



2022 Michigan Jobseeker Survey

Findings and Recommendations

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Background and Purpose

Michigan Works! contracted [DataWise Consulting, LLC](#) to conduct a survey to help workforce development teams and employers better understand the current state of the job market and workforce pool in Michigan. Specifically, the survey was designed to gather feedback from unemployed and underemployed adults about:

- Their perceptions of their employment status
- Whether they were actively looking for work
- What barriers they face to finding work
- What barriers they face to working
- What resources would be most helpful for jobseekers

Methodology

Survey development

In spring 2021, West Michigan Works! partnered with DataWise Consulting (formerly the Calvin University Center for Social Research) to develop a survey about unemployment, especially given the COVID-19 pandemic. In spring 2022, a very similar survey was fielded across the entire state of Michigan. A few survey questions were dropped from or added to the second wave of the survey. Most of the changes reflected changes related to COVID-19. For example, a question about businesses being temporarily closed due to the pandemic was dropped. See the questionnaire in [Appendix A](#), or visit [this link](#) to preview an online version.

Survey distribution and responses

Survey recruitment and responses occurred online. Michigan Works! distributed the survey to individuals who had registered for service with a Michigan Works! agency in a six-month period preceding the survey launch. A separate email was sent to individuals within each [Michigan Works! service area](#) with a survey link that tracked the region in which potential respondents were located.

Survey invitations were sent on May 18, 2022, and reminder emails were sent on June 2, 2022. Responses were collected through June 24, 2022. Email invitations and reminders were sent to over 100,000 email addresses. In total, 1413 respondents completed the online survey, yielding a response rate of nearly 2%. The actual response rate is likely higher due to an unknown number of invalid email addresses and bounced emails.

Respondent demographic characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 1413 survey respondents. The number of respondents varied across Michigan Works! service areas, with six regions yielding over 100 respondents each and three regions yielding fewer than 10 respondents each. Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated they were currently unemployed, with the remaining third indicating they were currently employed.

Table 1 Respondent demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Region		
Berrien, Cass, Van Buren	37	2.6%
Capital Area	86	6.1%
Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation	236	23.1%
Great Lakes Bay	114	8.1%
GST	130	9.2%
Macomb/St. Clair	136	9.6%
Northeast Consortium	44	3.1%
Northwest	8	0.6%
Oakland County	6	0.4%
Region 7B	49	3.5%
SEMCA	16	1.1%
Southeast	145	10.3%
Southwest	82	5.8%
Upper Peninsula	6	0.4%
West	195	13.8%
West Central	33	2.3%
Age Range		
18–24	44	3.1%
25–34	176	12.5%
35–44	291	20.6%
45–54	332	23.5%
55–64	377	26.7%
65–74	104	7.4%
75–84	15	1.1%
85 or older	1	0.1%
Prefer not to answer	17	1.2%

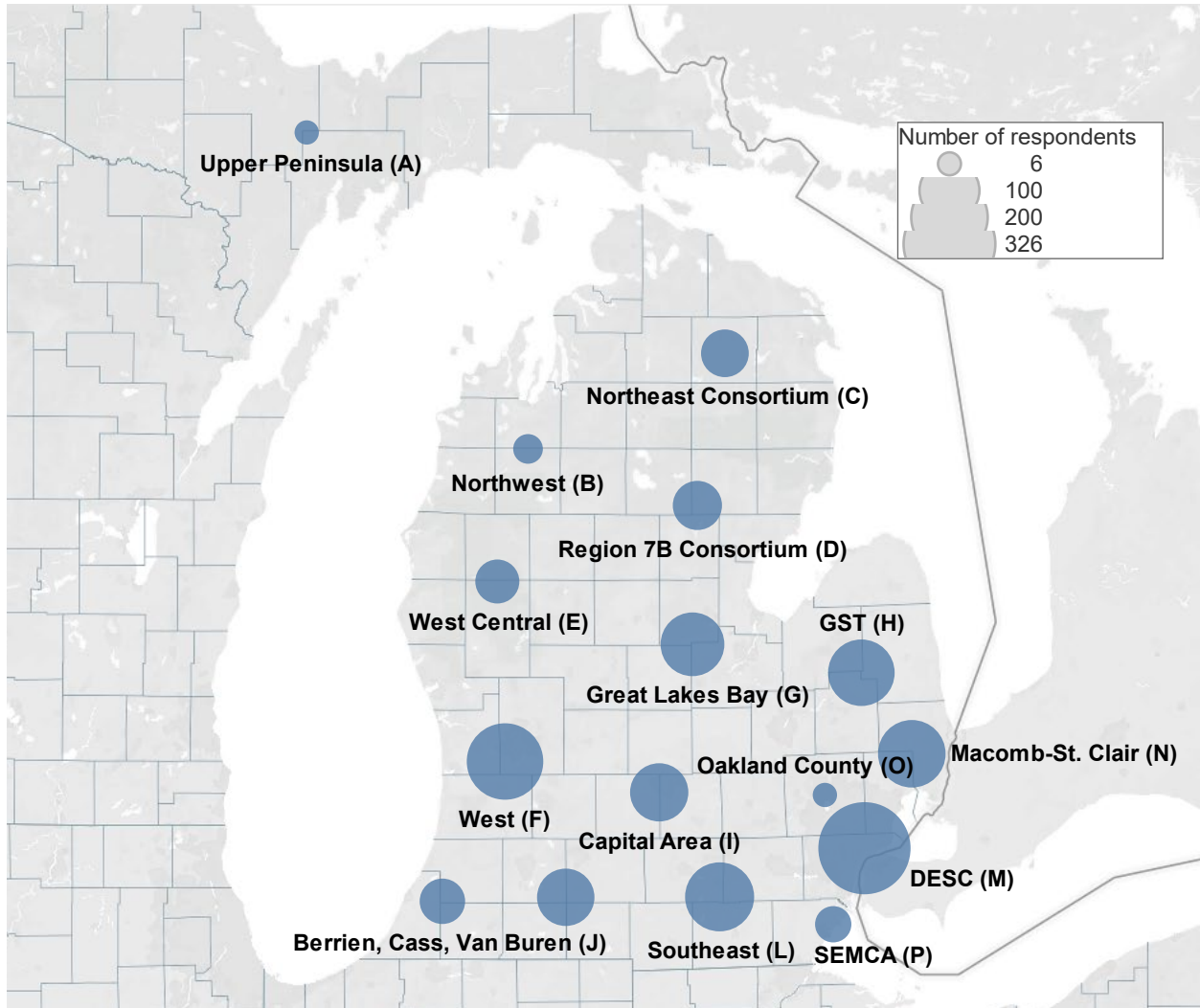
Demographic Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Race / Ethnicity		
White	884	62.6%
Black or African American	248	17.6%
Hispanic or Latino	28	2.0%
Asian	13	0.9%
Native American or Alaska Native	12	0.8%
Multiracial	58	4.1%
Another race	26	1.8%
Prefer not to answer	85	6.0%
Education		
Less than high school	35	2.5%
High school graduate	237	16.8%
Some college	384	27.2%
2-year degree	204	14.4%
4-year degree	311	22.0%
Professional degree	150	10.6%
Doctorate	17	1.2%
Prefer not to answer	17	1.2%
Gender		
Female	766	54.2%
Male	540	38.2%
Non-binary	9	0.6%
Prefer to self-describe	13	0.9%
Prefer not to answer	27	1.9%
Marital Status		
Married	547	38.7%
Divorced	247	17.5%
Never married	430	30.4%
Separated	33	2.3%
Widowed	39	2.8%
Prefer not to answer	60	4.2%

Demographic Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Annual Household Income as of January 1, 2022		
Less than \$10,000	167	11.8%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	129	9.1%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	182	12.9%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	158	11.2%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	110	7.8%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	85	6.0%
\$60,000 - \$69,999	70	5.0%
\$70,000 - \$79,999	63	4.5%
\$80,000 - \$89,999	53	3.8%
\$90,000 - \$99,999	52	3.7%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	106	7.5%
\$150,000 or more	57	4.0%
Prefer not to answer	119	8.4%
Annual Household Income at the Time of Survey		
Less than \$10,000	388	27.5%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	125	8.8%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	145	10.3%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	128	9.1%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	107	7.6%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	84	5.9%
\$60,000 - \$69,999	52	3.7%
\$70,000 - \$79,999	49	3.5%
\$80,000 - \$89,999	27	1.9%
\$90,000 - \$99,999	23	1.6%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	62	4.4%
\$150,000 or more	25	1.8%
Prefer not to answer	131	9.3%
Employment Status		
Employed	547	38.7%
Unemployed	865	61.2%

Demographic Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Household Size		
1	293	20.7%
2	469	33.2%
3	235	16.6%
4	186	13.2%
5	80	5.7%
6	31	2.2%
7 or more people	18	1.3%
Prefer not to answer	40	2.8%
Children in Household		
Yes	461	32.6%
No	895	63.3%
Children in School		
Yes	382	27.0%
No	79	5.6%
Not applicable / No answer	952	67.4%

Figure 1 shows a map of respondents broken down by Michigan Works! service area. Larger circles represent a greater number of respondents from the service area.

Figure 1 Number of respondents by Michigan Works! service area



Findings

This section presents the results of each survey question. When doing so provides additional insight, we compare results by respondent characteristics, such as employment status, gender, or race.¹

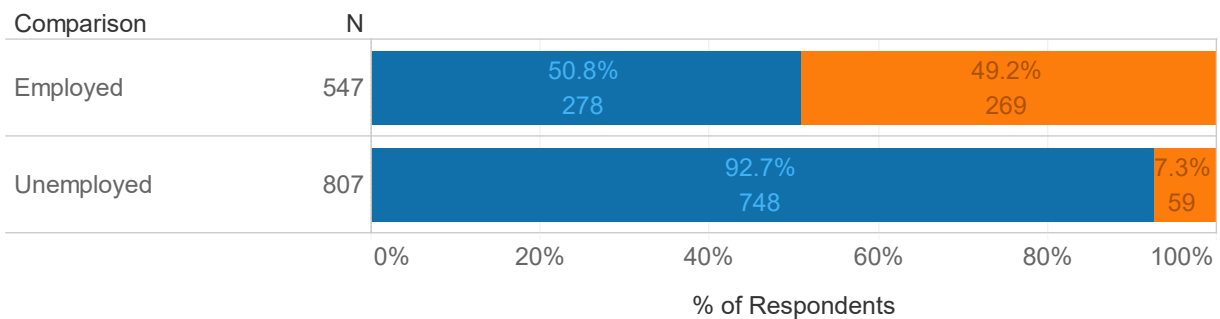
¹ Note that in some cases, visualizations do not include all options from demographic questions (e.g., individuals with a non-binary gender identity). This protects confidentiality when a small number of respondents belong to a group and could be identified when data are broken down by combinations of demographic variables.

Search for work

To better understand the current workforce landscape in Michigan, this survey opened with several questions related to respondents' search for work. More than three-quarters of all survey respondents indicated they were actively looking for work at the time of taking the survey. As **Figure 2** illustrates below, almost all unemployed respondents indicated they were looking for work, while just over half of employed respondents indicated they were looking for potentially better or more secure employment.

