

July 28, 2025

Santander US Paths to Prosperity

Financial Prosperity in America:

Consumers remain resilient, activate on key purchases amid future price uncertainty

For media use only.



Paths to Financial Prosperity

At Santander, we strive to help consumers achieve prosperity. We commissioned this study to continue our efforts to better understand middle-income Americans' current financial state and future aspirations, so we can best support them on their journey. This research series explores the barriers and challenges facing consumers as they work toward achieving financial prosperity, and the tools and support that middle-income households need to get there.

Building upon nine quarters of research, this installment looks at households' current financial state and economic outlook. It examines how economic conditions and future price uncertainty are impacting these households, as well as demand for autos, utilization of banking products and more.

Key Findings

- 1 Middle-income Americans are concerned about future price uncertainty but remain resilient. A majority are current on their bills and feel secure in their jobs—the two factors most associated with financial prosperity.
- 2 While many have postponed vehicle purchases over the past few years, more accelerated their car buying timelines in Q2, with some making purchases in Q2 due to future price uncertainty.
- 3 More homeowners are struggling to keep up with housing costs. Meanwhile, multifamily housing is seen as a more affordable option.
- 4 Savers have made progress toward earning higher interest rates on their savings over the past two years, but more than half still do not earn at least a 3% annual percentage yield (APY).

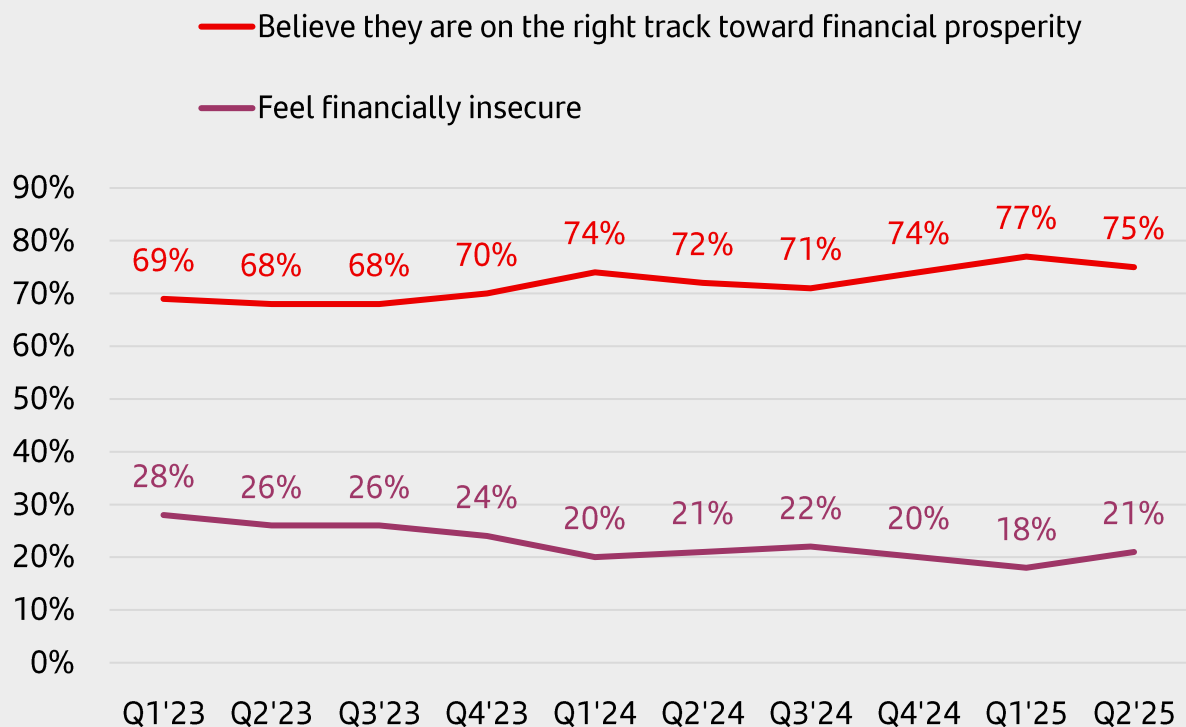
Middle-income Americans remain resilient,
activating on key purchases amid future
price uncertainty.



Still resilient: Middle-income Americans remain optimistic about their finances

Three-quarters believe they are on the right financial track, as most are current on their bills and feel secure in their jobs.

Financial confidence remains strong.



Top 5 factors middle-income Americans associate with their own financial prosperity:

1 Being able to pay bills and expenses



2 Having job security



3 Having flexibility in how you live life



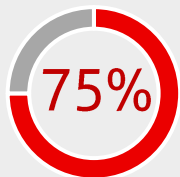
4 Being debt-free



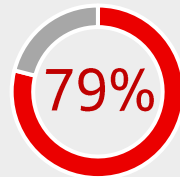
5 Having enough savings to handle emergency expenses



Most consumers remain current on their bills and feel secure in their jobs, contributing to their feelings of prosperity.



are current on their bills.

