

SWAA September 2023 Updates*

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4 September 2023



Latest survey wave included: August 2023

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* Many thanks to Mert Akan for excellent research assistance.

Source of Data and Citation

- **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, >200,000 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 the prior year. As of July 2023, we also now developed a dataset for 2022 and later that does not impose an earnings requirement.
- 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.

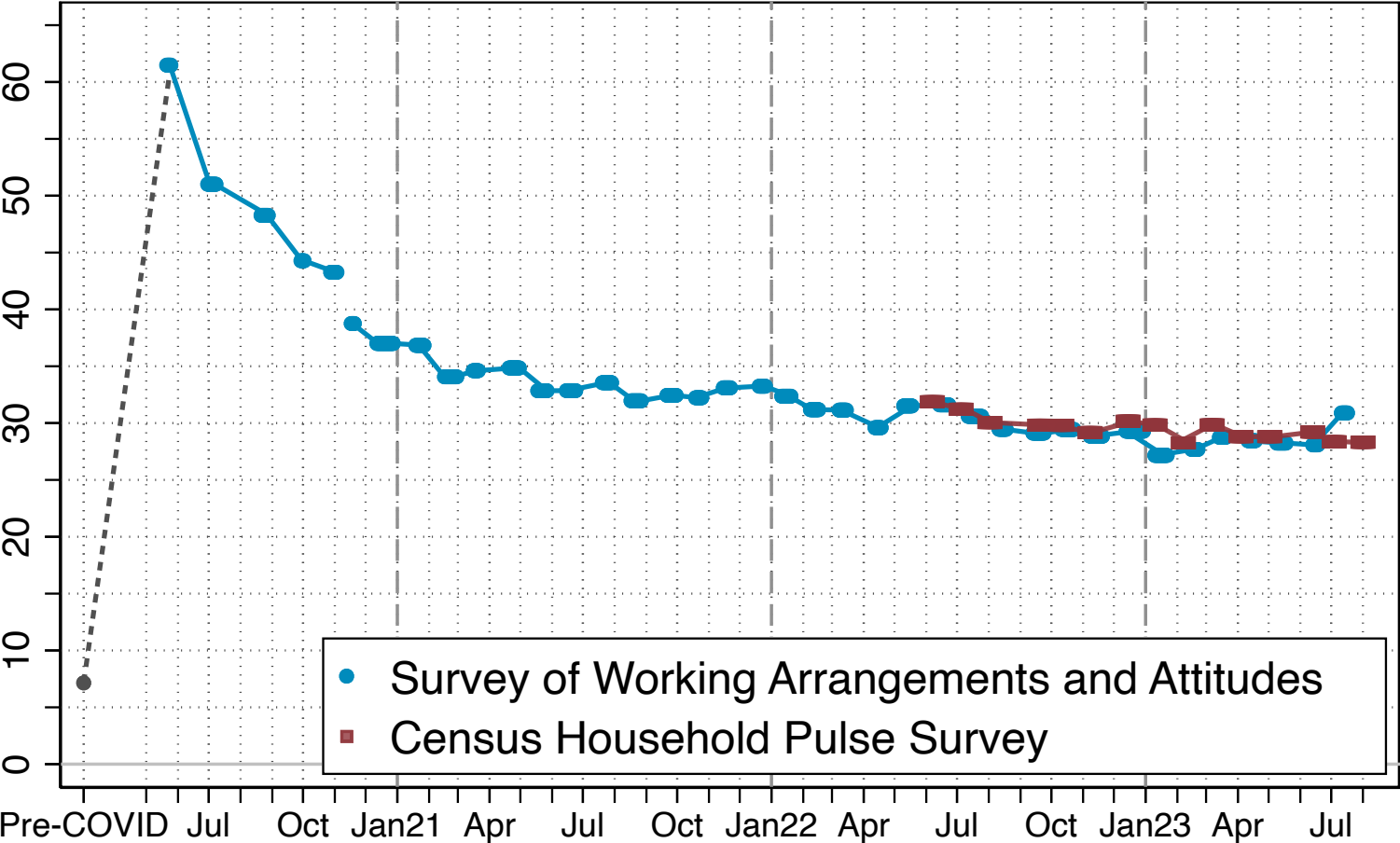
Representativeness

- By design, we focus on persons who exhibit some attachment to the workforce, as evidenced by prior earnings. When noted, some results using 2022 and later data do not impose an earnings requirement.
- 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.

Days Worked from Home Tick Upwards In July 2023, Likely Due to the July 4th Holiday



Percentage of paid full days worked from home



*We estimate the pre-COVID rate using the 2019 American Time Use Survey

*The break in the series in November 2020 reflects a change in the survey question.

Source: Responses to the questions:

- **Currently (this week) what is your work status?** (SWAA)
- **For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?** (SWAA)
- **In the last 7 days, have you...teleworked or worked from home?** (HHP)

Notes: For each wave, we compute the percent of paid full days worked from home in the SWAA and Household Pulse Survey (HHP) and plot it on the vertical axis. The horizontal-axis location shows when the survey was in the field. The pre-COVID figure is from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey. SWAA: 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 based on current-question responses and another question (not shown). We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells. HHP: We focus on individuals aged 20 to 64 with household incomes above \$25,000 per year. We assign 30% of days WFH if the respondent did so for “for 1-2 days;” 70% if they did so “for 3-4 days;” 100% if “5 or more days;” and 0 for “No.”

N = 147,412 (SWAA) N = 505,833 (HHP)

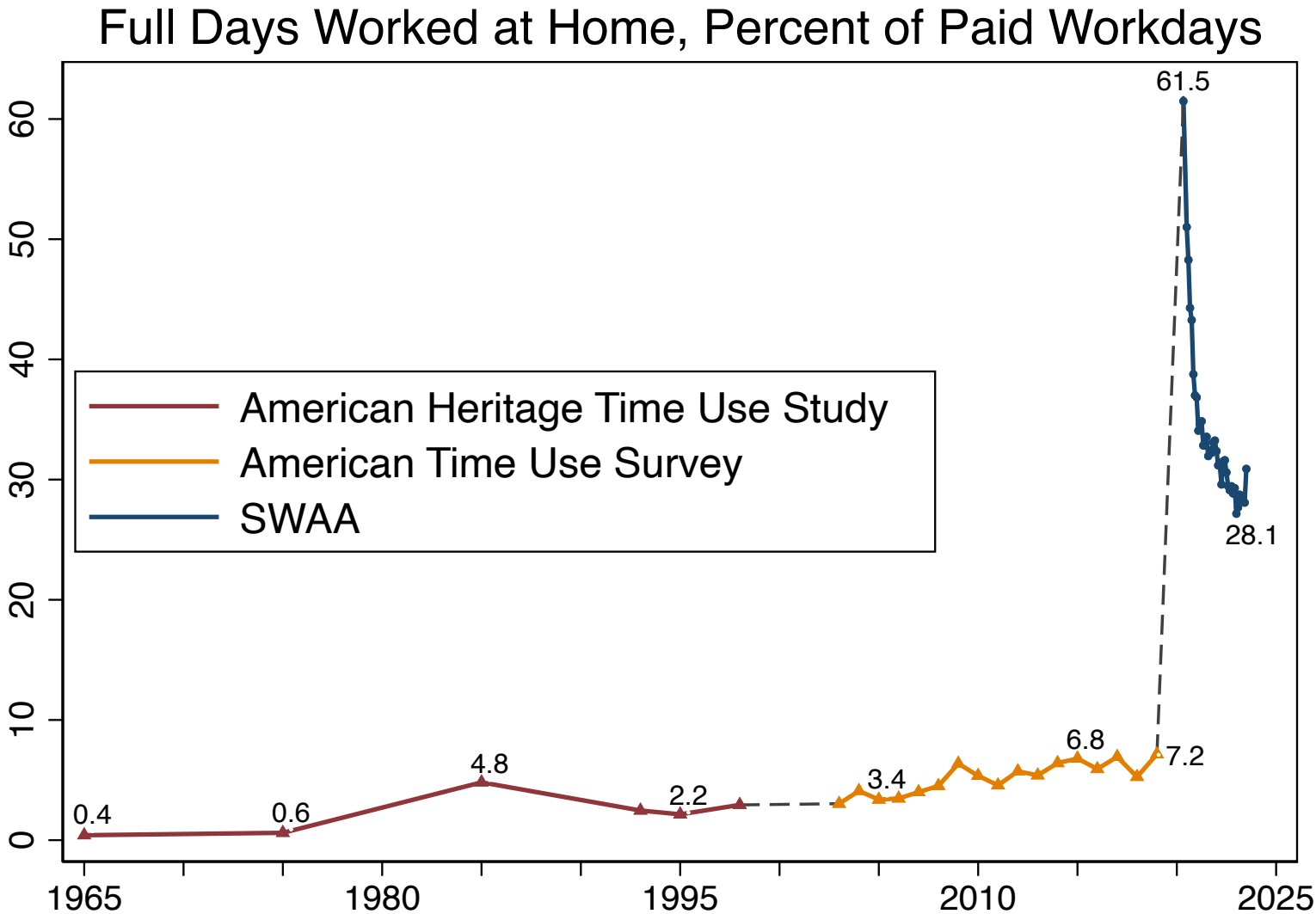
The Pandemic Permanently Increased WFH, Equivalent to Almost 40 Years of Pre-Pandemic Growth



