



The Council  
of State  
Governments

# Disability-Inclusive Telework for States

STATE APPROACHES TO INCREASING ACCESS & INCLUSION

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# Executive Summary

States are increasingly developing and implementing telework policies and programs for state government employees. Telework allows states to keep pace with changes in the workforce landscape, attract and retain talent, and achieve cost-savings goals. Telework also can play a key role in helping states hire individuals with disabilities, which can produce a range of monetary and non-monetary benefits for state governments.

In order to realize these benefits, states must ensure that telework is accessible to and usable by its employees with disabilities. While some states already consider individuals with disabilities in their telework policies and programs, states can take additional steps toward ensuring all components of state telework are inclusive.

This document provides guidance to state policymakers on developing more inclusive telework policies and programs. It includes an overview of workplace protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) pertaining to telework; details the components of state telework programs; and indicates how each component can be modified to better accommodate all employees (including those with disabilities). This brief also offers best practices states are using to advance inclusion in their telework policies and programs, and summarizes the fiscal impacts of inclusive telework.

## Key Findings

**States must ensure that telework is accessible to and usable by its employees with disabilities.** This includes ensuring employees with disabilities have an effective and meaningful opportunity to participate in telework programs, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act; developing and updating all components of state telework policies and programs to consider inclusion and accessibility and employing tele-

work as a reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities, even if a state does not offer a general telework program or otherwise limits eligibility for telework.

**States can focus on inclusion within telework policies, telework agreements, and the management of telework programs.** These represent the three components of a state telework program, with inclusion implemented at each level.

**States should ensure each telework component is clear, flexible, and takes into account universal design.** By considering each of these elements, states can ensure telework effectively accommodates a range of individuals, including those with disabilities.

**State agencies and governments can save millions of dollars a year by implementing telework programs.** Telework can save the average employer \$6,500<sup>1</sup> per part-time teleworker per year (or \$11,000 per half-time teleworker), in the form of lower real estate and operating costs; increased operational continuity during emergencies; greater employee productivity; and lower voluntary turnover.

**Inclusive telework can enhance organizational performance and produce additional cost savings.** Diverse workplaces have better operational and fiscal outcomes than their peers<sup>2</sup>, and inclusive telework can facilitate the hiring and retention of a range of employees. It also allows a greater number of employees to participate in telework, thereby enhancing associated cost savings.

# Introduction

Americans are increasingly transitioning to remote work. The number of people who telework has grown substantially over the past two decades,<sup>3</sup> even before the acceleration brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>4</sup>

In response to short- and long-term trends in how and where individuals work, many employers — including state governments — are creating or revising their telework policies and programs. At least 40 states have adopted public sector telework policies, and many state agencies have developed their own (either in place of or in addition to statewide policies). Yet, these policies do not always adequately consider the needs of workers with disabilities, who make up between 5% and 11%<sup>5</sup> of state government workforces.

Inclusive telework policies consider the needs of a range of state employees—including those with and without disabilities—from the outset. By ensuring telework policies and programs are inclusive to all, state governments can:

- **Better accommodate a range of employee needs, work styles, and communication preferences**, regardless of an employee's functional abilities
- **More easily continue normal operations during emergency situations** — such as pandemics and natural disasters — by facilitating telework for a range of employees
- **Reduce operating costs for the state** by enabling more employees to work from home
- **Attract and retain a more diverse range of talent**, particularly as inclusive telework policies are advertised
- **Increase operational performance** by attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce

The number of people who work from home at least 50% of the time increased 115% between 2005 and 2017<sup>6</sup>

The proportion of workers who have telecommuted at some point in their work lives increased from 9% to 37% between 1995 and 2015<sup>7</sup>

Fifteen percent of employed Americans worked remotely before the outbreak of COVID-19, and up to 50% worked remotely during the pandemic<sup>8</sup>

- **Reduce the responsibility of individual managers** to modify telework programs by formally aligning overall policies and practices with civil rights laws
- **Provide leadership in modeling employment best practices** for other employers in the state<sup>9</sup>

This brief provides state policymakers guidance on developing telework policies and programs that are accessible to all employees, including those with disabilities. It covers:

- [Workplace protections for people with disabilities as they relate to telework](#)
- [Components of state telework programs, key inclusive elements, and examples of innovative state initiatives](#)
- [The fiscal impact of inclusive telework for states](#)

## WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS AND TELEWORK

Under Title I of the federal [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#), employers (including state and local governments) with 15 or more employees are prohibited from discriminating against applicants and employees on the basis of disability. “Discrimination” includes the failure to provide “reasonable accommodations” to applicants and employees with disabilities.

