

2024 Planning & Progress Study

Leaving a Legacy

Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company (NM), Milwaukee, WI and its subsidiaries.

Background & Methodology

Background

The 2024 Planning & Progress Study, a research series from Northwestern Mutual, explores US adults' attitudes and behaviors toward money, financial decision-making, and the broader issues impacting people's long-term financial security.

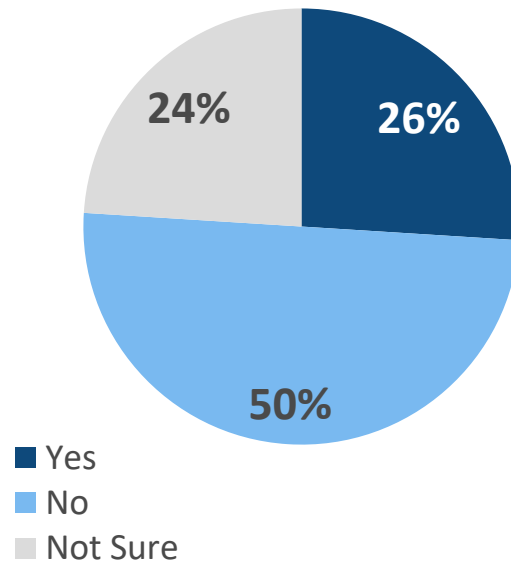
Methodology

The Harris Poll conducted a total of 4,588 online interviews among the general U.S. adult (18+) population between January 3rd and January 17th. Included in this overall total is a sample of 831 High-Net-Worth individuals (those with total household investable assets, excluding pensions, retirement plans and property, greater than \$1,000,000).

Data for the general U.S. population (including the High-Net-Worth oversample) were weighted to Census targets for education, age, gender, race/ethnicity, region and household income. A full methodology is available.

Just 26% of Americans expect to leave behind an inheritance.

Do you expect to leave an inheritance or give a gift/donation to a charitable organization?



One-third (32%) of Millennials expect to receive an inheritance, but only 22% each of Gen X and Boomers+ say they plan to leave a financial gift behind.

Do you expect to leave an inheritance or give a gift / donation to a charitable organization (e.g., non-profit, religious institution, etc.)?

	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
Yes	26%	36%	28%	22%	22%
No	50%	36%	47%	56%	55%
Not sure	24%	27%	25%	22%	23%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=4588)

Q2024AA Do you expect to leave an inheritance or give a gift / donation to a charitable organization (e.g., non-profit, religious institution, etc.)?

35% of Americans expect to receive an inheritance or have already received an inheritance and don't expect any more. For Gen Z, the gap is even wider – nearly four in ten (38%) expect to receive an inheritance, but only 22% of Gen X and 28% of Millennials say they plan to leave a financial gift behind.

Do you expect to receive money / assets as part of an inheritance(s)?

	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
Yes	25%	38%	32%	28%	11%
I already have and don't expect any more	10%	6%	3%	8%	22%
No	53%	38%	49%	54%	62%
Not sure	12%	18%	17%	10%	5%

Among those expecting to receive an inheritance, half (50%) consider it “highly critical” or “critical” to their long-term financial security. This sentiment is even more pronounced among Millennials, with 59%.

How critical to your long-term financial security or retirement is the inheritance that you’re expecting?

	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
CRITICAL (NET)	50%	54%	59%	46%	30%
Highly critical. Without receiving an inheritance, I won't achieve long-term financial security or be able to retire comfortably.	17%	13%	26%	14%	9%
Critical. Without receiving an inheritance, I may not achieve long-term financial security or be able to retire comfortably.	33%	41%	33%	33%	21%
NOT CRITICAL (NET)	50%	46%	41%	54%	70%
Not critical. I'll achieve long-term financial security and retire comfortably with or without receiving an inheritance.	43%	41%	35%	48%	54%
Not critical. I'll never achieve long-term financial security or retire comfortably with or without receiving an inheritance.	7%	5%	5%	5%	16%

BASE: EXPECT TO RECEIVE INHERITANCE (n=1194)

Q2024Z How critical to your long-term financial security or retirement is the inheritance that you’re expecting?

