

Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection

# Making Ends Meet Survey

### Want to take the survey online?

Mobile

Text your unique survey PIN number to 202-883-3381 to receive a link to directly connect to your survey or;

Web

Go to www.CFPBMakingEndsMeet.com and enter your unique survey PIN number and 5-digit zip code.

Questions? If you have any technical difficulties, including problems with the website or any questions about the survey, please call 1-855-246-9457.

For more information about the BCFP, visit www.consumerfinance.gov.



## **Making Ends Meet Survey**

#### What is the BCFP?

The Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (BCFP) is sponsoring this survey. The BCFP is a Federal agency created in 2010 to make mortgage, credit card, automobile, and other consumer loans work better and ensure that these markets are fair, transparent, and competitive.

#### What is the Making Ends Meet survey?

Many households run out of money at one time or another. This survey will help us understand your experiences and decisions when money gets tight. Because people's experiences can vary widely, please fill out the survey even if you have never run out of or borrowed money. The information you provide will help shape federal policies to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and respectfully when they borrow money to make ends meet.

#### How long will it take?

We expect the survey will take about 30 minutes, but the time may vary based on your experiences.

#### Who should complete this survey?

It is important that this survey is only completed by the person named on the enclosed letter.

#### Who will see my responses, and how will my responses be used?

Your responses will be used by researchers at the BCFP and others to understand consumers' experiences. Your responses will be kept private. Participation in the survey will not affect your credit or credit score.

#### How was I selected for this survey?

People were selected at random from across the United States.

#### **Privacy Act Statement**

#### 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(e)(3)

The information you provide through your responses to Westat will assist the study sponsor, the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection ("Bureau"), in understanding people's experiences when money gets tight.

The Bureau will not obtain nor access any directly identifying information from Westat about study participants. The information collected by Westat will include direct identifying personally identifiable information (PII) in order to contact you and will be combined with other data that the Bureau has collected to understand conditions in consumer credit markets in a way that you cannot be identified. The Bureau will only receive and keep response data stripped of direct identifying PII.

Information collected on behalf of the Bureau by Westat will be treated in accordance with the System of Records Notice ("SORN"), CFPB.022, Market and Consumer Research Records, https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/14/2012-27582/privacy-act-of-1974-as-amended. Although the Bureau does not anticipate further disclosing the information provided, it may be disclosed as indicated in the Routine Uses described in the SORN. Direct identifying information will only be used by Westat to facilitate the study and will be kept private except as required by law. The Bureau may make an anonymous version of the survey data publically available.

This collection of information is authorized by Pub. L. No. 111-203, Title X, Sections 1013 and 1022, codified at 12 U.S.C. §§ 5493 and 5512.

Participation in this exercise is voluntary. You may withdraw participation at any time. However, if you do not include the requested information, you may not participate in the study.

#### **Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3170-0066. It expires on 10/31/2019. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average approximately 30 minutes per response Comments regarding this collection of information, including the estimated response time, suggestions for improving the usefulness of the information, or suggestions for reducing the burden to respond to this collection should be submitted to the Bureau at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Attention: PRA Office), 1700 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20552, or by email to CFPB PRA@cfpb.gov.

### A. Your General Financial Situation and Experiences

#### 1. How well do these statements describe you or your situation?

	This statement describes my situation							
	Completely	Very well	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all			
I know how to make complex financial decisions.								
I am just getting by financially.								
I am concerned that the money I have or will save won't last.								
Because of my money situation, I feel like I will never have the things I want in life.								

2.	How	often	do	these	sta	tement	ts a	apply	to	you	1?
----	-----	-------	----	-------	-----	--------	------	-------	----	-----	----

<b>3.</b>	What sources of information do you use to make decisions about borrowing, credit, savings, or
	investments?

	<b>Y</b> es	NO
Family or friends	0.0	0.0
Financial planner, advisor, or broker		0.0
Banker	0.0	0.0
Internet, web service or application		0.0
Internet search		0.0
Lawyer or accountant		0.0
Books, magazines, newspapers, or mail	0.0	

	This statement applies to me							
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never			
I have money left over at the end of the month.								
My finances control my life.								

