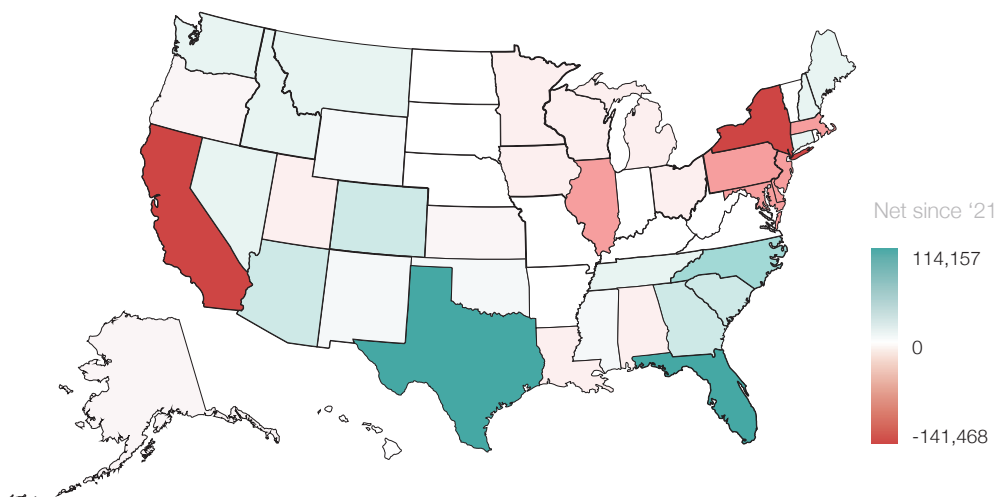


## REMOTE WORKERS: THE MOST MOBILE RESIDENTS

One of the key demographics relocating at high rates within the United States are fully remote workers. As a result of not being required to be physically present at the workplace, they have significant freedom to work from anywhere in the country. Thus, states with high cost structures are most likely to lose these workers, as one of the key barriers to migration, finding a new job, is removed from the equation.

Recent research has corroborated this theory. One [study](#) by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis suggests that “over half of the rise in interstate migration since 2019 can be accounted for by the rise in the WFH share” and that states with the largest pandemic increases in remote work were also the ones that have experienced the greatest out-migration. These findings are further borne out in an analysis of ACS data that found Massachusetts lost the fourth most remote workers to other states between 2021 and 2023 (-37,604)—a trend that very likely continued in 2024.

Figure 1: Fully Remote Worker Migration, 2021-23



Analysis of net remote worker migration based on American Community Survey (ACS) data

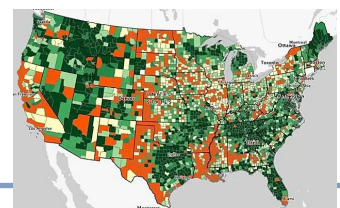
The only states to lose more net remote workers were California (-141,468), New York (-101,879), and New Jersey (-41,243)—all states with high cost structures and large remote workforces that are losing significant numbers of total domestic residents to out-migration since the pandemic according to ACS and IRS data.

Supplemental [Household Pulse Survey](#) data from the Census Bureau supports these findings. The data finds that even though Massachusetts had the sixth highest percentage of remote workers (hybrid and fully remote) in the country, it also has a smaller percentage of fully remote workers than the national average and had a significant decline between the summer of 2022 and 2024. While the U.S. fully remote population fell by 7.8 percent during that time, it declined 17 percent in the Bay State—from 894,717 workers to 742,436. In 2024, the state’s ratio of fully remote to hybrid workers was fourth lowest among the states.

The states receiving the greatest number of net remote workers from 2021 to 2023 according to the ACS were Florida (+114,157), Texas (+103,569), North Carolina (+58,524), and Georgia (+31,128).

A study by the Brookings Institution found that from 2020 to 2022, Greater Boston (Boston-Cambridge-Newton) lost more digital service jobs than all but two out of 100 major metropolitan areas—San Jose and Washington D.C. At the same time, more affordable locations like Nashville, Dallas, and Houston have attracted mobile workers.

FAST FACT



**[Remote workers] moves can pressure state and local governments to improve costly tax, housing, education, and other policies, and they can rejuvenate some of the places that our modern economy (supposedly) left behind.”**

[CATO Institute article](#)

The fully remote workforce in Massachusetts is concentrated in a handful of occupations. In 2023, the top 10 occupations were software developers, other managers, management analysts, chief executives, accountants and auditors, lawyers, financial managers, project management specialists, customer service representatives, and marketing managers. Many of which have positions which require highly skilled workers and bestow significant salaries.

**Figure 2: Analysis of net remote worker migration based on American Community Survey (ACS) data**

OCCUPATION	# TOTAL	# REMOTE	% REMOTE
<b>MA Total</b>	<b>3,679,171</b>	<b>580,269</b>	<b>15.77%</b>
Software Developers	80,784	37,878	46.89%
Other Managers	122,029	32,903	26.96%
Management Analysts	36,024	17,115	47.51%
Chief Executives And Legislators	51,656	14,093	27.28%
Accountants And Auditors	47,552	13,542	28.48%
Lawyers, Judges, and Other Judicial Workers	41,181	12,018	29.18%
Financial Managers	45,386	11,680	25.73%
Project Management Specialists	27,588	10,943	39.67%
Customer Service Representatives	52,061	10,011	19.23%
Marketing Managers	25,579	9,609	37.57%

Occupations with the Greatest Number of Fully Remote Workers in MA, 2023

Those workers were relatively split according to age, slightly favoring younger workers. Forty-six percent of remote workers were aged between 25 and 44 while 39 percent were between the ages of 45 and 64. However, fully remote work was considerably concentrated among the most educated. Thirty-three percent had greater than a bachelors degree, 41 percent had a bachelors, and only 26 percent had less than a bachelors.

This all suggests that remote workers in Massachusetts, especially those who are fully remote, are more mobile and willing to leave the state than other workers. With less to tie them here physically, they are choosing to live elsewhere. This is particularly concerning because remote work is more prevalent—and preferred—among younger, more educated, and higher-income workers. This is perhaps a partial explanation for the 26-to-34-year-old exodus from Massachusetts observed in IRS data and portends an emerging achilles heel for the once impervious Route 128 tech corridor.

DATA NOTE

**Analysis of ACS data is based on a question related to commuting. Respondents are asked to provide the mode of transportation they “usually” take to work. One of the options is “work from home” and it is our assumption that respondents choosing this option work full time from home (as opposed to hybrid).**

**IF YOU MISSED IT**

Previous editions of the newsletter covered:

- [State-to-State Migration Trends 2005-2023](#)
- [International Inflows into Massachusetts](#)

**STAY TUNED!**

Upcoming issues of Mapping Mass Migration will include analyses of:

- County and state population change in New England
- State components of change in 2024 (domestic migration, international migration, and natural population change)
- National migration trends