

# Where Are the Workers?

Insights from employers and working-age adults in *Greater Akron*  
(Summit, Medina and Portage counties)

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Greater Akron Chamber



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United Way  
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workers?

# Questions and Comments

Please place your questions and comments in the Q&A box,  
along with your email address and your county

Presentation slides and responses to your questions will  
be made available to all participants

# Introduction

About This Project

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# A Collaborative, Multi-Part Approach

NATIONAL SCAN OF  
EXISTING RESEARCH

EMPLOYER  
PERSPECTIVE

WORKING-AGE ADULT  
PERSPECTIVE

“WHERE ARE THE WORKERS?” INSIGHTS

# Employer Perspective

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# Employer Research Overview

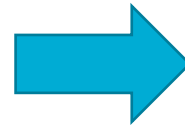
To better understand:

- How is the labor shortage manifesting in Northeast Ohio across counties, sectors, professions, and demographic groups?
- What have employers tried or what are they willing to try, and what has worked?
- How well do employers understand what workers want and need in today's labor market?

# Employer Surveys and Discussions

## Employer Survey

Survey	Responses
Greater Akron	254
<i>Medina</i>	33
<i>Portage</i>	99
<i>Summit</i>	122
Region	766



## Employer Roundtables

Roundtables	Sessions	Registrations
Greater Akron	6	77
<i>Medina</i>	1	30
<i>Portage</i>	2	17
<i>Summit</i>	3	30
Region	22	463





# The labor market feels tight because it is tight!

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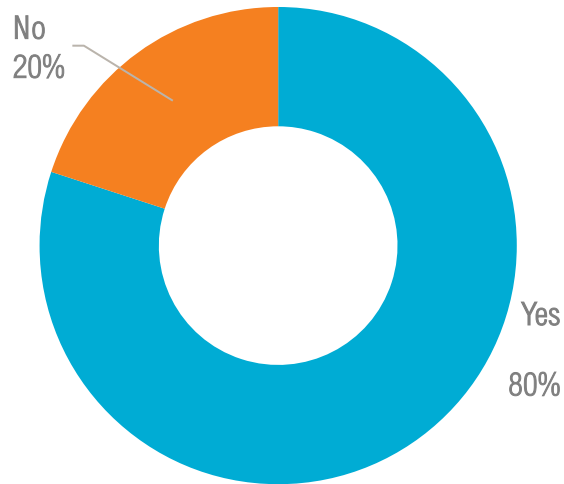
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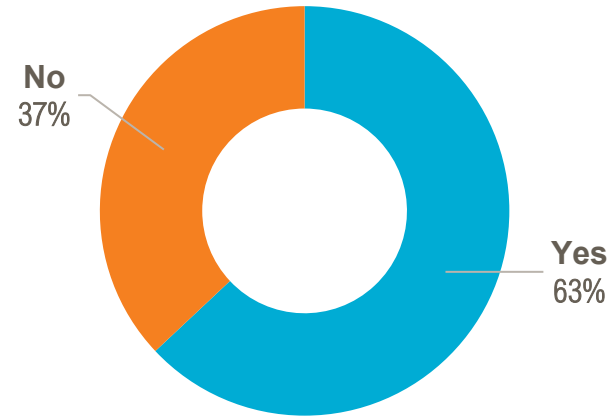
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# Greater Akron employers are feeling it.

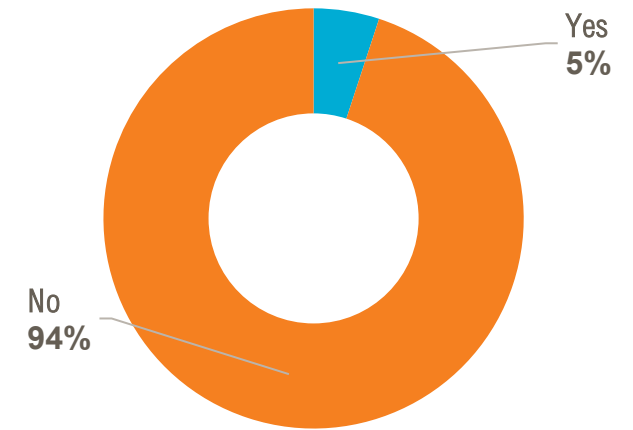
Talent Shortage?



High than Normal Turnover?



Sufficient pool of qualified applicants?



# The most elusive workers...

18-30  
year-olds

Hardest to recruit (47%)  
Quitting the most (44%)



# Employers are trying to address.

What is the biggest difference between today and pre-pandemic in your efforts to attract and hire talent?

1. Increasing benefits/salaries (including flexible work hours, hire-on bonuses)
2. Expanding job description to reach wider applicant pool/hiring less qualified candidates
3. Partnering with new organizations or training providers

What is the biggest difference between today and pre-pandemic in your efforts to retain your talent?

1. Offering bonuses/incentives
2. Promoting more from within the company
3. Supporting workforce to gain new skills (e.g. tuition reimbursement, in-house training)

# Employers are saying...

- Raising wages wasn't enough
- They need to find new ways to be attractive to candidates
- Need to place greater emphasis on company culture and implement strategies to retain employees
- Need to have flexible policies, including a hybrid work environment

"Wages are table stakes,  
nothing more."

-Executive at employer  
roundtable

# Working Age Adult Perspective

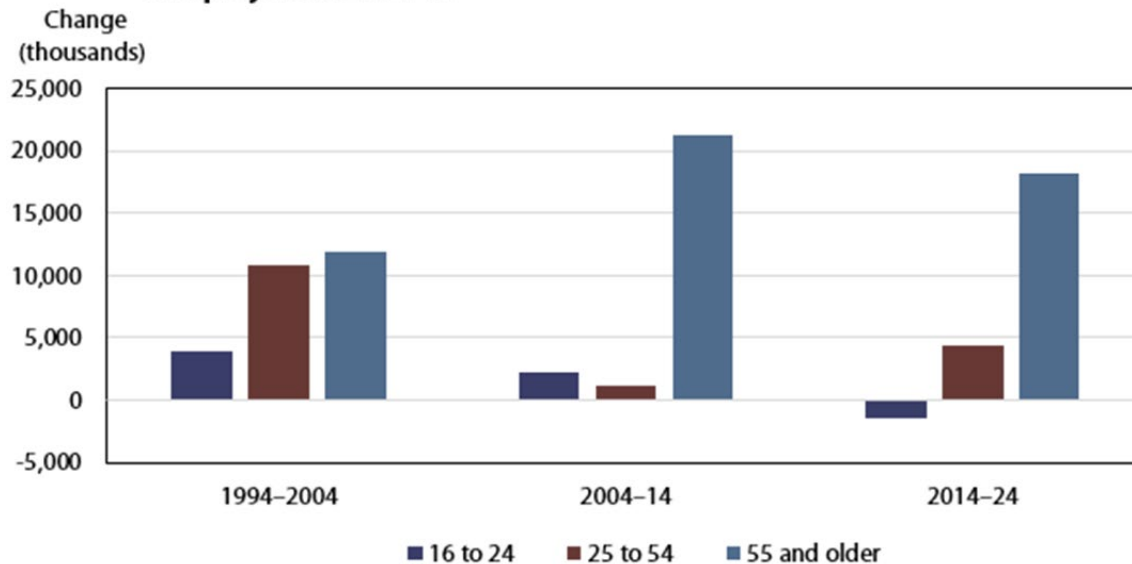
*This workforce product was partially funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.*



# What We Know about the Labor Shortage

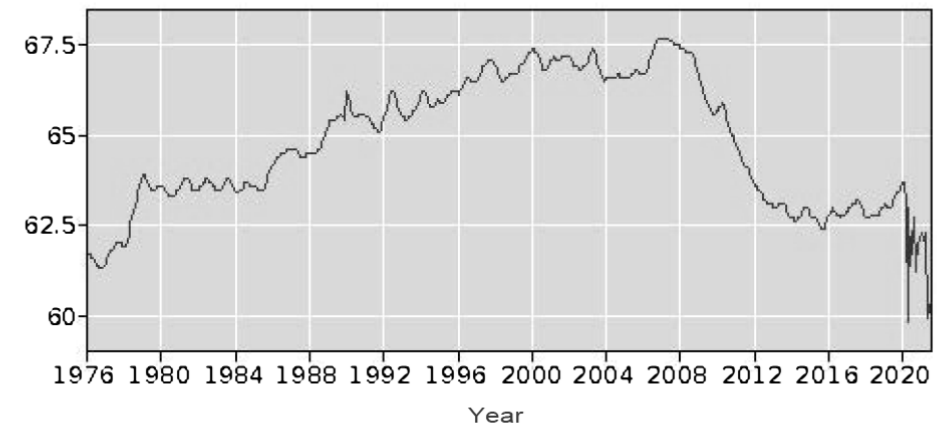
## U.S. Demographic Shift & Ohio's Vanishing Workforce

**Figure 1. Changes in the civilian noninstitutional population, 1994–2004, 2004–14, and projected 2014–24**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Ohio Labor Force Participation Rate 1976 - 2021**



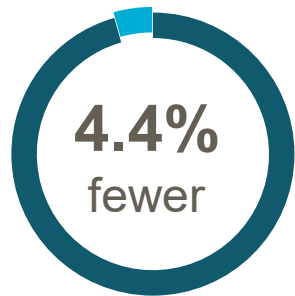
Ohio Labor Force Participation Rate						
Year	Period	Labor Force Part. Rate	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2007	Jul	67.6	6,016,911	5,676,080	340,831	5.7
2021	Jul	60.5	5,604,558	5,304,163	300,395	5.4
2022	June	62	5,794,278	5,570,206	224,072	3.9

Source - BLS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



# What We Know about the Labor Shortage

How many people  
are working?



