

Wage & Benefit Analysis

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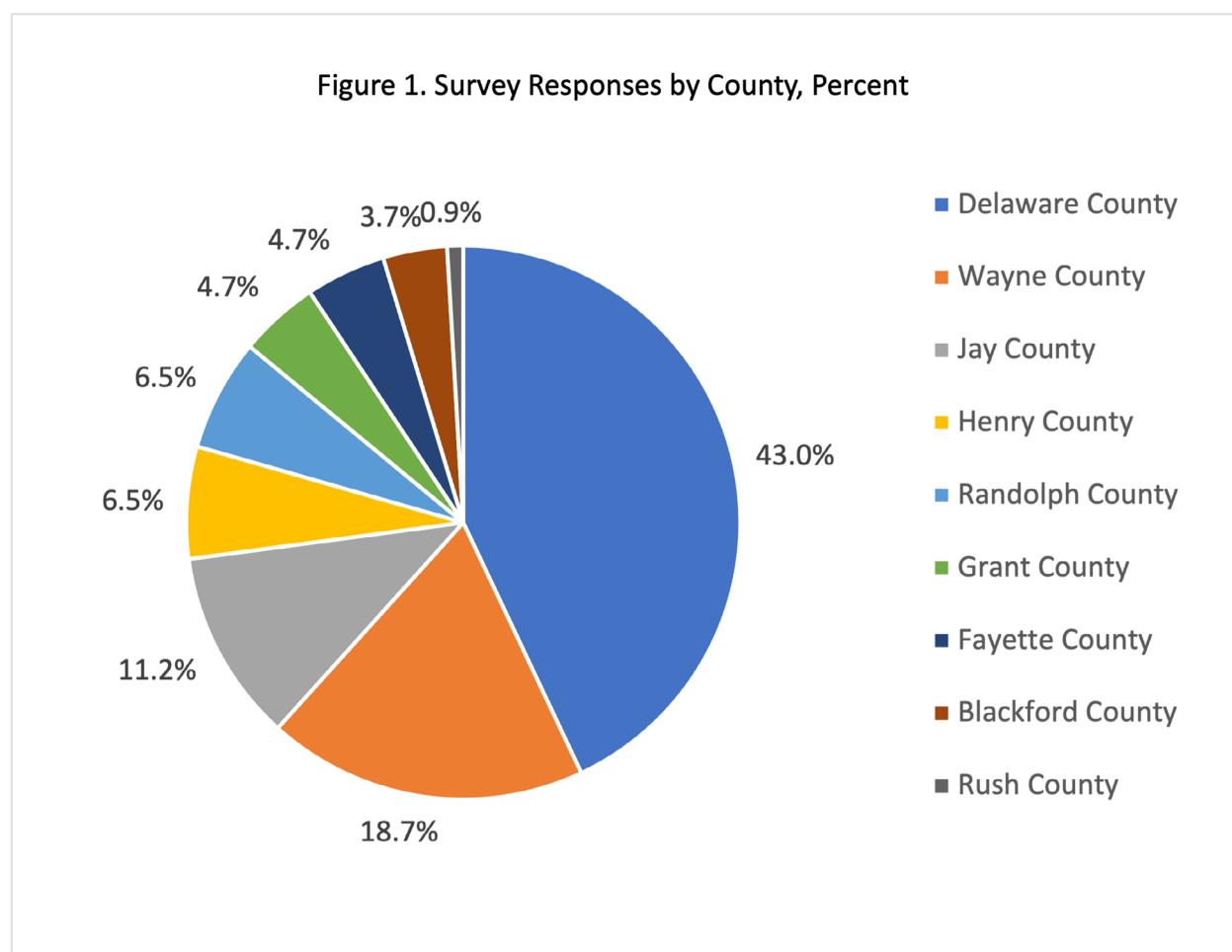
Survey Methodology

Forge East Central Indiana conducted a wage and benefit online survey among businesses in their region. The survey gathered data throughout August-September 2025 resulting in 107 valid responses.

The survey asked about total number of employees, including hourly and salaried employees. It also asked about the entry, average, and highest wages for 127 different jobs grouped into 14 major categories. Types of benefits offered were also included in the survey including but not limited to health and dental insurance, life and disability insurance, bonus programs, and personal time off and vacation.

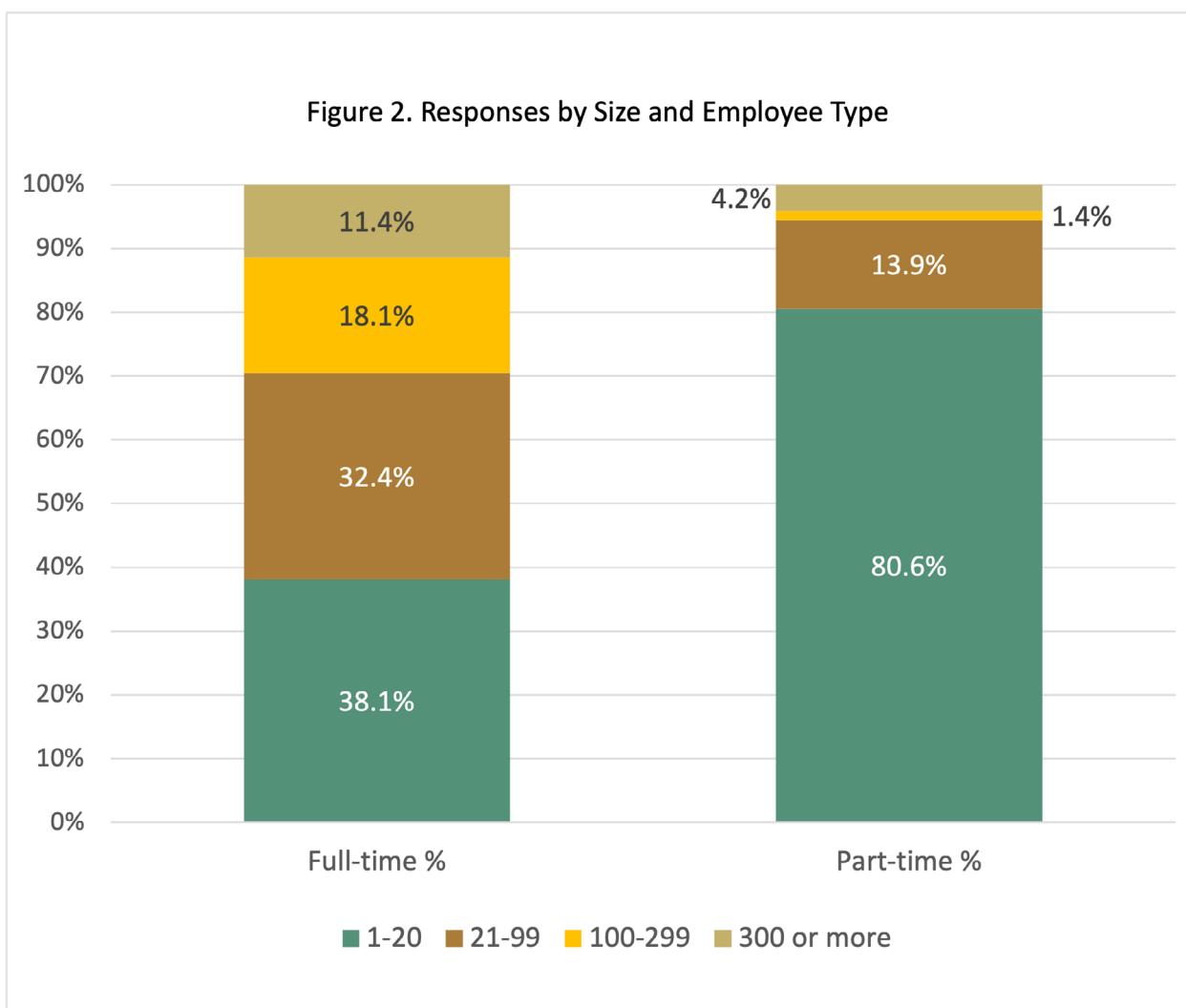
Overview of Responses

Figure 1 below shows the response breakdown by county. The largest share of responses came from Delaware County with 43.0% followed by Wayne County with 18.7% and Jay County with 11.2%. Henry and Randolph counties shared the next lowest place with 6.5%. The rest 14% of responses were received from businesses in Grant, Fayette, Blackford and Rush counties.



Business Size and Employee Type

Analysis revealed that the smallest companies (1-20 workers) have the largest share of full-time employees among businesses of all sizes (38.1%). They are followed by the medium-sized businesses (21-99 workers) whose share of full-time employees among businesses of all sizes is 32.4% (**Figure 2**). Also, small businesses rely heavily on part-time employees: those companies comprise more than 80% of all respondents who employ part-time workers. This continues a previous year trend when small businesses increasingly rely on part-time workers.



EMPLOYEE ANALYSIS

A total of 107 businesses reporting on 127 different jobs in 14 different groups resulted in 13,153 employees. This is an increase compared to the past year's survey, which counted 9,770 employees. Of these, 10,695 (81.3%) were hourly employees (83.9% in 2024) versus 2,458 (18.7%) salaried employees (16.1% in 2024). **Figure 3** shows the percent of total employees by job group. Close to 40% of employees reported in the region belonged to the Production Worker category followed by 20.6% in the Healthcare group. Advertising and Public Relations had the lowest share of employees reported with 0.4% followed by Human Resources with 0.9%.

