



**BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR IMPROVED TELEWORK POLICIES
IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

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Introduction

NVTC has agreed on 10 prioritized telework recommendations, which it is submitting to Pierce Homer, Secretary of Transportation of Virginia, for his further consideration. The recommendations are listed in the last section of this report. As described below, promising telework initiatives are underway at all levels of government and the private sector but given the enormous potential to reduce traffic congestion and clear our air, NVTC believes more needs to be done to provide strong leadership and cut through bureaucratic red-tape and institutional inertia. NVTC's recommendations call on state government to take the lead in accomplishing these improvements.

According to the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments, telework is defined as “*wage and salary employees who at least occasionally work at home or at a telework or satellite center during an entire workday, instead of traveling to their regular workplace.*” In reporting the extent of telework in this region, MWCOG further refines that definition to specify that a teleworker does so at an average of 1.36 days per week (this is the average based upon the range of respondents who telecommute as many five days per week to respondents who commute less than one day per month).

The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that commuters in the Washington DC region spend an average of 69 hours stuck in traffic each year, a number that continues to rise and which places Northern Virginia as #3 in the nation for worst traffic congestion. As a result of severe congestion the region has had to look at alternatives to ease these challenges. One of those alternatives is telework.

Telework offers great promise to ease traffic congestion and clean the air in the Metro Washington Area. Residents in the region have access to technology and many have jobs that are telework appropriate. More and more government agencies and private companies in the commonwealth are embracing teleworking as a practical alternative for their employees. However, getting management buy in, developing trust with their workers and making the shift to results-based management and institutionalizing opportunities through outreach to Human Resources Departments continue to be challenges for governments and private industry alike. Middle management continues to struggle with the concept in terms of personnel management and ensuring that they are achieving maximum productivity from their teleworking employees.

What follows is a comprehensive report on the emergence of telework into the mainstream working culture. Perspectives from a federal, state and local level are also offered.

The Emergence of the Telework Concept Into the Mainstream

Telework as a viable choice over traditional commuting continues to develop and take hold in the mainstream. According to Nicole Ellison in her book Telework and Social Change¹, “True social change usually takes about fifty years and, in truth, teleworking is ahead of the social learning curve.”

According to an article² by Wendell Joice, Ph D, Research Psychologist of the U.S. General Services Administration’s Office of Government-Wide Policies, recent studies, such as those from the International Telework Association (ITAC), indicate that there is a gradual but steady increase in both utilization of and interest in work arrangements that allow employees to work at least part of the time at alternate worksites in or close to their residences. Joice states, “Such work arrangements, commonly known as telework, telecommuting, or flexiplace, have been in use for well over a decade, and as it grows in prominence, telework seems poised to become a mainstream workplace option with global applications rather than an occasional perk.”

Extent of Teleworking in the U.S.

Estimates of the number of U.S. workers teleworking now and in the future vary. A recent Department of Energy study³ projects the number of U.S. telecommuters to reach 17.5 million in the year 2005 (16% of all workers), and 29.1 million in 2010 (27.4% of all workers). Especially here in one of the nation's most congested areas, telework can make an important, positive contribution to the region's economic viability and quality of work-life.

According to a March 2002 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics survey, one in seven (14%) American workers worked at home at least once per week during 2001.

Access Markets International Partners, a New York based telecom and internet research group, predicts that more than half of the U.S. workforce (approximately 67 million people) will telework in some form by 2006, bringing this alternative work option into the mainstream.

¹ Ellison, Nicole. Telework and Social Change: How Technology is Reshaping the Boundaries Between Home and Work. (Praeger, 2004).

² Joice, Wendell, “The Evolution of Telework in the Federal Government,” Executive Update Online February, 2003.

³ Department of Energy, 1998.

