

Fairfield County embraces telecommuting, boasts higher participation than state average



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Telecommuting works. Just ask the 24 percent of all Connecticut telecommuters who live in Fairfield County. According to a recent *Telecommute Connecticut* survey, nearly one quarter of all Connecticut telecommuters are Fairfield County residents, and Fairfield County boasts slightly higher than the statewide average number of telecommuters (a telecommuter is someone who works at home one or more days per month during normal working hours — this definition excludes home-based businesses, those who work off site for after-hours catch up and those who work remotely when they travel).

With Fairfield County helping lead the way, telecommuting is catching on throughout the state. The same survey revealed that more than 158,000 Connecticut residents work from home at least one day per month — an 86 percent jump from just five years ago. Those numbers support telecommuting's viability in Connecticut.

All of this is exciting news for *Telecommute Connecticut* — a service of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, which provides employers with free assistance to design, develop and implement telecommuting programs — and its continued efforts to support the state's goals to help decrease traffic congestion, energy consumption and air pollution.

Continuing trend illustrates success.

Telecommuting works, as evidenced by the survey's findings, that more than half of all Connecticut telecommuters have been working

at home for two years or longer. Rapid growth of telecommuting in Connecticut is illustrated by the survey finding that nearly one in four telecommuters (23%) started telecommuting within the past six months.

Nurturing satisfied employees pays off for employers and employees.

Employers cite productivity gains (38%) and reduced turnover (35%) as top benefits of offering telecommuting programs (Connecticut Business and Industry Association 2006 Fairfield/Westchester County Business Survey).

Notably, the survey revealed that telecommuting has been an overwhelmingly positive experience for Connecticut telecommuters, with 95 percent having positive feelings about working from home, which makes telecommuting a win/win for both sides. Topping the list of comments measured by the survey are: "Telecommuting helps me manage both home and personal activities" (50%); "I really enjoy working at home" (46%); and "Not having to commute is one of the best things about working from home" (45%).

Further, telecommuters save a tremendous amount of money. It is estimated that each Connecticut telecommuter reduces his or her annual commuting cost by an average of \$2,104 per year (using AAA's average cost per mile for 10,000 miles per year/composite average for small, medium and large-sized sedans).

Supporting the "green" movement.

Every telecommuter makes a difference. On an average day, it is estimated that telecommuting currently eliminates nearly 60,000 automobiles from Connecticut roadways. Based on the number of Connecticut telecommuters, the distances from their home to their worksites and the number of reported telecommuting days, the estimated reduction in vehicle miles traveled is nearly 45

million each month. In other words, telecommuting in Connecticut translates to an estimated reduction of nearly 540 million vehicle miles traveled each year; an estimated savings of 29 million gallons of gas each year; and an estimated reduction of 81,000 tons of air pollution every year.

Telecommuting works for local company.

Gregory & Howe, a medical testing firm in Shelton, knows the benefits of telecommuting firsthand.

The company's staffing needs exceeded the capacity of its office. Rather than lease additional space and consequently significantly increase overhead while reducing profitability, the company sought assistance from *Telecommute Connecticut*.

By implementing a custom-tailored telecommuting program, Gregory & Howe is able to use its existing office space more efficiently, eliminating the need for additional, costly office space and new workstations.

To date, the company has saved thousands of dollars in overhead, which translates to increased company profits and productivity increases from those who telecommute. Additionally, Gregory & Howe's telecommuter employees realize a decrease in expenses associated with commuting.

Jean Taylor Stimolo is the program manager of Telecommute Connecticut, a commuter service of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, which provides employers with free assistance to design, develop and implement telecommuting programs. The program's ultimate goal is to decrease traffic congestion, energy consumption and air pollution throughout the state. For more information, contact 1-800-255-7433 or visit www.telecommuteCT.com.

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