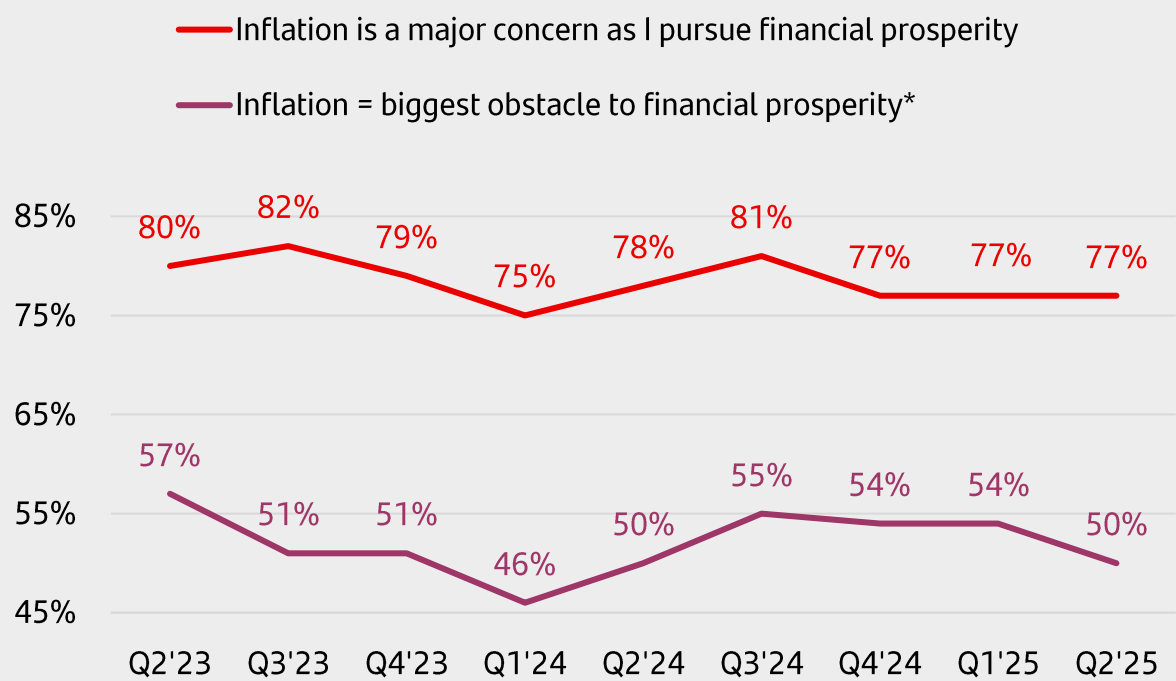


feel secure in their jobs.

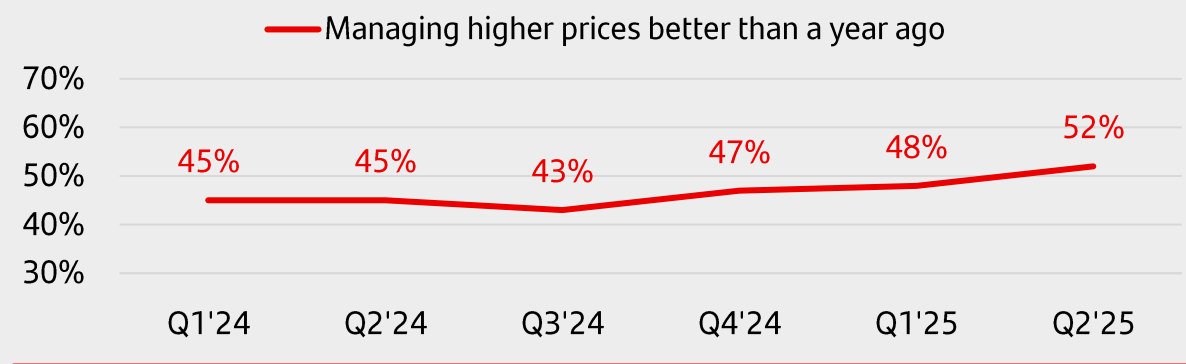
Inflation continues to be a major concern, but consumers are getting better at managing higher prices

Most have taken some action to deal with inflation over the past quarter.

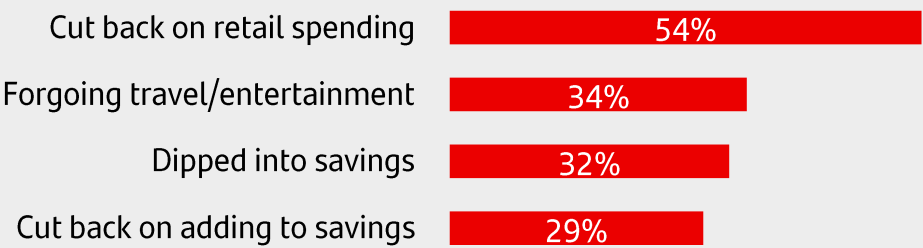
Concerns about current inflation remain elevated, and it is still seen as the #1 obstacle to financial prosperity.



Middle-income Americans have gotten better at dealing with higher prices.



More than 8 in 10 (84%) took some action in the past three months due to inflation**.



*50% indicated inflation is their biggest obstacle to financial prosperity, the highest of seven response options, including state of the job market/job security (12%, up 3pts) and slow wage growth (11%, up 2pts).

