



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: 9/11/12
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Tme: 15 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Jeri Muth, Human Resources Director x2816
Director(s)

Contact Info:

SUBJECT: **Teleworking/Flex Schedule Report**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Select_Concurrence

Other Concurrence: Select_Other

As to form: Select_Concurrence

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Select_Concurrence

Recommended Actions:

That the Board receive and file a report regarding the County's progress in supporting and promoting teleworking and flexible work schedules for the County's workforce.

Summary Text:

In March 2011, the County of Santa Barbara implemented a Teleworking Policy (Attachment A) designed to support teleworking for the County's workforce in instances where the employee, the job, and the alternate workplace was suitable for a teleworking arrangement. This Policy was part of an initiative to create a Mobile Workforce Program for the County in order to reduce the County's and its employees' "carbon footprint" in an accountable, customer-focused, and efficient manner.

The Teleworking Policy, which was the first phase of the Project, built upon the County's existing widespread use of flexible work schedules which reduces the number of days employees commute to and from work. The Policy further supports a reduction in commute days by establishing goals to increase teleworking by 5% each year over three years. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the use of teleworking and flexible work schedules in the County.

Background:

In November 2008, the County conducted surveys with all supervisors, managers, and executives to gauge the organization's readiness to consider different approaches to managing the workforce, specifically, through a Mobile Workforce Program. A Mobile Workforce Program requires an organization to think differently about how and where business is conducted, how jobs are constructed, work hours, technology security, and supervisory control. An additional survey was conducted with employees in January 2009. There were more than 500 respondents to the surveys, and in general, the responses demonstrated an openness and willingness to expand telecommuting arrangements and to explore greener ways of working. Additionally, in general, supervisors and managers validated that a Mobile Workforce Program, if properly designed, would be valuable and verified they are able to supervise and ensure the productivity of teleworkers. In addition 90% of employee respondents who telework indicated they were satisfied to very satisfied with the arrangement. Feedback from the surveys was shared with the workforce and the labor organizations.

In July 2009 a labor-management Mobile Workforce Program Team was formed. The team consisted of Human Resources staff, managers from Auditor-Controller, General Services, Planning and Development, Public Health, Public Works, and Social Services as well as representatives from the Deputy District Attorneys Association, Probation Peace Officers Association, SEIU Local 620, and SEIU Local 721. The Project Team met on multiple occasions, conducted research, and made substantive changes to the former policy (the Teleworking Policy).

The new policy was implemented in March 2010 with a one-year goal to increase teleworking, Countywide, by 5% in the first year. From March 2010 to March 2011, the reports showed an overall increase in teleworking of 19%. In part, this may be due to an increased awareness of the necessity to code timesheets in a particular way to capture teleworking hours. In addition, the report covering March 2010 to March 2011 showed seven departments did not have any teleworkers. This was not credible for most of the departments, and it was suggested that this was likely due to teleworkers not properly coding timesheets. Department Heads were briefed on the importance of coding timesheets properly and information was shared with all managers in the County.

From the period of March 2011 to March 2012, reports showed an additional increase of 11% with only six departments having no teleworking hours reported. This improvement is likely a combination of increased teleworking arrangements as well as improvements in employees properly coding their timesheets. Attachment B summarizes teleworking data comparing March 2010 (prior to the implementation of the new policy) through March 2012.

The Teleworking Policy also requires teleworkers to complete an online Orientation to Teleworking and a Working Safely at Home tutorial. Both of these tutorials were created recently will be made available to employees online. Employees will be notified when the online training is available and will be advised to complete it, if they are teleworkers, or considering requesting to telework.

Another aspect of the Mobile Workforce Program is the extent to which employees are afforded the opportunity to work flex schedules. Prior to the preparation of this report, departments were asked to identify:

1. The total number of employees in the department ;
2. The number of employees working a 9/80 schedule;
3. The number of employees working a 4/10 schedule; and
4. The number of employees working some other flexible work schedule that resulted in a reduction commuting days.

The survey showed that nearly 51% of the County's workforce is working a flexible work schedule and all but four departments allow some percentage of their employees to have a flexible schedule. The top six departments with the highest percentage of employees with flex schedules were:

1. Fire
2. Sheriff
3. Public Works
4. Auditor-Controller
5. Child Support
6. Social Services

Of the 3,671 employees at the time of the survey:

- 977 work a 9/80 schedule (one day off every other week or a half-day off every week);
- 313 work a 4/10 (one day off every week); and
- 566 work some other flex schedule (i.e., schedules that are primarily 12-hour shifts).

The County will continue to develop a Mobile Workforce Program not only by encouraging increased teleworking and flex schedules, but also by assessing field services and the way field staff is deployed to determine if there are opportunities for:

- Reducing travel to and from job sites and the field;
- Using videoconferencing to reduce travel to and from meetings;
- Reducing employee travel to and from offices by use of strategically located unassigned office space that can be reserved in advance (hotelling), or simply made available to employees on an as-needed basis without reservations ("hot desking");
- Eliminating unnecessary travel for field employees; and

- Reducing or eliminating the need for dedicated office space for employees who primarily work in the field.

A final element of the Mobile Workforce Program will be to examine the feasibility of a synchronized closure of the majority of County facilities. This phase will not be undertaken until 2013 or 2014.

Attachments:

A - Teleworking Policy

B – Teleworking Usage Comparison

C – Flex Schedules by Department

cc: Department Heads