



PAYNE CENTER
for
SOCIAL JUSTICE
THURGOOD MARSHALL
COLLEGE FUND

Black Thriving

IN AMERICA

2024

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“100 YEARS OF HELPING PEOPLE BE HEARD”

Black Thriving

IN AMERICA

2024

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About *Black Thriving in America: 2024* — The Data and Disparities

The Dr. N. Joyce Payne Research Center, in partnership with Gallup's Center for Black Voices, presents the *Black Thriving in America: 2024* report, offering a comprehensive analysis of Black Americans' self-reported life satisfaction and wellbeing. Leveraging over 80 years of Gallup's extensive survey data on education, employment and economic conditions, this report provides critical insights into racial equity and social justice. For the first time, it includes year-over-year trended data, revealing how Black Americans perceive and experience social justice in their daily lives.

The 2024 report builds on the previous year's introduction of Gallup's "Net Thriving" metric, which categorizes life experiences into suffering, struggling and thriving. While the 2023 report highlighted similar thriving rates among Black and White Americans, it also indicated that these figures concealed significant differences based on racial identity, wealth and other factors. This year's findings continue to show progress — and disparity. Notable improvements include a rise in Black Americans reporting near-perfect health (39%) and increased career satisfaction (56%). There is also a positive shift in neighborhood safety perceptions.

However, the report also underscores persistent disparities. Economic wellbeing remains a concern, with only 30% of Black Americans feeling financially secure, compared to 40% of White Americans. Gaps in educational opportunities and safety perceptions are influenced by income, gender and geographic location. Additionally, one in five Black Americans reports experiencing discrimination, particularly in interactions with police.

This year's Black American Racial Equity Dashboard represents a pivotal milestone, both celebrating the progress achieved and underscoring the urgent need to address persistent disparities. As the definitive "Dow Jones of Racial Equity" and the "NASDAQ of Black American Experiences," this dashboard provides an invaluable annual snapshot of social justice trends through rigorous empirical analysis.

The Payne Center is unwavering in its commitment to delivering these crucial insights every year. Our aim is to offer a comprehensive view of Black Americans' progress toward social justice, highlighting both advancements and ongoing challenges. These findings are essential for policymakers, community leaders and advocates dedicated to building a more equitable society.

Black Thriving in America: 2024 not only reflects the resilience and strides of Black Americans but also emphasizes the necessity for sustained vigilance and action. As we continue the journey toward racial equity, meticulous and honest reporting will be key to forging a path toward true justice and fairness for all.



M. C. Brown II, Ph.D.

*Executive Director & Research Scientist
Dr. N. Joyce Payne Research Center*



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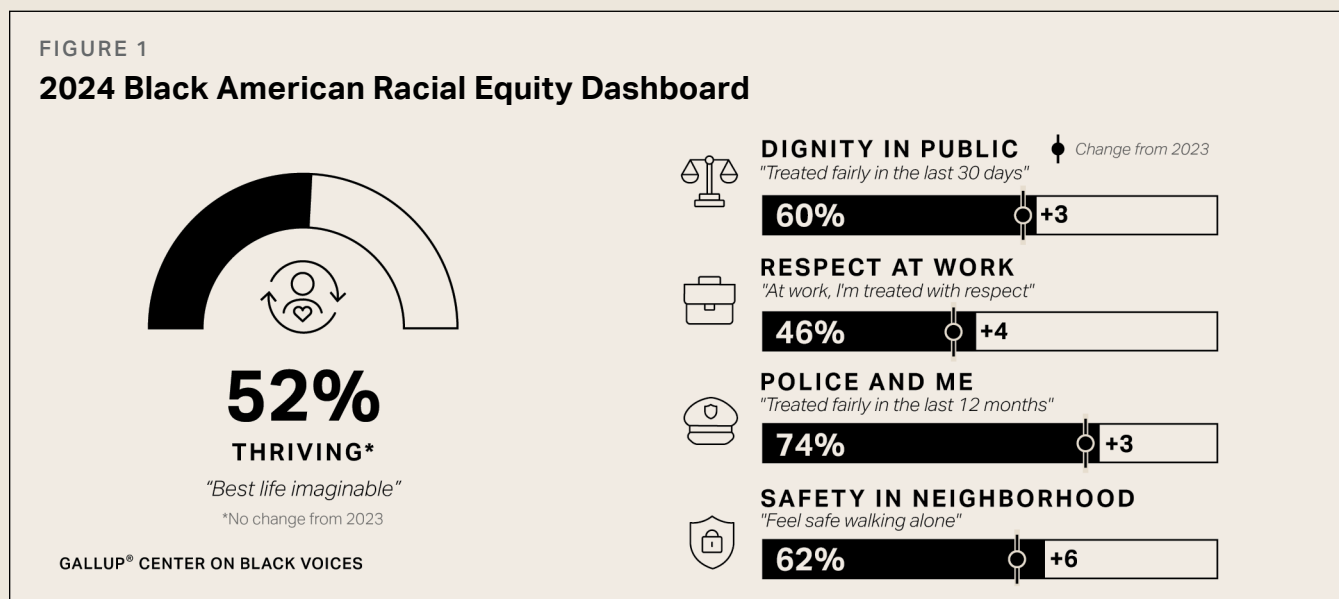
While economists and government agencies have long tracked the transactions of Black Americans, they've often missed the full picture of their lived experiences. Today, the Payne Research Center and the Center for Black Voices are changing that, providing crucial data to understand whether the Black experience in America is improving or declining.

— **JIM CLIFTON**

Chairman of Gallup & the Payne Research Center

Black American Racial Equity Dashboard

The 2024 Black American Racial Equity Dashboard highlights key measurements detailed in this report. The percentage of Black Americans thriving represents the percentage of Black Americans who have positive views about both their current and future lives.



A narrow majority of Black Americans (52%) are thriving in their wellbeing, marginally higher than the 50% thriving among White Americans and 48% among Hispanic Americans.

But this rate must be considered in the context of other Black life experiences:

DIGNITY IN PUBLIC

At least one in five Black Americans report having been treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity while shopping (23%), at work (22%), dining out (22%) or in a healthcare setting (20%). Reports of experiences with discrimination in each of these settings are somewhat higher for Black Americans than Hispanic Americans. Across each measure, Black Americans are more than three times as likely as White Americans to report being treated unfairly.

RESPECT AT WORK

Forty-six percent of Black American employees strongly agree they are treated with respect at work, reflecting a slight increase from 2023. The percentage of Black women who report being treated with respect at work (44%) has increased five points since 2023, but still lags the rate among Black men (49%).

POLICE AND ME

Among those who have interacted with police in the past year, Black Americans continue to be less likely than other racial groups to say they were treated with respect (74%) and that it was an overall positive experience (69%).

SAFETY IN NEIGHBORHOOD

Black Americans are more likely now than in 2023 to report feeling safe walking alone at night in the area where they live, but they still lag other racial groups in having a sense of safety. Perceptions of safety continue to vary greatly by income among Black Americans. Gender is also a major factor in perceptions of safety.

“

Commitment to racial progress and ensuring that Black Americans thrive is at the heart of our vision for a stronger nation. Education, especially through the transformative power of HBCUs, is more than just a path to personal success — it’s a cornerstone of wealth in all its forms. By investing in education, we uplift individuals and enrich our society, paving the way for a brighter, more equitable future for everyone.

— **DR. N. JOYCE PAYNE**

Founder of Thurgood Marshall College Fund

Understanding the Life Evaluation Index

The Life Evaluation Index measures how people rate their current and expected future lives. Gallup asks people to imagine a ladder, with the lowest rung representing the worst possible life and the highest rung representing the best possible life. Those rungs are numbered zero to 10. There are three life evaluation classifications based on responses to the index.

FIGURE 2

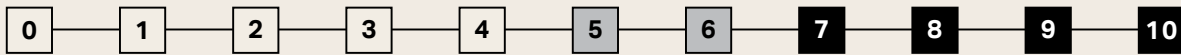
Life Evaluation Index



The Life Evaluation Index measures how people rate their current and expected future lives. There are three life evaluation classifications based on responses to the index: thriving, struggling and suffering.

WORST LIFE IMAGINABLE

BEST LIFE IMAGINABLE



SUFFERING

STRUGGLING

THRIVING

Wellbeing that is at high risk.

These respondents have poor ratings of their current life situation (4 and below) and negative views of the next five years (4 and below). They are more likely to report lacking the basics of food and shelter and more likely to experience physical pain, stress, worry, sadness and anger. They have less access to health insurance and care and more than double the disease burden in comparison to thriving respondents.

Wellbeing that is moderate or inconsistent.

