MIT AGELAB
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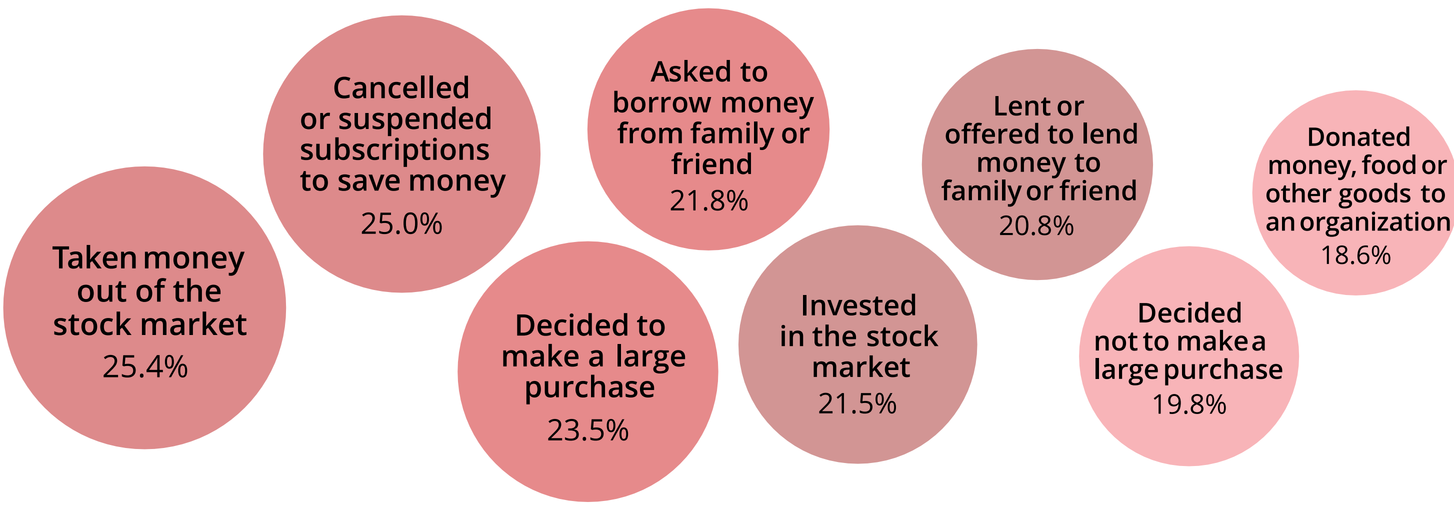
COVID-19: Personal Financial Behaviors

COVID-19 has had a major impact on the personal finances of many Americans. As the pandemic spread, businesses closed their doors, employment dropped, and investment portfolios lost substantial value. During the early phase of the pandemic in the U.S. in March 2020, the MIT AgeLab surveyed people of different generations to explore COVID-19's downstream effects, including changing financial behaviors and attitudes. Survey conducted March 17-19, 2020.

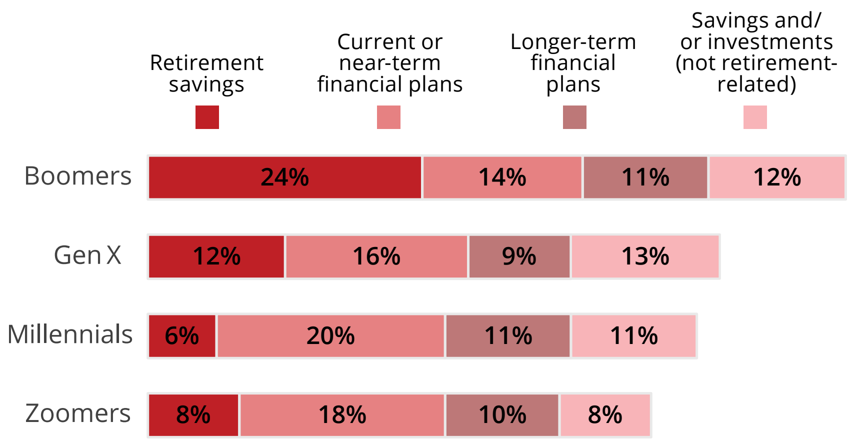
Have you done any of the following within the past month due to COVID-19?



51.4% of the overall sample reported taking at least one financial action due to COVID-19. Groups reporting higher levels of financial activity included people with higher household income levels, men, and those who either had been diagnosed with COVID-19 or knew someone who had. Boomers were less likely than other generations to have engaged in financial activities—even controlling for income and gender.

