
News Release

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U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao Awards \$2.4 Million in Telework Grants to People and Veterans with Disabilities

Minneapolis, Minn., Richmond, Va. and Bridgeport, Conn. Receive Telework Grants

WASHINGTON--U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao today awarded more than \$2.4 million in grants to help fund initiatives that will increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Connecticut, Minnesota and Virginia.

"As part of our continuing effort to increase access for workers with disabilities, today's grant of nearly \$2.4 million will provide necessary training, so that these workers can acquire the skills that will empower them to become more fully integrated in our workforce," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. "Today's grants will help expand telework employment opportunities for newly returning veterans with disabilities as well as others with disabilities in Minnesota, Virginia and Connecticut. The grants will also fund research to help individuals with disabilities get the training they need to find meaningful employment in telework positions," said Secretary Chao.

According to the Office of Personnel Management, telework (also called telecommuting) is the ability to do your work at a location other than your "official duty station." President George W. Bush, through his *New Freedom Initiative*, has directed agencies to undertake activities such as telework and assistive technology to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The three winners selected for departmental grants were Resource Inc., Minneapolis, MN, (\$829,526); Virginia Commonwealth University, Office of Sponsored Program, Richmond, VA, (\$829,925); and **The Workplace Inc., Bridgeport, CT, (\$755,423).**

The more than \$2.4 million of telework grants are being funded through the Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to operate the three projects for the next 36 months. The work will include investigating, developing and validating strategies likely to yield the largest number of telework positions for people with disabilities in cooperation with federal and state agencies.

The research will focus on:

1. Using telework as a return-to-work strategy specifically for people with disabilities receiving federal and state workers' compensation.
2. Using telework as an alternative strategy for increasing competitive employment for disabled veterans returning from tours of duty.
3. Surveying federal and state agencies and private employers to identify supporting conditions and strategies that are necessary to effectively implement and sustain telework for people with disabilities.

For more information, visit ODEP's Labor Department Web site at www.dol.gov/odep.

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