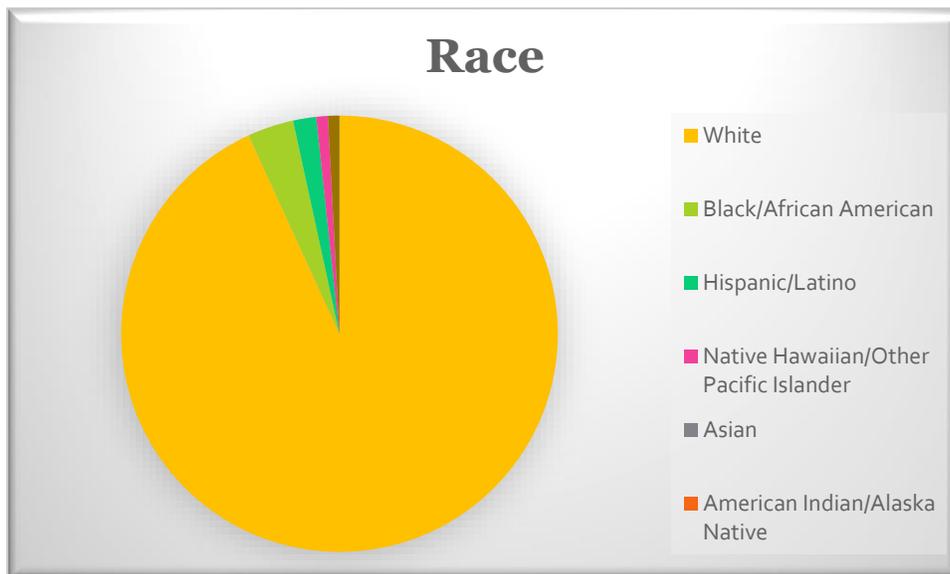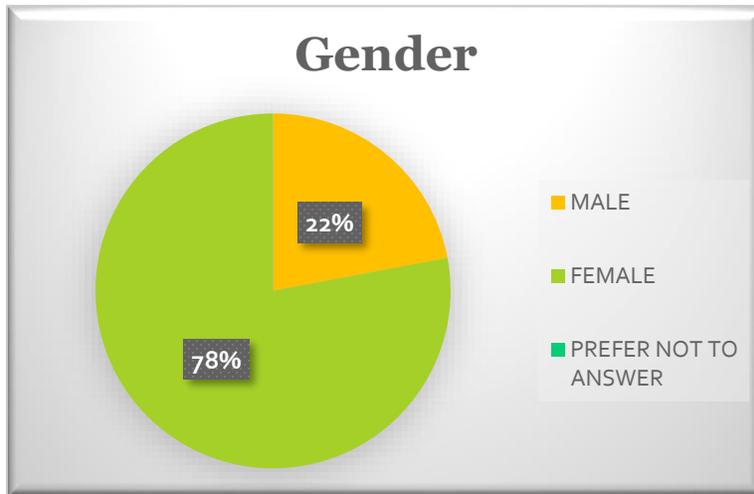# COVID RESPONSE WORKFORCE SURVEY

RESULTS

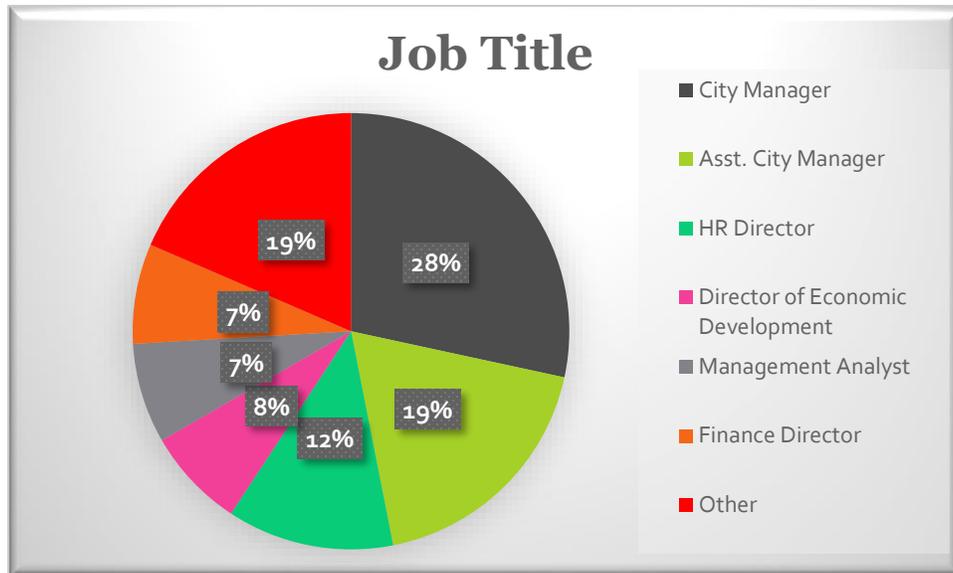Presented by the NIU Center for Governmental Studies

