WHAT GLOBAL WORKERS WANT



JULY 2023

As the world of work constantly evolves, our understanding of the "traditional worker" is being redefined. New SHRM research uncovers the unique wants, needs and experiences of over 3,800 workers across four countries (Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States) and five distinct worker types (see Figure 1) to better equip employers¹ and policymakers as they navigate this dynamic and often unpredictable landscape and develop policies that recognize and value the unique and diverse needs of these different workers.

FIGURE 1.

Worker Types* (% of sample)	Defining Features	Who They Are at a Glance
Full-Time Salaried Employees (46%)	 Employees who work full- time (35+ hours/week)** for an organization and are paid a fixed salary 	 Lowest share of workers who have more than one job Highest share of workers with a university degree More likely to have higher household incomes Highest share of workers performing hybrid work (combination of in-person and remote work)
Full-Time Hourly Employees (16%)	 Employees who work full- time (35+ hours/week) for an organization and are paid an hourly wage 	 Highest share of workers eligible for overtime pay More likely than other worker types to have access to benefits at similar rates to full-time salaried employees Tied for highest share of workers working fully in-person/on-site
Independent Workers (16%)	 Independent workers, such as independent contractors, freelancers, self-employed and gig workers These workers may work full-time or part-time and may be paid several different ways, with over half (52%) being paid via commission or lump sum 	 Highest share of workers who have more than one job Highest share of workers working fully remotely Lowest share of workers with access to benefits 44% own their own business as their primary source of income The top two reasons they are working as independent workers are for the flexibility of schedule (29%) or because they enjoy being their own boss/independent (25%) Only 1 in 3 would prefer to work as an employee of an organization instead of as an independent worker if given the choice

¹The term "employer" is used throughout to denote the entity receiving the services from the worker, whether or not the entity would be an "employer" for purposes of any applicable laws.

Worker Types* (% of sample)	Defining Features	Who They Are at a Glance
Part-Time Employees (15%)	 Employees who work for an organization part-time (< 35 hours per week) These workers may be paid a fixed salary or an hourly wage, with nearly 3 in 5 (62%) being paid hourly 	 Highest share of female workers Less than 3 in 10 would prefer to have a full-time job if given the choice 2 in 3 are working part-time for flexibility-related reasons, such as a desire for a flexible schedule, caregiving requirements or working while attending school Tied for highest share of workers working fully in-person/on-site
Temporary Employees (7%)	 Employees in temporary positions that last for a limited time or until the completion of a project These workers may work full-time or part-time and may be paid several different ways 	 Highest share of workers age 18-34 1 in 5 say the main reason they are working a temporary job is because they hope it leads to a regular job; another 1 in 5 are working a temporary job because they are currently attending school Nearly 3 in 4 would prefer to have a regular job if given the choice

*Note: Worker types based on respondents' primary job (see methodology section for full definition). **Note: The definition of a full-time worker can vary between 30 to 40 hours per week. For the purposes of this research, full-time work is defined as 35+ hours per week.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

To understand how well jobs² are currently meeting different types of workers' needs and preferences, SHRM Research asked workers about their attitudes and experiences across 17 key job features (see Figure 2) and 6 key worker benefits (see Figure 3), with the understanding that laws governing access to these benefits can vary from country to country.

The 17 job features examined in the study were modeled after a combination of the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being³ and the characteristics of good jobs identified by Gallup, Lumina Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Omidyar Network in their "Great Jobs Study."⁴ Workers rated the importance of these job features and their level of satisfaction with their access to these features at work.

²Throughout, the term "job" is used to describe work engagements performed by an individual worker, including employment as well as volunteer work, self-employment or independent contractor work.

³ <u>The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing</u>, U.S. Surgeon General, 2022

⁴ <u>Not Just a Job: New Evidence on the Quality of Work in the United States</u>, Gallup, Lumina Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, & Omidyar Network, 2019

FIGURE 2.

	Job Features Explored in the Research			
Higher-Level Need*	Job Feature			
Socurity	Fair compensation/pay			
Security	Job security/stability			
Safaty	Workload manageability			
Safety	Physical safety			
	Schedule input/control			
Autonomy	Autonomy/independence over how work gets done			
	Freedom to reject work assignments			
	Predictable work schedule			
Flexibility	Flexibility to manage work and life issues			
	Flexibility in work hours and schedule			
Accomplishment	Career advancement opportunities			
Learning	Learning and development opportunities			
Maaning	Opportunity to do meaningful work			
Meaning	Opportunity to use skills/abilities			
Dianity	Recognition for doing good work			
Dignity	Workplace where all are treated fairly			
Belonging	A sense of belonging and community			
*Needs modeled after the U.S. Surge	on General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well Being.			

