



# Remote Workers Plan



Prepared pursuant to Common  
Council File No: 210236



# Remote Workers Plan: Background

- In a survey conducted by *Dice* (a tech employment site), 58% of tech workers want to work remote full-time, and only 17% want to be in the office full-time <sup>(1)</sup>.
- In a survey conducted by *Breeze* (a disability insurance company), 65% of employees would take a 5% pay cut to work from home and if asked to return to full in person work, 36% would look for a new job <sup>(2)</sup>.
- In a survey conducted by *The Conference Board* (a non-partisan, non-profit research group), 38% of workers still want to work remotely post-pandemic <sup>(3)</sup>.
- According to *Ladders Inc.*, 15% of all job postings above \$80,000 are for remote jobs <sup>(4)</sup>.
- In a survey conducted by the *Milwaukee Department of City Development (DCD)*, 52.9% would consider relocating if they secured a remote work opportunity, creating both a threat and an opportunity for Milwaukee.



# Information Gathering: Review of Other Cities

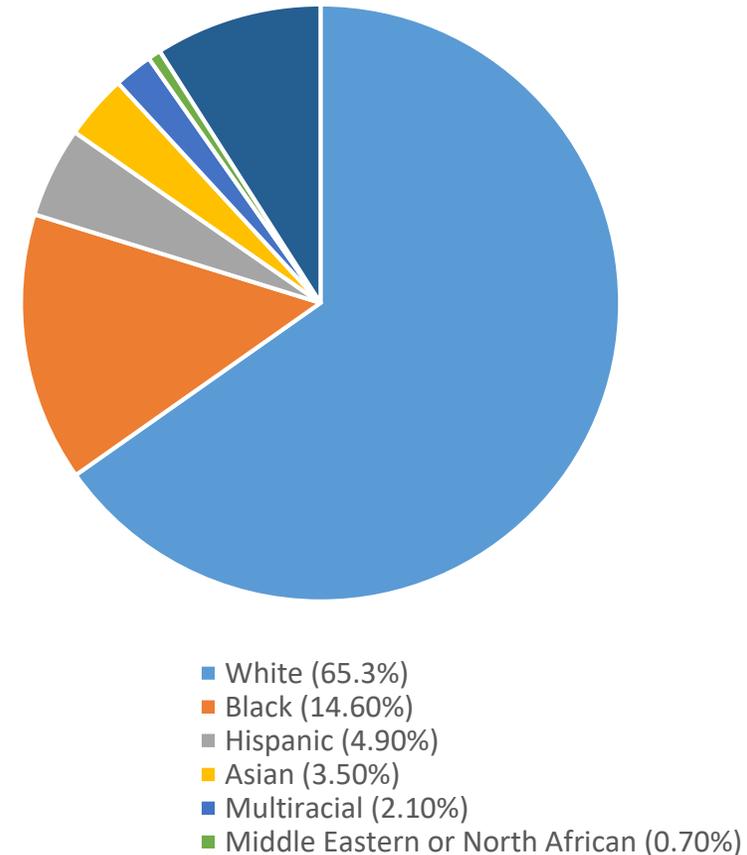
- West Virginia (<https://ascendwv.com/>): \$12,000 plus free outdoor recreation passes/rentals.
- Tulsa (<https://tulsaremote.com/>): \$10,000 and free coworking space.
- Northwest Arkansas (<https://findingnwa.com/incentive/>): \$10,000 plus a free bike or annual membership to a cultural institution.
- Topeka (<https://choosetopeka.com/apply/>): \$5,000 if renting or \$10,000 if purchasing a home plus \$1,000 from Jimmy John's if you move near one of their locations.
- Savannah, GA (<https://seda.org/resources-and-data/incentives-database/creative-incentive/>): \$2,000 to help tech workers with moving expenses.



