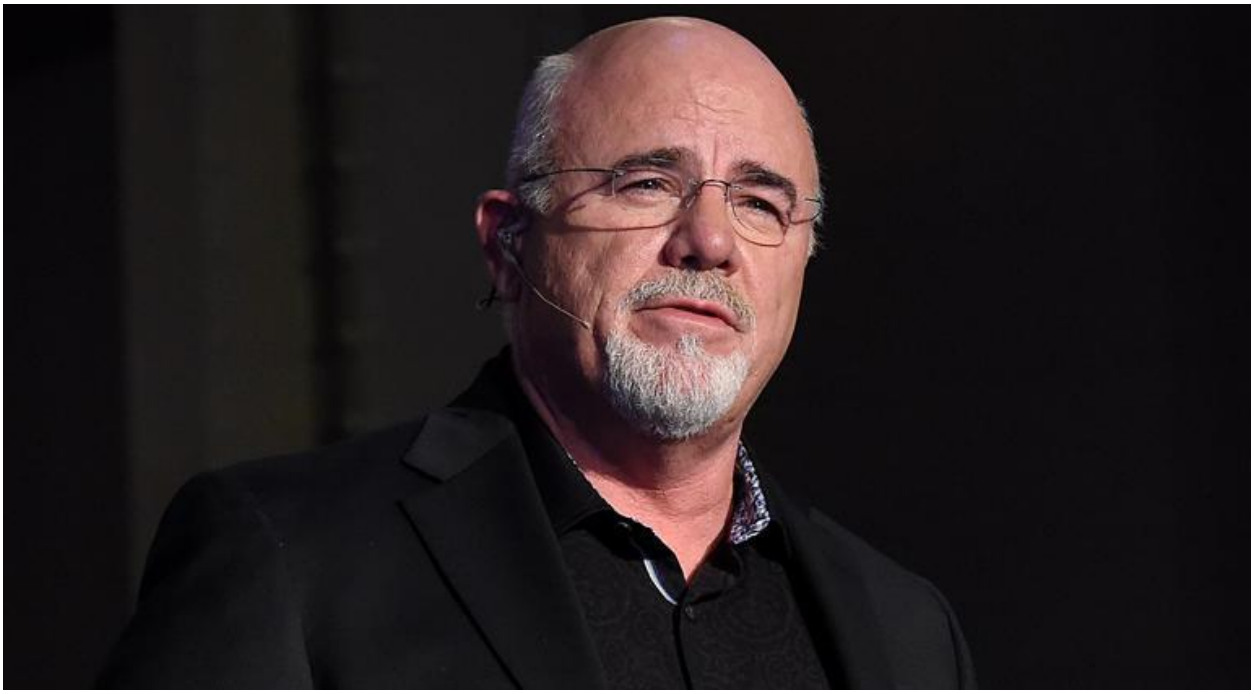
Dave Ramsey Reveals the Exact US Retirees Who Should Keep Working Past 65 — Are You One of Them?

Moneywise | Vishesh Raisinghani | June 20, 2026



Ramsey: retire only after hitting $1.46M© Michael Kovac/ Getty Images

Early retirement gets all the headlines and social media attention, but the data seems to suggest a trend in the other direction.

The rising cost of living and medical expenses have pushed many Americans to consider delaying retirement by a few years, according to research from Economist Enterprise (1). Gen X workers, those between the ages of 46 and 61, some of whom are on the cusp of retirement, say they have delayed their target by an average of 3.9 years.

Another study by the Transamerica Center (2) found that a whopping 57% of Baby Boomers expect to work until the age of 70 or beyond.

There could be many reasons, both macroeconomic and personal, for this emerging trend. But according to finance guru and radio host Dave Ramsey, there are only a few good reasons to consider working past the age of 65.

Here’s a closer look at whether or not delayed retirement is a good fit for you.

The retirees who need to keep working

Most workers probably have a birthday in mind while planning their retirement. But in a blog post published on his website (3), Ramsey said that was the wrong approach: "Retirement isn't an age, it's a financial number."

As of 2026, that magic financial number for most American workers is $1.46 million, on average, according to Northwestern Mutual (4). However, that headline is only one part of the story. In an interview with Kiplinger (5), Ramsey noted that hitting your nest egg target isn't enough to make that money last.

"Don't retire until you're truly ready," he said. "That means zero debt, a fully funded nest egg, and a clear monthly budget. Work longer if you need to, and budget like your future depends on it — because it does."

Simply put, if your nest egg is below your magic number, you still have monthly interest payments or haven't taken the time to plan your retirement carefully, you may need to keep working even if you're 65 or 70 years old.

Although, if you don't enjoy work, there are some ways to shorten that timeline by a few years.

Shortening the timeline

If you're approaching 65 without a robust retirement plan or an underfunded nest egg, you probably don't meet Ramsey's threshold for quitting work. But there are ways to reduce your time at the office without waiting for your nest egg to hit your magic number.

One way is to simply trim down your budget. Slashing your annual expenses from $80,000 to $65,000, for instance, could reduce your retirement target from $2 million down to $1.6 million based on the popular 4% withdrawal rule.

You may need to cut back on spending and tap into discounts for older adults to achieve this tighter budget. That's where an AARP membership could be handy. This lets you access a wide range of discounts on almost everything — from prescriptions and dental plans to travel, entertainment and insurance.

As one of the most trusted organizations for older Americans, AARP not only offers money-saving perks, but can also help you make informed financial and health decisions.

AARP members get access to guides that can help you make the most of Social Security, choose the right Medicare plan and uncover other government benefits — potentially saving you thousands.

Another way to cut the timeline is to aggressively reduce debt. Ramsey's technique of choice is something called the snowball method. The idea is to list your debts from smallest to largest, then knock them off one at a time starting from the top while paying the minimum on the other debts on your list. You can also approach debt repayment from the other direction: paying down your biggest debt first in an avalanche that cascades downwards.

But if you're struggling with getting all your debt in order, you may also want to consider debt consolidation — where you replace different loans and balances with a single monthly payment.

Consolidating all your debts into a personal loan through Credible can be an effective way to drop your debt faster. Instead of juggling multiple monthly payments, you'll have one predictable payment to manage each month.

Through Credible's online marketplace, finding the right loan becomes much simpler. Credible lets you comparison-shop for the lowest interest rates with just a few clicks.

In less than three minutes, you'll see all the lenders willing to help pay off your credit cards or other debts with a single personal loan.

If you owe a substantial amount, you may also want to see if you qualify for a debt relief program to help clear a significant portion of your debt.

With Freedom Debt Relief, you can speak with a certified debt relief consultant for free, who can show you how much you can save by partnering with them.

If you're eligible, they can negotiate settlements with your creditors until all of your enrolled debt is resolved.

Reducing debt and your retirement budget can both help you lower the target and leave work earlier while remaining within the guardrails Ramsey recommends.

Article Sources

We rely only on vetted sources and credible third-party reporting. For details, see our ethics and guidelines.

The Economist (1); Transamerica Institute (2); Ramsey Solutions (3); Northwestern Mutual (4); Kiplinger (5)

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