November 2020

McKinsey and Co. in conjunction with Lean In have put out a report on the Impact of COVID and Women in the Workplace. Some of the results demonstrated that women are more likely to reduce their workload or leave the workforce due to the impact of COVID. We reached out to our membership to see how COVID has affected them as employees and/or their organizations as a supervisor/manager.

Results will be used to share with our members and other associations to help their members improve workplace issues surrounding COVID. The survey was distributed to 754 members, of which there were **118** respondents, which is about a **16%** response rate.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

- MALE — 22%
- FEMALE — 78%
- PREFER NOT TO ANSWER

Race

- White
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Asian
- American Indian/Alaska Native

Job Title

"Other" responses include:

- Director of Policy and Public Affairs
- Assistant to the Chair
- Fire Chief
- Records Supervisor
- Director of Transportation
- City Engineer
- Director of Strategic Communication

- Attorney
- Chief of Police
- Senior Civil Engineer
- Executive Director

- Talent and Compensation Manager
- Planning Division Manager

Supervisory Level
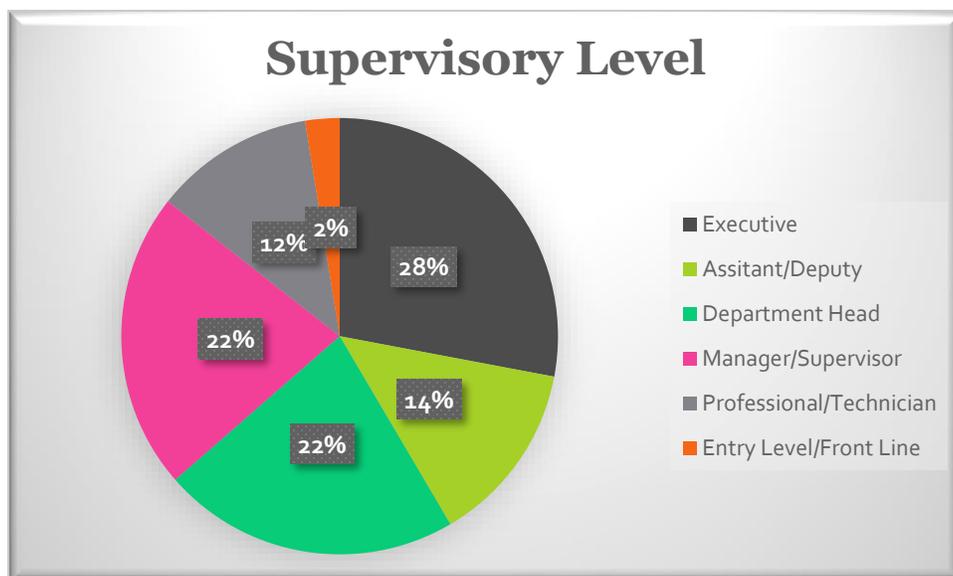
HOME ENVIRONMENT

Respondents were asked to indicate how many children they have living in their home. **33%** said they do not have any children at home. **20%** said they have children at home younger than five, **21%** said they have children at home ages 6-10 and **27%** of respondents indicated they have children at home ages 11-17. **17%** of respondents have children at home that are over age 18.

This means around **50%** of respondents have children at home doing e-learning while they are trying to work remotely.

Some comments about balancing e-learning and work at home are below:

- ➢ *"I am having to adjust my schedule based on schooling changes."*
- ➢ *"It is very difficult to focus on work with teachers emailing me about missing meets, my kids calling me about technology issues, and balancing my husband's work schedule."*
- ➢ *"Working from home has been challenging due to ever changing school schedules (i.e. fully remote or hybrid) and having to assist my kids in schoolwork."*
- ➢ *"The stress and management of a full-time job, remote learning and daycare have made it difficult to be present while at work."*

16% of respondents indicated they felt their caregiver responsibilities were looked at negatively by others in their workplace. **47%** indicated they did not feel this way.

