RAMSEY COUNTY

Flexible Workplace Policy
Employee Engagement Survey

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OVERVIEW

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created barriers that challenged the county to reimagine service delivery and provide employees innovative ways to continue to conduct business. A temporary Ad Hoc Telecommuting Policy was quickly authorized to eligible employees to perform some or all of their work in an alternate work location, including an employee's home. A Flexible Workplace Policy Team was convened in February 2021 to lead in building a permanent flexible workplace environment. The Flexible Workplace Policy Team focused on building a permanent flexible workplace environment while also ensuring alignment with the county's Residents First Strategic Priority; Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals; service delivery framework, Strategic Facilities Plan, and continued Talent Attraction, Retention, and Promotion (TARP) efforts.

The process toward a permanent flexible workplace environment included a countywide survey available for all employees, employee focus group conversations, and a multitude of communications. This report focuses on the countywide employee engagement survey.

Purpose

Employee engagement is critical in reimaging and creating a permanent flexible workplace environment and policy for its employees. Throughout the year, despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought, the county showed the continued efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery countywide even when working remotely or in an alternate work location. This survey was developed to collect and identify, from an employee perspective, if the Ad Hoc Telecommuting Policy and adjusted service delivery options were beneficial, successful, and to learn more about any barriers or challenges.

Although not all employee responses and preferences were met, majority of the results from the countywide employee engagement survey was used to shape future related countywide policies and guidelines. The survey included questions around the following:

- Experience working remotely over the past year;
- Benefits and concerns of a flexible workplace environment;
- Preferred work arrangements, including location, technology, and schedule;
- Impact on residents; and
- Barriers and resources needed.

Method

The Flexible Workplace Policy Team were key leaders in creating the survey and analyzing the results. In May 2021, the survey was created and launched live onto the internal RamseyNet website. Responses remained anonymous and employees at all levels were encouraged to fill out the survey and given up to three weeks to submit their responses. Reminders to complete the survey were also posted internally through emails, RamseyNews, and reiterated by leadership.

RESULTS

A total of 1,990 employees participated in the survey, bringing the response rate to nearly 49%. Table 1 breaks down the response rates by service team and department/division. The lowest response rate was 3%, with a few departments/divisions at 100%.

Table 1. Survey response rate by department/division.

Service Team	Department/Division	No. of Employees[1]	Respondents	Response Rate[2]
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	111	61	55%
	Workforce Solutions	80	54	68%
	Library	118	47	40%
	Parks & Recreation	93	40	43%
	Property Management	72	23	32%
	Housing Stability	19	15	79%
	Community & Economic Development	17	7	41%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	631	394	62%
	Financial Assistance Services	369	275	75%
	Community Corrections	435	241	55%
	Public Health	308	157	51%
	Health and Wellness Administration	318	106	33%
	Ramsey County Care Center	175	7	4%
	Lake Owasso Residence	113	6	5%
	Veteran's Services	6	5	
Information and Public Records	Information Services	67	70	104%
	County Assessor	45	36	80%
	Property Tax & Election Services	22	26	118%
	IPR Administration	50	24	48%
	Communications & Public Relations	13	14	108%
	Enterprise Project Management Office	4	1	25%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	321	220	69%
	Sheriff's Office	411	14	3%
	Emergency Communications	127	13	10%
	Emergency Management & Homeland Security	7	5	71%
	Medical Examiner	17	3	18%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	52	56	108%
	Finance	33	43	130%
	County Manager's Office[3]	26	26	100%
Related Org.	Law Library	4	1	25%
	Total	4,024	1,990	49%

[1] Employee counts are based on the 2020 Human Resources report.
[2] Response rates are approximate since the number of employees may have changed between 2020 and the survey.
[3] Includes the Chief Clerk; Administration; Policy and Planning; Compliance and Ethics Office; and Transforming Systems Together divisions.

Respondents' Characteristics

Employees at all levels were encouraged to complete the survey. Levels of management were identified with 53% of respondents identifying as frontline staff (Table 2). Although 24% of respondents declined to answer race/ethnicity, 49% identified as White/Caucasian and 27% of respondents were under American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, or Multiple (Table 3). About 24% of respondents declined to identify their gender. Majority of respondents who did identify their gender were female at 55%. Males made up 20% and non-binary respondents at 1% (Table 4).

Table 2. Self-identified employee management level.

Level of Management	Respondents	Percent
Executive team member	27	1%
Department director or senior management	49	2%
Manager	119	6%
Supervisor	212	11%
Frontline staff	1062	53%
None of the above	521	26%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 3. Self-identified employee race/ethnicity breakdown.

With which racial/ethnic categories do you identify?	Respondents	Percent
Declined to answer	483	24%
American Indian	15	1%
Asian	228	11%
Black/African American	195	10%
Latinx/Hispanic	71	4%
Multiple	26	1%
White/Caucasian	972	49%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 4. Self-identified employee gender.

With which gender do you identify?	Respondents	Percent
Decline to answer	472	24%
Female	1099	55%
Male	404	20%
Non-binary	15	1%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 5. Self-identified employee age range.

What is your age?	Respondents	Percent
Declined to answer	392	20%
16-20	1	0%
21-29	101	5%
30-39	406	20%
40-49	491	25%
50-59	434	22%
60 or older	165	8%
Total	1,990	100%

Working from Home

In order to capture the current and past year work environment, the survey included questions around employees' work location, specifically working from home frequency. It was revealed that 74% of respondents were working from home at least 30 hours a week. Only 8% of respondents stated that they never worked from home in the past year (Figure 1). Overall, a total of 92% of respondents were working from home at least once a week in the past year.

Figure 1. Frequency of employees working from home.
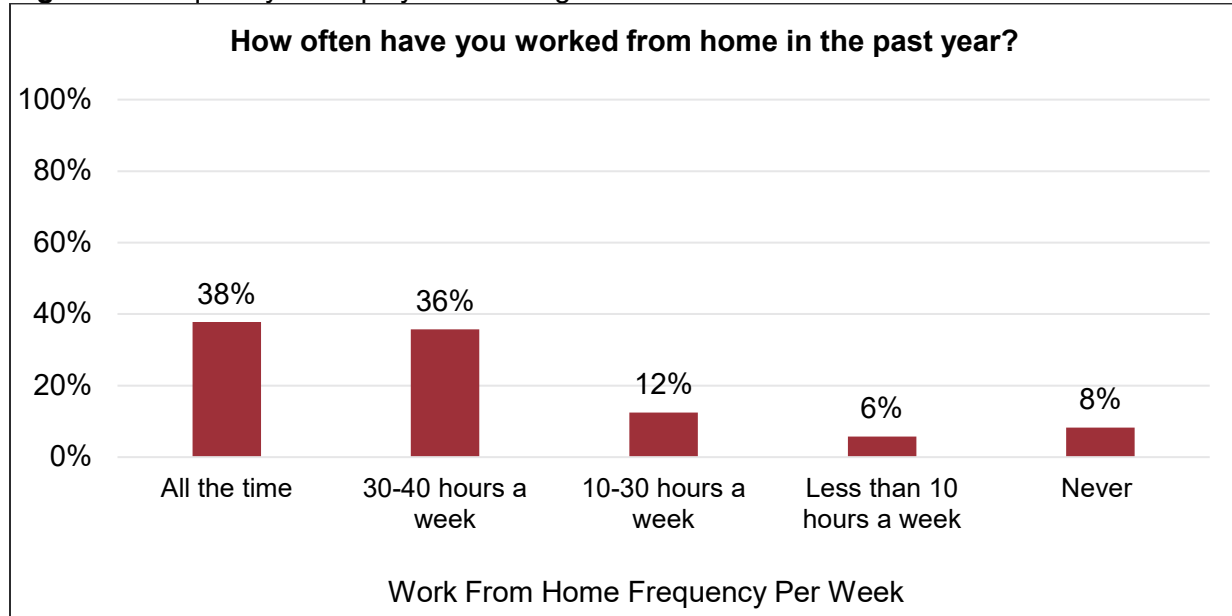
An additional question was asked to better understand reasons why employees did not work from home, which revealed that 64% of respondents did not work from home at all because of their specific job function and its requirement for in-office work (Table 6). About 13% of respondents selected the "does not apply" option. Other responses included employees who did not work virtually because of their own choice (18%), their home environment was not conducive to their work (14%), or another reason not listed (15%).

Table 6. Reasons why employees are not working virtually.

If you have not been working virtually, please provide the reasons why (check all that apply).	Respondents	Percent
Job function requires in-office work	105	64%
By choice	29	18%
Home environment is not conducive to my work	23	14%
Other	25	15%
Does not apply	21	13%
Total	**164**	**100%**

Permanent Flexible Workplace

When asked if an employee was interested in a permanent flexible workplace environment, nearly all respondents (94%) marked "yes", with only 3% marking "no" (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Employee preference on a flexible work environment.

Do you think Ramsey County should move to a flexible work environment post-pandemic?

