



# COVID-19 RESEARCH

HOW THE PANDEMIC IS CHALLENGING AND CHANGING EMPLOYERS

34%



OF EMPLOYERS **DIDN'T HAVE AN EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS PLAN** PRIOR TO COVID-19

ALMOST 2/3 OF EMPLOYERS

**DID**

HAVE AN EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS PLAN PRIOR  
TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

HOWEVER

**OVER HALF**

OF EMPLOYERS WITH POLICIES  
HAD ONE THAT **DID NOT COVER**  
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

**NOW, OVER (53%) OF EMPLOYERS ARE REVISING  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS, INCLUDING:**

**62%**

**OF HEALTH CARE  
ORGANIZATIONS**

**59%**

**OF MANUFACTURING  
ORGANIZATIONS**

**53%**

**OF WHOLESALE TRADE &  
TRANSPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

**OVER 7 IN 10**

**EMPLOYERS ARE  
STRUGGLING TO ADAPT TO  
REMOTE WORK**

*INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES*

**IDENTIFIED AS A CHALLENGE BY:**

**83%** OF PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC  
& TECHNICAL SERVICES

**69%** OF HEALTH CARE

**65%** OF MANUFACTURING

**2 IN 3** EMPLOYERS SAY **MAINTAINING EMPLOYEE MORALE** HAS BEEN A CHALLENGE.

EMPLOYERS WITH OVER 500 EMPLOYEES REPORT THIS AS MORE OF A CHALLENGE THAN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED EMPLOYERS

*INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES*

NEARLY 3/4 OF ACCOMODATION/ FOOD SERVICES & HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS ARE EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS WITH MORALE (73%)

## MORE THAN **1/3** OF EMPLOYERS ARE FACING CHALLENGES WITH:



MAINTAINING COMPANY CULTURE



MANAGING EMPLOYEES WHO ARE UNABLE TO TELEWORK



SHIFTING COMMUNICATIONS TO MEET REMOTE NEEDS



THE TIME REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT AND STAY COMPLIANT WITH GOVERNMENT LEAVE REQUIREMENTS



*OVER 3 IN 10 ORGANIZATIONS (31%) ARE HAVING TROUBLE MANAGING THE INCREASED NUMBER OF LEAVE REQUESTS*

35%

OF EMPLOYERS ARE GRAPPLING WITH CHANGES IN  
EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY





WITH COVID-19 STALLING THE ECONOMY,

**42% OF  
EMPLOYERS**

**SAY CONSUMER/CLIENT  
SPENDING IS DOWN**

**30% OF  
EMPLOYERS**

**CITE PAYING THEIR  
EMPLOYEES AS A CHALLENGE**

*INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES*

INDUSTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY SPENDING DECLINES INCLUDE: ACCOMMODATION/FOOD SERVICES (60%), RETAIL TRADE (54%), WHOLESALE TRADE & TRANSPORT (51%), AND PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, & TECHNICAL SERVICES (48%)

# 4 IN 10 EMPLOYERS HAVE SHUTDOWN CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THEIR BUSINESS— 19% ARE CONSIDERING DOING SO

**NEARLY  
HALF**

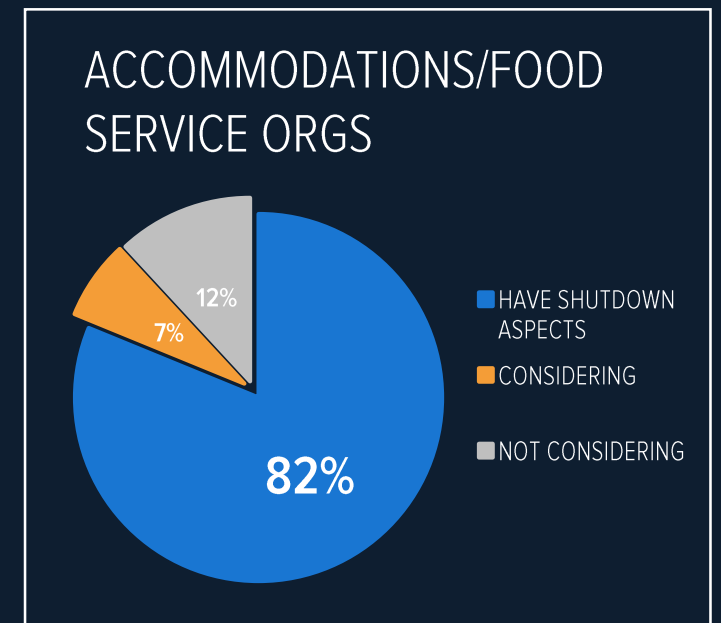
OF EMPLOYERS WITH **OVER 500** EMPLOYEES HAVE SHUTDOWN ASPECTS, WITH 1/3 CONSIDERING DOING SO

