



provoked  
insights

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Finances in a Changing Economy  
Summer 2024



# Background & Objectives

Provoke Insights is a trailblazer in research for branding, advertising, media, and content marketing initiatives. The company conducts a bi-annual study to stay up-to-date with the market trends across multiple industries.

In this comprehensive eighth-wave of the study, Provoke Insights evaluates Americans' sentiment, shopping impulse behaviors, and trust in the media. Continual inflation, layoffs, the presidential election, and the rapid growth of AI have impacted Americans' attitudes, concerns, and spending habits. This wave of research digs deep into the effect of these trends.

Provoke Insights has developed 13 industry-specific decks; this deck focuses on the **economy**.



# Methodology

Provoke Insights conducted a 15-minute survey among 1,500 Americans between the ages of 21 and 65. The study was in-field in April 2024.

A random stratified sample followed by weighting was used to ensure a high degree of sample representation of the U.S. population (household income, age, gender, geography, ethnicity, and children in the household). The sample was modeled to represent the latest US Census data.

Results based on this sample have a maximum margin of sampling error  $\pm 2.5\%$  at a 95% confidence level.

Statistical differences between subgroups indicated in this report were tested at a 95% confidence level. Significances are indicated by call-out boxes in graphs.







## Current State of the Market

Despite a generally optimistic outlook, many consumers struggle with concerns about their financial health, largely due to economic worries and inflation. As a result, two-thirds of Americans have become more budget-conscious than six months ago, leading them to be more mindful of their discretionary spending. Consumers are especially conscious of price increases at supermarkets and restaurants.



A hand with light-colored nail polish holds a pink piggy bank. The piggy bank has a white bandage on its side and a silver stethoscope is placed over its back. The background is a blurred white surface.

## Financial Health

Alarmingly, only half of the population is actively saving money, a troubling statistic compounded by the fact that one-tenth of Americans are sinking deeper into debt.

Individuals who are saving money typically possess higher incomes, affording them the ability to allocate discretionary income towards dining out, personal health, and travel. Conversely, those facing financial constraints are more inclined to carry balances on their credit cards and keep more cash at home.



# Changes in Financial Behavior

Each generation exhibits unique financial behaviors:

- Gen X prioritizes saving for retirement.
- Baby Boomers stay informed through financial news.
- Gen Z is the most likely to carry credit card balances.

The usage of digital wallets has surged among Americans, with nearly half of the population adopting this trend, marking a significant increase since 2020. Millennials are more likely to embrace this payment method.

Furthermore, interest in cryptocurrency investment has skyrocketed, more than tripling in the past three years. Notably, young males engage in this financial activity, albeit often at the expense of accumulating further debt.





The image features a central illustration of a hand holding a crumpled brown paper bag. The hand is rendered in a halftone, stippled style. The background is a light pinkish-tan color with a large, faint circular arrow pointing clockwise. Overlaid on this is a white line graph with several peaks and valleys, suggesting economic fluctuations. A dark blue rectangular box is positioned on the left side, containing white text.

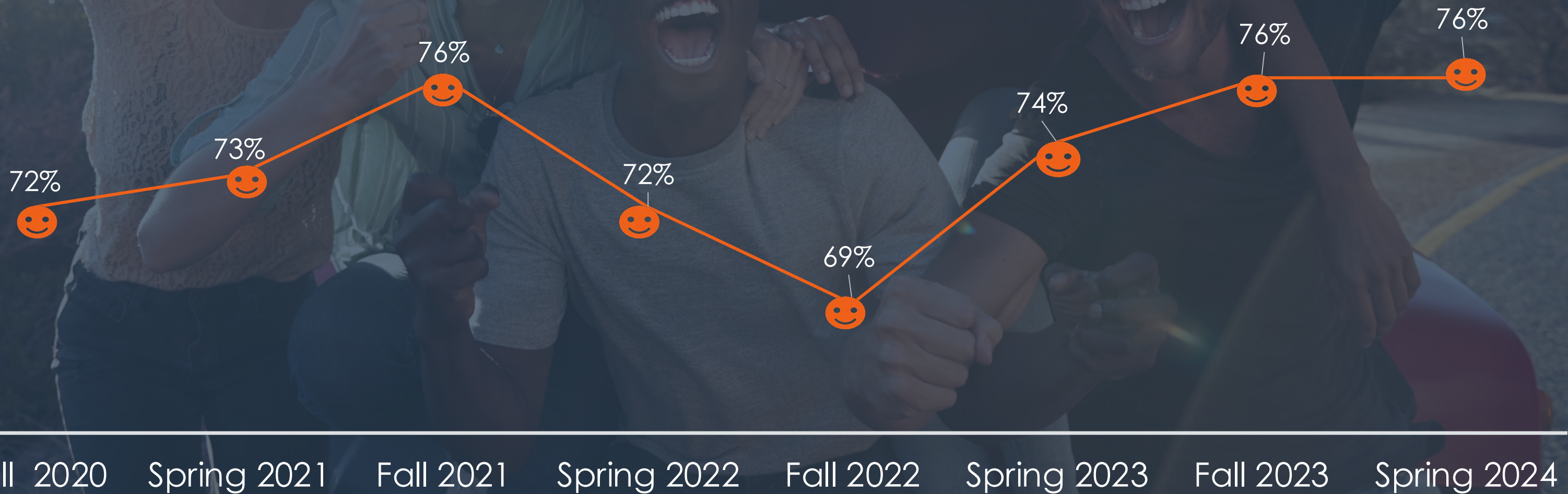
# How is the Economy Impacting Consumers?



# Consumer Optimism

Optimistic outlooks on the future remain high. The lowest sentiment was in Fall 2022.

