



2020

# State of Training and Staff Development Report

**RELIAS**  
relias.com

<b>01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	3	<b>07 FINDINGS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY SECTOR</b>	35
<b>02 INTRODUCTION</b>	9	<b>08 PERCEIVED STRENGTHS + WEAKNESSES</b>	41
Purpose of This Report	10	<b>09 CONCLUSION</b>	44
Who Is This Report For?	10	<b>10 ABOUT RELIAS</b>	45
<b>03 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	11	<b>11 ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH</b>	46
<b>04 DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	12		
<b>05 SURVEY FINDINGS + TRAINING OUTLOOK</b>	14		
<b>06 FINDINGS FOR HEALTHCARE SECTORS</b>	24		
Health and Human Services	26		
Acute and Pre-Acute Care	28		
Post-Acute Care	30		
Payers and Insurers	33		



In this year when national and world crises have unexpectedly hit everyone in healthcare and public safety harder than imaginable, leaders might be tempted to write off 2020 data as so far out of the norm that it skews analysis of trends.

However, changes wrought in 2020 will have implications for staff development and training for years to come. As a case in point, the coronavirus pandemic has underlined the need to train staff so they are competent and prepared for future crisis situations.

The Relias *2020 State of Training and Staff Development Report*, initiated in February before COVID-19 had widespread effects, was designed to take stock of the national perspective on five broad staff development and training issues in healthcare and public safety organizations. Because healthcare operations changed dramatically in the months after the coronavirus threat appeared, we conducted a follow-up survey in June to capture those trends.

Findings show that COVID-19 drove organizations to place even more emphasis on training and staff development beyond the importance given to professional education early in the year.

As a leader looking at the 2020 survey analysis, you may want to focus on perceived gaps in training as opportunities for new approaches to achieve optimal results. The data then can inform your immediate and long-term action plans for staff development in your organization.

## FINDING

Compliance with external requirements strongly **motivates investment in training.**

Licensing and certification needs continue to drive training dollars. A dramatically higher percentage of overall respondents acknowledged this need in 2020 than five years ago. Of healthcare respondents, 25% said their investment in training and staff development was too low.

## TAKEAWAY

Although an external driver, compliance has powerful internal benefits too. Compliance safeguards the organization's reputation and fiscal strength by avoiding government-imposed financial penalties. It also can boost staff confidence and competence, aiding retention and supporting high-quality service.

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

A third of healthcare respondents increased their training amid the pandemic. Organizations tend to be increasing training for existing front-line employees (healthcare 54%, public safety 27%) more than they are increasing compliance-driven training or new-hire training. This shows recognition of the value of training to be prepared for and navigate within a crisis.





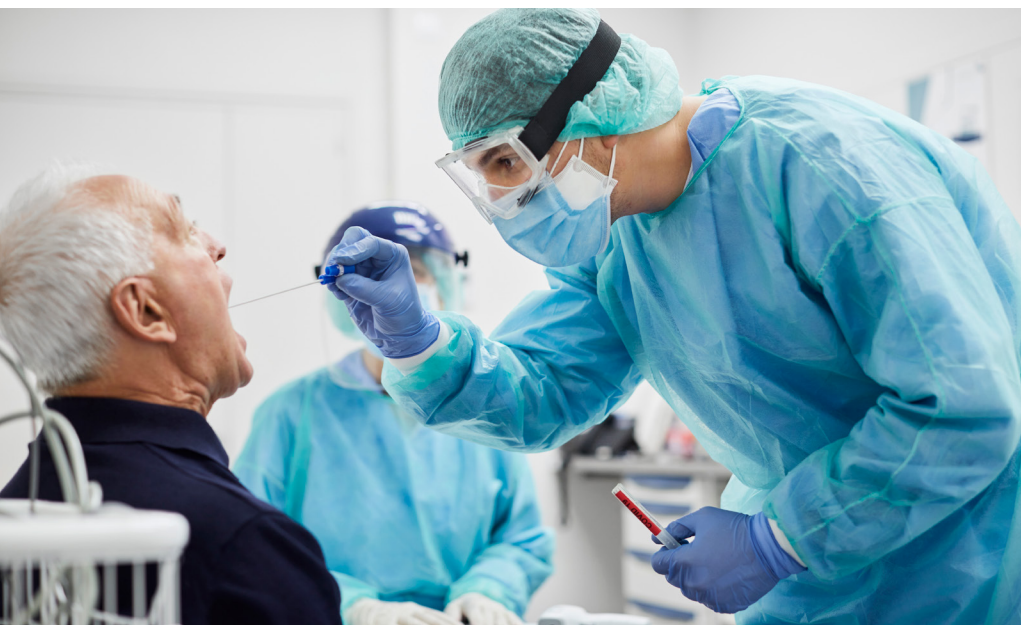
## FINDING

Most respondents see **strong value in staff development and training**, and they identified topics related to interpersonal skills and job competencies as **priority needs**.

Although compliance is a big driver, respondents strongly recognized the need for staff development that supports front-line interactions with the people receiving services.

## TAKEAWAY

Survey participants indicate a need for training related to leadership, communication, and competency, especially in infection control, mental health, and trauma-informed care.



## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Training was deemed highly important to even more respondents during the pandemic (healthcare 91%, public safety 83%) than in the February pre-COVID-19 survey. More post-acute care participants (74%) especially recognized its importance since the pandemic. Healthcare is prioritizing infection control, pandemic planning, employee wellness and self-care, and telehealth; public safety is prioritizing employee wellness and self-care, pandemic planning, and infection control.

## FINDING

Organizations are not widely using their systems to **evaluate the effectiveness** of training, even though many respondents use **online training and tracking**.

Many organizations (healthcare 61%, public safety 40%) are using online systems for more than half of their training. However, less than half of respondents (41%) indicated positive or well-developed methods of evaluating whether training is put in practice on the job. More than a third of respondents still use paper or word processing files for tracking training.

## TAKEAWAY

Tracking the completion of training and analyzing its effectiveness on the job are areas ripe for improvement. Because the use of learning management systems is growing (44% in 2020 vs. 33% in 2017), learning and development leaders should consider ways to use those systems to tie training to performance and impact on business objectives.

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Many respondents noted a major or moderate shift toward online training (healthcare 76%, public safety 82%). In healthcare, a learning management system (LMS) was the most common new method of tracking training (24%); in public safety, database (23%) and LMS (21%) tracking were the methods adopted most often.



## FINDING

Less than half of healthcare respondents indicated that **training directly affects the organization's financial results**, and that area ranked lowest when they identified areas where training showed positive results.

Although most respondents (76%) said training has a positive impact on business goals, they are not recognizing clear financial results from the investment. Training was seen to have the most impact on compliance, core staff clinical competencies, and risk management.

## TAKEAWAY

Executives should ensure that learning and development professionals are aware of high-level goals, then they can use their systems to measure the effectiveness of training and link that to outcome measures to show a return on investment.

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

With almost half of respondents (47%) noting a major change in the use of online training during the pandemic, online tracking becomes more feasible as well. As noted in the previous finding, more healthcare organizations are now using an LMS to track their training (24%).

## FINDING

Public safety respondents noted **gaps in training** and **lack of time** as the biggest weaknesses of their programs.

On the positive side, participants identified the relevance of training content as the top strength.

## TAKEAWAY

Organizational leaders need to consider creative scheduling and online options to ensure their staff members have adequate training and time to take courses.

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

The pandemic may be facilitating ease of access to support future training, as a major change in the amount of online training was noted by more than half (61%) of public safety respondents.





This year, healthcare and public safety professionals have grappled with interconnected and unforeseen challenges stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. **Keeping leaders and staff educated and prepared is the constant charge of training and staff development.** When expectations shift, training must help organizations stay on top of those new expectations.

In both healthcare and public safety, survey data can help you understand the changing demands for expertise in your field and trends in how your organization carries out its mission.

By considering the views of executives, education leaders, and front-line staff, you can make better decisions about how to stay responsive to your mission, provide high-quality service, reduce risk, and advance desired outcomes.

## Purpose of This Report

The Relias *2020 State of Training and Staff Development Report* was designed to get a national perspective on **five broad staff development and training issues** in healthcare and public safety organizations:

- + The perceived business alignment, value, and impact of today's staff development and training programs.
- + Principal training drivers and emerging influences.
- + Stakeholder perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of existing training programs.
- + Current common practices in training management and delivery.
- + Current budgets and the economics of staff development and training.

## Who Is This Report For?

This report is designed to be a resource for two groups: The executives **driving organizational performance** and the individuals **overseeing and delivering training** programs.

Our goal is to help organizations identify sustainable strategies for continuing to fulfill their mission amid inevitable and unexpected change. With the data and analysis in this report, healthcare and public safety leaders can:

- + Benchmark current practices, investments, and beliefs compared with a national sample.
- + Identify ways to improve staff development and training opportunities.



