

## Utah's Home-Based Workers

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated growth in the number of Utahns working from home. In 2021, 1 in 5 (20%) Utahns worked from home, compared with fewer than one in thirteen (7.4%) in 2019.

The number of home-based workers in Utah nearly tripled between 2019 and 2021, growing from roughly 117,600 to more than 327,300 workers. Similar increases occurred at the national level, with the number of home-based workers in the United States more than tripling between 2019 and 2021 and the share increasing from 5.7% to 17.9%.<sup>1</sup>

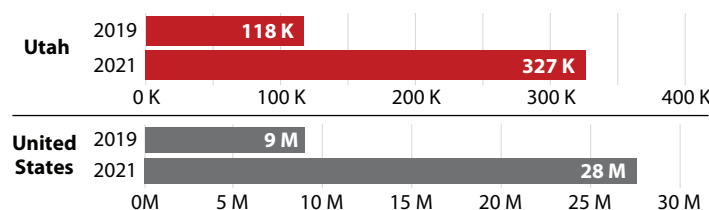
The Census Bureau defines home-based workers as individuals age 16 or older who perform work duties at home rather than traveling to a separate workplace. Census Bureau research reveals that Americans' adoption of home-based work varied across several key population characteristics – including age, race, ethnicity, sex, education, income, industry, and geographic mobility.<sup>2</sup>

For example, workers with higher incomes and education levels are more likely to work from home. Utah's work-from-home population shared these attributes, reflecting national trends according to each characteristic.

### Regional and State Comparisons

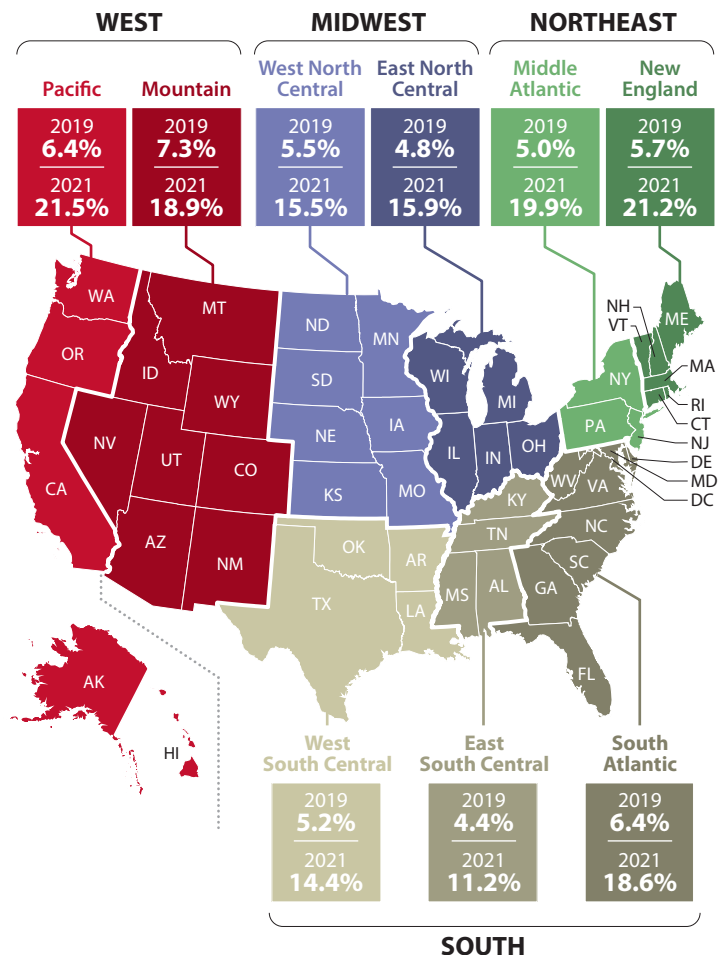
Before the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home was most common in the western U.S., specifically in the Census Bureau's Mountain division. In 2019, Utah ranked third in the nation for its share of home-based workers, after Colorado and Arizona.

**Figure 1. Home-Based Workers in Utah and the United States, 2019 and 2021**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

