

# The Definitive Wellbeing Program Benchmark

A guide to making sure your  
employee wellbeing benefits  
measure up and stand apart

An exclusive excerpt from Sequoia's  
complete 2019 benchmarking report  
revealing how people-first companies  
shape their employee experience.



SEQUOIA CONSULTING GROUP

## Employee Experience Benchmarking Report 2019

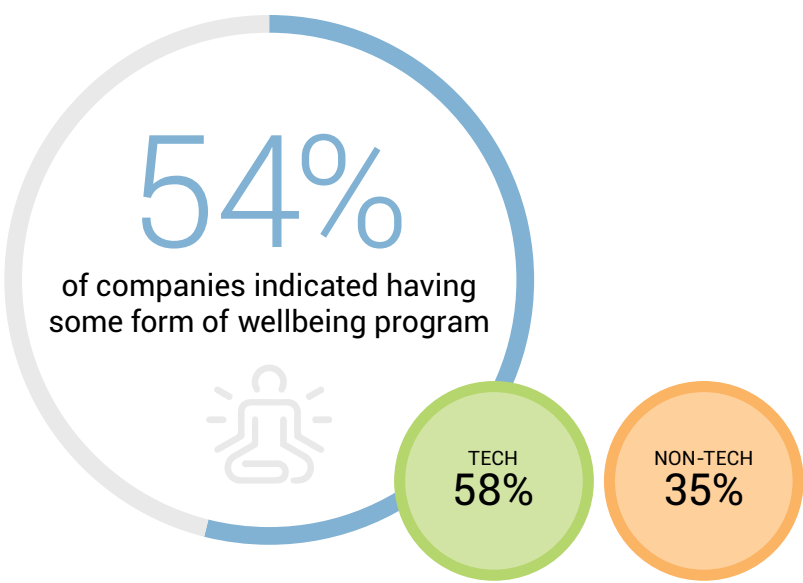


# Introduction

As healthcare rates continue to increase, tactics to support employee wellbeing have become a necessary component in every benefit program strategy. While bandwidth and budget were cited as some of the main deterrents from having a "formal" wellness program, our data showed the majority of companies are very focused on providing programs and resources to support their employees' physical, emotional, and financial health.

## Employers are more focused on a well-rounded approach to total wellbeing

FOCUS	2018	2017
Physical Wellbeing	84%	57%
Emotional Wellbeing	77%	35%
Financial Wellbeing	53%	35%
Social & Community Wellbeing	41%	47%
Family/Parental Wellbeing	33%	13%



## 2019 Trends

In this year's responses, we again saw a surge in the number of companies who are focused on creating a well-rounded, holistic wellbeing and benefits program, with the largest increase seen in mental and emotional wellbeing. There was also a large increase in the number of employers focused on physical wellbeing, with many of them leveraging strategies to make finding care and resources related to sleep, nutrition, and physical fitness easier. Financial wellbeing, particularly a focus on debt and money management strategies, continues to be a growing area of focus as well.

