



# Retirement Throughout the Ages: The American Middle Class

## *25th Annual Transamerica Retirement Survey*

**Transamerica** **Center**  
**For Retirement Studies®**

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# About the Authors

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With three decades of experience, Catherine is regularly cited by top media outlets on aging and retirement-related topics, speaks at industry conferences, and authors articles. She has testified before Congress on matters related to employer-sponsored retirement plans among small businesses, which have featured the need to expand access to workplace retirement savings and raise awareness of the Saver's Credit.

In 2024, Catherine received a [Lifetime Achievement Award](#) from the [Plan Sponsor Council of America](#) for her contributions to the retirement plan industry and dedication to improving retirement outcomes for employees. In 2018, she was recognized as an [Influencer in Aging](#) by PBS [Next Avenue](#) for her work in continuing to push beyond traditional boundaries and change our society's understanding of what it means to grow older. In 2016, she was honored with a [Hero Award](#) from the [Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement \(WISER\)](#) for her tireless efforts in helping improve retirement security among women.

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# About Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies

- **Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies® (TCRS)** is a division of **Transamerica Institute®**, a nonprofit, private operating foundation. TCRS conducts one of the largest and longest-running annual retirement surveys of its kind.
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# About the Report

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# Methodology: 25th Annual Transamerica Retirement Survey

- The analysis contained in this report was prepared internally by the research team at Transamerica Institute (TI) and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies (TCRS).
- A 26-minute online survey was conducted within the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of TI and TCRS between September 11 and October 17, 2024 among a nationally representative sample of 10,009 adults. The data in this report is shown for a subsample of 5,639 people with an annual household income between \$50,000 and \$199,999.
- Data are weighted where necessary by age by gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, and smoking status to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.
- Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this report, the sample data is accurate to within  $\pm 1.2$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.
- All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.
- Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

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# Key Highlights

The American middle class is the heartbeat of our society. Representing more than half of the U.S. population, people in the middle class embody the American dream. They are working hard, caring for their families, and saving for the future while navigating an evolving economy, artificial intelligence (AI), the aging population and need for caregivers, and uncertainties about Social Security.

***Retirement Throughout the Ages: The American Middle Class***, a collaboration between nonprofit Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies® (TCRS) and Transamerica Institute®, explores the life priorities, health and well-being, work-retirement status, personal finances, retirement expectations and preparedness, and caregiving experience of U.S. residents aged 18 and older in the middle class. The report offers detailed comparisons of people in the middle class by age range including people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and age 70 and older. It also provides recommendations for individuals, employers, and policymakers and a suggested reading list for those who want to learn more about the middle class.

This report is based on findings from the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Transamerica Retirement Survey, one of the largest and longest running surveys of its kind. It is a follow-up to the 2024 report, [\*The Retirement Outlook of the American Middle Class\*](#), which offers a comparative analysis of people in the middle class by level of income.



# Key Highlights

## A Portrait of the Middle Class

Currently, there is not a universally accepted definition of “middle class” among demographers and researchers. For the purpose of this survey report, Transamerica Institute and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies very broadly define it as U.S. residents who are age 18 and older with an annual household income (HHI) between \$50,000 and \$200,000. Based on this definition, the middle class represents 56% of the U.S. adult general population.

The middle-class has slightly more women (51%) than men (49%). Baby Boomers (30%) and Millennials (29%) are more prevalent than Generation X (23%), Generation Z (14%), and the Silent Generation (5%). More than half are married (53%), employed (57%), and White (60%). Two percent of people in the middle class are age 18 or 19, while 14% are in their twenties, 20% are in their thirties, 15% are in their forties, 14% are in their fifties, 16% are in their sixties, and 19% are age 70 and older. See appendix for more details.

The survey findings illustrate how people’s lives, priorities, employment status, and financial situations differ across age ranges:

- **Twenties: Starting Strong but Strained.** Twentysomethings are embarking on their careers and gaining their financial footing amid the proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies that are reshaping the future of work. Most twentysomethings are employed and some have multiple jobs. Many are also being called upon to serve as caregivers. They are stretched for time and money. Despite these challenges, most are saving for retirement, but some have already dipped into their retirement accounts by taking a hardship withdrawal and/or early withdrawal. By learning about personal finance, they can establish a more solid foundation for building long-term wealth.
- **Thirties: Focusing on Their Financial Future.** Thirtysomethings are moving forward in their careers, starting families, serving as caregivers, and prioritizing their finances. With a focus on their financial future, thirtysomethings are relying on sources of information about personal finances including family and friends, financial institutions, and social media, among others. More than eight in 10 thirtysomethings are saving for retirement, yet many are guessing how much they need to save. Some have already dipped into their retirement accounts by taking a hardship withdrawal and/or early withdrawal. By strengthening their knowledge and creating financial plans, thirtysomethings can set forth a roadmap that can guide them throughout their working years and into their retirement.

# Key Highlights

## A Portrait of the Middle Class (cont.)

- **Forties: Juggling Work, Family, and Finances.** Fortysomethings are squarely in their sandwich years of juggling career, family, and finances. They are setting priorities and making trade-offs between today, tomorrow, and their future. Most are saving for retirement, but with so many demands of their time and money, many are at risk of falling behind. Fortysomethings are so busy that they could easily lose track of the time. Retirement is still a couple of decades away, but now is the time for them to formalize goals, create financial plans, make course corrections and, if needed, seek the services of a professional advisor.
- **Fifties: Entering the Retirement Danger Zone.** Many fiftysomethings are falling short on their retirement savings and their window of time to save is closing. Many seek to extend their working years beyond retirement age, a solution which can bring more time to earn income and save. However, success is not guaranteed because it largely depends on fiftysomethings maintaining their health, keeping their job skills up to date and relevant, and having access to meaningful employment opportunities. Fiftysomethings should engage in financial planning, create a financial strategy for retirement and, if needed, seek assistance from a financial advisor. A robust retirement strategy should also include contingencies for potential setbacks.
- **Sixties: Retiring Ready or Not.** Sixtysomethings are retiring and they are prioritizing enjoyment of life. More than half have already retired while others are still working. Retirees retired at age 62 (median). Four in 10 sixtysomethings expect to rely on Social Security as their primary source of retirement income, and almost half cite Social Security being reduced or ceasing to exist as a greatest retirement fear. Whether they are retired or not yet retired, sixtysomethings can strengthen their financial situations by becoming more knowledgeable about personal finance, creating financial plans and, if needed, seeking the services of a financial advisor. It could mean the difference between a secure retirement versus outliving their savings.
- **Seventies and Older: Enjoying Life and Focusing on Health.** People in their seventies and older are enjoying retired life and focused on maintaining their health. More than four in 10 cite declining health that requires long-term care as one of their greatest retirement fears. Few are very confident they would be able to afford long-term care, if needed. A common solution for many would be to rely on family and friends to provide such care. People in their seventies and older should engage in financial planning and research long-term care options that are available and within financial reach. More than four in 10 are relying on Social Security as their primary source of income. Now is also the time for people in their seventies and older to discuss their wishes and expectations with their loved ones, if they have not done so already.

# Key Highlights

## A Portrait of the Middle Class (cont.)

The survey findings highlight commonalities and differences in people's lives across age ranges. People in all age ranges share the opportunity to expand their knowledge of personal finance and engage in financial planning, while those in a specific age range face unique issues and priorities based on their circumstances and life phase.

## Life, Happiness, and Healthy Activities

People in the middle class are planning to live long lives. Enjoying life and being healthy and fit are among their top priorities. Most people share a positive outlook on life, but some are experiencing distress, especially younger people. Across age ranges, many people are engaging in healthy activities ranging from eating healthy and exercising regularly to getting enough sleep and managing stress. The question is whether they are doing enough to adequately protect their health.

- **Top Life Priorities.** The middle class' top priorities in life include enjoying life (63%), being healthy and fit (61%), focusing on family (42%), planning for their financial future (42%), their career (25%), leading a more sustainable life (25%), giving back to the community (22%), pursuing lifelong learning (21%), and serving as a caregiver (15%).
- **Top Life Priorities by Age Range.** The top priorities in life for people in the middle class vary by their age and life phase. Enjoying life and being healthy and fit are the two most often top priorities among people of all ages. However, older people are more likely to prioritize them than younger people. For example, nearly three in four people age 70-plus (74%) cite enjoying life as a top priority compared with 53% of people in their 20s. Similarly, 74% of people age 70-plus are more likely to prioritize being healthy and fit, compared with 49% of people in their 20s. Focusing on family is another top priority in life for many people, with those in their 30s and 40s (48%, 50%, respectively) tending to be more likely to cite it than other age ranges. When it comes to planning for their financial future, people in their 30s and 50s are slightly more likely to prioritize it (50%, 49%) than other age ranges. Prioritizing career drops significantly with age. Forty-seven percent of people in their 20s cite their career as a top priority, compared with just 9% of people in their 60s and 3% who are age 70-plus.

# Key Highlights

## Life, Happiness, and Healthy Activities (cont.)

- **Outlook on Life.** Most people in the middle class have positive feelings about life including having close relationships with family and/or friends (87%), being generally happy (85%), and enjoying life (84%). Many also have a strong sense of purpose in life (79%), a positive view of aging (75%), and an active social life (62%). At the same time, some people are experiencing distress such as often feeling exhausted and burnt out (42%), often feeling unmotivated and overwhelmed (38%), having trouble making ends meet (37%), often feeling anxious and depressed (37%), and feeling isolated and lonely (26%).
- **Outlook on Life by Age Range.** Most people in the middle class have positive feelings about life, and older people are generally more positive than younger people. People aged 70-plus tend to be the most positive in terms of being a generally happy person (91%), having close relationships (90%), enjoying life (89%), and having a strong sense of purpose in life (82%). Of concern, people in their 20s are significantly more likely to be experiencing distress such as often feeling exhausted and burnt out (62%), often feeling unmotivated and overwhelmed (59%), having trouble making ends meet (55%), often feeling anxious and depressed (59%), and feeling isolated and lonely (46%).
- **Age Planning to Live.** The potential for people to live longer than ever before has implications for their time spent in the workforce relative to retirement, life and career planning, and alternative pathways to retirement. People in the middle class are planning to live to age 89 (median). One in eight people (13%) are planning to live to age 100 or older. Almost four in 10 people (38%) are “not sure,” a reasonable answer given the nature of the question. The survey compared people’s planned life expectancy with their expected retirement age and found that they plan to spend 26 years in retirement (median). People in their 20s and 30s are slightly more likely to plan to live to age 100 or older (14%, 16%, respectively) with expectations of longer retirements (30 years, 29 years).
- **Engagement in Healthy Activities.** When asked about health-related activities they are doing on a consistent basis, more than half of people in the middle class are eating healthy (57%), getting enough sleep (54%), exercising regularly (54%), socializing with family and friends (52%), and seeking medical attention when needed (52%). Nearly half are getting routine physicals and screenings (48%), maintaining a positive outlook (47%), getting plenty of rest (47%), and avoiding harmful substances (45%). Engagement in healthy activities generally increases with age.
- **Sources of Information for Health Matters.** For health-related matters, people in the middle class most often rely on sources of information including medical professionals (63%), health-related websites (37%), family and friends (35%), government websites (24%), and social media (20%). Across age ranges, the most relied upon source is medical professionals, with reliance increasing with age. Older individuals tend to rely on more traditional sources of information compared with younger people. In contrast, younger people tend to be more likely than older individuals to rely on new sources like social media, health/wellness apps, influencers, streaming platforms, podcasts, and ChatGPT.

# Key Highlights

## Life, Happiness, and Healthy Activities (cont.)

People in the middle class are relying on a wide variety of sources of information for health-related matters ranging from their doctors to medical websites to social media and ChatGPT. Some of these sources are more credible, trustworthy, and reliable than others. It is critical that people verify their sources to ensure they are getting accurate information which is consistent with their needs and circumstances.

## Personal Finances

The middle class is juggling competing financial priorities including pressing short-term needs and longer-term goals. Younger people are more focused on becoming financially established and the urgency to save for retirement increases with age. Paying off debt is a priority for people of all age ranges, especially those under age 70. Building emergency savings is also a commonly shared priority.

- **Current Financial Priorities.** People in the middle class share competing financial priorities such as paying off debt (55%), saving for retirement/continuing to save for retirement (48%), building emergency savings (40%), saving for a major purchase or life event (32%), and just getting by to cover basic living expenses (28%). More than six in 10 people in their 30s, 40s, and 50s cite paying off one or more types of debt as a priority. More than six in 10 people in their 40s and 50s cite saving for retirement. Younger people are generally more likely than older people to be saving for a major purchase or life event, and they're also more likely to be just getting by to cover basic living expenses.
- **Emergency Savings.** Emergency savings are needed to cover financial setbacks, such as unemployment, medical bills, home repairs, auto repairs, and other unexpected expenses. Emergency savings can also help prevent people from dipping into their retirement savings to cover such expenses. People in the middle class have saved \$10,000 (median) in emergency savings as of late 2024. Across age ranges, people's emergency savings increase with age: people in their 20s have saved \$2,000, those in their 30s and 40s have saved \$5,000, those in their 50s have saved \$7,000, those in their 60s have saved \$20,000, and those aged 70-plus have saved \$35,000 (medians). Of concern, more than one in 10 people in the middle class (12%) have no emergency savings.

# Key Highlights

## Personal Finances (cont.)

- **Working Knowledge of Personal Finance.** Almost three in four people in the middle class (73%) say they have either “a lot” or “some” working knowledge about personal finance, including 22% who have “a lot” and 51% who have “some.” Eight in 10 people in their 60s and those aged 70-plus (80%, 84%, respectively) have “a lot” or “some” working knowledge, which is significantly higher than people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s (62%, 71%, 68%, 67%).
- **Sources of Information for Personal Financial Matters.** For personal finance-related matters, people in the middle class most often rely on sources of information such as family and friends (36%), financial services institutions (32%), a professional financial advisor (28%), and financial websites (25%). Reliance on family and friends tends to decrease with age, while reliance on financial services institutions and a professional financial advisor increases with age. Reliance on financial websites is somewhat similar across age ranges. Younger people rely more on newer sources (e.g., social media, apps, influencers, etc.).
- **Professional Financial Advisor Usage.** More than one in three people in the middle class (35%) use a professional financial advisor. People in their 60s (43%) and those aged 70-plus (47%) are more likely to use a professional financial advisor than younger people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s (27%, 34%, 28%, 29%, respectively).

An all-critical opportunity for people in the middle class is increasing their knowledge of personal finance. People are relying on a wide variety of sources of information ranging from family and friends, websites, social media, to ChatGPT. Relatively few are using a professional financial advisor. Amid the proliferation of highly sophisticated scammers today, it is critical that people gain financial expertise and learn how to ask questions, make informed decisions, and protect their wealth.

# Key Highlights

## Work-Retirement Status

Most people in the middle class are employed. Younger people are more likely to be employed, work multiple jobs, and have side hustles. Among those who are not yet retired, people across age ranges are worried about how AI and robotics may render their jobs obsolete, yet many could be taking more action to safeguard their employability, given the high stakes. Many people plan to work beyond traditional retirement age and with expectations of continued work after retirement. However, the experience of retirees indicates these aspirations may be easier said than done. Many retirees retired sooner than planned for employment or health-related reasons.

- **Employment Status.** More than six in 10 people in the middle class (62%) are employed (57%) or self-employed (5%), while 26% are retired, 5% are not employed, 6% are homemakers, and 3% are students. More than three in four people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s are employed or self-employed (86%, 85%, 81%, 76%, respectively). Forty percent of people in their 60s are employed or self-employed while 52% are retired. Eighty-six percent of people aged 70-plus are retired.
- **Employed Workers: Number of Jobs/Employers and Side Hustles.** Almost eight in 10 employed workers in the middle class (78%) are currently working at one job or employer, while 23% have two or more jobs. Almost one in three employed workers in their 20s (32%) have two or more jobs. Among all ages, four in 10 employed workers (40%) indicate they have a “side hustle” as a means of making money in addition to their main form of employment or income, including 58% of those in their 20s, 44% of those in their 30s, and 36% of those in their 40s. Fewer than three in 10 workers in their 50s, 60s, or those aged 70-plus have a side hustle (26%, 22%, 18%, respectively).
- **Not Retired: Worries About AI, Robotics, and Job Skill Obsolescence.** More than four in 10 people in the middle class who are not retired (44%) are worried that artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics are making their job skills no longer needed, including 13% who are “very worried” and 31% who are “somewhat worried.” The extent to which people are worried decreases with age. Specifically, more than half of people in their 20s (52%) are worried, compared with fewer than half of those in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those who are age 70-plus (46%, 44%, 42%, 33%, 22%, respectively).

# Key Highlights

## Work-Retirement Status (cont.)

- **Not Retired: Steps Taken to Help Ensure Continued Work.** Almost nine in 10 people in the middle class who are not retired (87%) have taken at least one proactive step to help ensure they can continue working as long as they want and need. However, the question is whether they are doing enough. Only 57% of people say they are staying healthy so they can continue working, while fewer than half are keeping their job skills up to date (45%) or performing well at their current job (43%). Even fewer are networking and meeting new people (26%), taking classes to learn new skills (25%), scoping out the employment market (20%), obtaining a new degree, certification, or professional designation (18%), or attending virtual conferences and webinars (14%). Older people tend to be more focused on staying healthy and performing well at their current job, while younger people tend to be more focused on education and professional development.
- **Not Retired: Expected Retirement Age.** Among people in the middle class who are not yet retired, almost half expect to work past age 65 or do not plan to retire (48%), and a sizeable percentage expect to retire at age 70-plus or do not plan to retire (38%). However, expectations for retirement age vary by age range. Forty-nine percent of people in their 60s expect to retire at age 70-plus or do not plan to retire, followed by those in their 50s, 40s, 30s, and 20s (38%, 39%, 32%, 29%, respectively). Younger people in their 20s and 30s are more likely than those in their 40s, 50s, and 60s to expect to retire before age 65 (47%, 35%, 25%, 26%, 7%). A noteworthy 38% of people who are age 70-plus do not plan to retire.
- **Not Retired: Plans to Work in Retirement.** More than half of people in the middle class who are not yet retired (51%) plan to work after they retire, including 15% who plan to work full time and 36% who plan to work part time. Across age ranges, people share similar plans about continued work in retirement including those in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (53%, 53%, 48%, 52%, 49%, 56%, respectively).
- **Retirees: Age They Retired.** More than half of middle-class retirees (53%) indicate they retired before the age of 65, while 15% retired at age 65, 15% retired between ages 66 and 69, and 11% retired at age 70 or older. Seven percent consider themselves to be fully retired, but do not expect to ever stop working. The median age that retirees retired is 63. Regarding the timing of their retirement, nearly half of retirees (47%) indicate they retired sooner than planned – and among them, 54% did so due to employment-related reasons and 31% for personal health-related reasons. Forty-six percent of retirees retired when planned and 7% retired later than planned.

Amid rapid advances in AI and other technologies, middle-class workers of all ages must focus on keeping their job skills up to date and, if needed, find new career pathways to help ensure their employability and mitigate the risk of getting left behind.

# Key Highlights

## Retirement Expectations and Preparations

The middle class dreams of an active retirement that includes travel, spending more time with family and friends, pursuing hobbies, and volunteerism. Some even dream of doing paid work. At the same time, middle-class Americans reveal their greatest retirement fears to be declining health that requires long-term care, outliving their savings and investments, and that Social Security will be reduced or cease to exist in the future.

People in the middle class are expecting diverse sources of retirement income including Social Security, employer-sponsored retirement benefits, personal savings, and continued work. These sources vary by age range, with younger people more likely to expect retirement income from 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs, and older people from traditional pensions. Four in 10 people in their 60s and those aged 70 and older expect to rely primarily on Social Security.

Those who are not yet retired recognize the need to save for retirement, with almost eight in 10 saving in an employer-sponsored 401(k) or similar plan and/or outside the workplace. Despite the majority of people who are saving for retirement, many may not be saving enough, based on their reported household retirement savings. Relatively few people “strongly agree” they are building a large enough retirement nest egg.

- **Retirement Dreams.** People in the middle class dream of spending their retirement traveling (68%), spending more time with family and friends (59%), pursuing hobbies (48%), doing volunteer work (24%), and taking care of their grandchildren (20%). A noteworthy 26% of people dream of doing paid work in retirement including starting a business (13%), pursuing an encore career (11%), and continuing to work in the same field (9%). Six percent of people in the middle class do not have any retirement dreams.
- **Retirement Dreams by Age Range.** Across age ranges, people in the middle class share the same top three retirement dreams, including traveling, spending more time with family and friends, and pursuing hobbies. However, some retirement dreams differ by age range. Younger people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to dream of working in retirement (i.e., starting a business, pursuing an encore career, and/or continuing to work in the same field) than those in their 50s, 60s, and 70s (38%, 36%, 30%, 22%, 19%, 12%, respectively).

# Key Highlights

## Retirement Expectations and Preparations (cont.)

- **Greatest Retirement Fears.** The greatest retirement fears of people in the middle class include declining health that requires long-term care (41%), outliving their savings and investments (40%), Social Security being reduced or ceasing to exist (39%), cognitive decline, dementia, Alzheimer's Disease (35%), possible long-term care costs (33%), and losing independence (33%). Other greatest fears include being unable to meet the basic financial needs of family (28%), feeling isolated and alone (24%), lack of access to adequate and affordable health care (24%), lack of affordable housing (21%), not finding meaningful ways to spend time and stay involved (20%), and being laid off – not being able to retire on one's own terms (11%). Eleven percent of people don't have any retirement fears.
- **Greatest Retirement Fears by Age Range.** The greatest retirement fears among people in the middle class vary by age range. The greatest fear among those aged 70-plus is declining health that requires long-term care, compared with those in their 60s and 50s who most often cite Social Security being reduced or ceasing to exist (46%, 48%, respectively), and those in their 40s and 30s who most often cite outliving their savings and investments (42%, 39%) and declining health that requires long-term care (42%, 39%). The greatest retirement fears among those in their 20s are outliving savings and investments (35%) and not being able to meet the basic needs of their family (35%). Older people in the middle class are less likely to have retirement fears than younger people. Specifically, 17% of people aged 70-plus do not have any retirement fears, compared with just 7% of people in their 20s.
- **Expected Sources of Retirement Income.** People in the middle class expect diverse sources of income to cover living expenses in retirement. Almost eight in 10 people (79%) cite self-funded savings such as 401(k), 403(b), IRAs (65%), or other savings and investments (49%) as a source of retirement income. Most people are expecting income from Social Security (72%), while some are expecting income from a company-funded pension plan (29%), continued work (26%), home equity (18%), and/or an inheritance (12%).
- **Expected Sources of Retirement Income by Age Range.** Among people in the middle class, expected sources of retirement income vary by age range. Approximately nine in 10 people who are age 70-plus (92%) or in their 60s (88%) are expecting income from Social Security, compared with fewer people in their 50s, 40s, 30s, and 20s (76%, 67%, 58%, 53%, respectively). Older people are also more likely to expect income from a company-funded pension plan, while younger people are more likely to expect income from continued work. People of all ages share similar expectations of retirement income from self-funded savings, including younger people who are somewhat more likely to cite income from 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs, and older people who are somewhat more likely to reference other savings and investments.

# Key Highlights

## Retirement Expectations and Preparations (cont.)

- **Expected Primary Source of Retirement Income.** When asked about their expected *primary* source of retirement income, many people in the middle class cite self-funded savings (45%) which include 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs (33%), and other savings and investments (12%). Almost three in 10 people (28%) expect to *primarily* rely on Social Security, while 12% expect to rely on a company-funded pension plan, and 9% from continued work. Only 2% of people expect their primary source of retirement income to come from an inheritance and 2% from home equity.
- **Expected Primary Source of Retirement Income by Age Range.** In the middle class, the expected *primary* source of retirement income varies by age range. Younger people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to expect to primarily rely on self-funded savings from 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs, and other savings and investments than people in their 50s, 60s, and age 70-plus (56%, 59%, 52%, 43%, 33%, 24%, respectively). In contrast, people in their 60s and age 70-plus are more likely to expect to primarily rely on Social Security than those in their 50s, 40s, 30s, and 20s (43%, 40%, 29%, 23%, 17%, 17%). Older people are also more likely to expect to primarily rely on a company-funded pension, while younger people are more likely to cite income from continued work. Few people across age ranges expect to primarily rely on an inheritance or home equity in retirement.
- **Not Retired: Concerns About the Future of Social Security.** Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, more than seven in 10 (72%) agree with the statement, “I am concerned that when I am ready to retire, Social Security will not be there for me,” including 32% who “strongly agree” and 40% who “somewhat agree.” People in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s are more likely to agree than those in their 60s and age 70-plus (75%, 75%, 78%, 74%, 56%, 41%, respectively).
- **Not Retired: Retirement Nest Egg.** Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, almost two in three people (63%) agree they are currently building a large enough retirement nest egg, including 24% who “strongly agree” and 39% who “somewhat agree.” However, fewer than three in 10 people across age ranges “strongly agree,” including people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (25%, 27%, 24%, 17%, 25%, 22%, respectively).
- **Not Retired: Saving for Retirement and Age Started Saving.** Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, almost eight in 10 people (79%) are saving for retirement through employer-sponsored plans, such as a 401(k) or similar plan, and/or outside the workplace. People in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s are more likely to be saving than those who are age 70-plus (77%, 83%, 80%, 79%, 82%, 64%, respectively). Among those saving for retirement, people in their 20s and 30s are starting to save at an earlier age compared with those in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (ages 21, 27, 30, 30, 32, 40).

