



September 2020

FREELANCE FORWARD 2020

Commissioned by Upwork



STUDY OBJECTIVES

Upwork commissioned Edelman Intelligence, an independent firm, to conduct the first Freelance Forward study, which is our seventh annual study of the U.S. freelance workforce,¹ with these objectives:

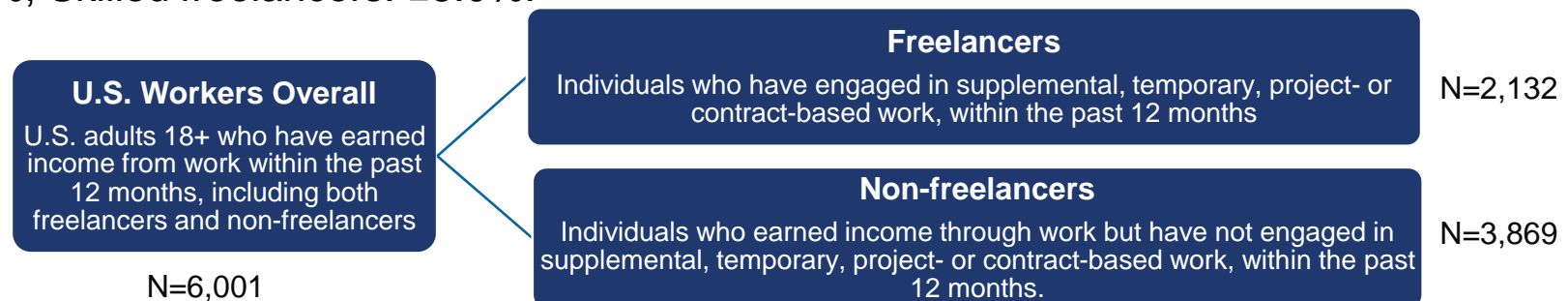
1. Size the freelance workforce, assess how it fits within the overall U.S. economy, and investigate dynamics within it
2. Understand how 2020's COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the composition of the freelance workforce
3. Deep dive into how freelancing provides economic opportunity
4. Assess the importance of education and skills training in a changing job environment
5. As the US labor market continues to evolve, look ahead to the future of the freelance workforce

This deck is organized in sections to detail results per objective.

¹ Prior studies of the freelance workforce were co-commissioned with the Freelancers Union under the name Freelancing in America. This study refers throughout to those prior studies, which are available at <https://www.upwork.com/i/freelancing-in-america/>.

METHODOLOGY

- An online survey of 6,001 U.S. adults who have done paid work in the past 12 months
- Data collected June 15, 2020 – July 7, 2020 by independent research firm Edelman Intelligence
 - This is the seventh year the survey has been conducted, allowing for trend data. Data collected in the summers of 2014-2019 is referenced throughout the analysis and indicates the percentage point change compared to previous years.
 - Percentage point differences between waves are noted where applicable and noteworthy in the report.
- Results were weighted to ensure demographic representation in line with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2019 Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey.
- Margin of error: Overall: $\pm 1.2\%$ at the 95% level of confidence. Freelancers: $\pm 2.1\%$, Non-freelancers: $\pm 1.6\%$, Full-time freelancers: $\pm 4.1\%$, Skilled freelancers: $\pm 3.0\%$.
- Audiences surveyed:



AUDIENCE GLOSSARY

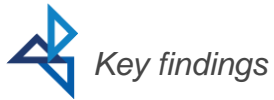
Group	Audience	Definition
General	U.S. Workers Overall	U.S. adults 18+ who have earned income from work within the past 12 months, including both freelancers and non-freelancers.
	Freelancers	Individuals who have engaged in supplemental, temporary, project- or contract-based work, within the past 12 months.
	Non-freelancers	Individuals who earned income through work but have not engaged in supplemental, temporary, project- or contract-based work, within the past 12 months.
Skilled Freelancing	Skilled freelancers	Individuals that indicate that their current freelance work entails selling skilled services (e.g., computer programming, writing, design, IT, marketing, business consulting, etc.)
	Non-skilled freelancers	Individuals who did not indicate that their current freelance work entails selling skilled services; their work includes a combination of selling unskilled services/labor or selling goods.
Freelancing Status	Full-time Freelancers	Individuals that describe their current freelance work status as “full-time freelancer.”
	Part-time Freelancers	Individuals that describe their current freelance work status as “part-time freelancer.”
Freelancing Types by COVID-19	Always Freelancers	Individuals who have engaged in supplemental, temporary, project-or contract-based work, within the past 12 months and report still doing so after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
	Paused Freelancers	Individuals who have engaged in supplemental, temporary, project-or contract-based work, within the past 12 months but have not done freelance work since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
	New Freelancers	Individuals who report engaging in supplemental, temporary, project-or contract-based work for the first time since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic.
Freelancer Classification	Independent Contractors	“Traditional” freelancers who don’t have an employer and instead do freelance, temporary, or supplemental work on a project-to-project basis.
	Moonlighters	Professionals with a primary, traditional job who also do freelance work. For example, a corporate-employed web developer who does projects for non-profits in the evening.
	Diversified Workers	People with multiple sources of income from a mix of traditional employers and freelance work. For example, someone who works part-time at a start-up, manages an Airbnb, and does freelance coding.
	Freelance Business Owners	Freelancers with one or more employees and consider themselves to be a business owner. For example, a marketing guru who hires a team of other marketers to build a small agency, but still identifies as a freelancer.
	Temporary Workers	Individuals with a single employer, client, job, or contract project where their employment status is temporary. For example, a data entry worker employed by a staffing agency who is working on a three-month assignment.

THE SIZE AND SCALE OF THE FREELANCE WORKFORCE IN 2020

59 million
Americans freelanced
in the past year

This is 36%
of the total
US workforce

\$1.2 trillion in annual earnings from freelancing



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19: PAUSE FOR SOME FREELANCERS

COVID-19 has impacted all areas of the economy, including freelancing

As a result, 10% of the US workforce has paused freelancing

OF THE FREELANCERS THAT PAUSED...

They were typically working in industries most impacted by social distancing and were in non-remote working situations

41% were freelancing infrequently, doing so less than once a month

But, 88% are likely to freelance in the future

51% of paused freelancers still have other sources of work, while 28% are on leave/furloughed or unemployed and 17% are students, homemakers, or retirees

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19: OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHERS

Although some paused, others saw freelancing as an opportunity during the global pandemic

As a result, 12% of the US workforce started freelancing

OF THOSE THAT STARTED...

They are more likely to come from tech/business industries and are more likely to be skilled

Their motivations for starting are necessity (54%) and financial stability during this recession (75%)

Even in the few months they've been working, new freelancers report positive financial results and 96% are likely to freelance in the future

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19: FREELANCERS' OVERALL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Compared to non-freelancers, freelancers are overall better equipped to weather the COVID-19 storm

Freelancers report lower rates of negative impact of COVID-19 on their overall lifestyle, well-being, mental health, and financial well-being

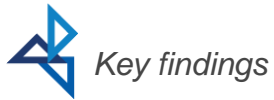
An already established remote lifestyle is one of the driving factors behind this

Among those still freelancing, business is healthy for many

61% of those who freelanced pre- and during COVID-19 have the amount of work they want or more

Given the emphasis on remote work, freelancers have had to adjust business development and networking strategies and have even had to consult their clients on ways of working remotely

3 in 10 freelancers have applied for financial support and most found the support useful for their business



FREELANCING IS A VIABLE OPTION FOR PEOPLE IN MANY SITUATIONS

48% of freelancers report being caregivers while 33% report having a disability in their household, surpassing non-freelancers and US workers overall

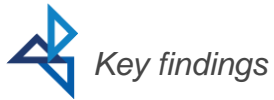
76% of caregivers who freelance say freelancing gives them more flexibility to be available for their families; 72% of freelancers with a disability in their household say freelancing gives them flexibility to address their personal, mental, or physical needs

Freelancers age 55+ make up more than a quarter of all freelancers (26%), primarily doing skilled and project-based work

65% of freelancers age 55+ see freelancing as a good way to transition into retirement and are less likely to be concerned about saving for retirement than their non-freelancing counterparts

Half of the Gen Z workforce have freelanced in the past year, and more than a third (36%) started since COVID-19

Even though most are part-time right now, 9 out of 10 Gen Z freelancers overall and those who started during COVID-19 are likely to continue doing freelance work in the future



HONING BUSINESS SKILLS AND STAYING AHEAD

Freelancers have a wide portfolio of skills which allows them to build their business

54% say soft skills like communication and people skills are very important to their work

47% say business skills are very important

Constant skills education and training is a must - and a standard - for freelancers

59% have participated in skills training in the last 6 months vs. 36% of non-freelancers

51% of freelancers had participated in skills training during the pandemic vs. 28% non-FLs

Tapping into freelance websites is a key strategy for success

Before the pandemic, 1 in 4 skilled freelancers typically found work through freelance websites

91% of skilled freelancers who have used freelance websites before and during the pandemic would recommend them to anyone starting out because...

- ✓ They can find work that is meaningful
- ✓ They can find trustworthy clients
- ✓ They can have access to tools/resources that help with project management and efficiency

FUTURE OF FREELANCING

Remote work plays a role in driving consideration to freelancing

58% of non-freelancers new to remote work are considering freelancing in the future

They would consider it because...

- ✓ Remote working has made them more productive workers (73%)
- ✓ They want to continue working remote instead of returning to a traditional worksite (74%)
- ✓ They can earn extra income to cope with the impact of the pandemic on their personal finances (85%)

Freelancers themselves are positive about the future

86% of all freelancers say the best days are ahead for freelancing, 90% among new freelancers

71% say perceptions of freelancing as a career are becoming more positive, 74% among skilled freelancers



Section 1

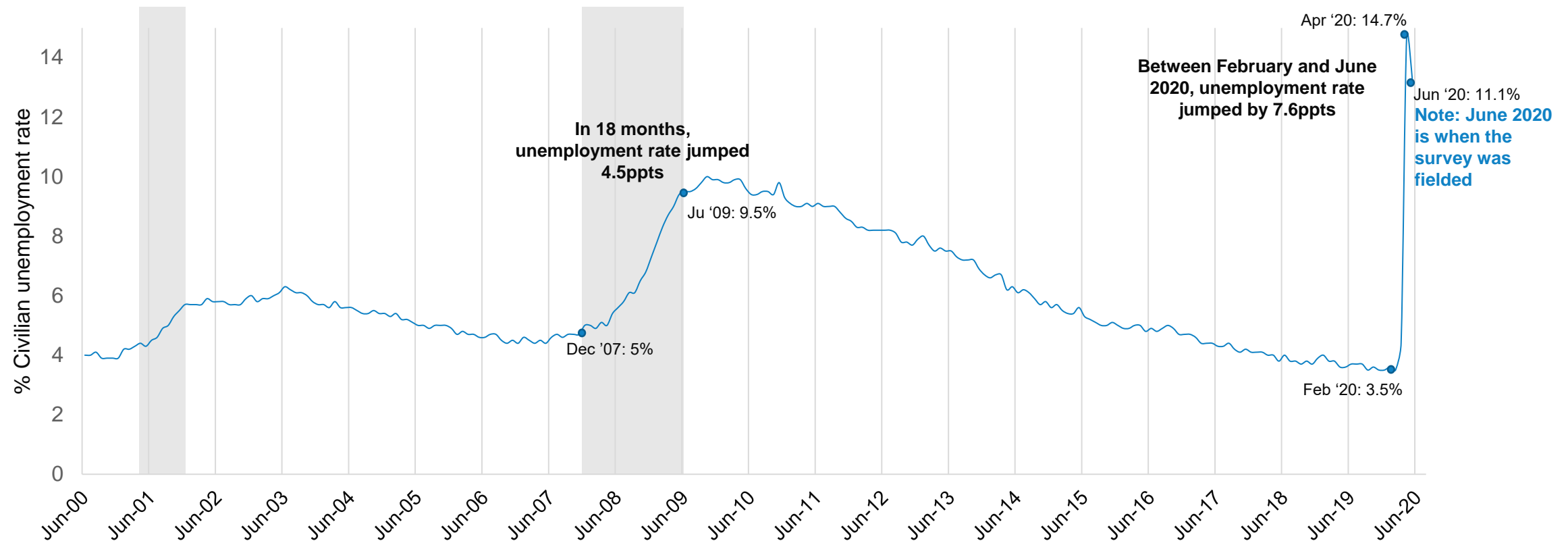
STATE OF THE FREELANCE WORKFORCE



TO UNDERSTAND THE FREELANCE WORKFORCE, WE MUST FIRST ASSESS THE DAMAGE OF COVID-19 ON THE OVERALL US WORKFORCE - UNEMPLOYMENT RATES REACHED DOUBLE DIGITS AT A RAPID PACE

US Civilian Unemployment Rate

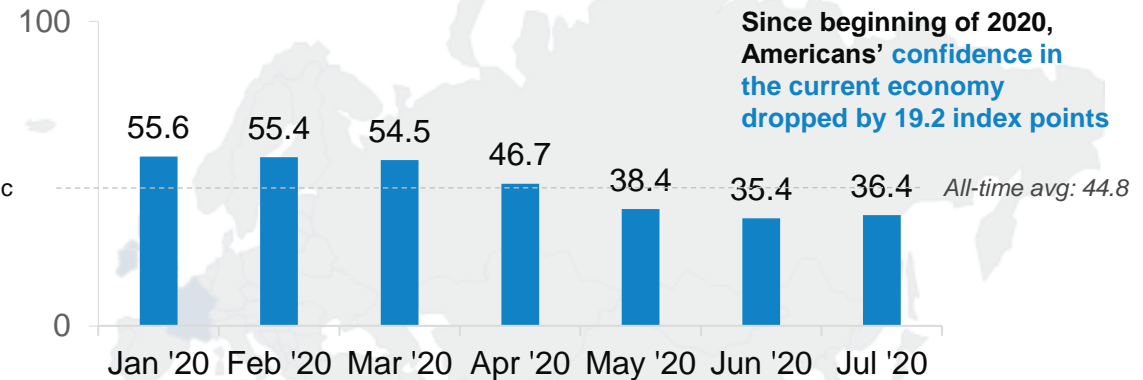
Showing civilian unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, 16 years or older
Note: Shaded area represents recession, as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research



ECONOMIC OPTIMISM IN THE US HAS SIGNIFICANTLY DROPPED

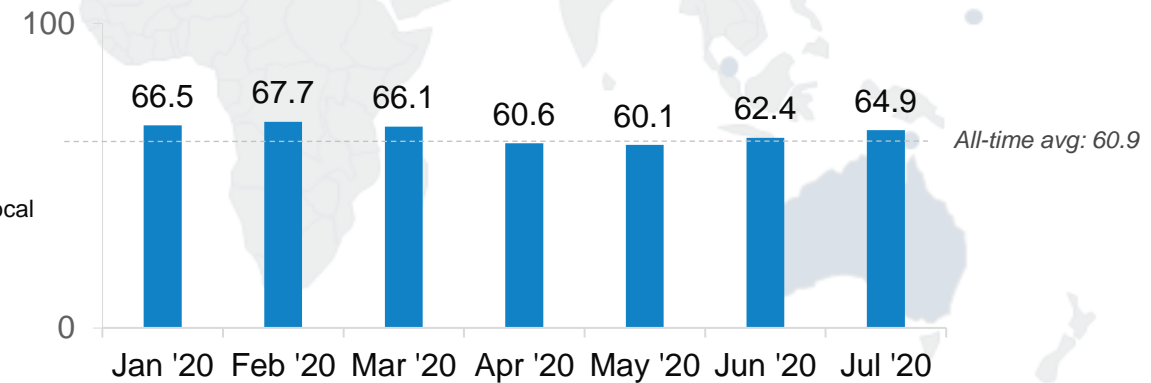
CURRENT ECONOMIC INDEX

Reflects respondent perceptions of current economic climate, ability to make household purchases, job security, and investment confidence.



EXPECTATIONS INDEX

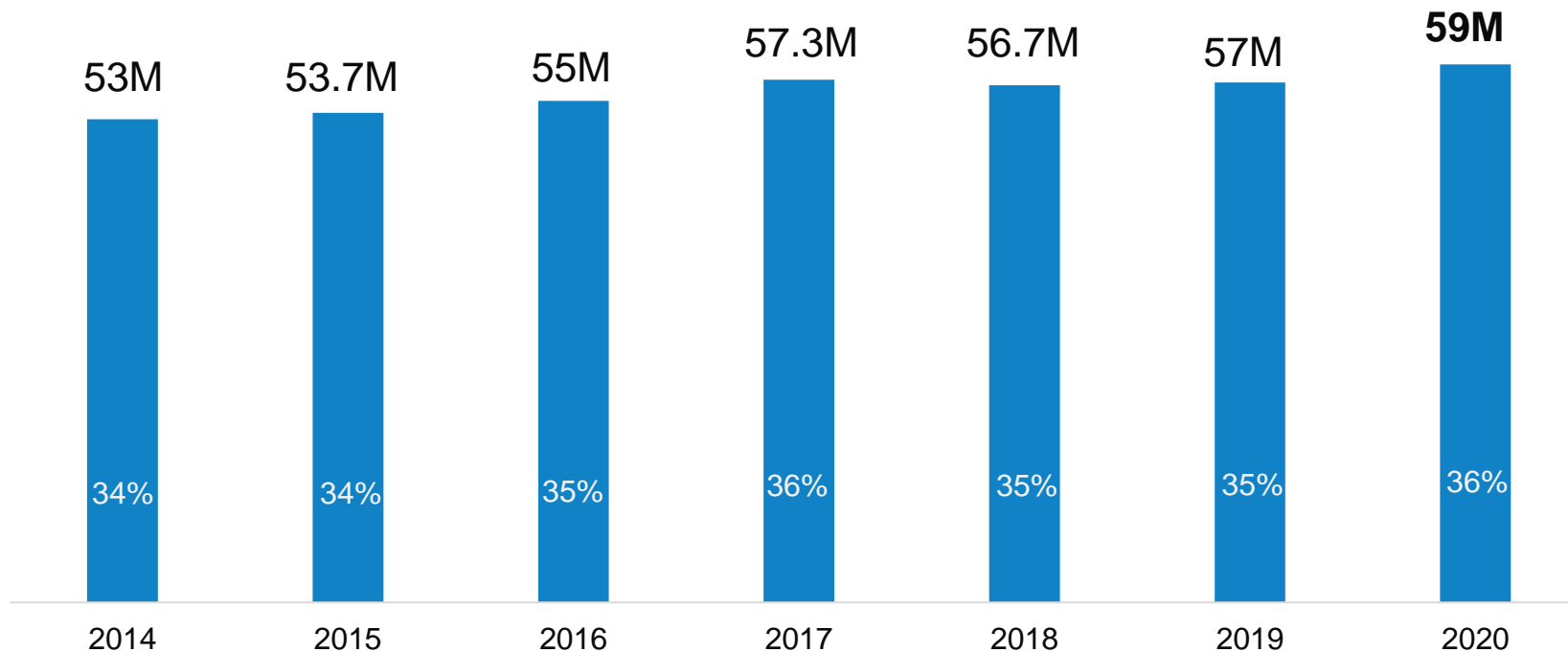
Reflects respondent attitudes regarding the future local economy, future financial situation, and job loss expectations.





BUT DESPITE RECENT SHORT-TERM HIGH US LABOR MARKET UNEMPLOYMENT - THOSE WHO FREELANCED IN THE PAST YEAR REMAINS STABLE AT 36%

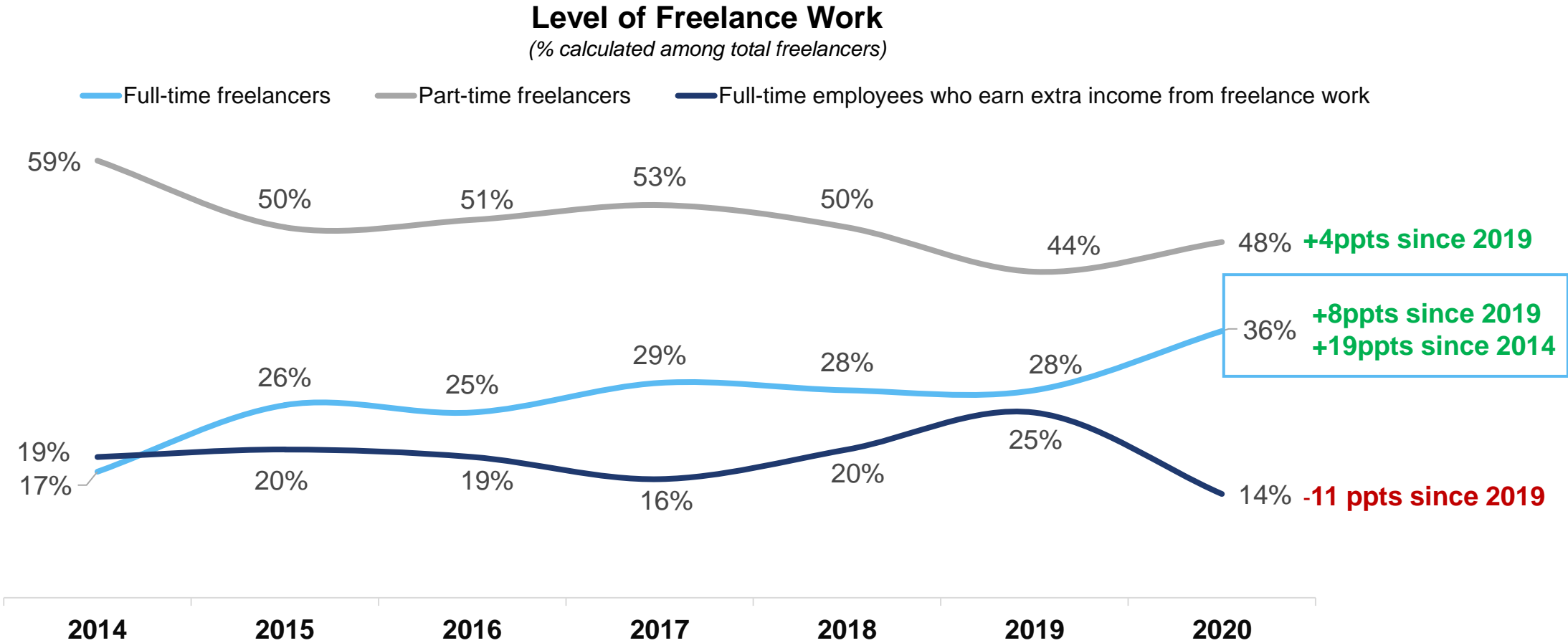
Number of American Workers Who Freelance



36%
of American
workers freelance



WHILE THE OVERALL FREELANCE WORKFORCE SIZE HAS REMAINED CONSISTENT IN THE PAST YEAR, THE PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO REPORT FREELANCING FULL-TIME IS GROWING

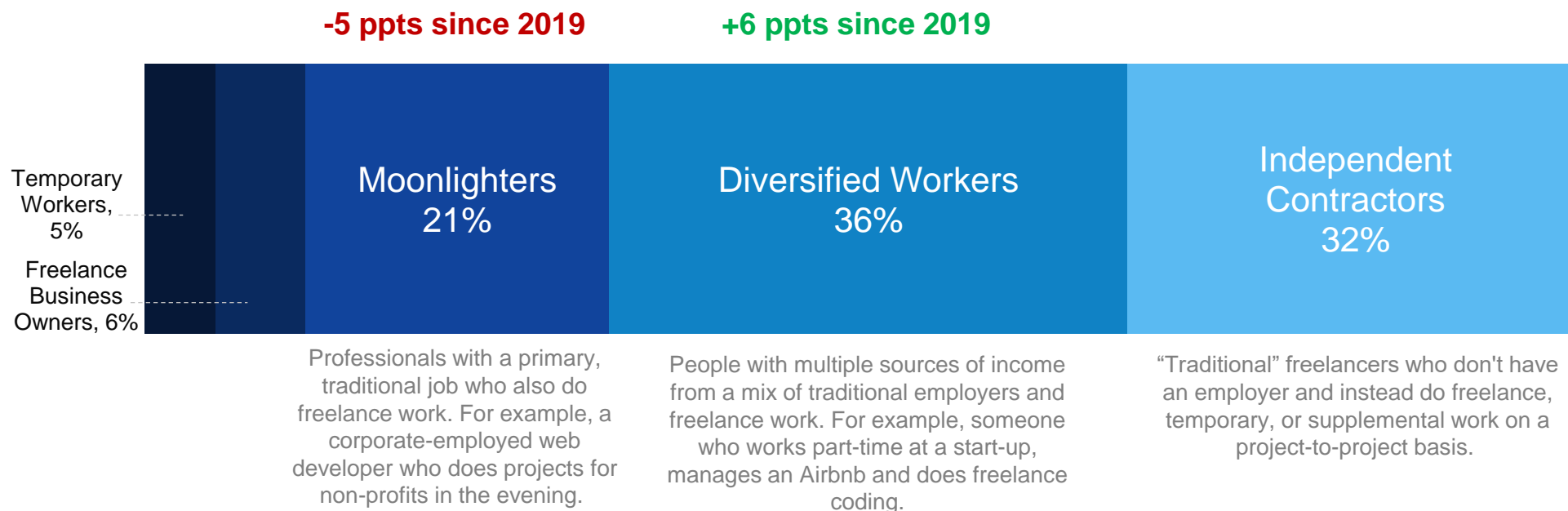




THIS TREND IS REFLECTED IN THE EXPANSION OF “DIVERSIFIED WORKER” FREELANCERS AND THE CONTRACTION OF FREELANCERS WHO HAVE A PRIMARY JOB BUT FREELANCE ON THE SIDE

Freelancer Classification

(% calculated out of total freelancers)

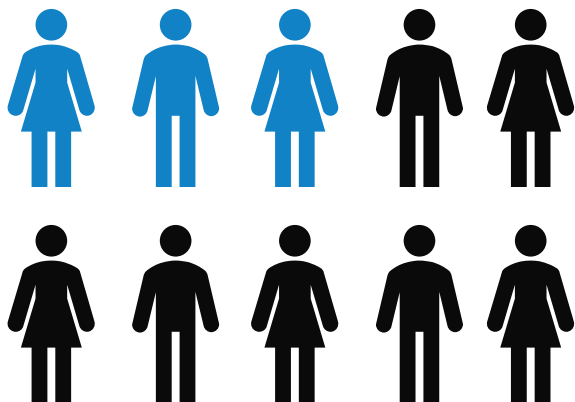




...ALSO AN INCREASE IN THOSE WHO LEFT THEIR EMPLOYER IN ORDER TO FREELANCE – THIS GROUP HAS BEEN ABLE TO INCREASE THEIR EARNING POTENTIAL IN LESS THAN 6 MONTHS

3 in 10

freelancers
quit or left a job with an employer
in order to freelance (30%)



+4 pts since 2019

As a freelancer now, do you earn more or less than when
you had an employer?