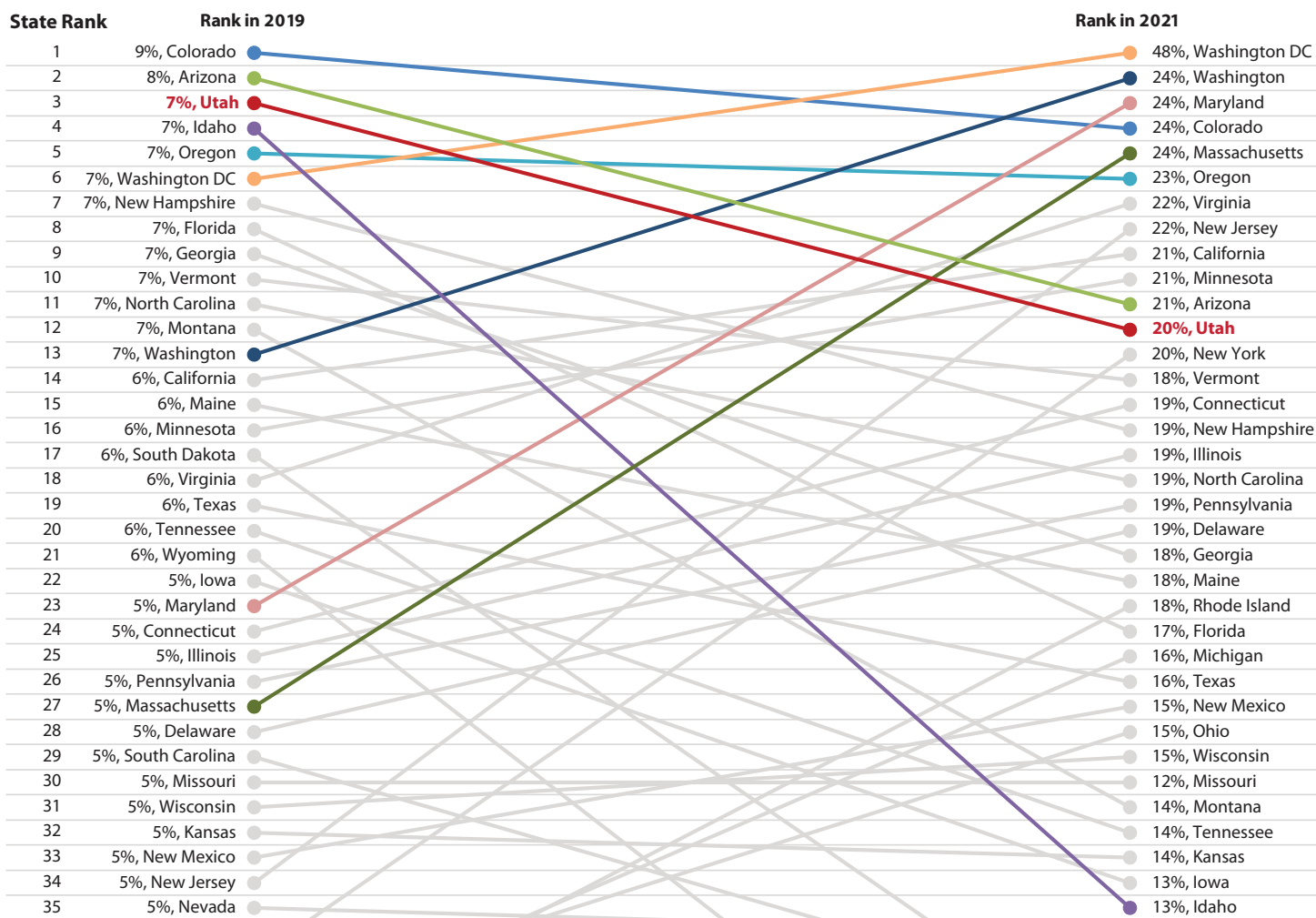
**Figure 2. Share of Workers Who Worked from Home by Region and Division, 2019 and 2021**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Between 2019 and 2021, changes created by COVID-19 resulted in working from home becoming more common across the nation. In 2021, the western U.S. still reported the highest share of home-based workers overall, but rates in New England and along the West Coast surpassed levels in the Mountain division. Utah ranked 12<sup>th</sup> for home-based workers in 2021, while Washington D.C., Washington state, and Maryland claimed the highest shares in the nation.

**Figure 3. Top 35 Work from Home States in the United States and Washington D.C., 2019 and 2021**



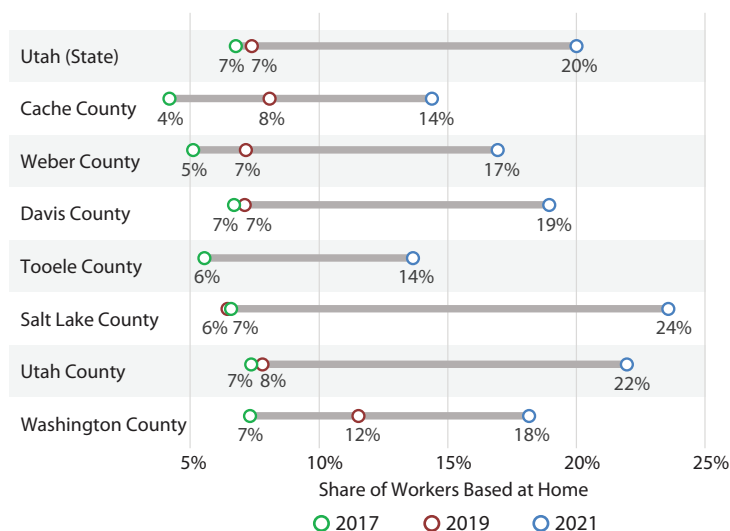
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

### County Comparison

Between 2017 and 2021, the number of home-based workers more than doubled in Cache, Weber, Davis, Tooele, Salt Lake, Utah, and Washington counties.<sup>3</sup> More than 1,430,000 workers ages 16 and older, or nearly 9 in 10 Utah workers, reside in these seven counties. Washington and Cache counties had the highest shares of home-based workers in 2019, following growth in their home-based workforces during the two previous years. However, increases in home-based work in the four Wasatch Front counties (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah) outpaced these two counties between 2019 and 2021.

