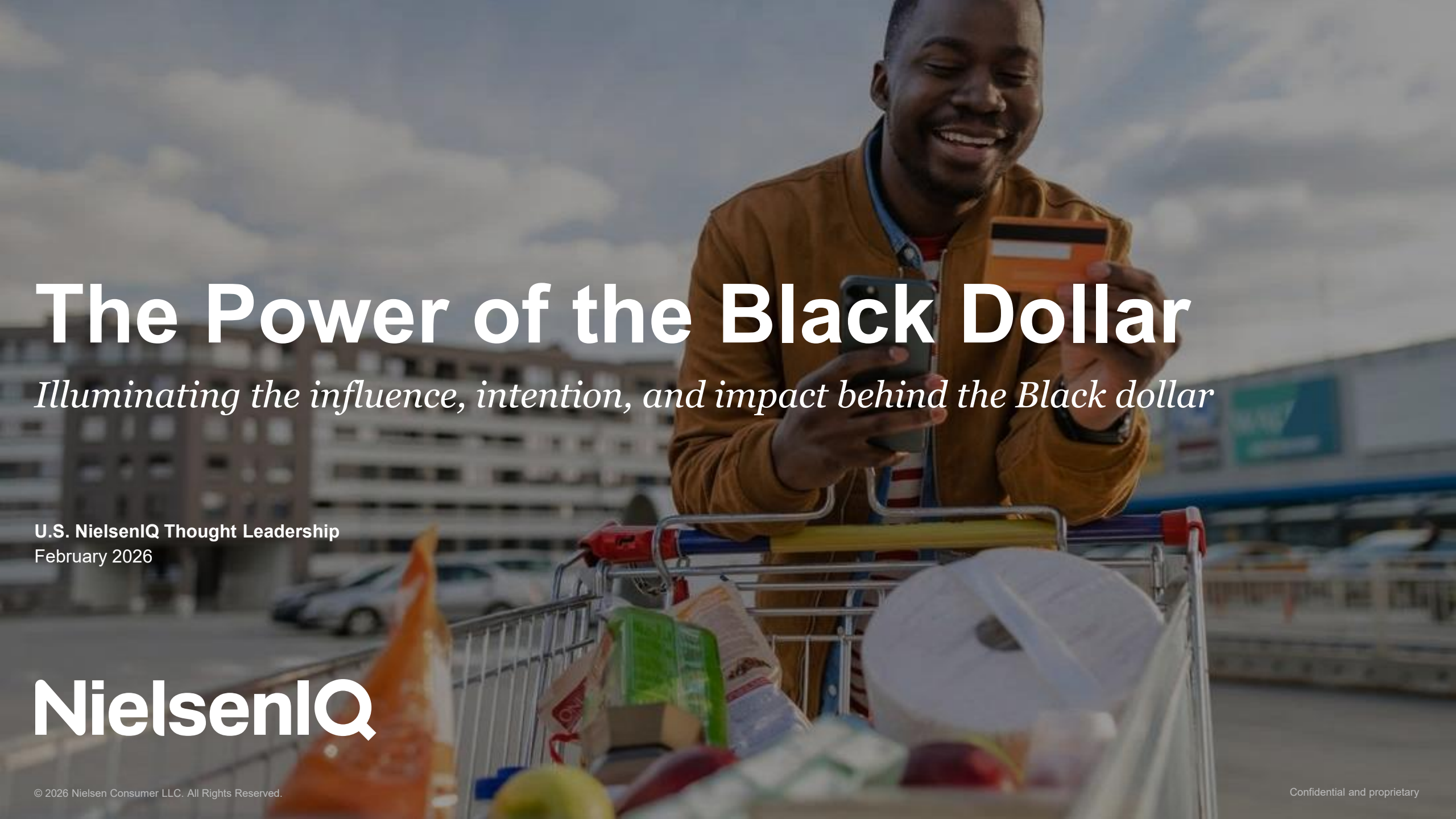


A smiling Black man in a brown jacket is pushing a shopping cart filled with groceries. He is holding a smartphone in his right hand and a credit card in his left hand. The background shows a parking lot with cars and a building under a cloudy sky.

The Power of the Black Dollar

Illuminating the influence, intention, and impact behind the Black dollar

U.S. NielsenIQ Thought Leadership
February 2026

NielsenIQ

What's included

The Power of the Black Dollar: *Illuminating the influence, intention, and impact behind the Black dollar*



Identity, values, and voice of the Black consumer



Trends influencing the Black consumer



What and where is the Black shopper purchasing



How to connect with the Black consumer

Note on Terminology: Use of “Black”

In this analysis, we use the term “Black” to represent a wide spectrum of racial, cultural, and ethnic identities, including African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latinos, African immigrants, multiracial Black individuals, and other members of the African diaspora in the United States. We recognize that this term does not always align with standardized language and categorization across NielsenIQ tools and datasets.

The intent is to be inclusive and respectful in representation. “Black” is used for consistency in data reporting and it is meant to encompass the broad and diverse experiences, heritages, and identities within the Black community. We remain committed to evolving our language and frameworks to better reflect the richness and complexity of the communities we serve, fostering deeper cultural understanding and more accurate insights.

*What is the **SABLE** Employee Resource Group (ERG) at NielsenIQ?*

NielsenIQ’s Sustaining Active Black Leadership and Empowerment (SABLE) ERG started as an affinity group by associates. SABLE focuses on providing members with opportunities to gain leadership experiences, professional growth networking. SABLE also supports the organization with recruitment and retention of diverse top talent; and engagements with clients and community outreach.



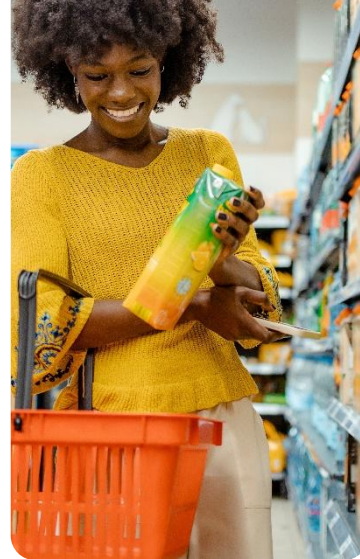
SABLE
Sustaining Active Black Leadership
and Empowerment

*The Black community is rich with **culture** and **diversity***

The Black community reflects a wide range of identities, histories, and cultural experiences. Black consumers are far from monolithic; with their purchasing choices mirroring the breadth of their diverse interests, lifestyles, and priorities.