18,188 fewer people in jobs  
(4.4%) than in 2019 in  
Summit, Medina and  
Portage Counties

Started freelancing since  
the pandemic began:

- 12% of US workforce (Upwork)

Retired in the past 2 years:

- 3.2 million in 2020 (BLS)
- estimated the same in 2021

Deaths from COVID:

- 258,440 ages 18-64 (CDC)

Stayed out to care for children:

- 5 million reported in 2022 (US Census)

Lost to Opiate crisis (out of workforce,  
deaths):

- 860,000 males ages 25 to 54 out of the workforce (NIH)
- 56,035 deaths for working age adults ages 25-64 and a 28% increase expected in 2021 estimated 71,732 (CDC)

Shrinking demographics:

- 3 million less employees (CBPP)

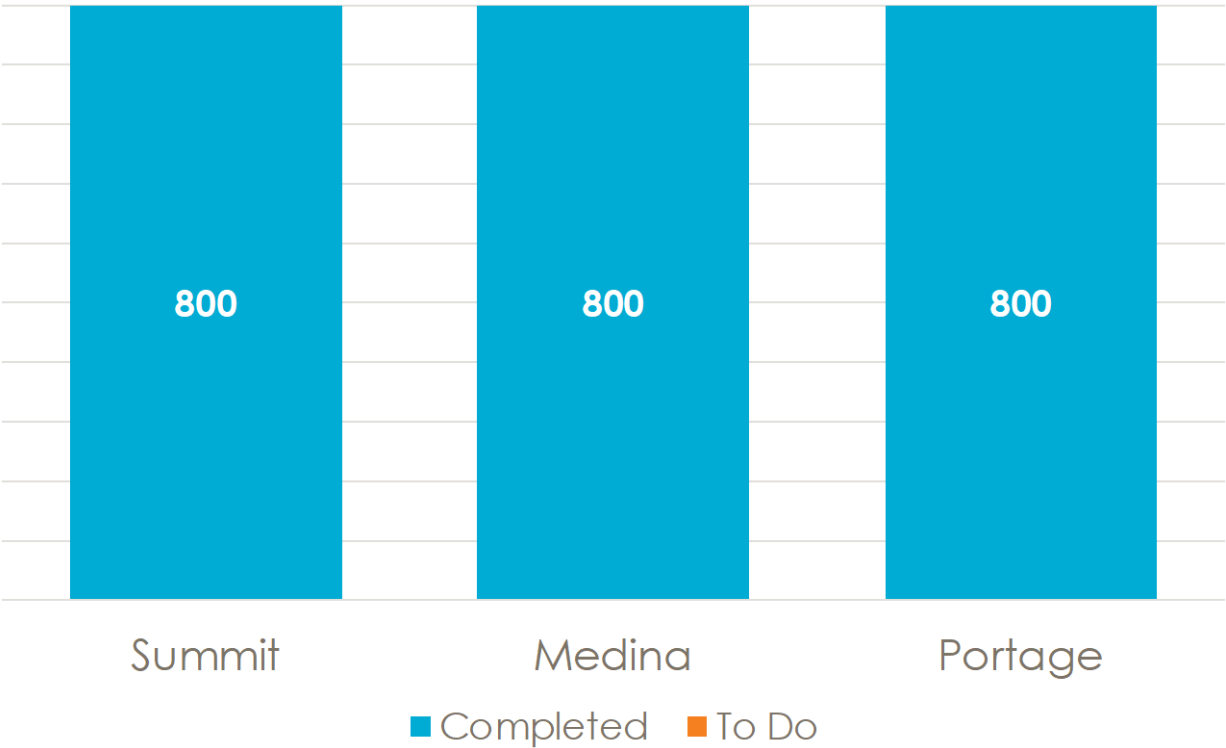
Key: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Center On Budget & Policy Priority (CBPP); Center for Disease Control (CDC); & National Institute of Health (NIH)



# Methodology and Survey Overview

- Conducted 12-minute surveys with working age adults in Summit, Medina and Portage Counties via phone and web:
  - 2,400 interviews (800/county)
  - 18+
  - Representative of area population by county
  - Larger sample size allows for key groupings to be well represented
- Conduct focus groups with individuals who completed a survey:
  - 5 focus groups with 6-10 participants

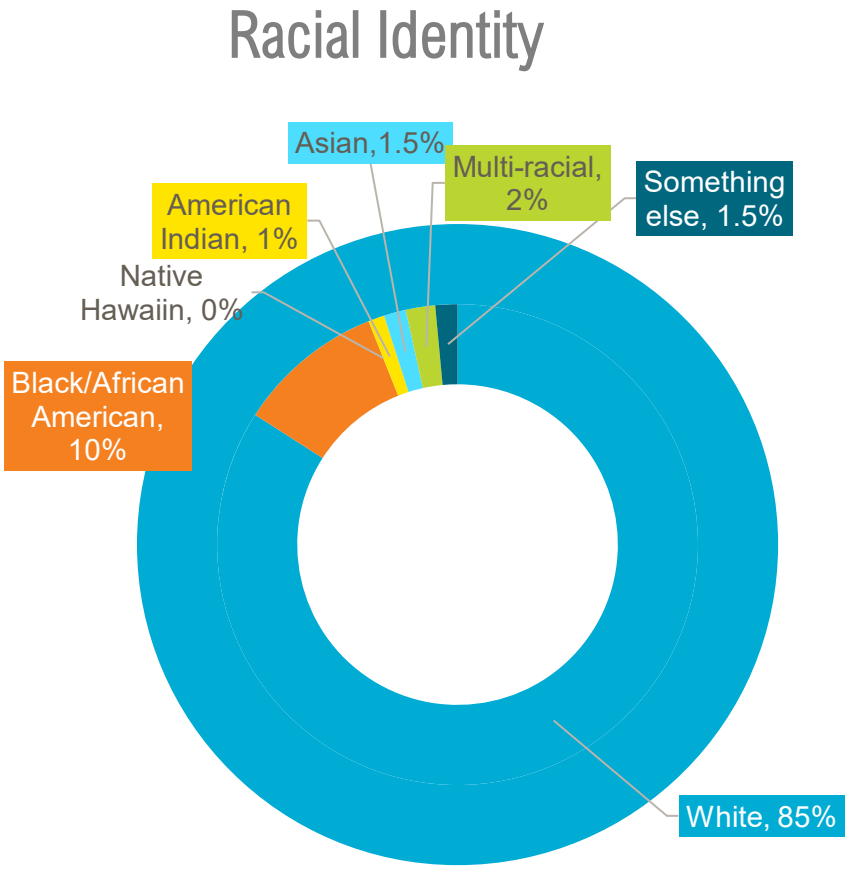
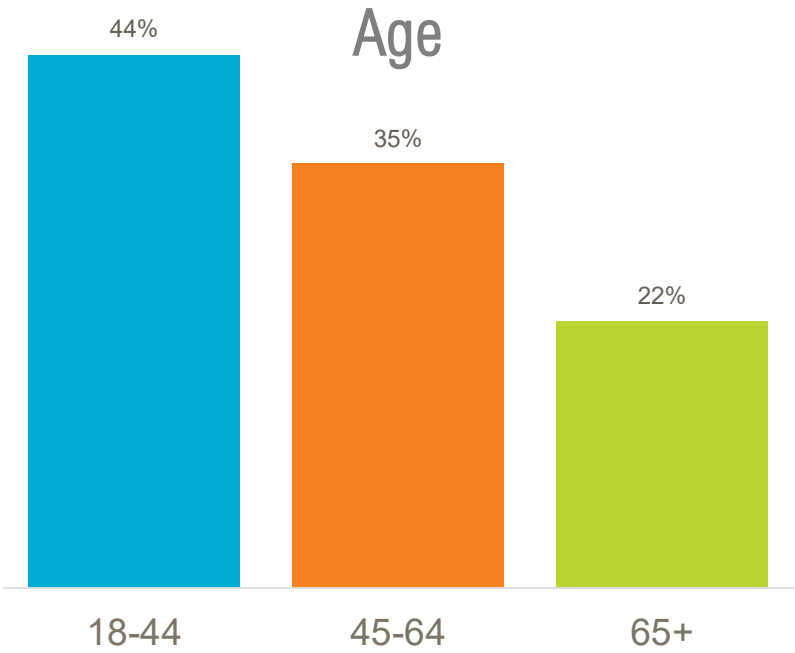
# Who Responded?



