

What Needs to Change to Get Rochester Back to Work?

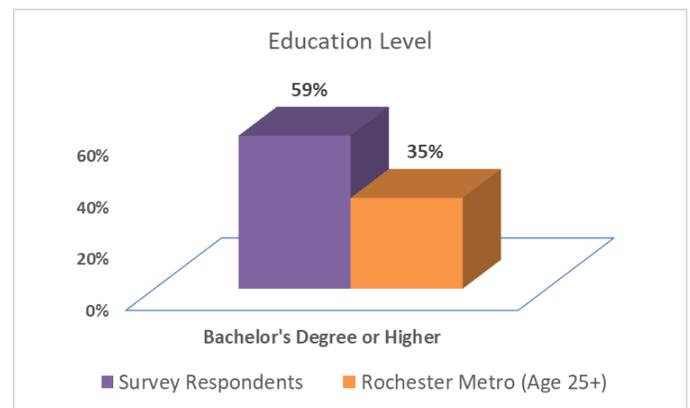
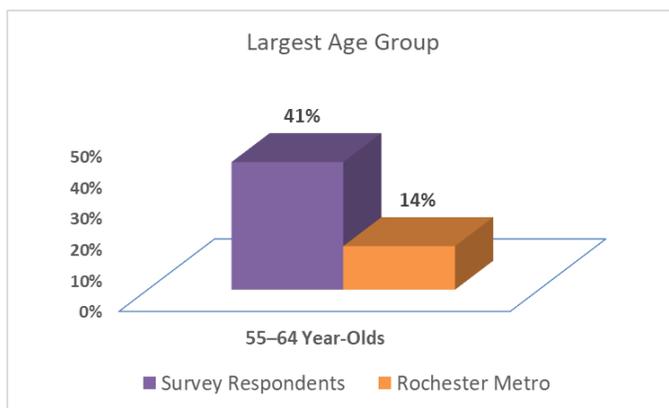
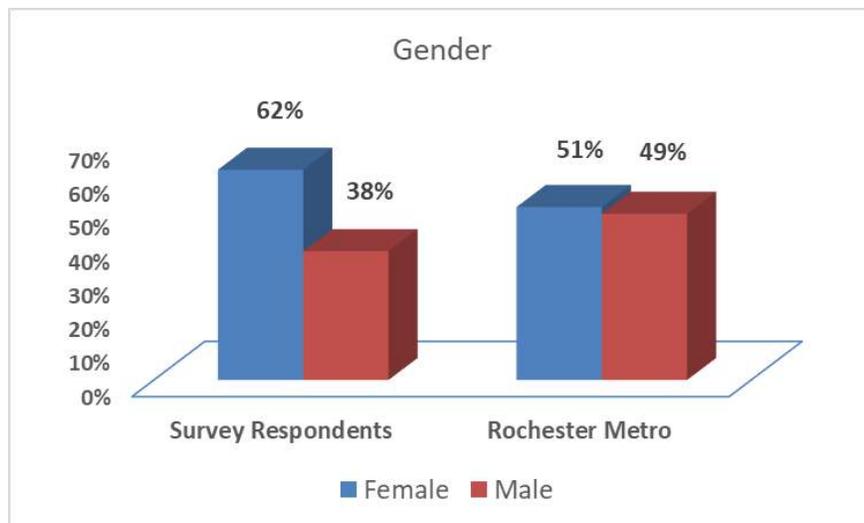
In June and early July, RochesterWorks! received responses to a survey asking unemployed Rochester-area workers about the barriers they faced in returning to work during the post-COVID recovery.

Who responded to the survey?

We received 69 valid responses. We wanted to hear from individuals who were not working, therefore...

