

reserve ratio reaches 1.38 percent, small IDIs will receive assessment credits for the portion of their assessments that contributed to the growth in the reserve ratio from 1.15 to 1.35 percent.

### **Budget Outlook**

The Budget estimates DIF net outlays of -\$65.9 billion over the current 10-year budget window (2020–2029). This \$65.9 billion in net inflows to the DIF is \$3.7 billion lower than estimated over the previous 10-year window (2019–2028) for the 2018 President's Budget. Growth in the DIF balance, in the size of the banking sector and the impact of higher interest rate accounted for most of this change, as the latest public data on the banking industry led to minimal changes in projections of failed assets as a share of the banking system, or to the receivership proceeds, resolution outlays, and premiums necessary to reach the long-run DIF target of 1.5 percent. Although the FDIC has authority to borrow up to \$100 billion from Treasury to maintain sufficient DIF balances, the Budget does not anticipate FDIC utilizing its borrowing authority because the DIF is projected to maintain positive operating cash flows over the entire 10-year budget horizon.

### **Pension Guarantees**

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) insures the pension benefits of workers and retirees in covered defined-benefit pension plans. PBGC operates two legally distinct insurance programs: single-employer plans and multiemployer plans.

#### **Single-Employer Program**

Under the single-employer program, PBGC pays benefits, up to a guaranteed level, when a company's plan closes without enough assets to pay future benefits. PBGC's claims exposure is the amount by which qualified benefits exceed assets in insured plans. In the near term, the risk of loss stems from financially distressed firms with underfunded plans. In the longer term, loss exposure results from the possibility that well-funded plans become underfunded due to inadequate contributions, poor investment results, or increased liabilities, and that the healthy firms sponsoring those plans become distressed.

PBGC monitors companies with underfunded plans and acts to protect the interests of the pension insurance program's stakeholders where possible. Under its Early Warning Program, PBGC works with companies to strengthen plan funding or otherwise protect the insurance program from avoidable losses. However, PBGC's authority to manage risks to the insurance program is limited. Most private insurers can diversify or reinsure their catastrophic risks as well as flexibly price these risks. Unlike private insurers, Federal law does not allow PBGC to deny insurance coverage to a defined-benefit plan or adjust premiums according to risk. Both types of PBGC premiums—the flat rate (a per person charge paid by all plans) and the variable rate (paid by some underfunded plans) are set in statute.

Claims against PBGC's insurance programs are highly variable. One large pension plan termination may result in a larger claim against PBGC than the termination of many smaller plans. The future financial health of the PBGC will continue to depend largely on the termination of a limited number of very large plans.

Single employer plans generally provide benefits to the employees of one employer. When an underfunded single employer plan terminates, usually through the bankruptcy process, PBGC becomes trustee of the plan, applies legal limits on payouts, and pays benefits. The amount of benefit paid is determined after taking into account (a) the benefit that a beneficiary had accrued in the terminated plan, (b) the availability of assets from the terminated plan to cover benefits, and (c) the legal maximum benefit level set in statute. In 2019, the maximum annual payment guaranteed under the single-employer program was \$67,295 for a retiree aged 65. This limit is indexed for inflation.

Since 2000, PBGC's single-employer program has incurred substantial losses from underfunded plan terminations. Nine of the ten largest plan termination losses were concentrated between 2001 and 2009. The other occurred in the early 1990s.

#### **Multiemployer Plans**

Multiemployer plans are collectively bargained pension plans maintained by one or more labor unions and more than one unrelated employer, usually within the same or related industries. PBGC's role in the multi-employer program is more like that of a re-insurer; if a company sponsoring a multiemployer plan fails, its liabilities are assumed by the other employers in the collective bargaining agreement, not by PBGC, although employers can withdraw from a plan for an exit fee. PBGC becomes responsible for insurance coverage when the plan runs out of money to pay benefits at the statutorily guaranteed level, which usually occurs after all contributing employers have withdrawn from the plan, leaving the plan without a source of income. PBGC provides insolvent multiemployer plans with financial assistance in the form of loans sufficient to pay guaranteed benefits and administrative expenses. Since multiemployer plans do not receive PBGC assistance until their assets are fully depleted, financial assistance is almost never repaid. Benefits under the multiemployer program are calculated based on the benefit that a participant would have received under the insolvent plan, subject to the legal multiemployer maximum set in statute. The maximum guaranteed amount depends on the participant's years of service and the rate at which benefits are accrued. For example, for a participant with 30 years of service, PBGC guarantees 100 percent of the pension benefit up to a yearly amount of \$3,960. If the pension exceeds that amount, PBGC guarantees 75 percent of the rest of the pension benefit up to a total maximum guarantee of \$12,870 per year. This limit has been in place since 2011 and is not adjusted for inflation or cost-of-living increases.