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)

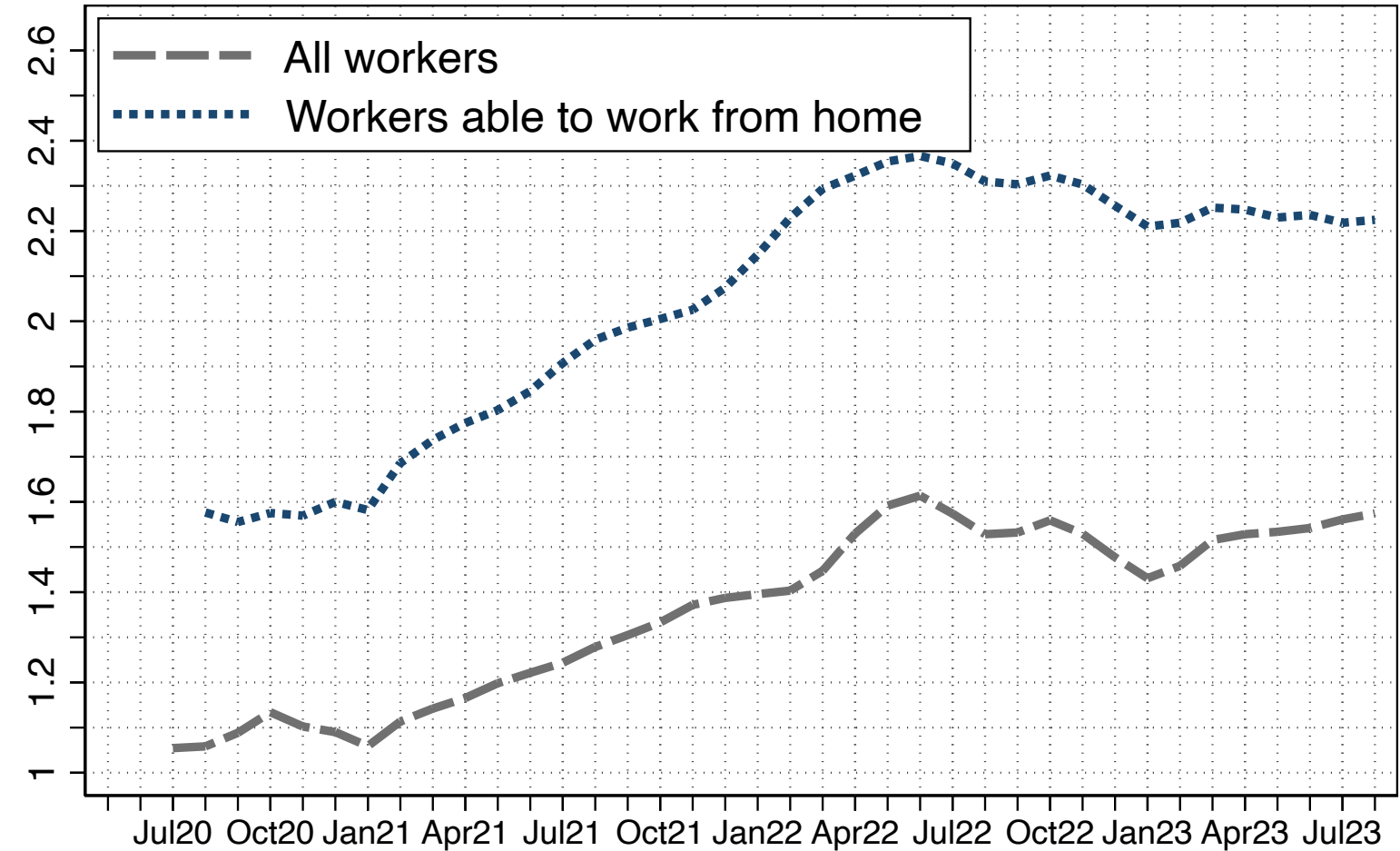
Notes: For each dataset, we compute the percent of working individuals who worked full days at home during the survey’s reference period. For the AHTUS and ACS, if an individual reports usually working from home, we mark them as working from home 100% of the time. In SWAA we compute the percent of full 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.



Employer Plans for WFH Trend Near 2.2 Days per Week for Persons Able to Work From Home



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



Responses to the question:

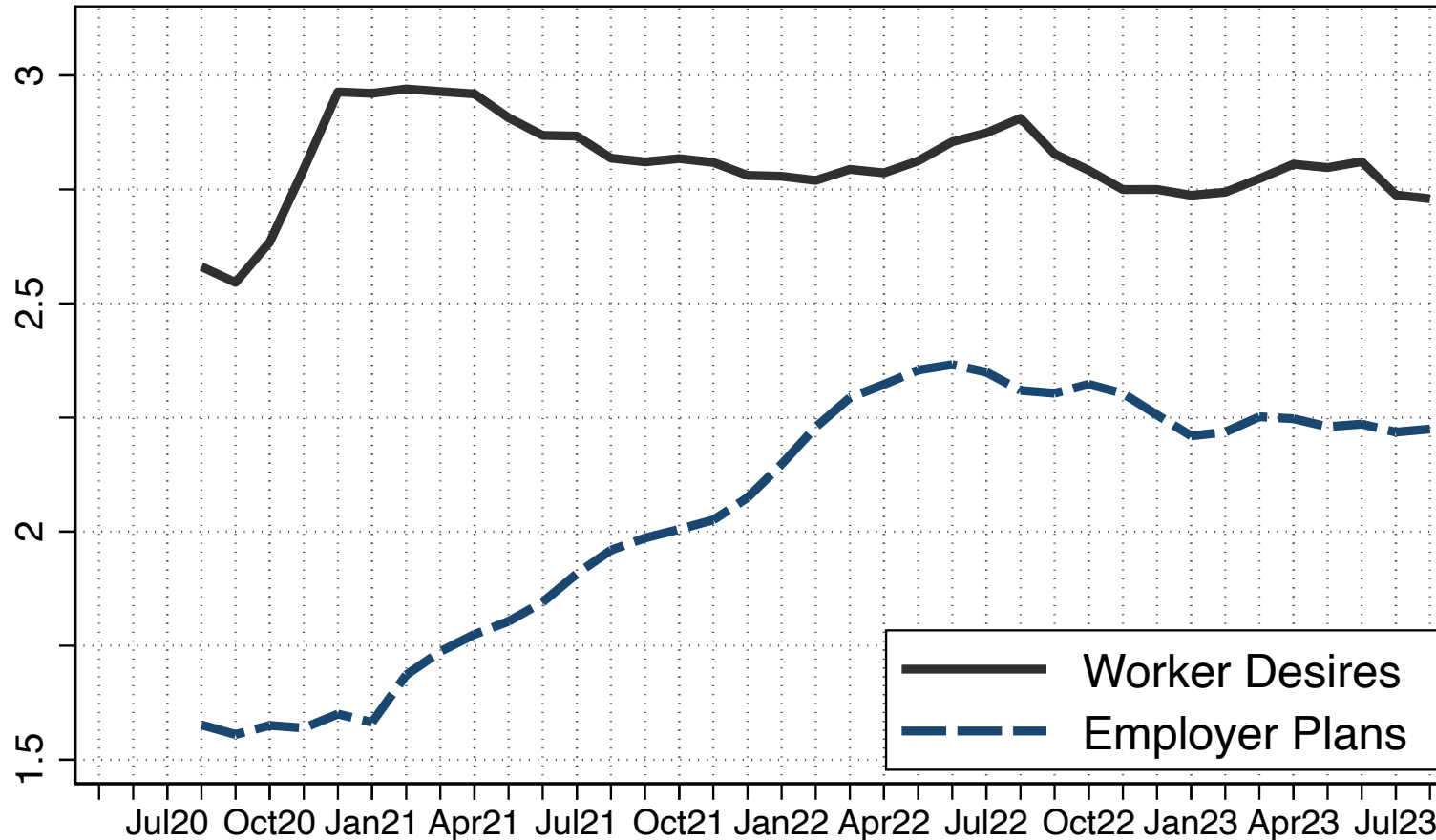
- *As the pandemic ends, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?*

Sample: Data are from all SWAA waves, covering July 2020 to August 2023. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer’s plans for WFH as the pandemic ends (“All workers” series), but the series labeled “Workers able to work from home” restricts attention to workers who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic. In both cases, 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 a prior year to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 168,496 (all respondents) and 121,156 (able to work from home)

The Gap Between How Much Employees Want to Work from Home and Employer Plans Is Stable at About 0.5 Days

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:

- **As the pandemic ends, how often would you like to have full paid days at home?**
- **As 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 2023. 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.

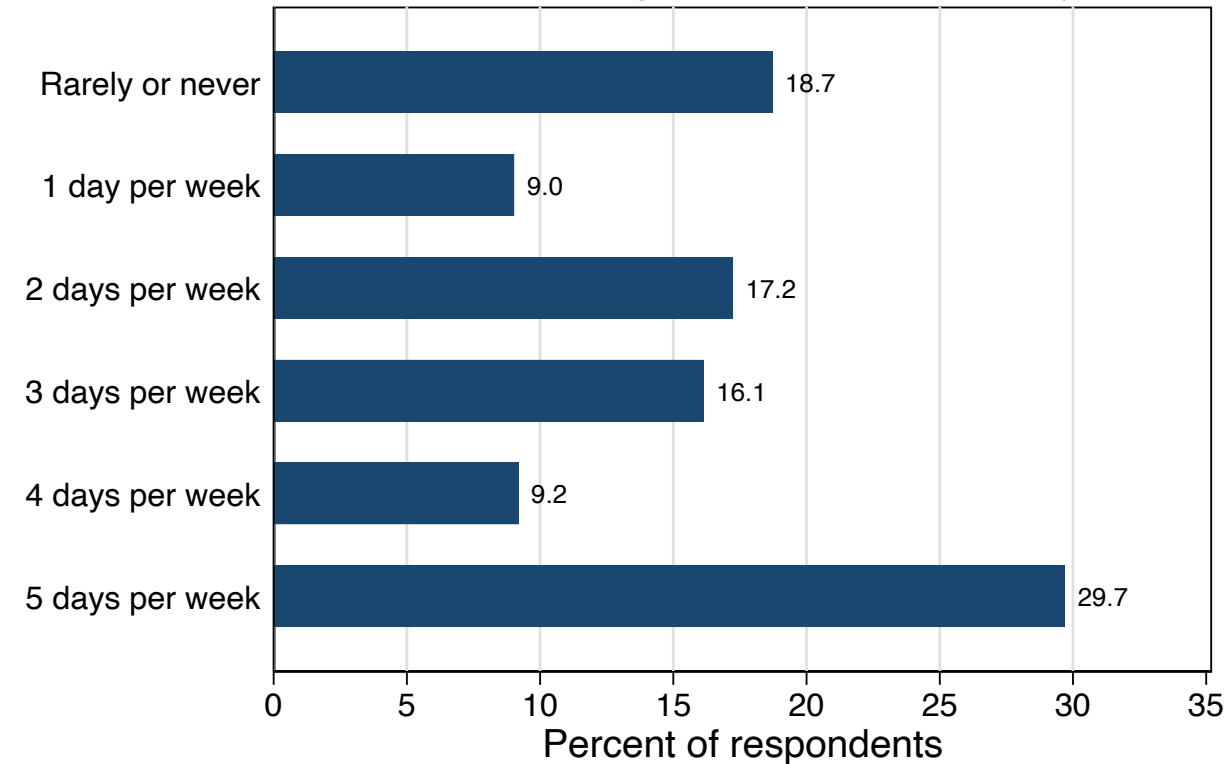
N = 121,156 (employer plans, able to work from home)

N = 130,238 (worker desires, able to work from home)

Employers Offer Fewer Fully Remote Jobs and More Fully Onsite Jobs Than Employees Want