Salt Lake County, home to nearly four of ten Utah workers, experienced the largest increase in its share of home-based workers between 2019 and 2021, growing from 6.5% to 23.6%. Salt Lake County's 2021 share of home-based workers was the highest of the seven counties with available data.

**Figure 4. Share of Utah Workers Based at Home by County, 2017, 2019, and 2021**



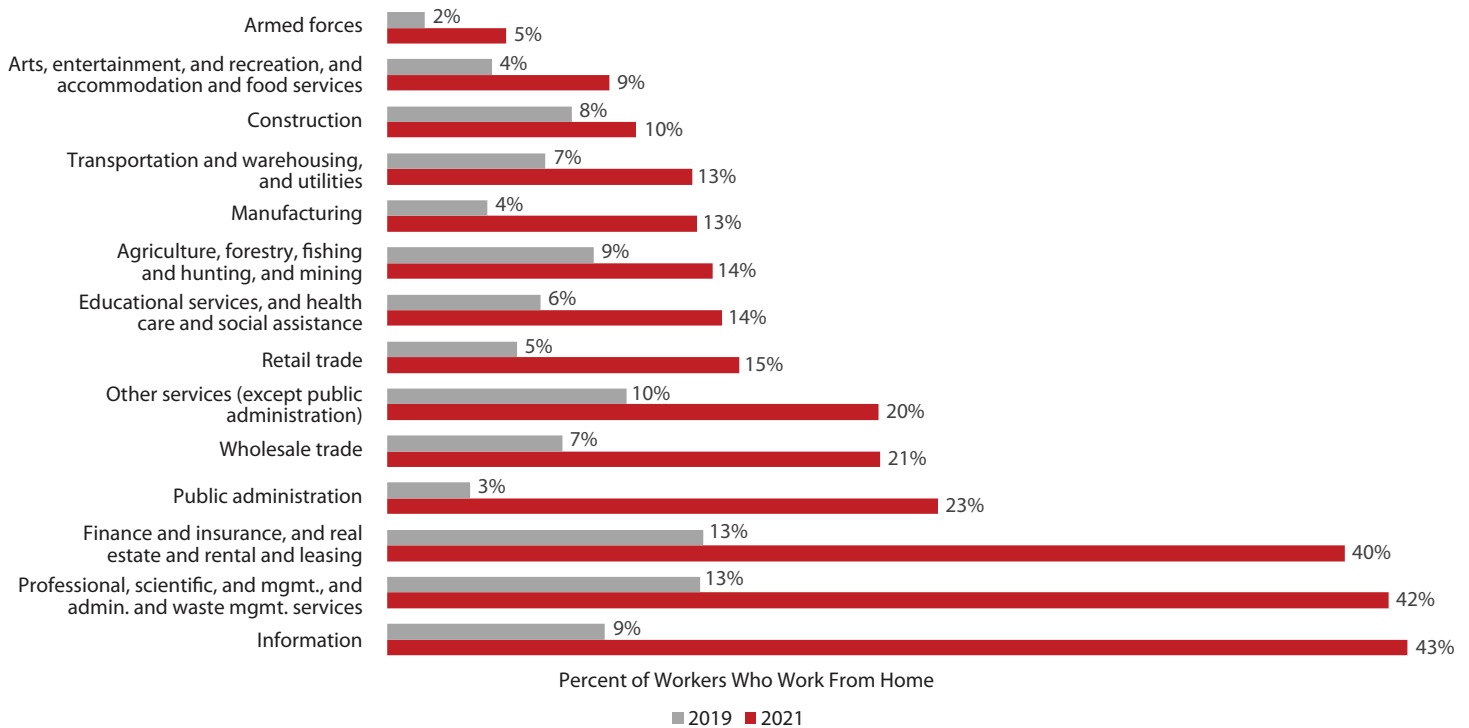
Note: Differences between 2017 and 2019 estimates in Salt Lake, Utah, and Davis counties were not statistically significant. All other 2017 and 2019 comparisons proved statistically significant, as did all 2019 to 2021 comparisons. Data for Tooele County in 2019 is unavailable.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017, 2019, and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Comparisons by Industry and Occupation

Rates of working from home vary widely between industries in Utah. In 2021, three Utah industries stand out with especially high shares of home-based workers: the information industry (42.5%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services industry (41.7%), and the finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing industry (39.9%).