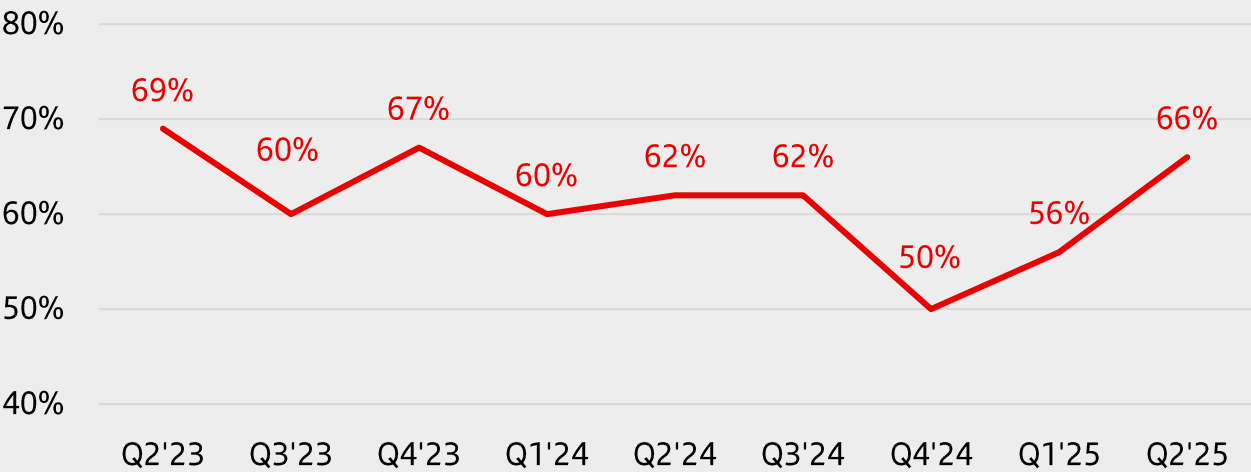
**Respondents could select all that apply; only top actions shown.

While middle-income Americans are confident about their own finances, more are concerned about the direction of the economy

Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) expedited key purchases to get ahead of future price uncertainty.

Anticipation of an economic recession

— Believe the U.S. will enter a recession in next 12 months



Consumers are concerned about price uncertainty and product availability.

Believe prices on goods will rise in the coming months

86%

Worried they will not be able to afford the rising costs of the goods they need

65%

Concerned the products they want and need will not be available

62%

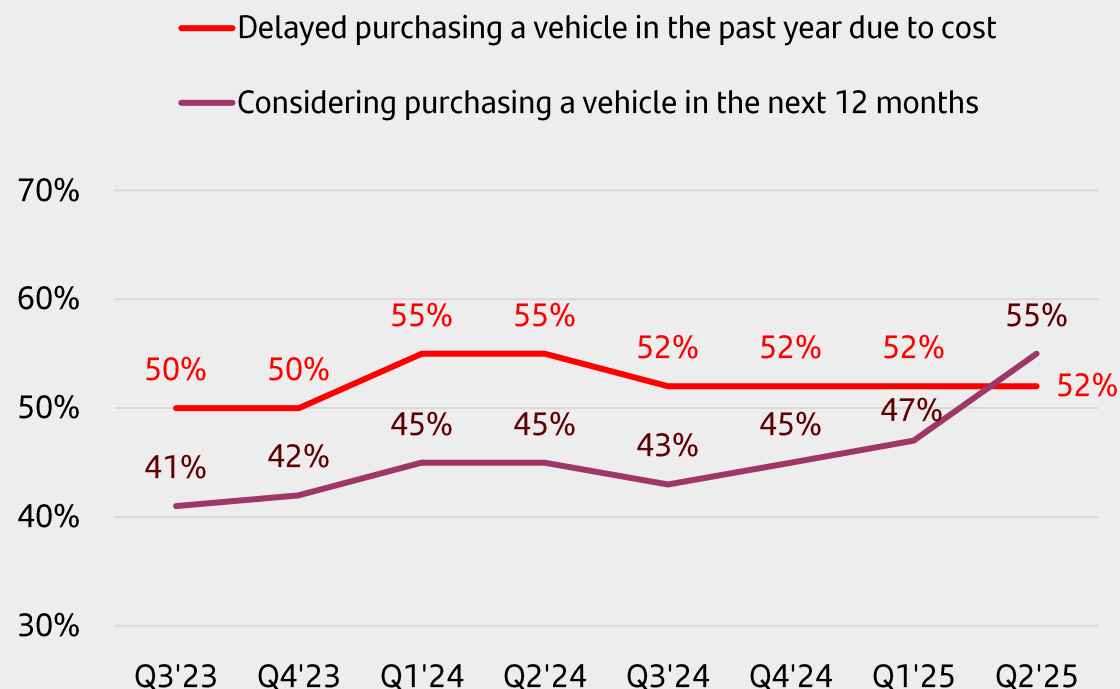
Middle-income Americans have
accelerated their car buying timelines.



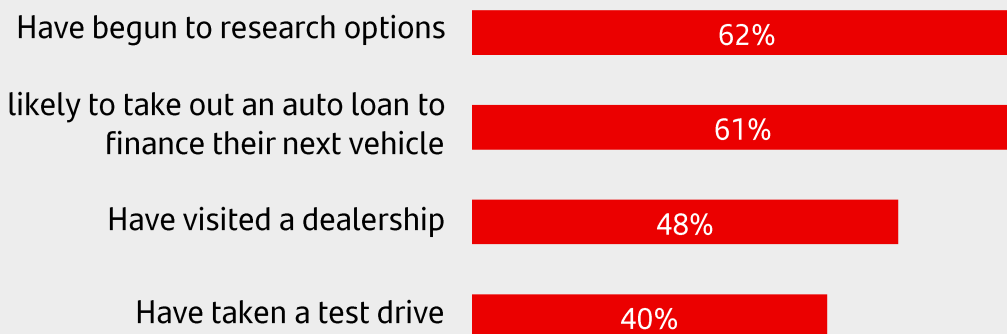
More middle-income Americans are considering vehicle purchases

Future price uncertainty led to expedited vehicle purchases in Q2, with more considering it in the months ahead.

