

From Data to Decisions

How Plan Design and Financial Advice Improve Retirement Outcomes

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Why Optimal Financial Decision-Making Needs Support

Complex Interconnected Decisions

- Employees face decades of interlinked retirement decisions affecting savings, advice, investment, and sustainable income.

Distinct Public vs Private Challenges

- Public sector workers encounter unique challenges rooted in pension design and trust differing from private sector workers.

Role of Choice Architects

- Employers and providers should act as active choice architects, improving defaults and simplifying options for better outcomes.

Better Outcomes Through Integration, Trust, and Technology

- Smarter system design can improve retirement results without requiring employees to become financial experts.

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Do not edit
How to change the design

What is the biggest challenge facing participant outcomes today?

The [Slido app](#) must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

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Survey Data

Financial Wellness and Mental/Emotional Survey Data

A nationally representative 2025 survey of both public and private sector employees deployed by MissionSquare Research Institute with Greenwald Research.

2,020 full-time workers: 1,016 state and local government employees and 1,004 private sector employees. All respondents were age 18 or older.

The final data were weighted by gender, race, and industry to reflect the distribution as found in the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Compensation Survey.

Source: How to Help Retirement Plan Participants Make Optimal Financial Decisions: Evidence From Public and Private Sector Employee Behaviors, MissionSquare Research Institute, 2026

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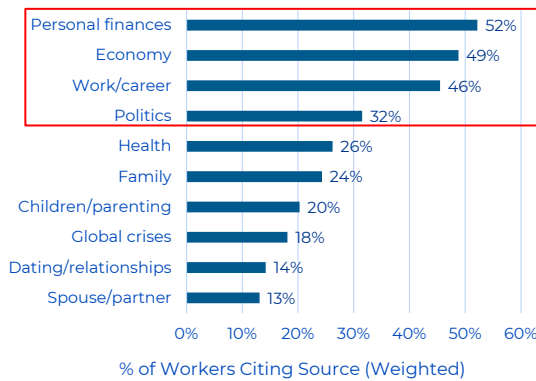
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The Importance of Customized Professional Advice

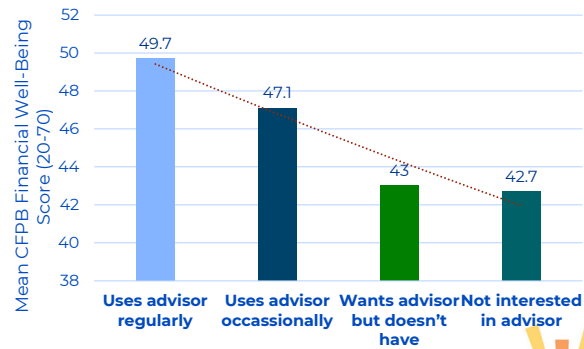
Address the stress-finance connection

Expand access to professional financial advice

Largest Source of Stress



Financial Well-Being by Financial Advisor Use



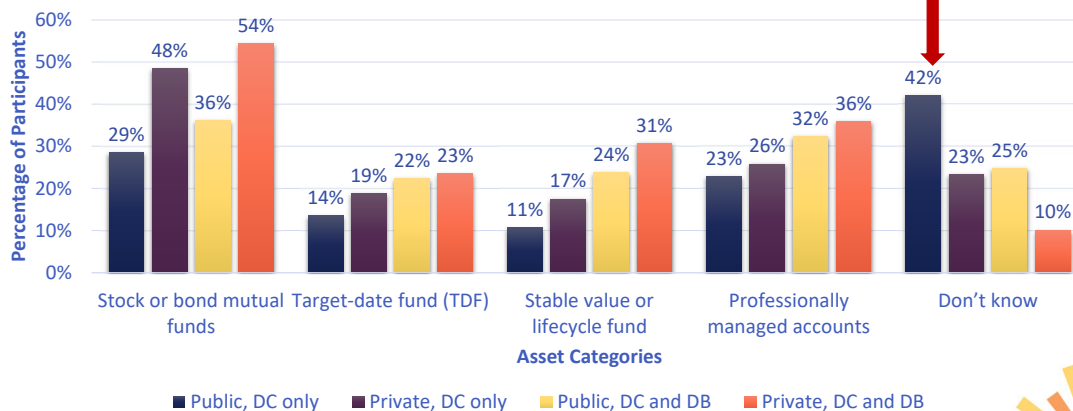
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Distinct Public vs Private Challenges