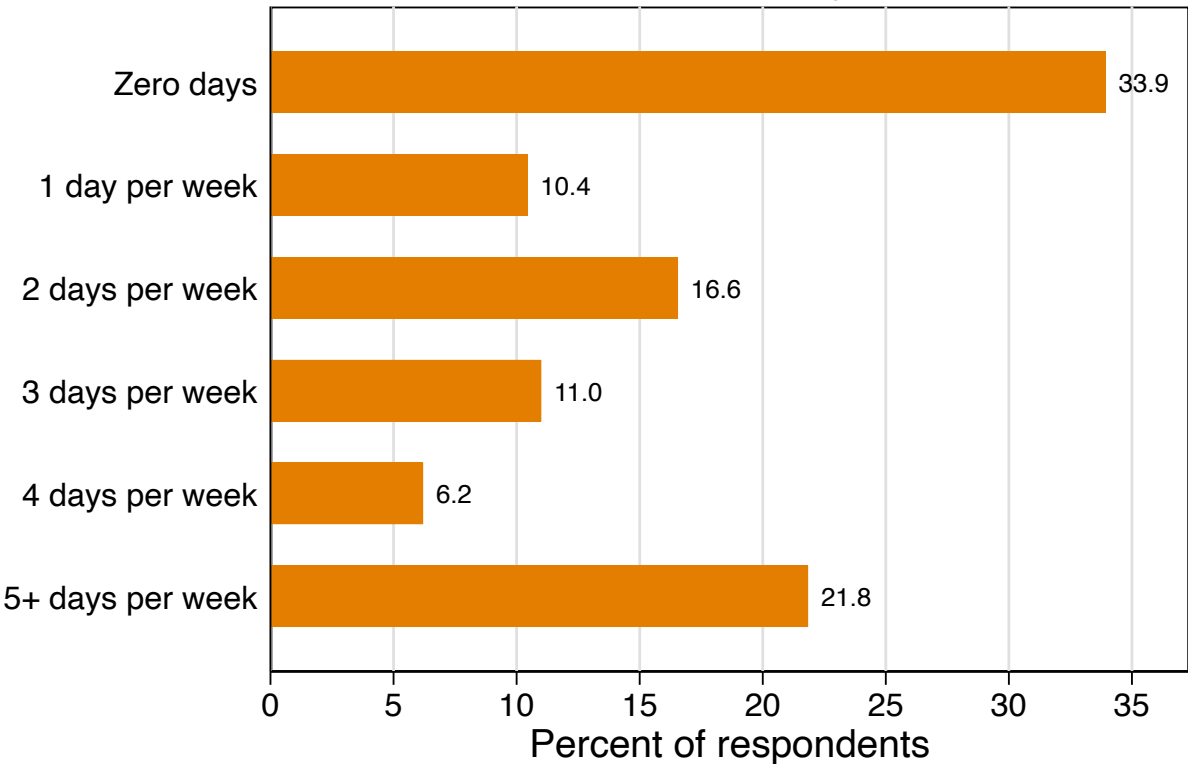


Worker desired amount of post-COVID WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 10592

Current amount of WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 10149

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 May to August 2023 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 a prior year to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

Working from Home is Most Prevalent in the Tech, 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?

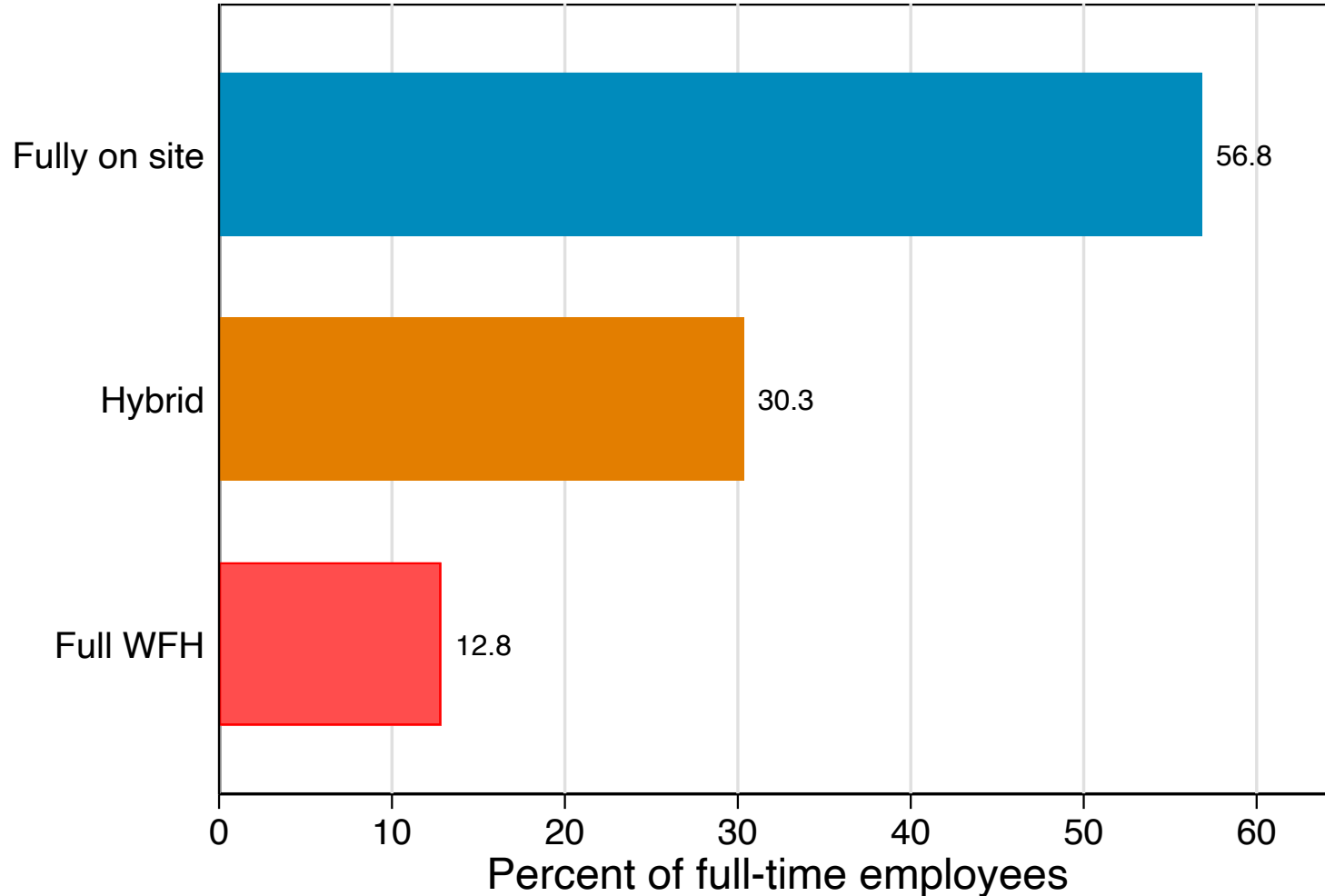
Sample: Data are from the March to August 2023 SWAA waves. The sample includes all wage and salary employees who pass the attention-check questions. We exclude mining due to insufficient observations and agriculture to focus on non-farm jobs. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 26,235

By August '23: 13% of Full-Time Employees Were Fully Remote, 57% Were Full-Time on Site, and 30% Were in a Hybrid Arrangement



Working Arrangements



Source: Responses to the questions:

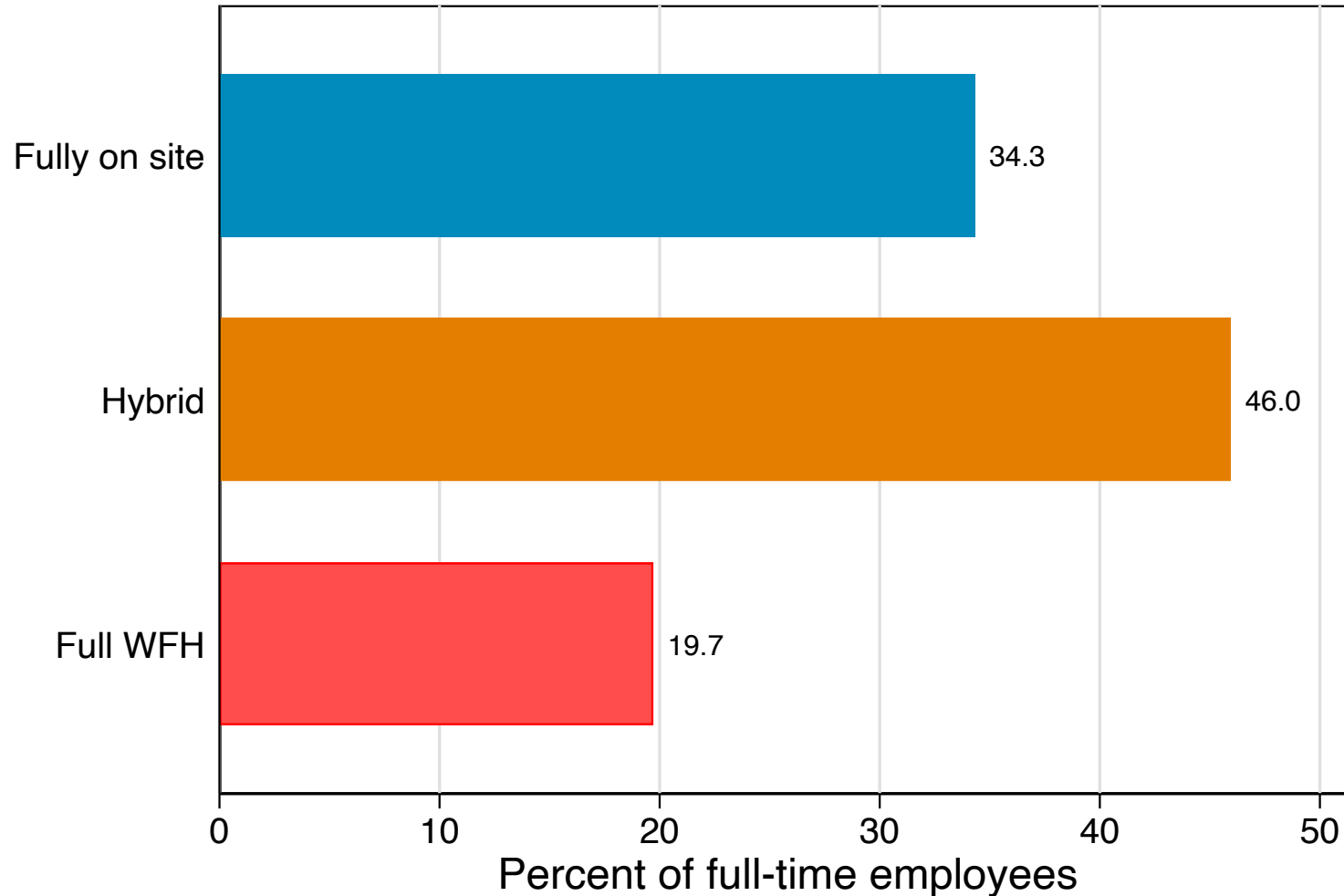
- For each day **last week**, did you **work a full day (6 or more hours)**, and if so **where?**

Notes: 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 show the percentage for each group. The sample covers the May to August 2023 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 14,969

For Employees that Can Work from Home, the Most Common Practice is Hybrid

Working Arrangements of Those Able to WFH May to Aug 2023



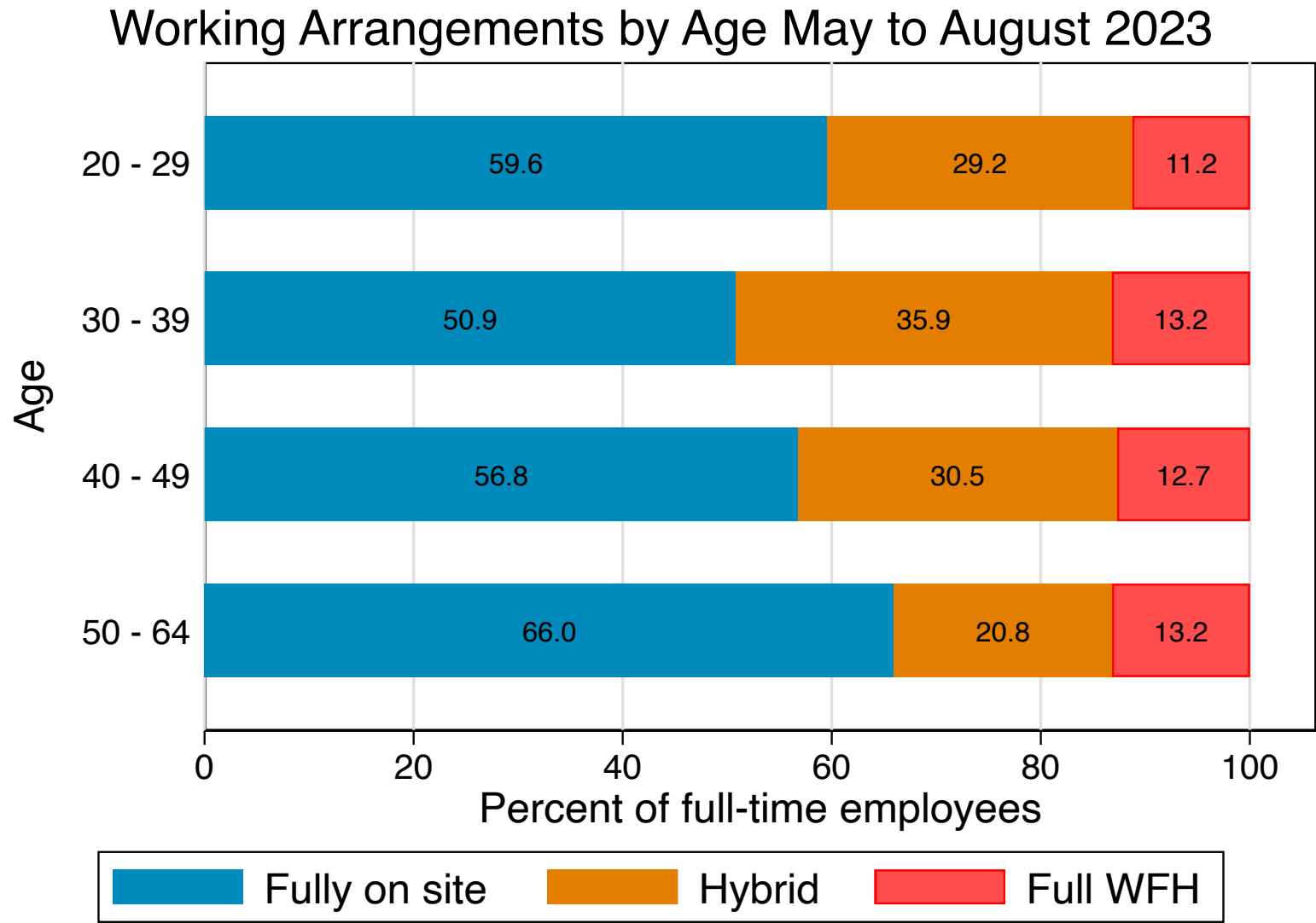
Source: Responses to the questions:

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

Notes: We compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who are able to work from home and 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 show the percentage for each group. We infer that somebody is able to work from home if they currently do so 1+ days per week, or did so at some point since the start of COVID. The sample covers the May to August 2023 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.

