



Human
Resources
Professionals
Association

Returning to Work & the Current State of the Workplace

HRPA Survey Report

September 2022

Introduction

HRPA helps protect workers, workplaces and society at large by enabling a flourishing Human Resources profession. We believe that well-run businesses are essential to a thriving society.

Between August 15 to 17, 2022, HRP A ran a pulse survey of its membership to gauge the current state of Ontario workplaces as they continue to evolve and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. 640 respondents participated in the survey from a range of industries and employment backgrounds.

Two and a half years later, the survey results suggest that workplaces are still adapting to how the pandemic has affected the world of work and HR departments are still playing a critical role in figuring out what their organizations will look like in the future.

The following map provides the full titles for industry abbreviations used in the report.

MAN = Manufacturing

NFP = Not for Profit

WR = Wholesale/Retail Distribution

BFPI = Banking, Finance, Pension Funds & Insurance

GPC = Government / Public Commissions

HSS = Health & Social Services

APREE = Agriculture, Primary Resources (Mining, Forestry), Engineering & Energy

CST = Construction & Skilled Trades

IT = Information Technology

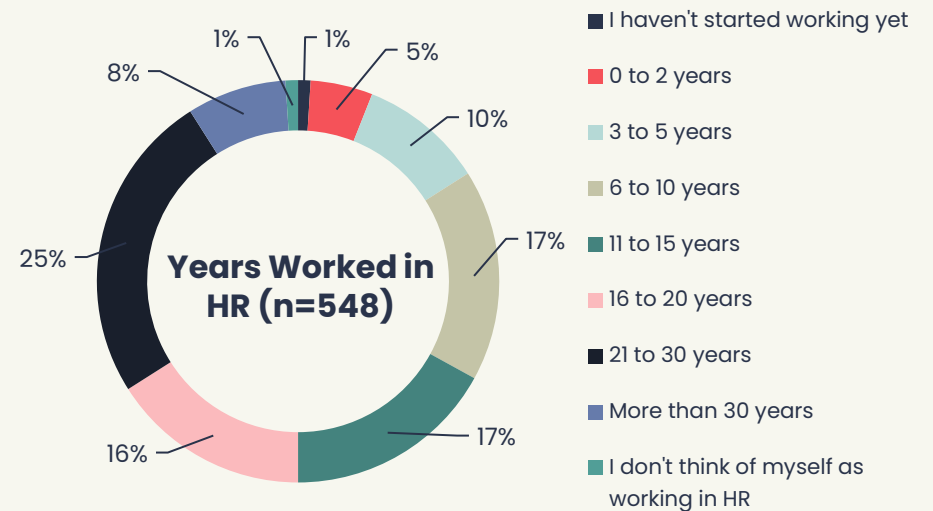
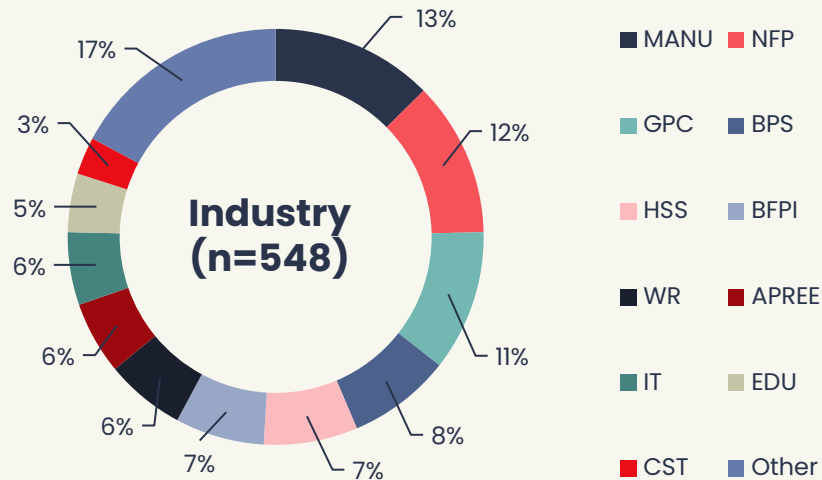
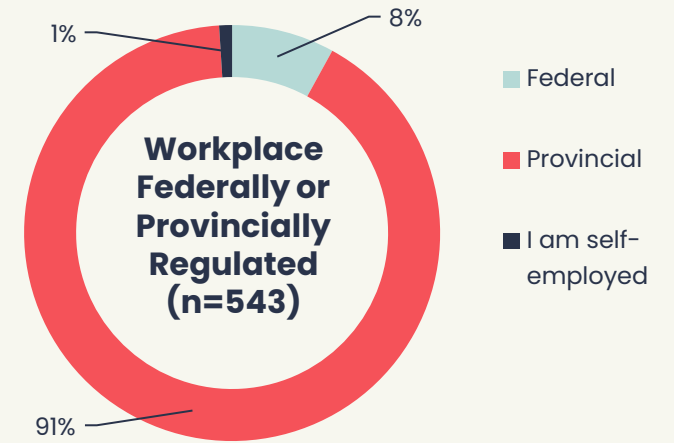
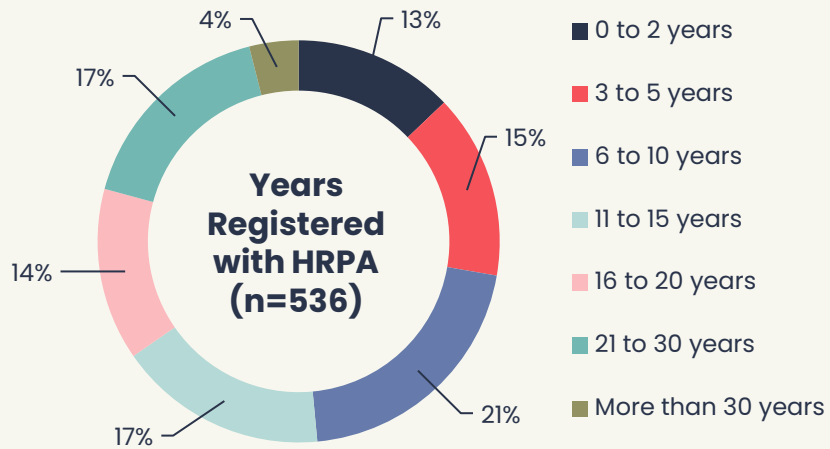
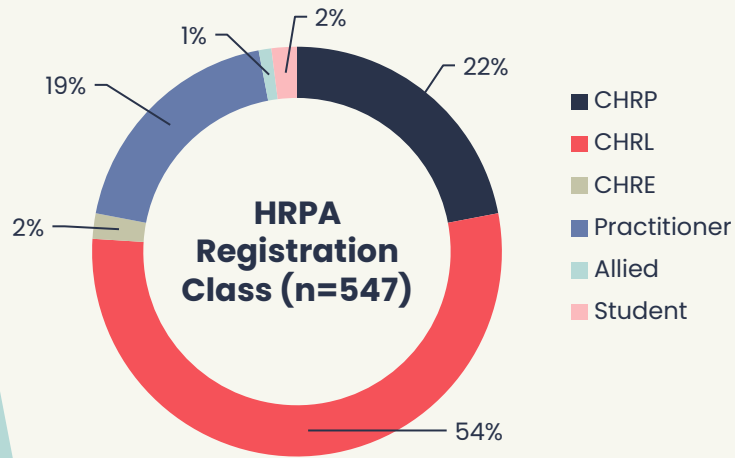
EDU = Educational Institutions & Services

