

News

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Seventeen Startling Facts That Sum Up Women's Retirement Risks

*New Report from TCRS Highlights Women's Challenges and the Urgent Need for Action
In Recognition of National Women's History Month and International Women's Day*

LOS ANGELES (March 1, 2017) – Today, nonprofit [Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies®](#) (TCRS) has released a new research report, [Seventeen Facts About Women's Retirement Outlook](#), which sheds light on vulnerabilities unique to women in their efforts to prepare for a secure retirement. The report is based on findings from TCRS' 17th Annual Transamerica Retirement Survey of Workers, and is being released in conjunction with National Women's History Month which corresponds with International Women's Day on March 8. The focus of International Women's Day is to highlight issues related to women's social, political and economic advancement.

"Today's women are better educated and enjoy career opportunities that our grandmothers' generation could only dream about. Nevertheless, women continue to encounter challenges including lower pay, time out of the workforce for parenting or caregiving, and longer life expectancies that all contribute to unique challenges in adequately saving for retirement," says [Catherine Collinson](#), president of TCRS.

Findings from the TCRS national survey of working women highlight that few have a high level of confidence about their future retirement. Only one in ten are "very confident" that they will be able to retire comfortably. At the same time, more than half are "guessing" at the amount they will need to save in order to feel secure in retirement. Household retirement savings is \$34,000 (estimated median) and more than two-thirds indicate that they have no back-up plan if forced into retirement sooner than expected. Four out of five are concerned that Social Security will not be available to them when they are ready to retire.

"The facts are startling and clear. Women must begin taking greater control and gain an understanding of their true retirement outlook," said Collinson. "By confronting challenges head-on, women can acquire essential knowledge about how to achieve financial security and create plans that can help mitigate risks and steer them on a course for financial security and a more positive outlook for their retirement ambitions."

The Seventeen Facts About Women and Retirement

- #1. Only 10 percent of women are "very confident" in their ability to fully retire with a comfortable lifestyle.
- #2. 53 percent of women plan to retire after age 65 (40 percent) or not at all (13 percent).
- #3. Half (50 percent) plan to work after they retire.
- #4. Are women being proactive steps to continue working past age 65? While 62 percent say they are staying healthy, only 54 percent are focused on performing well at their current job and 42 percent are keeping their job skills up to date.
- #5. Most women (64 percent) do not have a backup plan if forced into retirement sooner than expected.
- #6. 72 percent are saving for retirement through a workplace plan and/or outside of work in an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), mutual fund, bank account, etc. Women started saving for retirement at age 28 (median).
- #7. 47 percent expect their primary source of retirement income will be 401(k)/403(b) accounts/IRAs, and/or other savings and investments, while 27 percent expect to rely on Social Security.

- #8. 68 percent of women are offered a 401(k) or similar employee-funded retirement plan. However, 26 percent work part-time and are therefore less likely to have workplace retirement benefits.
- #9. 75 percent of women who are offered an employee-funded plan participate in the plan and contribute 6 percent (median) of their salary to the plan.
- #10. Women believe that they will need to save \$500,000 (median) in order to feel financially secure in retirement; among those who estimated their savings needs, 56 percent say they “guessed.”
- #11. Women’s total household retirement savings is \$34,000 (estimated median).
- #12. Women’s emergency savings is just \$2,000 (estimated median).
- #13. 57 percent of women say that having access to information that is easier to understand would motivate them to learn more about retirement.
- #14. Only a quarter of women (25 percent) are aware of the Saver’s Credit tax credit.
- #15. 38 percent of Baby Boomer women say they know a great deal or quite a bit about Social Security.
- #16. 82 percent of women are concerned that Social Security won’t be there for them when they are ready to retire.
- #17. Women’s number one retirement priority for the new President and Congress is fully funding Social Security by implementing reforms so that it can continue to pay future generations of retirees (59 percent).

TCRS’ new [report](#) and [fact sheet](#) also offer eight action steps women can take to begin improving their retirement outlook.

For more than a decade, TCRS has published research each year illustrating that women are at greater risk of not achieving a financially secure retirement compared to men. In December 2016, TCRS published [Influences of Gender on Retirement Readiness](#) which offers a five-year trend analysis. The goal of TCRS’ research is to raise awareness of the retirement risks that women are facing and highlight opportunities in which they can take greater control of their long-term financial security. Please visit TCRS at www.transamerica.org to view the full survey report including comparisons between women and men, fact sheet, infographics, and additional materials. Follow TCRS on Twitter [@TCRStudies](#).

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About the 17th Annual Retirement Survey

This survey was conducted online in the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of TCRS between April 11 and May 12, 2016 among a nationally representative sample of 4,161 workers including 2,315 women and 1,827 men. Potential respondents were targeted based on employment status and company size. Respondents met the following criteria: U.S. residents, age 18 or older, full- or part-time workers in for-profit companies, and employer size of 10 or more. Results were weighted to account for differences between the population available via the Internet versus by telephone, and to ensure that each quota group had a representative sample based on the number of employees at companies in each employee size range.