BY CONTRAST,

**47%**

OF EMPLOYERS WITH **LESS THAN 500** EMPLOYEES ARE NOT CONSIDERING SHUTTING DOWN ANYTHING

INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES





**OVER 1 IN 10 EMPLOYERS  
ARE FACING TOTAL SHUTDOWN**

83%

OF EMPLOYERS HAVE MADE **BUSINESS PRACTICE ADJUSTMENTS** AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

8%

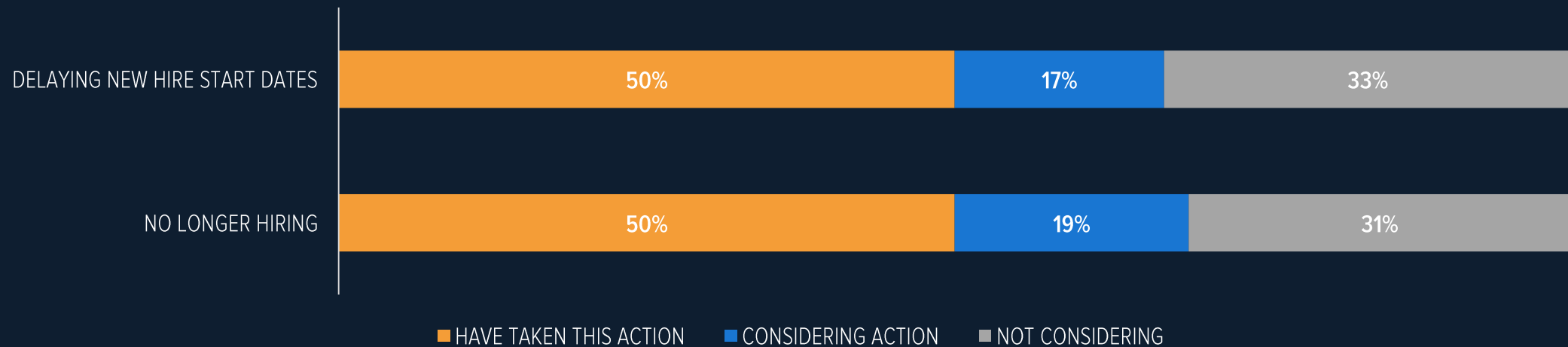
ARE CONSIDERING ADJUSTMENTS RELATED TO COVID-19

*INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES*

ACCOMMODATION/FOOD SERVICES (98%) AND RETAIL TRADE (96%) WERE MOSTLY LIKELY TO HAVE MADE ADJUSTMENTS, FOLLOWED BY MANUFACTURING (91%), AND HEALTH CARE (90%). PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, & TECHNICAL SERVICES WERE LEAST LIKELY TO HAVE MADE ADJUSTMENTS (70%), BUT 15% ARE CONSIDERING DOING SO

OF BUSINESS WHO HAVE MADE ADJUSTMENTS...

