

IN TOUCH

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Lessons from France:

Living Fully, Spending Thoughtfully, and Savoring Time

I recently returned from a two-week trip to France with my mom. This was our first time traveling alone together and like many meaningful experiences, it left me reflecting, not just on where we had been, but how we live.

France offers a striking contrast to the pace and priorities we often experience in the United States. While both cultures value family, success, and opportunity, the way those values show up in daily life can feel very different, especially when it comes to food, finances, and time.

Food as an Experience, Not a Task

One of the most noticeable differences was around meals. In France, food is not something you rush through, it's something you sit down for, savor, and share. Meals are usually multi-course, thoughtfully prepared (with love), beautifully presented and enjoyed slowly with others. Dining is less about efficiency and more about connection.

In the U.S., many of us eat "on the go," grabbing something quick between meetings or finishing lunch at our desks. Efficiency wins. But in France, mealtime is protected and respected. This break in the day is an intentional pause and a way to recharge and reconnect with self and others. I was surprised to learn that a two-hour lunch during the day is customary and expected, even the children leave school to go home each day for a three-course meal with their family. Oftentimes a nap or movie happens before returning to work or school as well.

There is a simplicity and mindfulness to approaching food, as an experience, that we found incredibly refreshing. We committed to baby steps towards improving our approach to meals. For starters, I am going to try and refrain from eating while standing, eating at my desk or rushing through meals.

Advisors Who Inspire Growth®



Julie Ellenbecker-Lipsky,
CFP®, CDFA®
President and Senior Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group

Time: A Different Rhythm

The French relationship with time may be the biggest shift I recognized. There is a clear boundary between work and personal life. Evenings are for family, weekends are for rest, and vacations are truly time away. Vacations are not just a relocation of work but a time to relax, unplug and connect with friends and family.

As you know, in the United States, busyness is often worn as a badge of honor. Most conversations begin with how busy we are, stressed out or looking forward to Friday. We equate productivity with success and often struggle to disconnect. But the French mindset of working to live, not living to work creates space for presence, relationships, and well-being. It's not about accomplishing less but rather about being more intentional with where our time and energy go.

Finances: Spending with Purpose

Interestingly, the French have a similar philosophy on how money is viewed and spent. They don't necessarily spend less but they certainly spend differently. There is a focus on quality over quantity, experiences over excess, and intentional purchases over impulse.

Where Americans often spend for convenience, saving time with larger homes, faster services, or bulk buying, French households tend to prioritize what they value most, and let the rest fall away.

During our two weeks in France, my mom and I experienced the joy of selecting fresh food from local markets and savoring each bite, often reflecting on the conversations we shared with the merchants and their passion for what they create.

We found our time in France to represent a quieter, more deliberate approach to wealth, one that aligns closely with long-term satisfaction and less on the stuff money can buy.

What Can We Learn?

This trip reminded me that financial planning isn't just about numbers—it's about how we want to live.

Yes, we want to save wisely, invest thoughtfully, and build long-term security. But ultimately, the goal is to create a life that feels full; rich in relationships, experiences, and meaning.

The French offer a gentle reminder:

- Slow down enough to enjoy what you've worked hard for
- Be intentional with both your time and your money
- Don't wait for "someday" to start living well today

At EIG, we believe true wealth is about finding harmony between planning for the future and embracing the present.

My time in France was a beautiful illustration of that philosophy in action, and I'm inspired to carry those lessons forward and share that perspective with my clients, friends, and family. And perhaps, a small invitation for all of us to pause, savor, and reflect on what matters most. 🍷



READY OR NOT, HERE LIFE COMES

The longer I live, the more I realize that some of life's most meaningful opportunities don't arrive when everything is perfectly in place. They often appear while we are knee-deep in uncertainty, balancing full calendars, or quietly questioning whether we are truly ready. And yet, those are often the moments that shape some of the most meaningful chapters of our lives.

One of the greatest misconceptions I see, especially as people approach retirement, is the belief that everything needs to be perfectly aligned before making a move. That we must feel fully prepared, completely informed, and entirely confident. But here is the truth: opportunity doesn't wait for preparation. It doesn't ask whether you have done all the research. It doesn't pause until you feel brave enough. Sometimes, it simply appears — and then it's gone.

I have had many clients say to me, "I wish I would have taken that trip," or "I regret not starting that passion project earlier." They were waiting for more time, more certainty, or a better moment. But we are not promised a better moment. We are only promised this one. And that is why it is so important to live by what you trust, not by what you fear.

