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STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
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January 23, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, President
and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Nadine Nakamura, Speaker
and Members of the House
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, I am transmitting herewith the Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 184 SD1 (2024) Remote Work Report.

A copy of the report has been transmitted to the Legislative Reference Bureau Library, and the report may be viewed electronically at: http://dhrd.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/.

Sincerely,

Brenna H. Hashimoto
Director

Attachments

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Relating to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 184, SD1 (2024) Requesting the Department of Human Resources Development to Conduct a Sample Survey of Organizations in the State Within the For-Profit, Nonprofit, and Government Sectors that Have Successfully implemented Remote Work, Hybrid Work, or Telework Arrangements

Submitted January 2025

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Executive Summary

This report is submitted to the Legislature by the Department of Human Resources Development in collaboration with the University of Hawaiʻi Economic Research Organization, the Hawaiʻi Broadband and Digital Equity Office, and Holomua Collective, prepared pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 184, S.D. 1 (2024).

Through SCR 184, the Legislature found that: (1) identifying both state jobs that are viable prospects for remote work; and (2) areas of the State where housing is affordable yet high-paying jobs are not readily available; and (3) subsequently pairing the identified remote job prospects with the State's local workforce, would meaningfully address the State's lack of affordable housing in certain areas, help keep local families in the State, and strengthen community ties. Accordingly, the Legislature requested:

1. The Department of Human Resources Development to conduct a sample survey of organizations in the State within the for-profit, nonprofit, and government sectors that have successfully implemented remote work, hybrid work, or telework arrangements;
2. The Department of Human Resources Development, in collaboration with the University of Hawaiʻi Economic Research Organization (UHERO), to identify areas of the State that have a combination of lower housing costs and decreased access to high-paying jobs; and
3. The Hawaiʻi Broadband and Digital Equity Office to analyze the condition of the existing broadband infrastructure in the areas of the State that have a combination of lower housing costs and decreased access to high-paying jobs.

During the summer of 2024, the Department of Human Resources Development, in partnership with Holomua Collective, surveyed twenty local for-profit, nonprofit, government, and labor organizations that have successfully implemented remote work, hybrid work, and telework arrangements. By the number based on the organizations that were surveyed:

- The organizations surveyed employ over 20,000 employees locally.
- In terms of the maximum number of days employees are allowed to engage in fully remote, hybrid, or telework - the median figure is three days.
- In terms of how many years the organization has been participating in fully remote, hybrid, or telework - the median figure is four years.
- In terms of the maximum percentage of employees that are engaged in fully remote, hybrid, or telework - the median figure is forty-five percent.

This survey identified:

1. Best practices for managers or supervisors of remote workers;
2. Best practices for measuring productivity in a remote work or hybrid work environment; and
3. Lessons learned from running a remote work or hybrid work program in the State.

Identified best practices for managers or supervisors of remote workers include:

- Provide Training
- Utilize Online Tools
- Check-In Frequently
- Use Multiple Communication Methods
- Allow for Asynchronous Communication
- Provide In-Person Work Opportunities
- Set Clear Expectations
- Encourage Autonomy
- Plan Team Bonding Activities
- Encourage Flexibility

Identified best practices for measuring productivity in a remote work or hybrid work environment include:

- Provide Open Feedback Channels
- Check-In Frequently
- Proactively Solve Problems
- Evaluate Regularly
- Utilize Task Management Tools
- Track Time Spent on Tasks
- Measure Productivity Individually
- Allow for Flexible Work Arrangements

Survey participants shared a breadth of individualized examples of lessons learned from running a remote work or hybrid work program in the State.

The University of Hawaiʻi Economic Research Organization identified the following ten zip codes in the state as having both low access to employment and relatively low home prices:

- 96785 Hawaiʻi County, (Volcano)
- 96748 Maui County, (Kaunakakai)

- 96778 Hawaiʻi County, (Hawaiian Beaches)
- 96727 Hawaiʻi County, (Honokaʻa)
- 96704 Hawaiʻi County, (Captain Cook)
- 96763 Maui County, (Lānaʻi City)
- 96737 Hawaiʻi County, (Hawaiian Ocean View)
- 96771 Hawaiʻi County, (Mountain View)
- 96772 Hawaiʻi County, (Discovery Harbour)
- 96752 Kauaʻi County (Kekaha)

Further, the University of Hawaiʻi Economic Research Organization identified eleven additional zip codes that are in the lower half of the distribution for both job access and home prices, but not in the lower quartile for at least one measure:

- 96749 Hawaiʻi County, (Hawaiian Paradise Park)
- 96760 Hawaiʻi County, (Hawaiian Acres)
- 96755 Hawaiʻi County, (Kapaʻau)
- 96792 City and County of Honolulu, (Waiʻanae)
- 96738 Hawaiʻi County, (Waikōloa Village)
- 96703 Kauaʻi County, (Anahola)
- 96716 Kauaʻi County, (Hanapēpē)
- 96743 Hawaiʻi County, (Waimea)
- 96719 Hawaiʻi County, (Hāwī)
- 96731 City and County of Honolulu, (Kahuku)
- 96796 Kauaʻi County, (Waimea)

