

2022 *Future retirees* report - Retirement planning in a pandemic



Snapshot of pre-retirees in Canada's education sector

Retirement—what once conjured stereotypical images of slowing down has been redefined as a time for growth and potential. RTOERO has been supporting retirees from Canada's education sector for more than 50 years. We've watched the evolution of retirement. And now, with our *Future retirees* report, we're tracking and sharing the insights with you.

Our first *Future retirees* report captures input from more than 900 future retirees from Canada's education sector. Ninety-two per cent of respondents are retiring in the next year to five years. This report provides a snapshot of how people feel about their readiness for retirement, the information they need and how the pandemic influenced their plans.

Highlights

- The pandemic has accelerated retirement plans for some from the education sector. Thirty per cent of respondents told us they're either considering retiring sooner or have decided to retire sooner.
- Respondents said that practical to-do information is their top need for retirement planning.
- Most people feel they're emotionally ready for retirement.
- Learning remains a priority as people approach retirement. Well-being at work and personal growth top the list of topics of interest for pre-retirees.



Who we heard from

The survey was sent to education sector workers across Canada. Of the 948 respondents¹, 41 per cent are classroom teachers, and 37 per cent are administrators. The majority of respondents are within five years of their retirement.



Other respondents were from early years, post-secondary institutions, public service and non-profit associations.

Time to retirement



Did you know?

RTOERO is for everyone in the education sector. Membership is free until you retire. [Sign up now.](#)

¹ The survey response rate provides a 95% confidence level, with a 3% margin of error.

Retiring during a pandemic

“The very word retirement might stir up worry for some education HR managers who are grappling with ways to fill staffing shortages brought on by the pandemic. At the same time, our survey shows the pandemic has caused education sector employees to rethink their retirement plans,” says Jim Grieve, CEO of RTOERO. “Accepting this reality is necessary as we forge a sustainable future for Canada’s education sector—how can we support retirement planning and support organization missions and strategic goals?”

The pandemic’s impact



30%

considering retiring sooner or decided to retire sooner

12%

considering delaying their retirement or decided to delay their retirement

49%

haven't changed plans

“I’ve stayed longer than I thought I would, but the pandemic presence has solidified my decision. It is truly time.”

Drill down

- Educators were slightly more likely than administrators to say they have decided to retire sooner than originally planned (**11% vs. 9%**)
- 27 per cent of people who are retiring in the next 1 to 5 years said they are considering retiring sooner than they originally planned
- Our findings are in contrast to results from the [2020 Retirement Risk Survey](#) conducted by the Canadian Institutes of Actuaries with Canadians in general, which found that 69 per cent of respondents will work longer than planned because of income needs due to the pandemic

In focus: How to create a pandemic retirement plan

The pandemic could leave lasting impacts on retirement activities and how folks feel about some aspects of retirement. Reframing can help! Challenge yourself to think differently about retirement activities and get creative. Focus on what you *can* do, not on what you can't. [Learn more](#)

Retirement by design

"Freedom" tops the list of words or phrases that come to mind when education workers think about retirement



"Our survey shows that those approaching retirement have a largely positive and optimistic view of their future," says Jim Grieve, CEO of RTOERO. "They're looking forward to an active time of travel and exciting activities of their own choosing. This fits with what we know about retirees – their happiness continues to grow throughout retirement."

Architects vs. flight risks, which are you?

Some education workers are planners and require great certainty; others are more impulsive or spontaneous. And some derive so much meaning from work that they don't want to walk away. We asked respondents which approach to retirement best describes them. Takeaway: most people want to design their retirement.

Architect

I'll go when I'm ready!
33%

Flight risk

I'm outta here as soon
as can manage it!
29%

Contribute

I'm enjoying my career
too much to consider
retirement yet!
10%

Procrastinator

I'm putting off thinking
about it!
9%

Pessimist

I can't leave
1%



"I enjoyed my career soooo much. I had prepared but did leave earlier than I had planned. It was too difficult to continue, and I feel so badly that many of my friends and colleagues have to go on with the current working conditions."

Drill down

- Classroom educators were more likely to identify as **flight risks (34%)**
- Administrators were more likely to identify as **architects (38%)**

In focus: Employees want options when it comes to retirement planning

Everyone's retirement journey looks different. Recognizing that people want to be architects of their retirement, show employees their choices for timing, working in retirement, and insurance options. Education sector employees anywhere in Canada can join RTOERO's group insurance plan, and there are often province-specific options. A national non-profit group plan such as this moves with you if you decide to relocate to other parts of Canada. RTOERO offers a checklist to help employees evaluate retirement insurance options. [Learn more.](#)

Retirement readiness

Financial preparedness for retirement

Financial planning is typically what comes to mind when people think about retirement planning. And while it's just one part of retirement planning, there's no denying its importance. So how financially prepared are education sector employees feeling? The closer people are to retiring, the more likely they are to say they're ready financially.

How financially prepared do you feel?

