Though there have been numerous studies and much research dedicated to remote working, the following information is limited to results and studies conducted over the past few years. While the impact of COVID-19 affected much of this information and influenced many of the studies, the only state plans included here are those intended to be permanent and not related to temporary provisions.

For the context of this information, the terms work-from-home, telework, remote work, and telecommuting are often used interchangeably. However, each policy does explicitly define the type of work schedule. For example, remote work is generally for those who rarely commute to the employer's primary workplace, but many "remote work" programs include employees who can choose to work in-office and from another approved location.

Common reasons for pushing towards telework have been:

- Reducing the cost of leasing office space
- Reducing the state environmental impact of commuting and the excessive traffic congestion burden on transportation departments
- Growing the economy in rural areas
- Attracting new employees and citizens into the state with remote work as a job benefit

The MissionSquare Research Institute, an independent, nonpartisan research group for local and state governments, has conducted multiple studies surveying exclusively government employees.

- The Survey Findings report found that 53% of employers offered "regular telework" in 2021, an increase from 27% in 2020.
- Additionally, 54% offered "a flexible schedule," such as four 10-hour days a week and 48% of employers offered "flexible work hours."
- Telework was much more common in state agencies (64%) compared to local agencies (19%).
- A survey of Public Sector Employee Views due to COVID-19 reported that from May 2020 to October 2020, 70% of employees reported flexible work to be the most appealing nontraditional benefit not currently offered.
    - The second highest appealing benefits (employee assistance and physical wellness) were tied at 41%.
    - In general, government employees are least satisfied with the offering of nontraditional benefits at their jobs.
- The 2021 updated survey on Public Sector Employee Views on Finance and Employment Outlook due to COVID-19 reported positive morale regarding work increased from 41% in October 2020 to 56% in May 2021.
    - The second highest ranking suggestion respondents gave for how employers could make their organization a better place to work was allowing work from home/remote work and flexible hours was 20%, with raises ranked above at 21%.

Global Workplace Analytics (GWA), a research and consulting firm focused on the future of workplaces, annually collaborates with OWL Labs, a technology company focused on promoting hybrid work, to produce a State of Remote Work Report. The 2021 report found that of those

who worked from home during the pandemic, 56% would be willing to quit or look for jobs that offered flexibility in work hours if they couldn't work remotely moving forward. Additionally, those who worked remotely during the pandemic answered how working from home "at least some of the time" after the pandemic would affect them:

- 84% of respondents agreed being able to work from home after COVID-19 would make them happier.
- 79% of all survey respondents agreed that the ability to work remotely would make them less stressed.
- 83% reported that working remotely would make them better able to manage their work-life balance.

GWA's latest telecommuting statistics also estimated that employees working at home half the time save between $600 and $6,000 per year. Those savings are primarily due to reduced costs for travel, parking, and foods. Conservative estimates found a typical U.S. employer can save $11,000 annually per half-time telecommuter, specifically as a result of increased productivity, lower real estate costs, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and better disaster preparedness.

The Gensler Research Institute, a global design firm and research group which conducts a U.S. Workplace Survey of full-time employees across 10 industries each year, reported that employees working in a hybrid work reported greater positive impacts than both those working full-time at home and those working full-time in office. They showed significant improvements in productivity, personal creativity, team relationships and leadership, and problem solving.

Addition from August 16, 2022

In Spring 2022, market-research firm Ipsos, in partnership with McKinsey & Company, a management consulting firm to organizations including corporations and governments, conducted the third edition of their American Opportunity Survey. The poll evaluates economic attitudes and well-being, and barriers within the workforce from a sample of over 25,000 adults in the United States. The Spring 2022 survey results found that 58% of those employed could work remotely, 35% work full-time and 23% on occasion or part-time. Using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data from April 2022, the following results would represent an equivalent of 92 million employed people who can work remotely and 66 million employed people, the remaining 42%, without the opportunity.

Across the 20 industries and occupations represented, people in the United States who are younger, have received more education, or earn higher incomes tend to have more availability to work remotely. Excluding the circumstances that some employers may insist on on-site work only, and the fact that not all work can be done remotely, 61% of employed men reported being offered remote work compared to 52% of employed women. Additionally, throughout all income levels, younger workers reported having more remote opportunities than older workers.

