

Telework and Workspace Sharing at GAO

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Genesis of the Telework and Workspace Sharing Program

- GAO has 11 Field Offices with a combined square footage of 191,000 and annual rent cost of about \$6.2 million for FY 15
 - Basic concept is to reduce office footprints by increasing telework and implementing workspace sharing
 - Provides added flexibility to staff plus cost savings for agency
 - Goal to reduce footprint by 40% and realize \$2.5 million annual savings in rent
 - Enhanced telework program is a field office program
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Telework arrangements

- 3 types of telework arrangements
 - Continuing, where employees telework on a recurring basis as part of their regular work schedule.
 - Episodic, where employees telework occasionally on an “as needed” basis.
 - Short-term, where employees telework under a time-limited arrangement to accommodate a special circumstance.

Telework and Workspace Sharing Program Rules

- Employees can telework up to 66 hours per pay period (or 82.5 percent of the time).
 - This is for continuous telework agreements
- Employees are required to report to the official duty station for at least 14 hours per pay period over at least 2 work days.
- Staff who telework 50% or more do not have designated workspace
 - Either share a workspace with co-worker with complimentary schedule, or
 - Use reservation system to find an available workspace

Number of employees teleworking

- Number of eligible employees – 788
- Number who have continuing telework arranges – 552 (71%)
 - 80 percent or more of the time – 171 (22%)
 - 50-79 percent of the time – 88 (11%)
 - 30-49 percent of the time – 144 (19%)
 - 30 percent or less of the time – 149 (19%)

FY 2015 data

Internal Evaluation of Telework Program

- Questions:
 - Evaluate whether the enhanced telework pilot was meeting its goals
 - Identify lessons learned from GAO's overall telework program
 - Provide recommendations for improvement, if needed.
- Methodology
 - Analyzed several timeliness, productivity, and quality measures.
 - Conducted staff surveys
 - Reviewed WebTA and telework data

What we found

- Maintained levels of quality, timeliness and productivity
 - Found no indication that enhanced telework negatively affected quality, timeliness, and productivity of GAO engagements.
 - No differences in meeting GAO's performance goals
 - No statistically significant difference in meeting expected issuance dates
- Enhance telework pilot provided cost savings
 - Net savings of almost \$2 million and about \$7.7 million of costs avoided

What we found (cont.)

- Employees Very or Generally Satisfied but Few Area Need Attention
 - Telework has many positive impacts
 - Ability to manage work/life balance
 - Impact on overall job satisfaction
 - Impact on morale
 - Impact on GAO's ability to recruit and retain high caliber employees
 - Impact on willingness to continue to work at GAO

What we found (cont.)

- Some Area Perceived Less Positively
 - Informal interactions and collaboration negatively affected
 - Feedback from managers
 - Technology – difficulties with the efficient use of technology, such as network speed, document management system instability, poor call quality with VoIP
 - Collaboration tools were not being used as much
 - Working with classified information more difficult.

Recommendations

- Finalize and implement a proactive strategy for addressing the issues and concerns discussed
- Create a telework management/best practices board to address concerns
- Identify and address needed system improvements
- Expedite develop and roll out of training
- Reexamine the effectiveness of GAO's collaboration tools and make enhancements, as necessary
- Continue to monitor and analyze the effect of enhanced telework on GAO performance indicators.

Considerations for Teleworking The Teleworker's Perspective

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Agenda

Telework arrangements

1. Episodic
2. Continuous
3. Short-term

Telework, generally speaking...

1. Home office
 2. Communication
 3. Planning
 4. Supervising staff
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Telework Arrangements

1. Continuous: routine telework
2. Episodic: as needed basis
3. Short-term: time-limited for special circumstances

Telework, generally speaking...

Setting up a home office:

- Separate, dedicated space
 - Reliable phone and internet
 - Printer (with ink)
 - Creature comforts: good chair, standing space, pens/pencils, paper, etc.
 - Remove distractions
 - End your work day
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Telework, generally speaking...

Planning:

- Appropriate work for telework
- Plan ahead to bring home relevant documents
- Use available tools/technology
- Be clear to your team about how to contact you
- Charge your phone for long conference calls

Telework, generally speaking...

Communication:

- Use available tools for phone, e-mail, and calendar
- Communicate with co-workers as frequently as you would if you were in the office
- Interacting with people outside your agency

Telework, generally speaking...

Supervising staff...or being supervised:

- Establishing trust
- Communication is key
- Regular phone meetings may be needed
- Plan to spend a little extra time for 1:1 phone calls
- Spend 1:1 time when you're in the office together

Telework

Questions