# HALF ARE NO LONGER HIRING OR DELAYING NEW HIRE START DATES



38%



OF EMPLOYERS HAVE **DECREASED HOURS** FOR EMPLOYEES, AND A FURTHER 28% ARE CONSIDERING IT\*

INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES

79%

OF ACCOMMODATION/FOOD SERVICE ORGS HAVE ALREADY DECREASED HOURS— 12% ARE CONSIDERING IT

OVER HALF (51%) OF RETAIL TRADE ORGS HAVE DONE THE SAME



**19% OF EMPLOYERS**  
HAVE **DECREASED PAY RATES**, AND  
ANOTHER **21% ARE CONSIDERING IT\***

*INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES*

56% OF ACCOMMODATION/FOOD SERVICES BUSINESSES  
HAVE DECREASED PAY, AND 13% ARE CONSIDERING IT

**OVER 3 IN 10**

**EMPLOYERS HAVE LAID  
EMPLOYEES OFF\***

**28% ARE  
CONSIDERING IT**

**40% ARE NOT  
CONSIDERING IT**

**15%**

**OF EMPLOYERS HAVE  
PERMANENTLY CUT HEADCOUNT\***

**24% ARE  
CONSIDERING IT**

**61% ARE NOT  
CONSIDERING IT**

*INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES*

ACCOMMODATION/FOOD SERVICES WAS MOSTLY LIKELY TO HAVE TAKEN EITHER ACTION— 76% HAVE LAID OFF EMPLOYEES AND 1/3 HAVE PERMANENTLY REDUCED HEADCOUNT. ONE IN TEN HEALTH CARE ORGS HAVE REDUCED HEADCOUNT, AND 19% ARE CONSIDERING IT



SOME ORGANIZATIONS ARE INCREASING HEADCOUNT:

