

FEDERAL ETC UPDATES

Employee Transportation Coordinator

NIH MOVING 3,000 TO BETHESDA



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced plans to relocate 3,000 employees to its Bethesda campus over the next 20 years.

The NIH campus holds 20,262 employees, already making it the largest employer in Montgomery County. To house the new employees, NIH plans to build 1.6 million square feet of research space and 775,000 square feet of administrative and support space. The plans also call for changing existing surface parking lots into pedestrian malls and parking garages, to add both green space and parking.

However, there is concern that the additional employees are expected to add more than 400 cars to the already crowded stretch of Rockville Pike. According to the Montgomery County Planning Department, there is some worry that the addition of more employees may cause more traffic congestion, and they are working with NIH to address this.

At the Walter Reed Medical complex across the street, the military is planning to replace five existing hospital buildings

with one five story building, and build a 341,000 square foot research facility and a 400-space parking garage.

ONE THIRD OF FEDERAL WORKERS TELEWORK DURING STORMS

With Hurricane Sandy and Snowmageddon affecting our region in recent years, the importance of business continuity through teleworking has been brought to the forefront once more.

“We estimate that approximately one-third of the nearly 300,000 federal employees in the D.C. area telework on days when the government buildings close due to weather,” said Thomas Richards, a spokesman for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

While this is a great statistic and shows that teleworking is important, OPM's latest annual “Status of Telework in the Federal Government” report to Congress, less than eight percent of federal employees in the entire country telework on a regular basis. According to the report, “management resistance” is cited as the primary barrier to teleworking, closely followed by technology.

Although it is clear that teleworking is important, there are still challenges to its widespread use. Commuter Connections has put together case studies that can help federal employers understand how to build telework programs.

On the www.FederalETC.org website, case studies are available that explore what other federal agencies are doing. One such case study is on the back.

CASE STUDY: TELEWORKING AT THE ANIMAL HEALTH AND PLANT INSPECTION SERVICE



Photo courtesy PixbyTommy

The Animal Health and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), headquartered in Beltsville, Maryland, has had a telework program in place for 23 years.

All employees who participate in telework, as well as managers who approve telework, are required to undergo telework training. As of June 2011, the policy of the APHIS Telework Program assumes that all employees and positions are eligible for telework, unless official duties require an employee to be physically present at a worksite on a daily basis and work cannot be performed remotely or from an alternative worksite. This is consistent with the current USDA Telework Policy.

APHIS encountered several challenges implementing their telework program:

- Determining the final language of the telework policy.
- Obtaining buy-in from management and employees and addressing misperceptions about the program and teleworking in general.
- Identifying work positions that are ineligible for teleworking.

The agency offers these tips for success:

- Involve upper management/executive team from the beginning to ensure support.
- Involve the various programs in the writing of the telework policy to increase buy-in.
- Keep unions apprised of policy status and eligibility notification.

To see more on this telework case study, and that of other federal agencies, go to FederalETC.org. For more information on telework programs, or to get assistance in setting up a program for your company, go to www.CommuterConnections.org.

