



2013

# STATE OF THE COMMUTE

*"At-a-Glance" Survey Section*

FROM THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON DC REGION

*Telework*



This is a “At-a-Glance” section from the 2013 State of the Commute (SOC) Report showing key figures and tables on Telework in the Washington, DC metropolitan region. To view the full report, go to [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

The SOC survey explored respondents’ telework experience. For purposes of this survey, telecommuters were defined as “*wage and salary employees who at least occasionally work at home or at a telework or satellite center during an entire work day, instead of traveling to their regular work place.*”

This section presents these results for 2013 and, in some tables, results for 2010, 2007, 2004, and 2001, but a few points on the definition of telework should be noted.

The definition presented above was used in the 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013 SOC surveys. But the definition was changed in 2004 to limit telework to arrangements that reduced vehicle trips; the 2001 definition had interpreted telework more broadly. To enable a valid comparison of later years’ surveys with the 2001 data, the 2001 telework results were revised to exclude respondents who would not have been counted as telecommuters under the current definition. These adjusted data are used in all tables that show 2001 results.

The 2001 SOC definition described telecommuters as, “*wage and salary employees who at least occasionally work at home or at a location other than their central work place during their normal work hours.*” This definition would have included workers who work at client sites outside of the Washington region and workers, such as sales or equipment repair staff, who travel to multiple customer locations during the course of the day. The 2001 definition also could have included respondents who work a portion of the normal workday at home, for example while waiting for a delivery, but travel to the regular workplace for another part of the day. These situations are not generally considered telecommuting for transportation-related purposes, thus the telework definition was rewritten in 2004 to exclude these cases and they would not have been counted as telework in 2013, 2010, 2007, or 2004.

## CURRENT AND POTENTIAL TELEWORK

### Respondents who Currently Telecommute

Respondents were read the above definition of telework and asked if they would consider themselves telecommuters based on this definition. One-quarter (25%) of all regional workers said they telecommute, either regularly or occasionally. This represented about 675,000 workers region-wide.

Telecommuters accounted for a higher percentage, 27%, of all regional commuters, that is, workers who travel to a main work location on non-telework days. Using this base of commuters excludes workers who are self-employed and for whom home is their only workplace. These workers do not have an outside work location, thus never make commute trips. The calculation of telecommuters

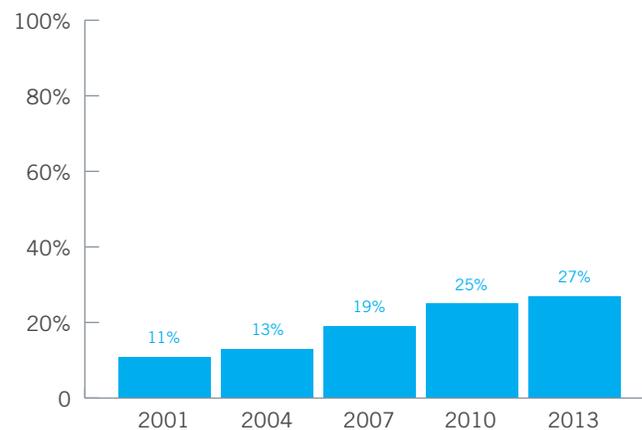
as a proportion of commuters reflects a more realistic picture of the role of telework in eliminating commute trips, thus is relevant for assessing the travel and air quality benefits of telework.

The 27% telework percentage represents a steady growth from the 2001 survey, when only 11% of employees telecommuted. The percentage growth also equals significant growth in the total number of telecommuters, as shown below:

Year	Number of telecommuters
2001	290,000
2004	318,000
2007	456,000
2010	600,000
2013	675,000

