Gender Gap in Callback Rates for Remote Work Preferences

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“At home, it’s easy. You wake up at 7 AM, it’s easy to log on and just start working.”

-- Shirley, 52, paralegal, two teenage children

Waldrep et al. 2024. *Social Sciences*.

“I can work out, hang with the kids, stop work, pick them up at four, go to a park; options not available before. I appreciate the flexibility.”

-- Holly, 30, admissions counselor, two young children

Waldrep et al. 2024. *Social Sciences*.

Research Questions

1. Do job applicants' stated preferences for remote work during the job application process affect hiring decisions?

2. Do these effects vary by applicant gender?

Presentation Outline

- Background & Theory
- Data & Methods
- Results
- Discussion & Conclusion

Background & Theory

Remote Work in the United States

- More than 1 in 5 U.S. workers work remotely at least some of the time (BLS 2025).

- There is an unmet desire for remote work: 63% of workers who rarely/never work from home would do so if they could (Parker 2025).

Gender and Remote Work

- Women are more likely than men to work remotely (BLS 2025).
- Gendered importance of remote work:
  - 49% of women vs. 43% of men might leave their job if remote work ended (Parker 2025).
- Women experience significant reductions in gender discrimination when working remotely (Doering + Tilcsik 2025).
- Women, on average, are willing to forego more salary than men for remote work options (Mas + Pallais 2017).
  - Importantly, this perception may be outsized in employers' minds.

Consequences of Remote Work

- Scholars have examined the relationship between remote/hybrid work and (Bloom et al. 2024; Emanuel + Harrington 2024; Ranganathan 2024; Emanuel et al. 2023; Dunatchik et al. 2021):
  - Job satisfaction
  - Employee retention
  - Productivity
  - Quality of work
  - Collective action
  - Gendered division of household labor
  - And more …

- Gap in existing literature: Consequences of remote work preferences during the job application process for hiring outcomes.

Hiring Outcomes

- Hiring decisions are highly consequential for workers and organizations.
- Drivers of hiring decisions are difficult to study:
  - Observability
  - Causality
- Field-experimental or audit study techniques have been developed to provide causal traction on the determinants of hiring decisions.

Research Questions Revisited

1. Do job applicants' stated preferences for remote work during the job application process affect hiring decisions?

2. Do these effects vary by applicant gender?

Competing Empirical Predictions

Potential Negative Effects:

- Violation of 'ideal worker' norms (Weisshaar 2018).
- Remote work preferences signal lack of commitment.
- Result: Remote work preferences lead to penalties for applicants.

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Potential Positive/Null Effects:

- Remote workers report higher job autonomy (Gajendran + Harrison 2007).
- May signal independence and less need for oversight.
- Remote work preferences may be orthogonal to what employers care about.
- Result: Remote work preferences may lead to a null or positive effect.

Gendered Dynamics

- Women applicants may face stronger penalties for violating ideal worker norms (Correll et el. 2007).
- Alternatively, remote work may align with gender stereotypes, making it more acceptable for women (see Pedulla 2020).
- If employers perceive women as being willing to accept lower pay for remote work options (Mas + Pallais 2017),
  - May create incentives to hire women with remote work preferences at lower salaries.
  - This pattern would likely be most salient in evaluative contexts where employers have more discretion over setting salaries.

Existing Related Literature

- Closest related work relies on survey-experimental data from hypothetical hiring and evaluation scenarios (Daviss et al. 2025; Moens et al. 2026).
- Findings suggest that type of work arrangement (remote, hybrid, or in-person) as well as workers' explanations of why they want a particular work arrangement shape evaluations.

Data & Methods

Field Experiment Design

- Pre-registered and IRB-approved audit study, which enables us to isolate demand-side processes in hiring.
- We submitted 3,083 fictitious job applications to 1,098 real job openings.
- Three occupations: Data science, Software engineering, and Project management.
- Seven metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC.

Key Manipulations

1. Work Location Preference: Signaled in the cover letter and in the summary statement at the top of the resume.

- Remote
- On-site
- Control (no preference stated)

