



PRIMERICA AND CHANGE RESEARCH RELEASE

**Q1 U.S. MIDDLE-INCOME
FINANCIAL SECURITY MONITOR™ (FSM™)
MARCH 2025**

A QUARTERLY TRACKING POLL OF MIDDLE-INCOME AMERICANS' FINANCIAL MOOD

Primerica's first quarter 2025 Middle-Income Financial Security Monitor™ finds inflation continues to be the top concern, with 62% reporting stress over finances, up from 57% during the fourth quarter of 2024. Forty-six percent (46%) expect to be worse off financially in the next year, up from 27% in December 2024.

The latest Primerica Household Budget Index™ (HBI™), which measures the purchasing power of middle-income families, found that middle-income families' perceptions of their personal finances align with overall economic conditions. Eighty-six percent (86%) of FSM™ respondents expect the costs of food and groceries to rise alongside utilities (77%) and fuel (76%) in the coming months. This trend is also highlighted in the HBI™, which shows average purchasing power for necessities dropped 0.3% in February compared to January as middle-income families paid more for less. Rising costs of car insurance, gasoline and utilities served as the main drivers for the decrease.



HOW ARE FAMILIES DOING AND FEELING FINANCIALLY?

- **Middle-income Americans increasingly concerned about financial futures.** Nearly half (46%) of respondents expect their financial situation to worsen in the coming year, up from 27% in Q4 2024. Only 18% believe their situation will improve, compared with 26% of respondents in the previous survey.
- **Majority expect a 2024 tax refund.** Fifty-three percent (53%) anticipate getting money back on their returns this year, with the top plans for those refunds including: saving (38%), paying down debt (32%) and/or paying outstanding bills (30%).

WHAT ARE MIDDLE-INCOME FAMILIES DOING TO SECURE THEIR FINANCIAL FUTURES?

- **Families are cutting back on spending.** Reaching the highest level in two years, 78% report limiting non-essential purchases, such as eating out and entertainment. In addition, 64% say they are setting aside money for an emergency fund, up from 59% in the previous survey.
- **Changing jobs or even adding a second one is top of mind to close the gap between incomes and expenses.** Fifty-two percent (52%) report either considering getting or already having a second job. More than half (55%) are considering changing or are already actively switching jobs.

ARE FAMILIES EQUIPPED WITH THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION THEY NEED?

- **Majority grasp financial basics but not complexities.** Overall, more than two-thirds (67%) of middle-income families feel confident in making sound financial decisions without outside help, particularly when it comes to financial fundamentals like building good credit (82% confident), paying down credit card debt (86%) and creating and following a financial budget (78%). However, they continue to express less confidence when it comes to more complex financial matters, including buying life insurance (64%), setting up a retirement account (63% confident), and investing in stocks, bonds or mutual funds (48%).
- **Anxiety and limited time are main drivers in lack of financial planning.** One-third (33%) say they don't contribute to a savings account, follow a budget, contribute to an investment account or set a financial budget each month. Anxiety (32%) and not having time (16%) continue to be cited as the biggest challenges.

TOPLINE TRENDS DATA:



MAR 2025 DEC 2024 SEPT 2024 JUN 2024 MAR 2024 DEC 2023 SEPT 2023 JUN 2023 MAR 2023

How would you rate the condition of your personal finances?

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| Share reporting "Excellent" or "Good." | 48% | 45% | 44% | 49% | 50% | 50% | 49% | 50% | 52% |
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Analysis: Respondents' assessments of their personal finances are down slightly from where they were a year ago.

Overall, would you say your income is...?

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| Share reporting "Falling behind the cost of living" | 69% | 65% | 68% | 66% | 67% | 68% | 72% | 71% | 72% |
| Share reporting "Stayed about even with the cost of living" | 23% | 29% | 24% | 26% | 25% | 24% | 20% | 22% | 21% |

Analysis: Concern about meeting the increased cost of living remained steady with 92% noting an inability to get ahead.

And in the next year, do you think the American economy will be...?

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| Share reporting "Worse off than it is now" | 76% | 55% | 25% | 40% | 46% | 53% | 56% | 57% | 53% |
| Share reporting "Uncertain" | 4% | 9% | 34% | 19% | 18% | 9% | 9% | 9% | 7% |

Analysis: The share of respondents expecting the economy to worsen over the next year has risen sharply since the previous poll.

Do you have an emergency fund that would cover an expense of \$1,000 or more (for example, if your car broke down or you had a large medical bill)?

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| Reporting "Yes" responses. | 64% | 59% | 61% | 63% | 62% | 60% | 62% | 61% | 58% |
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Analysis: The percentage of Americans who have an emergency fund that would cover an expense of \$1,000 or more has climbed since the previous survey.

How would you rate the economic health of your community?

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| Reporting "Not so good" and "Poor" responses. | 66% | 63% | 63% | 58% | 60% | 57% | 55% | 54% | 59% |
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Analysis: Respondents' rating of the economic health of their communities has gotten worse over the past year.

How would you rate your ability to save for the future?

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| Reporting "Not so good" and "Poor" responses. | 71% | 71% | 73% | 68% | 67% | 73% | 71% | 71% | 73% |
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Analysis: A significant majority continue to feel it is difficult to save for the future.

In the past three months, has your credit card debt...?

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| Reporting "Increased" responses. | 31% | 34% | 35% | 30% | 34% | 35% | 34% | 33% | 33% |
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Analysis: Credit card debt has remained about the same over the past year.

Learn more at www.primerica.com/public/our-impact.html

About Primerica's U.S. Middle-Income Financial Security Monitor™
 Polling was conducted online from March 3-6, 2025. Using Dynamic Online Sampling, Change Research polled 1,240 adults nationwide with incomes between \$30,000 and \$130,000. Post-stratification weights were made on gender, age, race, education and Census region to reflect the population of these adults based on the five-year averages in the 2021 American Community Survey, published by the U.S. Census. The margin of error is 3.1%.