

## Northwestern Mutual Study Indicates Contrast in Planning Perspectives About Individuals Compared to the Nation

Respondents say they're moving in the right direction, while they feel the nation is not

MILWAUKEE, May 8, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Northwestern Mutual releases today the third in a series of research studies examining the state of planning in America. The [Planning Perspectives Study](#) asked respondents to weigh in on whether they as individuals and the nation as a whole are moving in the right direction when it comes to key financial planning categories.

To view the multimedia assets associated with this release, please click: <http://www.multivu.com/mnr/53659-northwestern-mutual-key-financial-planning-perspectives-study>

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Conducted by independent research firm [Ipsos](#), the research revealed that Americans surveyed feel very differently about their own planning compared to the nation.

"As we continue through this period of economic uncertainty, this study takes the pulse on the progress Americans feel they are making in their personal financial planning," says Greg Oberland, Northwestern Mutual Executive Vice President. "At the same time, we're looking at how this all fits against the larger backdrop of what is taking place in America today. What we're seeing is contrasting views about the direction individuals are moving versus the nation."

When asked whether individuals and the nation are moving in the right direction:

**Debt:** Nearly eight out of 10 (79%) respondents said they are moving in the right direction in the area of managing debt, compared to only 11 percent that feel the same way about the nation.

**Education:** Three-quarters (75%) feel their children's education is moving in the right direction versus 19 percent that said the same about the nation.

**Work:** 73 percent feel they are moving in the right direction in the area of their career compared to less than three out of 10 (28%) that feel the nation is moving in the right direction in the area of jobs.

**Spending:** Three-quarters (75%) of respondents said their personal spending is moving in the right direction, versus 13 percent that said the same about the nation.

**Saving:** Two-thirds (66%) responded they are moving in the right direction in the area of saving versus only 12 percent that feel the nation's saving is moving in the right direction.

**Health:** 64 percent feel their health and fitness is moving in the right direction, compared to 23 percent that responded that the nation is moving in the right direction in the area of healthcare.

**Investing in Improvements:** Two-thirds (66%) of respondents said when it comes to investing in improvements in their lives (e.g., going back to school, making home repairs, etc.) they are moving in the right direction, compared to 25 percent that feel the nation's investment in infrastructure is moving in the right direction.

"With this year's election cycle keeping financial planning topics in the headlines every day, it's encouraging to see that individuals feel they are moving in the right direction," continues Oberland. "The challenge is in staying on track over time. Throughout this study what we've seen suggests that most Americans are still cautious about saving and investing, and many feel financially unprepared to live long lives. All of this is evidence of just how important it is to have a solid financial plan in place when it comes to achieving long-term financial security."

The first phase of the research study – Planning & Progress – found that nearly half of Americans surveyed take an informal approach to financial planning – if they have a plan at all – and even more (59%) feel their financial planning needs improvement. The second phase of the research – Longevity & Preparedness – revealed that Americans included in the study are startlingly unprepared financially to live to average life expectancies.

### About the Research

Northwestern Mutual sponsored the Planning & Progress Study to evaluate the state of financial planning in America, and people's progress toward reaching their long-term financial goals. Independent research firm [Ipsos](#)

conducted the online survey of 1,015 Americans aged 25 or older between February 2 and February 13, 2012. In order to reflect the U.S. population, results were weighted as needed to U.S. Census proportions for age, gender, marital status, household size, region and household income. A full methodology is available on request.

### **About Northwestern Mutual**

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