



# The 2023 Ease<sup>®</sup> SMB Benefits and Employee Insights Report

National Data, Trends & Observations for Small-  
and Medium-Sized Businesses

*ease*

# Crisis Fatigue & the Great Rebalancing

**While small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) account for all but 0.1% of U.S. businesses and nearly half of the private workforce, this group saw a net decrease of 3 million jobs this past year.<sup>1</sup>**

As pressures mount from all sides — a cooling job market, hints of a coming recession, unclear return-to-office plans (and clear pushback), continued supply chain disruptions, and noticeable inflation — SMBs are left wondering how to weather the storm.

# 81%

**of executives polled in a recent PwC survey agree there will be a recession in the next six months.<sup>2</sup> Unemployment fell to 3.5%,<sup>3</sup> but the Fed predicts 2023 job growth may continue to slow pushing the unemployment rate to 4.6%.<sup>4</sup>**

Crisis fatigue from the past three years can be felt from the biggest companies to the smallest. Another virus variant? Add it to the list. Historic inflation? We'll make do. It's been a real heads-down approach to getting it all done. But with that grind comes burnout. More than half of U.S. workers are experiencing at least moderate levels of burnout according to a recent Aflac study.<sup>5</sup>

And more than ever before, employees today expect their organizations to recognize their lives inside and outside work. Both groups are asking more and more of each other. But the continual refrain — do more with less — will likely continue to ring true.

2023 will prove to be anything but predictable. Brokers who succeed will be the ones who stay out in front and offer benefits that matter to their clients — all while minding the bottom line. To do this, they must rely on data-driven insights to learn from what's come before and what could come next.

**Because benefits matter.**

1. U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, [2022 Small Business Profile Infographic](#)

2. PwC, [U.S. Pulse Survey: Cautious to confident](#)

3. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [The Employment Situation — December 2022](#)

4. Yahoo!Finance, [6 Sector ETFs That Show Promise After December Jobs Data](#)

5. Aflac, [2022-2023 Aflac WorkForces Report](#)



## About the Report

The **2023 Ease SMB Benefits and Employee Insights Report** focuses on businesses throughout the country with 1-250 active employees. **With more than 5.5% of the entire SMB workforce making benefits and HR decisions in Ease,**<sup>6</sup> we have a breadth of anonymized data to glean insights into how SMBs redirected and evolved benefits throughout 2022. By analyzing Ease platform data from the past three years — 2020, 2021, and 2022 — we've uncovered trends, themes, and key insights that can help shape your benefits and engagement strategy.

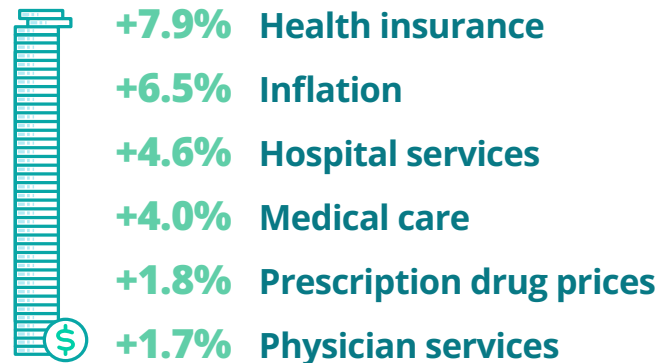
## About Ease

Ease is the **#1 rated** benefits administration and HR software for businesses with 2-250 employees, powered by insurance brokers. More than 2,300 agencies trust Ease to help them and their clients grow. Over 85,000 businesses trust Ease to manage benefits and HR for 3.4 million+ employees.

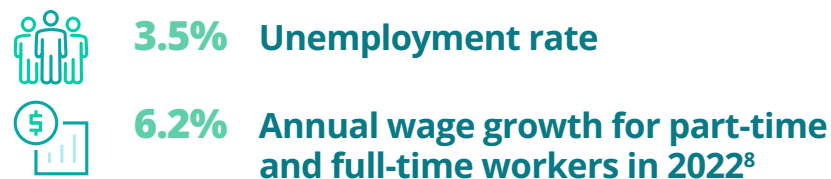
6. Based on the total SMB workforce reported by the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy and Ease users in 2022.

## More Factors Impacting SMB Benefits in 2022

From December 2021 to December 2022, U.S. consumer prices rose 6.5% for all goods.<sup>7</sup> (And we all felt this one — **food prices increased 10.4%.**) From a benefits impact, here's how contributing categories shook out.



## Other factors



## Find the Details Here

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Medical premiums and contributions . . .                   | <b>8-16</b>  |
| Health plans offered . . . . .                             | <b>17-22</b> |
| Voluntary benefits . . . . .                               | <b>23-36</b> |
| SMB growth . . . . .                                       | <b>37-40</b> |
| Special report: Recession-proofing your business . . . . . | <b>41-46</b> |



## Methodology

The data featured in this report reflects small- and medium-size businesses using Ease from January 2022 through December 2022. This analysis is based on anonymized data collected in January 2023.

7. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Consumer Price Index: 2022 in review](#)

8. USA Today, [Wage growth in 2022 showed signs of slowing. Is it enough to avert a recession?](#)

## TLDR; This Year in Benefits

When it comes to SMBs, even a small shift can be a big deal.

### Medical Premiums

Premiums continue their climb. Individual premiums saw a **21% increase** from 2018. And family premium increase came in slightly under that at **17.87%** over the same time period. That's a **\$104 difference** in individual premiums and a **\$231 difference** in family premiums *each month* — or **\$1,248 and \$2,772 per year** — significant for any household.



**+\$1,248**  
per year



**+\$2,772**  
per year

### Individual

**4.15% increase** in average individual medical premiums (\$23 more each month, or \$276 more annually from 2021)

**Employer** vs. **Employee** average contribution:

**72.78%**

**24.37%**

### Family

**5.52% increase** in average family medical premiums (\$80 more each month, or \$960 more annually from 2021)

**Employer** vs. **Employee** average contribution:

**61.38%**

**38.62%**



## Health Plans

Across nearly all plan types in 2022, larger SMB groups (51-250) saw an increase in enrollments while smaller groups (1-50) saw a decrease.

