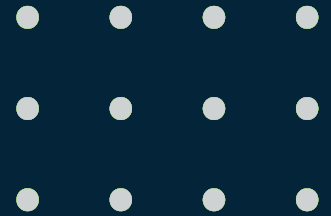


2026

The Littler® Annual Employer Survey Report



KEY FINDINGS: Leaves, Accommodations and Flexible Work Arrangements

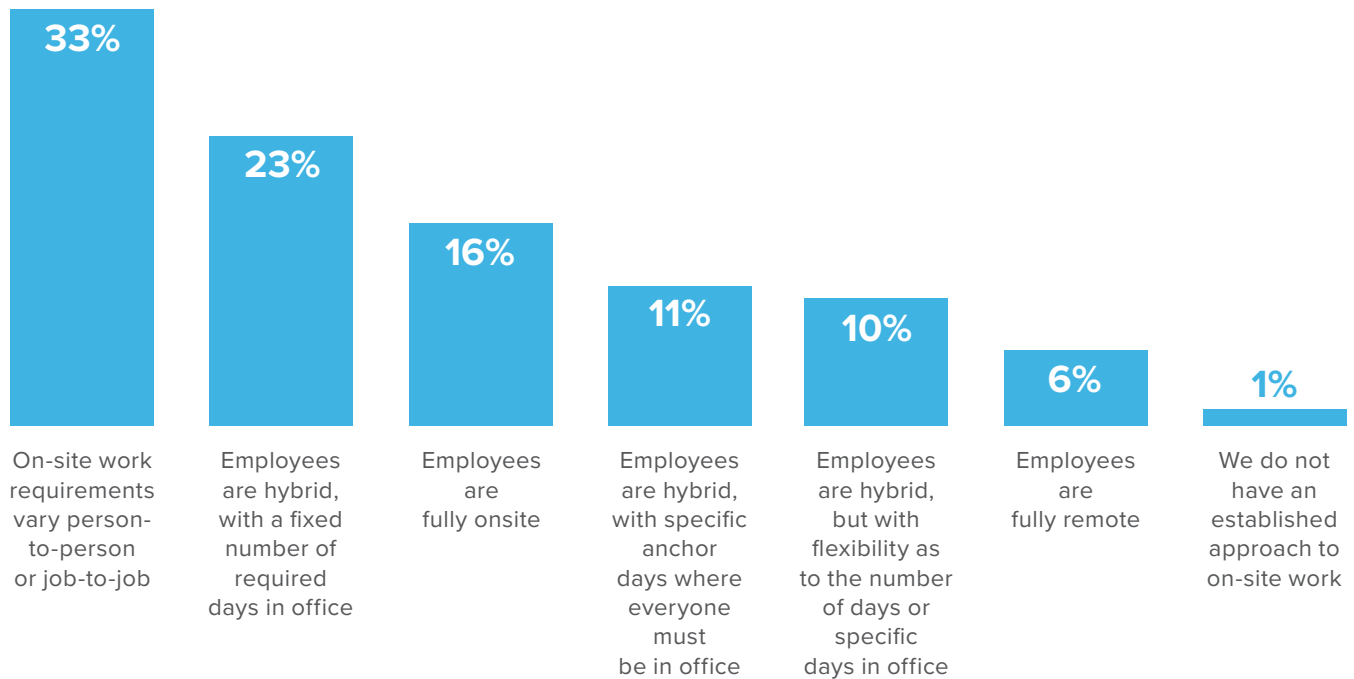
Employers are managing increasingly complex leave and accommodation requests, while at the same time continuing to grapple with pandemic-era expectations around flexible work.

The practical and legal challenges facing businesses in this evolving landscape were among the issues analyzed in [Littler's 2026 Annual Employer Survey Report](#), released in May and completed by more than 300 executives across the U.S. This report provides a snapshot of key survey findings in this area.

HYBRID WORK

Efforts to Bring Employees Fully Onsite Have Flattened as Hybrid Remains the Dominant Model

Which of the following best represents your organization's overall approach to on-site work for positions that could be performed remotely?