### **B.** Your Household and its Finances

4. Do you have a spouse or partner you share	9. What was your household's approximate
finances with?	annual income in 2017 from all sources
imances with:	(wages, tips, interest, child support,
Yes	alimony, investment or rental income,
□ No	retirement, Social Security, and
5. Do you have any children, parents,	government benefits such as food stamps)?
relatives, or other dependents that you	□ \$15,000 or less
share your finances with or who are	□ \$15,001 to \$20,000
financially dependent on you?	□ \$20,001 to \$40,000
☐ Yes	\$40,001 to \$70,000
□ No	\$70,001 to \$100,000
	☐ More than \$100,000
The next questions are about your household. By	10. How did this total annual household
household, we mean you and anyone you share your	income in 2017 compare to what you would
finances with.	expect in a "normal" year?
If you answered Yes to question 4, question 5, or both,	<u>-</u>
please answer the following questions for both you	Higher than normal
and the people you share your finances with.	☐ Normal
6. Who is responsible for making day-to-day	Lower than normal
decisions about money in your household?	11. Do you expect your income next year to be
☐ I make these decisions by myself	higher or lower than it was in the past?
☐ I make these decisions along with someone	Higher
else	About the same
☐ Someone else makes these decisions	Lower
	12. About how much do you think you and your family need to have in savings for
7. Do you or anyone in your household	emergencies and other unexpected things
currently have a checking account?	that may come up?
☐ Yes	\$
□ No	•
8. How does your household mostly pay for	13. What is your current work status? Mark all
bills and purchases? Please mark all that	that apply including for your spouse or
•	partner if you have one.  Spouse/
apply.	You Partner
Cash	Self-employed
Debit cards	Work full time
Checks	Work part time
☐ Credit cards	Retired
Pre-paid cards	Temporarily laid off or on leave Unemployed
<ul><li>Automatic payments</li><li>Pay online</li></ul>	Not working for pay (homemaker,
☐ Money orders	student, disabled, etc.)
☐ Mobile app	
Other (please specify)	14. Are you actively looking for a job or
	another job if you already have one?
	☐ Yes
	□ No

15. Which best describes your household's	20. Does your household have any stocks,
income from month to month?	bonds, or mutual funds outside of
☐ Income is about the same each	retirement accounts?
month→ Skip to question 17	☐ Yes
Income varies somewhat from	□ No
month to month	
Income varies a lot from month	21. In the past 12 months, have you or others
to month	in your household had an overdraft on a
<b>16.</b> Does your household's income vary	checking or savings account or had a
from month to month for any of the	payment turned down because the account
following reasons?	balance was less than the charge?
Tono wing reasons.	$\square$ No $\longrightarrow$ Skip to question 25
Yes No	Yes, had an overdraft
Bonuses, commissions, or tips	Yes, turned down
Seasonal employment	<b>C22.</b> In the past 12 months, how many
Variable work hours or irregular	times have you or others in your
work — —	household had an overdraft on a
Illness or injury affect my hours	checking or savings account or had a
Unemployment   Investment income	payment turned down?
	☐ 1-3 times
Tax refunds or unexpected taxes	4-10 times
Number of paychecks varies	☐ More than 10 times
Variable self-employment income  Overtime	23. The last time this happened, did you
Overtime	pay a fee?
17. Do you expect your income from month to	☐ Yes
month to be more or less variable in the	□ No
next six months than it was in the last year?	L24. The last time this happened, were you
☐ More variable	surprised or did you expect to
☐ About the same	overdraft your account when you
Less variable	made the transaction?
40 77711 02 03 04	Surprised
18. Which of the following statements comes	☐ I thought it was possible
closest to describing your household's	☐ Expected to overdraft
monthly savings habits?	25. Please estimate the total amount of money
☐ Don't save – usually spend more than	your household has right now in checking
income	and savings accounts.
☐ Don't save – usually spend about as much	
as income	Less than \$100
Save whatever is left over at the end of the	\$100 to \$500
month – no regular plan	\$501 to \$1,000
Save regularly by putting money aside each	□ \$1,001 to \$3,000
month	□ \$3,001 to \$5,000
19. Does your household have IRAs, 401(k)	□ \$5,001 to \$10,000
accounts, a pension plan, or other	☐ More than \$10,000
retirement accounts?	
☐ Yes	
□ No	

