

2022 Benefits Scorecard: Assessing the Performance of Public and Private Benefits in Supporting Worker Financial Security



JULY 2022

2022 Benefits Scorecard

A first of its kind, the **Benefits Scorecard** creates a framework to assess the performance of both public and private benefits in supporting the financial security of workers.



When analyzing 22 benefits through the lens of financial security, we find that public benefits and private benefits play an important role for workers in supplementing and protecting income, helping meet essential needs, and building wealth, but similarly fail to be adequate, accessible, inclusive, and equitable for all types of workers.



When looking at how benefits interact with each other to holistically support workers and their families, we find undermining features that destabilize workers (e.g., asset limits and benefit cliffs), signaling the importance of improving how well benefits work together to enhance workers' financial security.



Benefit Definition: We define benefits broadly, with a focus on their intended impact, “something that promotes well-being”—where workers and their families experience dignity, financial stability, economic mobility, and resilience.



Applying the 2022 Benefits Scorecard

The 2022 Benefits Scorecard proposes a framework to assess how benefits perform for workers.



RESEARCHERS

Researchers can adopt and adapt the framework to help quantify worker financial security and to help build scorecards for specific states, sectors, or types of workers and their families. They can also use the scorecard to assess benefit performance over time.



BUSINESS LEADERS

Business leaders—including employers and investors—can use this scorecard as a new framework for understanding the role benefit offerings play in supporting the financial security of workers. Employers can use it to assess and improve their current—and potential—benefit offerings to their workers. The scorecard also serves as a framework for business leaders to understand the role of public benefits in supporting financial security of workers and the importance of improving interactions across both public and private benefits to enhance benefit performance.



POLICY LEADERS

Policy leaders can use state and local versions of the scorecard to understand how benefits are performing for workers in their jurisdiction and explore federal, state and local policy actions to improve benefit design and delivery to close critical gaps and enhance workers' financial security.



BENEFIT PROVIDERS

Benefit providers—including fintech companies, associations, and large providers—can adopt our scorecard and adapt it for workers they support and use the insights to explore innovations that improve worker financial security outcomes.

A Guide to Using the 2022 Benefits Scorecard

1. 2022 Benefits Scorecard: Approach and Methodology	<u>p. 5</u>
2. 2022 Benefits Scorecard: A New Framework for Assessing our Private and Public Benefits	<u>p. 14</u>
Summary of 2022 Benefits Scorecard	<u>p. 15</u>
Part I: Supplement Income and Provide Stability	<u>p. 18</u>
Part II: Protect Income	<u>p. 26</u>
Part III: Reduce Cost-of-Living Expenses and Support Essential Needs	<u>p. 34</u>
Part IV: Build Financial Resilience and Build Wealth	<u>p. 42</u>
3. Opportunities with the 2022 Benefits Scorecard	<u>p. 50</u>
4. Appendix	<u>p. 54</u>
5. Authors, Acknowledgement and Endnotes	<u>p. 64</u>

2022 Benefits Scorecard: Approach and Methodology

BENEFITS ARE A KEY PILLAR OF FINANCIAL SECURITY



ROUTINELY POSITIVE CASH FLOW

Income must be regularly higher than what is spent on basic needs.

Positive cash flow allows people to:

- Meet basic financial obligations
- Build savings



PERSONAL RESOURCES

Savings and “financial cushions” must allow people to weather small shocks, build assets and achieve economic mobility.

Personal resources allow people to:

- Weather smaller shocks
- Invest in family well-being, asset building and economic mobility



PUBLIC & PRIVATE BENEFITS

People cannot self-insure all the time and need access to public, employer, and third-party benefits.

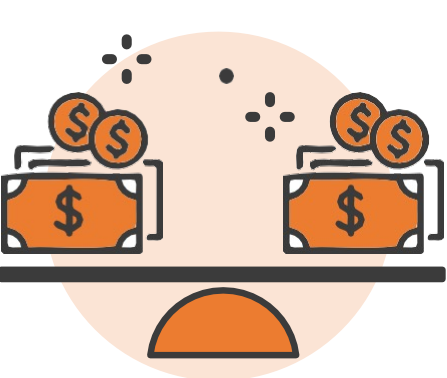
Public and private benefits allow people to:

- Replace or supplement income
- Reduce cost of living expenses
- Benefit from social insurance and risk pooling to protect households from major economic shocks
- Support household wealth building and economic mobility

Everybody Needs Benefits to Achieve Financial Security

Public and private benefits supplement wages, support essential needs, and protect workers by pooling risk and buying power.

Benefits play a foundational role in supporting workers by:



Supplementing income and providing stability



Protecting income



Reducing cost-of-living expenses and supporting essential needs



Building financial resilience and wealth

But Work and Benefit Arrangements Vary Significantly and Impact the Likelihood of Experiencing Financial Security

- Despite the number of public benefit programs and the proliferation of workplace benefit programs to promote well-being, not all workers have access to the same types or quality of workplace and public benefits.
- As a result, only higher-income, full-time employees receiving workplace benefits stand a reasonable chance of achieving financial security.

Financial Security by Work Arrangements and Benefit Receipt

Attachment to an Employer	Approximate Share of US Adults in Each Work Arrangement	Not Receiving Any Benefits	Receiving Public Benefits	Participating in Workplace Benefits
Full-time, Wage or Salaried Workers for a Single Employer	<p>47%</p>	Not Applicable*	Somewhat Stable / Relatively Stable 	Most Financially Secure
Part-time, Wage or Salaried Workers for One or More Employers		Financially Precarious 	Somewhat Stable 	Relatively Stable
Workers in Nonstandard Arrangements	<p>10%</p>	Financially Precarious 	Somewhat Stable 	Relatively Stable
Not Currently Earning Labor Income	<p>43%</p>	Most Precarious 	Financially Precarious 	Somewhat Stable / Relatively Stable

For All Workers to Achieve Financial Security, they Need Benefits to Meet their Core Financial Needs

- All workers need access and equitable outcomes from benefits that:
 - ✓ **Supplement income and provide stability**
 - ✓ **Protect income**
 - ✓ **Reduce cost-of-living expenses and support essential needs**
 - ✓ **Build financial resilience and wealth**
- The 2022 Benefits Scorecard provides a new framework to assess how benefits are performing today to support workers' financial security needs. It also creates a foundation for the work ahead to help us move toward a future where all workers are equitably supported by benefits. This includes:
 - Determining which current benefits meet workers' core financial needs and what benefit offering innovations are needed to fill current gaps.
 - Determining how to improve and modernize design and delivery to support the financial security of all workers and their families.



The Scorecard Starts with an Assessment of 22 Prevalent and Prominent Benefits





- Public benefits included are the most prominent safety net and social insurance programs.
- Private benefits included are the most well-known and commonly received workplace benefits.
- Emerging benefits were excluded from this assessment (e.g., guaranteed income, earned wage access, employer-sponsored emergency savings) due to their nascent nature, but they should be considered in determining how to meet the core benefit needs of workers. They can also provide insight for modernizing the design and delivery of benefits.
- This assessment is not exhaustive, and given the number of public benefits, we did exclude those that are smaller in scope (e.g., Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Emergency Broadband Benefit). This exclusion is not indicative of the role these benefits play in supporting the financial security of workers and their families.

DEFINITIONS

Our approach on benefits: We define benefits broadly, with a focus on their intended impact, “something that promotes well-being.” Based on this, we seek to ensure all workers have access to benefits that meet their core financial needs to promote their well-being—where workers and their families experience dignity, financial stability, economic mobility, and resilience.

