

# RETIREMENT PLANS THAT “CLEARLY” WORK FOR YOU.



Prizant Group

## WET BEHIND THE EARS: Naive, immature, inexperienced.



*Q: Am I right in assuming that the expression “wet behind the ears” refers to a newborn baby still wet with amniotic fluid?*

*A: Yes, the expression is believed to be an allusion to a wet newborn, but it first appeared in English in a negative version, “not yet dry*

*behind the ears.”*

*The ultimate source of the usage, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is the German “(noch) nass hinter den Ohren,” which showed up in the 1640s, and means “(still) wet behind the ears.”*

*The OED, an etymological dictionary based on historical evidence, describes the usage as “apparently with allusion to the idea that the area behind the ears is the last part of a newborn’s body to become dry after birth.”*

*A German version using “dry” showed up in the early 1700s as “(noch nicht) trocken hinter den Ohren,” meaning “(not yet) dry behind the ears,” and that’s*

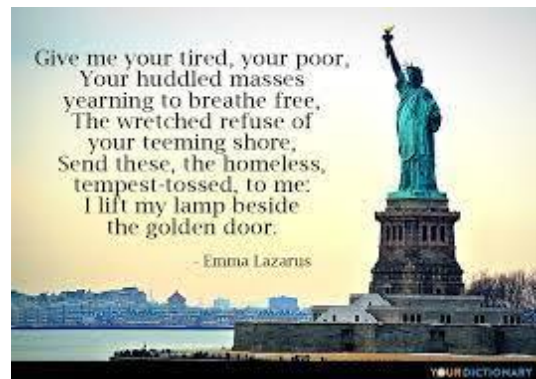
*the version that appeared in English in the early 1800s. The earliest English example in the OED is a translation of the negative German version:*

*"The French call such inexperienced uneducated boys, green creoles, (des créoles verts), as in German we usually say of such a person, 'he is not yet dry behind the ears.' " (From the Aug. 21, 1802, issue of The Port Folio, a Philadelphia political and literary newspaper.)*

*The "wet" version of the expression appeared in English in the mid-19th century. The earliest Oxford example is from The Boston Daily Atlas, March 25, 1851:*

*"Such a louse student, who is still wet behind his ears, thinks because he is received in the castle, he is some great person!"*

We were all **Naive** once or twice or thrice. (though I often have wondered about the "Old Soul Concept") **Old Soul** There is no question that in college, there was a marked difference in maturity between the majority and a tiny minority. Those favored few had a distinct advantage over us pathetic pubescents. As I gaze upon the recent social/political landscape, I am convinced that the American public, as a whole, is incredibly **"WET BEHIND THE EARS."** They accept the idea of **"American Exceptionalism"** **Exceptionalism** hook, line, and sinker. It is patently absurd that a resident of America is anymore or less superior to a person born in Britain, France, Senegal, Outer Mongolia, Japan, or name a country, territory, or tribe of your choice. And if that would be the case, then why not **"Open The Floodgates"** at the borders and let all these "Exceptional People" in? Well, we don't want "those" kind of people (i.e. people of color) but send us your **WHITE, EDUCATED, EUROPEANS OR FORGET THE EDUCATION!** **Larry David/People** Historically, despite the phrase on the Statue of Liberty, waves of immigrants have been treated quite poorly. **Immigration**



The reality of America (and certainly is not alone in this realm) is a country of Election Deniers, Q-anon Believers, Conspiracy Wing Nuts, Bigamy Cults, Flat Earthers, Moon Landing Stagers, Birthers (a person who subscribes to or promotes the incorrect belief that former US president Barack Obama was born outside the United States and was therefore ineligible to be president under the provisions of the US Constitution)

Survivalists, White Supremacists, Anti-Semites, Jan 6 Insurrectionists, Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, Michigan Militia, Bigots, [Hate Crimes](#) Anarchists, Anti-Vaxxers, Adherents to The Protocols of the Elders of Zion [Protocols](#), Rampant Violent Crime, Roving Bands of Organized Thieves, [Theft](#) Blatant Discrimination/Physical Attacks of the LGBTQ community, "Go Back To Where You Came From" taunts aimed at African-Americans, Middle Easterners, Asians, and Hispanics, Meteoric Rise of hate crimes, Denial of slavery, WhiteWashing of American History, Attempted Muslim bans, the Rumor Mongering T.V./print media (Fox News New York Post, News Nation) , Social Media sites (X-formerly known as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram,et. al.) and a Multitude of "Closeted KKK Members" masquerading as duly elected representatives on every level of government and an ex-President of these United States of America threatening to throw political opponents in jail, hang a Retired 4-Star Army General Joint Chiefs of Staff and shoot looters in front of a cheering crowd! [Looters](#) And if you don't think that this could happen in the "**Greatest Country in the History of the World**", select a "stiff" drink of your choice, take a long drag on your bong or vape pen, back it up with an antidepressant, and read the following on Schedule F and the Doomsday Book. [Schedule F Doomsday Book](#) All the signs point to trouble ahead and plenty of trouble behind. [Casey Jones](#)

