



Survey: Where and How America Savers Save

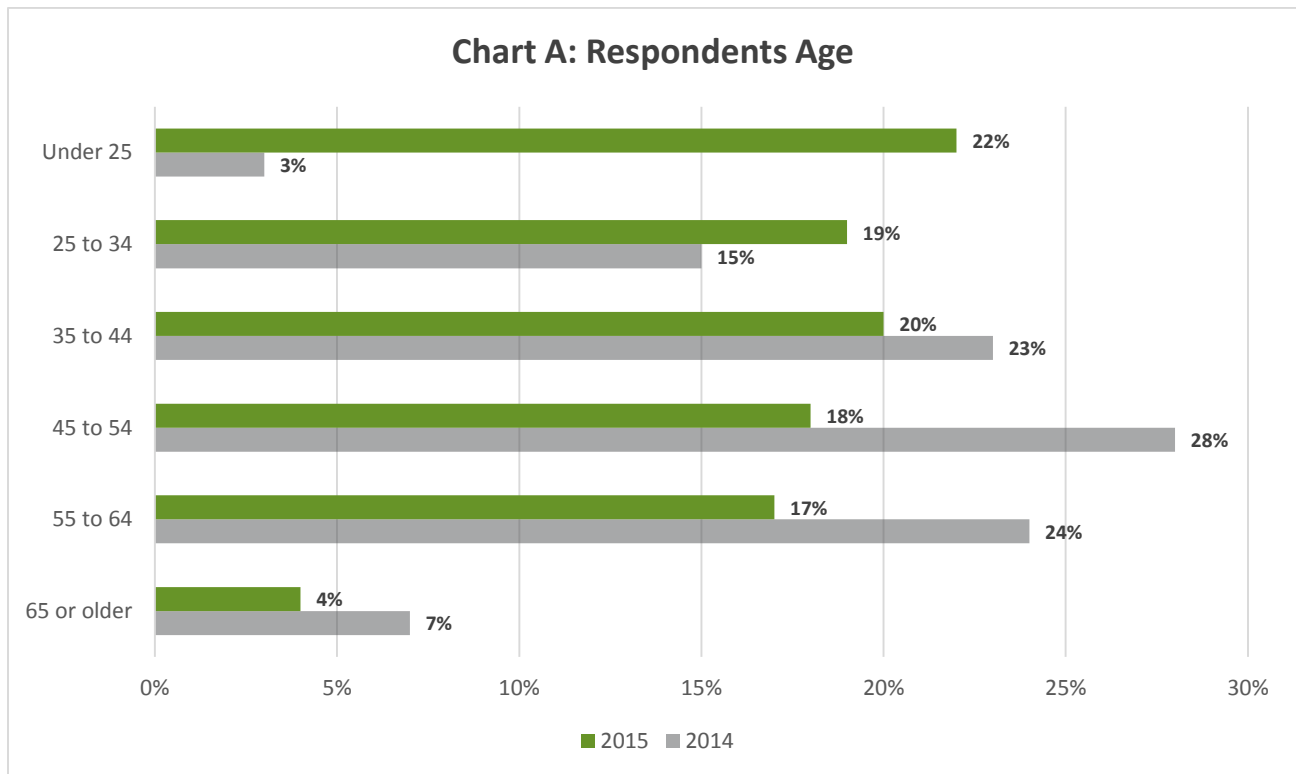
September, 2015

Introduction

In August of 2015, America Saves surveyed its savers to understand what financial products and methods they use to save – not counting savings for retirement. America Savers who took the America Saves pledge between January 2012 and July 2015 were recruited through direct emails and text messages. 1,389 America Savers completed the survey. While the results of this survey cannot necessarily be generalized to the entire America Saves community, the findings provide insights into the savings attitudes and behaviors of America Savers.

Differences Between 2014 and 2015 Data


This report highlights some significant changes from the results of the [May 2014 survey](#). We believe these changes are primarily the result of a different population of respondents (Chart A). Many more respondents under 25 years of age completed this year's survey. In many of the sections below, we have included charts comparing the answers of those under 25 years of age to those age 35 and older to highlight these differences.