Gen Z has the greatest expectations for the impact of an inheritance on their retirement strategy – anticipating the gift to cover almost 10% of their retirement funds.

Among the following, what percentage of your overall retirement funding do you expect each to deliver?

	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
401K or other retirement account	29%	26%	31%	33%	24%
Social Security	26%	13%	18%	27%	40%
Personal savings or investments	23%	27%	24%	20%	22%
Support from spouse / partner	8%	11%	10%	7%	6%
Other	6%	7%	6%	5%	5%
Inheritance	6%	10%	6%	6%	2%
Support from children	3%	6%	4%	3%	1%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=4588)

N37 Among the following, what percentage of your overall retirement funding do you expect each to deliver?

Among those expecting to leave an inheritance, two-thirds (68%) say it is either their “single most important financial goal” or is “very important,” and it’s even more of a priority for younger adults.

How important of a financial goal is it for you to leave something for your kids / the next generation?

	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
It is my single most important financial goal	17%	14%	22%	18%	11%
Very important	51%	61%	59%	47%	35%
Somewhat important	20%	21%	13%	22%	25%
Not that important	6%	1%	2%	7%	14%
Not at all important	7%	2%	3%	6%	14%

Far and away, most people who expect to leave an inheritance plan to give it to their children and grandchildren.

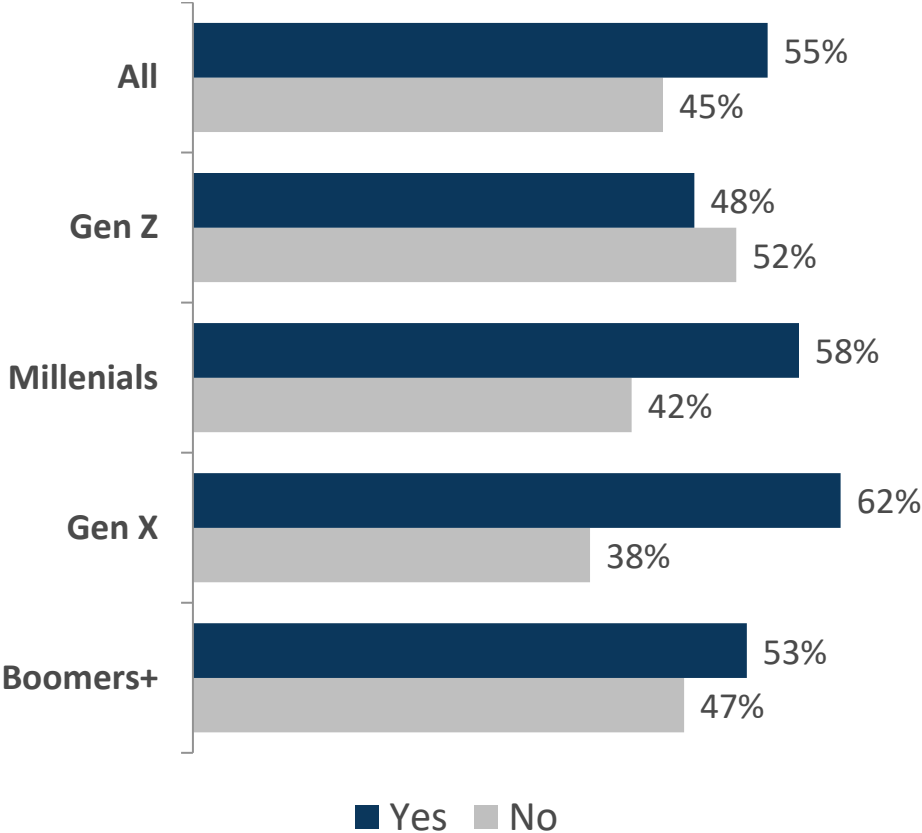
To whom do you, or would you, expect to leave your inheritance and / or charitable gift / donation?