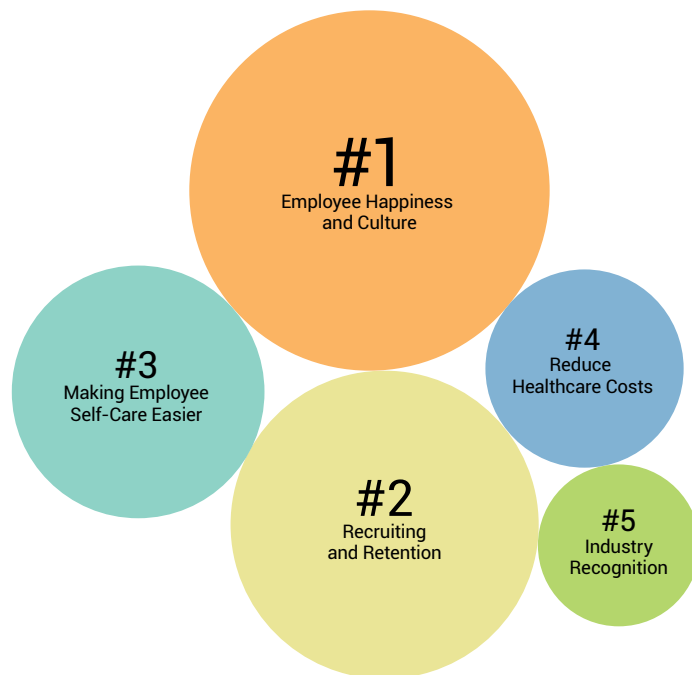


# Program Strategy

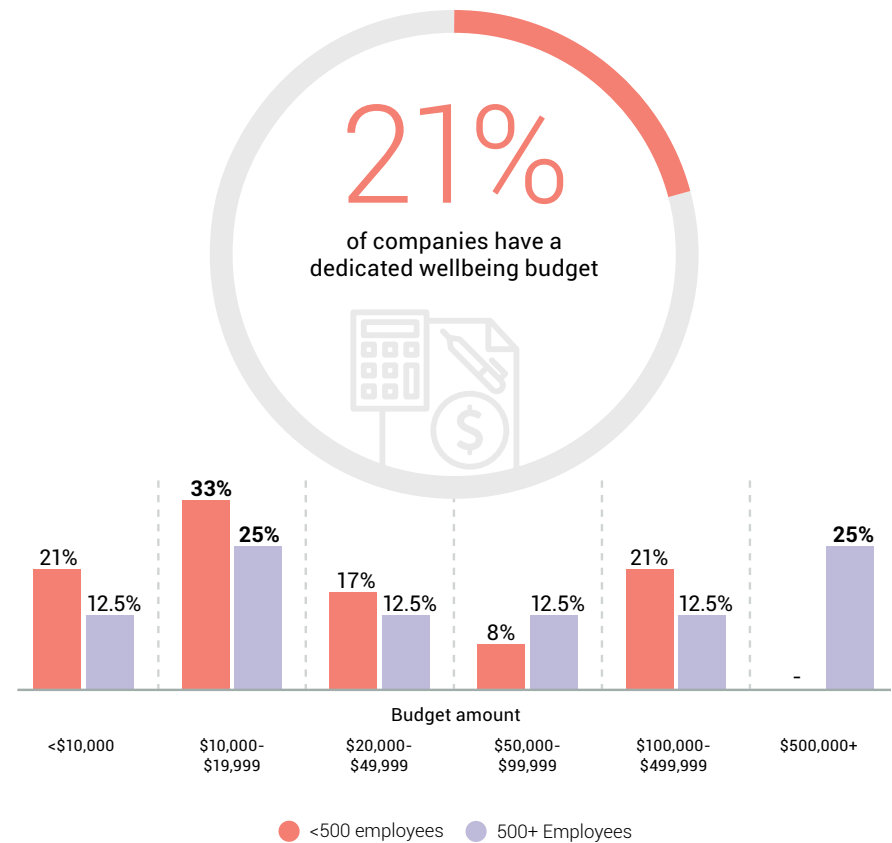
## Decision Drivers

While recruiting and retention, reducing healthcare costs, and making employee self-care easier are all contributing factors in shaping a wellbeing program, the majority of employers seem to agree that employee happiness and culture are the primary drivers for wellbeing-related decisions.