Fear has a clever way of disguising itself as practicality. It whispers, "Wait until you know more," or "Maybe later." But fear rarely speaks the language of possibility. Trust, on the other hand, allows us to step into the unknown with the belief that we can adapt, pivot, and grow along the way. Retirement does not mean putting your curiosity on hold or stepping away from new experiences. In many ways, it offers us the freedom to become even more fully ourselves.

Recently, I experienced this in a very personal way when an unexpected opportunity arose for me to become part of JK Art House art gallery alongside my longtime friend, Julia Taylor, in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward. It was not something I had planned years ago, nor something I anticipated becoming part of this chapter of my life. But saying yes to this creative endeavor reminded me that retirement is not simply about preserving what we have built. It can also be about remaining open to growth, reinvention, creativity, and thoughtful risk-taking.

What I have realized is that life continues to ask us to evolve. Sometimes the opportunities that stretch us the most are also the ones that awaken something within us that had quietly been waiting for attention. We do not stop needing purpose, inspiration, connection, or growth simply because we reach retirement age. If anything, we may finally have the wisdom and perspective to pursue those things more intentionally.

At Ellenbecker Investment Group, we walk alongside our clients through many of these turning points. Yes, we focus on financial stability, but we also understand the emotional side of transition and change. Because no matter how well you have saved, if you don't give yourself permission to embrace the opportunities in front of you, you may miss out on more than financial growth. You may miss out on experiences that bring meaning, energy, and fulfillment to your life.

Whether it is traveling, writing a book, mentoring someone, exploring a creative passion, deepening relationships, or simply choosing to spend your days differently, I want to encourage you not to wait until you feel completely ready. Trust your instincts. Trust the planning you have done. And trust that uncertainty does not mean you are incapable, it simply means you are stepping into something new.

You can always adjust your course along the way. But you cannot always reclaim an opportunity that was never taken.

Sometimes the most meaningful parts of life begin the moment we decide to say yes. 🍷

Karen J. Ellenbecker
Founder & Senior Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group



Meaningful Ways Grandparents Can Support Their Grandchildren Financially

For many grandparents, money isn't just about dollars and cents. It's a way to show love, pass down values, and help the next generation get off to a strong start. Whether you want to support education, encourage smart saving habits, or leave a meaningful legacy, there are plenty of ways to make a lasting impact.

Below are a few approachable strategies that can help you support your grandchildren while staying aligned with your financial plan, tax considerations, and long-term goals.

- **Annual Cash Gifts** - Simple and flexible, cash gifts are a classic way to help out. In 2026, you can give up to \$19,000 per person — or \$38,000 as a married couple — without triggering gift-tax reporting. These gifts can help cover savings, activities, or just lighten the load for parents.
- **529 College Savings Plans** - 529 plans remain one of the most powerful tools for education planning, and they've only gotten more flexible. They offer tax-free growth, tax-free withdrawals for qualified education expenses, and can even be used for K–12 private school tuition (and some homeschool expenses). Wisconsin residents can also take advantage of a state income tax deduction of up to \$5,280 in 2026. If plans change, you can transfer the account to another family member, and unused funds may be rolled into a Roth IRA for the beneficiary after 15 years. A bonus: grandparent-owned 529s no longer affect FAFSA, making them even more attractive.
- **Direct Tuition Payments** - Paying tuition directly to a school is an often-overlooked strategy. These payments don't count as taxable gifts and can make a big difference for families. It's a great option for private school, college, or graduate programs — all without affecting your annual gifting limits.

- **Custodial Accounts** - Custodial accounts let you gift cash, stocks, or other assets while keeping control until your grandchild reaches the age of majority (21 in Wisconsin). They're flexible, have no contribution limits, and can be used for any purpose — not just education. Because these accounts can affect a minor's taxes, it's worth talking with your advisor about the best way to structure them.

- **"Trump Accounts"** (Family Accumulation Accounts) - These accounts are getting a lot of attention. While some details are still being finalized, the idea is straightforward: families can contribute up to \$5,000 per child per year in after-tax dollars, and the funds grow tax-deferred. Money can be used for education, a first home, starting a business, or simply left to grow for the long term.

- **Estate Planning Considerations** - If your own children are financially secure, you may want to include your grandchildren in your estate plan. There's no one-size-fits-all approach here, but it can be a meaningful way to support future generations and leave a legacy that reflects your values.

