

# SWAA April 2022 Updates

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11 April 2022



Latest survey wave included: March 2022

To sign up for regular results updates, please sign up [here](#).

- **Source of all data (unless noted):** Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes (SWAA), see [www.wfhresearch.com](http://www.wfhresearch.com)

- **When referring to these results please cite:**

Barrero, Jose Maria, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, 2021. “Why working from home will stick,” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 28731.

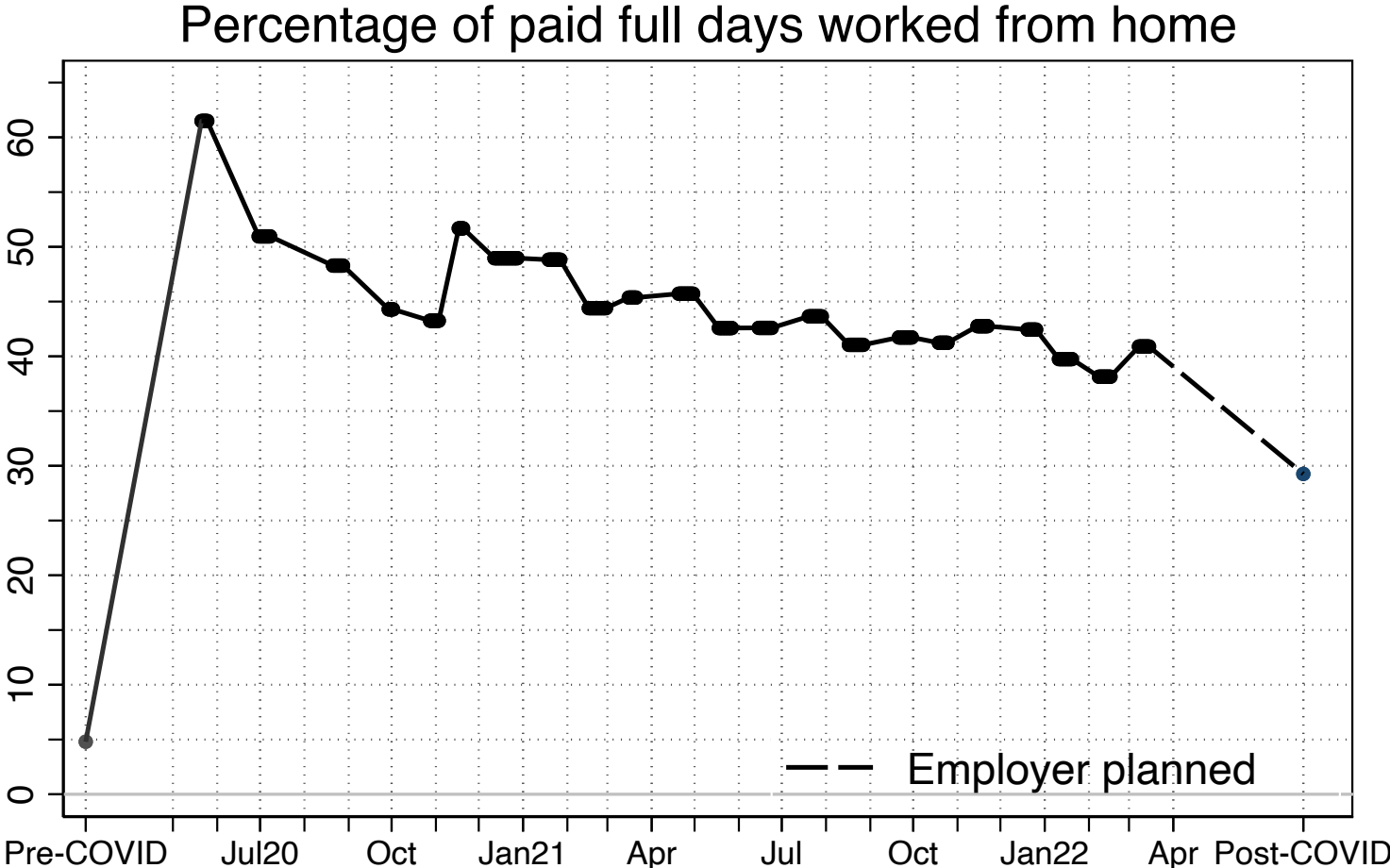
[www.wfhresearch.com](http://www.wfhresearch.com)

# Introduction & Methodology (2/3)

- **Target population:** US residents aged 20 to 64 with earnings above a pre-set floor, currently \$10k in the prior calendar year.
  - For the May 2020 to March 2021 waves the earnings floor is \$20k in 2019.
  - Between April and September 2021 we gradually moved to include individuals who earned \$10k to \$20k in 2019.
  - In 2022 we moved to an earnings floor based on the prior calendar year. So, between January and April 2022 we gradually moved from a threshold of \$10k earned in 2019 to \$10k in 2021.
  - Each survey wave goes into the field on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and data collection typically takes 10 to 12 days. Prior to 2022 we went to the field on the 3rd Tuesday.
  - Each wave collects 2,500 or 5,000 responses.
    - April 2021 and later waves collect 5,000 responses. The January and February 2022 waves collected 7,500 as we calibrated the transition from a 2019 to 2021 earnings requirement
    - Prior to April 2021 most waves collected 2,500 responses, but August 2020, December 2020, and January 2021 collected 5,000.
    - We drop respondents who “speed” through the survey, so the actual usable number of responses in each wave is somewhat less than the number we collect.

- **Representativeness:** Commercial providers field the survey on our behalf, drawing from a variety of sources for potential respondents.
  - We reweight the raw survey data to match the share of the population in a given {age x sex x education x earnings} cell in a pooled sample of 2010-2019 Current Population Survey data. See Figure 2 in Barrero, Bloom, and Davis (2021).
  - Unless noted, all statistics and charts use reweighted data.