**Employee happiness ranks as the biggest factor in how companies shape their wellbeing programs**



**Wellbeing budgets are hard to come by and vary widely by company size**



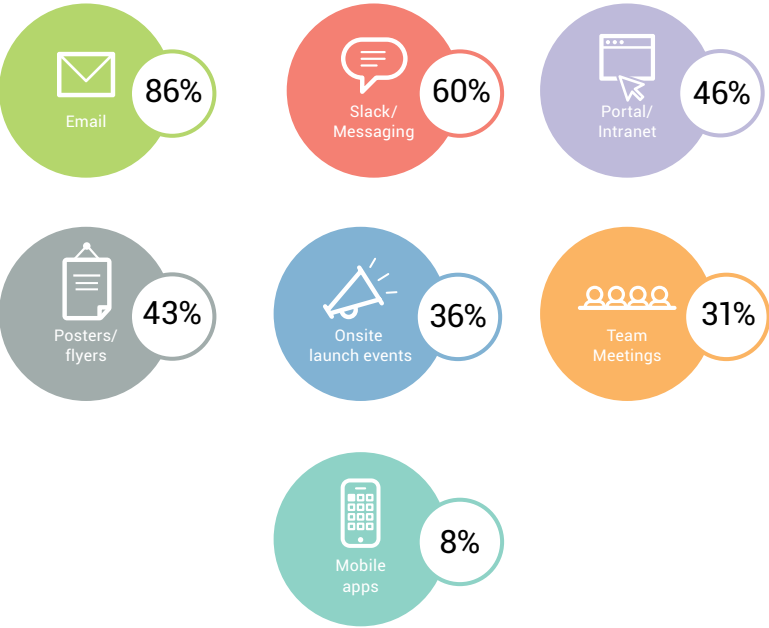
## Budget

With only 21% of companies reporting a dedicated wellbeing budget, many companies are increasingly turning to existing resources through their broker, carriers, or community to support their programs. Medical carriers have taken notice of the need, with many offering free telemedicine, chronic condition management, maternity programs, and even fitness challenges and health reimbursements for employees. In just two years, the percentage of companies taking advantage of carrier benefits has jumped from 31% to 48%.

## Vendors & Rollout

As companies evaluate vendors to help support their programs, the majority are turning to employees for recommendations (53%), closely followed by broker guidance (52%) and experience at a prior company (47%). To communicate the value of chosen vendors, email continues to be the primary source of information sharing, with messaging services like Slack quickly catching up.

### Companies use a wide variety of methods to communicate wellbeing offerings to employees



### Companies are using a variety of methods to measure wellbeing program success

Employee feedback or satisfaction surveys	72%
Ongoing engagement	68%
Initial interest and signup rates	52%
Calculated ROI	15%
Not currently measuring program success	14%

## Success Criteria

When it comes to measuring the success of their wellbeing program, companies most frequently turn to the initial driver of the wellbeing program's development: the employees themselves. 72% of employers rely on employee feedback to determine an initiative's success, while only 15% look to a calculated return on investment (ROI) such as a reduction in claims.

### Want to dive deeper? Talk to us.

The full version of the 2019 benchmarking report also features data and insights across domestic and global benefits, HR policy and administration, 401(k) retirement plans, and risk management and business insurance.

Reach out to learn more: [benchmark@sequoia.com](mailto:benchmark@sequoia.com)

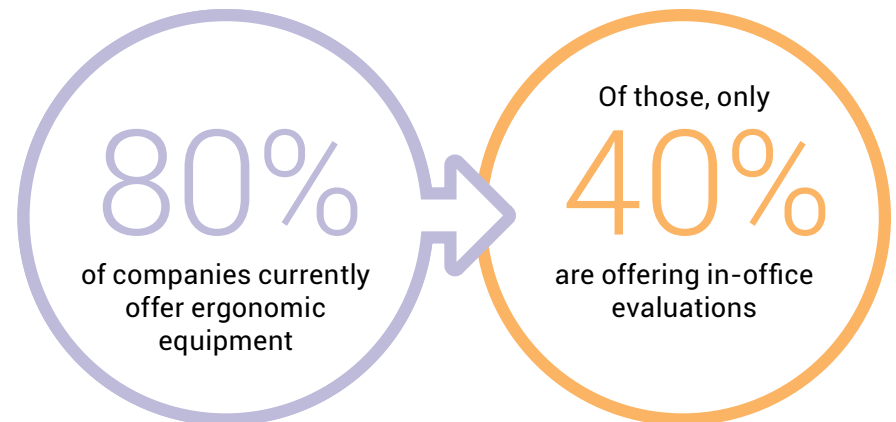


# Physical Wellbeing

Access to programs that favor physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, especially in the workplace, continue to be a mainstay of employer wellbeing programs. Providing convenient services at work is the most popular way to promote physical health, with approximately one third of companies offering access to onsite fitness programs, 30% hosting regular wellbeing seminars, and 19% offering organized fitness challenges.

