

# The Burden of Care

Addressing Challenges in Employment in the Nonprofit Sector

Report from the 2020, 2021, and 2022 Survey on Employment and Skills



Survey on  
Employment  
& Skills

BY STEVEN AYER | DECEMBER 2023

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The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.



The Diversity Institute conducts and coordinates multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder research to address the needs of diverse Canadians, the changing nature of skills and competencies, and the policies, processes and tools that advance economic inclusion and success. Our action-oriented, evidence-based approach is advancing knowledge of the complex barriers faced by underrepresented groups, leading practices to effect change, and producing concrete results. The Diversity Institute is a research lead for the Future Skills Centre.



The Future Skills Centre (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada, and is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.



The Survey on Employment and Skills is funded primarily by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre



## Survey on Employment & Skills

The Survey on Employment and Skills is conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with the Future Skills Centre and the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University. The survey explores the experiences of Canadians relating to education, skills and employment, including perceptions of job security, the impact of technological change, and the value of different forms of training.

All waves of the surveyed were conducted among those aged 18 and older, in all jurisdictions across Canada, using both online (provinces) and telephone (territories) interviewing methods. Results are weighted by age, gender, region, education (Waves 1 and 2), immigration background (all Waves), Indigenous identity (Wave 2 and onwards), and ethnic or cultural identity (Wave 3 and 4), to ensure they are representative of the Canadian population.

Throughout this report, all charts include data for Waves 1 through 4, unless otherwise specified.

The first wave of the survey consists of a sample of 5,000 Canadians, conducted between February 28 and April 4, 2020. Approximately 2,900 interviews were conducted on March 9 or earlier - prior to the WHO pandemic declaration - and approximately 2,100 were conducted on March 11 onwards. The second wave of the study consists of a sample of 5,351 Canadians, conducted between November 24 and December 22, 2020. The third wave of the study consists of a sample of 5,913 Canadians, conducted between June 1 and 28, 2021. The fourth wave of the survey consists of a sample of 6,604 Canadians, conducted between March 1 and April 17, 2022.

Across the four survey waves, 639 respondents indicated they worked in the nonprofit sector (charities and NGOs), 3,935 in the public sector (government, schools, and hospitals) and 7,710 in the private sector. It is important to note that schools and hospitals are often classified within the nonprofit sector, but are classified as public sector in this report.

Additional reports based on data from the Survey on Employment and Skills are available from the Future Skills Centre's [project webpage](#).

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# Executive summary

This report examines the perceptions of workers in the nonprofit sector and how these differ from workers in other sectors.

Based on responses to surveys conducted between February 2020 and April 2022, workers in the nonprofit sector have lower job satisfaction than workers in either the public or private sectors. Nonprofit sector jobs are also quite precarious, with high rates of temporary and part-time employment, including many workers who are involuntarily part-time.

The Survey on Employment and Skills is conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with the Future Skills Centre and the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University. This study uses responses from 639 nonprofit sector workers as part of a broader sample of 12,285 workers across the public, private, and nonprofit sector spanning four survey waves, with responses coming from all provinces and territories. The survey was conducted online (in the provinces) and by telephone (in the territories). Workers at schools and hospitals were classified as public sector, and workers self-identified what sector they work in.

Key findings include:

## Low job satisfaction in the nonprofit sector driven by some of the largest employee groups

- **Lower job satisfaction among nonprofit sector workers.** Twenty-six percent of nonprofit sector workers report being unsatisfied with their job (very or somewhat unsatisfied), higher than the 19% of private sector workers and the 17% of public sector workers who feel the same way.

- **For nonprofit workers, low job satisfaction among women, young people, first-generation Canadians, and people with disabilities.** Thirty-one percent of women in the nonprofit sector report being unsatisfied with their jobs, compared to 18% of men. Among nonprofit sector workers, thirty-five percent of workers aged 25 to 34 are unsatisfied, as are 34% of first-generation Canadians, and 40% of those with a disability that always or often limits their daily activities. Workers with these characteristics were more likely to be unsatisfied when working in the nonprofit sector than in other sectors.
- **Nonprofit workers in service occupations have the lowest job satisfaction of any occupation in the sector, while managers are the most satisfied with their jobs.** Forty-one percent of those providing services in the nonprofit sector are unsatisfied with their job - higher than any other group - compared to only 15% of executives and managers.

## Precarious and part-time work is common, as is economic precarity

- **Lower job permanency and more part-time workers.** Workers in the nonprofit sector are much more likely to say their jobs are temporary compared to workers in other sectors (27% versus 13% of private sector workers and 17% of public sector workers). Fifty-seven percent of nonprofit sector workers are in full-time jobs, compared to 67% in the private sector, and 77% in the public sector. Nonprofit workers are twice as likely to be working part-time as private sector workers (34% versus 18%), with about two in five part-time workers desiring full-time work across sectors.
- **Inadequate household income among nonprofit sector workers.** Three in ten (29%) nonprofit sector workers, 29% of private sector workers, and 20% of public sector workers indicate their household income is insufficient to meet their needs. These findings are a stark illustration of the challenges for workers in both the nonprofit and broader private sectors, a significant number of whom are unable to meet their basic needs.

## The nonprofit sector is diverse, and workers are more likely to report having ever faced discrimination and unfair treatment at work

- The nonprofit sector is diverse and often employs those who are more likely to be marginalized in Canadian society. Workers in the nonprofit sector are more likely to be female, under the age of 35, racialized, Indigenous, and to have physical or mental disabilities, than workers overall.
- The nonprofit sector's diverse workforce is more likely than that of other sectors to report ever having faced discrimination and unfair treatment at work. Among those with disabilities, those who work in the nonprofit sector are more likely to report having ever faced discrimination or being treated unfairly at work than those in either the public or private sector. Racialized nonprofit workers are more likely to report discrimination than are those in the private sector. Though sample sizes are small, more than half of Indigenous workers in the nonprofit sector report ever having faced discrimination at work.

## Work from home is the new normal and preferred by most of those working from home.

- Working from home is the new norm. Half of nonprofit sector workers are working from home at least some of the time and this remained constant across time.
- Working from home is preferred among many workers. A strong majority of those working from home prefer it and want it to continue after the pandemic. Significant minorities report concerns about working from home, ranging from promotions, to not having adequate software or computer systems, to not being able to do their jobs well at all.

## Collaboration is a critical skill for the future in the nonprofit sector

- Collaborative skills are highly valued among nonprofit workers. When asked to identify the most important skill they need to improve in order to succeed in their careers, the number one area

for nonprofit workers is collaborative skills, considerably higher than among those working in other sectors. Leadership, communication, and technical skills, as well as the ability to adapt, are also areas that nonprofit sector workers feel they need to improve.

- Training courses are common and considered useful. About half of nonprofit workers indicate they have taken an employer-provided course, and nearly all of those who did say the training was at least somewhat useful.

These findings suggest considerable challenges for the nonprofit sector, with workers expressing lower job satisfaction than those in other sectors. Many workers are struggling to meet basic needs, and there are widespread reports of discrimination and unfair treatment at work among nonprofit sector workers who identify as racialized, Indigenous, or having a disability. It falls to employers in the nonprofit sector, funders, and governments to think about how to improve conditions for nonprofit workers; and to address the long-term challenges of providing critical services that are delivered through the nonprofit sector when many workers in the sector are struggling and unhappy with their jobs. With half of nonprofit workers working from home, there will be ongoing questions that need to be answered about the long-term impact on all other areas of work.

In the current era of increased demand for services for nonprofits and continual worker shortages in many areas the nonprofit sectors serve, addressing the issues raised in this report will be key the future vitality of the nonprofit sector.

# Introduction

The Survey on Employment and Skills, conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with the Future Skills Centre and the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University, was designed to explore Canadians' experiences with the changing nature of work, including technology-driven disruptions, increasing insecurity, and shifting skills requirements.

The survey offers a unique opportunity to explore the employment situation of nonprofit sector workers, with a random, representative sample of 639 nonprofit workers amid a broader representation sample of 12,285 workers from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, collected across four survey waves between February 2020 and April 2022.<sup>1</sup>

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first representative data source that compares topics like job satisfaction and income sufficiency within the nonprofit sector compared to the broader workforce. In addition, it provides unique contributions to topics like job precarity, part-time employment, and skills and training in the nonprofit sector.