While a majority have delayed a vehicle purchase in the past year, more than half are now considering buying, a new survey high.

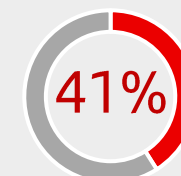


More households are taking steps toward their next vehicle purchase*.



*Among those considering a vehicle purchase in the next 12 months.

Among those who expedited purchases in Q2 to get ahead of future price uncertainty:



purchased a new or used vehicle**.

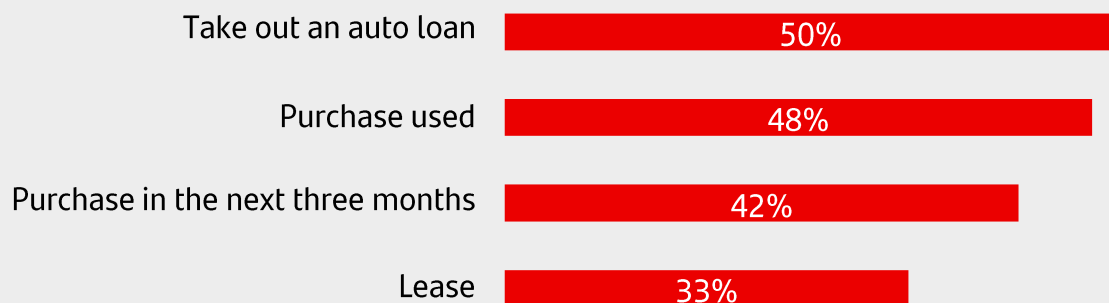
**Extrapolated to all middle-income Americans, this equates to 7%.

Purchase decisions and expectations are impacted by future price uncertainty

Nearly two-thirds of prospective buyers (65%) are worried about price impacts due to global trade uncertainty, but they remain optimistic they can stay within their budget.

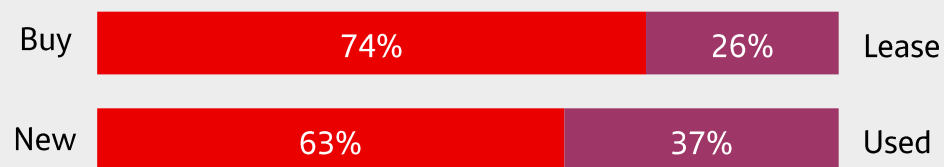
Prospective car buyers may modify their plans due to uncertainty around tariffs and global trade.

Percent who are more likely to do the following*:



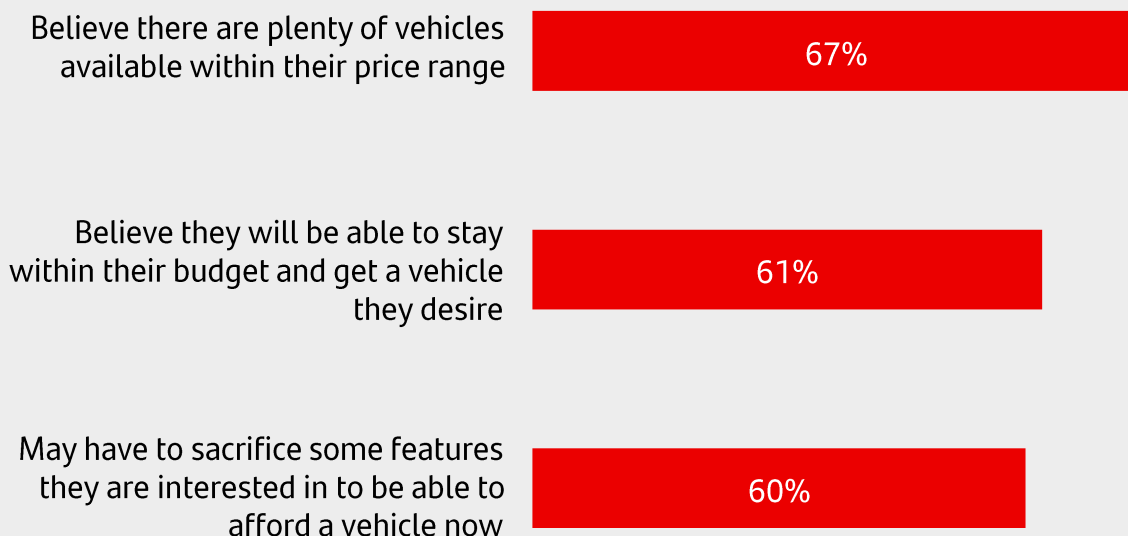
*Among those considering a vehicle purchase in the next 12 months.

Vehicle preferences among prospective buyers*:



*Among those considering a vehicle purchase in the next 12 months.

Most believe they will still find an affordable vehicle even if they must make some compromises*.

