



**TURNING THE KEY:
UNLOCKING HUMAN POTENTIAL
IN THE FAMILY-FRIENDLY
FEDERAL WORKPLACE***

*A Status Report on Federal Workplace
Family-Friendly Initiatives*

to

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

by

VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE



1997

* *“...the key to unlocking the enormous, unused,
human potential of the federal workforce.
Unlocking that potential will make everything
else possible—it is the only way.”*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Gore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, prominent initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Blair House Papers
January 1997



Mr. President:

Through personal leadership and inspiration, you have been driving a historic effort to encourage federal agencies to become more “family-friendly.”

Your 1994 and 1996 directives to agency heads on the family-friendly federal workplace led agencies to review and improve their efforts to help employees balance and integrate work and family demands. Your signature on the Family and Medical Leave Act not only provided federal employees with additional flexibility in meeting their life needs but was a powerful signal of your determination to help all American families achieve a better balance of their many responsibilities. Your proposed expansion of that Act would furnish employees with valuable additional time off to meet important medical and educational needs.

This is critical because across the country, American workers are struggling to balance the demands of work and family, searching for ways to maintain a healthy family life and a satisfying and productive career. We now know that family-friendly initiatives, properly administered, not only result in stronger families, but in more efficient and effective workplaces and better service to our customers.

At a time when a great deal of attention has been given to the significance of this issue, I am presenting you with this update on where the federal government now stands in this important arena. It is clear from our review during the past year that the necessary policies and programs are in place. In fact, in many areas, the federal government can be truly proud of its leadership position and its role as a model employer.

For example, the federal government was well ahead of private sector employers in offering an array of highly flexible work schedules, starting as early as the 1970s. It pioneered the use of leave sharing and leave banks, which help employees facing devastating illness or family emergencies obtain the time off they need, thanks to donations of paid leave from their co-workers. The quality and scope of our child care investments are another remarkable example of where we have shown leadership.

During the years ahead it will be important to build on these early successes.

Our first goal should be to achieve broader implementation of existing policies. We should do this at a level that will benefit significantly more employees: not only at headquarters but in the field, not only in some parts of agencies but throughout, not only to meet critical emergency situations but to help all employees manage the everyday stresses of contemporary life.

Second, we need to ensure access by all federal workers to innovative and supportive new strategies that have been generated in certain agencies and departments, whether those workers are in headquarters or the field, and whether they are high or low on the pay scale. We must work hard to be sure that the opportunities these strategies provide are widely available and be alert to the opportunity to expand and amplify these efforts wherever possible.

Third, we should strive for a dramatic change in workplace culture. As we are learning in the private sector, it is important to increase support and recognition for people's lives outside of work, demonstrate respect for their unique contributions and needs, achieve better relationships with their supervisors, and foster an environment that emphasizes trust and caring. Many substantive research efforts have recently documented the fact that these factors—combined with open and honest communications—can have far more impact than specific programs in inspiring employee commitment, productivity, and creativity.

As you said at last year's *Family Re-Union Conference: Families and Work*, "We can set up a framework within government . . . pass laws, have regulations . . . but in the end, it's the culture of America that has to change," if we are to have stronger children, stronger families, and a stronger economy.

The same is true in the federal community. We are learning to foster an environment that can truly change the culture of our workplaces and raise the spirit of the workforce, as called for in *Blair House Papers*. While the current climate of cost reduction and downsizing might seem to make this effort more challenging, I believe that systemic implementation of family-friendly policies can help us achieve our broader reinvention goals.

The report that follows offers greater detail on agency efforts, with examples of specific accomplishments. It highlights some of the cutting-edge, innovative approaches federal agencies are taking. We need to broaden the use of these approaches throughout the federal government.

We also need to enhance and, in some cases, move beyond our present approaches to the family-friendly workplace. My specific recommendations, outlined more fully in this report, are as follows:

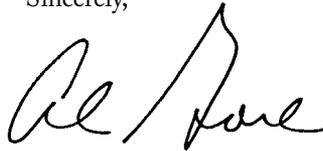
1. Federal child care should be not only an example of quality, but a model of accessibility and affordability. **We should make child care more affordable.**
2. Elder care increasingly affects federal workers, just as it does the entire American workforce. **We should heighten awareness and availability of elder care programs.**
3. Alternative or compressed work schedules mean more time and more flexibility to be with families. **We should increase employee use of flexible hours.**
4. If an employee can produce as efficiently offsite as on, we can and should support flexibility regarding where work is done. **We should greatly expand the number of federal workers who telecommute.**

5. Through our employee and mission programs, we can strengthen American fatherhood. **We should encourage men in their role as fathers.**
6. We must make sure that the programs and policies we introduce are in fact ones that employees want and will use. **We should promote employee feedback.**
7. Family-friendly programs can only succeed with top-level support. **We should hold leaders and their organizations accountable.**

All of this will take continued leadership by this Administration. Only when federal workers believe that their family life is supported by their top agency leaders can they be most effective. Only when senior management sets high expectations can these family-friendly practices become reality for all federal workers.

Mr. President, if we do all of these things—and do them well—I am confident we will have moved the federal workplace toward the goal you have held out before us since early 1994; we will have created a federal workplace that is friendly to families. At the same time, our employees will see it as a great place to work, and the American people will respect it as an effective place with which to do business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Gore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "A" and "G".