N = 15,587

Workers In Their 50s and 60s Are Fully Remote and Fully Onsite More Often Than Younger Workers



Source: Responses to the questions:

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

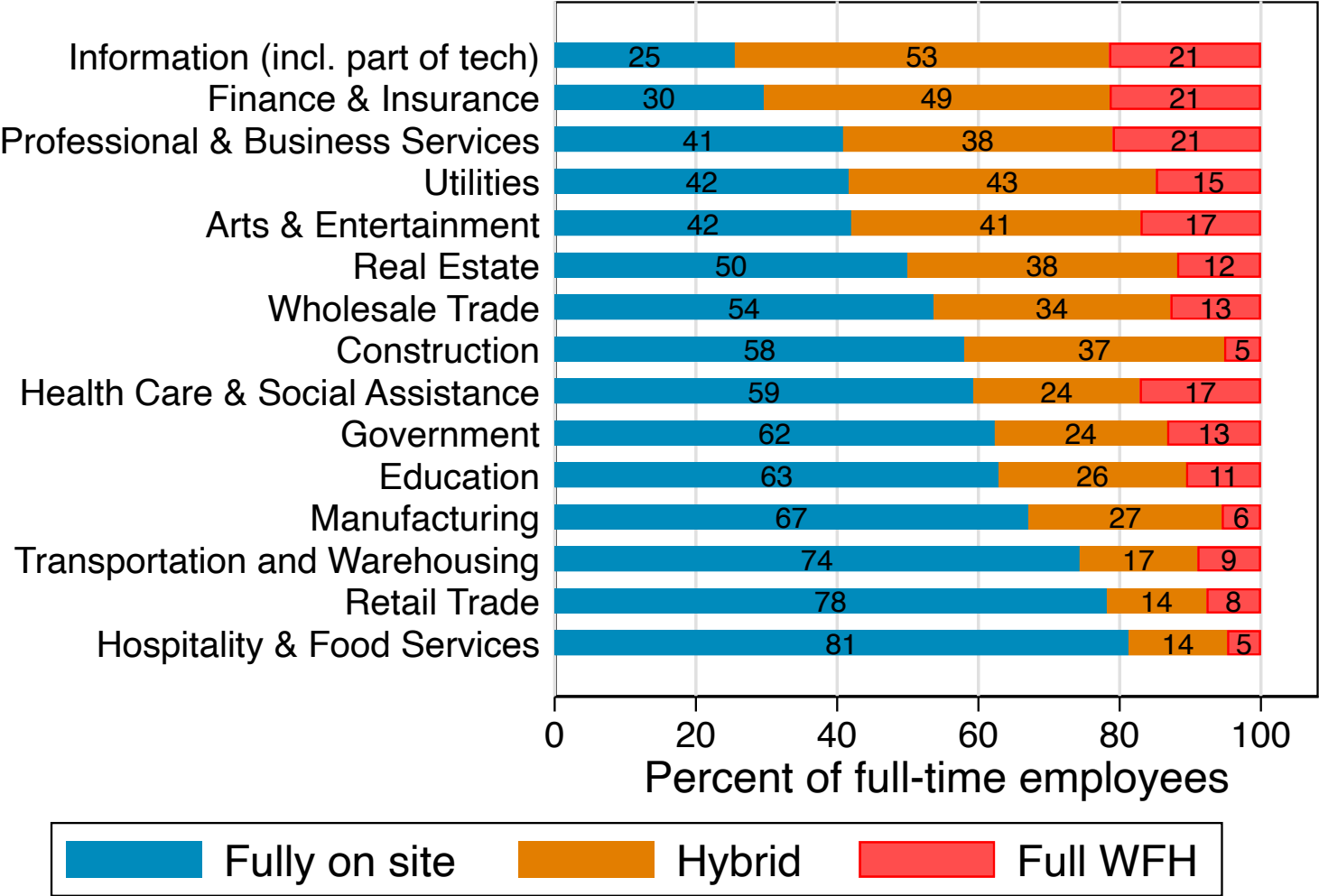
Notes: For each age group, we compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey’s reference week. Then we show the percentage for each group. The sample covers the May to August 2023 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 14,969

Information, Finance & Insurance, and Prof. & Business Services Have The Largest Share of Hybrid and Remote Workers



Working Arrangements by Industry May to August 2023



Source: Responses to the questions:

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

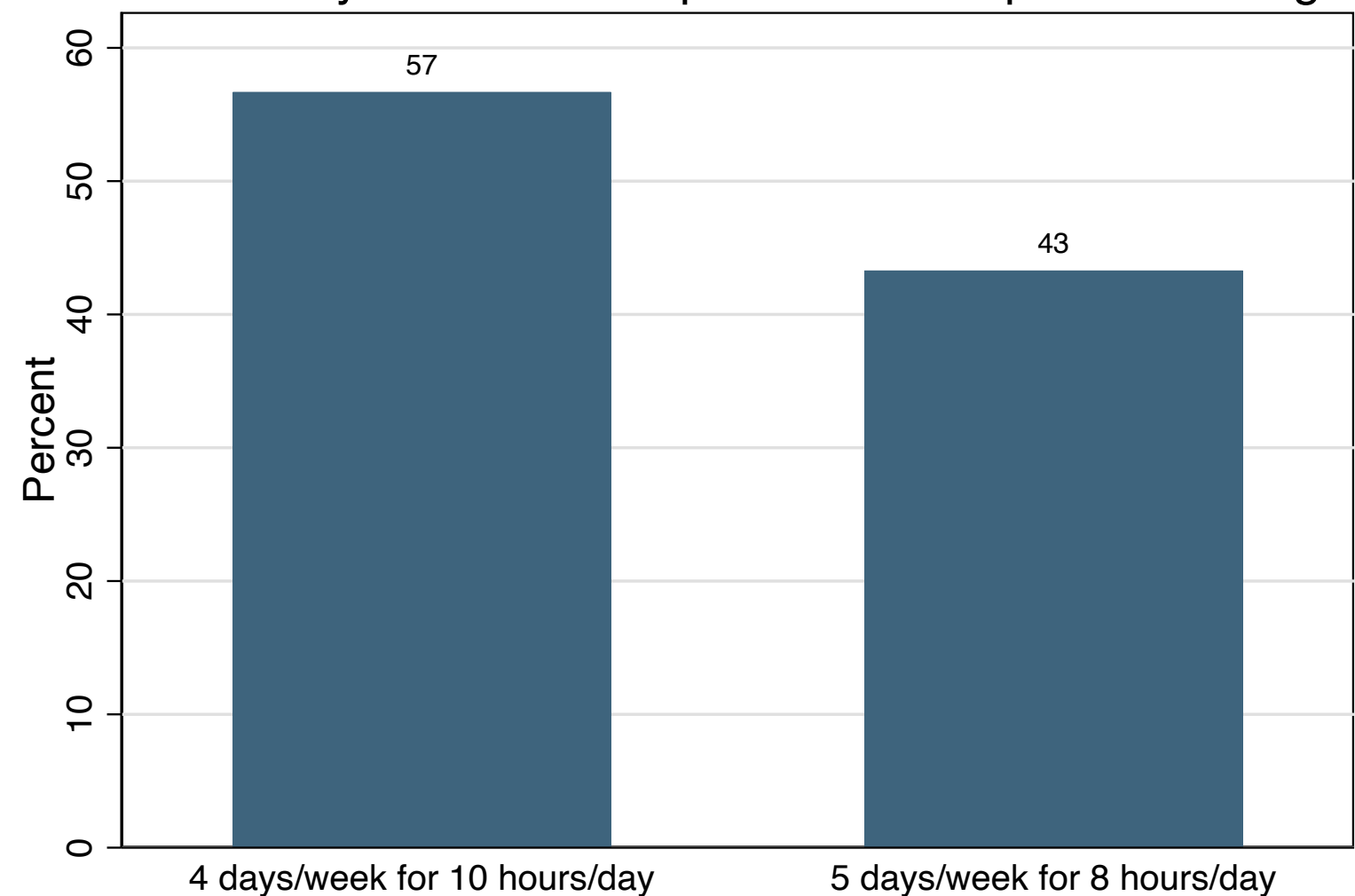
Notes: For each age group, we compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey’s reference week. Then we show the percentage for each group. The sample covers the April to July 2023 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells. We exclude agriculture, construction, mining, and other personal services, the latter two due to insufficient observations.