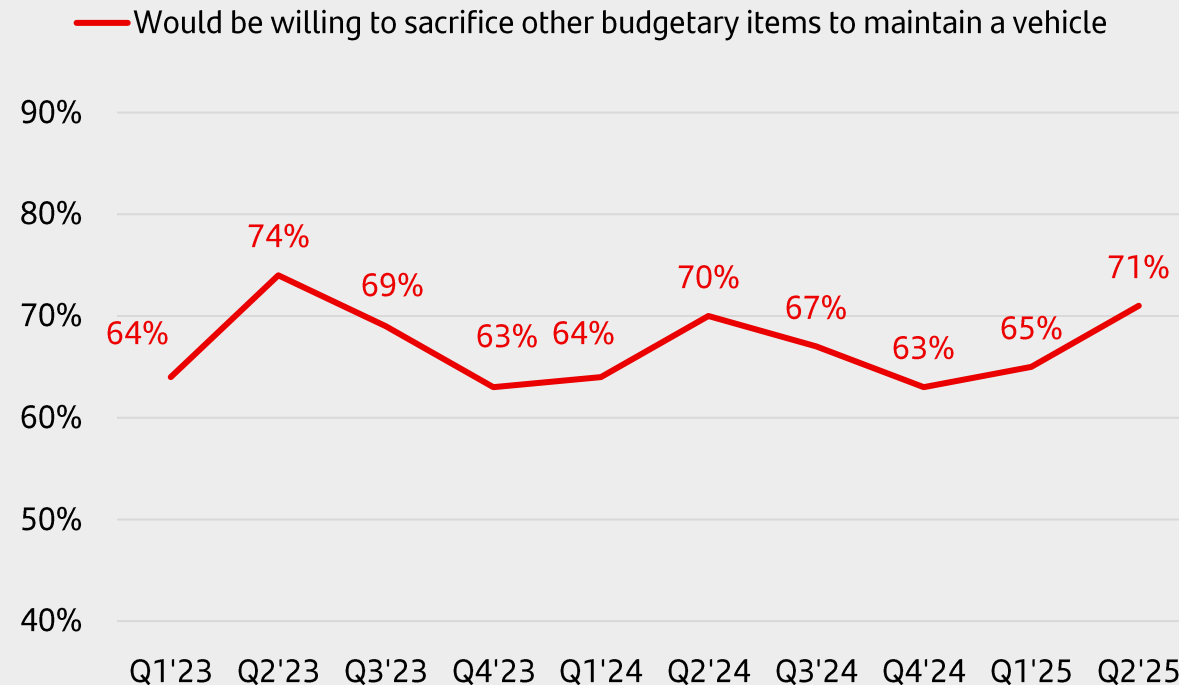


*Among those considering a vehicle purchase in the next 12 months.

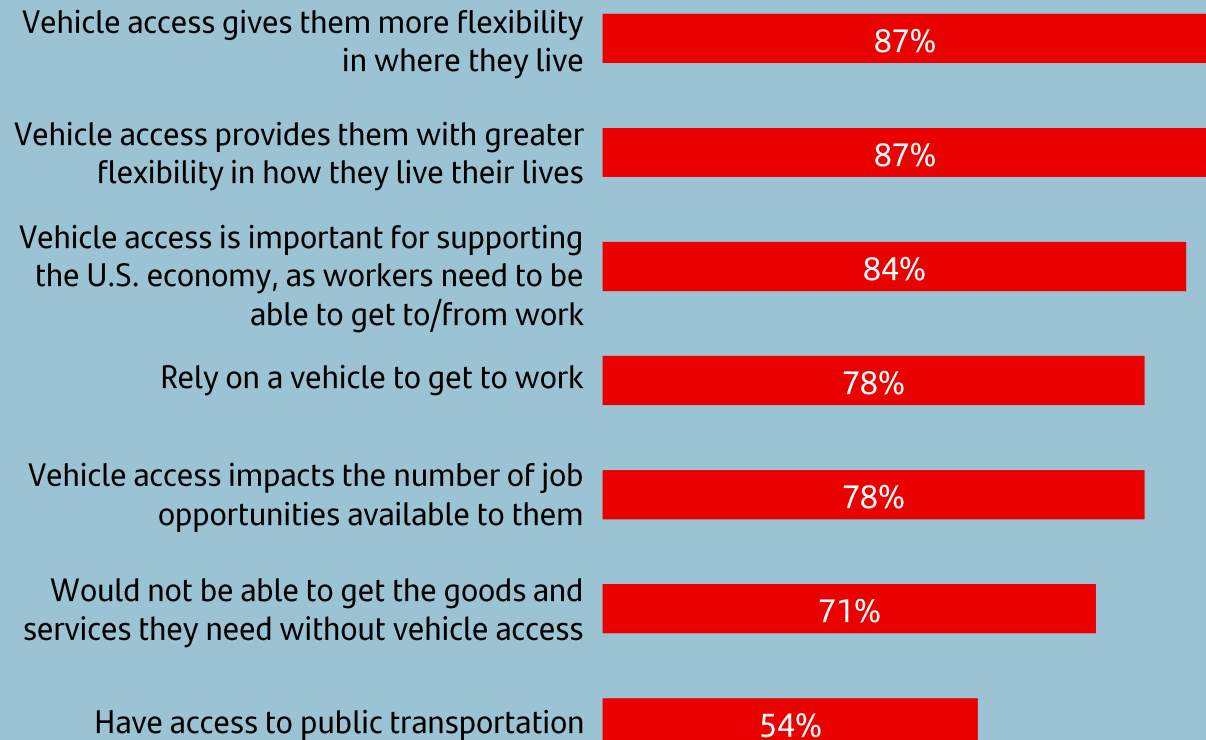
Vehicles remain essential for financial prosperity

Given the importance of vehicles in their everyday lives, Americans prioritize them in their household budgets.

