



The Future of Government Requires Work Transformation

WRITTEN BY:



Ruthbea Yesner
Vice President, Government Insights,
Education and Smart Cities, IDC

KEY STATS:

71% of government respondents have a dedicated budget to enable work transformation

38% are developing a remote work policy that is part of a long-term hybrid work strategy

40% have a tech road map for digitalization with a focus on cloud-first IT and agility

Source: IDC's *Hybrid Work Maturity Study*, March 2022

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Governments are in the process of updating policies, culture, and technologies for work transformation to hybrid teams to improve productivity and the employee experience.



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Creating a More Modern Government Workplace

Governments around the world are focused on being able to quickly deliver secure, reliable experiences for residents, visitors, and businesses. This is paramount in the face of ongoing disruptions and unexpected incidents and emergencies, such as weather events and public health crises. In addition, governments must respond quickly to changing policies and constituent needs as well.

This level of responsiveness and flexibility requires specific tools for an evolving hybrid workforce, from hybrid office workers and teams to those working in the field, to enable government employees to work and collaborate from any location. Many technologies support these working conditions, but secure and reliable connectivity, especially wireless access, and the necessary digital, cloud-based collaboration tools are foundational.

In addition, governments are facing a very tight labor market, and employees are experiencing burnout and moral fatigue from the pandemic. Most organizations are understaffed and struggling to fill existing job openings. This makes a flexible, modern workplace very important, to retain existing employees as well as attract new ones. Flexibility and updated tools will not only help employees do their jobs but also provide them with a better, more productive work environment and work-life balance, which can be differentiators from higher-paying jobs in the private sector.

Governments have experienced success with hybrid work and need to scale cloud-based technologies to support continuous responsiveness to the public and the faster delivery of secure digital services. Governments need to scale these technologies enterprise-wide and implement the necessary policies and culture to continue cloud and edge modernization. IDC's *Hybrid Work Maturity Study* shows that 40% of governments are in the process of implementing enterprise-wide support for a hybrid workforce, but only 17% report "experience parity," in which employees have the same experience regardless of location (see **Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1

Governments Are in the Process of Implementing Enterprise-Wide Support for a Hybrid Workforce

Q Which of the following best describes your organization's current approach to redesigning policies, culture, technologies, and facilities for a hybrid workforce?

VERY LIMITED. We do not expect a significant portion of our workforce to work remotely, and this is not a formal initiative at our company.	6%
AD HOC. Changes are being made at the departmental or business-unit level with no clear direction, support, or policy on the part of the organization as a whole.	12%
EARLY STAGES. We are at the early stages of evaluating and implementing the changes required to better enable our remote workers to perform their jobs efficiently and optimally.	23%
IN PROGRESS. Most key resources can be accessed by remote employees with minimal impact on capability, though some access is still disjointed or hampered by a poor user experience.	40%
EXPERIENCE PARITY. We provide a seamless employee experience to ensure all workers interact with corporate resources and colleagues consistently across locations.	18%

All government respondents.

Source: IDC's *Hybrid Work Maturity Study*, March 2022

Definition

Workplace transformation is defined as a fundamental shift in the work model to one that fosters human-machine collaboration (e.g., intelligent process automation, robotic process automation, chatbots, and augmented reality/virtual reality enhancements), enables new skills and worker experiences, and supports work across and within a (hybrid)

spectrum of field, remote, and onsite environments. Workplace transformation is driven by the need for greater employee productivity, and organizations are redesigning policies, culture, technologies, and facilities to enable the hybrid work model. In government, examples of workplace transformation include the increased support of work-from-home models that use collaboration tools for ongoing teamwork, as well as remote, secure access to systems from a variety of mobile devices, enabling employees to provide uninterrupted services to the public regardless of location.

Secure, Remote Access Key to Hybrid Work Transformation

Government has had several years of extreme pressure from economic disruption and public health emergencies arising from the pandemic and political instability. The public required massive support and responsive policies in action, and government organizations had to deliver while adjusting to a new reality of at-home and remote work. This forced adoption of new work models had a net positive result on governments' reconsidering their work processes, but as shown in **Figure 1**, there is still a way to go to have a work environment that truly enables employees to move seamlessly and securely between locations with the same productivity.

Improving the employee experience and productivity and improved business agility, continuity, and resilience are the key drivers for government work transformation.

These are tied to large-scale trends of continued disruption and the need for business resiliency, improving the employee experience in the context of labor shortages, and ongoing demands by the public for convenient digital services that take into account environmental and social impacts.

