

# DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PLAN EMPLOYER MATCH SUSPENSIONS DURING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

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## ABSTRACT

This report documents employer contributions to defined contribution (DC) plans based on *Form 5500 Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan* ("Form 5500") filings from 2005 through 2011. The focus is on changes in employer contributions following the financial crisis that began in late 2008 and the subsequent recession. Participants experienced reductions in median employer contributions of 2% between 2007 and 2008 and another 13% from 2008 to 2009. Employer contributions generally rebounded in 2011, but remained below pre-crisis levels. Small employers reduced their per participant contributions by more than large employers, but very small employers (1-9 plan participants) remained the largest contributors to their employees' plans. Participants also reduced their median contributions, and the ratio of employer-to-participant contributions also generally declined in 2008-2009. The report discusses notable differences within the distributions of employer contributions, participant contributions, and their ratios.