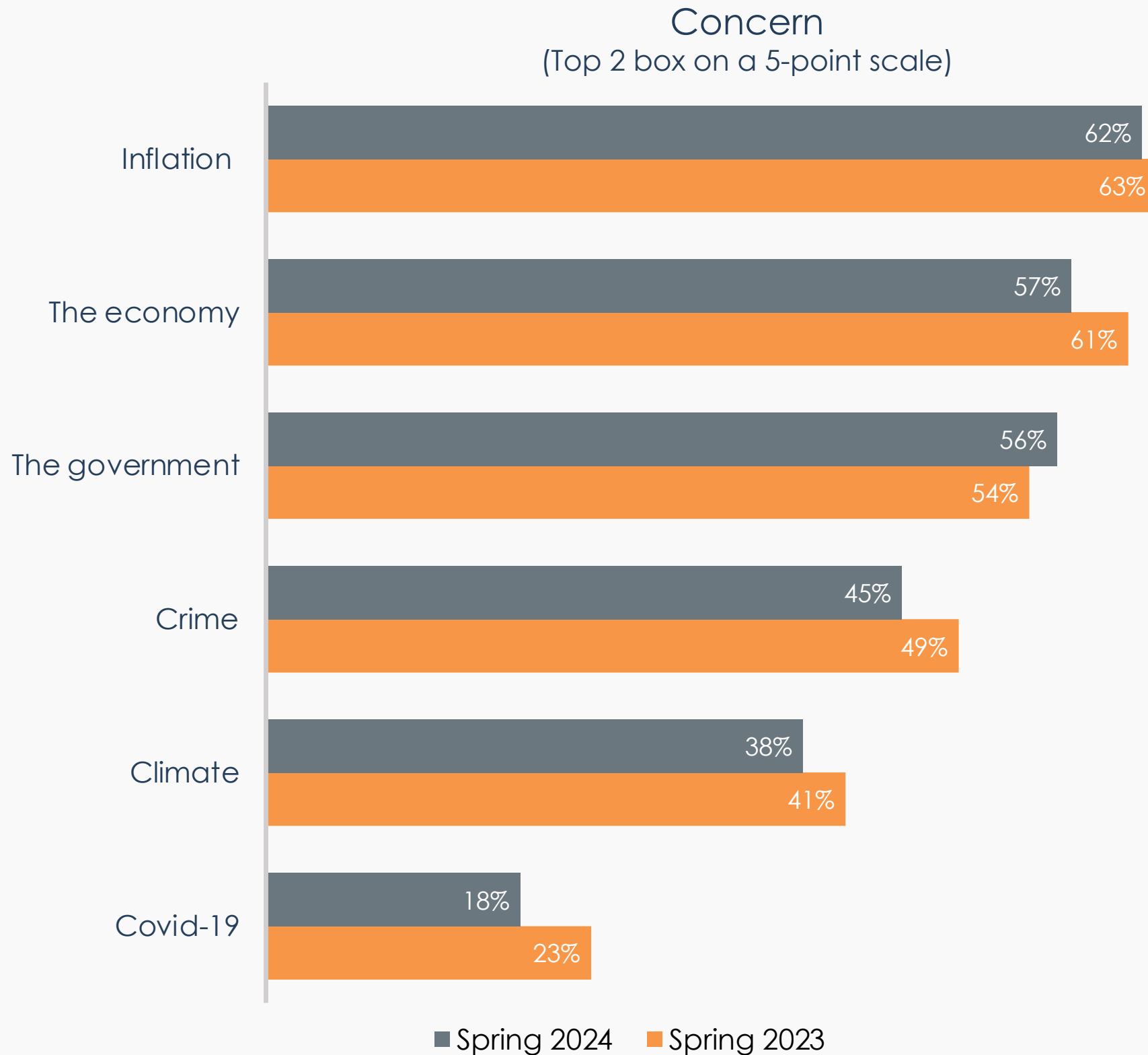
Optimism  
Top 2 box on a 4-point scale





# Top Concerns Impacting Consumers

Inflation remains the top concern among Americans. Worries about the government have slightly increased in the last year.









# 57%


(Top 2 box on a 5-point scale)  
of Americans are concerned  
about the economy

## Inflation is a Key Worry for Americans Regarding the Economy

“The prices of everything keeps going up while our jobs aren't paying more to keep up with the cost of living. Eventually only the higher ups will be able to afford a ‘normal’ lifestyle.”

“I am worried about the number of people who live paycheck to paycheck managing the increasing costs for everything. Inflation is making everyday items beyond the means for many.” 

“Everything is so expensive and it's hard to make enough to live and pay for everything you need to. People can't save money or have money for anything extra.” 

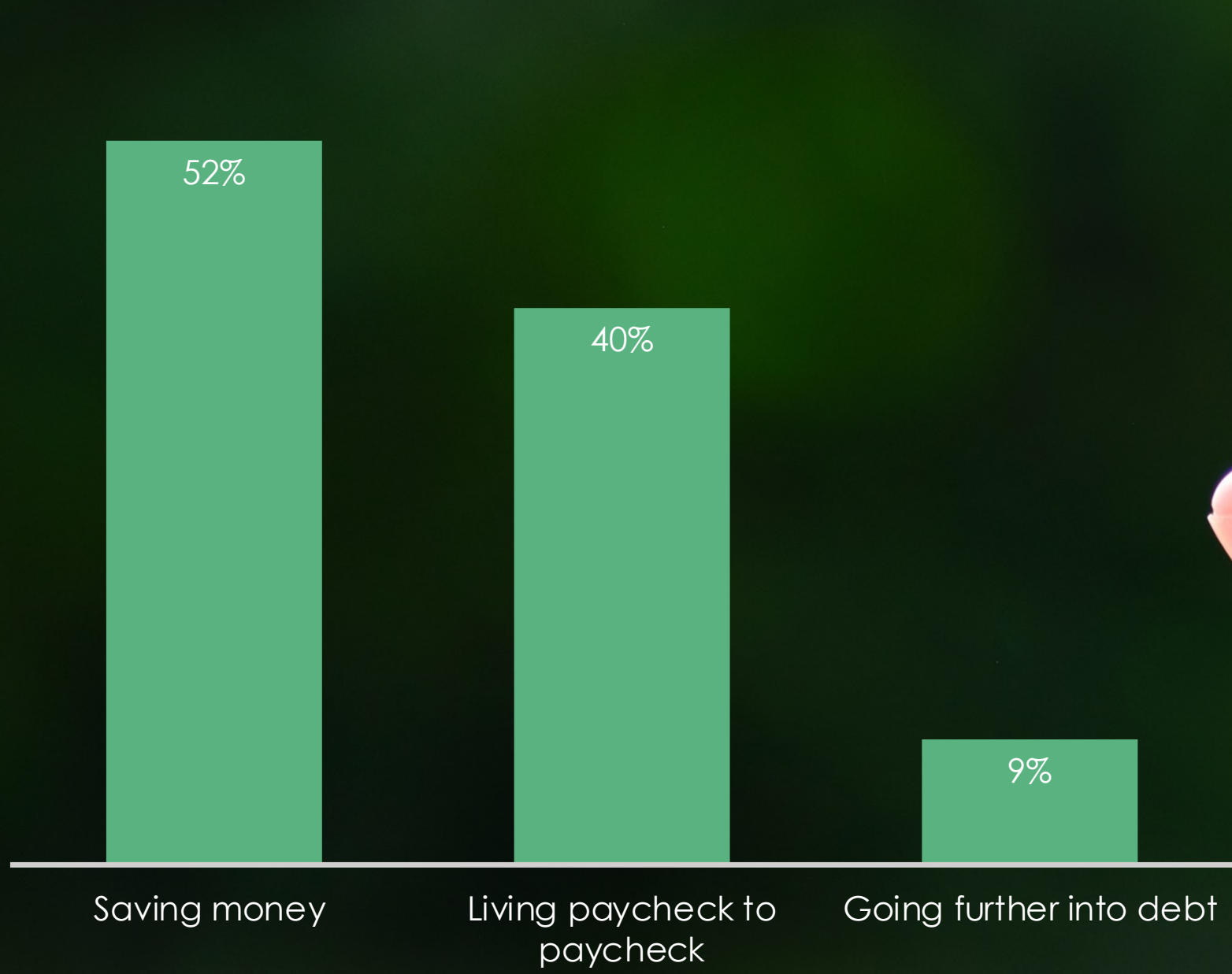
“Inflation is very high, and I am worried about a recession and a hit to our portfolio. We are very close to retirement and that makes me nervous.” 

“I'm worried the purchasing power of my salary will go down and I won't be able to afford to never worry about going out to eat or retirement.”



# Financial Positions

Only half of Americans are saving money. It is particularly concerning as a tenth are going further into debt.





