

IN PURSUIT OF BALANCE

Fostering a Balanced Work Life

2024

RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF ALGOMA RESIDENTS
CONCERNING QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

ABOUT AWIC

The Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation (AWIC) is Algoma's Workforce Planning Board. AWIC's goal is to provide access to easy-to-understand, quality-assured labour market information (LMI) for the Algoma region, allowing individuals to make decisions about future careers, employers to plan and find talent, and community stakeholders to inform policy and support local workforces.

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BACKGROUND

The coining of the term “Great Resignation” is attributed to Anthony Klotz, who used the phrase in a short article for Bloomberg News in May 2021. The “Great Resignation” captures the unprecedented wave of individuals departing from their jobs in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Widely regarded as a transformative event, the Great Resignation reshapes how workers approach the delicate balance between work and life. This paradigm shift significantly contributes to the ongoing labour shortages in various sectors.

The pandemic's impact on the labour market created considerable upheaval, with layoffs and subsequent mass hiring generating tumultuous workforce data. Amidst numerous accounts of employees leaving their jobs for an improved work-life balance, it is crucial to discern anecdotal stories from substantial evidence. Contrary to the narratives, the overall job departure rates have not seen a substantial increase, barring retirements, an anticipated outcome given the aging population in Ontario.

The "Quality of Work Life" concept encompasses diverse elements of an individual's work experience, ranging from compensation and job security to working conditions, organizational relationships, and the meaningfulness of one's work. As organizations grapple with workforce shortages, understanding the factors influencing job satisfaction becomes paramount. This report delves into primary data gathered across the Algoma District, focusing on the perspectives of employed and non-employed individuals regarding their work priorities.

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of job quality is essential, even if achieving an ideal job for everyone is impractical. Employers can elevate overall work quality through innovative job design and enhanced people management skills for front-line managers to create a more positive and fulfilling work experience.

This report unveils critical findings that significantly impact employee job satisfaction and retention. The insights derived from this data will guide forthcoming workshops and summits for employers and will be shared with community stakeholders to collaboratively address workforce challenges and enhance job satisfaction and retention rates. The content is grounded in the perspectives of individuals within a specific timeframe, aiming to spotlight current trends that individuals value.

Survey Insights:

The survey solicited respondents' opinions on a series of statements categorized under various themes. Noteworthy variations emerged between permanent and non-permanent employees, including job satisfaction, autonomy and support, working conditions and environment, work-life balance, income and benefits, job security and professional development, stress and work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report delves into the findings of a comprehensive 2023 survey conducted by the Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation, which focused on assessing the quality of work life among Algoma residents. Conducted over three months (May to July 2023), the survey garnered insights from 298 respondents, encompassing diverse employment scenarios, including full-time permanent and non-permanent roles and individuals who were unemployed, on leave, or recently retired.

KEY FINDINGS

Job Satisfaction	<i>89% of respondents expressed job satisfaction, but a significant portion considered changing employers (38%) or quitting (36%) in the last six months.</i>
Work Conditions	While many found their jobs meaningful, 21% reported high-stress levels, and 24% indicated insufficient staff for the workload.
Job Preferences	Respondents liked their jobs primarily due to fair wages, positive work environments, and employment-related benefits. Complaints included poor management, low wages, and an imbalanced work-life equation.
Reasons for Job Search	Those seeking alternative employment cited better wages, improved work environments, or burnout and work-life balance concerns.
Non-Permanent Employment	Half of non-permanent employees work involuntarily due to limited long-term opportunities. They also have less access to benefits, including paid vacation.
Paid Sick Days	Union members and permanent employees are more likely to use their allocated sick days, suggesting that some eligible employees don't feel secure using them.
Working Hours	Non-union members and males are more likely to work more hours than desired, while non-permanent employees work fewer hours than they would like.
Mandatory Overtime	Non-union members are more likely to have mandatory overtime compared to union members.
Unemployment	Unemployed respondents, often employed in non-permanent jobs, face more employment-related challenges, including a lack of benefits and mandatory overtime.
Disabilities	Respondents with disabilities often face employment disadvantages, with 60% believing potential employers would view them as disadvantaged. Accommodation requests include working from home and modified work hours.
Accommodation Requests	Two-thirds of respondents with disabilities asked for accommodations, with 62% receiving them. Reasons for not providing accommodations include refusal and cost.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Permanent Employment:** Providing permanent positions is attractive to employees.
- **Competitive Wages:** Fair compensation is crucial for job satisfaction.
- **Employment-Related Benefits:** Offering benefits, such as paid vacation, is highly valued.
- **Healthy Workplace:** A positive work environment, work-life balance, and effective management practices are essential for employee retention.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM RESPONDENT COMMENTS

- 28% expressed concerns about management, calling for improved HR training, eliminating favouritism, addressing toxic workplace dynamics, and related issues.
- 18% believed that wages did not match their workload.
- 16% emphasized the need for a better work-life balance, often attributing this issue to management.
- 12% supported the adoption of hybrid work arrangements to enhance work-life balance.
- 7% advocated for a four-day work week.
- 7% underscored the significance of work-related benefits.

In summary, this report offers a comprehensive analysis of Algoma residents' work experiences, emphasizing both the positive aspects and challenges within the local workforce. It provides valuable insights for employers seeking to attract and retain talent, underlining the significance of permanent employment, competitive wages, employment-related benefits, fostering a healthy workplace environment, work-life balance, and effective management and HR practices.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS | RESPONDENTS

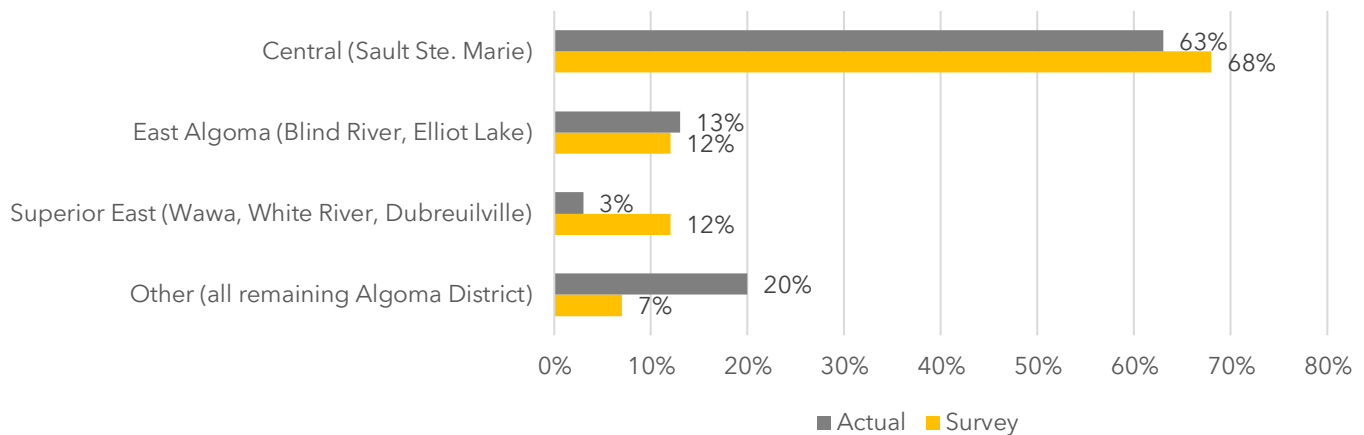
This section will comprehensively profile the survey respondents based on various demographic attributes. We will also endeavour to make relevant comparisons, wherever data permits, between the characteristics of the survey sample and the broader population of residents aged 15 years and older within Algoma District, as outlined in the 2021 Census.

LOCATION

Chart 1 shows the percentage distribution of survey respondents by geographic area and compares these proportions to the figures for the Algoma District. The match is relatively good, with some over-representation among residents of Superior East and a larger under-representation of residents from the other parts of Algoma District.

CHART 1

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION FOR ALGOMA AREAS



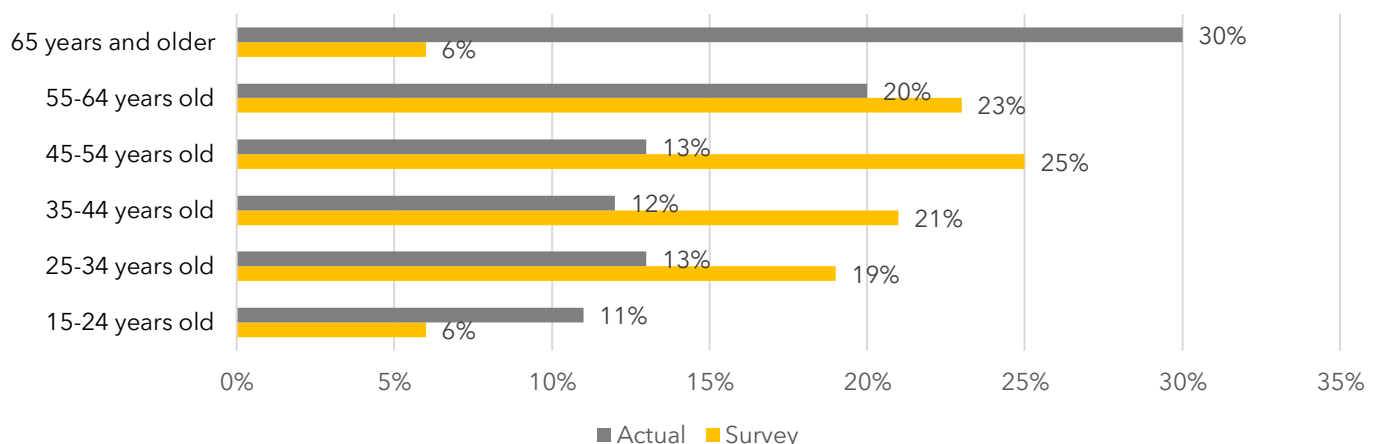
Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

AGE

Chart 2 compares survey respondents' age categories with the actual age distribution in Algoma District. Notably, the survey sample over-represented individuals aged 25 to 54, aligning with the focus on work-life quality. Conversely, youth (aged 15 to 24) and seniors (65 and older) are under-represented. This age distribution reflects the survey's emphasis on issues relevant to the prime working-age population.

CHART 2

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION BY AGE CATEGORIES



Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

GENDER IDENTITY

Table 1 compares the gender representation of the survey sample to the actual population. There is a considerable over-representation of females among the survey respondents compared to the actual gender split in the Algoma population.

While Statistics Canada does not report specifically on non-binary populations at a local level, it does provide an overall estimate of the transgender or non-binary population by comparing the responses to two Census questions: gender at birth and self-reported gender identity. On that basis, Statistics Canada estimates that one in 300 individuals aged 15 years and older in Canada is transgender or non-binary,¹ which amounts to 0.33%, the same as the proportion of the survey population.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION BY GENDER IDENTITY

GENDER	Survey	Actual
Male	25.8%	48.9%
Female	73.8%	51.1%
Non-binary	0.3%	Not available

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

Among survey respondents, 10.7% identified themselves as a person with a disability. For comparison's sake, the most recent statistical survey is Statistics Canada's Canadian Survey on Disability 2017, which estimates that among those aged 15 years and older in Ontario, 24% indicate that they are persons with a disability.² Based on that context, the survey sample under-represents persons with a disability.

CANADIAN-BORN AND IMMIGRATION STATUS

Table 2 shows the distribution of survey respondents by Canadian-born and immigrant status. There is a close match between the proportions among these various categories.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY CANADIAN-BORN AND IMMIGRATION STATUS

CANADIAN-BORN AND IMMIGRATION STATUS	Survey	Actual
Canadian citizen by naturalization	91%	92%
Landed immigrant or permanent resident of 5 years or more	2%	7%
Landed immigrant or permanent resident of less than 5 years	2%	1%
Non-permanent resident (e.g., work or study permit)	5%	1%

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Among survey respondents, 14.4% identify as Indigenous, only slightly above the 12.9% of Algoma residents aged 15 years and older who identified as Indigenous in the 2021 Census.

¹ Statistics Canada, "Canada is the first country to provide census data on transgender and non-binary people," *The Daily*, April 27, 2022.

² Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0374-01.