Al Gore

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Progress and Recommendations

On June 21, 1996, President Clinton issued a memorandum to all executive branch heads, asking them to implement family-friendly work arrangements in their departments and agencies. The memorandum, which is reprinted in full at the end of this report, identifies seven areas in which agencies are to review their personnel practices so as to improve and build upon existing policies, programs, and services. Specifically, agencies are to provide their employees with:

1. assistance in securing safe, affordable quality child care;
2. elder care information and referral services;
3. flexible hours that will enable employees to schedule their work and meet the needs of their families;
4. opportunities to telecommute when possible and consistent with their responsibilities;
5. policies and procedures that promote the active involvement in children's lives of fathers as well as mothers;
6. an effective mechanism for suggesting new practices that strengthen families and provide for a more productive work environment; and
7. leadership and participation in these policies and programs from the highest level of the agency.

Following is a summary of agency activities and progress in each of these seven areas, as well as recommendations for further progress.

1. Helping Secure Safe, Affordable Quality Child Care

Child care is an area of acknowledged leadership for the federal government, which takes justifiable pride in the quality of the nearly 1,000 worksite child care centers sponsored by civilian and military agencies. The Department of Defense (DoD) child care system is widely recognized as a model that states and local communities could well emulate, with its thoughtfully integrated combination of many forms and settings for care for very young children as well as for school-age children. At a recent White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning, President Clinton directed the Secretary of Defense to share this experience widely, citing the recognition DOD has achieved as a premier provider of child care.

The biggest barrier to federal employee access to safe, affordable child care—particularly among lower graded employees—continues to be the high fees charged by federal centers. General Services Administration (GSA) has studied this problem intensively this year. It found that while employer-supported child care is a cost-effective investment, it requires steady, predictable funding. DOD's child care system, for example, is heavily subsidized, making possible significantly lower fees to parents. In May, GSA released a report to Congress outlining the need to increase revenues and enrollment, reduce operating costs, and expand the availability of tuition assistance for parents who can't afford to pay full fees.

The problem of affordable child care is a challenging one—and not unique to the federal community. GSA plans to step up to a new role of helping to support fundraising and financial development needs, not only of the centers that operate in its buildings, but all those sponsored by civilian agencies. It has announced plans to acquire fundraising expertise and consult with outside groups to help accomplish this goal. GSA estimates that it will have to raise \$8 to 10 million per year in new money, from private sources, not appropriated funds.

Agency Progress

Seventy percent of the eligible centers under the oversight of the **General Services Administration** are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. GSA's goal is that 100 percent of the eligible centers will be accredited in less than two years. Of the **Defense Department's** child development centers, 71 percent are similarly accredited. In comparison, between 5 and 10 percent of non-federal child care centers nationwide are accredited.

The **Department of Defense** child care system is the largest employer-sponsored program in the world and includes child development centers, family child care homes, and school-age care programs for more than 200,000 children of active duty personnel. All center staff and child care providers participate in a competency-based training program based on the nationally recognized Child Development Award Credential competencies. The National Association for the Education of Young Children has cited DOD as a national leader in child development programs. A 1996 Carnegie Foundation report, *Years of Promise*, recognized the Department's efforts to provide quality child care services that meet the demanding lifestyle of military families.

The **Department of Transportation** sponsors 28 on- or near-site child development centers with plans to develop more. It also requires accreditation of these centers.

Many employees use the *Handbook of Child Care and Elder Care Resources* published by the **Office of Personnel Management** to assist them in locating appropriate dependent care. OPM also refers employees to a national free service, ChildCare Aware and its 800 number (800-424-2246), to locate child care resource and referral organizations in their area that can help identify child care programs to meet their needs.

Federal centers host a variety of fundraising activities, solicit donations during the Combined Federal Campaign, use funds from agency

recycling programs, and even hold bake sales and auctions to support tuition assistance and scholarships for employees' children. Among them are centers at the **Departments of Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, State, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Environmental Protection Agency.**

The **Department of Energy** sponsors a highly innovative child care program, "Babies in the Workplace," which was established at its Oakland, California, Operations Office. This program allows a newborn child up to six months of age to be in the parent's immediate work area.

The **Executive Office of the President** has a private room available for nursing mothers.

Some **Department of the Interior** field installations have made accommodations available for nursing mothers. Others provide space where mothers can meet to discuss and exchange information on child care, parenting, and balancing work and family issues.

A Family Support Room was recently established as a pilot project in the main **Department of the Interior** headquarters building for employees who face an emergency child care situation of short duration during the business day. The employee can bring the child to the facility and then actually work there—the support room is fully outfitted with office equipment as well as with comfortable couches and beds. The pilot's intent is to help employees manage a child care emergency with minimum disruption to productivity. The Department is also broadening its efforts to make laptop computer equipment available for short-term check out; this will enable employees to meet emergency child care situations while continuing their work at home.

Some **Environmental Protection Agency** locations, such as EPA Region X, Seattle, offer part-time child care enrollment to accommodate part-time employees' schedules. Other locations offer drop-in ser-

vices on a daily basis. The **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** offers part-time and drop-in care in addition to full-time care.

The **Overseas Private Investment Corporation** provides summer camp information for employees, and the **Federal Communications Commission** maintains a listing of seasonal recreational programs in neighboring communities for employees' children.

Many federal child care centers, including those at the **Social Security Administration** and the **Department of State**, offer full-day summer programs for school-age children up to 12 years old.

