



Virtual Office Toolkit

This Virtual Office Toolkit contains documents that will serve as a reference in assisting employees to work in a virtual office setting. They are:

1. **Virtual Office Procedures Signature Page:** *offers as overview of Virtual Office and includes a place to sign.*
2. **Virtual Office Procedures:** *stipulates the purposes, procedures, and practices for virtual office work in the field.*
3. **Virtual Office Preparedness Assessment:** *a survey which will be used to determine training needs.*
4. **Frequently Asked Questions:** *answers to questions by the Virtual Office Workgroup*

This kit is meant to be a reference tool for all employees who have already begun or soon will begin their work in the virtual office setting.

These documents were created with the assistance of the Virtual Office Workgroup, which consisted of counselors, supervisors, clerical staff, and regional managers.

Should you have any recommendations or questions about this document, please contact Jeff Hughes at Jeffrey.Hughes@fssa.in.gov.

Directions:

Please read the following documents.

Print off and sign the Virtual Office Procedures Signature Page.

Print off and complete the Virtual Office Preparedness Assessment with your Supervisor.

Virtual Office Procedures Signature Page

General Information

Virtual Office is an extension of the Field Operations of the State of Indiana's Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the community.

Applicability of All Existing Policies

Virtual Office does not alter the Employee's employment status and conditions of employment, including salary and benefits, payroll, attendance and punctuality, travel reimbursement, ethics, drug testing, leave, and other requirements. The Employee remains subject to all State of Indiana Personnel Department, FSSA Human Resources, and Agency rules.

Virtual Office Policy Agreement

Please refer to 'Virtual Office Policy Agreement.' The following is a summation for your convenience.

Participation

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Region Managers are currently allowed to participate
- An assessment will be completed to determine possible accommodations or alterations needed

Work Station

- **The assigned work station remains the Area Office**
- Mileage and other travel expenses will be computed from the Area Office or home location, as appropriate for each departure and return, per existing state regulations

Virtual Office Work Site

- The Virtual Office Worksite is a location within a community setting that allows for increased accommodation and availability of BRS services
- The Virtual Office Worksite may be a CRP's office, a public institution, or other location appropriate for work.
- Limited use of the Employee's home as a Virtual Office Worksite is permitted with prior approval of BRS Supervision; however, face-to-face meetings at the Employee's home are prohibited.
- You are still required to come to the Area Office at least once a week
- Do not disclose personal information, including home address or telephone number, to consumers or other business associates

Scheduling

- Work expectations include all duties defined in the job description and approved work performance profile
- Hours of work are defined by state and agency personnel policies, consisting of availability 7.5 hours per day
- You must have a set, established schedule, unless an adjusted work schedule is approved in accordance with state and agency policy.
- You are expected to be available by telephone and/or e-mail throughout the agreed-upon work hours.
- It is your responsibility to report absence from work within established BRS procedure.

Equipment and Safety

- All Agency equipment and supplies provided for Virtual Office Employees are the property of the State of Indiana.
- You are liable for any loss or damage to agency equipment or supplies due to negligence or misconduct.
- You are liable for costs incurred during personal use of all telecommunications equipment.
- The Employee acknowledges that all BRS policies concerning the protection of confidential information continue to apply.

Limitations and Exclusions

- Neither the State of Indiana nor the Agency are liable for damages to the Employee’s residence, other alternative worksite, or for personal injuries incurred by any third person (including family members), except to the extent adjudicated under Indiana law to be liable.
- This document may be modified or revoked at any time, with notice to the employee.

Sign that you have read and understood the Virtual Office Procedures, summarized above.

BRS Employee Signature

Date

BRS Employee Printed Name

BRS Supervisor Signature

Date

BRS Appointing Authority’s Signature

Date

Virtual Office Procedures

I. General Information

Virtual Office is an extension of the Field Operations of the State of Indiana's Division of Disability and Rehabilitation Services (DDRS) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) to meet the needs of people with disabilities in their community. Virtual Office is only an alternative for where work is performed and does not alter what work is performed (the quantity or nature of the work assigned) or when it is performed (the scheduled hours during which an employee is expected to be working).

II. Applicability of All Existing Policies

The Employee is subject to all State of Indiana Personnel Department, FSSA Human Resources, and Agency rules regarding employment status and conditions of employment, salary and benefits, payroll, attendance and punctuality, travel reimbursement, ethics, drug testing, leave, and other requirements. Failure to comply with applicable rules and requirements may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment (see <http://www.in.gov/spd/> and <http://intranet.fssa.in.gov/admin/hr/Pages/default.aspx>).