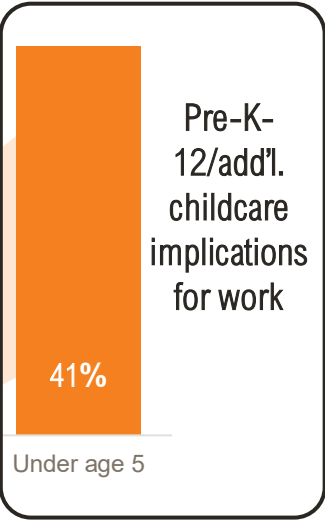
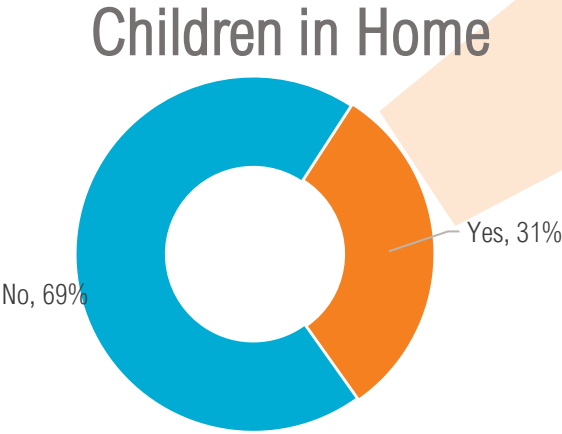
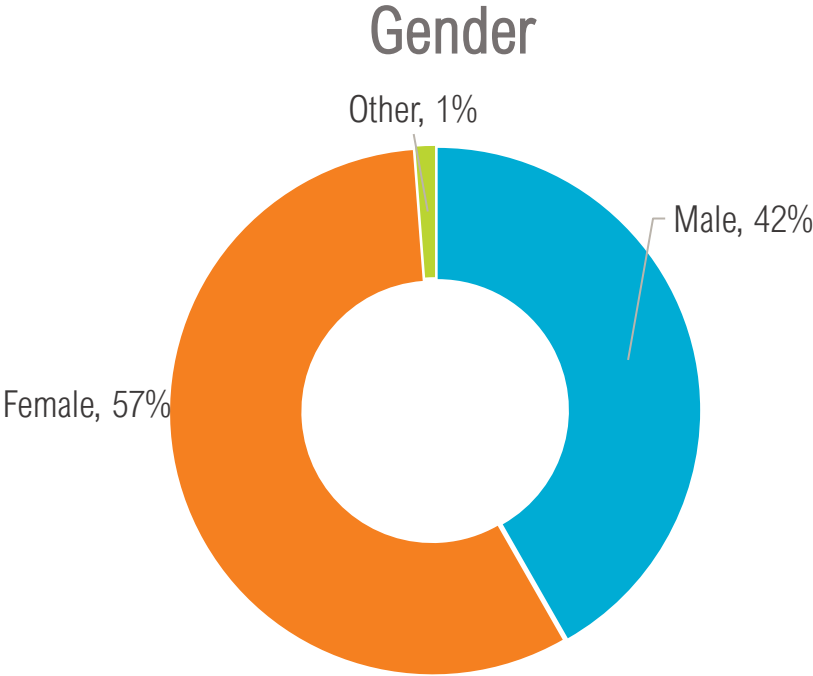
COUNTY	POP N	POP %	SAMPLE N	SAMPLE %	WEIGHT
Medina	179,116	20.3%	800	33.3%	0.61
Portage	162,476	18.4%	800	33.3%	0.55
Summit	540,810	61.3%	800	33.3%	1.84

County data was weighted to make each proportional to the overall 3-county area.

