

SWAA September 2022 Updates

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9 September 2022



Latest survey wave included: August 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

- **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

The Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes



- Monthly online survey since May 2020, >100,000 observations to date.
- We design the survey instrument.
- Target population: U.S. residents, 20-64, who earned \geq \$10K in 2019 (\geq \$20K in early survey waves). From January to March 2022, we transitioned to earned \geq \$10K in prior year.
- The SWAA is fielded by market research firms that rely on wholesale aggregators (e.g., [Lucid](#)) for lists of potential survey participants.
- After dropping “speeders” (~16% of sample), we re-weight to match 2010-2019 CPS worker shares in age-sex-education-earnings cells. Dropping those who fail attention checks (roughly another 12%) sharpens some results.
- Median response time: 7 to 12 minutes, after dropping speeders
- Results, micro data, survey instruments, and more are freely available at www.WFHresearch.com.

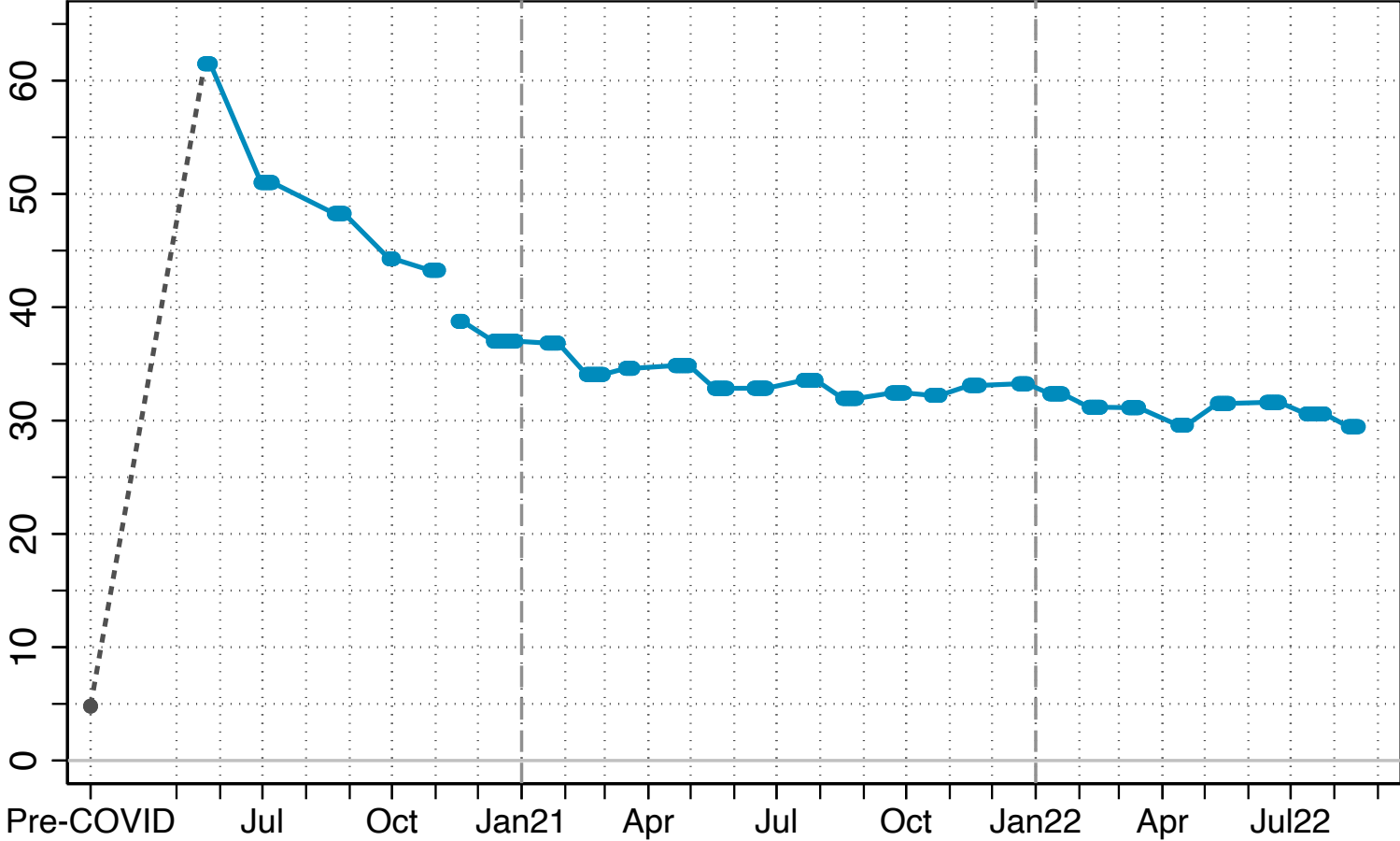
Representativeness

- By design, we focus on persons who exhibit some attachment to the workforce, as evidenced by prior earnings.
- No respondents are recruited based on an interest in our topics.
- Since respondents take the survey using a computer, smartphone, iPad or like device, we miss people who never use such devices.
- Before re-weighting, the SWAA under samples the less educated, particularly those who did not finish high school.
- Even after re-weighting, we may over sample those who are more tech and internet savvy, especially among the least educated.

Percentage of Paid Full Days Worked from Home, May 2020 to August 2022



Percentage of paid full days worked from home



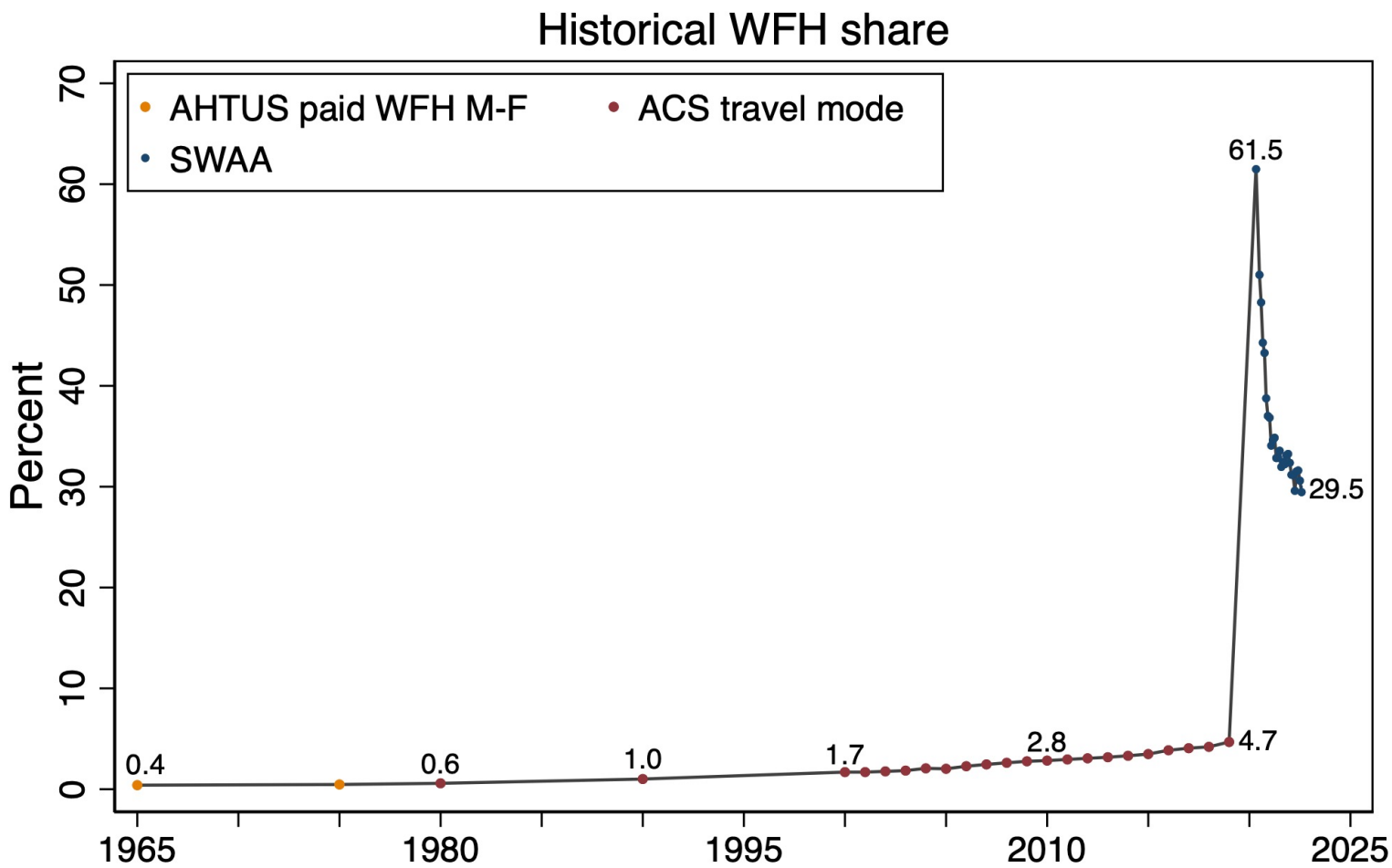
- Source:** Responses to the questions:
- **Currently (this week) what is your work status?**
 - **For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?**

Notes: For each wave, we compute the percent of paid full days worked from home and plot it on the vertical axis. The horizontal-axis location shows when the survey was in the field. Before November 2020, we asked the first question above. Since November 2021, we have asked the second question. From November 2020 to October 2021, we back-cast responses to the current question using a regression model that relates the current-question responses to the responses to another question (not shown). The pre-COVID figure is from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

*Pre-COVID estimate taken from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey
 *The break in the series in November 2020 reflects a change in the survey question.

