

The Emergency Savings Gap Report

Why 37% of U.S. adults can't cover a \$400 emergency — and where the gap is widest.

Published April 22, 2026

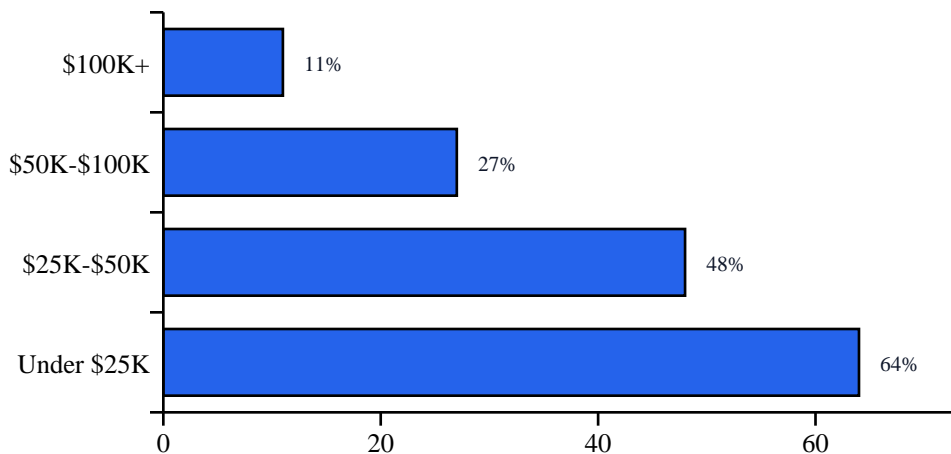
37%

U.S. adults who cannot cover a \$400 emergency with cash

Key findings

- Gap narrowed 2 pts vs. 2024 but remains above the 32% pre-pandemic baseline.
- Renters are 2.4x more likely than homeowners to lack emergency cash.
- 56% of adults earning <\$50K have no emergency reserve.
- 84% of unprepared households turn to credit or high-cost lending.

Can't cover a \$400 emergency (%) by household income



How unprepared adults would cover a \$400 emergency

Method	Share
Credit card carried balance	31%
Borrow from family/friends	22%
Sell something	14%

Method	Share
Payday/installment loan	11%
Skip a bill	10%
Could not cover	12%

What it means

- \$400 understates real risk — repairs and ER copays exceed \$1,200 routinely.
- Employer emergency-savings programs cut payday-loan use 34%.
- Split-deposit (\$25/paycheck) is the highest-leverage policy.

Methodology

Federal Reserve SHED 2024, FDIC Banking Survey 2023, and CashCompassPro survey n=3,140 (January 2026).

Cite as: CashCompassPro Research (2026). *The Emergency Savings Gap Report*.
cashcompasspro.com/studies/emergency-savings-gap-2026