



What's Next for Workplace Flexibility and Geographic Pay?

Today's Speakers



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Payscale



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Managing Director
Empsight



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Deloitte Consulting LLP





Today's Agenda

- Survey Methodology and Respondent Demographics
- Survey Insights Around Common Return to Work (RTO) Practices
- Bringing It All Together: Considerations for RTO Policies and Practices

Survey Methodology and Respondent Demographics



Survey Focus and Methodology

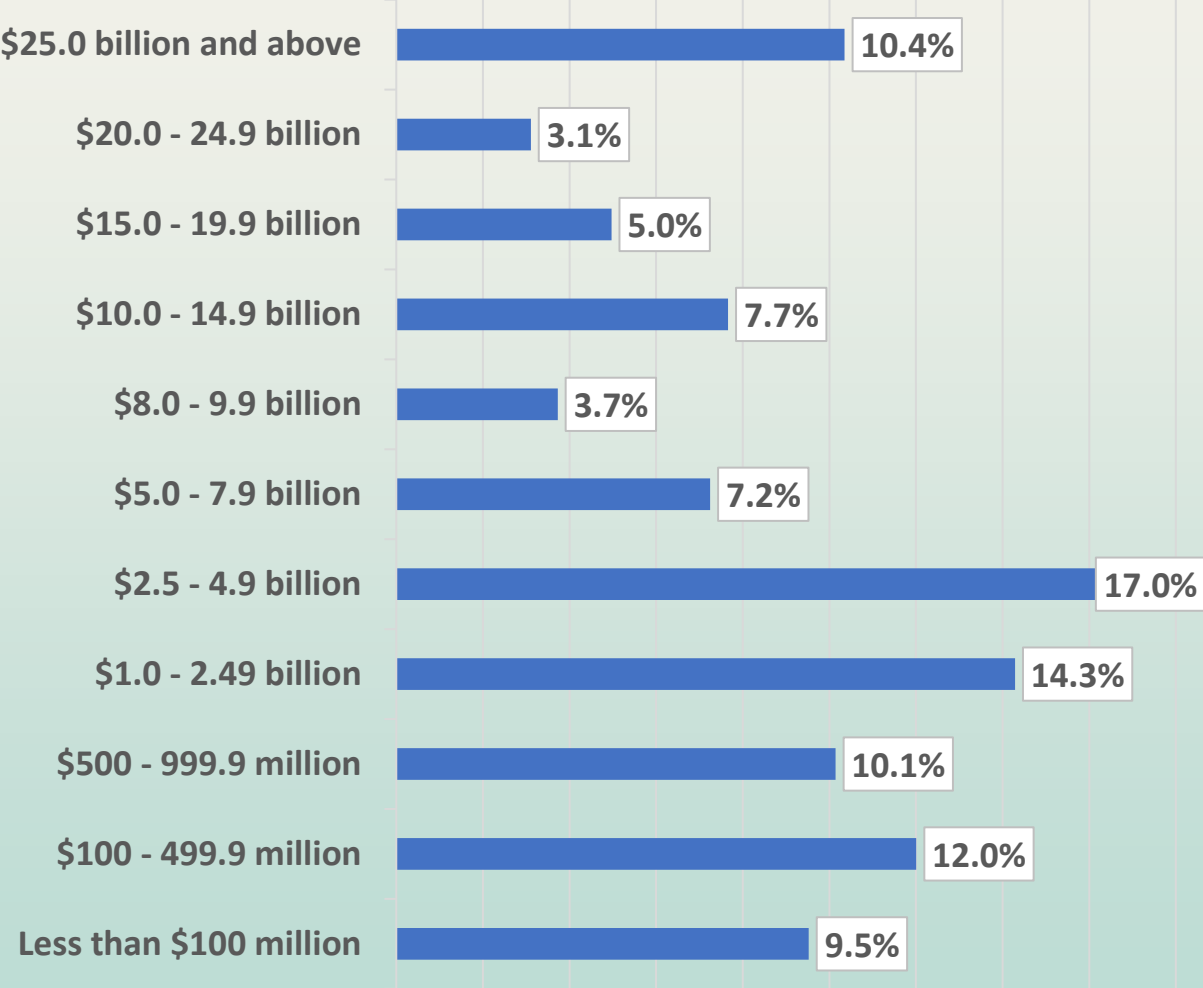
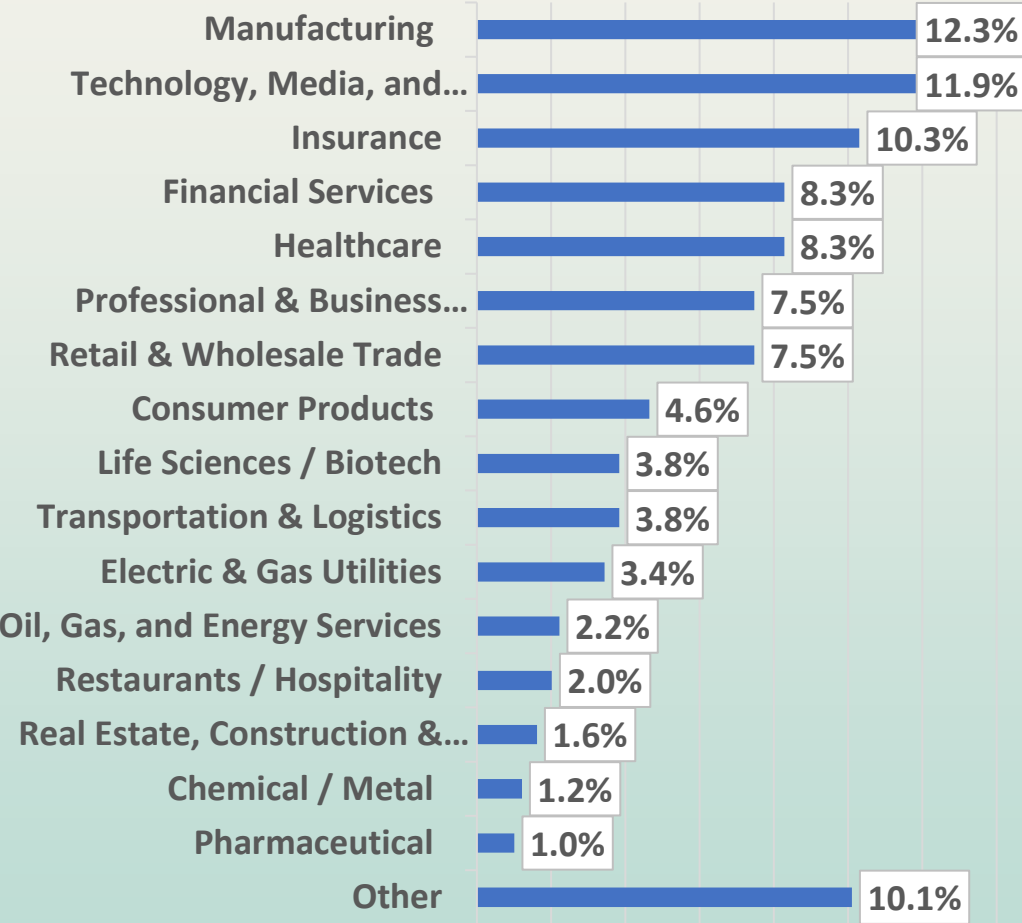
Exclusions: Not designed for government, higher education, or primarily frontline/hourly workforces

