



Financial Resilience Index and Survey

The **Financial Resilience Index** measures the middle-class' ability to manage life's challenges and plan for a stable future.
The **Financial Resilience Survey** explores how middle-class households understand their own financial resilience.

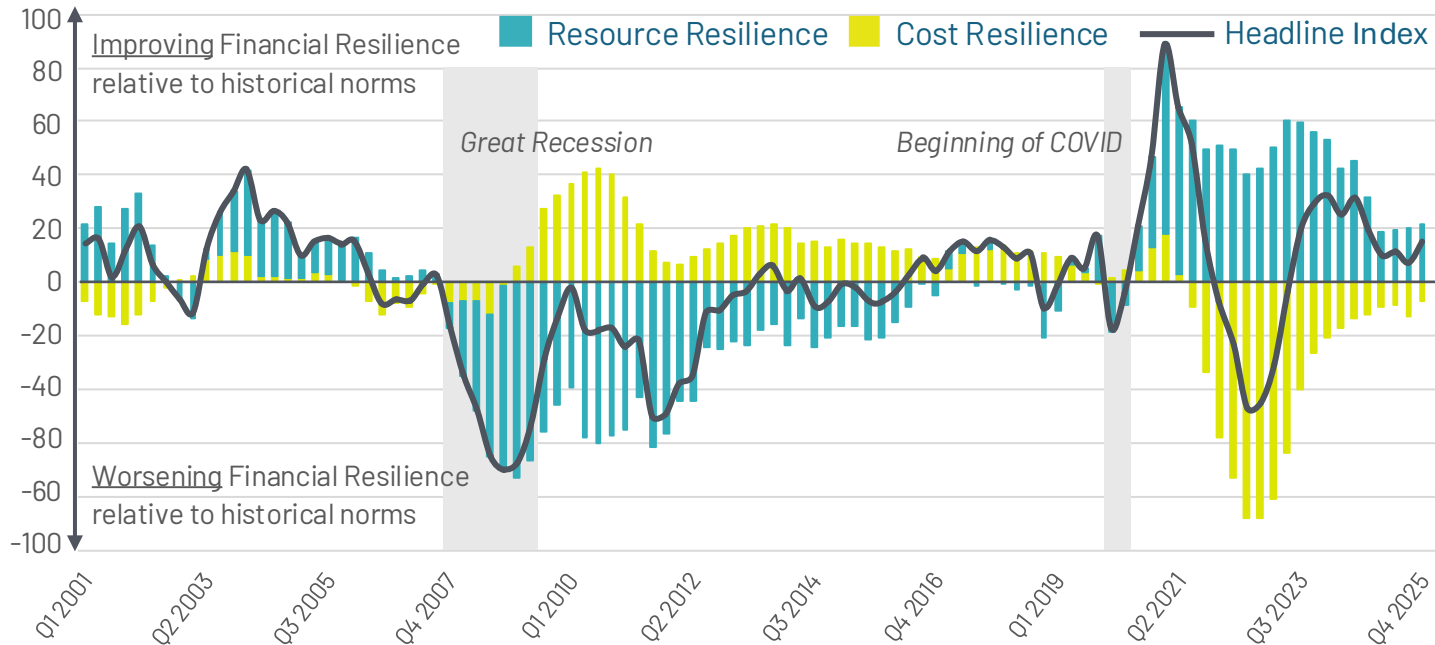
- In Q4 2025, the Financial Resilience Index rose to 14.8, indicating that middle-class resilience is above historical norms.
- The companion survey found that almost half of middle-class households are not very or not at all confident they will have enough savings to live comfortably throughout retirement.

Q4 2025 (Released Apr 2026)

Middle-class financial resilience improved in Q4 2025 and is above historical norms.

