

NEWS RELEASE

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100 Years Later: Mutual Funds Driver of Wealth for Middle-Class Americans

Over the past year alone, 2.3 million more US households became mutual fund investors

Washington, DC; October 31, 2024—According to new research published by the Investment Company Institute (ICI), 53.7 percent of households in the United States owned mutual funds in 2024 compared with 52.3 percent in 2023 and just 5.7 percent in 1980. ICI's latest reports, "[Ownership of Mutual Funds and Shareholder Sentiment, 2024](#)" and "[Characteristics of Mutual Fund Investors, 2024](#)," also found that most of these Americans are focused on long-term investing including saving for retirement and are middle class, with a median household income of \$115,000.

More Than Half of US Households Owned Mutual Funds in 2024
Millions of US households owning mutual funds

*Starting in 2014, the Annual Mutual Fund Shareholder Tracking Survey was revised to include a dual-frame random digit dial (RDD) sample design. In prior years, the survey used a landline RDD sampling frame.

**Starting in 2022, the Annual Mutual Fund Shareholder Tracking Survey was fielded on the KnowledgePanel®, a probability based online panel designed to be representative of the US population. The KnowledgePanel® was designed and administered by Ipsos, an online consumer research company.

Note: Please see [the report](#) for changes in survey methodology over time.

Sources: Investment Company Institute Annual Mutual Fund Shareholder Tracking Survey and US Census Bureau

"The data show that after 100 years, the mutual fund is still a strong reliable product helping millions of Americans save for retirement and other long-term financial goals. With 2024 marking the 100th anniversary of the mutual fund, there is no better way to celebrate than to acknowledge the more than 120 million investors relying on mutual funds to secure their financial future," said **Sarah Holden, ICI Senior Director of Retirement and Investor Research**. "The mutual fund paved the way for other financial products including exchange-traded funds (ETFs), and now millions of US households own ETFs. The expanding fund market and fund shareholder base highlight that the successful innovation of investment products continues today."

Mutual Funds Are a Key Investment Product for US Households

Ownership of US-registered investment companies; millions of US households, 2024

Sources: Investment Company Institute, US Census Bureau, and Federal Reserve Board

Mutual fund-owning households often are focused on saving for retirement, whether through employer-sponsored retirement plans or individual retirement accounts (IRAs). Nearly three-quarters of mutual fund-owning households held mutual funds through employer-sponsored retirement plans, including 401(k) plans, while more than half held mutual funds through traditional or Roth IRAs.

Other findings include:

- **Newer mutual fund-owning households show increasing diversity.** In 2024, 41 percent of mutual fund-owning households who purchased their first fund after 2019 are Asian, Hispanic, or Black, more than triple the percentage that bought their first mutual fund before 1990.
- **Mutual fund ownership is higher among older generations, although younger generations are well on their way to widespread mutual fund ownership.** In 2024, 57 percent of Generation X households, 58 percent of Baby Boomer households, and 61 percent of Silent Generation households owned mutual funds. About half (49 percent) of Millennial households owned mutual funds, and being closer to the start of their saving and investing journey, 35 percent of Generation Z households did.
- **Most households that owned mutual funds were headed by individuals in their peak earning and saving years.** Fifty-three percent of mutual fund-owning households were headed by individuals between the ages of 35 and 64. Thirty-one percent of mutual fund-owning households were 65 or older, likely reflecting the ongoing investing that continues even as households transition into retirement.
- **Almost all mutual fund investors were focused on retirement saving.** Saving for retirement was a financial goal for 87 percent of mutual fund-owning households, and 80 percent indicated that retirement saving was the household's primary financial goal. Employer-sponsored retirement plans are often the gateway to mutual fund ownership, and nearly three-quarters of mutual fund-owning households hold mutual funds through employer-sponsored retirement plans.

About the Annual Mutual Fund Shareholder Tracking Survey

The Annual Mutual Fund Shareholder Tracking Survey's purpose is to gather information on the demographic and financial characteristics of mutual fund-owning households in the United States. The most recent survey was conducted from May to June 2024, drawing a sample of 9,011 US households from the KnowledgePanel®, administered by Ipsos. For additional information about the survey, refer to the [report here](#).