WASHINGTON—How do such factors as family income, education, gender, and race affect participation in a 401(k)-type retirement plan? What are the average contributions for 401(k)-type plan participants?

The answers to these and other questions appear in the May 2008 EBRI Notes, available at www.ebri.org. Here are some of the findings:

**Participation:** The proportion of workers ages 21–64 participating in a 401(k)-type plan was 33.1 percent in 2005, up from 24.1 percent in 1996.

**Family income:** Participation in a 401(k)-type plan increased with a worker’s family income. Among workers with family incomes below $10,000, 7.4 percent participated in 2005, compared with 45.2 percent of workers with family incomes of $75,000 or more.

**Education:** Participation also increased with education. Participation in 2005 increased from 10.9 percent of workers without a high school diploma to 50.4 percent of workers with a graduate degree.

**Gender:** Men and women had virtually the same level of participation in 2005: 33.1 percent for men, 33.0 percent for women.

**Race:** White workers (36.8 percent) were the most likely to participate, followed by other (31.6 percent), black (27.0 percent), and Hispanic (19.0 percent). The numbers are for 2005.

**Contributions:** The mean (average) annual contribution for workers ages 21–64 making a contribution to a 401(k)-type plan increased from about $3,728 in 1996 to $4,274 in 2005, in 2005 dollars. Mean contributions increased with age and educational attainment. Men ($4,949) had higher mean contributions than women ($3,540).

**Maximum contribution:** The percentage of workers making a contribution at the maximum dollar amount allowed under Internal Revenue Service regulations rose from 3.2 percent in 1996 to 8.9 percent in 2005. Men (11.7 percent) were more likely than women (6.0 percent) to make the maximum contribution.