The **Nuclear Regulatory Commission** operates a kindergarten program so that working parents can continue to be close to their children as they begin school.

The **Department of Justice** offers emergency child care support through a contractor-operated center in Washington, D.C.

Since there is a large demand for the limited number of child care spaces available at the **Central Intelligence Agency**, its Family and Employee Liaison Office maintains an in-house list of teenage and college-age dependents and spouses of CIA employees in the Washington area who have expressed an interest in providing babysitting services for Agency personnel.

The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration's** Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California, provides child care for part-time workers and scholarships for employees with lower incomes. It has formed a group of working mothers to address affordable child care and other family concerns. Dryden Flight Research Center in Edwards, California, provides drop-in care with one day's notice.

Department of State Foreign Service families en route to or from post are provided with temporary child care services. The Department's child care center accepts schoolchildren on snow days and other days when local school systems are closed.

The **Department of Energy** provides a variety of child care services to its employees around the nation. For example, its Albuquerque Operations Office constructed a new state-of-the-art child care facility considered best in its class; it saved almost \$60,000 by building the facility rather than leasing space and paying overhead costs.

RECOMMENDATION: Make Child Care More Affordable

As specified in the President's directive to its Administrator, the General Services Administration should work aggressively toward resolving the child care affordability challenge, not only for the benefit of those former welfare recipients hired by federal agencies, but for all lower income federal employees. This means that GSA should provide leadership in defining a national strategy to help support the financial needs of all federal non-DOD centers and help make them affordable to a broader range of parents. At the same time, it should encourage external partnerships and stimulate pilot programs of new kinds of care—measures that have the potential to improve affordability. GSA should also work closely with other civilian agency sponsors of child care to continue to study this problem, bring forth new recommendations—including any desired legislative initiatives—and monitor the actions and needs of federal parents.

2. Providing Elder Care Information and Referral Services

Elder care increasingly affects federal workers, just as it does the entire American workforce. This trend will only continue as our population ages, and the baby boomer generation turns 50 and older. Most federal agencies are providing their workforce with information on elder care issues, options, and solutions in a variety of formats from brochures and seminars to Web sites. Many provide information and referral services through employee assistance programs or specialized contractors. Through these mechanisms, agencies offer specific infor-

mation on everything from Alzheimer's to living wills, from assisted living options to financial planning. Importantly, they can also refer employees to programs or services that can best meet their needs wherever their parents live, whether in the same neighborhood or, as is true in a large majority of cases, several states away.

Agency Progress

Many agencies' employee assistance programs act as clearinghouses for elder care information and referral. A few, like that of the **Department of Transportation**, provide one-on-one consultations with an advisor to help locate elder care services.

Those agencies that provide support groups and counseling for employees faced with elder care include the **Department of Transportation**, the **Department of Housing and Urban Development**, the **U.S. Information Agency**, and the **National Security Agency**.

The **Department of Energy's** Richland, Washington, office uses a private comprehensive resource and referral company to meet employee needs for counseling and information, as does the **Internal Revenue Service** and the **Department of Justice**.

The **Department of Labor's** Work/Life Center manages an elder care clearinghouse that provides referral services, Web sites, literature, videos, etc., for interested employees. Each year, the Department holds a Care Providers Fair at which employees can get answers to questions in person.

The **Social Security Administration** has conducted over 100 interactive broadcasts on the SSA National Satellite Network, holds caregivers' fairs, publishes an elder care newsletter, and hosts support groups and individual guidance sessions. Satellite broadcast topics include safeguarding the elderly from cons, scams, and swindles; senior living arrangements; understanding Alzheimer's disease; osteoporosis; and stroke rehabilitation and recovery. SSA's Employee Activities Association maintains access to a computer database of all elder care

services and facilities in the state of Maryland, to assist employees in locating appropriate services.

The **Tennessee Valley Authority** provides elder care fairs with information on financial planning, preparation of living wills, and coping skills.

Since 1982, the **Department of State's** social work staff in its Employee Consultation Service has provided individual elder care counseling. The staff makes home, nursing home, and hospital visits to assess a situation and facilitate family communication.

The **U.S. Information Agency** provides a full spectrum of elder care services for its employees, including health fairs and seminars on Alzheimer's disease, and information on legal issues, housing, nursing homes, financial/estate planning, and taking care of the caregiver.

In response to employee inquiries and survey responses, the **Environmental Protection Agency's** Research Triangle Park facility developed a comprehensive elder care program that serves as a model for the Agency. The program is for employees who provide or assist with the physical, emotional, and/or financial support of an elderly person. The program includes an elder care information kit, a community services and assistance directory, a survivor benefits manual, an elder care locator pamphlet, and educational seminars.

In 1992, the **Department of Defense** surveyed military personnel and their spouses and determined that 6 percent had elderly dependents and 9 percent had long-distance care responsibilities. In response, DOD provided materials to the military services' Family Centers to help their staffs meet the increasing elder care assistance and information needs of their customers. For example, the Hampton Roads Joint Services Exceptional Family Member Committee sponsored the region's first military Elder Care Workshop in May 1996, and the **National Security Agency** sponsored a two-day Elder Care Expo.

The **Office of Personnel Management** sponsors the Interagency Adult Dependent Care Working Group to promote agency initiatives in elder care.

