

Dear Friends.

We hope that you have had a chance to review our national study on financial realities in the Frum community. There are a lot of takeaways from that study that are germane to individuals, families and leaders in communities.

One of the things that we noticed as we aggregated data from people in various communities is that each community had its own unique characteristics and makeup, in many cases with results that are years in the making.

The Baltimore community is no different with meaningful data points that are unique to Baltimore across the board. In conjunction with Baltimore Jewish Life we have conducted an analysis as to how Baltimore compares to other communities across the country.

We hope you find this analysis beneficial. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns at hi@livinglchaim.com

The Kosher Money Team at Living L'Chaim

Frum Finances Survey: Baltimore Analysis

Michelle Shain, September 23, 2024

- About the Survey Respondents2
- Income and Assets.....4
 - Income4
 - Home Ownership5
 - Total Assets5
 - Accessible Savings5
- Debt.....7
 - Total Debt7
 - Biggest Source of Debt.....7
 - Credit Card Debt8
- Expenses.....9
 - Food Spending9
 - Day School and Yeshiva Tuition9
- Parental Help..... 11
- Retirement Planning..... 12
- Financial Advice..... 14
- Feelings about Finances..... 15

About the Survey Respondents

Data were collected in an open-access online survey, available at www.livinglchaim.com/survey, from July 17 through August 4, 2024.

The total number of responses was 3,163. The analysis in this memo is limited to the 2,994 respondents who lived in the United States. Of those, 293 (10%) lived in Baltimore. See Table 1.

Table 1. Location of survey respondents

| | | |
|------------------------|--|-------|
| | Baltimore | 293 |
| | Other United States | 2,701 |
| Excluded from analysis | Israel | 98 |
| | Other country (e.g., the United Kingdom, Montreal) | 35 |
| | “Not in a Jewish Community” | 1 |
| | Missing | 35 |
| | Total | 3,163 |

Respondents from Baltimore were older than respondents from other communities in the United States. The majority of respondents from Baltimore were older than 35, and 44% were older than 40. See Figure 1. Respondents from Baltimore also had fewer children at home, perhaps due to a greater proportion of empty nesters. See Figure 2.

Figure 1. Age: Baltimore v. other United States

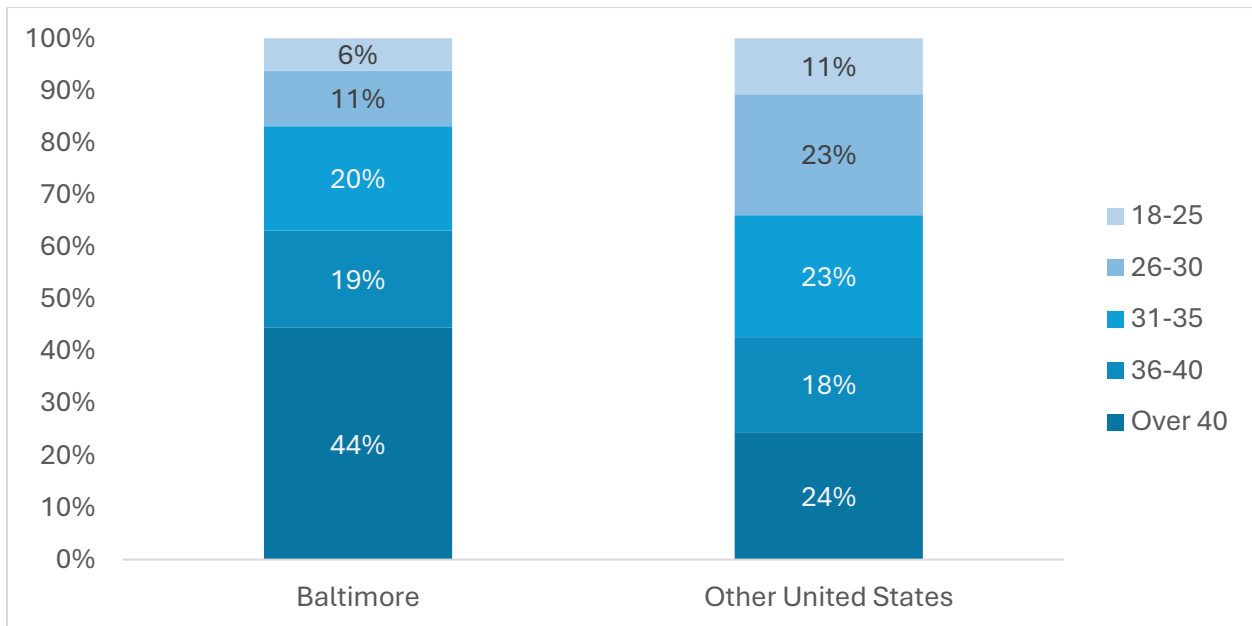
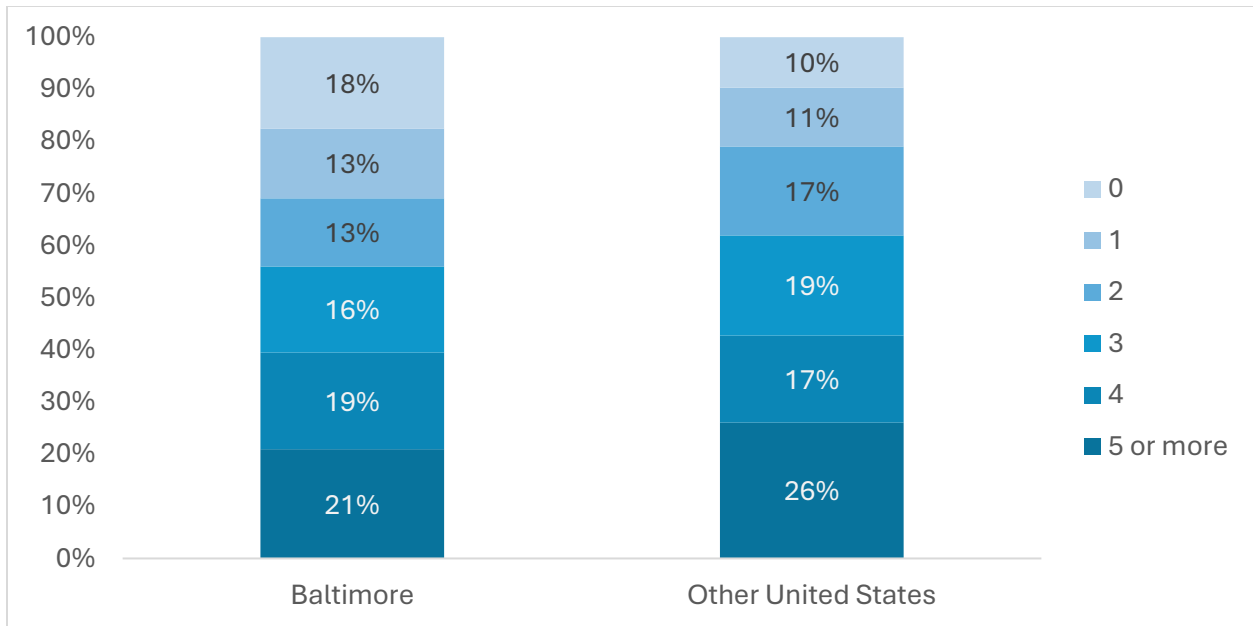


