



British Columbia HR Trends Report

Research to Help You Lead

Summer 2020

cphrbc.ca

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Introduction



Introduction

This report serves as a reference tool for HR professionals and departments across Western Canada to make better-informed decisions using up-to-date workplace information. Taken in concert with best practices, comparative data can help human resources professionals improve the advice they provide to their organizations.

CPHR British Columbia and Yukon, CPHR Alberta, CPHR Saskatchewan, and CPHR Manitoba have commissioned this report to supplement other sources of workplace information available to their members and to provide benchmarks that can help human resources professionals make better decisions. This report is unique compared to previous reports in the series, as the survey questionnaire was altered with the intent to gauge the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and better understand how organizations are responding.





Methodology



The Summer 2020 wave of this study was conducted by Insights West on behalf of CPHR British Columbia & Yukon, CPHR Alberta, CPHR Saskatchewan, and CPHR Manitoba. The survey was conducted online from June 1st to 17th, 2020.

Members of the four associations were invited to participate via email communication from their respective associations. In total, 5,140 BC and Yukon human resources professionals were sent a survey invitation. Respondents were screened to include members who:

- Are currently employed; and
- Have employees in Western Canada.

A total of 636 BC and Yukon human resources professionals participated in the survey, for an overall response rate of 12.37%. Survey responses to individual questions were optional. The margin of error of this survey varies depending on the number of completions each question received. The margin of error for a sample size of 636n (all survey respondents participating) is +/- 3.89% nineteen times out of twenty.

Sample



Throughout this report, where relevant and allowed by sufficient sample size, comparisons are made between different respondent subgroups, such as organization size. Where these differences are deemed statistically significant, they are indicated as follows:

- Statistically significantly **higher** than comparison group(s).
- Statistically significantly **lower** than comparison group(s).

Where applicable, results have also been compared to previous years' studies and statistically significant year over year changes have been indicated as follows:

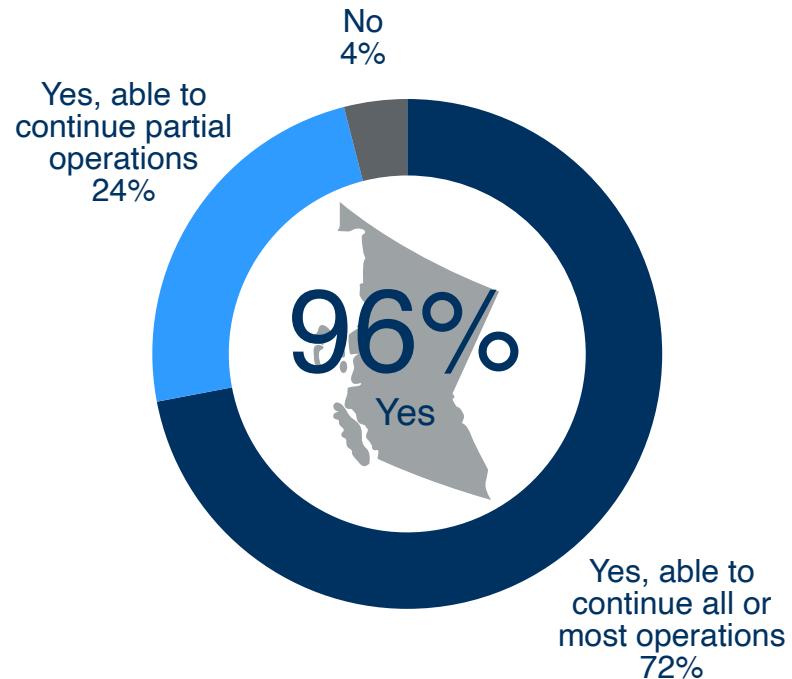
- ▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave.
- ▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave.



Detailed Findings

A black and white photograph of a man with short, dark hair. He is wearing a light-colored surgical mask over his mouth and nose. He is looking off to the left of the frame with a neutral expression. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with trees and possibly a building.

Organization State during Public Health Emergency



Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=563)

PD4. Was your organization able to continue operations throughout the pandemic?

Able to Continue Operations throughout Pandemic

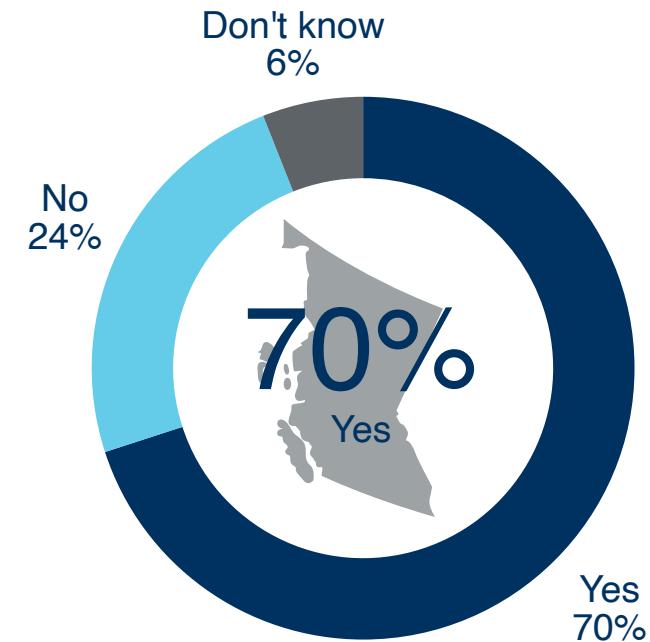
Nearly all BC & Yukon organizations were able to continue at least some operations throughout the pandemic, although close to one-quarter report that they were only able to continue partial operations.

Deemed Essential Business

The majority of BC & Yukon organizations have been deemed an essential business by their provincial public health authority.

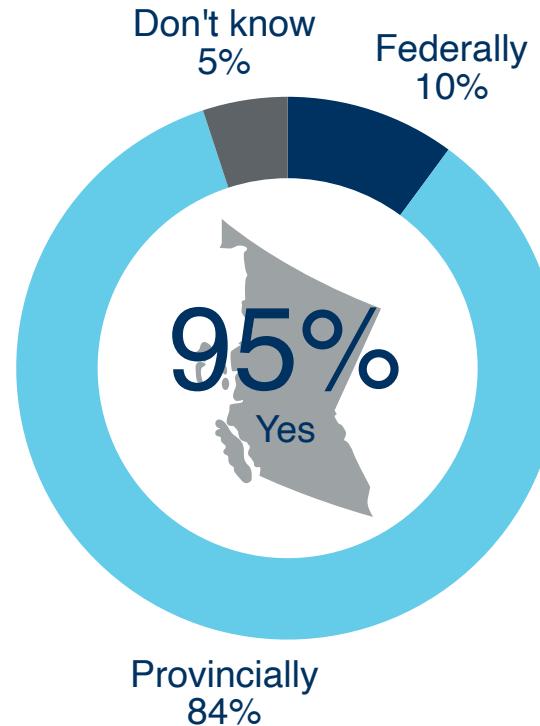
Small organizations (<100 employees) are significantly **less likely** to have been deemed an essential service: 54% vs. 77% medium sized and 81% large.

Across the different employment sectors, those who work in **education services** (55%), **professional, scientific, or technical services** (48%) and **oil and gas** (42%) are significantly **less likely** to have been deemed essential.



Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=533)

PD3. Has your organization been deemed an essential business by your provincial public health authority?

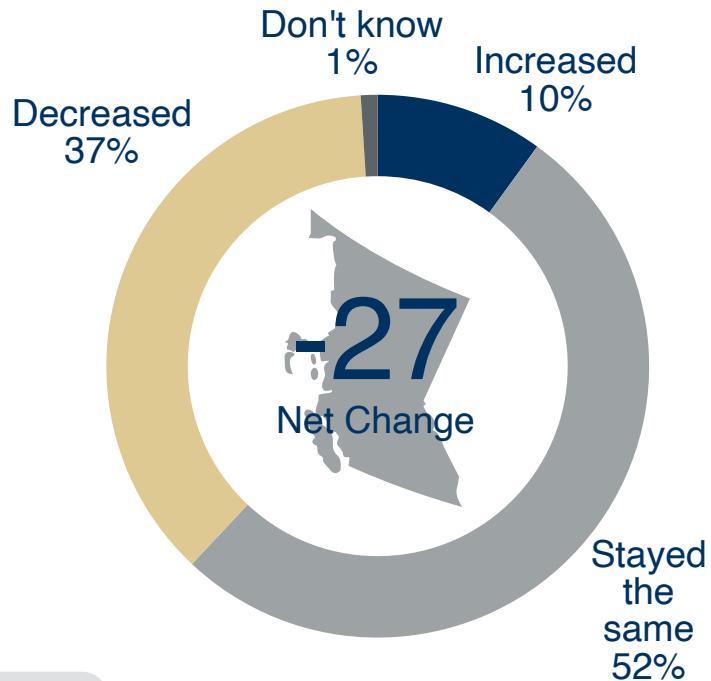


Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=564)
PD2. Is your workplace federally or provincially regulated?

Workplace Regulation

A strong majority of organizations represented by respondents in BC & Yukon are provincially regulated.

Pandemic Impact



Net Change
= Increase Minus
Decrease

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=524)

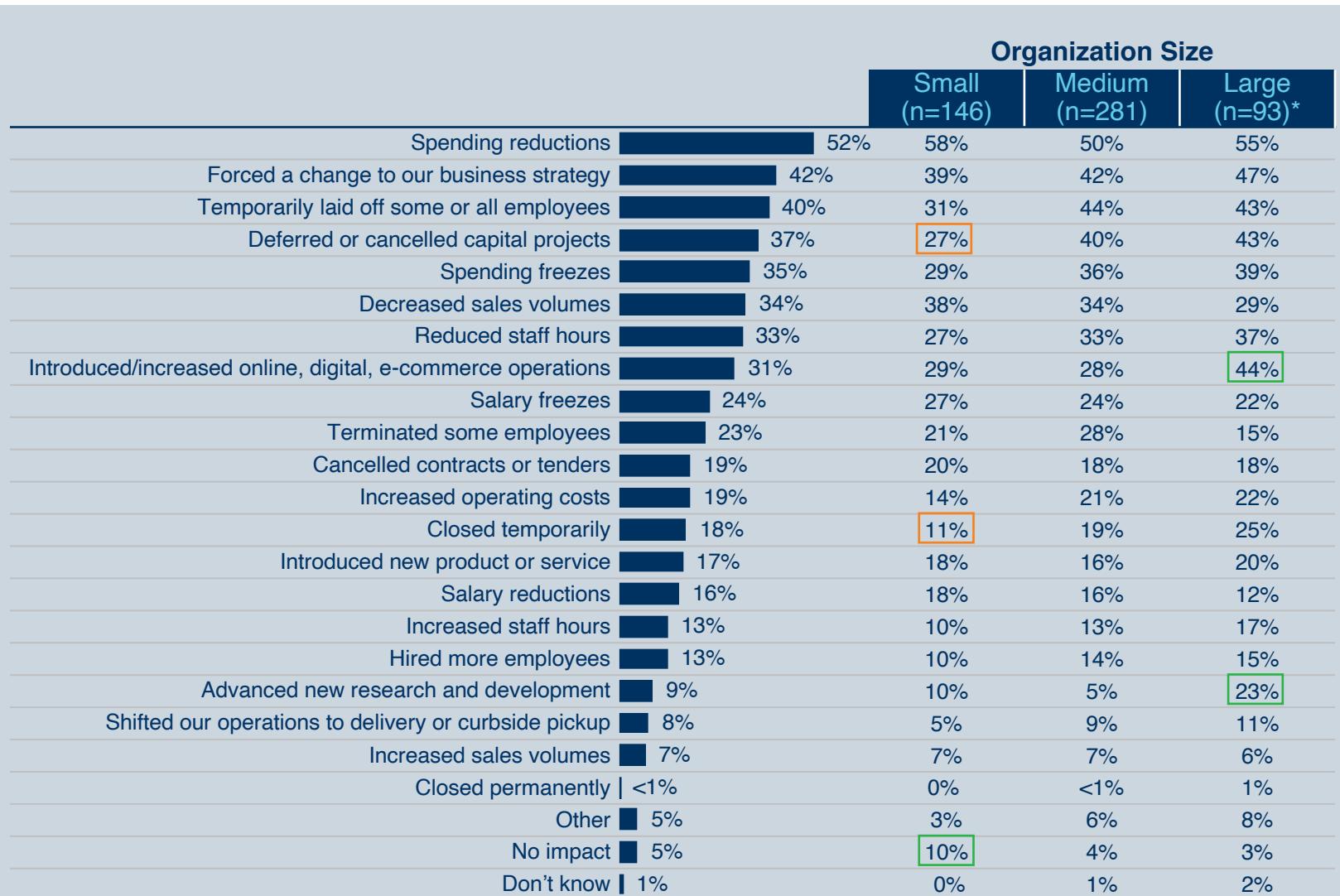
P5. How has the size of your workforce changed due to the pandemic?

Change in Workforce Size

Half of BC & Yukon organizations have seen a change to the size of their workforce due to the pandemic: two-in-five have seen a decrease, while one-in-ten have seen an increase.

The net impact of the pandemic has been a decline in workforce size.

Across the different employment sectors, **healthcare or social assistance** is the only industry to not show an overall net decrease (+1).



Pandemic Impact

Nearly all BC & Yukon organizations have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, most commonly via overall spending reductions.

Close to two-in-five have experienced *forced changes to business strategy, temporary layoffs, and deferred or cancelled capital projects*.

Large organizations are significantly more likely to have *introduced or increased online operations* and *advanced new research and development*. Small organizations are significantly less likely to have *deferred or cancelled capital projects* and *closed temporarily*.

