Remote Work in Kansas Communities Statewide Survey Results

March 13, 2023

K-State Research & Extension
Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development
Kansas Chamber of Commerce
Kansas Department of Agriculture
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Small Business Development Centers
NetWork Kansas
Office of Rural Prosperity
Senator Jerry Moran

K·STATE
Research and Extension

Executive Summary

In fall 2022, the K-State Research and Extension Community Vitality team, Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, and a group of partner organizations conducted an online, statewide survey on the status of remote work and the capacity of communities to support remote work in Kansas. Survey respondents included representatives of businesses, communities, economic development organizations, and others across the state.

Results indicate nearly half of respondent organizations currently employ remote workers. More than two-thirds believe remote work has been implemented successfully or very successfully in their organizations. More than 80 % believe remote work will continue. More than 90 % believe the number of remote workers and hybrid workers will remain the same or increase.

Nearly three-quarters of respondent communities (72 %) do not market their community to potential, current, and digital remote workers. Only 11 % offer remote workers some kind of relocation incentives.

When selecting remote workers, the types of skills organizations are seeking were identified as follows, in this order: Self-management/self-starter ability; Teamwork; Online communication; Project management/productivity; Online data management and security; Technical skills; and Organizing/creating a dedicated workspace.

Only 40 % of respondents indicated high speed Internet access was available to support remote work. Public Internet access, co-working spaces, and business incubators were available in less than one-quarter of respondent communities. Only 3.6 % reported that remote work training was available.

Specific survey findings:
- 47 % of respondents currently employ remote workers.
- 68 % of respondents indicate remote work has been implemented successfully or very successfully in their organization.
- 82 % of respondents indicate remote work will continue into the foreseeable future.
- Only 2.9 % of respondents indicated they planned to discontinue remote work practices which had been initiated due to covid.
- 92 % of respondents anticipate the number of remote workers in their organization will increase or remain the same.
- 94 % of respondents anticipate the number of *hybrid* workers in their organization will increase or remain the same.
- 31 % of respondents anticipate the number of remote workers in their organization will increase.
- 54 % of respondents anticipate the number of *hybrid* workers in their organization will increase.
- 28 % of respondents indicated their organizations marketed their community to remote workers.
- 11 % offer incentives to attract remote workers to their communities.

- When selecting and hiring remote workers, the desired types of skills were identified as follows, in order: Self-management/self-starter (21%), Teamwork (18%), Online communication (18%), Project management/productivity (14%), Online data management and security (12%), Technical skills (9%), and Organizing/creating a dedicated workspace (8%).
- In terms of resources to support remote work, only 40 % of respondents indicated high speed Internet access was available. Public Internet access was available to 25 %, co-working spaces in 16 %, and business incubators in 12 %. Respondents in communities with high speed Internet indicated it significantly aided work functions.
- Only 3.6 % indicated remote work training was available.

Conclusions

Remote work is being successfully implemented in Kansas and is expected to continue a pattern of growth. Hybrid work is expected to grow even more. Few Kansas communities are recruiting remote workers and fewer still offer incentives to attract them. When selecting remote workers, organizations primarily seek self-management, teamwork, and online communications skills. Access to high speed Internet continues to be a major barrier and training of remote workers is a significant need. A considerable amount of work is needed for Kansas to more widely provide for successful remote work environments and employees.

Attached are the complete survey results. Thank you to the partner organizations who supported and/or participated in the survey:

K-State Research & Extension
Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development
Kansas Chamber of Commerce
Kansas Department of Agriculture
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Small Business Development Centers
NetWork Kansas
Office of Rural Prosperity
Senator Jerry Moran

Thank you to the K-State Research and Extension Community Vitality Program Focus Team for providing grant support to make this survey possible.

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Background

Remote work has been increasing in the United States. According to *Small Business Trends,* remote work increased by 159 % in the 12 years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. That trend accelerated drastically when the COVID-19 pandemic started and stay-at-home orders were issued. Many businesses and organizations quickly changed to remote work and nearly 70 % of full-time workers were working from home, according to Owl Labs. This national trend is expected to continue and even increase after the pandemic subsides. The Future Workforce Report states that the number of remote workers is expected to nearly double the pre-pandemic level in the next five years. Upwork estimates that more than one in five Americans or 22 % of the workforce (36.2 million Americans) will work remotely by 2025. Of course, not all work can be performed remotely. However, remote work continues to grow for digital workers. Gartner estimates that 51 % of all "knowledge workers" globally will be remote.

Utah State University has been a leader in remote work training. In 2018, the Utah Legislature enacted the Rural Online Initiative (ROI) to provide Utah's rural workforce and businesses with education, training, and services for online opportunities in remote employment, freelance work, and e-commerce. Funding for the ROI was appropriated to Utah State University Extension for program development and delivery across targeted rural counties. Utah State developed two online, month-long training sessions: A Master Remote Work Professional certificate course for remote workers and a Master Remote Work Leader certificate course for supervisors. The program was so successful that it attracted national attention.

In Kansas, the Dane G. Hansen Foundation provided support for the Ogallala Commons organization to offer a Rural & Remote initiative including such training plus a coding and workflow academy in the foundation's region of northwest Kansas. Kansas State University (K-State) Research and Extension contacted the Ogallala Commons organization and, after being advised that Ogallala Commons would not be pursuing such offerings elsewhere in Kansas, decided to offer such a program.

Since that time, K-State Research & Extension has become an affiliate of the Utah State ROI and has supported several Extension agents and specialists who have completed the online training. For this initiative to move forward, additional data was needed.

Survey Methodology

In 2021, the K-State Research and Extension Community Vitality team identified a need for additional data about the status of remote work and the readiness of communities to support it. In spring 2022, the KSRE Community Vitality Program Focus Team (PFT) agreed to provide grant support to conduct a statewide, online survey. The K-State Department of Communications and Agricultural Education Department was engaged to construct the survey instrument and prepare it for distribution.

Statewide partner organizations were contacted and asked to support the survey. The following organizations agreed to do so: K-State Research & Extension, Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, Kansas Chamber of Commerce, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Small Business Development Centers, NetWork Kansas, and Office of Rural Prosperity. Senator Jerry Moran expressed interest in the survey as well.

A Qualtrics-based survey instrument was developed by Dr. Jason Ellis, head of the Department of Communications and Agricultural Education, and reviewed by the team of partners. The final draft survey and the Informed Consent statement were submitted to the K-State Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board as proposal number IRB-11210 and approved on May 23, 2022.

A link to the online survey was provided to the partner organizations to distribute to their members or contact lists for completion. The survey was available from August 3, 2022 to November 7, 2022. The following survey results were compiled and formatted while maintaining confidentiality for all respondents.

