Managing Money with Competing Responsibilities (Mid-Career)

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The Pension Boards
United Church of Christ, Inc.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED

Today's Agenda

Goals & habits

SMART goals, budgeting, and a healthy emergency fund

Debt & credit

Debt levels, the minimum-payment trap, DMPs, credit health

Protect & plan

Life insurance, saving for college, and career conversations conversations

Retirement income

On-track checkups, compounding, target-date funds funds

Legacy & care

Wills, beneficiaries, directives, estate prep, and caring for aging loved ones

Resources

Free, confidential help through LSS, NetBenefits, and PBUCC

AUDIENCE POLL

Which financial goal is top of mind right now?

Think about today — there's no wrong answer. We'll come back to this.

A Paying down debt

B Building emergency savings

C Saving for a child's education

D Investing for retirement

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PART ONE

Goals & Habits

"To everything there is a season — including a season to prepare."

GOALS & HABITS

Make Goals SMART

A vague wish (“pay off debt someday”) rarely happens. A SMART goal turns goal turns intention into a plan you can measure and finish.

- **S** — **Specific** Pay off the $3,000 balance on my credit card
- **M** — **Measurable** Track the balance to $0 — $300 paid every month
- **A** — **Achievable** $300/month fits my budget after trimming extras
- **R** — **Relevant** Frees up cash flow and stops high-interest charges
- **T** — **Time-bound** Done in 10 months ($3,000 ÷ $300 = 10)

THE GOAL, AT A GLANCE

$3,000

Credit card balance to clear

$300

Paid every month

10 months

Finish line — a date on the calendar

Tip: name a start date and put the payment on autopay so it happens without willpower.

Resource: ***Setting SMART Financial Goals***: *PBUCC.ORG > Financial Wellness > Other Resources*

Illustration assumes level $300 monthly payments; actual payoff varies with interest charged on the remaining balance.

GOALS & HABITS

A Simple Way to Track Your Budget

A budget is just a plan for the money you already have. Build it in five repeatable steps —then review and adjust.

1

Add up income

List every source of take-home pay —salary, housing allowance, side income.

2

Track spending

Record every dollar for 30 days. Apps, a notebook, or the PBUCC worksheet.

3

Categorize

Sort into needs, wants, and savings/debt. A 50 / 30 / 20 split is a useful start.

4

Map cash flow

Line up when income arrives against when bills are due, week by week.

5

Review & adjust

Check weekly, reset monthly. Pay yourself first by automating savings.

Resource: ***Home Budget Analysis Calculator:*** *PBUCC.ORG > Financial Wellness > Financial Calculators*

GOALS & HABITS

Why an Emergency Fund Matters

An emergency fund is cash set aside for life's surprises — a car repair, a medical bill, a gap in income. It's the buffer that keeps a setback from becoming new debt.

Protects your progress — Stops you reaching for a credit card when the unexpected hits.

Lowers stress — Peace of mind to keep serving without constant money worry.

Keep it separate & safe — A high-yield savings account — easy to reach, not invested.

HOW MUCH TO AIM FOR

$1,000

Start here — a cushion for the most common surprises

3–6 months

Build toward this — of essential expenses, once high-interest debt is under control

Save it where it's boring and safe — the goal is access, not growth.

Resource: ***PBUCC Emergency Grant*** *:* *PBUCC.ORG > Ministerial Assistance*

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PART TWO

Debt & Credit

Freeing up what you owe so you can give, save, and breathe easier.

Common Debt Levels & Healthy Ratios

Knowing typical balances — and the ratios lenders use — helps you gauge where you stand.

