

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT REPORT

Culture, Hospitality, Retail & Tourism



THIS IS A SECTION OF A LARGER REPORT. READ THE FULL REPORT AT [WOMENOUTOFWORK.CA](https://womenoutofwork.ca)



Of all of the sectors we analyzed, women working in the hospitality sector (accommodations and food services), retail sector, and the arts/culture/tourism sectors have been some of the most negatively impacted by COVID-19.¹² The 226 workers in these combined industries represent 15% of our total respondents.

88% of respondents who worked in hospitality prior to the pandemic experienced negative job impacts (e.g., were laid off either temporarily or permanently, left their jobs, or had their hours reduced), the highest number of any sector we analyzed. 75% of workers in retail, and 71% of workers in the arts, entertainment, recreation and tourism sector experienced negative impacts. While workers in all sectors experienced a decline in their financial situation due to the pandemic, hospitality workers experienced the largest negative change between February 2020 and January 2021.

**HOSPITALITY WORKERS
EXPERIENCED THE
LARGEST NEGATIVE
CHANGE IN THEIR
FINANCIAL SITUATION
BETWEEN FEBRUARY
2020 AND JANUARY 2021.**

In terms of stress and mental health before and during the pandemic, the 226 respondents in the hospitality, retail, culture, and tourism grouping reported predominantly mild stress before the pandemic (55%). A further 29% reported moderate stress and only 5% reported severe stress.

During the pandemic, however:

- 37% reported that their stress level is constantly fluctuating
- 40% reported that their stress level has increased and is getting worse
- 12% reported that their stress level initially increased but has improved, and
- 4% reported that their stress level improved during the pandemic

34% of respondents working in hospitality, retail, culture, and tourism reported that they had children under the age of 18 at home. Of these women, 63% reported feeling overwhelmed trying to balance work and caregiving.

In terms of financial concerns in all three sectors:

- 61% of respondents were concerned about unforeseen expenses due to COVID-19
- 43% were concerned about their ability to pay bills
- 38% were concerned about their ability to buy groceries
- 37% were worried about their ability to make rent or mortgage payments, and
- 29% were worried about lack of paid sick/caregiving days

**“Hospitality work may never be
the same. Now what do I do?”**

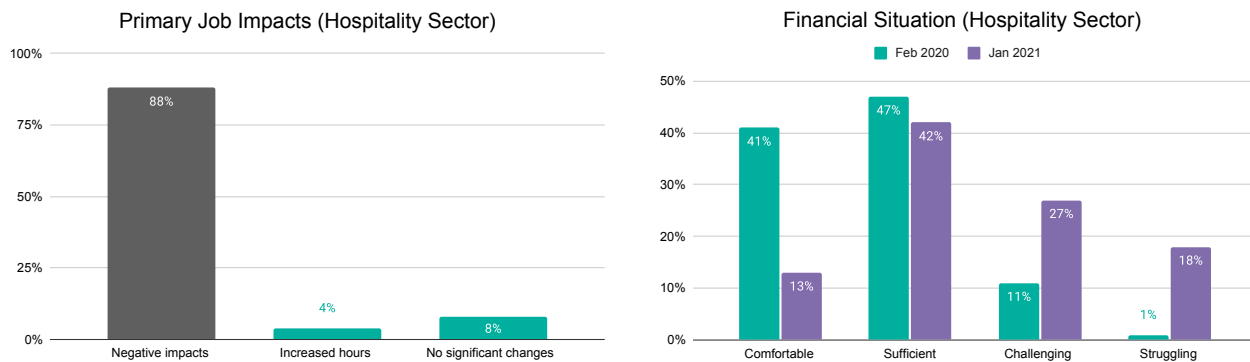
¹² We grouped workers who indicated that they work in architecture, design, events and/or tourism with arts, entertainment and recreation to increase the sample size for analysis (51 respondents)

HOSPITALITY SECTOR IMPACTS: ACCOMMODATIONS AND FOOD SERVICE

Of the women who completed our survey, 92 respondents indicated that they work in the hospitality sector. Pre-pandemic, 65% worked full-time and 33% worked part-time. Only 26% of hospitality workers reported that they had access to benefits, and only 10% indicated that they had access to paid sick time.

When asked how their primary job was impacted by the pandemic, 88% of hospitality workers indicated that they had been laid off (either temporarily or permanently), had left their jobs, or had their hours reduced, e.g., suffered some kind of negative work impact. Only 8% of hospitality workers saw no significant changes to their primary jobs, as shown in the chart below.