Tangible and Intangible Benefits to Telecommuting

A primary goal of telecommuting continues to be as a congestion mitigation tool; however telecommuting has a greater potential to address the challenges faced by communities affected by urban sprawl. If workers are able to disassociate their housing choices from their actual work location telecommuting has the potential to change the structural make-up of communities. Telework experts warn decision makers to be vigilant and ensure that telework doesn't actually drive sprawl and instead use it as a tool to "shape a new kind of balanced, urban lifestyle."⁴

Teleworking, when properly managed, has many advantages over traveling to a central office:

For the Employer:

- Increases productivity
- Reduces overhead and occupancy costs
- Helps recruit and retain good employees
- Improves attendance
- Increases efficiency through advanced technology

For the Employee:

- Increases productivity
- Promotes job satisfaction
- Reduces commuting time
- Reduces transportation expenses
- Improves quality of life (more family and personal time, less stress)

For the Community:

- Decreases traffic and highway congestion
- Lessens parking problems
- Decreases air pollution

⁴ Robinson, Nancy "Home Office Space: Freed from Their Cubicles, Where Will Commuters Go Instead?" The Next American City October, 2004.

- Reduces energy consumption
- Increases time for civic involvement

A 1999 Telework America (a public-private education effort funded by the non-profit International Telework Association and Council - ITAC) survey discovered that **companies in which employees telework can save up to \$10,000 per teleworker, per year in reduced absenteeism and retention costs.** As part of its Telework America program, ITAC has conducted ongoing research to better understand how Americans are working from home and other locations.

According to Professor Patricia L. Mokhtarian, Director of the Telecommunications and Travel Behavior Research Program at the University of California, Davis's Institute of Transportation Studies, telecommuting is not for everyone. "Many people just don't have the drive to telecommute," she says. "The natural level of telecommuting in the workforce is relatively modest. The real barrier is usually something institutional or social or psychological."⁵

Telework and the Federal Government

The Washington, DC metropolitan area is one of the more active locations for telework. Some of this DC-area activity emanates from the region's largest employer, the federal government.

The federal government has had an enlightened approach to telework for over a decade. It has determined eligible employees, set agency goals and mandated compliance. It measures and reports progress and maintains helpful websites to promote new teleworkers.

In addition to general legislation (Public Laws 104-52, § 620 (31 USC 1348) of Nov. 19, 1995 and 105-277, Omnibus Appropriation Act, Title IV, § 630, of Oct. 21, 1998:) that created telework mandates, the General Services Administration (GSA) was given legal authority in 1994 to establish telework centers where appropriate under Public Law 103-123; (107 stat. 1226). This law provided funding for the acquisition, lease, construction, and equipping of telecommuting centers in the Washington DC area.

Throughout the process of developing the federal telework program, Congress played a significant role. As early as September of 1992, Congress authorized GSA to set aside \$5 million to:

1. Establish telecommuting centers in the greater Washington, D.C. area (Public Law 102-393); and
2. Promote and implement telecommuting within the federal government.

⁵ Robinson, Nancy "Home Office Space: Freed from Their Cubicles, Where Will Commuters Go Instead?" The Next American City October, 2004.

In 1993, Congress modified that legislation by increasing the appropriation to \$6 million. The project born of this appropriation became known as the Interagency Telecommuting Pilot Project.

Due to the success and popularity of the Interagency Telecommuting Pilot Project, Congress appropriated another \$5 million in 1995 for the expansion and continuation of the telecommuting center project in the metropolitan Washington area. GSA then began establishing partnerships in several localities around Washington, D.C. to plan, manage, and promote the telecommuting effort in their geographic areas.

In October of 1998, Congress passed an Appropriations Bill that included \$2.1 million for the acquisition, lease, construction, and equipping of "flexiplace telecommuting centers."

Legislation, Public Law 106-346, Section 359, enacted in October, 2000 mandated goals and timetables for increased federal utilization of telework:

"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. Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall provide that the requirements of this section are applied to 25 percent of the Federal workforce, and to an additional 25 percent of such workforce each year thereafter."

To provide additional structure for government managers and workers, GSA established www.telework.gov, a comprehensive website designed to assist agencies, management and employees, at all levels, with understanding and implementing telework programs.

Beginning in 2001, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and GSA conduct an annual survey of teleworking in the federal government.

