NAVIGATING COVID-19
RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE
OVER HALF OF ORGANIZATIONS PLAN TO RETURN TO WORK BY THE END OF JULY (53%)  

NEARLY 1 IN 5 HAVE ALREADY REOPENED OR NEVER CLOSED PHYSICAL WORKSITES (17%)
45% of organizations have not announced a return to worksite date.

**Organization Size Differences**

LARGE ORGANIZATIONS (500+ EMPLOYEES) ARE LEAST LIKELY TO HAVE ANNOUNCED A RETURN DATE:

52%

OF LARGE ORGS HAVE NOT ANNOUNCED, COMPARED TO 44% OF SMALL (1-99) AND 41% OF MEDIUM ORGANIZATIONS (100-499)

**Industry Differences**

KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS ARE LEAST LIKELY TO HAVE ANNOUNCED A RETURN TO WORKSITE DATE:

- KNOWLEDGE: 51%
- SERVICE: 44%
- PHYSICAL: 32%

Physical industries are over twice as likely as others to have already returned (35%).
FOR ORGANIZATIONS WITH A SET RETURN TO WORKSITE DATE:

- **39%** will implement a *phased* return strategy (e.g., critical teams return first)
- **19%** will implement an *alternating* return strategy
- **11%** will return *all* employees working from home to in-person, full-time work immediately
- **11%** will return *some* employees to the worksite while others will work remote indefinitely
- **10%** will allow employees to *choose* whether they prefer to work from home, or will determine case-by-case

**Industry Differences**

Physical industry organizations are about twice as likely to use alternating return strategies (28%), compared to service or knowledge industry organizations.
Among organizations implementing phased return to work strategies, phasing based on department/function is most common.

- Returning by department/function: 33%
- Returning those with lower health risk first: 28%
- Returning leadership first: 26%
68% OF ORGANIZATIONS REPORT THEY PROBABLY OR DEFINITELY WILL ADOPT BROADER OR MORE FLEXIBLE WORK FROM HOME POLICIES FOR ALL WORKERS

**Organization Size Differences**

73% OF LARGE (500+) ORGS WILL OFFER GREATER WORK FROM HOME POLICIES

**Two-Thirds** OF SMALL (1-99) ORGS SAY THE SAME

**Industry Differences**

75% KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS ARE MOST LIKELY TO PLAN TO ADOPT BROADER WORK FROM HOME, VERSUS 63% OF SERVICE AND PHYSICAL ORGS.
SHRM COVID 19 RESEARCH: THE FUTURE OF REMOTE WORK

OVER 1 IN 4 ORGANIZATIONS

WILL PROBABLY OR DEFINITELY ALLOW WORKERS:

- WHO DID NOT PREVIOUSLY WORK REMOTELY TO DO SO PERMANENTLY (26%)
- TO WORK FROM HOME FULL-TIME THROUGH THE REST OF 2020 (29%)
A majority of organizations are implementing changes to make social distancing between workers more feasible, including:

- **85%** enforcing spaced seating in common areas
- **83%** reducing available seating in common areas
- **83%** setting limits on the number of employees in common areas

- Spacing workstations further apart (79%)
- Removing/reducing shared workspaces (78%)
- Adding floor markers or physical barriers (71%)
- Adding partitions between workers and/or customers (69%)
OTHER CHANGES ORGANIZATIONS ARE MAKING:

OVER 3 IN 4
ARE ADDING OR CONSIDERING IMPLEMENTING NEW ‘CONTACTLESS’ PROCEDURES (77%)

OVER 2 IN 3
ARE ADDING OR CONSIDERING ADDITIONAL TOUCHLESS FIXTURES AT THEIR WORKSITE (68%)
89% of organizations have or are considering requiring employees to wash hands or use hand sanitizer when entering work locations, or when going to/from breaks.
Organizations are also making changes to address the number of people on-site at once.

- Limiting the number of on-site workers: 81%
- Staggering start, stop, and break times of workers: 75%
- Reducing the number of on-site customers: 78%
HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES BEING IMPLEMENTED OR CONSIDERED BY ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:

- Requesting employees self-report symptoms, exposure, or travel: 97%
- Posting signs at entrances to ask the potentially exposed not to enter: 91%
- Requiring use of PPE: 86%
- On-site medical/temperature screening: 73%
**Over 3 in 5 Organizations Have Implemented or Are Considering Additional Safety Measures for High-Risk Populations:**

- **Higher-Risk Employees (e.g., those with certain health conditions):** 76% have implemented or are considering measures.
- **Employees Living with a Higher-Risk Individual (e.g., family member or roommate):** 69% have implemented or are considering measures.
- **Employees Living with a Frontline Worker (e.g., healthcare workers):** 60% have implemented or are considering measures.

Colors denote: Red for implementing or considering measures, Gray for not considering measures.
ONLY ABOUT HALF OF ORGANIZATIONS ARE CONSIDERING OR IMPLEMENTING ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES FOR EMPLOYEES THAT HAVE RECOVERED FROM COVID-19 (49%) OR LIVE WITH SOMEONE THAT HAS RECOVERED (52%)

ONLY 38% OF ORGANIZATIONS ARE CONSIDERING OR IMPLEMENTING ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES FOR EMPLOYEES THAT USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT
2 in 5 organizations that have already returned to work or that didn’t close have a dedicated plan for employees with childcare responsibilities (42%)

24% of organizations without a set return to work date have a childcare plan

32% of organizations with a set return to work date have a childcare plan
INDUSTRY IMPACTS ORGANIZATIONAL PLANS FOR CHILDcare

OVER 7 IN 10
KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE OR PLAN TO CREATE A WORKSITE PLAN AROUND CHILDcare (71%)