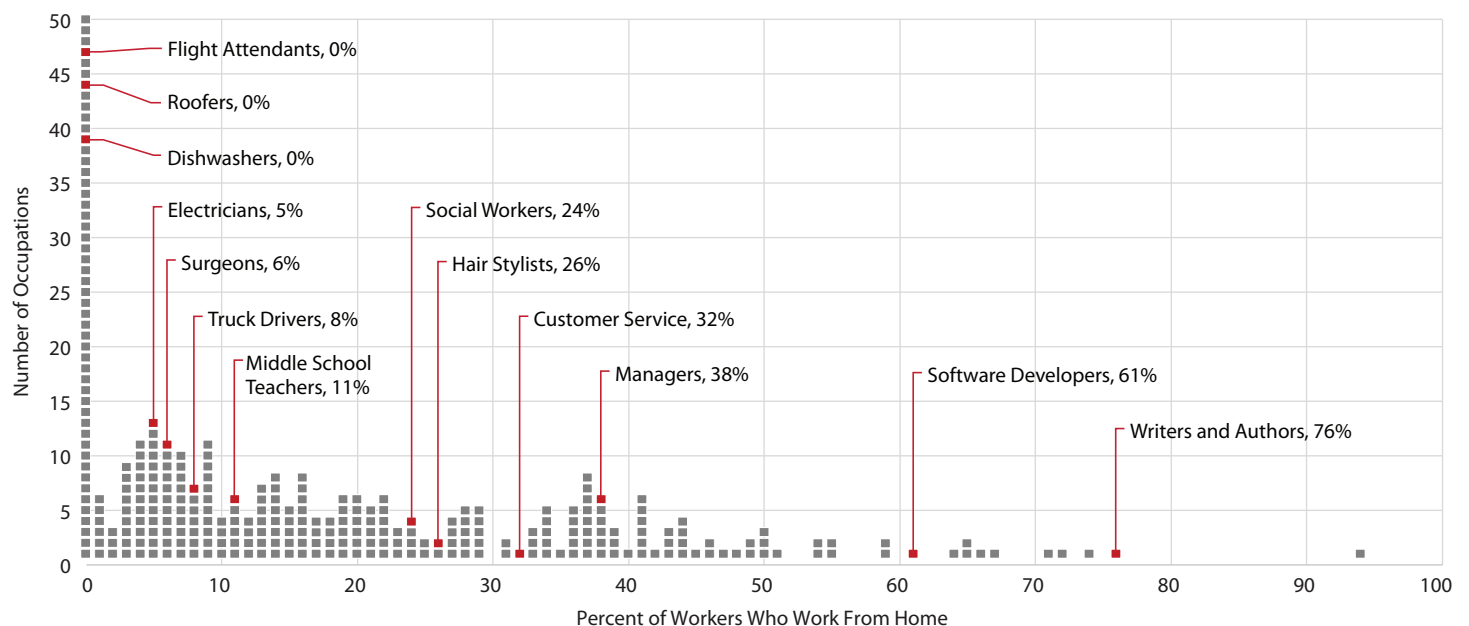
Utahns working in the armed forces or the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food service industry were the least likely to work from home in 2021. Less than 10% of workers in these fields worked from home. The construction industry also featured a small share of home-based workers, with just over 10% reporting they typically worked from home.

**Figure 5. Share of Industry Workers Based at Home in Utah, 2019 and 2021**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Figure 6. Occupations by Prevalence of Working from Home in Utah, 2021**



Note: Includes only occupations reported by more than 500 Utah workers. Occupations represented on the figure fall within a small margin of error.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

An analysis of specific jobs reveals 50 occupations out of 308 (held by at least 500 Utahns) in which no workers worked from home in 2021. Occupations with no home-based workers included postal service clerks, bartenders, powerplant operators, dentists, and flight attendants, among others. The largest group of home-based workers identified in the survey were managers, nearly 25,000 of whom are estimated to have worked from home in 2021. Three other occupations included more than 10,000 home-based workers in 2021: Software Developers, Customer Services Representatives and Computer Scientists and Systems Analysts or Web Developers.

Characteristics of Home-Based Workers

Age

Before COVID-19, working from home was most common for older workers. In 2019, 13.4% of workers age 65 and older worked from home, compared to 7.5% of 25 to 44-year-old workers and 2.3% of 16 to 19-year-old workers. Between 2019 and 2021, the share of people working from home increased in every age group, but working from home

grew the most among workers aged 25 to 44. As a result, the median age of home-based workers dropped from 42.7 to 39.1. In 2021, workers age 25 to 44 were more likely to work from home than any other age group. Workers under 24 remained the age group least likely to work from home. As seen in Figure 8, in 2019, the age distribution of home-based workers skewed older than commuters, with workers over age 44 making up 44.7% of home-based workers but only 33.4% of commuters. By 2021, the age composition of home-based workers looked more similar to that of commuters, especially for workers age 45 and older, who made up 34.1% of both groups.

