

## The Pew Charitable Trusts

### Survey of State and Local Public Employees

This survey was conducted for The Pew Charitable Trusts by Social Science Research Solutions, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted by landline and cell phone from Aug. 15 to Nov. 24, 2013, among 2,110 state and local public employees age 18 or older. Results for all are subject to sampling error of plus or minus 2.56 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, factoring in sample design effects. Sampling error is higher for subgroups of the overall sample.

Qualified respondents were identified from screening interviews with 55,170 U.S. adults age 18 or older. In some cases, respondents were identified in one survey and were recontacted later to complete the Pew interview. Survey estimates were adjusted to known population parameters to account for uneven probabilities of selection for respondents, including varying propensities to complete interviews after being recontacted; variables for this weighting included age, gender, census region, educational attainment, race and/or ethnicity, metropolitan status, and telephone usage (cell only, landline only, or both cell and landline).

The survey was sponsored and funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Laura and John Arnold Foundation and was reviewed by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence. Survey research expert Mike Mokrzycki served as an adviser on the survey instrument, fielding, methodology, and analysis.

Results below are shown for all respondents unless noted otherwise.

\* = less than 0.5 percent.

#### Screening Questions

*Respondents were asked a series of screening questions. Those who qualified to take the survey were composed of these categories of public employees:*

	Percent of all
State noneducation	21
Local noneducation	25
Teacher	32
Other education	22

- S1.** You said you work in (state government/municipal or local government). In what year did you start doing this work? (Summary table)

	Percent of all
2010-13	19
2004-09	23
1999-2003	17
1994-98	14
1989-93	10
1984-88	8
1983 or earlier	8
Don't know/refused	1

**Questions S2 and S2a held for future release.**

**S3.** Are you:

	Percent of all
Single/never married	16
Single living with partner	7
Married	62
Separated	3
Widowed	2
Divorced	10
Refused	1

### Main interview questions

1. I am going to read you a list of things that might describe a job. Please tell me how important each of these is to you. (INSERT ITEM) is this extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- a. The health and medical coverage provided by your employer.

	Percent of all
Extremely important	55
Very important	32
Somewhat important	9
Not too important	2
Not at all important	2
Don't know	*
Refused	*

- b. The retirement and pension plans provided by your employer.

	Percent of all
Extremely important	45
Very important	35
Somewhat important	16
Not too important	2
Not at all important	1
Don't know	*
Refused	*

- c. Your total annual salary.

	Percent of all
Extremely important	37
Very important	39
Somewhat important	22
Not too important	1
Not at all important	*
Don't know	*
Refused	*

- d. The security of your job.

	Percent of all
Extremely important	55
Very important	34
Somewhat important	10
Not too important	1
Not at all important	*
Don't know	*
Refused	*

- e. The ability to balance work and family.

	Percent of all
Extremely important	55
Very important	34
Somewhat important	8
Not too important	1
Not at all important	1
Don't know	*
Refused	*

- f. A career in public service.

	Percent of all
Extremely important	19
Very important	32
Somewhat important	35
Not too important	9
Not at all important	4
Don't know	*
Refused	*

2. Realistically, at what age do you expect to retire?

	Percent of all
Under 55	6
55 to 59	13
60 to 61	13
62 to 64	11
65	25
66 to 69	12
70 or older	17
Don't plan on ever retiring	4
Don't know	*
Refused	*

**Question 3 held for future release.**

4. Overall, how confident are you that you (and your spouse/and your partner) will have enough money to live comfortably throughout your retirement years? Are you...?

	Percent of all
Very confident	22
Somewhat confident	47
Not too confident	19
Not at all confident	11
Don't know	*
Refused	*

**Questions 5 to 8 held for future release.**

**9.** How satisfied are you with the **salary** provided by your employer for the work you do? Would you say you are...?

	Percent of all
Very satisfied	21
Somewhat satisfied	51
Not too satisfied	19
Not at all satisfied	9
Don't know	--
Refused	*

**10.** How satisfied are you with the **retirement benefits** provided by your employer (for the work you do? Would you say you are ...?

