



***AARP Bulletin* Survey on
Employment Status of the
45+ Population**

Executive Summary

May 2009



***AARP Bulletin Survey on
Employment Status of the 45+ Population***

Executive Summary

**Copyright © 2009
AARP
Knowledge Management
601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049**

Reprinting with Permission

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce **AARP The Magazine**, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 34.5 million readers; **AARP Bulletin**, the go-to news source for AARP's 40 million members and Americans 50+; **AARP Segunda Juventud**, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

AARP collected the data for this project through a telephone survey administered by International Communications Research (ICR). This report was written by Gerard Rainville, Senior Research Advisor, AARP Strategic Issues Research. For additional information contact Gerard Rainville at GRainville@aarp.org.

AARP recently commissioned a nationwide survey to determine the employment status of people 45 years or older. The survey examined whether people in this age group had lost jobs or sought new employment over the last 12 months. It also asked them if they had uncertainty about keeping their current jobs.

About one-quarter of the 45+ population reported already being retired. The largest concentration of retirees was in the 65+ age group, with over half (56%) reporting being retired.

Survey findings include:

- **Seventeen percent of those surveyed said they had postponed plans to retire.** Twenty-seven percent of those in the age group approaching retirement age (i.e. those between 55-64) reported postponing plans to retire and about one-fifth (19%) of this age group reported already being retired.
- **Fifteen percent of people in the survey said they looked for a new job because of uncertainty about their current employment.** Twenty seven percent of those in the 45-54 age group looked for a new job because of uncertainty. In the age groups with fewer people employed (i.e. those aged 55-64 and 65+), fewer respondents reported looking for new jobs because of uncertainty about their current employment.
- **Sixteen percent of respondents in the 45-54 and 55-64 age groups reported having lost a job during the past 12 months.** Of those, 28% of those 45-54 and 30% of those 55-64 reported finding another job after having lost a job.
- **Twenty two percent of those age 45-54 felt it was at least “somewhat likely” that their job could be eliminated within the next year.** One-quarter (25%) of this group reported not working or already being retired, which means job insecurity is even higher among those who could conceivably experience job loss. In considering only those at risk for losing their jobs, thirty percent of those age 45-54 felt it was “at least somewhat likely” that their jobs could be eliminated in the next 12 months.

Survey methodology

The study was conducted for AARP via telephone by ICR, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted from May 1- May 7, 2009 among a nationally representative sample of 767 respondents 45 years of age or older. A total of 219 respondents are age 45-54, a total of 234 respondents are age 55-64 and a total of 314 respondents are age 65+. The margin of error for total respondents is $\pm 3.5\%$ at the 95% confidence level. More information about ICR can be obtained by visiting www.icrsurvey.com

Topline Findings for AARP Bulletin Survey on Employment Status of the 45+ Population

(Total Respondents 45+ n = 767)

ES-1 During the past 12 months, (have you/has)...?

Total Respondents' (Ages 45+ who are employed or retired or temporarily unemployed; n = 683)	Yes	No	Already retired	Don't know	Ref.
a. Postponed plans to retire	17	56	26	*	1
b. Increased the number of hours you work	14	60	24	*	1
c. Decreased the number of hours you work	19	56	24	*	1
d. Taken a second job	10	89	NA	*	1
e. Lost a job	9	89	NA	*	1
f. Your spouse lost a job * (n=392)	6	93	NA	--	1
g. Looked for a new job because of uncertainty about your current employment	15	83	NA	*	1
h. Taken a cut in pay	14	84	NA	1	1
i. Lost or had your health benefits reduced	16	82	NA	1	1
j. Had to take furlough days off from work for which you were not paid	10	87	NA	1	1
k. Your employer stopped contributing to your 401 (k)	19	77	NA	3	1

Ages 45-54 Respondents (Who are employed or retired or temporarily unemployed; n = 183)	Yes	No	Already retired	Don't know	Ref.
a. Postponed plans to retire	22	75	2	--	*
b. Increased the number of hours you work	28	69	2	*	*
c. Decreased the number of hours you work	24	73	2	*	*
d. Taken a second job	19	81	NA	--	--
e. Lost a job	16	84	NA	--	--
f. Your spouse lost a job * (n=112)	9	91	NA	--	--
g. Looked for a new job because of uncertainty about your current employment	27	72	NA	*	*
h. Taken a cut in pay	14	85	NA	--	1
i. Lost or had your health benefits reduced	20	78	NA	2	--
j. Had to take furlough days off from work for which you were not paid	17	81	NA	1	1
k. Your employer stopped contributing to your 401 (k)	21	78	NA	1	--

(* Item f. asked of total respondents age 45+ who married and are employed or retired or temporarily unemployed)

Ages 55-64 Respondents (who are employed or retired or temporarily unemployed; n = 204)	Yes	No	Already retired	Don't know	Ref.
a. Postponed plans to retire	27	53	19	--	1
b. Increased the number of hours you work	14	67	18	--	1
c. Decreased the number of hours you work	25	57	16	--	1
d. Taken a second job	9	89	NA	*	2
e. Lost a job	16	87	NA	--	2
f. Your spouse lost a job (married, & employed or retired or temporarily unemployed; n = 128)	7	93	NA	--	--
g. Looked for a new job because of uncertainty about your current employment	16	83	NA	--	2
h. Taken a cut in pay	19	81	NA	--	1
i. Lost or had your health benefits reduced	24	75	NA	1	1
j. Had to take furlough days off from work for which you were not paid	12	87	NA	--	1
k. Your employer stopped contributing to your 401 (k)	24	69	NA	6	1