48.4M

Black individuals
in the United
States



More than
1 in 3

Black Americans
is under 30



20%

are immigrants or
children of
immigrants

9%

speak a language
other than English
at home

15%

are multiracial or
identify with more
than one race

73%

value holding to
religious faith and
belief

2%

identify as
Hispanic or
Latino

8%

trace heritage to
the Caribbean



Black Americans
practice a wide
range of faith
traditions



Source: [1] U.S Census Bureau, 2024 Estimates, [2] Pew Research, 2025
[3] MRI Simmons, 2025

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Black Consumer Buying Power

The Black American population represents one of the most influential, culturally significant, and economically powerful consumer segments in the US. With deep cultural heritage, strong community identity, and a rapidly growing economic footprint, Black consumers are shaping trends across retail, media, technology, beauty, entertainment, and beyond. Black purchasing decisions are guided by **authenticity, cultural connection**, and brands that respect and reflect their **values**.

Black shoppers are highly engaged, digitally connected, and often trendsetters in the broader marketplace. Their influence is especially strong across digital platforms, with Black audiences spending **32 hours per week** on apps and websites on smartphones and tablets, outpacing the total U.S. population. Their digital leadership makes them a driving force behind online culture, social trends, and brand engagement. Black buying power has reached **approximately \$2 trillion**, more than doubling since 2000. This economic strength, paired with a strong expectation for representation and inclusion, means brands that fail to align with Black consumers' values risk losing their loyalty. **67% of Black Americans will seek alternative brands** if a company does not support causes they care about.

Understanding where Black consumers shop, what they buy, and why they buy is essential for any brand seeking growth and long-term relevance. Their preferences signal shifts in culture, influence major product categories, from beauty to beverage alcohol, and push brands toward greater authenticity, representation, and cultural fluency. This piece serves as a foundation for deeper exploration of the motivations, pressures, and opportunities shaping the behaviors of Black American consumers, and the impact behind the power of the Black dollar.



\$2.1T

2026 Estimate

2.4x

growth
since 2000



*Identity, values,
and voice of the
Black consumer*



The Black consumer is rising in economic strength

Growth in *high income* \$100K+ HHs

31% HHs
+4pp versus 2 YA

***Smaller HHs*
(1-2 people)
continue to lead**

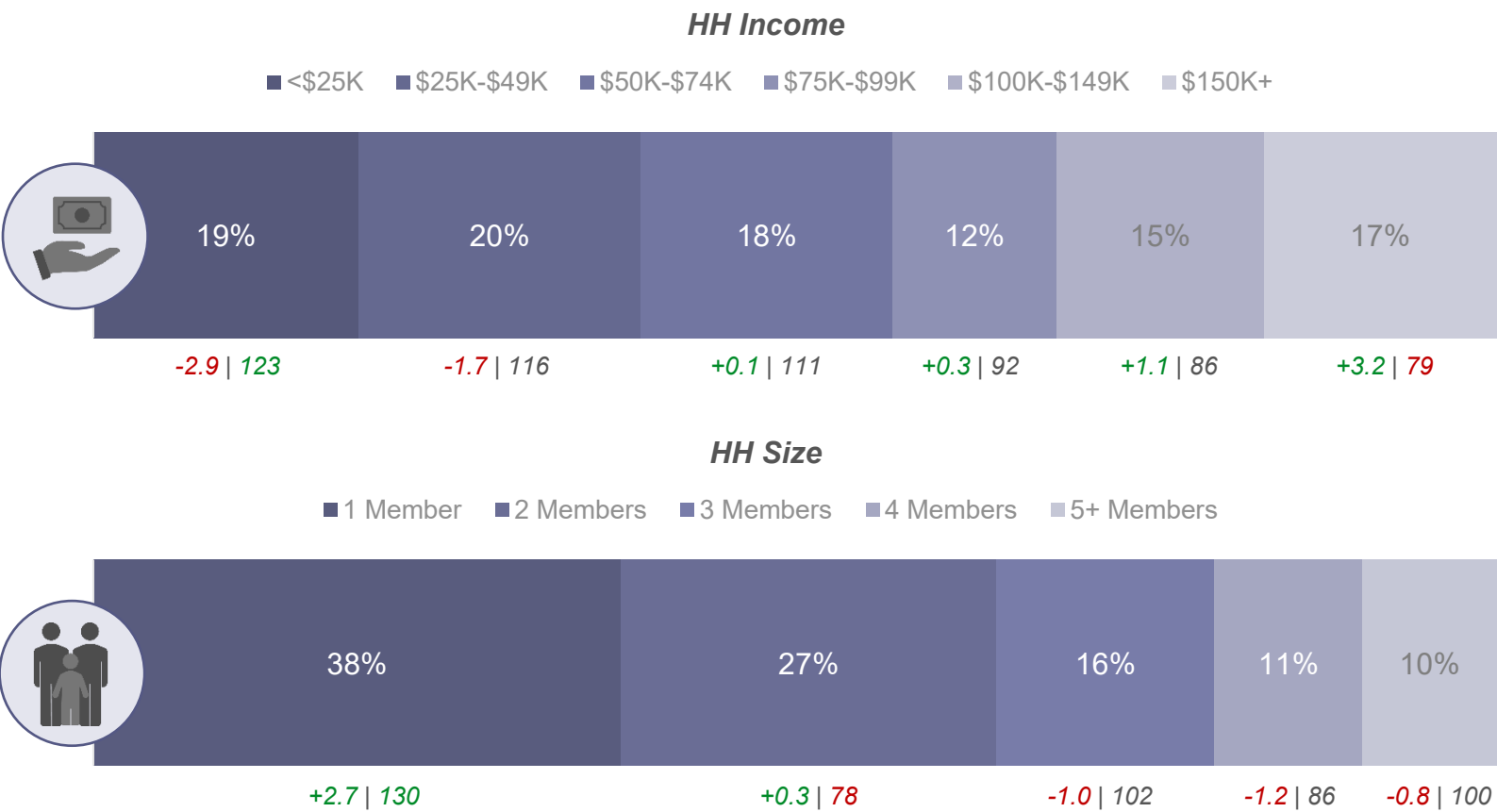
64% HHs
+3pp versus 2 YA

***7 in 10*
are financially
prepared for 3
months if they
were to lose
income**

Source: [1] Source: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Expanded Omnishopper | US EXP OSH - NDH Synd Full View - 444 5-yr; L52 weeks ending 12/27/2025, [2] <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2024/02/08/how-black-americans-view-financial-success/>