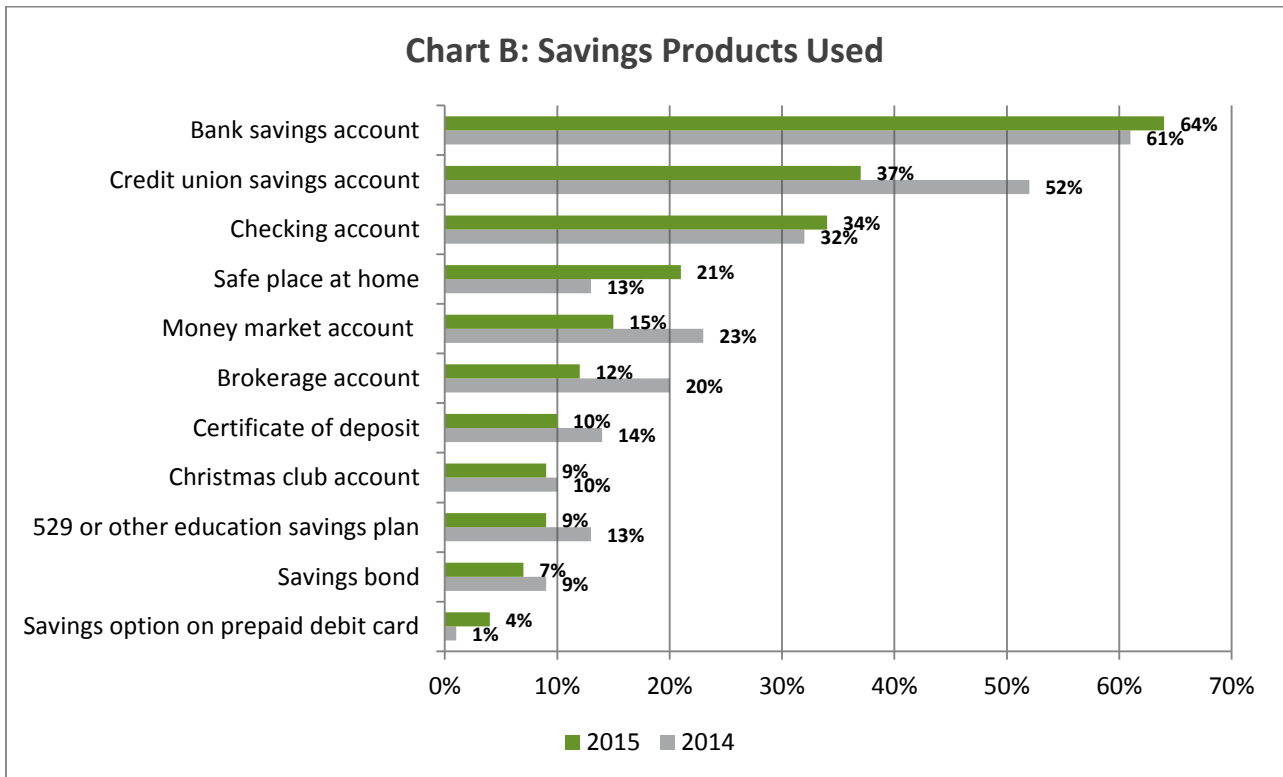


Savings Products Used

For the second year in a row, “bank savings account” and “credit union savings account” came in as the two most frequently selected savings products used by America Saves survey respondents (Chart B). These results continue to remain consistent with [data](#) from the Consumer Federation of America and America Saves, which shows that basic savings accounts remain important savings vehicles for Americans, especially for low-to moderate-income families. Noteworthy is that young respondents were much less likely to choose credit union savings accounts (Chart C).