DC Plan Investment Allocations By Plan Type



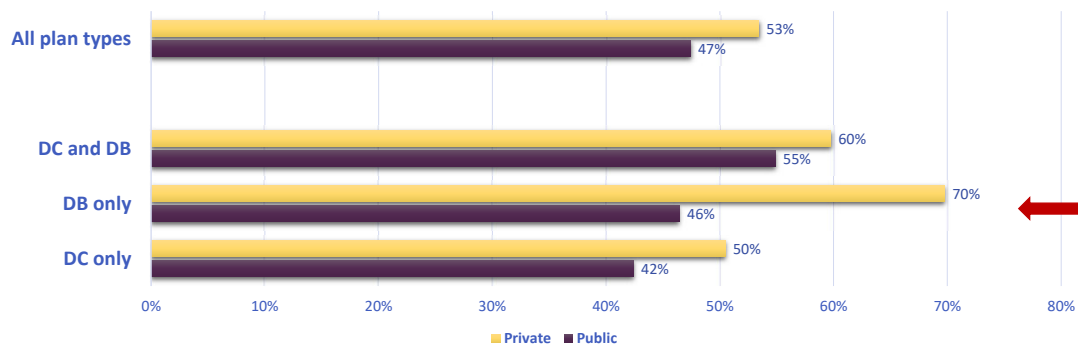
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Advice-Seeking Behavior – Financial Advisor Use

Percentage Working With A Professional Financial Advisor
By Sector and Plan Type

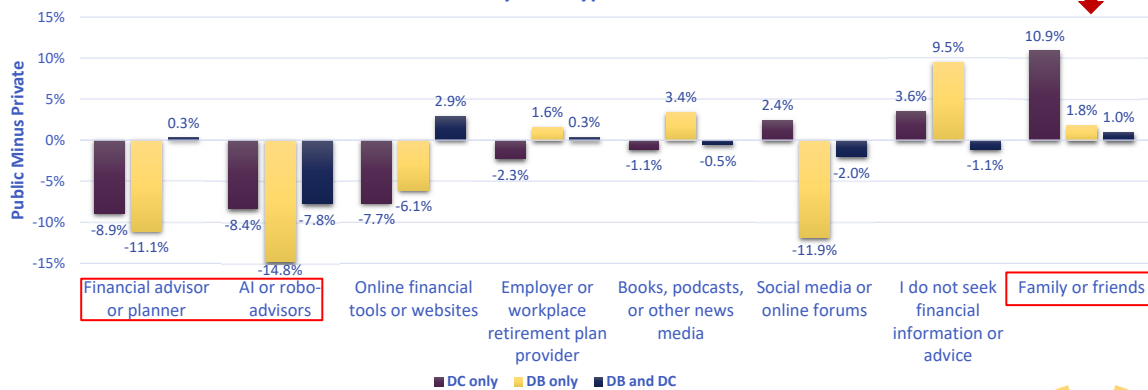


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Sources of Advice on Saving and Investing

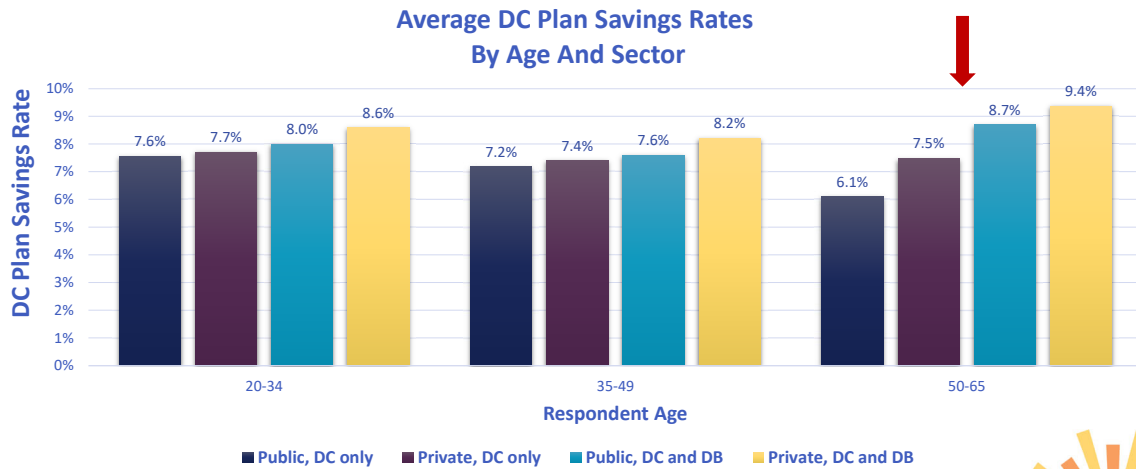
Sources Of Saving And Investing Advice, Difference Between Public And Private Sector Behavior
By Plan Type