These respondents have moderate views of their present life situation or moderate or negative views of their future. They are either struggling in the present or expect to struggle in the future. They report more daily stress and worry about money than thriving respondents and more than double the number of sick days. They are more likely to smoke and are less likely to eat healthily.

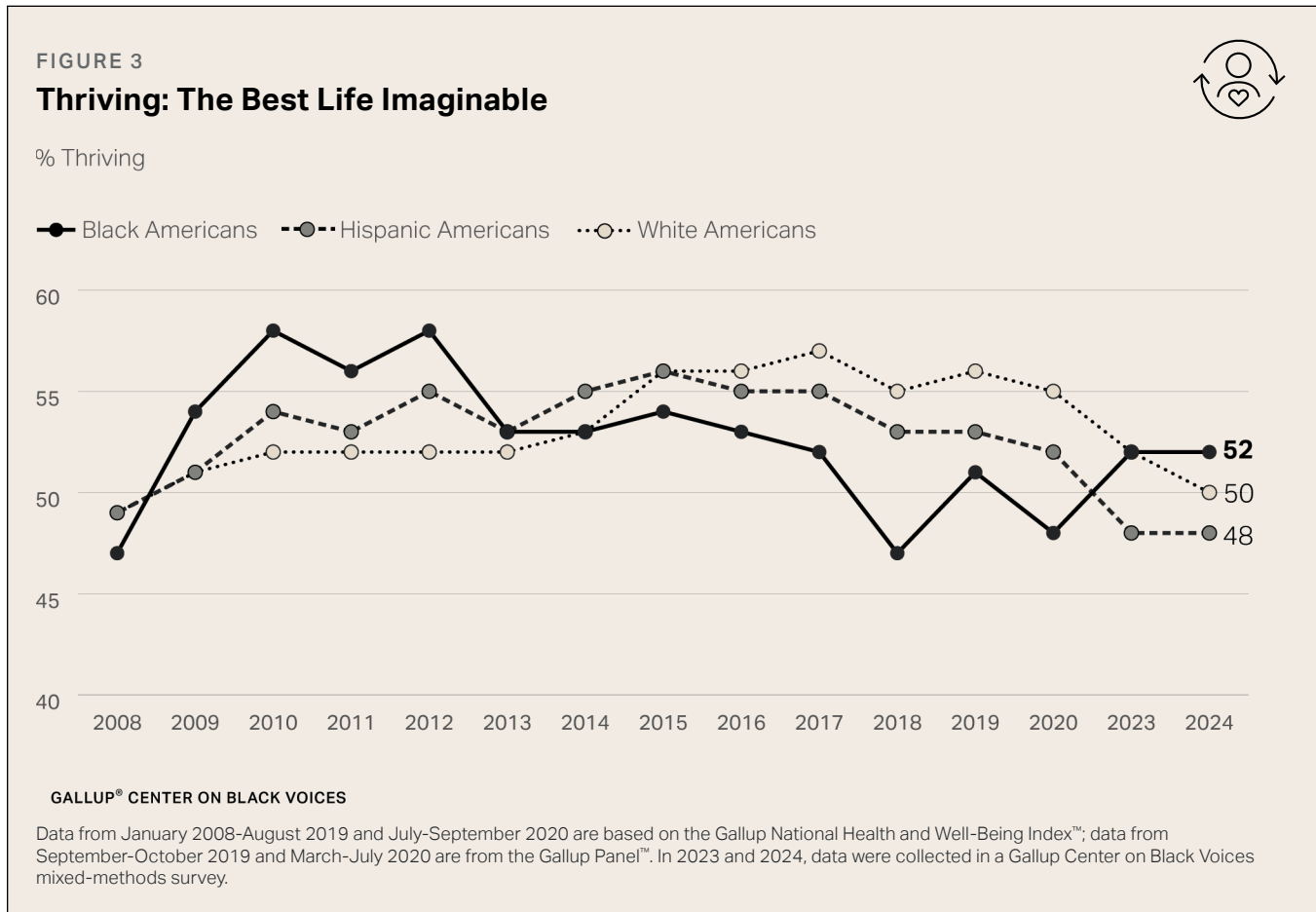
Wellbeing that is strong, consistent and progressing.

These respondents have positive views of their present life situation (7+) and positive views of the next five years (8+). They report significantly fewer health problems, fewer sick days, less worry, stress, sadness and anger, and more happiness, enjoyment, interest and respect.

SECTION ONE

Thriving: The Best Life Imaginable

Current State of Thriving Among Black Americans: The latest 2024 data reveals that 52% of Black Americans are thriving according to Gallup’s Life Evaluation Index, maintaining the same level as in 2023. This rate is notably higher compared to White (50%) and Hispanic Americans (48%), highlighting a relative advantage in life satisfaction for Black individuals.

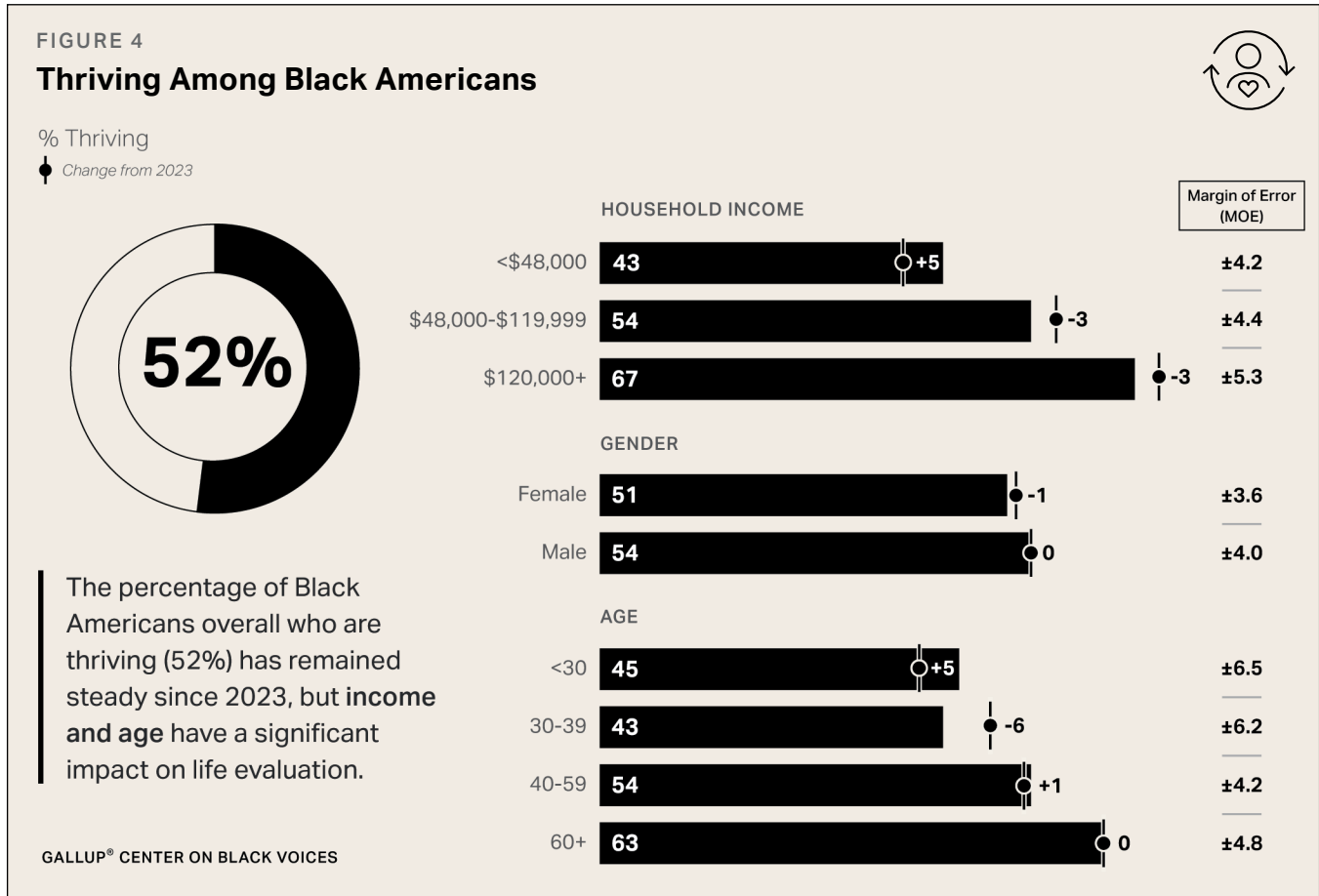


Income and age continue to be significant factors in thriving among Black Americans.

