Background information
The Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program (WDC) wanted to measure participant interest in having their Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) defined benefit estimate included on the Plan’s website and in participants’ personalized Lifetime Income Score. The Lifetime Income Score (LIS), powered by the WDC’s recordkeeper Empower Retirement, estimates the percentage of working income that a participant is on track to replace in retirement. The LIS percentage is generated by utilizing a participant’s individual deferred compensation savings, Social Security data, and any other outside sources of retirement income, such as a defined benefit estimate.

WDC partnered with Empower Retirement to offer a pilot group of 605 participants at 7 different employers a special limited-time option to view their defined benefit estimate in their LIS. The expected outcome was that the pilot group of participants would engage more with their account data on website and their LIS. The pilot program consisted of several communications touchpoints throughout the limited-time offer, which ran from April 15–June 30, 2020.

Goals
The goals of the pilot to include the defined benefit estimate in the LIS were to:

1) Enable participants to easily see their primary retirement income sources in one place, which will help them plan for retirement and identify any savings gaps while they are still working; and
2) Gauge participant engagement and interest in having their defined benefit estimate added to the participant website.

In their own words
Shelly Schueller, Deferred Compensation Director, said, “The defined benefit estimate pilot gave us valuable information about the desire of our participants to have a complete view into their retirement. We are pleased by the success of this project, and look forward to adding the defined benefit estimate for all active WDC participants in the coming year.”

Detailed description of the project
The Defined Benefit Estimate special project included:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for pilot participants about the special project.
- A pre-pilot email and letter to pilot participants explaining the limited time offer and how to access their account. The email and letter also explained how to opt-out of the pilot. The letter and email were sent in early April 2020.
- An opt-out process for any participant who did not want to participate.
- A pre-pilot survey and email to gauge interest about the new feature, which was sent on March 30, 2020.
- A pre-pilot survey reminder email was sent on April 9, 2020.
- A mid-pilot email during the pilot reminding participants to check their LIS was sent on May 20, 2020. Participants were encouraged to check out their new LIS and to meet with their Retirement Plan Advisor (RPA) for any questions.
- A pilot ending email to encourage participants to check their LIS was sent on June 25, 2020. Participants were again encouraged to view their new LIS, add in outside assets to their LIS,
and meet with their RPA.

- A post-pilot email asking participants to take a post-pilot survey about their experience was sent on July 14, 2020.
- The post-pilot survey, which was open until July 25, 2020.
- A survey reminder email to take the post-pilot survey was sent on July 22, 2020.

Examples of the communications campaign and screenshots of the defined benefit projection on the website are shown on pages 4-5.

Results
1. Pilot participants were highly engaged. The pre-pilot survey email was sent on March 30, 2020 and received an outstanding 52% open rate (over two times higher than the 23% industry standard), and of those who opened the email 34% clicked on the link to check out more information about the pilot. Other emails sent during the pilot ranged from a 34% open rate to a 47% open rate, and a 20% click rate to a 25% click rate.
2. Only two out of the 605 pilot group of participants opted out of the pilot.
3. Survey responses were very positive. The pre-pilot survey indicated that 86% of participants wanted to see all sources of their retirement income in one place, and 95% would be interested in the LIS including their WRS defined benefit estimate. 96% of respondents said it would be very helpful to see their WRS defined benefit estimate added to their future retirement income projection. 86% of respondents said they would be very engaged or engaged with adjusting their LIS if their WRS defined benefit estimate was included.
4. Pilot participants went online to see their data and made changes to their WDC accounts as a result of viewing their WRS defined benefit estimate. During the pilot, which ran from April 15-June 30, 47% of those targeted went online and reviewed their LIS with their WRS defined benefit estimate included. Average web session duration for these participants lasted about 8 minutes, 39 seconds, which is about a minute and 32 seconds longer than the WDC average session duration of 7 minutes and 7 seconds. 12% of the participants who went online decided to add in other outside assets and income, like rental income, to fill out their retirement income picture. 4.5% of the participants who went online increased their contribution after reviewing their LIS with their defined benefit estimate included, and 6% updated their beneficiaries during their web session.
5. During the pilot, participants could meet with their Retirement Plan Advisor (RPA), to discuss their retirement income and LIS. 10% of pilot participants chose to meet with their RPA during the pilot to review their new LIS.
6. Pilot participants took action after viewing their LIS: 13% made deferral changes throughout the pilot, and 10% of that group increased their deferrals. 4% made asset allocation changes during the pilot, and 3% signed up to have their assets rebalanced on a regular basis.
7. The post-pilot survey to participants revealed that 80% of respondents reviewed their WDC LIS during the pilot. 55% of respondents said it was very helpful to see their WRS defined benefit estimate added to their total future retirement income projection. 92% of respondents said they would like to continue to see their WRS defined benefit estimate included in their LIS. 58% of respondents said they adjusted the sliders on their WDC website account to make a change in their contribution, planned retirement age or mix of investments. 43% of respondents rated themselves as engaged in adjusting their LIS since the pilot began.
8. Employer feedback was also overwhelming positive, with many noting they are happy that the data is in one place, which assists their employees in planning for retirement. No negative feedback was received.
The WDC defined benefit estimate special project confirmed that providing retirement income sources in one place is desirable, because it makes retirement planning for participants much easier. Pilot data also revealed that participants who had access to their defined benefit data engaged with their WDC accounts even further by adjusting their deferrals, asset allocations and even their beneficiaries.