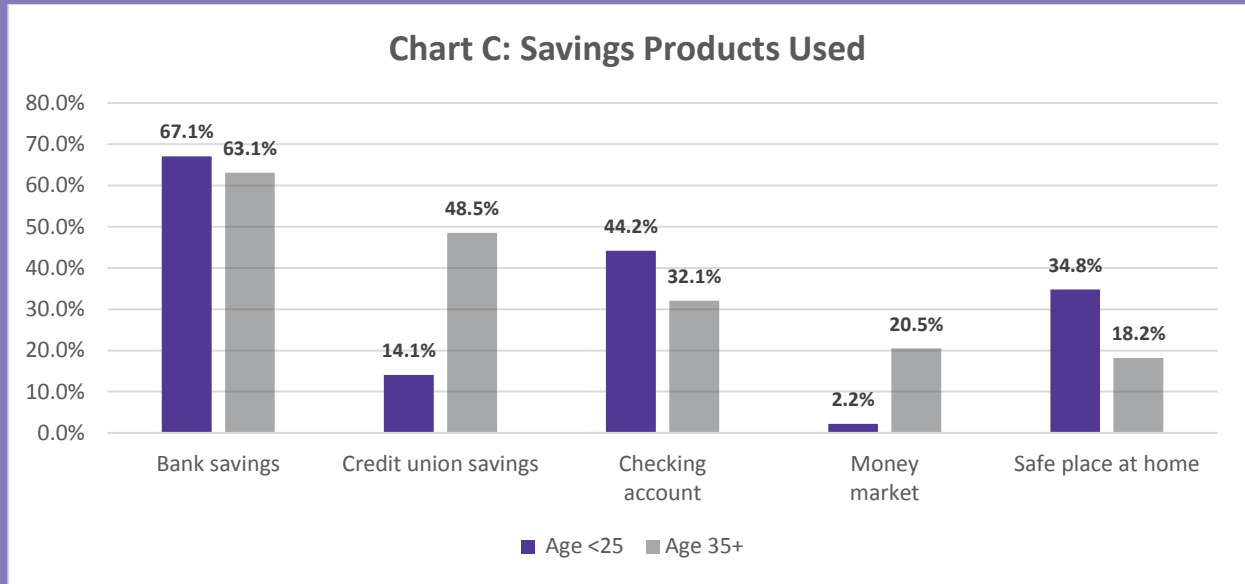
When asked “not counting savings for retirement, which of the following do you use for putting money aside as savings? (Select all that apply.)” (Chart B) more than half of respondents selected “bank savings account” (64%). The next highest reported using “credit union savings account” (37%), “checking account” (34%), “safe place at home” (21%), “money market account” (15%), and/or “brokerage account” (12%). Less frequently selected products included “certificate of deposit” (10%), “529 or other education savings plan” (9%), “Christmas club account” (9%), “U.S. savings bonds” (7%), “savings options on a prepaid debit card” (4%), and/or “informal savings circle (sou-sou, tanda, cundina)” (1%).

A bank savings account is the most frequently selected product for saving money among America Saves survey respondents. 



Comparing Youth to Older Groups: Savings Products Used (Chart C)

Those under 25 years of age were much less likely to select “credit union savings” or “money market” as one of the savings products they used than those age 35 and older. They also were more likely to select “checking account” and/or “safe place at home” as products they use to save.