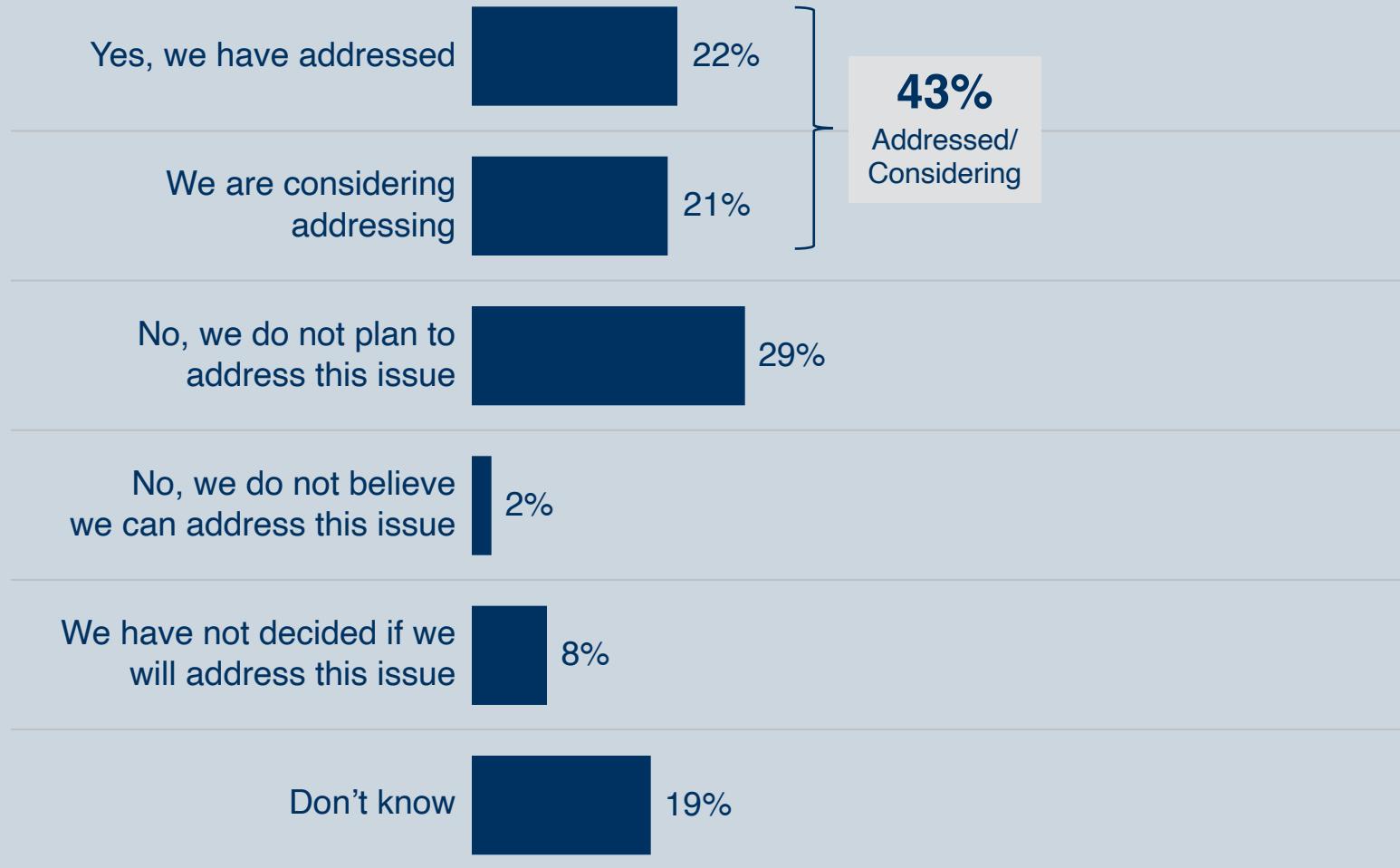
Across the different employment sectors, **healthcare or social assistance** and **public administration** are significantly **less likely** to have experienced **spending freezes** and **salary reductions**.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=532)
 *Small base size, interpret with caution.

P1. To date, how has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your organization?

 Statistically significantly higher than all other group(s).

 Statistically significantly lower than all other group(s).

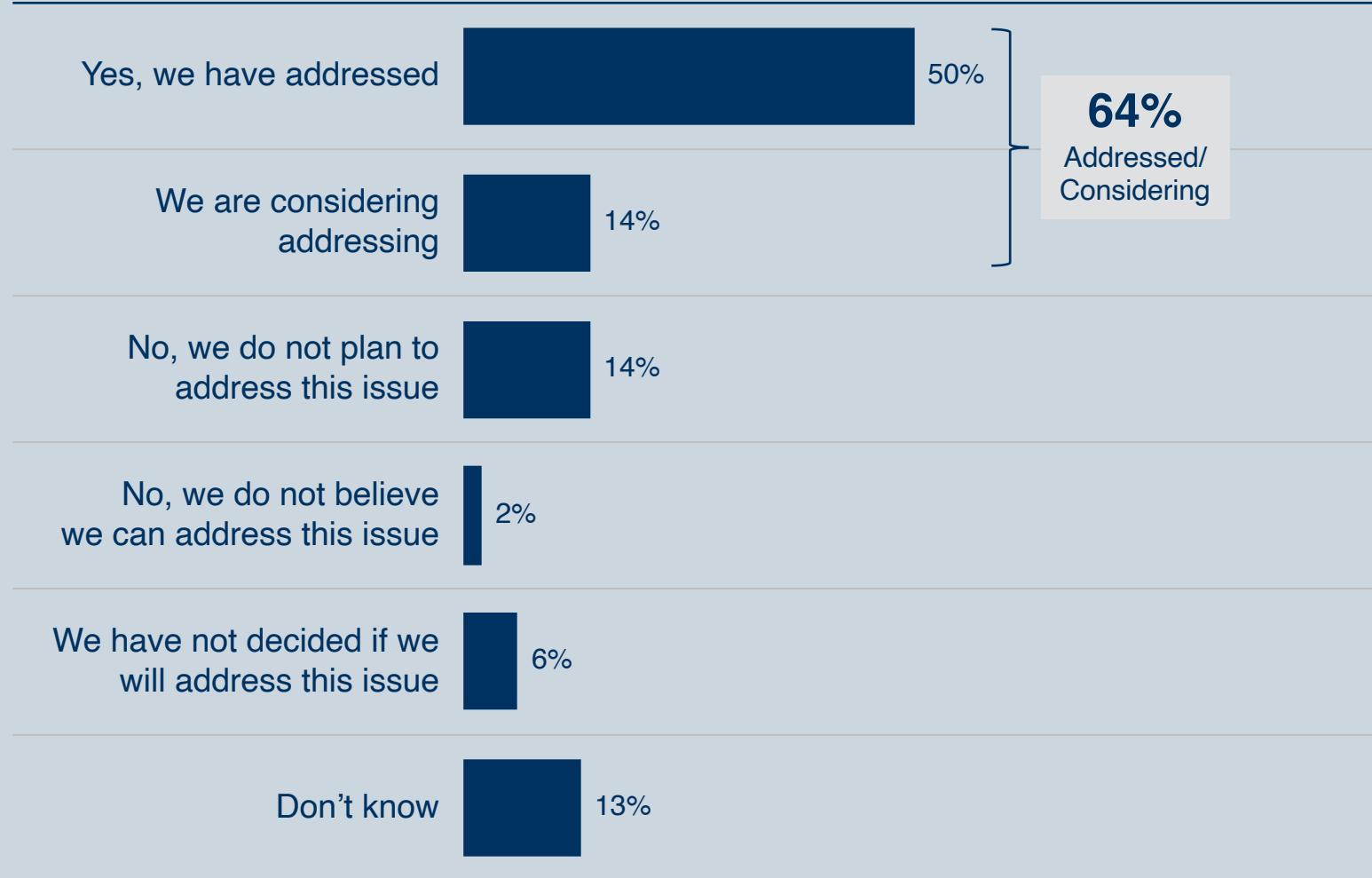


Plans to Address Changes to the Performance Management Program

One-in-five BC & Yukon organizations have addressed changes to the performance management program this year and a similar proportion are considering doing so.

Small organizations (<100 employees) are significantly **less likely** to have already addressed this issue: 15% vs. 24% medium sized and 29% large.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=520)
P12. Is your organization addressing any of the following in response to the pandemic?

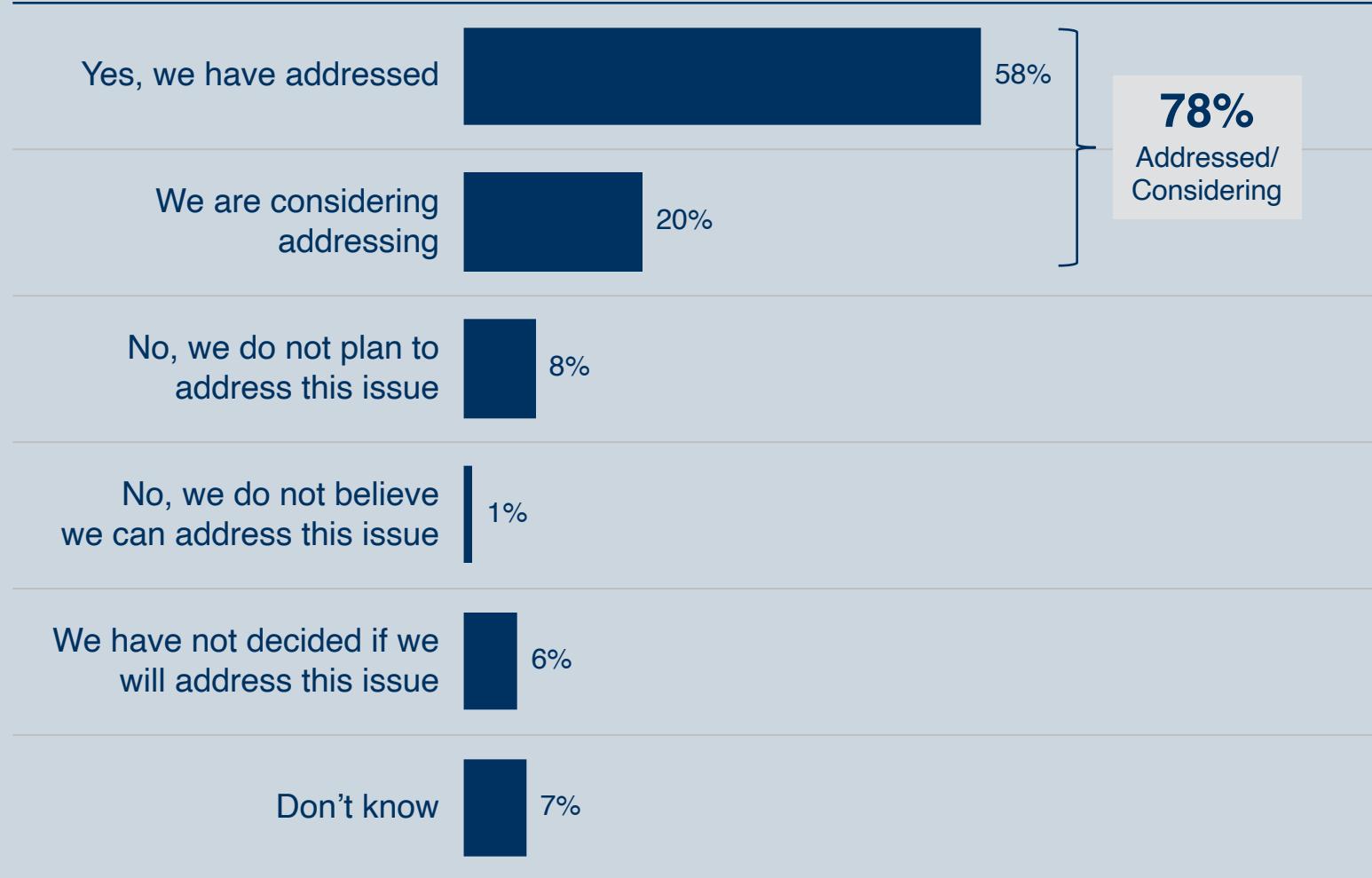


Plans to Address Employees' Personal Inter-Provincial/International Travel

Half of BC & Yukon organizations have already addressed the issue of employees' personal inter-provincial or international travel.

More than one-in-ten are considering addressing this issue.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=520)
P12. Is your organization addressing any of the following in response to the pandemic?



Plans to Address Special Mental Health Supports

A small majority of BC & Yukon organizations have already addressed special mental health supports available to employees as a result of the pandemic.

One-in-five are considering addressing this issue.

Small organizations (<100 employees) are significantly **less likely** to have already addressed this issue: 42% vs. 63% medium sized and 72% large.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=520)
P12. Is your organization addressing any of the following in response to the pandemic?

Remote Work

Workforce Able to Work Remotely

Among those BC & Yukon organizations able to continue their operations during the pandemic, a small majority report that at least half of their organization has been able to work from home, including one-in-five respondents whose entire organization has been able to do so.

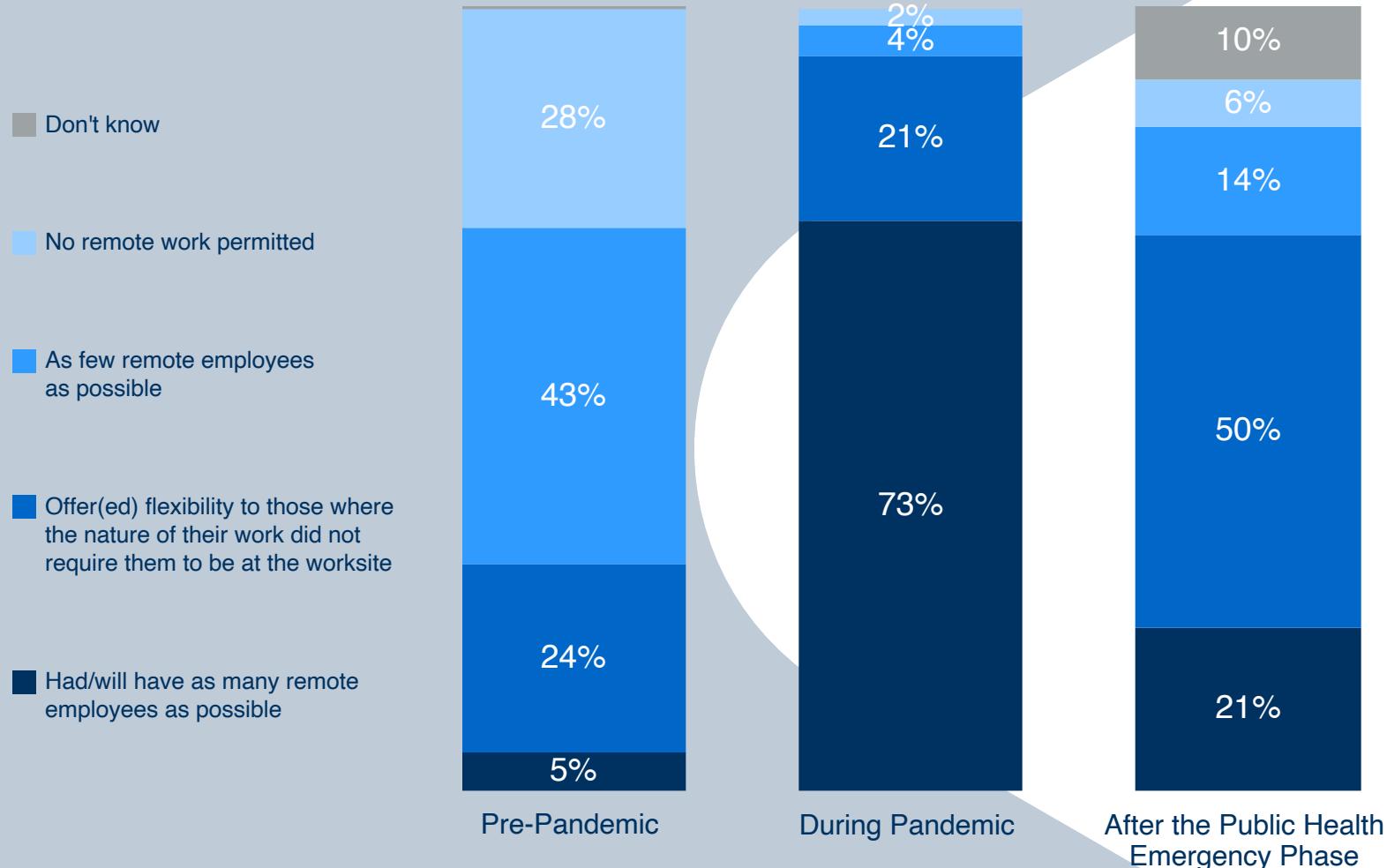
Small organizations (<100 employees) are significantly **more likely** to report that at least half of their employees are able to work from home: 74% vs. 51% medium sized and 55% large.