### Percentage of Commuters who Telecommute—2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013

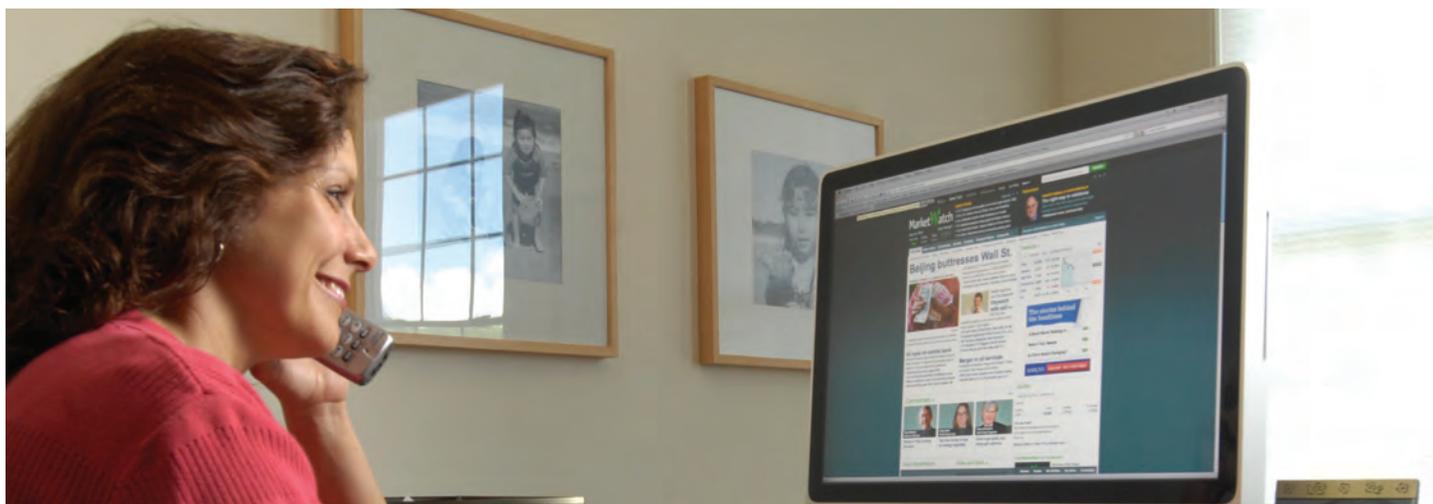
(2001 n = 6,924, 2004 n = 6,851, 2007 n = 6,168, 2010 n = 6,050, 2013 n = 5,892)



### Interest in Telework

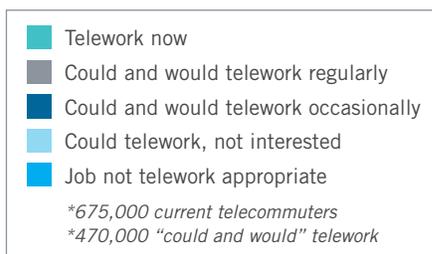
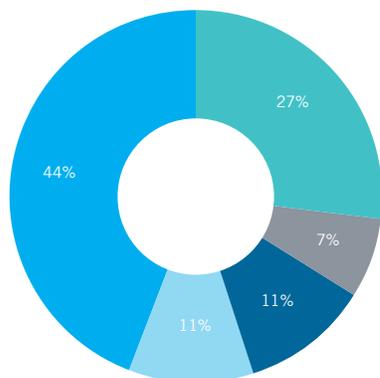
Commuters who work at a location outside their homes and who do not telecommute now were asked if their job responsibilities would allow them to work at a location other than their main work place, at least occasionally. Approximately 39% said it would be possible. These respondents were then asked if they would want to telecommute. More than six in ten said they would be interested, on either an occasional basis (38%) or a regular basis (26%). These interested respondents equal about 25% of non-telecommuters and 18% of all commuters.

These results suggest that even as the number of telecommuters has grown in the Washington metropolitan region, additional telework potential exists. The next figure summarizes the telework status of all respondents who are “commuters,” that is, not self-employed/work at home full-time.



### Telework Status Distribution

(n = 5,892)



About 675,000 regional commuters (27%) currently telecommute. An additional 18% of commuters "could and would" telecommute, that is, they have job responsibilities that could be done away from the main work place and they would be interested in teleworking, if given an opportunity. These commuters represent about 470,000 potential telecommuters. The remaining respondents said they would not be interested in teleworking (11%) or that their job responsibilities could only be performed at the main workplace (44%).

This table presents the results, with additional comparisons for current and potential telework percentages measured in 2010,

2007, and in 2004. The percentage of current plus potential telework has grown since 2004, from 29% to 45%.

