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BlackRock Global Investor Pulse Survey:**AMERICAN WOMEN FACE SAVING FOR RETIREMENT "GENDER GAP"
WITH A LASTING AND HARMFUL IMPACT**

The Millennial Generation Are Closing the Savings Gap But Risks Remain

**Female "Smart Savers" Break Out From the Pack by Increasing
Engagement**

NEW YORK, March 5, 2015 – Fewer American women have started saving for retirement than American men -- a savings "gender gap" with a significant impact right up to the full retirement age, according to the annual Global Investor Pulse Survey from BlackRock, which polled 27,500 investors including 4,000 Americans.

In the US, 53 percent of women overall have started saving for retirement, compared with 65 percent of men. Even among those women who have started saving money, they have accumulated less than half the retirement savings as men (\$34,900 vs. \$76,800). There is also a gap in savings behaviors--whereas close to half of men (45%) are willing to take on a high risk in order to achieve a good return on investment, this falls to just 28% of women. Also, for women investors, cash represents a greater proportion of their total investment than men, 68% compared to 59%.

"Blessed with a longer life, it's all too likely women will come to find that once they retire, it will last longer than they had planned. With lower savings rates and less willingness to take risks, many women are faced with greater financial obstacles when they are retired than men," said Heather Pelant, Personal Investor Strategist for BlackRock. "Luckily, more and more women are becoming engaged investors, especially at a young age. That engagement will be crucial to helping provide retirement income in our increasingly long life."

Reduced employment due to childcare obligations seems to have a significant impact on women successfully saving for retirement, the BlackRock survey indicates. For example, only about half of women age 25 to 44 are working full-time, compared with more than three-quarters of men that age.

Though the proportion of middle aged and older women saving for retirement begins to match those of men, they cannot make up for the late start so women enter pre-retirement with less saved: American women age 55-64 with retirement savings have accumulated just \$81,300 compared with \$118,400 for men that age (median

figures). This gap is particularly troubling given that women live longer than men—at birth, the life expectancy for U.S. women is about 79 compared to 72 for men. In the first revision of mortality assumptions since 2000, the Society of Actuaries estimated the average 65-year old man today will live 86.6 years, up from the 84.6 it was estimated a decade and a half ago. The average 65 year old woman will live 88.8 years, up from 86.4^[1]. While this accounts for approximately two years longer, it's important for women to realize that this is the average and their finances may need to last 10 years or more than men.

The Millennial Generation Is More Engaged

The saving habits of millennials indicate that they are changing and women manage finances more frequently. Millennial women are twice as likely as Baby Boomer women to describe themselves as an active investor (31% vs 15%), and they are nearly twice as likely to say that they are willing to take on high risk investments to achieve high returns (41% vs. 22%)

However, younger women continue to lag behind their male peers in terms of their interest in investment willingness to take investment risk to achieve high returns and perhaps most importantly likelihood to enjoy managing investments. Only 36% of millennial women claim to enjoy managing their investments, compared to 70% of millennial men.

Adopting “Smart Saver” Behaviors Can Help Women Close the Savings Gender Gap

Women could help close the saving gap by taking a cue from the segment of investors who are successfully planning for retirement— identified in the survey as “smart savers” – consist of those women who have accumulated more than 5 times the savings of American women: \$112,500 compared with \$21,200 (median figures).

The BlackRock survey found that these “smart savers” are distinctive from women overall in exhibiting positive financial behaviors which have helped them close the gender gap:

- Make saving for retirement a priority** – 82% of smart savers have dedicated retirement savings compared to the US average of 59%
- Maintaining a diversified portfolio**– smart savers are more likely to be investing in equities than the US average (21% of their portfolio vs. 14%) and hold less cash (57% of their portfolio vs. 68%)
- Manage finances frequently**– the typical smart saver spends more than 7 hours per month reviewing and making changes to their savings and investment and 56% classify themselves as ‘active’ investors.

^[1] The Wall Street Journal “Longer Lives Hit Pension Plans Hard” Tuesday, February 24, 2015

- **Plan and seek advice** – smart savers approach decision making with a sense of commitment with twice as many seeking a professional financial advisor as the average American.

“When it comes to saving and investing, women can get sidetracked as other obligations develop,” Pelant said. “Women can do better by adopting good financial habits early in life, setting their own goals, and finding the support they need to stick to those habits over the long run, and learning from the example of women who are successfully taking charge of their own financial life.”

About BlackRock

BlackRock is a leader in investment management, risk management and advisory services for institutional and retail clients worldwide. At December 31, 2014, BlackRock’s AUM was \$4.652 trillion. BlackRock helps clients meet their goals and overcome challenges with a range of products that include separate accounts, mutual funds, iShares® (exchange-traded funds), and other pooled investment vehicles. BlackRock also offers risk management, advisory and enterprise investment system services to a broad base of institutional investors through BlackRock Solutions®. Headquartered in New York City, as of December 31, 2014, the firm had approximately 12,200 employees in more than 30 countries and a major presence in key global markets, including North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Middle East and Africa. For additional information, please visit the Company’s website at www.blackrock.com | Twitter: [@blackrock_news](https://twitter.com/blackrock_news) | Blog: www.blackrockblog.com | LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/blackrock

About the Survey

One of the largest global surveys conducted in the financial services industry, the BlackRock Global Investor Pulse survey interviewed 27,500 respondents, in 20 nations: the US and Canada; in Europe, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UK; in Latin America, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico; in Asia, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan. The US sample comprised 4,000 respondents. No income or asset qualifications were used in selecting the survey’s participants. Executed with the support of Cicero Group, an independent research company, the survey took place from July to August 2014. For both the global sample and the US sample of 4,000 respondents, the margin of error is +/- 1.55%.