# Financial Constraints

Going into debt/living paycheck to paycheck



**Demos**

Mean Age 42.8 | More likely... Female 52% | HHI Under \$150K 89% | Rural 18%

**Top Activities**

- Baking (57%)
- Outdoor exercise (40%)
- Video games (40%)
- Self care (34%)

## What Makes Someone a SAVER vs. Being FINANCIAL CONSTRAINT

Significant Differences

Financial Constraints (n=727)		Saving Money (n=773)
<b>Financial Habits</b>		
28%	Follow financial news	44%
17%	Trade stocks online	30%
16%	Invest in cryptocurrency	20%
40%	Carry a balance on a credit card(s)	28%
34%	Keep more physical cash at home	28%
<b>Shopping Habits</b>		
27%	Impulse shop more than weekly	32%
<i>Top 2 on a 7-point agree scale</i>		
41%	Enjoy browsing store aisles	49%
29%	Switch brands that don't align with values	34%
8%	Spend money to keep up with trends	18%
<b>Relevant Promotional Media Sources</b>		

15%	TikTok	11%
9%	Facebook	6%
8%	News publications	12%

# Saving Money



**Demos**

Mean Age 42.9 | More likely... Male 53% | HHI \$150K+ 33% | Urban 19%

**Top Activities**

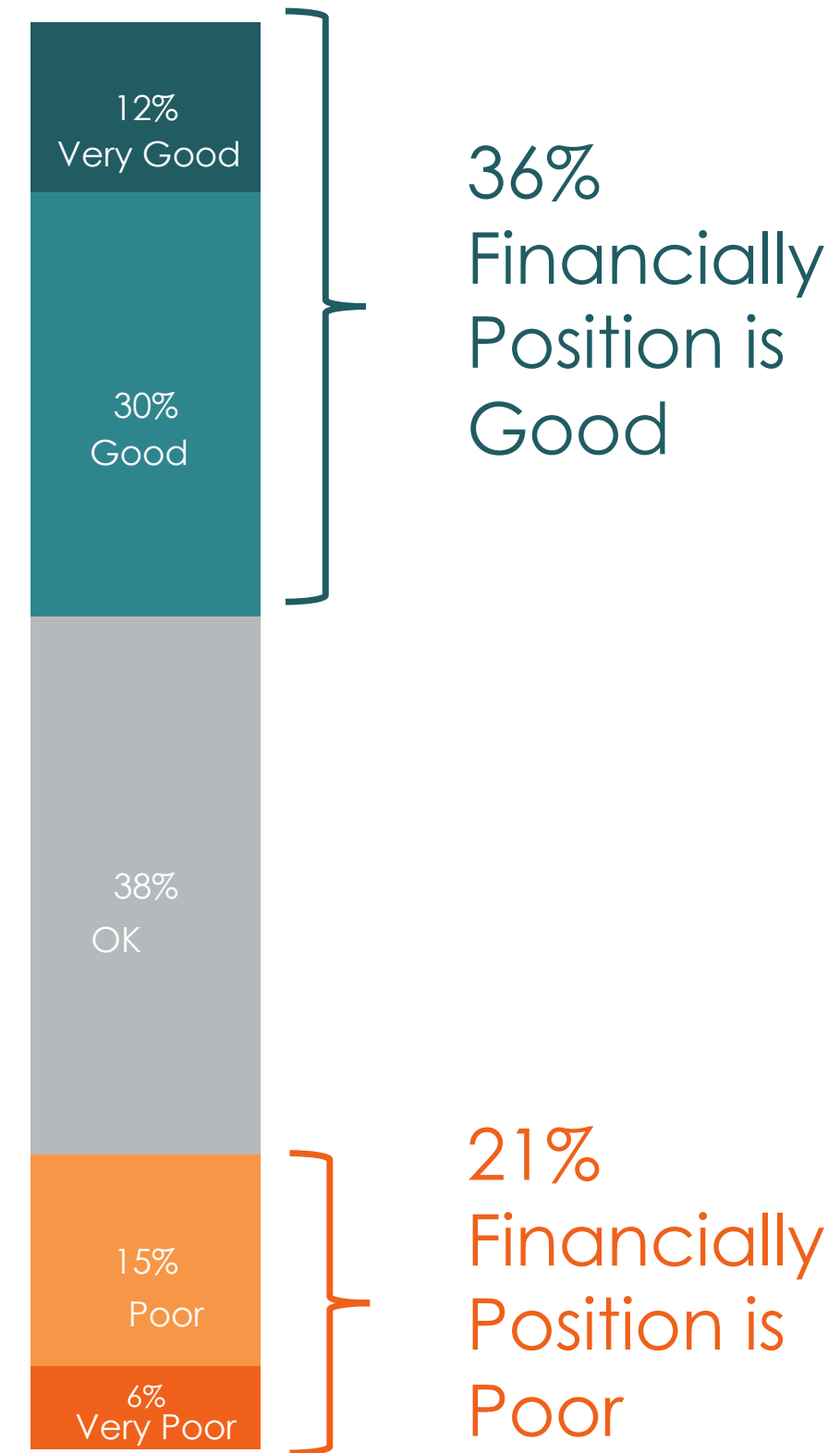
- Outdoor exercise (51%)
- Travel (38%)
- Going to the gym (36%)
- Dining out (33%)





# Financial Position Comparison

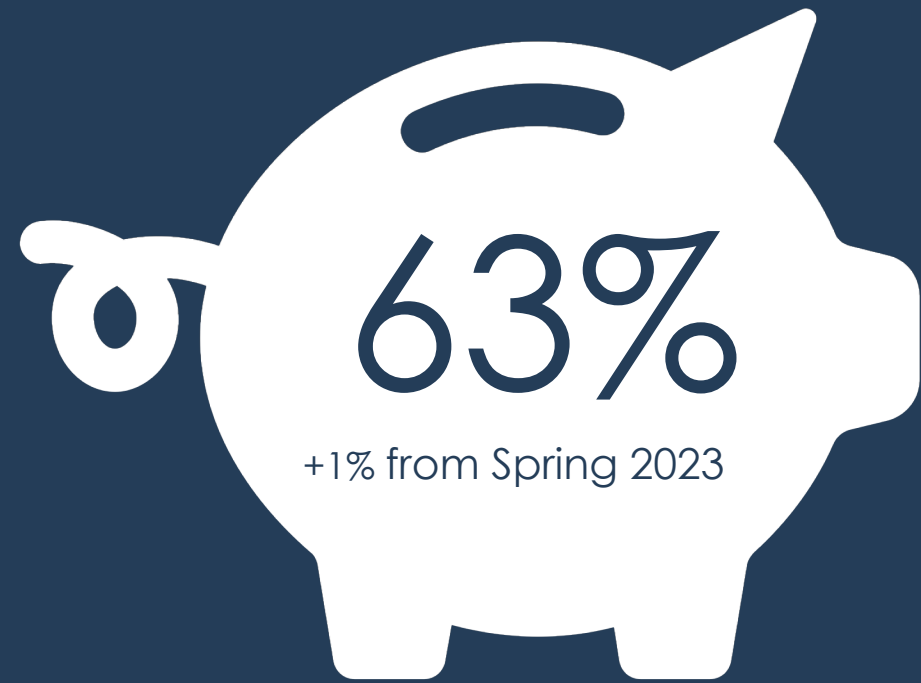
One-fifth of Americans believe that they are in a bad financial situation.





# Americans Are Budget Conscious

Two-thirds of consumers continue to reduce their spending.



