

TELEWORK CASE STUDY:

Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education

“I believe that telework has helped us recruit and retain qualified employees. Generally, the benefits of telework far outweigh the barriers. We are now applying for the grant funds that would require us to hire at least six new staff, all of whom will be teleworkers. I believe that telework will keep us at the cutting edge in our business.”

-Mary Doyen, Executive Director

The Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education (RMC) is a private, non-profit corporation that provides health education training, technical assistance and resources for children, youth, and their communities. The center employs 25 staff members.

Background and Implementation

RMC initially implemented a telework program in 1999 to improve employee morale, recruitment and retention. RMC currently has five staffers who telework one to three days a week, as well as one full-time teleworker who lives in Oregon. One of RMC’s teleworking employees was recruited as a home-based worker and was provided equipment and furniture. The others were full-time, office-based employees and were given equipment previously used in the office or provided their own. Technical support is available to all teleworkers. Staffers pay the cost for a second home phone line if needed, and can access the company network from home. Teleworkers also have access to office laptops.

Teleworkers’ schedules are communicated through a shared-files network and through white boards in the office. The teleworkers receive calls at home from clients and co-workers and typically work hours similar to office hours.

RMC developed formal policies for their telework program. Their in-house policies describe the telework arrangement as voluntary, and not as a universal employee benefit. The core company hours are to be maintained by each teleworker.

Restricted access materials such as personnel or financial records are not to be taken home without prior consent. The telework policies also indicate that work responsibilities, benefits, status and compensation do not change due to participation in the telework program. Each teleworker must sign RMC’s teleworking policies and has agreed to abide by the guidelines. To identify problems and develop solutions, RMC has used internal discussion forums with both teleworkers and non-teleworking employees.

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Results

The RMC teleworking program has been extremely successful since 1999. Both employees and managers agree that teleworking has

- improved productivity and resulted in improved employee morale, greater job retention and enhanced recruitment capabilities.
- RMC estimates that it costs approximately \$15,000 to recruit, relocate and train a new staff member. Therefore, it recognizes a potential savings of \$90,000 by retaining six staff members through teleworking.

RMC teleworkers

- save about 120 minutes per teleworking day by not commuting
- use this saved time to do more work, spend more time with their families and exercise.
- On an annual basis, reduce their vehicle milestraveled by 28,000 miles and prevent about 1,630 lbs. of air pollution.

RMC applied for a state grant that required prospective employees to reside in several different sections of the state. The grant application was approved, strengthened by having a telework program in place, and RMC is currently recruiting six additional teleworkers from around the state.

“Communication among staff has always been a critical issue for us, particularly because we operate in a team environment and often have staff traveling to workshops and conferences. Teleworking provided an opportunity to think about our communication issues in a new light. I think teleworking has enhanced our ability to function in teams because we pay attention to communication issues more closely than before.”

-Donna Duffy, Project Director



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