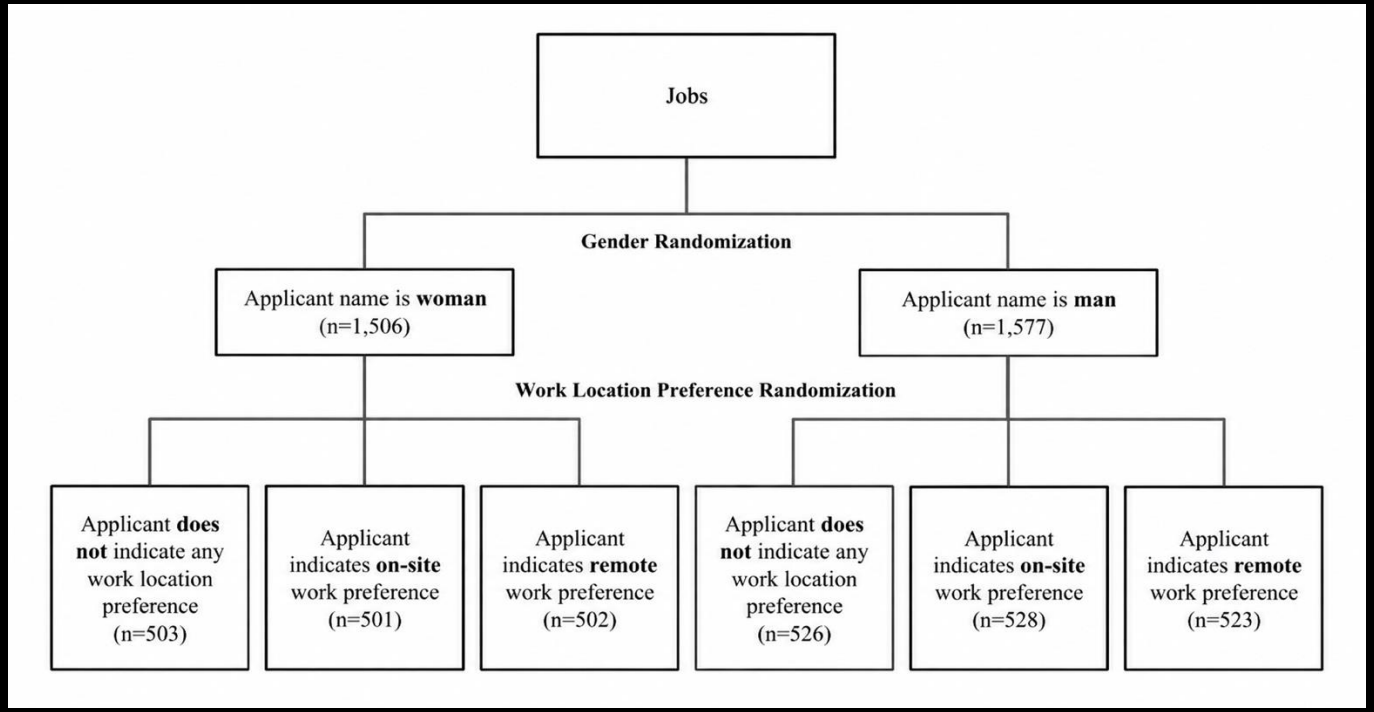
2. Applicant (Perceived) Gender: Signaled with gendered names, which is standard practice in audit studies.

- Women: Kristen Andersen, Megan Becker, Claire Nielsen
- Men: Scott Andersen, Matthew Becker, Todd Nielsen
- Names were pre-tested to ensure that they signaled desired gender and were not confounded with other perceptions (i.e., social class, age, ethnicity).

Application Procedures

- Three research assistants submitted the applications between June 2024 and March 2025.
- Each week of the study, we (randomly) picked a city-by-occupation combination.
- We identified jobs that had been posted within the previous 14 days and that were within a 25-mile radius of the city.
  - Would randomly sort those jobs.
  - Then, would keep jobs that were: hybrid jobs; had no on-site requirements
  - Did not apply to jobs that were part-time, contract, or temporary; where we had previously applied to the company; the company name was not listed; and where the company was listed on any resume.
- Applications were submitted on three consecutive days in a randomized order.

Randomization Process



Can isolate the effect of remote work preferences within a job posting while examining gender differences across job postings.

Additional Key Measures

- Dependent Variable: Whether or a not an application received a callback for the job within 60 days of applying (defined in our preregistration).
- Heterogeneity by Employer Discretion in Setting Salaries:
  - State-Level Pay Transparency: We coded whether a job posting was subject to a state pay transparency law at the time the job was posted.
  - Job Posting Salary Range: The salary range is defined as the difference between the posted maximum and minimum annual salary, for the job postings that disclosed a salary range (N = 1,940).

Analytic Approach

- Linear probability models of callbacks, by work location preference and gender, with standard errors clustered at the job posting level.

- Heterogeneity analyses (not pre-registered):
  - Variation by state-level pay transparency laws.
  - Variation by salary range listed on job postings.