	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
Children / Grandchildren	71%	69%	71%	74%	70%
Spouse	42%	53%	44%	37%	36%
Charitable organizations / causes / religious institutions	35%	38%	29%	30%	43%
Extended family members	27%	34%	28%	23%	21%
Friends	13%	24%	16%	4%	7%
Not sure	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%

BASE: EXPECT TO LEAVE AN INHERITANCE (n=1260)
Q2024AB To whom do you, or would you, expect to leave your inheritance and/or charitable gift/donation?

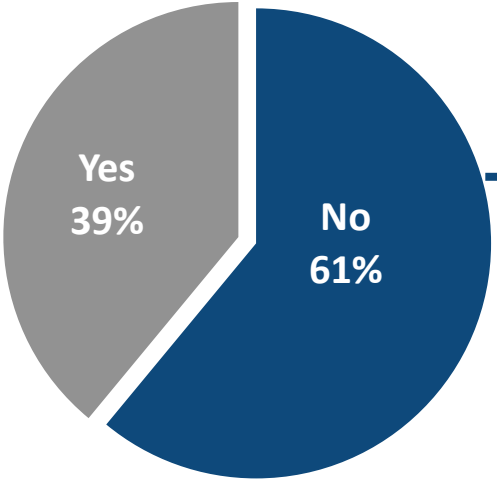
Nearly half (47%) of Boomers+ who expect to leave an inheritance or gift have not talked to family about their financial plans and more than a third of Gen X (38%) say the same.

Have you had a conversation with your family about your plan to leave an inheritance and/or leave a gift / donation to a charitable organization?

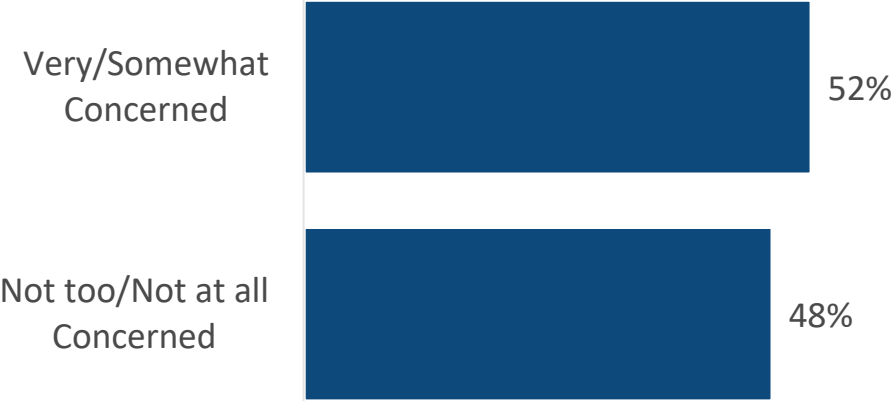


Six in 10 American parents say their children do not value financial responsibility at the same levels that they do, and among them, more than half (52%) are concerned that their variance in values could negatively impact the family's assets from one generation to the next.

Does your child/children value financial responsibility at the same levels you do?



How concerned are you that your child's/children's view of financial responsibility could negatively impact your family's assets from one generation to the next?



BASE: PARENTS (n=1722) and PARENTS

Q2024AS Does your child/children value financial responsibility at the same levels you do?

BASE: PARENTS AND CHILDREN WHO DO NOT VALUE (n=1025)

Q2024AT How concerned are you that your child's/children's financial responsibility could negatively impact your family's assets from one generation to the next?

Four in ten Boomers+ (40%) and two thirds of Gen X (65%) do not have a will.

Do you have a will?

