



## *OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 25, 2003

**TO:** Managing Director

**FROM:** Inspector General

**SUBJECT:** Report on Supervisor/Manager Telecommuting Survey

We have conducted a survey of the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program. We designed and conducted this survey to obtain supervisor and manager perspectives on whether the program is meeting the Commission's goals of increasing productivity, reducing absenteeism, improving employee morale and job satisfaction, and reducing supervisor/ manager oversight or monitoring in accomplishing their respective mission objectives.

We learned from the survey responses that Commission supervisors and managers support the Flexible Workplace Program, primarily because their telecommuting employee's exhibit improved morale and job satisfaction and tend to use a little less leave than their non-telecommuting counterparts. However, they are neutral about how their employees' participation in the program achieves the FCC's goals of increasing employee productivity and reducing supervisor/manager oversight or monitoring in accomplishing their respective mission objectives.

We found that from the responses to questions regarding the complications and impairments to accomplishing mission objectives and recommendations for improvement, supervisors and managers have concerns in these areas. However, we believe that Commission's Flexible Workplace Program policies have already given them the tools and authority needed to address most of their concerns.

As a result, we recommend that the Commission provide training to supervisors and managers to ensure that they are aware of the Flexible Workplace Program's policies and procedures and their authority and responsibilities for supervising their employees participating in the program.

Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact Thomas Cline, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, or me at (202) 418-0470.

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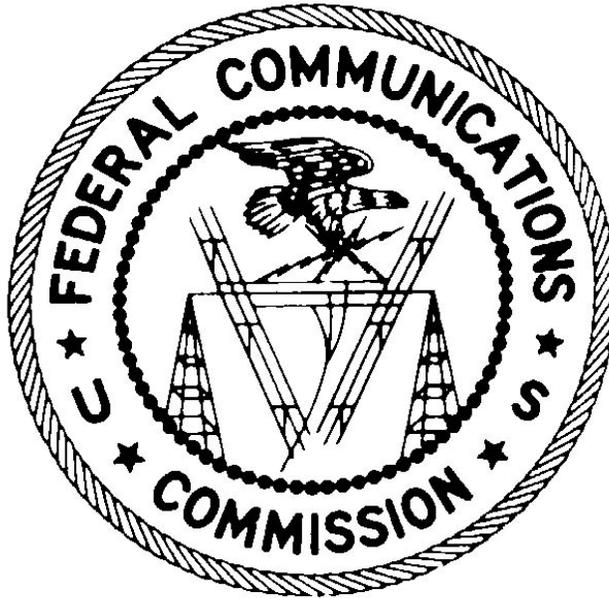
H. Walker Feaster III

cc: Director of Human Resources  
Deputy Director of Human Resources  
Human Resource Policy Advisor

Attachment

# FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Report on Supervisor/Manager  
Telecommuting Survey

Audit Report No. 03-AUD-09-17

November 25, 2003

## Report on Supervisor/Manager Telecommuting Survey

### Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
BACKGROUND	3
OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY	3
SURVEY RESULTS	5
Increased Productivity	6
Reduced absenteeism	6
Reduced supervisor/manager oversight or monitoring	7
Other Telecommuter vs. Non-Telecommuter Responses	8
How the Flexible Workplace Program Benefits Employee Performance in Accomplishing Mission Objectives	8
How the Flexible Workplace Program Complicates or Impairs Employee Performance in Accomplishing Mission Objectives	9
Supervisor/Manager Recommendations to Improve Program	10
CONCLUSION	12
APPENDICES	14
Article 46	
Supervisor/Manager Questionnaire	

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established its Flexible Workplace Program on June 8, 2000 as an alternative work arrangement for Commission employees to work away from their primary workplace. Work locations specified in the FCC's policy can be employees' homes, satellite offices, or other Commission approved "flexiplace" work sites. This practice is also known as telecommuting and/or telework.

The FCC established the Flexible Workplace Program to increase productivity, improve employee morale and job satisfaction, reduce absenteeism at the Commission, and enhance the Commission's Bureau and Office efforts to accomplish their respective missions.

We designed and conducted this survey to obtain supervisor and manager perspectives on whether the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program is meeting the Commission's goals of increasing productivity, reducing absenteeism, improving employee morale and job satisfaction, and reducing supervisor/ manager oversight or monitoring in accomplishing their respective mission objectives.

We found that the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program policy complies with Federal requirements. We also discovered that the FCC's employee participation rate of 21% and 25% for fiscal years (FY) 2001 and 2002 far exceed Federal agency telecommuting averages of 4.2% and 5% for those same years.

We learned from the survey responses that Commission supervisors and managers support the Flexible Workplace Program, primarily because their telecommuting employees exhibit improved morale and job satisfaction and tend to use a little less leave than their non-telecommuting counterparts. However, they are neutral about how their employees' participation in the program achieves the FCC's goals of increasing employee productivity and reducing supervisor/manager oversight or monitoring in accomplishing their respective mission objectives.

