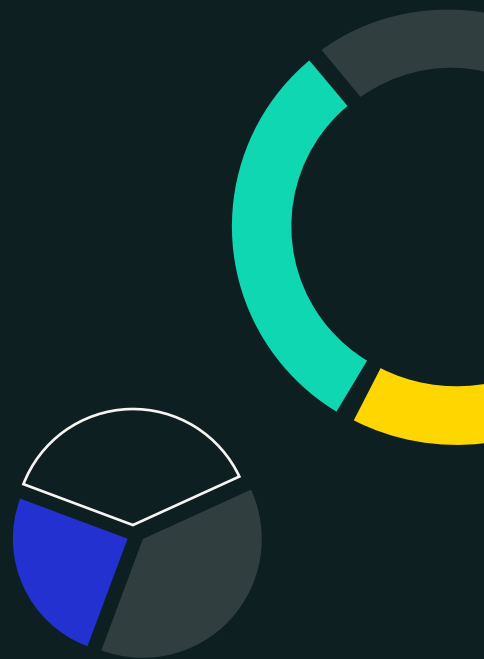
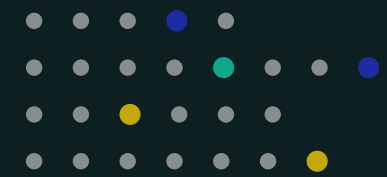
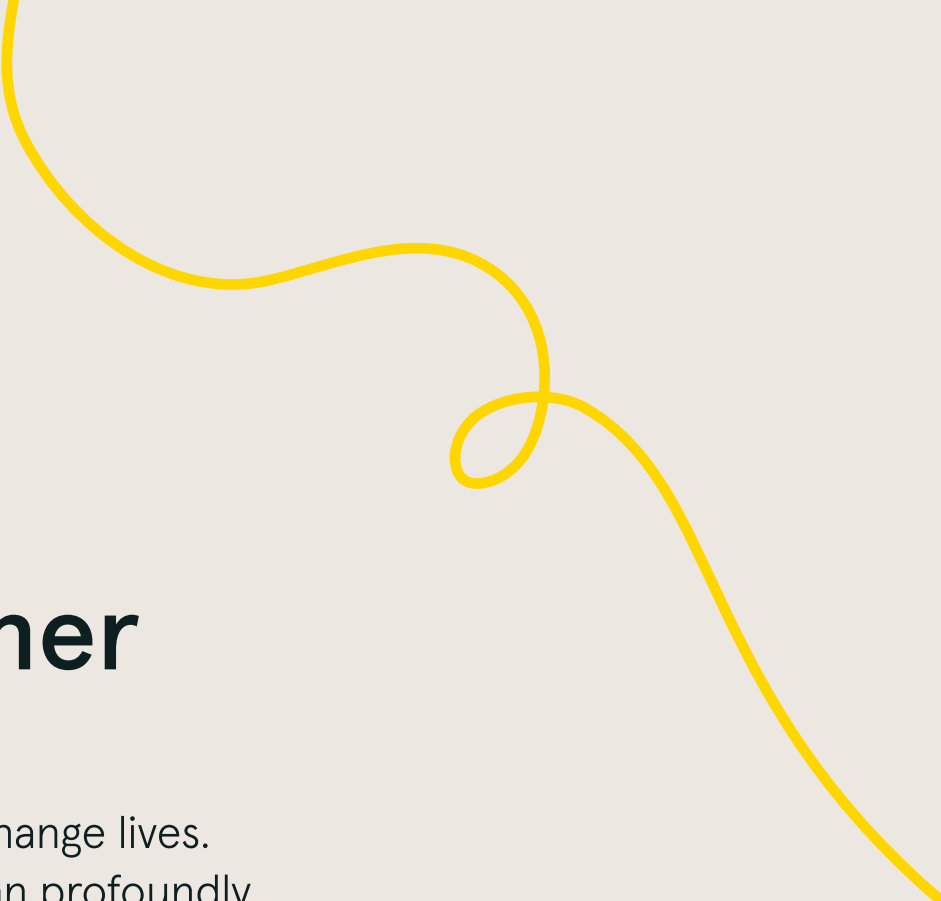