Figure 2 Search for work by employment status

Are you actively looking for work? If you are currently employed, you may be looking for better or more secure employment.

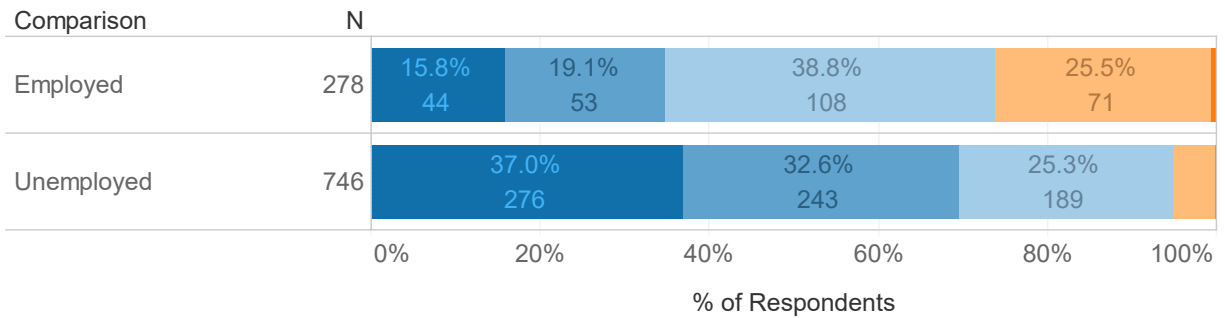


Color legend
■ Yes
■ No

However, among those who are actively searching for work, the effort people can put into searching for a job varies. Respondents' ability to actively search for work may be impacted by barriers such as time, finances, or internet access, to name a few. When asked about the effort they were able to dedicate toward finding work, a little over 60% of respondents said they were dedicating "a great deal" or "a lot" of effort, while the rest said they were only dedicating "a moderate amount" or "a little." Only three respondents said they were dedicating "no effort at all" to finding work. When comparing across employment status, respondents who were currently unemployed were about twice as likely to be dedicating "a great deal" of effort to finding work than those who were currently employed (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3 Effort toward search for work by employment status

How much effort are you able to dedicate toward finding work?

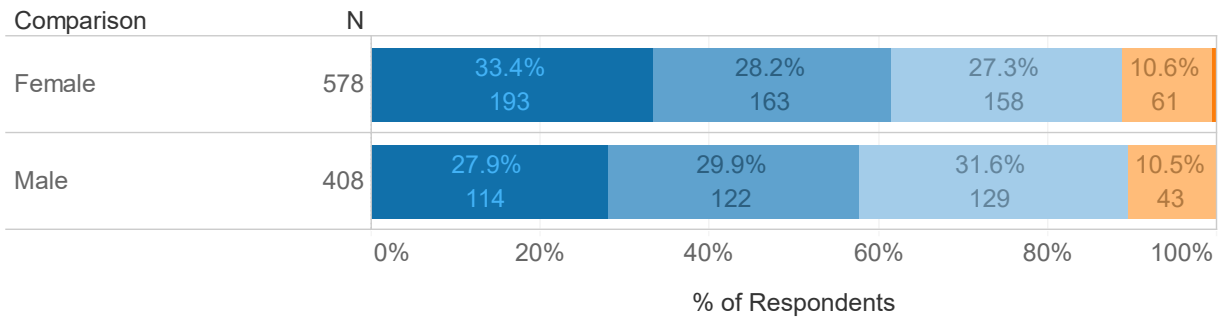


Color legend
■ A great deal
■ A lot
■ A moderate amount
■ A little
■ None at all

When comparing responses by gender, results showed that female respondents were dedicating more effort to searching for work than were male respondents (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Effort toward search for work by gender

How much effort are you able to dedicate toward finding work?

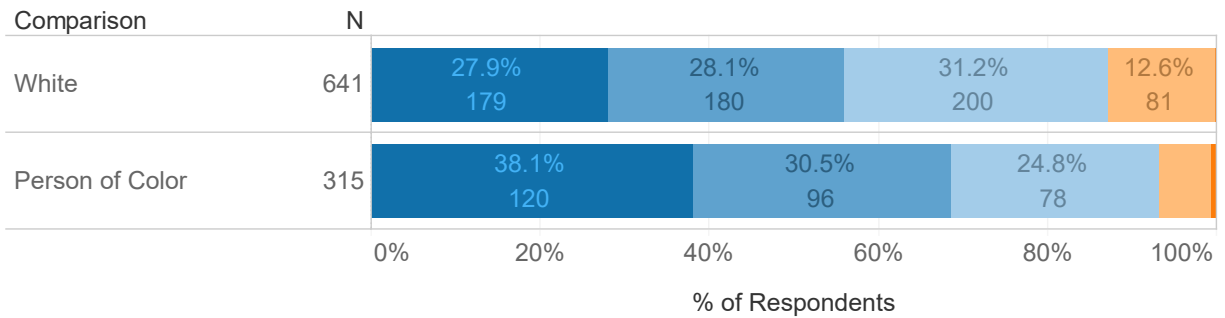


Color legend
■ A great deal
■ A lot
■ A moderate amount
■ A little
■ None at all

Additionally, respondents of color were dedicating more effort to searching for work than were white respondents (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Effort toward search for work by race

How much effort are you able to dedicate toward finding work?

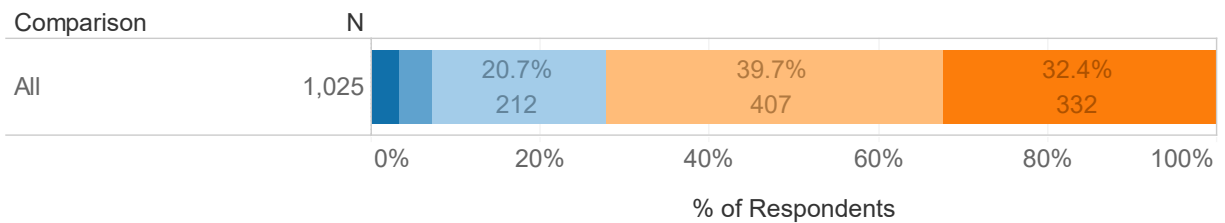


Color legend
 ■ A great deal
 ■ A lot
 ■ A moderate amount
 ■ A little
 ■ None at all

Despite the effort that respondents were putting into searching for work, most were having very little success in finding work (Figure 6). Nearly one-third of respondents said they were having no success at all, while about 40% of respondents said they were having only a little success. Only 7.2% of respondents indicated they were having “a lot” or “a great deal” of success finding work.

Figure 6 Success in finding work

How much success are you having looking for work?

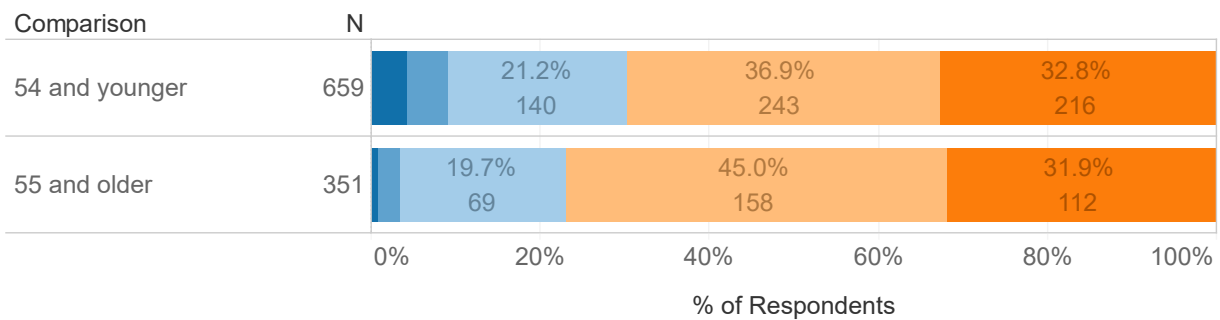


Color legend
 ■ A great deal
 ■ A lot
 ■ A moderate amount
 ■ A little
 ■ None at all

While success in looking for work varied little by gender, survey results revealed a difference in success between older and younger jobseekers (Figure 7). Only 3.5% of respondents who are 55 or older were having either “a great deal” or “a lot” of success looking for work, compared to just over 9% of respondents who were 54 or younger.

Figure 7 Success in finding work by age

How much success are you having looking for work?

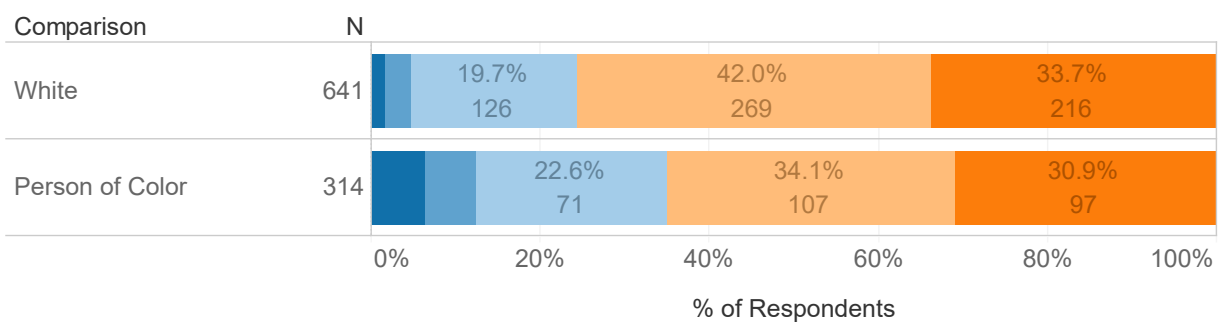


Color legend
■ A great deal
■ A lot
■ A moderate amount
■ A little
■ None at all

People of color were also more likely to report “a great deal” or “a lot” of success looking for work than were white respondents (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Success in finding work by race

How much success are you having looking for work?

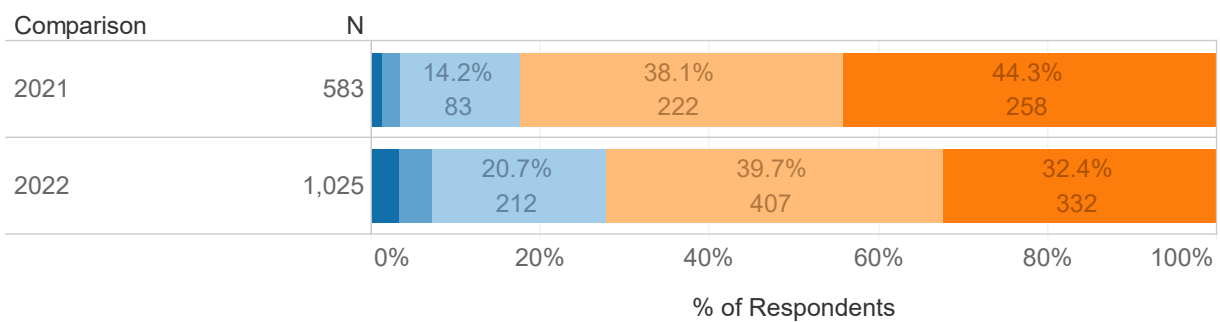


Color legend
■ A great deal
■ A lot
■ A moderate amount
■ A little
■ None at all

Encouragingly, the percentage of respondents having no success in looking for work was reduced by 12% between the 2022 survey and an identical question on a survey administered in 2021 to the West Michigan Works! region. (Note that only the West Michigan Works! region fielded the survey in 2021.) Additionally, the percentage of respondents having “a great deal” or “a lot” of success doubled year-over-year (Figure 9). This indicates that the job market has improved from where it was during more severe phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, although many people are continuing to have trouble finding work.