We also found that from responses to the questions regarding complications and impairments to accomplishing mission objectives and recommendations for improvement, supervisors and managers have concerns in these areas. However, we believe that Commission policies have already given them the tools and authority to address most of their concerns.

We recommend that the Commission provide training to supervisors and managers to ensure that they are aware of the Flexible Workplace Program's policies and procedures and their authority and responsibilities for supervising their employees participating in the program.



## **BACKGROUND**

Over the past several years, Congress has increasingly sought to encourage widespread use of telework in order to improve Government's ability to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce in a competitive job market, promote environmental quality and energy conservation, improve employees' work lives by allowing a better balance of work and family responsibilities, and reduce work related stress.

Telecommuting became a required policy of Executive agencies with the passage of Section 359 of the FY 2001 Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, Public Law 106-346. Section 359 prescribes, "Each executive agency shall establish a policy under which eligible employees of the agency may participate in telecommuting to the extent possible without diminished employee performance." The law also defines telecommuting as "any arrangement in which an employee regularly performs officially assigned duties at home or other work sites geographically convenient to the residence of the employee," and an eligible employee as "any satisfactorily performing employee of the agency whose job may typically be performed at least one day per week at an alternative workplace."

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established its Flexible Workplace Program on June 8, 2000 as an alternative work arrangement for Commission employees to work away from their primary workplace. Work locations specified in the FCC's policy can be employees' homes, satellite offices, or other Commission approved "flexiplace" work sites.

The FCC established the Flexible Workplace Program to increase productivity, improve employee morale and job satisfaction, and reduce absenteeism at the Commission, which should enhance Commission Bureaus and Offices ability in accomplishing their respective missions.

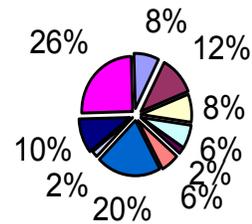
The FCC also recognized that its managers and supervisors play key roles in the success of the Flexible Workplace Program by identifying positions and employees that are eligible for telecommuting, setting performance expectations for telecommuters, parameters for telecommuting arrangements, and monitoring their telecommuting employees' productivity.

## **OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

Survey objectives included obtaining an understanding of the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program, collecting information on how the program operates, identifying areas for improvement, and obtaining assurance that the program complies with applicable laws and regulations.

## Survey Distribution by Bureau/Office

We randomly selected 50 supervisors and managers from a Commission wide list of 306 supervisors and managers and asked them to respond to our survey. The chart on the right shows the distribution of surveyed supervisors and managers by Bureau and Office.



We conducted our survey to find out what percentage of Commission employees participate in the Flexible Workplace Program, how many are regular or ad hoc telecommuters, how many days a week employees telecommute, and the reasons for supervisors denying employee telecommuting requests.

We designed our telecommuting questionnaire to obtain supervisor and manager perspectives on whether the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program meets the Commission's goals of:

- Increasing productivity;
- Reducing absenteeism;
- Improving employee morale and job satisfaction; and
- Reducing supervisor/manager oversight or monitoring.

We also asked supervisors and managers to give us their perspectives on:

- Whether employees charged overtime or credit hours while telecommuting, had appropriate time to interact with co-workers, avoided being assigned their share of unexpected tasks, and/or were more difficult to evaluate;
- How the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program benefits, complicates, or impairs employee performance in accomplishing their assigned mission objectives; and
- What recommendations they had on ways the Commission could improve the Flexible Workplace Program.

This project was conducted as a survey. A survey is the preliminary audit work done before an audit and is not an audit conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards (i.e., GAO "Yellow Book" standards). The purpose of a survey is to gather general working

information on important aspects of an entity, activity, or program and determine the nature and extent of any subsequent audit effort. The scope of this survey incorporated steps necessary to obtain an understanding of the Commission's program, collect information on how the program operates, identify areas for improvement, and obtain assurance about management's assertion that the program is in conformity with applicable laws and regulations. This survey was not conducted nor were the survey results analyzed to determine the statistical validity of the responses. Our intent was to gauge the attitudes of management regarding the telecommuting program by compiling responses to questions about the program.

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

We found that the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program policy<sup>1</sup> complies with Federal requirements and the FCC's employee participation rate exceeds Federal agency telecommuting averages as reported by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for fiscal years (FY) 2001 and 2002.<sup>2</sup> OPM reported that 4.2% and 5% of the Federal workforce teleworked in FY 2001 and FY 2002, respectively. The same report gave the FCC's participation rate at 21% and 25% for those same years.

We randomly selected fifty (50) supervisors and managers to survey. These managers are responsible for four hundred eighty-nine (489) Commission employees of which approximately thirty-two (32%) telecommute. The selected supervisors and managers represent sixteen percent (16%) of the total number of supervisors and managers working for the Commission. Forty-eight (48%) of the employees under the supervision of those we surveyed telecommute on a regular basis and fifty-two percent (52%) telecommute on an ad hoc basis.