Across the different employment sectors, **healthcare or social assistance, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, and construction** are the **least likely** to report that at least half of their employees are able to work from home.

Base: Able to Continue Operations During Pandemic (n=540)

R1. What proportion of your organization has been able to work remotely during the pandemic?





Approach to Remote Work

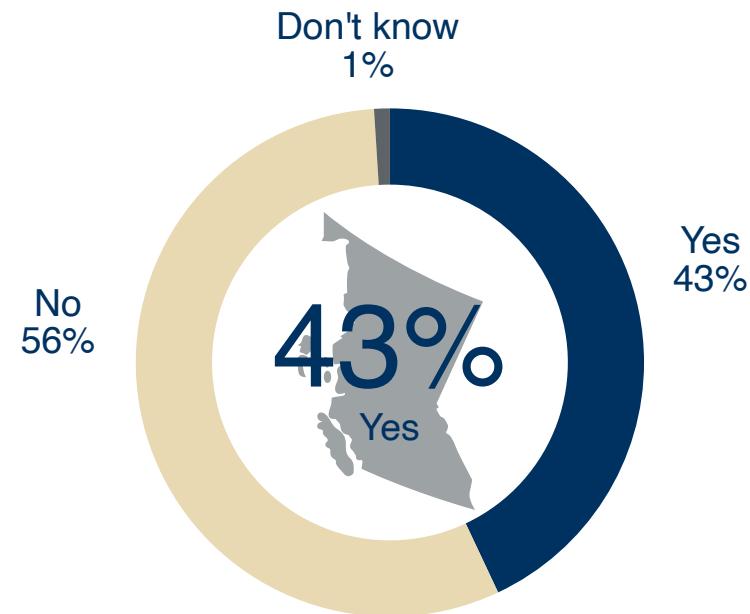
The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on BC & Yukon organizations' approach to remote work.

While only three-in-ten organizations encouraged remote work or offered flexibility related to remote work pre-pandemic, nearly all have done so during this period.

After the public health emergency phase has ended, the proportion encouraging as many remote employees as possible to work from home is expected to significantly decline – although not to the same extent as before the pandemic. Half expect to offer flexibility and one-in-five expect to encourage remote work -both significant increases compared to pre-pandemic.

Base: Able to Continue Operations During Pandemic (n=514)

R4. How has/will your organization approach remote work?



Base: Able to Continue Operations During Pandemic (n=514)

R5. Did your organization have remote work/flexible work policies prior to the pandemic?

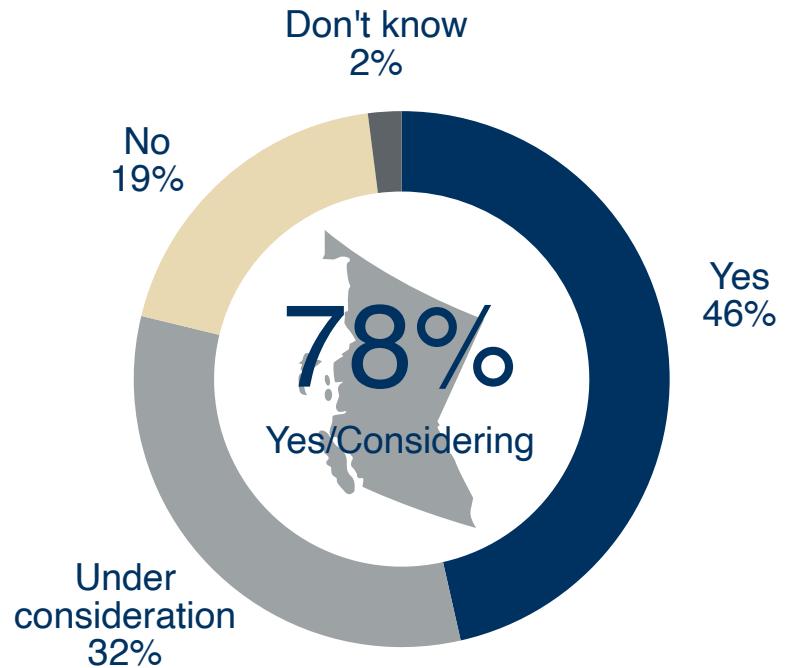
Remote Work Policies

Out of the organizations in BC & Yukon that continued their operations throughout the pandemic, just over two-in-five had remote work/flexible work policies prior to the pandemic.

Mid-sized organizations (100-999 employees) are significantly **less likely** to have already had remote work policies: 38% vs. 49% small sized and 50% large.

New Remote Work Policies

More than three-quarters of BC & Yukon organizations have either introduced new remote work or flexible work policies or have new policies under consideration.

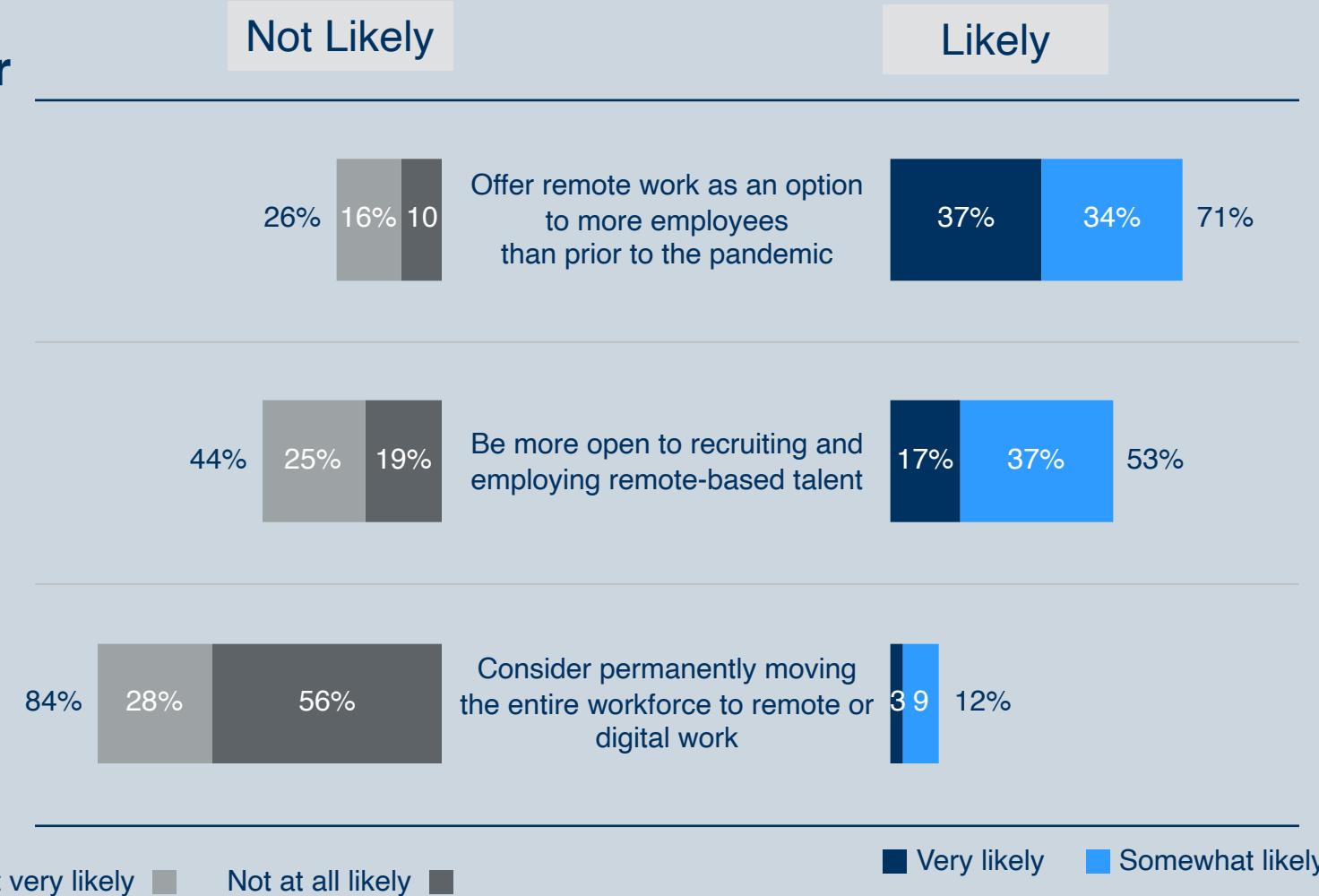


Base: Able to Continue Operations During Pandemic (n=514)
R6. Has your organization introduced any new remote work/flexible work policies during the pandemic?

Likelihood of Organizations to Offer Remote Work after Next Year

Thinking past the next year, the majority of BC & Yukon HR professionals believe their organization is likely to *offer remote work as an option to more employees compared to before the pandemic* and just over half believe they are likely to *be more open to recruiting and employing remote-based talent*.

One-in-ten believe they are likely to *consider permanently moving the entire workforce to remote or digital work*.

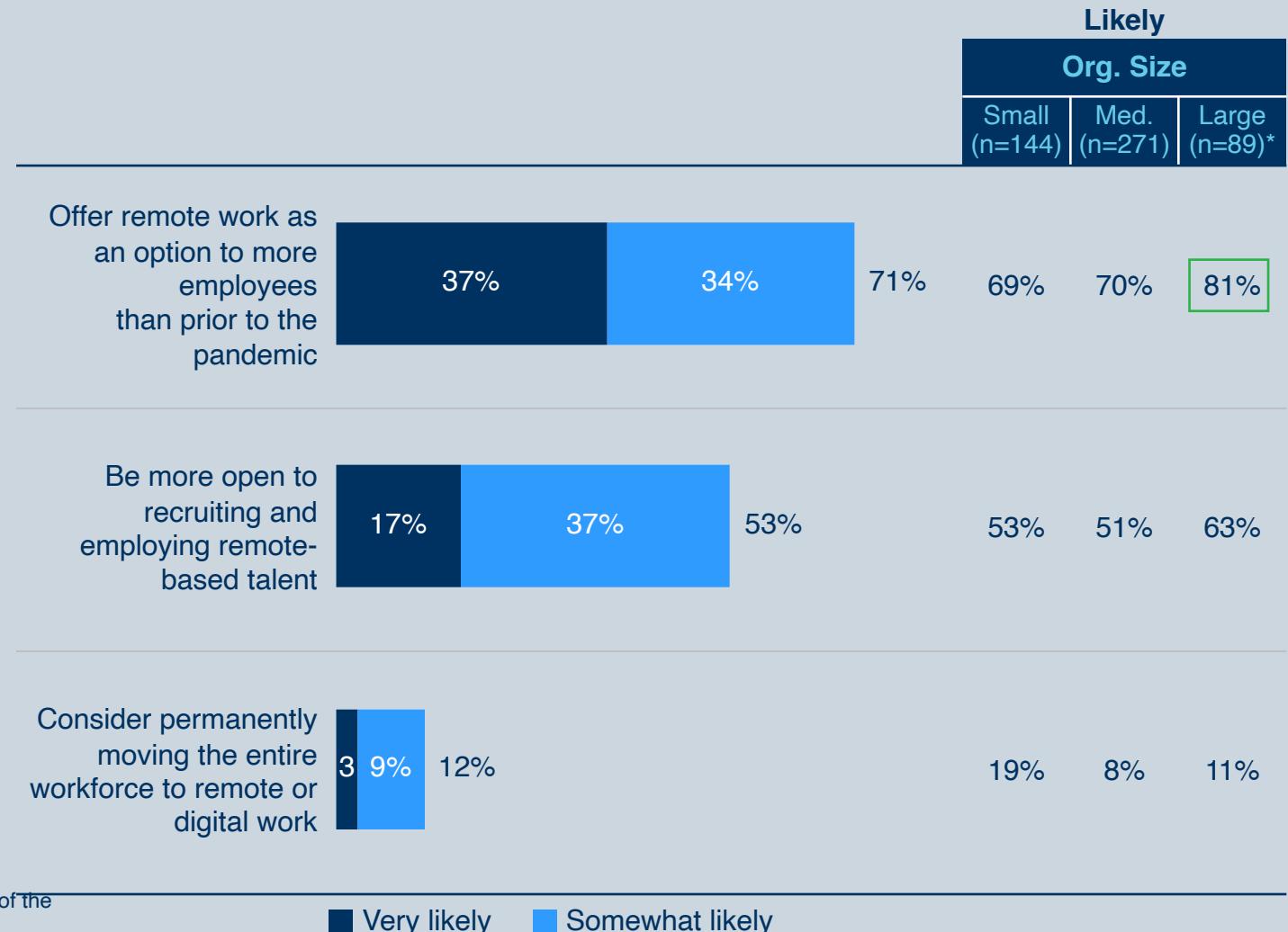


Base: Able to Continue Operations During Pandemic (n=512)

R7. Thinking past the next year, how likely is it that that your organization will do each of the following?

Likelihood of Organizations to Offer Remote Work after Next Year *Continued*

Large organizations are seen as significantly more likely to *offer a remote work option*.



