**Telework**

**Business Case for Managers**

Telework provides an opportunity for agencies to consider and accommodate individual employee needs while also maintaining optimal employee performance and continuing agency operations. The [Telework Enhancement Act of 2010](https://www.telework.gov/guidance-legislation/telework-legislation/telework-enhancement-act/) gives Federal agencies the freedom to define the types of arrangements and parameters for participation within their telework policies. Agencies retain both the discretion and the obligation to determine employee eligibility for telework subject to business-related requirements, operational needs and the limitations of the law and applicable collective bargaining agreements. Overall, telework is a valuable resource that should be viewed as a benefit for the organization, not just a convenience for employees.

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**RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF VALUED EMPLOYEES**

Research shows that for employees, flexibility in work hours and location are two of the most valued non-monetary awards that an organization can offer. Providing employees with the kind of workplace flexibilities that allow them to balance the needs of their families and responsibilities of their jobs is one way for the Federal Government to recruit talented candidates. Data from the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) revealed that [78 percent of employees who telework](https://www.fedview.opm.gov/2015FILES/Infographic_2015_FEVS_Results.pdf) say they are satisfied with the program. Telework also acts as a retention incentive for valued employees to stay with an agency instead of opting for retirement or employment elsewhere.

**PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY**

Research has shown that telework is connected to important work outcomes, including job performance and productivity. A recent study demonstrated that supervisor-rated job performance was evaluated as higher for teleworkers than for non-teleworkers.[[1]](#footnote-1) Additionally, research on why people telework has shown that productivity, specifically increased work efficiency and performance, is one of the primary motives that underlie employees’ desire to telework.[[2]](#footnote-2) By allowing employees to work under conditions best suited to their needs, telework can promote improved performance and productivity.

**EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES**

Compared to employees who face barriers to telework, teleworkers have more positive job attitudes, including higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment. Additionally, [FEVS data from 2016](https://www.fedview.opm.gov/2016FILES/Keys_Unlocking_Engagement.pdf) indicate that work-life balance is one of five key factors that drive an engaged workplace. The data also showed that individuals who telework exhibit consistently higher engagement scores than those who do not. Satisfaction, commitment, and engagement are also associated with a range of valued outcomes for organizations, such as retention and productivity.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to making telework eligibility determinations –** When making determinations regarding employee participation, OPM strongly encourages agencies and managers to be creative in considering the use of telework and other workplace flexibilities. Most, if not all, jobs include some duties that are considered to be “portable” in that they generally can be performed at any location. Examples of portable work are reading reports; analyzing documents and studies; preparing written letters, memorandums, reports and other correspondence; setting up conference calls, and similar tasks that do not necessarily require that an employee be physically present at the regular worksite.

**Employee participation in telework is voluntary** – The Telework Enhancement Act does not mandate telework or promote telework for its own sake. Instead, it asks agencies to implement telework as a workplace flexibility that assists the agency to maintain continuity of operations and reduce management costs while also improving Federal employees' ability to balance their work and life commitments.

**Telework is not an employee right** – Federal law requires agencies to establish telework programs but does not give individual employees a legal right to telework. That being said, it is clear that the intent of the laws on telework is to encourage agencies to allow employee participation in the telework program to the maximum extent possible without diminished employee performance.

**RESOURCES & GUIDANCE**

[Telework.gov – The official website of the Federal Government's telework program](https://www.telework.gov/)

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) maintains this website to provide easy access to information about telework in the Federal Government, in accordance with the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010.

[Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey](https://www.fedview.opm.gov/)

The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is a tool that measures employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. Survey results provide valuable insight into the challenges agency leaders face in ensuring the Federal Government has an effective civilian workforce and how well they are responding.

[Telework Enhancement Act of 2010](https://www.telework.gov/guidance-legislation/telework-legislation/telework-enhancement-act/)

This legislation is a key factor in the Federal Government's ability to achieve greater flexibility in managing its workforce through the use of telework. Both the Act in its entirety and highlights of the Act and its provisions can be found on Telework.gov, under Guidance + Legislation.

[Guide to Telework in the Federal Government](https://www.telework.gov/guidance-legislation/telework-guidance/telework-guide/)

The Guide to Telework in the Federal Government outlines practical information to assist Federal agencies, managers, Telework Managing Officers, other staff responsible for implementing telework, and employees.

1. Gajendran, R. S., Harrison, D. A., & Delaney-Klinger, K. (2014). Are telecommuters remotely good citizens? Unpacking telecommuting’s effects on performance via i-deals and job resources. *Personnel Psychology*, *68*, 353–393. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Shockley, K. M., & Allen, T. D. (2012). Motives for flexible work arrangement use. *Community, Work & Family*, *15*, 217–231. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)