Yes (94%)
No (3%)
Not Sure (3%)
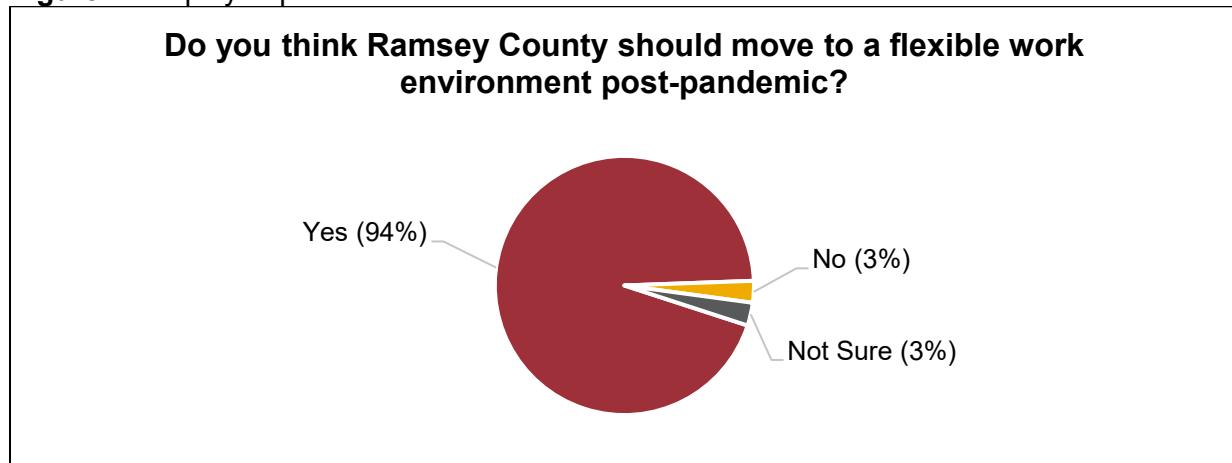
After comparisons, regardless of the different categories (work from home time, management level, race/ethnicity, gender, and age range), majority supported a flexible workplace (Table 7).

Table 7. Flexible workplace preference by respondents' characteristics.

Do you think Ramsey County should move to a flexible work environment post-pandemic?	Percent "Yes"
Frequency of Employees Working from Home	
10 or more hours	99%
1-10 hours	80%
No telework	62%
Level of Management	
Executive team member	93%
Department director or senior management	98%
Manager	95%
Supervisor	93%
Frontline staff	95%
None of the above	94%
Gender	
Female	96%
Male	93%
Declined to answer[4]	94%
Age Group	
49 and under	96%
50-59	94%
60 or older	88%
Declined to answer[5]	93%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	94%
Non-white	96%
Declined to answer[6]	93%

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[4] 472 (24%) of employees who declined to select a gender and 15 employees identified as non-binary.
[5] 392 (20%) of employees who declined to select an age group.
[6] 483 (24%) of employees who declined to select a race/ethnicity.

Limitations

Although there was a 49% response rate, there were limitations that may have impacted the analysis and interpretation of the overall survey data. Potential limitations include:

Lower response rates among some departments/divisions.
Data values and summary of findings may be different if departments/divisions with a lower response rate were able to complete the survey. It can be difficult to reach every single employee regardless of the communication type and number of reminders sent out. Additionally, the survey was voluntary, so employees who were not interested in a flexible workplace may not have found value in completing the survey.

Employees whose job function requires being on-site.
There is an underrepresentation of employees who tend to work more on-site or at Ramsey County facilities in order to perform their work. These employee perspectives were low in the data collection.

Declined to answer.
Around 25% of employees who submitted a response to the survey did not identify their race/ethnicity, gender, and/or age group. This creates gaps in fully capturing representation from these categories. It also prevents further analysis on whether there may have been any significant populations that may have led in survey responses.

Ongoing pandemic.
Although the survey had employees respond to questions based on their workplace environment in the past year, it leaned toward comparing their concerns during a pandemic. Since some employees were able to work from home and continued to do so during the time of the survey, it is hard to distinguish if the preference for a flexible workplace was because of employee safety concerns or non-related COVID-19 reasons.

Definitions.
Employees were not provided standard definitions or term descriptions regarding a flexible workplace environment. Each employee responding to questions around a flexible workplace and remote work, or scheduling may interpret each term differently. If definitions and clarity were initially shared, it may shift some responses.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Employees were also given an opportunity to provide more details related to advantages and challenges of working from home in the past year. A total of 1,818 employees provided a response in this area and major themes were pulled under each category: Resident Impact, Employer Benefits, Employee Benefits, Challenges from Working from Home, and Resources and Barriers.
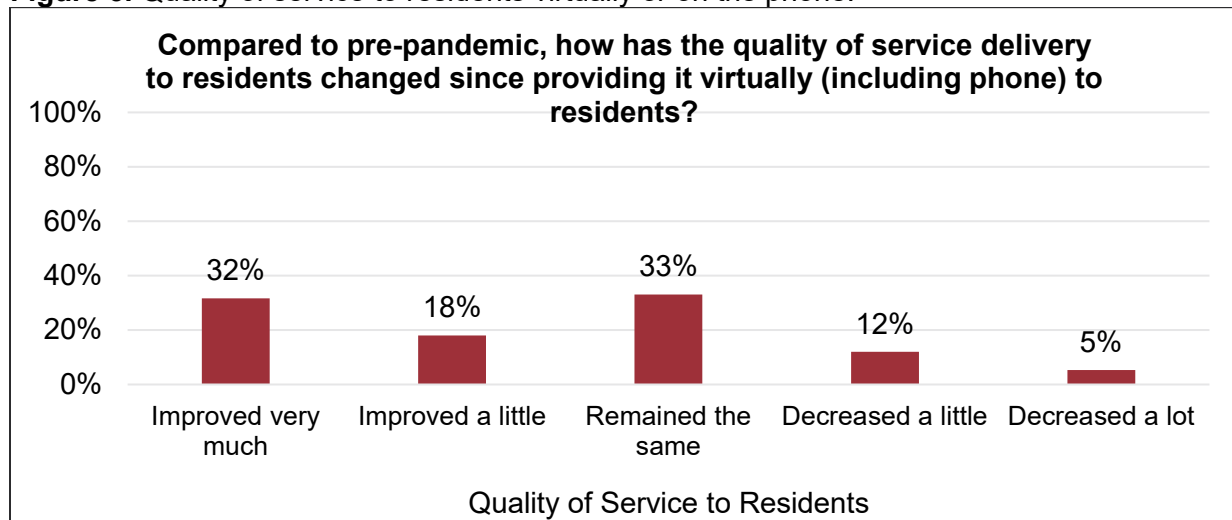
Resident Impact

About 60% of respondents provided resident-facing services or had interactions with community members and organizations outside of internal employees. Table 8 captures the estimated amount of time an employee interacted with a resident or other non-Ramsey County employee for work. Close to almost half of the respondents selected "does not apply", with 24% responding with only one to two hours a day.

Table 8. Employee time spent interacting with residents.

If you work directly with residents or other individuals who are not Ramsey County employees, how much of the day do you spend interacting with them (virtually or by phone) on average?	Respondents	Percent
1 to 2 hours	484	24%
3 to 4 hours	381	19%
5 to 6 hours	220	11%
8 to 10 hours	79	4%
Does not apply	804	40%
Invalid[7]	22	1%
Total	1,990	100%

Of those employees who have spent at least some time interacting with residents virtually or by phone, 83% shared that the quality of service remained the same or improved a little or very much. About 17% or respondents believed that quality of service to residents decreased.

Figure 3. Quality of service to residents virtually or on the phone.

Compared to pre-pandemic, how has the quality of service delivery to residents changed since providing it virtually (including phone) to residents?

Improved very much	Improved a little	Remained the same	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot
32%	18%	33%	12%	5%

Quality of Service to Residents

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[7] Some respondents selected more than one answer.

Resident Benefits and Challenges

A total of 1,397 employees provided feedback and responses regarding general experience working from home in the past year. One of the largest common themes heard revolved around the improvement of resident-facing services for employees working from home. Additional themes that occurred throughout employees' experiences included:

Employee productivity and availability for residents.
Many respondents shared that because of the flexibility to work from home, they were able to be more efficient when it came to connecting with residents, responding to resident inquiries, and had more time available to address resident questions and respond appropriately. This seemed to have come from the saved time that was previously spent traveling for work, such as between meetings to different locations or facilities. Additionally, with more time, respondents found that they were able to provide more flexibility to residents when scheduling times to meet, appointments, or reaching residents, especially if it was during an evening time.

