



TELECOMMUTING RESEARCH

DHRM IMPROVEMENT TEAM

METHODOLOGY

Scope: Research was conducted within the private and public sector to review telecommuting practices.

Research

- Studies
- White Papers
- Articles
- State Agencies
- Survey



Some of Our Research...

Articles/White Papers

American Psychological Association, October 2019, “The Future of Remote Work”

Gallup Organization, March 2020, “Quick Steps to Prepare a Remote Work Policy for Your Local Government.”

WSJ, January 2022, “Workers Care More About Flexible Hours Than Remote Work.”

Gallup Organization, December 2021, “How Local Governments Are Adapting to Hybrid and Remote Work.”

Gallup Organization, October 2020, “Remote Workers Facing High Burnout: How to Turn It Around.”

Forbes, 5 Statistics Employers Need to Know About the Remote Workforce, February 2021,

WSJ, May 2017, IBM, a Pioneer of Remote Work, calls Workers Back to the Office

WSJ, November 2020, IBM’s Perspective and Recommendations on Empowering a Mobile Workforce

Surveys & Resource Documents

Mission Square Research Institute, The Great Resignation and COVID-19: Impact on Public Sector Employment and How Employers Can Help

The Council on State Governments, “Disability-Inclusive Telework for States: State Approaches to Increasing Access & Inclusion.”

Prudential Insurance, Pulse of the American Worker Survey

US Office of Personnel Management, 2021 Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government, Leveraging Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government to Better Meet our Human Capital Needs and Improve Mission Delivery

Global Workplace Analytics, “The State of Remote Work 2021.”

www.telework.gov website for Federal Agencies

Pew Research Center Survey, conducted with 10,332 US adults between October 13 and 19, 2020

TERMINOLOGY

Various terms are used

- E-commuting
- E-work
- Hybrid model
- Remote work
- Telecommuting
- Telework
- Working at/from home
- Virtual work

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers provide reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities if needed to participate in recruitment process, perform their essential functions and access rights and privileges (e.g., training).

KEY FINDINGS...

Losing an employee can cost an employer **1/3 of that employee's annual earnings**, in the form of "hard costs" and "soft costs"

Telework can **decrease voluntary employee turnover by 25%**, by increasing job satisfaction and better accommodating changes in an employee's living situation

KEY FINDINGS...

Women are more likely than men to say they'd want to work from home all of the time when the pandemic is over

Among employed adults who say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home, % saying that, if they had a choice, they would want to work from home ____ when the coronavirus outbreak is over

	All of the time	Most of the time	Net
All who can do their work from home	27	27	54
Men	23	29	52
Women	31	25	56

Note: Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.
"How the Coronavirus Outbreak Has – and Hasn't – Changed the Way Americans Work"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Parents who are teleworking are having a harder time getting their work done without interruptions. Half of parents with children younger than 18 who are working at home all or most of the time say it's been difficult for them to be able to get their work done without interruptions since the coronavirus outbreak started. In contrast, only 20% of teleworkers who don't have children under 18 say the same. Mothers and fathers are about equally likely to say this has been difficult for them.

KEY FINDINGS...

Younger teleworkers are more likely to say they've had a hard time feeling motivated to do their work since the coronavirus outbreak started.

- Most adults who are teleworking all or most of the time say it has been at least somewhat easy for them to feel motivated to do their work since the pandemic started.
- But there's a distinct age gap:
 - 42% of workers ages 18 to 49 say this has been *difficult* for them compared with only 20% of workers 50 and older.
 - The youngest workers are among the most likely to say a lack of motivation has been an impediment for them: 53% of those ages 18 to 29 say it's been difficult for them to feel motivated to do their work.

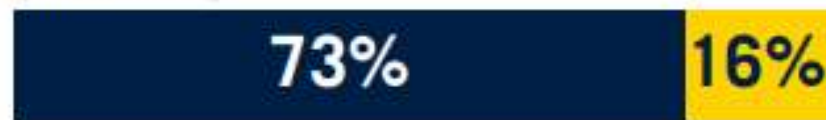


KEY FINDINGS...

Remote Work Becoming an Important Employee Benefit

Employers should continue to offer and expand remote-work options even after the pandemic is over

(All workers)



Agree

Disagree

(Remote workers)



Agree

Disagree

Nearly three-quarters (**73%**) of all workers say employers should continue to offer and expand remote-work options even after the pandemic is over—among current remote workers this percentage is even higher (**83%**).

