefits for organizations and employees alike. Further, and of critical importance, our findings indicate that the benefits of telework can occur while maintaining productivity and performance, if telework is managed appropriately. A key step that organizations must take in implementing an effective telework program is to ensure supervisors have the necessary skills and support to manage performance in a telework environment. Good performance management skills will be critical for enabling supervisors to make wise decisions about using telework in their work units and ensuring fair treatment of teleworkers and nonteleworkers. In addition, the organizational leadership must foster a culture that is conducive to telework, and ensure a well thought-out technology infrastructure that allows for access to necessary business tools and continuity in work unit dynamics. Flexibility in perspective about telework will be key, as will continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of telework. These strategies will be critical for realizing the benefits of telework and mitigating concerns.

The report's central message is the importance of weighing the applicable benefits of and concerns about telework with legal requirements and implementation considerations when making decisions about how to appropriately use telework in a given situation. I believe you will find this report useful as you consider issues affecting the Federal Government's ability to operate efficiently and effectively in these challenging times.

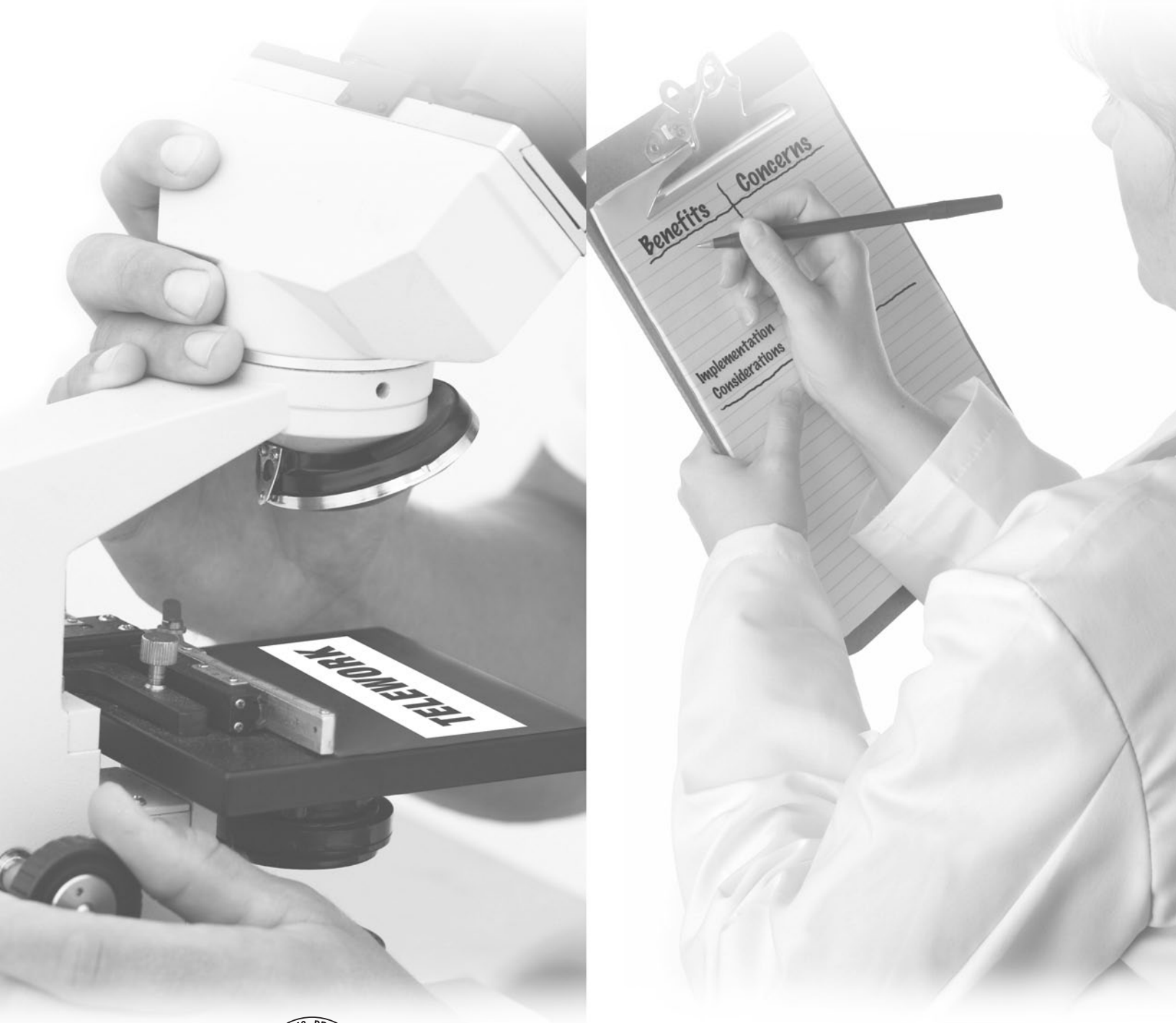
Respectfully,

Susan Tsui Grundmann

Enclosure

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Federal Government has a responsibility to use the Federal workforce in an efficient and effective manner.¹ Such usage requires that Federal organizations implement policies, practices, and procedures that strategically balance organizational and human capital needs. If used appropriately, workplace flexibilities such as telework can function as such a practice. According to the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, telework is “a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee’s position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.”² With telework, instead of physically commuting to the office to perform work responsibilities followed by commuting home, teleworkers simply “commute” to their home office area or to another approved geographically close location to perform their work. Telework, which provides flexibility in where and when work is accomplished, is a tool that can be leveraged within an organization’s overall business strategy as one means to further mission accomplishment.

Federal organizations continue to be interested in the role that telework can play in efficient and effective use of the workforce. This report is based on the analysis of survey data of Federal employee, supervisor, manager, and executive experiences with—and perceptions of—telework in the Federal workplace, as well as a review of various news articles, a sample of relevant professional literature, and interviews with leaders in telework. The report details a number of benefits, concerns, and implementation considerations for telework that we believe are likely to be of interest to most organizations. The report’s central message is the importance of weighing applicable benefits of and any concerns about telework in conjunction with legal requirements and implementation considerations when making decisions about how to appropriately use telework in a given situation.

Findings

Telework Can Directly Benefit Organizations. Telework can support continuity of operations plans and organizational preparedness for emergency situations. Additionally, it can potentially reduce organizations’ need for physical office space and its accompanying real estate and related expenses. These direct benefits could have a significant impact on organizational functioning in particular situations.

Telework Can Directly Benefit Employees. Telework can support employees’ work/life balance through reducing their commutes, allowing employees more personal time in the absence of a commute, and possibly granting them flexibility to work when they are most capable. These

¹ 5 U.S.C. § 2301(b)(5).

² 5 U.S.C. § 6501(3).

direct benefits can—collectively—help employees better balance their professional and personal schedules.

Telework Can Bring Indirect Benefits to Organizations. Although the direct benefits of telework to organizations and employees are unquestionably valuable, they do not necessarily make the business case for telework by themselves. We contend that the real value of telework for organizations comes indirectly through telework's direct impact on employee work/life balance. Specifically, by virtue of supporting employee work/life balance, telework can indirectly provide significant benefits for organizations in the areas of recruitment, retention, and employee engagement. Further, and of critical importance, it appears that the benefits of telework can occur with generally maintained productivity and performance. Yet, we emphasize that the benefits of telework are contingent on wise decisions about an appropriate approach to telework for a given situation, as well as on the effective employee management within that approach.

Telework Can Raise Concerns. Supervisors play a critical role in ensuring the success of a telework program and they need to feel comfortable in that role. However, some supervisors have concerns about how telework will affect mission accomplishment, and specifically, the functioning of their work units. Further, some believe that support for telework has been given too freely without providing adequate attention to addressing telework concerns. We draw attention to their concerns, organized into three areas:

- Work unit performance;
- Work unit dynamics; and
- Teleworker responsiveness and availability.

Although there are organizations and situations where these concerns may be warranted, our survey data generally suggest that most supervisors, employee nonteleworkers, and employee routine teleworkers believe that work outcomes relevant to telework concerns can be maintained in a telework environment. Yet, our data reveal some potential room for improvement. Specifically, our data also indicate that some supervisors and employee nonteleworkers believe that telework has had a *negative* impact on some of these work outcomes. The occurrence of such perceptions and of telework concerns in general underscores the criticality of ensuring that wise decisions are made about an appropriate approach to telework for a given situation and that employees are managed effectively within that approach. Similarly, good decisions about the use of telework can help mitigate concerns and prevent them from becoming realities.

However, we caution that some telework concerns—and some of the perceived and actual negative impacts of telework—may stem from issues or problems for which there are no readily apparent solutions. Thus, in making decisions about telework as a business tool, organizations should be prepared to identify areas where they are willing to make some trade-offs in order to reap the benefits that telework can offer. While this threshold for trade-offs and the incidence and range of actual negative effects of telework are likely to vary across and within organizations, a common goal should be ensuring a net positive return for the organization.

Recommendations

Organizational Leaders, Supervisors, and Employees

- ***Determine an appropriate technology, equipment, technical support, and security infrastructure for telework.*** Assist organizational leaders in devising a plan to identify and address where they are and where they need to be in terms of technology, equipment, technical support, and security in order to make telework a success.
- ***Be flexible about telework.*** Recognize that the optimal approach to telework is likely to evolve over time within each work unit and organization as a whole, and require an iterative process. Challenge assumptions about the best approach to telework. The more flexible and open you are to trying new approaches, working through issues, and identifying best practices, the greater the potential for determining the most appropriate approach for leveraging telework to meet mission goals.
- ***Talk about telework.*** Share information with one another about telework and discuss relevant benefits and any concerns. Discussions could include strategies for ensuring effective communication, teamwork, and work relationships in a telework environment, as well as teleworker responsiveness and availability.

Organizational Leaders

- ***Ensure culture and leadership preparedness for telework.*** Recognize that implementing telework will require at least some degree of culture change in many organizations. Ensure that leaders' words and behaviors guide the organization's culture to adapt to and accommodate telework. Leaders can foster such a culture by taking such steps as providing guidance and support on the telework approach, providing transparency about telework's challenges, and supporting appropriate participation in telework as well as participating themselves.
- ***Ensure supervisor preparedness for managing teleworkers and nonteleworkers.*** Work with supervisors to ensure that they are prepared for their role and can effectively manage teleworkers and nonteleworkers. In particular, make sure supervisors have good performance management skills. Good performance management practices are important for building employee-supervisor relationships based on mutual trust. Trust can work in concert with information gathered from good performance management practices to enable supervisors to make wise decisions about using telework in their work units (e.g., decisions about eligibility and continuation of use). Good performance management will also be important for ensuring fair treatment of teleworkers and nonteleworkers. Identify supervisors' skill areas in need of improvement and provide the necessary support and developmental resources.
- ***Decide on an appropriate approach to telework.*** Determine the extent to which telework can and should be implemented in the organization's environment. Weigh benefits of and any concerns about telework in conjunction with legal requirements and implementation considerations. Then, decide on an appropriate approach. Pilot programs may assist in making appropriate decisions about what works best and in tailoring the approach to telework to the organization's needs. As decisions are made, identify, measure, and track metrics to evaluate program functioning and make adjustments as necessary.

Supervisors

- *Work with organizational leaders to determine appropriate use of telework.* Begin by identifying work unit needs in relation to telework. Also identify any concerns about the impact of telework and determine possible strategies for mitigating them.
- *Determine your preparedness for managing in a telework environment.* Ensure you have the performance management skills necessary to manage the workforce, both teleworkers and nonteleworkers.
- *Exercise performance management skills.* Practice the performance management skills that will be necessary for work unit and ultimately organizational performance and that will also be important for building employee-supervisor relationships based on mutual trust. Also, exercise discretion to tailor management style and practices to the needs of different employees.
- *Use performance management information to make wise decisions about telework.* Use performance management information to make good decisions about telework eligibility and continuation of use, and to ensure fair treatment of teleworkers and nonteleworkers. This will be necessary for allowing the benefits of telework to be realized and for mitigating or preventing concerns about telework from becoming realities. Additionally, wise decisions in these areas will help supervisors ensure that they are using telework in a manner conducive to work unit communication, teamwork and relationship dynamics, employee responsiveness and availability, and ultimately individual and work unit performance. Finally, good decisions can help supervisors ensure and provide transparency that all employees are being managed and treated fairly regardless of where they are working.
- *Ensure fair treatment of teleworkers and nonteleworkers.* Treat teleworkers and nonteleworkers the same way. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 specifically states that “teleworkers and nonteleworkers are treated the same for purposes of— (A) periodic appraisals of job performance of employees; (B) training, rewarding, reassigning, promoting, reducing in grade, retaining, and removing employees; (C) work requirements; or (D) other acts involving managerial discretion”³ Such acts would include the distribution of work assignments. Good performance management practices can help supervisors exercise good and fair judgment in these areas and make decisions based on employee merit and not employee location.

³ 5 U.S.C. § 6503(a)(3) (internal punctuation omitted).

Employees

- *Consider whether telework would be right for you.* Telework-eligible employees should conduct a self-assessment to determine whether they want to telework.⁴ This should include determination that your home environment is suitable for telework. You should also make sure you can accomplish the same quantity and quality of work while teleworking as when working in the office. Further, make sure you can maintain appropriate communication, teamwork, and work relationships while teleworking and can abide by standards for responsiveness and availability. Telework-ineligible employees who would like to telework could consider talking with their supervisors about their status to determine if there is an opportunity for them to become eligible and the necessary criteria for achieving eligibility.
- *Maintain performance and fully engage in performance management with supervisors.* Whether teleworking or not, employees should be committed to maintaining their performance. Work cooperatively with your supervisor regarding your performance management. Discuss any impact that your telework—or others’ telework—is having on your ability to get your work done.
- *Maintain work unit dynamics.* Teleworking employees need to maintain appropriate communication, teamwork, and work relationships with the office, customers, and other relevant parties while teleworking. Similarly, nonteleworkers should be agreeable to using available technology to maintain appropriate communication, teamwork, and work relationships with teleworkers. Employees should discuss any impact that telework is having on the work unit’s ability to effectively maintain these critical dynamics.
- *Abide by standards for responsiveness and availability.* Teleworkers should work with their supervisor and work unit to ensure that they are responsive to and available for necessary contact, participating in necessary meetings, and contributing to unexpected assignments. This also includes being responsive to office coverage needs. Similarly, nonteleworkers should be agreeable to using available technology to support teleworkers’ efforts to be responsive to and available for such matters.

⁴For information for employees about participating in telework, see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, “Employees,” pp. 26-29. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

INTRODUCTION



As enumerated within the merit system principles and codified by law, the Federal Government has a responsibility to use the Federal workforce in an efficient and effective manner.⁵ Such usage requires, as a foundation, a match between human capital needs, interests, and capabilities and an organization's needs, mission, and goals. The exact elements that build upon this match and form the structure of each organization-workforce relationship are likely to vary. However, a common element is that policies, practices, and procedures need to be implemented within organizations that strategically balance organizational and human capital needs, strengthen their connection, and guide them towards efficiency and effectiveness. If used appropriately, workplace flexibilities such as telework can function as such a practice.

What Is Telework?

According to the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, telework is “a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.”⁶ With telework, instead of physically commuting to the office to perform work responsibilities followed by commuting home, teleworkers simply “commute” to their home office area or to another approved geographically close location to perform their work.

Telework, which provides flexibility in where and when work is accomplished, is a tool that can be leveraged within an organization's overall business strategy as one means to further mission accomplishment.

Interest in Telework

The concept and practice of telework have had a long history in the Federal Government. As early as 1957, before the term “telework” was coined, a Federal Government policy was in place that approved individuals on a case-by-case basis to be paid for working at home.⁷ This type of work arrangement was subsequently expanded upon and advanced as a strategy to recruit and retain talented individuals, and encourage more family friendly work places.⁸ Additionally, there was interest in seeing if the Federal Government could operate efficiently and effectively using nontraditional work schedules and arrangements.

⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 2301(b)(5).

⁶ 5 U.S.C. § 6501(3).

⁷ Wendell Joice, U.S. General Services Administration, *The Evolution of Telework in the Federal Government*, February 2000.

⁸ Ibid.

More recently, there has been increased interest in the role that telework can play in the efficient and effective use of the workforce. Such interest has stemmed in part from the changing nature of work and how and where that work can be accomplished. Specifically, job functions have changed from primarily clerical work to more knowledge-based work. In tandem, advances in computer systems, the internet, and related technology such as mobile communication devices have occurred at a rapid pace and have allowed individuals to access work and work-related information and to perform such work from locations other than the traditional office (and at times other than traditional work hours). Such changes have dramatically reduced the need for and practicality of requiring physical presence at an office. Further, Federal organizations and jobs have expanded onto a more national and global scale, which has necessitated identifying ways to accomplish work that do not require all employees to be located at a communal office and which avoid the burden and expense of regular Government travel. In conjunction with all of these changes (current difficult economic conditions notwithstanding), the job market for talented knowledge workers has become increasingly competitive, not just between the public and private sectors, but also within the public sector. This reality, coupled with a wave of anticipated retirements and the host of changes outlined above, has compelled Federal organizations to identify strategies, such as telework, to attract and retain talented individuals and to contribute to the efficient and effective use of the Federal workforce.

Finally, legislative attention has been given in regards to telework in the Federal Government. As described in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government* (April 2011), a series of laws have been enacted concerning the use of telework. Specifically, beginning in 2000, a law (P.L. 106-346, § 359) stipulated that "each executive agency shall establish a policy under which eligible employees of the agency may participate in telecommuting to the maximum extent possible without diminished employee performance."⁹ Following this mandate, in 2004, laws (P.L. 108-199, Division B, §627 and P.L. 108-447, Division B, § 622) prescribed particular agencies to expand participation in telework. Most recently, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 was enacted. As stated in OPM's Telework Guide, "[t]he Act is a key factor in the Federal Government's ability to achieve greater flexibility in managing its workforce through the use of telework. The law specifies roles, responsibilities and expectations for all Federal executive agencies with regard to telework policies; employee eligibility and participation; program implementation; and reporting[.]" as well as designating responsibilities to particular agencies.¹⁰

In light of this range of interest in telework, it is prudent to understand how telework can enable the Federal Government to efficiently and effectively use the workforce for mission accomplishment.

⁹U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, pp. 2-3 (quoting P.L. 106-346 § 359) (internal punctuation omitted). This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 3.

Purpose of This Study

In line with the merit system principle of efficient and effective use of the Federal workforce,¹¹ this study was conducted to examine Federal employee, supervisor, manager, and executive experiences with—and perceptions of—telework in the Federal workplace. We also obtained information relevant to telework from a review of various news articles, a sample of relevant professional literature, and interviews with leaders in telework. This information was collected to provide a holistic depiction of potential benefits of telework for organizations and employees, as well as potential concerns about telework. Organizations can use this information in weighing the pros and cons about telework to make wise decisions about the appropriate approach to telework for their situations. In addition, we offer several considerations that may be of interest to organizations as they decide on appropriate approaches to telework for their situations and implement their telework programs. This resultant report can assist organizations in making decisions about how to best integrate the telework flexibility into their business strategy and leverage it to meet mission needs.

¹¹5 U.S.C. § 2301(b)(5).

STUDY METHODOLOGY



Information for this report was primarily derived from the results of a web-based survey administered by MSPB in 2009 to a subset of Federal employees, supervisors, managers, and executives who provided their experiences with and perceptions about telework. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A. Respondents answered questions designed for them based on their role (e.g., supervisor, employee) in the organization. Many of the survey questions about organizational issues were taken or adapted from previous MSPB surveys. Since previous MSPB research indicated that increased employee engagement is associated with several desirable outcomes for organizations,¹² we were interested in examining whether telework affected employee engagement. Therefore, the 16 employee engagement questions—comprising MSPB’s Engagement Scale—from the 2005 Merit Principles Survey, were also included on our telework survey. A copy of this Engagement Scale along with information about the scoring protocol for the scale is included in Appendix B. Additional information for the report was extracted from a review of various news articles, a sample of relevant professional literature, and interviews with leaders in telework.

We were very interested in examining responses to several survey items based on whether employee respondents’ reported never teleworking or teleworking on a routine basis (*i.e.*, at least 1 day per week). The perspectives and experiences of those employees who telework routinely and those who do not telework are equally important in understanding how telework operates. The perspective of supervisors is also critical. Together, the input from these individuals allows for a balanced analysis of the impact of telework on performance and other important work outcomes. Therefore, we believe this study makes a significant contribution to understanding how telework operates through incorporating the perspectives of employee nonteleworkers, employee routine teleworkers, and supervisors.

In selecting the survey sample, we sought to select organizations and occupations that together covered the range of missions and occupations that are appropriate for telework. While telework can theoretically be used to some degree in most organizations, it is not appropriate for all organizations or for all occupations. Therefore, the survey sample was drawn from selected professional and administrative occupational series that appear to be generally appropriate for telework. Law enforcement organizations such as those in the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice, and organizations that require the physical presence of employees in particular settings such as laboratories or maintenance facilities, were not included in the sample because telework is unlikely to be appropriate for many occupations in these organizations. Given these factors and our desire to limit the size of the sample of respondents and minimize the survey burden on employees, we limited the size of our sample to 20,000 participants.

¹²U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008.

A total of 18,406 surveys were delivered, and of those received, 9,773 met our survey completion requirement for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 53.1 percent usable surveys. Our analyses did not indicate a response bias so no further correction was required in this area, but the results of the analyses reported here were weighted to reflect the occupational composition of the agencies surveyed. More information about our sampling plan, the agencies and occupations sampled, and the analysis and weighting procedures we used is included in Appendix C.

Results reported here are generalizable only to the organizations and occupations that we surveyed. While the results are not generalizable Governmentwide, to the degree that other organizations have similar missions or occupational makeup, these results may be useful and informative. Thus, we believe this report on telework benefits, concerns, and implementation considerations can assist a wide range of organizations in determining appropriate approaches to telework for their situations.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN READING THIS REPORT



Perceptions vs. Facts

It is important for the reader to remember that our survey data are based on the experiences and perceptions of the respondents. While the items about experiences are based on facts (e.g., Have you requested approval to telework on a routine basis), the items about perceptions are based on the personal beliefs of the respondent (e.g., overall, I am satisfied with my job, I am treated with respect at work). However, people's perceptions are likely to be reflected in their behavior. For example, the extent to which employees believe their supervisor supports and encourages telework may influence whether they request to telework.