# The share of full paid working from home days declines in early 2022 after much stability in 2021



**Source:** Responses to the questions:

- **Currently (this week) what is your work status?**
- **How many full paid working days did you work from home this [last] week?**
- **After COVID, in 2022 and later, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?"**

**Notes:** For each survey wave, we compute the average percentage of paid full days worked from home and plot it on the vertical axis against the days during which that wave was in the field on the horizontal axis. The pre-COVID estimate comes from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey and the post-COVID estimate uses data from the February 2022 wave. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

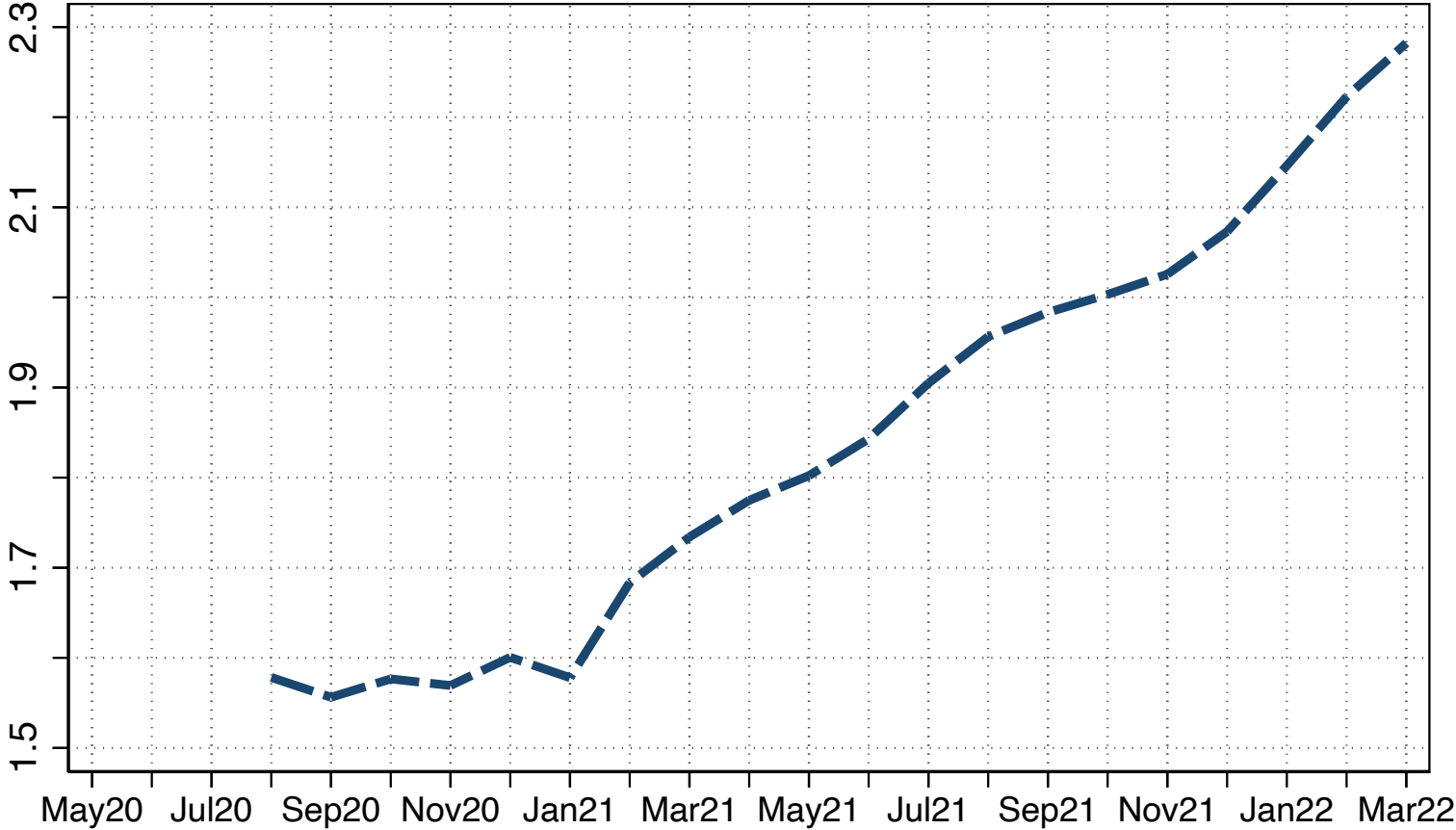
\*Pre-COVID estimate taken from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey  
 \*\*Post-COVID estimate based on the latest survey wave