However, there are limitations to the surveys; the first was collected between February 28 and April 4, 2020, amid the World Health Organization's declaration of a global pandemic. The second wave was collected between November 24 and December 22, 2020, amid a growing surge of COVID-19 cases across the country. The third was collected between June 1 and 28, 2021, as COVID-19 cases were declining across the country. The fourth was collected between March 1 and April 17, 2022, as restrictions were generally eased across the country. Each period was a unique snapshot in Canadian history, and any insights must be considered in that context.

<sup>1</sup> The question as asked was phrased Q46\_2. Are you currently employed in the: Public Sector (government, schools, hospitals), Private sector, Non-profit sector (charities, NGOS, etc.)?

Nearly every report on jobs and working conditions in the nonprofit sector highlights the shortage of good quality data on the topic - whether it be a recent literature review on Decent Work in the Nonprofit Sector,<sup>2</sup> the 2021 Advisory Committee Report on the Charitable Sector,<sup>3</sup> or a May 2021 article in the *Philanthropist Journal* entitled "The non-profit sector's ongoing data deficit."<sup>4</sup> This report fills some gaps, showing significant struggles for nonprofit sector workers compared to public and private sector workers.

This report shows that nonprofit sector workers have lower job satisfaction, higher job precarity through temporary work, and high rates of income insufficiency; and that many key employee groups are not satisfied with their jobs. At the same time, the level of diversity within the nonprofit sector also comes with widespread reports of discrimination at work. Finally, the report also highlights the experiences of nonprofit workers amid the pandemic, where many feel supported, but lack paid sick leave, and are worried about the long-term implications of working from home, or feel they do not have what they need to work from home effectively.

These findings aim to better inform funders, employers, and researchers in their pursuit of future investigations into the nonprofit sector; and echo the call for more official data to understand the evolving needs of nonprofit workers.

- 2 Uppal, Pamela. "Decent Work for Women: A Literature Review of Women Working in Ontario's Nonprofit Sector." Toronto, March 2018. <http://theonnc.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work>.
- 3 "Report #3 of the Advisory Committee on the Charitable Sector - July 2021 - Canada.Ca." Ottawa, July 15, 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/programs/about-canada-revenue-agency-cra/corporate-reports-information/advisory-committee-charitable-sector/report-advisory-committee-charitable-sector-july-2021.html>.
- 4 Barr, Cathy. "The Non-Profit Sector's Ongoing Data Deficit", The Philanthropist Journal, May 4, 2021. <https://thephilanthropist.ca/2021/05/the-non-profit-sectors-ongoing-data-deficit/>.



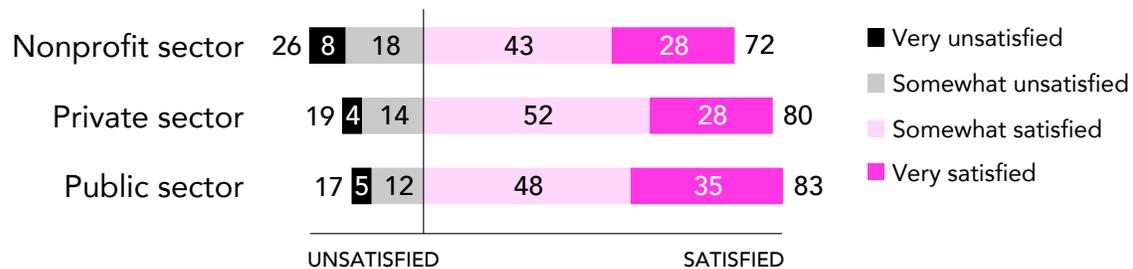
# Workers in the nonprofit sector

Workers in the nonprofit sector have lower job satisfaction than workers in either the public or private sectors. Job satisfaction in the sector is lower than average among women, young people, people with disabilities, and first-generation Canadians.

## Job satisfaction among workers in the nonprofit sector

Overall, 8% of nonprofit sector workers describe themselves as very unsatisfied, 18% as somewhat unsatisfied, 43% as somewhat satisfied, and 28% as very satisfied. Nonprofit sector workers are much more likely to report being unsatisfied with their jobs (26%) compared to workers in the private (19%) or public (17%) sectors.

FIGURE 1  
Job satisfaction by sector



Q17. Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied with your current job, or cannot say? Note: Cannot say is excluded from all satisfaction charts in this report. Numbers may not add up due to rounding, as is the case with many charts in this report.

Note: Throughout this report, all charts include data for Waves 1 through 4, unless otherwise specified. Some totals may not add up due to rounding on the charts, but this is not labeled on each chart. Just under 1% of respondents could not say how satisfied they are with their job and these are not shown throughout the report.



*To the best of our knowledge, **this is the first time randomly sampled representative data has been available to compare the job satisfaction of nonprofit workers with other workers.***

While most workers in all sectors are satisfied, including 72% in the nonprofit sector, 80% in the private sector, and 83% in the public sector, workers in the nonprofit sector are as likely to describe themselves as very satisfied (28%) as in the private sector (28%), but less likely than those in the public sector (35%); this represents a significantly lower rate of job satisfaction in the nonprofit sector.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time randomly sampled representative data has been available to compare the job satisfaction of nonprofit workers with other workers. Still, this data likely does not come as a surprise to those working in the sector, with initiatives led by sector organizations like the Ontario Nonprofit Network focusing on creating more Decent Work in the nonprofit sector.

Nearly all responses across the combined four survey waves were collected after the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic. Being the first survey to examine the question in this way, we cannot determine whether job satisfaction in the nonprofit sector may have been negatively impacted in some way by the pandemic in a way that would uniquely lower job satisfaction for nonprofit sector workers more so than for workers in other sectors. With revenue declines and increased service reported by many nonprofits, it is possible that this is the case.

Still, while the sample size is too small to report, nonprofit sector workers who responded to the Wave 1 survey, before the WHO's declaration of a pandemic, had lower job satisfaction than those who responded after the declaration.

While our results cannot determine why people have lower job satisfaction, it is important to highlight that a recent Imagine Canada report using 2019 data found that those working in community nonprofits made an average annual salary of \$38,716 - almost \$20,000 lower than in the economy overall.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that economic conditions alone represent a significant part of the reason for low job satisfaction.

The Imagine Canada report, while not looking at job satisfaction, encourages the nonprofit sector, its funders, and partners to adopt principles of decent work; and makes recommendations to funders, governments, and nonprofit leaders about how to create conditions whereby the nonprofit sector will be a more appealing employer. These recommendations include paying fair and competitive wages; offering benefits and permanent positions; and eliminating racial and gender pay gaps, among others.

The following sections of the report discuss the demographics of nonprofit sector workers, and which of these workers are experiencing low job satisfaction.



5 Jensen, Emily (2022). Diversity is our Strength: Improving working Conditions in Canadian Nonprofits. Imagine Canada: <https://www.imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/2022-10/diversity-is-our-strength.pdf>

## Characteristics of nonprofit workers

The nonprofit sector is diverse and represents many groups that are sometimes marginalized in Canadian society. Nonprofit workers are more likely to be women or racialized – particularly Indigenous or Black – than those in other sectors; and are more likely to have disabilities that limit their daily activities compared to workers in the private sector.

TABLE 1  
Characteristics of workers by sector

		Public Sector	Private sector	Nonprofit sector
Gender	Man	47	57	35
	Woman	53	42	64
	Other	0.5	0.3	0.3
Living with disabilities	Often has physical/mental condition/difference that limits amount/kind of activity that can be done on a typical day	9	9	17
	Sometimes has limitations	29	18	24
	Does not have limitations	60	70	57
Racial Identity <sup>6</sup>	Racialized or Indigenous identity (note some people identified multiple racial identities)	33	32	39
	Identified as white	71	68	61
	Identified as Black	5	4	8
Indigenous Peoples	Identified as Indigenous	6	3	8

6 The survey includes a question asking Canadians which racial or cultural categories best describe them. The options provided were drawn largely from a similar census question, and includes: white; South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.); Chinese; Black; Filipino; Latin American; Arab; Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, etc.); West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.); Korean; Japanese; Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)); and other. Respondents could select more than one category or decline to answer. In the census, information about Indigenous identity is gathered through a separate question – this was also the case for Waves 2 to 4 of the survey. In consultation with Toronto Metropolitan University's Ethics Review Board, however, a separate question on Indigenous identity was not included in Wave 1 of this survey. For this reason, in that wave respondents were provided the option to identify as Indigenous in the question about racial or cultural identity.

