

WHITE PAPER

Century Club Findings from The American College of Financial Services

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Executive Summary

Planning for the Century Club

As Americans live longer, healthier lives, with many expecting to live well into their 90s and beyond, retirement planning must adapt to a new reality: the era of the Century Club. The findings from The American College of Financial Services (The College) shed light on the financial, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of preparing for increasingly lengthy retirements. This report synthesizes initial findings from recent College research studies, including The College's Retirement Income Literacy Study (RILS), Monte Carlo simulations of retirement success, and mindset-based consumer research. Together, these findings offer a comprehensive picture of how expectations, planning behaviors, product usage, and optimism shape financial security in later life.

Key Themes and Findings

Longevity Is Increasing, Especially Among the Wealthy and Healthy

- Healthy, higher-income retirees are significantly more likely to live to advanced ages. One in three healthy women and one in four healthy men will live to age 95.
- Standard planning timelines (e.g., 30 years in retirement) may no longer be adequate. For healthy couples, there's a 20% chance one partner will live past age 100.

Longer Lives Require More Resources and Smarter Planning

- Extending the retirement horizon from 30 to 35 years increases Monte Carlo failure rates by 41% under historical return assumptions, and by over 300% when lower near-term returns are factored in.
- Funding a safe income using Treasury bonds is substantially more expensive for healthy individuals, requiring tens of thousands more in savings.

Mindset Influences Behavior and Outcomes

- Optimists are more likely to believe they'll be active and healthy in later life, and are more likely to save, plan, and prepare.
- Optimists are 237% more likely to be financially prepared to live to the age of 100 and 75% more likely to save at least 10% of income.

Confidence and Financial Literacy Go Hand in Hand

- Only 26% of respondents correctly estimated the longevity of a 65-year-old man.
- Those who understand average longevity are 54% more likely to plan for spending into their 90s.
- Retirement confidence correlates strongly with financial well-being (CFPB Score), annuity or pension ownership, and having an advisor.

Long-Term Care (LTC) and Guaranteed Income can increase retirement confidence

- LTC ownership is rare (just one in ten) but strongly associated with higher retirement confidence.

Lifetime income solutions, such as annuities and lifetime income solutions offered in retirement plans remain poorly understood, despite their potential to alleviate income uncertainty.

Inflation and Market Uncertainty Delay Retirement

- 40% of non-retired individuals plan to delay retirement due to inflation.
- Those delayed retirees show stronger interest in guaranteed income, signaling demand for financial stability during uncertainty.

Implications for the Retirement Planning Industry and Policymakers

- Education is empowerment. Increasing longevity literacy can directly improve retirement confidence and decision-making.
- Planning horizons must evolve. Professionals should use realistic assumptions and stress-test plans for 35+ years of retirement.
- Support emotional and behavioral engagement. A positive outlook is associated with better financial preparation.
- Tailor communication. Gender, mindset, and decision-maker roles impact perceptions and behaviors around retirement.
- Promote access to advice. Encourage broader use of formal retirement plans and advisors, especially in underserved segments of society.
- Highlight security. Products like annuities, LTC insurance and lifetime income solutions available within employer-sponsored retirement plans should be positioned not just as financial products, but as emotional and lifestyle enablers.

As we enter an age where living past 100 becomes increasingly common, advisors, insurers, and the public must rethink retirement with longevity at the center. The Century Club is no longer a rare milestone, it's a planning imperative.

Longer Retirements for Higher-Income Americans

In 2025, more Americans turned 65 than at any time in history¹. This “Peak 65” surge will continue through the 2020s as the Baby Boom generation reaches retirement age. America’s largest generation approaches retirement following one of the most significant shifts in responsibility for funding a lifestyle from defined benefit pensions to defined contribution savings plans.

Today’s retirees are faced with the complex task of funding a lifestyle without knowing how long they will live. Most Americans underestimate how long they’re going to live in retirement. Low longevity literacy

can lead to undersaving, claiming Social Security at a younger age, and a failure to plan for old age spending. The newest American College Retirement Income Literacy Study shows that most people underestimate how long an average retiree will live. This is a bigger problem for higher-income Americans who have made significant gains in longevity after the age of 65. A longer retirement is a more expensive retirement and planners need to understand how long their clients are likely to live in order to develop strategies for funding longer lives.

¹ <https://www.protectedincome.org/peak65/>

Longevity Literacy and Retirement Planning

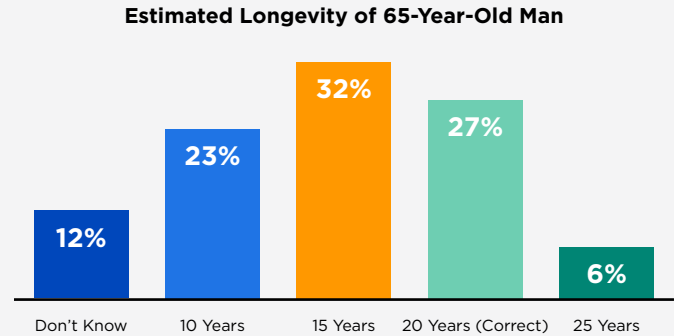
Most people have a vague idea of how long they are likely to live in retirement. It’s common to think of the age our parents or grandparents died when estimating our own longevity. In reality, longevity at age of 65 increased by about a year every decade in the 20th century, and higher-income Americans can expect to spend significantly more years in retirement.