# Key Highlights

## Retirement Expectations and Preparations (cont.)

- **Not Retired: Estimated Retirement Savings Needs.** Among those who are not yet retired, people in the middle class estimate they will need \$500,000 (median) by the time they retire in order to feel financially secure. Estimated needs vary by age range including people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (\$300,000, \$500,000, \$500,000, \$600,000, \$800,000, \$500,000, respectively). Almost four in 10 people (38%) estimate they will need to have saved \$1,000,000 or more.
- **Not Retired: Basis of Estimated Retirement Savings Needs.** Among those providing an estimate, almost half of people in the middle class (48%) guessed the amount they need to save for retirement. People in their 50s (55%) are more likely to have guessed than those in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (47, 46%, 49%, 43%, 43%, respectively). Almost one in five people (19%) used a retirement calculator or completed a worksheet, a finding that is similar across age ranges. Few people (11%) had the amount given to them by a financial advisor, a finding that is relatively low across age ranges.
- **Not Retired: Saver's Credit Awareness.** The Saver's Credit is a tax credit for eligible taxpayers who save for retirement in a qualified retirement plan, IRA, or ABLE account. Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, only four in 10 people (42%) are aware of the Saver's Credit. People in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to be aware of the Saver's Credit, compared with people in their 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (59%, 56%, 48%, 34%, 32%, 23%, respectively).
- **Not Retired: Catch-Up Contributions.** People aged 50 and older may be allowed to make Catch-up Contributions to their 401(k)/403(b)/457(b) plan or IRA that are above and beyond the annual retirement plan or IRS limits. Among those in the middle class who are not retired, just over half of people in their 50s (52%) are aware of Catch-up Contributions. Awareness is somewhat higher among those in their 60s (68%) and those who are age 70-plus (58%).
- **Employed Workers: Retirement Benefits Offered by Employers.** Among employed workers who work for a company, in the middle class, more than three in four people (79%) are offered a 401(k) or similar employee-funded retirement plan by their employer, including those in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s (78%, 84%, 81%, 76%, 76%, respectively).
- **Employed Workers Plan Participation and Salary Deferral Rates.** Among employed workers in the middle class who are offered a 401(k) or similar plan, eight in 10 workers (81%) participate in that plan. Participation rates are slightly lower among people in their 20s than those in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s (76%, 82%, 83%, 85%, 86%, respectively). In contrast, retirement plan participants in their 20s and 30s are contributing a higher percentage of their annual salary to the plan compared with those in their 40s, 50s, and 60s (12%, 12%, 10%, 10%, 10%) (medians).

# Key Highlights

## Retirement Expectations and Preparations (cont.)

- **Self-Employed: Saving for Retirement.** Among self-employed people in the middle class, 47% indicate they consistently save for retirement, while 36% occasionally save and 17% never save. Among those who are currently saving for retirement, many are using tax-advantaged retirement arrangements including 44% who are using a Traditional or Roth IRA, 39% a 401(k), 19% a Solo 401(k)/Individual 401(k), 11% a SEP IRA, and 10% a SIMPLE IRA. Twenty-one percent are not using a tax-advantaged arrangement. Among the self-employed who are currently saving for retirement, they are saving 20% of their annual personal income (median).
- **Not Retired: Tapping Into Retirement Savings.** Among those who are not yet retired, a concerning percentage of people in the middle class are tapping into their retirement savings before they retire. More than one in three people (36%) have taken a loan, early withdrawal, and/or hardship withdrawal from their 401(k) or similar plan or IRA, including 29% who have taken a loan and 21% who have taken an early and/or hardship withdrawal. Almost one in five people (18%) have taken a loan and paid it back in full, while 11% have taken a loan and are paying it back, and 9% have taken a loan but were unable to pay it back. People in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to have taken a loan, early withdrawal, and/or hardship withdrawal than those in their 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (41%, 40%, 39%, 32%, 26%, 19%, respectively).
- **Not Retired: Total Household Savings in Retirement Accounts.** As of late 2024, among those who are not yet retired, people in the middle class have saved \$67,000 (estimated median) in total household retirement accounts. Household retirement savings increases with age for people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s, and it then decreases for those who are age 70-plus (\$43,000, \$54,000, \$73,000, \$112,000, \$277,000, \$157,000, respectively) (estimated medians). Five percent of people have saved \$1,000,000 or more in total household retirement accounts, with people in their 60s and age 70-plus being most prevalent (16%, 18%). Seven percent of people have no household retirement savings including a concerning 11% of those who are age 70-plus.
- **Retirees: Total Household Savings and Home Equity.** As of late 2024, middle-class retirees reported \$253,000 in total household savings *excluding home equity* (estimated median). Seventeen percent of retirees have saved \$1,000,000 or more, while 5% have no household savings. Middle-class retirees reported \$211,000 in *home equity* (estimated median). One in five retirees (22%) have \$500,000 or more in *home equity*, while 14% have *no home equity*.

# Key Highlights

## Retirement Expectations and Preparations (cont.)

- **Financial Strategy for Retirement.** Almost three in four people in the middle class (74%) have a financial strategy for retirement, but only 25% have a written plan while 49% have an unwritten plan. Twenty-six percent of people do not have a plan. People in their 20s and 30s are slightly more likely to have a written plan than those in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (29%, 29%, 24%, 21%, 25%, 25%, respectively).

The middle class has yet to fully engage in retirement planning. By taking steps such as formally estimating their retirement savings needs, setting goals and creating financial plans, formulating a written retirement strategy, and learning about tax incentives such as the Saver's Credit and Catch-up Contributions, many people can improve their retirement outlook. They should take advantage of resources offered by their employer's retirement plan provider and seek assistance from a professional financial advisor, if needed.

# Key Highlights

## Caregiving Experience and Long-Term Care

Population aging and the skyrocketing cost of long-term care are a threat to the retirement security of working age people in the middle class and those already in retirement.

Many working age people in the middle class are being called upon to serve as caregivers for an aging parent or loved one. By taking on this labor of love, many are adjusting their employment at a time when they need to focus on their own earning potential and retirement savings. At the same time, many retirees in the middle class have not yet made plans on how they expect to receive care, if needed, and it is unclear whether they can afford such care.

- **Caregiving Experience.** Amid population aging and the skyrocketing cost of long-term care, many people are being called upon to serve as caregivers. Almost four in 10 people in the middle class who are not yet retired (38%) are currently serving and/or have served as a caregiver for a relative or friend during their career (excluding parenting responsibilities). Among them, 84% have made one or more adjustments to their work situation due to their caregiving responsibilities. Almost four in 10 retired people (36%) have dedicated a significant amount of time serving as a caregiver since they retired.
- **Retirees: Lack of Confidence in Ability to Afford Long-Term Care.** Few retirees in the middle class (14%) are “very” confident they will be able to afford long-term care, if needed, while 46% are “somewhat” confident, 25% are “not too” confident, and 15% are “not at all” confident. Retirees who are age 70-plus are more likely to be “very” confident than those in their 60s (16%, 11%, respectively).
- **Retirees: Plans for Long-Term Care.** Almost half of retirees in the middle class (49%) plan to rely on family and friends if they need help with daily activities and/or nursing care, including 35% who plan to rely on their spouse, 25% who plan to rely on family members, and 4% who plan to rely on friends. One in three (33%) plan to move to an assisted living community, while 29% plan to use a professional, paid in-home caregiver, and 11% plan to move to a nursing home. Ten percent plan to seek reduced-fee services from a community organization. More than one in four (26%) do not have long-term care plans including 30% of retirees in their 60s and 22% of those who are age 70-plus.

One of the most important things people can do is open the lines of communication between loved ones regarding expectations and the potential need to provide care. By doing so, people can research the available options, associated costs of care, and develop a plan that ensures adequate care in which everyone participates.

# Key Highlights

## Caregiving Experience and Long-Term Care (cont.)

For employed workers who are being called upon to serve as caregivers, employers are increasingly offering caregiving resources to their employees as part of their health and welfare benefit offerings. Transamerica Institute's recent employer report, [\*New Frontiers: Employers and the Evolving Workforce\*](#), describes the types of support that many employers, especially larger companies, are now offering.

## How to Fix Social Security

People in the middle class are concerned about the future of Social Security. The survey asked for their opinion about what should be done to address its funding shortfall. Responses included increasing the maximum earning subject to payroll taxes (42%), increasing the Social Security payroll tax rate (38%), preserving retirement benefit payments for retirees in greatest need (30%), and raising the retirement age (25%). Only 4% of people say Congress should “do nothing,” while 20% say they “don’t know.” Younger people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are generally more likely than those in their 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus to cite preserving retirement benefit payments for retirees in greatest need (39%, 35%, 31%, 27%, 26%, 20%, respectively).

## A Call to Action

The American middle class is the heart and soul of society and they embody the American dream. People in the middle class are working hard and saving for the future, but their ability to achieve a financially secure retirement is hanging in the balance. They need more support from policymakers, the financial services industry, and employers. A collaborative approach is needed to ensure that the middle class has access to workplace retirement benefits, products and services, social safety nets, and the know-how that is required for success. The sooner we intensify our efforts, the more quickly we can strengthen their retirement security.

**Catherine Collinson**

CEO and President, Transamerica Institute and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies

# Recommendations for the Middle Class

People in the middle class are working hard, caring for their families, saving for the future, and navigating an evolving economy. Whether in the workforce or retired, many have opportunities to strengthen their financial situation and enhance their retirement security. Action steps include:

1. **Engage in financial planning to gain a full understanding of your financial situation.** Create a budget, prioritize expenses, set short- and long-term goals, learn about investing, and develop a financial plan to help improve your fiscal health. Ensure that your insurance coverages are up to date and adequate. If you are facing challenges paying off debt, contact your lender to see if you can negotiate alternative payment arrangements.
2. **Calculate retirement savings needs, develop a retirement strategy, and write it down.** Factor in living expenses, health care, government benefits, inflation, investment returns, years in retirement, potential long-term care needs, as well as funds for pursuing retirement dreams such as travel and hobbies. Learn about professionally managed accounts, model portfolios, target date funds, and strategic allocation funds. Seek assistance from your retirement plan provider or a professional financial advisor, if needed.
3. **Save for retirement by participating in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, if available, or contributing to a tax-advantaged account.** By starting as early as possible and consistently saving over time, even small amounts can add up over a decades-long working life. If employed and offered a 401(k) or similar plan, take full advantage of matching employer contributions and defer as much as possible. If not offered a plan, explore options to contribute to a Traditional or Roth IRA. Job seekers should take retirement benefits into consideration as part of an overall compensation package.
4. **Avoid taking loans and early withdrawals from retirement accounts,** which can severely inhibit the long-term growth of savings. Before tapping into retirement savings, explore all possible alternatives.
5. **Review your retirement savings portfolio to ensure investments are consistent with your risk profile and years to retirement.** Learn about professionally managed accounts, model portfolios, target date funds, and strategic allocation funds. Seek assistance from your retirement plan provider or a professional financial advisor, if needed.
6. **Build emergency savings and create a backup plan,** in the event of an unplanned major expense, job loss, or in case retirement comes early or unexpectedly due to unforeseen circumstances.
7. **Prioritize physical and mental health.** Eat healthy, exercise regularly, and get plenty of rest. Explore ways to manage stress and work-life balance. Consider health implications when making lifestyle decisions. Your health is your wealth.
8. **Invest in your own human capital by pursuing professional development to help ensure continued employment now and in the future.** Take proactive steps to stay employed in the new world of work by learning new skills, honing current skills, and staying current with employers' needs.
9. **Get savvy about Social Security and Medicare.** Learn about Social Security claiming strategies that can help maximize long-term benefits and get informed about Medicare eligibility and coverage options to insure against medical expenses.
10. **Engage in conversations with family and close friends** about any expectations of needing to either provide or receive caregiving and/or financial support in retirement.
11. **Beware of scams.** Bad actors and scammers are becoming more sophisticated every day. Stay on top of the latest scams, safeguard your personally identifiable information (PII), and be hypervigilant about suspicious text messages, email, or calls.

# Recommendations for Employers

Amid the implementation of new technologies, the evolving economy, and workforce transformations, employers have a vested interest in enhancing their supportive business practices and benefit offerings to better align with employees' needs — and ultimately, to stand out in today's highly competitive environment. Specific opportunities include:

1. **Cultivate an age-friendly work environment** by offering opportunities, work arrangements, and training and tools needed for employees of all ages to be successful. Encourage mentorships, cross-training, professional development, and succession planning across all ages.
2. **Encourage professional development and lifelong learning opportunities for workers of all ages** to keep their skills up to date or learn new skills to help them remain employable in the evolving job market.
3. **Offer flexible work arrangements to support work-life balance** ranging from employees' personal responsibilities such as parenting, home-schooling, and caregiving, to professional development such as continuing education and volunteering.
4. **Adopt and promote policies to accommodate workers with special needs** (e.g., assistive technologies, remote work opportunities, etc.) to encourage even higher workforce participation.
5. **Offer health and welfare benefits that promote physical, mental, and financial health and well-being** such as health, disability, and life insurance; workplace wellness and financial wellness programs; and employee assistance programs.
6. **Sponsor a retirement plan or join a pooled plan arrangement** such as a pooled employer plan (PEP), multiple employer plan (MEP), or a group of plans (GoP). If a plan is not already in place, take advantage of the tax credits available for starting a retirement plan or joining a PEP, MEP, or GoP.
7. **Consult with your benefits advisors and retirement plan provider to learn about the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022** and the provisions that may be appropriate for your plan. These provisions include matching contributions based on qualified student loan payments, the Catch-Up Contribution Roth mandate for higher income employees and higher Catch-Up Contribution limits for ages 60 to 63 employees. There is also a provision for in-service withdrawals for emergency personal expenses, qualified disaster recovery relief, victims of domestic abuse relief, and to terminally ill individual relief. Also, be sure to learn about the law's plan administration-related rules including self-certification of hardship withdrawals and updated Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) rules.
8. **Extend benefits eligibility to part-time workers**, including health insurance and retirement plan offerings. For part-time workers who are not offered health insurance, provide information about the options available in the marketplace.
9. **Offer pre-retirees greater levels of assistance in planning their transition into retirement**, including education about retirement income strategies, retirement plan distribution options, and the need for a backup plan if forced into retirement sooner than expected (e.g., due to health issues, job loss, family obligations). Provide information about various options for claiming Social Security and filing for Medicare.
10. **Enable workers to phase into retirement** by allowing for a transition from full-time to part-time, working in different capacities or different locations, or having a more flexible schedule.
11. **Promote the benefits your company offers**, including health, wellness, and retirement benefits. Increasing awareness of these offerings could help employees enhance their physical, mental, and financial well-being.

# Recommendations for Policymakers

Policymakers have an opportunity to future proof and strengthen the U.S. retirement system so that the American middle class can live, work, and retire with dignity. Recommendations for policymakers that directly and indirectly promote retirement security include:

1. **Address Social Security and Medicare funding issues.** The sooner reforms are implemented to the programs, the more time people will have to adjust their financial plans for retirement.
2. **Provide guidance and regulations on certain key provisions of SECURE 2.0 to ensure a successful implementation, including:**
  - a) **Opportunities for expanding retirement plan coverage**, including small business tax credits for establishing retirement plans or joining multiple employer plans (MEPs) or pooled employer plans (PEPs); the formation of 403(b) MEPs and PEPs; and increased inclusion of part-time workers in retirement plans by reducing the long-term employment requirements.
  - b) **Enhanced retirement plan features that further facilitate retirement savings among workers**, including expansion of automatic enrollment and automatic increases; and the ability for employers to make matching contributions based on student loan repayments.
  - c) **Encouragement of the Department of Labor to improve and better publicize its public “Retirement Savings Lost and Found Database”** as required by SECURE 2.0 to enable retirement savers to find misplaced or forgotten account balances.
  - d) **The Saver’s Match, a new government matching contribution** for low- to moderate-income retirement savers that will replace the current Saver’s Credit.
3. **Ensure accessible and affordable quality health care options and prescription drugs** are available to all Americans, including part-time, self-employed, and gig economy workers, as well as the unemployed.
4. **Engage leaders from across sectors and disciplines to collaborate, innovate and implement new financing and delivery models for long-term care** that are more accessible and affordable to those individuals needing care and to family caregivers providing care.
5. **Support family caregivers** by providing Social Security credits to those who forego employment to provide care. Establish medical training programs for non-professional caregivers. Encourage employers to help workers who are juggling their jobs with caregiving.
6. **Ensure that all workers can save for retirement in the workplace** in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, IRA, or other program.
7. **Support lifelong learning** ranging from financial literacy education in schools and in the workplace to ongoing professional development, including retraining and learning new job skills.
8. **Encourage employers to implement age-friendly business practices.** Create incentives and remove disincentives for employers to hire and retain older workers, offer phased retirement, and create opportunities for encore careers.
9. **Increase access to affordable housing** to enhance financial security for Americans of all ages.
10. **Address the digital divide.** Consider providing and/or subsidizing additional broadband access, particularly in rural and underserved urban areas. Internet access is key to engaging with financial and health-related service providers.

***Retirement Throughout the Ages:  
The American Middle Class***

***Detailed Findings***

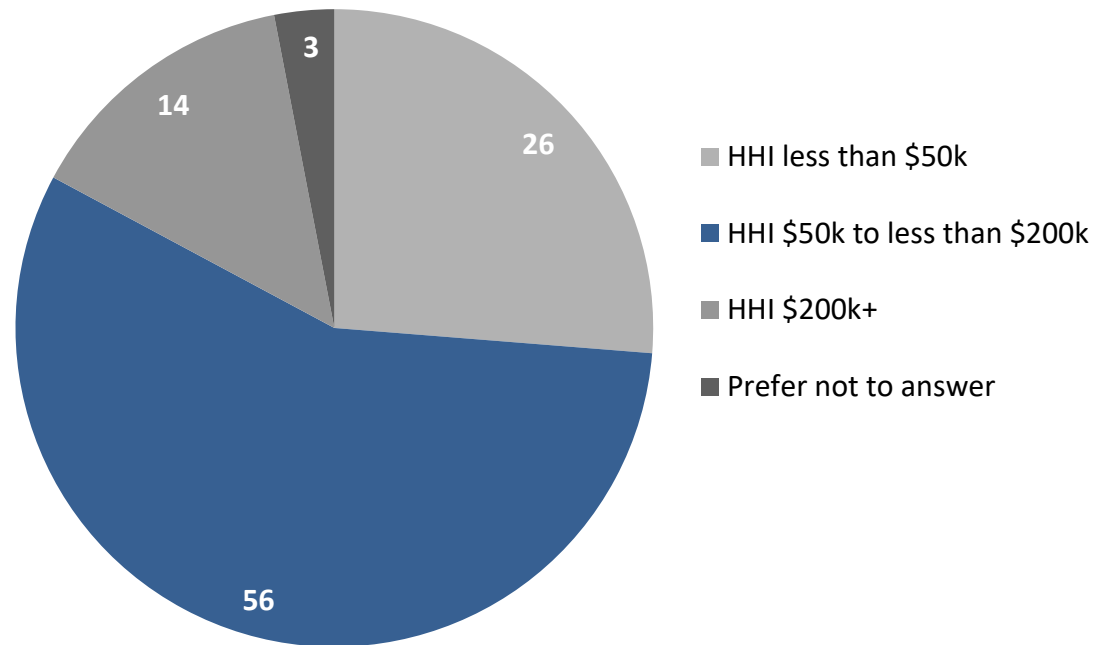
# *A Portrait of the American Middle Class*

# Defining the Middle Class

Transamerica Institute and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies broadly defines the “middle class” as people with an annual household income (HHI) between \$50,000 and \$199,999. The middle class represents 56% of the U.S. adult general population.

## How much total combined income did all members of your household earn before taxes last year?

U.S. General Population (%)



*Note: Results may not total to 100% due to rounding.*

U.S. GENERAL POPULATION BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS  
INCOME. How much total combined income did all members of your household earn before taxes last year?

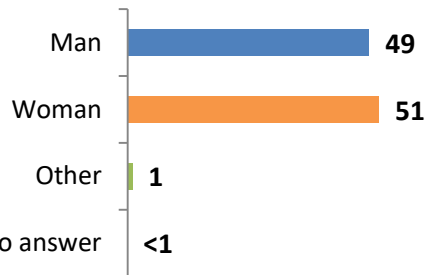
# A Portrait of the Middle Class

The middle-class has slightly more women (51%) than men (49%). Baby Boomers (30%) and Millennials (29%) are more prevalent than Generation X (23%), Generation Z (14%), and the Silent Generation (5%). More than half are married (53%), employed (57%), and White (60%). The middle class includes people of all ages. See appendix for more details.

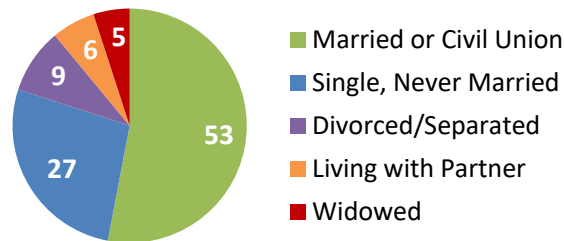
## The Middle Class - Household Income \$50k to less than \$200k (%)

### GENDER

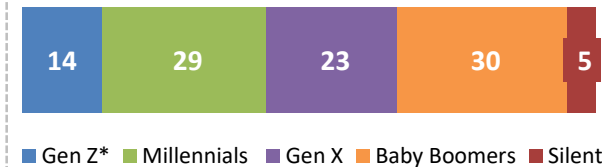
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### MARITAL STATUS

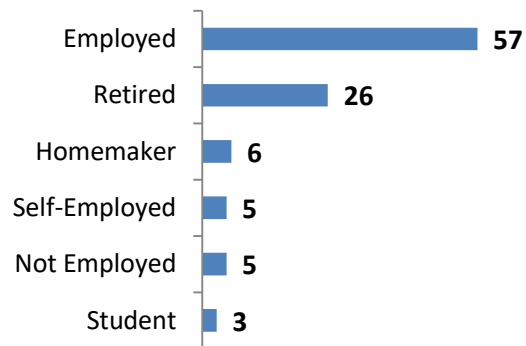


### GENERATION

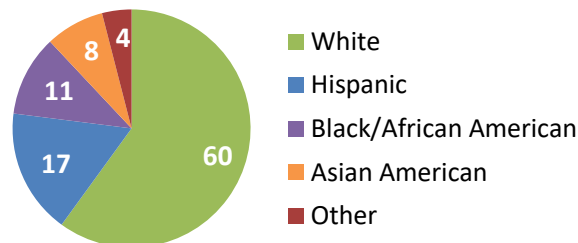


### EMPLOYMENT

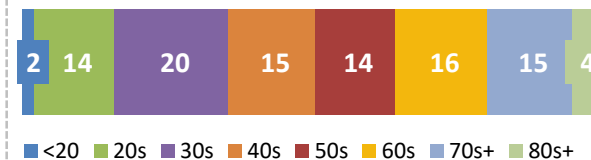
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### RACE AND ETHNICITY



### AGE RANGE



**Median Age: 48**

\* Gen Z includes people aged 18 to 27 at the time of the survey.

Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.

# Twenties: Starting Strong but Strained

Twentysomethings are embarking on their careers and gaining their financial footing amid the proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies that are reshaping the future of work. Most twentysomethings are employed and some have multiple jobs. Many are also being called upon to serve as caregivers. They are stretched for time and money. Despite these challenges, most are saving for retirement, but some have already dipped into their retirement accounts by taking a hardship withdrawal and/or early withdrawal. By learning about personal finance, they can establish a more solid foundation for building long-term wealth.

**47%**

cite their career as a top priority in life.

**8 in 10**

86% are employed or self-employed. Among those who are employed, 33% have 2 or more jobs and 58% have a side hustle.

**4 in 10**

43% are currently or have served as a caregiver to a relative or friend during the course of their working career.

**52%**

are worried that AI and robotics will make their job skills no longer needed.

**> Half**

55% are having trouble making ends meet.

**77%**

are saving for retirement in a 401(k) or similar plan, and/or outside the workplace.

**Age 21**

is the age (median) that retirement savers started saving.

**\$300k**

is the amount (median) needed to feel financially secure in retirement, but 47% guessed the amount.

**\$43,000**

is the amount saved in all household retirement accounts (estimated median).

**28%**

have taken a hardship withdrawal and/or early withdrawal from a 401(k) or similar plan or IRA.

# Thirties: Focusing on Their Financial Future

Thirtysomethings are moving forward in their careers, starting families, serving as caregivers, and prioritizing their finances. With a focus on their financial future, thirtysomethings are relying on sources of information about personal finances including family and friends, financial institutions, and social media, among others. More than eight in 10 thirtysomethings are saving for retirement, yet many are guessing how much they need to save. Some have already dipped into their retirement accounts by taking a hardship withdrawal and/or early withdrawal. By strengthening their knowledge and creating financial plans, thirtysomethings can set forth a roadmap that can guide them throughout their working years and into their retirement.

**Half**

50% cite planning for their financial future as a top priority in life.

**8 in 10**

85% are employed or self-employed. Among those who are employed, 24% have 2 or more jobs, and 44% have a side hustle.

