

STATE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE:

PERSPECTIVES ON REMOTE WORK

July 2021



Background & methodology

State governments had to pivot quickly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders, including Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), navigated the dual challenges of keeping state workers safe while continuing to deliver essential services to residents and businesses.

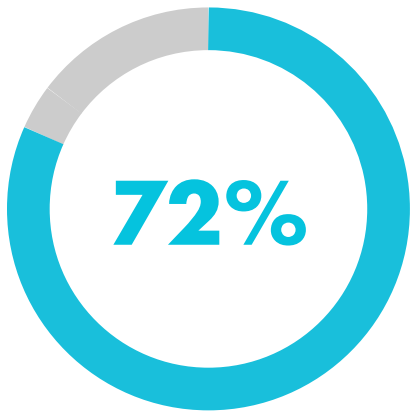
In November 2020, Accenture and NASCA surveyed CAOs in 32 states. We sought to understand how they are handling remote work and whether they are prioritizing continued innovation in human capital management.

We learned that flexible work styles offer advantages to government and workers—and these arrangements are likely to endure beyond the end of the pandemic.

Government goes remote



100% of CAOs reported having a telework/remote work policy in place before COVID 19



72% of CAOs said they adjusted their existing telework/remote work policies to allow for increased flexibility and empathy

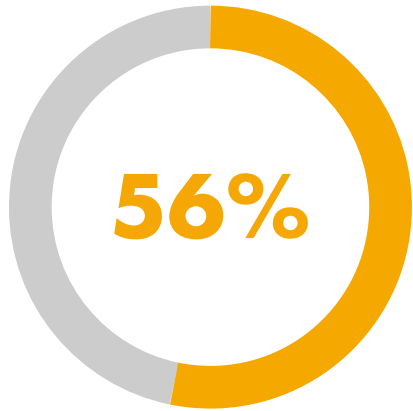
What changed in 2020?

CAOs told us their states made these updates and investments:

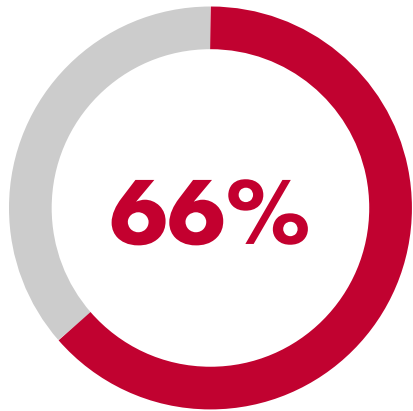
- Expand/formalize telework policy
- Flexibility around time work was done
- New technology to enable remote work
- State equipment allowed at home
- Hoteling for office
- Union arrangements, classification changes
- Training for managers
- Move toward project-based measures of accomplishment

A proposition that benefits everyone

More remote work. Less real estate.



of CAOs expect to keep at least a quarter of their workforce remote



of CAOs plan to reduce their real estate footprint as the size of the remote workforce increases

Higher satisfaction. Lower costs.

CAOs cite these as top advantages of a remote workforce:

Employee satisfaction and culture

91%

Real estate savings

63%

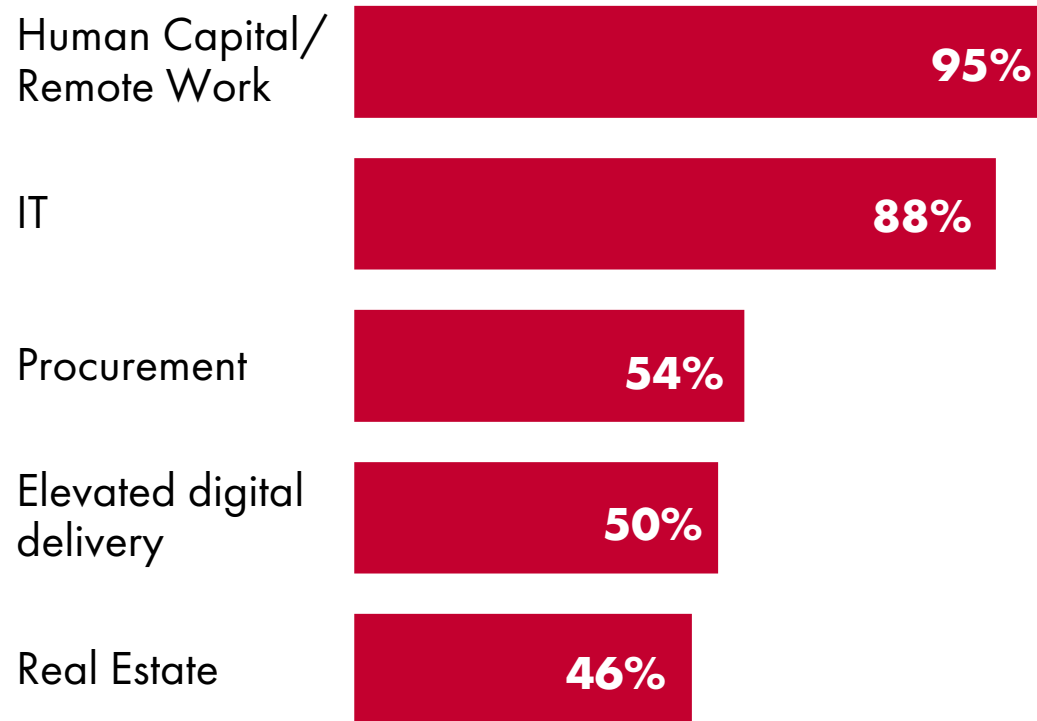
Talent Recruitment

63%

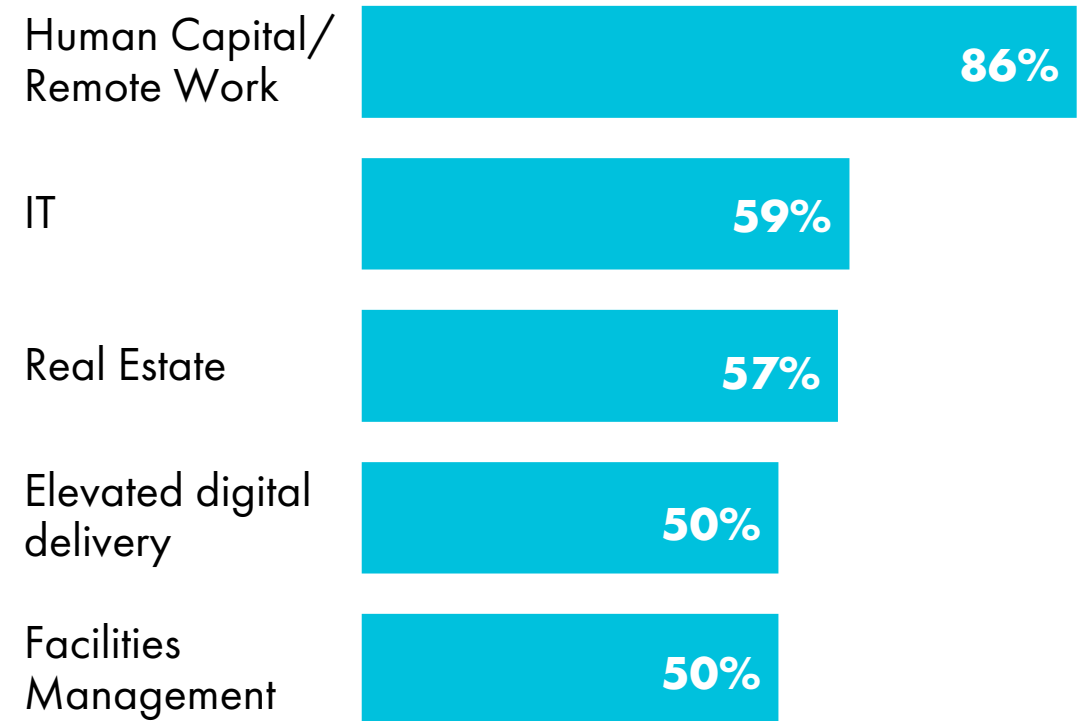
Workforce: Focus of innovation

CAOs point out that human capital remains a major focus of innovation

Top focus of innovation over the PAST six months



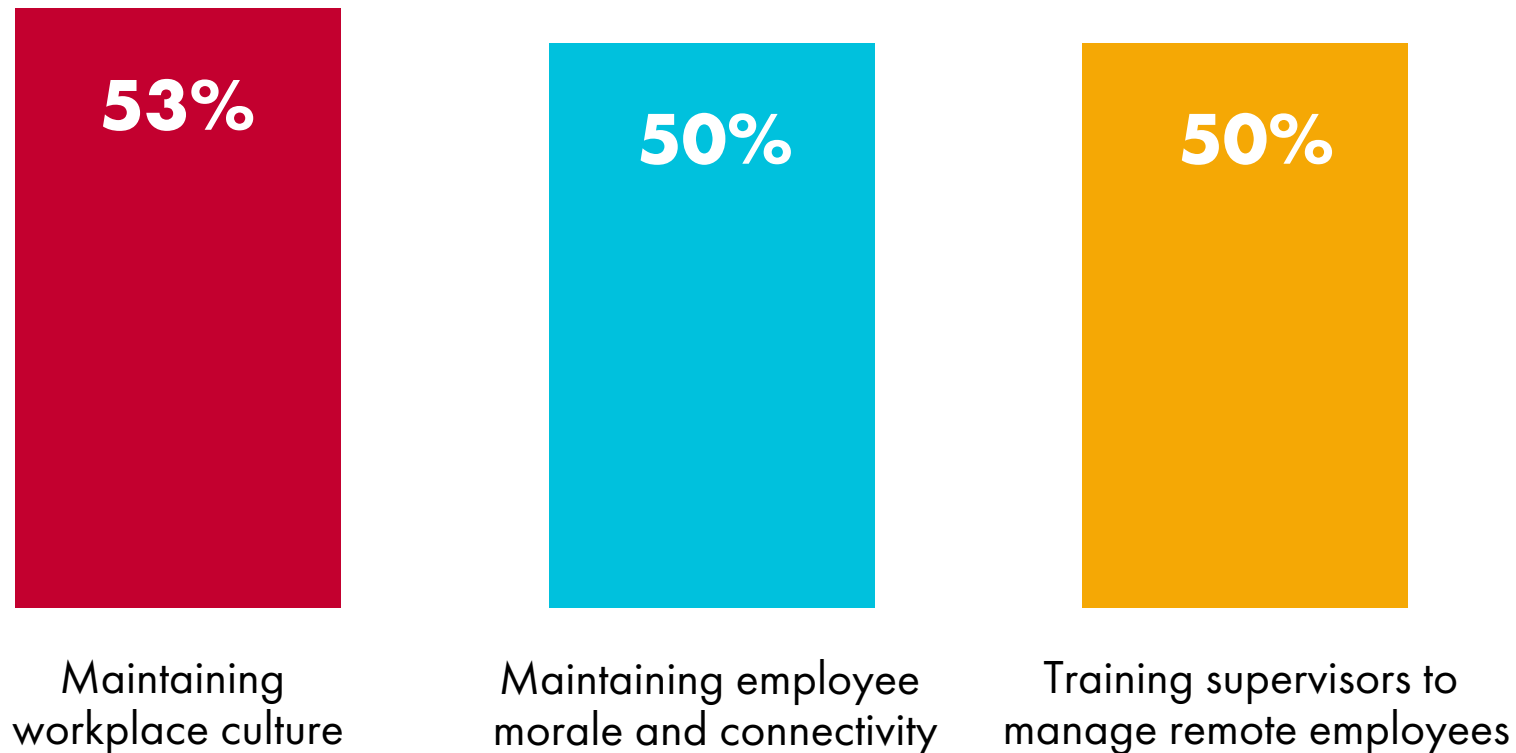
Top focus of innovation over the NEXT six months



More change to come, culture as a focus

CAOs anticipate significant changes in their organization's culture

To what extent do you expect the culture at your organization to change as a result of COVID-19? (select all)



More change to come, culture as a focus

As state workers went remote during the pandemic, CAO's observed a variety of best practice. Two of the top practices: **affording workers flexibility and giving them the right technology.**

“

We created a live dashboard that shows who is teleworking full time, part time or not at all. We measure gas savings and commute reduction. We developed new telework policies for the state. We developed a host of telework tools—everything from self-ergonomic analysis to tips on supervising, tips on Zoom and cybersecurity risks. We allowed staff to check out equipment using a CRM system so we could log which equipment went home and will need to be returned.

”



What works: Flexibility & technology



Prior to the pandemic, DGS utilized the existing telework policy and documentation templates created and maintained by the MD Dept. of Budget & Management (DBM). With the onset of the pandemic, we were forced to shift to a broad telework model within a short period of time, setting up employees to work remotely who otherwise had no experience and resources doing so. DGS went from 2% of employees working remotely to 45% since the onset of the pandemic. Several non-essential employees are working remotely in some capacity (some on a hybrid model).