As of January 6, 2025, most areas of the state with a combination of lower housing costs and decreased access to high-paying jobs generally have significant levels of broadband access. One area that stands out with a significant volume of addresses without broadband service is the Puna District of Hawaiʻi County, including:

- Volcano (96785)
- Hawaiian Beaches (96778)
- Mountain View (96771)
- Hawaiian Paradise Park (98749)
- Hawaiian Acres (96760)

While Puna contains a significant volume of addresses without broadband service, the number of addresses with broadband service does outnumber the addresses without service.

Introduction

Background of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 184, S.D. 1 (2024)

The Department of Human Resources Development prepared this report pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 184, S.D. 1 (2024) (hereinafter SCR 184). Through SCR 184, the Legislature found that identifying both state jobs that are viable prospects for remote work and areas of the State where housing is affordable yet high-paying jobs are not readily available and subsequently pairing the identified remote job prospects with the State's local workforce, would meaningfully address the State's lack of affordable housing in certain areas, help keep local families in the State, and strengthen community ties. Accordingly, the Legislature requested the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) to conduct a sample survey of organizations in the State within the for-profit, nonprofit, and government sectors that have successfully implemented remote work, hybrid work, or telework arrangements.

Specifically, SCR 184 requested that the survey identify examples of best practices for the implementation of a remote work program, including:

1. Best practices for managers or supervisors of remote workers;
2. Best practices for measuring productivity in a remote work or hybrid work environment; and
3. Lessons learned from running a remote work or hybrid work program in the State.

Additionally, SCR 184 requested that the Department of Human Resources Development collaborate with the University of Hawaiʻi Economic Research Organization (UHERO) to identify areas of the State that have a combination of lower housing costs and decreased access to high-paying jobs.

Finally, SCR 184 requested the Hawaiʻi Broadband and Digital Equity Office to analyze the condition of the existing broadband infrastructure in the areas of the State that have a combination of lower housing costs and decreased access to high-paying jobs.

Recent History and Potential Benefits of Hybrid and Remote Telework

In line with much of the United States, the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) led to a significant portion of the State working remotely full-time. Through the end of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, telecommuting and remote services have remained popular. The increased popularity of hybrid and remote telework has led to renewed interest in strategies to create more sustainable communities through remote work, hybrid work, or telework arrangements.

In Hawaiʻi, where the cost of living is high, telework presents a crucial opportunity for residents to save money, as remote work options can mitigate high expenses related to housing, transportation, and commuting. Telework also enables organizations to tap into a broader talent pool, attracting and retaining skilled professionals who a high cost of living might otherwise deter. By reducing the need for large office space, companies can reduce overhead costs and in turn those costs can be redirected into employee benefits, professional development, and technological advancements.

Moreover, the environmental benefits of telework are substantial. With fewer employees commuting daily, there is a significant reduction in carbon emissions, contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable environment, and thus aligning with Hawaiʻi's broader environmental goals and commitment to sustainability. Telework also fosters inclusivity by accommodating employees with different needs, such as those with disabilities or needing flexible schedules to manage family responsibilities.

Method

Survey Population

The Department of Human Resources Development, in collaboration with Holomua Collective, selected a survey population to represent a broad spectrum of organizations within Hawaiʻi's diverse economic landscape. Organizations selected for the survey include for-profit, nonprofit, government, and labor organizations that have implemented remote work, hybrid work, or telework arrangements. The selected organizations are of varying sizes, industries, and geographic locations across the state, and were selected to ensure that the data gathered reflects the experiences and perspectives of both experienced telework organizations and those newly adapting to flexible work models. The survey population included decision-makers, managers, and employees directly involved in the implementation and operation of remote work programs, providing a

holistic view of the opportunities and challenges associated with telework in Hawaiʻi. Through this representative sampling strategy, we sought to identify common trends, best practices, and unique challenges specific to Hawaiʻi's context, informing future policy and programmatic initiatives aimed at enhancing workplace flexibility and affordability for Hawaiʻi residents. The organizations that participated in the survey include:

- Bank of Hawaiʻi
- City and County of Honolulu Office of Economic Revitalization
- Department of the Attorney General
- Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Transportation
- Hawaiʻi Children's Action Network
- Hawaiʻi Community Foundation
- Hawaiʻi Government Employees Association
- Hawaiʻi State Teachers Association
- Hawaiʻi Workforce Funders Collaborative
- Hawaiian Electric
- HPM Building Supply
- Mana Up
- Public Utilities Commission
- Title Guaranty Hawaiʻi
- University of Hawaiʻi
- University of Hawaiʻi Maui College
- University of Hawaiʻi Professional Assembly
- Vibrant Hawaiʻi

The Survey

To ensure maximum flexibility and convenience for participating organizations, the survey was designed to accommodate various preferences for completion. Participants were able to complete the survey with written answers online, or with oral answers in-person, by phone, or via Zoom, over the summer of 2024. Each participant was asked the following questions:

- What is the name of your organization?
- What type of organization are you (for-profit, nonprofit, government, labor union)?
- Is your company fully remote or hybrid? If yes, how many days a week are employees allowed to telework?