Default Report

Remote Online Work Initiative
November 7, 2022 9:16 AM CST

Q2 - Having read the full consent statement (Remote Online Work Initiative informed consent) that explains my rights as a survey participant,
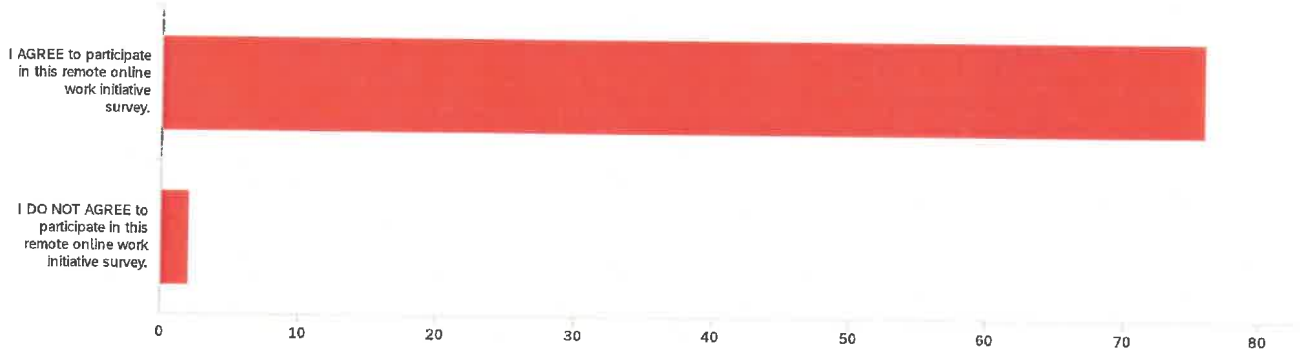
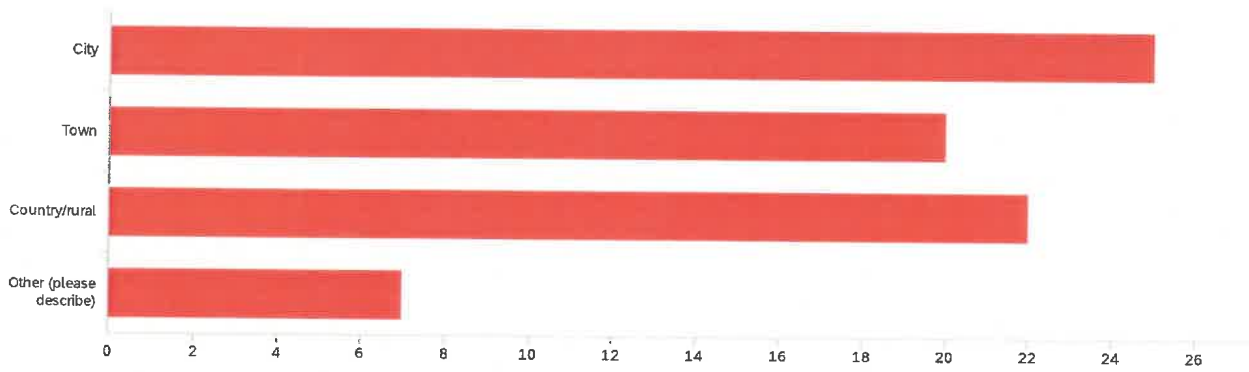| #	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Having read the full consent statement (Remote Online Work Initiative informed consent) that explains my rights as a survey participant,	1.00	2.00	1.03	0.16	0.02	78

#	Field		Choice Count
1	I AGREE to participate in this remote online work initiative survey.	97.44%	76
2	I DO NOT AGREE to participate in this remote online work initiative survey.	2.56%	2
			78

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q3 - In what type of community do you work?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	In what type of community do you work? - Selected Choice	1.00	4.00	2.15	1.00	0.99	74

#	Field		Choice Count
1	City	33.78%	25
2	Town	27.03%	20
3	Country/rural	29.73%	22
4	Other (please describe)	9.46%	7
			74

Showing rows 1 - 5 of 5

Q3_4_TEXT - Other (please describe)

Other (please describe)

Regional

Regional/Statewide Area

Shawnee

Multiple communities

Regional NE Kansas

Other (please describe)

Country/rural - unincorporated town

Metropolis

Q4 - What is your community's population?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What is your community's population?	0.00	1000000.00	47338.28	137069.80	18788130089.67	67

Q5 - Which of the following tools does your community have in order to support remote work? (check all that apply)
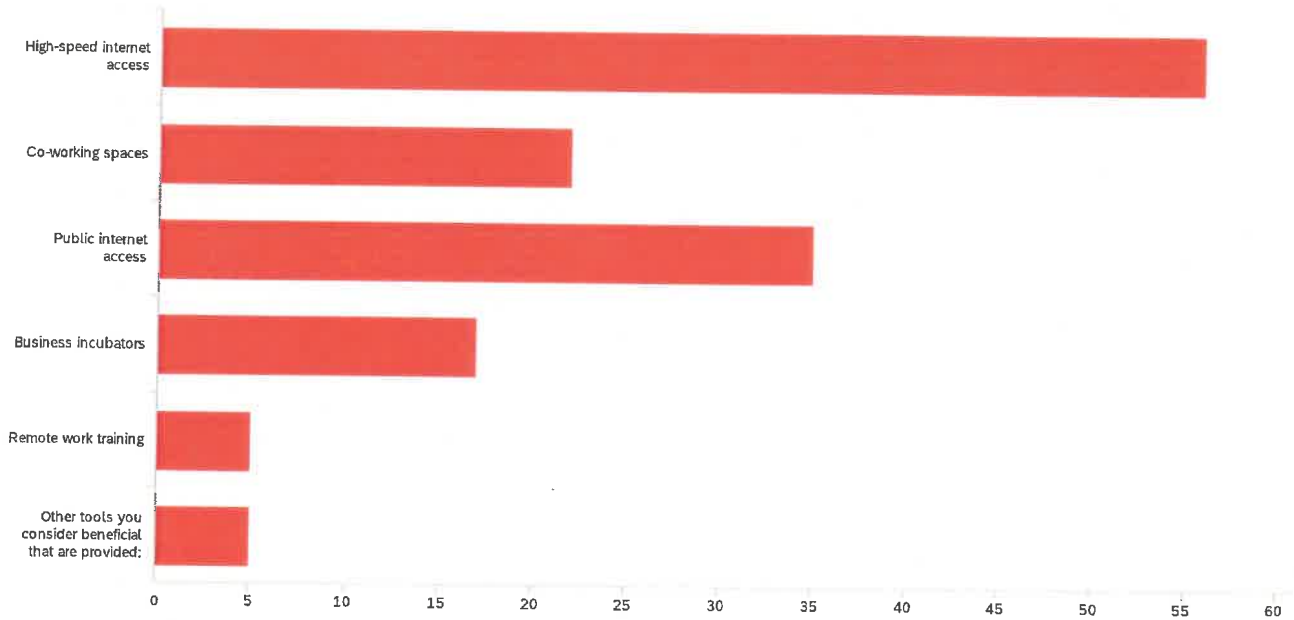
#	Field	Choice Count	
1	High-speed internet access	40 00%	56
2	Co-working spaces	15.71%	22
3	Public internet access	25.00%	35
4	Business incubators	12 14%	17
5	Remote work training	3 57%	5
6	Other tools you consider beneficial that are provided:	3 57%	5
			140

Showing rows 1 - 7 of 7

Q5_6_TEXT - Other tools you consider beneficial that are provided:

Other tools you consider beneficial that are provided:

Co work space is being created

Community does not provide anything, I have home wifi (not high speed) that allows me log in and do my work. It would be great if high speed was available at a reasonable price.
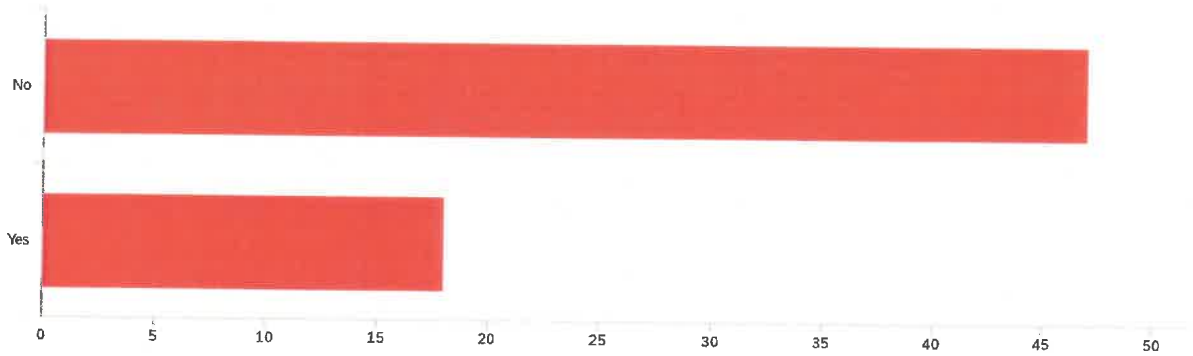
Other tools you consider beneficial that are provided:

main street loans.