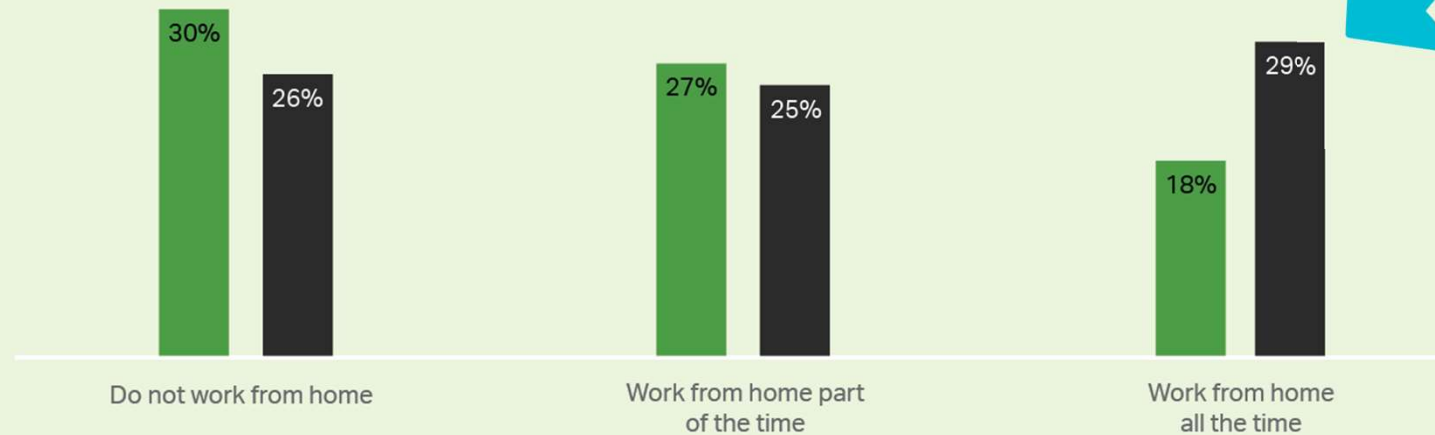
Moreover, **nearly half** of current remote workers (**42%**) say if their current company doesn't continue to offer remote-work options long term, they will look for a job at a company that does.

Source: Prudential Financial, Inc., Pulse of the American Worker Survey

KEY FINDINGS...

Percentage of Employees Who Feel Burned Out at Work "Very Often" or "Always"

■ Pre-COVID-19 ■ During COVID-19



Among full-time U.S. employees
"Pre-COVID-19" figures are from September 2019; "During COVID-19" figures are from April-September 2020

GALLUP

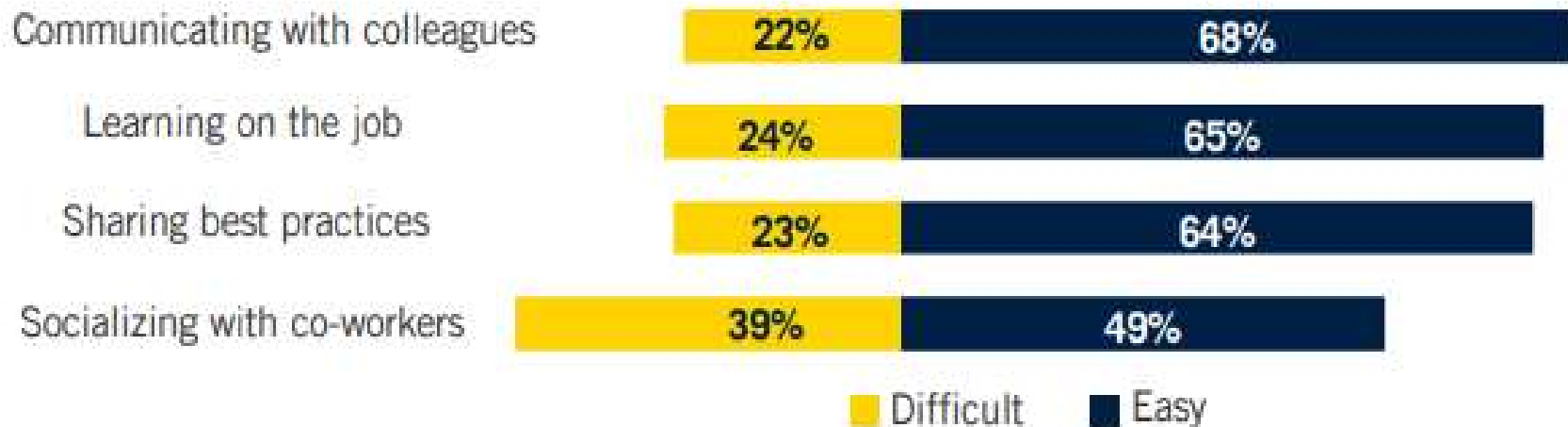
Fully remote workers are now experiencing more burnout than on-site workers.