Technology plays a pivotal role in driving work transformation. As employees increasingly rely upon mobile and cloud-based solutions to conduct business, government organizations face added pressure to securely support an expanded tech landscape and expanded networking requirements.

Cybersecurity is the number 1 concern across all levels of government. With more edge computing and more data flowing across networks, network security is a top priority to ensure the privacy and security of government and worker data (see **Figure 2**, next page). To maximize employee engagement and productivity, organizations must address the complexities of both ensuring work flexibility and security requirements. In IDC's *Hybrid Work Maturity Study*, 55% of governments cited the ongoing struggle between employee flexibility and security requirements as the biggest technology obstacle in work transformation.

Successful hybrid work models rely on robust networking to support secure enterprise-class access or an optimized-anywhere user experience. As governments look to expand hybrid work options, they must graduate from "best effort" connectivity and basic remote access to secure enterprise-class access that provides optimal experiences from anywhere. In addition, governments must update policies for employees' use of devices, use of work devices over unsecured networks, and how information is accessed and managed.

To maximize employee engagement and productivity, organizations must address the complexities of both ensuring work flexibility and security requirements.

FIGURE 2

Security Concerns Biggest Obstacle to Work Transformation

Q What are your greatest security concerns relative to remote and hybrid work models?

Work devices communicating over unsecure and unmanaged networks (e.g., public hotspots, home networks)	32%
Sensitive information accessed or saved on unmanaged devices (e.g., personal devices, USB thumb drives)	33%
The rapid growth in the number of new security threats and attacks	33%
The increasing complexity of securing a hybrid enterprise environment (e.g., securing endpoints)	36%
The lack of security, IT staff, and budget to manage the extra workload	38%

All government respondents.
Source: IDC's *Hybrid Work Maturity Study*, March 2022

Work Transformation Provides Ability to Deliver Secure, Resilient Services

Work transformation, and the move to a flexible work environment regardless of physical location, provides key benefits to governments, including:

Increased agility and resiliency for continuity of services: Government workers are on the front line of responding to major emergencies like severe weather events and public health crises as well as to daily disruptions from traffic accidents, security threats, and other issues. It is imperative that government workers be able to do their jobs in the midst of disruptions, which means workers must be able to access critical systems, communicate with each other, and continue to do their jobs regardless of their location or device used.

Helping to meet climate targets and reducing carbon emissions: Enabling field workers to remain in the field reduces truck rolls and travel time, while more at-home work leveraging videoconferencing and other collaboration tools also reduces travel into the office. This reduces carbon emissions from transportation and helps governments meet emission-reduction targets. Governments around the world have pledged serious carbon emission reductions in the “race to net zero,” with 120 nations committing to the Paris Agreement and record participation at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in 2021 (COP26). This extends beyond national governments to cities and communities: At COP26, 1,000 cities committed to halving their carbon emissions and going carbon-neutral by 2050.

Attracting and retaining employees: Just as the public wants to interact with government in the same way in which they conduct other business (such as online banking, telemedicine, or distance learning), so do government employees. The current tight labor market and existing staff shortages in government should accelerate adaptation to hybrid work models. There has been a cultural shift in workplace norms, and governments need to respond, moving away from rigid requirements for in-office work or field workers who check back in to an office. A hybrid model also provides better ways to collaborate and leverage skills across departments or agencies that are often in different buildings or even different geographies.

Improving employee productivity to take advantage of historic opportunities: Employees are stretched thin due to technical debt, a lack of skills and training, and an overall lack of resources. IDC's Government Buyer Intelligence Survey showed that U.S. governments are using 15–25% (sometimes more) of staff time and IT budget to service technical debt. Employees are spending time managing help desk requests and working around outdated systems.

This hurts employee productivity and contributes to burnout. At a time of historic funding opportunities, such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in the United States and the EU Recovery Fund in Europe, governments need the ability to apply staff resources to provide needed services as well as to respond to grants, to design projects for the use of funds, and to manage and track new initiatives.

