



Best Practices in Target Date Benchmark Construction

October 2025

**S&P Dow Jones
Indices**

A Division of **S&P Global**

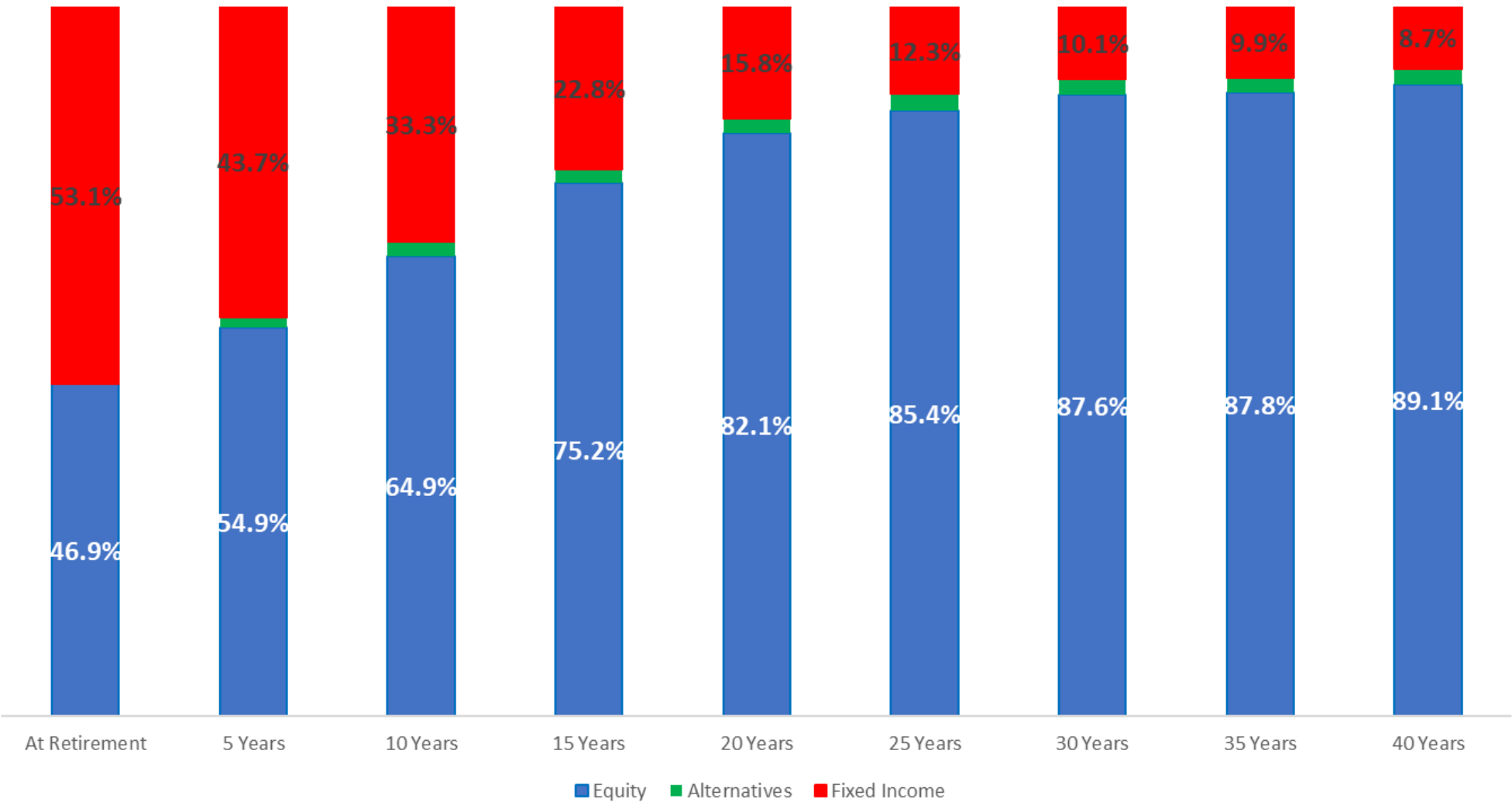
S&P Dow Jones Indices – For Financial Professionals Only

SPDJI Target Date Benchmarks – Benefits

- **Market leader** for target date benchmarks in the US and expanding globally
- **Flexibility** in glidepath construction, asset class/sub-asset class mix, inclusion of alternatives.
- **Transparent** and **straightforward** methodology available online
- Methodology can be adjusted for **any regulatory environment**



Example Glidepath: S&P Methodology



Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. Data as of June 2, 2025. Index performance based on returns in USD. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Chart/table is provided for illustrative purposes.