More consumers shift their focus to their vehicles heading into the summer.



Vehicle access provides flexibility in where middle-income Americans live and work.



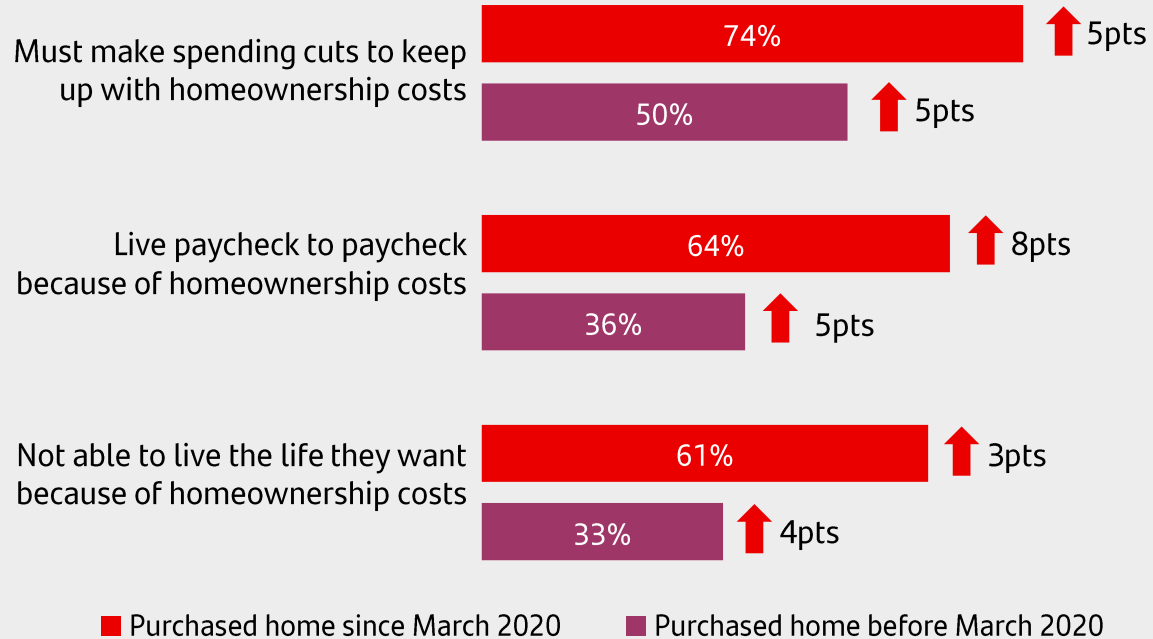
Multifamily housing seen as a more affordable alternative, as homeowners struggle with costs.



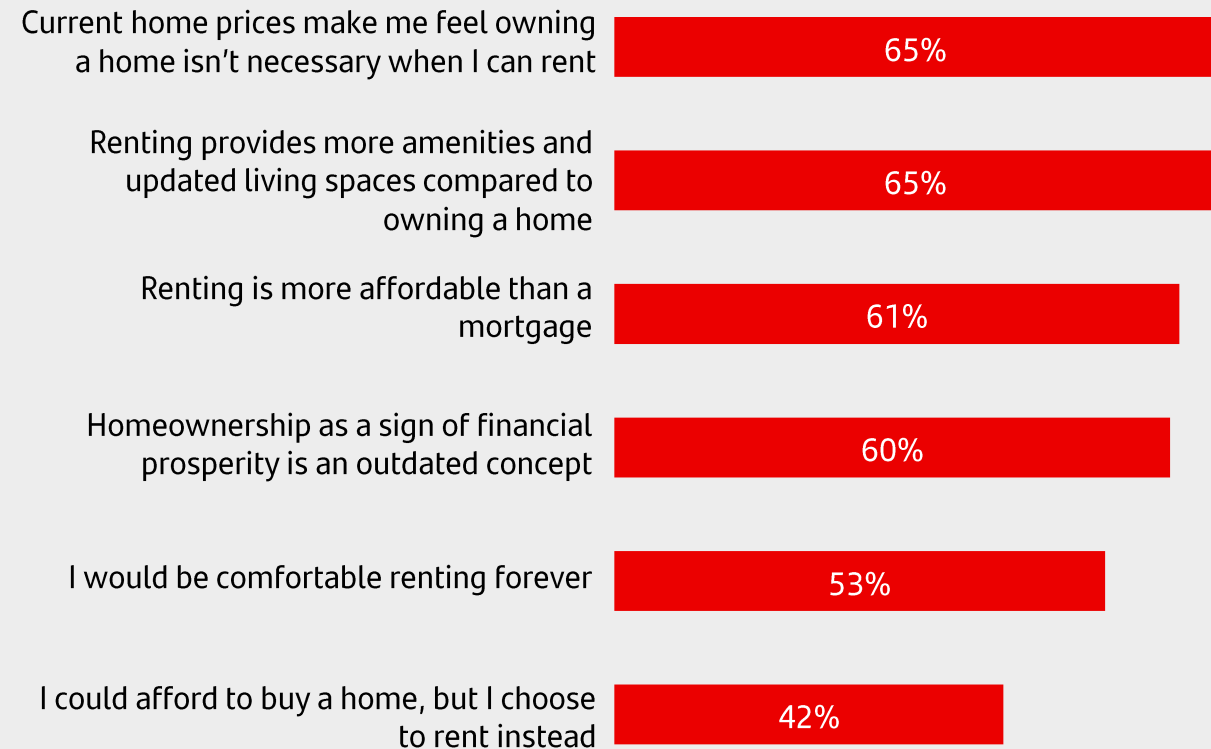
More homeowners are struggling to keep up with costs