Primary Savings Products Used

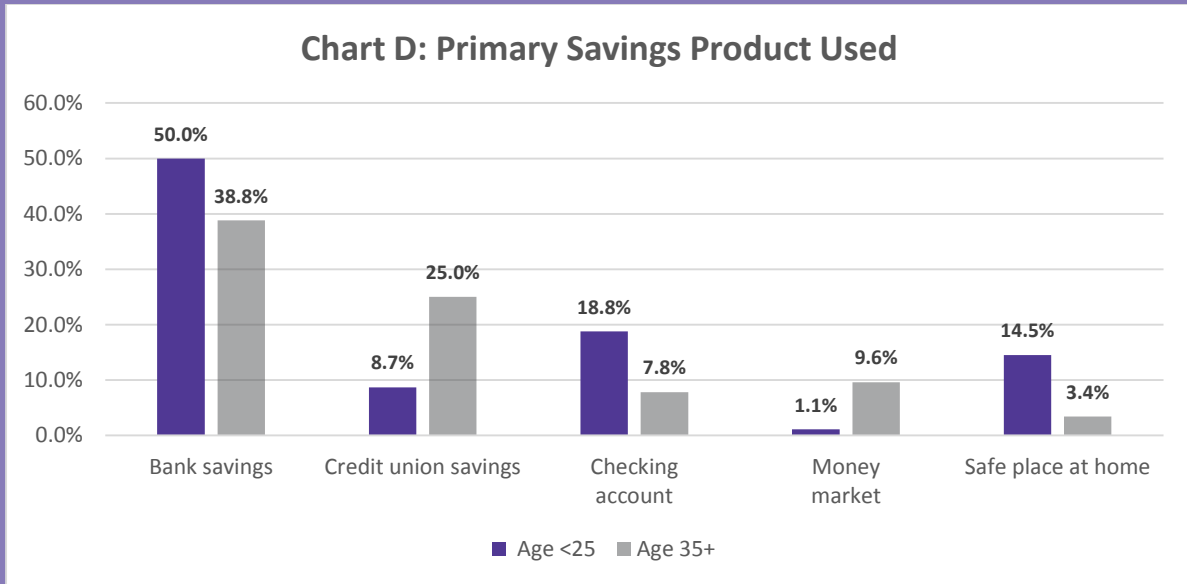
When asked “which is the primary savings product or option you use?” nearly two-thirds selected “bank savings account” (43%), or “credit union savings account” (20%). Twenty-nine percent selected “checking account” (10%), “money market account” (7%), “brokerage account” (6%), or “safe place at home” (6%). Less than 10 percent selected “certificate of deposit” (2%), “savings option on a prepaid debit card” (2%), “529 or other education savings plan” (1%), “Christmas club account” (1%), “U.S. Savings Bonds” (1%), or “informal savings circle (sou-sou, tanda, cundina)” (0.5%).

Primary Savings Product Used

1. Bank savings account (43%)
2. Credit Union savings account (20%)
3. Checking account (10%)

Comparing Youth to Older Groups: Primary Savings Products Used (Chart D)

Those under 25 years of age were also much less likely to select “credit union savings”, or “money market” as the main savings products they use than those age 35 and older. They also were more likely to select “checking account” or “safe place at home” as the main product they use to save.



