Remote Workers As a Source of Economic Development

How Small Communities Can Stay Competitive in a Digital World

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The Situation in 2023

The COVID-19 Pandemic has permanently altered the dynamic between workers and the geography and physicality of where they perform the functions of their jobs.
March 2020

5 Million Remote Workers

2025

36.2 Million American Employees

~22% of the American Workforce

Sources: Upwork Future Workforce Report (2022)
Potential

Towns like Mattoon are able to attract tech workers and their high-incomes.

Down the road, this could lead to new startups or even new offices opening from multinational companies.

Rural towns are able to be extraordinarily competitive when compared to urban areas, but they need to market it correctly to make urbanites and suburbanites realize the reality.
"Every remote worker these places successfully attract and retain is like gaining a fraction of a new factory or corporate office, with much less expenditure and risk."

- Mark Muro
Senior Fellow & Policy Director
Brookings Institute
Why Move From The Big City?

- Lower Cost of Living
- Short Commute Times
- Better & Individualized Schooling
- Quality Healthcare
- Low Crime
- Closer to Nature
Average Home Price: Los Angeles, CA v. Mattoon, IL

*Bestplaces.net cost of living comparison
**Differences**

**Remote Worker**

$89,178

- Requires little to no infrastructure if internet is accessible
- Youth are more likely to have remote jobs
- Provides more disposable income to use in the community
- No risk of remote jobs leaving because they are not geographically constrained

*salary data provided by [ZipRecruiter](link)*

**Manufacturing Worker**

$37,710

- Requires physical infrastructure (ex: buildings/roads)
- Hard to attract locals (especially local youth) to work here
- Doesn't provide much disposable income to use in the community
- Factories can close or leave a town

*salary data provided by [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](link)*

**Surprisingly enough, there is a severe lack of federal data on remote workers. However, it is incredibly easy to locate federal data on the BLS website for nearly any other type of profession or industry.**
Remote Salary Comparison by Location

- Nationwide, United States: $89,178
- Mattoon, IL: $81,343
- Charleston, IL, Illinois: $80,262

*Remote annual salary statistics from ZipRecruiter Report*
Manufacturing Salary Comparison by Location

Nationwide
United States $25,794

Mattoon, IL $31,256

Charleston, IL $23,215

Ilinois

*Remote annual salary statistics from ZipRecruiter Report
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Relocation Reimbursement</th>
<th>Living Expenses</th>
<th>Home Construction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>Student Loans</td>
<td>Tax Credit</td>
<td>Home Ownership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Works for Mattoon?

Move to Mattoon

$11,707

- $5,000 Cash Towards Moving Expenses
- $500 in Local Restaurant Vouchers
- 1-Year Free Membership at Elevate Coworking Space
- 6 Month Family YMCA Membership
- $500 Rural King Gift Cards
- 6 Months Free - Storage Unit
- $250 Gift Card to Slumberland Furniture
- $200 Professional Headshot with Melissa Harden at Studio 21
- $200 Gift Card to Morgan's Meat Market

$200 Gift Card to Morgan's Meat Market
$100 Gift Card to Broadway Appliance & Home Center
$50 Chamber Bucks
$20 Gift Card to Alamo Steakhouse
MarsPetcare Welcome Package
$1000 Off Car Purchase or $200 Service Gift Card
6 Months Free 1GB Internet
Wellness Assessment from Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Systems
2 Hours of Go-Karting & Axe Throwing at Zax Trax for 5 Family Members
Maranatha Christian Academy Registration Waiver
4 Private Music Lessons per-family from Sound Source Music
3 Credit Hour Tuition Waivers from Lake Land College
Douglas-Hart Nature Center: $25 Acorn Level Annual Membership
All For Them - Latonya's Petcare Services: $200 Credit towards Petcare Services
Clyde's Animal Clinic - Free Pet Exam and ID tag
These incentives are further complimented by the current and upcoming amenities our community has:

- LIFT (especially daycare)
- Parks / Lakes
- Lincoln Prairie Grass Bike Trail
- EIU / Lake Land College
- School District Class Sizes
- Sports Complex
- Cross County Mall
- Elevate
- Movie Theater
- and so on......
EXAMPLES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES
Greensburg
City in Indiana

Greensburg is a city in and the county seat of Decatur County, Indiana, United States. The population was counted at 11,492 at the 2010 census. [Wikipedia]

**Elevation:** 958’

**Area:** 9.3 mi²

**Weather:** 64°F (18°C), Wind SW at 9 mph (14 km/h), 36% Humidity [weather.com]

**Hotels:** 3-star averaging $124. [View hotels]

**Population:** 11,228 (2019)

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**Cash**

$5000

- "Grandparents on Demand"
- YMCA Membership
- Co-Working Space
- Playhouse Tickets