Now, working entirely from home during the pandemic might feel more like being "trapped at home" instead of a perk.

KEY FINDINGS...

What's easy and difficult with remote work

In general, remote workers report that **communicating with colleagues**, **learning on the job**, and **sharing best practices** have been easy to do remotely. **Socializing with co-workers**, which is important for building and maintaining culture, was reported as the most difficult part of work to replicate in a remote environment.



Source: Prudential Financial, Inc., Pulse of the American Worker Survey

IMPORTANCE TO EMPLOYEES

■ **74%** of professionals expect remote work to become standard

■ **97%** of employees don't want to return to the office full-time

Source: (5 Statistics Employers Need to Know About the Remote Workforce, Forbes, February 10, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashiraprossack1/2021/02/10/5-statistics-employers-need-to-know-about-the-remote-workforce/?sh=1a24d616655d>)

CATEGORIES

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has identified two categories:

- Routine: Occurs as part of an ongoing regular schedule
- Situational: Approved on a case-by-case basis and the hours worked were not part of a previously approved, ongoing or regular schedule.

Examples:

- Short-term need for uninterrupted time to complete work
- Dependent care responsibilities
- Recovering from illness or an injury who is able to perform work but temporarily unable to physically report to the agency worksite

WHY TELECOMMUTING?

- Identified as tool to address State recruitment and retention shortfalls
- Already happening due to pandemic
- Environmentally, telecommuting can help to reduce the carbon monoxide emissions, reduce gasoline usage and improve air quality
- States can benefit in cost savings:
 - Lower real estate, operating and maintenance costs
 - Greater continuity of operations during emergencies. FEMA cites telecommuting as an “essential component of continuity planning”.
 - Various studies show that employees are as effective, if not more effective working remotely.
 - According to Stanford University employee productivity can increase between 13% and 22% through remote work.
- Lower voluntary turnover

CONSIDERATIONS

Addressing Different Experiences

- Not introducing something new, leaders have recent experience
- Need to “speak” to range of experience with telecommuting
 - Positive
 - Neutral
 - Negative

Communication with agencies

- Point to positives
- Offer ideas and resources for concerns

EMPLOYER

PROS	CHALLENGES
RECRUITMENT – Larger geographical area for applicants	Maintaining contact and open communication with employee
RECRUITMENT - Attracts individuals for whom mobility is an issue (e.g., transportation wise and those with a disability, or older)	Monitoring and addressing performance and conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long term (e.g., childcare)• Incidents (e.g., alcohol)
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION - Employee benefit/perk	Team cohesion
RETENTION - Employee satisfaction/happiness	Maintaining adequate office staffing
Reduced overhead costs (e.g., office space, utilities)	Risk of injury due to home office setup
Reduced administrative leave (e.g., inclement weather)	Costs for equipment, training and cyberattacks
Reduced absenteeism	
Higher productivity	

COST OF TELEWORK TO STATES

From the Council of State Governments research, they identified the following costs:

- **Training**
 - Employee and leadership training
- **Equipment and information technology costs**
 - Building or updating IT infrastructure
 - Purchasing and paying for licenses on remote access software
 - Providing equipment for employees to work remotely
 - Reimbursements to employees (if offered) for phone lines and high-speed internet
- **Managing and Recovering from data security breaches and cyberattacks**
 - Threats are particularly high if employees are using unsecured WiFi to access emails and files

STATES HAVE SAVED MILLIONS...

- Utah launched statewide remote work in 2019 after a pilot garnered increase in productivity by more than 20%. Lower demand for office space by 63,900 square feet.
- Tennessee implemented an Alternative Workplace Solutions (AWS) program in 2016. Six thousand state employees participated, resulted in a 37% reduction in sick leave, a \$6.5 million reduction in real-estate rental costs and an increase in productivity. Selling an office building in downtown Nashville which is no longer needed for \$40-\$60 million.
- Washington State Department of Labor and Industries saved \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually by shifting to telework during pandemic. These cost savings came largely from reduced expenditures on facility maintenance, utilities and printing.

