Characterizing hybrid work patterns of GSA employees

What is the GSA priority?

Hybrid work has become widespread over the past three years, however, little is known about GSA employee work patterns. This information can be used to develop and tailor technologies, spaces, and strategies to support hybrid and distributed models of work so that employees are engaged, perform at their best, and remain focused on mission delivery. Existing administrative data offers an opportunity to better understand how and where employees work and make progress in addressing GSA's Learning Agenda priority question: *What technologies and solutions does the federal workforce need to improve effectiveness in a more responsive remote work setting?*

What did we evaluate?

This descriptive study characterizes the different ways GSA employees work remotely or from the office by investigating frequencies of onsite work and telework. The purpose of the study is to describe these groups in greater detail with recent data to inform strategic decision-making.

How did the evaluation work?

GSA employees are asked daily to report their work status (telework, reporting to job site, on leave, etc.). We combined these daily check-in data with other information about employees' position categories (onsite required, onsite flexible, offsite),

supervisors, staff offices, and other information from the GSA roster.

Using data for the period from March-September 2023, we calculated 1) the frequencies of work status for the 11,251 GSA employees who worked in March 2023; and 2) the number of days the entire team teleworks or works onsite. We then grouped employees based on similarities in their frequencies of working remote or onsite. These groups differ from GSA position categories and reflect *how* employees self-report working, not necessarily how their positions say they should work.[1]

GSA employees can be clustered into five work pattern groups (which are distinct from position categorization):

1. **Telecommuters**: Work more days than any group (i.e., take less leave, which includes vacation, medical leave, and alternative work schedules) and almost all work is telework (fewer than one day per pay period onsite), 30.6% of employees.

2. **Office visitors**: Primarily telework, occasionally work onsite (still fewer than one day per pay period onsite),

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[1] Position category has an impact on the type of telework schedule that an employee can choose to work. However, the category doesn't dictate the type of telework schedule. There is some supervisor/employee flexibility.

works 10 fewer days than teleworkers, 36.1% of employees.

3. **Hybrid workers**: Mostly telework, routinely work onsite (more than two days per pay period onsite), 18.9% of employees.

4. **In-office workers**: Sometimes telework, primarily work onsite (almost six days per pay period onsite), 8.0% of employees.

5. **Disconnected workers**: Work fewer days, more likely to exit employment, 6.3% of employees.

What did we learn?

Telework is very common at GSA, but the majority of employees come into the office at least occasionally. Using the work pattern groups above, **hybrid workers** routinely work onsite, coming to the office 26.5% of the time, more than two days per pay period. Hybrid workers vary greatly in how much they work onsite. Employees in this group spend 12.8 to 50.2% of their working time onsite. **Office visitors** work onsite an average of 4.2% of the time, fewer than one day per pay period, much less than hybrid workers.

Figure 1. *Telework is common, but onsite work is either rare or routine*

Work and leave per pay period

Legend: Leave, Reporting to job site, Teleworking
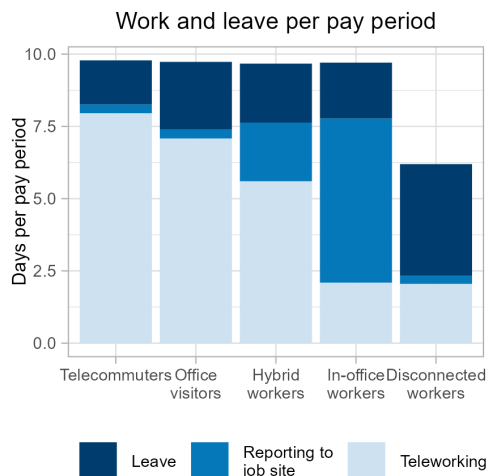
Work pattern groups differ by the amount of time they 1) work onsite, 2) telework, and 3) take leave, which includes vacation, medical leave, and alternative work schedules (See Figure 1). **Telecommuters** work more days on average per pay period than any other group. The principal difference between them and office visitors is that office visitors take more leave. Hybrid workers and in-office workers take a similar amount of leave, but in-office workers are located onsite more than twice as many days.

What do we recommend?

This study characterized five different work pattern groups based on the ways that GSA employees balance telework and onsite work. Telework is very common. Most employees work almost all of their days off site. Even in groups that come to the office more often, telework is still generally very common.

Results from this study can inform avenues for future evaluation efforts to better understand and promote GSA organizational health. One possible area of exploration is to better understand why some employees occasionally work in the office and what drives workers to come in on particular days. This information could be used to develop and evaluate strategies or "magnets" to draw people into the office for productive in-person work. Another possible area to investigate is whether work pattern groups have differing levels of employee satisfaction or engagement and differences in employee advancement and tenure. Lastly, these work pattern groups and definitions can help us to design and target specific interventions for improving organizational health.