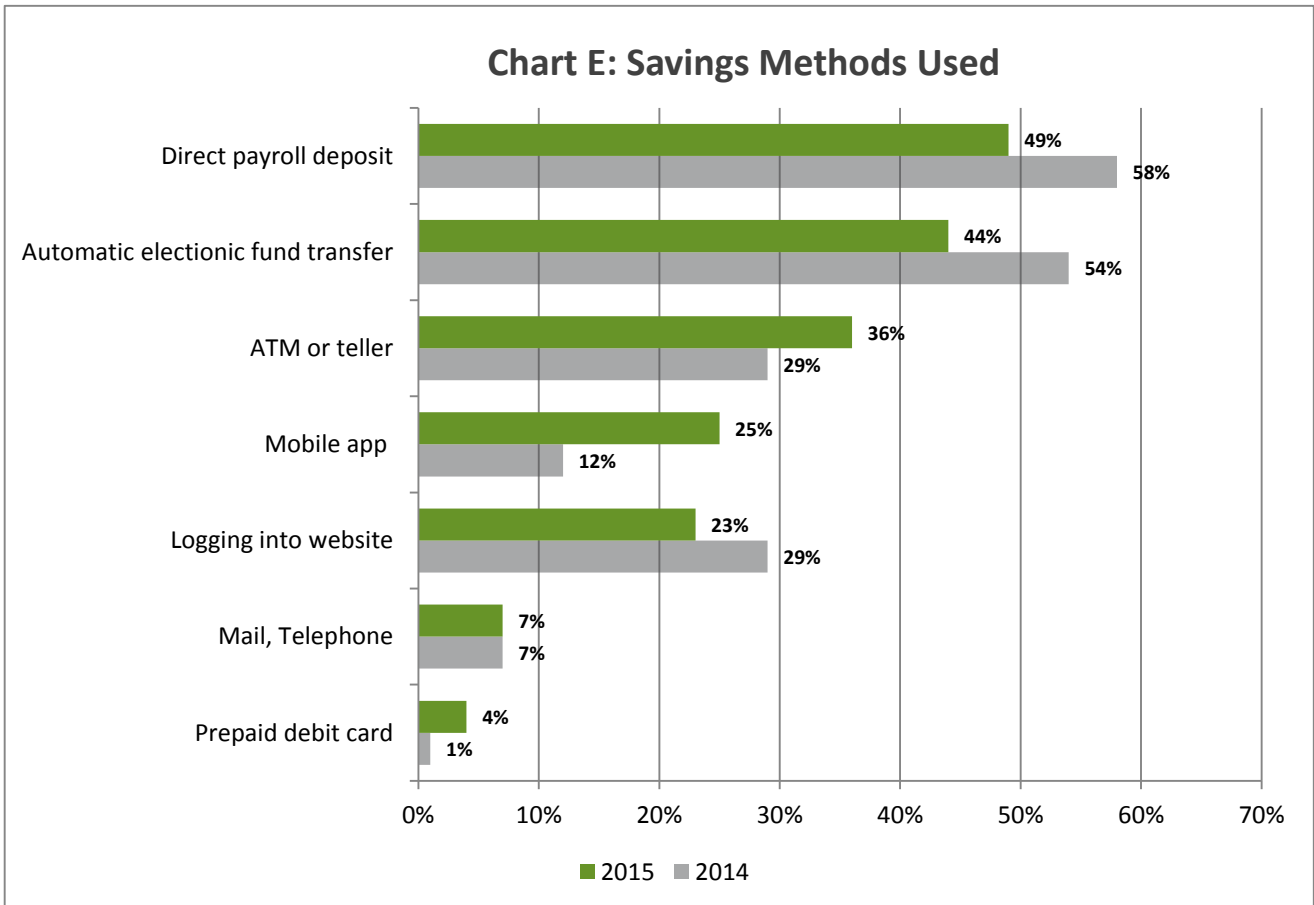
Those under 25 years of age were more likely to select “safe place at home” as their main savings product. [🐦](#)

Savings Methods

Saving automatically through “direct payroll deposit” and “automatic electronic fund transfer” remained the top two selected savings methods by America Saves survey respondents (Chart E). America Saves promotes automatic savings as the best way to save and these results highlight the key role this method plays in the lives of responding savers. Nearly 30% of those under 25 chose “payroll deposit” as their main method of saving. This group was also more likely to select “ATM or teller” and “mobile app” as the next highest primary savings methods than older generations. It is unclear if these differences merely reflect differences associated with those just establishing themselves in the labor market or longer-term trends related to technology and products.