BPS = Business & Professional Services

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Survey Demographics



Current Work Arrangements



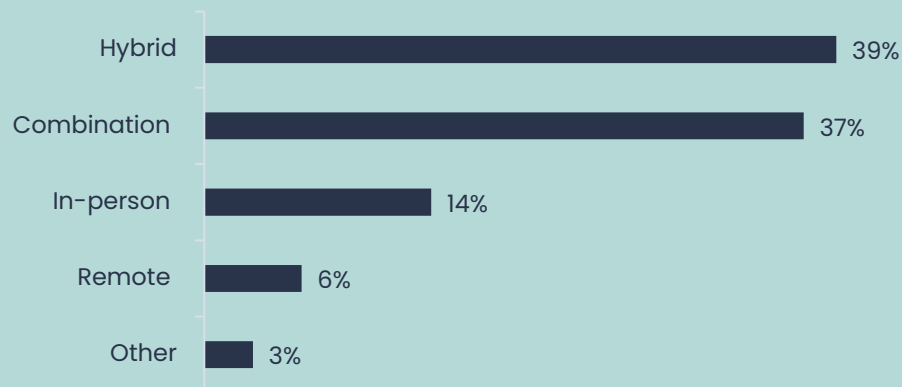
Most workplaces are taking a flexible approach to work with **39%** currently set up with a **hybrid work model**. An additional **37%** selected “combination”, meaning available work options depend on the nature of each employee’s work.



Industries that were significantly more likely to require **in-person work** were construction (50%), manufacturing (25%) and wholesale/retail distribution (21%), while the business & professional services (27%) and IT (19%) industries were significantly more likely to allow a **fully remote workforce**.



Q. What approach does your organization currently take regarding employee work arrangements? (n=640)

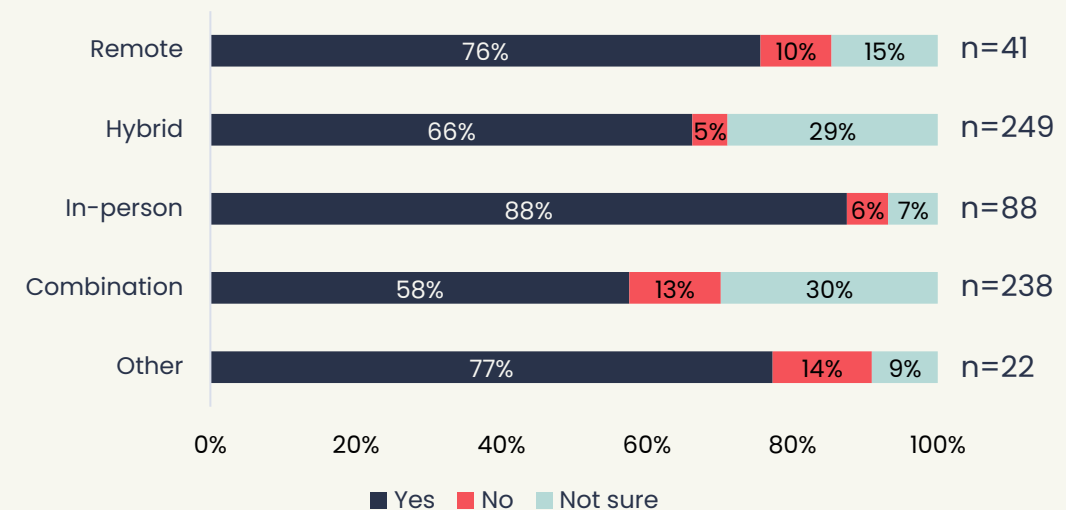


Plans for the Future

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents are planning to permanently retain their current work arrangements, while **25%** said they were not sure.

Those who are working in-person are most confident that their work arrangements will be permanent, while those that offer the most flexibility through hybrid and combination work are the least certain.