For women working in food service and accommodations jobs, the change in financial situation between February 2020 and January 2021 has been particularly stark:



In the hospitality sector, 18 respondents indicated they found a new job during the pandemic (and 22 are still actively searching). Only four respondents said that they found a new job in the accommodations and food services industry. The other 14 found work in other sectors, like retail (4), community and social services (4), and business and office administration (2).¹³

As shown in the table below, workers in this industry had the highest percentage of respondents who indicated that they had thought about changing their career, at 85% (compared to 61% for all survey respondents).

AT ANY POINT SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, HAVE YOU QUESTIONED:		
Accommodations and Food Service	Yes	No
Changing your career?	85%	15%
Learning a new skill or trade?	81%	19%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to workplace health and safety concerns?	40%	60%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to childcare or increased domestic responsibilities?	28%	72%
Postponing a personal milestone (such as starting a family or buying a home)?	55%	45%

¹³ This is a small sample size, and results should be interpreted with caution.



“I had been working in hospitality for the past 12 years and found a steady career in Canada and a job I loved. But losing my job made me question whether to change careers altogether and going back to school.”

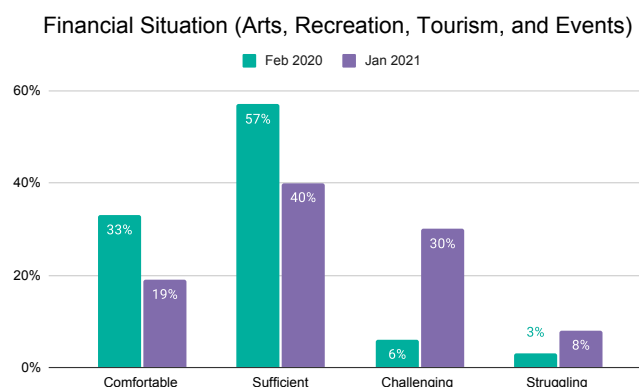
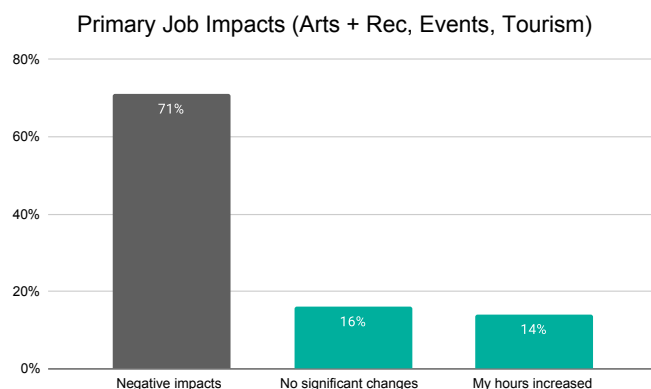
In this section of the survey, we provided respondents with the opportunity to elaborate. Women from the hospitality sector shared the following with us:

- “I did actively search April through August for a “less dangerous” job with less people contact to no avail (applied to over 34 jobs).”
- “We are having a baby in April and have bought a new house so both of these upcoming changes have been made more stressful by the more recent lockdowns and my situation at work. My maternity leave pay will be lower because I worked less in 2020 due to covid and leading up to my maternity leave I’m not able to work enough to save for moving costs or the baby. It’s added to our stress level and I feel more stressed at work. However we are in favour of the lockdown to help stop the spread, it’s just complicated.”
- “Hospitality work may never be the same. Now what do I do?”
- “I had been working in hospitality for the past 12 years and found a steady career in Canada and a job I loved. But losing my job made me question whether to change careers altogether and going back to school.”
- “I think it’s brought more attention to food service workers being an integral part of the community.”
- “I feel like I am at square one with my career. I would like to consider re-training, but at the current time I am not able to commit. I am a full time caregiver of two children at home, and future timelines seem completely unknowable.”

CULTURE SECTOR IMPACTS: ARTS, DESIGN, ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATION, & TOURISM

51 respondents indicated that they work in the culture sector.¹⁴ Prior to the pandemic 64% worked full-time and 30% worked part-time. 38% of culture sector workers reported that they had access to benefits, and 34% indicated that they had access to paid sick time.

71% of culture sector workers reported experienced negative job impacts, as shown below:




Women working in the culture sector reported an overall downturn in their financial situation between February 2020 and January 2021, though not as significantly as workers in hospitality.

In the culture sector group, 10 respondents said they had found a new job during the pandemic. Only one of the 10 was able to find a job in the same sector; the other nine went into different sectors, such as food services, healthcare, communications and marketing, and community and social services work.¹⁵

AT ANY POINT SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, HAVE YOU QUESTIONED:		
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Tourism	Yes	No
Changing your career?	76%	24%
Learning a new skill or trade?	69%	31%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to workplace health and safety concerns?	31%	69%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to childcare or increased domestic responsibilities?	29%	71%
Postponing a personal milestone (such as starting a family or buying a home)?	53%	47%


¹⁴ For our report, this grouping includes women who work in arts, entertainment, recreation, tourism, architecture, design, and events.