N = 87,028

WFH doubled every 15 years pre-pandemic. The increase in WFH during the pandemic was equal to 30 years of pre-pandemic growth.



Source: Responses to the questions:

- In their time diary the respondent listed the activity "Paid work at home" for **6 or more hours**. (AHTUS)
- How did this person **usually** get to work last week? (ACS)
- For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and, if so, where? (SWAA)

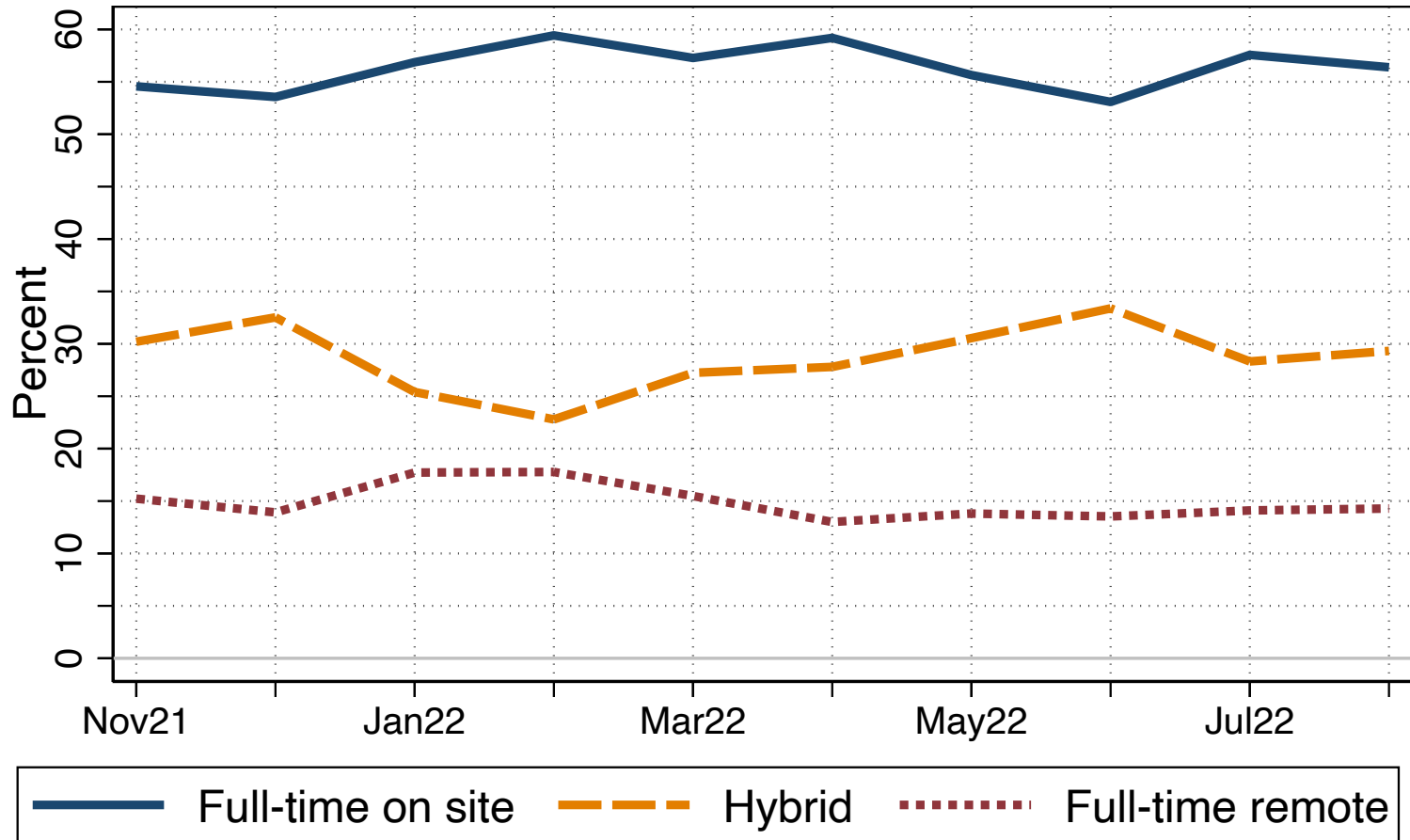
Notes: For each dataset, we compute the percent of working individuals who worked full days at home during the survey's reference period. For the AHTUS and ACS, if an individual reports usually working from home, we mark them as working from home 100% of the time. In SWAA we compute the percent of full paid days at home to account for a hybrid work schedule. Then we plot each percentage on the vertical axis. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$20,000 or more in 2019 dollars to overall population shares.

1965-1975 uses data from the American Historical Time Use Survey.
 1980-2019 uses data from American Community Survey.
 May 2020 - August 2022 uses data from the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes.

As of June 2022: ~15% of Full-Time Employees are Fully Remote, ~55% are Full-Time on Site, ~30% are in a Hybrid Arrangement



Current Working Arrangements: Full-time Employees



Source: Responses to the questions:
 - For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?

Notes: For each wave, we compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey's reference week. Then we plot each percentage on the vertical axis. The sample covers the November 2021 to August 2022 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

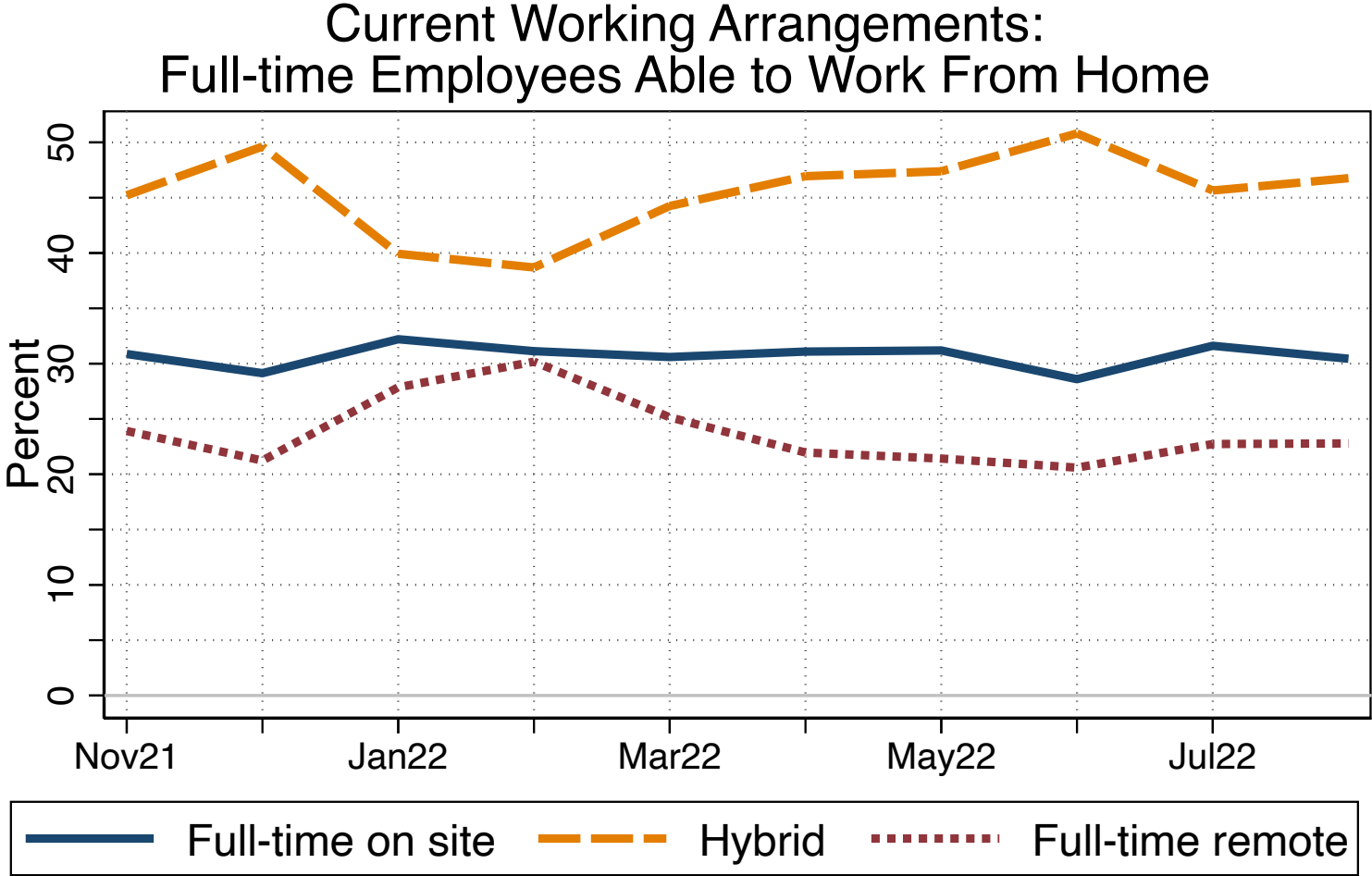
*The sample includes wage and salary employees who worked 5 or more days during the survey reference week.

