

2024 Wage & Benefit Report

Industry Summary





Introduction

Registered Veterinary Technologists (RVTs) are integral to the delivery of high-quality and accessible veterinary care in Alberta. As front-line professionals, they bring technical expertise, compassionate care, and operational support to every aspect of veterinary practice. However, as the veterinary profession continues to face workforce shortages, particularly in RVT roles, there is an urgent need to understand and address the factors impacting RVT recruitment, retention and professional fulfilment.

In 2024, the Alberta Veterinary Technologist Association (ABVTA) conducted its annual wage and benefits survey to gain deeper insight into the experiences and needs of RVTs across the province. These findings, along with earlier data from the 2021 Veterinary Professional Workforce Study and the 2022 RVT Compensation Review, reinforce that poor compensation, limited career advancement, and the emotional and physical toll of the job are key contributors to Alberta's RVT attrition rate of 8%.

This Employer Summary shares practical, real-world feedback directly from RVTs working in a variety of workplaces. It highlights areas where employers can make meaningful, often simple, changes that improve job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and strengthen team dynamics. From compensation and benefits to leadership, scheduling, utilization, and culture, RVTs are sharing what they need to stay, grow, and thrive in their careers.

While many employers are already making efforts to improve conditions, these insights serve as a roadmap to further action. When RVTs feel valued, respected, and supported, the result is better patient outcomes, more efficient teams, and long-term stability in your practice. For additional strategies, please refer to the Industry & Employer Recommendations outlined in the 2022 Compensation Review by clicking [here](#).



2024 Findings

The 2024 survey was distributed to all ABVTA members and received 801 responses, providing a strong representation of the workforce across Alberta. The findings shared in this report reflect key themes emerging from the annual survey, including compensation such as wages and additional benefits. Workplace-related information is also highlighted, including insights into retention, why RVTs choose to stay with or leave their employer, how their skills and knowledge are being utilized in practice, and opportunities to better support their full scope of practice and experience. The report also summarizes suggested practice improvements to meaningfully enhance the professional lives of RVTs.

Compensation

Competitive compensation remains a key factor in RVT satisfaction and retention. The 2024 survey highlights ongoing trends in wages, overtime, performance-based increases, and overall benefit offerings.

Wages

The average reported hourly wage for RVTs across Alberta is \$29.66, reflecting a modest increase from 2023. While this upward trend is encouraging, wage data by experience level continues to show inconsistencies.

- New graduates report average starting wages of \$22.89 (less than one year), \$24.55 (one year), and \$26.60 (two years of experience), which align with the 2022 recommendation of starting new RVTs at a minimum of \$5 above Alberta's minimum wage.
- Wages increase with years of experience; however, similar to 2022, a notable dip appears at the 11–12 year mark, with average wages dropping to \$29.68—roughly equivalent to the provincial average.
- Given the average respondent has 9.9 years of experience, this suggests experienced RVTs may not be compensated in accordance with their tenure or skills, potentially impacting long-term retention.

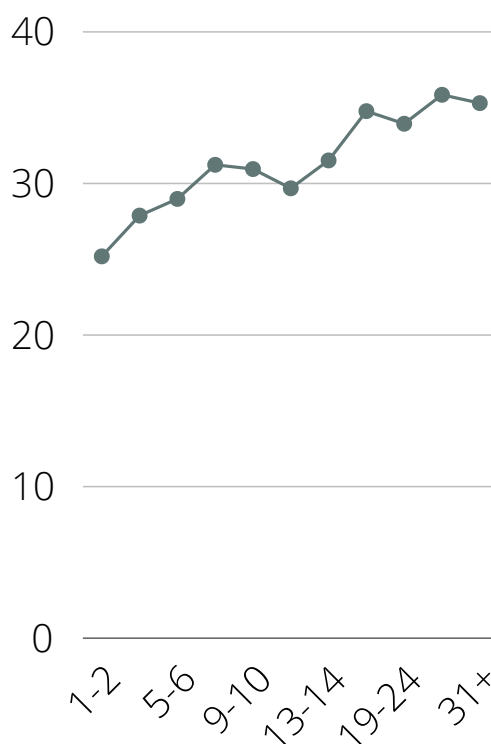
Starting Wage for New Grads

\$22.89 (<1 yr)

\$24.55 (1 yr)

\$26.60 (2 yrs)

Hourly Wage vs. Years of Experience





6.5%

Average wage increase
received by RVTs

21%

of RVTs report never having a
performance review

20%

of respondents have no health
benefits from their employer

58%

of respondents express
dissatisfaction with their
benefits package

Wage Increases

Forty percent of RVTs did not receive a wage increase in the past 12 months. Among those who did, the average increase was \$1.84 per hour, or approximately 6.5%.