In their State of Teleworking in Government 2004 report, OPM and GSA reported that the number of telework-eligible and teleworking employees continues to grow. In 2003, federal agencies nation-wide reported that a total of 751,844 employees (43 percent) are eligible to telework, compared with the 625,313 employees (35 percent) reported in 2002. This represents an increase of 126,531 (more than 20 percent) telework-eligible employees.

For the purpose of this report the federal government defines telework--using the definition from P.L. 106-346-- as "an alternative work arrangement for employees to conduct all or some of their work away from the primary workplace. This concept can be applied to a variety of work experiences. The work location might be a residence, a telecenter [described later in this document], an office closer to the employee's residence, or another acceptable location. The telework schedule may be fixed or episodic." Further, an eligible employee is one "whose job may typically be performed at least one day per week at an alternative workplace."

According to the Office of Personnel Management, the number of employees teleworking grew from 90,010 in 2002 to 102,921 in 2003. Most noteworthy is that from the first telework survey in April 2001 (when 53,389 employees were teleworking) until October 2003 (with 102,921 reported federal teleworkers) there has been an overall increase of 93 percent in the number of employees teleworking.⁶

For this annual survey teleworkers are divided into two categories: core and situational. To qualify as a core worker, federal employees must telework at least one day per week. Situational teleworkers must telework at least one day per month. Core teleworkers averaged six days per month and situational teleworkers averaged three days per month.⁷

The conclusion of the report is that telework is growing steadily in the Federal Government, whether measured by the number of employee's teleworking or by the growing maturity of agency telework programs. Telework is slowly but steadily moving into the mainstream, as an expected part of an effective agency's personnel strategy, rather than as a "special" program needing a great deal of external support.

Thanks to the efforts of Congress and the work of GSA, other important telework-related initiatives are now underway. The White House and GSA are undertaking efforts to establish better links between telework and emergency preparedness. Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia has recently introduced in Congress "The National Telecommuting and Air Quality Act." This Act would establish an air pollution credits trading program, which would offer organizations credits for avoiding nitrogen oxides emitted from vehicles if they let their employees telework or participate in other pollution-reducing initiatives.

In April 2005, the federal government teamed up with private industry to help them further develop their telework program. A group of public and private executives announced a new web site to help promote telework in the federal government and end the bureaucratic gridlock that has prevented it from flourishing.

The web site -- www.teleworkexchange.org -- is intended to provide information to federal employees about how they can join the telework ranks. It also provides an online chat room called the Water Cooler for federal workers to discuss problems. To promote the new web site, they have distributed bumper stickers that say, "*Honk if you'd rather be teleworking*" and "*My other car is a PC.*"

The web site features calculators that tally the cost of federal commuting and include the potential savings both in cost and environmental impact. Federal

⁶ Office of Personnel Management. Status of Telework in the Federal Government 2004
<http://www.telework.gov/documents/tw_rpt04/status-director.asp>

⁷ Office of Personnel Management. "Status of Telework in the Federal Government 2004."
Figure 2, "Core and Situational Teleworkers"
<http://www.telework.gov/documents/tw_rpt04/status-results.asp>

employees can register on the site and log how many miles they commute to work or save by teleworking.

Industry partners for the partnership, known as the Telework Exchange, include Intel, CDW Government, Citrix Systems and Juniper Networks.

Telework and Private Industry in the Washington Metro Area

As local residents commonly say, however, there is far more going on in the DC area than just the federal government. This is certainly true of telework activity.

A prominent advocate of telework in the private industry for DC is the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG defines a teleworker as a “wage or salaried employee who occasionally works at home or at a telework center during an **entire** work day instead of traveling to their work place.”

In 2001, COG set an aggressive goal: to have 20 percent of the total workforce in the Washington, DC region teleworking by the year 2005. To date, COG reports that 12.8% (or 320,000 people) of the workers in the Metropolitan Washington area telecommute at least 1.3 days per week (up from 11.8% last year), falling short of their goal by 7.2% -- or 180,000 workers.

COG’s latest State of the Commute report indicates that between 2001 and 2004 federal teleworkers in the Washington Metro area increased each year from 6.9% to 11.8% and non-federal teleworkers in the Washington Metro area increased each year from 12.6% to 13.4%.