# Who Responded?

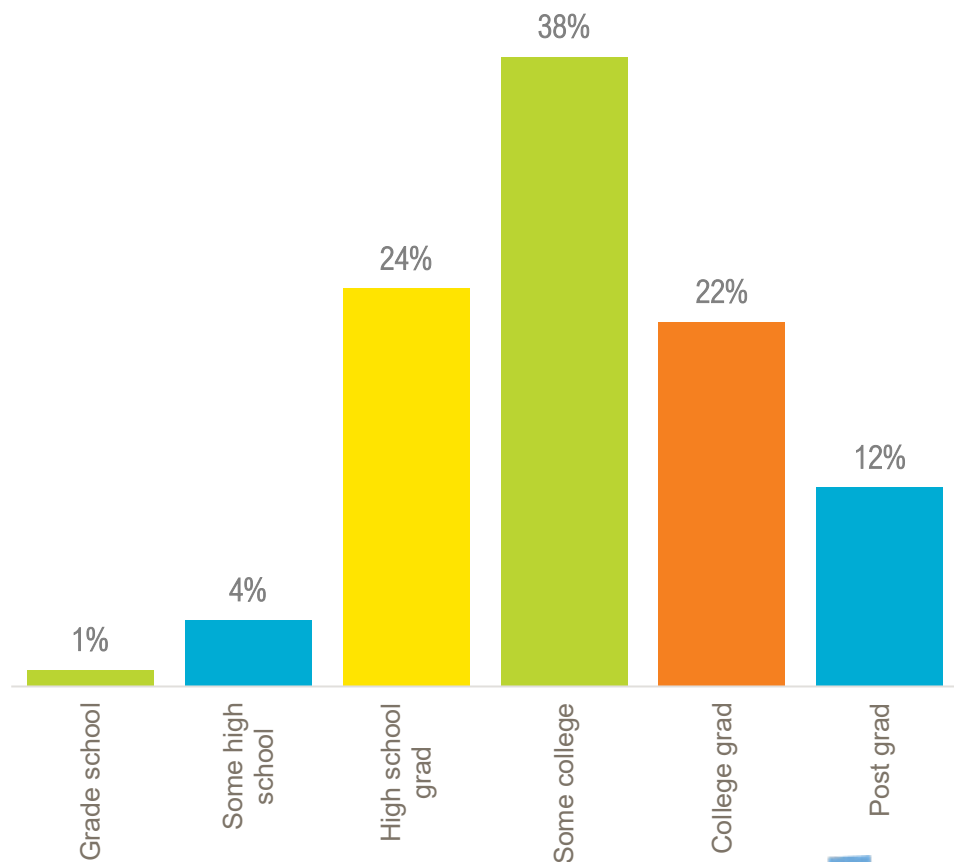


# Who Responded?

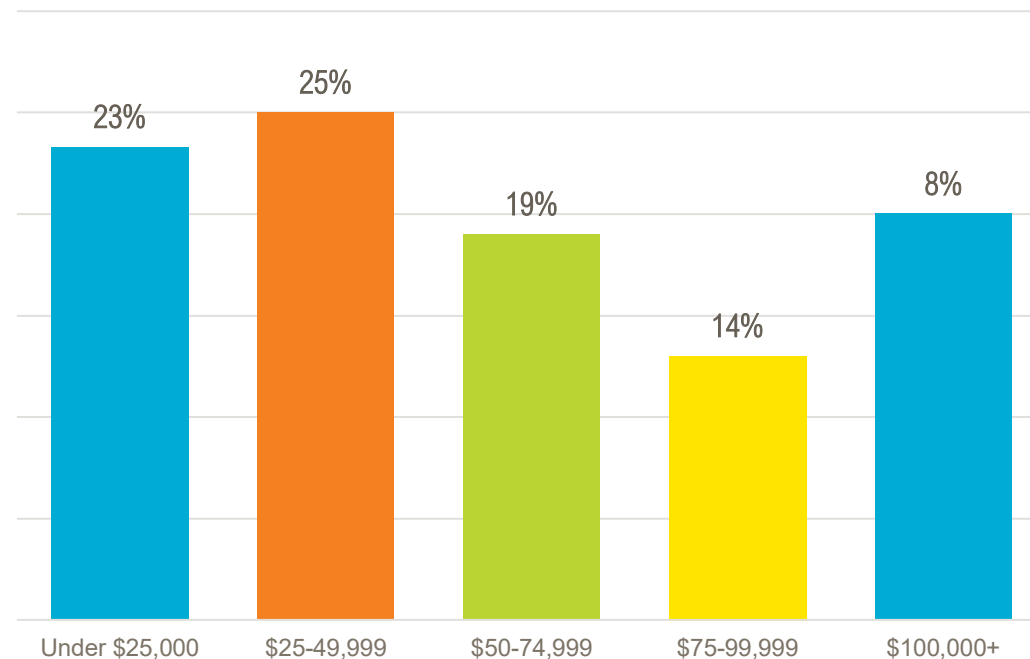


# Who Responded?

## Educational Attainment

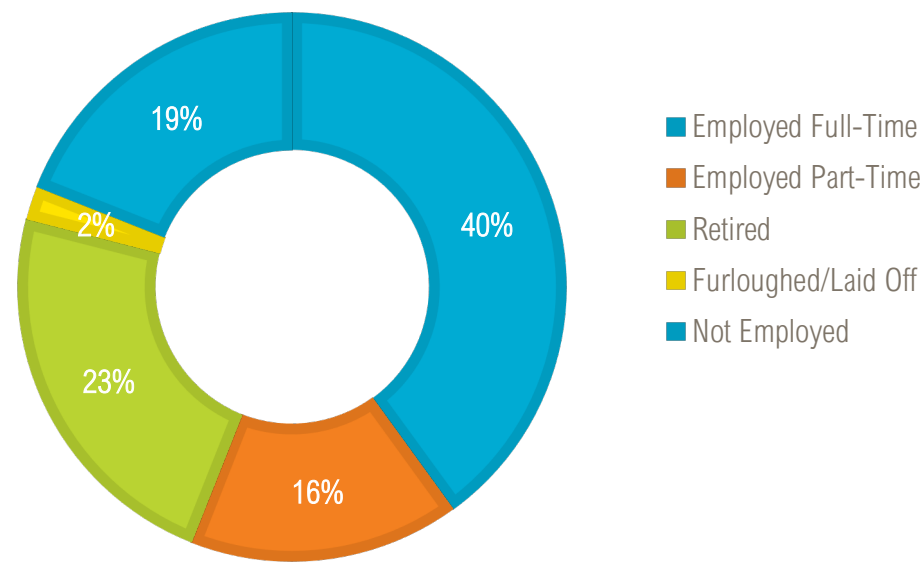


## Family/Household Income



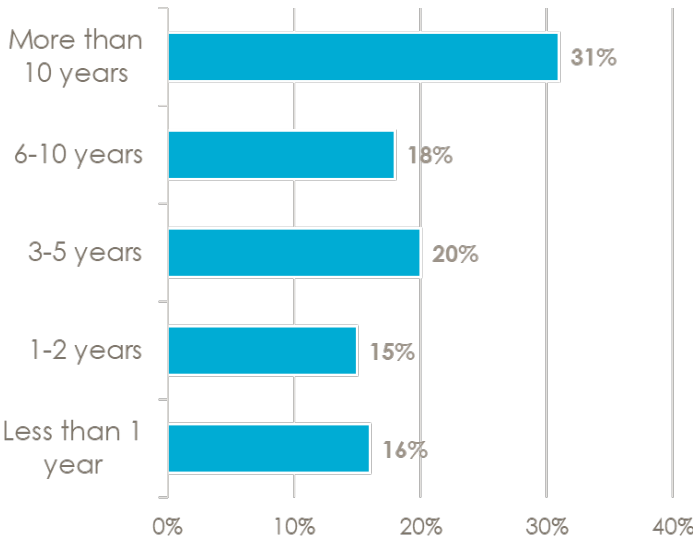
# Who Responded?

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS



Of those employed, full time or part time,

## LENGTH OF TIME AT JOB



# What They Told Us

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# Work interrupted by the pandemic

1 in 5 had to stay home during the pandemic

1 in 3 of all workers were laid off

1 in 4 of workers had hours cut/took a pay cut

1 in 3 started a new job

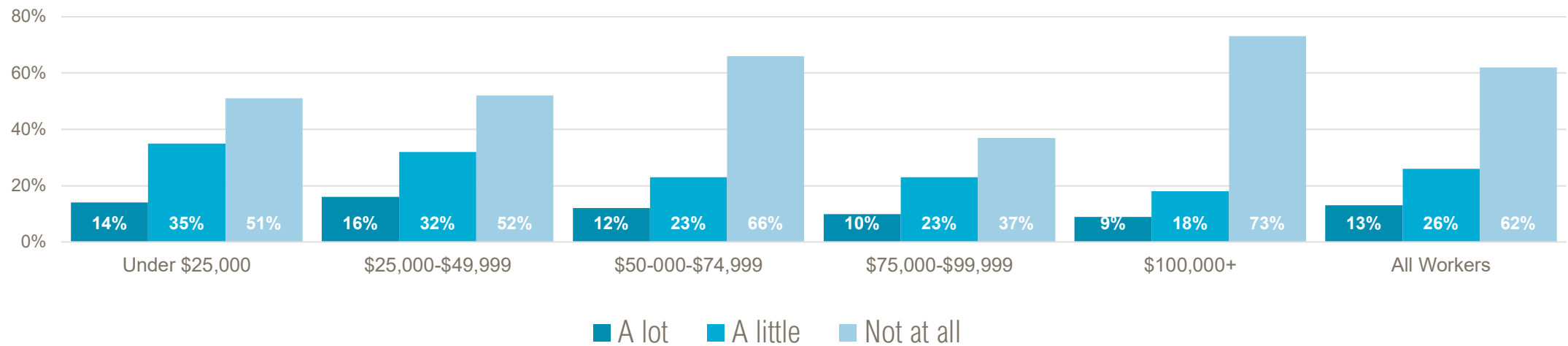
1 in 3 stayed at home to care for a child and/or older relative

1 in 4 make more money now than prior to the pandemic



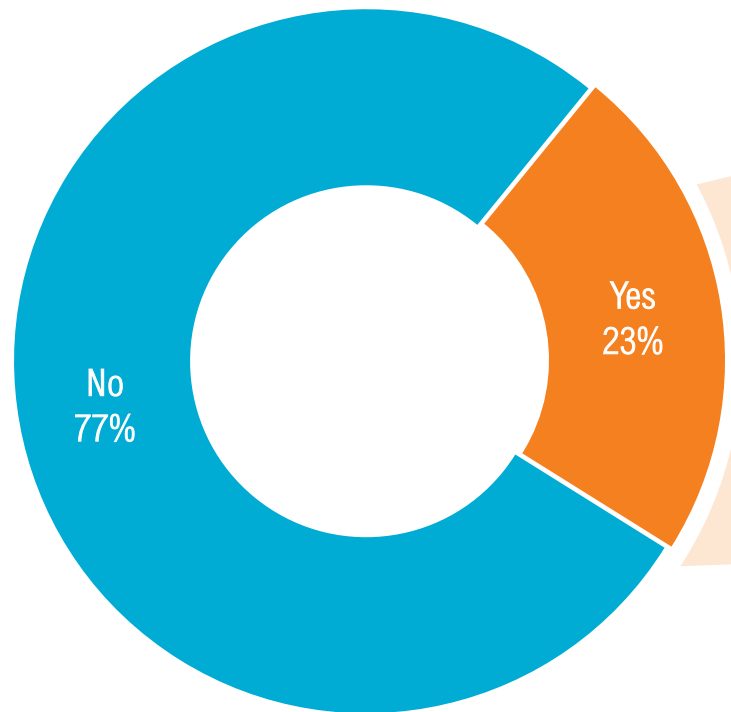
# Work interrupted by the pandemic

Did the extra unemployment benefits or other pandemic-related assistance allow you to stay out of the workplace longer or allow you to be more selective about your job when you returned to work?

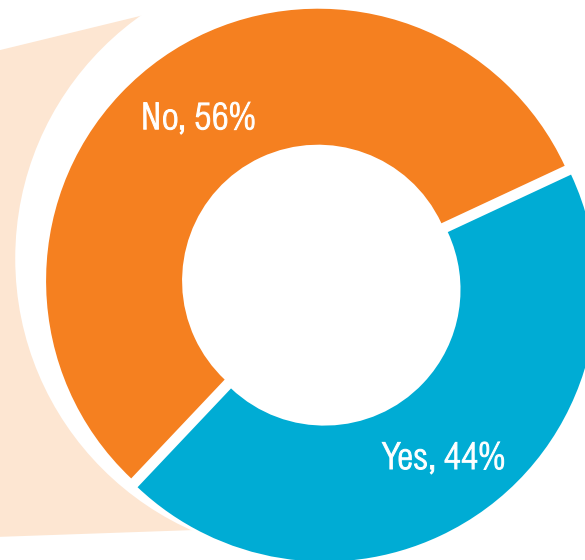


# People were quitting without jobs lined up.

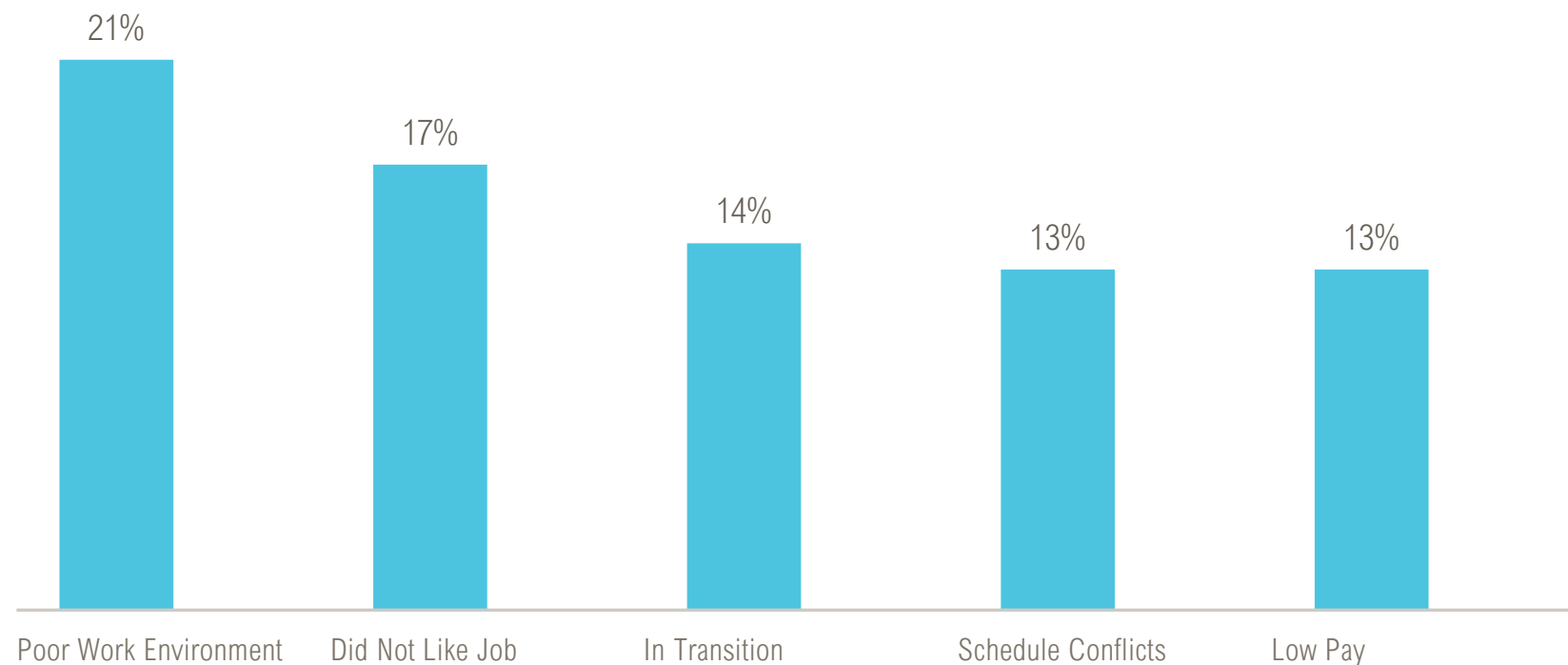
In the past 12 months,  
have you quit or left your job?