How to Build a **Target Date Benchmark**

- **Glidepath:**

- Choose method of glidepath construction (market consensus, index methodology, or a combination)
- Select asset class mix at retirement.
- Determine rate of de-risking.

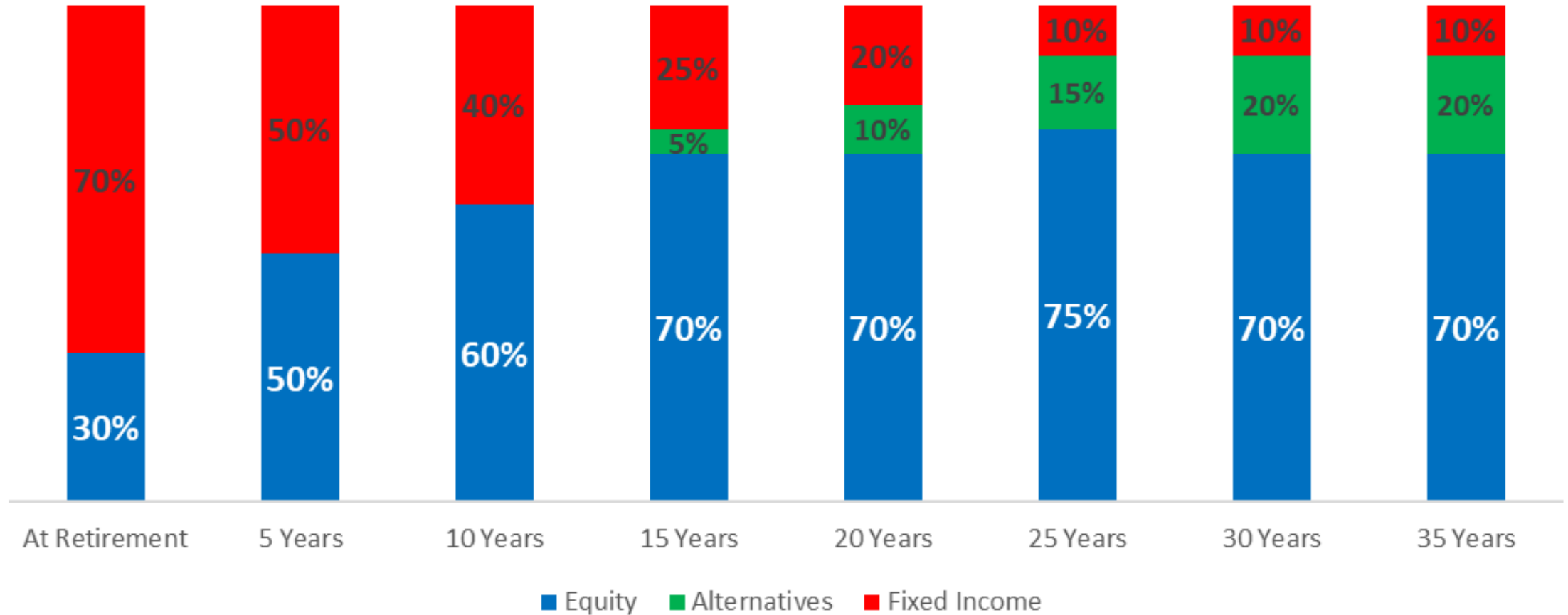
- **Asset Class Selection:**

- Inclusion of alternatives, at what level, and for how long?

- **Sub-Asset Class Selection:**

- Select appropriate sub-asset classes for ideal risk/return profile within regulatory boundaries and local preferences.

Example Glidepath: Hypothetical Concept



Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. Chart/table is provided for illustrative purposes.

