

Missouri Economy Indicators

Remote Work Trends

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Remote work has captured the imagination of people and communities, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Discussions about the future of remote work have become pervasive. Many employees have expressed a desire to work remotely at least occasionally after the pandemic ends, and communities hope to attract this population. This brief explores current trends related to remote work in Missouri.

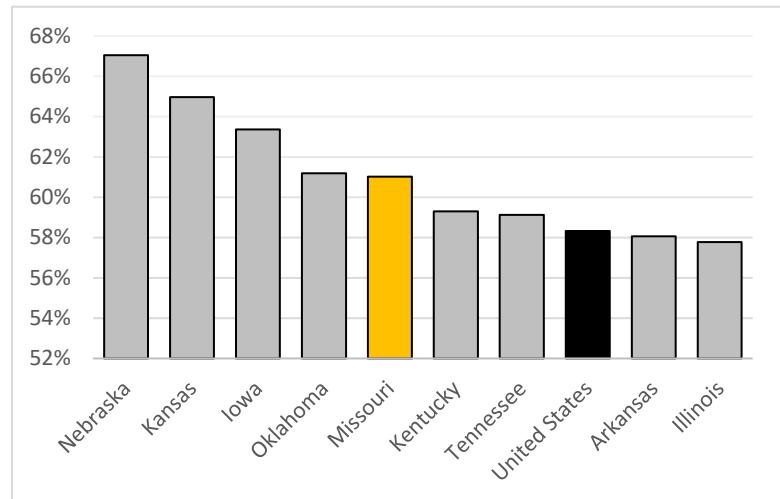
On-site work is the norm

The COVID-19 pandemic required many workers to quickly pivot to remote work. This pivot raised many questions about whether remote work could be the future of work.

U.S. Census Bureau data demonstrate that remote work increased during the pandemic, but full-time remote work is not an option for most Missourians. More than 60% of Missourians report living in a household where at least one person worked on-site at a workplace in the past seven days.

Percentage of Adults Living in Households Where Someone Worked On-site at a Workplace in the Past 7 Days

Average from July 21-Oct. 11, 2021



Source: MU Extension graphic using data from U.S. Census Bureau

Most Missourians Still Go to Work

[U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey](#) data describe the coronavirus pandemic's social and economic impacts on households. This series of surveys— which started in April 2020 and has continued through this fall— includes questions about how people work.

A recent pulse survey collected data on whether someone in a household worked on-site in the past seven days. The resulting data showed that, relative to the nation (58%) a slightly greater proportion of Missourians worked on-site. Throughout the survey period, the percentage of Missourians who reported someone working on-site in the past seven days ranged from 58.3% for Sept. 15-27, 2021, to 63.7% for Sept. 1-13, 2021.

Regionally, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Oklahoma all had higher rates of on-site work than Missouri during the period of July 21 to Oct. 11, 2021. In all states, most adult residents lived in households where someone had worked on-site in the past seven days.

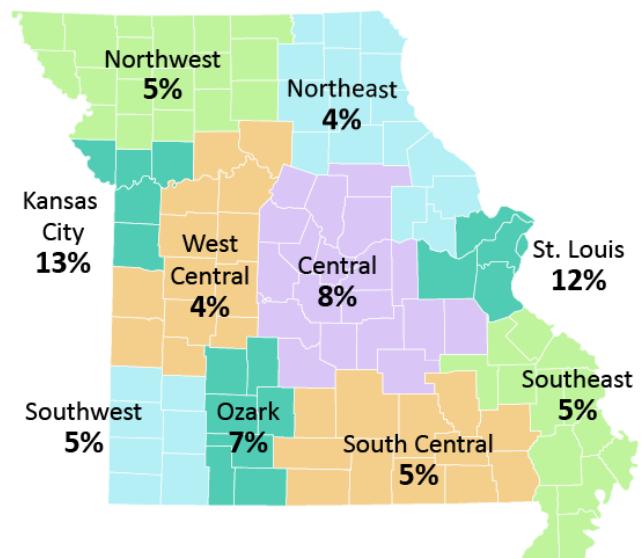
Telework Potential Varies Across the State

The 2021 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [Occupational Requirements Survey](#) measured whether different occupations could complete critical job functions while teleworking. This BLS survey focused on how well different occupations can perform permanent telework, which is different from the ad hoc remote work arrangements that have been common during the coronavirus pandemic.

The BLS data showed that only three major occupational groups—business and financial operations occupations, computer and mathematical occupations, and legal occupations—had greater than 33% of respondents say that telework was a permanent option for their jobs. Only 9.6% of all workers indicated that permanent telework was a realistic option.

Comparing the jobs that can more readily accommodate remote work with [occupational data](#) from Missouri's workforce areas shows where permanent telework options are most likely to impact Missouri. The workforce regions with the most jobs that could be impacted by telework are Kansas City and St. Louis. Due to their mix of jobs, many rural workforce regions are less likely to be impacted by telework. Consistent with national trends, nearly 10% of jobs involve critical tasks that can be completed while teleworking. Much of the work Missourians do—and the state's future work needs—is likely to remain tied to occupations with limited remote work possibilities.

Percent of Missouri Jobs Most Able to Complete Critical Tasks While Teleworking by Workforce Region



Source: MU Extension graphic using data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and MERIC.

Additional Resources

- The commercial real estate firm CBRE [analyzed migration patterns](#) using U.S. Postal Service data from address-change requests in 2020. In terms of how far residents were moving in 2020, the research found the biggest increase for moves compared with 2019 were those between 100 miles and 500 miles from the previous location.
- EMSI examined [how communities attract and retain remote workers](#). Incentives designed to attract remote workers receive a lot of [good](#) and [not-so-good](#) attention. The EMSI report highlights the importance of infrastructure and community building for creating remote-friendly communities.

All Missouri Economy Indicators briefs in this series are available at tinyurl.com/ExceedEconomyIndicators

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