Good highway system for travel if needed/ airport

MiFi for connectivity from home or on the road.

Q6 - Do you (or the organization you represent) market your community to potential, current and digital remote workers?

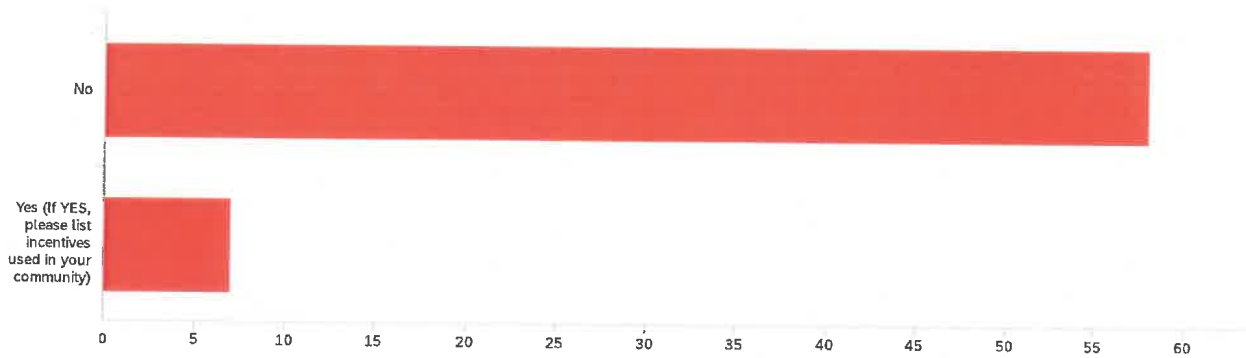| #	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you (or the organization you represent) market your community to potential, current and digital remote workers?	1.00	2.00	1.28	0.45	0.20	65

#	Field	Choice Count	
1	No	72.31%	47
2	Yes	27.69%	18
			65

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q7 - Does your community use incentives to attract remote workers to relocate to your community?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Does your community use incentives to attract remote workers to relocate to your community? - Selected Choice	1.00	2.00	1.11	0.31	0.10	65

#	Field		Choice Count	
1	No		89.23%	58
2	Yes (If YES, please list incentives used in your community)		10.77%	7
				65

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q7_2_TEXT - Yes (If YES, please list incentives used in your community)

Yes (If YES, please list incentives used in your community)

10,000 move-in incentive

I am not sure?

The county has a relocation incentive for workers who move in and maintain residence in the county. It is available to both remote and traditional workers.

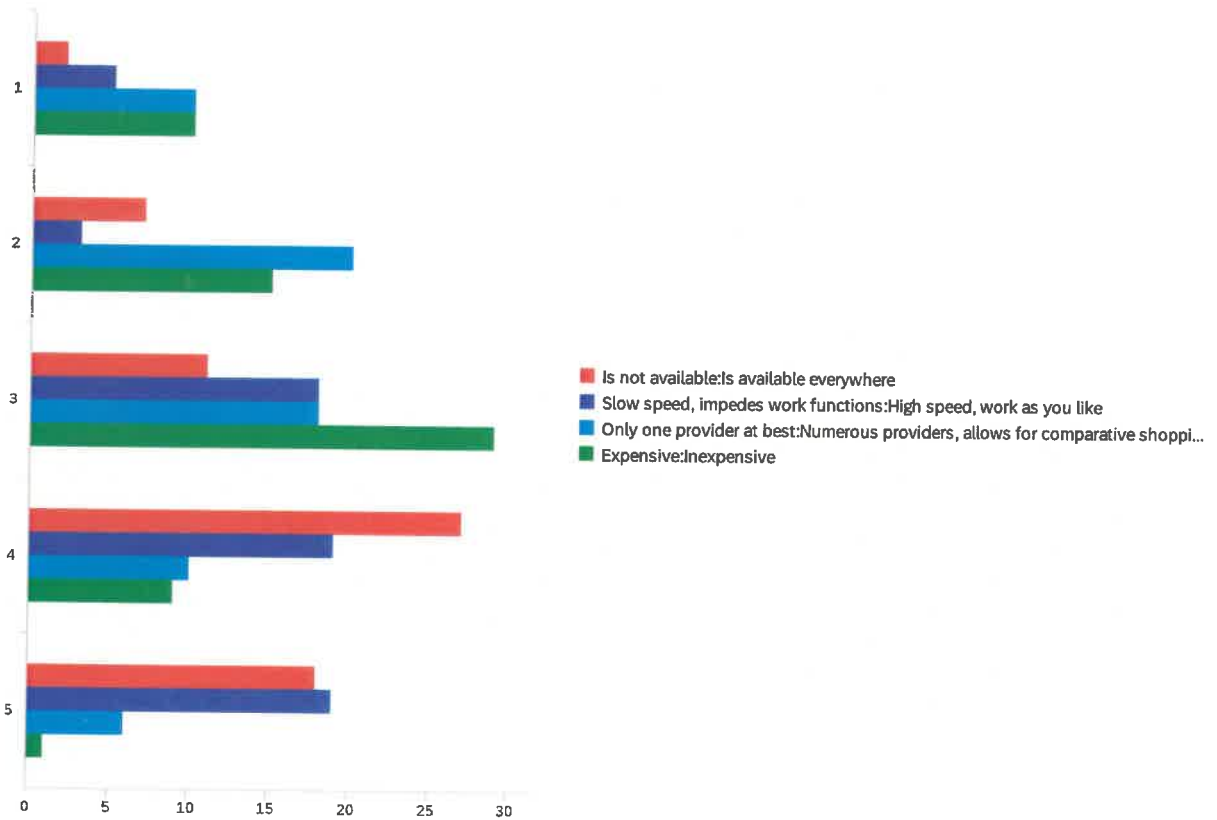I am not sure of the specifics, but I believe so.

School district USD ⬤ adoption of remote worker policy

Yes (If YES, please list incentives used in your community)

My actual answer is: I don't know.

Reduced taxes

# Q8 - Please characterize the high-speed internet access in your community.

Legend:
- Is not available:Is available everywhere
- Slow speed, impedes work functions:High speed, work as you like
- Only one provider at best:Numerous providers, allows for comparative shoppi...
- Expensive:Inexpensive

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Is not available:Is available everywhere	1.00	5.00	3.80	1.06	1.11	65
2	Slow speed, impedes work functions:High speed, work as you like	1.00	5.00	3.69	1.17	1.37	64
3	Only one provider at best:Numerous providers, allows for comparative shopping	1.00	5.00	2.72	1.18	1.39	64
4	Expensive:Inexpensive	1.00	5.00	2.63	0.96	0.92	64

#	Field	1		2		3		4		5		Total
1	Is not available:Is available everywhere	3.08%	2	10 77%	7	16 92%	11	41 54%	27	27 69%	18	65
2	Slow speed, impedes work functions:High speed, work as you like	7 81%	5	4 69%	3	28 13%	18	29 69%	19	29 69%	19	64
3	Only one provider at best:Numerous providers, allows for comparative shopping	15 63%	10	31 25%	20	28 13%	18	15 63%	10	9 38%	6	64

