

A large green square is positioned in the top left corner of the page. A thin grey line extends from its bottom right corner, ending in a small yellow square. This line continues horizontally to the left of the title, then turns vertically down to meet a horizontal line that spans the width of the page. From the right end of this horizontal line, a vertical line extends downwards, ending in another small yellow square. A large, thin, light-brown arc starts from the top right, curves around the right side, and ends at the intersection of the horizontal and vertical lines at the bottom right.

# Attitudes Toward Work and Job Security

August 2006



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Report Prepared by S. Kathi Brown  
AARP Strategic Issues Research

Survey conducted by  
International Communications Research

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601 E St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20049  
[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

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# INTRODUCTION

In recent years, much media attention has been given to the increasing number of formerly U.S.-based jobs that companies have moved (or off shored) to foreign countries, the increasing use of technology to automate jobs that were once much more labor-intensive, and the growing population of immigrant workers in the U.S. In light of these dynamics, AARP commissioned a nationally representative survey of U.S. workers ages 18 and older in order to explore their attitudes about work and job security, including their expectations regarding the age at which they will retire and the degree to which they feel secure in their current job.

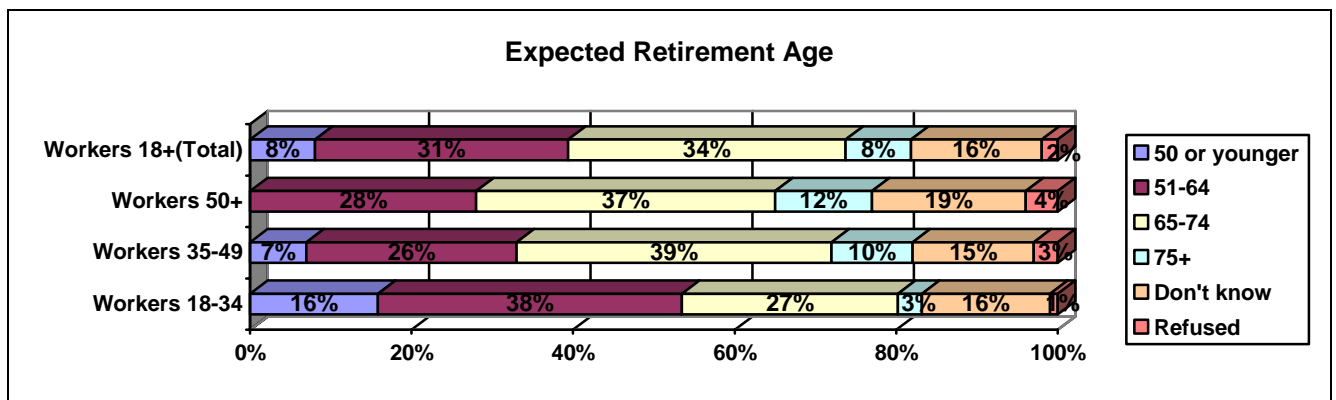
This survey, which was conducted for AARP by International Communications Research (ICR) from July 12, 2006 through July 16, 2006 as part of ICR’s weekly omnibus telephone polling, reveals that the majority of U.S. workers feel fairly secure in their current jobs. Furthermore, as other surveys have shown, many expect to continue working well into their late 60s, 70s, or beyond.

## KEY FINDINGS

### EXPECTED RETIREMENT AGE

When asked to indicate the age at which they expect to retire completely and stop working for pay, just under four in ten workers ages 18 and older (39%) reported that they expect to retire before the age of 65, while slightly more than four in ten (42%) reported that they expect to retire at the age of 65 or older. Furthermore, approximately one in six (16%) indicated that they did not know at what age they might retire.

Expected retirement age increases as worker age increases. For example, workers ages 18-34 (54%) are more likely than workers ages 35-49 (33%) and workers ages 50+ (28%) to expect that they will retire before the age of 65. Similarly, workers ages 35-49 (10%) and workers ages 50+ (12%) are more likely than workers ages 18-34 (3%) to indicate that they will retire at the age of 75 or older.



Q3. At what age do you expect to retire completely and not work for pay at all?

The median age at which workers expect to retire is 65. As shown in the table below, median expected retirement age is highest among workers ages 50+ and lowest among workers ages 18-34. Specifically, the median age at which workers 50+ expect to retire is 67, whereas the median age at which workers 18-34 expect to retire is just under 62 (61.7).

<b>Expected Retirement Age</b>	
<b>Current Age of Worker</b>	<b>Median Expected Retirement Age</b>
18-34 (n=242)	61.7
35-49 (n=396)	65.0
50+ (n=415)	67.0
Total (n=1053)	65.0

Q3. At what age do you expect to retire completely and not work for pay at all?

