

A Comparison of Men's and Women's Access to and Use of FWAs

Introduction

This fact sheet contains information about men's and women's access to and use of certain types of flexible work arrangements (FWAs).^{*} The data also includes information about men's and women's attitudes and preferences concerning flexibility. The data suggests far more similarities than differences in men's and women's access to and use of these FWAs.

Flextime

- May 2004 Bureau of Labor Statistics data show full-time male wage and salaried workers are somewhat more likely to have access to flexible schedules than full-time female wage and salaried workers (28.1 and 26.7 percent, respectively).^{vi} BLS defines flexible schedules as being able to vary or change the time that a worker begins and ends work (such as working from 7 am to 3 pm, rather than 9 am to 5 pm).
- According to the Families and Work Institute, although women (79%) and parents (78%) are somewhat more likely than other groups of employees to use either traditional or daily flextime when it is available (whether through formal or informal programs), the majority of men (68%) and the majority of non-parents (70%) use flextime when they have access to it.^{vii} FWI defines both forms of flextime as allowing employees to select their own starting and quitting times within a range of core-operating hours; with traditional flextime, employees stick to their chosen hours for a period of time; and with daily flextime, workers are allowed to select their hours on a daily basis.
- The data from a Corporate Voices for Working Families report show that for both men and women, as incomes rise, so does use of flextime (defined as altering the start and end times of an employee's work schedule).ⁱⁱⁱ The data also show that at every income level, men's and women's use of flextime is similar, although in the middle income range (\$25,000 to \$74,999) men use flextime somewhat more often than women, and in the higher income range (above \$75,000) women use flextime very slightly more often than men. Specifically:
 - For family incomes less than \$24,999 per year, men and women are equally likely to have used flextime, at 8% each.

^{*} Flexible work arrangements are defined here to include both informal and formal flextime (policies to change the start or end times of work either for an extended period of time (traditional flextime), or on a daily basis (daily flextime)), compressed workweeks, the ability to change the amount of hours worked and the ability to change the location of work.

- More men than women use flextime in the \$25,000-\$74,999 range.
 - For family incomes ranging from \$25,000 to \$49,000, 23% of men and 20% of women have used flextime.
 - For family incomes ranging from \$50,000 to \$74,999, 35% of men and 28% of women have used flextime.
- More women than men use flextime in families with incomes greater than \$75,000.
 - For family incomes ranging from \$75,000 to \$99,999, 39% of men and 40 % of women have used flextime.
 - For family incomes over \$100,000, 38% of men and 42% of women have used flextime.

Compressed Workweeks

- Research by the Families and Work Institute (FWI) has found no significant difference in access to compressed workweeks between men and women.^{iv} FWI defines compressed work weeks as enabling workers to work their allotted hours over fewer days of the week, for example working 10 hours a day over 4 days rather than 8 hours a day over 5 days.

Amount of Hours Worked

- The greatest difference between men's and women's use of FWAs is their use of and desire for reduced hours. Women are both more likely to be working reduced hours and more likely doing so by choice. Seventeen percent of wage and salaried employees work part-time (as defined by their employers). This comprises 24 percent of women and 9 percent of men in the total US workforce.
 - Women are more likely to work part-time voluntarily (67%), while only about half of men (52%) work part-time on a voluntary basis.^v

Location of Work

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, less than three percent of wage and salaried workers worked at home at least *one day per week* for pay in 2004 (excluding self-employed and those that "take work home"). The proportions of women (2.7%) and men (2.2%) working for pay from home are comparable.^{vi}
- Another study found that 12.4 million employees, or 8 percent of the workforce, had jobs where they worked from home during normal business hours at least *one day per month* in 2006.^{vii}
 - Of those 12.4 million employees, 60 percent were men and 40 percent were women.^{viii}
- Men and women are equally likely to want to work part of the regular work week at home.^{ix}

Men's and Women's Attitudes and Preferences Concerning Flexibility

- “Overall, 39 percent of respondents agree that there is job jeopardy for working flexibly,” according to the Families and Work Institute. FWI finds that men and women are equally likely to believe that using flexible work options would have negative effects on their job advancement.^x
- In a Catalyst study of lawyers, 34 percent of men and 25 percent of women report they can use flexible work arrangements without career penalties.^{xi}
- In another Catalyst study of “Generation X” workers, female professionals were more likely to believe that they will work part-time for their current employers during the next five years (19 percent) than their male counterparts (2 percent).^{xii}
- Twenty-four percent of female and 13 percent of male full-time workers would prefer to work part-time.^{xiii}

This fact sheet was produced through a non-exhaustive survey of selected websites, journal articles and research reports on men and women's access, use and preference for flexible work arrangements. We welcome feedback on additional data and information that could be included here.

Prepared for Workplace Flexibility 2010 by Shelley Waters Boots and Anna Danziger on behalf of the Urban Institute. April 30, 2008.

ⁱ *Questions and Answers about Flexible Work Schedules: A Sloan Work and Family Research Network Fact Sheet*, 2006 Sloan Work and Family Research Network.

ⁱⁱ *When Work Works: A Summary of Families and Work Research Findings*, 2004 Families and Work Institute.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Workplace Flexibility for Lower Wage Workers, 2006*, Corporate Voices for Working Families.

^{iv} *When Work Works: A Summary of Families and Work Research Findings*, 2004 Families and Work Institute.

^v *When Work Works: A Summary of Families and Work Research Findings*, 2004 Families and Work Institute.

^{vi} *Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Work At Home Summary.”* Accessed via the Internet on April 28, 2008 at: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/homey.nr0.htm>.

^{vii} *WorldatWork. Telework Trendlines for 2006.* Accessed via the Internet on April 28, 2008 at: <http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adimLink?id=17182&nonav=yes>. Note: figures exclude self-employed workers who work from home.

^{viii} *WorldatWork. Telework Trendlines for 2006.* Accessed via the Internet on April 28, 2008 at: <http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adimLink?id=17182&nonav=yes>. Note: data are for employee teleworkers, and exclude those who are self-employed and work from home.

^{ix} *When Work Works: A Summary of Families and Work Research Findings*, 2004 Families and Work Institute.

^x *When Work Works: A Summary of Families and Work Research Findings*, 2004 Families and Work Institute.

^{xi} *Workplace Flexibility is Still a Women's Advancement Issue*, 2003 Catalyst.

^{xii} *Workplace Flexibility is Still a Women's Advancement Issue*, 2003 Catalyst.

^{xiii} *When Work Works: A Summary of Families and Work Research Findings*, 2004 Families and Work Institute.