As previously measured, higher-earning Black Americans (67%) — those living in households earning \$120,000 or more annually — continue to be thriving at a higher rate than Black Americans living in households earning from \$48,000 to \$119,999 (54%) and those living in households earning less than \$48,000 (43%).

Though lower-earning Black Americans continue to be thriving at a lower rate than their higher-earning peers, the percentage thriving among this group has increased by five percentage points since 2023.

Less than half of Black Americans under the age of 40 are thriving — including those aged 18 to 29 (45%) and those aged 30 to 39 (43%). Life evaluations increase with each older age group, with a slim majority of Black Americans aged 40 to 59 (54%) thriving. Those aged 60 or older (63%) are the most likely age group to be thriving.



New demographic cuts in 2024 reveal educational and regional gaps in thriving among Black Americans.

A solid majority of Black Americans with a four-year bachelor's degree or higher (60%) rate their lives positively enough to be thriving, while just under half of Black Americans without a four-year bachelor's degree are thriving (49%).

While most Black Americans living in the South (54%) and the West (54%) are thriving, less than half of Black residents in the Midwest (47%) and Northeast (48%) are thriving in their life evaluations.

Black suburbanites (56%) are a bit more likely than Black residents of urban (51%) and rural (48%) areas to be thriving.

Career wellbeing among Black Americans has improved somewhat — 56% of Black Americans agree they like what they do occupationally every day, a slight increase from the 53% recorded in 2023.

Black Americans are statistically similar to White Americans (58%) on this measure, while Hispanic Americans (52%) are the least likely to like what they do.

As the 2023 report detailed, income is a key factor in career satisfaction for Black Americans: Those in high-income households are more likely than those in middle- or lower-earning households to like what they do at work. Though lower-earning Black adults — those living in households that earn less than \$48,000 — remain the least likely to like what they do, the current 47% is an improvement from the 41% recorded in 2023.

Black men (60%) continue to like what they do at work at a greater rate than Black women (53%). However, Black women are more likely now than they were in 2023 to be satisfied with their work, with a majority of Black women liking what they do in the latest measure.

Additionally, young Black Americans — those aged 18 to 29 — are substantially more likely to like what they do at work now (47%) than they were in 2023 (36%), marking the greatest increase of any Black subgroup. The rate of liking work also increased, albeit to a lesser degree, among Black Americans aged 40 to 59 — up to 54% from 49% in 2023.

FIGURE 5

Career Wellbeing

You like what you do every day.

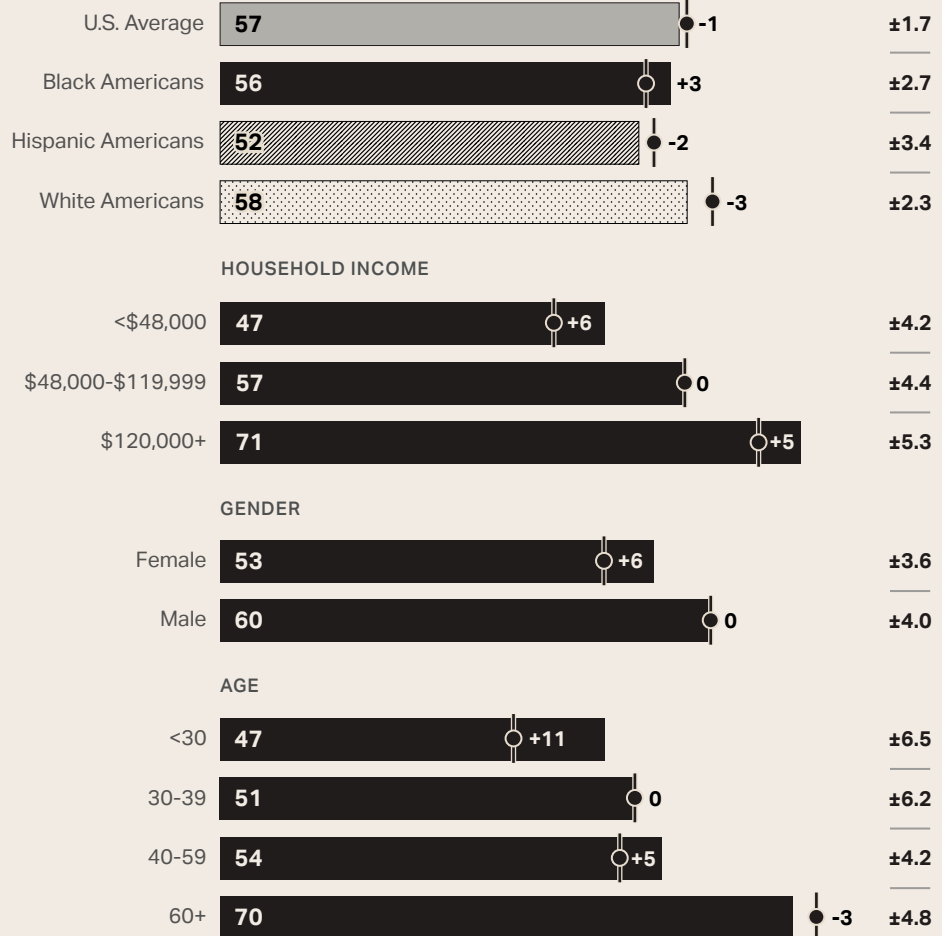
% Agree + Strongly agree

● Change from 2023



MOE

BLACK AMERICANS



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The latest update reveals other gaps in career wellbeing among Black Americans:

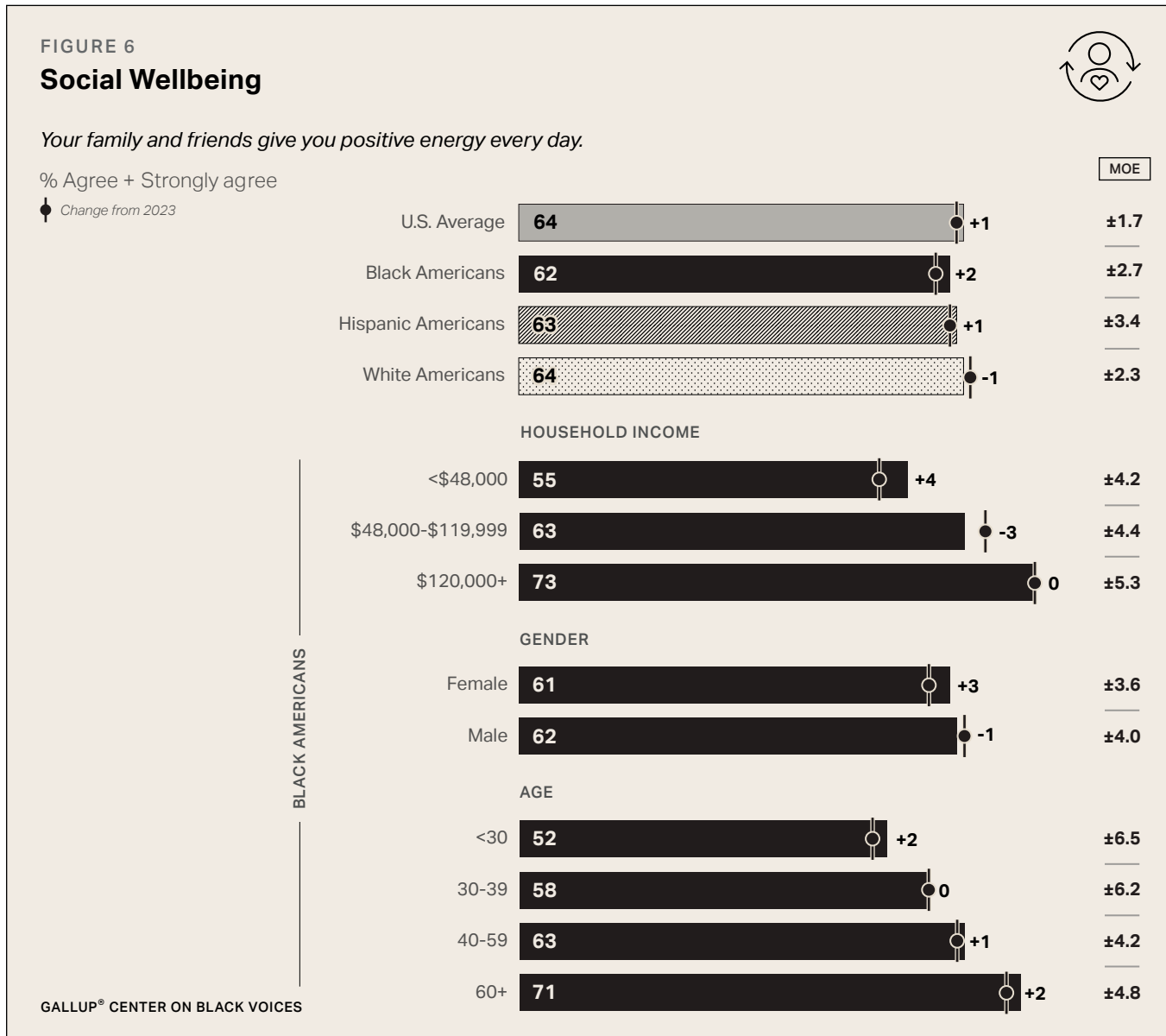
- Black Americans who have a four-year bachelor's degree or higher are much more likely to enjoy their work (65%) than Black Americans who do not have a four-year bachelor's degree (52%).
- Black Americans living in the South (59%) are slightly more likely to like what they do at work than their counterparts in the West (54%), Midwest (52%) and Northeast (50%).
- Black suburbanites (63%) are more likely than residents of urban (52%) and rural (52%) areas to enjoy what they do at work.