Results

Work Location Preferences & Gender

Summary Statistics

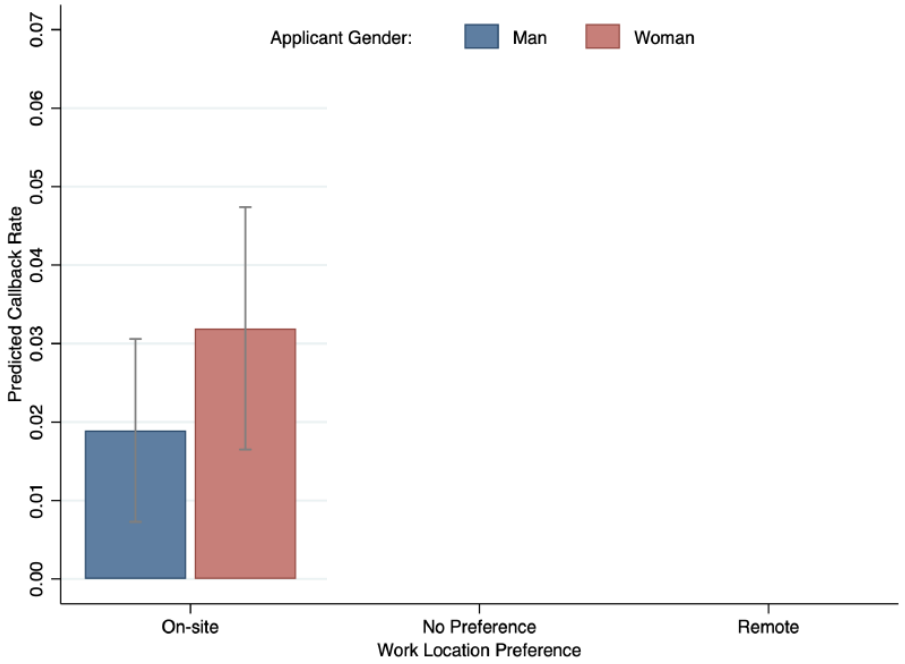
Variable	N	Mean	SD
Gender	3,083	0.49	0.50
Woman	1,506	-	-
Man	1,577	-	-
Work Location Preference	3,083	2.00	0.82
No Preference	1,029	-	-
On-site	1,029	-	-
Remote	1,025	-	-
Positive Callback	3,083	0.03	0.16
Callback	84	-	-
No Callback	2,999	-	-
Job Type	3,083	-	-
Data	322	-	-
Project	1,868	-	-
Software	893	-	-
City	3,083	-	-
Atlanta	446	-	-
Boston	447	-	-
Chicago	443	-	-
Los Angeles	374	-	-
New York	480	-	-
San Francisco	411	-	-
Washington DC	482	-	-
State Has Transparency Law in Effect (=1 if yes)[1]	2,993	0.57	0.50
Yes	1,699	-	-
No	1,294	-	-
Median Salary[2] *($)*	1,940	119,814	53,600
Salary Range[2] *($)*	1,940	32,229	43,317

Callback Rates by Work Location Preference and Gender



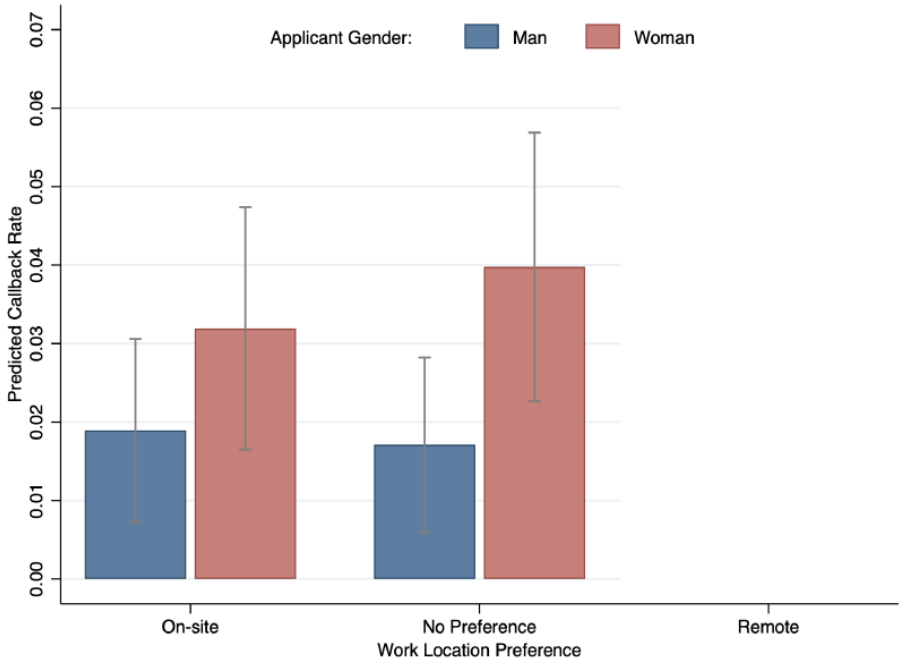
Note: Bars show predicted callback rates by work location preference and gender, using OLS models with 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level.

