



The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to reexamine the fundamentals of work in the United States. Before the pandemic, how often did we hear terms like “essential” or “frontline” workers? It has also compelled us to concentrate on work characteristics like the ability to work from home. Shelter-in-place and social distancing mandates have caused many of us to work from home, or at least those of us who are fortunate enough to be able to do so. How many workers in the Coachella Valley can work from home?

Researchers at the University of Chicago’s Becker Friedman Institute for Economics have provided us the framework to estimate this number. Their white paper “How Many Jobs Can be Done at Home?” (Jonathan I. Dingel and Brent Neiman, June 2020) presented their methodology for estimating what percentage of U.S. workers could do their jobs at home. They found that 37% of jobs in the United States can be accomplished entirely from home. They also noted that these types of jobs primarily pay more than jobs that cannot be done at home, and represent 46% of all US wages.

The Institute classified almost 1,000 occupations using surveys from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET), a U.S. Department of Labor program established to understand the nature of work in the U.S. Using responses

from survey questions about physical work conditions (e.g., having to work outdoors every day, having to walk or run for my work), or job behaviors (e.g., handling and moving objects or operating vehicles), they determined which of the 1,000 occupations could not primarily be done at home. They aggregated these findings into the major U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) standard occupational classification (SOC) codes to come up with the percentage of jobs in each occupation classification that can be done at home. For example, 97% of legal occupation jobs can be done at home, but only 3% of transportation and material moving occupations can.

CVEP applied these percentages to the occupation sector distribution in the Coachella Valley to estimate the number of valley workers that can work from home. Out of an estimated 187,218 jobs in the valley, 58,406 can be done from home, or 31.2% of valley jobs, as compared to 37% in the United States. Two of our top four employment sectors have an estimated 0% of workers that can work at home, and our highest sector, Sales and Sales Related, has an estimated 28% who can work from home. Nearly half of all jobs in the Coachella Valley are in sectors where 6% or less are estimated to be able to work from home.

Occupation	December 2019 employment	% of total employment	% who can work from home	Total who can work from home
Food Preparation and Serving Related	17,208	9.2%	0%	0
Building Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	17,126	9.1%	0%	0
Construction and Extraction	10,434	5.6%	0%	0
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	7,459	4.0%	1%	75
Production	5,878	3.1%	1%	59
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	9,230	4.9%	2%	185
Healthcare Support	4,583	2.4%	2%	92
Transportation and Material Moving	7,408	4.0%	3%	222
Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians	8,192	4.4%	5%	410
Protective Service	4,133	2.2%	6%	248
Personal Care and Service	10,589	5.7%	26%	2,753
Sales and Sales Related	24,045	12.8%	28%	6,733
Community and Social Service	2,832	1.5%	37%	1,048
Life, Physical, and Social Sciences	608	0.3%	54%	328
Architecture and Engineering	1,433	0.8%	61%	874
Office and Administrative Support	20,049	10.7%	65%	13,032
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media	3,161	1.7%	76%	2,402
Management	15,582	8.3%	87%	13,556
Business and Financial Operations	5,478	2.9%	88%	4,821
Legal	1,814	1.0%	97%	1,760
Education Instruction and Library	8,313	4.4%	98%	8,147
Computer and Mathematical	1,663	0.9%	100%	1,663
TOTAL	187,218			58,406

SHARE OF JOBS THAT CAN BE DONE AT HOME

