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Help Wanted: Strong Economy Means More Employers Can Hire and Retain Experienced Workers

New In Depth AARP Survey ‘Value of Experience’ Includes Insights on Workers, Employers, Entrepreneurs, Age Bias, and More

En español | WASHINGTON, DC—According to a new AARP survey of experienced workers, nearly 9 in 10 work for financial reasons, but approximately 8 in 10 either enjoy or feel useful doing their work. And among those who plan to retire, over 1 in 4 plans to start a business or earn money in some independent way, such as a gig economy job. Given employers’ need for talent, it makes great business sense to hire experienced workers, as demonstrated by additional AARP research.

“With rich work histories, varied experiences and expertise, older workers want to work, they’re ready to work, and they need to work,” said AARP Vice President of Financial Resilience Susan Weinstock. “More employers are looking for qualified candidates and experienced workers should have the opportunity to be judged on their merits, rather than their age.”

To highlight job opportunities among 50-plus workers, AARP launched an employer pledge for companies who hire workers based on ability, regardless of age. Since 2013, 650 employers have signed AARP’s pledge. AARP also continues to educate employers about the value of older workers and the benefits of a multigenerational workforce.

“According to government data, workforce participation rates for older workers exceed participation before the Great Recession, while younger worker participation is below pre-recession numbers,” added Weinstock. “While employment trends for older workers are favorable, with 27.9% of 55-plus workers suffering long-term unemployment compared to 18.1% of 16-54 workers, the long-term unemployment disparity suggests that entrenched age-bias still exist too often in the workplace.”

Findings from AARP’s survey, *The Value of Experience*, show that many experienced workers still face adversity in their job hunt or place of employment.

- More than 9 in 10 workers see age discrimination as somewhat or very common.
 - At work, more than 6 in 10 older workers (61 percent) report they’ve seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace, and of those concerned about losing their job in the next year, one-third (34 percent) list age discrimination as either a major or minor reason.
 - On the job hunt, almost half (44 percent) of older job applicants say they have been asked for age-related information from a potential employer.
- Only 3 percent report they have made a formal complaint to a supervisor, human resource representative, another organization or a government agency.
- Nearly 6 in 10 (59 percent) strongly support strengthening our nation’s age discrimination laws.

AARP wants to ensure that 50-plus workers are empowered, valued and have the opportunity to work as long as they need to or desire. In addition to AARP’s efforts to support consumers with information and programs related to job search and work opportunities, educate employers on the value of experienced workers, AARP works to strengthen and enforce the *Age Discrimination in Employment Act*.

Methodology: *The Value of Experience* AARP’s Multicultural Work and Jobs Study, fielded in September 2017 to 3,900 respondents ages 45-plus who are in the workforce – working or looking for work. The full study including the annotated survey, detailed methodology, and additional fact sheets, can be found at www.aarp.org/valueofexperience.

Multicultural and Gender Findings – AARP also did deeper dives into multicultural and gender insights with experienced workers and in the near future plans to release *fact sheets* on the following groups of experienced workers: African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, LGBT, and Women.

About AARP

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP

strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

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