Callback Rates by Work Location Preference and Gender



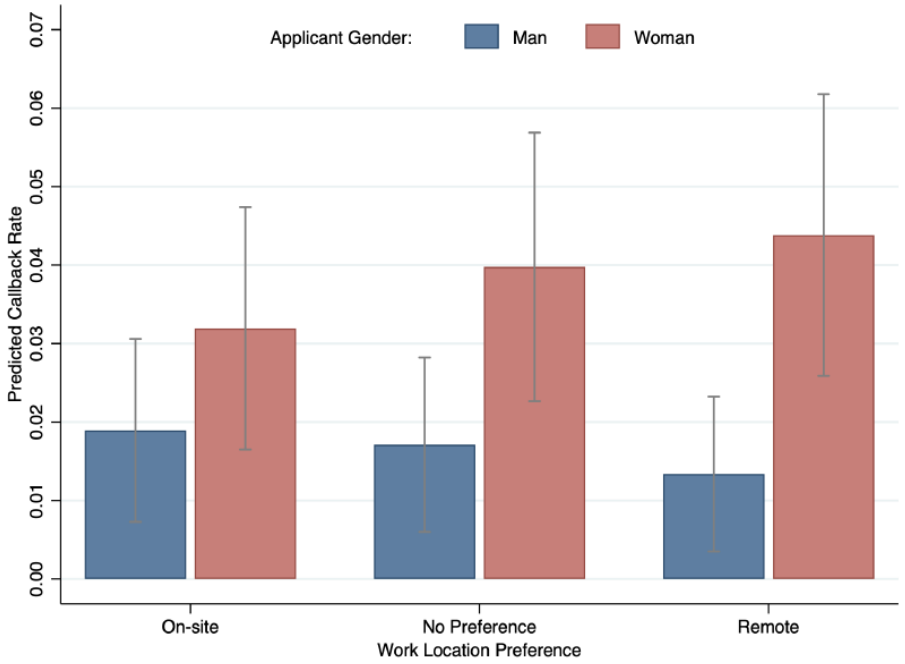
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The Effect of Remote Work Preferences and Gender on Callbacks

	Dependent Variable: Positive Callback			
	Full Sample	Man	Woman	Full Sample
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Work Location Preference				
No Preference				
Remote				
Gender				
Woman				
Work Location Preference × *Gender*				
No Preference × Woman				
Remote × Woman				
Constant				
Observations				
R-squared				
Adjusted R-squared				

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level in parentheses. $^{***}p<0.001$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{+}p<0.1$. Model (1) estimates effects of work location preference and gender on callback rates using the full experimental sample. Models (2) and (3) estimate the same effects as Model (1) with man and woman subsamples, respectively. Model (4) estimates the intersectional effect of work location preference and gender on callback rates, using the full sample. Reference category for work location preference is on-site.

The Effect of Remote Work Preferences and Gender on Callbacks

	Dependent Variable: Positive Callback			
	Full Sample	Man	Woman	Full Sample
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Work Location Preference				
No Preference	0.003			
	(0.005)			
Remote	0.003			
	(0.004)			
Gender				
Woman	0.022*			
	(0.009)			
Work Location Preference × *Gender*				
No Preference × Woman				
Remote × Woman				
Constant	0.015**			
	(0.005)			
Observations	3,083			
R-squared	0.005			
Adjusted R-squared	0.004			

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level in parentheses. ***$p<0.001$; **$p<0.01$; *$p<0.05$; $^{+}p<0.1$. Model (1) estimates effects of work location preference and gender on callback rates using the full experimental sample. Models (2) and (3) estimate the same effects as Model (1) with man and woman subsamples, respectively. Model (4) estimates the intersectional effect of work location preference and gender on callback rates, using the full sample. Reference category for work location preference is on-site.

The Effect of Remote Work Preferences and Gender on Callbacks

	Dependent Variable: Positive Callback			
	Full Sample	Man	Woman	Full Sample
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Work Location Preference				
No Preference	0.003	-0.002		
	(0.005)	(0.006)		
Remote	0.003	-0.006		
	(0.004)	(0.004)		
Gender				
Woman	0.022*			
	(0.009)			
Work Location Preference × Gender				
No Preference × Woman				
Remote × Woman				
Constant	0.015**	0.019**		
	(0.005)	(0.006)		
Observations	3,083	1,577		
R-squared	0.005	0.000		
Adjusted R-squared	0.004	-0.001		

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level in parentheses. ***$p<0.001$; **$p<0.01$; *$p<0.05$; $^{+}p<0.1$. Model (1) estimates effects of work location preference and gender on callback rates using the full experimental sample. Models (2) and (3) estimate the same effects as Model (1) with man and woman subsamples, respectively. Model (4) estimates the intersectional effect of work location preference and gender on callback rates, using the full sample. Reference category for work location preference is on-site.