III. Employee Work Status

Nothing in this Virtual Office Procedures alters the Employee's status as an employee of the State of Indiana. The Employee is not an independent contractor nor is this document to be construed as an employment contract altering the Employee's status, rights, or conditions of employment as a state employee appointed under IC 4-15-2. Nor does this document set any term on future employment. The Employee's status, rights, and conditions of employment are governed by IC 4-15-2, 31 IAC 2 and the policies/procedures established by the State Personnel Department, FSSA Human Resources, and BRS. The Employee's salary and benefits, including opportunities for advancement, shall not be affected by the Virtual Office Procedures and are neither enhanced nor impaired by participation in the program.

IV. Selection of Participants

Participation in the program is currently limited to select BRS Staff, including but not limited to all Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation Region Manager, and will hereafter be part of the Employee's assignment. An assessment of the Employee's readiness for the program will be completed and utilized to determine accommodations needed or if the employee requests removal from the program (see attachment *Virtual Office Employee Preparedness Assessment*). BRS Supervision will have up-to-date position descriptions and performance appraisal reports completed on all employees participating in the program. BRS Supervision reserves the right to end or change any/all Virtual Office arrangements based upon operational needs and/or evaluation of participant effectiveness.

V. Assigned Work Station

The assigned work station for employees participating in the Virtual Office program remains the Area Office. The location of the work station may not be changed without the prior approval of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) appointing authority.

VI. Virtual Office Worksites

The Virtual Office Worksite is a location within a community setting that allows for increased access to BRS services. The Employee who is not required to report to the Area Office for scheduled work hours must have at least one Virtual Office Worksite that has been approved by BRS Supervision. Depending on the work schedule, this worksite may be a community rehabilitation provider's office, a public institution, or other location appropriate for work. Regarding meetings with consumers and stakeholders, all Virtual Office Worksites must be an agreed upon, accessible, location determined by the Counselor and the consumer or stakeholder. Limited use of the Employee's home as a Virtual Office Worksite is permitted with prior approval of BRS Supervision; however, face-to-face meetings at the Employee's home are prohibited.

VII. Employee Safety and Security

The Virtual Office Worksite must be free of hazards to the Employee, the consumer, and state property, and must provide for the performance of assigned work during scheduled work times without undue interruptions. **Consumer or other "in-person" business meetings must occur at a Virtual Office Worksite that is within a public or private commercial space and not within the Employee's private residential setting.** Counselors will maintain the option of meeting within a consumer's home if it is in the consumer's best interest to do so. The Employee agrees to not disclose personal information, including home address or telephone number, to consumers or other business associates.

VIII. Right to Inspect

During regular weekday business hours, BRS Supervision may make on-site inspections of any Virtual Office Worksite to assess safety and security concerns or to retrieve State-owned equipment, software, data, and supplies. Inspections of Virtual Office Worksites in an employee's home will be conducted by at least two BRS Supervision staff and advance notice will be provided whenever practical

IX. Job Duties

The Employee acknowledges that work expectations include all duties defined in the Employee's job description and approved work performance profile, as may from time to time be modified due to operational need.

X. Hours of Work

The Employee agrees that the hours of work are defined by state and agency personnel policies, consisting of availability 7.5 hours per day, not including one hour unpaid lunch, which may not be taken either the first hour or last hour of the day. The Employee's schedule must consist of a standard work day and work week, unless an adjusted work schedule is approved in accordance with State and Agency policy. The Employee is expected to work an approved work schedule and must be present, working, and available by telephone and/or e-mail throughout the agreed-upon work hours.

XI. Work Schedule

The employee's work schedule must be pre-approved by BRS Supervision and must be in conformance with state and agency policy. The approved schedule may provide for an alternative Virtual Office Worksite for a maximum of four days per week; the Employee will still be required to come to the Area or Region Office at least once a week. The Employee shall report to the assigned Work Station when scheduled, or as directed, for meetings, training sessions, and other work functions requiring participation, or at the request of Supervision. The Employee shall be responsible for reporting all time worked and leave taken, and for submitting time sheets as required for payroll processing. The Employee acknowledges that misrepresentation of hours worked is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

XII. Use of Leave and Requesting Schedule Adjustments

The Employee acknowledges that it is their responsibility to report their absence from work, or use of any leave, to BRS Supervision no later than 15 minutes before the work day begins on the day on which the leave or absence is requested or within established BRS procedure. Any adjustments to starting time and/or ending time of the work day must be approved in advance by BRS Supervision. Such approval will be contingent on existing BRS policies and procedures and must be based on the operational needs of the agency.