Larkin

2024 REPORT

# State of Progressive Care & Leave





# Shaping Tomorrow's Leave Programs, Together

The best leave programs don't just check boxes—they change lives. The choices companies make around leave programs can profoundly affect their employees' well-being, whether they're celebrating exciting milestones or struggling with challenging personal events. In 2024, we asked leaders like you—HR innovators, benefits managers, and brokers—to share how your companies are managing employee leave. What we discovered sheds light on where the future of employee care is heading.

**From family care leave to cancer support, the companies leading the way are putting people first; showing how leave programs must evolve to attract and retain top talent, cut costs, and meet the growing needs of the modern workforce.**

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## RESPONDENTS

# Meet the Leaders Behind the Data

We captured data from a diverse group of HR professionals and companies—each with a unique perspective on employee leave. 60% of respondents work for companies with 1001-5,000 employees, with the other 40% spread between <500, <1000, and 5,001-10,000, ensuring the data gathered was from a broad base of organizations with varied needs.

**60%**

work for companies with 1001-5000 employees

**40%**

are spread between <500, <1000, and 5,001-10,000 employees

## Respondents Breakdown

With 56% of respondents identifying as Managers of HR or Benefits Teams, and 24% as VPs or Directors, the insights in this report come from leaders on the front lines of shaping employee benefits.