Q. Is your organization planning to permanently retain its current employee work arrangements?



Recalling Employees

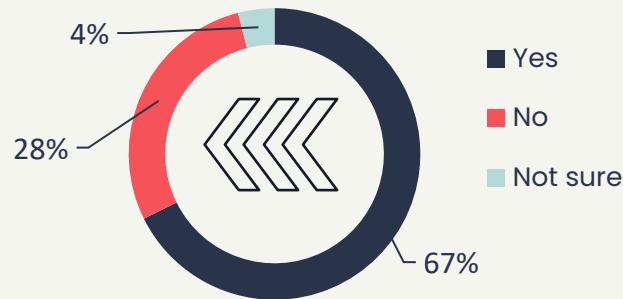
Two-thirds (67%) of respondents said that they have **recalled** their employees back to work in person at least some of the time, with **100%** of respondents from the **education sector** saying they have done so. The top reasons for recalling employees were:

68% Increasing employee collaboration

59% Encouraging team building

57% Improving/maintaining company culture

Q. Allowed employees to work fully remotely earlier in the pandemic & recalled those employees back to work in-person at least some of the time (n=640)



Half of respondents (53%) who recalled employees back to the workplace also said they **experienced challenges** in doing so, with those in the IT (72%) and banking/finance (68%) industries most likely to say they have experienced challenges.

Employee wellbeing continues to be top of mind for HR professionals

When asked about their **biggest concerns** about returning to in-person work, the top answers selected were:



Employee wellness and mental health (64%)



Employee pushback about returning to in-person work (63%)



Transitioning remote employees back to their traditional workplace (38%)

The concerns reported in this survey remain consistent with HRPAs return to work survey from Spring 2021 where employee wellness & mental health and transitioning remote employees back to their traditional workplace were the top answers to this question, both selected by **46%** of respondents.