Virtual options for residents.
Since working from home, employees have been meeting and providing online or virtual options to residents who need direct facing servicing, such as those who utilize county applications and participate in appointments or check-ins. Virtual options brought convenience, since employees did not have to schedule for travel time, which would include for some: parking, finding the right meeting location or building, having to take time off of work, arranging childcare, and/or taking transit and paying for any additional or related travel costs. Many employees felt more comfortable meeting with peers virtually, especially because of the current pandemic and protection concerns from other illnesses as well. There were reports of increased engagement and reduced rescheduling needs. Resident complaints were also reported as decreased since employees were able to work from home. eel more comfortable meeting with their worker from their own home rather than in county offices.

Quality of service for residents.
Employees also recognized that although virtual meetings worked as an advantage for many residents, there were still situations where face-to-face and in-person meetings would be best for continued excellent quality of service. Some listed job functions and work that would be best performed in-person included: developing rapport, observing home environment, utilizing signs of body language, and more. During virtual meetings, quality may have been reduced from barriers on the resident end if they had limited access to internet to meet online, if technology equipment caused a barrier, if a resident did not speak English fluently, and challenges with the different variety of devices being used.

The concern regarding the reduction of residents for walk-in services was also expressed from employees. A request of more available in-person locations for residents was brought up, especially for residents who had hard copy documents or were needed to return appropriate and private paperwork to an employee. This addresses the respondents that responded the decrease of quality of service to residents in their specific department/division.

Employer Benefits

There were several reasons why a permanent flexible workplace environment was beneficial for Ramsey County as an employer. This focuses on major themes respondents reiterated on why it was important to continue providing flexible workplace options. Instead of focusing on the resident, these benefits focus on Ramsey County as an employer.

Increased productivity.
By far the most common benefit reported by employees is increased productivity. Many employees reported that they are able to be more efficient and productive while working from home, which improves the county's overall progress. Employees shared that being at home increased their focus and reduced the amount of distractions from being in the office. Overall, there was a feeling of having accomplished more during each workday.

Time saving.
Similar to the residents saving time, employees also saved time from offering and having virtual meetings. This emphasizes the dramatic reduction of travel time, finding parking, and going to various locations. Since employees have more time working compared to traveling, it allows them to serve more residents and be more available for specific clients or peers. Responding to emails and phone calls were much easier to get to as well.

Attendance, morale, and cost savings.
With employees being at home, attendance for work was much easier and less use of leave time was needed. There was also mention of the overall employee morale, retention, and attraction pieces which improve the county culture. Additionally, flexibility to work from home is a huge savings cost. Less office spaces needed, reduced number of running facilities, and lower leasing or utility bills.

Employee Benefits

Although there are a few overlapping themes between employer and employee benefits, these major themes focus more on the employee as their work and life balance. Reasons why a permanent flexible workplace environment is beneficial for employees shared were:

Quality of life.
Employees reported having an improved work-life balance, including have more time and flexibility to attend to family and personal matters. Many employees have seen a reduction in overall stress and improvements in health, including more exercise, healthy-eating and general well-being.

Employees also noted:
- Not experiencing the stress of commuting to work and, for some, stressors in the workplace.
- Protection from COVID-19 and other illnesses.
- Employees reported being sick less.
- Having a more comfortable work environment where they can control factors such as office/desk set-up, lighting, noise levels and temperature.
- More control and independence over how they do their work day-to-day.

Time and cost savings.
Employees also frequently discussed how working from home saved time and money. Not having to commute to work allows them to have extra time in their day to dedicate to either work or personal use. Some reported how minimized commuting created savings in the areas of gas, parking, car maintenance, and going out to purchase lunch or meals during a workday.

Workplace culture and safety.
It was also noted that working from home helped avoid gossip amongst peers, experiences with microaggressions, and general other negative workplace experiences. There were some reports of being able to avoid unsafe conditions in and near the workplace or if an employee had to previously meet a resident or client in-person. The risk of auto accidents was also shared, with appreciation of not having to commute in extreme or dangerous weather days.

Challenges and Concerns

Employees were asked to identify concerns about extended flexwork opportunities in an open-ended question. The most common response to this question was that staff did not have any concerns about flexwork and expressed their support for being able to work from home throughout the pandemic and would like this arrangement to continue. Among the remaining responses that identified specific challenges, some identified more than one across four areas: being at home, being in the office, maintaining connections with colleagues and residents in-person and virtually, and creating a fair flexible work policy. These concerns were coded and available in appendix C. Employees whose role required being in the office, however, expressed their concern that their opportunities for flexwork were limited, and that County policies would not take their needs into consideration.

Supportive workforce with appropriate technology access.
When working from home, some employees shared concerns with maintaining accountability and productivity. Some felt that they did not have enough work to do, while others expressed that their colleagues' work quality had suffered while working from home during the pandemic. The number of employees who expressed this is small, as a far larger number of staff expressed their improved productivity when working from home as a benefit. Alternatively, there were also concerns about maintaining a work-life balance, as work hours can easily extend beyond the normal working day for some staff. Many employees also discussed the need for additional technology and phone support at home. Technology needs ranged broadly across a number of areas, including: wi-fi and internet and follow-up time for technical support questions. A number of employees also indicated the need to set-up a supportive, ergonomic home office space and its associated costs as a concern.

Flexibility and safety precautions on-site at Ramsey County facilities or offices.
Exposure to COVID-19 was specifically noted by a number of employees as a concern related to returning to the office and sharing workspaces with others. Some employees also had concerns about having spaces for locked file and equipment storage, having access to small meeting rooms, the need for technology in meeting rooms that would accommodate virtual attendance and the need for improved wi-fi in county buildings.

Maintaining and continued interpersonal connections with residents and peers.
Employees most commonly indicated they miss connecting with colleagues at the office and being around other people during the workday. Some employees discussed their difficulties with contacting colleagues and supervisors while working from home, noting an increase in the amount of time it takes to receive responses. A number of staff identified the ability to meet with residents in-person as a concern, due to client preference to meet in-person, lack of technology among some residents that prevents connecting virtually with staff, or due to staff perception that meeting clients in-person was beneficial towards building a relationship with them. These themes are also addressed in the next section. Some employees also noted the return to the office would require additional commuting time and a return to paying for parking.

Flexible workplace policy that is fair.
Staff who work primarily from home were concerned that the flexible work policy would not apply to their work situation. Some staff noted that some Ramsey County roles required them to be in the office, where opportunities to work from home were limited. Some staff expressed their concern that a flexible work policy would not adequately address the unique needs of staff with disabilities and/or at increased risk of contracting COVID-19, such as require returning to work. A number of staff expressed concern at being required to return to the office full time and losing flexibility all together. There is a concern among some staff that flexible work policies would not take employee input and feedback into account at all.

Resources and Barriers

Employees were asked to identify resources that would improve their work experience, barriers while working virtually, and their preference for virtual meeting platforms.

Over half of Ramsey County staff identified enhanced technology access (62%) and ergonomics (50%) would improve their work-from-home experience.
Over a third of employees identified expanded technology training resources (35%) and formal interactions with co-workers (34%) would improve their work-from-home experience. Over one quarter of staff identified a county-provided phone (25%), informal interactions (29%) and wi-fi internet access (30%) would improve their experience working from home. Less than one out of five respondents identified designated meeting space for resident interactions (19%), virtual meeting guidelines (19%), or other concerns. Other concerns primarily included scanning/printing or more detailed examples of technology-related concerns (Table 3).

Table 9. Potential improvements from home.

What are some of the things that would improve your work experience working from home (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Enhanced Technology Access	1141	62%
Ergonomics	913	50%
Virtual work tools (Teams, Zoom, AdobeSign)	722	40%
Expanded technology training resources (department-based and countywide)	647	35%
Formal interactions with co-workers (occasional in-person meetings)	628	34%
Wi-fi Internet Access	555	30%
Informal interaction or casual conversations with co-workers	530	29%
Phone Access (County Provided Phone)	460	25%
Designated meeting space for resident interactions	352	19%
Virtual Meeting Guidelines	347	19%
Other	315	17%
Total	1,826	

Three out of four employees (73%) identified barriers with working virtually. Over a third of staff (35%) identified technology-software as a barrier. Two out of five staff identified internet (22%) and wi-fi (18%) as challenges to virtual work. One out of four staff (25%) identified an inadequate home workspace set-up as a barrier. Other concerns among one out of five staff (23%) were primarily around having access to a scanner/printer or more detailed technology examples (Table 4).

Table 10. Barriers and challenges working virtually.

What are some of the barriers or challenges you've experienced working virtually (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Technology software	692	35%
Inadequate home workspace set up	490	25%
Internet	438	22%
Wi-fi	352	18%
Does not apply	543	27%

What are some of the barriers or challenges you've experienced working virtually (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Other	456	23%
Total	1,990	100%

Over half of Ramsey County staff identified Zoom (73%) and Microsoft Teams (62%) as working best for meetings. A small percentage of staff felt WebEx works best for meetings (7%). Other responses (4%) included more detailed explanations on using Zoom and Microsoft Teams as virtual platforms (Table 5).

Table 11. Preferred virtual platforms.