Financial challenges in response to COVID-19: Top of mind for many

Financial challenges as one of top 2 challenges by generation

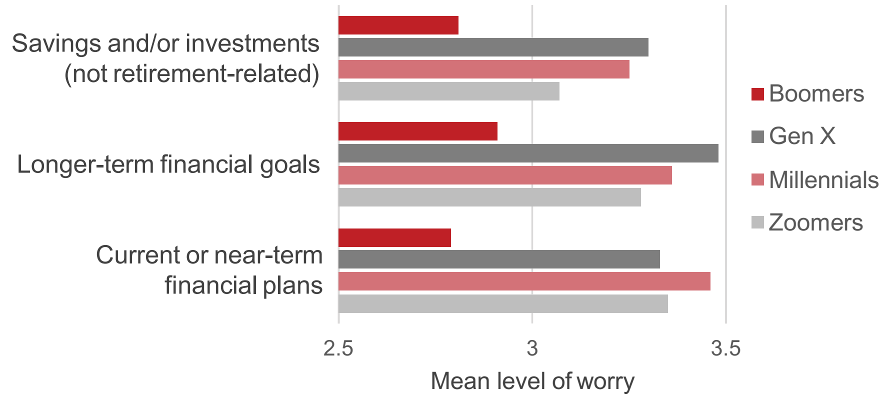


People were asked to select the top two challenges they faced as a result of COVID-19. 38.3% of respondents selected at least one financial impact as one of their top two challenges, and 8.4% selected two financial impacts. Despite reporting less worry about financial matters than other generations, Boomers were more likely to select financial challenges in their top two than other generations, primarily as a result of concerns about their retirement savings.

Financial worries as a result of COVID-19

Participants were asked about their COVID-19-related worries in different financial domains.

Higher household income was associated with higher levels of worry across all financial domains, including retirement savings. Baby Boomers, however, were less worried than other generations about their finances in all domains with the exception of retirement savings.

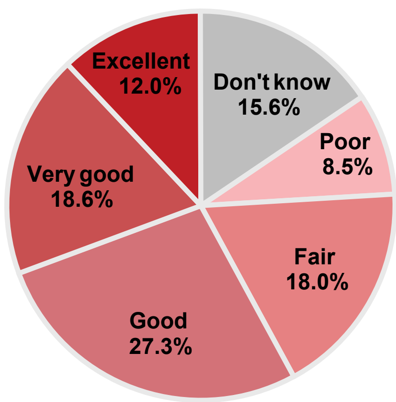


Scores ranged from 1 to 5; higher scores indicate higher levels of worry.

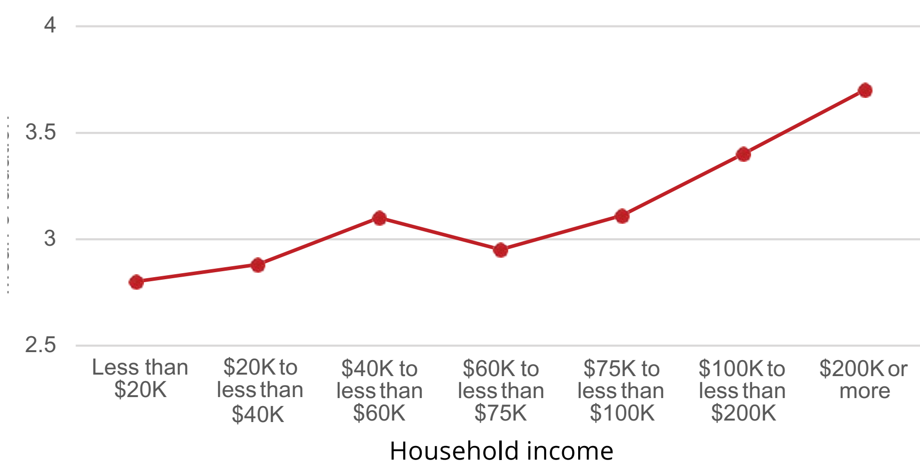
How would you rate the response of financial institutions to COVID-19?

Evaluation of financial institution/bank responses to COVID-19 by household income

Overall sample



Evaluation by household income



Responses were assessed with the following options: Evaluation of Response: 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = very good, and 5 = excellent.

Participants evaluated the responses of financial institutions to COVID-19 moderately. Those with higher incomes (which included a higher share of Gen X'ers and Boomers) responded more positively to the response of financial institutions and banks.

These results represent a snapshot of perceptions in the time window in which data were collected: March 17-19. Sample collected from Qualtrics Panels. Number of cases for analysis ranged from 934-1205. Ages in 2020: Baby Boomers, 56-74; Gen X, 40-55; Millennials, 24-39; and Zoomers, 18-23. Age groups older than Baby Boomers were also sampled, but there were too few responses in this round to report significant findings. The MIT AgeLab continues to monitor how different generations' attitudes and perceptions shift over time. The source for all data and graphics can be noted as (MIT AgeLab, 2020).

What is known about COVID-19 changes daily. For more information about preventing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping yourself and your family safe, visit the Centers for Disease Control website.