COG also reports that of those **not** teleworking, 25% have telework appropriate job responsibilities and 19% (or 420,000 workers) could and would telework, if offered the opportunity.

According to COG, teleworkers are reducing congestion, saving fuel and reducing NOx emissions. COG reports that teleworkers are responsible for the savings of over 2 million vehicle miles traveled, 100,000 gallons of gasoline and 1.5 tons of NOx emissions -- **per day.**

COG’s Commuter Connections programs have spearheaded the effort to promote telework. Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Commuter Connections also helps employers establish commuting benefits and assistance programs, including telework/telecommute programs, for their employees. Funding for Commuter Connections is provided to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments by the U.S. Department of Transportation, District of Columbia Department of Transportation, Maryland Department of Transportation, and Virginia Department of Transportation. Many

of the local Commuter Connections members receive grant funding directly from their respective state governments.

Due to the efforts of the federal government and COG an aggressive public policy is in place here. Such an aggressive policy means a dramatic increase in the number of teleworkers in the DC area in a relatively short period of time, and it has spurred a variety of local telework-development activities.

Telework Centers in Virginia

Currently, there are eight telework centers in Virginia all of which are in Northern Virginia and are part of a pilot program sponsored by the General Services Administration (GSA): City of Fairfax, Fredericksburg, Herndon, Manassas, Stafford, Sterling, Winchester and Woodbridge. The Fairfax, Herndon and Manassas centers are managed and operated by NoCommute.org and are a cooperative effort between the GSA, George Mason University's Mason Enterprise Center, and Lockheed Martin. The Fredericksburg, Stafford and Woodbridge centers are a cooperative effort between the GSA and the Rappahannock Area Development Commission. The Sterling and Winchester are not partners with any private entity.

All centers in Virginia were built with GSA funds. According to a 1998 Ernst and Young Telework Survey, the telework centers funded by GSA were built at an average cost of \$400,000 and offer an average of 30 work stations at each location. Operating costs for these 30 work station centers average approximately \$250,000 annually.

The Virginia telework centers are open to both federal employees as well as private sector employees. However, the Manassas center is only open to US citizens.

The average fee charged for a non-federal worker is \$115 per workstation per month for access to a workstation one day per week. Federal workers using the facility are billed for their usage by GSA quarterly. This fee is reimbursed by their agency. By federal law, agencies must set aside \$50,000 annually for this purpose.

The Virginia telework centers can all be found in strip malls or adjacent to corporate campuses. Approved workers have access to the telework centers 24 hours a day.

The telework centers offer the latest computer technology, high speed internet access and on site technical support. They also allow teleworkers to make an "electronic reservation" for a station at a center.

All centers have a digital telephone system with voice mail, LaserJet printers, scanners, shredders, photocopier and a plain-paper fax machine. The computer

equipment at each center includes networked Pentium-class IBM-compatible PCs with high-speed internet access, DSL, individual modems or a modem pool for dial-out, Microsoft Windows, PC Anywhere for Windows, Microsoft Office Professional (Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access), Corel Perfect Office 7 for Windows, Symantec Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Communicator/Navigator, and Norton or McAfee Antivirus. Four of the Virginia centers offer video conferencing.

While teleworking has some impact on congestion related issues in the region, telework centers are not necessarily profitable. The majority of telework centers do not reach profitability or cover their operating expenses from the fees they charge. Most telework centers have also had difficulty filling their workstation seats to maximum capacity. On average, the telework centers are only at 52% capacity on any given day.

The lack of a financially successful telework program has been attributed to many factors: foremost among them is an outdated fee schedule set by the government that fails to adequately recover all operating and construction costs. Other reasons include poor marketing and non-centralized organization of the telework centers.

However, the success of any telework program cannot be measured by profitability alone. It must instead be gauged by a combination of cost savings to the government and employers and the improved quality of life for employees using the center, as well as potential congestion relief and air quality benefits for the entire population.