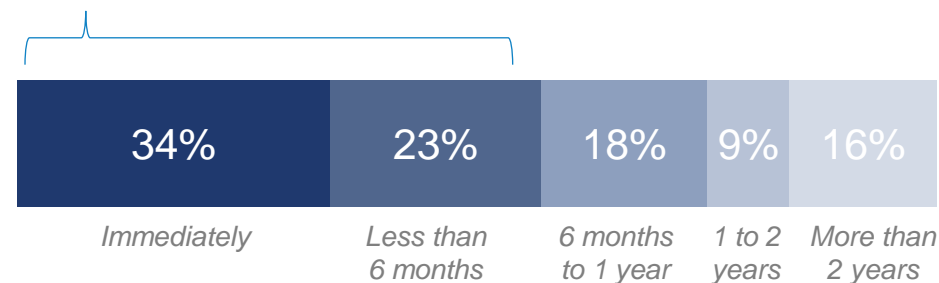
[Freelancers who left an employer to freelance]



How long did it take you to earn more as a freelancer than
you did with an employer?

[Freelancers who make more after quitting a job in order to freelance]

57% earned more in under 6 months

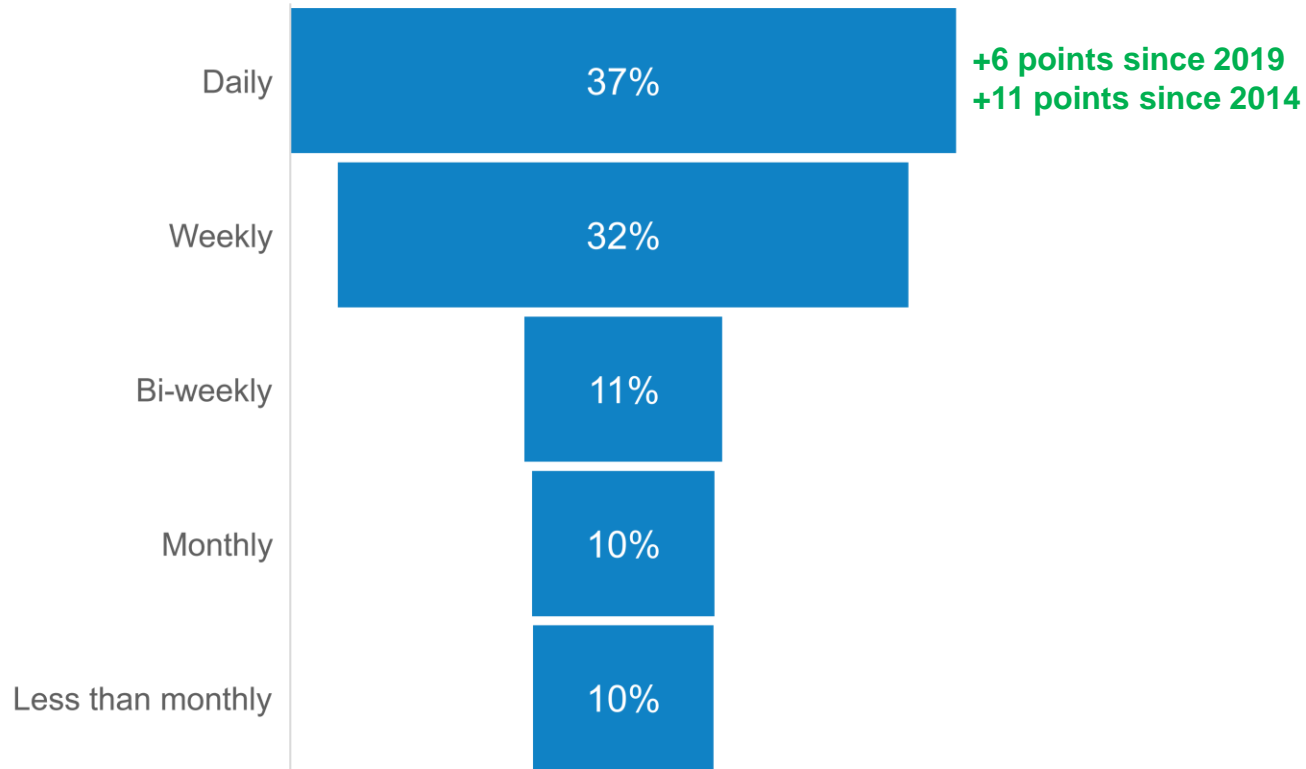




MANY ARE FREELANCING MORE FREQUENTLY AND, ON AVERAGE, HAVE MORE CLIENTS THAN IN 2019

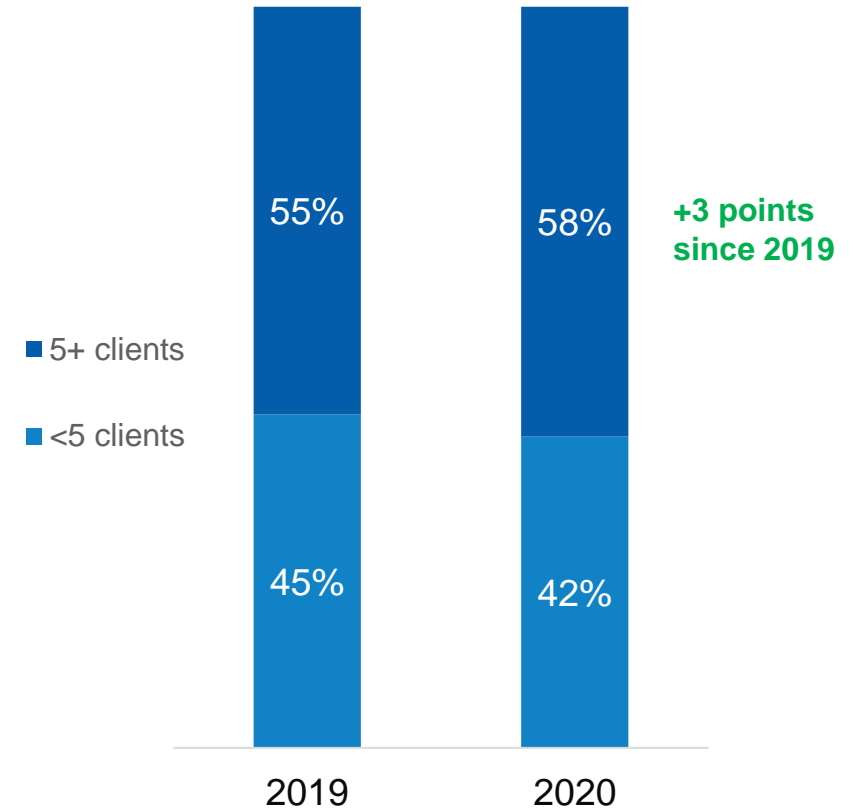
Frequency of Freelance Work

(% calculated among total freelancers)



Number of Clients in Past 6 Months

(% calculated among total freelancers)





FREELANCERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN A TRILLION DOLLARS TO THE US ECONOMY IN ANNUAL EARNINGS – A 22% INCREASE IN CONTRIBUTED EARNINGS SINCE 2019

**\$1.2
trillion**

(calculated among total freelancers)

in annual earnings from freelancing

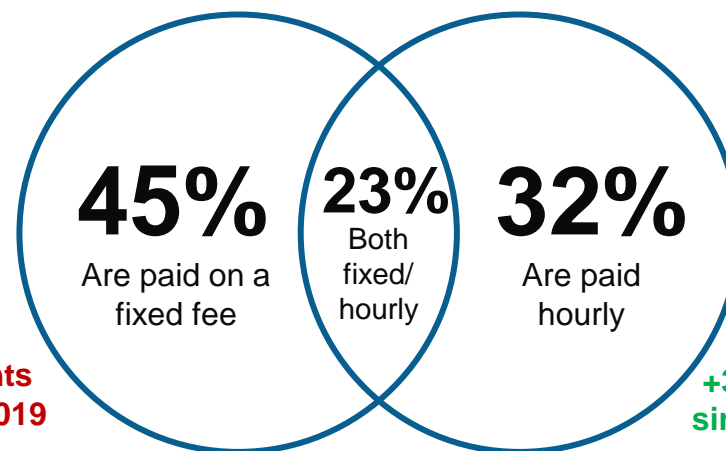
(vs. \$984 billion in annual earnings reported in 2019)

\$20.00

Median hourly rate
among **freelancers**
overall

\$25.00

Median hourly rate
among **skilled**
freelancers



**-3 points
since 2019**

**+3 points
since 2019**

(% calculated among total freelancers)



...AND MOST FREELANCERS FEEL THEY MAKE THE SAME OR MORE THAN THEY WOULD BE MAKING AT A TRADITIONAL EMPLOYER

3 in 5 (60%)

freelancers say they make the same or more than they'd make working for a traditional employer

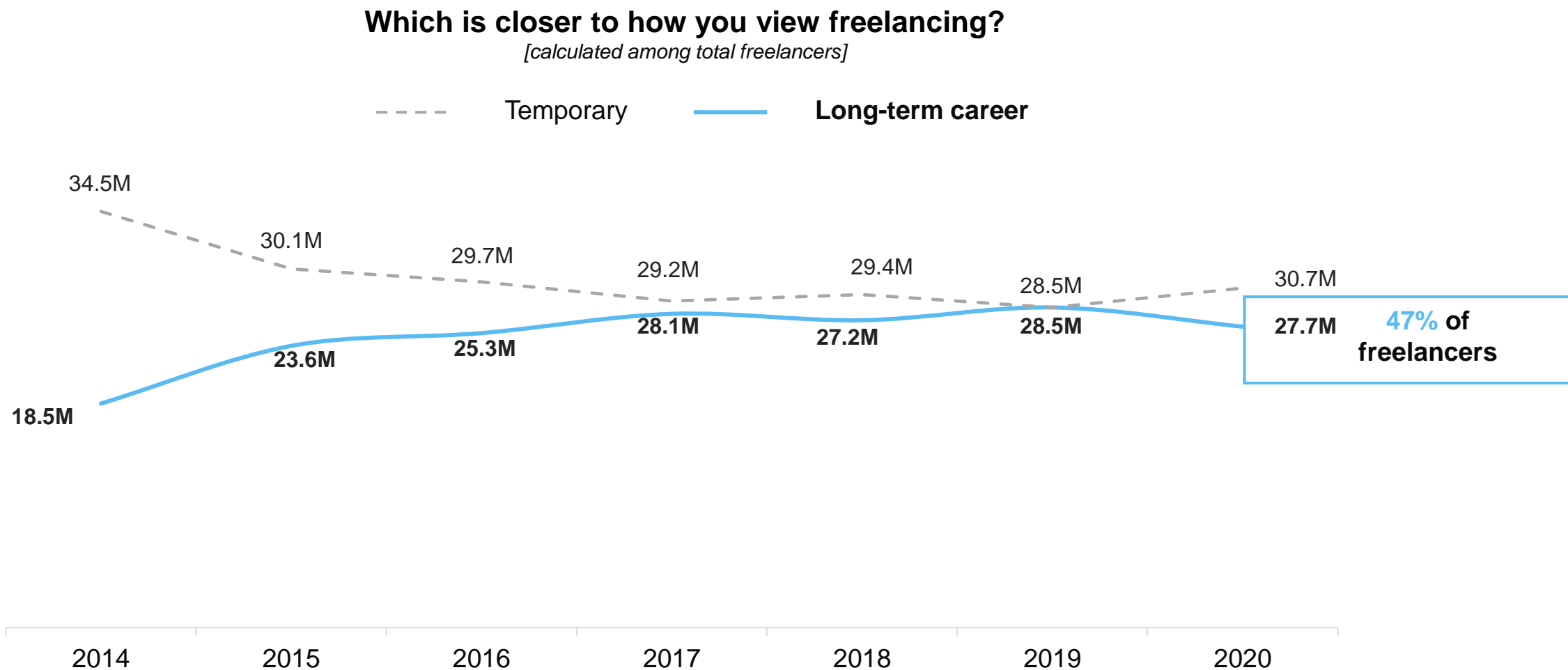
+7 points since 2019

More than half (57%)
of skilled freelancers say they set their own prices

More than 2 in 5 (44%)
skilled freelancers say they have raised their rates during the past year



FOR MANY, FREELANCING CONTINUES TO BE A LONG-TERM CAREER CHOICE



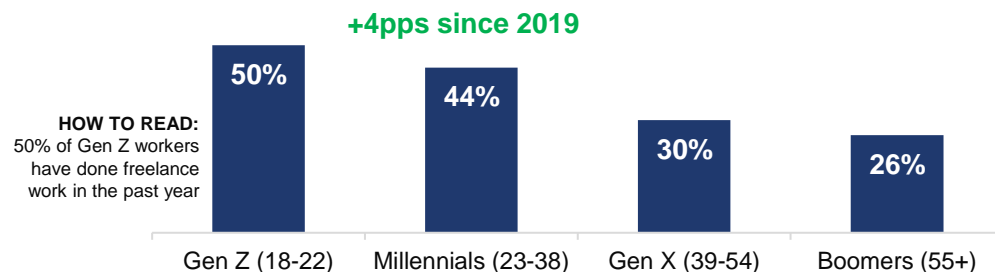


THE COMPOSITION OF THE FREELANCING WORKFORCE IS ALSO CHANGING...

They're getting younger

% of US Workers doing Freelance Work by Generation

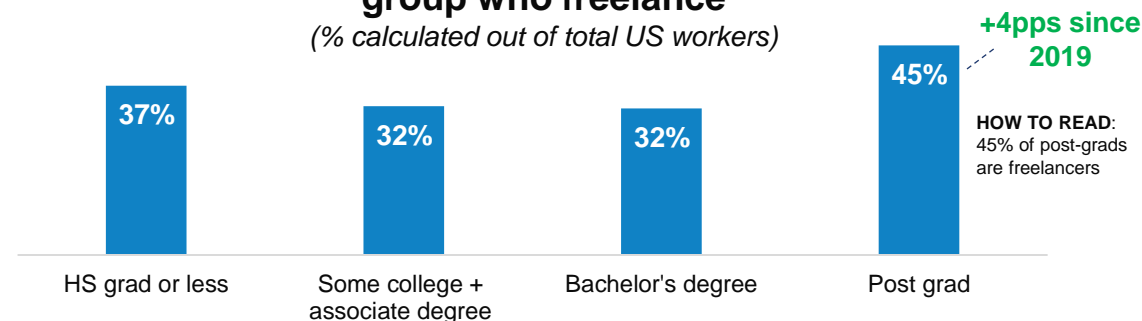
(% calculated out of total US workers in each generation group)



Post-grads are most likely to freelance

Percentage of workers among each education group who freelance

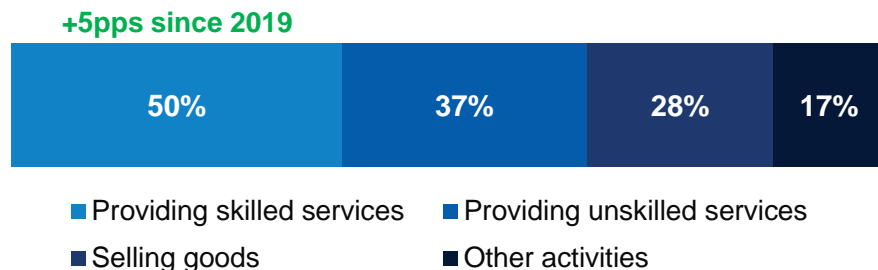
(% calculated out of total US workers)



They're becoming more "skilled"

Freelance work typically entails..

(% calculated out of total freelancers)

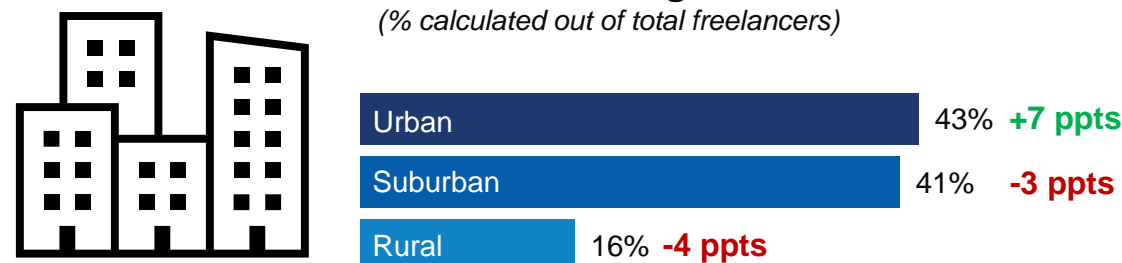


Note: Responses do not add up to 100% as multiple selections are allowed

More are living in urban areas

Area Living In

(% calculated out of total freelancers)



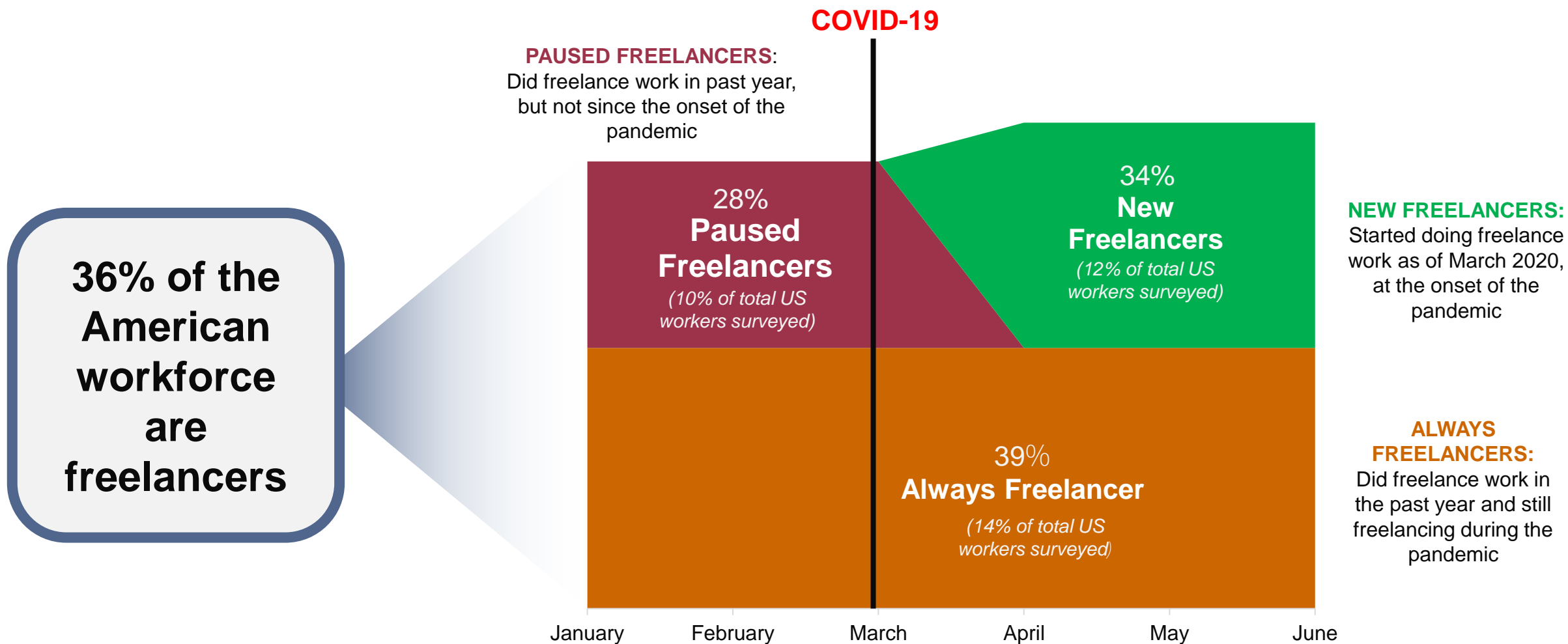
A person is seen from the side, sitting at a desk and looking at a large curved monitor. The desk also has another monitor, a speaker, and some plants. The background is a bright office space with windows and more plants. The entire image has a blue tint.

Section 2

THE CHANGING FREELANCE WORKFORCE DUE TO COVID-19



AMIDST COVID-19, FREELANCING OFFERS CONSISTENCY AND NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



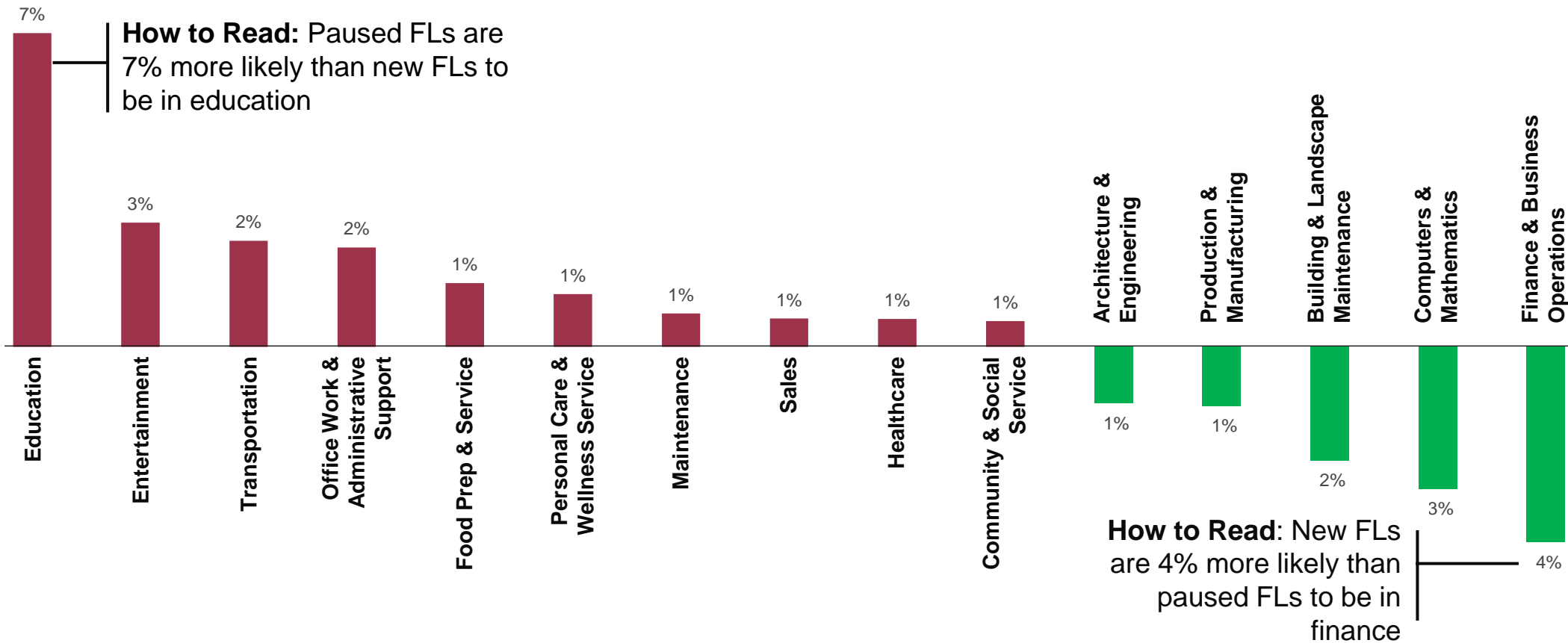
WHY HAVE SOME FREELANCERS PAUSED THEIR FREELANCING WORK?



THOSE WHO PAUSED FREELANCING SKEW IN OCCUPATIONS IMPACTED BY SOCIAL DISTANCING WHILE NEW FREELANCERS ARE IN FINANCE & BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND COMPUTERS & MATH

Paused freelancers skew more towards...

New freelancers skew more towards...