RACIALIZED IDENTITY

Table 3 shows the breakdown of survey respondents by racialized identity and the corresponding proportions for the Algoma District.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION BY RACIALIZED IDENTITY

RACIALIZED IDENTITY	Survey	Actual
Not identified with a racialized group (White)	87.1%	96.8%
South Asian	3.9%	1.2%
Chinese	0.0%	0.5%
Black	1.6%	0.6%
Filipino	1.2%	0.2%
Arab	0.4%	0.1%
Latin American	1.6%	0.2%
Southeast Asian	0.0%	0.1%
West Asian	0.8%	0.1%
Korean	0.0%	0.1%
Japanese	0.4%	0.0%
Other racialized	3.1%	0.2%

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

Overall, there is a good match between the distribution of racialized groups among the survey respondents and the general population. The fact is that the racialized population in Algoma accounts for only 3.2% of all residents, such that 12.9% of the survey population being racialized means that the sub-populations in this category are amply represented.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Table 4 highlights the educational attainment levels of the survey sample and Algoma residents (the educational attainment data is based on the population aged 25 to 64). Residents with a high school diploma or less are vastly under-represented in the survey sample (15% in the survey sample and 49% in the general population), and correspondingly, those with a university degree (a bachelor's or higher) are considerably over-represented (43% among survey respondents and 17% in the overall population).

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Survey	Actual
No certificate, diploma, or degree	1%	18%
High school (secondary) diploma	14%	30%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate	8%	8%
College or other non-university diploma	28%	25%
University certificate below bachelor level	5%	2%
Bachelor's degree	31%	12%
University degree above bachelor's	12%	4%

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The table below illustrates the employment status of survey respondents at the time of the survey.

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employment status	Percent
Employed full-time (30+ hours per week)	77.7%
Employed part-time (less than 30 hours per week) and looking for full-time work	1.7%
Employed part-time (less than 30 hours per week) and prefer not to/unable to work full-time	7.1%
Unemployed and looking for work (either full-time, part-time, casual, etc.)	7.4%
Unemployed and not looking for work/unable to work	0.7%
On leave (parental, maternity, etc.)	1.7%
Retired	3.7%

A data source that would profile Algoma residents for each category listed above does not exist. Still, there is some data for a few of these categories to provide a comparison. For example, using the 2021 Census, the % of residents aged 15 years and older were employed was 49.7%. While that number may vary over time, it nevertheless indicates that the survey sample is considerably over-represented by respondents who are employed, either full-time or part-time. For this survey, however, that is not bad, as the desire is to investigate issues related to the quality of work life.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

While some of the characteristics of the survey respondents would constitute an over-representation of a demographic group compared to their actual distribution in the Algoma population, in some instances, that is understandable, for example, in the case of a higher proportion of prime working-age adults (25 to 54 years old), or among those who are employed. The table below summarizes the other categories and notes whether over-representation exists. These features should be considered when applying the survey findings to the general population.

Out of proportion	In proportion
Females over-represented	Canadian-born and immigrants
Persons with disabilities under-represented	Indigenous identity
Residents with a high diploma or less are under-represented	Racialized identity
Residents with a university degree are over-represented	

EMPLOYED OR ON LEAVE | RESPONDENT PROFILE

The following set of characteristics is focused on respondents who are employed or on leave, representing almost 80% of the survey sample. In a later section, the responses of those who are unemployed or retired will be analyzed, and their responses will be compared to those in this section. The characteristics of the respondents who are employed or on leave will be compared to the exact characteristics of the Algoma population, where that data is available. (For brevity, this group will be referred to as the employed respondents.)

EMPLOYEE OR SELF-EMPLOYED

Among the employed survey respondents, 93% were employees, and 7% were self-employed. A partial comparison is the 2021 Census, where the Sault Ste. Marie Census Agglomeration (the geography for which a public table is available), 8% of workers were self-employed, a close match.

EMPLOYEE STATUS

Employed respondents were asked to indicate their employee status. The answers are illustrated in Table 6. The 2021 Census indicates that the Sault Ste. Marie Census Agglomeration, 77.3% of employees were permanent, once again, a relatively good match.

TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EMPLOYEE STATUS

Employment status	Percent
My job does not have a specified end date (i.e., permanent)	85.7%
I am on a contract with a length of one year or more	7.4%
I am on a contract with a length of less than one year	3.7%
I am in a seasonal, on-call, casual, or temporary job	3.3%

JOB TITLE

Employed respondents were asked to name the job title at their main job. As one can imagine, the 232 answers provided resulted in a very expansive range of titles, as any given occupation can have multiple labels. Many job titles would fall within a senior manager designation (chief executive officer, president, executive director), and there were many types of counsellors (counsellor – social worker, child, and adolescent counsellor) – 14 in total. 10 titles fit the administrative assistant/clerk occupational categories.

One way to communicate the range of these occupations is to assign them to categories that reflect the level of training and experience expected of that occupation. The table below lists Statistics Canada's six TEER (Training, Education, Experience, and Responsibility) categories, the assignment of the survey job titles, and the actual Census 2021 distribution of occupations in the Algoma District by TEER categories.

From Table 7, the employed survey sample has a disproportionately large number of individuals in Management Occupations (these occupations include senior managers and intermediate managers, such as HR Managers, Operations Managers, or Branch Managers). The employed survey sample is also significantly underrepresented in terms of individuals working in occupations that typically require a high school diploma or less.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION BY TEER CATEGORIES AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION

TEER (Training, Education, Experience and Responsibility) categories	Survey	Actual
Management occupations	24%	9%
Occupations usually require a university degree	17%	17%
Occupations usually require a college diploma or apprenticeship training of 2 or more years, or supervisory occupations	34%	24%
Occupations usually require a college diploma or apprenticeship training of less than 2 years or more than 6 months of on-the-job training	15%	18%
Occupations usually require a secondary school diploma or several weeks of on-the-job training	5%	14%
Occupations usually require short-term work demonstrations and no formal education	5%	17%

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

BROAD OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES

Broad occupational categories refer to clusters of similar functions instead of the skill and experience categories reflected in the TEER categories. Table 8 below provides the distribution of employed respondents by broad occupational categories and compares it to the actual Census 2021 percentages.

TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION BY BROAD OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION

Broad occupational categories	Survey	Actual
Legislative and senior management	4.7%	0.7%
Business, finance, and administration	28.5%	13.7%
Natural and applied sciences	0.4%	5.4%
Health care	11.6%	10.9%
Education, law and social, community, and government services	29.3%	14.5%
Art, culture, recreation, and sport	1.7%	1.8%
Sales and service	11.2%	24.2%
Trades, transport and equipment operators	6.9%	20.1%
Natural resources, agriculture, and related production	1.3%	3.4%
Manufacturing and utilities	4.3%	5.2%

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

The broad occupational category of Legislative and Senior Management is a small subset of the TEER category of Management Occupations; middle management occupations are spread across each of the other broad occupational categories.

There is an over-representation of individuals employed in Business, Finance, and Administration as well as in Education, Law, and Social, Community and Government Services, and under-representation among Sales and Service as well as Trades, Transport, and Equipment Operators.

INDUSTRY CATEGORIES

Table 9 compares the distribution of employed respondents by industry categories to the actual 2021 census figures for the Algoma District.

The significant differences are:

Over-representation among the survey sample:

- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Other Services

Under-representation among the survey sample:

- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION BY INDUSTRY CATEGORIES AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION

Industry categories	Survey	Actual
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.4%	2.2%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	1.3%	2.6%
Utilities	2.2%	1.2%
Construction	6.5%	6.7%
Manufacturing	3.5%	9.9%
Wholesale trade	0.4%	1.7%
Retail trade	2.6%	13.0%
Transportation and warehousing	3.5%	4.1%
Information and cultural industries	1.3%	1.0%
Finance and insurance	4.3%	2.5%
Real estate and rental and leasing	0.4%	1.4%
Professional, scientific and technical services	5.2%	4.0%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.4%	0.1%
Administrative and support, waste management & remediation	1.3%	3.9%
Educational services	9.1%	8.4%
Health care and social assistance	29.7%	18.7%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2.6%	2.2%
Accommodation and food services	4.7%	5.7%
Other services (except public administration)	12.1%	3.6%
Public administration	8.6%	7.0%

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT INCOME

The survey also collected information on the annual employment income of employed respondents. Table 10 below presents those results. The available comparison data is the distribution by employment income for all residents who reported employment income for 2020 in the Sault Ste. Marie Census Agglomeration, according to the 2021 Census.

There is a very significant under-representation of employed respondents who earned under \$20,000 in annual employment income and an over-representation of individuals who earned \$30,000 to \$79,999, as well as among those who earned \$100,000 and over.

TABLE 10

**DISTRIBUTION BY EMPLOYMENT INCOME CATEGORIES AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND ACTUAL POPULATION
(FOR THIS TABLE, SAULT STE. MARIE CA ONLY)**

Employment income categories	Survey	Actual
Less than \$20,000	2.6%	38.7%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	5.2%	8.8%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	12.1%	8.5%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	13.4%	8.3%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	19.0%	6.8%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	18.1%	5.8%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	10.3%	4.8%
\$80,000 to \$89,999	3.5%	5.1%
\$90,000 to \$99,999	3.9%	4.7%
\$100,000 and over	12.1%	8.6%

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census for the actual figures

JOB TENURE

Table 11 shows the distribution of employed respondents by their job tenure. The comparison data is only available at the Ontario level, and it uses slightly different categories, but the overall picture is still helpful. There is a relatively close match when comparing the job tenure distribution of employed survey respondents to the Ontario figures.

TABLE 11

DISTRIBUTION BY JOB TENURE CATEGORIES AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND ONTARIO FIGURES (2022)

Survey respondents		Ontario all employed (2022)	
Job tenure duration	Percent	Percent	Job tenure duration
Less than one month	3.5%	6.1%	1-3 months
1-6 months	4.3%	5.8%	4-6 months
6-12 months	9.9%	8.7%	7-12 months
More than one year	82.3%	79.4%	More than one year

Statistics Canada Table: 14-10-0411-01 for the actual figures

UNION MEMBERSHIP

Among employed respondents, 38% indicated that they are union members. Data on union membership among the general population is only publicly available at the provincial level; in Ontario, 26% of workers belong to a union,³ so the survey sample is somewhat over-represented regarding union members.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS

The following summarizes the degree to which the survey sample of employed respondents corresponds to the characteristics of employed residents of Algoma.

Out of proportion	In proportion
Individuals employed in management occupations are over-represented	Employee or self-employed
Individuals employed in occupations typically require a high school diploma or less under-represented.	Job tenure
Individuals employed in Business, Finance & Administration and Education, Law & Social, Community and Government Services over-represented	
Individuals employed in Sales & Service and Trades, Transport & Equipment Operators are under-represented.	
Individuals employed in Health Care & Social Assistance or Other Services over-represented	
Individuals employed in Manufacturing or Retail Trade under-represented	
Individuals earning \$30,000 to \$79,999, and those earning over \$100,000 over-represented	
Individuals earning under \$20,000 under-represented	
Union members over-represented	

Given that this survey investigates issues relating to the quality of work life, the representation issue that could have the greatest impact on assessing the responses is that of gender representation. For this reason, the substantive analysis will provide the survey response breakdowns for both males and females. Indeed, it just makes sense to illustrate the separate responses for men and women, as they often are employed in different industries and occupations, which could have a bearing on their quality of work life.

Two other categories likely highlight the different quality of work-life characteristics, and these will also be highlighted, where appropriate, in the overall responses: union and non-union members; and permanent and non-permanent (worked in a contract, seasonal, on-call, casual or temporary job) employees.

³ This is from monthly Statistics Canada data, Table: 14-10-0069-01.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE | EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS

This section analyzes the responses to those questions in the survey that refer to choices relating to employment and quality of work life among survey respondents who are employed.

THE MAIN REASON FOR THE CONTRACT, SEASONAL, ON-CALL, CASUAL OR TEMPORARY JOB

Employed respondents who indicated that they were not employed in a permanent job were asked the main reason why they worked in a contract, seasonal, on-call, casual, or temporary job. Their answers are presented in Table 12.

TABLE 12

THE MAIN REASON FOR WORKING IN A CONTRACT, SEASONAL, ON-CALL, CASUAL, OR TEMPORARY JOB (N=34)⁴

Reason	Percent
• Lack of longer-term employment opportunities	44%
• Other (please specify)	21%
• To engage in work that I am passionate about	12%
• To transition to a new job	12%
• Health, family, or personal considerations	6%
• To gain experience in my field of study	6%
• To practice or master a new skill	0%

Almost half (44%) of the respondents indicated that their choice of temporary work was involuntary. Rather, it was because of the lack of longer-term employment opportunities (these proportions were similar among males and females). Another one-fifth indicated it was some reason other than the six options that the survey provided, although none of these respondents chose to elaborate on what that other reason was. One in eight (12%) chose temporary work to engage in something they were passionate about, and another 12% said it was for transitioning to a new job.

THE MAIN REASON FOR BEING SELF-EMPLOYED

Employed respondents who indicated they were self-employed were asked the main reason for choosing self-employment. The responses are profiled below in Table 13.