		Public Sector	Private sector	Nonprofit sector
Immigration Background	Third-generation plus - Born in Canada and both parents born in Canada	61	52	54
	Second-generation - Born in Canada, and one or both of parents born in another country	23	23	20
	First-generation - Born in another country	15	25	25
Age	18 to 24	21	14	27
	25 to 34	22	22	20
	35 to 49	32	33	26
	50 to 64	22	27	23
	65 and older	3	5	5

## Gender

About 64% of nonprofit workers in this survey identify as a woman, 35% identify as a man, and 0.3% identify as “other.” The representation of women in the nonprofit sector is higher than in either the public (53%) or private (42%) sectors. However, this proportion of women workers in the nonprofit sector is somewhat lower than that which Statistics Canada noted in 2019, when they found that women held 77% of jobs in the nonprofit sector.<sup>7</sup>

## Living with disabilities<sup>8</sup>

This survey data shows that 41% of workers in the nonprofit sector identify as having some physical, mental, or other difference that sometimes (24%) or often (17%) limits the amount of kind of activities they can do on a typical day - higher than that found in the private sector (27%), and similar to that in the public sector (38%). Workers in the nonprofit sector are also more likely to report activity limitations that often limit their day-to-day activities (17%) compared to those in the public or private sectors (9% each).

7 Statistics Canada. “The Daily – Non-Profit Organizations and Volunteering Satellite Account: Human Resources Module, 2010 to 2019,” April 30, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210430/dq210430d-eng.htm>.

8 The survey asked: “Do you currently have a physical condition; a cognitive difference; an emotional, psychological or mental health condition; or a health problem that limits the amount or the kind of activity that you can do on a typical day? For this question, please consider only conditions or difficulties that have lasted or are expected to last for six months or more.”



*Statistics Canada found that “visible minorities” represented 28.6% of nonprofit workers in 2019. They noted there was significant growth in representation in nonprofit workers over the last 10 years.*

## Racial identification

Across the study, 39% of workers in the nonprofit sector reported an Indigenous or racialized identity, slightly higher than that reported by those in the public (33%) and private (32%) sectors. The nonprofit sector has a larger percentage of workers identifying as Black (8%) than either the public (5%) or private sectors (4%). Using a different methodology for determining representation, and covering a broader nonprofit sector categorization, Statistics Canada found that “visible minorities” represented 28.6% of nonprofit workers in 2019. They noted there was significant growth in representation in nonprofit workers over the last 10 years.<sup>9</sup>

## Indigenous peoples

About one in ten (8%) in the nonprofit sector identify as Indigenous, compared to 6% in the public sector and 3% in the private sector. This findings for Indigenous representation in the nonprofit sector is slightly higher than the 5.1% found for Statistic Canada’s broader nonprofit sector definition in 2019.<sup>10</sup> In both cases, this indicates that Indigenous workers

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada.

have a broader share of employment in the nonprofit sector than other sectors. In addition, Statistics Canada noted a significant increase in Indigenous employment in the nonprofit sector over the last decade.

## Immigration Background

Across all three sectors, most respondents report that both they and their parents were born in Canada (52% to 61%). However, the public sector has lower incidence of respondents being born outside of Canada (15%), while rates for the private and nonprofit sectors are identical (25% each). Overall, 45% of nonprofit workers indicate either they (20%), or one or both of their parents (25%), were born outside of Canada.

## Age

Workers in the nonprofit sector are younger than other sectors, with just under half (47%) falling into the 18 to 34 age range, compared to 43% in the public sector and 36% in the private sector.<sup>11</sup>

## Job satisfaction by employee characteristics

Among nonprofit sector workers, women, younger workers, those with a disability that always or often limits daily activities, and first-generation Canadians are more likely to report being unsatisfied with their job.

## Job satisfaction by gender

Women in the nonprofit sector are more likely to report being unsatisfied with their jobs than men (31% versus 17%). As the nonprofit sector employs a high proportion of women (64% of nonprofit sector respondents in this survey), this represents a significant issue for the sector.

11 Statistics Canada did note that, over time, the proportion of older workers has grown in the nonprofit sector, with those 55 and older comprising 22.7% of workers in 2019, up from 19.5% in 2010; and the proportion of workers aged 65 and older has grown by 80.2% over the same period. (Statistics Canada. "The Daily – Non-Profit Organizations and Volunteering Satellite Account: Human Resources Module, 2010 to 2019," April 30, 2021.) <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210430/dq210430d-eng.htm>.

Women in the private sector are also more likely to be unsatisfied with their jobs than men (21% among women and 17% among men), while there is no significant difference in job satisfaction in the public sector (17% among women and 15% among men). The gap is much larger in the nonprofit sector than in the other sectors.

While the exact reasons for the differences are beyond the scope of this report, it is clear based on initiatives like the Ontario Nonprofit Network’s Project on Decent Work for Women in the Nonprofit Sector that this finding will not be a surprise to some key groups working on improving working conditions in the sector.<sup>12</sup>

**FIGURE 2**  
**Job satisfaction, women and men, nonprofit sector workers**



Q17. Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied with your current job?

Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers.

## Job satisfaction by age

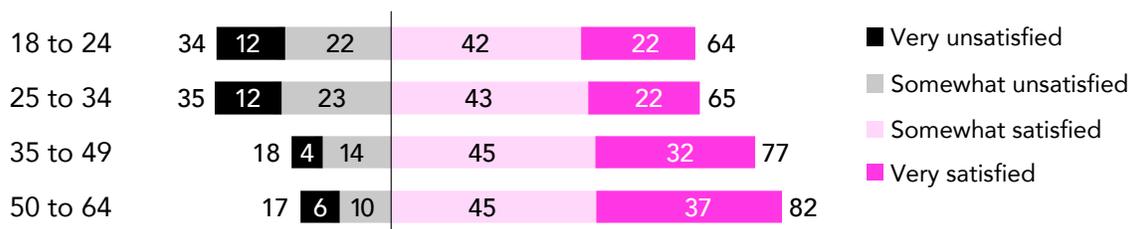
Workers under the age of 35 were almost twice as likely to report being unsatisfied with their job as workers aged 35 to 64. More than one-third of nonprofit sector workers under the age of 35 are not satisfied with their job, including 34% of those aged 18 to 24 and 35% of those age 25 to 34, compared to 18% of those aged 35 to 49 and 17% of those aged 50 to 64. Among younger workers, 12% of both those aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 are very unsatisfied with their jobs.

12 Their recommendations for creating decent work for women include stable employment; equal pay for equal work; gender parity in sector leadership; maternity and parental leave top-ups; pensions, and health and dental benefits; and safe reporting mechanisms for discrimination and harassment. It is likely that the lack of these factors in many organizations could be contributing to lower satisfaction among women in the nonprofit sector.

The nonprofit sector is particularly reliant on younger workers compared to the public and private sectors, with 47% of workers in our survey between the ages of 18 and 34, making these low levels of job satisfaction even more salient. Young workers under the age of 35 were 16 percentage points more likely to be unsatisfied with their jobs than young workers in the combined public and private sector data.

FIGURE 3

### Job satisfaction, by age, nonprofit sector workers



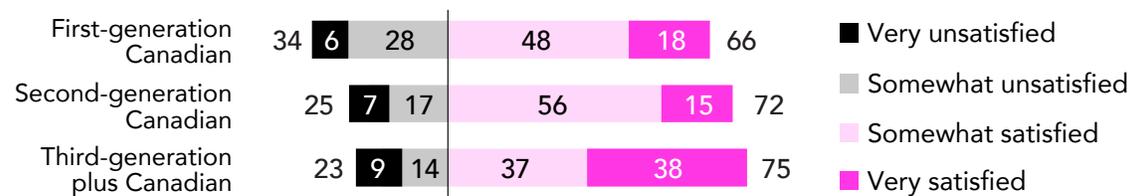
Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers. Note: Sample sizes for those 65 plus were too small to report at this level of detail.

### Job satisfaction by immigration status

First-generation Canadians are also particularly likely to be unhappy with their jobs in the nonprofit sector, with 34% reporting they are unsatisfied with their job, compared to 25% of second-generation Canadians, and 23% of third-generation plus Canadians. First-generation workers were more likely to be unsatisfied than first-generation workers in the private and public sectors.

