

2021

OAVT's Wage & Compensation Survey



Through uncertain times and changing rules regarding COVID-19 procedures and restrictions throughout 2021, 72.4% of Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs) in Ontario reported receiving a raise in the last 12-months, up from 60% just a year ago. In fact, the average hourly wage increase was **\$1.76** – representing the largest year-over-year increase in wages since the OAVT began collecting wage data in 2014, and a full \$0.31 better than the previous record, set just last year.

That's not to say wages went up for everyone. 27.6% of RVTs surveyed did not receive a raise in the last 12-months. Additionally, 13.7% of RVT respondents are still making less than \$20 an hour, although that number is down significantly from 25% in 2020. And 25.5% of RVTs

still receive **zero paid sick days** from their employer, although that is a slight improvement over last year's reported 29%.

The disparity between RVTs is something to pay attention to, as you read over the OAVT 2021 Wage & Compensation Survey data. Of the 1,000+ RVTs who responded, the majority are satisfied with their compensation. 57.4% of respondents checked "yes" when asked if they were "satisfied with the total compensation package your employer provides."

But while generally the numbers continue to trend up, with the overall average wage for RVTs rising by nearly 4% (compared to 2020) to \$24.84/hour, that is not the case for all RVTs.

Examples of this disparity in the compensation of RVTs using the OAVT's 2021 Wage Survey data include:

22%

of respondents receive no extended health benefits compared to the other 78% who do - whether it is in the form of full benefits (50% of respondents), a healthcare spending account (4.3%), matching their employer and contributing 50% to their policy (21.6%), or a percentage of their wages in lieu of benefits (2%).

21%

of respondents pay for 100% of their OAVT dues compared to the 76% of RVTs who get their dues completely paid for by their employer (3% get their dues partially paid for by their employer)

74%

of respondents are offered paid Continuing Education opportunities by their employer, up from 71.5% in 2020. 20% of respondents said that their employer pays more than \$500 in CE opportunities for them. 26% receive no compensation at all from their employers toward paid CE.

25.5%

of respondents receive zero paid sick days from their employer, which is an improvement over 29% in 2020. The majority (55.9%) of respondents receive 2-5 paid sick days per year.

14%

of respondents are making less than \$20/hr, a vast improvement over last year, when 25% of respondents fell into that category. 86% are making \$20/hr or more.

Average wage for all Ontario RVTs in 2021: **\$24.84/hr**

Median Wage for all Ontario RVTs in 2021: **\$23.50/hr**

Average wage for Ontario RVTs working in a traditional small animal practice (which makes up 61.5% of all responses): **\$22.63/hr**, a jump from **\$21.41/hr** in 2020.

Average raise for Ontario RVTs in 2021 (among respondents who reported receiving a raise): **\$1.76/hr**

RVT Wages

By Sector, Years of Experience and Location

RVT Wages, by Location

	Number of Respondents	Average Wage (Per Hour)	Median Wage (Per Hour)
Brant County	14	\$22.13	\$22.00
Chatham-Kent / Lambton	26	\$22.34	\$21.18
Durham Region	41	\$23.57	\$22.75
Eastern Ontario (Prescott, Russell, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry)	10	\$22.01	\$21.00
Grey-Bruce	20	\$22.39	\$22.50
Haldimand-Norfolk	8	\$22.99	\$23.50
Halton Region	46	\$24.63	\$24.00
Hamilton-Wentworth	35	\$26.26	\$24.00
Hastings-Prince Edward	10	\$22.94	\$22.30
Huron-Perth	20	\$22.29	\$21.00
Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington	34	\$21.94	\$21.00
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark	18	\$21.85	\$19.88
Middlesex-London	51	\$24.74	\$25.00
Niagara Region	19	\$22.82	\$23.25
Ottawa-Carleton	100	\$23.84	\$23.00
Peel Region	33	\$25.77	\$22.00
Peterborough	33	\$23.30	\$23.00
Renfrew/North Bay-Parry Sound	25	\$22.39	\$22.00
Simcoe-Muskoka/Haliburton-Kawartha-Pine Ridge (HKPR)	45	\$25.04	\$24.00
Southwestern (Oxford County, Elgin County, and City of St. Thomas)	26	\$23.46	\$22.00
Sudbury / Algoma	21	\$22.44	\$22.00
Thunder Bay / Porcupine/ Temiskaming	9	\$22.48	\$21.00
Toronto	134	\$27.47	\$27.00
Waterloo Region	63	\$23.78	\$23.00
Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph	47	\$30.92	\$28.50
Windsor-Essex	25	\$21.91	\$20.00
York Region	58	\$26.64	\$24.00

