

Breed's Hill Newsletter

Planning Your Financial Future

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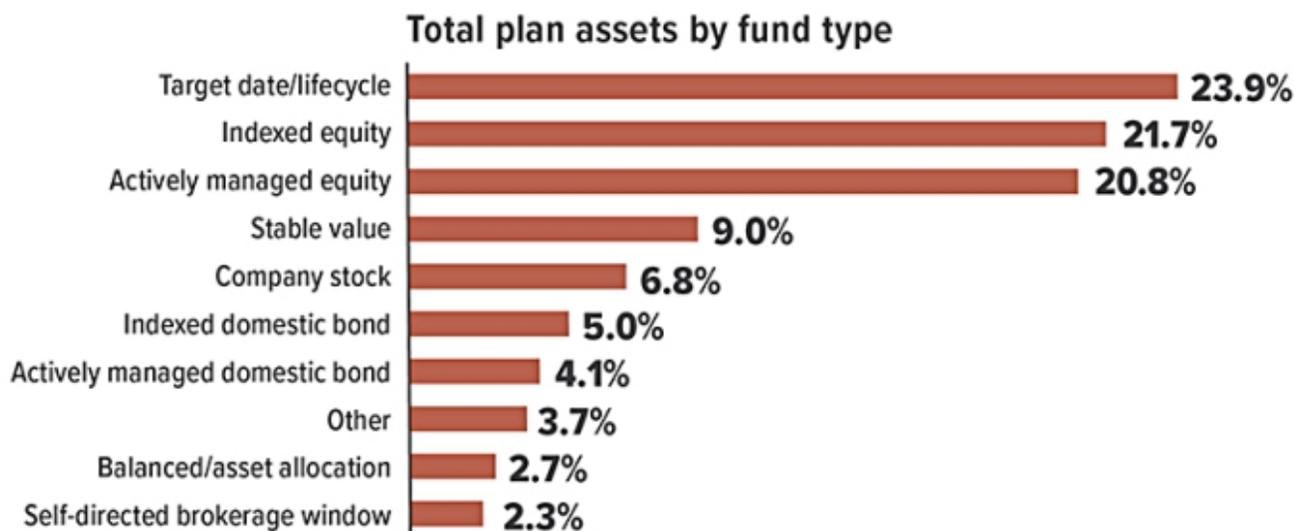
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How Are 401(k) Plan Participants Investing Their Money?

Created in 1996, National 401(k) Day has historically been celebrated on the Friday following Labor Day to shine a spotlight on this important employee benefit. Since the late 1990s, plans have evolved substantially, and most participants can now choose from a diverse variety of investments. The chart below shows how 401(k) and profit-sharing funds were invested in 2020.



Source: Plan Sponsor Council of America, 2021

All investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal, and there is no guarantee that any investment strategy will be successful.

Mutual funds are sold by prospectus. Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. The prospectus, which contains this and other information about the investment company, can be obtained from your financial professional. Be sure to read the prospectus carefully before deciding whether to invest.

How Much Life Insurance Do You Need?

Throughout your life, your financial needs will change and life insurance can help you meet some of those needs. But how much life insurance do you need? There are a number of approaches to help determine how much life insurance you should have. Here are three of those methods.

Family Needs Approach

With this approach, you divide your family's financial needs into three main categories:

- Immediate needs at death, such as cash needed for estate taxes and settlement costs, credit-card and other debts including a mortgage (unless you choose to include mortgage payments as part of ongoing family expenses), and an emergency fund for unexpected costs
- Ongoing income needs for expenses such as food, clothing, shelter, and transportation, which will vary in amount and duration, depending on a number of factors, such as your spouse's age, your children's ages, your surviving spouse's income, your debt, and whether you'll provide funds for your surviving spouse's retirement
- Special funding needs, such as college, charitable bequests, funding a buy/sell agreement, or business succession planning

Once you determine the total amount of your family's financial needs, subtract that total from the available assets your family could use to help defray some or all of these expenses. The difference, if any, represents an amount that the life insurance proceeds, and the income from future investment of those proceeds, might cover.