FIGURE 4

### Job satisfaction, by immigration status, nonprofit sector workers



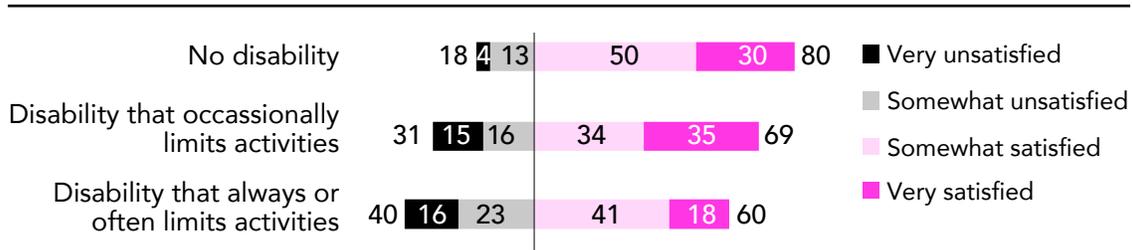
Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers.

## Job satisfaction by disability

Nonprofit workers with a disability are particularly likely to report low job satisfaction, especially those with more significant activity limitations. To illustrate, 40% of those with a disability that always or often limits their activities are unsatisfied with their job. For those with a disability that sometimes limits their activities, 31% are unsatisfied with their job. The nonprofit sector has particularly high rates of employment for those with disabilities that often limit activities (see page 10), so these high rates of job dissatisfaction reflect the experience of a significant proportion of workers in the sector. Workers with a disability in the nonprofit sector were more likely to be unsatisfied than workers with a disability in other sectors.

FIGURE 5

### Job satisfaction, by disability status, nonprofit sector workers



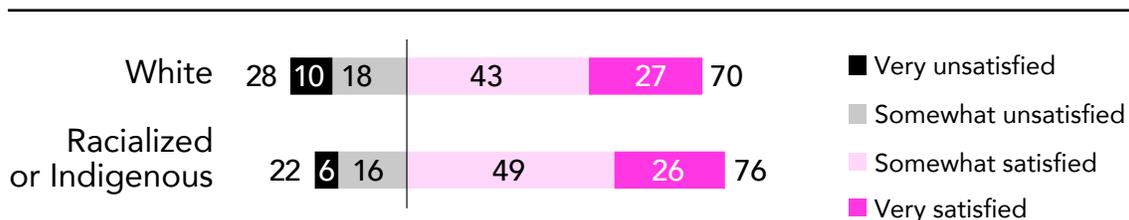
Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers.

## Racial identity

Among nonprofit workers who identify as white, 28% say they are unsatisfied with their jobs, slightly higher than those who identify as racialized or Indigenous (22%).

FIGURE 6

### Job satisfaction, by racial identity, nonprofit sector workers



Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers.

# Experiences of discrimination in the workplace

Compared to those in other sectors, nonprofit workers are more likely to have ever faced discrimination or unfair treatment at work based on their personal characteristics, including gender, racial identity, Indigenous identity, and disability status.

TABLE 2

## Experiences of ever having faced discrimination or unfair treatment at work by sector

	Public sector	Private sector	Nonprofit sector
Because of your race / ethnicity (racialized respondents only)	48	36	52
Because of your gender (women)	32	33	41
Because of your gender (men)	22	8	7
Because of your disability (respondents with activity limitations due to disabilities only)	24	19	37
Because you are an Indigenous person (Indigenous respondents only)	51	25	64
Because of your age (Respondents 30 and younger)	40	32	22
Because of your age (55 and older)	16	26	22
Percentage of respondents who reported at least one form of discrimination	17	14	22

Q19ar1 - 5. Because you have a disability - Have you ever experienced discrimination or been unfairly treated in the workplace:

*Subsample: Respondents from Waves 2 and 3. Questions about discrimination by age and gender were only asked in Wave 2. Questions about discrimination because of disability was only asked in Wave 3.*



*Of the **61 nonprofit workers who identify as having a physical or mental condition** or difference that always, often, or sometimes limits the amount/kind of activity that can be done on a typical day **37% report experiencing discrimination, compared to 24% of those with disabilities in the public sector.***

In Waves 2 and 3 of the survey, questions about perceptions of discrimination and being treated unfairly in the workplace were added to the questionnaire. Several questions were asked in both waves of the survey, while others were asked only in one wave. The questions asked if people had ever faced discrimination or unfair treatment at work, and results should be treated with caution, as that treatment may not necessarily have been in their current role. Sample sizes in the nonprofit sector are small, so differences should be interpreted with caution.

## People with disabilities

In the third wave of the survey, people who identified activity limitations were asked about their perceptions of whether they had faced discrimination in the workplace due to their disability. Of the 61 nonprofit workers who identify as having a physical or mental condition or difference that always, often, or sometimes limits the amount/kind of activity that can be done on a typical day, 37% report experiencing discrimination, compared to 24% of those with disabilities in the public sector, and 19% in the private sector. The differences between the nonprofit sector and the private and public sectors are statistically significant, though the margins of error are large.

## Racial identification

In Waves 2 and 3 of the survey, workers were asked whether they have faced discrimination or been treated unfairly based on race in the workplace. Among racialized respondents, those in the nonprofit (52%) and public (48%) sectors are more likely to report having faced discrimination or unfair treatment at work based on their race or ethnicity compared to those in the private sector (36%).

## Age

In Wave 2 of the survey, respondents were asked whether they have faced discrimination based on age. Nonprofit workers under the age of 30 are slightly less likely to indicate they have faced discrimination based on age (22%) than those in the private (32%) or public (40%) sectors.

## Gender

In Wave 2 of the survey, respondents were asked whether they had experienced discrimination based on gender. Among women, 41% of those in the nonprofit sector report discrimination, directionally higher than those in the private (33%) and public (32%) sectors, though not statistically significant.

## Indigenous persons<sup>13</sup>

In Waves 2 and 3 of the survey, Indigenous respondents were asked whether they have experienced discrimination because they are Indigenous. While there are only 36 responses among nonprofit sector workers across the two waves, 64% of those in the nonprofit sector and 51% in the public sector indicate they have faced discrimination because they were Indigenous, compared to 25% in the private sector.

13 The sample here is very small for the nonprofit sector (n=36), and relatively small for the public and private sectors (n=132 and n=122, respectively), so interpret with caution.

# Characteristics of nonprofit sector jobs

Workers in the nonprofit sector are considerably less likely to be employed full-time or have a permanent position than those in other sectors, with many working part-time jobs - though most part-time workers prefer those hours. Service occupations are more common in the nonprofit sector, and these workers have the lowest job satisfaction of any occupation in the nonprofit sector. Almost a third of nonprofit workers report that their household income is not enough for them.

## Full-time and part-time employment

Workers in the nonprofit sector are less likely to be employed full-time than those in other sectors, with 57% of nonprofit sector workers employed full-time, compared to 67% in the private sector and 77% in the public sector. In addition, nonprofit workers are twice as likely as private sector workers to be employed part-time with one or multiple employers (34% versus 18%); and considerably more likely than public sector workers (20%).

Employed full-time:

**57%**

Nonprofit  
sector workers

**67%**

Private sector  
workers

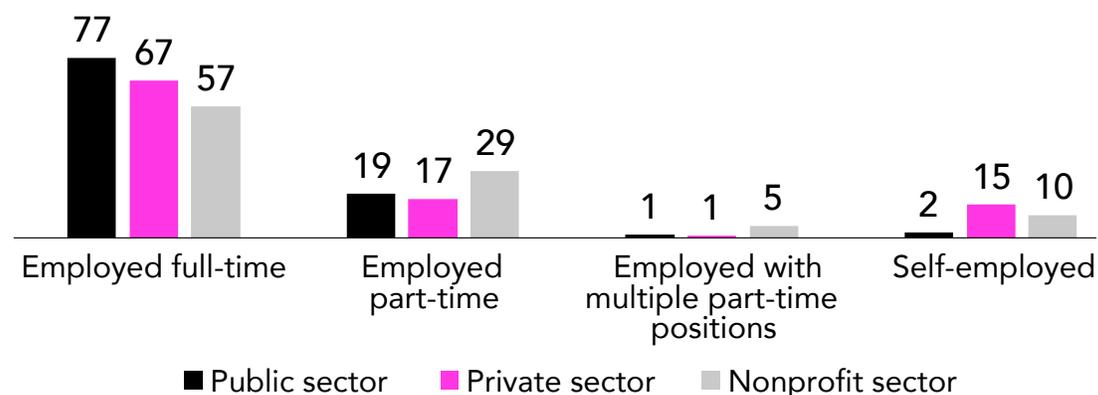
**77%**

Public sector  
workers

These results are similar to those found in a 2013 survey of nonprofit leaders in Ontario, commonly cited in the literature about employment in the nonprofit sector, which found that 59% of respondents worked full-time, and 31% were part-time.<sup>14</sup>