Rising economic strength signals expanding market opportunity

Income & HH Size – Distribution of Buyers
Share Change versus 2 YA | L52 Index versus Total Panel



Source: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Expanded Omnishopper | US EXP OSH - NDH Synd Full View - 444 5-yr; L52 weeks ending 12/27/2025



Growth in *high income* \$100K+ HHs
31% HHs
+4pp versus 2 YA

***Smaller HHs* (1-2 people) continue to lead**
64% HHs
+3pp versus 2 YA



Black households are a young and growing population



88% are English proficient



27% have college degree+



Median household income **\$56K**



Median age is **32**



1 in 3 are under the age of 30



45% own homes

Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population>

The Black population has *grown* more than 12 million since 2000...



48.4M

make up Black
population in the US



14.4%

of US Population



33%

increase between
2000-2023



1/3

of expected growth
through 2060 from
Black immigrant
population

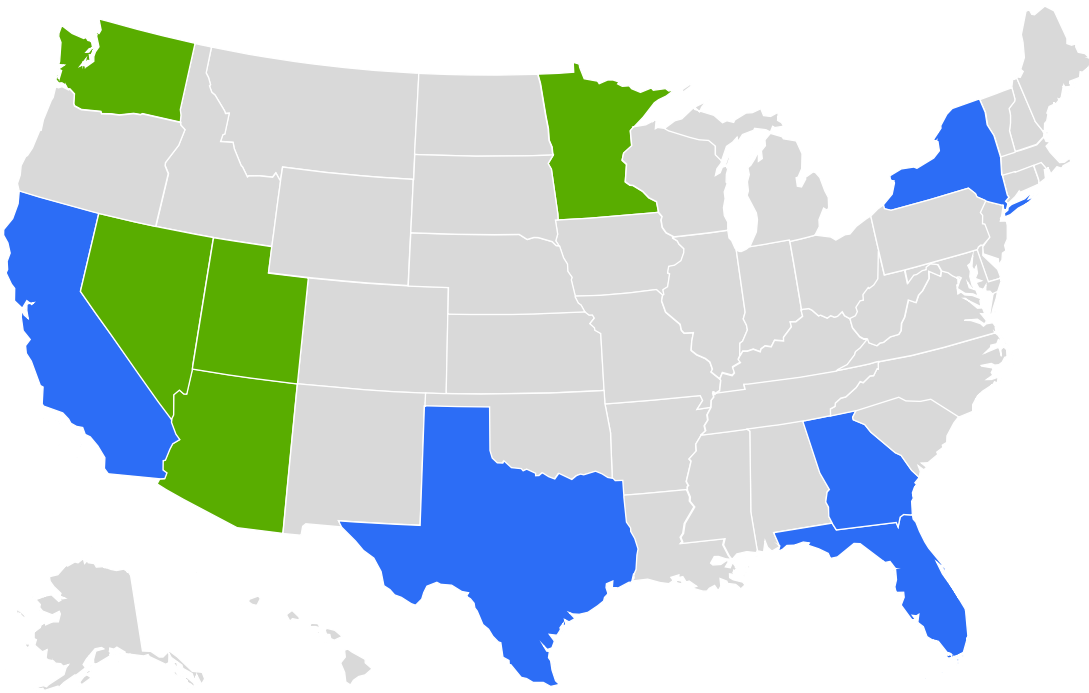
Source: U.S. Census Data For Social, Economic, And Health Research

Black population growth is reshaping America

Black population growth is reshaping the U.S. map, expanding beyond traditional hubs into fast-growing Western and Midwestern states, signaling new opportunities for brands to understand and serve emerging Black communities

Fastest Growing Black Population

	Utah	+89%
	Nevada	+60%
	Minnesota	+60%
	Arizona	+60%
	Washington	+51%



Largest Black Population

	Texas	4.0 million
	Florida	3.8 million
	New York	3.5 million
	California	2.8 million
	Georgia	2.3 million



Top 4 States increased Black population by at least 60%



38% of Black Americans live in these 5 states

Source: [1] <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/black-population-by-state>, [2] Pew Research Center

Black consumers hold their spiritual and religious beliefs in high regard



Source: MRI-Simmons USA, Spring 2025



Culture influences how Black consumers navigate the marketplace

Cultural identity is central to self-perception and purchase decisions



81% of Black adults see culture and ethnic heritage as important to how they see themselves, and this identity connection directly influences how they engage with brands and products.



For many Black audiences, celebrity culture fills the void left by decades of underrepresentation in media. Black audiences **spend 31% more time with TV** weekly than the general population, driven partly by stronger representation and cultural storytelling.

Culture fuels values-driven commerce and social expectation

Black consumers are more likely to stay **loyal** to a brand that:



“reflects my identity”



“invests in my community”



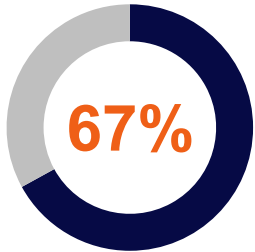
“is Black owned”



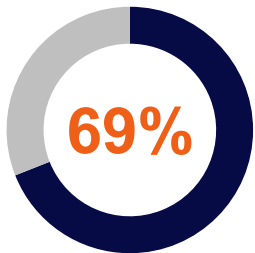
“culturally resonates and represents me”

Source: MRI Simmons, 2025

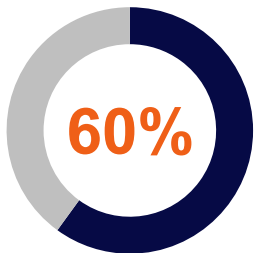
Brands that connect authentically will be successful



of Black viewers pay more attention to ads that reflect their culture, and over half prefer brands that **show up in culturally aligned content**



of Black consumers value **authenticity**



of Black consumers say it is important that a product or service be **customized to their needs**



