

Missouri Economy Indicators

Work Activities of Home Internet Users

VOL. 4, ISSUE 10, 29 AUGUST 2023

The internet is in high demand, according to new data from a [2023 Missouri survey](#). The survey found that most households had an internet subscription (87%), while less than one-tenth either did not have internet service or didn't know if it was available (9%). Only a small portion of households chose not to purchase available internet services (4%), largely due to affordability concerns among those with lower incomes.

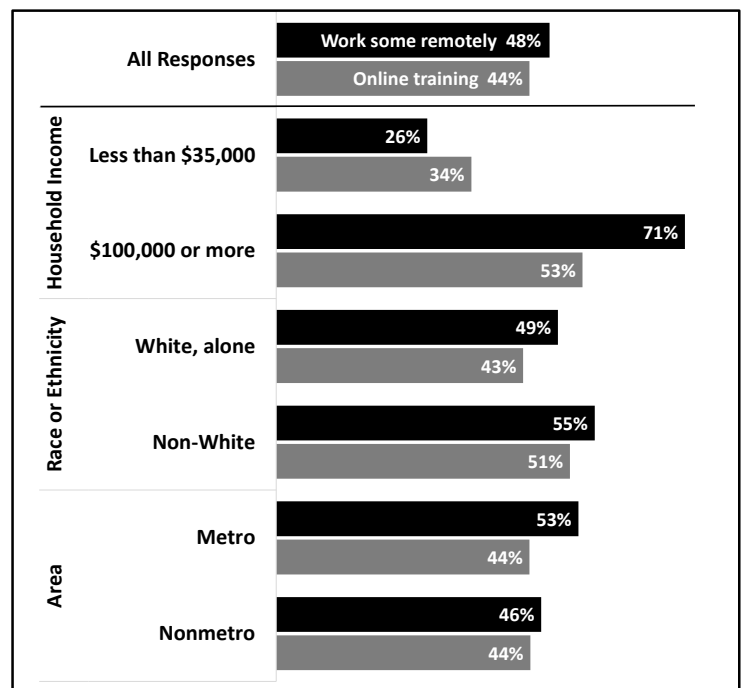
Supported by Missouri's Office of Broadband Development, the survey asked households about internet access, training interest and common activities such as work tasks. Three out of four respondents (76%) used the internet for work-related activity, but tasks varied among population groups. The top work activity was teleconferencing, completed by more than half of households in the past twelve months (55%), followed by working remotely at least one day a week (48%), taking online training courses (44%) and job searching (32%).

Higher Income Households More Likely to Work Remotely

Nearly half of responding households with home internet worked remotely at least one day a week. As household income increased, so did the likelihood of remote work: 71% of households with \$100,000 or more in income worked remotely, compared to 26% of households with income below \$35,000. Over half of Non-White households reported working remotely (55%), 6 percentage points higher than White households (49%). Nonmetro, or rural, households were less likely to work remotely than metro counterparts.

Forty-four percent of responding households used home internet to take online training courses. Just over half of higher-income and Non-White households used the internet for online training.

Internet Usage for Remote Work or Completing Online Training Courses, by Selected Groups



Source: MU Extension graphic of 2023 Missouri Internet Survey data. "All responses" figures were weighted by household income.

Fast, reliable internet service is important for completing work activities from home. Additionally, having a personal computer is critical to realizing the broader benefits of home internet access. Households with home internet service and only smartphones or entertainment consoles were much less likely to complete a work activity than those with a personal computer; one-fifth of smartphone-only households took online training courses (20%) compared to the survey average (44%).

Running Business Operations from Home

Just over one in five households (22%) used their home internet to run a business, which included selling items online or gig work. Understandably, self-employed business owners were very likely to manage business operations from home (72%). Just over one in four households in nonmetro areas used the internet for business operations, compared to one in five metro area households.

Households without home internet were asked about work activity expectations once they had service. Households without internet were much more hopeful that they could run a business from home (38%) compared to households with service (22%). One in four households with \$100,000 or more in income used the internet to run a business, but nearly half (47%) anticipated doing this once they had internet service.

While expectations to run a business – whether selling things online for extra income or being self-employed – are overly optimistic, it shows an interest that can inform training needs. Nearly one in five households

were interested in training for using the internet to start or manage a business. Increasing this entrepreneurial behavior benefits local economies as residents bring in extra income from operating businesses at home.

Additional Resources

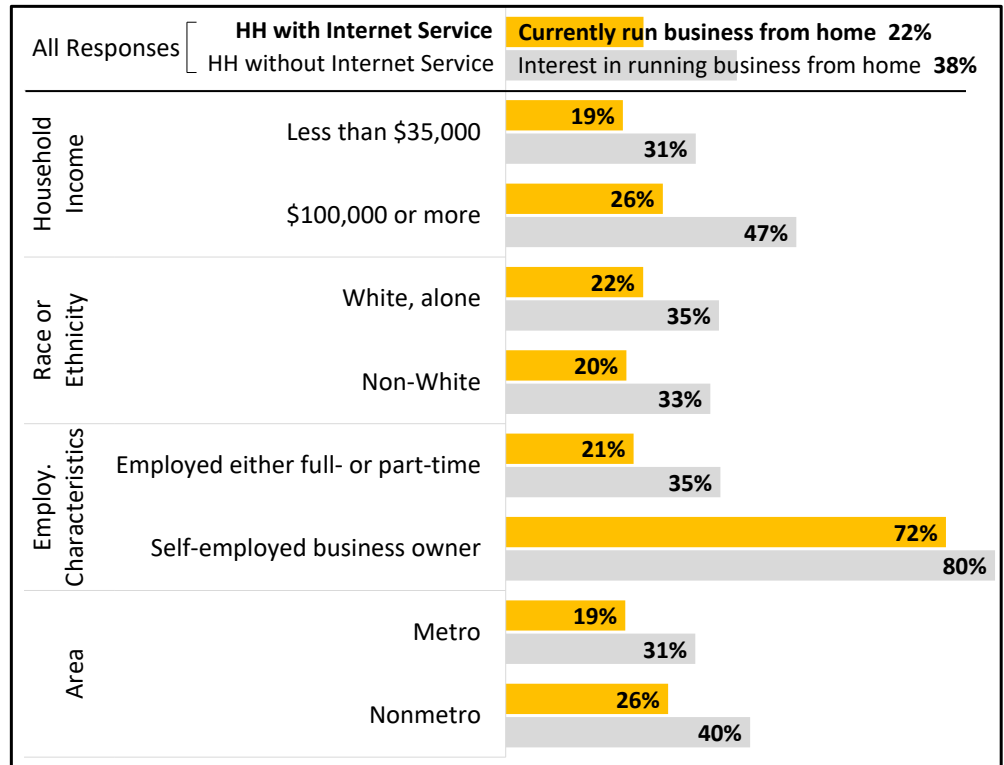
- Missouri [Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) offer free resources and counseling to Missourians interested in starting or growing a business.
- Looking for help in accessing and using internet services? The [Digital Asset Map](#), available on the Missouri Broadband Resource Rail, provides information on public Wi-Fi locations, classes and other programs located around the state to assist citizens and businesses with internet technologies.

All Missouri Economy Indicators briefs in this series are available at <http://muext.us/MissouriEconomyIndicators>

Author: Alan Spell, Assistant Extension Professor, alan.spell@missouri.edu

Households Using the Internet to Run a Business

Compared to Expectations from Households (HH) Without Internet



Source: MU Extension graphic of 2023 Missouri Internet Survey data. "All responses" figures were weighted by household income.