“Reasonable accommodations” are “feasible” modifications or adjustments — whether to the physical worksite, work schedules, or workplace policies — that enable employees with disabilities to effectively perform the essential functions of a job. Employers are not required to provide a particular accommodation if doing so would pose an “undue hardship,” such as a significant expense or difficulty.

Reasonable accommodations also apply to benefits and privileges, such as telework<sup>10</sup>, health benefits, and employee training programs. Employers must allow employees with disabilities effective and meaningful opportunity to participate in such programs, and they must make reasonable accommodations to facilitate that access.

Section 102 of the ADA states:

“No covered entity shall discriminate against a qualified individual on the basis of disability in regard to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.”



According to the Job Accommodation Network,

50% of accommodations cost less than \$500

19% cost nothing at all

More than 80% cost less than \$1,000

Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:



**JOB RESTRUCTURING**

e.g., reallocating or redistributing marginal job functions



**MODIFIED WORK SCHEDULES**

e.g., part-time or flexible work schedules



**ACQUISITION OR MODIFICATION OF EQUIPMENT**

e.g., providing alternative keyboards



**WORKSITE ADJUSTMENTS**

e.g., installing ramps



**POLICY MODIFICATIONS**

e.g., allowing service animals into an office

Reasonable accommodations apply to telework in two distinct ways:

**When telework is provided as a management option to all employees, state agencies must give employees with disabilities equal access to this benefit.<sup>11</sup>**

This accommodation may require modification or waiver of particular provisions. For example, prohibiting employees from using their own equipment for telework may need to be modified for employees who use their own assistive technology to perform their jobs. Inclusive telework programs are designed and implemented in a manner that accommodates a range of people, thereby reducing the need for modifications.

**Permitting an employee with a disability to telework may be a reasonable accommodation, even if the state has no telework program or limits its telework program to specific jobs.**

Changing the location where work is performed may fall under the ADA's reasonable accommodation requirement of modifying workplace policies, even if the state does not allow other employees to telework. Allowing employees to telework can eliminate workplace barriers, such as inaccessible worksites or challenging commutes.





## COMPONENTS OF STATE TELEWORK PROGRAMS AND KEY INCLUSIVE ELEMENTS

A state agency's telework program is informed by three components: (A) telework policies, (B) telework agreements, and (C) management of telework programs. To create disability-inclusive telework programs, state policymakers may want to consider three main principles:

- *Clarity* in expectations and procedures
- *Flexibility* in accommodating individual situations, when needed
- *Universal design*<sup>12</sup> in the creation of policies and the selection of telework tools

### Telework Policies

An individual agency may have two different policies shaping its telework program: statewide policies (mandated by law or through guidance by the state's Department of Human Resources or Department of Administrative Services), and agency-specific policies, which build on existing statewide policies. At least 40 states have adopted statewide telework policies, whether through laws and/or through statewide guidelines.

Telework policies generally outline the purpose of the telework program; eligibility and participation criteria; processes related to telework; responsibilities of employees and state personnel; and elements to be included in telework agreements (described below).

- **Florida**, **Vermont**, and **Virginia** have passed telework laws that apply to all state agencies.
- **Colorado**, **Georgia**, and **Massachusetts** have issued statewide telework guidelines for all state agencies to consider.
- **California**, **Montana**, and **South Carolina** have developed model or sample telework policies that individual agencies can modify and implement.

- Specific agencies — such as the [Indiana Department of Child Services](#), the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#), and the [New Mexico Corrections Department](#) — have developed their own telework policies.

## To Be Inclusive, State Agencies May Want to Consider:

**Explicitly indicating how policies apply to individuals with disabilities**, whether it is meant to be inclusive or needs to be modified, so that employees and managers better understand and engage with telework policies.