### Waiving coverage: 53.09%

Of those not waiving coverage, here's the plan adoption breakdown:

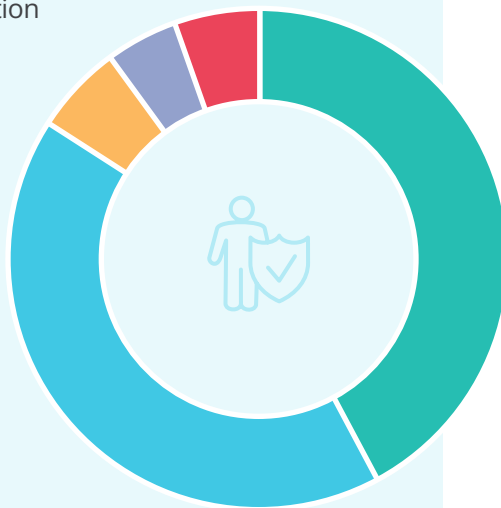
**HMO: 42.27%**

**PPO: 42.02%**

**HDHP: 6.06%**

**EPO: 4.01%**

**POS: 5.63%**



## Voluntary Benefits

### Average number of plans offered per employee: 3.61

#### Dental

- Average Total Premium: **\$61.97** (up 0.44% from 2021)
- Premium Contribution: **\$28.77 Employer** vs. **\$33.21 Employee**

**Employer** vs. **Employee** Contribution:

**46.43%**

**53.59%**

#### Vision

- Average Total Premium: **\$11.80** (-1.01% from 2021)
- Premium Contribution: **\$4.51 Employer** vs. **\$7.29 Employee**

**Employer** vs. **Employee** Contribution:

**38.25%**

**61.77%**

#### Accidental Death & Dismemberment

- Average Total Premium: **\$13.76** (up 3.15% from 2021)
- Premium Contribution: **\$7.69 Employer** vs. **\$5.99 Employee**

**Employer** vs. **Employee** Contribution:

**55.90%**

**43.57%**



### Long-term Disability

- Average Total Premium: **\$20.91** (up 4.81% from 2021)
- Premium Contribution: **\$15.84 Employer** vs. **\$5.12 Employee**

**Employer** vs. **Employee** Contribution:

**75.75%**

**24.48%**

### Short-term Disability

- Average Total Premium: **\$26.53** (up 5.07% from 2021)
- Premium Contribution: **\$11.31 Employer** vs. **\$13.71 Employee**

**Employer** vs. **Employee** Contribution:

**42.62%**

**51.68%**



# Medical Premiums & Contributions

*ease*



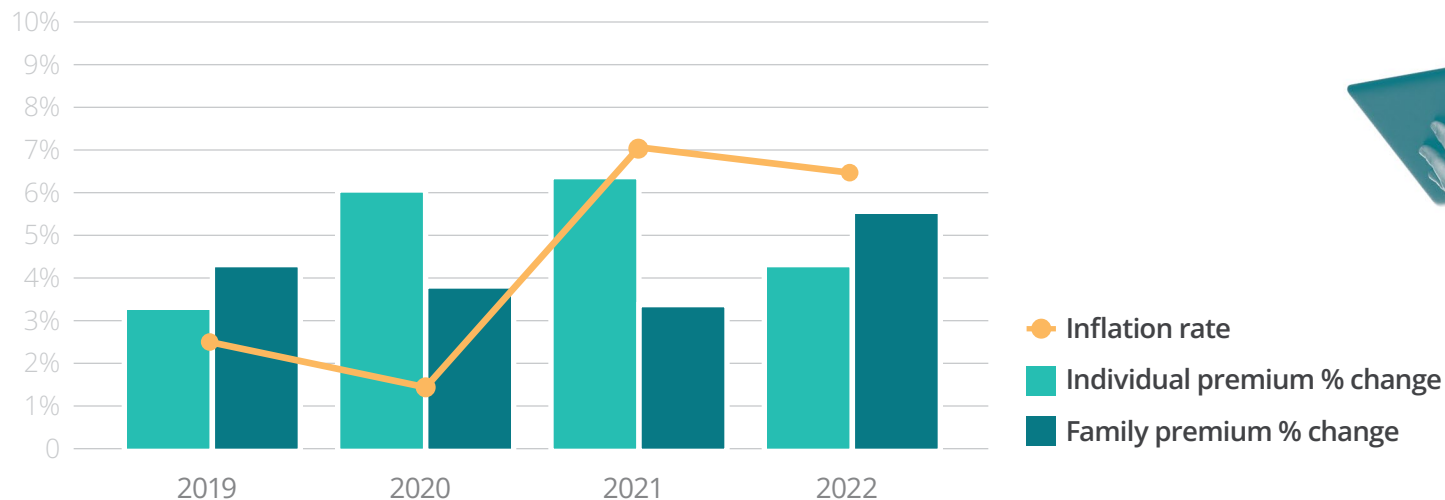
## Medical Premiums & Contributions

Though average medical premium increases fell under the rate of inflation, they did pick up steam from 2021.

On average, Ease companies saw a 4.15% increase in individual medical premiums, with the 1-10 employee segment experiencing the largest increase at nearly 7%. On the family side, medical premiums rose at a slightly higher rate — 5.52% on average.

**The outlier:** Employer groups with only 1-10 employees saw an increase of **12.07%**. That's nearly double the rate of inflation and the largest increase this group experienced in the past four years.

### Inflation and Medical Premium Increase from 2019-2022



## Monthly Medical Premiums

### INDIVIDUAL PLANS — PREMIUM COST

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium |       |       | Percent Change in Premium Cost |         |         |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020            | 2021  | 2022  | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$541           | \$575 | \$598 | 6.29%                          | 4.15%   | 10.69%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$534           | \$557 | \$596 | 4.34%                          | 6.93%   | 11.58%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$518           | \$555 | \$587 | 6.87%                          | 5.69%   | 12.95%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$528           | \$562 | \$589 | 6.36%                          | 4.87%   | 11.54%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$554           | \$570 | \$594 | 2.80%                          | 4.16%   | 7.08%   |

\*EEs = active employees

Regardless of company size, individual medical premiums averaged \$598 in 2022. What's more, employee count doesn't appear to have an outsized impact on premium cost with 1-10 employees and 101-250 employees experiencing only a \$2 difference.

## Monthly Medical Premiums

### FAMILY PLANS — PREMIUM COST

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium |                |                | Percent Change in Premium Cost |               |               |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                      | 2020            | 2021           | 2022           | 2020-21                        | 2021-22       | 2020-22       |
| All                  | <b>\$1,398</b>  | <b>\$1,445</b> | <b>\$1,525</b> | <b>3.35%</b>                   | <b>5.52%</b>  | <b>9.06%</b>  |
| 1-10 EEs             | <b>\$1,341</b>  | <b>\$1,386</b> | <b>\$1,554</b> | <b>3.35%</b>                   | <b>12.07%</b> | <b>15.83%</b> |
| 11-50 EEs            | <b>\$1,398</b>  | <b>\$1,451</b> | <b>\$1,522</b> | <b>3.83%</b>                   | <b>4.86%</b>  | <b>8.88%</b>  |
| 51-100 EEs           | <b>\$1,401</b>  | <b>\$1,462</b> | <b>\$1,507</b> | <b>4.32%</b>                   | <b>3.11%</b>  | <b>7.56%</b>  |
| 101-250 EEs          | <b>\$1,525</b>  | <b>\$1,535</b> | <b>\$1,506</b> | <b>0.70%</b>                   | <b>-1.88%</b> | <b>-1.20%</b> |

\*EEs = active employees

In 2022, the average family premium was \$1,525, and the rate of increase picked up steam from 2021. In previous years, companies with 1-10 employees maintained lower premiums. In 2022, however, this cohort saw the highest average premium, a nearly 16% increase since 2020. On the other end, the 101-250 segment saw an overall decrease of one point in the same period.