Survey Question Response Options

Most of the survey questions had five response options (e.g., Very Unimportant, Unimportant, Neither Important nor Unimportant, Important, and Very Important). When five choices were offered, we analyzed and reported the results by combining the two positive choices as if they were a single positive response and by combining the two negative choices as if they were a single negative response. The middle or neutral option was reported as endorsed. For example, for the question, "How important were the following factors in your decision to request telework on a routine basis: The amount of time it takes to commute," respondents who selected either "Very Important" or "Important" were reported as indicating that the factor was "Important." Similarly, respondents who chose "Very Unimportant" or "Unimportant" were reported as indicating that the factor was "Unimportant." Respondents who selected "Neither Important nor Unimportant" were reported as indicating that the factor was "Neither Important nor Unimportant." This practice helps us more easily analyze and report the data. Some survey items contained a "Don't know" or "Not applicable" option. Responses to these options were not included in the analyses of those items.

Telework at Home vs. Telework at a Telework Center

Our survey data does not differentiate between individuals who telework by working at home versus those who telework at a telework center. Thus, to the extent that there are differences in telework outcomes based on telework setting, our survey was not intended to capture them. Further, the discussion of our survey data in the sections that follow does not seek to address any such differences, or to focus on factors uniquely pertinent to working at home or working at a telework center.

Definition of Survey Respondents

- Employees – When we analyzed the survey data for this study and reported the results, we defined employees to include individuals who self-identified themselves on our survey as being either “non-supervisors” or “team-leaders.”
- Supervisors – When we analyzed the survey data for this study and reported the results, we defined supervisors to include individuals who self-identified themselves on our survey as being “supervisors,” “managers,” or “executives.”
- Routine teleworkers – When we analyzed the survey data for this study and reported the results, we defined routine teleworkers to include individuals who indicated on our survey that they telework at least 1 day per week from their home or from a telework center, which we equate as meaning that they telework at least 2 days per pay period.
- Ad hoc teleworkers – When we analyzed the survey data for this study and reported the results, we defined ad hoc teleworkers to include individuals who indicated on our survey that they telework on an ad hoc basis from their home or from a telework center.
- Nonteleworkers – When we analyzed the survey data for this study and reported the results, we defined nonteleworkers to include individuals who indicated on our survey that they never telework from their home or from a telework center.

TELEWORK AS A BUSINESS STRATEGY



Telework is a tool that can be leveraged within an organization's suite of workplace flexibilities to aid in mission accomplishment. Similar to other workplace flexibilities, telework can bring benefits if implemented appropriately and managed properly. As discussed in this chapter, telework has the potential to bring not only direct benefits to both organizations and employees, but also additional indirect benefits to organizations by virtue of the direct benefits to employees.

We have focused on the particular direct and indirect benefits below because we believe that they are likely to be of interest to most organizations. While we believe we have provided a good starting point, organizations are encouraged to determine the applicability of these benefits to their situation, as well as to identify any others that may be pertinent. Naturally, each organization is likely to experience benefits of telework to a different degree based on unique factors of their situation.

Direct Benefits of Telework for Organizations

Continuity of Operations. A critical way that telework can directly benefit organizations is through its usefulness as a continuity of operations strategy.¹³ Telework can serve as an essential tool for effectively maintaining operations during emergencies or other situations that would necessitate a geographically dispersed workforce capable of carrying out mission accomplishment. The importance of continuing operations during national security emergencies has long been recognized and continues to be important today.

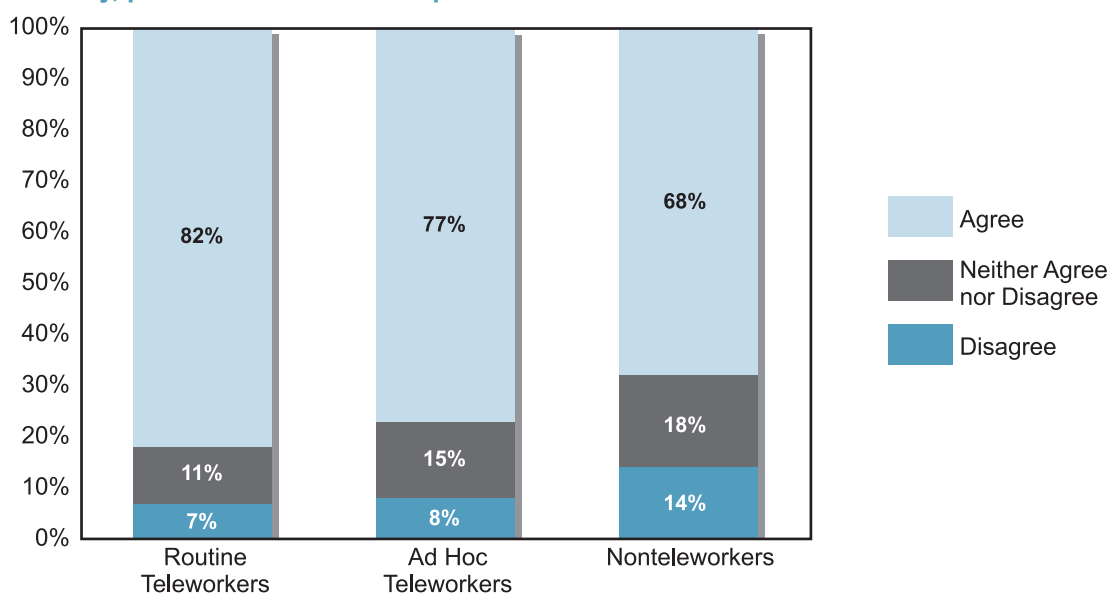
Not only is it critical for organizations to be able to operate during a national security emergency, such as a terrorist attack, but it is also imperative that they are able to function during inclement weather, a pandemic health crisis, or any other event that would prevent employees from commuting to and working in their offices. For example, in February 2010, the Federal Government in the Washington, D.C., area was forced to close for several days because of blizzards that prevented many individuals in the National Capital area from safely traveling to their normal organization worksite. However, because some employees were able to telework, it was estimated that “the Federal Government offset approximately \$30 [million] per day in lost productivity during the February storms as a result of telework.”¹⁴ Although significant,

¹³For important information related to incorporating telework into agency continuation of operations plans, see the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-292) accessed from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf> and see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, accessed from http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

¹⁴*Work-Life Programs: Attracting, Retaining and Empowering the Federal Workforce: Hearing before the S. Comm. on Oversight of Govt. Mgmt., the Fed. Workforce and the District of Columbia*, 111th Cong. (2010) (statement of Jonathan Foley, Sr. Advisor to the Dir. U.S. Office of Pers. Mgmt.). Accessed from: http://www.opm.gov/News_Events/congress/testimony/111thCongress/05_04_2010.asp.

the savings could most likely have been much greater and the disruption to Federal work much smaller if more employees had been prepared and able to telework. In general, if the threat to safety from inclement weather prevents an employee from commuting to work and the employee is telework-eligible, he or she could opt to telework as opposed to taking leave.¹⁵ Indeed, employees who had previously teleworked were more prepared to work from the safety of their homes during this winter emergency, and the importance of this preparedness would naturally be critical for other emergency situations. As is evident in Figure 1, our survey results indicate that a larger percentage of employee routine teleworkers agreed that they know what they need to do to continue working in the event of an emergency, as compared with employees who telework on an ad hoc basis and employee nonteleworkers.

Figure 1. Employees' reported agreement with the statement, "I know what I am to do to continue working in the event of a local or national emergency related to weather, security, pandemic or other disruption."



Attempting to telework during an emergency situation might be challenging for those who telework rarely or not at all. This is because unlike those who have teleworked regularly, these individuals have not had the opportunity to identify and address remote access problems that could arise.¹⁶ Further, it would likely be more difficult for such individuals to reach Information Technology support staff to resolve their problems during these situations.

Overall, having staff who telework on a routine or even ad hoc basis is consistent with organizational preparedness to maintain operations during an emergency situation. However, "[a]ccording to the Office of Personnel Management, only 44 of 78 agencies have made telework part of their COOP planning."¹⁷ Fortunately this number is likely to increase as the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 requires that "[e]ach executive agency shall incorporate telework into the continuity of operations plan of that agency."¹⁸

¹⁵ See U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Washington, D.C., Area, Dismissal and Closure Procedures*, December 2010.

¹⁶ Michael Hardy, "Snowfuggedaboutit: Practical experience reveals telework isn't as easy as it sounds," *Federal Computer Week*, Feb. 16, 2010, accessed from: <http://fcw.com/articles/2010/02/16/telework-in-snowstorm-not-always-easy.aspx>. See quoted comments within the article from Jon Eisenberg, a manager at National Academies.

¹⁷ John Moore, "4 Ingredients of a Telework Success," *Federal Computer Week*, Nov. 3, 2010, accessed from: <http://fcw.com/articles/2010/11/08/feat-telework-toolkit.aspx>.

¹⁸ See 5 U.S.C. § 6504(d)(1).

Work Space Efficiency. Another way that telework can directly benefit organizations is through reducing their need for physical office space. This reduction could translate into lower expenses for organizations in real estate and related building costs (e.g., heating/cooling, electricity, water). Telework could allow for such outcomes through arrangements where employees telework on alternative days so that they can share existing office space. Or, organizations could offer hoteling arrangements. For example, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) was able to increase the number of employees at the Alexandria, VA, campus to meet mission accomplishment needs without acquiring additional office space by expanding its telework hoteling program. In this program, employees give up their offices to work from home at least 90 percent of the workweek and then utilize workspace in temporary offices when they need to be physically present at the worksite. USPTO reported that this arrangement has allowed them to avoid over \$19 million in real estate and related costs.¹⁹

Although avoiding costs on such a large scale appears attractive, hoteling or other similar nearly full-time telework arrangements may not be suitable for all organizations. Before making a decision to use such telework arrangements, organizations would need to examine a host of factors including mission, culture, job functions, work unit dynamics, security requirements, and supervisor and employee preparedness and willingness to have telework occur on a nearly full-time basis. As we discuss in more detail in subsequent sections, telework decisions need to be made as business decisions that weigh the pros and cons for organizations and employees. Therefore, organizations need to realistically determine whether the direct benefits that could accompany using telework to reduce office space and avoid related expenses would be worth any potential or real challenges that would accompany such a decision.

Summary of Direct Benefits of Telework for Organizations. The direct benefits of telework to organizations in the areas of COOP and the potential for reduced office space are important, but they do not necessarily make the business case for telework on their own. For one, the emergency situations upon which the direct benefit of telework as a COOP strategy is based may not occur with enough frequency to warrant increased attention to telework. For example, there are usually only a few days a year when employees would be required to work remotely because of inclement weather conditions. Secondly, in regard to the direct benefit of work space and related expense reduction, not all organizations are able to allow the full-time or nearly full-time telework that would be necessary to reap this benefit. Thus, while these two direct benefits to organizations are no doubt important and could potentially have a dramatic impact on organizational functioning in particular situations, they do not really address everyday benefits of telework for most organizations. However, as discussed in the next sections, more everyday benefits that could better make the business case for telework occur through the direct benefits for employees, and by virtue of these benefits, the indirect benefits for organizations.

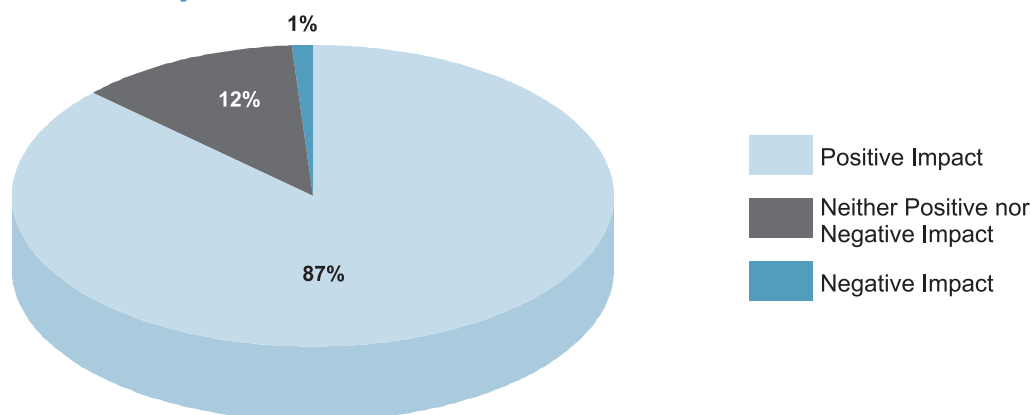
Direct Benefits of Telework for Employees

Work/Life Balance. Efficient and effective mission accomplishment by organizations requires a foundation of highly skilled and capable employees. Because organizational success is predicated on this robust human capital foundation, organizations should foster conditions that allow employees to be at their best while they are working. Telework can function as such a condition, as it is consistent with promoting employee work/life balance, a direct benefit to employees. Indeed, “telework allows employees to better manage their work and family obligations, thereby

¹⁹Information obtained during an interview on January 20, 2011 with representatives from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

retaining a more resilient, results-oriented Federal workforce better able to meet agency mission and goals.”²⁰ As is evident in Figure 2, our survey results indicate that the vast majority of employee routine teleworkers believe telework has had a positive or neutral impact on their ability to balance work and nonwork life.

Figure 2. Employee routine teleworkers’ reported impact of their teleworking on their ability to balance work and nonwork life



Further, 72 percent of employees who requested approval to telework on a routine basis—at least 2 days per pay period—indicated that the ability to better balance career and family obligations was important in their decision to request approval to telework on a routine basis.²¹ Additionally, 83 percent of supervisors who—in the last 2 years—had at least one employee who requested to telework on a routine basis (at least 2 days per pay period) indicated that their interest in supporting their employees’ ability to balance work and family was important in their decision to support or deny employees’ requests to telecommute on a routine basis.²² Clearly, employees and supervisors see telework as a tool for meeting the demands of employees’ personal and professional lives.

Telework can support work/life balance through reducing commutes. Consistent with supporting employees’ work/life balance, telework can reduce the travel time associated with the commute to work and its expense.²³ As shown in Figure 3, this is apparently important as our survey results indicate that the majority of employees who requested approval to telework on a routine basis indicated that the amount of time that it takes to commute and the distance (number of miles) of the commute were important in their decision to request approval. It is not unreasonable to consider the potentially adverse health and emotional effects that may accompany a long commute, such as recurrent neck and back pain, and worry.²⁴

²⁰U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, p. 21. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

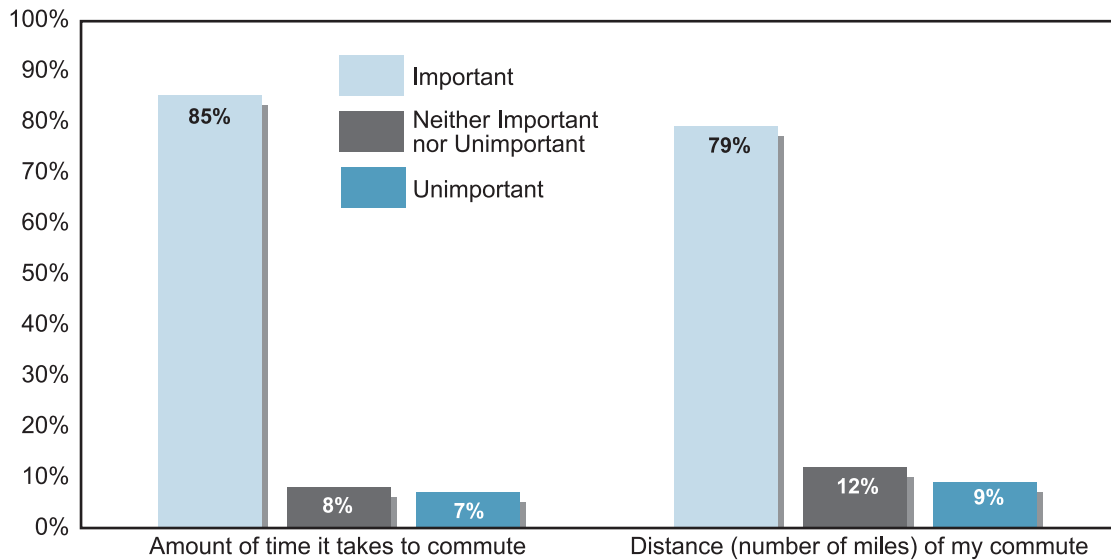
²¹See Appendix D for a list of employees’ perceptions of the importance of several factors in their decisions to request approval to telework on a routine basis.

²²See Appendix E for a list of supervisors’ perceptions of the importance of several factors in their decisions to support or deny employees’ requests to telecommute on a routine basis.

²³Aliah D. Wright, “Telework Experts Say Employers Can Manage Sight Unseen,” *Society for Human Resource Management*, Oct. 28, 2010, accessed from: <http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/technology/Articles/Pages/TeleworkUpdate.aspx>.

²⁴See Steve Crabtree, “Wellbeing Lower among Workers with Long Commutes,” *Gallup*, Aug. 13, 2010, accessed from: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/142142/Wellbeing-Lower-Among-Workers-Long-Commutes.aspx>.

Figure 3. Employees' reported importance of factors in their decision to request approval to telework on a routine basis



Telework can support employee work/life balance through giving employees more after-work personal time. Telework, through reducing commuting time, could also support employees' work/life balance through providing employees with more personal time after work on telework days to attend to everyday aspects of living. In the absence of a commute on telework days, employees would have more personal time after work to attend to basic daily needs such as grocery shopping, cooking, time with family or friends, hobbies, education, exercise, and sleep. While such conditions would naturally be desirable to employees, they could also be valuable to organizations to the extent that better work/life balance allows employees to focus more on work while they are working.

Telework can support employee work/life balance through allowing employees to work when they believe they are most capable. To the extent that organizations can merge telework with flexibility in scheduling employee work hours, telework could allow employees to work hours when they are most capable. Individuals perform the best when they feel at their best, and telework could assist employees in identifying the daily timeframe that would be most productive for them. Of course, any flexibility or change in work hours would need to be at the discretion of the supervisor and approved in advance to ensure adequate office coverage and to prevent adverse impact on work unit operations and performance. While such flexible work-hour scheduling in the office may already be offered in some organizations, the key difference here is combining this option with telework. It is important to recognize that many individuals cannot participate in the in-the-office flexible scheduling because of transportation, family, or other considerations that prohibit them from physically being in the office during alternative times that may be more productive for them. Telework could bridge this incompatibility and allow all employees to have equal access to flexible scheduling.²⁵

²⁵For more information on telework and flexibility in scheduling, see the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, p. 32. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

Similarly, merging telework with flexible scheduling could support employee work/life balance by enabling employees to work nonsequential hours during the day and to use approved breaks from work to attend to personal matters. For example, an employee could be permitted to work at home from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m., go off work time to attend a college class and do homework, and then resume work from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Consider also that an employee who normally works from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. could be permitted to take a 2-hour break and go off work time for a doctor appointment, but instead of taking leave, could then be permitted to make up the hours by resuming work until 6 p.m. Again, while some organizations already provide this flexibility, not all individuals may be able to participate when they are at the office because of the previously mentioned commuting challenges or other restraints.

Summary of Work/Life Balance Direct Benefits for Employees. Telework can bring direct benefits to employees in terms of work/life balance which can help employees better balance their professional and personal schedules. Although valuable, as with the direct benefits to organizations, telework's direct benefits to employees do not necessarily make the business case for telework on their own. This is because such benefits, although of everyday significance, are primarily focused on accommodating employees' needs and interests. They do not, by themselves, necessarily address organizational needs. However, as we discuss in the next section, we contend that direct benefits to employees in work/life balance can have significant indirect benefits for the Federal Government in a more everyday manner. It is in these indirect benefits that the real value of telework becomes apparent to organizations.

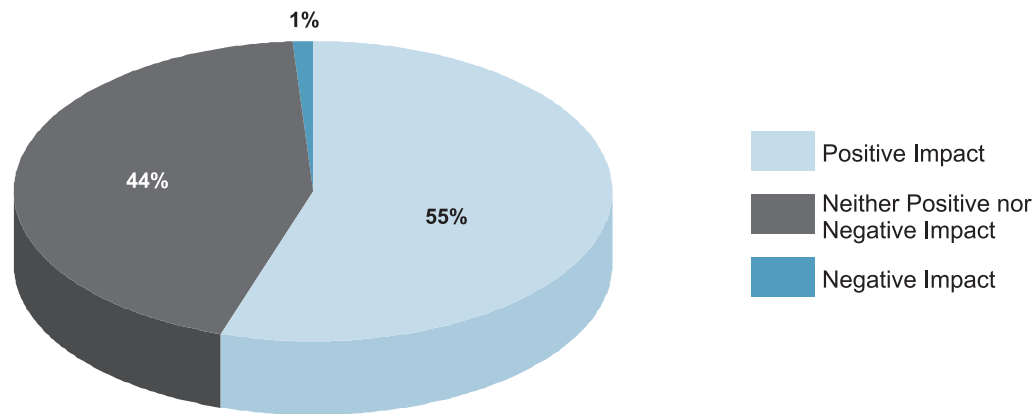
Indirect Benefits of Telework for Organizations

Employee Recruitment. Telework, by virtue of facilitating employee work/life balance, can have everyday indirect benefits for organizations through supporting their recruitment strategies. Efficient and effective mission accomplishment requires organizations to be able to successfully recruit and hire highly capable talent. To do this, organizations must be attentive to what prospective (and current) employees are looking for in an employer, and be able to offer such features to employees. Since many employees desire work/life balance, telework—through supporting this balance—could serve as such an attractive employer feature. Indeed, in light of competition both within the Federal Government for talent and between the Federal Government and the private sector, organizations that can offer and openly discuss telework opportunities can have a competitive advantage.²⁶

As can be seen in Figure 4, results of our survey indicate that the majority of supervisors stated that telework has had a positive impact on their organization's ability to recruit high quality employees.

²⁶Elizabeth Newell, "Recruitment Wars," *Government Executive Management Matters*, May 11, 2011, accessed from: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0511/051111mm.htm>.

Figure 4. Supervisors' reported impact of telework on their organization's ability to recruit high quality employees



Similarly, 59 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis indicated that the need to be an attractive employer that can recruit and retain high quality employees was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests. Thus, it appears that telework can support an organization's ability to recruit desired talent.

Telework can support the recruitment and accommodation of individuals with disabilities.

Telework can also serve as a valuable recruitment tool through enabling the Federal Government to benefit from the skills and capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Telework can also help address the needs of these workers.²⁷ Indeed, "telework may be used as a reasonable accommodation for an individual with a disability who may require, or prefer, to work at home. While not all persons with disabilities need, or want, to work from home, telework provides a viable option for individuals with disabilities that affect mobility or pose related challenges."²⁸ While a full discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this report, it is clear that by eliminating or significantly reducing the requirement to be physically at the worksite, telework can enable the Government to better benefit from the capabilities that individuals with disabilities have to offer.

