

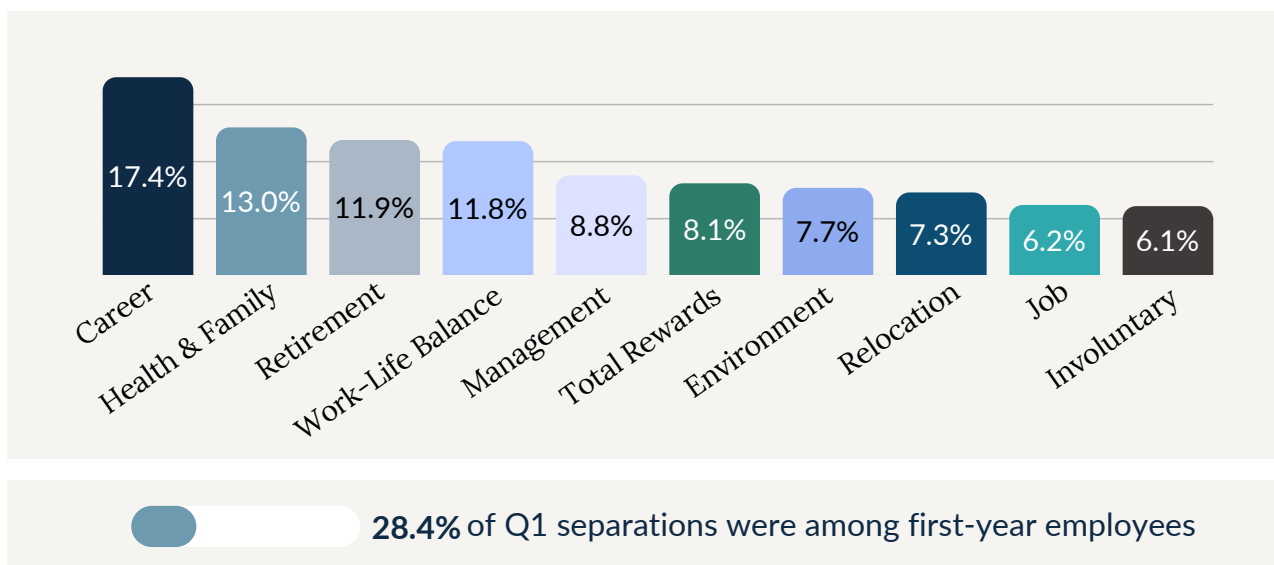
QUARTERLY WORKFORCE TRENDS REPORT

Q1 2026 Employee Exit and Retention Insights

Work Institute's Quarterly Workforce Trends Report analyzed 2888 employee exit interviews from individuals who separated during the first quarter of 2026. These findings provide an early indicator of workforce movement, retention pressure, and the employee behaviors shaping turnover in 2026. These findings reflect real-time employee decision-making and provide leaders with an early signal of where retention risk is emerging.

Key Findings for Employers

- Career-related exits were driven by advancement opportunities, development, and alternative career paths.
- Health & Family factors continued external pressures impacting workforce participation.
- Retirement represented demographic turnover pressure in many industries.
- Work-Life Balance was led primarily by scheduling and shift concerns.
- Management-related turnover underscored the continued impact of leadership behavior.
- Employees with less than one year of service represented 28.4% of all separations.



The most cited Career separations included different career paths (6.0%), promotion opportunities (5.6%), development (2.2%), school (2.1%), and job security (1.0%).

Health & Family separations were most commonly associated with child or elder care (4.9%), non-work-related health (4.0%), and other health & family reasons (3.2%).

Retirement accounted for 11.9% of separations.

Work-Life Balance separations were primarily driven by shift and schedule concerns (7.5%), commute (2.5%), and remote capability (1.3%).

Management-related separations were largely attributed to professional behavior (6.0%). Communication and support each accounted for 1.0%.

Total Rewards separations were primarily driven by base pay (7.2%).