N = 30,177

But hybrid dominates when we zoom in on workers who able to work from home



Source: Responses to the questions:
 - For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?



Notes: For each wave, we compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey’s reference week. This version of the chart focuses on respondents who are able to work from home. Then we plot each percentage on the vertical axis. The sample covers the November 2021 to August 2022 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

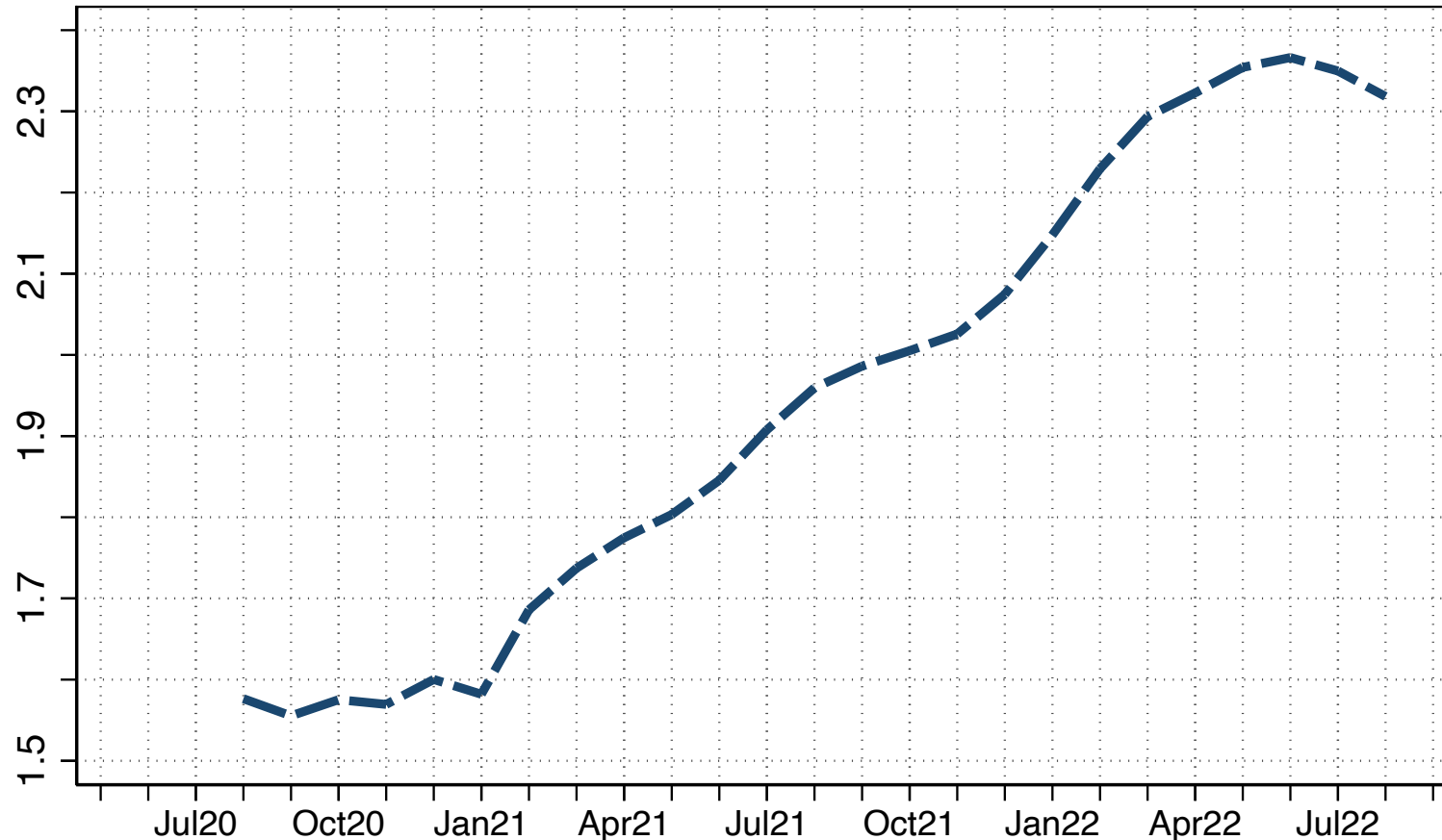
*The sample includes wage and salary employees who are able to work from home and worked 5 or more days during the survey reference week.

N = 22,309

Employer Plans for WFH post-COVID are between 2.3 and 2.4 Days per Week (for persons able to work from home) and Stabilizing



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?*

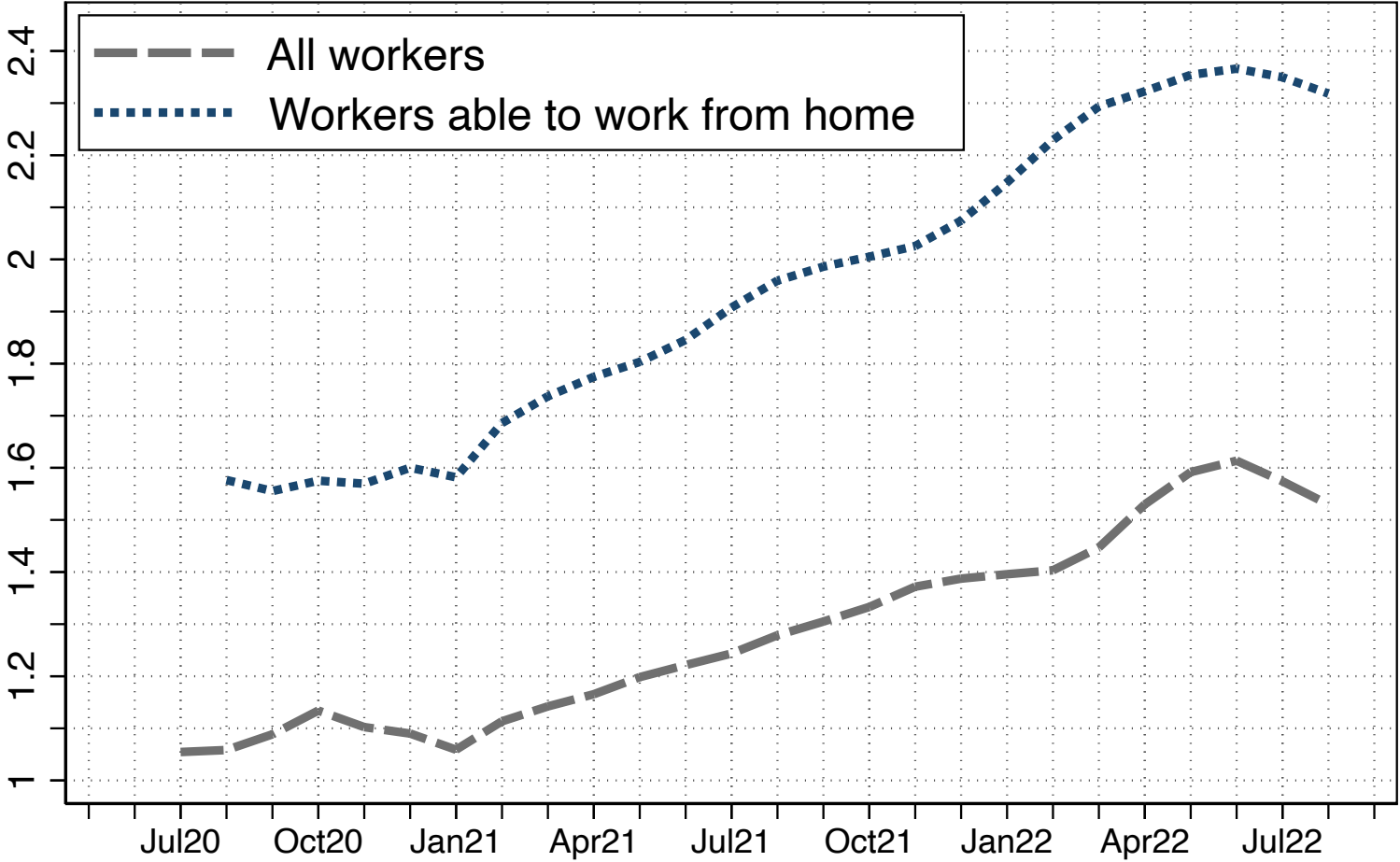
Sample: Data are from all SWAA waves, covering August 2020 to August 2022. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer's plans for post-COVID WFH and who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic (thus able to work from home). We exclude respondents who report having no employer. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 67,691 (able to work from home)