Figure 9 Success in finding work by survey year

How much success are you having looking for work?



Color legend
 ■ A great deal
 ■ A lot
 ■ A moderate amount
 ■ A little
 ■ None at all

Barriers to finding work

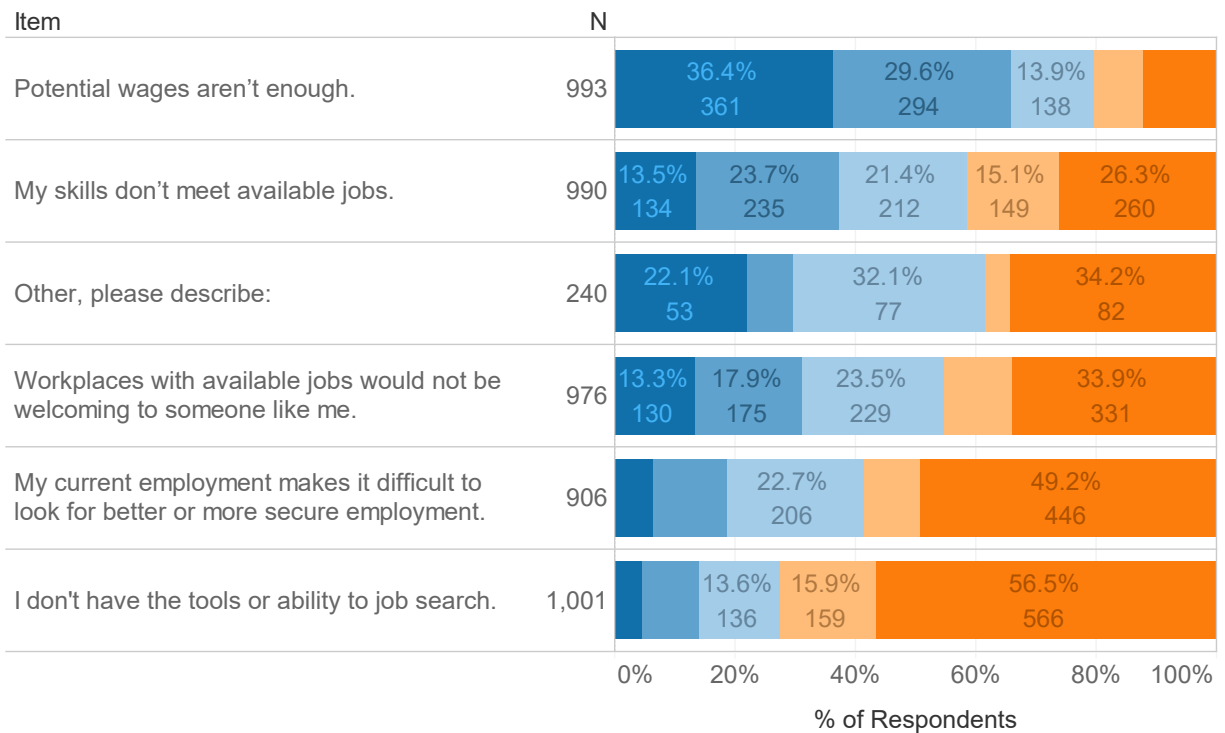
When looking at responses about barriers to finding work, the top three barriers were:

1. Potential wages aren't enough
2. Their job skills do not meet available jobs
3. Workplaces with available jobs would not be welcoming to someone like them

Not having the tools or ability to job search was least likely to be a barrier to finding work. Figure 10 shows each of the potential barriers respondents rated, sorted from most strongly endorsed as a barrier to least strongly endorsed as a barrier.

Figure 10 Barriers to finding work

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to finding work?



Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

By far the most strongly endorsed barrier to finding work is that potential wages are not enough. This barrier was also mentioned more than sixty times in respondents' comments at the end of the survey. One respondent wrote, "Jobs have to start paying better in Michigan because inflation on gas, food, and household items is negating any pay raises annually by several percent." Another commented on the lack of transparency around potential wages, saying:

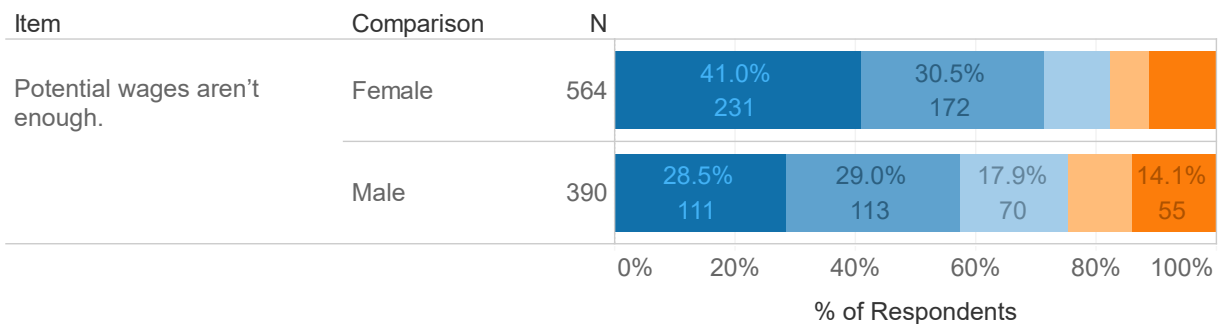
Employers not listing actual pay rates and benefits on job postings is a waste of jobseekers' time. I, like many people, don't have time to go to several interviews just to be offered a job that doesn't come close to meeting my financial needs. At this point, any employer not paying \$18/hour minimum with a week of vacation shouldn't be surprised no one wants to work for them. Jobs are to support us and our families; they aren't a hobby.

While respondents from both waves of this survey were concerned about potential wages, there appear to be key differences between respondents' concerns from year to year. In 2021, respondents from the West Michigan Works! region focused primarily on the mismatch between their education, skills, and desire for a living wage and available jobs. In 2022, respondents across the state of Michigan seemed to be primarily concerned with the lingering economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as inflation on basic goods and necessities and the stagnation of wages. It is also important to note that respondents are not only highlighting wages as a potential barrier to finding work; they are also highlighting the lack of benefits that may accompany low wages, such as lack of healthcare or vacation time, as a barrier.

When looking at these barriers across demographic variables, some barriers appear to be more of an obstacle for some groups than others. For example, when broken down by gender, the barrier that potential wages are not enough is more strongly endorsed by women than by men (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Potential wages as a barrier to finding work by gender

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to finding work?

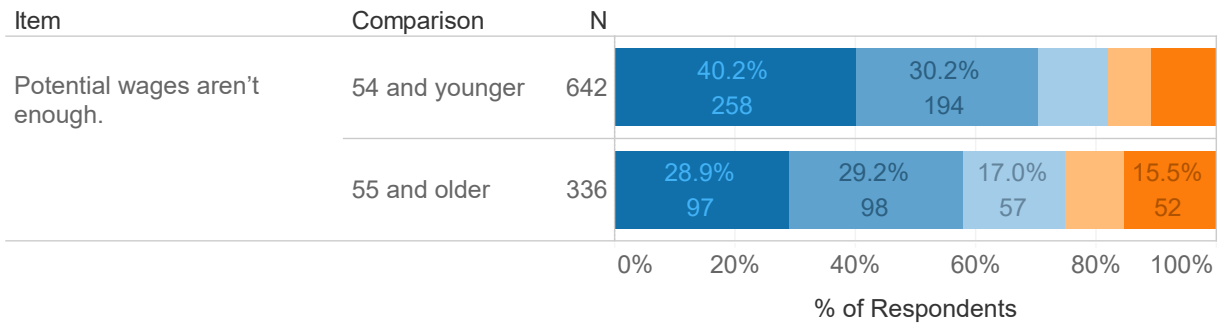


Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

Similarly, respondents ages 54 and younger were more likely to agree that potential wages are not enough, compared to respondents ages 55 and older (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Potential wages as a barrier to finding work by age

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to finding work?

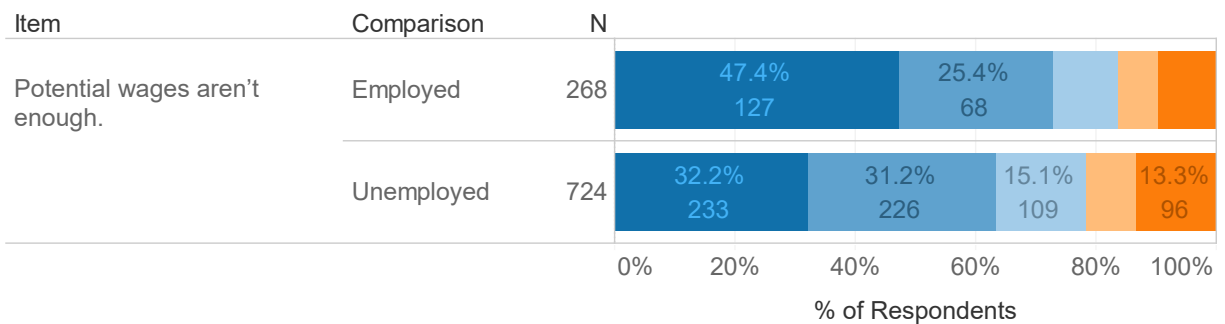


Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

Furthermore, currently employed respondents were also more likely to say that potential wages were not enough (Figure 13). This suggests that workers who are currently employed but are looking for more secure employment cannot find jobs that pay more than their current positions.

Figure 13 Potential wages as a barrier to finding work by employment status

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to finding work?



Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

Older respondents highlighted another perceived barrier to finding work: age discrimination. One respondent in the 55 and older age range wrote:

Employers are not willing to hire older employees. I am very qualified for all of the jobs I have applied for since January 2022. I have not been offered any jobs at all or even received a phone call or email. I know my age is a huge factor, but it's not fair... At age 64, it's next to impossible to find a decent paying job.

