As Economy Improves, Age Discrimination Continues to Hold Older Workers Back

Perceptions of Age Discrimination Grew During the Pandemic

In 2020, 78% of older workers reported having seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace—up markedly from 61% in 2018.1

Older Workers Are at Greater Risk of Being Left Out of Recovery

In April, over half of job seekers ages 55 and older were long-term unemployed (53.3%), compared with 42.3% of job seekers ages 16 to 54.2

After the Great Recession:

- It took older workers who were displaced about twice as long to find a new job as younger workers.3
- Older workers who were unemployed for six months or more had far worse outcomes in reemployment, including 59% who made less money than in their previous job, compared to 41% of the short-term unemployed.4

Older Job Seekers Need Help Navigating Age Discrimination in Hiring

In 2020, 41% of older job seekers were asked—either on an application or in a job interview—to provide their birth date, graduation date(s), or other age-related information.

Nearly all older workers agree that laws to combat age discrimination should be stronger.

96% of Older Workers; 96% of Whites; 99% of African Americans; 98% of Hispanics/Latinos

This survey—Understanding Older Workers during the Coronavirus Pandemic—was fielded to 1,322 respondents ages 40–65 and either in the workforce or recently exited the workforce. It was fielded in December of 2020. Additional oversamples were collected to yield a total of 306 African American/Black and 301 Hispanic/Latino older workers.

For more information on the survey, contact Rebecca Perron at rperron@aarp.org.

xPerron, Rebecca. (2018). The Value of Experience: Age Discrimination Against Older Workers Persists. Washington, DC: AARP. (This sample was slightly narrower in age than the current study.)

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