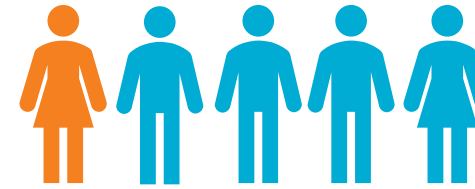
Did you have another  
job lined up before you quit?



# They're leaving for a few key reasons.



# Gig work has expanded options for workers in a time of uncertainty.

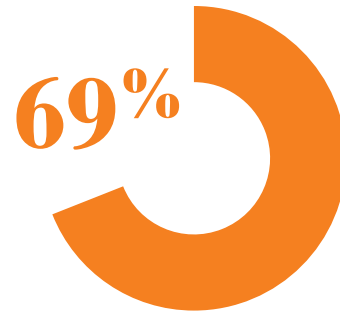


21%

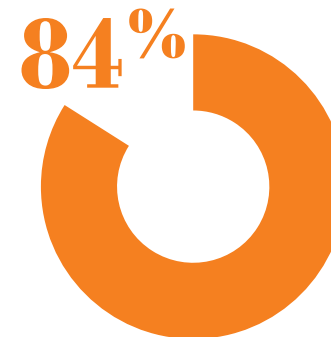
Have done freelance or contract work in the past year (Uber, DoorDash, babysitting, yardwork, etc.) to earn extra money?



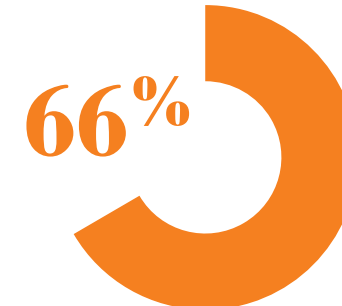
See it as their  
MAIN JOB



Started within the past  
TWO YEARS



ENJOY this type of  
work

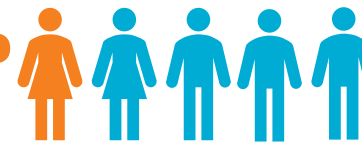


are CURRENTLY doing  
this type of work

4%

Of retired respondents have done this type of work in the past year

21%



Of “not employed” respondents have done this type of work in the past year.

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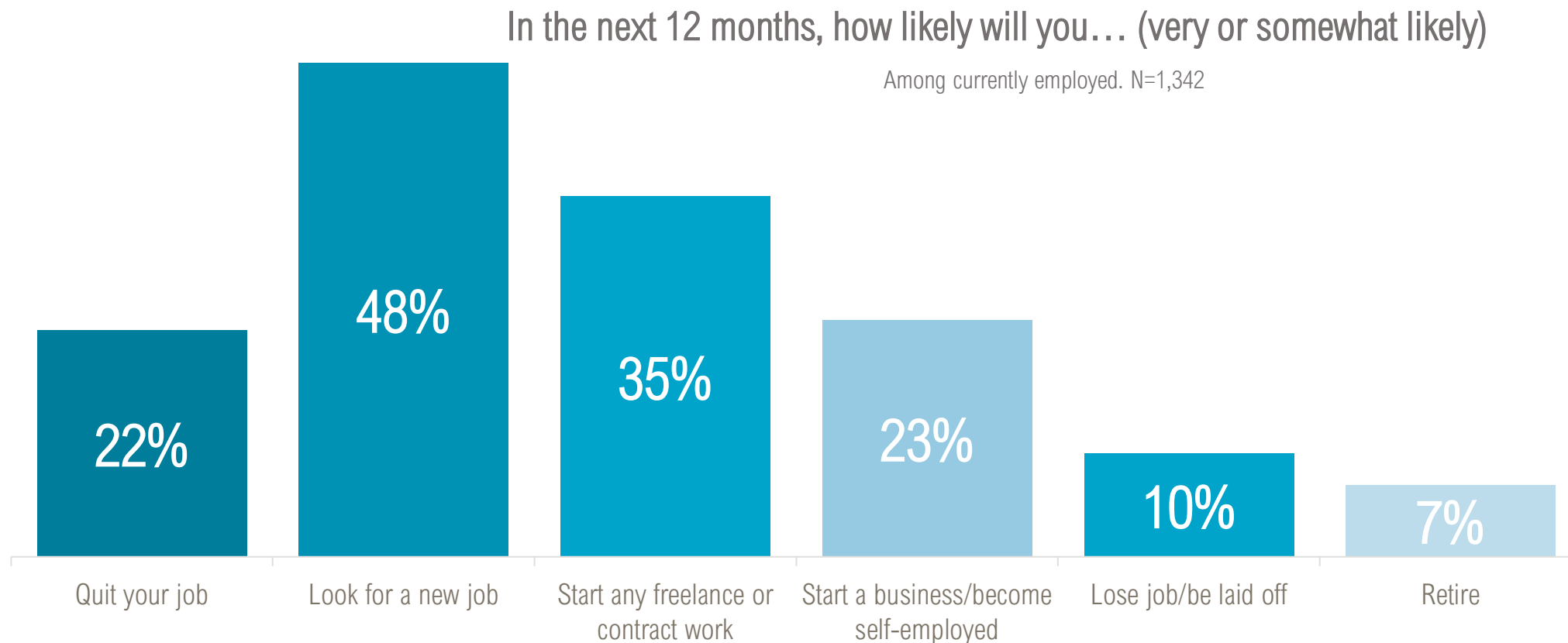
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# Today's employees feel overworked.

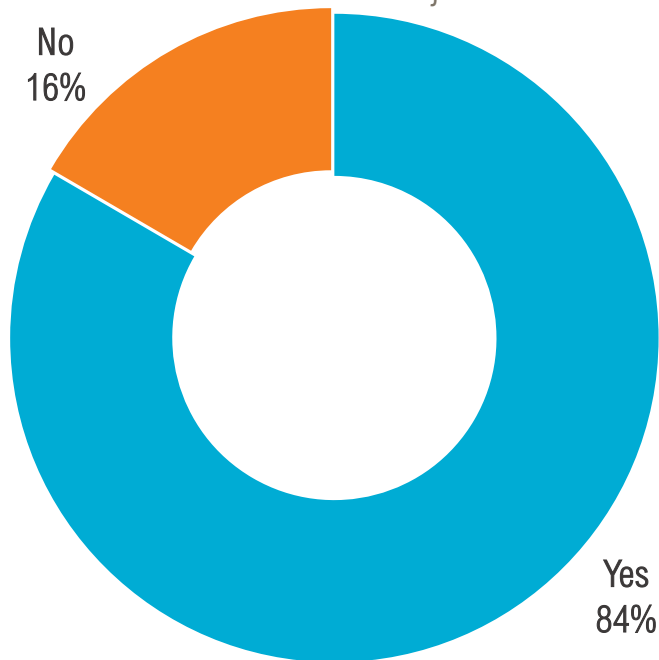


# They will probably keep leaving.

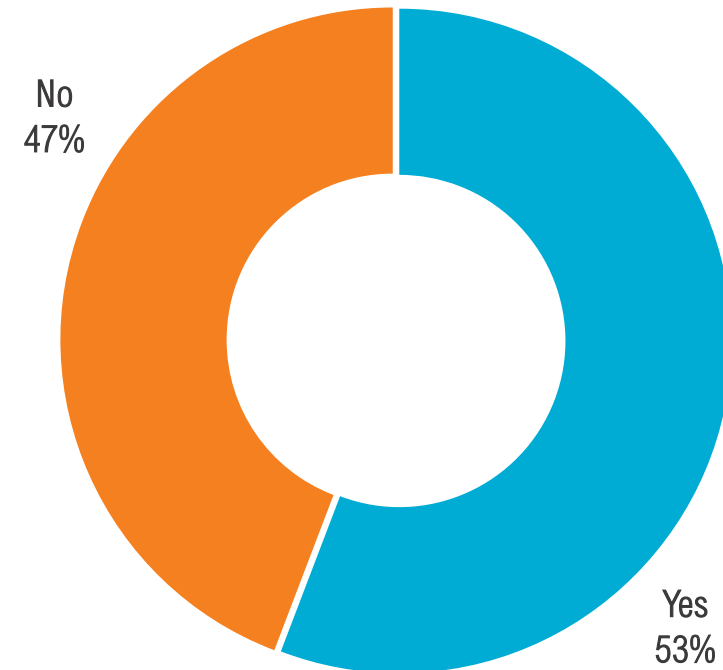


# Most planning to quit will look for another job. A smaller majority **could be convinced to stay** in their role for the right incentives.

Of those planning to quit, do you plan to look for another job?

