



Nearly 60% of American Consumers Feel Burdened by Debt Entering the 2020s According to LendingTree Survey

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CHARLOTTE, N.C., Feb. 4, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Most Americans ushered in the new year and new decade feeling burdened by debt, although the LendingTree survey also showed that many are still optimistic about their financial futures. To measure the confidence of American consumers for the decade ahead, LendingTree commissioned a survey of more than 1,500 Americans from Dec. 13-16, 2019.



Key findings

- **Nearly 60% of Americans feel weighed down by debt heading into 2020.** Despite the heavy burden of debt, **53% of respondents think they'll get ahead financially in the next decade**, and 64% believe they'll be debt-free by 2030.
- **Nearly half (48%) feel optimistic about their financial situation** heading into the 2020s, but more than 1 in 10 are pessimistic.
- **Credit card debt weighs on consumers the most**, followed by student loan debt, which disproportionately affects younger generations.
- **Millennials feel the most weighed down by debt, but they're also the most confident in their financial future.** Although 67% of millennials currently feel buried in debt, the same number believes they'll be debt-free by 2030.
- **Older generations are the least stressed about debt.** The survey shows that 54% of baby boomers and 63% of respondents in the silent generation report not being weighed down by debt.
- **Women feel less confident about their finances going into the new decade.** Meanwhile, 53% of men feel optimistic about their finances, versus 43% of women. Coincidentally, more men reported their current financial health as "excellent" than women.
- **Republicans are more optimistic about their money than Democrats.** The survey shows that 58% of Republicans reported an optimistic outlook, versus 47% of Democrats.
- **The higher your education level, the more financially confident you are.** About 3 in 4 Americans with a bachelor's degree believe they'll be debt-free in the next 10 years, while 59% without a four-year degree said the same.
- **Nearly 57% of college graduates are optimistic about their finances** in the new year, compared to 43% of those without a bachelor's degree.

More than half of Americans feel weighed down by debt

Of the 60% that feel weighed down by debt, nearly 22% of respondents are "completely" weighed down, while 37% feel "somewhat" weighed down. Even 47% of six-figure earners feel burdened by their debt.

Financial Optimism

While 63% of consumers believe that their financial health will be either "very good" or "excellent" by the end of the decade, only 11% think that their finances will be "very bad" or "not so great." Just 11% of people are pessimistic about their finances entering the new decade.

Debt Stressors

- **Credit card:** 36.7%
- **Student loan:** 20.7%
- **Medical:** 13.7%
- **Mortgage:** 12.4%
- **Personal loan:** 11.7%
- **Other:** 4.7%

Men vs Women

Nearly 62% of men surveyed think they'll get ahead financially in the 2020s, versus 44% of women who said they think the same way. Women also have less financial confidence in general than men, and they also feel less satisfied with their current financial situations, with 14% of women reporting their current financial situation as "excellent" compared to 21% of men.

Confidence across generations

Although Americans as a whole are more optimistic than pessimistic about their financial futures, that enthusiasm is more prevalent among the generations of young professionals: Millennials and Gen Zers. Gen Zers, who are between the ages 18 to 22 in 2019, have a neutral outlook about their finances, perhaps because of their younger age. The silent generation is less neutral, perhaps because of their older age.

For both millennials and Gen Zers, 63% of each group responded that they think they'll get ahead financially during the 2020s, which is 19% more than the population as a whole. They should: Gen Zers will enter into the workforce and millennials will advance their careers during the next decade, so their financial situations should improve, hypothetically.

Data suggests that financial optimism is split among party lines, too

It's not productive to draw broad conclusions over political parties in today's polarized climate, but here's what the data shows:

- More Republicans (58%) report feeling optimistic about their finances than Democrats (47%).
- Democrats are disproportionately affected by student loan debt compared with Republicans: 24% versus 17%, respectively.
- Republicans report being stressed out about [credit card debt](#) at a higher rate (45%) than Democrats (35%).

Americans with bachelor's degrees are more financially confident

College-educated Americans feel more optimistic about their current financial situations, as well as their future wealth. They even plan to overcome student loan debt: nearly three-quarters of Americans with a bachelor's degree believe they'll be debt-free by 2030.

For the full survey report and findings, please visit: <https://www.lendingtree.com/personal/study-consumers-burdened-debt/>

Methodology

LendingTree commissioned Qualtrics to conduct an online survey of 1,552 American consumers, with the sample base proportioned to represent the overall population. The survey was fielded Dec. 13-16, 2019.

For the purposes of this survey, generations are defined by the following ages in 2019:

Generation Z: ages 18-22
Millennials: ages 23-38
Generation X: ages 39-53
Baby boomers: ages 54-73
Silent generation: ages 74+

About LendingTree

LendingTree (NASDAQ: TREE) is the nation's leading online marketplace that connects consumers with the choices they need to be confident in their financial decisions. LendingTree empowers consumers to shop for financial services the same way they would shop for airline tickets or hotel stays, comparing multiple offers from a nationwide network of over 500 partners in one simple search, and can choose the option that best fits their financial needs. Services include mortgage loans, refinances, auto loans, personal loans, business loans, student refinances, credit cards and more. Through the My LendingTree platform, consumers receive free credit scores, credit monitoring, customized recommendations to improve credit health, and notification when there are opportunities to save money. In short, LendingTree's purpose is to help simplify financial decisions for life's meaningful moments through choice, education and support. LendingTree, LLC is a subsidiary of LendingTree, Inc. For more information, go to www.lendingtree.com, dial 800-555-TREE, like our Facebook page and/or follow us on Twitter @LendingTree.

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