**S&P Dow Jones
Indices**

A Division of **S&P Global**

- Dedicated index webpages featuring:
 - methodology
 - fact sheet

- MULTI-ASSET > RETIREMENT > S&P TARGET DATE

S&P Target Date 2025 Index

260.87 USD | -0.04% 1 Day

[Overview](#)

PERFORMANCE USD TOTAL RETURN

GRAPH VIEW TABLE VIEW

As of Mar 20, 2025

260.87

7.46%
1 YR RETURN

MTD QTD YTD 1 YEAR 3 YEAR 5 YEAR 10 YEAR

270
260
250
240
230
220

APR 2024 MAY 2024 JUN 2024

RETIREMENT
S&P Target Date

Overview Indices [News & Research](#)

The Index Launch Date is Sep 25, 2008. All information on the Launch Date. [SEE MORE](#) v

COMMENTARY - Dec 3, 2024

The S&P Target Date 2025 Index is a multi-asset index of indices designed to represent the allocations of the U.S. target date fund space with a 2025 vintage. An annual survey of allocations of target date funds is used to determine eligible asset classes and weights for the index.

 Factsheet

Contributors

Kevin Patalano
Senior Analyst
Multi-Asset Indices
kevin.patalano@inglobal.com

Sara Pollock, CFA
Director
Multi-Asset Indices
sara.pollock@inglobal.com