Our approach on workers: We seek to ensure that benefits are inclusive of all workers—including undocumented immigrants, low-wage workers, workers of color, formerly incarcerated individuals, and individuals with disabilities—irrespective of their employment status or labor income. We recognize the importance of all the ways individuals work to support themselves, their households, and their community.

Benefits are Organized by the Function they Play in Supporting Workers' Financial Lives

Supplement Income and Provide Stability	Reduce Cost-of-Living Expenses & Support Essential Needs
 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)• Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)• Child Tax Credit (CTC)• Paid Sick Leave	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)• Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Program (PBRA)• Home Mortgage Interest Deduction (HMID)• Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)• Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC)• Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance• Medicaid• Medicare
Protect Income	Build Financial Resilience and Wealth
 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML)• Short-term (STDI) and Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)• Long Term Disability Insurance (LTDI)• Workers Compensation (WC)• Unemployment Insurance (UI)• Social Security Retirement• Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employer-Sponsored Defined Contribution Retirement Plan• Employer-Sponsored Defined Benefit Retirement Plan

Benefits Scorecard Indicators

The Scorecard uses these four key indicators to assess the performance of both public and private benefits in supporting the financial security of workers:



**DOLLAR VALUE THE
BENEFIT PROVIDES**

How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?



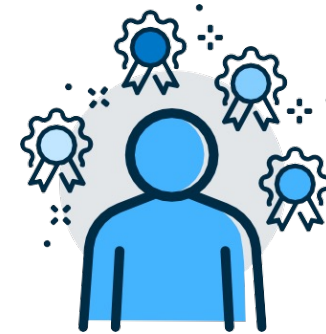
BENEFIT DELIVERY

How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?



BENEFIT ACCESS & USE

How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?



**INTERACTIONS
BETWEEN BENEFITS**

How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?

Each Benefit Receives Two Scores

We first assess how each benefit individually performs in supporting the financial security of workers using the benefit today and then assess their overall performance in holistically supporting the financial security of all workers.

Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today

How Well Does the Benefit Individually Perform in Supporting Workers Using it Today?

We look at the dollar value the benefit provides (indicator 1) and if it is effective in its support of workers, as well as how the benefit delivery (indicator 2), such as usage fees and waiting periods, reinforces or reduces the benefit value received. Based on these two indicators, benefits can receive a benefit performance score for supporting workers using it today in a five-scale range: needs significant improvement, needs moderate improvement, needs minor improvement, performs moderately well, and performs well.

Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers

How Well Does the Benefit Perform in Holistically Supporting all Workers?

We build off the initial performance score by adding in benefit access and use (indicator 3) to indicate if the benefit is nearly inclusive of all workers or if exclusions exist. We also add in interactions between benefits (indicator 4), such as asset limits and means testing, to incorporate how benefit interactions can enhance or undermine workers' financial security. Based on all four indicators—dollar value the benefit provides, benefit delivery, benefit access and use, and interactions between benefits—benefits receive an overall benefit performance score for holistically supporting all workers in a five-scale range: needs significant improvement, needs moderate improvement, needs minor improvement, performs moderately well, and performs well.

See [Appendix A](#) for more details on our methodology for assessing benefits in the scorecard.

“All Workers” Definition: We seek to ensure that benefits are inclusive of all workers—including undocumented immigrants, low-wage workers, workers of color, formerly incarcerated individuals, and individuals with disabilities—irrespective of their employment status or labor income.

2022 Benefit Scorecard:

A New Framework for Assessing our Public and Private Benefits

2022 Benefits Scorecard

Summary of 2022 Benefits Scorecard



2022 Benefits Scorecard (1 of 2)

	1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides	2. Benefit Delivery	3. Benefit Access and Use	4. Interactions between Benefits	Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today	Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers	
Benefit Name	<i>How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?</i>	<i>How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?</i>	<i>How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?</i>	<i>How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?</i>	<i>How well does the benefit individually perform in supporting workers using it today?</i> (Indicators 1&2)	<i>How well does the benefit perform in holistically supporting all workers?</i> (Indicators 1, 2, 3 & 4)	
Income Supplement & Stability	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Not Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Undermines Stability	Needs Significant Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Effective	Significantly Reduces	Somewhat Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Minor Improvement
	Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Somewhat Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Minor Improvement
	Child Tax Credit (CTC)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Somewhat Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Minor Improvement
	Paid Sick Leave	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Enhances Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Moderate Improvement
Protect Income	Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Enhances Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Moderate Improvement
	Short-term (STDI) and Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
	Long Term Disability Insurance (LTDI)	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
	Workers Compensation (WC)	Not Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Undermines Stability	Needs Significant Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Social Security Retirement	Effective	Reinforces	Nearly Inclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Well	Performs Moderately Well
	Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement

RATING SCALES

Dollar Value the Benefit Provides
(Low to High):
Not Effective » Partially Effective » Effective

Benefit Delivery
(Low to High):
Significantly Reduces » Slightly Reduces » Reinforces

Benefit Access and Use
(Low to High): Significantly Exclusive » Somewhat Exclusive » Nearly Inclusive

Interactions between Benefits
(Low to High):
Undermines Stability » Supports Stability » Enhances Stability

Benefit Performance Score (Low to High):
Needs Significant Improvement » Needs Moderate Improvement » Needs Minor Improvement » Performs Moderately Well » Performs Well

2022 Benefits Scorecard (2 of 2)

	1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides	2. Benefit Delivery	3. Benefit Access and Use	4. Interactions between Benefits	Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today	Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers	
Benefit Name	<i>How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?</i>	<i>How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?</i>	<i>How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?</i>	<i>How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?</i>	<i>How well does the benefit individually perform in supporting workers using it today?</i> (Indicators 1&2)	<i>How well does the benefit perform in holistically supporting all workers?</i> (Indicators 1, 2, 3 & 4)	
Reduce Expenses	Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)	Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
	Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Program (PBRA)	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
	Home Mortgage Interest Deduction (HMID)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Undermines Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	Not Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Significant Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Medicaid	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Somewhat Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Minor Improvement
	Medicare	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Nearly Inclusive	Enhances Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Performs Moderately Well
Build Wealth	Employer-Sponsored Defined Contribution Retirement Plan	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
	Employer-Sponsored Defined Benefit Retirement Plan	Effective	Reinforces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Well	Needs Moderate Improvement

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2022 Benefits Scorecard





Part I: Supplement Income and Provide Stability



Five Benefits that Supplement Income and Provide Stability are Assessed

Benefit	Description	System
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Safety net program that provides cash for a limited time to low-income families. Families may also receive non-cash benefits such as job training.	Public
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Safety net program that provides food assistance benefits to eligible low-income individuals and families via an Electronic Benefits Transfer card.	Public
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Refundable tax credit that reduces tax liability for low-to-moderate income working individuals and couples, particularly those with children.	Public
Child Tax Credit (CTC)	Partially refundable tax credit that reduces tax liability for low-income taxpayers and households with children.	Public
Paid Sick Leave	Paid time off from work that workers can use to stay home to address their health needs without losing pay.	Private

Addressing Barriers to Access and Use, Promoting More Equitable Values, and Removing Undermining Interaction Features (like Asset Limits) will Enhance Benefit Performance in Supporting All Workers

