What Retired Educators Need to Know About 5G Cellular Networks

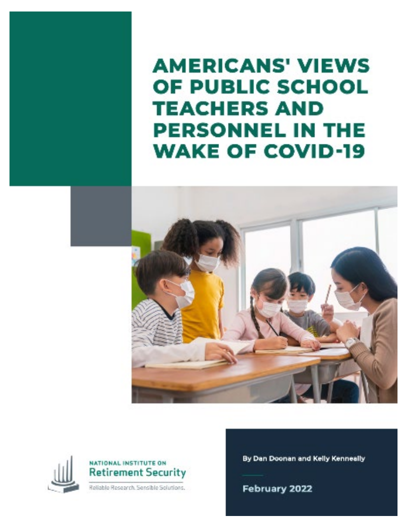
NRTA

AARP's Educator Community

NRTA in the Know

February 28, 2022

New Research Finds Deep Concern About K-12 Workforce



A new national survey finds deep public concern about the K-12 school workforce. Eighty-three percent of Americans express concerns about public school staff shortages, while 81 percent are worried about workforce burnout. Most Americans (89 percent) say K-12 public school staff deserve more respect, and they indicate that better pay (92 percent), healthcare benefits (89 percent) and pensions (86 percent) would help address workforce shortages.

These findings are contained in a new research report from the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS), **Americans' Views of Public School Teachers and Personnel in the Wake of COVID-19**. Read the research here.

The challenges facing the K-12 workforce will be discussed at the NIRS 13th

[Annual Retirement Policy Conference]() on **Tuesday, March 1, 2022**. The conference begins at 8:30 AM, and the education workforce panel discussion starts at 1:00 PM ET.

Retired Educator Association (REA) leaders are invited to hear more about this research during NRTA's Monthly Call with REAs on Wednesday, March 16th at 3:00 PM ET. Join the call via Teams here or by calling 202-774-9340, Conference ID: 976 529 641.

The survey was conducted by Greenwald Research in December 2021, and the research was made possible thanks to a grant from NRTA: AARP's Educator Community.

Read the Research

Watch the LIVE Webcast on the NIRS Retirement Policy Conference on March 1st

Mobile Carriers Retiring 3G | What You Need to Know

The country's three major wireless carriers - AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile - will be their third-generation (3G) cellular networks in 2022 to make room for better fourth-generation (4G) and new fifth-generation (5G) services.

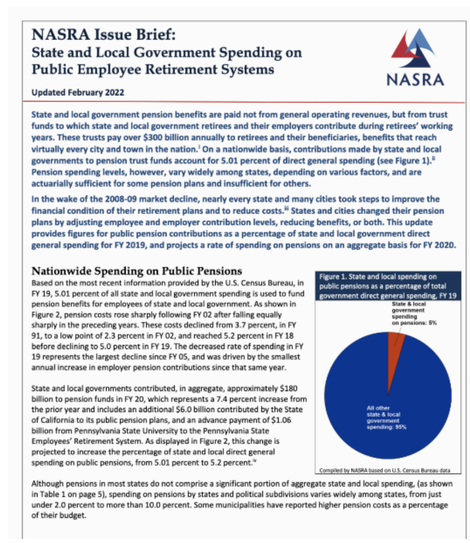
As a result, many older phones will be unable to make or receive calls and text messages or use data services. This may also affect devices that rely on 3G connectivity, such as medical alert devices, tablets, smartwatches, in-car SOS services, Kindle readers, home security products and other devices that are dependent on 3G.

While the move to new promises faster cellphone and internet speeds, this technology transition could leave lower income and older Americans disconnected as they may lose cellphone service entirely, including the ability to call 911.

Phasing out older networks isn't a new concept for wireless carriers as similar transitions have happened before – such as when second-generation (2G) networks were shut down in favor of building out the 4G network. Because of that experience, many service providers have developed programs and resources to help customers through the process.

Read More Here

NEW Research Details Spending on Pensions



NASRA Issue Brief:
State and Local Government Spending on Public Employee Retirement Systems

NASRA

Updated February 2022

State and local government pension benefits are paid not from general operating revenues, but from trust funds to which state and local government retirees and their employers contribute during retirees' working years. These trusts pay over $300 billion annually to retirees and their beneficiaries, benefits that reach virtually every city and town in the nation.[i] On a nationwide basis, contributions made by state and local governments to pension trust funds account for 5.01 percent of direct general spending (see Figure 1).[ii] Pension spending levels, however, vary widely among states, depending on various factors, and are actuarially sufficient for some pension plans and insufficient for others.