**More Budget Conscious**

## Who is Significantly More Likely to Be Budget Conscious

 77% Going Into Debt

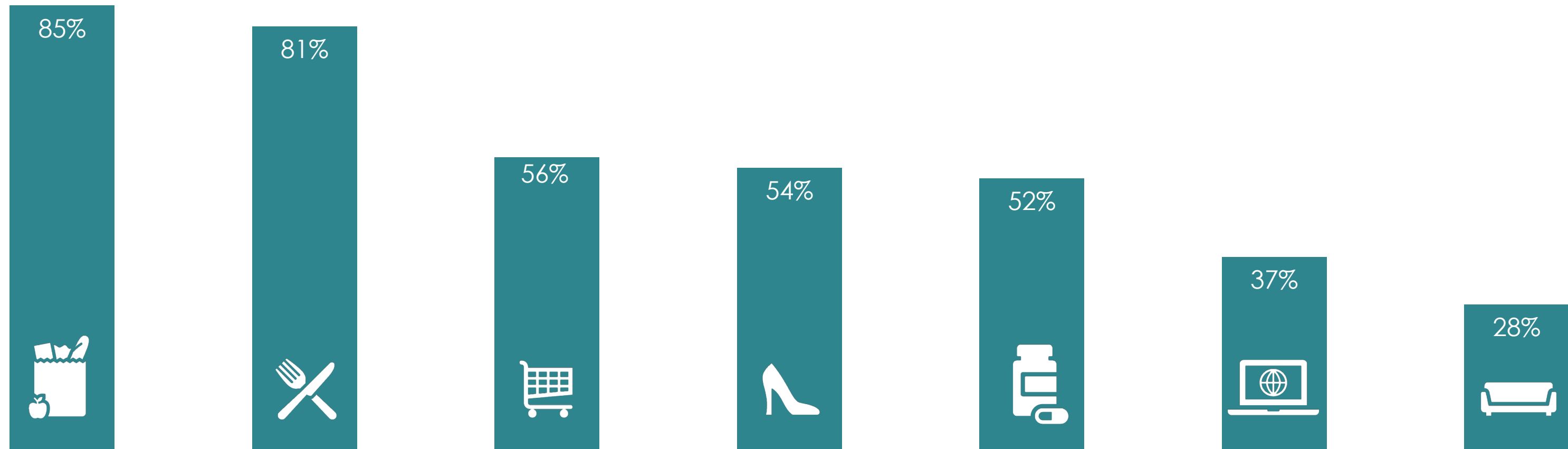
**H** 71% Hispanic

 68% Republican



# Inflation Impact Across Different Types of Stores

Prices have surged the most at food establishments such as supermarkets and restaurants.



Supermarkets

Restaurants

Superstores/Big box stores

Department Stores

Drug stores

eCommerce only sites (e.g. Amazon)

Furniture Stores



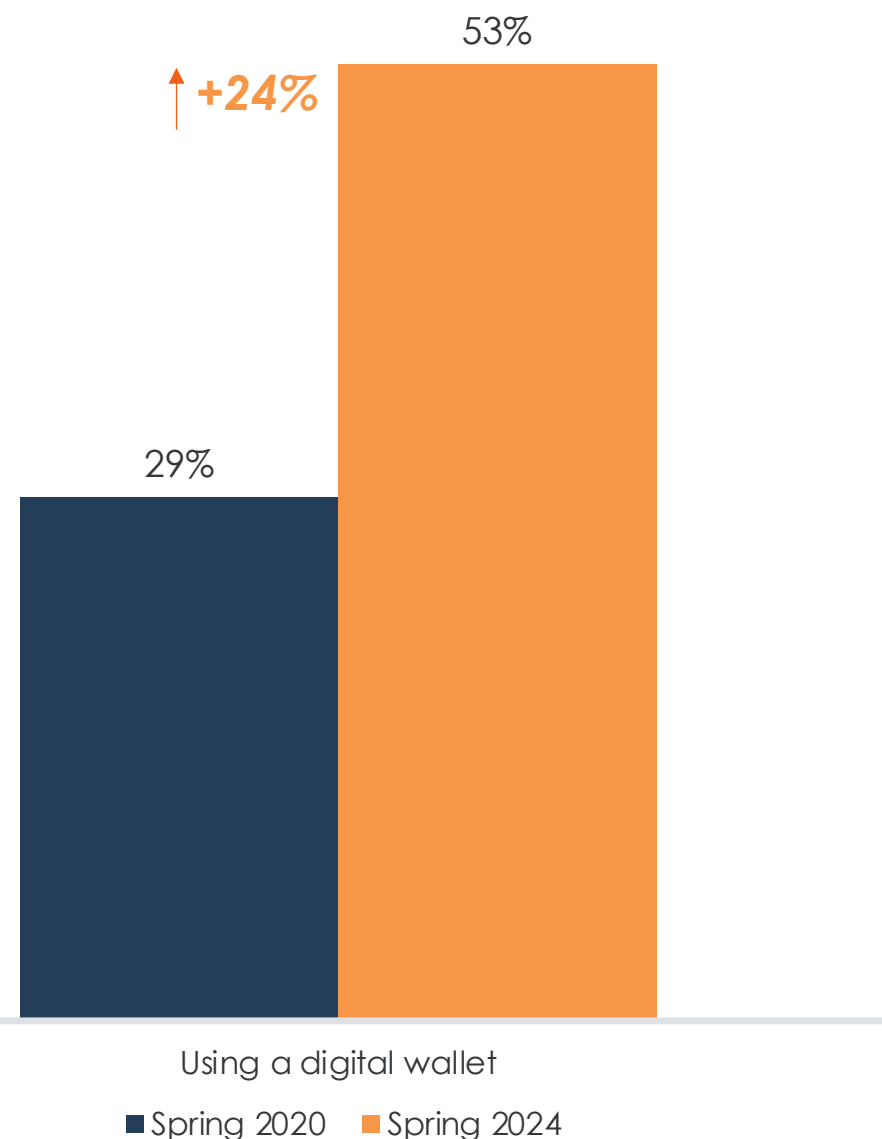
A photograph of a person sitting at a wooden table outdoors. The person is holding a red credit card in their right hand, which has a gold chip and some text on it. The credit card is held up towards a laptop on the table. The person's left hand is holding a green glass bottle. In the background, there is a blue pool and some greenery. On the table, there is a plate with a sandwich and some bread. The overall scene suggests a casual outdoor setting, possibly a cafe or a restaurant.

# Financial Activities










# Digital Wallets

Digital wallet usage has exploded, growing 24% in just four years. This payment method is especially prominent among impulse shoppers.



## Groups Significantly More Likely to use digital wallets

-  Carry CC balance (68%)
-  Impulse shops (66%)
-  Millennials (64%)
-  Urban (62%)
-  HHI \$150K+ (62%)
-  Gen Z (61%)
-  Parents (61%)



# Saving for Retirement

Only half of Americans are saving for retirement; the rate is unchanged from 2020.