- How long has your company been engaging in fully remote or hybrid work?
- How many employees does your organization have? What percentage of your workforce is currently participating in: (a) remote; or (b) hybrid work arrangements?
- After you adopted remote or hybrid work, what percentage of employees still chose to come into the office?
- After you adopted remote or hybrid work, were you able to downsize your office space and/or how much savings has the organization had as a result of allowing remote work? If hybrid, when employees come back to the office, do they use their original assigned workspace or a shared space?
- Do you require remote workers to complete training prior to remote working?
- What specific training or resources do you provide to managers or supervisors to effectively manage remote workers?
- Can you describe the communication strategies you have found most effective for remote management?
- How do managers maintain team cohesion and employee engagement in a remote or hybrid environment?
- Do you have different management tools you use for in-person versus remote or hybrid workers? If so, please name the tools?
- What metrics or indicators do you use to measure productivity among remote or hybrid workers?
- How do you ensure that these metrics are fair and accurately reflect employee performance?
- Can you share any challenges you have faced in measuring productivity and how you overcame them?
- What were the most significant challenges you encountered when implementing your remote work program?
- How did you address issues related to employee isolation and mental health?
- What adjustments did you make to your initial remote work policies or practices?
- What advice would you give to other organizations looking to implement or improve their remote work programs?
- How has your organization utilized remote or hybrid work arrangements as a strategy for recruitment and retention of employees? Has an applicant turned down a job if remote work was not an option?
- Are there any limitations or restrictions within your organization regarding the availability of remote work opportunities for employees? (ex. probationary period)
- Which types of roles within your organization are eligible for remote or hybrid work arrangements?

- Does your organization provide tools and equipment such as laptops, Wi-Fi, desks, and chairs to employees who engage in remote or hybrid work? If so, what items specifically.
- How has feedback from employees influenced your remote work policies?
- Have you heard any success stories or observed instances where remote work initiatives have positively impacted families or addressed cost of living challenges?
- Who else do you recommend we talk to who would have a good perspective on remote work implementation, productivity measurement, and the challenges and benefits associated with remote or hybrid work arrangements?

Data Collection and Quality Control

The data collection process was structured to ensure both accuracy and reliability, employing quality control measures at every stage. Each participating organization was given instructions and multiple options for completing the survey to accommodate preferences and schedules. Several quality control procedures, including automated validation checks to prevent incomplete submissions and inconsistencies, were used to maintain integrity of the data. During Zoom meetings, a structured interview protocol was followed to ensure consistency in data collection. Interviewers facilitated these sessions, recorded the discussions with consent, and transcribed responses to capture detailed insights. Additionally, the names of individuals that provided data on behalf of a participating organization were anonymized.

Best Practices for Implementation of a Remote Work Program

Identified Best Practices for Managers or Supervisors of Remote Workers

The survey asked multiple questions related to the management and supervision of remote workers. Participants identified: (1) specific training or resources provided to managers or supervisors to effectively manage remote workers; (2) communication strategies deemed most effective for remote management; and (3) maintaining team cohesion and employee engagement in a remote or hybrid environment. By integrating these practices, managers foster a supportive, efficient, and cohesive remote work environment that encourages productivity and employee satisfaction. Examples of best practices for managers and supervisors of remote work employees under each of these identified criteria include:

Provide Training: Consider requiring telework training courses for management and supervisors, including guidelines for oversight of remote workers and using technology.

Utilize Online Tools: Utilize platforms like Teams, Zoom, Asana, Notion, Loom, and shared drives to facilitate project management and communication.

Check-In Frequently: Schedule frequent check-in meetings to maintain communication, gauge team morale, and ensure alignment, progress, and engagement.

Use Multiple Communication Methods: Employ various communication methods (email, phone, video calls) to accommodate different preferences and needs.

Allow for Asynchronous Communication: Use tools for asynchronous updates and project tracking, fostering transparency.

Provide In-Person Work Opportunities: When possible, incorporate in-person meetings or team-building activities to strengthen connections among team members.

Set Clear Expectations: Set and communicate clear expectations regarding work goals, evaluation metrics, and communication standards.

Encourage Autonomy: Trust employees to manage their work independently, fostering a sense of ownership and team cohesion.

Plan Team Bonding Activities: Plan virtual and in-person team-building events to enhance relationships and promote a positive team culture.