- [North Dakota](#) — allows modification or waiver of policies for employees who work from home as a reasonable accommodation.
- [Alaska](#) and [Idaho](#) — clarify that policies do not cover reasonable accommodations; those requests should be made through Human Resources staff.
- [California](#) — permits full-time telework when accommodating people with disabilities.
- [Delaware](#) — directs that additional or modified accommodations be provided to people with disabilities who decide to change their worksite.
- [Arizona](#) and [South Carolina](#) — clarify that policies are meant as “general frameworks,” and exceptions can be granted on a case-by-case basis.

**Providing guidelines and requiring clear documentation** to ensure telework requests are handled transparently and reduce discrimination in telework denials and approvals.

- [Iowa](#) and the [Michigan](#) Department of Health and Human Services — direct that if a manager denies a telework request, he or she must provide the employee with a written explanation and business-related reason for the decision.
- [Alaska](#) — provides a list of business reasons that can reasonably result in a denial.
- [New Hampshire](#) — stipulates that employers must indicate steps that employees can take to be eligible for reconsideration.

- [Nebraska](#) — directs that telework policies be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner.

**Allowing employees flexibility in acquiring and utilizing technology and other equipment** to better meet the needs of employees.

- [Maryland](#) — offers state agencies several options for providing telework equipment, including lending it from the office; providing incentives for teleworkers to purchase their own equipment; subsidizing the purchase of equipment by teleworkers; and purchasing equipment for teleworkers.
- [South Dakota](#) and [Minnesota](#) — allow employees to use their own equipment for teleworking and indicate that agencies (at their discretion) may provide maintenance and repair of employee-owned equipment.

### An Example:

#### [Oklahoma House Bill 2062](#)

Amended Title 62, Sections 34.11.7 and 34.28 of the 2011 Oklahoma Statutes — includes several provisions to accommodate individuals with disabilities in state telework. The bill:

- Establishes a statewide telework assistance program, which provides policies and guidelines to support agency telework, including around “accommodation[s] for employees with disabilities.”
- Requires state agencies to employ accessible information technology platforms, and to consult the Department of Rehabilitation Services and individuals with disabilities in reviewing information technology (as well as corresponding trainings and technical assistance).
- Establishes the creation of a central telework website, which provides resources to facilitate effective telework for employees and managers.



## Telework Agreements

These agreements between a manager and an employee establish the terms and conditions of telework. Telework agreements are developed in accordance with state or agency policies but allow individual managers and employees to agree on specific arrangements within the more general policy framework. Several states provide sample telework agreements for individual agencies to use.

- **Kansas** and **West Virginia** — allow customization of the telework schedule, telework location, and duration of the agreement.
- **Delaware** — includes fields for specifying the systems, equipment, and software required for telework.

## To Be Inclusive, State Agencies May Want to Consider:

**Allowing employers and employees to customize particular aspects of telework agreements** — such as communication methods and means of securing and transporting equipment — to better account for an individual's unique situation.

- The **Kansas** Telework Agreement — requires documentation of “Furnishings and Supplies” that an agency may provide and communication tools and procedures to be used.
- **Minnesota** — requires determination of communication expectations and list of any additional instructions, conditions, restrictions, or exceptions relating to the Telework Agreement.

- **Alabama** — includes a “Special Conditions or Additional Agreements” section.

**Indicating protocols to allow employees with disabilities to telework during emergency situations** to mitigate additional challenges brought on by the extenuating circumstances (such as traveling to the office during a storm).

- **Montana** and **Virginia** — stipulate that agency telework agreements should indicate an employee’s status during emergency and weather-related closings.
- The **Idaho** Telecommuting Agreement — requires indication of whether an employee is expected to telecommute for the duration of an emergency.



### **An Example: Virginia’s Teleworking Policy**

Suggests various customizable fields that state agencies can include in their telework agreements, which accommodate a range of employee needs and preferences. The policy recommends including standard terms — such as the duration of the agreement and the employee’s work schedule — as well as more detailed ones: the status of the employee during emergencies; how communication between employees, supervisors, and co-workers will be handled; the equipment and/or supplies that will be used for telework; and who is responsible for providing and maintaining that equipment. According to the policy, telework agreements may authorize employees to use their own equipment, which can ease “undue burdens” that agencies may face in providing certain accommodations.

