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The Vision Council Releases New Consumer inSights Report for Q1 2026

Latest research highlights shifting spending habits and emerging trends across optical products and services

Alexandria, VA – April 30, 2026 – The Vision Council today released its [Consumer inSights Q1 2026](#) report, offering a detailed look at U.S. consumer behavior across optical products and services for the first quarter of the year. The report examines attitudes and purchasing patterns related to vision correction, managed vision care, eye exams, prescription eyewear, reading glasses, and non-prescription sunglasses.

This quarter's findings reflect a consumer landscape shaped by economic caution. Spending on vision care products edged downward compared to prior quarters, with consumers across categories gravitating toward lower price points and, in some cases, purchasing fewer items. The trend is broad-based, spanning prescription eyewear, and non-prescription products alike.

“Consumers are making more value-conscious choices, and that extends to vision care,” said **Kris Stevens, a representative from The Vision Council's inSights Research Program.**

“With inflation and broader economic uncertainty continuing to shape household budgets, it's no surprise that discretionary spending is under pressure, and eyewear is not immune. This quarter, we're seeing an uptick in lower-priced purchases, a preference for single pairs over multiples, and buying shorter supply of contact lenses.”

Additional Highlights for Q1 2026:

- **Value priced sunglasses were more popular this quarter**, compared to previous year-over-year values.
- **The daily contact lens modality use shows growth**, compared to the first quarter of 2025.
- **Independent practices dominate eye exams**, with most consumers choosing independent eye care providers — though fewer follow through on purchasing their eyewear at the same location.
- **Managed vision care remains a key driver of exam frequency**, with consumers without coverage considerably more likely to delay routine eye care.
- **The number of consumers purchasing a single pair of reading glasses is up**, now the same as the number purchasing multiple pairs, which had been the norm.

The **Consumer inSights Q1 2026** report is based on a survey of 12,031 U.S. adults aged 18 or older, fielded in the first quarter of 2026. Respondents are representative of the U.S. adult population.

More than three full years of trended data, along with the complete report, are available in The Vision Council's [Research Download Center](#). This report, a \$3,000 value, is available complimentary to members of The Vision Council; non-members may purchase it directly.

For more information about the Consumer inSights report or The Vision Council's research program, visit thevisioncouncil.org.

More about the inSights Research Program

The Vision Council's [inSights Research Program](#) is built on a foundation of rigorous methodology and cutting-edge technology. The inSights Research Program provides a comprehensive perspective on the state of the optical industry through quarterly consumer survey reports; in-depth special reports on eyewear and eyecare products and topics; and an end-of-year market estimate and industry forecast.

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About The Vision Council

The Vision Council brings the power of sight to all through education, government relations, research, and technical standards. A leading advocate for the optical industry, the association positions its members to deliver the eyewear and eyecare people need to look and feel their best. Vital to health, independence, and safety, better vision leads to better lives.