#	Field	1		2		3		4		5		Total
4	Expensive:Inexpensive	15.63%	10	23.44%	15	45.31%	29	14.06%	9	1.56%	1	64

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

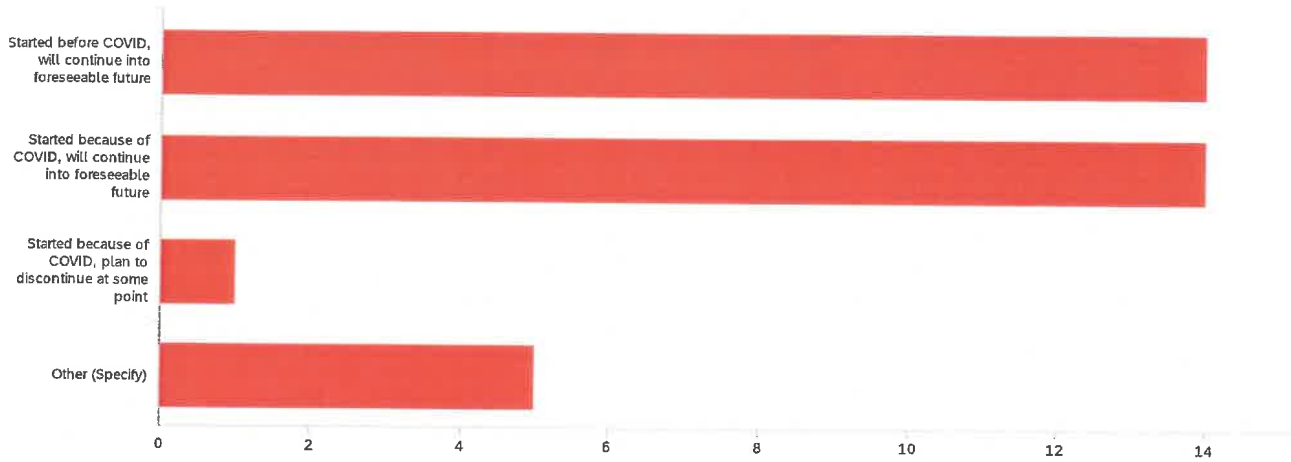# Q10 - Does your business or organization employee remote workers?
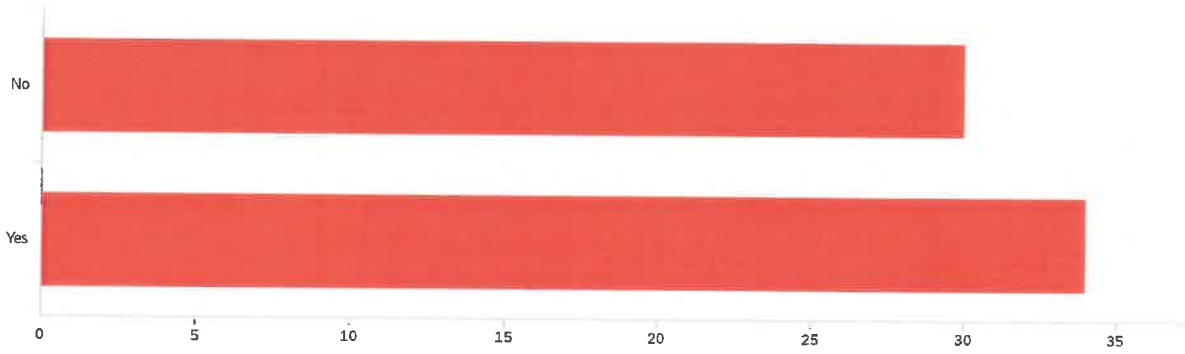
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Does your business or organization employee remote workers?	1.00	2.00	1.53	0.50	0.25	64

#	Field		Choice Count
1	No	46.88%	30
2	Yes	53.13%	34
			64

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q11 - What is the status of employing remote workers?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What is the status of employing remote workers? - Selected Choice	1.00	4.00	1.91	1.01	1.02	34

#	Field		Choice Count
1	Started before COVID, will continue into foreseeable future	41.18%	14
2	Started because of COVID, will continue into foreseeable future	41.18%	14
3	Started because of COVID, plan to discontinue at some point	2.94%	1
4	Other (Specify)	14.71%	5
			34

Showing rows 1 - 5 of 5

Q11_4_TEXT - Other (Specify)

Other (Specify)

Started because of COVID, will continue with a hybrid of in-person and remote work as deemed necessary for the task at hand.

Started after COVID after seeing success of other remote opportunities

Remote location better serves organization.

Other (Specify)

Very limited work by some personnel from home prior to COVID; many more since and numerous not being required to return on a regular 5 day a week basis.

I was able to move to Kansas from Tennessee because the opportunity for remote work

Q12 - Which of the following resources does your business or organization provide to support remote work? (check all that apply)
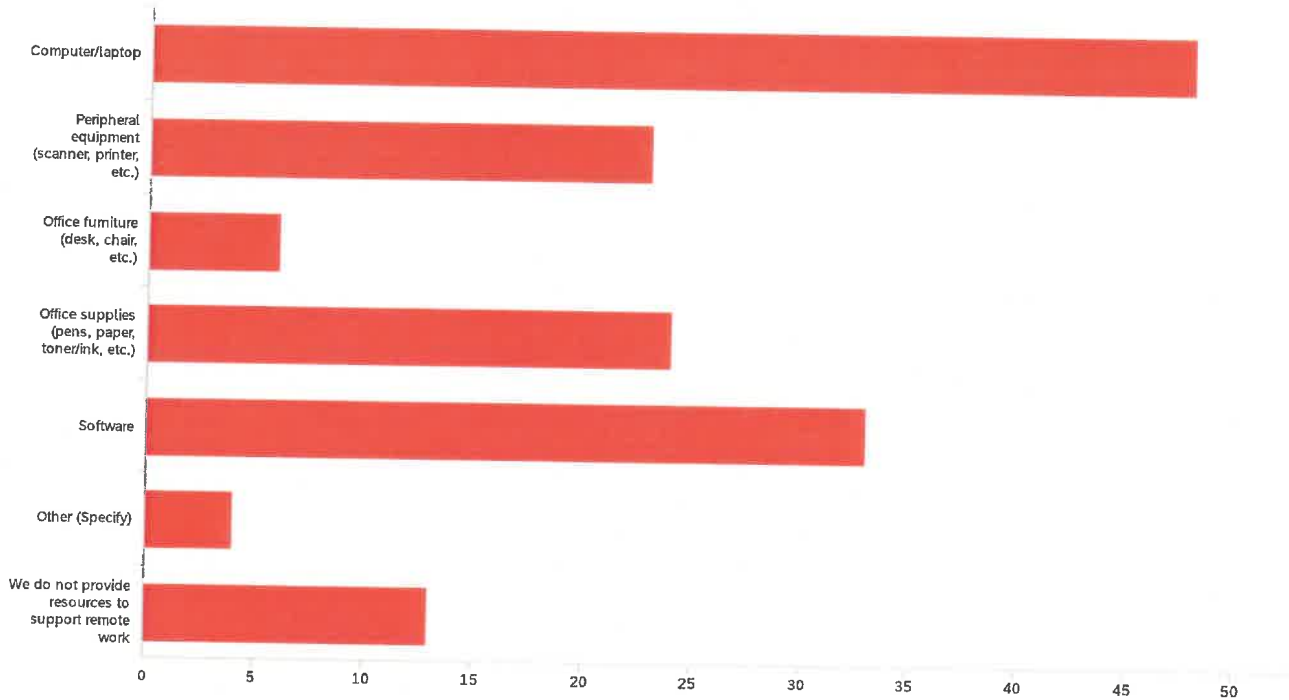
#	Field		Choice Count
1	Computer/laptop	31.79%	48
2	Peripheral equipment (scanner, printer, etc.)	15.23%	23
3	Office furniture (desk, chair, etc.)	3.97%	6
4	Office supplies (pens, paper, toner/ink, etc.)	15.89%	24
5	Software	21.85%	33
6	Other (Specify)	2.65%	4
7	We do not provide resources to support remote work	8.61%	13
			151