26. Do you or someone in your household own	C. Experiences with Credit
your current residence?	o. Experiences with ordait
Yes  No 27. If No, do you  Rent your current residence  Don't pay rent because residence owned by a family member  Don't pay rent for another reason  38. How much does your household spend on rent or your mortgage each month?  O or not applicable  Less than \$500  \$500 to \$999  \$1000 to \$1999  \$2000 to \$3999  More than \$4000	32. Have you taken out a payday loan in the past 6 months? (A payday loan is a loan that you must repay, rollover, or make a payment on your next payday.)  Yes  No  33. Have you rolled over a payday loan more than once in the last 6 months?  Yes  No  34. Do you still owe money on any payday loan?  Yes  No  35. Did you take out a payday loan online in the past 6
29. Imagine your household had an unexpected	months?
emergency expense of \$2,000 that could not	↓ Yes □ No
be avoided. How much of this expense	36. Have you taken out a pawn shop loan in the
Could you pay within a week?  None of it Some of it, but less than \$1,000 \$1,000 or more, but less than \$2,000 All of the \$2,000  30. If your household lost its main source of income, about how long could you and your household cover typical expenses by borrowing, using savings, selling assets, or seeking help from family or friends?  Less than two weeks About one month About two months Three to six months More than six months More than six months  31. In the past 12 months, did you or anyone in your household cash a check someplace other than a bank or financial institution?  Please mark all that apply.  Yes − a grocery, convenience, or retail store Yes − a check cashing or payday-lending store Yes − other (please specify)	past 6 months?  Yes No 37. Do you still owe money on any pawn shop loan? Yes No 38. Have you taken out a new loan to buy a car in the past 6 months?  Yes No 39. Do you still owe money on any auto loan? No Yes 40. Have you taken out an auto-title loan in the past 6 months? (An auto-title loan uses the car's value to borrow money for a short period of time.) Yes No 41. Do you still owe money on any auto-title loan? Yes No

42. At any time think of apply changed you you might be Yes No  43. How likely d get one of the months?	lying for mind turned or you the start of th	r credit because l down? nink it is	or a loan you thou s that you	but ight	48. When was the last time you checked your credit score or credit report?  Never  At least one year ago Within the last year  49. The last time you checked your score or credit report, how did you check it?
	Very likely	Likely	Un- likely	Very unlikely	☐ A free website like
New credit card Mortgage to buy a house					AnnualCreditReport.com  A paid website  A credit monitoring service  Your credit card statement
Loan to buy a car	0.0	Ç.C.			Some other way
Pawn shop loan Auto-title loan Payday loan in store					50. How do you think your credit score has changed since the last time you checked it?  Gone up Stayed about the same
Payday loan online					☐ Gone down
0	Did you on any o naking	have an f your c	dit card? unpaid t ards afte t paymen	oalance r	score?  Yes No  Solution  Mostly  Mostly  Mostly  Mostly  Mostly
			of your cr		All lenders give about the same rates for the same type of loan.
f		g will ch	ange in t		Having a low credit score may keep you from getting a job.
The helence		Decrease	Stay the same	Increase	Checking your credit score is bad
The balance carry month month				200	Applying for a lot of credit in a short time harms your credit score.
Your credit limit Number of c					A foreclosure leaves your credit
47. In the past y had a credit the amount y	ear, hav card ca	ve you u	nexpecte	dly it on	

