TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES FOR TELEWORKERS

There are a variety of technology options that enable you to telework effectively. The carriers, products, and services mentioned in this document are intended for informational purposes only and are not an endorsement of the carrier, product, or service.

1. Voice Communications Lines
A voice communications line enables you to communicate verbally with others while teleworking. Some lines provide only voice communications, while others allow you to access and transmit data as well. You and your supervisor will determine the best option available and decide whether you or your department will pay for this service. Many factors influence the decision, including how necessary the service is for effective teleworking and whether your department has a budget for the cost.

Options:

a. **Mason Telecommunications Land Line:** A Mason-provided verbal communications line via a physical connection between two or more land line telephones. If your supervisor has agreed to provide a Mason telecommunications land line, consult your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for assistance in requesting Mason technology services.

   **Costs:** Contact your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for specific costs.

b. **Mason Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Line:** A Mason-provided communications line (verbal and visual or just verbal) over the Internet that can be used with a computer, mobile phone, or land line phone. If your supervisor has agreed to provide a VoIP line, consult your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for assistance in requesting Mason technology services.

   **Costs:** This service is part of the [Telework Technology Service Bundle](#) which incurs a one-time installation charge of $30 and a monthly charge of $22.15. Check with your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for additional pricing information.

c. **Voice Land Line:** A verbal communications line via a physical connection between two or more land line telephones. Some of the carriers that provide land lines include AT&T, Verizon, Qwest/Century Link, and Vonage.

   **Costs:** Monthly fees vary from $3 to $40. Contact a specific carrier for service options and pricing.
d. **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Line:** A communications line (verbal and visual or just verbal) over the Internet that can be used with a computer, mobile phone, or land line phone. Some of the carriers that provide VoIP are Cavalier Telephone, CloseCall America/Birch Communications, CenturyLink, Charter, Cox, FairPoint Communications, PAETEC/Windstream, TDS Telecom, Comcast, RCN (Falls Church), Matrix Business Technologies, and Bristol Virginia Utilities.

**Costs:** The installation and monthly fees vary by carrier. Contact a specific carrier for pricing.

2. **Internet Connection**

If your duties require accessing the Internet while teleworking, you and your supervisor will determine the best option available and decide whether you or your department will pay for this service. Many factors influence the decision, including how necessary the service is for effective teleworking and whether your department has a budget for the cost.

**Options:**

a. **Satellite:** Internet access provided through satellites orbiting the Earth. Satellite service requires a satellite Internet subscription from an Internet satellite service provider and a satellite dish. Carriers that provide satellite Internet service are DIRECTV, Dish Network, HughesNet, and Wildblue.

**Costs:** Monthly fees vary from $40 to over $100. Contact a specific carrier for pricing.

b. **Cable Internet:** Internet access provided through cable television. Cable Internet requires a cable Internet subscription from a provider. Carriers that deliver Internet cable include Comcast, Cox Communications, RCN, and Time Warner.

**Costs:** Monthly fees vary from $20 to $200. Contact a specific carrier for pricing.

c. **FiOS:** Internet access provided through fiber-optic networks. FiOS Internet service requires a subscription to Verizon FiOS Internet service.

**Costs:** Monthly fees vary from $55 to $155. Contact Verizon for pricing.

d. **AirCard/MiFi for Cellular Networks:** AirCards are a type of small wireless broadband modem that connects a variety of devices and provides access to the Internet via a cellular phone network. MiFi is a line of compact broadband wireless routers produced by Novatel Wireless that have the same general characteristics as AirCards. AirCard/MiFi service requires an AirCard/MiFi modem device and a subscription from a cellular service provider. In order to use this service, you must have a device with the wireless
connectivity that is appropriate for conducting your teleworking duties. Carriers providing AirCard/MiFi service include AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint.

**Costs:** Aircards/MiFi can be free or cost up to $300 depending on the model and the service plan. Contact a specific carrier for pricing.

e. **Modem Card:** Modem cards provide Internet access via a device that is either internally attached to a PC’s motherboard or externally attached to a PC or laptop using a USB connection. An internal PC card requires wired connectivity from an Internet provider; a wireless card with a USB connection requires wireless access to an Internet provider.

**Costs:** Modem cards cost between $10 and $50 and can be obtained from stores that sell electronics and [Patriot Computers](http://www.patriotcomputers.com).

3. **Computer/Laptop/Tablet Devices**

A variety of hardware options are available to assist you in performing your teleworking duties, including desktop computers, laptops, and tablet devices. You and your supervisor will determine the best option available and decide whether you or your department will pay for this device. Many factors influence the decision, including how necessary the device is for effective teleworking and whether your department has a budget for the cost.

**Options:**

a. **Mason Laptop:** Laptop/notebook computers are portable and can be used in many locations. In some telework arrangements, Mason provides a laptop to the employee to conduct work on behalf of the university.

**Costs:** Contact your purchasing department for acceptable models and pricing.

b. **Mason Desktop Personal Computer (PC):** A desktop PC is a complete computer designed for use by one person at a time. In some telework arrangements, Mason provides a desktop PC to the employee to conduct work on behalf of the university.

