

MAKING TELEWORK WORK - WHAT IT WILL TAKE FOR VA

1. **Telework/Telecommuting should be treated as a unique Node of Secretarial activity, responsible directly to the Governor's Office for an initial period of 5 years.** This line of control will demonstrate to employers in the Commonwealth that Telework is not a temporary fad, but recognition that technology has created a new way of working that is being embraced by Virginia as a demonstration of its pragmatic National technology leadership. Because teleworking cuts across the silos of transportation, labor employment, HR, social services, education and technology. **Funding should be jointly contributed from the budgets of these Agencies.**
2. **The Commonwealth should mandate that 20% of the State's government workforce, unless demonstrated in writing that a job activity is not telework eligible, will telework.** This is similar to AZ and NC legislation. The difficulty here will be that Agencies will use the "non-eligible" wording as an excuse to say that none of their jobs are teleworkable! Anticipating this objection (compliance loophole), set in place tight definitions of what are "non-telework eligible activities". The Commonwealth should lead by example.
3. **A "Telework Extension Service"**, similar to the USDA Extension Service, should be deployed to help all sectors and regions, not only those with air quality & traffic congestion issues, by providing telework implementation consulting services. Many employers would like to adopt telework strategies, but do not know how to do it. To implement this service quickly, build on the telework industry's non-profits as the providers/coordinators/trainers to help all sectors and regions by providing telework implementation advisory services.
3. **Allow 100% depreciation during year one or Tax Credits to employers for hardware, software, office furniture and other telework enabling expenses** when a teleworker is redeployed to work from home, or a satellite office/teleworkcenter near to home.
4. **Provide incentives to encourage the use of flexible and staggered office hours** to help reduce commute travel during peak congestion times, as part of VA's determination to reduce its Carbon Footprint as its contribution to its anti-Global Warming campaign.
5. **Remove Tax Authority bias against persons taking home-office deductions by establishing a "T2000" form** (T = Telework); a W-2 style form, provided by VA's tax Dept, to be generated by employers and provided to teleworking/telecommuting employees. It will confirm to taxing authorities that the employee is a *bona fide* teleworker working from home as a condition of employment. Thereafter a "T2000 employee" without fear of penalization can properly charge telework-related home office deductions against personal tax.
6. **Remove Fiscal Bias against telework – eliminate Capital Gains Tax (at the time of sale)** levied on that portion of a teleworkers home for which a home-office allowance has been previously taken.
7. **Covenants and local zoning regulations should not unreasonably prohibit an employee from teleworking from a home office**, as a "white collar" office worker, when that employee **must** work from home as a condition of employment or as an accommodation.
8. **Provide "Matching Grants or Tax Deductions" for professional Telework training programs.** The Gartner Group has identified lack of Training as one of the major causes of the failure of Telework programs. This must not be allowed to happen to programs in VA.
9. **Provide targeted grants to encourage the use of telework to create jobs in development areas**, thereby contributing to: employment & population stability in rural and disadvantaged (including urban) areas, providing employment to those with disabilities (including service wounded Veterans and/or their care providers), helping to fill the skilled labor shortage elsewhere in the Commonwealth, and reducing the "Digital Divide".
10. **Promote the construction of a ubiquitous Broad Band Infrastructure and not impose fees/taxes/levies on cable/fiber/wireline/wireless in established rights of way** other than "fair & reasonable" fees for administration & reinstatement of surface areas. [Some states - Utah, Arkansas, FL, KY & MN - are thinking of levying rental fees on a per mile basis. These new charges will likely slow the deployment of high-speed bandwidth, especially penalizing outlying, rural and disadvantaged (including urban) areas → an opportunity for VA to lead nationally].