FIGURE 7

### Current employment situation, by sector



Q12 Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

### Job permanency

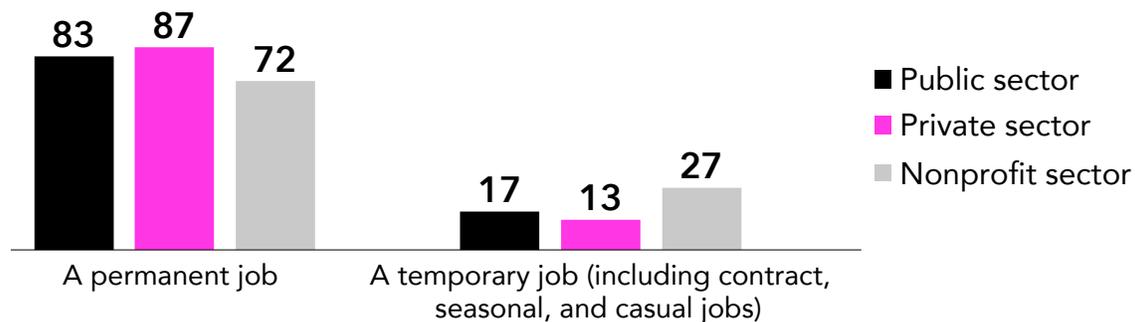
Nonprofit sector workers are also considerably more likely to be in temporary positions than those in other sectors, with 27% of nonprofit sectors indicating their jobs are temporary, seasonal, or casual, compared to 13% in the private sector and 17% in the public sector. Among nonprofit workers, this is split between 9% who describe their job as seasonal; 9% who describe their position as temporary, term, or contract; and 9% who describe their position as casual. This rate of temporary employment is somewhat higher than that

**27% of nonprofit sectors indicating their jobs are temporary, seasonal, or casual, compared to 13% in the private sector and 17% in the public sector.**

14 Mclsaac, Elizabeth, Stella Park, and Lynne Toupin. "Shaping the Future: Leadership in Ontario's Nonprofit Labour Force," 2013. <https://theonnc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ONN-Mowat.Shaping-the-Future-Leadership.Exec-Summary.pdf>.

found in the 2013 survey of 800 nonprofit respondents in Ontario.<sup>15</sup> However, those respondents were mostly executive directors and probably less likely to be contract staff than the overall workforce.<sup>16</sup>

**FIGURE 8**  
**Permanent versus temporary employment, by sector**



Q13A. Is your current job: A permanent job, a seasonal job (a job that lasts only for one part of the year), A temporary, term or contract job (a job that will end after a specific date), or a casual job (a job you do from time to time).

15 McIsaac, Elizabeth, Stella Park, and Lynne Toupin. "Shaping the Future: Leadership in Ontario's Nonprofit Labour Force," 2013. <https://theonnc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ONN-Mowat-Shaping-the-Future-Leadership-Exec-Summary.pdf>.

16 There was no statistically significant difference in job satisfaction between permanent and temporary workers in the nonprofit sector, though sample sizes are small. When aggregating data across all workers, temporary workers express slightly lower job satisfaction than permanent workers (20% of temporary workers are unsatisfied versus 15% of permanent workers).



## Occupation by sector

The most reported occupations in the nonprofit sector are clerical and administration or office support (18%), professional roles (18%), and service roles (16%). Trades, Transport, and Labour (14%), sales (10%), and management (10%) are also commonly identified occupations. The only occupation more likely to be found in the nonprofit sector is service-based roles (16%, compared to 10% each in the private and public sectors). Workers in the nonprofit sector are slightly more likely to describe themselves as working in professional occupations than are those in the private sector (18% versus 12%), but much less likely than those in the public sector (31%).

**TABLE 3**  
**Distribution of occupation by sector (%)**

	Public Sector	Private sector	Nonprofit Sector
Clerical and administration or office support	24	19	18
Sales or retail or cashier	8	11	10
Providing services (e.g., food services, cleaning, or other support)	10	10	16
Trades, Transport & Labour (e.g., skilled trade, manual labour, delivery)	14	23	14
Professional (e.g., nurse, teacher, therapist)	31	12	18
Executive, manager, or business owner	6	14	10
Other	7	9	13

16. What is your main occupation or the type of job you perform?

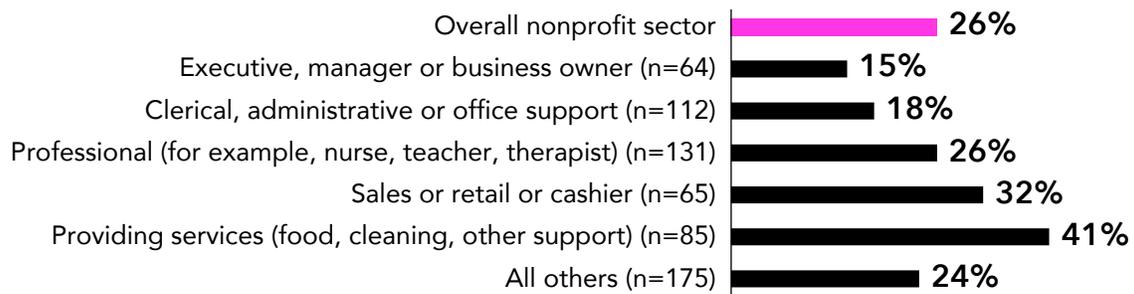
*Note: Some categories are aggregated together in the table. Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

## Occupation and job satisfaction in the nonprofit sector

Occupation is also clearly linked to job satisfaction. Those working in management positions in the nonprofit sector are less likely to say they are unsatisfied with their job (15%), considerably better than the average (26%). Those who indicate a clerical, administrative, or office support role are also less likely to be unsatisfied with their job (18%). On the other hand, those providing services are much more likely to say they are unsatisfied (41%).

FIGURE 9

### Percent unsatisfied with their job, by occupation, nonprofit sector workers only



Q17. Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied with your current job, or cannot say?

Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers

## Unionization

One in five (20%) nonprofit workers indicate they are unionized, a slightly higher proportion than that reported by private sector workers (13%), but much lower than among public sector workers (59%).

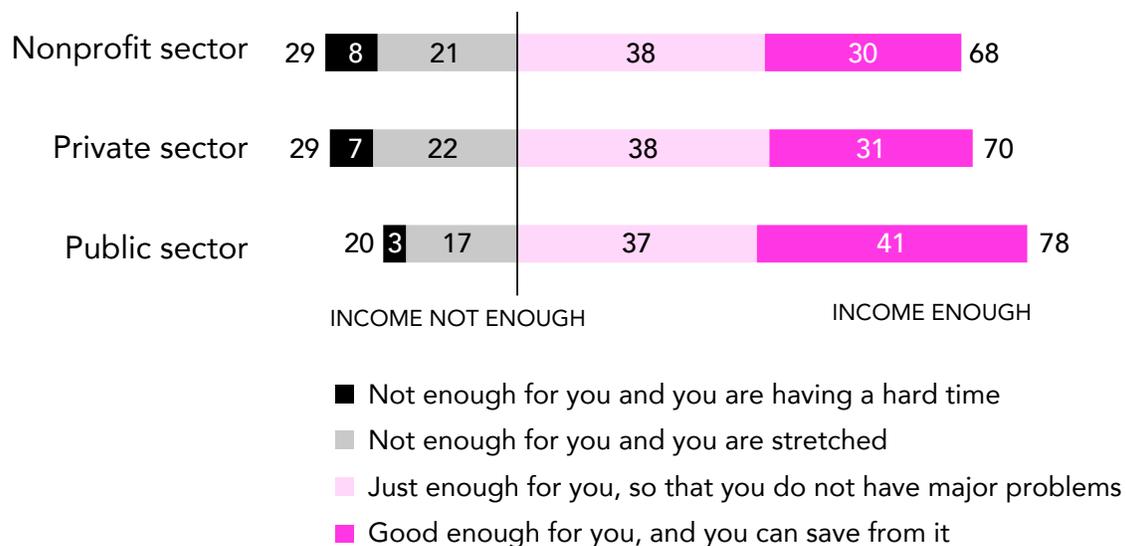
## Adequacy of household income

While the survey did not ask about how much workers are compensated at their job, it did ask about their overall household income and whether it is sufficient. Three in ten (29%) nonprofit workers describe their household income as not enough, including 8% who say that they are having a hard time and 21% who say they are stretched. Overall lack of sufficient income among nonprofit workers is identical to that reported by those in the private sector (29%), and much higher than that reported by public sector workers (20%). Fewer than one-third (30%) of nonprofit sector workers indicate their income is good enough for them and that they could save from it, and 38% say their incomes are just enough so they do not have major problems.