## **Management of Telework Programs**

Management of telework programs refers to the methods and strategies that agencies use in implementing and operating telework programs. It covers *how* policies are implemented. While some methods may be codified in state or agency policies, managers may further shape the management of policies through their individual decisions and actions. Components of telework management include who is designated as a telework coordinator; how managers and employees are trained on telework policies; how technical assistance is provided to off-site employees; and how data are collected and tracked.

- The **New Jersey** National Guard — assigns the Human Resource Officer responsibility for appointing a Telework Coordinator, and delineates responsibilities for that Coordinator.
- **Virginia** — encourages agencies to provide telework training to managers and provides links to best practice resources.
- **Utah** — urges agencies to develop customized Rollout Plans that detail implementation steps and timelines for telework programs.

### **To Be Inclusive, State Agencies May Want to Consider:**

**Training managers to effectively implement and communicate telework policies and best practices**, especially related to supporting people with different needs.

- **Minnesota, Virginia**, and other states — require or recommend that managers receive training on telework policies and best practices.
- **Massachusetts** — provides links to online telework trainings and best practice guides for managers.
- **Montana** — offers a course called “Remote Management.”

## Designating someone — such as the ADA Coordinator<sup>13</sup> — to coordinate and manage telework accessibility issues.

- [South Carolina](#), [Tennessee](#), [Utah](#), and several other states — require agencies to designate a Telework Coordinator to oversee implementation of the agency’s telework program and serve as a resource for managers.

**Coordinating with the state’s assistive technology resources** — created under [Section 4](#) of the federal Assistive Technology (AT) Act — to provide devices for individuals with disabilities (and often their employers). The [National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training \(AT3\) Center](#) lists contact information for each state’s assistive technology resource.

Examples of assistive technology include mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers); environmental adaptations (e.g., door openers, ramps); communication aids (e.g., hearing aids, text-to-speech software); and other devices (e.g., switch-adapted appliances, reachers).

- Telework Assistance Grants from the [Montana](#) Department of Public Health and Human Services — assist people with disabilities in accessing telework equipment during COVID-19.
- The [Wisconsin](#) Assistive Technology Program — loans out assistive technology devices to people with disabilities and their employers.

**The Technology Related Assistance to Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (Tech Act) defines assistive technology devices as “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.”**

**Training technology support personnel on selecting and supporting accessible technology** by considering universal design and [WCAG 2.0](#) or higher standards in selecting technology platforms; and to troubleshoot the assistive technology devices used by employees.

- The [Texas](#) Department of Information Resources — in response to COVID-19, encourages agencies to audit IT applications and tools to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to employees with disabilities.
- The Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT) — a federal initiative that provides [guidelines and resources](#) around telework accessibility, including digital communications.



### **An Example: The Utah Governor’s Office of Management and Budget**

Produced a Deployment Guide to assist state agencies in successfully implementing the state’s telework program. It was developed by a multi-agency Steering Team — consisting of representatives from the Governor’s Office and departments of Technology Services, Human Resource Management, and Administrative Services — and is based on best practices developed from a pilot telework program in the state. The Guide provides strategies, tactics, and a step-by-step process for successfully implementing telework. It includes guidance on assigning a Department Coordinator to facilitate telework implementation; training department supervisors on how to successfully manage remote workers; and training employees on how to work and collaborate effectively in a remote environment. It provides a framework that easily can be expanded to include accessibility considerations.

## THE FISCAL IMPACTS OF INCLUSIVE STATE TELEWORK

### How do states benefit from telework?

An average employer can save thousands of dollars per year for each employee who telecommutes. **Savings can range from \$6,500 for one employee who teleworks once-per-week, to \$11,000 for an employee who telecommutes half-time.**<sup>14</sup> These cost savings arise from the following sources:

- **Lower real estate, operating, and maintenance costs.** As more employees telework, employers reduce office and parking space needs and associated costs including: rent, property taxes, utilities, cleaning services and employee transit subsidies. This amounts to millions of dollars in cost-savings for larger organizations, including [\\$78 million](#) for Aetna<sup>15</sup>, [\\$30 million](#) for the U.S. Government Services Administration (GSA)<sup>16</sup>, and [\\$12 million](#) for Dell Technologies.<sup>17</sup>
- **Greater continuity of operations during emergencies.** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) cites telework as an “[essential component of continuity planning](#),”<sup>18</sup> which can prevent loss of productivity due to emergencies (e.g., natural disasters, inclement weather, building closures, pandemics). Global Workplace Analytics estimates that current teleworkers save employers [\\$1.7 billion](#) annually by continuing operations just one additional day per year.<sup>19</sup>
- **Greater employee productivity.** According to research conducted by Stanford University, employee productivity can increase between [13% and 22%](#) through telework.<sup>20</sup> These gains result from fewer distractions in a remote work location (compared to an office or worksite), lower absenteeism (which can cost [nearly \\$1,700](#) per employee per year in productivity losses<sup>21</sup>), and more time worked each day (including from [28%](#) of telecommuters who work during the time they would otherwise be physically commuting to an office).<sup>22</sup>



Losing an employee can cost an employer **1/3 of that employee's annual earnings**, in the form of "hard costs" and "soft costs"

Telework can **decrease voluntary employee turnover by 25%**, by increasing job satisfaction and better accommodating changes in an employee's living situation

- **Lower voluntary turnover.** According to the Society for Human Resource Management, losing an employee can cost an employer [one-third](#) of that employee's annual earnings, in the form of "hard costs" (e.g., recruiter fees, temporary labor) and "soft costs" (e.g., time spent training new hires, lost knowledge).<sup>23</sup> Telework can decrease voluntary employee turnover by [25%](#), by [increasing job satisfaction](#) and better accommodating changes in an employee's living situation (e.g., relocation to another city).<sup>24</sup>

State governments often are the [largest employers](#) in each state, employing between [9,000 full-time employees](#) (in [South Dakota](#)) and [236,000 full-time employees](#) (in [California](#)).<sup>25</sup> By increasing telework adoption within the state government workforce, state agencies can enjoy the many benefits (and corresponding cost-savings) noted above. While not all state government employees have jobs compatible with telework, 42% or more potentially do.<sup>26</sup>

States have saved millions of dollars by implementing telework programs.

- [Utah](#) launched a statewide teleworking program in 2019, based on results from a pilot program that resulted in a 20% increase in employee performance as a result. The Governor's Office estimates 30% of all telework-eligible employees — or 2,555 people — will participate in the initial roll-out of the program, reducing office space needs by nearly 64,000

square feet and saving the state [tens of millions of dollars](#).<sup>27</sup>

- [Tennessee](#) implemented an [Alternative Workplace Solutions \(AWS\)](#) program in 2016. Six thousand state employees have participated in the program, which has resulted in a 37% reduction in sick leave, a \$6.5 million reduction in real-estate rental costs, and an increase of productivity (according to 60% of managers).<sup>28</sup> In addition, the state plans to sell an office building in downtown Nashville, which is no longer needed, for \$40 million to \$60 million. Eventually, 27,000 of Tennessee's 38,000 executive branch employees could be eligible for the program.
- The [Washington](#) State Department of Labor and Industries, which employs roughly 3,000 people across multiple locations, estimates that the Department has saved between \$300,000 and \$500,000 annually as the result of the shift to telework brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. These cost savings come largely from reduced expenditures on facility maintenance, utilities, and printing.<sup>29</sup>

## What is the cost of telework for states?

The costs of telework are more difficult to document. Comprehensive data are not available on the state-level costs of telework, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office has found that only two federal agencies have collected data on telework costs.<sup>30</sup> However, based on the information that is available, costs incurred from telework include:

### Costs of training for and managing the telework program.

Many telework programs require employees and/or managers to complete trainings. In addition, agencies may hire or appoint telework coordinators to manage and oversee telework programs. These measures have associated costs, including those related to creating training modules and webinars; training employees and managers; and paying salaries of telework coordinators (which the General Services Administration estimated at \$245,290 for two percent of the salaries of its 34 telework coordinators and 20% of the salary of its agency telework coordinator).<sup>31</sup>

### Equipment and information technology costs.

These costs include building or updating an IT infrastructure that can handle telework; purchasing and paying licenses on remote access software; and providing equipment for employers to work remotely (including laptops, if not already provided). This also can include providing reimbursements to employees (if offered) for phone lines and high-speed internet. Tennessee's Alternative Workplace (AWS) program was funded by \$18.5 million from the state legislature, which went toward (in part) upgrading the state's IT infrastructure to accommodate telework.<sup>32</sup>

### Costs of managing and recovering from data security breaches and cyberattacks.

Telework can put agencies at risk for additional data security threats, which can be costly.<sup>33</sup> The White House estimated that "malicious cyber activity" cost the U.S. economy between \$57 billion and \$109 billion in 2016.<sup>34</sup> Threats are particularly high if employees are using unsecured WiFi to access emails and files.<sup>35</sup>

There may be additional costs associated with inclusive telework. These include developing and leading additional trainings around inclusion and migrating to accessible IT platforms.