Figure 3. Percent Total Jobs Surveyed by Group

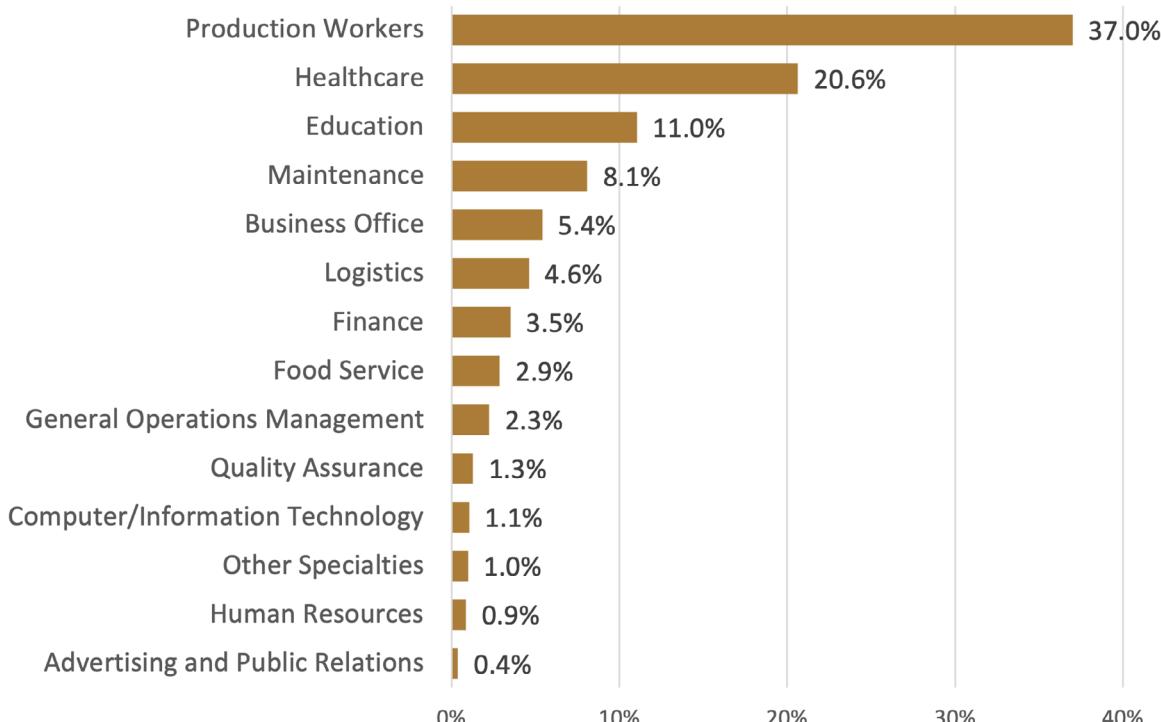
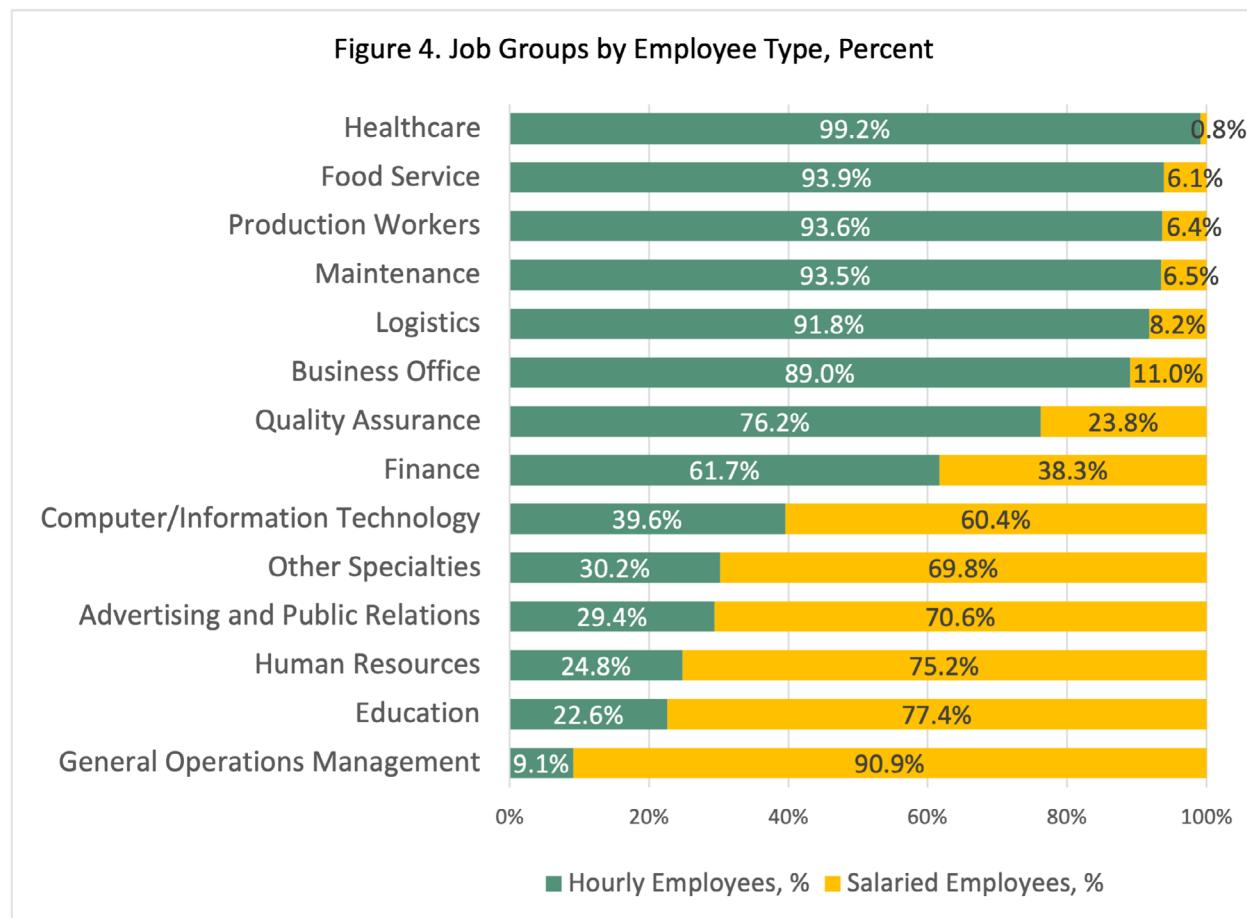


Figure 4 shows the percent of employees by type within each job group. The job group with the highest share of hourly employees was the Healthcare group (99.2%) followed by Food Service and Production Workers (93.9% and 93.6% respectively).

On the other hand, General Operations Management specialties had the highest share of salaried workers with 90.9% followed by Education with 77.4%.



Survey respondents indicated multiple thresholds to define full-time and part-time employment but out of 92 comments received, almost half of respondents defined full-time as those who work more than 30 hours per week, the other third of respondents defined full-time as those who work 35 or more hours per week and the remaining 1/3 of all respondents defined full-time as those who work 40+ hours per week. As for the part-time threshold, more than half of the 93 of respondents defined it as less than 30 hours per week.



WAGE ANALYSIS

Overall, the average hourly wages in the region were \$27.08 for the actual entry wage, \$31.06 for the average wage, and \$34.16 for the highest wage. Regarding wages by job groups, **Figure 5** shows the average wages (entry, average, and highest) among the 14 job groups analyzed sorted from highest to lowest based on the average wage reported (yellow bar).

Food Service had the lowest average wages at \$18.04 followed by Business Office with \$25.00 while the General Operations Management group had the highest with \$55.39 followed by Other Specialties with \$47.37. The highest average wage was \$48.84 in the General Operations Management group while Food Service had the lowest with \$14.48.