Encourage Flexibility: Recognize the importance of work-life balance and guide managers on ways to support staff achieving this.

Specific Examples of Best Practices Identified by Participants

Certain training practices identified by participants stand out as effective. The Department of the Attorney General and other State entities emphasized the necessity of mandatory training provided by the Department of Human Resources Development, stating, "we offer telework training by DHRD (Telework Program Guidelines)." This structured approach ensures that employees and managers are well-versed in telework guidelines and expectations.

Similarly, the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism mandates comprehensive training before employees begin teleworking. Employees must complete the "Overview of the Telework Program Guidelines" and "Telework Training for Employees". This training provides a practical introduction to telework and offers valuable tips and resources for success.

The University of Hawaiʻi tailors its training based on job types, offering specific training modules that align with different roles. This targeted training approach ensures that employees receive relevant and practical information. As stated, "we offer training based on job type, from reading policies to engaging in comprehensive training."

Bank of Hawaiʻi noted that leadership development is a priority and inclusive of different programs, training, and resources to help manage teams and employees more broadly. The bank said it leverages digital platforms such as Rising Team to help lead hybrid teams and has invited an industry leader to speak about leading hybrid teams as part of its leadership excellence program.

For managers, the Department of Transportation highlighted the importance of specialized training with its "Telework Training for Supervisors and Managers," which equips leaders with the necessary skills to manage remote teams effectively. HPM Building Supply also underscores the need for managers to understand remote team dynamics, requiring them to take courses that cover communication and management strategies for remote and hybrid teams.

Effective recruitment and retention strategies in a remote work environment hinge on flexibility and respect for individual work styles. Mana Up exemplifies this approach by utilizing remote communication tools like Slack, Notion, and Loom. Mana Up highlighted

the importance of balancing in-person and remote work models to maintain productivity and employee satisfaction.

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism emphasized constant communication through phone, Microsoft Teams meetings, and emails, ensuring that employees remain connected and engaged. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism also requires hybrid workers to complete a daily log, which helps track productivity and maintain accountability.

The Hawaiʻi Government Employees Association relies on guidance from its human resources department to determine the necessary training and resources for managing hybrid workers. This adaptive approach allows for tailored solutions that meet the specific needs of their workforce.

The Hawaiʻi Community Foundation finds success through frequent one-on-one meetings, team meetings, and weekly CEO updates. It emphasized the importance of intentional in-person team meetings and lunches to foster team cohesion and engagement.

The University of Hawaiʻi uses a mix of email, phone, and Zoom meetings to facilitate communication in a hybrid work environment. This combination of tools ensures that employees can stay connected and collaborate effectively, regardless of location.

The Department of Human Services highlighted the importance of requiring employees to keep their cameras on during video-meetings.

HPM Building Supply highlights the significance of setting clear communication expectations and goals. To keep everyone aligned and informed, HPM Building Supply employs regular one-on-one meetings and team huddles on Zoom. This practice maintains a consistent communication flow and allows issues to be addressed promptly.

Maintaining team cohesion and employee engagement in a remote or hybrid environment requires intentional efforts. The Department of Transportation mandates regular check-ins and the submission of work reports to ensure employees remain productive and engaged. Managers must monitor their team's work and maintain regular communication to foster a sense of connection and accountability. The University of Hawaiʻi Maui College recognized that it faced a challenge with employees who had a perception that those teleworking could not be productive and that it's up to the supervisor to maintain production of a team, and that production will dispel the perception.

Title Guaranty Hawaiʻi emphasized the importance of regular Microsoft Teams meetings for work-related discussions and informal virtual get-togethers. These meetings help maintain a strong team spirit and ensure remote employees feel included and valued.

The Hawaiʻi Community Foundation supports team cohesion through intentional in-person team meetings and lunches, allowing team members to bond and build relationships. This practice can mitigate the isolation of remote work and foster a sense of belonging.

Best Practices for Measuring Productivity in a Remote Work or Hybrid Work Environment

Identified Best Practices for Measuring Productivity in a Remote Work or Hybrid Work Environment

The survey examined the metrics and indicators participants use to measure productivity among remote and hybrid workers, including the tools and criteria employed to evaluate employee performance in these work arrangements. Additionally, the study assessed how organizations ensure that these metrics are fair and accurately reflect employee performance, exploring any processes or guidelines in place to maintain fairness and accuracy. Furthermore, the questions delved into the challenges organizations have faced in measuring productivity and the strategies implemented to overcome these challenges.

By implementing these best practices, organizations can effectively measure productivity in remote work settings while supporting employee engagement and performance.

Examples of best practices for measuring productivity in a remote work or hybrid work environment include:

Provide Open Feedback Channels: Foster an environment where team members feel comfortable providing and receiving feedback promptly, facilitating quick adjustments.