The Headline Index was 14.8 in Q4 2025, up 7.5 points from Q3 but down 4.8 points from a year ago. This score is consistent with a steady improvement in middle-class financial resilience. The Cost Resilience Index increased this quarter and is hovering just below its historical average, while the Resource Resilience Index has largely held steady in positive territory over the last four quarters. However, the companion survey found that almost half of middle-class households are not confident they will have enough savings to live comfortably throughout retirement.

Financial Resilience Headline Index
 >0 indicates improving financial resilience | <0 indicates worsening financial resilience



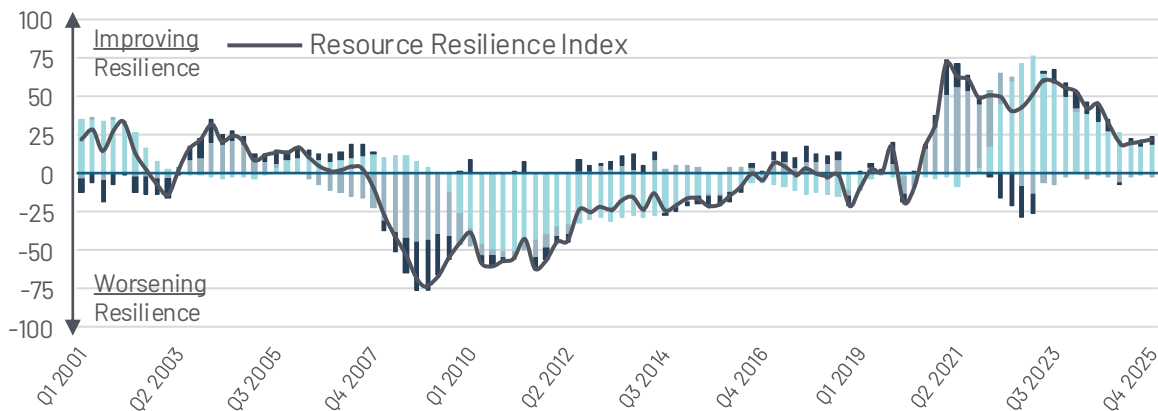
14.8 (Level)	7.5pt (Q/Q)	-4.8pt (Y/Y)
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- The Headline Index increased in Q4 and has held above '0' for 10 consecutive quarters.
- The Resource Resilience Index was little changed in Q4, with minor improvements in 'Retirement Readiness' and 'Income' offsetting a minor dip in 'Access to Capital.'
- The Cost Resilience Index rose to its highest level since 2021 but is still below just its historical average—indicating that cost pressures remain above average. Inflation slowed across all three subcomponents for the first time in two years, as cost pressures eased slightly for the 'Essentials' and eased marginally for 'Care & Education' and 'Modest Luxuries.'

Q4 2025 (Released Apr 2026)

Resource Resilience Index

The 'Retirement Readiness' and 'Income' scores both inched up in Q4, with the former holding just above average and the latter remaining solidly above average. The 'Access to Capital' score edged down, as increased delinquency expectations outweighed slightly above-average growth in non-retirement wealth.