While most RVTs take part in annual performance reviews, 21% report never having one. Additionally, many RVTs are unsure whether their reviews are connected to wage increases. This highlights an opportunity for employers to clarify performance processes and make merit-based compensation more transparent.

Overtime

A significant 77% of RVTs report working overtime, with most working 10 hours or less per month. Alarming, 8% say they receive no compensation for these additional hours. Ensuring overtime pay is provided consistently is essential for demonstrating respect for employees' time and preventing burnout.

Additional Compensation & Benefits

Most RVTs receive an extended compensation package that includes some form of health benefits, most commonly through a shared employer-employee plan. However, nearly 20% of respondents report receiving no health benefits at all.

Other reported perks include pet boarding, meals, gym memberships, fuel allowances, profit sharing, and pet insurance support.

Despite these offerings, 58% of RVTs expressed dissatisfaction with their benefits package. The most frequently requested improvements include health spending accounts, financial benefits, paid time off or flexibility, childcare support, and pet insurance discounts.

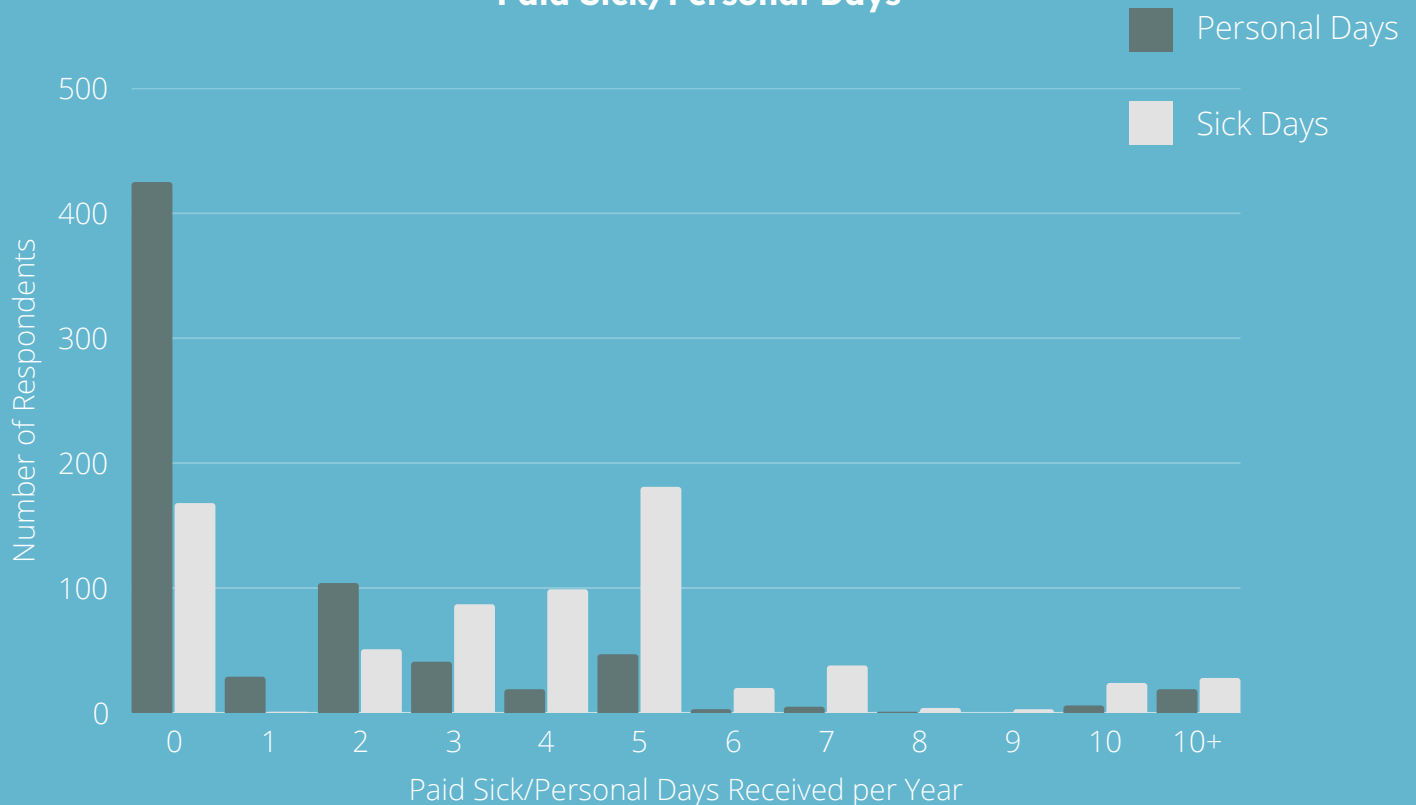
Most Common (>75%)