Figure 5. Average Wages by Job Group

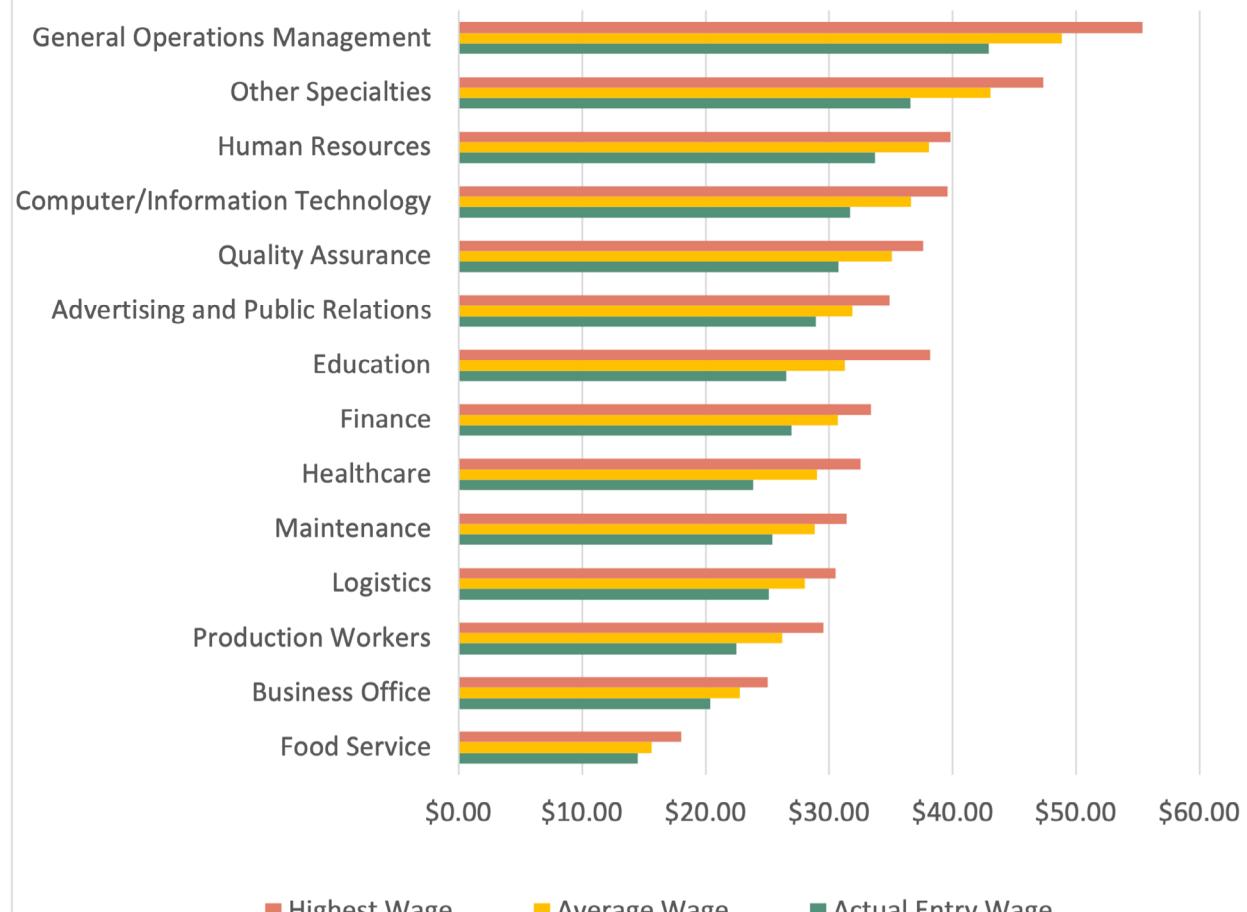


Table 1 shows the averaged actual entry, average, and highest wages per specific jobs. It also includes the number of responses ("Count"). The number of responses is important to keep in mind, as a smaller sample size makes the averages more susceptible to outliers. Note also that each job can have up to 107 responses; therefore, the total number of job group responses may exceed the total number of survey participants (107). Actual entry wages for jobs in the Education group had the least number of survey responses at 26 while the average wages for jobs in the Production Workers group had the highest survey responses with 239. In the end, actual entry wages, average wages and highest wages on average had 88 responses each.

Table 1. Average wages by category, job group, and jobs.

Job Group/Job Name	Actual Entry Wage	Count	Average Wage	Count	Highest Wage	Count
Advertising and Public Relations	\$28.90	45	\$31.86	45	\$34.89	46
Advertising & Promotions Manager	\$25.90	6	\$28.51	6	\$32.42	6
Advertising & Promotions Specialist	\$24.96	4	\$27.30	4	\$29.25	4
Graphic Designer	\$18.52	8	\$21.38	8	\$23.83	8
Marketer	\$23.05	7	\$24.66	7	\$25.76	7
Marketing Manager	\$33.47	15	\$37.39	15	\$42.10	16
Public Relations Support	\$45.36	2	\$45.36	2	\$45.36	2
Public Relations Chief	\$47.76	3	\$52.73	3	\$52.73	3
Business Office	\$20.38	107	\$22.75	108	\$25.00	108
Administrative Assistant	\$18.99	24	\$20.96	23	\$22.78	23
Business Office Manager	\$24.73	19	\$27.71	19	\$30.47	19
Customer Service Manager	\$25.23	10	\$29.43	10	\$31.86	11
Customer Service Representative	\$17.91	25	\$20.55	26	\$22.07	25
Data Entry	\$19.71	7	\$20.17	7	\$20.86	7
Executive Assistant	\$23.20	9	\$25.94	9	\$30.78	9
Receptionist	\$16.00	13	\$17.55	14	\$19.39	14
Computer/Information Technology	\$31.69	60	\$36.63	62	\$39.60	62
Data Entry Clerk	\$17.34	4	\$20.14	4	\$20.28	4
Data Entry Supervisor	\$32.33	3	\$35.75	3	\$35.94	3
Information Technology Manager	\$41.02	16	\$46.67	17	\$50.80	17
Information Technology Chief	\$35.39	7	\$39.79	7	\$40.94	7
IT/Help Desk Technician	\$23.60	20	\$27.70	21	\$30.06	21
Project Manager	\$33.93	7	\$42.64	7	\$47.64	7
Software Developer	\$40.45	3	\$43.70	3	\$50.57	3



Job Group/Job Name	Actual Entry Wage	Count	Average Wage	Count	Highest Wage	Count
Education	\$26.53	26	\$31.28	27	\$38.16	27
Guidance Counselor	\$26.45	5	\$28.84	4	\$33.67	4
Principal	\$46.50	3	\$47.48	4	\$51.79	4
Principal, Vice	\$37.86	2	\$40.63	2	\$43.41	2
Professor	\$24.44	3	\$36.46	3	\$61.15	3
Professor, Adjunct	\$42.00	1	\$42.00	1	\$43.03	1
Professor, Associate	\$24.09	1	\$54.63	1	\$85.16	1
Teacher, Elementary or Secondary	\$22.92	3	\$28.22	4	\$36.47	4
Teacher, Assistant	\$14.83	3	\$15.15	3	\$15.41	3
Preschool Teacher	\$14.93	2	\$16.33	2	\$17.93	2
Teaching Assistant	\$14.86	2	\$15.38	2	\$15.76	2
Lead Teacher	\$30.00	1	\$30.33	1	\$30.66	1
Finance	\$26.95	192	\$30.69	191	\$33.39	191
Accountant	\$31.85	29	\$36.47	29	\$38.44	29
Accounting Clerk	\$21.54	14	\$22.60	15	\$23.89	14
Accounts Payable Clerk	\$20.91	21	\$22.32	21	\$23.93	20
Accounts Payable Supervisor	\$32.07	7	\$34.36	7	\$35.72	7
Accounts Receivable Clerk	\$19.40	13	\$21.78	13	\$23.44	13
Accounts Receivable Supervisor	\$19.24	3	\$23.18	3	\$27.85	3
Auditor	\$27.42	2	\$29.53	2	\$30.97	2
Bank/Branch Manager	\$25.91	5	\$32.23	4	\$38.72	4
Bank/Branch Manager, Assistant	\$20.26	4	\$25.52	4	\$29.57	4
Controller	\$43.75	19	\$50.13	20	\$54.28	20
Credit Analyst	\$25.60	3	\$30.65	3	\$37.35	3
Loan Manager	\$38.73	3	\$50.27	3	\$51.40	3
Loan Processor	\$18.07	4	\$21.80	4	\$23.55	4
Mortgage Processor	\$19.49	3	\$23.12	3	\$25.16	3
Payroll Clerk	\$22.19	14	\$25.00	13	\$26.47	13
Payroll Supervisor/Manager	\$28.98	6	\$32.08	5	\$34.28	5
Personal Banker	\$17.33	3	\$19.52	3	\$22.33	3
Teller	\$15.76	4	\$17.38	4	\$19.92	4
Accounting Manager	\$30.15	9	\$33.70	9	\$36.26	10
Purchasing/Procurement Assistant	\$21.92	10	\$25.79	9	\$30.35	9
Purchasing/Procurement Manager	\$29.12	16	\$33.14	17	\$36.55	18



Job Group/Job Name	Actual Entry Wage	Count	Average Wage	Count	Highest Wage	Count
Food Service	\$14.48	33	\$15.62	30	\$18.04	31
Chef	\$20.43	5	\$22.34	4	\$24.72	5
Cook	\$14.98	10	\$16.43	9	\$19.17	9
Dietary Aide	\$12.53	2	\$14.12	2	\$16.94	2
Food Service Worker	\$14.45	11	\$15.87	10	\$17.29	11
Server	\$8.40	5	\$8.92	5	\$ 9.75	4
General Operations Management	\$42.92	78	\$48.84	82	\$55.39	80
Department Manager	\$32.13	15	\$39.27	14	\$45.12	15
District/Regional Managers	\$64.28	6	\$71.60	6	\$73.45	6
General Operations/Plant Managers	\$47.96	28	\$52.71	30	\$62.01	28
Manager, Assistant/Shift	\$32.11	6	\$38.35	7	\$40.99	6
Executive Director	\$50.28	15	\$57.54	16	\$65.59	16
Administrator	\$23.80	8	\$28.35	9	\$31.30	9
Healthcare	\$23.82	37	\$29.03	36	\$32.53	36
Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)	\$14.11	4	\$17.18	4	\$19.93	4
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	\$21.07	3	\$22.62	3	\$26.03	3
Lab Technician	\$25.33	4	\$26.78	4	\$28.72	4
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	\$24.84	5	\$28.88	5	\$32.27	5
Medical Assistant	\$17.47	4	\$19.87	4	\$23.71	4
Pharmacy Technician	\$18.02	2	\$21.48	2	\$28.43	2
Radiologic Technician	\$25.23	3	\$33.35	3	\$37.86	3
Registered Nurse (RN)	\$30.41	7	\$36.13	6	\$40.76	6
Sonographer	\$29.49	2	\$43.84	2	\$40.81	2
Therapist	\$27.63	3	\$43.34	3	\$48.55	3
Human Resources	\$33.73	80	\$38.08	84	\$39.83	84
Benefits Coordinator	\$27.37	4	\$28.43	4	\$28.99	4
Benefits Director	\$50.03	1	\$50.03	1	\$50.03	1
HR Coordinator/Specialist	\$21.89	13	\$23.45	14	\$24.61	14
Human Resources Director	\$46.08	13	\$58.28	14	\$60.07	13
Human Resource Generalist	\$27.11	18	\$31.01	19	\$34.15	19
Human Resource Manager	\$39.76	17	\$43.46	17	\$46.63	18
Human Resource Office, Chief	\$45.67	2	\$65.51	2	\$65.51	2
Recruiter	\$35.84	4	\$35.85	4	\$35.85	4
Trainer/Instructor	\$32.07	8	\$32.05	9	\$32.45	9