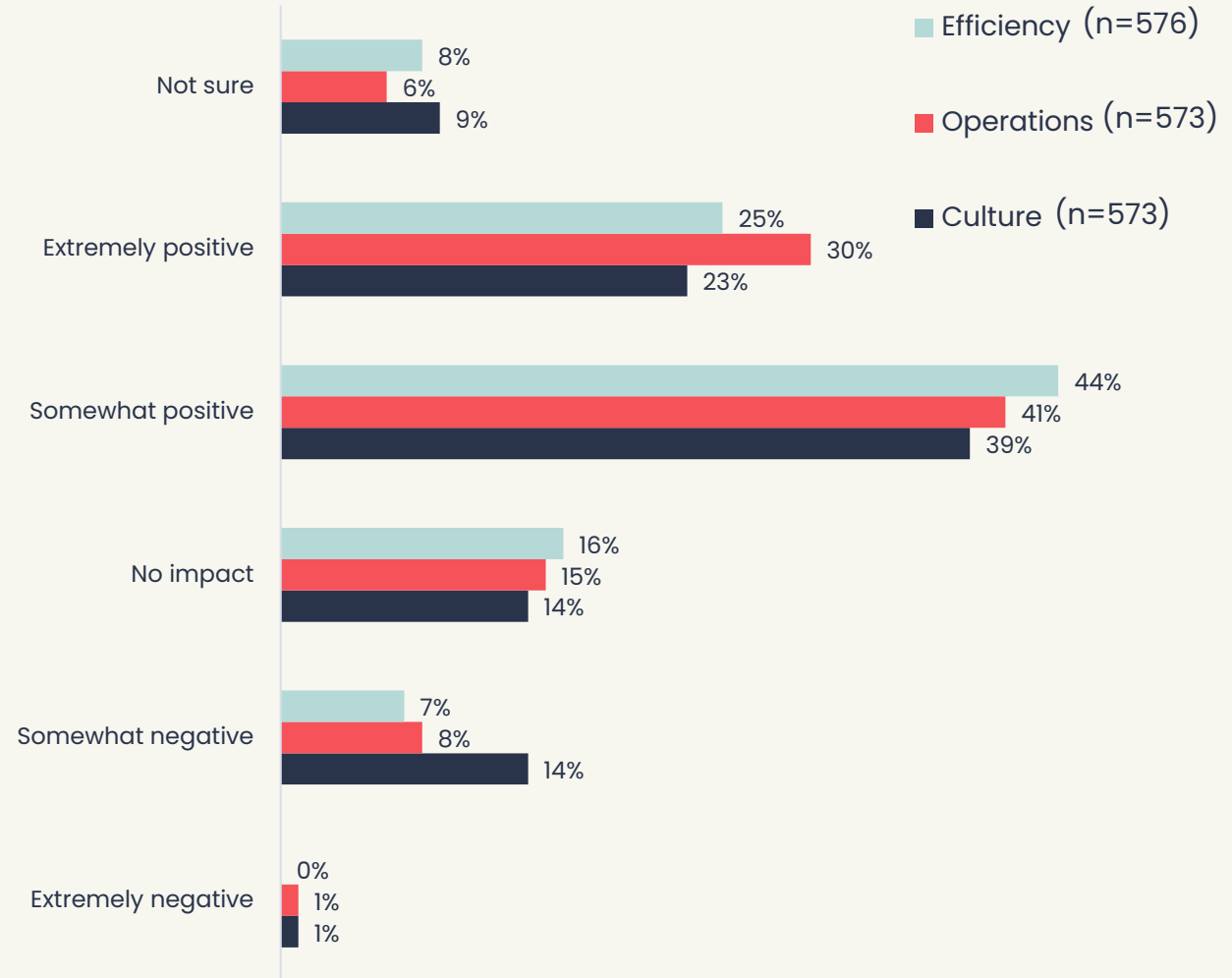
Impact of Technology

The use of technology generally had a **favourable impact** on respondents' workplaces over the course of the pandemic, although respondents were more likely to say it had a negative impact on organizational culture compared to operations and efficiency.

Industries that indicated technology had the greatest a **negative impact** on organizational culture were banking/finance (21%), education (20%), and agriculture/energy/engineering (20%).

Technology was reported to have the greatest positive effect on operations, with **71%** saying it had a somewhat or extremely positive impact, followed closely by efficiency, with **69%** saying technology had a positive impact.

Q. Over the course of the pandemic, what has been the impact of technology on your organization's...



Health & Safety

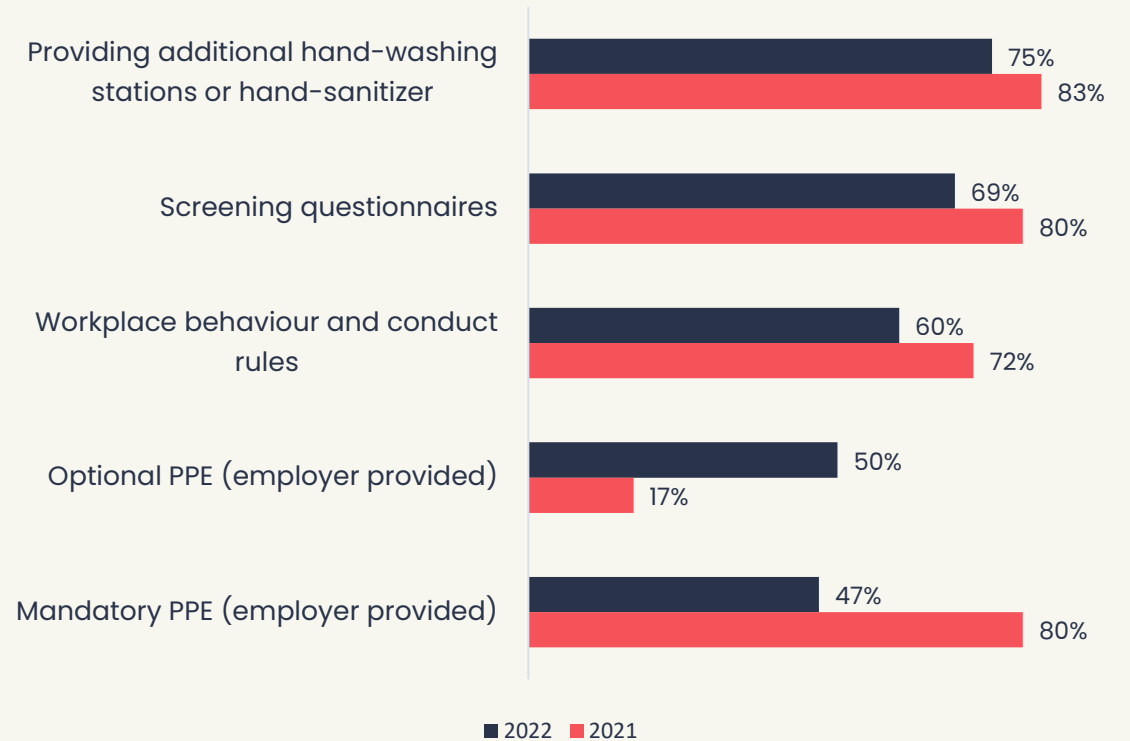
Many workplaces have begun to loosen COVID-19 health & safety measures.