Figure 2. Number of children at home: Baltimore v. other United States



Respondents from Baltimore were also more likely to be women: 44%, compared to 24% in other places in the United States.

Some of the differences between communities that are reported below may be an artefact of the fact that the survey reached more women and more older respondents in Baltimore than in other communities. The analysis attempts to control for differences in age, number of children at home, and gender of respondent by using regression models, but statistical controls are imperfect.

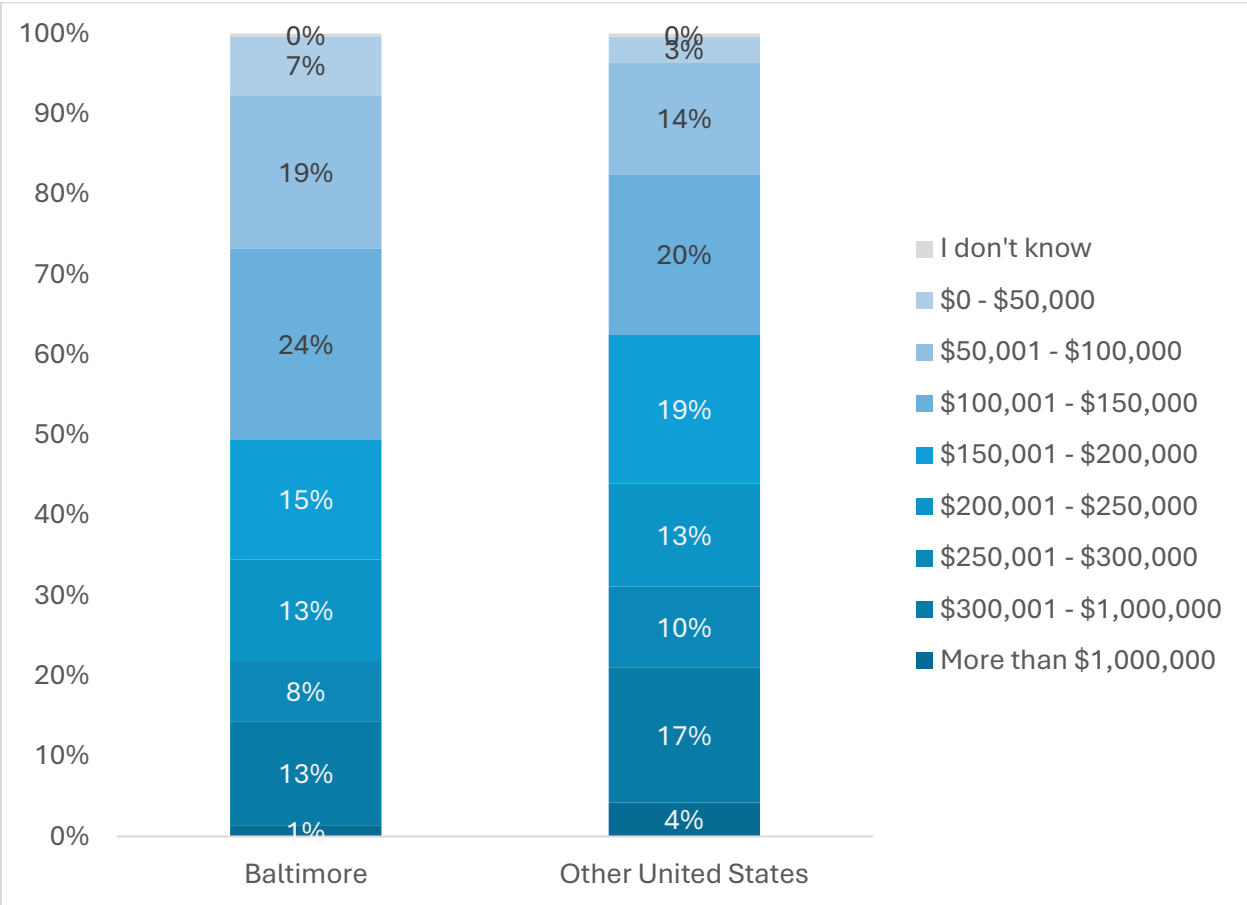
Income and Assets

Income

Half of Baltimore respondents had annual household incomes of \$150,000 or less. In other communities in the United States, only 37% had household incomes in that range. Even controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender, Baltimore respondents had lower household incomes than respondents in Lakewood, Brooklyn, Monsey, and the Five Towns/Far Rockaway.

On the other end of the spectrum, 14% of Baltimore respondents had annual household incomes over \$300,000, compared to 21% of respondents in other communities in the United States. See Figure 3.

Figure 3. Annual household income: Baltimore v. other United States



Note that the cost of living in Maryland is 15% higher than the national average. That is comparable to New Jersey but less than New York, which is 24% higher than the national

average.¹ In other words, although incomes are lower, money goes farther in Baltimore than in Brooklyn, Monsey, or the Five Towns/Far Rockaway.

