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January 2024

Telework Washington - Implementation Overview

Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD)

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Telework

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

The Implementation Team

The QIC-WD worked with the Washington Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) to establish an implementation team to lead the development and implementation of their [intervention](#). The Implementation Team was composed of representatives from Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT), Training, Continuous Quality Improvement, Union representatives, regionally based DCYF frontline staff and administrators, DCYF leadership, the Site Implementation Manager (SIM), the Data Coordinator (DC), and three members of the QIC-WD (representing expertise in workforce, implementation, and evaluation). The SIM and Data Coordinator positions were partially funded by the QIC-WD. All team members were recruited by DCYF leadership to ensure broad-based representation across regions and positions.

The Implementation Team met monthly, face-to-face, for a full day in Kent, WA for the first year of the project. Virtual intervention design meetings were held weekly to deliberate the various components of the telework program. During these meetings, the SIM led the team in discussions about intervention development, implementation supports, and evaluation design. Events that could impact the intervention were also discussed and solutions were identified to address implementation challenges. Meetings decreased in frequency once the intervention launched in June 2019 and the Washington's SIM vacated her position in early 2020.

Ultimately, the Implementation Team was responsible for:

- participating in the workforce needs assessment process to understand and question regional and office variation/significant differences in staff recruitment and retention patterns, and organizational culture and climates;

- identifying strategies to reduce turnover, improve retention, and improve recruitment of the right people, including what specific offices have previously implemented;
- working as a team to provide recommendations on a workforce intervention to meet the intended outcomes and to design the implementation of the workforce intervention;
- providing recommendations that support the design of an evaluation that minimizes the burden on frontline staff;
- recommending the necessary implementation supports; and
- reviewing data and processing experiences to recommend adaptations to the intervention and implementation process.

Preparing for Implementation

Preparing for implementation required intensive work by the Implementation Team, in connection with IT, Employee Health and Safety, the Assistant Attorney General assigned to the agency, HR, and the union. The SIM contacted other state agencies to locate telework resources that could be used as a template for some of the implementation supports to be created for the DCYF telework program (forms, handbook, terms and conditions, training, etc.).

The telework handbook and the automated application process (described below) were the two most critical pre-implementation supports developed during the installation phase. Once the parameters and processes were established, the SIM, with the support of the QIC-WD, visited the offices selected to implement the intervention to describe the DCYF telework program, demonstrate the application process, and answer

questions. These meetings preceded the first day staff were eligible to apply to telework. Virtual information sessions were offered to those who weren't able to participate in person.

Implementation Supports

- **DCYF Modern and Mobile Workplace Policy.**

Developed prior to this telework program, the HR Modern and Mobile Workplace Policy guided this intervention. It provided guidance to DCYF for the integration of workplace strategies to increase mobilization for employees and improve the work environment.

- **Self-Assessment.** Embedded in the telework application was a [self-assessment](#) for staff to use to help them think through whether they were a good fit for teleworking.

- **Telework Handbook.** This comprehensive resource addressed questions about telework benefits, requirements, processes, expectations, and best practices to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the telework component of the DCYF Modern and Mobile Workplace Policy.

- **Automated Application System.** The QIC-WD contracted with the vendor FORMVERSE, now called Autocene, to develop an electronic application and agreement system that allowed for a streamlined approval process, the creation of a telework agreement, and reliable data on uptake of the intervention. This streamlined, paperless process required coordination with the agency's IT staff to determine if this vendor would meet security requirements and to conduct a proof of concept. This platform created a reliable data source for the project's evaluation and information for the agency leadership and staff.

- **Equipment.** All DCYF workers had an agency-issued laptop or tablet and an iPhone to support their work, but they provided their own internet access and any additional hardware such as larger monitors or keyboards. IT provided adapters to teleworking staff to facilitate their use of larger monitors in their home offices.



- **Virtual information sessions.** The SIM held virtual sessions to support those interested in learning more about teleworking. In addition to creating a virtual space to answer staff questions, these sessions included information on: 1) the automated application system; 2) the application process; 3) developing formal telework agreements; 4) the rationale behind DCYF's decision to test the impacts of telework; and 5) tips for maximizing the positive benefits of telework.

- **IT supports.** IT supports included: 1) ensuring a virtual private network is available to support teleworking and 2) developing Help Guides that staff could use to troubleshoot simple IT-related issues around teleworking, intended to increase staff technological comfort and competence and to decrease calls to a limited IT workforce.

- **Support sessions for supervisors.** The SIM convened interested supervisors to process their experiences supporting their telework staff and identify the benefits and challenges they were experiencing.