FIGURE 3.

Worker Benefits Explored in the Research
Healthcare
Retirement benefits
Paid vacation leave
Paid sick leave
Paid maternity leave (i.e., paid leave for new mothers)
Paid paternity leave (i.e., paid leave for new fathers)

WHAT ALL WORKERS WANT

Regardless of worker type, more than 4 in 5 workers rated fair compensation/pay, job security/stability, workload manageability and flexibility to manage work and life issues as job features that are very or extremely important to them. In fact, except for independent workers, these four job features ranked in the top four most important for all other worker types (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4.

Pe	ercent of Workers W	ho Rate the Follow	ving Job Features	as Very or Extreme	ely Important
Rank	Full-time Salaried Employees	Full-time Hourly Employees	Part-time Employees	Temporary Workers	Independent Workers
1	Fair compensation/pay (97%)	Fair compensation/ pay (97%)	Fair compensation/ pay (95%)	Fair compensation/ pay (95%)	Fair compensation/ pay (92%)
2	Job security/ stability (95%)	Job security/ stability (93%)	Flexibility to manage work and life issues (90%)	Workload manageability (89%)	Flexibility to manage work and life issues (91%)
3	Flexibility to manage work and life issues (91%)	Flexibility to manage work and life issues (90%)	Workload manageability (89%)	Flexibility to manage work and life issues (89%)	Flexibility in work hours and schedule (90%)
4	Workload manageability (90%)	Workload manageability (88%)	Job security/ stability (88%)	Job security/ stability (88%)	Workload manageability (86%)

However, just because a job feature did not rank in the top four most important features does not mean it is not critical to the overall worker experience. To further understand what workers really want, SHRM Research also examined which of these 17 job features had the largest gaps between workers' assigned importance and their current levels of satisfaction, and which were top drivers⁵ of crucial workplace outcomes, including workers' sense of fulfillment, perceived job quality, and mental health and burnout at work.

What workers want from their employers

More/fair compensation and the **opportunity to do meaningful work**. Although most workers said that fair compensation/pay and the opportunity to do meaningful work are very or extremely important to them, fewer indicated that they are very or extremely satisfied with their current level of access to these features at work (see Figure 5).

⁵ Based on the results of a relative weights analysis of the 17 key job features examined in the study.

FIGURE 5.

	Fair Compensation/Pay			Opportunity to Do Meaningful Work		
	Very/ extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap	Very/ extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap
Full-time salaried employees	97%	46%	51%	76%	55%	21%
Full-time hourly employees	97%	41%	57 %	65%	49%	16%
Part-time employees	95%	43%	52 %	67%	46%	21%
Temporary employees	95%	44%	51%	84%	57%	27%
Independent workers	92%	45%	47 %	73%	56%	18%
Note: Due to roundir	ng, gap estimate	e values may vary by -	+/- 1 percentage	point.		

Yet, SHRM's data shows that high levels of satisfaction in these areas are crucial to a positive worker experience. Based on a relative weights analysis, workers' satisfaction with their access to fair compensation/pay and the opportunity to do meaningful work emerged in top three drivers of perceived job quality among all five worker types. Further, workers' satisfaction with their opportunity to do meaningful work emerged as the *number one* driver of workers' job fulfillment and a top three driver of workers' mental health regardless of worker type.

Workers who are very or extremely satisfied with their opportunity to do meaningful work are...

- Nearly 3 times more likely be very or extremely fulfilled at work than those who are only somewhat satisfied with the opportunity (67% vs. 24%)
- Over 13 times more likely to be very or extremely fulfilled at work than those who are unsatisfied with the opportunity (67% vs. 5%)

Workers who are very or extremely satisfied with their access to fair compensation/pay are...

- Over 2 times more likely to say they are working a high-quality job than those who are only somewhat satisfied with their access (63% vs. 31%)
- Over 5 times more likely to say they are working a high-quality job than those who are unsatisfied with their access (63% vs. 12%)

When it comes to pay, additional job(s) also secure the lives and livelihoods of workers: **Nearly 2 in 5** (**38%**) workers say they have more than one job (including part-time, evening or weekend work). While this is relatively uncommon among full-time salaried employees (29%), 36%-57% of workers from the other groups hold more than one job, with this being most common among independent workers (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6.

