

### The November Review

Given ongoing events in the securities markets, workers and their families are perhaps more focused on their retirement plans and retirement investments than ever before. The lead article in this month's *Review* examines an important aspect in the history of 401(k) plans, namely, the changing availability over time of the opportunity to invest in the stock of one's own employer. William J. Wiatrowski first provides a brief overview of these defined contribution retirement plans, and then elucidates the shift over the 20 years from 1985 to 2005 of the use of stock as an investment vehicle. Given the prominence and ubiquity of 401(k) plans in today's world, the changes discussed in this article are particularly timely.

Zack Warren compares occupational employment and wages in the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors using data from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program. As he notes, the number of not-for-profit institutions has increased rapidly in recent years, and the employment generated by such places has grown concurrently. Using the great volume of detailed industry and occupational employment information available from this program, he finds that occupational differences between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations can vary greatly from industry to industry.

The employment status of people with disabilities has been a topic of considerable attention and research in recent years, in both the public and private sectors. Burt S. Barnow identifies issues he feels are especially critical in regard to measuring not

only employment status, but also the very nature of disability status itself. He also examines the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act on the employment trends of disabled persons. He makes it clear that from his perspective socioeconomic surveys have to cover these issues more comprehensively if a fuller understanding of this sensitive subject is to be attained.

Finally for the November issue, Mary Dorinda Allard provides a look at how that most rambunctious of groups—high school students—allocate their time engaging in homework, household activities, and other aspects of their lives.

### Labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity

As data have indicated for a long time, there are differences in employment and unemployment patterns for labor market participants relating to race and ethnicity. Adult men of Hispanic ethnicity, for instance, have a higher share of their population employed than do their white, black, and Asian counterparts. Among adult women, a lower share of Hispanics is employed than their counterparts from the race groups.

In terms of education attained—always a critical factor influencing labor market outcomes—about the same share (around 90 percent) of white, black, and Asian workers 25 years of age and older has received at least a high school diploma. By contrast, a significantly smaller share (about 66 percent) of Hispanic workers has completed high school.

A full range of comparative information like that noted here can be

found in a new report from BLS called *Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity*, 2007. The report contains analysis and detailed tables presenting an array of labor market measures tabulated from this particular demographic focus. The online edition of this report can be found at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsrace2007.pdf>

### Program Perspectives

BLS recently launched a new publication called *Program Perspectives*. It is designed to be a showcase for the Bureau's various programs to highlight recent trends and developments in their data. The format is designed to be concise and visually fresh. This online publication likely will be posted a number of times per year.

The inaugural issue focuses on health benefits data from the National Compensation Survey. Topics covered include trends in employer costs for health benefits, access rates to health care benefits for employees, and participation rates for workers in their employers' health plans. The first issue can be found online at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/perspectives/> □

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