Every family is different, and so is every financial plan. The right approach depends on your goals, your tax situation, and the values you want to pass along. If you're thinking about gifting to your grandchildren or want help deciding which strategies fit your goals, we're here to support you every step of the way.



Kristina Schnuckel, CFP®, AIF®, CEPA®
Director of Client Experience & Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group

Navigating a Staggered Transition: When One Spouse Retires Before the Other

When working with couples, my conversation usually revolves around a shared milestone, like the shared vision and timing of each of their retirement. Sometimes both individuals leave work behind at the same time and step into retirement together. In reality, many couples experience a staggered transition, where one spouse retires while the other delays retirement. This arrangement can be rewarding, but it may also bring unique challenges.

From a financial perspective, staggered retirement can offer both advantages and challenges. On the positive side, income from the working spouse can phase the need to fully rely on retirement savings for income. There may even be an opportunity to take advantage of tax strategies, and the timing of when to start social security takes on a whole new perspective.

And let me make this point, even though a spouse has retired, their expenses don't necessarily decrease just because one person stops working. Many fixed expenses remain. Health insurance, discretionary spending, or new hobbies may increase costs, while taxes can become more complex due to mixed income sources. It is important to get a good budget by projecting cash flow carefully and revisiting their retirement plan to ensure sustainability during this in-between phase.

The financial part of retirement is easily calculated. The emotional aspects of only one spouse retiring can be more difficult to identify and manage. Think about it, you may be married for decades, raised children with all the successes and challenges that came your way. You not only survived that phase of life, but you may have thrived. You were partners with a common goal of...family. Now the kids are launched, and you are entering a new phase of life – possibly navigating the transition into retirement solo. As exciting as retirement is, the emotional dynamics of a split schedule can be significant. The retired spouse may be faced with a variety of BIG feelings; newfound freedom and flexibility, but that may also come with a potential struggle of a loss of identity, purpose, or daily structure. Meanwhile, the working spouse may feel pressure to keep earning or resentment over an uneven workload at home.

When these BIG feelings come out, open communication is essential. If you are currently in the transition into retirement with a spouse working, talking candidly about expectations around time, money, household responsibilities, and

personal goals can prevent small frustrations from escalating into long-term tension. Chores are only part of this discussion, spouses need to realize that they will soon have mismatched routines as one spouse is "free" and the other is tied to a job. The retired spouse may envision travel, volunteering, or major home projects, while the working spouse has limited time or energy to participate.

So, what do you do if you are in the midst of this transition or if you are thinking of one spouse retiring?

1. Think of this as a trial run!

Test out your retirement plan and see what retirement life might feel like.

2. Experiment with schedules,

and identifying shared activities they can enjoy during evenings, weekends, or planned time off.

3. Discuss roles and responsibilities.

This will set expectations.

4. Make a plan for your spouse's retirement.

This may include a conversation around healthcare if you are currently covered by the working spouse's plan.

Ultimately, when one spouse retires before the other, flexibility and planning are the foundations of success. Revisiting financial projections, redefining roles at home, and maintaining empathy for each other's experience can transform this transition into a period of growth rather than stress. While not the synchronized retirement many envision, a staggered approach can offer balance, security, and a smoother path into the next stage of life. Together. 🏡

Jean Range, CFP®

Senior Wealth Advisor
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The Importance of Mental Health in Your Financial Plan

More Than Numbers

Financial planning is sometimes assumed to be only about numbers. It involves budgets, investments, and returns, but so much more. Mental health and well-being play an important yet often overlooked role in long-term financial success.

Mind-Money Connection

Emotions and mental well-being directly influence financial behaviors. Understanding this connection can help people build more sustainable financial habits. Examples are:

- “Retail therapy” is where one goes shopping for the main purpose of making oneself feel better. This term is widely used, reflecting how it resonates with people. While shopping can help you feel in control, or release dopamine, it can also lead to financial stress and strain. Keep shopping in check by limiting your spending to your budget, only buying things you need or stick to window shopping!
- Overconfidence or fear can drive poor investment timing. When markets are rising and you feel like you can’t lose, risky investment decisions can be clouded. The reverse is also true – being panicked about a falling stock market can lead to selling at the worst time.
- Finances are one of the leading sources of stress and anxiety. There is a continuous feedback loop where anxiety and stress can lead to worsened financial decisions that creates further strain which thus increases stress. Proactively addressing the stress can disrupt the repeated cycle.