Various studies completed by the GSA have evaluated the costs and benefits of the telework center programs. While reports in recent years have declared the program a failure when strictly based on financial terms, the 1998 Ernst and Young study noted several of the program's achievements, including improving quality of life for workers, increasing worker productivity, and achieving an "economically attractive alternative to the daily commute." The Ernst and Young report also suggested steps through which telework centers could become a financially viable program. One way to increase the success of a center, by increasing the profitability and making it a more valuable community asset, is to diversify the clients and number of uses for the center. This can be done through a variety of means, including: a small-business incubator, a support facility to home-based telecommuters, executive suites for businesses, a community training internet access center, and a conference or meeting center.

But given the rapid force of technological development, many are now rethinking the concept of these centers; it seems that work at home offers most of the advantages and few of the disadvantages. This has led some to recommend that telework centers need to perform a wider variety of community services. This concept is explained further in the next section.

The Marriage of Telecommuting Centers and Urban Planning

In Compton, California, a private firm, along with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the City of Compton, and the Drew Economic Development Corporation, built the Blue Line TeleVillage, at a cost of \$659,000, to bolster economic opportunity in an otherwise depressed area. Adjacent to a 26-mile light rail system, the teleVillage attempts to reduce community reliance on automobiles by providing virtual services, like ATM access, through interactive kiosks. The teleVillage also incorporates a community meeting room, a state-of-the-art computer center, video conferencing facilities, education programs, and telecommuting workstations. The modest participation fee, no more than \$10 per family per year, and the walking distance to most local residences ensures community-wide accessibility.

In contrast to Virginia's telework centers, these centers offer one stop high tech "shopping" for area residents who may not otherwise have access to the latest technology. Overall 620 memberships were sold during the demonstration period of nine months from 91 different zip codes in central Los Angeles, Santa Monica and the Orange County border, suggesting that there was wide spread interest in the TeleVillage concept. The concentration of members came from 3 zip codes (52% from 3 zip codes). Consistent with the design concept the teleVillage functioned as an activity center for the immediate area as intended. Overall, participants rated the Blue Line TeleVillage demonstration project was deemed successful. By marrying technology and old-fashioned community planning, the Compton facility's success is encouraging for future projects.

Riverdale, located just outside Chicago, is a 110-year-old Frederick Law Olmstead-designed village in need of economic redevelopment. The village will begin its transformation with a network station and e-Village. Telecommuting can play a significant role in creating more communities with a relative balance of jobs, housing, services, recreation, and amenity. Seimbab consultants completed the technical report in April, 2003 and Riverdale is in search of funding for the effort.

Communities like these offer many benefits to their residents like reducing travel times, fostering economic stability and a better quality of life, and promoting environmental sustainability. E-villages like these can provide attractive alternatives for many people, whether they want to live in city or country.

Virginia's Telework Initiatives

Eight percent of Virginia residents are currently classified as teleworkers (teleworking at least eight days a month or slightly less than two days a week). This amounts to well over 560,000 of Virginia's seven million plus residents. According to MWCOG's 2004 annual State of the Commute report there are 144,597 teleworkers who reside in Northern Virginia and they telecommute an

average of 1.36 days per week. Accordingly, over a quarter of the commonwealth's teleworkers reside in this region.

The 2001 Virginia General Assembly passed a bill that established telework goals for Virginia state employees. Section 2.2-203.1 of the Virginia Code requires a statewide telework policy to be established by the Secretary of Administration. The policy, to be administered by the Department of Human Resources Management, could include an incentive program. The policy is to promote telecommuting or alternative work schedules "to the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance or service delivery." Each agency head "shall set annual percentage targets work schedules. By July 1, 2009, each state agency shall have a goal of not less than 25 percent of its eligible workforce participating..." (Section 2.2-2817.1.B of the Virginia Code).

Another action by the 2005 General Assembly considerably strengthened these Code sections by adding requirements to identify and justify broad categories of positions determined to be ineligible to participate and to include "specific budget requests for information technology, software, or other equipment needed to increase opportunities."

In response to the 2001 General Assembly, Governor Gilmore issued a mandate to implement a telework program in Virginia and gave the task to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT).