Income Replacement Calculation

This method is based on the premise that family income earners should buy enough life insurance to replace the loss of income due to an untimely death. Under this approach, the amount of life insurance you should consider is based on the value of the income that you can expect to earn during your lifetime, taking into account such factors as inflation and anticipated salary increases, as well as the interest that the lump-sum life insurance proceeds may generate.

Estate Preservation and Liquidity Needs Approach

This method attempts to calculate the amount of life insurance needed to settle your estate. Settlement costs may include estate taxes and funeral, legal, and accounting expenses. The goal is to preserve the value of your estate at the level prior to your death and to avoid an unwanted sale of assets to pay for any of these estate settlement expenses. This approach

takes into consideration the amount of life insurance you may want in order to maintain the current value of your estate for your family, while providing the cash needed to cover death expenses and taxes.

Unfortunately, many people underestimate their life insurance needs. Often, the purchase of life insurance is based solely on its cost instead of the benefit it might provide. By the same token, it's possible to have more life insurance than you need. September is Life Insurance Awareness Month, a good time to review your life insurance to help ensure that it matches your current and projected needs.

The cost and availability of life insurance depend on factors such as age, health, and the type and amount of insurance purchased. Before implementing a strategy involving life insurance, it would be prudent to make sure that you are insurable. As with most financial decisions, there are expenses associated with the purchase of life insurance. Policies commonly have mortality and expense charges. Any guarantees are contingent on the financial strength and claims-paying ability of the issuing insurance company. Optional benefits are available for an additional cost and are subject to contractual terms, conditions, and limitations.

Interest in Life Insurance Stays Strong



68%
of life insurance owners report
feeling financially secure



44%
say they'd face financial hardship
within 6 months if a primary
wage earner died



41%
say they need life insurance —
or more of it



31%
of people say COVID-19 has made
it more likely they'll purchase life
insurance within the next 12 months

Source: 2022 Insurance Barometer Study, Life Happens and LIMRA

Finding Forgotten Funds

As a child, you may have dreamed about finding buried treasure, but you probably realized at an early age that it was unlikely you would discover a chest full of pirate booty. However, the possibility that you have unclaimed funds or other assets waiting for you is not a fantasy.

Billions of dollars in unclaimed property are reported each year, and 10% of people have some form of property waiting to be returned by state unclaimed property programs.¹ So how do you find what is owed to you, even if it's not a fortune? One of the challenges of finding lost property is knowing where to look.

State Programs

Every state has an unclaimed property program that requires companies and financial institutions to turn inactive account assets over to the state if they have lost contact with the rightful owner for a period of time. In most states, this dormancy period is three to five years, but may be shorter or longer depending on the type of property and on state law. It then becomes the state's responsibility to locate the owner.

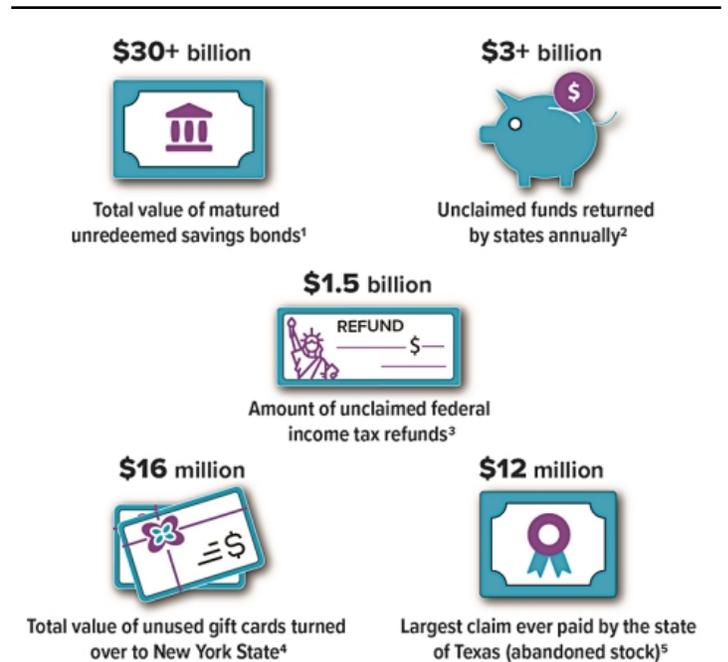
For state programs, unclaimed property might include financial accounts, stocks, uncashed dividends and payroll checks, utility security deposits, insurance payments and policies, trust distributions, mineral royalty payments, gift cards, and the contents of safe-deposit boxes. State-held property generally can be claimed in perpetuity by original owners and heirs.

