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Three Institutes with Streamlined Telework Approval Processes

- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
- National Institute on Aging
- National Human Genome Research Institute

NIH Takes Pain Out of Telework Approval Process

Forms, forms, and more forms. They are an indelible fixture in any government process and telework programs are no exception. There are applications to review, computers to examine, alternative work offices to approve, and more forms required to approve changes to the old ones.

Three Institutes at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently took some of the punch out of all this paper pushing. They have automated the entire approval and renewal process for employees participating in telework programs. Called Telework Online, this new Web-based application routes the necessary forms through the approval chain.

The system handles the main functions of the agency's telework approval process: the initial employee application, the alternative work office evaluation, the change request, and the annual renewal. Within the three Institutes using the system, more than 1,500 employees now have access to apply online for telework benefits. The amount of time it takes to route an application through the process has been reduced from a month to less than a day.

As another plus to the automation, these three forward-thinking organizations now can easily provide required telework statistics to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM requires annual, and sometimes quarterly, reports on the number of telework applications filed and declined, and the number of people regularly teleworking. The Telework Coordinators at these Institutes can pull these statistics in a matter of minutes, and guarantee their accuracy.

Gayle Mundell, Telework Coordinator at NIDCD, says, "Since implementing Telework Online, I spend 50 percent less time reviewing and approving applications. With automated notices sent to supervisors and teleworkers alike, the administrative tasks involved with e-mail and post mail have been streamlined."

"This is a very robust application that can be readily customized to work for other agencies based on their specific forms, workflow, and processes," says Colleen Sasser, Business Development Manager at LCG Systems, which designed the system for NIH. According to Sasser, the system can be implemented, and up and running in just a few weeks.

<http://www.teleworkexchange.com/teleworker-08-07.asp#p4b>