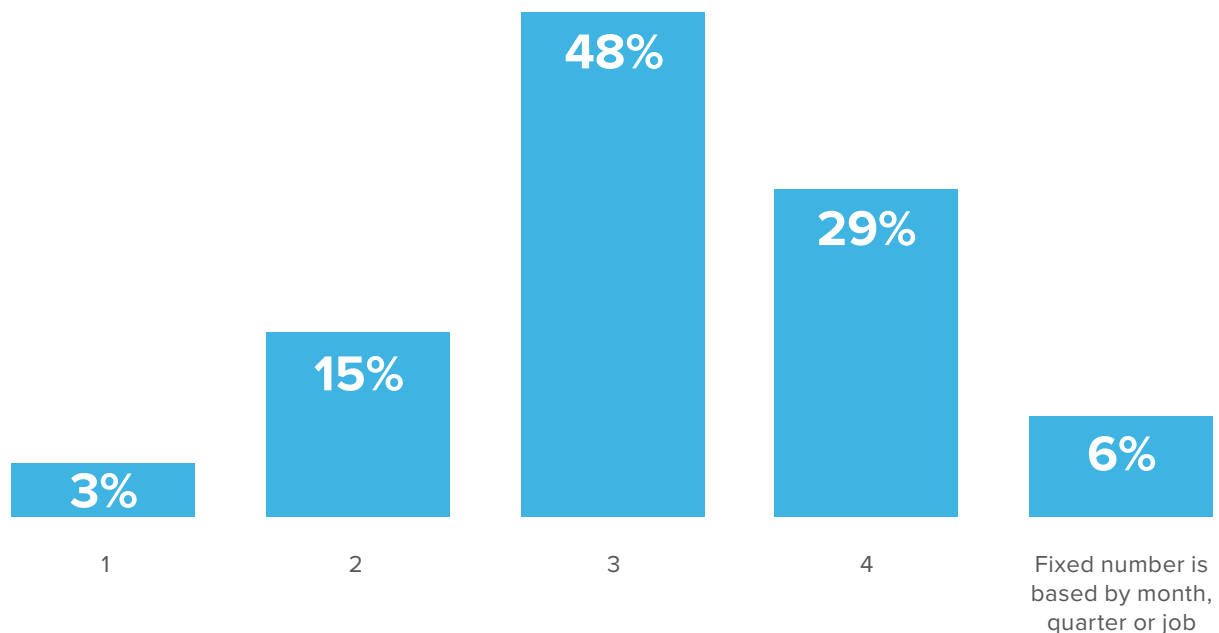


Hybrid work remains the most common arrangement for positions that can be performed remotely, with 77% indicating that their organizations are providing some type of hybrid work schedule.

Only 16% have employees that are fully onsite and just 6% have employees that are fully remote. These figures are almost exactly in line with the past three years of data from Littler's surveys, showing that most movement around in-office work in recent years has been within some type of hybrid arrangement.

Three Days in Office Emerges as the Hybrid Norm

How many days per week does your organization require employees to be in office?



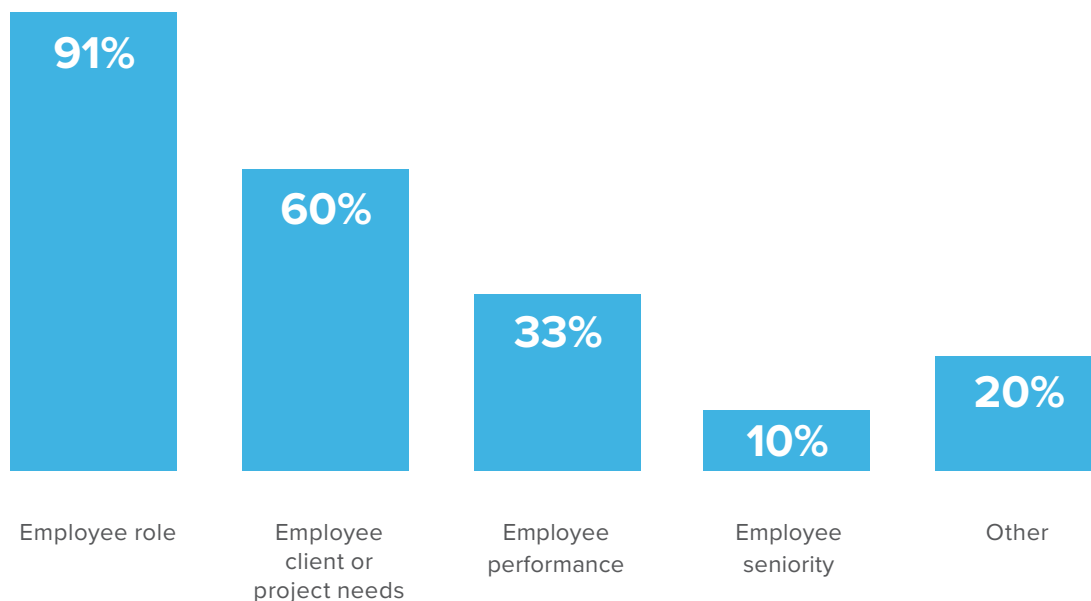
Of organizations that offer hybrid schedules with a fixed number of in-office days, the largest share (48%) requires employees to be in office three days a week, followed by four days a week (29%). The data shows employers moving away from arrangements with fewer required in-office workdays, as fewer than 1 in 5 (18%) require only one or two days per week.