# Information Gathering: Survey Results

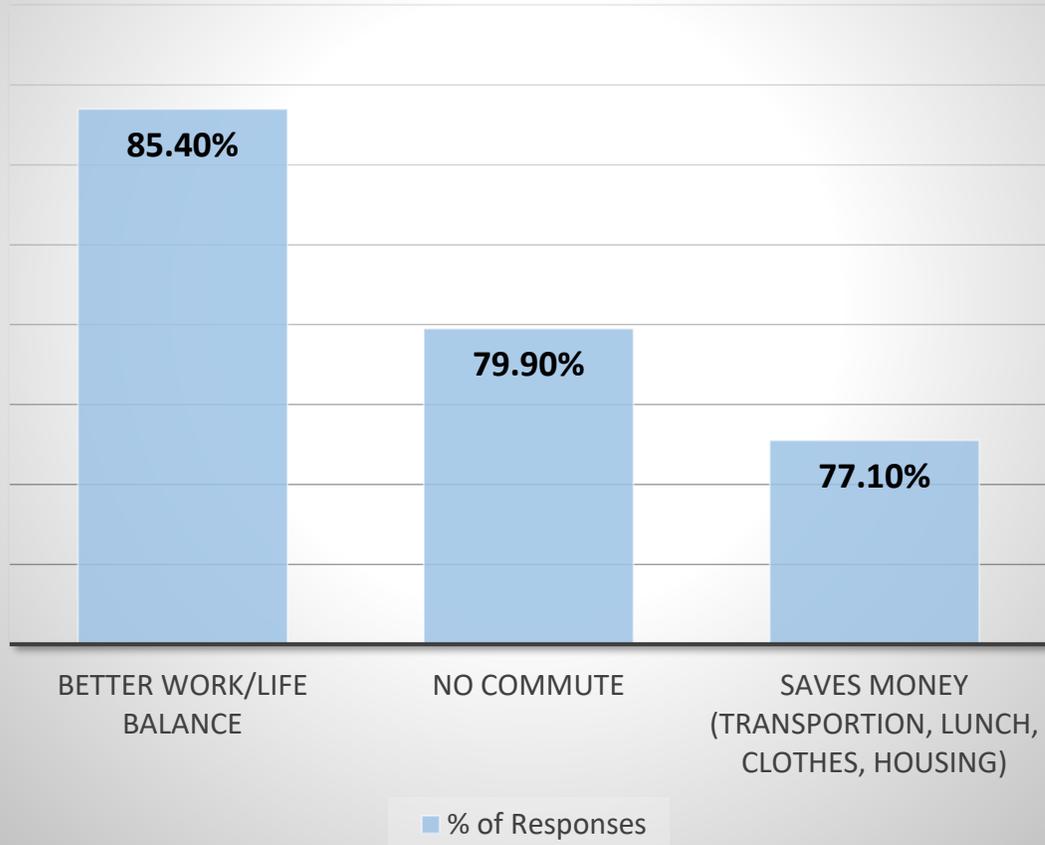
- Basic Demographics of Respondents:
- 144 responses
- 77.8% City of Milwaukee resident
- 47.5% Fully remote, 33.33% Remote several days a week
- 52.2% Female

Race or Ethnicity?