Mental Health and Financial Decision-Making

Strong mental health supports clear, rational thinking during periods of market volatility and a long-term discipline in saving and investing. Having confidence helps you stay committed to a financial plan. On the flipside, the risks of poor mental well-being are decision paralysis and emotional reactions that undermine long-term strategies.

Practical Financial Tips

- Build an emergency fund to create security
- Automate savings and investments to remove emotional decision-making
- Work with a trusted advisor for accountability and perspective
- Take breaks from constant market monitoring to maintain emotional balance

Invest in Your Well-Being

Mental health is a foundational component of financial success. Prioritize self-care through financial discipline, therapy with a licensed provider, positive social connection, time in nature, and other proven methods for emotional regulation. Research payment and insurance options for your mental and behavioral health care so you can plan for any related costs.

An Advisor’s Role: Supporting the Whole Client

A wealth advisor is your partner in strategy and in maintaining perspective. EIG takes a holistic approach to financial planning. Our wealth advisors act as guides who help clients navigate both financial complexity and emotional challenges through listening, empathy, and personalized planning. Meet our advisors on our website, ellenbecker.com/our-team. 



Heather Deaton CFP®, CSRIC™
Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group



Caring for Family Without Losing Yourself

The Weight of Being in the Middle

The sandwich generation refers to adults, typically in their 40s and 50s, who are simultaneously caring for aging parents while still raising or supporting their own children. About one quarter of American adults find themselves in this position, and the weight they carry is compounding. In a recent survey, 86% of sandwich generation caregivers reported emotional exhaustion, 80% reported physical exhaustion, and 69% said they feel financial pressure from caring for their parents, all figures that have risen meaningfully over just the past three years.

What's perhaps most striking is that only 39% had discussed their parents' financial needs with them in the past year, yet 60% said having those conversations would make them feel less overwhelmed.

The gap between what would help and what is actually happening tells us something important. This generation isn't lacking love or willingness. They're lacking a starting point.



Start With Your Own Foundation

One place that starting point often gets overlooked is the caregiver's own financial house. When you are managing everyone else's needs, it is easy to neglect your own retirement contributions, insurance coverage, and emergency reserves. But if you deplete your savings or accumulate debt in service of caregiving without a sustainable plan, you may one day find yourself in need of the same support you gave.

A financial advisor who understands multigenerational planning can help you build a structure that protects both generations, not by choosing one over the other, but by thinking through them together.

That might mean identifying benefit programs your parents already qualify for, having an honest cost sharing conversation with siblings, or simply building a realistic budget that accounts for caregiving expenses before they become a crisis.

The Conversations That Matter

The relational toll deserves equal attention, and it often goes unaddressed even longer than the finances. More than half of sandwich generation caregivers report having to choose between their career and caring for a parent, and that kind of impossible tradeoff breeds quiet resentment.

Toward siblings who aren't pulling equal weight. Toward a spouse who doesn't fully understand the drain.

None of that makes someone a bad person. It makes them human.

What helps is naming it out loud.

If siblings are involved, a structured family conversation with clear roles and honest expectations is far less painful than the alternative, which is usually one person burning out while everyone else assumes things are fine.

A Message to Parents

It is also worth saying something directly to the person receiving the care.

Many aging parents resist asking for help not because they don't need it, but because they don't want to be a burden. That instinct, however well-meaning, can actually increase the burden by delaying planning and leaving adult children to piece things together under pressure.

The greatest gift a parent can give at this stage is clarity, about their wishes, their documents, their finances, and their fears.

It turns a guessing game into a partnership.

Moving Forward, Together

The families we have seen come through this season well share a common thread. They started the hard conversations before circumstances forced them to. They built a team around them rather than trying to figure it out alone. And they gave themselves the same grace they so freely extended to everyone else.

If you are somewhere in the middle of this right now, you do not have to carry it alone.

Reach out to your EIG team and let's build a plan that honors everyone in the picture. 🍷

Advisors Who Guide Through Life's Seasons®

Tammy Niemann, ChFC®
Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group



ARE YOU READY

For The 2026 Catch-Up Rule Changes?

Beginning in 2026, SECURE Act 2.0 will bring meaningful changes to retirement savings, particularly for those age 50 and older. Two key updates are on the horizon: one allows for higher contribution limits, while the other shifts how certain catch-up contributions will be taxed.

The Super Catch-Up Opportunity

Contribution Limits by Age

Higher contribution limits offer a valuable opportunity to boost retirement savings, particularly during the later years of your career when time to save is limited.