SOCIAL WELLBEING

More than six in 10 Black Americans (62%) agree or strongly agree that their family and friends give them positive energy every day.

This rate varies significantly by income, with Black Americans in higher-earning households much more likely than those in middle- or lower-earning households to agree that their family and friends give them positive energy.

Age is also a significant factor: While about half of Black Americans under age 30 agree that their family and friends give them positive energy each day, this figure rises with each older age group.



At least six in 10 Black Americans living in the West (63%), South (65%) and Northeast (60%) report getting positive energy from family and friends, while only a narrow majority of Black Americans in the Midwest (52%) report the same.

Black Americans with a four-year bachelor's degree or higher (67%) are more likely than those without a four-year bachelor's degree (60%) to say they receive positive energy from family and friends each day. Black suburbanites (65%) are slightly more likely than residents of urban (60%) and rural (60%) areas to report getting positive energy from family and friends.

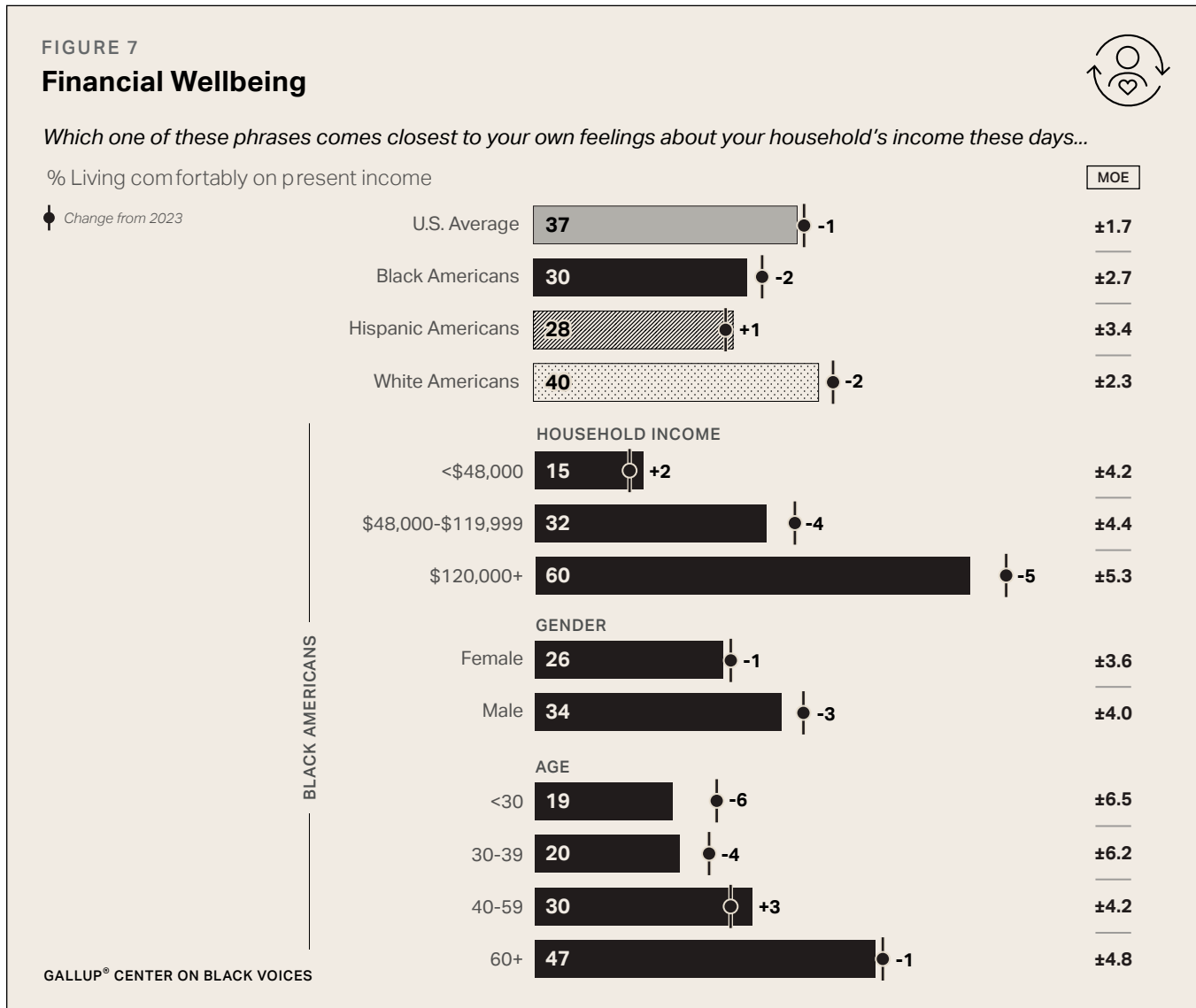
FINANCIAL WELLBEING

The percentages of Black (30%) and Hispanic (28%) Americans who report living comfortably on their present income remain lower than the percentage among White Americans (40%).

While most Black adults in higher-earning households (60%) report living comfortably on their income, just 15% of those in lower-earning households report the same. Middle-earning households fall in between, at 32%.

Meanwhile, Black men (34%) remain more likely than Black women (26%) to report living comfortably on their income.

Among age groups, almost half of Black Americans aged 60 or older (47%) report living comfortably, while about one in five under the age of 40 report the same.



Black Americans with a four-year bachelor's degree or higher (47%) are about twice as likely to report living comfortably on their income as those without a four-year bachelor's degree.

Black suburbanites (37%) are more likely to say they are living comfortably on their income than residents in rural (25%) and urban (28%) areas.

Black adults with no children in their household (34%) are more likely to report living comfortably than those who do have children in their household (22%).

Less than half of Black Americans (47%) agree or strongly agree that their city or area is the perfect place for them.

This rate is similar to the rate among Hispanic Americans (49%), while both are lower than the rate among White Americans (56%).

While Black Americans living in higher-earning households (58%) continue to be most likely among income subgroups to agree that their city or area is the perfect place for them, this figure is down seven percentage points from the previous measure of 65% for this group.

Half of Black men (50%) agree their city or area is the perfect place for them, while less than half of Black women (45%) agree.

Most Black Americans aged 60 or older (58%) agree that their city or area is the perfect place for them, but this figure decreases with each younger age group.

Black Americans with a four-year bachelor's degree or higher (51%) are slightly more likely than those without a four-year bachelor's degree (46%) to agree that their city or area is the perfect place for them.

While most Black suburbanites (55%) say their area is the perfect place for them, less than half of Black residents in rural (42%) and urban (44%) areas say the same.

About half of Black residents in the West (52%) and South (50%) say their area is the perfect place for them, while much smaller percentages of Black residents in the Northeast (43%) and Midwest (36%) report the same.

