



Fewer Than Half Have More Emergency Savings Than Credit Card Debt *45% Say Building Savings is More Important Than Tackling Debt*

New York – February 20, 2020 -- Just 49% of Americans have more emergency savings than credit card debt, according to a new survey from Bankrate.com.

For the full report please visit: <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/financial-security-february-2020/>

This is up from 44% last year, but still lower than at any point from 2011-2018 when it ranged from 51% - 58%. Just more than a quarter (28%) have more credit card debt than emergency savings: little changed from 29% last year and on par with the highest level between 2011-2018 when this ranged from 21% - 28%. Another 16% have no credit card debt, but no emergency savings either.

- 45% of American households say increasing emergency savings is a higher priority than paying down debt
- 38% say paying down debt is a higher priority than boosting emergency savings
- 6% are focused on both at the same time
- 8% say neither one is a priority

“High rate credit card debt should be attacked with urgency,” says Greg McBride, CFA, Chief Financial Analyst for Bankrate.com. “Utilize zero percent balance transfer offers, trim other expenses, and generate additional income through freelance work or a second job to make 2020 the year you pay off credit card debt for good.”

Younger millennials (age 24-30) are the only age group more likely to have credit card debt in excess of emergency savings (46% vs. 35% that have more in emergency savings). The likelihood of having more credit card debt than emergency savings declines with age, from 46% among younger millennials to 15% of those age 66 and older.

“It takes time to build emergency savings and it is a moving target as expenses increase from young adulthood to middle age,” adds McBride. “The habit of regular saving is critical to starting, growing, and replenishing your emergency savings cushion.”

Millennials are split – with younger millennials more focused on increasing emergency savings while older millennials (age 31-39) are the only age group more focused on paying down debt than boosting emergency savings.

Methodology: This study was conducted for Bankrate via telephone by SSRS on its Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus is a national, weekly, dual-frame bilingual telephone survey. Interviews were conducted from January 21-26, 2020 among a sample of 1,011 respondents in English (976) and Spanish (35). Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (307) and cell phone (704, including 489 without a landline phone). The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.51% at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population.

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