GOING REMOTE FIRST

FOR COMMUNITIES

SUMMARY

Remote work has been a hot topic for the past couple of years. Most of the focus has been on the impact on employees and the companies where they work. But what about the communities where they live? Workers are moving past the normal commute distance for most major cities. This has been a boom for some communities and a disaster for other.

Taking a remote First approach, communities can improve their sustainability and overall economic future. Rather than trying to attract companies, they can focus on attracting workers.

Remote First isn't just about remote workers, it's about ensuring residents can receive services, and be educated without having to move to different communities.

It's also about sustainability in terms of energy, food production and general community vitality.

It's time to look at your community's future a different way.
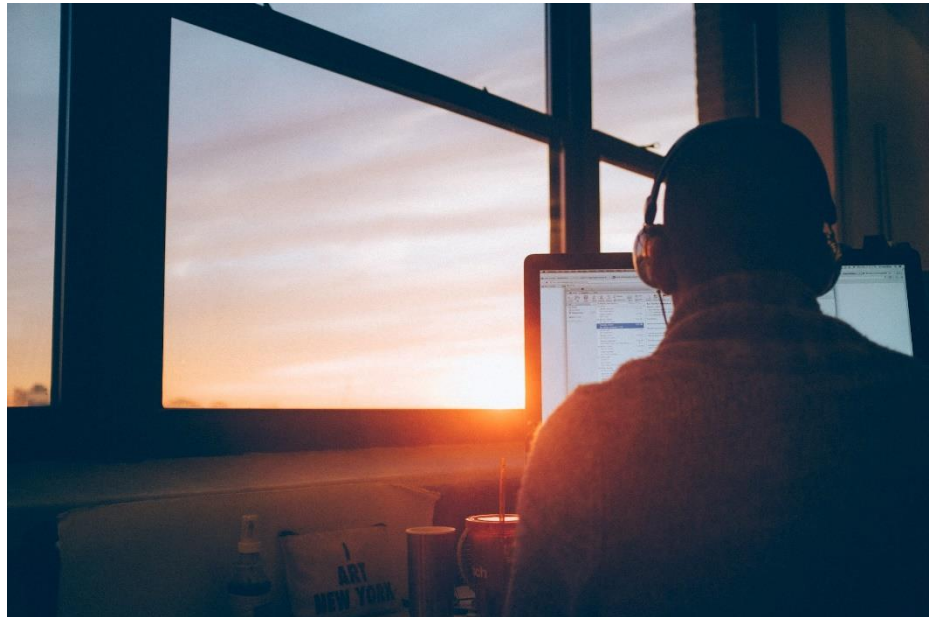
INTRODUCTION

REMOTE FIRST

Remote First is about looking at how things are done from a remote perspective first. We have learned from two years of a pandemic that work can be done almost anywhere. Education can be done remotely. And many medical and government services can be done remotely as well. They key is to not treat this as an exception where the previous methods will be returned to later. Remote can be a long-term strategy for both companies and communities.

LIVING ANYWHERE

When people can live anywhere, why shouldn't it be your community? Major tourist destinations have been popular remote work locations, but ultimately people want quality of life. For communities that may have lost a major employer or two, it's no longer a matter of filling that void. You just need reasons for people to want to live there.

SUSTAINABILITY

Blackouts, fuel shortages, supply chain issues and food insecurity have all been recent problems. Focusing on a Remote First strategy, communities and become more resilient, and more attractive to new and old residents alike.

Community Priorities

- Grow population
- High speed internet
- Economic growth
- Sustainability

ADDED PRIORITIES

- Improve remote service access
- Keep older residents in their homes longer

Opportunities

- Tourism
- Cultural activities
- Job creation

GOALS

ATTRACT WORKERS

What is going to bring workers to your community? Chances are it's not going to be jobs. It is going to be quality of life. It's time to think about what your community has to offer; local farms, breweries, wineries, theater, lakes, skiing, galleries, etc.

RETAIN RESIDENTS

Over 80% of adults over the age of 65 have two or more chronic medical conditions. Often this means leaving the home and community they love for senior friendly living. What if residents had more remote access to the services they need and didn't have to leave their homes to get them? It retains the character of the community and ensures long term sustainability.