Check-In Frequently: Schedule regular one-on-one and team meetings to ensure clarity, track progress, and assist with tasks, deadlines, and expectations.

Proactively Solve Problems: Address productivity challenges as they arise through open discussions, allowing for adjustments in workflows and expectations.

Evaluate Regularly: Conduct periodic performance reviews that include clear assessment criteria.

Utilize Task Management Tools to Track Progress: Use collaborative platforms (e.g., customer relationship management (CRM) systems, project management software) to track tasks and monitor progress transparently without micromanaging.

Track Time Spent on Tasks: Implement tools for employees to track their time spent on tasks.

Measure Productivity Individually: Tailor productivity metrics to reflect each employee's unique contributions and work styles, understanding that different roles may require other measures of success.

Allow for Flexible Work Arrangements: Allow for flexibility in how and when work is completed, focusing on outcomes rather than adherence to traditional office hours.

Specific Examples of Best Practices Identified by Participants

Establishing and encouraging open communication is the most repeated theme in measuring participants' productivity. The University of Hawaiʻi Professional Assembly said that some metrics and tools it uses to measure productivity are "constant and open communication and meetings to understand where everyone is with their respective work duties to ensure that the work requirements are being met." Hawaiʻi Workforce Funders Collaborative holds regular one-on-one meetings with employees, and the Hawaiʻi State Teachers Association requires monthly check-in meetings between employees and supervisors. Similarly, Title Guaranty Hawaiʻi emphasizes the importance of regular check-ins and team meetings. Title Guaranty Hawaiʻi requires managers to regularly communicate with remote workers via Microsoft Teams and other online platforms. These practices help build a sense of community and ensure that remote employees remain engaged and motivated.

Multiple participants explained that they measure productivity by having employees proactively update supervisors about their progress. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and the University of Hawaiʻi have documents that employees must fill out to track productivity. The City and County of Honolulu Office of Economic Revitalization employees use a customer relationship management and online program management tool to track progress on tasks and projects. The Department of the Attorney General and Vibrant Hawaiʻi require employees to track their time worked.

Hawaiian Electric noted that it finds annual goal setting and quarterly and mid-year reviews to be important as part of its use of metrics. Hawaiian Electric also emphasized there must be a clear understanding of deliverables (what, when, how, measurable results) to make sure you can measure the success. In addition, Hawaiian Electric uses absenteeism and employee engagement scores as additional factors they watch.

Maintaining team cohesion and employee engagement in a remote or hybrid environment can be challenging. To achieve and measure productivity, multiple participants highlighted the importance of recognizing and adapting to the varied work styles of remote workers. The Department of the Attorney General noted that it had to

adjust its practices "to allow for situational telework arrangements; flexibility/discretion by Division Supervisors." Hawaii Children's Action Network noted that it ensures metrics are fair and accurately reflect employee performance by having individualized goals for each employee. The Hawaiʻi Workforce Funders Collaborative found a way to work "that enables asynchronous productivity and allowed us to schedule meetings that we both needed to be in…so that we each have flexibility to work in a way that meets our needs and the company's needs."

The Hawaiʻi Workforce Funders Collaborative also suggested that measuring productivity in a traditional sense has not worked for its organization. Instead, it measures productivity among remote workers by "not necessarily think[ing] about our work in terms of productivity. Instead, we think about the outcomes of customer satisfaction, partner delight, new and innovative work happening for the first time where it was not possible before… We are not tracking how hours of work spent impacts our metrics of success -- because innovation and equity are not necessarily efficient. We utilize a loose agile methodology so that we "fail fast" and learn from mistakes and move forward at a quick clip, but this does not necessarily reflect productivity or efficiency."

Examples of ensuring that metrics are fair and accurately reflect employee performance include:

- Using performance assessments that are designed collaboratively to reflect purpose, goals, strategies, results and expected data results.
- Having individualized goals for each employee.
- Measuring employees' goals against their quarterly goals.
- Ensuring consistency throughout the Department regardless of whether the individual was working in the office or remotely.
- Applying the same metrics whether the employee works in the office or has a hybrid/remote arrangement.
- Using their Telework plan, employees fill out answering how the function of their job can be completed remotely, how they handle deadlines and sensitive information, and if the employees have all tools for telework, they also have a telework safety checklist
- Looking at the daily logs of hybrid workers and having supervisors review the daily logs to measure performance and productivity.
- Having managers calibrate performance as a part of their talent management practice.
- Having annual goal setting along with quarterly checks to show them if the goals are reasonable or achievable. Management needs to review and understand why certain work cannot be achieved. Is it due to lack of collaboration with other folks

(due to remote working)? If so, you can mitigate by encouraging in-person follow up or finding new ways of working together to achieve goals from remote working.

- Comparing data prior to the pandemic and when remote work began taking place. This is how they were able to determine that there was no drop in member engagement when they transitioned to remote working.
- Doing lots of check-ins, and by holding each other accountable in that their work is all interdependent so if one person doesn't finish their job everyone else must take on more work, and at the end of every project they review what went well and what they all did well on.