Percent of Workers Who Have More Than One Job by Worker Type





Source: Global Worker Project, SHRM, 2023

What's more, among workers who hold more than one job, full-time salaried employees are more likely to say the extra money they earn is a "nice-to-have." In contrast, workers of other types are more likely to say the money they earn from having more than one job is important or essential for meeting their basic needs (see Figure 15 later in the report).

What workers want from their work

Balanced work-life integration and **manageable workloads** to address personal and professional concerns. Yet, just like the satisfaction gaps shown earlier in the report, work-life flexibility and workload manageability were also areas with notable gaps between workers' assigned importance and their current levels of satisfaction, further shaping the worker experience. While all five worker types showed these gaps, independent workers had the smallest gap due to higher levels of satisfaction with their current access to balanced work life integration and manageable workloads (see Figure 7).

	Flexibility to Manage Work and Life Issues			Workload Manageability		
	Very/ extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap	Very/ extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap
Full-time salaried employees	91%	63%	27%	90%	56%	34%
Full-time hourly employees	90%	54%	35%	88%	56%	32%
Part-time employees	90%	65%	25%	89%	61%	27 %
Temporary employees	89%	65%	24%	89%	58%	31%
Independent workers	91%	75%	15%	86%	72%	15%

FIGURE 7.

Note: Due to rounding, gap estimate values may vary by +/- 1 percentage point.

Notably, workload manageability may be particularly crucial for shaping the worker experience. In fact, based on a relative weights analysis, (a lack of) satisfaction with workload manageability emerged as the *number one* driver of burnout among all five worker types.

Workers who are very or extremely satisfied with their workload manageability are...

- Over 4.5 times <u>less</u> likely to agree/strongly agree that they are burned out from their work than those who are unsatisfied with their workload manageability (14% vs. 64%)
- Over 4 times <u>more</u> likely to say their job has had a positive impact on their mental health in the last six months than those who are unsatisfied with their workload manageability (37% vs. 9%)

Last but not least, workers' satisfaction with **opportunities to use their skills/abilities** also ranked as a feature workers want from their work, serving as a top three driver of fulfillment across all worker types. Yet, again, this was another job feature with a notable gap between workers' assigned importance and current levels of satisfaction (see Figure 8).

	Орр	ortunity to Use Skills/Abi	lities
	Very/extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap
Full-time salaried employees	84%	61%	24%
Full-time hourly employees	79%	50%	30%
Part-time employees	73%	45%	28%
Temporary employees	87%	53%	34%
Independent workers	78%	56%	21 %
Note: Due to rounding, gap est	imate values may vary by +/- 1 p	ercentage point.	

FIGURE 8.

What workers want most from their governments

Improved compensation and living conditions. SHRM asked workers: "If you had an opportunity to speak with the government in your country, what is the number one change you would suggest to them to help improve your job?"

The key themes that workers cited not only detailed the struggles they face specifically regarding their jobs, but more importantly revealed the *interconnected relationship between their jobs and broader aspects of their daily lives*. In other words, workers' concerns extend beyond the confines of their jobs, yet these concerns can have a profound impact on their ability to perform their jobs effectively.

The most commonly cited theme across workers of all types and from all countries included a call for improving compensation and living conditions. In their responses, workers provided suggestions for where their governments can make the most impact in this space:

Increase wages: "We need more competitive wages. Our wages increasing by 1% every year is not sustainable. You are always behind." — Full-time hourly employee in Canada

- Lower inflation: "I'd say increase the pay. It should be a bit higher to match with inflation and rent costs. Everything is more expensive, but wages are still stagnant." Full-time hourly employee in the United States
- Mandate salary increases: "A change in labor legislation to mandate salary increases if companies are unwilling to comply with regulations regarding overtime payment." — Temporary employee in Mexico
- Reduce taxes: "They need to help people afford the cost of living. If they could improve employee benefits or salary or reduce tax, anything to help people live day to day without struggling to afford food and bills." Full-time salaried employee in the United Kingdom
- Provide security: "ANY work carried out should have a livable minimum wage attached to it. There is no protection for those of us who are self-employed, and this is constantly taken advantage of." Independent worker in the United Kingdom

WHAT VARIES

SHRM research shows connectivity between workers; workers of all types want high-quality jobs with fair compensation, opportunities to do meaningful work and to use their skills/abilities, and the ability to effectively manage their personal and professional lives. However, each of the five worker types also have unique wants and needs that shape their fulfillment at work and their perceptions of what makes for a high-quality job.

By gathering and analyzing insights by worker type, SHRM strived to understand the different types of workers across the selected countries.