According to the Social Security administration mortality tables, the average American man who has reached age 62 will live to age 85 and the average

woman will live to age 88. Respondents to the 2023 American College Retirement Income Literacy Study², a nationally representative survey of 3,765 adults ages 50 to 75 across the wealth spectrum, were asked how long an average 65-year-old man could expect to live. Only 26.5% selected 20 years. 31.5% thought the average man would live to age 80, 23.3% believed a man would only live 10 years, and just 6.3% thought an average man would live to age 90. 12.4% indicated that they didn’t know.

² The American College of Financial Services. (2023). *Retirement Income Literacy Study*. <https://www.theamericancollege.edu/knowledge-hub/retirement-income-literacy-study>

Figure 1:
Estimated Longevity of
65-Year-Old Man Among
Respondents (20 Years is
Correct)

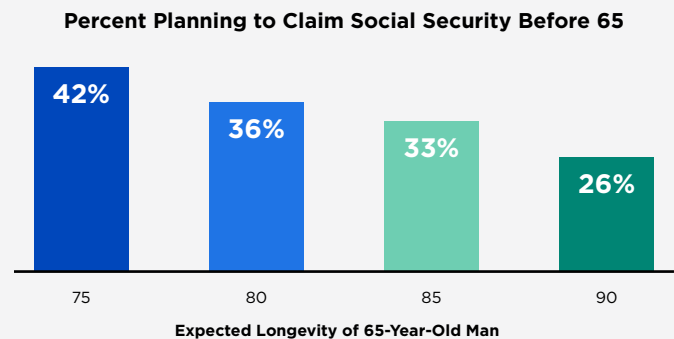


In other words, 55% of respondents underestimated retirement longevity and an additional 12.4% didn't know. Just under a third of respondents (32.8%) had an accurate or optimistic idea of retirement longevity.

Those who had an unrealistically low expectation of retirement longevity were far more likely to indicate that they plan to claim Social Security income

benefits before the age of 65. While 42% of those who believed that retirement would only last to age 75 for a 65-year-old man expected to claim before age 65, only 33% of those with an accurate estimate of expected longevity planned to claim Social Security early and 26% of those who overestimated longevity planned to claim before age 65.

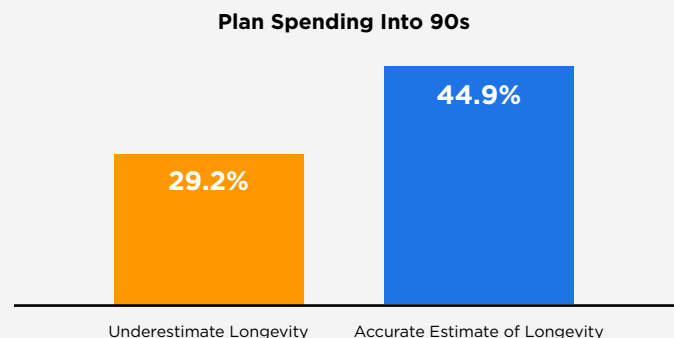
Figure 2:
Percent Planning to Claim
Social Security Before Age
65 by Expected Longevity



When people are asked “What is the maximum age you would plan for your savings to last in retirement before you run out of money?,” 54% more of those who had an accurate or optimistic idea of expected

longevity chose a maximum planning horizon into their 90s compared to those who underestimated longevity.

Figure 3:
Percent Who Plan for
Retirement Spending
Into Their 90s



Retirement Lifespan of Healthy Americans

The optimistic survey respondents who thought that a 65-year-old man could expect to live 25 years in retirement weren't wrong for higher-income men. These higher-earning men and women have made significant gains in retirement longevity in recent decades. Stanford economist, Raj Chetty and his co-authors found that life expectancy among Americans in the top 5% of income increased 2.34 years for men and 2.91 years for women between 2001 and 2014,

compared to just 0.32 years for men and 0.04 years for women in the bottom 5%³.

Healthier, higher-income retirees need to plan for a longer retirement than the average American. How much longer? Using mortality tables designed for annuitants—healthier and wealthier individuals—alongside those for Social Security recipients illustrates differences in longevity. Table 1 presents these differences clearly

3 <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2513561>

Table 1:
Percent of Retirees Still Alive by Age, Gender, and Health

Age	Average Male	Healthy Male	Average Female	Healthy Female	Average Couple	Healthy Couple
70	88.2%	94.1%	92.5%	95.4%	99.1%	99.7%
75	78.2%	88.8%	85.2%	90.9%	96.8%	99.0%
80	65.1%	80.9%	74.8%	84.6%	91.2%	97.1%
85	48.6%	68.7%	60.2%	74.0%	79.5%	91.9%
90	30.1%	49.6%	41.8%	56.1%	59.3%	77.9%
95	13.8%	25.9%	22.4%	33.3%	33.2%	50.6%
100	4.4%	8.0%	8.7%	12.7%	12.7%	19.7%

Source: 2017 Social Security mortality table and the 2012 Society of Actuaries annuity mortality table adjusted for expected improvement to the present day

It's obvious from Table 1 that healthier, higher-income retirees need to plan for a longer retirement than the average American. A healthy 65-year-old man is 65% more likely to be alive at age 90 than the average American. One-third of healthy 65-year-old women can expect to live to the age of 95, and half of healthy couples will have one spouse who lives longer than 95 years.

The percentages from Table 1 can also be seen as failure rates. If a retiree creates a spending plan in which their money lasts to the age of 90, half of healthy men, 56% of

healthy women, and 78% of healthy couples will outlive their savings.

The traditional failure rate methodology in financial planning considers a withdrawal rate safe if the money lasts to the age of 95. For a healthy couple retiring today, this yardstick can't be considered safe if half of them will have at least one spouse who lives beyond the age of 95. Even if the money lasts to the age of 100, one in five healthy couples will outlive their savings if no adjustments are made to their income withdrawal strategy.

