

Telework Continues to Be a Success at GPO



Chief Acquisition Officer Lorna Baptiste-Jones works successfully from home with her team using MS Teams.

Spring has come and gone, and we have quickly moved into summer. While some of our teammates have returned to GPO, many of us are still working from home due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In our last issue of *Typeline*, we showed how telework works for GPO. After six months, telework continues to be a success within the business units at our agency. “Telework has been successful for the Acquisitions team,” says Chief Acquisition Officer Lorna Baptiste-Jones, “and where there were challenges, we have been able to work through them.”

At the start of the pandemic, Acquisition Services was very instrumental in helping to keep the agency safe. When no one could find hand sanitizers or wipes, Acquisition Services was able to provide sources where GPO could get all the medical supplies we needed. “We had to award medical screener contracts at Pueblo, Laurel, Stennis, and DC, and we had less than a week to get those contracts in place, and we were successful,” says

Baptiste-Jones. “When issues occurred we intervened and resolved them quickly.”

Acquisition Services is also responsible for getting leases put into place at GPO. While teleworking, Realty Specialist Denise Leon has been very effective in getting this done. With the help of IT, Facilities, and her teammates, Leon was able to get lease space ready for the Inaugural Task Force. There were four suites they were looking to occupy. Leon got the occupancy agreement in place, the lease done, and everything ready to go so they could move in and start occupying that space. As a result, they were very grateful. “This was the smoothest this process has ever been in the 13 years I have been a part of this program,” said Scott Drummond with the Architect of the Capitol. Leon has made this process simple for both external and internal customers.

In addition to leases, Acquisition Services has also been effective in issuing awards to meet the agency’s needs. “Every year, the agency has an influx of purchasing requests that come in that

need to be awarded by the end of the fiscal year. So far we have 190 FY21 purchasing requests to award. We have awarded 146 so far,” says Baptiste-Jones. “We are on track to make sure we meet our Fiscal year end awards. Being in a telework posture has not stopped us from accomplishing the task we have to accomplish.” Acquisition Services also continues to provide paper when needed, manage the Purchase and Fleet Card Programs, and keep our tenants informed.

During our emergency status, Finance played a major role in making sure everyone got paid properly. One of their challenges was making sure everyone going to the worksite was receiving the correct rate. “We had to ensure that everyone was coded properly and make sure everyone received their funds,” says Chief of Payroll Operations Faisal Ali. “I work closely with Michelle Gibbs, Chief of Examination and

Billing, and Bill Boesch, our Chief Financial Officer. It’s been a great team. We’ve had it worked out to make sure all employees have been paid on time,” he adds. Finance also works closely with Human Capital to make sure everyone is processed correctly. “Since Human Capital initiated hiring virtually, we’ve been able to assist in giving them guidance in payroll and getting hires added properly into the system. Teamwork and trying to Skype or use Microsoft Teams has been really successful. It’s easier to get in contact with everyone,” says Ali.

The Office of Programs, Strategy, and Technology (PST) is one of our business units that was already teleworking a few days out of the week. So, they were somewhat prepared for a time like this. “We had that experience going in over the last few years so it was relatively a straightforward transition for us being fully remote,” says GPO Lead



Chief of Payroll Operations Faisal Ali and his teammates use MS Teams to assist Human Capital with payroll needs for employees.



Lead Program Planner Jon Quandt works successfully from home with his teammates using the tools and technology provided by GPO.

Program Planner Jon Quandt. “We continue doing some of our same stand ups, and we’re adapting to some of them trying to use the newer tools like Microsoft Teams. That has been working fairly well overall.”

When the work-from-home order started on March 17, 2020, PST had just wrapped up one of their releases, which was a quarterly deployment for **govinfo** with a number of features they had been working on for a couple of months. Then, from April to July, they were busy working on a complete refresh of all of our servers, storage, and components in the

environment. “We went from one set of servers that were physical to virtual. There was a lot of testing and coordination going on. It worked smoothly in a remote environment. We certainly had a lot of help from IT,” says Quandt. “The fact that we were able to do that major effort over this period is a real testament to our team’s ability to adapt with the tools and technology that are available to us and also the flexibility from both the teams and management.”

“I feel fortunate for the Weather and Safety Leave policy that got rolled out. It certainly took off some of the stress,” says Quandt

who has also had to trade off working hours with his wife while parenting a 5-year-old and 18-month-old at home. “Prior to the lockdown, I was basically biking into work pretty much every day that I wasn’t teleworking. I do miss seeing people, but I do think the past several months has been a good indication that this can be done and could be expanded in some areas in the agency that previously haven’t had the ability to do it.”

Certainly there are some areas at GPO where telework is always going to have to be hands on and you can’t get around it, but there are other areas where telework works for GPO and continues

to be a success as with Acquisitions, Finance, and PST. “It certainly hasn’t been without challenges, but I think everyone has really stepped up and done what they can to continue delivering the same level of quality in service, which shows the dedication our team has,” says Quandt, “and from the interaction I’ve had with others throughout the building, virtually of course, that stands true across the agency. That’s a good reminder that we are public servants and want to do the job we can to serve the American people whether that’s in a historic building or in our home offices.”