

# Case Study: Reassessing How Work is Done Reduces Air Travel

Two separate departments within the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Chicago office reduced airline miles traveled by 33 percent in two years through a joint project. Collectively, they exceeded their original goal of a 10 percent reduction in miles traveled.

OPM's Nationwide Testing Group<sup>(1)</sup> – a national program head-quartered in Chicago – proposed combining efforts with OPM's Oversight Group, a regional office, to bolster project results.

Nationwide Testing Group managers made the decision that this group would forgo conference travel in Fiscal Year 2012, eliminating an estimated 13,000 airline miles.

The Oversight Group, accustomed to significant travel to conduct audits in its 14-state region, elected to pilot several of its audits from the Chicago office via conference call or webinar instead of on location, reducing the need for personnel to fly to those project sites and saving money associated with travel.



*The Office of Personnel Management Nationwide Testing and Oversight Groups are in the John C. Kluczynski Federal Building in Chicago.*

## Key Topics

- Airline mile reduction.
- Technology adoption.

## Results

- Airline miles reduced by 33 percent in two years.

## Facility at a Glance

- Located in the Chicago Federal Center, in the city's central business district.
- Two groups, Nationwide Testing and Oversight, shared the office.
- 30 employees between the two groups.
- Participant since 2011 in the FGC transportation and purchasing categories.
- Recipient of two EPA Region 5 FGC Awards: Transportation and Purchasing.

## Sustainable Materials Management Federal Green Challenge



CHANGING HOW WE THINK ABOUT OUR RESOURCES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

# Reduced Air Travel

This change to off-site evaluations was also facilitated by the increase in automation at client agencies. Current budget constraints have encouraged the expansion of off-site evaluations to save travel dollars.

OPM used several software tools to support its project. Staff used a software program from its travel vendor to develop a list of city-to-city travel that occurred in OPM's baseline year and fiscal year 2012, the year the agency chose to reduce miles for the Federal Green Challenge project. Staff manually transferred each flight from the travel management software to the tracking tool. Then the distance between cities was calculated using on-line air travel distance calculators to give OPM data on the total air miles traveled in both

years. Once the distance between cities was calculated, this distance could be used again for future trips to the same destination. Carbon foot print calculations estimate that reducing air travel reduced over 5,500 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Overall, the project was successful not only from the standpoint of reducing airline miles, but from the groups' ability to work together toward a common goal and adopting new technologies. They had never worked together, so the effort to successfully join forces on this project was itself an accomplishment.

(1) Nationwide Testing Group closed in early 2014.

## About the Federal Green Challenge

The Federal Green Challenge, part of EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program, is designed to challenge federal agencies throughout the country to lead by example in reducing the federal government's environmental impact. It helps agencies meet obligations under Executive Orders 13514 and 13423.

In 2012, nearly 300 federal agencies, representing more than 500,000 employees participated in the Federal Green Challenge. Their combined efforts resulted in an estimated cost savings of more than \$31 million to U.S. taxpayers.



## For More Information

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