Showing rows 1 - 8 of 8

Q12_6_TEXT - Other (Specify)

Other (Specify)

Stipend for portion of internet, cell, and computer

Other (Specify)

During COVID only

cell phone

VPN Remote access

Which of the following resources does your business or organization provide to support remote work? (check all that apply)

Other (Specify)	4	2.90%
Software	33	23.91%
Office supplies (pens, paper, toner/ink, etc.)	24	17.39%
Office furniture (desk, chair, etc.)	6	4.35%
Peripheral equipment (scanner, printer, etc.)	23	16.67%
Computer/laptop	48	34.78%

Which of the following resources does your business or organization provide to support remote work? (check all that apply)

Category	Value
Computer/laptop	48
Peripheral equipment (scanner, printer, etc.)	23
Office furniture (desk, chair, etc.)	6
Office supplies (pens, paper, toner/ink, etc.)	24
Software	33
Other (Specify)	4

0   10   20   30   40   50   60
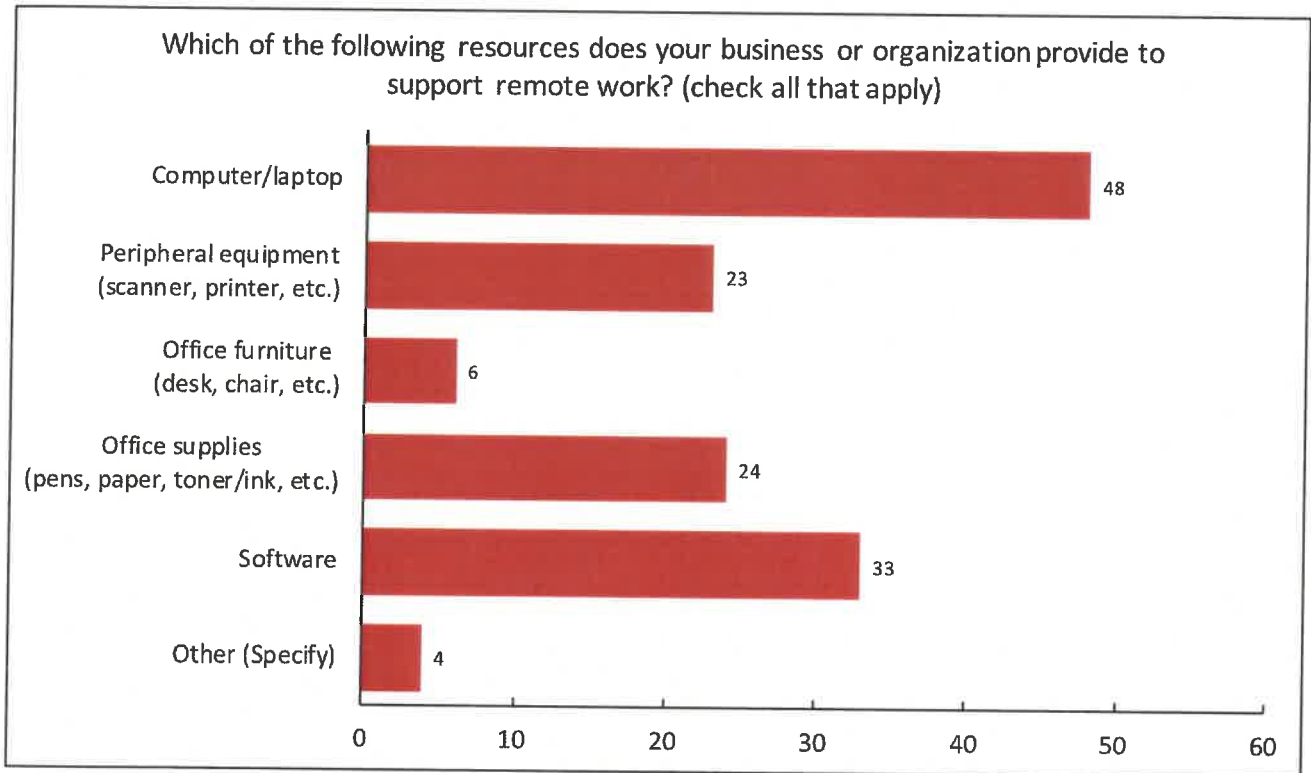
Q13 - With what degree of success has or is your organization implementing remote work?
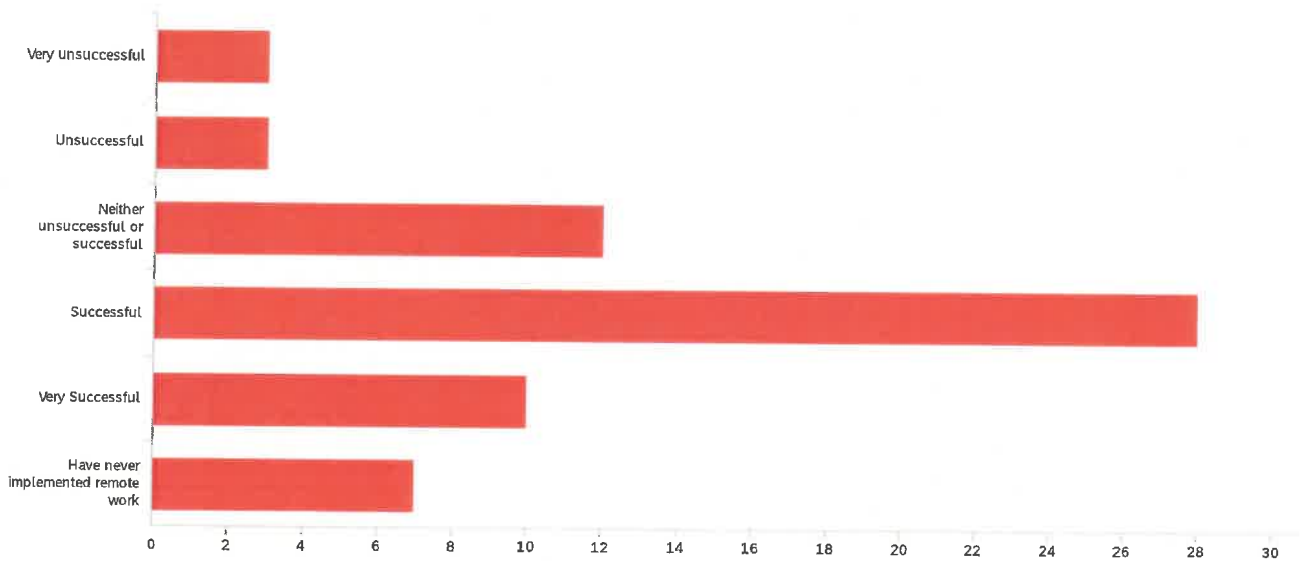
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	With what degree of success has or is your organization implementing remote work?	1.00	6.00	3.95	1.19	1.41	63

#	Field		Choice Count
1	Very unsuccessful	4.76%	3
2	Unsuccessful	4.76%	3
3	Neither unsuccessful or successful	19.05%	12
4	Successful	44.44%	28
5	Very Successful	15.87%	10
6	Have never implemented remote work	11.11%	7
			63

Showing rows 1 - 7 of 7

With what degree of success has or is your organization implementing remote work?