This special project aligns directly with the WDC’s mission to help its participants meet their retirement income goals and to make retirement planning accessible and easy to all. The Deferred Compensation Board decided to add the defined benefit estimate to all participant’s LIS in April of 2021, given the success of the pilot.

Feasibility of use by other governments of a similar size
Other government plans with a defined benefit plan should work with their recordkeeper to determine if populating their participants’ defined benefit data is available to them. Within our recordkeeper’s environment, the functionality is available based on the defined benefit administrator’s ability to provide the defined benefit file feed in the correct format. If available, we highly recommend that the 457 plan work with their defined benefit plan administrator and their recordkeeper to determine a process to make this available for participants. It makes a huge difference in participant engagement, which we expect to translate to better retirement outcomes for these participants in the future.

Examples of Defined Benefit Estimate Pilot communications

Pre-pilot email and letter
Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program

Thank you for taking the time to help improve the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program!

As a friendly reminder, you will have another survey concluding the end of the pilot program. This information will be used to determine the effectiveness and success of the possible upgrade to the Lifetime Income Score and the WDC Program.

Questions? Call the WDC at (877) 457-WDCP (9327)

Thank you for your participation in the pilot program. Your direct involvement may help improve the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program (WDC).

As a friendly reminder, your Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) pension benefit estimate was added to your WDC account and is shown as “employer contributions” under Net Assets. The monthly dollar amount comes directly from your WRS Statement of Benefits as of January 1, 2020 and does not reflect future benefits. To project future WRS retirement benefits, visit the ETP Retirement Calculator.

To review your WRS estimate in addition to your Lifetime Income Score, follow the steps below:

- Log in to your WDC account at www.wdc457.org.
- Navigate and click on the Other Aspects tab below your Lifetime Income Score. If you have already added your own pension benefit estimate, you will want to delete it to avoid any duplicate estimates.
- If you have not added a pension benefit estimate, review the WRS estimate and adjust the numbers to see how the addition of your pension benefit estimate and different corrections affect your score.

Thank you for your participation in the pilot program. Your direct involvement may help improve the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program (WDC).
NAGDCA 2021 LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION AWARD
Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program (WDC)
Plan Design & Administration – Defined Benefit Estimate Pilot

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**Post-pilot survey email**

Thank you for taking the time to help improve the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program!

Thank you for taking part in the pilot program designed to test a possible upgrade to the Lifetime Income Score feature available on the WDC website. To help us determine if these upgrades should be made permanent, please take a few moments and give us your feedback. Your responses will be kept confidential and will be used to help determine future WDC enhancements to the Program.

Please click the link before Saturday, July 25, 2020. It should only take a few minutes to complete.

Click here to take the survey!

Questions? Call the WDC at (877) 457-WDCP (9327)

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**Pre-pilot survey question**

Thank you for taking a few minutes to give us some feedback. Your input is greatly appreciated.

* 1. Have you done any retirement planning on your own?
   - Yes
   - No

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**Post-pilot survey question**

Thank you for taking part in the ETF Pilot Program and for taking a few minutes to give us some feedback. Your input is greatly appreciated.

As part of the pilot, when you logged into your WDC account between April 15, 2020 and July 1, 2020, your WRS pension estimate was included in your Lifetime Income Score. Your Lifetime Income Score is a personalized estimate of your future retirement income based on your current rate of contributions to your WDC account and your chosen investment mix as well as other factors.

* 1. Have you reviewed your WDC Lifetime Income Score since April 15 to view the addition of your WRS retirement pension benefit estimate?
   - Yes
   - No