- **Survey Focus:** Remote and hybrid work policies, geographic pay differentials, employee relocations, and expense management
- **Timing:** 2025 Policy changes since COVID-19, and compensation implications.
- **Employer Focus:** Employer provided responses
- **Participants:** Public and Private Companies with U.S.-based professional/office employees in remote or hybrid-capable roles
- **Participation Scope:** U.S.-headquartered organizations and non-U.S. organizations with relevant U.S. employee populations
- **Survey Format:** Online questionnaire
- **Survey Data Collection:** June to August 2025
- **Reporting Methodology:** No Data Is Reported with Less than 5 Organizations

Total Participants: 534

Respondent Demographics

Total employee population is 8.7 million+
Average 16,928
Median 4,300



Current trends with remote and hybrid working environments



Does your organization mandate a certain number of days working on-site?

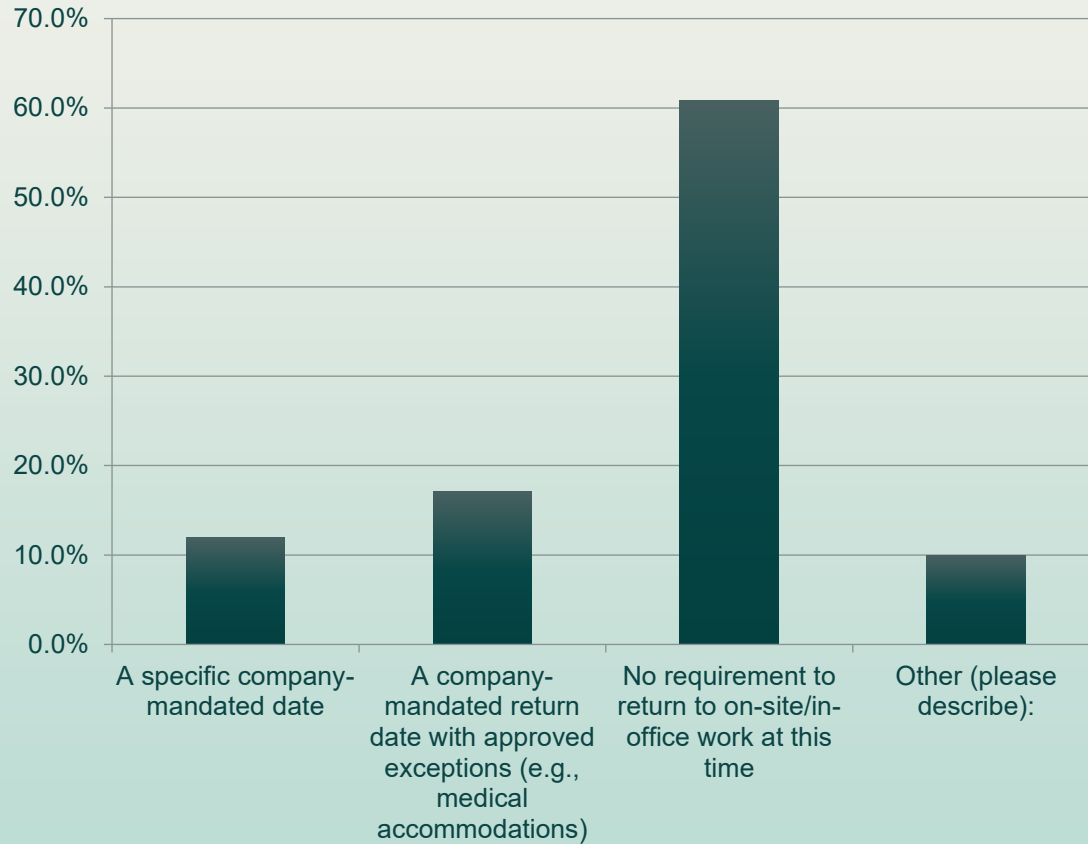
- A. Yes, for all workers
- B. Yes, for some workers
- C. No
- D. Unsure

Myth #1: Virtually all companies are mandating employees return to office / on-site work either four or five days a week.

Survey says...

>60% of participants have no specific number of days for on-site work.