The Effect of Remote Work Preferences and Gender on Callbacks

	Dependent Variable: Positive Callback			
	Full Sample	Man	Woman	Full Sample
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Work Location Preference				
No Preference	0.003	-0.002	0.008	
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.007)	
Remote	0.003	-0.006	0.012^{+}	
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)	
Gender				
Woman	0.022^{*}			
	(0.009)			
Work Location Preference × *Gender*				
No Preference × Woman				
Remote × Woman				
Constant	0.015^{**}	0.019^{**}	0.032^{***}	
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.008)	
Observations	3,083	1,577	1,506	
R-squared	0.005	0.000	0.001	
Adjusted R-squared	0.004	-0.001	-0.001	

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level in parentheses. $^{***}p<0.001$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{+}p<0.1$. Model (1) estimates effects of work location preference and gender on callback rates using the full experimental sample. Models (2) and (3) estimate the same effects as Model (1) with man and woman subsamples, respectively. Model (4) estimates the intersectional effect of work location preference and gender on callback rates, using the full sample. Reference category for work location preference is on-site.

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	Dependent Variable: Positive Callback			
	Full Sample	Man	Woman	Full Sample
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Work Location Preference				
No Preference	0.003	-0.002	0.008	-0.002
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Remote	0.003	-0.006	0.012^{+}	-0.006
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.004)
Gender				
Woman	0.022*			0.013
	(0.009)			(0.010)
Work Location Preference × Gender				
No Preference × Woman				0.010
				(0.010)
Remote × Woman				0.017*
				(0.008)
Constant	0.015**	0.019**	0.032***	0.019**
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Observations	3,083	1,577	1,506	3,083
R-squared	0.005	0.000	0.001	0.005
Adjusted R-squared	0.004	-0.001	-0.001	0.004

Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level in parentheses. $^{***}p<0.001$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{+}p<0.1$. Model (1) estimates effects of work location preference and gender on callback rates using the full experimental sample. Models (2) and (3) estimate the same effects as Model (1) with man and woman subsamples, respectively. Model (4) estimates the intersectional effect of work location preference and gender on callback rates, using the full sample. Reference category for work location preference is on-site.

Main Finding

Compared to stating a preference for on-site work, stating a preference for remote work leads to a larger increase in callback rates for women applicants than for men applicants. The difference is 1.7 percentage points --- equivalent to ~60% of the overall callback rate.

Robustness Checks

- Logit and probit specifications.
- Including controls for city and occupation.
- Limiting to job openings that received two and three applications.

Does Salary-Setting Discretion Matter?