Eighteen (18) of the surveyed respondents are listed as supervisors or managers but do not manage or supervise employees, do not have employees who telecommute, or are Bureau or Office chiefs who do not directly supervise Commission employees. Five (5) supervisors and managers did not respond to our survey. We subtracted the above respondents and non-responders from our survey results in order to more accurately present the perspectives of supervisors and managers who have employees participating in the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program. We requested these respondents provide us their perspectives on the benefits, shortcomings, and recommendations for improving the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program and included their responses in the survey results.

Four (4) out of the forty-five supervisors and manager respondents stated that they denied employee applications to telecommute. Three of the four stated that they denied their employees' telecommuting applications because of the nature of their employee's work. One supervisor stated that their employee did not have access to the databases required to perform their job function.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 46, *Telecommuting (Flexible Workplace) Program*

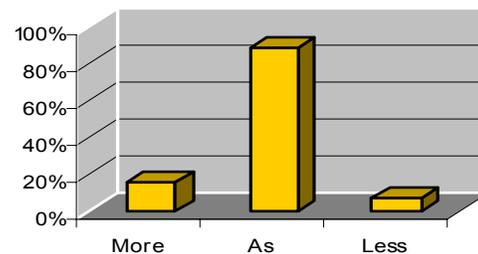
<sup>2</sup> *The Status of Telework in the Federal Government*, OPM's 2003 Telework Report to Congress.

On some of the questions we received more than a 100% response because many of the surveyed supervisors and managers are responsible for several telecommuters and gave multiple responses. We also received less than a 100% response on some of the other questions because respondents did not provide a response.

### **Increased Productivity**

To get supervisor and manager perspective on whether they have noticed increased productivity as a benefit of the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program, we asked supervisors and managers if their telecommuting employees were more, as, or less productive than their employees who don't telecommute. Eighty-nine percent (89%) responded that their telecommuting employees are as productive as their non-commuting employees. Fifteen percent (15%) of the supervisors and managers responding to this question indicated that their telecommuting employees were more productive and seven percent (7%) indicated that their telecommuting employees were less productive than their non telecommuting employees.

**Telecommuter Productivity**



Based on the survey results, supervisors and managers are neutral about the impact of telecommuting on employee productivity in accomplishing their assigned missions from the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program. However, this may represent a measure of success, given that there were concerns that telecommuting would have an adverse impact on productivity early on in the program.

### **Reduced absenteeism**

Our survey addressed whether supervisors and managers felt that their telecommuting employees used more, the same amount, or less leave than their non-telecommuting counterparts. We asked this question in order to get their perspective on whether they were realizing one of the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program projected

benefits that telecommuting employees should use less leave than non-telecommuting employees.

Seventy percent (70%) of the surveyed respondents indicated that their telecommuting employees' used leave at the same level as their non-telecommuting employee. Nineteen percent (19%) of the supervisors and managers responded that their telecommuting employees used less leave than their non-telecommuting employees.

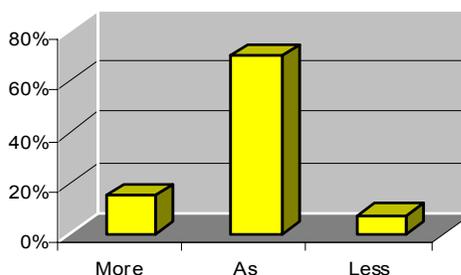
Based on the absenteeism survey questions, it appears that the Commission supervisors and managers feel that they are realizing some benefit in accomplishing their mission because their telecommuting employees have been using the same or less leave than their non-telecommuting counterparts.

### **Reduced supervisor/manager oversight or monitoring**

Our survey also requested the respondents' input on whether their telecommuting employees required the same level, significantly more, or less supervisory oversight or monitoring than their non-telecommuting employees.

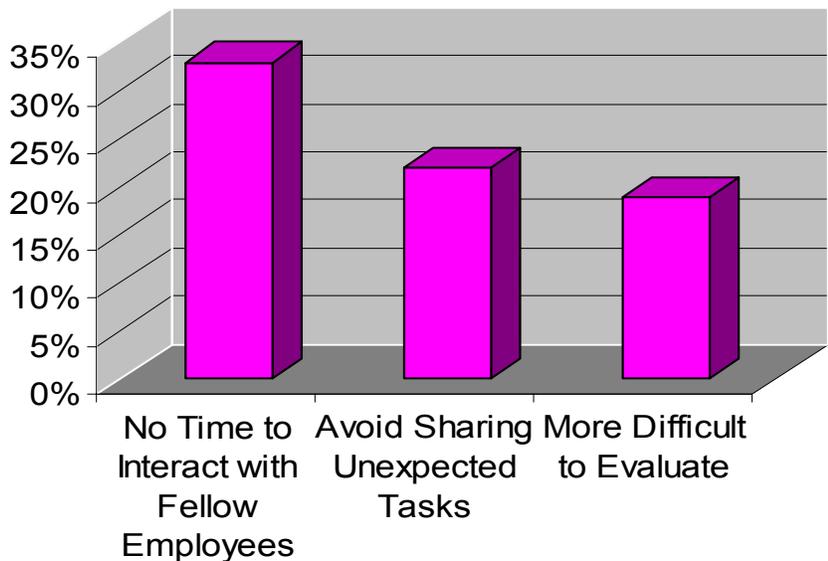
Seventy percent (70%) of the surveyed respondents indicated that their telecommuting employees' require the same level of supervision or monitoring while fifteen percent (15%) indicated that their telecommuting employees require significantly more supervision or monitoring. Only seven percent (7%) responded that their telecommuting employees required less supervision or monitoring than their non-telecommuting employees.