### Summary of Current and Potential Telework

Respondents who are not Self-Employed/Work at Home

Telework Status	2013 SOC Percentage (n = 5,892)	2010 SOC Percentage (n = 6,050)	2007 SOC Percentage (n = 6,168)	2004 SOC Percentage (n = 6,896)
<b>Currently telecommuting</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Not telecommuting</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>87%</b>
Job responsibilities allow telework and INTERESTED in telework ("could and would")	18%	21%	24%	16%
Job responsibilities allow telework, but NOT INTERESTED in telework	11%	9%	6%	6%
Job responsibilities would NOT allow telework	44%	45%	52%	65%

Interestingly, the percentage of commuters who said their jobs are incompatible with telework dropped from 2004 to 2013. Because it seems unlikely that the composition of jobs changed substantially in the region, these results suggest a shift in commuters' ability, or perception of their ability, to perform their work at home or another location away from their primary work location. It appears that a larger share of commuters believe they could telecommute, at least occasionally. This could be related to increasing availability of communication and computer technology, such as broadband internet, lower cost telephone options, and computer networking, or perhaps from greater understanding of telework options and a broader definition of what responsibilities are "telework-compatible."

## Telework by Personal Characteristics

Telework is not distributed equally by demographic group. This table compares the incidence of telework by respondents' sex, ethnic group, age, income, commute distance, and home and work areas. The third column shows the percentage of each demographic group who telecommute today (e.g., 26% of men and 27% of women). The last column shows the percentage of commuters in the group who "could and would" telecommute if given the opportunity (e.g., additional 22% of respondents who are between 25 to 34 years old). Note that this should be compared against the 18% of all commuters in the region who "could and would" telecommute.

### Teleworkers by Demographic and Travel Characteristic

Demographic Group	All Commuters		
	(n=___)*	Percentage Who Currently Telecommute	Percentage who "could and would" Telecommute**
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	3,280	27%	18%
Male	3,035	26%	18%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>			
White	4,404	30%	18%
Asian	391	31%	20%
African-American	1,136	22%	20%
Hispanic	383	19%	16%
<b>Age</b>			
Under 25 years	189	6%	20%
25–34	664	25%	22%
35–44	1,317	30%	21%
45–54	1,879	28%	15%
55 or older	2,059	26%	15%
<b>Income</b>			
Less than \$30,000	209	5%	18%
\$30,000–\$59,999	532	8%	15%
\$60,000–\$99,999	888	18%	22%
\$100,000–\$139,999	1,259	26%	21%
\$140,000–\$179,999	839	34%	16%
\$180,000+	698	42%	23%

\* All respondents in the group, both telecommuters and non-telecommuters

\*\* Respondents whose job responsibilities would allow telework and who would be interested in telework

Some demographic groups telework more than do others. For example, 30% of Whites and Asians telecommute, compared with only 22% of African-Americans and 19% of Hispanics. Telework appears to increase with age up to the 35–44 years old group, peaking at 30%, then declines as age increases further. And, telework increases as income rises; 26% of workers with household incomes between \$100,000 and \$139,999 telecommute, compared with only about five

percent of workers with incomes below \$30,000 and eight percent of workers with incomes between \$30,000 and \$59,999.

As shown in the table (cont.), below, telework also increases with increasing commute distance. There are no significant differences in telework by home location, but respondents who work in the Inner Core and Middle Ring telecommute at a higher rate than do respondents who work in the Outer Ring.

### Teleworkers by Demographic and Travel Characteristics

Demographic Group	All Commuters		
	(n=___)*	Percentage Who Currently Telecommute	Percentage who "could and would" Telecommute**
<b>Commute Distance</b>			
Less than 5 miles	814	18%	17%
5–14 miles	1,765	25%	20%
15–39 miles	1,973	27%	20%
40 miles +	570	37%	18%
<b>Home Area</b>			
Inner Core	1,588	26%	19%
Middle Ring	1,611	27%	18%
Outer Ring	2,693	25%	18%
<b>Work Area</b>			
Inner Core	2,478	29%	20%
Middle Ring	1,925	27%	17%
Outer Ring	1,467	19%	20%

\* All respondents in the group, both telecommuters and non-telecommuters

\*\* Respondents whose job responsibilities would allow telework and who would be interested in telework, at least occasionally

The table also illustrates which groups have the greatest potential for future telework, that is, which groups would be most likely to telecommute in the future if given the opportunity. The last column in the table shows percentages of commuter who believe their job responsibilities would allow telework and who would like to telework. This is the group referred to as "could and would."

In general, the groups with the highest current use of telework show the greatest additional potential and groups with low current telework also show low potential. But some groups have noticeably higher potential than the 18% average. These include middle-income and high-income respondents (\$100,000 or more annual income) and respondents who are younger than 45 years of age.