	1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides 	2. Benefit Delivery 	3. Benefit Access and Use 	4. Interactions between Benefits 	Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers using it Today	Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers
<i>Benefit Name</i>	<i>How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?</i>	<i>How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?</i>	<i>How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?</i>	<i>How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?</i>	<i>How well does the benefit individually perform in supporting workers using it today?</i>	<i>How well does the benefit perform in holistically supporting all workers?</i>
					(Indicators 1&2)	(Indicators 1, 2, 3 & 4)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Not Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Undermines Stability	Needs Significant Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
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Paid Sick Leave	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Enhances Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Moderate Improvement

RATING SCALES

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(Low to High):
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Interactions between Benefits
(Low to High):
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Benefit Performance Score (Low to High):
Needs Significant Improvement » Needs Moderate Improvement » Needs Minor Improvement » Performs Moderately Well » Performs Well

Benefit Value and Delivery Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **Responsive value promotes equity.** SNAP is designed to respond to the needs of families by providing larger benefit amounts to households with the greatest financial need.¹
- ✓ **Cash benefits provide workers with agency to meet their needs.** Cash transfers like EITC and refundable portions of CTC give workers autonomy and flexibility in the use of benefits.²



Features that undermine financial security:

- **Long waiting periods to use benefits destabilize families.** Delays can result in reliance on predatory financial products, like refund anticipation loans at tax time³, or volatility in income due to probationary periods in use of paid sick leave.⁴
- **Conditions on usage undermine benefit value and dignity of workers.** Delivery of SNAP and TANF on an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card restricts usage⁵ and stigmatizes benefit recipients while fear of job loss or employer denial impacts use of paid sick leave.⁶
- **Discretionary values and use of funds creates inadequate and inequitable support.** With state discretion on usage, only 21% of TANF assistance⁷ is distributed in the form of cash benefits, limiting its value as an income enhancement support. Black children are more likely than Latinx and white children to live in states with the lowest TANF benefit levels, with 52% living in states with benefits at or below 20% of the poverty line.⁸



Benefit Access and Interaction Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **Automatic eligibility and interoperability of data supports access and stability.** Broad-based categorical eligibility⁹ allows states to automate SNAP eligibility for those qualifying for other safety net assistance programs. SNAP benefits also promote portability, continued access as recipients move across states.
- ✓ **Reinforcing benefit interactions support stability and promote economic mobility.** Both EITC and CTC help stabilize households without counting as income^{10 11} which negatively impacts access to means-tested benefits; access to paid sick leave can enhance retirement plans, with one study finding that workers with paid sick leave had 30% more saved in retirement.¹²



Features that undermine financial security:

- **Means testing, asset limits, and work requirements destabilize and neglect dignity of workers.** These features of TANF and SNAP create significant barriers to access for workers. At the same time, asset limits and means testing can encourage being unbanked, increase churn off and on programs, and impact the use of other benefits that support wealth building.¹³
- **Benefit cliffs create financial instability.** SNAP eligibility requires the income of participants to be below 130% of the federal poverty guideline, which creates a benefit cliff for workers who increase their earnings above that level—making them completely ineligible.¹⁴ This can impact take-up of job promotions and reduce the level of support of other benefits that count as income—such as cash assistance, Social Security, and unemployment insurance.
- **State discretion in eligibility creates significant disparities in access to benefits.** Discretion in paid sick leave eligibility policies excludes many part-time, low-wage, and small business workers.¹⁵ Nearly 40% of Black workers¹⁶ and more than half of Latinx workers¹⁷ are excluded from paid sick leave benefits.



Critical Gaps in Benefit Access and Use



More than

3.7 Million

Families eligible for TANF do not receive it.¹⁸

Nearly

28 Million
Workers

do not have access to paid sick leave.¹⁹



While nearly 78% of eligible households claim the EITC,²⁰ 5 million households leave \$7 billion unclaimed annually.²¹ This number excludes ineligible families such as mixed-status families filing without Social Security numbers.

Local and State Policy and Market Actions to Close Benefit Gaps

Improving and expanding access

- In partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Civilla used a people-centric approach to help shorten their public benefit application, which incorporates five different programs, by 80% and cut the processing time by almost 50%.²²
- The Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services partnered with Code for America to create MNbenefits, an interface that has eliminated internet and language barriers by creating a mobile-friendly application.²³
- States including Colorado and Connecticut ensure both TANF and SNAP eligibility for individuals with prior felony drug convictions.²⁴
- Fourteen states, 19 cities and four counties have mandated paid sick leave.²⁵ As a result, 81% of workers in California report paid sick leave access as opposed to only 36% of workers in places without paid sick leave laws.²⁶
- While 55% of workers in retail and food service lack access to paid sick leave, more than 80% of workers at Home Depot, Safeway, Costco, and In-N-Out report having paid sick leave.²⁷

Enhancing values

- Many states offer refundable state EITCs to supplement the federal benefit while some states, including Colorado and New York, offer fully refundable state CTCs.²⁸



Federal Policy Actions During the Pandemic Promote Benefit Access and Equity

Although temporary, these actions signaled what is needed to close benefit gaps for workers.

- Improved access by ensuring approximately 65 million private-sector workers and 22 million public-sector workers had job-protected paid sick leave.²⁹
- Promoted equity by expanding EITC to provide income support to over 17 million low-wage workers³⁰ who are single filers, increasing the maximum award from \$543 to \$1,502.³¹

2022 Benefits Scorecard





Part II: Protect Income



Seven Benefits that Protect Income are Assessed

Benefit	Description	System
Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML)	Partially or fully compensated time away from work for specific and generally significant family caregiving needs, such as the arrival of a new child or serious illness of a close family member.	Public or Private
Short-term (STDI) and Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)	Disability insurance plans that are intended to cover individuals who cannot work for brief periods of time. Although some short-term policies can last for up to two years, the typical policy lasts between three and six months.	Public or Private
Long Term Disability Insurance (LTDI)	Disability insurance plans that provide long-term wage replacement for workers who can't work because of a disability.	Private
Workers Compensation	Provides wage replacement, medical, and rehabilitation benefits to workers who are injured on the job regardless of who was at fault.	Private
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Social insurance program that provides weekly unemployment insurance payments for workers who lose their job through no fault of their own, replacing part of their wage while they seek work..	Public
Social Security Retirement	Social insurance program that provides replacement income for qualified retirees and their families.	Public
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	Social insurance program that provides replacement of some lost income for qualified workers who can no longer work due to a disability	Public

Expanding Access and Use while also Ensuring Equitable Replacement Rates will Strengthen Benefit Performance in Supporting All Workers

	1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides 	2. Benefit Delivery 	3. Benefit Access and Use 	4. Interactions between Benefits 	Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers using it Today	Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers
<i>Benefit Name</i>	<i>How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?</i>	<i>How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?</i>	<i>How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?</i>	<i>How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?</i>	<i>How well does the benefit individually perform in supporting workers using it today?</i> (Indicators 1&2)	<i>How well does the benefit perform in holistically supporting all workers?</i> (Indicators 1, 2, 3 & 4)
Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Enhances Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Moderate Improvement
Short-term (STDI) and Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
Long Term Disability Insurance (LTDI)	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
Workers Compensation (WC)	Not Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Undermines Stability	Needs Significant Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
Social Security Retirement	Effective	Reinforces	Nearly Inclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Well	Performs Moderately Well
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement

RATING SCALES

Dollar Value the Benefit Provides
(Low to High):
Not Effective » Partially Effective » Effective

Benefit Delivery
(Low to High):
Significantly Reduces » Slightly Reduces » Reinforces

Benefit Access and Use
(Low to High): Significantly Exclusive » Somewhat Exclusive » Nearly Inclusive

Interactions between Benefits
(Low to High):
Undermines Stability » Supports Stability » Enhances Stability

Benefit Performance Score (Low to High):
Needs Significant Improvement » Needs Moderate Improvement » Needs Minor Improvement » Performs Moderately Well » Performs Well

Benefit Value and Delivery Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **High replacement rates support financial stability.** Nearly half (47%) of workers using family leave receive 100% wage replacement,³² which allows them to take needed time off without destabilizing their household.
- ✓ **Aligning benefit delivery with financial need enhances support.** Frequent and timely delivery of income protection benefits—bi-weekly or monthly—is critical to managing expenses and securing essential needs.