Job Group/Job Name	Actual Entry Wage	Count	Average Wage	Count	Highest Wage	Count
Logistics	\$25.09	83	\$28.01	89	\$30.53	88
Materials Handler	\$18.41	15	\$20.38	17	\$22.42	17
Packer/Picker/Stock Worker	\$19.01	7	\$21.56	7	\$23.20	7
Scheduler	\$29.09	10	\$34.30	10	\$38.55	11
Shipping/Receiving Clerk	\$20.24	20	\$22.34	21	\$24.08	21
Truck Driver	\$23.39	13	\$25.76	14	\$25.86	13
Warehouse Supervisor	\$30.92	7	\$35.25	9	\$42.14	8
Materials Manager	\$45.07	6	\$48.85	6	\$54.63	6
Logistics Manager	\$37.35	5	\$42.54	5	\$42.54	5
Maintenance	\$25.40	143	\$28.84	149	\$31.40	148
Custodian (non-Janitorial)	\$18.24	6	\$19.73	6	\$20.60	6
Janitorial custodian	\$16.74	22	\$17.82	23	\$19.32	24
Custodial Manager	\$22.20	6	\$23.43	6	\$24.22	6
Electrician	\$30.01	10	\$35.18	10	\$38.86	10
Groundskeeper	\$19.95	6	\$20.73	7	\$20.88	7
Maintenance General/Helper	\$20.58	26	\$23.48	28	\$26.19	28
Maintenance Manager	\$38.32	32	\$43.97	32	\$46.87	31
Industrial and Machine Maintenance	\$25.94	18	\$31.13	19	\$35.43	18
Facility Maintenance	\$21.93	17	\$26.46	18	\$30.88	18
Other Specialties	\$36.60	52	\$43.08	53	\$47.37	54
Compliance Specialist	\$27.29	8	\$29.78	8	\$31.11	8
Corporate Counsel/Staff Attorney	\$18.05	4	\$24.80	4	\$31.55	4
Mechanical Engineers	\$38.42	10	\$49.06	10	\$57.58	10
Risk Management Director	\$45.33	6	\$50.74	6	\$50.74	6
Safety Director	\$42.85	6	\$47.60	6	\$48.94	7
Industrial Engineer	\$64.10	4	\$64.50	5	\$65.50	4
Quality Engineer	\$31.04	6	\$34.28	6	\$37.39	6
Product Engineer	\$33.08	8	\$42.09	8	\$53.32	9
Production Workers	\$22.49	236	\$26.21	239	\$29.52	238
Assembler	\$17.96	11	\$19.27	11	\$21.63	11
Assembler, Mechanical	\$20.17	6	\$23.60	6	\$25.71	6
CNC Operator/Set-up	\$23.20	17	\$26.22	17	\$28.74	17
Crushing, Grinding & Polishing Machine Operators/Setter/Tenders	\$18.26	7	\$20.59	7	\$22.70	8
Fabricators	\$22.04	7	\$25.64	7	\$28.15	7



Job Group/Job Name	Actual Entry Wage	Count	Average Wage	Count	Highest Wage	Count
Production Supervisors/Managers	\$30.04	34	\$36.09	35	\$41.87	34
Foreman	\$23.69	6	\$32.30	6	\$35.01	6
Fork Lift Operator	\$20.19	18	\$22.65	19	\$23.41	18
General Laborer	\$18.30	15	\$21.78	15	\$26.90	15
Grinder Polisher	\$18.58	2	\$20.50	2	\$21.63	2
Inventory/Stock Clerk	\$22.19	14	\$24.97	15	\$27.38	15
Machine Operators	\$21.68	23	\$25.22	24	\$29.71	23
Machinist	\$24.70	11	\$28.55	11	\$31.24	11
Production Lead Person/Non-Management	\$22.53	22	\$26.05	22	\$29.14	22
Production Worker	\$18.48	30	\$21.31	29	\$24.22	30
Tool and Die Maker	\$26.31	13	\$30.79	13	\$35.35	13
Quality Assurance	\$30.77	45	\$35.06	47	\$37.62	46
QA/Inspection Technician	\$21.51	25	\$24.17	26	\$26.73	25
Quality Manager	\$42.34	20	\$48.54	21	\$50.58	21

When looking at jobs with three or more responses, different patterns emerge. **Table 2** looks at the lowest and highest averages across all three types of wages: actual entry, average, and highest with three or more responses. The lowest average actual entry wage in the region was Server in Food Service group at \$8.40 per hour compared to the highest, which was Information District/Regional Managers at \$64.28 per hour.

Regarding the average wage offered, the lowest was again Server in Food Service with \$8.92 per hour compared to the District/Regional Managers at \$71.60 per hour. Lastly, the lowest average highest wage reported was also Server in Food Service with \$9.75 per hour compared to District/Regional Managers at \$73.45 per hour.

Table 2. Lowest and Highest Average Wages

Average Wages	Actual Entry	Average	Highest
Lowest Paid	Server (Food Service) \$8.40	Server (Food Service) \$8.92	Server (Food Service) \$9.75
Highest Paid	District/Regional Managers \$64.28	District/Regional Managers \$71.60	District/Regional Managers \$73.45



We also include the top 5 lowest and highest paid jobs for entry, average, and highest wages in the region with three or more responses (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Top 5 lowest/highest paid jobs for entry, average, and highest wages in the region with three or more responses.

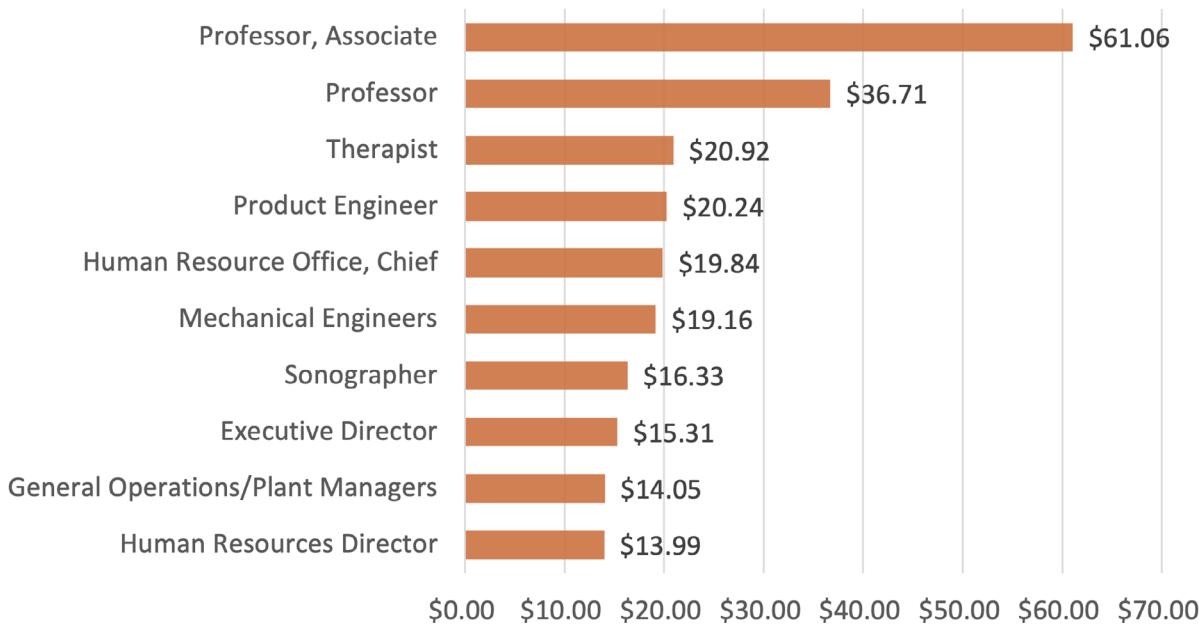
Job Title	Wage per Hour
Actual Entry Wage	
Top 5 Highest Paid Jobs	
District/Regional Managers	\$64.28
Industrial Engineer	\$64.10
Executive Director	\$50.28
General Operations/Plant Managers	\$47.96
Public Relations Chief	\$47.76
Top 5 Lowest Paid Jobs	
Cook	\$14.98
Teacher, Assistant	\$14.83
Food Service Worker	\$14.45
Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)	\$14.11
Server	\$8.40
Average Wage	
Top 5 Highest Paid Jobs	
District/Regional Managers	\$71.60
Industrial Engineer	\$64.50
Human Resources Director	\$58.28
Executive Director	\$57.54
Public Relations Chief	\$52.73
Top 5 Lowest Paid Jobs	
Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)	\$17.18
Cook	\$16.43
Food Service Worker	\$15.87
Teacher, Assistant	\$15.15
Server	\$8.92