## Telework by Employment Characteristics

The survey data also showed some differences in the telework and potential telework distribution by employment characteristics. These results are presented in the next table.



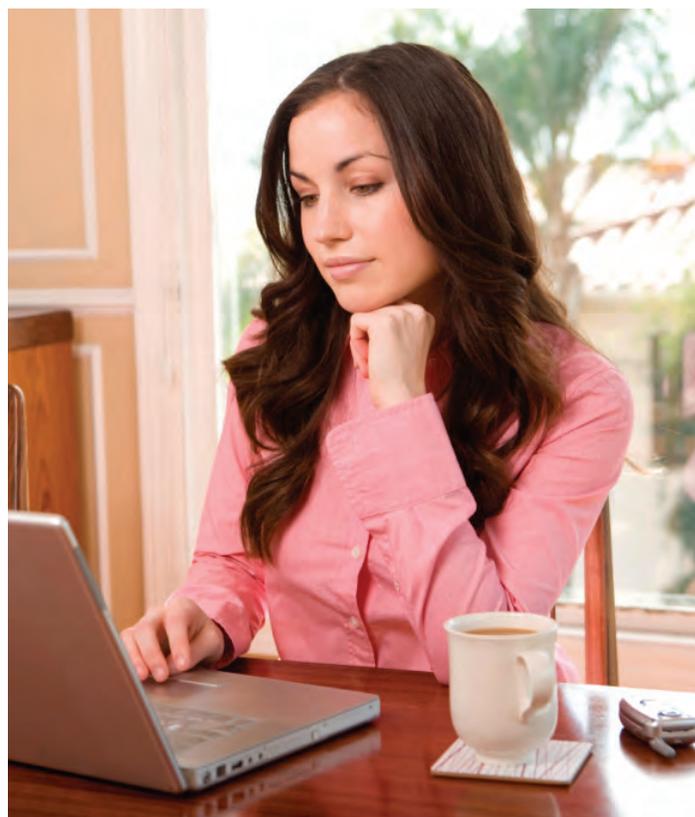
## Telework by Employment Characteristics

Demographic Group	All Commuters		
	(n=___)*	Percentage Who Currently Telecommute	Percentage who "could and would" Telecommute**
<b>Employer Type</b>			
Federal agency	1,417	38%	19%
Non-profit org.	625	27%	23%
Private employer	2,519	26%	19%
Self-employed	721	24%	7%
State/local agency	764	13%	16%
<b>Employer Size</b>			
1-25	1,427	17%	16%
26-100	1,146	18%	19%
101-250	651	25%	23%
251-999	798	30%	23%
1,000+	1,345	37%	20%
<b>Occupation</b>			
Technicians/related support	281	39%	27%
Professional	2,270	35%	17%
Executive, manager	1,234	34%	24%
Sales	346	21%	16%
Administrative support	711	16%	21%
Protective service	146	11%	11%
Precision craft, production	202	7%	10%
Service	241	6%	13%

\* All respondents in the group, both telecommuters and non-telecommuters  
 \*\* Respondents whose job responsibilities would allow telework and who would be interested in telework, at least occasionally

Federal agency employees telecommute at a rate (38%) much higher than the regional average and much higher than do employees who work for non-profit agencies (27%) private employers (26%), and state/local agencies (13%). Generally, use of telework increased with increasing employer size. Some occupations also have higher telework rates than average.

The table also illustrates the potential for telework among these employment groups. Again, the relative percentages of non-teleworkers who could and would telecommute if given the opportunity generally mirrors the relative percentages of respondents who telecommute in each group. A few groups do have higher potential than the 18% average. Two groups with sizeable telework potential are respondents who work for non-profit organizations and employees of mid-sized firms (employers with between 100 and 999 employees).