When asked what health and safety measures were being used in workplaces, hand washing stations and screening questionnaires were selected as the most common among survey respondents.

The use of mandatory PPE in workplaces has decreased significantly with only **47%** of respondents saying it was a safety measure in place, compared to **80%** in the 2021 survey. In addition, **50%** of respondents said PPE is optional in their workplace, compared to **17%** in the 2021 survey.

88% Of respondents said they have loosened some of their COVID-19 safety measures.

Q. Has your organization implemented any of the following measures to maintain a safe, healthy and hygienic workplace for employees and visitors? (2022 n=547; 2021 n=699)



The chart above illustrates how the most popular COVID-19 safety measures in place compared to responses from the Spring 2021 survey. The results show how the overall trend of relaxing safety measures has impacted the use of PPE in the workplace.

Vaccinations

Vaccination policies relaxed by many workplaces

Nearly **seven in ten respondents** said their workplace had a COVID-19 vaccination policy in place for employees.



Of those who had a policy, **41% have lifted it** or are planning to do so in the near future.

Had a vaccination policy in place

68%

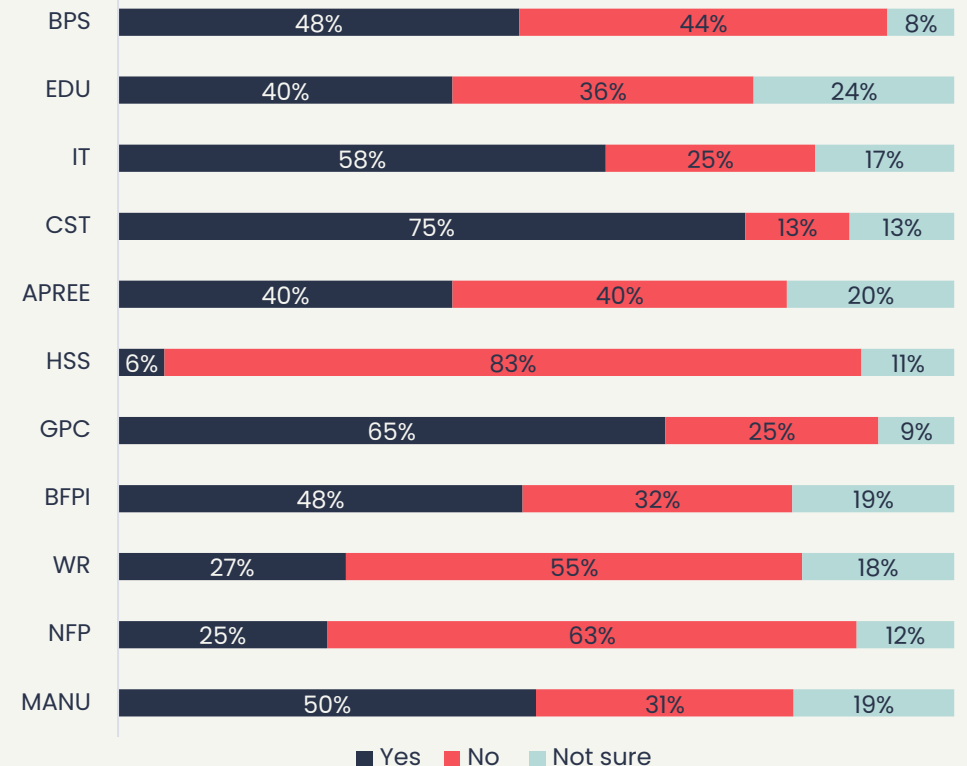
Lifted vaccination policy or planning to