Features that undermine financial security:

- **Discretionary values create inadequate and inequitable support.** Wage replacement rates vary significantly, from 30% to 50% for unemployment insurance³³ and from 50% to 100% for state paid family and medical leave benefits.³⁴
- **Extensive documentation or burden of proof to receive benefits destabilizes workers.** Short-term disability benefits and other income protection benefits require documentation³⁵ and proof to receive payments and the extensive process³⁶ can result in wrongful denials.
- **Inadequacy of values can be costly for workers.** Workers' compensation covers only 21% of the cost of workplace injuries, with the cost shifting to employees to pay for lost income and medical expenses.³⁷



Benefit Access and Interaction Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **Integrating benefits with payroll improves access.** From Social Security benefits to disability insurance, income protection benefits are accessible through seamless payroll taxes and deductions.
- ✓ **Reinforcing benefit interactions support financial stability.** Paid family medical leave allows workers to use paid sick leave and paid time off for other health and well-being needs. Many Social Security Disability Insurance recipients are also eligible for SNAP,³⁸ which helps support food security and overall well-being.



Features that undermine financial security:

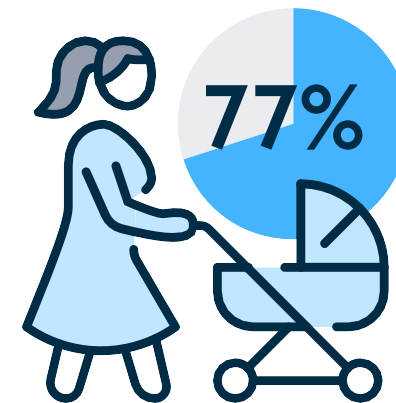
- **Discretionary access creates significant disparities.** Only 10% of the lowest wage workers have access to long-term disability insurance compared to 60% of workers in the highest wage group.³⁹ To qualify for UI, an individual must meet minimum earning levels. This results in the exclusion of workers who are not consistently attached to or who have been historically discriminated against in the labor market⁴⁰—including women of color⁴¹, low-wage workers, people with minor disabilities,⁴² or formerly incarcerated people.
- **Conditions on usage create barriers for workers.** Low-wage workers are not effectively supported by workers' compensation. One study found that only 8% of injured workers filed a claim, and 50% of workers who reported their injury experienced illegal retaliation.⁴³
- **Interactions that limit benefit values destabilize people's financial security.** The combined amount of disability benefits cannot exceed 80% of pre-disability wage, with either workers' compensation or Social Security Disability Insurance cut to stay below the threshold.⁴⁴



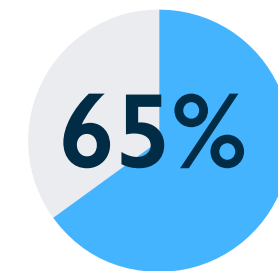
Critical Gaps in Benefit Access and Use

More than **5.2 million unemployed workers** in March 2020 **did not receive unemployment insurance benefits.**⁴⁵

More than **102 million workers (77% of all workers)**⁴⁶ **lack access to a defined paid parental or family leave benefit.** Only 12% of lowest-wage workers compared with 35% of highest-wage earners have access to this support.



More than **86 million workers (65% of workers)**⁴⁷ do not have access to long-term disability insurance.



Local and State Policy and Market Actions to Close Benefit Gaps

Promoting equity

- Washington, Massachusetts, Colorado, and the District of Columbia's programs have progressive wage replacements, replacing 80% to 95% of wages⁴⁸ for low-wage workers.

Improving and expanding access

- New York created the Black Card Fund to offer independent drivers access to workers compensation.⁴⁹
- Some states are offering paid family and medical leave to the self-employed, with the District of Columbia and Massachusetts allowing workers to opt-in. Massachusetts also requires employers to automatically cover all independent contractors if they constitute 50% or more of their workforce.⁵⁰
- US Digital Response partnered with the Kansas Department of Labor to enhance their UI system to effectively manage the significant increase in UI applications during the pandemic, integrate Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), and help reduce response times to workers by 50%.⁵¹

Enhancing value

- General Mills increased their paid family and medical leave benefits while boosting their bereavement and short-term disability benefits.⁴⁹ More than 11,000 non-union employees⁵² in the US have access to 18-20 weeks of fully compensated maternity leave for the birth mother and 12 weeks for partner or adoptive parent leave.

Federal Policy Actions During the Pandemic Promote Benefit Access and Equity

Although temporary, these actions signaled what is needed to close benefit gaps for workers.

- Improved access with PUA supports workers ineligible for traditional UI, reaching 14.6 million workers⁵³ at the peak of unemployment who normally would not have been eligible.⁵⁴
- Promoted equity with 69% of UI recipients receiving comprehensive wage replacement rates exceeding 100% due to the additional weekly benefit of \$600.⁵⁵

2022 Benefit Scorecard





Part III: Reduce Cost-of-Living Expenses and Support Essential Needs



Eight Benefits that Reduce Expenses and Support Essential Needs are Assessed

Benefit	Description	System
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)	Safety net program that is the major federal program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford housing in the private market.	Public
Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Program (PBRA)	Safety net program that provides low-income households with rental assistance for affordable private or government-owned rental housing.	Public
Home Mortgage Interest Deduction (HMID)	Tax deduction that allows itemizing homeowners to deduct mortgage interest paid.	Public
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	As part of the safety net, states receive funds to provide financial assistance to low-income families to access child care so they can work or attend a job training or educational program.	Public
Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC)	Non-refundable tax credit that helps working families pay expenses for the care of children, adult dependents, or an incapacitated spouse.	Public
Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance	Workplace health insurance program that is offered to employees and their dependents (and in most cases, spouses) as a benefit of employment.	Private
Medicaid	Safety net program that provides free or low-cost health benefits to low-income adults, children, seniors, and people with disabilities.	Public
Medicare	Social insurance program that provides health insurance coverage for elderly people and young people with disabilities	Public

Expanding Access and Removing Delivery and Use Barriers will Enhance Benefit Performance in Supporting All Workers

	1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides 	2. Benefit Delivery 	3. Benefit Access and Use 	4. Interactions between Benefits 	Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers using it Today	Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers
Benefit Name	<i>How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?</i>	<i>How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?</i>	<i>How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?</i>	<i>How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?</i>	<i>How well does the benefit individually perform in supporting workers using it today?</i> (Indicators 1&2)	<i>How well does the benefit perform in holistically supporting all workers?</i> (Indicators 1, 2, 3 & 4)
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)	Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Program (PBRA)	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Moderate Improvement
Home Mortgage Interest Deduction (HMID)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Undermines Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	Not Effective	Significantly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Significant Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC)	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
Medicaid	Effective	Slightly Reduces	Somewhat Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Moderately Well	Needs Minor Improvement
Medicare	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Nearly Inclusive	Enhances Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Performs Moderately Well