According to DRPT staff who administer programs developed to promote telework statewide, telework is enjoying some success and is poised for even better performance in the future, especially if more resources are devoted to the task. Among state agencies, the Virginia Department of Transportation encourages its employees to telework (although we are aware of no explicit goal). There is a basic telework agreement available at www.dhrm.state.va.us/hrpolicy/policy/telecommute1_61.pdf. (although there are reports that agencies seeking to use this agreement are referred to Virginia's Attorney General's office for case by case opinions that discourage widespread use).

DRPT is developing a central website for its Telework!VA program with separate sections for state employees and the private sector. It will have policies and sample human resource manuals available for customization. Some marketing funds have been budgeted but spending has been delayed pending development of this website and training of staff. Some marketing has been accomplished through the Washington Metropolitan Area's Commuter Connections program and telework has been promoted in a television campaign as part of the Springfield Interchange congestion mitigation program. The goal of the pending marketing effort will be to raise the 1.36 day per week telework average in Northern Virginia up to two days per week.

DRPT established Telework!VA, to provide financial incentives-- up to \$35,000 (\$3,500 per employee for up to ten employees) per employer. The program is administered by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

(MWCOCG). The program offers consultant assistance, equipment lease terms and options for the employers.

To date, 60 companies have accessed the funding currently available to start up a telework program and the Telework!VA pilot program through MWCOCG has awarded nearly \$320,000 of grants.

In order to qualify for the Telework!VA grants, participating business sites must be a private for-profit business enterprise or non-profit organization classified as such under Section 501(c) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code and located in Northern Virginia. Priority is given to the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford, Spotsylvania and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax, Fredericksburg, Manassas and Manassas Park. Applicants must have a minimum of 20 employees working from the Northern Virginia site.

A pilot program evaluation conducted in August, 2003 provided valuable information about the current Telework!VA program.

First, it appeals primarily to small and mid-sized companies. Second, the incentives currently offered are not high enough to motivate large companies. Third, not all companies require the service of a consultant and finally, there is a lot of "red tape" to get through to receive reimbursement resulting in too much time (six to nine months) passing between the initial application and the actual contract signing.

However, Telework!VA has addressed these issues and has made the contracts less onerous. They've simplified the program and increased flexibility. They are preparing to increase their marketing efforts by conducting focus groups with businesses and conducting internet surveys through the Chamber of Commerce.

To date DRPT reports receiving over 61,600 web hits, over 600 phone inquiries and over 300 site visits. They are expanding the program to all Virginia workers vs. Virginia residents only. They are modifying the Telework!VA program to transfer consultant activities to the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) representatives in each jurisdiction, for a more hands on approach than has been offered by COG. They began training a sales outreach force in May, 2004. They will roll out an incentive based program in July 2005 in Richmond and Hampton Roads.

DRPT is also developing a non incentive based, sustainable program which can be implemented state-wide and which will include a web-based self help resource including on-line e-learning training, sample policies, testimonials and an employee handbook, similar to the federal www.telework.gov site. Telework!VA will also continue promotional activities with Commuter Connections and through printed materials, such as brochures and fact sheets.

DRPT awarded the Dulles Area Transit Association (DATA) a \$100,000 grant to promote Telework!VA in Northern Virginia to supplement the outreach efforts that are conducted by DRPT and MWCOCG. Currently DATA is conducting outreach

seminars for area businesses and educating them about the Telework!VA program.

Telework and Local Governments

Fairfax County

Local governments are also taking significant steps to implement telework programs for county and city employees.

Fairfax County defines telework as allowing employees to work from a home-based office or local work center during normal work hours, instead of commuting. Fairfax County government began their teleworking program with 50 employees in 1995. During that year, those teleworkers saved a total of 180,000 commuting miles and 6,000 commuting hours.

Currently, more than 825 county employees telework an average of 1-2 days a week. An expansion plan is underway to raise that number to 1,000 by the end of 2005. Fairfax County reports that 5,000 of its 11,000 employees have positions that could allow them to telework. Accordingly, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisor's goal of 10 percent of eligible employees teleworking one or two days per week is within reach.

Arlington County

Arlington County has created the Telework Advisory Network. This unique program was created as an opportunity for Arlington County employers to obtain peer advice to start or formalize telework programs. They have defined telework as the ability to work from home or a satellite office. They tout telework as a progressive benefit that meets the needs of today's competitive business environment. The Telework Advisory Network enables employers to receive from a major Arlington County employer, information and advice about setting up a telework program.