Telework can allow for an expanded recruitment pool. Appealing to employee work/life balance needs may also allow the Federal Government to expand its recruitment pipeline to hire individuals with desirable talent from areas located beyond the feasible commuting area.²⁹ This would include those with desirable talent who cannot relocate or who have commitments or circumstances that would make it challenging or infeasible for them to work at the office location. Widening the recruitment area would be likely to translate into better applicant pools for positions, in terms of both the number of applicants and the range of applicant qualifications. Such a practice is consistent with the first merit system principle.³⁰ It also supports the

²⁷ See U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, "Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities," pp. 36-37. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

²⁸ U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, p. 35. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

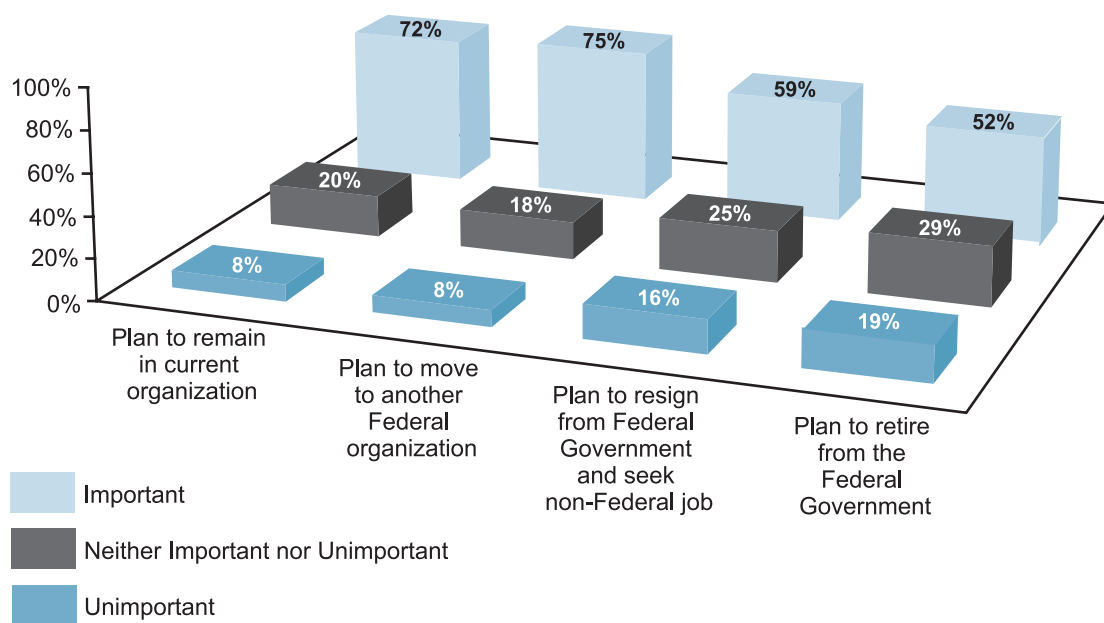
²⁹ During an interview on February 3, 2011, representatives from Noblis, a nonprofit science- technology- and strategy-based organization, indicated that a "primary impetus" for their telework program was the ability to "capture talent" outside of the normal commuting area.

³⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 2301 (b)(1). "Recruitment should be from qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a work force from all segments of society, and selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge and skills, after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity."

Government's ability to foster innovation in the workforce. This benefit could be especially helpful for filling mission-critical jobs, and for allowing the Government to benefit from individuals with unique skill sets. Further, broadening the recruitment and hiring area could also help the Government to be more representative of the diverse nation which it serves.

Employee Retention. Telework, through supporting employee work/life balance, can also have everyday indirect benefits for organizations through functioning as a valuable strategy for retaining highly capable employees. Just as efficient and effective mission accomplishment requires an organization to be able to attract highly capable individuals, it also requires an organization to retain them. This is especially true when the organization has invested in employee training and development, as well as when employees have specialized experience and mission-critical skill sets. Further, competition for talent doesn't end once an employee comes onboard; current employees are also attentive to what other employers offer compared to their current employer. Therefore, as with prospective employees, current employees are likely to be interested in work/life balance and attracted to employers who can offer work arrangements such as telework that support this balance. Indeed, as illustrated in Figure 5, of those employees who planned to remain in their current organization/agency, move to another Federal organization/agency, resign from the Federal Government and seek a non-Federal job, or retire in the next 2 years, the majority indicated that the opportunity to telework was important in their decision to remain in or leave (move, resign, or retire) their current organization/agency.

Figure 5. Employees' reported importance of the opportunity to telework in their decision to remain in or leave (move, resign, or retire) their current organization

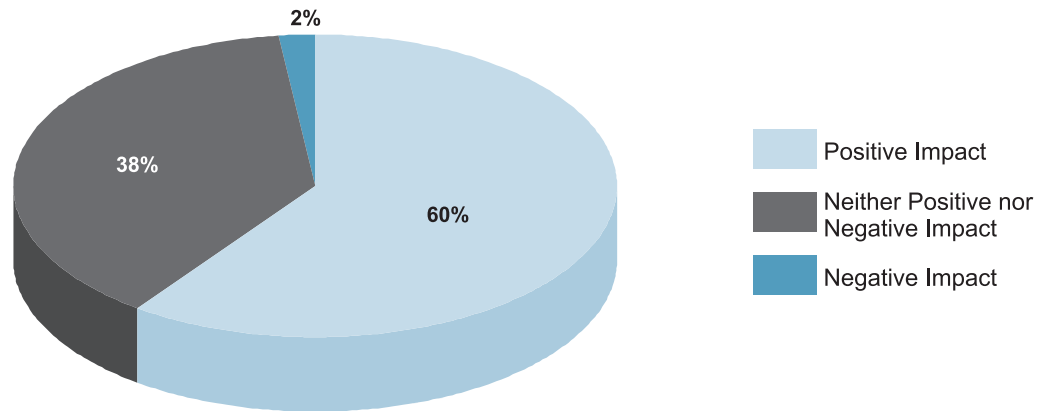


*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Further, 86 percent of employee routine teleworkers indicated that their experience as teleworkers has had a positive impact on their satisfaction with their job and organization. Additionally, 81 percent of employee routine teleworkers indicated that their experience as teleworkers has had a positive impact on their desire to stay in their organization.

It appears that employees are not the only ones who see value in telework as a retention strategy. As illustrated in Figure 6, our survey data show that a large majority of supervisors indicated a positive impact of telework on their organization's ability to retain high-performing employees.

Figure 6. Supervisors' reported impact of telework on their organizations' ability to retain high-performing employees



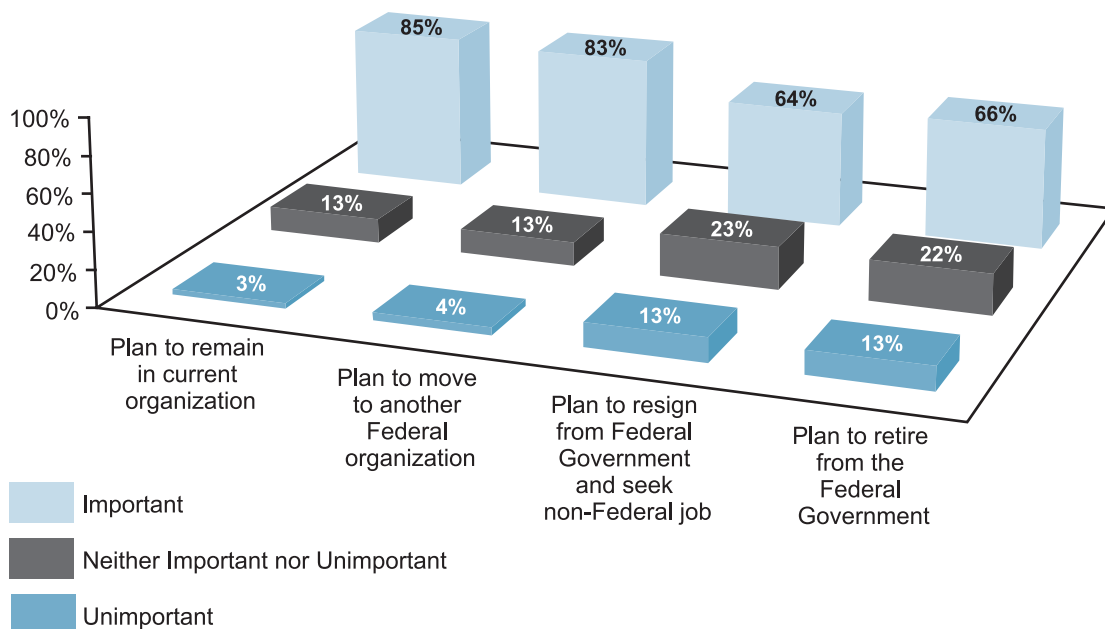
Additionally, 62 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis indicated that the need to retain an individual high-performing employee was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests.

Telework as a retention strategy can have both practical and financial implications for organizations. Most basically, if telework allows organizations to retain employees by virtue of supporting their work/life balance, the organization holds on to desirable employee skills and characteristics that may be hard to replace and that have financial value in terms of fostering outcomes and results for the organization. This could be especially important in situations that require organizations to operate within tight budget constraints and that result in organizations having limited resources for hiring new highly capable employees. The retention benefit could also be critical in terms of helping both employees and the organization adjust to an employee's intended retirement. Specifically, telework—through work/life balance—could encourage individuals who are retirement-eligible to delay their retirement, or ease into their retirement, thereby giving their organizations time to hire or train successive employees and to ensure a transfer of knowledge and skills. Additionally, the ability of organizations to retain highly capable employees allows them to avoid the costs associated with having to advertise a vacant position, review applications, administer assessments, conduct reference checks, and allow for on-the-job training and adjustment time for a new employee to become fully functional.

Telework as a retention strategy can address commuting constraints or challenges. Telework, through supporting employee work/life balance, can also be a viable means of retaining employees who need to or desire to relocate from the feasible commuting area, or who have commitments or circumstances that would create challenges for them to continue to commute to their office. For example, a spouse could get transferred to a distant geographic location or employees themselves could become ill or disabled. Telework, through removing or reducing

the requirement to commute to the office, could make it more feasible for these individuals to address their circumstances while staying with their current employer. Further, reducing or eliminating commuting obligations could impact employees' desire to stay at their jobs. Indeed, as shown in Figure 7, data from our study suggest that of those employees who planned to remain in their current organization/agency, move to another Federal organization/agency, resign from the Federal Government and seek a non-Federal job, or retire in the next two years, the majority indicated that the commuting distance, time, or cost was important in their decision to remain in or leave (move, resign or retire) their current organization/agency.

Figure 7. Employees' reported importance of commuting distance, time, or cost in their decision to remain in or leave (move, resign, or retire) their current organization



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Circumstances could also change for the organization that could create challenges for employees to continue commuting to the office. For example, the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) has successfully leveraged telework among other “inducements” to increase the percentage of employees—from 29 percent to nearly 60 percent—willing to transfer to a new agency location more than 30 miles away from their current work site. Specifically, approved employees can telework 3 days per week and can also work 9-hour days, indicating that they only have to travel to the new agency location on 3 out of every 10 work days (i.e., three times a pay period).³¹

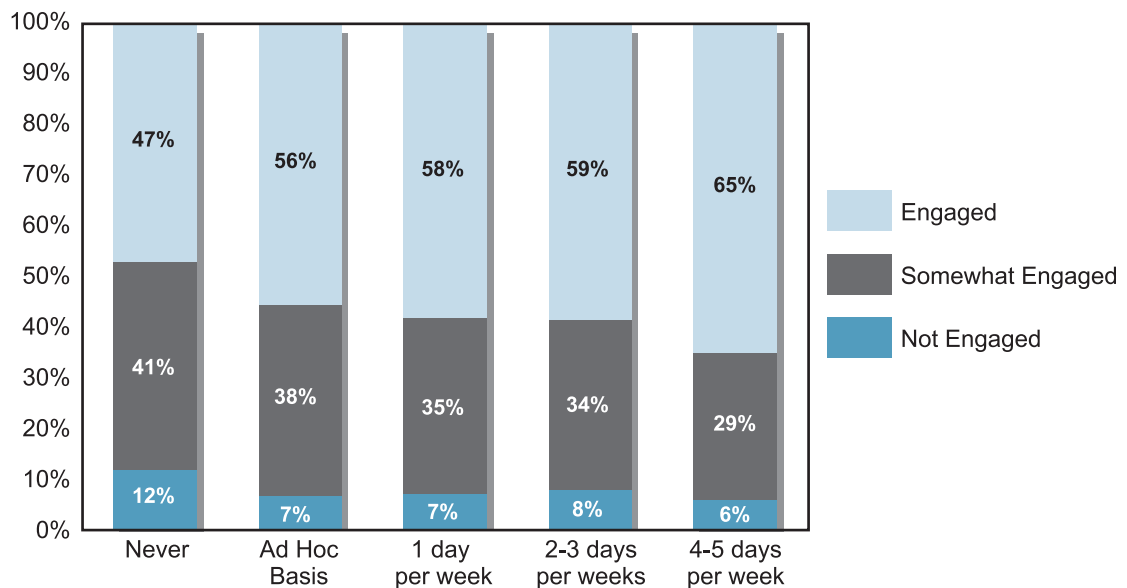
Overall an organization's ability to offer telework as a flexible work arrangement can reasonably be expected to translate into a higher likelihood that the organization will be able to recruit and retain talented individuals and that they will be able to tap into sources of talent for whom regular office presence may not be feasible.

³¹Bob Brewin, “DISA says more employees willing to make move to new HQ,” *Nextgov*, Aug. 31, 2010, accessed from: http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng_20100831_4008.php. In this article, the author summarizes perspectives from Dave Bullock, DISA BRAC executive, on DISA's headquarters relocation.

Employee Engagement. Another way in which telework can provide everyday indirect benefits to organizations through employee work/life balance is in the area of employee engagement. Employee engagement is considered to be a heightened connection between employees and their work, their organization, or the people they work for or with, that is associated with better results for the organization.³² This bond is posited to exist in a manner beyond job satisfaction and to include employees finding personal meaning—and taking pride—in their work, as well as perceptions that they are valued by the organization.³³ Previous MSPB research suggested associations between an agency’s average level of employee engagement and several desirable organizational outcomes. Specifically, this research indicated that in Federal agencies where more employees were engaged there were higher programmatic results, employees used less sick leave, there were fewer EEO complainants, and there was a lower lost time case rate where employees missed work because of work related injury or illness.³⁴

Results from our survey indicate that the practice of telework is associated with greater employee engagement.³⁵ Some 65 percent of employees who agreed that their supervisor encourages and supports telework are engaged compared with 31 percent of employees who disagreed their supervisor encourages and supports telework. Further, as can be seen in Figure 8, our results suggest that there is an association between employees’ engagement and their reported telework frequency, with higher percentages of engaged employees as telework frequency increases.

Figure 8. Comparison of employees’ reported telework frequency with their levels of engagement



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

³²U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008, p. 2.

³³Ibid., p. 2.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 27-35.

³⁵See Appendix B for a discussion on how we determined employee engagement levels.

Although these results are interesting, it is important to note that they do not explain the nature of the association between telework and engagement. Just as telework could be driving employee engagement, it could also be the case that employees who are already engaged to begin with are given more discretion to telework. Further, other factors incidental to telework could contribute to or be responsible for the association. For example, supervisors who support telework could also support other workplace flexibilities which could be individually or jointly driving engagement, or these supervisors could be enacting good supervisory practices which are conducive to engagement. While more research is clearly needed to understand the apparent association between telework and engagement, these results are nonetheless encouraging.

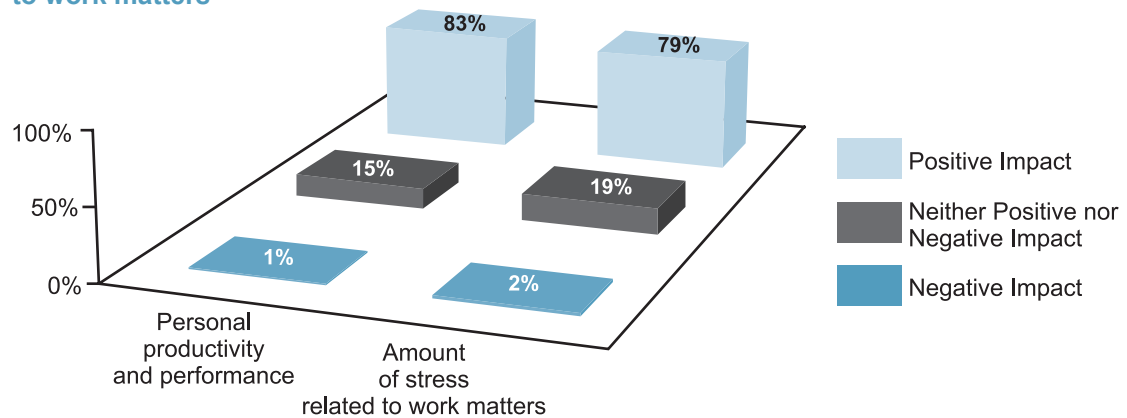
Summary of Indirect Benefits of Telework for Organizations. Through its support of employee work/life balance, telework can bring everyday benefits to organizations that can have a significant impact on organizational functioning. Indeed, telework's indirect benefits in the areas of employee recruitment, retention, and engagement have positive implications for organizational mission accomplishment. It is these indirect benefits that make the business case for telework because they address regular and recurring organizational interests and needs. Additionally, as will be discussed below, these indirect benefits (as well as the direct organizational and employee benefits) can occur with the important result of generally maintained levels of productivity and performance.

Telework and Productivity and Performance

Organizations bring people together to accomplish a mission, provide a service, generate products, or achieve a combination of such purposes. Organizational performance requires effective policies, practices, and procedures. It also requires employees who successfully meet performance expectations. Thus, regardless of potential benefits, we would not expect organizations to be willing to adopt an initiative that posed a reasonable risk of negative impact on employee performance or organizational performance. Telework does not appear to pose such a risk, if implemented and managed appropriately.

Teleworker Productivity and Performance. Our survey results suggest that telework can be conducive for maintaining employee productivity and performance. Specifically, 86 percent of employees who requested approval to telework on a routine basis indicated their view that they could be more productive at home was important in their decision to request approval. Similarly, 83 percent of employees who requested approval to telework on a routine basis indicated that having fewer interruptions at home was important in their decision. This suggests that employees view telework as more than just a work place flexibility; they see it as a means to work effectively for the organization. Further, as can be seen in Figure 9, the vast majority of employee routine teleworkers indicated that their experience as a teleworker has had a positive or neutral impact on their personal productivity and performance, and their amount of stress related to work matters.

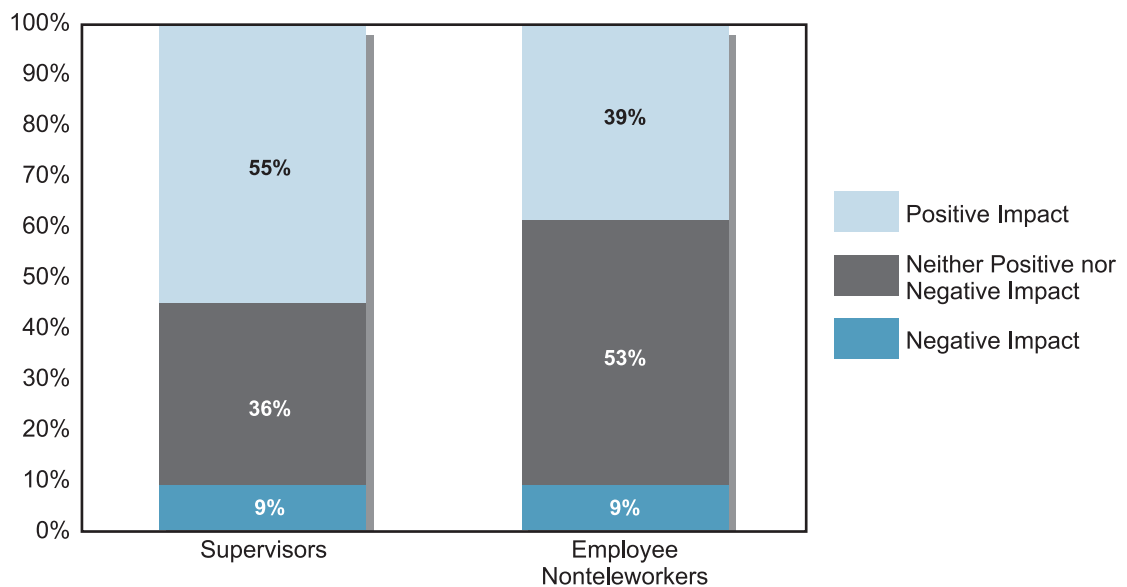
Figure 9. Employee routine teleworkers' reported impact of their teleworking on their personal productivity and performance, and amount of stress related to work matters



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

While we can expect that employees who telework routinely would report that telework makes them more or equally productive, as seen in Figure 10, we found that supervisors and employee nonteleworkers *also* see a mostly neutral or positive impact of telework on the organization's productivity and performance.

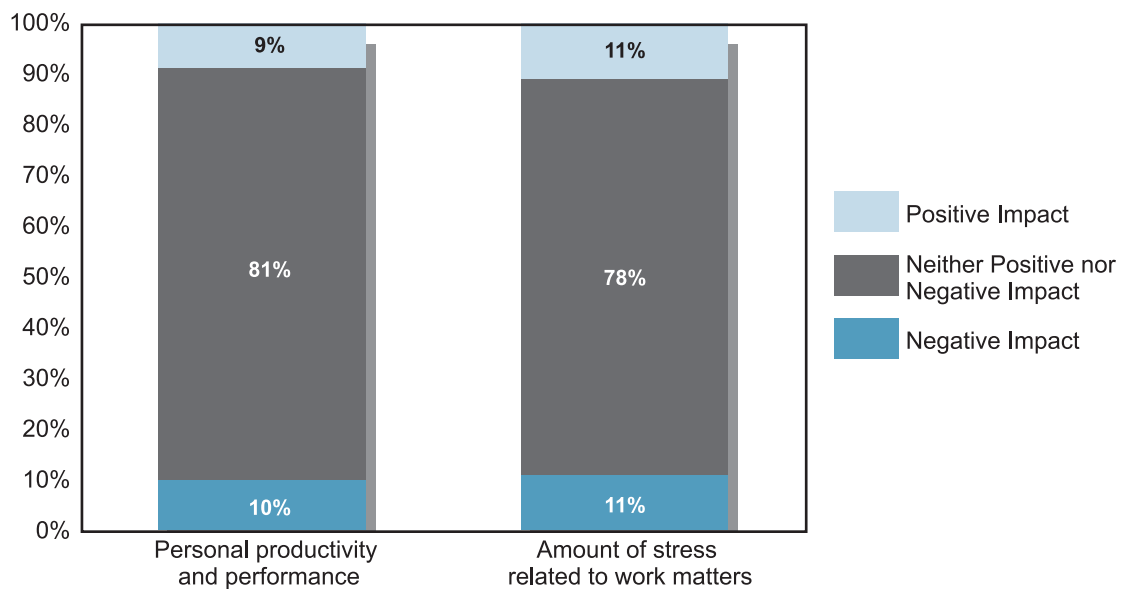
Figure 10. Supervisors' and employee nonteleworkers' reported impact of telework on organizational productivity and performance



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Nonteleworker Productivity and Performance. For the most part, our survey results indicate that the majority of employee nonteleworkers believe that telework has had a neutral or positive impact on their work-related outcomes. As can be seen in Figure 11, the vast majority of employee nonteleworkers stated that the teleworking of others in their organization has had a neutral impact on their personal productivity and performance and their amount of stress related to work matters.