Very unsuccessful	3	4.76%	5.36%
Unsuccessful	3	4.76%	5.36%
Neither unsuccessful or successful	12	19.05%	21.43%
Successful	28	44.44%	50.00%
Very successful	10	15.87%	17.86%

With what degree of success has or is your organization implementing remote work?
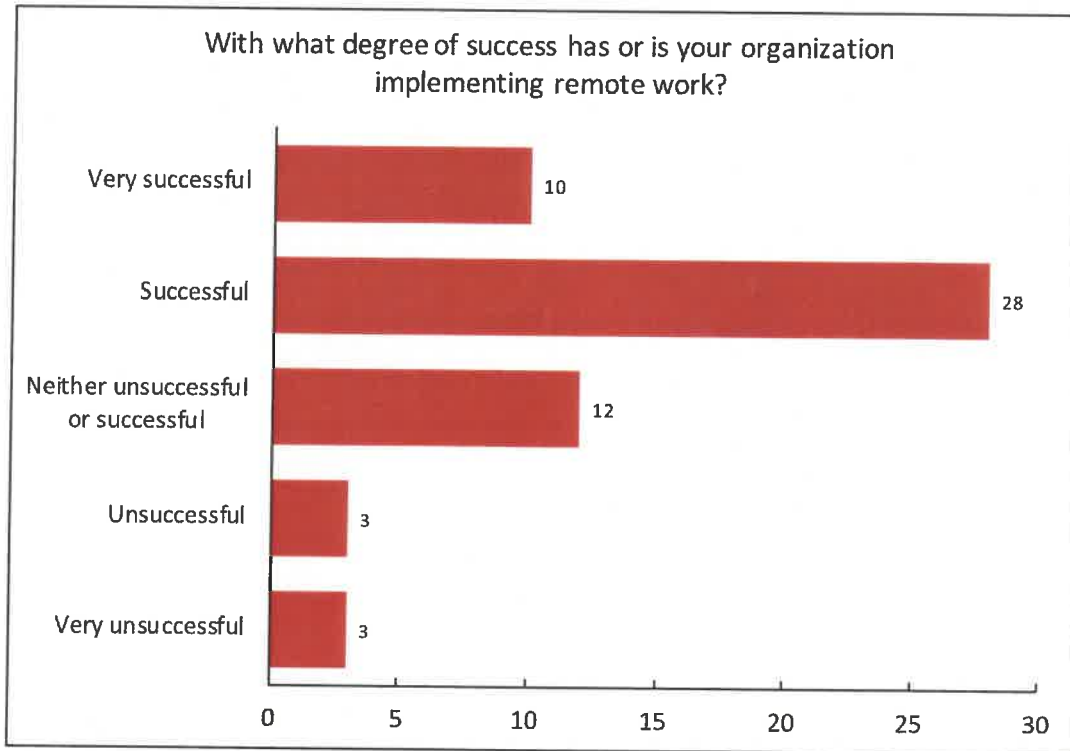
Q15 - What percentage of your workers are

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Fully remote	0.00	100.00	18.97	31.70	1005.01	60
2	Hybrid	0.00	100.00	22.60	32.29	1042.45	60
3	Fully on-site	0.00	100.00	58.43	40.46	1637.41	60

Q16 - Would you consider employing remote workers if you do not currently?
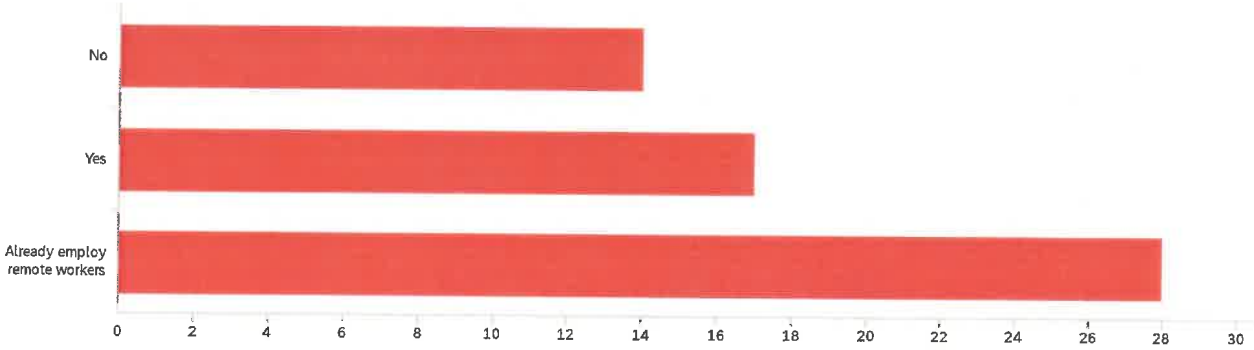
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Would you consider employing remote workers if you do not currently?	1.00	3.00	2.24	0.81	0.66	59

#	Field	Choice Count	
1	No	23.73%	14
2	Yes	28.81%	17
3	Already employ remote workers	47.46%	28
			59

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

Q17 - Since you already employ remote workers, how do you advertise the position and connect with prospective candidates and applicants?

Since you already employ remote workers, how do you advertise the position...

We have not hired anyone since transitioning to hybrid. N/A

personal contacts

Social media, newspapers and online resources

Self identified applicants

online job sites

Our approach is similar to hiring for traditional roles.

We advertise positions on LinkedIN, various job lists and our online presence.

Online

Advertise online with website, social media, and Indeed. Also listed at university's in the area.

I have not yet had to advertise any of the positions that are currently remote or hybrid. However, I don't imagine the recruiting strategy being all that different if/when we do.

These were existing employees that were coding related that due to Covid or lack of daycare, we negotiated a work from home option

don't know

word of mouth at this point

State of Kansas

LinkedIn, Facebook, refereals

My company employs remote workers and advertise various ways online

remote option not part of recruitment

company website

Promote hybrid as an option when interviewing - up to two days per week remote

College website; indeed; LinkedIn

Since you already employ remote workers, how do you advertise the position...

We using an online hiring board and advertise positions as remote and/or hybrid.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn

Indeed, facebook

Q18 - Since you already employ remote workers, what geographic considerations or limitations do you have for remote work applicants?

Since you already employ remote workers, what geographic considerations or...

Must live in the county

must live within the region

If applicable, a boundary is set, but for the most part positions are open statewide

None

none, but prefer Kansans.

We approach new hires as on-site staff. Our remote/hybrid staff have shifted to that after having been on-site - having learned our culture.

We allow remote work, but employees must reside within state of Kansas.

They need to be in the state and able to travel to the office and in-person events

We ask them to be within a 2 hour drive of our base location in Lawrence, KS to attend events and meetings.

This depends on the responsibilities of the position. For some there are very few limitations, others would need to stay within an assigned district or portion of the State of Kansas.

Preferable living in the region as to attend staff mtgs.

state residents

none at present

None

None that I know of

When I applied I had to submit and internet speed test and meet requirements

must come in to work at least partly

just need high speed internet and cell phone service

We only have a hybrid situation so employees must be willing to travel to local offices

Must live in the local area as no position is 100% remote.