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Defined Contribution Retirement Plan Savings



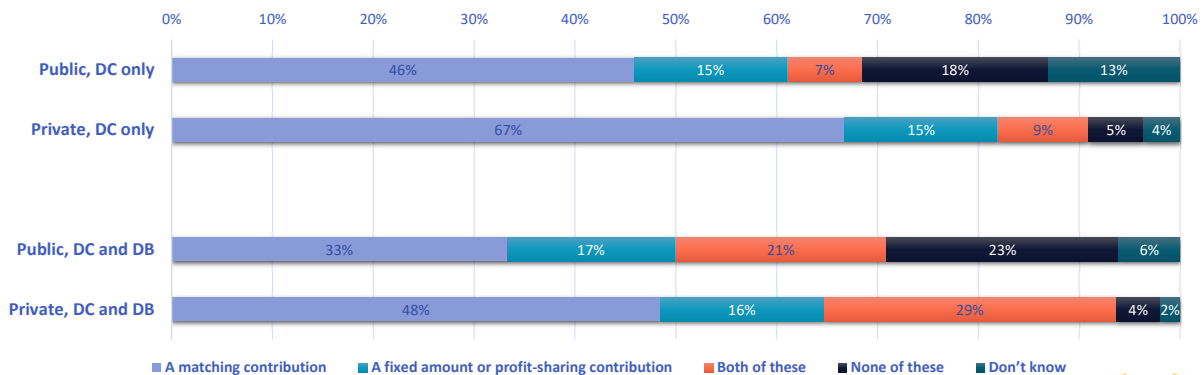
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Employer Match on Retirement Savings

Percentage Whose Employers Provide A Match or Other Contributions to Their DC Plan By Plan Type and Sector



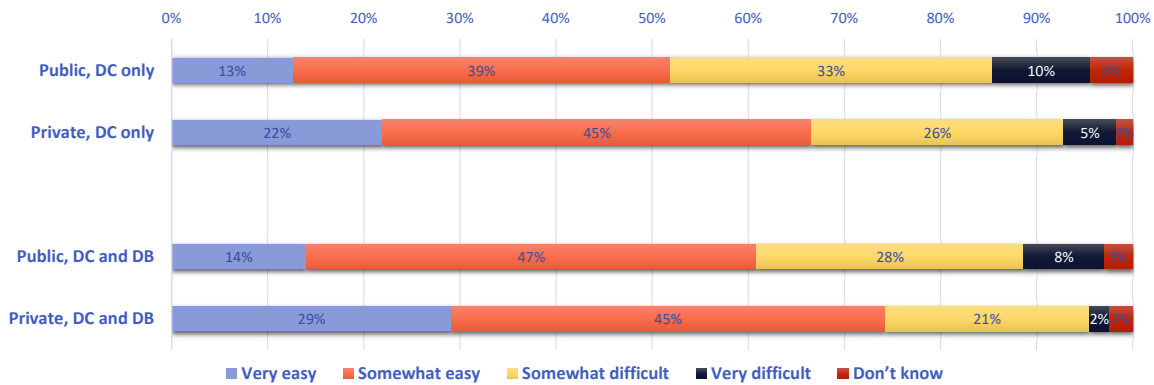
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Difficulty of Making Investment Decisions