Source: Council of State Governments: Disability-Inclusive Telework for States

WHAT ARE OTHER STATE GOVERNMENTS ARE DOING?

- At least 40 states have adopted statewide telework policies, whether through laws and/or through statewide guidelines.
 - Florida, Vermont, and Virginia passed telework laws that apply to all state agencies.
 - Colorado, Georgia, and Massachusetts issued statewide telework guidelines for all state agencies to consider.
 - California, Montana, and South Carolina developed model or sample telework policies that individual agencies can modify and implement
- Some states offer flexibility in acquiring and utilizing technology and other equipment to better meet the needs of employees.
 - Maryland — offers state agencies several options for providing telework equipment, including lending it from the office; providing incentives for teleworkers to purchase their own equipment; subsidizing the purchase of equipment by teleworkers; and purchasing equipment for teleworkers.
 - South Dakota and Minnesota — allow employees to use their own equipment for teleworking and indicate that agencies (at their discretion) may provide maintenance and repair of employee-owned equipment.

Source: Council of State Governments: Disability-Inclusive Telework for States

**“COMPANIES SHOULD NEVER JUST IMPLEMENT
TELECOMMUTING WITHOUT CHANGING ANYTHING ELSE...
THEY ALSO NEED TO SHIFT THEIR CULTURE AND NORMS TO
SUPPORT THE NEW ARRANGEMENT.”**

I/O PSYCHOLOGIST KRISTEN SHOCKLEY, PHD, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA (THE FUTURE OF REMOTE WORK, AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, OCTOBER 1, 2019, VOL. 50, NO. 9, [HTTPS://WWW.APA.ORG/MONITOR/2019/10/COVER-REMOTE-WORK](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/10/cover-remote-work))

COMMUNITY

Pros

- Reduced traffic
- Reduced air pollution
- Reduced wear on transportation infrastructure

CHALLENGES

- Reduction in business for stores and restaurants in city core areas
 - Pandemic may make this less obvious



EMPLOYEE

Pros

- Better work/life balance
- Flexibility/autonomy
- Savings in time and commuting costs
- Morale
- Reduced workplace distractions
- Increased job satisfaction and productivity



Challenges

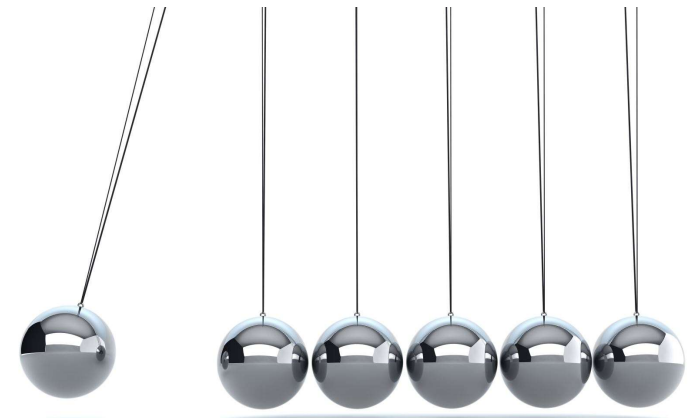
- Blurring of work-family boundaries
- Sense of isolation from coworkers
- Household distractions
- Potential for working excessive hours
- “Out of sight, out of mind”
 - Not being considered for informal training or high-touch projects
- Fear of being over-managed

EMPLOYEE ISSUES TO ADDRESS

- Ergonomics and home-work environment
- Work scheduling and distribution
- Working alone
- Who will provide what items (e.g., chairs, desks, computer, office supplies)
- Who will pay for utilities (e.g., internet)
- Workers' compensation
- OSHA compliance (e.g., smoke alarm, posting)

PRE-PANDEMIC

- Employers were implementing
- Employers were cutting back on their programs. Companies like Yahoo, Best Buy, Bank of America and IBM choose to end or scale back their work-from-home programs. Leaders cited the need to improve:
 - Teamwork
 - Collaboration
 - Communications



