# **Methodology**

Harris Poll® fielded the study on behalf of the National Endowment for Financial Education from December 7-11, 2017, via its Harris On Demand online omnibus service, interviewing 2,165 U.S. adults aged 18+. Data were weighted using propensity score weighting to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

**Key Findings – Financial Resolutions**

Over two thirds (69%) of U.S. adults will make financial New Year’s resolutions for 2018. Among those that plan to, top goals include setting and following a budget (40%), making a plan to get out of debt (39%), establishing savings (any type) (32%) and boosting retirement savings (31%).

* Men are significantly more likely than women to resolve to boost their retirement savings (37% vs. 26%)

**Key Findings – Largest Expenses in 2018**

U.S. adults feel that paying off debt (40%), home expenses-excluding mortgage (33%) and transportation expenses (32%) will be among the top 3 largest expenses they will incur in 2018.

**Key Findings – Financial Setbacks**

Almost two thirds of U.S. adults (63%) admit to experiencing unexpected financial setbacks in 2017. Transportation issues (23%), housing repairs/maintenance (20%) and inability to keep up with debt/falling behind on bill payments (16%) topped the list.

**Key Findings – Major Unexpected Expense**

If faced with a major unexpected expense today, over a third of U.S. adults say they’d pay for it with the help of credit card(s) (36%), closely followed by emergency savings (31%) or cash (28%).

* Men (34%) are significantly more likely than women (23%) to say they would use cash to pay for unexpected expenses
* Men (25%) are also more likely than women (19%) to say they’d take out a loan from a bank or credit union (e.g., home equity loan, personal loan)

**Key Findings – Quality of Financial Life**

Overall, a majority of U.S. adults (53%) feel the current quality of their financial life is about what they expected it to be, and 18% say it’s better than they expected. However, 29% of U.S. adults say the current quality of their financial life is worse than they expected.

* Women (31%) are significantly more likely than men (26%) to feel the current quality of their financial life is worse than they expected.

**Key Findings – Paycheck To Paycheck**

Overall, nearly half (49%) of U.S. adults admit to living paycheck to paycheck, while 48% do not.

**Key Findings – Reasons For Living Paycheck To Paycheck**

U.S. adults feel that credit card debt (24%), mortgage/rent (23%), and employment struggles (17%) are among the biggest reasons why people live paycheck to paycheck.

**Key Findings – Financial Stress**

Not surprisingly, over three quarters of U.S. adults (76%) say something causes them financial stress. Saving money (53%) tops the list, followed by debt (43%).

* Women are significantly more likely than men to feel financial stress (79% vs. 73%) at all, specifically over saving money for emergencies (41% vs. 33%) and student loan debt (16% vs. 12%).

**Key Findings – Financial Relief**

About three quarters of U.S. adults (76%) say that something causes them financial stress. Among those who say something causes them financial stress, 44% say not having to worry about saving would give them the most financial relief. Additionally, 38% of those with financial stress say not having to worry about debt would give them the most financial relief.

###