**4 in 10**

41% are currently or have served as a caregiver to a relative or friend during the course of their working career.

**46%**

are worried that AI and robotics will make their job skills no longer needed.

**90%**

rely on one or more sources of info about personal finance including family and friends (39%), financial institutions (29%), and social media (28%).

**83%**

are saving for retirement in a 401(k) or similar plan, and/or outside the workplace.

**Age 27**

is the age (median) that retirement savers started saving.

**\$500k**

is the amount (median) needed to feel financially secure in retirement, but 46% guessed the amount.

**\$65,000**

is the amount saved in all household retirement accounts (estimated median).

**23%**

have taken a hardship withdrawal and/or early withdrawal from a 401(k) or similar plan or IRA.

# Forties: Juggling Work, Family, and Finances

Fortysomethings are squarely in their sandwich years of juggling career, family, and finances. They are setting priorities and making trade-offs between today, tomorrow, and their future. Most are saving for retirement, but with so many demands of their time and money, many are at risk of falling behind. Fortysomethings are so busy that they could easily lose track of the time. Retirement is still a couple of decades away, but now is the time for them to formalize goals, create financial plans, make course corrections and, if needed, seek the services of a professional advisor.

**Half**

50% cite focusing on family as a top priority in life.

**8 in 10**

81% are employed or self-employed. Among those who are employed, 21% have 2 or more jobs, and 36% have a side hustle.

**39%**

are currently or have served as a caregiver to a relative or friend during the course of their working career.

**4 in 10**

41% cite supporting children as a current financial priority.

**18%**

have “a lot” of working knowledge about personal finance.

**80%**

are saving for retirement in a 401(k) or similar plan, and/or outside the workplace.

**Age 30**

is the age (median) that retirement savers started saving.

**\$500k**

is the amount (median) needed to feel financially secure in retirement, but 49% guessed the amount.

**\$73,000**

is the amount saved in all household retirement accounts (estimated median).

**21%**

have taken a hardship withdrawal and/or early withdrawal from a 401(k) or similar plan or IRA.

# Fifties: Entering the Retirement Danger Zone

Many fiftysomethings are falling short on their retirement savings and their window of time to save is closing. Many seek to extend their working years beyond retirement age, a solution which can bring more time to earn income and save. However, success is not guaranteed because it largely depends on fiftysomethings maintaining their health, keeping their job skills up to date and relevant, and having access to meaningful employment opportunities. Fiftysomethings should engage in financial planning, create a financial strategy for retirement and, if needed, seek assistance from a financial advisor. A robust retirement strategy should also include contingencies for potential setbacks.

**49%**

cite planning for their financial future as a top priority in life.

**3 in 4**

76% are employed or self-employed, and 9% are retired. Among the employed, 14% have 2+ jobs, and 26% have a side hustle.

**> Half**

52% expect to retire after age 65 or do not plan to retire.

**4 in 10**

41% of those who are not yet retired are focused on keeping their job skills up to date.

**1 in 5**

Just 21% have a financial strategy for retirement in the form of a written plan.

**79%**

are saving for retirement in a 401(k) or similar plan, and/or outside the workplace.

**Age 30**

is the age (median) that Baby Boomer investors started saving for retirement.

**\$600k**

is the amount (median) needed to feel financially secure in retirement, but 55% guessed as the basis of their estimate.

**\$112,000**

is the amount saved in all household retirement accounts (estimated median).

**29%**

currently use a professional financial advisor.

# Sixties: Retiring Ready or Not

Sixtysomethings are retiring and they are prioritizing enjoyment of life. More than half have already retired while others are still working. Retirees retired at age 62 (median). Four in 10 sixtysomethings expect to rely on Social Security as their primary source of retirement income, and almost half cite Social Security being reduced or ceasing to exist as a greatest retirement fear. Whether they are retired or not yet retired, sixtysomethings can strengthen their financial situations by becoming more knowledgeable about personal finance, creating financial plans and, if needed, seeking the services of a financial advisor. It could mean the difference between a secure retirement versus outliving their savings.

**3 in 4**

75% cite enjoying life as a top priority in life – and 89% indicate they are enjoying life.

**>Half**

52% are retired and 40% are employed or self-employed.

**Age 62**

is the median age that retirees retired. Among those not yet retired, 49% expect to retire at age 70-plus or do not plan to retire.

**46%**

cite Social Security being reduced or ceased to exist as a greatest retirement fears.

**4 in 10**

40% expect Social Security to be their primary source of retirement income, while 33% expect it to come from self-funding savings.

**1 in 4**

25% have a financial strategy for retirement in the form of a written plan.

**1/3**

33% have a “a lot” of working knowledge about personal finance.

**\$277,000**

is the amount saved by those who are not yet retired in all household retirement accounts (estimated median).

**\$203,000**

is the amount retirees have in total household savings excluding home equity (estimated median).

**43%**

currently use a professional financial advisor.

# Seventies and Older: Enjoying Life and Focusing on Health

People in their seventies and older are enjoying retired life and focused on maintaining their health. More than four in 10 cite declining health that requires long-term care as one of their greatest retirement fears. Few are very confident they would be able to afford long-term care, if needed. A common solution for many would be to rely on family and friends to provide such care. People in their seventies and older should engage in financial planning and research long-term care options that are available and within financial reach. More than four in 10 are relying on Social Security as their primary source of income. Now is also the time for people in their seventies and older to discuss their wishes and expectations with their loved ones, if they have not done so already.

**74%**

cite enjoying life and being healthy and fit as top priorities in life – and 89% indicate they are enjoying life.

**8 in 10**

86% are retired and 12% are employed or self-employed.

**Age 65**

is the median age that age 70-plus retirees retired. Among those who are not yet retired, 38% do not plan to retire.

**45%**

indicate their greatest retirement fears include declining health that requires long-term care.

**Only 16%**

are “very confident” they would be able to afford long-term care, if needed.

**49%**

plan to receive long-term care from family and friends, if needed.

**4 in 10**

43% expect Social Security to be their primary source of retirement income, while 24% expect it to come from self-funding savings.

**1 in 4**

26% have a financial strategy for retirement in the form of a written plan.

**\$286,000**

is the amount age 70-plus retirees have in total household savings excluding home equity. (estimated median).

**47%**

currently use a professional financial advisor.

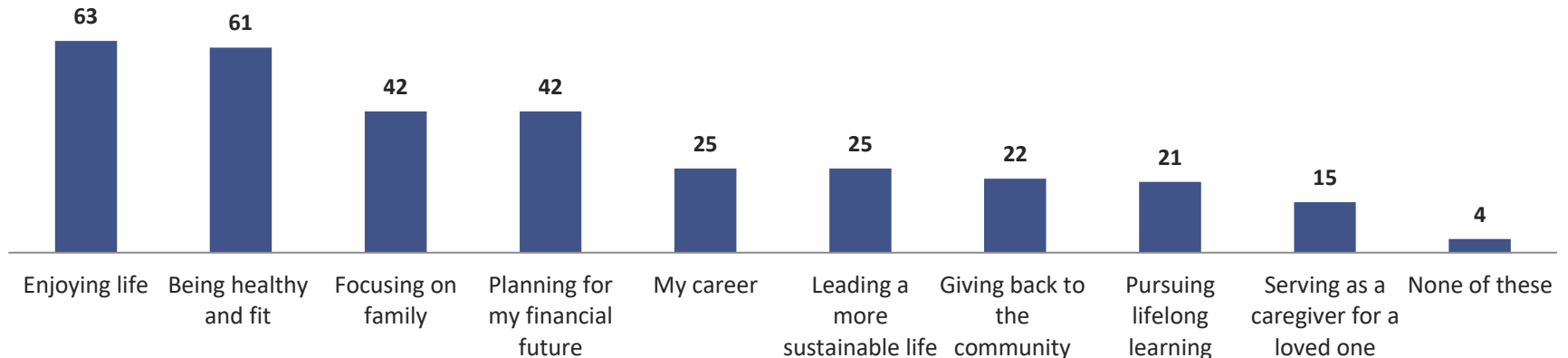
## *Life, Happiness, and Healthy Activities*

# Top Life Priorities

The middle class' top priorities in life include enjoying life (63%), being healthy and fit (61%), focusing on family (42%), planning for their financial future (42%), their career (25%), leading a more sustainable life (25%), giving back to the community (22%), pursuing lifelong learning (21%), and serving as a caregiver (15%).

## Which of the following are currently your top priorities in life? Select All.

All Middle Class (%)



Responses not shown for "Other" (All Middle Class: 2%).

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY - ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS  
Q2022A. Which of the following are currently your top priorities in life? Select all.

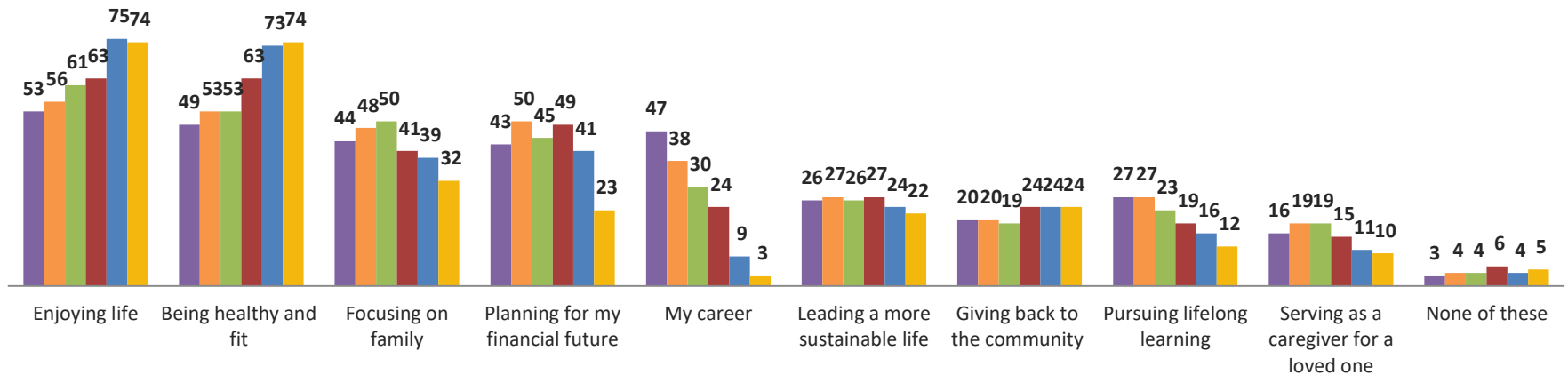
# Top Life Priorities by Age Range

The top priorities in life for people in the middle class vary by their age and life phase. Enjoying life and being healthy and fit are the two most often top priorities among people of all ages. However, older people are more likely to prioritize them than younger people. For example, nearly three in four people age 70-plus (74%) cite enjoying life as a top priority compared with 53% of people in their 20s. Similarly, 74% of people age 70-plus are more likely to prioritize being healthy and fit, compared with 49% of people in their 20s. Focusing on family is another top priority in life for many people, with those in their 30s and 40s (48%, 50%, respectively) tending to be more likely to cite it than other age ranges. When it comes to planning for their financial future, people in their 30s and 50s are slightly more likely to prioritize it (50%, 49%) than other age ranges. Prioritizing career drops significantly with age. Forty-seven percent of people in their 20s cite their career as a top priority, compared with just 9% of people in their 60s and 3% who are age 70-plus.

## Which of the following are currently your top priorities in life? Select All.

Middle Class by Age Range (%)

20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s+



Responses not shown for "Other" (20s: 2%, 30s: 1%, 40s: 1%, 50s: 2%, 60s: 1%, 70s+: 3%).

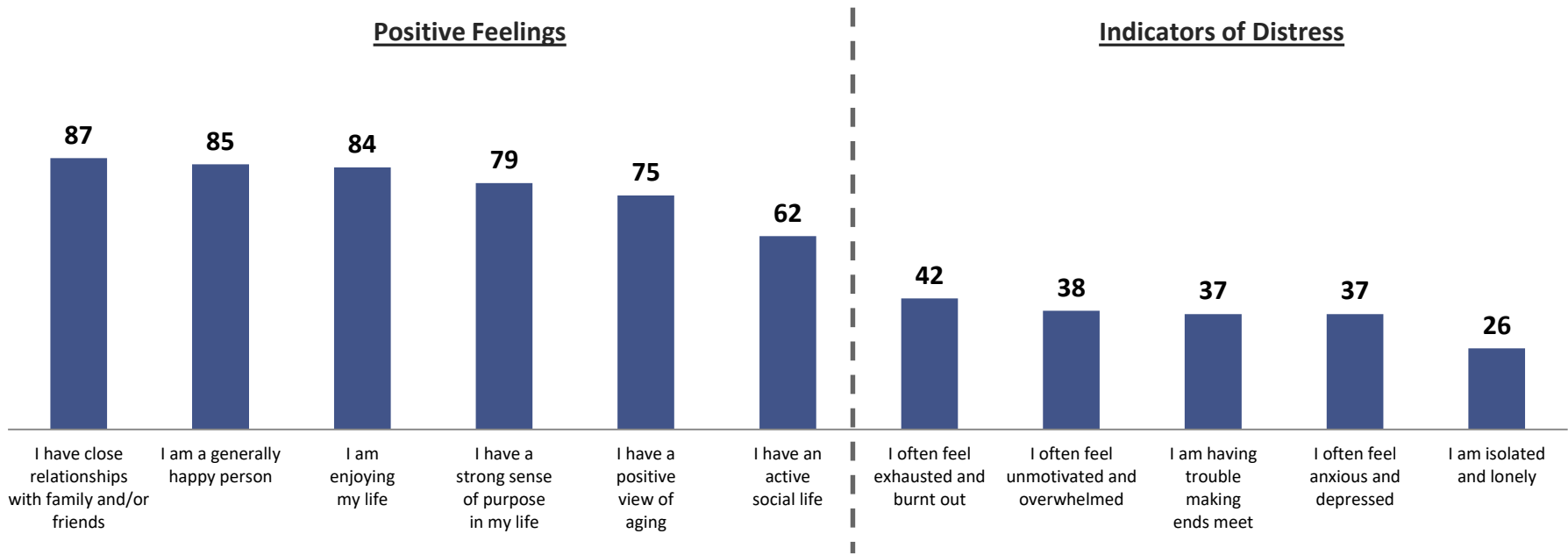
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS  
Q2022A. Which of the following are currently your top priorities in life? Select all.

# Outlook on Life

Most people in the middle class have positive feelings about life including having close relationships with family and/or friends (87%), being generally happy (85%), and enjoying life (84%). Many also have a strong sense of purpose in life (79%), a positive view of aging (75%), and an active social life (62%). At the same time, some people are experiencing distress such as often feeling exhausted and burnt out (42%), often feeling unmotivated and overwhelmed (38%), having trouble making ends meet (37%), often feeling anxious and depressed (37%), and feeling isolated and lonely (26%).

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (NET – Strongly/Somewhat Agree)**

All Middle Class (%)



# Outlook on Life by Age Range

Most people in the middle class have positive feelings about life, and older people are generally more positive than younger people. People aged 70-plus tend to be the most positive in terms of being a generally happy person (91%), having close relationships (90%), enjoying life (89%), and having a strong sense of purpose in life (82%). Of concern, people in their 20s are significantly more likely to be experiencing distress such as often feeling exhausted and burnt out (62%), often feeling unmotivated and overwhelmed (59%), having trouble making ends meet (55%), often feeling anxious and depressed (59%), and feeling isolated and lonely (46%).

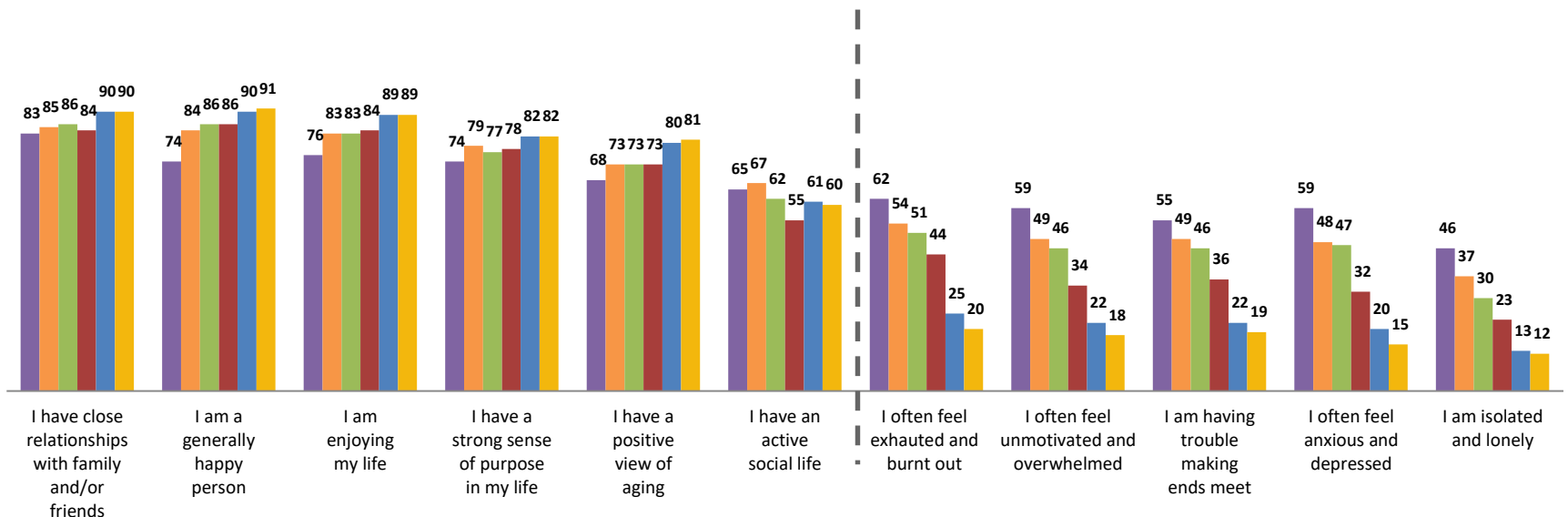
## How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (NET – Strongly/Somewhat Agree)

Middle Class by Age Range (%)

20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s+

### Positive Feelings

### Indicators of Distress

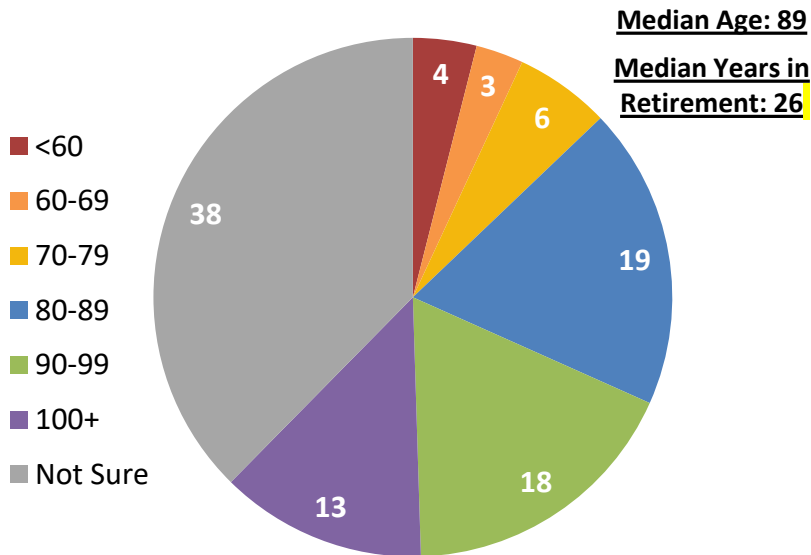


# Age Planning to Live

The potential for people to live longer than ever before has implications for their time spent in the workforce relative to retirement, life and career planning, and alternative pathways to retirement. People in the middle class are planning to live to age 89 (median). One in eight people (13%) are planning to live to age 100 or older. Almost four in 10 people (38%) are “not sure,” a reasonable answer given the nature of the question. The survey compared people’s planned life expectancy with their expected retirement age and found that they plan to spend 26 years in retirement (median). People in their 20s and 30s are slightly more likely to plan to live to age 100 or older (14%, 16%, respectively) with expectations of longer retirements (30 years, 29 years).

## What age are you planning to live to? (%)

All Middle Class



Middle Class by Age Range

Middle Class Age Range	Live to 100+	Live to Age in Years (Median)	Years in Retirement (Median)
20s	14%	87	30
30s	16%	88	29
40s	13%	87	25
50s	11%	85	25
60s	11%	88	25
70s+	10%	90	27

*Note: Results may not total to 100% due to rounding.*

\*Median years in retirement calculation excludes those who said, “don’t plan to retire.”

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY - ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q2850. What age are you planning to live to?

Q910. At what age do you expect to retire?

# Engagement in Healthy Activities

When asked about health-related activities they are doing on a consistent basis, more than half of people in the middle class are eating healthy (57%), getting enough sleep (54%), exercising regularly (54%), socializing with family and friends (52%), and seeking medical attention when needed (52%). Nearly half are getting routine physicals and screenings (48%), maintaining a positive outlook (47%), getting plenty of rest (47%), and avoiding harmful substances (45%). Engagement in healthy activities generally increases with age.

Engaging in Health-Related Activities on a Consistent Basis Select all. (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
Eating healthy	57	46	53	54	58	64	66
Getting enough sleep	54	45	46	49	52	61	70
Exercising regularly	54	44	49	53	57	62	58
Socializing with family and friends	52	41	46	46	49	61	68
Seeking medical attention when needed	52	29	35	42	56	67	82
Getting routine physicals and recommended health screenings	48	23	28	38	49	66	79
Maintaining a positive outlook	47	36	40	39	46	57	65
Getting plenty of rest	47	37	37	40	43	57	66
Avoiding harmful substances (e.g., cigarettes, alcohol, illicit drugs)	45	34	37	37	45	53	63
Getting recommended vaccinations (e.g., flu, Shingles, MMR)	40	18	21	30	39	56	74
Managing stress	40	39	39	43	41	40	37
Spending time in nature	37	37	37	39	40	41	33
Seeking mental health support when needed	21	28	29	24	22	15	10
Considering long-term health when making lifestyle decisions	21	20	20	20	23	22	20
Practicing mindfulness and meditation	19	19	21	21	19	18	15
Nothing	3	3	3	4	4	2	1

Note: Responses not shown for "Other" (All Middle Class: 1%, 20s: 1%, 30s: 1%, 40s: 2%, 50s: 1%, 60s: 1%, 70s+: 1%).

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1446. Which of the following health-related activities are you currently doing on a consistent basis? Select all.

# Sources of Information for Health Matters

For health-related matters, people in the middle class most often rely on sources of information including medical professionals (63%), health-related websites (37%), family and friends (35%), government websites (24%), and social media (20%). Across age ranges, the most relied upon source is medical professionals, with reliance increasing with age. Older individuals tend to rely on more traditional sources of information compared with younger people. In contrast, younger people tend to be more likely than older individuals to rely on new sources like social media, health/wellness apps, influencers, streaming platforms, podcasts, and ChatGPT.

What sources of information do you rely on for health-related matters? Select all. (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
<b>Medical professionals</b>	63	41	46	57	64	82	89
<b>Health-related website</b> (e.g., Everyday Health, WebMD, Healthgrades, etc.)	37	30	33	36	39	43	40
<b>Family and friends</b>	35	32	36	35	35	35	38
<b>Government websites</b> (e.g., Center for Disease Control (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH), etc.)	24	25	23	23	21	25	27
<b>Social media platforms</b> (e.g., TikTok, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Reddit, YouTube, etc.)	20	38	33	22	14	8	5
<b>Health/Wellness apps</b> (e.g., Apple Health, Headspace, Calm, etc.)	18	23	26	21	16	13	8
<b>Newspapers, magazines, journals, or books</b>	18	15	15	16	17	19	24
<b>Physical trainers/nutritionists</b>	15	20	19	16	14	10	9
<b>Television or radio programs</b>	15	15	16	13	14	14	17
<b>Health/wellness influencers</b> (e.g., Dr. Sandra Lee, Panela Reif, Cody Rigsby, etc.)	12	19	21	14	8	4	3
<b>Streaming platforms</b> (e.g., Twitch, Netflix, etc.)	10	17	19	12	8	3	2
<b>Podcasts</b> (e.g., The Proof, Wellness Her Way, The Exam Room, etc.)	10	15	17	11	10	6	3
<b>ChatGPT or similar artificial intelligence (AI) tools</b>	8	15	14	7	6	3	1
<b>None</b>	6	7	6	8	9	4	2

Note: Responses not shown for "Other" (All Middle Class: 1%, 20s: <1%, 30s: 1%, 40s: 1%, 50s: 1%, 60s: 2%, 70s+: 2%).

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q2024D. What sources of information do you rely on for health-related matters? Select all.

# *Personal Finances*

# Current Financial Priorities

People in the middle class share competing financial priorities such as paying off debt (55%), saving for retirement/continuing to save for retirement (48%), building emergency savings (40%), saving for a major purchase or life event (32%), and just getting by to cover basic living expenses (28%). More than six in 10 people in their 30s, 40s, and 50s cite paying off one or more types of debt as a priority. More than six in 10 people in their 40s and 50s cite saving for retirement. Younger people are generally more likely than older people to be saving for a major purchase or life event, and they're also more likely to be just getting by to cover basic living expenses.