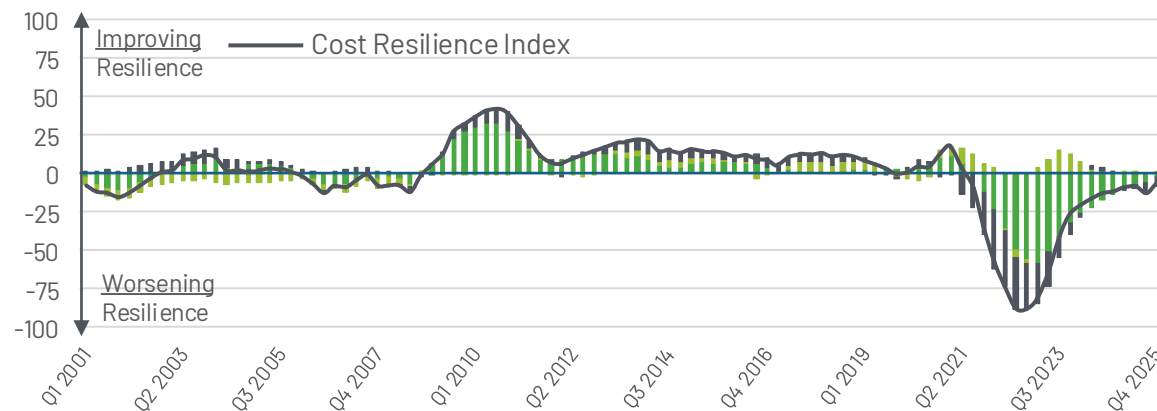
Resource Resilience	21.9 (Level)	+1.6 pt (Q/Q)	-9.7 pt (Y/Y)
Income	+18.3 (Level)	+1.2 pt (Q/Q)	-8.7 pt (Y/Y)
Access to Capital	-1.9 (Level)	-1.2 pt (Q/Q)	+1.1 pt (Y/Y)
Retirement Readiness	+5.5 (Level)	+1.5 pt (Q/Q)	-2.1 pt (Y/Y)

Zooming In: 'Access to Capital' Debt Delinquency Expectations

Middle-class households reported a higher risk of not being able to make a minimum debt payment in Q4. This increase in debt delinquency expectations led to the Q/Q dip in the 'Access to Capital' score.

Cost Resilience Index

The 'Care & Education' score shifted from negative to positive in Q4 due to easing cost pressures for medical care services. A decline in housing-related inflation led to an improvement in the 'Essentials' score, although it is still just a tick below '0'. 'Modest Luxuries' was essentially unchanged, also holding just below average.



Cost Resilience	-7.1 (Level)	+5.9 pt (Q/Q)	+4.8 pt (Y/Y)
Essentials	-1.8 (Level)	+3.9 pt (Q/Q)	+11.9 pt (Y/Y)
Care & Education	+1.2 (Level)	+1.8 pt (Q/Q)	+1.0 pt (Y/Y)
Modest Luxuries	-6.5 (Level)	+0.2 pt (Q/Q)	-8.1 pt (Y/Y)

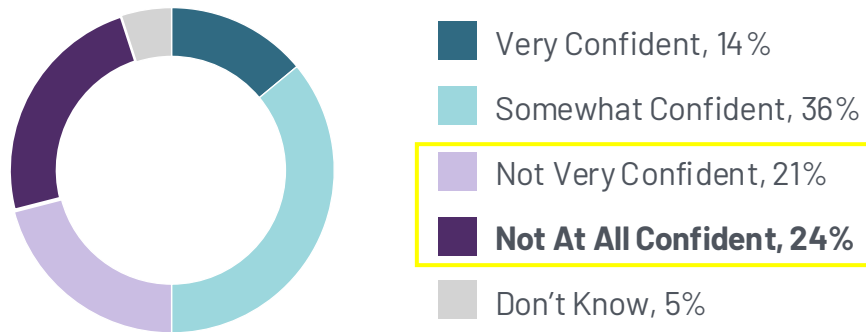
Zooming In: 'Essentials' Housing Costs

After peaking in 2023, housing cost pressures have eased steadily and are now right around their historical average. Reduced housing inflation is a key reason the 'Essentials' category is no longer a major drag on Cost Resilience.

Q4 2025 (Released Apr 2026)

Retirement Confidence

How confident, if at all, are you, that you will have enough retirement savings to live comfortably throughout retirement? Please select the option that best applies.