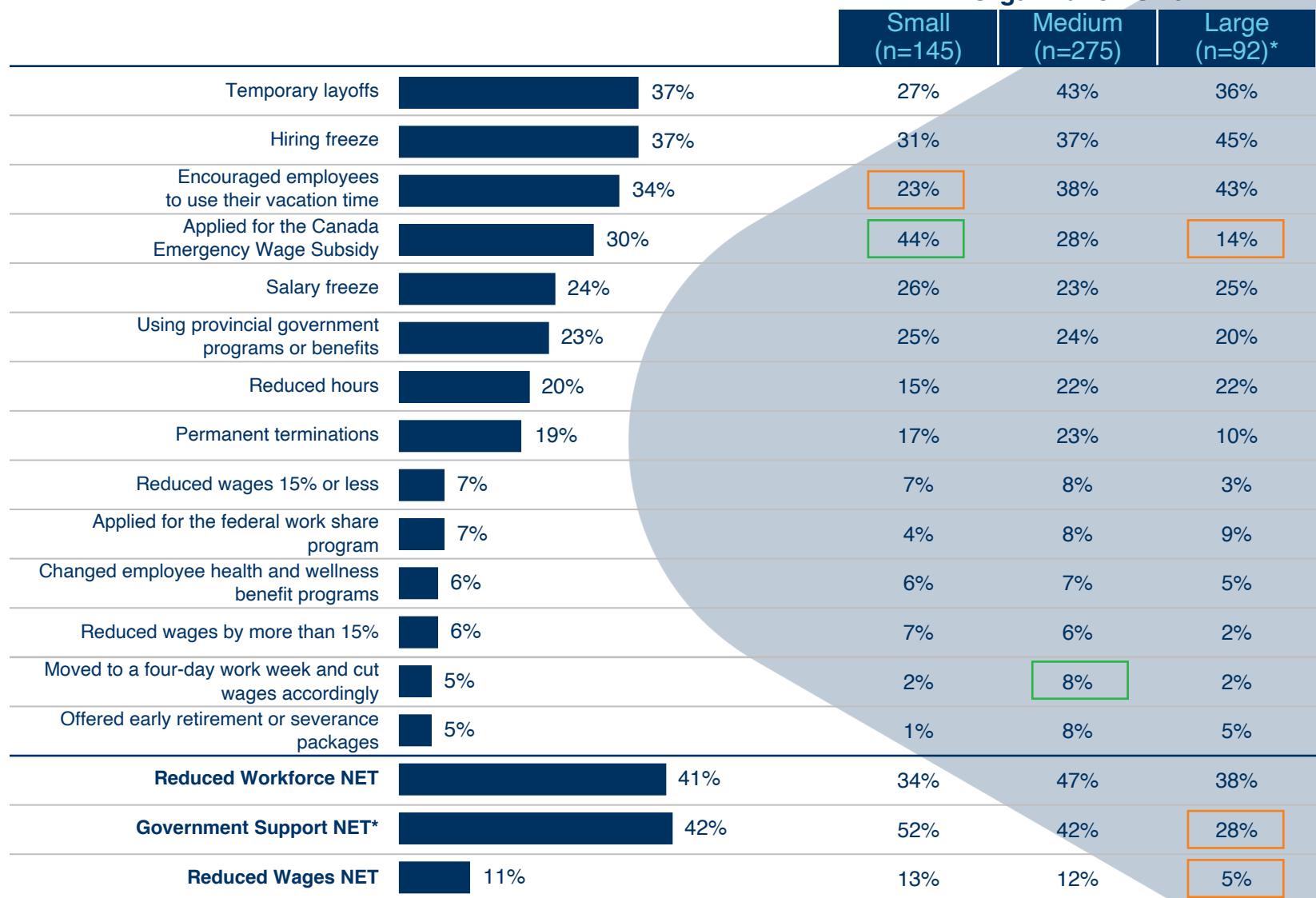
Base: Able to Continue Operations During Pandemic (n=512)

*Small base size, interpret with caution.

 Statistically significantly higher than all other group(s).

 Statistically significantly lower than all other group(s). 23

Controlling Labour Costs



*Note: the Government Support NET includes the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and provincial government programs or benefits.

Actions Taken to Control Labour Costs

In response to the economic downturn from the pandemic more than one-third of BC & Yukon organizations controlled labour costs through *temporary layoffs*, *hiring freezes*, and *encouraging employees to use vacation time*. Three-in-ten applied for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

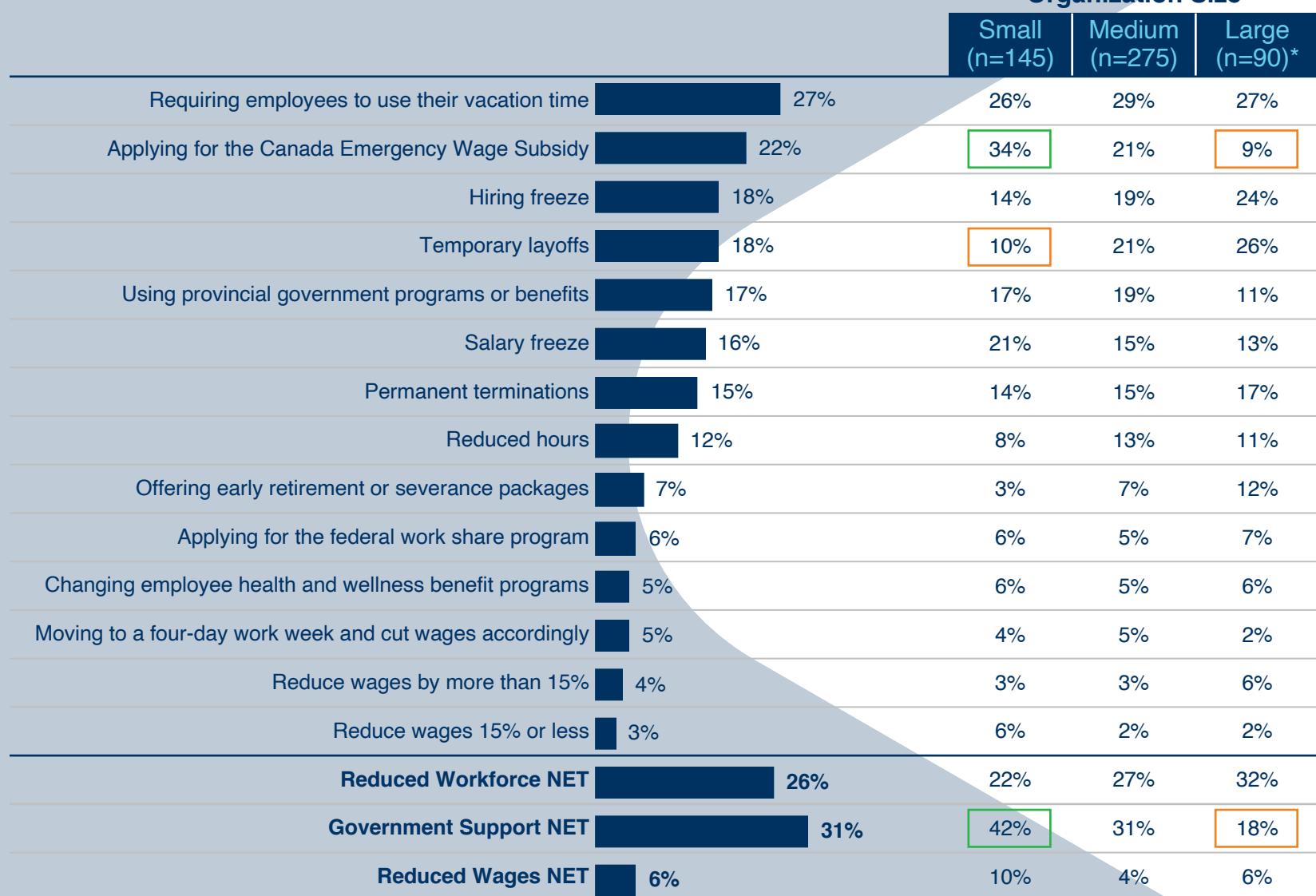
Large organizations (1,000+ employees) are significantly less likely to have applied for government support and reduced wages.

Small organizations (<100 employees) are significantly more likely to have have applied for the Canada Emergency wage subsidy, but less likely to have encouraged employees to use their vacation time.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=523)
P7. Which of the following actions did your organization take to control labour costs in response to the economic downturn from the pandemic?

█ Statistically significantly higher than all other group(s).

█ Statistically significantly lower than all other group(s).



Planned Future Actions to Control Labour Costs

Looking towards the next three to six months, close to one-quarter of BC & Yukon organizations plan to *require their employees to use their vacation time and apply for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy* in order to control labour costs in response to the economic downturn from the pandemic.

Just under one-in-five have plans for *hiring and salary freezes, temporary layoffs and permanent terminations, and using government programs or benefits*.

Large organizations are significantly less likely to plan on *applying for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy*.

Small organizations are significantly more likely to plan on *applying for the Subsidy*, and less likely to plan for *temporary layoffs*.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=521)

*Small base size, interpret with caution.

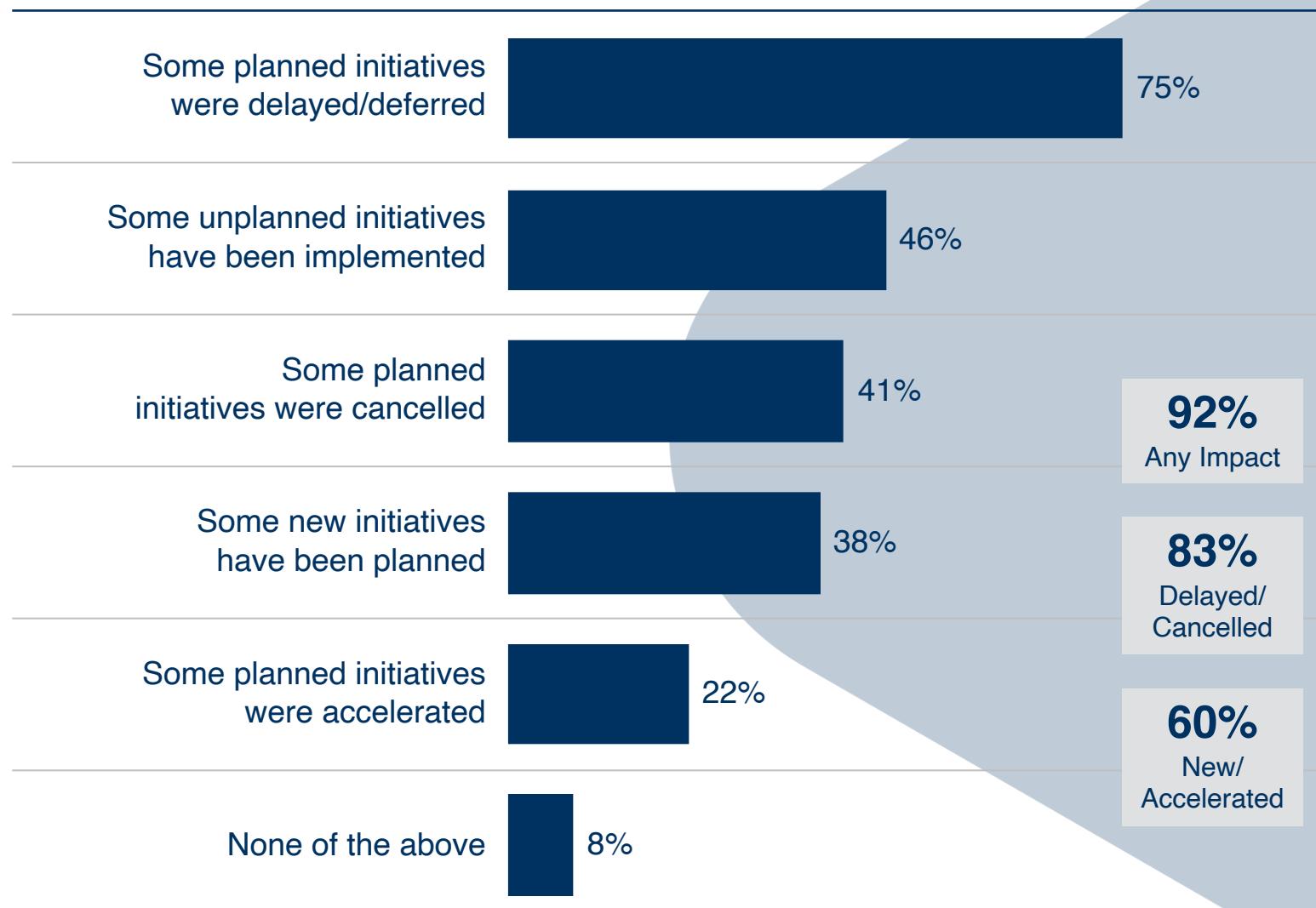
P8. Which of the following actions does your organization plan to take in the next three to six months to control labour costs in response to the economic downturn from the pandemic?

 Statistically significantly higher than all other group(s).

 Statistically significantly lower than all other group(s).



Impact on HR Initiatives, Policies, and Employee Learning



Pandemic Impact on HR, People, or Cultural Initiatives

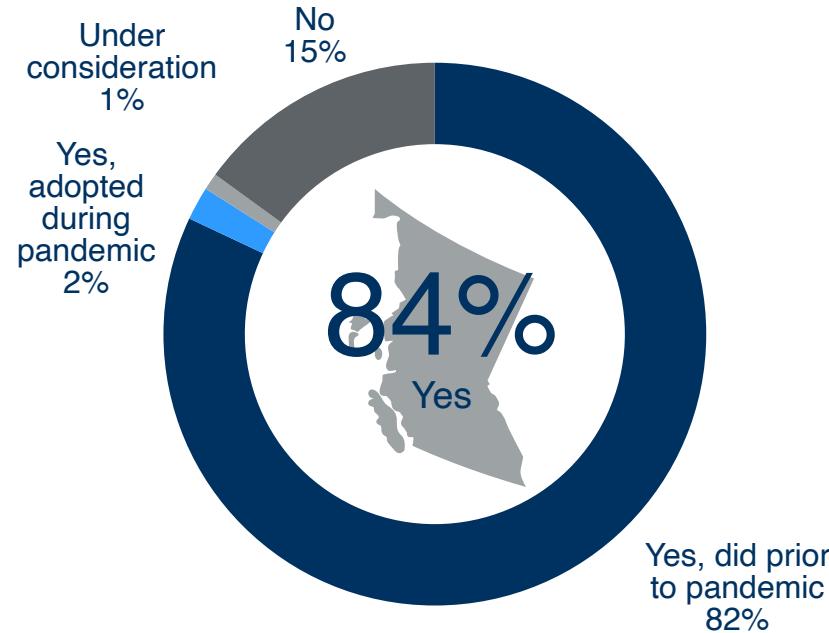
Nine-in-ten BC & Yukon organizations have seen the human resources, people, or cultural initiatives at their organization be impacted by the pandemic.

While more than four-in-five have seen these initiatives be delayed or cancelled, a smaller majority have also seen unplanned or accelerated initiatives.

Small organizations (1,000+ employees) are significantly **less likely** to have planned initiatives that have been :

- **Delayed:** 64%, vs. ~81% medium and large; and
- **Accelerated:** 15%, vs. 25% medium and 28% large.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=513)
P14. How has the pandemic impacted HR, People or Cultural initiatives at your organization?



Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=521)

P9. Does your organization offer paid short-term sick leave?

Short-Term Paid Sick Leave

Just over four-in-five BC & Yukon organizations offered paid short-term sick leave prior to the pandemic.

Few have adopted this policy during the pandemic or have a policy under consideration.

Large organizations (1,000+ employees) are significantly **more likely** to offer paid short-term sick leave: 94% vs. 86% medium sized and 76% small.

Across the different employment sectors, **oil and gas, retail and wholesale trade, and construction** are the **least likely** to offer short-term paid sick leave.