A Long Life is More Expensive

An easy way to see how much more money a retiree needs to save to fund a longer retirement is to estimate the cost of creating a base of income to various ages using safe investments. Returns on financial assets are generally variable, but it is possible to buy Treasury bonds that will mature and provide a future income that isn't subject to investment risk.

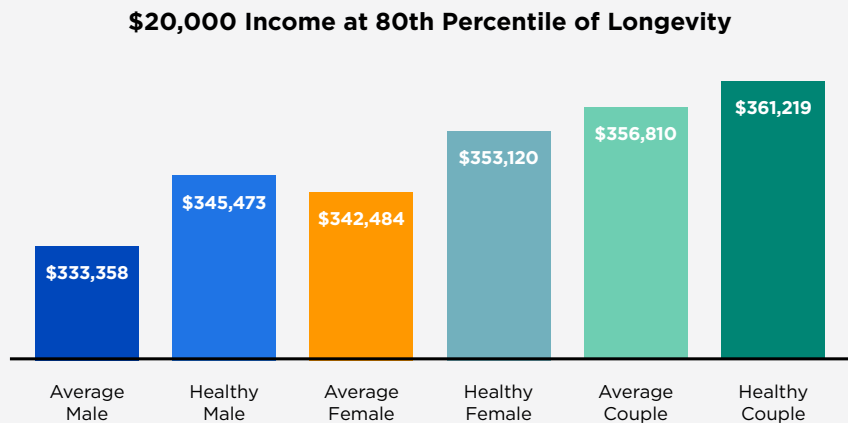
At today's interest rates⁴ and using retirement longevity expectations for healthy men and women, we can compare the cost of buying a safe income

using Treasury bonds to the age at which a healthy man, woman and couple has a 20% chance of outliving their savings. For example, an average 65-year-old man has a 20% chance of reaching the age of 92.91 years. The cost of funding \$20,000 of income from Treasury bonds at today's yields⁵ will be \$333,358. A healthy man has a 20% chance of living to the age of 96.35 years. It will cost him \$345,473 today to buy the same \$20,000 of income to an age at which he has a 20% chance of "failure."

⁴ Treasury yields collected on April 3, 2025: 3.92% for 1-year, 3.71% for 2-year, 3.68% for 3-year, 3.75% for 5-year, 3.88% for 7-year, 4.06% for 10-year, 4.51% for 20-year, 4.49% for 30-year.

⁵ Treasury bond yields on April 3, 2025 with the assumption that bonds are purchased and held to maturity to provide future income.

Figure 4: Cost of \$20,000 Income from Treasury Bonds with a 20% Probability of Outliving Savings



Source: 2017 Social Security mortality table and the 2012 Society of Actuaries annuity mortality table adjusted for expected improvement to the present day. Treasury bond yields on April 3, 2025.

The cost of sufficient income to fund a longer life is higher for healthy men and women, and for a healthy couple. This means that healthier individuals will have to save more to fund the same lifestyle with an 80% probability of success.

Today's savers can expect to live significantly longer than their parents, and longer than the average American. Research from the Retirement Income Literacy Study shows that most underestimate the number of years an average retiree will live. These less longevity-literate respondents are more likely to claim Social Security early and less likely to plan for income into their 90s.

A longer retirement is a more expensive retirement. Being longevity-literate means recognizing that today's retiree must plan for a lifestyle that may extend into their 90s, and for couples even longer. Strategies for funding longer lifestyles include waiting to claim Social Security until age 70 to receive a substantially higher income benefit, delaying retirement by a few years or considering a transition to part-time employment, increasing savings rates, or transferring the risk of unknown longevity to an institution to help protect against the risk of living beyond your planning horizon.

Longevity and Retirement Success

How will longer lifespans impact the ability to withdraw income from a balanced portfolio of assets? A longer time horizon puts pressure on an investment portfolio to fund spending for a longer period of time. A poor sequence of investment returns jeopardizes retirement income success rates by reducing an investment balance at the same time withdrawals are being made, resulting in fewer assets available to grow in a subsequent recovery.

How are projected failure rates affected by an increase in longevity? As mentioned, a healthy 65-year-old man has a 20% chance of living to age 96 and a woman has a 20% chance of living to age 98. A healthy couple has a 20% chance of living to age 100. The 4% rule commonly used in financial planning assumes that a retiree's maximum lifespan is 30 years and estimates income risk based on that time horizon. What would happen if the same method was applied to a time horizon of 35 or even 40 years?

Today's retiree needs to consider both the possibility that they will live longer than previous generations of American retirees, and the likelihood that investment returns will be lower than markets experienced by American investors over the last 100 years. Most asset management firms assume more modest future returns on stocks and bonds. For example, Blackrock

capital market expectations for U.S. stocks over the next 10 years are 5.69% and 4.42% for aggregate bonds⁶. How will more modest return expectations coupled with longer lifespans affect retirement income risk?