**56%**

Managers of HR/benefits teams



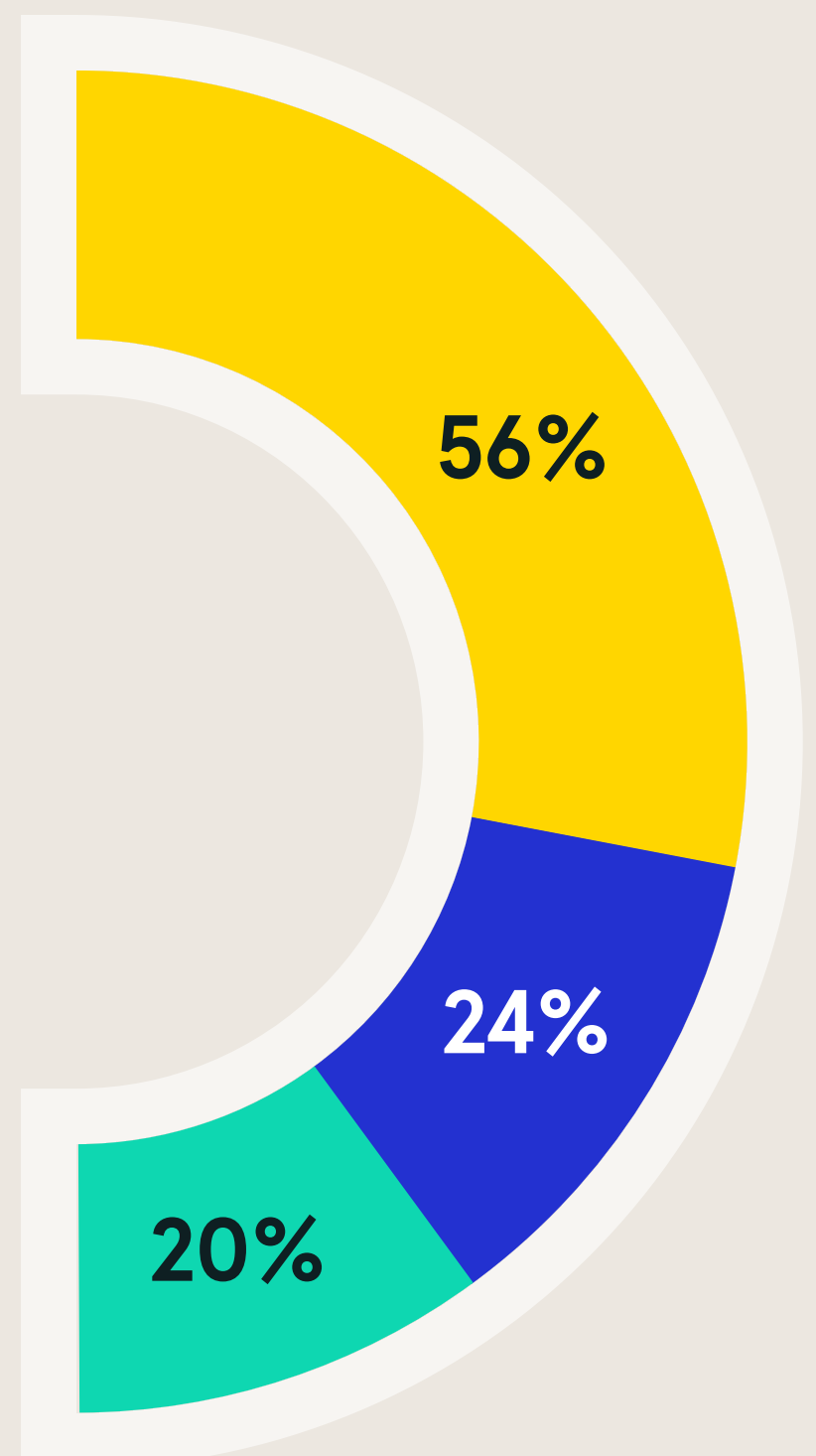
**24%**

VPs/Directors, actively influencing benefits strategy



**20%**

Brokers or benefits consultant



TRENDING NOW

# What Does Leave Look Like in 2024-2025

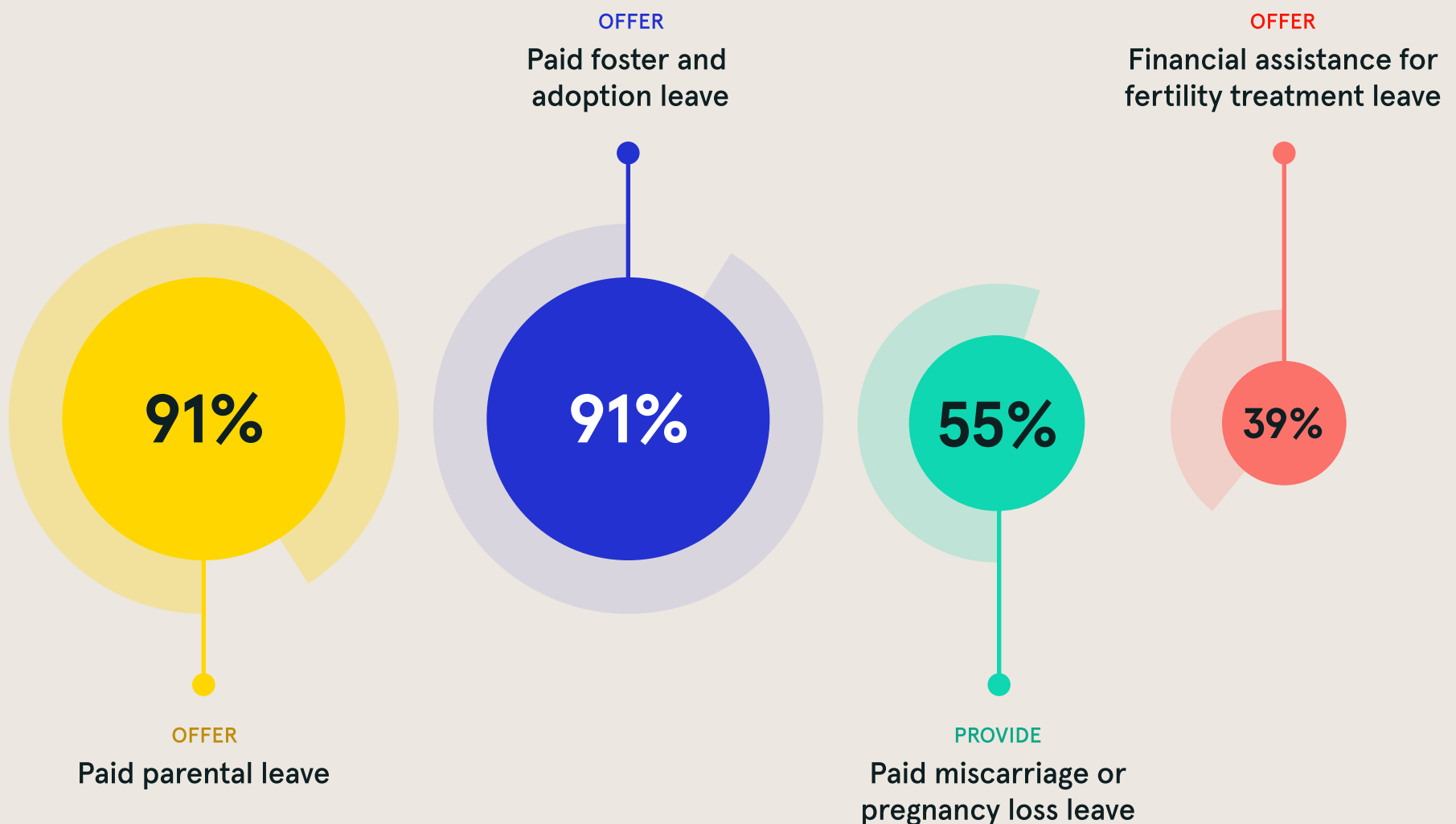
The way companies approach leave is changing—fast. Our survey results demonstrate that organizations are getting serious about enhancing their leave programs.