Which virtual platforms work best for meetings (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Zoom	1452	73%
Microsoft Teams	1231	62%
WebEx	146	7%
Other	89	4%
Total	1,990	100%

Future Work Location Preferences

Employees were asked about their preferences around flexible work schedule, work location and workspace configuration preferences. Employees overwhelmingly prefer to work from home (Table 6) and most want to work from home as much as possible (Table 7).

Table 12. Primary work location preference.

If your job allows you to flexwork, where do you primarily prefer to work?	Respondents	Percent
Work from home	1,591	85%
Work where my unit is assigned to work (if different from the county location above)	151	8%
Work in a county location close to home or close to work assignments	97	5%
Work from a Ramsey County Service Center, such as a Ramsey County library	18	1%
Work from a contracted coworking or shared space (e.g. We Work)	10	<1%
Total[8]	1,867	100%

Over half of employees (54%) prefer to work virtually four days a week, with an additional 34% wanting to work virtually three or two days a week.

Table 13. Work location preference.

Please indicate your work location preference.	Respondents	Percent
Virtually four days a week and remainder in a shared drop-in space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	1,068	54%

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[8] 123 employees indicated this question does not apply.

Please indicate your work location preference.	Respondents	Percent
Virtually three days a week and remainder in a shared drop-in space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	321	16%
Virtually two days a week and remainder at dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	353	18%
Virtually one day a week and remainder at dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	88	4%
Full time with a dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office and no consistent virtual work.	160	8%
Total	1,990	100%

For the employees who would prefer to work virtually three or more days a week, two out of five indicated they would not need a physical workspace in the office, as they would only come to Ramsey County office on an as-needed basis, such as for meetings or trainings (42%). When they do want a physical workspace, employees are equally interested in an unassigned workstation (35%) or desk (30%) and small private rooms that can be reserved (34%). Open co-working spaces is of lowest interest (20%).

Table 14. Physical workspace preference.

If you prefer to work virtually three or more days a week, please indicate your preference for types of physical workspace you would use while in the office (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Not applicable[9]	578	42%
Unassigned workstation[10]	484	35%
Small, private room that can be reserved[11]	476	34%
Unassigned desk or work surface[12]	419	30%
Open co-working space[13]	278	20%
Total	1,389	

Two-thirds of employees are somewhat or very interested in drop-in workstations (Table 9) and 55% of employees are somewhat or very comfortable with using a drop-in workstation with other staff (Table 10).

Table 15. Drop-in workstation preference.

Assuming that data privacy and personal security have been addressed by the county, how interested are you in drop-in workstations.	Respondents	Percent
Very interested	656	33%
Somewhat interested	647	33%
Not at all interested	515	26%
Does not apply	172	9%
Total	1,990	100%

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[9] Employee would only come to Ramsey County offices for team meetings, trainings, etc. on an as-needed basis.
[10] E.g. drop-in and find a workstation that is available.
[11] A 1-2 person capacity room.
[12] E.g. drop-in space and/or find a desk that is available.
[13] E.g. tables, chairs and sofas available.

Table 16. Comfortability with a drop-in workstation.

How comfortable are you using a drop-in workstation (cubicle/office) with other staff (with scheduled times and regular cleaning?	Respondents	Percent
Very comfortable	679	34%
Somewhat comfortable	422	21%
Neither comfortable or uncomfortable	349	18%
Somewhat uncomfortable	244	12%
Very uncomfortable	296	15%
Total	1,990	100%

Figure 3. Weekday preferences.

Which day(s) would you prefer to work in a Ramsey County office or facility (check all that apply)?

- Monday: 34%
- Tuesday: 56%
- Wednesday: 61%
- Thursday: 47%
- Friday: 21%

Day of the Week
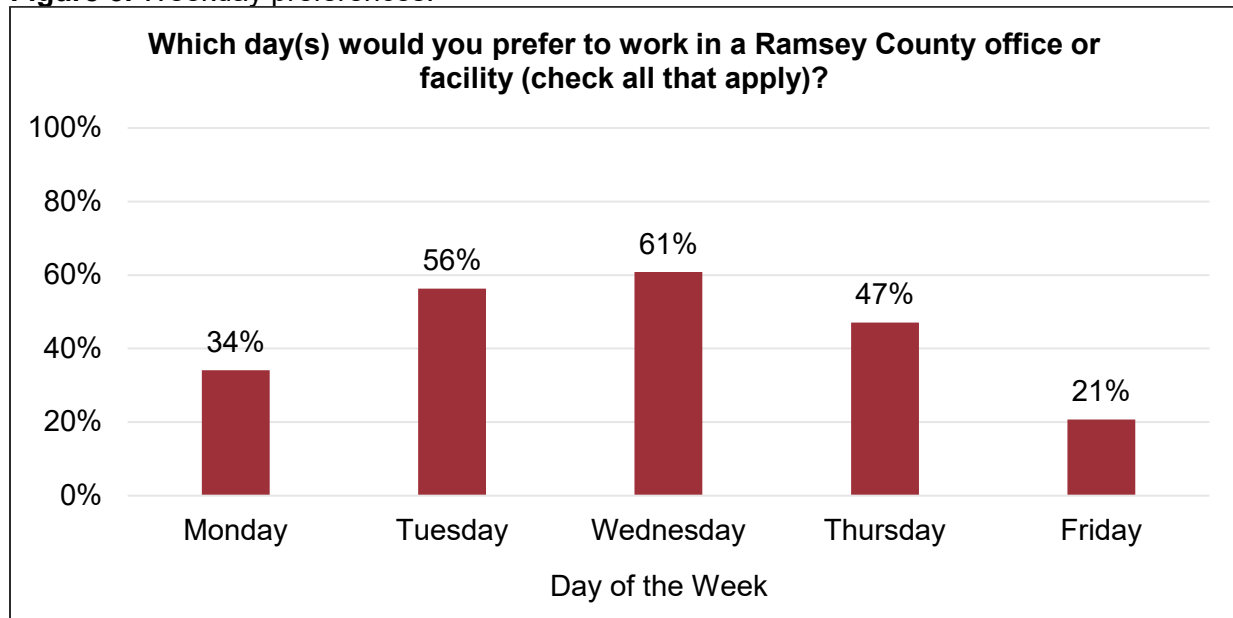
Ramsey County employees work regularly with private data and are more than comfortable storing material electronically. Over three out of four (77%) employees work with private or confidential data often or very often (Table 11). Most employees (92%) are somewhat or very comfortable using electronic storage of materials and records and relying less on paper (Table 12).

Table 17. Private or confidential data frequency.

How often do you work with private or confidential data?	Respondents	Percent
Very often	1,189	60%
Often	347	17%
Sometimes	271	14%
Hardly ever	147	7%
Never	36	2%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 18. Electronic storage and record comfortability.

Please indicate your level of comfort using electronic storage of materials and records and relying less on paper.	Respondents	Percent
Very comfortable	1,463	74%
Somewhat comfortable	362	18%
Neither comfortable or uncomfortable	83	4%
Somewhat uncomfortable	57	3%
Very uncomfortable	25	1%
Total	1,990	100%

Department/Division Comparison

Responses to key survey questions were broken out by employee department/division. Tables 21 to 29 in Appendix B show the responses by department/division for several areas. There are key differences in experiences, needs and preferences by department/division that should be considered in developing flexwork practices for the county. Examples of differences between department/division included:

- Opinion that Ramsey County should move to a flexible work environment ranged from 78% to 100%.
- Working from home in the past year at least some of the time ranged from 55% to 100%
- Preference to work from home three or more days a week ranged from 21% to 86%.
- Interest in open co-working spaces (e.g.. tables, chairs and sofas available) ranged from 10% to 40%.
- Perception that the quality-of-service delivery to residents has remained the same or improved ranged from 55% to 100%.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are recommendations for Ramsey County as it continues planning for moving to a flexible work environment.

Continue to support employees working from home as much as possible while providing adequate supports for both at home and in-office needs. Many employees would like to continue working from home as much as possible and believe that working from home has many benefits for Ramsey County as an employer, residents and employees. Employees did identify the need for more support in the area of technology and ergonomics/home office set up.

Continue to invest in more options for how residents can virtually access services and complete their business with Ramsey County. Many areas of Ramsey County have made a number of changes to allow for more ways for residents and clients to complete applications, submit documents and participate in meetings. These options are beneficial regardless of where employees are physically located. Even as employees return to in-office work, offering virtual options will be of benefit to residents. However, there does continue to be a need for in-person services in order to provide quality services and mitigate barriers experienced by residents (lack of access to technology, language barriers). Options should be reviewed based on the needs of each type of program/service and to assess any potential equity impact.

Ensure in-office workspaces accommodate needs to work with employees who are in different locations.
Employees would like to make sure that when they are in the office, there is a workspace available and that the workspace configuration for individual work include sit/stand desks, docking stations and monitors, ability to access preferred office chairs, and areas for equipment and file storage. Collaboration spaces should have technology provided to allow effective interaction with on-site and remote employees. Workspaces should be available on a reservation basis and some for drop in use.