Home Ownership

Eighty percent of Baltimore respondents owned their homes, compared to 67% of all other respondents. Even controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender, homeownership was higher in Baltimore than in Lakewood, Brooklyn, and the Five Towns/Far Rockaway.

Total Assets

There were no differences in total assets between Baltimore and other communities in the United States after controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender. About half (46%) of Baltimore respondents had \$100,000 or less in assets other than their homes. Fifteen percent had less than \$10,000.

Table 2. Total assets other than home (Baltimore respondents only)

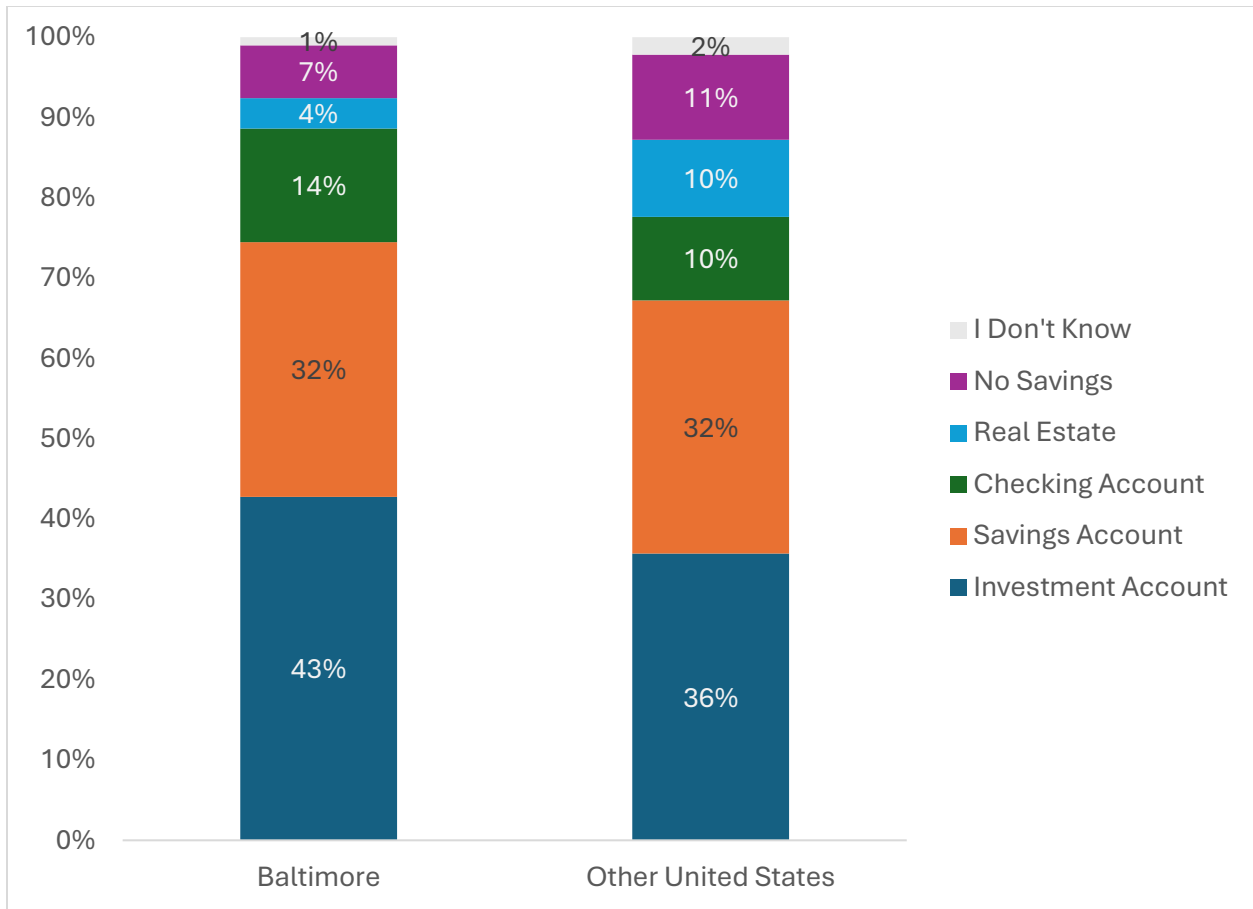
| | Number of respondents | Percent of respondents |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Under \$10,000 | 44 | 15% |
| \$10,000 - \$50,000 | 45 | 16% |
| \$50,001 - \$100,000 | 43 | 15% |
| \$100,001 - \$150,000 | 35 | 12% |
| \$150,001 - \$200,000 | 14 | 5% |
| \$200,001 - \$500,000 | 47 | 16% |
| \$500,001 - \$1,000,000 | 29 | 10% |
| More than \$1,000,000 | 28 | 10% |
| I don't know | 4 | 1% |
| Total | 289 | 100% |

Accessible Savings

A plurality of Baltimore respondents held the majority of their accessible savings in investment accounts. Investment accounts were a more common choice in Baltimore than in Brooklyn or Monsey. On the other hand, Baltimore respondents were the least likely to hold the majority of their accessible savings in real estate, even controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender. See Figure 4.

¹ Source: Council for Community and Economic Research, [Cost of Living Index](#).

Figure 4. Where majority of accessible savings is stored: Baltimore v. other United States



Debt

Total Debt

There were no differences in total debt between Baltimore and other communities in the United States after controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender. See Table 3.