Since you already employ remote workers, what geographic considerations or...
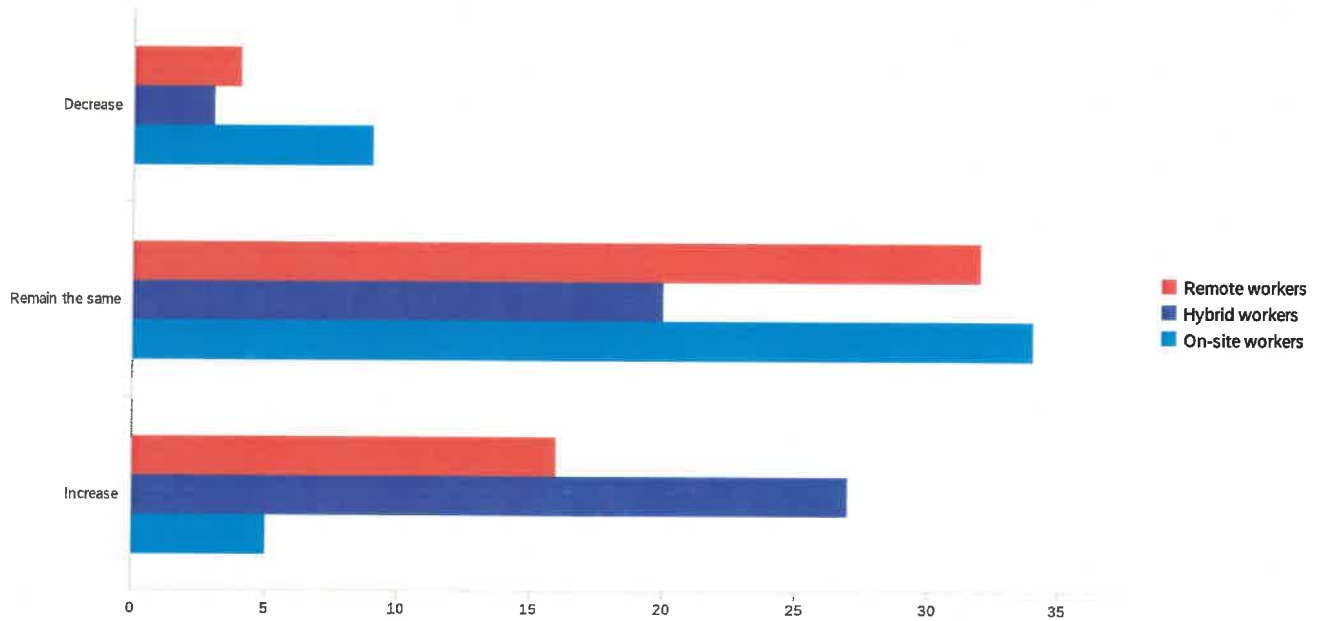
Must live in Kansas

Must reside in the state of KS

Must be in the state of Kansas

Within state of Kansas

Q19 - 12. In the future, what do you see happening regarding the number of remote, on-site, and hybrid workers in your organization?


#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Remote workers	1.00	3.00	2.23	0.58	0.33	52
2	Hybrid workers	1.00	3.00	2.48	0.61	0.37	50
3	On-site workers	1.00	3.00	1.92	0.53	0.28	48

#	Field	Decrease		Remain the same		Increase		Total
1	Remote workers	7.69%	4	61.54%	32	30.77%	16	52
2	Hybrid workers	6.00%	3	40.00%	20	54.00%	27	50
3	On-site workers	18.75%	9	70.83%	34	10.42%	5	48

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q20 - What type of skills does your organization value when choosing/hiring remote workers?
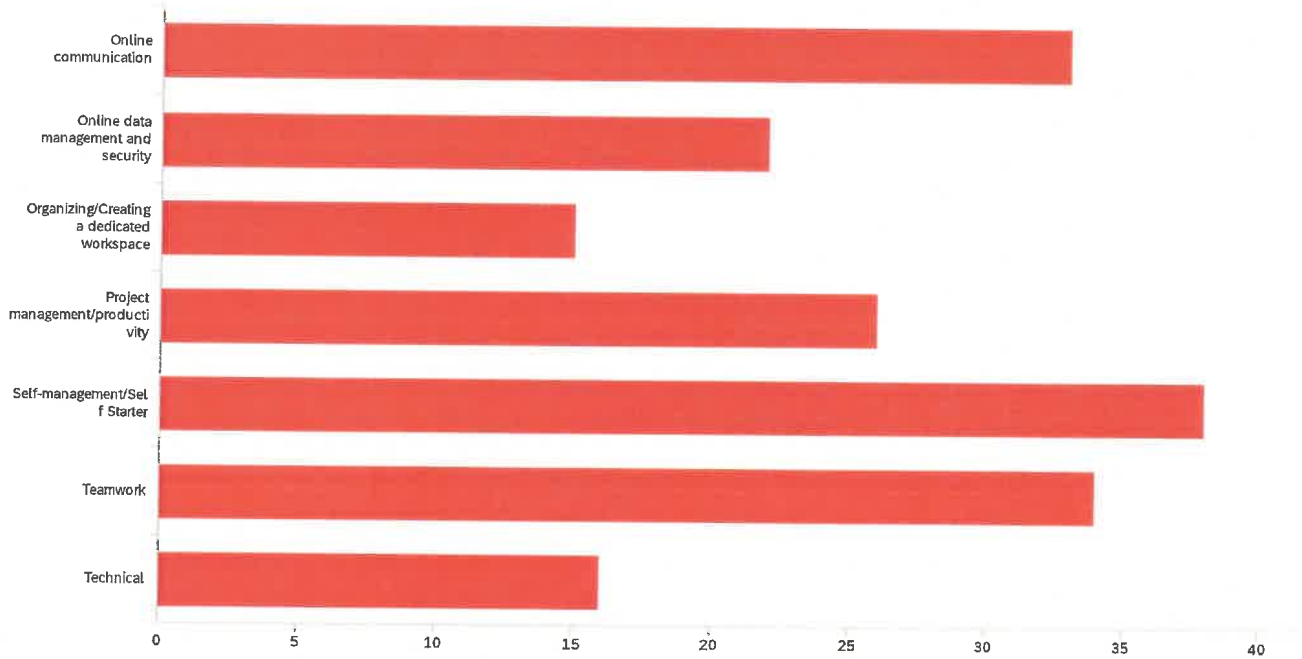
#	Field	Choice Count	
1	Online communication	17.93%	33
2	Online data management and security	11.96%	22
3	Organizing/Creating a dedicated workspace	8.15%	15
4	Project management/productivity	14.13%	26
5	Self-management/Self Starter	20.65%	38
6	Teamwork	18.48%	34
7	Technical	8.70%	16
			184

Showing rows 1 - 8 of 8

Q21 - Does your business or organization provide remote work training for remote workers?
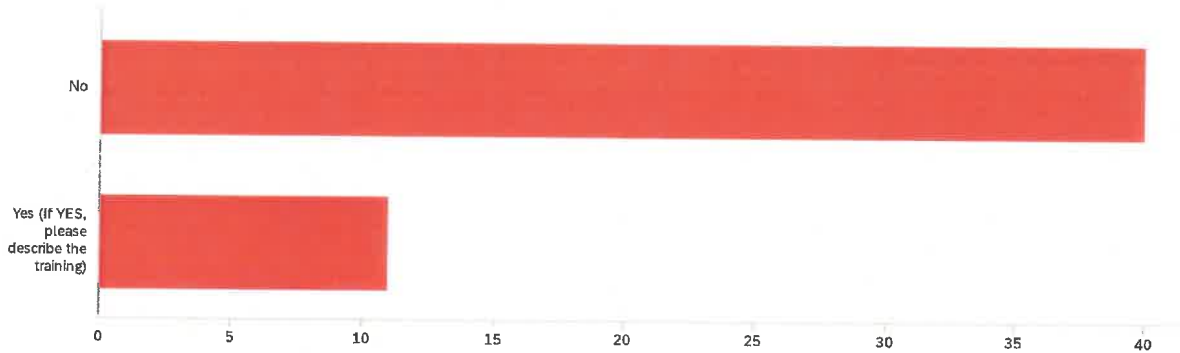
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Does your business or organization provide remote work training for remote workers? - Selected Choice	1.00	2.00	1.22	0.41	0.17	51

#	Field		Choice Count
1	No	78.43%	40
2	Yes (If YES, please describe the training)	21.57%	11
			51

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q21_2_TEXT - Yes (If YES, please describe the training)

Yes (If YES, please describe the training)

Employees are brought on site for onboarding.

