

2023 Pew Charitable Trusts Small Business Retirement Savings Survey

The study was conducted for the Pew Charitable Trusts via Telephone by SSRS, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted by telephone among a sample of n=1,500 total respondents, with n=500 completed in each of three states. The margin of error for the total of respondents is +/- 5.1 percentage points for Massachusetts, +/- 5.6 percentage points for Pennsylvania, +/- 5.5 percentage points for Washington at the 95% confidence level. More information about SSRS can be obtained by visiting www.ssrs.com.

***General Notes:** Percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.
An asterisk indicates a result less than 1%.

Introduction

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP S2, modified - trend for comparison

S2. Which of the following descriptions applies to you?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
You are the owner or co-owner of a small business	56	56	49
Not the owner, but you are the decision maker about employee benefits	44	44	51
Neither of these applies to you	*	*	*
Refused	*	*	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP S3, modified – trend for comparison

S3. First of all, approximately how many people does your business employ? When answering this question, please include wage -W2- workers, including full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers. Please do not include any contract -1099- workers.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
5 to 10	61	63	67
11 to 29	25	24	22
30 to 49	7	7	6
50 to 74	4	3	3
75+	3	2	2
Refused	0	0	0

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP Q4, modified – trend for comparison

S4. Is a retirement savings plan such as a 401(k) or 403(b) offered to any of your employees?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Yes	50	43	42
No	48	55	56
Don't Know/not sure	2	2	3
Refused	*	*	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP S8

S5. What type of business or industry is your company?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	1	2	2
Arts, entertainment, recreation	5	5	3
Communications, telecommunications	*	*	1
Construction	9	9	10
Educational services that do NOT include PUBLIC schools	5	5	5
Finance, insurance	1	2	1
Health care, pharmaceutical	7	10	12
Hotel, lodging, restaurant	15	16	22
Leasing and rental	1	*	1
Manufacturing	12	12	6
Nonprofit	7	10	7
Real Estate	2	*	1
Retail	6	6	9
Services for example, business, legal, engineering, accounting	8	9	7
Transportation, warehousing	3	4	3
Utilities; for example, electric power, gas, water	2	2	1
Wholesale trade	2	1	2
Private government contractor	*	*	0
Public schools	0	0	0
Child care	3	2	2
Automotive	2	2	2
Research, technology	3	1	1
Building, grounds cleaning or maintenance	1	1	1
Private government contractor	0	0	0
Public Schools	0	0	0
Other	5	1	3
Don't know/not sure	0	0	0
Refused	0	0	0

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

NEW

S6. And is your business a local business or a franchise?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Local Business	94	89	91
Franchise	4	7	7
Don't Know/not sure	2	4	1
Refused	*	*	*

Questions for Businesses with Retirement Plans

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

NEW

P2. Approximately what percentage of your employees are eligible to participate in your company's retirement savings plan? Please consider full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers, but NOT contract workers.

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
1% to 50%	16	17	15
51% to 75%	5	7	10
76% to 100%	77	74	174
Don't know	1	1	2
Refused	1	0	1

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

NEW

P3. Does your retirement plan currently include employer contributions?

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Yes	84	90	90
No	14	8	9
Don't know	2	3	1
Refused	*	*	*

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

NEW

P4. Did your company start offering a retirement savings plan [READ LIST]?

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Right Away	23	19	16
Within a year of opening	22	22	26
Within 2 to 10 years of opening (VOL.)	20	20	25
Within 11 to 20 years of opening (VOL.)	9	6	7
21 or more years after opening (VOL.)	6	7	4
Plan started before I joined the company (VOL.)	6	5	3
Don't know/not sure	15	21	18
Refused	*	*	*

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

PEW EMPLOYER SURVEY P2, modified – trend for comparison

P5. There are many reasons businesses might offer a retirement savings plan. Please tell me whether each of the following is a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason your organization offers a retirement plan.

Would you say that's a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason?

A. It helps attract and retain quality employees.

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Yes, major reason	62	61	68
Yes, minor reason	30	26	28
No, not a reason	7	12	5
Don't know/not sure	1	1	0
Refused	0	0	0

B. It has a positive impact on employees.

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Yes, major reason	75	79	79
Yes, minor reason	18	16	18
No, not a reason	6	4	3
Don't know/not sure	2	1	*
Refused	*	0	0

C. It helps employees save for retirement.

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Yes, major reason	86	87	92
Yes, minor reason	10	10	7
No, not a reason	2	3	1
Don't know/not sure	2	*	0
Refused	*	1	0

D. It provides tax advantages for management.

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Yes, major reason	23	25	18
Yes, minor reason	42	43	45
No, not a reason	33	29	36
Don't know/not sure	2	3	1
Refused	*	0	0