A flexible working arrangement was the third-most-popular motivator (21%) for those planning to look or recently looking for a new job—a population that made up 86% of the nearly 14,000 total employed respondents. It was also the third largest margin of difference between all reported popular reasons, with the fourth popular reason, better

health insurance, at 16% of all respondents. The top two motivations for a new job were greater pay or increased hours (47%), and better career opportunities (27%).

For existing workplaces, the survey showed that when offered at least some remote work, 87% of workers accept and spend an average of three days a week working from home. Once an employee has the opportunity, there was a tendency amongst those who chose to stay on-site or in-office to be either between 55 and 64 years of age or earn between $25,000 and $74,999 in yearly income. Of that 58% of workers with a remote work option, approximately 13% did not participate.

When asked about potential impacts to job performance, more fully remote workers (five days a week) reported having major or moderate impacts on their ability to effectively perform work often than non-remote workers. The largest group of workers that reported being significantly impacted by factors were flexible, partial remote workers (one to four days a week remote). Overall, the difference between the amount of workers impacted ranged from 20% and 29%, but the range between fully remote workers and non-remote workers was consistently much smaller. This trend occurred for each question. Between the more frequently impacted partially remote workers and the less frequently impacted non-remote workers, 29% more respondents were affected by demands at home for childcare. Care demands at home for adult family member or other adult dependents, and access to reliable, high-speed internet were the next highest percentage differences, 27% more respondents reporting impacts on their work performance from both factors. This finding does not address cause and effect and notes that those experiencing significant impacts could be more likely to work a schedule that reduces exposure to these challenges.

([McKinsey American Opportunity Survey Results](#), published June 23, 2022)

STATE EXAMPLES

Numerous states have drafted and implemented legislation related to remote work by proposing broadband expansion and increasing agency budgets as needed.

Maine passed [legislation](#) in June 2019 to study the cost and benefits of telework to the state and its employees with a goal of having at least 30% of state employees telework by 2030. In December 2020, the Department of Administrative and Financial Services published their first [report](#). The Bureau of Human Resources' survey found 89% of respondents were satisfied with telework and 86% reported their productivity is efficient and effective while teleworking when compared to working in the office. Preliminary estimates found state employees saved 17,877 trips per week, drove 1,088,980 fewer miles per week, and were responsible for 233,103 fewer pounds of carbon emissions every week. These findings benefit the state as "an integral component" Maine's Climate Action Plan to reduce pollution.

Overall, telework policies across states are generally very similar to each other. Job positions suitable for telework or remote work are not primarily dependent on in-person, on-site interaction or handling sensitive information. The position should also be defined with clearly communicated tasks that can be evaluated by results. Common themes in these policies are:

- Providing secure technology to remotely working employees
- Establishing flexible schedules or setting a fixed work-from-home schedule
- Requiring an official agreement with terms that need annual renewal

- Considering employee behavior history in telework eligibility
- Requiring leadership, senior staff to remain in office full-time
- Requiring minimum days required in office

Some states have implemented a standard for agencies to use or adapt to their needs. All policies agree increased communication between managers and employees is critical and clearly defined expectations and outlined tasks are often required in telework request paperwork for many state agencies. For example, the Department of Health in **Louisiana**—where there is no statewide telework policy—outlines a section in its work from home expectations where the employee is required to itemize in writing the tasks performed while working at home and the number of hours and minutes devoted to each task to submit each pay period.

There are multiple states who have implemented telework policies that go further than these general adjustments.

Arizona has had a telework program since 1993 and before 2020, it was most recently updated in a planning guide in 2012. The latest update remodeled the remote work program to Arizona's Connected Workforce, which prioritizes "a work culture that affords employees flexibility, autonomy, and trust" and aims to increase the remote workforce. The following information is located on that website.

The program offers four options:

- *Resident office,* a traditional workplace arrangement from within a State or agency-leased building
- *Remote work* (previously telework), an arrangement allowing employees to work from home or an approved location one or more days a week
- *Virtual office,* an arrangement where a full time employee works from an assigned workstation either at home or another approved location with no facility costs to the State
- *Hoteling*, an arrangement that allows employees to use unassigned, non-permanent workstations as needed
  - The Department of Administration currently offers the first floor of a State-owned building available to all state employees as a hoteling workspace with a video conferencing space and a cafe with indoor/outdoor seating.