RECOMMENDATION: Heighten Awareness and Availability of Help

Elder care programs should be increased so that every agency offers assistance, and broadened to supplement general information with more individualized counseling for employees coping with elder care issues. Agencies should review their employee assistance programs to be certain that they are fully capable of providing employees with expert advice and support in this important area. They can also consider adding the services of a specialized referral contractor, as the Department of Justice, the Internal Revenue Service, and other agencies have done. Or they can draw on local area agencies on aging; these provide excellent free resource and referral services that can be used where employee assistance programs or outside contractors cannot or do not provide them. The Adult Dependent Care Working Group, sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management, should continue its efforts to solicit agency views and information needs as well as its practice of showcasing available services, practices, and policies.

3. Offering Flexible Hours

Flexible and compressed work schedules were initially instituted several years ago as a way to ease commuting and energy problems. Today, however, such schedules support the new emphasis on employees' ability to balance work and family responsibilities. Nearly half of all federal employees take advantage of some form of flexible work schedule. The flexibility most used by federal employees is staggered arrival and departure times, as well as flexible or compressed work weeks in which employees work 8 to 10 hours for nine days and then take one day off every other week.

Most of the agencies are doing a good job in creating flexible or compressed schedules for their employees, utilizing flex time, voluntary leave transfer programs, and alternative work schedules. As the Selective Service System reports, “Creative scheduling has been a definite morale booster.”

Most agencies are also doing a fine job in administering the Family and Medical Leave Act, as well as leave-sharing programs in which co-workers voluntarily donate paid annual leave to employees who are experiencing personal or family emergencies. Some agencies are making effective use of part-time schedules for many different positions and grade levels, including senior managers. Job-sharing arrangements are still relatively rare, but the Office of Personnel Management reports that they are working well where they exist. In some agencies, employees who use their own leave to do volunteer work can have the time matched by their agency—thus providing a significant incentive to become involved in school events or participate in community activities.

Agency Progress

Many agencies report very high percentages of employees on flexible or compressed schedules—50 percent of **Defense** employees, 75 percent of **Energy’s**, and 85 percent of **Labor’s**. Seventy percent of the **Environmental Protection Agency’s** employees are on compressed work schedules.

The **Department of Education** matches the leave parents use to volunteer at their children’s schools.

Employees’ use of alternative work schedules at the **Central Intelligence Agency** has increased from 8 percent in 1990 to 22 percent in 1996.

Department of Energy employees have increased their use of family-friendly leave. In 1995, 10 percent of its workforce used an average of three days of leave; the next year this increased to near 20 percent.

The **Department of State** offers some form of flexible schedules in all 27 of its bureaus. About a third of them offer all three forms of alternative work schedules: flextime, flextour, and compressed schedules.

The **Railroad Retirement Board** can provide comprehensive health and medical services to the 1,000-plus employees at its Chicago headquarters because two part-time registered nurses share one full-time position.

The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration's** Marshall Space Flight Center shuts down completely between Christmas and New Year's Day to allow employees to spend time with their families during that special season.

The **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**, in an effort to further expand the participation of managers and supervisors in its Alternative Work Schedules Program, required that pilot programs proposed under its Employee-Friendly Workplace Competition cover all supervisors. The Competition was an effort by HUD to provide its entire workforce with an opportunity to submit models for local testing. In all, 23 proposals were received from 15 HUD field offices.

The part-time employment program at the **Federal Communications Commission** has been very successful. Most part-time positions are requested by employees to accommodate family concerns. Employees of all positions and grade levels—including senior executives—have successfully participated in the program. The FCC also grants employees time off from duty, without loss of pay or leave, through its Time Off Awards which recognize sterling performance.

RECOMMENDATION: Increase Employee Usage

We should continue to increase the percentage of the federal workforce that uses various forms of work schedule flexibility, not only because it is highly valued by employees and their families but also because of long and positive experience with flexibility in the federal

workplace. Improvements are needed in some parts of agencies where flexible or compressed schedules are not yet offered to senior-level employees. OPM should encourage part-time employment and job-sharing arrangements, including for mid- and senior-level employees. A governmentwide employee survey, co-sponsored by the National Performance Review and to be conducted later this year, will help determine the level of interest in converting to part-time status. In this regard, the USAJOBS automated employment information system—Web site (<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>), computer bulletin board, phone system and touch screen kiosks—an excellent way for employees to quickly identify those jobs open for part-time, job-sharing or even telecommuting consideration.

Agencies should also fully inform their employees of the government's family-friendly leave flexibilities, including the President's April 1997 memorandum requesting heads of departments and agencies to take immediate action to ensure that employees are permitted to schedule and be granted up to 24 hours of leave without pay or annual leave, compensatory time off, or credit hours (where available) to use for special family and medical circumstances, such as school activities or children's doctors appointments.

4. Providing Opportunities for Telecommuting

While considerable progress has been made in telecommuting in the last three years, much more can be done. This may be the issue with the greatest potential to change our federal workplace culture, in much the same way as flexible work schedules have during the last 20 years. Telecommuting can yield increased efficiency, greater productivity and reduced workplace costs, as well as enhanced quality of family life.