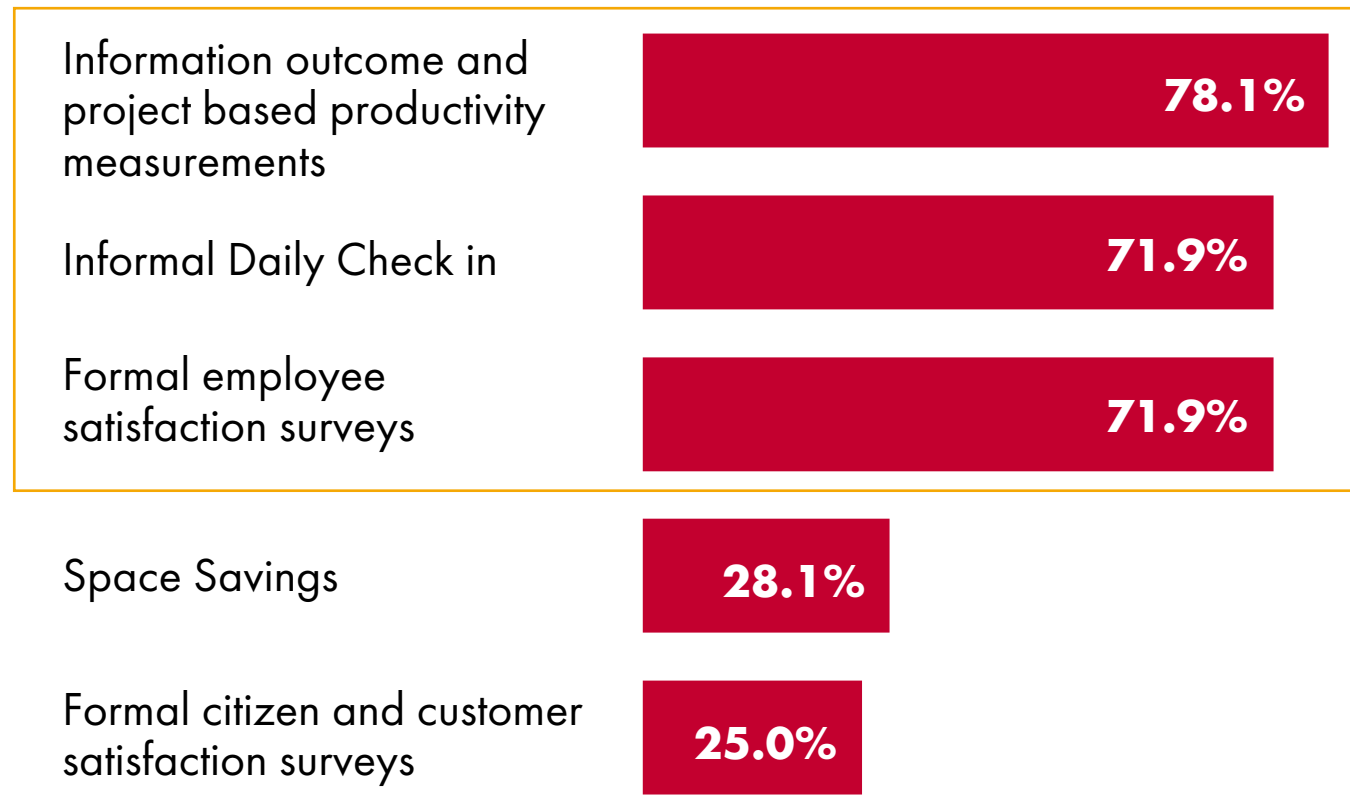
As a result, DGS “relaxed” some of the more rigid requirements for documenting telework activities, to allow supervisors and management more flexibility to manage staff who are working remotely.

In addition, more flexibility was added to expand the scope of who can telework. DGS also included a “flexible telework option” that allows employees with other commitments during the day due to the pandemic (such as childcare issues, etc.) to work a flexible schedule, when operationally feasible. We have instructed managers to be as flexible as operationally possible with employees who are working remotely, given additional commitments and conflicts due to the pandemic. DGS is currently reviewing the telework program (via survey) from a Department perspective to determine how effectively teleworkers are working, in order to identify any challenges that may be hindering productivity. Based on those results, DGS will develop a consistent and effective telework program that will be used long-term based on operational needs to include on-going training for employees and supervisors.



Managing performance remotely

The survey revealed that most CEOs are using three methods to manage the performance of remote workers



“Focus on outcomes rather than hours on the computer.”

Managing performance remotely

“

A targeted, deliberate model for tracking and managing work activities on a daily basis (as opposed to tracking work more indirectly or as needed) with established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to determine the level of success and effectiveness for employees who are working remotely.

Frequent team meetings for staff to interact virtually (on video), in the place of in-office staff meetings that occurred prior to the pandemic.

Schedule virtual “All Hands Meetings” on a monthly basis to keep employees engaged.

Encouraging managers and supervisors to be as flexible as operationally feasible and focus on results by tracking telework activities. This also helps with employee accountability.

Leaders encourage team members to help one another with new or unusual assignments and highlight the accomplishments that are being made.