**Three in ten (29%) nonprofit workers describe their household income as not enough, including 8% who say that they are having a hard time and 21% who say they are stretched.**

FIGURE 10

### Adequacy of household income, by sector



Q48. Would you say your total household income is...?

# Nonprofit sector workers during the pandemic

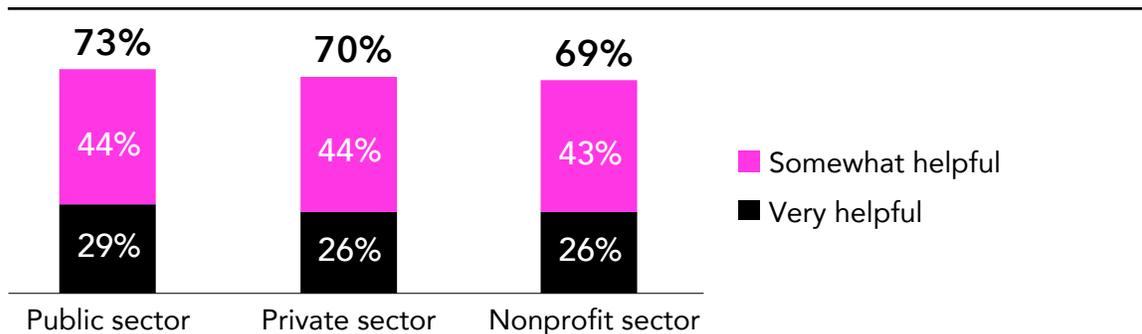
Most nonprofit sector workers feel their employers were helpful in managing changes to their work situation during the pandemic, with most working from home at least part of the time. Those working from home generally view the experience very positively, with most agreeing that they prefer to work from home at least some of the time. A minority agree with concerns that they can't do their job well at home; that they don't have the right equipment at home to do their job; or that they are worried about job advancement because they are working from. Workers are divided as to whether working from home has left them with little time for themselves and their families.

## Employer support on managing changes

Workers across sectors are equally likely to say that their employers were at least somewhat helpful in managing changes to their work situation, with 69% of nonprofit sector workers indicating this, 70% of private sector workers, and 73% of public sector workers. However, this leaves a significant 24% of nonprofit workers who say their employers were not very helpful (17%) or not helpful at all (7%), with an additional 6% who can't say.

FIGURE 11

**Extent your employer has helped you manage changes to your work situation, by sector, Waves 2, 3, and 4**



Q33c. To what extent has your own employer helped you to manage the changes to your work situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic? Has your employer been: Somewhat helpful, Not very helpful, Not helpful at all, Cannot Say (excluded from the analysis)?

## Working from home

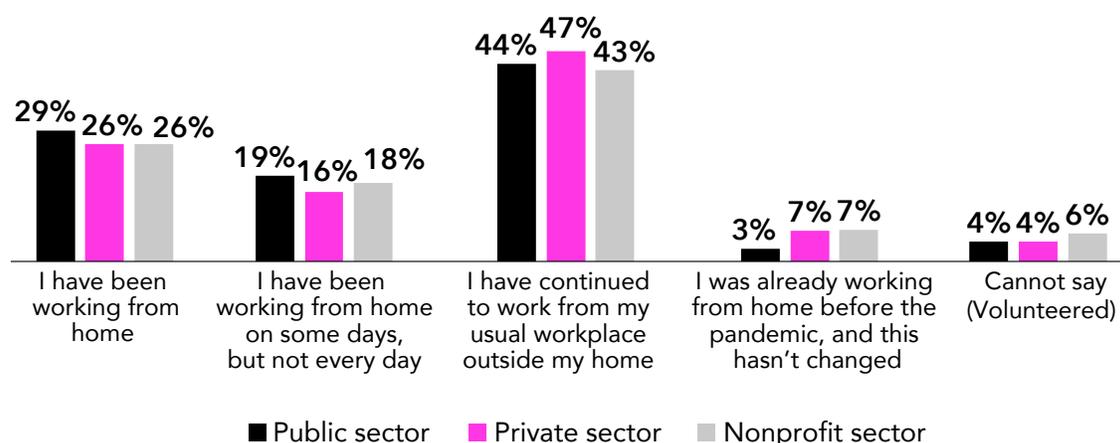
Most nonprofit sector workers work from home at least some of the time (50%), including about one in five (16%) who work from home on some days, a trend that will continue to shape the labour market in the future as even in Wave 4, about half of nonprofit workers are working from home. One-third (33%) of nonprofit sector workers work from home almost exclusively, including 7% working from home before the pandemic and 26% working from home since the pandemic started. Many (47%) are also working from their usual workplace outside of the home.

Among both private and public sector workers, there has been a slight increase in the proportions of those working from their usual workplace outside their home in the most recent waves, but essentially no change among nonprofit sector workers (41% in Wave 2 and 42% in Wave 4). Half of private sector workers are back in the office in Wave 4 (50%, up from 45% in Wave 3, and 44% in Wave 2).

This study cannot shed light on the needs and concerns of these workers during the pandemic, but this topic is explored in more depth in the Survey on Employment and Skills' *Work at home or live at work: The complexities of new working arrangements*.

FIGURE 12

### Work from home situation in the past 3 months, by sector, Waves 2, 3, and 4



Q24d. Which of the following best describes your work situation during the past three months of the COVID-19 pandemic?



***74% of those working from home say their employer should continue to allow them to work from home once the pandemic is over, and 60% agree they like working from home more than their regular workplace.***

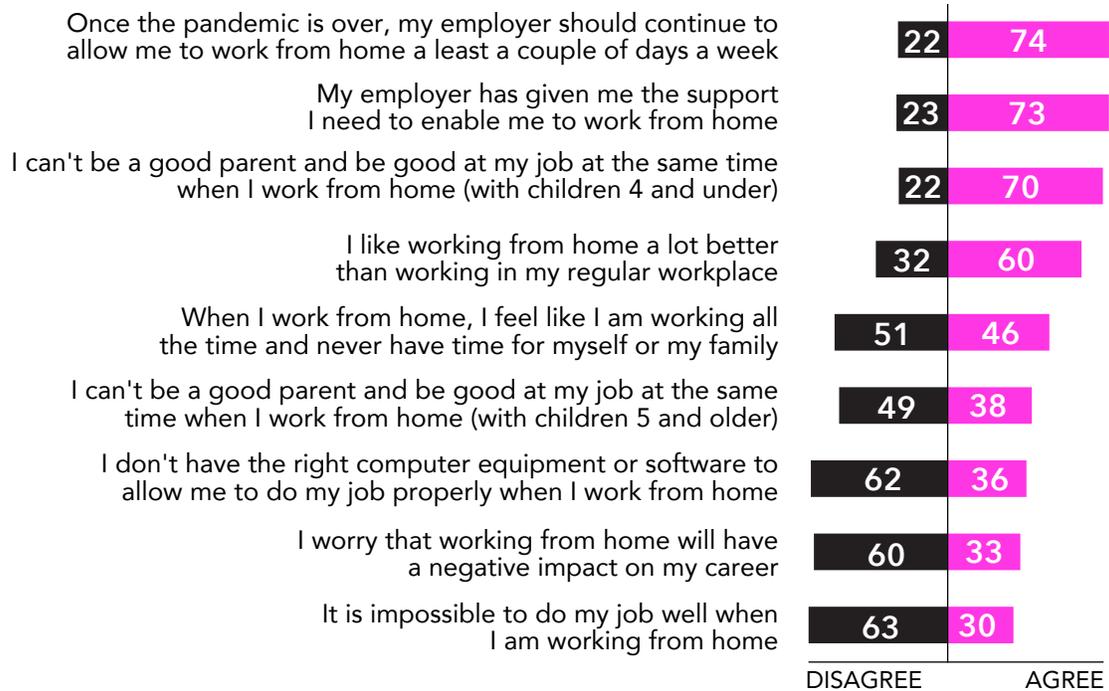
Those working from home were asked additional questions about their experiences working away from their workplace - and the responses are quite positive. Overall, 74% of those working from home say their employer should continue to allow them to work from home once the pandemic is over, and 60% agree they like working from home more than their regular workplace. Similarly, a strong majority (73%) agree their employer has given them sufficient support to enable them to work from home.

