

Pensionomics 2021:

Measuring the Economic Impact of DB Pension Expenditures

Key Findings

Benefits paid by state and local pension plans support a significant amount of economic activity in the state of Pennsylvania.

Pension benefits received by retirees are spent in the local community. This spending ripples through the economy, as one person's spending becomes another person's income, creating a multiplier effect.

In 2018, expenditures stemming from state and local pensions supported...

- 112,922 jobs that paid \$6.6 billion in wages and salaries
- \$19.2 billion in total economic output
- \$2.7 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues

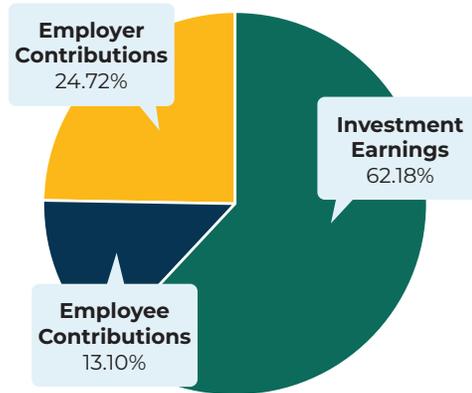
... in the state of Pennsylvania.

Each dollar paid out in pension benefits supported \$1.67 in total economic activity in Pennsylvania.

Each dollar "invested" by Pennsylvania taxpayers in these pension plans supported \$6.75 in total economic activity in the state.

Overview

Expenditures made by retirees of state and local government provide a steady economic stimulus to Pennsylvania communities and the state economy. In 2018, 439,892 residents of Pennsylvania received a total of \$11.5 billion in pension benefits from state and local pension plans.



The average pension benefit received was \$2,174 per month or \$26,091 per year. These modest benefits provide retired teachers, public safety personnel, and others who served the public during their working careers income to meet basic needs in retirement.

Between 1993 and 2018, 24.72% of Pennsylvania's pension fund receipts came from employer contributions, 13.10% from employee contributions, and 62.18% from investment earnings.* Earnings on investments and employee contributions—not taxpayer based contributions—have historically made up the bulk of pension fund receipts.

Impact on Jobs and Incomes

Retiree expenditures stemming from state and local pension plan benefits supported 112,922 jobs in the state. The total income to state residents supported by pension expenditures was \$6.6 billion.

To put these employment impacts in perspective, in 2018 Pennsylvania's unemployment rate was 4.2%. The fact that DB pension expenditures supported 112,922 jobs is significant, as it represents 1.88 percentage points in Pennsylvania's labor force.

Economic Impact

State and local pension funds in Pennsylvania and other states paid a total of \$11.5 billion in benefits to Pennsylvania residents in 2018. Retirees' expenditures from these benefits supported a total of \$19.2 billion in total economic output in the state, and \$11.1 billion in value added in the state.

\$8.6 billion in direct economic impacts were supported by retirees' initial expenditures. An additional \$5.4 billion in indirect impact resulted when these businesses purchased additional goods and services. \$5.2 billion in induced impacts occurred when workers employed by businesses as a result of the direct and indirect impacts made expenditures.



Economic Multipliers

Taxpayer Contribution Factor*



\$1.00
 contributed by taxpayers to
 Pennsylvania pensions over
 30 years



\$6.75
 total output



Each \$1 in taxpayer contributions to Pennsylvania's state and local pension plans supported \$6.75 in total output in the state. This reflects the fact that taxpayer contributions are a minor source of financing for retirement benefits—investment earnings and employee contributions finance the lion's share.

Pension Benefit Multiplier



\$1.00
 pension benefits paid to
 retirees in Pennsylvania



\$1.67
 total output



Each \$1 in state and local pension benefits paid to Pennsylvania residents ultimately supported \$1.67 in total output in the state. This "multiplier" incorporates the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of retiree spending, as it ripples through the state economy.

*Caution should be used in interpreting these numbers. See the Technical Appendix of the full *Pensionomics* report for details.

Impact on Tax Revenues

State and local pension payments made to Pennsylvania residents supported a total of \$2.7 billion in revenue to federal, state, and local governments. Taxes paid by retirees and beneficiaries directly out of pension payments totaled \$355.8 million. Taxes attributable to direct, indirect, and induced impacts accounted for \$2.4 billion in tax revenue.

Federal Tax	\$1.7 billion
State/Local Tax	\$995.0 million
Total	\$2.7 billion

Economic Impacts by Industry Sector

The economic impact of state and local pension benefits was broadly felt across various industry sectors in Pennsylvania. The ten industry sectors with the largest employment impacts are presented in the table below.

Industry	Employment Impact (# Jobs)	Labor Income Impact	Value Added Impact	Output Impact
Hospitals	6,359.10	\$539,983,876	\$613,694,557	\$1,146,541,533
Full-service restaurants	4,436.50	\$108,667,454	\$160,354,900	\$289,856,849
Limited-service restaurants	4,331.60	\$93,054,172	\$144,571,154	\$325,780,158
Offices of physicians	3,522.50	\$431,315,188	\$509,634,422	\$719,233,293
Nursing and community care facilities	3,035.00	\$133,126,981	\$146,152,711	\$249,923,318
Retail - Food and beverage stores	2,875.00	\$91,957,775	\$118,784,766	\$202,176,794
Other real estate	2,746.70	\$76,564,360	\$210,690,847	\$533,092,925
Retail - General merchandise stores	2,521.30	\$74,152,514	\$100,443,106	\$169,582,556
Individual and family services	2,477.60	\$84,283,863	\$79,752,545	\$113,814,793
All other food and drinking places	2,130.50	\$67,807,566	\$85,185,741	\$132,198,009

Industry totals include the first round of impacts from pension payments to state residents, and do not account for recaptured "leakage" to or from other states.