

Ageism for the Over-50 Crowd Means Longer Layoffs, Less Pay: Study



[Nate Swanner](#) January 3, 2019 3 min read

AGEISMOLDER WORKERSTECH PROS



A new [study](#) shows that those over the age of 50 often don't leave their jobs voluntarily, and the chances of earning a similar salary in a new job are next to impossible.

ProPublica and Washington-based think tank Urban Institute analyzed data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), which has been tracking Americans over the age of 50 since 1992. Its sample dataset has tracked roughly 20,000 people.

Its findings are startling. All told, it sees a trend where older workers are forced out of higher-paying jobs they've earned, and face continued employment disruptions thereafter. From ProPublica:

Through 2016, our analysis found that between the time older workers enter the study and when they leave paid employment, 56 percent are laid off at least once or leave jobs under such financially damaging circumstances that it's likely they were pushed out rather than choosing to go voluntarily.

<https://insights.dice.com/2019/01/03/ageism-low-salary-new-job/>

Further analysis shows only ten percent will ever earn as much as they did before being pushed out of that first high-paying job (which is after 50, so that lucrative post could have been years in the making). As ProPublica writes: “Even years afterward, the household incomes of over half of those who experience such work disruptions remain substantially below those of workers who don’t.”

HRS is a survey of working professionals, which means it can only guess the cause of such turnover amongst older working professionals; but ProPublica does track reasons given by those surveyed for losing jobs.

Dice’s own report, the [Diversity and Inclusion Survey](#), notes age-based discrimination (or at least the perception of ageism) is far and away the most recognized type of discrimination amongst tech pros. Some 29 percent of respondents to our study say they’ve experienced or witnesses ageism at work.

It’s interesting how these two studies dovetail into one another. Our study shows tech pros in their late 40s are most concerned about job disruption or age-based discrimination; 80 percent fear attitudes about age will affect their career. HRS data shows those fears are realistic.

Sadly, the infatuation with youth hasn’t subsided. Facebook, gripped by scandals throughout 2018, was also hit with accusations that Facebook job ads allow for ageism: Recruiters and companies [can target age-based demographics to avoid older professionals altogether](#).

HRS data also shows that those laid off or fired in their 50s are more prone to longer periods of unemployment, and take less lucrative roles just to get back into the workforce. Furthermore, it shows one-third of older professionals experience two or more job changes after 50. “Older workers don’t lose their jobs any more frequently than younger ones,” Princeton labor economist Henry Farber told ProPublica, “but when they do, they’re substantially less likely to be re-employed.”