Results by Pay Transparency Laws & Salary Range

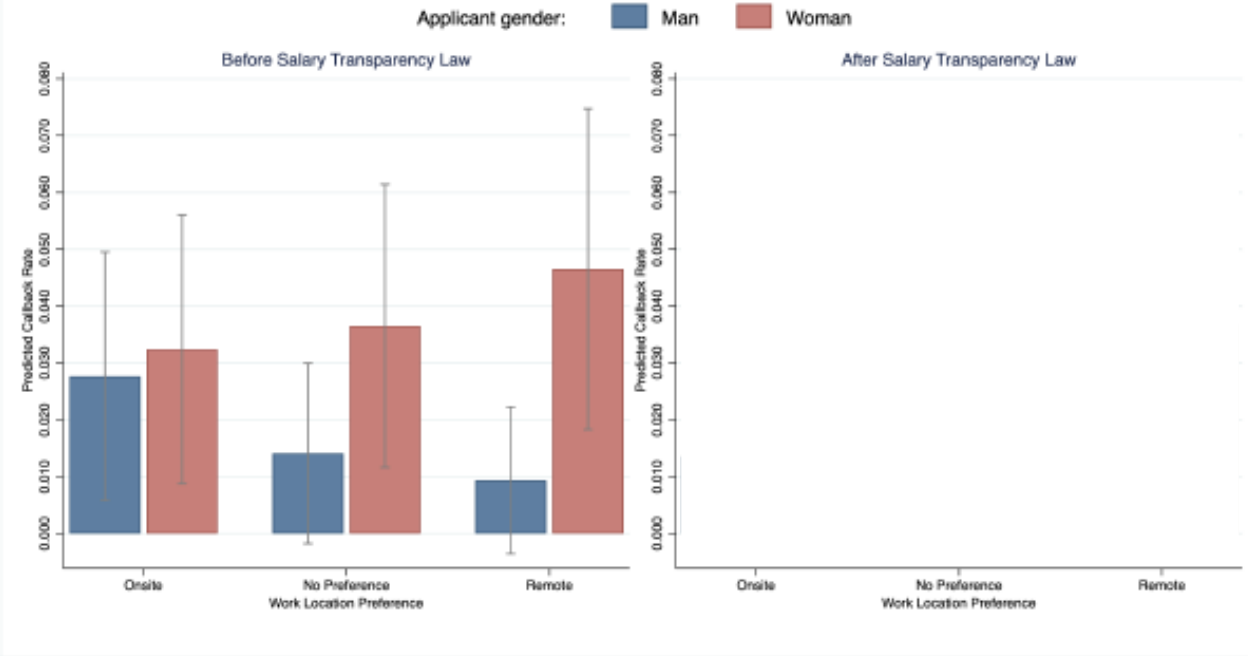
	Salary Transparency (1)	Salary Range (2)
Woman	0.164	1.912*
	(0.565)	(0.822)
No Preference × Woman	0.812	-0.266
	(0.705)	(0.747)
Remote × Woman	1.479*	-0.201
	(0.669)	(0.733)
After Salary Transparency Law	-0.727	
	(0.652)	
No Preference × Woman	-0.877	
× After Salary Transparency Law	(0.869)	
Remote × Woman	-1.482*	
× After Salary Transparency Law	(0.743)	
Salary Range ($thousands)		0.001
		(0.003)
No Preference × Woman		0.016
× Salary Range ($thousands)		(0.013)
Remote × Woman		0.018*
× Salary Range ($thousands)		(0.007)
Constant	-3.560***	-5.121***
	(0.414)	(0.717)
Observations	2,993[1]	1,940[2]
Pseudo R-squared	0.021	0.069
R-squared	-	-

Results by Pay Transparency Laws



Note: Bars show predicted callback rates by work location preference, gender, and whether the job post was posted before or after the salary transparency law, using OLS models with 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level.

Results by Pay Transparency Laws



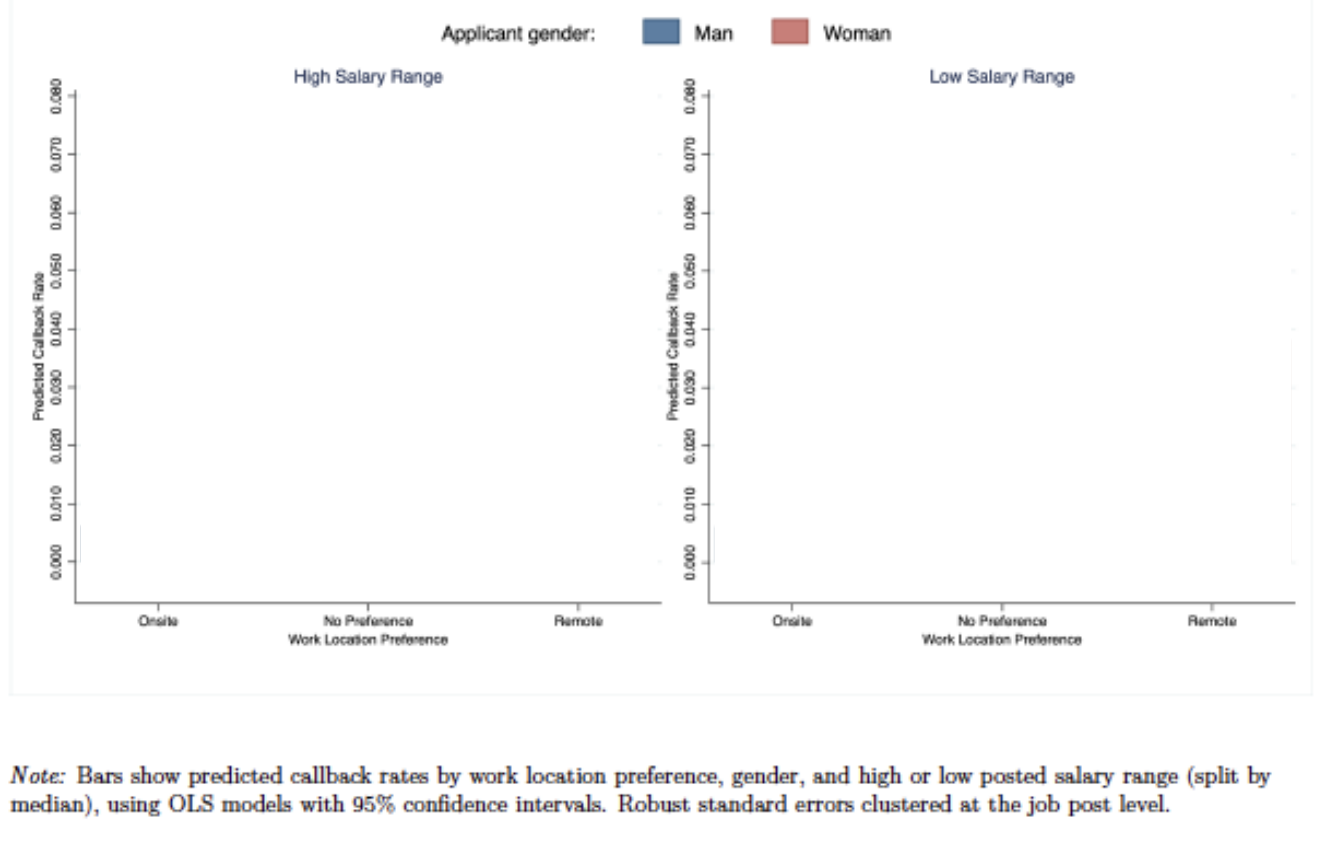
Note: Bars show predicted callback rates by work location preference, gender, and whether the job post was posted before or after the salary transparency law, using OLS models with 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level.