## The *2020 State of Training and Staff Development* survey was developed in coordination with Hanover Research.

The survey was designed to echo the same study field as in 2017 to provide a **longitudinal perspective** into the overall trends of the industry. The survey was launched online through **Qualtrics on February 18** to 678,169 healthcare and public safety executives, managers, and training personnel. As an incentive for participation, the first 500 respondents were entered into a random drawing for a gift certificate for one of six \$150 Amazon gift cards. After one week of fielding, the survey was closed on February 25 with a total of 7,785 responses, including 2,207 partial respondents and 434 disqualified respondents.

After cleaning the data through R, the study consisted of **5,089 qualified completed responses**. The final data set was then analyzed through MarketSight, with the data cut into crosstabs by accreditation, sector, industry, size of the organization, and type of organization. Statistical significance testing was performed across segments with a 95% confidence level using a Z-Test with  $p = \text{less than } 0.05$ . This report provides a synopsis of findings across the healthcare sector—**health and human services, acute and pre-acute care, post-acute care, and payers and insurers**—and in the **public safety** sector.

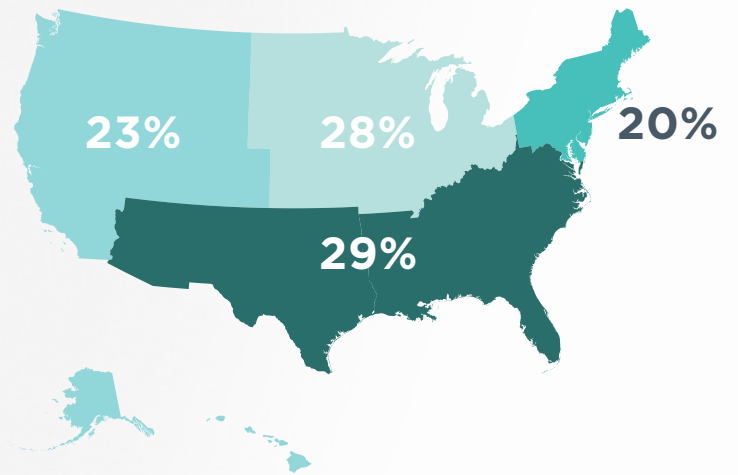
Due to the major impact COVID-19 has had on the healthcare industry, part of the survey was redesigned to capture the impact of the coronavirus and relaunched on June 2. After 10 days of fielding, the **COVID-19 follow-up survey** was closed on June 12. The second survey undertook the same process as the February survey, coming down to a total of **4,549 qualified respondents** in healthcare and public safety. The post COVID-19 results were used to draw insights into the impact that COVID-19 has had on the industry.

More than 5,000 healthcare and public safety professionals participated in this survey, with 29% of respondents holding executive or senior management positions and 15% of respondents holding other key training stakeholder positions.

**The survey represents professionals in the public safety sector and in the following healthcare sectors:**

acute and pre-acute care; post-acute care; payer and insurer organizations; and health and human services organizations providing services in behavioral health, in community health, and for individuals with developmental disabilities.

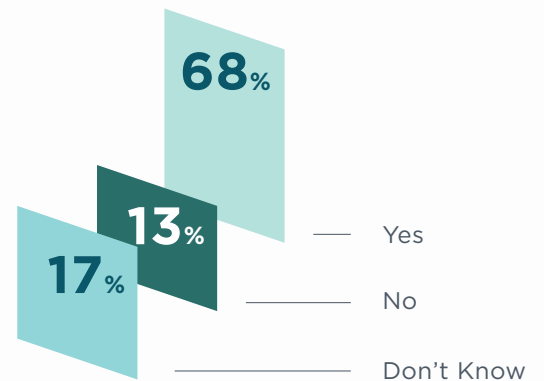
## RESPONDENTS' HEADQUARTERS



## COMPANY SIZE BY EMPLOYEE COUNT



## ACCREDITATION



## TYPE OF ORGANIZATION





---

# Survey Findings + Training Outlook

## Wide Recognition of Compliance as a Training Driver

### FINDING

**Compliance** with external requirements strongly **motivates investment** in training.

Licensing and certification needs continue to drive training dollars. A dramatically higher percentage of overall respondents acknowledged this need in 2020 (93%) than five years ago (73%). Of healthcare respondents, 25% said their investment in staff development and training was too low.

### TAKEAWAY

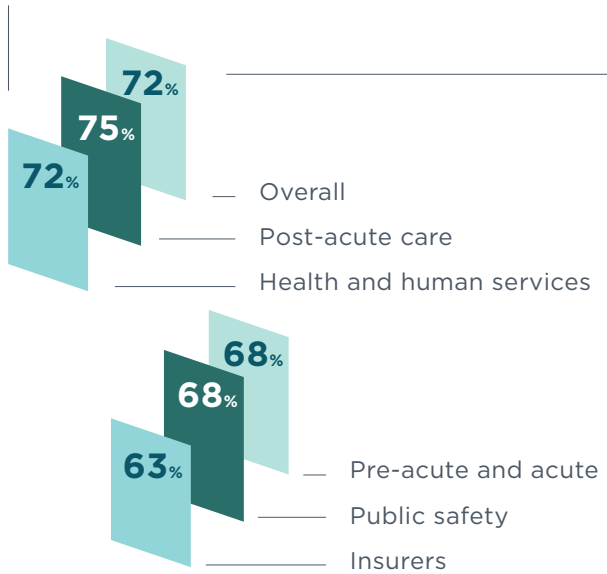
This external driver has powerful internal benefits too. Compliance can preserve the organization's reputation and fiscal strength by maintaining quality ratings and avoiding government-imposed financial penalties. It also can boost staff confidence and competence, aiding retention and supporting high-quality service.

In 2020, 93% of respondents are investing in training to support licensing and certification needs, an increase of 27% from respondents in 2015. Most organizations (72%) in the initial survey reported that more than half of their training over the past 12 months was aimed at satisfying compliance requirements.

### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Most healthcare organizations are increasing (33%) or maintaining (54%) training spending. Organizations tend to be increasing training for existing front-line employees (healthcare 54%, public safety 27%) more than they are increasing compliance-driven training or new-hire training. This shows recognition of the value of training to be prepared for and navigate within a crisis.

## MOST TRAINING FOR COMPLIANCE PURPOSES



**Q.** How much of total training done at your organization **in the past 12 months** was done to satisfy compliance requirements versus being done **solely for organizational performance improvement?**

*\*Percentage who answered, "more than half"*

## TRAINING EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR LICENSING + CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

**77%**  
Healthcare

**68%**  
Public Safety

**Q.** How important is it for staff development and training programs to support the licensing or certification needs of your staff?





## Priorities in Staff Development and Training

### FINDING

Most respondents see **strong value in staff development and training**, and they identified topics related to interpersonal skills and job competencies as priority needs.

Although compliance is a big driver, respondents strongly recognized the need for staff development that supports front-line interactions with the people receiving services.

### TAKEAWAY

Survey participants indicate a need for training related to leadership, communication, and competency, especially in infection control, mental health, and trauma-informed care.

The majority (84%) of respondents believe that staff development and training are highly important, a belief that is consistent across organizations of all sizes, from small (87%) to medium (84%) to large (84%).

### Biggest Training Needs

- + Clinical competencies
- + Infection control
- + Leadership
- + Direct care
- + Ethics
- + Regulatory compliance
- + Nursing
- + Mental health
- + Time management
- + Trauma-informed care
- + Documentation skills

### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Training was deemed highly important to even more respondents during the pandemic (healthcare 91%, public safety 83%) than in the February pre-COVID-19 survey. Respondents working in post-acute care (74%) are significantly more likely to report increased importance than those in health and human services (53%), payers and insurers (56%), pre-acute and acute care (55%), and public safety (39%). Healthcare is prioritizing infection control, pandemic planning, employee wellness and self-care, and telehealth; public safety is prioritizing employee wellness and self-care, pandemic planning, and infection control.

## Evaluating Use of Training on the Job

### FINDING

Organizations are not widely using their systems to **evaluate the effectiveness** of training, even though many respondents use **online training and tracking**.

Many organizations (healthcare 61%, public safety 40%) are using online systems for more than half of their training. However, less than half of respondents (41%) indicated positive or well-developed methods of evaluating whether training is put in practice on the job. More than a third of respondents still use paper or word processing files for tracking training.

### TAKEAWAY

Tracking the completion of training and analyzing its effectiveness on the job are areas ripe for improvement. Because the use of learning management systems is growing (44% in 2020 vs. 33% in 2017), learning and development leaders should consider ways to use those systems to tie training to performance and impact on business objectives.