AGE RANGE	BASE CONTRIBUTION	CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTION	TOTAL CONTRIBUTION
UNDER 50	\$24,500	—	\$24,500
AGES 50–59	\$24,500	\$8,000	\$32,500
AGES 60–63	\$24,500	\$11,250	\$35,750
AGES 64+	\$24,500	\$8,000	\$32,500

Maximizing the Opportunity

The enhanced catch-up provision applies only between ages 60 and 63, creating a limited window when contribution limits are at their highest. This period, which often aligns with peak earning years, presents a valuable opportunity to accelerate retirement savings.

After age 63, limits revert to the standard catch-up amount, making early planning and coordination with your overall financial and tax strategy especially important.

The Roth Catch-Up Requirement

What Has Changed

Starting in 2026, higher income taxpayers will be required to make catch-up contributions on a Roth basis. Specifically, this rule applies to individuals whose prior-year wages exceed \$150,000 (indexed for inflation).

For those above this threshold, catch-up contributions to employer-sponsored plans (such as 401(k)s) must be made as Roth contributions. Individuals below the threshold will still have the option to choose between pre-tax and Roth catch-up contributions.

This change affects how contributions are taxed- not how much can be saved.

Under this rule, catch-up contributions will no longer reduce current taxable income for higher earners. Instead, taxes are paid upfront, with the benefit of tax-free growth and tax-free withdrawals later in retirement.

Planning Considerations

This change signals a shift from pure tax deferral to a more diversified tax strategy. Rather than concentrating only on minimizing current taxes, the focus expands to timing taxation more effectively over the long term.

Building Roth assets can enhance flexibility in retirement, particularly when navigating required minimum distributions, shifting tax brackets, and overall income management. However, the tradeoff is higher current taxable income, which needs to be factored into your strategy.

Bringing It All Together

While these provisions serve different purposes, they may apply to the same individuals over time. One expands contribution opportunities, while the other adjusts how those contributions are taxed.

This shifts the focus beyond simply maximizing contributions. It also highlights the importance of aligning contribution strategies with your broader tax and financial plan. With thoughtful planning, these changes can support greater long-term flexibility and efficiency in retirement.

At Ellenbecker Investment Group, we understand that changes like these require careful planning. Our EIG Tax Team, alongside your EIG Advisor Team, is here to provide structure and support, helping you navigate these updates with clarity and confidence. 🏡

*Advisors Who Provide
Structure and Support®*

Ed Henning, CPA®
Tax Planning Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group





Navigating a New Era of Fed Leadership and Market Stability

Richard Schiller, CFA®, CPA
Portfolio Manager & Wealth Advisor, Pavlic Investment Advisors, Inc.

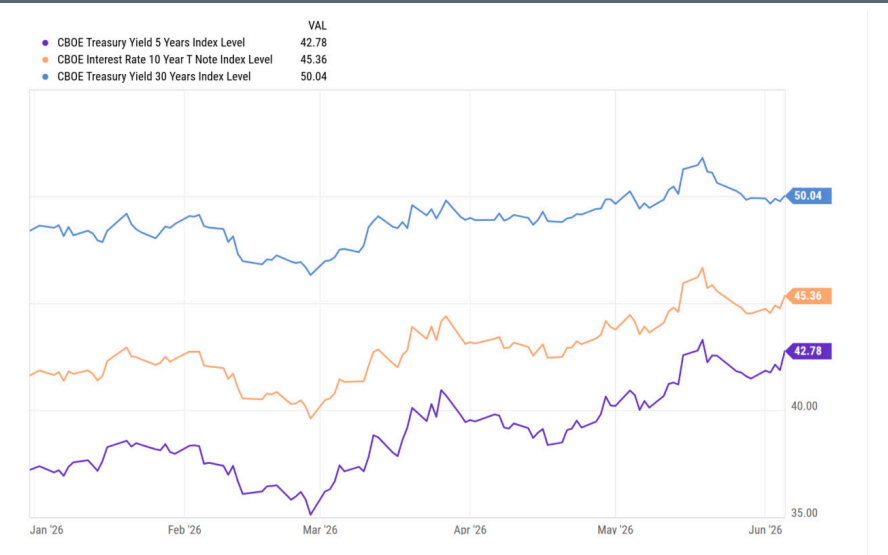
The fixed income markets have experienced a distinct evolution year-to-date. The first quarter of 2026 marked a clear transition from the rapid interest rate easing seen in late 2025 to a period of paused observation. Entering the year, the Federal Reserve held the federal funds rate steady at a target range of 3.50%–3.75%. The 10-year Treasury yield, which closed out last year near 4.2%, dipped below 4.0% mid-quarter before stabilizing. The second quarter turned the market’s focus towards two new factors: the Federal Reserve’s leadership transition with Kevin Warsh officially taking over as Fed Chair in May and the spike in oil prices driven by the war in Iran. Given the transition from Powell to Warsh, our expectation remains that the Fed will eventually look to restart the rate-cutting cycle at the end of this year. However, if oil prices remain elevated with the Strait of Hormuz being closed, the Fed will have a hard time arguing that lower rates make sense as inflation remains elevated.

