Background

The 2020 Planning & Progress Study, a research series from Northwestern Mutual, explores U.S. adults’ attitudes and behaviors toward money, financial decision-making, and the broader issues impacting people’s long-term financial security.

The study was conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of Northwestern Mutual. This wave included 2,702 American adults aged 18 and older who participated in an online survey between June 26 – July 10, 2020. Previous waves included 2,650 American adults aged 18 or older who participated in an online survey between February 12 – 25, 2020 and 2,077 adults aged 18 or older who participated between April 29 – May 1, 2020.

Results were weighted to Census targets for education, age/gender, race/ethnicity, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.
On average, American adults have $65,900 in personal savings, excluding retirement funds.

Average: $65,900
More Americans feel financially secure than insecure, though financial security was higher pre-pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Pandemic Financial Security Rating</th>
<th>Current Financial Security Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Secure (8-10)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure (4-7)</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Secure (1-3)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS – 2020 Gen Pop: (n=2702)**

**Q1075.** If financial security is defined as "a feeling of confidence that you will achieve the financial goals you have for yourself or your family through the actions you are currently taking," how financially secure do you feel right now? Use a 1 to 10 scale where 1 means "not at all financially secure" and 10 means "completely financially secure."

**Q1.** Using the same 1 to 10 scale where 1 means "not at all financially secure" and 10 means "completely financially secure", how financially secure did you feel before the COVID-19 pandemic?
However, many U.S. adults are experiencing some level of financial anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rising cost of healthcare</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned financial emergency</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned health emergency</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your level of savings</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your income</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your understanding of personal finances</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outliving retirement savings</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to afford healthcare</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for retirement</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your level of debt</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having poor credit</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing your job</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This financial anxiety has a notable impact on Americans’ lives

% Monthly or More Often

- 20%
- 31%
- 21%
- 23%
- 19%
- 22%

- Hourly
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a year or less often
- Never

- Made you physically ill
  - 65%
  - 46%
  - 61%
  - 56%
  - 67%
  - 59%

- Made you feel depressed
  - 2%
  - 5%
  - 8%
  - 17%
  - 21%
  - 19%

- Impacted your relationship with spouse/partner
  - 2%
  - 5%
  - 6%
  - 17%
  - 21%
  - 19%

- Caused you to miss out on social events and opportunities
  - 2%
  - 5%
  - 7%
  - 21%
  - 14%
  - 19%

- Impacted your job performance
  - 2%
  - 5%
  - 6%
  - 14%
  - 67%
  - 59%

- Created issues with family members/friends (other than spouse/partner)
  - 2%
  - 4%
  - 7%
  - 19%
  - 9%
  - 59%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS – 2020 Gen Pop: (n=2702)
QAR1. How often has financial anxiety...?
40% of Americans are thinking about or actively planning their finances one month or less in advance

- Day to day: 11%
- Week to week: 9%
- Month to month: 20%
- Quarterly: 8%
- Annually: 11%
- 2 to 5 years out: 7%
- 5 to 10 years out: 4%
- More than 10 years out: 11%
- I've stopped thinking about my financial future for the time being: 7%
- I've never actively planned for my financial future: 11%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS – 2020 Gen Pop (n=2702)
NEW4. How far in advance are you currently thinking about or actively planning your finances today? Please pick the longest option available that applies to you.
Half of U.S. adults don’t have clarity on how much they can afford to spend now versus save for later

I have good clarity on exactly how much I can afford to spend now vs how much I should be saving for later

50%

I don’t have great clarity on exactly how much I can afford to spend now vs how much I should be saving for later, but I still tend to spend on things I enjoy… and am hoping I’ll have enough saved for later

22%

I don’t have great clarity on exactly how much I can afford to spend now vs how much I should be saving for later, so I tend to hold back on spending just to be safe

27%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS – 2020 Gen Pop (n=2702)
Q1817. If you had to choose, please select which ONE of the following statements applies to you.