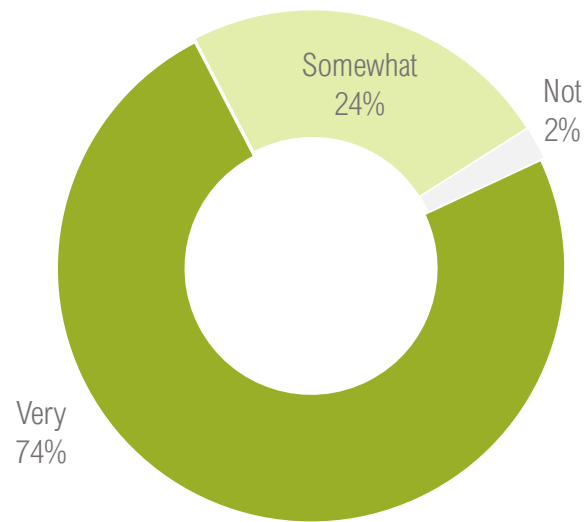


Is there anything your employer could do to encourage you to stay?



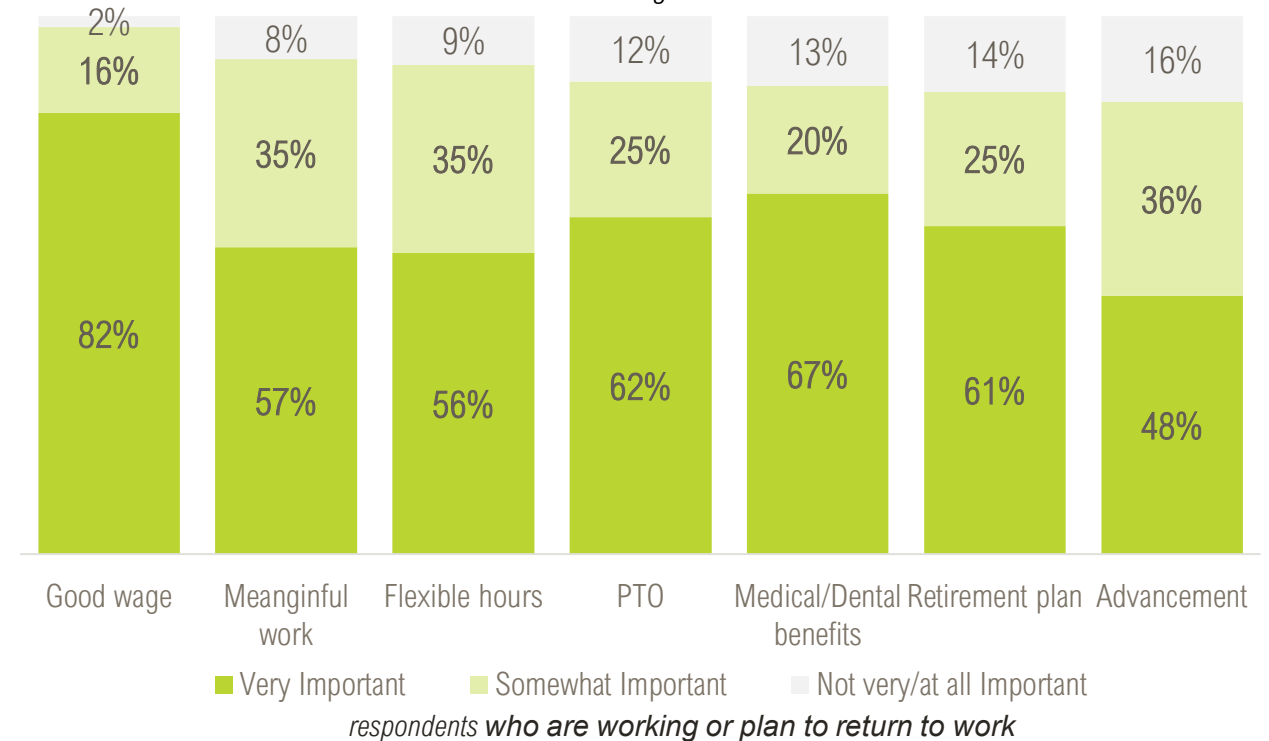
# Money talks. But it's not everything.

Importance of salary information inclusion in job listing (all respondents)



## Other top factors

*In thinking about the ways you earn money both now and in the future, how important are each of the following. . .*

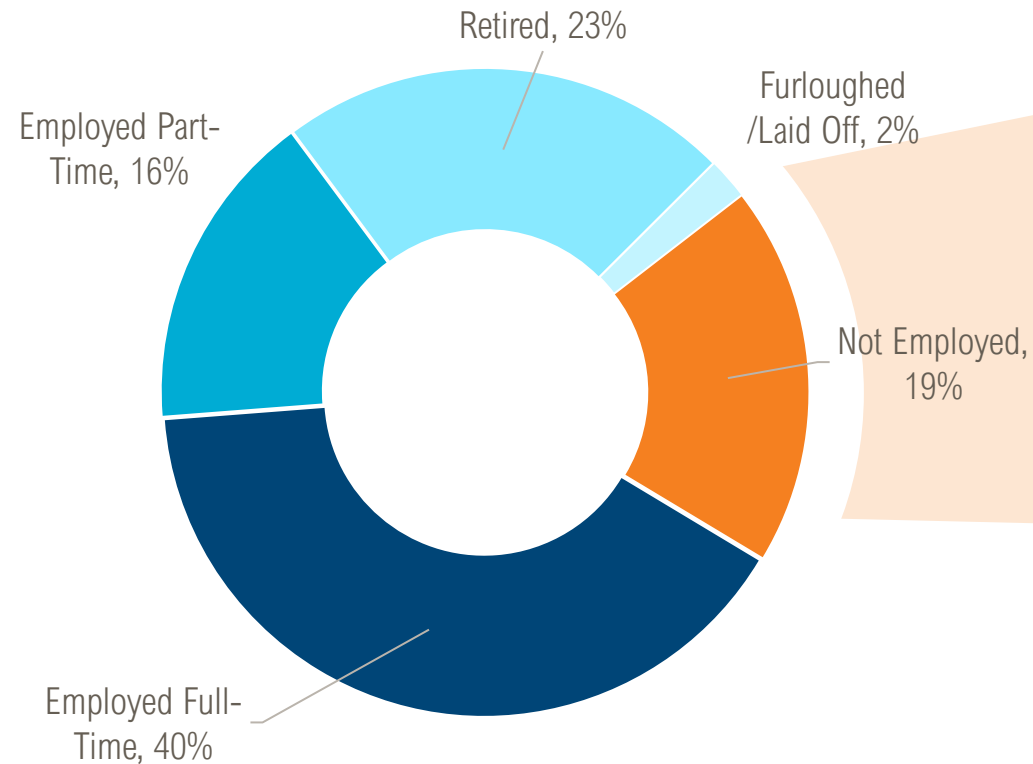




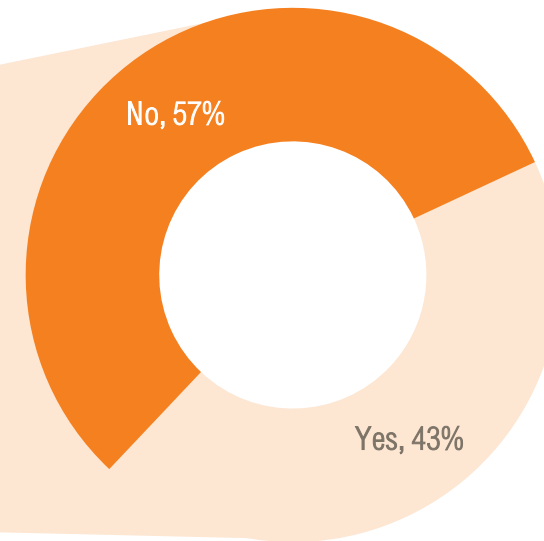
# People not looking for work have good reasons.



Employment Status



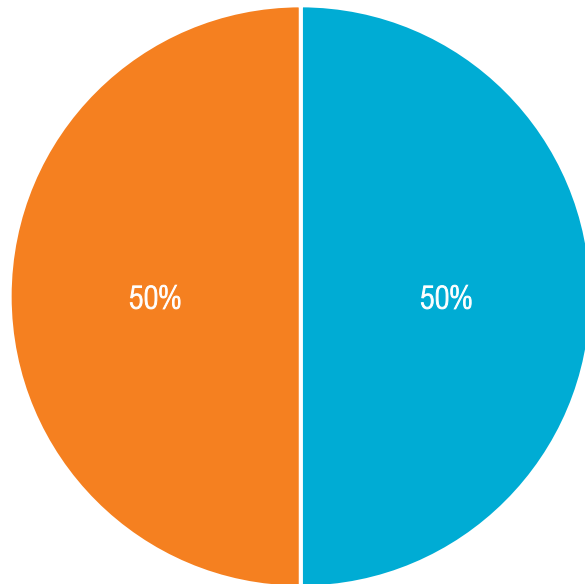
Are you currently looking for work?