Ease of Making Investment Decisions in DC Plans



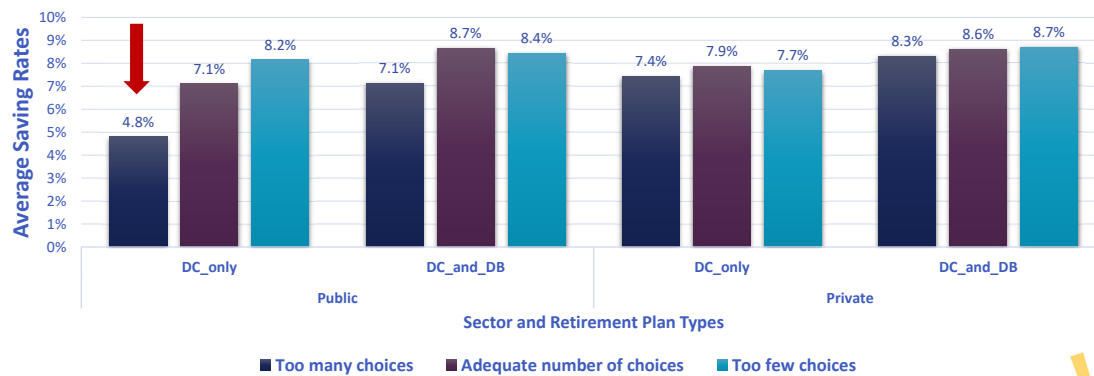
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Role of Choice Architecture: The Impact of DC Retirement Plan Core Menu Design

Retirement Plan Saving Rates
By Plan Core Menu Size and Plan Types



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Guaranteed Income Options Shape Financial Planning

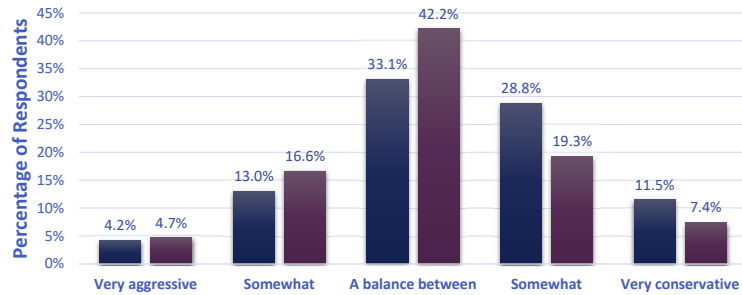
Behavioral impact on saving, investing, and retirement income choices

- Shapes saving habits, risk tolerance, and confidence throughout careers.
- Influences saving, investment risk, and confidence years before retirement—not just at payout.

Importance of Communication

- Clear plan design and communication bridge the gap between current contributions and future retirement income.

Retirement Plan Investment Portfolio Risk/Aggressiveness
With vs. Without Guaranteed Income (DB)



Workplace Retirement Plan Portfolio Risk/Aggressiveness

■ Public, DC only ■ Public, DC and DB

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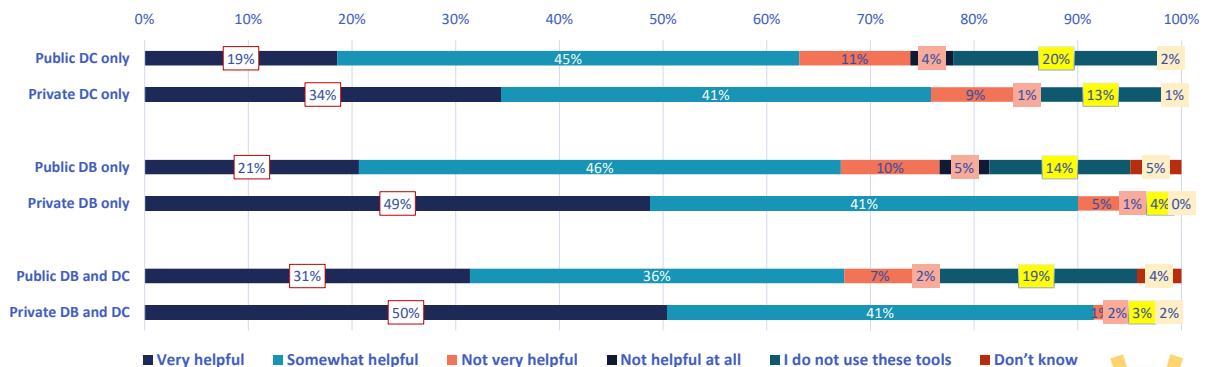


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Why Technology Alone Is Not Enough

Public sector workers are significantly less interested in financial technology tools

Find Financial Technologies Useful in Managing Finances and Planning for Retirement?



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Survey Data

Artificial Intelligence in the Workforce



A nationally representative 2025 survey of state and local government employees deployed by MissionSquare Research Institute with Morning Consult (N=2,000).



This survey focuses on public sector employees' AI adoption and usage.



The final data were weighted by gender, race, and industry to reflect the distribution as found in the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and the U.S. Census of Governments.