Interestingly, smaller companies tend to more frequently offer employee wellbeing stipends, with 81% of companies with a headcount under 500 employees providing some form of a stipend, and only 18% of those over 500 employees doing so.

With chronic pain and musculoskeletal concerns on the rise, and a high number of companies including chiropractic and acupuncture in their benefits packages, more proactive ergonomic evaluations can complement existing benefits. Currently, while 80% of companies offer ergonomic equipment to employees, only 40% are offering in-office evaluations.



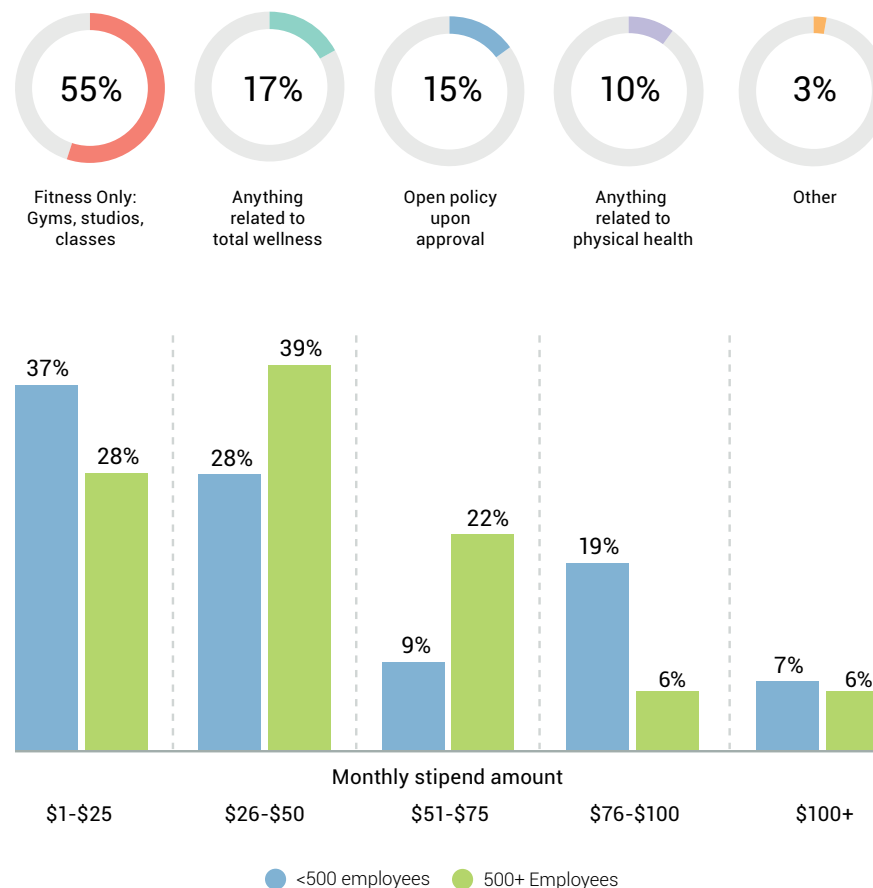
## Companies offer a variety of perks to support employee physical wellbeing

Ergonomic equipment	79%
Gym membership reimbursement/subsidy	48%
Onsite showers	46%
Telemedicine	44%
Ergonomic evaluations	39%
Onsite fitness classes	33%
Onsite wellbeing seminars	30%
Organized fitness challenges	19%
Near-site health clinic membership	13%

Additional programs include:

Wellness Wednesday  
Weight Management Program  
Healthy Free Meals  
Onsite dermatology/vision/dental checkups  
Subsidized Fitness Devices  
Running Groups  
Smoking Cessation Program  
Sleep Pods  
Company Sports Teams  
Stocked Kitchens  
Nutritionist

## Companies offer wellness stipends to support a variety of activities



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# Emotional Wellbeing

Spurred in part this year by societal events, natural disasters, and celebrity advocacy, mental health was a topic very much in the spotlight. Along with this increase in public awareness, our survey shows that mental health has been top of mind for employers, with a dramatic increase in the percentage of companies focusing on this area, jumping from 35% in 2017 to 77% this year.

