



Do More Business™ Report

How Consumers Manage Their Money in 2026

First Internet Bank commissioned a nationally representative survey of 1,000 U.S. adults to better understand how consumers feel about their financial stability, confidence and financial outlook. Fielded in August 2026, the survey found consumers are actively taking steps to strengthen their finances and remain optimistic about the year ahead, even as many acknowledge they may not be fully prepared for an unexpected expense.

Consumers feel financially confident, but not all are prepared for the unexpected.

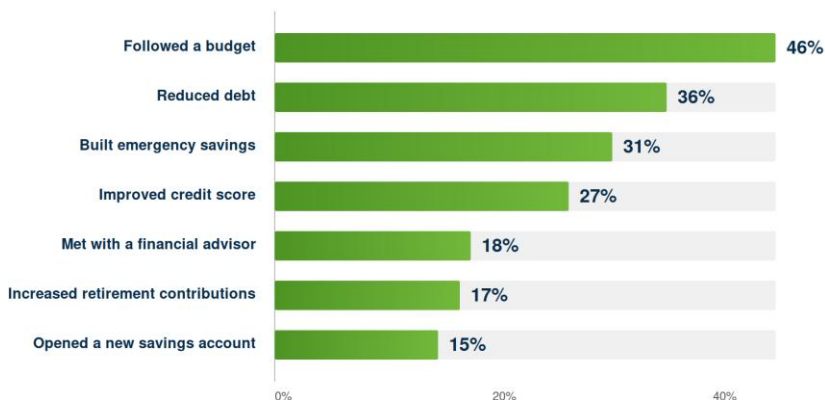
Most consumers appear to be on solid financial footing. More than half (56%) say they are extremely or very confident managing their household finances, and only 15% report low confidence. Yet when faced with a more tangible test, an unexpected \$1,000 expense tomorrow, confidence drops slightly: 54% are extremely or very confident they could cover the cost, while 27% are not very or not at all confident. The findings suggest that confidence in day-to-day money management does not always translate into financial resilience. Many households feel in control of their finances, but a meaningful share remain vulnerable to unexpected setbacks.

Steady action, not overhaul, defines the past six months.

Nearly half (46%) of consumers followed a budget in the past six months, while 36% reduced debt, 31% built emergency savings and 27% improved their credit score. Additional steps included meeting with a financial advisor (18%), increasing retirement contributions (17%) and opening a new savings account (15%). Only 17% report taking no action, underscoring a broader trend: consumers are making steady, intentional moves to strengthen their financial position.

How Consumers Strengthened Their Finances

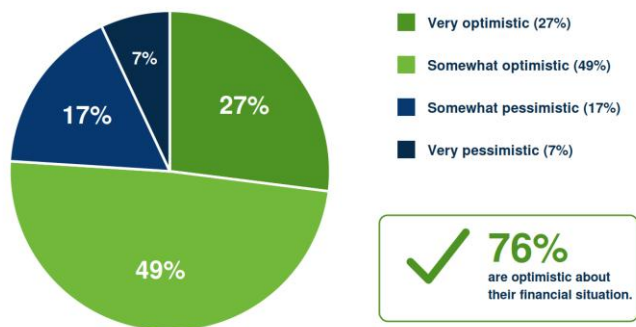
Budgeting and debt reduction led the actions taken over the past six months.



Source: First Internet Bank consumer survey, August 2026 (n=1,000)

Consumers Are Optimistic About the Year Ahead

More than three-quarters expect a positive personal financial outlook.



Personal financial outlook over the next 12 months

Optimism holds even as year-over-year progress is mixed.

Looking back, 40% say their financial situation improved over the past year, 23% say it worsened and 36% say it stayed about the same. Despite these varied experiences, consumers view the future more positively: 76% are somewhat or very optimistic about their personal financial situation over the next 12 months, compared with 24% who are somewhat or very pessimistic. While experiences over the past year differ, consumers remain largely positive about what comes next.

Savings and debt reduction anchor the next 12 months.

Asked to name their top financial goal for the year ahead, 24% point to building savings and 23% to paying down debt, well ahead of growing investments (16%), improving cash flow (14%), saving for retirement (11%), buying a home (7%) and preparing for a major purchase or life event (6%). The results indicate that many consumers are focused on building greater financial security before pursuing longer-term financial goals.





Consumers are preparing for the holidays, not avoiding them.

Consumers head into the holidays feeling largely prepared: 69% are very or somewhat prepared for holiday spending, while 31% are not very or not at all prepared. Looking ahead, 39% have already started or plan to start budgeting soon, 24% expect to spend about the same as last year and 13% plan to spend less. Just 10% plan to skip holiday spending altogether.