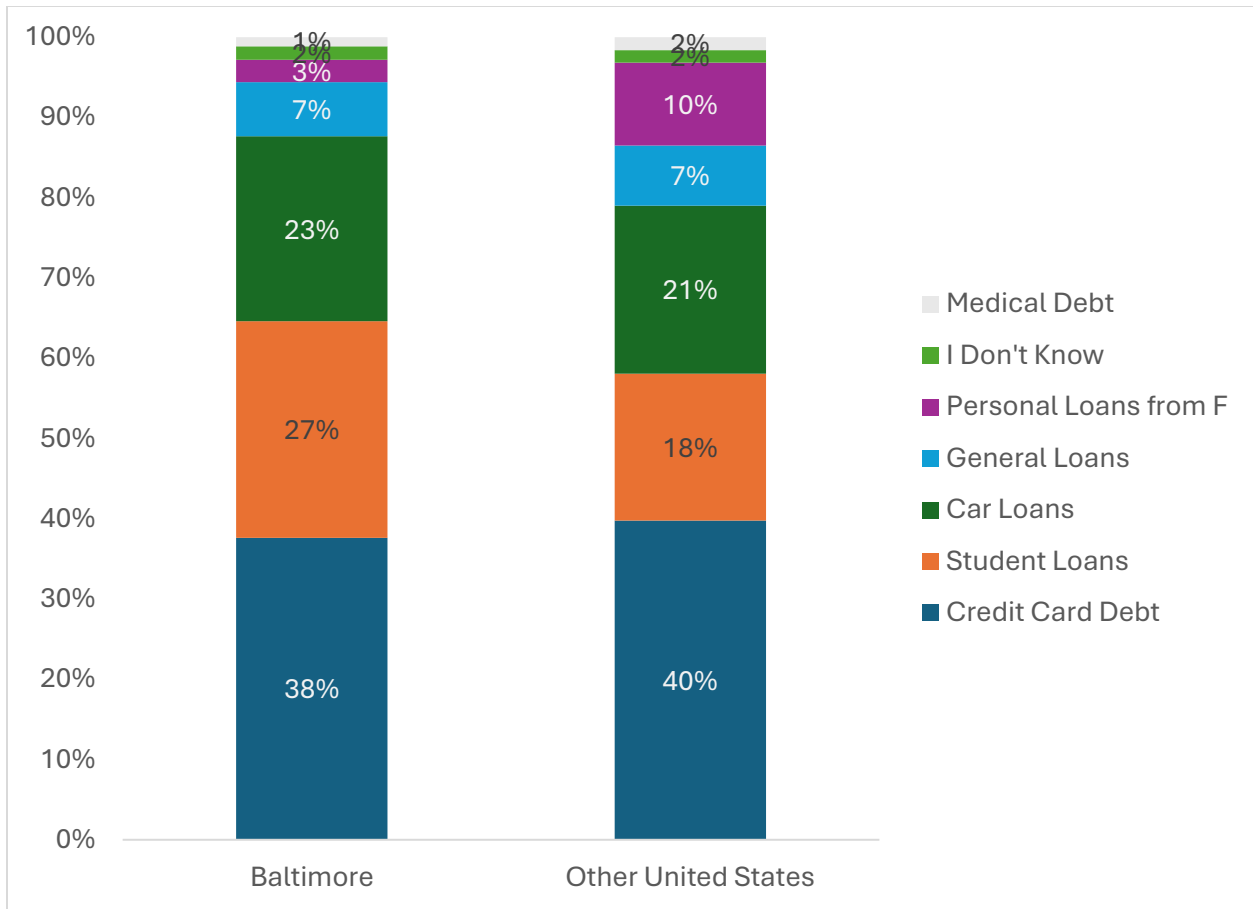
Table 3. Total debt other than home (Baltimore respondents only)

| | Number of respondents | Percent of respondents |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| None | 98 | 34% |
| \$20,000 or less | 89 | 31% |
| \$20,001 - \$50,000 | 49 | 17% |
| \$50,001 - \$100,000 | 27 | 9% |
| More than \$100,000 | 23 | 8% |
| Don't know | 1 | 0% |
| Total | 287 | 100% |

Biggest Source of Debt

Of respondents who have debt, those in Baltimore were more likely than those in Lakewood, Brookly, and Monsey to say that the biggest source of their debt is student loans. Baltimore respondents were less likely than those in all other communities to say that the biggest source of their debt is personal loans from family or friends. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Biggest source of debt excluding mortgage: Baltimore v. other United States



Credit Card Debt

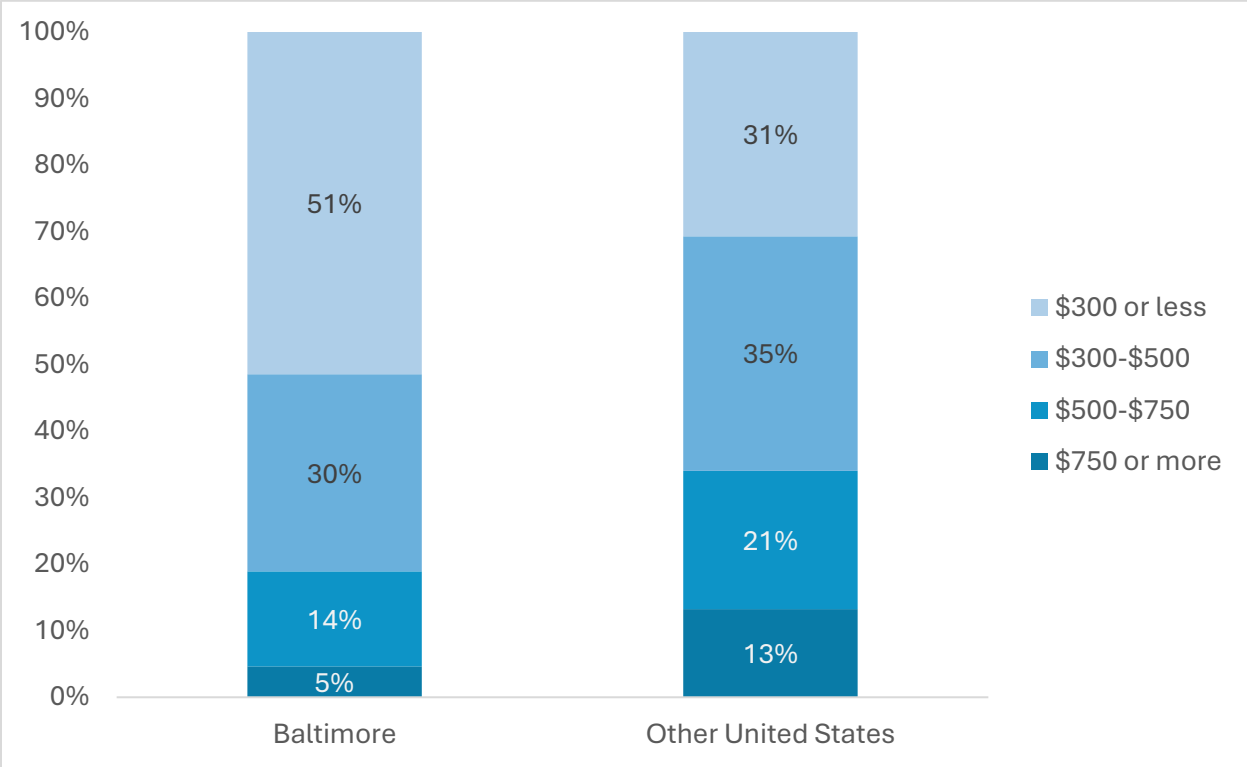
Seventy-six percent of Baltimore respondents regularly pay their credit card bills fully every month. That percent is not significantly different in other communities.