Employer plans for Full Paid Days Worked from Home after the Pandemic



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?*

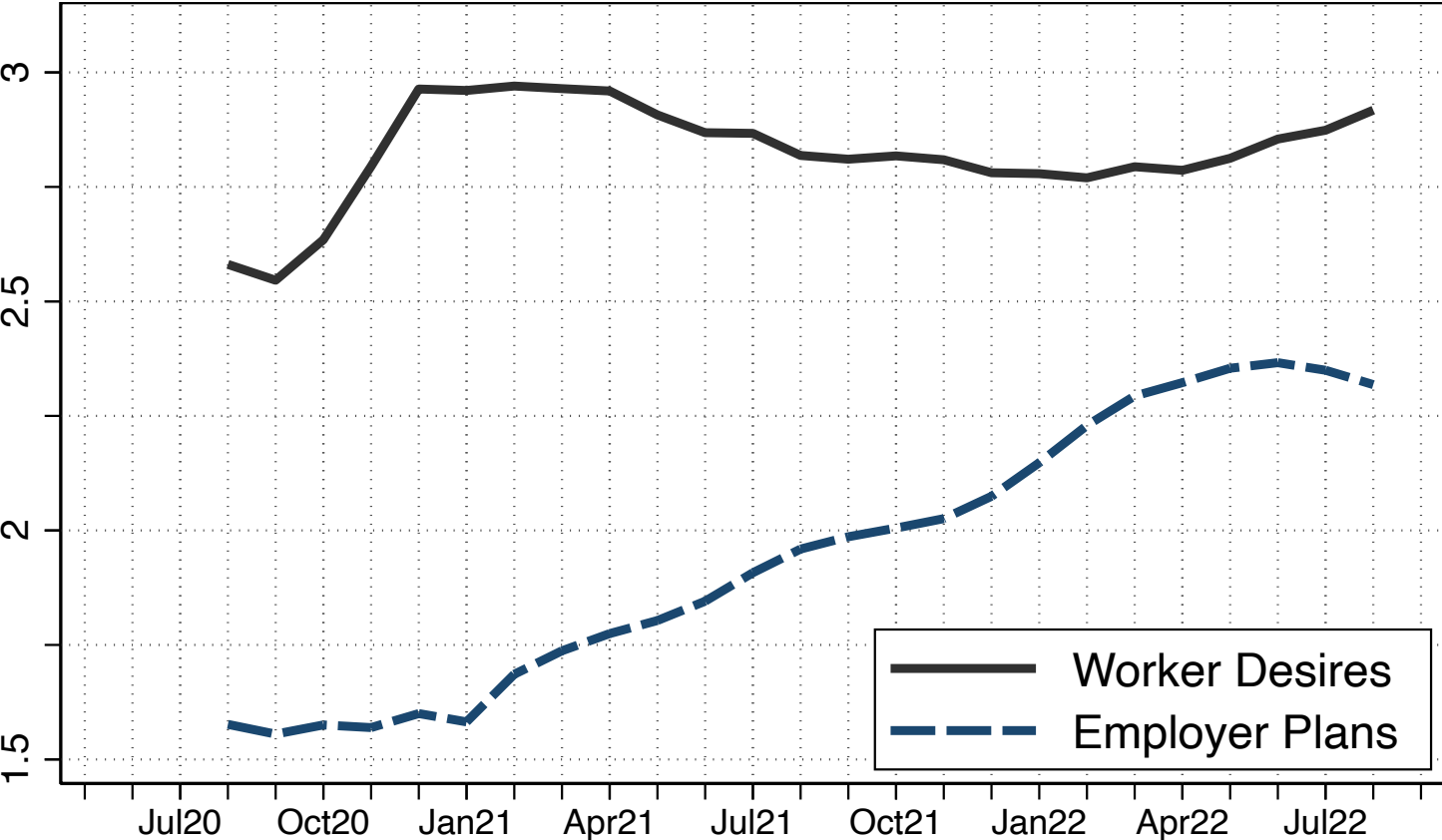
Sample: Data are from all SWAA waves, covering July 2020 to August 2022. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer’s plans for post-COVID WFH (“All workers” series), restricting attention to workers who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic for the series labeled “Workers able to work from home.” In particular, we exclude respondents who report having no employer. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 96,138 (all respondents) and 67,691 (able to work from home)

For Workers Able to Work From Home, the Gap Between Their Desired Amount and Their Employer's Plans for Post-COVID Working From Home Continues to Shrink



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



Sample: Workers able to work from home

Responses to the questions:

- **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 August 2020 to August 2022. The sample includes all respondents who responded to the relevant survey and have work-from-home experience during the pandemic. For the employer plans series, we exclude respondents who report having no employer.

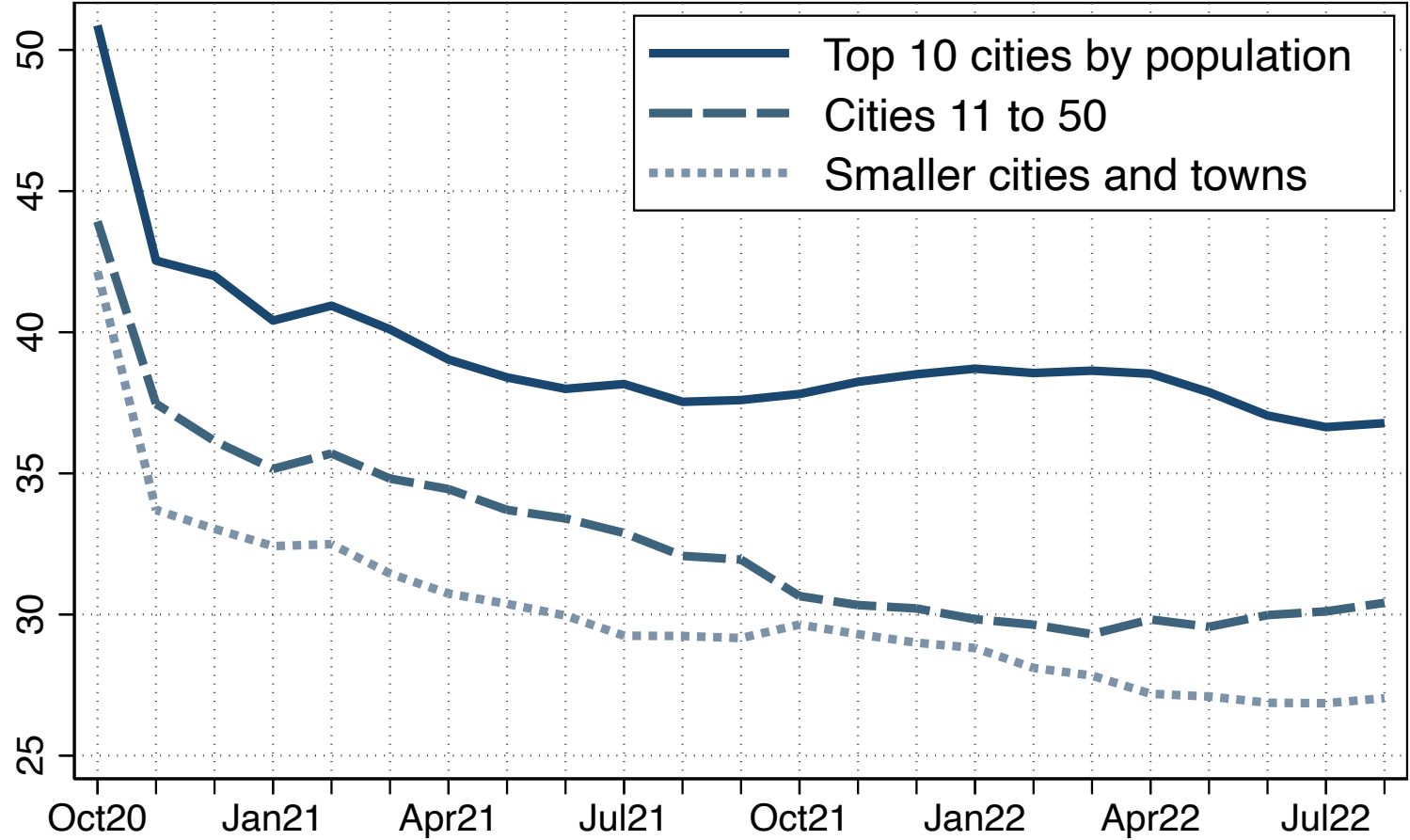
N = 67,691 (employer plans, able to work from home)

N = 72,905 (worker desires, able to work from home)

Working From Home is Much More Common in Major Cities than in Smaller Cities and Towns



Percent of paid full days worked from home



*We define cities using Combined Statistical Areas and use the location of the respondent's current job.