E. It provides tax advantages for employees.

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Yes, major reason	43	39	47
Yes, minor reason	41	42	37
No, not a reason	15	16	16
Don't know/not sure	2	3	0
Refused	0	0	0

F. It's the right thing to do for society.

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Yes, major reason	61	63	61
Yes, minor reason	25	25	28
No, not a reason	12	11	10
Don't know/not sure	1	1	1
Refused	1	0	0

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

NEW

P6. Why did you choose to offer the type of retirement savings plan that you did?¹

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
We chose a safe harbor plan offered by our payroll company.	22	13	15
We sought out a variety of plans and chose the one that we felt best met our needs.	44	48	55
We chose the simplest option we could find.	16	22	16
We chose the most cost-effective option we could find.	15	22	15
Our retirement plan was recommended by the company providing it.	25	20	22
Don't know/not sure	11	9	9
Refused	*	0	1

¹ Results may add to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

Questions for Businesses that Do NOT Offer Retirement Plans

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO DO NOT OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

PEW EMPLOYER SURVEY NP1, modified – trend for comparison

V1049 AARP Q5, modified – no trend

NP1. There are many reasons businesses do not offer a retirement savings plan. Please tell me whether each of the following is a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason your organization does not offer a retirement plan.

Would you say that's a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason?

A. It is too expensive to set up.

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Yes, major reason	38	33	38
Yes, minor reason	20	18	20
No, not a reason	38	43	36
Don't know/not sure	4	5	6
Refused	1	0	*

B. We do not have the resources to administer such a plan.

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Yes, major reason	48	39	43
Yes, minor reason	16	28	22
No, not a reason	35	32	33
Don't know/not sure	2	*	2
Refused	0	0	*

C. Our employees are not interested.

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Yes, major reason	35	23	20
Yes, minor reason	20	25	24
No, not a reason	40	47	49
Don't know/not sure	5	5	6
Refused	*	*	2

D. Our business is too new.

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Yes, major reason	9	6	5
Yes, minor reason	17	12	21
No, not a reason	73	81	72
Don't know/not sure	1	2	2
Refused	0	0	0

E. We are concerned about how to choose a plan provider.

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Yes, major reason	11	7	7
Yes, minor reason	28	21	21
No, not a reason	59	72	66
Don't know/not sure	1	0	5
Refused	1	0	*

F. We haven't thought about it.

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Yes, major reason	10	10	9
Yes, minor reason	26	21	18
No, not a reason	61	67	66
Don't know/not sure	*	1	6
Refused	*	*	*

G. We don't know how to get a plan.

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Yes, major reason	4	9	6
Yes, minor reason	29	19	25
No, not a reason	66	72	66
Don't know/not sure	2	*	2
Refused	0	*	1

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO DO NOT OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

V1049 AARP Q6, modified – trend for comparison

NP2. Does your company ever plan to offer a retirement savings plan to your employees? (IF YES: How soon do you plan to offer it?)

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
In the next year	8	10	9
In the next five years	14	16	21
In the next ten years	3	3	3
No	61	56	53
Don't know/not sure	13	14	12
Refused	1	*	1

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

NEW

A1. Some states have adopted a new program to help workers save for retirement. These **state-sponsored automated retirement savings programs** are sometimes known as an “**Auto-IRA**,” a “**Work and Save**,” or a “**Secure Choice**” program. How much, if anything, have you heard about this type of state-sponsored program? Have you heard?

These programs are not meant to replace social security.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
A lot	3	3	3
Some	9	10	11
Not much	17	18	18
Nothing at all	71	69	66
Don't know/not sure	*	*	2
Refused	0	0	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

PEW EMPLOYER SURVEY NP8, modified – no trend

A2. Now I am going to ask a few questions about a new retirement plan intended to make it easier for employees at businesses without retirement plans to save for retirement. The plan would be sponsored by the state and not by businesses like yours. First, I have a few questions about how this might apply to **BUSINESSES**. Please tell me how much, if at all, you support each separate feature of the new retirement plan. Would you say you...that?

