



## **HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **H-GAC COMMUTE SOLUTIONS LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE TO HELP EMPLOYERS BUILD, ENHANCE TELEWORKING PROGRAMS**

**HOUSTON, TX** – In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, companies and organizations are canceling large meetings and events, halting most business travel, and requiring non-essential staff to work from home. Yet even as telecom technology improves and the variety of virtual office tools increases, successfully implementing telecommute programs can be a challenge - especially for small businesses and nonprofits.

Commute Solutions, a service of the Houston-Galveston Area Council, this week launched a new website, [YourCommuteSolution.org](http://YourCommuteSolution.org), aimed at helping employers through the logistics of implementing telework programs, sharing resources and best practices for employees new to telework, and providing tools and resources for residents and businesses in the Houston-Galveston region seeking more sustainable commute options – such as teleworking, bicycling, walking, vanpool, or public transit.

“The key mission of Commute Solutions has always been to help reduce congestion in the region by introducing both employers and commuters to more sustainable commuting options,” said Jamila Owens, program manager of Commute Solutions. “With the outbreak of COVID-19, these options – particularly teleworking – have become even more important and relevant.”

For employers implementing or seeking to improve existing telework programs, [YourCommuteSolution.org](http://YourCommuteSolution.org) provides resources such as guidelines and best practices on strengthening telework programs and optimizing productivity, sample telework plans and agreements, and facts and statistics about the impact of telework programs.

Commute Solutions also provides free consultative services for its partners, employers, universities, local governments, and others looking to build a customized telework program specific to their needs or to enhance existing telework, commuter benefits, and trip reduction programs for their employees, students, or tenants. Becoming a partner is free for all organizations in the Greater Houston region.

#### **Houston-Galveston Area Council**

H-GAC is a voluntary association of local governments and local elected officials from the 13-county Gulf Coast planning region, which includes an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 7 million people. H-GAC works to promote efficient and accountable use of local, state, and federal tax dollars; serves as a problem-solving and information forum for local governments; and helps analyze trends and conditions affecting the region. For more information, visit [h-gac.com](http://h-gac.com).



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“There are a lot of benefits for both employers and employees to having a telework program or a commuter benefits program. Employers can see significant savings as well as increased employee retention and recruitment. For employees, several studies have shown that teleworking and other alternative commuting options can lead to reduced stress on the job, more productivity, and health benefits in addition to saving money. Our entire region benefits as well. According to the EPA, for every one mile saved from telecommuting, we can pull one pound of CO2 from the atmosphere,” Owens said.

Commute Solutions will continue adding more content to the website in the coming weeks. Plans are in the works for commuter benefit resource pages for universities and property managers, which would include information on reducing traditional commute costs (such as parking permits) and strategic planning assistance for travel demand management to attract new tenants.

“Right now, teleworking is at the front of everyone’s mind as we practice social distancing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, but at some point, the situation will improve. Schools will reopen. Many employees will be expected to return to work in an office. It would be great if, when that time comes, we can help set a path towards a more sustainable, better commute for everyone in the region,” Owens said. “This website is a key step towards that goal.”

For more information about Commute Solutions, visit [www.yourcommutesolution.org](http://www.yourcommutesolution.org).

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