Save for retirement  
■ Spring 2020 ■ Spring 2024

## Groups Significantly More Likely to Save for Retirement

\$ HHI \$150K+ (69%)

🏠 Saving money (61%)

X Gen X (56%)

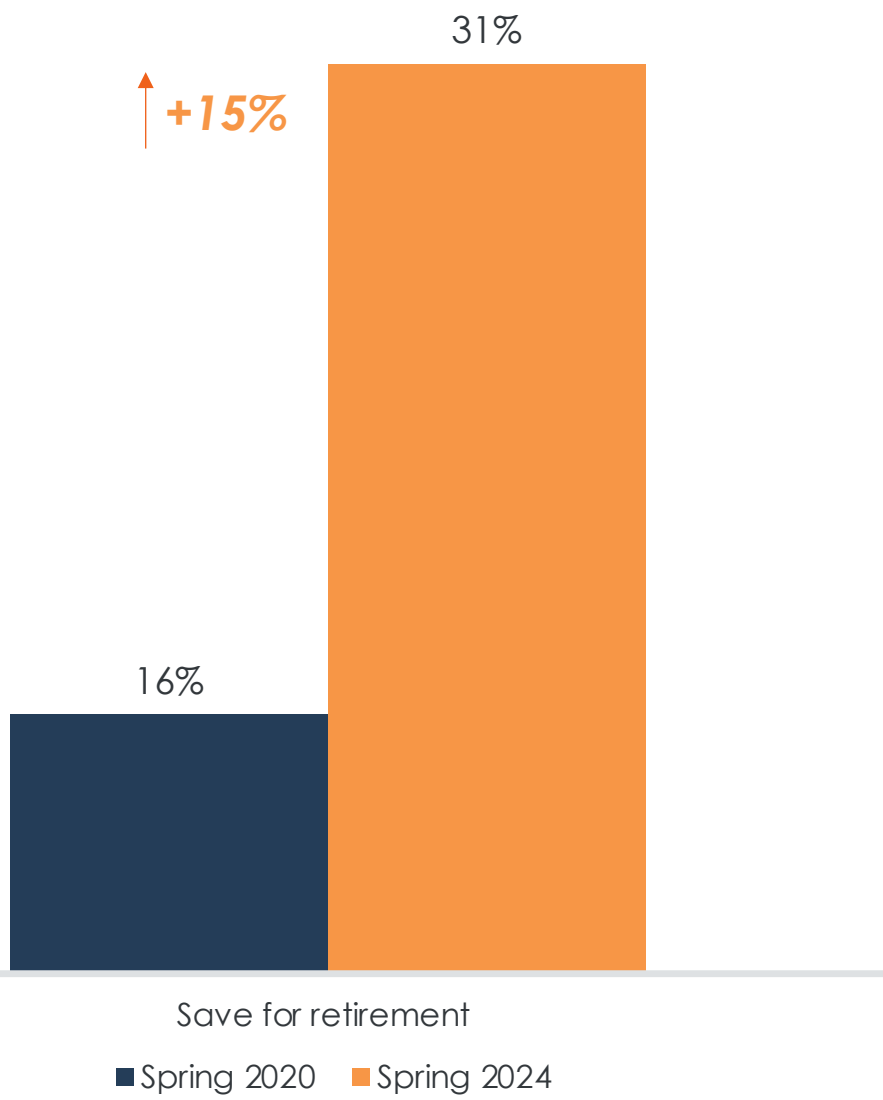
🐘 Republican (54%)

Retirement



# Keep more Cash at Home

Banking and investing are nerve-racking, as nearly double the number of Americans have kept cash at home since 2020.



Groups Significantly More Likely to Keep More Cash at Home



Rural (40%)

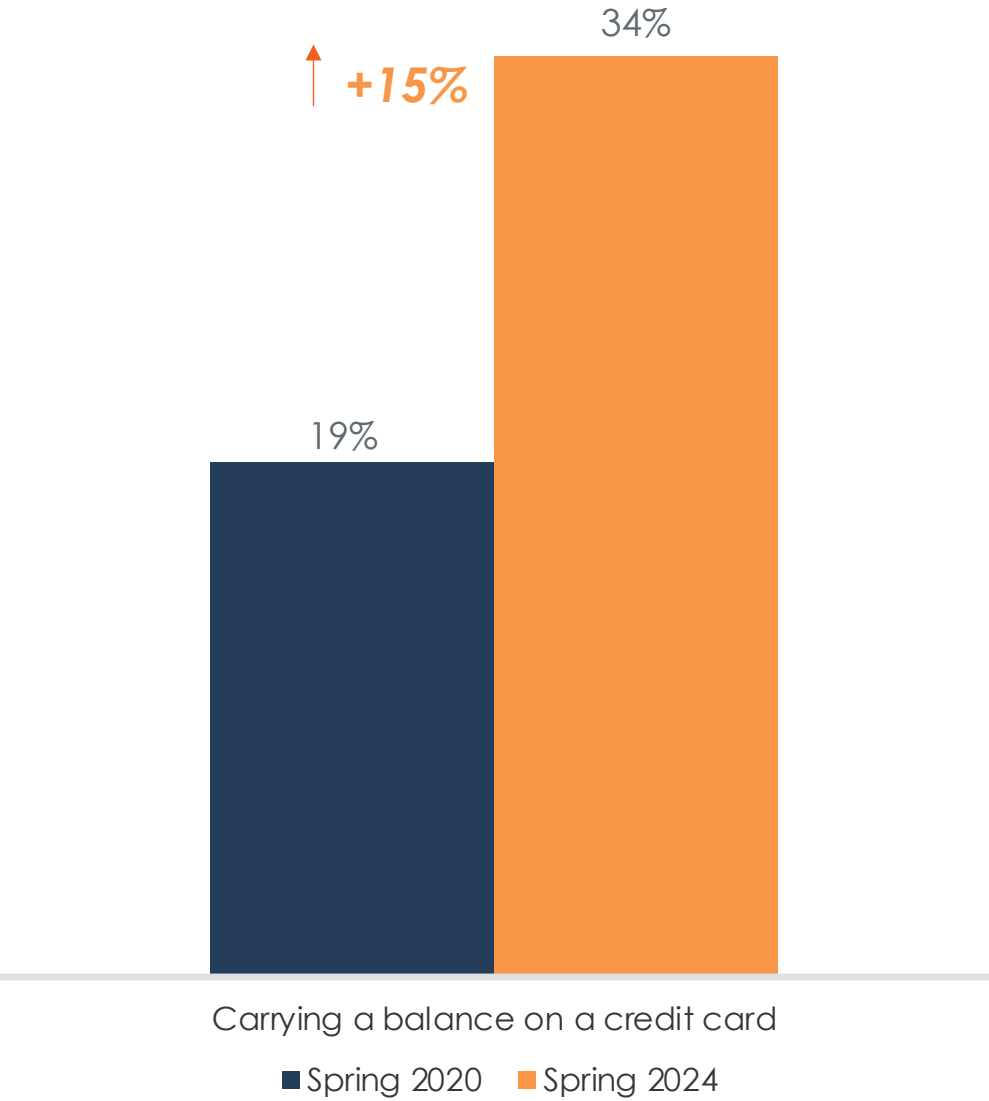


Going into debt (37%)



# Credit Card Balance

Nearly twice as many consumers plan to hold credit card debt in 2024 compared to 2020.