While robust data are not currently available on the costs of telework, the fact that so many state agencies, federal agencies, and businesses have moved toward telework indicates that (in many instances) the benefits outweigh the costs. In addition, inclusive telework poses limited additional costs, and confers the many benefits outlined in this section.

## How do states benefit from inclusive telework?

Inclusive telework — which considers and accommodates the needs of a range of employees — allows a greater number of people to participate in telework programs, thereby increasing the cost savings associated with telework.

In addition, inclusive telework serves as an important tool that states can use to attract, accommodate, and retain diverse talent, including individuals with disabilities. In particular, telework can allow state agencies to look more broadly for qualified employees by eliminating relocation or commuting requirements that would otherwise prevent people from applying. For people with disabilities specifically, inclusive telework can [facilitate employment](#) by removing physical and transportation barriers to employment and better accommodating medical needs.<sup>36</sup> In addition, inclusive telework can reduce bias and discrimination people belonging to minority groups — based on race, [disability](#), or other factors — face in the workplace.<sup>37</sup> The Washington Department of Labor and Industries found that some employees who belong to those groups report feeling safer when working from home.<sup>38</sup>

Through inclusive telework programs, states can increase their hiring and retention of employees with disabilities and enjoy the corresponding benefits of a diverse workplace. These benefits include:

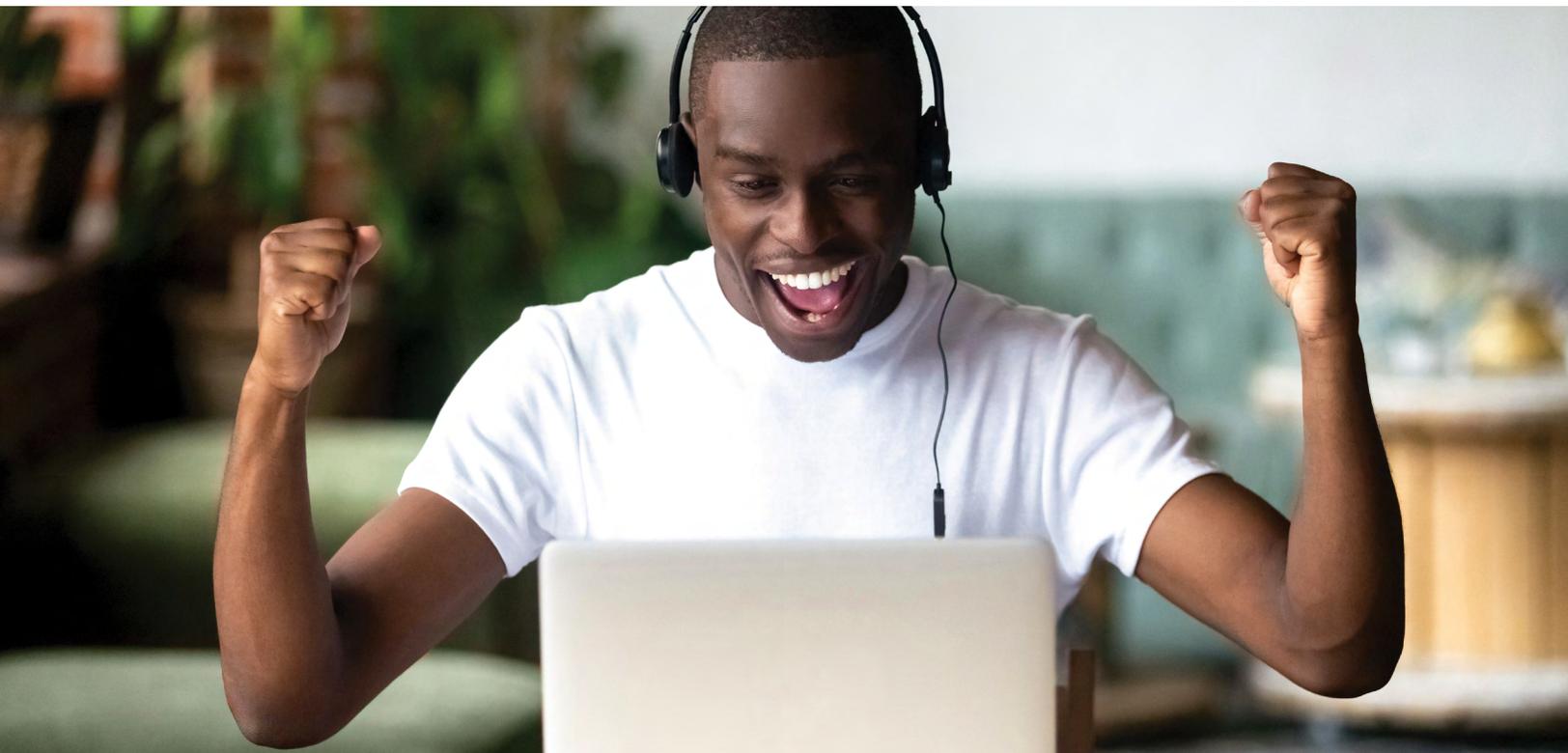
- **Improved organizational performance.** [Research](#) shows that diversity spurs innovation and creativity; improves the quality of discussions; and ensures high quality policy and programming outcomes that take into account a broader set of issues and standards.<sup>39</sup> It also allows for better, more comprehensive problem-solving and reduces groupthink when people from different backgrounds are