**Level of Supervisory  
Telecommuter Oversight**



Based on survey responses, Commission supervisors and managers feel that, overall, they have to oversee or monitor their telecommuting employees as much or more than their non-telecommuting employees.

### **Other Telecommuter vs. Non-Telecommuter Responses**



We asked supervisors and managers about whether, overall, their telecommuting employees had an appropriate amount of time to interact with co-workers, avoided being assigned their share of unexpected tasks, and whether telecommuters were more difficult to evaluate. Based on the following responses, it appears that supervisors and managers have concerns about their telecommuting employees in these areas:

- Telecommuting Employees have Appropriate Time to Interact with Co-Workers: Thirty-three percent (33%) of the surveyed supervisors and managers responded that their telecommuting employees do not have appropriate time to interact with their co-workers.
- Telecommuting Employees Avoid Being Assigned Their Share of Unexpected Tasks: Twenty-two percent (22%) of the respondents indicated that their employees avoid being assigned their share of unexpected tasks while they are telecommuting. Written comments indicate this observation is not due to active avoidance by telecommuters, rather, it appears to derive from a reluctance to assign day-to-day or “brush fire” tasks to a telecommuter.
- Telecommuting Employees are More Difficult to Evaluate: Nineteen percent (19%) of the surveyed supervisors and managers indicated that their telecommuting employees are more difficult to evaluate.

### **How the Flexible Workplace Program Benefits Employee Performance in Accomplishing Mission Objectives**

We asked supervisors and managers to provide written comments on how the Commission’s

Flexible Workplace Program benefits employee performance in accomplishing their mission objectives. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the forty-five responding supervisors and managers made no comment about how the Program benefits employee performance in accomplishing their mission objectives. The other responding supervisors and managers made several observations that fell in the following broad categories:

- Thirty-three percent (33%) reported that their telecommuting employees work with fewer distractions;
- Twenty-seven percent (27%) felt that employee morale improved as a result of the Flexible Workplace Program;
- Twenty-two percent (22%) reported that their telecommuting employees were more productive while telecommuting;
- Sixteen percent (16%) cited their employees reduced commuting time and stress as a benefit of the Program;
- Eleven percent (11%) felt that increased employee flexibility from the Flexible Workplace Program benefited employee performance; and,
- Seven percent (7%) reported that their telecommuting employees use less leave which helps them in accomplishing their mission objectives.

### **How the Flexible Workplace Program Complicates or Impairs Employee Performance in Accomplishing Mission Objectives**

We asked supervisors and managers to provide written comments on how the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program complicates or impairs employee performance in accomplishing their mission objectives. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the surveyed supervisors had no suggestions or comments in this area and eighteen percent (18%) reported that the Flexible Workplace Program did not impair employee performance in accomplishing their mission objectives. The complications or impairments to employee performance cited by the remaining surveyed supervisors and managers include their:

- Inability to or delay in contacting employees while they are telecommuting [twenty-two percent (22%)];
- Difficulty in scheduling staff or other meetings because of telecommuting employee schedules [thirteen percent (13%)];
- Difficulty in assigning rush or unexpected projects to their telecommuting employees [eleven percent (11%)];

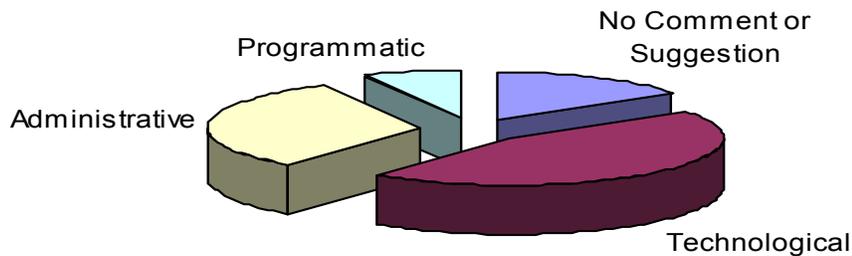
- Difficulty in monitoring employees who are telecommuting [nine percent (9%)] and,
- Employees' inability to access databases and other information services while telecommuting [nine percent (9%)];

Other areas of concern cited by respondents included their reluctance to contact telecommuting employees while they are at home (4%), difficulty in tracking accomplishments (2%), employee reluctance to be flexible with their telecommuting schedules (7%), increased workload burden on their non-telecommuting employees (7%), and getting reduced performance from their telecommuting employees (4%).