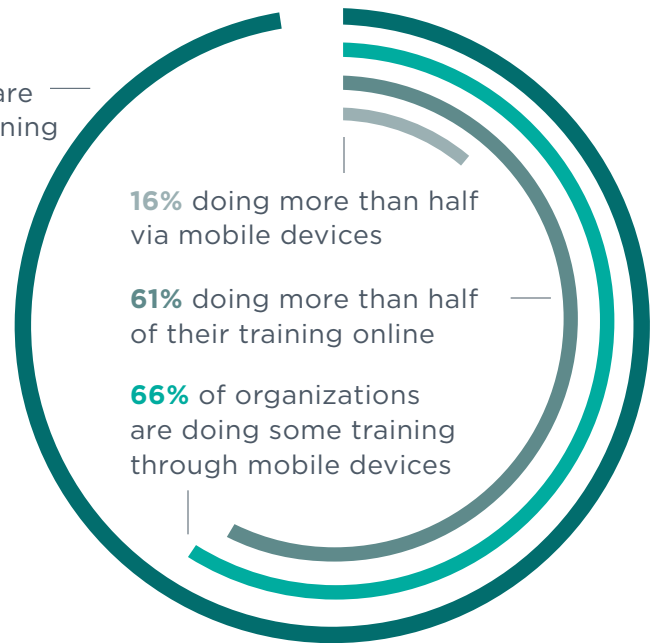
### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Many respondents noted a major or moderate shift toward online training (healthcare 76%, public safety 82%). In the healthcare sector, an LMS was the most common new method of tracking training (24%); in public safety, database (23%) and LMS (21%) tracking were the methods adopted most often. At the same time, 84% of healthcare respondents said their organizations were prepared to deliver online training, and they ranked communication, online options, and flexibility as top strengths of their training and development.

Survey respondents overwhelmingly consider staff training and development critical (84%), and most (71%) feel they are investing adequately. More than half (61%) of these organizations are using online training for more than half of the training they conduct, with two-thirds (66%) of organizations implementing some of that training on mobile devices. Almost half (41%) indicate they have reasonably well-developed methods in place to evaluate whether what is taught is put into practice on the job, up from 26% in 2017.

## HEALTHCARE

**97%** of organizations are doing some online training



Well-developed methods to evaluate training implementation: **41%**

While **61% of organizations** are using online platforms to conduct most training, **only 1 out of 6** (16%) have moved to conducting most training on mobile devices.





## Training's Influence on Reaching Business Goals

### FINDING

Less than half of healthcare respondents indicated that **training directly affects** the organization's financial results, and that area **ranked lowest** when they identified areas where training showed positive results.

Although most respondents (76%) said training has a positive impact on business goals, they are not clearly recognizing financial results from the investment. Only 43% said training directly impacts the organization's financial results, and that was slightly lower than the 45% in 2017. Training was seen to have the most impact on compliance, core staff clinical competencies, and risk management.

### TAKEAWAY

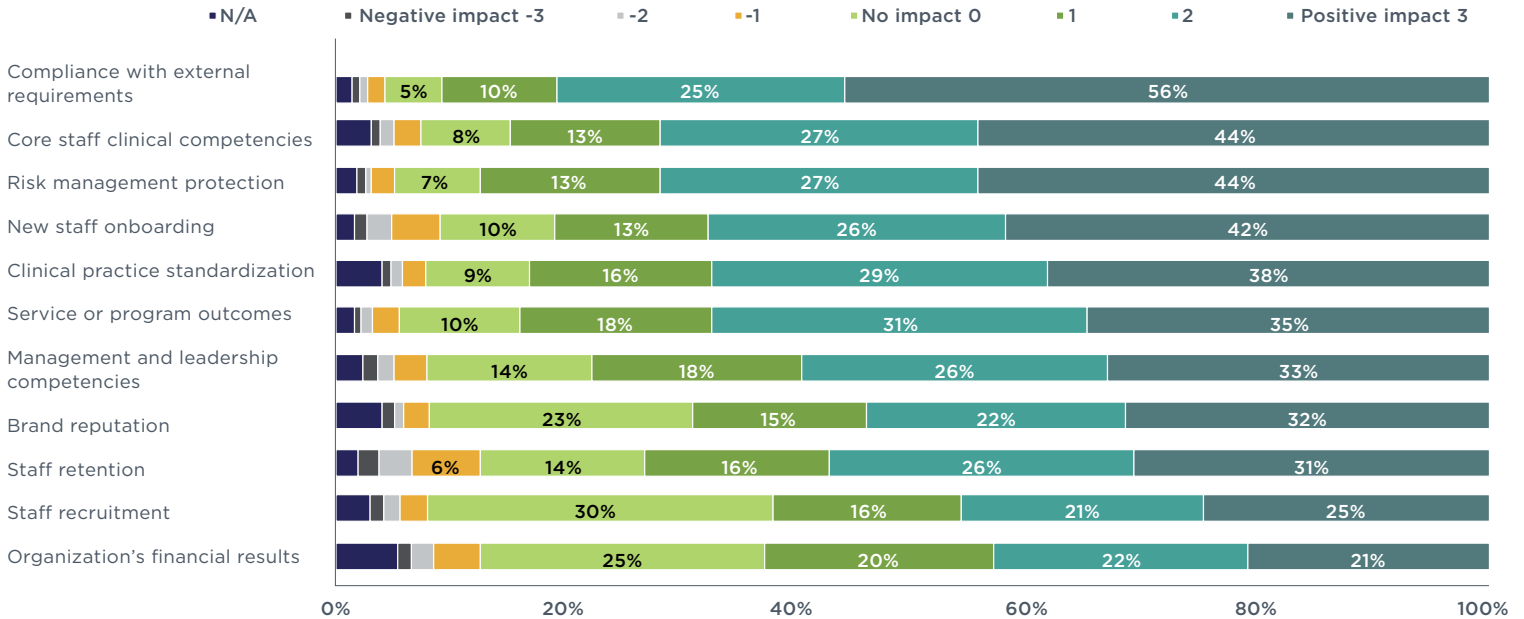
Executives should ensure that learning and development professionals are aware of high-level goals. Then they can use their systems to measure the effectiveness of training and link that to outcome measures to show a return on investment.



### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

With almost half of respondents (47%) noting a major change in the use of online training during the pandemic, online tracking becomes more feasible as well. As noted, more healthcare organizations are now using an LMS to track their training (24%).

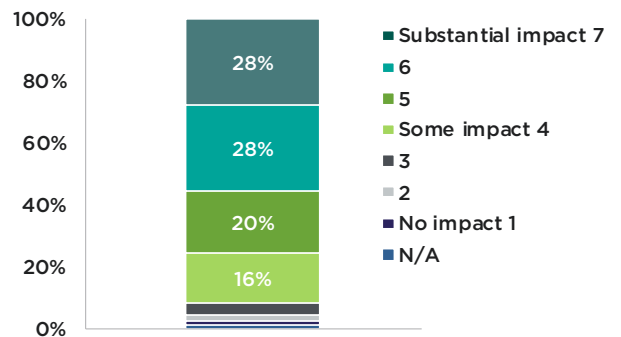
## IMPACT OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING ON BUSINESS AREAS



Most respondents (76%) believe that staff development and training notably impact top business goals—76% of professionals in healthcare and 74% of those in public safety organizations. When it comes to how training translates to the bottom line, healthcare respondents believe training has had a direct effect on financial results—63% report at least some impact. Yet financial results were ranked at the bottom of the list of eleven impacts respondents could choose from. While only 21% report that staff development programs have had a significantly positive impact on their financial picture, only 7% report a specifically negative impact.

These results suggest that most organizations find value in training, but they are still struggling to demonstrate how their training boosts performance and improves business outcomes to produce a return on investment. The ability to link staff training with bottom-line organizational results could affect the available funding for learning and development.

## IMPACT OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING ON TOP BUSINESS GOALS



# Targeted Training and Staff Development

## FINDING

**More than half (58%)** of respondents said their organizations provide recommendations for individualized staff development and training **for all employees** as part of the annual performance review and evaluation system.

One-fifth (20%) said they provide individualized recommendations for only some employees as part of the performance review process. Of those, the types of employees receiving recommendations are clinical staff, certified nursing assistants, direct-care staff, licensed staff, managers and supervisors, nurses, employees with low performance, and staff needing specialized training.

## TAKEAWAY

Employees involved in patient care are most likely to receive individualized staff development recommendations. Consider the potential positive effects on retention and engagement if supervisors provided staff development recommendations for all job roles in the future.

When listing the training they desire to see in their organizations, professionals in healthcare and public safety organizations agreed in many areas, including opportunities for leadership development.

## Biggest Training Needs by Industry

### HEALTHCARE

- + Safety
- + Compliance
- + Trauma-informed care
- + Technology
- + Best practices
- + Leadership
- + Evidence-based

### PUBLIC SAFETY

- + Communications
- + Customer service
- + Mental health
- + Leadership
- + Trauma-informed care
- + Safety

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Training priorities brought to light during the pandemic are infection control, pandemic planning, and employee wellness in healthcare and public safety, with different weight given to those top priorities in each sector, as noted previously.



## Adapting to Shifts in the Macroenvironment

### FINDING

The **impact of changes** in the external macroenvironment on staff development and training needs was unclear to many.

Many respondents indicated uncertainty and doubt about how changes in the external environment might affect their training programs. For those who acknowledged the potential effects, they focused on funding, laws, insurance, and technology.

### TAKEAWAY

COVID-19 has proven that unexpected events and external factors can dramatically affect training requirements. Those organizations with a strong, yet flexible staff development and training program in place can pivot when needed and refocus education content to match changing service demands.