OVER 1 IN 4
PHYSICAL INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS ARE NOT GOING TO INCLUDE CHILDcare IN RETURN TO WORK PLANS (28%)
NEARLY 6 IN 10

ORGANIZATIONS PLAN TO HANDLE CHILDCARE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS (59%) – 7% WILL NOT GRANT ANY ACCOMMODATIONS

ORGANIZATION SIZE DIFFERENCES

SMALL ORGANIZATIONS (1-99) ARE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY AS LARGE ORGANIZATIONS (500+) TO PLAN TO OFFER CHILDCARE ACCOMMODATIONS TO ALL EMPLOYEES WHO REQUEST THEM— 22% VERSUS 9%
ORGANIZATIONS ARE MAINLY RESPONDING TO CHILDCARE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS WITH FLEXIBILITY-RELATED STRATEGIES

- Implementing or considering allowing flexible hours: 86%
- Implementing or considering allowing full-time remote work: 71%
- Implementing or considering allowing reduced working hours: 63%

ACCOMMODATIONS WITH DIRECT COSTS ARE MUCH LESS COMMON: ONLY 9% OF ORGANIZATIONS ARE CONSIDERING OR PROVIDING SUBSIDIES TO PARENTS TO AFFORD CHILDCARE, ONLY 7% ARE CONSIDERING OR PROVIDING ON-SITE CHILDCARE SERVICES.
46% of organizations say childcare policies will be adjusted to accommodate employees returning to the worksite, but will eventually return to pre-COVID-19 policies.
65% OF ORGANIZATIONS PLAN TO USE VIDEO INTERVIEWS MORE OFTEN OR MUCH MORE OFTEN IN FUTURE

53% PLAN TO USE IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS LESS OFTEN OR MUCH LESS OFTEN DURING THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND
OVER 1 IN 3 ORGANIZATIONS ARE MORE WILLING TO CONSIDER EMPLOYING FULLY REMOTE WORKERS GOING FORWARD, COMPARED TO PRIOR TO COVID-19

27% OF ORGANIZATIONS ARE REVIEWING OPEN POSITIONS TO DETERMINE IF THEY CAN BE COMPLETED REMOTELY

22% OF ORGANIZATIONS ARE MODIFYING POSITIONS TO BE COMPLETED REMOTELY
90% of HR professionals report that they are *no more or less likely* to hire from alternative talent pools as a response to COVID-19.

- 9% of organizations are more likely to hire veterans than before.
- 8% of organizations are more likely to hire older workers than before.
- 5% of organizations are more likely to hire individuals with disabilities than before.
- 3% of organizations are more likely to hire workers on temporary visas than before.
68% of organizations have sustained funds in their budget associated with upskilling/reskilling throughout COVID-19.

6% have increased funds, 25% have decreased funds.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Training and Development Organizations Have Increased</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training involving new technology/equipment</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-functional training</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job-related skills training</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New product/services training</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional/soft skills training</td>
<td>17%</td>
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## Service & Knowledge

Industry organizations are the most likely to offer additional upskilling/resources to different groups.

### Upskilling/Reskilling for Active Employees
- **Service**: 49%
- **Knowledge**: 47%
- **Physical**: 36%

### Upskilling/Reskilling for Furloughed Employees
- **Service**: 16%
- **Knowledge**: 15%
- **Physical**: 8%

### Upskilling/Reskilling for Laid-Off Employees
- **Service**: 13%
- **Knowledge**: 10%
- **Physical**: 4%
12% of organizations report their severance packages are more generous than prior to COVID-19.

7% report severance packages are now less generous.

Increases to severance packages were generally consistent across industries:

- 14% Knowledge Industry
- 11% Service Industry
- 11% Physical Industry
OVER 4 IN 5
HR PROFESSIONALS REPORT THEIR WORK HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY CRUCIAL TO THEIR ORGANIZATION SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN
68% of HR professionals report that leaders have relied more on HR for success since the pandemic began.

82% of HR professionals feel that their senior leaders have made appropriate business decisions during the pandemic.

79% of HR professionals trust their senior leaders to make the right decisions during recovery.
OVER HALF

OF HR PROFESSIONALS FEEL THEIR WORK IS MORE APPRECIATED THAN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC (51%)—ONLY 13% FEEL LESS APPRECIATED
For the purposes of this analysis, the 14-industry standard demographic list was condensed into four categories based on the type of work done by the majority of workers in that industry.

**Service-type Industries:**
- Accommodation or food service (such as hotels or other travel accommodations, restaurants and other food services, or drinking places)
- Health care (such as doctors’ offices, dentists, optometrists, home health care services, hospitals, social services, or nursing care facilities)
- Retail trade (such as auto dealers, household or electronics stores, grocery stores, clothing stores, etc.)
- Other services (such as auto repair, electronics repair, barber shops and beauty salons, dry cleaning, funeral homes, or working in private homes)
- Education (such as K-12 teachers or administrators, colleges or universities, or business or trade schools)

**Knowledge-type Industries:**
- 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)
- Administrative support services (such as business support, travel arrangements, security services, landscaping, or waste management)
- Professional, scientific, or technical services (such as legal, accounting, computer systems, advertising, or scientific research services)

**Physical-type Industries:**
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- 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)
- Transportation and warehousing (such as airline, trucking, bus or metro, taxis, couriers or messengers, or warehousing and storage)

This survey was fielded electronically to a random sample of SHRM members from May 13 through May 20, 2020. 1087 HR professionals responded to the survey in full or in-part. Academicians, students, consultants, self-employed, retired and HR professionals who were furloughed or laid off were excluded from the sample. Respondents represented organizations of all sizes from 2 to 25,000+ employees across the U.S. in a wide variety of industries.