**N = 64,375 (May20 to Mar22)**  
**N = 3,499 (post-COVID estimate from Feb22 data)**

# Employer plans for working from home post-COVID



### Average Days per Week Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: Employer Plans



Sample: Workers able to work from home

**Responses to the question:**  
- *After the pandemic ends, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?*

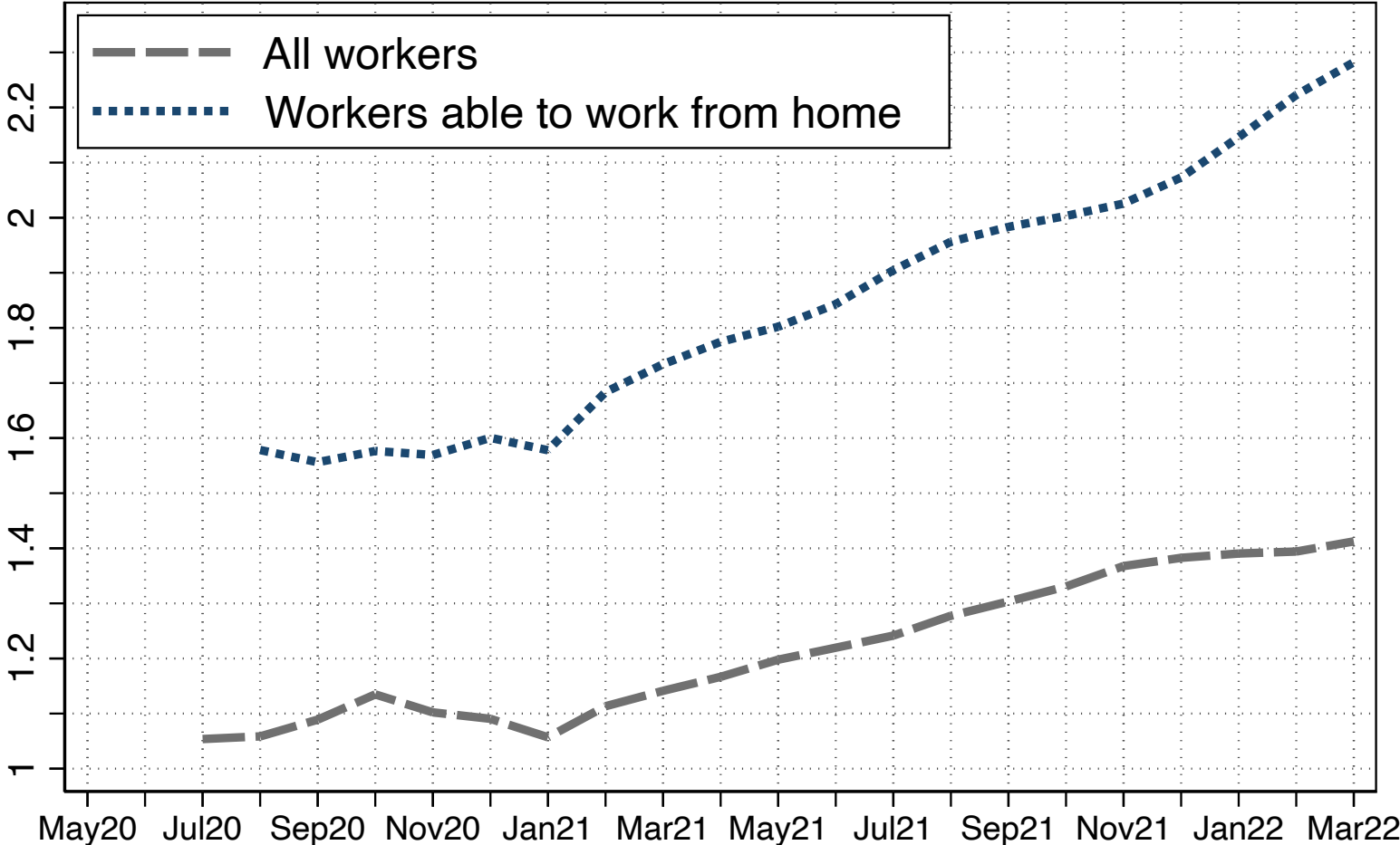
**Sample:** Data are from all SWAA waves, covering August 2020 to March 2022. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer’s plans for post-COVID WFH and who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic (thus able to work from home). We exclude respondents who report having no employer.

**N = 48,806 (able to work from home)**

# Employer plans for working from home post-COVID: all workers vs. those able to work from home



### Average Days per Week Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: Employer plans



### Responses to the question:

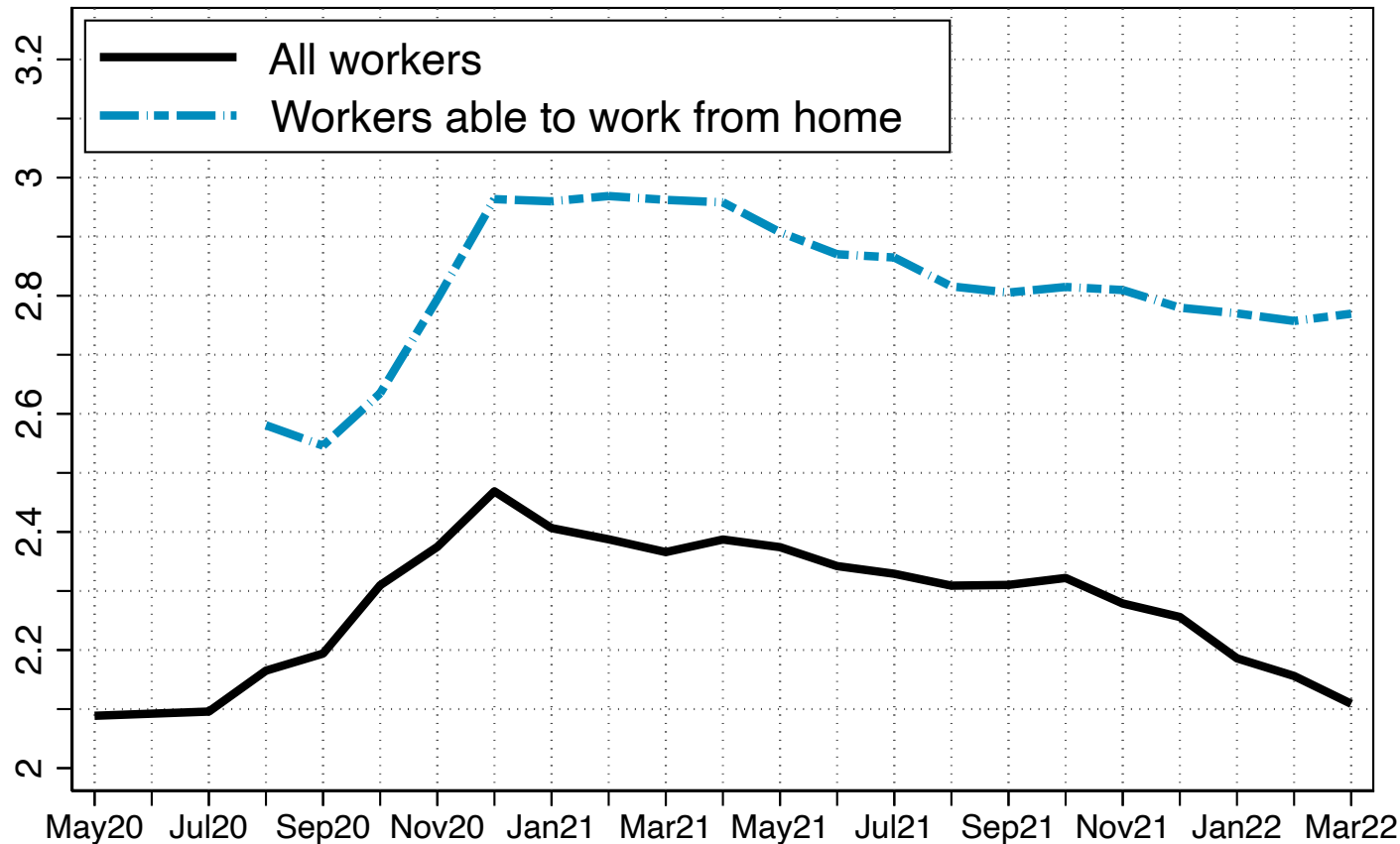
- *After the pandemic ends, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?*