The planning guide focuses on task management for teleworking employees and contains the telework agreement. The website offers management resources to supervisors for effectively implementing new protocols and monitoring performance. An engagement survey from April-May 2021 reflected 91% of employees agreed that their immediate supervisors gives them the support needed to successfully work remotely. In 2020, the State saved taxpayers more than $3 million in annual cost savings with physical space reduction. The State is reporting less overall turnover, which reduces ongoing recruiting and training costs for new employees.

Arizona is also one of the few states that have included accountability measures within its policies. The remote work policy in the State Personnel System Statewide Policies and Procedures requires remote workers and supervisors to participate in studies to evaluate the program when necessary. Outlined in this section are items such as, supervisors will "ensure teams are working collaboratively," "fostering a culture of inclusiveness," and "establish productivity and quality standards."

The webpage also keeps track of success stories from state agencies finding benefits such as the following:

- Experienced about 3% less absenteeism and lost 25% fewer people from turnover with 75% of its workers hybrid or fully remote [(Department of Economic Security (DES)]
- Saved about $1 million by sharing office space with Department of Transportation (DES)
- Saved close to half a million dollars in operational expenses with over 90% working remotely [Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)]
- Reduced processing time for its certification program from about one week to nearly instant certification by making it a completely paperless process—which saved more than 12,000 staff hours a year. (DEQ)
- Reduced wait times for appointments from nine weeks to two days with all eligible employees working remotely [Arizona Department of Veterans Services (ADVS)]
- Saved $100,000 in office space rent (ADVS)
- Increased counselors services provided by 47.3% to assist over 3,000 veterans a month—which allowed for over $650 million tax-free dollars in benefits to veterans (ADVS)
- Saved $1.2 million by consolidating two buildings into one with 60% of its workforce to virtual offices [Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the state's Medicaid system]
- Increased engagement with members and clinical teams by 2.8% moving all of their paper-based processes online, while maintaining HIPAA compliance (AHCCCS)

The state's employee engagement survey for 2021 reported that of the 59% respondents working remotely one or more days per week, 86% reported that remote work has had a positive impact on their work experience. As of August 2021, 40% of state employees worked remotely. As of September 2021, the state had reduced office space by 552,891 square feet and saved taxpayers more than $7 million.

The State of **Washington** has one of the more comprehensive resource guides for hybrid work and telework. Their Office of Financial Management (OFM) updated a webpage as recently as September 2021 with detailed research on performance management, best practices, and recommendations for operational interruptions, ergonomics, training, and workshops.

The state also has an employee engagement survey that's been conducted annually since 2006. The 2020 survey had a response rate of 67% and had the highest percentage of positive responses in the history of the survey.

- 76% of respondents were satisfied with their job, 4% higher than the previous year.
- 69% of respondents indicated they would recommend their agency to others.
- 56% of respondents (37.5% of the total workforce) indicated they would like to continue teleworking a majority of the time when the workplace is safe to reopen for employees.

Additionally, among these resources are example situations for a state agency or educational institution to support out-of-state remote work. Some of these situations include supporting military families, victims of violence or stalking who need safety-related accommodations, border state residents, and those providing care for family members defined under FMLA.

In March 2020, shortly after the announcement of remote work, OFM directed state agencies to remove any policy language that stated that "caring for others" shall not be a reason to deny telework eligibility, citing research that lack of dependent care "prompted substantial numbers of women to drop out of the workforce" and that the U.S. sees "an estimated $12.7B loss in productivity due to reduced workforce participation and missed workdays related to dependent care."

Most states explicitly define dependent care as an unacceptable reason to telework or require proof that the employee has dependent care established before approving a telework request. For example, **Georgia's** telework policy for executive branch agencies requires employees arrange care as if they were in the conventional office and directly states telework is not a substitute, with exception of extenuating circumstances based on the availability of schools or childcare providers or a declared State of Emergency.

