

# HIGH ANXIETY

## Stressed Investors Hungry For Advice

by Rusty Field

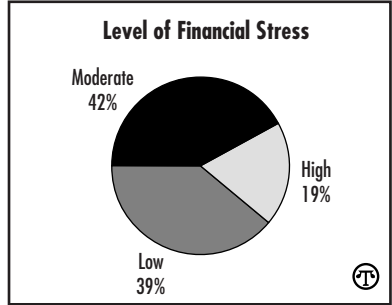
Vice President, American Express  
Financial Education and  
Planning Services

(NAPSA)—The economic uncertainty of the past few years is weighing on the minds of workers, according to a survey recently published by American Express Financial Advisors, Inc.

Sixty-one percent of those surveyed said they were experiencing moderate to high levels of financial stress (see graphic at right), and one-quarter felt that this stress had escalated in the last 18 to 24 months. The survey also found that stress was highest among those with moderate or lower income levels. People with annual incomes of less than \$40,000 were 84 percent more likely than those with incomes of \$40,000 to \$74,999, and 45 percent more likely than those with incomes of \$75,000 or more, to have experienced high or extremely high financial stress in the past 18 to 24 months.

American Express' 2002 National Survey on Financial Stress and Retirement Saving polled 756 consumers whose employers offer a retirement plan. Overall, the survey found that employees were dealing with mounting financial stress and were very interested in investment advice.

These results are no surprise. With prolonged market volatility, an increase in financial stress is expected. People are seeing their retirement savings shrink—the money they invested in the '90s with much success, is in a reversal. So, on top of financial worries such as job insecurity or debt, many now feel that their retirement



future is slowly slipping away.

To counter this feeling, people are becoming motivated to gain greater control of their financial destiny. Many are seeking assistance with both their retirement plan saving and their overall financial situation. More than half of the people surveyed wanted to receive comprehensive financial advice or guidance on choosing among plan investment options, accumulating money for retirement, and using savings for retirement income. Talking with a financial advisor in the workplace or outside of the workplace was a top preference for receiving financial advice.

Employers are recognizing the need and are helping their employees gain access to this help in the workplace. Employees should ask their employer or union about adding a financial education program and making investment guidance available.

Employers can find out more about offering financial education or advice in the workplace by calling American Express at 1-800-437-0600. Individuals can call the American Express IRA Solutions Center toll-free at 1-866-IRA-ADVICE (1-866-472-2384).