**Supervisor/Manager Recommendations to Improve Program**

Finally, we asked the supervisors and managers to give their recommendations on how the Commission could improve the Flexible Workplace Program. As depicted by the chart, Sixteen percent (16%) of the respondents gave no suggestions or comments on how the FCC's telecommuting program could be improved. We grouped respondent recommendations for improving the FCC's Flexible Workplace Program into three broad categories: technological, administrative, and management or supervisory. Many of the responding supervisors and managers gave more than one recommendation for improving the program, so total recommendations came to one hundred-five percent (105%) of the responding supervisors and managers.

**Recommendations for Improvement**



### Technological Recommendations

The largest percentage of survey responses fell into the technological recommendation category. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the responding supervisor and managers' recommendations for improving the Commission's telecommuting program involved their telecommuting employees being provided or being required to have:

- Updated Commission technology and software [Eighteen percent (18%)];
- More access to FCC servers and databases [Thirteen percent (13%)];
- A second telephone line for telecommuting employees using dial-up services for internet access [Thirteen percent (13%)];
- and,
- A Commission provided call forwarding service from the telecommuting employee's office telephone to their telecommuting telephone [Four percent (4%)].

### Administrative Recommendations

Thirty-three percent (33%) of the surveyed supervisor and manager responses were administrative type recommendations for improving the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program. Of that, twenty-five percent (25%) made the following recommendations address administrative, day-to-day concerns:

- More uniform telecommuting guidelines should be issued and enforced by the Commission [seven percent (7%)]. Recommendations in this area include having the Commission define the nature of work being performed in various Bureaus and Offices and identify the resources and tools needed to offer telecommuting opportunities to all interested employees. Another recommended establishing more uniform guidelines for telecommuting and cited the disparity between Bureaus and Offices in allowing their employees to change their telecommuting days. Some offices are very flexible while others allow little or no flexibility in employees changing their telecommuting days.
- Telecommuting application form should be revised [seven percent (7%)]. A supervisor noted that almost every employee's telecommuting application submitted for their approval was filled out incorrectly and it took too long for the union to sign-off on the applications.
- Telecommuting employees should be required to submit summaries of their day's activities and accomplishments to their supervisors after each telecommuting day [seven percent (7%)].

- Management should increase the number of FCC contacts available for answering questions on the telecommuting program [four percent (4%)].

The remaining recommendations for improving the telecommuting in this area included instituting core office days (2%), requiring telecommuting employees to notify their supervisors when they begin and end their work day when they telecommute (2%), requiring annual update courses for telecommuters (2%), and making all telecommuting ad hoc (2%).

### Managerial or Supervisory Recommendations

Eight percent (8%) of the supervisor and manager recommendations were Commission management directed type recommendations that fell into four general areas: increase upper management acceptance of the telecommuting program (2%), allow managers to telecommute (2%), make denial of employees' telecommuting applications non-grievance actions (2%), and make the telecommuting program more flexible (2%).

## CONCLUSION

The survey responses indicate that Commission supervisors and managers support the Flexible Workplace Program, primarily because their telecommuting employee's exhibit improved morale and job satisfaction and tend to use a little less leave than their non-telecommuting counterparts. However, they are basically neutral about whether their employees' participation in the program achieves the FCC's goals of increasing employee productivity and reducing supervisor or manager oversight or monitoring in accomplishing their respective mission objectives. However, this may represent a measure of success, given that there were concerns that telecommuting would have an adverse impact on productivity early on in the program.

We found that supervisors and managers already have the tools and authority to address most of their concerns about complications and impairments to accomplishing their mission objectives and recommendations for improvement. For example, supervisors and managers can:

- Establish in-office core days that require all their employees to be at their official duty station (Article 46, Section 5, C);
- Require their employees to attend scheduled staff meetings, either in person or by teleconference (Article 46, Section 5, C and D);

- Assign rush or unexpected projects to telecommuting employees by calling, e-mailing, or, if its critical, requiring them to return to the office (Article 46, Section 5, C); and,
- Require their telecommuting employees to be available to them and their customers by telephone, e-mail, voice mail, or other communications media (Article 46, Section 5, D).

We recommend that the Commission provide training to supervisors and managers to ensure that they are aware of the Flexible Workplace Program's policies and procedures and their authority and responsibilities for supervising their employees participating in the program.

## **APPENDICES**

## ARTICLE 46

### **TELECOMMUTING (FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE) PROGRAM**

#### **Section 1 - Definition of Telecommuting (Flexible Workplace) Program**

The flexible workplace is a program that permits employees to work at home or at other approved locations remote to the conventional office site. The terms "flexiplace" and "telecommuting" are synonymous and include working at home or in satellite office sites or other approved flexiplace work sites. The Flexible Workplace Program is not intended to prevent an employee and his or her supervisor from agreeing that a particular assignment or task may be performed away from the official work site.

#### **Section 2 - Purpose of Telecommuting/Flexiplace Program**

The Parties anticipate that this program will result in increased productivity, improvements in employee morale, job satisfaction, and reduced absenteeism.

#### **Section 3 - Telecommuting/Flexible Workplace Arrangements**

Positions approved for flexiplace depend on the specific nature and content of the job rather than just the job series and title.