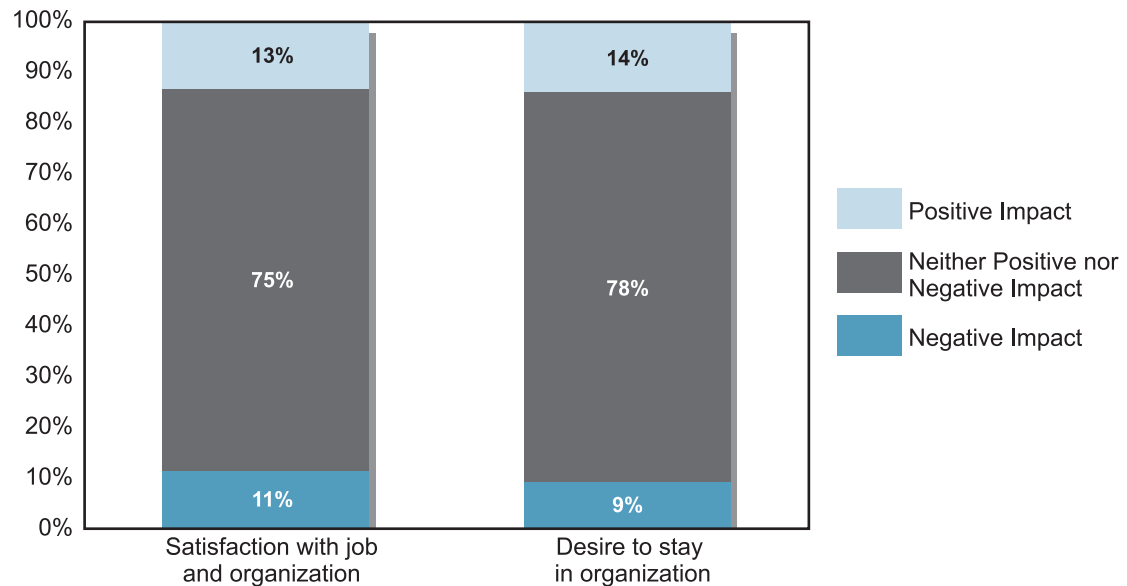
Figure 11. Employee nonteleworkers' reported impact of the teleworking of others on their personal productivity and performance, and amount of stress related to work matters



Further, our survey results show that 82 percent of employee nonteleworkers stated that the teleworking of others has had a neutral impact on requests or expectations for them to cover for people who telework, and 7 percent stated a positive impact on this same outcome. Employee routine teleworkers also had similar perceptions, with 80 percent stating that their experience as a teleworker has had a neutral impact on their need to have people cover for them, and 17 percent reporting a positive impact on this same outcome.

Additionally, as can be seen in Figure 12, the vast majority of employee nonteleworkers stated a neutral or positive impact of the teleworking of others in their organization on their satisfaction with their job and organization, and on their desire to stay in their organization.

Figure 12. Employee nonteleworkers' reported impact of the teleworking of others on their satisfaction with their job and organization, and their desire to stay in their organization



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

This further suggests that telework is being effectively managed in these organizations and that supervisors are making good decisions about how to implement telework.

Overall then, our data indicate that—when managed appropriately—telework can result in maintained productivity and performance. The vast majority of supervisors and employee nonteleworkers believe that telework has had a neutral or positive impact on organizational productivity; the vast majority of employee routine teleworkers believe that their teleworking has had a neutral or positive impact on their personal productivity and performance and amount of stress related to work matters; and the vast majority of employee nonteleworkers believe that the teleworking of others has had a neutral impact on their personal productivity and performance and related work outcomes. However, these results also highlight some perceptions of negative impact which draw attention to the importance of the appropriate use of telework and effective management of the workforce using telework. While these findings are noteworthy, it is important to keep in mind that we don't have objective productivity data at either the employee or organizational levels to verify these perceptions. Therefore, while the perceptual data tells mostly a positive story and is encouraging for telework, organizations may want to validate it in their own situations using more objective and comprehensive evaluation methods. This is especially important given that organizational mission accomplishment depends on employee—and ultimately organizational—performance.

Summary of the Business Case for Telework

The above sections discussed survey data indicating that the telework flexibility can provide direct benefits to organizations and employees in important areas. Telework can directly benefit organizations through supporting continuity of operations plans and organizational preparedness for emergency situations. Additionally, telework can directly benefit organizations through potentially reducing their need for physical office space and its accompanying real estate and related expenses. These benefits can have a significant impact on organizational functioning in particular situations. Telework can directly benefit employees by supporting their work/life balance through reducing commutes, allowing employees more personal time in the absence of a commute, and possibly granting employees flexibility to work when they are most capable. These benefits can collectively help employees better balance their professional and personal schedules.

Although these direct benefits to organizations and employees are unquestionably valuable, they do not necessarily make the business case for telework by themselves. However, we believe that the real value of telework for organizations comes indirectly through telework's direct impact on employee work/life balance. Specifically, by virtue of supporting employee work/life balance, telework can indirectly result in significant benefits for organizations in the areas of recruitment, retention, and employee engagement. And of critical importance, it appears that these benefits and the direct benefits of telework can occur with generally maintained productivity and performance.

However, as noted above, our data did indicate some negative perceptions about the impact of telework on productivity and performance. Further, some supervisors do have concerns about telework. As we discuss in the next few chapters, such issues highlight how important it is to make wise decisions about the approach to telework that is appropriate for the organization or work unit, and then to effectively manage employees within that approach. Such attention will be necessary to help organizations experience the discussed benefits, mitigate concerns about telework, and prevent such concerns from becoming realities that would be at odds with telework benefits.

Finally, it is important to note that while the benefits discussed above are likely to be of interest to most organizations, they are just a sample of the ways that telework can provide value to organizations. Organizations are encouraged to determine their applicability as well as to identify any other benefits pertinent to their situation when making decisions about telework.

CONCERNS ABOUT TELEWORK



Although the results of our survey data suggest that the practice of telework can produce benefits for organizations and employees alike, these outcomes are dependent on the effective implementation and management of the telework program. Therefore, supervisors play a critical role in ensuring the success of a telework program and they need to feel comfortable in that role.

However, some supervisors have concerns about how telework will affect mission accomplishment and specifically, the functioning of their work units. Further, some believe that support for telework has been given too freely without providing adequate attention to addressing telework concerns. We draw attention to their concerns, organized into three areas:

- Work unit performance;
- Work unit dynamics; and
- Teleworker responsiveness and availability.

While our discussion of these areas will provide awareness of some of the practical challenges that can accompany telework, it is important to note that the specific telework concerns for each supervisor and organization are likely to vary based on their unique situations. Therefore, organizations are encouraged to evaluate and determine the applicability of these concerns for their own environments, as well as to identify any additional concerns that may exist. The end goal should be determining possible strategies for dealing with concerns about telework and how to appropriately factor such challenges and strategies into decisions about telework. Ultimately, organizations must weigh the benefits of telework against any concerns they have and make decisions about what trade-offs, if any, are appropriate, to ensure that telework is used as an effective business tool that supports mission accomplishment.

Telework and Work Unit Performance

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their work unit accomplishes its goals, and some have concerns that telework will interfere with both teleworkers' and nonteleworkers' ability to work effectively. These concerns may reflect skepticism regarding whether teleworkers will be responsible and disciplined enough to maintain their productivity while they are teleworking. They may also reflect uncertainty about whether teleworkers will be able to telework without burdening nonteleworkers.

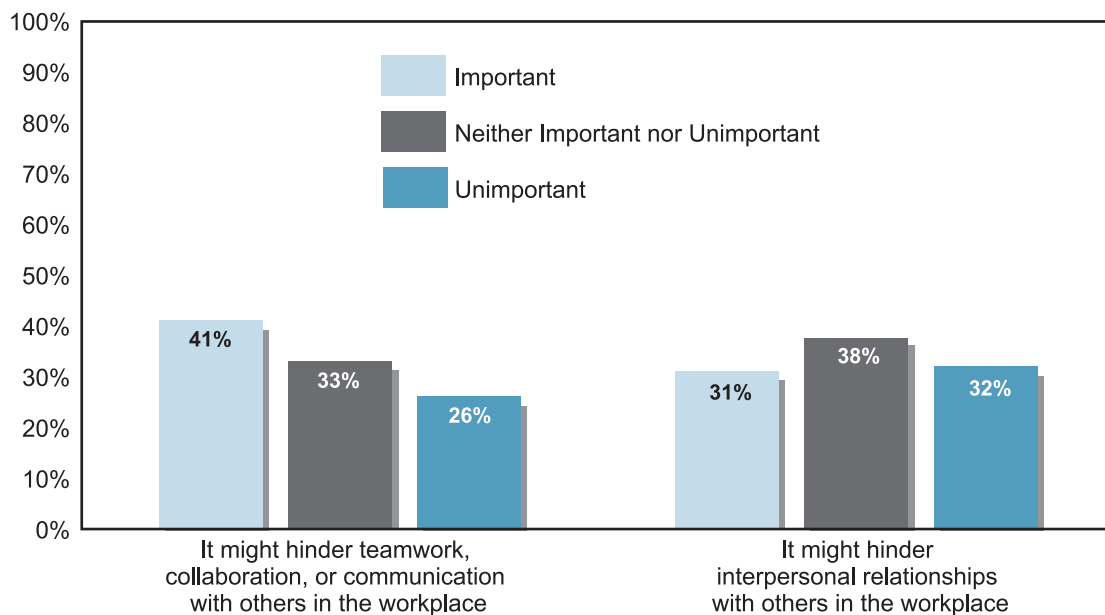
Although these are potentially valid concerns, as previously discussed, our survey results suggest that employees can be as productive when they telework as when they are working in the traditional office environment, and that when telework occurs, the productivity of others can

generally be maintained. However, we emphasize that maintained productivity is likely to be contingent on an appropriate approach to telework and on the effective employee management within that approach.

Telework and Work Unit Dynamics

Since telework by definition removes employees from being physically present in the office, some supervisors have concerns that important work unit dynamics such as communication, teamwork, and work relationships may suffer when some employees telework. Indeed, 59 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis indicated that the need to support and facilitate interpersonal relationships and collaboration among employees was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests. Additionally, as illustrated in Figure 13, a sizeable minority of employees who did not request approval to telework on a routine basis—at least 2 days per pay period—indicated their views that telework might hinder teamwork, collaboration, or communication with others in the workplace, or that telework might hinder interpersonal relationships with others in the workplace, were important in their decision to not request approval to telework on a routine basis.³⁶

Figure 13. Employees' reported importance of factors in their decision to NOT request approval to telework on a routine basis



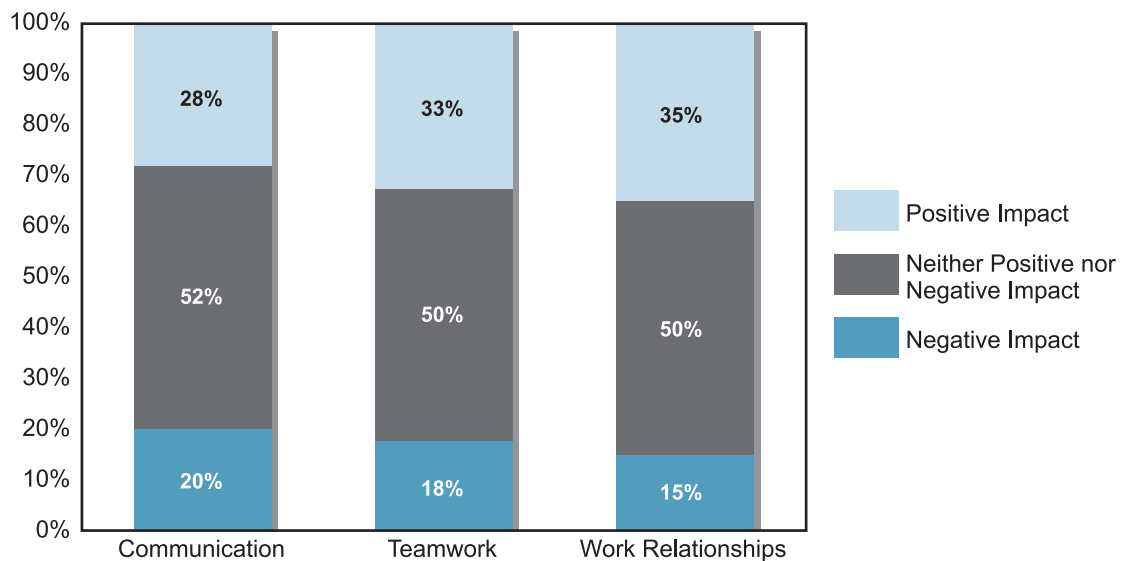
*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

³⁶ See Appendix F for employees' perceptions of the importance of several factors in their decisions to not request approval to telework on a routine basis.

Clearly, the potential impact of telework on work unit interactions is an area of concern for some supervisors and employees. Such concerns may occur because supervisors or employees do not believe that their work unit has access to appropriate technology to effectively maintain appropriate communications or interactions in a virtual manner. They may also reflect concerns that teleworkers and nonteleworkers will not be able to mutually and effectively rely on technology for these dynamics. These concerns may also occur because supervisors or employees are not confident that teleworkers will be able to recognize collaborations or teamwork situations that would be best accomplished with face-to-face communications and interactions, or be willing to act accordingly. These potential concerns are understandable because supervisors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their work units function effectively to accomplish performance goals. Similarly, employees want to ensure that they can appropriately work with one another to achieve objectives. Thus, supervisors and employees understandably want to ensure that necessary work unit dynamics can continue when teleworkers are working out of the office.

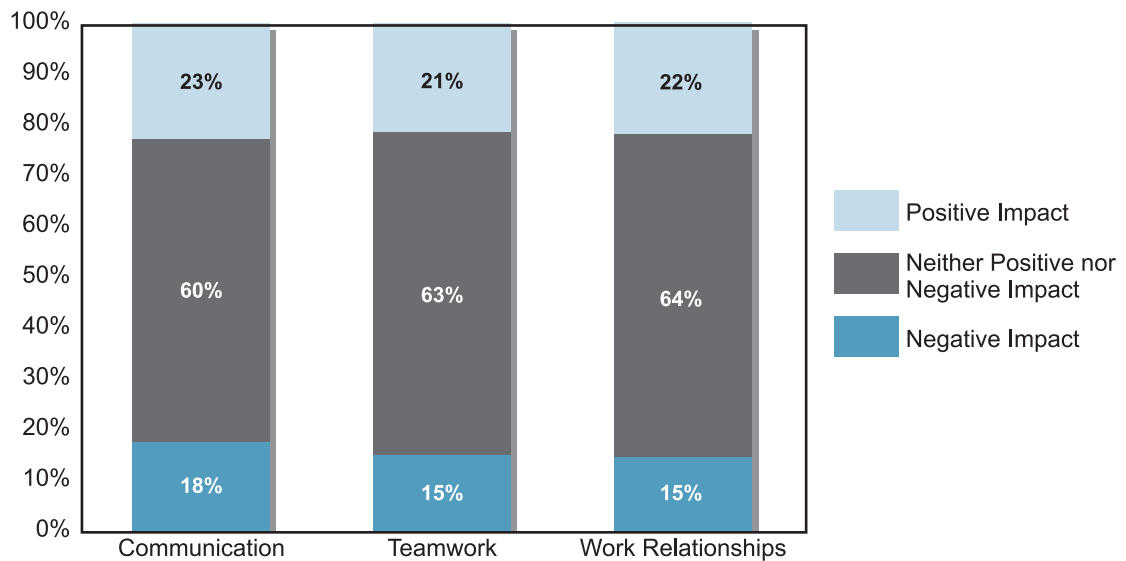
However, as illustrated in Figures 14 and 15, the majority of supervisors and employee nonteleworkers indicated that telework has had a neutral or positive impact on their organization's ability to ensure effective communication and support effective teamwork and work relationships.

Figure 14. Supervisors' reported impact of telework on their organization's ability to ensure effective communication and support effective teamwork and work relationships



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Figure 15. Employee nonteleworkers' reported impact of telework on their organization's ability to ensure effective communication and support effective teamwork and work relationships



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Similarly, 81 percent of employee nonteleworkers stated that the teleworking of others has had a neutral impact on their relationship with their colleagues and 9 percent stated a positive impact. Further, as shown in Table 1, employee routine teleworkers and employee nonteleworkers generally had similar perceptions about work unit factors related to communication, teamwork, and work relationship interactions.

Table 1. Employee routine teleworkers' and employee nonteleworkers' reported agreement with statements about work unit factors

Survey Items	Employee Routine Teleworkers' Agreement	Employee Nonteleworkers' Agreement
Overall, I have positive relationships with my colleagues.	95%	92%
I routinely pitch in to help my colleagues when needed.	91%	89%
I am treated with respect at work.	86%	80%
It is easy to share information and coordinate work on projects in my organization.	78%	69%
My colleagues routinely pitch in to help me when needed.	76%	70%
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit.	76%	69%
My opinions count at work.	75%	68%
Regular interactions with my colleagues are important to my job.	73%	78%
Regular interactions with my colleagues are important to me personally.	72%	73%

Although the results in Table 1 indicate generally similar agreement between employee routine teleworkers and employee nonteleworkers, it is evident that employee nonteleworkers indicated less agreement on all but the last two statements. Additionally, while a majority of supervisor- and employee nonteleworker-survey respondents indicated that telework has had a neutral or positive impact on communication, teamwork, and work relationships, this perception was not unanimous. Figures 14 and 15 discussed earlier indicate that some supervisors and employee nonteleworkers believe that telework has had undesirable effects on these same processes. Such results reinforce the criticality of making wise decisions about an appropriate approach to telework for a given situation, and effectively managing employees within that approach. Indeed, the ability of telework to bring benefits is contingent upon such factors. Further, to the extent that telework is managed properly, any concerns about negative impact of telework on work unit processes and interactions can most likely be mitigated and do not have to translate into actual negative effects.

Overall, our results suggest that most supervisors have made wise decisions on the appropriate use of telework in these environments and management of the workforce using telework. Similarly, they suggest that appropriate technology for telework is available in these environments and that employees have developed an effective synergy for using such technology to maintain necessary dynamics.³⁷ Further, they reflect that employees have exercised good judgment in aligning their requests to telework with work unit needs, thereby helping to ensure that their telework practice and what they work on during telework days are conducive for maintaining necessary communications, teamwork, and work relationships. Taken together, these results indicate that when used wisely, telework can be consistent with communication, teamwork, and work relationship processes that are important for work unit goal accomplishment.

Telework and Teleworker Responsiveness and Availability

The third area of concern is that telework—through physically removing employees from the office—will adversely affect teleworker responsiveness and availability. In terms of responsiveness, some supervisors have concerns that teleworkers will not respond to emails or telephone messages from customers, coworkers, or supervisors on their telework days. It is critical that telework does not interfere with providing customers with the services that are the responsibility of the Federal Government. Not only would any interference be detrimental to work unit performance, but also, it would be likely to result in negative perceptions about the organization by customers, which in the long run can also be detrimental to mission accomplishment. Similarly, it is essential that telework does not interfere with important work unit dynamics between coworkers, as any interference would likely have negative effects on the work unit's ability to achieve objectives. Further, it is essential that telework does not interfere with employees' responsiveness to supervisors. Such interference would also likely negatively impact work unit performance, particularly if a supervisor is trying to obtain assistance from the teleworker on a quick turnaround project, or apprise the teleworker of new work assignments. It is critical for teleworkers to participate in all communications, interactions, meetings, and activities that are necessary to accomplish work. In addition, it is critical that all teleworkers respond in a timely manner so that work flow is not interrupted and no unnecessary delays occur.

³⁷There is a range of available technology that can be used to help maintain communication, teamwork, and work relationships while using telework, and to support teleworkers' responsiveness and availability, thereby helping to mitigate any concerns about these critical work unit dynamics. This technology includes: call-forwarding and conference calling features; instant messaging; collaborative applications for sharing and editing documents; cameras that enable virtual face-to-face communication; webinars for online meetings; and video-conferencing for group-level virtual face-to-face communication.

In terms of availability, some supervisors have concerns that teleworkers will be unavailable for—or resistant to—assisting with office coverage needs. Specifically, some have concerns that telework will pose challenges for scheduling meetings or discussions that would either require physical attendance or would require teleworkers to participate remotely. Indeed, 73 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis indicated that the need to ensure office coverage and/or have adequate staff available for high priority, quick turn-around projects was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests. The good news is that our survey results indicate that 94 percent of employee routine teleworkers stated they are willing to adjust their telework schedule to work at the office if necessary (for example, to ensure office coverage or work on a critical assignment). However, some supervisors still express concern that telework is (or will be) viewed by some employees as an entitlement rather than as a tool that helps both employees and—more importantly—the organization to meet its goals. To ease these concerns and build more support for telework in the supervisory ranks, organizations need to ensure that controls are in place to support supervisory decisions about when employees need to be in the office. Supervisors are in the best position to determine the minimum number of employees necessary to be in the office on each work day, and employees hoping to telework must understand that their telework preferences should not and cannot be of paramount concern when supervisors are making decisions regarding appropriate office coverage.

While our data do not directly address concerns about teleworker responsiveness or about availability for office coverage, these concerns underscore the importance of making wise telework decisions and effectively managing teleworkers and nonteleworkers within the work unit. These concerns also highlight the importance of evaluating the extent to which appropriate technology is in place to enable teleworkers to fully participate in the communications necessary to accomplish work unit goals, as well as any impromptu work matters, meetings, and assignments that may arise. Further, they also draw attention to the importance of supervisors' awareness of how much actual physical presence is needed in the office on a daily basis, for work matters or office coverage. Just as telework could reaffirm the need for a certain level of physical presence in the office, telework could reveal that there is *less* of a need for physical presence than was previously believed.