Unfortunately, finding the resources to help support employees in this space continues to be a challenge. While 73% of employers indicated they offered an employee assistance program (EAP), we found only 4% of employers found the EAP program helpful to employees. Concerned with issues like burnout and work-life balance, depression and anxiety, and family support, companies are doing what they can to offer innovative programs to help support the mental health and emotional stability of their employees. Setting aside a fun, quiet area in the office, recognizing career achievements, allowing pets at work, and leveraging mindfulness and stress management resources are all offerings on the rise at companies.



**Burnout ranks as the highest concern for companies when it comes to issues facing employees**



Companies offer a variety of resources to support emotional wellbeing

EAP	73%
Fun Room at the Office	64%
Pets at Work	39%
Service Awards	39%
Therapy and/or Mindfulness	9%
Advanced EAP	8%
Stress Management Coaching	7%
Sleep Pods	6%

Companies are implementing formal procedures to help employees through traumatic events

Natural Disaster	42%
Terrorist Attack	18%
Employee Critical Illness	17%
Employee Death	14%
Nuclear Attack	9%
Political Announcement	6%





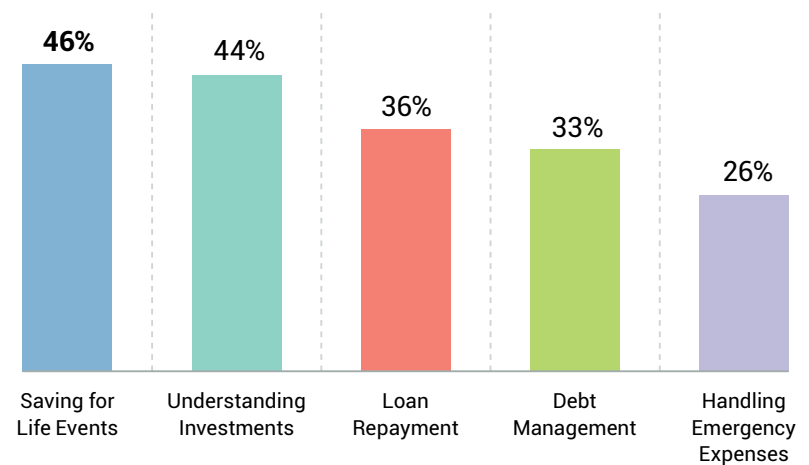
# Financial Wellbeing

As the cost of living continues to increase in US metropolitan areas, employees are turning to employers for financial resources to help with budgeting, debt reduction, and saving for future expenses.

With 53% of companies developing strategies for financial support, most focus on helping employees save for life events (46%), understand investments (44%) and repay loans (36%). We found that companies offered a wider variety of benefits than in years past, focusing on profit sharing and equity.