**Sample:** Data are from all SWAA waves, covering July 2020 to March 2022. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer’s plans for post-COVID WFH (“All workers” series), restricting attention to workers who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic for the series labeled “Workers able to work from home.” In particular, we exclude respondents who report having no employer.

**N = 69,927 (all respondents) and 48,806 (able to work from home)**

# Enthusiasm among workers for working from home after the pandemic has waned somewhat since late 2020

Average Days per Week Working From Home  
After the Pandemic Ends: Worker Desires



## Responses to the question:

- *After the pandemic ends, how often would you like to have full paid days at home?*

**Sample:** Data are from all SWAA waves, covering July 2020 to March 2022. The sample includes all respondents who reported their desired amount of remote work for after the pandemic (“All workers” series), restricting attention to workers who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic for the series labeled “Workers able to work from home.”

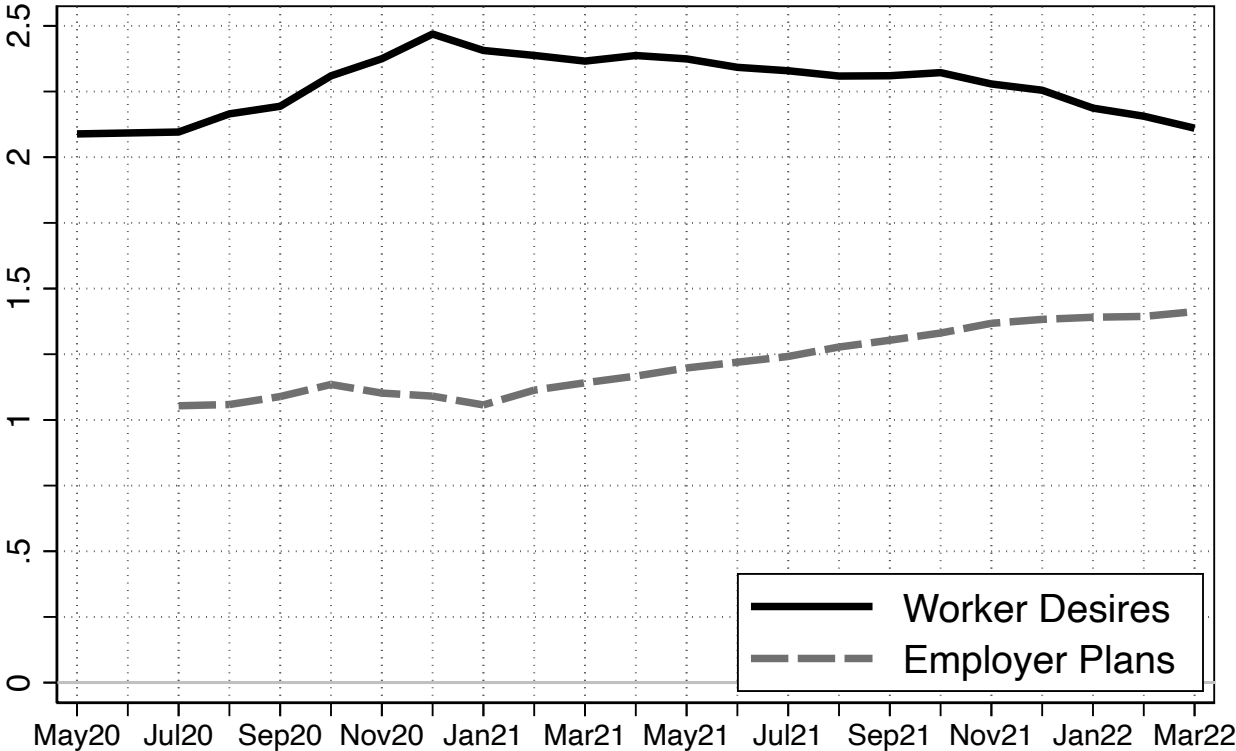
**N = 81,927 (all respondents) and 52,442 (able to work from home)**