TABLE 13

THE MAIN REASON FOR BEING SELF-EMPLOYED (N=17)

Reason	Percent
To decide my own work hours, wage, or location	35%
To engage in work that I am passionate about	29%
To work in my field of expertise	29%
Other (please specify)	6%
Unable to find work as an employee	0%
Health, family, or personal considerations	0%
To transition to a new job	0%
To practice or master a new skill	0%

⁴ "N" refers to the number of responses to this question. Because only 35 respondents indicated that they worked in contract or temporary jobs, the number responding to this question was much lower.

Whereas a large proportion of respondents who engaged in contract or temporary work did so because there was no permanent work, the self-employed do what they do out of choice, either to be their own master (35%), to engage in work they are passionate about (29%), or to work in their field of expertise (29%). The only other option chosen was “Other” (6%) because the person inherited the business. Only 7% of respondents were self-employed, so a limited number of individuals responded to this question.

ACCESS TO JOB BENEFITS

Employed respondents were asked which benefits they had access to as part of their employment. The answers are shown in Table 14, together with cross-tabulations by several categories of respondents: males; females; union members; non-union members; permanent employees (job does not have a specific end date); and non-permanent employees (working on contract, seasonal, on-call, casual or temporary job).

Significant differences exist in access to employment-related benefits by different population groups. Those who work non-permanent jobs have the least access to benefits. Not only do 28% of them indicate that they receive no benefits whatsoever (compared to 5% saying the same thing among permanent employees), but among most of the benefits, there is a relatively low number accessing each of the benefits. For example, the most common benefit, paid vacation leave, is a benefit that 84% of permanent employees enjoy, while among non-permanent employees, the figure is less than half that, at 40%. A slightly smaller proportion of non-permanent employees receive supplemental or dental care (36%) or paid sick leave (36%). For all other benefits, less than one-quarter of non-permanent employees have access to any one of them.

In almost all cases, union members have notably higher access to benefits than non-union members. While union and non-union members have equal access to paid vacation leave (76% and 75%, respectively), in most other cases, the incidence of benefits is around 15% to 30% higher among union members than non-union members.

There is only a slight difference between access to benefits between men and women, yet considerably more female survey respondents belong to a union (41%) than males (26%). For some benefits, women have more access (notably paid sick leave), but for other benefits, male access is around 10% higher (pension plan, disability insurance or death benefits, workers’ compensation).

The “Other” benefit category had seven responses. Some identified benefit options not covered by the supplied answers, such as an employee stock plan, bonuses, or a vehicle. Others identified partial contributions to benefits or benefits that reflected a combination, such as sick leave and personal leave.

TABLE 14**ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT-RELATED BENEFITS, ALL RESPONDENTS AND BY SELECT GROUPS**

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non- permanent employees
Paid vacation leave	75%	74%	76%	76%	75%	84%	40%
Supplemental medical or dental care	70%	68%	70%	80%	63%	78%	36%
Paid sick leave	66%	61%	68%	80%	57%	75%	36%
Pension plan (include group RRSPs and matching RRSP contributions)	66%	72%	64%	84%	55%	76%	24%
Disability insurance or death benefits	61%	70%	59%	70%	55%	72%	12%
Workers' compensation	50%	58%	47%	53%	48%	56%	20%
Supplementary maternity, paternity, parental, or EI benefits	41%	42%	40%	59%	30%	46%	20%
Other (please specify)	3%	0%	4%	5%	2%	3%	4%
None of the above	12%	14%	11%	5%	16%	5%	28%

PAID SICK DAYS

The topic of paid sick days had two questions:

- 1) How many sick days do you get each year?
- 2) How many paid sick days do you take each year?

Table 15 displays the distribution of responses by the number of sick days employed respondents are entitled to in a year. There is a similar pattern in the responses to this question as to the question regarding employment-related benefits, where non-permanent employees receive the lowest allocation of paid sick days, followed by non-union employees.

However, there is some discrepancy between the responses to this question and the answers in Table 16 under the heading of Paid Sick Leave. For example, in Table 15, 52% of respondents indicate they are entitled to zero paid sick days, while in Table 14, among this same group, 36% say they get paid sick leave, which means that 64% do not get paid sick leave, which is rather higher than 52%. The same applies to all the categories. Either way, the pattern is evident: non-permanent and non-union employees do worse when comparing access to employment-related benefits or paid sick leave.

TABLE 15**NUMBER OF ANNUAL ENTITLED PAID SICK DAYS**

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees
Zero paid sick days	24%	25%	24%	15%	29%	15%	52%
1-5 paid sick days	20%	32%	16%	11%	25%	20%	28%
6-10 paid sick days	24%	16%	27%	29%	20%	27%	20%
More than 10 paid sick days	32%	28%	34%	45%	25%	38%	0%

Table 16 displays the number of annual paid sick days taken by employed respondents. The last row combines the responses for “Most” and “All.”

TABLE 16
NUMBER OF ANNUAL PAID SICK DAYS TAKEN

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees
I don't get paid sick days	22%	21%	22%	15%	27%	14%	52%
None	10%	19%	7%	5%	13%	9%	4%
Some	43%	46%	42%	41%	44%	48%	28%
Most	9%	4%	11%	16%	5%	11%	8%
All	16%	11%	17%	23%	11%	18%	8%
MOST or ALL	25%	14%	29%	39%	16%	28%	16%

The first-row response (“I don’t get paid sick days”) is already something that is reported in Table 14 (“zero paid sick days”), and the answers are much the same. What is striking is the varying degree to which employed respondents used the paid sick days they were entitled to. Almost 40% of union members took most or all of their paid sick days, more than twice the proportion of non-union members (16%). Similarly, permanent employees were almost twice as likely (28%) as non-permanent employees (16%) to use the paid sick days they were entitled to. It may suggest that union members or permanent employees feel more secure in their employment or exercising their rights. It also suggests that it is not only the employment-related benefits that are important but also the confidence that an employee can make use of these benefits which is important.

WEEKLY WORKLOAD

Employed respondents were asked to assess their expected work level in their jobs. Table 17 presents the responses.

TABLE 17
ASSESSING WEEKLY WORKLOAD

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees
I work more than I would like to	33%	40%	31%	27%	38%	35%	16%
I work as much as I would like to	60%	58%	60%	63%	58%	61%	60%
I work less than I would like to	7%	2%	8%	10%	4%	4%	24%

It is striking that across all categories, a significant majority (58% to 63%) indicate they work as much as they would like. The differences arise in relation to working either too much or too little.

Non-permanent employees are most likely to indicate that they work less than they would like to. In terms of working more than they would like to, non-union members (38%) express this more often than union members (27%), and males (40%) express it more than females (31%). Non-permanent employees are least likely to say they work more than they would like to (16%).

AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS

Employed respondents were asked to estimate the average hours they worked per week. Table 18 provides the average figure for each category. The only comparison point is the hours worked per week provided by the Labour Force Survey. However, this figure is for all Ontario workers. The average hours worked over May, June, and July 2023 was 32.9 hours,⁵ less than the 38.6 hours arising from the survey.

TABLE 18
AVERAGE HOURS OF WORK PER WEEK- EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS

ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees
38.6	43.9	37.1	35.8	40.4	39.1	33.3

The real value of the survey is in comparing different groups. Men work more hours on average than women (as is the case in the Labour Force Survey). Non-union employees work longer than union members, and permanent employees work more than non-permanent employees (who were more likely to say in a previous question that they get less work than they would like).

It is also interesting to note the distribution of responses regarding average hours worked. Table 19 shows the percentage of respondents who worked 44 or more hours a week (what is considered overtime) and those who worked less than 30 hours per week (what is considered part-time).

TABLE 19
THE PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES WORKING 44 HOURS OR MORE OR LESS THAN 30 HOURS PER WEEK

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non- permanent employees
44 hours or more	20%	37%	14%	7%	28%	18%	12%
Less than 30 hours	9%	5%	9%	8%	9%	5%	24%

⁵ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table: 14-10-0032-01.

Consistent with other answers, non-permanent employees had the largest percentage of those who worked less than 30 hours (24%), while non-union employees had the highest proportion of those who worked overtime (28%). Men were far more likely than women to work overtime, while women were only slightly more likely to work less than 30 hours. Union members had both low levels of overtime and low levels of working part-time hours.

WORKING EXTRA HOURS

The survey asked employed respondents to indicate, on average, how many days per month they had worked extra hours beyond their usual schedule. Table 20 shows the average figures for each survey population group. As in the case of overtime and part-time hours, males were more often required to work extra hours compared to females, as were non-union members compared to union members, and permanent employees compared to non-permanent employees.

TABLE 20

NUMBER OF DAYS PER MONTH WORKING EXTRA HOURS

ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non- permanent employees
5.1	8.2	3.9	4.3	5.4	5.0	2.8

The responses were also analyzed by comparing the proportion of answers at two ends of the spectrum: what percentage of employees reported only having to work extra hours four days or less a month and the percentage of employees having to work extra hours ten days or more a month. Overall, the differences are not as stark as the incidence of over-time work, although the pattern is the same: males are notably more likely to work extra hours ten days or more a month, whereas non-permanent employees are least likely and instead are most likely to have to work extra hours only four days or less a month.

TABLE 21

PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES BY NUMBER OF DAYS PER MONTH WORKING EXTRA HOURS

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees
4 days or less per month of extra hours	64%	47%	69%	62%	65%	64%	76%
10 days or more per month of extra hours	17%	32%	13%	15%	19%	18%	12%

Employed respondents were further asked whether working extra hours was mandatory, that is, required by their employer. Table 22 illustrates the responses. Overall, only around one in five responses (21%) indicate that extra work is a mandatory expectation of their employer. The largest contrast is between non-unionized (25% say it is mandatory) and unionized employees (13%). There is also a slight difference between non-permanent employees (24%) and permanent employees (19%). There is virtually no difference between males and females on this question.

TABLE 22

THE PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES INDICATING WHETHER EXTRA HOURS ARE MANDATORY OR NOT

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees
Yes	21%	21%	20%	13%	25%	19%	24%
No	79%	79%	80%	87%	75%	81%	76%

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE | UNEMPLOYED RESPONDENTS

This section analyzes the responses to those questions in the survey that refer to choices relating to unemployment and the quality of work-life issues relating to employment before becoming unemployed.

24 respondents identified themselves as unemployed (8.1% of the survey sample). Of these, 18 were unemployed and looking for work (7.4% of the sample), and 6 were unemployed and not looking for work (0.7% of the sample).

The most striking characteristic of the unemployed was the high proportion of non-permanent residents (either possessing a study or work permit). Of the entire survey sample, 5.4% were non-permanent residents. Among the unemployed and looking for work, 22% were non-permanent residents, and among those unemployed and not looking for work, 67% were non-permanent residents. Put another way, of the 16 non-permanent residents who participated in the survey, eight (50%) were unemployed.

The sample size for the unemployed respondents is small, limiting the ability to analyze it by further sub-categories, such as union membership or permanent employment. Moreover, the high proportion of non-permanent residents among this group also limits the ability to apply the survey findings to the general population of Algoma.

The next two questions relate to the circumstances of unemployment, and the responses for both Canadian citizens and non-permanent residents are provided.

THE MAIN REASON FOR BEING UNEMPLOYED

The survey asked unemployed respondents to indicate the main reason for their employment. The best way to present this data is to indicate the number of respondents for each answer, separating the responses from those unemployed and looking for work between Canadian and non-permanent residents.⁶ The results are displayed in Table 23.

TABLE 23

THE MAIN REASON FOR BEING UNEMPLOYED

	Canadian citizen	Non-permanent resident
Going to school	3	3
Caring for own children	4	--
Temporary job ended or laid off	4	--
Own illness or disability	3	--
Just arrived to Canada	--	2
Caring for an adult family member	1	--
Did not get the hours I needed	--	1
Not finding work	--	1
Quit to look for other employment	--	1
Seeking better work/life balance	1	--
Other personal or family responsibilities	--	--

⁶ Among this group of 24 unemployed residents, there is one person who indicated they are unemployed and currently not looking for work. Every other unemployed respondent indicated they were looking for work.

Table 23 lists the reasons for being unemployed in order of frequency, the top four being going to school, caring for one's own children, temporary job or being laid off, and one's own illness or disability.

Statistics Canada tracks the reason for being unemployed via the Labour Force Survey – the data is only available at the Ontario level.⁷ Of all the unemployed people, around 64% had not worked in the previous year, and another 18% had never worked. If one focuses only on those who became unemployed in the past year, around one-third had been laid off, and the rest had quit. Around a quarter of all recently unemployed had decided to enrol in school, and another 13% retired. In short, the survey sample of unemployed reflects a lower proportion of individuals who had been laid off and about an equal proportion of those who decided to go to school.

Table 24 shows the length of time each unemployed respondent had been unemployed. It is not surprising that the non-permanent residents had typically been unemployed for less than six months, as it is likely that a number of them had only recently arrived in Canada. Among Canadian citizens, around 62% had been unemployed for more than a year, which is quite close to the Labour Force Survey data.