Financial Priorities Right Now. Select all. (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
<b>NET – Paying off debt</b>	55	58	65	64	61	50	37
Paying off credit card debt	35	34	43	40	39	32	23
Paying off mortgage	28	21	34	35	36	29	19
Paying off other consumer debt	11	12	13	13	13	9	8
Paying off student loans	11	22	18	12	7	4	2
<b>Saving/continuing to save for retirement</b>	48	33	53	60	65	54	29
<b>Building emergency savings</b>	40	38	46	46	39	36	32
<b>Saving for a major purchase or life event</b>	32	46	40	34	27	23	21
<b>Just getting by to cover basic living expenses</b>	28	39	33	29	26	19	18
<b>Supporting children</b>	25	25	44	41	24	12	7
<b>Paying health care expenses</b>	20	23	23	21	17	18	21
<b>Creating an inheritance or financial legacy</b>	18	17	18	14	13	17	27
<b>Contributing to an education fund</b>	15	18	22	20	12	7	9
<b>Supporting parents</b>	11	22	16	12	8	3	1
<b>Paying long-term care expenses</b>	8	15	12	6	3	4	6
<b>Supporting grandchildren</b>	5	3	4	5	6	6	6

Note: Responses not shown for "Other" (All Middle Class: 5%, 20s: 5%, 30s: 4%, 40s: 2%, 50s: 3%, 60s: 5%, 70s+: 9%).

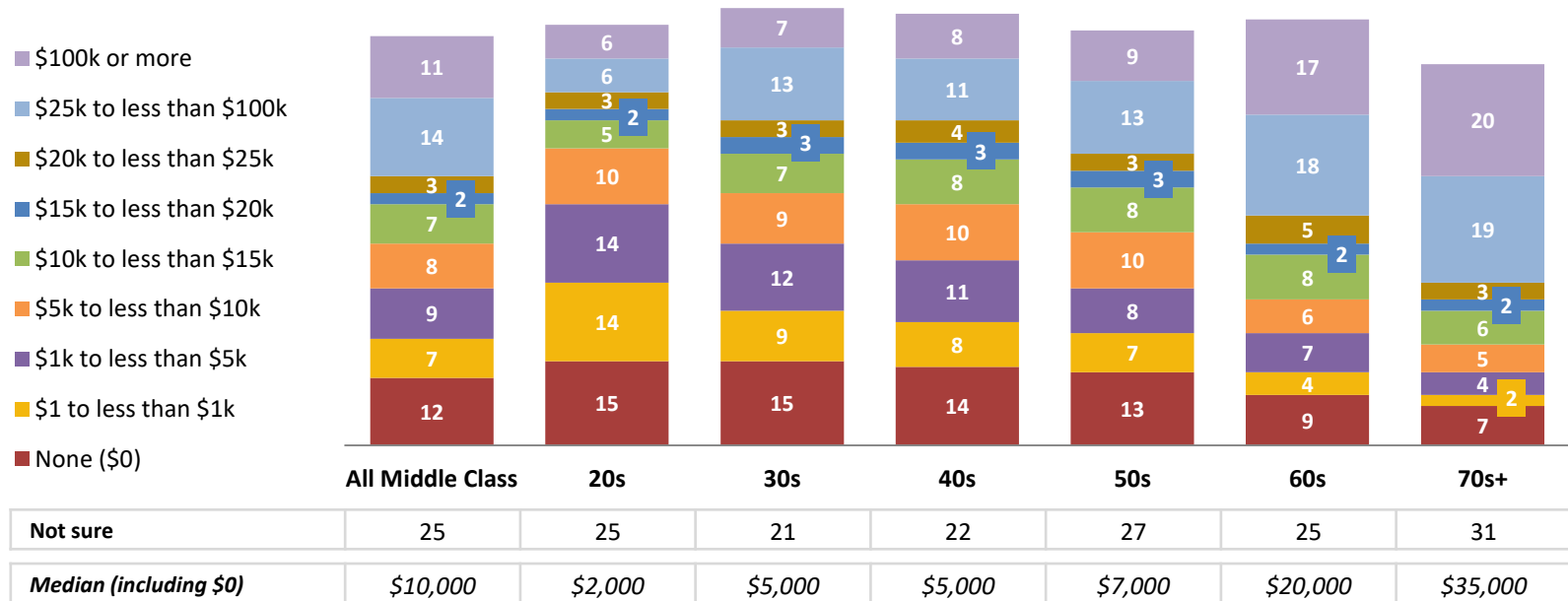
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q2639. Which of the following are your financial priorities right now? Select all.

# Emergency Savings

Emergency savings are needed to cover financial setbacks, such as unemployment, medical bills, home repairs, auto repairs, and other unexpected expenses. Emergency savings can also help prevent people from dipping into their retirement savings to cover such expenses. People in the middle class have saved \$10,000 (median) in emergency savings as of late 2024. Across age ranges, people’s emergency savings increase with age: people in their 20s have saved \$2,000, those in their 30s and 40s have saved \$5,000, those in their 50s have saved \$7,000, those in their 60s have saved \$20,000, and those aged 70-plus have saved \$35,000 (medians). Of concern, more than one in 10 people in the middle class (12%) have no emergency savings.

**2024 Total Emergency Savings**



Note: Results may not total to 100% due to rounding.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q2825. How much do you have in emergency savings specifically to cover the cost of unexpected major financial setbacks (e.g., unemployment, medical bills, home repairs, auto repairs, other)?

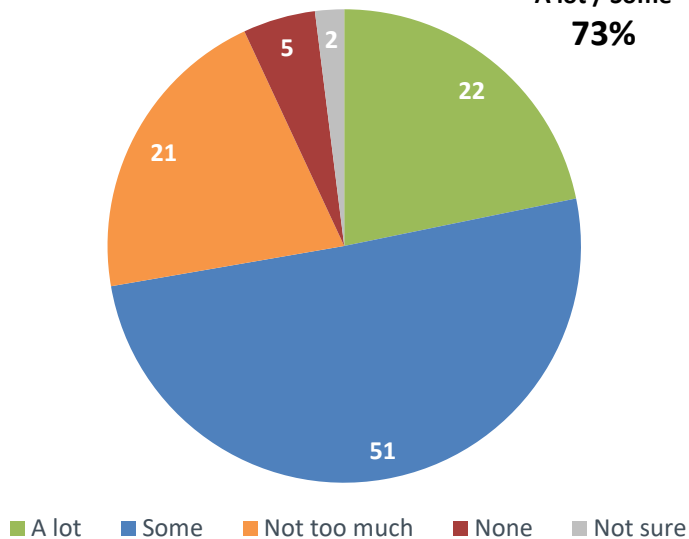
# Working Knowledge of Personal Finance

Almost three in four people in the middle class (73%) say they have either “a lot” or “some” working knowledge about personal finance, including 22% who have “a lot” and 51% who have “some.” Eight in 10 people in their 60s and those aged 70-plus (80%, 84%, respectively) have “a lot” or “some” working knowledge, which is significantly higher than people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s (62%, 71%, 68%, 67%).

## How much of a working knowledge do you have about personal finance? (%)

**All Middle Class**

NET –  
A lot / Some  
**73%**



**Middle Class by Age Range**

Age Range	NET A lot / Some	A lot	Some	Not too much	None	Not sure
20s	62	17	45	29	6	2
30s	71	18	53	22	4	3
40s	68	18	50	25	5	2
50s	67	17	50	25	6	2
60s	80	29	51	16	4	<1
70s+	84	33	52	12	3	1

*Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.*

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q2023D. How much of a working knowledge do you have about personal finance (e.g., managing money, investments, debt, risk, taxes)?

# Sources of Information for Personal Financial Matters

For personal finance-related matters, people in the middle class most often rely on sources of information such as family and friends (36%), financial services institutions (32%), a professional financial advisor (28%), and financial websites (25%). Reliance on family and friends tends to decrease with age, while reliance on financial services institutions and a professional financial advisor increases with age. Reliance on financial websites is somewhat similar across age ranges. Younger people rely more on newer sources (e.g., social media, apps, influencers, etc.).

What sources of information do you rely on for personal finance matters? Select all. (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
<b>Family and friends</b>	36	41	39	38	34	34	30
<b>Financial services institutions</b> (e.g., bank, brokerage firm, credit union, insurance company, investment company, etc.)	32	29	29	30	29	35	39
<b>Professional financial advisor</b>	28	20	22	22	25	37	44
<b>Financial websites</b> (e.g., Yahoo! Finance, CNBC, Bloomberg, Morningstar, etc.)	25	23	24	29	25	28	20
<b>Employer’s retirement plan provider</b>	19	17	24	21	27	18	8
<b>Social media platforms</b> (e.g., TikTok, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Reddit, YouTube, etc.)	17	32	28	20	12	5	2
<b>Newspapers, magazines, journals, or books</b>	16	14	13	15	15	18	21
<b>Finance/Financial apps</b> (e.g., NerdWallet, Acorns, Robinhood, etc.)	15	21	21	19	16	11	5
<b>Employer</b>	15	24	22	19	17	5	2
<b>Television or radio programs</b>	13	13	12	11	13	13	13
<b>Personal finance influencers</b> (e.g., Humphrey Yang, Dave Ramsey, Suze Orman, Tiffany Aliche, etc.)	11	14	16	13	10	7	4
<b>Podcasts</b> (e.g., The Journal, Planet Money, Closing Bell, Money Life, etc.)	10	14	16	11	10	6	3
<b>Streaming platforms</b> (e.g., Twitch, Netflix etc.)	9	17	17	12	6	3	1
<b>ChatGPT or similar artificial intelligence (AI) tools</b>	6	11	10	6	3	2	1
<b>None</b>	12	9	10	12	15	14	14

Note: Responses not shown for “Other” (All Middle Class: 2%, 20s: <1%, 30s: 1%, 40s: 1%, 50s: 2%, 60s: 3%, 70s+: 4%).

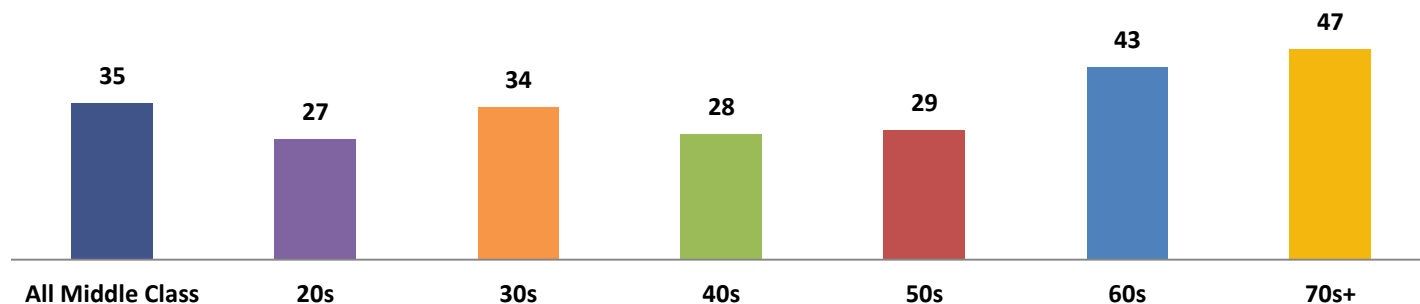
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS  
Q2024E. What sources of information do you rely on for personal finance matters? Select all.

# Professional Financial Advisor Usage

More than one in three people in the middle class (35%) use a professional financial advisor. People in their 60s (43%) and those aged 70-plus (47%) are more likely to use a professional financial advisor than younger people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s (27%, 34%, 28%, 29%, respectively).

## Do you currently use a professional financial advisor?

Middle Class by Age Range - Yes (%)



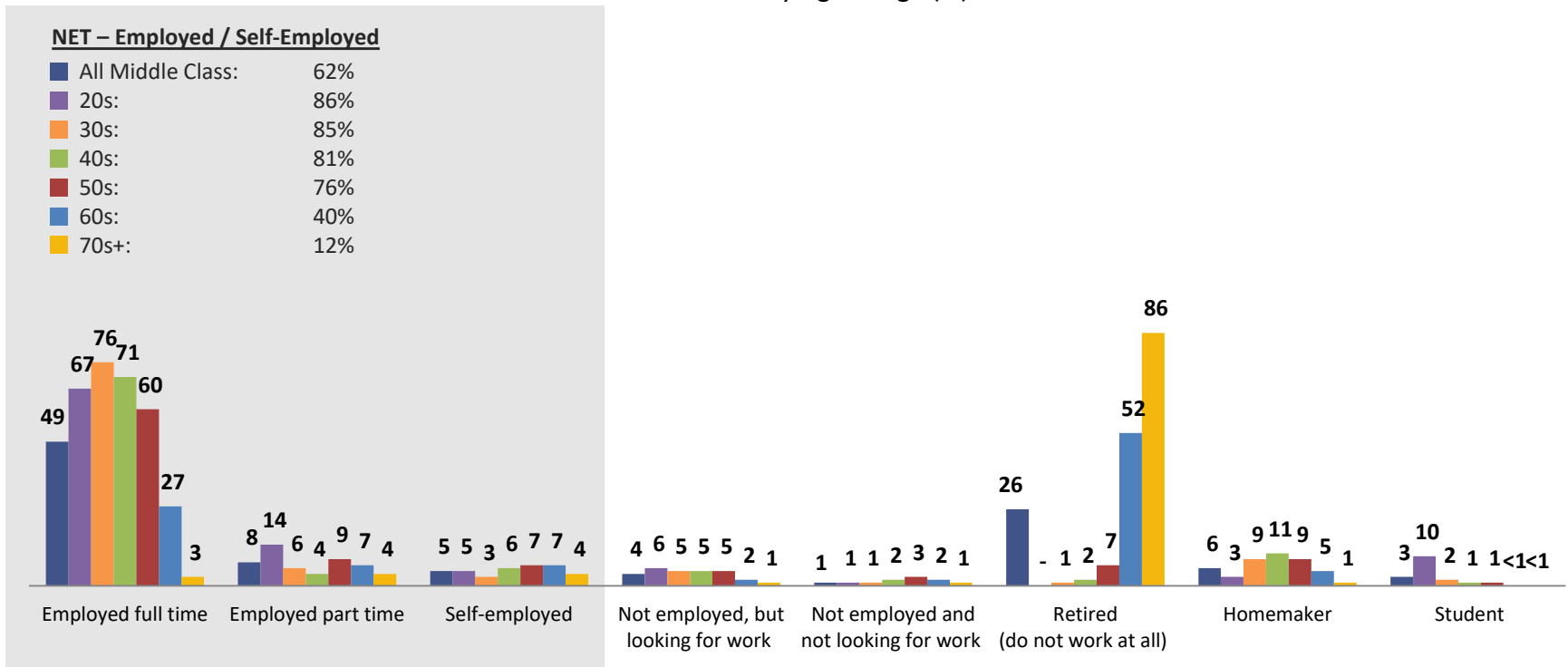
## *Work-Retirement Status*

# Employment Status

More than six in 10 people in the middle class (62%) are employed (57%) or self-employed (5%), while 26% are retired, 5% are not employed, 6% are homemakers, and 3% are students. More than three in four people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s are employed or self-employed (86%, 85%, 81%, 76%, respectively). Forty percent of people in their 60s are employed or self-employed while 52% are retired. Eighty-six percent of people aged 70-plus are retired.

## Which one of the following describes your employment status? Select all.

Middle Class by Age Range (%)



Note: Net calculations may not add up due to rounding.

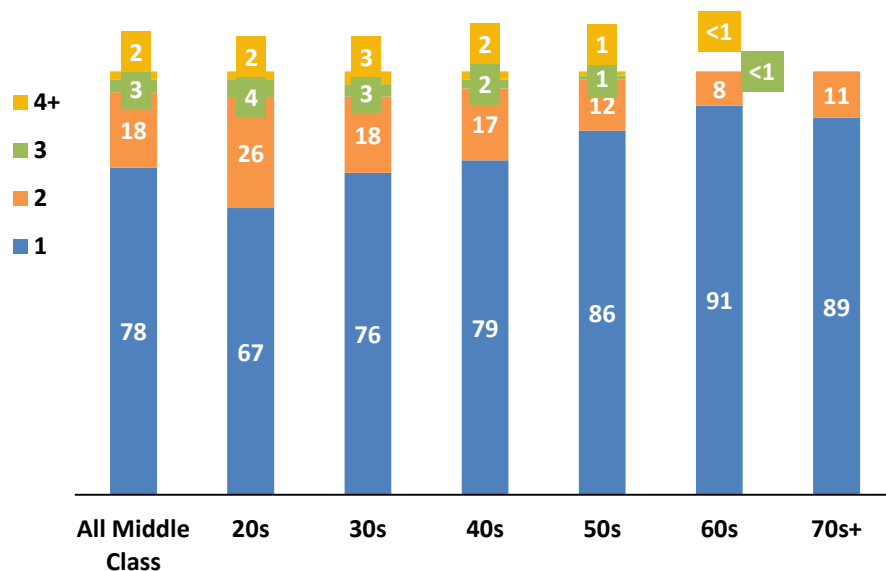
# Employed Workers: Number of Jobs/Employers and Side Hustles

Almost eight in 10 employed workers in the middle class (78%) are currently working at one job or employer, while 22% have two or more jobs. Almost one in three employed workers in their 20s (33%) have two or more jobs. Among all ages, four in 10 employed workers (40%) indicate they have a “side hustle” as a means of making money in addition to their main form of employment or income, including 58% of those in their 20s, 44% of those in their 30s, and 36% of those in their 40s. Fewer than three in 10 workers in their 50s, 60s, or those aged 70-plus have a side hustle (26%, 22%, 18%, respectively).

## How many jobs or employers are you currently working for?

Employed Workers (%)

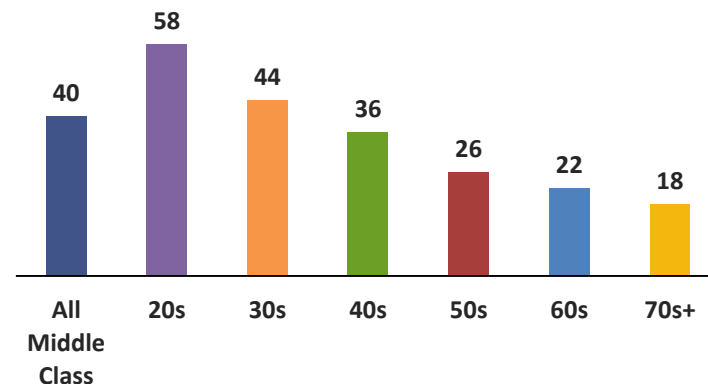
NET 2+ Jobs:	22%	33%	24%	21%	14%	9%	11%
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## Do you currently have a “side hustle”

(a means of making money in addition to your main form of employment or income)?

Employed Workers - Yes (%)



Note: Results may not total to 100% due to rounding.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – EMPLOYED WORKERS

Q2775. How many jobs or employers are you currently working for?

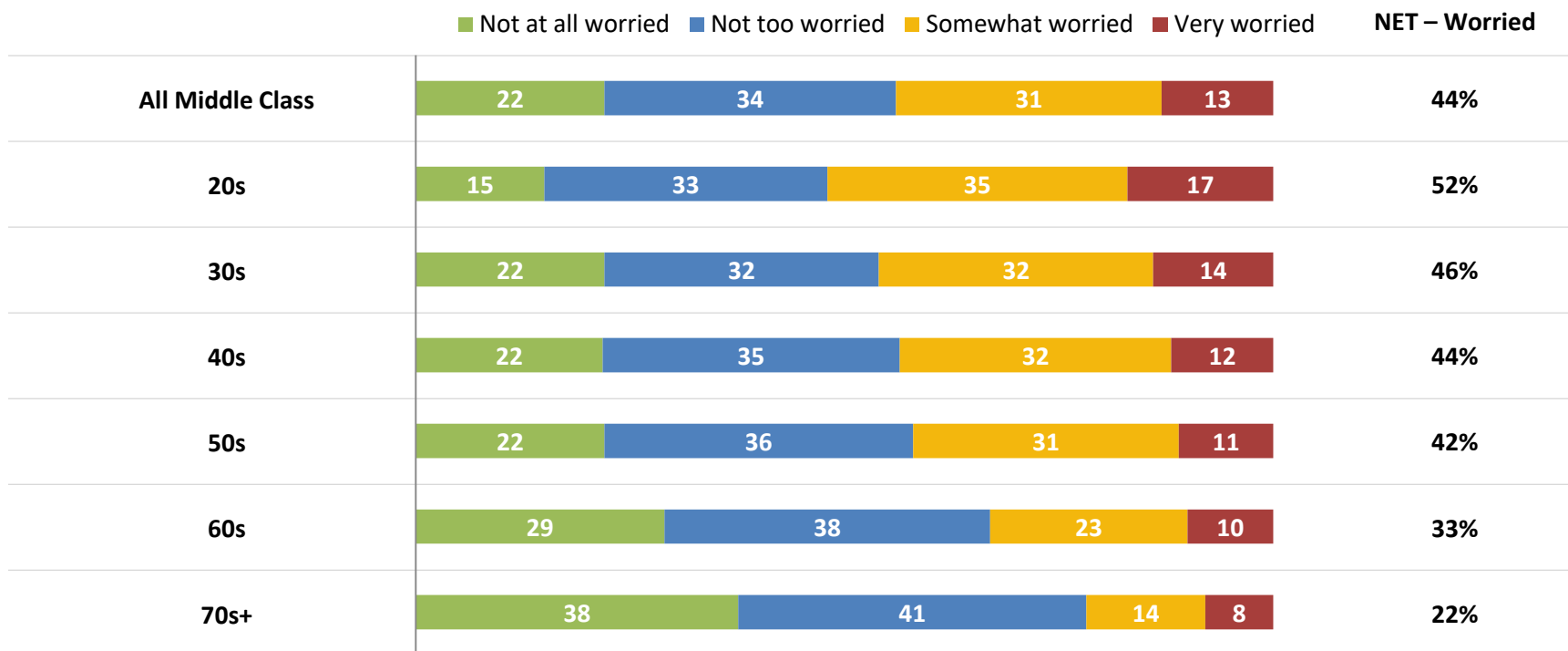
Q2022F. Do you currently have a “side hustle” (a means of making money in addition to your main form of employment or income)?

# Not Retired: Worries About AI, Robotics, and Job Skill Obsolescence

More than four in 10 people in the middle class who are not retired (44%) are worried that artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics are making their job skills no longer needed, including 13% who are “very worried” and 31% who are “somewhat worried.” The extent to which people are worried decreases with age. Specifically, more than half of people in their 20s (52%) are worried, compared with fewer than half of those in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those who are age 70-plus (46%, 44%, 42%, 33%, 22%, respectively).

## How worried are you about artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics making your job skills no longer needed?

Not Retired (%)



Note: Results may not total to 100% due to rounding.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED Q2024C. How worried are you about artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics making your job skills no longer needed?

# Not Retired: Steps Taken to Help Ensure Continued Work

Almost nine in 10 people in the middle class who are not retired (87%) have taken at least one proactive step to help ensure they can continue working as long as they want and need. However, the question is whether they are doing enough. Only 57% of people say they are staying healthy so they can continue working, while fewer than half are keeping their job skills up to date (45%) or performing well at their current job (43%). Even fewer are networking and meeting new people (26%), taking classes to learn new skills (25%), scoping out the employment market (20%), obtaining a new degree, certification, or professional designation (18%), or attending virtual conferences and webinars (14%). Older people tend to be more focused on staying healthy and performing well at their current job, while younger people tend to be more focused on education and professional development.

Have you taken any steps to ensure that you'll be able to continue working as long as you want and need? Select all. Not Retired (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
<b>NET – Taken One or More Steps to Continue Working</b>	87	91	91	85	81	81	87
Staying healthy so I can continue working	57	49	55	54	63	67	71
Keeping my job skills up to date	45	44	50	45	41	43	50
Performing well at my job	43	40	43	42	44	49	55
Networking and meeting new people	26	29	30	26	19	20	19
Taking classes to learn new skills	25	30	30	25	15	13	13
Scoping out the employment market and opportunities available	20	24	24	19	16	11	10
Obtaining a new degree, certification, or professional designation	18	24	24	16	10	4	4
Attending virtual conferences and webinars	14	16	17	14	11	10	14
Other	2	3	3	1	3	2	3
I have not taken any steps to ensure I'll be able to work as long as I want and need	13	9	9	15	19	19	13

# Not Retired: Expected Retirement Age

Among people in the middle class who are not yet retired, almost half expect to work past age 65 or do not plan to retire (48%), and a sizeable percentage expect to retire at age 70-plus or do not plan to retire (38%).