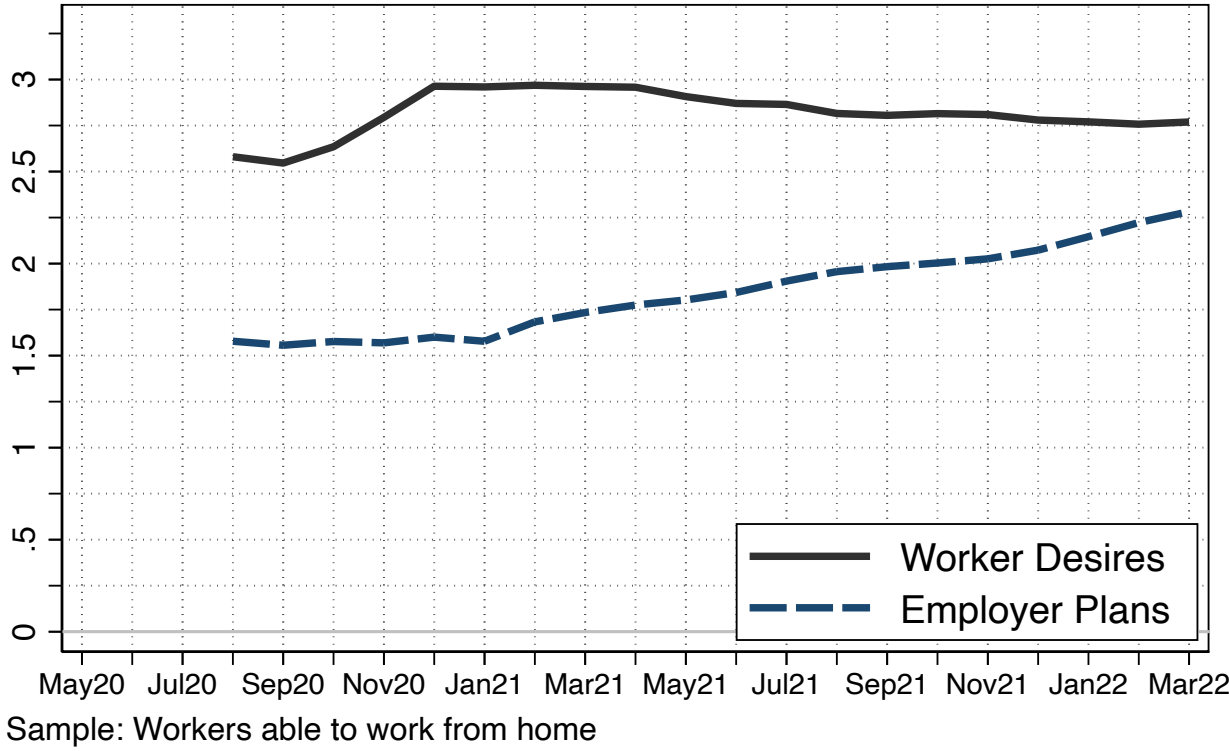
# The gap between worker desires and employer plans for post-COVID working from home has shrunk but remains large



Average Days per Week Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: All Respondents



Average Days per Week Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: Workers Able to WFH



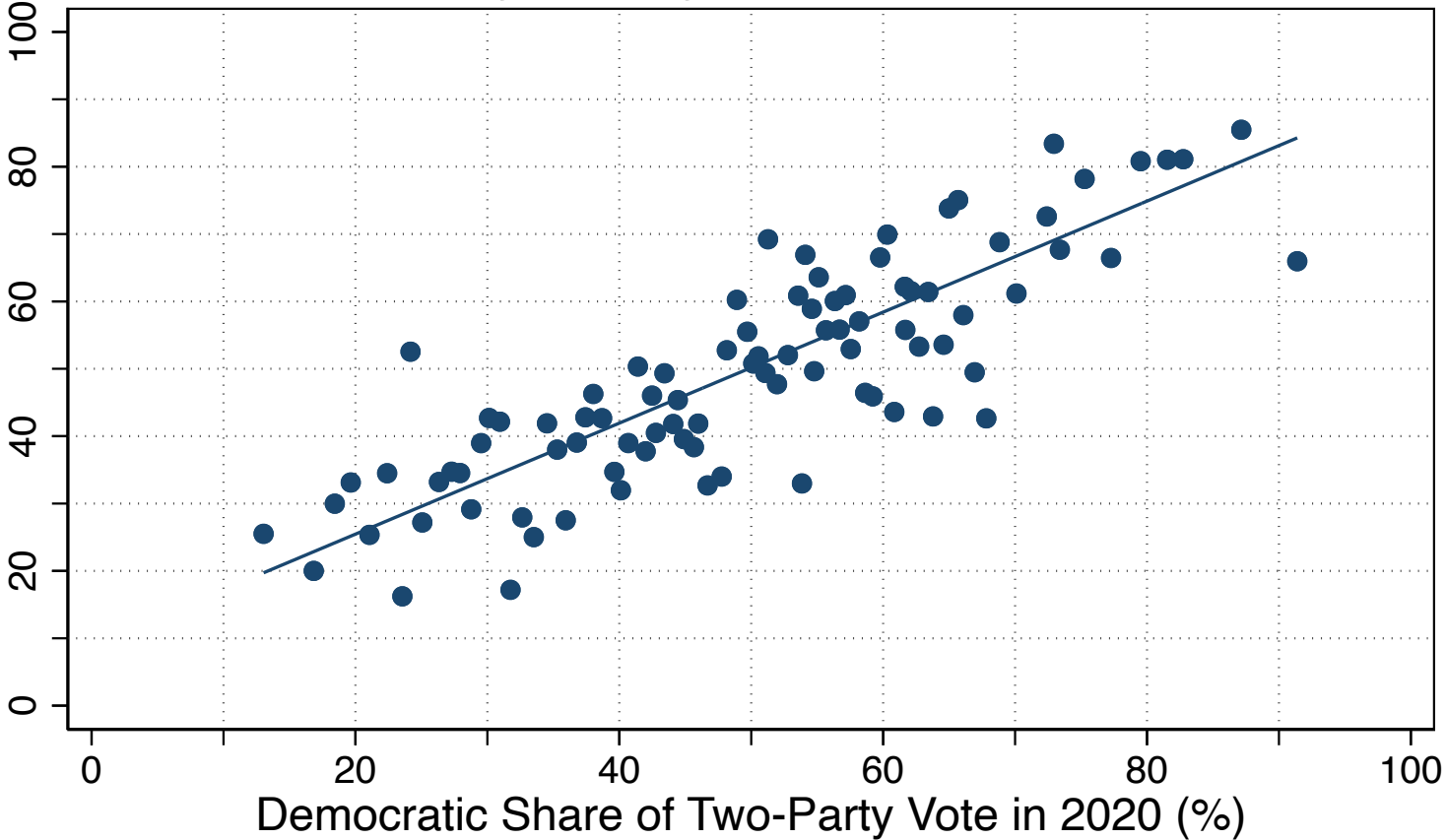
**Responses to the questions: (1) After the pandemic ends, how often would you like to have full paid days at home? After the pandemic ends, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?**

**Sample:** Data are from all SWAA waves, covering July 2020 to March 2022. The sample includes all respondents who responded to the relevant survey question (“All workers” series), but we restrict attention to workers who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic for the right chart series that include only “Workers able to work from home.” For employer plans series, we exclude respondents who report having no employer. **N = 81,927 (worker desires, all respondents) 52,442 (worker desires, able to work from home) N = 69,927 (employer plans, all respondents) and 48,806 (employer plans, able to work from home)**

# The share of 2020 Democratic votes at the county level among the two main parties is a strong predictor of reported party affiliation in our survey



### Democrats as % of Two-Party Affiliation by County of Residence



Slope of linear regression = .82 (.03).