Source: Responses to the questions:
 - **Currently (this week) what is your work status?**
 - **For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?**

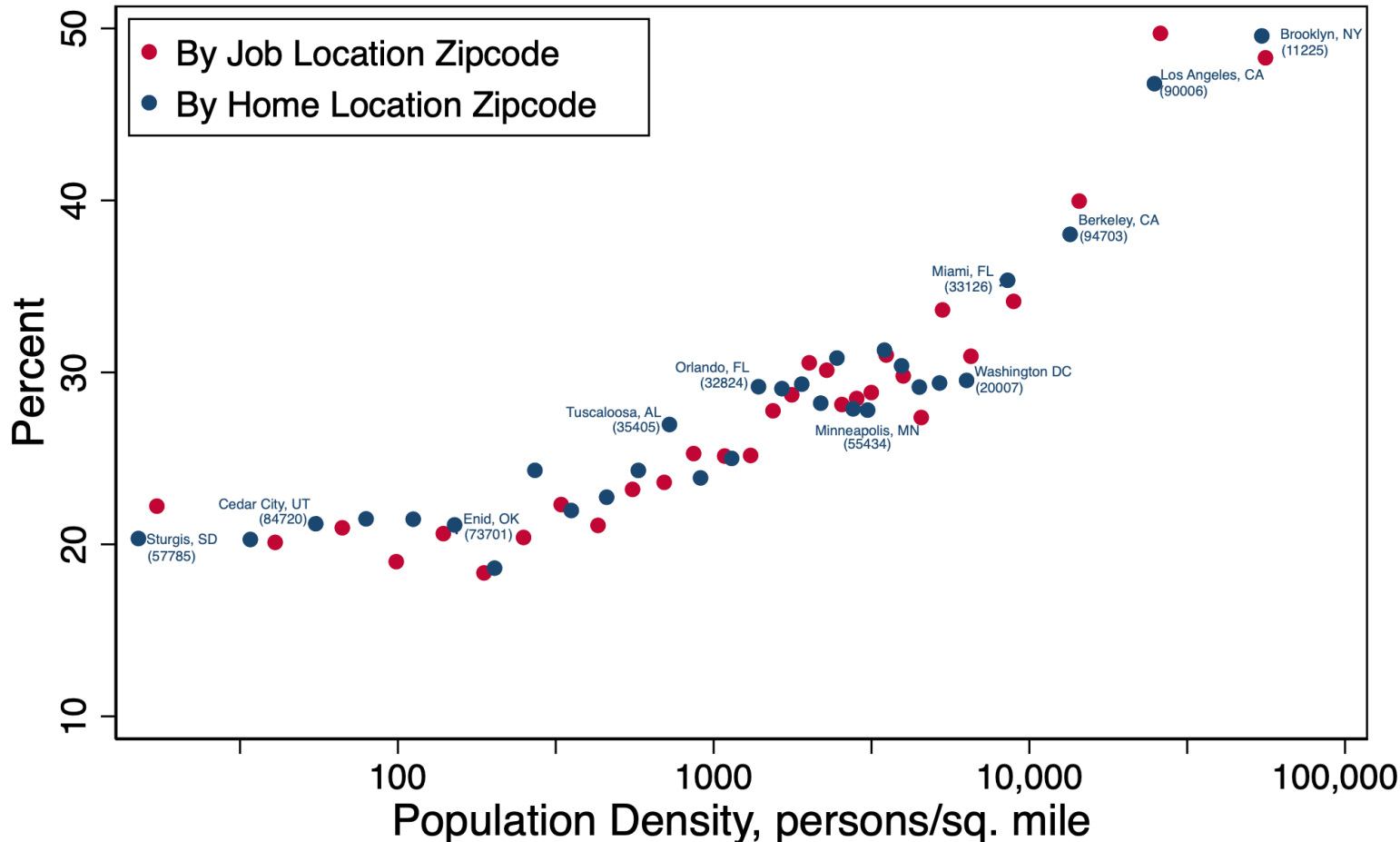
Notes: The chart plots 6-month moving averages where available and 3-month moving averages prior to November 2020. For each wave, we compute the percent of paid full days worked from home and plot it on the vertical axis, after sorting respondents into cities (i.e., Combined Statistical Areas) by the location of their current job's business premises. Before November 2020, we asked the first question above. Since November 2021, we have asked the second question. From November 2020 to October 2021, we back-cast responses to the current question using a regression model that relates the current-question responses to the responses to another question (not shown). We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 81,863

Employer Planned Work From Home is Higher in More Densely Populated Areas



Binscatter Employer Planned WFH share



Source: Response to the question:

- **Currently (this week) what is your work status?**
- **For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?**

Notes: This chart pools data from January 2021 to August 2022 SWAA waves and splits the observations into 30 equal size groups by zip code population density. Then we plot the mean percent of paid full work from home days and mean population density for each group. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 dollars to overall population shares.

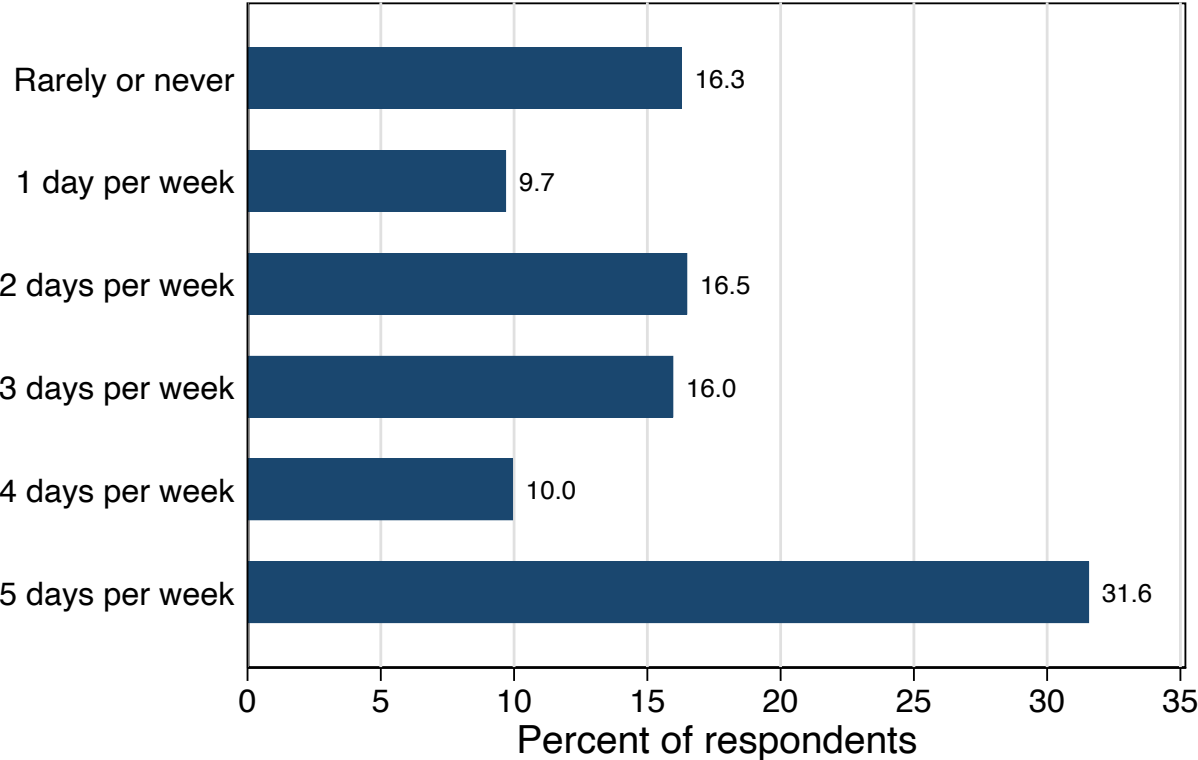
N = 66,815

Weighted to match Current Population Survey.
Data pooled from January 2021 - August 2022.

Workers who are able to work from home want more full-time remote and less full-time in-person work than their employers are willing to offer

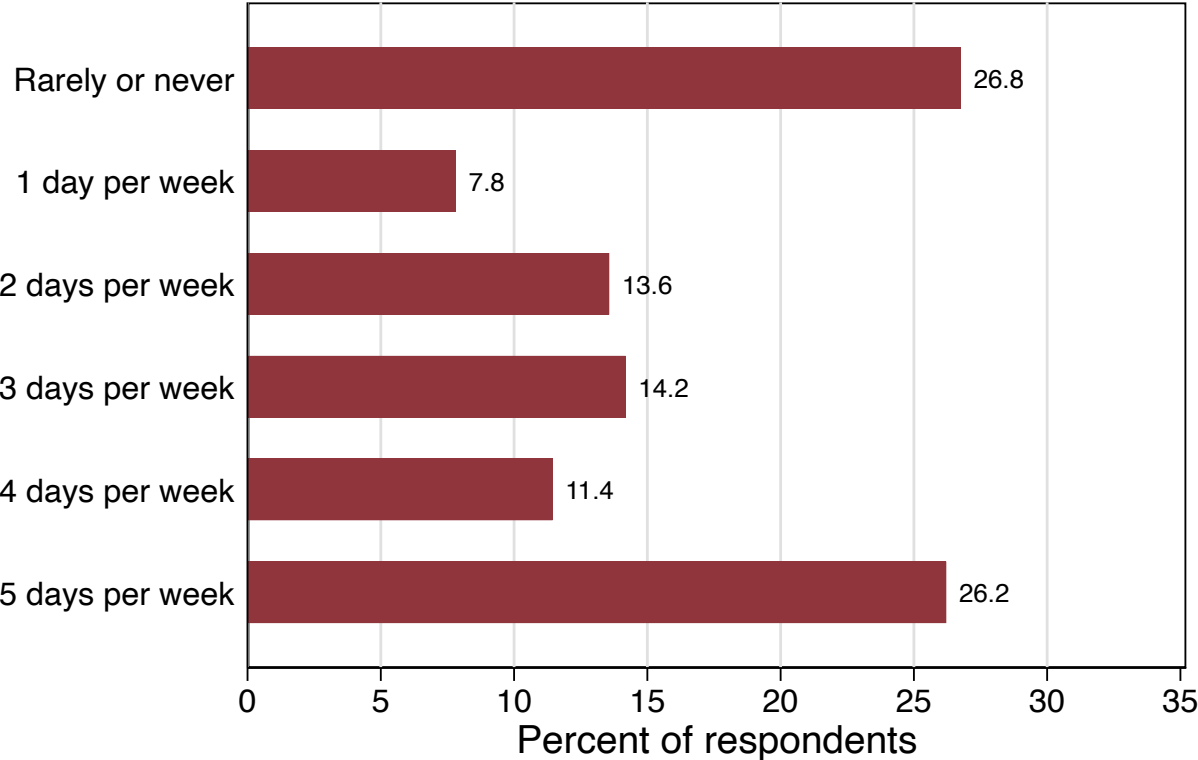


Worker desired amount of post-COVID WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 8223