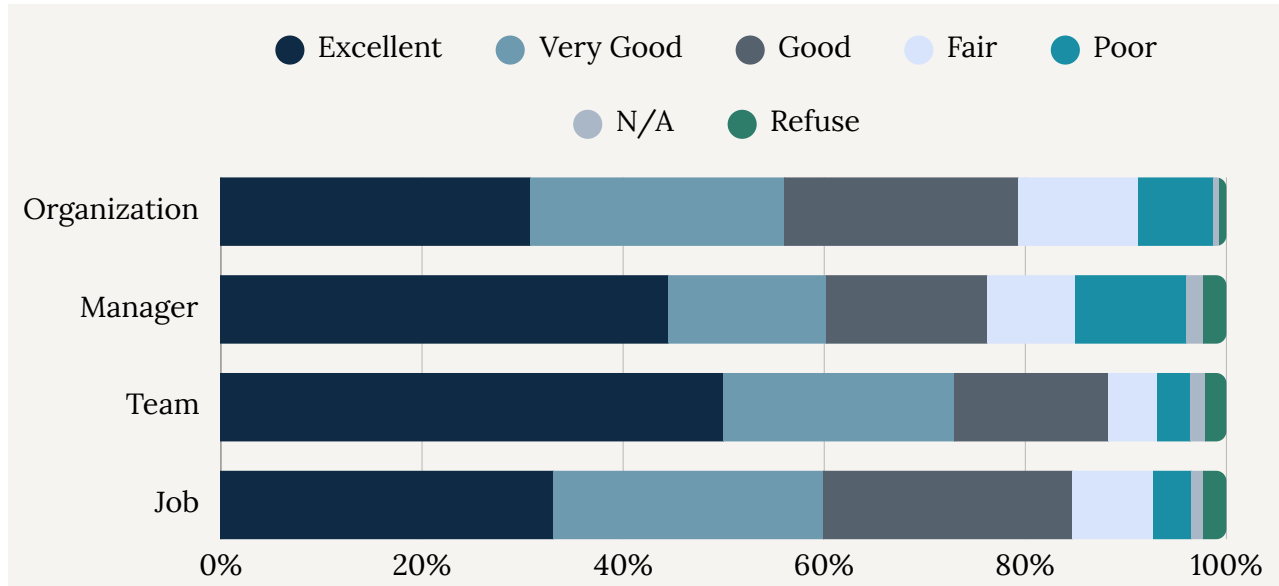
Environment-related separations were most frequently linked to organizational culture (4.6%) and coworker relationships (2.1%).

Relocation separations were primarily employee-initiated (5.4%), followed by spouse or partner relocation (1.1%).

Core Driver Ratings

Distribution of Employee Ratings (Percent of Responses)

Work Institute tracks four core workplace perceptions that most influence retention and engagement outcomes. These include what the employee thinks and feels about the organization, their manager, their team, and their job itself. These perceptions consistently influence whether employees stay, disengage, or ultimately leave.



	Organization	Manager	Team	Job
Excellent	30.8%	44.5%	50.0%	33.1%
Very Good	25.2%	15.7%	23.0%	26.8%
Good	23.3%	16.0%	15.3%	24.8%
Fair	12.0%	8.8%	4.8%	8.0%
Poor	7.4%	11.0%	3.3%	3.8%
N/A	0.6%	1.7%	1.5%	1.2%
Refuse	0.7%	2.3%	2.1%	2.3%

Data Scope & Methodology

- Findings are based on employee-reported exit interviews collected between January 1 and March 31, 2026.
- Interviews were conducted within a 4 - 6 week post-separation window.
- Data include responses across multiple industries and geographic regions with primary representation in North America.
- Respondents were asked to identify up to four contributing reasons for their separation and to select the most important reason. Reason distributions reflect the most important reason selected by each respondent.
- Percentages are calculated based on total employee-reported separations unless otherwise noted.
- Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.