## Monthly Medical Contributions

### EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS — INDIVIDUAL

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |       |       | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021  | 2022  | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$400                        | \$417 | \$435 | 73.97%                          | 72.65% | 72.78% | -1.78%                         | 0.17%   | -1.61%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$371                        | \$376 | \$403 | 69.50%                          | 67.46% | 67.55% | -2.94%                         | 0.14%   | -2.80%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$381                        | \$399 | \$419 | 73.39%                          | 71.89% | 71.47% | -2.04%                         | -0.57%  | -2.61%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$398                        | \$421 | \$436 | 75.35%                          | 74.93% | 74.01% | -0.56%                         | -1.23%  | -1.78%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$519                        | \$424 | \$443 | 93.58%                          | 74.37% | 74.55% | -20.52%                        | 0.24%   | -20.33% |

\*EEs = active employees

With the rise of individual premiums, employers are responsible for a slightly higher share of total contribution in 2022 — to the tune of 0.17% — although that works out to be about \$18 more per month on average. When looking at the percentage of premium contribution, employers are paying a lower percentage now than in 2020, nearly 2% less on average.



## Monthly Medical Contributions

### EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS — INDIVIDUAL

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |       |       | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021  | 2022  | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$141                        | \$143 | \$146 | 26.03%                          | 24.88% | 24.37% | -4.41%                         | -2.08%  | -6.40%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$163                        | \$169 | \$170 | 30.50%                          | 30.25% | 28.57% | -0.85%                         | -5.53%  | -6.33%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$137                        | \$141 | \$147 | 26.28%                          | 25.45% | 25.08% | -3.16%                         | -1.43%  | -4.54%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$130                        | \$129 | \$136 | 24.68%                          | 23.02% | 23.17% | -6.73%                         | 0.67%   | -6.11%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$134                        | \$131 | \$140 | 24.09%                          | 23.02% | 23.63% | -4.41%                         | 2.65%   | -1.88%  |

\*EEs = active employees

Employees across the board are responsible for less of their medical contributions in 2022 than they were in 2020. On average, employees spent \$146 on monthly medical premiums in 2022, or \$1,752 for the year. For comparison, the annual cost sat at \$1,692 in 2020 (for a difference of \$60).

## Monthly Medical Contributions

### EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS — FAMILY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |         |       | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|-------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021    | 2022  | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$827                        | \$869   | \$936 | 59.12%                          | 60.11% | 61.38% | 1.67%                          | 2.12%   | 3.82%   |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$626                        | \$664   | \$819 | 46.69%                          | 47.87% | 52.74% | 2.53%                          | 10.17%  | 12.95%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$858                        | \$906   | \$889 | 61.38%                          | 62.42% | 58.39% | 1.69%                          | -6.46%  | -4.87%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$943                        | \$1,006 | \$928 | 67.30%                          | 68.79% | 61.57% | 2.21%                          | -10.48% | -8.50%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$1,104                      | \$1,141 | \$962 | 72.40%                          | 74.33% | 63.88% | 2.66%                          | -14.06% | -11.77% |

\*EEs = active employees

This year, we're finally seeing the smallest cohort, businesses with 1-20 employees, cover more than half of the family premium contribution. This group accounts for the largest increase from 2020, at nearly 13%. Inversely, the largest employer groups are seeing a decrease in contribution of close to that same amount.

The smallest segment, notably, is the only one that has increased its percentage of family premium contributions over the past three years. And it makes sense: It's much easier to take on increased costs with a smaller number of employees than it is for larger organizations.

## Monthly Medical Contributions

### EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS — FAMILY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |       |       | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021  | 2022  | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$572                        | \$576 | \$589 | 40.88%                          | 39.89% | 38.62% | -2.41%                         | -3.20%  | -5.54%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$715                        | \$723 | \$734 | 53.30%                          | 52.13% | 47.26% | -2.20%                         | -9.33%  | -11.33% |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$540                        | \$546 | \$633 | 38.64%                          | 37.59% | 41.61% | -2.72%                         | 10.69%  | 7.68%   |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$458                        | \$456 | \$579 | 32.70%                          | 31.21% | 38.43% | -4.54%                         | 23.10%  | 17.51%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$420                        | \$375 | \$544 | 27.57%                          | 24.40% | 36.12% | -11.49%                        | 48.03%  | 31.02%  |

\*EEs = active employees

The percentage of employee contributions for family plans is down year over year on average. For employee family coverage, Ease companies averaged \$589 per month in 2022, or \$7,068 for the year. When looking at employee size, however, the largest groups paid significantly less per month — nearly \$190 or \$2,280 per year less — than the smallest groups. But their percentage of premium contribution grew the most year-over-year at a 48% increase.

## Total Monthly Benefits Costs

### EMPLOYEE

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Benefits Cost per Employee |       |       | Percent Change per Employee |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                               | 2021  | 2022  | 2020-21                     | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$365                              | \$368 | \$394 | 0.97%                       | 7.05%   | 8.08%   |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$445                              | \$451 | \$511 | 1.31%                       | 13.25%  | 14.73%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$406                              | \$420 | \$460 | 3.47%                       | 9.51%   | 13.30%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$394                              | \$405 | \$417 | 2.68%                       | 3.01%   | 5.77%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$351                              | \$350 | \$372 | -0.07%                      | 6.14%   | 6.07%   |

\*EEs = active employees

Continuing the trend we've seen since 2018, the smaller the company the more their employees paid toward benefits. Here's the breakdown: Employees working for companies with 101-250 employees paid 37% less than those working for companies with 1-10 employees this past year.





# Health Plans Offered

*ease*

## Health Plans Offered

Continuing the trend, the past three years have shown the larger the employer, the more health plans they are likely to offer. While HMOs and PPOs account for a majority of plans selected in 2022, more than 50% of SMB employees opted to waive coverage entirely, up 13% since 2020.

Holding relatively steady, the number of health plans offered by employers reflects efforts to steer employees toward more affordable options. While uptake of consumer-driven health plans remains a small slice of the pie, participation in high deductible health plans (HDHPs) has increased 68% year over year.

Panning out, HDHPs typically combine with a health savings account (HSA). Given the current state of the economy, households may be opting to use higher deductible plans to save money on their monthly premiums. And from a generational perspective, more

Gen Zers have begun to age out of their parental medical coverage, and now face paying for their own plans. More money in their pockets seems like a safer bet.