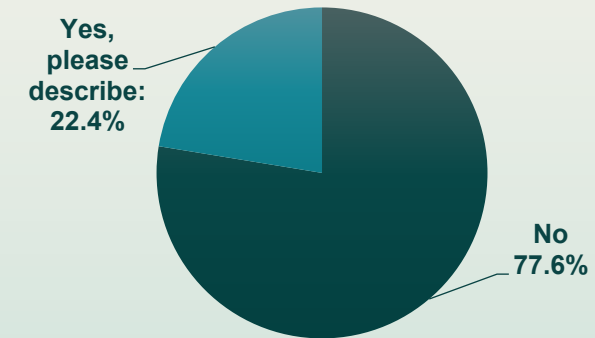
Are nearly all employees (i.e., 95–100%) required to return to on-site/in-office work as:



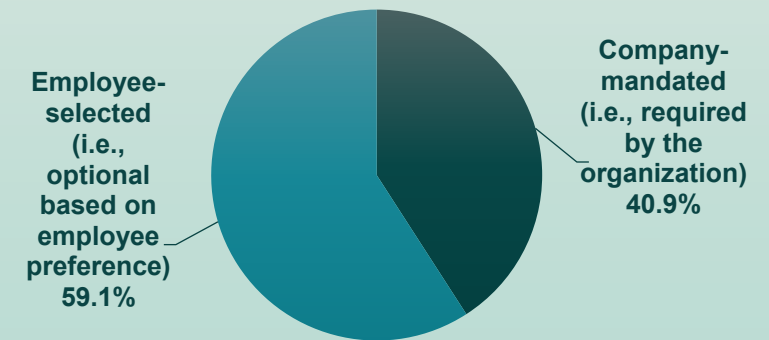
 **Payscale**

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compensation surveys & consulting

Have remote work restrictions been rolled back since 2021?



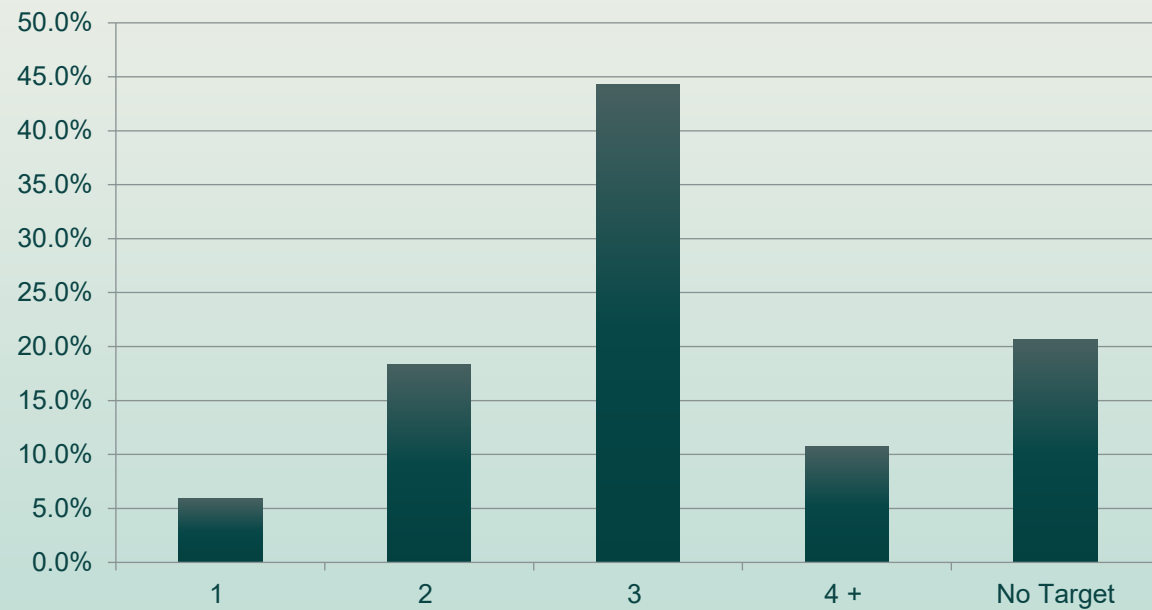
For employees who are 100% remote, is this arrangement:



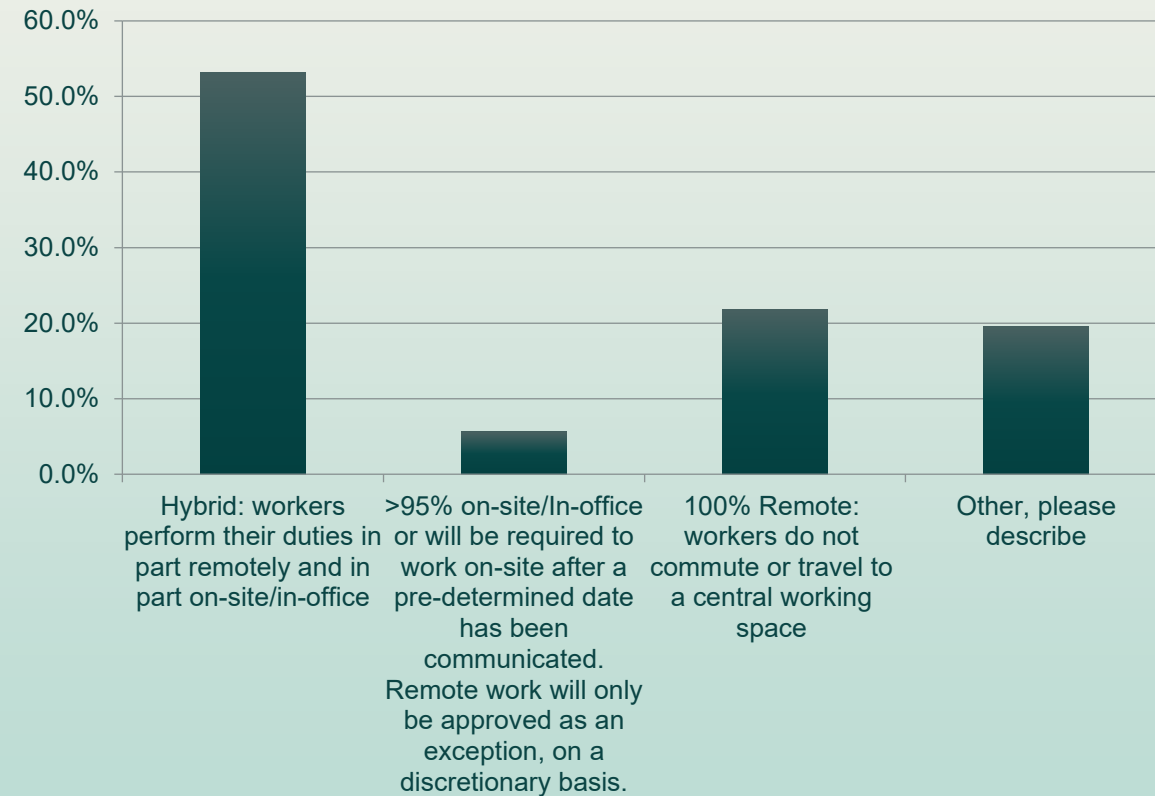
Deloitte.