Three ratios worth knowing

≤ 28%
Housing ratio

Housing costs as a share of gross monthly income

Example: *$1,680 housing cost on on $6,000 monthly income*

≤ 36%
Total debt ratio

All debt payments as a share of gross income (28/36 rule)

Example: *$2,160 total debt on $6,000 $6,000 monthly income*

≤ 20%
Consumer-debt ratio

Non-mortgage debt payments vs. take-home pay

Example: *$900 in card & auto payments on $4,500 take-home*

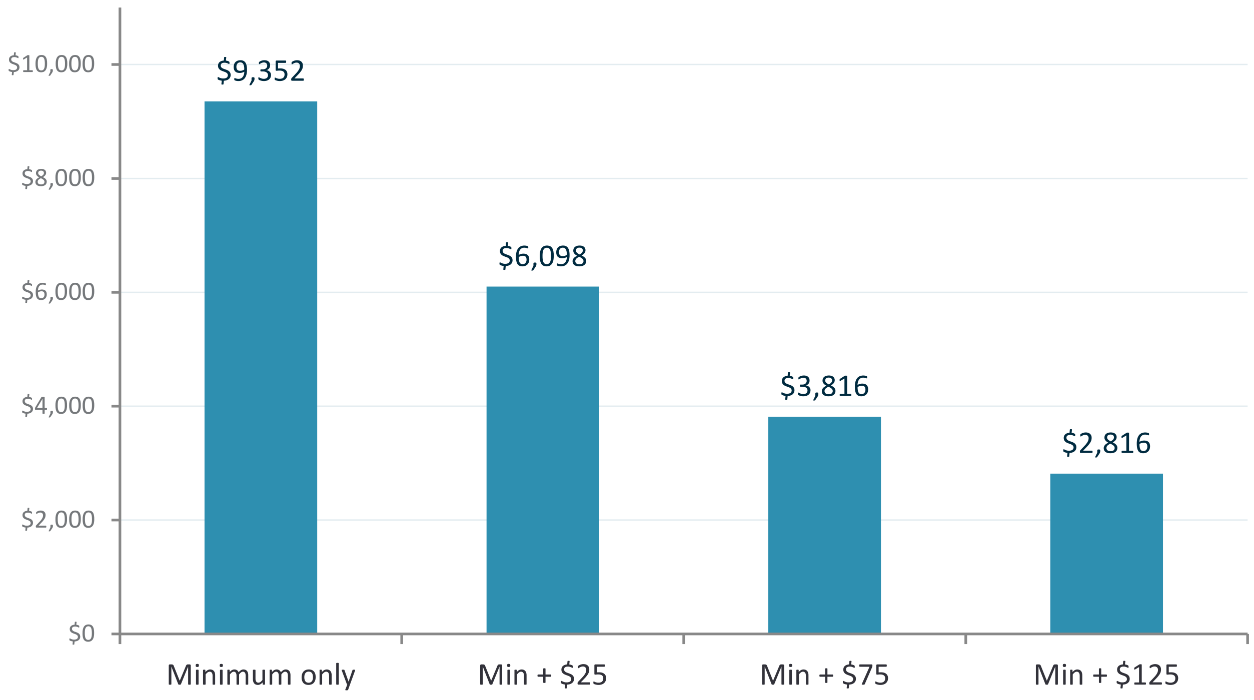
Resource: ***Debt-To-Income Ratio Calculator***: *PBUCC.ORG > Financial Wellness > Financial Calculators*

DEBT & CREDIT

Avoiding the Minimum-Payment Trap

Same $8,000 balance at 20% APR. The only thing that changes is how much you add above the minimum — and it changes everything.
everything.

Total interest paid before it's gone



Time to pay off · Interest paid

Monthly approach	Payoff	Interest
Minimum only	18.2 yrs	$9,352
Min + $25	9.8 yrs	$6,098
Min + $75	5.4 yrs	$3,816
Min + $125	3.8 yrs	$2,816

Just $125 more a month clears the debt 14 years
years sooner and saves about **$6,500 in interest.**
interest.

Assumes 20% APR; minimum = greater of 3% of balance or $25; extra added to each month's minimum. Illustrative only.

A Partner for Your Debt: LSS Financial Choice

When debt feels unmanageable, you don't have to figure it out alone. LSS Financial Financial Counseling is a trusted nonprofit that has guided people for 35+ years — free, years — free, confidential, and judgment-free.

Certified counselors — NFCC- certified guidance by phone, nationwide.