REMOTE EDUCATION

Classrooms are generally the preferred method of education. That is until someone is injured and can't go to school, or the bus ride is too far, or when going to school becomes a super-spreader event. Students should be able to learn equally well regardless of whether they can come to school or not.

SUSTAINABILITY

There are various initiatives communities can implement to improve their sustainability. This can mean implementing microgrids, rural electrification, extending fiber, converting unused buildings, or simply linking farmers to local restaurants. Perhaps it's cultural or seasonal events that create a regular source of tourists. Maybe it's just creating AirBnB or VRBO opportunities to share what your community has to offer. Every community is unique, and this can be a strength to long term resilience.

THE NUMBERS

Remote First is a strategy for both businesses and communities.

There's lots of statistics on worker productivity, and preference for working remotely. There's also a lot of data that should be a wake-up call for community leaders. Whether you are interested in the economy or the environment, there are plenty of benefits to go around.

17% of workers have moved away from their workplace since the pandemic started. - (Chicago Tribune)

By 2028, 73% of all departments will have remote workers – (Upwork)

Telecommuting currently reduces the greenhouse gas emission an amount equal to 600,000 cars – (State of Telecommuting)

52% of workers work from home at least one day every week – (Owl Labs)

Half-time telecommuters save 11 days a year by not traveling to work (State of Telecommuting)

18% of people work remotely full time – (Owl Labs)

Companies that allow remote work have 25% lower employee turnover than those that don't – (Owl Labs)

51% of employers officially allow their employees to work from home – (Softchoice)

Telehealth helps close health care disparities in rural areas – (AAMC)

72% of companies still don't have a detailed strategy for their remote work model (Incisiv – AT&T – Future of Work Study)

85% of managers believe that having remote workers will become the new normal (Tecla)

REMOTE FIRST

The pandemic has shown us that most people can work remotely and be effective. It's also shown us that when given a chance to work remote, many choose to relocate. Parts of Florida, Arizona, California, and Texas were among the few major metropolitan areas to see growth during 2020-2022. All major metropolitan areas in the Northeast saw a net loss. In many cases though, people simply moved out past where they needed to live if they were commuting.

Region/ Metropolitan Area	Metropolitan Area Population Size 2021	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020	2020-21
Northeast Region												
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	19,768,458	*1.0*	*0.9*	*0.6*	*0.4*	*0.4*	*0.1*	(0.3)	(0.4)	(0.6)	(1.0)	(3.4)
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	6,228,601	*0.8*	*0.7*	*0.4*	*0.5*	*0.4*	*0.3*	*0.3*	*0.3*	(0.1)	(0.4)	(1.5)
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	4,899,932	*1.4*	*2.0*	*1.9*	*1.4*	*1.1*	*1.5*	*1.2*	*0.6*	*0.4*	(0.4)	(2.5)
Pittsburgh, PA	2,353,538	*0.3*	*0.1*	*0.2*	(0.3)	(0.6)	*0.2*	(1.0)	(0.3)	*(0.2)*	*(0.3)*	(0.8)
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	1,675,774	*0.2*	*0.3*	(0.1)	*0.3*	0.1	*0.2*	(0.2)	0.1	(0.1)	(0.0)	(0.2)
Hartford-East Hartford-Middletown, CT	1,211,906	0.1	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.5)	(0.6)	(0.3)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.3)
Buffalo-Cheektowaga, NY	1,162,336	(0.2)	(0.2)	(0.0)	(0.2)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.2)	(0.2)	(0.2)	(0.3)	(0.4)
Rochester, NY	1,084,973	0.1	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.5)	(0.1)	*(0.2)*	(0.3)	*(0.2)*

Census Data – Growth Rates for Northeast 2010-2021

This represents a huge opportunity for small towns. Developing a Remote First strategy aligns with many American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding opportunities to ensure regional sustainability. Let us help you develop a new vision for your community. For more information contact us at:

https://www.goingremotefirst.com/contact