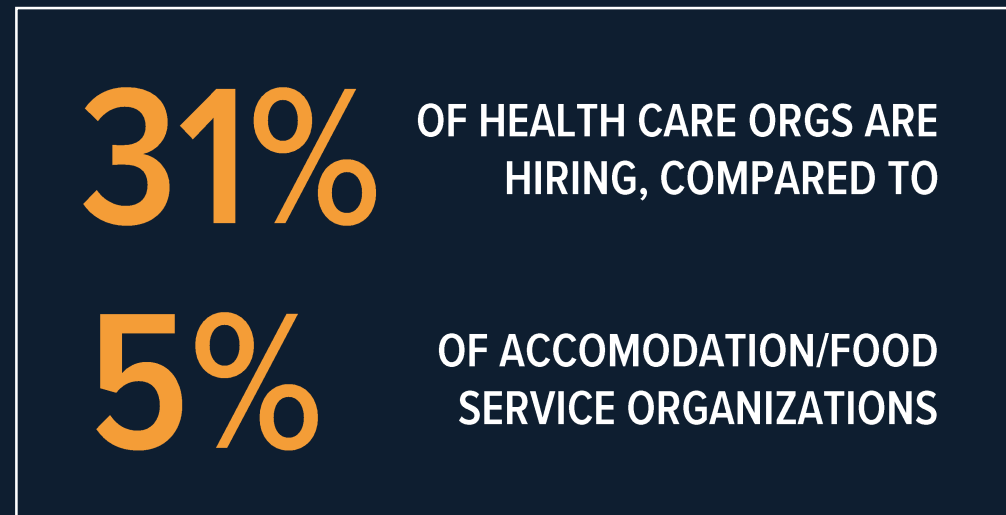
**14% OF EMPLOYERS**

**HAVE HIRED MORE EMPLOYEES IN RESPOSE TO COVID-19\***

ORG SIZE DIFFERENCES



INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES

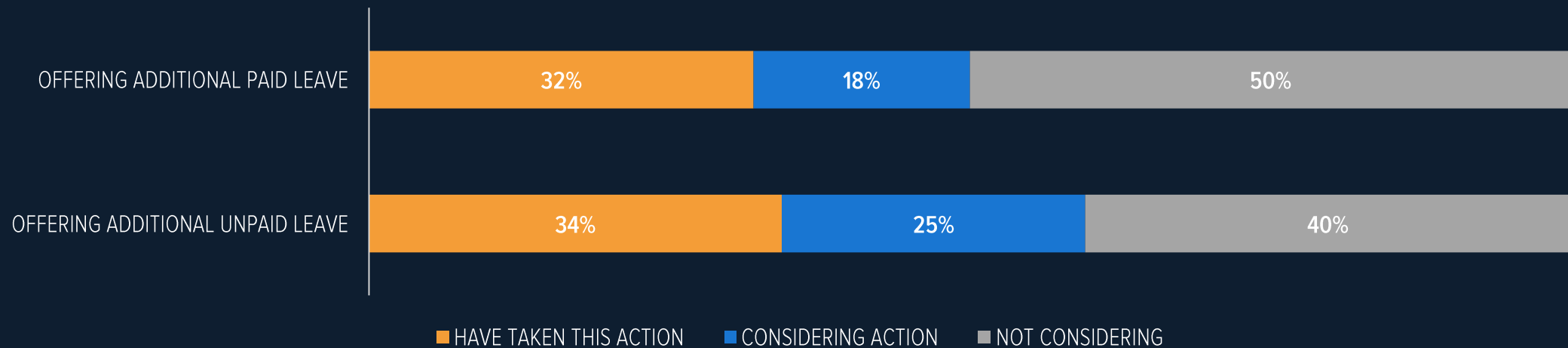


\*OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE MADE ADJUSTMENTS OR ARE CONSIDERING MAKING ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO COVID-19

SOME EMPLOYERS ARE USING LEAVE POLICIES TO RESPOND—

**AROUND 1/3 OF EMPLOYERS\***

ARE OFFERING ADDITIONAL PAID OR UNPAID LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES



\*OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE MADE ADJUSTMENTS OR ARE CONSIDERING MAKING ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO COVID-19



## RETAIL TRADE

IS THE INDUSTRY CHANGING LEAVE  
POLICIES MOST IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

57%

OF RETAIL ORGS ARE  
OFFERING ADDITIONAL  
UNPAID LEAVE\*

42%

OF RETAIL ORGS ARE  
OFFERING ADDITIONAL  
PAID LEAVE\*

SHRM COVID 19 RESEARCH: LEAVE-RELATED CHANGES  
INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES

40%

OF HEALTH CARE AND MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS ARE OFFERING ADDITIONAL **UNPAID** LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES\*

1 IN 3

HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS ARE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL **PAID** LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES\*

\*OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE MADE ADJUSTMENTS OR ARE CONSIDERING MAKING ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO COVID-19

**OVER 3/4  
OF EMPLOYERS**

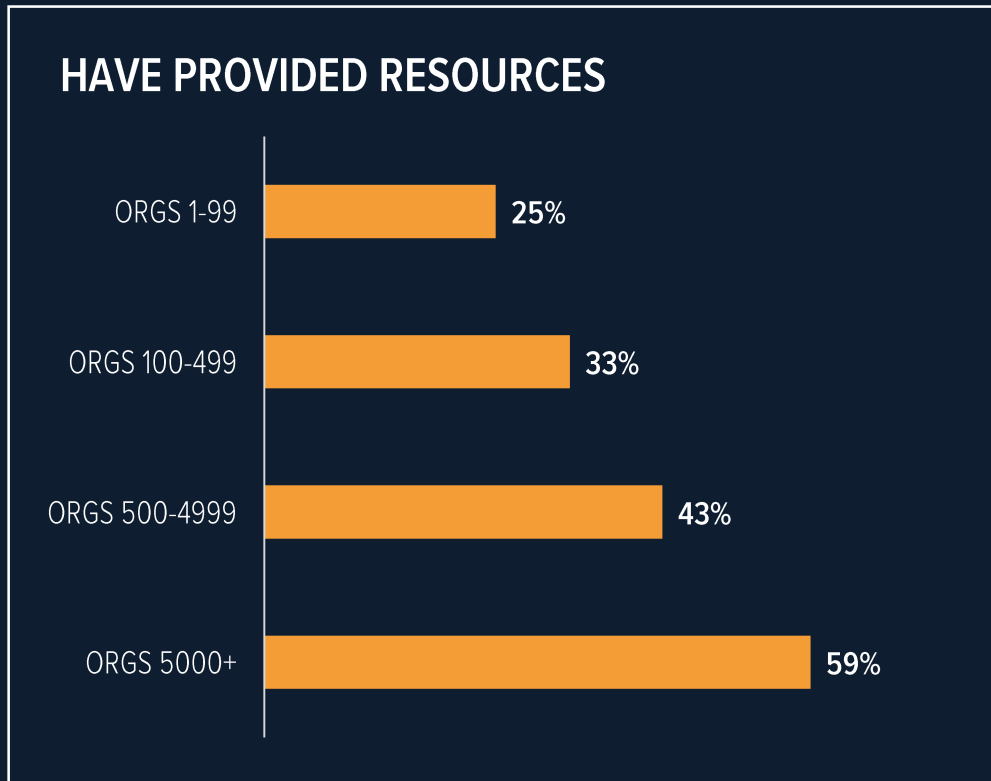
**ARE HAVING EMPLOYEES WORK FROM HOME, AS A REQUIREMENT (38%) OR DUE TO CV-19 EMPLOYEE CONCERNS (40%)\***