Renters see their living situation as a more affordable option, and a majority of them (53%) would be comfortable renting forever, up from 48% in Q1.

Recent homebuyers are stretching their finances*.



Among those who rent their primary residence:

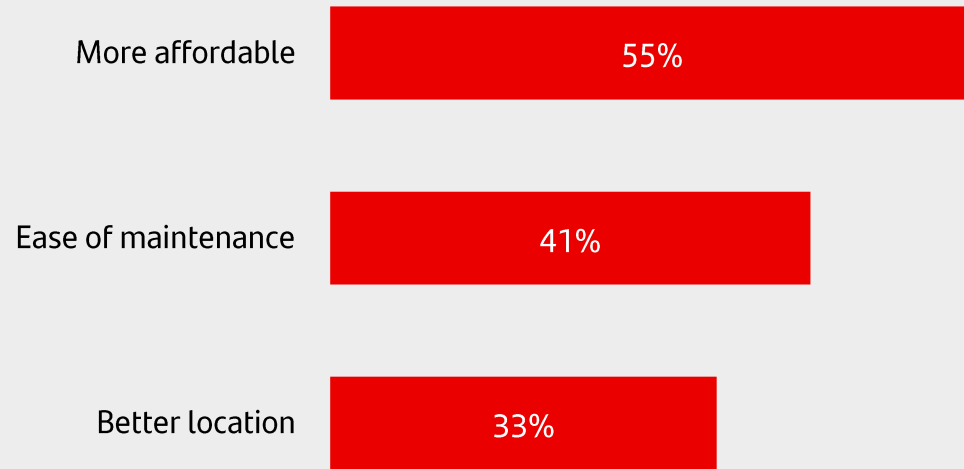


*Increases based on Q1'25 findings.

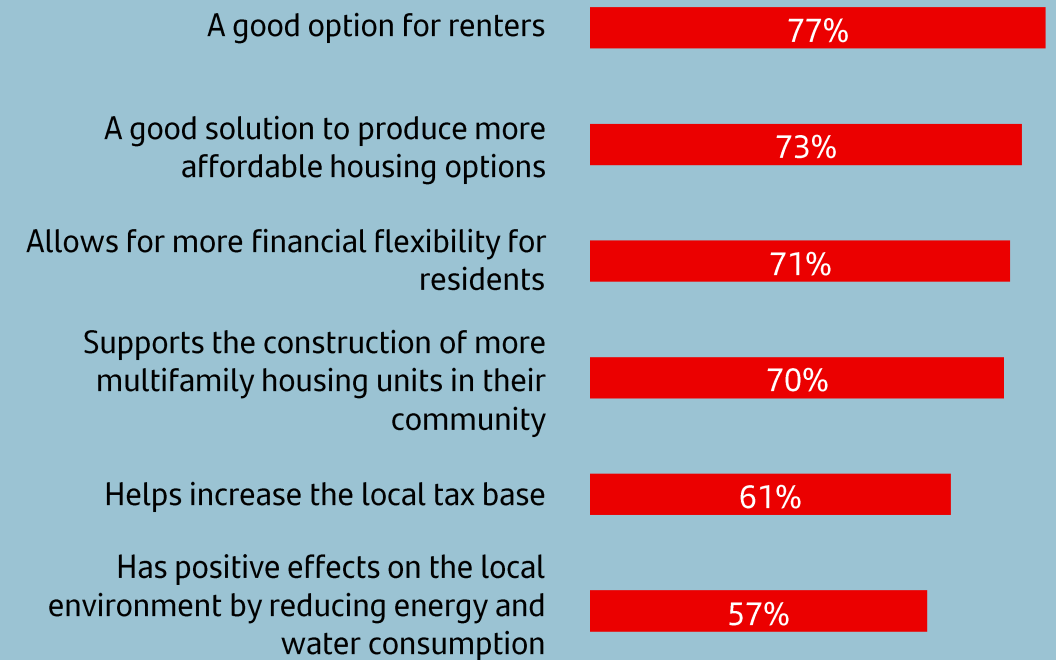
Multifamily housing offers affordability and other benefits

Most of those living in multifamily homes believe they are a good option for renters.

Top three reasons for living in a multifamily home*:



Multifamily homes are viewed as beneficial for residents and their communities**.



*Among those living in a multifamily home. Respondents could select all that apply; only top responses shown.

