

Executive Summary

Survey results highlighted key focus areas for healthcare quality, accessibility, and affordability. This data offers a foundation from which CEOs, HR leaders, and policymakers can optimize their programs.

The American Heart Association's 2026 Voice of the Employee Survey reveals a workforce highly motivated to improve its health but constrained in its ability to do so.

Employees are setting goals for exercise, nutrition, sleep, and financial well-being. However, for many, achieving those health goals feels out of reach due to time and financial constraints.

The result is a growing gap between intention and action. Employees are looking to employers to help fill that gap.

In March 2026, the American Heart Association worked with The Harris Poll to survey 2,001 employees who rely on their employers for insurance and wellness benefits.

This survey explores the opinions, perspectives, and self-reported experiences of those employees at this moment in time:

- **95%** are actively trying to improve their health and well-being
- **50%** report healthcare costs have affected their ability to pay for day-to-day expenses, including food, childcare, and rent
- **47%** have stopped or decreased retirement contributions

The findings show motivation is not the issue.

Employees face barriers that make health difficult to sustain: rising healthcare and living costs, caregiving responsibilities, and the structure and intensity of work.

These barriers limit employees' ability to maintain healthy behaviors, and they are looking to employers for support and guidance.

Notably, the areas employees most want to improve are also where they struggle most. Work-life balance and stress management emerge as critical pressure points. Many employees indicate that their job makes it harder to prioritize their health.

To address this, employees are seeking their own solutions and using multiple tools, including AI, to manage their health and navigate benefits. This reflects urgency and unmet needs as employees look for support.

At the same time, **90%** of employees would welcome more support from their employer, specifically to manage their health. And they expect that support to be practical, accessible, and embedded in their daily work.

Employees pointed to wide-ranging opportunities for employer support:

- **84%** cite challenges navigating employer-provided health benefits
- **28%** currently use AI tools, and **73%** are interested in more AI-powered health solutions from employers
- **92%** believe health and well-being should be supported through day-to-day work practices, not just policies and programs

Organizations that address these barriers and align support with how work actually happens are better positioned to improve well-being, sustain performance, and retain talent.

Survey Methodology

The research was conducted online in the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the American Heart Association.

The Harris Poll conducted research among 2,001 employees, defined as U.S. adults age 18+ who are employed full or part time (not self-employed) with a company with 25+ employees, are enrolled in a health plan offered by their employer, and their coverage is provided by their employer.

The survey was conducted from February 26–March 12, 2026.

Data are weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, employment, household income, as well as company size in order to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval.

For this study, the sample data is accurate to within ± 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Respondents by Company Size

- **565** respondents from small companies (25–99 employees)
- **401** respondents from medium companies (100–999 employees)
- **556** respondents from large companies (1,000–9,999 employees)
- **479** respondents from very large companies (10,000+ employees)

About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is a global public opinion, analytics, and market research consultancy that strives to reveal society's authentic values to inspire leaders to create a better tomorrow.

With a global research reach of more than 90 countries, Harris offers advisory services across sectors to world leaders, CEOs, and business decision-makers with state-of-the-art analytics, real-time software services, and practitioners in marketing, reputation, customer experience, trends, futures, and thought leadership/research-for-public release. The Harris Poll translates shifting social sentiment into a competitive marketplace advantage.

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