Comparisons between retirement age expectations reported by boomers in this survey and expectations reported by boomers in an earlier AARP survey suggest that boomers' expectations regarding the age at which they will retire have remained about the same during the last three years. Specifically, the median age at which today's working boomers (defined as those between the ages of 42 and 60 at the time of this survey) expect to retire is 65, which is the same as the median expected retirement age reported in 2003 by working boomers who responded to AARP's *Baby Boomers Envision Retirement II* survey.<sup>1</sup>

## **LIKELIHOOD THAT CURRENT JOB WILL BE ELIMINATED WITHIN NEXT YEAR**

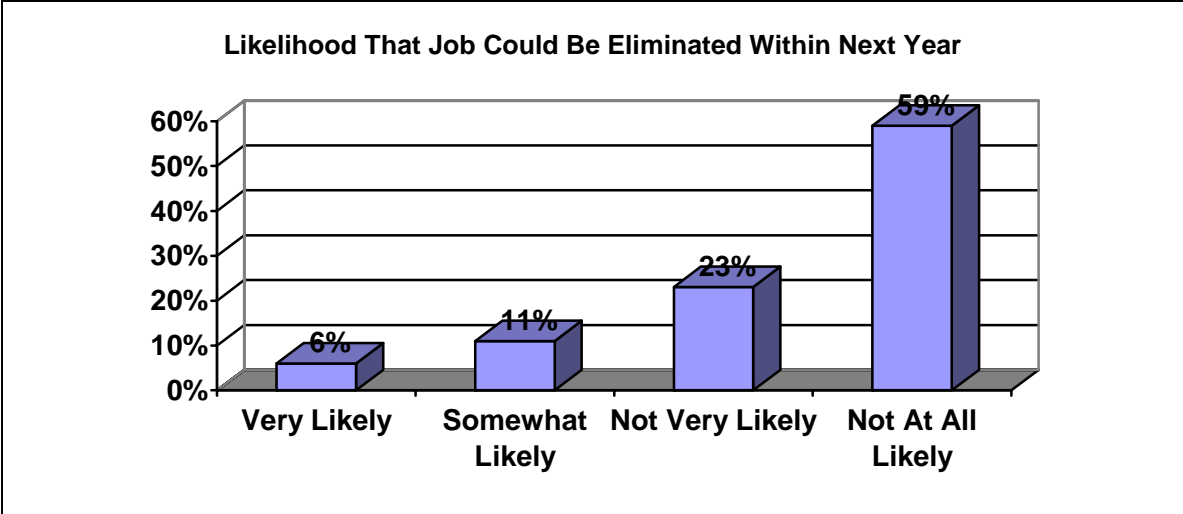
The majority (82%) of workers ages 18+ believe that it is unlikely that their job will be eliminated within the next year. However, approximately one in six (17%) workers do believe that this is either very likely (6%) or somewhat likely (11%).

Worker beliefs concerning how likely it is that their job could be eliminated do not vary significantly by age of worker.

Comparisons to a 2002 AARP survey that examined perceptions of job security among workers ages 45 to 74 suggest that workers today feel somewhat more secure in their jobs than they did in 2002. Specifically, in the 2002 survey, 22 percent of workers ages 45 to 74 indicated that it was very or somewhat likely that their job could be eliminated within the next year.<sup>2</sup> However, in this most recent study, the percentage of workers ages 45 to 74 who share this sentiment has dropped to 17 percent.

<sup>1</sup> AARP, *Baby Boomers Envision Retirement II: Survey of Baby Boomer's Expectations for Retirement*. (Washington, DC AARP, 2004). This survey, which was conducted in 2003, was of individuals between the ages of 38 to 57, which represented the age range of boomers in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> AARP, *Staying Ahead of the Curve: The AARP Work and Career Study*. (Washington, DC AARP, 2002).



Q4a. How likely is it that your job could be eliminated within the next year?

Among those workers who think that their job is likely to be eliminated within the next year, the most common reasons offered for these expectations are the weak economy (14%), a slowdown in business (12%), a disappearing need for the type of work that they do (9%), a lack of funding for their job (7%), and the possibility that their job may be off shored (7%).