	Percent of all
Very satisfied	34
Somewhat satisfied	51
Not too satisfied	11
Not at all satisfied	3
Don't know	1
Refused	*

**Questions 11 to 13 held for future release.**

**14.** Do you think that some government workers who want to leave their jobs at a younger age choose to stay in their jobs until they reach retirement age so that they won't lose retirement or pension benefits—or do you think that this does not happen?

	Percent of all
Yes, it does happen	80
No, it doesn't happen	14
Maybe	1
Don't know	4
Refused	*

**14a.** Do you think that happens with a lot of government workers, or not that many? (IF THINKS SOME GOV'T WORKERS (MAYBE) STAY IN JOB UNTIL RETIREMENT AGE SO THEY DON'T LOSE BENEFITS) (n = 1732)

	Percent of all
A lot	74
Not that many	21
Don't know	5
Refused	*

**14SUM.** Summary table: Think workers stay in government jobs until retirement so they don't lose benefits.

	Percent of all
It happens a lot	60
It happens but not with that many	17
It doesn't happen	14
It happens/unspecified	4
Don't know/refused	4

**15.** Do you think there are some government workers who retire **earlier** than they'd like because that is the only way for them to maximize their retirement benefits—or do you think that this does not happen?

	Percent of all
Yes, it happens	56
No, it doesn't happen	31
Maybe	1
Don't know	12
Refused	*

**15a.** Do you think that happens with a lot of government workers, or not that many? (IF THINKS SOME GOV'T WORKERS (MAYBE) RETIRE EARLIER THAN THEY'D LIKE IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE BENEFITS) (n = 1218)

	Percent of all
A lot	55
Not that many	39
Don't know	7
Refused	*

**15SUM.** Summary table: Think government workers retire earlier to maximize retirement benefits.

	Percent of all
It happens a lot	31
It happens but not with that many	22
It doesn't happen	31
It happens/unspecified	4
Don't know/refused	12

16. Do you know if the retirement plan your current employer offers is what's called...

	Percent of all
Defined benefit plan	64
Some other type of plan	14
Don't know type of plan	20
Refused	2

16a. Can you tell me what kind of retirement benefit plan that is? (IF SOME OTHER TYPE OF RETIREMENT PLAN, NOT DEFINED BENEFIT) (n = 291)

	Percent of all
Defined contribution	11
Cash balance	*
Hybrid	2
457	3
401(k)	19
403(b)	8
TIAA-CREF/teacher retirement plan	5
Public employee retirement plan	4
Other	19
Don't know	28
Refused	1

Questions 17 to 21 held for future release.

22. Thinking generally, if you had to choose between these two options, would you prefer...?

	Percent of all
A job that pays a somewhat higher salary in exchange for less generous retirement benefits	41
A job that offers more generous retirement benefits in exchange for a somewhat lower salary	55
It depends (VOL.)	2
Don't know	2
Refused	*

**Questions 23 to 26 held for future release.**

**27.** All in all, do you think your current employer's retirement system needs changes or should be kept as it is?

	Percent of all
Needs changes	35
Keep as is	61
Don't know	4
Refused	*

**27a.** And would you say it needs major changes, or only minor changes? (IF THINKS EMPLOYER'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM NEEDS CHANGES) (n = 700)

	Percent of all
Major changes	36
Only minor changes	63
Don't know	2
Refused	--

**27SUM.** Current employer's retirement system.

	Percent of all
Needs major changes	12
Needs only minor changes	22
Keep as is	61
Needs changes/unspecified	1
Don't know/refused	4

**28.** Which do you think is more likely—that you would work for your current employer until you retire, or that you would go to work for a different employer before then?

	Percent of all
Work for current employer until retirement	74
Go to work for different employer	23
Don't know	2
Refused	*

**Questions 28a, 28b, and 29 to 37 held for future release.**