



# Benefits of Remote Work

## OUR GOALS



Improve Air Quality



Enhance Real Estate Utilization



Increase Remote Workforce



Increase Employee Productivity



Enhance Talent Retention and Recruitment



Provide Timely Customer Service to Citizens

## A Better Work/Life Balance for Employees

Employees of the State of Arizona are part of a forward-thinking culture focused on creating work environments that support efficiency and productivity in service to all Arizonans. The digital technology available today means “work” is no longer a physical place but performance that can happen anywhere.

The State of Arizona strives for a work culture that affords employees flexibility, autonomy, and trust.

Across our many agencies, boards, commissions, and other offices, State employees are able to work remotely (when their job role allows), in their homes, in offices, and in hoteling spaces.

By offering the option of full-time remote, or a partial telecommute schedule, employees enjoy improved work/life balance, report higher job satisfaction, and are more productive.

## Taxpayers Benefit from Cost Savings

The State sees less turnover from employees who participate in remote work, thereby reducing ongoing recruiting and training costs. In 2020, the State saved taxpayers more than \$3 million in annual cost savings by reducing physical space needs.

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## Success Stories

As state agencies focus on sustainable remote work, there have been successes across agencies as the number of remote workers increases. The Department of Economic Security (DES) transitioned approximately 50 percent of its workforce to remote work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020. As of March 2021, more than 75 percent of the DES team works remotely (either in a full time or hybrid capacity). Additionally, DES has experienced approximately 3 percent less absenteeism compared to this time last year and has lost 25 percent fewer people due to turnover.

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has successfully maintained mission operations while having transitioned over 90 percent of its staff to remote working. As a bonus, this transition to remote working has allowed the agency to reduce their operational expenses with savings of close to half a million dollars since the start of the pandemic.

The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the state's Medicaid program known as AHCCCS, has moved more than 60 percent of its workforce to virtual offices. This allowed the agency to consolidate from two buildings into one, saving \$1.2 million in fiscal year 2020.

The Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) Veteran Benefits Counselors (VBCs) assist Arizona's service members, veterans, and their families with receiving federal and state veteran benefits. Before COVID-19, VBCs either shared office space with other government entities or rented space through private leasing companies. In late March 2020, all VBCs who could work remotely moved to virtual office status. Working from home, VBCs increased direct services provided by 47.3 percent and reduced wait times for appointments from nine weeks to two days. VBCs now meet with more than 3,000 veterans each month and collectively, veterans using their services receive more than \$650 million tax-free dollars annually from compensation, pension, and survivor benefits. ADVS canceled several office leases, saving the department \$100,000 in rent monies for FY21 and the future.

Data from all agencies indicates that more than 15,000 employees are now working remotely.

Many departments and teams have adapted their paper-based workflows to an online environment. Here are just a few examples:

- » The AHCCCS Office of Human Rights, which provides special assistance to AHCCCS members with serious mental illness designations, moved their 100 percent paper-based processes online while maintaining HIPAA compliance and increasing

engagement with members and clinical teams by 2.8 percent year over year.

- » ADEQ moved its paper-based Operator Certification program, which certifies 5,000 drinking and wastewater treatment facility operators, to a 100 percent paperless and secure, one-stop, self-service online portal, reducing processing time from about one week to nearly instantaneous. Customers now have immediate access to their certifications and ADEQ is able to reallocate more than 12,000 staff hours each year to value-added mission outcomes.
- » In February 2021, ADOT announced that many Arizonans will be able to renew their driver licenses online, a process that previously required an in-person visit.

The 2021 employee engagement survey reflected the positive impact remote work is having on overall employee engagement. With 59% of survey respondents reporting they are working remotely one or more days per week, and 86% of those reporting that remote work has had a positive impact on their work experience, the State is moving the needle toward a culture that recognizes performance over placement and values work/life balance. The 2021 employee engagement rate was 75% (up 1% from last year and up 5% from 2019). Gallup calls workplaces with engagement rates of 71% or more (engagement ratios of 9 and above) exceptional organizations.

### Please share your remote work successes.

[Webform »](#)

When submitting a success story related to remote work, please include commentary about how remote work resulted in better, faster, or more cost-effective service, as well as any other improvements. Please be sure to cite the Arizona Management System (AMS) tools, principles, and values.

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## Contact

Arizona Department of Administration  
Human Resources Division  
Office of Travel Reduction Programs  
100 N 15th Ave., Suite 301  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

+1 602-542-7433





# Program Information



## Program Overview

The Arizona's Connected Workforce (ACW) program provides the framework and resources for remote work and other alternative workplace options for State employees. The program was launched to focus on increasing efficient use of the State's building resources, increasing employee engagement and satisfaction, decreasing commute-related pollution, and improving the State's ability to serve the citizens of Arizona.



## Alternative Workplace Options

As part of the Arizona's Connected Workforce program, and in response to lessons learned about remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, the statewide [remote work policy](#) was updated in December 2020 to include increased flexibility in remote work options. The current policy allows agencies the flexibility to offer multiple workplace alternatives to eligible employees, including full-time virtual office arrangements, partial remote work, hoteling, and traditional resident office work.

- » **Remote work**, previously referred to as telework, is a management option that allows qualified state employees to work from home or another approved location one or more days a week.
- » **Virtual office** is a workplace arrangement that allows qualified employees to work full-time from an assigned, fully functional workstation that is located in the employee's home or another approved remote location that has no facility costs to the State or agency.
- » **Hoteling** is an arrangement that allows employees to utilize unassigned, non-permanent workstations on an as-needed basis, subject to availability. Some State agencies are incorporating agency-specific hoteling workstations into their individual floor plans. There is existing hoteling workspace available to all State employees on the first floor of the building located at 1400 W. Washington Street, and the State is evaluating whether to incorporate additional shared hoteling spaces in State buildings as part of future space-planning projects.
- » **Resident office** is a traditional workplace arrangement whereby employees work from an assigned workstation within a State or agency-leased building.

Employees interested in participating in remote work, virtual office, and/or hoteling must meet the remote work requirements, complete the required training, and work with their supervisor to complete a remote work agreement that must be renewed annually.



## Program History

The State of Arizona Telework program was first launched as a pilot program in 1990, with a goal of improving air quality by reducing commute-related pollution as required under [ARS 49-588](#). Following the success of the pilot, the program was formally established through executive order in 1993. The current [executive order](#) mandates implementation within every agency, board and commission, with a goal of reaching 20 percent participation among state employees in Maricopa County.

At the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency, state agencies quickly implemented broader use of remote work sites. Seeing improved efficiency and cost savings during 2020, the Arizona's Connected Workforce program has helped to move the State of Arizona toward developing a supportive remote work culture.

Revisions to the State's [remote work policy](#) (ASPS/HRD-PA5.01) published in December 2020 replace the previous telework policy, which was designed for employees who worked remotely one or two days per pay period. The new policy reflects changes to make the program more flexible and includes provisions for virtual office arrangements. The policy is a general framework for remote workers in all state agencies and does not attempt to address the special conditions and needs of all individuals. Agencies are encouraged to develop their own policies and procedures in alignment with the State policy to meet the needs of the agency.

To reflect the changes to the program and policy, the remote work training and remote work agreement were updated in 2021. The new computer-based training includes an employee academy and a leadership academy for supervisors who are leading a team that includes remote workers.

Likewise, the remote work agreement has been redesigned in a digital environment. The links on the right-hand side of this page offer additional information regarding the remote work program.

## Quick links

[Executive Order](#)



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[Remote Work Policy](#)



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