Understand how employee needs and preferences vary by division/department and implement plans that account for the unique needs of each division. As discussed in this report, responses to the survey did vary widely by department/division.

Collect more info from employees about technology needs. The survey identified technology as a top area of concern for employees. However, the survey responses did not always provide enough detail on the various types of needs in this area. Ramsey County would benefit from further data collection from employees in order to adequately plan for technology needs.

Understanding needs of staff that have job responsibilities that require them to be in the office or when there is a shared team responsibility for in-office work. Employees who are not able to work from home often reported concerns about how applicable any flexible work policy would be for them. Considerations for flexwork opportunities among staff whose roles require them to be in the office requires further understanding.

APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY

Flexible Workplace Policy Survey
Ramsey County is seeking your feedback on a *Flexible Work Policy* that will allow us to build a permanent workforce environment in alignment with our Resident's first strategic priority, core values, service delivery framework and strategic facilities plan in serving our community while leveraging technology and a flexible work environment to attract and retain a talented workforce. We are asking these questions to learn what has worked well remotely over the last year and to identify areas where we can adapt and improve with a post-pandemic policy. Results from this survey will help shape policies and work environment options countywide, but this information is only a reflection of preferences for planning purposes and is not binding on your future work arrangements.

- Flexible or virtual work is when an employee works on an occasional or regular schedule at a designated non- county facility or office, such as his or her home.
- A mobile worker is an employee whose job function requires travel to meet and work in person with clients/customers throughout the County (for example, visiting home nurses and environmental health specialists conducting field inspections.) The primary workplace of a mobile worker may or may not be a central County office.

Ramsey County staff should expect to return to in-person work environments after Labor Day (September 6, 2021.) However, some staff may be able to choose to work from home or another alternative worksite on certain days, depending on their department's service delivery needs. In accordance with Workplace Standards:

- Staff working three or more days per week at a Ramsey County facility or office are likely to maintain a dedicated work location, such as a cube or office.
- Staff who commute into a Ramsey County facility fewer than three days per week would use a drop-in workstation or other type of shared workspace.

Although we cannot ensure that staff preferences will be met immediately, your responses will help Ramsey County determine future workspace needs and create facilities where employees, and the residents they serve, are able to thrive.

* Indicates a required field

Category: Your Experience with Telecommuting

1. Do you think Ramsey County should move towards a flexible work environment post pandemic? *
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not sure

2. During the pandemic, many staff have been working virtually from home. How often have you worked from home in the past year? *
   a. Never (apply skip logic: skip to question 8)
   b. Rarely (less than 10 hours a week)
   c. Half of the time (10-30 hours a week)
   d. Almost all the time (30-40 hours a week)
   e. All the time

3. What do you see as the advantages of working from home for Ramsey County staff?

4. What are some of the things that would improve your work experience when working from home? (choose all that apply)
   a. Enhanced technology access (laptop, scanner, fax, headsets)
   b. Wifi/internet access
   c. Virtual meeting guidelines
   d. Ergonomics (chairs, etc.)
   e. Phone access (County provided phone)
   f. Informal interaction or casual conversations with co-workers
   g. Formal interactions with co-workers (occasional in-person meetings)
   h. Designated meeting space for resident interactions
   i. Virtual work tools (Teams, Zoom, AdobeSign)
   j. Expanded technology training resources (department-based and countywide)
   k. Other (please describe):

5. If you work directly with residents or other individuals who are not Ramsey County employees, how much of the day do you spend interacting with them (virtually or by phone,) on average?
   *
   a. 1-2 hours
   b. 3-4 hours
   c. 5-6 hours
   d. 8-10 hours
   e. Does not apply

6. Compared to pre-pandemic, how has the quality of service delivery to residents changed since providing it virtually (including phone) to residents?
   a. Improved very much
   b. Improved a little
   c. Remained the same
   d. Decreased a little
   e. Decreased a lot
   f. I do not work directly with residents

7. How do you think the resident experience may have been impacted by the fact that you have worked virtually?

8. What are some of the barriers or challenges you've experienced working virtually? (choose all that apply)
   a. Internet
   b. Wi-fi
   c. Technology -Software
   d. Inadequate home workspace set up
   e. Other?
   f. Does not apply

9. If you have not been working virtually, please provide the reasons why (check all that apply) *
   a. Job function requires in-office work
   b. By choice

    c. Home environment is not conducive to my work (e.g.. lack space, lack quiet, etc.)
    d. OtheR (please describe):
    e. Does not apply

Category: Workspace Options

10. If your job allows you to flexwork, where do you primarily prefer to work? (choose one)*
    a. Work from home
    b. Work in a county location close to home or close to work assignments
    c. Work from a Ramsey County Service Center, such as a Ramsey County library
    d. Work where my unit is assigned to work (if different from the county location above)
    e. Work from a contracted coworking or shared space (e.g.. We Work)
    f. Does not apply

11. The County is considering establishing drop-in workstations at different department locations and minimizing or eliminating dedicated offices and workstations. Assuming that data privacy and personal security have been addressed by the County, how interested are you in this option? *
    a. Very interested
    b. Somewhat interested
    c. Not at all interested
    d. Does not apply

12. How comfortable are you using a drop-in workstation (cubicle/office) with other staff (with scheduled times and regular cleaning?) *
    a. Very comfortable
    b. Somewhat comfortable
    c. Neither comfortable or uncomfortable
    d. Somewhat uncomfortable
    e. Very uncomfortable

13. What is your level of comfort with being co-located with staff of other divisions at a work site? (A great deal of comfort down to no comfort at all.) *
    a. Very comfortable
    b. Somewhat comfortable
    c. Neither comfortable or uncomfortable
    d. Somewhat uncomfortable
    e. Not comfortable

14. Which virtual platforms work best for meetings? *
    a. Zoom
    b. MS Teams
    c. WebEx
    d. Other (please describe):

15. Please indicate your work location preferences: *
    a. Work full time with a dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office and no consistent virtual work.
    b. Work virtually one day a week with the remainder at dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office.

    c. Work virtually two days a week with the remainder at dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office.

    d. Work virtually three days a week with the remainder in a shared drop-in space at a Ramsey County facility or office.

    e. Work virtually four days a week with the remainder in a shared drop-in space at a Ramsey County facility or office.

16. Which day(s) would you prefer to work in a Ramsey County office or facility? (check all that apply) *

    a. Monday

    b. Tuesday

    c. Wednesday

    d. Thursday

    e. Friday

17. If you prefer to work virtually three or more days a week, please indicate your preference for types of physical workspace you would use while in the office (check all that apply) *

    a. Unassigned desk or worksurface (e.g.. drop-in and find a desk that is available)

    b. Unassigned workstation (e.g.. drop-in and find a workstation that is available)

    c. Open co-working space (e.g.. tables, chairs and sofas available)

    d. Small, private room that can be reserved (1-2 person capacity)

    e. Not applicable; I would only come to Ramsey County offices for team meetings, trainings, etc. on an as-needed basis.

Category: Data Storage

18. How often do you work with private or confidential information? *

    a. Very often

    b. Often

    c. Hardly ever

    d. Never

19. Please indicate your level of comfort in using electronic storage of materials and records and relying less on paper. *

    a. Very comfortable

    b. Somewhat comfortable

    c. Neither comfortable or uncomfortable

    d. Somewhat uncomfortable

    e. Very uncomfortable

Category: Overarching Feedback

20. What is your biggest concern about extended flexwork opportunities? *

21. What is your department, office, or division name:

    a. County Manager's Office (Chief Clerk and Admin Staff, Policy and Planning, Compliance and Ethics, and Transforming Systems Together)

    b. Communications & Public Relations

    c. Community Corrections

    d. Community & Economic Development

e. County Assessor
f. County Attorney's Office
g. Emergency Communications
h. Emergency Management & Homeland Security
i. Enterprise Project Management Office
j. Finance
k. Financial Assistance Services
l. Health and Wellness Administration
m. Housing Stability
n. Human Resources
o. IPR Administration
p. Information Services
q. Lake Owasso Residence
r. Law Library
s. Library
t. Medical Examiner
u. Parks & Recreation
v. Property Management
w. Property Tax, Records & Election Services
x. Public Health
y. Public Works
z. Ramsey County Care Center
aa. Sheriff's Office
bb. Social Services
cc. Veteran's Services
dd. Workforce Solutions

22. What is your level of management? *
    a. Frontline staff
    b. Supervisor
    c. Manager
    d. Department Director or Senior Management
    e. Executive Team Member
    f. None of the above

Category: Demographics
Please note that this section of questions is optional and that you are not required to respond. Any responses you do provide will remain anonymous and will be used for the sole purpose of analyzing potential equity impacts. This information will be kept strictly confidential and when reported, will not identify any individual.