TABLE 24
LENGTH OF TIME UNEMPLOYED

	Canadian citizen	Non-permanent resident
Less than 1 month	1	3
1 to 6 months	4	4
6 to 12 months	1	1
More than 1 year	10	--

NATURE OF PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

The next few questions focus on the characteristics of employment and then are followed by questions relating to the quality of work life. Several distinct groupings of respondents answered these questions:

- Unemployed Canadian citizens (not retired) (16 respondents)
- Unemployed non-permanent residents (8 respondents)
- Retired persons who had been employed (9 respondents)

These are very different groups, and combining the responses would muddy the waters concerning differences that may be present between these categories. Yet, on the other hand, neither of these groups has a sufficiently large sample size to give assurances regarding the conclusions that can be drawn from analyzing the results.

This report has chosen to focus only on unemployed Canadian citizens, with the caution that 16 responses do not constitute a robust sample but that some tentative observations may still be of value. Indeed, of these 16 responses, 2 had never been employed, so the working sample is only 14.

⁷ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0126-01.

Table 25 shows the split among this group between employee status and self-employment of their last employment and compares it to the responses for the employed category, as well as for the working population of the Sault Ste. Marie Census Agglomeration.

TABLE 25

EMPLOYEE STATUS AND SELF-EMPLOYED

	Unemployed Canadian citizen respondents	All employed respondents	All employed SSM CA residents
Employee	93%	93%	92%
Self-employed	7%	7%	8%

There is an exact concordance between these three groups for this characteristic of employment.

Table 26 compares the distribution of respondents by the permanency of their employment, showing the figures for the unemployed Canadian citizen respondents and all employed respondents.

TABLE 26

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EMPLOYEE STATUS

Employment status	Unemployed Canadian citizens	All employed
My job does not have a specified end date (i.e., permanent)	50%	86%
I am on a contract with a length of one year or more	0%	7%
I am on a contract with a length of less than one year	21%	4%
I am in a seasonal, on-call, casual, or temporary job	29%	3%

It is noteworthy that among the unemployed, there is a much lower proportion of individuals who had permanent employment, and among those in the category of non-permanent employment, they were all concentrated in jobs that had a contract of less than one year or were seasonal, on-call, casual, or temporary.

Table 27 provides the reasons why these unemployed respondents had been employed in a non-permanent job and compares the distribution of responses to that of all employed respondents. Because this is a subset of the answers from Table 26, it only represents seven respondents, so the results need to be taken with a grain of salt.

TABLE 27

THE MAIN REASON FOR WORKING IN A CONTRACT, SEASONAL, ON-CALL, CASUAL OR TEMPORARY JOB

Reason	Unemployed Canadian citizens	All employed
To engage in work that I am passionate about	29%	12%
Health, family, or personal considerations	29%	6%
Other (please specify)	29%	21%
Lack of longer-term employment opportunities	4%	44%
To transition to a new job	4%	12%
To practice or master a new skill	4%	0%
To gain experience in my field of study	0%	6%

JOB TITLE, OCCUPATION, AND INDUSTRY

With such a limited number of unemployed respondents, there would not be enough to make appropriate comparisons based on occupation or industry. One notable feature about the job titles of the last position these individuals were employed in: most of the respondents were in occupations that typically required a college diploma (both more than or less than two years of study) or a trades certificate, whereas among the employed and in the actual population, there are higher proportions of managers and individuals in jobs requiring a university degree, as well as in jobs that require a high school diploma or less.

JOB TENURE

With the same caution regarding the sample size, it is nevertheless interesting to note that among the unemployed sample, a far lower percentage (36%) had been employed for a year or more compared to the employed survey sample (82%).

UNION MEMBERSHIP

There was also considerably less union membership among the unemployed, 22% versus 38% among the employed sample.

BENEFITS: SICK DAYS

Among employed respondents, only 12% said they did not have access to any employment-related benefits; among the unemployed respondents, the figure was 55%. Among the employed, typically 50% to 75% had access to each category of employment-related benefits cited; among the unemployed, the highest figure was 36% for workers' compensation.

Regarding allotted paid sick days, 24% of employed respondents said they got no paid sick days; the figure was 73% among the unemployed respondents, almost three times as many. The proportion of the unemployed respondents who used paid sick days was 18%, whereas the proportion among the employed sample was 78%.

WORKLOAD: HOURS OF WORK

On the issue of workload, the unemployed sample were somewhat more likely to say that they work more than they would have liked to (46%) compared to the employed sample (33%). On average, the unemployed sample reported working 48.0 hours per week, compared to an average of 38.6 hours per week for employed respondents. Of the unemployed, 36% indicated that their average hours per week were 44 hours or more, compared to 20% among the employed; none of the unemployed respondents indicated that their average hours per week were under 30 hours, compared to 9% among the employed.

On average, the unemployed sample would work extra hours around 5.2 days per month, which is very similar to the 5.1 days cited by employed respondents. 18% of the unemployed had ten days or more a month when asked to work extra hours (employed sample: 17%), and 44% had four days or less a month when asked to work extra hours (employed sample: 64%).

The larger difference was on the issue of whether the request to work extra hours was mandatory: 64% of the unemployed indicated that the request was mandatory, compared to 21% of the employed.

OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE UNEMPLOYED SAMPLE

At the outset of this report, the demographic characteristics of all survey respondents were profiled. It bears highlighting the comparison of several socio-demographic categories between this sample group of unemployed Canadian citizens and the entire survey sample:

	Unemployed sample	All survey respondents
Gender	71%	74%
Indigenous identity	36%	14%
A person with a disability	57%	11%
Educational attainment		
No certificate	0%	1%
High school diploma	50%	14%
Trades certificate	7%	8%
College diploma	36%	28%
University below bachelor	0%	5%
University bachelor and higher	7%	43%

In several respects, this small sample of unemployed is quite different from that of the entire survey population; these unemployed are:

- More likely to be of Indigenous identity
- Much more likely to be a person with a disability
- Much more likely to have a high school diploma
- Much less likely to have a university bachelor's degree or higher

SUMMING UP AN OVERVIEW OF THE UNEMPLOYED SAMPLE

Again, it is important to emphasize how small the sample of the unemployed was in this survey so that any observations should be treated with caution. There were many dissimilarities in terms of demographic characteristics compared to the overall survey population.

In terms of the characteristics of their previous employment, these unemployed were:

- More likely to have worked in a non-permanent job
- Less likely to have been employed for a year or more
- Less likely to be a union member

In terms of certain quality of employment features, these unemployed were:

- Far more likely to have had employment-related benefits in their last job
- Far more likely not to have any allocated paid sick days
- Far more likely to have used any paid sick days
- More likely to have worked more hours than they would have liked to
- Far more likely to have a request to work extra hours to be mandatory

LOOKING FOR A NEW EMPLOYER WHILE WORKING: RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD A JOB

The survey next probed the question:

In the last six months that you worked, did you look for a job with a different employer?

The question was directed to all those who were employed, unemployed, on leave or retired. Table 28 shows the responses, including by different survey population categories.

TABLE 28

LOOKING FOR A JOB WITH A DIFFERENT EMPLOYER WHILE WORKING

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees	Unemployed†
Yes	38%	38%	39%	44%	34%	39%	52%	64%
No	62%	62%	61%	56%	66%	61%	48%	36%

† Unemployed is limited to Canadian citizens

Almost four out of ten (38%) respondents said they looked for a job with another employer while working. The proportion was higher among the unemployed (same caution regarding sample size), as well as among non-permanent employees, and somewhat higher among union members as opposed to non-union members. The response among retired persons is not shown because they all answered no: why would someone look for a different employer six months before retiring?

Respondents were then asked to provide a reason for their answer. This was an open-ended question, so the responses have been clustered into appropriate common themes. On the principle of one person—one vote, if a respondent provided two reasons, each reason given would be assigned a value of half a vote. All the votes have been totalled, and the responses reflect the percentage of votes cast per reason for each category, those that did not look for another employer and those that did.

Table 29 provides the reasons for respondents working in non-permanent jobs and Table 30 shows the responses of those in permanent jobs.

TABLE 29

REASONS FOR LOOKING OR NOT LOOKING FOR ANOTHER EMPLOYER WHILE WORKING, NON-PERMANENT EMPLOYEES

DID NOT LOOK FOR OTHER EMPLOYER		DID LOOK FOR OTHER EMPLOYER	
Reason	Percent	Reason	Percent
Happy/satisfied with the job	50%	Contract ending/ended	25%
Just started/signed the contract	33%	Seeking better wage	21%
Hoping for a permanent position with my current employer	17%	Poor work environment	17%
		Want more security/stability	13%
		Want benefits	8%
		Want more hours of work	8%
		Not the type of work I want	8%

For those who work in non-permanent employment, their circumstance greatly affects their decisions. The lack of permanence in their job and/or the lack of benefits, sufficient work hours or security are major factors in their choices: while half who do not seek another employer while working do so because they are satisfied with the job, the others do so because they just started their contract or because they hope by staying that they will be hired for a permanent job.

Those who do look for another employer while working do so because their contract is coming to an end, or because they desire a better wage, more security, benefits or more hours of work. A smaller proportion cite a poor working environment as why they seek other employment.

TABLE 30

REASONS FOR LOOKING OR NOT LOOKING FOR ANOTHER EMPLOYER WHILE WORKING, PERMANENT EMPLOYEES

DID NOT LOOK FOR OTHER EMPLOYER		DID LOOK FOR OTHER EMPLOYER	
Reason	Percent	Reason	Percent
Happy/love my job	65%	Seeking better wage	25%
Employer or self-employed	11%	Poor work environment	21%
Too old to seek other work	5%	Burnout/stress/seek better work-life balance	15%
Will be retiring soon	5%	Seeking professional development	13%
Just got hired recently	5%	Want benefits	6%
No need to	5%	Curious/looking for opportunities	6%
Appreciate getting benefits	4%	Not appreciated/respected	5%
Other	5%	Just want a change	5%
		Unhappy with work	2%
		Business is closing	2%
		I am leaving town	2%

Among those who are in permanent employment, a larger proportion of those not looking for another employer say that it is because they are happy with their current job – indeed, many use the more expressive “I love my job” when not a single non-permanent employee ventured beyond the words “happy” or “satisfied.” A smaller proportion were either the employer or self-employed, and another portion were older and either felt it would be too challenging at their age to compete for another job or they were expecting to retire soon.

Many reasons arose for permanent employees to look for another employer while working. A quarter (25%) felt they were underpaid for the work they did. Another considerable proportion (21%) cited a poor working environment (the term “toxic workplace” was used several times). Other common reasons included burnout, stress, or wishing to find a better work-life balance, or they were seeking opportunities for professional development or advancement.

SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED QUITTING

The survey probed employee dissatisfaction further with the following question:

In the last six months that you worked, did you seriously consider quitting your main job?

The question was directed to all those who were employed, unemployed, on leave, or retired. Table 31 shows the responses, including those from different survey population categories.

TABLE 31

SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED QUITTING WHILE EMPLOYED

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees	Unemployed†
Yes	36%	34%	37%	35%	37%	36%	40%	55%
No	64%	66%	63%	65%	63%	64%	60%	45%

† Unemployed is limited to Canadian citizens

Slightly over a third (36%) of all employees seriously consider quitting over six months while in their current job. There is limited variation in this response regardless of the survey category, with only the unemployed being more likely to express this view (55%).

When asked the reason for their response, the answers fell into the following categories:

Among non-permanent employees:

- For those who had not considered quitting, each of them indicated that they liked their work, the workplace environment, and/or their employer
- For those who had considered quitting, over half (55%) cited a poor work environment, including managers/supervisors who tended to micro-manage; another quarter (25%) pointed to poor pay, and the others cited a lack of benefits or wishing more job security

Among permanent employees:

- For those who had not considered quitting, over half (52%) said they loved their work or were happy/content with it; another 20% gave the more lukewarm reason that there was no reason to quit or that there was no better alternative; 15% said that they needed the income and/or benefits; and 9% said that their advanced age made it less likely they could find other work or that they were close to retirement
- For those who had considered quitting, the top four reasons were: poor work environment (toxic or lack of direction) - 26%; burnout or high-stress levels - 16%; poor wages/underpaid - 11%; overworked or too physically challenging - 10%; other reasons included feeling undervalued/disrespected/unsupported; poor work-life balance; lack of benefits; not challenged by the work or need a change

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE JOB

With almost four out of ten employees looking for another employer while working in a job, and with over a third saying they had thought of quitting the job in the previous six months, it is striking that nine out of ten employees say they like their current job. The actual question posed was:

Overall, do you like your main job?