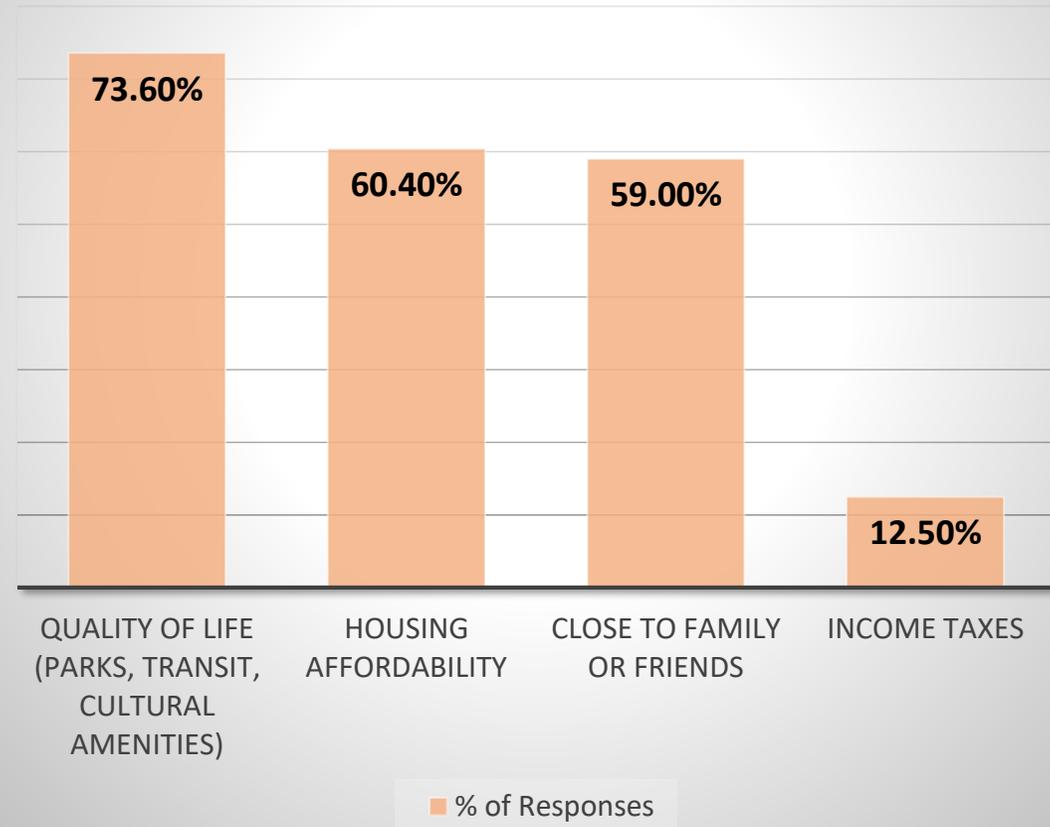


# Information Gathering: Survey Results

Why do you, or why would you, choose to work remotely (check all that apply)?

