Nonprofit Risk Management Center

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The following piece is excerpted from *Full Speed Ahead: Managing Technology Risk in the Nonprofit World*. Published by the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, the book is available by calling (202) 785-3891 or visit www.nonprofitrisk.org.

Suggested Components of a Telework Policy

Consider including the following items in a telework policy for your nonprofit:

- θ An overview of the parameters of the program, and any special requirements that apply (e.g. that telework locations be within the state where the nonprofit operates, or that the nonprofit will be allowed to inspect the work site).

- θ Information on the nonprofit's systems security provisions and instructions.

- θ A restatement of the nonprofit's applicable code of conduct.

- θ Information about the required work schedule and means of communications between the employee and the "home office" as well as contact between the employee and the nonprofit's clients and outside vendors.

- θ A signed statement that the employee agrees to establish and maintain a safe and secure home workstation and that the employee has read and understands the policy and agrees to abide by its provisions.

With minor necessary exceptions, telecommuting employees should be subject to the same rules that apply to employees working in your main office. Make sure that any changes in employment policies and practices are promptly communicated to these off-site employees.

As with any change in employment policy, an organization should always request legal review from a competent attorney familiar with the laws of the state in which the nonprofit conducts business before implementing the new policy.

There are numerous resources available to organizations seeking to formalize a telecommuting program. For example, the International Telework Association & Council Web site (www.telecommute.org) has a helpful FAQ section that addresses common questions about telecommuting. The American Society for Training and Development offers a guide to establishing a telecommuting program, *An Organizational Guide to Telecommuting: Setting Up and Running a Successful Telecommuter Program* as well as a 16-page booklet titled, *Training Telecommuters* (www.astd.org). The U.S. Office of Personnel Management offers a document titled *Steps for Implementing Telework* located at www.opm.gov/wrkfam/telecomm/steps.htm. Though the steps were developed to assist federal government agencies, they offer additional tips beyond those provided above and many can be readily adapted to a nonprofit's needs. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (www.mwcog.org/commuter/cogpolicy.html) has a *Sample Telework Policy and Agreement*.