

Fast Facts from EBRI

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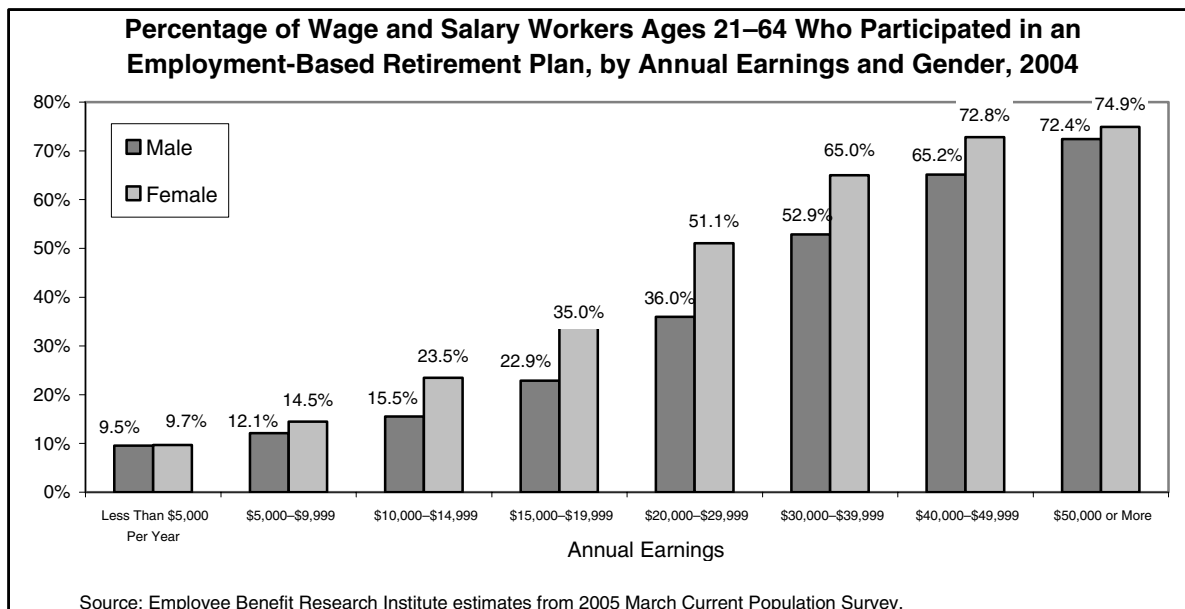
Men, Women and Retirement Plan Participation

WASHINGTON—Is there any difference in the level of retirement plan participation between men and women?

Yes, but very little overall, a study by the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute found. Still, the study did show the overall difference between women and men to be misleading because in most cases similarly situated women actually are *more* likely to participate than men. The study notes that “while the overall percentage of females participating in a plan was lower than that of males, the retirement plan participation gender gap is closing, and when controlling for work status or earnings the female participation level surpasses that of males.”

Here are the key points:

- Among *all* wage and salary workers ages 21–64, women participated in a retirement plan at a slightly lower level (47.2 percent) than males did (49.4 percent).
- Among full-time, full-year workers of the same ages, females had a higher level of participation (58.2 percent) in a plan than men did (55.4 percent).
- Across each of the worker status categories (full-time, part-time, full-year, and part-year) women were more likely to participate in a retirement plan than men.
- Within each of the earnings levels, the proportion of women participating in a retirement plan was higher than for men (see chart below).



The figures (using 2004 Census Bureau data) are for participation in either a defined benefit or defined contribution plan. The full study is in the October 2005 *EBRI Issue Brief*, “Employment-Based Retirement Plan Participation: Geographic Differences and Trends,” available on the Internet at www.ebri.org/pdf/EBRI_IB_10-2005.pdf

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