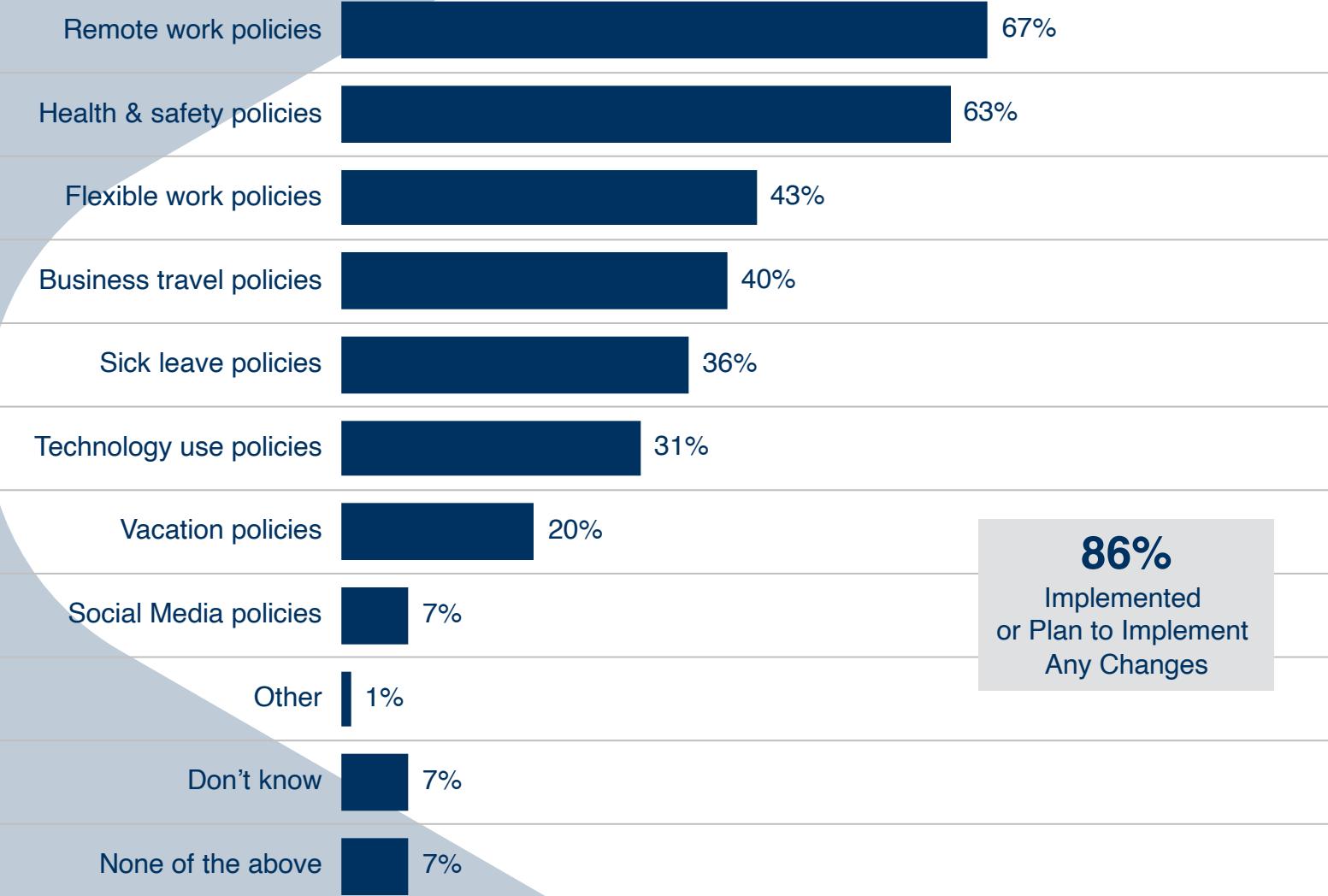
Implemented or Planned Changes to Policies in Response to the Pandemic

More than four-in-five BC & Yukon organizations have implemented or plan to implement changes to one or more policies in response to the pandemic over the next three months – most commonly policies related to *remote work* and *health and safety*.

Large organizations (1,000+ employees) are significantly **more likely** to see policy changes related to *flexible work* (54% vs. ~42%), *business travel* (54% vs. ~36%), and *vacation policies* (30%, vs. ~17%).

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=521)

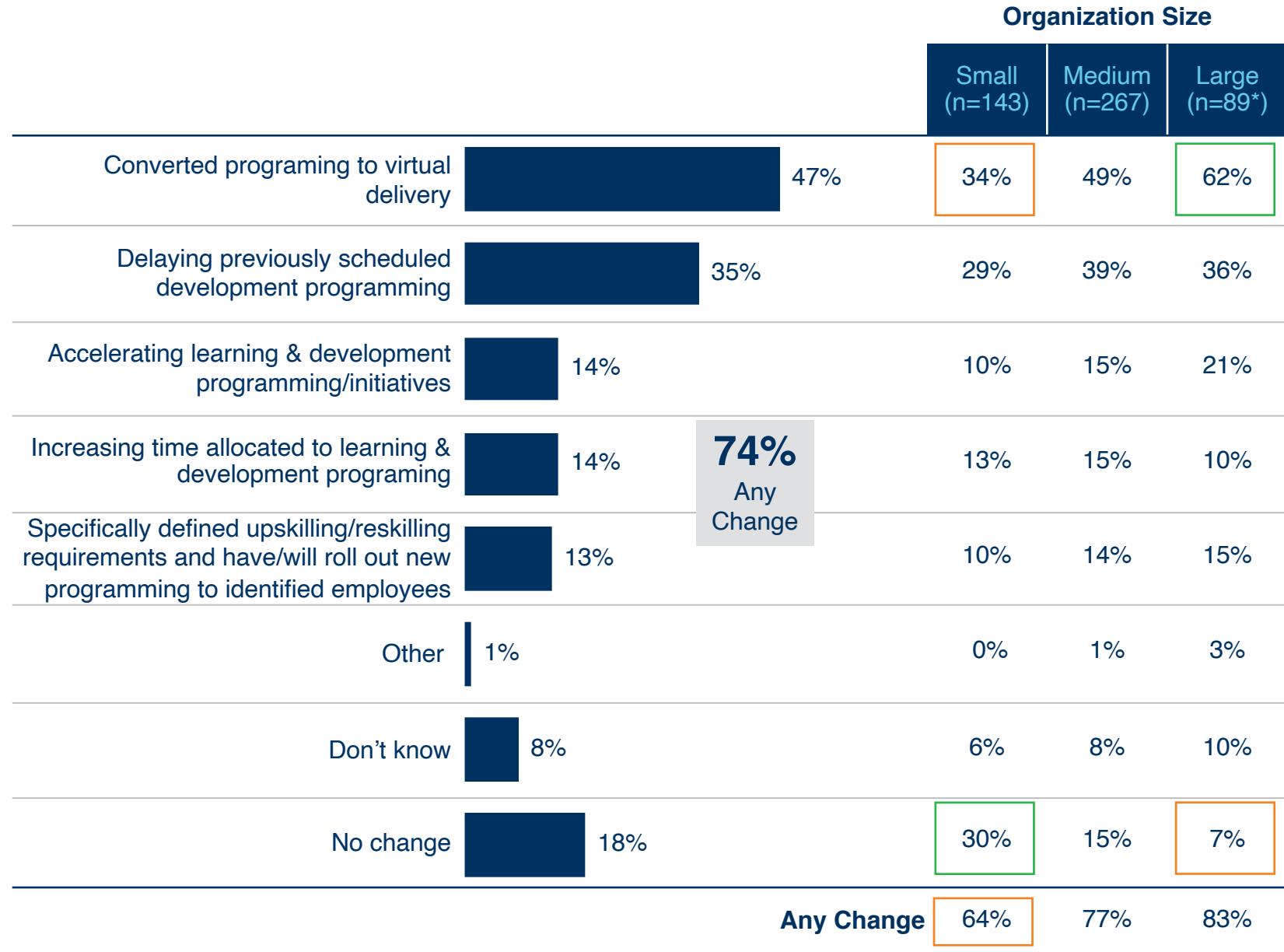
P10. Did your organization implement changes to the following policies, or does it plan to do so in the next three months in response to the pandemic?



Pandemic Approach to Learning and Development

Three-quarters of BC & Yukon organizations have seen a change in how they approach learning and development due to the pandemic: most commonly *moving to virtual delivery* or the *delay of previously scheduled development programming*.

Large organizations (1,000+ employees) are significantly more likely to have *converted to virtual delivery*.



Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=509)

*Small base size, interpret with caution.

P16. How is your organization approaching learning and development due to the pandemic?

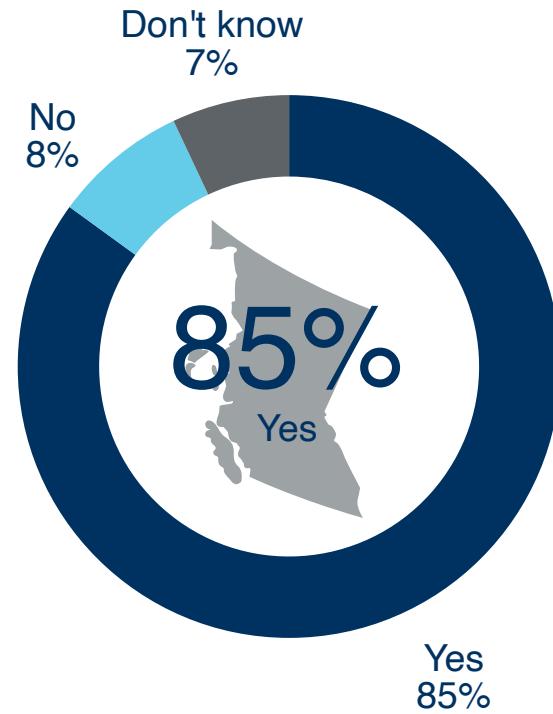
 Statistically significantly higher than all other group(s).

 Statistically significantly lower than all other group(s). 31

Returning to Normal Operations

HR's Involvement in Business Continuity and Recovery Decision Making

A strong majority of BC & Yukon organizations are involving HR in their critical business continuity and recovery decision making.



Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=509)

P21. Given the pandemic, is HR involved in critical business continuity and recovery decision making?

Challenges to Resuming Operations

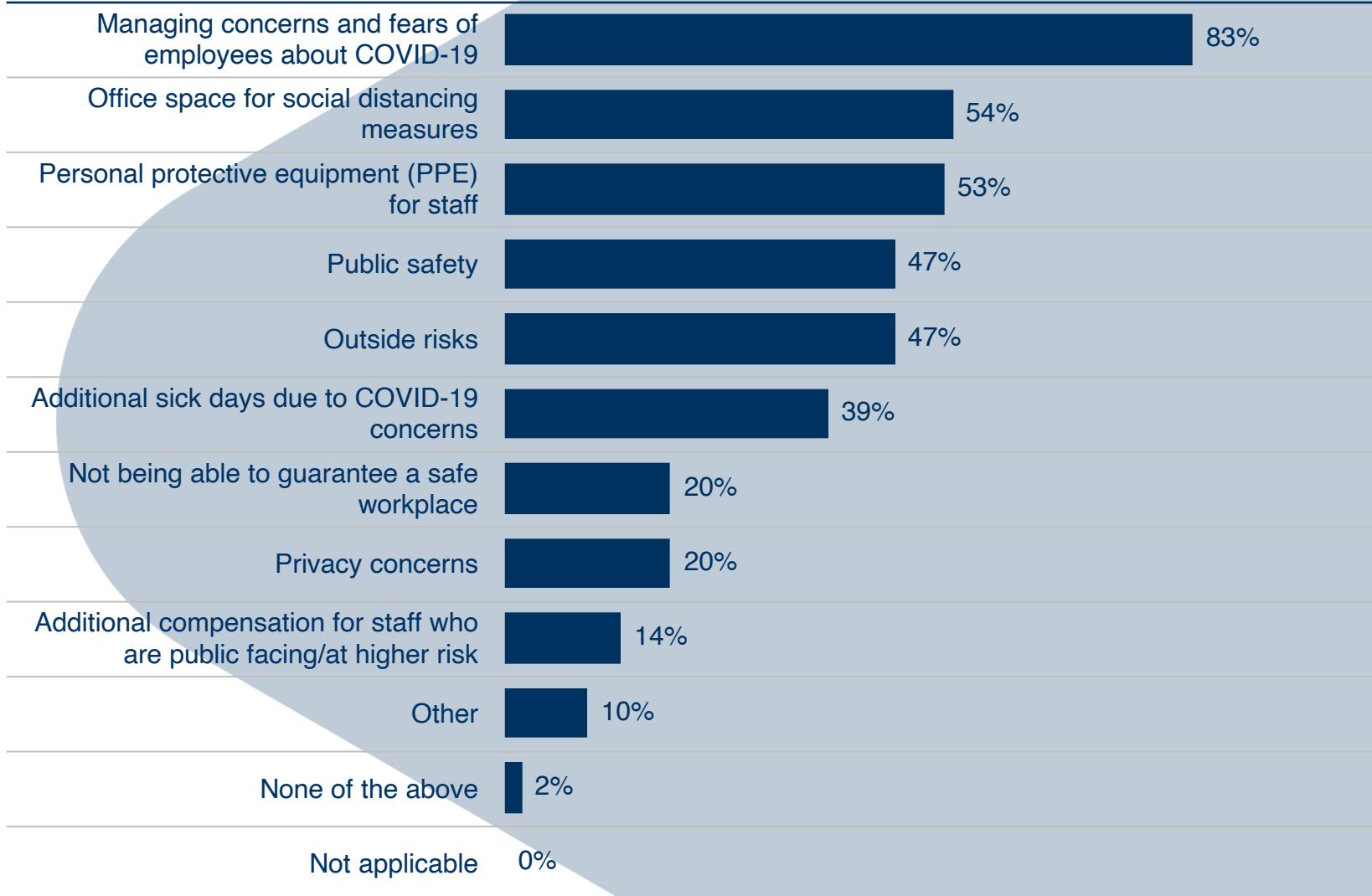
Managing the concerns and fears of employees stands out as the main challenge of resuming operations among those whose organizations closed or shifted operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Close to half also consider *sufficient office space for social distancing, staff PPE, public safety, and outside risks* among their chief concerns.

Two-in-five are concerned about *additional sick days*.

