

EBRI Databook on Employee Benefits

Chapter 4:

Retirement Annuity and Employment-Based Retirement Income

This chapter looks at the percentage of Americans ages 50 or older who have employment-based pension or annuity income. Furthermore, the average and the median levels of this income are presented.

The data for the basis of this chapter is the March supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS)—the most widely available and detailed source for income provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. **However, there is controversy surrounding the validity of the March CPS data in relation to its information about pension income and total income of the older population.**

Note: The data in this chapter were tabulated from the March Current Population Survey, conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. Of all datasets reporting income of the older population, the March CPS allows for the most detailed breakouts of individual incomes. However, there has been controversy about March CPS data in relation to the underreporting of certain types of income, including various retirement income sources. In response to this controversy, the Census Bureau has undergone an effort to refine the income questions and results from this effort have shown much higher levels of retirement income. See Jessica L. Semega and Edward Welnick, Jr. “The Effects of the Changes to the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement on Estimates of Income.” *Proceedings of the 2015 Allied Social Science Association (ASSA) Research Conference*. Available at <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2015/DEMO/ASSA-Income-CPSASEC-Red.pdf>

Consequently, when examining or using this CPS data from this chapter and other chapters using CPS data, understanding what is missed or under reported is important before drawing conclusions about the financial status of individuals’ income in retirement.

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For past years of data and inflation adjusted dollar amounts click on the following links for a spread sheet of data.

- [Table 4.1 Retirement Annuity and/or Employment-Based Pension Income Reciprocity, Males](#)
- [Table 4.2 Retirement Annuity and/or Employment-Based Pension Income Reciprocity, Females](#)
- [Table 4.3 Percentage Receiving Retirement Annuity and/or Employment-Based Pension Income, Combined Males and Females](#)
- [Table 4.4 Real Median Annual Income from Retirement Annuity and/or Employment-Based Pension, Combined Males and Females](#)
- [Table 4.5 Real Mean Annual Income from Retirement Annuity and/or Employment-Based Pension, Combined Males and Females](#)