## It's All in the Family

Though more traditional leave programs such as paid parental leave have become almost ubiquitous across the board—with **91% of organizations offering paid parental leave**, and **91% offering paid foster and adoption leave**—changes are on the horizon.

## What Does Parental Support Look Like?

More companies consider the full spectrum of experiences employees may have when starting or growing a family. Support appears to be becoming more expansive across the board.



# The Devil's in the Demographics

Although the expansion of parental support is strong, more is needed to match the shifting demographics of the workforce. **Over half of U.S. residents live in areas where childcare options are overcrowded, too expensive, or non-existent.**

Research from Harvard Business School shows that **three out of four (73%)** employees reported having some type of current caregiving responsibility – a pressure that will only increase as the population ages. By 2050, the **number of Americans aged 65 and older will reach 86 million**, and a significant portion of them will depend on their adult children as their primary caregivers. As a result of these shifts, more employees will face the difficult choice of cutting back their hours or leaving their jobs to care for family members. It's a costly choice – both for employees and employers, who will face talent drains and frequent costly recruitment and training needs.

These trends will influence the workforce for decades, but the availabilities of remedies like paid family care and progressive childcare are lagging behind. Employers who recognize the growing need for these services can seize the opportunity to lead and stay ahead of this important demographic transformation.

 **>50%**

of U.S. residents live in areas where childcare options are overcrowded or too expensive.

 **86 million**

Americans will be aged 65 and older by 2050.

## Employers Are Behind the Ball on Progressive Leave

**45%**



OFFER  
Paid family care and leave

**39%**



OFFER  
Child care assistance beyond an EAP

## WHAT EMPLOYEES WANT

# The Leading Benefits in 2024-2025

Employees today expect to receive benefits that not only support their personal and professional lives but also help them thrive. Our survey results reveal which benefits are most valued, and how companies are using these benefit programs to reduce turnover, boost productivity, and keep employees engaged.