23. With which racial/ethnic categories do you identify? Check all that apply:
    a. White/Caucasian
    b. Black/African descent
    c. Asian
    d. Latinx/Hispanic
    e. American Indian/Native American/Indigenous
    f. Decline to answer

24. Which gender do you identify?

    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Non-binary
    d. Decline to answer

25. Age Range:
    a. 16-20
    b. 21-29
    c. 30-39
    d. 40-49
    e. 50-59
    f. 60 or older
    g. Decline to answer

26. Are you represented by a labor union?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Decline to answer

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS BY DEPARTMENT

Table 1. Survey response rate by department/division.

Service Team	Department/Division	No. of Employees[14]	Respondents	Response Rate[15]
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	111	61	55%
	Workforce Solutions	80	54	68%
	Library	118	47	40%
	Parks & Recreation	93	40	43%
	Property Management	72	23	32%
	Housing Stability	19	15	79%
	Community & Economic Development	17	7	41%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	631	394	62%
	Financial Assistance Services	369	275	75%
	Community Corrections	435	241	55%
	Public Health	308	157	51%
	Health and Wellness Administration	318	106	33%
	Ramsey County Care Center	175	7	4%
	Lake Owasso Residence	113	6	5%
	Veteran's Services	6	5	
Information and Public Records	Information Services	67	70	104%
	County Assessor	45	36	80%
	Property Tax & Election Services	22	26	118%
	IPR Administration	50	24	48%
	Communications & Public Relations	13	14	108%
	Enterprise Project Management Office	4	1	25%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	321	220	69%
	Sheriff's Office	411	14	3%
	Emergency Communications	127	13	10%
	Emergency Management & Homeland Security	7	5	71%
	Medical Examiner	17	3	18%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	52	56	108%
	Finance	33	43	130%
	County Manager's Office[16]	26	26	100%
Related Org.	Law Library	4	1	25%

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[14] Employee counts are based on the 2020 Human Resources report.
[15] Response rates are approximate since the number of employees may have changed between 2020 and the survey.
[16] Includes the Chief Clerk; Administration; Policy and Planning; Compliance and Ethics Office; and Transforming Systems Together divisions.

Table 2. Self-identified employee management level.

Level of Management	Respondents	Percent
Executive team member	27	1%
Department director or senior management	49	2%
Manager	119	6%
Supervisor	212	11%
Frontline staff	1062	53%
None of the above	521	26%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 3. Self-identified employee race/ethnicity breakdown.

With which racial/ethnic categories do you identify?	Respondents	Percent
Declined to answer	483	24%
American Indian	15	1%
Asian	228	11%
Black/African American	195	10%
Latinx/Hispanic	71	4%
Multiple	26	1%
White/Caucasian	972	49%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 4. Self-identified employee gender.

With which gender do you identify?	Respondents	Percent
Decline to answer	472	24%
Female	1099	55%
Male	404	20%
Non-binary	15	1%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 5. Self-identified employee age range.

What is your age?	Respondents	Percent
Declined to answer	392	20%
16-20	1	0%
21-29	101	5%
30-39	406	20%
40-49	491	25%
50-59	434	22%
60 or older	165	8%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 6. Reasons why employees are not working virtually.

If you have not been working virtually, please provide the reasons why (check all that apply).	Respondents	Percent
Job function requires in-office work	105	64%
By choice	29	18%
Home environment is not conducive to my work	23	14%
Other	25	15%
Does not apply	21	13%
Total	164	100%

Table 7. Flexible workplace preference by respondents' characteristics.

Do you think Ramsey County should move to a flexible work environment post-pandemic?	Percent "Yes"
Frequency of Employees Working from Home	
10 or more hours	99%
1-10 hours	80%
No telework	62%
Level of Management	
Executive team member	93%
Department director or senior management	98%
Manager	95%
Supervisor	93%
Frontline staff	95%
None of the above	94%
Gender	
Female	96%
Male	93%
Declined to answer[17]	94%
Age Group	
49 and under	96%
50-59	94%
60 or older	88%
Declined to answer[18]	93%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	94%
Non-white	96%
Declined to answer[19]	93%

Table 8. Employee time spent interacting with residents.

If you work directly with residents or other individuals who are not Ramsey County employees, how much of the day do you spend interacting with them (virtually or by phone) on average?	Respondents	Percent
1 to 2 hours	484	24%

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[17] 472 (24%) of employees who declined to select a gender and 15 employees identified as non-binary.
[18] 392 (20%) of employees who declined to select an age group.
[19] 483 (24%) of employees who declined to select a race/ethnicity.

If you work directly with residents or other individuals who are not Ramsey County employees, how much of the day do you spend interacting with them (virtually or by phone) on average?	Respondents	Percent
3 to 4 hours	381	19%
5 to 6 hours	220	11%
8 to 10 hours	79	4%
Does not apply	804	40%
Invalid[20]	22	1%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 9. Potential improvements from home.

What are some of the things that would improve your work experience working from home (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Enhanced Technology Access	1141	62%
Ergonomics	913	50%
Virtual work tools (Teams, Zoom, AdobeSign)	722	40%
Expanded technology training resources (department-based and countywide)	647	35%
Formal interactions with co-workers (occasional in-person meetings)	628	34%
Wi-fi Internet Access	555	30%
Informal interaction or casual conversations with co-workers	530	29%
Phone Access (County Provided Phone)	460	25%
Designated meeting space for resident interactions	352	19%
Virtual Meeting Guidelines	347	19%
Other	315	17%
Total	1,826	

Table 10. Barriers and challenges working virtually.

What are some of the barriers or challenges you've experienced working virtually (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Technology software	692	35%
Inadequate home workspace set up	490	25%
Internet	438	22%
Wi-fi	352	18%
Does not apply	543	27%
Other	456	23%
Total	1,990	100%

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[20] Some respondents selected more than one answer.

Table 11. Preferred virtual platforms.

Which virtual platforms work best for meetings (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Zoom	1452	73%
Microsoft Teams	1231	62%
WebEx	146	7%
Other	89	4%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 12. Primary work location preference.

If your job allows you to flexwork, where do you primarily prefer to work?	Respondents	Percent
Work from home	1,591	85%
Work where my unit is assigned to work (if different from the county location above)	151	8%
Work in a county location close to home or close to work assignments	97	5%
Work from a Ramsey County Service Center, such as a Ramsey County library	18	1%
Work from a contracted coworking or shared space (e.g. We Work)	10	<1%
Total[21]	1,867	100%

Table 13. Work location preference.

Please indicate your work location preference.	Respondents	Percent
Virtually four days a week and remainder in a shared drop-in space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	1,068	54%
Virtually three days a week and remainder in a shared drop-in space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	321	16%
Virtually two days a week and remainder at dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	353	18%
Virtually one day a week and remainder at dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office.	88	4%
Full time with a dedicated space at a Ramsey County facility or office and no consistent virtual work.	160	8%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 14. Physical workspace preference.

If you prefer to work virtually three or more days a week, please indicate your preference for types of physical workspace you would use while in the office (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Not applicable[22]	578	42%
Unassigned workstation[23]	484	35%

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[21] 123 employees indicated this question does not apply.

[22] Employee would only come to Ramsey County offices for team meetings, trainings, etc. on an as-needed basis.

[23] E.g. drop-in and find a workstation that is available.

If you prefer to work virtually three or more days a week, please indicate your preference for types of physical workspace you would use while in the office (check all that apply)?	Respondents	Percent
Small, private room that can be reserved[24]	476	34%
Unassigned desk or work surface[25]	419	30%
Open co-working space[26]	278	20%
Total	1,389	

Table 15. Drop-in workstation preference.

Assuming that data privacy and personal security have been addressed by the county, how interested are you in drop-in workstations.	Respondents	Percent
Very interested	656	33%
Somewhat interested	647	33%
Not at all interested	515	26%
Does not apply	172	9%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 16. Comfortability with a drop-in workstation.

How comfortable are you using a drop-in workstation (cubicle/office) with other staff (with scheduled times and regular cleaning?	Respondents	Percent
Very comfortable	679	34%
Somewhat comfortable	422	21%
Neither comfortable or uncomfortable	349	18%
Somewhat uncomfortable	244	12%
Very uncomfortable	296	15%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 17. Private or confidential data frequency.

How often do you work with private or confidential data?	Respondents	Percent
Very often	1,189	60%
Often	347	17%
Sometimes	271	14%
Hardly ever	147	7%
Never	36	2%
Total	1,990	100%

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[24] A 1-2 person capacity room.
[25] E.g. drop-in space and/or find a desk that is available.
[26] E.g. tables, chairs and sofas available.

Table 18. Electronic storage and record comfortability.

Please indicate your level of comfort using electronic storage of materials and records and relying less on paper.	Respondents	Percent
Very comfortable	1,463	74%
Somewhat comfortable	362	18%
Neither comfortable or uncomfortable	83	4%
Somewhat uncomfortable	57	3%
Very uncomfortable	25	1%
Total	1,990	100%

Table 19. Department name.

