

Supporting an Effective Telecommuting Workforce

Pandemics like COVID-19, also known as coronavirus, create a variety of unusual circumstances that you must be able to quickly adjust to. This guide provides information and best practices related to establishing a telecommuting workforce and supporting an effective virtual workplace for your employees and business.

Establishing a Telecommuting Workforce:

The following is a checklist on items a company should consider when temporarily switching to a virtual environment or remote working situation in response to business disruptions like COVID-19:

- Identify which business functions and work positions can be done remotely (at home).
- Identify which specific employees would be impacted by allowing telecommuting.
- Ensure telecommuting employees have proper equipment and services to support a working remotely. This includes cellular phones, computers/laptops, printers/scanners, headphones, and related items.
- Establish appropriate internet and cellular services and identify how any employee borne costs (e.g. increased internet charges) would be reimbursed or supported.
- Review what software, access, log-ons and related support each employee will need to do their job.
- Identify what IT support is required, and if who may need access to your facility.
- Conduct tests of the equipment, connectivity, access and function with each individual employee BEFORE starting remote work if possible.
- Create or review trainings and/or instructions on how to use online video conferencing tools.

Telecommuting Best Practices:

Below is a summary of best practices in regards to maintaining and fostering an effective virtual workforce:

- Establish a telecommuting policy
- Encourage employees to maintain a normal work schedule and to keep a healthy work-life balance.
- Instruct employees and supervisors to hold regular meetings and establish clear expectations.
- Encourage all employees to over communicate with their co-workers.
- Continue education and training for employees through virtual platforms
- Regularly check-in with employees to ensure they have the necessary equipment and resources.

Additional Resources:

- [Iowa State University ITS: Digital Accessibility: Making Remote Work Accessible](#)
- [Gallup: How to Manage Remote Employees](#)
- [Robert Half: Remote Control: How to Make Telecommuting Work for Your Team](#)

For help responding to the COVID-19 emergency or implementing a response plan, contact:

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