Source: NIQ Consumer Life, 2025



*Trends influencing the **Black** consumer*



Transformative trends influencing how Black consumers navigate the marketplace



Redefining value in challenging economy

Black consumers are redefining value through resilience, prioritizing reliability, outcomes, and economic empowerment in a shifting financial landscape



Powering purpose-driven commerce

Black consumers are powering purchases where their values are, using their wallets to champion representation, equity, and brands aligned with their beliefs



Leading the digital evolution

Black consumers are leading the digital evolution, driving innovation in social commerce, AI adoption, and tech-enabled shopping behaviors



Prioritizing health & wellbeing

Black consumers are elevating holistic wellbeing, embracing data-driven health tools, ingredient transparency, and proactive wellness lifestyles

For Black Americans, the income gap reflects systemic barriers that constrain financial stability and long-term mobility

Group	Median Household Income
Black	\$56,020
Hispanic	\$70,950
White (Non-Hispanic)	\$92,530
Asian	\$121,700

The ***racial income gap is structural***, and because White Americans benefit from stronger financial knowledge and more favorable financial conditions, the TIAA Institute–GFLEC Personal Finance Index shows that ***Black Americans lack critical financial skills in areas such as risk, insurance, saving, and investing, underscoring the need for financial-literacy programs designed specifically for the realities and needs of the Black community.***



Source: nul.org

Black consumers are redefining value in challenging economy

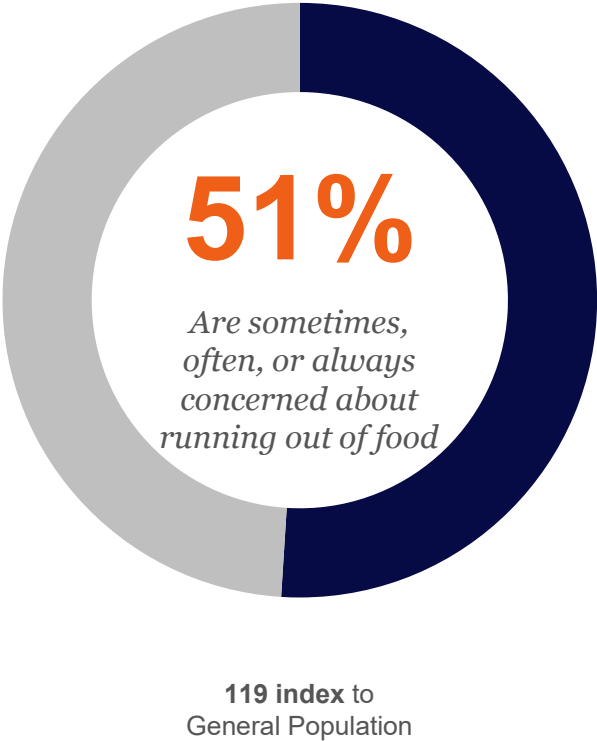


Navigating greater levels of food insecurity

Food insecurity is a real concern among African American households. SNAP reliance runs 1.5x higher and fewer than half can satisfy basic needs past seven days without benefits. This makes “bridge food” innovation and reliable protein access essential. The spend signal is shifting from “cheapest today” to “reliable, resilient, protein-forward nutrition that lasts”. This puts a focus on offers, packs, and formats that bridge food security gaps.

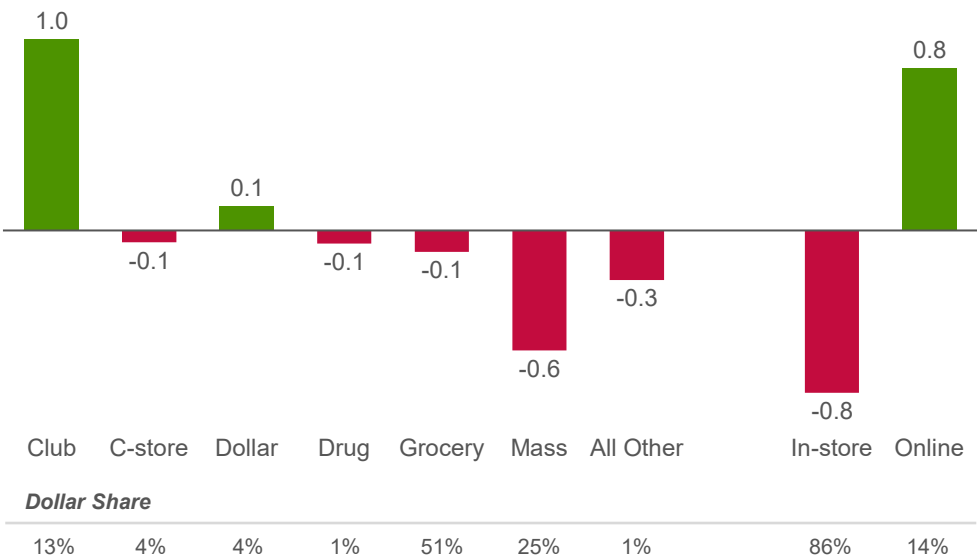
Price Pressure

Frequency Of Being Concerned About Running Out Of Food



Channel Shift

Dollar Share Change Across Channels Among Black Households, Total Store



Club and Dollar channels are gaining share among Black households, with upper-income segments driving +20.6% (Club)² and +22.2% (Dollar)² spend growth—proof that “value” increasingly means quality, one-stop efficiency, and superior customer service, not bargain bins. eCommerce is capturing share from brick & mortar stores, pointing to a future where “value control” is digital, planned, and deeply mission-driven.

