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Unnecessary Barriers Study Reveals Government Has Work to Do in Hiring and Retaining Americans with Disabilities

*Kareem Dale, Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy, to Discuss Report Findings at
Telework Exchange Town Hall Meeting*

ALEXANDRIA, Va., March 29, 2010 – Telework ExchangeSM, a public-private partnership focused on expanding telework adoption, in partnership with the Federal Managers Association, today announced the results of the “Unnecessary Barriers” study, which explores agencies’ performance in hiring, retaining, and effectively managing employees with disabilities. The study reveals that 71 percent of Federal employees feel their agency is committed to hiring employees with disabilities, however, just half say their agency is equipped to make good on this commitment. Further, nearly half of Federal managers report they have not received adequate training to effectively manage employees with disabilities or to effectively retain employees with disabilities – 40 and 45 percent, respectively. Uncle Sam is not walking the talk.

While the study reveals a grim prognosis on the Federal government’s recruitment and retention practices relating to Americans with disabilities, it does uncover key opportunities for improvement.

How to Walk the Talk

- **Secure Management Commitment.** Agencies with committed senior management monitor progress, provide adequate training, and offer technical support to employees with

disabilities at nearly double the rate compared to agencies without committed senior management. Management buy-in directly impacts agency accommodations

- **Educate for Equal Opportunity.** The study reveals 36 percent of managers involved in approving or authorizing new hires or promotions are not familiar with Schedule A and 58 percent are not familiar with Executive Order 13163. Agencies must educate managers responsible for hiring on key mandates and advocate for equal opportunity
- **Accommodate with Equipment.** Eighty-four percent of respondents believe their organization offers reasonable accommodations, yet few offer telework, technical support, job-share options, or personal care assistance. Agencies must offer improved physical, access, communications, and technical accommodations

Kareem Dale, Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy, the White House, will discuss the findings of the “Unnecessary Barriers” report during the morning keynote address, “Reducing Unemployment for People with Disabilities,” at the Spring 2010 Telework Exchange Town Hall Meeting on April 8, in Washington, D.C.

“Agencies must equip, educate, and train managers to hire and retrain a workforce that includes employees with disabilities,” said Cindy Auten, General Manager, Telework Exchange. “We look forward to Mr. Dale’s presentation at the upcoming Town Hall Meeting to discuss how the Federal government’s telework initiatives can offer Americans with disabilities unprecedented job opportunities.”

“Federal managers play a vital role in hiring, managing, and promoting employees with disabilities,” said Jim Mahlmann, National Vice President, Federal Managers Association. “This study uncovers key opportunities to engage and educate managers regarding Federal hiring mandates and reasonable accommodation.”

The “Unnecessary Barriers” study is based on a survey of 513 Federal employees directly responsible for hiring and managing employees. To download the full study results, please visit www.teleworkexchange.com/unnecessarybarriers. To register for the Spring 2010 Telework Exchange Town Hall Meeting, please visit www.teleworkexchange.com/townhallmeeting. Registration is complimentary for government employees.

About Telework Exchange, LLC

Telework Exchange is a public-private partnership focused on demonstrating the tangible value of telework and serving the emerging educational and communication requirements of the government teleworker community. The organization facilitates communication among teleworkers, telework managers, and IT professionals. For more information on Telework Exchange, visit www.teleworkexchange.com.

About Federal Managers Association

The Federal Managers Association (FMA) is the largest, oldest, and foremost Federal employee organization representing the interests of the 200,000 managers, supervisors and executives in the federal government today. FMA advocates excellence in public service through effective management and professionalism, as well as the active representation of its members’ interests and concerns. FMA advances its mission through consultation in the Executive Branch and advocacy in Congress, outstanding professional development programs, informative publications and networking opportunities for its members. Visit us at www.fedmanagers.org.