## Medical Plans Offered

### NUMBER OF PLANS OFFERED PER EMPLOYEE

| Companies Using Ease | Number of Plans Offered Per EE |      |      | Percent Change |         |         |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|----------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                           | 2021 | 2022 | 2020-21        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | 2.69                           | 2.69 | 2.64 | 0.04%          | -1.94%  | -1.90%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | 1.85                           | 1.89 | 1.67 | 1.80%          | -11.55% | -9.97%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | 3.41                           | 3.37 | 3.03 | -1.17%         | -9.95%  | -11.00% |
| 51-100 EEs           | 3.71                           | 3.82 | 3.71 | 2.99%          | -2.87%  | 0.04%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | 3.64                           | 3.67 | 3.74 | 0.98%          | 1.71%   | 2.71%   |

\*EEs = active employees

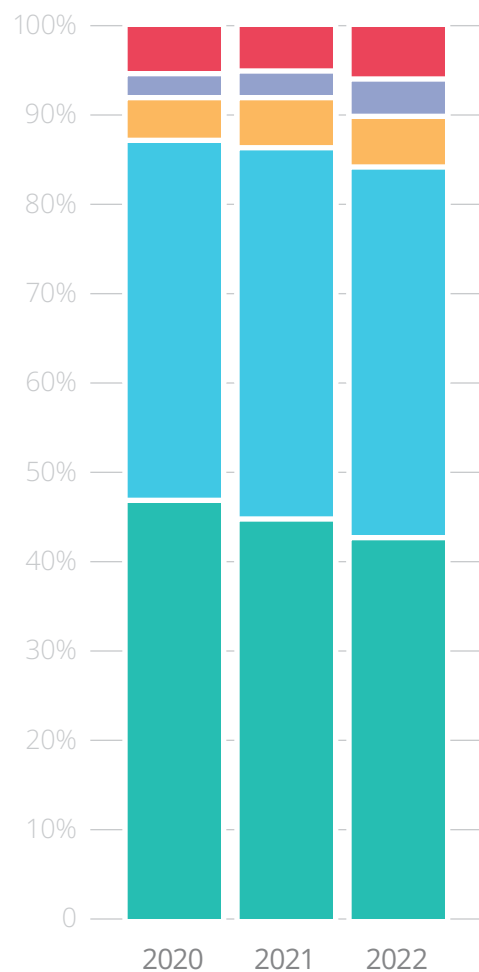
On average, businesses with more employees offered more medical plans than those with fewer employees in 2022, which continues the trend we saw back in 2020. Though minimal, you'll see a decrease in average number of plans offered per employee from that same time span. Notably, the only increases seen are in the 101-250 employee segment.

## Adoption by Medical Plan Type

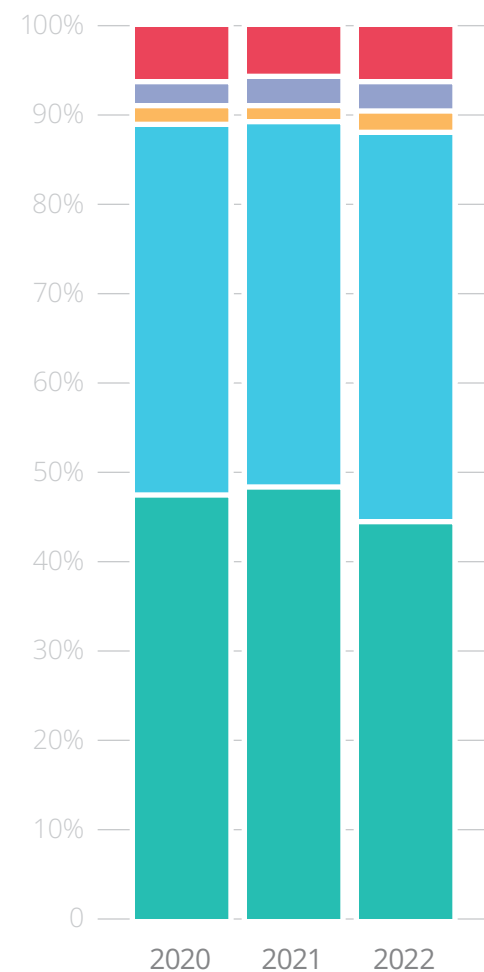
In 2022, HMO and PPO adoption were nearly even, both coming in at 42% and some change. But the real story here is high-deductible health plans (HDHPs) breaking through with 6% participation. That's an impressive 68% increase year over year. Though adoption is still light compared to more traditional HMOs and PPOs, HDHPs are the fastest-growing plan type by nearly double the next in line.