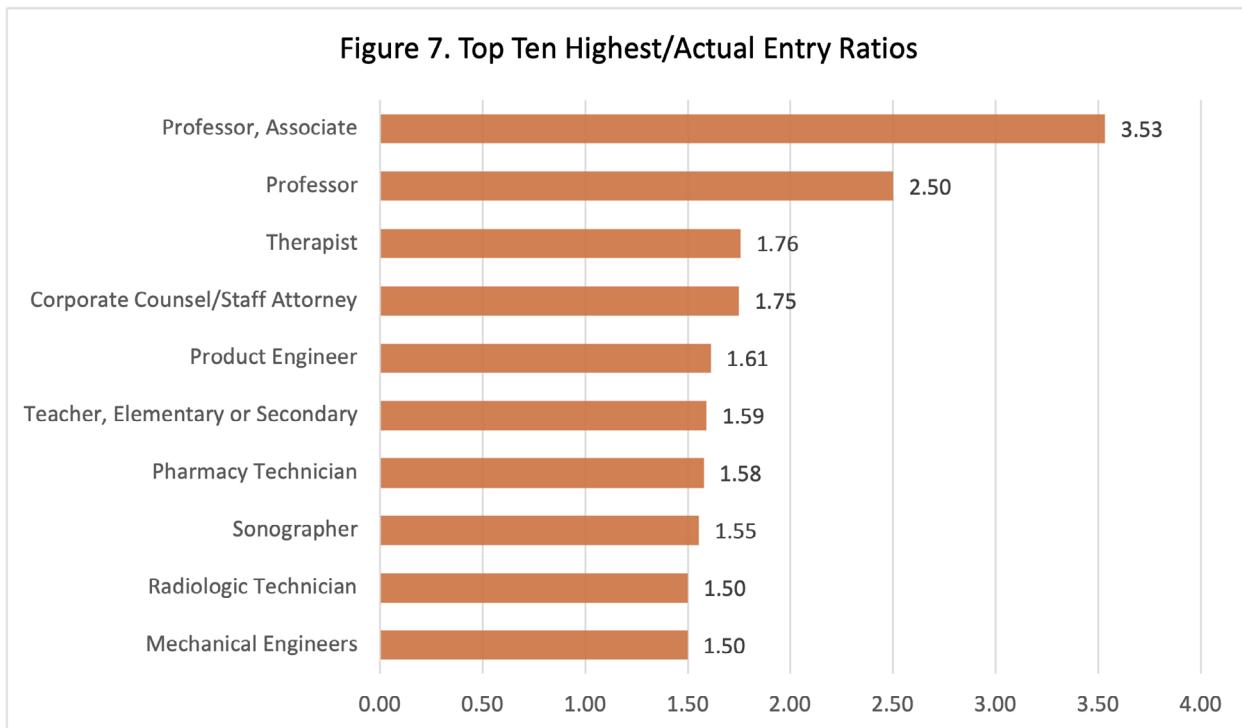
Job Title	Wage per Hour
Average Highest Wage	
Top 5 Highest Paid Jobs	
District/Regional Managers	\$73.45
Executive Director	\$65.59
Industrial Engineer	\$65.50
General Operations/Plant Managers	\$62.01
Professor	\$61.15
Top 5 Lowest Paid Jobs	
Janitorial custodian	\$19.32
Cook	\$19.17
Food Service Worker	\$17.29
Teacher, Assistant	\$15.41
Server	\$9.75

Regarding actual entry versus highest wages by job, **Figure 6** shows the top ten jobs with the largest difference between highest and actual entry wages among those with three or more responses. Associate Professor had the largest difference (\$61.06) between the average highest wage (\$85.16 per hour) versus the average actual entry wage (\$24.09 per hour). All top ten jobs had a difference of more than \$13 dollars.

Figure 6. Top Ten Jobs with Highest Minus Actual Entry Wages



Lastly, regarding average wages, **Figure 7** shows the top ten largest ratios between highest and actual entry wages. The job with the highest ratio was again Associate Professor where the average highest wage was 3.53 times higher than the average actual entry wage. Notice how jobs are not the same as the top ten with highest difference.



WAGE SUMMARY

Overall, Production Workers accounted for 1/3 of the number of jobs reported compared to only 0.4% of Advertising and Public Relations jobs. Regarding type of workers, Healthcare had the highest share of hourly workers (99.2%) compared to General Operations Management with 9.1% of hourly workers.

In summary, the average hourly wages in the region were \$27.08 for the actual entry wage, \$31.06 for the average wage, and \$34.16 for the highest wage. Food Service jobs had the lowest average wages while General Operations Management had the highest.

Jobs with the lowest average wages in the region included Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), Cook, Food Service Worker, Assistant Teacher and Server among others. Jobs with the highest wage included District/Regional Managers, Industrial Engineer, Human Resources Director, Executive Director, Public Relations Chief, among others.

The largest difference between highest and actual entry wages was among Associate Professors, where the highest average wage was \$61.06 per hour higher compared to the average actual entry wage. Similarly, Associate Professor had the largest ratio between highest and actual entry wages, where the highest average wage was 3.53 times higher than the average actual entry wage.

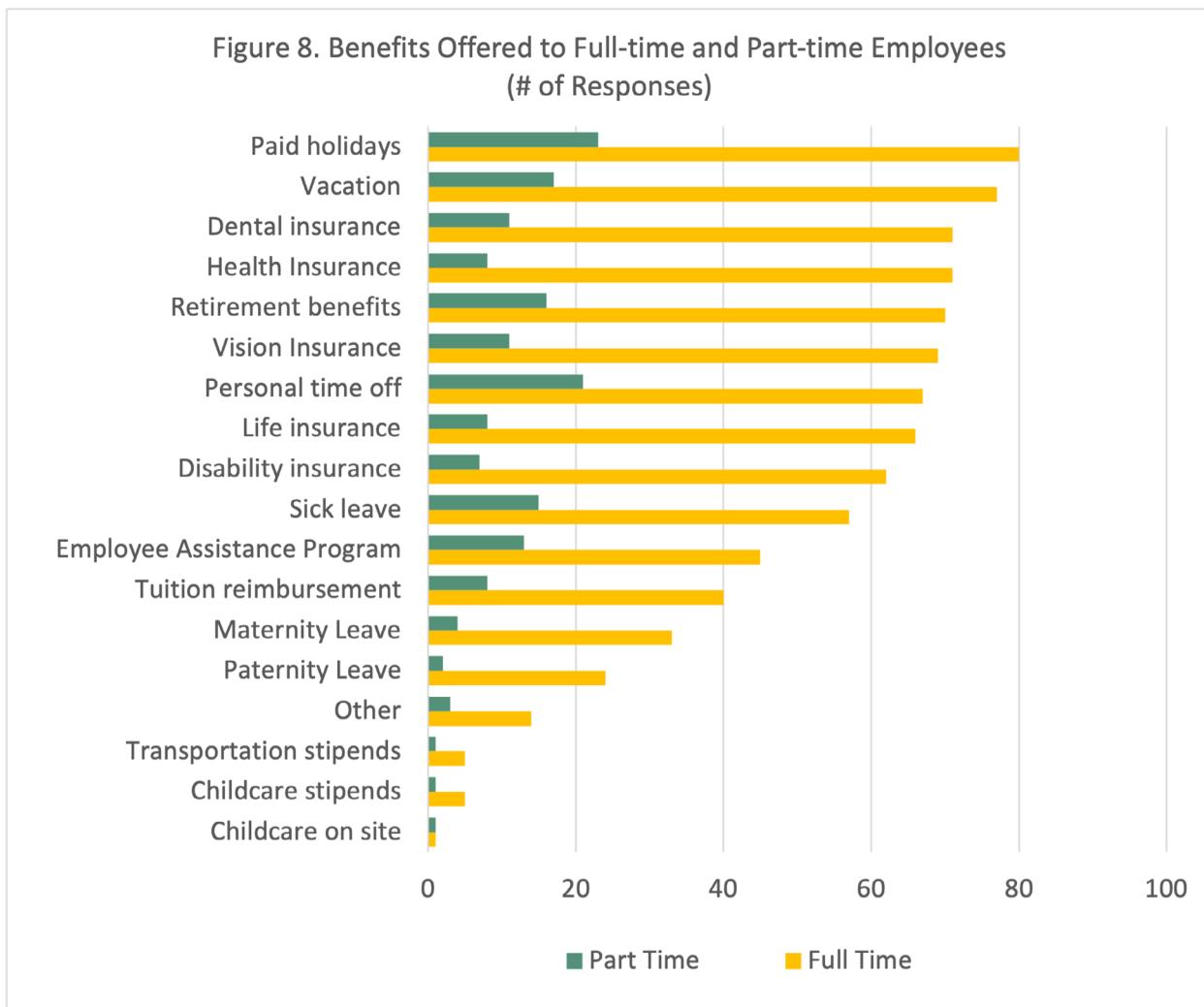


BENEFITS

The total number of valid responses received was 99. **Figure 8** shows the number of respondents offering benefits to full-time and part-time employees. Note that 38.1% of respondents offered benefits to hourly employees, which is more than 6 percentage points increase since the previous year (32.9%).

As shown in Figure 8, more respondents offered more benefits to full-time versus part-time employees. The most popular benefits for full-time employees were paid holidays, vacation, health and dental insurance, and retirement benefits with roughly 75% of respondents offering these benefits to full-time employees.

For part-time employees, paid holidays, personal time-off and vacation were the most popular with more than 50% of respondents offering these benefits to part-time employees. Regarding the Other category, some responses included floating holidays, unlimited unpaid time off, attendance bonus, company discount, 401k, health insurance stipend, fuel, on-site medical care, YMCA membership discount.

