

From Impossible to It's Possible in the Equation for Financial Well-Being: Women, Schools and Money

Financial well-being has always been a tricky mix to master. Personal finance may no longer feel like an equation of $A+B=C$. Instead, it may feel like $(A \times \text{by inflation}) + (B \times \text{by inflation}) = < \text{enough}$. And for women, the equation has more variables than for men. Aside from inflation, women have retirement savings, unexpected emergencies and family financial security at the top of their minds.

*The Impossible Equation for Financial Well-Being:
Educators + (Finance+ Women) -Debt – Caregiving x
Stress/Lack of Time= Unrealistic Expectations*

Apples to Apples or Apples to Algebra?

More often than men, women play many roles at once. And playing many roles at once means women have many factors impacting their personal finance equation, no matter the demographic group. They may be a mother, educator, sister, daughter, wife, community member and dog walker all at the same time.

Educators face even more variables in the personal finance equation, including student loan debt and staff shortages. On a national level, federal student loan debt is \$1.7 trillion – larger than credit debt --- and the average student loan borrower has over \$37,000 in student loan debt.¹ And women hold two-thirds of the student loan debt.²

¹ Source: <https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-statistics>

² Source: <https://usow.org/studentloans/>

³ These stats are summarized in an article here: <https://www.bcgbenefits.com/blog/targeting-female-investors> and include a 2016 Kiplinger Study, and a 2013 Fidelity Study, and also a Vanguard study from 2008 about behavioral finance.



Horace Mann surveyed about 2,500 teachers to better understand some of the challenges they may face managing student loan debt and accessing loan forgiveness programs. The results showed that one of every three educators is considering leaving the teaching profession due to financial stress.

Women's longer life expectancy means they must set aside more to live on in retirement, and their role as caregiver often sandwiches them between raising children and helping their aging parents at the same time. Because of this dual caregiving role, women may spend portions of their retirement on health care for others.

Because of all this, comparing women's experiences in personal finance to men's isn't apples to apples – it's apples to algebra. The elements of women's circumstances may differ, but the complexity of their financial situation remains.

These situations leave little time for financial planning. However, the reality is that female educators face unique financial needs, and they need help.

From “You’ve Come a Long Way Baby” to “We’ve Got This”

You know the proverb that says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together?” The same is true for women’s personal finances. Women have come a long way in closing the gap between men and women in both income and leadership, but they still have a way to go in retirement savings.

However, that gap in retirement savings may be changing as women’s strengths and challenges in personal finance have gotten more attention recently. In general, women exceed men in their investment behavior. They research more, engage in panic selling less, and respond to market swings less often. Women are also more likely to seek advice on their investments.³

Yet, educators in particular have a difficult time seeking investment advice because they often don’t know how to find professionals to help them with their situation. Increased income and better debt repayment options would also go a long way toward helping the financial well-being of educators. A team of supportive and trustworthy advisors are also helpful.

Educators also have complex retirement benefits programs, and female educators feel less familiar with those programs than their male colleagues. 68.9% of male educators say they have a good or very good understanding of their retirement benefits, but only 56.7% of women educators feel that confident.⁴

Horace Mann has financial wellness resources and representatives that can help turn what may seem like an impossible financial well-being situation for educators into a possible one. For more information on Horace Mann’s financial wellness resources, visit horacemann.com/financial-wellness or contact your [Horace Mann representative](#).

⁴ Horace Mann white paper, [Checks and Balance: How financial stress and heavier workloads are accelerating the teacher shortage](#),” Feb. 2023.

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The It’s Possible Equation for Financial Well-Being: (Women + Benefits x Income) - Debt/ Advisor=Flexible Approaches