All Companies Using Ease

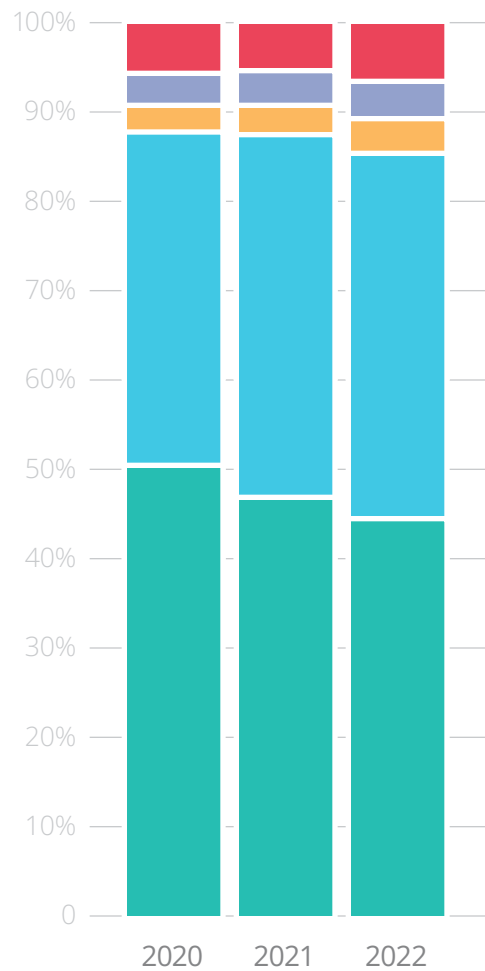


1-10 Active Employees

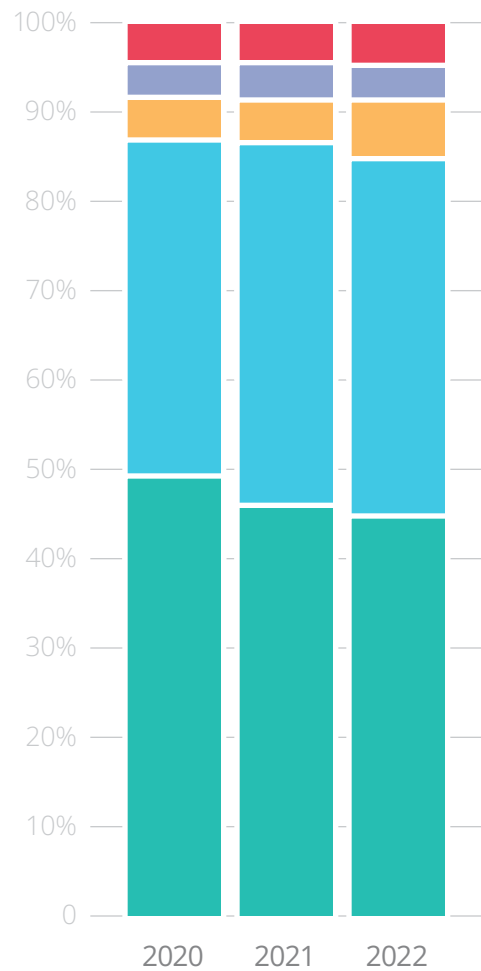




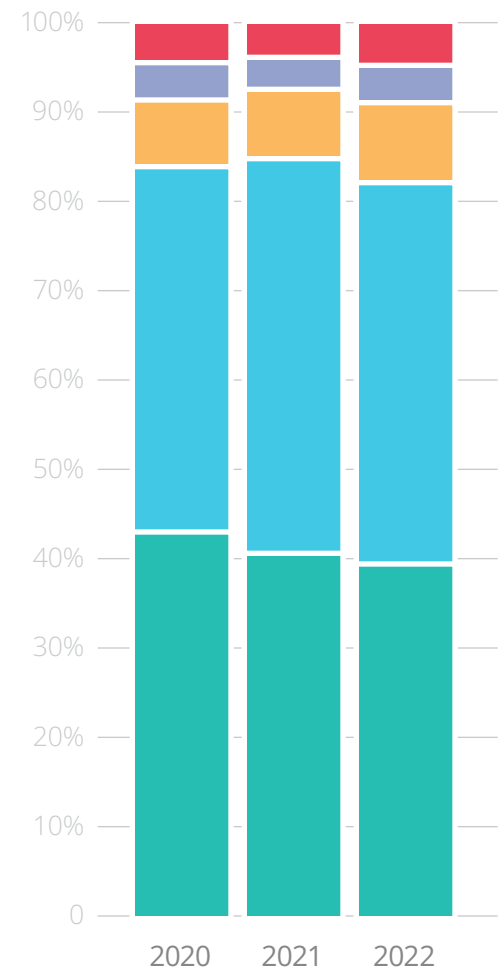
11-50 Active Employees



51-100 Active Employees



101-250 Active Employees



POS EPO HDHP PPO HMO

## Medical Plans

### EMPLOYEES WAIVING COVERAGE

| Companies Using Ease | Employees Waving Coverage |        |        | Percent Change |         |         |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|----------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                      | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | 46.80%                    | 49.93% | 53.09% | 7%             | 23%     | 13%     |
| 1-10 EEs             | 31.52%                    | 34.03% | 40.54% | 8%             | 33%     | 29%     |
| 11-50 EEs            | 46.64%                    | 53.33% | 60.25% | 14%            | 27%     | 29%     |
| 51-100 EEs           | 50.27%                    | 54.82% | 59.20% | 9%             | 25%     | 18%     |
| 101-250 EEs          | 48.69%                    | 51.33% | 56.81% | 5%             | 23%     | 17%     |

\*EEs = active employees

This past year sees double-digit increases across the board for employees waiving medical coverage. This could be due to several factors, but the cooling COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the rise of inflation and other economic pressures likely have people considering other ways to save some money. According to Kaiser Family Foundation, almost half of U.S. adults say they have difficulty affording health care costs.<sup>9</sup> What's more, four in ten say they have delayed or gone without medical care in the past year due to cost.

9. Kaiser Family Foundation, [Americans Challenges with Health Costs](#)



# Voluntary Benefits

*ease*

## Voluntary Benefits

Feel like you're confronting dwindling employee loyalty and job satisfaction? You're not alone. A recent MetLife survey found 72% of employers say employee stress and burnout are challenges for their organizations.<sup>10</sup>

And that's where holistic well-being benefits can make the difference. When employees feel supported and healthy physically, mentally, financially, and socially, they are 74% more likely to be satisfied with their jobs.<sup>10</sup>

Voluntary benefits offer SMBs a unique way to meet the needs of their employees without wrecking their budgets. Must-haves like dental, vision, and life top the list for SMB employees, but lifestyle benefits like financial wellness, legal services, and pet insurance continue to gain steam.

When it comes down to it, SMBs offer nearly four voluntary plans on average. Employer groups with 1-10 employees offer two, while the largest segment nearly triples that at six plans on offer.



10. MetLife, 2022 report [The Rise of the Whole Employee](#)



## Voluntary Benefits Plans Offered

### NUMBER OF PLANS OFFERED PER EMPLOYEE

| Companies Using Ease | Number of Plans Offered Per EE |      |      | Percent Change |         |         |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|----------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                           | 2021 | 2022 | 2020-21        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | 3.59                           | 3.58 | 3.61 | -0.52%         | 1.03%   | 0.50%   |
| 1-10 EEs             | 2.35                           | 2.37 | 2.40 | 0.58%          | 1.42%   | 2.02%   |
| 11-50 EEs            | 3.88                           | 3.88 | 3.95 | 0.11%          | 1.71%   | 1.82%   |
| 51-100 EEs           | 5.01                           | 5.06 | 5.14 | 1.07%          | 1.66%   | 2.75%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | 5.68                           | 5.73 | 5.78 | 0.93%          | 0.77%   | 1.70%   |

\*EEs = active employees

Similar to the trend we see with medical plans, the larger the company, the more voluntary benefits plans offered per employee in 2022. All company sizes have increased voluntary benefits plans offered slightly year-over-year, with the 51-100 employee segment seeing the highest rate of change over the past three years.

## Voluntary Benefits Premium Cost

### AVERAGE COST ACROSS ALL SEGMENTS

| Companies Using Ease | Average Premium Cost |         |         | Percent Change |         |         |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                 | 2021    | 2022    | 2020-21        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| Dental               | \$61.46              | \$61.70 | \$61.97 | 0.39%          | 0.44%   | 0.83%   |
| Vision               | \$12.05              | \$11.92 | \$11.80 | -1.08%         | -1.01%  | -2.07%  |
| AD&D                 | \$13.48              | \$13.34 | \$13.76 | -1.04%         | 3.15%   | 2.08%   |
| STD                  | \$23.78              | \$25.25 | \$26.53 | 6.18%          | 5.07%   | 11.56%  |
| LTD                  | \$20.10              | \$19.95 | \$20.91 | -0.75%         | 4.81%   | 4.03%   |

Vision coverage continues to see a decrease year-over-year in premium cost. Short-term disability saw the biggest jump from 2020 to 2022 at almost 12% (\$2.75 per month, or \$33 more annually).

## Dental Plans

### EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |         |         | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021    | 2022    | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$27.28                      | \$27.91 | \$28.77 | 44.39%                          | 45.23% | 46.43% | 2.31%                          | 3.09%   | 5.47%   |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$27.75                      | \$27.61 | \$27.99 | 41.60%                          | 41.86% | 42.46% | -0.51%                         | 1.36%   | 0.84%   |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$28.30                      | \$28.14 | \$28.36 | 44.77%                          | 44.76% | 45.15% | -0.56%                         | 0.76%   | 0.20%   |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$28.12                      | \$29.19 | \$29.20 | 46.14%                          | 47.53% | 47.55% | 3.80%                          | 0.03%   | 3.83%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$26.56                      | \$27.03 | \$28.36 | 45.08%                          | 45.94% | 47.90% | 1.76%                          | 4.91%   | 6.76%   |

\*EEs = active employees

In 2022, though employers are paying a slightly higher percentage of contribution for dental premiums than last year, it works out to about less than a dollar more per month per employee on average.