Debt Management Plan — Consolidates credit cards into one one monthly payment, often at lower interest — so you pay off faster. off faster.

A real plan — Budget review, debt strategy, and student-loan options tailored to you.

Get free financial guidance

833.975.0719

www.financialcounseling.lssmn.org/pbucc

PBUCC Member & Immediate Family Family Members: free confidential sessions.

LSS Financial Counseling does not provide bankruptcy services. A DMP may affect credit access while active; ask a counselor.

Improve Your Credit — and Read Your Report

Your credit score shapes the rates you're offered on everything from cars to mortgages. Five factors drive it — and you control most you control most of them.

35%	**Payment history** — Pay on time, every time — the single biggest factor
30%	**Amounts owed** — Keep card balances as low as possible – ideally pay off!
15%	**Length of history** — Keep older accounts open – but balance against annual fees
10%	**New credit** — Apply sparingly; each hard inquiry dings the score
10%	**Credit mix** — A healthy variety helps modestly

Review your credit report

Free annual reports

from all three bureaus at annualcreditreport.com

Check for errors

wrong balances, accounts you don't recognize, or signs of fraud — then dispute them

Resource: Work with LSS Financial Choice

LSS Financial Choice can pull your report and review it with you with your approval

Score factor weights are approximate (FICO model) and vary by scoring system.

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PART THREE

Protect & Plan

Putting protections in place for the people who depend on you.

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Do I Need Life Insurance?

If someone depends on your income, the answer is usually yes. Life insurance replaces what your family would lose — so a loss of life doesn't become a loss of home or future.

Estimate your need with D-I-M-E

- **D** — **Debt** — Credit cards, auto, and final expenses
- **I** — **Income** — Years of salary your family would need replaced
- **M** — **Mortgage** — The balance remaining on your home
- **E** — **Education** — Future college costs for your children

Resource: UCC Life Insurance Plan: Read more on PBUCC.ORG

Estimate your needs

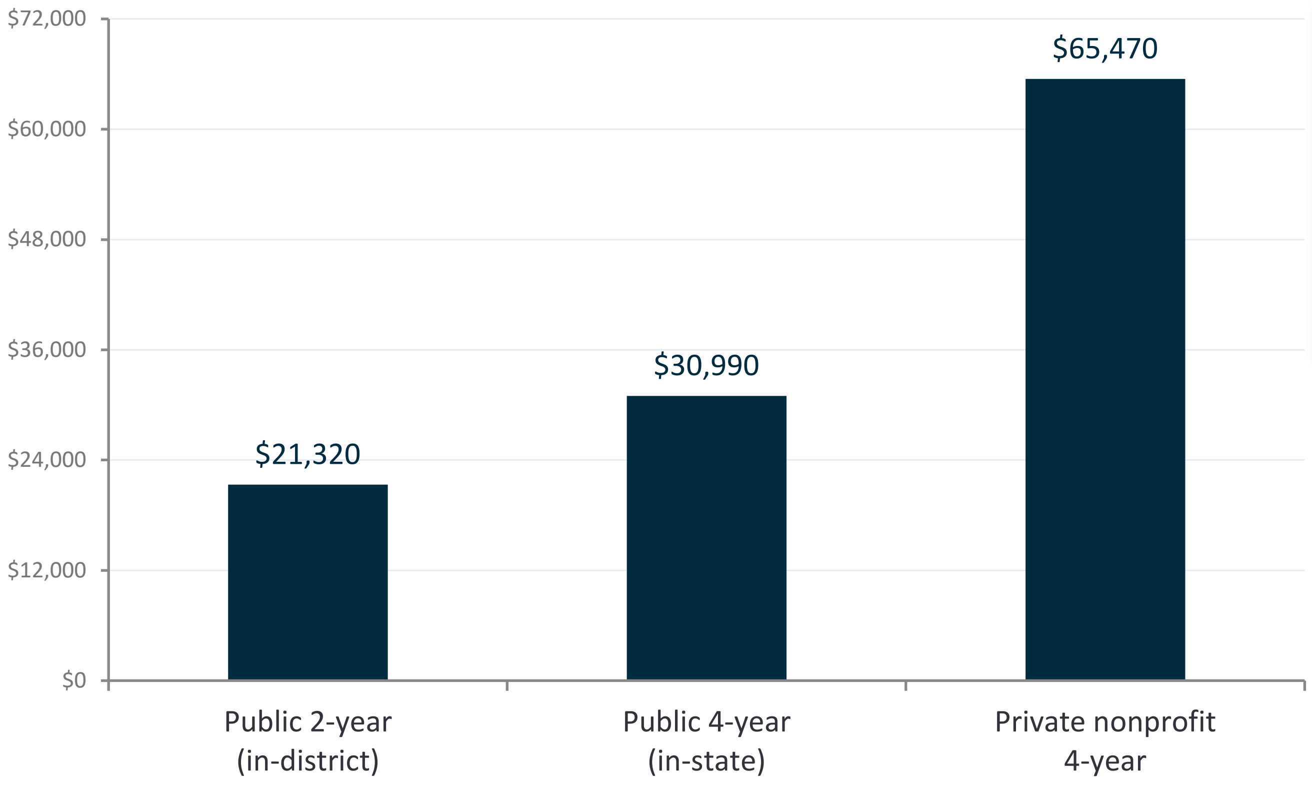
Answer a few questions to estimate the coverage your family needs.