Another respondent highlighted the difficulty they have faced as an older jobseeker:

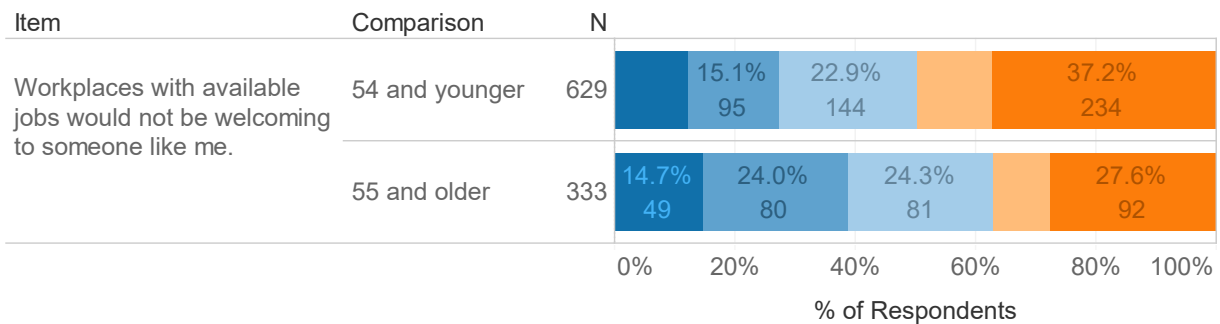
I look and apply to jobs every single day for the last two years. I'm vigilant to say the least—I need to work and will take a job where I will be underpaid. I've had interviews but have not landed a job. I'm so frustrated and angry! This is not how I wanted to spend my time. Although ageism is against the law, I have experienced it a lot—exceedingly difficult to prove. I have applied for jobs that I know I'm qualified for because that is what I have done in the past. I'm not even called for an interview, and instead, I got a rejection letter. When I inquired as to why, Human Resources told me the department made the decision.

Many other older respondents echo encountering these same barriers of age discrimination, over-qualification, and lower potential wages and benefits while searching for work. Despite their willingness to take on work, even if they are underpaid, older jobseekers are still struggling to find viable jobs.

In the 2021 iteration of the survey in the West Michigan Works! region, it was found that the barrier “Workplaces with available jobs would not be welcoming to someone like me” was more a barrier for respondents of color than for white respondents. In the 2022 survey to the entire state, this was not the case. However, there was a difference when comparing results by age. Almost 40% of respondents ages 55 or older at least somewhat agreed with the statement, compared to fewer than 30% of respondents ages 54 or younger (Figure 14). This points to experienced age discrimination in the job market.

Figure 14 Unwelcoming workplaces as a barrier to finding work by age

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to finding work?



Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

In addition to the barriers listed in the survey, respondents identified an additional barrier to finding work in their final comments: the job search and application process. Over eighty respondents (6%) in the 2022 wave of the survey mentioned their frustration with the application process; in 2021, only seventeen respondents (2%) mentioned the application process. Many respondents highlighted the sheer number of applications they had submitted without hearing anything back from employers. One respondent wrote:

The job application process is like sending information into a black hole. With very few exceptions, applications are not acknowledged or responded to. It is very frustrating to send out dozens of applications with only one response or two.

Several respondents expressed their suspicion toward so many employers posting jobs but never hearing back. For example, one respondent said, “My experience seems to show plenty of ‘ghost’ jobs. What I mean by that is, I have applied to a lot of jobs that I was fully qualified for and was never contacted for even an initial phone interview or even notification of the job being closed.” This lack of transparency makes it difficult for jobseekers to know how best to position themselves to potential employers, especially when their qualifications match what employers are looking for.

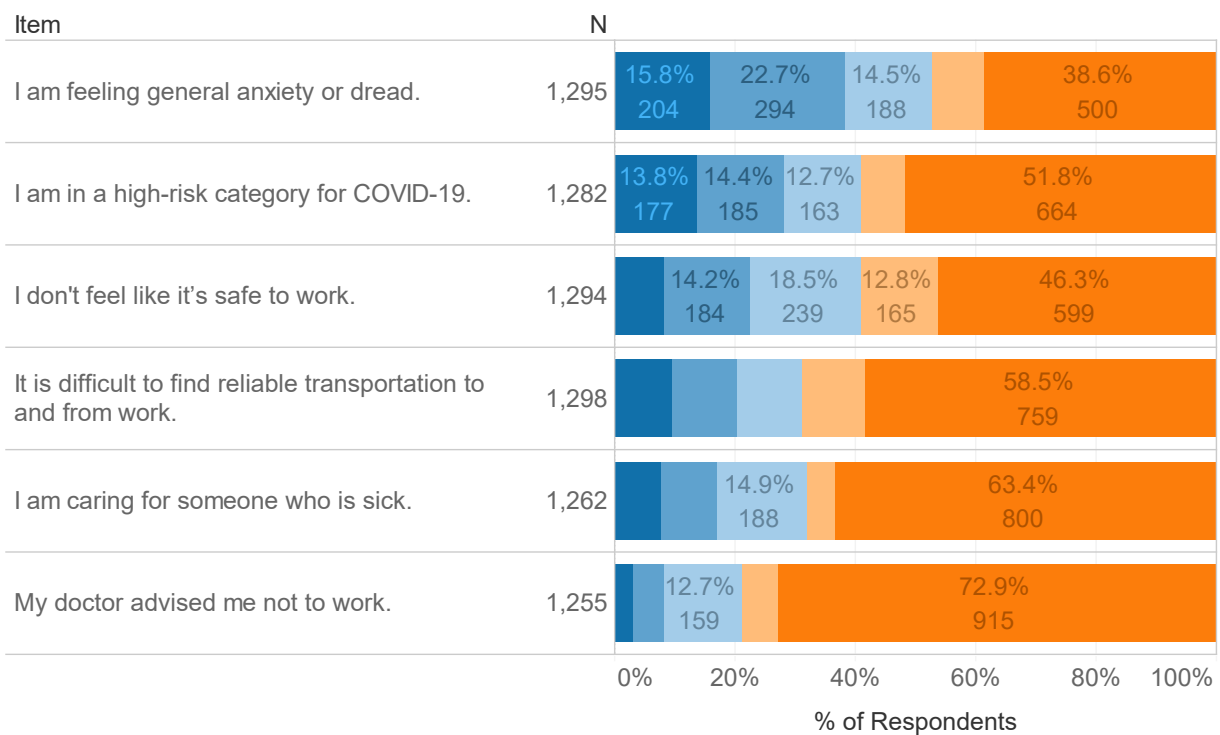
Barriers to working

Even if respondents could or do find work, many respondents report barriers to working. As shown in (Figure 15), among the potential barriers shown to all respondents, the top three barriers were:

1. Respondents are feeling general anxiety or dread
2. Respondents are in a high-risk category for COVID-19
3. Respondents don't feel like it's safe to work

Figure 15 Barriers to working

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to working?



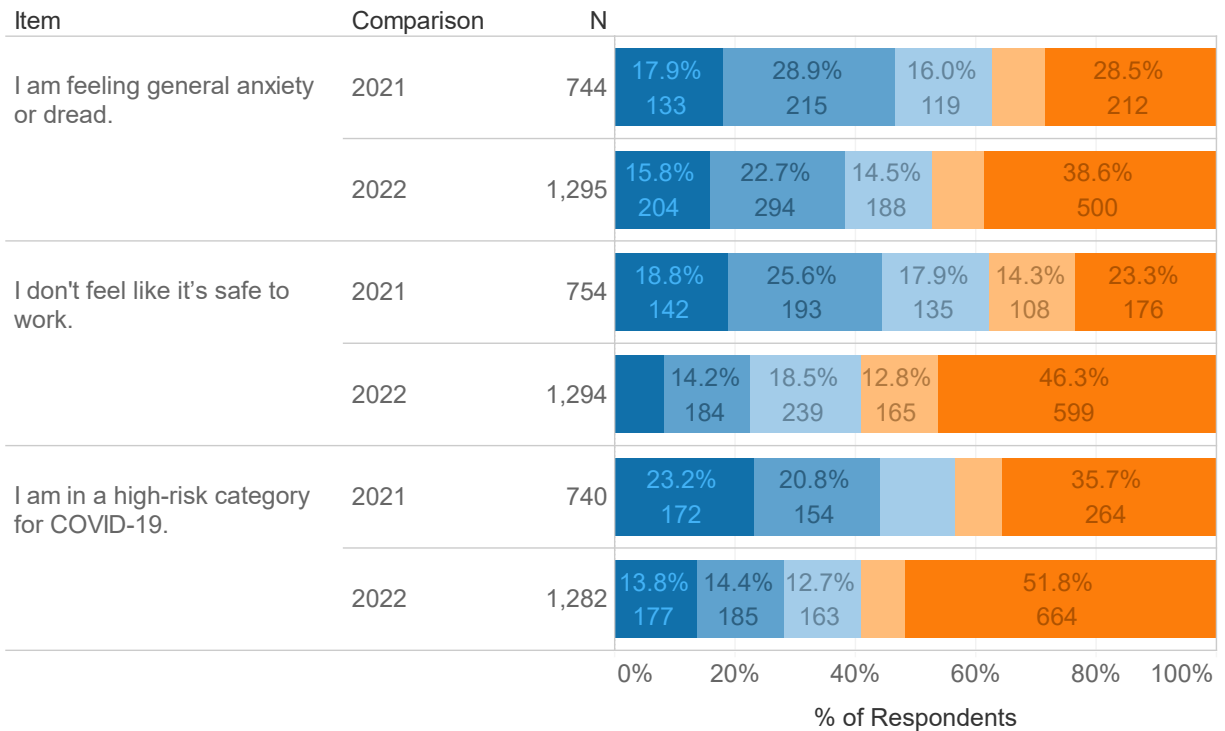
Color legend

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

However, there was a decline in agreement with all three of the greatest barriers from 2021 to 2022 (Figure 16). Notably, there was about a 10% decrease in the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with both “I don't feel like it's safe to work” and “I am in a high-risk category for COVID-19.” This indicates that pandemic-related barriers are now seen as less of an issue.

Figure 16 Selected barriers to working by survey year

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to working?

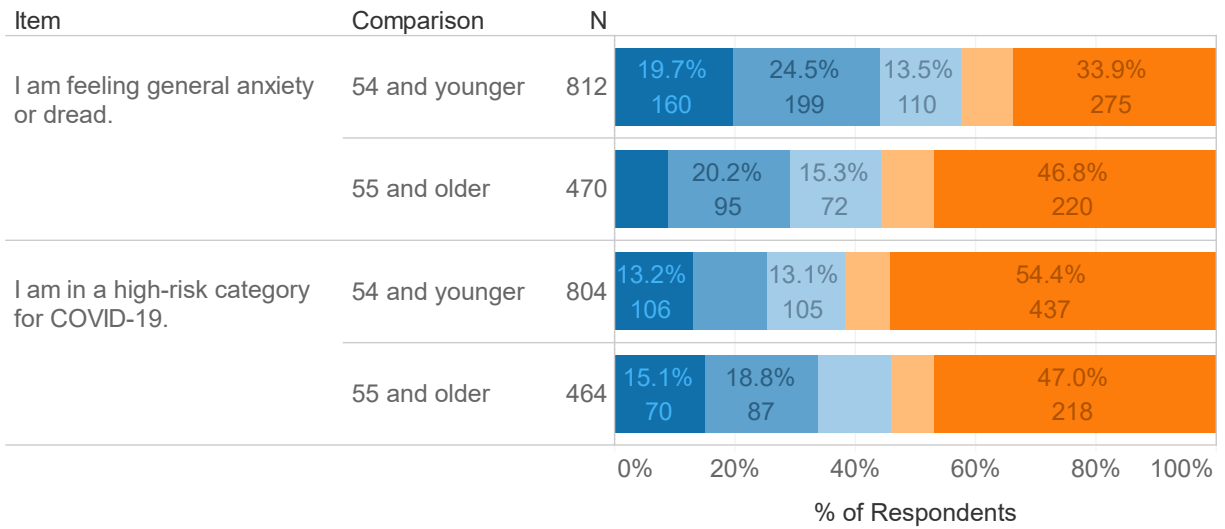


- Color legend
- Strongly Agree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

Again, many of these barriers vary by respondents' demographic characteristics. While no notable variations appear between men and women, two barriers stand out when breaking responses down by age group (Figure 17). Younger respondents report feeling general anxiety or dread at a higher rate than older respondents, with nearly 20% of respondents 54 years and younger indicating they strongly agree that general anxiety or dread is a barrier to working. For older jobseekers, higher risk of contracting COVID-19 is a greater barrier than for younger jobseekers, although this difference is much less pronounced than it was in the 2021 findings.

