# **Methodology**

Harris Poll® fielded the study on behalf of the National Endowment for Financial Education from December 16-20, 2016, via its QuickQuery online omnibus service, interviewing 2,088 U.S. adults aged 18+. Data were weighted using propensity score weighting to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

**Key Findings – Financial Resolutions**

Over two thirds (68%) of U.S. adults will make financial New Year’s resolutions. Among those that plan to, top goals include setting and following a budget (41%), making a plan to get out of debt (39%), boosting retirement savings (35%) and establishing savings (any type) (33%).

* Men are significantly more likely to resolve to boost their retirement savings than women (42% vs. 28%)

**Key Findings – Largest Expenses in 2016**

U.S. adults feel that paying off debt (39%), home expenses (32%) and transportation expenses (31%) will be among their top 3 largest expenses in 2017.

**Key Findings – Financial Setbacks**

Almost two thirds of U.S. adults admit to experiencing financial setbacks in 2016. Transportation issues (23%), housing repairs/maintenance (20%) and medical care for injury/illness (18%) topped the list.

**Key Findings – Major Unexpected Expense**

If faced with a major unexpected expense, over a third of U.S. adults say they’d pay for it with the help of credit card(s) or emergency savings (both 35%), closely followed by cash (32%).

* Men (40%) are significantly more likely than women (24%) to use cash to pay for unexpected expenses

**Key Findings – Quality of Financial Life**

Overall, the majority if U.S. adults feel their financial life is about what they expected it to be (55%), and 15% say it’s better than they expected. However, 31% of U.S. adults say their financial life quality is worse than they expected.

* Men (18%) are significantly more likely than women (12%) to feel their financial life quality better than they expected.

**Key Findings – Paycheck To Paycheck**

Overall, nearly half (48%) of U.S. adults admit to living paycheck to paycheck, while 47% do not.

* Women are significantly more likely than men to live paycheck to paycheck (51% vs. 45%)

**Key Findings – Reasons For Living Paycheck To Paycheck**

U.S. adults feel that credit card debt (24%), employment struggles (22%) and mortgage/rent (18%) are among the biggest reasons why people live paycheck to paycheck.

* Men are more likely to cite credit card debt as a reason why people live paycheck to paycheck than women (28% vs. 21%).

**Key Findings – Financial Stress**

Not surprisingly, over three quarters of U.S. adults say something causes them financial stress (78%). Saving money (53%) tops the list, followed by debt (44%).

* Women are significantly more likely than men to feel financial stress (82% vs. 74%) at all, specifically over saving money for emergencies (40% vs. 33%) and student loan debt (17% vs. 12%).

**Key Findings – Financial Relief**

Among those who say something causes them financial stress, 42% say not having to worry about saving would give them the most financial relief. Similarly, for those whom debt causes stress, 38% say not having to worry about debt would give them the most financial relief.

* Women (42%) are more likely than men (35%) to say not having to worry about debt would provide relief; conversely, men (46%) are more likely than women (38%) to say not having to worry about saving would do this for them.

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