Expenses

Food Spending

Half (51%) of Baltimore respondents spent \$300 or less on food per week. Other communities in the United States spend significantly more, even controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender. See Figure 6.

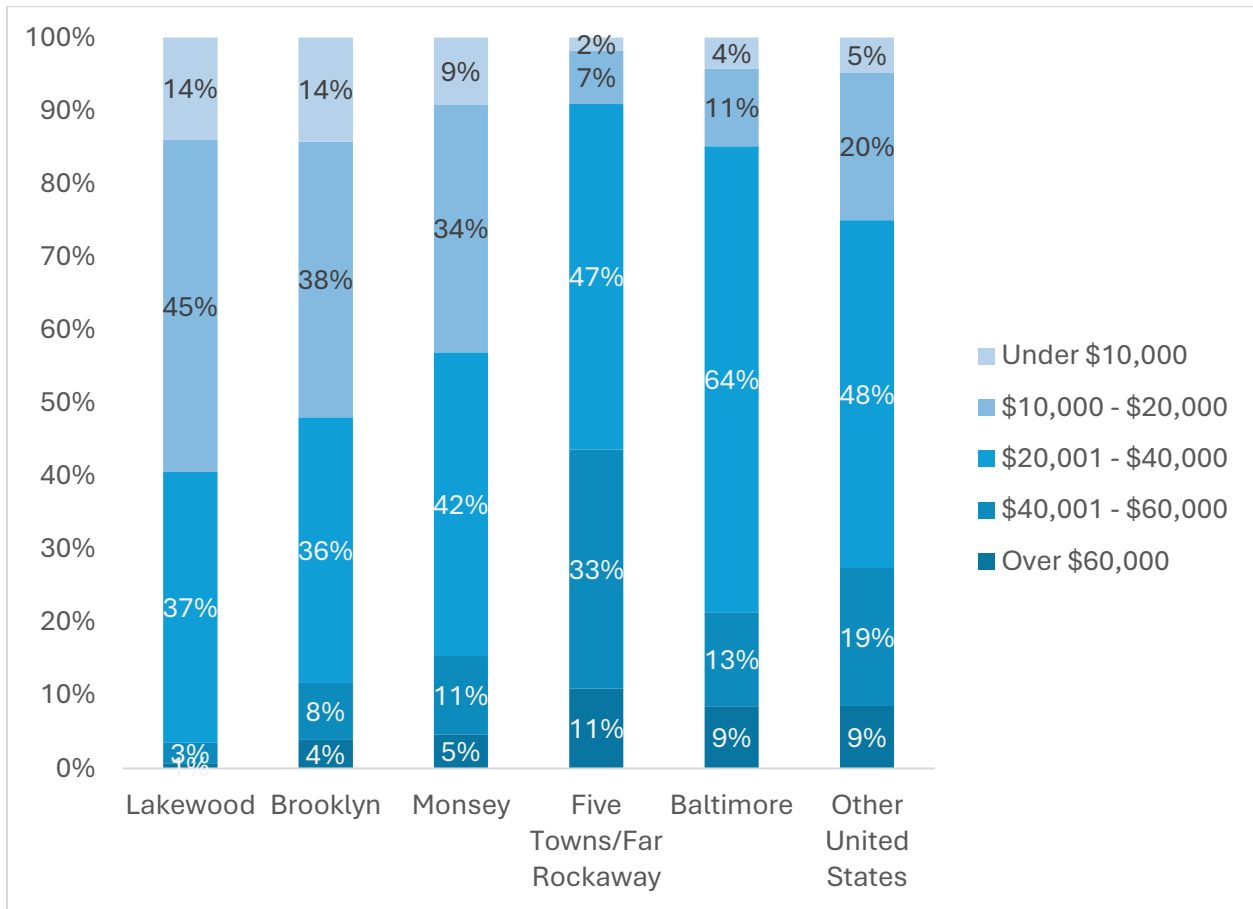
Figure 6. Weekly spending on food: Baltimore v. other United States



Day School and Yeshiva Tuition

Day school and yeshiva tuition are higher in Baltimore compared to Lakewood and Brooklyn, but lower than in the Five Towns/Far Rockaway. For example, for respondents with three children at home, 85% of those in Baltimore have tuition bills over \$20,000, compared to only 41% of those in Lakewood. See Figure 8.

Figure 7. Total annual day school and yeshiva tuition bill, before assistance, for families with 3 children at home: Baltimore v. other United States

