

Unmarried Domestic Partners Benefit Fact Sheet, March 2012

The “National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2012” (Bulletin 2773) provides data on access to defined benefit retirement survivor benefits and health care benefits for unmarried domestic partners.

Highlights of these data include:

- Defined benefit retirement survivor benefits:
 - Fourteen percent of all civilian workers have access to a defined benefit retirement plan that has a provision for survivor benefits for unmarried domestic partners. The percentage is the same for both same sex and opposite sex partners.
 - In private industry, 8 percent have access to this provision for same sex and 7 percent for opposite sex partners.
 - In State and local government, 49 percent have access to this provision for same sex partners and 48 percent for opposite sex partners.
 - There is typically little difference in access rates between same sex and opposite sex partners for the same series characteristics.
 - When analyzing these access rates, it is important to take into account the percent of workers who have access to defined benefit plans. For example, 19 percent of employees in private industry have access to a defined benefit plan compared to 83 percent of State and local government employees (See table 2 of bulletin). As a result, approximately 42 percent (8/19) of private industry employees with access to a defined benefit plan have a plan that provides same-sex domestic partner benefits, while that figure in State and local government is 59 percent (49/83).
- Health care benefits:
 - Among civilian workers, access to health care benefits for unmarried domestic partners is available to 31 percent of same sex partners and 26 percent of opposite sex partners.
 - In private industry, 30 percent have access for same sex partners and 25 percent have access for opposite sex partners.
 - In State and local government, 33 percent have access for same sex partners and 28 percent have access for opposite sex partners.
 - This benefit is typically more prevalent for same sex partners than for opposite sex partners.