XIII. Dependent Care

Virtual Office is not an alternative to substitute for child or dependent care. The Employee must continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care as would otherwise be required to accommodate for traditional work arrangements.

XIV. Equipment

The state and the Agency shall provide the Employee with:

- A. a laptop;
- B. a portable printer;
- C. a Verizon Wireless AirCard;
- D. a Blackberry communication device;
- E. an electronic signature pad
- F. a webcam;
- G. a travel roller case
- H. other equipment as needed;
- I. necessary disability-related modifications to any item, including hardware or software
- J. equipment-related consumable supplies (such as paper and pens).

State-owned equipment will be maintained, repaired, and replaced by the Agency, as necessary. Where maintenance, repair, or replacement is indicated, the Employee shall return the equipment to the State Office as directed by BRS Supervision. General supplies (e.g., notepads, pencils, pens) for the Virtual Office Worksite shall be obtained by the Employee from the employee's regularly assigned Area Office.

All Agency equipment and supplies provided for Virtual Office Employees are the property of the State of Indiana. Equipment shall be returned by the Employee to the Agency upon termination

of employment or as otherwise directed by DDRS/BRS Administration. Equipment provided by the agency may be used only by the Employee and only for agency business. Personal use of these materials by any person or persons is prohibited. The employee must use reasonable precautions to protect State-owned equipment against theft, damage, and misuse. The Employee will be liable for any loss or damage to agency equipment or supplies due to negligence, misconduct, or personal use.

XV. Telecommunications

BRS assumes responsibility for the monthly service charges for internet access and phone service acquired through an Aircard and a Blackberry. The Employee agrees to adhere to the provisions of the BRS use agreement, established agency policy governing the use of State equipment and resources for personal use, the Information Resources Use Agreement required by Indiana Office of Technology, and the BlackBerry Enterprise Server User Agreement. Furthermore, the Employee must not use fee-for-service programs such as 411. No-cost options available include Connect2Help (211) and Google411 (1-800-466-4411). The Employee acknowledges they are not authorized to cause any changes or additions to the internet or phone service. The Employee will be liable for any costs associated with personal use of all telecommunications equipment and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. **Personal use of equipment is strictly prohibited.**

XVI. Travel Expenses

Payment for travel costs by the Agency shall be made in accordance with State and Agency travel reimbursement rules. Mileage, overnight lodging eligibility, and per diem allowances shall be computed based upon the Employee's officially assigned Area or Regional Office or home location, as appropriate for each departure and return. The agency shall not pay per diem costs for any work period worked at home or other Virtual Office Worksite, when the Employee is not in travel status.

XVII. Confidentiality and Security

The Employee acknowledges that all BRS policies concerning the protection of confidential information continue to apply in the Virtual Office Worksite. Staff members are responsible for taking reasonable steps to maintain the security of equipment owned by the State. These steps include maintaining equipment in a secure area to which only the staff member has access. Laptop computers and other easily transportable items must be taken home at night or stored in a locker or other secure area to which the staff member has sole access.

In the event that any item assigned to a staff member is stolen or is found to be missing under circumstances that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the item was stolen, the staff member must report the suspected theft to the local police. The staff member must contact his or her supervisor to report that the item is missing immediately after he or she has notified the police.

IT equipment used for Virtual Office must be equipped with all activated password protected screensavers, firewall protections, up-to-date anti-virus protections updated weekly, and encryption required by the State and the Agency. Data must be encrypted when transferred or transmitted. The Employee shall not transfer or store confidential consumer or employee data on a personal PC or other personal equipment or on any unencrypted removable media device (USB drive, CD-ROM, etc.).

All staff members should take reasonable steps to back-up documents stored on their computers and are responsible for being aware of security issues and potential problems at all times. The Employee must only use software and hardware approved and supported by the State of Indiana. The Employee must not download or install any hardware or software without the prior consent of IOT or State officials. All of State or IOT security rules and regulations apply.