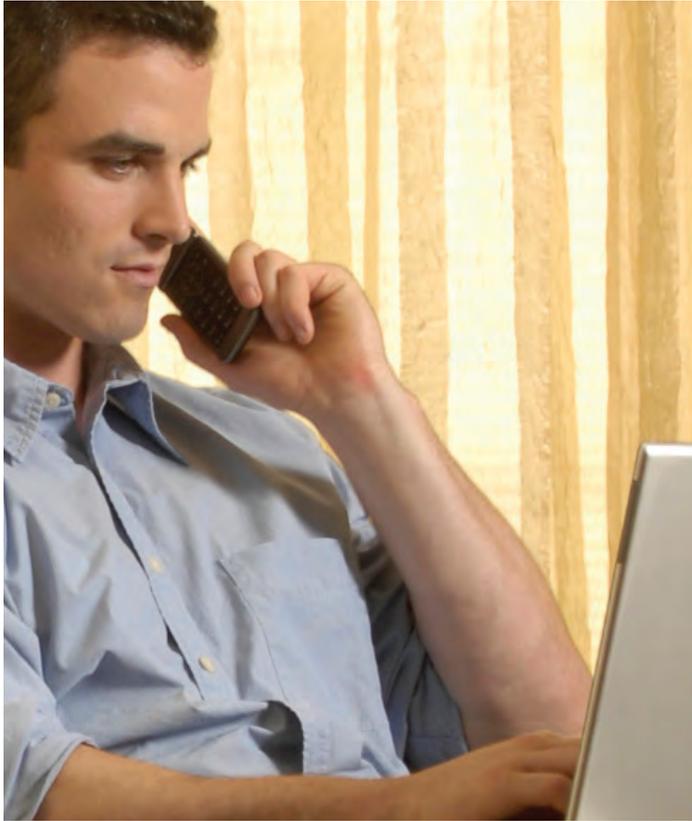
**38%** of Federal agency employees telecommute, non-profit agencies (27%) private employers (26%), and state/local agencies (13%).

### Sources of Telework Information

Respondents who telecommute were asked how they learned about telework and if they received telework information either from Commuter Connections or from an MWCOC web site. The most frequently mentioned sources are shown in the next figure.

The largest source of information, by far, is "special program at work/ employer," named by more than seven in ten (73%) of respondents. This percentage is about the same as in the 2010 survey (71%), but considerably higher than in the 2007 survey, in which only 55% cited their employer as the source of information, and higher still compared with the 34% who gave this answer in 2004.

Ten percent of teleworkers said they received telework information directly from Commuter Connections or MWCOC.



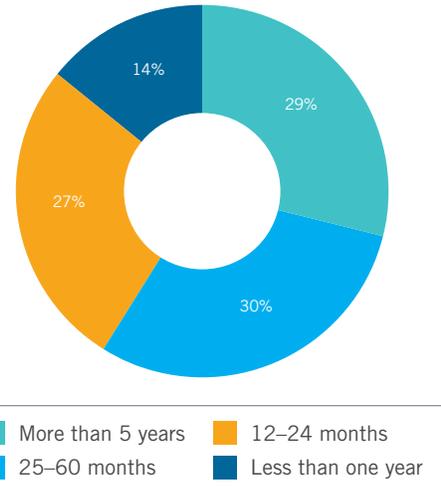
## TELEWORK PATTERNS

Respondents who said they telecommute, at least occasionally were questioned about their telework characteristics including: length of time telecommuting, use of informal or formal telework arrangement, telework location, frequency of telework, and access mode to telework locations outside the home.

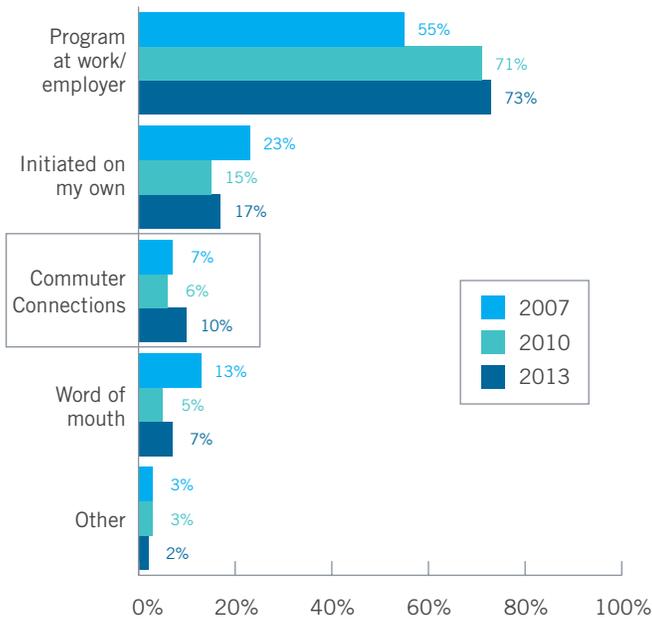
### Length of Time Telecommuting

As illustrated in the next figure, 41% of respondents who telecommute started within the past two years and 14% started within the past year. On average, respondents have been teleworking about 59 months. This is a slightly longer duration than was estimated in 2010 (56 months) and 2007 (53 months) and much longer than the 42 months average measured in the 2004 survey.

