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Senior Real Estate Matters

Monthly Newsletter – August 2010

Retirement Savings Shortfalls Escalate

By Elyse Umlauf-Garneau

We've all heard about the dangers of running out of money in retirement. A new report by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) explores those worries in greater depth and quantifies what has been on the minds of many baby boomers and seniors.

Everyone, regardless of income, it seems, is falling short on retirement savings.

The EBRI Retirement Readiness Rating™ is based on EBRI's Retirement Security Projection Model®, something EBRI has been using since 2003 to evaluate national retirement income adequacy.

EBRI's latest [July 2010 analysis](#) indicates that that nearly half (47.2 percent) of early baby boomers (aged 56 to 62) are at risk of not having enough money to pay for basic retirement costs and uninsured medical expenses.

The risk for late baby boomers (aged 46 to 55) drops to 43.7 percent, and for Generation X (aged 36 to 45), 44.5 percent are at risk of having insufficient retirement income.

And in its [March 2010 Retirement Confidence Survey](#), EBRI found that

a quarter of workers say the age at which they expect to retire has increased in the past year. Since 1991, EBRI has been seeing a steady rise in people's planned retirement age. In 1991, half of workers planned to retire before age 65 (50 percent), compared with 28 percent in 2010.

And 70 percent of workers expect to work for pay after retirement, with many planning to rely on that income to support themselves during retirement.

Three-quarters of workers say that such employment will provide them (and their spouse) with a major (27 percent) or minor (50 percent) source of income in retirement (77 percent total, up from 68 percent in 2000).

The reports offer a great deal of additional analysis and statistics, but the takeaway is that everyone, regardless of age or income, needs to be more aggressive about advance planning and socking away retirement dollars.

And for help with that planning, there's no shortage of wisdom and advice. You could take a one-on-one approach by consulting a certified financial planner. You can find one at:

- [Financial Planning Association](#)
- [National Association of Personal Financial Advisors](#)

[The Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc.](#) outlines some issues to consider before hiring a financial professional.

You also can assess where your finances stand by taking a do-it-yourself approach:

- Employee Benefits Security Administration U.S. Department of Labor offers a [brochure](#) that outlines ways to rev up retirement savings, along with links to additional sites for investment education.
- [Choose to Save](#) provides an array of helpful insight on retirement preparation, debt management, and budgeting. Also worth checking out is the [Ballpark Estimate](#) worksheet to identify how much is necessary to ensure a comfortable retirement.

Elder Financial Abuse

Nothing erodes the nest egg like a scam artist who steals your hard-earned savings.

Yet another bit of sobering financial news comes from a June report by the Investor Protection Trust (IPT) that was conducted by Infogroup/ORC.

It indicates that one out of every five people over the age of 65--more than 7.3 million Americans--already have been victimized financially.

The IPT site includes [education videos](#) that cover common investment scams, such as pension theft, hard-sell tactics for financial products, and dishonest credit counselors.

In addition, a partnership has emerged between IPT, the North American Securities Administrators Association, and the National Adult Protective Services Association in

cooperation with several leading U.S. medical associations.

It has launched the Elder Investment Fraud and Financial Exploitation campaign to get medical professionals involved in identifying older Americans who may be vulnerable to financial abuse.

The aim is to educate such professionals about the financial abuse red flags they may spot among their senior patients.

The red flags that IPT suggests to medical professionals also can apply to others caring for seniors.

Watch out if senior express concerns that include:

- I have trouble paying bills because the bills are confusing.
- I don't feel confident making big financial decisions alone.
- I don't understand financial decisions someone else is making for me.
- I give loans or gifts more than I can afford.
- My children or others are pressuring me to give money.
- People are calling or mailing me asking for money or lotteries.
- Someone is accessing my accounts or money seems to be disappearing.

Walkers' Paradise

Wondering how easy it will be to get around on foot at a new home you're considering?

[Walk Score](#) is a simple website that allows you to plug in the name of a city

or a specific address to determine how pedestrian friendly it is.

The site ranks places with a number from 0 to 100 and looks at an array of things, including whether a city has:

- A center, such as a main street or a public space.
- Mixed uses and affordable housing located near businesses, and schools and offices that are accessible on foot.
- Parks and public spaces.
- Streets designed for bikes and walkers, along with access to public transit.

Top walkable American cities include San Francisco, New York, Boston, and Chicago.

The site gives Toronto, Canada a score of 98, making it a walker's paradise, and it gives Vancouver a score of 72, calling it very walkable. Quebec City, ranked as somewhat walkable, gets a score of 58.

Another [site](#) has run assisted living buildings around the country through walkscore.com and ranks the top 100 options.

One New York City building for seniors scored a perfect 100.

Real Estate Matters: News & Issues for the Mature Market
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