XVIII. Limitations and Exclusions

Neither the State of Indiana nor the Agency are liable for damages to the Employee's residence or other alternative work site, or for personal injuries incurred by any third person (including family members), except to the extent adjudicated under Indiana law to be liable.

While the Agency is supplying the telecommunications equipment listed above, it shall not pay for the additional installation, service, repair, or replacement costs of utilities (including electric or telephone service) or internet subscription, wireless, or e-mail service costs. In addition, work-related long distance phone calls should be made using Agency-granted materials, such as Blackberry or Area Office telephone. Use of personal equipment for these purposes is prohibited and reimbursement of fees will not be given.

The costs of equipment-related and other general consumables available from the Employee's regularly assigned Area Office will not be reimbursed if purchased by the Employee.

The Agency shall not approve home modifications for purposes of the Virtual Office Program, except in cases where reasonable accommodations are required for program participation. All accommodations must be evaluated and recommended by an assistive technology evaluator approved by BRS Supervision.

XIX. Revocation or Modification

Virtual Office Procedures may be modified or revoked at any time, with notice to the employee.



Virtual Office Preparedness Assessment

FSSA – DDRS – BRS

Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services

Directions: This assessment is to be completed by the VR Supervisor and VR Counselor together. They are to discuss each topic and rate the Counselor's ability as directed.

Work Skills	High	Med	Low
Please rank the VRCs ability in the following areas as High, Med, or Low. For any 'Low' response, please use the Action Plan at the end of this form.			
Organizational Skills: How organized is the counselor? Does s/he possess good organizational skills?			
Discipline: Is the counselor self-disciplined? Does s/he get work done without many reminders?			
Reliability: e.g. being on time to work, keeping clients waiting, etc.			
Level of Job Knowledge: Knowledge of PPM, of protocols, of IRIS, etc			
Productivity: Does s/he keep up on IRIS reports? Are there many overdue cases, etc?			
Quality Of Work: Consider the counselor's interactions with clients, comprehensive evals, etc.			
Adaptable: Does the counselor readily adapt to changing routines and environments?			
Communication: Is the counselor an effective communicator and team player?			
Knowledge of Equipment	High	Med	Low
Please identify the VRCs knowledge of and ability using the following equipment. For any 'Low' response, please use the Action Plan at the end of this form.			
Laptop Computer (including USB Mouse)			
Portable Printer			
Webcam			
Aircard			
Blackberry			
Computer Software (Microsoft Outlook, specialized software)			
IRIS			
Signature Pad (if Applicable)			

Virtual Office Worksites		Yes	No
Please rate the following areas as Yes or No. For any 'No' response, please use the Action Plan at the end of this form.			
Does your caseload allow you to be offsite at schools, CRPs, or other locations?			
Can you arrange days where communication can be handled by telephone or email?			
Have you found safe, comfortable worksites where it is easy to concentrate on work?			
Are your Virtual Office Worksites confidential, secure, and accessible?			
Do you understand that face-to-face client interaction may not occur in your home?			
Are your worksites prepared for your technology needs? (Aircard works, outlets, etc)			
Have you signed the Virtual Office Guidelines and Requirements signature page?			
VRC Needs		Yes	No
Please answer the following questions about your personal needs. For any 'Yes' response, please use the Action Plan at the end of this form.			
Do you require an accommodation (equipment, interpreter, etc) due to a disability?			
Do you require specialized equipment due to your caseload (VI, RCD)?			
Difficulty Areas:		Proposed Action Plan:	
_____ Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Signature		_____ Date	
_____ Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor Signature			

Supervisors: Please give this form to your Region Manager for review.

Region Managers: Please send a copy of this form to Jeffrey Hughes for training consideration.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Virtual Office Work is the concept of working from home or another community-based location to extend the Field Operations of the State of Indiana Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS). The Virtual Office is an alternative method of meeting the needs of people with disabilities in their community.

Equipment/Tools

What technology will the counselor have available in the field?

New computers, printers, BlackBerries, Air Cards, Signature Pads, and other necessary tools including wheeled travel cases.

Who is responsible for the equipment?

The use of the equipment, tools or supplies provided by BRS is limited to authorized persons and for purposes relating to BRS business. BRS will provide for repairs and/or replacement to State-issued equipment that has been properly maintained by the Employee. When the employee uses his/her own equipment, the employee is responsible for maintenance and repair of personal equipment.