The results are more evenly split between those who agree (46%) that they are working all the time because they were working from home, leaving little time for themselves or their family, and those who disagree (51%).

Relatively small proportions agree that they didn't have the right computer equipment or software to do their job properly at home (36%); that they worry working from home will have a negative impact on their career (33%); and that it is impossible to do their job well when they are working from home (30%).

FIGURE 13

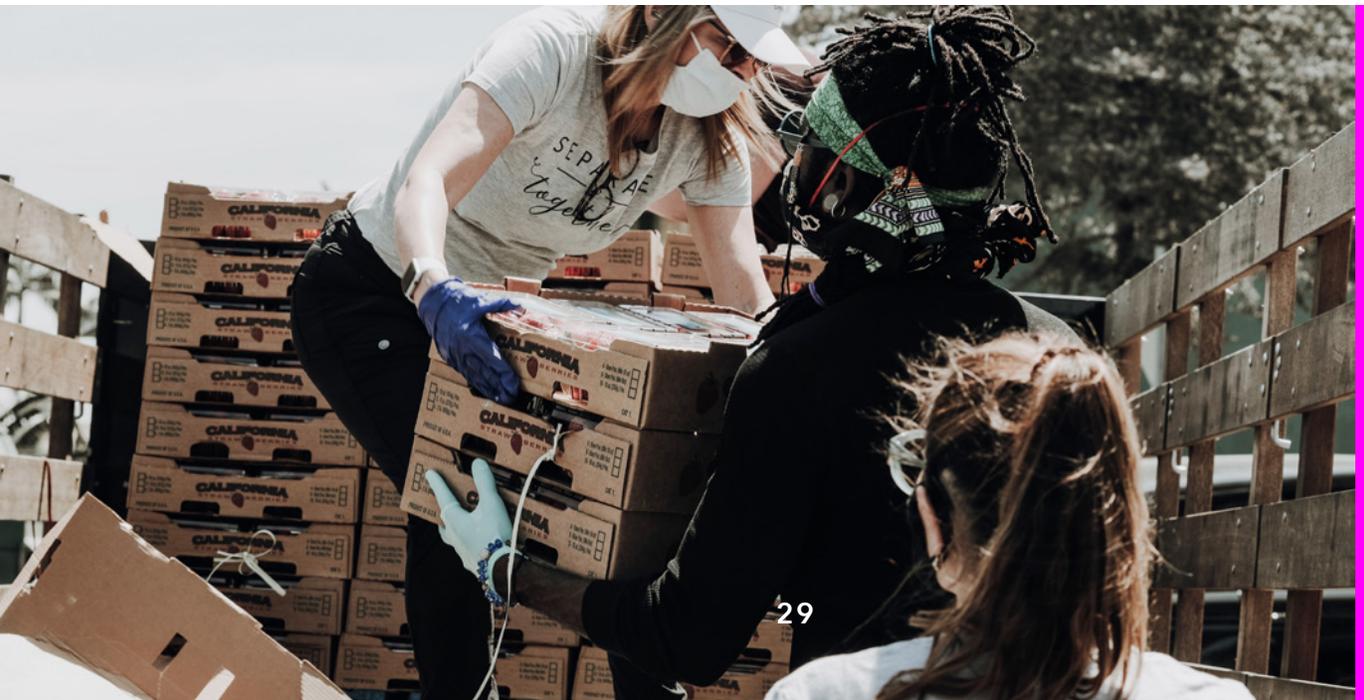
## Perceptions about working from home among nonprofit sector employees, Waves 2, 3, and 4



Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers working from home

Q24E. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements about working from home? Cannot say results are not shown on the chart.

Note: Most questions were asked in Waves 2, 3 and 4, but the questions on computer equipment and employer support were asked only in Waves 2 and 3.



## Going to work sick and access to paid sick leave

Prior to the pandemic, about two in five workers in the nonprofit sector (39%) would have gone into work if they woke up on a workday feeling a bit sick, a smaller proportion compared to those in other sectors. Among those who would have gone to work sick, about a third (32%) indicate they would not have been paid if they hadn't gone in. Of those who stayed home when sick, 39% indicate they do not get paid if they stay home - identical to that reported by those in the private sector, but a smaller proportion than among those in the public sector.

**TABLE 3**  
**Going to work sick and access to paid leave, by sector**

		Public Sector	Private sector	Nonprofit sector
Q33fW3: And now thinking about the time before the pandemic, which of the following best describes what would happen if you woke up on a work day feeling a little sick (like you might be getting a cold or the flu)?	I would likely have gone in to work anyway	53	52	39
	I would likely have called in sick and stayed home	43	41	59
	Cannot say	4	7	2
Among workers who went to work sick	Went to work because they wouldn't have been paid for the day if they didn't	38	44	32
If you did not go into work because you were feeling sick, did you still get paid for work that day?	Yes, I still got paid when I stayed home from work because I was sick	69	54	55
	No, I did not get paid when I stayed home from work because I was sick	27	39	39
	Cannot say	4	7	5

*Subsample: Respondents to the third wave of the survey*

# Skills and training in the nonprofit sector

Nonprofit workers say that communication skills, the ability to collaborate, and the ability to read and write well, were the most important skills to get their current jobs; these findings are similar to those found across all respondents.

In Wave 4 of the survey, workers were asked to identify the most important skills they had to get their current job (or find a new job, for those who are unemployed). Because this was only asked in Wave 4, sample sizes are small, making comparisons difficult.

The most important skills were communication skills (33%), the ability to collaborate (27%), the ability to read and write well (27%), the ability to adapt quickly to change by learning new skills (26%), and thinking or the ability to solve problems (24%). Technical skills, being good with numbers, and digital skills were in the bottom four of the 10 skills surveyed.

## The most important skills reported were:

**33%**

Communication skills

**27%**

The ability to collaborate

**26%**

The ability to adapt quickly to change by learning new skills

**27%**

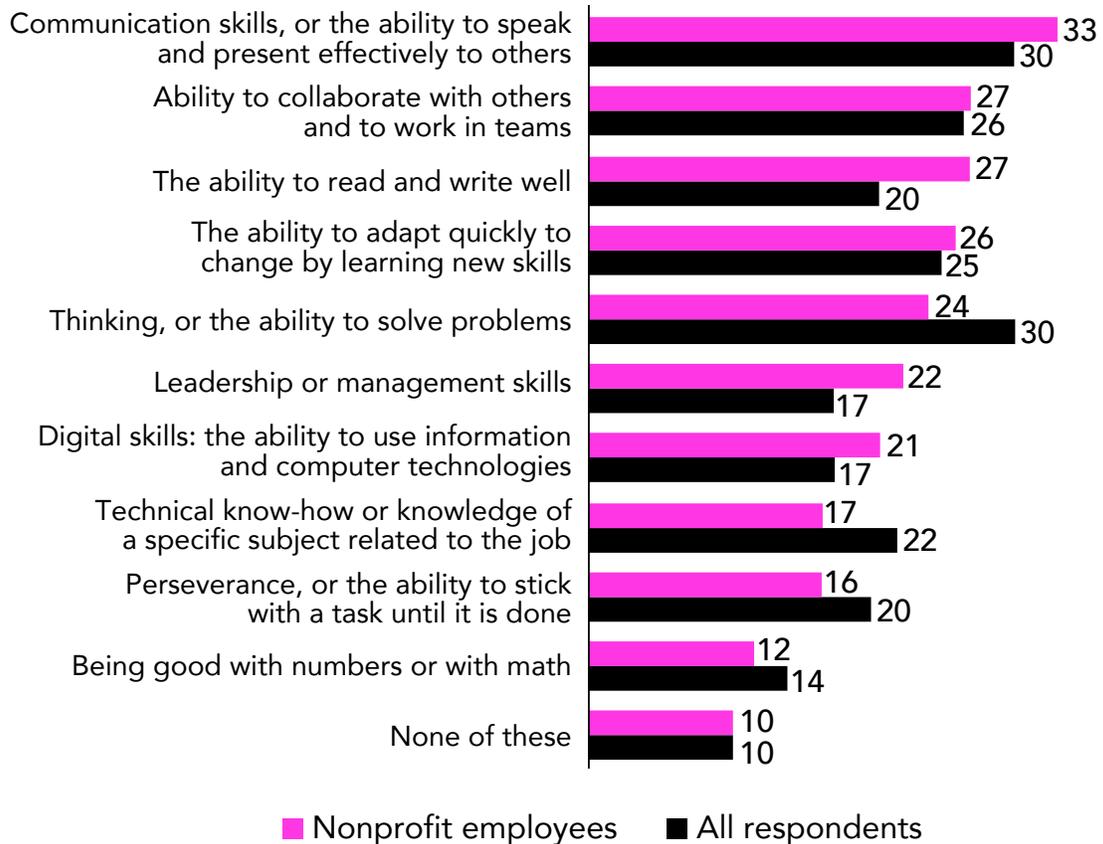
The ability to read and write well

**24%**

Thinking or the ability to solve problems

FIGURE 14

**Most important skill to get your current job/find a new job, nonprofit workers versus all respondents, Wave 4**



Q32A. Thinking about the following skills, which ones would you say: were the most important skills for you [IF employed, 01, 02, 03, 04 TO Q12] to have to get the main job you currently have? / [IF unemployed and looking for work, 08 TO Q12] to find a new job?