## Paid Leave – The Foundation of Retention

For most employees, **having access to company-paid leave is non-negotiable.** Whether it's for personal reasons, medical recovery, or simply taking a well-earned break, paid leave helps prevent burnout and keeps employees loyal to the company.

81%



**agree that leave reduces turnover & retention**

by giving employees the flexibility to manage life's challenges.

78%



**agree that leave boosts morale & productivity**

by allowing employees to recharge and return to work ready to contribute.

## A Growing Expectation, Mental Health

In a world where well-being is top of mind, employees are increasingly seeking benefits that address all aspects of their health—both physical and mental. 71% of respondents cite health and fitness programs as benefits that help retain and attract talent, but their enthusiasm for mental health support seems to be just as strong, with 66% offering mental health assistance or leave.

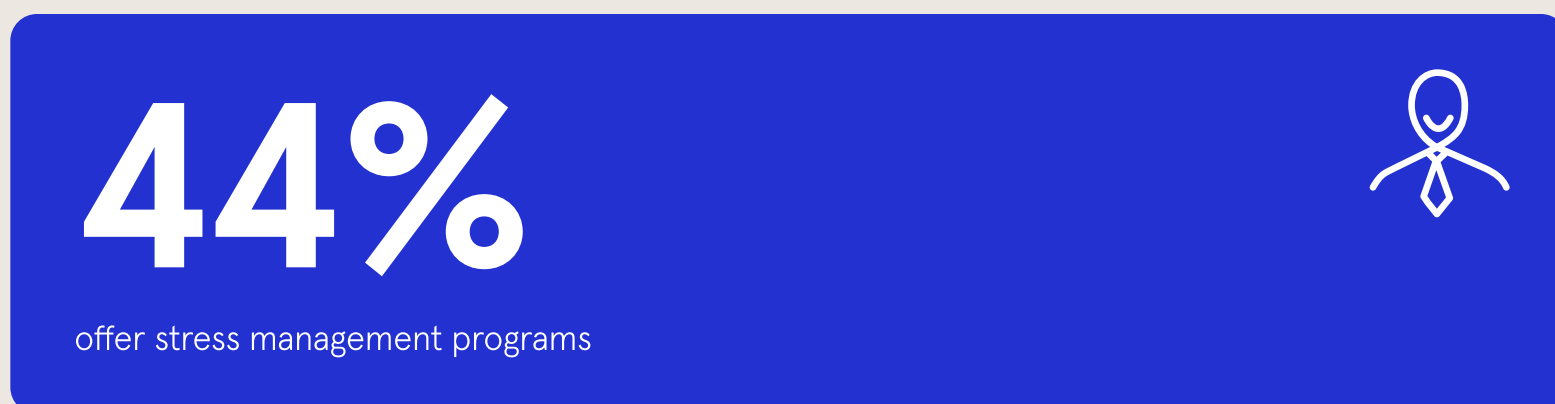
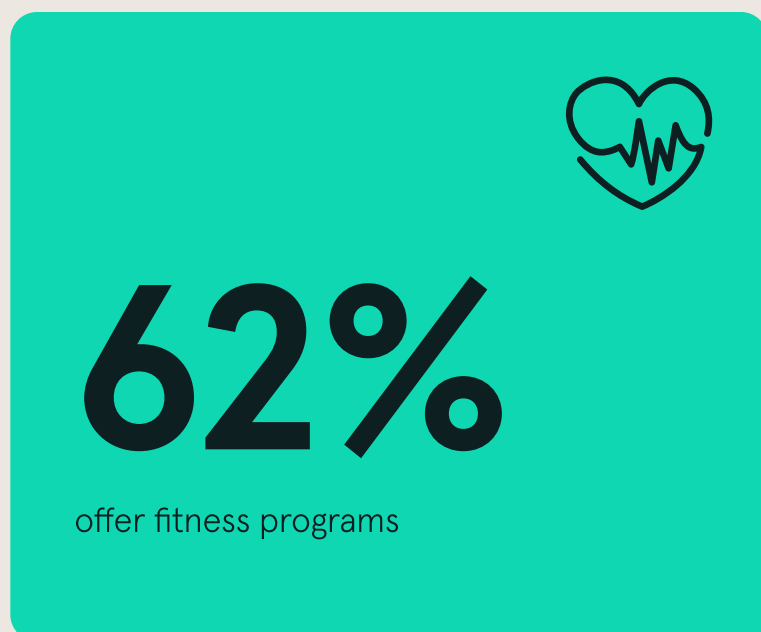
**71%**