Sex

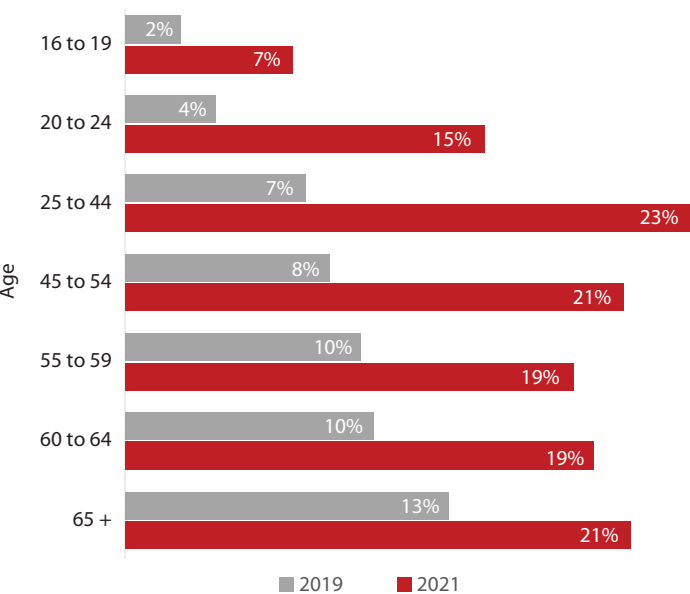
In 2019, women made up the majority (52.6%) of Utah’s home-based workers, even though they accounted for less than 45% of the state’s workforce. This echoes research indicating that before the pandemic, home-based workers were more likely to be women, especially those with “caregiving responsibilities, disabilities, or other considerations that necessitated working from home.”<sup>4</sup>

By 2021, the female share of home-based workers in Utah decreased to 47.2% as the pandemic caused the percentage of men working from home to increase. Despite these shifts, women remain more likely than men to work from home, with 21.5% of female workers reporting they worked from home in 2021 compared to 18.9% of male workers.

Race and Ethnicity

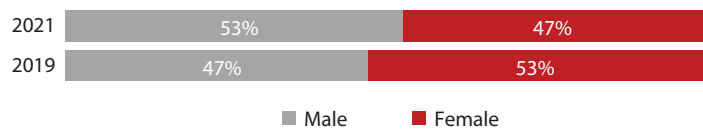
Asian or Pacific Islander Utahns were the most likely racial group to work from home in 2021, followed by White Utahns, with more than 20% of workers in each group based at home. This differs from 2019, when White workers were the most likely

Figure 7. Share of Utah Workers Who Work from Home by Age Group, 2019 and 2021



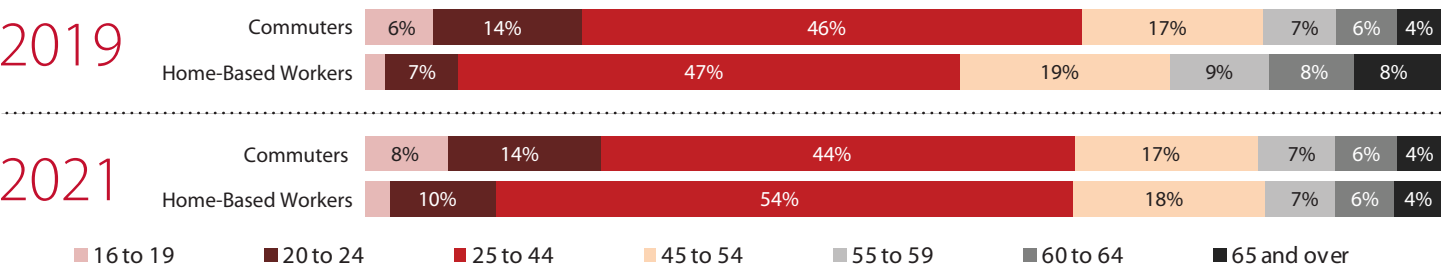
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Figure 9. Male and Female Share of Utah’s Home-Based Workers, 2019 and 2021



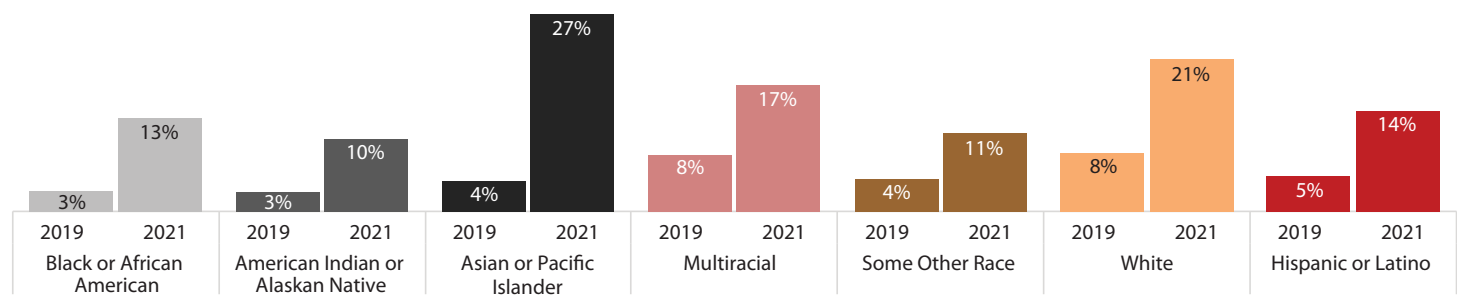
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Figure 8. Utah Workers by Age and Work Location, 2019 and 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Figure 10. Share of Utahns Who Work-from-Home, by Race and Ethnicity, 2019 and 2021**