<b>Reasons for Believing That Job Is Likely To Be Eliminated Within Next Year</b>	
<b>(Base: Workers 18+ who think job is very/somewhat likely to be eliminated in next year, n=159)</b>	
Weak economy	14%
Business is slow	12%
There is no longer a need for the type of work I do	9%
Funding has been cut/lack of funding	7%
Job may be off shored/moved to another country	7%
Business or factory is closing	5%
Going to college	5%
Temporary employment	5%
Merger or consolidation	4%
To cut costs	4%
Change in management	3%
Anything can happen, there is no guarantee	3%
Relocating	3%
Downsizing/cut backs	2%
Work in competitive industry	2%
My age	1%
My job performance	1%
Boss is older	*
Other	11%
Don't know	6%

Q4b. Why do you feel that your job is likely to be eliminated within the next year?

## EXPECTATIONS FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

When asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements related to their perceptions of their own job security over the next five years, a large majority of workers ages 18+ indicate that they feel that their jobs will be secure over this time period.

Specifically, slightly more than three in four (77%) workers ages 18+ expect to have their current job for at least another five years. Workers ages 35-49 (84%) and workers ages 50+ (83%) are more likely than workers ages 18-34 (65%) to feel this way.

Nevertheless, a small minority of workers voice concerns about the impact that immigrant workers, technological advances, and off shoring may have on their jobs over the next five years. For example, one in seven (15%) workers are concerned that their employer may replace them with an immigrant or other worker who will work for lower wages. Additionally, one in ten (9%) are concerned that technological advances, such as increasing automation or use of robots, may jeopardize their jobs. Finally, just under one in ten (8%) are concerned that their employer may move their job to a foreign country.

Concerns about the impact of immigrant workers and off shoring do not vary significantly by age of worker. However, with regard to the impact of technological advances, workers ages 35+ appear to be somewhat less concerned than younger workers. Specifically, workers ages 35+ (92%) are more likely than workers ages 18-34 (86%) to *disagree* that technological advances may jeopardize their jobs.

Expectations for Next Five Years			
(n=1,053)	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly/ Somewhat Agree
I expect to have my current job for at least another five years (n=1053)	60%	17%	77%
I am concerned that, within the next five years, my employer may replace me with an immigrant or other worker who is willing to do my job for less money (n=1053)	8%	7%	15%
I am concerned that advances in technology may mean that my job will be partly or completely replaced by a machine or a robot within the next five years (n=1053)	3%	6%	9%
I am concerned that my employer may move my job to a foreign country within the next five years (n=1053)	5%	3%	8%

## **YEARS AT CURRENT JOB**

Of all workers surveyed, approximately one in six (15%) had been at their job for less than one year, just over one-third (37%) had been in their current job between one and five years, and nearly one in five (18%) had been in it for six to ten years. Another three in ten (30%) had been in their current job for more than 10 years.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted by telephone from July 12 – July 16, 2006, among a nationally representative sample of 1,053 workers age 18 and older. Of those, 516 are boomers age 42 to 60 years old and 415 are age 50+. The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.8% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error for boomers is +/-5.2% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error for workers age 50 and older is +/-5.9% at the 95% confidence level. To capture these interviews, ICR used its primary general population omnibus.

The data is weighted by age, gender, region, education, race/ethnicity, number of phone lines, and number of adults in the household to be nationally representative of workers ages 18+.

## APPENDIX: ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

For each survey question, this annotated questionnaire shows the percentage of respondents who provided each response.

Employment Screener. Currently, are you yourself employed full-time, part-time, or not at all?

	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Not employed</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total (n=1053)	80	20	--	--
Boomers (n=516)	86	14	--	--
Age 50+ (n=415)	78	22	--	--

Age Screener. What is your age?

	<b>18-34</b>	<b>35-49</b>	<b>50+</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total (n=1053)	37	35	27	--
Boomers (n=516)	--	47	53	--
Age 50+ (n=415)	--	--	100	--

Q1. Are you self-employed or do you work for someone other than yourself?

	<b>Self-employed</b>	<b>Work for someone other than self</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total (n=1053)	15	81	4	--	*
Boomers (n=516)	17	79	4	--	--
Age 50+ (n=415)	21	77	2	--	--

Q2. How many years have you been at your current job?

	< 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years	Don't know	Refused
Total (n=1053)	15	37	18	18	12	*	*
Boomers (n=516)	6	28	18	25	23	--	*
Age 50+ (n=415)	5	25	13	24	32	*	*

Q3. At what age do you expect to retire completely and not work for pay at all?

	50 or younger	51-64 years	65-74 years	75+ years	Don't know	Refused
Total (n=1053)	8	31	34	8	16	2
Boomers (n=516)	1	31	39	10	15	3
Age 50+ (n=415)	--	28	37	12	19	4

Q4a. How likely is it that your job could be eliminated within the next year? Would you say...?