**First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.**

**Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.**

**Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.**

**Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.**

—Martin Niemöller [First](#)



As depressing as the previous discussion was, I can guarantee you that the upcoming one will NOT be much better. I can categorically say, after 25 years in the retirement plan business, the naivety of the common worker (or even the uncommon one) is shocking. They don't know what Medicare covers, haven't a clue about their projected Social Security monthly payment, are in complete denial as to their ability to financially survive in retirement, and have way too rosy of a picture of their golden years (I blame advertising for that!).

**HIGH INCOME HAZE – A national study predicts that nearly ½ of households are at risk of not having enough money for retirement. 28% do**

**not think they are at risk when they should be more worried and tend to be high-income households. Low income households are more likely to be “too worried” (source: Center for Retirement Research at Boston College).**

### **This Is What Life Without Retirement Savings Looks Like**

Many seniors are stuck with lives of never-ending work—a fate that could befall millions in the coming decades.

CORONA, Calif.—Roberta Gordon never thought she'd still be alive at age 76. She definitely didn't think she'd still be working. But every Saturday, she goes down to the local grocery store and hands out samples, earning \$50 a day, because she needs the money.

“I'm a working woman again,” she told me, in the common room of the senior apartment complex where she now lives, here in California's Inland Empire. Gordon has worked dozens of odd jobs throughout her life—as a house cleaner, a home health aide, a telemarketer, a librarian, a fundraiser—but at many times in her life, she didn't have a steady job that paid into Social Security. She didn't receive a pension. And she definitely wasn't making enough to put aside money for retirement.

More and more older people are finding themselves in a similar situation as Baby Boomers reach retirement age without enough savings and as housing costs and medical expenses rise; for instance, a woman in her 80s is paying on average \$8,400 in out-of-pocket medical expenses each year, even if she's covered by Medicare. Many people reaching retirement age don't have the pensions that lots of workers in previous generations did, and often have not put enough money into their 401(k)s to live off of; the median savings in a 401(k) plan for people aged 55 to 64 is currently just \$15,000, according to the National Institute on Retirement Security, a nonprofit. Other workers did not have access to a retirement plan through their employer.

That means that as people reach their mid-60s, they have to either dramatically curtail their spending or keep working to survive. “This will be the first time that we have a lot of people who find themselves downwardly mobile as they grow older,” Diane Oakley, the executive director of the National Institute on Retirement Security, told me. “They're going to go from being near-poor to poor.”

The problem is growing as more Baby Boomers reach retirement age—8,000 to 10,000 Americans turn 65 every day, according to Kevin Prindiville, the executive director of Justice in Aging, a nonprofit that addresses senior poverty. Older Americans were the only demographic for whom poverty rates increased in a statistically significant way from 2015 to 2016, according to Census Bureau

data. While poverty fell among people 18 and under and people 18 to 64 from 2015 to 2016, it rose to 14.5 percent for people over 65, according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure, which is considered a more accurate measure of poverty because it takes into account health-care costs and other big expenses. "In the early decades of our work, we were serving communities that had been poor when they were younger," Prindiville told me. "Increasingly, we're seeing folks who are becoming poor for the first time in old age."

This presents a worrying preview of what could befall millions of workers who will retire in the coming decades. If today's seniors are struggling with retirement savings, what will become of the people of working age today, many of whom hold unsteady jobs and have patchwork incomes that leave little room for retirement savings? The current wave of senior poverty could just be the beginning. Two-thirds of Americans don't contribute any money to a 401(k) or other retirement account, according to Census Bureau researchers. And this could have larger implications for the economy. If today's middle-class households curtail their spending when they retire, the whole economy could suffer.