Comprehensive Life Insurance Analysis:
PBUCC.ORG > Financial Wellness > Financial Calculators

Term vs. permanent policies differ in cost and duration. This is educational only — compare quotes and consult a licensed professional.

How Much Does College Cost?

Average published cost of one year — tuition, fees, housing, food, and supplies (College Board, 2025–26).



Sticker price isn't the price most pay

Many students receive grant aid that lowers the real (net) cost (net) cost — about 4 in 5 students at public four-year schools get schools get help. Compare net price, not the headline number. number.

Estimate your college costs

Use the **College Saving Calculator on PBUCC.ORG**. **PBUCC.ORG**.

PBUCC.ORG > Financial Wellness >Financial Calculators

Published average total budgets (College Board, 2025–26). Costs vary widely by state and school; net price after aid is typically lower.

Saving for College: 529 vs. Coverdell ESA

Two tax-advantaged ways to save. Both grow tax-free for qualified education — they differ in how much you can put in, who can contribute, and how you invest.

	529 Plan	Coverdell ESA
Contribution limit	No federal annual limit; high lifetime caps ($300K+). Counts as a gift; 5-year front-loading allowed.	$2,000 per child, per year
Income limits	None — anyone can contribute	Phases out (single $95K–$110K; married $190K–$220K)
Tax treatment	After-tax in; tax-free growth & tax-free qualified withdrawals. Many states add a deduction/credit.	After-tax in; tax-free growth & tax-free qualified withdrawals
Qualified uses	College, plus up to $20K/yr K-12 tuition, apprenticeships, $10K loan repay; 529→Roth up to $35K	Broad K-12 & college expenses; must be used by age 30
Investment options	Set menu — age-based / target-date & static portfolios	Self-directed — wide choice of funds, ETFs, stocks

Limits/rules reflect 2026 federal figures and may change; state 529 benefits vary. Non-qualified withdrawals owe tax plus a 10% penalty on earnings.

Talking with Children About Careers

Career conversations work best as an ongoing, low-pressure dialogue — helping a child discover their gifts, not handing them a verdict.

Start early, stay curious

Make it a series of small chats over years, not one big 'so what will you be?' talk.

Lead with strengths & interests

Ask what they enjoy, what they're good at, and what problems they'd love to solve — before salary.

Explore the real world

Job shadowing, informational interviews, volunteering, and part-time work reveal what fits.

Weigh paths & costs

Compare trades, two-year, and four-year routes — and the return on each investment.

Frame it as calling

Connect work to gifts and service: 'How might you use what you're good at to help others?'

Use free tools

College Board BigFuture has career quizzes and skill-to-career insights to spark ideas.