Survey says... *Policies generally have lots of flexibility with heavy reliance on employee discretion.*

For Hybrid employees, what is the number of required in-office days per week for the majority of these employees?



For roles that are able to work remotely, please select your organization's current workplace policy.



Does your organization have a formal remote/hybrid work policy?

- A. Yes, for part of workforce (certain areas)
- B. Yes, for all of workforce
- C. Yes, manager discretion by individual
- D. No, we used to allow remote work, but eliminated it
- E. No, our entire workforce is required to be on-site
- F. Unsure

Heard in the headlines: Most organizations established remote work policies during the pandemic and are keeping these policies

“The adoption of remote work platforms after the Covid-19 lockdown: New approach, new evidence”

National Library of Medicine, September 29, 2022

“The companies sticking to fully remote work”

BBC, September 12, 2023

“Coronavirus makes Work From Home The New Normal”

SHRM, March 20, 2020

“These companies plan to make working from home the new normal. As in forever”

CNN, June 25, 2020

“Work-from-home is here to stay: Call for flexibility in post-pandemic work policies”

Science Direct, January 2023

“Biggest Tech Companies Walk Back Remote-Work Policies”

Parmenter Realty Partners, January 3, 2023

“These companies decided to go fully remote – permanently”

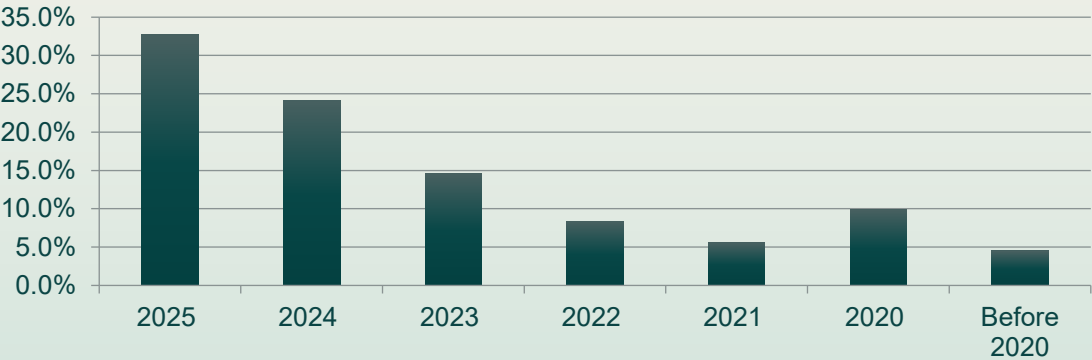
CNN, January 27, 2022

Myth #2: Most organizations established remote work policies during the pandemic and haven't changed since.

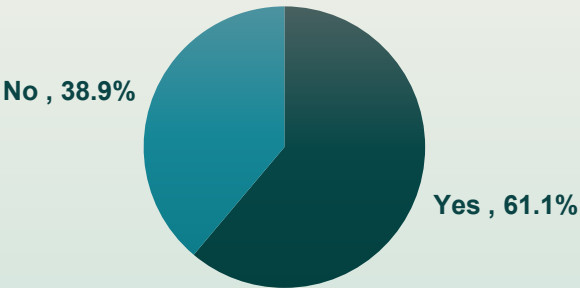
Survey says...

Most organizations established their policies in 2024 and 2025 — post-pandemic.

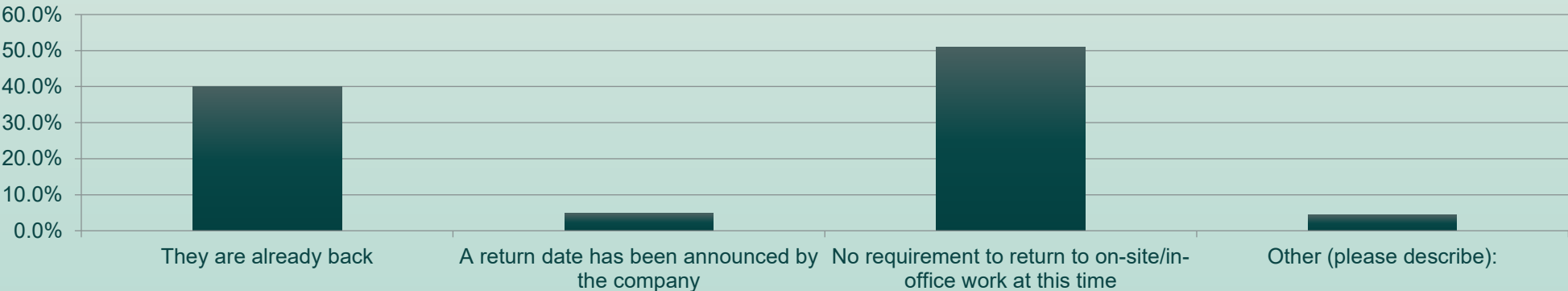
When was your organization’s remote work policy most recently updated?



If applicable, is there flexibility for 100% remote work to continue after the designated return-to-office date?



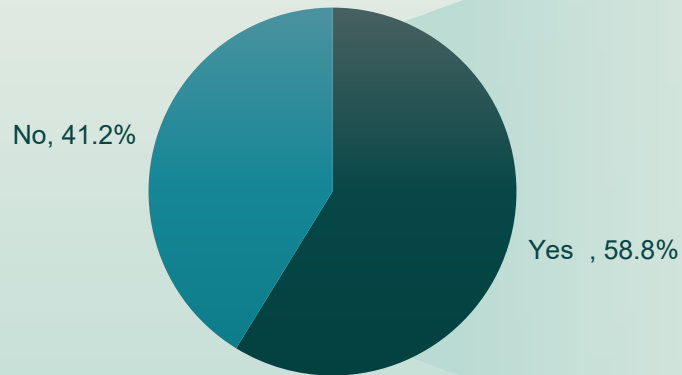
For hybrid office/remote employees, what is the current status of their return to on-site/in-office work?