FIGURE 8

Community Wellbeing

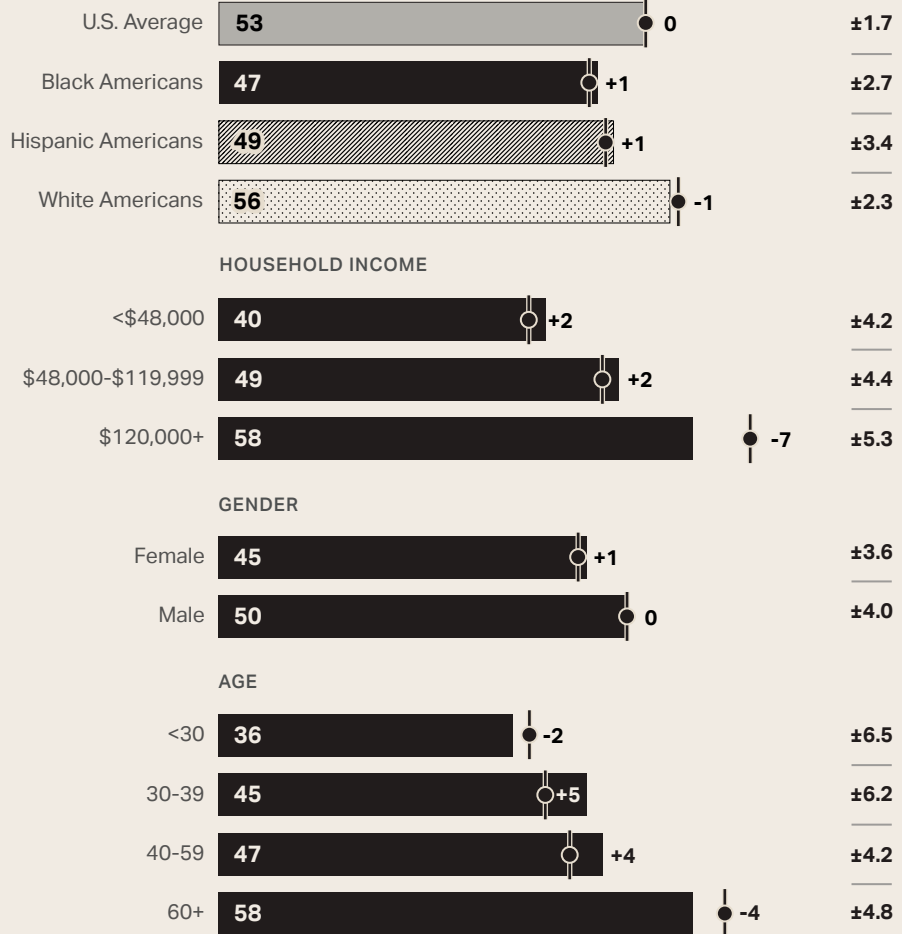


The city or area where you live is the perfect place for you.

% Agree + Strongly agree

● Change from 2023

MOE



BLACK AMERICANS

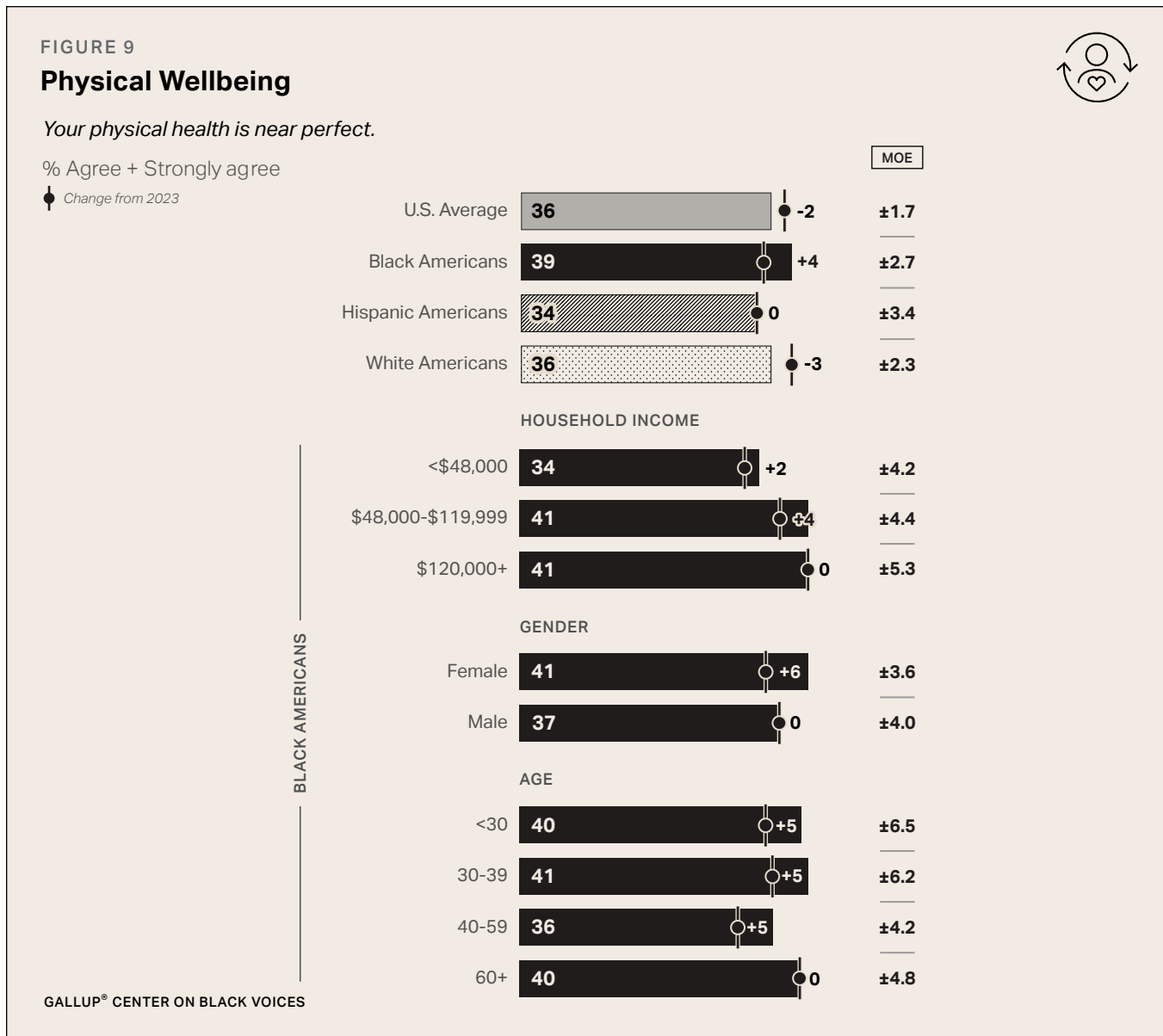
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Physical wellbeing among Black Americans has improved and now leads the national average.

About two in five Black Americans (39%) agree or strongly agree that their physical health is near perfect, reflecting an increase of four percentage points since the 2023 measure. Slightly more than a third of White (36%) and Hispanic (34%) Americans rate their physical health the same.

Black Americans living in lower-income households are less likely than those living in middle- and higher-income households to rate their physical health as near perfect.

Black women are more likely to rate their health positively now than they were in 2023, and they are now somewhat more likely to rate their health positively than Black men.



Black Americans aged 40 to 59 (36%) continue to be the least likely age group to rate their physical health as near perfect. However, ratings among this group have increased since 2023.

Health ratings among Black residents in rural areas (33%) are a bit lower than ratings among Black residents living in urban (39%) and suburban (43%) areas.

SECTION TWO

Dignity in Public

When asked about their experiences in the past month, at least one in five Black Americans report having been treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity while shopping (23%), at work (22%), dining out (22%) or in a healthcare setting (20%). These figures are largely stable from the previous update, though there has been a marginal increase in reports of mistreatment while dining.

Reports of experiences with discrimination in each setting are slightly higher for Black Americans than Hispanic Americans. Across each measure, Black Americans are more than three times as likely as White Americans to report being treated unfairly.