- A. A flexible work place arrangement may be used when there is a recurring opportunity to perform work at an alternate site; e.g. for individual days or hours within a pay period, or for a special assignment or project.

Examples of such work tasks may include: data analysis, reviewing grants/cases, writing decisions or reports; telephone intensive tasks, such as obtaining or collecting information, following up on participants in a study, or setting up a conference; and some computer oriented tasks such as programming, data entry, and word processing. Typically, such tasks require uninterrupted concentration and result in measurable work outputs or products.

- B. A flexible work place arrangement may be appropriate to accommodate an employee with a temporary illness or disability if the employee is capable of performing the job at home or at a telecommuting center.

## **Section 4 - Selection Process**

- A. Participation in the Flexible Workplace Program is voluntary.
- B. Bargaining unit employees may request to participate in the flexible work place program by submitting a written request and flexible work place agreement (Exhibit No.1 ) to their immediate supervisor through NTEU. The NTEU Chapter President will initial and forward the documents to the employee's immediate supervisor. The union initials these documents only to show prior receipt of the application, not to approve or disapprove the application. NTEU will date stamp the application.
- C. An employee's request will be reviewed based on the nature and content of the job and the following criteria. If the employee, and his or her job, meet the criteria of this article, then the flexiplace arrangement will be approved:
  - 1. The employee's current rating of record is at least Fully Successful or Pass on a Pass/Fail system.
    - 2. The employee is not on leave restriction.
    - 3. The employee is not on a performance improvement plan (PIP).
  - 4. The employee has not received any disciplinary or adverse action in the last 12 months that was based on leave or attendance abuse.
  - 5. The employee is not serving a probationary period, is not in the first year of a trial period, or is not occupying a trainee position (supervisors may make an exception to this provision on a case-by-case basis).
  - 6. The employee's fully successful performance of work does not require:
    - a. daily use of specialized equipment or technology that is available only at the official duty station;
    - b. personal face-to-face contacts with co-workers, managers, and/or customers;
    - c. use of work processes or methods which can be more efficiently performed at the employee's official duty station.
  - 7. The employee is not required to provide office coverage, answer phones, receive visitors, sort mail, or provide on-site computer support.

8. The approval of the telecommuting request will not result in insufficient qualified staff to provide adequate office coverage. (See Section E for tie-breaker.)
- D. Normally, the request will be acted upon within ten calendar days. If the request is disapproved, the employee will be notified in writing, stating the reasons for the disapproval. An employee whose request is disapproved may request that the next higher level official reconsider the disapproval of the request prior to filing a grievance.
  - E. Where more than one employee in the same work unit submits a request and the approval of all requests would result in insufficient qualified staff to provide adequate office coverage or there is insufficient FCC-owned equipment to allow all qualified employees to participate, the supervisor will discuss the matter with the affected employees and attempt to reach a mutually agreeable resolution. The supervisor will provide the union with reasonable advance notice of and an opportunity to be represented at the discussion. In the event that a mutually agreeable resolution is not achieved, approval of the conflicting telecommuting requests will be decided by FCC Entrance on Duty (EOD) date and, in the event of the same EOD date, by Service Computation Date. An employee whose request to telecommute is disapproved may file a grievance at Step 2 of the Negotiated Grievance Procedure. If the grievance is not resolved, it may be moved to expedited arbitration under Article 40 without the need for mutual consent of the Parties.

## **Section 5 - Official Duty Station, Duty Hours, Time and Attendance**

- A. Participants in the Flexible Workplace Program shall be permitted as part of a flexiplace arrangement to work any AWS schedule in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article 42, "Alternate Work Schedules," of the Basic Negotiated Agreement.
- B. The official duty station of an employee participating in the flexible work program is the employee's Federal office.
- C. The Employer has the right to direct flexiplace employees to report to the official duty stations due to special circumstances, including, but not limited to, office assignments, meetings, and/or training classes. These should be planned to give the employee notice in time to travel to the official duty station during the regular commuting time. In this situation, time spent traveling will not be

considered hours of work. When the employee is scheduled for a full day tour of duty at the flexiplace and receives notification to report to the official duty station too late to travel during normal commute time, travel time will be counted as hours of work.

- D. As a minimum level of accessibility, employees in the flexible work place program are expected to be at least as available to managers, co-workers, and customers by telephone, e-mail, voice mail, or other communications media during their scheduled daily tours of duty as when working at the official duty station.
- E. Overtime and compensatory time must be approved in advance by an authorized official.
- F. Policies and practices for requesting and using leave shall be in accordance with the Basic Negotiated Agreement.
- G. The Employer will make a good faith effort to reasonably facilitate a telecommuter's use of a telecommuting center.