Strategy Focus: The Power of the 10-Year Bond Ladder:

Our focus within fixed income investments remains on owning direct investment-grade bonds over a 10-year bond ladder structure. In an environment where monetary policy shifts and economic variables introduce potential volatility, this disciplined strategy provides essential structural advantages:

- 1. Locking in Attractive Yields:** While yields have normalized from the peak periods where we executed reinvestments between 5.0% and 5.5%, going-in yields to maturity remain historically compelling at approximately 4.75%/year on a weighted average basis over a 10-year ladder. A 10-year ladder allows us to lock in these elevated yields for the long term before subsequent Fed cuts can materialize.
- 2. Extending Duration Away from Cash:** Yields on short-term instruments, cash equivalents, and money market funds become increasingly less compelling as the broader interest rate easing cycle progresses. By maintaining exposure further out on the yield curve, we insulate your portfolio from the declining yields of short-term cash holdings.
- 3. Reliable Ballast and Capital Preservation:** High-quality, direct investment-grade bonds provide a highly visible, predictable income stream and serve as an invaluable hedge against stock market volatility. Because these are individual bonds that mature systematically, they deliver a stabilizing buffer and clear capital preservation, independent of short-term market noise acting as a diversifier from equity market volatility.

Your team at Ellenbecker Investment Group remains deeply committed to guiding you through this evolving economic landscape. By maintaining a prudent, structured approach to fixed income, we ensure your bond portfolios will continue to serve as a reliable anchor that supports your long-term financial objectives and lifestyle.



Source:



Barry Mendelson
CEO
Capital Market Consultants, Inc.

Economic Recap

The U.S. economy remained resilient through the first four months of the year, with growth rebounding after a sluggish end to 2025. In part, the uptick was driven by a rebound from Q4’s sharp decline in federal outlays. Business investment remained a bright spot, with gains driven by further investment in AI and some broadening of capital expenditures into more traditional areas.

Consumer spending was a soft spot in Q1, suggesting the recent jump in gasoline prices is already having some impact on spending patterns. U.S. GDP rose at a seasonally adjusted and inflation-adjusted 1.6% annual rate in the first quarter of 2026.

Slower growth is expected ahead as higher oil prices and supply-chain tensions will likely place additional upward pressure on inflation and further reduce consumers’ purchasing power. However, higher tax refunds should offer some near-term cushion for households, which, alongside continued investments in AI, is likely to keep the economy expanding at around a 2% pace in Q2.

Job growth appears to have picked up from its anemic pace at the end of last year and is now running close to its breakeven rate, helping keep the unemployment rate steady.

Outlook: The outlook for the U.S. economy over the next 12 months features a temporary acceleration in growth, paired with a short-term spike in inflation. The economy is experiencing a powerful fiscal and tech-driven bump, even as it battles near-term geopolitical headwinds. This near-term growth surge is expected to be temporary.

Bolstered by the economic tailwinds of the 2025 Reconciliation Act (also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act) and a massive 60% increase in capital expenditures by tech companies on AI infrastructure, overall GDP growth is projected to reach 2.2% to 2.4% for full-year 2026.

By mid-2027, as fiscal stimulus fades and tighter credit conditions weigh on consumers, GDP growth will likely moderate toward its long-term potential of 1.8%-1.9%.

The short-term labor market remains remarkably tight but is undergoing structural change. The unemployment rate is expected to hover around 4.3% through the end of 2026, then drift slightly higher to 4.5% or 4.6% in 2027. Employment growth is slowing sharply due to significantly reduced net immigration flows. However, high corporate productivity, partly boosted by early adoption of generative AI, is keeping output strong despite a smaller labor pool.

Inflation has proven stickier than anticipated heading into the middle of 2026, driven by a combination of policy shifts and global events. Because of this near-term reacceleration in inflation, the Federal Reserve’s timeline for lowering borrowing costs has likely been pushed back.