Table 32 illustrates the responses. The group least likely to have liked their job is the unemployed (recall this is a small, less reliable sample). But even among this category, almost two-thirds said they liked their last job. Among other categories, non-union members were somewhat more likely to like their jobs than union members, although even in the latter case, 86% liked their jobs.

TABLE 32
LIKING ONE'S JOB

	ALL RESPONDENTS	Males	Females	Union members	Non-union members	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees	Unemployed†
Yes	89%	85%	91%	86%	94%	91%	88%	64%
No	11%	15%	9%	14%	6%	9%	12%	36%

† Unemployed is limited to Canadian citizens

One may like one's job but sometimes think of quitting and sometimes look for other employment. But in the case of those who don't like their job, that is certainly the case: of the 26 respondents who said they didn't like their job, 20 of them (77%) had thought of quitting, and 22 of them (85%) had looked for other work.

PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

At the start of the survey, respondents were asked whether they identified as a person with a disability, to which 32 respondents (11% of all respondents) answered yes. In the section that specifically probed questions related to employment and a person's disability, 29 respondents replied to these questions.

This sample size provides insight into the workplace experiences of persons with disabilities, but it is not a large enough sample to delve deeper into different populations and employment sub-categories. For this reason, only the responses of all 29 respondents with disabilities will be profiled.

To provide context, comparisons will be made to the results of Statistics Canada's Canadian Survey on Disability in 2017. Results from that survey will rely on figures for Ontario.

MAIN HEALTH CONDITION

Table 33 shows the main health condition of respondents with a disability that causes the most difficulty or limits their activities. The table shows the answers by actual number of survey respondents, the percentage breakdown of respondents' answers, and the percentage distribution from the Canadian Survey on Disability (which asks for all disabilities, not just the main one). For this Canadian survey, responses were shown to the entire Ontario population of persons with a disability (ALL) and the employed Ontario population of persons with a disability (EMP).⁸

As noted previously, the Algoma survey had a smaller proportion of respondents with a disability (11%) than the Ontario population (24%).⁹ The share by disability type also seems lower among respondents, even accounting for the Canadian survey allowing multiple responses.

TABLE 33

THE MAIN HEALTH CONDITION OF PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY THAT CAUSES THE MOST DIFFICULTY

Disability type	Algoma survey		Canadian Survey on Disability	
	Number	Percent	ALL	EMP
Mobility (difficulty moving around, such as walking or using stairs)	6	21%	46%	35%
Pain-related (either always present or reoccurring)	6	21%	68%	71%
Hearing	4	14%	22%	17%
Mental health-related (anxiety disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, etc.)	4	14%	33%	31%
Learning (dyslexia, hyperactivity, attention problems, etc.)	3	10%	17%	11%
Developmental (Down syndrome, autism, Asperger syndrome, etc.)	2	7%	5%	N/A
Other or unknown disability	1	3%	3%	2%
Seeing	0	0%	26%	16%
Flexibility (difficulty reaching or bending down to pick up objects)	0	0%	48%	48%
Dexterity (difficulty grasping small objects such as pens)	0	0%	22%	17%
Memory (not including occasional forgetfulness)	0	0%	18%	12%
Prefer not to answer	3	10%	N/A	N/A

⁸ Statistics Canada, Tables 13-10-0348-01 and 13-10-0730-01.

⁹ Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0374-01.

INFLUENCE OF DISABILITY ON THE CHOICE OF CAREER

Respondents were split on whether their condition influenced their career choice, with slightly less than half saying it did and slightly less than half saying it did not. The remainder indicated that they had never been employed (Table 34).

TABLE 34

DID HAVING A DISABILITY INFLUENCE THE CHOICE OF CAREER

	Number	Percent
Yes	14	48%
No	13	45%
I have never been employed	2	7%

LIMITATIONS ON THE AMOUNT OF WORK OR KIND OF WORK

Respondents with a disability are more likely to feel that their condition limits the amount of work or kind of work they can do at a job, with 59% feeling that is the case.

DISADVANTAGED IN EMPLOYMENT

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents with a disability feel that they are disadvantaged in employment because of their condition. An almost equal amount (59%) feels that their current employer or any potential employer would likely consider them disadvantaged in employment because of their condition.

In further probing this disadvantage, the survey asked respondents with a disability whether their condition made it difficult to change jobs or advance in their current job. Table 35 shows that two-thirds (65%) found it difficult; indeed, one-third (34%) found it very difficult.

TABLE 35

THE DEGREE TO WHICH DISABILITY MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO CHANGE JOBS OR ADVANCE

	Number	Percent
Yes, very difficult	10	34%
Yes, difficult	9	31%
No, not difficult	10	34%

Respondents were further asked why they felt their condition made it difficult to change jobs or advance in their jobs. Table 36 shows the responses that were selected (respondents could choose more than one response).

TABLE 36

REASONS WHY THEIR DISABILITY MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO CHANGE JOBS OR TO ADVANCE IN THEIR CAREER

Reason	Number	Percent
Discrimination or stigma because of condition	10	48%
Adapting to a new work environment would be difficult	10	48%
Difficult to obtain the required support or accommodations	8	38%
Condition limits the ability to search for a job	6	29%
Condition limits the number of hours that can be worked	4	19%
Other	5	24%

The responses provided for the “Other” response category included that their condition placed limitations on what task they could do or their mobility, that their condition could vary from day to day, or that new symptoms were emerging.

The responses in Table 36 indicate three largely equal reasons: firstly, that the condition itself posed limitations; secondly, that getting the appropriate accommodations was not easy; and third, that the presence of the condition resulted in discrimination or stigma. In short, the condition created challenges, but also how others responded to the condition created barriers.

ACCOMMODATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT FOR A DISABILITY

Respondents were asked whether they had told their employer about their disability condition. Two-thirds (66%) had told their employer.

Respondents were next asked what they would require for them to be able to work. Table 37 lists their responses (they could choose as many responses as applied).

Almost one-third (31%) of the respondents with a disability said they did not need workplace accommodations. The accommodation that received the most votes – one-third (34%) – indicated that working from home was what they needed. Around one-quarter (24%) sought flexible work arrangements (modified hours or days or reduced work hours). After that, the accommodations largely focused on workstation modifications, such as a modified or ergonomic workstation (21%) or special chair or back support (17%). Lower on the list were other equipment or assistance, such as adapted parking, technical aids, or an accessible workplace (handrails, ramps, accessible elevators, and washrooms), each of which attracted 10% or less support. The “Other” responses volunteered were printed documents, processing time, sensory items, a sit-stand desk, and frequent breaks.

TABLE 37

REQUIREMENTS TO SUPPORT THE ABILITY TO WORK

	Number	Percent
Don't need workplace accommodations	31%	9
Working from home	34%	10
Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	24%	7
Modified or ergonomic workstation	21%	6
Special chair or back support	17%	5
Modified or different duties	10%	3
Adapted or accessible parking	10%	3
Human support (e.g., reader, sign language interpreter, job coach, or personal assistant)	7%	2
Technical aids (e.g., voice synthesizer, TTY, infrared system, or portable note-taker)	7%	2
Computer, laptop or tablet with specialized software or other adaptations (e.g., braille, screen magnification software, voice recognition software, or a screen reader)	7%	2
Handrails, ramps, widened doorways or hallways	7%	2
Accessible elevators	7%	2
Adapted washrooms	7%	2
Specialized transportation	3%	1
Communication aids (e.g., braille or large print reading material or recording equipment)	0%	0
Other equipment, help or work arrangement (please specify)	14%	4

By way of comparison, the Canadian Survey on Disability¹⁰ reported the following incidence of workplace accommodations for employed Ontario persons with a disability between the ages of 25 and 64 years old:

- 36.5% required one or more workplace accommodations
- 25.4% required flexible work arrangements
- 16.0% required workstation modifications
- 12.7% required other equipment, help, or work arrangement

The Algoma survey reports roughly the same proportions regarding the need for workplace accommodations as the Canadian survey.

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents with a disability had asked their employer for the needed workplace accommodations. Seven respondents indicated they had not asked for the needed accommodations. This group was further asked why they had not. This is a very small sample, so it would not be appropriate to extrapolate their responses to the general population of persons with a disability, but it still warrants profiling their answers to get a sense of the considerations that come into play. These respondents were allowed to select more than one reason, so the total number of responses is considerably larger than seven:

- 4 indicated that they did not want to cause difficulty for their employer
- 3 said they were uncomfortable asking
- 3 said they did not want to disclose the need for accommodation
- 3 said they feared negative consequences
- 1 each cited the following reason:
 - Did not think employer could afford or find proper accommodations
 - Concerned about the reaction of co-workers
 - Condition is not severe enough
 - Lack of awareness or understanding by employer concerning accommodation requests
 - Been refused in the past

Another 3 cited an “Other” reason which was not listed as an answer option:

- Was seeking a full-time position and did not wish to jeopardize that possibility
- Was unsure if the accommodations could help
- Did not have a diagnosis yet

Looking at all these reasons, the primary motivation for respondents not asking for the accommodations they needed was because they felt that it would result in negative consequences for them.

Among those who asked for accommodations, six out of ten (62%) said that their employer-provided the accommodations (the total number who answered this question was 13, so this result must be treated cautiously).

The reasons given for turning down a request for accommodations were:

- Assumed they just didn’t wish to do so
- The employee was in a casual position, so they were less likely to do so
- Too expensive
- Not available locally
- And two indicated that the employer simply refused the request

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0749-01.

EVALUATING EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE CONDITIONS

The next set of questions was directed at all respondents who either were employed or had been employed (unemployed or retired). In each of these questions, respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement about several statements grouped around several themes.

A composite score was created to analyze these results to make it easier to compare responses across various sub-populations for each statement. For each response, a value was assigned to the answer as follows:

- +2 for "strongly agree"
- +1 to "agree"
- 0 for "neither agree nor disagree."
- 1 for "disagree"
- 2 for "strongly disagree"

The numerical values for all responses were then added up and divided by the total number of responses. In this way, one gets an average response. For example, if the value at the end was +1, then the average response was "agree," even though perhaps half the respondents agreed very strongly (+2), and the other half disagreed (-1). The range of views brings the average score to a place in the middle of strongly agree and disagree.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

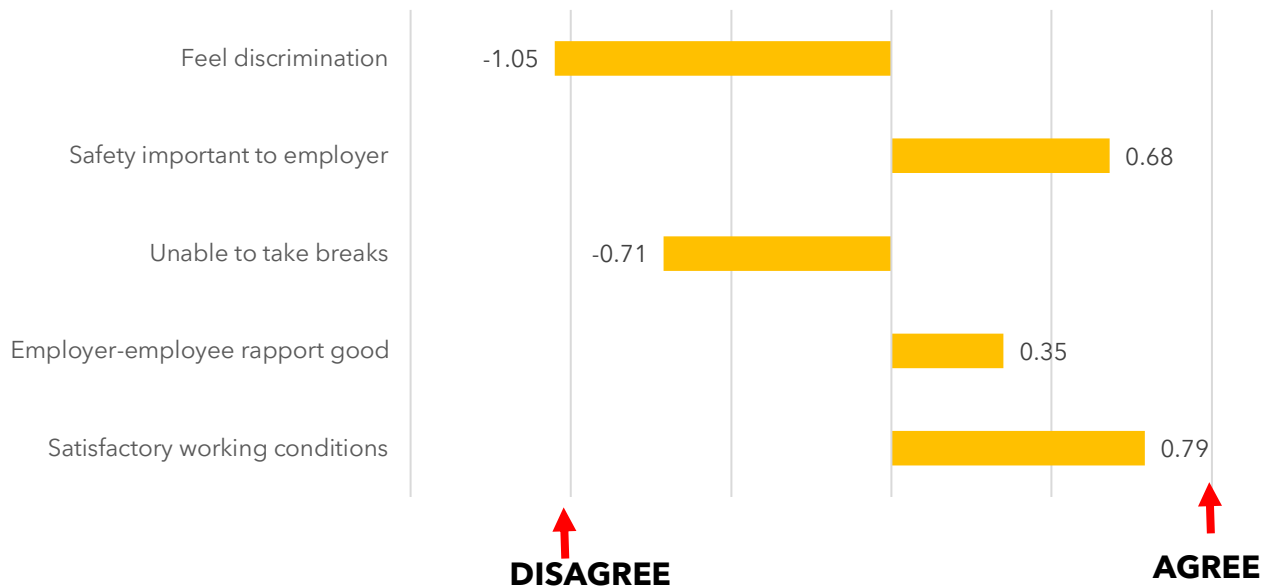
The following table shows the actual statements that respondents were asked to react to under this theme, together with the abbreviated form of each statement, which is used in Chart 1 to make the chart easier to read.

