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Job Flexibilities And Work Schedules In 2017–18

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This Spotlight on Statistics looks at the percentage of wage and salary workers with flexible work arrangements, including workers' ability and choices to work at home and adjust their work hours. This Spotlight also examines who works which schedules and why. Data are annual averages for wage and salary workers, and exclude all self-employed workers. All estimates refer to workers' main jobs. Unless otherwise specified, data include workers age 15 and over.

Men and women were equally likely to work at home

Twenty-nine percent of wage and salary workers could work at home in their primary job in 2017–18, and 25 percent did work at home at least occasionally. Fifteen percent of wage and salary workers had days they only worked at home.

Men and women were equally likely to work at home (25 percent) and to have days they worked solely at home (15 percent and 14 percent, respectively).

Thirty-two percent of Asians sometimes worked at home, a higher percentage than for Whites (26 percent) or Blacks or African Americans (18 percent).

Hispanic or Latino workers (13 percent) were less likely to work at home than non-Hispanics (27 percent).



Parents living with children were more likely to work at home

Among wage and salary workers, parents living with children under age 18 were more likely to work at home than workers who were not parents with children at home (30 percent, compared with 22 percent).

Among workers age 25 and over, 47 percent of those with a bachelor's degree and higher worked at home at least occasionally, compared with 9 percent of workers with a high school diploma and 3 percent of workers with less than a high school diploma.



Workers in management, business, and financial operations more likely to work at home

In 2017–18, about one-half (51 percent) of workers in management, business, and financial operations occupations sometimes worked at home. These workers were more likely to work at home than workers employed in other occupations. Workers in professional and related occupations were the next most likely to work at home (38 percent). Twenty-five percent of workers in sales and related occupations sometimes worked at home--the same percentage as the overall average.



Parents worked at home to coordinate their work schedules with personal or family needs

Among those who worked at home, 24 percent did so because of a personal preference, 23 percent worked at home to catch up on work, 22 percent did so to coordinate their work schedule with personal or family needs, and 16 percent did so because the job required it.

Among parents who worked at home, the number one reason for working at home was to coordinate their work schedule with their personal or family needs. Twenty-nine percent of parents who worked at home did so for this reason. Among those who worked at home and were not a parent of a child living at home, 27 percent did so because of a personal preference, while only 18 percent worked at home to coordinate their work schedule with personal or family needs.

Women were more likely than men to work at home to finish or catch up on work (26 percent, compared with 21 percent) and to coordinate their work schedule with personal or family needs (25 percent, compared with 20 percent). Men were more likely than women to work at home because of a personal preference (27 percent, compared with 21 percent).



More than half of wage and salary workers had a schedule with flexible work hours

Fifty-seven percent of wage and salary workers had a flexible schedule in which they were able to vary the times they began and stopped working, including 20 percent who were able to change it frequently, 26 percent who could do so occasionally, and 11 percent could vary their schedule only rarely.

Wage and salary workers who were Hispanic or Latino were less likely to have a flexible work schedule than workers who were not Hispanic or Latino—50 percent, compared with 58 percent.

Whites, Blacks or African Americans, and Asians were about equally likely to have a flexible schedule in which they could vary the times they began and stopped working.



Public sector workers more likely to have a formal policy governing flexible schedules

Some of the workers with a flexible schedule had formal arrangements governing their schedules. Sixteen percent of wage and salary workers had a formal arrangement with their employers that permitted this flexibility.

Public sector workers were more likely to have a formal policy governing this arrangement than private sector workers (19 percent, compared with 16 percent), while private sector workers were more likely to have schedule flexibility without a formal arrangement (44 percent, compared with 24 percent).

Among public sector workers, federal workers were more likely to have a formal arrangement. Thirty-four percent of federal workers had a formal arrangement governing their flexible work schedule, compared with 24 percent who were able to adjust their work hours without a formal arrangement.

Women were more likely than men to have formal arrangements allowing schedule flexibility (18 percent, compared with 15 percent).



