



STATE OF ALASKA

TELEWORKING EXPERIENCE SURVEY

June 2021

Highlights

On 4/28/2021, the State of Alaska Department of Administration distributed a teleworking experience survey to all 16,000 State of Alaska employees. The results reflect the State's significant shift to teleworking in the spring of 2020, an overarching positive disposition toward teleworking, as well as a common appreciation for the benefits of teleworking.

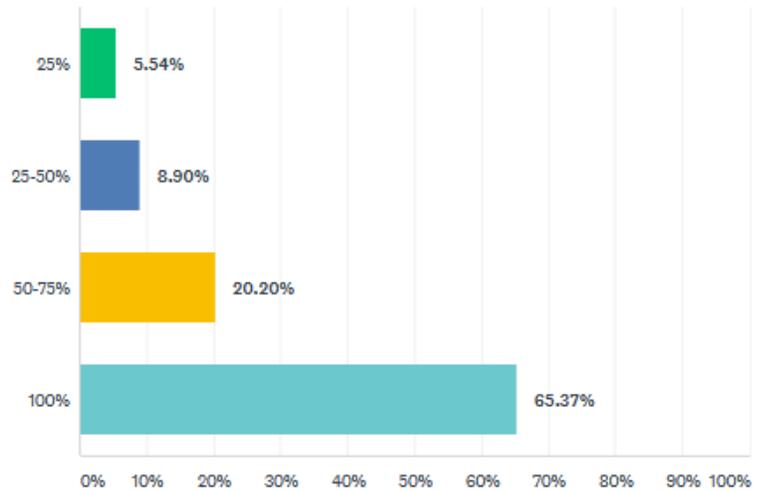
The major sentiment is employees have found minimal barriers to success in a remote environment and the vast majority of teleworking employees desire to continue teleworking in some capacity.

Summary

In an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, over 6000 State of Alaska (SOA) employees transitioned to teleworking in the spring of 2020. This transition was coupled with supporting technologies and policies. Just over a year later, many of those employees (5956 total, May 2021) continue teleworking at least part of the time. To gather insight on the employees experience teleworking, as well as to inform State policy, the Department of Administration surveyed all Executive Branch employees on the topic. The survey received a notable volume of responses, totaling 4485 individual responses, during the three days it was open. The overall response rate was 28% of the 16,000 recipients. Responses were received from all SOA departments:



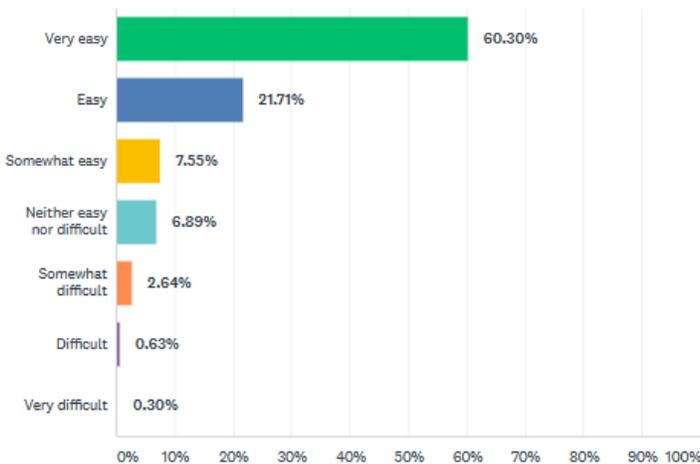
Of those who responded, 3065 (68.34%) were, at time of response, actively teleworking; 1420 (31.66%) were not. Of those teleworking at the time of their response, only 5.9% - 179 of 3035 - had started teleworking before March 2020 and the majority (65.37%) were teleworking 100% of the time:



Considering your typical work week right now, how much time are you teleworking?

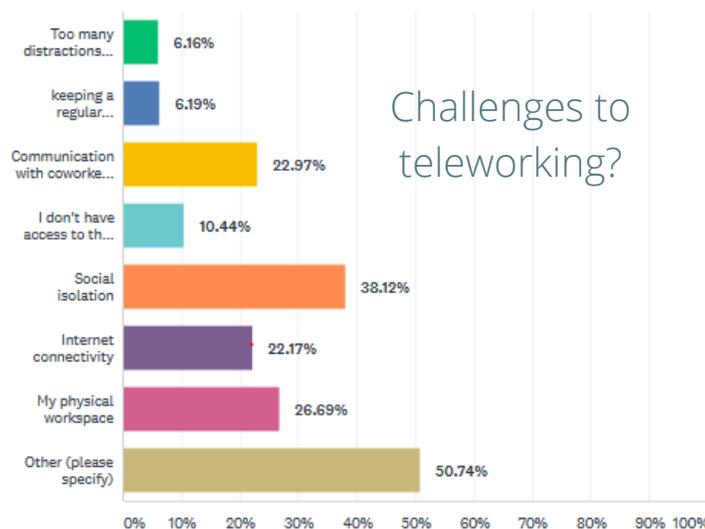
Challenges and Benefits

When asked "How easy or difficult is it for you to work effectively while teleworking?", the vast majority of teleworking employees responded 'very easy' (60.30%) or 'easy' (21.71%). Less than 4% found teleworking to be at all difficult.



How easy or difficult is it for you to work effectively while teleworking?