- Professional Registration (ABVMA & ABVTA Fees)
- CE allowance
- Clothing/uniform allowance
- Discounts on veterinary services & pet food

Least Common (<25%)

- Disability coverage
- Retirement savings plans
- Health spending accounts
- Life insurance
- Employee assistance or wellness programs

Paid Sick/Personal Days



Professional Development Support

RVTs are required to complete 20 hours of continuing professional development each year. Just over half of respondents receive \$500 or more annually to support their CE. However, many shared that access to professional development is inconsistent and often dependent on management discretion or handled on a case-by-case basis.

Personal Days & Flexibility

Flexibility is increasingly important to employees, especially as the majority of RVTs identify as female and often balance professional responsibilities with family and personal commitments.

Despite this, 24% of respondents report having no paid sick days, and 61% receive no paid personal days. Offering even limited flexibility and paid time off can significantly support employee wellbeing, reduce absenteeism, and improve retention.

Workplace Experience & Engagement

Understanding how RVTs experience their workplaces and how engaged they feel in their roles is essential to improving retention, morale, and practice performance. The 2024 survey asked RVTs to share insights on how long they've remained with their current employer, why they choose to stay or consider leaving, and how well their skills and training are being used in practice. The findings highlight both the challenges and the opportunities for employers to create more supportive, engaging and sustainable work environments.

Employer Retention

Retention continues to be a concern in veterinary practices. Seventy-one percent of RVTs surveyed have been with their current employer for five years or less, and 30% indicated they plan to leave within the next two years. The most common reasons for wanting to leave include feeling undervalued, experiencing toxic workplace culture, poor management practices, insufficient compensation and benefits, and long or impractical commutes.

Alternatively, when asked why they choose to stay, RVTs cited a range of positive factors: supportive and respectful workplace environments, fair compensation and benefits, healthy work-life balance, strong team relationships, access to professional development, high standards of care, management support, lifestyle fit, and unique practice opportunities. These findings show that meaningful retention is achievable when key workplace conditions are met.

30%

of respondents plan to leave
their employer within the next
two years



RVT Engagement

Seventy percent of respondents reported feeling they are utilized to their full potential, which is an encouraging increase from 67% in 2023. However, many RVTs still shared specific opportunities to enhance their engagement and professional fulfillment.

Opportunities for Greater Engagement

RVTs identified numerous ways employers can better support their growth, increase satisfaction, and strengthen veterinary teams:

- **Enable full scope of practice:** Allow RVTs to perform tasks they are legally and professionally trained to do, such as technical appointments, dental radiographs, anesthesia, triaging, and wellness exams.
- **Build trust and collaboration:** Strengthen veterinarian–RVT relationships by promoting shared responsibilities and reducing micromanagement.
- **Expand specialized roles:** Provide opportunities for advanced CE and practice areas such as nutrition consults, large animal care, diagnostics, rehabilitation, and surgical support.
- **Focus on RVT-specific work:** Adjust scheduling to prioritize clinical tasks, minimizing administrative or non-technical responsibilities.
- **Support professional growth:** Offer structured mentorship*, training pathways, career development opportunities, and recognition of individual skills and contributions.
- **Support client communication roles:** Expand RVT involvement in education, weight loss consultations, and behavior counseling.
- **Address systemic challenges:** Improve staffing ratios, update management practices, reduce non-technical responsibilities such as reception work or cleaning duties, establish clear protocols, and ensure access to tools, equipment, and training.
- **Prioritize well-being:** Tailor roles to individual strengths, provide manageable workloads, and promote work-life balance to prevent burnout.