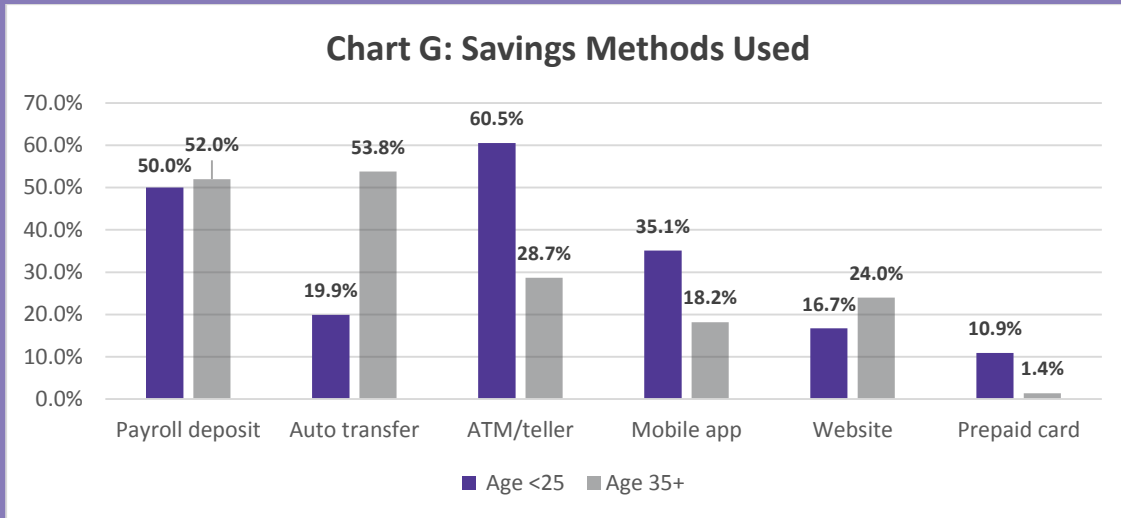
More than 60% of America Saves survey respondents reported saving automatically. 

When asked “which methods do you use to put money into savings? (Select all that apply.)” nearly half selected “direct payroll deposit” (49%) and/or “automatic electronic funds transfer” (44%). The next highest savings methods selected included “ATM or teller” (36%), “mobile app” (25%), and/or “logging into website” (23%). Less than 10 percent of respondents selected “use prepaid debit card” (4%), “telephone” (4%), and/or “mail” (3%).



Comparing Youth to Older Groups: Savings Methods Used (Chart F)

Those under 25 years of age were much less likely to select “automatic electronic funds transfer” as a savings method used than those age 35 and older. They were also more likely to select “ATM or teller” and/or “mobile app.”



Primary Savings Method Used

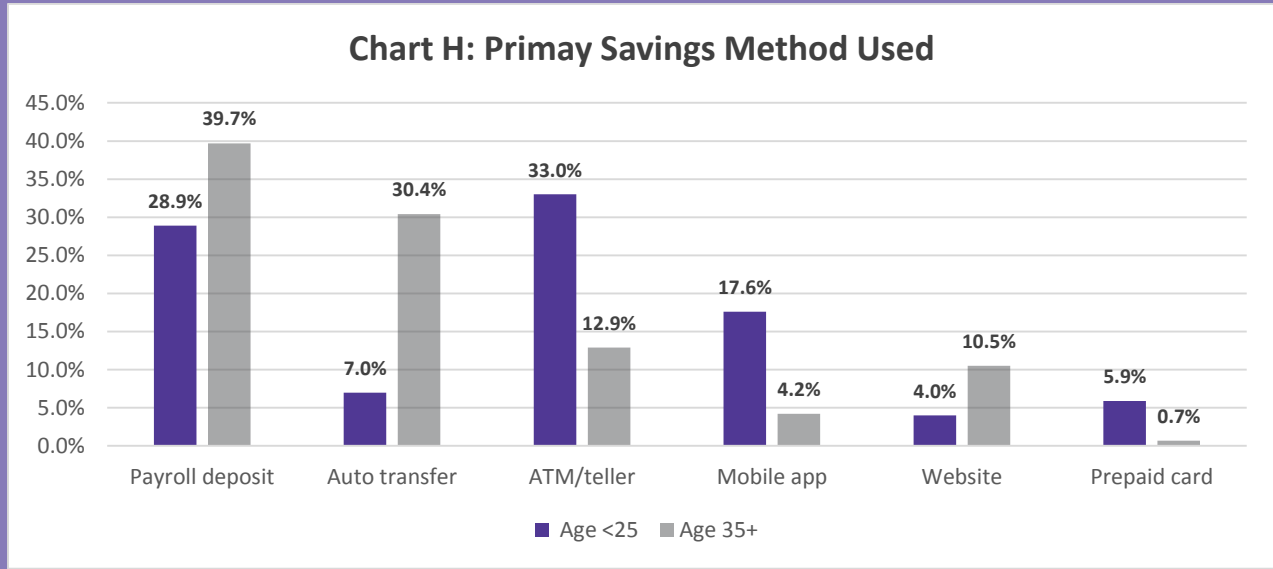
When asked “Which one of these methods do you use most often to put money into savings?” nearly two-thirds selected “direct payroll deposit” (36%) or “automatic electronic fund transfer” (25%). Nearly one-third selected “ATM or teller” (18%), “logging into website” (9%), or “mobile app” (9%). Rarely used savings methods included “prepaid debit card” (2%), “mail” (1%), or “telephone” (1%).