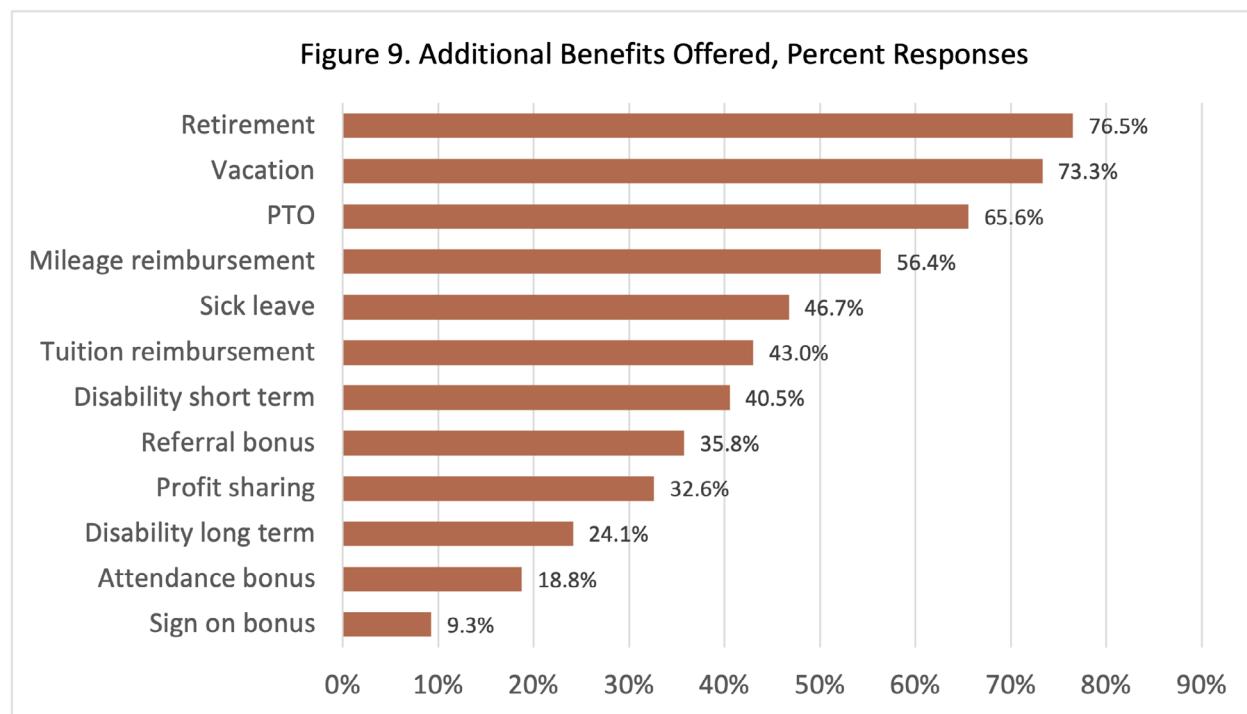


Additional Benefits

Figure 9 shows additional benefits offered by survey respondents.

The most popular benefits were retirement plans and vacation, with over 70% of respondents offering these. Paid time off (PTO), mileage reimbursement, and sick leave were the next most common, each offered by roughly half of the respondents. A sign-on bonus was the least popular, with just over 9% of respondents indicating they offered one.

Among those who offered attendance, sign-on, and referral bonus programs, a majority (71% or more) reported these programs were effective. Of the three, the referral bonus was seen as the least effective.



Respondents were asked about maternity and paternity leave policies.

For birth-related leave, over 80% offered 6 to 13 weeks of maternity leave, while only half as many offered 6 to 13 weeks of paternity leave. The most common duration of paternity leave was 2 to 4 weeks (41%).

For adoption-related leave, more than 70% of respondents offered 6 to 13 weeks of maternity leave, and half offered 6 to 13 weeks of paternity leave. Again, the most common (45%) paternity leave duration was 2 to 4 weeks (See **Figures 10a and 10b**).



Figure 10a. Maternity/Paternity Leave Policies: for Birth
n=22-29

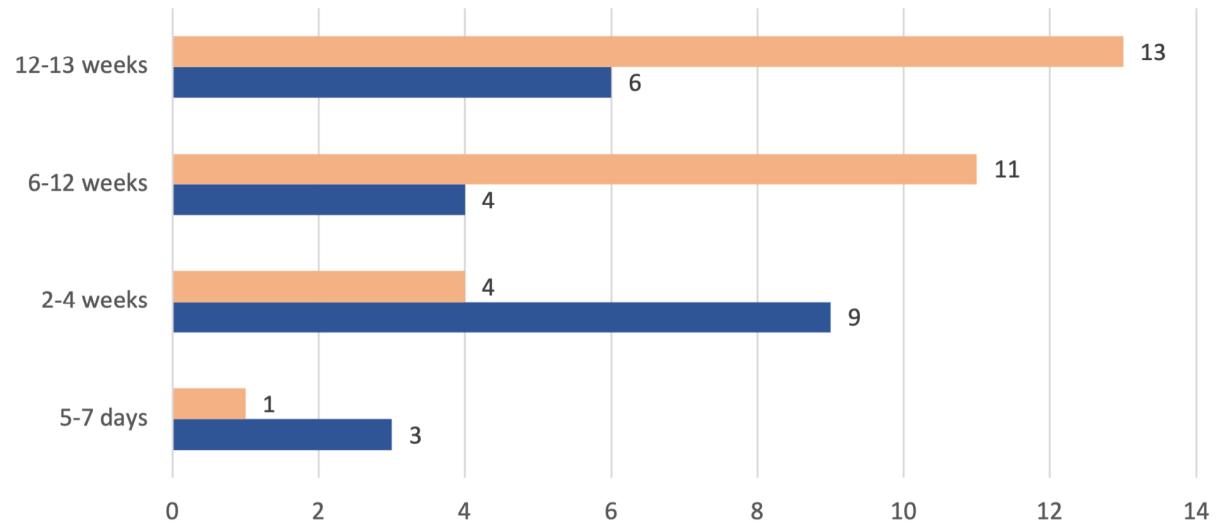
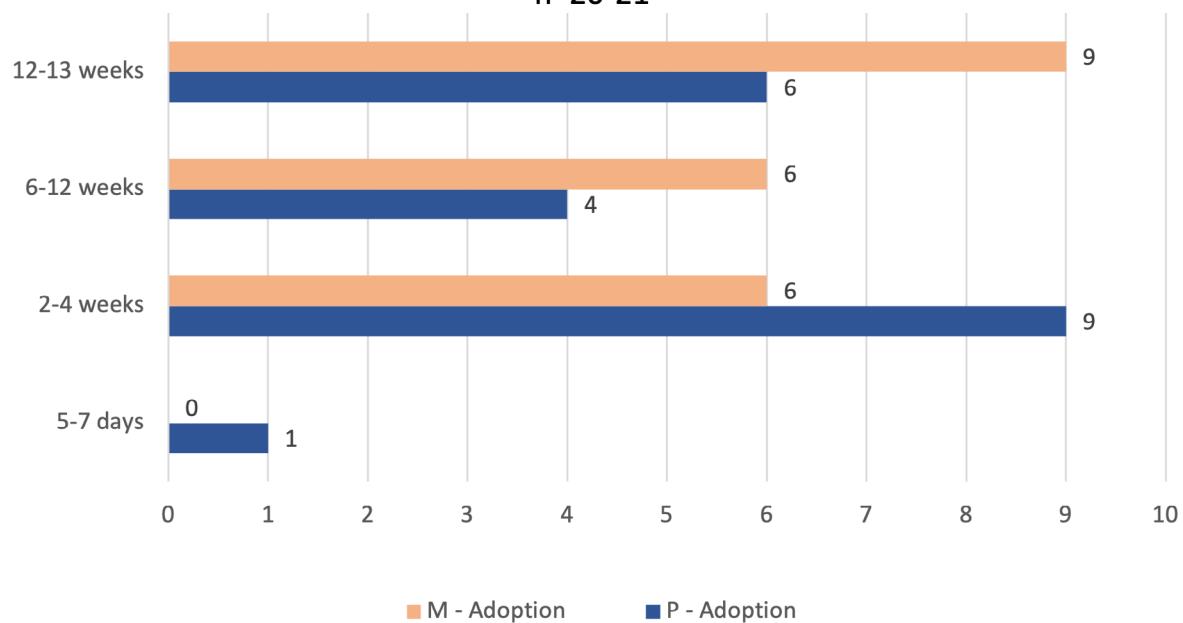


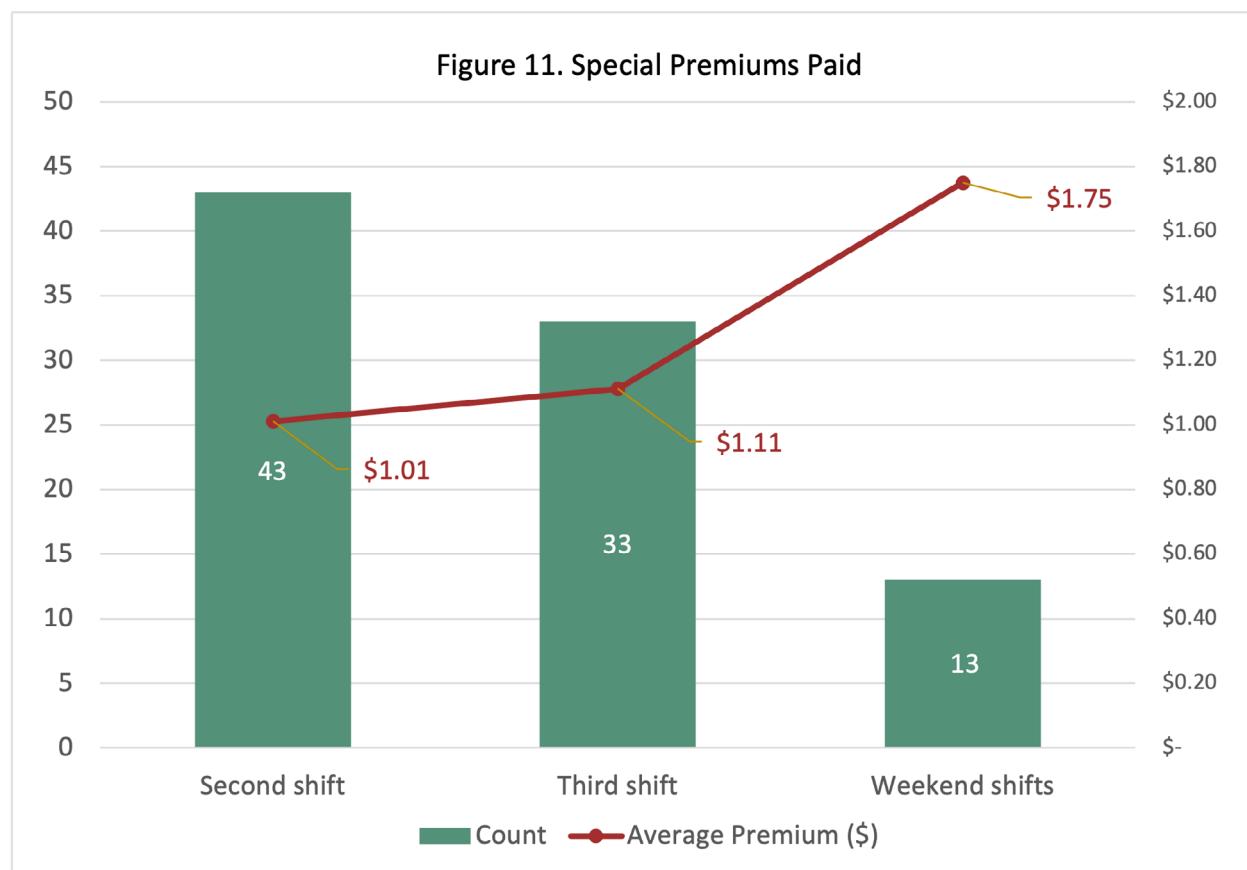
Figure 10b. Maternity/Paternity Leave Policies: for Adoption
n=20-21



Special Premium

Respondents were asked whether they provided a special pay premium for employees working second or third shifts, as well as for weekend shifts. **Figure 11** presents the number of respondents who reported offering such premiums.

