

Cryptocurrency Ownership in 2026 – Fewer New Owners Among LIFE Survey Respondents

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In August 2024, the Consumer Finance Institute (CFI) published a research brief on cryptocurrency ownership ([Do Price Changes Affect Crypto Ownership?](#)) based on data collected from a series of consumer surveys.¹ At that time, we noted a growing disconnect between cryptocurrency market prices and self-reported ownership among respondents to our surveys, with ownership rates and purchase interest decreasing during the crypto winter of 2022 but failing to rebound during later price increases. In this brief, we briefly update our past observations relating to ownership rates and market prices and describe more recent changes to the inflow of new crypto owners.

We find that in the quarters following our last report, ownership rates did briefly increase and decrease in conjunction with market prices before again disconnecting in mid-2025, coinciding with drops in ownership rates and the likelihood to purchase among our respondents. Additionally, purchase timing data from April 2024, April 2025, and April 2026 reveal a lower inflow of new entrants to the crypto owner population and a decrease in recent purchases among the existing groups of owners. These observations may be signs that the cryptocurrency market is transitioning to one that is increasingly supported by existing participants rather than by expansion into new populations.

¹ See [Cryptocurrency Ownership: Insights from the CFI COVID-19 Survey of Consumers](#), [Cryptocurrency Ownership During a Crypto Winter: Effects of a Downturn on Consumer Attitudes to Crypto](#), and [Do Price Changes Affect Crypto Ownership?](#) for previous survey observations on cryptocurrency.

Figure 1: Closing Price of Bitcoin (left axis) and Crypto Ownership Rates (right axis)



Ownership and Price Changes

To evaluate the relationship of cryptocurrency market conditions to ownership rates and interest in future purchases, we use the price of Bitcoin (BTC) as a proxy for the general crypto market.² **Figure 1** charts the daily closing price of Bitcoin between July 1, 2021, and April 30, 2026; the columns indicate the crypto ownership rates from each survey referenced in this paper. Looking at the January 2022 and October 2022 columns in the figure, we see the changes noted in our previous reports (based on data collected

during the COVID-19 pandemic); during the crypto winter period, when the price of Bitcoin (and cryptocurrencies writ large) was decreasing rapidly, the self-reported ownership rate also decreased. Details can be found in the [prior report](#).

In the data collected after that report, we again see a disconnect between price movements and ownership rates. Over that period, Bitcoin prices rose about 50 percent, then experienced two separate significant decreases, ending the period at about half its peak

² Source: Bitcoin USD (BTC-USD), retrieved from Yahoo! Finance, finance.yahoo.com/quote/BTC-USD/history/. While Bitcoin's dominance of cryptocurrency market caps has moved between 38 percent and 65 percent since January 2022, it has

long been the largest single cryptocurrency in the market (coinmarketcap.com/charts/bitcoin-dominance/).

Table 1: Likely to Purchase Cryptocurrency in the Future		All Respondents	Nonowners	Prior Month-End Closing Price	Prior 3-Month Average Daily Price Change
<i>COVID Survey</i>	January 2022	18.8%	6.9%	\$46,306	+\$27
	October 2022	10.6%	4.0%	\$19,432	-\$64
<i>LIFE Survey</i>	April 2024	21.8%	13.4%	\$71,334	+\$319
	April 2025	19.7%	10.7%	\$82,549	-\$121
	April 2026	14.5%	7.6%	\$68,233	-\$214

value. While these large movements were happening, ownership rates remained relatively flat, fluctuating between 12 percent and 13 percent.

Future Purchase Interest

Next, we look at respondents' likelihood to purchase cryptocurrency in the future. Comparable questions were included in the 2022 COVID-19 Surveys and the April 2024, April 2025, and April 2026 LIFE Surveys, and the results are reported in **Table 1**. As a measure of the status of the cryptocurrency market during each survey, we also show the price of Bitcoin just before the survey data collection and the average daily price change (DPC) in dollars for the previous three months. The latter metric serves as a proxy for the prevailing trends that were taking place as each group of respondents took the surveys.

Our previous reports documented that overall interest in purchasing cryptocurrencies decreased during the crypto winter (2022), falling from 18.8 percent to 10.6 percent of all respondents. The DPC also switched from +\$27 (positive trajectory) to -\$64 (negative trajectory) between those time frames, suggesting that decreasing prices had a suppression effect on future purchase intentions.

The next survey to use the purchase intent question was the April 2024 LIFE Survey, when the price of Bitcoin was at its three-year peak and the DPC was significantly positive at +\$319. At that time, 21.8 percent of respondents indicated that they were likely to purchase crypto in the future; the large and rapid growth of the market, as well as the strong upward trajectory of prices, increased its attractiveness to consumers.

In April 2025, despite the price being at its highest level of the time period we study, future purchase intentions decreased slightly to 19.7 percent. A DPC of -\$121 indicates that the price had been decreasing for the previous three months at a fairly rapid pace. In April 2026, a DPC of -\$214 indicated a faster price decrease, and purchase intentions dropped to 14.5 percent (despite the price being nearly the same as in April 2024 and well above that reported in the 2022 surveys).

Table 1 also shows the purchase intentions of nonowners, an important metric to evaluate the potential for the market to increase via new participants rather than via existing owners who expand their holdings. We see that nonowners' likelihood to purchase follows the same path as the

Table 2: Time Since First and Most Recent Purchases of Crypto by Current Owners

	April 2024	April 2025	April 2026
Crypto ownership rate	16%	16%	12%
% First purchase in last 12 months	45%	35%	24%
% Most recent purchase 24+ months ago	13%	16%	19%

overall population, with interest being highest when the market is increasing.

Market Composition and New Entrants

LIFE Survey respondents who own crypto are asked for information on the timing of both their original purchase and their most recent purchase (these questions are asked annually in each April survey). Between April 2024 and April 2026, we see a distinct change in the composition of the ownership group based on when they entered the crypto market and when they last purchased.

Table 2 shows the crypto ownership rates for each of the last three surveys in which purchase timing was asked. Ownership was steady at 16 percent in 2024 and 2025 before decreasing to 12 percent in 2026.

We identify the owners' market entry based on the timing of their first crypto purchase. In April 2024, 45 percent of owners had made their first crypto purchase in the 12 months before the survey, indicating a massive inflow of new owners coinciding with a period of significant price increases. Over the next two periods, the percentage of new entrants in the 12 months preceding the survey decreased to 35 percent, then to 24 percent. In the declining price environments preceding those surveys, fewer people were choosing to enter the market.

Next, we look at how long ago owners made their most recent crypto purchase to gauge whether the group is actively adding to its portfolio. While a little more than 70 percent in each year had made recent purchases (not shown), we see a growing proportion of the group that is simply holding older assets without adding to them. In April 2024, 13 percent of owners had not made a purchase for 24 or more months; by 2026, that number had increased to 19 percent.

Conclusion

Between April 2024 and April 2026, data collected via the LIFE Survey show that cryptocurrency ownership rates among survey respondents were flat and (in the last six quarters) became decoupled from changes in the market price of Bitcoin. Over the same period, the percentage of crypto owners who are new to the market (e.g., made their first purchase within the last 12 months) decreased, while the percentage of passive owners (e.g., made their most recent purchase more than 24 months ago) has increased. Finally, the likelihood to purchase among all respondents decreased in recent years, in conjunction with large decreases in the price of Bitcoin.