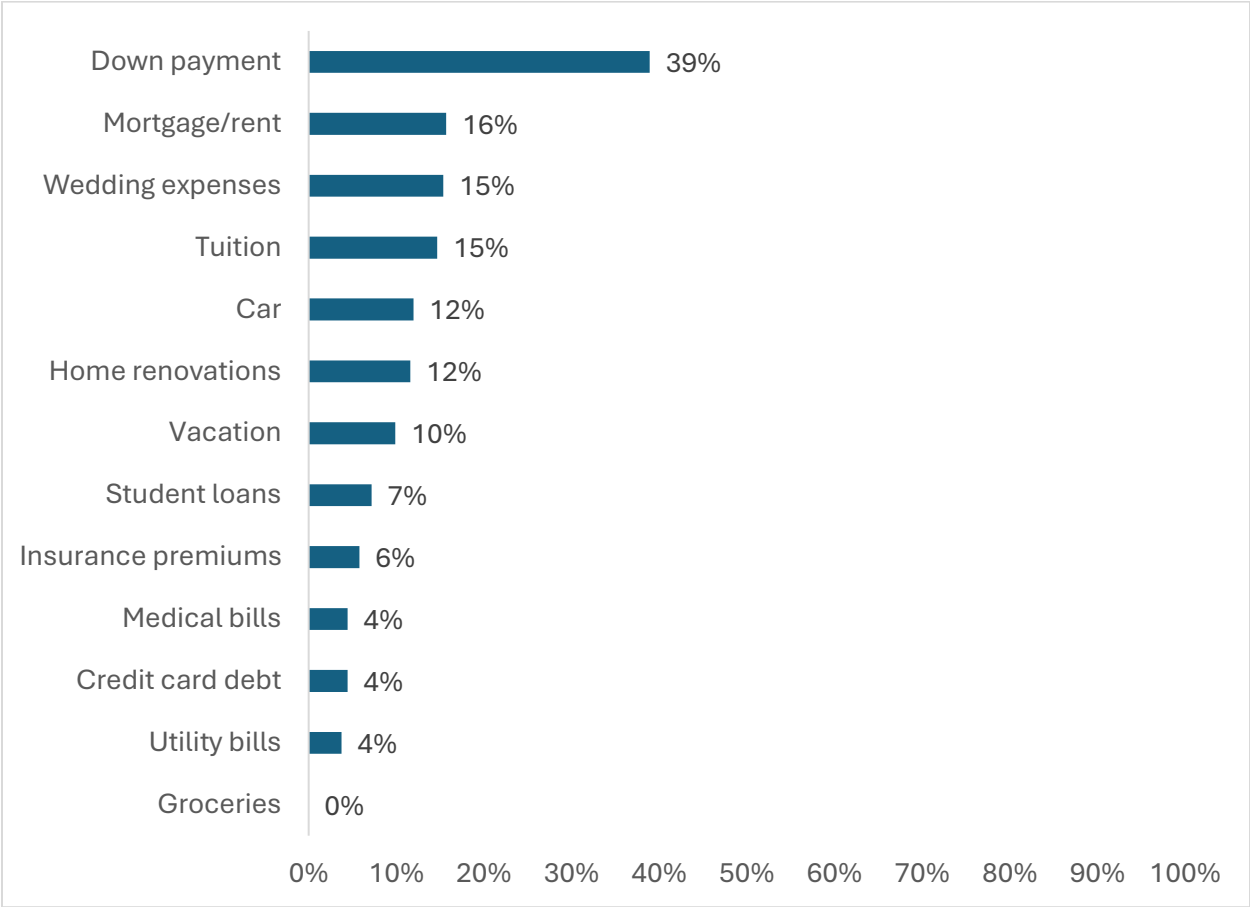


The tuition amount that respondents pay, after assistance, is similarly higher in Baltimore than in Lakewood and Brooklyn, but lower than in Monsey and the Five Towns/Far Rockaway.

Parental Help

Sixty percent of Baltimore respondents reported that their parents or in-laws contributed “significantly” toward one of the expenses in Figure 8, with a down payment on a house being the most common type of help. Respondents from other communities in the United States weren’t different, except that those in Lakewood, Brooklyn, and Monsey were less likely to receive help with vacation expenses and insurance premiums.

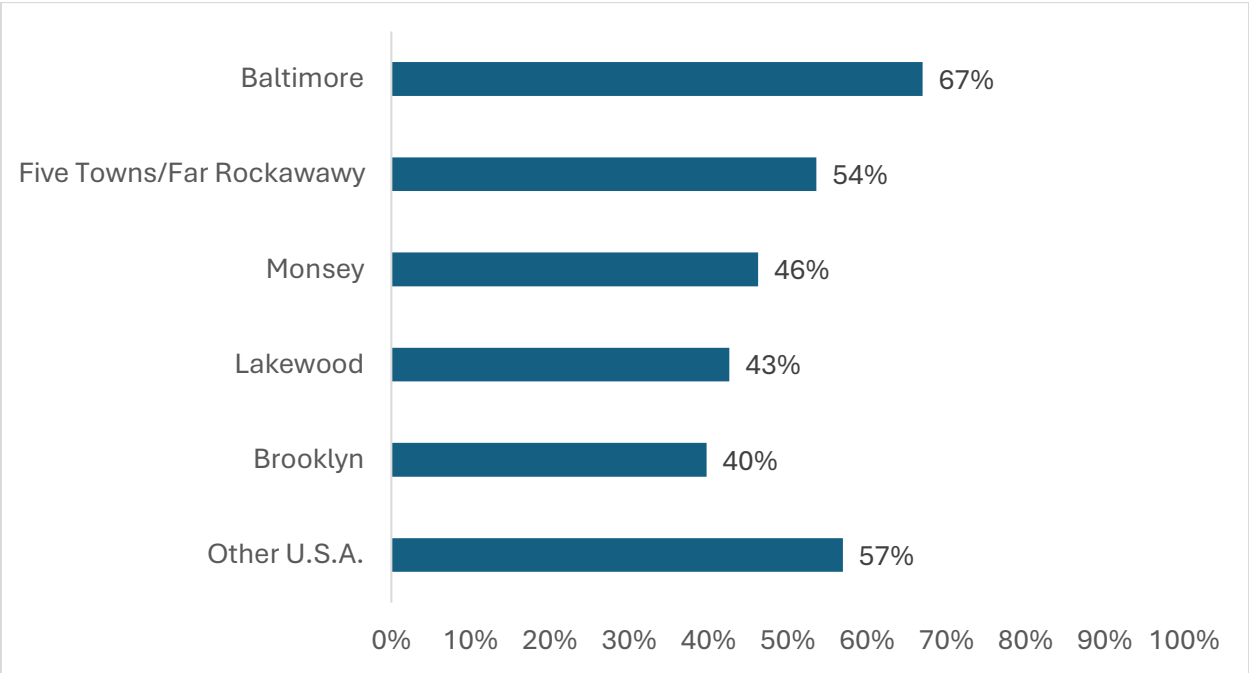
Figure 8. Financial support from parents or in-laws (Baltimore only)