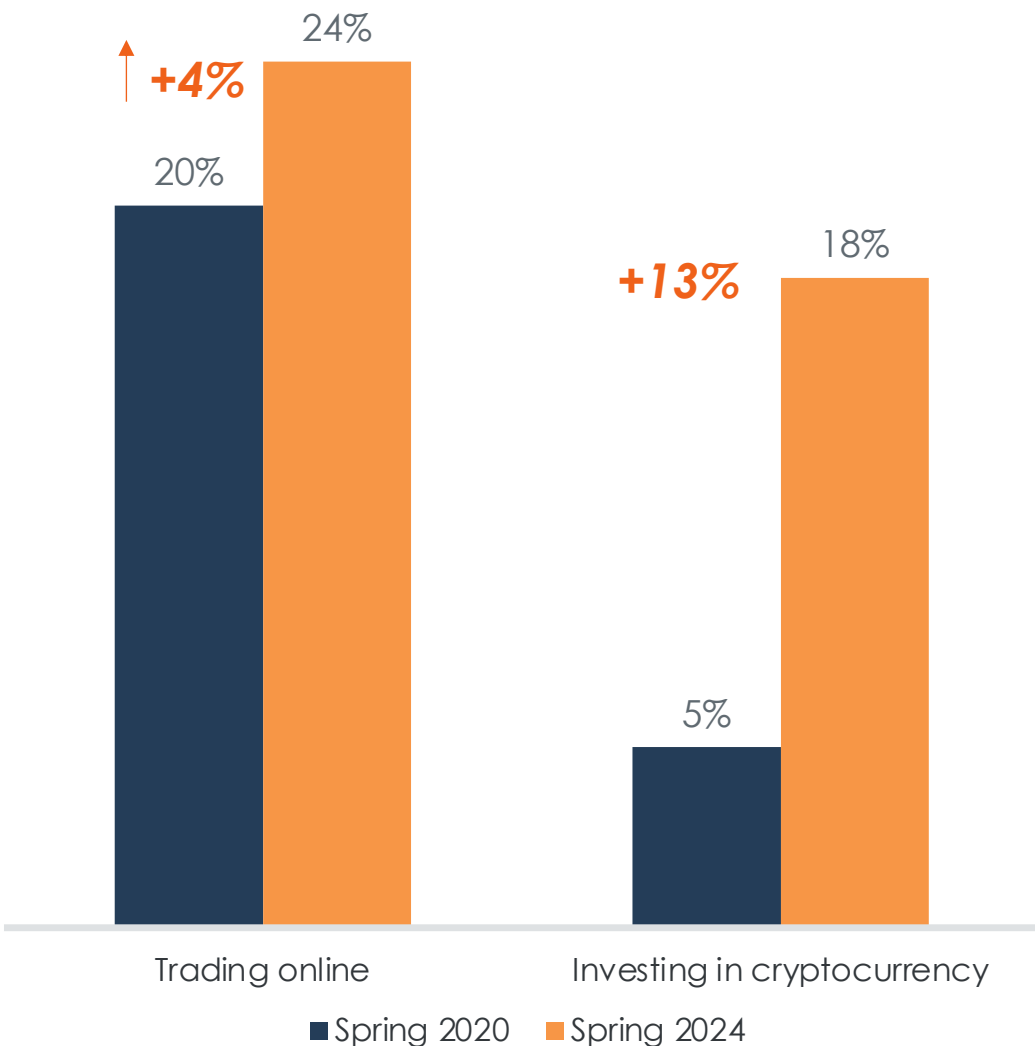
Groups Significantly More Likely to carry a credit card balance

- ✈️ Going further into debt (49%)
- 🛒 Impulse shops (42%)
- Z Gen Z (39%)









# Online Investing

Plans to invest in cryptocurrency has more than tripled in the past 4 years.



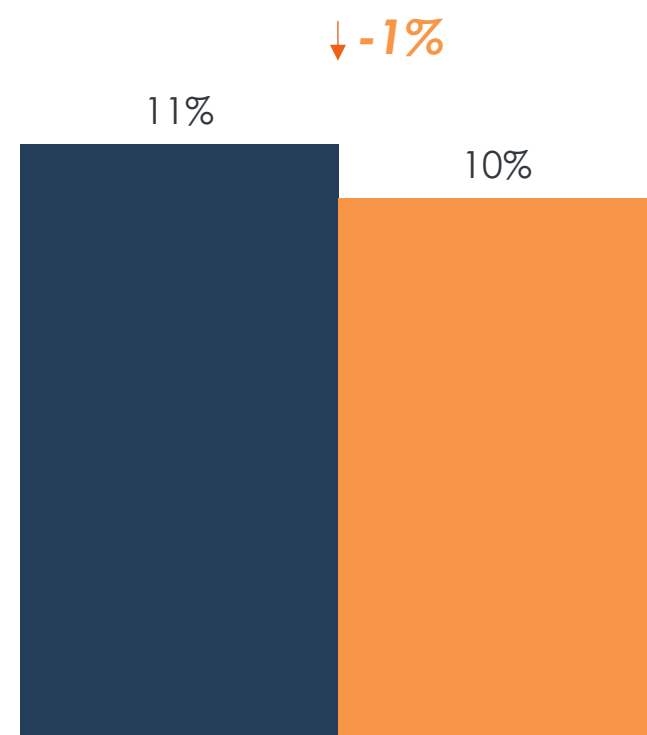
## Groups Significantly More Likely to invest in cryptocurrency

-  Impulse shop (29%)
-  Male (28%)
-  Urban (28%)
-  Parents (25%)
-  Going further debt (24%)
-  Millennials (23%)



# Switch Insurance Providers

Switching insurance providers remains flat; however, those in debt are more likely to make this shift.