Sources: NIQ, BASES Quick Question Omnibus Survey, n=1,021; NIQ, Expanded OmniShopper Panel, Total US, Total Outlets, Total Product, 52 Weeks Ending 11/29/2025

Black consumers prioritize quality and remain optimistic as incomes and financial literacy rise

Factors that define a product's value for Black consumers

#1 Durable, will last a long time

#2 Makes my life easier

#3 High quality

#4 It is a brand I trust

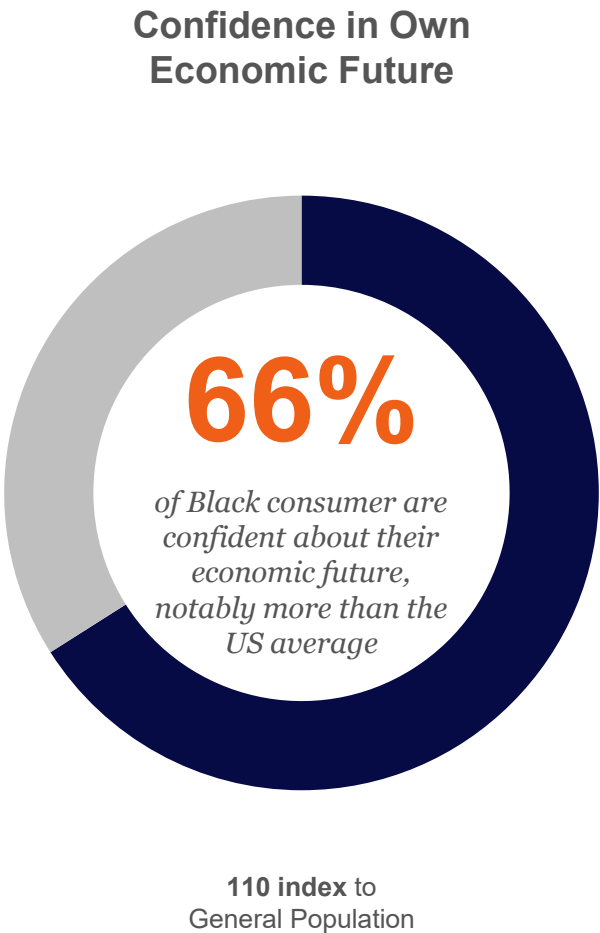
#5 Customized to my needs

#6 Looks good, stylish

#7 Has multiple functions

#8 Inexpensive

#9 Environmentally friendly



52% of Black Consumers say that an important aspect of money is leaving something for your heirs



28% of Black consumers define success as being knowledgeable and well-informed (+6 pts)



24% of Black consumers define success as being wealthy (+8 pts)



27% of Black consumers think that “now is a good time to buy”, +7 pts higher than general

Source: Consumer Life US, 2025

Values of Black consumers drive retail choice, shifting spend to trusted retailers and brands

Changes to DEI strategies influence shopper sentiment, as Black consumers prioritize value-aligned retailers

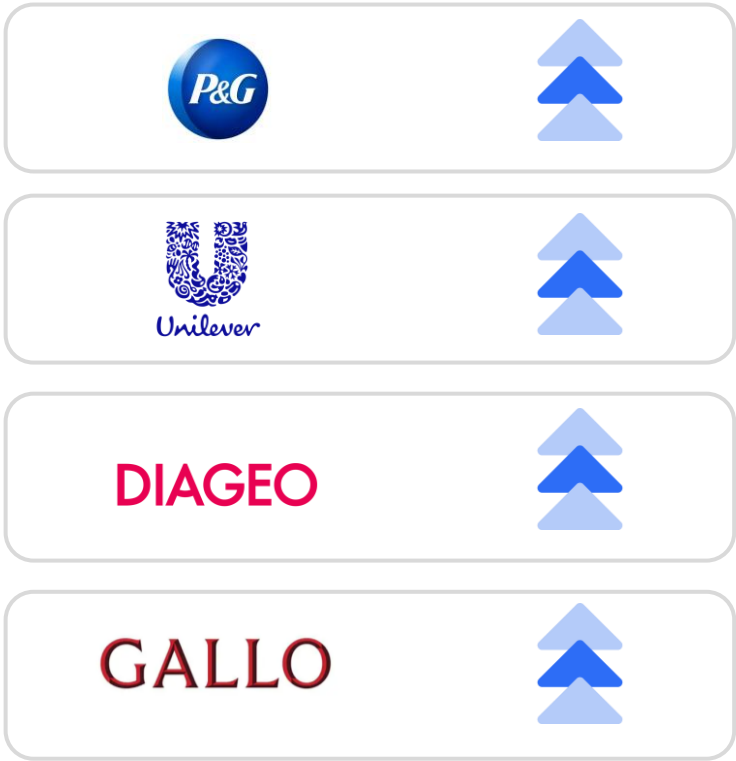
Consumer Purchase Behavior Change vs YA Black Buying Households

“I think the Black community, in the consumer arena, is a sleeping giant with a trillion dollars in spending power. When we mobilize it and focus, we can bring empires down. A year ago, nobody really thought there would be such an impact, and here we are having a Fortune 500 company up against the ropes.”
Jamal Bryant for AFRO

[Target's DEI rollback fuels year-long boycott and losses | AFRO American Newspapers](#)

Retailer	Buyers		Value per Buyer	
Walmart	17M		\$2,886	
Target	12M		\$693	
Costco	6M		\$1,813	
Sephora	3M		\$383	

Value per Buyer Change vs YA Black Buying Households

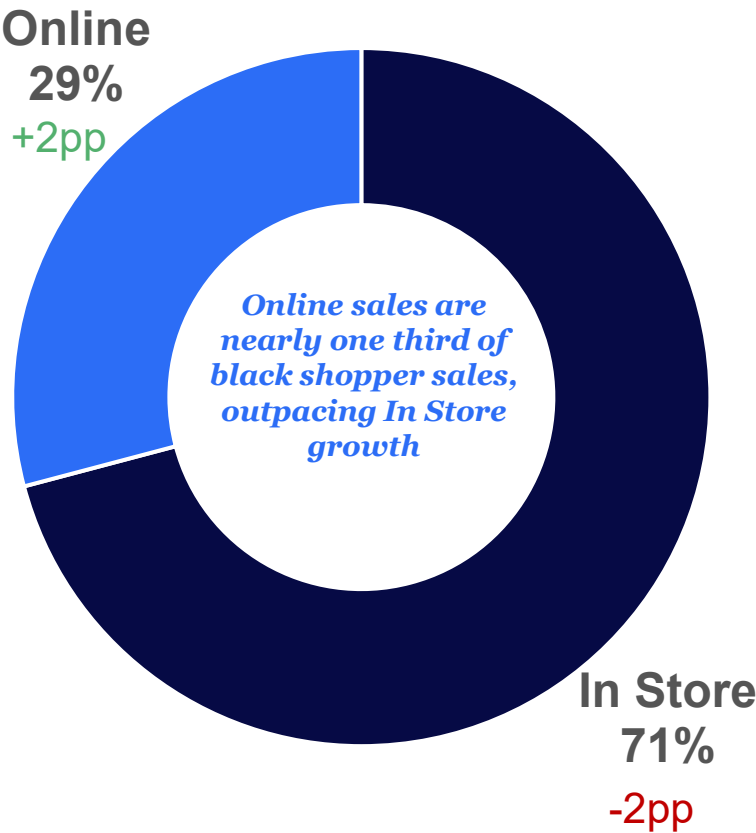


Source: NielsenIQ Omnishopper; Total Available Retailers (Omni) US, 52 Weeks Ending 12/27/25, Target's DEI rollback fuels year-long boycott and losses | AFRO American Newspapers