What is your department, office or division name?	Respondents	Percent
Communications & Public Relations	14	1%
Community & Economic Development	7	<1%
Community Corrections	241	12%
County Assessor	36	2%
County Attorney's Office	220	11%
County Manager's Office[27]	26	1%
Emergency Communications	13	1%
Emergency Management & Homeland Security	5	<1%
Enterprise Project Management Office	1	<1%
Finance	43	2%
Financial Assistance Services	275	14%
Health and Wellness Administration	106	5%
Housing Stability	15	1%
Human Resources	56	3%
Information Services	70	4%
IPR Administration	24	1%
Lake Owasso Residence	6	<1%
Law Library	1	<1%
Library	47	2%
Medical Examiner	3	<1%
Parks & Recreation	40	2%
Property Management	23	1%
Property Tax, Records & Election Services	26	1%
Public Health	157	8%
Public Works	61	3%
Ramsey County Care Center	7	0%
Sheriff's Office	14	1%
Social Services	394	20%
Veteran's Services	5	0%
Workforce Solutions	54	3%
Total	1,990	100%

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[27] Includes the Chief Clerk; Administration; Policy and Planning; Compliance and Ethics Office; and Transforming Systems Together divisions.

Table 20. Work from home frequency by respondents' characteristics.

How often have you worked from home in past year?	% Worked 30 or More Hours from Home
Level of Management	
Executive Team Member	70%
Department Director or Senior Management	63%
Manager	57%
Supervisor	65%
Frontline staff	75%
None of the above	79%
Gender	
Female	77%
Male	67%
Decline to Answer	73%
Age Group	
29 and under	66%
30-49	78%
50 and older	69%
Declined to answer	72%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	72%
Non-White	77%
Declined to answer	73%

The following tables of departments/divisions are included in the county-wide results but are either combined or excluded from the breakouts by department/division due to either a low group size and/or low response rate.

Excluded: Ramsey County Care Center, Lake Owasso Residence, Veteran's Services, Law Library Sheriff's Office, Emergency Communications, Medical Examiner, Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Combined: (1) Community Economic Developed (CED) and Housing Stability, (2) Assessor's Office and Property Taxes, Records and Election Services (PTRES) and (3) Information and Public Records (IPR) Administration and Communications and Public Relations (CPR).

Table 1. Flexible workplace preference by department/division.

Service Team	Department/ Division	Respondents	Percent "Yes"
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	61	89%
	Workforce Solutions	54	98%
	Library	47	81%
	Parks & Recreation	40	78%
	Property Management	23	96%
	CED & Housing	22	91%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	394	97%
	Financial Assistance Services	275	98%
	Community Corrections	241	90%
	Public Health	157	93%
	Health and Wellness Administration	106	92%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	70	96%
	Assessor, PTRES	62	98%
	Administration, CPR	38	100%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	220	99%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	56	100%
	Finance	43	100%
	County Manager's Office	26	92%
	Total	1,990	94%

Table 2. Work from home frequency by department/division.

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents	Frequency Per Week					
			At least some	All the time	30-40 hours	10-30 hours	Less than 10 hours	Never
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	61	79%	25%	28%	13%	13%	21%
	Workforce Solutions	54	100%	30%	61%	2%	7%	0%
	Library	47	55%	2%	9%	11%	34%	45%
	Parks & Recreation	40	75%	20%	23%	18%	15%	25%
	Property Management	23	87%	17%	17%	26%	26%	13%
	CED & Housing	22	95%	41%	36%	14%	5%	5%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	394	96%	35%	46%	12%	4%	4%
	Financial Assistance Services	275	95%	64%	25%	6%	0%	5%
	Community Corrections	241	90%	15%	49%	19%	7%	10%
	Public Health	157	90%	25%	36%	22%	8%	10%
	Health and Wellness Administration	106	88%	35%	37%	11%	5%	12%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	70	93%	56%	27%	7%	3%	7%
	Assessor, PTRES	62	97%	34%	39%	21%	3%	3%
	Administration, CPR	38	100%	45%	34%	11%	11%	0%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	220	98%	55%	32%	8%	2%	2%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	56	95%	63%	25%	7%	0%	5%
	Finance	43	100%	53%	40%	2%	5%	0%
	County Manager's Office	26	96%	38%	35%	23%	0%	4%
	Total	1,990	92%	38%	36%	12%	6%	8%

Table 3. Work location preference by department/division.

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents who have worked from home	Number of Weekdays Preferred Virtual					
			3 to 4 days	4 days	3 days	2 days	1 day	Fulltime
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	48	38%	26%	11%	33%	13%	16%
	Workforce Solutions	54	67%	48%	19%	26%	6%	2%
	Library	26	21%	17%	4%	21%	17%	40%
	Parks & Recreation	30	35%	18%	18%	25%	8%	33%
	Property Management	20	65%	35%	30%	13%	0%	22%
	CED & Housing	21	73%	55%	18%	14%	0%	14%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	380	76%	60%	16%	15%	4%	5%
	Financial Assistance Services	261	87%	76%	11%	7%	1%	5%
	Community Corrections	216	64%	44%	21%	21%	5%	10%
	Public Health	142	62%	47%	15%	24%	6%	8%
	Health and Wellness Administration	93	70%	56%	14%	15%	3%	12%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	65	81%	67%	14%	11%	3%	4%
	Assessor, PTRES	60	76%	52%	24%	16%	6%	2%
	Administration, CPR	38	68%	26%	42%	26%	3%	3%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	216	73%	59%	14%	22%	3%	2%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	53	86%	73%	13%	11%	2%	2%
	Finance	43	79%	49%	30%	19%	2%	0%
	County Manager's Office	25	58%	42%	15%	31%	8%	<1%
	Total	1,826	70%	54%	16%	18%	4%	8%

Table 4. Primary work location preference by department/division.

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents	Home	Unit assignment	Location close to home	Ramsey County service center	Shared space	Does not apply
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	61	70%	8%	8%	0%	0%	13%
	Workforce Solutions	54	76%	9%	4%	2%	6%	4%
	Library	47	53%	13%	8%	0%	0%	28%
	Parks & Recreation	40	43%	4%	2%	6%	0%	45%
	Property Management	23	74%	9%	9%	0%	0%	9%
	CED & Housing	22	77%	14%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	394	86%	5%	5%	1%	1%	3%
	Financial Assistance Services	275	95%	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%
	Community Corrections	241	68%	19%	4%	0%	0%	9%
	Public Health	157	76%	7%	10%	0%	1%	6%
	Health and Wellness Administration	106	75%	6%	7%	2%	0%	10%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	70	89%	7%	1%	0%	0%	3%
	Assessor, PTRES	62	89%	8%	3%	0%	0%	0%
	Administration, CPR	38	79%	11%	5%	0%	0%	5%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	220	85%	5%	6%	1%	0%	2%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	56	91%	5%	2%	0%	0%	2%
	Finance	43	86%	9%	2%	0%	0%	2%
	County Manager's Office	26	73%	12%	12%	4%	0%	0%
	Total	1,990	80%	8%	5%	1%	1%	6%

Table 5. Physical workspace preference on-site if respondent works virtually three or more days a week by department/division.[28]

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents who prefer working 3+ days virtually	Small, private room that can be reserved	Unassigned desk or work surface[29]	Unassigned workstation[30]	Open co-working space[31]	Not applicable[32]
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	23	57%	30%	22%	17%	35%
	Workforce Solutions	36	36%	28%	33%	19%	36%
	Library	10	20%	10%	30%	10%	50%
	Parks & Recreation	14	21%	21%	7%	21%	50%
	Property Management	15	40%	27%	40%	33%	27%
	CED & Housing	16	44%	38%	44%	19%	38%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	299	29%	28%	34%	20%	45%
	Financial Assistance Services	239	26%	26%	35%	15%	51%
	Community Corrections	155	45%	35%	37%	25%	34%
	Public Health	98	37%	42%	36%	17%	33%
	Health and Wellness Administration	74	28%	24%	30%	18%	53%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	57	32%	32%	23%	26%	49%
	Assessor, PTRES	47	30%	28%	38%	19%	34%
	Administration, CPR	26	50%	27%	46%	31%	35%
Safety & Justice	County Attorney's Office	160	35%	34%	41%	18%	34%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	48	42%	31%	33%	38%	54%
	Finance	34	44%	32%	41%	15%	29%
	County Manager's Office	15	53%	47%	53%	40%	27%
	Total	1,389	34%	30%	35%	20%	42%

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[28] Respondents had the option to check all that apply.
[29] E.g. drop-in and find a desk that is available.
[30] E.g. drop-in and find a workstation that is available.
[31] E.g. tables, chairs and sofas available.
[32] Would only come to Ramsey County offices for team meetings, trainings, etc. on an as-needed basis.

