

ICI Defined Contribution Plan Recordkeeper Data Show Retirement Plan Participants Stayed the Course Through Up and Down Markets in 2018

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Washington, DC; May 23, 2019—Almost all defined contribution (DC) plan participants kept contributing to their retirement savings during 2018, according to ICI’s “[Defined Contribution Plan Participants’ Activities, 2018](#).” The study tracks contributions, withdrawals, and other activity based on DC plan recordkeeper data covering more than 30 million participant accounts in employer-based DC plans.

The latest recordkeeper data indicate that savers remained committed to saving for their futures by continuing to contribute to their DC plans: only 2.3 percent of DC plan participants discontinued their contributions during 2018.

Other findings include:

- **Withdrawal activity for DC plans remained low in 2018, similar to the activity in 2017.** In 2018, 3.4 percent of DC plan participants took withdrawals, the same share as in 2017. Levels of hardship withdrawal activity also remained low, with only 1.6 percent of DC plan participants taking hardship withdrawals during 2018, compared with 1.7 percent in 2017.
- **Most DC plan participants stayed the course in their asset allocations, even as stock values moved up over much of the year and then sharply down in the fourth quarter of 2018.** In 2018, 9.7 percent of DC plan participants changed the asset allocation of their account balances, and 5.1 percent changed the asset allocation of their contributions. These levels of reallocation activity are similar to the activity levels in 2017.

- **DC plan participants' loan activity remained the same throughout 2018.** At the end of December 2018, 16.7 percent of DC plan participants had plan loans outstanding, the same share as in 2017.

ICI has been tracking participant activity through recordkeeper surveys since 2008. This update provides results from ICI's survey of a cross section of recordkeeping firms representing a broad range of DC plans. Please visit ICI's [401\(k\) Resource Center](#) for more information.

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