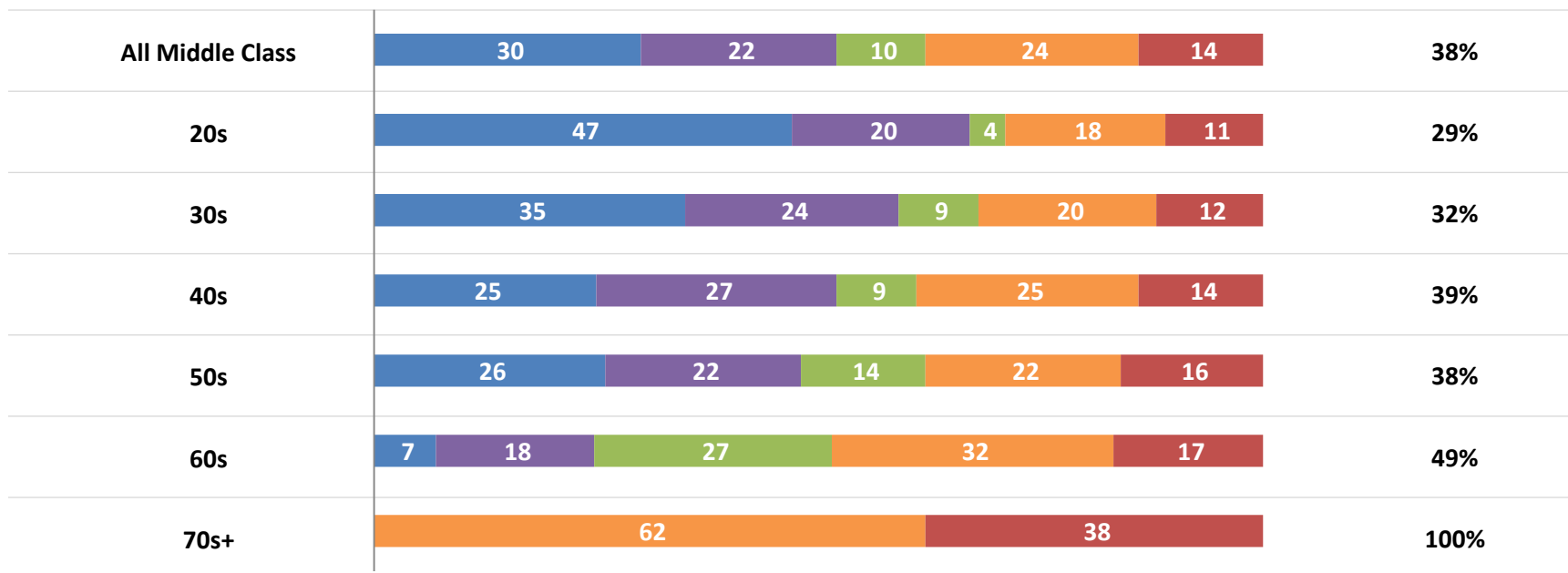
However, expectations for retirement age vary by age range. Forty-nine percent of people in their 60s expect to retire at age 70-plus or do not plan to retire, followed by those in their 50s, 40s, 30s, and 20s (38%, 39%, 32%, 29%, respectively). Younger people in their 20s and 30s are more likely than those in their 40s, 50s, and 60s to expect to retire before age 65 (47%, 35%, 25%, 26%, 7%). A noteworthy 38% of people who are age 70-plus do not plan to retire.

## At what age do you expect to retire?

Not Retired (%)

■ Before Age 65   
 ■ At Age 65   
 ■ Ages 66 - 69   
 ■ Age 70+   
 ■ Do Not Plan to Retire

**NET – Age 70+ or Do Not Plan to Retire**



Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED  
Q910. At what age do you expect to retire?

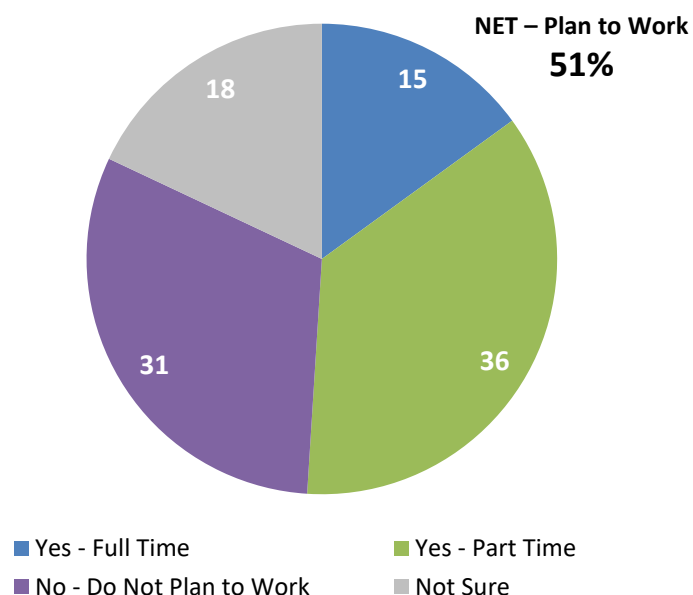
# Not Retired: Plans to Work in Retirement

More than half of people in the middle class who are not yet retired (51%) plan to work after they retire, including 15% who plan to work full time and 36% who plan to work part time. Across age ranges, people share similar plans about continued work in retirement including those in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (53%, 53%, 48%, 52%, 49%, 56%, respectively).

## Do you plan to work after you retire?

Not Retired (%)

All Middle Class



Middle Class by Age Range

Age Range	NET Plan to work	Yes, I plan to work full time	Yes, I plan to work part time	No, I do not plan to work	Not sure
20s	53	17	36	34	13
30s	53	20	33	31	16
40s	48	16	32	30	22
50s	52	10	42	28	20
60s	49	8	41	33	18
70s+	56	14	42	28	16

*Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.*

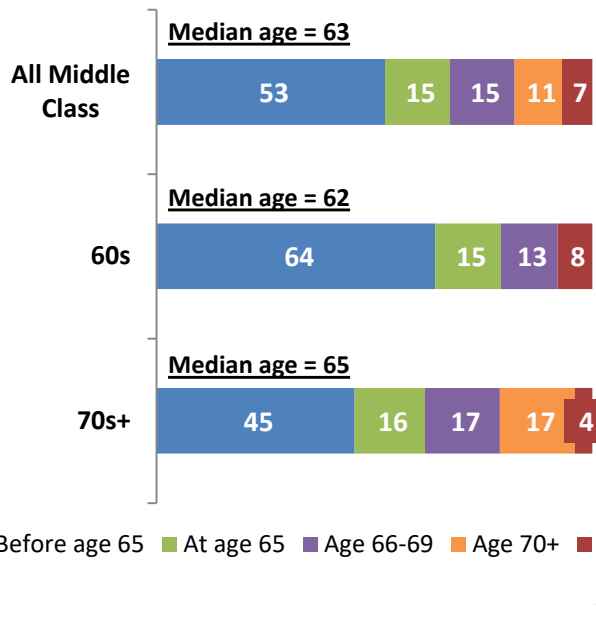
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED  
Q1525. Do you plan to work after you retire?

# Retirees: Age They Retired

More than half of middle-class retirees (53%) indicate they retired before the age of 65, while 15% retired at age 65, 15% retired between ages 66 and 69, and 11% retired at age 70 or older. Seven percent consider themselves to be fully retired, but do not expect to ever stop working. The median age that retirees retired is 63. Regarding the timing of their retirement, nearly half of retirees (47%) indicate they retired sooner than planned – and among them, 54% did so due to employment-related reasons and 31% for personal health-related reasons. Forty-six percent of retirees retired when planned and 7% retired later than planned. Forty-six percent of retirees retired when planned and 7% retired later than planned.

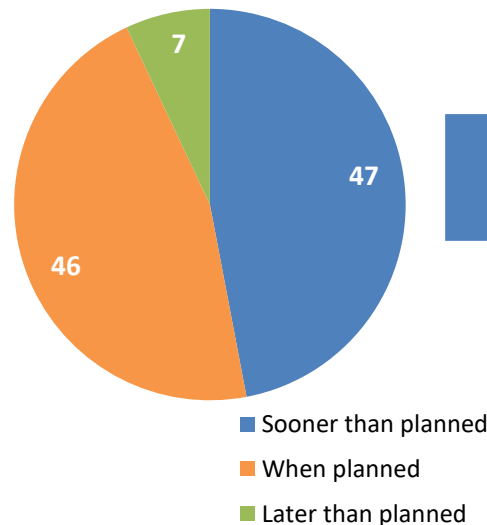
## At what age did you consider yourself fully retired or no longer working?

Retirees (%)



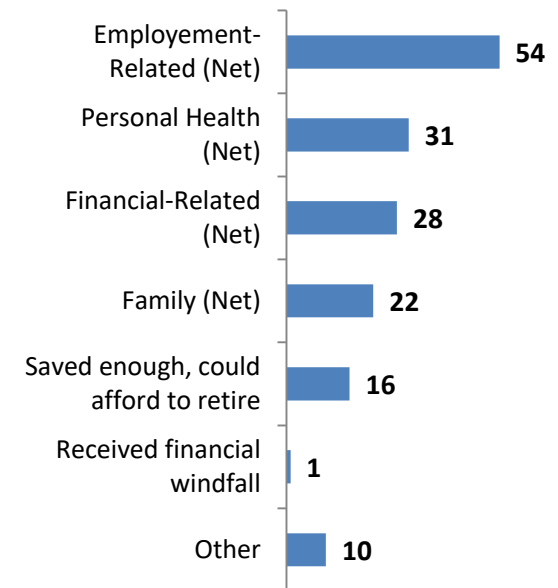
## Did you enter into retirement when you had planned?

Retirees (%)



## What were your reasons for retiring sooner than planned?

Retired sooner than planned (%)



Notes: 1) Results may not total 100% due to rounding. 2) Due to sample size limitations, only data for all middle-class retirees and those in their 60s and 70s+ are shown.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – RETIREES

Q915R. At what age do you consider yourself fully retired or no longer working?

Q1547. Did you enter into retirement when you had planned?

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – RETIREES RETIRED SOONER THAN PLANNED

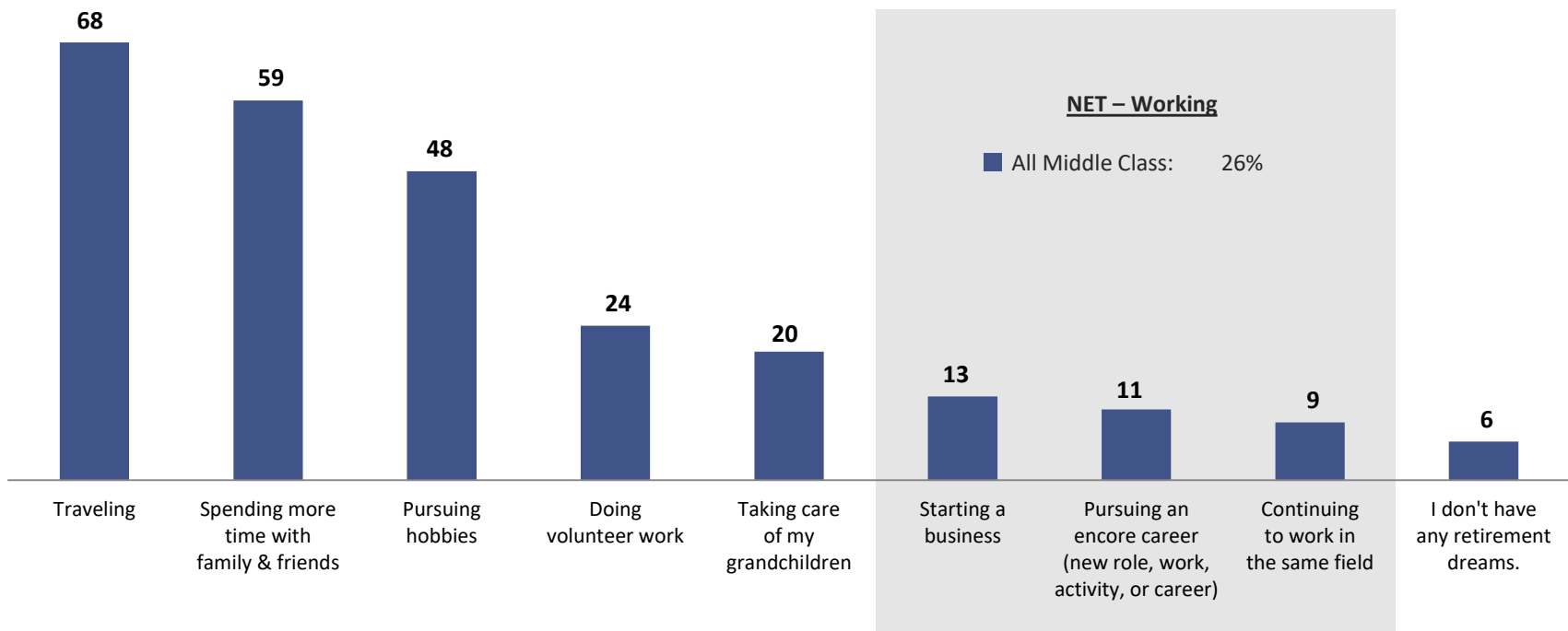
Q1548R. What were your reasons for retiring sooner than planned? Select all.

# *Retirement Preparations and Expectations*

# Retirement Dreams

People in the middle class dream of spending their retirement traveling (68%), spending more time with family and friends (59%), pursuing hobbies (48%), doing volunteer work (24%), and taking care of their grandchildren (20%). A noteworthy 26% of people dream of doing paid work in retirement including starting a business (13%), pursuing an encore career (11%), and continuing to work in the same field (9%). Six percent of people in the middle class do not have any retirement dreams.

**How do you dream of spending your retirement? /**  
**Before you retired, how did you dream of spending your retirement? Select all.**  
 All Middle Class (%)



Note: Responses not shown for "Other" (All Middle Class: 2%).

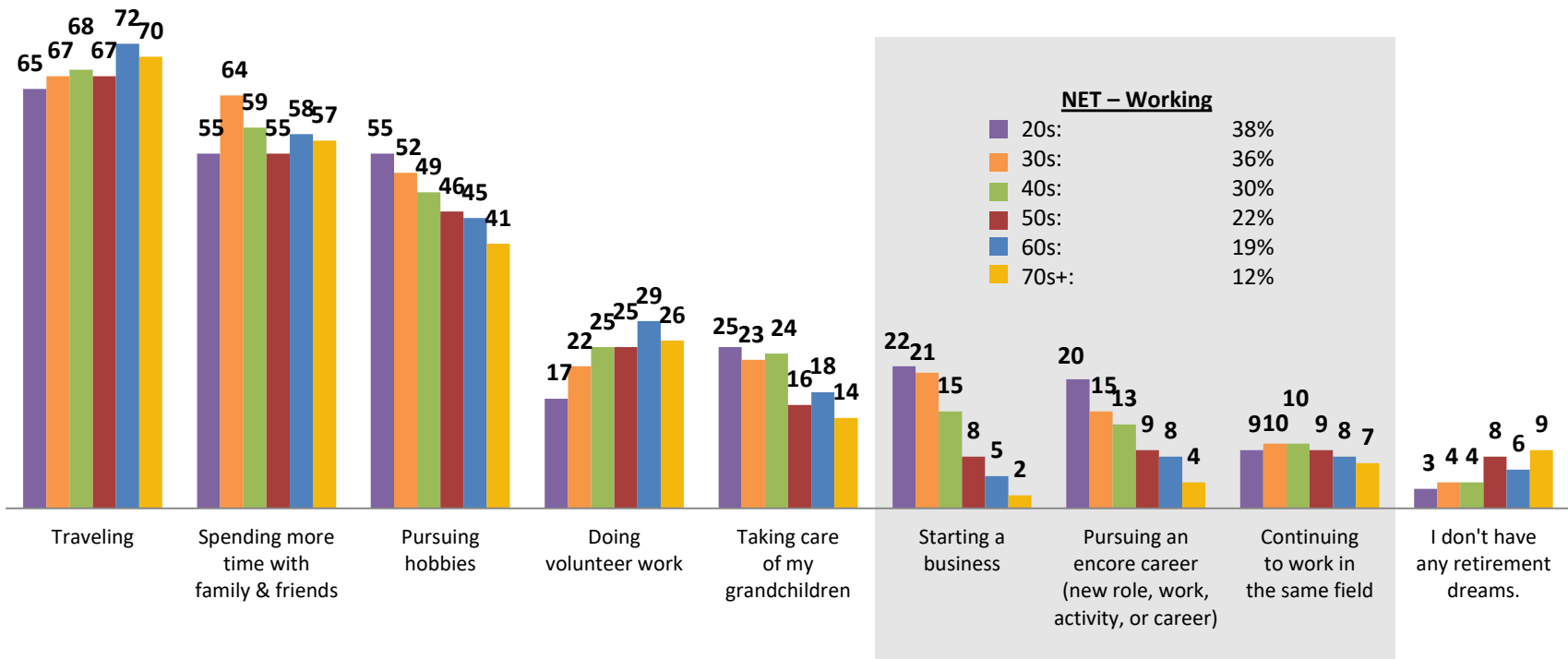
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1418. How do you dream of spending your retirement? / Before you retired, how did you dream of spending your retirement? Select all.

# Retirement Dreams by Age Range

Across age ranges, people in the middle class share the same top three retirement dreams, including traveling, spending more time with family and friends, and pursuing hobbies. However, some retirement dreams differ by age range. Younger people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to dream of working in retirement (i.e., starting a business, pursuing an encore career, and/or continuing to work in the same field) than those in their 50s, 60s, and 70s (38%, 36%, 30%, 22%, 19%, 12%, respectively).

**How do you dream of spending your retirement? / Before you retired, how did you dream of spending your retirement? Select all.**  
Middle Class by Age Range (%)



Note: Responses not shown for "Other" (20s: 1%, 30s: 2%, 40s: 1%, 50s: 2%, 60s: 3%, 70s+: 3%).

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

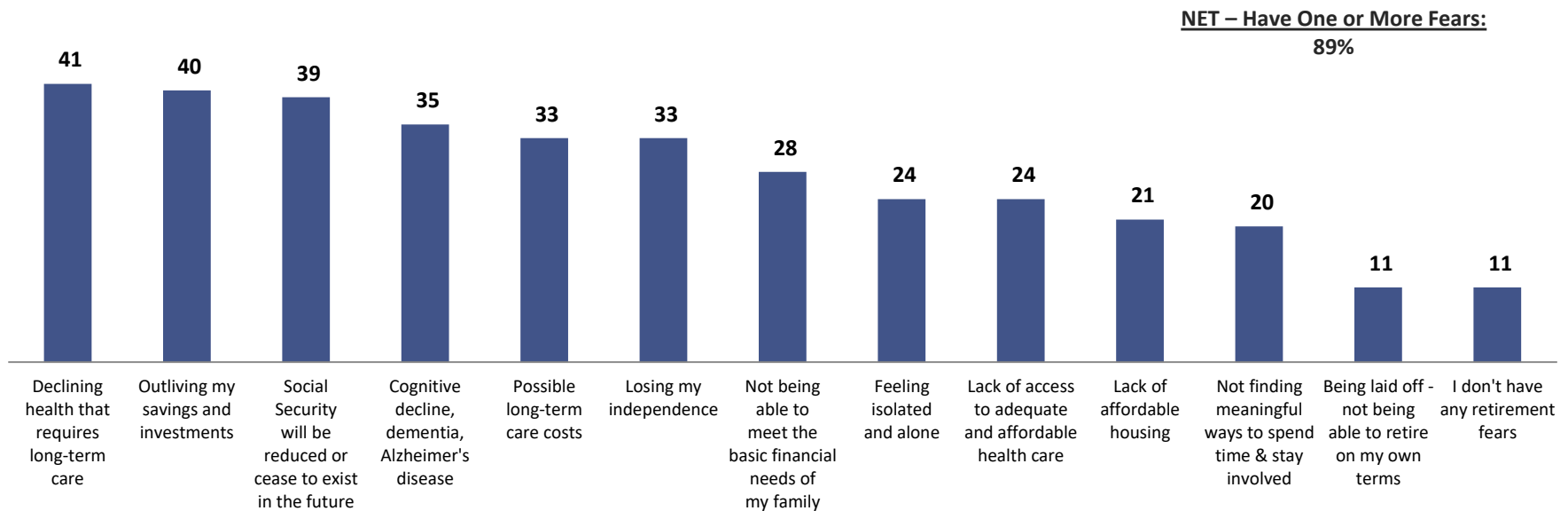
Q1418. How do you dream of spending your retirement? / Before you retired, how did you dream of spending your retirement? Select all.

# Greatest Retirement Fears

The greatest retirement fears of people in the middle class include declining health that requires long-term care (41%), outliving their savings and investments (40%), Social Security being reduced or ceasing to exist (39%), cognitive decline, dementia, Alzheimer’s Disease (35%), possible long-term care costs (33%), and losing independence (33%). Other greatest fears include being unable to meet the basic financial needs of family (28%), feeling isolated and alone (24%), lack of access to adequate and affordable health care (24%), lack of affordable housing (21%), not finding meaningful ways to spend time and stay involved (20%), and being laid off – not being able to retire on one’s own terms (11%). Eleven percent of people don’t have any retirement fears.

## What are your greatest fears about retirement? Select all.

All Middle Class (%)



\* Being laid off – not being able to retire on my own terms was only asked of people who are not retired.

Note: Responses not shown for “Other” (All Middle Class: <1%).

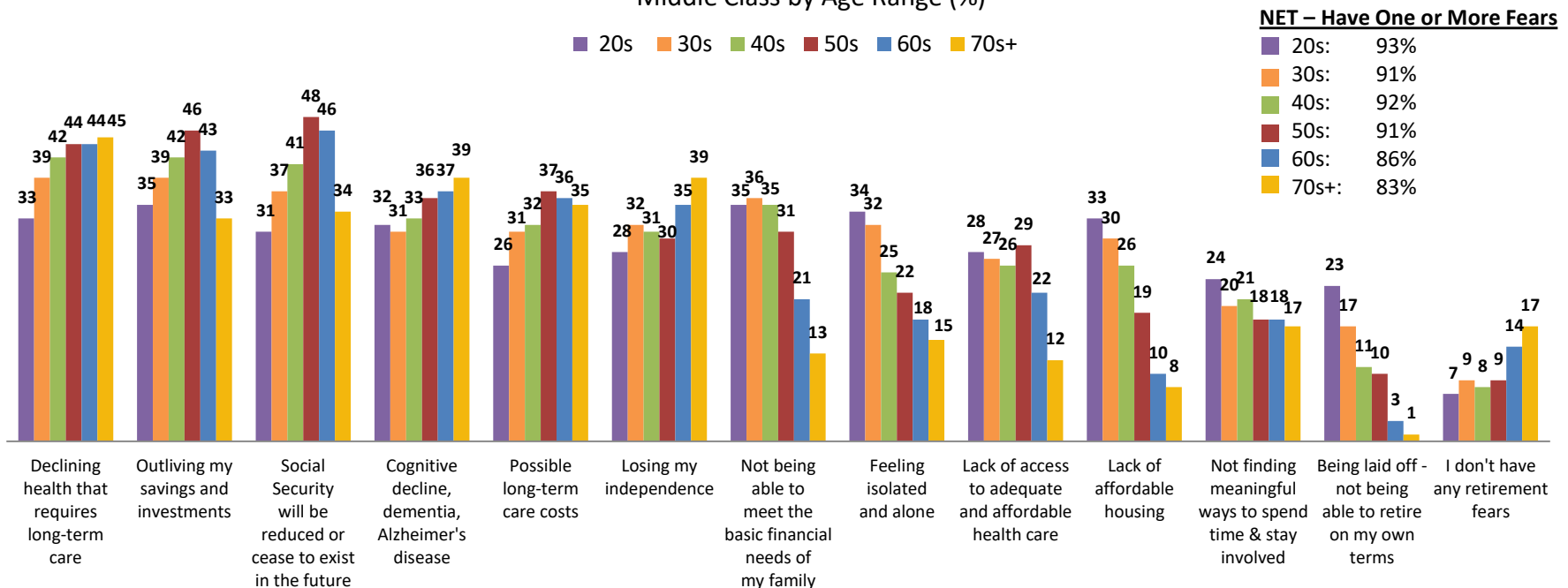
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1422. What are your greatest fears about retirement? Since entering retirement, what are your greatest fears about retirement? Select all.

# Greatest Retirement Fears by Age Range

The greatest retirement fears among people in the middle class vary by age range. The greatest fear among those aged 70-plus is declining health that requires long-term care, compared with those in their 60s and 50s who most often cite Social Security being reduced or ceasing to exist (46%, 48%, respectively), and those in their 40s and 30s who most often cite outliving their savings and investments (42%, 39%) and declining health that requires long-term care (42%, 39%). The greatest retirement fears among those in their 20s are outliving savings and investments (35%) and not being able to meet the basic needs of their family (35%). Older people in the middle class are less likely to have retirement fears than younger people. Specifically, 17% of people aged 70-plus do not have any retirement fears, compared with just 7% of people in their 20s.

**What are your greatest fears about retirement? Select all.**  
Middle Class by Age Range (%)



Note: Responses not shown for "Other" (20s: <1%, 30s: <1%, 40s: <1%, 50s: <1%, 60s: 1%, 70s+: 1%).