I've done some things to prepare 32%



Almost prepared 27%



I'm ready 21%



I'm just starting to think about it 13%



Not at all prepared 5%



"I'm a little concerned since COVID-19 and the healthcare crisis that my pension will be enough to cover the cost of living as I age."

In focus: Worry about retirement finances is common

A [survey](#) by the National Institute on Ageing and HomeEquity Bank found that at least 77 per cent of Canadians age 55 to 69 are worried about their finances. Unsurprisingly, financial stress can [affect performance at work](#) – and since it's the most significant source of stress for Canadians in general, it's something for employers to pay attention to.

In focus: 5 ways to think about retirement planning – and money isn't one of them

Financial security in retirement is important. But, RTOERO knows there is more to consider. We want people to have their best life in retirement. But what defines a meaningful retirement? Download our white paper [5 ways to think about retirement... and money isn't one of them](#) to learn more about retirement planning (beyond the financial elements) and how we're working to advance meaningful retirements for members and Canadians.

Emotional preparedness for retirement

Most respondents say they feel emotionally ready or almost ready for retirement. Hopefully, that means they've done some pre-thinking about what the change might be like.

How emotionally prepared do you feel?

I'm ready 36%



Almost prepared 21%



I've done some things to prepare 21%



I'm just starting to think about it 16%



Not at all prepared 6%



"Ready and not ready. Rollercoaster of emotions about it. But it's time."

Drill down

Classroom educators were more likely than other groups to say they're emotionally ready for retirement **(39%)**

In focus: How to prepare for retirement emotionally

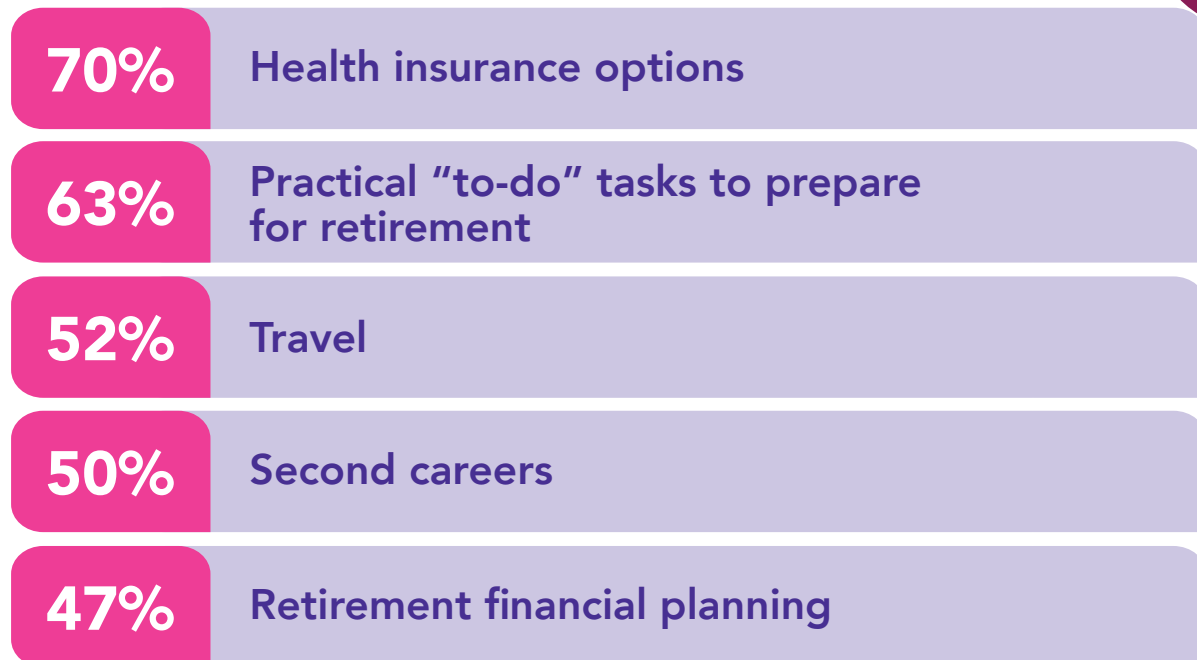
Retirement is a significant change. We always suggest considering what the transition might be like for you. [Learn more.](#)

Love of learning

Which retirement topics do people want to know about?

There's a lot to do to get ready for retirement, and a lot of people are going through the process. Employers and organizations like RTOERO are in an excellent position to provide help. So, what retirement planning topics most interest people?

Top 5 topics



Drill down

Information about practical "to-do" tasks for retirement was of greatest interest to people who are **1 to 5 years from retirement (71%)**

In focus: How to help employees prepare for retirement and why you should

Your employees are your closest and most crucial link between the organization and the people you serve. Taking care of your employees at all stages of their careers impacts employee well-being and engagement. And, in turn, affects your organization's reputation internally and externally. [Learn more.](#)

Which career topics do people want to know about?