Loudoun County

The County reports that 10 to 15 percent of regular employees -- about 300 people -- telecommute at least one day a month. Over the next six months the county hopes to expand that to 15 to 20 percent of eligible employees.

City of Falls Church

Falls Church just instituted its own telework program and defines telecommuting as a "flexible work arrangement between an employee and the City that allows eligible employees to complete specific work assignments from a remote work site other than the office." Their telework program provides either Core or Situational opportunities for city employees.

Core teleworkers are defined as having “off-site work hours that are designated on a regular basis – e.g. every Wednesday.”

Situational teleworkers are defined as “off-site work hours that are determined on an as-needed basis.”

Once the Telecommuting Work Application is approved and in place, employees must complete a Task Summary Sheet for each pay period in which they telecommute. Situational telecommuters must also complete and receive approval for the Telecommuting Work Agreement prior to telecommuting.

Falls Church is also rolling out a Commuter Incentive Program to encourage employees to find alternatives to driving alone to work

The cities of Fairfax and Alexandria are still developing telework policies for their employees, but they actively promote teleworking to businesses and residents in their jurisdictions.

NVTC Recommendations

With federal and state governments taking the lead on this issue, and assisting local governments as needed, businesses will be encouraged to follow thereby increasing productivity in this information age, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, reducing toxic emissions, and creating a better quality of life for our citizens.

NVTC has identified the following possible actions to increase the effectiveness of teleworking in our region and statewide and has listed them in priority order.

Prioritized Recommended Actions For The Commonwealth To Take The Lead In Implementing Effective Telework Programs

1. The commonwealth should implement existing statutes by establishing specific goals for telecommuting by its own employees, especially for those located in dense urban areas, on an agency by agency basis. At the very least one or more state agencies should be designated as pilot agencies for the commonwealth to get the ball rolling.
2. Use existing federal or local telework agreements as a model to offer state employees quick and easy on-line access to facilitate necessary documentation of employee performance requirements, since the current state agreement is not serving that purpose.
3. As directed by state statute, conduct telework audits to identify which state employee positions (at every level) are or are not applicable for telework, using the federal government audit as a model. Be certain to identify institutional and technological barriers.

4. Develop and promote clear telework policies, educational tools and sample HR manuals that can be customized. Use the federal www.Telework.gov as a model. Conclude work on the state website and begin to use it.
5. Centralize telework information -- it needs to be clear and concise. Maintain accurate statistics on eligible state employees, agency goals, and actual teleworkers using common definitions. It should be as easy as one stop shopping for an individual or business. The federal government has successfully done this—so too should the commonwealth and the region for its employees and as a model for local governments and the private sector.
6. Initiate an aggressive marketing campaign to promote telework at both state and local levels as a team effort. Clearly brand telework as another piece of the multimodal “pie”—offering yet another choice for commuters. This means marketing telework as a viable sustainable solution that doesn’t have to be a full time commitment.
7. Identify adequate and sustainable funding for the Telework!VA program including outreach and website promotion. Find a dedicated state source to support marketing efforts, web site and centers without intruding on existing sources for transit.
8. Create a Virginia telework council. NVTC recently sent a letter to Governor Warner referencing past efforts by Del. Jim Scott and others to create such a council. The council should also be responsible for a significant education and outreach effort designed to increase knowledge, understanding and benefits of teleworking for Virginians.
9. Provide tax incentives for companies to implement programs. Reimburse employers/employees for the costs of phone and internet services for telework. Develop strong partnerships with private industries that sell equipment to support teleworking and encourage equipment discounts and donations to regional telework centers. Tie donations or discounts to a cross marketing campaign with private industries that will benefit from additional equipment sales.
10. Consider whether the usefulness of telework centers could be enhanced with broader community benefits and services, similar to the televillage or e-village concepts in California and Illinois. Alternatively, determine if telework centers are no longer viable since telecommunications improvements have made work at home such an attractive possibility. If so, direct resources to more productive uses.