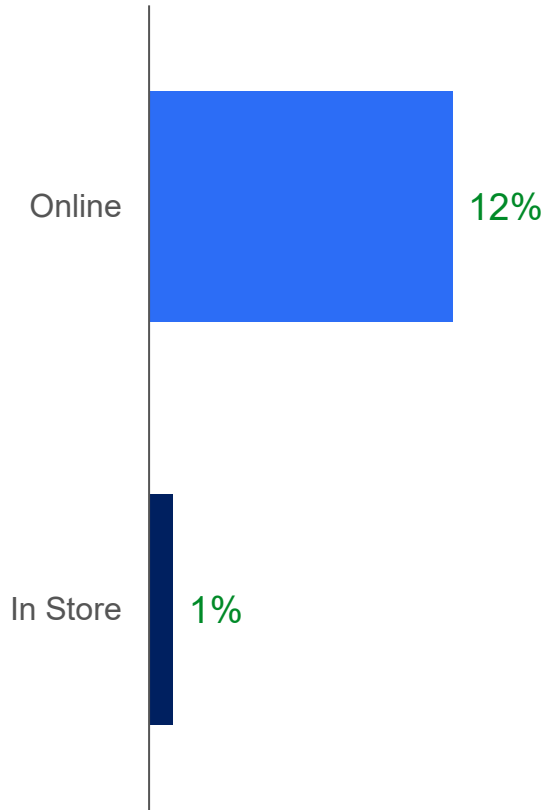
Black consumers are rapidly shifting more spend online

Digital platforms deliver dollar growth as Black consumer shift trips to online purchasing

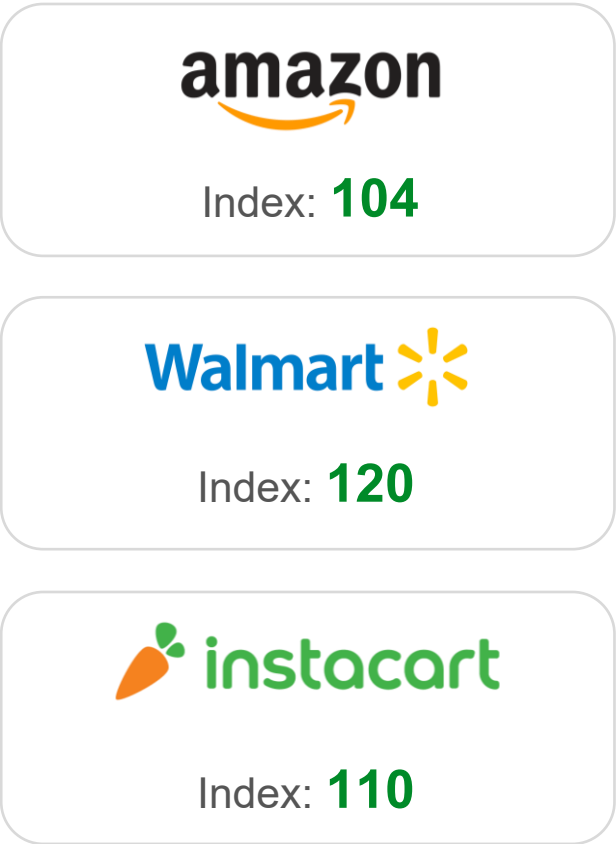
\$ Share of Online vs. In store
Black Buying Households



Dollar change vs. YA Online vs. Instore
Black Buying Households



Top 3 Online Retailers
Black Buying Households



Source: NielsenIQ Omnishopper; Total Available Retailers (Omni) US, 52 Weeks Ending 12/27/25

Black consumers are highly digitally engaged, leading AI adoption and social media influence

Accelerate tech adoption as Black consumer lead digital utilization to define brand power and shopper journey

GenAI Behavior

Black Consumers

GenAI is already part of daily life

Lead Gen AI daily usage at **21%**
highest among all racial groups

AI is trusted in the shopping journey

53% showed interest in AI support while shopping and feel more comfortable than average letting GenAI guide decisions

Adoption is driven by efficiency + trust

Faster decisions, simplified paths
Trust in brands and retailers; perceived bias-free help

Highest Indexed Social Media Platforms

Black Consumers



Top 3 Overindexing Consumer Behavior Towards Platforms

High Index / High Penetration

Behavior	Index
Follow Influencers for fashion and beauty tips	156
Create videos and content	151
Connect with brands through social media	146

High Index / Low Penetration

Behavior	Index
Influence others	201
Rate or review products	186
Product purchases due to advertising	176

Source: NIQ, AI survey Questions November 2025, Spectra , December 2025 - MRI-Simmons USA | Base: Adults | Consumer Profile