Will counselors have cell phones?

Yes. BRS has determined the BlackBerry phone will be more flexible and offer greater service to staff. Those currently using cell phones will exchange the cell phone for a BlackBerry, and every effort will be made to transfer the cell phone number to the new BlackBerry. The BlackBerry makes it possible for the counselor to send or receive emails, make or receive telephone calls, and access their Outlook Calendar.

What if I need office supplies?

Office supplies will be provided as needed through your Area Office. Out-of-pocket expenses will not be reimbursed.

What about shredding documents?

Counselors should have few documents in the field that will need to be shredded, so those can be taken back to the office.

Compensation and Work Hours

Will counselors receive additional pay for working in a virtual setting?

The employee's compensation, benefits, work status, and work responsibilities will not change due to working in the field or a virtual office. The amount of time the employee is expected to work per day or pay period will not change as a result of working in a virtual office setting. State employees are required to work a 7.5 hour day and a 37.5 hour week.

Will counselors have access to telephones and voice mail in the area office?

Yes. Every office will have enough extensions so that each person will have his or her own voice mailbox, and instructions will be provided to access the voice mail from remote locations. It will be vital for the clerical staff to assist people instead of sending them directly to voice mail.

Will Employees still receive compensation for travel?

Yes. Employees will be able to claim mileage from their permanent work station or their home to other designated work or meeting sites. Transportation questions need to be discussed by the Employee and the area supervisor, so that transportation does not become an issue after travel has occurred.

Workspace

Will the Area Offices still have all the necessary equipment?

Yes. Area Offices will continue to operate with a full range of equipment: copiers, printers, faxes, telephones, postage machines, shredders or shredder services, etc.

Where will the counselor work outside of the area office?

Some ideas for these sites include private meeting areas at Community Rehabilitation Facilities, Community Mental Health Centers, YMCAs, Schools (High Schools, IVY Techs, University extension campuses), Boys and Girls Clubs, Community Centers, Work Ones, other State Offices, or Social Security offices. This is not an exhaustive list and, of course, each community will have its own unique opportunities for site development. These are called "Virtual Office Worksites."

What needs to be considered in finding a suitable "Virtual Office Worksite"?

The employee shall designate a workspace within the remote work location for placement of equipment to be used while working. The employee shall maintain this workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to the employee, consumers (when applicable), and the equipment.

What site will be considered a counselor's permanent work station?

The work station will continue to be the Area Office.

Will counselors be able to adjust their work schedules?

The employee must be available by telephone and email during core work hours of 8 am to 4:30 pm; any adjustments to the work day must be pre-approved by the area supervisor.

What furniture will be taken to a newly-downsized office?

The reduced space will call for the surplus of furniture and office storage cabinets. Meeting rooms will have only common furniture for shared use. A desk or a table with chairs for consumers to meet with a counselor is the only furniture required in a meeting room, but a bookcase or file may be added.

Will counselors have access to the area office?

Yes. Offices will have a designated meeting room for each three counselors; with that ratio, an area office may have two or three meeting rooms. Counselors can schedule "office" days to meet with consumers, clerical staff, or the supervisor. Additionally, each office will have a conference room that can be reserved for a larger group meeting.

Will counselors meet consumers in remote locations?

Yes. All consumer interactions will be conducted at a public meeting place, such as a reserved meeting room in an office, a facility, or a library. Employees may never meet consumers at the employee's home.

Will counselors be able to take an office chair or other furniture to the home work station?

No.

Accountability

Will the counselors have responsibilities added to those they currently have now?

No. BRS is not changing what we do, but how we do it. The employee remains obligated to comply with State of Indiana and BRS rules, practices, and instructions. The employee will participate in all studies, inquiries, reports, and analyses relating to the Virtual Office Program.

Will staff be responsible to attend additional meetings and trainings?

Counselors and Area Supervisors will be responsible for attendance at meetings, trainings, conferences, and seminars directly related to job performance duties.

Will performance measurements and timeliness expectations be changed?

No. Individual counselor's performance measurements are based on the performance measurements required of the State by the Federal guidelines, and these are not arbitrarily changed. Any changes to performance expectations will be applied universally for all staff whether working virtual or not.

How will staff be supervised when they are in the field?

Supervisors will be available for VRCs for consultation and support through review and approval of Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Supervisors will also review job performance through quarterly meetings with VRCs and CRPs.