Approximately one-third (31%) of respondents in February expected changes in the macroenvironment to affect training and development. They expected changes in areas such as funding, laws, insurance, and technology to have a potential impact on what training programs look like in the future.

### Influential Macroenvironment Changes

- + Available funding
- + Changes in state/federal requirements
- + Economic factors
- + Managed care
- + Medicare changes
- + Insurance requirements
- + Licensing regulations
- + Technology changes

### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

In the June survey amid the pandemic, even fewer respondents (healthcare 27%, and public safety 22%) expected substantial changes to staff development and training than in the February survey before the pandemic (healthcare 31%, public safety 28%), and most were still unsure in June (healthcare 57%, public safety 59%). However, of those who did expect changes, many described COVID-19 as having a very or extremely notable impact (healthcare 65%, public safety 73%).

# Healthcare Sectors

The information in this section elaborates on previous findings outlined in this report and expands on findings in specific parts of the healthcare industry: **health and human services; acute and pre-acute care; post-acute care; and payers and insurers**. Results show that healthcare organizations overall recognize the value of training.

In response to COVID-19, 87% maintained or increased their investment in training, with many turning to online training and use of a learning management system (LMS).

During the pandemic, most respondents said their organization was prepared in terms of delivering online training (84%), management and leadership (76%), readiness to deliver relevant training material and content (73%), staff readiness (71%), and ability to deliver virtual training (69%).

## FINDING

**Less than half** of healthcare respondents indicated that **training directly affects the organization's financial results**, and that area ranked lowest when they identified areas where **training showed positive results**.

Although most respondents (76%) said training has a positive impact on business goals, they are not clearly recognizing financial results from the investment. Training was seen to have the most impact on compliance, core staff clinical competencies, and risk management.

## TAKEAWAY

Executives should ensure that learning and development professionals are aware of high-level goals, then they can use their systems to measure the effectiveness of training and link that to outcome measures to show a return on investment.

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Organizations recognize the value of staff development and training, with more respondents increasing (33%) or maintaining (54%) their investment than decreasing it (13%). Prior to COVID-19, online training (61%) was already more prevalent than face-to-face. With almost half of respondents (47%) noting a major change in the use of online training since the pandemic, online tracking becomes more feasible as well. More organizations are now using an LMS (24%) to track their training.

SECTOR 1

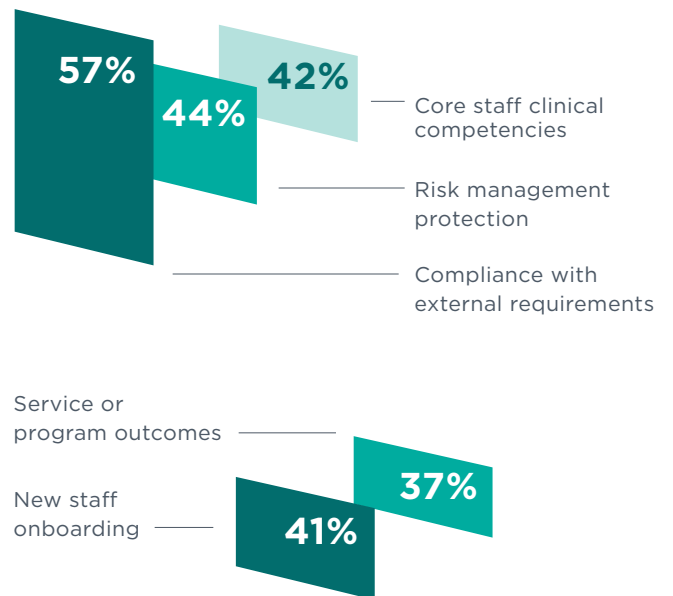
# Health and Human Services

Health and human services was the primary service sector self-identified by **2,806 respondents**; 32% were in executive or senior management positions, and 12% were training or staff development directors.

## Importance of Staff Development and Training

Health and human services respondents believe training and development is important—70% say it’s very or extremely important. More than two-thirds of respondents (68%) say that their training and staff development programs show positive results for service or program outcomes. They indicate that training is especially important for meeting compliance needs.

## AREAS OF BUSINESS SHOWING IMPACT FROM STAFF DEVELOPMENT



## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Training topics given priority amid the pandemic were employee wellness and self-care (68% of respondents), pandemic planning and response (65%), and infection control (61%).

**Q:** How much impact does your staff development and training program have on current results in each of the following areas?

**Note:** Percentage who chose most positive rating.

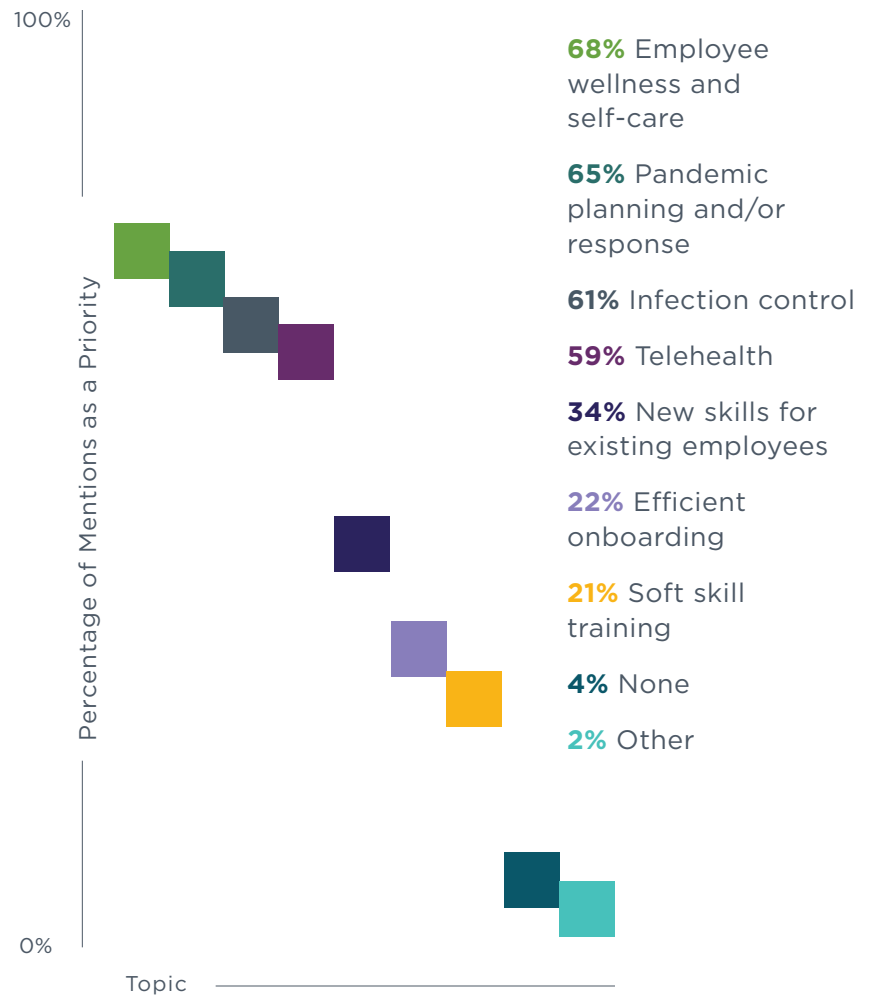


## TRAINING TOPICS PRIORITIZED DUE TO COVID-19

Health and Human Services

### Technology

Almost three-quarters (72%) of health and human services organizations conduct more than half of their training online. The most popular method of tracking whether staff completed the training was through an LMS (44%), up 33% from usage in 2015 and showing no increase in the last two years. In fact, many of the survey respondents report that they continue to also use paper or word processing files (34%) and spreadsheets (34%) to track training completion. This industry sector is among the lowest use of LMS software of all those surveyed.



### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Moderate or major changes in the use of online learning were noted by 80% of health and human services respondents. Because this sector's use of an LMS was previously low in comparison with other healthcare sectors, the post-COVID-19 trend toward online learning could potentially support efforts to increase the use of an LMS for tracking training in health and human services in the future.

### USE OF LEARNING MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE



SECTOR 2

# Acute and Pre-Acute Care

Acute or pre-acute care was the primary service sector self-identified by **495 respondents**; 22% were in executive or senior management positions, and 24% were staff development or training directors.

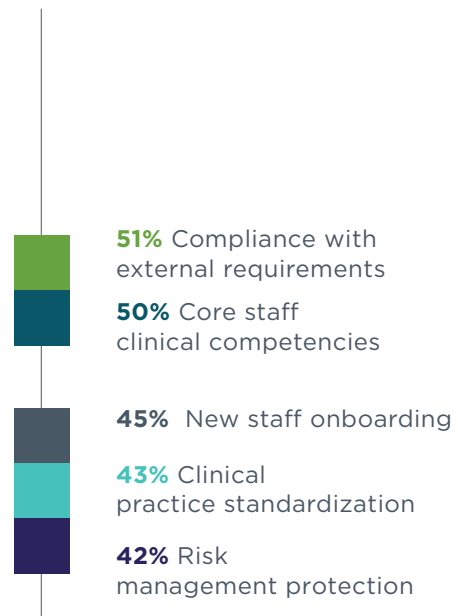
## Importance of Staff Development and Training

As our research in 2017 revealed, pre-acute and acute care respondents believe training and development most positively impacts compliance with external requirements and core staff clinical competencies. In fact, 76% report that staff training and development have a positive result on core staff clinical competencies, compared with only 70% of organizations in the health and human services sector.

### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Training topics given priority amid the pandemic were not surprising: infection control (82% of respondents), pandemic planning and response (72%), and employee wellness and self-care (64%).

## AREAS OF BUSINESS SHOWING IMPACT FROM STAFF DEVELOPMENT



**Q:** How much impact does your staff development and training program have on current results in each of the following areas?

**Note:** Percentage choosing most positive rating.

## Technology

When it comes to the technology to deliver training, adoption rates haven't moved much since 2017. Currently, 92% of acute and pre-acute respondents conduct at least half of their training online, similar to where the sector was in 2017. Most of these organizations (68%) track training completion using an LMS—the highest adoption of this technology of any of the industries we surveyed. These results suggest that acute and pre-acute organizations may be more attentive to tracking and recording staff development than some of their peers in other healthcare sectors. These respondents also report the highest use of spreadsheets to track completion (40%).

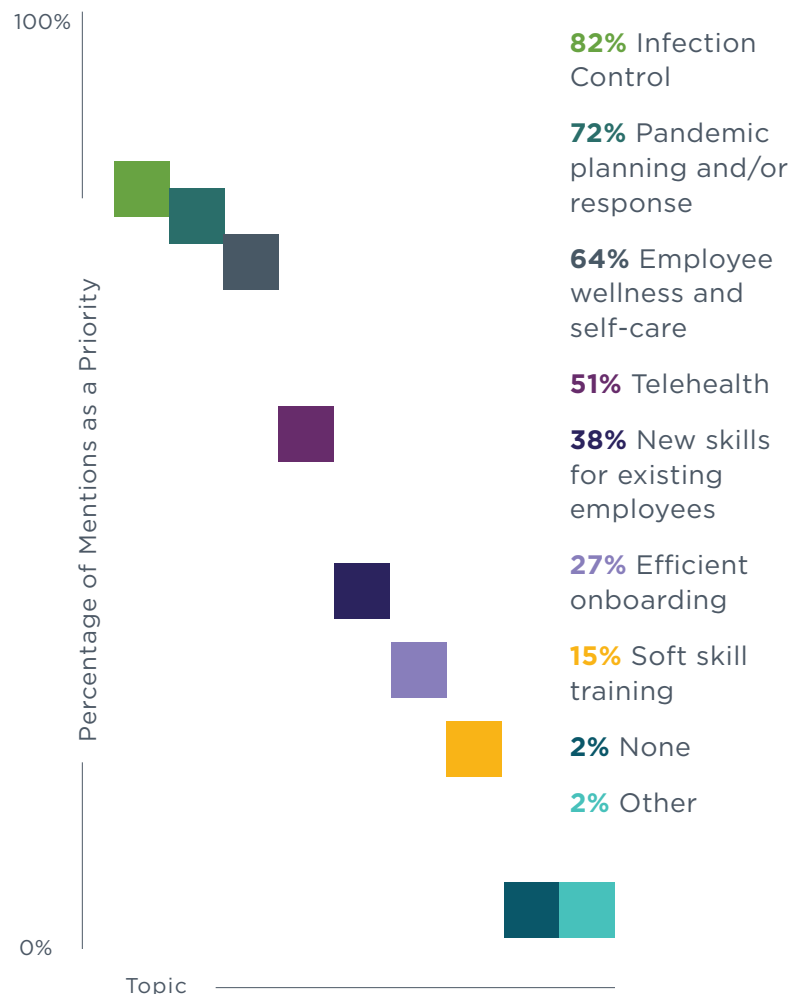
### METHODS USED TO TRACK TRAINING

**Q:** How do you track the training completed by staff?

- 68%** Learning management system software
- 41%** Paper/word processing files
- 40%** Spreadsheets
- 32%** Databases
- 29%** Human resources information systems
- 15%** Learning experience platform
- 4%** Other

### TRAINING TOPICS PRIORITIZED DUE TO COVID-19

Acute + Pre-Acute Care



### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Moderate or major changes in the use of online learning were noted by 78% of respondents in pre-acute and acute care. If the increased online learning is used in tandem with an LMS, then that could bring greater tracking ability as well.

SECTOR 3

# Post-Acute Care

Post-acute care was the primary service sector self-identified by **1,558 respondents**; 28% were in executive or senior management positions, and 16% were healthcare training staff directors.

Amid the spread of COVID-19, post-acute care respondents said their organizations were giving even more priority to infection control training. That figure is not surprising, given the high risk of complications from COVID-19 for seniors in long-term care facilities.

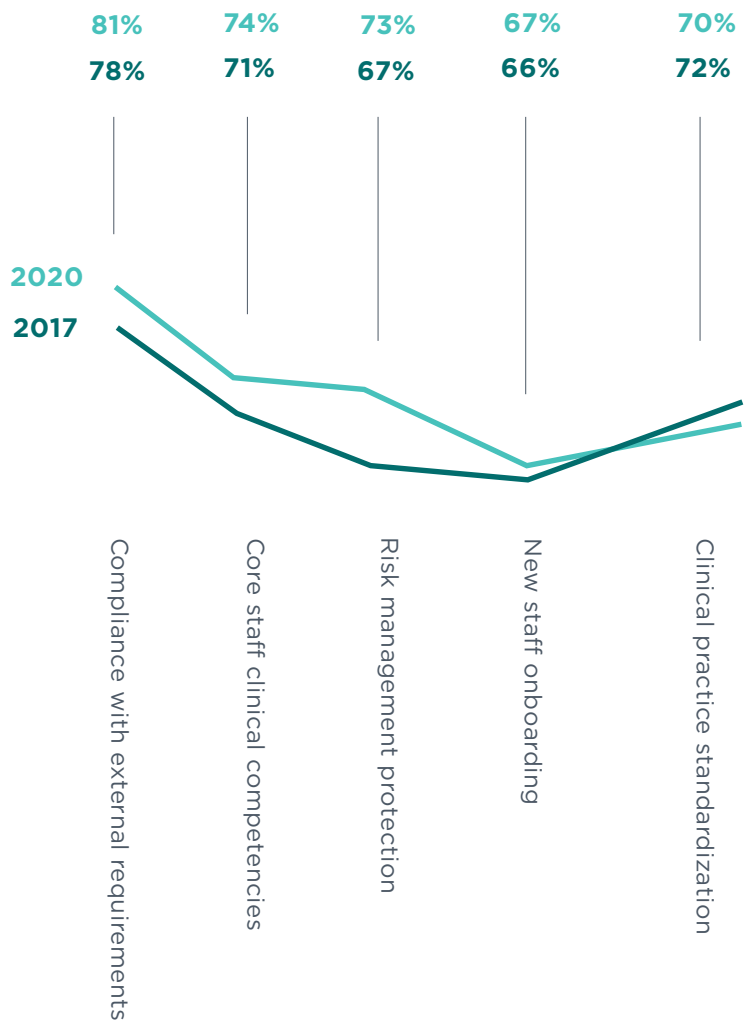
### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Respondents working in post-acute care (74%) are significantly more likely to report increased importance given to staff development and training. Training topics given priority amid the pandemic were not surprising: infection control (92% of respondents), pandemic planning and response (78%), and employee wellness and self-care (64%).

**Q:** How much impact does your staff development and training program have on current results in each of the following areas?

**Note:** Percentage choosing top two positive ratings.

### AREAS OF BUSINESS SHOWING IMPACT FROM STAFF DEVELOPMENT





## TRAINING TOPICS PRIORITIZED DUE TO COVID-19

Post-Acute Care

### Importance of Staff Development and Training

As with other sectors in healthcare, post-acute care respondents believe training and development programs most positively impact compliance with external requirements, followed closely by core staff clinical competencies. These priorities show a slight increase from 2017, making it clear that these are top of mind for post-acute care executives and training stakeholders when making critical investment decisions.