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

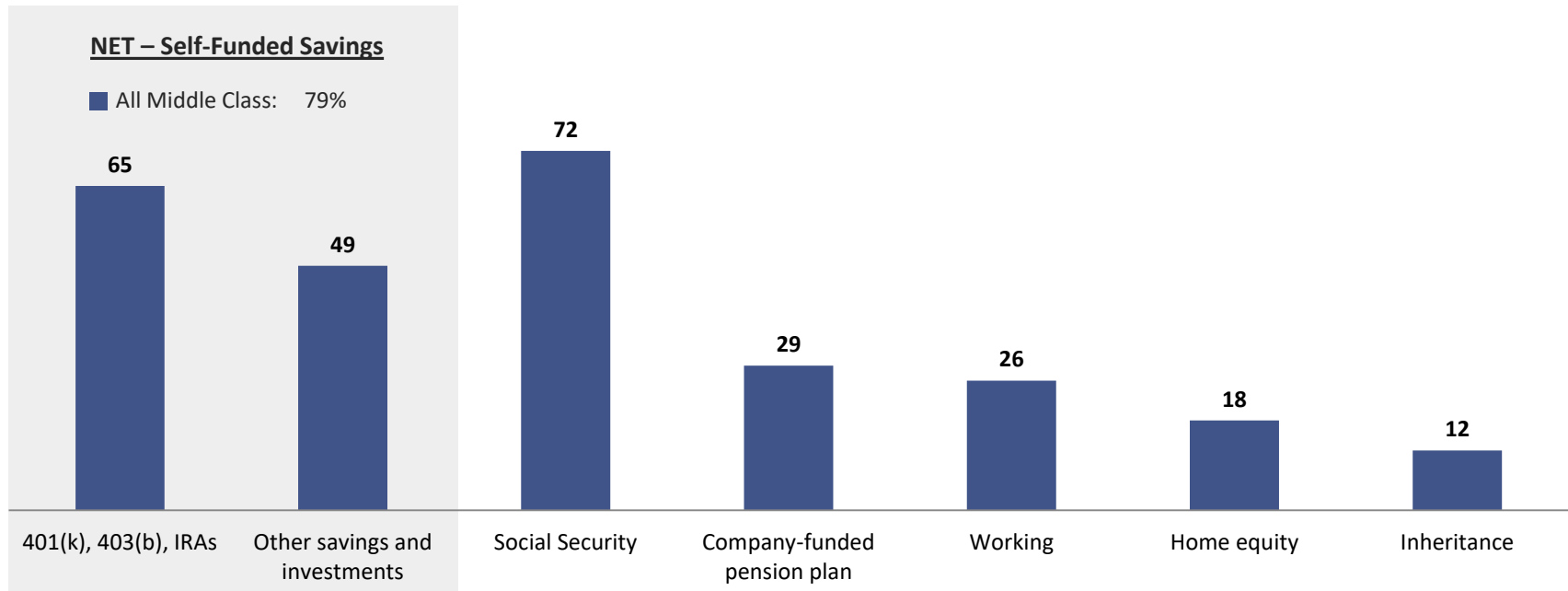
Q1422. What are your greatest fears about retirement? Since entering retirement, what are your greatest fears about retirement? Select all.

# Expected Sources of Retirement Income

People in the middle class expect diverse sources of income to cover living expenses in retirement. Almost eight in 10 people (79%) cite self-funded savings such as 401(k), 403(b), IRAs (65%), or other savings and investments (49%) as a source of retirement income. Most people are expecting income from Social Security (72%), while some are expecting income from a company-funded pension plan (29%), continued work (26%), home equity (18%), and/or an inheritance (12%).

**Which of the following do you expect to be sources of income to cover your living expenses after you retire? / Over the course of your retirement, what will be all of your sources of income to cover your living expenses? Select all.**

All Middle Class (%)



*Note: Responses not shown for "Income from my business" and "sale of my business" which were only asked of the self-employed. Responses not shown for "Other" (All Middle Class: 3%).*

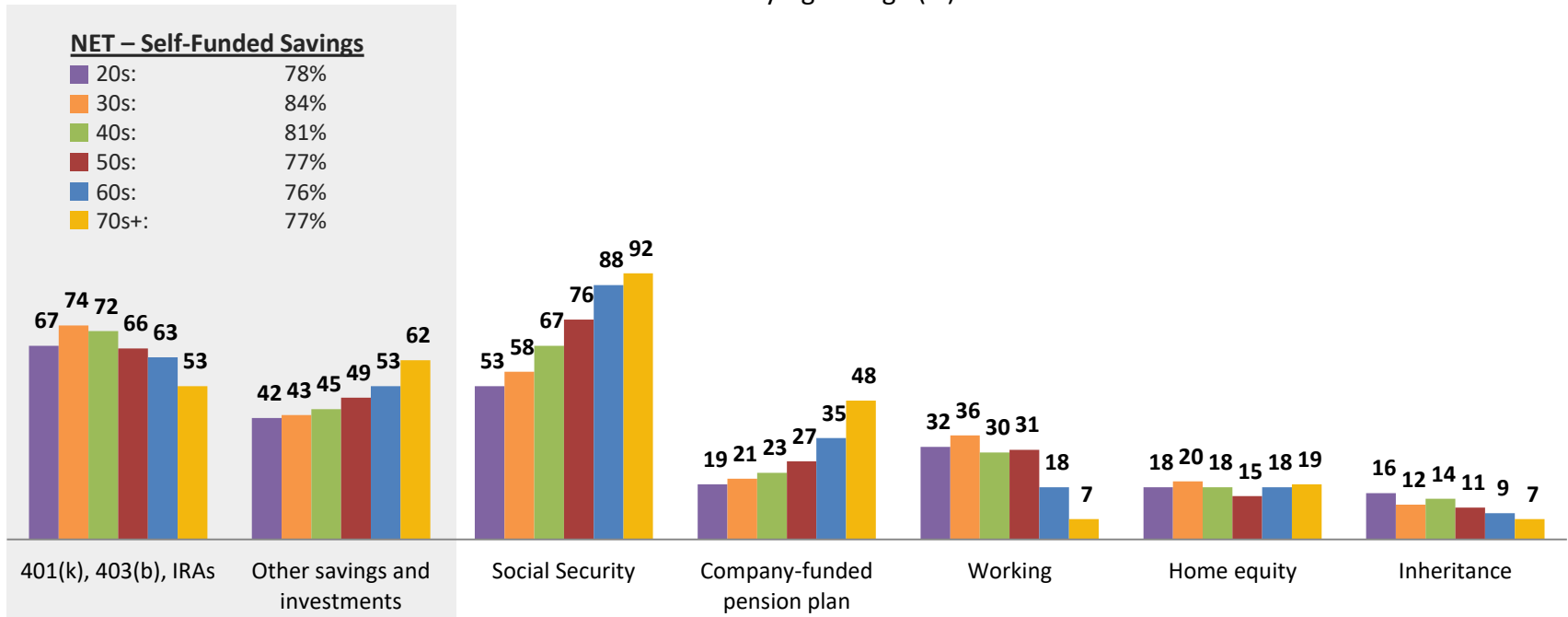
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1145. Which of the following do you expect to be sources of income to cover your living expenses after you retire? Over the course of your retirement, what will be all of your sources of income to cover your living expenses? Select all.

# Expected Sources of Retirement Income by Age Range

Among people in the middle class, expected sources of retirement income vary by age range. Approximately nine in 10 people who are age 70-plus (92%) or in their 60s (88%) expect Social Security, compared with fewer people in their 50s, 40s, 30s, and 20s (76%, 67%, 58%, 53%, respectively). Older people are also more likely to expect income from a company-funding pension plan, while younger people are more likely to expect income from continued work. People of all ages share similar expectations of retirement income from self-funded savings, including younger people who are somewhat more likely to cite income from 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs and older people who are somewhat more likely to reference other savings and investments.

**Which of the following do you expect to be sources of income to cover your living expenses after you retire? / Over the course of your retirement, what will be all of your sources of income to cover your living expenses? Select all.**  
Middle Class by Age Range (%)



Note: Responses not shown for "Income from my business" and "sale of my business" which were only asked of the self-employed. Responses not shown for "Other" (20s: 1%, 30s: 1%, 40s: 2%, 50s: 2%, 60s: 5%, 70s+: 6%).

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1145. Which of the following do you expect to be sources of income to cover your living expenses after you retire? Over the course of your retirement, what will be all of your sources of income to cover your living expenses? Select all.

# Expected Primary Source of Retirement Income

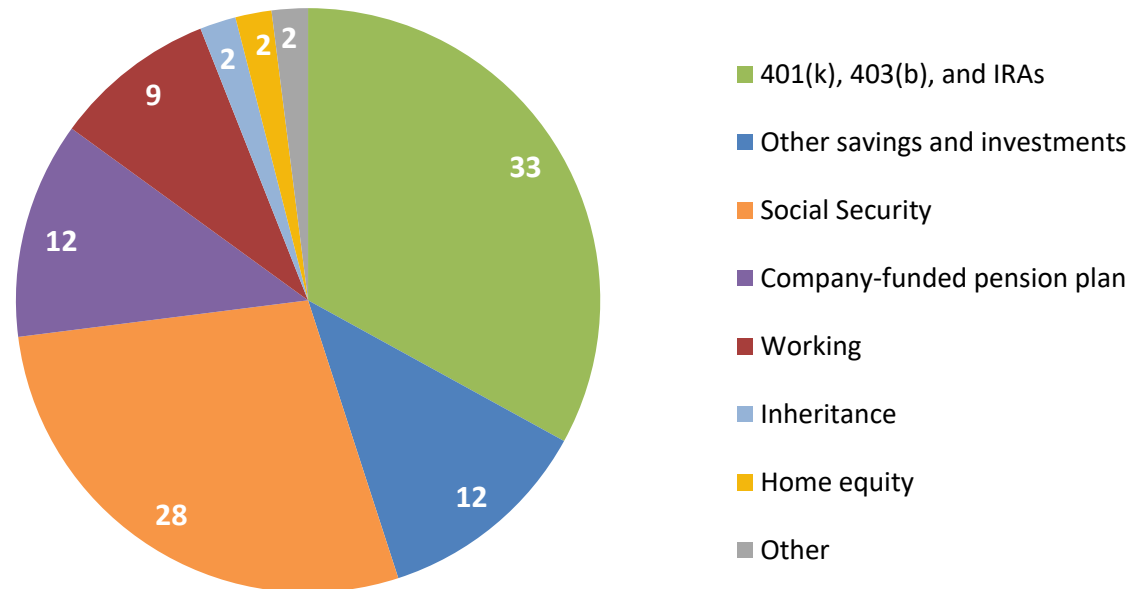
When asked about their expected primary source of retirement income, many people in the middle class cite self-funded savings (45%) which include 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs (33%), and other savings and investments (12%). Almost three in 10 people (28%) expect to primarily rely on Social Security, while 12% expect to rely on a company-funded pension plan, and 9% from continued work. Only 2% of people expect their primary source of retirement income to come from an inheritance and 2% from home equity.

**Which one of the following do you expect to be your primary source of income to cover your living expenses after you retire?**

**Over the course of your retirement, what will be your primary source of income?**

All Middle Class (%)

**All Middle Class**  
NET – Self-funded savings (45%)



*Note: Responses not shown for "Income from my business" and "sale of my business" which were only asked of the self-employed.*

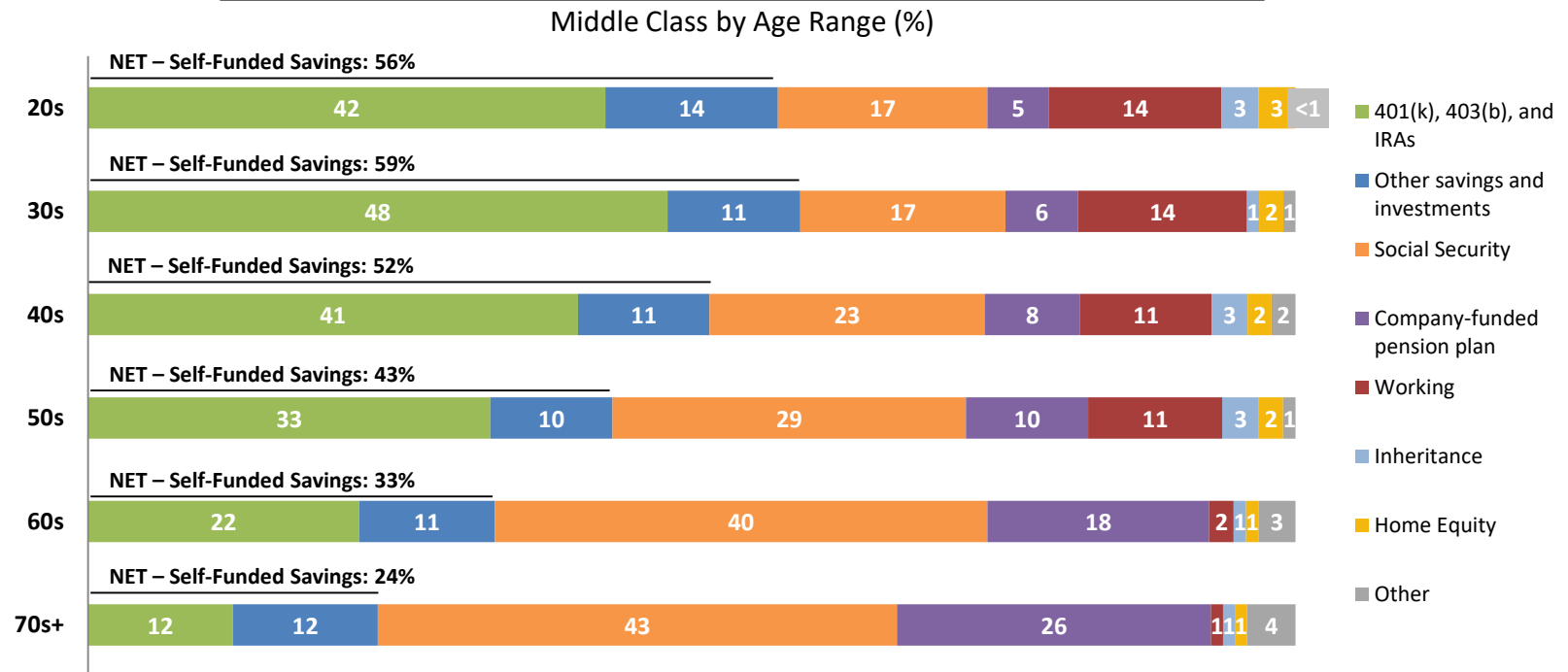
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1150. Which one of the following do you expect to be your primary source of income to cover your living expenses after you retire? / Over the course of your retirement, what will be your primary source of income?

# Expected Primary Source of Retirement Income by Age Range

In the middle class, the expected primary source of retirement income varies by age range. Younger people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to expect to primarily rely on self-funded savings from 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs, and other savings and investments than people in their 50s, 60s, and age 70-plus (56%, 59%, 52%, 43%, 33%, 24%, respectively). In contrast, people in their 60s and age 70-plus are more likely to expect to primarily rely on Social Security than those in their 50s, 40s, 30s, and 20s (43%, 40%, 29%, 23%, 17%, 17%, respectively). Older people are also more likely to expect to primarily rely on a company-funded pension, while younger people are more likely to cite income from continued work. Few people across age ranges expect to primarily rely on an inheritance or home equity in retirement.

**Which one of the following do you expect to be your primary source of income to cover your living expenses after you retire? / Over the course of your retirement, what will be your primary source of income?**



Note: Responses not shown for "Income from my business" and "sale of my business" which were only asked of the self-employed. Results may not total 100% due to rounding.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1150. Which one of the following do you expect to be your primary source of income to cover your living expenses after you retire? / Over the course of your retirement, what will be your primary source of income?

# Not Retired: Concerns About the Future of Social Security

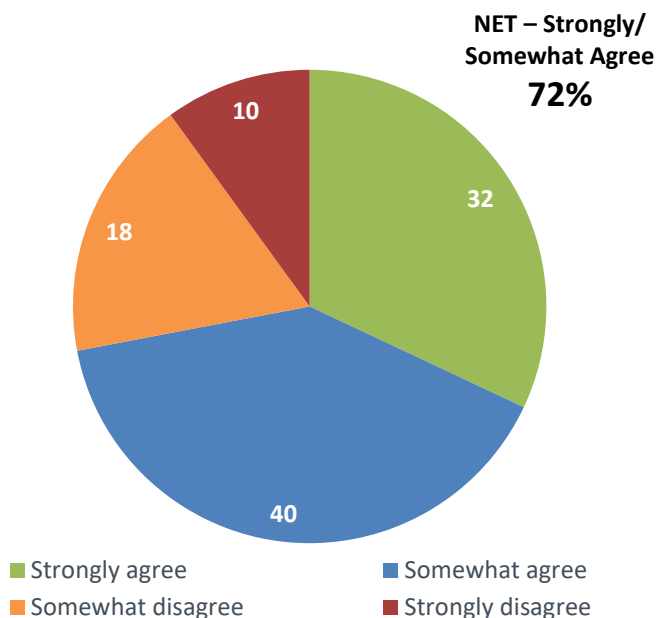
Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, more than seven in 10 (72%) agree with the statement, “I am concerned that when I am ready to retire, Social Security will not be there for me,” including 32% who “strongly agree” and 40% who “somewhat agree.” People in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s are more likely to agree than those in their 60s and age 70-plus (75%, 75%, 78%, 74%, 56%, 41%, respectively).

**“I am concerned that when I am ready to retire, Social Security will not be there for me.”**

Not retired (%)

**All Middle Class**

**Middle Class By Age Range**



Age Range	NET Strongly / Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
20s	75	30	45	19	6
30s	75	34	41	16	10
40s	78	39	39	14	7
50s	74	35	39	16	10
60s	56	19	37	27	17
70s+	41	16	26	26	32

Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q930. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding retirement?

“I am concerned that when I am ready to retire, Social Security will not be there for me.”

# Not Retired: Retirement Nest Egg

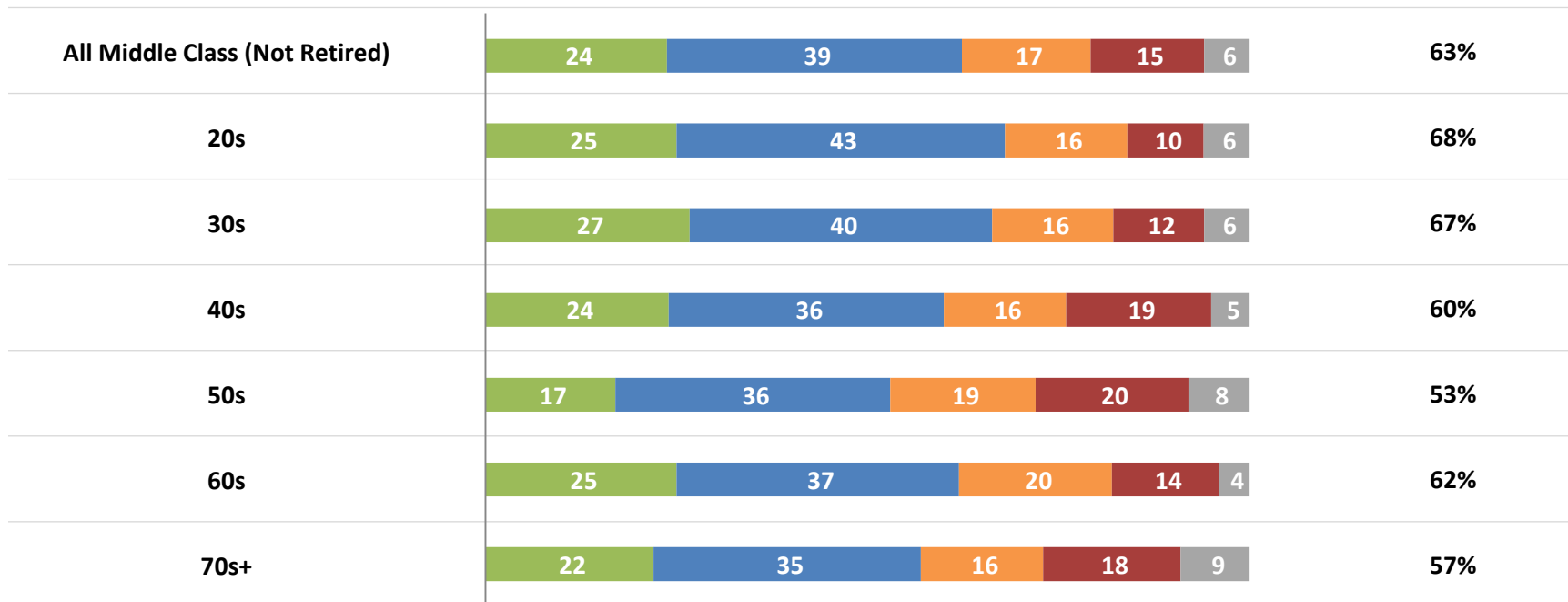
Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, almost two in three people (63%) agree they are currently building a large enough retirement nest egg, including 24% who “strongly agree” and 39% who “somewhat agree.” However, fewer than three in 10 people across age ranges “strongly agree,” including people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (25%, 27%, 24%, 17%, 25%, 22%, respectively).

## “I am currently building a large enough retirement nest egg.”

Not Retired (%)

■ Strongly Agree   
 ■ Somewhat Agree   
 ■ Somewhat Disagree   
 ■ Strongly Disagree   
 ■ Not Sure

**NET – Agree**



Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.

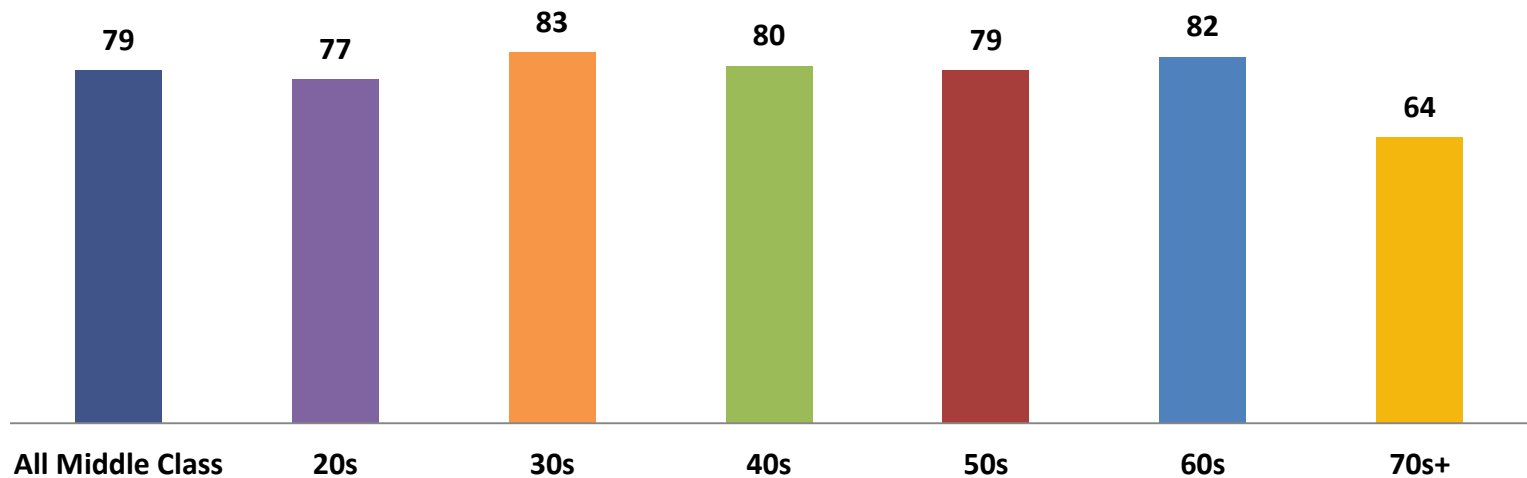
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED

Q800. How much do you agree or disagree that you are currently building a large enough retirement nest egg (i.e., total retirement savings)?

# Not Retired: Saving for Retirement and Age Started Saving

Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, almost eight in 10 people (79%) are saving for retirement through employer-sponsored plans, such as a 401(k) or similar plan, and/or outside the workplace. People in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s are more likely to be saving than those who are age 70-plus (77%, 83%, 80%, 79%, 82%, 64%, respectively). Among those saving for retirement, people in their 20s and 30s are starting to save at an earlier age compared with those in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (ages 21, 27, 30, 30, 32, 40).

**People Who Are Saving For Retirement Through an Employer-Sponsored Retirement Plan and/or Outside of Work**  
Middle Class by Age Range (%)



Age Started Saving (Median)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
	29 years	21 years	27 years	30 years	30 years	32 years	40 years

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – CURRENTLY OFFERED QUALIFIED PLAN

Q1190. Do you currently participate in, or have money invested in your company’s employee-funded retirement savings plan?

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED

Q740. Are you currently saving for retirement outside of work, such as in an IRA, mutual funds, bank account, etc.?

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – INVESTING FOR RETIREMENT

Q790. At what age did you first start saving for retirement?

# Not Retired: Estimated Retirement Savings Needs

Among those who are not yet retired, people in the middle class estimate they will need \$500,000 (median) by the time they retire in order to feel financially secure. Estimated needs vary by age range including people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (\$300,000, \$500,000, \$500,000, \$600,000, \$800,000, \$500,000, respectively). Almost four in 10 people (38%) estimate they will need to have saved \$1,000,000 or more.