Statement in survey	Abbreviated version in chart
I feel discriminated against at work based on my age/gender/race/religion/disability/etc.	Feel discrimination
The safety of workers is a high priority for management	Safety is important to employer
I am not able to take my scheduled/allotted breaks	Unable to take breaks
The relationship between management and employees is good	Employer-employee rapport good
The working conditions are satisfactory	Satisfactory working conditions

There was a considerable range of responses to these five statements, from a high level of disagreement with feeling discrimination at work based on the common discrimination categories to a moderate degree of agreement with the proposition that working conditions are satisfactory.

While on balance, there was disagreement that one is not able to take their scheduled or allotted breaks, that level of disagreement is less than the reaction to the presence of discrimination. There was agreement that the safety of workers is a high priority with management and a lower level of agreement that the relationship between management and employees is good.

CHART 1: WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT, ALL RESPONDENTS



There were variations by different categories of survey respondents. A significant variation was where the average composite score for that group was either 25% higher or 25% lower than the average for all respondents.

Non-union members had the highest positive views; they were most likely to feel their working conditions were satisfactory, that their safety was a priority for management, that the relationship between management and employees was good, and had the strongest disagreement toward feeling discrimination.

Union members more often expressed less positive views: their view of employer-employee relationships was slightly on the disagreement side, they had a lower level of satisfaction with working conditions, and they had a lower level of agreement with the statement that worker safety was a high priority with management.

Some of this difference may be due to the circumstances of these respondents specifically. Half the union member respondents worked in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, compared to less than a fifth of the non-union members, who more often worked in Other Services, Public Administration, Construction, Accommodation & Food Services, and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services. The union members more often worked in direct service roles, while the non-union members were often in administrative occupations.

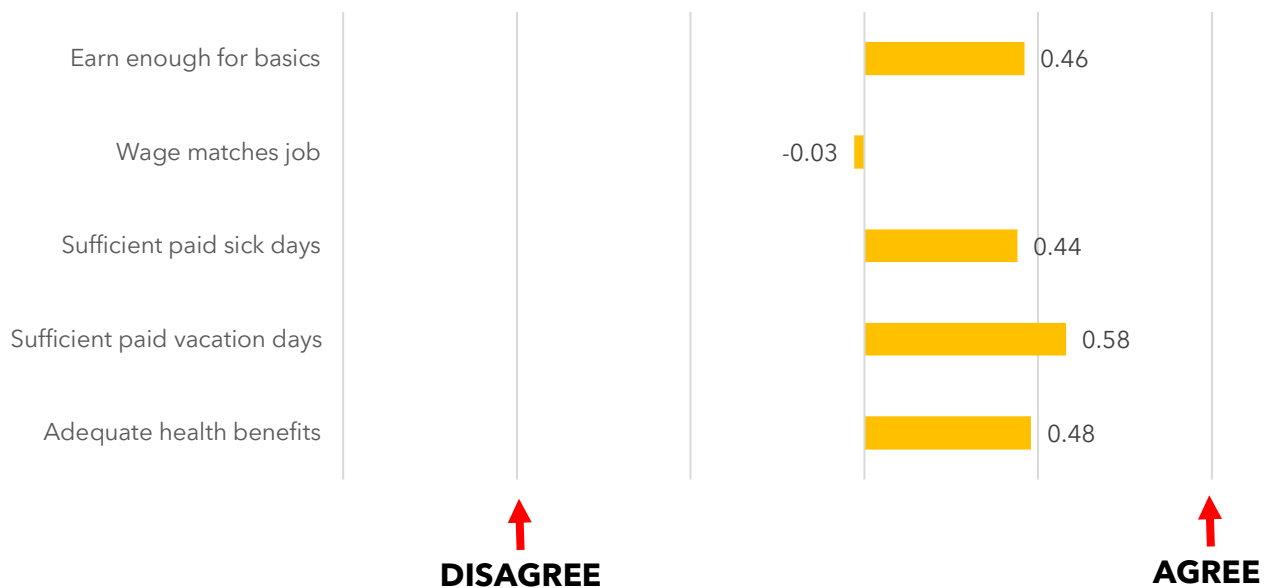
In terms of other categories of survey respondents, non-permanent employees also had lower levels of agreement regarding management concern for the safety of workers, or that management-employee relationships were good, and they had the lowest level of disagreement with feeling discrimination at work.

INCOME AND BENEFITS FROM EMPLOYMENT

The statements that respondents were asked to comment on are listed in the table below, together with their abbreviated version for Chart 2.

Statement in survey	Abbreviated version in chart
I earn enough to pay for basic needs (housing, food, etc.)	Earn enough for the basics
I receive an appropriate wage/salary for the work I do	Wage matches job
My workplace provides a sufficient number of paid sick days	Sufficient paid sick days
My workplace provides a sufficient number of paid vacation days	Sufficient paid vacation days
I receive adequate health benefits through my employer	Adequate health benefits

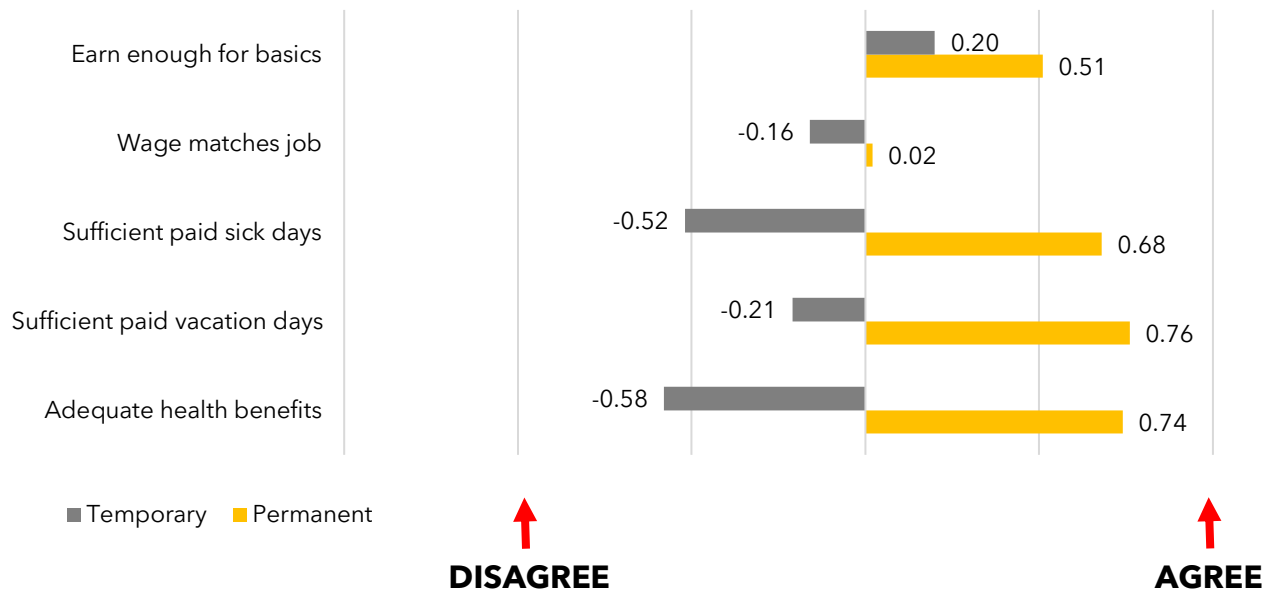
CHART 2: INCOME AND BENEFITS FROM EMPLOYMENT, ALL RESPONDENTS



While for most statements, there is an agreement, that level of agreement is tepid, halfway between “neither agree nor disagree” and “agree.” The average score for the statement “I receive an appropriate wage/salary for the work I do” is “neither agree nor disagree.”

These average results for all respondents hide the profound difference in responses between non-permanent and permanent employees, as illustrated in Chart 3. (In order to avoid the clumsy term “non-permanent,” this section will use the term “temporary.”)

CHART 3: INCOME AND BENEFITS FROM EMPLOYMENT, TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT EMPLOYEES



For most of these statements, temporary employees fall on the disagree side of the ledger, although not entirely a full disagreement at value “1”. On the other hand, permanent employees are on the agreement side of the scale, sometimes closer to the value of “1”.

On the issue of wages, both temporary and permanent employees somewhat agree that they earn enough for life’s basics, but on whether they receive a wage appropriate for the work they do, temporary employees slightly disagree, while permanent employees have an average score of “neither agree nor disagree.”

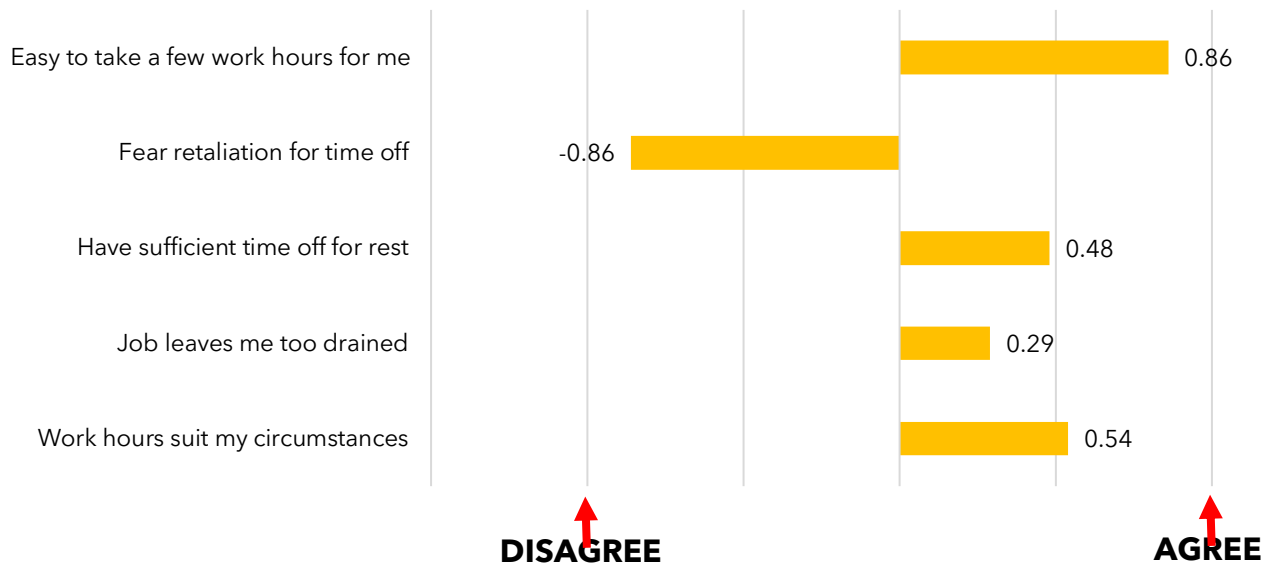
Among differences among the other survey categories, non-union tend to have higher levels of agreement with all of these statements; the composite score of union members on the issue of a basic wage and a wage appropriate to their work ends up on the disagreement side of the scale. Men agree slightly more that their wage is appropriate for the work they do, while women slightly disagree.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The statements for this section are provided below, as well as the abbreviated versions for the accompanying chart.

Statement in survey	Abbreviated version in chart
It’s easy for me to take a few hours off work occasionally for personal matters	Easy to take a few work hours for me
I fear retaliation or punishment for taking time off (calling in sick, vacation)	Fear retaliation for time off
I have sufficient time off work for rest/non-work duties/recreation	Have sufficient time off for rest
My job leaves me too tired or mentally drained to do things after work	Job leaves me too drained
My current working hours/patterns suit my personal circumstances	Work hours suit my circumstances

CHART 4: WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ALL RESPONDENTS



It is a good sign that most employees generally agree (almost "1") that they can occasionally take a few hours off work for personal matters. They also disagree that they fear retaliation or punishment if they take time off for being sick or on vacation. There is a lower level of agreement that their work hours suit their personal circumstances or that they have sufficient time off work for rest and recreation. Yet, in response to whether their job leaves them too tired or mentally drained to do things after work, the average response is agreement, although a lower value (0.29).

