



Vol. 3 | July 2021

Message from Leadership

The Biden Administration asked federal agencies across government to begin to plan for the “Future of Work.” This effort recognizes that the Department of Labor was able to successfully execute much of its mission under maximum telework during the pandemic, and that we should apply lessons learned to shape the way we work in the future.

More than 800 DOL employees registered to participate in a “Future of Work” listening session. By this week, DOL will have conducted approximately 55 different listening sessions across the country with employees, DOL labor unions, DOL affinity groups, and supervisors. A tremendous thank you to those who were willing to contribute their feedback and ideas during these sessions that will help shape the “Future of Work” at DOL.

Key themes from the sessions thus far include:

- Appreciation to all DOL employees for quickly pivoting to telework to help the Department achieve its goals during an incredibly challenging time;
- Recognition that early and continual engagement with the DOL workforce will help to create a successful approach for the Department and its employees;
- Increased interest in expanding telework and other workplace flexibilities based on the experience over the past year; and,
- Administrative challenges to changing the way we work (e.g., space management, equipment and supplies, and more).

We look forward to engaging you further as we work toward building the Department’s “Future of Work” plan. In the interim, if you have any questions or additional comments, please feel free to email us at:

Contact.OASAM@dol.gov.

— **Rachana Desai Martin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy**

In Case You Missed It

Here is a quick recap of the latest COVID-19 information and guidance sent to all DOL employees:

- [Remote Work Resources](#)
- [Updated Physical Distancing Guidance](#)
- [Vaccination Information and Resources](#)



Additional information, including [Employee Messages](#), are posted on the [DOL COVID-19 LaborNet page](#). If you have questions, please visit the [FAQ page](#), or contact us at: COVID19Questions@dol.gov.

Employee Spotlight: Timmy Nguyen, OFCCP (Philadelphia Region)



“When the COVID-19 pandemic hit our community and this country, I saw firsthand the effect of COVID-19 and the toll it took on the medical field. I wanted to show my appreciation to the doctors and nurses on the frontline at the Children’s Hospital by delivering 250+ fresh and hot meals from a local restaurant in Richmond, VA in June 2020.

In December 2020, the pandemic was still ongoing and hospital emergency rooms were at capacity in Richmond. Many kids in the community were at home learning remotely and no longer had access to their free or reduced-price lunch. I knew it was on me to do what I could, and that was to go out and deliver 500+ meals to our front line hospital workers in the Emergency Room at VCU Health. I also delivered food and milk to kids in the neighborhood and to our local EMT units. No matter the circumstances, it was incredibly important for me to let our frontline healthcare workers know that we are all in this together, we stand by them, and we appreciate the hard work they do every day. And it was just as important for the kids in our community to know that they are loved and won’t go hungry. It’s a message to the community that we all have to come together and give back, because that’s what life is all about.”

Do you know of a DOL colleague making a difference during COVID-19? Share the story with us: [DOLCOVID-19Newsletter!](#)



Did You Know?

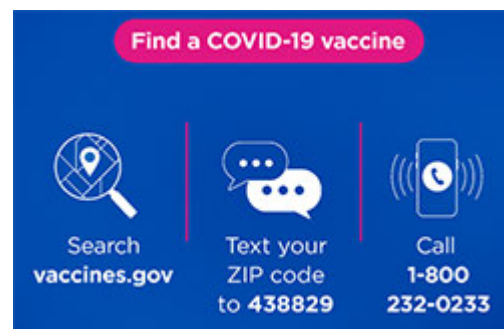
The Office of Human Resources (OHR) [Division of Worklife and Engagement](#) (DWE) recently developed a repository of [remote work resources](#) that provide helpful tips and information for the DOL community on working from home.

The available resource topics include: best practices for remote work, leading and managing remote teams, tips for boosting productivity while working from home, tips for designing and re-designing your remote work space, and parenting and working from home. For more information, please visit OHR's DWE [Telework LaborNet page](#), or the [DOL COVID-19 Telework page](#).



Vaccines: What You Need to Know

The Biden Administration has launched a national public education campaign, [We Can Do This](#), to help Americans make informed decisions about COVID-19 vaccines to protect themselves and their communities. **The We Can Do This** website contains ample [resources](#) to help you learn more about vaccination efforts.