**Among those living in a multifamily home.

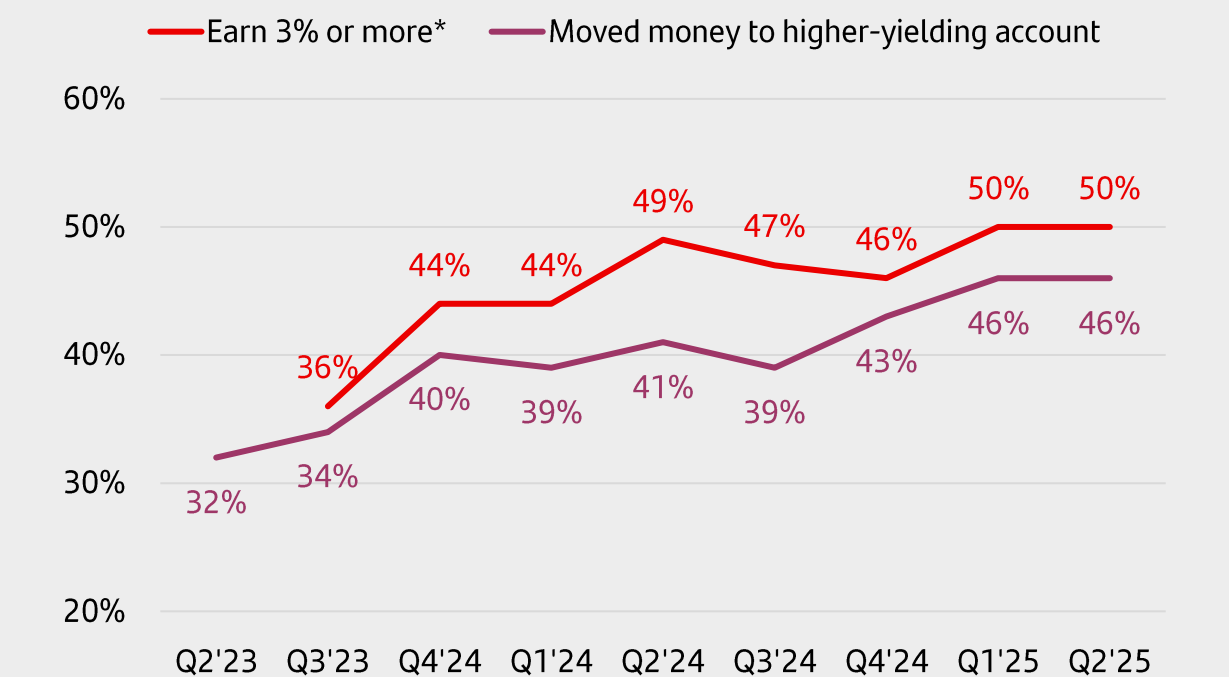
Savers have made progress toward earning more on their savings, but half are still not earning a competitive rate.



Savers have made progress toward earning higher interest rates

Eight in 10 agree their bank provides information and guidance that is helpful for achieving financial prosperity, and most rely on their bank’s digital capabilities for managing finances.

Middle-income Americans have moved their money to earn higher interest rates over the past two years.



*Among those who know the interest rate on their primary savings account. 19% do not know the rate they earn on their savings.

Middle-income consumers are confident in their bank and the banking sector overall.



Consumers utilize digital banking to stay on top of their finances.



Methodology

Methodology

This research on financial prosperity, conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of Santander US, surveyed 2,200 Americans who are bank and/or financial services customers, ages 18-76.

Survey participants are employed or looking for work, own/use at least one financial product and are the primary or shared decision-maker on household finances with household income in the “middle-income” range of ~\$53,000 to \$161,000¹.

¹ Range based on median household income of ~\$80,500 (U.S. Census Bureau) and Pew Research Center definition of middle-income being two-thirds to double median household income.

This Q2 study was conducted in June 2025. The interviews were conducted online, and the margin of error is +/- 2 percentage points for the total audience at a 95% confidence level. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

The data was weighted to target population proportions for a representative sample based on age, gender, ethnicity, region and education.

The previous studies were conducted over the following time periods:

- Q1 2025: February 2025
- Q4 2024: December 2024
- Q3 2024: August 2024
- Q2 2024: May 2024
- Q1 2024: February 2024
- Q4 2023: December 2023
- Q3 2023: September 2023
- Q2 2023: May 2023
- Q1 2023: January 2023

Financial prosperity is defined as thriving financially. Achieving financial prosperity includes being able to cover living expenses, handle emergencies and pursue life goals without significant tradeoffs.

Multifamily homes are generally housing properties with five or more residential units, such as an apartment building.

About Santander US

Santander Holdings USA, Inc. (SHUSA) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Madrid-based Banco Santander, S.A. (NYSE: SAN) (Santander), recognized as one of the world's most admired companies by Fortune Magazine in 2025, with approximately 175 million customers in the U.S., Europe and Latin America. As the intermediate holding company for Santander's U.S. businesses, SHUSA is the parent company of financial companies with more than 11,300 employees, 4.5 million customers and assets of \$165 billion in the fiscal year ended 2024. These include Santander Bank, N.A., Santander Consumer USA Holdings Inc., Banco Santander International, Santander Securities LLC, Santander US Capital Markets LLC and several other subsidiaries. Santander US is recognized as a top 10 auto lender as well as a top 10 multifamily bank lender and servicer and has a growing wealth management business. For more information about Santander US, please visit www.santanderus.com.

Disclaimers

© 2025 Santander Bank, N.A. All rights reserved. Santander and the Flame logo are trademarks of Banco Santander, S.A. or its subsidiaries in the United States or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.