



# Oklahoma City on top as training camps loom

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# Socializing, saving a tricky balancing act



Gen Z and millennials spend on average about \$250 each month on activities with friends, according to a survey. Among respondents, 72% said going to a restaurant or bar is how they spend time with friends, and 32% said they go weekly or more often. GETTY IMAGES

## Gen Z, millennials report overspending on social events

Rachel Barber  
USA TODAY

Maria Stevens' credit cards are maxed out, in part because she relied on them when she was laid off, but she thinks it's also largely because she struggles to say no to invites from her friends.

After attending 30 social events in four years, she said she "crashed out" over pressure to spend on social activities in July. In one month, she was invited to several more events, baby showers, weddings and bachelorette trips, on top of planning her own birthday party.

"I'm like, I'm about to have to hide under a rock because there's no way. ... I was very overwhelmed," Stevens said. "And I was like maybe I'm going to have

**Socializing is still important to Generation Z and millennials – 69% of whom prioritize in-person connection with friends at least weekly. But 3 in 5 say spending on social activities impacts their financial goals, according to a new Ally Bank survey.**

to cut ties with some people somehow."

Stevens, 25, is part of a generation often characterized by loneliness, and the financial strain of friendship might be one reason why. Socializing is still important to Generation Z and millennials – 69% of whom prioritize in-person connection with friends at least weekly. But 3 in 5 say spending on social activities impacts their financial goals, according to a new Ally Bank survey.

It found that overspending is widespread, not an exception, and most young adults are aware they are not budgeting effectively for their social lives.

**Few young people have strict budget for socializing**

When Stevens got engaged in 2023, she and her now-husband decided they would stop going to bars entirely because they were easily spending \$200 in one night – up to \$400 if they also went to dinner beforehand.

That's close to what the average young person spends socializing per month. Gen Z and millennials spend on average about \$250 each month on activities with friends, according to

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# CAP was introduced to reduce bias

**But Army program derided as 'woke' by Hegseth didn't elevate non-White officers**

Davis Winkie  
USA TODAY

An Army program for selecting unit commanders that a spokesman for newly designated Secretary of War Pete Hegseth condemned as "woke" selected White men for command roles at a higher rate than women and minority officers, according to internal data reviewed by USA TODAY.

In 2024, it thwarted a four-star general's attempt to boost an unfit subordinate.

The Army's Command Assessment Program, known as CAP, screened officers for career-defining command jobs by combining a series of physical and mental tests with feedback from previous peers and subordinates. It existed independent of the service's promotion system.

But Hegseth directed the program's cancellation, celebrating the move in a Sept. 3 social media post saying, "Good riddance." Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson, in a statement to USA TODAY, said Hegseth alone ordered the move "because it was a failed, woke experiment."

"Secretary Hegseth has been clear: promotions across the Department of War will be based on merit and performance, not trendy social fads," Wilson said. "The Department's priority is building a lethal, effective military where leadership is earned, not handed out through flawed programs."

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Sept. 5 allowing the use of "Department of War" as a "secondary name" for the Department of Defense, and the use of "Secretary of War" and "Deputy Secretary of War" in official government communications without officially changing the name, which would require action by Congress.

The CAP program was considered a "crown jewel" of the Army's talent management reforms, said Mike Arnold, a fellow at the right-leaning Hoover Institution think tank and former

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# Anthropic agrees to pay \$1.5B to settle author suit

Blake Brittain and Mike Scarcella  
REUTERS

Anthropic told a San Francisco federal judge on Sept. 5 that it has agreed to pay \$1.5 billion to settle a class-action lawsuit from a group of authors who accused the artificial intelligence company of using their books to train its AI chatbot Claude without permission. The plaintiffs in a court filing asked U.S. District Judge William Alsup to approve the settlement, af-

ter announcing the agreement in August without disclosing the terms or amount.

"This settlement sends a powerful message to AI companies and creators alike that taking copyrighted works from these pirate websites is wrong," the authors' lawyers said in a statement. They called it the largest copyright recovery in history and the first of its kind in the artificial intelligence era.

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Andrea Bartz was one of the writers to file the class action lawsuit against Anthropic last year. EMMA MCINTYRE/GETTY IMAGES FOR HELLO SUNSHINE