We encourage you to keep the following in mind when developing your plans for vaccination:

- Getting vaccinated gets us back to normal. Getting vaccinated is the best way to defeat this virus and get back to safely gathering with family and friends.
- The vaccine is free and available to everyone. Vaccines are available at no cost to everyone age 12 and older living in the United States, regardless of immigration or insurance status.
- Getting vaccinated is a personal decision. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or health care provider. Estimates show that 90% of doctors have gotten a shot themselves.
- The majority of American adults have been vaccinated. They are now protected from this deadly virus and are on the path back to normal.

Interested in joining the **We Can Do This** campaign? Learn more about joining the [COVID-19 Community Corps](#). Additional information can also be found on the LaborNet COVID-19 webpage: [COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#).

A Telework Success Story

If you had asked the Office of Acquisition Services' Head of Contracting Activity, Sandra Foster, what she thought about telework on March 1, 2020, you would have gotten a very skeptical response. Fast forward to almost a year and a half of maximum telework and Sandra is singing a different tune.



What changed your mind about telework during the pandemic? Prior to the Pandemic, I was one of those managers who strongly believed telework did not work. I thought employees were less productive and were virtually impossible to manage (no pun intended). I had no desire to telework. Once thrust into the telework environment, I found my pre pandemic beliefs were ill-informed. All of my telework WOE's are now telework WOW's.

What benefits has telework provided to you? The greatest benefit has been the savings of 3 to 4 hours a day in commute time. The hours are now redirected to work hours and family time.

What tips or tricks do you have for people to make the most out of telework? Check in often. Make use of the information technology software that is available to enhance your telework experience.

As in-person work becomes an option in the future, Ms. Foster is looking forward to continuing to use a telework option as a way to maintain balance and productivity. Check out the Did You Know section for tips on your telework set up!

Telework Survey Results

In December 2020, the Department commissioned an online survey to better understand DOL supervisors' and staff's (excluding the Bureau of Labor Statistics) use and opinions of telework before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and upon return from the pandemic. [Aggregate survey results are located on LaborNet](#) and should be viewed as the results from a single-point-in-time, December 2020.

Asked & Answered

You asked, and we answered!

Q: Can employees use Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts to cover virtual day care and virtual camps?



A: Yes. Many dependent care providers and summer camps may be offering virtual services to respond to the call for social distancing. Virtual day care and virtual camps are eligible Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account expenses. More information on Flexible Spending Accounts can be found [online](#) or by calling 877-FSAFEDS (372-3337); TTY: 866-353-8058.

Q: Should employees who have already received the COVID-19 vaccine notify someone? Is DOL tracking the vaccination status of its staff?

A: At this time, DOL employees and contractors are not required or expected to notify anyone of their vaccination status.

Q: Can an employee request administrative leave to take a relative to a COVID-19 vaccine appointment?

A: The Department's policy, [Expansion of the DOL COVID-10 Workplace Safety Plan to Include Use of Administrative Leave for COVID-19 Vaccination](#), applies exclusively to DOL employees receiving their own COVID-19 vaccinations. Employees may use other paid leave (e.g., sick or annual leave), as well as

available expanded Workplace Flexibilities to assist family members with their COVID-19 vaccination appointments. Information on various [workplace flexibility options](#) that may be helpful during this time, including other types of leave, can be found on LaborNet.

Q. How does the pandemic affect work-related or personal travel?

A. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provided [guidance on travel for people who have received the full dosage of the COVID-19 vaccine](#). Pursuant to [OMB Memorandum M-21-15](#), Federal employees should adhere strictly to CDC guidance for [domestic](#) and [international](#) travel before, during, and after travel, regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business. All travelers, including Federal employees who are fully vaccinated, should continue to [take health and safety precautions](#). All travelers are required to [wear a mask](#) over their nose and mouth on all planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and while indoors in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and indoor train stations.

While the Safer Federal Workforce Taskforce has provided updated guidance that lifted government-wide limits on official travel for Federal employees who are fully vaccinated, DOL is still operating under the DOL Workplace Safety Plan which directs that travel must be identified as mission critical by the DOL Agency Head.

For more FAQs, visit the [DOL COVID-19 FAQ LaborNet page!](#)

Interested in Learning More?

We have a number of helpful resources available for you on the [DOL COVID-19 LaborNet page!](#) Information is updated daily – visit some of the most popular links below:

- [COVID-19 Guidance and Resources Main Page](#)
- [Workplace Flexibilities](#)
- [Telework](#)
- [Benefits & Wellness](#)

Questions? Please email us at 