Estimated Retirement Savings Needed To Feel Financially Secure. Not Retired (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
Less than \$100k	19	30	22	16	11	11	11
\$100k to less than \$500k	23	25	24	21	22	20	31
\$500k to less than \$1m	20	17	18	20	26	21	17
\$1m to less than \$2m	18	10	15	19	22	26	19
\$2m or more	20	18	21	24	19	21	22
<b>Median (including \$0)</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

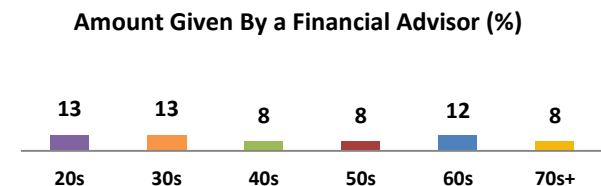
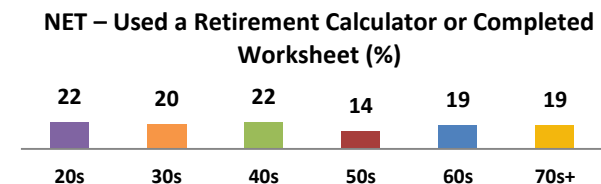
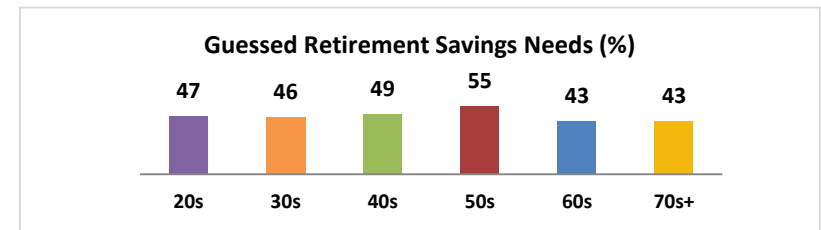
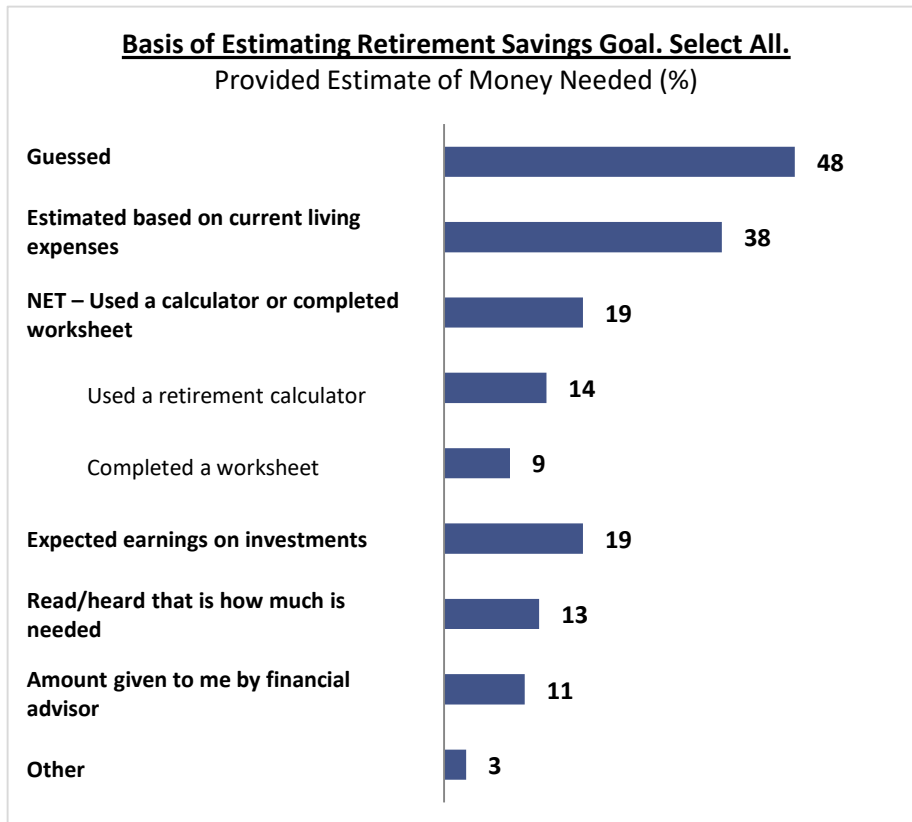
Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED

Q890. Thinking in terms of what money can buy today, how much money do you believe you will need to have saved by the time you retire in order to feel financially secure?

# Not Retired: Basis of Estimated Retirement Savings Needs

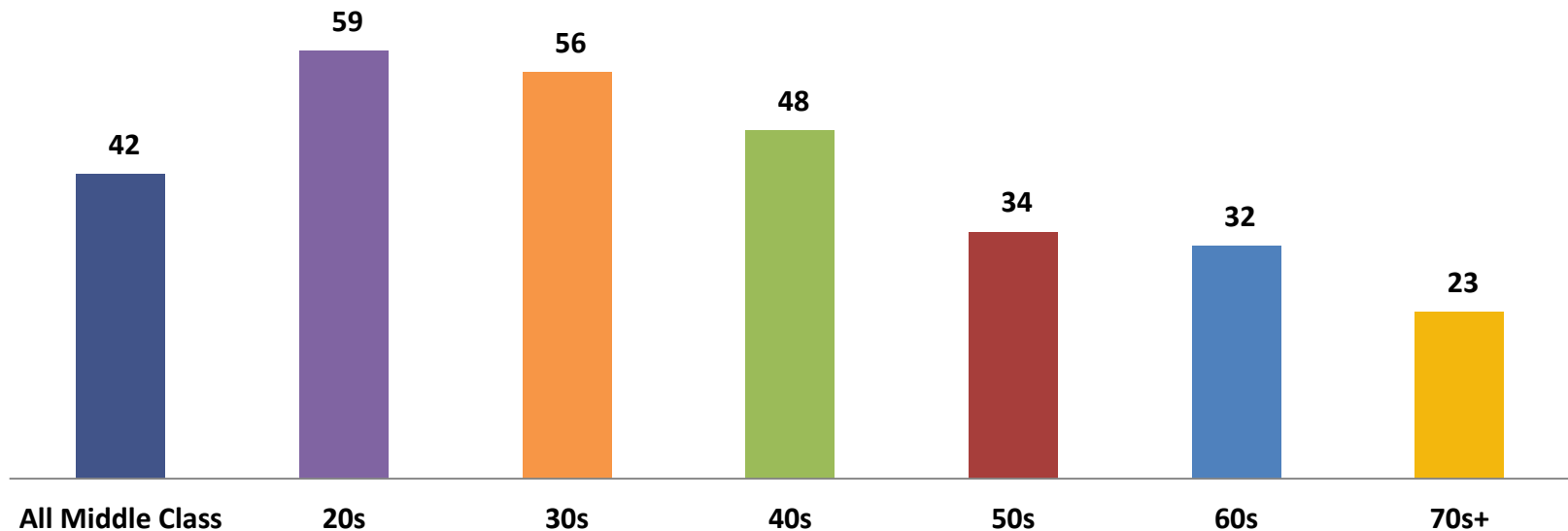
Among those providing an estimate, almost half of people in the middle class (48%) guessed the amount they need to save for retirement. People in their 50s (55%) are more likely to have guessed than those in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (47, 46%, 49%, 43%, 43%, respectively). Almost one in five people (19%) used a retirement calculator or completed a worksheet, a finding that is similar across age ranges. Few people (11%) had the amount given to them by a financial advisor, a finding that is relatively low across age ranges.



# Not Retired: Saver's Credit Awareness

The Saver's Credit is a tax credit for eligible taxpayers who save for retirement in a qualified retirement plan, IRA, or ABLE account. Among those in the middle class who are not yet retired, only four in 10 people (42%) are aware of the Saver's Credit. People in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to be aware of the Saver's Credit, compared with people in their 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (59%, 56%, 48%, 34%, 32%, 23%, respectively).

**Awareness of the Saver's Credit**  
Not retired - Yes (%)

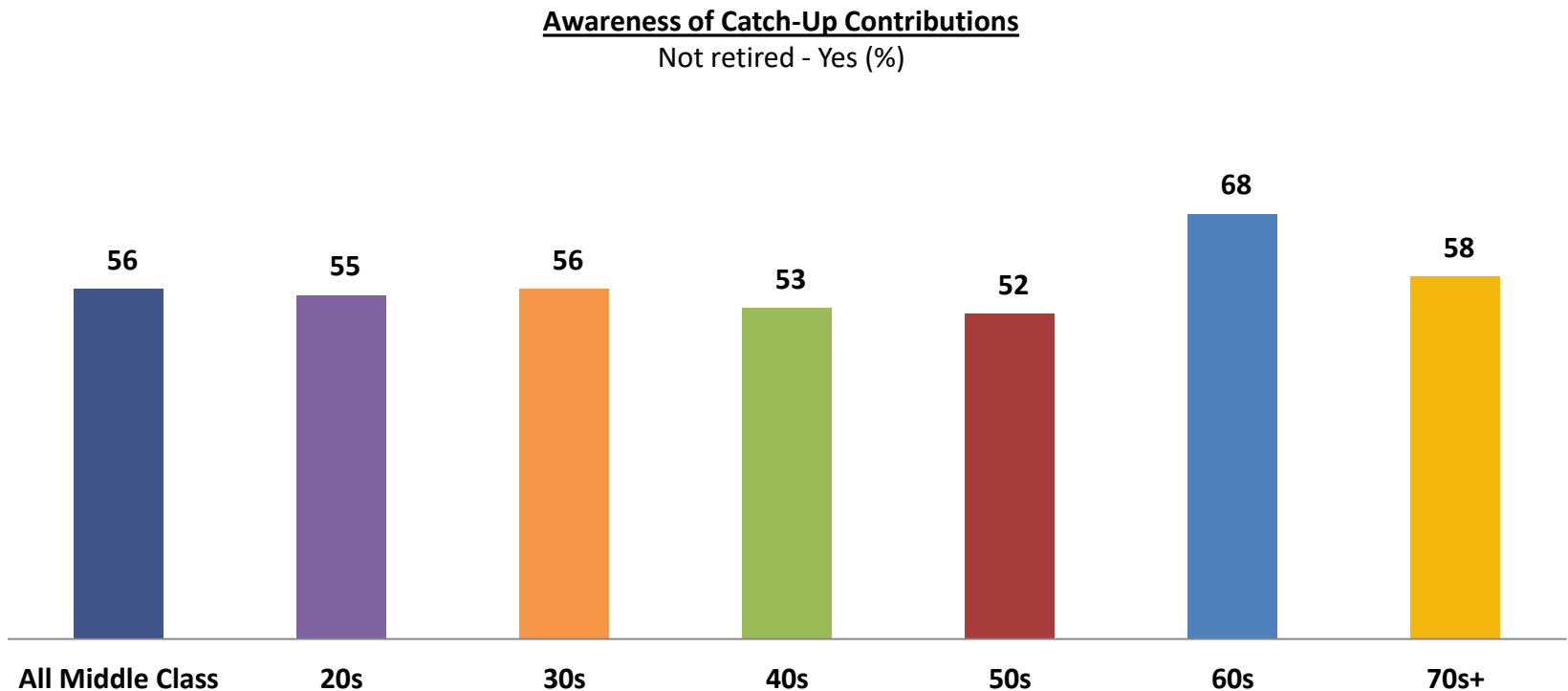


MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED

Q1120. Are you aware of a tax credit called the "Saver's Credit," which is available to individuals and households, who meet certain income requirements, for making contributions to an IRA or a company-sponsored retirement plan such as a 401(k) plan or 403(b) plan?

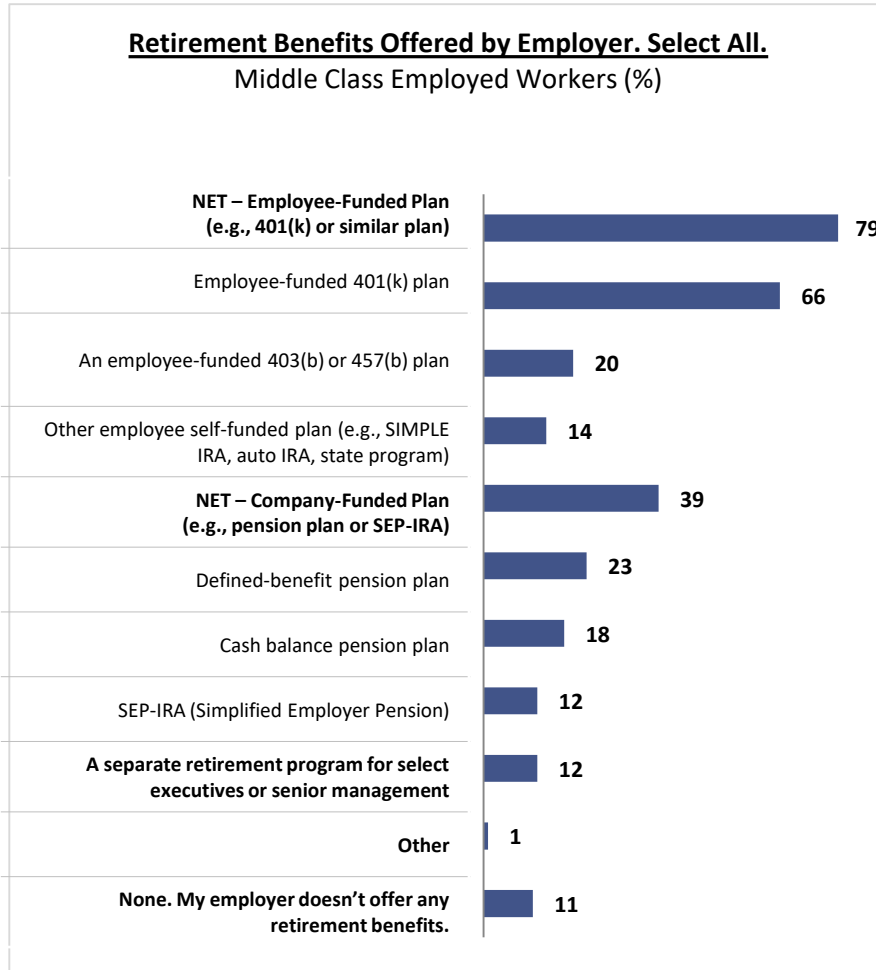
# Not Retired: Catch-Up Contributions

People aged 50 and older may be allowed to make Catch-up Contributions to their 401(k)/403(b)/457(b) plan or IRA that are above and beyond the annual retirement plan or IRS limits. Among those in the middle class who are not retired, just over half of people in their 50s (52%) are aware of Catch-up Contributions. Awareness is somewhat higher among those in their 60s (68%) and those who are age 70-plus (58%).

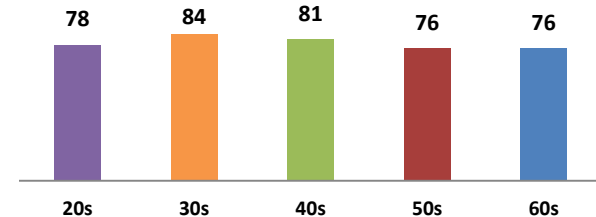


# Employed Workers: Retirement Benefits Offered by Employers

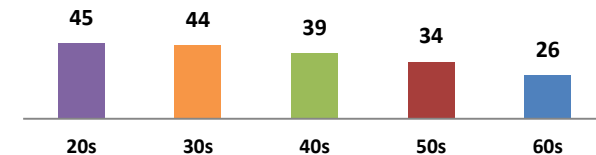
Among employed workers who work for a company, in the middle class, more than three in four people (79%) are offered a 401(k) or similar employee-funded retirement plan by their employer, including those in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s (78%, 84%, 81%, 76%, 76%, respectively).



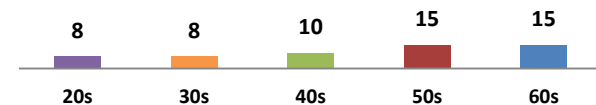
NET – Employee-Funded Plan (e.g., 401(k) or similar plan) (%)



NET – Company-Funded Plan (e.g., pension plan or SEP-IRA) (%)



None. My employer doesn't offer any retirement benefits. (%)



Note: Employed workers who are age 70-plus are not shown on the age range charts due to sample size limitations, i.e., small base.

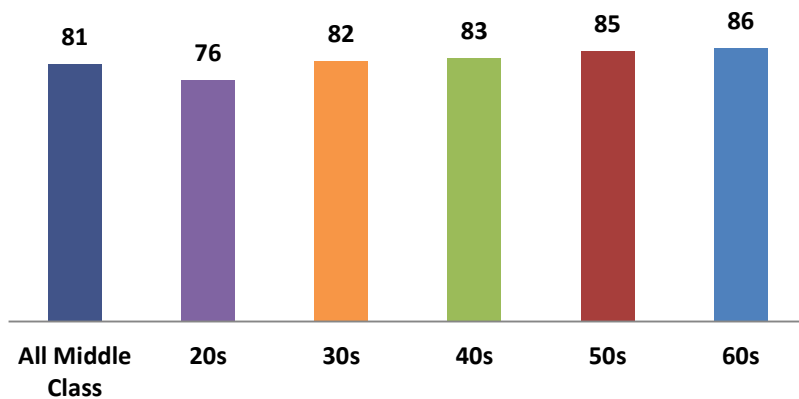
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – EMPLOYED WORKERS  
Q1180. Which of the following retirement benefits does your company currently offer to you, personally? Select all.

# Employed Workers Plan Participation and Salary Deferral Rates

Among employed workers in the middle class who are offered a 401(k) or similar plan, eight in 10 workers (81%) participate in that plan. Participation rates are slightly lower among people in their 20s than those in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s (76%, 82%, 83%, 85%, 86%, respectively). In contrast, retirement plan participants in their 20s and 30s are contributing a higher percentage of their annual salary to the plan compared with those in their 40s, 50s, and 60s (12%, 12%, 10%, 10%, 10%) (medians).

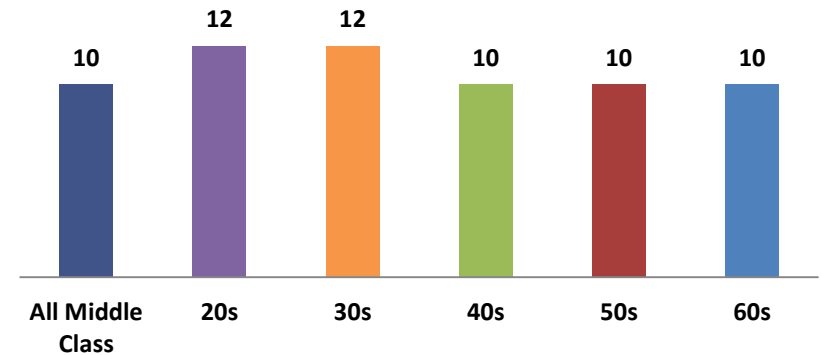
## Participates in 401(k) or Similar Plan

Yes (%)



## Percentage of Annual Salary Saved in Plan

Median (%)



*Note: Findings for people who are age 70-plus are not shown due to sample size limitations, i.e., small base.*

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – CURRENTLY OFFERED A PLAN

Q1190. Do you currently participate in, or have money invested in your company's employee-funded retirement savings plan?

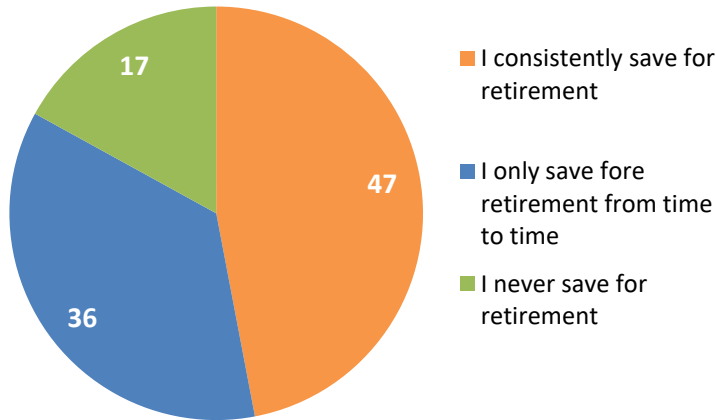
MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES IN A PLAN

Q601. What percentage of your salary are you saving for retirement through your company-sponsored plan this year?

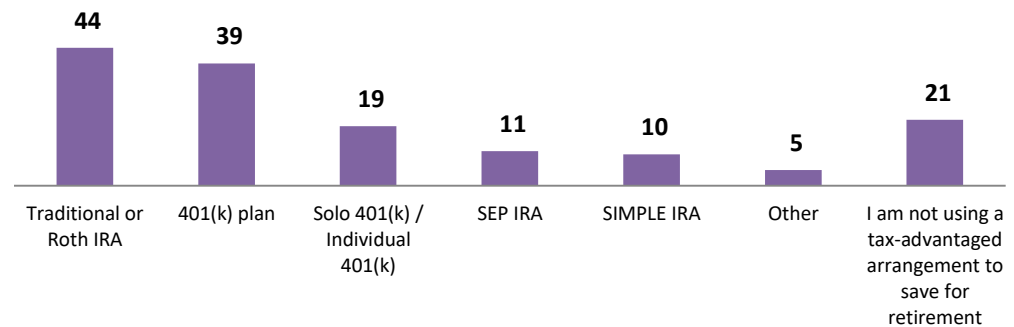
# Self-Employed: Saving for Retirement

Among self-employed people in the middle class, 47% indicate they consistently save for retirement, while 36% occasionally save and 17% never save. Among those who are currently saving for retirement, many are using tax-advantaged retirement arrangements including 44% who are using a Traditional or Roth IRA, 39% a 401(k), 19% a Solo 401(k)/Individual 401(k), 11% a SEP IRA, and 10% a SIMPLE IRA. Twenty-one percent are not using a tax-advantaged arrangement. Among the self-employed who are currently saving for retirement, they are saving 20% of their annual personal income (median).

**Which of the following best describes your approach to saving for retirement?**  
Self-Employed (%)



**Which of the following tax-advantaged retirement arrangements are you using to save for retirement? Select all.**  
Self-Employed, Currently Saving for Retirement (%)



*Note: Charts only depict self-employed among all middle class. They are not offered by age range due to sample size limitations. Note: Results may not total 100% due to rounding.*

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – SELF-EMPLOYED

Q5120SE. Which of the following best describes your approach to saving for retirement?

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – SELF-EMPLOYED AND CURRENTLY SAVING FOR RETIREMENT

Q5135SE. Which of the following tax-advantaged retirement arrangements are you using to save for retirement? Please select all that apply.

Q5130SE. How much are you saving for retirement as a percentage of your personal annual income?

# Not Retired: Tapping Into Retirement Savings

Among those who are not yet retired, a concerning percentage of people in the middle class are tapping into their retirement savings before they retire. More than one in three people (36%) have taken a loan, early withdrawal, and/or hardship withdrawal from their 401(k) or similar plan or IRA, including 29% who have taken a loan and 21% who have taken an early and/or hardship withdrawal. Almost one in five people (18%) have taken a loan and paid it back in full, while 11% have taken a loan and are paying it back, and 9% have taken a loan but were unable to pay it back. People in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are more likely to have taken a loan, early withdrawal, and/or hardship withdrawal than those in their 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (41%, 40%, 39%, 32%, 26%, 19%, respectively).

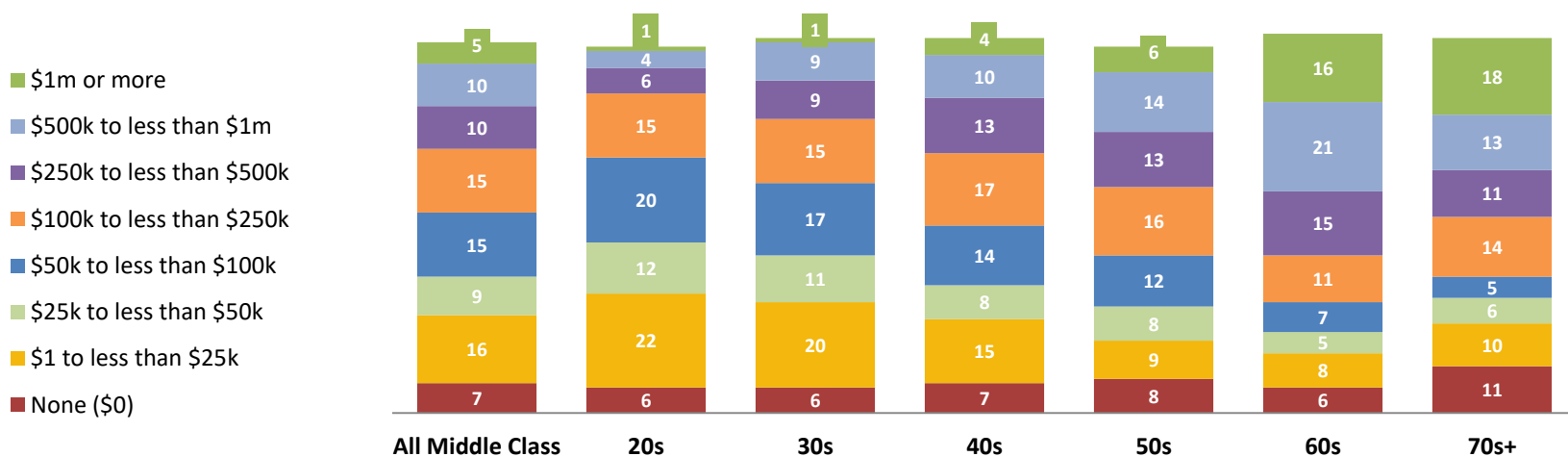
Ever Taken a Loan, Early Withdrawal, and/or Hardship Withdrawal. Select all. Not retired (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
<b>TOTAL NET – Have Taken a Loan, Early Withdrawal, and/or Hardship Withdrawal From 401(k) or Similar Plan or IRA</b>	36	41	40	39	32	26	19
<b>NET – Have Taken a Loan</b>	29	35	33	30	23	20	10
<b>NET – Have Taken an Early and/or Hardship Withdrawal</b>	21	28	23	21	17	13	12
Yes, I have taken a loan from a 401(k) or similar plan and paid it back in full	18	19	21	20	16	13	7
Yes, I have taken a loan from a 401(k) or similar plan and am paying it back	11	15	13	11	8	6	1
Yes, I have taken a loan from a 401(k) or similar plan but was unable to pay it back so it became an early withdrawal and incurred taxes and penalties	9	14	10	7	6	4	2
Yes, I have taken a hardship withdrawal and incurred taxes and penalties	10	15	11	9	7	4	3
Yes, I have taken an early withdrawal and cashed out a portion or all of a 401(k) or similar plan balance after my separation of employment from a prior employer and incurred taxes and penalties	9	9	10	10	7	5	4
Yes, I have taken an early withdrawal and cashed out a portion or all of an IRA and incurred taxes and penalties	5	6	5	4	4	3	5
<b>No, I have never taken a loan or early withdrawal from a 401(k) or similar plan or IRA</b>	59	53	55	56	64	71	80
<b>Not sure</b>	5	6	6	5	4	3	2

# Not Retired: Total Household Savings in Retirement Accounts

As of late 2024, among those who are not yet retired, people in the middle class have saved \$67,000 (estimated median) in total household retirement accounts. Household retirement savings increases with age for people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s, and it then decreases for those who are age 70-plus (\$43,000, \$54,000, \$73,000, \$112,000, \$277,000, \$157,000, respectively) (estimated medians). Five percent of people have saved \$1,000,000 or more in total household retirement accounts, with people in their 60s and age 70-plus being most prevalent (16%, 18%). Seven percent of people have no household retirement savings including a concerning 11% of those who are age 70-plus.