- The **S&P Target Date Index Series** is a **consensus-driven, multi-asset benchmark** for TDFs. It is designed to be an accurate representation of TDFs in the U.S. market and to be the basis against which managers can assess their performance.
- The series is constructed from indices that represent the actual allocations of funds in the U.S. target date space.
- The assets used in the construction of the index series are all investable, and the weights are published in advance of the index series rebalancing.
- **S&P Dow Jones Indices** also produces **S&P Target Date Style Indices**. The "To" style indices aim to reduce the impact of market drawdowns around the expected retirement date, while the "Through" style indices aim to mitigate longer-term risk—the risk of outliving one's assets in retirement.
- The series consists of 13 **S&P Target Date Index**, 11 **S&P Target Date Index** and 1 **S&P Target Date Through Index**. New index introductions are launched in five-year intervals.

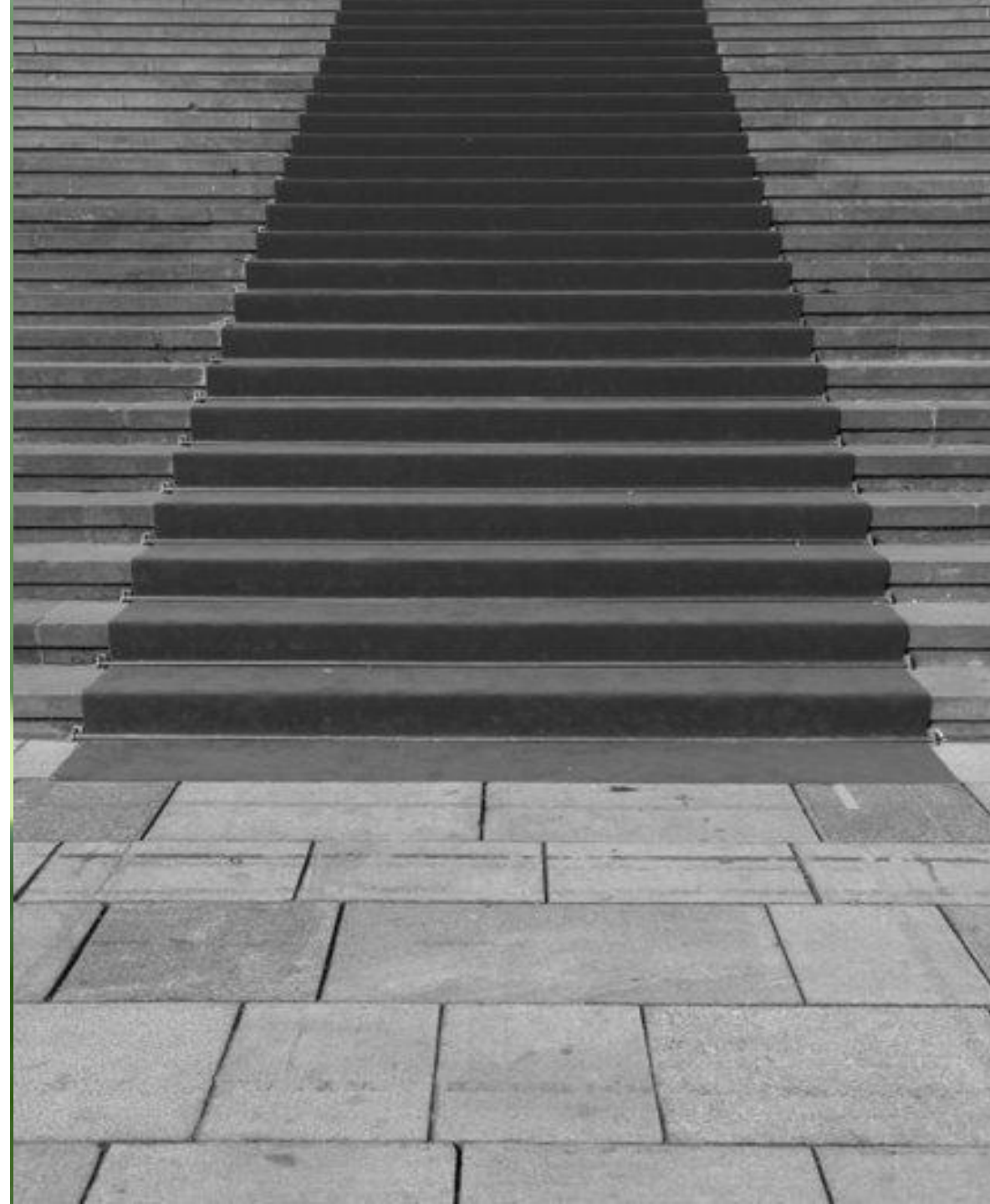
Register to receive our latest research, education, and commentary at
on.sagepub.com/SignUp.

