

FEDERAL ETC UPDATES

Employee Transportation Coordinator

A NEW CULTURE AT GSA USHERS MORE WORK/LIFE BALANCE

In 2013, the General Services Administration (GSA) moved back into their newly renovated headquarters in downtown Washington, where its employees found that their personal real estate had been radically altered.



In an effort to dismantle the bureaucratic approach to work/life that the federal government is known for, GSA administrator Daniel M. Tangherlini has instituted sweeping changes in not only the physical work space but also the work culture; he is urging his employees to work away from their desks.

As part of a larger \$161 million renovation, the GSA took a page from Hewlett-Packard, Deloitte and other tech and consulting firms. Most of the walls at 1800 F St. NW have been pulled down, the premises filled with rolling file cabinets that double as seats; giant whiteboards installed, and lockers for stashing purses and lunch boxes. The once ubiquitous printers and paper shredders are rare. Even Tangherlini gave up his 1,600-square-foot office for an open area with his executive and support staff at Ikea-style desks.

With 3,300 headquarters employees, the GSA represents just a small fraction of the federal workforce but Tangherlini's push could help usher in a new federal culture. It is part of a long debate over how employers can best deploy their workers in the digital era.

Tangherlini is betting that his employees will get more done if they are at home – or anywhere outside the office, for that matter – more often. He wants them to instant-message, Google-chat, e-mail and Internet-call their way through the workday on laptops and smartphones. He is betting that when they do venture into the office, they will work together better and more creatively if closed doors and high cubicles don't get in the way.

Though many managers are nervous about keeping track of their staffs, the key, according to Julisa Mandeville and Charles Hardy, the GSA's chief workplace coordinators, is that managers need to communicate their expectations ahead of schedule. "This is a learning process," said Hardy, "and we don't know all of the answers."

One employee said that it seems to be working as she and many colleagues tend to work more hours from home in a typical work day.

Only time will tell if the new culture takes hold; however, one can't dispute the tremendous savings realized by such changes. Referring to critics of the new approach, "Let's say you don't buy any of that, we can show \$24 million we saved in rent on six leases we don't have anymore," said Tangherlini.



'POOL REWARDS – A FINANCIAL PERK TO START RIDESHARING

Frequently, Commuter Connections is asked by employers to help promote ridesharing to their employees. The great news is that Commuter Connections has many, free services and programs that can assist employers.

One of these programs is 'Pool Rewards.

Launched in 2010 for carpoolers, and extended to vanpoolers in 2012, 'Pool Rewards is a program of Commuter Connections designed to encourage current drive alone commuters to try carpooling or vanpooling in the Washington region. Eligible carpoolers can earn \$2 per day (\$1 each way) for each day they carpool to work over a consecutive 90-day period as assigned by Commuter Connections. The maximum incentive for the 90-day trial period is \$130 in exchange for going online and logging information about carpool trips and for completing surveys about the experience.

Eligible vanpools can qualify for up to \$200 per month when they:

- Are newly formed.
- Originate from D.C., Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, or New Jersey, with a destination anywhere in the Washington metropolitan region (visit commuterconnections.org for a map of the coverage area).
- Register with Commuter Connections.
- Have 7 to 15 total occupants (including the driver).
- Submit an application through one of the authorized 'Pool Rewards vanpool providers.

One of the riders in the first vanpool to join the 'Pool Rewards program, Evon Tameca said, "I never knew that I'd be the vanpool-type of commuter, but my decision has changed my life! The wear-and-tear on my car is reduced tremendously,

and I go to work with a whole new mindset now. It's wonderful!"

Ridesharers can save hundreds of dollars per year. Said Nicholas Ramfos, Director of Commuter Connections, "In these challenging economic times, a little extra money can make a big difference."

"People who rideshare through Commuter Connections have avoided driving more than 11 million miles, and save an average of \$600 per year. That's 20 trips to the moon and back, and equivalent to a year's worth of premium coffee!" noted Ramfos.

'Pool Rewards is just one of the many reasons that ridesharing is a money saving, value proposition.

Other programs and assistance offered by Commuter Connections to assist federal employers in promoting ridesharing and alternative commuting to your employees include:

- Promotion of the Guaranteed Ride Home program that provides a free ride home to carpoolers, vanpoolers, transit riders, and bike riders.
- Promotion of bicycling and participation in the annual Bike To Work Day.
- Assistance in setting up a Telework program.
- Free ridematching through commuterconnections.org.
- Assistance in setting up a SmartBenefits® program.

Finally, employers should go to the newly redesigned Federal ETC web site at federaletc.org to access the many resources available.

'POOL REWARDS
it pays to rideshare

Start a new carpool/vanpool and get paid by 'Pool Rewards using these easy steps!

- 1 Sign up to rideshare with 1 or more people at commuterconnections.org. Must be a NEW carpool/vanpool.
- 2 Sign up for the 'Pool Rewards program within 30 days of forming your new carpool/vanpool at commuterconnections.org.
- 3 Reap the Rewards. Up to \$130 per person for a carpool and \$200 monthly per van.

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS
4 YEARS
commuterconnections.org