### Responses to the question:

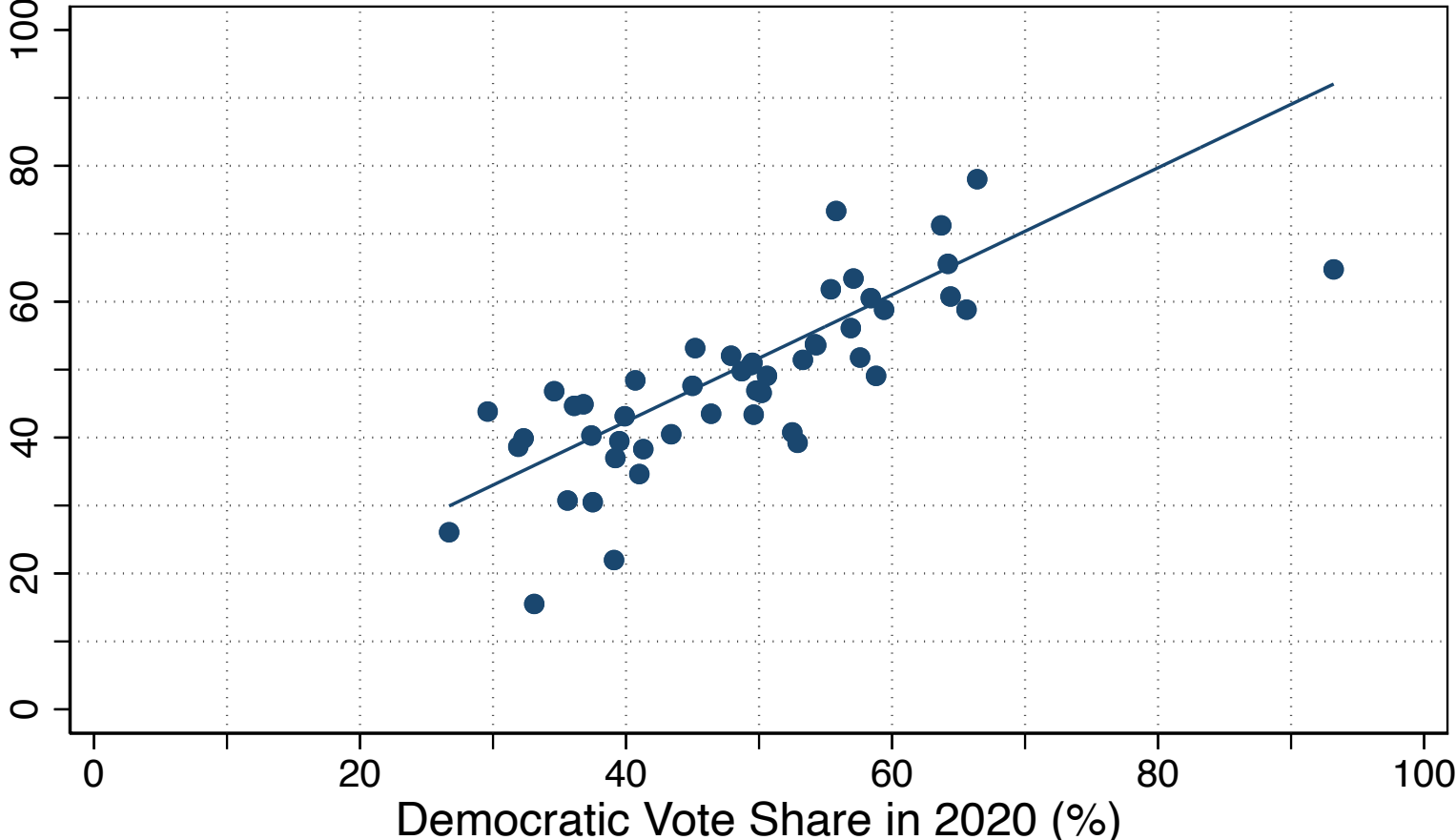
- Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?  
Strong Democrat / Not very strong Democrat / Independent, close to Democrat / Independent (neither party) / Independent, close to Republican / Not very strong Republican / Strong Republican / Others

**Notes:** Data are from the January to March 2022 SWAA waves. We re-weight raw responses to match 2010-2019 CPS pop. by {age x sex x education x earnings} cell. The figure shows the average share of Democrats affiliating with one of the two major parties (i.e. excluding *Independent (neither party)* and *Others*) for each of 100 quantiles of the county-level two-party vote share in the 2020 presidential election. Elections data are from [MIT Elections Data & Science Lab](#) N = 9,279.

# The share of 2020 Democratic votes at the state level among the two main parties is a strong predictor of reported party affiliation in our survey



### Democrats as % of Two-Party Affiliation by State of Residence



Slope of linear regression = .93 (.07).

