

## Employee Benefits Survey

# Availability of flexible work schedule and student loan repayment benefits in the United States, June 2019

In 1980, the Bureau of Labor Statistics published the Employee Benefits in Industry from a pilot survey of private sector benefit plans. The pilot survey included information on hours and days per week worked, paid and unpaid lunch and rest time, and paid leave.

Annually, the National Compensation Survey (NCS) program publishes statistics on the costs, coverage, and provisions of employer sponsored benefits. In order to produce relevant statistics about the national economy, the NCS periodically evaluates emerging trends in compensation and modifies the National Compensation Survey and methodologies.

Two new benefits were published for the June 2019 reference period: flexible work schedule<sup>1</sup> and student loan repayment. While the data reflect the percentage of workers with access (available for their use) to these benefits, the NCS does not include additional details about the type of flexible hours arrangements available to workers, employee participation, eligibility requirements, nor the average dollar or maximum amounts employers may reimburse for tuition. These benefits will be incorporated into the annual [Employee Benefits in the United States](#) publication as part of the quality of life and financial benefits.

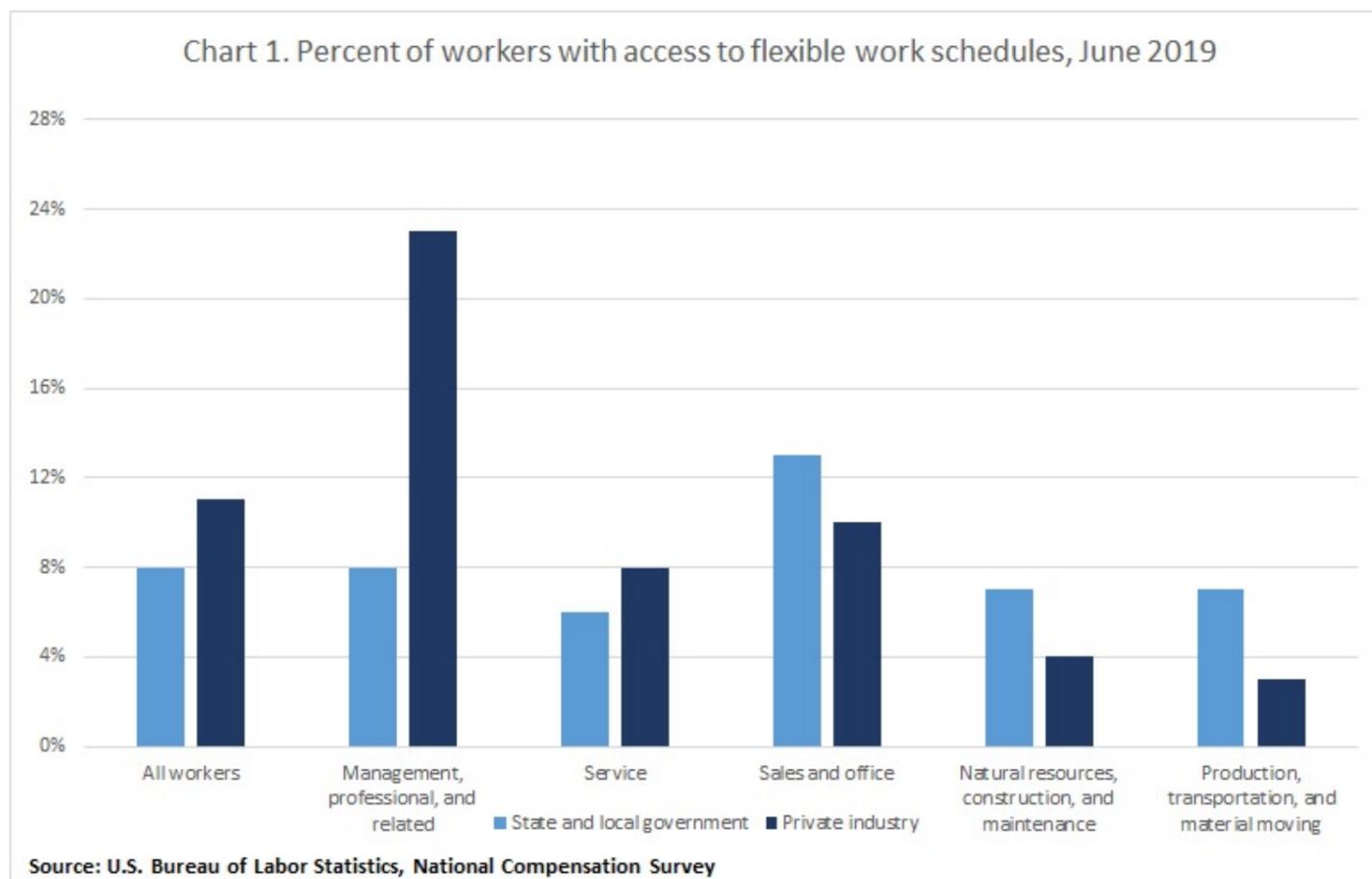
In June 2019, 3 percent of civilian workers (includes private industry, as well as state and local government workers) had access to student loan repayment and 11 percent had access to flexible work schedules.

### Flexible work schedule

For the purposes of the NCS, if workers are able to set their own schedules within a general set of parameters they are considered as having access to flexible work schedule benefits.

For example, employees may be required to work a minimum of five hours per workday, but work can be performed anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Workers may also have a compressed work schedule available to them, where they may work longer hours each day but fewer days in a week (i.e., employees work four ten-hour days).

For civilian workers, a flexible work schedule was available to 6 percent of teachers and 26 percent of workers in management, business, and financial occupations. Seventeen percent of workers in New England had access to this benefit.