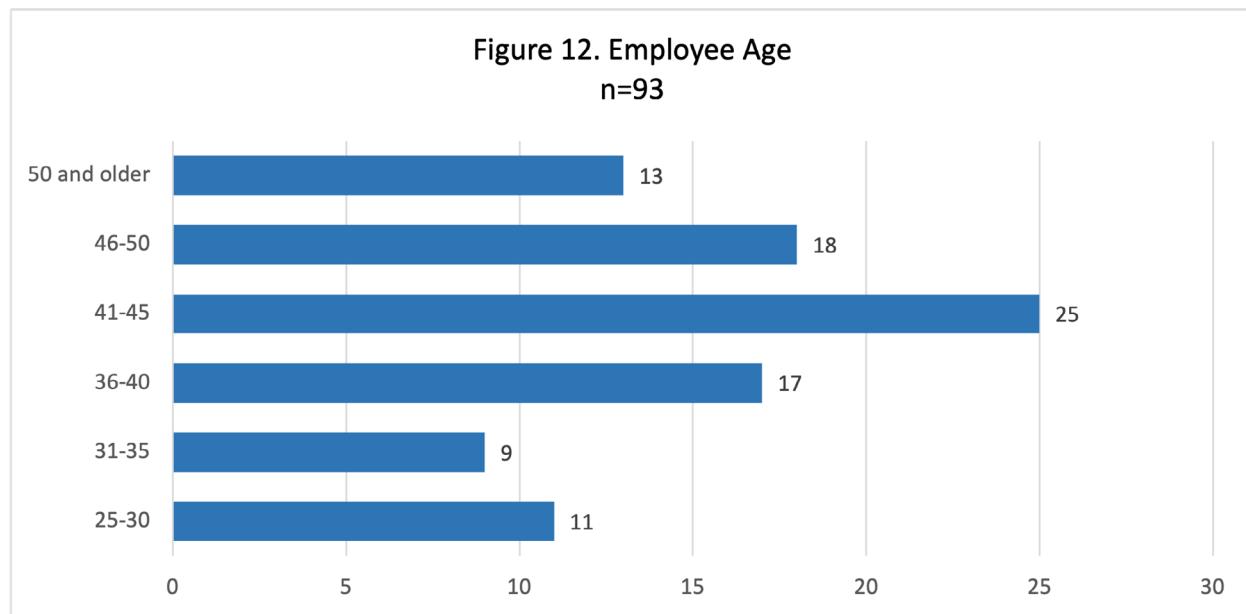
Among employers offering a second-shift premium, the additional pay ranged from \$0.35 to \$2.00 per hour, with the majority paying approximately \$1.00 per hour above the regular rate. Employers offering a third-shift premium reported similar pay differentials, ranging from \$0.35 to \$2.00 per hour, with most paying an average premium of \$1.11 per hour. For weekend work, employers indicated premiums ranging from \$1.00 to \$2.50 per hour above the regular weekday rate, with an average premium of approximately \$1.75 per hour.



Demographics and Future Hiring

In addition to wages and benefits, the survey asked respondents about future hiring and employee age. When asked how many employees they are planning to hire, respondents said 3,740 (almost twice as many comparing to 2024 survey) of which 1,159 would be added during the next year, 1,301 over the next two years, and 1,280 over the next three years.

Figure 12 illustrates the age distribution of employees among respondents. The largest proportion of employees (27%) were between 41 and 45 years old, with 25 respondents reporting individuals in this age group. The next most common age ranges were 46-50 years (19%) and 36-40 years (18%), with 18 and 17 respondents, respectively. Younger age groups were less represented, with 11 respondents reporting employees aged 25-30 (12%) and 9 respondents reporting those aged 31-35 (10%). Employees aged 50 and older accounted for 13 respondents (14%). Overall, the data indicate that the workforce is predominantly composed of individuals in their forties, suggesting a relatively experienced and mature employee base. The median age of the workforce reported by survey respondents was 43 years.



Screening, Healthcare Costs, Remote Work, Childcare, and Hiring Services

The survey also included questions related to THC screening, healthcare costs, remote work, childcare, and hiring services. Approximately 24% of respondents indicated that they conduct THC screening as part of their employment process.



In terms of training methods, 90% of respondents reported that employee training takes place on-site. The remaining 10% indicated that training is provided through online platforms, community colleges, external workshops or lectures, training centers, or universities.

Figure 13 presents the services respondents used to hire their most recent employees. Indeed was the most frequently used hiring platform, cited by 52 respondents, indicating its strong dominance as a recruitment tool. Other unspecified services were also commonly mentioned (34 responses), followed by corporate social media platforms (30) and LinkedIn (28). Traditional recruitment methods, such as outside employment agencies, were used by 18 respondents. Online job boards like ZipRecruiter (9), Indiana Career Connect (8), and Work One (7) were less frequently utilized. Only a small number of respondents reported using regional workforce organizations such as Eastern Indiana Works (6), or more traditional methods like billboards (3), Career Builder (1), and direct mail (1). Overall, the data suggest that employers rely heavily on online platforms—particularly Indeed and social media—for recruitment, while traditional methods play a minimal role.

Figure 13. Services used to hire the last five employees
(# of Responses, n=88)

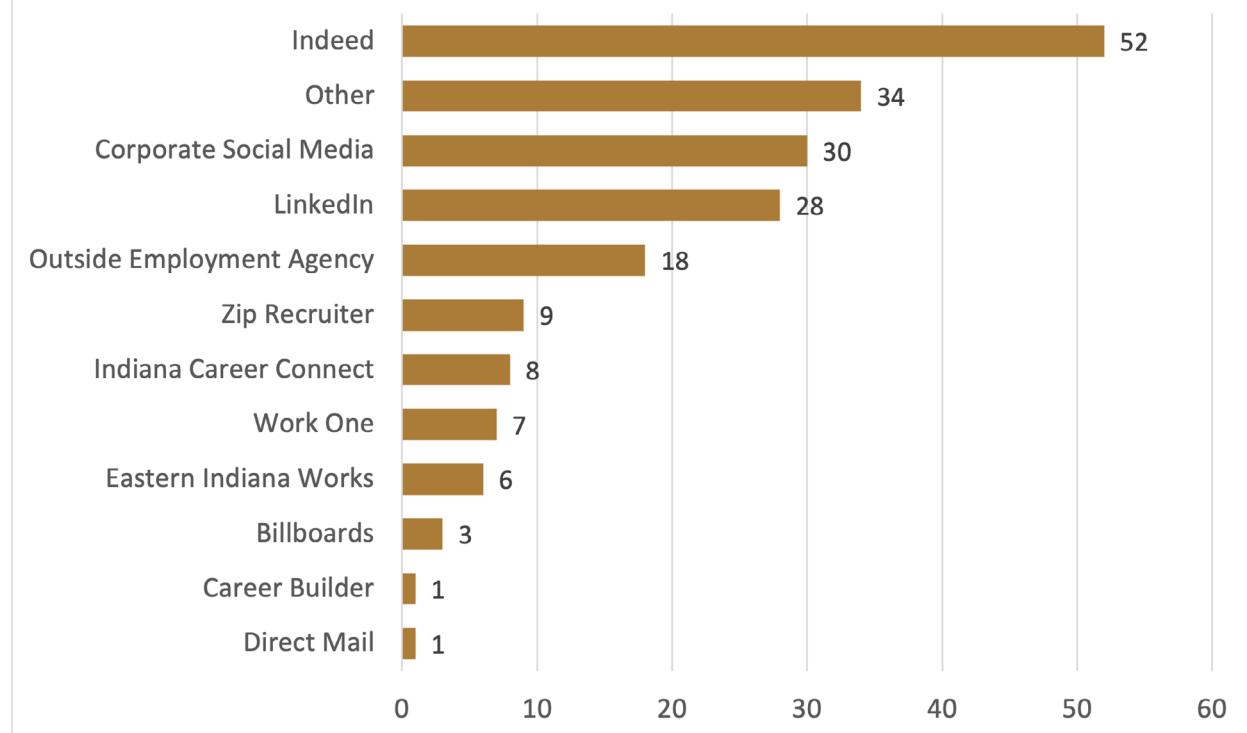


Figure 14 illustrates the extent to which employers offer remote work flexibility. The majority of respondents (62%) reported that they do not provide any form of remote work flexibility. Among those that do, 26% indicated that remote work is available to less than 25% of their workforce. A smaller portion, 5%, allow remote work for between 25% and 49.9% of employees, while another 5% extend it to between 50% and 74.9% of workers. Only 2% of respondents reported offering remote work flexibility to 75% or more of their workforce. These results suggest that while some degree of remote work is available in certain organizations, the overall prevalence remains low, with most employers maintaining predominantly on-site operations.

