Access to Benefits

This interactive uses March 2014 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employer Costs for Employee Compensation data from the National Compensation Survey (NCS), which reflect conditions in the labor force in the first quarter of that year. This research was conducted with restricted access to Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the BLS.

The NCS is a panel survey of employers operating in the United States and covers all jobs in the U.S. labor force, excluding federal and agricultural workers. The primary sampling unit is an "establishment," that is, a single location where business is conducted, such as a single grocery store rather than a firm, which would include the legal entity as a whole and all of the locations where it does business.

This analysis is restricted to private-sector establishments including those from both for-profit and nonprofit firms, excluding state and local government jobs. Each sampled establishment reported to the BLS on a number of randomly selected jobs based on the number of workers it usually employs.[1] If two jobs at an establishment were at different levels and in different occupations, the reported benefits packages and their costs may vary substantially. The NCS' approach to data collection yields a nationally representative set of jobs in the American economy for a specific economic quarter. Overall, the analytic sample for the interactive includes wage and benefit information on 43,997 jobs at 6,338 establishments. A full description of sampling methodology is reported by the BLS in **chapter 8 of the *Handbook of Methods*.**

For presentation in the interactive, observations are grouped by industry, establishment size, and the wage tier of the job within its industry. An industry captures the broad range of functions performed by employees of the establishment and is defined by a two-digit **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code**. (See Table 1.)

The interactive divides employers into three groups based on the size of the sampled establishment: under 10 employees, 10 to 49 employees, and 50 or more. Although the vast majority of establishments in the U.S. are small, most people work in larger ones. Because the NCS draws its sample proportional to the share of employment, a larger share of jobs in the data are drawn from larger establishments than from smaller establishments.

Jobs are classified into three tiers: the top third, middle third, and bottom third of wage earners in the job's industry.

The interactive lets users select an industry, establishment size, and wage tier and presents descriptive statistics on the selected combination. If data on fewer than 76 jobs are available for the user-selected characteristics, the statistics for that group are not displayed.

The first figure in the interactive shows the proportion of jobs within the user's selected configuration that offer each benefit type and how much is spent on the benefit for the median job nationally. The second figure is the range of wage and total benefit spending by employers in the selected group(s). All statistics presented in the interactive are weighted to be representative of a national sample of jobs.

Benefits offered are grouped into five categories. (See Table 2.)

Table 1
NAICS Industry Names, Codes, and Names in Interactive

NAICS name	Name in dropdown	NAICS code
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	Mining and extraction	21
Utilities	Utilities	22
Construction	Construction	23
Manufacturing	Manufacturing	31
Wholesale Trade	Wholesale trade	42
Retail Trade	Retail trade	44
Transportation and Warehousing	Transportation	48
Information	Information	51
Finance and Insurance	Finance and insurance	52
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	Real estate and leasing	53
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Professional and technical	54
Management of Companies and Enterprises	Management of companies	55
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	Admin/support/waste mgmt	56
Educational Services	Educational services	61
Health Care and Social Assistance	Health care	62
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	Arts and rec	71
Accommodation and Food Services	Hotel and food service	72
Other Services (except Public Administration)	Other services	81

Table 2
Benefits by Category

Supplemental pay	Leave	Retirement	Health insurance	Other insurance
Differential shift pay	Sick leave	Defined benefit pension	Health insurance	Long-term disability
Overtime	Holiday	Defined contribution pension	Dental insurance	Short-term disability
Nonproduction bonus	Vacation		Vision insurance	Life insurance
	Other leave			

Only employers who incur costs for a given benefit are counted as providing that benefit. For instance, if a worker is eligible for leave but the leave is unpaid and the employer incurs no cost to provide that benefit, the job is classified as not providing a leave benefit. All monetary values are presented as dollars per hour of work by the employee in the sampled job. If an employer pays a fixed cost to provide a given benefit to all employees, the cost is assumed to be spread equally across all employees. In some instances, the cost of a benefit to an employer is conditioned by the employee's use of the benefit. For instance, if an employer offers paid leave but the worker only takes part of the time he or she has available, it may lower the cost of that benefit recorded in the survey.

Endnote

1   If a worker is on vacation or otherwise temporarily away from work when the data are collected, her job could still be selected for inclusion in the data.

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