Employer planned amount of post-COVID WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 7380

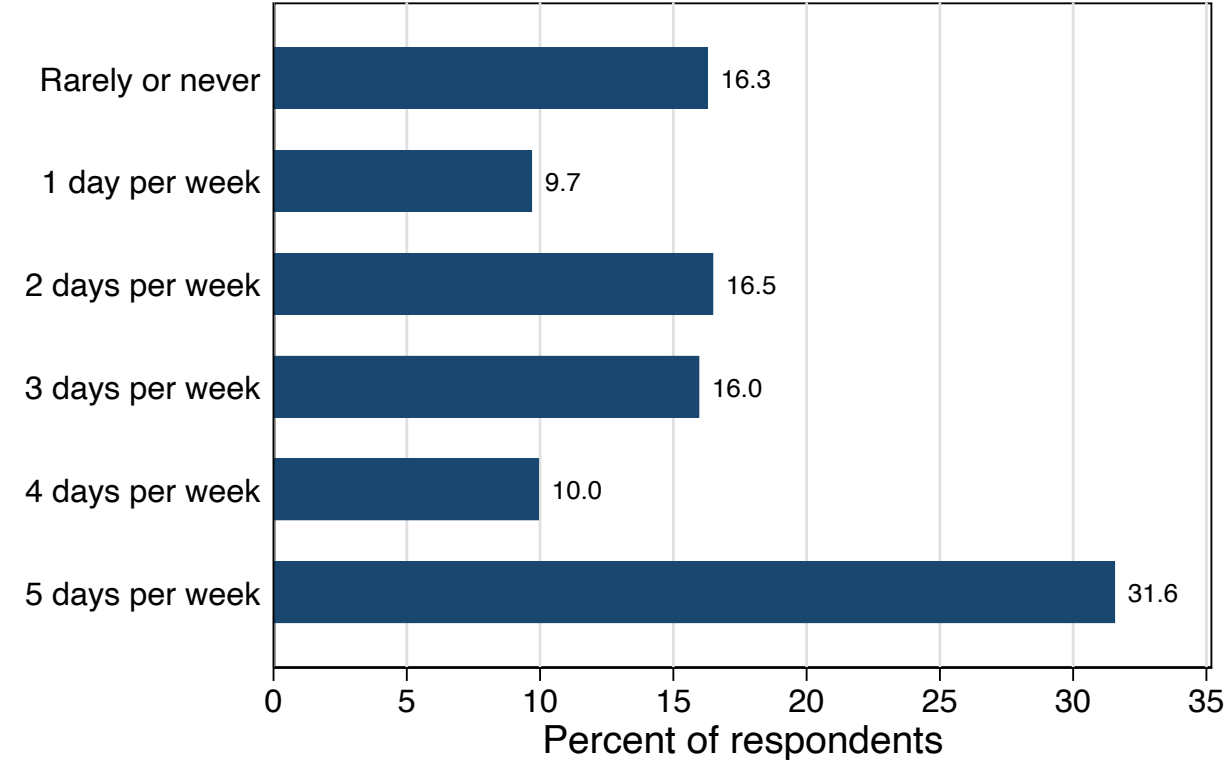
Responses to the questions: *As the pandemic ends*, how often would you **like to** have paid workdays at home? *As the pandemic ends*, how often **is your employer planning** for you to work full days at home?

Sample: Data are from the June to August 2022 SWAA waves. The sample includes full-time wage and salary employees (i.e. who worked 5 or more days during the survey reference week) who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic and pass the attention-check questions. The chart on the right excludes respondents who report having no employer or who say their employer has not given them a clear post-pandemic plan. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

Workers who are able to work from home want more full-time remote and less full-time in-person work than their employers are currently offering

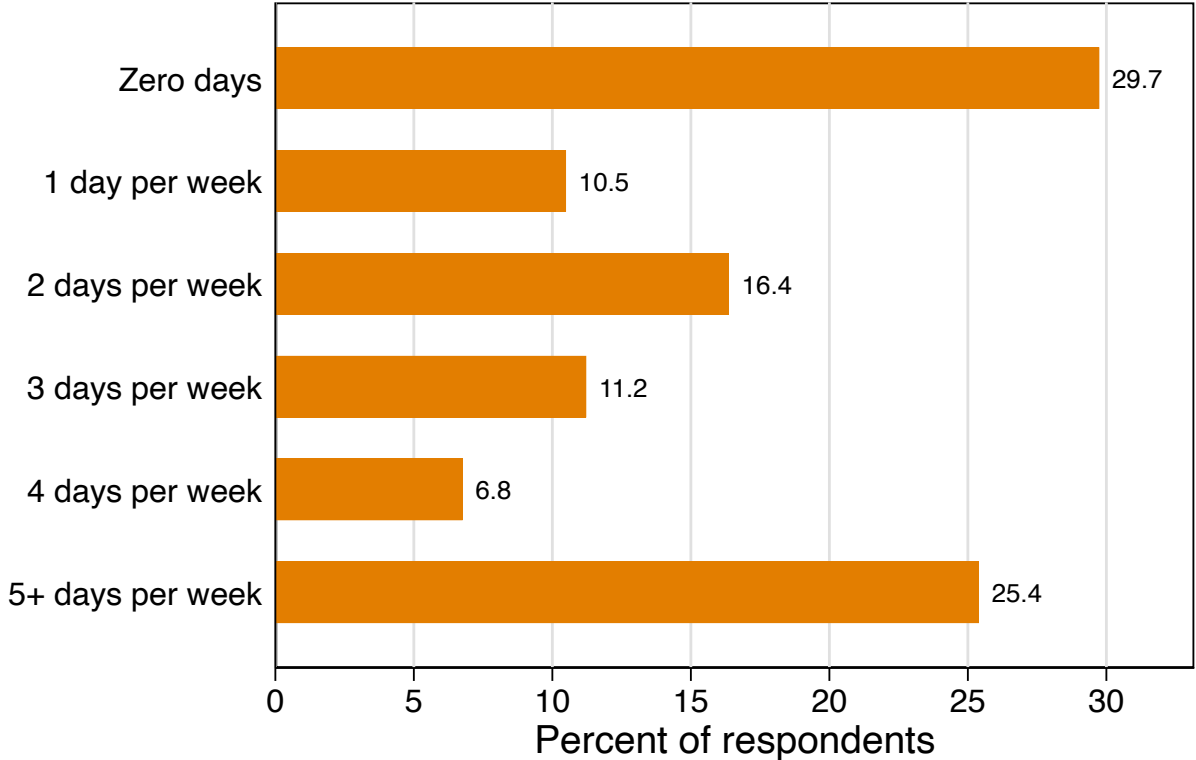


Worker desired amount of post-COVID WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 8223

Current amount of post-COVID WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 7894