**2024 Total Household Savings in Retirement Accounts**

Not Retired (%)



<b>Not sure</b>	10	13	9	10	10	6	7
<b>Decline to answer</b>	3	<1	2	3	4	6	5
<b>Estimated median (including \$0)</b>	\$67,000	\$43,000	\$54,000	\$73,000	\$112,000	\$277,000	\$157,000

Notes: 1) The median is estimated based on the approximate midpoint of the range of each response category. Non-responses are excluded from the estimate. 2) Results may not total 100% due to rounding.

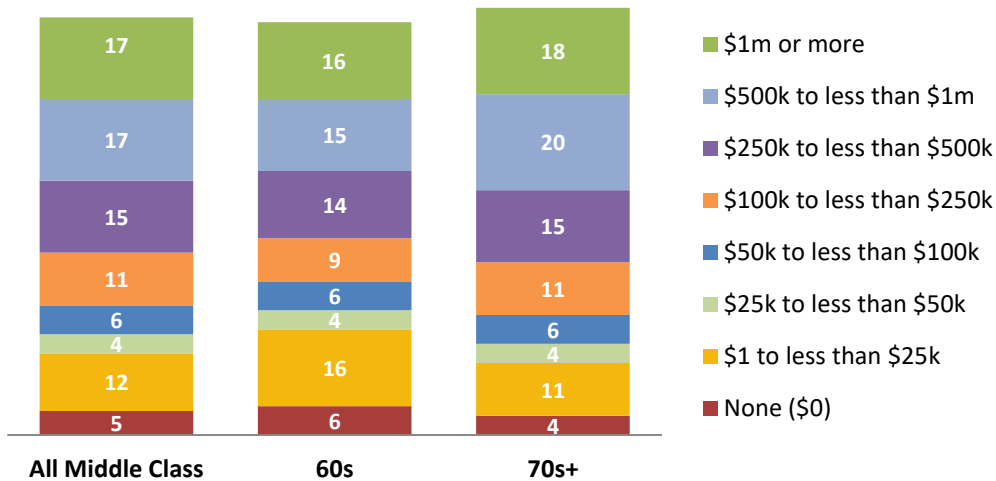
# Retirees: Total Household Savings and Home Equity

As of late 2024, middle-class retirees reported \$253,000 in total household savings *excluding home equity* (estimated median). Seventeen percent of retirees have saved \$1,000,000 or more, while 5% have no household savings. Middle-class retirees reported \$211,000 in *home equity* (estimated median). One in five retirees (22%) have \$500,000 or more in *home equity*, while 14% have *no home equity*.

## Approximately how much money does your household currently have in the following?

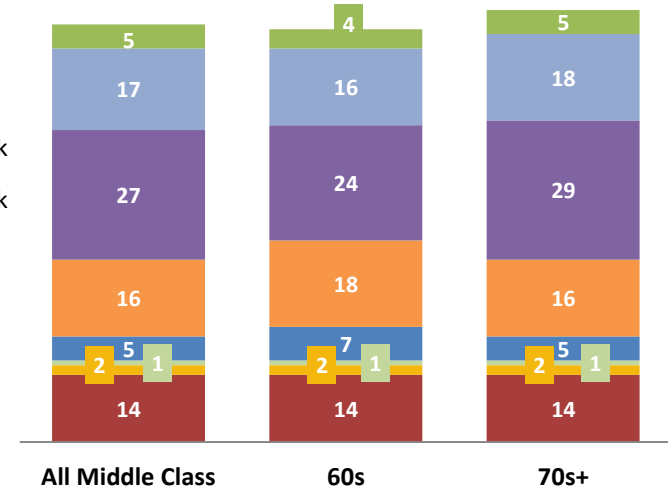
### 2024 Household Savings (Excluding Home Equity)

Retirees (%)



### 2024 Home Equity

Retirees (%)



5	6	4	Not sure	6	7	5
8	8	8	Decline to answer	6	7	6
<b>\$253,000</b>	<b>\$203,000</b>	<b>\$286,000</b>	<b>Estimated Median (including \$0)</b>	<b>\$211,000</b>	<b>\$184,000</b>	<b>\$227,000</b>

Notes: 1) The median is estimated based on the approximate midpoint of the range of each response category. Non-responses are excluded from the estimate. 2) Results may not total 100% due to rounding. 3) Due to sample size limitations, only data for all middle-class retirees and those in their 60s and 70s+ are shown.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – RETIREES

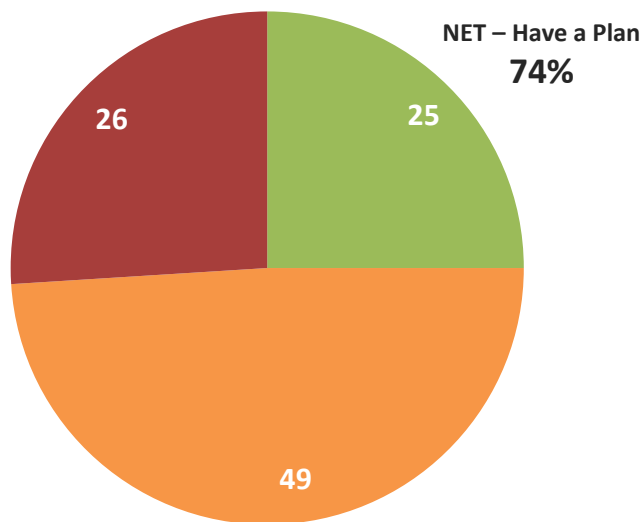
Q1310R. Approximately how much money does your household currently have in the following? 1. Household savings excluding home equity. Please include IRAs, 401(k)s, bank accounts, brokerage accounts, etc., and any other savings in your household. 2. Home equity.

# Financial Strategy for Retirement

Almost three in four people in the middle class (74%) have a financial strategy for retirement, but only 25% have a written plan while 49% have an unwritten plan. Twenty-six percent of people do not have a plan. People in their 20s and 30s are slightly more likely to have a written plan than those in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus (29%, 29%, 24%, 21%, 25%, 25%, respectively).

## How would you describe your financial strategy for retirement? (%)

All Middle Class



■ Have a written plan ■ Have a plan but not written down ■ Do not have a plan

Middle Class by Age Range

Age Range	NET Have a plan	Have a written plan	Have a plan but not written down	Do not have a plan
20s	77	29	48	23
30s	75	29	46	25
40s	72	24	47	28
50s	68	21	47	32
60s	77	25	52	23
70s+	76	25	51	24

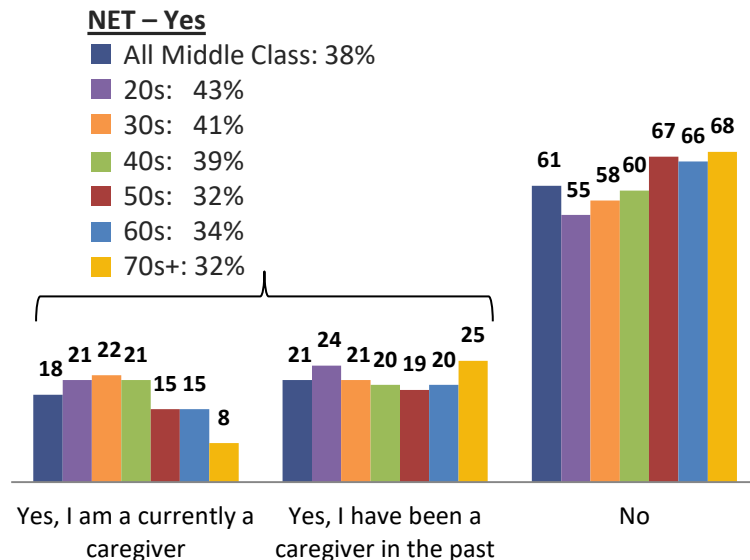
## *Caregiving Experience & Long-Term Care*

# Caregiving Experience

Amid population aging and the skyrocketing cost of long-term care, many people are being called upon to serve as caregivers. Almost four in 10 people in the middle class who are not yet retired (38%) are currently serving and/or have served as a caregiver for a relative or friend during their career (excluding parenting responsibilities). Among them, 84% have made one or more adjustments to their work situation due to their caregiving responsibilities. Almost four in 10 retired people (36%) have dedicated a significant amount of time serving as a caregiver since they retired.

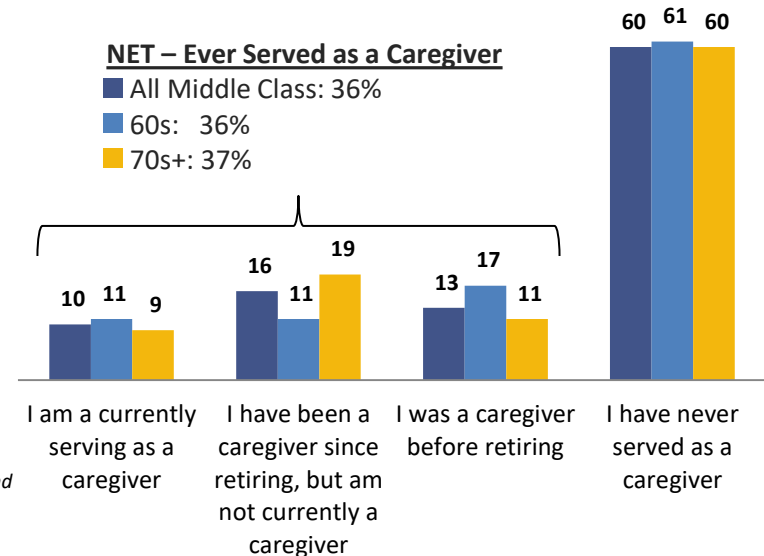
**Are you currently serving or have you served as a caregiver for a relative or friend during the course of your working career (excluding parenting responsibilities)? Select all.**

Not Retired (%)



**Since retiring, have you dedicated a significant amount of time serving as a caregiver to a family member or friend who needs help taking care of themselves? Select all.**

Retired (%)



Notes: Responses not shown for "Not Sure." Due to sample size limitations, only data for all middle-class retirees and those in their 60s and 70s+ are shown.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED

Q2500x1. Are you currently serving or have you served as a caregiver for a relative or friend during the course of your working career (excluding parenting responsibilities)? Select all.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – NOT RETIRED AND SERVED AS A CAREGIVER

Q2505x1. Which of the following have you done as a result of becoming a caregiver? Select all.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – RETIREES

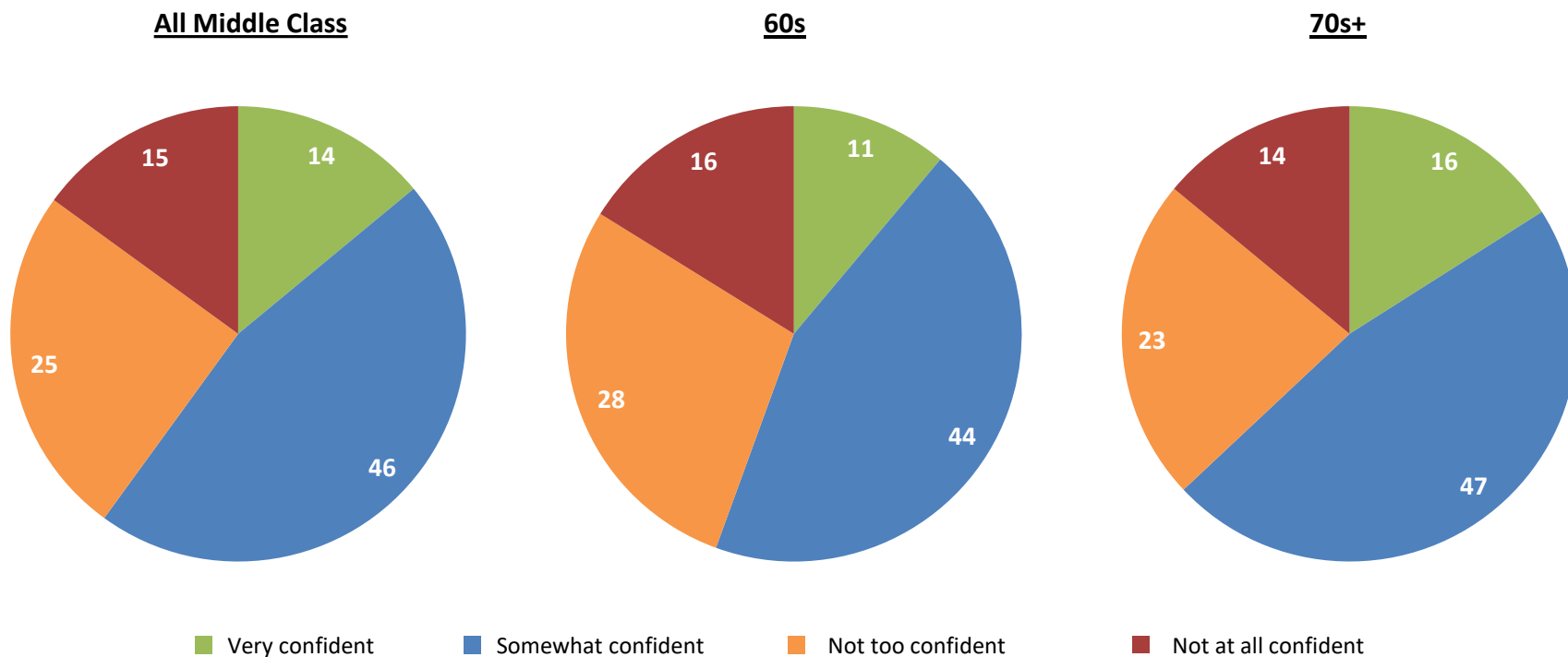
Q2755R. Since retiring, have you dedicated a significant amount of time serving as a caregiver to a family member or friend who needs help taking care of themselves? Select all.

# Retirees: Lack of Confidence in Ability to Afford Long-Term Care

Few retirees in the middle class (14%) are “very” confident they will be able to afford long-term care, if needed, while 46% are “somewhat” confident, 25% are “not too” confident, and 15% are “not at all” confident. Retirees who are age 70-plus are more likely to be “very” confident than those in their 60s (16%, 11%, respectively).

## Level of Confidence re: Ability to Afford Long-Term Care

Retired (%)



Note: Due to sample size limitations, only data for all middle-class retirees and those in their 60s and 70s+ are shown.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – RETIREES

Q2780R. How confident are you that you will be able to afford long-term care, if needed (e.g., an assisted living community, skilled nursing facility, professional paid in-home care)?

# Retirees: Plans for Long-Term Care

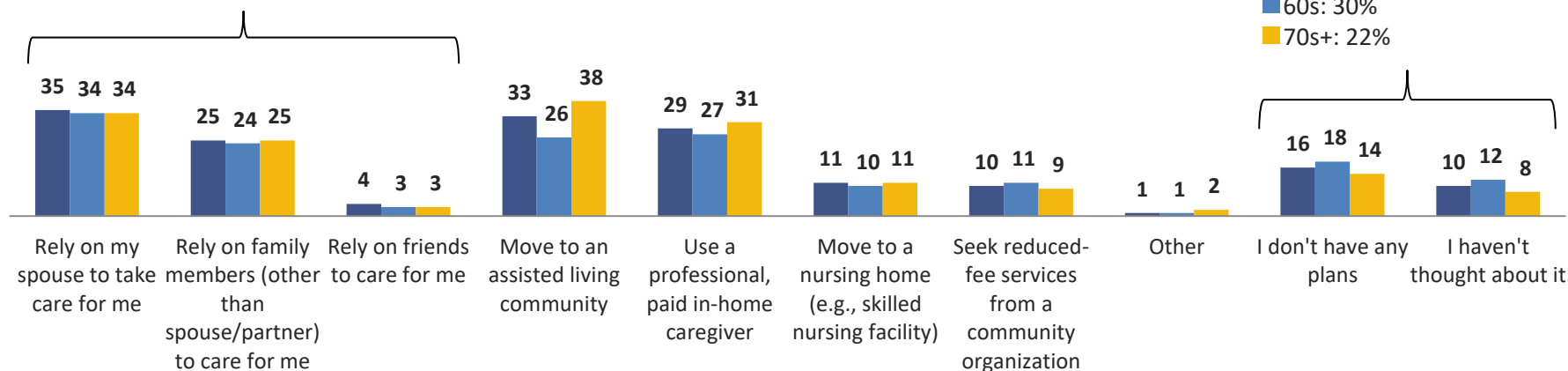
Almost half of retirees in the middle class (49%) plan to rely on family and friends if they need help with daily activities and/or nursing care, including 35% who plan to rely on their spouse, 25% who plan to rely on family members, and 4% who plan to rely on friends. One in three (33%) plan to move to an assisted living community, while 29% plan to use a professional, paid in-home caregiver, and 11% plan to move to a nursing home. Ten percent plan to seek reduced-fee services from a community organization. More than one in four (26%) do not have long-term care plans including 30% of retirees in their 60s and 22% of those who are age 70-plus.

## If your health declines and you need help with daily activities and/or nursing care, what are your plans for receiving such care? Select all.

Retired (%)

### NET – Rely on Family and Friends

■ All Middle Class: 49%  
 ■ 60s: 47%  
 ■ 70s+: 49%



### NET – Don't Have Plans

■ All Middle Class: 26%  
 ■ 60s: 30%  
 ■ 70s+: 22%

Note: Due to sample size limitations, only data for all middle-class retirees and those in their 60s and 70s+ are shown.

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – RETIREES

Q2775R. If your health declines and you need help with daily activities and/or nursing care, what are your plans for receiving such care? Select all.

# *How to Fix Social Security*

# How to Address Social Security’s Funding Shortfall

The survey asked people in the middle class about actions that Congress should take to address Social Security’s estimated funding shortfall. Responses included increasing the maximum earning subject to payroll taxes (42%), increasing the Social Security payroll tax rate (38%), preserving retirement benefit payments for retirees in greatest need (30%), and raising the retirement age (25%). Only 4% of people say Congress should “do nothing,” while 20% say they “don’t know.” Younger people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are generally more likely than those in their 50s, 60s, and those aged 70-plus to cite preserving retirement benefit payments for retirees in greatest need (39%, 35%, 31%, 27%, 26%, 20%, respectively).

To address the Social Security funding shortfall, which of the following actions do you feel that Congress should take? Select all. (%)	All Middle Class	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s+
<b>Increase the maximum earnings subject to payroll taxes</b> (Social Security limits the amount of a worker’s earning subject to taxation. For 2024, the taxable maximum is \$168,200.)	42	40	40	39	35	45	51
<b>Increase the Social Security payroll tax rate</b> (Currently, employers and their employees each pay 6.2% of wages up to the taxable maximum earnings, while the self-employed pay 12.4%.)	38	37	38	35	33	42	42
<b>Preserve retirement benefit payments for retirees in greatest need, which may reduce benefits for those with lesser need</b> (Testing would look at a retiree’s income to determine need. High income retirees would receive reduced or no benefits.)	30	39	35	31	27	26	20
<b>Raise the retirement age</b> (Today, the age to receive full retirement benefits is 67 for people born in 1960 or later. Retirees can claim a reduced benefit as early as age 62 or an increased benefit up to age 70.)	25	24	24	19	16	25	40
<b>Do nothing</b>	4	6	5	6	5	3	3
<b>Don’t know</b>	20	17	20	23	26	18	16
<b>Other</b>	6	2	4	5	7	8	9

MIDDLE CLASS BASE: 25TH ANNUAL SURVEY – ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q2023C. The Social Security trust fund for retirement is expected to be depleted in approximately 10 years. If Congress does not act by then, Social Security will only be able to pay an estimated range of 75-85% of scheduled retirement benefits. To address this funding shortfall, which of the following actions do you feel that Congress should take? Select all.

# *Appendix*

# A Portrait of the Middle Class by Age Range

Characteristics		All Middle Class (%) n=5,639	20s (%) n=651	30s (%) n=1,125	40s (%) n=1,003	50s (%) n=778	60s (%) n=908	70s+ (%) n=1,097
<b>Gender</b>	Man	49	52	50	49	46	47	49
	Woman	51	47	49	50	54	53	51
	Transgender	<1	<1	1	1	<1	<1	-
	Non-binary	1	1	<1	1	<1	-	-
	Gender non-conforming	<1	1	<1	-	<1	<1	<1
	Identify as other	<1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Prefer not to answer	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married/Living with partner	59	31	58	67	66	69	67
	Divorced/Separated/Widowed	14	2	6	10	18	21	27
	Never married	27	67	36	22	16	11	6
<b>Generation</b>	Generation Z (Born 1997 to 2012)	14	81	-	-	-	-	-
	Millennial (Born 1981 to 1996)	29	19	100	43	-	-	-
	Generation X (Born 1965 to 1980)	23	-	-	57	100	-	-
	Baby Boomer (Born 1946 to 1964)	30	-	-	-	-	100	75
	Silent Generation (Born 1928 to 1945)	5	-	-	-	-	-	25
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>	White	60	39	49	57	62	69	82
	Hispanic	17	32	23	15	11	10	6
	Black/African American	11	17	13	13	11	11	5
	Asian American	8	5	9	10	10	8	5
	Other	4	5	5	4	3	3	2
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	Less than college degree	56	76	58	52	54	49	43
	College degree or more	44	24	42	48	46	51	57
<b>Annual Household Income</b>	\$50,000 to less than \$74,999	28	30	26	21	22	33	36
	\$75,000 to \$99,999	23	25	23	21	22	21	23
	\$100,000 to \$124,999	19	23	20	19	19	15	15
	\$125,000 to \$149,999	13	10	11	15	16	15	12
	\$150,000 to \$199,999	18	13	20	23	21	17	13
	Prefer Not to Answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Military Status</b>	Active duty, enlisted member of U.S. military	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	-	-
	Reserve duty, enlisted member of U.S. military	1	3	2	1	-	-	-
	Veteran	10	4	5	5	9	12	20
	None of these	89	92	92	94	91	88	80

# A Portrait of the Middle Class by Age Range

Characteristics		All Middle Class (%) n=5,639	20s (%) n=651	30s (%) n=1,125	40s (%) n=1,003	50s (%) n=778	60s (%) n=908	70s+ (%) n=1,097
<b>Urbanicity</b>	Urban	29	37	41	37	23	20	19
	Suburban	53	51	44	47	58	58	61
	Rural	17	12	14	16	19	22	20
<b>LGBTQ+ Status</b>	LGBTQ+	8	16	11	7	4	5	2
	Did not identify as LGBTQ+	91	83	88	91	96	95	97
	Decline to Answer	1	1	1	2	<1	1	1
<b>Health Status</b>	Excellent	16	23	21	16	16	12	9
	Good	60	53	57	60	63	67	65
	Fair	21	22	20	22	19	19	24
	Poor	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Disability Status</b>	A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities, such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying	14	11	9	12	12	17	21
	A physical, mental, or emotional condition that increases the difficulty of learning, remembering, or concentrating	10	18	13	11	9	4	3
	Deafness or a serious hearing loss	5	4	3	4	3	4	8
	Blindness or serious vision loss or condition	3	5	4	3	2	2	2
	None of the above long-lasting conditions, disabilities, functional limitation or health problems	76	70	78	78	81	78	72
<b>Pet Ownership</b>	Dog	47	58	58	54	48	41	27
	Cat	32	35	40	39	36	24	19
	Both dog and cat	63	74	74	72	65	53	39
	Other	5	4	5	6	7	6	4
	No pet	36	24	25	26	33	45	59

# Learn More About the Middle Class: Suggested Reading

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