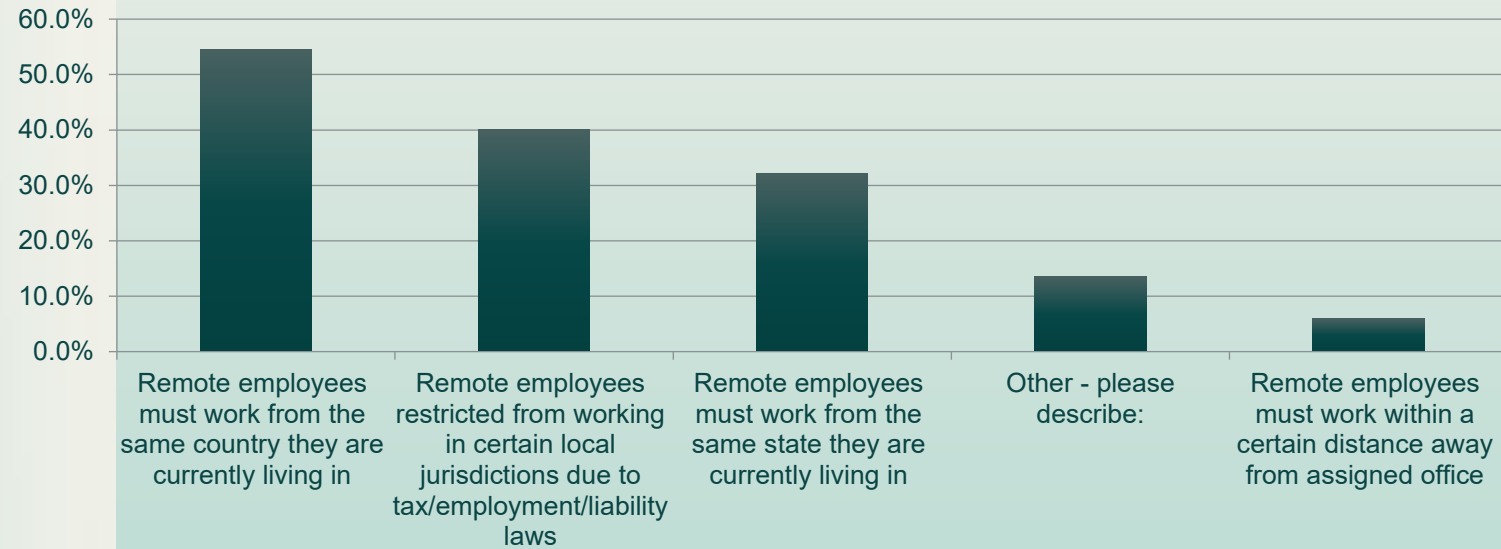
Survey says...

There is generally some flexibility on where remote employees can work from

Does your current remote work policy include guidelines or restrictions on where remote employees can work from (e.g., specific states or countries)?



If yes, what location-based restrictions are in place for remote employees?
(Select all that apply) - Selected Choice



Does your organization require a reduction in employee pay for working remotely?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Sometimes
- D. I don't know

Heard in the headlines: If you work remotely, it means a pay cut.

“Setting Salaries for Remote Workers”

Abacus Payroll, October 10, 2024

“Tech Workers Take Much Lower Pay to Ditch the Office”

UCLA Anderson Review, July 9, 2025

“Job recruiters are carrot-and-sticking candidates with work-from-home perks to get people to sign on at lower salaries”

Fortune, January 5, 2025

“When will remote workers see their pay cut?”

The Economist, February 6, 2025

“Why Some Workers Would Take A 20% Pay Cut To Work From Home”

Forbes, February 10, 2025

“The Future of Work is Hybrid: What It Means for Your Paycheck”

Ignite HCM Consulting and Services, May 20, 2025

“Many workers would take a paycut to work from home — some would forgo at least 20% of their salary”

CNBC, February 7, 2025

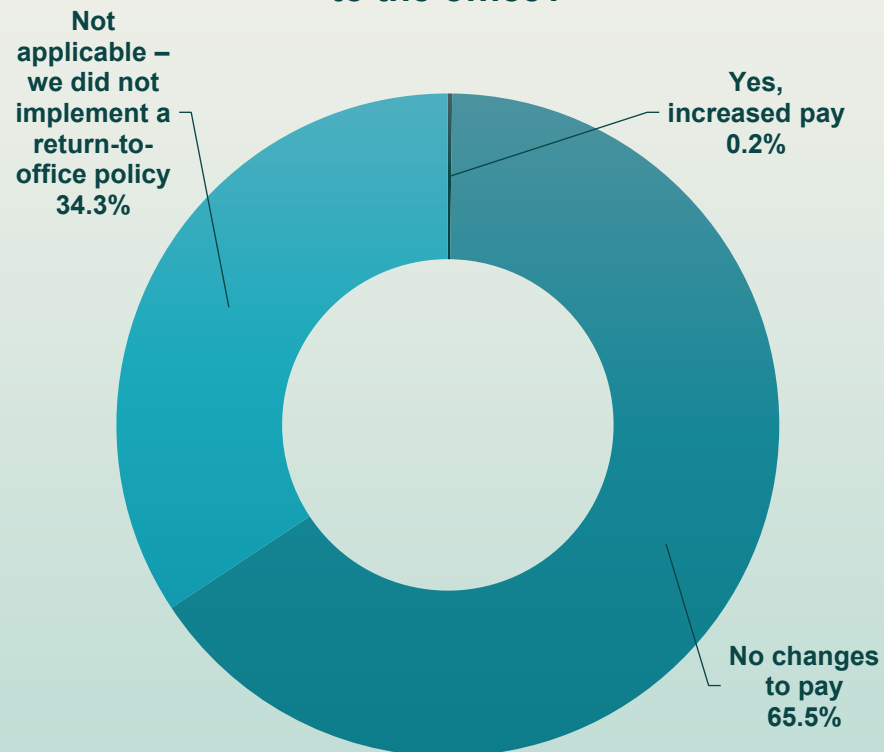
Myth #3: If you work remotely, it means a pay cut.