- A. Businesses would withhold money from participating employees’ paychecks and send it to the retirement account on their behalf.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	37	30	26
Somewhat support	34	41	36
Do not support	24	27	35
Don't know/not sure	3	2	3
Refused	1	*	*

B. Businesses would not be required, nor would they be allowed to contribute to their employees' retirement accounts.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	21	14	16
Somewhat support	30	32	29
Do not support	44	50	48
Don't know/not sure	4	3	6
Refused	1	1	1

C. Businesses would not have any legal responsibility for their employees' retirement accounts.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	47	44	44
Somewhat support	28	30	29
Do not support	19	23	22
Don't know/not sure	5	3	4
Refused	*	1	0

D. The program would be run by a financial services company with experience in retirement plans and investments, but the state government would provide oversight and guidance.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	35	26	20
Somewhat support	36	36	41
Do not support	25	35	36
Don't know/not sure	4	2	3
Refused	1	*	*

E. All communications to employees would come from the program administrator.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	45	41	37
Somewhat support	35	36	38
Do not support	16	21	22
Don't know/not sure	3	2	3
Refused	*	1	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

PEW EMPLOYER SURVEY NP8, modified – no trend

A3. Now I have a few questions about how this program might apply to EMPLOYEES. Please tell me how much, if at all, you support each separate feature of the new retirement plan. Would you say you...that?

Would you say you strongly support, somewhat support, or do not support this feature?

A. Employees who don't have access to a retirement savings plan at their work would be offered the chance to participate in one.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	69	59	58
Somewhat support	22	29	26
Do not support	6	11	13
Don't know/not sure	3	1	2
Refused	*	1	*

- B. By default, workers would contribute to the retirement savings account unless they took action to opt out of the program.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	38	41	30
Somewhat support	37	33	38
Do not support	22	24	31
Don't know/not sure	3	1	1
Refused	*	1	*

- C. As a starting point, Participating employees would contribute a set amount of five percent of their paychecks to the retirement account.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	24	24	14
Somewhat support	41	41	45
Do not support	32	34	39
Don't know/not sure	3	1	2
Refused	*	1	*

- D. Employees could stop or change their contributions at any time.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	76	72	70
Somewhat support	15	16	17
Do not support	7	11	12
Don't know/not sure	2	*	1
Refused	*	*	*

- E. Employees could withdraw their own contributions to the account at any point without a penalty.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	52	49	52
Somewhat support	26	26	27
Do not support	20	24	21
Don't know/not sure	2	1	*
Refused	*	1	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

PEW EMPLOYER SURVEY NP9, modified – no trend

A4. Now I want you to think about all of these plan features together. Please tell me how much, if at all, you support the new retirement plan as a business owner or decision-maker. Do you....?

If respondent says support, ask: do you strongly or somewhat support?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Strongly support	29	26	21
Somewhat support	52	49	51
Do not support	16	23	27
Don't know/not sure	4	2	2
Refused	*	1	*

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO SUPPORT RETIREMENT PLAN

PEW EMPLOYER SURVEY NP9A, modified – trend for comparison

A5a. Regardless of whether your business currently offers a plan, what is the main reason you support THIS RETIREMENT PLAN?

	Massachusetts (n=401)	Pennsylvania (n=377)	Washington (n=354)
The costs of withholding contributions would be modest.	18	24	20
It would make our business more competitive to open positions.	17	16	15
It would help attract more qualified candidates to open positions.	32	36	38
Other	3	1	1
All of the above (VOL.) ²	2	1	4
Everyone should have access to a retirement plan/it is the right thing to do (VOL.) ²	2	2	2
Empowers employees' independence, choice, and control of retirement (VOL.) ²	3	2	3
Good option/beneficial/helpful to save for retirement (VOL.) ²	7	8	4
Eases company's burden/provides government support (VOL.) ²	3	1	1
Good for employers who don't offer a retirement plan (VOL.) ²	1	1	*
It doesn't apply to us/We already have a plan/Need more information (VOL.) ²	2	2	2
Automatic/ensured saving/people must contribute to retirement account (VOL.) ²	1	1	0
Don't know/not sure	6	4	7
Refused	2	2	1

² This option is a code developed based on verbatim responses when respondents chose “other” and were asked to specify.

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO DO NOT SUPPORT THIS RETIREMENT PLAN

PEW EMPLOYER SURVEY NP9B, modified – trend for comparison

A5b. What is the main reason you do not support this retirement plan?

	Massachusetts (n=81)³	Pennsylvania (n=109)	Washington (n=137)
I am worried about the costs of enrolling workers and sending their contributions to the plan.	n/a	5	4
I don't think my business's employees want/need a retirement plan.	n/a	22	8
I don't think workers should be automatically enrolled in a retirement plan.	n/a	30	48
Other	n/a	9	5
Don't want or don't trust government-run plan (VOL.) ⁴	n/a	24	27
Too bureaucratic/controlling (VOL.) ⁴	n/a	4	4
Not as good as our plan/not interested (VOL.) ⁴	n/a	1	1
Don't know/not sure	n/a	5	4
Refused	n/a	*	*

³ Results not shown due to insufficient sample size.