IBM

Telecommuting program first introduced

Pulled thousands of its workers back into the workplace



40% of its 386,000 employees in 173 countries were working remotely

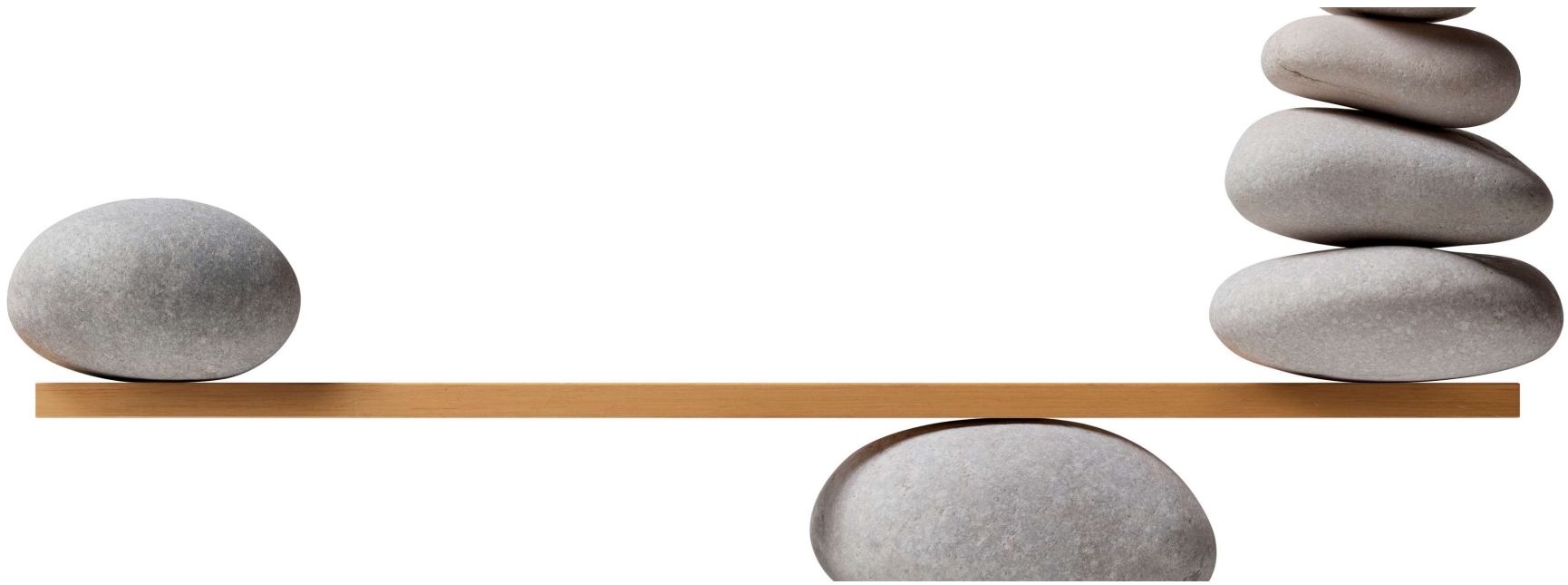
"We believe that if remote work is embraced as part of innovation and technological change, it has the potential not only to increase participation in the labour force, but to improve productivity, attract and retain talent, and assist in the transition to a low carbon economy. However, we recognise that in order for employers and employees to fully reap the benefits, policies and practices need to be carefully designed so as to avoid unreasonable regulation of the home environment and to mitigate downside risks such as negative mental and physical health impacts."

Source: Bringing Work Home, The Center for Work & Family, Boston College,

https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/publications/researchreports/Bringing%20Work%20Home_Telecommuting; IBM, a Pioneer of Remote Work, calls Workers Back to the Office, The Wall Street Journal, May, 18, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ibm-a-pioneer-of-remote-work-calls-workers-back-to-the-office-1495108802>; IBM's Perspective and Recommendations on Empowering a Mobile Workforce, November 18, 2020, <https://www.ibm.com/blogs/policy/mobile-workforce/>

HOW DO WE PROMOTE PERMANENT (BEYOND COVID) CHANGE?

- Provide data: Advantages; Issues to address
- Provide tools: Best practices; Emphasize organization cultural change; FAQs
- Provide support
 - Training
 - Federal Government virtual training for employees and managers is on www.telework.gov
 - DHRM ???
 - EAP
 - LinkedIn
 - Resources
 - www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/telework.html
 - Consultation



“IT’S NOT SO MUCH THAT TELECOMMUTING IS GOOD OR BAD; IT’S JUST THAT SOMETIMES IT’S ADVANTAGEOUS AND SOMETIMES IT’S NOT”

(GAJENDRAN, *JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND PSYCHOLOGY*, VOL. 34, NO. 1, 2019)

THE FUTURE OF TELECOMMUTING...

- Various studies indicate that working from home is here to stay
- Telework allows states to keep pace with:
 - changes in the workforce landscape,
 - attract and retain talent and
 - achieve cost savings goals.
- Helps states hire individuals with disability, which can produce a range of monetary and non-monetary benefits for state governments.