The Georgia Workforce Summary for FY2020 stated the need to consider flexible work scheduling and work-from-home "not as an employment perk, but as a viable strategic recruitment and retention tool" for state employees. The Department of Administrative Services also introduces the statewide policy as a program that has potential for "increased productivity, enhanced employee recruitment and retention, potential cost reduction, work/life balance and environmental sustainability." The Atlanta Regional Commission conducted a survey in August 2020 and found that 54% of Atlanta workers were feeling reduced stress and 73% were saving money from not commuting. Other positive results included exercising more, eating healthier, better work concentration, and getting to know neighbors.

The **Oklahoma** Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) published an employee Q&A article on telework opinions after a year of transitioning. The results were an overall increase in productivity and savings in employee commute time. The agency found that offering a hybrid schedule system would better serve OMES employees in the future. The state's current telework policy encourages regular or and full-time telework as an added workforce benefit and an alternative to office space costs for state government. Teleworking allowed OMES to consolidate office spaces and save over half a million dollars. The article noted this transition brought nearly all of its divisions into the same building for the first time. However, Oklahoma's telework policy specifically excludes working from home; each telework site must meet 18 minimum requirements, including "stairs with four or more steps are equipped with handrails," "computer equipment is connected to a surge protector, and "space is free from excess furniture." OMES also reserves the right to inspect the location of each employee. Additionally, each employee is required to complete an ergonomics assessment training before entering a telework agreement.

The **Iowa** Department of Administrative Services telework policy also permits worksite inspections to verify the protection and security of confidential information, but includes home inspections if an employee works from their personal residence. If this inspection is refused, the telework agreement is terminated. The policy allows home residences as an acceptable alternate worksite and will provide an issued State cell phone for business use only and state-owned equipment to be placed in employee homes. It outlines that technology may be provided, but the state assumes no responsibility for operating costs, such as increased home expenses related to internet access or utilities. If an agency initiated the telework agreement and requires more expenses, the employee will be reimbursed. The policy also includes a Telework and Reasonable

Accommodation section, which states the Telework Program may be used to provide reasonable accommodation for qualifying employees who for example, have partially recovered from an injury or illness who could perform work on a full- or part-time basis from a telework site.

Kentucky's Personnel Cabinet lists the eligibility conditions for telework in its telecommuting policy. The conditions are broken into three categories:

- *Regular, recurring telecommuting,* which may be full-time or part-time and requires a formal agreement between the employee, manager and office/department head that is copied and placed in the employee's agency personnel file.

- *Periodic, intermittent telecommuting* arrangements that do not require a formal agreement or checklist. For example, an employee assigned to a project with a short timeframe or one that requires intense concentration that is best completed outside of the office could qualify for this arrangement.

- *Temporary or emergency telecommuting* for circumstances such as short-term illness, weather related transportation emergencies, or personal circumstances prohibiting an employee from reporting to work, a natural disaster, or a state of emergency.

The policy also includes details similar to other states and agencies, such as requiring telework training for employees and managers, but notably requires dress code and professional image maintenance.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) in **Utah** organized a Remote Work special project. Through the program, agencies self-reported that 135 employees were retained in December 2020 because of the availability of remote work. There was an estimate increase in rural parts of the state by 207 jobs. Remote work for state government is also a priority in the One Utah Roadmap plan by the governor's administration's first 500 days.

The pilot program A New Workplace enabled all agencies to quickly transition to remote work early in the COVID-19 response over a weekend, using the preexisting infrastructure. Before the pandemic, only one-fourth of state agencies were participating in the system. The latest report from A New Workplace can be found here. Recent additions included obtaining an Adobe eSign license that provided paperless signature approval process free to agencies, enhancing internet bandwidth and updating VPNs, and purchasing audio visual equipment for all agencies. Utah accomplished this transition through an extensive and detailed planning guide with resources for a successful program. These resources include document templates, presentations, training videos, charts to help assess eligibility, and risk mitigation strategies that have helped agencies manage programs and encourage telework. Notably, the state was able to create a policy for remote working when the state experiences days of bad air quality in which the employee agrees to not use a vehicle during work hours and those not usually working remotely can temporarily participate. Additionally, 1,100 state employees took advantage of offered resources by signing up for an opportunity to acquire discarded office furniture from the state's purchase of a building.