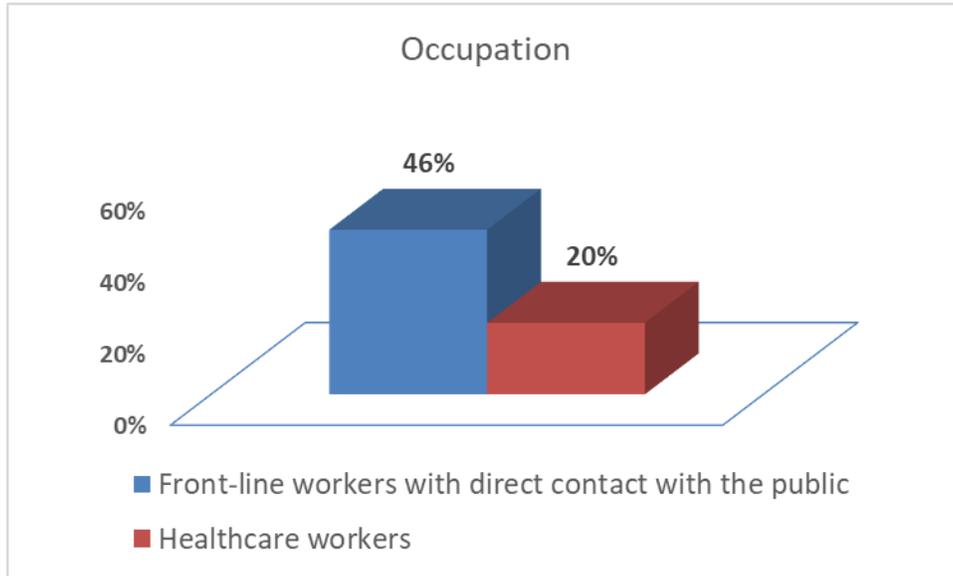
- 61% of respondents were receiving unemployment insurance benefits
- 19% were receiving other public assistance benefits

Our survey respondents have a higher percentage of women, a greater proportion of older workers, and a higher education level, on average, than the general population.

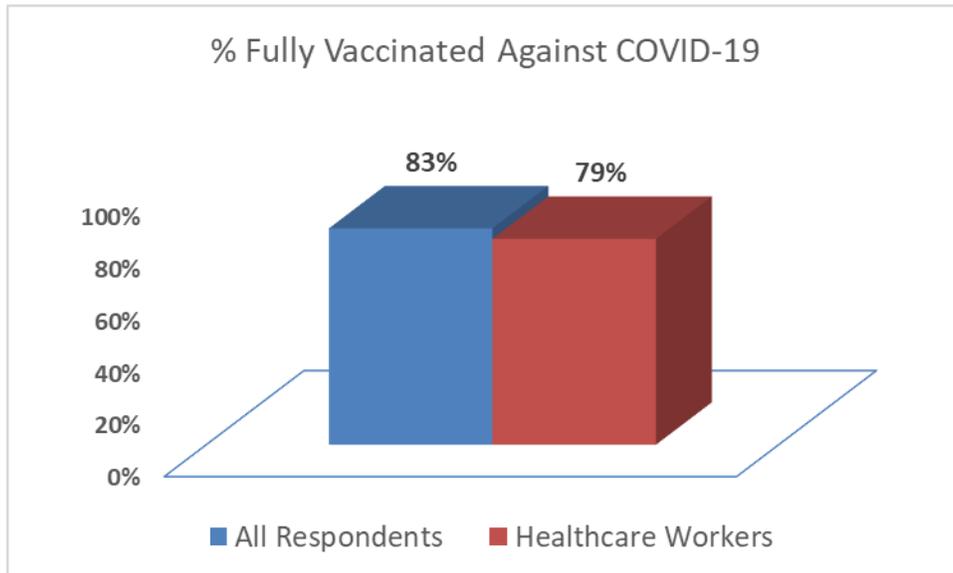


Childcare Fact: 15 respondents have a child at home, aged 12 or younger (22%)

Occupation: How many survey respondents are front-line, essential workers? How many are healthcare workers?



