

# 'Virtual officing' allows Forest Service to retain top staff

Some of the **National Forest Service's** star employees have considered turning down promotions rather than relocating to major Forest Service locations in cities. Many have said they'd quit rather than abandon their rural lifestyles.

That's why the U.S. Department of Agriculture agency started installing "virtual offices" in some employees' homes, allowing them to keep their positions without relocating.

Like telecommuting, virtual officing only works for employees with jobs that don't require face time, like computer or classifications specialists. A handful of the agency's 34,000 employees work in virtual offices, while many others participate in a traditional telework program that allows them to work up to four days a week from their homes. The agency saves about \$35,000 every time it doesn't have to relocate an employee.

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