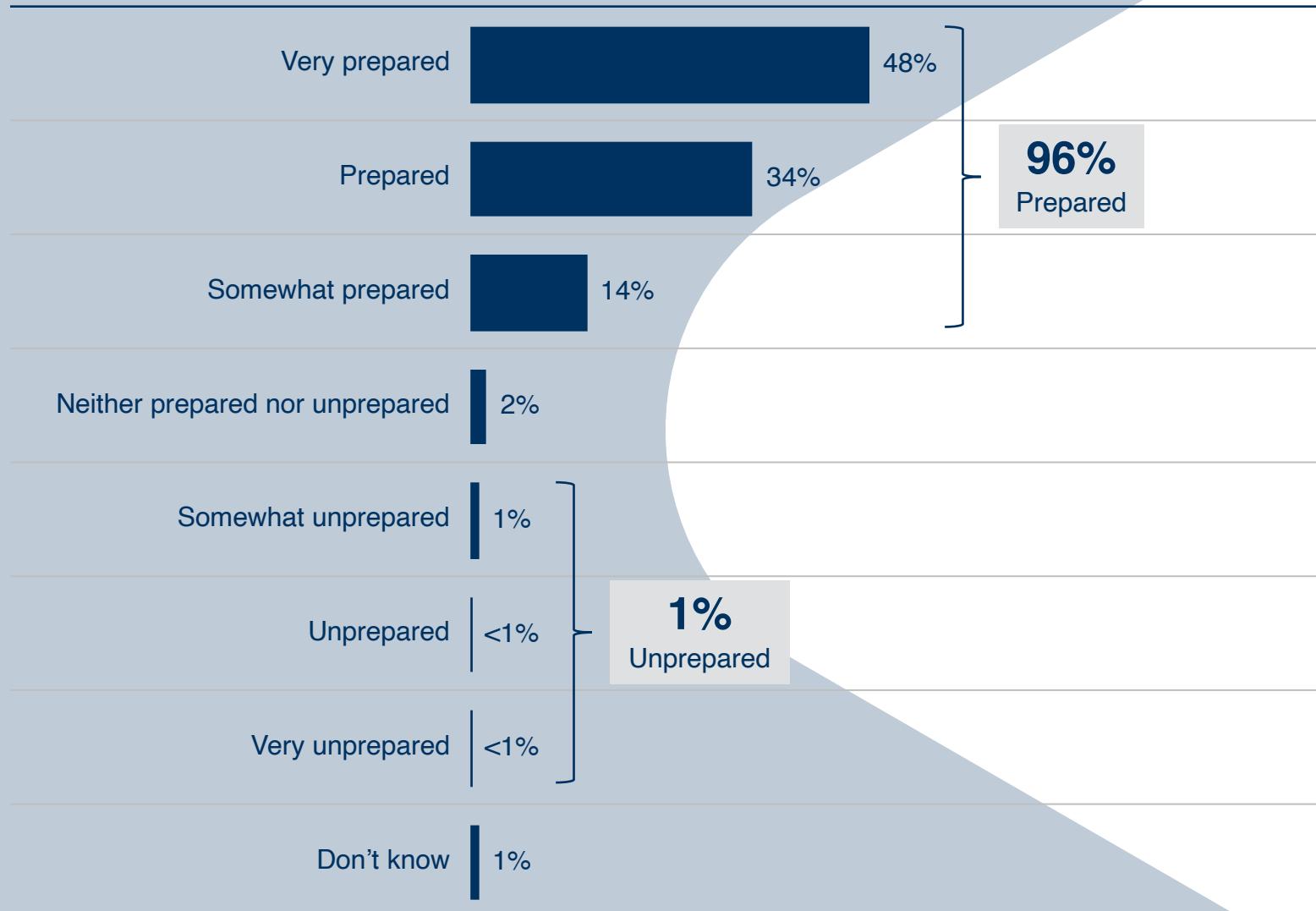
Base: Closed or Shifted Operations (n=124)

P2. What are the main challenges you are facing with respect to resuming your operations?



 Statistically significantly higher than all other regions.

 Statistically significantly lower than all other regions.



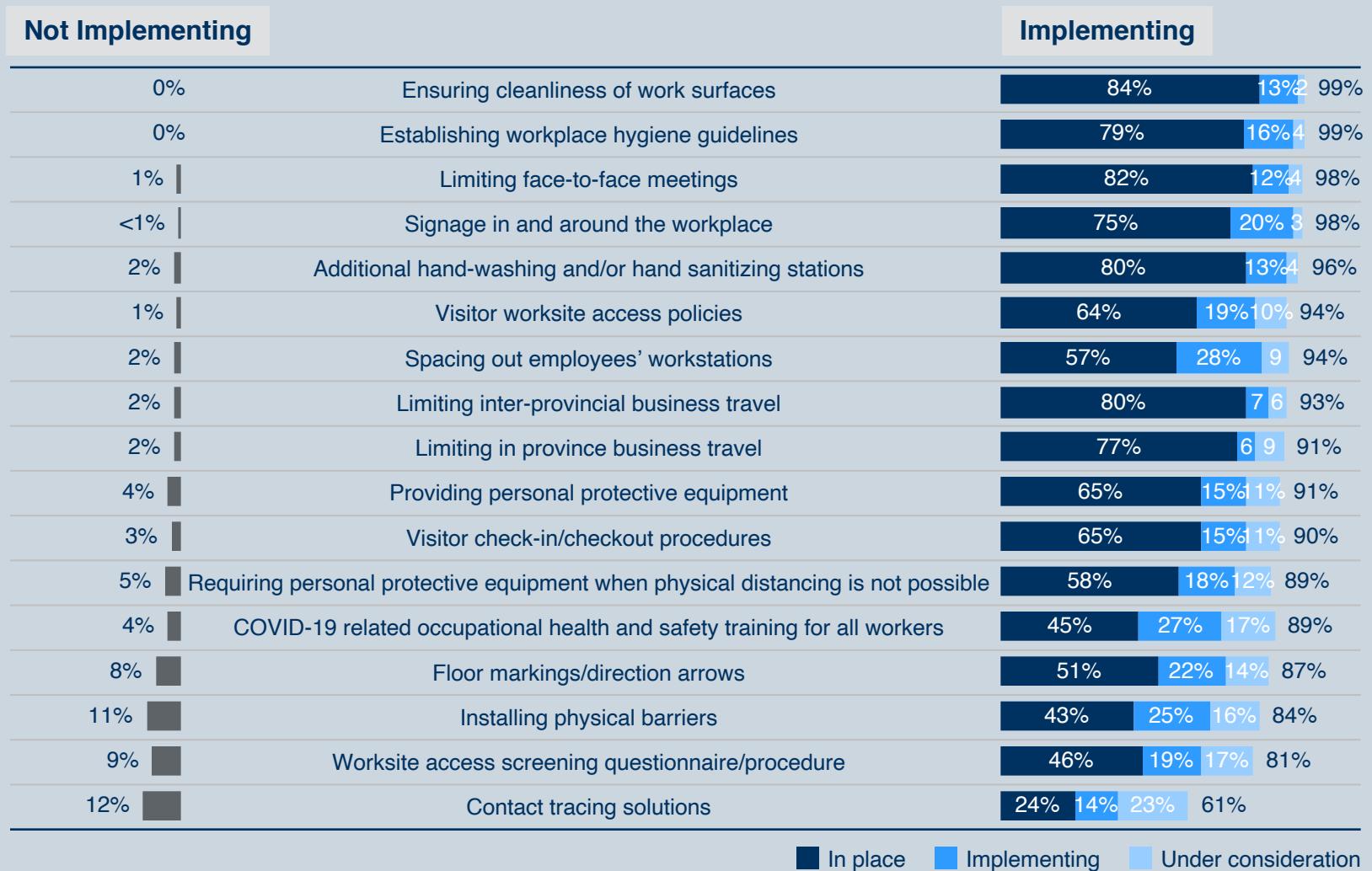
Prepared to Meet OH&S Guidelines

Nearly all BC & Yukon HR professionals believe their organizations are prepared to meet Occupational Health and Safety and public health guidelines for the return to the workplace.

Just under half consider their organizations “*very prepared*.”

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=530)
 P3. To what extent do you believe your organization is prepared to meet Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) and public health guidelines for the return to the workplace?

 Statistically significantly higher than all other regions.
 Statistically significantly lower than all other regions.



Status of Employee Workplace Safety Measures

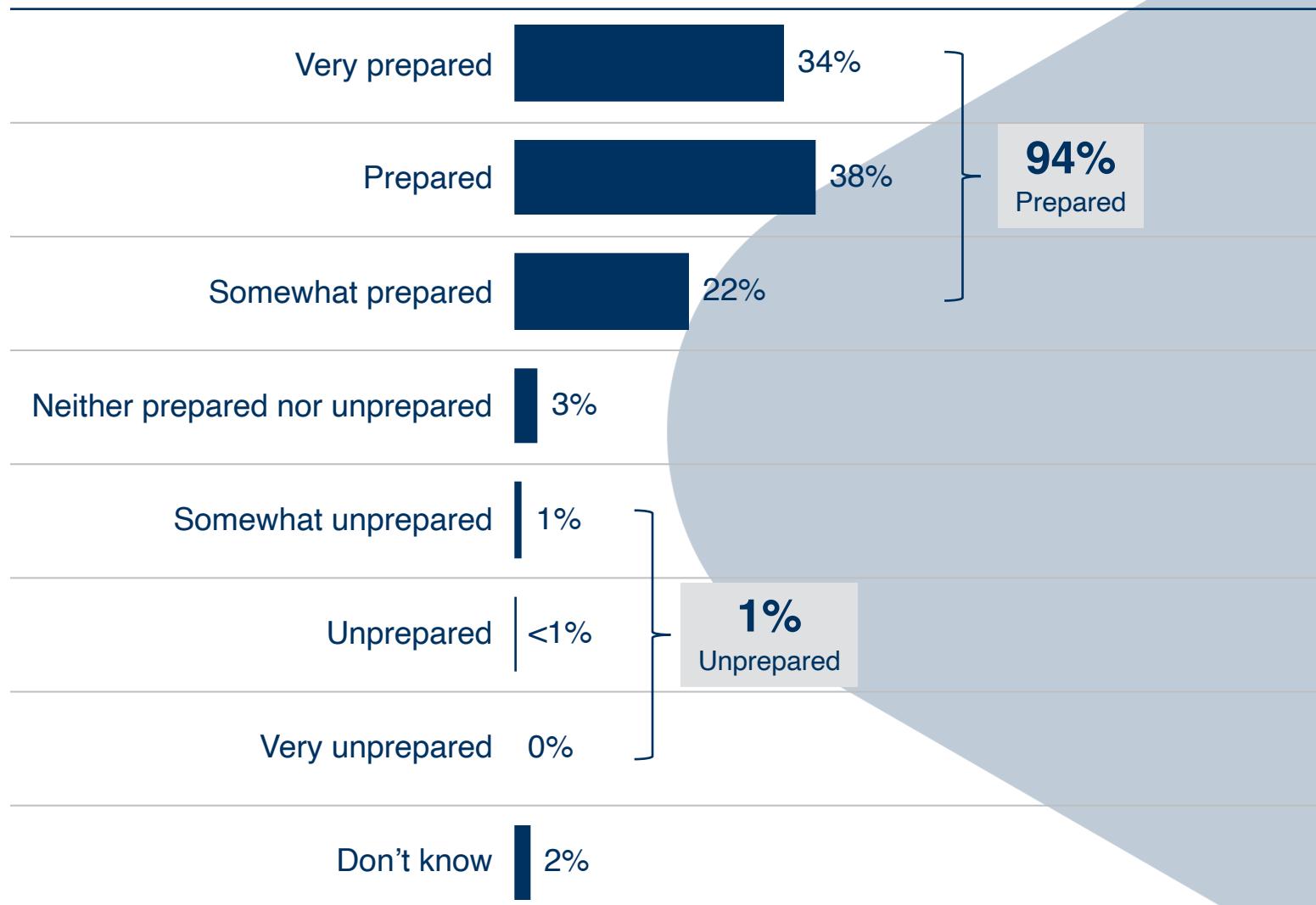
With the exception of *contact tracing solutions*, more than three-quarters of BC & Yukon organizations either already have, or are in the process of getting, all of the workplace safety measures tested.

Safety measures already in place for at least three-quarters include:

- *Ensuring work surface cleanliness;*
- *Limiting face-to-face meetings;*
- *Establishing workplace hygiene guidelines;*
- *Additional hand washing stations;*
- *Limiting inter-provincial business travel;*
- *Additional hand washing stations; and*
- *Signage in and around the workplace.*

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants & N/A (n varies)

P4. Please indicate the status of the following measures to ensure employees' safety while at the workplace.



Preparedness for Second Pandemic Wave

Nearly all HR professionals for BC & Yukon organizations believe their organization is at least somewhat prepared to respond to the possibility of a second wave of the pandemic.

One-third believe they are “*very prepared*.”

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=509)
 P22. To what extent is your organization prepared to respond to the possibility of a second wave of the pandemic?

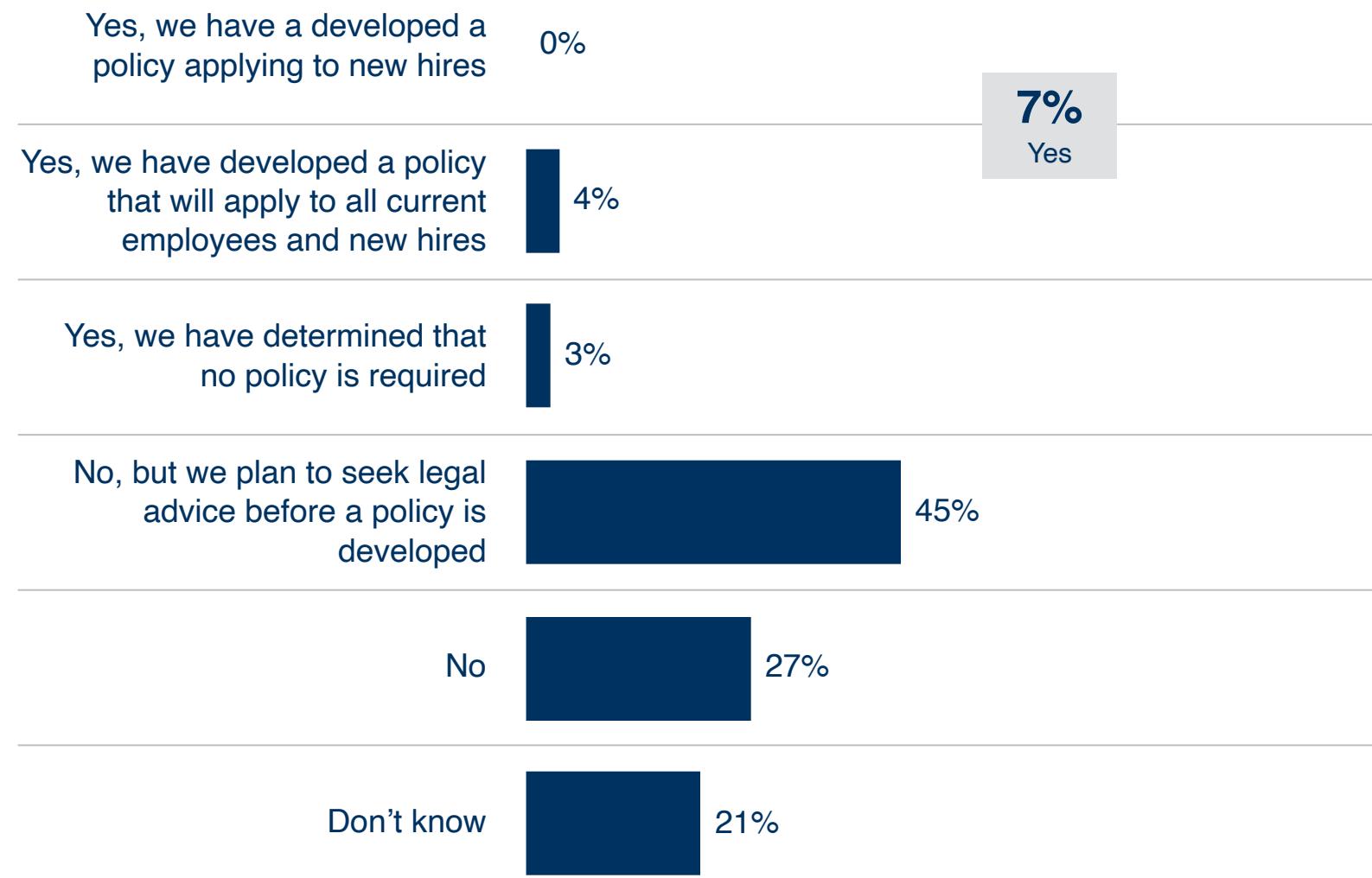
Have Pre-Determined Response to Vaccine Development

Fewer than one-in-ten BC & Yukon organizations have determined how they will respond should an effective vaccine be developed for COVID-19.