Full-time Salaried Employees (Feel more fulfilled and secure, yet have some concerns related to flexibility and workload manageability)

Topline: Full-time salaried employees tend to be more educated and financially secure than the other worker types — both in the immediate and long term. They also have greater access to benefits (i.e., healthcare, retirement and paid leave) through the workplace and, similarly, place higher values on that access.

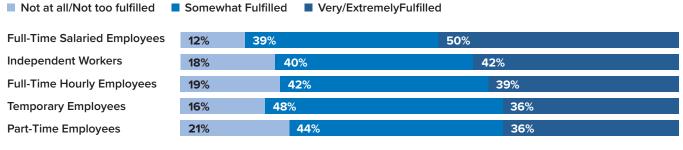
Compared to the other worker types, full-time salaried employees are more likely to say they are very or extremely fulfilled at work (50% versus 36%-42% of other workers) and are less likely to perceive their primary job as low quality⁶ (11% versus 18%-20% of other workers). In fact, almost half (46%) of full-time salaried employees rate their jobs as high quality⁷ (see Figures 9 & 10).

⁶ Rating of 1-5 on a 10-point scale, where 1 indicates the lowest quality job and 10 indicates the highest quality job.

⁷Rating of 8-10 on a 10-point scale.

FIGURE 9.

Fulfillment at Work by Worker Type



May not sum exactly to 100% due to rounding

Source: Global Worker Project, SHRM, 2023

FIGURE 10.

Perceived Job Quality by Worker Type

Low quality (1-5) Average Quality (6-7) High Quality (8-10)

Full-Time Salaried Employees	11%	43%	46%
Independent Workers	18%	40%	42%
Temporary Employees	19 %	42 %	39%
Part-Time Employees	20%	45%	35%
Full-Time Hourly Employees	19 %	47%	34%

Source: Global Worker Project, SHRM, 2023

As discussed earlier in the report, satisfaction with one's opportunity to do meaningful work and access to fair compensation/pay were both top drivers of perceived job quality and fulfillment at work among all five worker types. Interestingly, however, satisfaction with one's sense of belonging and community emerged as a *unique* top three driver of perceived job quality and fulfilment at work among full-time salaried employees but not among the other worker types (see Figure 11).

FIGURE 11.

	Top Three Drivers of Perceived Job Quality by Worker Type						
	Full-Time Salaried Employees	Full-Time Hourly Employees	Part-Time Employees	Temporary Employees	Independent Workers		
	Opportunity to	Fair	Opportunity to	Opportunity to	Fair		
1	do work that is	compensation/	do work that is	do work that is	compensation/		
	meaningful to me	рау	meaningful to me	meaningful to me	рау		
	Fair	Opportunity to	Fair	Level of job	Opportunity to		
2	compensation/	do work that is	compensation/	security or	do work that is		
	рау	meaningful to me	рау	stability	meaningful to me		
	A sense of	Career	Opportunities	Fair	Level of job		
3	belonging or	advancement	to use my skills/	compensation/	security or		
	community	opportunities	abilities	рау	stability		
Note: Resi	Its based on relative w	eiahts analysis of the 17	iob features examined	in the study.			

Note: Results based on relative weights analysis of the 17 job features examined in the study.

Looking to the data in its entirety, there is a sense that full-time salaried employees are more interconnected with their work as it is the place they find community, access to benefits and ensure financial and physical security.

However, with that interconnectedness comes a loss of flexibility and a heightened desire for more employer and government-mandated flexibility to better enable work-life integration. When asked what changes they would suggest to their government to help improve their jobs, full-time workers (both salaried and hourly) were more likely than other types of workers to suggest flexibility-related changes (e.g., shortened workweeks or work hours).

Despite the positive attributes associated with being a full-time salaried employee and the relative prestige that is attached, these workers (along with their other full-time counterparts) are reporting trouble managing their professional and personal lives.

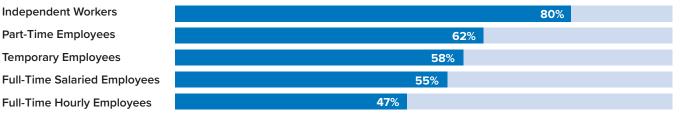
Full-time Hourly Employees (Better than some, worse than others)

Topline: Full-time hourly employees are similar to their full-time salaried counterparts in many ways (including access to benefits), but they differ in the wallet. Among the five worker types, full-time hourly employees reported the greatest gap between the importance they assign to fair compensation/pay and their level of satisfaction with their current access to it (satisfaction gap of 57 percentage points versus 47-52 percentage points among other workers; see Figure 5). In fact, unlike their salaried counterparts, dissatisfaction with their access to fair compensation/pay was a top three driver of burnout for these workers.