RATING SCALES

Dollar Value the Benefit Provides (Low to High): Not Effective » Partially Effective » Effective	Benefit Delivery (Low to High): Significantly Reduces » Slightly Reduces » Reinforces	Benefit Access and Use (Low to High): Significantly Exclusive » Somewhat Exclusive » Nearly Inclusive	Interactions between Benefits (Low to High): Undermines Stability » Supports Stability » Enhances Stability	Benefit Performance Score (Low to High): Needs Significant Improvement » Needs Moderate Improvement » Needs Minor Improvement » Performs Moderately Well » Performs Well
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Benefit Value and Delivery Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **High benefit values support stability and promote economic mobility.** Housing vouchers cap rent at 30% of household income, helping workers secure an essential need without increasing the rent burden.⁵⁷ Housing vouchers can sometimes be used to purchase a “modest home” and individuals returning to work are protected from immediate rent increases with a percentage of employment income excluded during the first two years.⁵⁸
- ✓ **Low usage fees ensure benefit value is realized.** Medicaid provides comprehensive benefits with low out-of-pocket costs and premiums. One in four women with employer-sponsored health insurance (25%) say their plan didn’t cover a cost or covered less than expected, compared to only 15% of women with Medicaid.⁵⁹

Features that undermine financial security:

- **Long waiting periods to use benefits destabilize workers and their families.** Section 8 vouchers and project-based rental assistance have average waiting periods of 2.5 years⁶⁰ due to limited housing supply.
- **High fees reduce the value of support.** Employer-sponsored plans have increased the burden of cost on workers, with premiums up 47%, and a 74% increase in plans with deductibles (average deductible of \$1,669) over the last decade.⁶¹



Benefit Access and Interaction Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **Expanding access reduces disparities in outcomes.** Medicare is nearly universal and with eligibility comes substantial reductions in disparities in health insurance coverage, access to care, and self-reported health for Black and Latinx participants.⁶²
- ✓ **Portability of benefits ensures continuity and financial stability.** Medicare is portable, residing with the individual and thus allowing them to maintain access even if they move out of state.
- ✓ **Automatic enrollment supports stability.** Once you receive Social Security benefits, you are automatically enrolled in Medicare when you turn 65 years old.⁶³
- ✓ **Reinforcing benefit interactions enhance stability.** Nearly 10 million low-income seniors and people with disabilities are enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid.⁶⁴



Features that undermine financial security:

- **Discretionary eligibility creates significant disparities.** For rental assistance, local public housing authorities set eligibility criteria for housing choice vouchers and property managers have significant power over screening criteria for project-based assistance. Medicaid take-up rates vary from 50% in Texas to 96% in Massachusetts⁶⁵ due to states varying administrative burdens and eligibility conditions, including means-testing and work requirements.
- **Phase in benefits and conditions to access create disparities in outcomes.** Both the Home Mortgage Interest Deduction (HMID) and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) are inaccessible to lower-income households due to minimum income requirements. The HMID also requires itemization of deductions, which creates a barrier to access for workers who gain a larger benefit from standardized deductions, while the CDCTC limits access for families who rely on alternative forms of childcare that do not qualify as eligible costs.⁶⁶



Critical Gaps in Benefit Access and Use

Nearly **36 million workers** are not eligible for employer-sponsored health insurance and more than 30 million with access to plans do not participate.⁶⁷



About **4 million low-income adults lack access to healthcare coverage** in states that chose not to expand Medicaid.⁶⁸



Over **9 million households** (75% of those eligible) don't have access to rental assistance.⁶⁹

Local and State Policy and Market Actions to Close Benefit Gaps

Expanding access

- Allowing non-citizens to access Medicaid can reduce gaps in healthcare access and outcomes. For example, California expanded Medi-Cal eligibility to low-income adults 50 years of age or older regardless of immigration status.⁷⁰
- Centro Legal de la Raza works with the cities of San Leandro and Oakland in California by providing dual language emergency rental assistance application support and flexibility in the method of submission.⁷¹

Improving usage

- Fourteen states have prohibited discriminatory practices that make it illegal to deny housing to someone using a Section 8 voucher, and Connecticut allocated funding to help pay for legal assistance for housing discrimination.⁷²
- In response to the high rate of evictions during COVID-19, Utah implemented strategies for targeted outreach including the creation of a dashboard to identify disparities in eviction and promote eviction assistance to high-eviction neighborhoods.⁷³

Promoting equity

- The Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) is a small organization that ties employee health insurance contributions to their pay, creating four tiers based on title or role in the organization. The 2021 structure ranges from employee cost of 15% in the lowest tier to 22.5% in the highest tier.⁷⁴

Federal Policy Actions During the Pandemic Promote Benefit Access and Equity

Although temporary, these actions signaled what is needed to close benefit gaps for workers.

- Promoted equity with the CDCTC fully refundable and with increased amount of expenses eligible for the credit with a higher maximum credit rate of 50%.⁷⁵
- Improved access and continuity of coverage, allowing Medicaid recipients to stay enrolled despite income adjustments that would otherwise impact their eligibility. Broadening eligibility resulted in more than 82 million covered by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).⁷⁶

2022 Benefit Scorecard





Part IV: Build Financial Resilience and Wealth



Two Benefits that Build Financial Resilience and Wealth are Assessed

Benefit	Benefit Description	Benefit System
Employer-Sponsored Defined Contribution Retirement Plan	Workplace retirement plan in which an employee contributes money, and the employer typically makes a matching contribution.	Private
Employer-Sponsored Defined Benefit Retirement Plan	Workplace retirement plan where employee benefits are computed using a formula that considers several factors, such as length of employment and salary history.	Private

Improving Interactions with Public Benefits and Promoting More Equitable Contributions will Strengthen Benefit Performance in Supporting All Workers

	1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides 	2. Benefit Delivery 	3. Benefit Access and Use 	4. Interactions between Benefits 	Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers using it Today	Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers
<i>Benefit Name</i>	<i>How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?</i>	<i>How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?</i>	<i>How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?</i>	<i>How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?</i>	<i>How well does the benefit individually perform in supporting workers using it today?</i> (Indicators 1&2)	<i>How well does the benefit perform in holistically supporting all workers?</i> (Indicators 1, 2, 3 & 4)
Employer-Sponsored Defined Contribution Retirement Plan	Partially Effective	Slightly Reduces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Needs Minor Improvement	Needs Significant Improvement
Employer-Sponsored Defined Benefit Retirement Plan	Effective	Reinforces	Significantly Exclusive	Supports Stability	Performs Well	Needs Moderate Improvement

RATING SCALES

Dollar Value the Benefit Provides
(Low to High):
Not Effective » Partially Effective » Effective

Benefit Delivery
(Low to High):
Significantly Reduces » Slightly Reduces » Reinforces

Benefit Access and Use
(Low to High): Significantly Exclusive » Somewhat Exclusive » Nearly Inclusive

Interactions between Benefits
(Low to High):
Undermines Stability » Supports Stability » Enhances Stability

Benefit Performance Score (Low to High):
Needs Significant Improvement » Needs Moderate Improvement » Needs Minor Improvement » Performs Moderately Well » Performs Well