cite health and fitness programs as benefits that help retain and attract talent

**66%**

offer mental health assistance of leave for employee wellness

## A Focus on All Aspects of Health



**These wellness programs are no longer just perks**—they're essential for maintaining a healthy, productive workforce. Companies that invest in their employees' physical and mental health are rewarded with higher retention and better performance.

## THE ROI OF LEAVE

# A Strategic Investment

As companies navigate the complexities of employee retention and engagement, one question remains top of mind: which benefits deliver the greatest return on investment? Our survey results shed light on the programs that not only support employees but also provide measurable value to organizations.

## PAID LEAVE

### The Foundation of Value

While wellness benefits are reported as delivering the best ROI at 62%, **paid leave is recognized by 90%** of respondents for improving recruitment and retention, and by 70% for boosting productivity. This aligns with a 2024 study from Harvard Business School which found that organizations that offer caregiver support see a reduction in turnover by 5-6%.

Although **only 53% of companies report a clear ROI from paid leave programs**, their proven ability to prevent burnout, reduce turnover, and enhance productivity makes them a vital cornerstone of any benefits strategy.

**62%**

report wellness benefits deliver the best ROI

**90%**

say paid leave improves recruitment and retention

**70%**

indicate paid leave boosts productivity

## Return on Leave and Care

**62%**

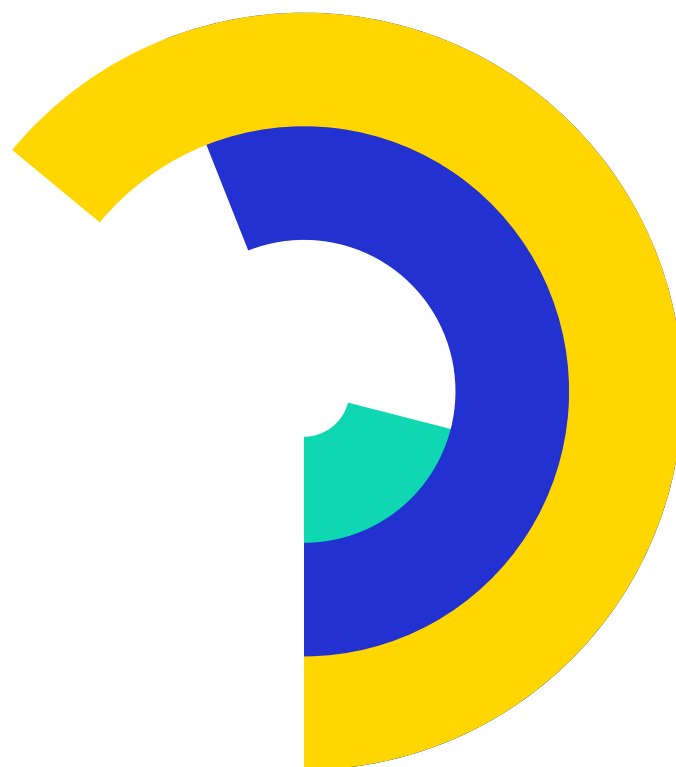
report health and fitness programs offer the highest ROI

**53%**

see clear returns from their paid leave programs

**16%**

indicate childcare and eldercare assistance provide a measurable return



In today's competitive market, offering benefits that prioritize employee well-being is not just a nice-to-have, it's a strategic advantage. By focusing on programs that deliver a tangible ROI, companies can support their employees while also ensuring the long-term health of their business.