When asked about skills that are most important to improve for them to be successful in their career or find a new job (among those unemployed), nonprofit workers rate the ability to collaborate as most important (30%), followed by leadership or management skills (27%), communication skills (27%), technical know-how or knowledge of a specific subject related to the job (23%), and the ability to adapt quickly to change by learning new skills (23%).

The only significant difference in perceptions of important skills to improve is that nonprofit workers rank the ability to collaborate with others and work in teams as the most important (30%), while overall, workers rank it seventh (18%).

Notably, a greater proportion of nonprofit workers identify technical skills as an area they need to improve to advance in their career (23%) than say it was an important skill to get their current job (17%). This gap is higher in the nonprofit sector versus the average for all workers, with those in other sectors rating technical skills as more important to get their current job.

While nonprofit workers are particularly likely to say the ability to read and write well was an important skill to get a job in their sector (27%, making it tied for the second highest), very few identify it as a skill they need to most improve to advance in their career (9%, the second lowest of the skills asked about).

FIGURE 15

**Skills that are most important to improve for you to be successful in your career/find a new job, nonprofit workers versus all respondents, Wave 4**



Q32B. Thinking about the following skills, which ones would you say: are the most important skills for you [IF employed] to improve, in order for you to be successful in your career in the future? / [IF unemployed] to find a new job in the future?

## Training

About half of nonprofit workers indicate they have taken an employer-provided training course; and the vast majority of those who took a course found it useful, regardless of whether their employer supported it. The main reason for not taking a course is that they did not need one - though a number of other barriers are flagged, including the complexities of the pandemic, time to complete training, cost of potential training, and availability of the right training. Formal courses provided by employers, learning on the job from co-workers, and learning through formal training provided outside of work, are identified as the best way to improve skills.

Those in both the public (53%) and nonprofit (48%) sectors are more likely than those in the private sector (35%) to have taken a training course provided by their employer.

The significant majority of those who took a training course that was provided by their employer say it was useful (88%), evenly split between those who say it was very (44%) or somewhat (44%) useful. Regardless of what type of training was provided, significant majorities found it useful.

In Wave 4 of the survey, those who had not taken any work-related training were asked why. The most common response was that they didn't feel that they needed to because they had the skills they need (60%), followed by not having enough time (23%), the pandemic making it difficult to participate (21%), training is too costly and the employer won't pay (11%), and that they know where or how to take a course for the skills they need (10%).



TABLE 4

### Training courses and usefulness for nonprofit sector workers

	Course that was provided by your employer	Course that was not provided by your employer, but that you took while you were working	A training course that you took when you took time off from work (Wave 1 only)	A training course that you took because you became unemployed or were working fewer hours because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Waves 3 and 4 only)
Took a course	48	27	21	20
<b>Of those that took the course, the percentage that found it useful...</b>				
Very useful	44	26	36	19
Somewhat useful	44	65	41	68
Useful (very or somewhat)	88	91	77	87

*Subsample: Nonprofit sector workers from Waves 1, 3, and 4.*

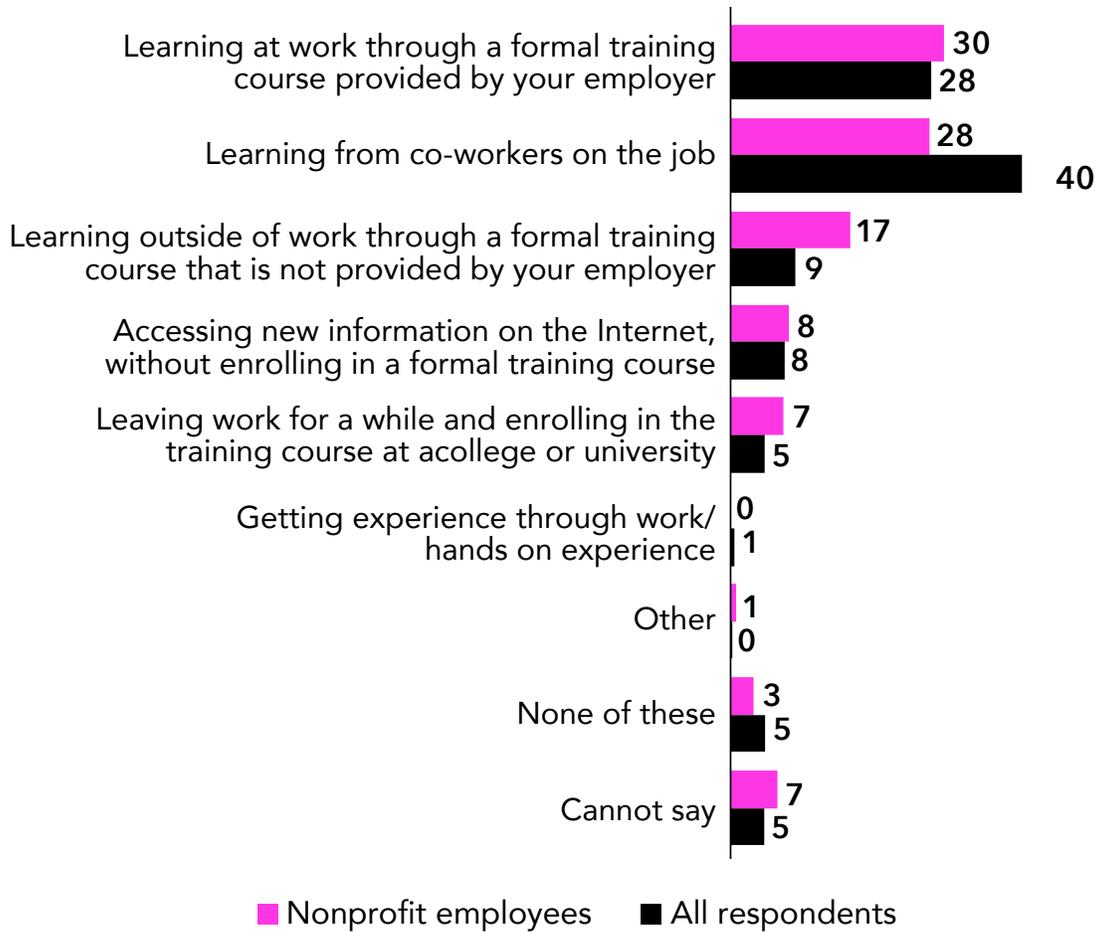
*Q35A/Q35B/Q35C/Q35E. Since the start of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, have you participated in any of the following forms of work-related training to improve your skills? Q36A/Q36B/Q36C/Q36E. How useful was this course in terms of helping you develop the skills you needed to succeed at work?*

Nonprofit workers in Wave 1 were asked about the best way to learn new work-related skills, and learning through a formal training course (30%) emerges as the top method, followed by learning from co-workers on the job (28%), and learning outside of work through a formal training course that is not provided by your employer (17%). The only statistically significant difference versus the overall responses for nonprofit sector workers are less likely to identify learning from co-workers on the job as the most important way to learn new skills.

*Nonprofit workers were asked about the **best way to learn new work-related skills, and learning through a formal training course (30%) emerged as the top method.***

FIGURE 16

**Best way for you to learn new work-related skills, nonprofit sector workers versus all respondents, Wave 1**



Q37. In your opinion, what is the best way for you personally to learn new work-related skills? Is it...



**Environics  
Institute**  
For Survey Research

 **Future Skills  
Centre**

**TED  
ROGERS  
SCHOOL  
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**DiVERSITY  
INSTITUTE**