Primary Savings Method Used

1. Direct payroll deposit (39%)
2. Automatic electronic fund transfer (25%)
3. ATM or Teller (18%)

Comparing Youth to Older Groups: Primary Savings Method Used (Chart G)

Those under 25 years of age were much less likely to select “automatic electronic funds transfer” and “website” as their main savings method used than those age 35 and older. They were also more likely to select “ATM or teller,” “mobile app,” or “prepaid card.”



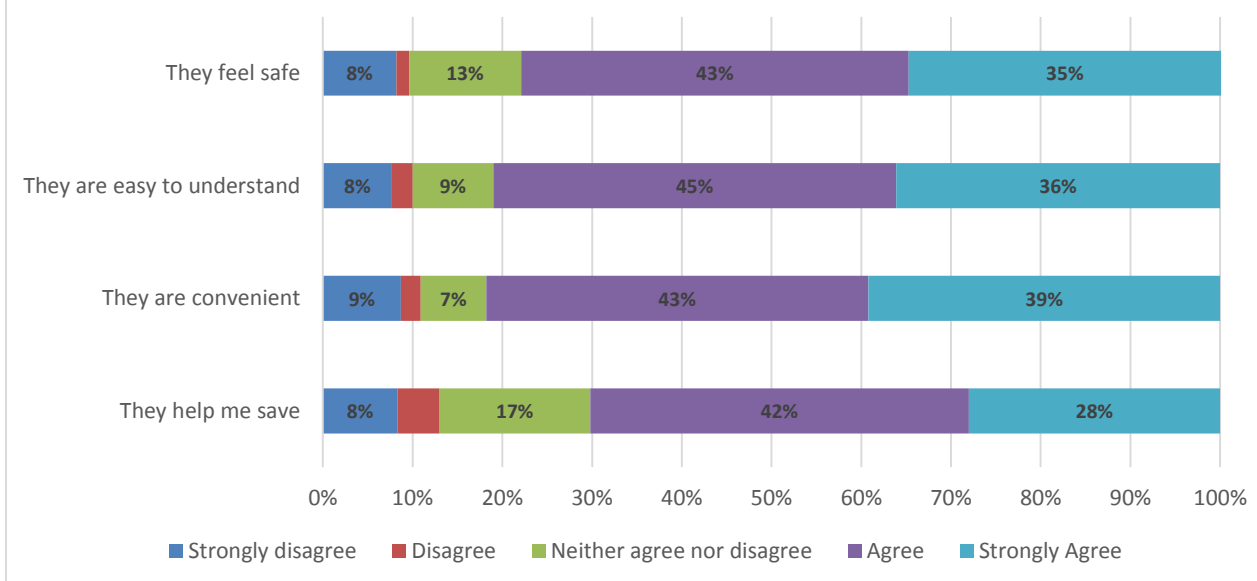
Perceptions of Savings Products

Overall, the survey results illustrate that respondents think the savings products they use help them save, are convenient, are easy to understand, and feel safe (Chart H). Interestingly, youth were somewhat less likely to have these beliefs and were more likely to “strongly disagree” with these statements than those age 35 and older (Charts I & J).

Seventy percent of respondents “agreed” (42%) or “strongly agreed” (28%) that these savings products “help them save.” Eighty-two percent of respondents “agreed” (43%) or “strongly agreed” (39%) that these savings products “are convenient.” Eighty-one percent of respondents “agreed” (45%) or “strongly agreed” (36%) that these savings products are “easy to understand.” Seventy-eight percent of respondents “agreed” (43%) or “strongly agreed” (35%) that these savings products “feel safe.” (Note: There is likely a self-selection bias among respondents, creating an over-representation of satisfied savers.)