Note: Racial groups include both Hispanic and non-Hispanic individuals, except for the Hispanic or Latino category, which reflects individuals of any race who identify as Hispanic or Latino. Racial groups include individuals who identify as a single race alone, except for the Multiracial group.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate

to work from home, followed by Multiracial workers and Hispanic or Latino workers. In 2019 and 2021, American Indian or Alaskan Native workers were the least likely to work from home.

Overall, racial and ethnic minorities are under-represented in Utah's home-based workforce. In 2021, more than 20% of working Utahns identified as racial minorities—however, only 16.9% of home-based workers identified as these racial categories. Additionally, 14.3% of the state's workforce identified as Hispanic or Latino in 2021, but these workers accounted for less than 10% of home-based workers.

### Education

Workers with higher educational attainment are more likely to work from home. Just over 3 in 10 working Utahns with bachelor's degrees or higher worked from home in 2021, compared to 17.4% of workers with associate degrees or some college and 12.7% of those with only high school diplomas.

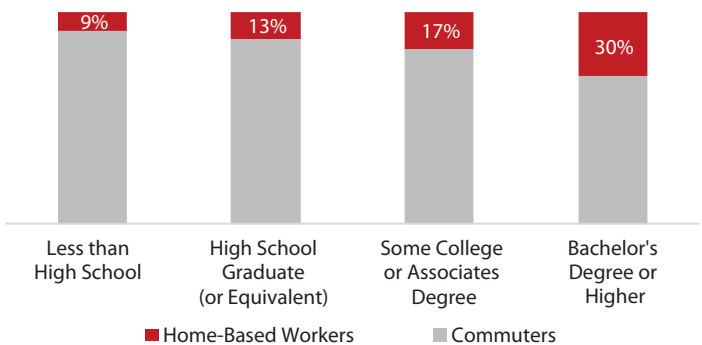
Between 2019 and 2021, the educational attainment of home-based workers increased. Just over half of home-based workers in 2021 held bachelor's degrees or higher, compared to 41.5% in 2019.

### Income

In 2021, Utah's home-based workers earned the highest median income of all commuter groups, making approximately 30% more than the next highest group: workers who drove alone to work. This differs from 2019 when commuters who drove alone to work had the highest median earnings, approximately 10% higher than home-based workers.

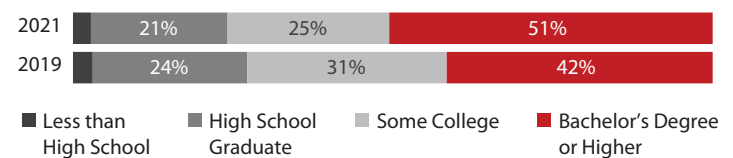
Utahns with higher incomes were more likely to work from home than lower-wage earners in 2021. Over one-third of Utah residents earning \$100,000 or more in annual personal income worked from home in 2021. In comparison, only 14.7% of those earning \$20,000 to \$39,999 worked from home. Higher earners were also the most likely to work from home before the pandemic, but in 2021 workers earning less than \$20,000 were the least likely to work from home, while workers earning \$40,000 to \$59,999 were the least likely group in 2019.

**Figure 11. Work Locations of Utahns by Educational Attainment, 2021**



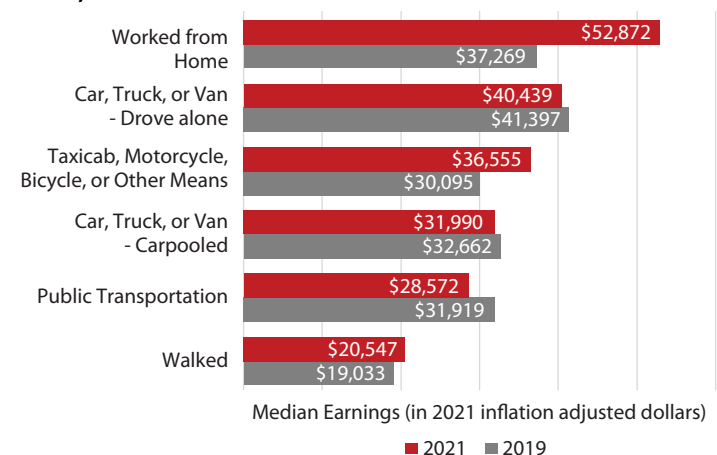
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Figure 12. Educational Attainment of Home-Based Workers, 2019 and 2021**



