



Remote and Hybrid Work in Virginia

Key Facts

Remote-capable occupations constitute [37% of U.S. jobs](#) but capture 46% of aggregate wages.

Remote workers are most prevalent in high-skill, knowledge-work industries, including the following:

- Information
- Finance and insurance
- Professional services
- Management

These industries are termed "[Skilled Scalable Services \(SSS\)](#)."

Broadband service has increased across Virginia, with 80% of the population having a broadband internet subscription in 2021 (United States Census Bureau).

Parts of Northern Virginia with high concentrations of tech and professional services jobs have [25%](#) of people working remotely.

However, rural counties in Southwest and Southside Virginia have seen almost no influx of remote workers.

Study Overview

- Graduate students in the [Spring 2023 Economic Development Studio class](#) at Virginia Tech worked with Virginia Main Street and Main Street America to study remote work in Virginia and provide a model for making Virginia more remote worker friendly.
- Students put remote workers into four categories:
 - **Urbanists:** These workers value urban amenities, such as cultural offerings, social diversity, and convenient transportation, and choose to remain in high-cost cities despite ability to work remotely.
 - **Salary Stretchers:** These workers are likely to move to an area with lower housing costs. They are also likely to transition from renting to home ownership.
 - **Nature Lovers:** These workers value the outdoors and often relocate to rural areas from cities.
 - **Boomerangs:** These workers move back to places where they have family ties or previous attachments.

Recommendations

- Build public-private partnerships with co-working spaces. (Urban)
- Expand access to WiFi in public spaces such as parks and downtown areas. (Urban)
- Improve broadband availability. (Rural Resort & Rural Perennial)
- Work with broadband providers and Virginia Telecommunication Initiative ([VATI](#)) to expand internet access. (Rural Resort and Rural Perennial)
- Protect affordable housing options. (Rural Resort)
- Conduct a housing survey to identify vacant structures as candidates for adaptive reuse or future development. (Rural Perennial)
- Analyze SSS industries in adjacent counties and metros to identify the magnitude of the potential market for relocating remote workers. (Rural Resort and Rural Perennial)
- Consider re-zoning to allow for more diverse housing options. (Suburban/Exurban)
- Examine and compare peak hour public transit usership as well as peak hour vehicle traffic in areas with high concentration of jobs. (Urban and Suburban/Exurban)
- Review data from public utility companies on energy and water consumption in residential areas to track differences in use patterns from remote workers working out of their homes. (Urban and Suburban/Exurban)
- Examine business licensing patterns and connect with remote employers. (All)
- Conduct a survey of residents to determine the prevalence of remote work. (All)