Benefit Value and Delivery Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **Guaranteed benefit amount promotes stability.** Although solvency can be an issue, defined benefit plans come with a guaranteed income stream at retirement without employee contributions or the burden of risk.
- ✓ **Automatic increases and employer contributions enhance value.** More than half (51%) of employers with a defined contribution plan match into the plan with a median match of 3% of a worker’s salary. More than two-thirds (69%) of defined contribution plans offer automatic escalation, which increases the percentage of pay employees save over time, and nearly half offer escalation as the default instead of requiring workers to opt-in.⁷⁷

Features that undermine financial security:

- **Lack of portability of benefits reduces their value to workers.** With retirement plans often sitting with employers, the need to roll over funds at job transition can lead to significant burdens on workers, with funds left behind (one in four workers leaving jobs in 2019 left behind an average of \$1,710 in savings)⁷⁸ and cash out leakages⁷⁹ (89% a result of job transitions).⁸⁰
- **High fees for early withdrawals undermine their value for workers.** With a need for liquidity and a lack of emergency savings, more than half of workers with a defined contribution retirement account have taken an early withdrawal from their retirement accounts, experiencing both the income tax burden and an additional 10% tax penalty.⁸¹



Benefit Access and Interaction Features Impact Financial Security

Features that enhance financial security:

- ✓ **Automatic enrollment increases take-up.** Sixty-nine percent of defined contribution plans automatically enroll workers,⁸² facilitating benefit participation for those offered the benefit. They also often come with default rates and funds, which reduce barriers to access and use for many workers.



Features that undermine financial security:

- **Means testing and asset limits destabilize workers.** Savings in defined contribution plans can count as assets, impacting eligibility into safety net programs with asset limits. Disbursement of funds at retirement can count as income, impacting eligibility into means-tested programs like SNAP⁸³ and Medicaid.⁸⁴
- **Conditions on usage create barriers to access.** With funds limited for use in retirement, workers facing insufficient wages, cash flow challenges, and the need for savings liquidity are less likely to take up plans when offered by their employers. While 45% of lowest-wage workers have access to retirement plans, only 57% take them up versus 89% take-up rates for highest wage workers.⁸⁵



Critical Gaps in Benefit Access and Use

More than **37 million workers** lack access to a workplace retirement savings plan, and 21 million workers with access do not participate.⁸⁶



Fifty-eight percent of part-time workers, 55% of lowest-wage workers, and 67% of contingent workers⁸⁷ **do not have access to workplace retirement plans.**



In working-aged households with at least one employed worker in 2019, **60% of White** households participated in a workplace retirement plan versus **46% of Black**, and **37% of Latinx** households.⁸⁸

Local and State Policy and Market Actions to Close Benefit Gaps

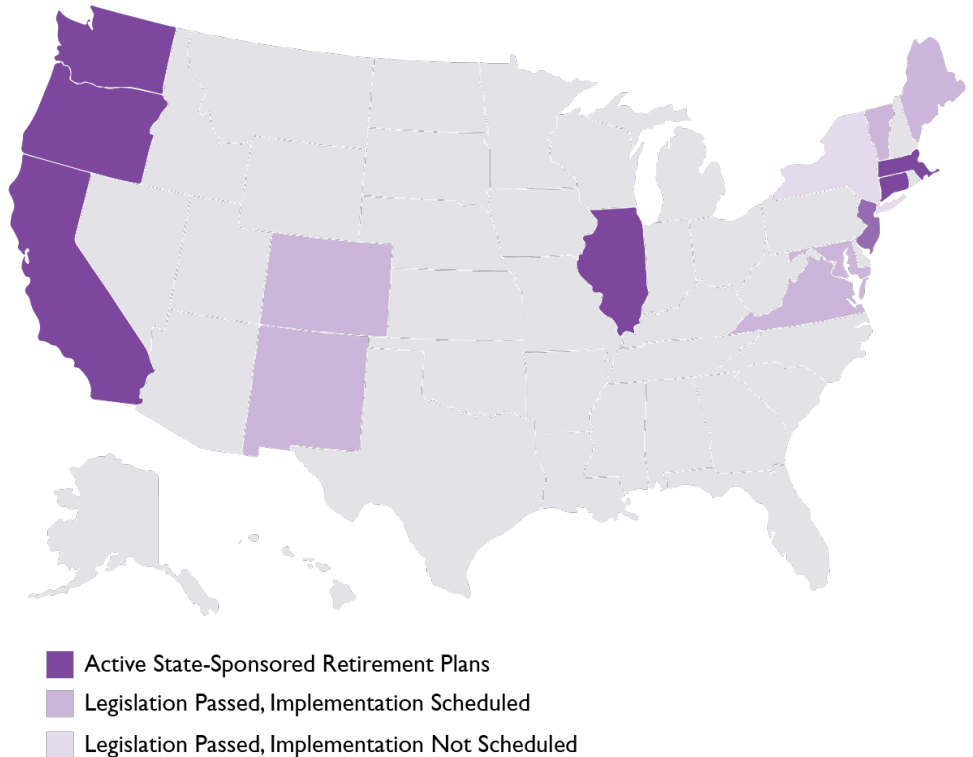
Expanding access:

- Six states—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington—have state-sponsored retirement savings programs,⁸⁹ and an additional eight states have enacted legislation to create a program.⁹⁰ These programs are public-private partnerships that either mandate or allow voluntary participation by employers and offer workers a way to save for retirement while reducing employers’ burden and cost of administering their own programs.⁹¹

Strengthening benefit interactions:

- Abbott created a new benefit in 2018 combining student loan repayment and retirement savings, enabling eligible full-time and part-time employees who are contributing 2% of their pay toward student loans to receive a 5% match deposited into their 401(k) plans—without any 401(k) contribution of their own.⁹² This is possible through an IRS ruling that allows for this contribution for student loan repayment.
- The National Employment Savings Trust (NEST), in London, U.K., has piloted a sidecar emergency savings vehicle through payroll deductions that allows participants to save into an emergency savings account with overflow amounts directed to their retirement plans.⁹³

States with State-sponsored Retirement Savings Programs



Federal Policy Actions During the Pandemic Promote Benefit Access and Equity

Although temporary, these actions signaled what is needed to close benefit gaps for workers.

- Created flexibility in delivery by suspending required minimum distributions from retirement accounts, allowing people to keep funds in their accounts and recover from market volatility and downturns.
- Expanded access to retirement funds by increasing loan amounts available for those eligible to up to 100% of their vested account balance or \$100,000, whichever is less, with an additional repayment year. In addition, those qualifying were eligible to withdraw up to \$100,000 penalty free for pandemic-related hardships.⁹⁴

Opportunities with the 2022 Benefits Scorecard

The Scorecard Signals Opportunities for Policy and Business Leaders to Improve Benefit Design and Delivery to Close Critical Gaps for Workers



DOLLAR VALUE THE BENEFIT PROVIDES

Features that Enhance Financial Security

- Responsive values
- High amounts or replacement rates
- Employer contributions
- Automatic increases in value
- Guaranteed amounts

Features that Undermine Financial Security

- Low replacement rates or inadequate values
- Discretionary value



BENEFIT DELIVERY

Features that Enhance Financial Security

- Cash benefits
- Low usage fees
- Aligning delivery timing and frequency with need

Features that Undermine Financial Security

- Long waiting periods to use
- High fees
- Overpayment and other penalties
- Retaliation
- Conditions on usage (e.g., EBT cards)
- Extensive documentation or proof to receive payments
- Lack of portability