Some comments about caregiver responsibilities are listed below:

- ➢ *"I have been surprised to see how understanding most everyone has been about the challenges of managing a full-time job and caring for my young children. I however have found it difficult to manage the balance and keeping up with my work in the midst of such constant change."*
- ➢ *"My organization has gone out of its way to ensure that work-life balance is valued throughout the organization."*
- ➢ *"Those of us with children are singled out and made to feel like we're taking a benefit that others are not afforded."*
- ➢ *"The immediate reaction is that I am shirking my duties when childcare is unavailable or I am forced to balance."*
- ➢ *"I have gotten feedback about loud kids in the background or 'call me when there's not crying' or negative comments if I'm outside while taking a call so my kids can run around outside and be occupied so I can focus on a call. I see male colleagues doing the same thing and I'm unsure and doubtful if they get similar feedback. I received a comment that 'you'll need a nanny' if I was to ever become Village Manager - as if I had to disguise my family and take health risks in order to progress in my career."*

WORK ENVIRONMENT

49% of respondents claimed that events surrounding COVID-19 have caused them to increase their number of weekly hours worked, while **48%** claimed there was no change in their hours worked weekly. Many respondents indicated they are working more irregular hours, checking emails late into the evening and on weekends, due to the incorporation of remote work capabilities.

Even despite longer hours at the office, **61%** of respondents indicated that they were able to remain completely present at work during working hours. **39%** claimed they were not able to remain completely present. Respondents indicated their main distraction to be balancing childcare and work responsibilities while working from home.

84% of respondents said they have not considered leaving the workforce because of COVID-19 regulations and restrictions, while **16%** claimed they have considered that possibility. Many respondents revealed they have turned down career advancement opportunities due to COVID-19 since these opportunities would take them away from home more often than they are comfortable with at this time.

Fortunately, **61%** of respondents said they did not have any of their direct reports reduce their hours or leave the workforce due to COVID-19. **37%** indicated they have had direct reports reduce their hours or leave and a small percentage **(~1%)** had 11 or more direct reports reduce their hours or leave. This small percentage was made up of police, fire, and public works positions.

The most common reasons respondents indicated their workforce was reduced are:

1. Employees with children dealing with e-learning/daycare issues; and
2. COVID-19 exposure/quarantine protocols

SOLUTIONS

85% of respondents claimed they were able to make arrangements to help support staff in the workplace. The most common arrangements made were providing work-from-home capabilities and more flexible hours.
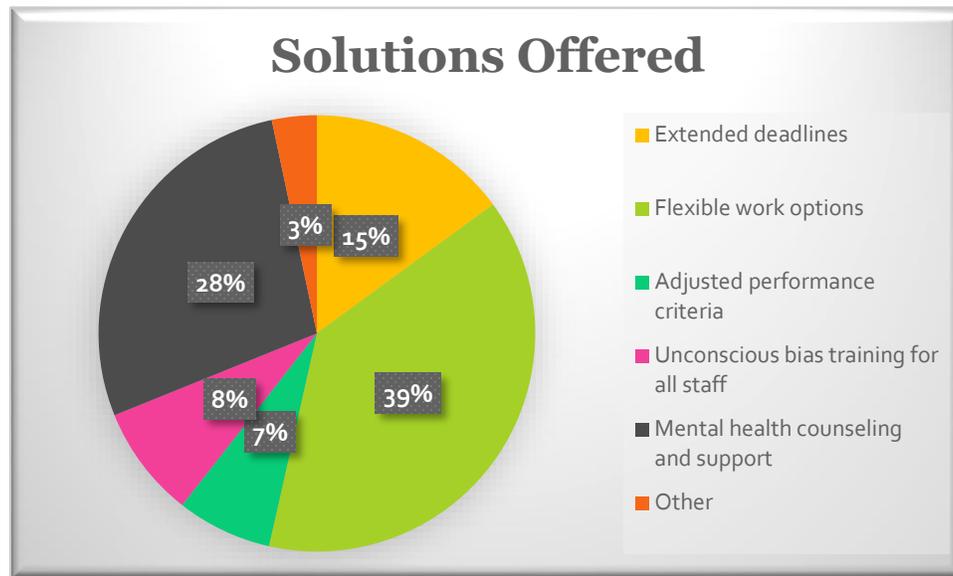
"Other" responses include:

> ➤ *"Unconscious bias training for first responders."*
> ➤ *"Our insurance offers mental health counseling/support"*
> ➤ *"Sexual Harassment Training"*

Respondents were asked to rank **solutions** according to how well they would support them as employees. Results are listed below:

1. Flexible work options
2. Mental health counseling and support
3. Unconscious bias training for all staff
4. Extended deadlines
5. Adjusted performance criteria