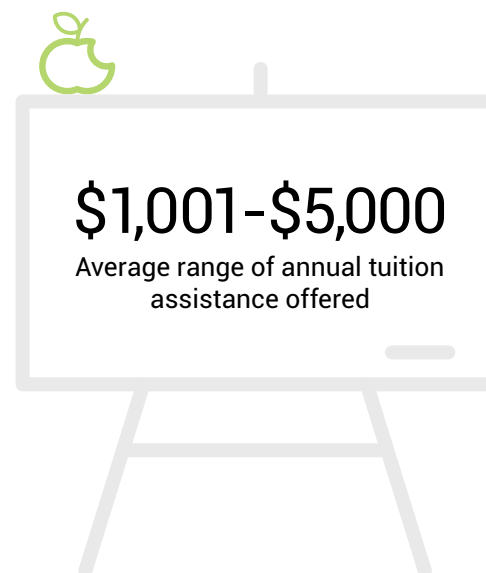
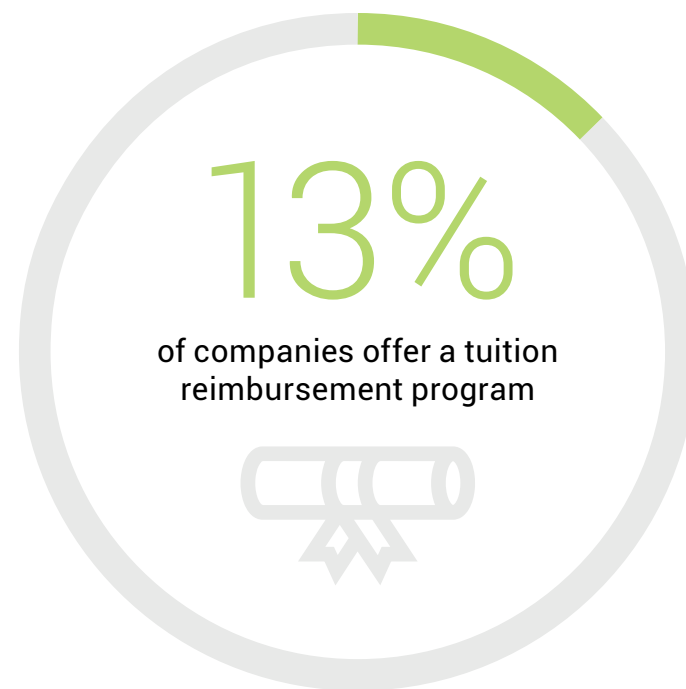


**Companies believe "saving for life events" is the top financial concern for employees**



**Companies offer a wide variety of benefits and perks to support employee financial wellbeing**

Profit Sharing Equity Program	56%
Discount Savings Platform	51%
Paid Relocation Program	33%
Professional Education Allowance	33%
Education	23%
Tuition Reimbursement	13%
Student Loan Reimbursement	5%
529 Plans	4%
Employer Subsidized Housing	2%
Student Loan Matching	1%



**Intriguing, right? Let's talk.**

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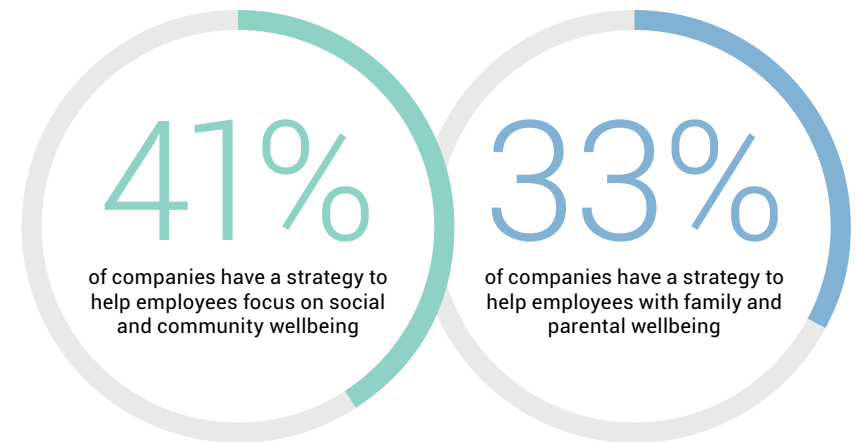
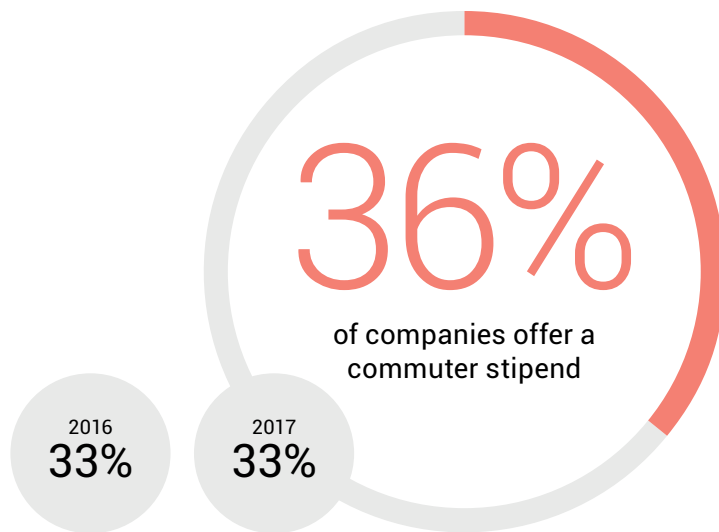
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# Other Programs & Perks

