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## PLANNING FOR TELEWORK

The COVID-19 virus presents many challenges and the need to formulate flexible and agile work strategies has never been more critical than it is now. The following are general steps supervisors can take to ready themselves and their team in the event telework becomes necessary.

**For questions regarding telework, stay in contact with your agency Human Resource section, the Division of Personnel, and watch for further guidance from the Governor's office.**

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### Step 1 – Identifying staff who may need (or be asked) to telework.

- Those over 65 years of age
- Those who have underlying health conditions (heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease)
- Those who have been asked to self-quarantine because of possible COVID-14 exposure
- Parents with school-aged children

These are good groups to keep in mind for initial planning. You should also have a plan in place in the event all non-essential staff are asked to work from home.

### Step 2 – Determining what work is and is not appropriate for telework.

When looking at work from home assignments, remember some work is not easily performed in a telework environment. Work requiring the use of personally identifiable information (PII), access to material that cannot be removed from the main office, or an employee's physical presence (e.g., face-to-face customer centers), are often not good options for telework. If your work consists primarily of these types of duties, you may need at least some staff physically at work to maintain basic functions. However, to thin out workspaces and lessen the number of people in the office at once, you might explore other options for your staff. Good options for telework include:

- Assignments that require thinking and writing, such as data analysis, reviewing grants, writing regulations, decisions, or reports.
- Computer oriented tasks, such as programming, data entry (if it doesn't include PII), and word processing.
- Telephone intensive tasks such as contacting customers, setting up meetings, or contacting vendors/suppliers.
- Professional development which can include free online courses (e.g., Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, etc.) or reading books on an area of assignment.
- Project or strategic planning for tasks staff haven't had time during regular work hours.

While thinking about work tasks in a telework environment, you should begin thinking about work products that an employee can deliver (such as a report, summary, etc.) to ensure they have completed the task or assignment. Focusing too much on logged hours is more difficult to accurately confirm without work products. Also, it is a good idea to have each staff member identify

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work products (projects with deliverables, reports, data analysis projects) objectives, and the necessary support. Use the attached **Extended Work from Home Worksheet**.

### **Step 3 –What technology is needed and how will staff communicate?**

As you identify work, you need to begin thinking about what the employee will need to be successful. Do they need a specific software from home or access to free online communication tools? How will they work collaboratively with others? How will they communicate with you? These issues need to be thought out and discussed with staff prior to teleworking. Things to consider:

- What technology is available to support remote communication?
  - Many agencies have access to software for conference calls or video meeting software (such as Skype for Business). What do you have access to already?
  - If there are no already developed options, what free options (e.g., Zoom, Facetime, Google Hangouts, etc.) might be used? Are these allowed by your agency (or the Office of Technology) given the type of work you will be doing?
  - Do you have staff who do not have computers or internet? Can something be sent home, or can they be given non-computer-based work?
- What should staff be communicating, to whom, and how often?
  - Progress/updates on work products
  - Plans for the next day/future work
  - Support needs from others on the team or resources to help complete a task/project
- What are your communication expectations for your staff?
  - Will you require daily group meetings?
  - What should staff be communicating, to whom and how often?
  - Times to meet, what information needs to be shared when you meet
  - Who attends the meeting?
- Do you need to share contact information of team members, include cell and home phones, work and personal email addresses and list of important/frequently used numbers and emails of other department, project contacts, vendors, suppliers?

### **Step 4 – Test everything.**

- If work laptops are available, are they updated with the software needed for telework?
- Have staff attempted to log into known work apps from home?
  - Timekeeping/scheduling, grant tracking, service ticket systems, task management
  - Email/webmail
  - Office 365 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, etc.)

### **Step 5 – While you wait for the call.**

- Prepare ancillary materials to work from home such as books, portable drives, documents
- Create out of office messages and appropriate greetings for email and phones
- Communicate progress and plans with your team