Black consumers are prioritizing health and wellbeing

78%

More cautious in what I do and how I do it since COVID-19

133 index

73%

Looking for products or services that **improve mental well-being**

123 index

60%

Important for me to **go to the doctor** when I'm sick

114 index

59%

I'll **pay just about anything when it concerns my health**

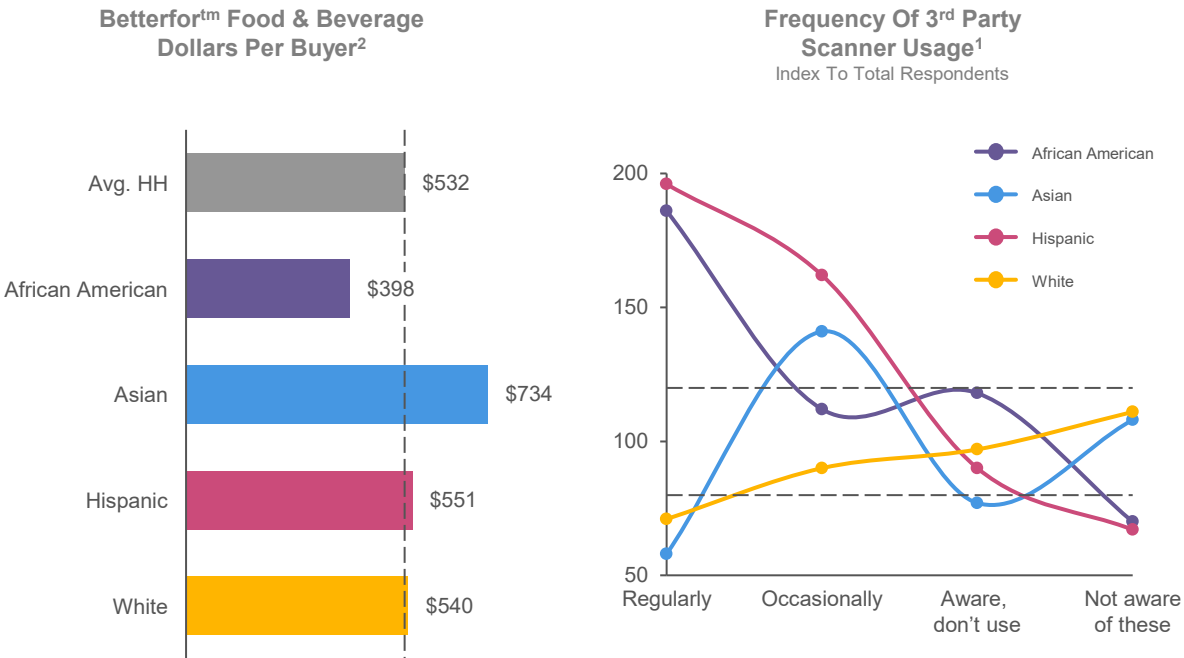
127 index



Source: MRI Simmons, 2025

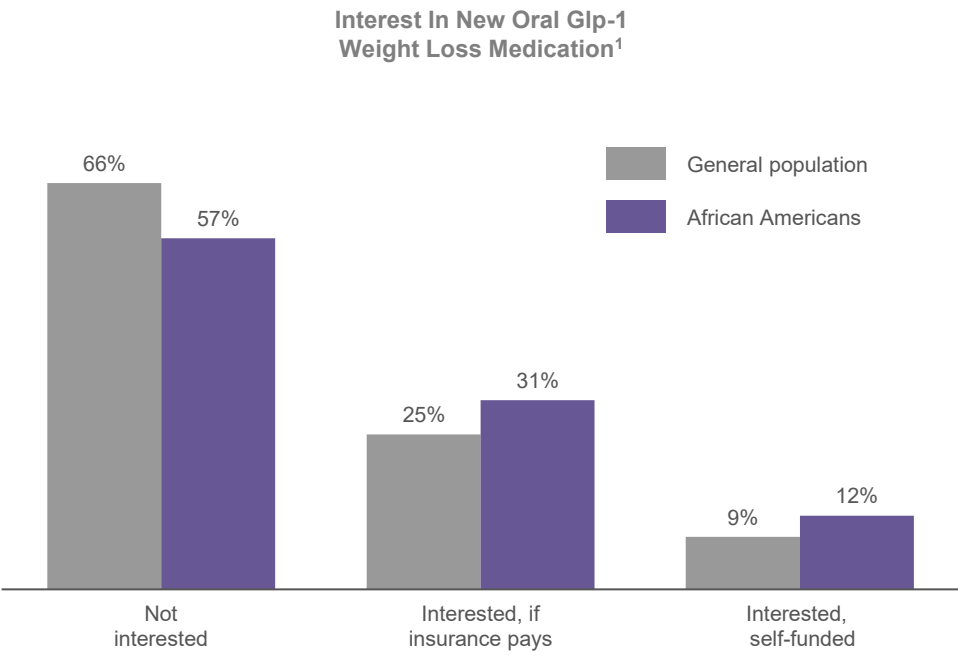
Black consumers look to better-for-you products and GLP-1s for a holistic approach to health

Closing the Better-For™ Gap



Black shoppers currently spend 25% less on BetterFor™ products, but this gap may narrow as they become more ingredient-focused and increasingly rely on third-party scanning apps to assess quality. They are also quicker to reject low-scoring items and actively use health wearables, indicating a shift toward more algorithm-guided, data-driven purchasing.

Black Consumers Lead in GLP-1 Interest



Black consumers show elevated interest in new oral GLP-1s and are 1.4× more likely to self-fund them—signaling that appetite-modifying tools could soon shift category demand. Their higher use of protein supplements and high-protein snacks suggests they're primed to accelerate adoption of products with meaningful functional benefits as GLP-1 access expands.

Industry Analysis Sources: NIQ, Expanded Omnishopper Panel On Demand, Powered By Label Insights, Total US, Total Outlets, Total Food & Beverage, 52 Weeks Ending 12/27/2025; 3NIQ, Expanded OmnishopperPanel, Total US, Total Outlets, Total Product, 52 Weeks Ending 11/29/2025

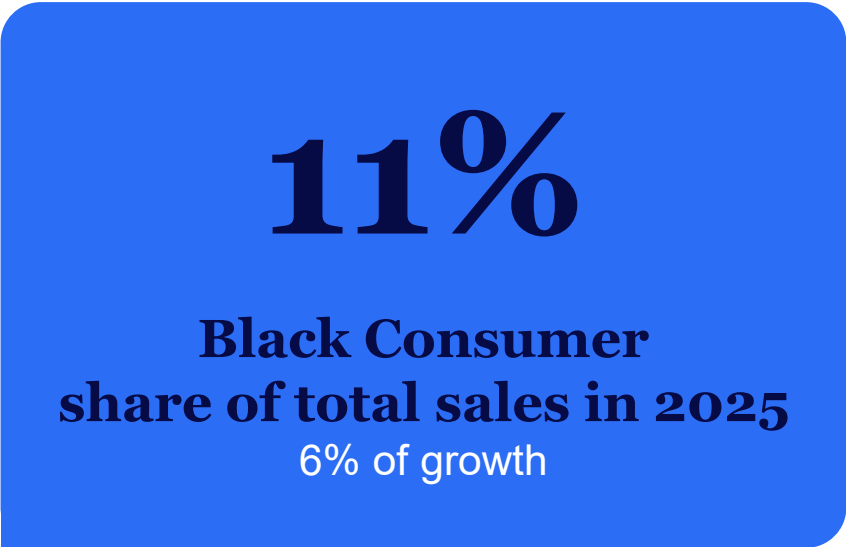


*What and where is the **Black shopper** purchasing*



Unlock untapped growth potential through effective engagement

Despite their meaningful market presence, Black consumer spending is growing at half the U.S. average, signaling a major opportunity for brands to boost frequency and spend through stronger engagement



