

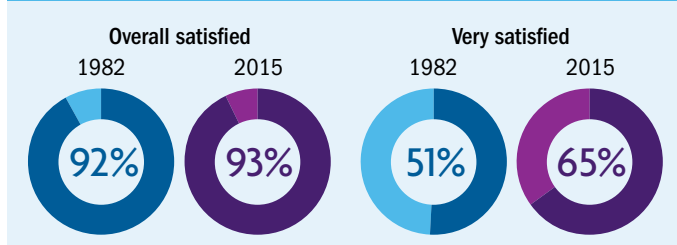
# Learning from today's retirees



As a plan sponsor, you're always looking for information that can help improve the retirement readiness of your employees. Studying the experience of actual retirees can provide you with this type of insight. With this in mind, we surveyed more than 1,500 of our retired participants about all facets of retired life and the planning and preparatory steps they took.

TIAA's 2016 Voices of Experience Survey<sup>1</sup> is unique to the industry because it allows for an unprecedented comparison of retiree trends from 30 years ago. The 2016 survey is a follow-up to the landmark Voices of Experience Study conducted in 1982. It found that despite the numerous challenges facing retirees, more than 90% were satisfied with their retirement. The survey learnings can help you put in place programs and services that can help your employees pursue satisfying retirement.

## Exhibit 1: Today's retirees are more satisfied in retirement



### Good news for your workforce

Retiree satisfaction levels from 30 years ago remain relatively unchanged when compared to TIAA's 1982 Voices of Experience Study. However, the intensity of retiree satisfaction has notably increased.

Your employees will also be happy to know that the thrill of retirement seems to increase the longer individuals are retired. Almost three-quarters (68%) of survey respondents retired for more than 10 years say they are very satisfied with their retirement. This compares to the 56% of respondents retired for five or less years saying the same.

And contrary to popular belief, it's still possible to retire early (before age 65). Among the retirees surveyed in 2015, more than half (54%) retired early, compared to only 39% of retirees in 1982. Even better news is that the majority of all survey respondents are retiring on their own terms: 76% of those surveyed in 2015 report that they retired by choice, an increase from 67% in 1982.

These results could give your employees a reason to be optimistic about retirement. But what can they do to achieve the same results?

### How you can help

Working with your retirement provider and advisor, you can create a plan that applies some of these survey insights. Some of the steps you can take include:

- Encouraging early retirement saving and planning—the earlier the better
- Focusing educational efforts around a target lifetime income goal for retirement, not the size of an account balance
- Considering adding guaranteed income solutions to your plan menu and educating your employees about them
- Letting your employees know it's possible to retire on their own terms with the right preparation.

These steps can get your employees closer to enjoying an equally satisfying retirement as today's retirees.

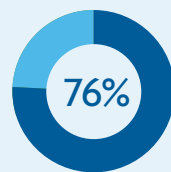
### What leads to a fulfilling retirement?

Satisfied retirees share many similarities when it comes to their social life and how they manage their finances. Staying busy and engaged is key to a satisfying retirement. That's why it's so important to encourage your employees to explore the activities and opportunities available to them after they retire. They can do this by participating in a community of like-minded retirees or soon-to-be retirees—such as TIAA's sponsored [MyRetirement](#) community—to get ideas about staying busy in retirement.

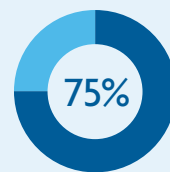
On the financial side, getting an early start on retirement planning can give individuals the flexibility to retire on their own terms—even the choice to retire early. However, the challenge is that your youngest employees aren't focused on retirement yet. They need education about budgeting and paying off student loan debts before they can turn their attention to retirement planning. These employees can access information by going to customized websites—such as [TIAA's Starting your financial life](#)—that offer relevant educational resources and tools.

Retirement satisfaction also ties into feelings of financial security and confidence. A majority of surveyed retirees have a fixed or variable annuity (70%), and almost all of those are happy with their decision to annuitize (92%). A meeting with a financial advisor can help your employees understand their own retirement income needs and how fixed annuities can provide guaranteed lifetime income.

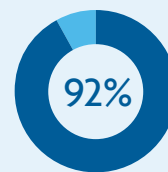
### Exhibit 2: Characteristics of happy retirees



of retirees engaged in 10 or more activities are very satisfied, but only 52% engaged in 1-4 activities say the same.



of retirees who began planning for retirement before age 30 are very satisfied.



of the 70% of retirees with fixed and variable annuities are satisfied with their decision to annuitize.

### Employers play an important role

You play a critical role in helping your employees pursue a financially secure and fulfilling retirement. Half of today's retirees reported receiving retirement planning help from their employers, more than double than in 1982. And that percentage will only increase going forward. You can take pride in knowing that your efforts can help your employees. Equally important, your actions can put your employees on the path to a satisfying retirement.

Click [here](#) for more insights from the TIAA 2016 Voices of Experience Survey.

1. The TIAA 2016 Voices of Experience survey was conducted by GfK Custom Research North America among a total of 1,583 TIAA retirees between May 28 and August 27, 2015. To qualify, all respondents had to indicate that they are retired. Respondents were mailed the survey questionnaire and had the option to return the survey by mail or to complete the survey online. Respondents completed 104 surveys online and 1,479 by mail. The sample was provided by TIAA, and data were weighted by gender, age, region, engagement and industry sector.

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