Results by Pay Transparency Laws



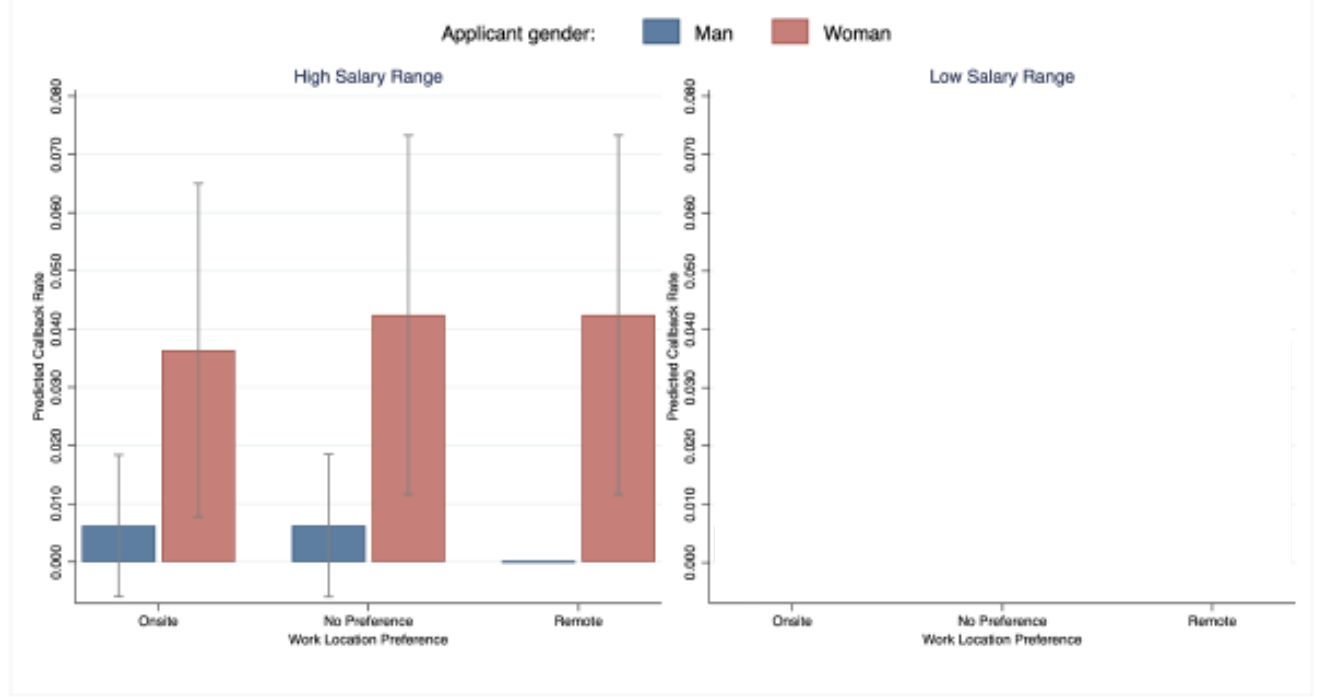
Note: Bars show predicted callback rates by work location preference, gender, and whether the job post was posted before or after the salary transparency law, using OLS models with 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level.