BENEFIT ACCESS & USE

Features that Enhance Financial Security

- Automatic enrollment
- Automatic eligibility
- Portability
- Payroll integration
- Streamlined applications

Features that Undermine Financial Security

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| • Means-testing | • Conditions on access and use |
| • Asset limits | • Fear of job loss |
| • Work requirements | • Discretionary eligibility |
| • Frequent verification or recertification | • Phase-in |
| | • Benefit cliffs |



BENEFIT INTERACTIONS





Features that Enhance Financial Security

- Bundled application
- Automatic eligibility
- Interoperability of data and systems

Features that Undermine Financial Security

- Means-testing
- Asset limits
- Benefit cliffs

The Scorecard Creates a Framework to Assess the Performance of Additional Current and Emerging Benefits

Supplement Income and Provide Stability	Reduce Cost-of-Living Expenses & Support Essential Needs
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed income • Predictable scheduling • Timely access to earned wages • Supplemental Security Income (SSI) 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible spending accounts • Employer-provided dependent care benefits • Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program • Emergency Broadband Benefit • Employer-provided housing assistance • Employer-provided dental insurance • Long-term care insurance
Protect Income	Build Financial Resilience and Wealth
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer-provided life insurance • Social Security Survivor Benefit 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer-provided emergency savings • 529 college savings plan • State-sponsored retirement plans • Student loan repayment • Employee ownership plans

These are examples (not all inclusive) of additional benefits to consider assessing in their support of workers' core benefit needs and for additional insights on modernizing design and delivery of benefits.

Roadmap for Benefits21

This framework serves as a foundation for the Aspen Institute Financial Security Program to move Benefits21's work forward in collaboration with workers, our Leadership Advisory Group, and our partners to:

- Determine which current benefits meet the core financial needs of workers and what innovations are needed in benefit offerings to fill existing gaps.
- Explore opportunities to close critical benefit gaps in access and usage through policy and market-based solutions, and signal what changes are needed to improve and modernize the design and delivery of benefits.
- Develop partnerships to use the framework to assess benefit performance for specific types of workers, states, industries, and employers. Through these partnerships, we can also gauge changes to benefits over time and their impact on equitably, and effectively supporting workers' financial security.
- Set up a roadmap that identifies new ways to administer, offer, and deliver benefits to equitably meet the financial security needs of all workers.

Appendix

Appendix A: Methodology for Assessing Benefits

We used publicly available data and research to assess the benefits in the scorecard.

Through our comprehensive analysis of the benefit research and data, we created a basis of comparison of public and private benefits that function and are designed in vastly different ways by identifying four key indicators to assess the performance of all benefits: Dollar Value the Benefit Provides; Benefit Delivery; Benefit Access and Use; and Interactions Between Benefits. Each indicator receives a score with an underlying value of one to three, with one indicating the lowest performance and three indicating the highest performance.

Indicator	Definition	Score Range
1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides	How effective is the value of the benefit in supporting household financial stability?	Not Effective = 1 Partially Effective = 2 Effective = 3
2. Benefit Delivery	How does the way the benefit is delivered impact the value of the benefit received?	Significantly Reduces = 1 Slightly Reduces = 2 Reinforces = 3
3. Benefit Access and Use	How accessible and available is the benefit for all households in need of its support?	Significantly Exclusive = 1 Somewhat Exclusive = 2 Nearly Inclusive = 3
4. Interactions Between Benefits	How does use of this benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, support household financial stability?	Undermines = 1 Supports = 2 Enhances = 3

Appendix A: Methodology for Assessing Benefits

Scoring of Benefit Indicators

The Scorecard is an effort to standardize performance assessment of benefits along four indicators that most directly and meaningfully align with worker financial security. To do so, we reviewed secondary research and captured publicly available data on each of the benefit performance indicators (e.g., benefit dollar values and income replacement rates and how adequately they support financial security; delivery channels, and payment conditions and barriers that impact the dollar value of the benefit; participation rates and access gaps to determine the use of benefits and worker exclusions; and benefit interactions such as benefit cliffs and asset limits, and their role in holistically supporting the financial stability of workers). We then use this data to assign each of the four indicators a score.

Existing research on these indicators and the benefit's impact on financial security informs the indicator scores. However, this existing data is not standardized and differs considerably due to the significant variation in publicly available data on public and private benefits, and the vast differences in benefit programs and policies across states, localities, and employers. Therefore, our score for each indicator, determined by available data on benefit indicators and how benefits compare to one other by indicator design features that impact financial security outcomes, represents our best educated assessment given available data, rather than a full apples-to-apples comparison. We encourage states, administrators, and employers to adopt the scorecard framework and strengthen data collection and analysis. Collecting the data for these four indicators will provide them with the opportunity to quantitatively assess how their benefits are performing, and make improvements and innovate, to meet the financial security needs of workers and their families.

All the data and research used to score the benefits assessed can be found in the [2022 Benefits Scorecard Addendum](#).

Appendix A: Methodology for Assessing Benefits

Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today

How Well Does the Benefit Individually Perform in Supporting the Financial Security of Workers Using it Today?

To assess how a benefit individually performs in supporting workers using the benefit today, we looked at both the dollar value the benefit provides (indicator 1) and the benefit delivery (indicator 2).

To calculate the score, we use a weighted calculation of the benefit value and benefit delivery numerical scores. We weight them according to our review of the literature on these benefit indicators, and the role benefit value and delivery play in impacting the financial security support provided by the benefit. With value critical to ensuring adequate support, in our calculation, it receives a weight of 75%, while delivery—which impacts the value received—receives a weight of 25%. The resulting weighted benefit performance score assessing how well the benefit individually performs in supporting workers using it today is in a five-scale range from needs significant improvement to performs significantly well.

Appendix A: Methodology for Assessing Benefits

Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today (continued)

Calculation for how benefits are individually performing to support the financial security of workers using the benefit today:

1. Dollar Value the Benefit Provides	2. Benefit Value	Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today
Not Effective = 1 Somewhat Effective = 2 Effective = 3	Significantly Reduces = 1 Slightly Reduces = 2 Reinforces = 3	Needs Significant Improvement = 1.0 - 1.49 Needs Moderate Improvement = 1.5 - 1.99 Needs Minor Improvement = 2.0 - 2.49 Performs Moderately Well = 2.5 - 2.99 Performs Significantly Well = 3.0

$(\text{Dollar Value the Benefit Provides}) * .75 + (\text{Benefit Delivery}) * .25 = \text{Benefit Performance Score for Support Workers Using it Today}$

Example: Effective (3*.75) + Slightly reduces (2*.25)= Performs Moderately Well (2.75)

Appendix A: Methodology for Assessing Benefits

Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers

How Well Does the Benefit Perform in Holistically Supporting the Financial Security of All Workers?

To assess how the benefit is holistically supporting the financial security of all workers, we looked at all four indicators: dollar value the benefit provides (indicator 1), benefit delivery (indicator 2), benefit access and use (indicator 3), and interactions between benefits (indicator 4). We used a weighted calculation, building off the numerical score received for how well the benefit individually performs in supporting workers using it today, and incorporating the numerical scores for benefit access and use (indicator 3) and interactions between benefits (indicator 4). Consistent with our Benefits21 goal and the scorecard goal of ensuring all workers have access to and can use the benefits they need, and that the benefits work together to holistically support workers, we give these indicators 75% of the overall score weight.

