The Partnership for New York City surveyed major employers between August 9 and August 20, 2021, to develop projections on how long Manhattan's one million office workers will continue to work remotely.

According to survey results, 23% of Manhattan office workers have returned to the workplace. Employers expect that 41% of office workers will return by September 30. This is still significantly below estimates from a previous Partnership survey in late May, when employers projected that 62% of employees would return to the office by the end of September. By January 2022, a full 76% of office employees are expected to return to the office. The new survey also finds that 81% of New York City-based employees of the companies represented in the survey are fully vaccinated.

**Delta variant has caused many employers to delay return-to-office plans**

Q: Have you delayed return-to-office plans due to the recent increases in COVID-19 cases/rise of the Delta variant?

- No: 54%
- Yes: 44%
- Still Evaluating: 2%
The Partnership survey of employers found:

- 23% of Manhattan office employees have returned to the workplace as of late August, up from 12% in late May.

- Employers expect that 41% of employees will return by the end of September 2021—down from May estimates of 62%—and 76% of office workers are expected to return by the end of January 2022.

- 44% of employers have delayed their return-to-office plans because of the recent rise in COVID-19 cases due to the Delta variant, 54% have not delayed their return-to-office plans and 2% have not yet determined whether to delay.
  - Among employers that have delayed their return-to-office plans, 42% postponed for one month or less, 18% for between two and three months, 10% for three months or more, and 28% are evaluating on an ongoing basis.

- Employers in every industry reported increased office occupancy between May and August, with notable increases in the following:
  - 85% of real estate employees are currently in the office, up from 70% in May.
  - 29% of financial services employees are currently in the office, up from 14% in May.
  - 26% of consulting employees are currently in the office, up from 9% in May.

- Large employers (5,000+ employees) contributed most to the summer return to office, jumping from 8% in late May to 25% as of late August. Among firms with fewer than 500 employees, over one-third (34%) of office workers have returned, up from 24% in May.

- Consistent with past survey findings, the vast majority (70%) of employers are adopting a rotating or “hybrid” office schedule in which employees can work remotely for part of the week; only 26% of employers are requiring employees to be in the office full time; 5% will not require employees to return to the office at all.

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**Employer approach to return to office**

- **Return to office not required**: 5%
- **Full time in office**: 26%
- **Hybrid model**: 70%

*Note: Total exceeds 100% due to rounding*
The Partnership asked employers about vaccination and office policies:

- 58% of companies that disclosed their vaccination policy plan to require that all employees are vaccinated for COVID-19 (with appropriate exemptions) and 44% plan to require that all office guests are vaccinated. Thirty-seven percent of companies reported not having a vaccination policy. Several employers noted that regular testing is required for unvaccinated employees.

- Of employers who provided information on office protocols for unvaccinated employees, 63% say they will restrict unvaccinated employees’ attendance at in-person meetings, 57% will restrict attendance at client meetings and 43% will restrict business travel for unvaccinated employees.

- 49% of employers will require all returning employees to wear masks while in the office, 32% will mandate masks only for unvaccinated employees and 19% of employers will not have a mask mandate.

The Partnership asked employers for estimates of vaccination rates of their employees:

- 81% of New York City-based workers are vaccinated, according to responses from companies that disclosed vaccination estimates (companies were asked for vaccination rates for all employees, not just Manhattan office employees).

The Partnership also asked employers whether they supported the city mandate requiring proof of vaccination for indoor dining and other activities:

- The overwhelming majority (94%) of employers support the recent city mandate that requires customers to provide proof they have received at least one vaccine dose in order to enter indoor dining, fitness or entertainment facilities.

Additional information:

- The majority of surveyed employers have offices in Midtown West (38%), Midtown East (33%) or the Financial District (16%).

- The majority of respondents are in financial services (36%), real estate (17%), law (11%), media (6%), tech (5%) and consulting (4%).

- The Partnership published its initial survey conducted in late May in their report A Call for Action and Collaboration and released subsequent surveys in August and October 2020 and March and June 2021.