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Press Release

Milliman analysis: February market gains lift corporate pension funding ratios to highest level in nearly 25 years

Milliman PFI funded ratio rises to 109.4% despite falling discount rates

SEATTLE – MARCH 5, 2026 – [Milliman, Inc.](#), a premier global consulting and actuarial firm, today released the results of its monthly Milliman 100 Pension Funding Index (PFI), which analyzes the 100 largest U.S. corporate pension plans.

During February, discount rates fell by 14 basis points, to 5.33%, and raised the PFI projected benefit obligation to \$1.235 trillion. However, monthly returns of 2.15% offset the impact and lifted the market value of plan assets by \$22 billion, to \$1.351 trillion. The PFI funded ratio rose from 109.1% as of January 31 to 109.4% as of February 28—the highest level since the 109.9% mark observed in July 2001.

“February’s investment performance drove the month’s \$5 billion gain in funding levels,” said Zorast Wadia, author of the Milliman PFI. “While this marks 11 straight months of funding improvements, further declines in interest rates may occur, and ongoing market volatility makes it vital for plan sponsors to undertake surplus-management strategies focused on both sides of the balance sheet.”

Looking forward, under an optimistic forecast with rising interest rates (reaching 5.83% by the end of 2026 and 6.43% by the end of 2027) and asset gains (10.53% annual returns), the funded ratio would climb to 121% by the end of 2026 and 136% by the end of 2027. Under a pessimistic forecast (4.83% discount rate at the end of 2026 and 4.23% by the end of 2027 and 2.53% annual returns), the funded ratio would decline to 102% by the end of 2026 and 93% by the end of 2027.

Read this month’s complete [Pension Funding Index](#) or Milliman’s full range of [annual Pension Funding Studies](#). For regular updates of Milliman’s pension funding analysis, email pensionfunding@milliman.com.

About Milliman

Milliman leverages deep expertise, actuarial rigor, and advanced technology to develop solutions for a world at risk. We help clients in the public and private sectors navigate urgent, complex challenges—from extreme weather and market volatility to financial insecurity and rising health costs—so they can meet their business, financial, and social objectives. Our solutions encompass insurance, financial services, healthcare, life sciences, and employee benefits. Founded in 1947, Milliman is an independent firm with offices in major cities around the globe. Visit us at milliman.com.

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