Results by Salary Range



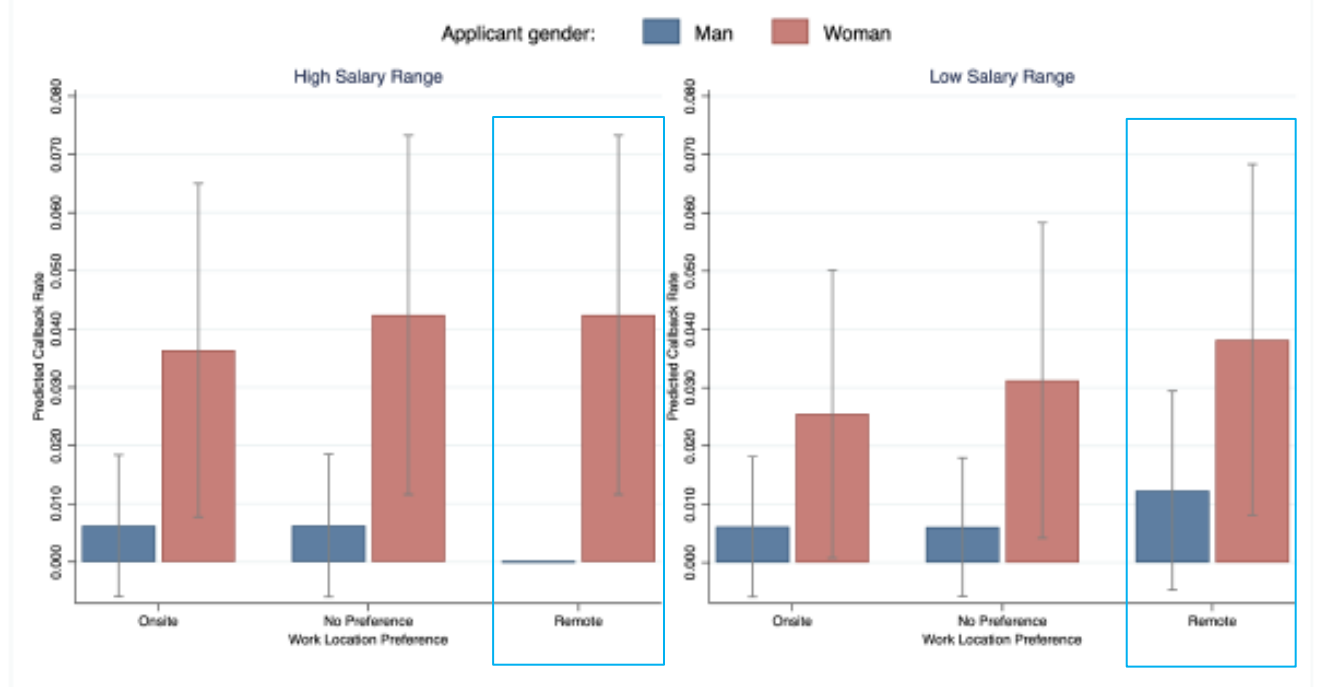
Note: Bars show predicted callback rates by work location preference, gender, and high or low posted salary range (split by median), using OLS models with 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level.

Results by Salary Range



Note: Bars show predicted callback rates by work location preference, gender, and high or low posted salary range (split by median), using OLS models with 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level.

Results by Salary Range



Note: Bars show predicted callback rates by work location preference, gender, and high or low posted salary range (split by median), using OLS models with 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors clustered at the job post level.

Salary Discretion

- The gendered pattern in remote work callbacks is particularly salient when employers have more discretion over salaries.

- This is consistent with employers:
  - Perceiving women as willing to accept lower wages for remote work.
  - Being more interested in hiring women with remote work preferences because they believe they can hire them at lower salaries.

Discussion & Conclusion

Limitations

- Low overall callback rates.
- Important geographic and occupational scope conditions.
- We are looking only at hybrid jobs.
- We do not test all mechanisms and evidence for the mechanism is indirect.

Discussion and Implications

- First (to our knowledge) field-experimental evidence about how remote work preferences affect hiring decisions.
- Reveals gendered dynamics: Women benefit more than men from stating a remote work preference during the hiring process.
- Not a costless “benefit” for women: Indirect evidence that employers perceive women as willing to accept lower wages for remote work.
- Provides novel insight into how remote work intersects with gender to shape access to job opportunities in the United States.

Thank You!

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Preregistration

- Preregistration on the AEA RCT Registry.
- Uploaded a pre-analysis plan as well.
- Minor divergences from preregistration:
  - Preregistered sample size was 3,000 applications to 1,000 job postings. We end up with 3,083 applications to 971 job postings, largely due to job postings being removed after first application was submitted.
  - In our pre-analysis plan, we indicated that the omitted work location preference category would be the “control,” but use “on-site” as the omitted category because it makes interpretation of our findings more straightforward.