* ABVMA/ABVTA Mentorship Checklists are available as a member resource for download in the ABVMA and ABVTA Member Portals.

Underutilized Skills

Despite their training and experience, many RVTs report that key skills are not being regularly used in practice. Better leveraging these abilities could improve job satisfaction, retention, and clinic efficiency.

Clinical & Technical Skills

Radiology, cytology, catheterization, cystocentesis, anesthesia, emergency medicine, dental radiographs, and advanced surgical support.

Large Animal Expertise

Bovine pregnancy checking, artificial insemination, equine rehabilitation, and advanced large animal care.

Client Education

Counseling in nutrition, weight loss, behavior, and preventive care.

Lab & Research

In-house diagnostics, cytology interpretation, manual CBCs, and use of diagnostic equipment.



Practice Improvement

RVTs were asked to share 1-2 changes that would meaningfully improve their professional lives. Their responses provide clear, practical suggestions that can enhance job satisfaction, support retention, and optimize team performance. These suggestions not only enhance day-to-day workplace experiences, but also have the potential to improve retention, morale, and overall team performance.

Staffing & Workload Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase staffing levels of all staff to reduce workload and improve efficiency.• Ensure all team members, including support staff, are adequately trained and competent.• Distribute workload fairly and support effective team management practices*.
Management & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve communication between leadership and staff.• Lead a culture of openness and respect.• Address toxic behaviors and ensure staff concerns are taken seriously.• Avoid micromanagement and support autonomy and trust in RVT roles.• Appoint a dedicated practice manager or HR lead to support team operations.
Competitive Compensation & Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase wages to reflect responsibilities, experience and cost of living.• Introduce or improve benefit packages, including paid personal and sick days, health spending accounts, and retirement savings plans.• Offer profit-sharing, bonuses, and overtime compensation.• Offer allowances for professional development, uniforms and wellness programs.• Recognize overtime and provide flexible scheduling to support work-life balance.
Equipment & Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replace or repair broken equipment promptly to avoid long waiting times for essential tools.• Invest in updated and functional anesthetic monitoring equipment, x-ray and ultrasound machines, lab analyzers, oxygen incubators, and ergonomic workstations.• Expand or renovate clinics to accommodate staff and clients, including additional exam rooms, private break rooms, or designated cat/dog spaces.

Continuing Education & Professional Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a CE/PD allowance and increased access to in-house training. • Support RVTs pursuing advanced certifications or training in specialized areas like anesthesia, behaviour, nutrition, large animal care, and diagnostics. • Create structured mentorship and performance review processes that promote professional development.
Work-Life Balance & Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff receive regular and protected breaks, including lunch breaks. • Offer flexible schedules, part-time options, or alternate shifts to accommodate family, health, and personal needs. • Provide mental health days or wellness allowances.
Workplace Culture & Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and support a positive, inclusive, and respectful team environment. • Show appreciation through recognition, team-building events, snacks/meals, or small workplace perks. • Reduce workplace tension and support mental health by encouraging a healthy work-life balance and conflict resolution.
Skill Utilization, Scope of Practice & RVT Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow RVTs to work to their full legal and trained scope, including anesthesia, diagnostics, client education, and emergency care. • Reduce non-technical tasks (e.g., cleaning, reception) so RVTs can focus on their core responsibilities. • Clearly define expectations and job roles to minimize confusion and promote consistency across the team.

*The ABVMA/ABVTA WorkPack is a professional retention toolkit dedicated to high functioning teams in veterinary medicine. Please visit www.workpack.abvma.ca for more information





Conclusion

The findings from the 2024 ABVTA Wage and Benefit Survey underscore the critical role that compensation, workplace culture, and meaningful engagement of RVTs in practice play in job satisfaction, engagement, and retention. While many employers are taking steps in the right direction, the data highlights clear areas for improvement, particularly in addressing wage gaps, investing in modern equipment and professional development, and ensuring RVTs are empowered and supported to work to their full scope of practice.

Improving the experience of RVTs is not only a matter of employee satisfaction, but also essential to the sustainability and success of veterinary practices across Alberta. RVTs want to stay in this profession. They are passionate, capable, and eager to contribute. What they need in return is support, respect, and workplaces that allow them to thrive.

We encourage all employers to reflect on these findings, review your internal practices, and take action to support your RVTs in meaningful ways. Small changes can have a lasting impact on team well-being, patient care, and long-term workforce stability.