

TO: NeighborWorks America
FR: Morning Consult
DT: May 2025
RE: Down Payments and Homeownership Polling

State of Homeownership Overview

The American dream of homeownership remains strong, particularly among younger adults—but for many, that dream feels increasingly out of reach. While financial barriers are the primary obstacle, prospective buyers are actively taking steps to overcome them.

Interest in homeownership remains high—but so do barriers

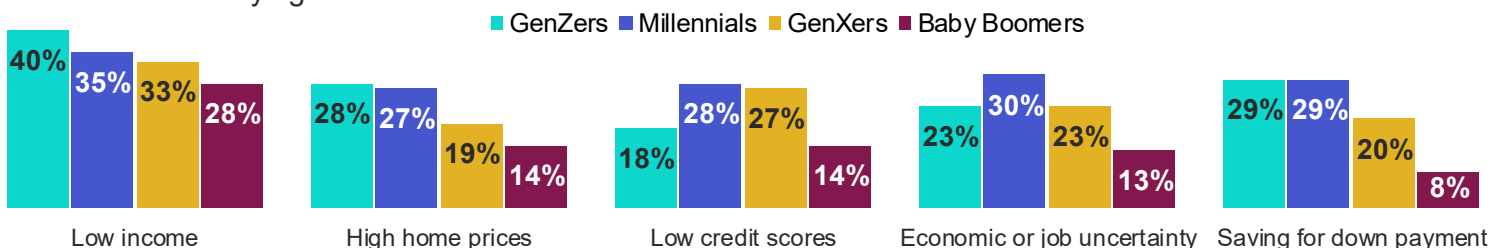
- Homeownership and interest are evenly split. Nearly half of adults (49%) currently own a home, while an equal share (49%) are interested in buying but are waiting for the right time. Over a quarter (27%) are actively looking to purchase within the next 12 months.
- Younger adults are driving demand. GenZers and Millennials are significantly more likely to be in the market—39% of each group are actively searching, compared to 23% of GenXers and 10% Baby Boomers.

Total Agree	GenZers	Millennials	GenXers	Baby Boomers
Currently looking	39%	39%	23%	10%
Interested but waiting	79%	64%	42%	22%
Homeowners	32%	44%	46%	66%

- Among those currently searching, 58% are first-time buyers and 42% have purchased before.

Financial hurdles are the top barrier to buying

- Despite high interest, many adults feel priced out of homeownership. 31% believe homeownership is unattainable and 36% say they're not interested in buying a home.
- Among those waiting or uninterested, the most commonly cited financial barriers include:
 - **Low income:** 33%
 - **High home prices:** 22%
 - **Low credit scores:** 22%
 - **Economic or job uncertainty:** 22%
 - **Saving for a down payment:** 21%
- Younger generations report especially high levels of pessimism, with 38% of GenZers and 32% of Millennials seeing homeownership as unattainable. And roughly one in five (22%) in both groups have no interest in buying.



Methodology: This poll was conducted between May 17-18, 2025 among a sample of 2,201 adults aged 18+ in the US. The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on age, gender, race, educational attainment, region, gender by age, and race by educational attainment. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Buyers are taking action to prepare

- Among adults actively looking to buy in the next 12 months, 72% are saving for a down payment, 53% have cut back on non-essential spending, 34% have taken on additional work, and 26% have sold personal items to save money.
 - GenZers (43%) are more likely than Millennials (38%) or GenXers (30%) to take on additional work. But Millennials (54%) and GenXers (59%) lead in reducing spending on non-essentials.

% Selected	GenZers	Millennials	GenXers	Baby Boomers
Reduced spending on non-essentials	45%	54%	59%	51%
Taken on additional work	43%	38%	30%	11%
Sold personal items	27%	29%	23%	21%
Received financial help from family/friends	24%	23%	19%	1%
Moved in with family/friends	23%	21%	18%	9%

Awareness of down payment assistance is moderate

- 61% of those currently looking or waiting to buy a home are at least somewhat aware of assistance programs, and 25% have looked into them.
 - Millennials (30%), GenZers (25%), and GenXers (24%) show the most active engagement with grants or assistance programs that help with down payments.
 - Misconceptions of programs persist, with 31% of adults currently looking or waiting believing 10-14% down payment is needed, while 27% think 20% or more is required—potentially deterring buyers unnecessarily.

Home search priorities center around size, condition, and price flexibility

- When searching for a home, more than half of adults prioritize the size (55%) and conditions (56%) of the property. Yet, nearly two-thirds (63%) would consider a fixer-upper for a better price or location.
- While Baby Boomers are most likely to prioritize property taxes (55%) and HOA fees (26%) when searching for a home, younger generations prioritize proximity to work and public transit.

% Selected	GenZers	Millennials	GenXers	Baby Boomers
Size of the home	50%	56%	54%	63%
Condition of the home	49%	53%	56%	74%
Property taxes	40%	37%	44%	55%
Proximity to work	33%	28%	26%	12%
School quality	26%	25%	12%	3%
Homeowners insurance costs	19%	17%	21%	27%
HOA fees	12%	14%	14%	26%
Proximity to public transit	12%	11%	10%	4%
Green space/parks	12%	11%	9%	7%

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Flexibility on location and long-term residence

- Adults currently looking or waiting to buy a home are willing to move far distances from their current workplace for a home that meets their needs: 28% are willing to move 11-20 miles, 16% would go 21-30 miles, and only 9% would relocate 30 miles.
 - Millennials (20%) are more willing than GenZers (13%) to move 21-30 miles.
- Half of all buyers expect to stay in their next home for over 10 years; Baby Boomers (73%) are most likely to report this long-term intent.

Trust in realtors remains strong

- When seeking homebuying information, most adults (41%) trust realtors the most—especially Baby Boomers (51%). Whereas 19% trust family and friends; and another 19% trust online sources.
 - GenZers (26%) and Millennials (20%) are more likely than other groups to trust their personal networks.

% Selected	GenZers	Millennials	GenXers	Baby Boomers
Realtor	38%	40%	38%	51%
Friend or family member	26%	20%	13%	13%
General internet search	16%	18%	23%	23%
Lender	5%	7%	12%	4%
Government website	5%	6%	3%	5%
Nonprofit organization	1%	3%	3%	1%
None of the above	9%	5%	8%	3%

Recommendations

Overall, the dream of homeownership remains strong, but increased education is needed to address concerns, dispel myths, and overcome barriers. Consider the following focus areas:

- ❖ **Expand homebuyer education:** Clarify down payment requirements, promote available assistance programs, and correct common misconceptions through targeted messaging.
- ❖ **Strengthen financial empowerment:** Offer coaching and counseling to help buyers overcome income, credit, and savings challenges, and share practical savings strategies.
- ❖ **Leverage trusted community messengers:** Equip realtors and community leaders with up-to-date information and encourage them to share success stories to boost buyer confidence.