#### **Section 6 - Space, Equipment and Services**

- A. The Employer will make a good faith effort to reasonably provide the necessary equipment, supplies, and services required for employees to participate in the Flexible Workplace Program. However, this does not preclude employees from providing their own compatible equipment consistent with FCC network requirements and the availability of technical support and services.
- B. Employees may not remove classified material from their official duty stations without prior approval from appropriate authorities.
- C. Flexiplace home sites must have adequate work space, lighting, residential telephone service, power, and adequate security.
- D. The Parties agree that the Employer has the right to inspect the home work site to ensure its suitability. Reasonable advance notice will be given (not less than two workdays in advance of the inspection). The employee can get a union representative to attend as a witness if the employee so requests. Another inspection may be made if there are changes to the home work site which necessitates another inspection.
- E. Employees must comply with all security measures and disclosure provisions,

including pass word protection and data encryption so that the Privacy Act or other security standards are not compromised.

- F. Employees must protect all government records and data against unauthorized disclosure, access, mutilation, obliteration, and destruction.
- G. Employees must ensure that government provided equipment and property is used only for official purposes. Reasonable care should be used in operating all equipment. The servicing and maintenance of government owned equipment is the responsibility of the Employer.

### **Section 7 - Other Provisions**

- A. If a flexible work place agreement is canceled or terminated, the Employer will make a reasonable effort to relocate the employee in work space and to provide equipment and furniture equivalent to what the employee had prior to participating in the flexible work place agreement. It will restore the employee to the same working conditions other similarly situated employees have who work in the office no later than ten calendar days after termination of the flexiplace arrangement.
- B. Employees participating in the Flexible Workplace Program will not be excused from work because workers at the official duty station are dismissed or not required to work due to an emergency if the emergency does not impact the work being performed at the alternative work site. If the emergency occurs at the flexiplace work site which impacts on the employee's ability to perform official duties, the employee will immediately notify the Employer. The Employer will direct the employee to another work site, grant administrative leave, or the employee will make leave arrangements; e.g., annual leave or LWOP.
- C. The Employer will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs (e.g., utilities) associated with the use of the flexiplace work site. The employee does not relinquish any entitlement to reimbursement for appropriately authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Employer as provided for by law and regulations; e.g., long distance telephone calls, FAXs, copying.
- D. Employees who telecommute will be covered by applicable provisions of the Federal Employees Compensation Act.

- E. If the employee's request to telecommute is to accommodate a disability or illness, the employee may be required to provide a medical certification or other relevant information.

**Section 8 – Provisions Applicable During Initial “Rollout” of the Telecommuting Program**

- A. Employees may apply for telecommuting at any time.
- B. Employees in a work unit who are telecommuting will have priority over those entering the work unit, and the tie-breaking provisions of Section 4,E do not apply.
- C. Employees in a work unit who have applications for telecommuting pending within their work unit will have priority over those entering the work unit, and the tie-breaking provisions of Section 4,E do not apply.
- D. Applications will be processed in the order in which they are submitted to NTEU Chapter 209, except during the initial application period. Applications that cannot be approved will be retained by the supervisor and acted upon as circumstances permit.
- E. Employees currently telecommuting will receive no special preference in the application process (except employees who are telecommuting as an accommodation to a disability or Common Carrier Bureau employees in the New York area).
- F. Employees may use personally-owned computers to connect to the FCC’s computer network *only* to the extent that the Employer has determined it is able to provide necessary technical support and services for these personally-owned computers.

REQUEST AND AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE  
IN THE FCC FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE PROGRAM

**TO:**

**THROUGH:** (Name) **Designated NTEU Official**

**SUBJECT:** Request and Agreement to Participate in the Flexible Workplace Program

I wish to participate in the Flexible Workplace Program pursuant to Article 46 of the Basic Negotiated Agreement between the FCC and NTEU. I have read and understand the provisions of Article 46.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Last) (Middle Initial)

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade, Series, and Pay Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

NATURE OF REQUEST (Include all information necessary to evaluate the request, as applicable.)

1. If your request is to accommodate a disability or illness, please attach medical certification and/or other relevant information, and indicate the estimated duration of the disability or illness.
2. Indicate the days you wish to telecommute.
3. Specify where you would like to work off site (e.g., home or at a telecommuting center).
4. Describe the nature and content of the work you could perform.
5. Identify any equipment or services you think you would need to successfully perform work at the alternative work site.

## FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE AGREEMENT

The following constitutes an agreement between:

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(The FCC and the EMPLOYEE named above)

on the terms and condition for the employee's participation in the FCC Flexible Workplace Program as provided in Article 46 of the Basic Negotiated Agreement between the FCC and NTEU. Article 46 is hereby incorporated into this agreement by this reference and by signing this agreement, the employee understands that the provisions of Article 46 are part of this agreement.

1. The bargaining unit employee who volunteers to participate in the Flexible Workplace Program must agree to provisions of Article 46 and the provisions of this agreement.
2. The employee's official duty station is: \_\_\_\_\_  
(include street, city, state, zip code and phone number).  
  