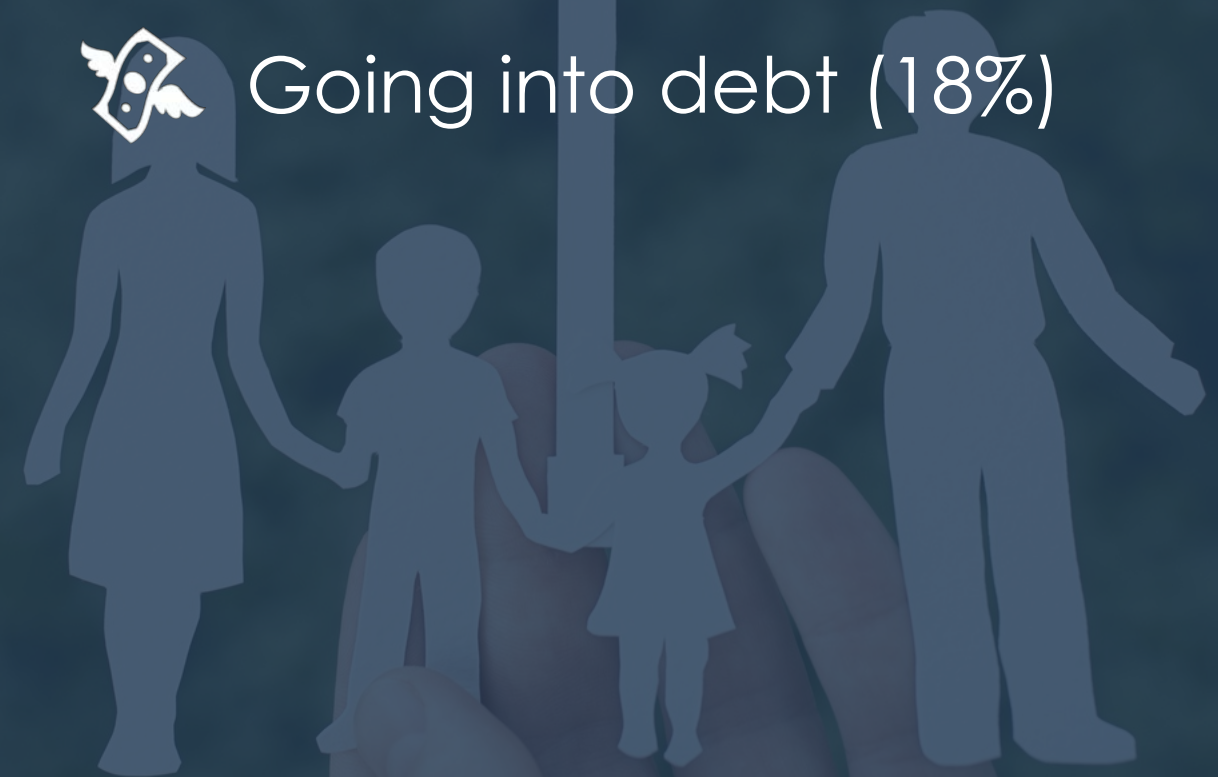
Switch insurance providers

■ Fall 2023 ■ Spring 2024

Groups Significantly More Likely to Switch Insurance Providers



Going into debt (18%)