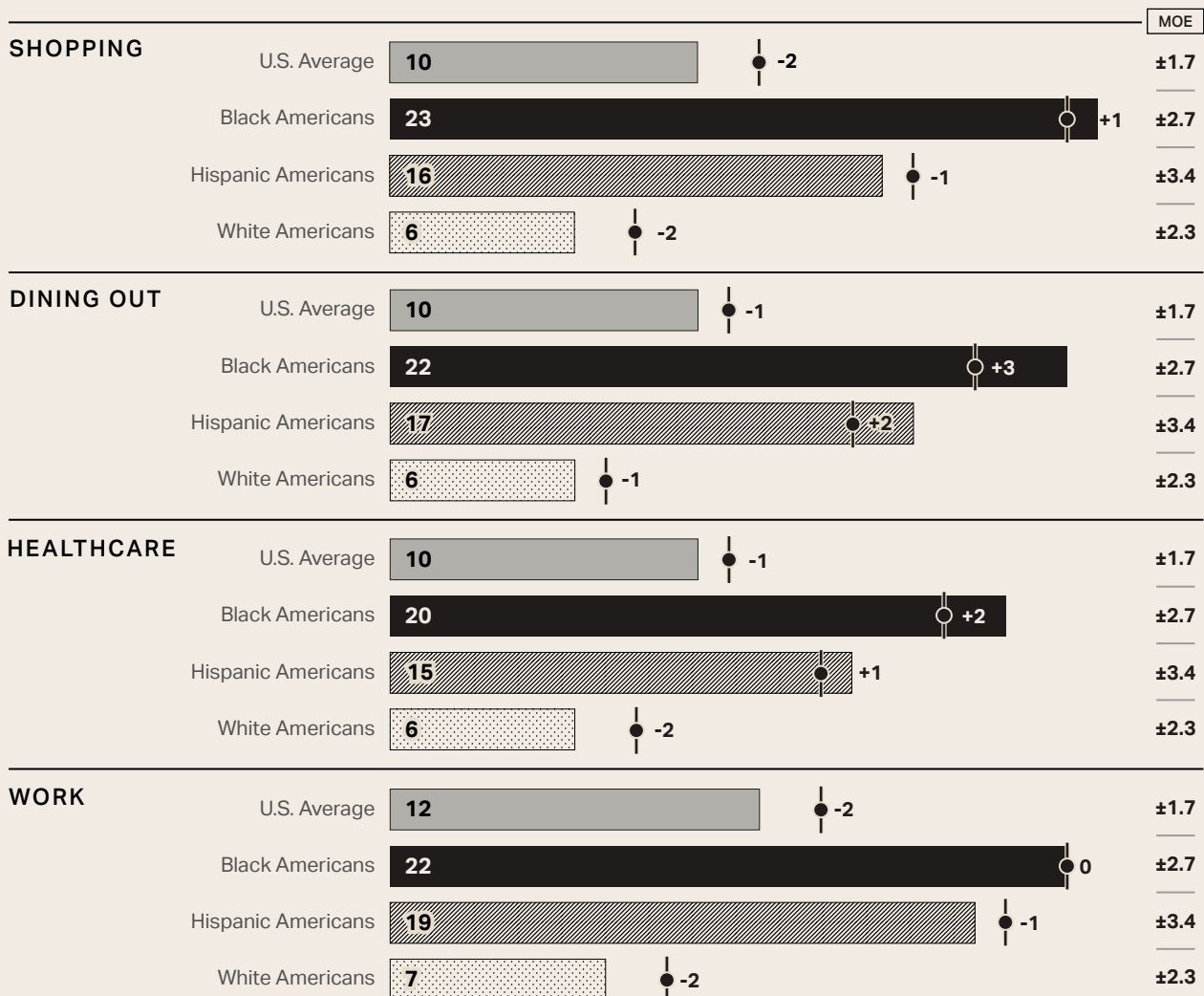
FIGURE 10

Discrimination in Public Spaces



Can you think of any occasion in the last thirty days when you felt you were treated unfairly in the following places because of your race or ethnicity?

% Yes ● Change from 2023



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SECTION THREE

Respect at Work

Forty-six percent of Black American employees strongly agree they are treated with respect at work, reflecting a small increase from 2023 and now similar to the national average of 45%. More than one in three strongly agree that there is someone at work who encourages their development (37%) and that at work, their opinions seem to count (35%) — both slightly exceeding national averages.

FIGURE 11

Experiences at Work



RESPECT

At work, I am treated with respect.

% Strongly agree

◆ Change from 2023



DEVELOPMENT

There is someone at work who encourages my development.

% Strongly agree

◆ Change from 2023

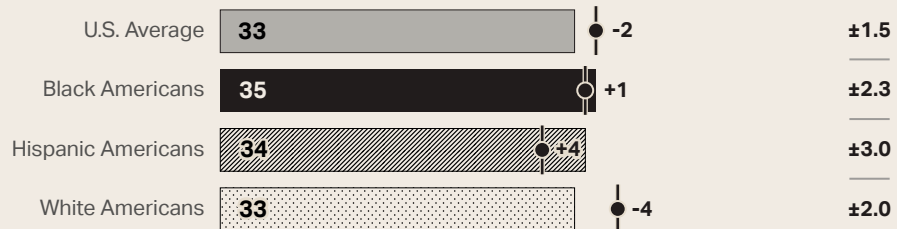


OPINIONS

At work, my opinions seem to count.

% Strongly agree

◆ Change from 2023



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The percentage of Black women who report being treated with respect at work (44%) has increased five points since 2023, but still lags the rate among Black men (49%).

FIGURE 12

Respect at Work

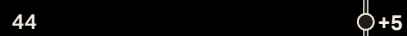


At work, I am treated with respect.

% Strongly agree

Change from 2023

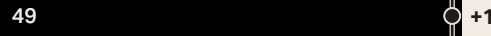
Black female



MOE

±3.0

Black male



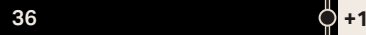
±3.6

There is someone at work who encourages my development.

% Strongly agree

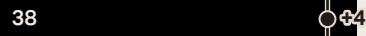
Change from 2023

Black female



±3.0

Black male



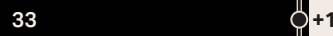
±3.6

At work, my opinions seem to count.

% Strongly agree

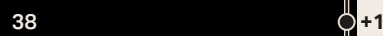
Change from 2023

Black female



±3.0

Black male



±3.6

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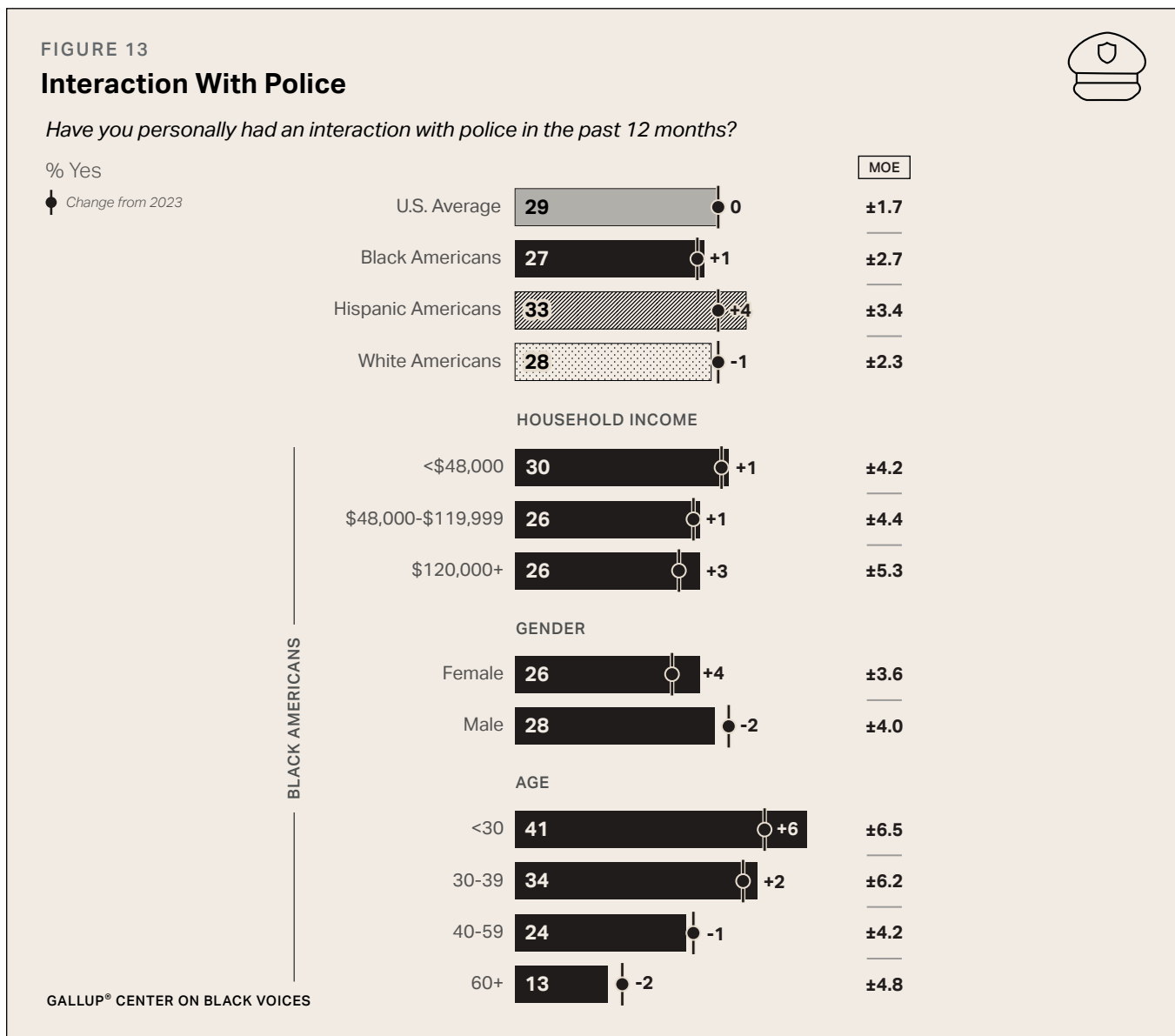
SECTION FOUR

Police and Me

About one in four Black Americans (27%) report personally having an interaction with police in the past 12 months, stable from the 2023 measure and now on par with the rate among White Americans (28%). Hispanic Americans (33%) have become slightly more likely to report having interactions with police and now lead among racial groups on this measure.