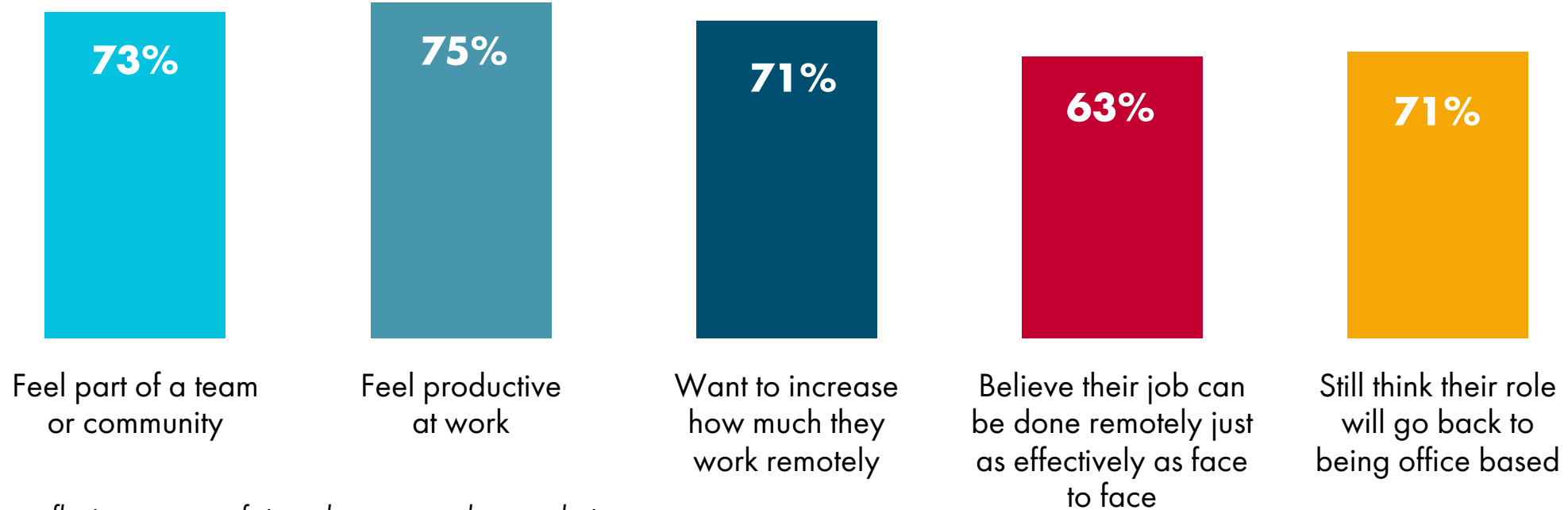
”



Workforce perspective: Remote work works

In a survey of public sector workers, they reported feeling productive and part of a community. They also believe their job can be done effectively via remote work

Now, reflecting on your work since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Answer reflect responses of strongly agree and somewhat agree

Looking forward: Managing the complexity

Flexible work styles can be highly beneficial to states and their workforces.
But a shift to these models can also introduce friction and complexity.

The workplace post COVID-19 will look different, states will have to work through:

01

Understanding potential impact on customers

02

Shifts in expectations—for example, employees working on snow days

03

Work location and related legal and tax ramifications

04

Potential for workers' compensation claims for at-home injuries

05

Impact on paid leave

06

Equity and inclusion related to high-speed Internet access

07

Opportunities to further refine performance management to focus more on goals and outcome vs. hours worked

AUTHORS



Kelly Rogers
Senior Manager,
Public Service, Accenture
kelly.j.rogers@accenture.com



Bill Kilmartin
Senior Advisor,
Public Service, Accenture



Jenny Brodie
State and Local Government
Research Lead, Accenture
jennifer.brodie@accenture.com



Pam Goins
Executive Director, National
Association of State Chief
Administrators (NASCA)



Jamie Rodgers
Deputy Director, National
Association of State Chief
Administrators (NASCA)

ABOUT NASCA

Founded in 1976, the National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA), is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 association representing state chief administrators—public officials in charge of departments that provide support services to other state agencies. NASCA provides a forum to exchange information and learn new ideas from each other and private partners. NASCA’s mission is to help state chief administrators and their teams strategically transform state government operations through the power of shared knowledge and thought leadership. For more information, visit www.nasca.org.

ABOUT ACCENTURE

Accenture is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, we offer Strategy and Consulting, Interactive, Technology and Operations services—all powered by the world’s largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. Our 569,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. We embrace the power of change to create value and shared success for our clients, people, shareholders, partners and communities. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

Copyright © 2021 NASCA. All Rights Reserved.

Copyright © 2021 Accenture. All rights reserved.

Accenture and its logo are registered trademarks of Accenture.