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Nearly 3 in 4 Americans Have a Financial Regret in 2025; Retirement and Credit Card Debt Top Regrets

Americans say cheaper essentials would improve their financial situation

NEW YORK - August 20, 2025 - About three-quarters of Americans (74%) have a financial regret in 2025, down slightly from 77% in 2024, according to a new Bankrate survey. Among those with financial regrets, the most common regret was not saving for retirement early enough (22%), followed by accumulating too much credit card debt (15%).

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

Along with not saving enough for retirement or incurring too much credit card debt, other top financial regrets include not saving enough for emergency expenses (13%), taking on too much student loan debt (5%), not saving enough for children's education (3%) and buying more houses than they could afford (2%). More than 1 in 5 (21%) say they do not have any financial regrets, while 5% say they don't know.

Overall, Americans are more likely to point to regret over a lack of savings compared to taking on too much debt by nearly a 2-to-1 margin (38% vs. 20%). Regrets about savings include not saving for retirement early enough, not saving enough for emergencies, and not saving enough for children's education, while too much debt includes credit card debt and student loans.

Gen Xers (ages 45-60) are the most likely to say they have a financial regret at 83%, followed by millennials (76%; ages 29-44), baby boomers (75%; ages 61-79) and Gen Zers (63%; ages 18-28). Not saving early enough for retirement is the number one regret for baby boomers (36%) and Gen Xers (28%), while millennials and Gen Zers cite both retirement savings (17%, 12% respectively) and incurring too much credit card debt (17%, 12% respectively) as their top regret.

"While a majority of Americans still admit to harboring some remorse over their past financial decisions, the decrease is a step in the right direction," said Bankrate Financial Analyst Stephen Kates, CFP. "One consistent takeaway from this study every year is the durability of 'not saving enough for retirement' as a regret. The percentage of people

with this regret grows with age as retirement draws closer. Younger Americans should look to the future to avoid the mistakes of their older counterparts.”

Among those who report having a financial regret, 43% say they have not made any progress toward addressing it in the past 12 months, up from 40% in 2024. However, 42% say they have made some progress, while 15% say they have made significant progress on their financial regret.

When asked what would most likely improve their financial situation in the near future, cheaper essentials (e.g. gas, groceries, etc.) stood out by a wide margin as Americans’ most commonly cited factor (30%). Less cited factors include better job opportunities (11%) lower rent (10%), and rising stock market values (7%). Additionally, 1 in 10 Americans (10%) say that nothing would improve their financial situation in the near future.

Cheaper essentials was the number one factor across all generations for improving financial situations, cited by 36% of baby boomers, 30% of both millennials and Gen Xers, and 20% of Gen Zers. Notably, Gen Zers also cited better job opportunities (20%) as the top factor that would improve their financial situation.

“More Americans are reporting making no progress on their regrets this year,” added Kates. “This is troubling because while it’s unrealistic to expect to make perfect financial decisions all the time, having regrets doesn’t mean you can’t fix them or make improvements over time. It is the small incremental changes applied consistently over time that make the biggest impacts.”

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 2,078 U.S. adults, of whom 1,575 have a financial regret. Fieldwork was undertaken between July 9-11, 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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