**Costs:** Contact your purchasing department for acceptable models and pricing.

c. **Mason Tablet Device:** A tablet device is a wireless, portable computer with a touch screen interface. In some telework arrangements, Mason provides a tablet device to the employee to conduct work on behalf of the university.

**Costs:** Contact your purchasing department for acceptable models and pricing.

d. **Employee-Provided Laptop:** Some telework arrangements require the employee to provide their own laptop/notebook computer.
Costs: Depending on size, brand, and capacity, a laptop may range from $250 to over $1,500.

e. **Employee-Provided Desktop Personal Computer (PC):** Some telework arrangements require the employee to provide their own desktop PC.
   **Costs:** Depending on size, brand, and capacity, a desktop PC may range from $150 to over $5,000.

f. **Employee-Provided Tablet Device:** Some telework arrangements require the employee to provide their own tablet device.
   **Costs:** Depending on size, brand, and capacity, a tablet device may range from $150 to over $800.

4. **Software for Access to Online Systems and Services**
   If your teleworking duties require access to applications and systems on the Mason network, you and your supervisor will determine the best option available. Most options are provided by Mason free of charge.

   **Options:**
   a. **Virtual Private Network (VPN):** Allows remote access to Mason’s resources and your office computer so that you can perform work as if you were in the office. VPN is the recommended method of access. Additional information is available from the [VPN FAQ web page](#).  
   **Costs:** VPN is free of charge and is part of the Telework Technology Service Bundle which incurs a one-time installation charge of $30 and a monthly charge of $22.15.

   **Costs:** RDP is free of charge.

   c. **PC Anywhere:** Software that enables remote desktop and remote access on a device. It requires purchase of a license from Symantec.
   **Costs:** Check pcAnywhere for cost information.

   d. **Unified Communications:** Allows you to receive faxes via e-mail and voice messages attached to e-mails as audio files.
Costs: This feature is part of the Telework Technology Service Bundle which incurs a one-time installation charge of $30 and a monthly charge of $22.15. Check with your Telecom Coordinator for additional pricing information.

5. Voice Communications Devices and Service Plans
There are several types of devices and service plans for voice communications. You and your supervisor will determine the best option available and decide whether you or your department will pay for the device and service. Many factors influence the decision, including how necessary the device is for effective teleworking and whether your department has a budget for the cost.

Options:

a. Desk Set: A land line telephone used in conjunction with land line service. Land line telephones can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and telephone equipment.
   Costs: The cost of a desk set ranges from $15 to $60 depending on the features.

b. Cellular: A mobile telephone that allows calls to be placed over a wide geographic range. There are many carriers to choose from including Cricket, Verizon Wireless, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint.
   Costs: If you are providing the device and paying for the service, contact cellular phone providers directly for pricing information. The costs range from no charge for the device to over $200 depending on the phone and the service provided. If your department is providing the device and the service, contact your Telecom Coordinator for assistance.

c. Smartphone: A cellular phone that combines features of a variety of devices, including a personal digital assistant, portable media player, camera, computer, and many others. There are many carriers to choose from including Cricket, Verizon Wireless, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint.
   Costs: If you are providing the device and paying for the service, contact cellular phone providers directly for pricing information. The costs range from no charge for the device to over $400 depending on the phone and the service provided. If your department is providing the device and the service, contact your Telecom Coordinator for assistance.

d. Soft Phone: An application that enables a computer to be used as a telephone using VoIP. A soft phone is recommended as part of the Telework Technology Service Bundle. If your supervisor has agreed to provide the Bundle, consult your Telecom Coordinator for assistance in requesting Mason technology services.
**Costs:** This application is part of the Telework Technology Service Bundle which incurs a one-time installation charge of $30 and a monthly charge of $22.15. Check with your Telecom Coordinator for additional pricing information.

6. **Other Hardware**

Depending on your technology equipment, additional components may be necessary. You and your supervisor will determine the best options available and decide whether you or your department will pay for these components. Many factors influence the decision, including how necessary the equipment is for effective teleworking and whether your department has a budget for the cost.

**Options:**

a. **Headset:** An attachment that holds an earphone or pair of earphones and a voice transmitter at one’s head. Headsets appropriate for use with computing devices usually have a USB connector or multi-pronged plug that connects to the device’s speaker and audio jacks. A headset can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and telephone equipment.

   **Costs:** The cost of headsets ranges from $15 to over $100 depending on the features.

b. **Keyboard:** An input device consisting of buttons that correspond to written symbols that can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and computer equipment.

   **Costs:** The cost of a keyboard ranges from $20 to over $100 depending on the features.

c. **Monitor:** An electronic visual display for computers that can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and computer equipment.

   **Costs:** The cost of monitors ranges from $100 to over $300 depending on their size and features.

d. **Mouse:** A pointing device whose movement controls the motion of a cursor on a monitor. A mouse can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and computer equipment.

   **Costs:** The cost of a mouse ranges from $10 to over $100 depending on the features.

e. **Miscellaneous (mouse pad, speakers, cooling device, paper, etc.):** Effective teleworking may require the purchase of a variety of incidentals related to technology devices, services, operation, and maintenance.

   **Costs:** Costs for such items vary. Review your needs and discuss procurement with your supervisor.