PROTECT & PLAN

Connect with a Virtual College Coach

College Board's BigFuture offers free, trustworthy planning — including one-on-one virtual advising for eligible students. No counselor at school? This helps level the field.

Free 1:1 virtual advising — Trained advisors guide eligible students students through applications, essays, and financial aid — via partners partners like Matriculate, ScholarMatch, and UStrive.

BigFuture School app — After a PSAT/SAT, students get scores plus college, scholarship, and career matches.

Plan & pay tools — College search, cost calculators, and monthly monthly scholarship drawings ($500–$40,000).

Start exploring

bigfuture.collegeboard.org

Look for “Virtual College Advising” under Plan for College to check eligibility and get matched with a free advisor.

Completely free · College Board nonprofit

PROTECT & PLAN

Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)

PSLF can erase the remaining balance on federal Direct Loans after 10 years of public-service work. Since 2021, clergy and religious workers qualify — a major opportunity for those who serve.

120 qualifying payments

10 years' worth — they don't have to be be consecutive

Direct Loans

Other federal loans e.g. FFEL, Perkins) Consolidate into a Direct Loan first

Income-driven repayment

Make payments under a qualifying IDR plan

Qualifying employer

Government or 501(c)(3) nonprofit — churches now included

Certify yearly

File the employment certification form every year

Tax-free forgiveness

The forgiven balance isn't taxed federally

LSS Financial Choice student-loan counselors help you navigate PSLF — for free. They can discuss updated updated Government rules and deadlines as well. **833.975.0719**

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PART FOUR

Retirement Income

Turning steady, faithful contributions into lasting security.

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Are You on Track for Retirement?

Your Lifetime Retirement Income Plan lives on Fidelity NetBenefits®. A few minutes there minutes there shows whether you're on pace — and what to adjust.

Log in —PBUCC.ORG > Member Login > Access Fidelity NetBenefit®

Check your score — Use the planning tools to see your projected retirement income vs. your goal

Adjust — Nudge your contribution rate and review your investment mix

Get free guidance — Fidelity Retirement Planners can help

Fidelity Retirement Planners can help you estimate if you are on track for retirement and select investments in the PBUCC Lifetime Retirement Income Call 800-642-6543, option 4 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

Milestones are general guidelines (Fidelity), not personalized targets; your number depends on your situation.

AUDIENCE POLL

(Consider Privately) -How on-track do you feel for retirement?

Be honest — this is just a gut check for your own reflection.