Telecommuting also permits and requires a new emphasis on measurement of actual results generated by employees, rather than on their ability to be at the principal workplace at specific times. This shift in emphasis is in line with the intent of the Government Performance and Results Act, which makes agency accountability for results a matter of

law. Additionally, the trust, respect, and open communication that undergird successful telecommuting arrangements will go a long way toward building the new workplace culture that can support the transformation required by our reinvention efforts. For both of these reasons, it is critical that we intensify our efforts here and ensure their success.

The last formal count of federal telecommuters, taken a year ago by the General Services Administration, reported nearly 10,000 individuals working at home, at special satellite centers, or at other locations different from the principal workplace. While a comprehensive government-wide survey has not been completed yet this year, individual agencies are reporting numbers that indicate the total may have doubled since the last count. We are thus moving in the right direction toward the goal of the President's Management Council: 60,000 federal telecommuters by the end of FY 1998 (3 percent of a total workforce of nearly two million).

While this is encouraging, there remain barriers to the full realization of telecommuting's potential to improve the quality of life for federal employees and get work done most productively. The most significant of these stem from distrust—a fear that off-site employees might take an “out of sight, out of mind” approach to their work. Changing this will require clear direction from the top, as well as more intensive education and sharing of positive experiences.

Agency Progress

The **General Services Administration** has opened telecommuting centers around Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other cities for use by all federal agencies. There will be more than 16 telecenters in suburban Washington, D.C., alone by the end of this year. More than 400 employees from 40 agencies now use these centers. Ten more facilities have been opened in other parts of the country, and others are planned. GSA has also set a goal that 1,000 of its 14,000 employees will telecommute by the end of 1998.

The **Department of the Navy** is a major user of GSA telecenters—one out of five employees working from a telecenter is a Navy employee.

Thirteen percent of the **Department of Education's** workforce works at home or at satellite centers, exceeding the federal 3 percent goal.

The **Department of Transportation** requires each of its organizations to establish a telecommuting program and report on progress. The DOT telecommuting goal is 5 percent of its total workforce; currently, 800 employees (of about 30,000) telecommute at least once a week, and this number is expected to increase dramatically in the next year. The **Federal Railroad Administration**, the **Federal Highway Administration**, and the **Federal Aviation Administration** are piloting different experimental programs for safety inspectors to operate out of their homes—or, in some cases, their cars—as they are in the field as inspectors. This program has enabled the **Federal Railroad Administration** to close several field offices.

By 1998, the **Department of Energy** projects that about 1,200 employees will be telecommuting—half that number will come from field offices and half from DOE headquarters. The Bonneville Power Administration has about 60 employees participating in a telecommuting program in which employees use their own equipment. The Chicago Operations Office uses a federal agency satellite office. At the Golden, Colorado, field office, 22 of the 147 employees have participated in the telecommuting program. DOE's goal is to have a 10 percent telecommuting participation level at headquarters and increased levels in its field offices by the end of the next fiscal year.

The **Consumer Product Safety Commission** launched a telecommuting pilot project in 1995, involving 10 field employees from five Eastern Region offices. Currently, about 60 of its 128 field employees (primarily product safety investigators and public affairs specialists) are working from their homes or from satellite locations. The results have

been a decrease in rent costs and an increase in productivity and morale among participating employees. In July 1996, CPSC received a Hammer Award from the National Performance Review in recognition of this project's success.

A telecommuting pilot is the newest addition to the **Federal Communications Commission's** family-friendly work environment. The program consists of 30 employees, drawn from positions at all levels. The participants work from their homes or telecommuting centers; the FCC provides computer equipment where necessary.

The **Central Intelligence Agency** has one secure telecommuting center and has proposed to Congress the creation of three additional secure telecommuting centers by 2001, to help employees do classified work closer to home.

A growing number of **Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service** mediators at field offices are now working out of their homes. They have been provided with laptop computers to assist them in their daily work.

The **Department of Labor** recently completed two successful pilot programs on flexiplace/telecommuting; these programs are now permanent. The Department has about 3,400 employees participating in some form of telecommuting. Forty-six percent of these are fathers.

Fourteen percent of the **Merit Systems Protection Board** staff telecommute. Some of these telecommuters are administrative judges at regional offices who write case decisions at home.

The **National Labor Relations Board** initiated a telecommuting program involving administrative law judges and other employees. Several supervisory attorneys are included in the pool of telecommuting employees who are working at home.

National Credit Union Association examiners telecommute from their homes when they are not examining credit unions or on travel duty. The agency is currently broadening its use of telecommuting through advanced computer technology.

The **National Mediation Board** has established a home-based computer program that lets employees check out excess computers for use at home for official agency business, including computer training. The Board's mediation staff has been equipped with computers as well as fax machines for home use.

The **Department of Defense's Defense Investigative Service** has instituted a Work-From-Domicile program. Currently, the Service has almost 1,200 employees working from home or alternative work locations on either a full- or part-time basis. Under the program, many investigators work from their homes, traveling to interviews without having to report daily at a central office. These employees only need to visit their office occasionally for meetings, training, orientations, and general administrative requirements.

The **Defense Contract Audit Agency** has aggressively pursued telecommuting not only as a means of helping employees balance the competing demands of work and family responsibilities, but also to reduce overhead costs through the reduction of commercially leased space. Through telecommuting arrangements covering 91 employees, DCAA estimates over \$400,000 savings over a two-year period.