**Length of Time Telecommuting**  
(n = 1,545)



**Sources of Information About Telework—2007, 2010, 2013**  
(n = 1,571, multiple responses permitted)



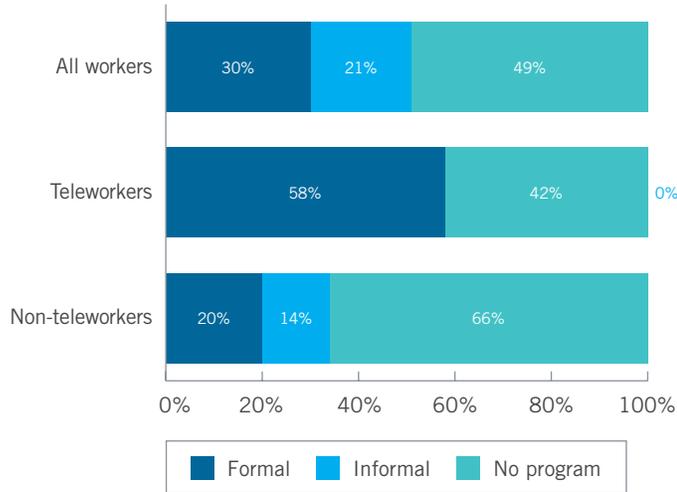
### Formal or Informal Telework Arrangement

Telecommuters were asked if they work under a formal program or through an informal arrangement with a supervisor. Respondents who do not telecommute were asked if their employer has a telework program, even though the respondent does not use it.

As shown in this next figure, 51% of all respondents said their employers allow some telework, either under a formal program (30%) or an informal arrangement (21%). Slightly less than half (49%) of respondents said their employers do not have any telework program or that they don't know about any program.

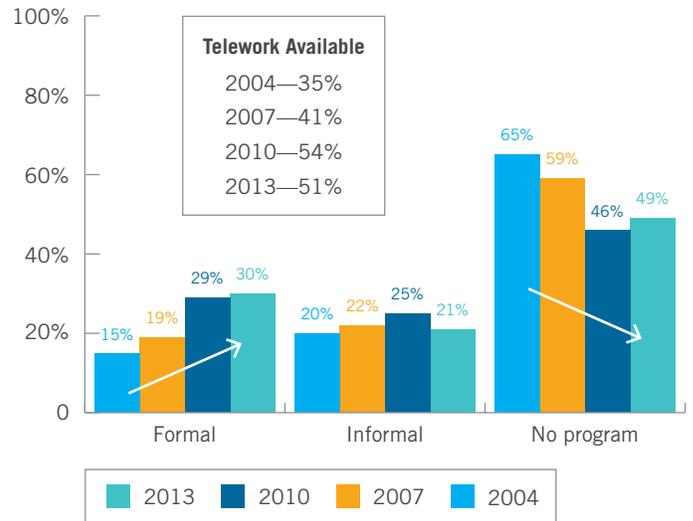
### Formal and Informal Telework Arrangements

All respondents and Telecommuters vs Non-Telecommuters  
(All workers n = 5,892, Teleworkers n = 1,530, Non-teleworkers n = 4,039)



### Telework Arrangements—2004, 2007, 2010, 2013

(2004 n = 6,896, 2007 n = 6,168, 2010 n = 5,854, 2013 n = 5,892)



The figure above also presents the distribution of telework availability among respondents who currently telecommute and those who do not. Telecommuters are much more likely than are other respondents to work for an employer with a formal telework program. Nearly six in ten (58%) telecommuters said they telecommute under a formal arrangement and 42% work under an informal arrangement with their supervisor. This represents a shift from 2004, when only 32% of telecommuters had a formal agreement. This appears to signal a greater acceptance of formal telework.

By contrast, only 20% of non-telecommuters said their employers have a formal telework program and 14% said telework is permitted under informal arrangements. Two-thirds (66%) said the employer has no program or they don't know if a program exists.