Additionally, like their salaried counterparts, these workers are also less likely to say their needs for flexibility to manage their work and personal lives are being met at work. Yet again, despite this similarity, full-time hourly employees are even more dissatisfied than full-time salaried employees. Full-time hourly employees are the least likely of the five worker types to be very or extremely satisfied with the level of flexibility they have to manage work and life issues (54% versus 63%-75% of other workers); yet, 9 in 10 full-time hourly workers say this is a job feature that is very or extremely important to them (see Figure 7). What's more, this group is also the least likely to be very or extremely satisfied with the level of flexibility they have in work hours and schedule (47% versus 55%-80% of other workers; see Figure 12).

FIGURE 12.

Percent of Workers Who Are Very/Extremely Satisfied With the Level of Flexibility They Have in Their Work Hours and Schedule by Worker Type



Unsurprisingly, this dissatisfaction manifests itself in these workers' mental health at work, with full-time hourly employees being the least likely to report that their job has had a positive impact on their mental health in the past six months. Only 21% of full-time hourly employees report a positive impact versus 26%-38% of other workers (see Figure 13).

FIGURE 13.

Percent of Workers Who Say Their Job Has Had the Following Impact on Their Overall Mental Health in the Past 6 Months by Worker Type

A negative impact No im	pact 🛛 A positive impact		
Full-Time Hourly Employees	37%	42 %	21 %
Part-Time Employees	34%	40%	26%
Full-Time Salaried Employees	37%	36%	27%
Temporary Employees	37%	31%	32%
Independent Workers	28%	34%	38%

Source: Global Worker Project, SHRM, 2023

While several of the top three drivers of full-time hourly employees' mental health and burnout aligned with that of other worker types (e.g., workload manageability and the opportunity to do meaningful work), there were also unique drivers for this group. In particular, satisfaction with one's level of schedule input and control emerged as a unique top three driver of overall mental health at work for full-time hourly employees. Additionally, satisfaction with the recognition they receive for doing good work also emerged as a unique top three driver of full-time hourly employees (and part-time employees) but not for the other worker types.

While it is unclear exactly why full-time hourly employees are looking for these specific indicators as compared to other types of workers, one potential reason could be the nature of their jobs. In other words, given the more transactional nature of hourly work and the potential for less formal feedback mechanisms, full-time hourly employees may particularly be looking for clearer indicators from their employers to show that their hard work is being appreciated.

Aside from pay raises, are there changes in working conditions that employers could make that would increase overall job satisfaction of full-time hourly workers?

Independent Workers (Freedom and Flexibility Seekers)

Topline: Independent workers love their sense of freedom and flexibility. These workers report the highest levels of satisfaction when it comes to key job features like workplace manageability and flexibility to manage personal and professional obligations that are important to workers of all types. For example, nearly 3 in 4 (72%) independent workers say they are very or extremely satisfied with the manageability of their workload compared to only 56%-61% of other workers. Further, 3 in 4 (75%) independent workers say they are very or extremely satisfied with their flexibility to manage work and life issues compared to only 54%-65% of other workers (see Figure 7).

While all workers denoted that flexibility to manage their work and personal lives was important, it seems that independent workers are currently best able to achieve this. Of the five worker types, independent workers experience the lowest satisfaction gaps (importance minus satisfaction) when it comes to the manageability of their workload (satisfaction gap of 15 percentage points versus 27-34 percentage points among other workers) and their flexibility to manage their work and personal lives (satisfaction gap of 15 percentage points versus 24-35 percentage points among other workers; see Figure 7).

However, independent workers tend to value specific types of flexibility more or less than workers of other types. For example, independent workers assign significantly more importance to having access to flexibility in their work hours and schedule than other workers (90% rate as very/extremely important versus only 66%-78% of other workers). In contrast, independent workers rated having access to a predictable work schedule as significantly less important than the other surveyed groups (only 57% rate as very/extremely important versus 69%-75% of other workers; see Figure 14). What's more, independent workers place higher value on having autonomy over their work. Over 4 in 5 (85%) independent workers say having autonomy or independence over how they do their work is very or extremely important to them compared to 66%-77% of other workers.