The statewide Remote Work Guide published in June 2021 also mentions the state's Master Space Plan. The GOPB estimates full implementation of this plan would cost $245,000,000, and the investment would save the state an additional $500,000,000 over the next 50 years. From researching established remote work programs, the state found it unnecessary to reimburse or provide stipends to remote workers. It advises agencies should not provide incentives to participate in an already popular program.

Two legislative appropriations from the 2020 Legislative Session funded the program implementation, totaling $6,000,000. Additionally, $1,000,000 of capital improvement funds and $695,000 of federal CARES Act money went into the program. Approximately $2,500,000 remain for the upcoming fiscal year and an additional $750,000 of capital improvement funds.

Numerous other states have also dedicated offices to manage telework and remote work programs. **Colorado** organized an Office of Future of Work Initiative promoting online courses for employees and supervisors to improve remote working skills. The Office encourages those who complete the courses to add it to resumes and job profiles to "signal employers that you have the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in a remote work environment." Colorado has been an advocate for remote work since 2019, when it introduced an act requiring all companies operating in the state, including remote employees, to include salary details in job postings to encourage pay equity. Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's (CDLE) telework policy has been in place since 2015 with the goal for employees to "realize a more satisfying work-life balance while the department may enjoy increased productivity and job satisfaction on the part of the employee." CDLE moved from clearly stating telework was a privilege to more than two thirds of employers planning for remote work to be permanent. The webpage also features frequently updated news articles showcasing the benefits of remote work for various demographics and its positive impact on the workforce. In March 2021, an executive order created the Subcommittee on Digital Literacy and Inclusion to further research digital equity and collaborate with efforts to expand broadband infrastructure.

The **California** Department of General Services (DGS) created a Telework Dashboard to keep an ongoing tracker of the current status of teleworkers for fifteen departments including saving estimates, cumulatively and per week, for vehicle expenses, time, and environmental impact. As of the week of November 15, 2021, the state's telework rate is 85% and it has cumulatively saved $45,800,000 in vehicle expenses and 1,990,000 hours of time from telework efforts since March 2020. After transitioning into fulltime telework in March of 2020, DGS studied the department's teleworkers and found they had saved approximately 16.4 years of commute time. Continuing the research and conducting surveys, the dashboard was expanded with the goal to include all state departments.

Existing California law requires all state departments to offer telecommuting. The statewide policy outlines that an effective telework program must provide a benefit to the state, employees, and either generate savings or be cost neutral. The state has provided a mandatory telework agreement form that is annually reviewed by the employee and supervisor. This agreement also mentions dependent care with more flexibility, stating that the employee must agree that such care will not adversely affect professionalism or work duties, but does not mention securing external dependent care. One of the guides offers tips for how to navigate balance during school closures while working at home.

Missouri created the [Show Me Distributed Teams program](#) in response to permanent hybrid and remote work options. In addition to a team member playbook published with guidance and baseline requirements, a few of the approved and published department plans include the following details:

- An employee that is unwilling or unable to utilize personal equipment and/or resources in order to work remotely will be required to report to the official work place.
- Teleworking employees are required be in office at least one day; some require two days a week.
- Ineligible teleworkers include Division Directors, Communications Director, Chief Financial Officer, General Counsel, Department Directors and their executive assistants.
  - It also allows the Division Director to exclude telework eligibility for other leadership positions.
- A team member should not be primary caregiver of a child under 12 years old during work hours.
- Employees are required to set up voicemail greetings, stay connected internal through communication systems every day, and keep Outlook calendars updated or share them among teams.
- A timekeeping practice is required for all program members to provide a record of all hours worked.

Many of the reported costs and savings are most easily accessible through local news articles. I have hyperlinked and cited them below. Some state websites are documenting their savings and expenses within their telework policy pages, but because there are so many states without a comprehensive state plan, various agencies are reporting these amounts independently. Beyond the expenses to comply with required transitions to remote work, it is also unclear if these costs are one-time, reoccurring, or may increase with later telework expansions.