Across Toronto

	Number of Respondents	Average Wage (Per Hour)	Median Wage (Per Hour)
Toronto - Downtown	61	\$27.82	\$27.00
Toronto - Etobicoke	12	\$28.03	\$27.00
Toronto - North York	35	\$27.72	\$27.00
Toronto - Scarborough	26	\$26.02	\$24.38



RVT Wages, by Years of Experience



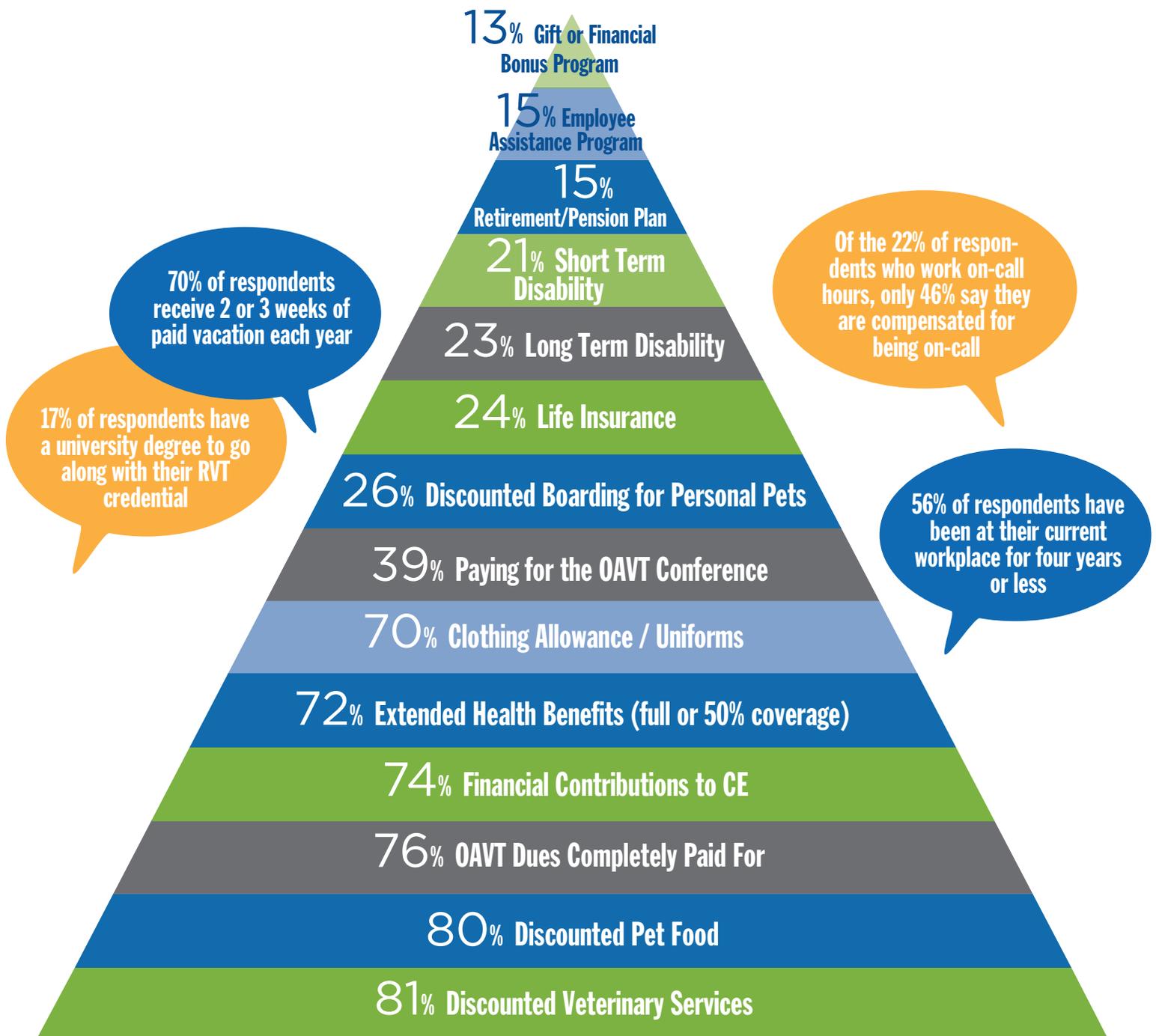
Years as an RVT	Average Hourly Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Number of Respondents
< 1	\$20.55	\$20.00	34
1-2 Years	\$21.52	\$20.00	111
3-4 Years	\$22.39	\$21.88	128
5-6 Years	\$23.24	\$22.80	118
7-8 Years	\$23.85	\$23.50	94
9-10 Years	\$25.28	\$24.00	88
11-12 Years	\$24.38	\$23.50	81
13-14 Years	\$27.12	\$26.00	59
15-16 Years	\$25.49	\$23.83	72
17-18 Years	\$28.53	\$27.00	37
19-20 Years	\$27.17	\$25.60	45
21-22 Years	\$29.06	\$27.00	39
23-24 Years	\$28.93	\$26.00	23
25-26 Years	\$27.16	\$25.50	21
27-28 Years	\$26.14	\$26.00	10
29-30 Years	\$33.42	\$30.00	17
31-32 Years	\$25.88	\$25.75	9
33-34 Years	\$33.33	\$30.00	6
35 Years or More	\$33.19	\$27.50	14

