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Half of Americans Struggle to Pay Rent or Mortgage, With Gen Z Hit Hardest

- *A higher share of Americans struggle to afford housing than last spring, according to a Redfin survey*
- *Gen Zers make sacrifices including selling belongings, working side hustles, and moving in with their parents to afford housing*
- *The most common sacrifices Americans make to afford housing are eating out less and skipping vacations*

SEATTLE — Feb. 24, 2026 — Roughly half (49%) of U.S. residents struggle to afford their regular rent or mortgage payments, according to a new [survey](#) from [Redfin](#), the real estate brokerage powered by Rocket.

Gen Zers are more likely than older generations to struggle with housing payments. About two-thirds (67%) of Gen Zers struggle to afford their rent or mortgage, compared with just over half of millennials and Gen Xers (53% and 54%, respectively), and 36% of baby boomers.

These findings are from a Redfin-commissioned survey conducted by Ipsos in November 2025, fielded to 4,000 U.S. residents. Redfin considers survey respondents to struggle with housing payments if they selected “I struggle greatly to afford them,” “I regularly struggle, but sometimes okay,” or “I sometimes struggle, but generally okay.” Please see the full report for additional methodology details.

Overall, Americans are more likely to struggle to make housing payments than they were last spring. In a comparable Redfin [survey](#) conducted in May 2025, 44% of U.S. residents said they struggle to afford their mortgage or rent payment, compared with nearly half today.

It’s difficult for many Americans to afford housing because housing costs are high. The median U.S. home-sale price and average mortgage rates were [historically high](#) in November, when Redfin’s most recent survey was fielded, though they were not at record highs. Homebuyers need to earn [\\$111,000 per year](#) to afford the typical U.S. home, about \$25,000 more than the median household income.

It’s particularly difficult for Gen Zers to afford housing because they haven’t yet reached their peak earning years and haven’t had much time to save for a down payment or monthly rent or mortgage payments.

“Buyers have been laying low for the last year or so because housing costs are high and the economy is uncertain. Young people are particularly concerned about job security and tariffs, and how those things will impact their pocketbooks and ability to make their housing payments,” said [Desiree Bourgeois](#), a [Redfin Premier](#) agent in Detroit. “I recently met a young couple hunting for a house in the \$300,000 range. They’re worried about whether the country is going to enter a recession and whether they may lose their jobs or see their home value go down. There

are very few first-time buyers out there; the cost of housing is so high that it's challenging to enter the market.”

Homeowners and Renters Are Borrowing Money, Skipping Meals to Afford Housing Payments

More than one in three (39%) Americans who struggle to afford housing are eating out at restaurants less often to make their monthly payments, making this the most common sacrifice. It's followed by taking no or fewer vacations (34%).

Roughly one in six (17%) people work additional hours at their job to afford housing, and nearly one in six (16%) report selling belongings.

Some Americans are also making more consequential sacrifices: 15% skip meals entirely to afford housing, 14% have delayed medical treatments, 4% have delayed having children, and 4% have given up pets.

More than one-third (35%) of Gen Zers who struggle to afford housing report nixing restaurants, and 18% have skipped meals entirely. Among the other sacrifices Gen Zers are making: 20% have sold their belongings, 18% have worked a side hustle, and 15% have moved in with their parents.

Affordability struggles make it difficult for many young Americans to make their existing rental or mortgage payments, and they also make it difficult for young renters to break into the housing market. Just over [one-quarter \(27.1%\)](#) of Gen Zers own their home, compared to more than half of millennials and more than 70% of Gen Xers and baby boomers.

There are a few bright spots. The Gen Z and millennial homeownership rates are slowly ticking up as time goes on, with slightly more young Americans becoming homeowners in 2025 than the year before as affordability improved marginally. Redfin expects affordability to [improve more](#) in the coming year as mortgage rates stay closer to 6% than 7%, home-price growth loses steam, and wages increase faster than housing costs.

To view the full report, including a graph, additional survey results and a full methodology, please visit: <https://www.redfin.com/news/struggle-to-pay-housing-gen-z/>

About Redfin

Redfin is a technology-driven real estate company with the country's most-visited real estate brokerage website. As part of Rocket Companies (NYSE: RKT), Redfin is creating an integrated homeownership platform from search to close to make the dream of homeownership more affordable and accessible for everyone. Redfin's clients can see homes first with on-demand tours, easily apply for a home loan with Rocket Mortgage, and save thousands in fees while working with a top local agent.

You can find more information about Redfin and get the latest housing market data and research at <https://www.redfin.com/news>. For more information about Rocket Companies, visit <https://www.rocketcompanies.com>.

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