**Total Incentive Value**

$7,000

**ELIGIBILITY**

- Must relocate to Greensburg, IN within the next 6-12 months.
- Must have a remote position or be self-employed outside of Greensburg.
- Must be at least 18 years old.
- Must be eligible to work in the U.S.
- Must be selected
Incentive Package

- $10,000 relocation incentive
- Up to $9,000 in homebuyer incentives

Total Incentive Value: $19,000

ELIGIBILITY

- Must be a full-time remote worker
- Must currently live 300+ miles from downtown Rochester
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must be able to relocate to Greater Rochester within 6 months of program acceptance
- Must be eligible to work in the United States

Cash isn't always king. Where do you see community support or something unique about the town?
Stillwater
City in Oklahoma

Stillwater is a city in, and the county seat of, Payne County, Oklahoma, United States. It is located in north-central Oklahoma at the intersection of U.S. Route 177 and State Highway 51. As of the 2010 census, the city population was 45,688, making it the tenth-largest city in Oklahoma. Wikipedia

Elevation: 984’
Area: 30.06 mi²
Weather: 81°F (27°C), Wind SW at 10 mph (16 km/h), 11% Humidity weather.com

Incentive Package

- $5,000 down payment assistance for homebuyers
- Up to $1,500 in relocation expenses reimbursement
- $300 towards closing costs
- Red Dirt Music Tour with legendary musician John Cooper
- Free tickets to a live concert at Tumbleweed Dance Hall
- Free tickets to Gypsy Cafe Music Festival
- A $2k tab at Aspen Coffee
- Martial Arts Classes

Total Incentive Value $9,000

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be first time buyers of a home in Stillwater
- Home must be located within city limits
- Home must be owner-occupied
They provide the website traffic and tools to enable cities like Mattoon to curate the types of remote workers they wish to attract. You can see their income, family makeup, and other important demographical information to help make your decision for who should qualify for your recruitment programs.

Founded by former Co-founders of Angie's List. Connects remote workers to communities that want to attract them. Offers a free 45 day trial of their services to prove what they do works.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movers</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>TOTAL INCOME</th>
<th>CURRENT LOCATION</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLD</th>
<th>MOVE TIMELINE</th>
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<td>Orlando FL</td>
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<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Applied</td>
<td>270000</td>
<td>Chesterfield MO</td>
<td>2 Adults, 3 Children</td>
<td>Within 1 Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lead Created: 07/30/2022
MakeMyMove Subscription Plan

**Community**

Up to 25 Movers Per Month
$24 per additional

$599/mo
Save $25 per Mover

[Select]

**Community Plus**

Up to 50 Movers Per Month
$20 per additional

$999/mo
Save $29 per Mover

[Select]
Interview Process Flowchart

STEP 01: Find Mattoon on MakeMyMove or our Website

STEP 02: Applicants Submit an Application on MakeMyMove

STEP 03: Mattoon sorts applications and sends invitations for video interviews

STEP 04: Interviews are conducted, and qualified candidates are sent MOUs

STEP 05: MOU is signed, Applicants undergo background check and verification

This could easily be conducted with Google Forms if you plan to DIY Remote Recruitment
Step 6

MOVE TO MATTOON!!!
Pilot Program Objective

To Bring Five High Salary Remote Executives and Their Families to Mattoon Within a Year of Program Launch
Operational Costs Post Pilot

$10,000 Per-Family

$7,200 Minimum Subscription Fee (MMM)

$57,200 Annually

Initial framework. We over fundraised.

Assuming 5 Families As Target
Fundraising

$60,000 Raised from Local Businesses
Approximately $12,000 Per-Family
"You can have the best marketing website in the world, but if nobody sees it, there's no point"

-Make My Move
MakeMyMove.com Stats

For 2021:

→ 630,000 unique visitors
→ 45,000 active users

Case Studies:

→ In 5 months, West Lafayette IN has 20 workers
→ In 2 months, Stillwater, OK has 4 workers
→ In 3 months, Bloomington, IN has 10 workers
→ In 6 weeks, Greensburg, IN received over 1,700 applications.

Stillwater, OK movers averaged a salary of $110,000 per year
Lafayette, IN movers averaged a salary of $97,600 a year
Eight Month Results

400+ APPLICATIONS

Average Income $65,000

Over 30+ States Represented

APPLY NOW
What They Have To Say

IT Analyst
$132,000
2 Adults 3 Children
Signed MOU! Moves in July!