Most workers knew their schedule more than 4 weeks in advance

Fifty-five percent of wage and salary workers knew their work schedule 4 weeks or more in advance, and 19 percent learned their work schedule less than one week in advance.

Men were more likely than women to learn their work schedule less than one week in advance—24 percent, compared with 14 percent. Women were more likely to know their schedule 4 weeks or more in advance (61 percent, compared with 50 percent).

Among wage and salary workers age 25 and over, thirty-one percent of workers with less than a high school diploma learned their work schedule less than one week in advance, compared with 14 percent of workers with a bachelor's degree and higher.



Not everyone had a flexible schedule

Some workers did not have flexible schedules and had no input into their work hours. Thirty-six percent of all wage and salary workers (51.3 million workers) did not have a flexible work schedule and had employers who decided their schedule without their input.

Sixty-five percent of wage and salary workers in production occupations (5.6 million workers) and 57 percent of wage and salary workers in construction and extraction occupations (3.3 million workers) did not have a flexible work schedule and had employers who decided their schedules.

In addition, advance knowledge of work schedules varied across occupations. Among all wage and salary workers, those in construction and extraction occupations (40 percent) and transportation and material moving occupations (33 percent) were the most likely to learn their work schedules less than one week in advance.



Short notice and lack of flexibility were more common for some occupations

A relatively small number of workers had short notice, no flexibility in the hours they worked, and no input into their work schedules. Five percent of all wage and salary workers (7.4 million workers) learned their schedules less than a week in advance and had no schedule flexibility or input into their schedules. This included 24 percent of workers in construction and extraction occupations (1.4 million workers), 6 percent of workers in services occupations (1.4 million workers), and 13 percent of workers in transportation and material moving occupations (1.0 million workers).

Just one percent of workers in management, business, and financial operations occupations (227,000 workers) and 3 percent of workers in sales and related occupations (376,000 workers) had less than one week notice and no flexibility or input into their schedules, accounting for a small share of the 7.4 million workers with these restricted schedules.



Most workers worked a daytime schedule

Eighty-four percent of wage and salary workers worked a regular daytime schedule in 2017-18. Men were slightly more likely than women to work non-daytime hours – 18 percent, compared with 15 percent.

Sixteen percent of workers usually worked a non-daytime schedule, including 6 percent of workers who worked evenings, and 4 percent who worked nights. The remaining 6 percent worked a rotating shift, a split shift, an irregular schedule, or some other schedule.



Workers in leisure and hospitality industries were more likely to work a non-daytime schedule

Thirty-seven percent of workers in leisure and hospitality, 26 percent of workers in transportation and utilities, and 25 percent of workers in wholesale and retail trade worked non-daytime schedules – more than in other industries.



Part-time workers were more likely to work a non-daytime schedule

Among single-jobholders, part-time wage and salary workers were twice as likely to work a non-daytime schedule as were full-time workers (27 percent, compared with 14 percent). Among part-time workers, 14 percent worked an evening shift, 5 percent worked an irregular schedule, and 4 percent worked a night shift.



Workers had different reasons for working a non-daytime schedule

Among wage and salary workers who worked non-daytime hours, 39 percent did so because it was the nature of the job, 19 percent because of a personal preference, and 12 percent to allow time for school or another job. Women were twice as likely as men to work non-daytime hours because they allowed for better arrangements for their families (14 percent, compared with 7 percent).



More information

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The American Time Use Survey (ATUS), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), is a continuous survey about how individuals age 15 and over spend their time. In the ATUS interview, survey respondents report activities they did between 4 a.m. on the day before the interview until 4 a.m. on the day of the interview. Interviews are conducted on all 7 days of the week. More information about the ATUS is available at www.bls.gov/tus.

The 2017-18 Leave and Job Flexibilities Module was sponsored by the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau. The purpose of the module was to obtain information about workers' access to and use of leave, job flexibilities, and work schedules. Additional information can be found in the [Job Flexibilities and Work Schedules News Release](#).