In recent years, many multiemployer pension plans have become severely underfunded as a result of unfavor-

able investment outcomes, employers withdrawing from plans, and demographic challenges. In 2001, only 15 plans covering about 80,000 participants were under 40 percent funded using estimated market rates. By 2011, this had grown to almost 200 plans covering almost 1.5 million participants. While many plans have benefited from an improving economy and will recover, a small number of plans are severely underfunded and, absent any changes, projected to become insolvent within ten years.

As of November 15, 2018, the single-employer program reported a positive net position of \$2.4 billion, while the multiemployer program reported a long-term actuarial deficit of \$53.9 billion. The challenges facing the multiemployer program are immediate.. In its 2018 Annual Report, PBGC reported that it had just \$2 billion in accumulated assets from premium payments made by multiemployer plans, which it projected would be depleted by 2025. If the program runs out of cash, the only funds available to support benefits would be the premiums that continue to be paid by remaining plans; this could result in benefits being cut much more deeply, to a small fraction of current guarantee levels.

To address the problems facing the multiemployer program and the millions of Americans who rely on those plans for their retirement security, the Congress passed The Multiemployer Pension Reform Act, which was included in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act signed on December 16, 2014. The law includes significant reforms to the multiemployer pension plan system, including provisions that allow trustees of multiemployer plans facing insolvency to apply to the Department of Treasury to reduce benefits by temporarily or permanently suspending benefits. The law does not allow suspensions for individuals over age 80 or for those receiving a disability retirement benefit. A participant or beneficiary's monthly benefit cannot be reduced below 110 percent of the PBGC guarantee. It also increases PBGC premiums from \$12 per person to \$26 beginning in 2015 and indexes premiums to inflation thereafter. While the legislation was an important first step, it will not be enough to improve PBGC's solvency for more than a very short period of time. PBGC projects that it is likely to become insolvent by 2025, extending its projected insolvency date by three years compared to the 2013 projection.

In addition, Congress enacted premium increases in the single-employer program as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA). By increasing both the flat-rate and variable-rate premiums, the Act will raise an estimated \$4 billion over the 10-year budget window. This additional revenue will improve the financial outlook for the single-employer program, which was already projected to see a large reduction in its deficit over the next 10 years.

### Premiums

PBGC's combined liabilities exceeded assets by \$51.5 billion at the end of 2018. While the single-employer program's financial position is projected to continue improving over the next 10 years, in part because Congress has raised premiums in that program several times, the

multiemployer program is projected to run out of funds in 2025. Particularly in the multiemployer program, premium rates remain much lower than what a private financial institution would charge for insuring the same risk and well below what is needed to ensure PBGC's solvency.

The Budget includes two policy proposals to reform PBGC premiums. For an in-depth discussion of these proposals, please see the Labor chapter of the Budget Appendix.

## Disaster Insurance

### Flood Insurance

The Federal Government provides flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Flood insurance is available to homeowners, renters, businesses, and State and local governments in communities that have adopted and enforce minimum floodplain management measures. Coverage is limited to buildings and their contents. At the end of 2018, the program had over five million policies worth \$1.31 trillion in force in 22,337 communities. The program is currently authorized until May 31, 2019.

Congress established NFIP in 1968 to make flood insurance coverage widely available, to combine a program of insurance with flood mitigation measures to reduce the nation's risk of loss from floods, and to reduce Federal disaster-assistance expenditures on flood losses. The NFIP requires participating communities to adopt certain land use ordinances consistent with FEMA's floodplain management regulations and take other mitigation efforts to reduce flood-related losses in high flood hazard areas ("Special Flood Hazard Areas") identified through partnership with FEMA, States, and local communities. These efforts have resulted in substantial reductions in the risk of flood-related losses nationwide. However, structures built prior to flood mapping and NFIP floodplain management requirements are eligible for discounted premiums. Currently, FEMA estimates that approximately 20 percent of the total policies in force pay less than fully actuarial rates while continuing to be at relatively high risk of flooding.

FEMA'S Community Rating System offers discounts on policy premiums in communities that adopt and enforce more stringent floodplain land use ordinances than those identified in FEMA's regulations and/or engage in mitigation activities beyond those required by the NFIP. The discounts provide an incentive for communities to implement new flood protection activities that can help save lives and property when a flood occurs. Further, NFIP offers flood mitigation assistance grants for planning and carrying out activities to reduce the risk of flood damage to structures covered by NFIP, which may include demolition or relocation of a structure, elevation or flood-proofing a structure, and minor physical mitigation efforts. In particular, flood mitigation assistance grants targeted to