¹⁵ This is a small sample size, and results should be interpreted with caution.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white face mask and a dark blazer over a grey sweater, is sitting at a desk in an office. She is looking down at a laptop. The background is slightly blurred, showing office equipment and a plant. The entire image has a purple tint.

“I’m being passed on jobs because my entire team is men. I’m the only woman. I’m the only full time care provider for my child. My male colleagues’ wives are also doing the brunt of the home care.”

We encouraged respondents to elaborate on how COVID-19 has impacted their career, either positively or negatively:

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- “Negatively, I’m being passed on jobs because my entire team is men. I’m the only woman. I’m the only full time care provider for my child. My male colleagues’ wives are also doing the brunt of the home care.” (Response from a culture sector worker)
 - “Very much so, negatively. The little work I have left, via Zoom, is just not the same. I fear the industry may be permanently changed.” (Response from a culture sector worker)
 - “Definitely negatively!!! I’m a corporate travel consultant and business has basically come to a complete halt. I’m not sure if the travel industry can recover from this.” (Response from a travel industry worker)

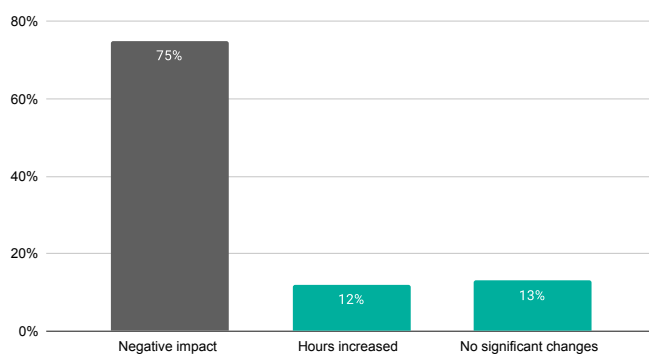


RETAIL SECTOR IMPACTS

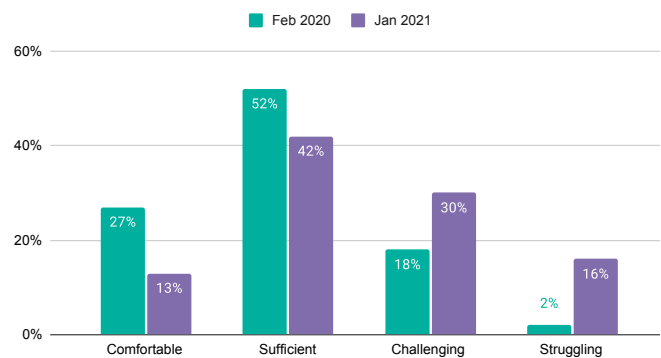
84 respondents indicated that they work in the retail sector. Prior to the pandemic 58% worked full-time and 38% worked part-time. 33% of retail workers reported that they had access to benefits, and 20% indicated that they had access to paid sick time.

75% of respondents working in retail said they had experienced negative job impacts due to the pandemic, as shown in the chart below.

Primary Job Impacts (Retail)



Financial Situation (Retail)



In the retail group, eight respondents said they had found a new job during the pandemic. Only three out of the eight found a job in the same sector. The other five went into different sectors, such as communications and marketing, business and office administration, and community and social services work.¹⁶

Retail workers had the highest percentage of respondents who considered reducing their hours or stopping working due to workplace health and safety concerns (60% compared to 34% of all respondents).

AT ANY POINT SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, HAVE YOU QUESTIONED:		
Retail	Yes	No
Changing your career?	75%	25%
Learning a new skill or trade?	67%	33%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to workplace health and safety concerns?	60%	40%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to childcare or increased domestic responsibilities?	27%	73%
Postponing a personal milestone (such as starting a family or buying a home)?	46%	54%

We encouraged the retail sector respondents to elaborate on how COVID-19 has impacted their career, either positively or negatively:

- “The responsibilities that have fallen on the shoulders of mostly women throughout this pandemic are insurmountable. It is impossible to expect women to feel they can put their careers first when they are trying to balance homeschooling on top of all other home duties.”
- “Negatively...causing different moods in everyone. everyone is stressed...my panic attacks make me miss work and also constant worry of getting ill since I touch things that thousands of people touch daily, also energy level is down and sleep patterns changed so I get up to only four hours sleep a day.”
- “Yes. In a negative way. It’s harder to work with the general public when they are scared and stressed.”

“It’s harder to work with the general public when they are scared and stressed.”

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