ECONOMIST ENTERPRISE

Shorter retirement delays, but not for all

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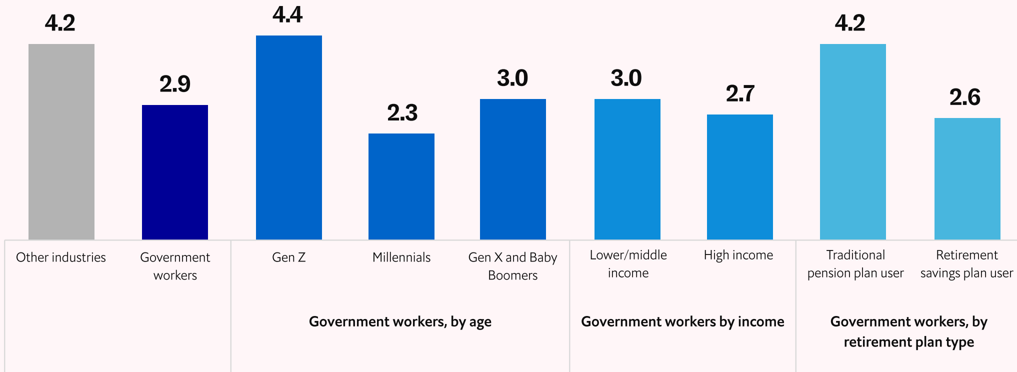
Government workers expect smaller retirement delays—but larger gaps remain for some

Expected retirement delays (in years)

Difference between expected retirement timing and ideal retirement timing



Source: Economist Enterprise 2025 US Benefits 2.0 survey

Government employees expect to retire closer to their ideal timing than workers in other sectors, with an average expected delay of 2.9 years compared with 4.2 years elsewhere, according to the latest Benefits 2.0 survey, conducted by Economist Enterprise and sponsored by Nuveen. But retirement expectations vary meaningfully across the government workforce.

Gen Z employees anticipate the longest delay, at 4.4 years, while Gen X and Baby Boomers expect a 3.0-year delay—higher than Millennials' 2.3 years. These differences may reflect distinct pressures at opposite ends of the workforce. Younger employees may feel less financially secure early in their careers, while older workers may be responding to rising healthcare costs and changing retirement expectations later in life.

Plan type also matters. Government workers using traditional pension plans report the same ideal retirement age as those using retirement savings plans (61), but they expect to retire later—at 65, compared with 63.6. This may reflect how pension structures can encourage longer service, but it also shows that retirement expectations can vary significantly even within a comparatively stable benefits environment.

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