

Fact Sheet: District of Columbia

Workplace Retirement Plans Will Help Workers Build Economic Security

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Access to an employer-based retirement plan is critical for building financial security later in life. Yet, about 44 percent of District of Columbia's private sector employees—roughly 100,000—work for an employer that does not offer a retirement plan. Significant numbers of workers at all levels of earnings and education do not have the ability to use payroll deductions to save for retirement.

Currently in the District of Columbia, workers of larger employers are more likely to have a retirement plan than workers of smaller employers. The probability of having a workplace retirement plan also differs considerably by workers' earnings level, education, and race and ethnicity. The lack of ability to participate in an employer-provided retirement plan, however, spans all levels of education and earnings, and cuts across all groups.

District of Columbia's Situation by the Numbers

About 44 percent of District of Columbia workers ages 18 to 64 in the private sector work for businesses that do not offer a retirement plan.

- **Small-business employees are less likely to have a plan:** Workers in District of Columbia businesses with fewer than 100 employees are much less likely to have access to a plan (62 percent) than workers in larger businesses (32 percent). In raw numbers, about 56,000 small-business employees do not have access to a retirement plan compared with about 45,000 in businesses with 100 or more workers.
- **Workers at all education levels do not have a plan:** About 85 percent of workers who did not have a high school degree did not have an employer-provided retirement plan—a much higher percentage than workers with some college (55 percent) or a bachelor's degree or higher (36 percent). But in raw numbers, workers with at least some college who did not have access to an employer plan exceeded those workers without a

high school degree who did not have access to an employer plan (62,000 versus 14,000).

- **Workers at all earnings levels do not have a plan:** More than 69,000 of District of Columbia employees with annual earnings of \$40,000 or less did not have access to a workplace plan. These workers represent about 68 percent of the 100,000 employees without an employer-provided retirement plan.
- **Access to a plan differs substantially by race and ethnicity:** About 64 percent of Hispanic workers and about 51 percent of African Americans lacked access to an employer-provided retirement plan. Minorities accounted for about 67 percent (67,000) of the roughly 100,000 employees without a workplace retirement plan.

Why Access to Payroll Deduction Retirement Savings Plans Is Important

- **Makes saving easier:** About 90 percent of households participating in a workplace retirement plan today report that payroll deductions are very important and make it easier to save.¹ Saving at work appears to be critical: Few households eligible to contribute to an Individual Retirement Account outside of their jobs regularly do so.²



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- **Helps increase retirement income:** Social Security is essential to retirement security, but its average retirement benefit is only \$1,300 a month. Most retirees will need additional resources. Providing workers with a convenient way to save is an important step to increase the amount of assets a person will have at retirement: A 2014 Employee Benefit Research Institute study found that about 62 percent of employees with access to a retirement plan had more than \$25,000 in total savings and investments, and 22 percent had \$100,000 or more. However, only 6 percent of those without access to such a plan had over \$25,000 saved, and only 3 percent had \$100,000 or more.³
- **Allows individuals to build their own economic security:** Retirement savings plans help workers achieve economic security through their own efforts. Greater access could also help improve economic mobility and reduce wealth disparity.

District of Columbia: Who is NOT Covered by a Workplace Retirement Plan?

(percentage and number of private wage and salary workers ages 18-64 whose employer does not offer a retirement plan)

Item	Group	%	Number
	ALL	ALL	
		44.0%	100,446
Age	18-34 years	46.5%	57,725
	35-44 years	37.9%	18,471
	45-54 years	46.4%	15,722
	55-64 years	40.1%	8,527
Race & Ethnicity*	Hispanic	64.2%	18,887
	Asian (non-Hispanic)	42.4%	5,275
	Black (non-Hispanic)	50.9%	40,749
	White (non-Hispanic)	32.5%	33,407
Education	Less than high school	85.1%	13,735
	High school	63.8%	24,315
	Some college	54.7%	16,935
	Bachelor's or higher	35.6%	45,460
Gender	Male	43.8%	49,406
	Female	44.3%	51,039
Employer Size	Under 10	74.8%	19,487
	10-49	62.1%	25,252
	50-99	48.0%	10,890
	100-499	40.6%	17,214
	500-999	36.2%	6,047
	1,000+	27.1%	21,555
Earnings Quintile	\$14,000 or less	75.2%	25,685
	\$14,001 to \$25,000	68.9%	25,738
	\$25,001 to \$40,000	46.4%	17,202
	\$40,001 to \$63,500	29.5%	13,251
	Over \$63,500	24.9%	18,569

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, March Supplements 2012-2014.

Note: The results are based on three-year averages from 2011-2013. The sample includes workers whose longest-held job was in the private sector. Earnings quintiles are based on all wages and salary earned by U.S. workers, whether or not they were covered by a retirement plan.

* Other non-Hispanic category is not shown, so sum of race & ethnicity categories may not sum to total

- 1 Jack VanDerhei, "The Impact of Modifying the Exclusion of Employee Contributions for Retirement Savings Plans from Taxable Income: Results from the 2011 Retirement Confidence Survey," Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) Notes, March 2011. Available at http://www.ebri.org/pdf/notespdf/EBRI_Notes_03_Mar-11.K-Taxes_Acct-HP.pdf.
- 2 For workers earning between \$30,000 and \$50,000, about 72 percent participated in an employer-provided retirement savings plan when one was available, compared with less than 5 percent without an employer plan who contributed to an Individual Retirement Account. Unpublished estimates from EBRI of the 2004 Survey of Income and Program Participation Wave 7 Topical Module (2006 data).
- 3 2014 RCS Fact Sheet #6," EBRI. Available at http://ebri.org/pdf/surveys/rcs/2014/RCS14_FS-6_Prep-Ret_Final.pdf.

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