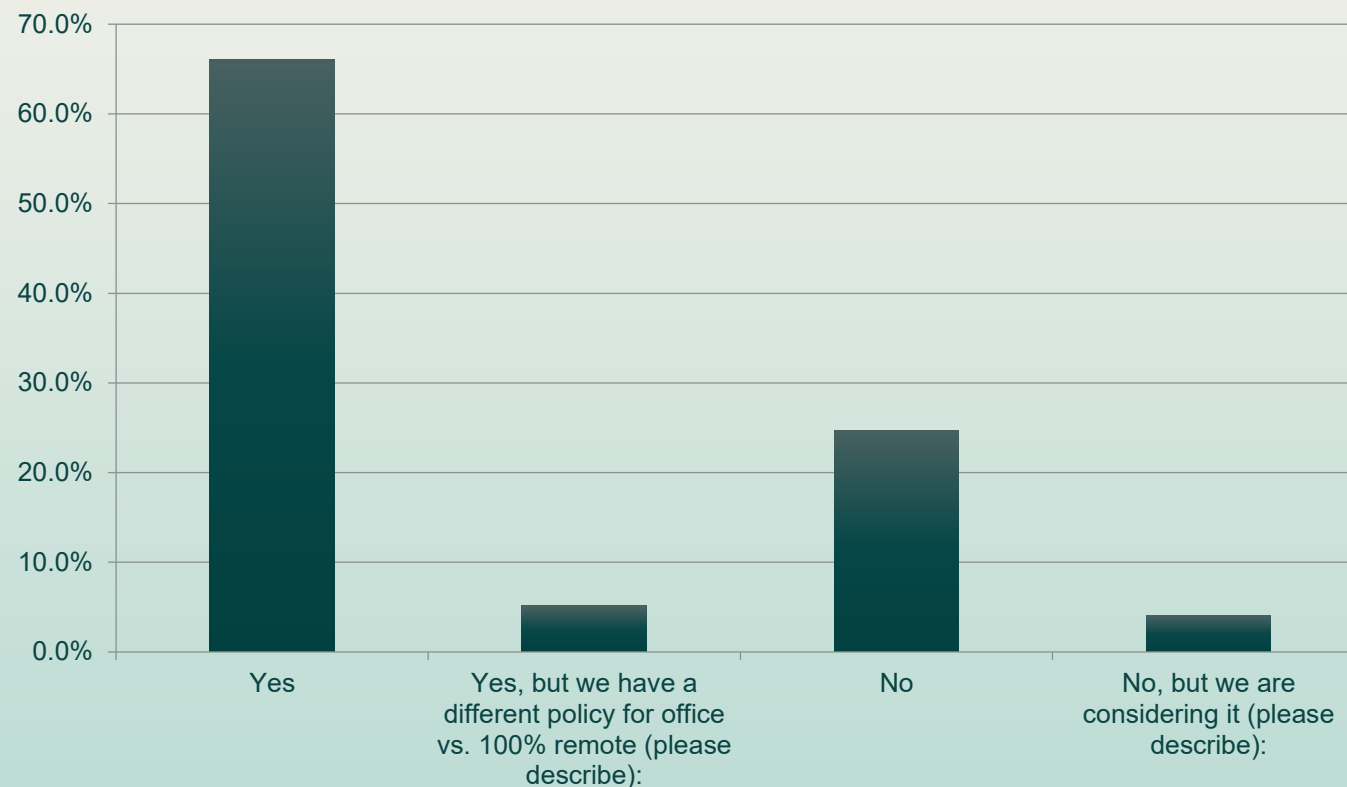
Survey says...

*Virtually **no one** reported decreasing employee pay based on workplace.*

Did your organization make any pay adjustments as employees began returning to the office?



Does your geographic differential compensation policy apply to employees who work 100% remotely?



Does your organization pay lower when a worker works in a low cost-of-labor area?

- A. Yes, for all workers
- B. Yes, for some workers
- C. No
- D. Unsure

Heard in the headlines: remote workers in lower-cost locations are paid less

“Should Remote Work Pay Be Based On Location?”

The Huffington Post, January 12, 2022

“Are Companies Secretly Paying Remote Workers Less? A Look at Global Pay Disparities”

Velocity Global, April 23, 2025

“Remote Workers Expect Pay to Reflect Their Locations”

SHRM, April 21, 2021

“Can You Pay Your Remote Workers Less Than Your Office Workers or Based on Geographic Location? Rethinking Your Pay Model in a New Era”

Fisher Phillips, October 4, 2022

“Should Remote Workers Living in Lower-Cost Locations Be Paid Less?”

SHRM, July 24, 2020

“Revisiting location-based pay in this era of remote work”

Minnesota Public Radio Marketplace, October 15, 2021

“The Pay Gap Between Hybrid and Fully Remote Employees: Are We Headed for a New Wage Divide?”

Madison Davis, April 23, 2025

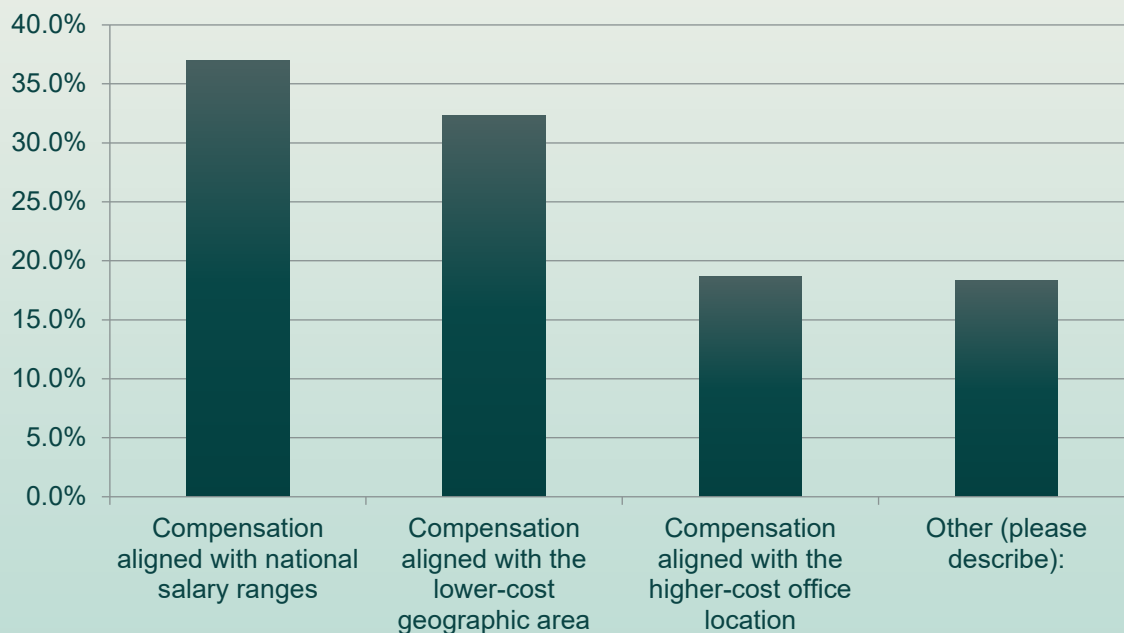
Myth #4: Pay is reduced when employees work from low cost-of-labor locations.