(All pay, leave, and travel will be based on the employee's official duty station.)
3. The employee's alternate work site is: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(include street, city, state, zip code and phone number).
4. The employee, when telecommuting, agrees to report to the official duty station as required for training, conferences, mandatory meetings, and to receive assignments and review completed work. The employee may also be required to report to his or her official duty station for short duration to perform work which cannot otherwise be performed at the alternative work site.
5. The employee's tour of duty will be: \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify days, hours, and location at both the office and the alternative work site).
6. The employee's timekeeper will have a copy of the employee's flexible work place schedule. The employee's time and attendance will be recorded as performing official duties at the official duty station.
7. By signing this agreement, the employee agrees to follow established procedures for requesting and obtaining approval of leave. Failure to follow these procedures may result in the termination of this agreement.

8. The employee will be in a pay status while working at the approved alternative work site.
9. The employee's job performance will be appraised in accordance with the employee's performance plan.
10. The employee agrees to perform only official duties while telecommuting.
11. All government provided equipment is for official business only. Employees are prohibited from using such equipment for private purposes.
12. The Standards of Conduct continue to apply to employees at their approved alternative work site.
13. The employee will apply approved safeguards to protect government records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with the Privacy Act requirements set forth in the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a).
14. The employee is responsible for ensuring the safety and adequacy of the home work place and for ensuring applicable building and safety codes are met. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring the home's electrical system is adequate for the use of government equipment, and safeguarding government equipment from children and pets. (Refer to the Checklist provided by the agency's Safety and Health Manager.)
15. Provided the employee is given at least two days advance notice, the employee agrees to permit periodic home inspections by the government during the employee's normal working hours to ensure proper maintenance of government owned property and work site conformance with safety standards and other specifications of this agreement. The employee has the right to have a union representative attend the inspection.
16. The employee agrees that the government will not be responsible for operations, home maintenance, or any other incidental cost; e.g., utilities, associated with the use of the employee's residence if the residence is the approved alternative work site.
17. Government employees suffering from work-related injuries and/or equipment or property damages at the alternate work site are covered to the extent provided by the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act, the Federal Tort Claims Act, or the Federal Employees Compensation Act (workers' compensation).

18. The employee understands that the employee is covered under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act if injured in the course of actually performing official duties at the official duty station or the approved alternative work site.
19. The employee understands that this agreement may be terminated by the employee at any time.
20. The employee also understands that the Employer may terminate the agreement for cause such as:
  - (a) Failure to meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Article 46 of the Basic Negotiated Agreement.
  - (b) Failure to adhere to the provisions of this agreement;

I AGREE TO THE TERMS AND PROVISIONS OF THIS AGREEMENT:

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Employee's Name, Job Title, Signature, and Date

THE EMPLOYER AGREES TO THE TERMS AND PROVISIONS OF THIS AGREEMENT:

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Manager's Name, Title, Signature, and Date

NTEU has received a copy of this application prior to its submission to the employer:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Designated Union Official) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**  
**Office of Inspector General**

**Telecommuting Survey Questionnaire - Supervisors**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established its Flexible Workplace Program on June 8, 2000. The FCC established the Program to increase productivity, improve employee morale and job satisfaction, and reduce absenteeism.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to survey Commission managers and supervisors about their employees' participation and obtain input on the perceived benefits, complications, and shortcomings the managers and supervisors have experienced or observed since the Commission's Flexible Workplace Program was established.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TITLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BUREAU/OFFICE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DIVISION/BRANCH** \_\_\_\_\_

1. I supervise \_\_\_\_\_ employees.
2. Number of employees for each occupation code and grade of employees supervised (e.g., five (5) GS-0343-14s, three (3) GS-1120-13s, etc.).

<u>Number</u>	<u>Occ. Code/Grade</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Occ. Code/Grade</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Of these, \_\_\_\_\_ employees with the following occupation codes and grades telecommute (e.g., five (5) GS-0343-14s, three (3) GS-1120-13s, etc.):

<u>Number</u>	<u>Occ. Code/Grade</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Occ. Code/Grade</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

4. \_\_\_\_\_ of my employees are regular telecommuters and \_\_\_\_\_ of my employees are ad-hoc telecommuters.

5. Employees under my supervision telecommute (indicate number of employees for each selection below):

\_\_\_\_\_ One (1) day a week.

\_\_\_\_\_ Two (2) days a week.

\_\_\_\_\_ Three (3) days a week.

\_\_\_\_\_ Four (4) days a week.

\_\_\_\_\_ Five (5) days a week.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ of my employees applied to telecommute, but were denied.

7. The denied employees were the following occupation codes and grades (e.g., five (5) GS-0343-14s, three (3) GS-1120-13s, etc.):

<u>Number</u>	<u>Occ. Code/Grade</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Occ. Code/Grade</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____



Require the same level of supervision/monitoring. \_\_\_\_\_

Require significantly more supervision/monitoring. \_\_\_\_\_

Require less supervision/monitoring. \_\_\_\_\_

Have appropriate time to interact with co-workers. \_\_\_\_\_

Avoid being assigned their share of unexpected tasks. \_\_\_\_\_

Are more difficult to evaluate. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Describe how the Commission's telecommuting program benefits employee performance under your supervision in terms of accomplishing your mission objectives.

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