# D. Running Out of Money

62. Which of the following did you do when you	64. A major expense for one thing may m	ake it
had difficulty paying that bill or expense?	hard to pay other bills or expenses. V	Vhen you
Please mark all that apply.	ran out of money, what did you have	difficulty
Did not pay for all of this expense	<b>paying for?</b> Please mark all that apply.	
Negotiated a lower or delayed payment for this	☐ A medical expense	
expense	A car or vehicle repair	
Cut back on other expenses	A home repair	
Paid another bill late or skipped a payment  Increased income, for example, by working	☐ Food ☐ Mortgage or rent	
overtime or taking an extra job	Utilities Utilities	
☐ Sold something	Other regular household expenses	
Pawned something	Another major expense	
Took money from savings, investment, or a retirement account	Other (please specify)	
Borrowed from an IRA, 401k, or retirement		
account		
Used a credit card	E. Household Events	
Took out or used a home equity line of credit  Took out a loan from a bank, credit union, or other	E. Houselloid Evellis	
financial institution		
Borrowed from friends or family	65. In the past 12 months, has your house	
Took out a payday loan	experienced a significant, unexpected	
Took out an auto-title loan  Borrowed from an unlicensed lender who charges	involuntary drop in income from any	of the
interest	following?	Yes No
Other (please specify)	Period of unemployment	
	Reduction in work hours	
	Changed to a lower-paying job	
63. If you borrowed money, why did you choose	Loss of government benefits	
this way of borrowing money over another		
option? Please mark all that apply		
☐ It was the lowest cost option	Could not work because someone in	
☐ It was familiar; I had used it before	your household was in jail	
☐ The terms, like price or repayment options, were		
easy to understand	66. In the past 12 months, have any of the	
☐ It was convenient	following happened to your household	a? Yes No
☐ It was the only option I could qualify for	Someone in your household got married	
☐ I could get the money quickly		
☐ There was no credit check ☐ It was available online	separated	
Family or friends recommended it to me	Someone in your household died,	
☐ I did not want anybody to know that I needed	including a parent	
money	Someone was born, adopted, or moved	
Other (please specify)	into your household	
1 4/	Someone left your household	
	Natural disaster affected your home or business	
	You moved to a new residence	_
	Tou moved to a new residence	

67. In the past 12 months, has your household experienced a significant unexpected expense from any of the following?			I	F. Perspectives				
A major medical or dental expense Gift or loan to a family member or friend outside your household A major vehicle repair or replacement A major house or appliance repair A TV, computer, or mobile phone repair or replacement Legal expenses or fines Taxes or fees Theft or robbery Increase in child care or dependent care expenses Other major unexpected expense  68. In the next 6 months, do you expect at following to occur?  To move to a new residence A period of unemployment Other reduction in income	No	p	70. Will box per oth clo wh	es andeers.  hen rrow ople s ners o sest t and b Not at A littl A mod A grea ople o ry ca  Mos Nee ppos teries	making majing money search for to describin orrowing of all le derate amour at deal lly speakin can be trusteful in deast people cand to be very of e you were so, but you of the structure of the control of the contro	jor decisions a or getting cre the very best the chart of the following how much greating cred at the chart you getting with people trusted careful offered severations.	about dit, some erms while wing comes you search it? say that most u need to be ple? al possible nly one. In	
A major medical expense To get a promotion Go on vacation Pay a large education related expense To buy a house				lik		Which one	omes A and B of these five lo  Outcome A  50% chance	
To buy a car A major home renovation or repair Birth, adoption, or other addition to your household						Lottery 1 Lottery 2 Lottery 3	Get \$42 Get \$34 Get \$26	Lose \$6 Lose \$2 Get \$2
Someone in your household to get married  69. If you answered yes to any of the even question 67, do you expect to need to cover any of these expenses?		w to				Lottery 4 Lottery 5	Get \$18 Get \$10	Get \$6 Get \$10
Cover any of these expenses:  ☐ Yes ☐ No				col	uld d m. C/ a. b.	weide when hoose one of Would you \$1000 is \$1000 is \$1000 is \$1100 is \$1000	you would ge ption for each rather get: n one month n six months rather get: n one month n six months	