Summary of Concerns About Telework

Supervisors play a critical role in ensuring the success of a telework program and they need to feel comfortable in that role. However, some supervisors have concerns about how telework will affect mission accomplishment, and specifically, the functioning of their work units. Further, some believe that support for telework has been given too freely without providing adequate attention to addressing telework concerns. This chapter drew attention to their concerns, organized into three areas:

- Work unit performance;
- Work unit dynamics; and
- Teleworker responsiveness and availability.

These concerns are important to address because work unit performance requires telework decisions to be made that support not just individual employee performance, but also work unit performance and the communication, teamwork, and work relationship dynamics that are necessary for such success. Similarly, good telework decisions need to be made to ensure employee responsiveness to and availability for work unit needs such as contact, participation in meetings, contribution to unexpected assignments, and help with office coverage.

Our survey data generally suggest that most supervisors, employee nonteleworkers, and employee routine teleworkers believe that work outcomes relevant to telework concerns can be maintained in a telework environment. Yet, our data reveal some potential room for improvement. Specifically, our data also indicate that some supervisors and employee nonteleworkers believe that telework has had a negative impact on some of these work outcomes. The occurrence of such perceptions and of telework concerns in general underscores the criticality of ensuring that wise decisions are made about an appropriate approach to telework for a given situation and that the workforce is managed effectively within that approach. Indeed, any concerns about telework and resultant actual negative impact stemming from telework will be more pronounced in environments where telework decisions are not made in the best interest of work unit and organizational goal accomplishment. Similarly, good decisions about the use of telework can help mitigate concerns and prevent them from becoming realities.

Additionally, it is important to note that much of the literature on telework, fairly or unfairly, cites supervisors as a key barrier to implementing telework. Often they are depicted as needing to be able to physically observe employees at their desks and to monitor their behaviors. Yet, it is important to consider that supervisors who are resistant to telework may have developed their resistance from negative personal experiences with telework, such as those cited in this chapter. Unfortunately, regardless of the incidence of such experiences, once they happen, they are hard to erase from memory. Thus, given that supervisors are critical in the implementation of telework, it is incumbent upon organizations to create an environment in which supervisors are supported and well as prepared to manage telework and are provided with strategies to help them overcome any concerns and resistance they may harbor. Several strategies are discussed in the next chapter.

However, we caution that some telework concerns—and some of the perceived and actual negative impacts of telework—may stem from issues or problems for which there are no readily apparent solutions. Thus, in making decisions about telework as a business tool, organizations should be prepared to identify areas where they are willing to make some trade-offs in order to reap the benefits that telework can offer. For example, in order to more effectively recruit talented individuals, an organization may need to allow its employees to telework more frequently. While permitting this increase in telework frequency could enable the organization to improve its applicant pool, it could also result in fewer individuals being physically present each day for office coverage. While the threshold for such trade-offs and the incidence and range of actual negative effects due to telework are likely to vary across and within organizations, a common goal should be ensuring a net positive gain for the organization.

POTENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A TELEWORK PROGRAM



Realizing the benefits of telework and mitigating any concerns will be contingent upon the appropriate use of telework and effective management of the total workforce where telework is used. Thus, decisions about how to use telework must be based on a holistic analysis of the pros and the cons of telework for an organization, with the goal of striking the right balance.³⁸ There may be trade-offs, but ultimately, telework decisions need to be made in the best interest of supporting organizational mission accomplishment.

The following sections offer several considerations for organizations to take into account as they weigh telework benefits and concerns and make decisions about appropriate approaches to telework for their situations. These considerations may also help organizations identify strategies to prevent or mitigate telework concerns. However, we emphasize that the information in these sections is not intended to be exhaustive of the elements necessary or required for establishing a successful telework program. Organizations need to review telework legal requirements and applicable guidance³⁹ as well as work with their Telework Managing Officer and other relevant leaders and stakeholders to determine how to use the information in this report and determine the approach to telework that is most appropriate for their situations.

Culture and Leadership Preparedness for Telework

Implementing telework will require at least some degree of culture change in many organizations. Although the Federal Government is often characterized as being one overarching employer, it comprises many distinct organizations, each with their own unique missions, leaders, and workforces, and therefore, their own social and cultural characteristics. Further, even within each organization, there will be at least some variability from the department level down to the work unit level in terms of work norms, customs, values, and perspectives on appropriate work processes. These differences within and especially among organizations have implications for how a new initiative such as telework will be viewed and implemented. The exact nature of these effects in each organization is beyond the scope of this report. However, the underlying message is clear: an organization's culture plays a critical role in the success of any initiative.⁴⁰ Telework is no exception. Since leaders play a key role in shaping an organization's culture, their words and behaviors will be critical for ensuring that the organization's culture can adapt to and accommodate telework. There are several steps that leaders can take to foster such a culture.

³⁸During an interview on February 1, 2011, representatives from the General Services Administration stated that “the components [of a telework program] must be examined systematically and in an integrated fashion because nothing occurs in a vacuum.”

³⁹For legal requirements and responsibilities and for additional pertinent telework information, see both the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 accessed from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf> and U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, accessed from http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

⁴⁰Alyah Khan, “Culture change: A squishy topic but a vital one,” *Federal Computer Week*, May 2, 2011, accessed from: <http://fcw.com/articles/2011/05/09/home-page-fed-workforce-culture-change.aspx>.

Guiding and Supporting Telework. One way of fostering a culture conducive to telework is for leadership to openly express their vision for and support of their telework approach. This could include emphasizing the core values of the organization and illustrating how their approach to telework is consistent with such values and with mission accomplishment. Leaders could also discuss the reasons why they believe their approach to telework is optimal for the organization, and further why they support participation in telework. Additionally, leadership might consider requesting feedback on their telework approach, as this involvement will likely be important for getting employees on board with the initiative.⁴¹

Following the example of leadership, mid-level managers and frontline supervisors may also find it beneficial to communicate their support of the telework approach directly to employees in their work unit. Leadership may also consider giving supervisors the authority to use their discretion to make adjustments to the organization's desired approach to telework in order to best address the needs of their work units. Together, such leadership guidance and support are important for fostering a culture conducive to telework because—as with any new change or initiative—employees will look to their leaders for direction on how telework should be perceived.

Providing Transparency about Telework Challenges. In tandem with providing guidance on their vision for telework and showing their support for their approach, leadership should provide transparency on any anticipated challenges to implementing telework. Such challenges include any concerns about telework as well as policy and procedural barriers to telework. Providing such transparency at the start can assist with cultural acceptance of telework and will help the organization as a whole prepare for telework and identify possible strategies for mitigating anticipated problems. Indeed, leadership will be crucial for guiding supervisors and the workforce through any changes that need to be made or resistance that needs to be overcome to implement their approach to telework.⁴²

Supporting Appropriate Participation in Telework. As noted above, employees will look to their leaders for guidance on how telework should be perceived and appropriately used. Indeed, our survey data indicate that 72 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis stated that the degree to which agency managers and leaders support telework was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests. Further, a sizeable minority, or 22 percent, of employees who did not request approval to telework on a routine basis, indicated that "[i]t might irritate or frustrate my supervisor because he or she does not like telework," was important in their decision to not request approval. Clearly, leadership support for telework at all levels appears important for fostering cultural acceptance of telework participation. Another way for leaders to foster a culture that supports participation in telework is for them to participate in telework themselves.⁴³ Participation in telework and increasing experience managing teleworkers may help supervisors of teleworkers alleviate concerns that they have about telework because they will have experienced it first-hand. There is rarely a substitute for hands-on experience as a learning tool. Indeed some 49 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis indicated that the degree to which they

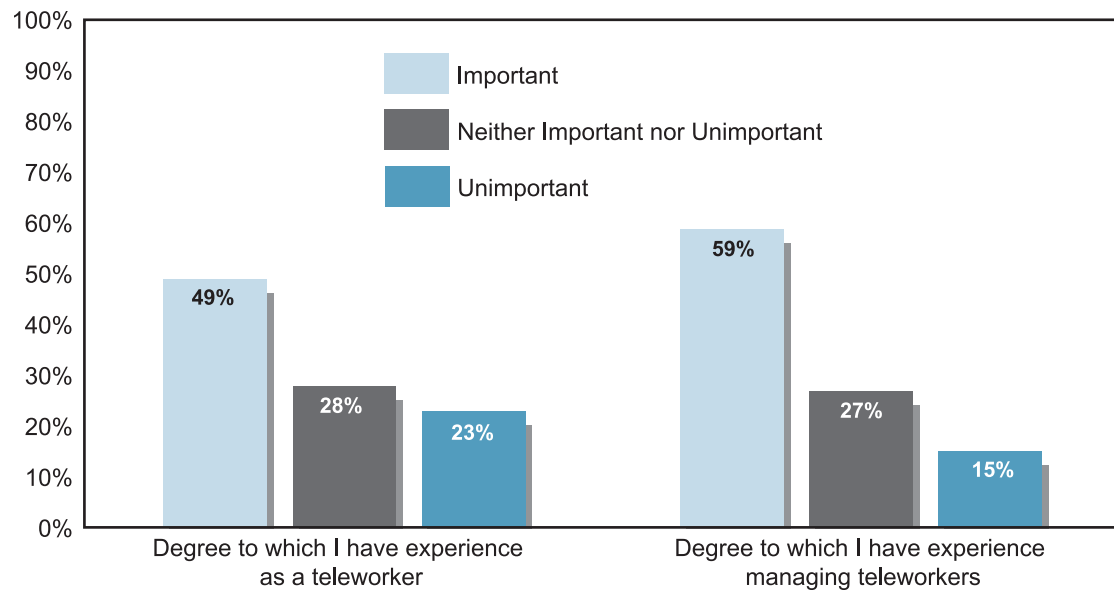
⁴¹Ibid. See comments within the article by Adam Cole, director of government practice at the Corporate Executive Board.

⁴²During an interview on February 1, 2011, representatives from the General Services Administration stated that leadership support is essential for promoting telework as is the "need to have Top Cover [by leadership] and a champion to help smooth out the issues."

⁴³U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, p. 25. The *Guide* indicates that "Managers and supervisors should make it a point to regularly participate in telework in order to lead by example and be comfortable in dealing with the dynamics of managing in a telework environment." This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

have experience as a teleworker was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests. Additionally, 59 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis indicated that the extent to which they have experience managing teleworkers was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests. These findings are depicted in Figure 16.

Figure 16. The importance of experience as a teleworker and experience managing teleworkers in supervisors' decisions to support or deny employees' requests to telecommute on a routine basis



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Taken together, leadership guidance and support will be critical for fostering a culture conducive to telework. Further, providing transparency about anticipated telework challenges and supporting appropriate participation will be important to ensuring cultural acceptance of the telework approach and resulting telework program.

Supervisor Preparedness

Another critical consideration for telework is that supervisors are prepared to properly manage in a telework environment. Effective management will not only be necessary to allow telework benefits to be realized but also may help prevent telework concerns from becoming realities. Organizations need to ensure that supervisors have the performance management skills necessary to manage the workforce. Good performance management practices are also important for building employee-supervisor relationships based on mutual trust. Trust can work in concert with information gathered from good performance management practices to enable supervisors to make wise decisions about using telework in their work units.

Building Performance Management Skills. Good performance management practices are critical for effective workforce management.⁴⁴ Previous MSPB research has demonstrated that these practices are important for employee engagement,⁴⁵ which is associated with important organizational outcomes.⁴⁶ In addition to supporting work unit and ultimately organizational success, good performance management practices will be especially critical for supervisors in managing teleworkers, mitigating telework concerns, and making good telework decisions.

As illustrated in Table 2, our survey results indicate that a much larger percentage of employees who agreed that their supervisor supports telework also agreed with several statements about performance management in their organization than employees who disagreed that their supervisor supports telework.

Table 2. Percentage of employees who agreed with the following performance management statements by whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “My supervisor encourages and supports telework.”

Performance Management Statements	Employee AGREED that Supervisor Supports Telework	Employee DISAGREED that Supervisor Supports Telework
I know what is expected of me on the job.	94%	81%
I am held accountable for achieving the results expected of me.	94%	77%
I have individual performance goals that clearly define the results I am expected to achieve.	86%	66%
My performance goals are clearly linked to organizational or work unit goals.	84%	63%
Recognition and rewards are based on performance in my work unit.	75%	44%
Appropriate, objective measures or metrics are used to evaluate my achievement of my performance goals.	72%	42%
I am satisfied with the recognition and rewards I receive for my work.	70%	41%

Although we cannot tell from these data why this association exists, it is consistent with the notion that good performance management practices help supervisors get the information about employee behavior and performance that they need to make good decisions about using telework in their work environment.

While the specific performance management practices necessary for each work unit that uses telework will vary based on individual employee and work unit needs, there are a few common elements. For one, it will be incumbent upon supervisors to clearly communicate their performance expectations to teleworkers and nonteleworkers and to ensure that the expectations are understood. Differences in employee autonomy and work complexity aside, employees need

⁴⁴For additional information on the importance of performance management, see the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s Performance Management website, accessed from: <http://www.opm.gov/perform/>.

⁴⁵U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Managing for Engagement-Communication, Connections, and Courage*, July 2009.

⁴⁶U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008.

to know what is expected of them and how well they are performing. This is naturally important for an employee's individual performance, but in the aggregate, is also essential for organizational performance. Further, it will be especially important in telework arrangements given that some in the organization have concerns about teleworker productivity and performance. Clear expectations can help establish a contract between supervisors and teleworkers to ensure that teleworkers are aware of how they need to fill their hours while they are teleworking.

Although clear performance expectations will provide the foundation upon which employees will focus their efforts, review of progress towards goals coupled with timely feedback will add the necessary supportive structure to guide employees' outcomes. Ensuring that employees are on the right track is not only essential for the employees but can help the supervisor stay attuned to work demands in the office and who is available for new assignments. Further, such reviews and feedback discussions are useful for identifying problems as well as the need to change direction or how work is distributed. Again, such reviews and timely feedback will be especially important in telework arrangements to mitigate possible concerns about teleworker productivity and performance. Yet, regardless of where an employee is working, it is key that supervisors use their discretion to determine the appropriate frequency and level of review and feedback for each employee based on his or her needs. Some employees prefer and need only minimal review and feedback to generate desired results and thus would benefit from a more "hands-off" management style. Other employees may need regular, structured, and detailed reviews and feedback, and would benefit from a more directive management style. Supervisors need to ensure that they are paying attention to such differences in employee needs and that they are tailoring their management style and practices accordingly.

While supervisors need to be prepared to use different styles for managing employee performance, there can be no differences in employee standards or accountability for performance. This is especially critical in a telework environment. As part of their responsibility to hold all employees accountable for their agreed-upon results, supervisors need to communicate clear performance expectations and give regular feedback about work progress. When these preliminary performance management steps are taken, being held accountable should not come as a surprise to any employee. Supervisor commitment to holding employees accountable for performance can also help mitigate potential concerns about teleworker productivity and performance. Further, it will help supervisors ensure that they are actually focusing on performance and not office presence. Representatives from the General Services Administration whom we interviewed said there is a "need to change the mindset from focusing on where work is performed to focusing on performance." While being able to monitor and physically observe employees in the office and at their desks can provide information about the accomplishment of work, it is not a guarantee. Further, the absence of monitoring (such as when an employee is teleworking) does not imply that employees are not accomplishing work. Therefore, office presence and the ability to observe employees should not serve as a proxy for determining the productivity of employees.

In line with holding employees accountable for their performance and conduct, supervisors need to be prepared to make fair and appropriate decisions about recognizing and rewarding good performance. On the other hand, supervisors also need to be prepared to address poor performance and to help those employees improve. This includes the ability to have difficult conversations with employees about their performance. Regardless of work location or arrangement, it is important for supervisors to reinforce good performance and take steps to correct sub-par performance. This may be especially useful in a telework environment to ensure perceptions of fairness.

Using Performance Management Practices to Build Trust. Mutual trust is important for effective working relationships and can be especially important in a telework environment. Good performance management practices can support the development of employee-supervisor relationships built on mutual trust and defined by transparency and the meeting of expectations. These practices provide regular avenues for employees to demonstrate to supervisors that they can meet agreed-upon performance expectations, and for supervisors to respond with agreed-upon rewards. Such dovetailed employee behaviors and supervisor responses can, over time, build trust that each party will follow through on their promises. Trust can work in concert with information gathered from good performance management practices to help supervisors make wise decisions about using telework in their work units.

Using Performance Management Information to Make Wise Decisions About Telework. Supervisors need to make wise decisions about telework eligibility and continuation of use in their work units. Good performance management information can help supervisors ensure transparency and fairness in these decisions. Further, performance management information can help supervisors ensure they are managing and treating employees fairly regardless of where they are working.⁴⁷ Overall, such information can help supervisors ensure that they are using telework in a manner that is conducive to work unit communication, teamwork, and relationship dynamics, employee responsiveness and availability, and ultimately individual and work unit performance. Indeed, “[g]ood performance management practices are essential for telework to be effective and equitable.”⁴⁸

Eligibility To Begin Telework. Criteria for eligibility to begin and continue teleworking must be consistent with the law and applicable guidance.⁴⁹ However, the specifics of whom to approve for telework fall under the discretion of organizations. Within organizations, supervisors are probably in the best position to make appropriate decisions about who is allowed to telework and who is not. The concerns in the previous chapter highlight the criticality of good decisions about telework for communication, teamwork, and work relationships so as to maintain individual and work unit productivity and performance and to ensure teleworker responsiveness and availability. Good decisions about who is allowed to telework are crucial for supporting these ends and for helping to mitigate telework concerns. Ultimately, work unit goal accomplishment as well as the performance and conduct of those requesting telework must drive decisions related to telework eligibility.

In using their discretion for determining telework eligibility, at a minimum, supervisors should take into consideration the aforementioned performance management information about each employee as well as his or her overall performance and demonstration of appropriate behaviors in the office. For example, employees’ work results such as quantity, quality, and timeliness of products, and behaviors such as use of technology, handling of confidential/secure information, and response to coworkers’ requests for input or assistance, should be factors in telework eligibility determinations. These may be indicators of whether the employee possesses the essential competencies, motivation, and self-discipline to be able to telework successfully.

⁴⁷During an interview on Feb. 1, 2011, a General Services Administration representative emphasized that there should be no difference in performance measures for teleworkers and nonteleworkers and the importance of “avoiding disparate treatment.”

⁴⁸U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, p. 25. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

⁴⁹See the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 accessed from: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf>. See also U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, “Eligibility and Participation,” April 2011, pp. 14-16. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

Indeed, our survey results indicate that 85 percent of supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis stated that their perception of the employee's reliability, discipline, and self-motivation was important in their decision to support or deny employees' requests. In light of such information, supervisors should make preliminary judgments about an employee's propensity to be responsive, communicate effectively, engage in teamwork, and maintain relationships in a telework environment. Regardless of the specific factors supervisors use for telework eligibility decisions, they have the responsibility to ensure that they use the same criteria for all of their employees, and that such criteria are understood and fairly applied. The importance of fairness and transparency in determining telework eligibility criteria and in making telework decisions cannot be overstated. In addition to being important for its own merits, fairness and perceptions of fairness can influence how employees feel about their jobs and their organization and how they perform.

Once supervisors have communicated telework eligibility criteria and have made determinations regarding employee telework eligibility, they should explain the reason(s) for their decisions to employees who are determined ineligible. While this type of discussion may be difficult for supervisors, it should be conducted in a respectful and straightforward manner. Provided that supervisors have engaged their employees in regular performance management discussions and can cite performance- or conduct-based reasons for telework ineligibility, the decision should not come as a surprise to the employees. However, an ineligible employee may disagree with his or her supervisor's decision and, if permitted through their organization's grievance procedures, may choose to file a grievance regarding the decision. Organizations should be prepared to support a supervisor's decision, provided that performance management practices were exercised, the decision was performance- or conduct-based, and criteria for eligibility were clear.

While eligibility is a necessary prerequisite for employees to telework, willingness to telework is equally important. Although an individual may be determined eligible for telework, participation in a telework arrangement is voluntary.⁵⁰ Therefore, after making their eligibility decisions for telework, supervisors should encourage eligible individuals to conduct a self-assessment to determine whether they *want* to telework.⁵¹ This should include determination that their home environment is suitable for telework. For a host of reasons, some employees may decide that telework is not appropriate for them.⁵² Results of our survey indicate that when asked, "Assuming you had the equipment, resources, and approval required, how many days per pay period do you want to perform your current duties via telework?," 17 percent of employees stated that they would never want to perform their duties via telework or would only want to on an ad hoc basis. Further, 48 percent of employees who did not request approval to telework on a routine basis stated that they prefer working in the office as important in their decision to not request approval. Finally, 28 percent of employees who did not request approval to telework on a routine basis stated their view that it might negatively impact their productivity or performance

⁵⁰See U. S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, p. 6., footnote 2, for a potential caveat on the voluntary nature of telework. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

⁵¹Refer to U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, "Employees," April 2011, pp. 26-29. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

⁵²For example, some individuals may wish to keep their home and work lives separate, or they may prefer the routine and structure of coming to the office everyday. Others may desire to have daily face-to-face communication and interaction with colleagues and not want to rely on technology. Some may not want the responsibility of having to plan ahead and organize work to fill telework days or to physically bring home equipment or materials. Individuals might also identify that their home environment does not have a space appropriate for telework, or would have too many distractions and not allow them to focus.

was important in their decision to not request approval. Thus, supervisors should be prepared for the possibility that those whom they deem eligible for telework may choose not to telework. Naturally, supervisors should be supportive of such decisions.

Eligibility To Continue Telework. As noted earlier, good performance management practices can also provide supervisors with the support they need to make good decisions about revising or revoking telework privileges based on employee performance or conduct. Supervisors need to evaluate how individual employees are performing under telework arrangements, including how effective they are with communication, teamwork, work relationships, responsiveness, and availability. Supervisors should then use this information to make adjustments to their decisions and telework approach. For example, employees who were initially determined ineligible for telework may be allowed to telework if their performance in specific areas has improved, while employees who were initially approved may lose their privileges if certain factors fall below acceptable levels. Overall, supervisory attention to individual and work unit performance and related work unit dynamics will help supervisors identify individuals for whom telework is not working out.