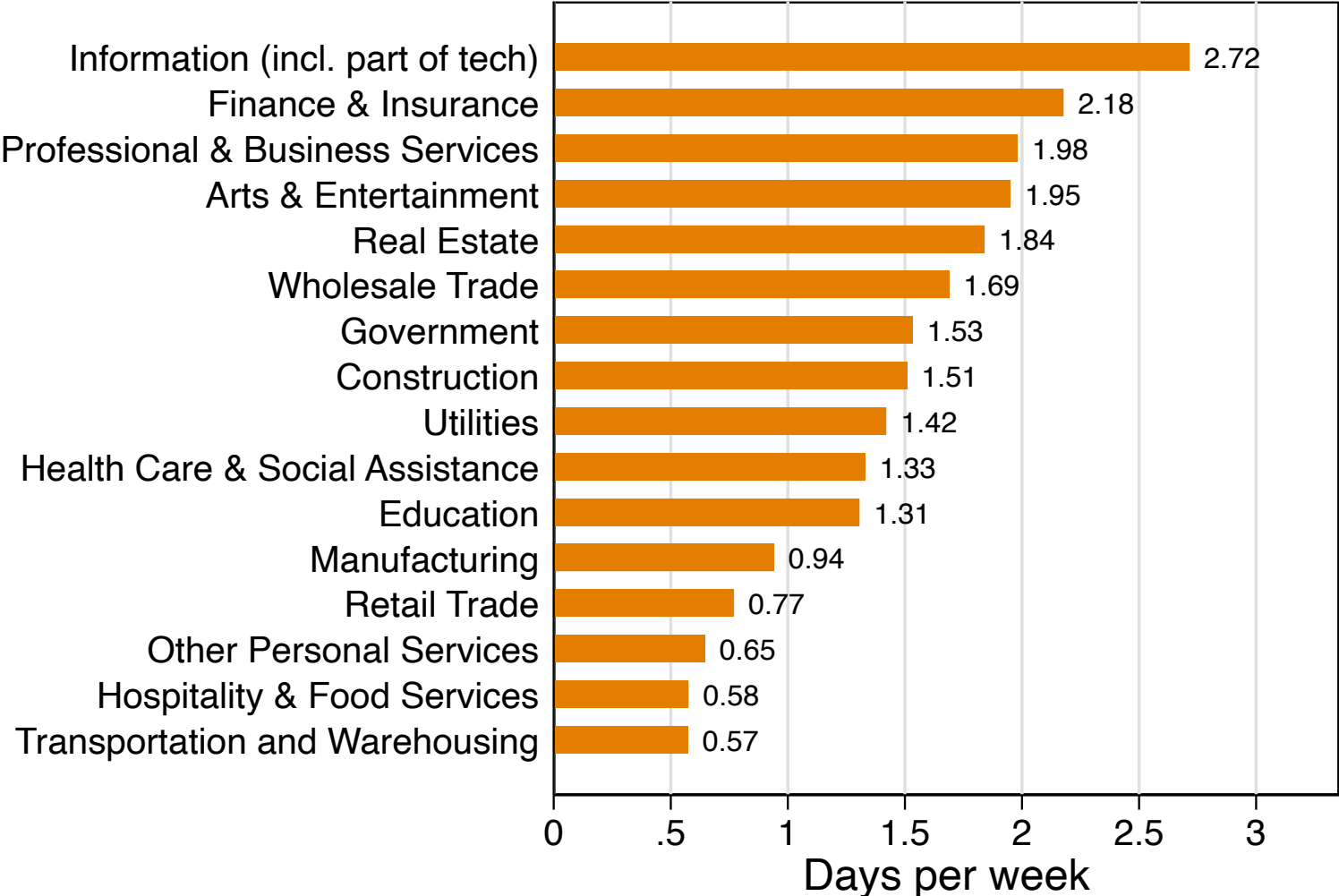
Responses to the questions: *As the pandemic ends*, how often would you **like to** have paid workdays at home? *For each day last week*, did you **work a full day (6 or more hours)**, and if so **where**?

Sample: Data are from the June to August 2022 SWAA waves. The sample includes full-time wage and salary employees (i.e. who worked 5 or more days during the survey reference week) who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic and pass the attention-check questions. Numbers for “5 days per week” in the right chart include responses for 6 or 7 full days worked from home. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

Current levels of working from home are highest for the information, finance, and professional and business services sectors



Current working from home: All wage and salary employees



Responses to the question:
 - For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?

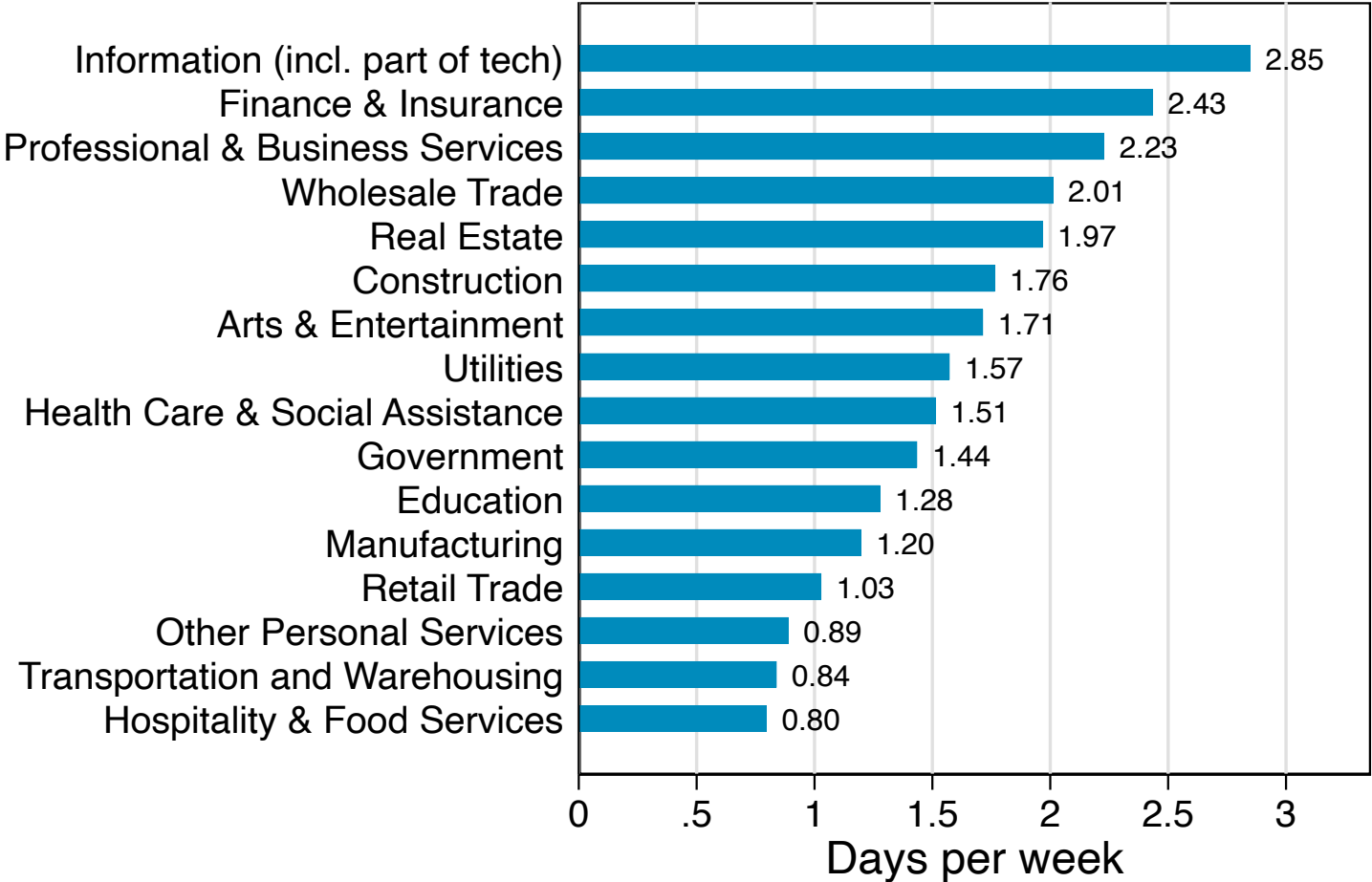
Sample: Data are from the April to July 2022 SWAA waves. The sample includes all wage and salary employees who pass the attention-check questions. We exclude mining due to insufficient observations and agriculture to focus on non-farm jobs. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 13,662

Post-COVID employer plans for working from home are highest for the information, finance, wholesale, and professional and business services sectors



Employer plans for post-COVID working from home:
All wage and salary employees



Responses to the question: *As the pandemic ends*, how often would you like to have paid workdays at home?

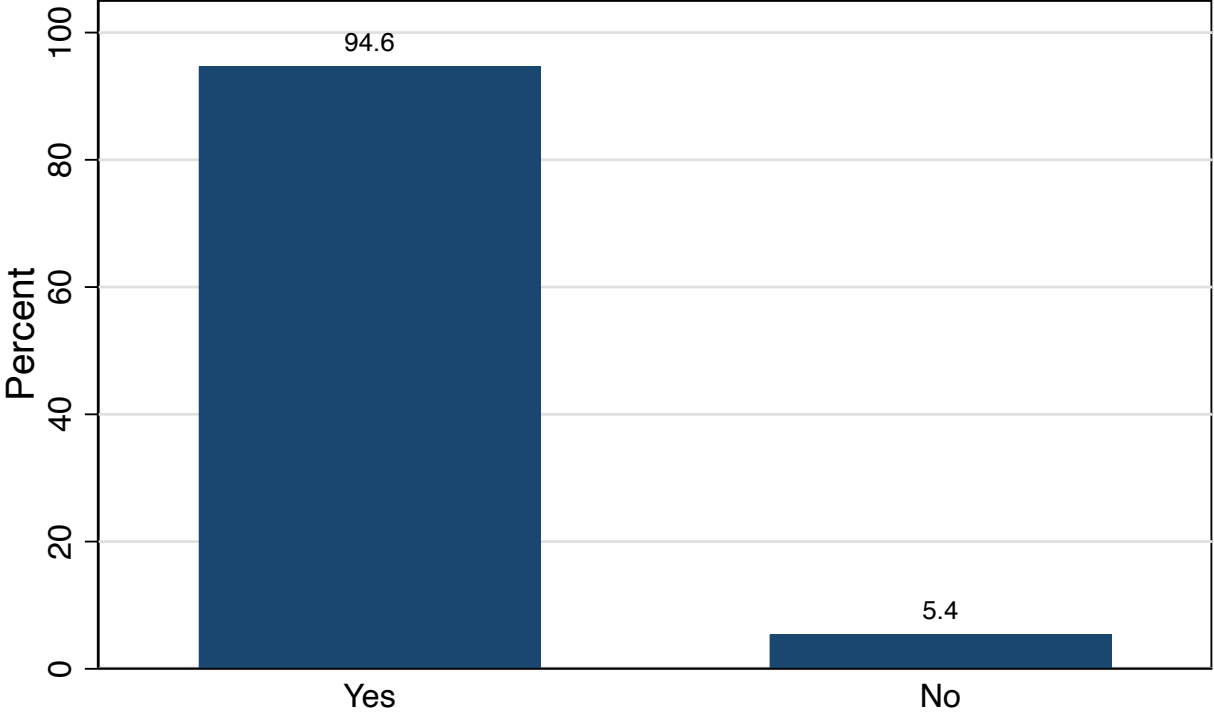
Sample: Data are from the June to August 2022 SWAA waves. The sample includes wage and salary employees who pass the attention-check questions. We exclude mining due to insufficient observations and agriculture to focus on non-farm jobs. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 13,634

Most employees who can work from home are coming into work as many days as their employer requests. Non-compliance is more severe when employers ask for more days.