6

Appendix

Building a Glidepath: **Overview**

1. Asset allocation via ***market consensus***
2. Asset allocation via ***consistent mathematical derisking***
3. Asset allocation via a combination of ***both***



Sub-Asset Class Mix **Example**

Current S&P Target Date Sub-Asset Classes:

Asset Class	Index Name
U.S. Large Cap	S&P 500
U.S. Mid Cap	S&P 400
U.S. Small Cap	S&P 600
International Equities	S&P Developed Ex-U.S. BMI
Emerging Market Equities	S&P Emerging BMI
U.S. REITs	Dow Jones U.S. Select REIT
International REITs	S&P Developed Ex-U.S. REIT
Core Fixed Income	S&P U.S. Aggregate Bond Index
Cash Equivalents	S&P U.S. Treasury Bond 0-1 Year Index
TIPS	S&P US Treasury TIPS Index
High Yield Corporate Bonds	S&P 500 High Yield Corporate Bond Index
Commodities	S&P GSCI

Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. The S&P Target Date To 2010 Index was discontinued effective June 5, 2016. The S&P Target Date To 2015 Index and the S&P Target Date Through 2010 Index were discontinued effective June 10, 2022. For more information, please see the [S&P Target Date Indices Methodology](#).

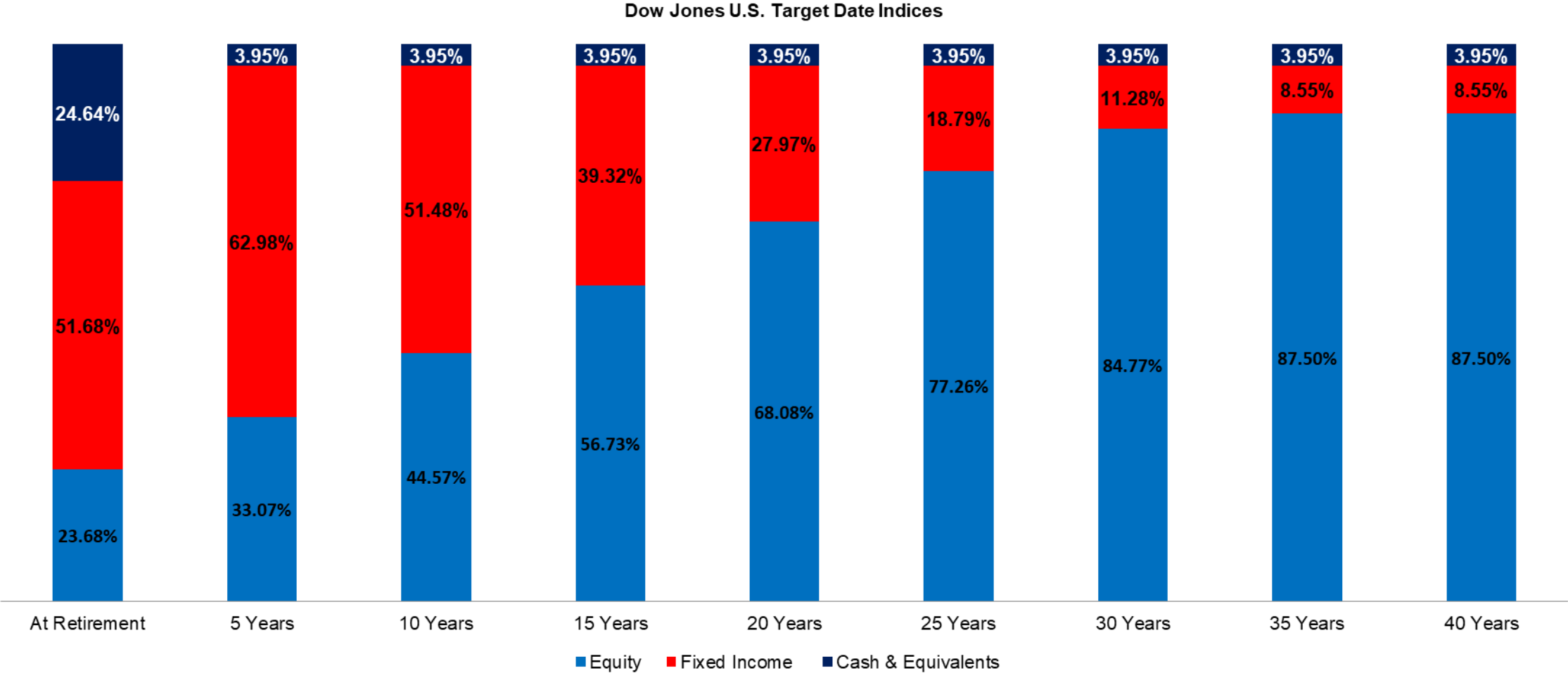
Sub-Asset Class Mix **Example**

Current Dow Jones Target Date Sub-Asset Classes:

U.S. Series
Dow Jones U.S. Stock CMAC Index
Dow Jones U.S. Large-Cap Growth Index
Dow Jones U.S. Large-Cap Value Index
Dow Jones U.S. Mid-Cap Growth Index
Dow Jones U.S. Mid-Cap Value Index
Dow Jones U.S. Small-Cap Growth Index
Dow Jones U.S. Small-Cap Value Index
S&P Bond Composite – U.S. Index
S&P U.S. Government Bond Index
S&P U.S. Dollar Global Investment Grade Corporate Bond Index
S&P U.S. Mortgage-Backed Securities Index
S&P Cash Composite – U.S. Index
S&P U.S. Treasury Bill 0-3 Month Index

Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. The S&P Target Date To 2010 Index was discontinued effective June 5, 2016. The S&P Target Date To 2015 Index and the S&P Target Date Through 2010 Index were discontinued effective June 10, 2022. For more information, please see the [S&P Target Date Indices Methodology](#).

Example Glidepath: Dow Jones Methodology



Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. Data as of Sep. 15, 2025.. Index performance based on returns in USD. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Chart/table is provided for illustrative purposes.