	LIKELY			NOT LIKELY			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not very	Not at all		
Total (n=1053)	17	6	11	82	23	59	1	*
Boomers (n=516)	16	5	11	83	23	60	1	*
Age 50+ (n=415)	16	7	9	83	25	58	1	*

(Asked of total workers 18+ who think it is likely that their job will be eliminated within the next year; n = 159; Boomers = 75; Age 50+ = 57)

Q4b. Why do you feel that your job is likely to be eliminated within the next year?

	Total (n=159)	Boomers (n=75)	Age 50+ (n=57)
Business is slow	12	10	12
Business or factory is closing	5	6	5
Change in management	3	5	3
Funding has been cut/lack of funding	7	10	8
Job may be off shored/moved to another country	7	8	7
Weak economy	14	19	11
Merger or consolidation	4	8	5
My age	1	2	2
My job performance	1	--	1
There is no longer a need for the type of work I do	9	8	9
To cut costs	4	4	5
Downsizing/cut backs	2	--	1
Going to college	5	--	--
Anything can happen, there is no guarantee	3	5	4
Relocating	3	1	7
Temporary employment	5	3	--
Boss is older	*	*	1
Work in competitive industry	2	--	--
Other	11	9	17
Don't know	6	7	8
Refused	*	--	--

**Q4a/4b Combined. This table shows the responses to Q4a and 4b as a percent of all survey respondents.**

	<b>Total (n=1053)</b>	<b>Boomers (n=516)</b>	<b>Age 50+ (n=415)</b>
<b>Likely that job will be eliminated in the next year</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>
Business is slow	2	2	2
Business or factory is closing	1	1	1
Change in management	1	1	*
Funding has been cut/lack of funding	1	2	1
Job may be off shored/moved to another country	1	1	1
Weak economy	2	3	2
Merger or consolidation	1	1	1
My age	*	*	*
My job performance	*	--	*
There is no longer a need for the type of work I do	2	1	1
To cut costs	1	1	1
Downsizing/cut backs	*	--	*
Going to college	1	--	--
Anything can happen, there is no guarantee	*	1	1
Relocating	1	*	1
Temporary employment	1	*	--
Boss is older	*	*	*
Work in competitive industry	*	--	--
Other reasons	2	1	3
<b>Not likely that job will be eliminated in the next year</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Refused</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>

WO-5. I am going to read you some statements about your job. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement. First/Next (INSERT)?

a. I expect to have my current job for at least another five years

	AGREE			DISAGREE			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly		
Total (n=1053)	77	60	17	22	9	13	1	*
Boomers (n=516)	86	70	16	14	6	8	*	--
Age 50+ (n=415)	83	68	15	15	6	9	2	--

b. I am concerned that my employer may move my job to a foreign country within the next five years

	AGREE			DISAGREE			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly		
Total (n=1053)	8	5	3	91	6	85	1	*
Boomers (n=516)	7	4	3	93	4	89	*	*
Age 50+ (n=415)	9	6	3	90	4	86	1	*

c. I am concerned that, within the next five years, my employer may replace me with an immigrant or other worker who is willing to do my job for less money

	AGREE			DISAGREE			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly		
Total (n=1053)	15	8	7	84	10	74	1	1
Boomers (n=516)	13	8	5	85	13	72	1	1
Age 50+ (n=415)	14	8	6	83	13	70	1	2

d. I am concerned that advances in technology may mean that my job will be partly or completely replaced by a machine or a robot within the next five years

	AGREE			DISAGREE			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly		
Total (n=1053)	9	3	6	90	7	83	*	*
Boomers (n=516)	6	2	4	94	6	88	--	*
Age 50+ (n=415)	7	3	4	92	6	86	*	*

**Additional Demographics** (other than Age and Employment Status Captured in Screener)

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Total (n=1053)</b>
Less than high school graduate	11
High school graduate	32
Some college	22
Graduated college	20
Postgraduate school or more	10
Technical school/other	4
Refused	1

<b>Total Annual Household Income</b>	<b>Total (n=1053)</b>
Under \$25,000	14
\$25,000 - \$49,999	26
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17
\$75,000+	28
Refused / Don't know / Unspecified	16

<b>Hispanic / non-Hispanic</b>	<b>Total (n=1053)</b>
Hispanic	14
Non-Hispanic	84
Refused / Don't know	2

<b>Race</b>	<b>Total (n=1053)</b>
White	77
Black	12
Other race	5
Refused / Unspecified	6

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total (n=1053)</b>
Male	54
Female	46