### Responses to the question:

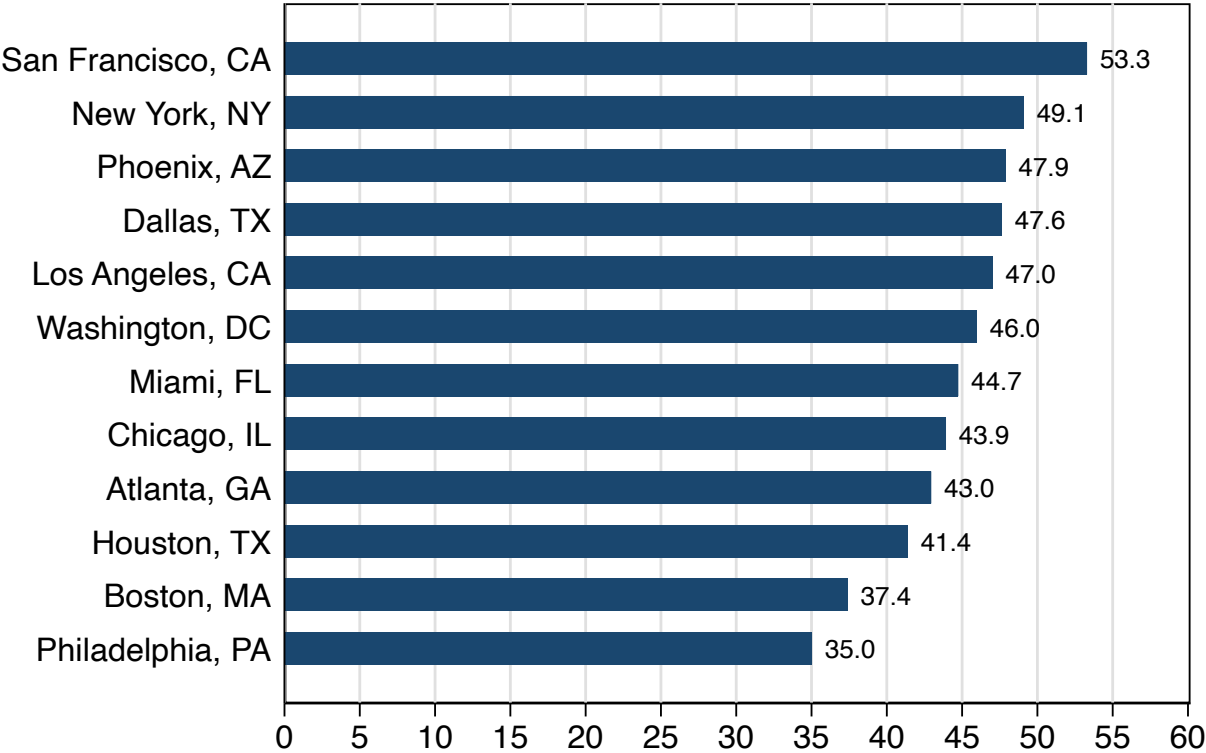
- Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?  
Strong Democrat / Not very strong Democrat / Independent, close to Democrat / Independent (neither party) / Independent, close to Republican / Not very strong Republican / Strong Republican / Others

**Notes:** Data are from the January to March 2022 SWAA waves. We re-weight raw responses to match 2010-2019 CPS pop. by {age x sex x education x earnings} cell. The figure shows the average share of Democrats affiliating with one of the two major parties (i.e. excluding *Independent (neither party)* and *Others*) against the Democrat’s two-party vote share in the 2020 presidential election, for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. **N = 9,747.**

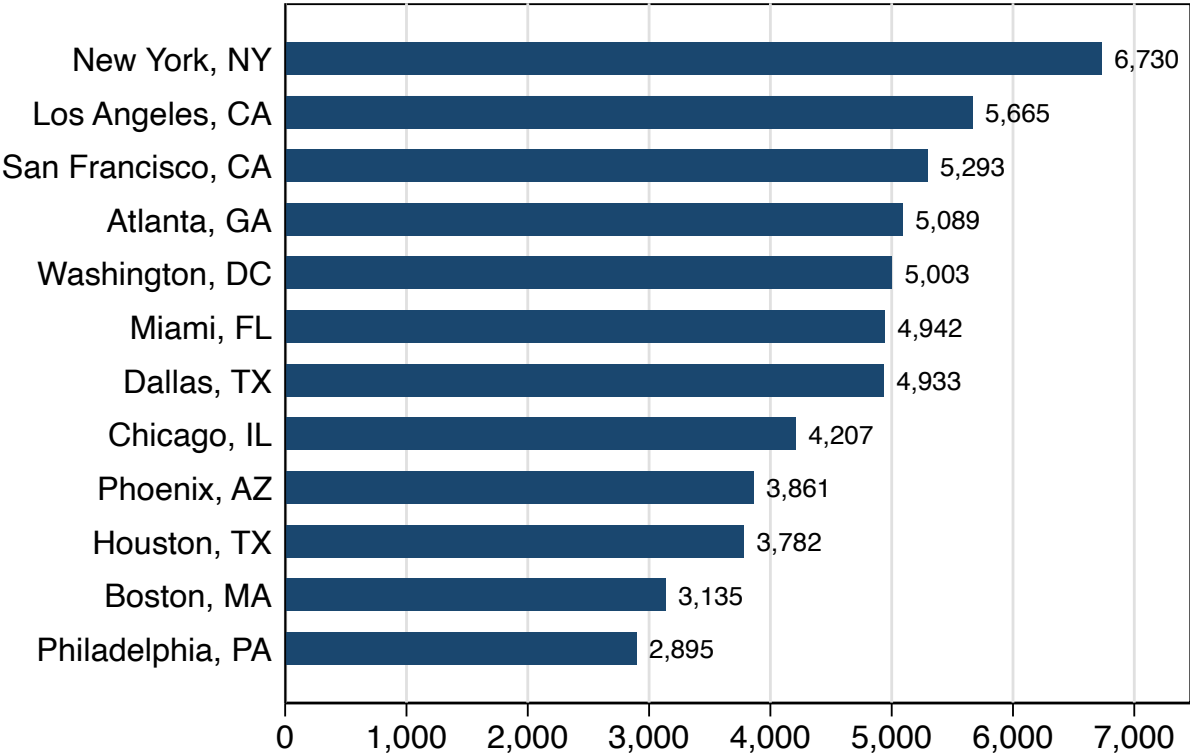
# After the pandemic ends, New York and the two major California metro areas will see the largest reductions in person-days on business premises and spending