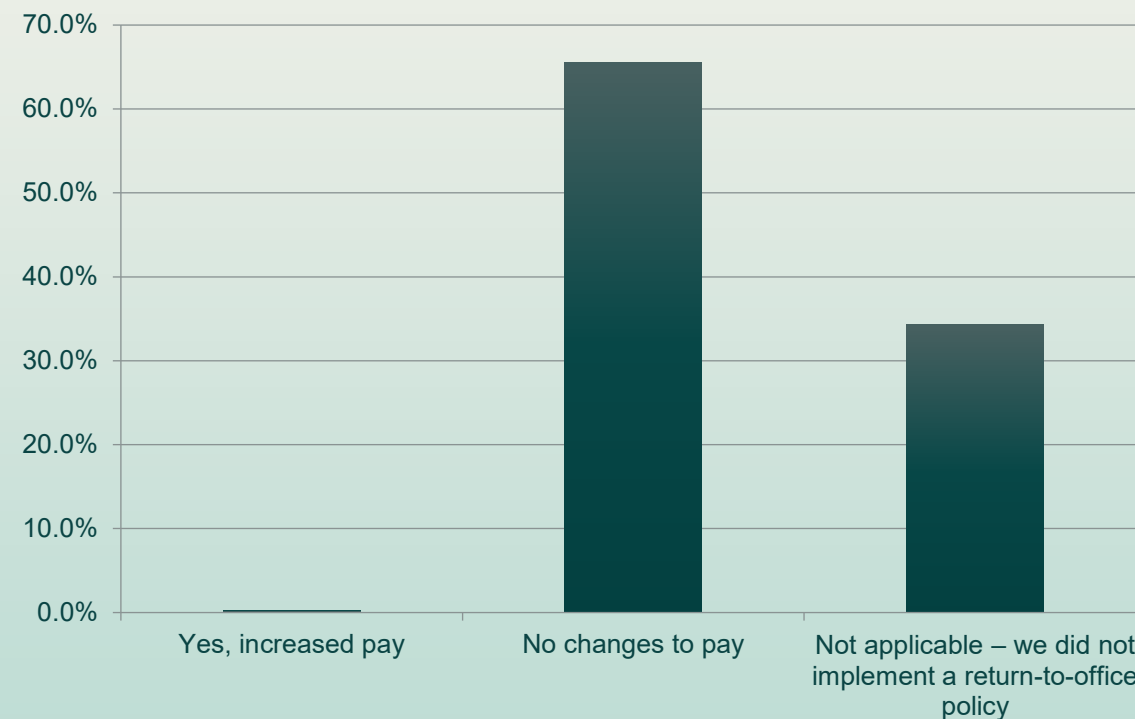
Survey says...

Very few organizations have implemented geographic pay differences for remote and hybrid work.

If an individual is hired remotely from a lower-cost geographic area to work for a higher-cost office location, what does your formal policy recommend? (Select all that apply)



Did your organization make any pay adjustments as employees began returning to the office?



Does your organization closely monitor where workers are performing their jobs?

- A. Yes, using badge swipes
- B. Yes, by checking technology
- C. Yes, through leader or manager check-ins
- D. No
- E. Unsure

Heard in the headlines: employers are tracking you

“Amazon has a new 'badge data' strategy for monitoring employee office attendance”

HR Grapevine, Jan 20, 2025

“Begin Closer Monitoring of Employee On-Site Attendance, Agencies Told”

FEDweek, May 13, 2025

“Your Boss Wants You Back in the Office. This Surveillance Tech Could Be Waiting for You”

Wired, February 26, 2025

“Millennials lead the ‘coffee badging’ revolt to protest return to office as businesses push to fill empty seats”

Fortune, August 6, 2025

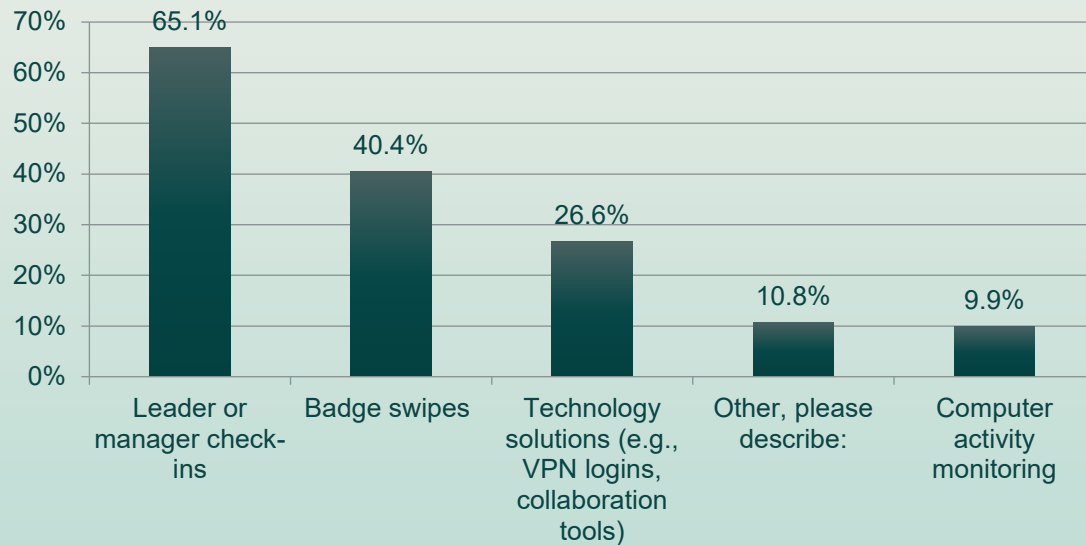
Myth #5: Organizations are watching worker location closely via badge swipes and tracking practices.