**92%** Infection Control

**78%** Pandemic planning and/or response

**64%** Employee wellness and self-care

**41%** Telehealth

**37%** New skills for existing employees

**25%** Efficient onboarding

**19%** Soft skill training

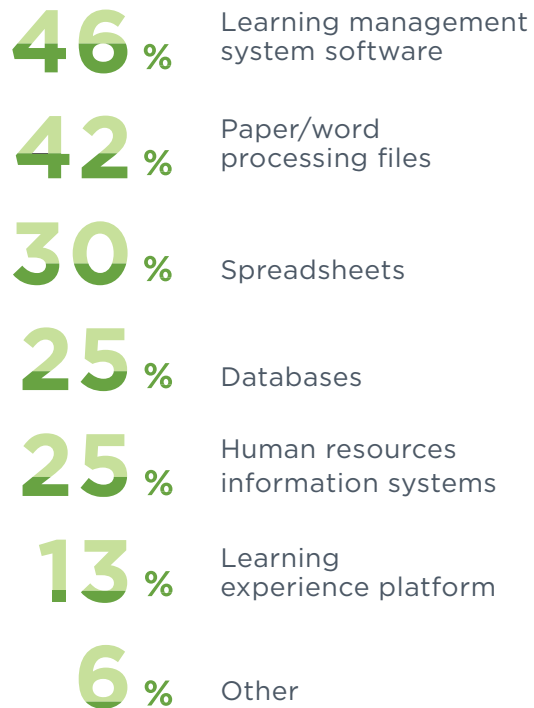
**2%** None

**1%** Other

## Technology

Most respondents (86%) report using online training at least half the time, and 41% use mobile devices for training at least half the time. Just under half (46%) track completion of training using an LMS, which is among the lowest adoption rate in the healthcare industry. In fact, the post-acute care sector reported the highest use of paper or word processing files for tracking among all in the industry, at 42%. These results show room for improvement in this sector’s tracking of training progress.

### METHODS USED TO TRACK TRAINING



**Q:** How do you track the training completed by staff?

### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Moderate or major changes in the use of online learning were noted by 66% of respondents in post-acute care. Because 42% indicated in the initial survey that they still use paper or word processing files to track training and only 46% use an LMS, this is an area ripe for growth in LMS use.

SECTOR 4

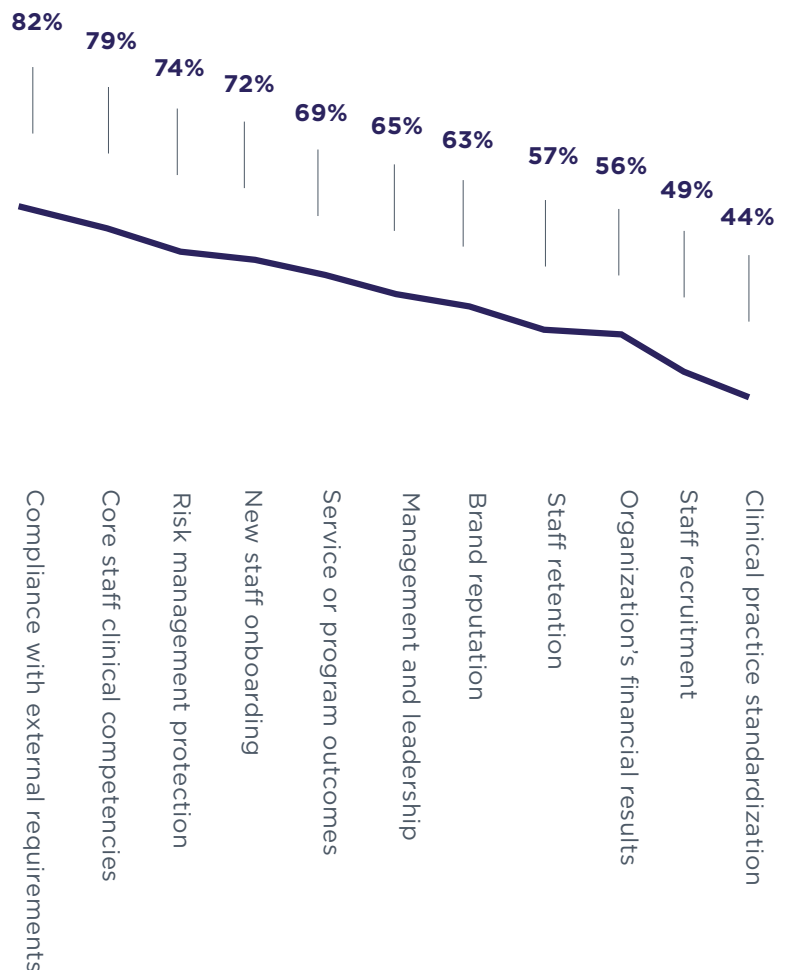
# Payers and Insurers

The payers and insurers segment was the primary service area self-identified by **68 respondents**; 31% were in executive or senior management positions, and 7% were training or staff development directors.

## Importance of Staff Development and Training

The most important benefit of training and development for those in the payers and insurers industry is, as with so many in healthcare, to ensure compliance with external requirements (82%). Just over half of respondents in this sector (56%) ranked it as the number one consideration. As with others in the industry, the organization’s financial results ranked near the bottom of the list of business goals where training has shown the most positive impact, along with staff recruitment and retention, and brand reputation.

### AREAS OF BUSINESS SHOWING IMPACT FROM STAFF DEVELOPMENT

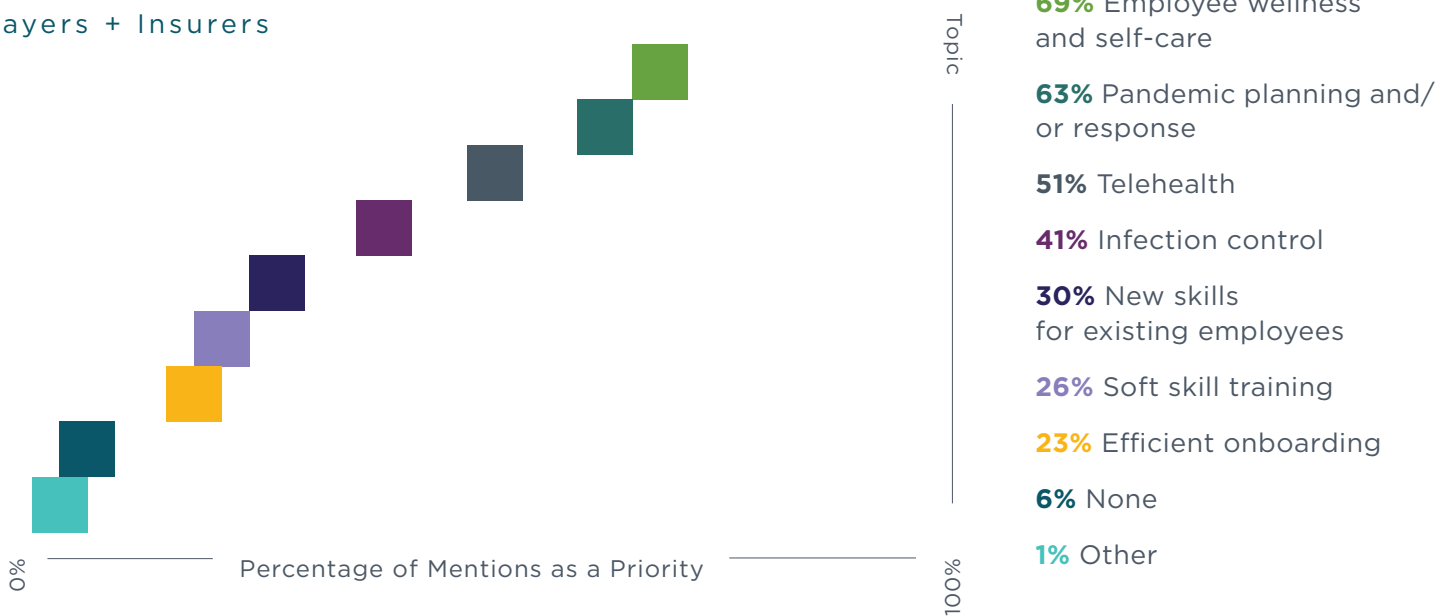


### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Training topics given priority amid the pandemic were employee wellness and self-care (69% of respondents), pandemic planning and response (63%), and telehealth (51%). Attention to infection control as a priority training topic was dramatically lower in payers and insurers than in other healthcare sectors.

## TRAINING TOPICS PRIORITIZED DUE TO COVID-19

Payers + Insurers

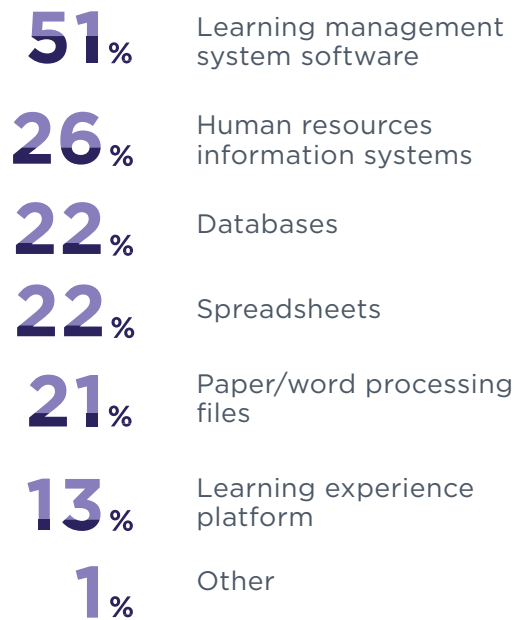


### Technology

Most payer and insurer respondents (72%) indicate that their organization conducts more than half of training online, and 19% of the organizations conduct all training online, which is the highest percentage of any of the sectors.

