Pension and Annuity Income: Gender Differences

WASHINGTON—What percentage of men and women over age 50 receive retirement annuities and employment-based pension income? Are workers in the private sector or public sector more like to receive such income?

Overall, about one-quarter of men and about 18 percent of women over age 50 receive pensions or annuities, data show. Private-sector recipients over 50 are more likely to get these benefits than their counterparts in the public sector, but public-sector recipients get larger payments. The January 2008 EBRI Notes, published by the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), answers these and other questions about the characteristics of those who received annuity and/or pension income in 2006.

Men over Age 50 (in 2006)
- Total receiving pensions, annuities: 25.1 percent
- Mean (average) annual income for male recipients: $19,062
- Median* annual income for male recipients: $14,280
- Private-sector male recipients: 15.6 percent
  - Mean annual income/private-sector men: $14,569
  - Median annual income/private-sector men: $10,800
- Public-sector male recipients: 8.4 percent
  - Mean annual income/public-sector men: $26,185
  - Median annual income/public-sector men: $22,000

Women over Age 50 (in 2006)
- Total receiving pensions, annuities: 17.8 percent
- Mean (average) annual income for female recipients: $12,971
- Median annual income for female recipients: $7,848
- Private-sector female recipients: 10.0 percent
  - Mean annual income/private-sector women: $9,320
  - Median annual income/private-sector women: $5,000
- Public-sector female recipients: 6.8 percent
  - Mean annual income/public-sector women: $17,378
  - Median annual income/public-sector women: $12,348

Discussion Points
- Gender is a particularly strong factor in retirement annuity and/or employment-based pension income recipiency. Women age 50 and over in 2006 are part of a cohort who, on average, spent fewer years in the labor force than younger cohorts.
- While fewer individuals age 50 and over received pension income from a public-sector plan than from a private-sector plan, the median amount an individual received from a public-sector plan was considerably larger than that received by a private-sector plan recipient.
- The likelihood of receiving annuity and/or pension income increases with age until the oldest age group (age 80 and over), where data show a lower percentage receiving such income.