

**Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2023 Transcript**  
**May 21, 2024**

NARRATOR. For 11 years, the Survey of Household Economics and Decisionmaking has measured the economic well-being of U.S. households. The 2023 survey tracks how adults and families are faring, as well as key topics related to financial outcomes. Fielded in October of 2023, the most recent survey reveals that 72 percent of adults were doing at least okay financially, meaning they reported either doing okay or living comfortably. This share was similar to 2022, but below the 78 percent reported in 2021. Despite moderating inflation rates, many adults indicated that higher prices continued to be a challenge when managing finances. Relatively small, unexpected expenses remained a potential challenge for many families. When faced with a hypothetical expense of \$400, 63 percent of all adults in 2023 said they would have covered it exclusively using cash, savings or a credit card paid off at the next statement referred to altogether as cash or its equivalent. The share who would pay using cash or its equivalent remained unchanged from 2022, but down from 68 percent in 2021. As with financial well-being, these results were near pre-pandemic levels from 2019, but down from their recent high in 2021. Yet, in contrast to these measures of financial well-being and emergency savings, worker's rates of job search and pay raises remained above the levels seen in 2021, reflecting continued strength in the labor market. Some people reported specific material hardships, including skipping medical care due to cost, missing bills and food insufficiency. 7 percent of adults reported food insufficiency, meaning that they or members of their household sometimes or often did not have enough to eat in the prior month. Each of these material hardships were more common among low income adults. 21 percent of adults with family income less than \$25,000 said members of their household sometimes or often did not have enough to eat. The latest survey also included new questions about childcare. Childcare costs can make up a substantial

share of the family budget. Parents using paid childcare typically spend 50 to 70 percent as much per month on childcare as they did on their housing payment, which is most people's single largest monthly expense.

More information about the wide range of financial opportunities and challenges facing U.S. families is available in the *Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2023*.

To view or download this year's full report and downloadable survey data, visit

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/consumerscommunities/shed.htm>.