Most Consumers Feel Prepared for Holiday Spending

Nearly seven in 10 feel ready for upcoming holiday expenses.



69%

feel very or somewhat prepared for upcoming holiday spending.

How prepared consumers feel

PREPARED 69%

NOT PREPARED 31%

30%

39%

19%

12%

Very prepared
30%

Somewhat prepared
39%

Not very prepared
19%

Not at all prepared
12%



Source: First Internet Bank consumer survey, August 2026 (n=1,000)





Income and savings are the biggest drivers of financial confidence.

Asked what contributes most to financial confidence today, 32% cite stable income and 17% cite savings or an emergency fund, ahead of low debt levels (12%), budgeting habits (11%), support from family or a partner (11%) and retirement savings (10%). When asked what would help them feel more financially confident in the year ahead, budgeting and spending tools ranked highest at 29%, followed by debt reduction strategies (20%) and retirement planning advice (12%). Access to financial professionals and financial education each received 7%. The findings suggest consumers value practical tools and strategies that help them make informed financial decisions.

Appendix

Methodology

First Internet Bank commissioned an independent survey, fielded in August 2026, to understand how consumers feel about financial stability, confidence and outlook amid ongoing economic pressures. The survey was conducted by Dynata among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 U.S. adults, drawn from Dynata's proprietary, first-party panel of verified, opt-in respondents.

U.S. Consumer Survey

1. How confident do you feel in your ability to manage your household finances today?
 - a. Extremely confident — 25%
 - b. Very confident — 31%
 - c. Somewhat confident — 29%
 - d. Not very confident — 11%
 - e. Not at all confident — 4%
2. Compared to one year ago, how would you describe your financial situation today?
 - a. Much better — 13%
 - b. Somewhat better — 27%
 - c. About the same — 36%
 - d. Somewhat worse — 16%
 - e. Much worse — 7%
3. Which of the following actions have you taken in the past six months to strengthen your financial position? (Select all that apply)
 - a. Built emergency savings — 31%
 - b. Followed a budget — 46%
 - c. Reduced debt — 36%
 - d. Increased retirement contributions — 17%



- e. Opened a new savings account — 15%
 - f. Met with a financial advisor — 18%
 - g. Improved my credit score — 27%
 - h. None of the above — 17%
4. If you faced an unexpected expense of \$1,000 tomorrow, how confident are you that you could cover the cost?
- a. Extremely confident — 32%
 - b. Very confident — 22%
 - c. Somewhat confident — 20%
 - d. Not very confident — 13%
 - e. Not at all confident — 14%
5. What contributes most to your financial confidence today?
- a. Stable income — 32%
 - b. Savings or an emergency fund — 17%
 - c. Low debt levels — 12%
 - d. Retirement savings — 10%
 - e. Budgeting habits — 11%
 - f. Financial knowledge — 7%
 - g. Support from family or a partner — 11%
6. Which financial goal are you most focused on over the next 12 months?
- a. Building savings — 24%
 - b. Paying down debt — 23%
 - c. Buying a home — 7%
 - d. Growing investments — 16%
 - e. Saving for retirement — 11%
 - f. Improving cash flow — 14%
 - g. Preparing for a major purchase or life event — 6%
7. How prepared do you feel for upcoming holiday spending this year?
- a. Very prepared — 30%
 - b. Somewhat prepared — 39%
 - c. Not very prepared — 19%
 - d. Not at all prepared — 12%
8. Which of the following best describes your approach to holiday spending this year?
- a. I have already started planning and budgeting — 21%
 - b. I plan to create a spending budget soon — 18%
 - c. I will spend about the same as last year — 24%
 - d. I will reduce my spending compared to last year — 13%
 - e. I have not thought about it yet — 14%
 - f. I do not plan to spend money on the holidays this year — 10%
9. How optimistic are you about your personal financial situation over the next 12 months?
- a. Very optimistic — 27%



- b. Somewhat optimistic — 49%
 - c. Somewhat pessimistic — 17%
 - d. Very pessimistic — 7%
10. Which resource would be most helpful in making you feel more financially confident in the year ahead?
- a. Budgeting and spending tools — 29%
 - b. Emergency savings guidance — 14%
 - c. Debt reduction strategies — 20%
 - d. Retirement planning advice — 12%
 - e. Access to financial professionals — 7%
 - f. Financial education and resources — 7%
 - g. Investment guidance — 11%