In terms of challenges faced with respect to measuring the productivity of remote or hybrid workers, multiple organizations have noted that these challenges can exist for in-office personnel as well. Some of the challenges–and the ways organizations have addressed them–include:

- Aligning the goals, strategies/activities to the expected results and what the next steps will be to improve.
- Miscommunication between the managers and employees and struggles with teamwork.
- The biggest challenge originates from failing to provide clear feedback immediately to employees who are not performing to the level needed (this is true of in-office and remote work environments).
- There is no one way to measure productivity for all employees. For example, if the organization tracks the progress of the time it takes to resolve a complaint, not every employee has a role in ensuring that complaint is resolved quickly. That metric would be an indicator of performance for certain employees who have direct responsibility in ensuring timely completion. One of the greatest challenges is to ensure the data that is gathered is both meaningful and not burdensome to track. They need to focus on what are true indicators of success.
- Addressing disconnects when the employer feels like the employee may not be producing enough work from home, but the employee feels like they are actually working harder from home, in part because their work may bleed into evening and weekend hours.

Some examples of how organizations have addressed these issues include:

- Having more communication between both parties, even in remote environments.
- Managers are required to do an evaluation of telework every three months and identify if there are deficiencies. If so, the manager can address the issues and

possibly bring the employee back into the office and/or come in on a regularly scheduled basis for on-site supervision. Whether a person is working remotely or in the office, if there are performance issues, this would be addressed with 1:1 meetings and a performance improvement plan if it came to that.

- Review the amount of meaningful output from employees, regardless of the amount of their activities. Whether in-person or working remotely, simply spending more time working is not necessarily a measure of productivity.

While many organizations have been engaging in some type of hybrid, remote, or telework option since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it has still been a relatively short period of time since then. As a result, organizations have faced challenges with respect to implementing remote work, even when they ultimately find that it provides a net benefit to their organization.

Identified Examples of Lessons Learned from Running a Remote Work or Hybrid Work Program in the State

Through the survey, a breadth of additional information and lessons learned from running a remote work or hybrid work program arose. The survey found that the option of remote or hybrid work may impact recruitment of potential employees, and that many organizations provide the equipment needed for an employee to telework. The review also identified the necessity of communication in overcoming the initial hurdles and obstacles faced during transition in telework. The survey also explored how organizations addressed issues related to employee isolation and mental health, looking into specific initiatives and support systems put in place to maintain employee well-being. Additionally, the survey assessed the adjustments made to initial remote work policies or practices in response to evolving needs and feedback. Lastly, the survey gathered advice from these organizations for others looking to implement or improve remote work programs, highlighting best practices and lessons learned with the intention of providing insight into the successful management and enhancement of remote work environments.

Organizations shared a variety of information regarding how providing remote work, hybrid, or telework options affect recruitment. There was a split between organizations that reported applicants turned down jobs if remote work was not an option and others who had not had that experience. Most organizations that responded to the survey did report that they use the availability of remote or hybrid work options as a recruitment tool. Organizations also reported that multiple candidates asked about remote work during interviews and that it was seen as a way to assist parents with childcare obligations. Respondents reported a wide range of physical equipment that is provided to employees working from home, including some respondents providing no physical equipment and others providing all necessary equipment and a monthly monetary stipend for additional expenses incurred as a result of working from home (e.g., internet access, phone lines, etc.). The most common response from participants was that a laptop was provided to employees.

Training managers and employees for teleworking requires a structured approach encompassing effective communication, resource allocation, and ongoing support. According to the Hawai'i State Teachers Association, a critical practice is "developing the trust that is needed between supervisor and employee to have difficult discussions for improvement and to monitor work time hours and encourage reaching out to the

supervisor with questions and for support." Training supervisors to foster an environment of trust and openness promotes an environment in which employees feel comfortable discussing challenges and seeking assistance without fear of judgment.

The Public Utilities Commission underscored the importance of having "strong managers/supervisors who can support and guide employees." The Commission also highlights that "managers must have open dialogue to provide honest feedback and discuss any issues," which is essential for maintaining transparency and resolving problems efficiently. Regular check-ins and clear expectations are vital components of this practice.

Title Guaranty Hawai'i also emphasized the need for regular communication between managers and remote workers. It recommends that "managers are in regular contact with remote workers and keep the lines of communication open," ensuring that remote employees remain engaged, informed, and connected to the team.

Employee isolation and mental health are critical issues in remote work settings. HPM Building Supply addresses these concerns by organizing quarterly well-being events such as wellness bingo and ensuring that employees are invited to local events. HPM Building Supply recognizes that "bringing people together on Zoom" and participating in well-being activities can significantly mitigate feelings of isolation and foster a sense of community among remote workers.