Employees were asked to rank the three most significant challenges faced while teleworking. Among the options listed, 'Other', 'Social Isolation', and 'Communication with Coworkers' were ranked as the top three overall, respectively. Those who selected 'other', were asked to specify in their words what other challenges they faced. While some who selected 'other' specified issues including technology, resources (printers, etc.), cost, ergonomics, and uncertainty, the most significant trend was those who used the field to state they faced no specific challenges. Rather, many used the text field to share the benefits they experienced as a result of teleworking, specifically including greater productivity/efficiency, less distractions, and better communication.

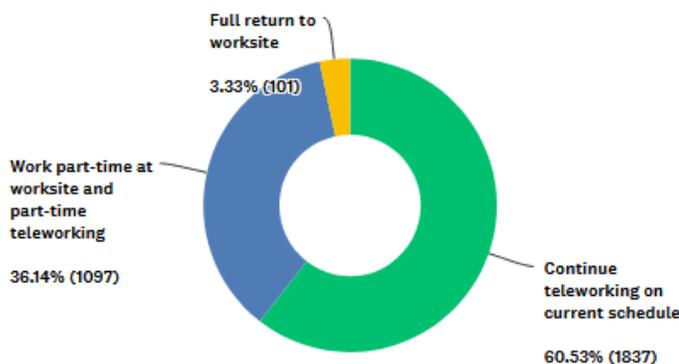


Of note, several State of Alaska employees emailed the Department of Administration Commissioner's Office after responding to the survey to share the benefits they experienced as a result of teleworking, as this was not included as a question on the survey. Employees specifically mentioned the following: reduced commute time, healthier eating options, lower fuel costs, less stress, better quality of life, higher productivity, and greater efficiency.

Preferences

Teleworking employees were asked their preference going forward. Notably, just over 3% responded 'full return to worksite', while over 60% wanted to continue teleworking on their current schedule (65% of which were teleworking full time; 20% were working 50-75%), and 36% desired some sort of hybrid arrangement, partially teleworking and partially working from a worksite.

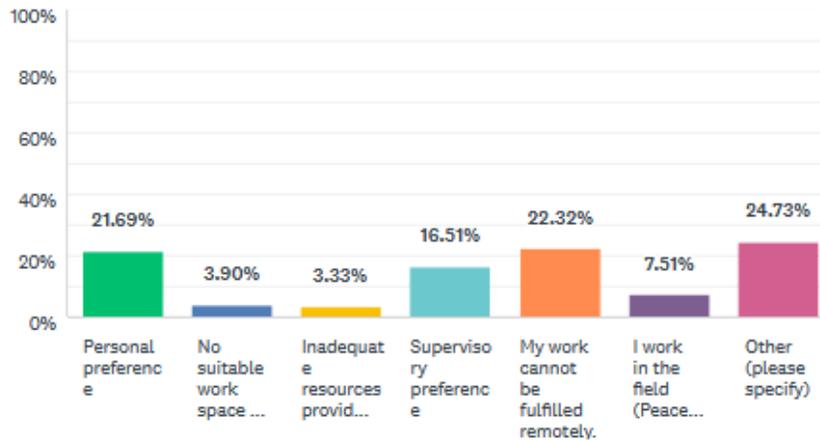
Which work environment would you prefer moving forward?



Non-Teleworkers

Of those who responded to the survey, 1420 (31.66%) were not, at time of response, actively teleworking at all. Those who were not teleworking, instead of being routed the questions above, were asked what, from the following options, was preventing them from teleworking: 'Personal preference'; 'No suitable work space at home'; 'Inadequate resources provided to work remotely'; 'Supervisory preference'; 'My work cannot be fulfilled remotely'; 'I work in the field'; 'Other'. The responses were spread somewhat evenly, with 'Other', 'My work cannot be fulfilled remotely', and 'Personal preference' most selected, each representing just over 20% of responses.

If you are not teleworking at all, what is preventing you from doing so?



The survey again allowed those who responded 'Other' to specify in their own words what is preventing the responder from teleworking.

The majority of those responses fell into three categories: personal preference, inability to perform job remotely, or the individual was previously teleworking but their unit had since returned to work site.

Trends and Conclusion

A few notable trends emerge from the data gathered from the SOA Teleworking Experience Survey that help to paint the picture of employees' experience teleworking this past year.

First, the survey saw an outstanding response rate of approximately 28%. The survey was open for three days and received well over 4000 responses. This was well above the target response rate, and indicates two things: **teleworking is a topic of great interest to State employees** and **trends in the data are an accurate representation of the experience of employees**, as the margin of error associated with such a response rate is minimal.

Second, **State employees find minimal challenges to working effectively in a teleworking environment**. The overwhelming response is successful teleworking is not difficult and challenges faced by teleworking employees are minimal and generally outweighed by the benefits. However, this does not exclude the fact that many employees found there to be some tangible challenges, most notably related to social isolation and communication with their coworkers.

Finally, overall, **employees would like to continue teleworking in some form**. Of those teleworking employees who responded to the survey, only 3.33% would prefer a full return to their worksite. Those who prefer to remain teleworking either partially or full time represent 96.67% of those teleworking at the time of response.

Policy

On May 5, 2021, the State of Alaska introduced an updated Return to Worksite Policy which seeks to strike a balance between teleworking and onsite work. The policy represents a shift from mostly full time teleworking for many employees to hybrid teleworking arrangements. In doing so, the policy seeks to capture for employees and the State the many benefits to teleworking while addressing the gaps resulting from full time teleworking. It provides flexibility at the agency level, to create a plan that best serves the agency mission and meets the teams' needs.