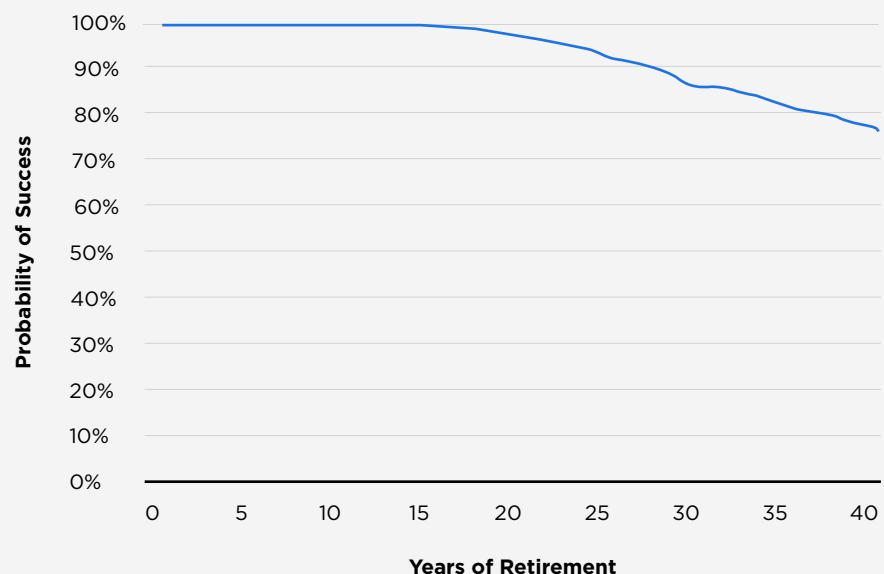
Let's begin by estimating failure rates at age 95 and 100 for a 65-year-old retiree using the traditional method of Monte Carlo estimation using a 60% stock/40% bond portfolio and average stock and bond returns and inflation between 1928 and 2024⁷ of 11.79% for the S&P 500, 5.85% for bonds, a 3.11% average inflation rate and 1% investment expenses.

A 65-year-old retiree who follows the 4% rule has a 12.8% chance of failure by age 95. Estimating the risk of failure using the same Monte Carlo analysis of a 65-year-old retiree to the age of 100 instead of age 95 (35 years instead of 30 years) increases the failure rate by 41% from 12.8% to 18%. A retired healthy couple with a 40-year time horizon (for example a healthy couple that retires at age 60) will see their failure rate rise to 23.2%. These failure rate estimates use historical investment returns that are substantially higher than the 10-year expected capital market returns from the largest asset management firms.

6 [Capital market assumptions - Institutional | BlackRock](#)

7 pages.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/New_Home_Page/datafile/histretSP.html

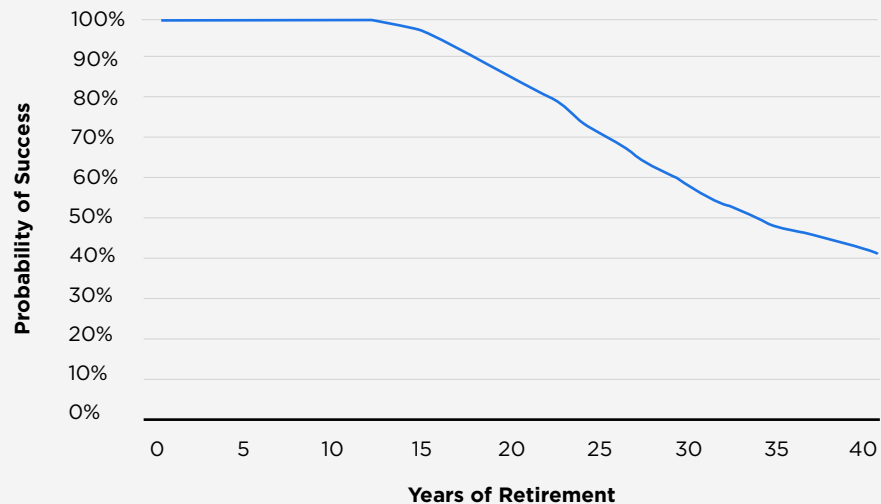
**Figure 5:
Probability of 4% Rule
Success by Length
of Retirement Using
Historical Asset Returns**



What happens to failure rates given both longer lifespans and more modest asset returns during the first 10 years of retirement? We estimate the same Monte Carlo analysis using projected 10-year stock and bond returns, and then we assume that stock and bond returns after year 10 revert to their historical average.

With more modest near-term asset returns, failure rates rise from 12.8% to 42.1% over 30 years. Using a more realistic 35-year planning horizon, failure rates rise from 18% to a remarkable 51.6%. In other words, using more modest near-term asset return expectations coupled with a longer time horizon increases the probability of failure by 303% compared to a 30-year time horizon using historical U.S. asset returns.

Figure 6: Probability of 4% Rule Success by Length of Retirement Using Projected Asset Returns



Retirees in the defined contribution era face the prospect of deciding how much to spend each year without knowing the investment returns they will receive or how many years of retirement they will need to fund. Increases in lifespan mean that historical yardsticks such as the 4% rule may not be sufficient when planning horizons reach beyond the original 30-year limit used to judge the safety of a fixed withdrawal strategy.

Moreover, investing during a period of lower expected investment returns adds substantially to the risk of outliving savings. A retiree who may be comfortable with a 87.2% chance of success when following the 4% rule may not be comfortable with a 48.4% chance of success when funding the same lifestyle for 35-years using lower projected 10-year assets returns. These dual risks of longer lifespans and lower potential investment returns suggest a more cautious withdrawal strategy that can result in spending less each year than expected when retirement is funded using only traditional investments.