# Respondent Profile

## Gender



**49%**  
Female

**50%**  
Male

\*<1% other identity

## Generation

**42 years old**  
Median Age



**Z** 13% Gen Z

**X** 32% Gen X

**M** 38% Millennials

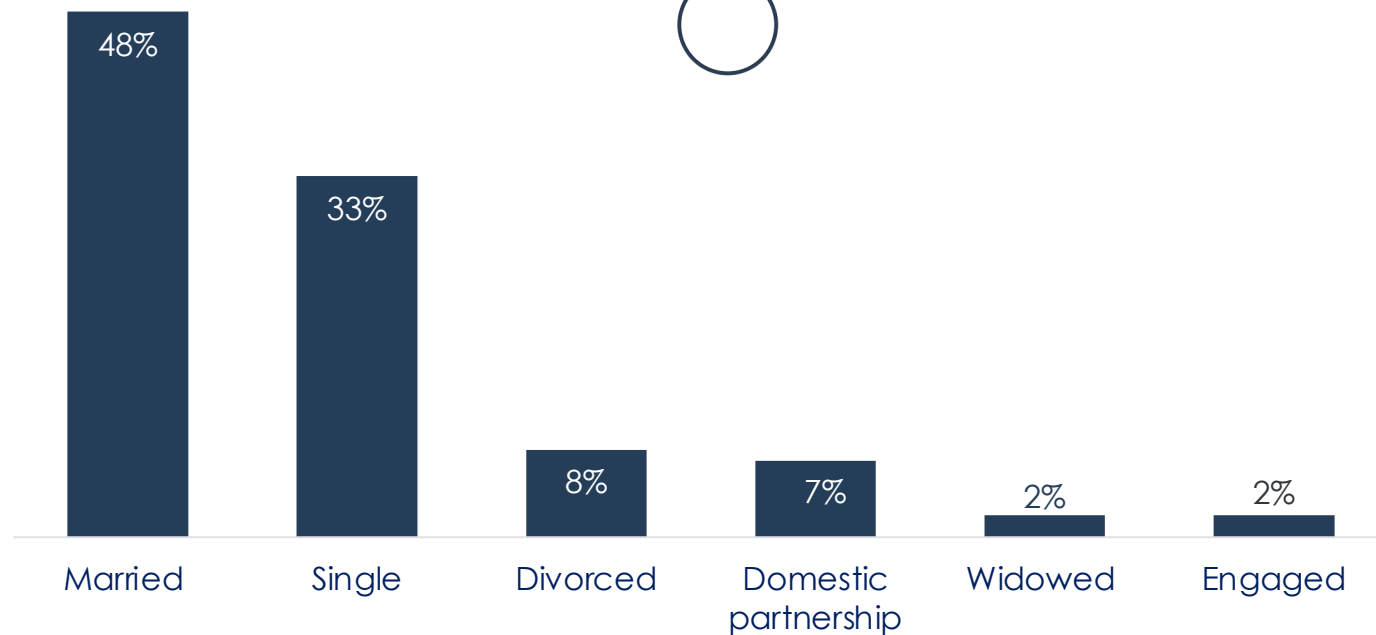
**B** 17% Baby Boomers

## Parental Status

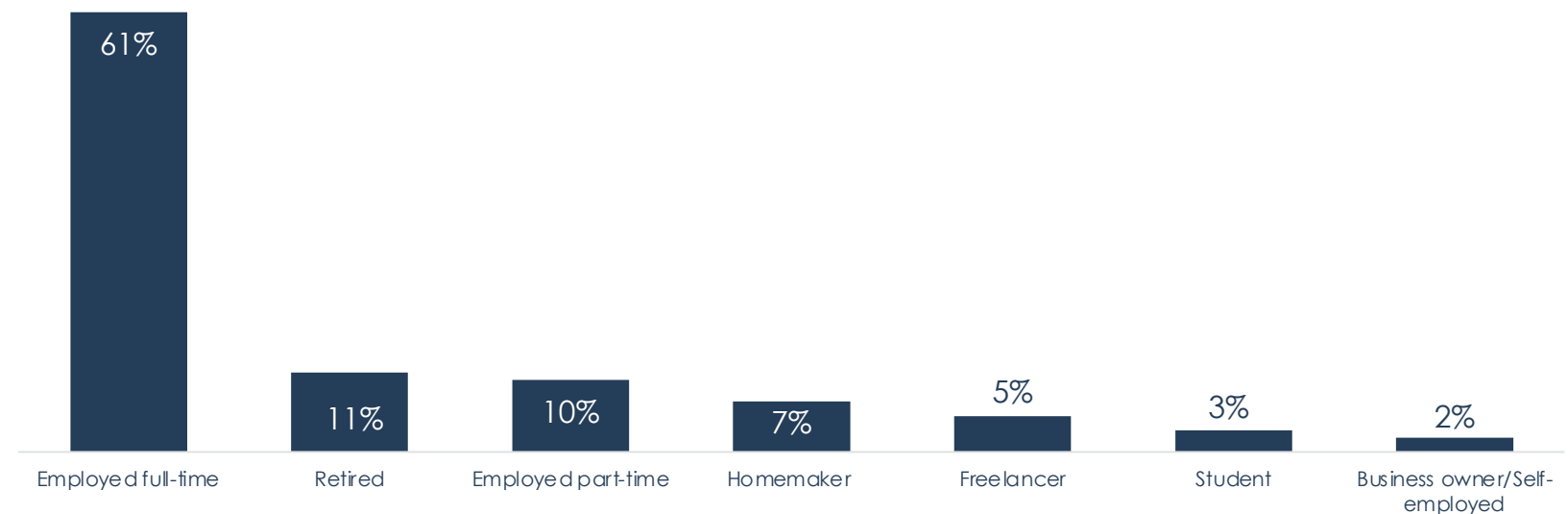


**39%**  
Have children

## Marriage Status



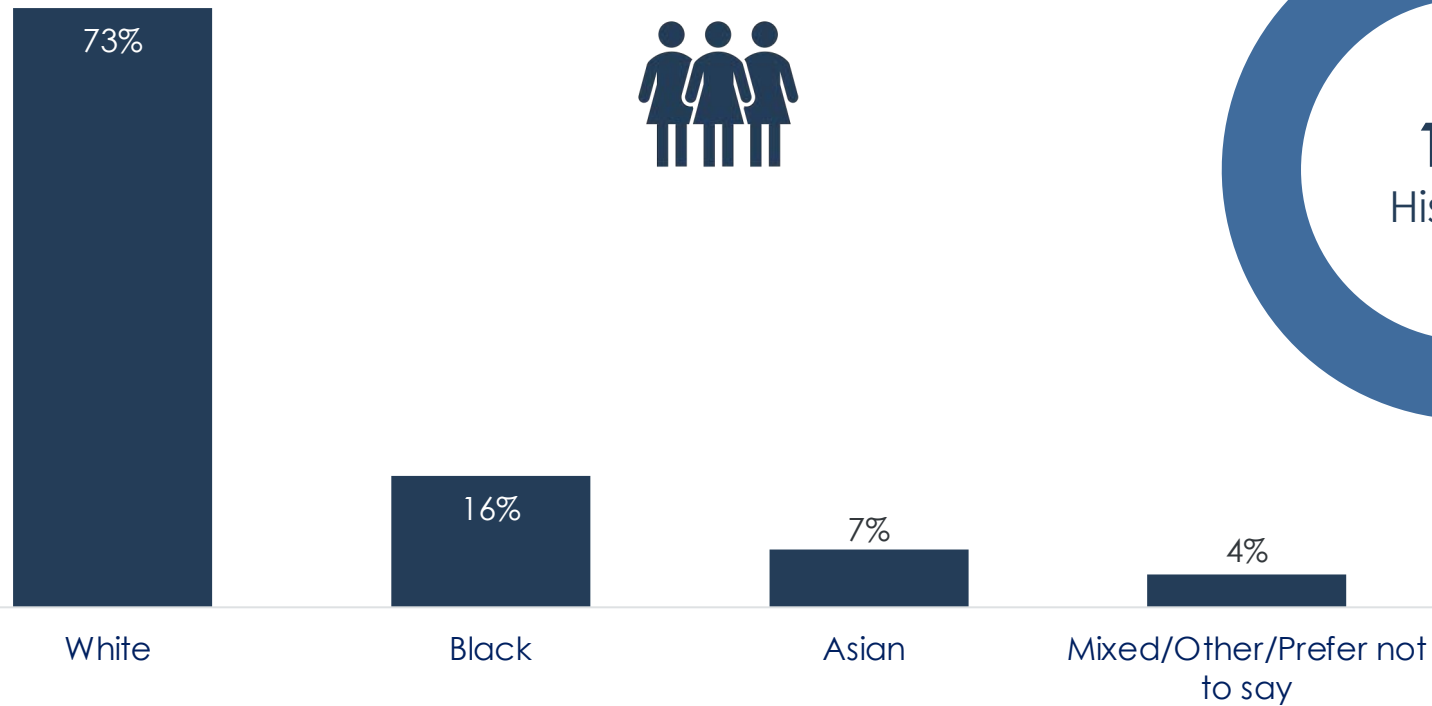
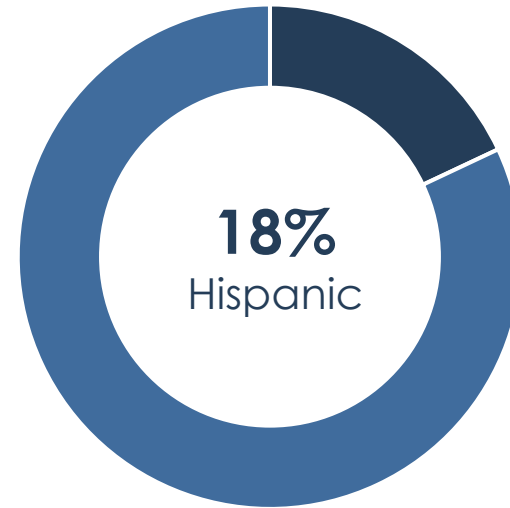
## Employment Status





# Respondent Profile

## Ethnicity



## Political Party

37%   
Democrat

26% I  
Independent

30%   
Republican

\*7% Prefer not to say/Other

## Area



26%  
Rural

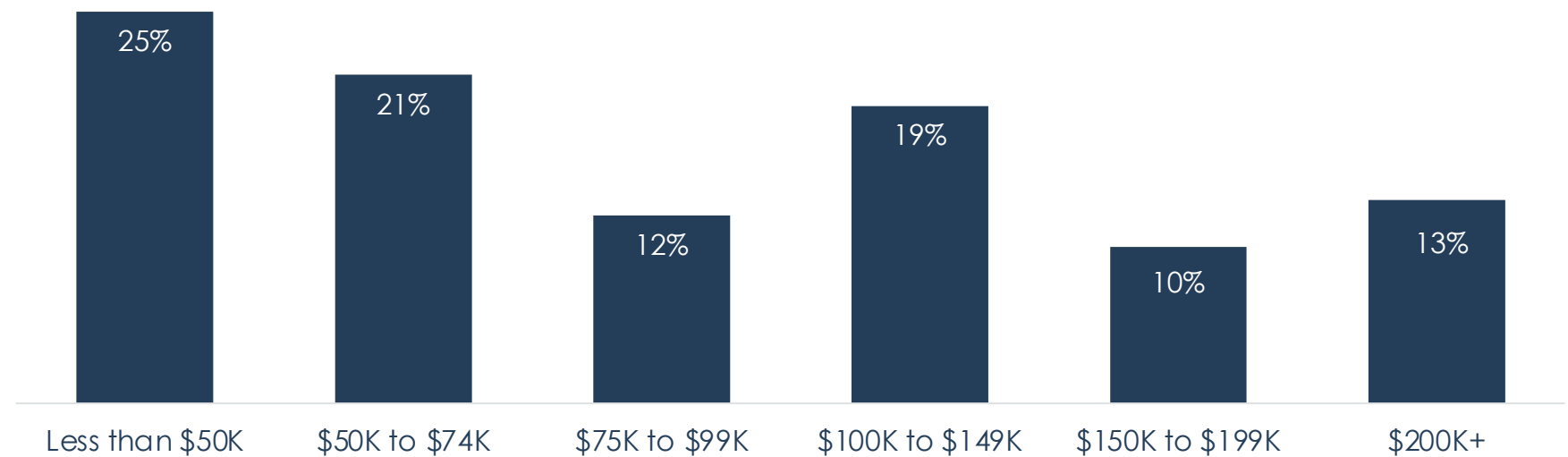


49%  
Suburban



25%  
Urban

## Household Income





# About Provoke Insights

Provoke Insights is a full-service market research firm founded on the belief that research should better align with marketers' needs. Our mission is to empower brands by providing them with the insights they need to navigate today's ever-changing marketing landscape.

Unlike traditional market research firms, we take a more agile and innovative approach to our work. Our team is dedicated to developing initiatives that are designed to address the unique and evolving needs of today's market quickly and effectively.

What sets Provoke Insights apart from other research firms is our singular focus on branding and advertising initiatives. Our team consists of seasoned researchers who are also experienced brand and media strategists. With this expertise, we deliver actionable insights that help brands succeed in their marketing efforts.

For more information or press inquiries, reach out to [info@provokeinsights.com](mailto:info@provokeinsights.com).