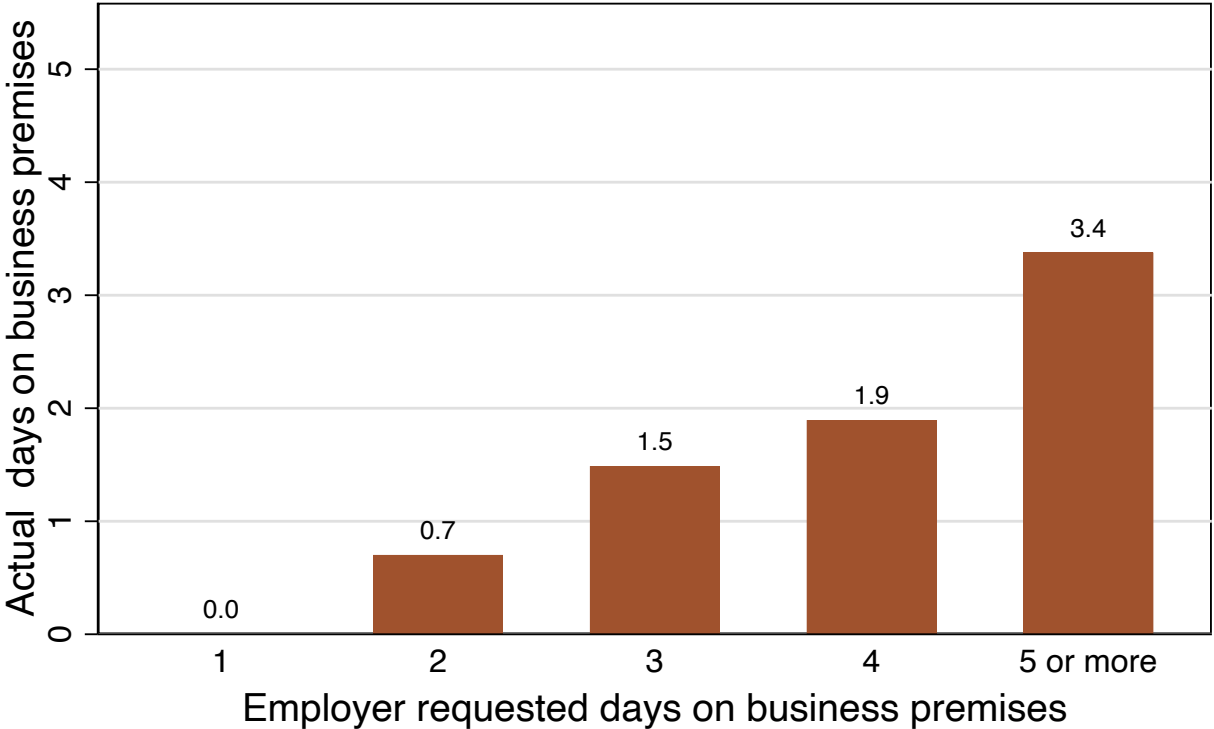


Last week, did you come into work as many days as your employer wanted you to come in?



*Sample: Wage/salary employees who are able to work from home.

When and how much are workers playing 'hooky'?



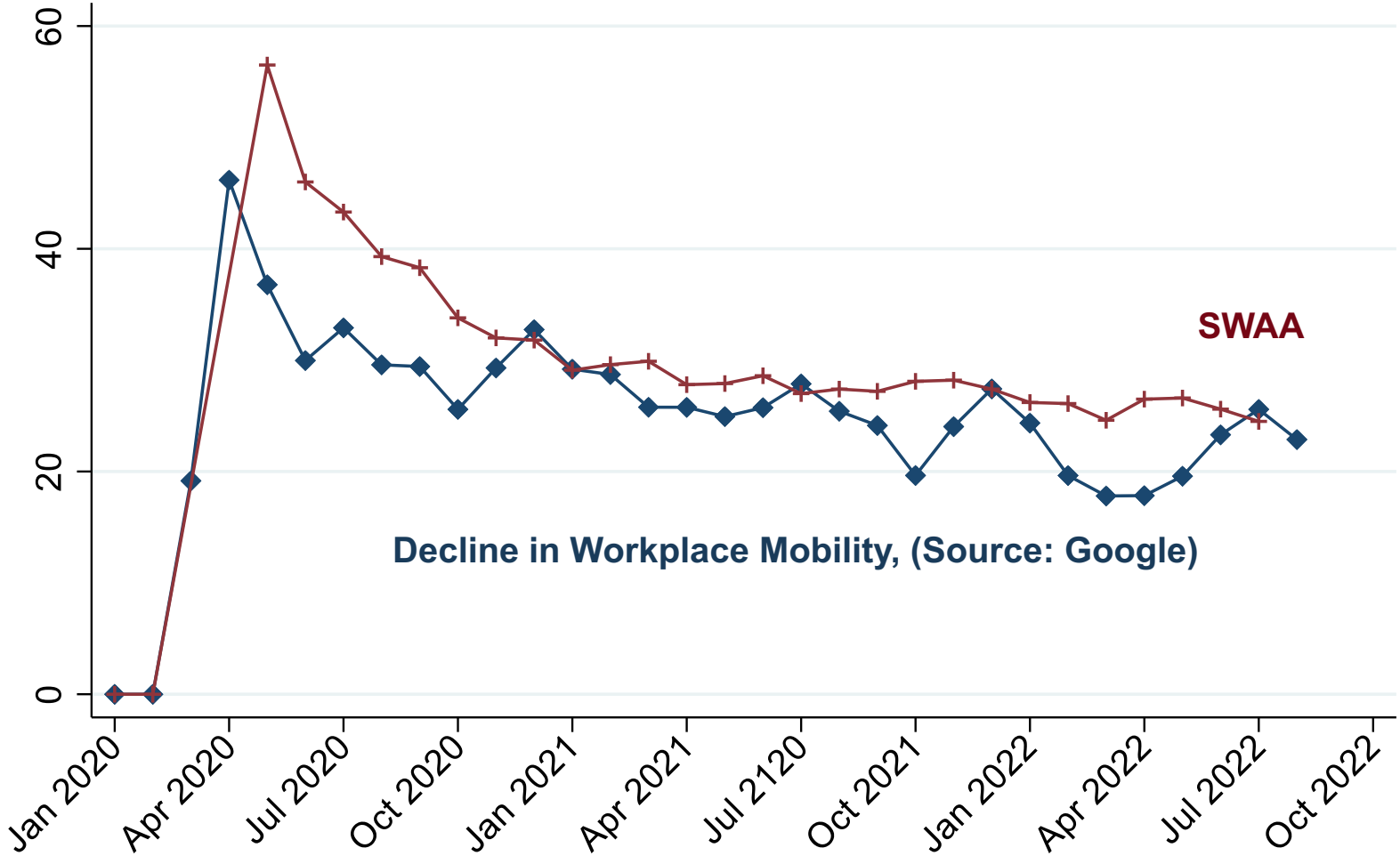
*Sample: Wage/salary employees who came into work fewer days than requested and are able to work from home.

Notes: Data are from the June to August 2022 SWAA waves. The sample includes wage and salary employees who pass the attention-check questions. We exclude mining due to insufficient observations and agriculture to focus on non-farm jobs. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings. The figure on the right is based on responses to the question: **“Last week, how many days: Did you come into work? Did your employer want you to come into work?”** N = 12,850 (left). N = 582 (right)

Our monthly SWAA data on the increase in working from home relative to January 2020 align with drop



Indicators of % increase in WFH



Source: Google Workplace Cellphone Mobility Data from <https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/> measured as the daily deviation of workplace trips from the January 3 to February 6, 2020 average (reported here as a monthly average). SWAA is the amount of full paid working days done from home from home based on the the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes from www.wfhresearch.com minus the pre-pandemic estimate based on the American Time Use Survey as reported in Barrero, Bloom, and Davis (2021).

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.