Longevity Attitudes and Retirement Savings

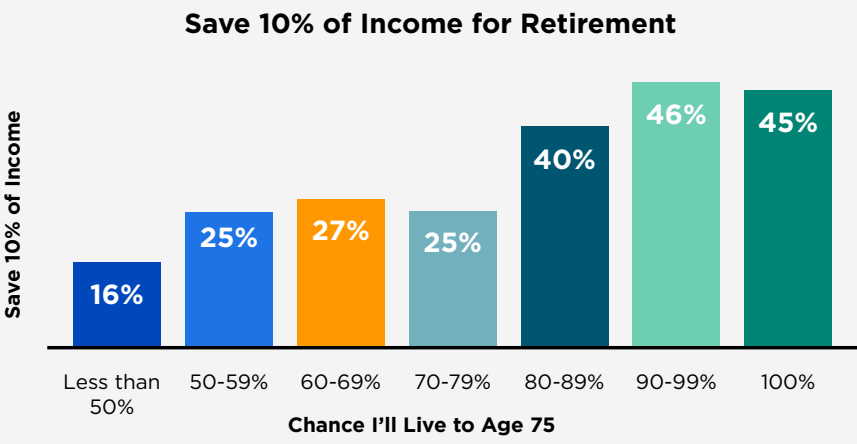
Do workers who believe that they will live longer approach retirement savings differently? In a recent consumer survey conducted by the Granum Center for Economic Security at the American College of Financial Services and Ageist.com, we looked at whether attitudes about health and longevity affect retirement behaviors.

What is the percent chance that you will live to the age of 75? We asked 2,051 respondents to estimate from 0% to 100% the likelihood that they will live to age 75. 87% believe that they have at least a

50% chance of living to age 75. The most common responses were 100% chance of living to 75 (22.4% of the sample), 50% (16.9% of respondents), and 80% (16.5% of respondents).

Not surprisingly, those whose beliefs about longevity are more optimistic save more for retirement. Nearly half of respondents who believe that they have at least a 90% chance of living to age 75 save 10% of their income for retirement compared to about one in four respondents who believe they have less than an 80% chance of living to age 75.

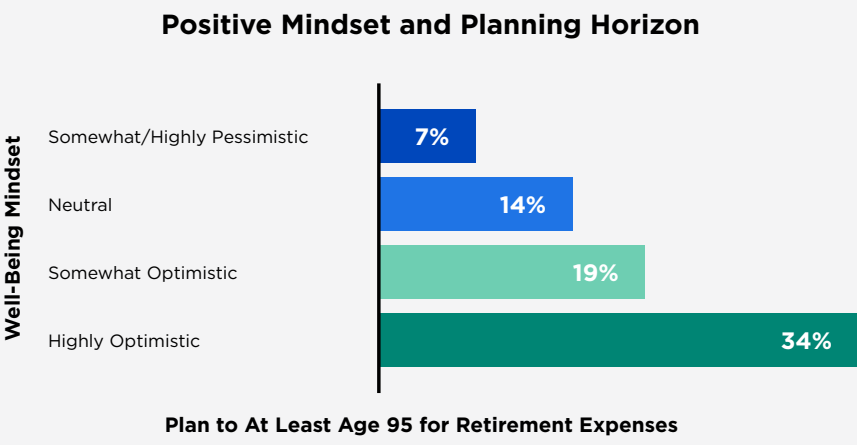
Figure 7: Percent Who Save 10% of Income for Retirement by Longevity Beliefs



Why do some believe that they will live longer in retirement? The answer may be related to opinions about well-being in the future, also known as mindset. Respondents were asked “When you imagine your well-being over the next 15 years, how do you feel?” Responses ranged between highly pessimistic to highly optimistic. About a quarter of respondents were highly optimistic, and 11% were pessimistic.

Respondents were also asked “when planning for funding expenses in retirement, to what age do you feel comfortable as your maximum planning horizon?” About one in three (33.9%) indicated that they would only plan on spending up to the age of 75 at the most, 16.7% said they’d plan up to age 80, 14% would plan to age 85, 15.1% to age 90, and 9.3% to age 95, and 10.9% would plan to age 100 or older.

Figure 8: Expected Well-Being in 15 Years and Retirement Expense Planning Horizon



Respondents who held a more positive mindset about their well-being over the next 15 years were far more likely to believe that they need to plan for expenses to at least age 95 in retirement. While only 7% of those who were pessimistic about their well-being would plan funding expenses to age 95, more than one in three of those who were highly optimistic about their well-being planned to fund expenses to at

least age 95. A positive mindset is strongly related to expected planning horizon.

Retirement preparation appears to be motivated by beliefs about longevity and a more positive mindset about the future. This may be because those who are more optimistic about their future health believe that they need to plan for a longer period of lifestyle spending in retirement.

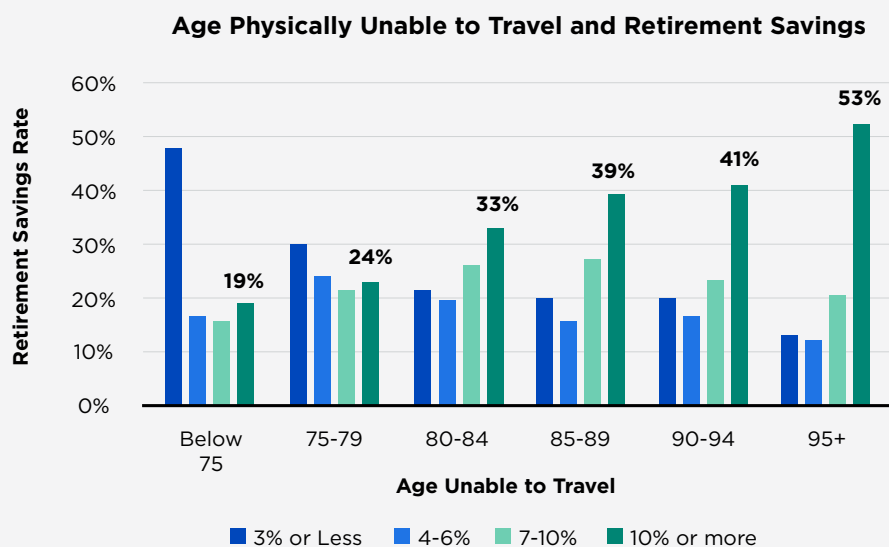
For example, there appears to be a clear relationship between attitudes about the “age you feel you will be physically unable to travel” and the amount of a respondent’s paycheck they set aside to fund retirement expenses.