An June 2020 [article](#) reported that the **Georgia** Juvenile Justice Commission saved $206,000 by eliminating phone charges on more than 400 devices, such as tablets that were unused. Replacing landlines for staffers with state-issued cellphones saved $570,000. Closing 18 community offices, including probation sites, saved another $663,000. The goal was to save where feasible without affecting the employees with furloughs and layoffs. Additionally, a department attorney reported that working from home resulted in savings of "wear and tear" on her car by eliminating her 35-minute commute that could sometimes take her an hour. She also saved money on gas and on food from eating out for lunch less often.

A June 2021 [article](#) reported costs in **Kansas** to allow remote work totaled at least $8.8 million and ranged from a "$72 camera purchase in the Kansas Water Office to $1.4 million in audiovisual equipment for the Kansas Judicial Branch to ensure court hearings could be livestreamed." Federal funds assisted in purchasing over $1 million in computers and additional funds bought software licenses and webcams.

Beyond technical costs of equipment, many agencies found unexpected results from their remote workers. An employee the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts discovered going back to the office made her less productive. She said, "at the time, it seemed like the productive thing to do,"

but she found she spent more time talking to people in the office than time spent being disrupted by her dogs while at home.

Since August 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau has asked about telework in their Household Pulse Survey and the results show households with teleworkers between August and December of 2020 experiencing better health. Of those in "poor health," 4 in 5 (79.9%) reported that no one in their household switched to telework or changed their telework habits, compared to just over half (52.4%) of those in "excellent health," but these health benefits have also been proven without the influence of COVID-19.

In July 2021, an article reported survey results from the **Ohio** Civil Service Employees Association. Of the surveyed members, 80% preferred telework over returning in-office. Additionally, the president stated, "telework allows workers to avoid office politics and take fewer sick days." The association represents the bulk of state employees. The survey showed telework provides environmental and economic benefits, as well as an increase in employee productivity and wellbeing.

An article in June 2021 reported preliminary data from the **Michigan** Department of Civil Service showing state employee use of sick time decreased to 19% from 22.3% in the 2019 fiscal year. The article states three possible explanations. Due to reduced social interaction, employees could be experiencing less illness or due to more work flexibility, employees may have fewer appointments that require sick leave use. The last possibility is that there's a different wellness threshold for in-office work compared to working from home. Workers may not feel well enough to get ready for a commute to work, but could be comfortable working from their laptops.

(Egan, Paul. "State Worker Sick Days Fall 19% in Pandemic: Remote Work Played Big Part in the Reduction, Experts Say." *Detroit Free Press,* Jun 15, 2021)

In 2016, **Tennessee** implemented an Alternative Workplace Solutions (AWS) program and telework policy when asked to reduce the state's office space use. The Tennessee legislature provided $18.5 million to implement AWS which allowed departments to upgrade communications infrastructure and digitize records. A 2018 article reported the progress. Internal Tennessee surveys reported that 60% of managers say employees have improved productivity and 80% of employees say they have a better work-life balance. The average employee was estimated to be saving $1,800 a year on gas. Agencies using the program also recorded a 37% reduction in sick leave use. Another 2019 article, written by the Department of General Services commissioner at the time, reported that the decrease in sick-leave usage resulted in many employees delaying their retirement plans and that the flexible workplace will attract younger generations. The 16 participating departments have reported savings of $5 million dollars in agency real estate costs by reducing office space by 375,000 total square feet. The AWS program influenced Utah's Remote Work program and many state plans have incorporated leadership training similar to models from Tennessee.

Summary of Positive Impacts from Remote Work Strategies for State Government		
	Benefits	**Savings**

State Employer	• Increased employee retention and attraction of new talent
	• Increase in job satisfaction
	• Increase in employee morale and productivity
	• More flexibility to adapt to emergencies and maintain operations
	• Increase in rural economies, potential for larger applicant pool
	• Decreased environmental impact
	   o Fewer greenhouse gas emissions
	   o Fewer commuters
		• Reduced office space
		   o Energy savings with less utilities costs
		   o Financial savings with less rented space
		• Reduced time spent in staff hours by converting systems online

State Employee	• Increase in job satisfaction • Improved work-life balance • Increase in morale and productivity • Increased sense of wellbeing and health • Greater access to job opportunities in state government	• Decreased transportation and vehicle expenses (e.g., cost of gas, car maintenance, public transit passes, etc.) • Decreased time spent commuting

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