Half indicate that their organization uses LMS software to track training completion, and about one-quarter use human resources information systems—the only sector using these systems so prevalently. This sector has robust adoption of automated systems and, in fact, the lowest number of organizations still using paper or word processing files and spreadsheets to track completion of training.

### METHODS USED TO TRACK TRAINING



### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Moderate or major changes in the use of online learning were noted by 60% of respondents in the payers and insurers sector.

**Q:** How do you track the training completed by staff?



# Public Safety Sector

Public safety was the primary service sector self-identified by 162 respondents. Of these, 24% were in sergeant or higher positions, and 17% were training or staff development directors.

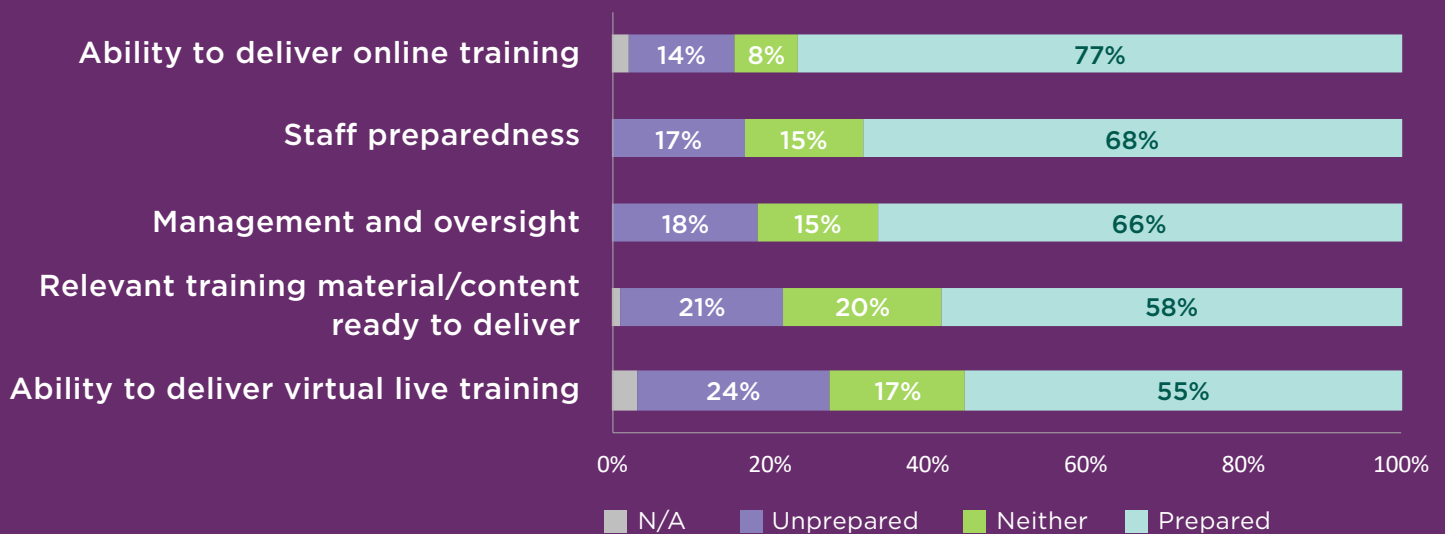
## COVID-19 INSIGHTS

During COVID-19, respondents cite the organization’s flexibility, infection control, and online options as top strengths of their staff development and training programs. Poor IT infrastructure and outdated information are the most commonly noted weaknesses.

In the context of the pandemic, respondents have indicated their organizations were generally well-prepared across multiple measures related to training delivery. Public safety organizations are best prepared to deliver online training (77%) but least prepared to deliver virtual live training (55%).

## ORGANIZATION’S PREPAREDNESS BY AREA TOP/BOTTOM 2

Top 2: Prepared includes “Mostly” and “Completely” Prepared  
Bottom 2: Unprepared includes “Mostly” and “Completely” Unprepared



## Importance of Staff Development and Training

About three-quarters of respondents (74%) consider staff development and training highly important. Although 25% are happy with their organization’s level of financial investment, more than a third (36%) believe their organization is not investing enough. About two-thirds of respondents (68%) indicate that more than half of their organization’s training in the past 12 months was conducted to satisfy compliance requirements.

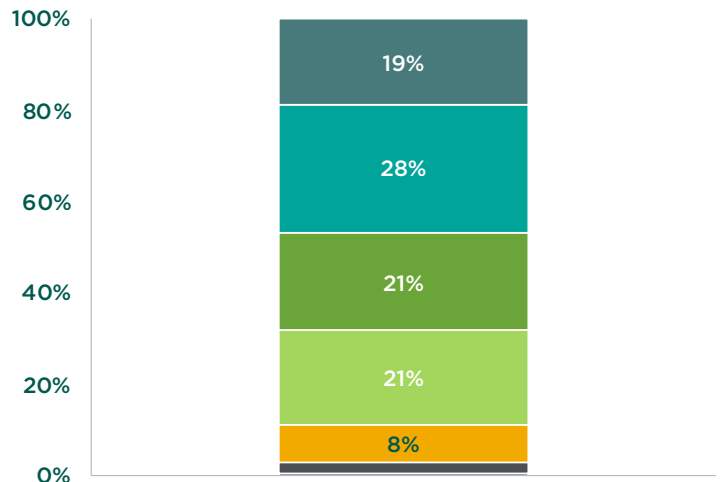
In 57% of the organizations surveyed and 80% of large organizations, responsibility for managing staff development is shared across multiple people or departments. Having dispersed responsibility could affect the perception of whether investment is adequate.

## Biggest Needs for Training

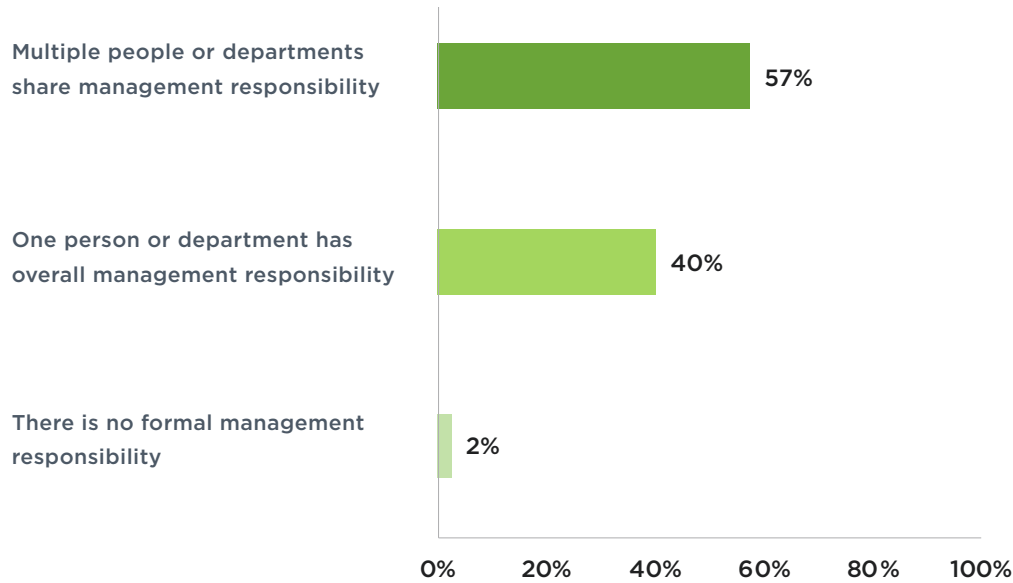
- + Communications
- + Customer service
- + Mental health
- + Leadership
- + Trauma-informed care
- + Safety

## AMOUNT OF TRAINING CONDUCTED TO SATISFY COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

■ N/A ■ None 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ About half 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ All of it 7



## MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING



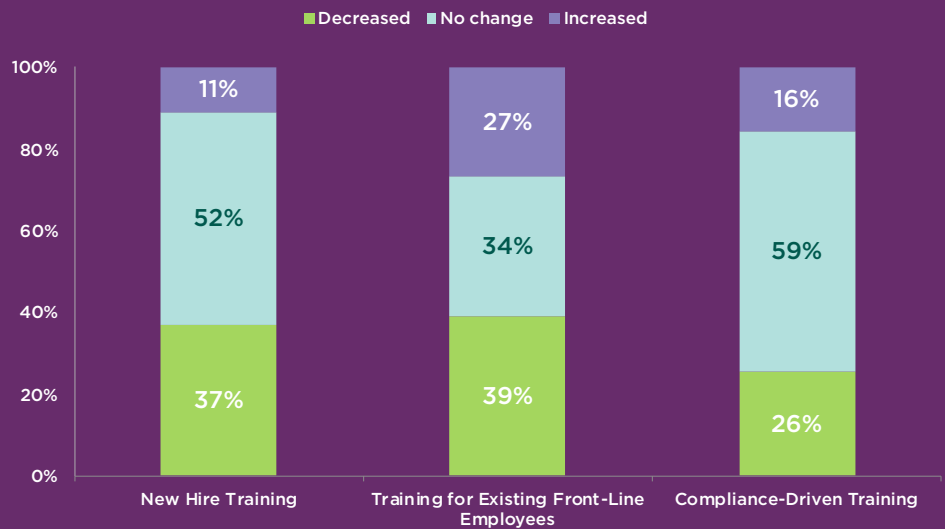
**Q:** Which of the following best describes management responsibility in staff development and training at your organization?

### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Although respondents in the initial survey recognized the importance of training and staff development, the overall level of training is steady or decreasing across three primary categories amid the pandemic. Public safety organizations are maintaining or decreasing new hire training (52% and 37%, respectively), training for existing front-line employees (34% and 39%), and compliance-driven training (59% and 26%), since the pandemic began.

During the pandemic, 39% of respondents noted increased importance given to staff development and training. Training topics given priority in public safety were employee wellness and self-care (62% of respondents), pandemic planning and response (58%), and infection control (50%). Attention to infection control as a priority training topic was notably lower in public safety than in all healthcare sectors except payers and insurers.

### CHANGE IN AMOUNT OF TRAINING SINCE COVID-19

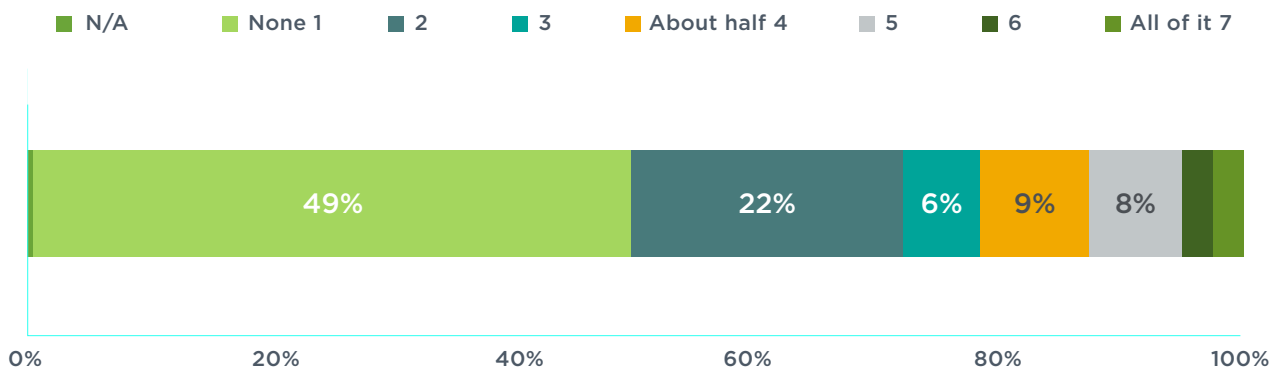




## Technology

Fewer than half of public safety organizations (40%) participating said they conduct at least half of their training online. And of those who do train online, few (13%) have adopted mobile devices like smartphones or tablets for more than half of their online training.

### ONLINE TRAINING CONDUCTED WITH A MOBILE DEVICE

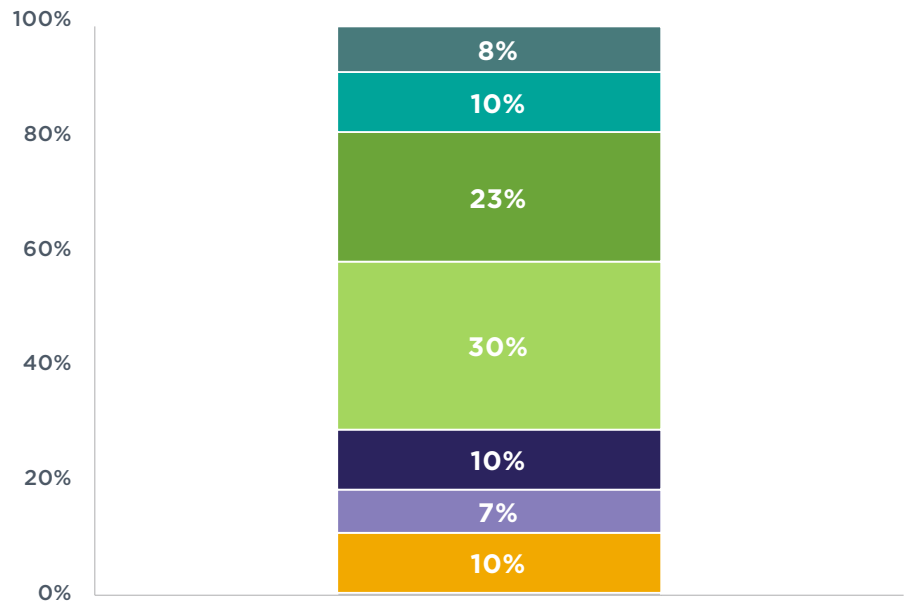


**Q:** Of the training done at your organization in the past 12 months that was completed online, how much was completed using a mobile device (e.g., smartphone, tablet)?

Organizations most often track training completion using databases (48%) or LMS software (44%) to evaluate whether training is put into practice on the job. Only 41% believe that the organization has reasonably well-developed methods to evaluate whether employees have completed their training and integrated it into their jobs.

### EXTENT TO WHICH THERE ARE METHODS TO EVALUATE TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION

- N/A
- 2
- Some methods in place 4
- 6
- None at all 1
- 3
- 5
- Well-developed methods 7



**Q:** To what extent does your organization have methods in place to evaluate whether training is put to practice on the job?

#### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Organizations are using more of those same top tracking methods since the pandemic, with use of databases (23%) and LMS software (21%) increasing.

In addition to the overall findings and the breakdowns for each industry sector, the survey data indicated areas where respondents thought their training and development programs were working well and where they were lacking.

## Strengths of Training and Development

To identify what appears to be hitting the mark in their programs, respondents were asked:

**Q. What is the top strength of your organization's current staff development and training program?**

### TOP MARKS IN HEALTHCARE

- + Relevant training content
- + Ease of access
- + Meets external requirements

### TOP MARKS IN PUBLIC SAFETY

- + Well-organized
- + Ease of access/convenience
- + Good trainers

#### NOTE

Some areas cited as strengths by respondents also received votes as weaknesses by other respondents.

### PREPAREDNESS TO DELIVER ONLINE TRAINING

**84%** Healthcare

**77%** Public Safety

### COVID-19 INSIGHTS

Most organizations were prepared to deliver online training amid the pandemic—84% in healthcare and 77% in public safety. Healthcare participants ranked communication, online options, and flexibility as top strengths of their training and development. Public safety organizations ranked flexibility, infection control, and online options as the top strengths. Note that some of the strengths were also noted as weaknesses below.

## Weaknesses of Training and Development

While respondents generally find it easy to access training, healthcare and public safety organizations also report that a lack of time to take training is a weakness in their staff development programs.

### **Q.** What is the top weakness of your organization's current staff development and training program?

#### **WEAK AREAS IN HEALTHCARE**

- + Lack of time to train
- + Lack of follow-up

#### **WEAK AREAS IN PUBLIC SAFETY**

- + Not enough training
- + Lack of time to train
- + Poorly organized

### **COVID-19 INSIGHTS**

During the pandemic, healthcare respondents said lack of online options, not enough training, and lack of communication were weaknesses of their training and staff development programs. Public safety respondents cited IT infrastructure, outdated information, and communication as weak points. As noted, the strengths and weaknesses cited by respondents overlap.



# Moving Forward

All the results compiled in this report can inform your **organizational analysis** about where you could improve your training and staff development programs.

Each organization has its own pluses and minuses, and we hope the data provided in this report will inspire you to look more closely at the status of your teams and your overall organization. By analyzing the data and **thinking strategically**, you can find ways to move your staff and your entire organization forward while **getting even better** at what you already do well.

Relias is a global software company that specializes in education and training solutions for healthcare and human service providers. For more than 11,000 organizations around the world, Relias continues to help its clients elevate the performance of teams to get better at maintaining compliance, developing staff, and promoting consistent, high quality care.

**Our online platform** employs assessments to reveal specific gaps in skills and addresses them with targeted, personalized, and engaging learning. Relias employs a wide variety of subject matter experts across the healthcare industry—from physicians to social workers—as well as a team of specialized instructional designers and developers, to create and curate over 7,000 online educational courses. Our courses follow principles of adult learning, are assessed at least every three years by an internal accreditations team to meet the required standards of over 135 accrediting bodies, and a majority include continuing education (CE) and continuing medical education (CME) content, helping healthcare personnel meet their licensure requirements.

Through our platform and education, Relias supports your need for data-informed decision-making, so you can take better care of people, lower costs, reduce risk and penalties, improve reimbursements, and achieve overall better results.

**Let us help you get better.**  
[relias.com](https://relias.com)

Hanover Research provides high-quality, custom **research** and **analytics** through a cost-effective model that helps clients make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

[hanoverresearch.com](https://hanoverresearch.com)