The differences in responses among the various survey groups are as follows:

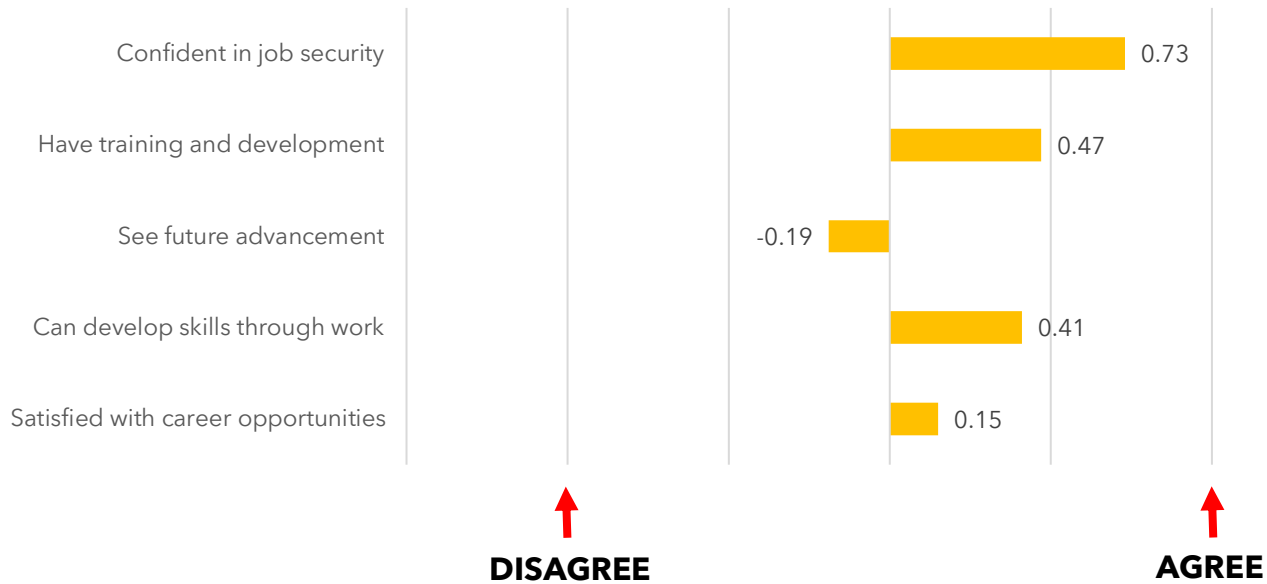
- Temporary employees have a lower level of agreement regarding whether they have sufficient time off work for rest or recreation or whether their job leaves them too drained after work, and they have a lower level of disagreement regarding fear of retaliation for taking time off
- Non-union members have higher levels of agreement about being able to take work time off for personal reasons, for having sufficient time for rest or recreation and for their work hours suiting their circumstances and have a lower level of agreement that their work leaves them too drained afterwards
- Union members have the highest level of agreement with the statement that work leaves them too drained for anything afterwards
- Males are more likely to agree that they have sufficient time after work for rest or recreation and are less likely to agree that work leaves them too drained for after-work activities

JOB SECURITY AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The statements for this theme and their abbreviated forms for the subsequent chart are listed below.

Statement in survey	Abbreviated version in chart
I am confident in my job security	Confident in job security
My workplace provides opportunities for training and professional development	Have training and development
I can see opportunities for advancement in my current organization	See future advancement
I am given opportunities to develop my skills at work	Can develop skills through work
I am satisfied with the career opportunities available for me here	Satisfied with career opportunities

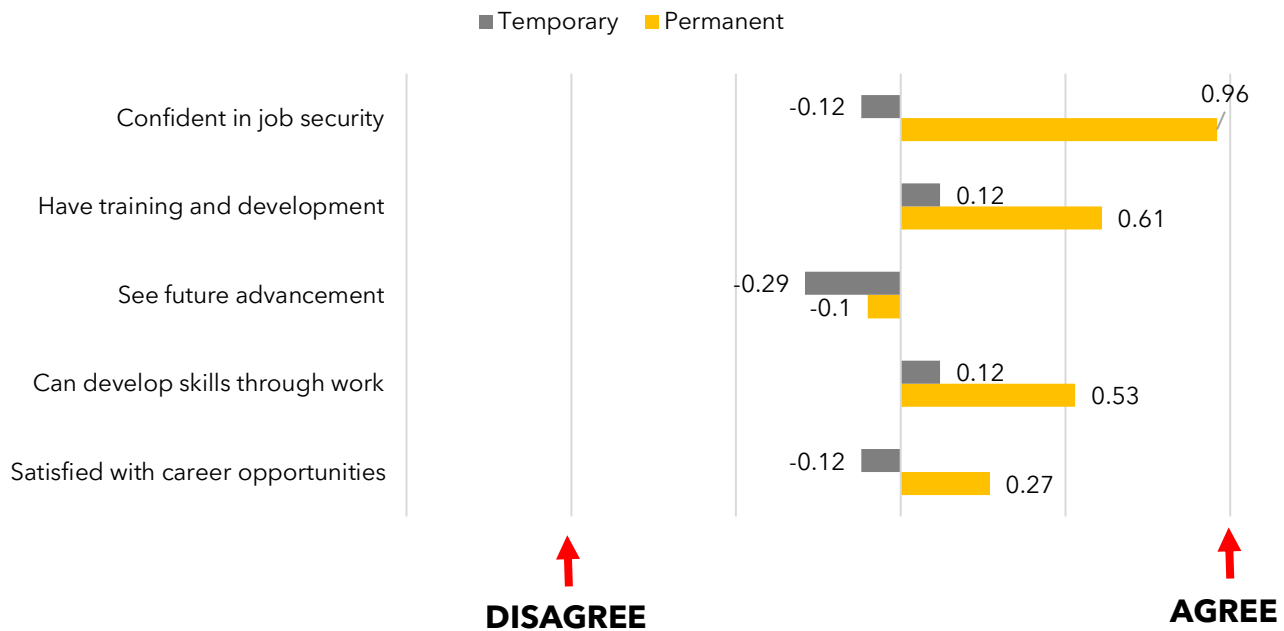
CHART 5: JOB SECURITY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ALL RESPONDENTS



All respondents have some confidence regarding their job security and a lower level of agreement that they have opportunities to develop their work skills, including training and professional development opportunities. On the other hand, there is a low level of satisfaction with career opportunities, and some disagree that there are opportunities for advancement.

This is another set of issues where there is a considerable difference between the views of permanent and temporary employees, as evidenced in Chart 6.

CHART 6: JOB SECURITY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT EMPLOYEES



Not surprisingly, the biggest difference is on the issue of confidence in job security, where permanent employees have an average score of “agree”, while temporary employees score below “neither agree nor disagree,” edging slightly into “disagree” territory. Temporary employees are less likely to have opportunities to develop their skills through work, training, and professional development. Notably, permanent and temporary employees score on the negative side of the range when seeing opportunities for advancement in their current organization.

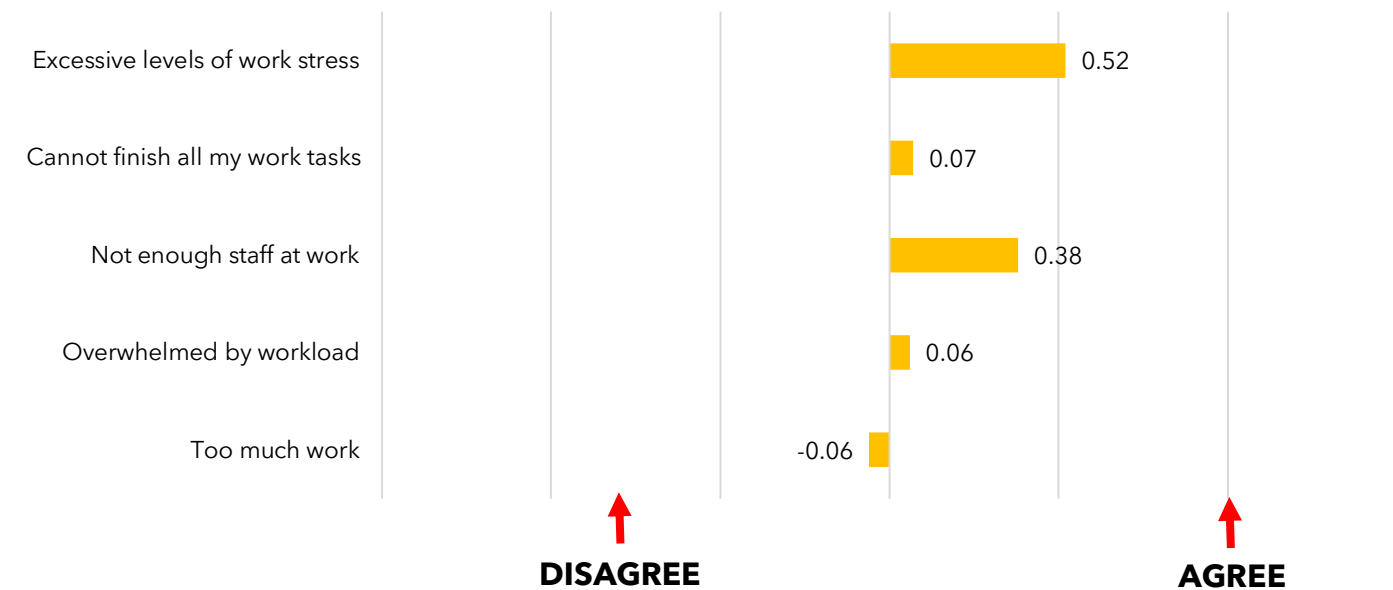
As before, non-union members have more positive scores on these statements, while union members are most negative about seeing opportunities for advancement in their organization. Women are more likely not to see opportunities for advancement (-0.28), while men neither agree nor disagree (0.1).

STRESS AT WORK

Once more, the statements for this section are listed in the table below, as well as the abbreviated versions for the chart.

Statement in survey	Abbreviated version in chart
I often feel excessive levels of stress at work	Excessive levels of work stress
I cannot finish all my tasks within my assigned work hours	Cannot finish all my work tasks
There is not enough staff to get the work done	Not enough staff at work
I feel overwhelmed by my workload	Overwhelmed by workload
I have too much work to do everything well	Too much work

CHART 7: STRESS AT WORK, ALL RESPONDENTS



Each of the statements under this section speaks to workplace stress and overwork. There is some agreement for two out of five of these statements, and for the other three statements, the composite scores average around zero (0.07, 0.06 and -0.06), which is “neither agree nor disagree.”

The two statements which attract higher levels of agreement have higher numbers of respondents expressing strong agreement:

- 21% strongly agreed that they often feel excessive levels of stress at work
- 24% strongly agreed that there is often not enough staff to get the work done

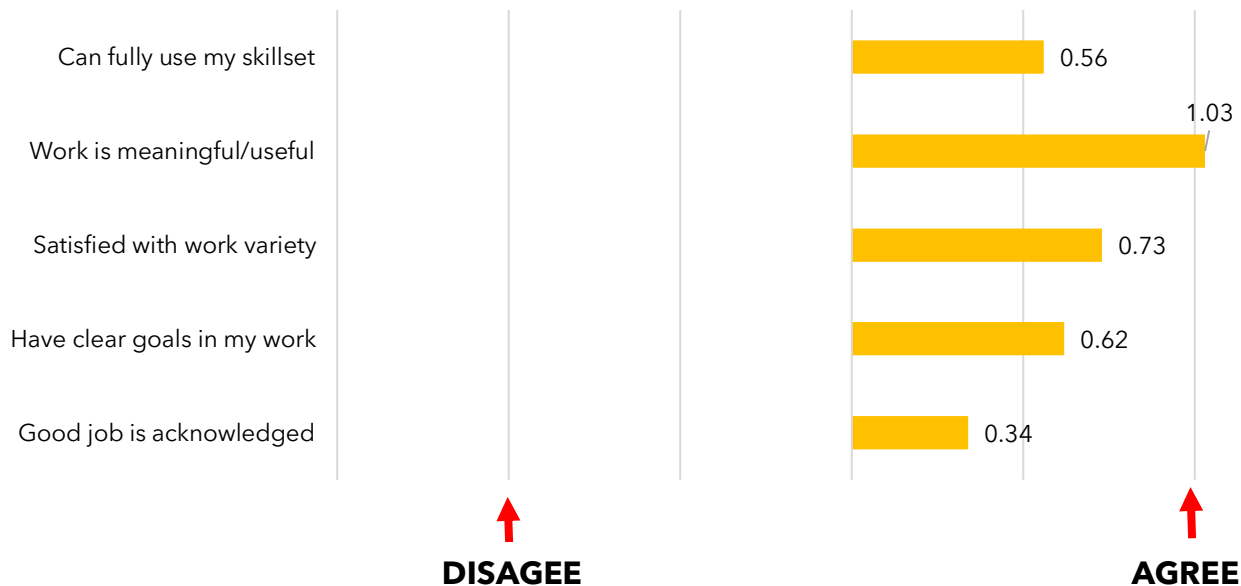
There was little variation in responses between the survey groups for the statements under this section.

JOB SATISFACTION

The table below itemizes the statements for this section and their abbreviated form used in the chart.