RECOMMENDATION: Meet Challenging Goals

The President's Management Council has quantified a government-wide telecommuting goal for 1998 and has tasked an Interagency Working Group with executing a detailed plan to accomplish it. It's a good goal—and we should continue to push toward it. I'd encourage agencies to set their own targets, but what's really required is to engage the leadership in making this happen. I will ask the PMC to take this on. Additionally, we should step up efforts on education, awareness, and training, particularly as these relate to management attitudes, support, and participation. The National Performance Review can help by showcasing federal agencies that are taking the lead on this issue.

At the community level, the Office of Personnel Management should harness the energies of the Federal Executive Boards and Federal Executive Associations to provide leadership in cities with large numbers of federal workers, and/or traffic and air quality problems. The FEBs and FEAs should coordinate with state and local government and private sector counterparts to develop collaborative community-based partnerships aimed at increasing telecommuting as an effective workforce and traffic demand management strategy. Similarly, the Department of Transportation—in its leadership role under the Global Climate Change Action Plan—should energize and involve local metropolitan planning organizations to join community efforts to raise public awareness of telecommuting and increase employer participation in all sectors.

5. Promoting Involvement of Fathers in Children's Lives

Agencies are aware that their commitment to strengthening fatherhood must include both support for the fathers in their workforce as well as for those affected by the programs they administer for all Americans. This commitment has resulted in a change in attitude reflecting a deeper understanding of a father's family responsibilities. Another result has been more respect and encouragement from managers, who now allow fathers the time off they need to attend to family obligations.

Several federal agencies have taken proactive steps to reach out to fathers, allowing more men the flexibility to become more actively involved in the lives of their children. Where men face long periods of deployment away from their families, several agencies—particularly those in the military—have developed a great variety of programs, services, and support mechanisms to assist families through these difficult times. Other agencies are offering special educational programs to give fathers new tools to improve their relationships with their children and to build awareness of their parenting strengths.

Some agency practices supporting men in their role as fathers are not new, separate initiatives; rather, for the first time, fathers' family needs are being considered equal to those of mothers. This reflects real progress.

Agency Progress

The **Department of Defense** produced a video promoting ideas that deployed fathers can use to stay in touch with their children; the video was distributed to the Department's 291 Family Centers for use in their deployment programs. The **Armed Forces Information Service** generated articles on the role of fathers for all installation newspapers. The **Armed Forces Radio and Television Service** created a radio spot—broadcast to all overseas sites—highlighting the President's emphasis on fathers.

The **Department of Labor's** Flexiplace program achieved a 46 percent participation rate by fathers. Instead of using their time to commute to and from the office during peak hours, program participants report more involvement in family matters—particularly in their children's lives, such as spending more time with their children and being home before bedtime.

The **Department of Education** led in the planning and implementation of a federally-sponsored conference, hosted by Vice President Al Gore, on "Strengthening the Role of Fathers in Families" in May 1996. The Department plans to conduct a "Dad Goes Back to Class" campaign to encourage parent employees to visit their child's classroom; it is also establishing a "Friend of the Family" Departmental award.

The **Department of Energy's Bonneville Power Administration**, two-thirds of whose employees are male, established a Parent Resource Group which holds monthly luncheons on parenting topics ranging from "Quality of Parenting" to "Raising Teenagers."

The **U.S. Coast Guard** has established a "Dads University" that provides training to both military and civilian employees. Dads University

workshops focus on celebrating fatherhood and raising fathers' awareness of their parenting strengths, mistakes, and potential for maximizing time with their children. One course—"The Secrets of Fast-Track Fathering"—gives fathers tools for improving their relationships and helps them develop a "fathering mindset."

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency** rotates its personnel during disaster deployments to maintain staff's family involvement; also, from a mission standpoint, FEMA works to ensure that family members are not separated from each other in shelters during disasters.

A Parents Network has been formed by the **Environmental Protection Agency's** Region 1 in Boston. The group meets monthly and makes recommendations to the Human Resources Office and senior management on ways to improve the balance between work and family.

The **Department of State** plans a variety of activities related to father involvement, notably a "Fathers' Forum" program that will provide opportunities for fathers to network with each other and learn about the demands of fatherhood. It also will educate managers on the importance of supporting both mothers and fathers in their parenting roles—for example, by avoiding routine late-in-the-day staff meetings.

The **Social Security Administration** presented a live interactive broadcast via its National Satellite Network on "Strengthening the Role of Fathers in the Family." Videotapes have been used by other federal agencies.

RECOMMENDATION: Encourage Men in Their Role as Fathers in Families

The Interagency Working Group on Fatherhood was created as a result of the Presidential Memorandum of June 16, 1995, tasking the heads of all federal agencies to find ways for a flexible, responsible government to strengthen the role of fathers in families. This Working Group should continue its vigilant approach to addressing the needs of

fathers in the federal workplace. Agencies should make a particularly strong effort to expand the use of flexible or compressed work schedules and telecommuting programs for fathers, to encourage fathers to take leave for family responsibilities, and to be open to suggestions from and about fathers. We should communicate our support for these efforts from the highest levels of management.

6. Listening to Employee Suggestions

Employees are in an excellent position to comment on agencies' family-friendly policies. Moreover, they frequently have ideas regarding new practices that can strengthen families and provide for a more productive work environment. Many agencies are using a variety of creative ways to capture employee suggestions and feedback on family-friendly programs and policies. These mechanisms range from work-family resource centers to employee surveys, from home pages to task forces and suggestion programs. Some use existing programs to solicit employee suggestions. More often, agency leaders have chosen to establish new or special workplace teams or to form new partnerships with employee unions focused on this topic.