As with decisions about eligibility to begin telework, supervisors should be able to make such telework continuation decisions without fear of undue challenges by employees. Naturally, supervisors should be prepared to explain the reasons for their decision to the affected employees in a clear, thorough, and respectful manner. This step should include clearly explaining the eligibility criteria and the specific factors that were used to make the determination. Performance management information can be especially important here. However, despite going through these steps, supervisors may still find that some employees may formally dispute the ineligibility decision. While supervisors cannot control this occurrence, their attention to respectful communication and their focus on job-related factors can go a long way towards helping employees recognize that the decision was fair and founded on criteria that are equally applicable to all who request telework. However, it is again important that organizations support a supervisor's discretion in this area, providing that good performance management practices were exercised, the decision was performance- or conduct-based, and the criteria for eligibility were clear.

Fair Treatment for Teleworkers and Nonteleworkers. As discussed earlier, supervisors also need to be prepared to ensure that they are treating teleworkers and nonteleworkers the same way. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 specifically states that “teleworkers and nonteleworkers are treated the same for purposes of—(A) periodic appraisals of job performance of employees; (B) training, rewarding, reassigning, promoting, reducing in grade, retaining, and removing employees; (C) work requirements; or (D) other acts involving managerial discretion”⁵³ Such acts would include the distribution of work assignments. Good performance management practices can help supervisors make decisions in all of these areas that are sound, fair, and based on employee merit and not on their work location.

Discrepancies Between Supervisor Skills and the Needs of the Supervisor Role.

Previous MSPB research has indicated that there is room for improvement in some supervisors' preparedness for their roles.⁵⁴ Specifically, some supervisors may not have been properly informed of the extent of supervisory duties when they applied for their positions; may not

⁵³ 5 U.S.C. § 6503(a)(3) (internal punctuation omitted).

⁵⁴ U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *A Call to Action: Improving First-Level Supervision of Federal Employees*, May 2010.

have been hired based on their management skills; may not have received appropriate training including performance management training; and may not be evaluated on their supervisory behaviors.⁵⁵ While these problems exist independently of telework, they may be exacerbated in a telework environment. Granted, the incidence, prevalence, and magnitude of inadequate supervisor preparedness will vary both within and across organizations, as will its implications for managing teleworkers in different contexts. Regardless, organizations should work with their supervisors to determine any skill inadequacies for managing nonteleworkers and teleworkers and implement developmental measures as appropriate. This may require both short-term and long-term strategies.

In the short-term, organizations may need to provide supervisors with more extensive performance management training building on some formal steps that have been taken to address weaknesses in such training.⁵⁶ Or they may need to develop more focused, tailored training to address the specific needs of their supervisors. Additionally, organizations could encourage mentoring and feedback from other supervisors who manage teleworkers. They may also need to introduce telework at a reduced pace or on a limited basis while they develop their supervisors' skills and establish the performance management structure needed to maximize the benefits of telework and minimize concerns. In the long-term, however, and in the interest of not denying themselves, their employees, and ultimately those whom the Government serves the benefits of telework, organizations may need to adopt more firm strategies. This may include changes in how supervisors are selected, developed, and evaluated to ensure that they have the appropriate competencies to successfully manage both a remote and traditional workforce.

Logistical Preparedness: Technology, Equipment, Technical Support, and Security

Ensuring culture, leadership, and supervisor preparedness can collectively provide a solid foundation for an effective telework program. However, also critical is an organization's logistical preparedness. Logistical preparedness includes technology, equipment, and technical support readiness for telework. These elements are likely to serve as critical enablers for telework, as employees will need remote access to their existing business tools to provide seamlessness between working in the office and working at home. Similarly, employees will need appropriate technologies to enable continuity in quality and quantity of communication and teamwork efforts as well as work relationships. Further, appropriate technical staff will need to be available to establish, guide, and support such an infrastructure. Additionally, organizations will need to ensure information security preparedness for telework.⁵⁷ While information security preparedness is important for everyday telework, it is especially critical for ensuring successful telework as a continuity-of-operations strategy.

⁵⁵The MSPB report cited in footnote 54 indicates on pages 35-36 that only 26 percent of new supervisors receive training on how to develop performance goals and standards; only 25 percent receive training on reviewing employees' work progress; only 28 percent receive training on documenting employee performance; only 17 percent receive training on conducting performance discussions; and only 24 percent receive training on giving positive feedback and coaching.

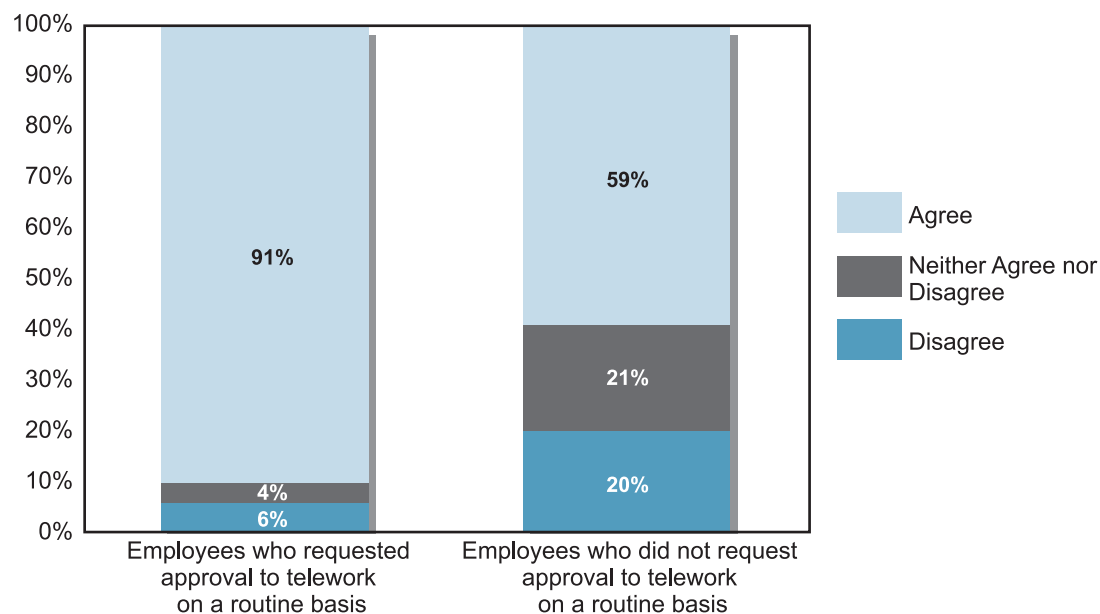
⁵⁶See 5 C.F.R. § 412.202, "Systematic training and development of supervisors, managers, and executives."

⁵⁷For more information on security preparedness for telework, see "Telework Security" accessed from www.gsa.gov/teleworknow.

Determining an appropriate telework technology and security solution. As with the other considerations for telework, there is unlikely to be a one-size-fits-all solution for organizations in regard to appropriate technology, equipment, technical support, and security for telework. First, there is likely to be variability between organizations in what constitutes such necessary elements for telework based on differences in mission, culture, job functions, sensitivity of work, interdependency among employees for work tasks, and other factors. Second, there is likely to be variability between organizations in the adaptability of their current infrastructure to meet telework demands. Third, given these factors, there will likely be variability in what each organization determines is appropriate from a financial standpoint.

In light of these considerations, organizational leaders should devise a plan to identify and address where they are and where they need to be in terms of technology, equipment, technical support, and security in order to make telework a success. To this end they could consider convening discussion groups with the Telework Managing Officer, supervisors, and information technology (IT) specialists to determine telework infrastructure needs and capability gaps. Employees could also be consulted for a “front line” perspective on the technology and security necessary to make telework a success. For example, employees might be able to draw attention to specific technologies that they believe would help them in working and communicating with one another while teleworking. Or they may be able to help identify whether they already have the basic equipment to successfully perform their duties through telework. As illustrated in Figure 17, a much larger percentage of surveyed employees who requested approval to telework on a routine basis agreed that they have access to (they use their own or their organization provides) the hardware, software, internet connections, and other resources, that they need for telework, compared with employees who did not request approval to telework on a routine basis.

Figure 17. Employees’ reported agreement with the statement, “I have access to (use my own or my agency provides) the hardware, software, internet connections, etc. I need for telework.”



*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Additionally, employees may be able to draw attention to perceived or actual threats to information security in regards to telework, or the need for better training on information security in a telework environment. Results from the current study suggest that a sizeable minority—19 percent—of employees who did not request approval to telework on a routine basis indicated their view that information security cannot be assured was important in their decision to not request approval. Employees may possibly be able to offer additional useful perspectives on technological and security needs for telework.

Technology changes for telework may impose costs. The larger the discrepancy between where an organization falls along the telework technology and security continuum and where an organization wants and needs to be, the more likely it is that the costs will be higher to implement desired telework arrangements. Organizations and supervisors will need to weigh the costs of implementing their desired telework technological solution against the anticipated benefits of telework, including any savings associated with such benefits. For example, while potential benefits of telework to organizations in the areas of continuity of operations, recruitment, retention, and employee engagement don't lend themselves to exact dollar-metrics, there are certainly financial implications of telework which organizations may want to consider. For example, while the Congressional Budget Office estimated that it would cost approximately \$30 million across 5 years to pay for administrative necessities related to telework,⁵⁸ there have been estimates that “a four-day shutdown following a blizzard in February 2010 cost the federal government between \$70 million and \$100 million per day in lost productivity.”⁵⁹

Telework technology changes may not need to be immediate. Organizations and supervisors might also consider that when weighing the costs to establish their desired technological solution for telework against the anticipated benefits of telework, any technological or infrastructure changes or upgrades do not necessarily have to happen immediately. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 specifies that “the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue policy guidance requiring each executive agency when purchasing computer systems, to purchase computer systems that enable and support telework, unless the head of the agency determines that there is a mission-specific reason not to do so.”⁶⁰ However, the additional solutions supportive of telework could be phased-in during regular equipment and technology refreshes. Such a gradual approach would naturally spread the telework technological costs over a longer period of time. This distribution could be necessary for many organizations or at least more financially palatable, thereby making it easier (and more feasible) for them to implement the telework solution that is optimal.

Logistical Preparedness: Telework Education

Another form of logistical preparedness for telework is for organizational leaders, supervisors, and other telework decisionmakers, as well as employees, to stay informed about relevant telework information. Awareness and understanding of telework information as well as options for telework programs are likely to be important for ensuring compliance with requirements and for determining the most appropriate approach to telework to meet organizational needs. Organizational leaders, supervisors, and other telework decisionmakers, as well as employees,

⁵⁸Joe Davidson, “Telework Legislation is good news for budgets and workers,” *The Washington Post*, Nov. 18, 2010.

⁵⁹Bill Leonard, “President Signs Federal Employee Telework Legislation,” *Society for Human Resource Management*, Dec. 10, 2010.

⁶⁰5 U.S.C. § 6504(f).

should ensure awareness of provisions of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 and OPM's Guide to Telework in the Federal Government,⁶¹ both of which outline legal requirements, and roles, responsibilities, and other important information for telework. Additionally, there is a wealth of publically available telework information and resources that they may find useful.⁶²

Additionally, organizational leaders, supervisors, and other telework decisionmakers should ensure that they—and their employees—understand their organization's specific telework policy, training requirements, and agreements as well as any applicable collective bargaining agreements. This is necessary for compliance with program requirements and is intuitively important for a successful telework program. Further, a good understanding of such items can make employees more comfortable about entering into a telework arrangement. For this reason, organizations may also wish to examine the value of creating a formal channel in the organization for guidance on or questions and answers about telework. This channel would most appropriately include participation from the TMO or other designated telework officials who are familiar with the organization's telework policy, required training, agreements, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and telework legal requirements. Additionally, organizations should provide easy access to pertinent telework information and resources.⁶³

Deciding on an Appropriate Approach to Telework

Determining the extent to which telework can and should be implemented in their environment will require that organizations weigh the benefits of and any concerns about telework for their situation in conjunction with legal requirements and implementation considerations. There is not one “best” answer for using telework. The many distinct organizations of the Federal Government will differ according to factors such as:

- Mission;
- Occupations and job functions;
- Technology and security requirements;
- Leader characteristics, interests, and vision; and
- Workforce needs, interests, and cultural characteristics.

Further, even within each organization, there will be at least some variability from the department level down to the work unit level, especially in terms of tasks and work products and necessary work unit dynamics. All of these differences will have implications for how telework can and should be implemented in a particular organization. Ultimately, tailored approaches to telework that take into account such factors and appropriately weigh applicable benefits and concerns, such as those discussed in the previous chapters, will be necessary for success.

Determining Telework Frequency. One critical decision about the approach to telework that is linked to all other telework decisions, is determining the optimal frequency of telework. This decision may be best made at the lowest supervisory level possible (for example, manager, first-level supervisor) as these individuals are in a good position to judge specific work unit needs and

⁶¹ See the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 accessed from: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf>. Also see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

⁶² For example, www.telework.gov is co-sponsored by OPM and GSA and provides a range of information about telework. Additionally, www.gsa.gov/teleworknow can be used to access a range of telework information.

⁶³ During an interview on January 20, 2011, representatives from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office indicated that the upfront provision of telework tools was a success factor for their telework program.

factors relevant to telework. Further, these needs and factors are likely to be pertinent to all other telework decisions. For example, in deciding on the frequency of telework for their work units, supervisors could consider the extent to which:

- Work unit occupations, core duties, responsibilities, and tasks are consistent with telework;
- Employees need to be physically present to interact with coworkers, customers, clients, and others;
- Individual employees are willing and able to successfully telework;
- Communication, teamwork, and work relationships necessary for work unit performance can be maintained;
- Employee responsiveness and availability can be maintained;
- Office coverage can be maintained;
- Information security requirements allow telework; and
- Available technology is conducive to telework.

Although the optimal frequency of telework is likely to vary for different environments based on these and other factors, our data suggest a relationship between how often an employee teleworks and his or her view of how telework impacts different work factors. Specifically, as shown in Table 3, these data mostly suggest that a greater percentage of those employees who telework 2 to 3 days per week indicated a positive impact of telework on work factors than employees who telework at other frequencies.

Table 3. Percentage of employees reporting a positive impact of telework on various work factors by their telework frequency

Work Factors	Ad Hoc	1 Day per Week	2-3 Days per Week	4-5 Days per Week
Your personal productivity or performance.	59%	81%	90%	81%
Your ability to balance work and nonwork life.	68%	85%	89%	92%
Your amount of stress related to work matters.	57%	76%	85%	78%
Your amount of stress related to nonwork matters.	55%	73%	80%	77%
Your opportunity for developmental assignments or training.	16%	30%	36%	29%
Your opportunity for career advancement or promotion.	11%	24%	30%	23%
Your relationships with your colleagues.	13%	30%	41%	25%
Your relationship with your supervisor.	16%	31%	44%	34%
Your desire to stay in your organization.	52%	77%	85%	86%
Your satisfaction with your job and organization.	62%	84%	88%	88%
Your need to have people cover for you.	9%	18%	17%	15%

*Note that these percentages just represent employee teleworkers' perceptions of positive impact of their teleworking on each work factor; these data do not account for their perceptions of either neutral or negative impact on these factors.

While these findings are interesting, they represent only the perspective of teleworking employees. Determining the optimal frequency of telework should be based on objective data about the impact of telework frequencies on work factors, but should also consider supervisors' and employee nonteleworkers' perspectives. Also, organizations and supervisors must take into account their unique circumstances and needs, as the optimal frequency is likely to vary across environments.

Telework Decisions and the Use of Pilot Programs. Organizations that decide to implement telework will have to make a host of decisions based on telework-relevant factors to determine the approach to telework that is best for their situation. Pilot programs can provide a relatively low-risk environment to determine what works, what does not work, and what is ultimately necessary for an appropriate approach to telework in an organization. This experience can assist organizations in laying a solid foundation for building a full-scale telework program that best aligns with organization mission, job functions, and worker needs.

To develop the framework for the pilot program(s), organizations could consider convening focus groups. Focus groups could include the Telework Managing Officer and a blend of senior leaders, supervisors, and employee representatives with an array of job functions to sample a range of needs and gather multiple perspectives on criteria for telework to be a success. The culmination of such focus group discussions could be the “who, what, when, and how” plans for the telework pilot program. However, regardless of how organizations determine their plans for the pilot program, once initiated, the program should be evaluated and adjusted accordingly.⁶⁴ This organization-tailored systematic vetting process of telework practices could significantly assist an organization in ensuring that their full-scale telework program will be appropriate and conducive to mission accomplishment.

Flexibility in Decisions and Approach to Telework. In general, it will be important for organizational leaders, supervisors, and any other individuals making decisions about telework, as well as employees, to challenge their assumptions about the best approach to telework. Flexibility and openness in perspective will be key as the optimal approach to telework is likely to evolve over time within each work unit and organization as a whole, and require an iterative process. The more flexible and open leaders, supervisors, and other decisionmakers, as well as employees, are to trying new approaches, working through issues, and identifying best practices, the greater their potential for determining the most appropriate approach for leveraging telework to meet mission goals. This flexibility and openness includes sharing information with one another about telework and discussing relevant benefits and any concerns. Discussions could include strategies for ensuring effective communication, teamwork, and work relationships in a telework environment, as well as teleworker responsiveness and availability.

Early and Ongoing Evaluation of the Telework Program. As organizations make decisions about the use of telework, they need to be prepared to identify metrics to evaluate program results for the organization, and to start measuring and tracking them. Decisions on the specific metrics to track for evaluation purposes, and for identifying best practices and areas needing improvement, will vary for each organization (and even work unit) based on their interests, unique situation,

⁶⁴For example, evaluation could include analyzing the extent to which organizational goals are being met.

Organizations could also survey participants in the pilot program on multiple occasions to evaluate the functioning of the program. Structured and open ended survey responses could provide organizations with insight into elements of success of the telework program and could alert organizations of elements that could use improvement. Additional focus group discussions could then be held regarding the latter to determine alternative telework practices and procedures. These changes could then be implemented and subsequently evaluated through the next wave of surveys, resulting in a cyclical process of continuous improvement for the telework program.

and characteristics. Metrics will also depend on telework reporting requirements.⁶⁵ Regardless of the metrics chosen, program evaluation and improvement should begin *early* and be an ongoing process.

Summary of Implementation Considerations

Implementing telework will require at least some degree of culture change in many organizations. Since leaders have a key role in shaping an organization's culture, their words and behaviors will be critical for ensuring that the organization's culture can adapt to and accommodate telework. Leaders can take several steps to foster such a culture, including providing guidance and support on their telework approach, providing transparency about telework challenges, and supporting appropriate participation in telework as well as participating themselves.

Organizations need to ensure that their supervisors are prepared to properly use telework and manage teleworkers and nonteleworkers. These supervisory capabilities will not only be necessary to allow telework benefits to be realized but may also help prevent telework concerns from becoming realities. Organizations need to ensure that supervisors have the performance management skills necessary to manage the workforce. Good performance management practices are important for building employee-supervisor relationships based on mutual trust. Trust can work in concert with information gathered from good performance management practices to enable supervisors to make wise decisions about using telework in their work units, such as decisions about telework eligibility and continuation of use in their work units. Good performance management information can help supervisors ensure transparency and fairness in these decisions. Further, performance management information can help supervisors ensure they are managing and treating employees fairly regardless of where they are working. Organizations are encouraged to work with their supervisors to identify skill areas in need of improvement and to provide the necessary support and developmental resources. The latter is an effort that may require both short-term and long-term strategies.

Organizations also need to pay attention to their logistical preparedness for telework because their technology, equipment, technical support, and security infrastructure will be critical in enabling telework success. Organizational leaders should devise a plan to identify and address where they are and where they need to be in terms of technology, equipment, technical support, and security in order to make telework a success. To this end, they could consider convening discussion groups with the Telework Managing Officer, supervisors, and information technology (IT) specialists to determine telework infrastructure needs and capability gaps. Employees could also be consulted for a "front line" perspective on the technology and security necessary to make telework a success. While there are likely to be costs associated with any infrastructure changes, organizations should consider how they may be offset by the anticipated value of telework for their environments. They may also consider making incremental improvements as necessary.

Another form of logistical preparedness for telework is for organizational leaders, supervisors, and other telework decisionmakers, as well as employees, to stay informed about relevant telework information. Awareness and understanding of telework information as well as options for telework programs are likely to be important for ensuring compliance with requirements and for determining the most appropriate approach to telework to meet organizational needs.

⁶⁵ See U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, "Reporting," p. 20. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

Additionally, organizational leaders, supervisors, and other telework decisionmakers should ensure that they—and their employees—understand their organization’s specific telework policy, training requirements, and agreements as well as any applicable collective bargaining agreements. A formal channel in the organization for telework guidance, questions, and answers might also be helpful.

Finally, organizations are responsible for determining the extent to which telework can and should be implemented in their environment. This will require weighing benefits of and any concerns about telework in conjunction with legal requirements and implementation considerations before deciding on an appropriate approach. Pilot programs may assist them to decide what works best in their environment and to tailor their approach to telework to meet their needs. It will be important for organizational leaders, supervisors, and any other individuals making decisions about telework, as well as employees, to challenge their assumptions about the best approach to telework. Flexibility and openness in perspective will be key as the optimal approach to telework is likely to evolve over time within each work unit and organization as a whole, and require an iterative process. This flexibility and openness includes sharing information with one another about telework and discussing relevant benefits and any concerns. As organizations make decisions about telework, appropriate metrics should be identified, measured, and tracked to help them evaluate program functioning and make adjustments as necessary.

While the implementation considerations that we have offered can assist organizations in determining the most appropriate approach to telework for their environment, as with the benefits and concerns we have discussed, the applicability of these considerations will vary based on each organization’s unique situation and telework needs. Further, we emphasize that these are just a sample of the range of telework considerations and encourage organizations to determine any additional considerations pertinent to their situation.

CONCLUSIONS



The Federal Government has a responsibility to use the Federal workforce in an efficient and effective manner.⁶⁶ Such usage requires that Federal organizations implement policies, practices, and procedures that strategically balance organizational and human capital needs. If used appropriately, telework—which provides flexibility in where and when work is accomplished—can function as such a practice.

Federal organizations continue to be interested in the role that telework can play in efficient and effective use of the workforce. Therefore, MSPB conducted this study to examine Federal employee, supervisor, manager, and executive experiences with—and perceptions of—telework in the Federal workplace. We also obtained information relevant to telework from a review of various news articles, a sample of relevant professional literature, and interviews with leaders in telework. The study results provide a holistic depiction of some benefits, concerns, and implementation considerations for telework. This resultant report can assist organizations in making decisions about how to best integrate the telework flexibility into their business strategy and leverage it to meet mission needs.

Telework Can Directly Benefit Organizations. Telework can support continuity of operations plans and organizational preparedness for emergency situations. Additionally, it can potentially reduce organizations' need for physical office space and its accompanying real estate and related expenses. These direct benefits could have a significant impact on organizational functioning in particular situations.