The initial score—how well does the benefit individually perform to support workers using it today—receives a weight of 25% in the overall performance score. This weight allows for us to build off the initial score to account for gaps in access and use and how benefits interact with each other to provide an overall score of how the benefit is holistically and equitably supporting all workers. Benefit access and use (indicator 3) and interactions between benefits (indicator 4) receive a total weight of 75% in the overall score. Given our review of the literature on these benefit indicators and the role benefit access and use and interactions between benefits play in impacting the financial security support provided by the benefit, access and use receives a weight of 75% and interactions between benefits a weight of 25% of this remaining 75% of the score. The resulting score assessing how well the benefit performs in holistically supporting all workers today is in a five-scale range from needs significant improvement to performs significantly well.

Appendix A: Methodology for Assessing Benefits

Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers (continued)

Calculation for how benefits are holistically supporting the financial security of all workers:

Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today	3. Benefit Access and Use	4. Interactions Between Benefits	Overall Benefit Performance Score for Supporting All Workers
Needs Significant Improvement = 1.0 - 1.49 Needs Moderate Improvement = 1.5 - 1.99 Needs Minor Improvement = 2.0 - 2.49 Performs Moderately Well = 2.5 - 2.99 Performs Significantly Well = 3.0	Significant Exclusions = 1 Some Exclusions = 2 Nearly Inclusive = 3	Undermines Stability = 1 Supports Stability = 2 Enhances Stability = 3	Needs Significant Improvement = 1.0 - 1.49 Needs Moderate Improvement = 1.5 - 1.99 Needs Minor Improvement = 2.0 - 2.49 Performs Moderately Well = 2.5 - 2.99 Performs Significantly Well = 3.0

$(\text{Benefit Performance Score for Supporting Workers Using it Today}) \times .25 + ((\text{Access \& Use}) \times .75) + (\text{Interactions Between Benefits} \times .25) \times .75 = \text{Overall Benefit Performance Score}$

Example: Needs Minor Improvement $(2.25 \times .25) +$ Significant Exclusions $((1 \times .75) \times .75) +$ Supports Stability $((2 \times .25) \times .75) =$ Needs Moderate Improvement (1.5)

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

- **Benefits:** We define benefits broadly, with a focus on their intended impact, “something that promotes well-being”.
- **Financial Security:** At the Aspen Institute Financial Security Program, we have adopted as our definition of financial security the description of financial well-being established by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) “a state of being wherein a person can fully meet current and ongoing financial obligations, can feel secure in their financial future, and is able to make choices that allow them to enjoy life.”⁹⁵
- **Private Benefits:** These benefits are distributed to workers through the workplace and are primarily discretionary in nature, but some private benefits are mandated (e.g., workers compensation) and some private benefits are publicly subsidized (e.g., health insurance).
- **Public Benefits:** These benefits are delivered to individuals by the government and provide cash-like assistance or in-kind benefits. Social safety net programs (e.g., SNAP, TANF) are means-tested—where households can qualify based on having income below the program’s threshold. Social insurance programs (e.g., Medicare, Unemployment Insurance) are designed to protect individuals from major economic risks. Public benefits are also administered through our tax system (e.g., EITC, HMID).
- **Workers:** Our definition is inclusive of all workers—including undocumented immigrants, low-wage workers, workers of color, formerly incarcerated individuals, and individuals with disabilities—irrespective of their employment status or labor income. We recognize the importance of all the ways individuals work to support themselves, their households, and their community.

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

Public Benefit Features:

- **Benefit Cliff:** A sudden decrease or disqualification of public assistance benefits when a family's income or earnings increase past eligibility threshold
- **Means-testing:** A condition in which families and individuals are required to prove their income falls under designated levels to meet certain public assistance eligibility requirements.
- **Asset limit:** A limit to the total amount of assets a family or individual must have to meet certain benefit eligibility requirements, this can include cash and retirement savings as well as vehicle and liquid assets among other material property that may be considered an asset.
- **Phase In:** A gradual shift in benefit levels that is dependent on changes to income, family size, etc.

Additional Feature Definitions:

- **Discretionary Eligibility:** States, localities, and/or employers have discretion over who is eligible for benefit assistance and eligibility requirements.
- **Discretionary Value:** States, localities, and/or employers have discretion over the values of the benefit provided to benefit recipients.

Appendix C: Guiding Design Principles for Benefits21

Ensuring all workers are financially secure and can live economically dignified lives requires the design and delivery of a system of benefits guided by these principles⁹⁶ :

- **Inclusive:** Protects all workers, irrespective of their work arrangement and employment status
- **People-centric:** Ensures workers and their voice, life and experience are critical and central to the design and delivery of benefits
- **Portable:** Ensures continued access and funding as workers transition to new jobs, move across state lines, enter new work arrangements and piece together different types of work
- **Interoperable:** Uses technology to effectively integrate benefit systems and platforms and ensures seamless access and delivery
- **Responsive:** Responsive and accountable to workers' changing needs and economic conditions
- **Equitable:** Ensures all workers, including workers of color, low-wage workers, and workers in non- traditional work arrangements, can achieve financial security
- **Effective:** Ensures workers don't face barriers to access and receive benefits in a timely, effective manner
- **Promotes Mobility:** Supports job growth and economic opportunity of workers without cliffs or limitations that create barriers
- **Maintains Dignity:** Treats all workers with dignity, irrespective of the benefits needed to ensure their financial security

Authors, Acknowledgements, and Endnotes

Authors



Sarika Abbi

Associate Director, Financial Security Benefits Innovation, Financial Security Program

Sarika is an Associate Director for the Aspen Institute's Financial Security Program. She leads our Benefits 2.0 work to modernize the design and delivery of benefits to ensure the financial security and economic dignity of all workers. She has spent nearly 15 years in financial inclusion and financial security work, both internationally and domestically, with expertise in program management, product design, research and evaluation.

Sarika earned her Master of Arts in Public Administration from New York University and Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of California, Berkeley.



Karina Hernandez

Graduate Student Intern

Karina recently earned her Master of Public Policy Degree from the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. During her time at the Ford School, she pursued a policy concentration in public policy analysis methods and served as an executive board member of Students of Color in Public Policy (SCPP).

Previously, Karina was a Program Manager for NALEO Educational Fund. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of California, Riverside.



About the Aspen Financial Security Program

The Aspen Institute Financial Security Program's (FSP) mission is to illuminate and solve the most critical financial challenges facing American households and to make financial security for all a top national priority. We aim for nothing less than a more inclusive economy with reduced wealth inequality and shared prosperity. We believe that transformational change requires innovation, trust, leadership, and entrepreneurial thinking. FSP galvanizes a diverse set of leaders across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to solve the most critical financial challenges. We do this through deep, deliberate private and public dialogues and by elevating evidence-based research and solutions that will strengthen the financial health and security of financially vulnerable Americans. To learn more, visit AspenFSP.org, join our mailing list at <http://bit.ly/fspnewsletter>, and follow [@AspenFSP](https://twitter.com/AspenFSP) on Twitter.

About Benefits 21

Benefits21 at the Aspen Institute Financial Security Program works toward a future in which all workers across the US have access to -- and make use of -- equitable benefits. Benefits21 produces tools and insights, convenes cross-sector leaders, and spurs market and policy innovation to close benefit gaps today and modernize public- and private-sector benefits to ensure the financial security of all workers.

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