We have access to Rural & Remote through NWKEICI

We will if needed. We do provide orientation, but only training if needed.

Training with I.T. And their dept head.

Online training
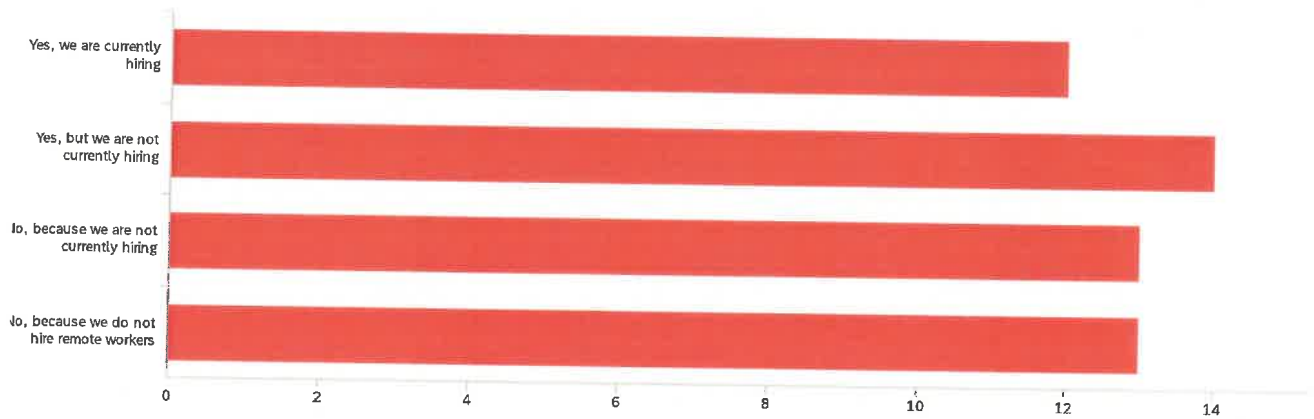
Yes (If YES, please describe the training)

I am one of the training coaches, training is via zoom and Microsoft teams

ROI

ROI

USU program

Q22 - If there are qualified remote workers, would you be interested in hiring them?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	If there are qualified remote workers, would you be interested in hiring them?	1.00	4.00	2.52	1.10	1.21	52

#	Field	Choice Count	
1	Yes, we are currently hiring	23 08%	12
2	Yes, but we are not currently hiring	26.92%	14
3	No, because we are not currently hiring	25 00%	13
4	No, because we do not hire remote workers	25 00%	13
			52

Showing rows 1 - 5 of 5

If there are qualified remote workers, would you be interested in hiring them?

|			
No, because we are not currently hiring	13	25.00%	33.33%
Yes, but we are not currently hiring	14	26.92%	35.90%
Yes, we are currently hiring	12	23.08%	30.77%
No, because we do not hire remote workers	13	25.00%	

If there are qualified remote workers, would you be interested in hiring them?
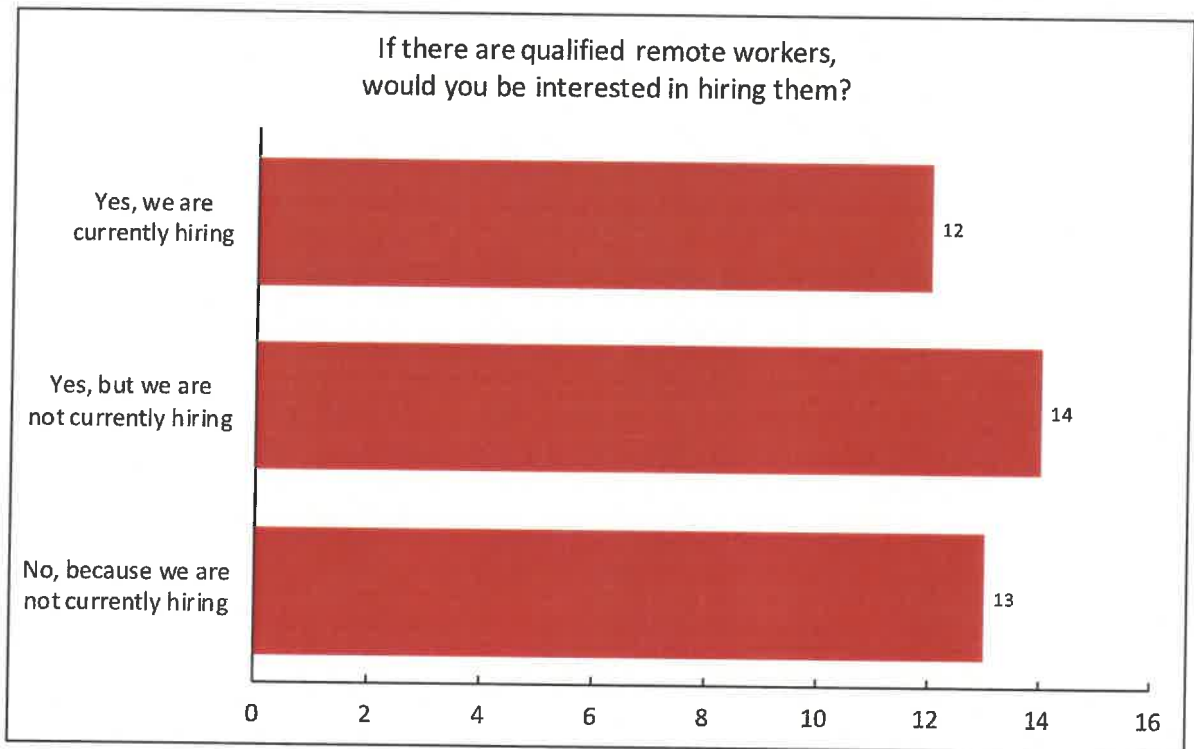
Q23 - Did you know there are remote work certification opportunities for remote workers (both professional and leadership positions)?
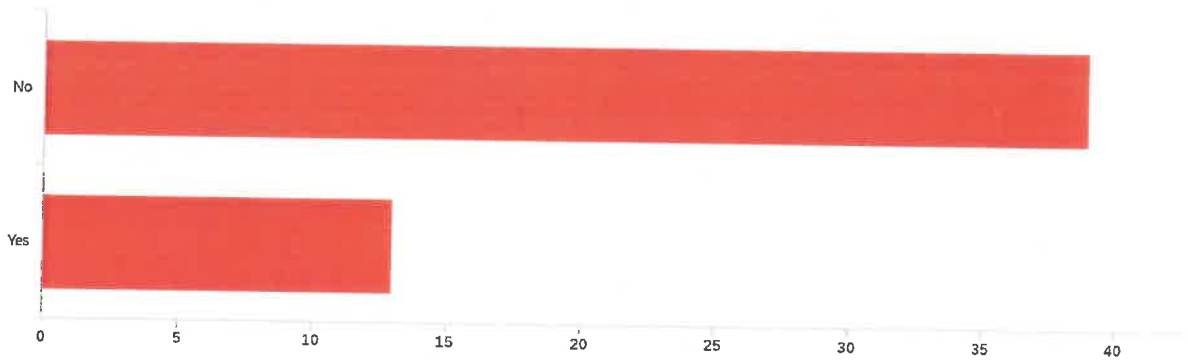
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Did you know there are remote work certification opportunities for remote workers (both professional and leadership positions)?	1.00	2.00	1.25	0.43	0.19	52

#	Field	Choice Count	
1	No	75 00%	39
2	Yes	25 00%	13
			52

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

End of Report