REMOTE WORK AND ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS

As employers seek more structured in-office work policies, they often see a corresponding rise in requests for individualized arrangements, many of which may be for personal reasons. For remote work or other accommodation requests that relate to a legally binding obligation, employers must address these requests in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and/or similar state or local laws.

Role-Based Decisions Drive Workplace Flexibility

Which of the following factors are considered when determining on-site work requirements for employees? (Select all that apply)



For those organizations where on-site requirements vary by person or job, decisions regarding who is permitted to work remotely are largely driven by employee role (91%), followed by employee client or project needs (60%). This is relevant because minimizing litigation risk requires a defensible business rationale, with differences in hybrid schedules more effectively justified by the essential functions and operational requirements of a given role – versus potentially subjective criteria like employee performance or manager preferences.



“In managing remote work requests, many employers are finding that the challenge is not just the volume of requests, but how those requests are handled at the frontline manager level. As employees continue to have high expectations around the feasibility and availability of remote work, it is increasingly important for businesses to have consistent processes in place for evaluating and granting such requests on a truly individualized, case-by-case basis, and that supervisors and managers know how to access that process.”

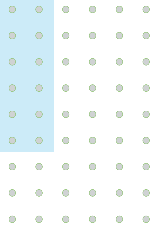
Alexis C. Knapp

Co-Chair of Littler's Leave and Accommodation Practice Group

Mental Health Requests Remain Elevated

67%

of employers have seen an increase in leaves of absence and accommodation requests related to employee mental health over the past year.



Mental health in the workplace continues to be a growing concern for employers and employees alike. Over the past year, 67% of employers experienced increases in the volume of mental health related leaves of absence and accommodation requests – and that figure rises to 74% for large employers. This follows two years of survey data in which employers reported a similar increase in the amount of leave and accommodation requests related to mental health conditions – 70% in Littler’s 2025 Employer Survey and 74% in the 2024 report.



“Many employers are seeing not only a high volume of leave and accommodation requests with a mental health component but continued increases on top of the elevated levels of the past few years. Leaves and accommodations are among the most challenging workplace requests to administer, and the added complexity of mental health related requests has only heightened the stakes.”

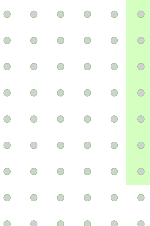
Jeff Nowak

Co-Chair of Littler’s Leave and Accommodation Practice Group

Leave Administration Challenges Persist

75%

say managing extended or open-ended absences was a challenge over the past year.



When it comes to administering leaves of absence and accommodation requests, managing extended or open-ended absences is the most significant hurdle that employers identify, with 75% saying it was a challenge over the past year. Roughly half of respondents indicated difficulty with related issues, including managing the stacking of different leave types (55%), addressing employee expectations regarding leave duration or flexibility (55%), and determining when different leave entitlements can run concurrently (49%).

70% identify manager training on handling leave and accommodation requests as a challenge.

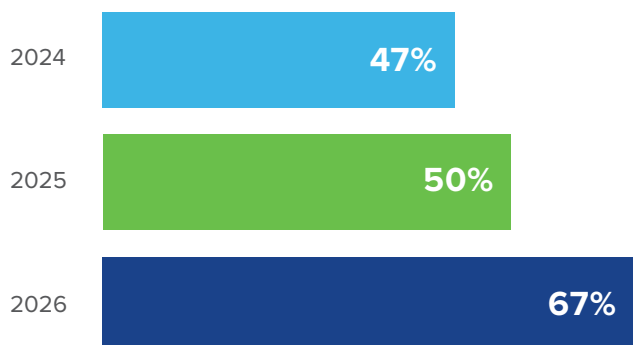
Employers' second most common challenge in administering leave and accommodation requests is ensuring that managers are adequately trained to handle them (70%). Organizations are increasingly recognizing that policies and HR support alone are not sufficient if frontline managers do not understand leave and accommodation obligations.

WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION LITIGATION

Littler's 2026 survey saw employers anticipating litigation risk across a wide range of issues over the next 12 months. Among the most notable shifts came in the area of workplace accommodation requests, which saw a 17 percentage-point increase in employers concerned about litigation. This is a particular worry for large employers, with 77% bracing for accommodation-related litigation.

The growing concern reflects increased friction around employees' remote work expectations, as well as the ongoing rise in mental health-related accommodation requests. Requests may also be increasing as more employees and healthcare providers tap into online resources related to workplace accommodation rights and utilize generative AI to help draft requests.

Percentage of employers concerned about litigation related to workplace accommodations for the upcoming year



For more information on Littler's Leave and Accommodation practice group, [click here](#), or visit the [Insights page](#) for analysis of recent developments. The complete Littler 2026 Employer Survey Report can be accessed [here](#).