## Dental Plans

### EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |         |         | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021    | 2022    | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$34.18                      | \$33.79 | \$33.21 | 55.61%                          | 54.76% | 53.59% | -1.13%                         | -1.72%  | -2.83%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$38.96                      | \$38.33 | \$37.92 | 58.40%                          | 58.11% | 57.54% | -1.63%                         | -1.06%  | -2.67%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$34.92                      | \$34.73 | \$34.45 | 55.23%                          | 55.24% | 54.85% | -0.53%                         | -0.81%  | -1.34%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$32.83                      | \$32.20 | \$32.24 | 53.86%                          | 52.44% | 52.51% | -1.90%                         | 0.10%   | -1.81%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$32.36                      | \$31.82 | \$30.84 | 54.92%                          | 54.09% | 52.09% | -1.66%                         | -3.10%  | -4.71%  |

\*EEs = active employees

The cost of employee monthly contribution for dental premiums is down across the board. While the dollar amount is less than \$0.60 on average, in a world of increasing costs, this is a pleasant surprise.

## Vision Plans

### EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021   | 2022   | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$4.26                       | \$4.37 | \$4.51 | 35.35%                          | 36.68% | 38.25% | 2.68%                          | 3.19%   | 5.95%   |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$4.26                       | \$4.35 | \$4.37 | 32.70%                          | 34.34% | 34.96% | 2.16%                          | 0.44%   | 2.60%   |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$4.46                       | \$4.41 | \$4.47 | 35.96%                          | 36.27% | 37.31% | -0.97%                         | 1.37%   | 0.38%   |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$4.53                       | \$4.68 | \$4.71 | 38.06%                          | 39.52% | 40.46% | 3.31%                          | 0.68%   | 4.02%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$4.19                       | \$4.28 | \$4.59 | 36.36%                          | 37.48% | 40.19% | 2.08%                          | 7.23%   | 9.46%   |

\*EEs = active employees

In 2022, employers contributed minimally higher dollar amounts (\$0.15 on average) to vision premiums than in 2021. And employers contribute more — to the tune of nearly 6% — than in 2020.

## Vision Plans

### EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021   | 2022   | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$7.79                       | \$7.55 | \$7.29 | 64.65%                          | 63.30% | 61.77% | -3.13%                         | -3.43%  | -6.46%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$8.76                       | \$8.30 | \$8.12 | 67.30%                          | 65.52% | 65.01% | -5.32%                         | -2.11%  | -7.32%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$7.94                       | \$7.75 | \$7.51 | 64.04%                          | 63.73% | 62.69% | -2.30%                         | -3.08%  | -5.31%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$7.37                       | \$7.16 | \$6.94 | 61.94%                          | 60.46% | 59.60% | -2.87%                         | -3.04%  | -5.82%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$7.33                       | \$7.13 | \$6.82 | 63.64%                          | 62.52% | 59.79% | -2.70%                         | -4.37%  | -6.95%  |

\*EEs = active employees

Similar to what we see in dental, vision care premiums for employees remain lower in 2022 than in 2021. An annual total of \$93.48 in 2020 now looks like \$87.48 for employees in 2022.



## Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) Plans

### EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021   | 2022   | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$7.74                       | \$7.46 | \$7.69 | 57.45%                          | 55.97% | 55.90% | -3.61%                         | 3.03%   | -0.69%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$10.41                      | \$8.27 | \$9.49 | 70.46%                          | 60.32% | 64.25% | -20.48%                        | 14.71%  | -8.78%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$7.66                       | \$8.12 | \$8.35 | 57.68%                          | 58.07% | 57.43% | 5.96%                          | 2.82%   | 8.94%   |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$7.31                       | \$7.52 | \$7.78 | 56.05%                          | 54.64% | 55.32% | 2.89%                          | 3.43%   | 6.42%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$6.69                       | \$6.87 | \$6.90 | 52.29%                          | 53.46% | 52.56% | 2.67%                          | 0.54%   | 3.23%   |

\*EEs = active employees

Employers paid slightly more this year in AD&D premiums across all employer groups with an average of \$7.69 (a 3% increase over 2021). Employer groups with 1-10 employees saw the largest increase of nearly 15%, and this segment also covers the highest percentage of contribution at 64%.

## Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) Plans

### EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021   | 2022   | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$5.74                       | \$5.83 | \$5.99 | 42.55%                          | 43.68% | 43.57% | 1.57%                          | 2.88%   | 4.49%   |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$4.36                       | \$4.71 | \$5.06 | 29.54%                          | 34.32% | 34.26% | 7.93%                          | 7.48%   | 16.00%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$5.62                       | \$5.85 | \$6.04 | 42.32%                          | 41.86% | 41.54% | 4.09%                          | 3.15%   | 7.36%   |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$5.73                       | \$6.17 | \$6.26 | 43.95%                          | 44.84% | 44.53% | 7.68%                          | 1.45%   | 9.24%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$6.10                       | \$5.98 | \$6.24 | 47.71%                          | 46.54% | 47.50% | -2.06%                         | 4.39%   | 2.24%   |

\*EEs = active employees

On the other side of AD&D employer data, employees at companies in the 1-10 segment pay nearly \$1.20 less than their counterparts at larger companies.

## Short-Term Disability (STD) Plans

### EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |         |         | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021    | 2022    | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$10.21                      | \$10.45 | \$11.31 | 42.93%                          | 41.39% | 42.62% | 2.35%                          | 8.20%   | 10.74%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$5.68                       | \$5.20  | \$5.85  | 15.27%                          | 13.91% | 14.67% | -8.49%                         | 12.46%  | 2.91%   |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$8.62                       | \$9.09  | \$9.97  | 32.82%                          | 33.68% | 36.91% | 5.48%                          | 9.74%   | 15.76%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$10.67                      | \$11.69 | \$12.53 | 49.91%                          | 51.32% | 55.79% | 9.58%                          | 7.14%   | 17.40%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$13.45                      | \$13.01 | \$13.63 | 60.83%                          | 55.71% | 46.07% | -3.26%                         | 4.74%   | 1.32%   |

\*EEs = active employees

In most segments, employers are shouldering a higher percentage of total STD premium costs (43% on average) while those costs continue to increase, too. Notably different, the largest segment now covers a lower percentage of premium for their employees, decreasing 24% since 2020.

## Short-Term Disability (STD) Plans

### EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |         |         | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021    | 2022    | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$13.57                      | \$14.61 | \$13.71 | 57.07%                          | 57.84% | 51.68% | 7.62%                          | -6.12%  | 1.03%   |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$31.51                      | \$32.18 | \$33.09 | 84.73%                          | 86.13% | 83.02% | 2.12%                          | 2.82%   | 5.00%   |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$17.63                      | \$17.90 | \$16.90 | 67.18%                          | 66.32% | 62.57% | 1.49%                          | -5.53%  | -4.13%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$10.71                      | \$11.01 | \$9.92  | 50.09%                          | 48.31% | 44.16% | 2.80%                          | -9.90%  | -7.38%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$8.66                       | \$9.54  | \$9.64  | 39.17%                          | 40.85% | 32.60% | 10.14%                         | 1.07%   | 11.32%  |

\*EEs = active employees

On average, STD premium contribution slid 6% year over year — or about \$1 — for employees. And the percentage of premium contribution dipped across the board, with the 1-10 employee segment responsible for the most and the 101-250 segment responsible for the least amount of premium.