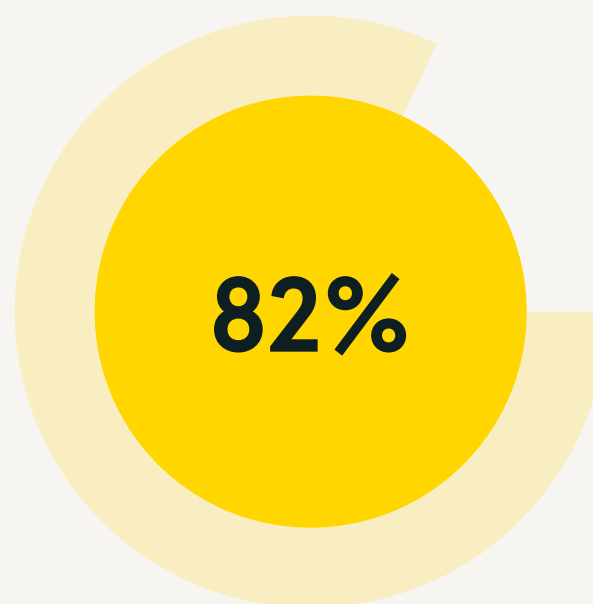


# Key Takeaways

Our data shows that the evolving needs of today's workforce are driving significant changes in how employers approach leave and benefits. As employees seek greater support for wellness, caregiving, and work-life balance, HR professionals are being forced to contend with greater complexity and nuance in their benefits programs. These leaders are seeking more support from partners and vendors to keep up with these changing tides.



of respondents identify Leave of Absence Administration as a top challenge, indicating a strong need for support in this area.



of respondents highlight compliance concerns, emphasizing the pressure employers face to meet legal requirements.

## Companies That Fine-Tune Their Benefits Offerings Stand to Gain a Significant Advantage

The importance of getting these programs right cannot be overstated. Companies that fine-tune their benefits offerings stand to gain a significant advantage, not only in retaining talent but also in reducing costs and improving overall employee well-being. This might seem like a daunting task, but with the right partnerships and a strategy that focuses on the most impactful areas of leave and benefits, HR professionals can take the future of care and leave head on.

# 5 Things You Can Do to Gain a Competitive Advantage

## Focus on Paid Leave as a Core Strategy



Across everyone surveyed, **Paid Leave** is cited as the **strongest benefit program** for increasing recruitment and retention (91%), reducing turnover (81%), and boosting productivity and morale (78%). HR professionals looking to make a noticeable difference in their employees' lives and their organization's metrics should invest in a strong paid leave program.

## Prepare for Future Workforce Needs



Proactively adopting family care leave and enhanced childcare benefits will be critical as demographic shifts place more caregiving responsibilities on employees. Companies that invest in caregiving programs will not only stand out from competitors in talent markets, but will also enjoy better retention, and productivity while reducing absenteeism.

## Leverage Wellness Programs for Measurable ROI



62% of respondents report that health and fitness programs offer the highest ROI. To maximize impact, employers should continue expanding wellness programs that focus on preventative health, fitness, and mental well-being.

## Streamline Leave of Absence Administration



With 100% of respondents indicating challenges in managing leave administration, employers should prioritize automating or outsourcing these processes to reduce administrative burdens and ensure a smoother employee experience.

## Enhance Compliance Support



As 81% of respondents cite compliance as a top concern, companies should focus on partnering with experts to stay aligned with evolving regulations and reducing legal risks and fines.

At Larkin, we believe in putting people first, and the HR leaders we surveyed are running programs that do the same. Let's work together to build the future of leave and benefits—because when your employees thrive, your company does too.

Contact us →