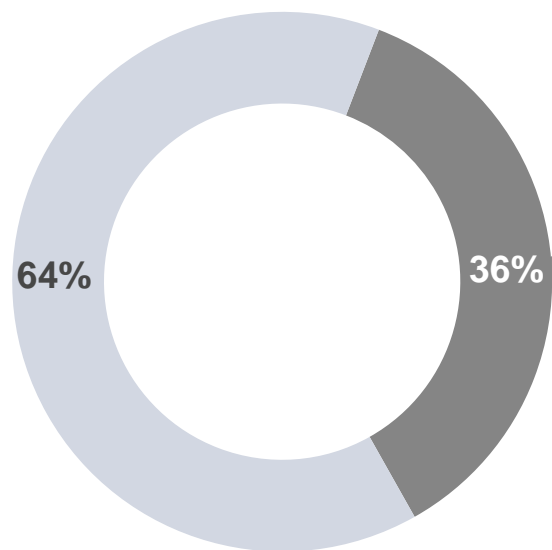




FREELANCERS WHO WERE NOT WORKING REMOTELY BEFORE COVID-19 WERE TWICE AS LIKELY TO HAVE PAUSED FREELANCING COMPARED TO THOSE WORKING REMOTELY

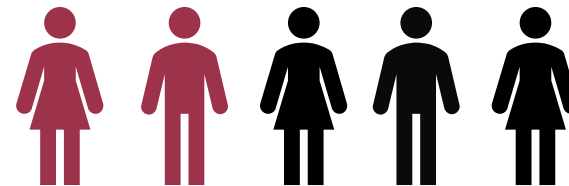
**Pre-COVID, did you do
any work remotely?**

(% calculated among total freelancers)



■ Remote ■ Not Remote

44%

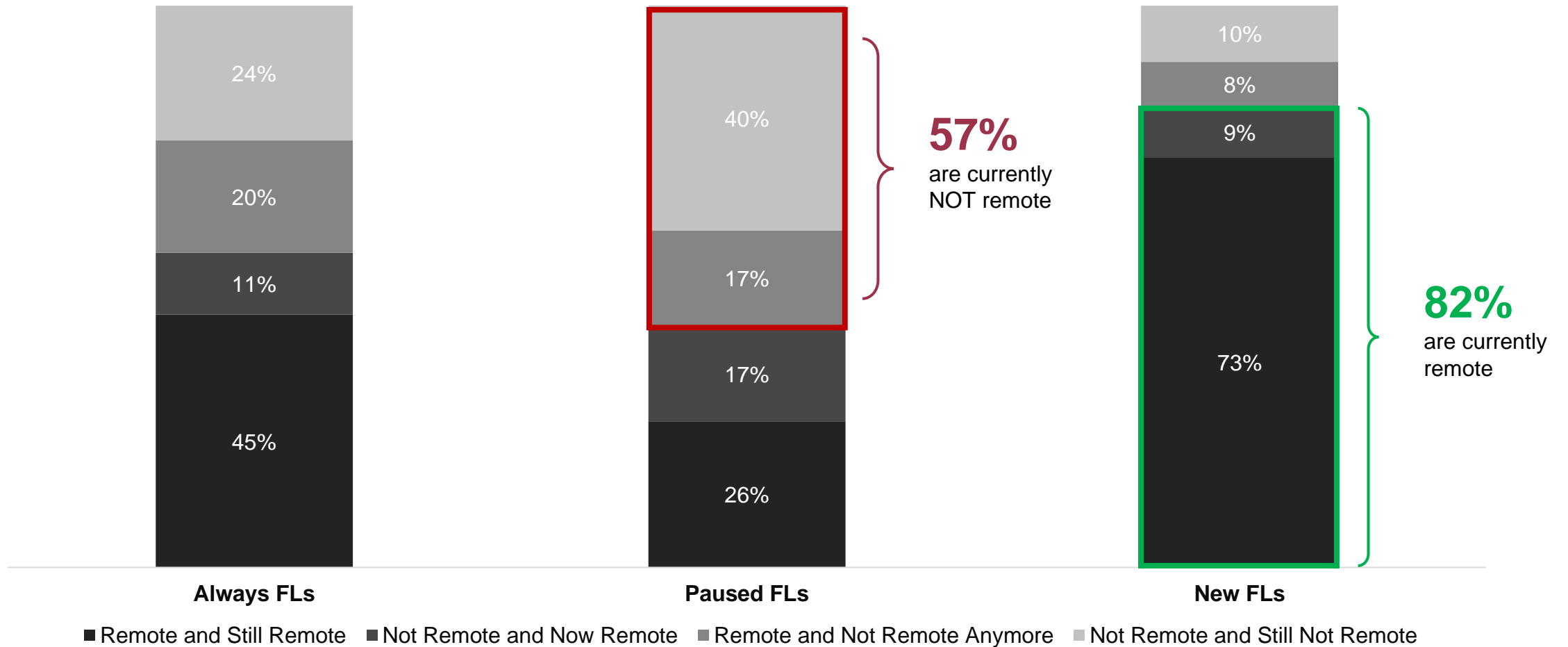


of freelancers not working
remotely before COVID-19 have
paused freelance work since the
onset of the pandemic

*(vs. 20% of freelancers working remotely who
paused freelance work)*

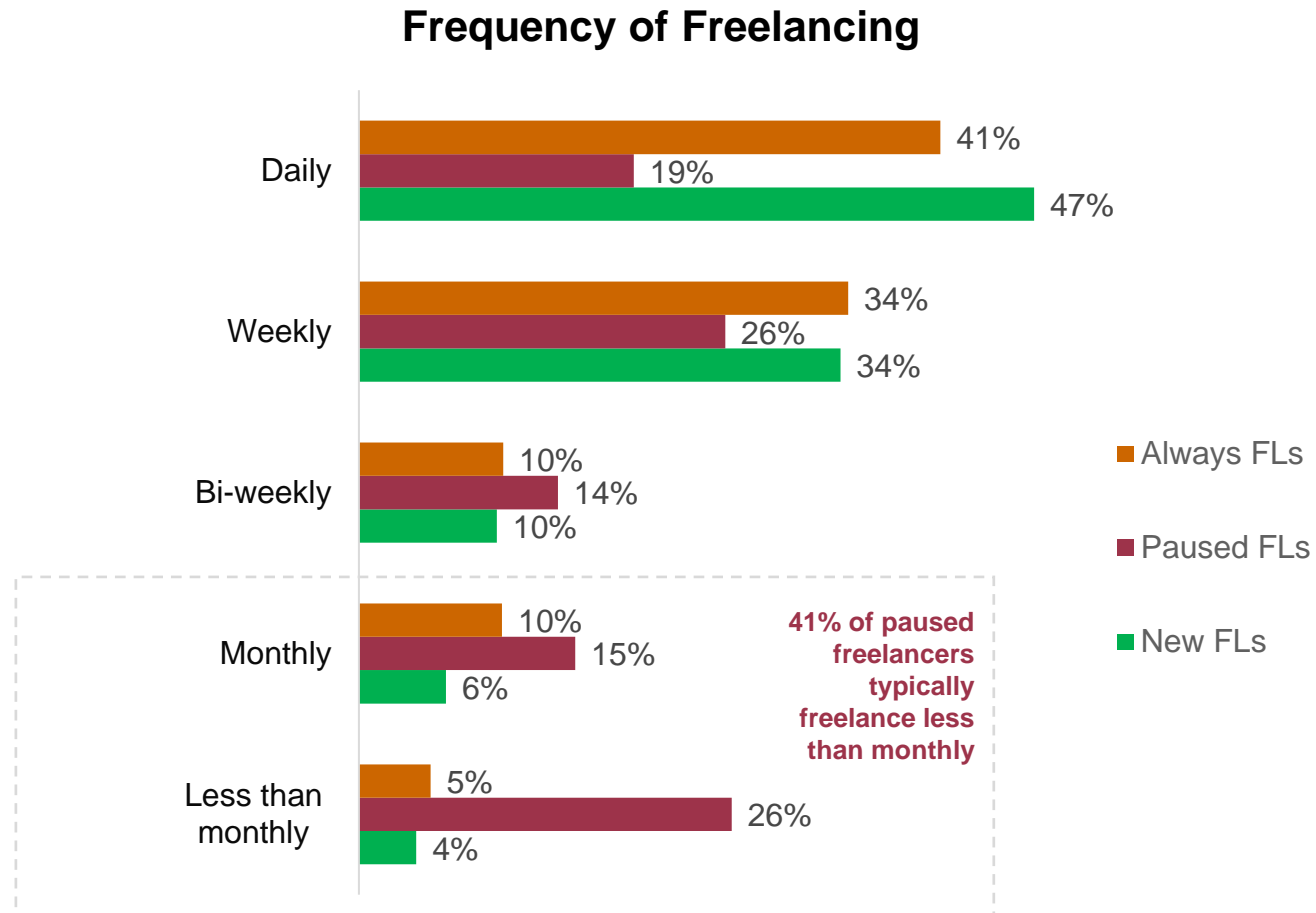
THE MAJORITY OF NEW FREELANCERS ARE WORKING REMOTELY

Remote Working Status Pre & During COVID-19





TWO IN FIVE PAUSED FREELANCERS WERE TYPICALLY FREELANCING LESS THAN ONCE PER MONTH

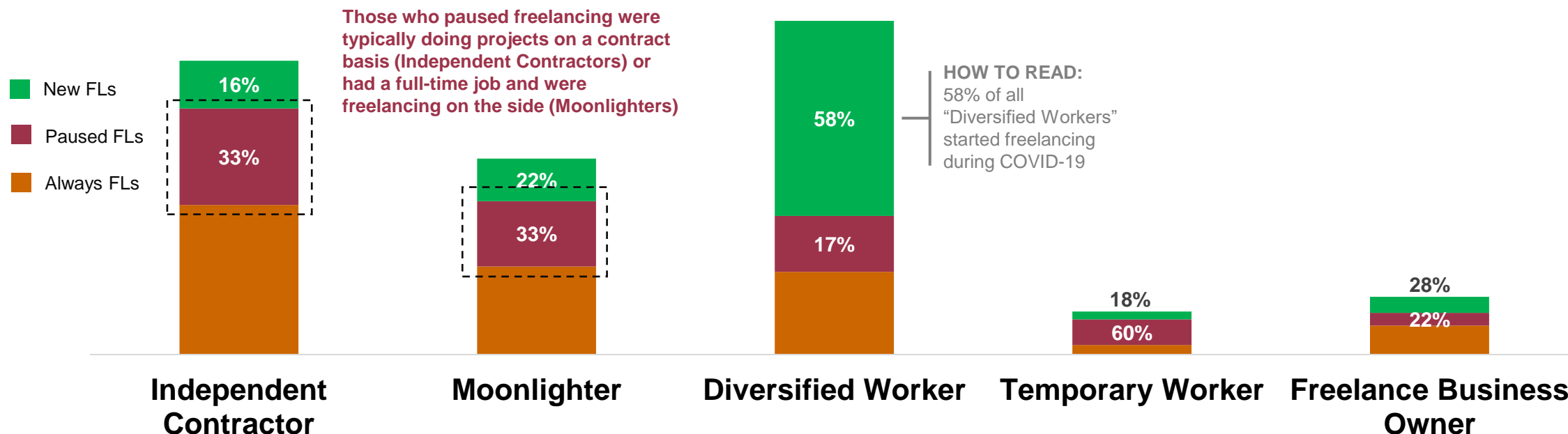




“DIVERSIFIED WORKERS” HAD THE LARGEST INCREASE IN FREELANCERS DUE TO COVID-19, WHILE “TEMPORARY WORKERS,” “MOONLIGHTERS,” AND “INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS” HAD THE LARGEST DECLINES

% Always, Paused, and New Freelancers Across Classifications

(% calculated out of each freelancer classification group)



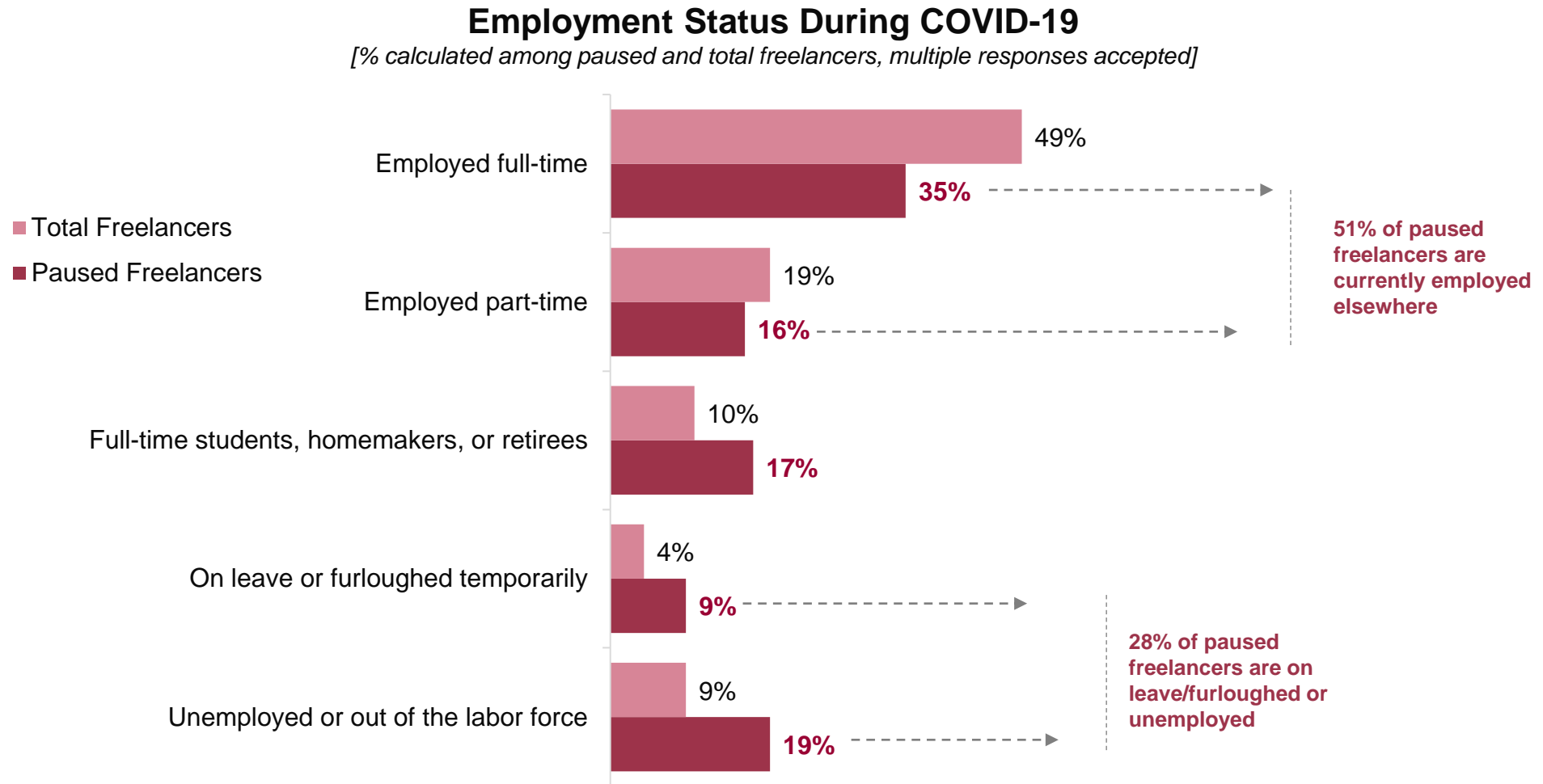
TOP REASONS WHY SOME PAUSED FREELANCING - BY FREELANCER CLASSIFICATION

Some industries were temporarily hit harder by COVID-19 than others

PAUSED INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS	PAUSED Moonlighter	PAUSED Diversified Workers	PAUSED Temporary Workers	PAUSED Business Owners
<p>60% are in jobs that can't be made remote</p> <p>Occupations like transportation, maintenance, arts & design, entertainment, and personal care (e.g. hairdressing) were most impacted</p> <p>88% expect to do freelancing work in the future</p>	<p>80% still have their main employer to lean on</p> <p>They have put a pause on their freelance work while waiting for the pandemic to subside with 90% expecting to do freelance work in the future</p>	<p>“Diversified workers” are the least impacted by COVID-19 because they have multiple employers, leading to flexibility</p> <p>89% expect to do freelance work in the future</p>	<p>Those whose short-term freelance contract has ended</p> <p>Fluctuations in freelance work is a regular part of life for these “temporary workers”</p>	<p>Those impacted were small business owners (1-5 employees) in industries like art or construction</p>



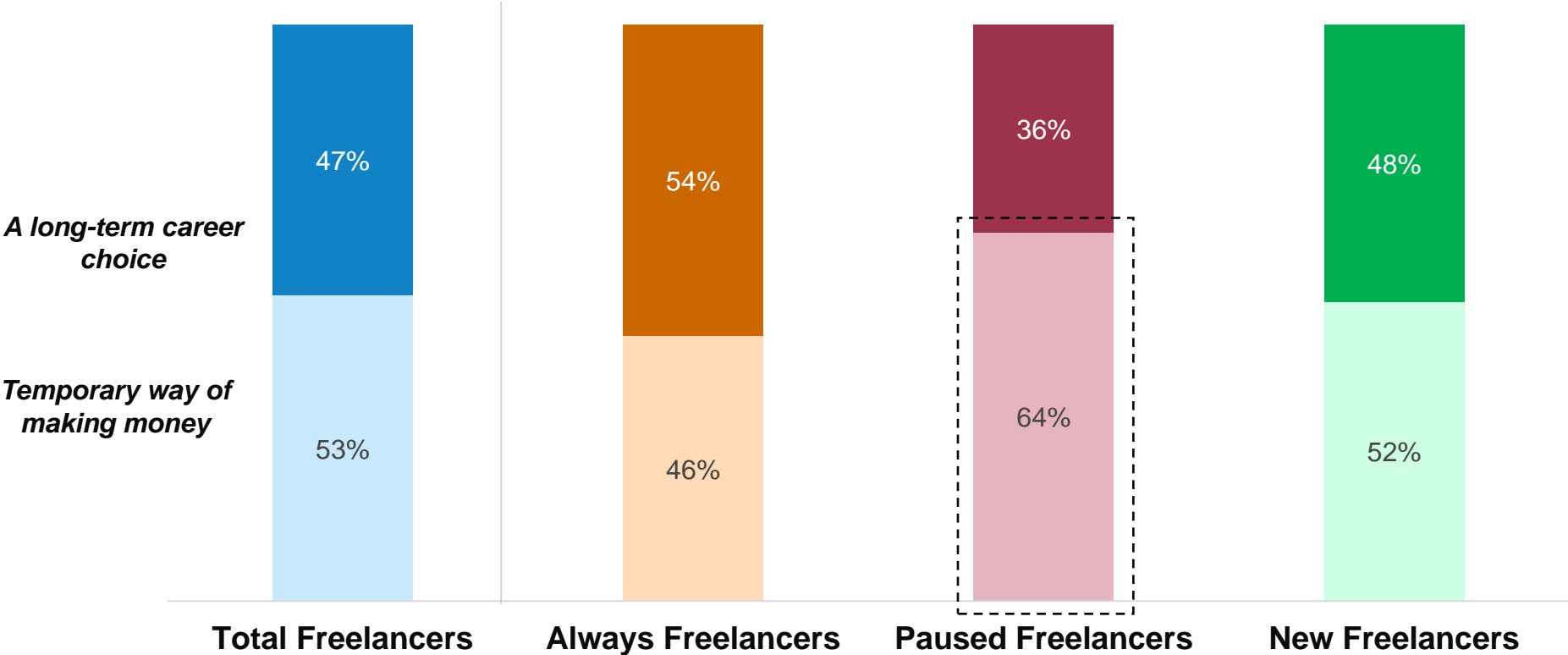
HALF OF PAUSED FREELANCERS ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED FULL- OR PART-TIME ELSEWHERE





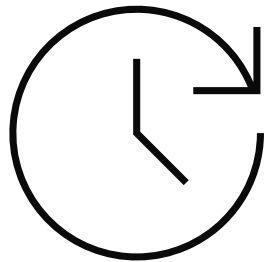
PAUSED FREELANCERS ARE MOST LIKELY TO VIEW THEIR FREELANCE CAREERS AS TEMPORARY

Which is closer to how you view freelancing?





GIVEN THAT MANY PAUSED THEIR FREELANCING WORK DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, MOST PLAN TO RETURN IN THE FUTURE



88%

of **paused freelancers** are
likely to do freelance work
in the future

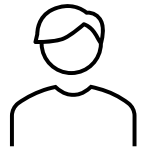
(54% are very likely)

WHO IS THIS NEW WAVE OF FREELANCERS?



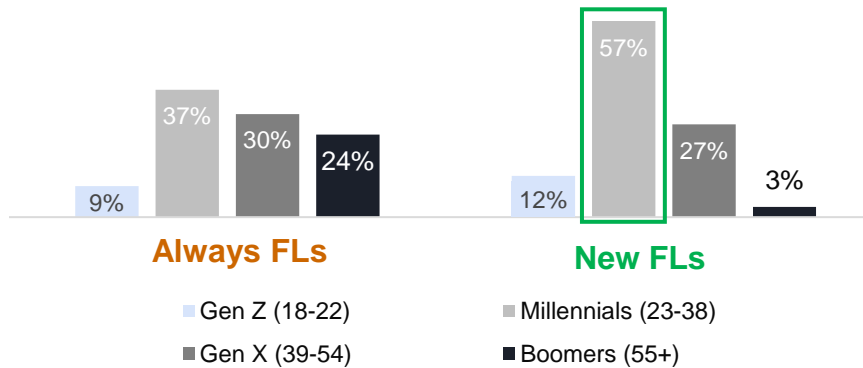
THIS NEW WAVE OF FREELANCERS SKEW MALE, MILLENNIAL, AND URBAN

72% Male

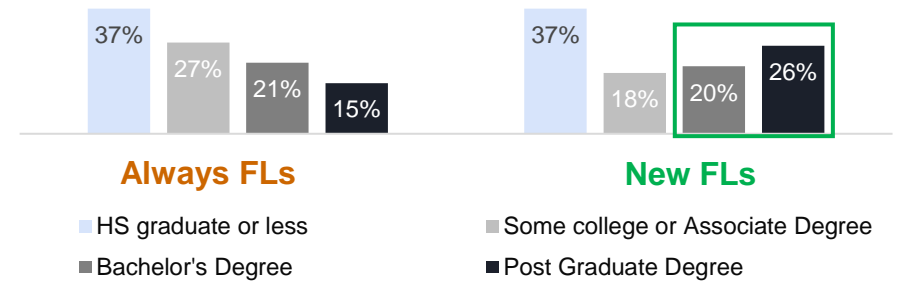


vs. 62% Always freelancers who are male

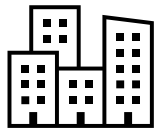
Generations by Always and New FLs



Education Levels by Always and New FLs



60% Urban



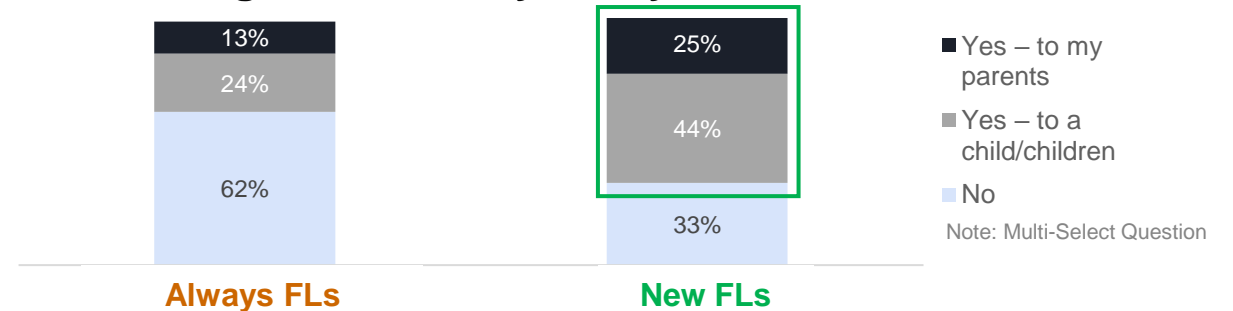
vs. 35% Always freelancers who live in urban areas