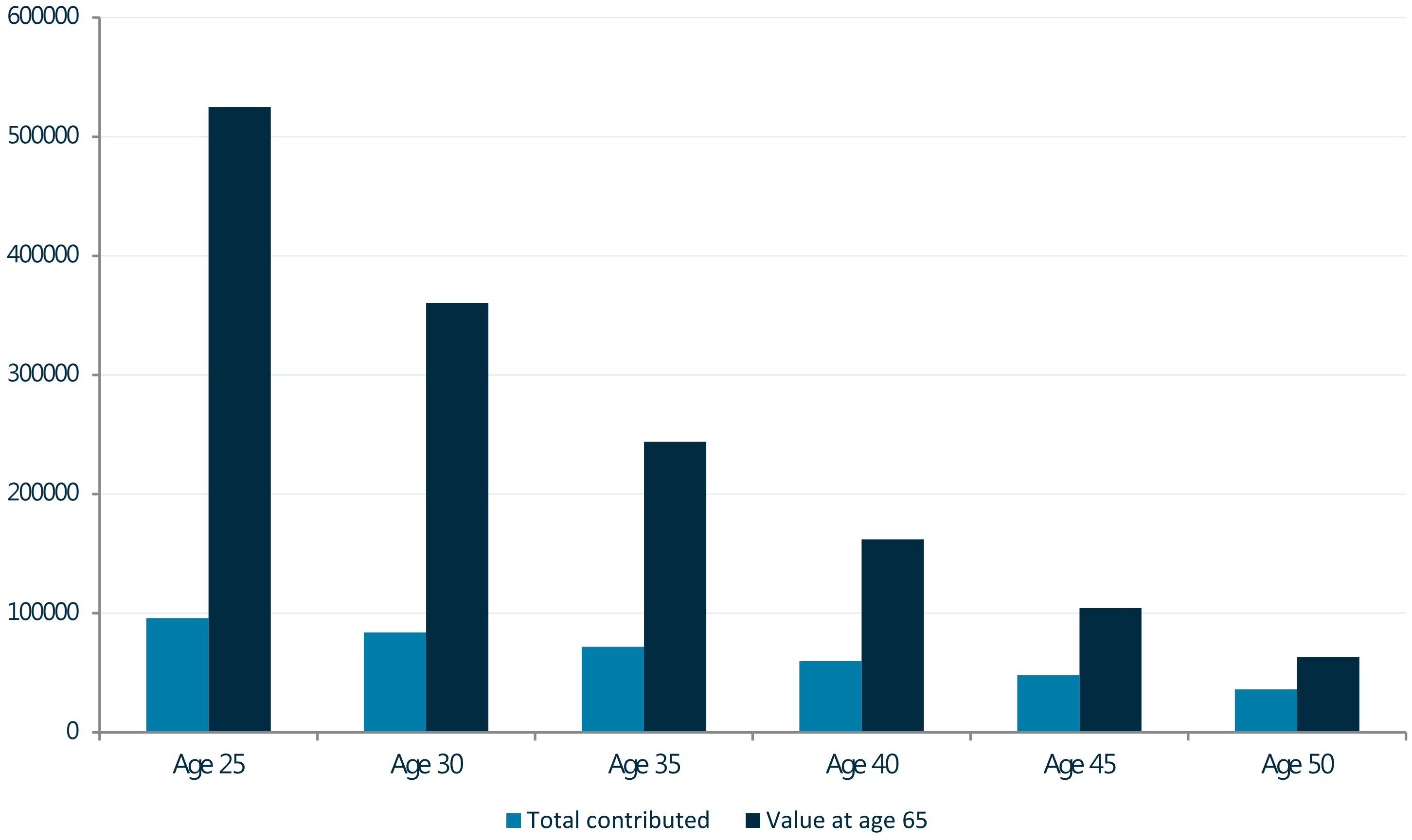
Confident and on pace

Making progress, but unsure

Just getting started

Haven't begun yet

Why time matters more than amount



$200 / month

at 7% per year

Starting at 25:

$524,963

Starting at 45:

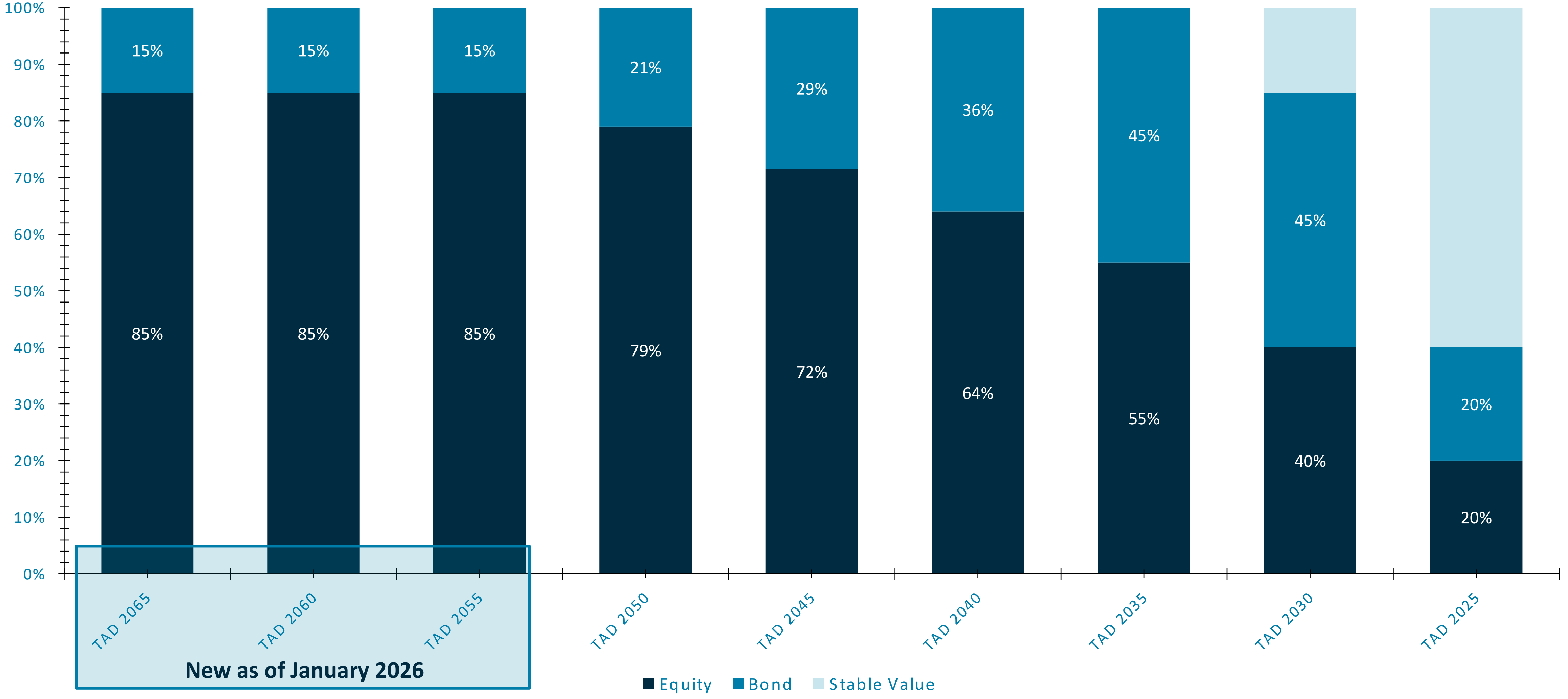
$104,185

The 20-year head start is worth more than any stock pick.

Resource: *Project Horizon – Free Incentive Matching for UCC Clergy. To learn more, email* **HorizonProgram@pbucc.org**

PBUCC Target Annuitization Date (TAD) Funds

TAD Funds automatically reduce stock market risk towards retirement, are diversified, and rebalanced proactively as markets shift



**Approximate percentages as of October 2025*

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PART FIVE

Legacy & Care

Caring for loved ones and the legacy you leave behind.

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Keep Your Beneficiaries Current

Beneficiary designations decide who receives your retirement and insurance accounts — and they override your will. Outdated names are one of the most common, and most avoidable, planning mistakes.

They override your will — Whoever is named on the account gets it — even if your will says otherwise.

Review after life events — Marriage, divorce, a birth, or a death should trigger an update.

Name primary & contingent — Add a backup beneficiary, and set the percentages so they total 100%.

Don't forget any account — Pension, 403(b), IRAs, and every life-insurance policy.

Update Beneficiaries

For PBUCC Lifetime Retirement Income Plan
Fidelity NetBenefits® → Profile → Beneficiaries

For PBUCC Life Insurance Policies
PBUCC.ORG → Forms

Build Your Estate-Planning Guide

Estate planning is a gift of clarity to those you love — organizing your documents so they can act without scrambling during a hard time. The PBUCC Vital Records Guide walks you through it.

Will & executor

Who inherits, and who carries it out

Advance directive

Your medical wishes / living will

Powers of attorney

Financial and medical decision-makers

Beneficiary list

Accounts & policies, kept current

Account inventory

Banks, investments, debts, logins

Letter of instruction

Wishes, contacts, where things are

Use the PBUCC Vital Records Guide (to identify and gather every document — then store them safely and tell a trusted person where to find them. **PBUCC.ORG > Financial Wellness > Other Resources**

What Is a Will?

A will is the legal document that directs how your assets are distributed after death, death, names a guardian for minor children, and appoints the executor who carries out carries out your wishes.

Directs your assets — You decide who receives what — not a court.