Across the federal government, agencies report having acted on the suggestions they have received through these various mechanisms. They credit employee input with the establishment of many new programs and policies. Our experience at the National Performance Review reminds us continually of the value of the great suggestions and course corrections from newly empowered federal workers who are helping to streamline government.

Agency Progress

Several agencies—including the **Central Intelligence Agency** and the Departments of **Labor, Transportation, and Health and Human Services**—report having established work-life centers that serve as focal points for employee programs.

The **Department of State** has a network of 27 work and family coordinators, one for each bureau, to receive employee suggestions about new practices for strengthening families. In August 1996, these work and family coordinators conducted a survey to assess the use of family-friendly initiatives throughout the Department and to receive feedback from employees.

The **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** conducts annual surveys to assess the effectiveness of communication between FERC staff and those parents using FERC's child care services as well as their overall satisfaction with these services.

The **U.S. Information Agency** established a Family-Friendly Team through its union partnerships. The team conducted a survey of all employees which led to a subsequent revision of several policies.

When an employee survey showed widespread support for a child care center, the **National Science Foundation's** Labor-Management Partnership initiated a feasibility study and implementation plan for such a center.

The **U.S. Agency for International Development** established the USAID Quality Council to evaluate agency policies and programs, employee concerns, and suggestions for improvements in the workplace.

The **Department of Labor** is making its Employee Suggestion Program part of its intranet system to improve employee access to the program and eliminate the use of forms.

The **Interior Department's Bureau of Reclamation** has designated a Work and Family Team to provide a vehicle for employee input regarding the Bureau's family-friendly activities. And the Department's **National Park Service** has established a home page that conveys family-friendly and work-life information to their employees.

The **General Services Administration** has replaced its Suggestions Program with a new, more decentralized, Solutions Program, which

allows regions to tailor the program to suit their specific needs and environment. The program changes the way GSA handles and implements new ideas by reflecting a “bias to adopt” philosophy; that is, it leans in the direction of accepting employee solutions, rather than resisting them.

The **Executive Office of the President** has established a Customer Service Bureau to assist staff in finding answers to questions and to receive their comments and suggestions. An Employee-Friendly Task Group has also been established to review and develop recommendations on the use and expansion of employee-friendly programs.

The **U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency** surveyed its employees on a variety of family-friendly work issues.

The **Department of Health and Human Services**, along with its Union-Management Partnering Council, is leading a major Quality of Work Life Initiative; this effort includes a first-ever annual employee survey and the opening of a model Work/Life Center.

The **Selective Service System** has an employee suggestion program in place. The agency collects, reviews, and follows up on each submission.

RECOMMENDATION: Promote the Process

We should clearly support and widely promote the use of employee feedback and suggestion mechanisms. This will yield maximum participation and tap the greatest asset of the organization—the creativity and brain power of the men and women who comprise our federal workforce. Agencies should also use their partnerships with unions to accomplish this.

7. Lending Highest Level Leadership Support

Instead of seeing work-family programs only as an agreeable reward for good employees, federal managers are beginning to consider these

programs to be central to the achievement of agency missions—a concept effectively demonstrated by several recent research studies in the private sector.

First Tennessee Bank, for example, has done a cost-benefit analysis of work-life efforts that shows that family-friendly policies and programs help achieve customer goals within a supportive workplace culture. When managers are supportive, the study finds, customer service and customer relationships improve. DuPont uses 10 years of research to demonstrate that participants in work-life initiatives are the company's most committed employees. IBM research demonstrates that its highest performers stay with the company because of its work-life programs.

These studies, and many others, suggest that family-friendly workplace programs do not just benefit some few employees who encounter serious or tragic circumstances. Instead, these programs are an effective means to drive broad workplace change—change that improves customer service, reduces cost, improves employee attitudes and effort, and supports recruitment and retention of the best and brightest employees.

Here in the federal sector, leaders of several agencies have stepped forward to demonstrate their personal support for family-friendly programs—and to encourage similar support in others. These demonstrations of top-level leadership and involvement are paying off. The creation of a family-friendly workplace is a key management strategy that can evoke greater employee commitment, more discretionary effort, and higher productivity.

Agency Progress

At the **Department of Transportation**, former Secretary Federico Peña issued a challenge to all senior managers, asking that work-life program success be integrated into organization performance measures. He further challenged them to expand work-life initiatives wherever possible, defining them as “business imperatives and good management.”

Attorney General Janet Reno expressed the work-life philosophy of the **Department of Justice** by saying, in part, that “work-life initiatives are an important beginning in helping employees find some balance between work and family needs.” Secretary of **Health and Human Services** Donna Shalala, in announcing her Department’s major Quality of Work Life Initiative designed “to improve the quality of work life for all HHS employees,” explained to employees that “we want you to hold us accountable for doing just that.” The **Department of State’s** leadership has expressed a similar level of commitment, making it clear that its work and family policy and program initiatives are “a long-distance event, not a sprint.”

The **Office of Personnel Management** set up a Work and Family Program Center to provide leadership and assistance to other federal agencies and to support family-friendly programs governmentwide. The Center sponsors conferences, seminars, and exhibits; offers speakers; issues written guidelines and resource materials; and conducts promotional and educational events. Among its many publications are the *Work and Family Kit*, a compilation of the programs, policies, and practices available to agencies to help employees balance their work and family needs.