The retirement-savings system in the United States has three pillars: Social Security, employer-sponsored pensions or retirement-savings plans, and individual savings. But with the rise of less stable jobs and the decline of pensions, a larger share of older Americans are relying only on Social Security, without either of the two other pillars to contribute to their finances. This by definition means they have less money than they did when they were working: Social Security replaces only about 40 percent of an average wage earner's income when they retire, while financial advisers say that retirees need at least 70 percent of their preretirement earnings to live comfortably.

Today's seniors are so reliant on Social Security in part because companies that once provided pensions began, in the '70s, to turn the responsibility of retirement saving over to individuals. Rather than "defined benefit" plans, in which people are guaranteed a certain amount of money every year in retirement, they receive "defined contribution" plans, which means the employer sets aside a certain amount of money per year. This switch saved companies money because it asked employees, not employers, to take on the risks associated with long-term investing. This means that the amount people receive is more affected by the ups and downs of the stock market, their individual wages, and interest rates. In 1979, 28 percent of private-sector workers had participated in defined-benefit retirement plans—by 2014, just 2 percent did, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute, a nonprofit. By contrast, 7 percent of private-sector workers participated in defined-contribution plans in 1979—by 2014, 34 percent did.

The recession and economic trends in the years since have also worsened the

finances of millions of seniors. Some bought houses during the housing boom and then found they owed more on their homes than they were worth, and had to walk away. Others invested in the stock market and saw their investments shrink dramatically. Jackie Matthews, now 76, lost her investments during the recession, and then had to sell her Arizona home in a short sale, netting only \$3,000. She now lives near her family in Southern California, renting a room in a friend's apartment, and budgets her finances carefully, skimping on meat and never buying anything new.

But even people who emerged from the recession relatively unscathed may have a hard time saving, according to a 2017 report from the Government Accountability Office. Average wages, when adjusted for inflation, have remained near where they were in the '70s, which makes it hard for workers to increase their savings. This has had a significant impact on the bottom 80 percent of workers, for whom average wages have remained relatively constant, even as income increased for the top 20 percent of households in the past three decades.

For many seniors, the answer to this lack of savings has meant working longer and longer, as Roberta Gordon is doing. Today, about 12.4 percent of the population aged 65 or older is still in the workforce, up from 3 percent in 2000, according to Oakley. I met a woman named Deborah Belleau who is 67 and works as a manager at a mobile-home park in Palm Springs, California. She worked as a waitress for 30 years, and often relied on government assistance as she raised her two children as a single mother. "You just don't think about tomorrow" when you're more worried about getting food on the table, she said. That means that today, though she receives money through Social Security, she can't afford a cellphone or a TV. Her rent is \$600 a month. She works full-time at the mobile-home park, despite aches and pains in her back and feet. Sometimes, when she wakes up, she can't walk. But, she says, "I can't quit. There's no way I can live on \$778 a month," the amount she receives from Social Security.

At least Belleau and others are physically able to work. Some seniors without retirement savings or a safety net have become homeless in recent years as housing costs have risen and they find themselves without the ability to generate income. "I see more homeless seniors than I've ever seen before," Rose Mayes, the executive director of the nonprofit Fair Housing Council of Riverside County, just east of Los Angeles, told me. In America in 2016, nearly half of all single homeless adults were aged 50 and older, compared with 11 percent in 1990.

What can be done to help today's seniors and generations to come? There are two approaches, Prindiville said: Help people save for old age and make

retirement more affordable. As for the first approach, some states have been trying to establish programs that help people save for retirement through payroll deductions even if their employers don't offer any retirement-savings accounts, for example. But the Trump administration in May repealed an Obama-era rule from the Department of Labor that would have made it easier for states to help people set up these plans. And the federal government is winding down a program, called myRA, which tried to encourage middle- and low-income Americans to save for retirement. "There are no new initiatives or strategies coming out of the federal government at a time when the need is growing," Prindiville said.

The second approach might mean expanding affordable-housing options, creating programs to help seniors cover medical costs, and reforming the Supplemental Security Income program so that poor seniors can receive more benefits. But there does not seem to be much of an appetite for such ideas in Washington right now. In fact, the Trump administration has proposed cutting money from SSI as well as the Social Security Disability Income program.

These initiatives can make the difference between having a home—and some semblance of stability—and not. Gordon, in Corona, was barely scraping by when I talked to her. A few months later, she was much more stable. Why? She'd gotten off a wait list and been accepted into the housing-voucher program known as Section 8, which reduces the amount of income she has to put toward housing. She's still working at 76, but she feels a little more secure now that she has more help. She knows, at least, that she's one of the lucky ones—able, in her older years, to keep food on the table and a roof over her head.[Grim](#)

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