Names guardians — Critical for parents of minor children.

Appoints an executor — The person who settles your estate.

Without one? — State "intestacy" law decides — and it may not match your wishes.

Make one for free

FreeWill guides you through a simple, valid will at no cost — a great place to start.

freewill.com/pbucc

Review and update it after major life changes.

Online tools suit straightforward estates; complex situations (trusts, blended families, businesses) warrant an attorney.

Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney

A will speaks after death. These documents protect you while you're alive but unable to speak or act for yourself — putting decisions putting decisions in the hands of people you trust.

Living Will

Advance healthcare directive

Spells out the medical care you do — and don't — want if you can't communicate your wishes.

Durable Medical POA

Healthcare agent / proxy

Names a trusted person to make medical decisions on your behalf for anything not covered by your living will.

Durable Financial POA

Financial agent

Authorizes someone to manage your finances — finances — pay bills, handle accounts — if you you become incapacitated.

FreeWill.com/pbucc: Create a Living Will, Financial POA, and Medical POA — so you can align your healthcare wishes with your faith and values.

LEGACY & CARE

Caring for an Aging Loved One — Part 1

Stepping in to help an aging parent or relative touches many areas at once. Start with these three foundations — ideally in unhurried conversations, before a crisis forces them.

Living arrangements

- Aging in place vs. assisted living vs. nursing care
- Home safety and daily support needs
- Compare costs and proximity to family

Estate planning

- Confirm the will, POAs, and directives are current
- Locate the original documents
- Know who the named agents and executor are

Insurance

- Review health coverage and Medicare options
- Long-term-care and supplemental policies
- Confirm life-insurance status and beneficiaries

Caring for an Aging Loved One — Part 2

Once the foundations are in place, manage the day-to-day money so nothing slips through the cracks — and your loved one stays protected from mistakes and scams.

Bill payment

Set up autopay, watch for missed or duplicate bills, and guard against fraud and scams.

Cash flow

Map income (Social Security, pension) against monthly needs so nothing is short.

Assets & debt

Inventory accounts, property, and debts — then simplify and consolidate where you can.

Tax planning

Track required minimum distributions, available deductions, and get filing help.

HealthAdvocate - members.healthadvocate.com: Confidential counseling & work/life help for non-Medicare health plan members guidance for aging parents.

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PART SIX

Your Support Team

You don't have to do this alone — help is ready when you need it.

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Resources & Free, Confidential Help

LSS Financial Choice

Budgeting, debt plans, credit & student loans

833.975.0719 · lssmn.org/financialcounseling/pbucc

Fidelity NetBenefits®

Your retirement plan, on-track tools, beneficiaries

netbenefits.com

PBUCC Member Education

Vital Records Guide, worksheets, pension counselors counselors

pbucc.org > financial wellness · 800.642.6543

College Board BigFuture

College planning, cost calculators, virtual advising advising

bigfuture.collegeboard.org

FreeWill

Free will, advance directive & financial POA

freewill.com/pbucc

Health Advocate

Confidential counseling & work/life help for non-Medicare members

pbucc.org · members.healthadvocate.com

FINANCIAL WELLNESS FOR MINISTRY & LIFE PILOT PROGRAM

Register for a free 1:1 financial wellness session

Discuss your situation with a PBUCC team member and receive a $25 Amazon Gift Card.

Scan to register

For general education only—not financial, tax, legal, or investment advice. Third-party resources are listed for convenience, not as endorsements.

Questions before we close

Last call — what's still unclear, and what will you do this week?

Q&A

Putting it into practice

Action steps, planning, next steps

1. **Write one SMART money goal, run a quick budget check, and start or top up your emergency fund?**
2. **Pay a bit above the minimum, pull your free credit report, and book a free LSS Financial Choice session?**
3. **Review your life insurance with DIME, open a 529 for a child, or check if you qualify for PSLF?**
4. **Log in to Fidelity NetBenefits® to check you're on track, update your beneficiaries, and start your will?**

CLOSING

Thank you for your time! Please provide your feedback

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"The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is today."