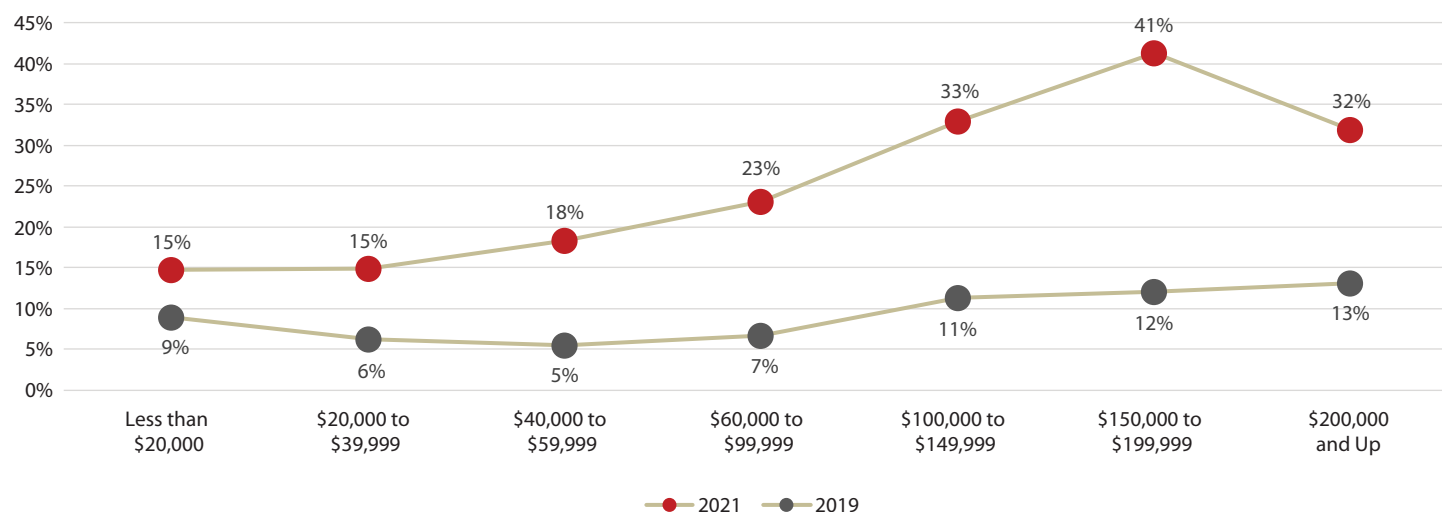
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Figure 13. Utah Median Earnings by Transportation to Work, 2019 and 2021**



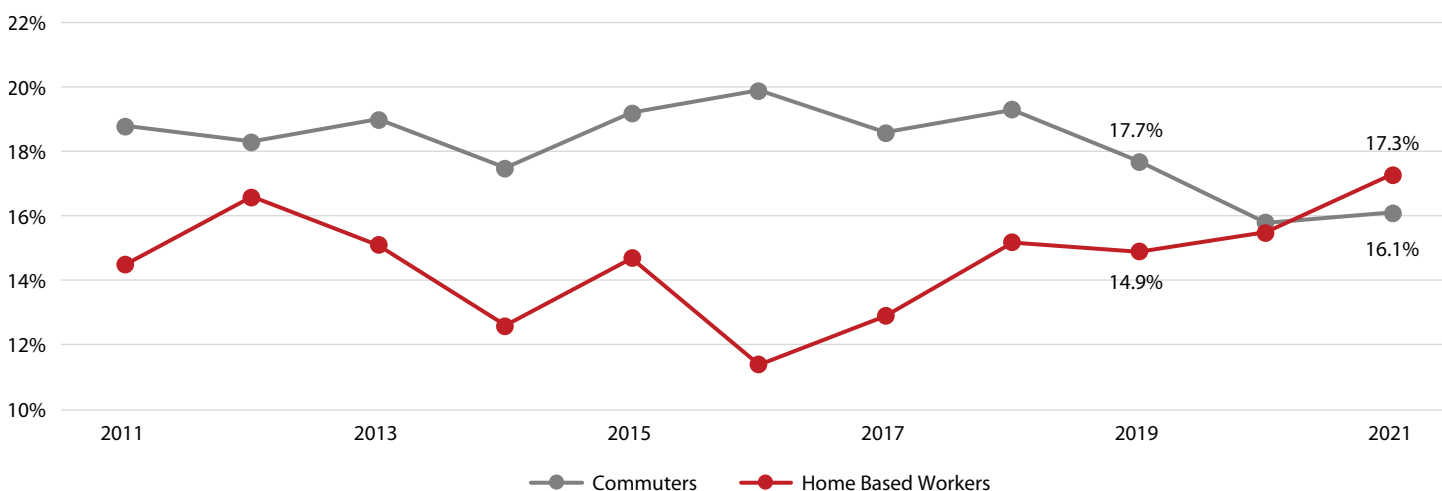
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Figure 14. Share of Income Groups Working-From-Home, 2019 and 2021**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Figure 15. Percentage of Commuters and Home-Based Workers Who Relocated in the Previous Year, 2011-2021**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Poverty

In 2021, home-based workers had the lowest poverty rate of any commuter group (3.4%), compared to 5.3% of all other commuters combined. In 2019, 5.5% of Utahns who worked from home received earnings below the poverty level, a rate almost identical to the 2019 rate for commuters.

