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More Than 1 in 4 Americans Feel They Need To Make At Least \$150,000 A Year To Live Comfortably

One-third of Americans believe they will never achieve financial security

NEW YORK - June 23, 2025 - Almost half of Americans (45%) say they need to make a six-figure annual income (\$100,000 or more) to be financially secure/comfortable, with more than a quarter (26%) saying they need to make \$150,000 or more, according to Bankrate's Financial Freedom Survey. That's almost double what the average full-time, year-round worker made in 2023 (\$81,515), according to the latest estimates from the [Census Bureau](#).

For more information: <https://www.bankrate.com/investing/financial-advisors/financial-freedom-survey/>

Another 16% say they need to make \$200,000 or more per year to feel financially secure and 8% say they need to make \$500,000 or more. Notably, more than half of Americans (56%) say they need more than they are currently earning to live comfortably.

The majority of Americans (77%) say they do not feel completely financially secure, up from 75% in 2024 and 72% in 2023. This includes 32% who believe they will never achieve complete financial security, up from 30% in 2024 and 26% in 2023. Less than 1 in 4 Americans (23%) say they are completely financially secure.

By generation, Gen Xers (ages 45-60) are the most likely to say they are not financially secure at 84% compared to 80% of Gen Zers (ages 18-28), 79% of millennials (ages 29-44) and 69% of baby boomers (ages 61-79). Comparatively, baby boomers are the most likely to say they feel completely financially secure at 31%, followed by millennials (21%), Gen Zers (20%) and Gen Xers (16%).

Gen Xers were also the most likely to say they need to make \$150,000 or more to live comfortably/financially secure, at 35%, followed by millennials (26%), baby boomers (24%) and Gen Zers (20%).

"Times have shifted," said Bankrate Economic Analyst Sarah Foster. "Getting rich may have once been what many Americans fantasized about, but now, simply living

comfortably feels like the new aspiration, as economic challenges make financial stability a rare luxury.”

To feel rich/financially free, more than a quarter of Americans (26%) say they need to make at least \$1 million per year, up from 23% in 2024 and 21% in 2023. Additionally, more than half (55%) say they need to make \$200,000 or more, while 39% say they need to make \$500,000 or more per year to feel rich /financially free.

Older generations were more likely to say they need to make \$1 million or more to feel rich, at 37% for Gen Xers and 27% for baby boomers compared to 23% of millennials and 18% of Gen Zers.

“As our income rises, so does our vision of comfort,” Foster added. “With each pay bump, the lure of a grander lifestyle can be irresistible — especially after periods of restraining ourselves. But this ‘lifestyle inflation’ can sometimes pose as many risks to our finances as actual inflation. The belief that a bit more money will solve all our problems is often an illusion. Remember, budgeting and saving can provide something worth even more than the new car or the bigger apartment: a life with fewer money worries.”

This year, Bankrate asked U.S. adults whether they believe that their version of the ‘American Dream’ is possible in today’s economy. Almost half (45%) say it is unlikely, while 29% say it is likely and 26% say it is neither likely nor unlikely. Of those Americans who do not believe they will ever be financially secure, 77% say it is unlikely they will be able to achieve their version of the American Dream. Additionally, older generations were more likely to say that they have given up on their version of the ‘American Dream.’ Specifically, 48% of both baby boomers and Gen Xers and 47% of millennials say it’s unlikely they’ll achieve the American Dream in this economy, compared to 33% of Gen Zers.

Methodology:

This survey has been conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc panel of individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 2,260 U.S. adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between May 14th-16th, 2025. The survey was carried out online and meets rigorous quality standards. It gathered a non-probability-based sample and employed demographic quotas and weights to better align the survey sample with the broader U.S. population.

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