RVT Wages, By Sector*

Sector	Average Hourly Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Number of Respondents
Small Animal Practice	\$22.63	\$22.00	618
Large Animal Veterinary Practice (including Food Animal, Ruminants, and Equine)	\$23.99	\$22.58	9
Large Animal Veterinary Practice (Equine Only)	\$22.17	\$21.60	4
Mixed Animal Veterinary Practice	\$22.39	\$21.63	40
Emergency/24 Hour Veterinary Hospital	\$25.30	\$25.00	75
Agriculture (including Food Animal, Equine, Llama/Alpaca)	\$24.26	\$21.50	5
Shelter Medicine- Municipal or Not-for-profit	\$23.95	\$23.63	28
Specialty/Referral Practice	\$27.39	\$28.00	64
Veterinary Teaching Hospital	\$34.27	\$36.00	17
Educator - Veterinary Technology Program	\$33.90	\$34.00	13
Research/Lab Animal Science	\$32.87	\$30.41	42
Office Manager/Practice Manager	\$28.56	\$28.82	32
Upper Management or Association (CEO/Executive Director/Director of)	\$43.13	\$43.40	3
Self-Employed (related to the RVT field)	\$40.13	\$31.75	4
Zoo/Wildlife Rehabilitation	\$23.54	\$20.50	4
Industry Sales/Marketing	\$38.48	\$37.00	25
Diagnostic Laboratory	\$28.72	\$27.00	5
Government- Provincial, Federal or Public Health	\$32.58	\$30.50	10
Locum RVT	\$28.71	\$28.00	7
Approximately 61.5% of respondents work in small animal practices. Of those, 68% said they work in independently-owned practices, while 32% said that they work in corporately-owned practices.			
Independent Small Animal Practice	\$23.42	\$23.00	
Corporate Small Animal Practice	\$24.23	\$24.00	

Additional Compensation

Benefits and other incentives from an employer can help improve workplace culture and limit employee turnover. The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) 2018 employee benefits survey found that 92% of employees feel that benefits are important to their overall job satisfaction¹. Here is a breakdown of the percentage of respondents who reported having additional compensation from their employers (aside from wages).



COVID-19's Impact on Wages

How did COVID-19 impact Ontario's RVT workforce?

More hours, less hours:

For 41% of RVTs, their hours have remained the same throughout COVID-19, while 50% said they saw an increase in hours, and just 9% said their hours have been reduced.

Changing jobs:

19% of respondents said they made a change in their workplace or employer due to COVID-19.

Loss of Work:

84% of respondents were not unemployed at any time from March 24, 2020 through August 2020 due to COVID-19. However 14% said they were. 10% reported taking a COVID-19-related, voluntary leave of absence over the past year.

Changes to compensation:

Was COVID-19 cited by employers as the reason for a reduction or change in benefits normally received? For 92% of respondents, the answer was no. For 8% of respondents, the answer was yes. The most common response was a freeze on wage increases during the pandemic, with the elimination of paid Continuing Education opportunities a close second. A handful of respondents indicated that their employers increased the number of paid sick/mental health days due to the pandemic, with some offering paid time off specifically for COVID-related reasons (isolating after being tested, etc.)

Some RVTs also reported losing their employee discounts for products and services, although also said that those discounts were eventually reinstated.

What It All Means:

There is a documented shortage of RVTs in Ontario and across North America, and it is common to hear employers share that they are having difficulty attracting RVTs to apply to fill open positions. This survey should give those employers an indication of areas where they can differentiate themselves from other potential employers so as to attract more and/or better applicants.

42.5% of all RVTs who responded to this survey aren't happy with their overall compensation package, presenting employers an opportunity to attract those RVTs with a more attractive compensation package.



All of these are factors that likely contribute to the satisfaction and loyalty of employees, while the paid Continuing Education offers the potential to improve employee knowledge and skills as well, a benefit not only to the employee, but to the employer.

As mentioned in the Summer 2021 issue of RVT Journal, satisfaction in your workplace and with your compensation package is about more than just the number, but while that is true, the numbers do matter.