Retirement Planning

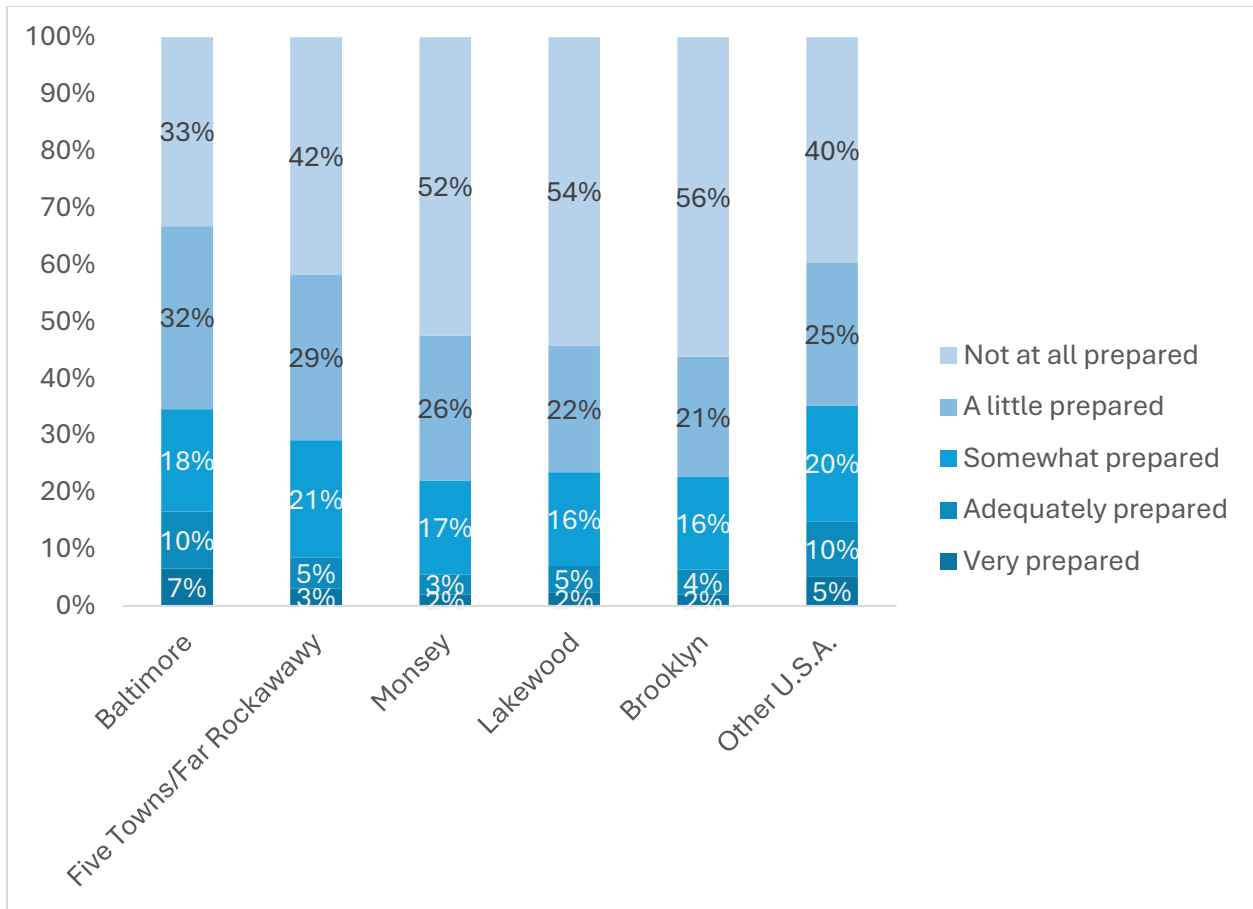
Two thirds (67%) of Baltimore respondents have started planning financially for retirement. No other community in the United States has such a high rate of retirement planning, even controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender. See Figure 10.

Figure 9. Started planning financially for retirement: Baltimore v. other United States



Similarly, 67% of Baltimore respondents feel at least a little financially prepared for retirement. No other community in the United States feels as prepared, even controlling for age, number of children at home, and gender. See Figure 10.

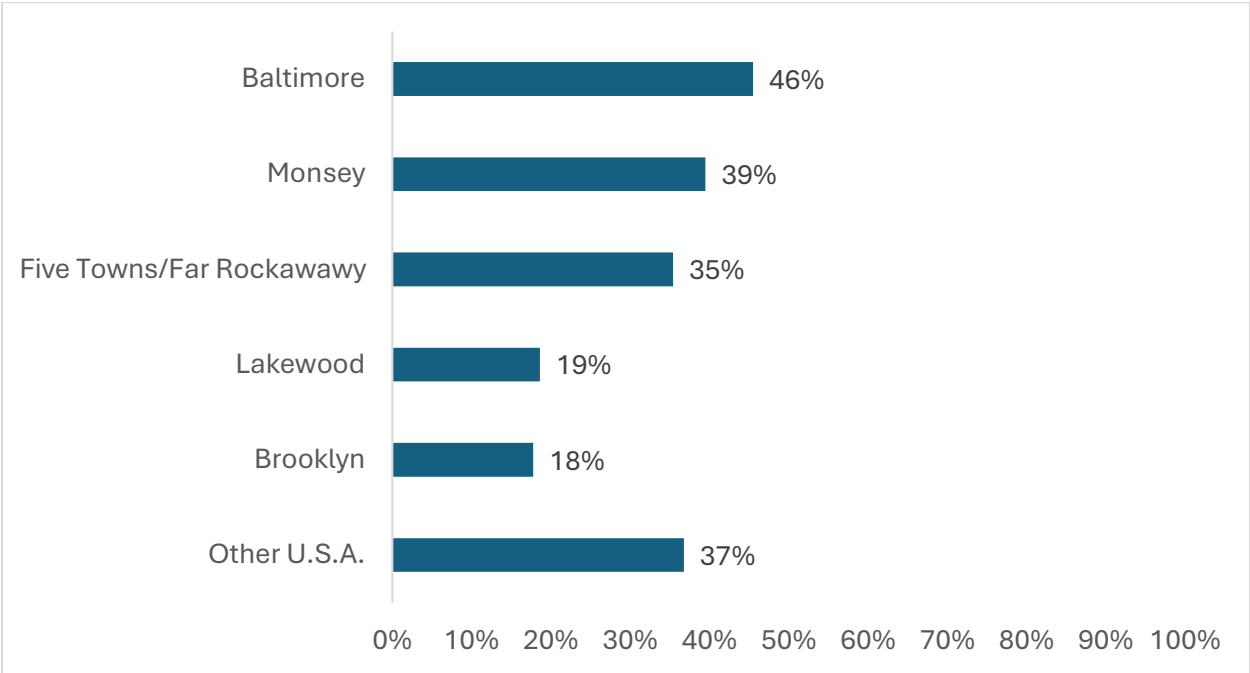
Figure 10. Feeling financially prepared for retirement: Baltimore v. other United States