How will IRIS Reports be used?

Supervisors will continue to utilize the IRIS Reports, and those reports will be used more for projecting and planning to set goals than for reviewing past performance.

Will my supervisor visit me in the field?

Yes. Supervisors will be required to make both announced and unannounced visits to counselors. Home visits are not anticipated, but if such a visit is deemed necessary, the Area Supervisor must consult with the Region Manager and the Director of Field Operations and then, consequently, notify the counselor.

Will a dress code be enforced?

Yes. All employees working outside of their own home, either at the area office or at a community-based work station, are expected to maintain a professional appearance as stated in the Dress Code of the State Personnel Policy.

Meeting Rooms

What is the "meeting room"?

Meeting rooms will be established at a ratio of three counselors per meeting room, and counselors will schedule time in the meeting rooms. Meeting rooms are not designed to be personal space, and counselors will not move their own furniture into to these rooms to coexist with other counselors. These rooms are common space.

How will the meeting room be reserved?

Staff will be given instructions to access the Area Office Outlook Calendar, and it can be used to reserve the meeting rooms. Counselors can also request assistance from the clerical staff to do this.

Support

Will clerical staff offer support to counselors in the field?

Yes. The virtual office will require more teamwork than ever.

How can the secretaries offer more support to counselors?

First, clerical will determine the needs of the consumer who drops by or calls in and assist the person when possible. If the secretary cannot assist the person, the secretary will relay the information/request to the counselor via email or telephone. The counselor may equip the secretary to meet the consumer's need, or follow-up with the consumer himself or herself. Voice mail should not be the first place the consumer is sent.

What about urgent requests?

Secretaries may refer the consumer to a counselor or the supervisor in the office.

Will a counselor's cell phone number be given to callers?

If a secretary or another counselor or supervisor in the office cannot assist a caller, secretaries can give the BlackBerry numbers to callers.

How will the secretaries document calls and mail?

Secretaries will be instructed to document all activity in the IRIS case notes. These notes will be a permanent part of the file and easily referenced. Secretaries will then send Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor an email of the documentation in IRIS, i.e.: "See case note on J. Smith #012345."

How will special needs of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors be considered in the virtual office setting?

Counselors who have disability-related needs will have accommodations. All counselors will go through a Virtual Office Preparedness Assessment that will clearly identify items needing attention.

Will my supervisor be available when I need him or her?

Supervisors will be available as they should be now. Field staff will have direct access with the cell phone or email to contact the supervisor.

Communication

Will employees still be required to attend meetings in the area office?

Virtual workers will be available for staff meetings and other meetings deemed necessary by management. However, all Virtual Employees must be in the Area Office at least one time per week for computer updates.

Will everyone have access to the counselor's calendar?

Supervisors and clerical staff must have full access to each counselor's Outlook Calendar. Calendars need to be kept current and accurate, and all staff in the office should have access to one another's Outlook calendars.

Liability for Injuries

Who will be responsible for any injuries to the employee?

Neither the State of Indiana nor the Agency are liable for damages to the Employee's residence or other alternative work site, or for personal injuries incurred by any third person (including family members), except to the extent adjudicated under Indiana law to be liable.

Dependent Care

Will the employee be able to have other people in the home when they are working?

Virtual Office work is not a substitute for dependent care. Employees will not be available during core work hours to provide dependent care.

Income Tax

Will the employee be able to claim expenses on their income tax if they work in a home office setting?

It will be the employee's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a home office area. The State of Indiana will not provide tax guidance nor will the State assume any additional tax liabilities. The employee is encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss income tax implications.

Customer Service

How will consumers contact the counselor?

Consumers may contact the office as they do now. If a consumer comes directly to the office to make contact, then he or she can continue to do so because the office will be staffed as usual every day from 8 am to 4:30 pm. Those who wish to call can continue to call the local number or the toll free number. Counselors and Secretaries will have continuous contact, so messages can be relayed to counselors.

What about confidentiality?

Any confidential materials taken home or to remote locations should be kept in the designated work area and not be made accessible to others.

Will Vocational Rehabilitation be "paperless"?

Yes. The agency's goal is to be paperless, and strategies are implemented to reach that end. Unfortunately, leases are expiring, and the agency has had to move the virtual office plan more quickly than the paperless project. By late 2009, all offices should be both virtual and paperless.