

# State Employee Workforce Return to ~~Work~~ Office

**Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee**



Emily S. Elliott, Director  
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# Current Status of Executive Branch Operations

- Continuing to promote and encourage all state employees and their families to become fully vaccinated.
- Continuing to maintain the COVID mitigation measures that are required in the related Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) Health and Safety Standards.
- **Continuing the return of employees to the worksite, holding more in-person meetings and special events and meeting with constituents to deliver services in person.**
- **State buildings and facilities are open with lower employee capacity in some areas due to an increase in teleworking that will continue after the declared emergency ends.**
- Anticipating the expiration of the COVID public health emergency declaration on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

# Workforce Pivot

- In March 2020, COVID forced acceptance of teleworking and created an immediate shift in thinking about how and where work could be performed.
- The Commonwealth benefited from having a Telework Policy and program that had been in place since 2008 and the Code of Virginia already required each state agency to have a goal of not less than 20 percent of its eligible workforce telecommuting.
- Prior to pandemic, agencies reported roughly 26% of Classified positions as eligible for teleworking with about 19% of those eligible actually teleworking in some capacity.

# Workforce Support

- During pandemic, a State Agency Workforce Readiness Team was formed to identify and address workforce related needs.
  - Members included VITA, DGS, DOLI, VDH, DHRM, VDEM and others.
  - Team focused on agency needs like technology, procurement, facility cleaning, leave and benefit guidance, training for managers and employees on managing by results and use of online conferencing tools, etc.
- Teleworking reported at highest levels ever in the Commonwealth. In many agencies, over 90% of the workforce was actively teleworking.

# Future of the Workplace

- As we come out of the pandemic, agencies are evaluating the impact to the workforce and reimagining what the future workplace can look like based on the lessons learned from the dramatic shift to teleworking.
- Employee survey data indicates varying levels of employee interest in returning to the office.
- Evolving to a “Hybrid Workplace Model” where the focus is much more on how the work is being done, not where it is done with some employees being on site full time and other continuing to telework a set number of days per week.
- **To remain competitive as an employer and to enhance recruitment and retention of state employees, we must continue to embrace teleworking.**
- **We must also continue to keep a focus on measuring and monitoring performance and productivity of an agency and on the delivery of services to meet constituents needs.**

# Measuring and Monitoring Work

- Should not be significantly different based on where the work is performed.
- Agencies have Strategic Plans / Performance Goals and must meet required established federal and state mandates.
- Individual employees are required to have an Employee Work Profile that establishes job responsibilities and performance expectations and for those who telework, a signed teleworking agreement is required.
- Telework agreements include work and performance standards and it is a supervisors responsibility to ensure compliance to the standards, along with evaluating and measuring performance.

# Service Delivery

- Continue to seek and address customer feedback.
- Many lessons learned during pandemic that will carry forward to enhance customer experience:
  - Automation of processes and enhanced technology use.
  - Use of web/online technologies for virtual meetings and conference calls.
  - On site appointment scheduling/systems.
  - Shifting workers to work sites/agencies where needed; expanded mobile or curb side service delivery.
  - Augmenting staff when workload demands exceed capacity.
  - Hybrid teleworking models for office coverage.

# DHRM Action List

- Continue delivery of training and education on workforce practices that support teleworking.
- Actively evaluating recruitment and retention data and what, if any changes, are needed to pay and benefits structure due to an increase in teleworking.
- Finalize report due 9/1 to Committee Chair on how teleworking can be used as a means to reduce operational costs for state government, and recruit and retain workers for state government jobs.



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