Ages 65+ Respondents' (who are employed or retired or temporarily unemployed; n = 296)	Yes	No	Already retired	Don't know	Ref.
a. Postponed plans to retire	3	39	56	1	1
b. Increased the number of hours you work	1	47	51	*	1
c. Decreased the number of hours you work	9	37	52	--	1
d. Taken a second job	*	98	NA	1	1
e. Lost a job	1	96	NA	1	1
f. Your spouse lost a job (married, & employed or retired or temporarily unemployed; n = 152)	*	97	NA	--	3
g. Looked for a new job because of uncertainty about your current employment	3	95	NA	1	1
h. Taken a cut in pay	11	86	NA	2	1
i. Lost or had your health benefits reduced	7	92	NA	*	1
j. Had to take furlough days off from work for which you were not paid	1	94	NA	3	1
k. Your employer stopped contributing to your 401 (k)	12	83	NA	3	2

ES-2 Have you been able to find another job?

(Asked of total respondents' age 45+ who are employed, retired, or temporarily unemployed and who have lost a job during the past 12 months)	Yes, found another job	No, did not find another job	Don't know	Ref.
5/7/09 Total (n = 51)	28	72	--	--
45-54 (n = 28)	28	72	--	--
55-64 (n = 18)	30	70	--	--
65+ (n = 5)	13	87	--	--

ES-1e/2. Combo Table

(Total respondents age 45+ are employed, retired, or temporarily unemployed)	Lost a job during the past 12 months			Did not lose a job during the past 12 months	Don't know	Ref.
	NET	Found another job	Did not find another job			
5/7/09 Total (n=683)	9	3	7	89	*	1
45-54 (n=183)	16	4	11	84	--	--
55-64 (n=204)	11	3	8	87	--	2
65+ (n=296)	1	*	1	96	1	1

ES-2a. Has your spouse been able to find another job?

(Total respondents' age 45+ married, employed, or retired, or temp. unemployed & whose spouse has lost a job during the past 12 months)	Yes, spouse found another job	No, spouse did not find another job	Don't know	Ref.
5/7/09 Total (n=15)	31	63	--	5
45-54 (n=7)	36	64	--	--
55-64 (n=7)	22	65	--	14
65+ (n=1)	100	--	--	--

ES-1f/2a. Combo Table

(Total respondents' age 45+ who are married, employed, retired, or temporarily unemployed)	Spouse lost a job during the past 12 months			Spouse did not lose a job during the past 12 months	Don't know	Ref.
	NET	Spouse found another job	Spouse did not find another job			
5/7/09 Total (n=392)	6	2	4	93	--	1
45-54 (n=112)	9	3	6	91	--	--
55-65 (n=128)	7	1	4	93	--	--
65+ (n=152)	*	*	--	97	--	3

ES-3 Since losing your job, have you (or your spouse) spent more time volunteering or helping others in your community?

(Total respondents' age 45+ who are employed, retired, or temporarily unemployed and they or their spouse have lost but found another job during the past 12 months.)	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/7/09 Total (n=22)	44	51	5	--
45-54 (n=11)	54	46	--	--
55-64 (n=9)	25	59	16	--
65+ (n=2)	40	60	--	--

ES-1e/1f/2a/3. Combo Table

(Total respondents age 45+ who are employed, retired, or temporarily unemployed)	5/7/09 Total (n=683)	Ages 45-54 (n=183)	Ages 55-64 (n=204)	Ages 65+ (n=296)
Respondent or spouse lost a job during the past 12 months	12	19	15	2
Respondent/spouse found another job	4	6	4	*
Have spent more time volunteering or helping others in your Community	2	3	1	*
Have not spent more time volunteering or helping others in your community	2	3	3	*
Respondent/spouse have not found another job	8	12	11	1
Respondent or spouse did not lose a job during the past 12 months/dk/ref	88	81	85	98

ES-4 How likely is it that your job could be eliminated within the next year?

	LIKELY			NOT LIKELY			Not employed/retired	Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not very	Not at all			
5/7/09 Total	15	4	11	41	17	24	43	1	1
45-54	22	7	15	52	22	30	25	*	--
55-65	13	3	10	46	22	23	38	1	2
65+	7	1	6	22	6	16	69	1	1

ES-5 During the past 12 months, did you return to work after retiring?

(Total respondents' age 45+ who are retired)	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/7/09 Total (n=307)	6	92	--	2
45-54 (n=7)	15	85	--	--
55-65 (n=56)	12	83	--	5
65+ (n=244)	4	95	--	1

ES-6 Did you return to work after retiring because you needed more income?

(Total respondents' age 45+ who are retired & returned to work.)	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/7/09 Total (n=16)	35	65	--	--
45-54 (n=1)	100	--	--	--
55-65 (n=5)	--	100	--	--
65+ (n=10)	57	43	--	--

ES-5/6. Combo Table						
(Total respondents age 45+ who are retired)	Returned to work after retiring			Did <i>not</i> return to work after retiring	Don't know	Refused
	NET	Because you needed more income	Not because you needed more income			
5/7/09 Total (n=307)	6	2	4	92	--	2
45-54 (n=7)	15	15	--	85	--	--
55-64 (n=56)	12	--	12	83	--	5
65+ (n=244)	4	2	2	95	--	1

AM-1. Are you or your spouse or partner currently a member of AARP?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/7/09 Total	35	63	1	*
45-54	19	80	1	--
55-65	41	57	1	1
65+	50	49	1	--