Telework Can Directly Benefit Employees. Telework can support employees' work/life balance through reducing their commutes, allowing employees more personal time in the absence of a commute, and possibly granting them flexibility to work when they are most capable. These direct benefits can—collectively—help employees better balance their professional and personal schedules.

Telework Can Indirectly Benefit Organizations. Although the direct benefits of telework to organizations and employees are unquestionably valuable, they do not necessarily make the business case for telework by themselves. We contend that the real value of telework for organizations comes indirectly through telework's direct impact on employee work/life balance. Specifically, by virtue of supporting employee work/life balance, telework can indirectly provide significant benefits for organizations in the areas of recruitment, retention, and employee engagement. Further, and of critical importance, it appears that the benefits of telework can occur with generally maintained productivity and performance. Yet, we emphasize that the benefits of telework are contingent on wise decisions about an appropriate approach to telework for a given situation, as well as on the effective employee management within that approach.

⁶⁶ 5 U.S.C. § 2301(b)(5).

Telework Can Raise Concerns. Supervisors play a critical role in ensuring the success of a telework program and they need to feel comfortable in that role. However, some supervisors have concerns about how telework will affect mission accomplishment, and specifically, the functioning of their work units. Further, some believe that support for telework has been given too freely without providing adequate attention to addressing telework concerns. We draw attention to their concerns, organized into three areas:

- Work unit performance;
- Work unit dynamics; and
- Teleworker responsiveness and availability.

Although there are organizations and situations where these concerns may be warranted, our survey data generally suggest that most supervisors, employee nonteleworkers, and employee routine teleworkers believe that work outcomes relevant to telework concerns can be maintained in a telework environment. Yet, our data reveal some potential room for improvement. Specifically, our data also indicate that some supervisors and employee nonteleworkers believe that telework has had a negative impact on some of these work outcomes. The occurrence of such perceptions and of telework concerns in general underscores the criticality of ensuring that wise decisions are made about an appropriate approach to telework for a given situation and that employees are managed effectively within that approach. Similarly, good decisions about the use of telework can help mitigate concerns and prevent them from becoming realities.

However, we caution that some telework concerns—and some of the perceived and actual negative impacts of telework—may stem from issues or problems for which there are no readily apparent solutions. Thus, in making decisions about telework as a business tool, organizations should be prepared to identify areas where they are willing to make some trade-offs in order to reap the benefits that telework can offer. While this threshold for trade-offs and the incidence and range of actual negative effects of telework are likely to vary across and within organizations, a common goal should be ensuring a net positive gain or return for the organization.

Attention to Culture and Leadership Preparedness for Telework. Implementing telework will require at least some degree of culture change in many organizations. Since leaders have a key role in shaping an organization's culture, their words and behaviors will be critical for ensuring that the organization's culture can adapt to and accommodate telework. Leaders can take several steps to foster such a culture, including providing guidance and support on their telework approach, providing transparency about telework challenges, and supporting appropriate participation in telework as well as participating themselves.

Attention to Supervisor Preparedness. Organizations need to ensure that their supervisors are prepared to properly use telework and manage teleworkers and nonteleworkers. These supervisory capabilities will not only be necessary to allow telework benefits to be realized but may also help prevent telework concerns from becoming realities. Organizations need to ensure that supervisors have the performance management skills necessary to manage the workforce. Good performance management practices are important for building employee-supervisor relationships based on mutual trust. Trust can work in concert with information gathered from good performance management practices to enable supervisors to make wise decisions about using telework in their work units, such as decisions about telework eligibility and continuation of use in their work units. Good performance management information can help supervisors ensure transparency and fairness in these decisions. Further, performance management information can help supervisors

ensure they are managing and treating employees fairly regardless of where they are working. Organizations are encouraged to work with their supervisors to identify skill areas in need of improvement and to provide the necessary support and developmental resources. The latter is an effort that may require both short-term and long-term strategies.

Attention to Logistical Preparedness. Organizations also need to pay attention to their logistical preparedness for telework because their technology, equipment, technical support, and security infrastructure will be critical in enabling telework success. Organizational leaders should devise a plan to identify and address where they are and where they need to be in terms of technology, equipment, technical support, and security in order to make telework a success. To this end, they could consider convening discussion groups with the Telework Managing Officer, supervisors, and information technology (IT) specialists to determine telework infrastructure needs and capability gaps. Employees could also be consulted for a “front line” perspective on the technology and security necessary to make telework a success. While there are likely to be costs associated with any infrastructure changes, organizations should consider how they may be offset by the anticipated value of telework for their environments. They may also consider making incremental improvements as necessary.

Another form of logistical preparedness for telework is for organizational leaders, supervisors, and other telework decisionmakers, as well as employees, to stay informed about relevant telework information. Awareness and understanding of telework information as well as options for telework programs are likely to be important for ensuring compliance with requirements and for determining the most appropriate approach to telework to meet organizational needs. Additionally, organizational leaders, supervisors, and other telework decisionmakers should ensure that they—and their employees—understand their organization’s specific telework policy, training requirements, and agreements as well as any applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Deciding on an Appropriate Approach to Telework. Finally, organizations are responsible for determining the extent to which telework can and should be implemented in their environment. This will require weighing benefits of and any concerns about telework in conjunction with legal requirements and implementation considerations. Then, they must make decisions on an appropriate approach. Pilot programs may assist them to decide what works best in their environment and to tailor their approach to telework to meet their needs. It will be important for organizational leaders, supervisors, and any other individuals making decisions about telework, as well as employees, to challenge their assumptions about the best approach to telework. Flexibility and openness in perspective will be key as the optimal approach to telework is likely to evolve over time within each work unit and organization as a whole, and require an iterative process. This flexibility and openness includes sharing information with one another about telework and discussing relevant benefits and any concerns. As organizations make decisions about telework, appropriate metrics should be identified, measured, and tracked to help them evaluate program functioning and make adjustments as necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Organizational Leaders, Supervisors, and Employees

- ***Learn about telework.*** Ensure awareness of provisions in the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 and OPM's Guide to Telework in the Federal Government,⁶⁷ both of which outline legal requirements, roles and responsibilities, and other important information for telework. Also ensure understanding of your organization's specific telework policy, training requirements, and telework agreements as well as applicable collective bargaining agreements.
- ***Determine an appropriate technology, equipment, technical support, and security infrastructure for telework.*** Assist organizational leaders in devising a plan to identify and address where they are and where they need to be in terms of technology, equipment, technical support, and security in order to make telework a success. Take into account necessary communication, teamwork, and work relationship needs, as well as requirements for teleworker responsiveness and availability during telework.
- ***Be flexible about telework.*** Recognize that the optimal approach to telework is likely to evolve over time within each work unit and organization as a whole, and require an iterative process. Challenge assumptions about the best approach to telework. The more flexible and open you are to trying new approaches, working through issues, and identifying best practices, the greater the potential for determining the most appropriate approach for leveraging telework to meet mission goals.
- ***Talk about telework.*** Share information with one another about telework and discuss relevant benefits and any concerns. Discussions could include strategies for ensuring effective communication, teamwork, and work relationships in a telework environment, as well as teleworker responsiveness and availability.

Organizational Leaders

- ***Ensure culture and leadership preparedness for telework.*** Recognize that implementing telework will require at least some degree of culture change in many organizations. Ensure that leaders' words and behaviors guide the organization's culture to adapt to and accommodate telework. Leaders can foster such a culture by taking such steps as providing guidance and support on the telework approach, providing transparency about telework's challenges, and supporting appropriate participation in telework as well as participating themselves.
- ***Consider giving supervisors authority and support to make changes to the organization's desired telework approach to best support their work unit's needs.*** Consider the appropriateness of giving supervisors discretion to make adjustments to the organization's desired approach to telework in order to best address the needs of their work unit.

⁶⁷ See the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 accessed from: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf>. Also see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

- ***Ensure supervisor preparedness for managing teleworkers and nonteleworkers.*** Work with supervisors to ensure that they are prepared for their role and can effectively manage teleworkers and nonteleworkers. In particular, make sure supervisors have good performance management skills. Good performance management practices are important for building employee-supervisor relationships based on mutual trust. Trust can work in concert with information gathered from good performance management practices to enable supervisors to make wise decisions about using telework in their work units (e.g., decisions about eligibility and continuation of use). Good performance management will also be important for ensuring fair treatment of teleworkers and nonteleworkers. Identify supervisors' skill areas in need of improvement and provide the necessary support and developmental resources. Short-term strategies, such as performance management training, and mentoring and feedback from other supervisors who manage teleworkers, may be necessary, as well as long-term strategies such as changes in how supervisors are selected, developed, and evaluated.
- ***Support supervisor discretion in making telework eligibility decisions.*** Criteria for eligibility to begin and continue teleworking must be consistent with the law and applicable guidance.⁶⁸ However, the specific details fall under the discretion of organizations. Because supervisors are probably in the best position to make appropriate decisions about who is allowed to telework and who is not in their work unit, organizational leaders should be prepared to support supervisor's discretion in such decisions, provided that good performance management practices were exercised, the decision was performance- or conduct-based, and criteria for eligibility were clear.
- ***Decide on an appropriate approach to telework.*** Determine the extent to which telework can and should be implemented in the organization's environment. Weigh benefits of and any concerns about telework in conjunction with legal requirements and implementation considerations. Then, decide on an appropriate approach. Pilot programs may assist in making appropriate decisions about what works best and in tailoring the approach to telework to the organization's needs. As decisions are made, identify, measure, and track metrics to evaluate program functioning and make adjustments as necessary.

Supervisors

- ***Work with organizational leaders to determine appropriate use of telework.*** Begin by identifying work unit needs in relation to telework. Also identify any concerns about the impact of telework and determine possible strategies for mitigating them. At a minimum, determine standards for and strategies to maintain necessary work unit dynamics, such as communication, teamwork, and work relationships. Similarly, determine strategies for ensuring teleworker responsiveness and availability in areas such as contact, meetings, unexpected assignments, and office coverage.
- ***Determine your preparedness for managing in a telework environment.*** Ensure you have the performance management skills necessary to manage the workforce, both teleworkers and nonteleworkers. Such skills include the ability to clearly communicate performance expectations; review progress towards goals and provide feedback; hold employees accountable for results; and make fair and appropriate decisions about recognizing and rewarding good performance and addressing poor performance. Also, ensure you can have difficult conversations with employees about their performance. Further, supervisors need to make sure they can tailor their management style and practices to the needs of

⁶⁸ See the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 accessed from: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf>. Also, see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, "Eligibility and Participation," April 2011, pp. 14-16. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

different employees. These skills are not only important for the work unit and ultimately organizational productivity, but can help mitigate concerns about telework and help supervisors make good decisions about telework. To the extent that you need improvement in these skills, be prepared to work with your organizational leaders to improve.

- ***Exercise performance management skills.*** Practice the performance management skills that will be necessary for work unit and ultimately organizational performance and that will also be important for building employee-supervisor relationships based on mutual trust. Clearly communicate to teleworkers and nonteleworkers performance expectations and ensure that these are understood. Review their progress towards goals and provide timely feedback, both steps important for identifying problems as well as the need to change direction or how work is distributed. Then, hold all employees accountable for their agreed-upon results. In line with holding employees accountable for their performance, make fair and appropriate decisions about recognizing and rewarding good performance as well as addressing poor performance. Finally, exercise discretion to tailor management style and practices to the needs of different employees.
- ***Use performance management information to make wise decisions about telework.*** Use performance management information to make good decisions about telework eligibility and continuation of use, and to ensure fair treatment of teleworkers and nonteleworkers. This will be necessary for allowing the benefits of telework to be realized and for mitigating or preventing concerns about telework from becoming realities. Additionally, wise decisions in these areas will help supervisors ensure that they are using telework in a manner conducive to work unit communication, teamwork and relationship dynamics, employee responsiveness and availability, and ultimately individual and work unit performance. Finally, good decisions can help supervisors ensure and provide transparency that all employees are being managed and treated fairly regardless of where they are working.
- ***Make wise decisions regarding initial and continued telework eligibility.*** In using discretion to approve requests to telework, at a minimum, take into consideration each employee's overall productivity and performance and demonstration of appropriate behaviors in the office. Regardless of the specific factors used for telework eligibility decisions, consistent with the law and applicable guidance,⁶⁹ ensure that the same criteria are used for all employees, that employees understand them, and that they are fairly applied. After employees begin to telework, evaluate how individual employees are performing under telework arrangements. Use performance management information in conjunction with an analysis of how effective employees are with communication, teamwork, and work relationship dynamics in a telework environment, as well as their responsiveness and availability. Use this information to make adjustments to your decisions about telework eligibility and telework approach.
- ***Be prepared for difficult conversations about telework eligibility.*** Be prepared to explain the reasons for telework ineligibility decisions to the affected employees in a clear, thorough, and respectful manner. Include a clear explanation of the eligibility criteria and the specific factors that were used to make the determination. Performance management information will be especially important here. However, despite going through these steps, there may still be some employees who will formally dispute the ineligibility decision. While supervisors cannot control this occurrence, attention to respectful communication and focus on job-related factors can go a long way towards helping employees recognize that the decision was fair and founded on criteria that are equally applicable to all who request telework.

⁶⁹ See the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 accessed from: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf>. Also, see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, "Eligibility and Participation," April 2011, pp. 14-16. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

- *Ensure fair treatment of teleworkers and nonteleworkers.* Treat teleworkers and nonteleworkers the same way. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 specifically states that “teleworkers and nonteleworkers are treated the same for purposes of—(A) periodic appraisals of job performance of employees; (B) training, rewarding, reassigning, promoting, reducing in grade, retaining, and removing employees; (C) work requirements; or (D) other acts involving managerial discretion”⁷⁰ Such acts would include the distribution of work assignments. Good performance management practices can help supervisors exercise good and fair judgment in these areas and make decisions based on employee merit and not employee location.

Employees

- *Consider whether telework would be right for you.* Telework-eligible employees should conduct a self-assessment to determine whether they want to telework.⁷¹ This should include determination that your home environment is suitable for telework. You should also make sure you can accomplish the same quantity and quality of work while teleworking as when working in the office. Further, make sure you can maintain appropriate communication, teamwork, and work relationships while teleworking and can abide by standards for responsiveness and availability. Telework-ineligible employees who would like to telework could consider talking with their supervisors about their status to determine if there is an opportunity for them to become eligible and the necessary criteria for achieving eligibility.
- *Maintain performance and fully engage in performance management with supervisors.* Whether teleworking or not, employees should be committed to maintaining their performance. Work cooperatively with your supervisor regarding your performance management. Ensure that you understand your performance expectations and resolve any questions. Be prepared to participate fully in progress reviews through providing detailed accounts of your progress towards goal accomplishment and success in meeting timelines and milestones as well as any challenges. Take seriously all feedback discussions and be prepared to be held accountable for agreed-upon results. Further, work with your supervisor to identify desired means of recognition for good performance and strategies to overcome areas of weakness. Finally, discuss any impact that your telework—or others’ telework—is having on your ability to get your work done.
- *Maintain work unit dynamics.* Teleworking employees need to maintain appropriate communication, teamwork, and work relationships with the office, customers, and other relevant parties while teleworking. Similarly, nonteleworkers should be agreeable to using available technology to maintain appropriate communication, teamwork, and work relationships with teleworkers. Employees should discuss any impact that telework is having on the work unit’s ability to effectively maintain these critical dynamics.
- *Abide by standards for responsiveness and availability.* Teleworkers should work with their supervisor and work unit to ensure that they are responsive to and available for necessary contact, participating in necessary meetings, and contributing to unexpected assignments. This also includes being responsive to office coverage needs. Similarly, nonteleworkers should be agreeable to using available technology to support teleworkers’ efforts to be responsive to and available for such matters.

⁷⁰ 5 U.S.C. §6503(a)(3) (internal punctuation omitted).

⁷¹ For information for employees about participating in telework, see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, April 2011, “Employees,” pp. 26-29. This guide can be accessed from: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf.

APPENDIX A: TELEWORK SURVEY



SECTION 1: YOUR JOB AND ORGANIZATION

Q1. On average, how many hours have you worked each week during the past year?

- ☐ 40 or less
☐ 41-45
☐ 46-50
☐ 51-55
☐ 56-60
☐ 61 or more

Q2. On average, what proportion of your time at work do you spend doing the following tasks? (Please ensure all add to 100%)

- a. Reading or reviewing documents (correspondence, reports, policies, or other work products, etc. on paper or electronically)..... %
- b. Creating, writing or editing documents (correspondence, reports, policies, or other work products, etc. on paper or electronically) %
- c. Researching or analyzing information and/or producing data summaries..... %
- d. Having formal face to face meetings or discussions with colleagues, project team members, supervisors, customers, or others %
- e. Informally talking or collaborating colleagues, project team members, supervisors, customers, or others..... %
- Total** %

Q3. What proportion of your time do you spend on tasks that can only be done at your office or duty station (e.g., tasks that require interaction with customers or the public in a specific location such as a hospital or service center, or that require laboratories or other special facilities or equipment)?

%

Q4. What proportion of your time do you spend working on secure or classified information, equipment or systems?

%

Q5. FOR SUPERVISORS ONLY: What proportion of your time do you spend supervising employees or other supervisors (assigning tasks, giving direction, providing feedback, etc.)?

%

☐ Not applicable, I am not a supervisor.

Q6. My organization provides me with:

	Yes	No
a laptop.....	☐	☐
a cell phone	☐	☐
a personal data assistant.....	☐	☐
other mobile device.....	☐	☐

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your job and organization?

	Strongly disagree				
	Disagree				
	Neither agree nor disagree				
	Agree				
	Strongly agree				
a. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The work I do is meaningful to me.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I have sufficient opportunities (such as challenging assignments or projects) to earn a high performance rating	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Overall, I have the resources to do my job well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. I know what I have to do to ensure the security of information and systems I use for work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. I know what I am to do to continue working in the event of a local or national emergency related to weather, security, pandemic or other disruption.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. My work unit produces high quality products and services ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. I would recommend my agency as a place to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q8. Overall, I am satisfied with the training I receive in my present job.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q9. Overall, I am satisfied with my job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 2: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about interpersonal relationships in your organization?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Regular interactions with my colleagues are important to my job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Regular interactions with my colleagues are important to me personally	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. It is easy to share information and coordinate work on projects in my organization	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Overall, I have positive relationships with my colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. My colleagues routinely pitch in to help me when needed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. I routinely pitch in to help my colleagues when needed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. I am treated with respect at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. My opinions count at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 3: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about performance management in your organization?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I know what is expected of me on the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. I have individual performance goals that clearly define the results I am expected to achieve	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. My performance goals are clearly linked to organizational or work unit goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Appropriate, objective measures or metrics are used to evaluate my achievement of my performance goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. I am held accountable for achieving the results expected of me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Recognition and rewards are based on performance in my work unit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. I am satisfied with the recognition and rewards I receive for my work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q12. On my last performance appraisal I was rated: (Choose the most accurate single response)

- ☐ Outstanding
☐ Exceeds fully successful
☐ Fully successful
☐ Less than fully successful
☐ Unsuccessful
☐ Pass (Pass/Fail Systems only)
☐ Fail (Pass/Fail Systems only)

SECTION 4: YOUR SUPERVISOR AND MANAGER

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your supervisor?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. My supervisor supports collaboration by providing tools and resources, such as groupware or knowledge management systems, to facilitate information exchange	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. My supervisor has a good understanding of my job performance and accomplishments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. My supervisor likes frequent updates about my work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. My supervisor supports my need to balance work and family issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. My supervisor gives me autonomy to accomplish my work.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Overall, I have a positive relationship with my supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Overall, I am satisfied with my managers above my immediate supervisor.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 5: YOUR CAREER PLANS AND EXPERIENCE

Q14. In the next two years, do you plan to:

- ☐ **Remain** in your current organization/agency
☐ **Move** to another Federal organization/agency
☐ **Resign** from the Federal Government and seek a non-Federal job
☐ **Retire** from the Federal Government

Q15. How important are each of the following factors to your decision to remain in or leave (move, resign or retire) your current organization/agency?

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Very important
a. Use of my skills and abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Opportunities for developmental assignments and training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Opportunity for career advancement or promotion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. My relationships with the people I work with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. My relationship with my supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Overall satisfaction with my organization	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Geographic location and/or community I live in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Commuting distance, time or cost	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Ability to balance work and non-work activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Opportunity to telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Opportunity to work flexible hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. For only people who are considering retirement: The ability to phase in my retirement by working part time or becoming a re-employed annuitant.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q16. Have you been treated fairly in the past 2 years in each area listed below:

	Yes	No	Not sure/Not applicable
a. Career advancement.....	☐	☐	☐
b. Awards	☐	☐	☐
c. Performance appraisals.....	☐	☐	☐
d. Training	☐	☐	☐
e. Discipline	☐	☐	☐
f. Job assignments	☐	☐	☐
g. Pay.....	☐	☐	☐
h. Telework.....	☐	☐	☐
i. Flexible scheduling or hours.....	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 6: LIFE BALANCE ISSUES

Q17. Do you have personal responsibility for the care of minor children?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No → **Go to Q19**

Q18. How much of the responsibility for the care of minor children is yours?

- ☐ 25% or less
☐ More than 25% but less than half
☐ Half or 50%
☐ More than half but less than 75%
☐ 75% or more

Q19. Do you have responsibility for the care of elderly or disabled adults?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No → **Go to Q21**

Q20. How much of the responsibility for the care of elderly or disabled adults is yours?

- ☐ 25% or less
☐ More than 25% but less than half
☐ Half or 50%
☐ More than half but less than 75%
☐ 75% or more

Q21. How frequently do you:

	Less than once per month	2-3 times per month	Weekly	2-3 times per week	Daily	2-3 times per day	4 or more times per day
a. Actively attend to (mentally focus your attention on) or take action (e.g. use the phone, email, and/or use the internet) on non-work related issues when you are working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Actively attend to (mentally focus your attention on) or take action (e.g. use the phone, email, and/or use the internet) on work related issues when you are not working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q22. On average, how much leave (all sources, annual leave, sick leave, etc.) do you take per month to handle personal issues such as medical appointments, home or car maintenance, school meetings, etc.? This does not include hours spent away from the office as part of your Alternative Work Schedule (AWS)?

