

The Benefits Scorecard: Assessing workplace benefits, well-being, and talent strategy.

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Key Points:

- Centering worker financial security in benefit offerings presents an underutilized opportunity for business to address income and wealth inequality
- The [Benefits Scorecard](#) is a new framework that employers can use to assess their workplace benefit offerings
- Findings of the 2022 Scorecard indicate clear actions for business leaders to innovate on workplace benefits and to support for broader policy and public safety nets

Public and private benefits play an important role for workers in supplementing and protecting income, helping meet essential needs, and building wealth. By thoughtfully designing workplace benefits offerings and an approach that recognizes the important role public safety nets play in workers financial security, businesses can more holistically support their workforce and also contribute to reducing income and wealth gaps. But to take action, the business community needs decision-useful information about how public and private benefits support workers and the most meaningful and relevant opportunities to improve benefits – their design and delivery – to advance financial security for all workers and their families.

The [Benefits Scorecard](#) is a new framework that business leaders can use to understand the role that benefit offerings play in workforce financial security in the United States. Developed by the [Aspen Institute Financial Security Program's Benefits21 initiative](#), the scorecard analyzes 22 prevalent and prominent public and private benefits—including various forms of paid leave, insurance, retirement plans, and healthcare among others. The benefits are assessed through the lens of financial security and their performance is evaluated based on four key indicators:

- **Dollar value:** How effective is the benefit value in supporting household financial stability?
- **Benefit delivery:** How does benefit delivery impact the value received?
- **Benefit access and use:** How accessible and available is the benefit for all households?
- **Interaction between benefits:** How does the benefit, when it interacts with other benefits, supports household financial stability?

The first two indicators are used to evaluate how the benefit performs in support of workers using the benefit today. The latter two are bundled with the first two indicators to assess the overall benefit performance in holistically supporting all workers, recognizing that many public and private benefits remain inaccessible, often for the most vulnerable workers.

When evaluated through the lens of financial security, there are clear findings about how public and private benefits perform to support workers and their families with important takeaways for business:

- Finding: Access to private workplace benefits play a critical role to ensuring financial security but relatively few workers have access to them. In fact, several of the highest potential benefits are the least equitable and inclusive of low-wage and non-traditional workforces. Paid sick leave, paid family medical leave, health insurance, and retirement plans suffer significant gaps in access and use along with low, insufficient values or high costs resulting in poor performance in supporting all workers.
 - **Action Opportunity: Employers should ensure the provision of workplace benefits applies to their entire workforce, equitably. While benefits may be modified based on needs of different types of workers, frontline, low-wage, and workers in non-traditional arrangements should have access to – and receive equitable support – from the same benefits (or similar in form and function) to any others at the company.**
 - Innovation in Action: Target leveraged worker feedback to guide [new investment in benefits](#) for hourly store associates, supply chain facility workers, and HQ employees. In addition to setting starting wages as \$15-24/hour, the company reduced enrollment waiting periods and the minimum hours for employees to qualify for benefits (from 30 to 25 per week), likely significantly increasing access to benefits for part-time employees.
- Finding: Beyond provision of a benefit, specific features of that benefit can either enhance or undermine financial security. For example, inadequate values, conditions on use, and high delivery fees not only lead to ineffective and inequitable support of workers financial security, they also can be drivers of low participation and utilization rates.
 - **Action Opportunity: Companies can assess their current and potential benefit offerings to determine how benefits may be missing the mark. By tweaking features of existing workplace benefits, companies can improve efficacy and amplify the impact of benefits on worker financial security. Seeking worker feedback and designing for the most vulnerable workers are ways to ensure benefits design are supporting financial security for all.**
 - Innovation in Action: After learning that nearly two-thirds of its hourly and entry-level employees were living paycheck to paycheck, [PayPal assessed and made changes to its benefits and compensation](#). Building on this, the [Worker Financial Wellness Initiative](#), launched in October 2020, has engaged several companies representing more than 800,000 workers. Companies can join and commit to assessing the financial wellness of their workforce annually to better understand employees’ financial vulnerabilities and identify opportunities for improving resilience as well as adapting benefits.
- Finding: Public benefits not only provide critical supports to all workers; their design and delivery significantly impacts the financial security of workers. Some of the best performing benefits are part of the public safety net, Social Security Retirement and Medicare – social insurance programs that were designed to support and protect nearly all workers, with integration into business information and payroll systems to ensure more inclusive and equitable support without burdening workers to apply and prove eligibility. At the same time other critical public benefit programs – such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have features – asset limits and benefit cliffs – that poorly integrate into workplace compensation offerings, negatively impacting use of savings and wealth building benefits and take-up of job promotions due to potential loss of these supports.
 - **Action Opportunity: Companies can play a role in supporting workers to access public benefit programs and support market and policy innovation to strengthen interactions across both public and private benefits in ways that enhance financial security outcomes for workers and improve participation in their workplace offering. For business, there could be potentially low-cost and high-value opportunities to improve workforce wellbeing by helping to connect employees, customers, and their communities to these services. And beyond direct action to connect workers, customers, and communities with public safety nets, companies should be supporting broader policy and public safety nets that strengthen the enabling environment for societal economic security and mobility.**

- Innovation in Action: As part of its focus on the social determinants of health, Kaiser Permanente ran a text-based outreach campaign through its Food for Life program that [successfully enrolled 70,000 eligible individuals](#) into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

All companies should have an interest in understanding whether the benefits they invest in are best contributing building a secure, healthy, and resilient workforce. The 2022 Benefits Scorecard signals opportunities for business leaders to look holistically at their benefit offerings - and workers overall well-being- and act now to begin to close benefit gaps in ways that support worker financial well-being, which in turn supports a thriving workforce and workplace.

To learn more about Benefits21 and upcoming events and publications, join the Aspen Financial Security Program's [newsletter](#). To engage with BSR's [Healthy Business Coalition](#) and join [an upcoming futures workshop](#) on the business role in reimagining the future of benefits and workforce economic security and mobility, contact Jessica (jcuster@bsr.org) and Hannah (hellis@bsr.org).