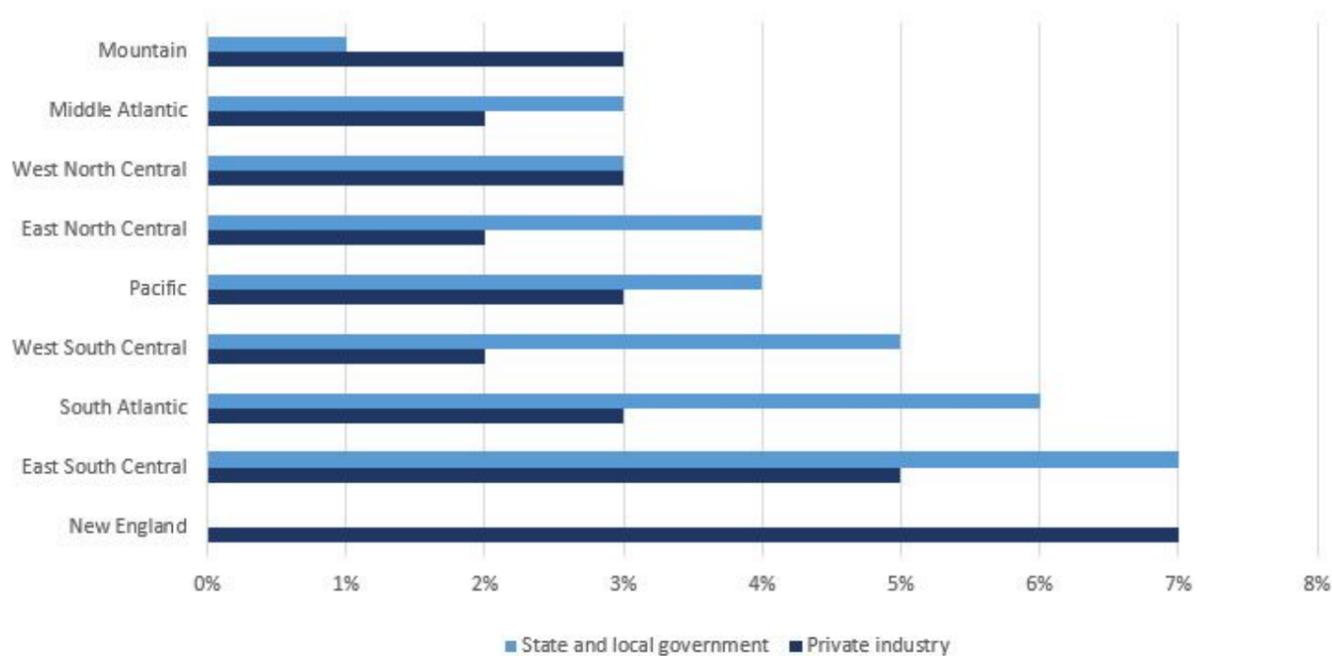


[Table 1. Percent of workers with access to flexible work schedule by worker and establishment characteristics](#)

### Student loan repayment

Student loan repayment is considered available to employees when employers provide monetary support to employees for education they already obtained. Ongoing educational expenses are not included in the access estimates.

Chart 2. Percent of workers with access to student loan repayment by census division, June 2019



Note: The New England state and local government estimate did not meet publication criteria.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey

Table 2. Percent of workers with access to student loan repayment benefits by worker and establishment characteristics

Student loan repayment was available to 3 percent for civilian and private industry workers and 4 percent of state and local government workers.

In private industry, 2 percent of workers in establishments with 1 to 99 employees and 5 percent of workers in establishments with 500 employees or more had access to the benefit. In state and local government, 4 percent of workers in establishments with 1 to 99 employees had access to this benefit and 5 percent of workers in establishments with 500 employees or more had access.

## Additional resources

See [Table 1. Flexible Work Schedule](#) and [Table 2. Student Loan Repayment](#) for Excel versions of the HTML tables available in this factsheet.

Fact sheets:

- [What data does the BLS publish on family leave?](#)
- [Holiday profiles](#)
- [Access to paid personal leave](#)
- [Unmarried domestic partner benefit fact sheet, March 2013](#)

[NCS Glossary of Employee Benefit Terms](#) — provides definitions of major plans, key provisions, and related terms.

[Handbook of Methods: National Compensation Measures](#) — provides information on the survey design, calculations, weighting, and imputation methods used to produce NCS estimates of compensation. Information on calculating the reliability of estimates (standard errors) is included in the [calculation section](#).

## Historical data

For historical information on the cost, coverage, and provisions of employer-sponsored benefit plans see the [NCS publications list](#). BLS advises against making comparisons with previously published benefits estimates due to changes in weighting and sample rotation. The estimates presented were produced using June 2019 employment weights from the Current Employment Statistics program. The NCS uses a sample rotation, where one-third of the private sample is rotated each year except in years where the state and local government sample is rotated, which occurs approximately every ten years.

## Comparing private and public sector estimates

Private industry estimates should not be directly compared with state and local government estimates as differences between these sectors stem from factors such as variation in work activities and occupational structures. Manufacturing and sales, for example, comprise a large portion of private industry work activities but are rare in state and local government. Professional and administrative support occupations (including teachers) account for two-thirds of the state and local government workforce, compared with one-half of private industry. Additionally, primary, secondary, and special education teachers typically have a work schedule of 37 or 38 weeks per year. Because of this work schedule, they are generally not offered leave benefits for vacations or holidays. In many cases, the time off during winter and spring breaks during the school year are not considered vacation days for the purposes of the NCS.

## END NOTES

(1) The household data from American Time Use Survey program on access to and use of leave — 2017 – 2018 are also available at [www.bls.gov/news.release/leave.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/leave.htm).

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