- ☐ None
☐ Up to 2 hours
☐ 3-4 hours
☐ 5-6 hours
☐ 7-8 hours
☐ 9-16 hours
☐ More than 16 hours or over 2 days

SECTION 7: YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF TELEWORK

Q23a. Does your agency have a formal telework policy?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know

Q23b. Does your agency have telework goals (either voluntary or mandated)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know

Q24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about telework in your agency?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I understand my agency's telework policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. My supervisor encourages and supports telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. My agency's managers and senior leaders encourage and support telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I have access to (use my own or my agency provides) the hardware, software, internet connections, etc. I need for telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Employees that telework have similar work assignments and work expectations as employees that do not telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Employees have to choose telework or Alternative Work Schedule (AWS), they are unable to have both	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 8: YOUR INTEREST IN AND REQUESTS FOR TELEWORK

Q25. Assuming you had the equipment and resources necessary, how many days per pay period COULD you perform your current duties via telework?

- ☐ None or only on ad hoc basis
☐ 1-2 days per pay period
☐ 3-4 days per pay period
☐ 5-6 days per pay period
☐ 7-8 days per pay period
☐ 9-10 days per pay period

Q26. Assuming you had the equipment, resources and approval required, how many days per pay period do you WANT to perform your current duties via telework?

- ☐ None or only on ad hoc basis
☐ 1-2 days per pay period
☐ 3-4 days per pay period
☐ 5-6 days per pay period
☐ 7-8 days per pay period
☐ 9-10 days per pay period

Q27. Have you made one or more requests to telework on an ad hoc (non-routine) basis? (e.g., to complete an assignment away from the interruptions in the office, or to handle non-work issues such as to meet the plumber, etc.)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No → Go to Q29

Q28. How many times did you actually telework on an ad hoc (non-routine) basis in the last year?

- ☐ Never
☐ 1-3 days
☐ 4-6 days
☐ 7-9 days
☐ 10-12 days
☐ More than 12 days
☐ Not Applicable

Q29. Have you requested approval to telework on a routine basis – at least two days per pay period?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No → Go to Q35

Q30. How important were the following factors in your decision to request telework on a routine basis?

	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
a. The amount of time it takes to commute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The distance (number of miles) of my commute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I have less interruptions at home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I can be more productive at home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. I can better balance career and family obligations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q31. Was your request for routine telework granted?

- ☐ Yes → **Go to Q36**
☐ No
☐ Still in process → **Go to Q36**

Q32. If the request was NOT granted, what were the reasons your request was denied? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ The agency has no telework policy
☐ I am not eligible (e.g., because of my occupation; the type of work I do; or my status as a trainee intern, or new employee; or because I am a supervisor)
☐ Information security cannot be assured
☐ The cost for equipment, training, etc. is too high
☐ It would jeopardize office coverage
☐ It would hinder teamwork, collaboration, communication and/or interpersonal relationships among employees
☐ It would hinder the employee-supervisor relationship and communication
☐ There are no objective performance measures to track my productivity or performance
☐ My supervisor would not be able to control who could telework
☐ My first-level supervisor does not support telework
☐ Leaders above my first-level supervisor do not support telework
☐ I was not rated fully successful or above on my last performance appraisal
☐ Employees on Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) are not allowed to telework

Q33. Did you file a formal complaint or grievance when your request for telework was denied?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No → **Go to Q36**

Q34. What was the outcome of the complaint or grievance?

- ☐ I was ultimately allowed to telework
☐ I was not ultimately allowed to telework
☐ The issue is still pending

(Go to Q36)**Q35. How important were the following factors in your decision NOT to request approval to telework on a routine basis – at least two days per pay period?**

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Very important
a. I am not eligible (e.g., because of my occupation; the type of work I do; or my status as a trainee, intern or new employee; or because I am a supervisor).....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. I prefer working in the office (e.g., it is more appropriate for my job; easier to keep up with what is going on in the office; avoids home distractions; helps keep work and non-work separate, etc.).....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. It might hinder teamwork, collaboration, or communication with others in the workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. It might negatively impact my productivity or performance.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. It might hinder interpersonal relationships with others in the workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Information security cannot be assured.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. I might miss important training or developmental opportunities.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. I do not have access to the necessary equipment or facilities for telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. It might irritate or frustrate my supervisor because he or she does not like telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. I do not believe my request would be approved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. We do not have objective performance measures to track productivity or performance.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Teleworkers in my organization do not have the same opportunities for career development as non-teleworkers do.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Teleworkers in my organization don't seem to be promoted as often as non-teleworkers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. I would have to give up my Alternative Work Schedule (AWS)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q36. Including yourself, how many people are in your immediate work unit?

Q37. Including yourself, approximately how many people in your work unit telework, on average, at least two days per pay period? (Give your best estimate)

Q38. What is your supervisory status?

- ☐ Non-supervisor } Go to Q50
☐ Team leader }
☐ Supervisor }
☐ Manager } Go to Q39
☐ Executive }

SECTION 9: SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS: QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TELEWORK OF YOUR EMPLOYEES

Q39. In the last 2 years, how many of your employees have asked to telework on an ad hoc basis?

(If none, go to Q41)

Q40. How often did you support these requests for ad hoc or temporary telework in the last 2 years?

- ☐ 0-20% of the time
☐ 21-40% of the time
☐ 41-60% of the time
☐ 61-80% of the time
☐ More than 80% of the time

Q41. In the last 2 years, how many of your employees have asked to telework on a routine basis – at least two days per pay period?

(If none, go to Q45)

Q42. How often did you support these requests for routine telework in the last 2 years?

- ☐ 0-20% of the time
☐ 21-40% of the time
☐ 41-60% of the time
☐ 61-80% of the time
☐ More than 80% of the time

Q44. How important were the following factors in your decision to support or deny employees' requests to telecommute on a routine basis?

	Very unimportant				
	Unimportant				
	Neither important nor unimportant				
	Important				
	Very important				
a. The agency policy regarding telework.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The degree to which agency managers and leaders support telework.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. The degree to which I have experience as a teleworker myself.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. The degree to which I have experience managing teleworkers.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. The availability of objective measures to hold the employee accountable for their productivity and performance.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. The employee's occupation, or status as an intern, trainee or new employee.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. The need to ensure office coverage and/or have adequate staff available for high priority, quick turn-around projects.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. The need to support and facilitate interpersonal relationships and collaboration among employees.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. The need to be an attractive employer that can recruit and retain high quality employees.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. My perception of the employee's reliability, discipline and self-motivation.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. The employee's recent performance appraisal rating.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Issues regarding actual or perceived fairness or discrimination among employees.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. The possibility that the employee will file a grievance or EEO complaint if I deny the request.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. The need to retain an individual high-performing employee.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. The ability to control who does it.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. My interest in supporting my employees' ability to balance work and family.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q45. How many employees work for you? (If you are second level supervisor or manager, include all who work below you)

Q46. How many of your employees, on average, telework under each of the following schedules?

- a. 4-5 days per week
- b. 2-3 days per week
- c. One day per week
- d. Once every pay period or every two weeks
- e. Once per month
- f. Less than once per month or on an ad hoc basis
- g. Never

Q47. How many of your employees that telework have a formal telework agreement?

Q48. How much experience do you have supervising teleworkers?

- ☐ None → **Go to Q50**
- ☐ Less than one year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 5 or more years

Q49. Supervising teleworkers is:

- ☐ More challenging than supervising on-site employees
- ☐ About the same as supervising on-site employees
- ☐ Easier than supervising on-site employees

SECTION 10: EXPERIENCE WITH AND IMPACT OF TELEWORK

Q50. Which option most closely reflects how frequently you telework from your home or from a telework center?

- ☐ 4-5 days per week
- ☐ 2-3 days per week
- ☐ 1 day per week
- ☐ On an ad hoc basis
- ☐ Never → **Go to Q56**

Q51. How long have you been working under this telework arrangement?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 5-6 years
- ☐ 7-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

Q52. Do you have a written telework agreement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q53. Are you willing to adjust your telework schedule to work at the office if necessary (e.g., to ensure office coverage or work on a critical assignment)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q54. Are you willing to adjust your telework schedule in order to participate in training, work on a high visibility project, or be promoted to a higher level position?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q55. How has your experience as a teleworker in your organization impacted:

	Very negative impact				
	Negative impact				
	Neither positive nor negative impact				
	Positive impact				
	Very positive impact				
a. The difficulty and complexity of your work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Your personal productivity or performance.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Your ability to balance work and non-work life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Your amount of stress related to work matters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Your amount of stress related to non-work matters.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Your opportunity for developmental assignments or training.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Your opportunity for career advancement or promotion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Your relationships with your colleagues.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Your relationship with your supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Your desire to stay in your organization.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Your satisfaction with your job and organization.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Your need to have people cover for you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q56. How has the *teleworking of others* in your organization impacted:

	Don't know, Not applicable				
	Very negative impact				
	Negative impact				
	Neither positive nor negative impact				
	Positive impact				
	Very positive impact				
a. The difficulty and complexity of your work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Your personal productivity or performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Your ability to balance work and non-work life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Your amount of stress related to work matters ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Your amount of stress related to non-work matters.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Your opportunity for developmental assignments or training....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Your opportunity for career advancement or promotion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Your relationships with your colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Your relationship with your supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Your desire to stay in your organization	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Your satisfaction with your job and organization	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Requests or expectations for you to cover people who telework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q57. Overall, how has teleworking impacted your organization's:

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	Neither positive nor negative impact	Negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know
a. Productivity and performance.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Ability to ensure effective communication.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Ability to support effective teamwork	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Ability to support effective work relationships.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Ability to recruit high quality employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Ability to retain high performing employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 11: DEMOGRAPHICS

Q60. How long have you worked for the Federal Government?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ 21-25 years
- ☐ More than 25 years

Q61. How long have you worked for your agency?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ 21-25 years
- ☐ More than 25 years

Q62. When will you become *eligible* for retirement from the Federal Government?

- ☐ I am already eligible
- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ 21-25 years
- ☐ More than 25 years
- ☐ I don't plan to work for the Government long enough to retire → **Go to Q64**

Q63. When do you *plan* to retire from the Federal Government? (If you are not sure, give your best estimate at this time)

- ☐ Early, if early retirement is offered
- ☐ As soon as I am eligible
- ☐ 1-2 years after I'm eligible
- ☐ 3-5 years after I'm eligible
- ☐ 6-8 years after I'm eligible
- ☐ More than 8 years after I'm eligible

Q64. What is your agency?

- ☐ Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- ☐ Census Bureau
- ☐ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- ☐ Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA)
- ☐ Employment Standards Administration (ESA)
- ☐ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- ☐ Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- ☐ National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- ☐ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- ☐ Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS)
- ☐ Patent and Trademark Office (PTO)
- ☐ Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)
- ☐ U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

Q65. What is your occupation?

- ☐ Social Science, Psychology, and Welfare (100 series)
☐ Human Resources Management (200 series)
☐ General Administrative, Clerical, and Office Services (300 series)
☐ Natural Resources Mgmt and Biological Sciences (400 series)
☐ Accounting and Budget (500 series)
☐ Medical, Hospital, Dental, and Public Health (600 series)
☐ Engineering and Architecture (800 series)
☐ Legal and Kindred (900 series)
☐ Business and Industry (1100 series)
☐ Copyright, Patent, and Trademark (1200 series)
☐ Physical Sciences (1300 series)
☐ Mathematics and Statistics (1500 series)
☐ Information Technology (2200 series)
☐ Other

Q66. What is your annual salary, including locality pay?

- ☐ Less than \$30,000
☐ \$30,001 through \$50,000
☐ \$50,001 through \$70,000
☐ \$70,001 through \$90,000
☐ \$90,001 through \$110,000
☐ \$110,001 through \$130,000
☐ \$130,001 through \$150,000
☐ \$150,001 through \$170,000
☐ \$170,001 or more

Q67. What is your highest level of education completed?

- ☐ Less than a high school diploma
☐ High school, equivalent diploma or GED
☐ Some college but no degree
☐ Associate's degree
☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Graduate credits but no graduate degree
☐ Master's degree
☐ Professional degree (e.g., DDS, ED, JD, MD)
☐ Doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)

Q68. On average, how much time does it take you to get to your normal duty station (one-way) on the days that you commute to work?

- ☐ Less than 15 minutes
☐ 16-30 minutes
☐ 31-45 minutes
☐ 46-60 minutes
☐ 61-75 minutes
☐ 76-90 minutes
☐ 91-105 minutes
☐ 106-120 minutes
☐ More than 120 minutes

Q69. On average, how many miles do you travel to your normal duty station (one-way) on the days you commute to work?

- ☐ 0-5 miles
☐ 6-10 miles
☐ 11-15 miles
☐ 16-20 miles
☐ 21-30 miles
☐ 31-40 miles
☐ 41-60 miles
☐ More than 60 miles

Q70. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

Q71. What is your age?

- ☐ 25 or under
☐ 26-29
☐ 30-35
☐ 36-39
☐ 40-49
☐ 50-59
☐ 60-69
☐ 70 or older

Q72. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Q73. Please select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify. (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African America
☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
☐ White

Q74a. Based on your personal experience, can you describe briefly a situation in which telework was effective? This could involve you as the teleworker, or working with others who are teleworkers.

Q74b. Based on your personal experience, can you describe briefly a situation in which telework was NOT effective? This could involve you as the teleworker, or working with others who are teleworkers.

Q75a. Describe briefly the biggest barrier to more effective telework in your organization.

Q75b. What are other barriers to effective telework in your organization?

Q76a. Describe briefly the best way to improve the effectiveness of telework in your organization.

Q76b. What are other ways to improve the effectiveness of telework in your organization?

APPENDIX B:

MSPB EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SCALE



MSPB Engagement Scale Questions

1. I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.
2. My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission.
3. I would recommend my agency as a place to work.
4. I am treated with respect at work.
5. My opinions count at work.
6. I know what is expected of me on the job.
7. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
8. I have the resources to do my job well.
9. The work I do is meaningful to me.
10. A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit.
11. My work unit produces high quality products and services.
12. Recognition and rewards are based on performance in my work unit.
13. I have sufficient opportunities (such as challenging assignments or projects) to earn a high performance rating.
14. I am satisfied with the recognition and rewards I receive for my work.
15. Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor.
16. Overall, I am satisfied with managers above my immediate supervisor.

Engagement Scale Scoring

The Engagement Scale we used in this report contains the same 16 questions used in previous MSPB reports. Each of the 16 questions contained a five-level response scale: Strongly Disagree (1 point), Disagree (2 points), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3 points), Agree (4 points) and Strongly Agree (5 points). This means that the minimum engagement score is 16 and the maximum engagement score is 80. Respondents who scored as if they agreed with each of the 16 engagement items were classified as “engaged” (i.e., 4 points x 16 questions = 64). Therefore, scores of engaged respondents ranged from 64 to 80. Respondents who scored between pure neutrality (i.e., 3 points x 16 questions = 48) and our engaged cutoff were classified as “somewhat engaged.” Therefore, scores of somewhat engaged respondents ranged from 48 to 63. Respondents who scored less than neutrality for each question were classified as “not engaged.” Therefore, scores of not engaged respondents ranged from 16 to 47.⁷²

⁷²U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008, pp. 10-11.

APPENDIX C:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON STUDY METHODOLOGY



We were initially interested in understanding the differences in how telework operates in organizations that have a relatively high degree of telework participation versus those that have a relatively low degree of telework participation, but that had similar missions and/or occupational makeups. Our selection of agencies was designed to support this comparative analysis.

We selected agencies with relatively high and low telework usage from the 2007 Office of Personnel Management Telework Data Call Report. We selected “high” telework agencies with a range of missions based on the percentage of employees who routinely teleworked at least 1 day per week. We reviewed the distribution of occupational groups in the high telework agencies and selected a “low” telework agency from the OPM Data Call that matched the high telework agency in terms of general mission and occupational distribution. We also tried to roughly equate the overall number of employees in the high and low telework groups. The agencies we surveyed are listed below.

High Telework Agencies

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST, Department of Commerce)
Patent and Trademark Office (PTO, Department of Commerce)
Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA, Department of Defense)
Food and Drug Administration (FDA, Department of Health and Human Services)
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS, Department of the Interior)
Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC)
Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS, Department of the Treasury)

Low Telework Agencies

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA, Department of Commerce)
Census Bureau (Department of Commerce)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA, Department of Transportation)
Centers for Disease Control (CDC, Department of Health and Human Services)
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR, Department of the Interior)
Employment Standards Administration (ESA, Department of Labor)

We surveyed only professional and administrative occupations that were appropriate for telework based on the type and method of the work involved. We did not include employees in the following occupations in our sample:

Occupational Series	Occupational Title
700	Veterinary medical science group
1000	Information and arts group
1400	Library and archives group
1600	Equipment, facilities, and services group
1700	Education group
1800	Investigation group
1900	Quality assurance, inspection, and grading group
2000	Supply group
2100	Transportation group

To simplify the sampling plan, and provide an opportunity to identify and explore relationships between the general role of the employee and telework, we defined sampling strata by grouping the occupations as mission, nonmission or support, or supervisory (including managers and executives). We defined the population for the sample as all employees with appropriate occupations in each agency. The sampling frame consisted of all those in the appropriate occupations for which the agency was able to supply an email address. This strategy is consistent with the relationship between telework and technology and our decision to only administer the survey electronically. The percentage of the population of employees for which agencies provided email addresses ranged from 93 percent to 99 percent across the sampling strata. The sampling frame is very similar to the population, so the criterion of available email addresses most likely did not bias the sample. A stratified random sample was drawn from those with email addresses, with oversampling of selected strata to ensure we received enough surveys in each occupational group to analyze.

Once the survey was administered and data collected we weighted the 9,773 surveys we accepted for analysis purposes. Surveys were assigned to a stratum based on whether or not the occupation (as defined by the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) which is maintained by the Office of Personnel Management) was defined as mission or non-mission, self-reported agency, and self-reported supervisory status. Surveys were weighted by stratum, with weights calculated to represent the CPDF population (i.e., the actual number of employees) in each stratum. The weighted data allow us to generalize our results to the population in the agencies we surveyed, and to select segments of the population (e.g., a specific agency or occupation) for purposes of analysis.

Our selection of agencies was designed to support comparative analysis between agencies with high telework usage versus agencies with similar missions and occupational make-up but with low telework usage. However, we found that the amount of routine telework reported in the 2007 OPM Telework Data Call Report that we used to select our agencies differed considerably from the actual amount of routine telework reported by our survey participants. Empirical analysis of

survey responses indicated that the proportion of routine teleworkers changed, mostly increasing, in many agencies from that reported in the older OPM data that we used for sampling purposes. Given these changes, we determined it would be more accurate to define high/low telework agencies based on the empirical survey data (i.e., to designate high/low telework using the proportion of routine telework as the criterion). Use of this criteria resulted in the USGS being designated as a low telework agency, and the CDC and the Federal Highway Administration being designated as high telework agencies.

Although we looked at a number of agency variables to see if there were differences between high/low telework agencies, our data did not indicate any general agency differences except for leadership support of telework. Specifically, a higher proportion of employees in high telework agencies reported that their supervisors and leaders supported telework than did employees in low telework agencies. Leader support is a reasonable and expected driver of telework differences between agencies. Factors other than cross-agency levels of telework needed to be examined to better understand how telework was operating in agencies.

APPENDIX D: IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS IN EMPLOYEES' DECISIONS TO REQUEST APPROVAL TO TELEWORK ON A ROUTINE BASIS



Employees who requested approval to telework on a routine basis—at least 2 days per pay period—indicated the importance of several factors in their decision to request approval.

Factors	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Unimportant
I can be more productive at home.	86%	11%	4%
The amount of time it takes to commute.	85%	8%	7%
I have less interruptions at home.	83%	12%	4%
The distance (number of miles) of my commute.	79%	12%	9%
I can better balance career and family obligations.	72%	19%	8%

*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

APPENDIX E:

IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS IN SUPERVISORS' DECISIONS TO SUPPORT OR DENY EMPLOYEES' REQUESTS TO TELECOMMUTE ON A ROUTINE BASIS



Supervisors who had employees who requested to telework on a routine basis rated the importance of several factors in their decision to support or deny employees' requests to telecommute on a routine basis.

Factors	Important	Neither Important/ Unimportant	Unimportant
The agency policy regarding telework	85%	10%	5%
My perceptions of the employee's reliability, discipline and self-motivation	85%	11%	4%
My interest in supporting my employees' ability to balance work and family	83%	13%	4%
The availability of objective measures to hold the employee accountable for their productivity and performance	75%	17%	9%
The need to ensure office coverage and/or have adequate staff available for high priority, quick turn-around projects	73%	16%	11%
The degree to which agency managers and leaders support telework	72%	18%	10%
The employee's occupation, or status as an intern, trainee or new employee	72%	19%	10%
The employee's recent performance appraisal rating	72%	21%	8%
The need to retain an individual high-performing employee	62%	25%	13%
The degree to which I have experience managing teleworkers	59%	27%	15%
The need to support and facilitate interpersonal relationships and collaboration among employees	59%	29%	12%
The need to be an attractive employer that can recruit and retain high quality employees	59%	27%	14%
Issues regarding actual or perceived fairness or discrimination among employees	52%	33%	15%
The degree to which I have experience as a teleworker myself	49%	28%	23%
The ability to control who does it	32%	40%	28%
The possibility that the employee will file a grievance or EEO complaint if I deny the request	15%	40%	46%

*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

APPENDIX F: IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS IN EMPLOYEES' DECISIONS TO NOT REQUEST APPROVAL TO TELEWORK ON A ROUTINE BASIS



Employees who did not request approval to telework on a routine basis—at least 2 days per pay period—indicated the importance of several factors in their decision to not request approval.

Factors	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Unimportant
I prefer working in the office (e.g., it is more appropriate for my job; easier to keep up with what is going on in the office; avoids home distractions; helps keep work and non-work separate, etc.).	48%	26%	26%
It might hinder teamwork, collaboration, or communication with others in the workplace.	41%	33%	26%
I do not believe my request would be approved.	33%	34%	33%
It might hinder interpersonal relationships with others in the workplace.	31%	38%	32%
I am not eligible (e.g., because of my occupation; the type of work I do; or my status as a trainee, intern or new employee; or because I am a supervisor).	29%	36%	35%
I do not have access to the necessary equipment or facilities for telework.	29%	31%	40%
It might negatively impact my productivity or performance.	28%	36%	36%
It might irritate or frustrate my supervisor because he or she does not like telework.	22%	40%	38%
Information security cannot be assured.	19%	36%	46%
I might miss important training or developmental opportunities.	18%	37%	45%
We do not have objective performance measures to track productivity or performance.	16%	46%	39%
I would have to give up my alternative Work Schedule (AWS).	10%	49%	41%
Teleworkers in my organization do not have the same opportunities for career development as nonteleworkers do.	7%	51%	42%
Teleworkers in my organization don't seem to be promoted as often as nonteleworkers.	7%	53%	40%

*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

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