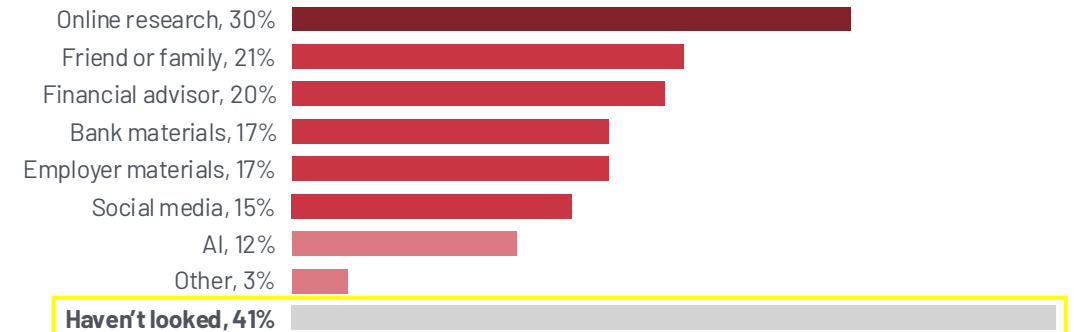
Almost half (46%) of middle-class households are not very or not at all confident they will have enough retirement savings to live comfortably throughout retirement.

Zooming In Gen X

One-third (59%) of middle-class Gen X respondents—the generation approaching retirement age—are not confident they will have enough retirement savings. This is a larger share than any other middle-class generation (Gen Z: 40%; Millennials: 51%; Boomers+: 34%).

Retirement Information

During the past year, where have you looked for information or guidance about planning for retirement? Please select all that apply.



More than four-in-ten (41%) of middle-class respondents say that they have not looked for information or guidance about planning for retirement during the past year.

Zooming In Not Looking for Guidance And Not Confident

More than half (56%) of middle-class respondents who have not looked for information or guidance about planning for retirement during the past year are also not confident (not very or not at all) that they will have enough retirement savings to live comfortably throughout retirement.

FULL SURVEY RESULTS

Question	Response Options	Share of Middle-Class Households Selecting Option
<p><i>How confident, if at all, are you, that you will have enough retirement savings to live comfortably throughout retirement? Please select the option that best applies.</i></p>	<i>Very confident</i>	14%
	<i>Somewhat confident</i>	36%
	<i>Not very confident</i>	21%
	<i>Not at all confident</i>	24%
	<i>Don't know</i>	5%
<p><i>During the past year, where have you looked for information or guidance about planning for retirement? Please select all that apply.</i></p>	<i>A financial advisor or insurance agent</i>	20%
	<i>Materials from your bank or financial institution</i>	17%
	<i>Materials from your employer</i>	17%
	<i>Friend or family member</i>	21%
	<i>Chat GPT, Claude, or another AI tool</i>	12%
	<i>Online research</i>	30%
	<i>Social media</i>	15%
	<i>Other</i>	3%
<i>Not applicable - I haven't looked for information or guidance about planning for retirement during the past year</i>	41%	



Financial Resilience Index and Survey

ABOUT THE INDEX & SURVEY

The **Headline Index** measures the middle class's ability to manage life's challenges and plan for a stable future. The **Resource Resilience Index** measures the ability to handle unexpected expenses and sustain a quality of life, and to save and live well in retirement. The **Cost Resilience Index** measures the ability to afford modest luxuries without trading off the essentials, and to afford life-stage appropriate care and education.

Composition. The Financial Resilience Index measures the direction and magnitude of changes in middle-class financial resilience by tracking 26 variables that represent important middle-class cost pressures and financial resources. Input variables have been scoped to the middle-class, based on typical components of a middle-class household budget or income and wage brackets, with several exceptions where wage/income brackets were unavailable for certain data series. The Headline Index is composed of a Resource Resilience Index and a Cost Resilience Index, each of which has three subcomponents. This composition frames financial resilience as the interaction of financial resources and cost pressures and provides insight into the specific underlying factors that drive changes in middle-class financial resilience.