## Geographic Mobility

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, home-based workers moved to new homes at lower rates than commuters. In 2019, 17.7% of Utah's commuters moved in the previous year, compared to only 14.9% of home-based workers. However, during the pandemic, home-based workers and commuters became equally mobile. In 2021, 17.3% of home-based workers in Utah reported moving in the previous year, compared to 16.1% of commuters. The difference between these two rates is statistically insignificant.



**Table 1. Mobility Status of Utah Commuters and Home-Based Workers, 2019 and 2021**

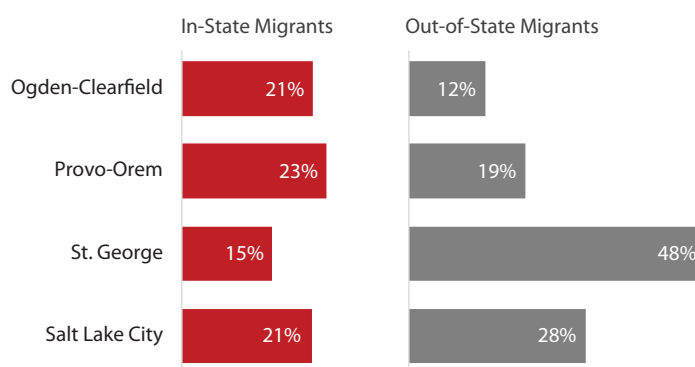
	2019				2021			
	Commuters	MOE	Home-Based Workers	MOE	Commuters	MOE	Home-Based Workers	MOE
Living in Same House	82.3%	0.6	85.1%	2.05	83.9%	0.65	82.7%	1.3
Moved Within Utah	14.0%	0.55	10.3%	1.75	12.4%	0.55	12.9%	1.15
Moved from Another State	3.2%	0.3	3.8%	1.1	3.0%	0.3	4.1%	0.7
Moved from Abroad	0.5%	0.1	0.8%	0.55	0.6%	0.15	0.3%	0.2

Note: Shading indicates no statistically significant difference between commuters and home-based workers.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

A closer look at the data shows that in 2021 Utah's home-based workers were more likely than commuters to have moved to Utah from other states but less likely to have relocated from abroad. In 2019, both types of workers were equally likely to move from outside Utah, and home-based workers were significantly less likely to move within Utah.

Work-from-home status is one characteristic that contributes to the distinct profiles of migrants who relocate to each of Utah's metro areas. In 2021, almost half of the migrants moving into the St. George metro area from outside Utah were home-based workers. In contrast, home-based workers made up 12.2% of out-of-state migrants to the Ogden-Clearfield metro area. This pattern aligns with national observations indicating that many fully remote workers relocated to scenic travel destinations following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 16. Share of In-Migrants Who Work from Home by Metropolitan Area, 2021**

Note: Data was unavailable for Utah's 5th metropolitan statistical area, Logan, UT-ID and the many smaller statistical areas within the state.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Data Notes

This Fact Sheet uses data from the American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides data concerning the social, economic, demographic, and housing characteristics of U.S. residents.

The American Community Survey divides workers into 6 commuter groups based on how they typically travel to work: car, truck, or van- drove alone; car, truck, or van- carpooled; public transportation; walked; taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means; and worked from home. In this factsheet, the term "commuter" refers to any worker who does not work from home.

## Endnotes

1. Burrows, M., Burd, C., McKenzie, B. (2023). *Home-Based Workers and the COVID-19 Pandemic: American Community Survey Reports* (Report No. ACS-52). U.S. Census Bureau. [www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2023/acs/acs-52.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2023/acs/acs-52.pdf)
2. Burrows, M., Burd, C., McKenzie, B. (2023).
3. The ACS 1-Year estimates provide data describing areas with populations over 65,000 residents. In 2021, seven counties in Utah had populations above this level – Cache, Davis, Salt Lake, Tooele, Utah, Washington, and Weber.
4. Badger, E., Gabeloff, R., and Katz, J. (Jun 17, 2023). The Places Most Affected by Remote Workers' Moves Around the County. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/17/upshot/17migration-patterns-movers.html>
5. Badger, E., Gabeloff, R., and Katz, J. (Jun 17, 2023). The Places Most Affected by Remote Workers' Moves Around the County. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/17/upshot/17migration-patterns-movers.html>