In the wake of the 2008-09 market decline, nearly every state and many cities took steps to improve the financial condition of their retirement plans and to reduce costs.[iii] States and cities changed their pension plans by adjusting employee and employer contribution levels, reducing benefits, or both. This update provides figures for public pension contributions as a percentage of state and local government direct general spending for FY 2019, and projects a rate of spending on pensions on an aggregate basis for FY 2020.

Nationwide Spending on Public Pensions

Based on the most recent information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, in FY 19, 5.01 percent of all state and local government spending is used to fund pension benefits for employees of state and local government. As shown in Figure 2, pension costs rose sharply following FY 02 after falling equally sharply in the preceding years. These costs declined from 3.7 percent, in FY 91, to a low point of 2.3 percent in FY 02, and reached 5.2 percent in FY 18 before declining to 5.0 percent in FY 19. The decreased rate of spending in FY 19 represents the largest decline since FY 05, and was driven by the smallest annual increase in employer pension contributions since that same year.

State and local governments contributed, in aggregate, approximately $180 billion to pension funds in FY 20, which represents a 7.4 percent increase from the prior year and includes an additional $6.0 billion contributed by the State of California to its public pension plans, and an advance payment of $1.06 billion from Pennsylvania State University to the Pennsylvania State Employees' Retirement System. As displayed in Figure 2, this change is projected to increase the percentage of state and local direct general spending on public pensions, from 5.01 percent to 5.2 percent.[iv]

Figure 1. State and local spending on public pensions as a percentage of total government direct general spending, FY 19

Compiled by NASRA based on U.S. Census Bureau data

Although pensions in most states do not comprise a significant portion of aggregate state and local spending, (as shown in Table 1 on page 5), spending on pensions by states and political subdivisions varies widely among states, from just under 2.0 percent to more than 10.0 percent. Some municipalities have reported higher pension costs as a percentage of their budget.

New research from the National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA) details contributions made by state and local governments to pension trust funds.

The research finds that Based on the most recent information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, in FY 19, about five percent of all state and local government spending is used to fund pension benefits for employees of state and local government.

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Pension spending levels, however, vary widely among states, depending on various factors, and are actuarially sufficient for some pension plans and insufficient for others.

Read the Research

Consumer Fraud Losses Hit Record $5.8 Billion

Consumers reported losing a record-breaking $5.8 billion to fraud in 2021 for a 70 percent year-over-year increase, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) said in a new report.

The losses stemmed from a variety of schemes. The largest number hinged on impostors: crooks who stole money from people by posing as romantic interests, government employees, relatives in distress, tech-support experts or others, such as representatives of businesses or charities.

There were almost one million impostor scams among the nearly 2.8 million frauds reported in 2021 to the FTC's Consumer Sentinel Network.

Impostor fraud losses skyrocketed to $2.3 billion in 2021, up from $1.2 billion in 2020.

The Consumer Sentinel Network takes reports from law enforcement, consumer-protection agencies and partners including AARP's Fraud Watch Network. The reports fall into three buckets: fraud; identity theft; and other consumer complaints that run the gamut from defective appliances to predatory lending.

Read More Here

Taxpayers 65 and Older Eligible for Earned Income Tax Credit

Millions of older Americans will be able to claim an earned income tax credit (EITC) when they file their 2021 tax returns this year.

Lisa Marsh Ryerson, AARP executive vice president and president of AARP Foundation, told U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris that AARP will raise awareness about the benefit and continue to urge that the EITC cap be permanently lifted.

“Older workers have been hard hit by the pandemic, and we’re delighted that now people age 65 and older are eligible to receive the EITC for the first time,” Marsh Ryerson said at a White House event designed to promote the changes to the EITC and Child Tax Credit included in the American Rescue Plan of 2021. “But poverty doesn’t go away in one year — this is an important benefit that must continue.”

Before the changes included in the rescue plan, individuals age 65 and older were not eligible for the EITC. For the 2021 tax year, the legislation lifted that age cap and also tripled the maximum credit for workers without children to $1,502. Workers age 65 and older are projected to total 13 million by 2024 and are the fastest growing age group in the workforce, according to AARP research.

Read More Here

Questions?

As always, the NRTA Team is available to answer your questions or provide counsel on issues. Below is our contact information:

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We thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with you and your members!