Reduction of person days on business premises (percent) by MSA of Current Residence



Reduction in spending (\$ per person per year) by MSA of Current Residence



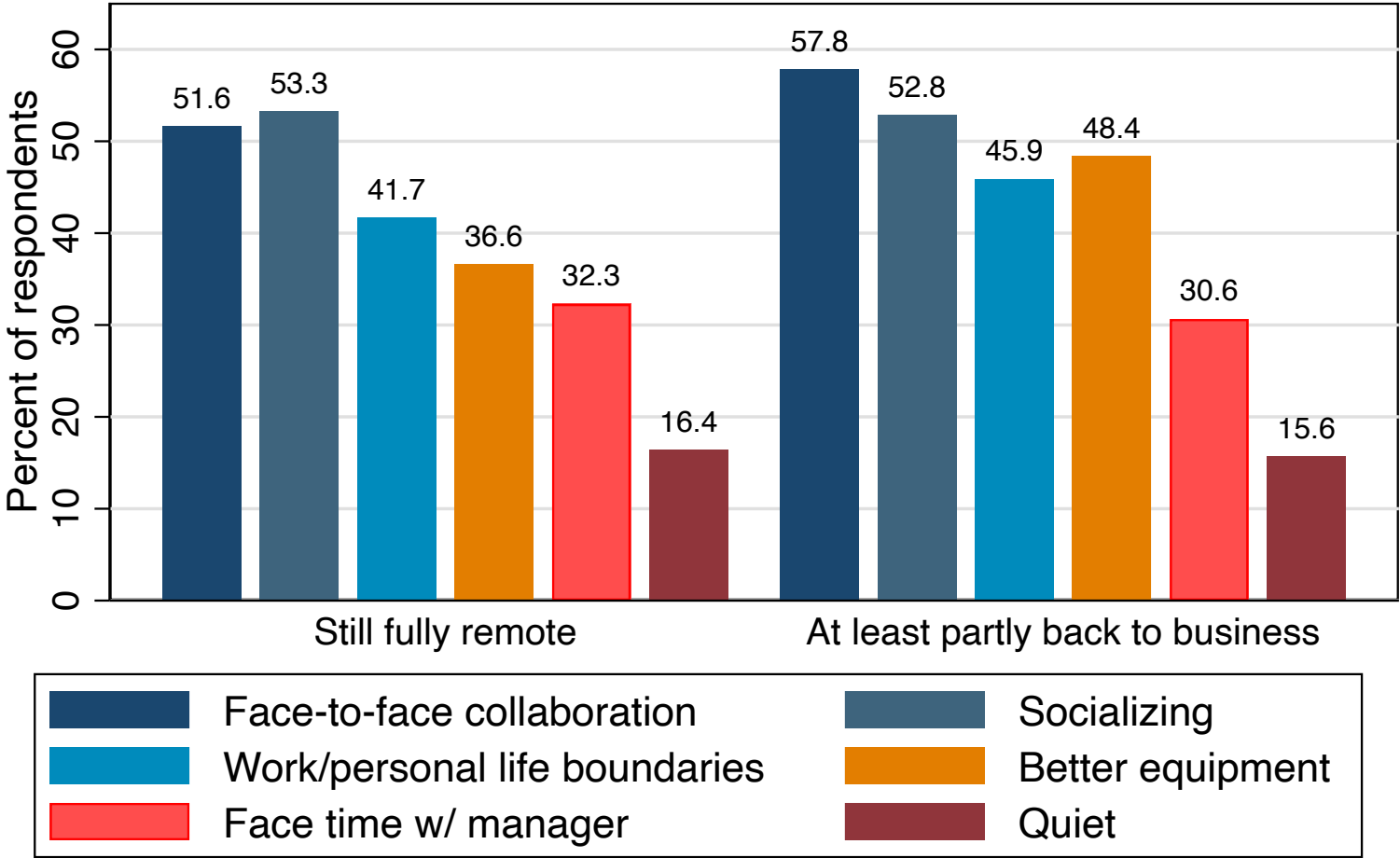
**Notes:** The sample includes workers who are able to work from home (as revealed by having done so at some point during COVID). We obtain employer plans for post-COVID working from home from the January to March 2022 SWAA waves and weekly expenditure near work from questions that asked about meals, entertainment and shopping near work in 2019, asked from July 2020 to January 2021. For each of 12 top metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) we compute the average amount of post-COVID work-from-home days employers are planning. We also compute the average *weekly expenditure near work in 2019* for each MSA. We estimate the reduction in person days on business premises as WFH plans (% of full paid working days) – 5 (%), based on our estimates of pre-COVID working from home from the American Time Use Survey). Finally, we estimate the annual loss in spending (\$ per worker per year) for each city as:  $(\text{weekly expenditure near work} * 50) * (\% \text{ reduction in expenditure})$ .

**N = 7,787 (WFH Plans reported in 2022Q1) N = 14,527 (weekly spending near work pre-pandemic)**

# Workers going back to business premises (at least partly) cite better equipment and face-to-face collaboration more often as top benefits of going into work



Question: "What are the top 3 benefits of working on your employer's business premises?"



**Notes:** The sample includes respondents to the February and March 2022 SWAA who passed the attention check questions, worked from home at some point since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and worked during the survey's reference week. We split the sample by whether workers are still 100% remote or working at least 1 day of the week on business premises. We exclude responses of "Other" benefits and allow respondents to pick fewer than three benefits total. The SWAA samples US residents aged 20 to 64 who earned \$10,000 or more in 2019.

**N = 4,563**

# References



- Barrero, Jose Maria, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, 2021. “Why working from home will stick,” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 28731.