



Dear friends of Procurement U,

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many organizations to figure out how to best adjust their workflows and training programs to meet the changing demands of our current work environment. This means many organizations (NASPO and Procurement U included) are moving to remote work options. While it is important for every organization to do something, the reality is that it can be much more challenging for some organizations to quickly ramp up a work-from-home situation, and training programs are left evaluating their ability to deliver effective training in a virtual environment.

Below are some tips and resources that could help you manage virtual training or remote work options.

Articulate, the creator of popular eLearning course software, has put out a [blog](#) of things you need to know in order to stand up a remote workforce quickly. The article underscores the importance of having the right technology tools but also implementing policies of overcommunication and collaboration across the organization.

The Association for Talent Development (ATD) has also compiled [several resources](#) to help you create effective training for a remote workforce. This includes tips to make virtual training a success, as well as tips for meeting human needs in the virtual classroom. Some of the resources may only be available to ATD members, but the *Insight* blog articles are all free and available to anyone.

In addition, several tech companies responsible for workplace software have taken steps to help you take advantage of virtual training resources during this time:

- [Microsoft Teams](#): The Teams application comes standard with any Microsoft Office 365 account that your office might have and can be used for remote chat, video conferencing, conference calls, and virtual team collaboration. In response to the

current climate, Microsoft has removed restrictions and offered additional features usually reserved for paid users. It is also offering anyone a six-month free trial to the premium version of the app.

- **Slack**: Slack is one of the most popular tools for workplace communication and collaboration providing instant messaging, file sharing, voice and video calls and community engagement. Slack has always had a free tier that can work for the basics in a pinch.
- **Zoom**: Similarly, Zoom has a free tier and has expanded its offerings given the current climate. Zoom has removed the 40-minute time limit that was normally imposed on free meetings with more than two participants.
- **Webex**: Cisco has taken a similar approach with its Webex platform, removing time restrictions for its free Webex platform which supports up to 100 participants and VoIP capabilities.
- **Google Hangouts**: Google has rolled out free access to their advanced Hangouts Meet video-conferencing product free to all G Suite and G Suite for Education customers until July 1, which can allow for free calls with up to 250 participants as well as recording capabilities.
- **FreeConferenceCall.com**: FreeConferenceCall.com also offers free audio and video conferencing, screen sharing, recordings and more.

Google's online services (Google Docs, Sheets, etc.) are also free and can allow users to collaborate on documents in real time. This can help as you adjust to any change in your work environment. Also, if you or your staff need detailed information that cuts through the confusion and noise related to COVID-19, **here is an online course** that provides practical information on the virus.

One final note is to encourage patience. As the world moves to remote work as much as possible, the software and servers set up to support this type of work are being strained. Microsoft Teams and other apps are already reporting service issues most likely caused by the influx of users to their platforms. Be patient as companies work to support the new environment and be patient with yourself and your staff as you adjust your work processes. Flexibility and understanding are more critical now than ever before.

As always, the Procurement U team is here to help and our **catalog of online courses** remains available as an online procurement training resource. If you are exploring remote training options and need assistance or have questions, we are happy to help point you in the right direction.

Warmest regards,

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