at the table. Disability represents one type of diversity and people with disabilities report possessing “[agility, persistence, forethought, and a willingness to experiment](#)” that can promote innovative and creative thinking.<sup>40</sup>

- **Increased financial performance.** A [study](#) by McKinsey & Company found that diverse companies are more likely to have financial returns that exceed industry averages.<sup>41</sup> In addition, research produced by Accenture, Disability:IN, and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) found that companies that improved their inclusion of people with disabilities were [four times more likely](#) to have total shareholder returns that outperformed their peers.<sup>42</sup> These gains may be due to the enhanced innovation that results from hiring people with disabilities, as well as increases in [morale, productivity, and employee retention](#).<sup>43</sup>

# Conclusion

Telework has become, and will continue to be, a key facet of the American work landscape. At the same time, state governments are [embracing diversity](#) and inclusion initiatives that increase the recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement of employees with a broad spectrum of disabilities.<sup>44</sup> What's more, policymakers at all levels of state government can play a role: legislators and governors can create more inclusive telework policies through law; agencies can develop their own inclusive telework policies and practices; and individual managers can prioritize inclusion and accessibility in their management of telework policies and practices. By developing inclusive telework policies and programs, state governments can better keep pace with the evolution of telework and ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in those efforts.



# Endnotes

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5. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/news/data-releases/2018/release.html>), Alaska has the highest percentage of state government employees with disabilities, at 10.9%. In 2018, former Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton reported that 6.9% of Minnesota state government employees had a disability (<https://www.governing.com/topics/workforce/gov-disabled-state-government-workforce.html>). Louisiana set a goal to ensure that people with disabilities made up 7% of its state government workforce ([https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/Programs/GODA/SAME\\_Report.pdf](https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/Programs/GODA/SAME_Report.pdf)).
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9. Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion, "A Joint Resolution on Executive Orders to Encourage States to be Model Employers of People with Disabilities," <https://askearn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/EARN-State-as-a-Model-Employer-Final-PDF-1.pdf>.
10. Many state telework policies indicate that telework is a "management option" or "privilege," rather than a "universal employee benefit." However, telework is still a work program available to employees. Therefore, state agencies must allow employees with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate. Also, permitting an employee with a disability to telework may be a reasonable accommodation, even if the state has no telework program or limits its telework program to specific jobs.

11. Agencies can consider a range of business reasons for approving or denying someone's telework request. This might include the suitability of the position for telework, an employee's ability to work independently, and an employee's overall work performance.
12. According to the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, universal design is "the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability." <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>
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