General Disclaimer

© 2025 S&P Dow Jones Indices. All rights reserved. S&P, S&P 500, SPX, SPY, The 500, US500, US 30, S&P 100, S&P COMPOSITE 1500, S&P 400, S&P MIDCAP 400, S&P 600, S&P SMALLCAP 600, S&P GIVI, GLOBAL TITANS, DIVIDEND ARISTOCRATS, Select Sector, S&P MAESTRO, S&P PRISM, S&P STRIDE, GICS, SPIVA, SPDR, INDEXOLOGY, iTraxx, iBoxx, ABX, ADBI, CDX, CMBX, MBX, MCDX, PRIMEX, HHPI and SOVX are trademarks of S&P Global, Inc. ("S&P Global") or its affiliates. DOW JONES, DJIA, THE DOW and DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE are trademarks of Dow Jones Trademark Holdings LLC ("Dow Jones"). These trademarks together with others have been licensed to S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. Redistribution or reproduction in whole or in part are prohibited without written permission of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. This document does not constitute an offer of services in jurisdictions where S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, S&P Global, Dow Jones or their respective affiliates (collectively "S&P Dow Jones Indices") do not have the necessary licenses. Except for certain custom index calculation services, all information provided by S&P Dow Jones Indices is impersonal and not tailored to the needs of any person, entity or group of persons. S&P Dow Jones Indices receives compensation in connection with licensing its indices to third parties and providing custom calculation services. Past performance of an index is not an indication or guarantee of future results.

It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Exposure to an asset class represented by an index may be available through investable instruments based on that index. S&P Dow Jones Indices does not sponsor, endorse, sell, promote or manage any investment fund or other investment vehicle that is offered by third parties and that seeks to provide an investment return based on the performance of any index. S&P Dow Jones Indices makes no assurance that investment products based on the index will accurately track index performance or provide positive investment returns. S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC is not an investment advisor, and S&P Dow Jones Indices makes no representation regarding the advisability of investing in any such investment fund or other investment vehicle. A decision to invest in any such investment fund or other investment vehicle should not be made in reliance on any of the statements set forth in this document. S&P Dow Jones Indices is not an investment adviser, commodity trading advisor, commodity pool operator, broker dealer, fiduciary, promoter" (as defined in the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended), "expert" as enumerated within 15 U.S.C. § 77k(a) or tax advisor. Inclusion of a security, commodity, crypto currency or other asset within an index is not a recommendation by S&P Dow Jones Indices to buy, sell, or hold such security, commodity, crypto currency or other asset, nor is it considered to be investment advice or commodity trading advice.

These materials have been prepared solely for informational purposes based upon information generally available to the public and from sources believed to be reliable. No content contained in these materials (including index data, ratings, credit-related analyses and data, research, valuations, model, software or other application or output therefrom) or any part thereof ("Content") may be modified, reverse-engineered, reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of S&P Dow Jones Indices. The Content shall not be used for any unlawful or unauthorized purposes. S&P Dow Jones Indices and its third-party data providers and licensors (collectively "S&P Dow Jones Indices Parties") do not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, timeliness or availability of the Content. S&P Dow Jones Indices Parties are not responsible for any errors or omissions, regardless of the cause, for the results obtained from the use of the Content. THE CONTENT IS PROVIDED ON AN "AS IS" BASIS. S&P DOW JONES INDICES PARTIES DISCLAIM ANY AND ALL EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR USE, FREEDOM FROM BUGS, SOFTWARE ERRORS OR DEFECTS, THAT THE CONTENT'S FUNCTIONING WILL BE UNINTERRUPTED OR THAT THE CONTENT WILL OPERATE WITH ANY SOFTWARE OR HARDWARE CONFIGURATION. In no event shall S&P Dow Jones Indices Parties be liable to any party for any direct, indirect, incidental, exemplary, compensatory, punitive, special or consequential damages, costs, expenses, legal fees, or losses (including, without limitation, lost income or lost profits and opportunity costs) in connection with any use of the Content even if advised of the possibility of such damages.

S&P Global keeps certain activities of its various divisions and business units separate from each other in order to preserve the independence and objectivity of their respective activities. As a result, certain divisions and business units of S&P Global may have information that is not available to other business units. S&P Global has established policies and procedures to maintain the confidentiality of certain non-public information received in connection with each analytical process.

In addition, S&P Dow Jones Indices provides a wide range of services to, or relating to, many organizations, including issuers of securities, investment advisers, broker-dealers, investment banks, other financial institutions and financial intermediaries, and accordingly may receive fees or other economic benefits from those organizations, including organizations whose securities or services they may recommend, rate, include in model portfolios, evaluate or otherwise address.