Workplace learning doesn't need to stop as folks get closer to retirement. Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents told us they were interested in topics that centre on their wellness and growth—and these focuses will benefit the employer too.

Top 3 topics



Drill down

- Well-being at work was a popular topic among those retiring in the next **1 to 5 years (44%)**, and that popularity dropped off for people retiring in **less than 12 months (19%)**
- Well-being at work was the most popular topic among administrators (**39%**)
- Administrators were more interested in leadership development than the overall group (**24% vs. 19%**)

In focus: Leadership and learning opportunities are perks of RTOERO membership

If leadership development and ongoing learning top your personal growth priority list, then RTOERO membership now and in retirement could be an excellent fit for you. There are plenty of leadership roles within our member-focused organization. Plus, you will have access to our regular webinars and workshops. Your membership is free until retirement. Once you're a member, you'll be able to join our group insurance plan for retirement. You can [sign up for your membership now](#).

What's your retirement personality?

If you're wondering what to expect and how to plan your time during retirement, the answers may come from you! Your personality and preferences will likely shape your retirement journey. Here are some of the most common retirement personalities we've met and how future retirees identify.

8 retirement personality types

Respondents selected the retirement personality or personalities they feel best described them.



Artist/Creator 33%

For you, retirement will be a chance to pursue your creative endeavours.



Athlete 39%

Retirement will give you more time for the active lifestyle you love.



Bucket-lister 40%

Checking items off your list of fun experiences will be the priority in retirement.



Director 14%

You're the organizer and the party planner. You look forward to a full social calendar in retirement.



Globe trotter 54%

You plan to indulge your travel bug during retirement.



Philanthropist 34%

Volunteering and giving back is top of mind in your retirement plans.



Scholar 24%

You're a lifelong learner, and retirement will give you time to indulge your inner student.



Workhorse 27%

Whether it's a second career, entrepreneurship or continuing in your chosen field, you plan on working in retirement.

Your possible next steps

What to do next depends on who you are! Here are some options.

Are you a:

Education employer

- ☐ Read our article about [how to help employees prepare for retirement and why you should.](#)
- ☐ Review your current employee support process for retirement and tackle any quick wins.
 - ☐ Is information easy to find?
 - ☐ Is the process clearly laid out?
 - ☐ Are you showcasing the different options employees have for retirement insurance?
 - ☐ Are you clearly explaining the process for working in retirement? (Tip: this is critical if you're dealing with staffing challenges – make the process clear and simple and people are more likely to do it).
 - ☐ What learning opportunities are you offering to employees?
- ☐ Connect with RTOERO if you need support with your process. You can request a customized retirement planning workshop for your organization, and we can also provide template articles to help you with staff communication about retirement. Email our marketing and communications team at media@rtoero.ca.



Future retiree in the next year

- Attend our retirement planning workshop. If you've already attended, you can sign up again – come as many times as you want! [Reserve your spot here.](#)
- For a checklist of what you need to do before retiring, see our blog post on [everything you need to think about to plan for retirement in Canada.](#)
- If you've decided on RTOERO insurance, go ahead and [get your membership](#) and apply for insurance. Your insurance will kick in the day your current plan ends so there will be no gaps. We usually recommend applying up to 3 months ahead of your retirement date. [Apply here.](#)
- If you're still deciding on insurance, [download our insurance comparison checklist](#) for questions to ask.
- Think about what you'd like to do in retirement. [Check out our list of 50 ideas](#) if you need some inspiration.



Future retiree in the next 1 to 5 years

- For a checklist of what you need to do before retiring, see our blog post on [everything you need to think about to plan for retirement in Canada](#).
- Attend our retirement planning workshop. If you've already attended, you can sign up again – come as many times as you want! [Reserve your spot here](#).
- If you're starting to look at insurance options, [download our insurance comparison checklist](#) for questions to ask.
- Consider getting a financial planner if you don't have one already. You have time to review your finances and make adjustments to help you get retirement ready. [Learn more](#).
- [Join RTOERO today](#) and enjoy your free membership until you retire. One of the most popular perks of membership with [Venngo MemberPerks](#) to help you save on purchases you'll make anyway, including shoes, apparel, restaurants, services and more.

Future retiree in 6+ years

- [Join RTOERO today](#) and enjoy your free membership until you retire. One of the most popular perks of membership with [Venngo MemberPerks](#) to help you save on purchases you'll make anyway, including shoes, apparel, restaurants, services and more.
- Consider getting a financial planner, if you don't have one already. You have time to review your finances and make adjustments to help you get retirement ready. [Learn more](#).



RTOERO is a bilingual trusted voice on healthy, active living in the retirement journey for the broader education community. With 82,000+ members in 51 districts across Canada, we are the largest national provider of non-profit group health benefits for education retirees. We welcome members who work in or are retired from the early years, schools and school boards, post-secondary and any other capacity in education. We believe in a better future, together! Your membership is free until you retire.

[Sign up today](#)

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