**Top 3 Reasons  
Not Looking for Work**  
Disability  
Stay at home parent  
Medical/health issue

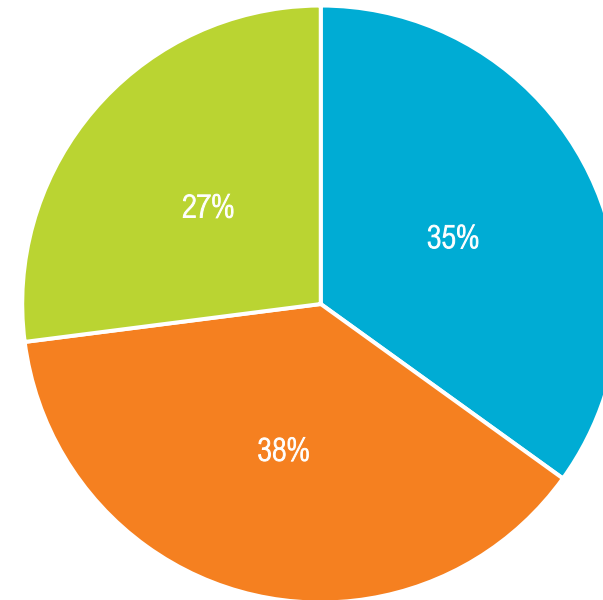
# Those looking for jobs...

Looking for FT or PT  
(of those looking)



■ Part-time ■ Full-time

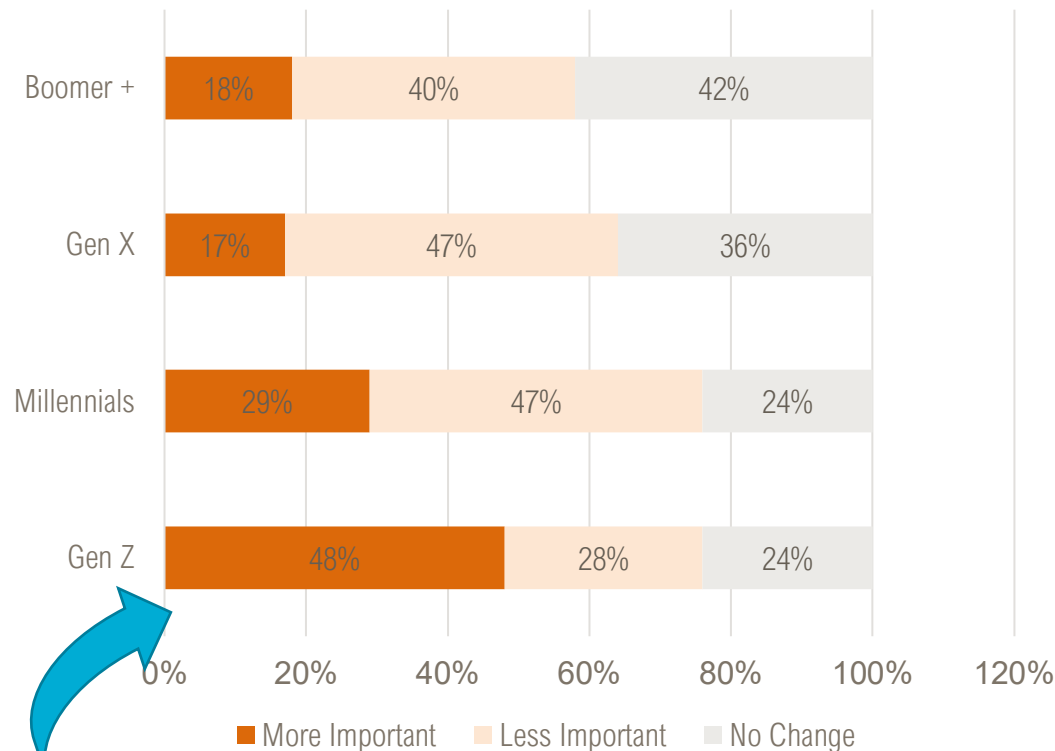
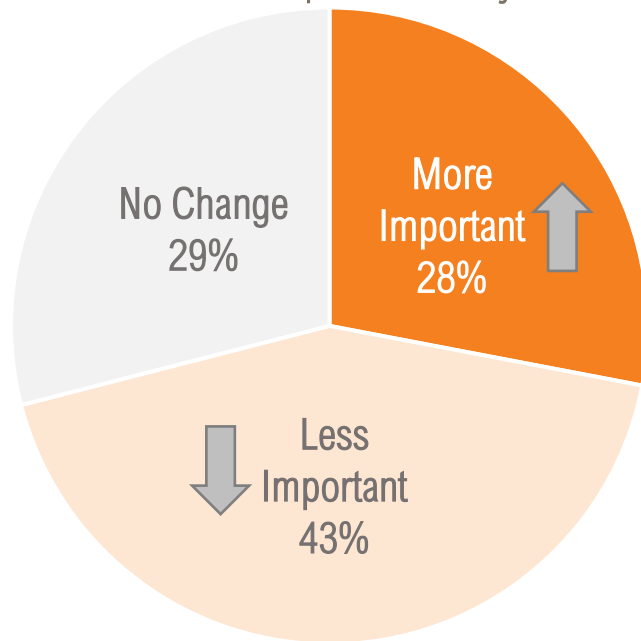
Current Outlook of Finding Job  
(of those looking)



■ Very optimistic ■ Somewhat optimistic ■ Pessimistic

# Attitudes about work have changed.

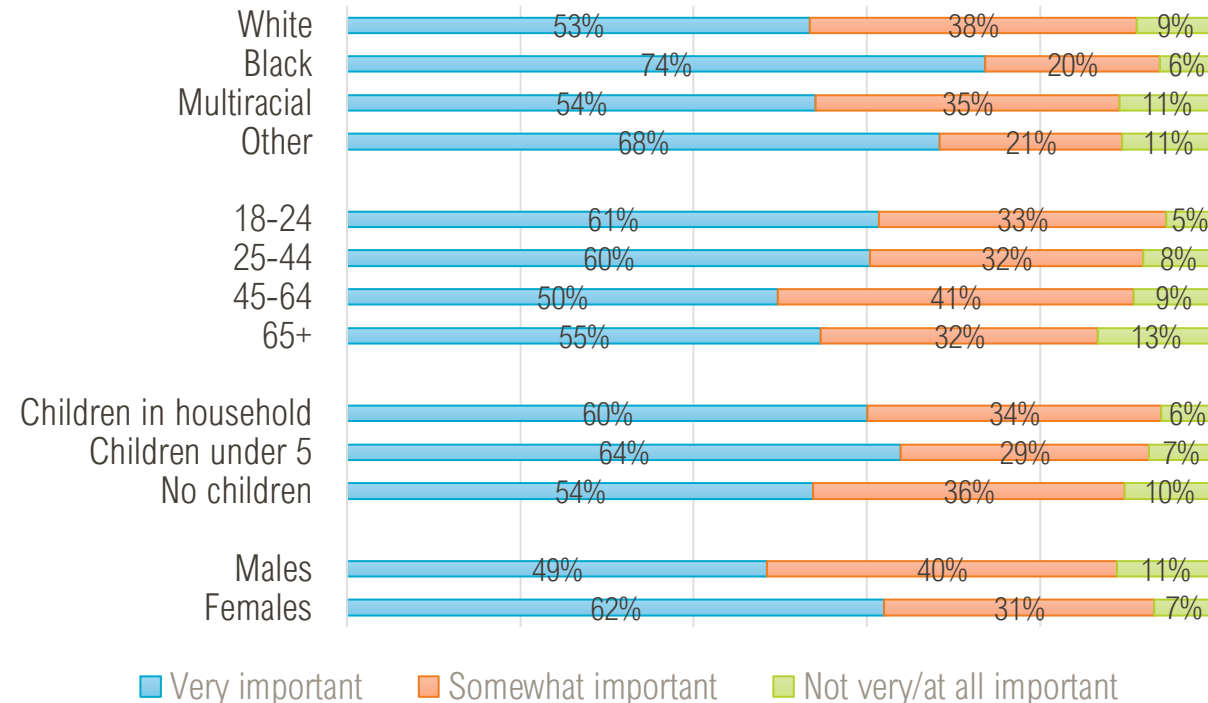
Since the pandemic, has work become more or less important to you?



Almost half of younger workers say work is more important now than it was pre-pandemic.

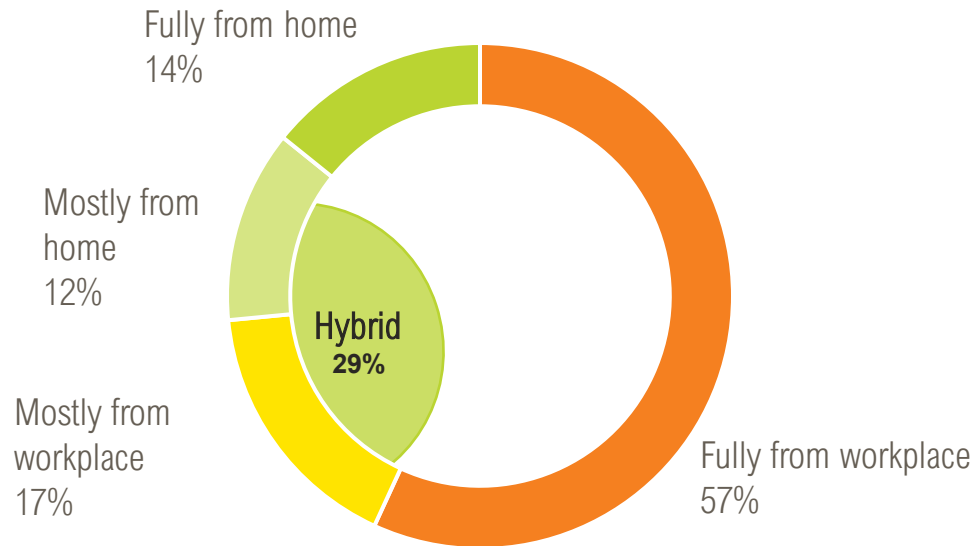
# Flexible hours are important to many workers.