More than half of those who believe they will be able to travel into their mid-90s and beyond save 11% or more for retirement, and an additional 21% save between 7 and 10% of their income. This compares to 48% saving

7% of their income or less among those who believe they will only be able to travel up to age 75.

As beliefs about future capabilities rise, so does retirement savings rate. The percentage of respondents saving more than 10% of their income starts at 19% among those who expect to travel up to age 75 and rises to 33% among those who expect to travel into their mid-80s up to 53% of those who expect to travel into their 90s.

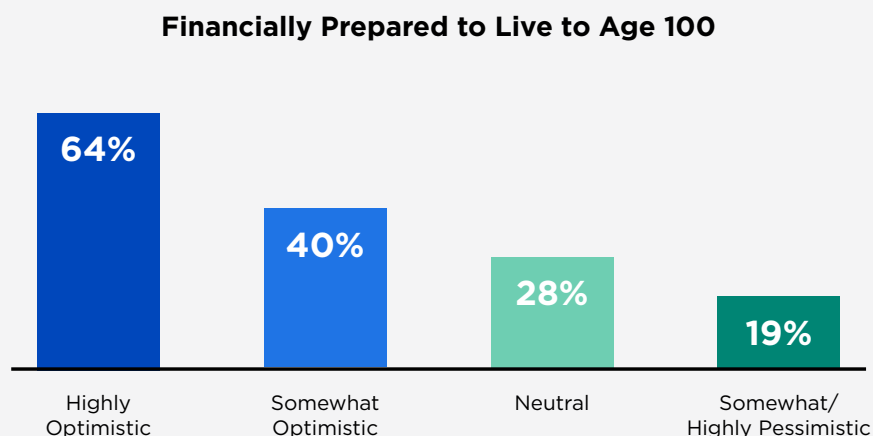
Figure 9: Age You Will be Physically Unable to Travel and Retirement Savings Rate



Those who expect to live longer, more active lifestyles save more for retirement and expect to plan for expenses into their 90s and beyond. There appears to be a relationship between a positive future mindset, beliefs about longevity, and preparation for funding a longer retirement lifespan. When asked “are you financially prepared to live to age 100,” 64% of those

who have a more optimistic mindset about future well-being are financially prepared to live to age 100 compared to 40% of those who are somewhat optimistic, 28% of those who are neutral, and 19% of respondents who are pessimistic about their future well-being.

Figure 10: Sentiment on Financial Preparedness to Live to Age 100



An important aspect of longevity awareness is the motivation to prepare for a longer retirement. A more positive mindset appears to motivate people to become better financially prepared. Those who are highly optimistic about their future well-being are more than three times as likely to be financially prepared to live to age 100 as those who are pessimistic about their well-being. Longevity is not

the only motivator of retirement preparedness. Those who anticipate a longer active life in retirement, also known as healthspan, save a consistently higher percentage of their income for retirement. Awareness of longer and more active retirements can drive savings behavior among workers preparing to fund their own future lifestyle.

Longevity and Long-Term Care Planning: A Quiet Driver of Retirement Readiness

For many Americans, living longer and remaining active well into their later years is a powerful motivator for optimistic retirement visions. But extended lifespans also bring new and often overlooked financial and emotional demands related to health and caregiving. As individuals imagine retirements filled with purpose and vitality, many are underprepared for the reality of declining health and the costs associated with it.

The likelihood of needing long-term care increases as longevity improves. Yet fewer than one in five adults in our study reported having a plan in place to fund these future care needs. This lack of preparation has significant implications. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, over 70% of adults age 65 today will require some form of long-term care during their lifetime, lasting an average of 3.7 years for women and 2.2 years for men⁸. Meanwhile, the median retirement savings for near-retirees stands at just \$144,000, barely⁹ enough to cover one year in a private nursing home room, where annual costs can exceed \$100,000¹⁰.

Despite limited uptake, long-term care insurance ownership was strongly associated with higher retirement confidence in our analysis. This relationship persisted even when controlling for asset levels and income. Individuals with LTC coverage were more likely to work with a financial advisor, have a formal retirement plan in place, and report higher overall engagement in their planning behavior. These findings suggest that LTC ownership reflects not only financial capacity but also a mindset of resilience, proactive decision-making, and a willingness to confront future risks head-on.

Awareness of long-term care realities remains stubbornly low. A 2021 survey from the Insured Retirement Institute found that only 27% of Americans aged 40 to 65 had ever spoken with a financial professional about long-term care¹¹. Findings from the RILS echo this gap, as only one-third of respondents who had a financial advisor had a plan to pay for long-term care.

