

APPENDIX A
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DESKSHARING

1. **Will employees be eligible for a tax deduction of "home-based" office?**

No.

2. **Are participants expected to work more than one day a week at home?**

Participants can work at the official duty station from his/her assigned office on a rotating basis of no more than a total of 5 days per pay-period (e.g., 3 days at the official duty station on week 1 and 2 days at the official duty station on week 2). For the remaining work tour (5 days), the employee will be permitted to work away from the official duty station at an approved alternate work site.

3. **Who is eligible to participate in the desk sharing program?**

All interested CDER Federal and PHS employees located at the White Oak complex in Buildings 21, 22, and 51 will be given consideration for the desk sharing program. Note: Super/Office directors will determine which positions qualify for desk sharing.

4. **Would adjustments be made to existing policies to facilitate office sharing such as coming in for all meetings, many meetings can be attended by teleconference?**

Desk Sharing will be an expansion of the Flexible Workplace Arrangements Program (FWAP). In as much management should make reasonable efforts to provide alternative methods, such as teleconferencing, use of fax and e-mail, and/or other methods to avoid unplanned situations requiring the employee to report to the conventional work site.

5. **Does the FDA/CDER still reimburse staff for internet access?**

No. However, future reimbursement may be possible dependent upon the budget.

6. **What happens after the pilot period or if the sharing arrangements don't work out, will you lose your office?**

At the conclusion of the pilot, all participants may return to their previously occupied offices.

In the event management decides to continue with the desk sharing as a program; employees will be allowed to continue in the program and maintain the office space shared during the pilot, thus forfeiting any agreement to return to the office held prior to participating in the desk sharing pilot.

If it is later determined that the desk sharing program will be discontinued, the agency will return all employees to a similar office held prior to participation in the desk sharing program, recognizing there may be a transition period. Example: Employees shall be assigned to available office space or required to share an office until a similar office becomes available.

7. **Will this change be reflected in the PMAP?**

No. The establishment of an employee's PMAP elements and standards are based on the mission and goals of the office and agency.

8. Will employees be compensated, or will workload be reduced in light of the decreased efficiency this will cause?

No. Employees will not be compensated by the agency for participating in the desk sharing initiative. CDER does not anticipate reduced workloads or any sort of decreases efficiency levels. The primary goal of this initiative is to address existing office space shortages at the White Oak complex.

9. Would the alternate work site be at the employee's home or an offsite location?

Employees participating in the desk sharing program will be permitted to work at a "home-based" office.

10. Will the person sharing my office be consistent (e.g. the same person every week) or is it anticipated that this would not be a controllable factor?

Yes. There will only be two individuals assigned to each office.

11. What would happen if on a scheduled work at home day, I needed to come into the office?

If feasible, the occupants could share the office or use a near by conference room or other vacant office.

12. There needs a big shift in CDER culture in terms of organizing meetings and allowing flexibility in work for desk sharing to work. There are several days we need to cancel the work from home because the meetings get scheduled at the last minute and they need you there in person. What will be done to address this concern?

Management should make reasonable efforts to provide alternative methods, such as teleconferencing, use of fax and e-mail, and/or other methods to avoid unplanned situations requiring the employee to report to the conventional work site.

13. Are there "approved alternate worksites" that are not home-based, (i.e. alternate offices that may have video conferencing capabilities, copying, shared printing, etc.)?

Not at this time.

14. What happens when one of the folks sharing an office need to deviate from a pre-arranged schedule?

Schedule changes would require advanced approval/coordination with the supervisor and/or appropriate management official.

15. What office equipment would be shared?

All permanent/stationary office equipment will be shared (e.g., desk, keyboard, telephone, chair, etc.).

16. How would phones work in this setting?

All phones have the capacity to carry up to 6 lines; each employee would have a dedicated phone line.

17. Will there be a need for more storage space in each office (file cabinets)?

This will be considered on a case by case basis. More efficient use of file cabinets and common file areas would be necessary.

18. Who will serve as the approving official for employees wanting to participate in the desk sharing program?

The office director or if designated the second level supervisor shall be the person responsible for final approval or disapproval of requests and agreements to participate in the desk sharing program. **Super Office directors or designee, but no lower than division director will be responsible for final approval or disapproval of requests and agreements in super offices.**

19. Under the Desk Sharing concept can the Manager decide to locate the shared office in a different office location other than the ones occupied by either of the affected employees who volunteer for the Program?

Management at this time does not foresee circumstances that would require CDER managers to relocate employees from the original selected/approved office. However, management reserves the right under 5 USC 7106 to assign employees.

20. Given the sensitivity that surrounds window office assignment priority, under what conditions can a Manager opt to relegate the shared office participants to an inner non-window office?

The window office becomes the shared space whenever a BUE volunteers to participate in the Program and s/he is at that time assigned to a window office per applicable guidance.

21. How will file cabinet sharing be assigned under Desk Sharing?

This will be considered on a case by case basis. More efficient use of file cabinets and common file areas would be necessary and handled in a fair and equitable manner.

22. Volunteers must fully understand/accept the terms of the Desk Sharing Agreement before signing including particulars with regards turn-in of the office key where necessary, re-assignment to a similar office arrangement at the end of the Program and the disposition of personal items within each volunteer's respective offices during the respective period of the Program.

All Desk Sharing Program participants will acknowledge that they have read the Desk Sharing Program Functional Statement/MOU and by signing the Desk Sharing Program application agree they fully understand the terms of the program.

23. Will telephones be reconfigured for a multi-user mode of usage?

All phones have the capacity to carry up to 6 lines; each employee would have a dedicated phone line.

24. Are non-bargaining, bargaining and Commissioned Corps employees permitted to occupy shared office space?

Yes, at management's discretion.