Survey says...

Informal leader check-ins are the most prevalent way organizations become aware of the employee's workplace.

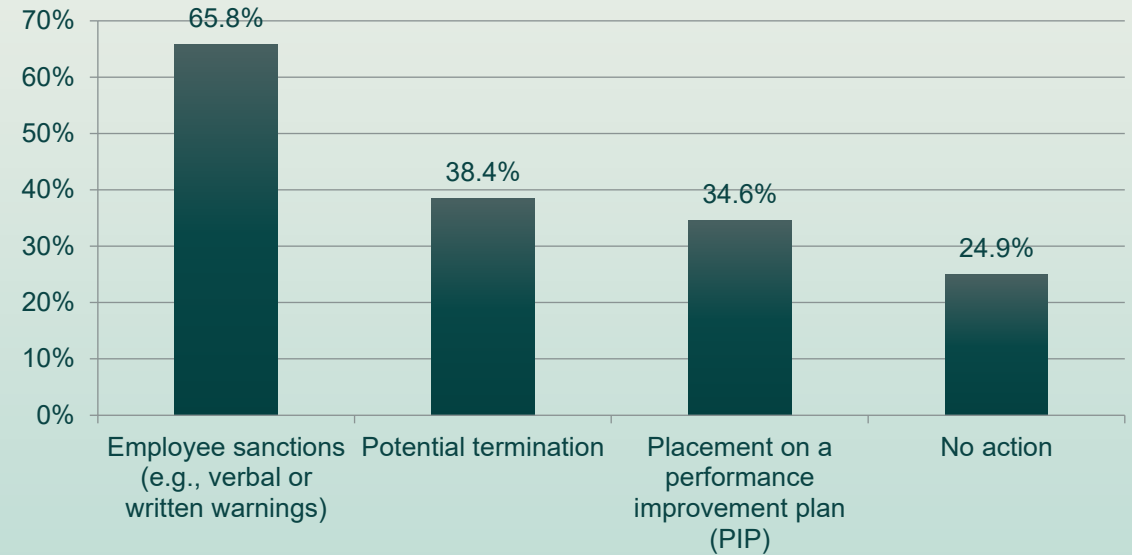
How does your organization monitor compliance with hybrid and remote work policies?

(Select all that apply)



What are the potential repercussions if hybrid work policies are not followed?

(Select all that apply)



Considerations for your RTO Policy



- How does work get done for your organization in the future?
-

- How will employees react to a change in policy?
 - Are ways of working “broken?”
-

- Own the narrative or your employees might create their own story.

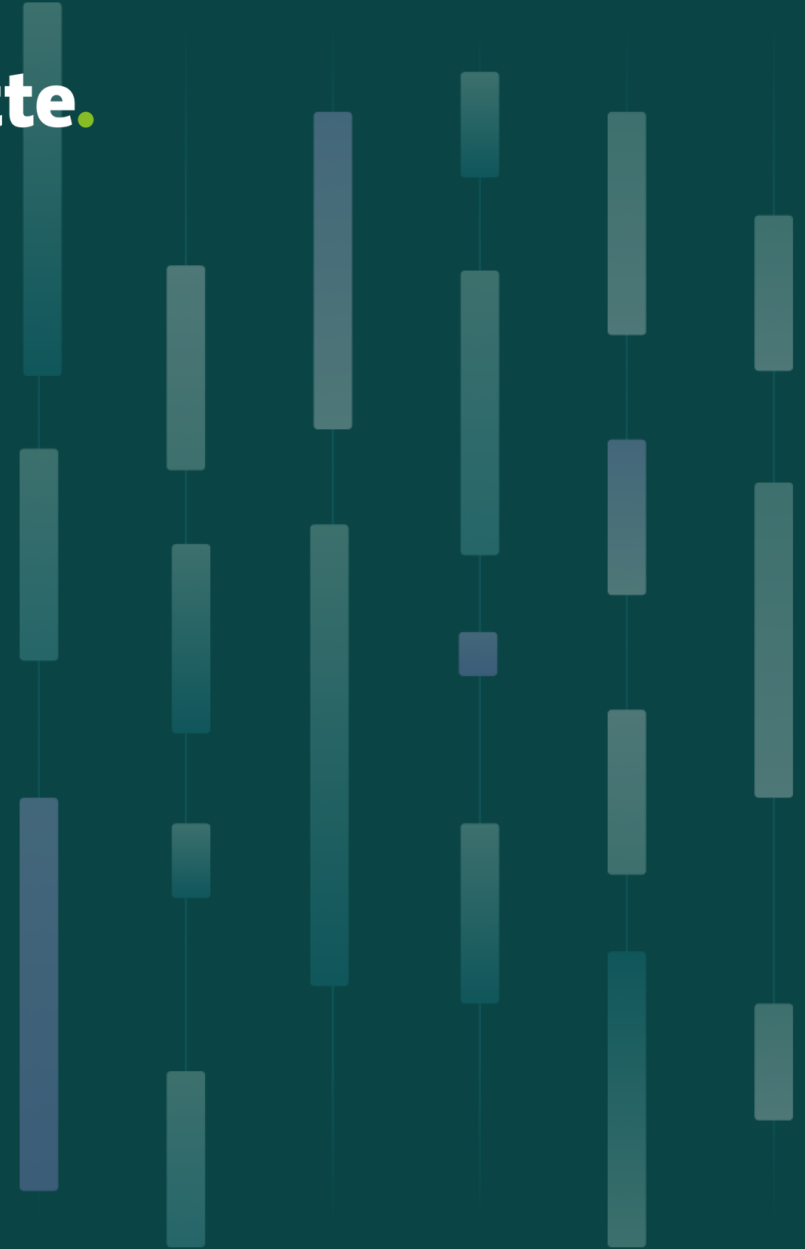
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Q&A

Please ask any questions in the Q&A section of the console!



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