	Flexibility i	n Work Hours an	d Schedule	Predictable Work Schedule		
	Very/ extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap	Very/ extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap
Full-time salaried employees	72%	55%	16%	72%	72%	0%
Full-time hourly employees	66%	47%	20%	75%	69%	5%
Part-time employees	78%	62%	16%	69%	64%	4%
Temporary employees	77%	58%	19%	72%	60%	12%
Independent workers	90%	80%	10%	57%	61%	-4%

FIGURE 14.

Note: Due to rounding, gap estimate values may vary by +/- 1 percentage point.

Independent workers report that their mental health is also less negatively impacted by their work. When asked what impact their job has had on their mental health in the past 6 months, independent workers (38%) were significantly more likely than full-time salaried (27%), full-time hourly (21%) and part-time employees (26%) to report a positive impact (as compared to a negative or neutral impact; see Figure 13). In a similar pattern, these workers were also more likely to *disagree* or *strongly disagree* (38%) that they are burned out by their work when compared to full-time salaried (29%), full-time hourly (28%) and temporary (23%) employees.

Independent workers are defined in the survey as self-employed individuals, independent contractors, independent consultants, freelance workers and gig workers. These workers by definition have the right to, and generally do, work for more than one entity or employer. The survey results bear out this truth. Independent workers were the largest share of surveyed workers that reported that they had more than one job. In other words, these workers' financial security comes from holding multiple jobs, with independent workers being more likely than workers of other types to say the extra money they earn from holding more than one job is important or essential for meeting their basic needs⁸ (see Figure 15).

⁸ Survey question wording adapted from "The State of Gig Work in 2021, Pew Research Center."

FIGURE 15.

The extra money that I earn from having more than one job is...

Essential for meeting my basic needs

Full-Time Salaried Employees	13%	29 %			57%		
Full-Time Hourly Employees	23%		37%			40%	
Part-Time Employees	33%			29 %		39 %	
Temporary Employees	32%			34%			33%
Independent Workers	44%				33%		23%

Note: May not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding; survey question wording adapted from "The State of Gig Work in 2021, Pew Research Center"

Source: Global Worker Project, SHRM, 2023

Further, their work relationship, by legal design in most countries, does not provide independent workers with access to certain employee-type benefits as connection with the performance of their work. As a result, these workers are less likely to say that they have access to benefits like healthcare, retirement or paid leave through their workplace beyond what is required by law in their country (see Figure 16). Therefore, it should come as no surprise, for example, that independent workers (along with part-time and temporary employees) are less likely to be actively saving for retirement than full-time salaried or hourly employees, the two worker types with the greatest access to benefits in the workplace (see Figure 17).

		Retirement Benef	its	Healthcare Benefits		
	Very/ extremely important	Workplace offers retirement benefits beyond what is required by law	Gap between importance and access	Very/ extremely important	Workplace offers healthcare benefits beyond what is required by law*	Gap between importance and access
Full-time salaried employees	87%	73%	15%	74%	74%	-1%
Full-time hourly employees	78%	70%	8%	76%	74%	2%
Part-time employees	67%	50%	18 %	51%	40%	11%
Temporary employees	75%	38%	36%	69%	53%	16%
Independent workers	58%	14%	44%	55%	21%	34%

FIGURE 16.

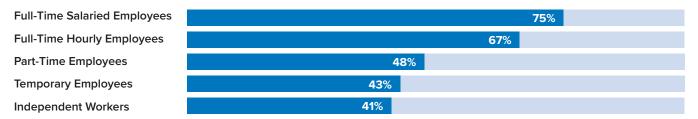
Note: Due to rounding, gap estimate values may vary by +/-1 percentage point.

*Note: It is important to recognize that policies that govern individuals' access to these benefits vary from country to country. For example, individuals in the United Kingdom have access to national healthcare coverage outside of employment. While Canadians also have access to a publicly funded healthcare system for primary care, it is estimated that about two-thirds of Canadians have supplementary private insurance, often obtained through employment⁹.

⁹ https://www.commonwealthfund.org/international-health-policy-center/countries/canada

FIGURE 17.

Percent of Workers Actively Saving for Retirement by Type



Source: Global Worker Project, SHRM, 2023

Given these gaps in benefits coverage, it is also unsurprising that when asked what top change they would suggest to their government to help improve their job, many independent workers suggested changes to **improve the healthcare system**. Unique to independent workers, this group also suggested that government could improve policies for nontraditional workers — enabling them to continue working independently but allowing for some sort of overarching structure to protect them.

Which raises the question, are current laws outdated that do not allow companies to provide employee-like benefits to this growing part of the workforce who enjoy their status as independent workers, but would also like access to benefits in connection with their current status as independent workers?