**OVER 1/3 OF EMPLOYERS ARE PROVIDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT HEALTHY ADJUSTMENT TO REMOTE WORK, INCLUDING:**

- **MENTAL HEALTH**
- **PODCASTS**
- **CDC TOOLKITS**
- **BOOKS**
- **NEWSLETTERS**
- **EAP RESOURCES**

# ORGANIZATION SIZE HAS A BIG IMPACT ON AVAILABILITY OF ONLINE WORK RESOURCES

ORG SIZE DIFFERENCES



INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES



54%



OF EMPLOYERS ARE OFFERING ADDITIONAL  
PANDEMIC-RELATED EDUCATION OR TRAINING FOR  
EMPLOYEES, AND 24% ARE CONSIDERING IT

1/3

OF EMPLOYERS HAVE EXPERIENCED A  
**NOTICEABLE INCREASE** IN REQUESTS  
FOR INFORMATION ABOUT EMPLOYEE  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

*ORG SIZE DIFFERENCES*

**47%** OF ORGS WITH 500-  
4999 EMPLOYEES

**70%** OF ORGS WITH OVER  
5000 EMPLOYEES

*INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES*

ALMOST HALF (46%) OF HEALTH  
CARE ORGS HAVE EXPERIENCED  
INCREASES

OVER 1/3 OF ACCOMMODATION/  
FOOD SERVICE AND RETAIL TRADE



SHRM Research uses a 13-industry standard demographic list, where all responses from organizations not covered under one of the following industries are categorized as “Other”.

- Accommodation or food service *(such as hotels or other travel accommodations, restaurants and other food services, or drinking places)*
- Administrative support services *(such as business support, travel arrangements, security services, landscaping, or waste management)*
- Construction
- Education *(such as K-12 teachers or administrators, colleges or universities, or business or trade schools)*
- Finance, insurance or real estate *(such as banking, financial investing, insurance companies, real estate agents, or other goods and equipment rental)*
- Government, public administration or military *(such as state, local or national government, justice and safety activities, national security, or military)*
- Health care *(such as doctors' offices, dentists, optometrists, home health care services, hospitals, social services, or nursing care facilities)*
- Manufacturing
- Other services *(such as auto repair, electronics repair, barber shops and beauty salons, dry cleaning, funeral homes, or working in private homes)*
- Professional, scientific, or technical services *(such as legal, accounting, computer systems, advertising, or scientific research services)*
- Retail trade *(such as auto dealers, household or electronics stores, grocery stores, clothing stores, etc.)*
- Transportation and warehousing *(such as airline, trucking, bus or metro, taxis, couriers or messengers, or warehousing and storage)*
- Wholesale trade *(such as the wholesale trade or sale of vehicle parts and supplies, furniture and construction materials, plumbing and heating equipment, clothing or food and beverage supplies)*

**HR PROFESSIONALS:** A sample of 2278 HR professionals from SHRM's membership were surveyed between April 1 and April 7, 2020. Respondents were invited by email, with a response rate of approximately 5.4%. Due to stratified sampling methodology, overall margin of error for the study is unavailable.