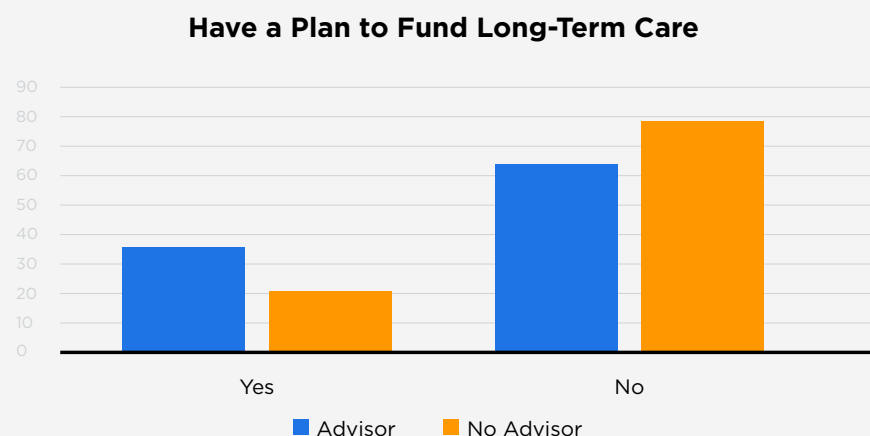
8 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. (2020). *How Much Care Will You Need?* <https://acl.gov/ltc/basic-needs/how-much-care-will-you-need>

9 Federal Reserve Board. (2023). *Survey of Consumer Finances*. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scfindex.htm>

10 Genworth. (2023). *Cost of Care Survey*. <https://www.genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care.html>

11 Insured Retirement Institute (IRI). (2021). *2021 Retirement Readiness Among Older Workers*. <https://www.ironline.org/>

Figure 11: Plan to Fund Long-Term Care



Even more concerning is the disconnect around who actually provides care. Misconceptions persist among individuals. Many assume that Medicare or standard health insurance will cover these needs, when in fact they do not. According to HHS¹² and AARP¹³, the vast majority of long-term care is delivered by unpaid family members, often spouses or adult children. Yet only 20% of respondents in the RILS study were able

to correctly identify family as the primary source of care. And just one-third assumed their own family would provide that care if needed. This mismatch between expectation and reality creates a significant blind spot in retirement planning, especially in the context of rising longevity, caregiving burdens, and declining family availability.

12 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. (2020). *How Much Care Will You Need?* <https://acl.gov/ltc/basic-needs/how-much-care-will-you-need>

13 AARP (2023). *Caregiving in the U.S.*

Confidence and Financial Well-Being: The Quiet Strength of Long-Term Care Planning

Ownership of long-term care (LTC) insurance is more than a financial product—it’s a behavioral marker tied to greater retirement preparedness, financial, and emotional confidence. In this study, individuals with LTC coverage consistently reported higher financial well-being and greater confidence in their ability to afford retirement.

Notably, these differences remained robust even after controlling for household assets, educational attainment, age, gender, race, employment status, and marital status. In other words, the association between LTC ownership and self-reported confidence

was not simply a function of wealth or demographic advantage, it reflects meaningful behavioral and psychological differences in how people prepare for future risks.

Individuals who owned LTC insurance scored, on average, 3.28 points higher on the CFPB Financial Well-Being Scale and 0.33 points higher on a four-point retirement confidence scale compared to those without coverage. These differences were both statistically significant and practically meaningful, indicating that LTC ownership is strongly linked with a sense of financial preparedness and resilience.

Figure 12: Retirement Confidence

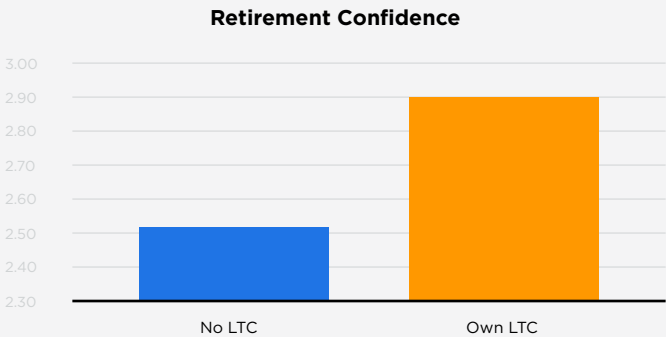
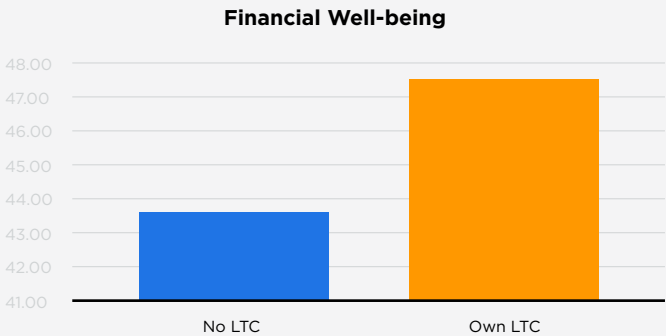