The benefits are clear, as evidenced by IDC’s Hybrid Work Maturity Survey, in which government investment in work transformation in 2021 resulted in the following improvements:

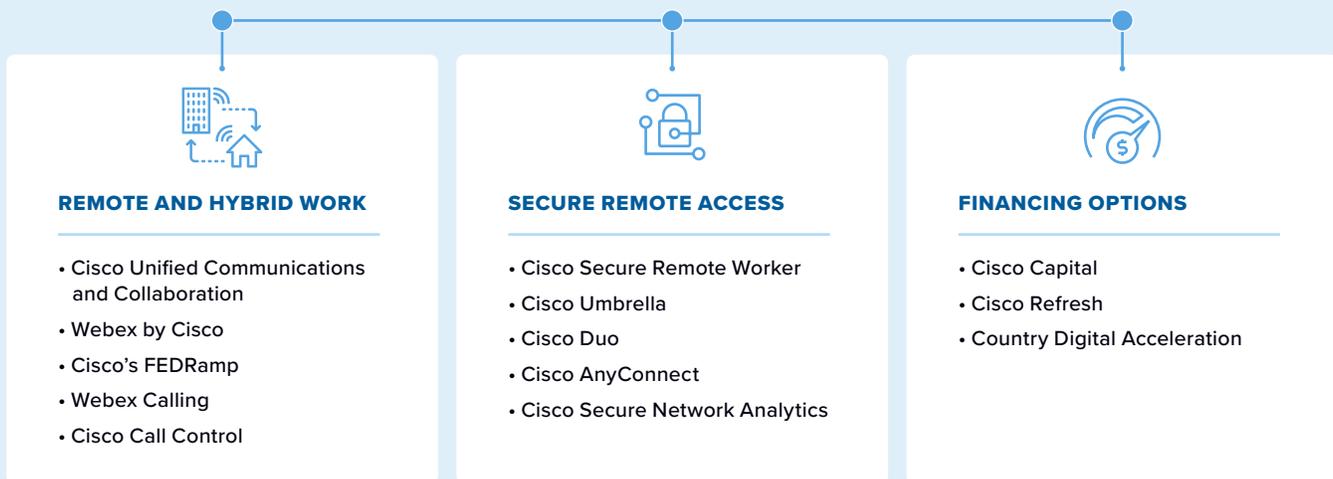
- ▶ **54%** of organizations saw a 25–50% improvement in employee productivity.
- ▶ **53%** saw a 25–50% improvement in business agility/continuity/resilience.
- ▶ **38%** saw a 25–50% improvement in employee experience.

Considering Cisco

Cisco has a strong presence in government, and its core networking and server technology has long been part of the technology stack found in government organizations worldwide. Cisco’s portfolio of government-focused products and services enables national, regional, and local government employees, and the public, to securely connect from home, work, or other locations (see **Figure 3**).

Cisco’s foundational technology platforms enable workplace transformation across government, building off Cisco’s collaboration, mobility, networking, and security technologies. Products and solutions for government organizations looking to implement hybrid and flexible work models for employees are shown in the following sections.

FIGURE 3
Cisco’s Workplace Transformation Portfolio



Source: Cisco, 2022



COLLABORATION TOOLS FOR REMOTE AND HYBRID WORK

Cisco Unified Communications and Collaboration is an IP-based communication system that integrates voice, video, data, and mobility products and applications for a secure communication and collaboration platform used by government organizations. Webex by Cisco provides an integrated platform that can be leveraged with applications via Webex open APIs. Webex provides the ability to embed applications for enhanced collaboration and workflows. Webex also provides discussion rooms and chats that persist over time, enabling teams to refer back to communications, whiteboarding, and secure content over the lifetime of a project. This helps government organizations achieve desired program and project outcomes. Organizations can also take advantage of **Cisco's FEDRamp** Moderate version for enhanced security.

Webex has a variety of offerings, including the following:

Webex by Cisco enables employees to work together in person or virtually, integrating meetings, messaging, and calling on a single integrated and trusted app. IT and non-IT employees can learn new systems via online training, cloud-based meetings, and video.

Webex Calling is an enterprise-grade cloud calling and team collaboration solution offered through a flexible subscription model. With centralized administration, security, and reliability, Cisco keeps the Webex cloud always on and always up to date so government employees have agility and business continuity to continue government operations.

Cisco Call Control delivers the right experience to the right user endpoint. These on-premises and integrated solutions allow customers to choose the consumption model that best fits their needs, and reduce maintenance costs with infrastructure for voice, video, and messaging.



SECURE REMOTE ACCESS

Cisco understands that government employees who are working from home often access sensitive information. This is especially important as recent events have shown that remote devices have been used by bad actors for ransomware attacks and other hacking attempts. **Cisco AnyConnect** enables integrated virtual private network (VPN) access from any device, at any time or place, to provide secure access to critical IT resources. Cisco provides secure remote access via **Cisco Secure Remote Worker**, which offers an integrated set of solutions that provides secure access from any connection. Cisco Duo uses multifactor authentication to verify user identity, and the device passes security requirements before being granted access to IT systems and sensitive information. **Cisco Umbrella** uses the internet's infrastructure to enforce security and block malicious activity before a connection is ever established. **Cisco Secure Network Analytics** supports today's hybrid work environment to more easily be managed regardless of user and administrative location. Zero trust security with comprehensive visibility allows organizations to securely operate from any location.