67% are caregivers



vs. 38% Always freelancers who are caregivers

Caregiver Status by Always and New FLs



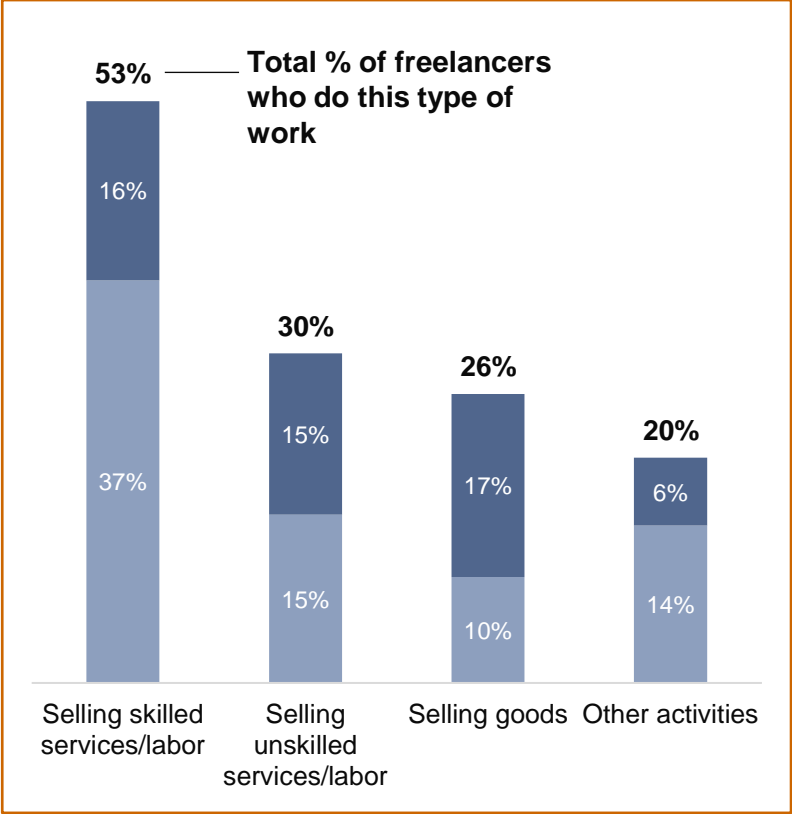


NEW FREELANCERS HAVE ALSO TAKEN ON MORE SKILLED JOBS THAN ALWAYS OR PAUSED FREELANCERS

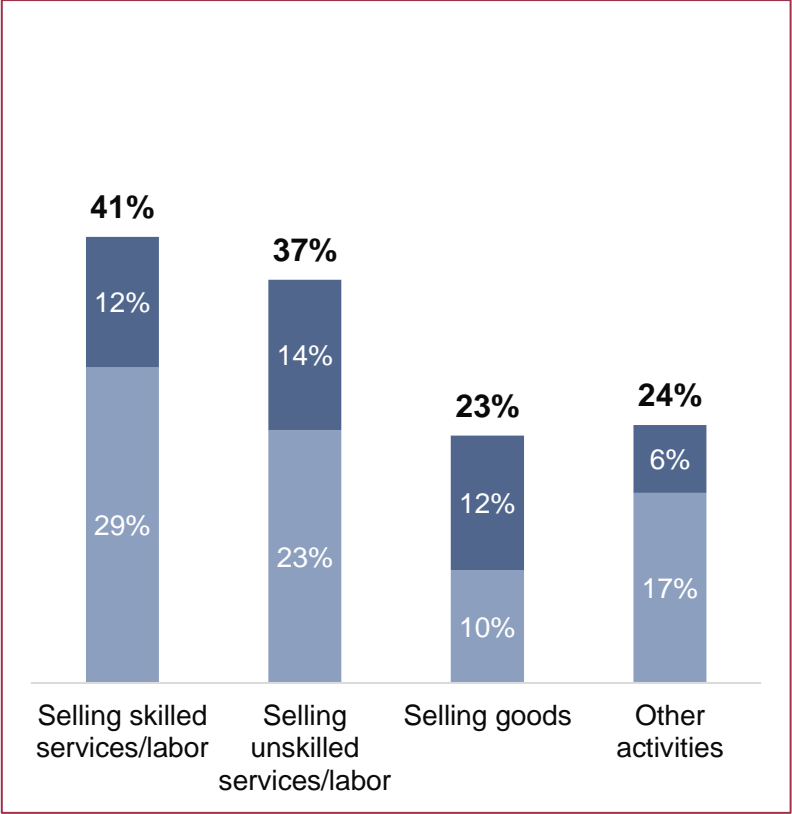
What does your freelance work entail?
[multiple responses accepted]

- Do this type of freelancing only (i.e., exclusively)
- Do this type of freelancing along with at least 1 other type (i.e., multiple types)

Always Freelancer



Paused Freelancer



New Freelancer





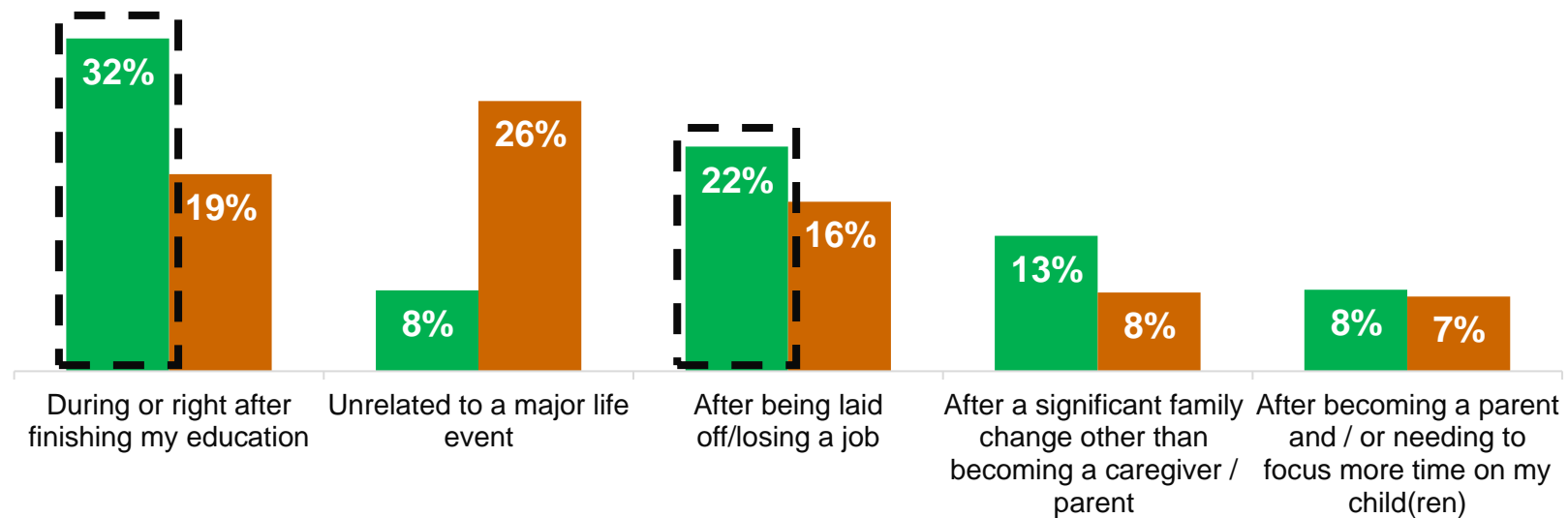
MORE THAN HALF OF NEW FREELANCERS BEGAN FREELANCING DUE TO MAJOR LIFE EVENTS SUCH AS FINISHING THEIR EDUCATION OR BEING LAID OFF

When did you start freelancing?

(showing top 5 reasons, % calculated among each freelancer group)

■ New FLs

■ Always FLs





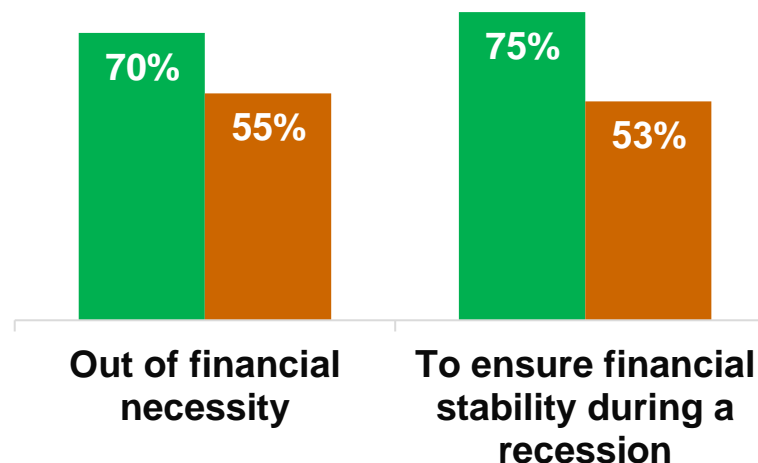
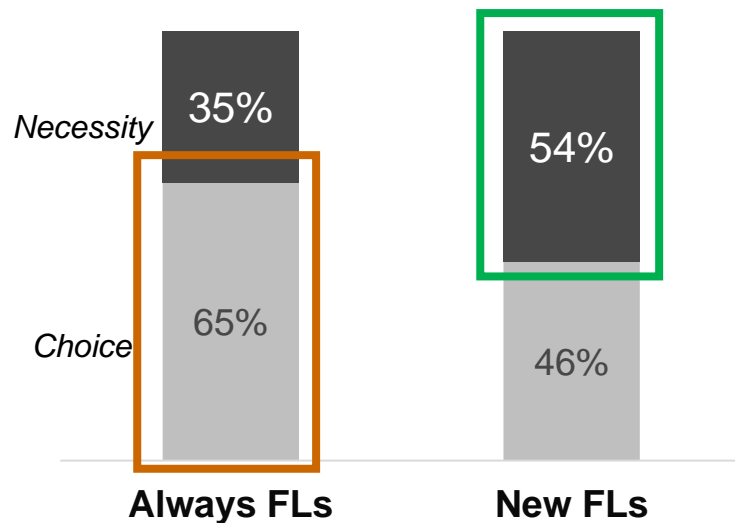
DRIVEN BY FINANCIAL NECESSITY, THIS NEW GROUP SHOWS HOW FREELANCING CAN BE A VIABLE SOLUTION FOR SOURCING NEW INCOME

Reason for Starting to Freelance

% is a Reason They Freelance

(% showing T2B)

■ New FLs
■ Always FLs



85%

Of new freelancers say they are likely to consider freelancing in the future as an extra source of income to cope with the impact of the pandemic on their personal finances

(vs. 79% always freelancers)



EVEN IN A FEW SHORT MONTHS, FREELANCING IS PROVING TO BE A LUCRATIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW FREELANCERS

59%

of new freelancers feel
**they make more
money as a freelancer**
than they'd be making
from a traditional
employer

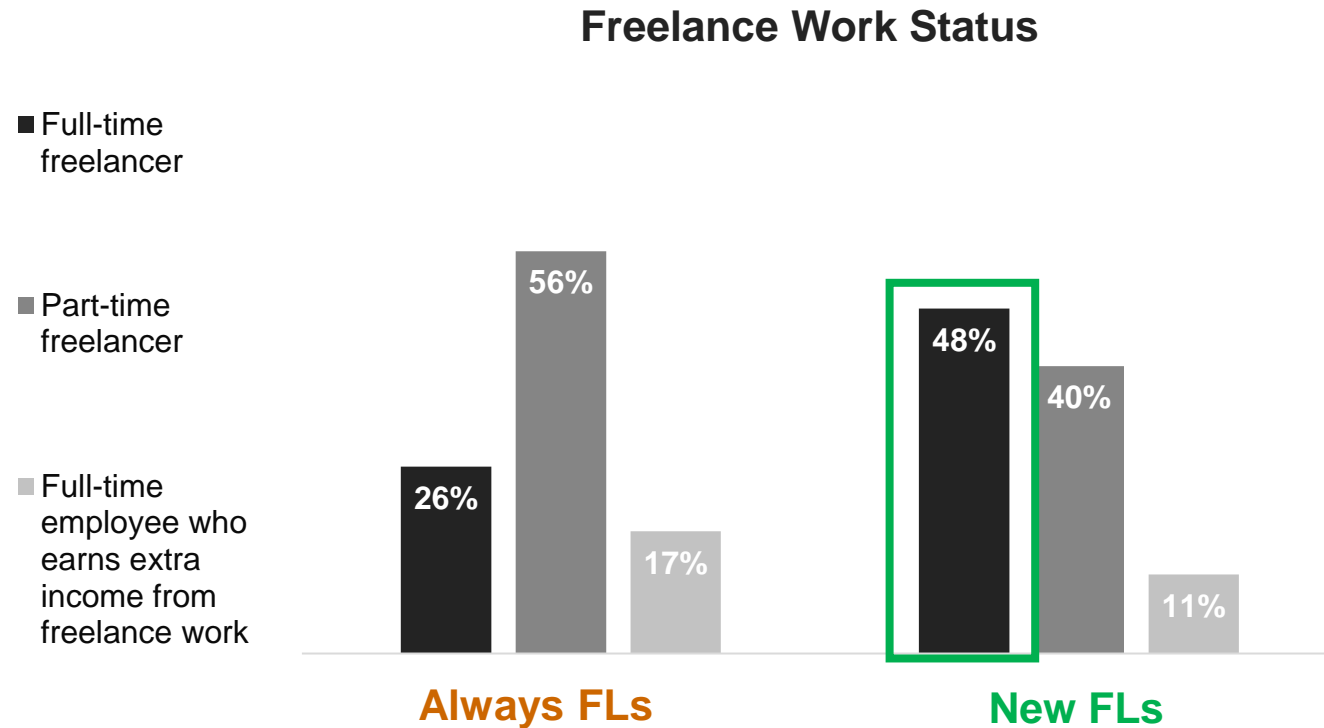
More than a third of
new freelancers have
**more work than they
want during the
pandemic**
(37%)

72%

of new freelancers believe
their **income will
increase in the coming
year**



NEARLY HALF OF NEW FREELANCERS ARE ALREADY SEEING FREELANCING AS BOTH A FULL-TIME AND LONG-TERM CAREER OPPORTUNITY



48%

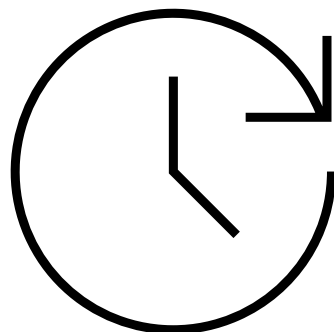
of new freelancers say they
view freelancing as a long-term career choice
(54% always freelancers)



THESE EVERGREEN FREELANCERS ARE HERE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

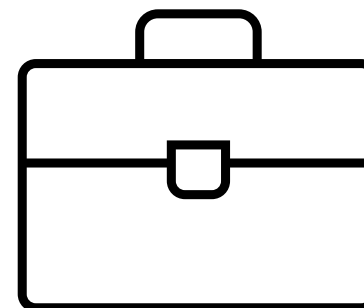
96%

of new freelancers are likely to **do more freelance work** in the future



60%

of new freelancers agree that there is **no amount of money that would convince them** to take a traditional job

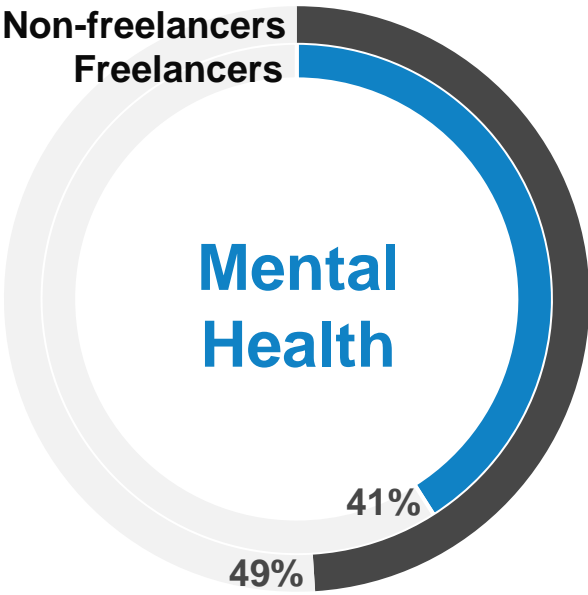
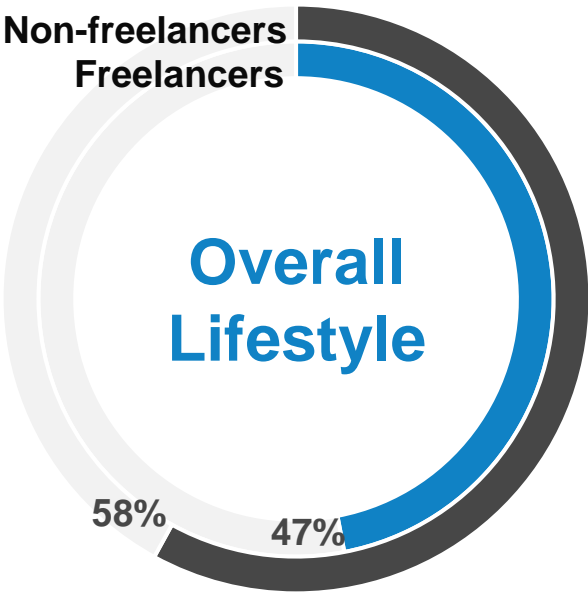
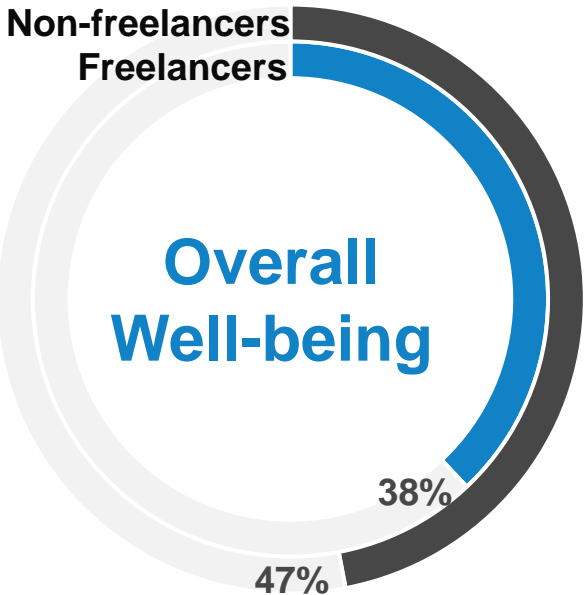


HOW IS COVID-19 IMPACTING FREELANCERS' OVERALL WELLBEING?



ACROSS THE BOARD, FREELANCERS REPORT A LOWER NEGATIVE IMPACT FROM COVID-19 COMPARED TO NON-FREELANCERS ON THEIR...

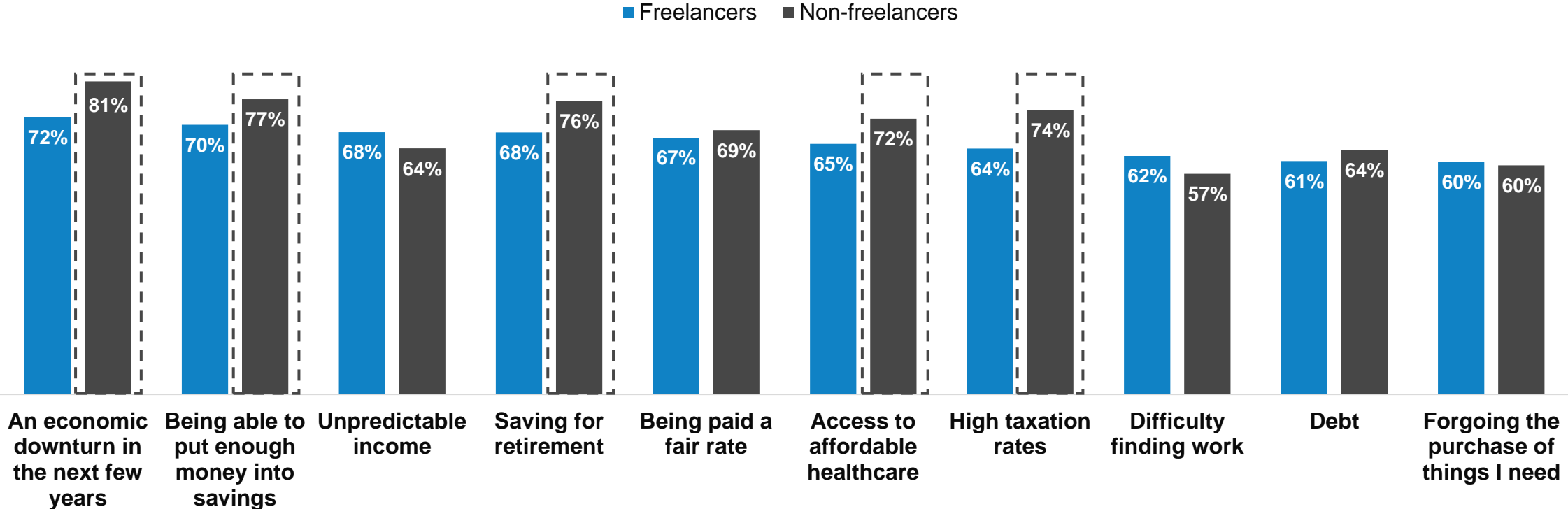
% Negative Impact from Pandemic





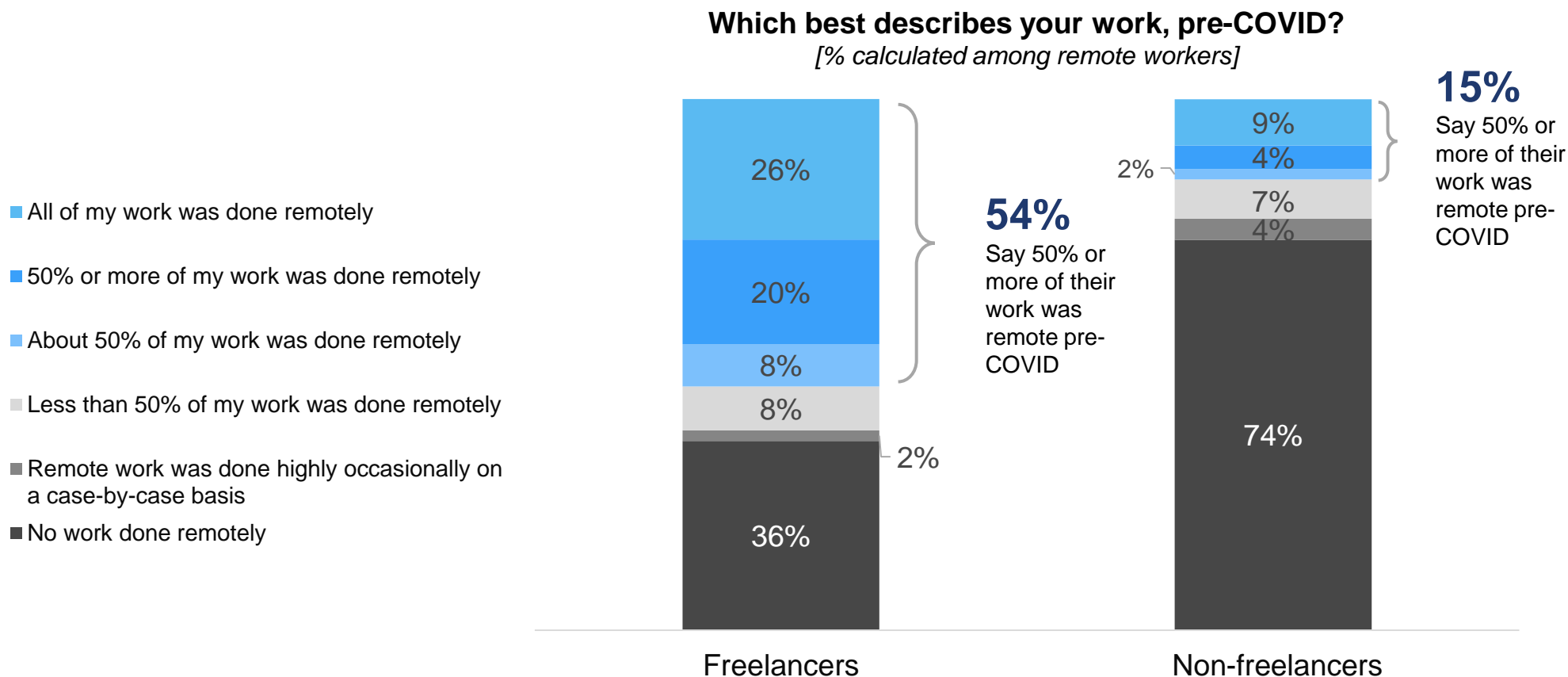
FREELANCERS ALSO REPORT BEING LESS CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE THAN NON-FREELANCERS

In 2019, we saw that **freelancers and non-freelancers reported similar levels of concern** around things like saving for retirement, saving money, accessing healthcare, etc., but **in 2020 non-freelancers are more concerned about...**
(% showing very or somewhat concerned, among total freelancers and non-freelancers)





WHY IS THIS THE CASE? IT COULD BE THAT FREELANCERS WERE MORE ACCUSTOMED TO THE WAYS OF REMOTE WORK PRE-COVID





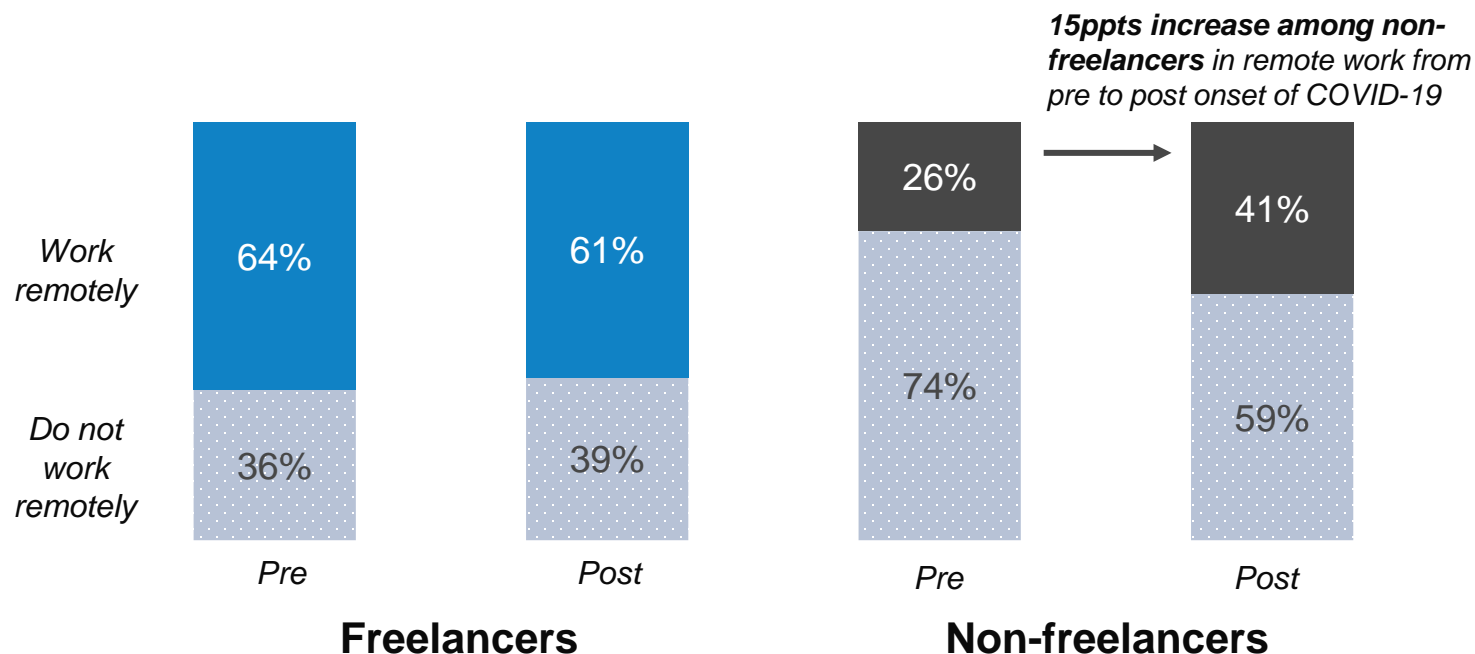
...AND HAVE NOT HAD TO ADJUST TO REMOTE WORK AS MUCH AS NON-FREELANCERS DURING COVID-19