N = 14,625

When Asked to Choose, More Full-Time Workers Prefer Working 4 Days a Week for 10 Hours a Day Over 5 Days for 8 Hours



Share of 5-day workweek respondents who prefer working:



Responses to the question:

- Which of the following would you prefer?
- Work 4 days per week for 10 hours a day
- Work 5 days per week for 8 hours a day

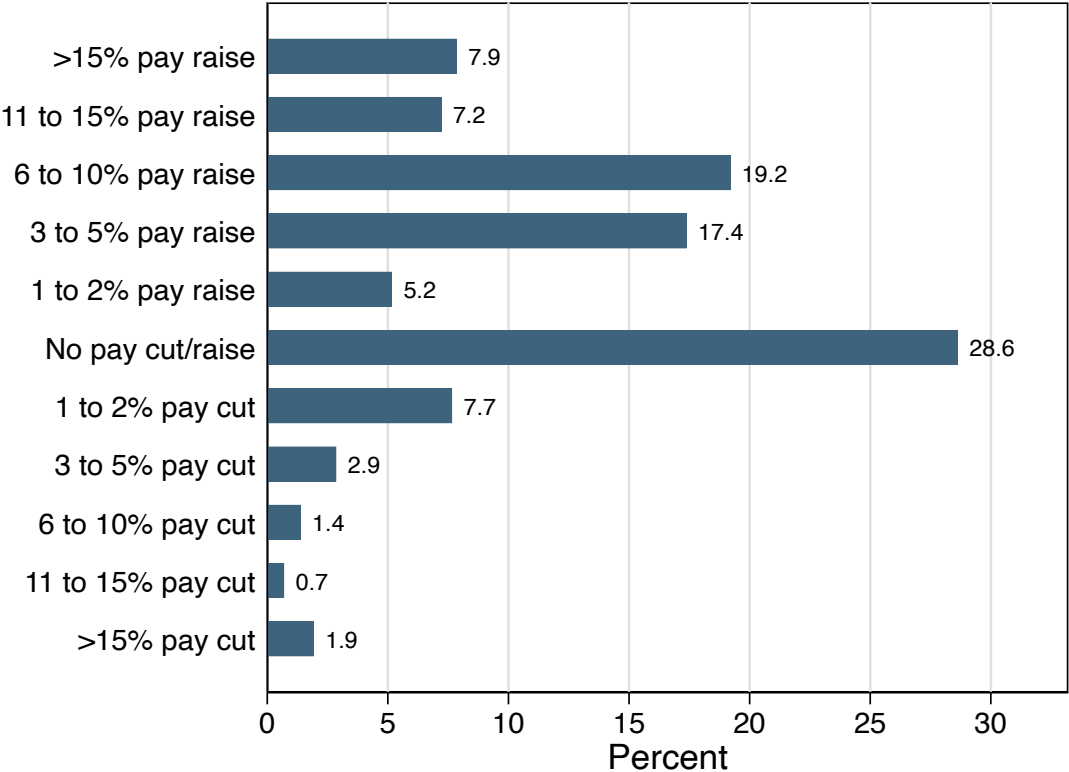
Notes: Data are from the August 2023 SWAA wave, focusing on employed respondents earnings at least \$10,000 in the prior year and whose typical workweek involves 5 or more full paid workdays. We drop respondents who fail our attention-check questions and reweight their responses to match the share of persons in Current Population Survey by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 1,502

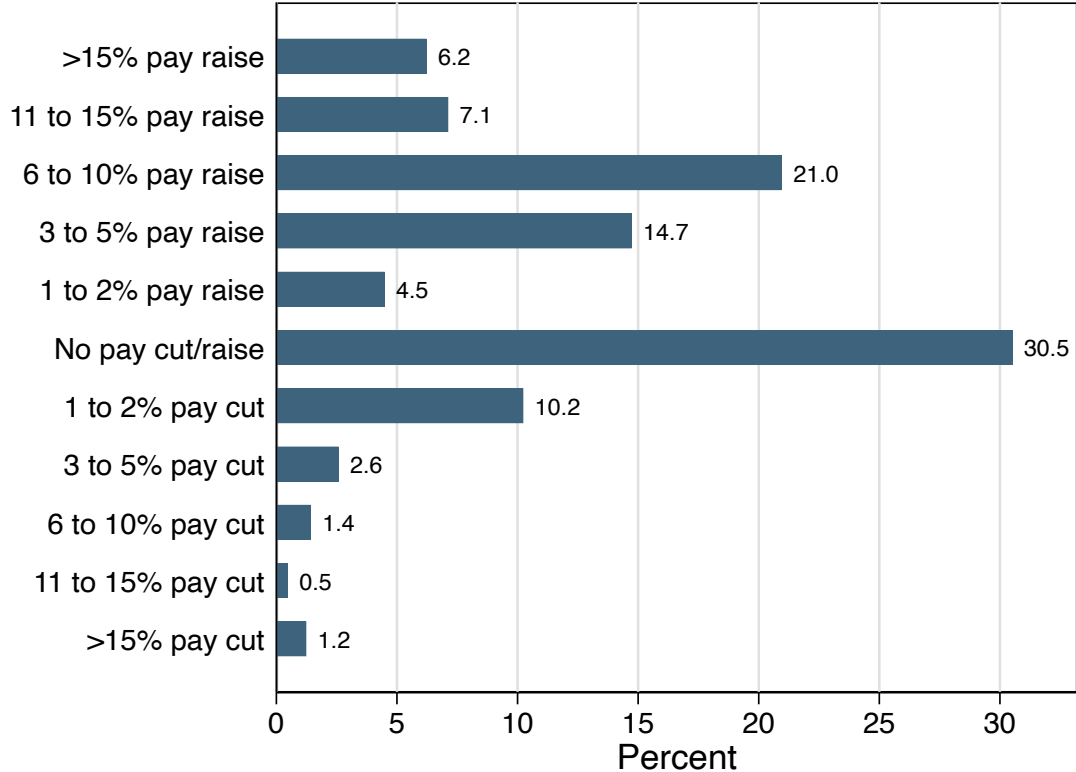
Full-Time Workers On Average View Compressing Their Workweek Into 4 Days As Equivalent to a 4% Raise



Value of compressing a 5-day workweek into 4 days while doing the **same amount of work** over the week



Value of compressing a 5-day workweek into 4 days while continuing to **work the same hours** over the week