Figure 17 Selected barriers to working by age

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to working?

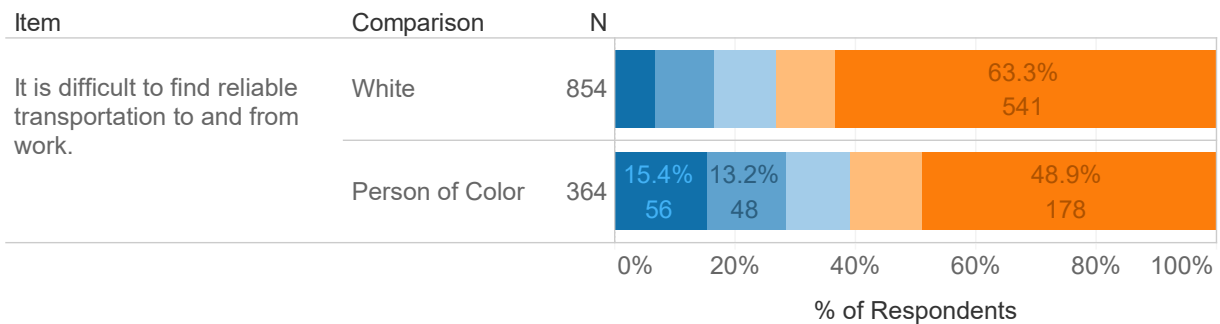


Color legend
■ Strongly Agree
■ Somewhat Agree
■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
■ Somewhat Disagree
■ Strongly Disagree

Additionally, finding reliable transportation stood out as more of a barrier for respondents of color than for white respondents (Figure 18). More than a quarter of respondents of color at least somewhat agreed that it is difficult to find reliable transportation to and from work, while only about 18% of white respondents indicated difficulty in finding reliable transportation.

Figure 18 Transportation as a barrier to working by race

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to working?



Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

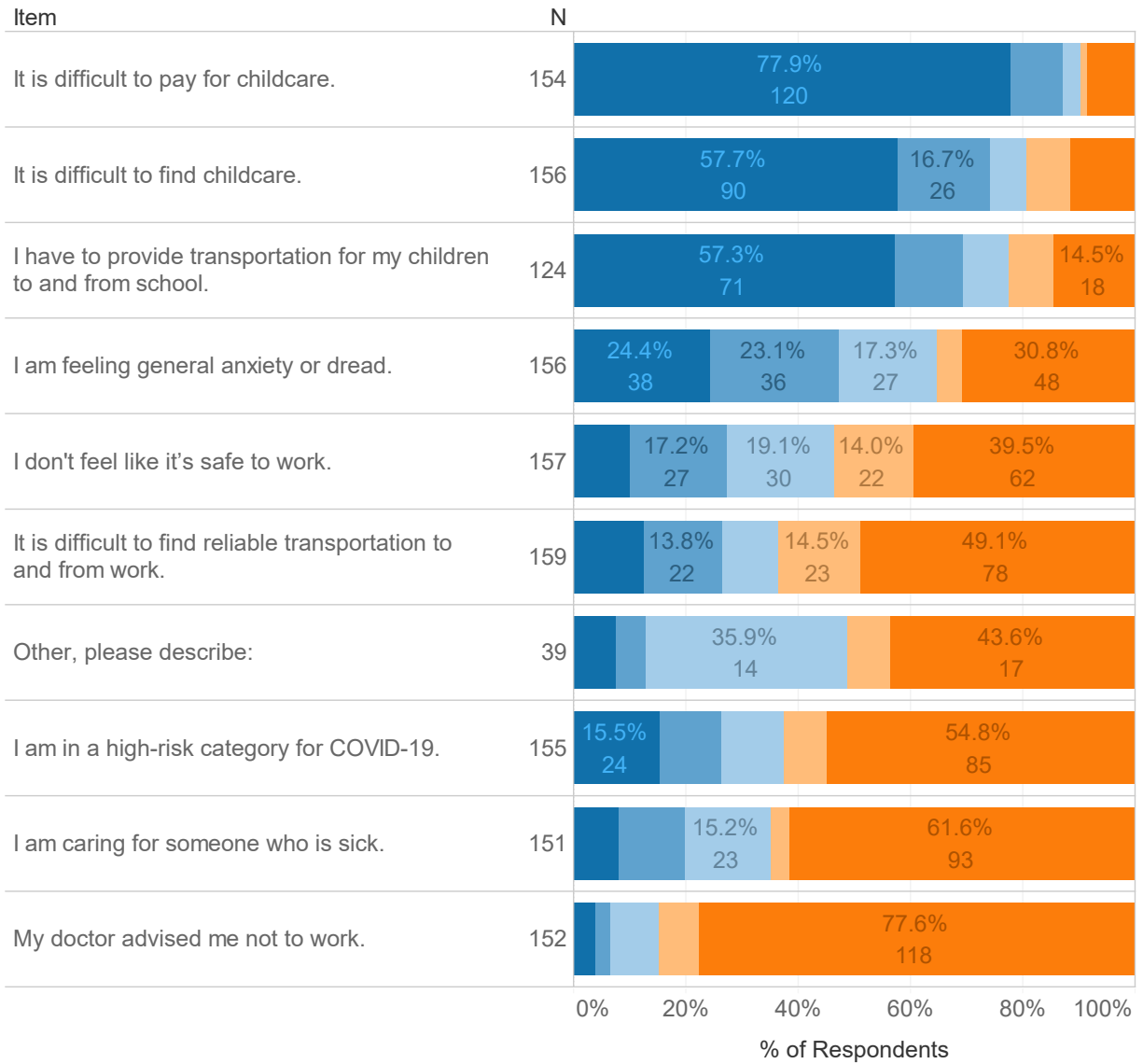
For many respondents, childcare or family care responsibilities pose a barrier to working. These responsibilities often limit the times that respondents can work, as several comments highlighted. For example, one respondent wrote, “I live with and take care of my mother who has advanced dementia. I am trying to find a job to work from home. In order to work outside the home, I would have to pay someone to watch her, which means I have to get a job that pays enough to do that.” Another respondent wrote:

I would love training for a work from home virtual position that is not phone related and offers flexibility in hours, 401k and medical, dental, optical. I have 5 children who are homeschooled. Ages 9, 11, 13, 15, and 16 (2 of them have some disabilities that require constant care). I want to work and miss working but have zero help and no support system. The only option is something from home.

Given the unique obstacles many respondents face because of childcare and family care responsibilities, the survey asked specifically about childcare needs. Some barriers listed in the survey were shown only to respondents who indicated they had children who required childcare (Figure 19) or who attended school (Figure 20). Among these respondents, paying for childcare and finding childcare emerged as the biggest barriers, while having to provide transportation to and from school followed closely behind.

Figure 19 Barriers to working for respondents with children who need childcare

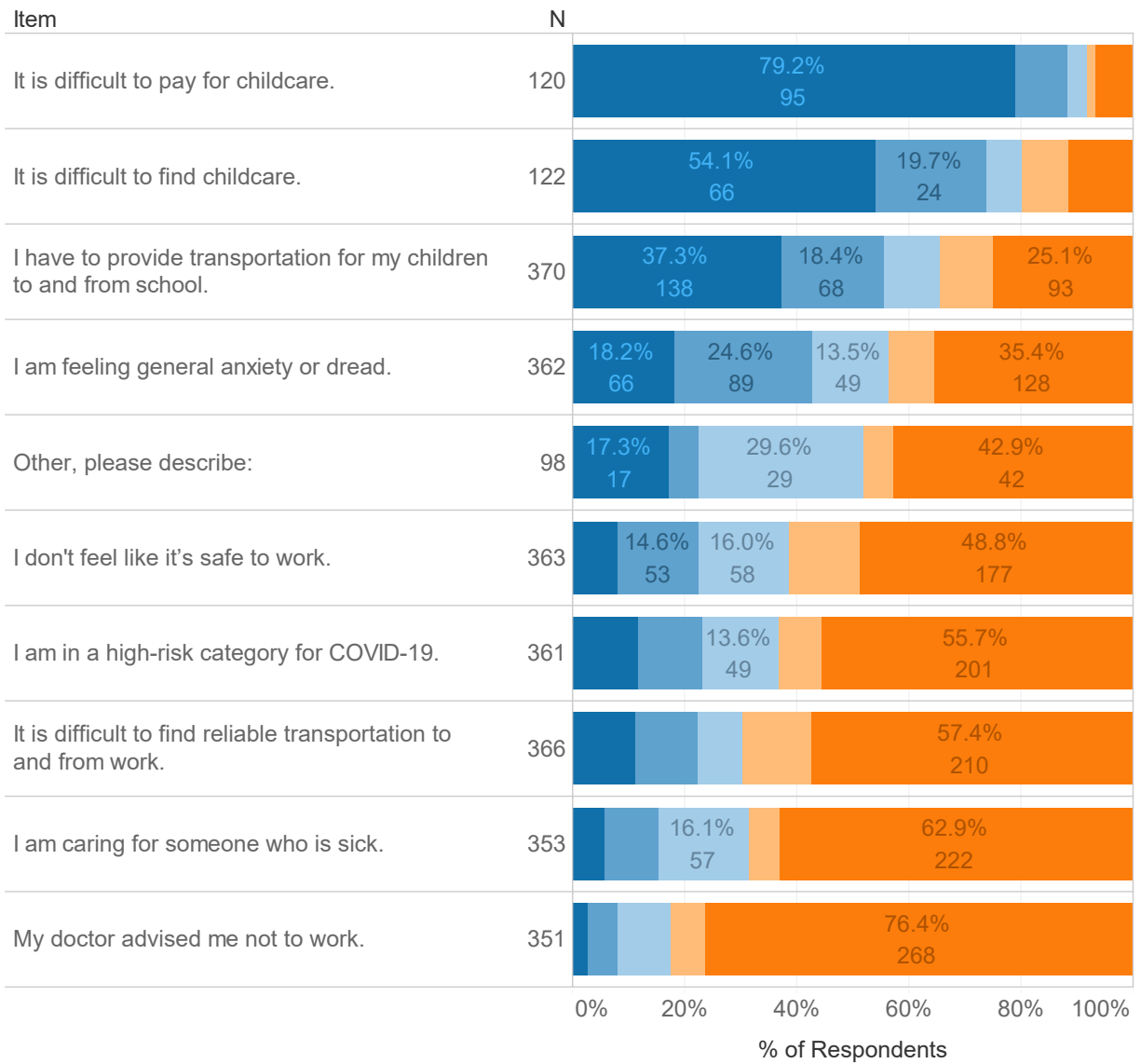
To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to working?



Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

Figure 20 Barriers to working for respondents with children who attend school

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to working?



Color legend
 ■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

Potential resources

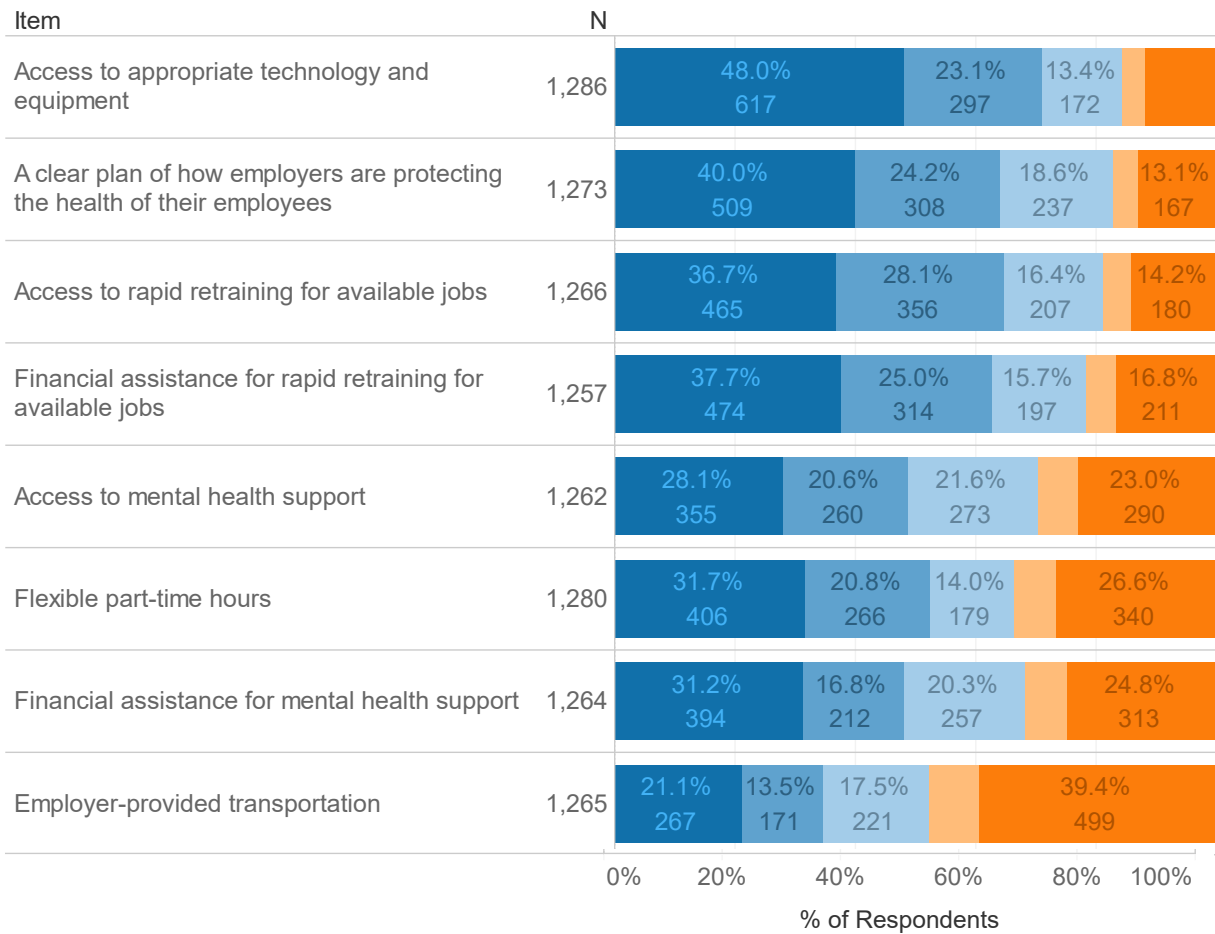
When asked about how likely they would be to use potential resources to address the barriers they experience to finding work or working, respondents indicated the top three resources they would use were:

1. Access to appropriate technology and equipment
2. A clear plan of how employers are protecting the health of their employees
3. Access to rapid retraining for available jobs

Figure 21 shows the list of resources applicable to all respondents, sorted in order from most likely to be used to least likely to be used.

Figure 21 Likelihood of using resources

How likely would you be to use each of these resources?



Color legend

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

With the exception of “a clear plan of how employers are protecting the health of their employees,” all resources saw at least a slight increase in respondents indicating they would be somewhat or extremely likely to use the resources from 2021 to 2022 (Figure 22).

The above-mentioned statement had a 12.3% decrease in the percentage of respondents who indicated they would be extremely likely to use such a resource. This was enough of a decrease for “access to appropriate technology and equipment” to replace it as the most highly endorsed resource. This indicates that while safety in light of the COVID-19 pandemic is still a concern, respondents are now able to turn their thoughts back to more common workplace issues.

When looking at the likelihood of using these resources across gender, age, and race, survey responses showed that respondents 54 years of age and younger (**Figure 23**), women (**Figure 24**), and respondents of color (**Figure 25**) are more likely to use all of the resources listed.

Figure 22 Likelihood of using resources by survey year

How likely would you be to use each of these resources?

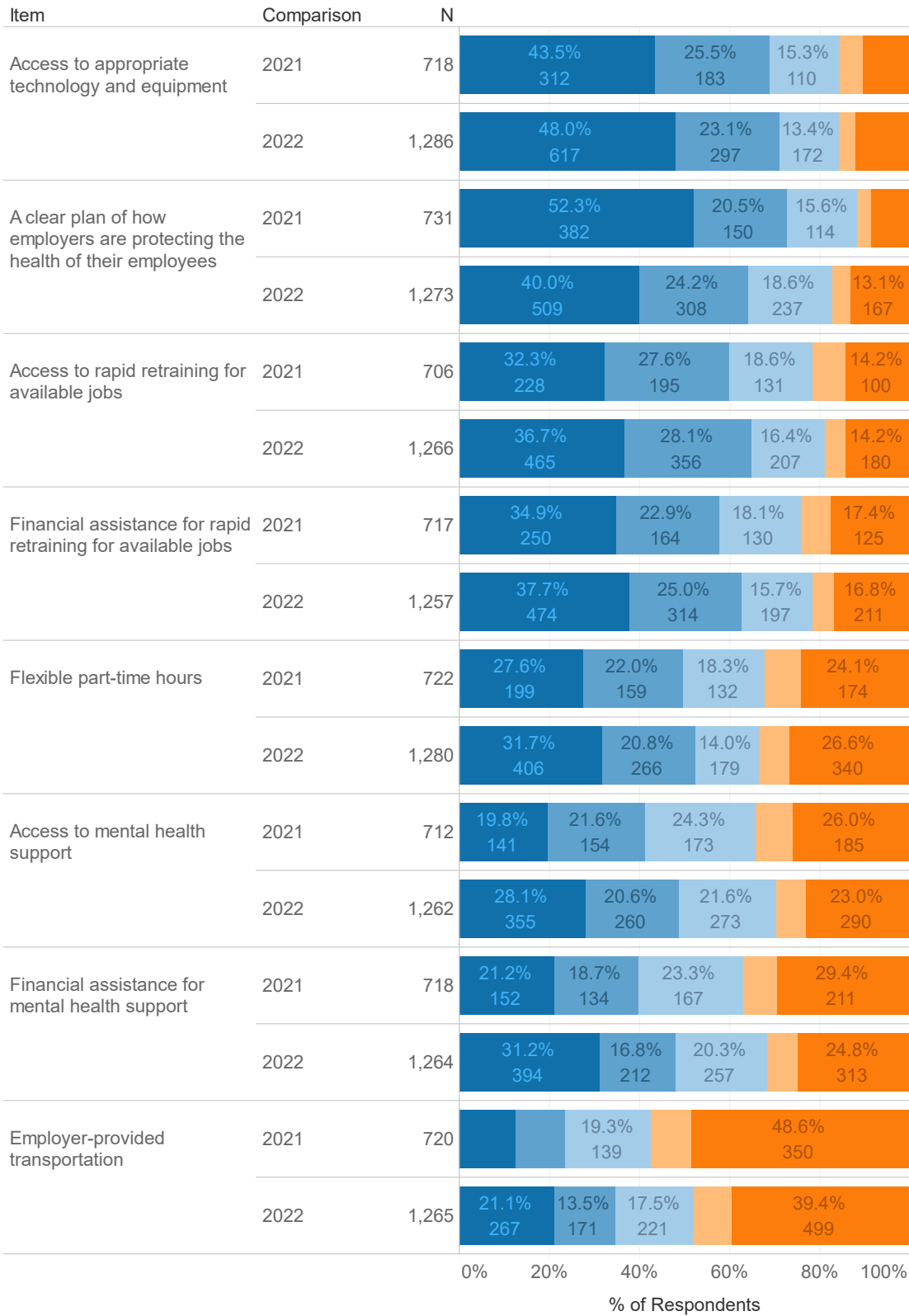


Figure 23 Likelihood of using resources by age

How likely would you be to use each of these resources?