Statement in survey	Abbreviated version in chart
I can use my skill set to the fullest at work	Can fully use my skillset
I feel like the work I do is meaningful/useful	Work is meaningful/useful
I am satisfied with the variety of work I get to do	Satisfied with work variety
I have a clear set of goals to enable me to do my job	Have clear goals in my work
When I have done a good job, it is acknowledged by my manager	Good job is acknowledged

CHART 8: JOB SATISFACTION, ALL RESPONDENTS



Notably, respondents feel like their work is meaningful/useful; at 1.03 (“Agree”), this is the statement which received the highest level of agreement among the 30 statements posed to respondents. There were also relatively positive scores for their satisfaction with the variety of work they do, that clear goals are set for their work and, to a lesser extent, that they get to use their skills to the fullest. The statement which attracted a lower level of agreement was that employees receive acknowledgment from their manager when they have done a good job. Over a quarter of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly with this last statement.

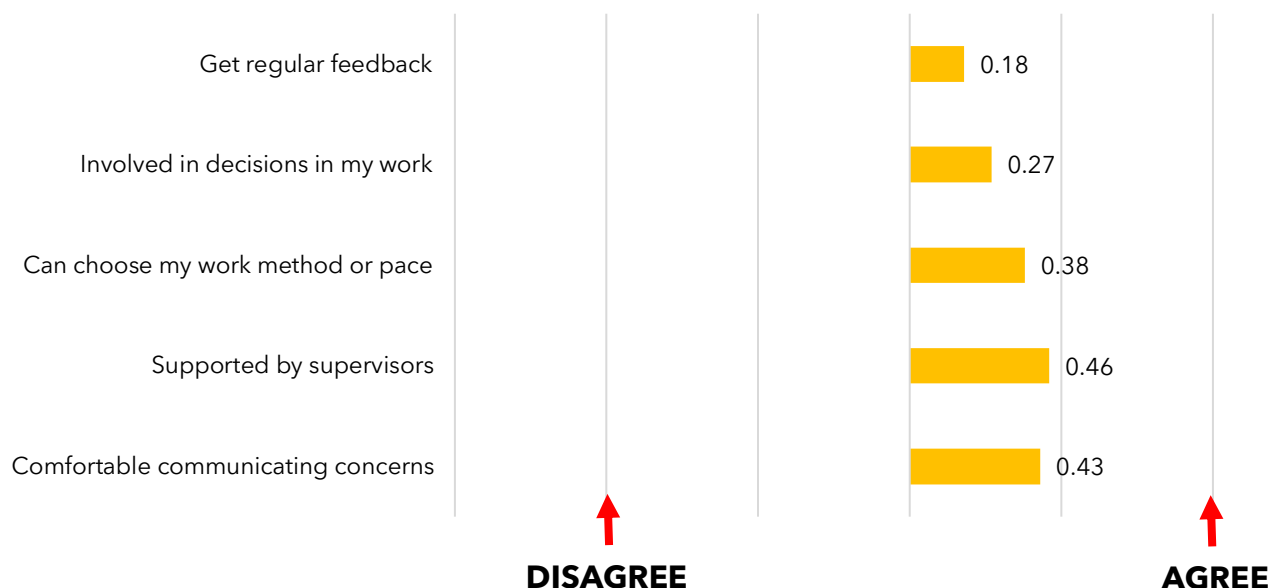
There was limited variation across the survey groups for this set of statements.

AUTONOMY AND SUPPORT

This was the final set of statements, listed in the table below, accompanied by their abbreviated form for the chart.

Statement in survey	Abbreviated version in chart
I receive regular feedback from my supervisor/management	Get regular feedback
I am involved in decisions that affect me in my own area of work	Involved in decisions in my work
I can choose my method or pace of work	Can choose my work method or pace
I feel supported by my supervisor/management	Supported by supervisors
I feel comfortable communicating workplace concerns with my employer/supervisor	Comfortable communicating concerns

CHART 9: AUTONOMY AND SUPPORT, ALL RESPONDENTS



This set of statements speaks to the ability to shape one's own work as well as the level of constructive communication between the employee and management. For all these statements, the level of agreement is positive but low, below halfway between "neither agree nor disagree" and "agree." The lowest level of agreement was with the statement, "I receive regular feedback from my supervisor/management."

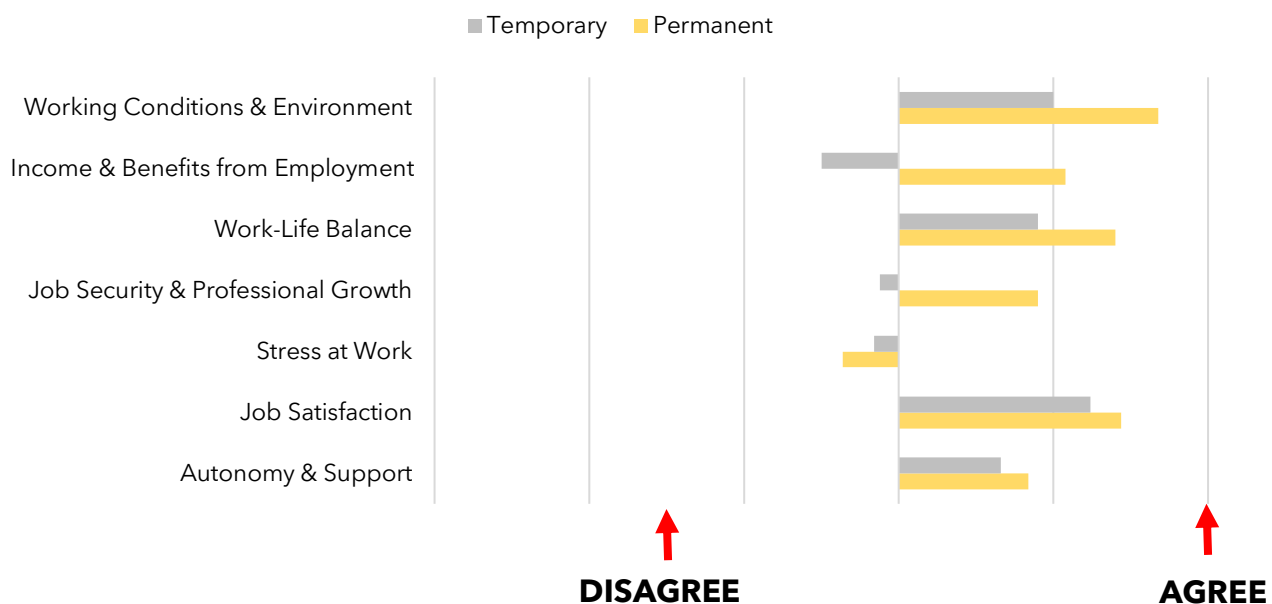
The biggest difference among the survey categories was between non-union members, who provided the highest scores for these statements, and union members, who provided low scores.

COMPARING RESULTS FOR ALL EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE THEMES

Given that each of these categories has a theme, it is possible to assemble an average score for each theme. Any statement framed as negative (for example, "I am not able to take my scheduled/allotted breaks") is turned into a positive so that one can add all the statements within a given theme to arrive at an average composite score.

It has already been pointed out that there is often a considerable gap between the responses of temporary and permanent employees, so this summary will compare the results for each group. The average scores for each theme are presented in Chart 10.

CHART 10: AVERAGE SCORES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE THEMES, TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT EMPLOYEES



While there are differences between the ratings of temporary and permanent employees for each theme, the degree of difference varies considerably. For example, there is a smaller difference with respect to Job Satisfaction as well as Autonomy and Support. On statements relating to Income and Benefits and Job Security and Professional Development, permanent employees had positive scores, while temporary employees had negative scores. Working Conditions and Environment and Work-life Balance both had positive scores, but permanent employees had higher average scores.

The Stress at Work theme, because the statements expressed a negative view (for example, "I often feel excessive levels of stress"), shows agreement with these statements as a negative, in contrast to the other statements. It is striking that on this theme, permanent employees scored a higher average score on work-related stress measures than temporary employees.

Respondents were asked about their reasons for staying in their current job by way of the following question:

What are the main factors keeping you employed at your current workplace? What do you like about your job?

Respondents were required to write in their responses and were given up to five text boxes to list their reasons. 229 respondents answered this question, and across the five opportunities, they provided 740 entries.

Individuals can use different words to describe the same thing, so in analyzing the responses, it is necessary to identify the common category that captures the essence of responses voicing the same reason. Certainly, there are outlier answers which reflect the views of a handful of respondents. However, after reviewing all the entries, it was found that 92% of the 740 answers fit into 18 categories, each of which had at least 10 responses.

Ten prominent responses are described in the following table, each summary title and its meaning or common variants.

Summary title	Description
Co-workers	Like co-workers, like the team, like work environment
Benefits	Like or need work benefits, including pension, vacation time, extended benefits
Decent wage	It is a good wage; basically, a fair wage.
Meaningful	The work is meaningful or engaging; I am making a contribution.
Like my job	Like what I do, like this field of work
Need income	Have financial obligations that need to be met.
Flexibility	I appreciate that I can vary my hours or work as little or as much as I wish
Like the hours	Like that limited to regular workweek hours; no weekend work
Like employer	Like my boss, supervisor, employer

Table 40 lists the prominent responses for all 740 entries and in order of the five responses. Showing the first to fifth responses provides a further sense of the importance of these factors based on which response was at the top of the mind (first response) and which responses were more prominent than the third or fourth item.

In terms of the first responses, the most important factors are:

1. A decent wage
2. One's co-workers/work environment
3. Work that is meaningful or engaging
4. Needing the income
5. Having the flexibility to set one's hours

Notably, as a first response, a decent wage is mentioned most often, and needing the income also comes in fourth on this list. Liking one's co-workers or work environment may be a second response for the first two entries, but afterwards, it is the top entry for the third, fourth and fifth responses, pushing this reason to number one when calculating all responses.

The availability of benefits is eighth on the first response list, but it is regularly cited as a second, third or fourth reason, resulting in this item being second among all responses.

TABLE 40: FACTORS INFLUENCING A DECISION TO STAY EMPLOYED AT CURRENT WORKPLACE, WITH TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES IN EACH CATEGORY

ALL ANSWERS N = 740	1st ANSWER N = 228	2nd ANSWER N = 204	3rd ANSWER N = 156	4th ANSWER N = 91	5th ANSWER N = 61
Co-workers	Decent wage	Benefits	Co-workers	Co-workers	Co-workers
Benefits	Co-workers	Co-workers	Benefits	Benefits	
Decent wage	Meaningful	Like my job	Meaningful	Like employer	
Meaningful	Need income	Decent wage	Flexibility		
Like my job	Flexibility	Meaningful	Like my job		
Flexibility	Like my job	Like the hours			
Like clients	Like clients				

ALL ANSWERS includes every factor with 40 or more entries

1st ANSWER includes every factor with 15 or more entries

2nd ANSWER includes every response with 13 or more entries

3rd ANSWER includes every response with 11 or more entries

4th ANSWER includes every response with 8 or more entries

5th ANSWER includes every response with 10 or more entries

Some of the other factors which did not make Table 40's lists but which received the next highest number of mentions were: liked working conditions (for example, ability to work alone; variety of tasks); location (close to home, short commute; ability to work from home); and work-life balance (the schedule of work or demands of work created enough space to attend to other things).

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

The last question in the survey asked the following:

Please tell us if you have any additional thoughts or comments on the Quality of Work Life or any other workforce-related topics.

76 respondents took the opportunity to provide additional comments. Of those, eight wrote that they had nothing further to add. Of the remaining 68, several spoke to more than one issue. Their comments fell into the following categories:

- (28%) had a complaint about management, noting such issues as management should be appropriately trained to address human resources matters, that they should not engage in favouritism, that they are responsible for clearing up a toxic workplace, and similar observations
- (18%) felt that wages were too low, including that they were not commensurate with the amount of work employees had to do
- (16%) emphasized the need to ensure an appropriate work-life balance, which they often felt was lacking among management
- (12%) felt that there should be more reliance on hybrid work as a way to support a better work-life balance
- (7%) advocated on behalf of a four-day workweek
- (7%) stressed the need for work-related benefits

Other topics which received a smattering of comments were the lack of enough staff or enough good staff impacting their quality of work life, that the nature of the job itself makes their life stressful, and the desire for more investment into developing their skills and promoting career advancement.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the survey indicates overall satisfaction with their jobs among Algoma employees, but noteworthy issues warrant attention. Addressing these concerns will likely contribute to enhanced employee retention and increased engagement in their work.

Employers should pay attention to the significant disparities in responses between permanent and non-permanent employees and how these variations influence their overall job satisfaction. Furthermore, key factors influencing job satisfaction across all employee categories include competitive wages, employment-related benefits, a positive workplace environment, effective management and human resources practices, consideration for maintaining a proper work-life balance and providing flexibility and autonomy in job roles.

Individuals with disabilities face certain constraints in seeking employment accommodations that could enhance their work experience, and some encounter challenges in obtaining these accommodations even when requested.

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