55%

of freelancers agree that due to the unpredictable nature of being a freelancer, they feel **it has prepared them to cope with the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic better than those in traditional jobs** (67% among full-time freelancers)

% Who worked remotely pre-COVID and post onset of COVID-19

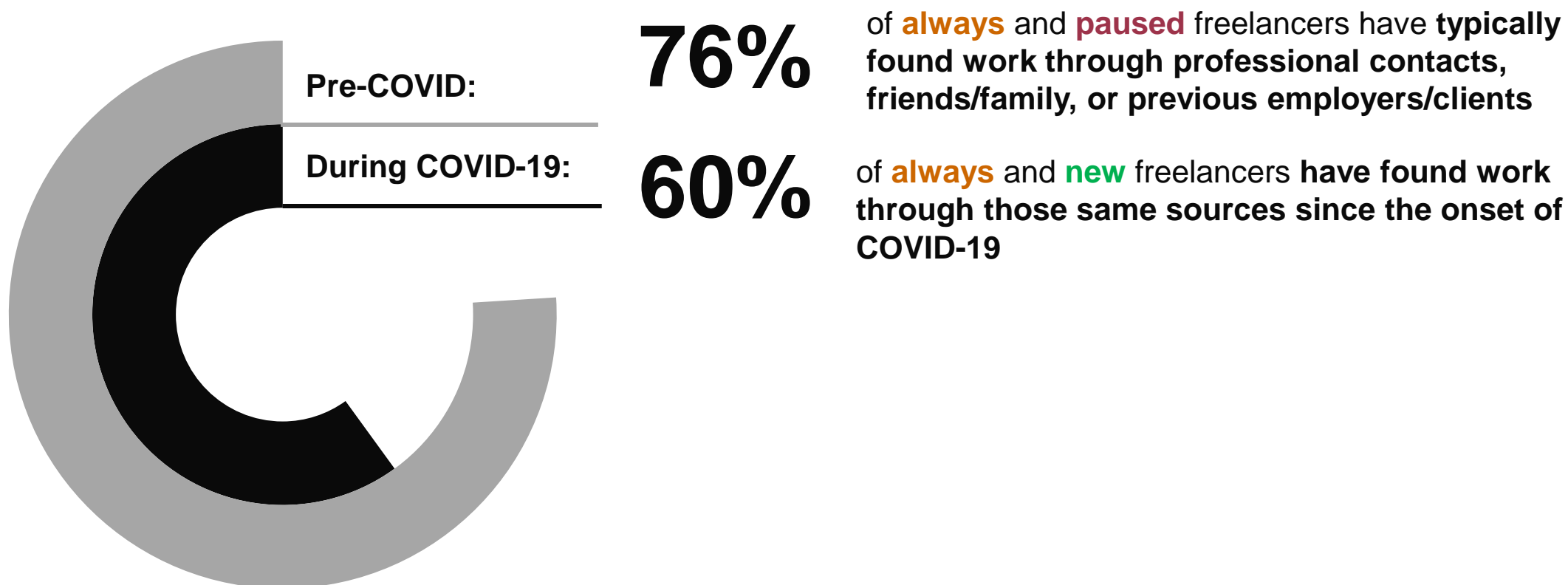
(% calculated among total freelancers and non-freelancers)





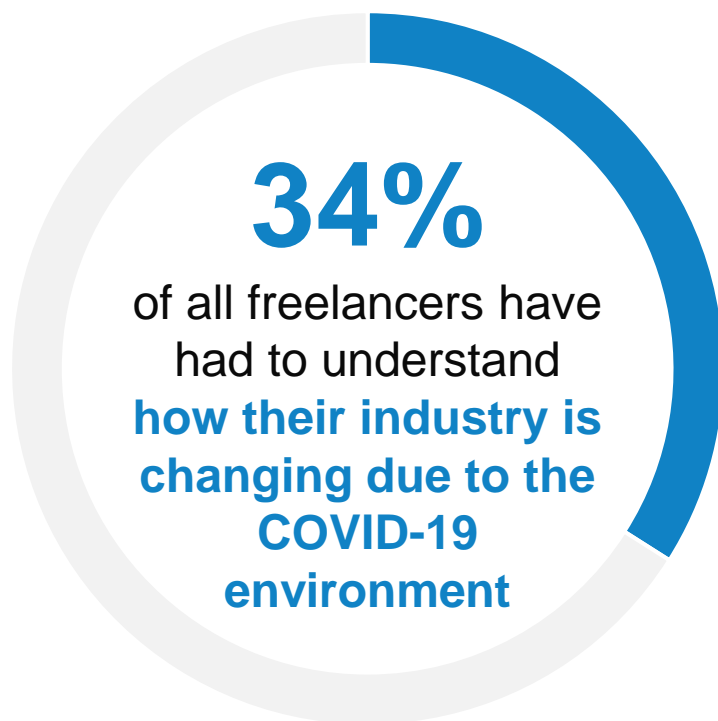
THE SHIFT TO REMOTE WAYS OF LIFE DUE TO THE PANDEMIC HAS IMPACTED FREELANCERS' ABILITY TO FIND WORK THROUGH NETWORKING

Networking was a main channel for finding work pre-COVID, but since then, sourcing work through these channels has declined

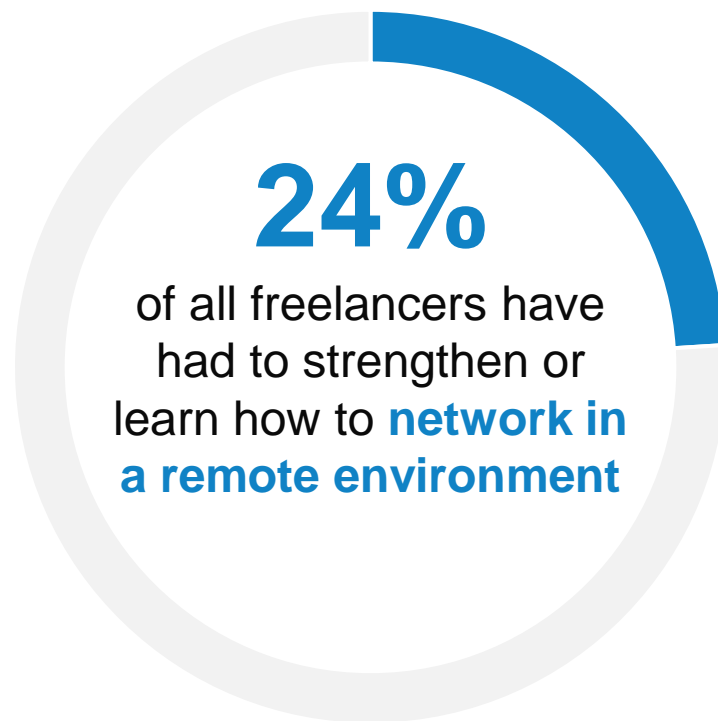




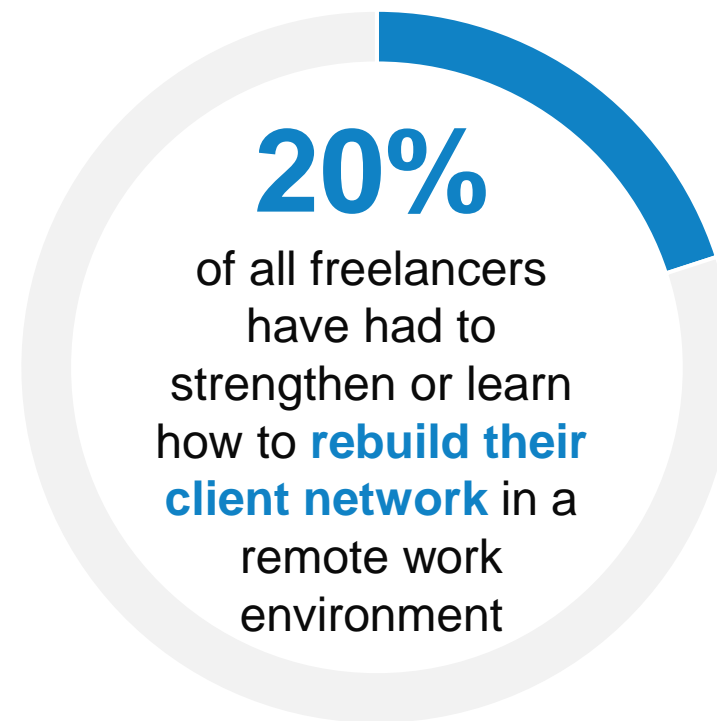
SINCE NETWORKING IS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR FINDING FREELANCE WORK, SOME FREELANCERS HAVE HAD TO REEVALUATE THEIR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MODELS IN A REMOTE WORKING ENVIRONMENT



(+3ppts among freelancers new to remote working)



(+6ppts among freelancers new to remote working)





BUT DESPITE NOT BEING ABLE TO NETWORK IN THEIR TYPICAL WAYS, ACTIVE FREELANCERS ARE ADAPTING WELL TO THIS NEW ENVIRONMENT - THEY ARE FINDING NEW CLIENTS AND JUMPING ON NEW OPPORTUNITIES

61%

of those who *freelanced pre- and during COVID-19* feel they **have the amount of work they want or more work** than they want during the pandemic

65%

of *skilled freelancers who were freelancing pre- and during COVID-19* say their **hours have either stayed the same or increased** since the onset of the pandemic

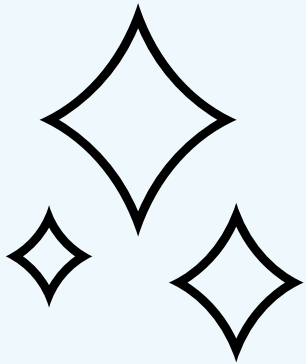
45%

of *skilled freelancers who were freelancing pre- and during COVID-19* say that they do **more** skilled work since the onset of the pandemic

30%

of *new freelancers who started amidst COVID-19* **saw a business opportunity unique to the pandemic**

WORKING REMOTELY HAS MADE FREELANCERS MORE PRODUCTIVE



89% of freelancers say that they are likely to continue freelancing in the future because ***“working remotely has made me a more productive worker”***

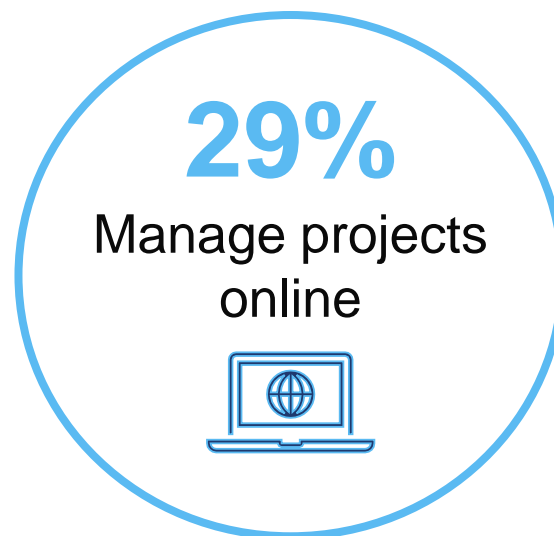
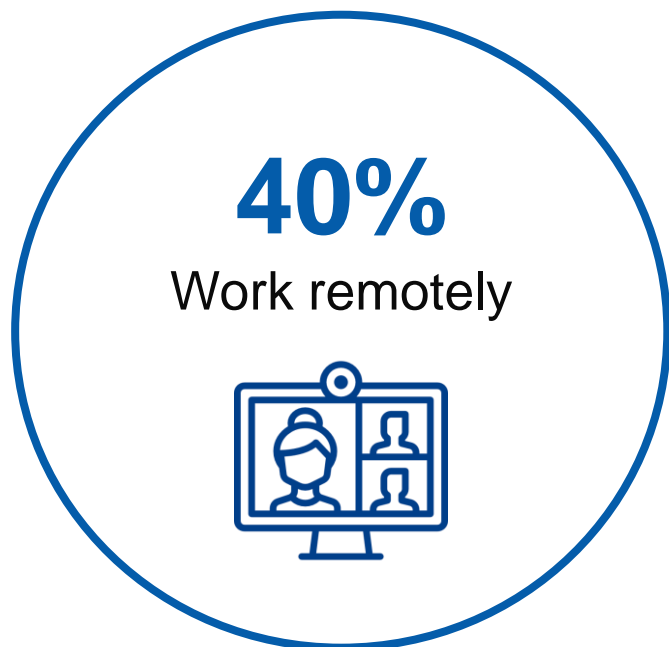
(85% of among freelancers new to remote working)



BEING ACCUSTOMED TO REMOTE WORK, THOSE STILL FREELANCING SERVE AS TRUSTED ADVISORS TEACHING CLIENTS NEW ONLINE SKILLS

During COVID-19, active freelancers have had to consult or train their clients on how to...

(% calculated among Always and New freelancers)





DESPITE FREELANCERS ADAPTING WELL TO THE COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT, FINANCIAL SECURITY HAS STILL BEEN A CHALLENGE FOR SOME

1/3

(33%)

of those
freelancing pre-
and during
COVID-19 say
that their **work
hours have
decreased since**
the onset of
COVID-19

2 in 5

(43%)

freelancers say COVID-19
has had a negative impact
on their economic and
financial wellbeing

1 in 5

(21%)

freelancers have had
to withdraw from their
savings or retirement
fund



REGARDLESS OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19, OVERALL, FREELANCERS REPORT FEELING SUPPORTED BY AVAILABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

3 in 10

HAVE APPLIED FOR
FINANCIAL SUPPORT

8 in 10

HAVE FOUND IT TO
BE USEFUL

3 in 10 (30%) freelancers have applied for financial support due to COVID-19

- ✓ 12% applied for a personal finance loan
- ✓ 12% applied for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- ✓ 11% applied for a small business loan or grant through the federal government
- ✓ 9% applied for a small business loan or grant through their state

Of those that sought support through these channels, a majority found them useful – Unemployment Insurance was the least useful with 12% still waiting for a response to their unemployment claims and 19% not finding the program useful

Most freelancers feel supported by local, state, and government officials

Significantly more than non-freelancers, across the board



Section 3

FREELANCING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS DEMOGRAPHICS



AMIDST THE TOUGH JOB MARKET FOR GRADS, COLLEGE AGE WORKERS HAVE SOUGHT OUT FREELANCING OPPORTUNITIES

36%



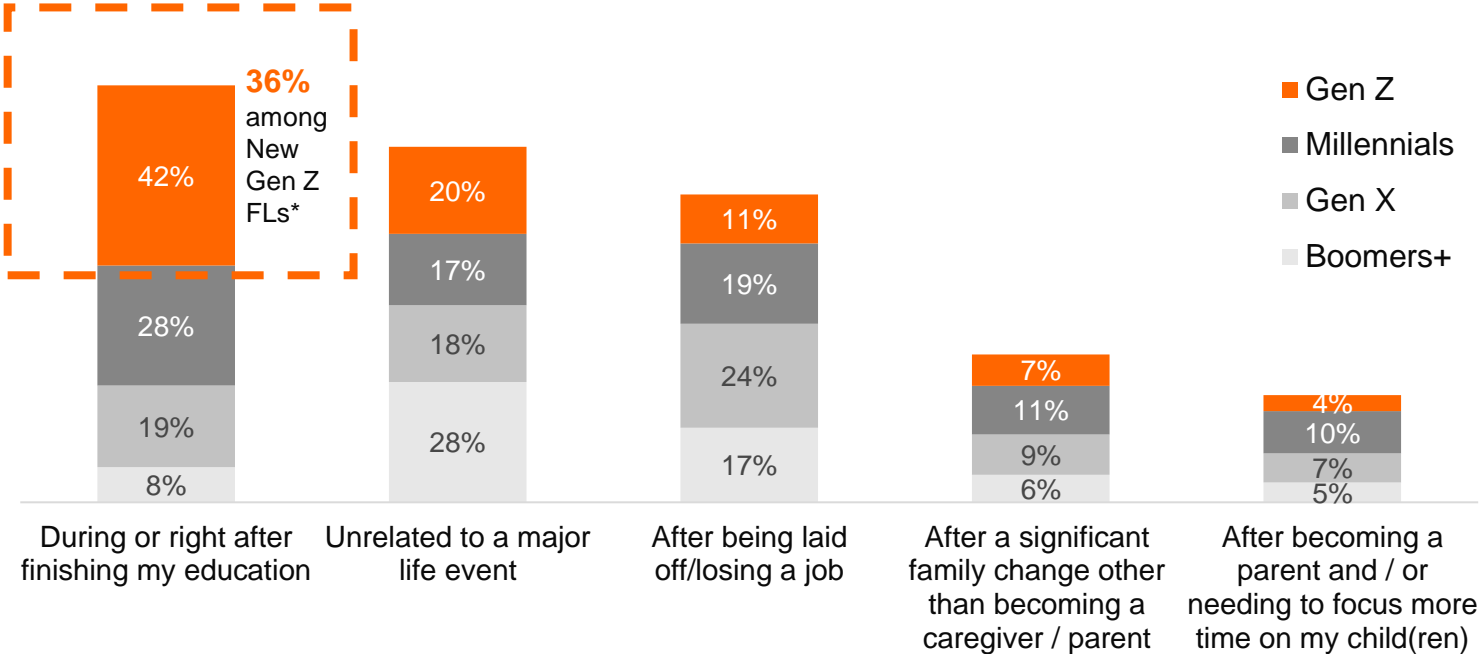
of Gen Z freelancers started during COVID-19

[among total Gen Z Freelancers]

Vs. 44% Millennials, 33% Gen X, 6% Baby Boomers+

When did you start freelancing?

[among freelancers within each generation]

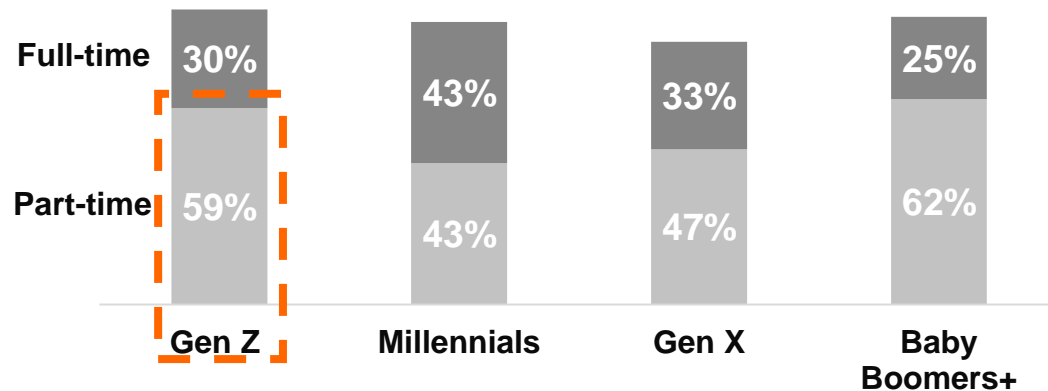




MOST GEN Z FREELANCERS, WHO TYPICALLY FREELANCE PART-TIME, SEE IT AS A MONEY-MAKING STRATEGY FOR NOW

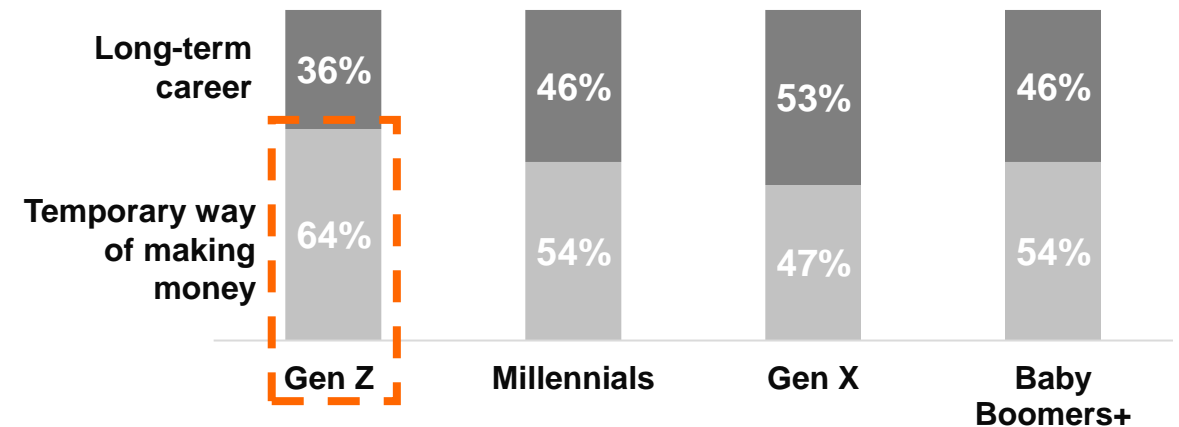
59% of Gen Z freelancers are freelancing *part-time*

[among total freelancers by generation]



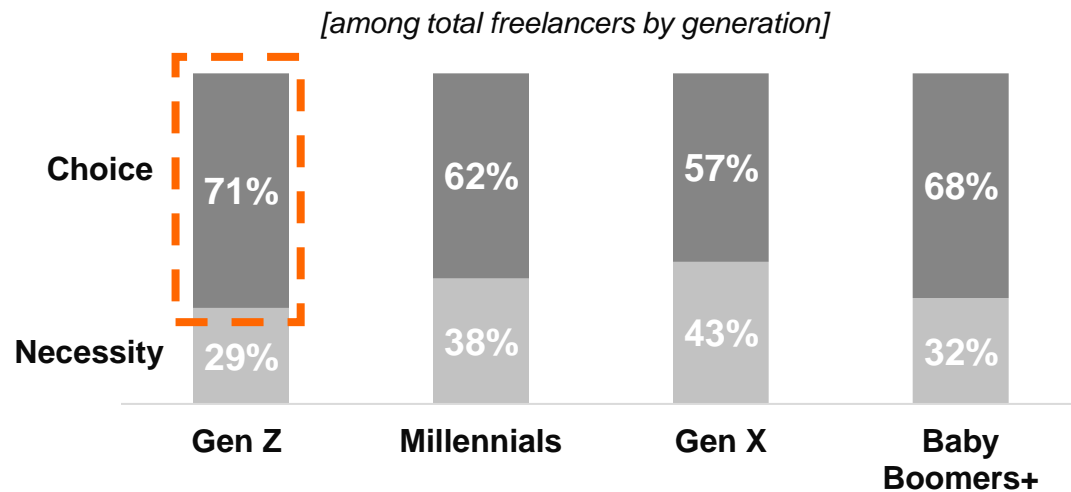
64% of Gen Z freelancers see freelancing as *a temporary way of making money*

[among total freelancers by generation]



MOST FREELANCE BY CHOICE AND ARE HIGHLY LIKELY TO CONTINUE FREELANCING IN THE FUTURE

71% of Gen Z freelancers started freelancing *by choice, over necessity*



9 out of 10

of **Gen Z freelancers overall** are likely to do freelance work in the future

(89% likely overall, 51% very likely)

&

of **new Gen Z freelancers (who started during COVID-19)** are likely to do freelance work in the future*

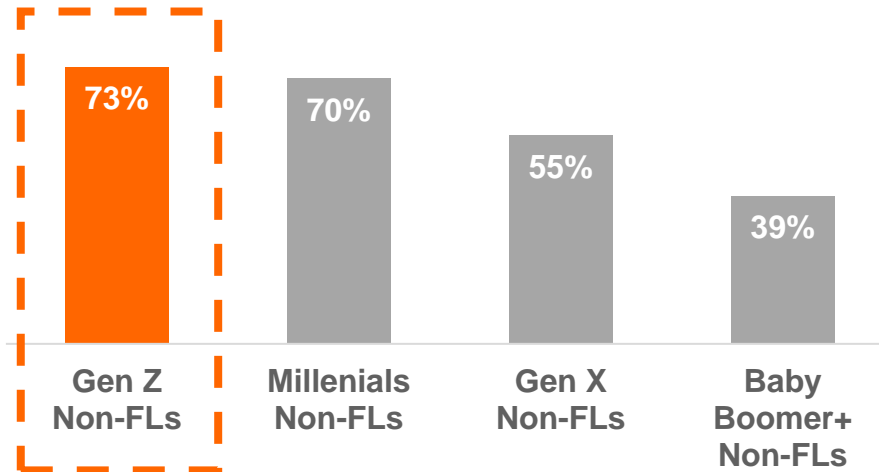
(90% likely overall, 47% very likely)