America Saves survey respondents feel the products they use to save help them save, are convenient, are easy to understand, and feel safe. 🐦

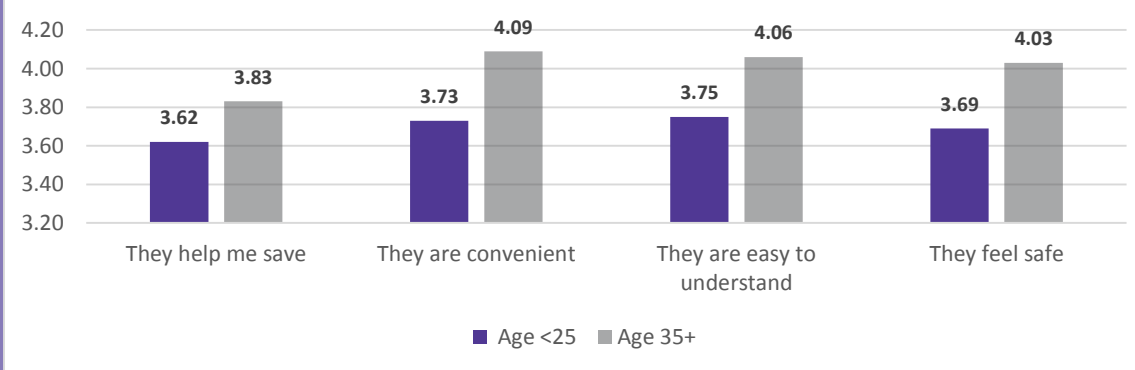
Chart H: Perceptions of Products



Comparing Youth to Older Groups: Perceptions of Savings Products

Those under 25 years of age were somewhat less likely to “agree” that these products help them save, are convenient, are easy to understand, and feel safe than those age 35 and older (Chart I).

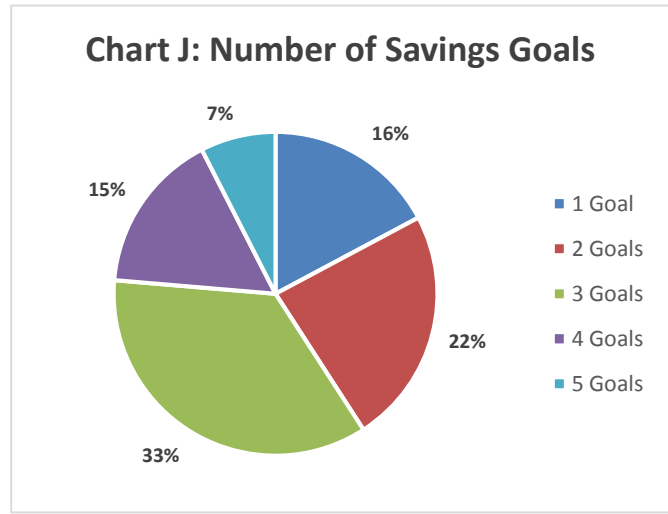
Chart J: Median Ratings of Perceptions of Savings Products



Savings Goals

The majority of respondents reported saving for multiple goals (Chart J). These numbers were largely unchanged from the 2014 results. While those age 35 and over selected “retirement,” “debt repayment,” and “vacation” as their top savings goals, youth were more likely to select “education,” “motor vehicle,” or “special event” as their main savings goals (Chart M).

Only 16 percent reported they were saving for just one goal. Nearly a third (33%) of respondent’s selected three goals, nearly a quarter (22%) selected two goals, and nearly a quarter (22%) selected four or five goals.



Comparing Youth to Older Groups: Savings Goals (Chart K)

Those under 25 years of age were more likely to choose saving for education, motor vehicle, and special event than those age 35 years of age and older. They were also less likely to choose debt repayment, and retirement.