## Long-Term Disability (LTD) Plans

### EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |         |         | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021    | 2022    | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$14.12                      | \$14.85 | \$15.84 | 70.28%                          | 74.40% | 75.75% | 5.13%                          | 6.66%   | 12.13%  |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$16.95                      | \$16.69 | \$17.87 | 55.73%                          | 57.71% | 53.62% | -1.52%                         | 7.10%   | 5.47%   |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$14.23                      | \$16.09 | \$16.26 | 61.75%                          | 70.91% | 68.54% | 13.03%                         | 1.06%   | 14.23%  |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$14.87                      | \$15.18 | \$15.81 | 76.14%                          | 74.58% | 77.71% | 2.11%                          | 4.14%   | 6.33%   |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$13.74                      | \$13.97 | \$14.32 | 73.39%                          | 79.53% | 80.38% | 1.66%                          | 2.51%   | 4.21%   |

\*EEs = active employees

Similar to what we see with short-term disability, larger companies contribute more toward long-term disability compared to smaller companies, although the cost is cheaper for these larger organizations, too.

## Long-Term Disability (LTD) Plans

### EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS — MONTHLY

| Companies Using Ease | Monthly Premium Contribution |         |         | Percent of Premium Contribution |        |        | Percent Change in Contribution |         |         |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | 2020                         | 2021    | 2022    | 2020                            | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-21                        | 2021-22 | 2020-22 |
| All                  | \$5.97                       | \$4.99  | \$5.12  | 29.72%                          | 25.01% | 24.48% | -16.47%                        | 2.56%   | -14.33% |
| 1-10 EEs             | \$13.46                      | \$11.27 | \$12.79 | 44.27%                          | 38.98% | 38.37% | -16.28%                        | 13.45%  | -5.01%  |
| 11-50 EEs            | \$8.82                       | \$6.82  | \$7.02  | 38.25%                          | 30.05% | 29.58% | -22.67%                        | 2.89%   | -20.44% |
| 51-100 EEs           | \$4.66                       | \$4.68  | \$4.50  | 23.86%                          | 22.98% | 22.14% | 0.38%                          | -3.67%  | -3.30%  |
| 101-250 EEs          | \$4.98                       | \$3.47  | \$3.40  | 26.61%                          | 19.76% | 19.08% | -30.36%                        | -2.06%  | -31.80% |

\*EEs = active employees

In 2022, employees are contributing a lower percentage of monthly LTD premium across the board, even though those costs continue to rise on average. The largest segment pays just over \$40 annually in premiums, while the smallest segment pays just over \$150.





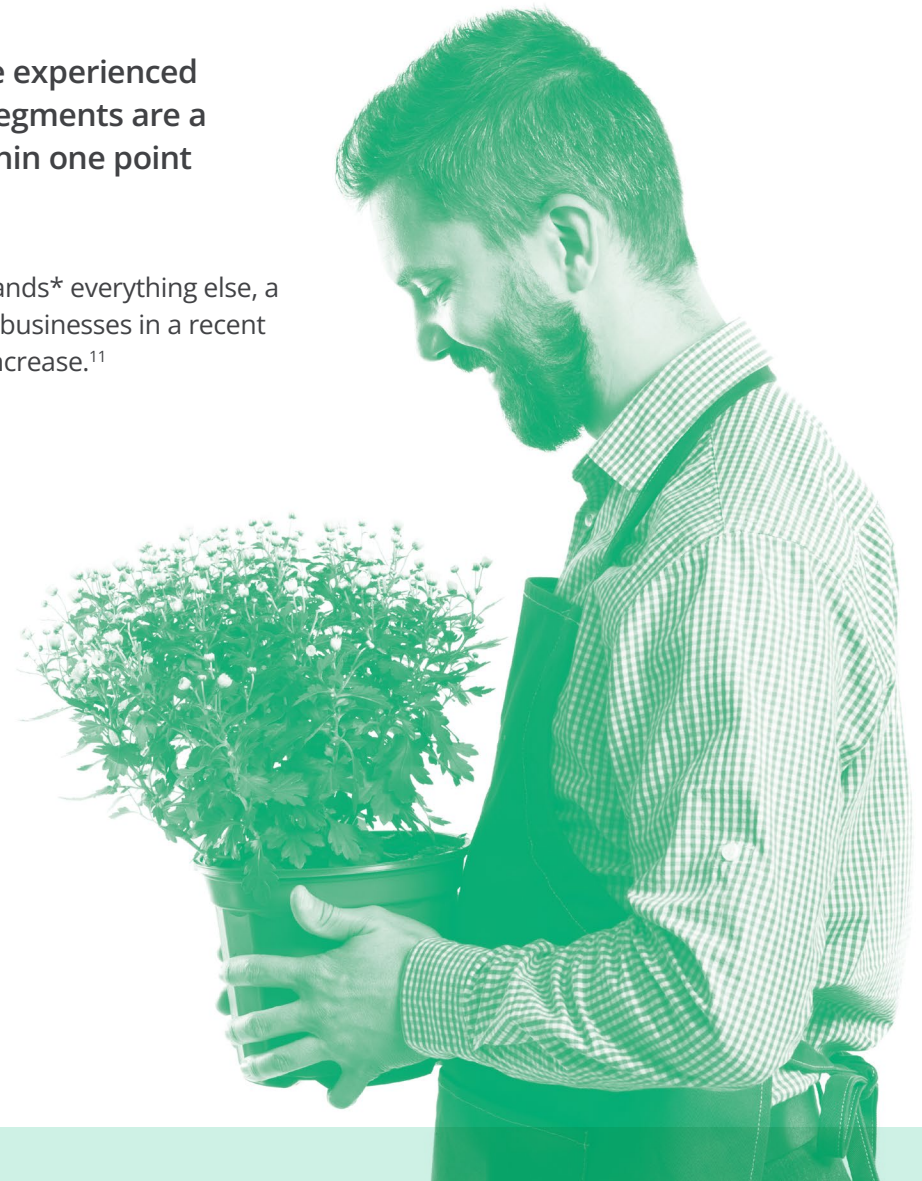
**SMB**  
**Growth**  
*ease*

## SMB Growth

Sometimes, flatlining can be a good thing. In 2022, groups in Ease experienced a nominal increase in the average number of employees. While segments are a mixed bag when comparing 2022 to 2020, all fluctuations are within one point when looking at a three-year trend line.