				
	\$ Change	\$ Per Buyer	Occasion Per Buyer	\$ Per Occasion
Black	+3.8%	\$14,347	373	\$38.48
Total US	+7.7%	\$17,057	367	\$46.53

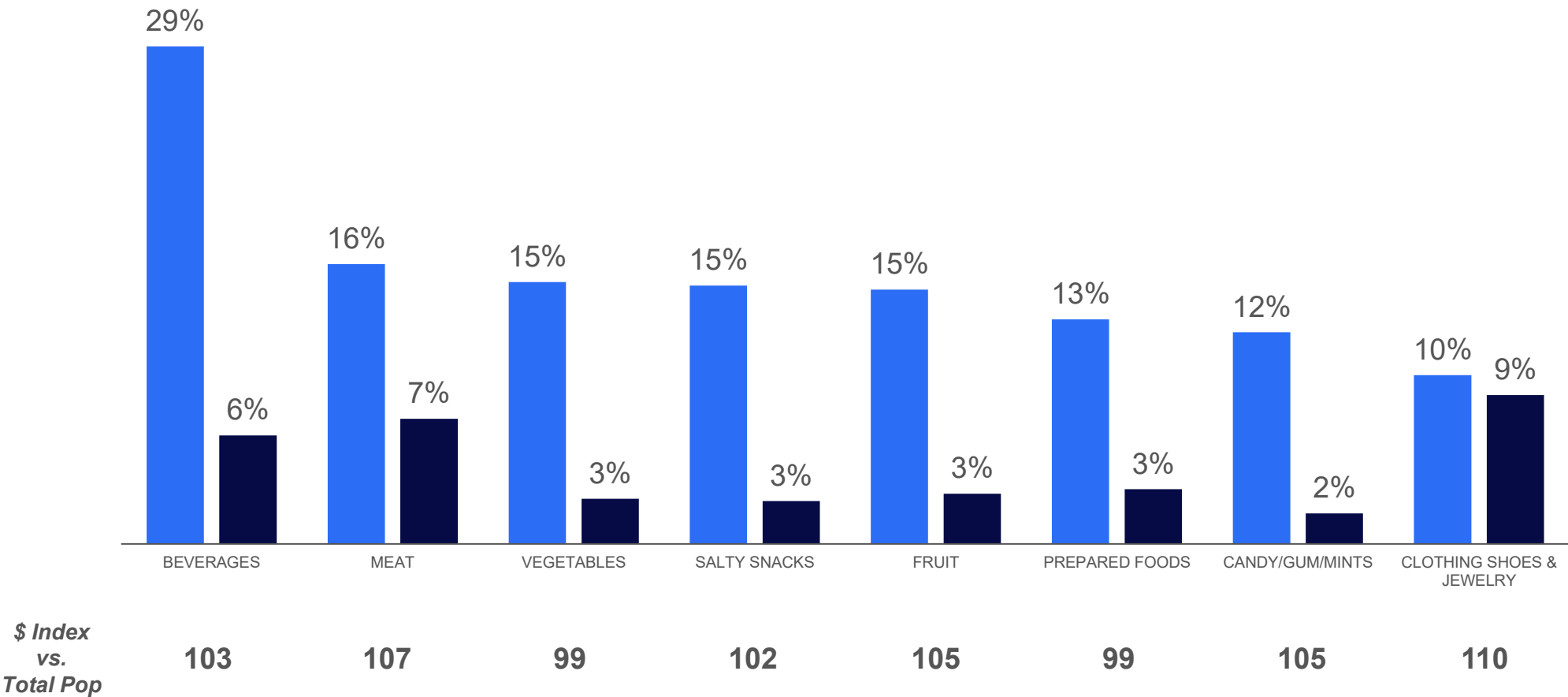
 *Black households make up 13.1% of Total U.S. households & spend 11.0% of the dollars*

Source: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Expanded Omnishopper | US EXP OSH - NDH Synd Full View - 444 5-yr; L52 weeks ending 12/27/2025

From daily needs to self-expression, high-frequency categories win with Black consumers

Share of Wallet
Black Buying Households

■ Share of Occasions ■ Share of Dollars



Looking good is a top priority for Black consumers—66% rank it as very important, indexing 131 vs. total consumers, signaling a strong demand for products that support confidence and self-presentation



Source: NielsenIQ Omnishopper; Total Available Retailers (Omni) US, 52 Weeks Ending 12/27/25; NIQ Consumer Life 2025

Two thirds of dollar spend are in Grocery and Mass Merch, with Warehouse/Club growing

Most channels are growing due to an increase in Black buying households

Black Household Purchase Metrics by Channel

	Channel	\$ Share*	\$ Growth	Occasion per buyer	Dollar per occasion
	Mass Merch	39%	3.4%	114	\$48.73
	Grocery	28%	2.0%	107	\$37.80
	Warehouse/Club	10%	10.4%	20.8	\$89.30
	Dollar	5%	5.0%	48.4	\$16.18
	Convenience	4%	4.3%	51.3	\$12.98
	Department	4%	24.7%	9.1	\$94.98
	Drug	3%	0.9%	22.9	\$21.62
	Beauty Supply	2%	4.0%	8.5	\$44.87
	Liquor	1%	14.6%	11.2	\$39.49
	Pet	1%	(12.5)%	7.2	\$47.23

Source: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Expanded Omnishopper | US EXP OSH - NDH Synd Full View - 444 5-yr; L52 weeks ending 12/27/2025

*All Other = 4%



*How to connect with the **Black** consumer*



Building meaningful connections with Black consumers starts with genuine understanding, cultural respect, and unwavering authenticity