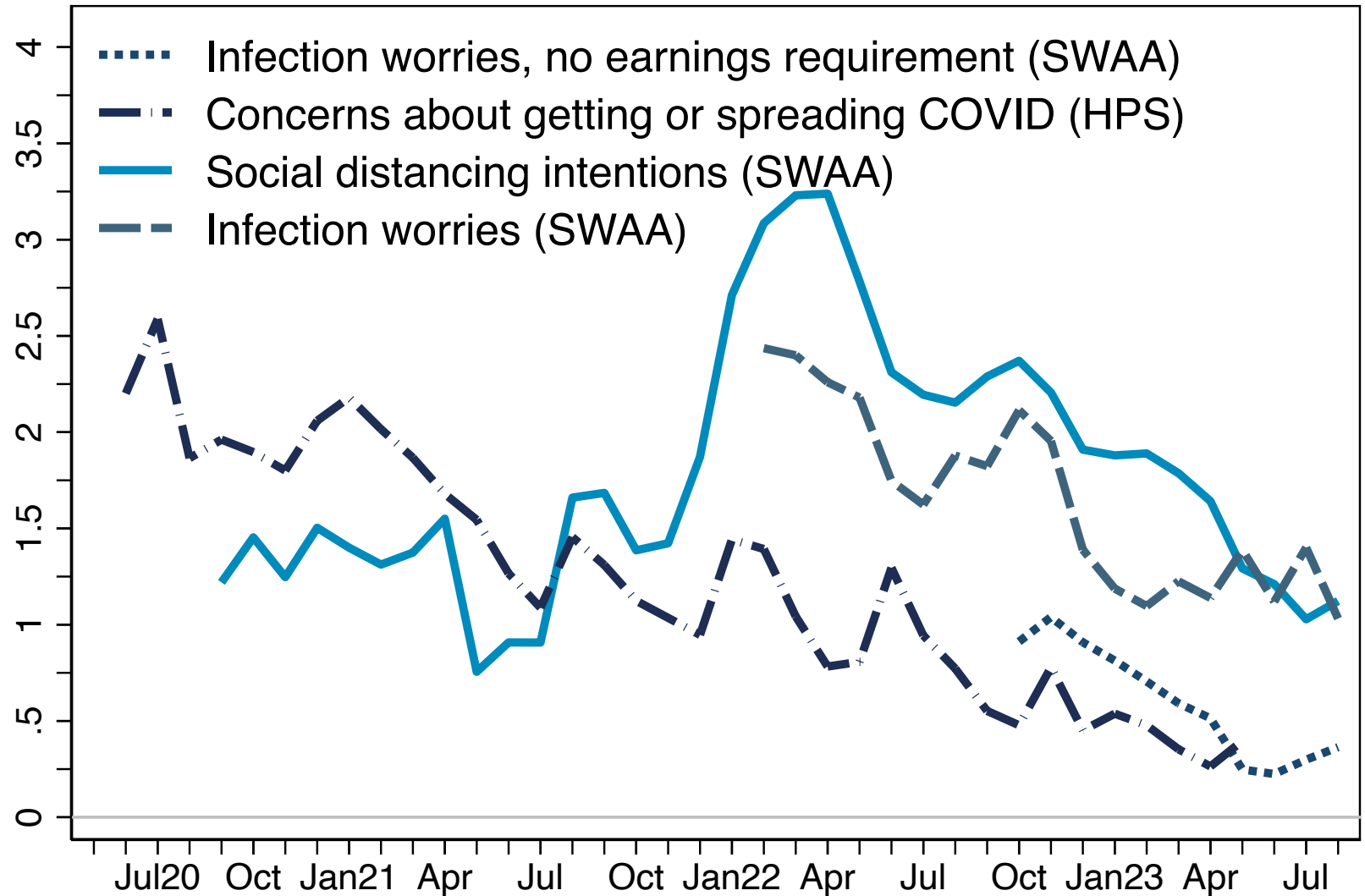
Responses to the questions: How would you feel about **compressing your workweek into 4 days**, while continuing to work the **same number of hours** [doing the **same amount** of work] over the week? How much of a **pay raise** (as a percent of your current pay) would you value as much as **compressing your workweek to 4 days**? How much of a **pay cut** (as a percent of your current pay) would you value as much as **compressing your workweek to 4 days**?

Notes: Data are from the August 2023 SWAA wave, focusing on employed respondents earnings at least \$10,000 in the prior year and whose typical workweek involves 5 or more full paid workdays. We drop respondents who fail our attention-check questions and reweight their responses to match the share of persons in Current Population Survey by age-sex-education-earnings cells. We randomize respondents across questions that hold hours or amount of work constant when hypothetically compressing the workweek to four days. The two charts reflect the two versions of the question. **N = 1,502 (left) N = 1,545 (right)**

By Summer '23, Infection Fears and Social Distancing Intentions Weigh Less and Less on Labor Force Participation



Drag on labor force participation rate, percentage points



Notes: The solid blue line shows the labor force drag associated with social distancing intentions, following the calculations in Table 2 and pooling over the most recent three months of data to construct each monthly estimate. The dashed line shows the drag due to infection worries in SWAA data, using our original self-assessment question and following the calculations in Table A.4. The dotted line shows the drag due to infection worries in SWAA data, using our new self-assessment question with many response options and following the calculations in Table . The dotted line shows a three-month moving average (two months at end points). The dash-dot-dash line shows the drag due to concerns about “getting or spreading COVID,” according to the Household Pulse Survey (HPS). For all four series, we show equal-weighted labor force drag estimates. **N=170,220** (social distancing intentions); **N=72,524** (infection worries, original question); **N=33,772** (infection worries, new question and no prior-earnings requirement); **N=2,776,574** (concerns about getting or spreading COVID).

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.

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Friday's are dead in the office. But where is everybody?

About half of us are at home. But a surprisingly large number are working somewhere else - public spaces, co-working or friends and family. I think this reflects the post-pandemic norm. The term "Working From Home" means a lot of home, but also a lot of other places too.

As for me I'll be Working from Work (WFF) today - I have family visiting and our home-office doubles up as our spare room :-)

Where Do You Work When Not at Your Employer?

Gender	Home	Public space (e.g. cafe)	Co-working space	Friend/family member's home
Female	65.2	15.5	11.1	8.2
Male	47.0	24.0	18.7	10.3

Percent

Home

Public space (e.g. cafe)

Co-working space

Friend/family member's home

Source: Survey of Workplace Attitudes and Arrangements www.wfhresearch.com Sample of 1,162 respondents in June 2023 who worked, but not at their employer's business premises. Respondents each asked about one random working day (Monday to Friday) in the prior week.

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Theme of the week seems to be [#WFH](#) is blurring work-life boundaries. Our data suggests this is a hybrid issue in particular, with more than half of hybrid employees working a full day on Saturday or Sunday. Ful ...see more

Percent working full days, by day of the week

Day	Fully remote	Fully in-person	Hybrid
Mon	98	96	96
Tue	99	95	96
Wed	98	95	94
Thu	98	95	96
Fri	97	96	95
Sat	32	40	58
Sun	29	28	47

Notes: www.wfhresearch.com SWAA data for June to August 2023. Includes 3,866 in person, 4,023 hybrid, and 1,091 remote employees who worked 5+ days a week. Re-weight to match US Current Population Survey

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Steve Roth, chairman of real estate giant Vornado said Fridays are "dead forever" for office use. It looks like he was right - Friday has become the day to [#wfh](#). There is now a 3-part week: ...see more

Friday has become the day to work from home

Percentage of days worked from home, by day

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

Notes: US Survey of Workplace Attitudes & Arrangements www.wfhresearch.com. Just 5-day hybrid workers