With mounting macroeconomic pressures and a barrage of seemingly \*waves hands\* everything else, a little glimmer of growth goes a long way. And that optimism is shared with small businesses in a recent Bank of America report: 64% of small-business owners expect their revenue to increase.<sup>11</sup>

11. Bank of America, [2022 Small Business Owner Report](#).



## Average SMB Size

### AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACTIVE EMPLOYEES

| Companies Using Ease | Active Employees |        |        | Percent Change |
|----------------------|------------------|--------|--------|----------------|
|                      | 2020             | 2021   | 2022   | 2020-22        |
| All                  | 31.70            | 31.65  | 31.94  | 0.76%          |
| 1-10 EEs             | 4.79             | 4.82   | 4.90   | 0.14%          |
| 11-50 EEs            | 24.78            | 24.39  | 24.67  | -0.45%         |
| 51-100 EEs           | 70.08            | 69.66  | 69.70  | -0.55%         |
| 101-250 EEs          | 146.28           | 147.04 | 147.11 | 0.57%          |

\*EEs = active employees

While all segments have seen a small uptick in active employees from 2021 to 2022, all segments have been under one point change either direction from 2020. Outside of Ease, SMBs experienced a net job loss of 3 million,<sup>12</sup> or a shrinking of 5% of the total workforce.

12. U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, [2022 Small Business Profile Infographic](#)

## Companies Using Ease

### GROWTH TRAJECTORIES SINCE 2019

| Companies Using Ease                   | 1-10 EEs<br>2022 | 11-50 EEs<br>2022 | 51-100 EEs<br>2022 | 101-250 EEs<br>2022 | 251+ EEs<br>2022 |
|--|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Of businesses with 1-10 EEs in 2019    |                  | <b>16.26%</b>     | <b>0.66%</b>       | <b>0.24%</b>        | <b>0.09%</b>     |
| Of businesses with 11-50 EEs in 2019   |                  |                   | <b>8.49%</b>       | <b>0.91%</b>        | <b>0.09%</b>     |
| Of businesses with 51-100 EEs in 2019  |                  |                   |                    | <b>3.60%</b>        | <b>0.2%</b>      |
| Of businesses with 101-250 EEs in 2019 |                  |                   |                    |                     | <b>9.9%</b>      |

\*EEs = active employees

Ease looked at companies that have been using our system since 2019. Overall, 13.29% of companies in Ease grew, while 7.68% shrank over the same period.

#### Of the companies between 1-10 employees in 2019:

- **16.26%** now employ 11-50
- **0.66%** now employ 51-100
- **0.24%** now employ 101-250
- **0.09%** now employ 251+

#### Of the companies between 11-50 employees in 2019:

- **8.49%** now employ 51-100
- **0.91%** now employ 101-250
- **0.09%** now employ 251+

#### Of the companies between 51-100 employees in 2019:

- **3.60%** now employ 101-250
- **0.02%** now employ 251+

#### Of the companies between 101-250 employees in 2019:

- **9.9%** now employ 251+





# **SPECIAL REPORT: Recession- Proofing Your Business**

*ease*



## SPECIAL REPORT: Recession-Proofing Your Business

Ease's survey of 1,000 U.S.-based employers and employees<sup>13</sup> gives you an **in** on what to **share out** with your clients.

Even a hint of economic disarray can drive business decision-makers into panic mode. As a broker, you can be a steadying force, ready with options backed by data to bring some stability and calm to the latest news alert. Benefits remain a big line item for employers and are increasingly important for employees. You're the tightrope walker balancing the needs of both — and we're your launch platform.

13. 2023 Employer and Employee Sentiment Survey, fielded in January 2023 to 500 employers and 500 employees of businesses with fewer than 1,000 employees in the U.S.

## Give Them What They Want

Employers (ERs) and employees (EEs) share what's on their wish lists for OE 2023.

### Top benefits priorities in 2023:

- Offer employees more affordable options



- Save money



- Offer more benefit options



### Current benefits:

- **73% of employers** believe their employees are at least somewhat happy.
- **67% of employees** say they are at least somewhat happy.

**71%** of both employers AND employees are somewhat or very likely to shop for benefits according to their lifestyle.

### Increase happiness:

- Believe more benefits options would increase happiness



- Believe lower premiums would increase happiness



- Believe additional perks would increase happiness



### Extra lifestyle benefits:

- Want transportation benefits



- Want childcare benefits



- Want travel insurance benefits



- Wants financial planning and credit support





## Be Irreplaceable

More than half of small businesses report cutting costs over the last year.<sup>14</sup> Don't let your services be on the chopping block.

Employer expectations for year-round support continue to increase, too. In fact, only 6% of employers surveyed think their broker is needed **only** during open enrollment. That means a remarkable **94%** expect consultation, innovation, and ongoing management support year-round. Three out of four agencies know they will need to provide more options to their groups this year.<sup>15</sup>

**78% of agencies** anticipate their groups wanting MORE insurance options this upcoming open enrollment season:

- **42.49%** will offer more worksite benefits options (like accident, life, or critical illness).
- **33.38%** will offer more health insurance plan options.
- **32.63%** will offer mental health benefits.
- **29.14%** will offer wellness resources.
- **20.18%** will offer a telemedicine option.

# 37.52%

**of agencies offered more support to clients this year than last year by helping them onboard new hires online, conducting benefits elections remotely, and providing compliance support.**

14. Forbes Advisor, [Small Business Statistics of 2023](#)

15. Ease, [2022 Open Enrollment Readiness Report](#)

## Make It Easy

No one wants to row upriver, especially when it feels like a constant deluge. While benefits are used year-round, open enrollment acts as the confluence of expectations, realities, and operational rapids. As a broker advisor, you're there to calm the waters.

**30.2% of employers** experienced too many paper forms during open enrollment.

- **23%** experienced complicated benefits offerings.
- **22%** had missing signatures.
- **20%** had unanswered benefits questions.

**Changes employers want** to make for open enrollment this year:

- **37%** want to offer more benefits,
- **31%** want a simpler open enrollment process.
- **26%** want fewer paper forms.

**27% of employers** said their employees requested more education around benefits offerings.

**40.83% of employers** note payroll integration is a **key feature** when considering a new technology solution.

# 73.77%

**of employers** believe benefits administration technology is a higher or equal priority going into this year's open enrollment.

And yet **only 30.70%** actually report using a technology solution for enrollment currently.<sup>15</sup>

## So How Can You Do All of That?

👉, we're Ease.

Bring efficiency, organization, and transparency to your current book of business while future-proofing your success in the years to come. With Ease, access benefits administration software to support groups of all sizes, benefits designs, and objectives.

**Bonus: Ease doesn't stop after open enrollment closes.** As an all-in-one digital benefits solution, you can develop new ways to increase your commissions by offering voluntary benefits, HR tools, TPA connections, ACA compliance, and payroll integrations all while managing mid-year changes for your clients with one login.

**Ready to learn more about what Ease can do for you and your business?**

# 56.87%

**of brokers surveyed reported winning business over the past year. When diving deeper, an impressive 80.04% of identified Ease users won new business while for non-Ease users, that win column drops to just 11.55%.<sup>15</sup>**



**Visit [ease.com](https://ease.com) to schedule a demo.**  
**Because benefits matter (and so do you).**



*ease*

Because benefits matter.

RP-InsightsReport x