There is greater parity among income and gender subgroups among Black Americans on this measure compared to the 2023 update: Interactions with police are now similarly reported across high-, middle- and low-income Black households and between Black men and women.

As noted in the 2023 update, Black reports of interactions with police increase with each younger age group.



Among those who have interacted with police in the past year, Black Americans continue to be less likely than other racial groups to say they were treated with respect (74%) and that it was an overall positive experience (69%).

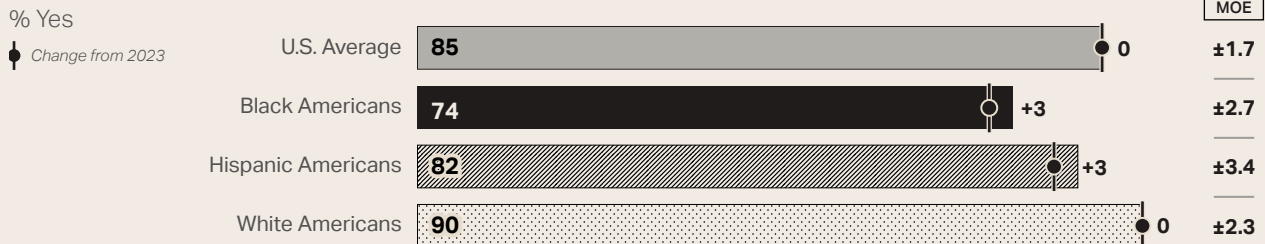
FIGURE 14

Experiences With Police



FAIRLY

You were treated fairly.



RESPECT

You were treated with respect.



POSITIVE

It was an overall positive experience.



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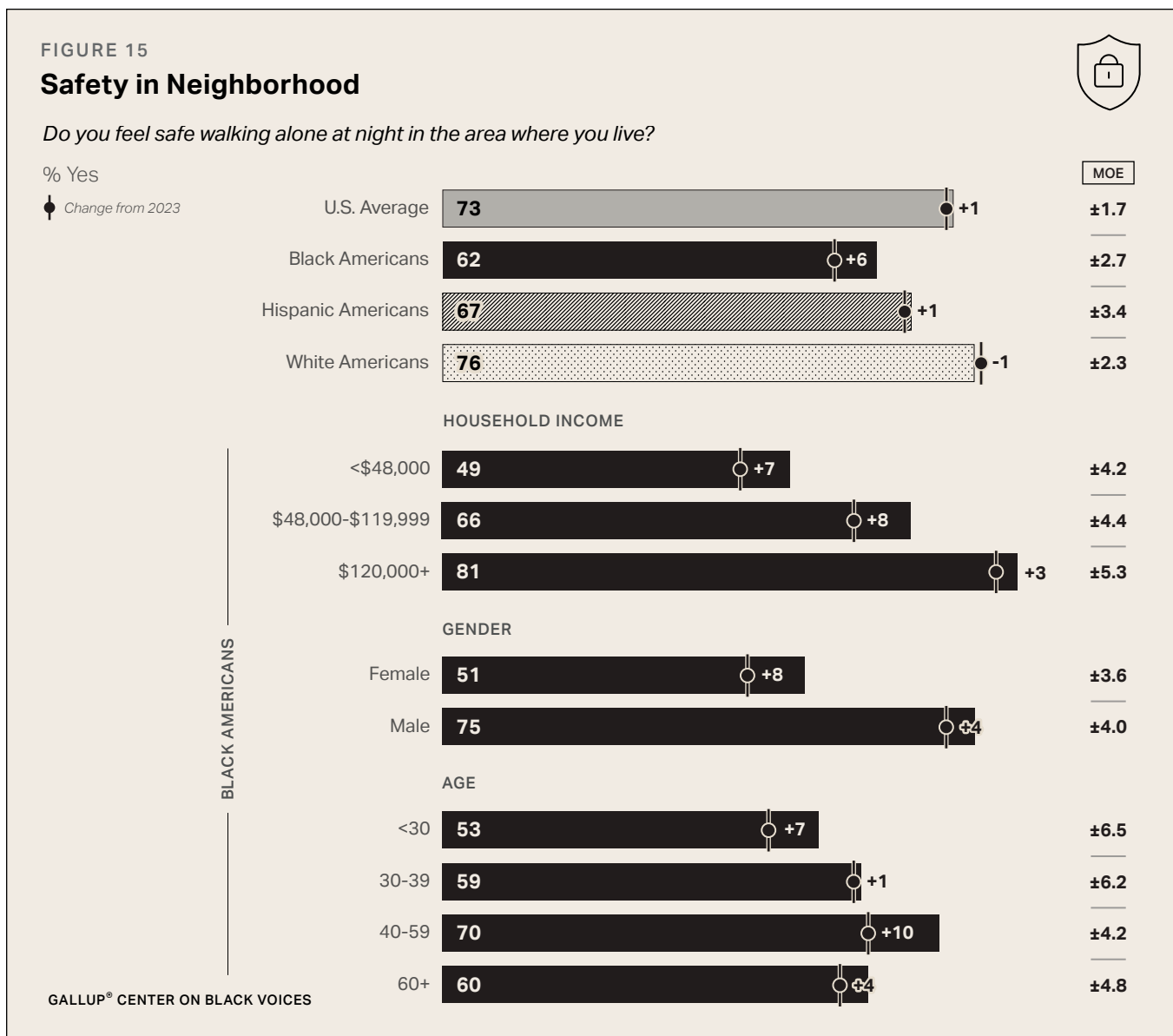
SECTION FIVE

Safety in Neighborhood

Black Americans are more likely now than in 2023 to report feeling safe walking alone at night in the area where they live, but they still lag other racial groups in having a sense of safety.

Perceptions of safety continue to vary greatly by income among Black Americans. Black adults in higher-earning households (81%) remain most likely to report feeling safe, but perceptions of safety have increased meaningfully among those in middle- (66%) and lower-earning (49%) households.

Gender is also a major factor in perceptions of safety, as detailed in the 2023 report. While three in four Black men (75%) report feeling safe walking alone at night in their area, only about half of Black women (51%) report the same. However, Black women's reports of safety have increased to a majority level since 2023.

