

**TABLE 1: PUMS Knowledge Indicators**

**Basic Program Facts**

*Who can get benefits and when do you get them?*

Knowledge Indicator	Survey Question	1999	1998
	3. Next, I'm going to read you a list of statements about Social Security programs, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. <b>YOU MAY HAVE MENTIONED SOME OF THESE PROGRAMS IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.</b> Please answer each question to the best of your knowledge, but if you are not sure about an answer, just say so. How about <b>(read and rotate A-I)?</b>		
1. Social Security provides retirement benefits.	Social Security provides retirement benefits <i>(Agree)</i>	80%	80%
2. Social Security provides benefits to the families of workers who die.	Social Security provides benefits to the families of workers who die <i>(Agree)</i>	82	80
3. Social Security pays benefits to workers who become disabled	Social Security pays benefits to workers who become disabled <i>(Agree)</i>	85	83
4. People can retire early and receive some benefits	7. Can a person retire early and still receive some Social Security retirement benefits? <i>(Yes)</i>	65	62
5. Age 62 is the earliest age that people can retire and collect some Social Security benefits.	8. (If code "1" in #7, ask:) What is the earliest age you can retire and start receiving some Social Security retirement benefits? (Open ended and code actual age) <i>(62)</i>	49	46
6. Age 65 is the earliest age that people can retire and collect full Social Security benefits. People born after 1938 will have their full retirement age gradually increased.	5. What do you think is the youngest age someone can retire today, and start receiving FULL Social Security retirement benefits? If you don't know just say so. (Open ended and code actual age) <i>(65)</i>	38	38
7. The youngest age that one can retire and receive full benefits will rise. People born in 1960 and later will collect full Social Security benefits at age 67.	6. Is the youngest age you can retire and collect FULL Social Security retirement benefits <b>(read 1-2)?</b> 1 Fixed, OR 2 Will it rise in the future (rise in the future) <i>(Will rise...)</i>	72	65

Percentages in green boldface are significantly greater than 1998 ( $p < 0.05$ )

Percentages in red boldface are significantly less than 1998 ( $p < 0.05$ )

**TABLE 1: PUMS Knowledge Indicators (continued)**

Value of Social Security Programs			
<i>How important is Social Security?</i>			
Knowledge Indicator	Survey Question	1999	1998
8. Social Security benefit amounts depend upon how much people have earned.	Do all people who receive Social Security retirement benefits receive the same amount, or does it depend on how much people earned when they were working? 1 People receive the same amount 2 Depends on how much people earned when they were working <i>(Depends...)</i>	92%	89%
9. Social Security benefits go up automatically with the cost of living.	3. Next, I'm going to read you a list of statements about Social Security programs, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. YOU MAY HAVE MENTIONED SOME OF THESE PROGRAMS IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTION. Please answer each question to the best of your knowledge, but if you are not sure about an answer, just say so. How about <b>(read and rotate A-I)?</b> Social Security benefits go up automatically with the rise in the cost of living <i>(Agree)</i>	61	59
10. Social Security was designed to provide part of retirement income.	10. Were Social Security retirement benefits, by themselves, designed to provide enough money for retired people to live on? 1 Yes 2 No <i>(No)</i>	73	73
	3. Next, I'm going to read you a list of statements about Social Security programs, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. YOU MAY HAVE MENTIONED SOME OF THESE PROGRAMS IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTION. Please answer each question to the best of your knowledge, but if you are not sure about an answer, just say so. How about <b>(read and rotate A-I)?</b>		
11. Social Security plays a major role in keeping seniors out of poverty.	Social Security benefits play a major role in keeping many senior citizens out of poverty <i>(Agree)</i>	75	76
12. Social Security is the largest source of income for most elderly Americans.	Social Security is the largest single source of income for most elderly Americans <i>(Agree)</i>	79	77

*Percentages in green boldface are significantly greater than 1998 (p<0.05)*

*Percentages in red boldface are significantly less than 1998 (p<0.05)*

**TABLE 1: PUMS Knowledge Indicators (continued)**

Financing Social Security Programs			
<i>What can we expect now and in the future?</i>			
Knowledge Indicator	Survey Question	1999	1998
13. Social Security taxes paid today are mainly used for today's retired people.	12. What do you think happens to the Social Security taxes paid by workers today? Are the taxes mainly put away for their own retirement, or are they mainly used now to pay benefits to today's retired people? 1 Put away for their retirement 2 Used right now to pay benefits to today's retired people <i>(Used right now...)</i>	<b>78%</b>	81%
	3. Next, I'm going to read you a list of statements about Social Security programs, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. YOU MAY HAVE MENTIONED SOME OF THESE PROGRAMS IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTION. Please answer each question to the best of your knowledge, but if you are not sure about an answer, just say so. How about <b>(read and rotate A-1)</b> ?		
14. A tax placed on both workers and employers pays for Social Security benefits.	Social Security is paid for by a tax placed on both workers and employers <i>(Agree)</i>	87	87
15. Social Security does not pay for the food stamp program	Social Security pays for the food stamp program <i>(Disagree)</i>	<b>46</b>	50
	14. Now, I'm going to read to you several statements about Social Security. For each one, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. How about <b>(read and rotate A-D)</b> ? 5 Strongly agree 4 Somewhat agree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 1 Strongly disagree		
16. In the future due to changing demographics, there will not be enough workers to pay for benefits, under current law	In the future, there will not be enough workers to pay for the benefits that retired people receive <i>(5 or 4)</i>	<b>57</b>	61
17. People on Social Security are living longer and healthier lives therefore receive benefits longer.	People on Social Security are living longer, so they cost the program more money <i>(3 or 4)</i>	75	76
18. The percentage of older Americans will about double between now and 2034.	The percentage of older Americans will about double between now and the year 2032 <i>(3 or 4)</i>	83	84
19. There is not significant fraud and abuse by people who aren't entitled to benefits	There is significant fraud and abuse by people who aren't entitled to benefits <i>(2 or 1)</i>	23	21

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Note that three knowledge indicators, 16, 17 and 18, were changed by SSA between the 1998 and 1999 surveys. The significance of this change will be addressed in the Gallup National Report.