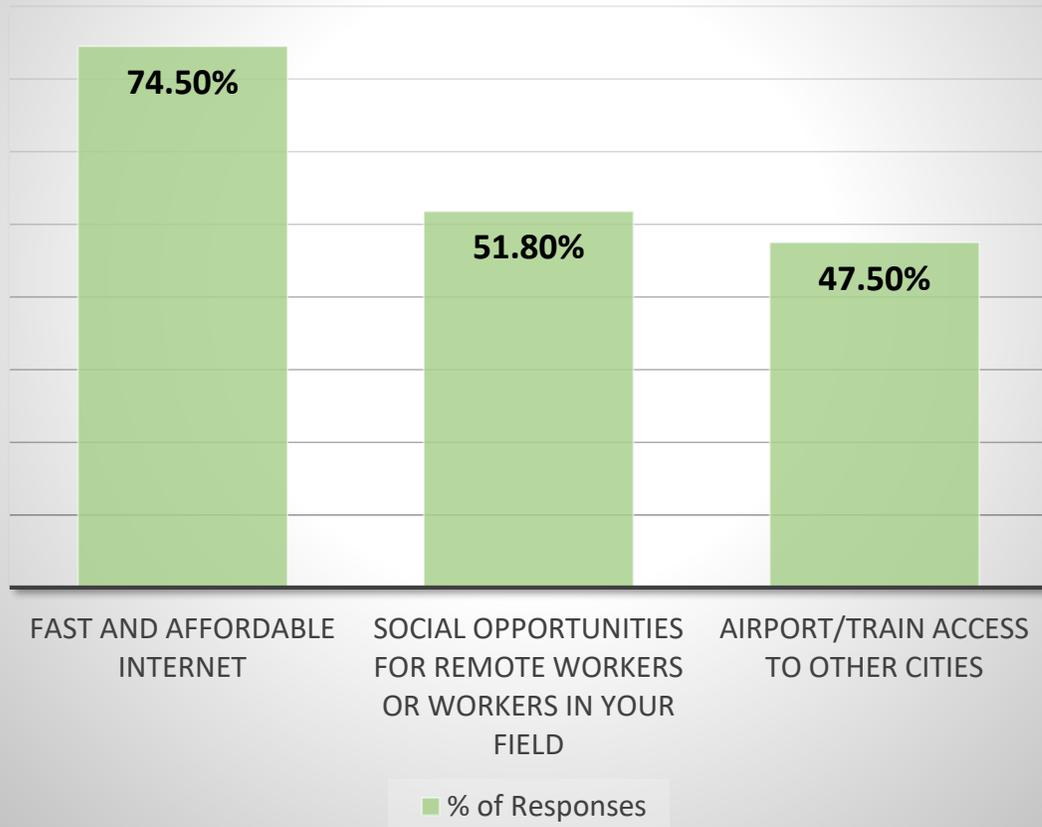


When considering remote work, what factors are most important in choosing the city/region where you live? Please choose your top 3.

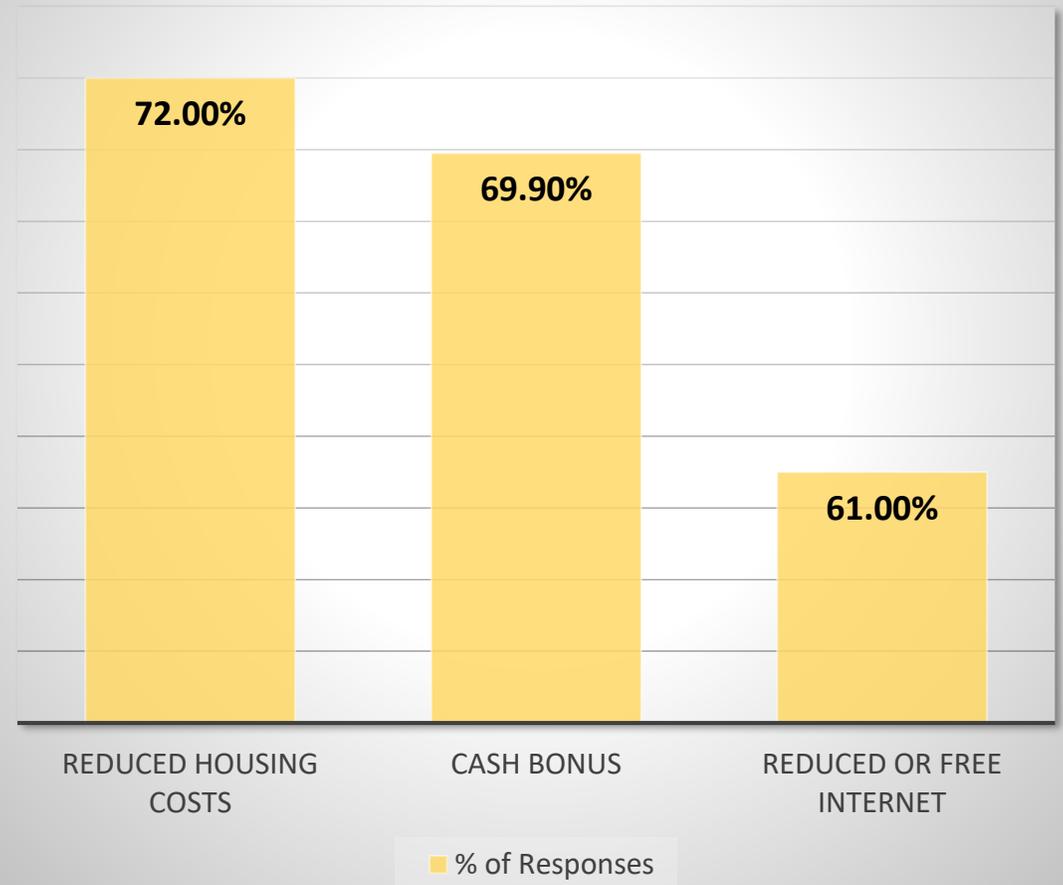


# Information Gathering: Survey Results

Which of the following could influence your decision to choose a city to live in while working remotely for a company elsewhere? (check all that apply)?