- Resource Resilience Index subcomponents include: (1) Income; (2) Access to Capital; and (3) Retirement Readiness. *(See table on the next page for more detail)*
- Cost Resilience Index subcomponents include: (1) The Essentials; (2) Care & Education; and (3) Modest Luxuries. The cost variables that make up these subcomponents are not intended to represent a comprehensive middle-class budget or provide an alternate measure of inflation. Rather, they reflect the types of expenditures that define a typical middle-class American lifestyle. *(See table on the next page for more detail)*

Index Methodology. The Financial Resilience Index is a z-score index. All variables are harmonized to a quarterly frequency. Price and wealth variables are transformed to a year/year percent growth basis. Z-scores are used to standardize the transformed variables, using January 2001 to December 2025 as the historical sample period. Z-scores are multiplied by a constant of '100' so that index values are generally bounded by +/-100. Some variable values (e.g., cost-related variables) are inverted so that a positive index score always indicates improving conditions, and a negative index score always indicates worsening conditions. The result of these transformations is a quarterly index that compares the direction and degree of the most recent quarterly reading to the long-run historical average quarterly reading. For example, a very high positive index score (>40) indicates substantial improvement in overall resilience, cost pressures, or resources relative to the long-run historical average; a very low negative index score (<-40) indicates substantial worsening in overall resilience, cost pressures, or resources relative to the long-run historical average. Each index and subcomponent are weighted to reflect their relative importance and impact on middle-class financial resilience. The Resource Resilience Index accounts for 60% of the Headline Index and the Cost Resilience Index accounts for 40%. Within the Resource Resilience Index, the 'Income' subcomponent is 45%, 'Access to Capital' is 35%, and 'Retirement Readiness' is 20%. Within the Cost Resilience Index, 'The Essentials' subcomponent is 55%, 'Care & Education' is 15%, and 'Modest Luxuries' is 30%. Z-scores are multiplied by their respective weights and aggregated to compose the indices.

Survey Methodology. The Financial Resilience Survey was conducted online within the United States by YouGov on behalf of ACLI from March 11 – 16, 2026, among 3,707 adults ages 18 and older. This report primarily presents the survey results for the 1,476 respondents from middle-class households—those earning \$50,000 to \$149,999 in annual household income. Upper-income households are those earning \$150,000 or more in annual household income and lower-income households are those earning less than \$50,000 in annual household income. This report only presents comparisons between subgroups that are statistically significant. For complete survey methodology, including subgroup sample sizes and information about statistical significance, please contact ACLI. *Last year's survey was fielded by a different survey partner, with minor wording and methodological differences between years. Directional changes and results between years are valid, ACLI cautions against overinterpreting percentage point changes from this year to last.*

DATA SOURCES

Index	Subcomponent (Index Weight)	Variable	Data Source
Resource Resilience (60%)	Income (45%)	Wage growth, 25-75 th wage percentile	<i>Wage Growth Tracker</i> , Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
		Non-retirement wealth, 40-80 th income percentile	<i>Distributional Financial Accounts</i> , Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
	Access to Capital (35%)	Access to consumer credit	<i>Senior Loan Officer Opinion Survey on Bank Lending Practices</i> , FRS Board of Governors
		Debt delinquency expectations, \$50-100K in income	<i>Survey of Consumer Expectations</i> , Federal Reserve Bank of New York
	Retirement Readiness (20%)	Retirement assets, 40-80 th income percentile	<i>Distributional Financial Accounts</i> , Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
Change in likelihood of comfortable retirement, middle income tercile		<i>Survey of Consumers</i> , University of Michigan	
Cost Resilience (40%)	Essentials (55%)	Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence	<i>Consumer Price Index</i> , U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
		Rent of primary residence	
		Groceries	
		Electricity	
		Gasoline	
		Motor vehicle parts and equipment	
		Motor vehicle maintenance and repair	
		Motor vehicle insurance	
		Internet services	
	Care & Education (15%)	Medical care services	
		College tuition and fees	
		Day care and preschool	
		Prescription drugs	
	Modest Luxuries (30%)	Dining out	
		Recreation	
		Household appliances, furnishings, and services	
		New vehicles	
		Used vehicles	
		Hotel stays	
Airline fares			