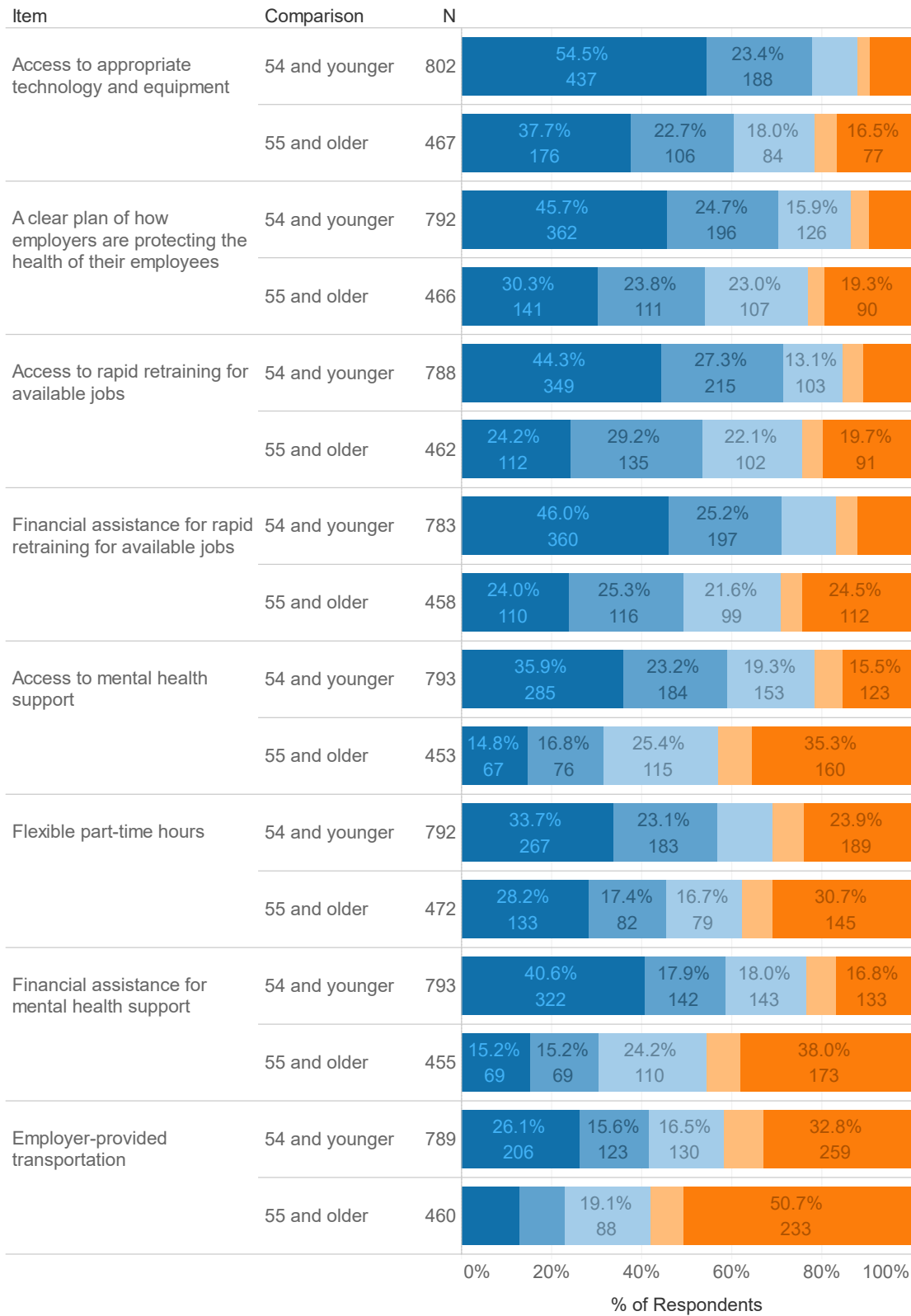


Figure 24 Likelihood of using resources by gender

How likely would you be to use each of these resources?

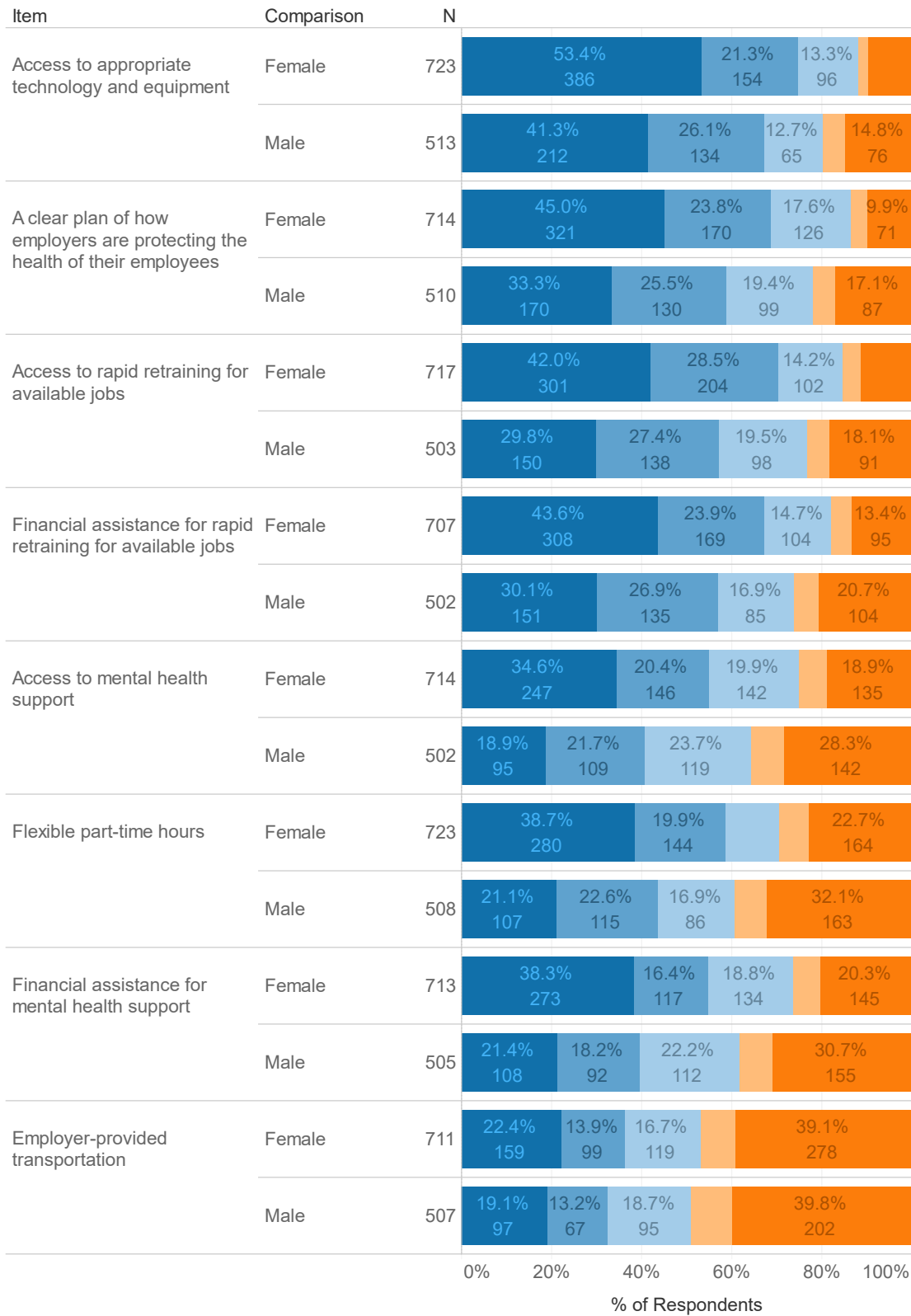
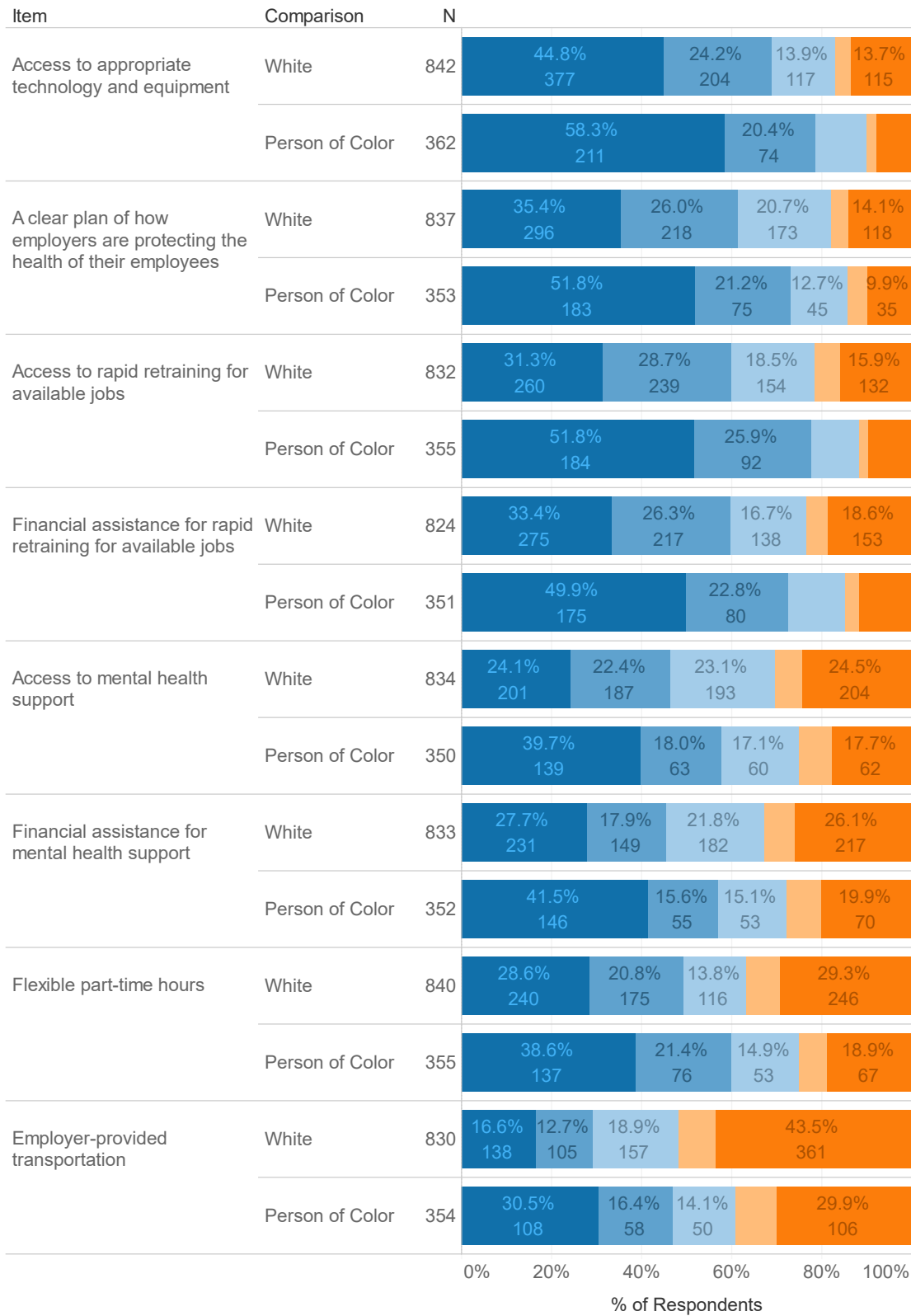