GEN Z-ERS THAT ARE CURRENTLY NOT FREELANCING ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER GENERATIONS TO CONSIDER IT, PARTICULARLY AS A WAY TO COPE WITH RECESSIONARY PERIODS

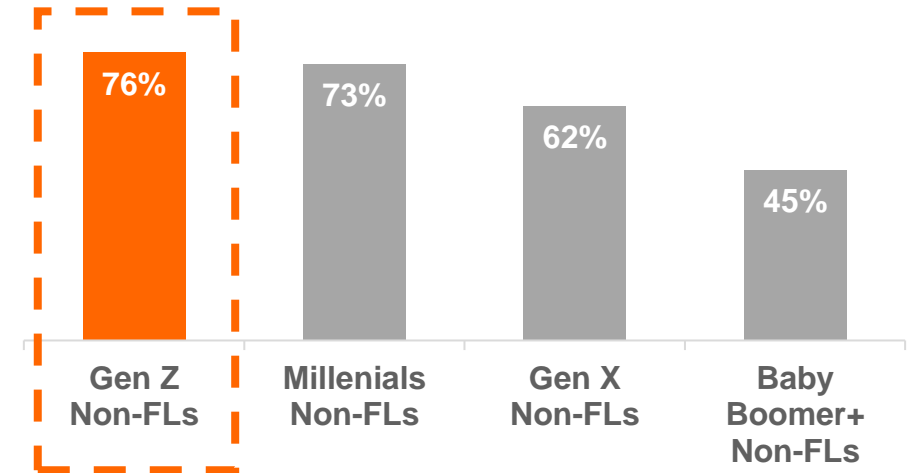
3 in 4 (73%)

of Gen Z non-freelancers
are likely to consider doing
freelance work **in the future**



3 in 4 (76%)

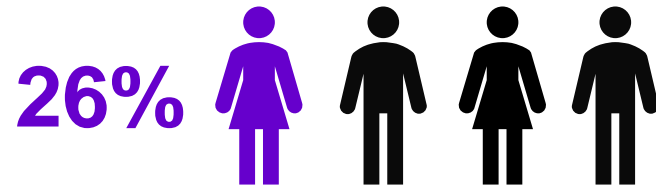
of Gen Z non-freelancers
say they are likely to do freelance work in
the future **to earn extra income to cope with
the impact of the pandemic on their
personal finances**



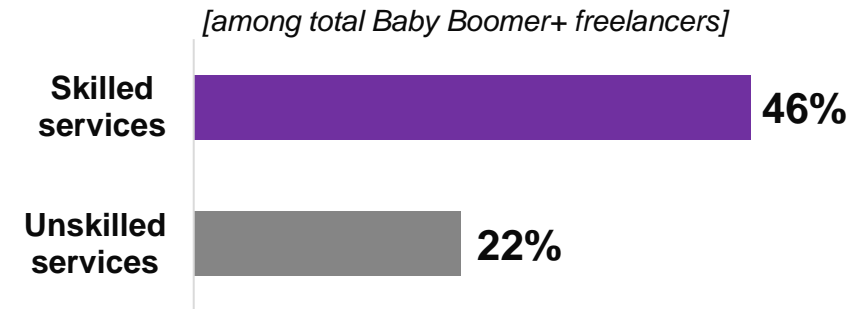


FREELANCING ISN'T JUST SOMETHING RESERVED FOR YOUNGER GENERATIONS, THOSE AGES 55+ HAVE ALSO BEEN TAPPING INTO THE BENEFITS OF FREELANCING

More than a quarter of workers ages 55+ have done freelance work in the past year

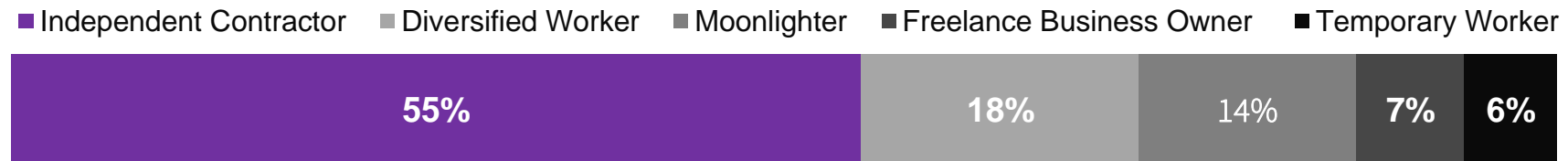


They are typically **skilled freelancers**



They are mostly **“independent contractors,”** meaning they do work on a project to project basis

[among total Baby Boomer+ freelancers]



(vs. 30% Gen Z, 22% Millennials, 34% Gen X freelancers)



BOOMERS, BOTH FREELANCER AND NON-FREELANCER, VIEW FREELANCING AS A FINANCIAL STRATEGY AS THEY NEAR RETIREMENT



65%

of Boomers who freelance agree that **freelancing is a good way to transition into retirement...**

vs. 43% Gen Z, 60% Millennials, 56% Gen X workers who freelance

...and those freelancing are **less likely to be concerned about saving for retirement** than non-freelancers

62% of Boomers who freelance are concerned about saving for retirement

vs. 73% Non-freelancer Boomers

72% of non-freelancing Boomers **would consider it to earn additional income in retirement**

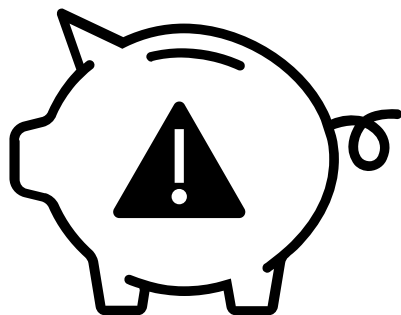


BUT BOOMERS ARE AT RISK OF NOT SAVING ENOUGH FOR RETIREMENT DUE TO COVID-19

Boomer freelancers are most likely to be negatively impacted by COVID-19

53% say their economic or financial well-being has been negatively impacted

Vs. 37% Gen Z, 40% Millennials, 49% Gen X workers who freelance



2 in 5 (42%)

Boomers that freelance say their hours spent on freelancing have decreased since the onset of COVID-19

Vs. 21% Gen Z, 27% Millennials, 35% Gen X workers who freelance

1 in 2 (47%)

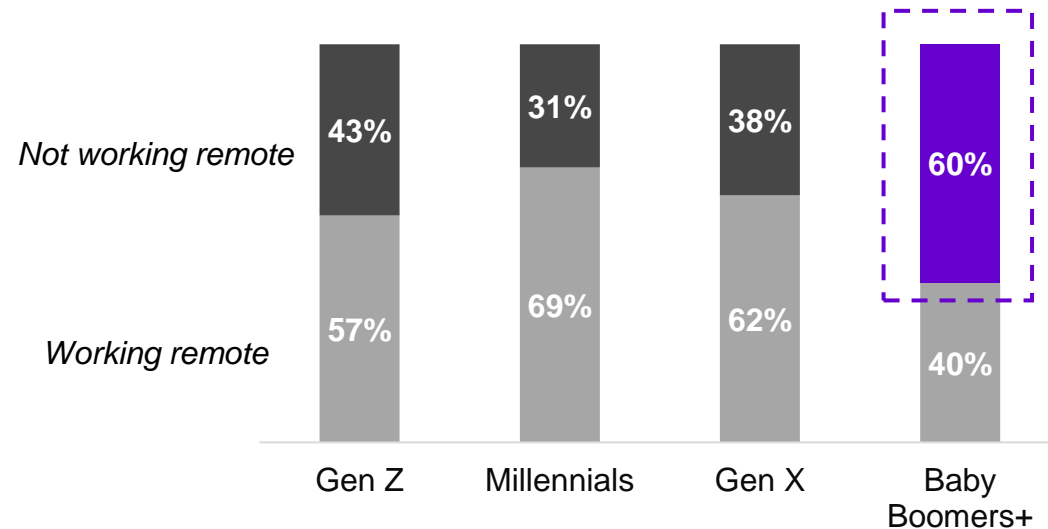
Boomers that freelance say they have less work than they want during the COVID-19 pandemic

Vs. 32% Gen Z, 30% Millennials, 39% Gen X workers who freelance



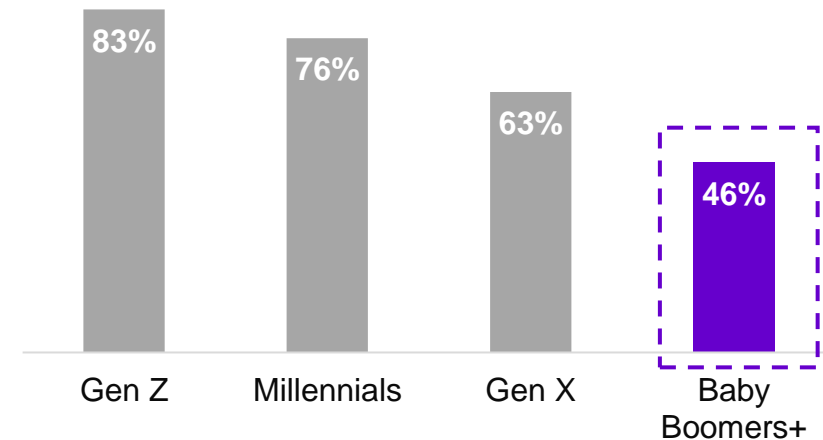
SEVERAL FACTORS COULD POINT TO WHY BOOMERS HAVE LESS WORK THAN DESIRED: A DEPENDENCE ON NON-REMOTE WORK AND LESS FREQUENT SKILLS TRAINING

Remote Work Status During COVID-19



Boomer freelancers were the most likely to be non-remote before COVID-19 (49% did not work remotely vs. 40% Gen Z, 31% Millennials, 33% Gen X freelancers)

% Participated in Skills Training Within Past Year

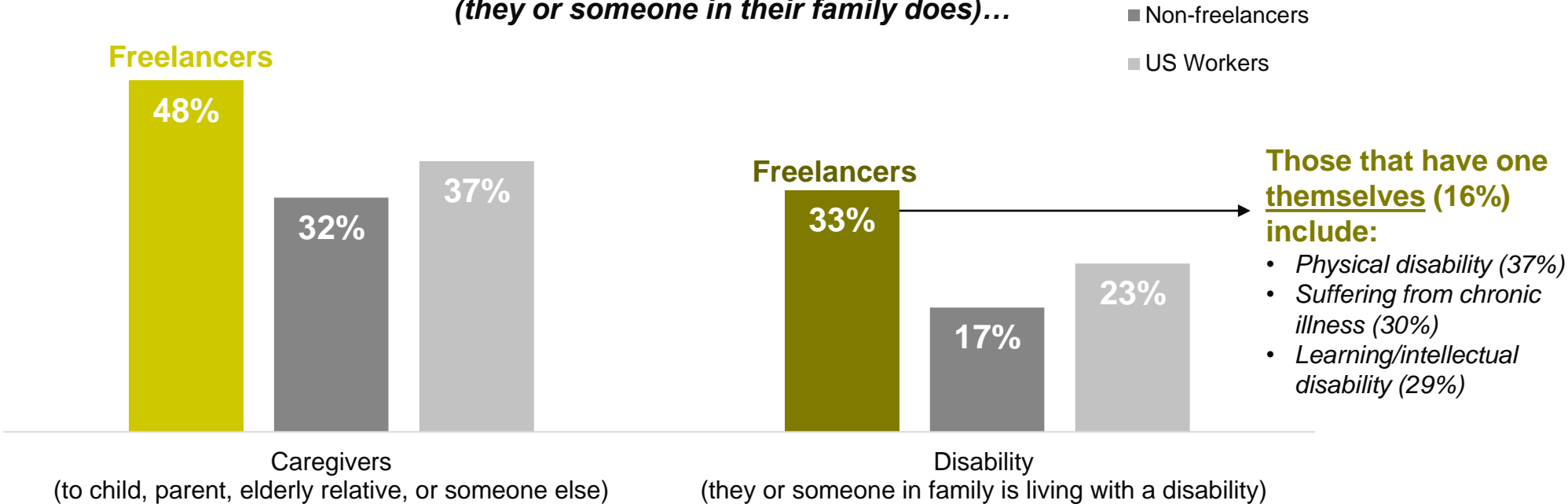


41% of Boomer freelancers report they have not strengthened or learned any skills amidst COVID-19 (vs. 11% Gen Z, 12% Millennials, 21% Gen X)



MANY CAREGIVERS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TURN TO FREELANCING FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

*Compared to US workers and non-freelancers overall, a higher proportion of freelancers are **caregivers** or have a **disability** (they or someone in their family does)...*





FREELANCING ALLOWS THESE INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES AND THOSE AT HOME, PROVIDING THEM WITH THE FLEXIBILITY, CONTROL, AND TIME TO DO SO



Among freelancers who are caregivers...

76% say freelancing gives them more flexibility to be **more available as a caretaker for their family**

71% say freelancing has given them **more control of their life overall**

69% say freelancing provides them **an alternative that can allow one to support a family without a traditional job**



Among freelancers with a disability or one in their family...

72% say freelancing has **given them more control over their life overall**

72% say freelancing **gives them the flexibility to address their personal, mental, or physical health needs**

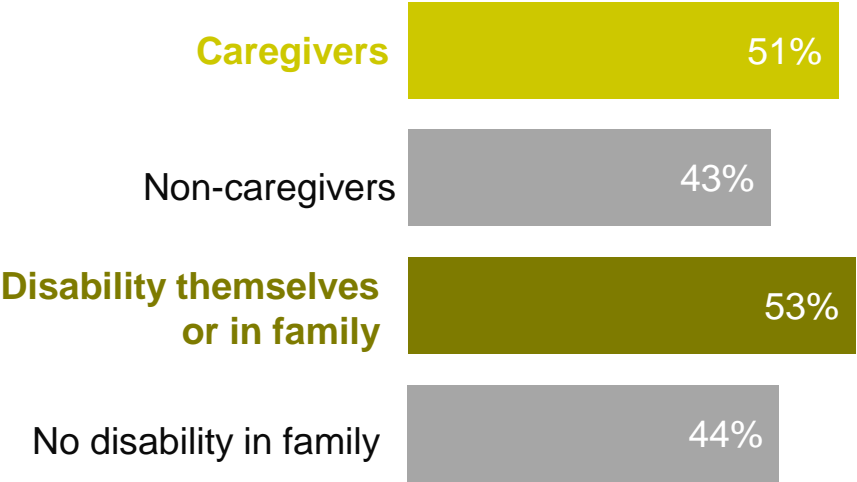
69% say that **because of personal circumstances they are not able to work for a traditional employer, but freelancing gives them the flexibility they need**



FREELANCERS WITH THESE PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES VIEW FREELANCING AS A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

% See Freelancing as a Long-Term Career Choice

[among freelancers within each group]



% Very Likely to do Freelance Work in Future

[among freelancers within each group]





EVEN NON-FREELANCERS CONSIDER FREELANCING AS AN OPTION SHOULD THEY BECOME CAREGIVERS DOWN THE ROAD

2 in 3 (64%)

of non-freelancers say they would consider freelancing **as a career option to take care of a family member**



1 in 2 (49%)

of non-freelancers say they would consider freelancing **to take care of aging parents who will need general care**



Section 4

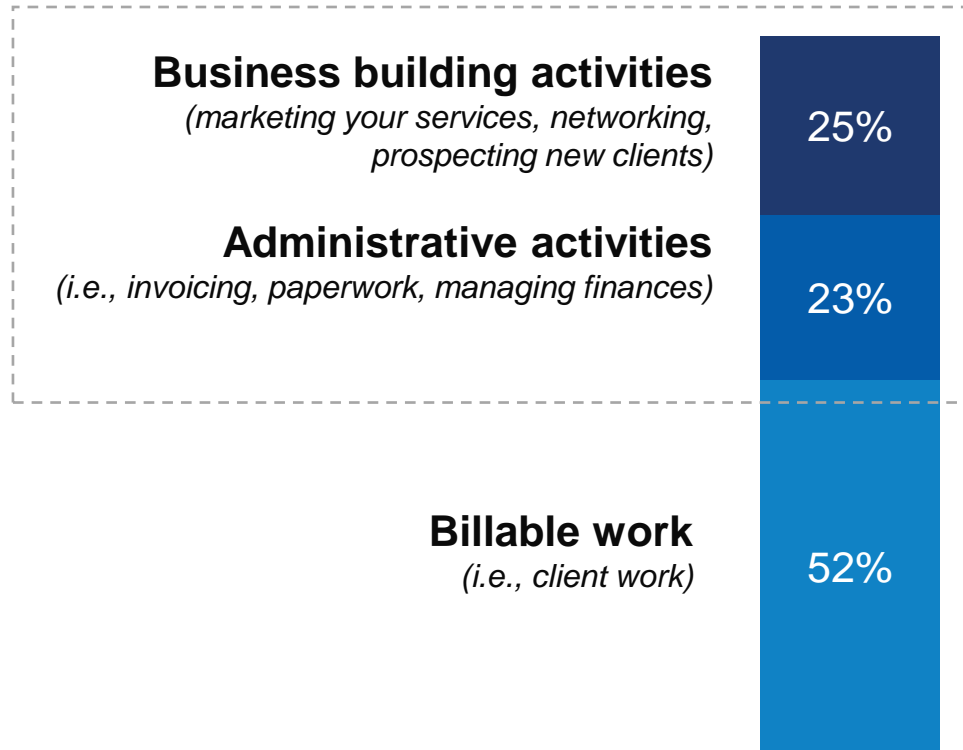
HONING BUSINESS SKILLS AND STAYING AHEAD



WHILE CLIENT SERVICES AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE ARE CENTRAL TO FREELANCE WORK, SOFT AND BUSINESS SKILLS ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT

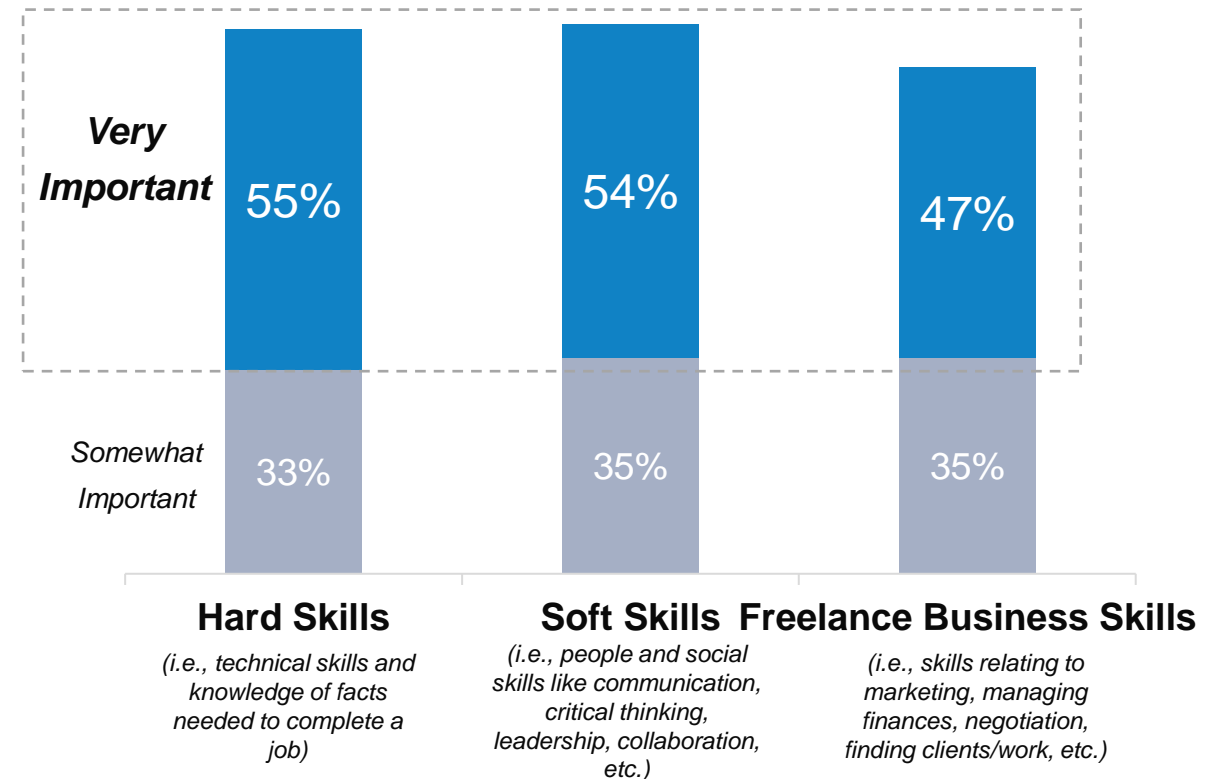
What percentage of your time on freelance work is spent on...?

[% calculated among total freelancers]



How important are the following skills to your work?

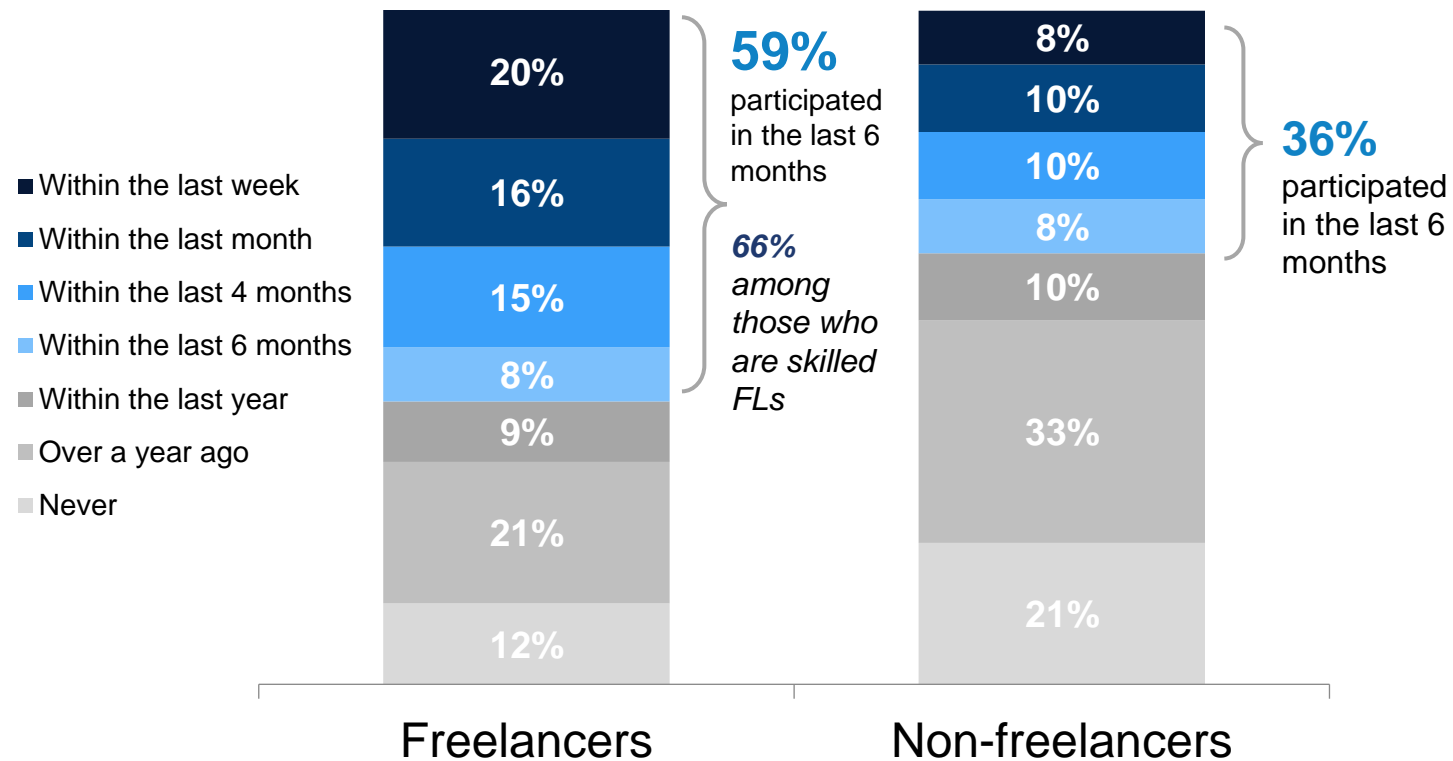
[% calculated among total freelancers]



KEEPING THESE SKILLS SHARP REQUIRES CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

When was the last time you participated in any skill-related education or training?