FINANCING OPTIONS

Cisco recognizes that government organizations are always focused on the efficient use of taxpayer money. Cisco offers tools and solutions to help organizations afford the purchase of technology upgrades or new technologies. **Cisco Capital** is designed to provide organizations with flexible financing solutions for purchasing the latest technologies, with no up-front costs and predictable payments. **Cisco Refresh** offers RF Certified Remanufactured Equipment that IT managers can use to enable new service capabilities while making the most of their limited and often uncertain budgets. **Country Digital Acceleration** is a Cisco program built to expand access with country-level academic and industry partnerships and strategic investments. Currently, Cisco Country Digital Acceleration is involved with 37 countries around the world.

Marketplace Opportunities and Challenges

Hybrid work is a major cultural shift in government that must be supported with updated policies and work models. The need for new policies, especially in unionized environments, may slow down some of the desired implementation of hybrid work.

In IDC's *Hybrid Work Maturity Study*, 60% of government survey respondents indicated that workforce transformation is primarily a top-down initiative driven by senior leadership, and policy and work model changes do require executive buy-in. This is an effective strategy, with more organizations experiencing work parity if implemented as a top-down initiative.

However, with different leaders responding in different ways, there will be an inconsistent evolution and implementation of hybrid work over time, with agencies and departments at times behaving differently even within the same country or city. This makes tracking specific business opportunities more research- and relationship-intensive.

The market is highly competitive, with many vendors pushing video collaboration solutions and document sharing opportunities that have developed during the pandemic and work norms have shifted to hybrid work. Differentiation is promoted by technology suppliers providing truly integrated collaboration platforms which link to other applications or functionalities, presupposing that governments are able to or want to use these platforms in this way. It remains to be seen how government will adopt these integrated solutions.

Governments must continue to invest in work transformation and technology modernization in order to provide reliable and secure experiences quickly and as needed to the public.



Reimagining the Workplace

Governments must continue to invest in work transformation and technology modernization in order to provide reliable and secure experiences quickly and as needed to the public.

To be successful in this work transformation, governments will need to:

Reimagine the workplace: Existing facilities, field work, and home offices are the new workplace.

Ensure executive leadership buy-in for work transformation to improve the success of work parity. Align leadership to maximize support for work transformation across culture, technology, policies, and facilities.

Define desired outcomes for improved public and employee experiences, as well as the technology requirements to meet these outcomes and to optimize employee engagement and productivity.

Update policies and invest in change management and culture, as required to meet outcomes.

This includes understanding the current employee climate with regard to hybrid work and adopting agile practices to encourage rapid adaptation of new and innovative work practices.

Establish a consistent security policy and functionality that protects critical data and services in the office or in a hybrid environment, and continuously monitor the balance between hybrid work and security.

To the extent that Cisco can address the challenges described in this paper, the company has a significant opportunity for success as a partner to governments globally.

About the Analyst



Ruthbea Yesner
Vice President, Government Insights,
Education and Smart Cities, IDC

Ruthbea Yesner is the Vice President of Government Insights at IDC. In this practice, Ruthbea manages the U.S. Federal Government, Education, and the Worldwide Smart Cities and Communities Global practices. Ruthbea's research discusses the strategies and execution of relevant technologies and best practice areas, such as governance, innovation, partnerships, and business models that are essential for government and education transformation. Ruthbea's research includes analytics, artificial intelligence, open data and data exchanges, digital twins, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and mobile solutions in the areas of economic development and civic engagement, urban planning and administration, smart campus, transportation, and energy and infrastructure. Ruthbea contributes to consulting engagements to support K–12 and higher education institutions, state and local, and IT vendors' overall Smart City market strategies.

[More about Ruthbea Yesner](#)

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Our trustworthy technologies connect and enable government without compromising security and privacy. With an integrated and comprehensive portfolio of products, services, architectures, solutions, end-to-end customer support, Innovation Centers, targeted programs and initiatives, financing, and a comprehensive ecosystem of global partners, Cisco is your trusted partner to help you drive improved social, economic, environmental, and safety outcomes and to ultimately help you reimagine your countries and communities around the world.

No matter what goals you are trying to achieve, we can help build the bridge to get you there.

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