

**Request for Applications
for the
SACOG Regional Telework Initiative**

SACOG Regional Telework Initiative

What is the Regional Telework Initiative?

The pilot initiative will provide targeted and customized technical assistance and other incentives to a group of selected employers to assist in administering and maintaining ongoing telework. The pilot will utilize expert consultants and SACOG staff to support employers in establishing telework policies and employee agreements, conduct training for virtual management, and provide insights on productivity monitoring, among other services identified in the recently conducted focus groups. The pilot will include materials accessible to all employers across the region, including employer policy templates and best practices research, via the SacRegion511 website (SacRegion511.org).

This pilot is a component of SACOG's Regional Innovative Mobility program which promotes non drive-alone mode use (carpooling, vanpooling, public transit, bicycling, walking, and telecommuting) for all types of trips. This program works to reduce air emissions, provides congestion relief, and increases mobility and safety for residents and commuters. The program's activities are part of several policies and actions set forth in the SACOG 2020 MTP/SCS to meet air quality requirements and the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target as noted in Policy #1: Shortened vehicle trips (reduce average trip length that residents take on a daily basis) and Policy #2: Increased transit, bike, and walk trips (resulting from shifting trips from vehicle travel to non-vehicle modes).

How do we define telework?

Telework is people performing their work functions at a location(s) that differs from where they would normally be doing it. It is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform work, during any part of regular, paid hours, at an approved alternative worksite (e.g., home, telework center). Telework is not a person who was hired and expected to work regularly at a location that is not an office or space associated with the employer, also known as a remote worker.

Goals & Strategies

Goal of the pilot:

Increase the percentage of teleworkers, within a participating organization, that use telework to replace commute trips, compared to pre-COVID-19 levels, reducing commute vehicle miles traveled and associated vehicle emissions.

Strategies to achieve this goal:

The pilot will use these strategies to inform the overall goal:

- Provide targeted and customized technical assistance to assist in administering and maintaining ongoing telework.
- Detail the benefits of regular, ongoing telework through the lens of saved commute vehicle trips, which will ultimately provide greater flexibility and autonomy in travel choices for individual employees.
- Assess ways to decrease the average mileage driven by teleworkers that use telework to replace commute trips.
- Measure change in ongoing telework rates through analysis of pre-COVID-19 travel patterns, telework levels during pilot participation, and post pilot outcomes and lasting effects.

Pilot Overview & Eligibility Criteria

How will the pilot work?

SACOG will select 10-20 applicants (organizations) varied in job function, size, and geography to participate in the pilot.

Pilot participants (organizations) will be offered a set number of hours of technical assistance in topic areas the organization identifies as a challenge, which can be customized, over a six-month pilot period to determine if ongoing telework can be achieved through these mechanisms.

Essential workers, or non-telework eligible employees, within an employer will be offered customized technical assistance from SACOG and, if applicable, provided a commute incentive (e.g. transit pass or personalized trip planning).

How much time will be required from organizations that participate?

40 hours over a six-month period (approximation)

- 15-20 hours of direct technical assistance
- 10 hours of employer-level evaluation & coordinating employee-level evaluation
- 10 hours of general program administration

Who should apply?

SACOG is searching for private and/or public organizations of varied job function, size, and geography within the six-county SACOG region. Organization representatives that are responsible for administering and/or managing telework programs should apply on behalf of the employer.

SACOG serves as the direct recipient of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds and develop and oversee the pilot program for the applicants that are selected. Project applicants must be able to sign an agreement with SACOG to receive services as well as agree to a data-disclosure agreement. SACOG serves as the steward of these federal funds.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants that fail to meet the following eligibility criteria will be considered ineligible for selection. This shall be at the sole discretion of SACOG.

1. At least 50% of staff from an applying organization must work in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and/or Yuba counties on a typical work day, pre-COVID-19.
2. Only one application may be submitted per organization.
3. The pilot must conclude within seven months (six-month pilot plus one month of wrap-up) of an agreement being signed and support the regional Innovative Mobility program to reduce vehicle miles and trips.
4. The participating organizations must demonstrate a connection between the proposed activities and the pilot program's goal to reduce single occupancy (SOV) trips and miles.
5. The applications must agree and fully commit to measuring outcomes (levels of telework, trip/miles reductions, and any other outcomes) to receive services in the pilot.
6. The applicant should demonstrate willingness to include a broad base of employees when participating in the pilot - particularly employees that might not have experience using the various non-drive alone modes of transportation (e.g. telework).

How will progress be measured?

Pilot participants (organizations) will be measured through a pre-pilot survey that examines travel patterns before COVID-19 both the employer and employee level. Another survey will be administered during the pilot that will provide learnings from experiences during the pilot initiative. A third survey will be administered post-pilot that will evaluate the pilot initiative's impact and potential lasting effects.

Reporting Requirements

Upon the project's completion, pilot participants will work with SACOG to complete final report that summarizes participation, results of various surveys, and results that clearly articulate both the percentage change of employees that will maintain ongoing telework and the estimated potential of vehicle trips and miles reduced due to the services received in the pilot.