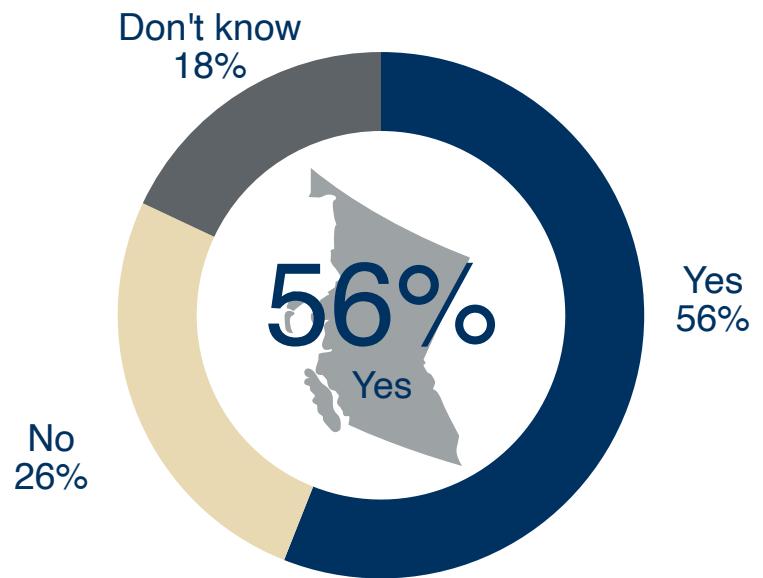
Just under half plan to seek legal advice in developing a policy for this situation.

Large organizations (1,000+ employees) are significantly **less likely** to have determined how they will respond (yes NET): 1%, vs. 7% medium and 10% small.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=509)
P23. If an effective vaccine is developed for COVID-19, has your organization determined how it will respond?



Business Continuity Plan



Had Business Continuity Plan prior to Pandemic

A small majority of BC & Yukon organizations had a business continuity plan prior to the pandemic.

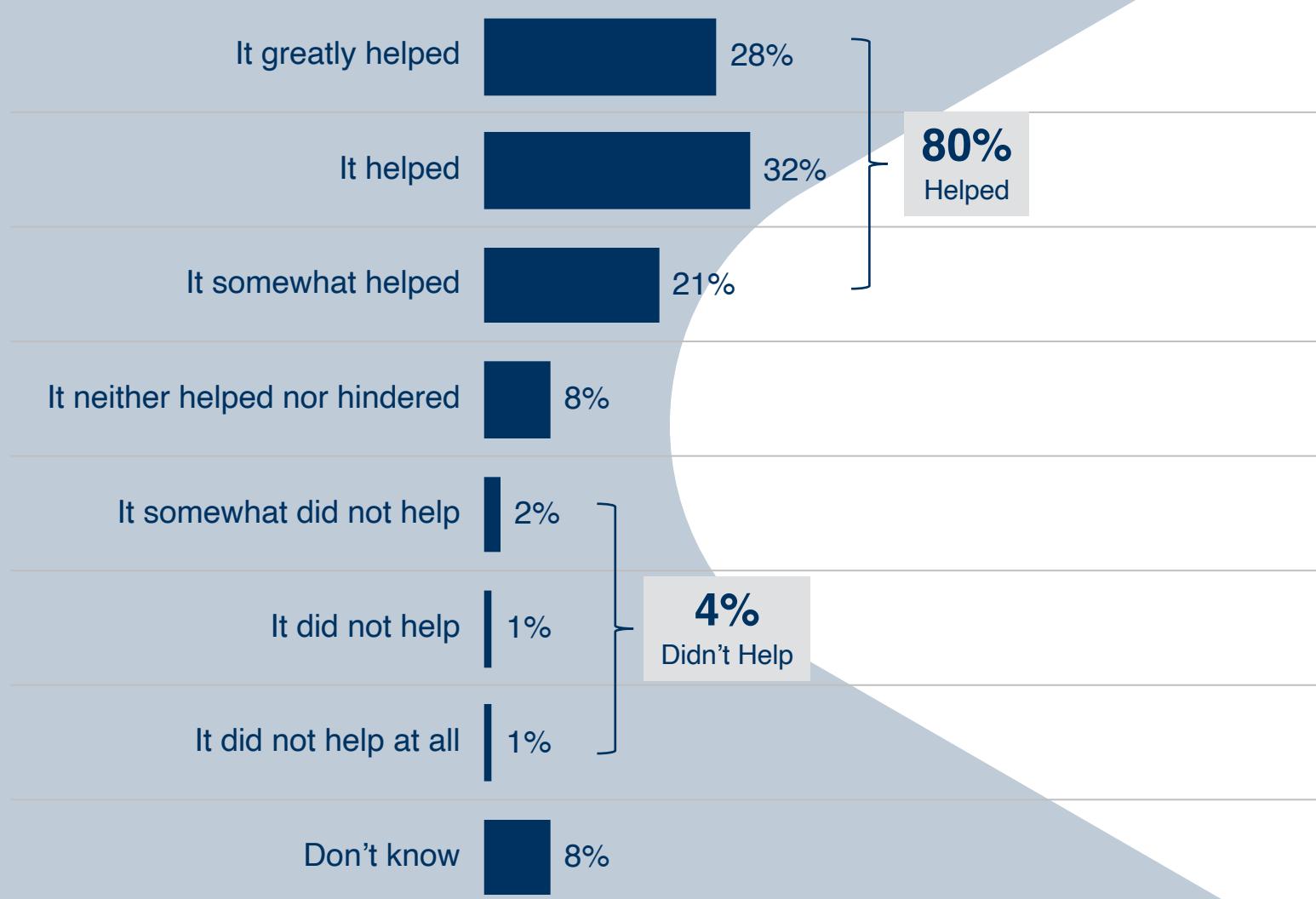
Those with a business continuity plan prior to the pandemic are significantly more likely to report being able to continue **all or most** operations during the pandemic: 82%, vs. 57% without a prior business continuity plan.

Large organizations (1,000+ employees) are significantly **more likely** to have had a continuity plan: 68%, vs. 56% medium and 50% small).

Those in the **finance and insurance** industry (80%) are the **most likely** to have had one.

Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=509)

P17. Did your organization have a business continuity plan prior to the pandemic?



Impact of Continuity Plan

Among those with a business continuity plan, four-in-five believe it helped their organization to guide decision making in reacting and responding to the public health emergency arising from the pandemic.

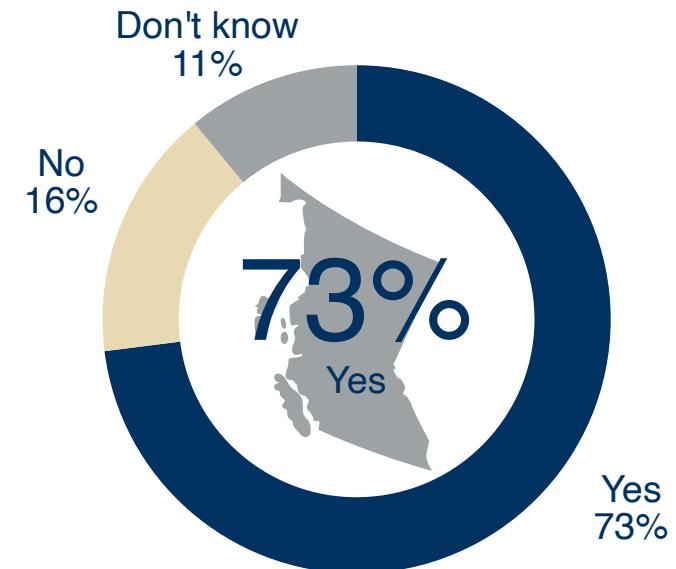
Over one-quarter believe “*it helped greatly*.”

Base: Had a business continuity plan (n=284)
 P20. In your view, to what extent did your organization’s business continuity plan help guide decision making in reacting and responding to the public health emergency arising from the pandemic?

HR a Key Contributor in Developing Continuity Plan

HR was a key contributor in developing the business continuity plan for three-quarters of BC & Yukon organizations (among those with business continuity plans).

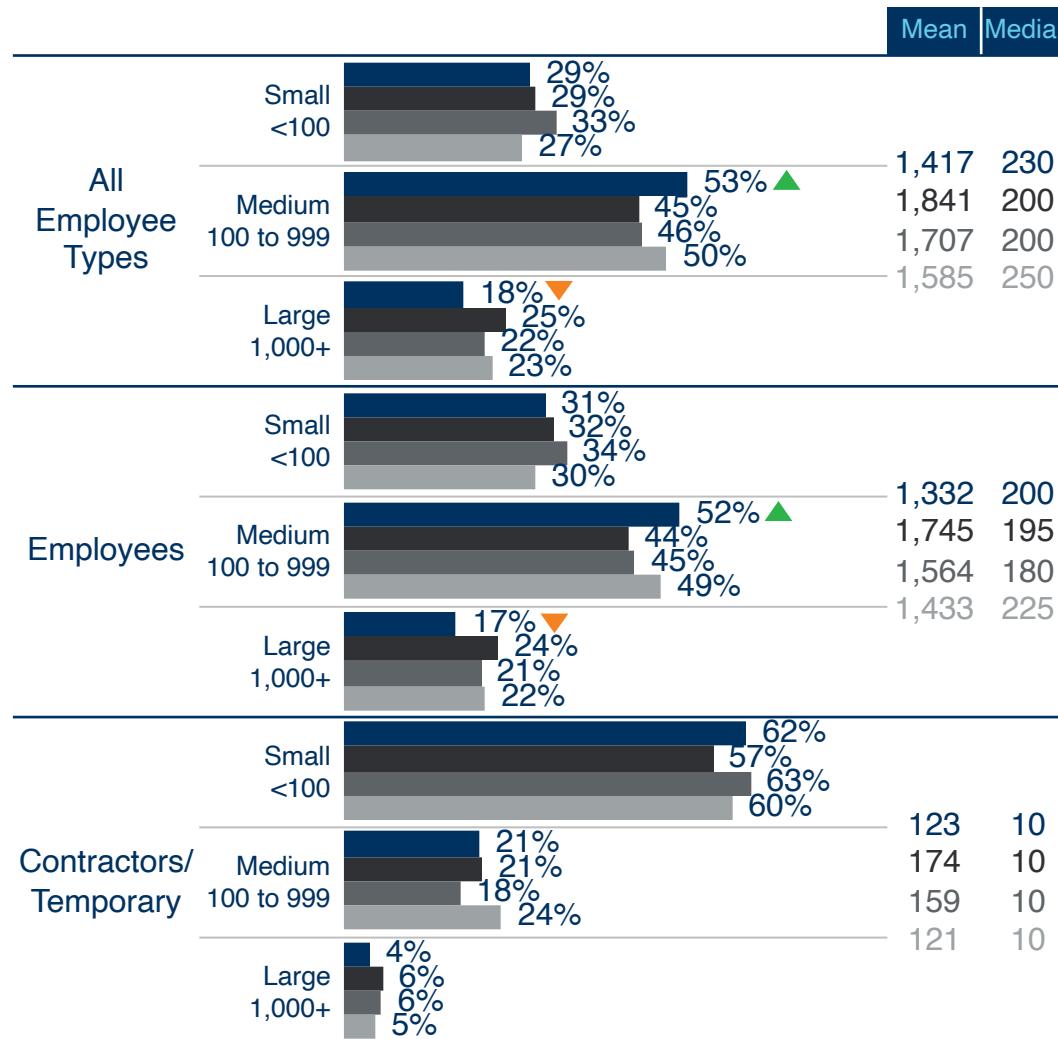
HR is significantly **less likely** to have been a key contributor for **small** organizations (<100 employees): 59%, vs. 78% medium and large.



Base: Had a business continuity plan (n=285)

P18. Was HR a key contributor in developing your organization's business continuity plan?

Respondent Profile



Organization Size

For the purposes of this report, small organizations are defined as those having fewer than 100 employees (of all types) within their province, medium organizations as those having between 100 and 999 employees, and large organizations as those employing 1,000 or more employees.

The average number of employees for organizations in the province of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory is 1,417, while the median is 230.

-  June 2020 (n varies)
-  December 2019 (n varies)
-  June 2019 (n varies)
-  December 2018 (n varies)

 Statistically significantly higher than previous year.
 Statistically significantly lower than previous year.

