To understand how firefighters feel about their jobs and benefits, the National Institute on Retirement Security conducted a national poll to gain deep insight into their views at a time when state and local governments are struggling to recruit and retain employees. This fact sheet provides a snapshot of key highlights of the research. More information is available in the full report, *State and Local Employee Views on Their Jobs, Pay and Benefits*, issued in November 2019 and available at [www.nirsonline.org](http://www.nirsonline.org).

**Firefighters are committed to public service despite the fact that their jobs are stressful.**

96% of firefighters say they are committed to serving the public.

- **Strongly Agree**: 11%
- **Somewhat Agree**: 45%
- **Somewhat Disagree**: 39%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 4%

85% of firefighters say their jobs are stressful.

- **Strongly Agree**: 11%
- **Somewhat Agree**: 46%
- **Somewhat Disagree**: 11%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 4%

**Firefighters have highly favorable views on their pensions and the death/disability benefits included in their pension.**

98% of firefighters have favorable views of defined benefit pensions.

- **Very Favorable**: 24%
- **Somewhat Favorable**: 74%
- **Somewhat Unfavorable**: 2%
- **Very Unfavorable**: 0%

97% of firefighters say that providing death and disability benefit is an important feature of a pension.

- **Very Important**: 15%
- **Somewhat Important**: 81%
- **Not Too Important**: 3%
- **Not At All Important**: 0.5%
FIREFIGHTERS AGREE THAT THEIR PENSION IS A MAJOR REASON THEY CHOSE THEIR JOB AND IT IS A MAJOR REASON THEY STAY.

Firefighters overwhelmingly agree that a pension benefit is a major reason they chose a public sector job.

- All State & Local Employees: 37% Strongly Agree, 35% Somewhat Agree, 21% Somewhat Disagree, 1% Strongly Disagree
- Firefighters: 57% Strongly Agree, 32% Somewhat Agree, 10% Somewhat Disagree, 1% Strongly Disagree

92% of firefighters agree that a pension benefit is a major reason why they stay in their job.

- All State & Local Employees: 49% Strongly Agree, 37% Somewhat Agree, 10% Somewhat Disagree, 1% Strongly Disagree
- Firefighters: 66% Strongly Agree, 26% Somewhat Agree, 8% Somewhat Disagree

99% of firefighters say they plan to stay with their current employer until they are eligible for retirement or can no longer work.

FIREFIGHTERS OVERWHELMINGLY AGREE THAT ELIMINATING PENSIONS WOULD WEAKEN PUBLIC SAFETY.

- 69% of firefighters say switching out of a pension would make them more likely to leave their job.
- 82% of firefighters say they would be more likely to leave their job if their pension were cut.
- 93% of firefighters say eliminating pensions for the public workforce would weaken public safety.

FIREFIGHTERS AGREE THAT PENSIONS ARE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR RECRUITING AND RETAINING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

Firefighters overwhelmingly agree that offering a pension is an effective tool for attracting new public employees.

- All State & Local Employees: 56% Yes, Very Effective, 38% Yes, Somewhat Effective, 6% No, Not Effective
- Firefighters: 77% Yes, Very Effective, 22% Yes, Somewhat Effective, 1% No, Not Effective

99% of firefighters say offering a pension is an effective tool for retaining employees.