	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
Yes	38%	20%	27%	35%	60%
No	62%	80%	73%	65%	40%

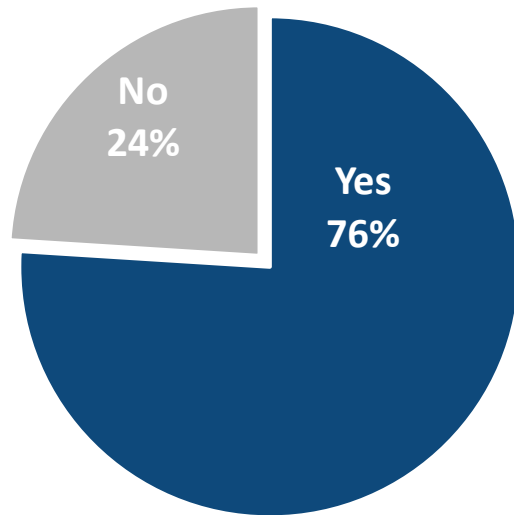
Of those who do not have a will, the primary reasons for not having one include: people think they're too young, don't have enough assets, it's complicated and awkward to think about, and they're uncertain about where to leave their assets.

Why don't you have a will? Please select all that apply.

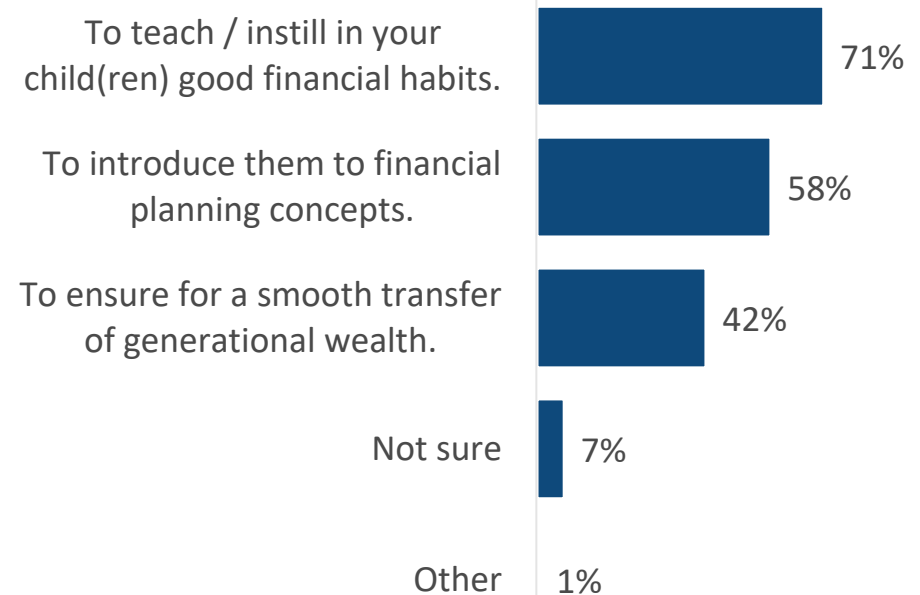
	All	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers+
Don't have enough assets	34%	25%	36%	37%	37%
Too young	31%	74%	38%	10%	2%
It's complicated and awkward to think about	17%	12%	17%	18%	22%
It's depressing to plan for the end of life	17%	17%	19%	19%	13%
Unsure of who / what to leave assets to	17%	19%	18%	16%	17%
Other	7%	2%	6%	11%	12%
Not sure	14%	6%	12%	18%	20%

Three in four parents (76%) say they would feel comfortable including their teenage or young adult children in their annual meeting with their financial advisor.

Would you feel comfortable including your teenage or young adult children in your annual meeting with a financial advisor?



Primary reasons why you would include your child/children in your annual meeting with a financial advisor?



BASE: PARENTS (n=1722)

Q2024AU Someday in the future, would you feel comfortable formally including your teenage or young adult child(ren) in your annual meeting with a financial advisor so they can learn more about the process?

BASE: PARENTS AND CHILDREN INCLUDED (n=1316)

Q2024AV What's the primary reason you do and/or expect to include your child/children to be involved with your annual planning meetings with a financial advisor? Please select all that apply.