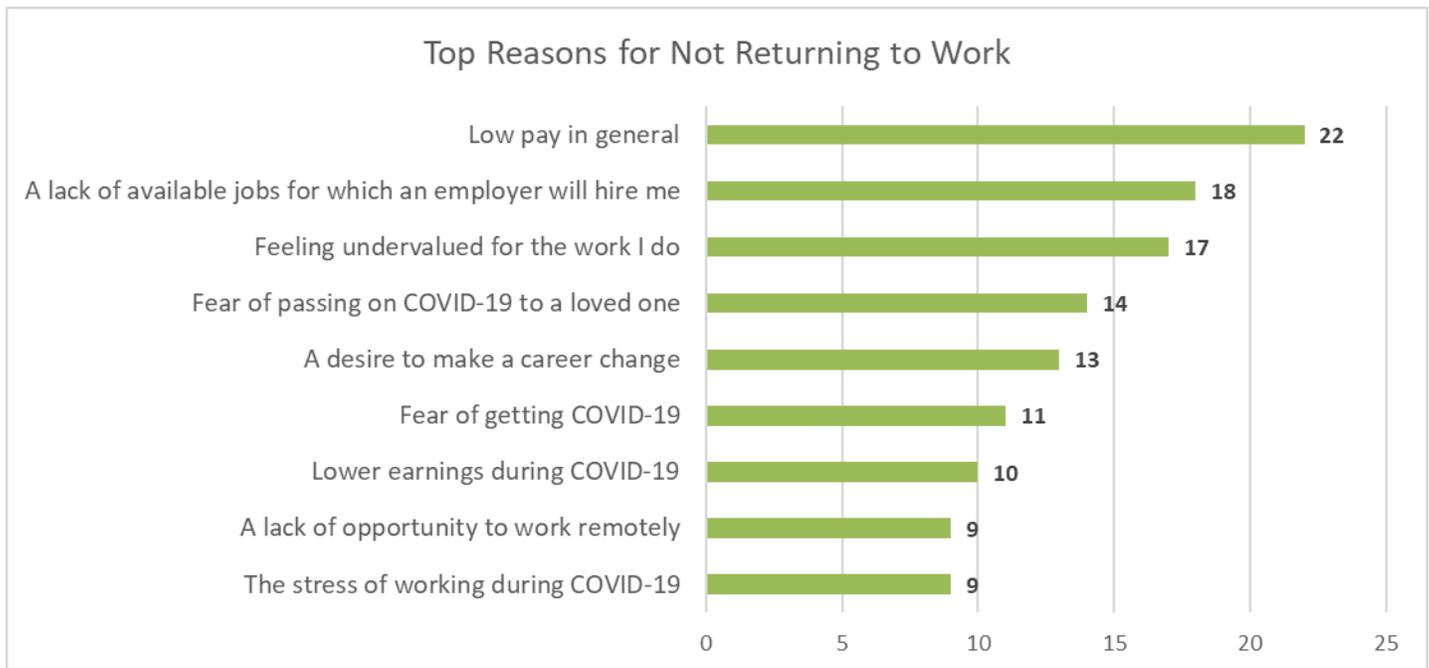
Vaccination Rates: What percentage of survey respondents are fully vaccinated?



What are the main reasons why they haven't yet returned to work?

We asked survey respondents to rank the three most important barriers preventing them from returning to work.

The following barriers were selected with the greatest frequency.



Are those all the reasons, and how do the answers differ by gender, occupation, or other demographics? Are unemployment benefits a factor?

The survey responses paint a complex picture of the barriers that this group faces. Here are some of the highlights, broken down into categories.

To what extent is COVID-19 preventing this group from returning to work?

(Note: This survey was completed prior to the impact of the Delta variant in our area.)

29% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that **fear of getting COVID-19** is preventing them from returning to work

23% of females	33% of males
26% among the fully vaccinated	42% among those not fully vaccinated
41% among those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public	36% among healthcare workers

35% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that **fear of passing on COVID-19 to a loved one** is preventing them from returning to work

36% of females	29% of males
32% among the fully vaccinated	50% among those not fully vaccinated
44% among those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public	36% among healthcare workers

35% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that **measures that employers are failing to take to protect people from COVID-19** are preventing them from returning to work

33% of females	29% of males
32% among the fully vaccinated	42% among those not fully vaccinated
47% among those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public	43% among healthcare workers

Highlighted Data Point: 50% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public and 50% of healthcare workers either somewhat or strongly agreed that **the stress of working during COVID-19** is preventing them from returning to work

41% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public and 36% of healthcare workers either somewhat or strongly agreed that **the additional workload and/or extra hours due to COVID-19** is/are preventing them from returning to work

To what extent are low pay or poor working conditions preventing this group from returning to work?

51% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that **lower earnings during COVID-19** are preventing them from returning to work

59% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public
57% of healthcare workers

Highlighted Data Point: 65% either somewhat or strongly agreed that [low pay in general](#) is preventing them from returning to work

72% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public

64% of healthcare workers

75% of respondents with less than a bachelor's degree

58% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [feeling undervalued for the work they do](#) is preventing them from returning to work

63% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public

57% of healthcare workers

43% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [the lack of a fixed or predictable work schedule](#) is preventing them from returning to work

50% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public

43% of healthcare workers

49% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [the lack of opportunity to work remotely](#) is preventing them from returning to work

[To what extent are transportation and child/family care barriers preventing this group from returning to work?](#)

17% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a lack of reliable transportation](#) is preventing them from returning to work

Half of them live in one of the nine (9) ZIP codes identified in the Governor's Gun Violence Prevention initiative

19% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a lack of access to affordable childcare](#) is preventing them from returning to work

75% of respondents with a child/children aged 5 or younger

64% of respondents with a child/children between the ages of 6 and 12

Nearly half of them live in one of the nine (9) ZIP codes identified in the Governor's Gun Violence Prevention initiative

25% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [their responsibility to care for their own or someone else's children](#) is preventing them from returning to work

Highlighted Data Point: 55% of respondents with one or more children between the ages of 6 and 12 either somewhat or strongly agreed that [their responsibility to support their own or someone else's children with their remote schoolwork](#) is preventing them from returning to work

22% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [their responsibility to care for an adult who needs care or assistance](#) is preventing them from returning to work

26% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a lack of paid family leave](#) is preventing them from returning to work

38% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public

50% of healthcare workers

To what extent is a health concern or a disability preventing this group from returning to work?

33% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [anxiety or another mental health condition](#) is preventing them from returning to work

29% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a physical health condition](#) is preventing them from returning to work

17% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that a [lack of reasonable accommodations for a disability](#) is preventing them from returning to work

To what extent are the [possibility of discrimination and/or the fear of violence or abuse](#) preventing this group from returning to work?

14% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [the possibility of racial or ethnic discrimination](#) is preventing them from returning to work

22% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [the possibility of gender discrimination](#) is preventing them from returning to work

26% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [fear of violence or abuse from customers](#) is preventing them from returning to work

28% of those who consider their usual occupation to be a front-line job requiring regular, direct contact with the public

29% of healthcare workers

28% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that [fear of violence or abuse from co-workers](#) is preventing them from returning to work.

To what extent are the [availability of unemployment benefits vs. the lack of employment opportunities or the desire to pursue other career goals](#) preventing this group from returning to work?

14% of respondents who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a desire to continue collecting unemployment benefits instead of working](#) is preventing them from returning to work.

21% of respondents who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a weekly unemployment benefit rate that is higher than their usual earnings](#) is preventing them from returning to work.

Highlighted Data Point: 67% of respondents who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a lack of available jobs for which an employer will hire them](#) is preventing them from returning to work.

43% of respondents who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a desire to make a career change](#) is preventing them from returning to work. More than half of them also cited a lack of available jobs for which an employer will hire them as a factor.

29% of respondents who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits either somewhat or strongly agreed that [a desire to go back to school or college](#) is preventing them from returning to work.

[Does this survey explain why Rochester-area workers are slow to return to the workforce?](#)

No. The survey respondents are a relatively small group and are not representative of the Rochester-area workforce. However, the results are useful, especially when compared with other survey and economic data.

[Questions](#)

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