Figure 13: Financial Well-Being



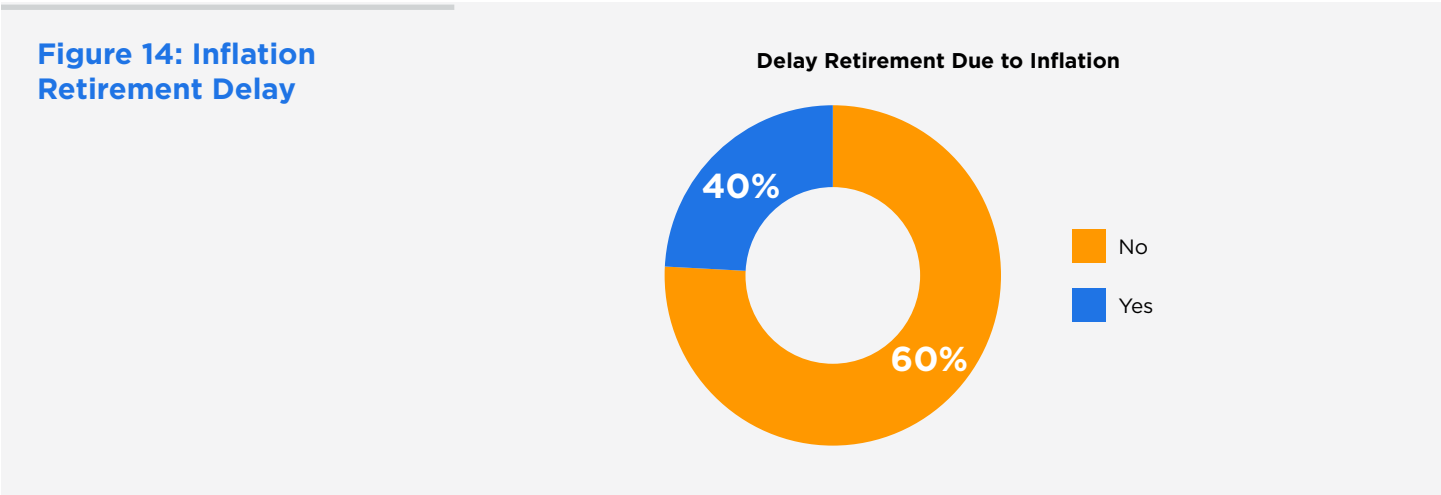
The analysis confirmed that the relationship between LTC ownership and higher confidence held true regardless of net worth or income level. This suggests that long-term care insurance may serve as a proxy for broader planning behavior: those who own it are more likely to have a formal retirement plan, to work with a financial professional, and to actively engage in decision-making around future care needs.

At the same time, disparities in financial well-being were observed among women, unmarried individuals, and those not currently employed, groups that often

shoulder caregiving responsibilities or face higher longevity risk without parallel financial protections.

Taken together, the data point to a clear takeaway: planning for long-term care is not just about managing financial risk but more of a larger component of retirement readiness. In an era defined by extended life spans, compressed family structures, and rising care costs, early conversations about LTC planning offer a pathway to greater confidence, reduced vulnerability, and a stronger sense of control in retirement.

Inflation, Retirement Delays, and the Demand for Income Security



Inflation is more than just a headline—it’s reshaping the retirement landscape in meaningful ways. Nearly two out of five (40%) respondents reported plans to delay retirement due to rising costs. Of those, 45% expect to delay by five years or more. These extended delays were most common among individuals with fewer financial resources: more than 60% of those planning to delay by five years or more reported household assets under \$100,000. Younger adults were especially affected, with nearly three-quarters of this group under the age of 60.

While inflation is outside the control of any one individual, its impact shows up clearly in personal behavior. People who plan to delay retirement because of inflation are more likely to express concern about financial markets and more likely to seek out stable, reliable sources of income. Even after accounting for age, assets, employment, and other demographic factors, interest in financial products

that offer guaranteed income was significantly higher among those delaying retirement. On average, interest increased by more than 0.3 points on a 1–7 scale.

Perceptions of market risk also played a role. Individuals who saw the market as risky were more drawn to income guarantees, while confidence in predicting the market had no measurable impact. This suggests that emotions may shape behavior more than analytical certainty.

Other trends also emerged. Interest in guaranteed income declined with age and was significantly lower among women and those not currently employed full-time. But the broader pattern held: those who feel financially vulnerable due to inflation are more receptive to products that enhance financial stability.

Summary

Planning for Longevity in the Century Club

Americans are entering a new era of retirement, one shaped by longer life spans, evolving expectations, and shifting responsibilities for funding lifestyle and care. This report underscores a core truth: longevity changes everything. It extends the financial horizon, introduces new risks, and demands deeper, more nuanced planning than ever before.

Research from The American College of Financial Services illustrates that while optimism about aging is widespread, many individuals underestimate how long they will live, when they will need care, and what it will cost. These misperceptions affect when people

claim Social Security, how long they plan for their savings to last, and whether they prepare for the real possibility of long-term care.

At the same time, the data show that knowledge, mindset, and behavior can mitigate these risks. Individuals who demonstrate higher longevity literacy, work with financial professionals, or own long-term care insurance are significantly more likely to report financial confidence, well-being and planning preparedness—even after accounting for income and wealth. These findings challenge the assumption that planning behaviors are simply a function of financial means. They are also a reflection of psychological readiness and engagement.

The future of retirement planning must center around three core imperatives:

Reframe Longevity as Both a Risk and Opportunity

Longevity should not only be seen as a risk to be managed, but as a new phase of life to be optimized. Advisors and the broader retirement planning industry must help clients understand the implications of outliving average projections—especially for healthy, higher-income individuals and couples. Planning for 35+ years in retirement must become the norm, not the exception.

Address the Emotional and Behavioral Dimensions of Planning

Financial strategies alone are not sufficient. Clients benefit from conversations that build confidence, reduce anxiety, and bridge the gap between knowledge and action. Tools like annuities, long-term care insurance and lifetime income solutions within employer sponsored retirement plans should be framed not just as financial instruments, but as enablers of confidence, independence, and dignity.

Close the Literacy and Preparedness Gap

Educational efforts must go beyond basic financial knowledge. Enhancing longevity literacy, debunking common myths (e.g., Medicare covering LTC), and helping clients articulate caregiving expectations are essential steps. Special attention must be given to underserved and vulnerable populations—women, single adults, and lower-income individuals—

who often face greater longevity risk without corresponding financial safeguards.

As America enters the Century Club, retirement planning is no longer a conversation about “how much is enough,” but about “how long is long enough.” For professionals in financial services, the path forward is clear: center the conversation around longevity, expand the toolkit beyond accumulation, and embrace the behavioral levers that drive true retirement readiness.

This material is not a recommendation to buy or sell a financial product or to adopt an investment strategy. Investors should discuss their specific situation with their financial professional.

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