⁴ This option is a code developed based on verbatim responses when respondents chose "other" and were asked to specify.

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

NEW

A6. If the state adopts a retirement savings program like the one that is being proposed, how likely are you to continue to offer your business’s retirement plan? Are you very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

	Massachusetts (n=274)	Pennsylvania (n=252)	Washington (n=244)
Very Likely	56	56	57
Somewhat likely	29	27	22
Not too likely	6	8	9
Not likely at all	5	5	10
Don’t know/not sure	4	3	2
Refused	1	1	0

BASE: RESPONDENTS WHO DO NOT OFFER A RETIREMENT PLAN

A7. If the state adopts a retirement savings program like the one that is being proposed, businesses will be required to register their employees unless they start their own retirement plan. How likely are you to adopt your own retirement plan instead? Are you very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

	Massachusetts (n=218)	Pennsylvania (n=241)	Washington (n=245)
Very Likely	8	8	15
Somewhat likely	21	30	23
Not too likely	19	23	21
Not likely at all	50	37	37
Don’t know/not sure	2	2	4
Refused	*	*	*

Questions related to concern about current retirement savings situation in state

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP Q1 - modified

R1. How concerned are you, if at all, that YOUR EMPLOYEES will not have enough money when THEY RETIRE? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not concerned at all?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Very concerned	33	29	29
Somewhat concerned	35	40	39
Not too concerned	19	15	15
Not concerned at all	12	15	15
Don't know/not sure	1	*	2
Refused	*	*	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP Q2, modified – no trend

R2. In your opinion, how much, if anything, should state lawmakers do to help encourage residents to save for retirement? A lot more, somewhat more, a little more, or nothing more?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
A lot more	36	38	23
Somewhat more	30	26	25
A little more	15	17	18
Nothing more	16	21	31
Don't know/not sure	3	1	2
Refused	*	*	1

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP Q9, modified – no trend

R3. How concerned, if at all, are you, that some residents will not have enough money for retirement and could end up needing public assistance? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not concerned at all?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Very concerned	40	43	31
Somewhat concerned	41	37	44
Not too concerned	9	10	11
Not concerned at all	9	9	12
Don't know/not sure	1	*	1
Refused	0	*	*

Business demographics

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP D2, modified – trend for comparison.

D1. How many years has your organization been operating?

Your best estimate is fine.

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
0 through 5 years	8	8	11
6 through 10 years	10	9	15
11 through 20 years	17	15	20
21 through 30 years	19	17	19
31 through 50 years	29	25	22
51 through 99 years	12	18	10
100 through 300	6	8	2
Don't know/not sure	*	1	2
Refused	0	1	0

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP D3, modified – trend for comparison

D2. Next, we have a question about your business revenue; please stop me when I get to the category that includes your **business revenue** in 2022. Was it...?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Less than \$0, it was negative	2	2	2
Less than \$10,000	1	1	1
\$10,000 to less than \$50,000	1	6	4
\$50,000 to less than \$100,000	5	7	4
\$100,000 to less than \$200,000	6	6	11
\$200,000 to less than \$500,000	13	13	13
\$500,000 to less than \$1 million	20	15	13
\$1 million or more	39	31	33
Don't know/not sure	7	10	9
Refused	8	8	10

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

NEW

D3. Is your business a member of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Yes	15	12	13
No	72	77	73
Don't know/not sure	13	11	13
Refused	0	*	0

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

NEW

D4. Is your business a member of your state or local Chamber of Commerce?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Yes	31	36	37
No	62	56	57
Don't know/not sure	8	7	7
Refused	0	*	*

Demographics of respondent

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP D4, modified – trend for comparison

D5. To ensure that it is recorded accurately, could you please state your gender?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Male	48	45	38
Female	49	53	60
Other	0	0	0
Non-binary	*	0	*
Don't know/not sure	*	0	*
Refused	3	2	1

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP D5

D6. What is your age as of your last birthday?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
19 – 34	9	9	15
35 – 49	21	24	26
50 – 64	46	41	38
65 +	17	22	13
18 +, exact age unknown	7	4	7

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP D7 – rotates modified

D7. Do you consider yourself to be a(n) Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Democrat	18	19	19
Republican	18	37	20
Independent	41	22	28
Something else	13	12	17
Don't know/not sure	3	4	3
Refused	8	6	13

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

V1049 AARP D8 - modified

D8. How would you characterize your political views – very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?

	Massachusetts (n=500)	Pennsylvania (n=500)	Washington (n=500)
Very conservative	3	9	5
Conservative	22	29	25
Moderate	32	36	32
Liberal	19	12	12
Very liberal	5	3	5
Don't know/not sure	6	6	9
Refused	13	7	13