The Hawai'i Community Foundation also prioritizes mental health by offering an Employee Assistance Program to support staff professionally and personally. An Employee Assistance Program is a voluntary, work-based program offering free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and work-related problems. The Hawai'i Community Foundation actively encourages participation in various optional activities designed to build relationships and integrate new staff into the organizational culture. The Hawai'i Community Foundation finds that "organizational culture is a work in progress in the hybrid environment," emphasizing the importance of continuous efforts to maintain and enhance employee engagement.

Similarly, Bank of Hawai'i provides an employee assistance program that offers programs, counselors, and other resources along with offering on-site and virtual mental health courses. The bank specifically noted that it leverages the voice of the employee to understand employee sentiment first. "That informed us on how we initially rolled out our hybrid practices. We continue to keep a pulse on employee sentiment and business need to guide any future adjustments."

Organizations often face challenges from external sources when implementing remote work programs. The Public Utilities Commission experienced "scrutiny and lack of support from those outside our organization – in particular those who are critical without having an understanding of our operations." To address this, the Public Utilities Commission suggested that telework be viewed as an opportunity rather than an entitlement and emphasized the importance of strong managerial support and clear expectations. This approach helps mitigate external criticisms and fosters a more supportive environment for remote work.

When asked what advice would you give to other organizations looking to implement or improve their remote work options, answers included:

- Put together and get feedback from employees on policies and procedures prior to implementation.
- Provide proper technology and support for success. Technology is your best friend.
- Communicate with remote employees often.
- Hold in-person meetings to bring employees together in the building.
- Do it because it is great for staff, great to help traffic, great for the environment and will save you money.
- Ensure guidelines are clear with room for discretion and flexibility by management.
- Treat your colleagues as adults and respect that they know best how they can bring their best to work. Ask people what works best for them, and as a manager and leader take it upon yourself to craft policies that meet the needs of your team. When you show people this respect and autonomy, they respect you and understand when compromises need to be made to create policies that may not work for everyone.
- Ensure that managers are in regular contact with remote workers and keep the lines of communication open.
- Trust your managers and provide ongoing guidance.
- Be mindful of ensuring employees are engaged, have a sense of belonging and connection. Also, managers/supervisors must set clear expectations and increase communication/interaction with their direct reports.
- Have clear guidelines (setting how much telework is offered), consider the challenges of new employees, help to make sure employees are working in a safe environment, if employee productivity is lingering then make sure to address it sooner rather than later.
- Create a fair work from home structure for all employees and create an instrument to document productivity that works best for your department. Ask the employees to make their home office conducive to work so it will generate or

equate substantially to the same productivity amount as when the employee is at work.

- Set clear expectations from the start.
- Be intentional about communicating with one another and updating organization-wide. Continued high performance is linked to the benefit of being allowed to work remotely.
- It's important to have inclusive conversations and leverage internal/external data to inform how you approach, define, and evolve your practices.
- Every organization is different. You need to first understand the overall company strategy and employees' needs. When you design the program, you can consider launching your pilot program first so you can collect feedback and fine tune the overall program.
- Meet employees where they're at and ensure that they understand the reasons for any decisions that are being made.
- Figure out what is annoying you as a leader and have honest conversations with people to understand why they are acting a certain way and being creative in overcoming distrust in employees needing time during work and operating with integrity and advising others to really look at how they can create conditions for people to operate with integrity and complete the mission.

Locations in Hawaiʻi with Low Access to Jobs and Low Home Prices

Using information available in the [2024 UHERO Housing Factbook](#), UHERO generated a list of zip codes in the state that have both low access to employment and relatively low home prices. UHERO measured access to jobs by counting the number of jobs that are within a thirty-minute drive of the population weighted centroid of each Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA). Jobs counts come from the 2021 LEHD LODES data set. To measure housing costs, UHERO used the estimated median home price according to the 2022 5-year American Community Survey. UHERO identified ten zip codes that are both in the bottom quartile of job access and the bottom quartile of home prices.

Zip codes in the bottom twenty-five percent for both job access and home prices

Zip code	County	Jobs within 30 minutes	Median home price ($)
96785 (Volcano)	Hawaiʻi	254	299,700
96748 (Kaunakakai)	Maui	310	347,700
96778 (Hawaiian Beaches)	Hawaiʻi	987	220,400
96727 (Honokaʻa)	Hawaiʻi	769	510,000
96704 (Captain Cook)	Hawaiʻi	641	493,200
96763 (Lānaʻi City)	Maui	1,368	486,900
96737 (Hawaiian Ocean View)	Hawaiʻi	338	205,100
96771 (Mountain View)	Hawaiʻi	1,364	273,100
96772 (Discovery Harbour)	Hawaiʻi	372	347,700
96752 (Kekaha)	Kauaʻi	2,339	489,500