Importance of Flexible Hours

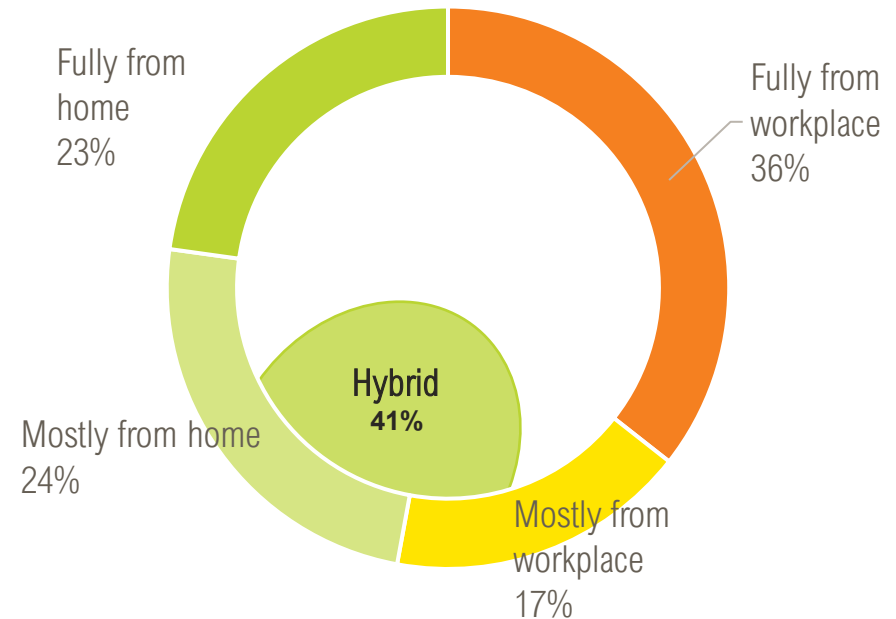


# Work environment flexibility is important to many workers.

Current work environment for employed workers



Workers' desired environment

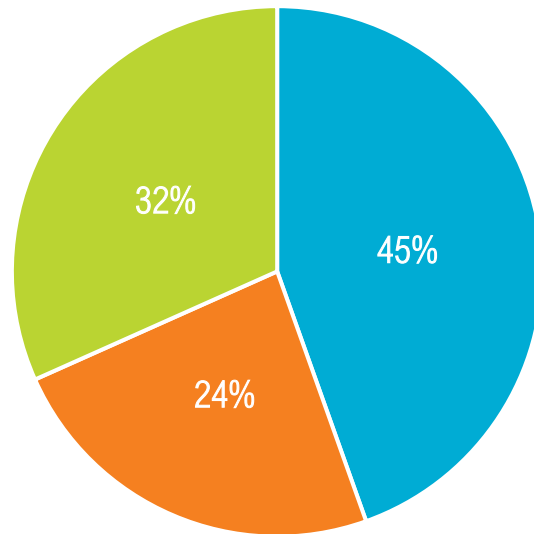


# Top Barriers to Employment

All Responses	Black	Female	Under \$25,000	Gen Z	Not Employed
Pay Too Low	Pay Too Low	Pay Too Low	Pay Too Low	Pay Too Low	Pay Too Low
Health Issues	Discrimination - race	Health Issues	Health Issues	Health Issues	Health Issues
Childcare Issues	Health Issues	Concerns for Health of Self/Family	Disabilities	Lack of Work Experience	Disabilities
Disabilities	Concerns for Health of Self/Family	Disabilities	Concerns for Health of Self/Family	Lack of Training	Transportation Issues
Concerns for Health of Self/Family	Transportation Issues	Childcare Issues	Transportation Issues	Concerns for Health of Self/Family	Concerns for Health of Self/Family
Lack of Training	Discrimination – gender	Lack of Training	Lack of Training	Transportation Issues	Gaps in Employment
Criminal Record	Disabilities	Vaccine Mandates	Criminal Record	Disabilities	Lack of Experience

# Training and Education Needs

Have Training and Education needed to get ahead in job?

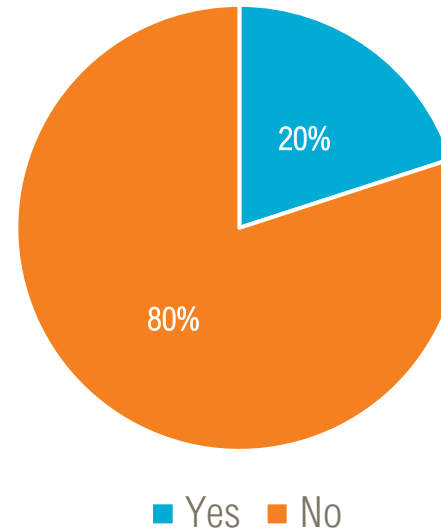


■ Have what need ■ Need more ■ Happy with where am

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Had difficulty pursuing training



The top 3 reasons for what made getting training difficult:

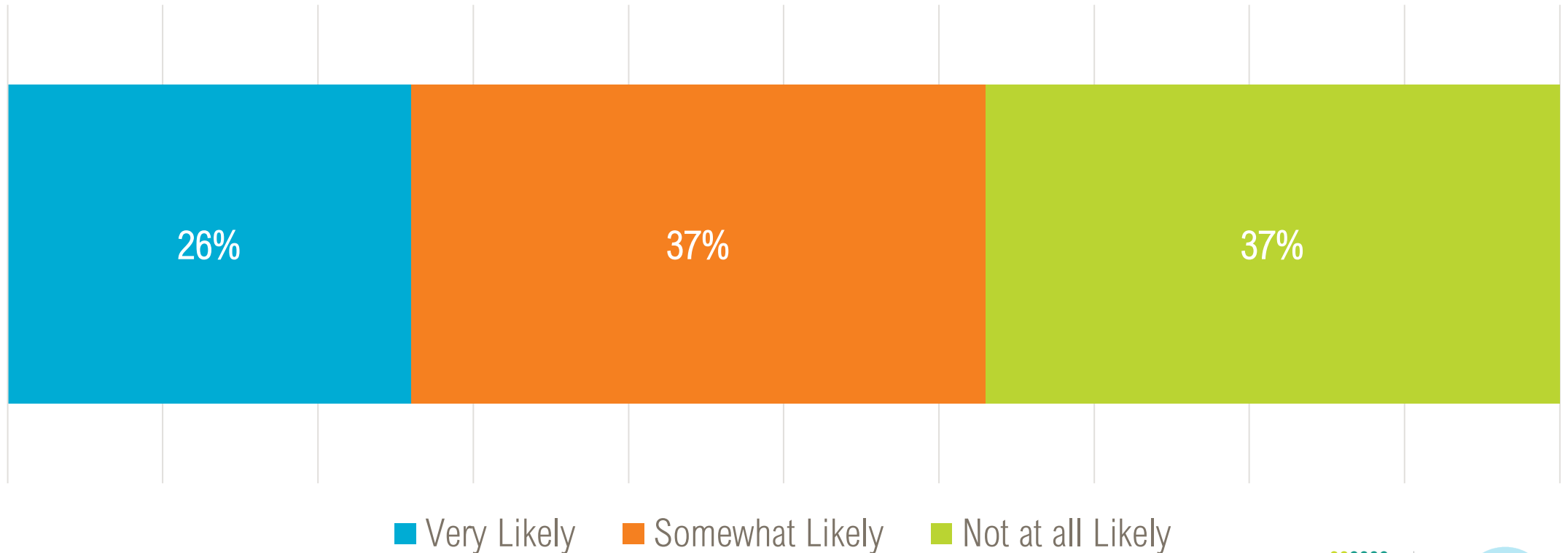
1. Time
2. Money
3. Impact of COVID

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# Likelihood of seeking additional education or training in next 3 years





# Emerging Themes

## Respondents frequently cited:

- Wage matters
- "Flexibility" is desired
- Want "meaningful work" - feel a part of something/contributing
- Gig work is a large part of the current employment landscape
- Access to mental health services
- Half job seekers looking for Part-Time work
- High interest in job related training and education
- COVID has had a significant impact on defining what work is

# Strategies

For Employers and Workforce Practitioners

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# Grow the Workforce...

## Attract Talent

Pull in from  
sidelines

Attract workers  
from other  
jobs

Attract workers  
to region

## Develop & Retain Talent

Train into new  
careers

Advance  
current  
employees

# Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

## Talk With Your Employees

Stay Interviews

Exit Interviews

Employee Resource Coaches

# Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

## Provide Positive Work Environment

Mental Health Days

Employee Assistance Programs

Rewards/Recognition

# Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

## Invest in Career Development

Employee Development Plans

Supervisor Training

Tuition Reimbursement

# Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

## Help Employees Find Meaning in Their Work

Worker Voice

Physical Space

# Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

## Pay Competitive Wages

Wages + Benefits

Non-traditional Benefits



# Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

## Incorporate Flexibility Wherever Possible

Flexible Work Hours

Job Sharing

# Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent

## Connect to Your Community

Public Workforce System

High Schools and Colleges

Community Agencies

Sector Partnerships

# What's Next?

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**[www.conxusneo.jobs/watw](http://www.conxusneo.jobs/watw)**

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