Part-time Employees (Happy for now, not really worried about work)

Topline: Few part-time employees have an interest in working full-time. In fact, 2 in 3 part-time employees say a perk of their part-time schedule is the flexibility that it allows them to attend to other matters — like caregiving or attending school — while working. Therefore, it may come as no surprise that part-time employees (56%) are somewhat less likely than full-time salaried (77%), full-time hourly (66%) and temporary employees (75%) to say that career advancement opportunities are very or extremely important to them.

This reduced scheduling, however, does come with a potential price: When compared to full-time salaried employees, part-time employees are 11 percentage points less likely to perceive their job as high quality (35% of part-time employees versus 46% of full-time salaried employees; see Figure 10). Part-time employees are also somewhat less likely than full-time salaried and full-time hourly employees to have access to benefits through their workplace, although they are also somewhat less likely to assign high importance to these benefits. For example, only 51% of part-time workers say it is very or extremely important for them to have access to health insurance at work as compared to 76% of full-time hourly employees and 74% of full-time salaried employees (see Figure 16).

Notably, while the top three drivers of part-time employees' perceived job quality and fulfillment at work are similar to workers of other types (e.g., influenced by their level of satisfaction with their opportunity to do meaningful work, their access to fair compensation/pay and their opportunity to use their skills/ abilities), the job features that drive part-time employees' mental health at work are somewhat unique from other workers. Having a sense of community or belonging at work was the number one driver of overall mental health at work for part-time employees. Additionally, recognition for doing good work also emerged as a top three driver of overall mental health at work for this group (also true for full-time hourly employees), suggesting that while these workers tend to highly value their time outside of work, having a social support system and knowledge that their work is being appreciated can go a long way in positively impacting their workplace experience (see Figure 18).

FIGURE 18.

Top Three Drivers of Overall Mental Health at Work by Worker Type *					
	Full-Time Salaried Full-Time Hourly		Part-Time	Temporary	Independent
	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees	Workers
1	Workload manageability	Workload manageability	A sense of belonging or community	Opportunity to do meaningful work	Opportunity to do meaningful work
2	Flexibility to manage both work and life issues	Opportunity to do meaningful work	Opportunity to do meaningful work	Workload manageability	Fair compensation/ pay
3	Opportunity to do meaningful work	Recognition for doing good work and schedule input/control (tie)	Recognition for doing good work	A sense of belonging or community	Opportunities for career advancement

*Note: Results based on relative weights analysis of the 17 job features examined in the study.

While part-time workers enjoy the flexibility to pursue other tasks outside of work, what are the longterm consequences of having systems wherein a person's access to important benefits and/or sense of community are so closely intertwined with the workplace?

Temporary Workers (Please let me stay, I need benefits)

Topline: Temporary workers may not be here for a long time, but they wish they could be. Temporary workers are younger overall than the ages of workers in other categories, and want workplaces where they can learn, find meaning and have dignity and belonging similar to their full-time salaried and hourly counterparts. In fact, satisfaction with their access to learning and development opportunities emerged as a unique top three driver of fulfillment at work for temporary employees but not for other workers (see Figure 19).

FIGURE 19.

Top Three Drivers of Fulfillment at Work by Worker Type						
	Full-Time Salaried	Full-Time Hourly	Part-Time	Temporary	Independent	
	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees	Workers	
	Opportunity to	Opportunity to	Opportunity to	Opportunity to	Opportunity to	
1	do work that is	do work that is	do work that is	do work that is	do work that is	
	meaningful to me	meaningful to me	meaningful to me	meaningful to me	meaningful to me	
	Opportunities	Fair	Fair	Learning and	Fair	
2	to use my skills/	compensation/	compensation/	development	compensation/	
	abilities	рау	рау	opportunities	рау	
	A sense of	Opportunities	Opportunities	Opportunities	Opportunities	
3	belonging or	to use my skills/				
	community	abilities	abilities	abilities	abilities	
Note: Re	Note: Results based on relative weights analysis of the 17 job features examined in the study.					

Representing the highest share of respondents ages 18-34, a large majority of temporary employees (74%) said they would prefer to have a regular job if given the choice. Given the number of temporary workers who would rather have a regular job, it is not surprising that job security/stability is at the forefront on these workers' minds. In fact, temporary workers experience the largest satisfaction gap in job security/ stability (importance minus satisfaction) when compared to the other four worker types (satisfaction gap of 47 percentage points versus 21-39 percentage points among other workers). This satisfaction gap is over double that of full-time salaried, full-time hourly and part-time employees (see Figure 20).