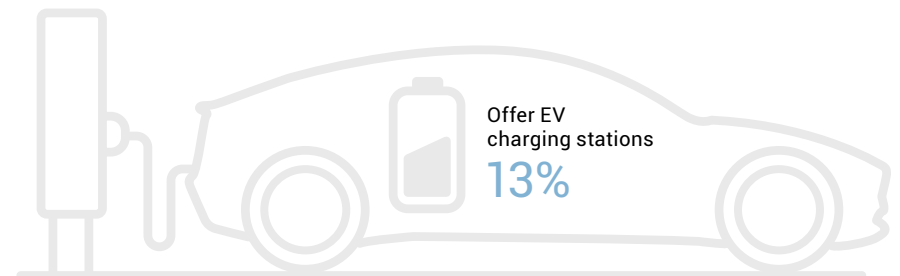
With offerings like fitness discounts, onsite flu shots, and office snacks becoming more mainstream than innovative, many employers are thinking outside the box to find programs that bring value and convenience to employees. With more companies focused on improving an employee's overall quality of life, survey results pointed towards an increased focus on practical benefits for the family, community, and personal health.

## Companies continue to ease the burden of commuting for their employees



## Creative Commuting

Although flexible working arrangements and work-from-home options are on the rise, companies recognize that for the majority of employees, commuting is still very much a stressor. To lend a hand, 36% of companies offer some level of commuter stipend, while additional eco-friendly commuter support is often provided in the form of bike allowances, electric vehicle charging stations, company shuttle routes, and carpool services.



## Conveniences at Work

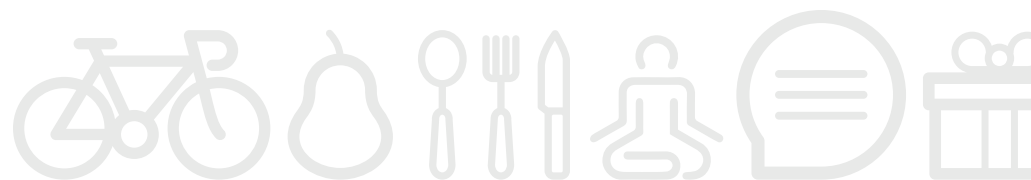
Once at the office, companies are increasingly striving to create an environment that more closely resembles the comforts of home, providing showers, sleep pods, casual dress codes, pet friendly policies, and onsite health clinics.

Companies are breathing new life into the idea of work-life balance by offering employees convenient services like onsite teeth cleaning, eye exams, and skin checks.

### Companies offer a variety of benefits to impact the employee experience

Casual Dress Code	93%
Onsite Mothers' Room	64%
Return-to-Work Program (after parental leave)	62%
Remote Working Policy	49%
Volunteer Events	41%
Onsite Interest Groups	35%
Voluntary Pet Insurance	26%
Laundry Service	6%
Parental Coaching	5%
Childcare Credits Allowance	4%

### Companies continue to differentiate themselves with a wide variety of perks



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