[% calculated among total freelancers and non-freelancers]



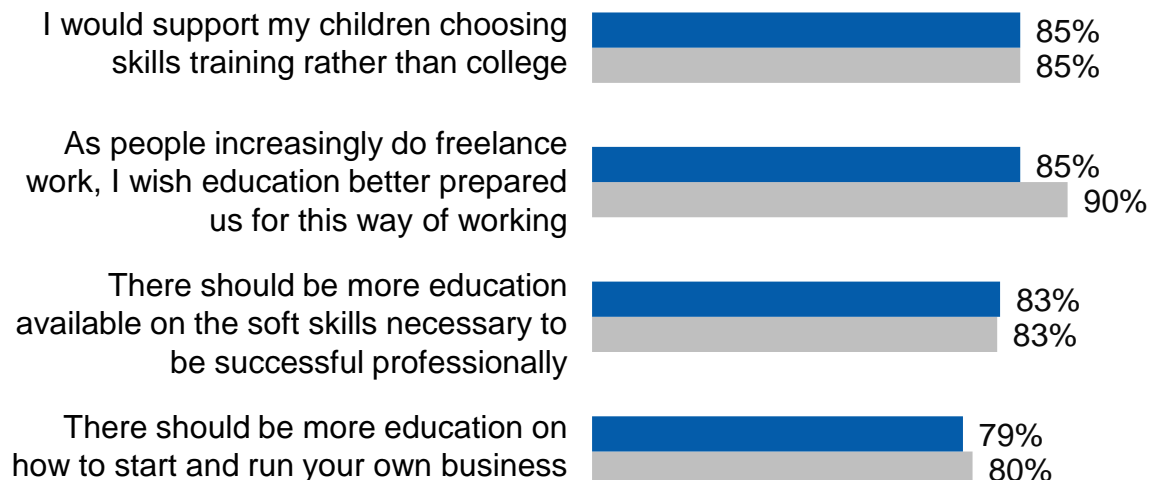


FREELANCERS AND NON-FREELANCERS AGREE THAT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM SHOULD BE DOING MORE TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

They feel there should be more emphasis on soft and business skills...

% agree, calculated among total freelancers and non-freelancers

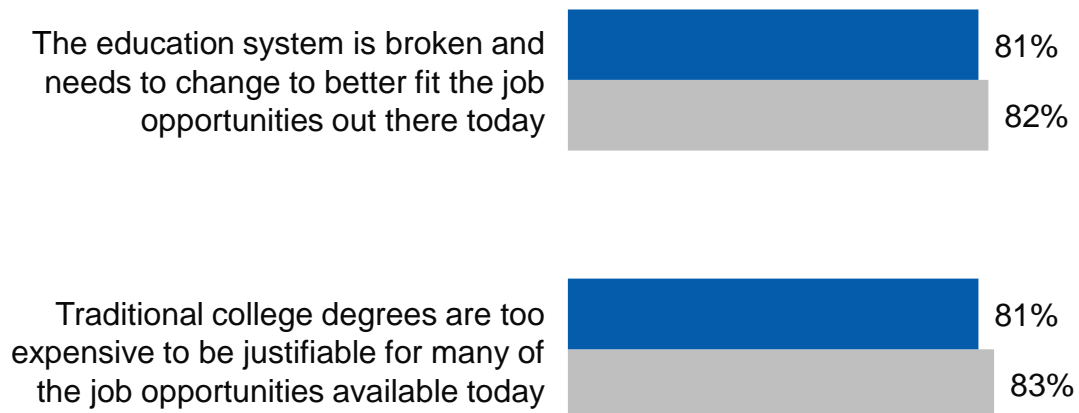
■ Freelancers ■ Non-freelancers



...and the education system should better align with job opportunities today

% agree, calculated among total freelancers and non-freelancers

■ Freelancers ■ Non-freelancers





WHILE STILL FINDING VALUE IN THEIR COLLEGE EDUCATION, IN HINDSIGHT FREELANCERS WOULD FOCUS THEIR EDUCATION TO BE BETTER ALIGNED WITH THEIR CURRENT WORK

While most freelancers feel the education they received in college was useful to the work they do now....

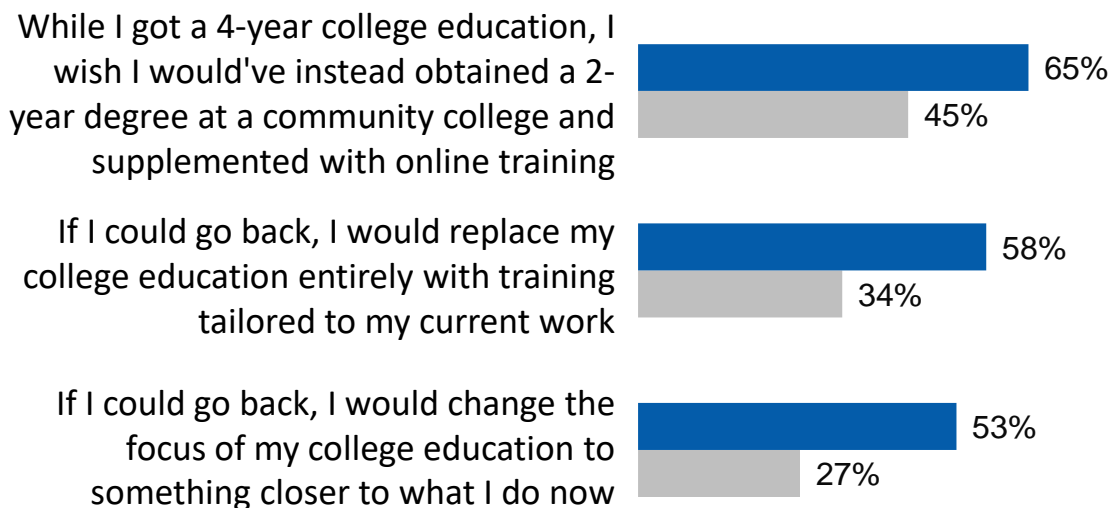
81% agree

Among those with associate's degree or higher, vs 75% non-freelancers with associate's degree or higher

...they would prioritize more specialized education or training, more so than non-freelancers

(% agree, calculated among freelancers and non-freelancers who have Associate's degree or higher)

■ Freelancers ■ Non-freelancers





ENSURING SUCCESS ALSO MEANS TAPPING INTO ONLINE RESOURCES TO FIND WORK – PARTICULARLY FREELANCE WEBSITES

1 in 4

always skilled freelancers typically find work through **general freelance websites** (26%)

&

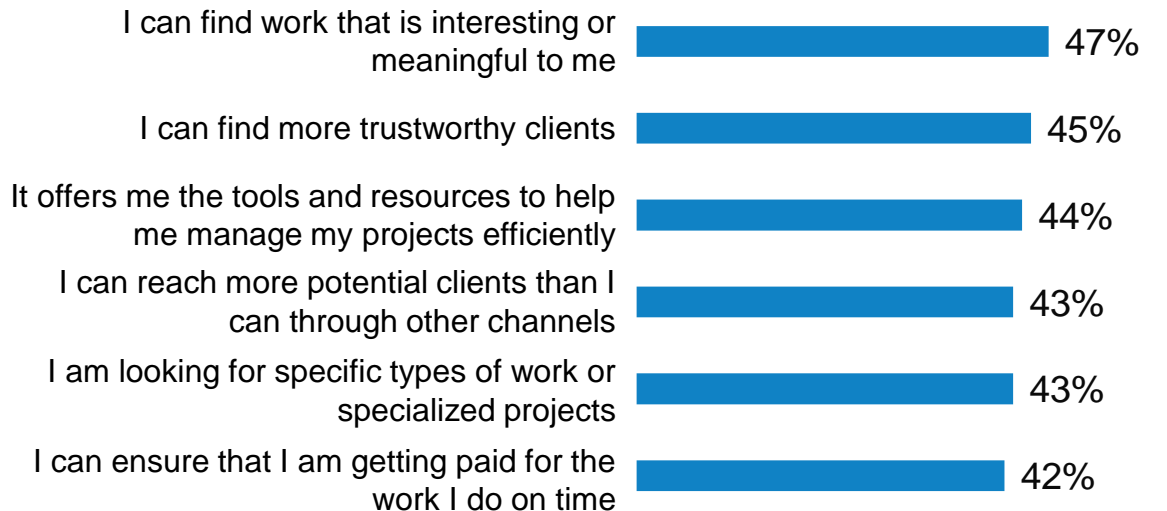
new freelancers have found work through **general freelance websites since the onset of COVID-19** (25%)

[91%] *of all skilled freelancers who use freelance websites*

are likely to recommend them to those just starting out

Why freelance websites?

[% calculated among all skilled freelancers who use websites to find work]



A high-angle, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. A large, thin monitor is positioned behind the laptop, displaying a colorful abstract pattern. To the right of the laptop, a small potted plant is visible. The scene is dimly lit, with a blueish tint. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

Section 5

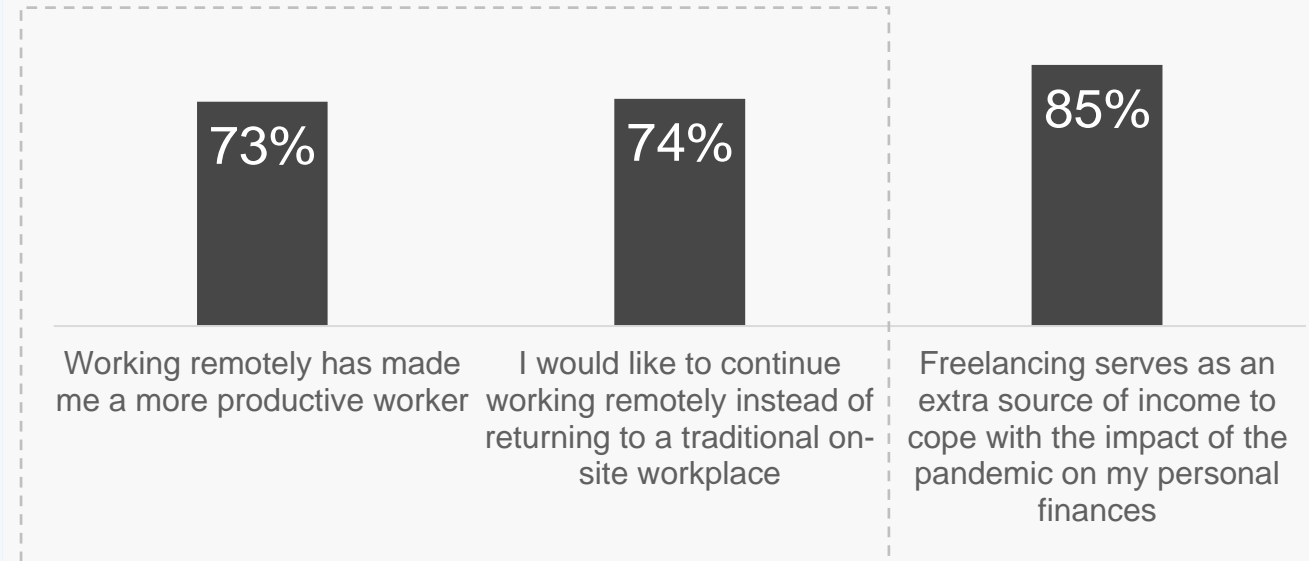
FUTURE OF FREELANCING

NON-FREELANCERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WORKING REMOTELY, SEE FREELANCING AS A LEGITIMATE CAREER OPTION MOVING FORWARD

58%

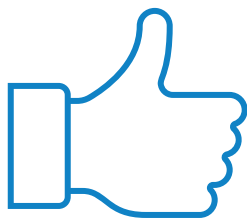
of non-freelancers new to remote work say that they are **likely to consider freelance work in the future**

Non-freelancers new to remote work are considering freelancing because...





FREELANCERS ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THEIR WORK AS THEY EXPERIENCE FIRSTHAND THE BENEFITS THAT COME WITH IT



86%

of freelancers say that the
best days are ahead
(90% among new freelancers)

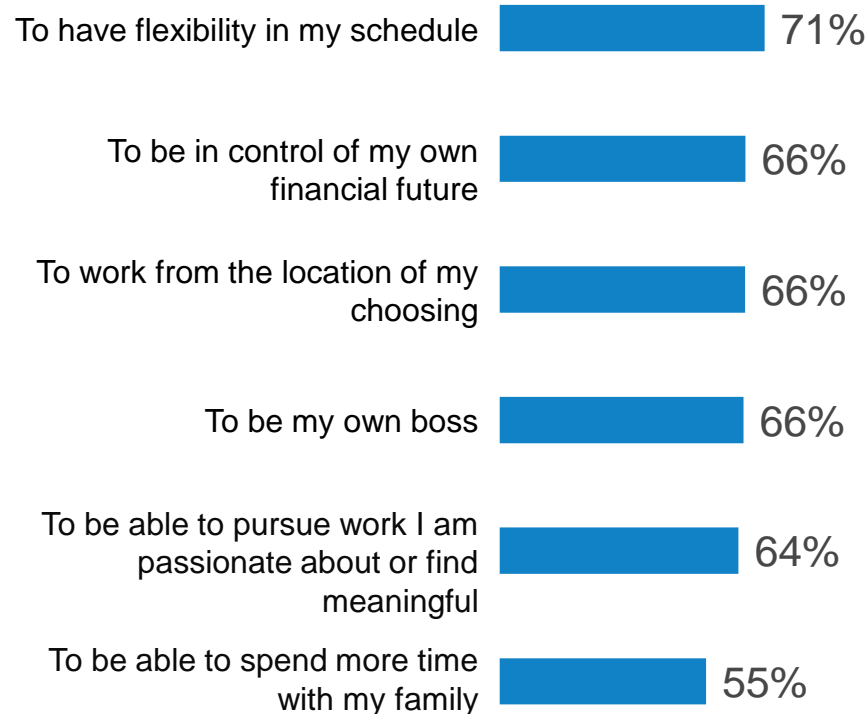


71%

of freelancers say that
**perceptions of freelancing
as a career is becoming
more positive**
(74% among skilled freelancers)

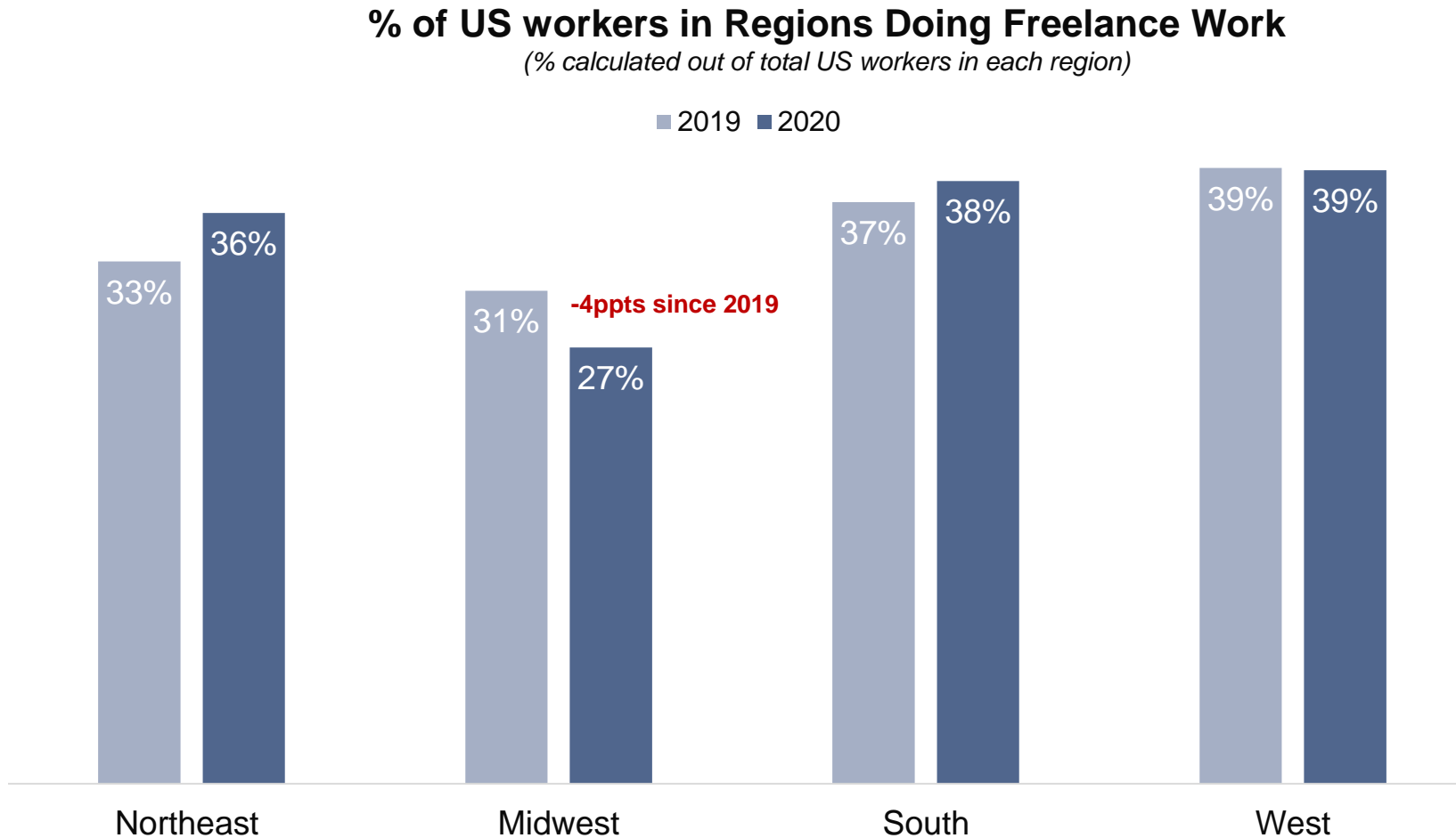
Reasons Why They Freelance

(% calculated among total freelancers)



APPENDIX WITH SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

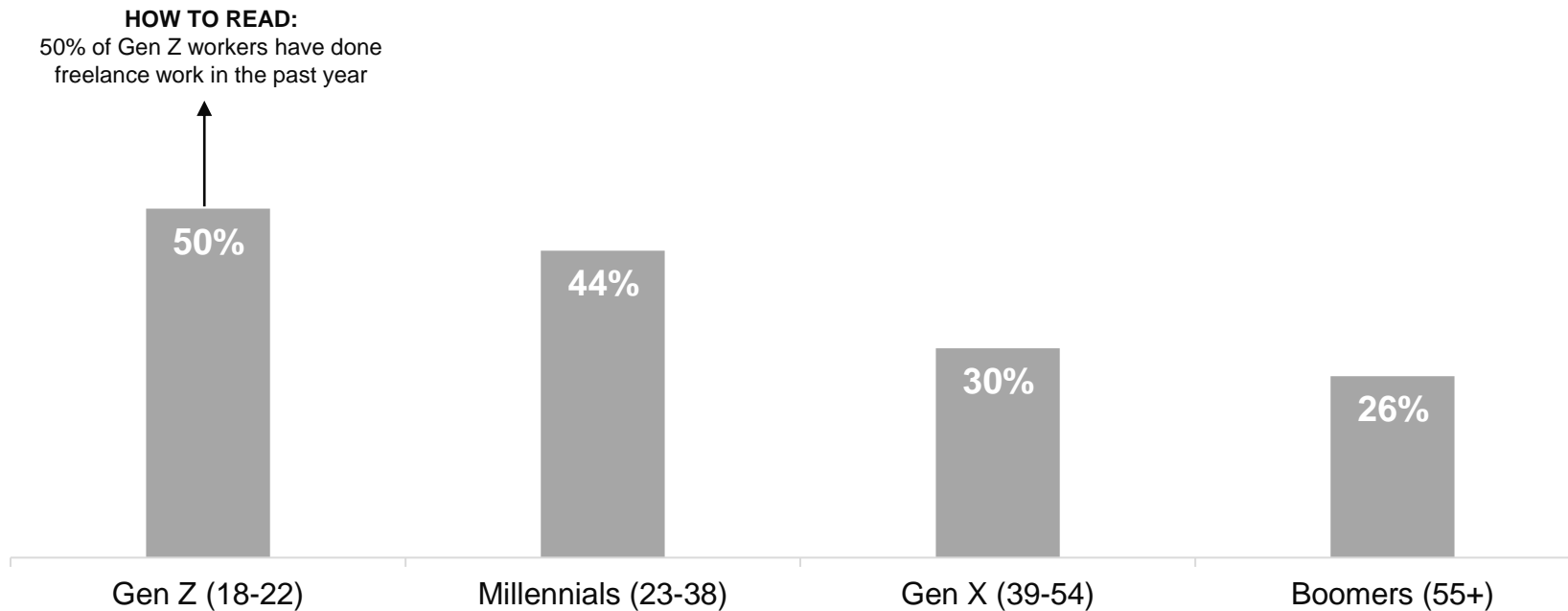
PERCENTAGE OF US WORKERS FREELANCING IN EACH REGION





GENERATIONS DOING FREELANCE WORK

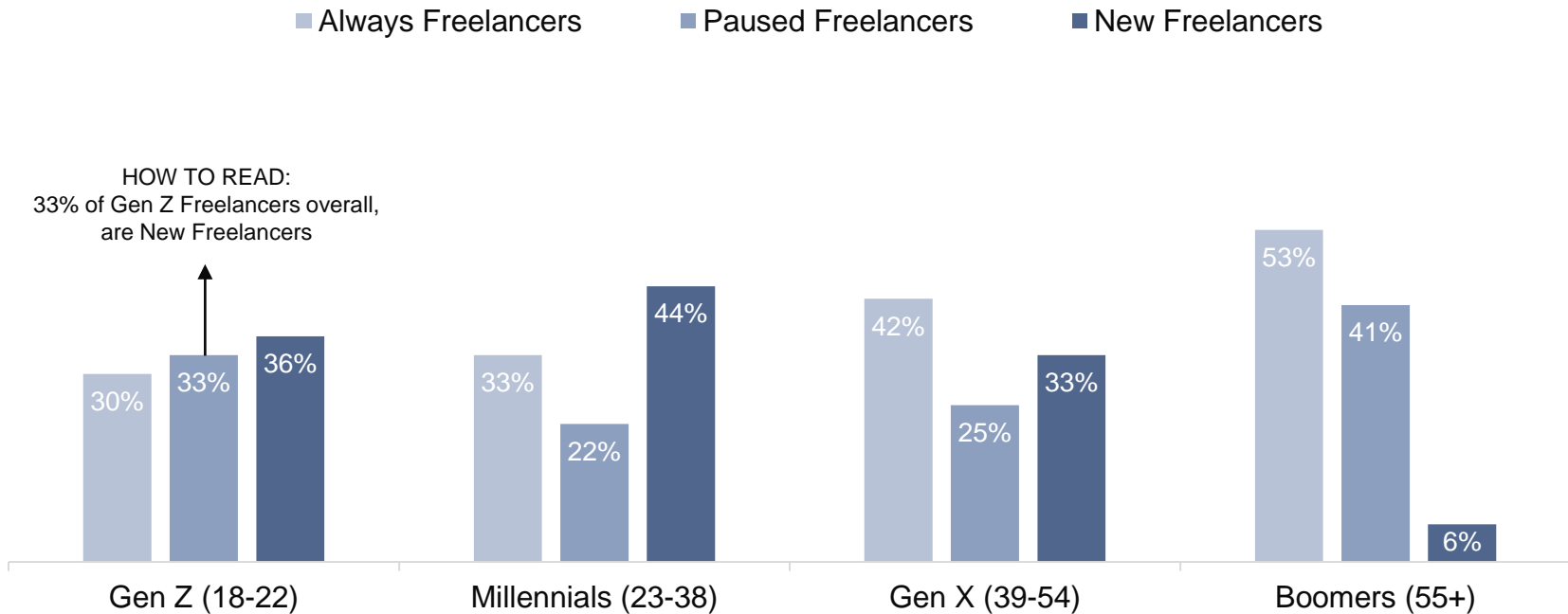
% of US Workers doing Freelance Work by Generation *(% calculated out of total US workers in each generation group)*





TYPES OF FREELANCERS BY GENERATION

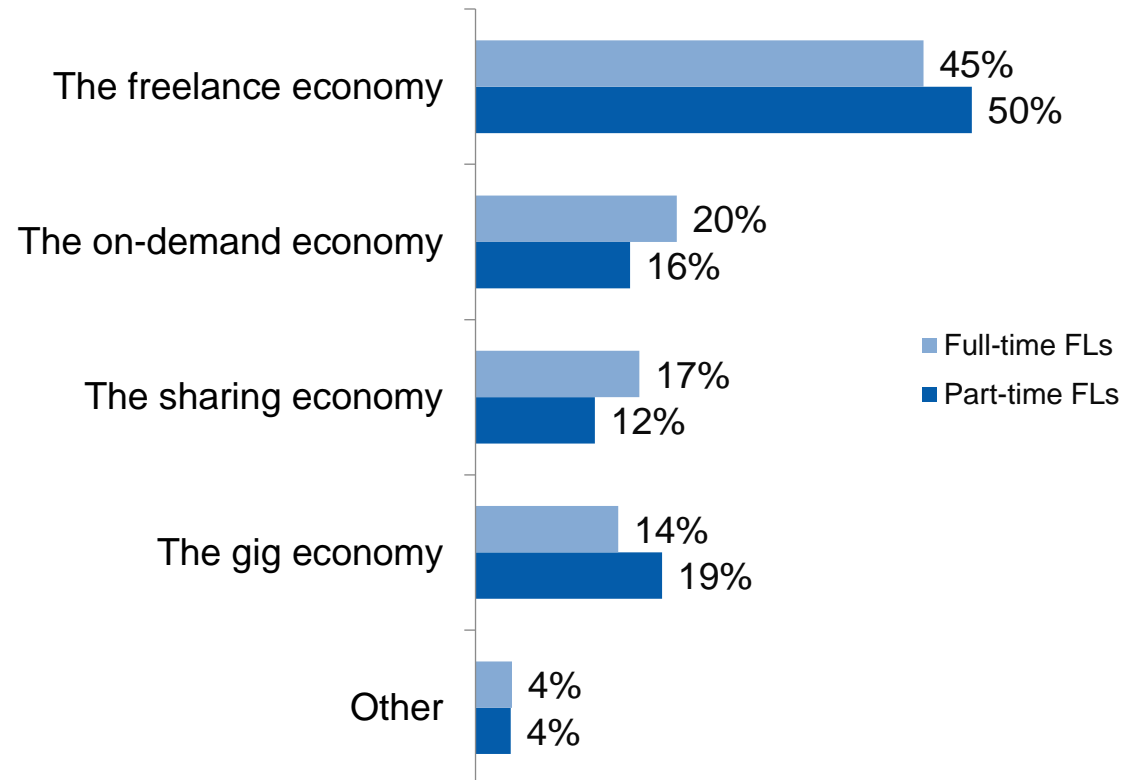
% of Always, Paused, and New Freelancers by Generation *(% calculated out of freelancers in each generation group)*