Financial Advice

About half (46%) of Baltimore respondents had ever received professional financial advice on managing their finances. Smaller percentages of respondents from Lakewood and Brooklyn had ever received professional financial advice. See Figure 11.

Figure 11. Ever received professional financial advice: Baltimore v. other United States



Feelings about Finances

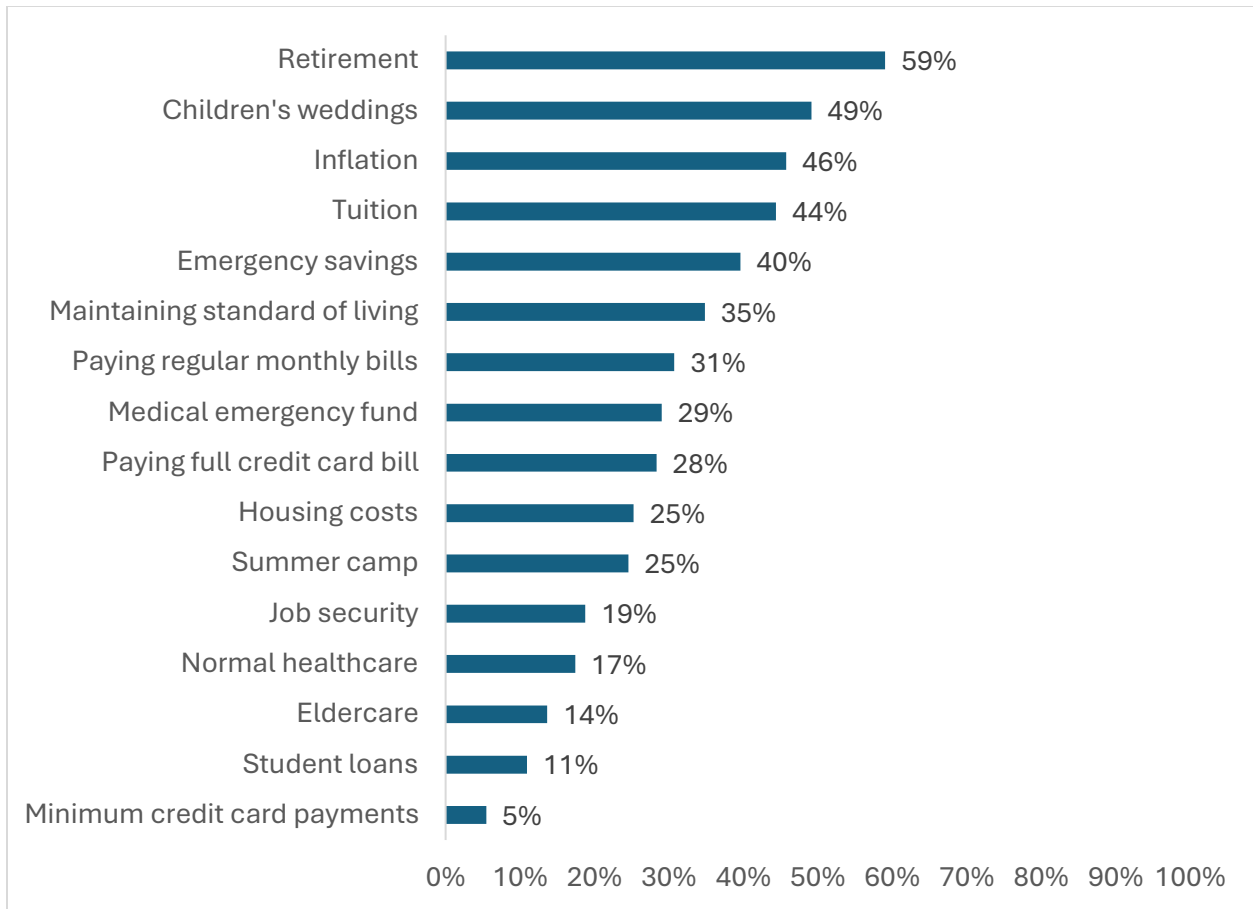
About half (46%) of Baltimore respondents feel like they earn enough to live comfortably. Most (80%) feel at least somewhat stressed about finances. See Table 4. Other communities in the United States are not different from Baltimore on these measures.

Table 4. Feelings of stress when discussing/thinking about finances (Baltimore only)

| | Number of respondents | Percent of respondents |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Not stressed | 59 | 20% |
| Somewhat stressed | 148 | 51% |
| Very stressed | 85 | 29% |
| Total | 292 | 100% |

Figure 12 shows the percentage of Baltimore respondents who worried about each of 16 expenses. Nine percent of Baltimore respondents had no worries. As a whole, Baltimore respondents worried the most about retirement, followed by paying for their children’s weddings, inflation and tuition.

Figure 12. Financial support from parents or in-laws (Baltimore only)



Respondents in Baltimore were more worried about both tuition and about student loans than respondents in Lakewood, Brooklyn, Monsey, the Five Towns/Far Rockaway, and other communities. They were also less worried about housing costs than respondents in those communities.

