



# Telework!VA Case Study

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## Organization

TecAccess, Inc.  
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## Telework Coordinator

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## Testimonial

“The Telework!VA Program allowed me to offer my team telework. It expanded our reach and gave us access to larger pool of candidates. I believe in hiring a diverse workforce including people with disabilities. Since many of our team members have severe disabilities the telework option allowed them to be more productive. The grant was so helpful and allowed us to update a lot of our equipment. The program is WONDERFUL. We have worked with the federal government and state government programs designed to help small businesses. Most of the programs did not add a lot of value to my bottom-line with the exception of this program. I would recommend it to all businesses. I am grateful that Virginia has this program.”

*Debra Ruh, TecAccess, CEO and Founder*

## Business Benefits

1. Better candidates.
2. Happier and more productive employees.
3. Retention of current staff.

## Background

TecAccess, an SBA 8(a) Certified, Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), and Woman-Owned Company, has become the global leader in Electronic and Information Technology accessibility solutions. TecAccess specializes in Web and IT Accessibility, Section 508 compliance, and W3C standards. Services include testing and assessment, training, engineering, policy review, and consulting.

The majority of the TecAccess associates are people with disabilities. TecAccess is composed of the very individuals for whom Section 508 was designed. As such, the organization possesses the inherent capability of realistically evaluating compliance technology from the perspective of the target audience – people with disabilities.

TecAccess has received numerous distinctions - including the President's *New Freedom Initiative Award*, the Department of Labor's "Circle of Champions," the Virginia Small Business Administration's "Small Minority Business of the Year," the National Association of Business Owner's "Rising Star" Award, the "Career Award" by Lighthouse International, and the "Leadership Award" by Women in Technology (WIT). In addition, CEO and Founder Debra Ruh has authored many publications and spoken to leaders from around the world, as evidenced by her widely anticipated address to the European Union in 2006. These honors highlight TecAccess' primary goals:

1. Provide organizations with realistic options from a complete menu of compliance and accessibility solutions
2. Employ people with disabilities.
3. Remain strong advocates for people with disabilities.

TecAccess sought to implement a telework program in order to:

- Reach a more diverse pool of candidates.

- Become an employer of choice by offering the flexibility of telework.
- “Walk-the-walk” as technologists based on the belief that IT can enhance productivity.

### Summary of Assistance Provided

TecAccess was accepted into the Telework!VA program in June 2007. The organization received \$31,365 in financial incentives, which was used for new laptops, printers, and a multi-purpose machine; as well as technical support to ensure their systems were set up as efficiently as possible.

### Telework Statistics

TecAccess participated in the 2009 and 2010 annual surveys. The most recent survey results showed that:

- There were 9 teleworkers.
- These employees worked at home an average of 5 days/week.
- The average one-way commute distance was 66 miles.
- These participants saved a total of 5,940 vehicle miles of travel per week, equaling a reduction of 285,120 commute miles annually (based on 48 work weeks in a year).

### Obstacles or Challenges and How They Were Resolved

#### 1. Making everyone always feel like a team.

We used technology to help us reach out to the team. We used instant messenger and video chat. We took the time to celebrate personal and professional accomplishments.

#### 2. Some of the team did not seem to have the discipline.

We had to be sure we were measuring the right things. Instead of seeing a person and assuming they were working we put in better measurements so we knew if a team member was contributing to the bottom-line. It also allowed the team to measure themselves. Some team members did not display the discipline needed to self-manage their day. Some were not as productive based on measurements and several times team members worked so hard we have to ask them to work less hours. It was an interesting dynamic.

### Results

At the time TecAccess joined the Telework!VA program in June 2007, 5 of the organization’s employees worked at home informally. TecAccess implemented a successful telework program and subsequently partnered with another technology firm (SSB) in April 2011, allowing the two organizations to share resources. Many of the TecAccess employees now work for the new firm and continue to telework. As of June 2011, 30 of the organization’s 41 employees were teleworking on a regular basis.

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