Most states participate in a free national database sponsored by the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators called [MissingMoney.com](https://www.missingmoney.com). You might also check specific databases for every state where you have lived. For more information and links to individual state programs, see the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators at [unclaimed.org](https://www.unclaimed.org).

Even if your search isn't fruitful the first time you look, check back often because states regularly update their databases.

Federal Programs

Unclaimed property held by federal agencies might include tax refunds, pension funds, funds from failed banks and credit unions, funds owed investors from U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission enforcement cases, refunds from mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration, and matured unredeemed savings bonds. There is no single searchable database for federal agencies, but you can find more information and links to sites you can search at [usa.gov/unclaimed-money](https://www.usa.gov/unclaimed-money).



Sources: 1) U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2022 (as of December 2021); 2) National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators, 2022; 3) Internal Revenue Service, 2022 (data for 2018 tax year); 4) Office of the New York State Comptroller, 2022 (data for 2021); 5) Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, 2022

Submitting a Claim

To claim property, follow the instructions given, which will vary by the type of asset and where the property is held. You'll need to verify ownership, typically by providing information about yourself (such as your Social Security number and proof of address), and submit a claim form either online or by mail. What if the listed property owner is deceased? A claim may be made by a survivor and will be payable according to state or federal law.

Avoiding Scams

Finding and receiving any unclaimed property to which you are entitled should not cost you money. Some states allow legitimate third-party "finders" to offer to help rightful owners locate property for a fee, but you do not need to pay them in order to receive the property. Be on the lookout for scammers who pretend to have unclaimed property in order to trick you into revealing personal or financial information. Before you sign any contracts or give out any information, contact your state's unclaimed property office.

1) National Association of State Treasurers, 2022

Building Financial Resilience

Inflation, roller-coaster markets, global events, and life circumstances can test anyone's fortitude. You may not feel ready to handle these pressure-filled times and might worry about the potential effects on your financial well-being. Fortunately, you can take steps to build the resilience you need to help handle the turbulence and hopefully emerge even stronger.

Focus on the Foundation

Developing a new budget or reviewing an existing one may help reduce stress by reminding you that you still have control over many aspects of your personal finances. A budget outlines your income and expenses and shows how much money is coming in compared to how much money is going out. If you find that you are spending more than you realized, you can make adjustments.

An important companion to a budget is an emergency fund. When an unexpected expense comes up, you can use your emergency reserves to cover it, instead of dipping into long-term savings or racking up costly credit-card debt that could throw your budget off track at a time you can least afford it. Consider starting an emergency fund and build it up over time.

Stress-Test Your Portfolio

When you're investing for retirement or another financial goal, assessing the potential impact of various scenarios may help you prepare for unexpected events. This may be done using computer

simulations to analyze how your portfolio might perform. Doing this at regular intervals may help take some of the emotion out of decision-making during stressful times, helping you address gaps and opportunities.

There is no assurance that a simulation will be accurate. Because of the many variables involved, you should not rely on simulations without realizing their limitations. All investing involves risk, and there is no assurance that any financial strategy will be successful.

It's better to look ahead and prepare, than to look back and regret.

Jackie Joyner-Kersey

Source: BrainyQuote.com

Prepare for the Future

Of course, you're never going to be prepared for every financial scenario. But developing a written financial strategy and reviewing it periodically may help you thoughtfully navigate life's twists and turns. It documents and organizes the pieces of your financial picture, helping you stay focused on the future as you weather the current storms.

Building financial resilience is an ongoing process, and it's never too late to start. Becoming better positioned for downturns can help you feel more confident that you can handle whatever challenges come your way.

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