### G. You and Your Household

74. What is your sex?  Male Female	82. Besides you and your spouse, how many other adults live in your household?
75. How old are you?	<ul><li>☐ No others</li><li>☐ 1 other</li><li>☐ 2 or more</li></ul>
<ul> <li>Less than 25 years</li> <li>25–34 years</li> <li>35–44 years</li> <li>45–54 years</li> <li>55–61 years</li> <li>62 years or older</li> </ul>	83. How many children live in your household?  No children  1 2 or more
76. What is your highest level of education?	84. How many children do you currently have in college?
<ul> <li>Less than a high school degree</li> <li>High school degree</li> <li>Technical or vocational degree</li> <li>Some college, but no degree</li> <li>Two-year college degree</li> <li>Four-year college degree</li> <li>Postgraduate degree (for example, MA, PhD, JD, MBA, MD)</li> </ul>	None or not applicable  1 2 or more  85. Thinking of the child who most recently started college, in what year did that person first enroll in college?
77. Are you currently attending school?	
☐ Yes ☐ No	86. If you helped any of your children pay for college, how did you do so?
<ul> <li>78. Is English your preferred language?</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>79. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>□ Took money out of savings (including a retirement account)</li> <li>□ Took out a parental education loan</li> <li>□ Used a home equity loan or refinanced a mortgage</li> <li>□ Took out another loan</li> </ul>
origin? □ Yes	87. What is your military status?
□ No	Spouse/ You Partner
80. What is your race? Mark all that apply.  White Black or African American American Indian or Alaska Native Asian	No military service On active duty Reserve or National Guard Veteran or retired  88. Do you have a mobile phone?
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Yes
81. What is your current marital status?	□ No
<ul><li>☐ Married</li><li>☐ Living with a partner</li><li>☐ Never married</li></ul>	89. How do you access the internet?  Yes No Your phone
☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed	A computer at home
	or a relative's home)

# **G.** Household Expenditures and Finances

90. In the past five years, have you been more than 90 days overdue on a loan, such as for a credit card
or mortgage, or another bill?  Yes
□ No
91. Have you applied for any type of credit or loan in the last five years?  Yes
$\square$ No $\square$
92. In the past five years, were you turned down for a loan or not given as much credit as
you applied for? □ Yes
□ No
93. About how much do you spend on food you use at home in an average week?
<ul><li>☐ Less than \$50</li><li>☐ \$50 to 99</li></ul>
\$100 to \$199
\$200 or more
94. Did you have any food delivered in the last week?
95. Have you or anyone in your household eaten out in the last week?
☐ Yes ☐ No
96. Does your household replace or repair any major electrical good such as a refrigerator or washing
machine when broken?
Yes, immediately
<ul><li>☐ Yes, when we have the funds</li><li>☐ No</li></ul>
Does not apply
97. Does your household replace worn-out clothes with new ones?
Yes, immediately Yes, when we have the funds
□ No
☐ Does not apply
98. Thinking of your household's total monthly or weekly income, is your household able to make ends
meet, that is, pay your usual expenses?  ☐ With great difficulty
☐ With difficulty
With some difficulty
☐ Fairly easily ☐ Very easily
99. Do you have a small amount of money to spend each week on yourself (not your family)?
All the time
☐ Most weeks ☐ Once in a while
Hardly at all or never

00 If your household absolutely had to nay a large expense, after using savings, investment, or
retirement accounts, what other sources of money you would turn to?
If your household absolutely had to pay a large expense, after using savings, investment, or retirement accounts, what other sources of money you would turn to?    Charging the expense to a credit card or taking a cash advance on a credit card Taking out a loan from a bank or other financial institution   Borrowing from friends or family Payday loan (online or storefront)   Auto-title loan Pawning something you own Selling a household item Overdraft   Home equity line of credit Other (please specify)