Source: Artificial Intelligence in Public Workforce: An In-Depth Study on Employee Perspectives and Retirement Planning Implications, MissionSquare Research Institute, 2025

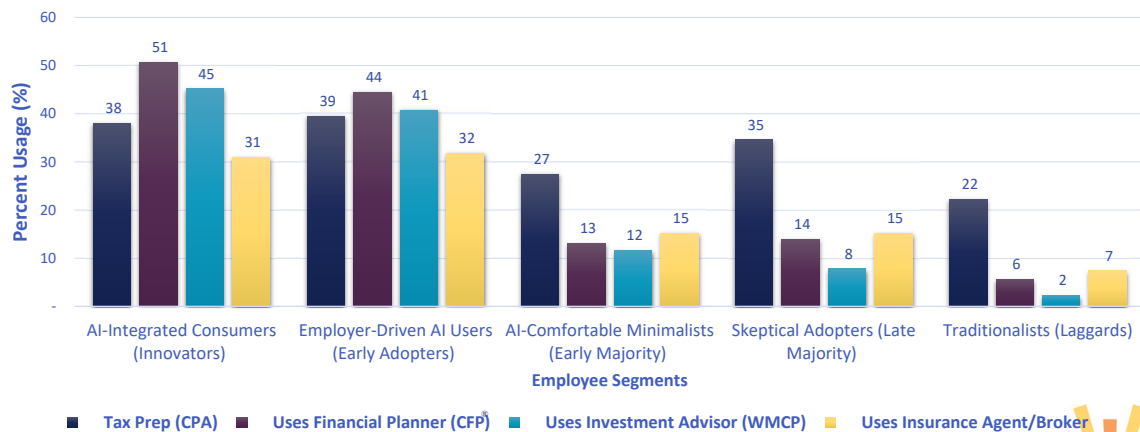
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Trust Drives Engagement: AI and Human Advisors Are Complements, Not Substitutes

Financial Professional Usage by Employee Segment

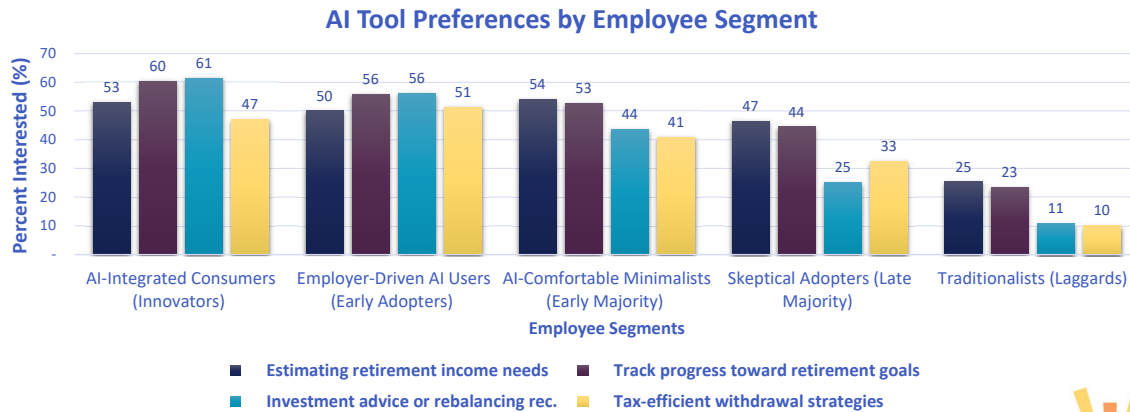


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Workplace AI Creates a Retirement Planning Engagement: Behavioral Segmentation Reveals Clear Strategy Paths



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Key Takeaways

- 01 Better outcomes require better decision environments
- 02 Plan design strongly influences participant behavior
- 03 Human-centered guidance remains critical in the public sector
- 04 Simplicity and personalization drive engagement
- 05 Income planning should integrate every source of retirement income

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The Bottom Line

Employees do not make one retirement decision — they make a sequence of connected decisions over decades.

Reduce friction

Simplify the choices participants actually face.

Scale the guidance

Pair behavioral design with technology that earns trust.

Support the journey

Deliver timely, personalized help across the lifecycle.

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Discussion: From Evidence to Action

“How can plans create an ‘easy button’ for participant decision-making without oversimplifying important financial choices?”

What participant behavior are you most trying to change?

Where are employees asking for help — and where are they silent?

What data identifies friction without feeling intrusive?

Which simplification would have the biggest impact?

Show of hands, then open discussion.

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Questions?

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2. Select "External QA/Survey."
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