



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Jeff Goettman
Chief of Staff

May 5, 2022

Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

Virginia is again open for business and we want to lead its emergence from the pandemic in the workplace.

With our focus on attracting new businesses, growing jobs, and improving services to our citizens, our administration will adopt policies and practices that bring people together again in the workplace. The goal of our administration is to deliver best-in-class government services across all agencies. We have a team that is committed to excellence and operating efficiently, and we are going to encourage people to get together in an office-centric environment where our employees can once again benefit from more direct mentorship and peer-to-peer learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a public health emergency that resulted in a shutdown of state facilities, agency operations, schools, daycare centers and many businesses within our communities across Virginia. The shutdown impacted each and every worker in Virginia. Now, more than two years into this pandemic, we are returning to normalcy leaning forward and focusing on excellence to ensure that the Commonwealth of Virginia is the best place in the nation to live, work and raise a family.

We are embarking on a new path that values innovation, teamwork, and in-person communication. We are updating our workplace policies for executive branch employees to achieve our goals and return our various teams to a more productive work environment. We want to standardize workplace policies and practices across executive agencies to enable customer-centric services, top-tier education, safety and security, and prosperity for Virginia. We are committed to our mission of delivering best-in-class government for the citizens of Virginia.

For all, we are committed to a better way forward

As we return to normalcy and re-evaluate appropriate workplace policies and practices, we must align our commitment to employees and teamwork with our commitment to Virginians (our customers) and best-in-class government services in a safe environment for all.

Our return to an in-person work environment will provide options to support telework where appropriate. Employees with current telework agreements will need to request telework and apply for telework approval with the new Standard Telework Agreement. Our goal is completion of all telework agreements by June 3, 2022, with all employees returning to the office by July 5, 2022. At the same time, please coordinate your return dates with your supervisors. There is no need for employees to wait until July 5, 2022 to return to the office. We want to gather our full teams together as soon as is practical.

As we restart our economy and our post-pandemic workplace in Virginia, we want to do it right, and will follow some simple principles:

- We will encourage in-office work – people work better in-person, together.
- All positions will get evaluated for the potential to telework.
- Employees requesting telework will have the same approval process across executive agencies – consistency is critical.

For our employees, we are committed to teamwork

Over our first one hundred days, we prioritized getting out to meet our team. Secretaries assembled their teams, listened to employees, and initiated change at all their agencies to deliver better, more efficient services to realize the goals of our administration. The senior executive team has visited more than 25 secretariats, agencies, and authorities so far, and we are not done. Together with the Cabinet, we have heard the plea of many of our agencies: “Let’s return to normal and get back to work together.”

We know the many benefits of working together in person and aligning on common objectives to provide reliable and resilient services to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth’s many programs and projects require effective teams, and our recent employees who joined during the pandemic deserve the opportunity to better know the teams to which they belong. Our administration embraces the advantages of an in-office work environment, the importance of peer-to-peer learning, consistent mentorship, and overall teamwork.

For all, we are committed to safety

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all government employees and our constituents. Each state government facility and executive branch agency will comply with the Health and Safety guidelines issued by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, which includes reasonable accommodations for disabilities and health needs. (<https://www.doli.virginia.gov/>)

For our customers, we are committed to excellent customer service

Reliable and consistent operations and excellent customer service standards are critical for us to effectively serve the 8.6 million citizens across the Commonwealth. Going forward, we will require all agencies to maintain a high-level of in-office operations and provide public in-person service hours. Agencies will have both direct and support staff present and on-site to provide the quality of service the citizens of the Commonwealth deserve.

How we work will benefit Virginians and set an example for businesses across the Commonwealth. We will lead Virginia in making it the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Goettman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Jeff Goettman