Performance Disclosure/Back-Tested Data

All information presented prior to an index's Launch Date is hypothetical (back-tested), not actual performance, and is based on the index methodology in effect on the index launch date. However, when creating back-tested history for periods of market anomalies or other periods that do not reflect the general current market environment, index methodology rules may be relaxed to capture a large enough universe of securities to simulate the target market the index is designed to measure or strategy the index is designed to capture. For example, market capitalization and liquidity thresholds may be reduced. In addition, forks have not been factored into the back-test data with respect to the S&P Cryptocurrency Indices. For the S&P Cryptocurrency Top 5 & 10 Equal Weight Indices, the custody element of the methodology was not considered; the back-test history is based on the index constituents that meet the custody element as of the Launch Date. Complete index methodology details are available at spglobal.com/spdji. Back-tested performance reflects application of an index methodology and selection of index constituents with the benefit of hindsight and knowledge of factors that may have positively affected its performance, cannot account for all financial risk that may affect results and may be considered to reflect survivor/look ahead bias. Actual returns may differ significantly from, and be lower than, back-tested returns. Past performance is not an indication or guarantee of future results.

Please refer to the methodology for the Index for more details about the index, including the manner in which it is rebalanced, the timing of such rebalancing, criteria for additions and deletions, as well as all index calculations. Back-tested performance is for use with institutions only; not for use with retail investors.

S&P Dow Jones Indices defines various dates to assist our clients in providing transparency. The First Value Date is the first day for which there is a calculated value (either live or back-tested) for a given index. The Base Date is the date at which the index is set to a fixed value for calculation purposes. The Launch Date designates the date when the values of an index are first considered live: index values provided for any date or time period prior to the index's Launch Date are considered back-tested. S&P Dow Jones Indices defines the Launch Date as the date by which the values of an index are known to have been released to the public, for example via the company's public website or its data feed to external parties. For Dow Jones-branded indices introduced prior to May 31, 2013, the Launch Date (which prior to May 31, 2013, was termed "Date of introduction") is set at a date upon which no further changes were permitted to be made to the index methodology, but that may have been prior to the Index's public release date.

Typically, when S&P DJI creates back-tested index data, S&P DJI uses actual historical constituent-level data (e.g., historical price, market capitalization, and corporate action data) in its calculations. As ESG investing is still in early stages of development, certain datapoints used to calculate S&P DJI's ESG indices may not be available for the entire desired period of back-tested history. The same data availability issue could be true for other indices as well. In cases when actual data is not available for all relevant historical periods, S&P DJI may employ a process of using "Backward Data Assumption" (or pulling back) of ESG data for the calculation of back-tested historical performance. "Backward Data Assumption" is a process that applies the earliest actual live data point available for an index constituent company to all prior historical instances in the index performance. For example, Backward Data Assumption inherently assumes that companies currently not involved in a specific business activity (also known as "product involvement") were never involved historically and similarly also assumes that companies currently involved in a specific business activity were involved historically too. The Backward Data Assumption allows the hypothetical back-test to be extended over more historical years than would be feasible using only actual data. For more information on "Backward Data Assumption" please refer to the [FAQ](#). The methodology and factsheets of any index that employs backward assumption in the back-tested history will explicitly state so. The methodology will include an Appendix with a table setting forth the specific data points and relevant time period for which backward projected data was used.

Index returns shown do not represent the results of actual trading of investable assets/securities. S&P Dow Jones Indices maintains the index and calculates the index levels and performance shown or discussed but does not manage actual assets. Index returns do not reflect payment of any sales charges or fees an investor may pay to purchase the securities underlying the Index or investment funds that are intended to track the performance of the Index. The imposition of these fees and charges would cause actual and back-tested performance of the securities/fund to be lower than the Index performance shown. As a simple example, if an index returned 10% on a US \$100,000 investment for a 12-month period (or US \$10,000) and an actual asset-based fee of 1.5% was imposed at the end of the period on the investment plus accrued interest (or US \$1,650), the net return would be 8.35% (or US \$8,350) for the year. Over a three-year period, an annual 1.5% fee taken at year end with an assumed 10% return per year would result in a cumulative gross return of 33.10%, a total fee of US \$5,375, and a cumulative net return of 27.2% (or US \$27,200).