At Ellenbecker Investment Group, we recognize that changing economic conditions can create both challenges and opportunities. While growth, inflation, and policy trends continue to evolve, a steady, long-term perspective remains key. Our team is here to help clients navigate these shifts with clarity and confidence, offering thoughtful guidance aligned with their financial goals.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bloomberg, U.S. Federal Reserve



EIG Behind the Scenes

With so many options available when it comes to managing your finances, choosing the right partner can feel overwhelming. And while investment strategy is important, I've learned that building a successful, long-term relationship goes far beyond the investments themselves.

In June, we launched a new Money Sense podcast series called, "EIG Behind the Scenes", designed to highlight the people and perspectives behind Ellenbecker Investment Group. As EIG's Director of Operations and Systems, I had the opportunity to join Karen Ellenbecker for the first episode, where we explored what it takes to build a boutique business that lasts.

Karen shared insights from her more than 40 years in the industry, reflecting on how the business has evolved and the intentional decisions she made over 30 years ago to

create a different kind of firm, one grounded in personalized service, long-term relationships, and thoughtful growth.

Our conversation also touched on what "boutique" really means today, how technology can enhance, but never replace, the personal side of our work, and how emerging tools like artificial intelligence may play a role in the future. We also reflected on key lessons learned throughout EIG's 30-year history.

If you didn't have a chance to listen in June, the episode is available anytime on our website, ellenbecker.com/money-sense, as well as Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

This new series will continue to highlight the individuals and departments working behind the scenes at EIG who support our advisors and clients every day. In upcoming episodes, we'll explore areas like Compliance, Information Technology, Marketing, Tax Planning, and Human Resources, each playing an important role in the strength of our firm.

At the end of the day, building and sustaining a boutique business truly takes a team. We look forward to continuing these conversations and sharing more of what goes on behind the scenes at EIG.



Brett Engelking

Director of Operations & Systems
Ellenbecker Investment Group



HIT PLAY ON MONEY SENSE & MPC



Big things are happening with our podcasts, and if you haven't tuned in yet, now's the time. Our longtime radio favorites have officially made the move to on-demand listening, making it easier than ever to stay informed, inspired, and connected, whenever it fits your schedule.

Whether you're catching up in the car, on a walk, or between meetings, these conversations are worth a spot in your rotation.

Money Sense: Smart Conversations You Can Use

Looking for practical, real-world financial insights? Money Sense delivers thoughtful discussions that help you navigate life's biggest decisions with confidence.

Recent episodes include:

- *How to Make Your Kid Rich for \$1 a Day*
- *Make Your Best Financial Decisions During Divorce*
- *Why Delayed Gratification Matters for Investors*

The best part? You don't have to catch them live. Every episode is ready when you are, so it's never too late to jump in and get something valuable out of the conversation.

MPC: Milwaukee's Philanthropic Community

If you want to feel more connected to the incredible work happening right here in our community, MPC is a must-listen.

So far this year, we've featured inspiring organizations like:

- Feed Your Soul, Inc.
- Fostering Community
- G-IV Recovery Foundation
- Heart2Heart Compassionate Widow's Circles
- John 23 Educational Center
- Kwizera Ministries

- Lad Lake
- Lake Country Clean Waters
- Milwaukee Chamber Theatre
- Mount Mary University
- Our Space
- Pantheon Industries
- Prayer Haven
- Rogers Foundation
- Summer Stage Delafield
- TeamTeal365 Inc
- The Builders Ministry
- Valley of the Kings Sanctuary & Retreat
- WCTC Foundation
- Whitefish Bay Civic Foundation
- Wildlife in Need
- Wisconsin Community Services
- Women's Beer & Spirits Collective
- Zachariah's Acres
- Zamora Group International

Every episode brings a new story, a fresh perspective, and a reminder of the impact happening all around us.

Ready to Jump In?

Don't wait to get caught up - your next favorite episode is already waiting for you.

Visit ellenbecker.com/podcasts and start listening today.



Follow along, share with a friend, and make these conversations part of your summer routine.

WELCOME: New Team Members



Nik Kibardin joined Ellenbecker Investment Group in March 2026 as a Wealth Services Advisor & Development Leader. He brings more than 15 years of experience in the financial services industry, with a background that spans client education, advisor development, and leadership through multiple branch management roles. During the warmer months, you'll often find him playing soccer with his kids, volunteering as a coach for FC Wisconsin, or enjoying time with friends and family on the lakes throughout the Lake Country area. Learn more about Nik at ellenbecker.com/team/nik-kibardin.