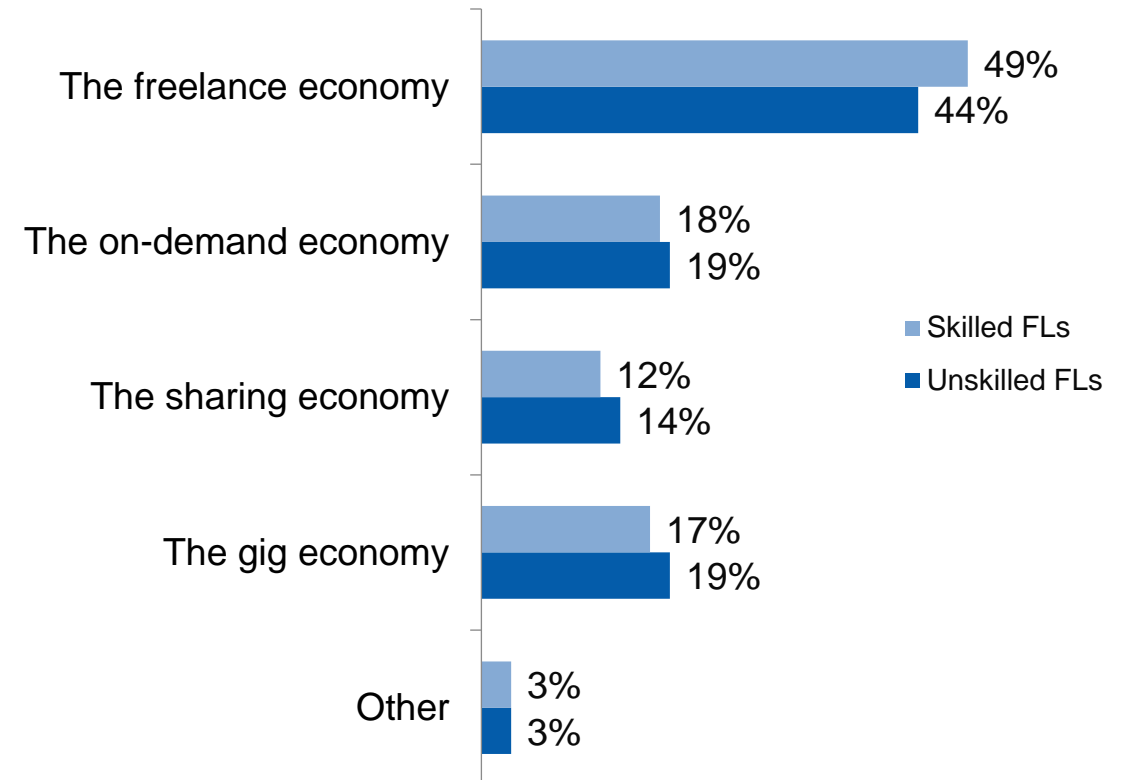
FULL-TIME FREELANCERS AND THOSE WHO DO SKILLED WORK IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS 'THE FREELANCE ECONOMY'

How do you prefer to describe the group of people who freelance?
[% calculated among total freelancers]

Full-time vs Part-time Freelancers



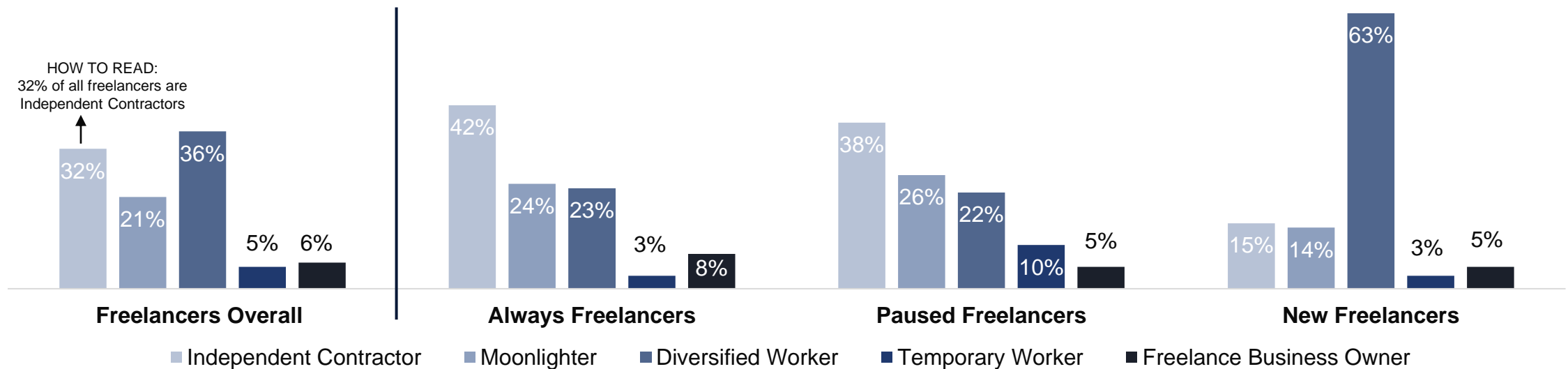
Skilled vs Unskilled Freelancers



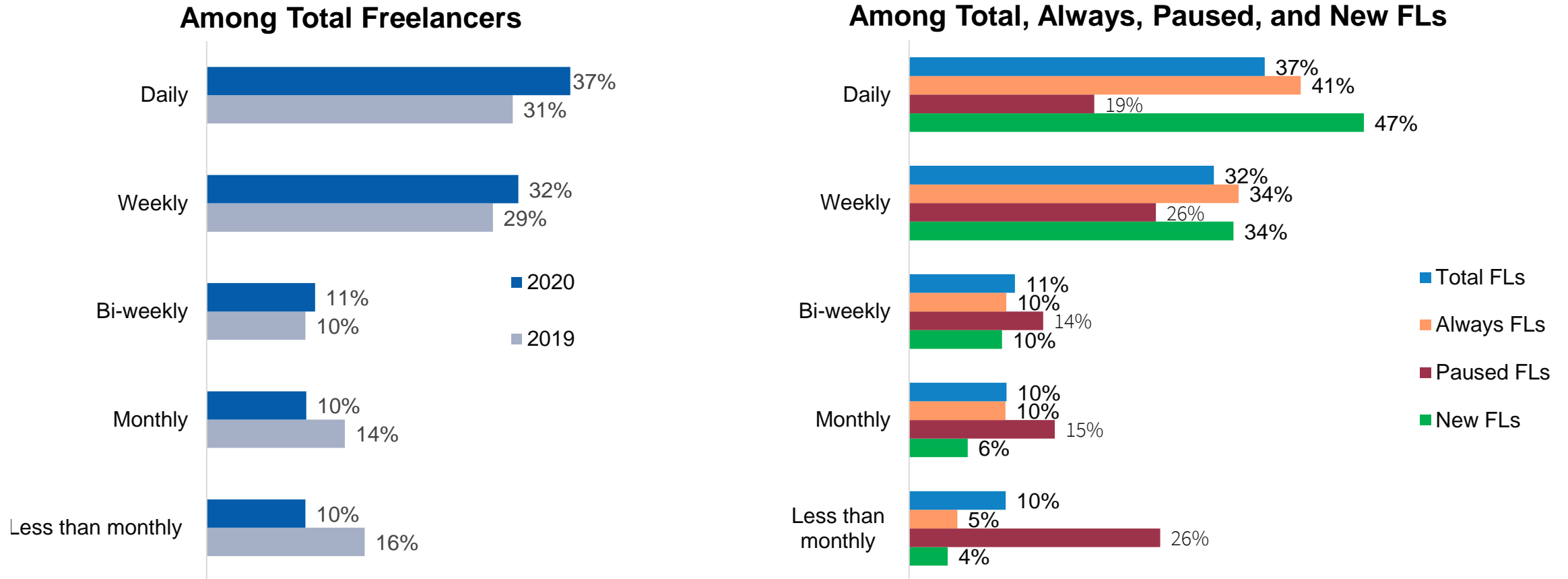


THE MAJORITY OF NEW FREELANCERS ARE “DIVERSIFIED WORKERS,” WHILE PAUSED FREELANCERS SPAN ACROSS A VARIETY OF FREELANCE TYPES (E.G. “MOONLIGHTER,” “TEMPORARY WORKER,” ETC.)

Freelancer Specific Classification (% calculated among each freelancer group)

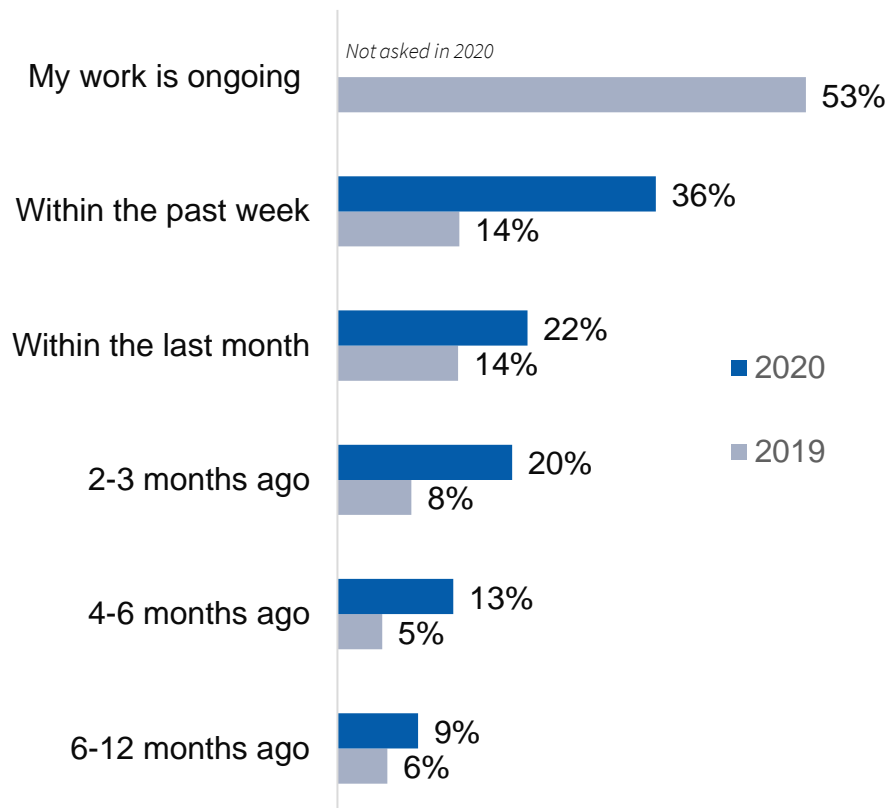


FREQUENCY OF FREELANCING: BY TOTAL, ALWAYS, PAUSED, AND NEW FREELANCERS

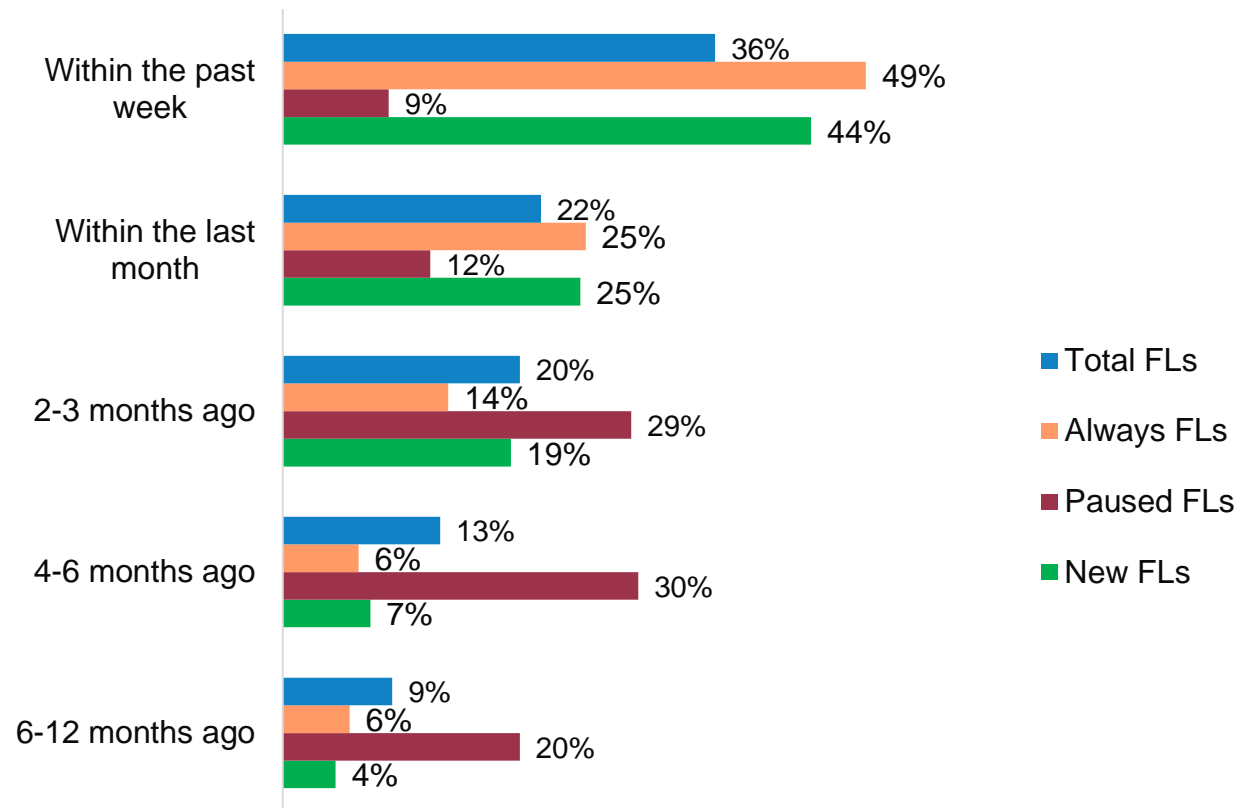


FREELANCE WORK RECENCY BY TOTAL, ALWAYS, PAUSED, AND NEW FREELANCERS

Among Total Freelancers

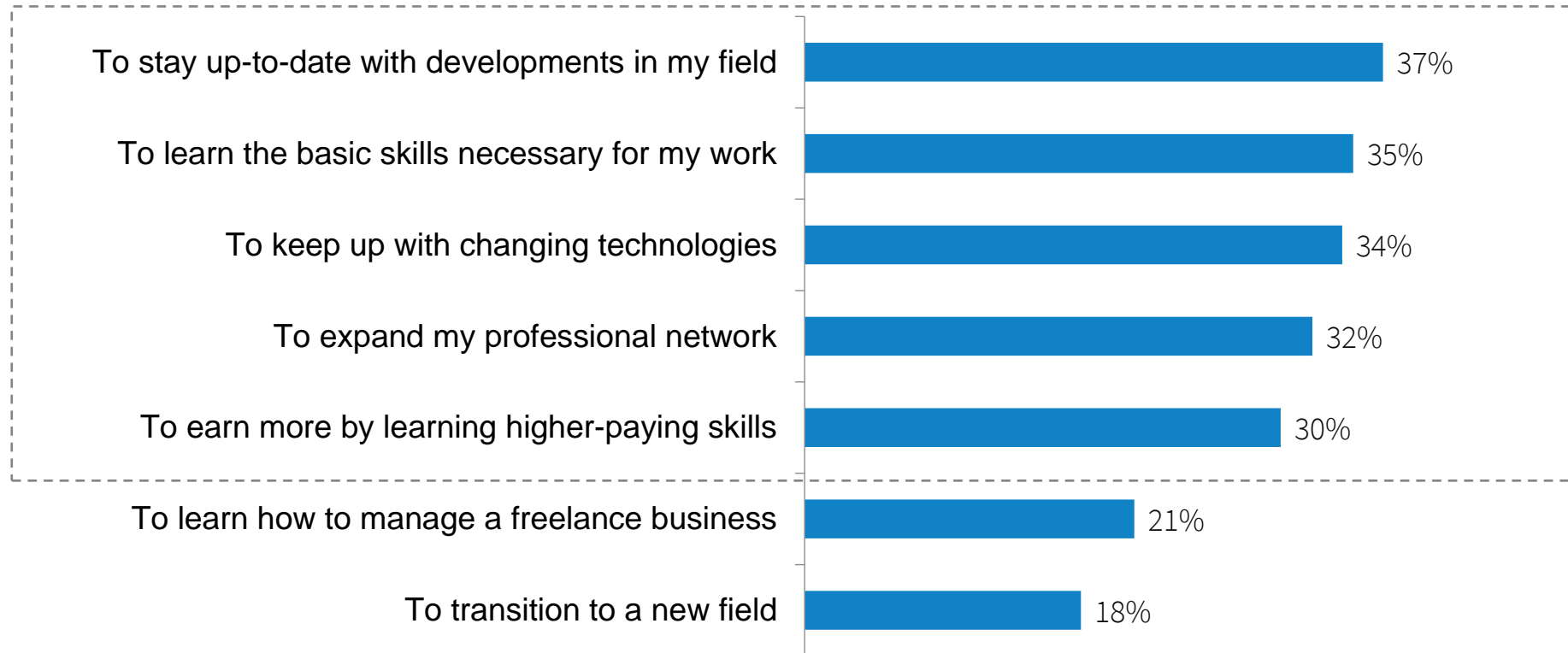


Among Total, Always, Paused, and New FLs



FREELANCERS VALUE SKILLS TRAINING FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS

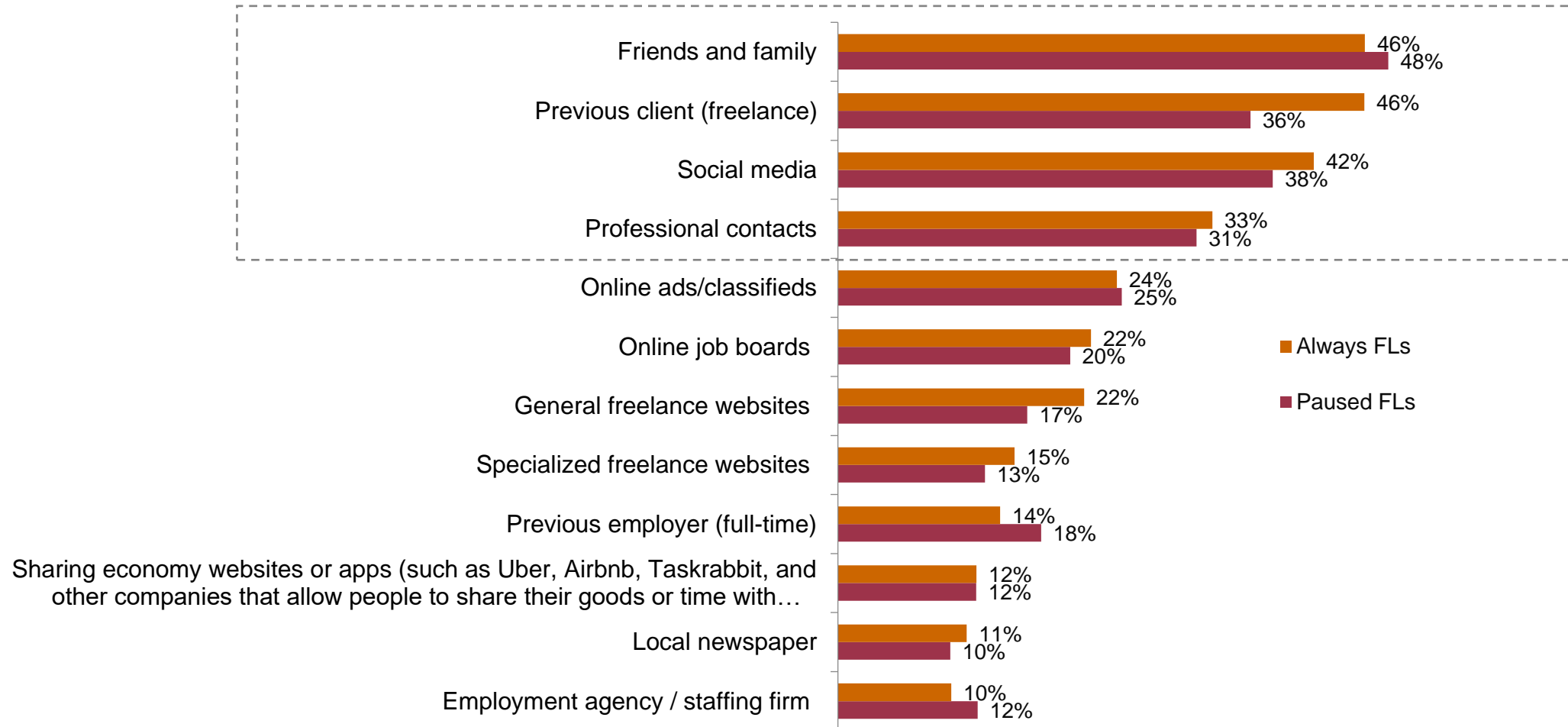
% Among Top Three Reasons for Skill-Related Education or Training
[% calculated among total freelancers]





ALWAYS AND PAUSED FREELANCERS TYPICALLY SOURCE WORK THROUGH PERSONAL CONTACTS OVER ONLINE RESOURCES

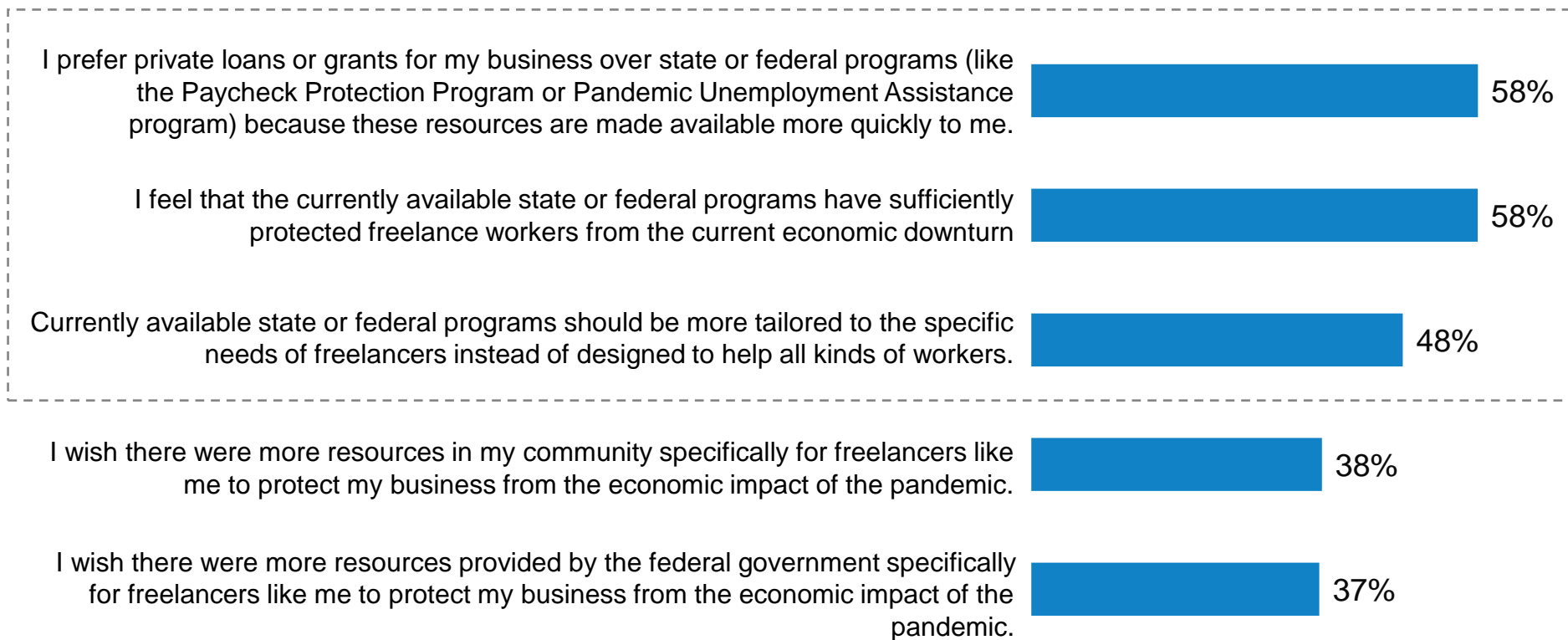
Where do you typically find work?
[% calculated among total Always and Paused FLs]





FREELANCERS COULD USE MORE RESOURCES PROVIDED BY THEIR COMMUNITY AND STATE/FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY TAILORED FOR FREELANCERS LIKE THEM

% Agree
[% calculated among total freelancers]





FREELANCERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL PRODUCTIVE IN REMOTE SETTINGS THAN NON-FREELANCERS

In which setting do you feel most productive in?
[% calculated among remote workers]

