

Work/Life Services and Employee Well-Being:

Insights from 59,137 EAP Work/Life Cases (2020–2024)

A Research Brief for HR and Benefits Leaders

OVERVIEW

A new landmark five-year study of **59,137 Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Work/Life cases across 4,981 employers** offers one of the most detailed looks at how employees use EAPs for real-world issues. The findings reveal that **EAP use isn't just about mental health counseling**—it's about practical life challenges that directly affect employees' productivity, focus, and financial stability.

Across every age group, industry, and employer size, employees reached out most for **legal, financial, and everyday life assistance**—core stressors that, if left unaddressed, can contribute to mental health issues that disrupt performance and increase absenteeism.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Everyday Problems Drive EAP Use

Employees used EAP Work/Life services for:



Legal and financial concerns alone accounted for nearly three-quarters of all EAP Work/Life cases, showing that employees' underlying issues are often non-clinical but have direct mental health and productivity impacts.

2. EAPs Serve a Broad Range of Workers

The study analyzed usage data from nearly 5,000 organizations in diverse sectors:

Top three industries:

Education (28%)
Healthcare (25%)
Government (17%)

Median employer size:



Average user age:



3. Different Life Stages, Different Needs

Patterns of EAP use aligned closely with life stages:

- **Younger workers** (under 40) most often sought help with **financial issues, childcare, and personal assistance**.
- **Older workers** (50s and 60s) more often needed **legal or eldercare support**.
- These patterns mirror the evolving stressors that accompany career and family transitions, reinforcing the value of EAPs that address whole-life well-being.

4. Pandemic and Time Trends

Despite expectations that COVID-19 would change usage patterns, **EAP use remained consistent** across the five years studied (2020–2024). We found 30% of cases occurred during the pandemic and 70% occurred after. The types of issues for which employees sought help did not change significantly during or after COVID-19. This stability suggests that **everyday stressors—legal, financial, and life assistance—are ongoing drivers of help-seeking behavior**, not just crisis-driven events.

5. Employer Size and Industry Matter—But Only Slightly

While small differences appeared by employer type, large organizations (20,000+ employees) saw greater use of convenience/personal assistance services. Transportation, financial, and government employees were most likely to seek legal help. Overall, however, the findings showed remarkably consistent use patterns across industries and employer sizes—evidence that **EAP Work/Life services need to meet universal employee needs**.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HR AND BENEFITS LEADERS

Whole Health EAPs Address the Underlying Causes of Work Disruption

The data reinforces what HR leaders often see firsthand: **employees bring their whole selves to work**. Legal disputes, financial strain, childcare challenges, and family care obligations can all undermine engagement and performance. Whole Health EAPs take a multifaceted approach to care through a thorough clinical assessment of the mental health issue and its root cause. By offering access to specialized help for these everyday pressures, EAPs that offer robust whole health solutions prevent larger problems—from stress-related illnesses to absenteeism and turnover.

A Whole Health EAP Is a Strategic Investment

- **ROI through timely intervention:** Helping employees resolve practical life problems early reduces costly downstream effects such as lost time, distraction, and workplace errors.
- **Equitable support:** Services like legal, financial, and caregiving assistance are relevant to every demographic, helping employers reach workers who may never seek traditional mental health counseling.
- **Retention and resilience:** Employees who experience real-world problem solving through their EAP report higher satisfaction, trust in their employer, and a greater sense of stability.



DATA VALIDATES THE MODERN EAP MODEL

This research represents one of the largest EAP Work/Life analyses ever conducted. It validates the **whole health EAP model**, showing that when programs integrate **mental health counseling with financial, legal, and everyday life support**, they better align with how employees experience stress—and how employers can drive measurable results.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

FINDING	MEANING FOR EMPLOYERS
51% of EAP Work/Life cases were legal issues	Legal stress is a top productivity disruptor—access to legal help reduces distractions and absenteeism.
23% were financial concerns	Financial well-being drives emotional well-being; early financial help prevents crisis escalation.
21% were personal life assistance (convenience, childcare, eldercare)	Time and family support improves retention and reduces burnout, especially for caregivers.
Used consistently across industries and employer sizes	Demonstrates universal value—Whole Health EAPs meet needs across all workforce segments.
Use stayed stable through the pandemic	Everyday stressors persist regardless of external crises; Whole Health EAPs provide constant, reliable relief.

CONCLUSION

This five-year analysis offers clear evidence that **EAPs are not just counseling programs—they're productivity tools** that address the life challenges employees face every day.

For brokers and HR leaders, the takeaway is straightforward:

Investing in a Whole Health EAP delivers measurable value—supporting workforce well-being, reducing stress-related costs, and strengthening organizational resilience.