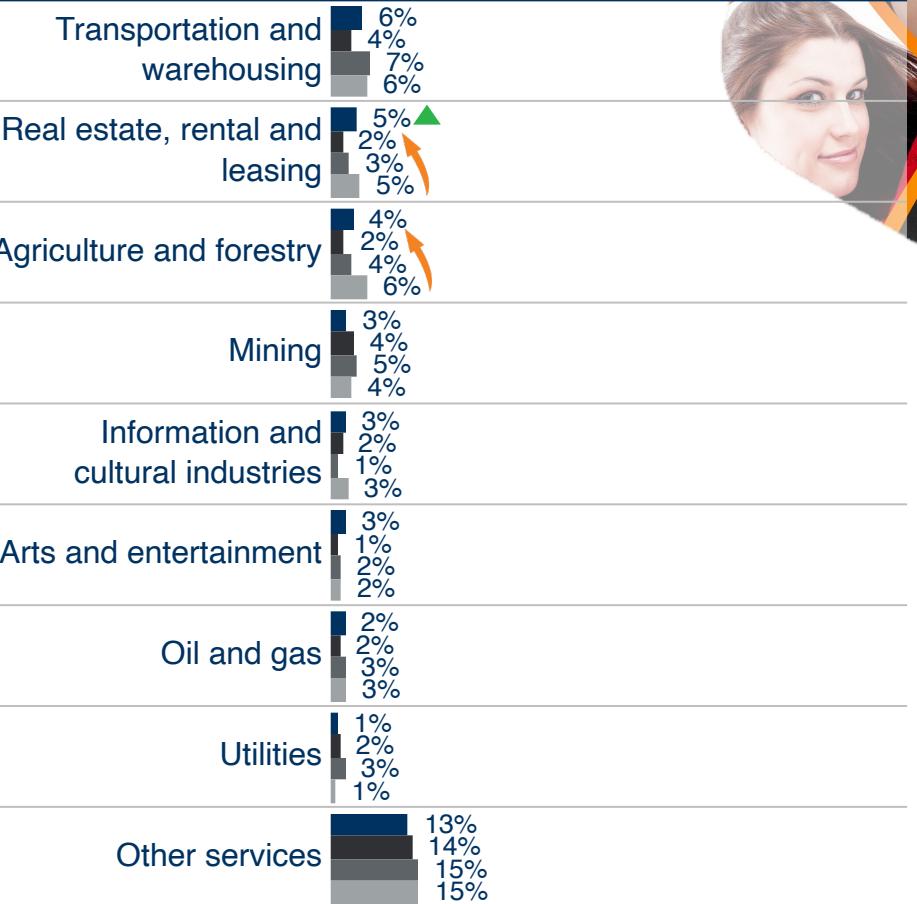
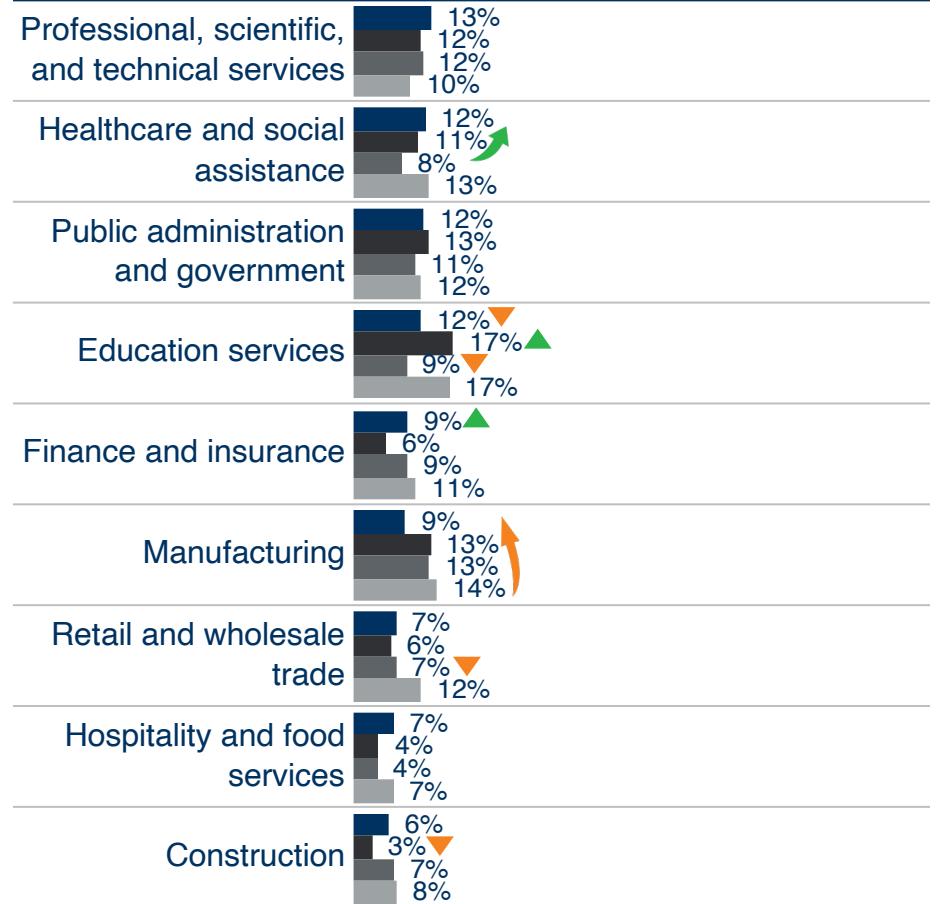
Entire Organization Size

Two-in-five BC & Yukon HR employees work for organizations with 500 or more employees across the entire organization.



Base: Employed in HR, excluding consultants (n=566)
PD1. What is the size of your entire organization?

Organization Sector



Base: Employed in HR function

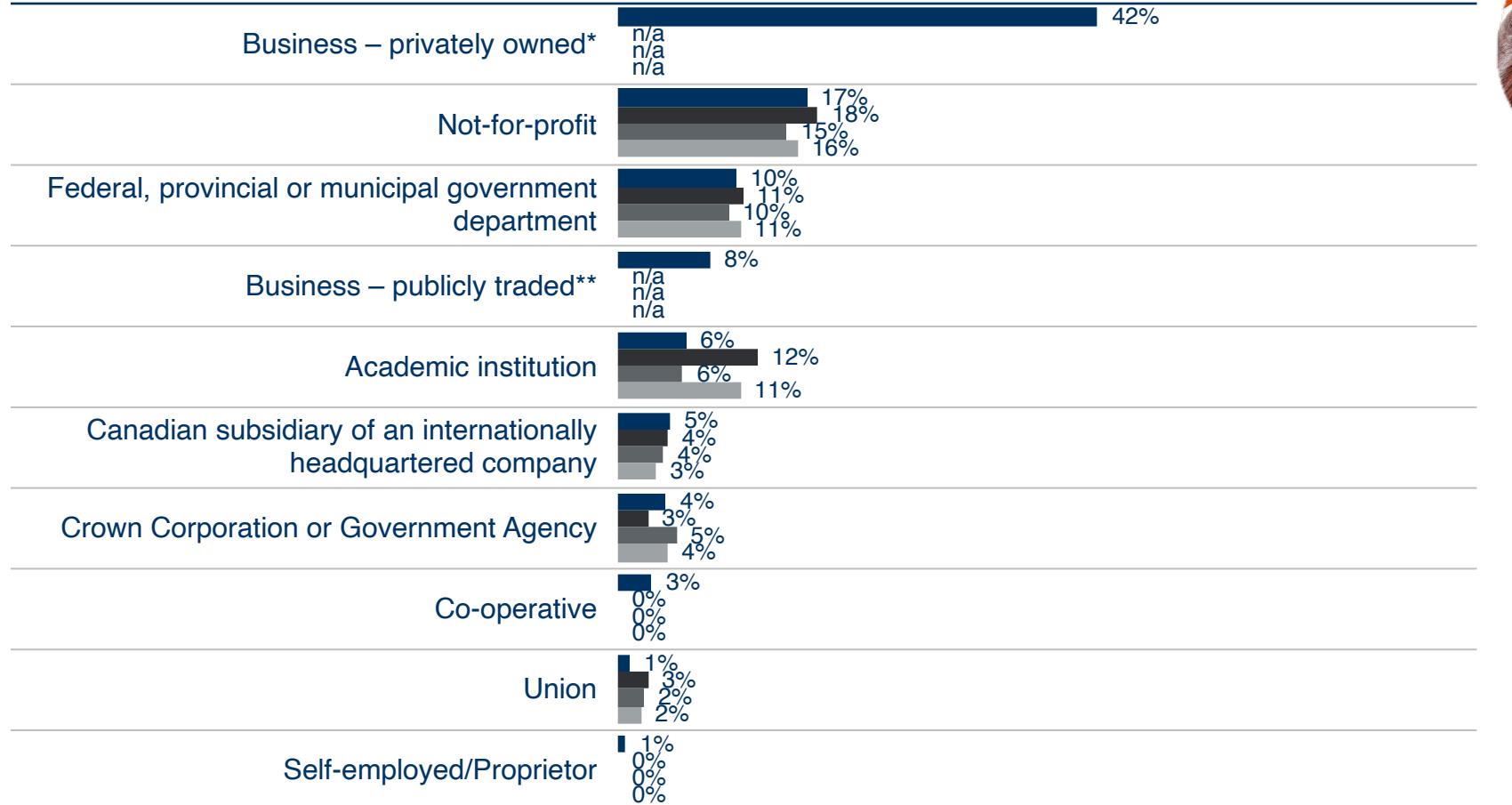
C3. What sector does your organization operate in? If you are a consultant to multiple firms, please select all of the applicable areas.



-  June 2020 (n=571)
-  December 2019 (n=248)
-  June 2019 (n=394)
-  December 2018 (n=332)

 Statistically significantly higher than previous year.
 Statistically significantly lower than previous year.

Type of Organization



Base: Employed in HR function

C3a. My organization is a...

* Question text changed from “private firm” in Summer 2020

** Question text changed from “publicly traded firm” in Summer 2020



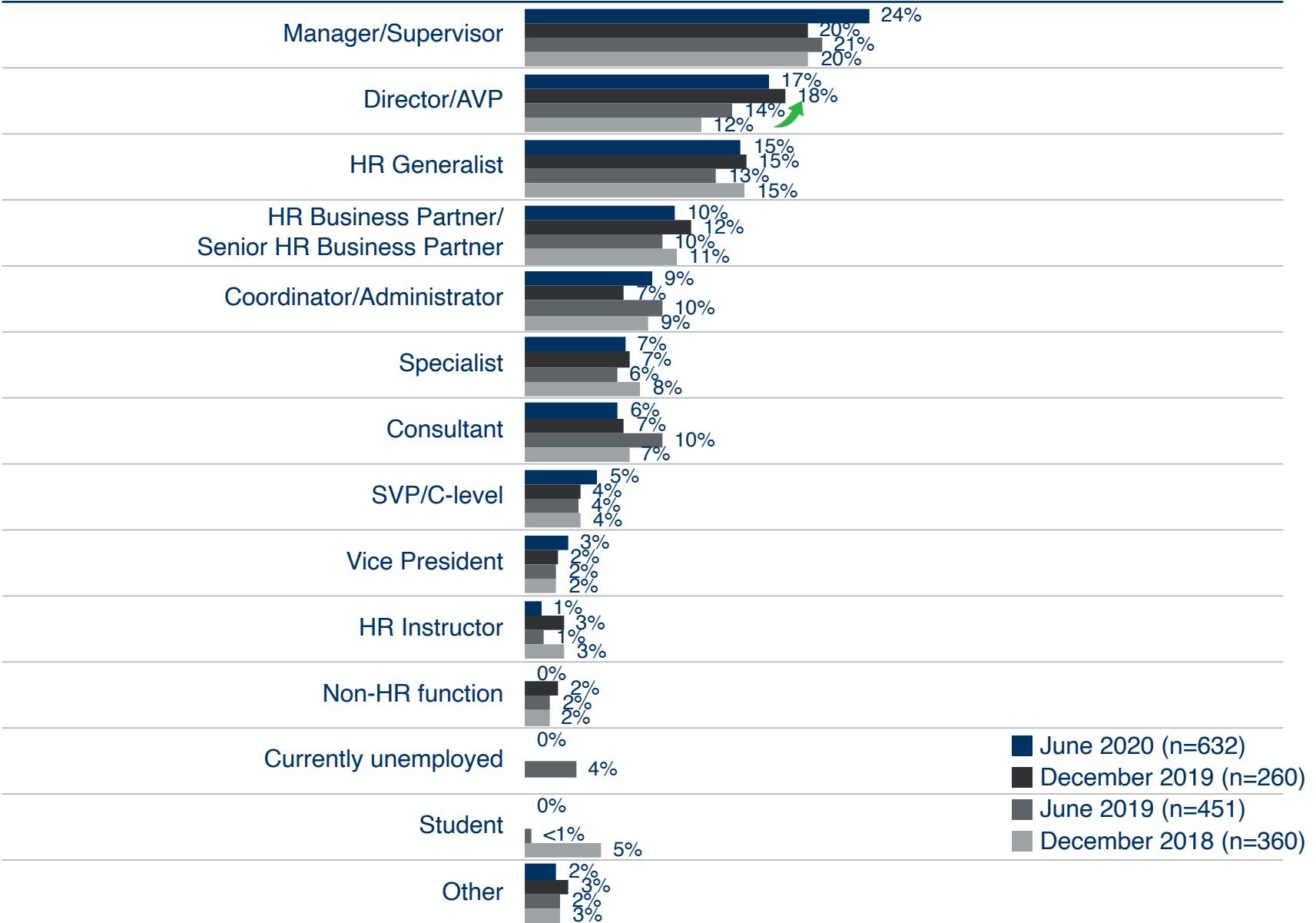
- █ June 2020 (n=536)
- █ December 2019 (n=228)
- █ June 2019 (n=350)
- █ December 2018 (n=298)

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year.
 ▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year.

Organization Role

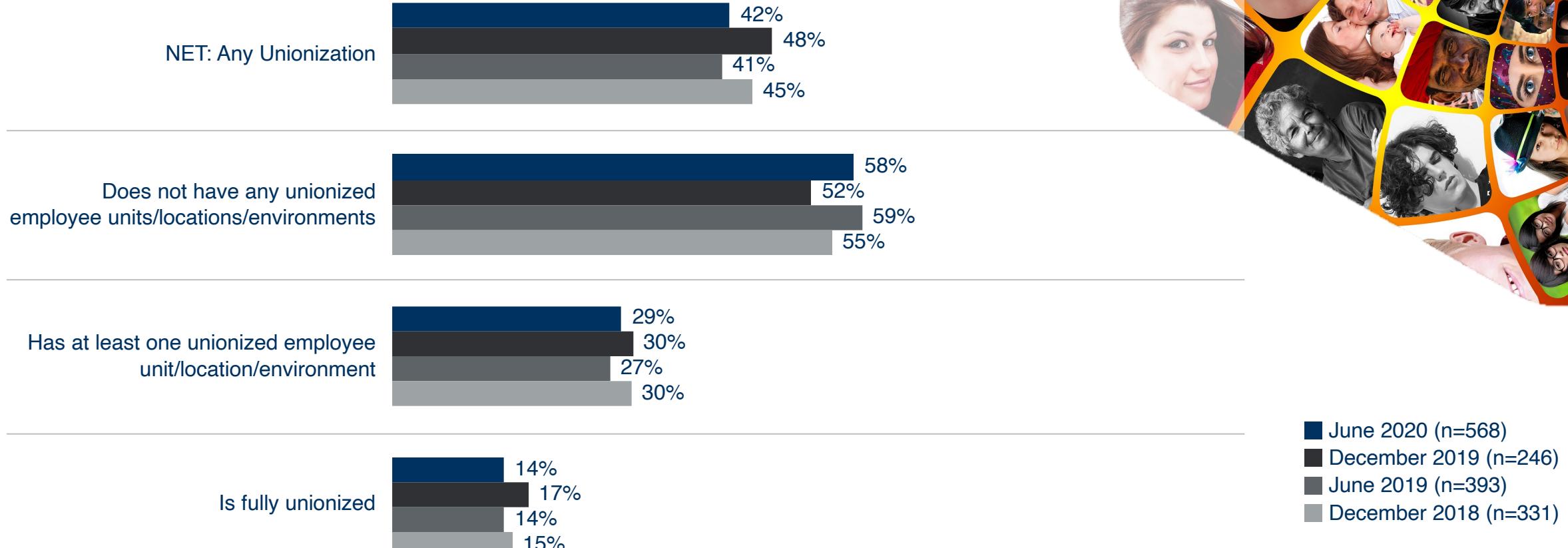
Base: All respondents

C1. Which option best describes your role in your organization?



▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year.
▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year.

Union Status



Base: Employed in HR function

C3b. Which of the following best describes your organization?

- June 2020 (n=568)
- December 2019 (n=246)
- June 2019 (n=393)
- December 2018 (n=331)

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year.
▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year.

Contact Information

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About the Organization

CPHR British Columbia & Yukon

Founded in 1942, CPHR British Columbia & Yukon has grown to include more than 6,000 members encompassing CEOs, VPs, directors of HR, HR generalists, HR advisors, consultants, educators, students and small-business owners in BC and the Yukon. We are all Human Resources.

CPHR British Columbia & Yukon offers professional development and networking opportunities as well as resources for every stage of your career. www.cphrbc.ca