What appeals to you most about Mattoon?
I want to live in a place where I can own a home with a big lawn, a swing set, and a slide. I want a less urban life for my family (I live on the outskirts of Greater Los Angeles at the moment, and the traffic is horrible). I want a place where I can afford a home with enough bedrooms for my children, a playroom, and a home office. I currently pay $2250 per month for a 1200 sq. ft. apartment with no yard of its own. Because of the high expenses in California, despite having a master's degree and a good job, my family struggles to make ends meet. I want the white-picket-fence American dream, and I feel that Mattoon is the place that I can make that happen.

Boeing Executive
$150,000
2 Adults 0 Children

What appeals to you most about Mattoon?
We are looking for a break from Seattle and it's hub bub, but don't want to give up and become hermits. The vibrant downtown, lakes and community are exciting. We want a quiet place to call home, but still be able to stop at a local coffee shop or diner. We want to be able to enjoy the outdoors and simply slow down a little. Mattoon has that for us.

Commercial Real Estate Agent
$80,000
2 Adults 1 Pet

What appeals to you most about Mattoon?
My husband and I both work in tech. I work with a commercial brokerage using AI technology in Phoenix, my husband works with Standard AI based in San Francisco. We are remote now and have spent only months at a time in the Midwest. We want to settle down and build a home. We've researched Mattoon and love the great schools for kids eventually and the dog friendly community. We have a one year old pug named Whiskey. He loves being outside. Arizona weather can be brutal and we want to be able to take him on walks around the neighborhood. We look forward to hearing more about Mattoon and think we both have a lot to offer. My husband loves to cook and previously operated a food truck. We are excited to get a feel of the town and try every restaurant we can.
Better Cities for Pets

Certification is always a fun topic for applicants with pets!

Mattoon, Illinois: Working Together to Build the Future

*70% of all households in the United States have pets according to Apartments.com AND the Humane Society.
That said...
All Recruitment Should Be Part Of A Broader Community Strategy Our City Should Adopt to Remain Competitive
Resident Recruitment and Welcoming Strategy

**Understand**
How will you learn about the experience of becoming a newcomer in your community?

**Market**
How will you get the message that your community has opportunities out there?

**Recruit**
How will you help potential residents choose your community?

**Welcome**
How will your community welcome newcomers?

**Manage Leaving**
How will your community connect with people that leave?

**Belonging**
How will your community cultivate a sense of belonging for residents?

**Engage**
How will your community engage newcomers?
Main Challenges Moving Forward

HOUSING

Lack of Quality Housing In Community

On a positive note, this process caused more discussion about housing in our community and we are now working towards solutions

*We've had three potential MOU signers decline or wait to sign because of lack of quality housing*
Main Challenges Moving Forward

GHOSTING
Remote Worker Recruitment is Not a Cure-All for Economic Decline

“Communities across the country should [...] focus on the kind of basic block-and-tackling that will lead to more robust growth overall and a higher quality of life for residents. This includes the harder work of building authentic growth sectors; developing a skilled and diverse digital workforce; deploying robust transportation infrastructure for local residents; and enacting policies that support workers and their families, such as investment in education, accessible child care, and universal paid sick and family leave. New and better place-based and place-conscious federal policies would also help, such as the creation of sizable regional tech hubs in new places.”

- Mark Muro
Senior Fellow & Policy Director
Brookings Institute
But when we do these things, it then makes our community more attractive to others.

So by working to attract remote workers, and simultaneously working to make life better for your current residents, you're likely to attract more remote workers and their salaries to your community.
Where We Could Improve

**Research**
Understanding larger trends (ex: remote working) and getting ahead of them.

This will allow us to adapt as we continue to shift away from prior work/industry norms.

We could be wrong about this! But we don’t think we are based upon current literature.

**Marketing**
Producing a few marketing videos for the town can drastically improve our digital footprint.

Nobody is going to read a wall of text about Mattoon and be excited.

They need to SEE what makes Mattoon great.

**Recruitment**
After they see what makes Mattoon great, what gives someone the extra push they need to move here?

**Welcoming**
What happens when someone moves to Mattoon?

Who welcomes them to the community?

How do they become involved?
Where We've Been Successful

National Media

| FORTUNE | THE WALL STREET JOURNAL | GOVERN |}

MOU Commitments

5 of 5

Have Already Signed and we're only just a little bit past half of our timeline!!!

*creating positive digital content about the town really helped

Community Support

Again, this program and all of the national attention for Mattoon, IL that we have received would not have been possible without the support of Mattoon's incredible business community.

Their forward thinking and generous contributions are the reason why Mattoon, IL has had such great success and will continue to do so.

Thank you!
This is How We Truly Put...
Questions About Remote Worker Recruitment?
Contact us!

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