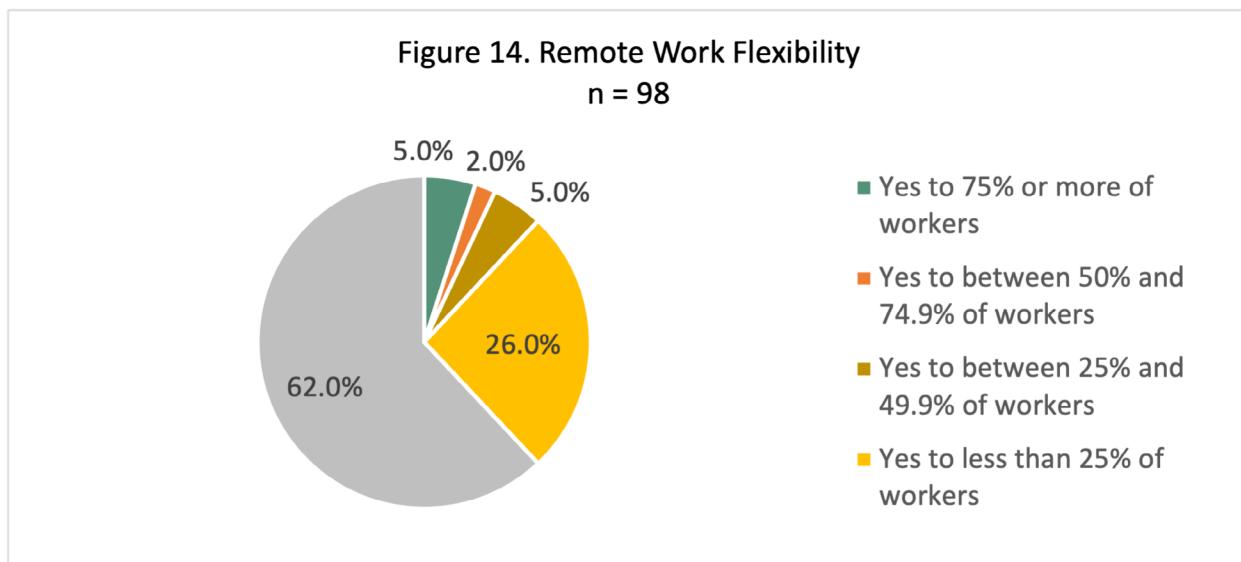


Figure 15 (n = 99) illustrates respondents' levels of concern regarding increasing healthcare expenses. The majority of participants expressed either high concern (44.4%) or moderate concern (42.4%), indicating that over four-fifths of respondents view rising healthcare costs as a significant issue. Only 13.1% of respondents reported low concern, suggesting that worries about healthcare affordability are widespread within this group. Overall, the data highlight that healthcare cost increases are perceived as a substantial challenge for most businesses surveyed.



Figure 15. Rising Healthcare Costs Concerns

n = 99

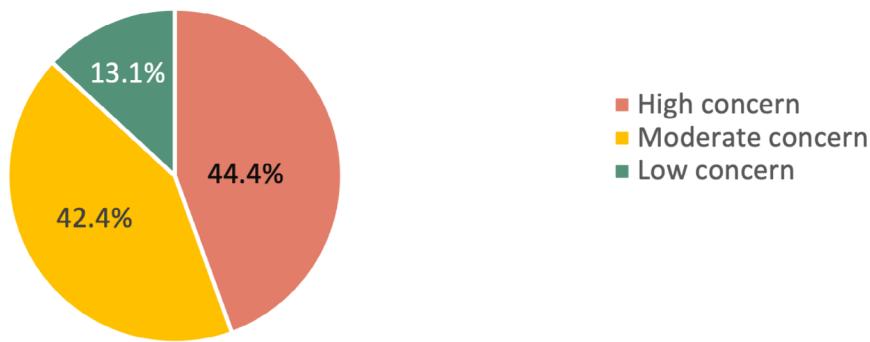
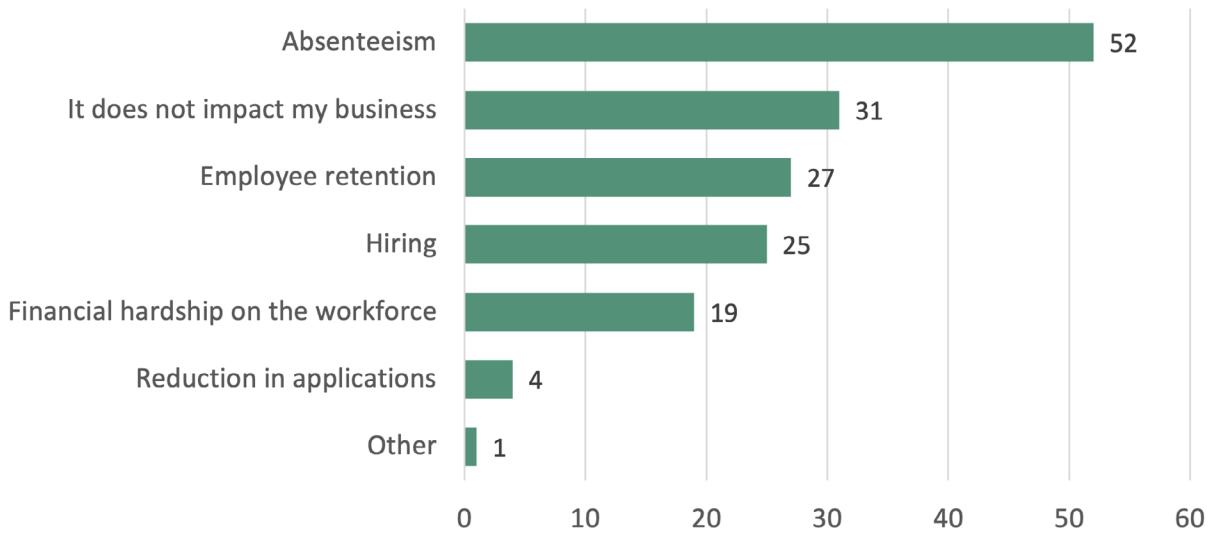


Figure 16 illustrates the impact of childcare availability among respondents. The most frequently reported impact was absenteeism (n = 52). The next largest group consisted of businesses indicating that childcare availability did not affect them (n = 31), followed by employee retention (n = 27) and hiring (n = 25). The overall distribution is similar to the 2024 data, except for an increased share of businesses reporting absenteeism as an impact.

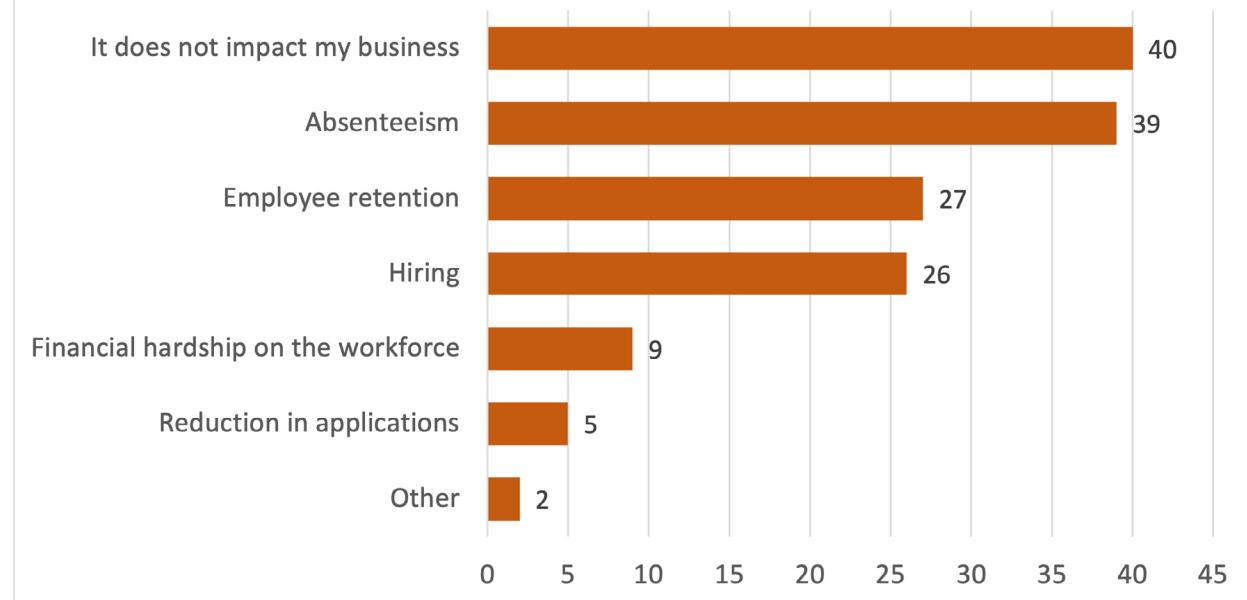
Figure 16. Impact of Childcare Availability
(# of Responses) n=86



Lastly, **Figure 17** illustrates how businesses perceive the effect of transportation reliability on various operational aspects. The largest group of respondents (40) indicated that reliable transportation does not impact their business, suggesting that for many organizations, transportation issues may not be a critical concern. However, nearly as many (39) reported that transportation reliability affects absenteeism, highlighting its strong link to workforce attendance.

Employee retention (27 responses) and hiring (26 responses) were also significant factors, indicating that transportation challenges can influence both attracting and keeping talent. A smaller number of respondents cited financial hardship on the workforce (9) and reduction in applications (5), while only 2 selected "Other." Overall, the data suggests that while some businesses remain unaffected, transportation reliability is a notable factor in workforce stability and operational efficiency for many employers.

**Figure 17. Impact of Reliable Transportation Options
(# of Responses) n=87**





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