UHERO identified eleven additional zip codes that are in the **lower half** of the distribution for both job access and home prices, but not in the lower quartile for at least one measure.
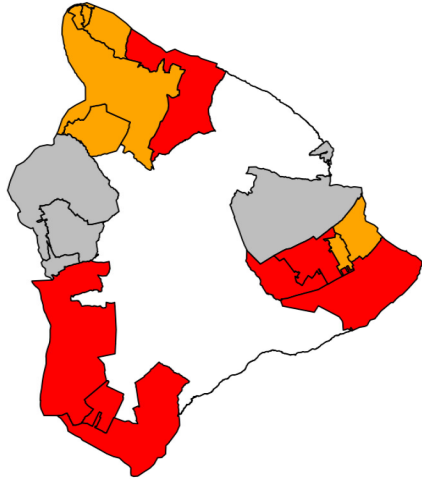
Zip codes in the bottom fifty percent for both job access and home prices (but not bottom twenty-five percent for both)

| Zip code	County	Jobs within 30 minutes	Median home price ($)
96749 (Hawaiian Paradise Park)	Hawaiʻi	10,258	403,800
96760 (Hawaiian Acres)	Hawaiʻi	5,876	330,500
96755 (Kapaʻau)	Hawaiʻi	828	682,200
96792 (Waiʻanae)	Honolulu	6,251	515,800
96738 (Waikōloa Village)	Hawaiʻi	3,404	627,000
96703 (Anahola)	Kauaʻi	3,447	507,400
96716 (Hanapēpē)	Kauaʻi	3,035	657,500
96743 (Waimea)	Hawaiʻi	2,822	678,300
96719 (Hāwī)	Hawaiʻi	828	587,400
96731 (Kahuku)	Honolulu	3,577	701,500
96796 (Waimea)	Kauaʻi	2,667	520,200

The locations of these zip codes are mapped in the figure below.

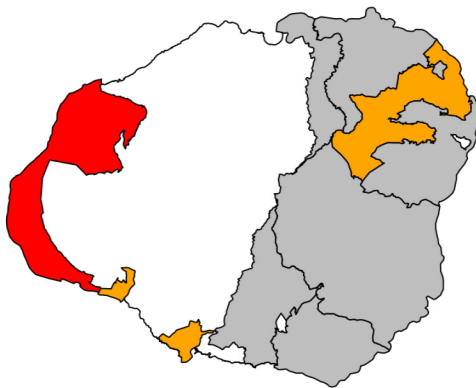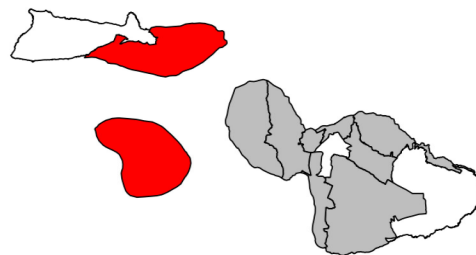**Zip Codes with Low Job Access and Low Home Prices**

Hawai'i

Honolulu
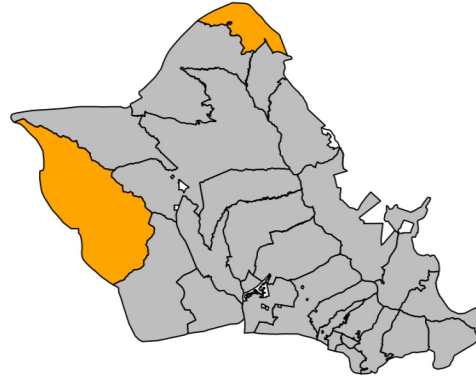
Kaua'i

Maui

Low Job Access & Low Home Prices? ▮ Very Low ▮ Low ▮ Not Low ▯ No data

"Very low" indicates the zip code is in the bottom twenty-five percent of zip codes for both job access and housing costs. "Low" indicates the zip code is in the bottom fifty percent for both job access and housing costs.

Existing Broadband Infrastructure in Locations in Hawaiʻi with Low Access to Jobs and Low Home Prices

Connect Kākou is the statewide broadband initiative to ensure that communities across Hawaiʻi have access to reliable and affordable high-speed Internet. With the assistance of the University of Hawaiʻi Broadband Office, Connect Kākou hosts the [Hawaiʻi State Broadband Service Map](#), an interactive map that shows all broadband serviceable locations within Hawaiʻi.

Based on the information presented in this map (last updated on January 6, 2025), most areas of the state with a combination of lower housing costs and decreased access to high-paying jobs generally have significant levels of broadband access. One area that stands out with a significant volume of addresses without broadband service is the Puna District of Hawaiʻi County, including:

- Volcano (96785)
- Hawaiian Beaches (96778)
- Mountain View (96771)
- Hawaiian Paradise Park (98749)
- Hawaiian Acres (96760)

While Puna contains a significant volume of addresses without broadband service, the number of addresses with broadband service does outnumber the addresses without service.