Figure 25 Likelihood of using resources by race

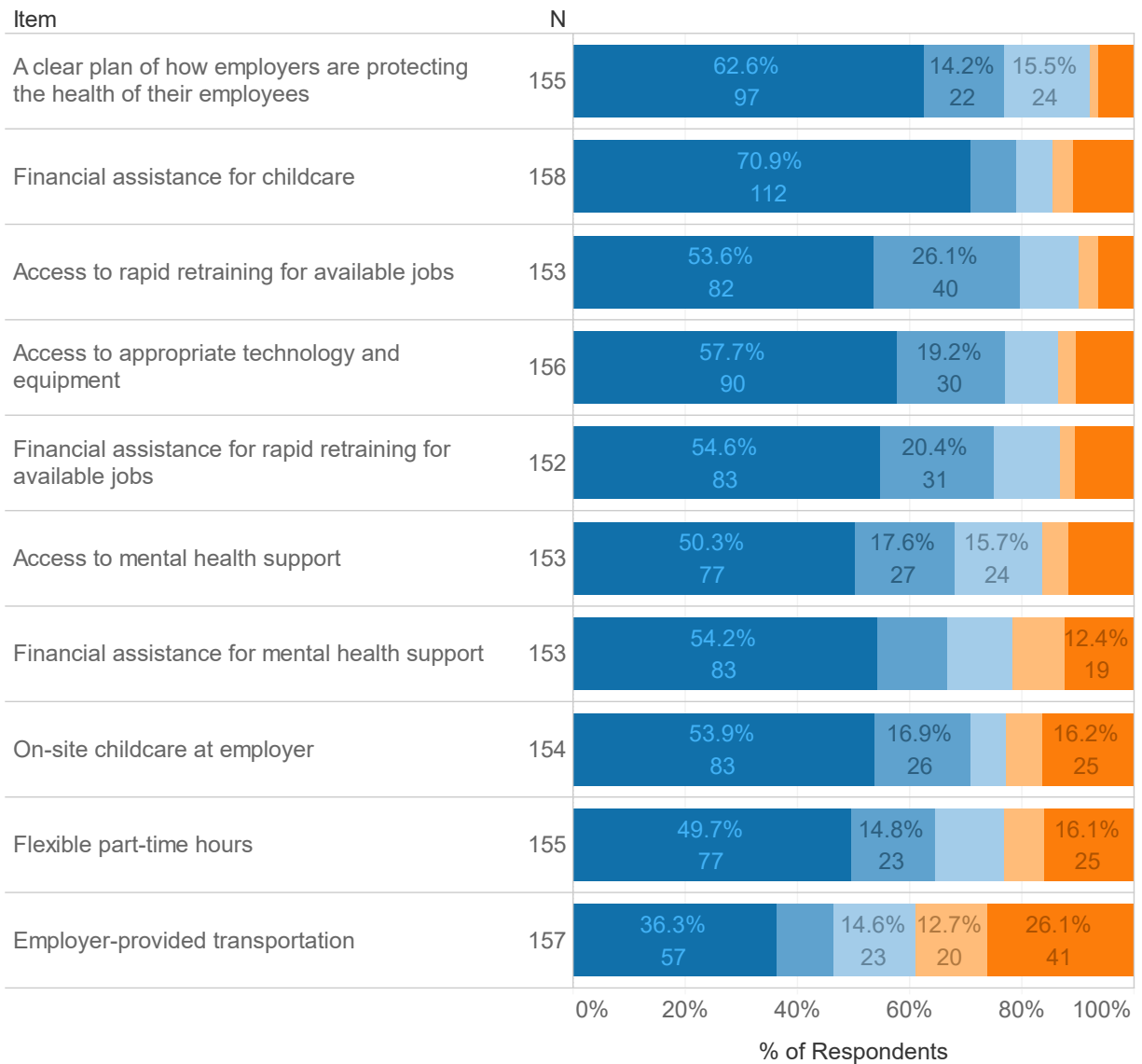
How likely would you be to use each of these resources?



Among respondents who had children requiring childcare, financial assistance for childcare emerged as the second-most likely resource to be used, while onsite childcare at employer was the third-least likely resource to be used (Figure 26). All the resources, with the exception of employer-provided transportation, were highly endorsed by respondents with children requiring childcare, indicating a great need for this group of jobseekers.

Figure 26 Likelihood of using resources among respondents requiring childcare

How likely would you be to use each of these resources?



Color legend

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

Recommendations and Conclusion

A few modifications to the survey administration process have the potential to increase the number of responses and quality of data in future years.

1. **Send individualized email invitations and reminders**

Emails that include the recipient's first name instead of a generic greeting may draw more attention and yield a higher response rate.

2. **Brand the survey for each Michigan Works! service area**

Including the specific regional agency name and logo on emails and at the beginning of the survey may make respondents feel more connected to and likely to respond to the survey.

3. **Track bounce and response rates at the regional or individual level**

The number of survey responses varied greatly by region. Much of this variation may be due to differences in the number of email addresses survey invitations were sent to across regions. However, it is unclear how many email addresses were on the original contact list for each region. It is also unknown how many of the email addresses may have been invalid or how many messages may have bounced.

Without this information, we cannot calculate response rates for each region.

Survey results highlight several barriers jobseekers in Michigan are facing that make it difficult for them to find work and work. Despite the number of challenges they face, respondents also provided feedback on opportunities to address these barriers.

1. **Focus on addressing lingering social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workforce.**

In 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents were primarily concerned with how employers were directly addressing the health and safety of their employees. However, respondents in the 2022 wave of the survey seemed to focus more on how employers are going to address the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, many respondents showed concern about stagnating wages in the midst of rapid inflation of basic necessities like housing, food, and transportation. Respondents from this year's survey also expressed a desire for the kinds of flexibility offered during the pandemic, such as remote work options and flexible hours. As employers consider how to best recruit and retain employees, it will be important for them to adapt to the changing needs of the workforce.

2. **Develop resources to prevent older jobseekers from falling through the cracks.**

Almost half of survey respondents were 55 years or older, and many of these respondents indicated frustration that despite their experience and qualifications, they were being overlooked for positions that suited them. One potential solution would be developing a program that bridges the gap between older jobseekers and employers. Such a program may provide resources to hiring managers that aid in avoiding age bias while hiring, while also providing older jobseekers with resources for navigating a changing job market.

3. **Implement more transparent communication processes with jobseekers.**

Many respondents indicated frustration with the lack of transparency throughout the job search process. Several people noted that even though they were dedicating a lot of time and effort to their job search—even applying for several types of positions across multiple industries—they rarely received any follow-up communication regarding their application, even if they were highly qualified for the position. This lack of feedback makes it difficult for jobseekers to know how to best position themselves to potential employers and can put immense strain on individuals looking for work. Employers could consider providing feedback to applicants and interviewees that are not a good fit for the position, allowing applicants to better understand employers' reasoning.

4. **Increase wages and expand benefits.**

Given the prevalence of respondents' frustration with low potential wages as an obstacle to finding work and working, employers might benefit from exploring strategies to increase wages to better recruit potential employees. However, adequate wages are only one part of the solution; many jobseekers also highlighted the need for benefits packages that support their health and wellbeing. Especially as many are caring for young, elderly, sick, or disabled family, jobseekers are concerned with finding jobs that provide wages to cover their day-to-day needs and benefits that support them in maintaining their responsibilities.

Each of these strategies has the potential to improve the job search experience and working conditions in an uncertain and unstable environment. Nearly half of respondents reporting feeling some amount of anxiety or dread, particularly related to unemployment and searching for work, and by implementing solutions to many of these barriers, employers could potentially alleviate much of the anxiety that jobseekers are feeling.

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Welcome!

What is this survey about?

The purpose of this research is to help Michigan Works! better understand the current state of the job market and workforce pool in Michigan. Michigan Works! would like to learn how to better match people who are looking for work with jobs that are available. This survey is not affiliated with the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency; your responses to this survey will remain anonymous and will not affect your unemployment benefits status.

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to take this survey. The survey takes most people 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey will ask questions about your employment status, your search for work, barriers to working, and yourself.

Do I have to participate?

No, you do not have to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to participate. You may choose to skip questions.

How will my identity be protected?

All information is for the sole purpose of this research study and is anonymous. Your responses cannot be linked to you.

What are the risks?

You may experience some emotional distress because the survey contains questions about unemployment.

What are the benefits?

You will receive no personal benefit for your participation. More generally, researchers hope your response will help Michigan Works! assess current needs and guide future efforts to support jobseekers.

Whom can I contact with questions?

You can send questions about this research project to Dr. Laura Luchies, Principal Consultant at DataWise Consulting, by emailing laura.luchies@wearedatawise.com. You can send questions about your rights as a research subject or report any research misconduct or negative impact to you as a result of your participation by emailing irb@calvin.edu. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Calvin University.

By clicking "NEXT," you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old and you are consenting to participate in this survey.

Employment status

Your answers to the following questions will help determine which questions you see throughout the rest of the survey.

Are you currently employed?

- Yes, I am currently employed.
- No, I am **not** currently employed.

Which of the following best describes your employment?

Please check all that apply.

- I have full-time employment (30 hours or more per week).
- I have part-time employment (fewer than 30 hours per week).
- I have sufficient employment to meet my needs.
- I do not have sufficient employment to meet my needs.
- My current employment is seasonal or temporary.
- I am worried that I may be laid off in the next few months.

Is the reason for your unemployment related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Yes, my unemployment is related to COVID-19.
- No, my unemployment is **not** related to COVID-19.

Which of the following best describes the reason for your unemployment?

- I was laid off from my previous job.
- I was placed on a temporary furlough from my previous job.
- I left my previous job voluntarily.
- I am self-employed or own a business, and I cannot be open due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- I completed a temporary or seasonal position.
- I am retired from the workforce.
- I am unable to work due to a disability.
- I am unable to work due to a disability related to COVID-19.
- Other, please describe: _____

Which of the following **educational or development activities** apply to you?
Please check all that apply.

- I am enrolled as a full-time student.
- I am enrolled as a part-time student.
- I am actively learning new job skills.
- I am working on changing to a new profession or vocation.
- I am self-employed.
- I am working on starting a business.
- Other, please describe:
- None of the above

About your search for work

Are you actively looking for work?

If you are currently employed, you may be looking for better or more secure employment.

- Yes
- No

How much effort are you able to dedicate toward finding work?

- None at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot
- A great deal

How much success are you having looking for work?

- None at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot
- A great deal

Barriers to work and potential new supports

Your answers to the following questions will help determine which questions you see throughout this section.

Do you have any children in your household?

- Yes
- No

Are any of your children in school?

- Yes
- No

Do any of your children need childcare?

- Yes
- No

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to **working**?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	<i>Don't know/Can't say</i>
It is difficult to find childcare.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is difficult to pay for childcare.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have to provide transportation for my children to and from school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't feel like it's safe to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am caring for someone who is sick.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is difficult to find reliable transportation to and from work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am in a high-risk category for COVID-19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My doctor advised me not to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am feeling general anxiety or dread.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please describe:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to **finding work**?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	<i>Don't know/Can't say</i>
I don't have the tools or ability to job search.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potential wages aren't enough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My skills don't meet available jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workplaces with available jobs would not be welcoming to someone like me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My current employment makes it difficult to look for better or more secure employment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please describe:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 How likely would you be to use each of these resources?

	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely	<i>Don't know/Can't say</i>
On-site childcare at employer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial assistance for childcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible part-time hours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A clear plan of how employers are protecting the health of their employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employer-provided transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Access to mental health support

Financial assistance for mental health support

Access to rapid retraining for available jobs

Financial assistance for rapid retraining for available jobs

Access to appropriate technology and equipment

About you

What is your age?

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 - 74

75 - 84

85 or older

Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes your gender?

Male

Female

- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe: _____
- Prefer not to answer*

Are you transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer*

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2-year degree
- 4-year degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate
- Prefer not to answer*

Q24 Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated

Never married

Prefer not to answer

Q25 Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7 or more people

Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes your race and ethnicity?

Check all that apply.

Native American or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian

Other Pacific Islander

White

Other, please specify: _____

Prefer not to answer

As of **January 1, 2021**, what was your annual household income?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- More than \$150,000
- Prefer not to answer*

Q28 As of **today**, what is your annual household income?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999

- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- More than \$150,000
- Prefer not to answer*

In which ZIP code do you reside?

Closing comments

Please use the box below to provide any additional comments.

Almost done!

If you would like to go back and change any of your answers, please do so now. If you are ready to submit your survey, click the "SUBMIT" button.