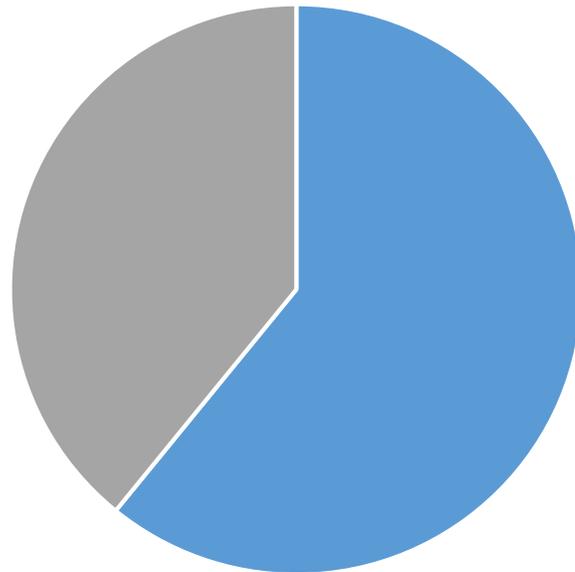


If you work or could work remotely, what incentives would encourage you to consider relocation (check all that apply)?



# Information Gathering: Survey Results

Should the City of Milwaukee offer incentives to new remote workers?



■ Yes ■ No

What are the negative aspects of working remotely (check all that apply)?

- Lack of socialization/collaboration with coworkers (72.2%)

When considering your future career opportunities, will you (check all that apply)?

- Consider relocating if I secured a remote opportunity (52.9%)

**Comments:** The most common submission in areas where respondents could write in their own comments was the issue of crime being a deterrent to attracting remote workers.



# Information Gathering: Stakeholder Interviews

Milwaukee 7

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Newaukee

Social X

Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee

Avanzando

MKE Tech Hub Coalition

ElevAsian

...and many other individuals



# Recommendations



## Remote Workers Plan



1. Become a Destination Region
2. Lead by Example
3. Statewide Programs
4. Create a Sense of Community
5. Provide Affordable Coworking Spaces
6. Targeted Advertising
7. Target Companies for Satellite Offices
8. Provide Direct Incentives



# 1. Become a Destination Region

- Quality of life improvements: parks, transit, cultural amenities
  - Affordable and quality housing
  - Fast, affordable and reliable internet and other utilities
  - Safe streets that are walkable and bikable for all ages and abilities
  - Enhanced overall public safety
- 
- ❖ Responsible Parties: City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, M7, State of Wisconsin
  - ❖ Estimated Cost: \$10m+
  - ❖ Timeline: Short, Mid and Long Term



<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2022/01/26/improving-quality-of-life-not-just-business-is-the-best-path-to-midwestern-rejuvenation/>



# 2. Lead by Example

- City government should offer best in practice remote working options to employees, while requiring remote employees to live in the City. This should also include on-site coworking spaces.
  - Work with major local corporations to ensure that their remote work policies encourage or require employees to live nearby.
- 
- ❖ Responsible Parties: City of Milwaukee
  - ❖ Estimated Cost: \$0
  - ❖ Timeline: Short and Mid Term



# 3. Statewide Programs

- Work to create a statewide remote work program that offers an incentive for remote workers to move to Wisconsin, such as the income tax credit that Maine has to assist with student loans: <https://liveandworkinmaine.com/opportunity-maine/>.
- Increase outreach to veterans to make sure they are aware of the unique benefits that the State of Wisconsin offers to veterans:  
<https://inwisconsin.com/blog/wisconsin-offers-veteran-benefits-state/>.

- ❖ Responsible Parties: M7, WEDC
- ❖ Estimated Cost: \$0 to City, State income tax credit would be offset by additional people moving here and generating new income taxes.
- ❖ Timeline: Short and Mid Term



# 4. Create a Sense of Community

- Create an integration program for new residents that exposes them to all of the assets that Milwaukee has to offer and helps them meet new people and network. This could be done through a group of dedicated volunteers or in conjunction with groups like Newaukee and Social X that have already done this successfully.
- Work with local corporations and partners to put a spouse placement program in place, to make sure that spouses also find employment opportunities and communities that meet their needs and interests. This could be done by hiring a placement agency or similar firm to provide this service. Groups like Newaukee have already done this successfully for local corporations.