Table 6. Weekday(s) preferred to work from home by department/division.[33]

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	61	52%	72%	77%	64%	26%
	Workforce Solutions	54	15%	59%	65%	61%	13%
	Library	47	79%	60%	68%	70%	51%
	Parks & Recreation	40	48%	70%	78%	70%	38%
	Property Management	23	43%	57%	70%	57%	17%
	CED & Housing	22	41%	59%	86%	50%	18%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	394	27%	48%	56%	44%	19%
	Financial Assistance Services	275	31%	48%	45%	28%	17%
	Community Corrections	241	42%	66%	64%	51%	25%
	Public Health	157	34%	61%	71%	58%	22%
	Health and Wellness Administration	106	38%	55%	62%	42%	27%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	70	39%	43%	53%	41%	19%
	Assessor, PTRES	62	29%	53%	73%	47%	18%
	Administration, CPR	38	39%	71%	61%	53%	13%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	220	30%	57%	60%	45%	17%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	56	18%	45%	57%	38%	11%
	Finance	43	19%	65%	58%	58%	7%
	County Manager's Office	26	38%	81%	69%	58%	15%
	Total	1,990	34%	56%	61%	47%	21%

[33] Respondents had the option to check all that apply.

Table 7. Resident quality of service delivery change since pre-pandemic by department/division.

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents working from home providing resident-facing services	Same or improved	Improved very much	Improved a little	Remained the same	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot
Economic Growth or Community Investment	Public Works	29	97%	10%	17%	69%	3%	0%
	Workforce Solutions	44	86%	43%	20%	23%	11%	2%
	Library	22	55%	5%	9%	41%	27%	18%
	Parks & Recreation	28	75%	29%	11%	36%	18%	7%
	Property Management	8	100%	13%	25%	63%	0%	0%
	CED & Housing	16	75%	19%	31%	25%	19%	6%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	336	84%	33%	17%	34%	13%	4%
	Financial Assistance Services	237	99%	54%	16%	29%	1%	0%
	Community Corrections	173	65%	21%	17%	27%	17%	18%
	Public Health	100	71%	24%	18%	29%	19%	10%
	Health and Wellness Administration	31	81%	42%	23%	16%	16%	3%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	16	100%	44%	38%	19%	0%	0%
	Assessor, PTRES	57	93%	26%	25%	42%	7%	0%
	Administration, CPR	20	85%	25%	20%	40%	15%	0%
Safety & Justice	County Attorney's Office	148	89%	36%	23%	30%	9%	1%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	10	70%	40%	20%	10%	30%	0%
	Finance	16	100%	44%	13%	44%	0%	0%
	County Manager's Office	15	73%	20%	33%	20%	27%	0%
	Total	1329	83%	33%	19%	32%	12%	5%

Table 8. Barriers and challenges working from home by department/division.

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents	Internet	Wi-fi	Technology-Software	Inadequate home workspace set up	Other	Does not apply
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	61	21%	21%	30%	23%	18%	30%
	Workforce Solutions	54	30%	28%	31%	35%	30%	20%
	Library	47	9%	11%	28%	28%	13%	45%
	Parks & Recreation	40	28%	15%	28%	30%	20%	40%
	Property Management	23	22%	13%	22%	26%	13%	35%
	CED & Housing	22	23%	32%	45%	45%	9%	27%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	394	25%	17%	39%	19%	25%	25%
	Financial Assistance Services	275	10%	8%	38%	7%	22%	40%
	Community Corrections	241	29%	25%	37%	41%	19%	21%
	Public Health	157	31%	29%	42%	39%	24%	15%
	Health and Wellness Administration	106	20%	16%	32%	12%	27%	31%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	70	17%	9%	11%	17%	26%	44%
	Assessor, PTRES	62	23%	15%	29%	32%	26%	16%
	Administration, CPR	38	29%	29%	32%	37%	26%	18%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	220	24%	20%	40%	25%	23%	22%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	56	21%	11%	23%	29%	25%	34%
	Finance	43	14%	14%	35%	23%	35%	19%
	County Manager's Office	26	23%	19%	27%	46%	27%	12%
	Total	1,990	22%	18%	35%	25%	23%	27%

Table 9. Improvements that can be made for working from home.

Service Team	Department/Division	Respondents who have worked from home	Enhanced technology access	Ergonomics	Virtual work tools	Expanded technology training resources	Formal interactions with co-workers	Wi-fi internet access	Informal interaction with co-workers	Phone access (county provided)	Virtual meeting guidelines	Resident interaction meeting spaces	Other
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Public Works	48	50%	52%	29%	35%	48%	33%	40%	13%	17%	6%	19%
	Workforce Solutions	54	61%	52%	52%	48%	39%	31%	35%	19%	17%	33%	20%
	Library	26	62%	46%	35%	35%	23%	27%	31%	27%	19%	4%	8%
	Parks & Recreation	30	50%	57%	50%	17%	43%	23%	43%	23%	23%	10%	17%
	Property Management	20	75%	40%	50%	40%	20%	30%	25%	25%	20%	15%	20%
	CED & Housing	21	76%	57%	57%	33%	52%	33%	29%	38%	19%	24%	0%
Health and Wellness	Social Services	380	67%	42%	43%	34%	34%	28%	25%	24%	17%	29%	18%
	Financial Assistance Services	261	66%	45%	35%	39%	25%	25%	13%	31%	20%	12%	17%
	Community Corrections	216	69%	65%	42%	43%	45%	38%	40%	26%	20%	36%	12%
	Public Health	142	73%	65%	37%	32%	40%	39%	40%	20%	12%	16%	14%
	Health and Wellness Administration	93	56%	40%	44%	42%	28%	34%	20%	23%	24%	6%	23%
Information and Public Records	Information Services	65	38%	42%	23%	14%	26%	22%	28%	6%	17%	0%	15%
	Assessor, PTRES	60	55%	45%	33%	20%	28%	30%	30%	30%	13%	22%	35%
	Administration, CPR	38	61%	58%	45%	32%	58%	42%	34%	21%	32%	21%	21%
Safety and Justice	County Attorney's Office	216	63%	48%	42%	33%	30%	29%	26%	31%	19%	11%	17%
Strategic Team	Human Resources	53	51%	43%	32%	45%	26%	34%	34%	34%	28%	11%	15%
	Finance	43	35%	53%	26%	28%	33%	16%	40%	19%	26%	5%	14%
	County Manager's Office	25	64%	72%	44%	56%	52%	40%	60%	16%	36%	28%	8%
	Total	1,826	62%	50%	40%	35%	34%	30%	29%	25%	19%	19%	17%

APPENDIX C: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION ANALYSIS

Open-ended responses were coded by a team of Ramsey County staff, where they were broadly categorized as indicated below. Many responses included more than one idea and may have been coded across a number of categories. Response counts should not be considered additive—they do not add up to the total number of respondents.

Table 10. Employee advantages working from home.

Code	Count
Productivity/Focus/Less distractions	1144
Saves Time/ No commute; between meetings	819
Flexibility	549
Employee cost saving (driving/parking)	503
Work/Life balance	465
Less stress, including commute	304
Savings to county/ environment	257
Increased comfort and individualized work environment	214
Health (exercise, food prep, mental health, general wellness)	214
Sick less/ Protection from COVID-19	185
Better attendance/less need to take time off	185
Employee morale /Retention/Worker attraction	182
Greater availability to clients	133
Avoid driving in inclement weather/Reduced accident risk	120
Safety	73
Less gossip/negative workplace	61
Independence/Autonomy/Trust	58
Childcare	51
More accessible to colleagues	48
Improved team communication	47
Disadvantage	32
Privacy	22
Concern about returning to office	14
Can work from further distance from county (greater MN, out of state)	11

Table 11. Biggest concern of extended flexwork.

Code	Count
None	818
Missing connections with colleagues	273
Office workspace setup	158
Maintaining accountability and productivity at home	112
Creating a fair flexwork schedule	112
Need for technology, phone support at home	104
Losing flexwork opportunities and being required to return to office full time	94
Role requires being in the office	77
Contacting colleagues	76
Access to clients and community in-person	64
Effective and quality service delivery	56
Establishing an effective home workspace	54

Code	Count
Access paper files and printing	52
COVID-19 Exposure and other health concerns in office	47
Lack of electronic filing	25
Establishing work hours and work-life balance	23
Lack of wi-fi	22
Parking/Commuting	12

Table 12. How working from home may have impacted residents.

Code	Count
Positive Comments	
Convenience/save time travel	322
More efficient better customer service	167
Change in county practices to increase options for residents	145
Staff more available/responsive	138
Increased engagement/participation/show up	114
Residents like virtual/phone visits	109
Better service	104
Clients are adjusting/adapting	41
Virtual appts help protect from illness exposure	28
Client choice	10
Less complaints	7
Other positive	40
Neutral Comments	
Neutral- No change in quality	235
Not applicable- Still meet in person	40
Negative Comments	
Often need for In person for better quality	282
Technology barriers	95
Less access to walk in services	43
Poorer customer service	30
Paperwork exchange (dropping off, picking up)	22
Need for more virtual technology	19
Language access	18
Harder to reach staff	14
Less participation/unenrollment	12
Other negative	70