41%

Different vaccination standards for different industries

The construction industry was most likely to say their vaccine policy has or will be lifted (75%), while health and social services (83%) was the most likely to keep theirs in place.

Q. Has your organization lifted its vaccination policy or planning to do so in the near future?



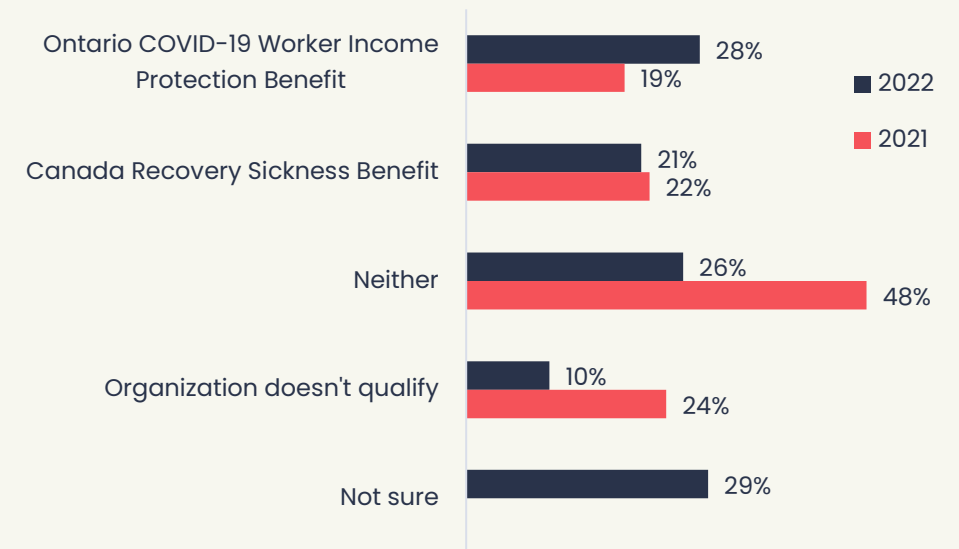
Paid Sick Leave

Access to paid sick leave for workers is a major issue that has been intensified by the pandemic. **82%** of respondents say their organization **provides paid sick days** above what is available through provincial and federal programs.

More respondents reported utilizing the **provincial paid sick leave program** compared to the 2021 survey (28% vs. 19%), while reported use of the federal program remained largely unchanged.

Close to **one third** of respondents (29%) indicated that they **do not know** if their organization or its employees have used government sickness benefits, opting to select the option “not sure”, which was newly included in the 2022 survey.

Q. Has your organization or your employees utilized any of the following government funded paid sick leave programs?* (2022 n=543; 2021 n=722)



*2021 survey included an option to indicate that both sick leave benefits were used. Response counts for the provincial and federal programs in 2021 have been adjusted to include those who selected the option for both benefits.



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Contact the HRPA Team:

communications@hrpa.ca

hrpa.ca