❖ Responsible Parties: M7 and City of Milwaukee

❖ Estimated Cost: \$50,000-\$250,000

❖ Timeline: Short and Mid Term



# 5. Provide Affordable Coworking Spaces

- Sponsor free memberships at existing coworking spaces.
- Provide grants, whether through our commercial corridor programs or a new program, for creating new coworking spaces.
- Turn public buildings, such as libraries, into free coworking spaces.
- Collaborate with a company such as WorkAround (<https://joinworkaround.com/>), a local startup that seeks to create coworking spaces in underutilized buildings, whether a completely vacant building or a business that has extra space, such as a restaurant with a party room that is rarely used.

❖ Responsible Parties: M7 and City of Milwaukee

❖ Estimated Cost: \$50,000-\$250,000

❖ Timeline: Short and Mid Term



# 6. Targeted Advertising

- Focuses on people with an affinity for Milwaukee, either because they grew up here, went to school here, have lived here in the past or have family that lives here.
  - Focuses on sectors where the Milwaukee region has a shortage of workers, to increase the overall talent pool in that sector.
  - Focus on mid-career talent with at least 4-5 years of experience in their field. This is an age group that Milwaukee companies struggle to attract, yet they are young enough that they are still relatively mobile and willing to consider a move.
  - Focuses on regions where we are likely to have success (ie, Chicago).
  - Directs traffic and interested parties to [www.choosemketech.org](http://www.choosemketech.org), a website dedicated to helping tech workers learn more about life in Milwaukee and explore job opportunities.
  - Increases outreach to veterans to make sure they are aware of the unique benefits that the State of Wisconsin offers to veterans: <https://inwisconsin.com/blog/wisconsin-offers-veteran-benefits-state/>.
  - Asks diverse leaders in Milwaukee to explain why they choose to live here and/or why they came back, their pride in the City and the lifestyle here beyond the beer/cheese stereotypes
  - Reaches out to alumni groups in other cities to connect with their members.
- 
- ❖ Responsible Parties: M7, MKE Tech Hub Coalition and City of Milwaukee
  - ❖ Estimated Cost: \$25,000-\$500,000
  - ❖ Timeline: Short and Mid Term





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<https://www.choosemketech.org/>



# 7. Target Companies for Satellite Offices

- Target large companies with headquarters in high cost regions to open a satellite office here, likely either from the east coast, west coast or Chicago (ie, OpenGov).
- Target WI companies in smaller cities with challenges attracting talent to open a satellite office here (ie, Michels).

- ❖ Responsible Parties: M7, MKE Tech Hub Coalition and City of Milwaukee
- ❖ Estimated Cost: dependent on any incentives provided to individual companies, if any
- ❖ Timeline: Mid Term



# 8. Provide Direct Incentives

- Create a pilot program that provides a combination of cash incentives and a welcome package with free or reduced prices to area attractions and restaurants. Workers would need to apply for the grant and the total number of awardees would be capped to limit the overall cost. A volunteer review group would be used to review the applications.
- Consider incentives such as down payment assistance or a reduced price on City-owned houses.
- Potentially focus on certain sectors where the Milwaukee region has a shortage of workers, to increase the overall talent pool in that sector.
- Focus on mid-career talent with at least 4-5 years of experience in their field. This is an age group that Milwaukee companies struggle to attract, yet they are young enough that they are still relatively mobile and willing to consider a move.
- Work with local companies to help recruit and incentivize their remote workers to move to Milwaukee.
- Provide a “finder’s fee” to existing residents who are able to convince their colleagues, friends or family to move here as a remote worker.

❖ Responsible Parties: M7, MKE Tech Hub Coalition, City of Milwaukee and local foundations

❖ Estimated Cost: \$100,000-\$1,000,000, depending on incentive provided

❖ Timeline: Short and Mid Term



# Recommendations

1. Become a Destination Region
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3. Statewide Programs
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