

Fact Sheet: Oklahoma

Workplace Retirement Plans Will Help Workers Build Economic Security

David John and Gary Koenig
AARP Public Policy Institute

Access to an employer-based retirement plan is critical for building financial security later in life. Yet, about 50 percent of Oklahoma's private sector employees—roughly 606,000—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 Oklahoma, 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.

Oklahoma's Situation by the Numbers

About 50 percent of Oklahoma 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 Oklahoma businesses with fewer than 100 employees are much less likely to have access to a plan (71 percent) than workers in larger businesses (36 percent). In raw numbers, about 352,000 small-business employees do not have access to a retirement plan compared with about 254,000 in businesses with 100 or more workers.
- **Workers at all education levels do not have a plan:** About 71 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 (51 percent) or a bachelor's degree or higher (37 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 (311,000 versus 72,000).

- **Workers at all earnings levels do not have a plan:** More than 461,000 of Oklahoma employees with annual earnings of \$40,000 or less did not have access to a workplace plan. These workers represent about 76 percent of the 606,000 employees without an employer-provided retirement plan.
- **Access to a plan differs substantially by race and ethnicity:** About 66 percent of Hispanic workers and about 49 percent of African Americans lacked access to an employer-provided retirement plan. Minorities accounted for about 35 percent (213,000) of the roughly 606,000 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
- **Helps increase retirement income:** Social Security is essential to retirement security, but its average



**Public Policy
Institute**

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.

Oklahoma: 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	50.2%	606,099
Age	18-34 years	61.1%	310,294
	35-44 years	43.9%	115,066
	45-54 years	38.0%	102,105
	55-64 years	46.4%	78,633
Race & Ethnicity*	Hispanic	66.2%	68,248
	Asian (non-Hispanic)	51.4%	12,396
	Black (non-Hispanic)	49.4%	39,642
	White (non-Hispanic)	48.2%	392,878
Education	Less than high school	70.5%	71,730
	High school	53.7%	223,590
	Some college	51.4%	214,444
	Bachelor's or higher	36.5%	96,335
Gender	Male	50.3%	330,487
	Female	50.0%	275,612
Employer Size	Under 10	78.5%	138,563
	10-49	71.8%	153,427
	50-99	55.2%	60,063
	100-499	47.9%	92,269
	500-999	39.8%	23,569
	1,000+	30.2%	138,208
Earnings Quintile	\$14,000 or less	74.2%	174,660
	\$14,001 to \$25,000	63.3%	173,964
	\$25,001 to \$40,000	43.3%	113,370
	\$40,001 to \$63,500	36.2%	84,009
	Over \$63,500	29.5%	60,096

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>.

State Fact Sheet: OK, #332, August 2015

© AARP PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE
 601 E Street, NW
 Washington DC 20049

Follow us on Twitter @AARPolicy
 on facebook.com/AARPolicy
www.aarp.org/ppi

For more reports from the Public Policy Institute, visit <http://www.aarp.org/ppi/>.