Travis Walters joined EIG in May 2026 as an Investment Operations Associate. Prior to joining EIG, Travis worked in healthcare as a Doctor of Chiropractic and remains co-owner of Catalyst Wellness, bringing a detail-oriented and problem-solving approach to his role at EIG, with a focus on organization and operational excellence. Outside of work, Travis enjoys spending time with his two children, staying active through golf, strength training and fitness, and taking advantage of everything Wisconsin has to offer. Learn more about Travis at ellenbecker.com/team/travis-walters.



Emily Daniel joined Ellenbecker Investment Group in January 2026 as a Tax Team intern and transitioned in June to a financial planning intern role, supporting Jean and Kristina's teams. She is expected to graduate in May 2028 from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and Finance.



Sage Schmidt joined Ellenbecker Investment Group in January 2026 as part of the Tax Internship Program and is currently a Financial Planning Summer Intern, supporting Tammy and Heather's teams. Sage is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, with an expected graduation date of May 2028. She also plans to pursue an accelerated master's degree in finance.

ICYMI (IN CASE YOU MISSED IT)

EIG hosted our annual Shred Day on Saturday, May 30th where we welcomed 325 cars, shred 12,000 pounds of paper, and nearly filled a semi trailer with recyclable electronics!



Do you follow EIG on Facebook and/or LinkedIn? If not, you don't want to miss this!

Stay up to date on EIG's upcoming events, radio shows, and other important news by following us on social media.

- facebook.com/EllenbeckerInvestmentGroup
- linkedin.com/Ellenbecker-investment-group

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To register and view the most current list of events, visit: ellenbecker.com/events
To receive our weekly emails, please email: info@ellenbecker.com

JULY

2	Liberty Park Live - John Nemeth	5:30 PM
6	Liberty Park Live - Kids from Wisconsin	5:30 PM
15	Wisconsin Widows Connected (WWC)	5:30 PM
16	EIG Car Show benefitting WCTC Campus Cupboard	4:00 PM
23	Liberty Park Live - Pat McCurdy	5:30 PM

AUGUST

6	Liberty Park Live - Steely Dane	5:30 PM
13	Liberty Park Live - Hypnotized	5:30 PM
19	Wisconsin Widows Connected (WWC)	5:30 PM
20	Military & Veterans Appreciation Night at Lake Country Dockhounds	5:30 PM

SEPTEMBER

9	Seminar: Inspired in Retirement	5:30 PM
9	Women's Bible Study	5:30 PM
15	Seminar: The Wealth Seed Program	5:30 PM
16	Wisconsin Widows Connected (WWC)	5:30 PM
23	Women's Bible Study	5:30 PM
30	Seminar: Medicare	5:30 PM

Quarterly Charity Partner

Formally known as Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative, WHVI has served thousands of veterans and their families in Southeastern Wisconsin since 2008. Founded and run by veterans, their mission is to help homeless and at-risk veterans reach and maintain their highest levels of independence by offering unique programs to complement what other organizations do.

Now through the end of September EIG is collecting the following for WHVI:

- Bathroom Linens (towels, shower curtains, bathmats)
- Cleaning Tools (Swiffers, brooms, mops, garbage bags)
- Pet Supplies (food & treats for dogs and cats)



HR UPDATE

Core Values Ambassadors

Congratulations to these team members for reflecting our culture and bringing our core values to life.

- Matt Slifka
- Kate Murphy
- Ryan Fritz

Employee Anniversaries

- May
- Gina Tegge - 1 year
 - Colin Oquist - 2 years
 - Isaac Schroeder - 2 years

- June
- Faith Reiter - 1 year
 - Michele Brehm - 2 years
 - Kristina Schnuckel - 13 years

Employee Donations

- The Augustine Academy
- Breanna Pelerin Foundation
- Bridge Church
- Brush Creek Academy
- Compassion International
- Cure Alzheimer's Fund
- Wisconsin Humane Society



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Conversations that share financial perspectives and connect local insights with global viewpoints, all grounded in the philosophy of "True Wealth," where health, family, friendships, and values matter just as much as money.

New Episodes on Tuesdays



The Heart of Milwaukee Philanthropy®

MPC spotlights the changemakers, nonprofit leaders, and everyday heroes shaping our city through generosity and purpose and explores ways for each of us to make a difference.

New Episodes on Thursdays

Find our podcasts here:
[Ellenbecker.com/podcasts](https://ellenbecker.com/podcasts)



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