**Telework Arrangements 2004 through 2013**—The next figure shows the incidence of telework arrangement in 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013. As is clear from the figure, the share of employers that offer or permit telework increased substantially between 2004 and 2010, but leveled off between 2010 and 2013. In the 2004 SOC survey, only 35% of respondents noted that their employer allowed telework. The percentage of employers that permit telework fell slightly in 2013. The growth has primarily been in the share of formal programs. In 2004, telework arrangements were more often informal, while in 2010 and 2013, the proportions had reversed and formal telework arrangements predominated.

**Telework Arrangement by Employer Type**—The availability of telework arrangements varied widely by respondents' employer types, as illustrated in this next table.

Formal programs are most common among respondents who work for a federal government agency. Nearly seven in ten (67%) respondents who work for federal agencies said their employer has a formal program, compared to only about 21% who are employed by state/local agencies, 23% of respondents who work for non-profit organizations, and 18% who work for private employers. Respondents who work for non-profit organizations or private employers are most likely to have informal telework arrangements. More than a third of non-profit employees and a quarter of private sector employees said their employers permit informal telework. State/local government agencies are least likely to permit telework under any arrangement. Only one-third (35%) of these respondents said their employer allow employees to telecommute.



**58%** of telecommuters said they telecommute under a formal arrangement and 42% work under an informal arrangement with their supervisor.

### Formal or Informal Telework Arrangements By Employer Type

Program Type	Federal Agencies (n = 1,417)	State/local Agencies (n = 764)	Non-profit Organizations (n = 626)	Private Employers (n = 2,519)
<b>No telework program/ Don't know if program exists</b>	23%	<b>65%</b>	42%	56%
<b>Telework permitted</b>	73%	35%	58%	44%
Formal program	<b>67%</b>	21%	23%	18%
Informal arrangement	10%	14%	<b>35%</b>	<b>26%</b>

**Telework Arrangement by Employer Size**—Telework arrangements also varied by the number of employees at respondents' worksites. These results are presented in this next table.

### Formal or Informal Telework Arrangements By Employer Size

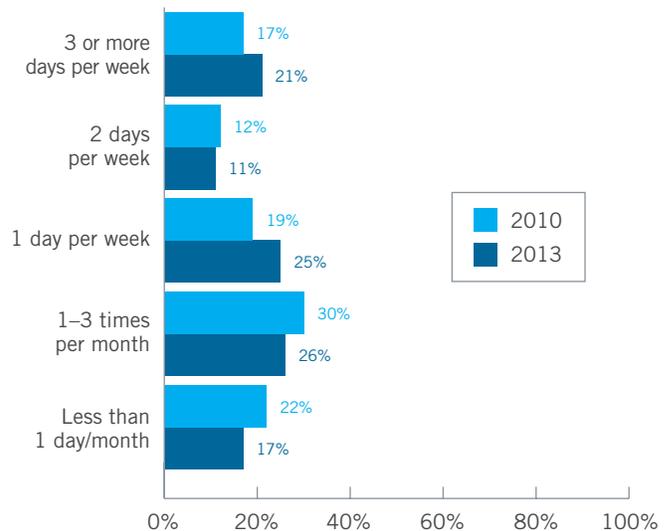
Program Type	1–50 Employees (n = 1,975)	51–100 Employees (n = 598)	101–250 Employees (n = 651)	251–999 Employees (n = 798)	1,000+ Employees (n = 1,345)
Formal program	10%	21%	28%	37%	55%
Informal arrangement	22%	19%	28%	24%	17%
No program	68%	60%	44%	39%	29%

Respondents who work for large employers are most likely to have access to a telework program.

### Telework Frequency

The frequency with which respondents telework is detailed in the next figure. About 17% of respondents who telework do so infrequently, either for special projects (8%) or less than once per month/only in emergencies (9%). One-quarter (26%) said they telework a few times each month. Nearly six in ten (57%) said they telework at least one day per week. On average, teleworkers use this arrangement about 1.4 days per week. This overall average frequency represents an increase from the 1.3 days per week average observed in the 2010 SOC survey.

### Frequency of Telework—2010 and 2013 (n = 1,559)



### Telework Locations

The overwhelming percentage (99%) of telecommuters said they do so exclusively from home. The remaining one percent named another telework location, such as a satellite office, library or community center, or Telework Center.

Telecommuters who use locations outside their homes travel an average distance of 17.3 miles to these locations. A large majority (84%) of these respondents drive alone to the telework location. The remaining 16% use an alternative mode.



**17%** of respondents who telework do so infrequently, either for special projects (8%) or less than once per month/only in emergencies (9%).