



Encore Capital Group Announces Findings of its Second Economic Freedom Study

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Survey of 3,000 U.S. and U.K. Adults Explores Changing Perspectives on Personal Finances and the Economy, Impacts of High Inflation Rates and Past-Due Debt, and Pathways to Economic Freedom

SAN DIEGO, Feb. 27, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Encore Capital Group, Inc.](#) (Encore) (Nasdaq: [ECPG](#)), an international specialty finance company, today announced the findings of its second Economic Freedom Study. This new study asked 3,000 people in Encore's largest markets, the United States and United Kingdom, their feelings about personal finances and the economy, as well as the impact of inflation on spending and debt. In keeping with Encore's Mission, it also asked people how they prioritize economic freedom, and what they believe are the most valuable tools to achieve it. The research was commissioned by Encore and conducted by Morning Consult.

A detailed report of the findings is available on [Encore's website](#). Key highlights from the study include:

- Fewer adults in the U.S. and the U.K. believe they're better off financially than they were the year before compared to the [2021 Encore Economic Freedom Study](#). Most adults don't believe they're in a better financial state compared to the previous year, and less than half of respondents report feeling comfortable with their current financial state.
- Inflation had a major impact on personal spending for more than 90% of surveyed adults. Consumers report spending more on groceries, gas/utilities and housing in both the U.S. and the U.K. Just 17% of U.S. adults and 14% of U.K. adults reported an increase in how much they contributed to their savings in 2022.
- U.S. adults are more likely to have a positive outlook on their economic future compared to U.K. adults, who demonstrated a significant decrease in their confidence in the future of the economy. However, respondents tended to have a more positive outlook on the future of their own personal finances (61% U.S., 47% U.K.) as opposed to the overall economy (39% U.S., 17% U.K.).
- Thirty-five percent of Americans and 43% of U.K. adults report having past-due debt, and adults in both countries are more likely to be accumulating, rather than reducing, past-due debts. More Americans (59%) than their U.K. counterparts (52%) are confident in their ability to pay down debt in the coming year, but they're aligned on how to tackle their debt – pay it down in small increments over time.
- Almost all surveyed adults agree that economic freedom is a priority in their life (91% U.S., 84% U.K.); Americans are more likely than U.K. adults to name economic freedom as their top priority.

"Because we work with consumers every day, it's important for us to understand how people feel about their finances, the stresses they face and the tools they need to achieve their goals," said Ashish Masih, Encore's President and CEO. "The learnings from this study not only help Encore be a better and more empathetic partner to our consumers, but they also provide insights for anyone committed to helping others achieve financial well-being."

Even as consumers become more indebted, and more distressed as a result, the survey found that people want to fulfill their financial obligations. Approximately nine out of ten adults in both countries believe it's important to pay off past-due debts and that access to affordable credit is important to the economy.

"Helping resolve their financial obligations is a mutual goal we share with our consumers, and it's a positive starting point," added Masih. "From here, we can work together with consumers to find the best path for resolving debt in a manageable way."

The survey affirmed many of the approaches Encore takes with consumers today. For example, when asked what would be most helpful in reducing or eliminating debt, "being able to pause debt repayment if I experience hardship" was cited as one of the most important factors for all surveyed adults.

In 2011, Encore's U.S. subsidiary, Midland Credit Management (MCM), created the industry's first and only [Consumer Bill of Rights](#), which clearly defines how MCM will suspend collection activities when a consumer demonstrates they are experiencing significant financial hardship due to medical issues, natural disasters, job loss or other issues. Similarly, Encore's subsidiary in the U.K., Cabot Credit Management, has a Sensitive Support Team, which can offer account holds for various lengths of time while consumers get the support they need to work on their financial, mental or physical health.

"Our Mission is to help all consumers – not just the ones we work with – achieve economic freedom. But there's always more to learn as we strive to be an even better partner in our consumers' financial growth," said Masih. "Even in a state of heightened stress, I was gratified to see that the people surveyed showed signs of optimism and resilience, and they continue to believe in their ability to reach a better financial future. It's our Mission to help them get there, and it's also our essential role in the larger consumer credit ecosystem."

The online survey was fielded by Morning Consult from December 9-22, 2022, and included 1,500 U.S. adults and 1,500 U.K. adults. The samples are weighted to reflect the demographics of the general population in each country. The margin of error for this study is plus or minus 3 percentage points in each country.

About Encore Capital Group, Inc.

Encore Capital Group is an international specialty finance company that provides debt recovery solutions and other related services for consumers across a broad range of financial assets. Through its subsidiaries around the globe, Encore purchases or services portfolios of receivables from major banks, credit unions and utility providers.

Encore partners with individuals as they repay their debt obligations, helping them on the road to financial recovery and ultimately improving their economic well-being. Encore is the first and only company of its kind to operate with a *Consumer Bill of Rights* that provides industry-leading commitments to consumers. Headquartered in San Diego, Encore is a publicly traded NASDAQ Global Select company (ticker symbol: ECPG) and a component stock of the Russell 2000, the S&P Small Cap 600 and the Wilshire 4500. More information about the company can be found at <http://www.encorecapital.com>.

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