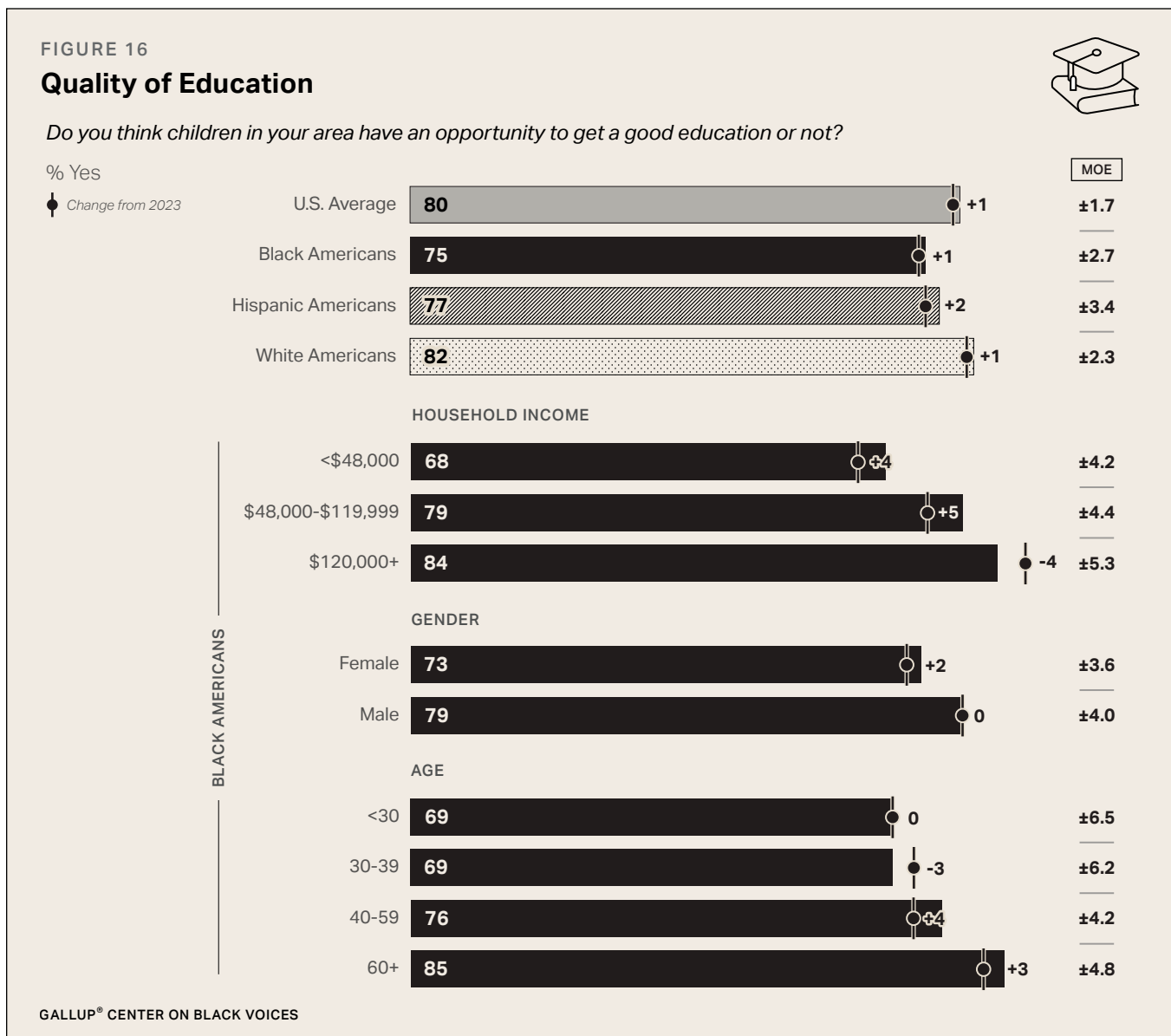


Black residents of urban (57%) and rural (57%) areas are much less likely to feel safe walking alone at night than residents in suburban areas (72%).

Quality of Education

About three in four Black Americans (75%) say they think children in their area have an opportunity to get a good education.

As noted in the past, perceptions of educational opportunities for children vary greatly by income, with Black Americans in higher-earning households (84%) expressing confidence in children's opportunities for a good education at a higher rate than middle- (79%) and lower-income (68%) households. Black men remain somewhat more optimistic than Black women in their views about educational opportunities for children. Meanwhile, older Black Americans are more optimistic about educational opportunities than younger Black Americans.



In U.S. suburbs (82%), Black Americans are more likely than their counterparts in rural (72%) and urban (72%) areas to be optimistic about children's quality educational opportunities. Optimism in opportunities for a quality education is slightly lower in the Midwest (69%) and Northeast (66%) than it is among Black Americans living in the West (76%) and South (80%).

“

I wish we could say that racism and prejudice were only distant memories. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust ... We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.

— **JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL**
United States Supreme Court

Conclusion: Progress and Disparities in Racial Equity for Black Americans

As we reflect on the state of racial equity for Black Americans in 2024, the landscape presents both promising advancements and persistent challenges. This year's data underscores a nuanced narrative of progress, particularly in areas such as physical and career wellbeing, while also highlighting ongoing disparities that call for continued action and policy focus.

Thriving and Economic Disparities: The sense of thriving among Black Americans remains resilient, with 52% of individuals reporting a high level of life satisfaction, maintaining the same rate as 2023. This is a notable achievement compared to the 50% of White Americans and 48% of Hispanic Americans who report similar levels of thriving. Yet, the data reveals that income remains a critical factor, with those in higher-earning households showing significantly higher thriving rates (67%) than their lower-income counterparts (43%). While there has been a promising five-percentage-point increase in thriving among lower-income Black Americans, the income disparity remains stark and highlights the urgent need for equitable economic policies.

Career Wellbeing and Satisfaction: A modest improvement in career wellbeing is evident, with 56% of Black Americans expressing daily enjoyment of their work, up from 53% in 2023. This progress brings Black Americans' job satisfaction in line with White Americans, surpassing that of Hispanic Americans. However, gender and income disparities persist, with Black men (60%) showing higher job satisfaction compared to Black women (53%). Notably, satisfaction among Black women has improved, reflecting a broader trend of increasing career satisfaction across generations. The regional and educational differences in job satisfaction further illuminate the need for targeted interventions to address these gaps.

Social Support and Income Effects: The robust sense of social support among Black Americans is a testament to the community's resilience, with 62% reporting daily positive energy from family and friends. This support, however, is unevenly distributed by income, with those in higher-earning households more likely to experience this positive reinforcement. Age also plays a role, as older Black Americans report higher levels of social support compared to their younger counterparts. Regional variations highlight that while social support is generally strong, disparities persist, particularly in the Midwest, where lower percentages of positive support are reported.

Financial Wellbeing and Disparities: The financial wellbeing of Black Americans shows marked variation, with a significant divide between those who report living comfortably based on their income. The rate of comfortable living among higher-income Black Americans (60%) contrasts sharply with the lower rates observed among those in middle- (32%) and lower-income households (15%). This disparity underscores the need for comprehensive economic reforms to ensure equitable financial stability across all income levels.

Community Satisfaction and Regional Variations: Satisfaction with one's community remains relatively low, with only 47% of Black Americans considering their city or area the ideal place for them. This figure reveals significant regional disparities, with higher satisfaction reported in suburban areas compared to urban, town and rural settings. Income and age further influence perceptions of community satisfaction, indicating that while some improvements are seen, substantial gaps remain, particularly among lower-income and younger Black Americans.

Physical Wellbeing and Gender Shifts: Physical wellbeing among Black Americans has notably improved, with 39% now rating their health as near perfect, surpassing national averages. This increase is particularly evident among Black women, who now rate their health more positively than in previous years. The data reveals ongoing age-related disparities, with younger Black Americans generally reporting lower health ratings than their older counterparts. Regional differences also persist, with urban and suburban residents more likely to report excellent health compared to those in rural areas.

Discrimination and Equity Gaps: The prevalence of racial discrimination remains a critical issue, with significant proportions of Black Americans reporting unfair treatment in various settings. Despite a stable overall rate of police interactions, disparities in respect and overall positive experiences persist, especially when compared to other racial groups. This highlights a persistent challenge in achieving equitable treatment and underscores the need for systemic reforms to address racial biases and improve interactions across all public spheres.

Respect and Recognition at Work: The sense of respect and recognition at work has seen incremental improvements, with 46% of Black employees strongly agreeing that they are treated with respect, aligning with the national average. However, gender disparities persist, as Black men continue to report higher levels of respect than Black women. These findings point to the need for ongoing efforts to ensure equitable workplace treatment and opportunities for career development.

Safety and Community Perceptions: The sense of safety when walking alone at night has improved among Black Americans, yet still lags other racial groups. Income and gender disparities significantly impact perceptions of safety, with higher-income individuals and Black men feeling more secure compared to their lower-income and female counterparts. This data indicates that while progress is being made, substantial work remains to ensure a uniformly high sense of safety across all demographics.

In summary, while 2024 marks notable advancements in some areas of racial equity for Black Americans, the data reveal enduring disparities that must be addressed. The progress in physical health, job satisfaction and community safety must be balanced against ongoing economic, educational and regional disparities. Addressing these issues requires a continued commitment to equitable policies and practices that support all Black Americans in achieving their fullest potential. As we move forward, these insights must guide policymakers, community leaders and advocates in their efforts to foster a more equitable and inclusive society.

Methodology

***Black Thriving in America: 2024* is intended to help capture the perceptions and experiences of everyday life for Black Americans.**

These results are based on a Gallup web study completed by 12,132 U.S. adults, aged 18 and older, Mar. 25-Apr. 3, 2024. The survey was conducted in English. Individuals without internet access were not covered by this study. The Gallup Panel recruited 6,093 respondents for the study and supplemented them with 6,039 respondents from a third-party sample provider.

The Gallup Panel is a probability-based panel of U.S. adults whom Gallup selects using address-based sampling methods and random-digit-dial phone interviews that cover landlines and cellphones. Demographic targets were specified for the third-party sample provider to improve representativeness of the sample.

Gallup uses a multistage weighting process to ensure samples are demographically representative of the U.S. adult population, using the most recent Current Population Survey figures; this process includes weighting Black, Hispanic and White respondents separately for each sample source before combining the sample.

For results based on this sample, the maximum margin of sampling error, which takes into account the design effect from weighting, is ± 1.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error for subgroups are higher. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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