FIGURE 20.

Job Security/Stability					
	Very/extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap		
Full-time salaried employees	95%	74%	21 %		
Full-time hourly employees	93%	72%	21 %		
Part-time employees	88%	65%	23%		
Temporary employees	88%	41%	47 %		
Independent workers	82%	42%	39%		
Note: Due to rounding, gap estimate values may vary by +/- 1 percentage point.					

Beyond dissatisfaction with their level of job security/stability, temporary workers also displayed a notable satisfaction gap when it came to career advancement opportunities, further reinforcing their strong desire to obtain a regular position (see Figure 21).

Career Advancement Opportunities					
Very/extremely important	Very/extremely satisfied with their access	Gap			
77%	41%	37 %			
66%	33%	33%			
56%	32%	24 %			
75%	32%	43%			
59%	33%	26 %			
	Very/extremely important 77% 66% 56% 75%	Very/extremely importantVery/extremely satisfied with their access77%41%66%33%56%32%75%32%			

FIGURE 21.

When it comes to benefits, temporary workers also experience additional gaps — much like independent workers. However, there is a significant difference in that temporary workers generally assign higher levels of importance to obtaining access to these benefits through the workplace than do independent workers. This is not surprising given the results that temporary workers would prefer regular work. For example, 69% of temporary workers say it is very or extremely important for them to have access to health insurance at work, but only 53% say their workplace offers them health insurance beyond what is required by law (a gap of 16 percentage points; see Figure 16).

When asked about what changes they would suggest to their government to help improve their jobs, the suggestion for improved pensions/retirement plans was a unique theme that emerged among temporary workers. This tracks with temporary workers' experiences with retirement benefits in the workplace. While 3 in 4 (75%) temporary workers say it is very or extremely important for them to have access to retirement benefits at work, only 38% of these workers say their workplace offers this type of benefit to them beyond what is required by law (a gap of 36 percentage points; see Figure 16).

While the nature of temporary work is obviously temporary, are there, or should there be, structures in place wherein these temporary workers could go to experience community, stability, growth and acceptance within the workplace? Is this a job for the individual employer, the employer community, the government or some combination therein? Given temporary workers' interest in employee benefits, is this a topic that deserves more consideration when employers develop benefit plans applicable to employees?

WHAT'S NEXT?

SHRM research identifies the opportunities available for employers and governments to positively impact the lives and livelihoods of workers around the world. As the past few years have shown, the world of work is constantly evolving. As workers, employers and policymakers continue to navigate these changes together, there is an increasing need to move beyond the one-size-fits-all definition of a "traditional worker" to better recognize the diversity of worker types that exist in the modern world of work.

For modern workplaces and workforces to thrive, global leaders must create balanced policy solutions that consider the diversity of workers and their unique needs, preferences and employment relationships to truly create a world of work that works for all.

This is just the beginning of this important work! SHRM and its partners will continue to drive change with more expanded Global Research and data-driven solutions to assist policymakers and employers in creating a human-centered world of work that secures the lives and livelihoods of work, workers and the workplace.

Stay tuned!

METHODOLOGY

To spearhead this global conversation, SHRM surveyed **3,845** workers from Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States using a third-party online panel. Surveys were conducted March 31 – April 17, 2023 and were available in English and Spanish.

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about their primary job and, if

Country	Number of Responses
Canada	961
Mexico	884
United Kingdom	999
United States	1001
TOTAL	3,845

applicable, a subset of questions about their secondary job if they held more than one. For the purposes of this survey, a worker's primary job refers to the job where they work the most hours per week.

Respondents' answers to a subset of these questions were then used to classify them into five broad worker types examined in this report. To create these worker types, we used a combination of practical guidance related to existing worker classifications, previous research and exploratory cluster analysis techniques. Cluster analysis techniques are designed to explore natural groupings of individuals based on similar characteristics they share. In addition to these questions, respondents were asked about their work preferences, needs and level of satisfaction across different aspects of their jobs.

Of the 3,845 workers sampled, a small number (n=56) did not fit into the five worker types identified. These workers generally indicated that they were paid outside of typical hourly or salaried pay structures (e.g., commission-based, lump sum, or unpaid) but did not identify as temporary or independent workers. Due to their small sample size, this group was excluded from the final worker type analysis.



SHRM Research conducted this study as part of the SHRM Global Worker Project, which is focused on building a shared, human-centered understanding of the future of the workplace to inform policymakers worldwide through policy recommendations and best practices on how workers and employers can thrive.