Additionally, Jim King, former Director of the **Office of Personnel Management**, established a now highly coveted annual award to honor those agencies that provide innovative and effective work and family programs throughout the government. The award was won this year by the Departments of **Labor and Education** and the **U.S. Coast Guard**.

The **Department of Defense** has disseminated its extensive written response to the President’s family-friendly workplace directive throughout the Department, supporting it with radio and TV spots and newspaper articles that reinforce the role leadership plays in ensuring a family-friendly workplace. The **Department of Energy** plans to do the same. It will distribute its report along with a highly positive policy

statement encouraging top managers to review the report and adopt changes locally, based on best practices in the Department.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner wants to ensure that EPA’s “Quality of Worklife” is among the best in the federal government. To this end, many regional offices have developed and issued their own family leave manuals and policies. Decisions pertaining to leave use and approval for various family-related and work issues have been delegated to the lowest level of authority to demonstrate the Agency’s commitment to support staff in balancing work and family concerns.

RECOMMENDATION: Hold Leaders Accountable

Agency leaders should challenge their organizations in the same manner and with the same mechanisms they use to focus management attention on other key priorities—that is, they should establish clear goals, set high expectations, and hold their line organization accountable for results. We must continue to exert strong leadership in this arena and to communicate the importance of balancing work and family needs. We must do this not only because it is good for families, but also because it is vital in building the strong organizations that can deliver the results our customers—American taxpayers—demand and deserve.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 21, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Implementing Federal Family Friendly
Work Arrangements

I continue to believe that honoring and supporting the concerns of family members in the workforce is vital to good government and to a productive work force. In order to build on its record of support for families in the Federal workplace, the executive branch must continue to examine its practices and to implement the goals of the Presidential Memorandum of July 11, 1994. The Federal Government must continue to set the pace in transforming the culture of the American workplace so that it supports employees who are devoted to their families.

It is clear to me that whenever the Federal Government establishes a goal of providing civilian employees and military personnel with an environment supportive to families, the result is greater cost efficiency, increased worker commitment and productivity, better customer service, and improved family life.

Therefore, today I am directing all executive departments and agencies to review their personnel practices and develop a plan of action to utilize the flexible policies already in place and, to the extent feasible, expand their ability to provide their employees:

- (1) assistance in securing safe, affordable quality child care;
- (2) elder care information and referral services;
- (3) flexible hours that will enable employees to schedule their work and meet the needs of their families. This includes

encouragement to parents to attend school functions and events essential to their children;

- (4) opportunities to telecommute, when possible, and consistent with their responsibilities, to achieve the goal of 60,000 telecommuters by 1998 as set by the President's Management Council. This includes telecommuting from home and from satellite locations;
- (5) policies and procedures that promote active inclusion of fathers as well as mothers;
- (6) an effective mechanism by which employees can suggest new practices that strengthen families and provide for a more productive work environment; and
- (7) leadership and participation in these policies and programs at the highest level of the agency.

The departments and agencies shall provide an initial report on the results of this review to the Vice President through the National Performance Review within 120 days of the date of this memorandum. This report should include an assessment of progress made towards specific goals and include innovative approaches and detailed success stories.

The National Performance Review, together with the Domestic Policy Council, the President's Management Council Working Group on Telecommuting, the Office of Personnel Management and the General Services Administration will continue to work with the executive agencies as we move forward together to increase productivity through family-friendly work environments.

William Clinton

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 11, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Expanding Family-Friendly Work
Arrangements in the Executive Branch

In order to recruit and retain a Federal work force that will provide the highest quality of service to the American people, the executive branch must implement flexible work arrangements to create a “family friendly” workplace. Broad use of flexible work arrangements to enable Federal employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities can increase employee effectiveness and job satisfaction, while decreasing turnover rates and absenteeism. I therefore adopt the National Performance Review’s recommendation that a more family-friendly workplace be created by expanding opportunities for Federal workers to participate in flexible work arrangements consistent with the mission of the executive branch to serve the public.

The head of each executive department or agency (hereafter collectively “agency” or “agencies”) is hereby directed to establish a program to encourage and support the expansion of flexible family-friendly work arrangements, including: job sharing; career part-time employment; alternative work schedules; telecommuting and satellite work locations. Such a program shall include

- (1) identifying agency positions that are suitable for flexible work arrangements;
- (2) adopting appropriate policies to increase the opportunities for employees in suitable positions to participate in such flexible work arrangements;

- (3) providing appropriate training and support necessary to implement flexible work arrangements; and
- (4) identifying barriers to implementing this directive and providing recommendations for addressing such barriers to the President's Management Council.

I direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management ("OPM") and the Administrator of General Services ("GSA") to take all necessary steps to support and encourage the expanded implementation of flexible work arrangements. The OPM and GSA shall work in concert to promptly review and revise regulations that are barriers to such work arrangements and develop legislative proposals, as needed, to achieve the goals of the directive. The OPM and GSA also shall assist agencies, as requested, to implement this directive.

The President's Management Council, in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, shall ensure that any guidance necessary to implement the actions set forth in this directive is provided.

Independent agencies are requested to adhere to this directive to the extent permitted by law.

This directive is for the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget is authorized and directed to publish this directive in the *Federal Register*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "W".

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