Any press releases, flyers, newsletters, and other media/marketing materials used to promote the pilot or participation must be reviewed by Adrienne Moretz (amoretz@SACOG.org) prior to use. Please allow two business days for review.

Final reports are due one month after the pilot program's completion.

How can employers apply?

- Applicants should apply only using the online application provided at: surveymonkey.com/r/SACOGtelework
- The responses to application questions shall address the evaluation criteria and how participation achieves the goals of the pilot program.
- Applicants should submit complete applications to SACOG, via the online link, no later than September 25, 2020 at 5pm.

Evaluation & Selection Process

How will applicants be evaluated?

Applications submitted after 5 p.m. PST on September 25, 2020 will not be considered. An application review committee of SACOG staff will evaluate all information submitted in the application. Each applicant should demonstrate how effectively its application meets the evaluation criteria and pilot program goals.

Each member of the Panel will review the applications and assign points based on pilot program criteria listed below and information contained in the project application submissions. The Panel will convene to discuss the applications and reach consensus on the final criteria points and total score for each project. The Panel will recommend a list of applicants to participate in the pilot. SACOG reserves the right to select a varied pool of applicants to best inform long-term telework programming, with a focus on variety in geography, classification, and size.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Max. Points
<p>Potential of pilot to increase percentage of employees, within the participating organization, that use telework to replace commute trips: Does participating in the pilot increase the percentage of employees that maintain ongoing telework compared to pre-COVID-19 levels and replace commute trips with telework, thereby reducing CO2 emissions and furthering attainment of air quality standards?</p> <p>Applicants that demonstrate that participating in the pilot is going to improve their ability to implement an ongoing, long-term telework program will score higher on this criterion.</p>	15
<p>Ability to implement services provided during the pilot: Will participant require more than the minimum resources for basic implementation? Are there significant barriers to implementation including financial or operational barriers such as: 1) the need to expend significant capital to implement an IT infrastructure; 2) is there a large number of employees who are not able to telework due to the nature of the business or the industry?</p> <p>Applicants that demonstrate that they will be able to implement a long-term telework program by leveraging the technical assistance provided by this pilot (and don't need additional outside resources beyond the technical assistance) will score higher on this criterion.</p>	5
<p>Potential for long-term policy or process change: Will your employer support policy or process changes that may be required for long-term implementation? Is there potential for permanent implementation such that the following CMAQ objectives are met: reduced single occupancy vehicle trips and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Are there organizational expectations that work environments will return to traditional in-person service models in a post COVID era?</p> <p>Applicants that demonstrate that their employer will support policy and process changes to encourage and enable their employees to telework on a permanent basis (thereby reducing commute trips into the future) will score higher on this criterion.</p>	15
<p>Commitment of participating organization:</p>	15

<p>Does your organization have the ability and capacity to administer a six-month pilot including multiple evaluation touch points and coordination with technical assistance providers?</p> <p>Applicants that demonstrate that they will actively participate in the pilot and evaluation work will score higher on this criterion.</p>	
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What if my employer is not selected?

Employers that commit to ongoing telework but that are not selected for the pilot will be offered to serve in a measurement group where the employer is surveyed in alignment with the pilot participants but without any additional incentives or materials. Telework-related educational materials, best practice research, and templates are widely available to employers and employees at SacRegion511.org.

Pilot Timeline

Key dates for the pilot program

Process	Date
Open date for applications	September 4, 2020
Closing date for applications	September 22, 2020
Application review	September 22 - 25, 2020
Applicant selection	September 28, 2020
Project Launch	October 1, 2020
Final Reports due (coordination with SACOG)	May 30, 2020

Special Conditions

Reservations

This request for applications does not commit SACOG to award services to applicants, defray any costs incurred in the preparation of an application pursuant to this request or to procure or contract for work. SACOG may decline to applications without providing the reason(s) underlying the declination. Failure to select applicants will not result in a cause of action against SACOG.

Public Records

All applications submitted in response to this request become the property of SACOG and are considered public record. As such, applications may be subject to public review.

Right to Cancel

SACOG reserves the right to cancel or revise, for any or no reason, in part or in its entirety this request. If SACOG revises and/or cancels the request prior to the deadline for applications, applicants will be notified by email

Additional Information

SACOG reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification from any or all applicants to this request, but is under no obligation to do so

Participation Agreement

The selected participants will be required to sign the "Regional Telework Agreement," agree to the data disclosure, and submit any other requested documentation.

Successful applicants who are selected for the pilot will be given no more than 30 days to execute the agreement for the SACOG Regional Telework Initiative. Applicants failing to execute the agreement within 30 days shall forfeit their selection and SACOG may select another applicant at its discretion. SACOG intends to hold participants accountable to the project schedules they have proposed to ensure fairness in the competitive process and encourage participants to coordinate with SACOG quickly so that the public can benefit from the project as soon as possible. SACOG will not be held accountable for any harm caused during and/or from projects or events funded by SACOG