CRYPTO ADVISORY

STABLECOIN PAYMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2026



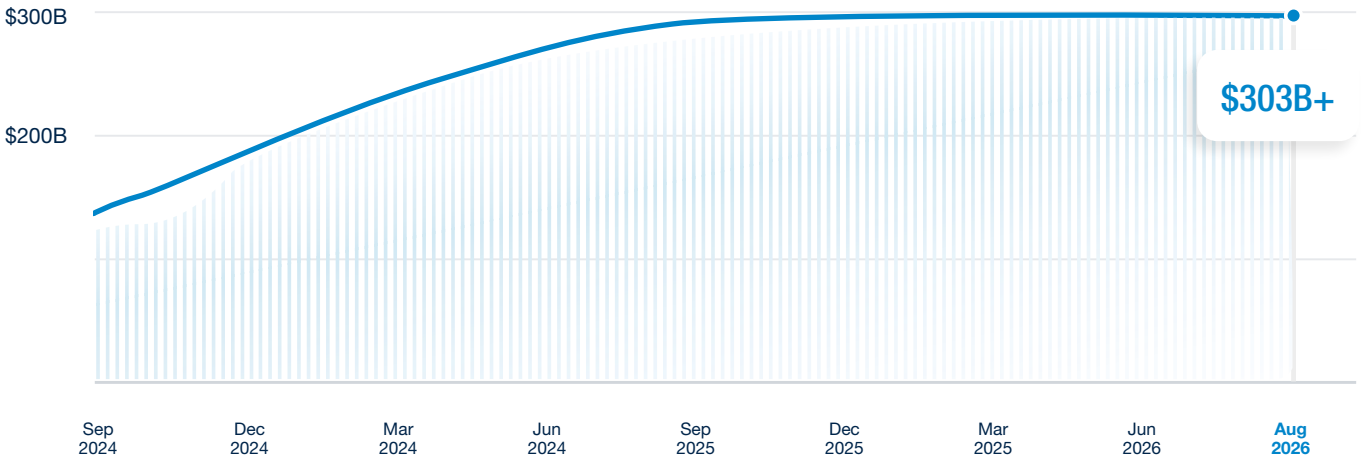
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WHAT STABLECOINS ARE AND WHO IS HOLDING THEM NOW

A stablecoin is a digital token pegged to the U.S. dollar, issued on a public blockchain, and redeemable one-for-one against a reserve of real-world assets. Total stablecoin supply reached $303 billion at the end of August 2026, up 6% year over year and 79% over two years, according to Allium. Tether and Circle together account for 85% of it, and supply has grown from under $10 billion in early 2020. Tether alone backs its tokens with $187.8 billion of assets, about three quarters of it in short-dated Treasuries and Treasury-backed repo. Stablecoin issuers collectively rank among the twenty largest holders of short-term U.S. Treasuries.

Total Stablecoin Supply



Most stablecoin supply sits with intermediaries rather than end users. Consumer wallets account for $43 billion, about 14% of the total. The largest holder categories are $82 billion at institutions, $89 billion on exchanges, and$26 billion in DeFi protocols. A Citizens and Allium analysis published in April 2026, when supply stood near $295 billion, estimated that stablecoin reserves generate roughly $170 billion in incremental Treasury demand, about 58 cents of new demand per dollar of supply, with the balance reallocated from exchange cash, money market funds, and brokerage accounts. Citi projects total stablecoin supply reaching $1.9 trillion by 2030; Standard Chartered puts the figure at $2 trillion by 2028.

Most stablecoin activity is still traders moving in and out of crypto positions; Allium describes payments as one of the fastest-growing uses. The two are hard to separate, and published estimates vary widely as a result.

$303B
Total stablecoin supply
At the end of August 2026

85%
Tether + Circle share
Of total stablecoin supply

14% / $438
Held in consumer wallets
Most supply remains with intermediaries

$89B
Held on exchanges
Largest identified holder category

$82B
Held by institutions
Institutional stablecoin holdings

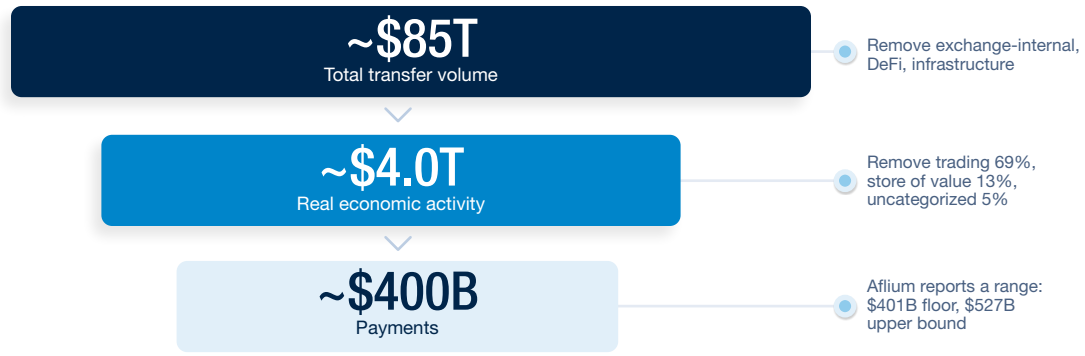
$26B
Held in DeFi protocols
Stablecoins deployed across DeFi

FROM $85 TRILLION IN VOLUME TO ROUGHLY $400 BILLION IN PAYMENTS

Raw transaction volume obscures how much payment activity sits inside it. Total stablecoin transfer volume reached $85 trillion between January and August 2026. Once exchange-internal transfers, DeFi activity, and infrastructure transactions are removed, $4.0 trillion remains as real economic activity. That is a reduction of more than 95%, and it is the single most important adjustment anyone reading stablecoin headlines needs to make.

From transfer volume to payments

January to August 2026



Within that $4.0 trillion, trading accounts for 69%, store-of-value activity for 13%, payments for up to 13%, and 5% remains uncategorized. Applying that final filter, stablecoin payments reached at least $401 billion in the first eight months of 2026, up 42% against the same period a year earlier. Allium's upper bound for the same window is $527 billion, a figure that includes consumer deposits to institutions which the firm treats as trading or custody elsewhere in its own analysis. Allium publishes ranges rather than point estimates because classifying counterparties from on-chain data is an inference problem: a wallet address does not announce that it belongs to a business, so the split depends on entity labeling that carries real uncertainty. Allium describes its classification outputs as estimates rather than measurements.

69%
Trading share
Of $4.0T real economic activity

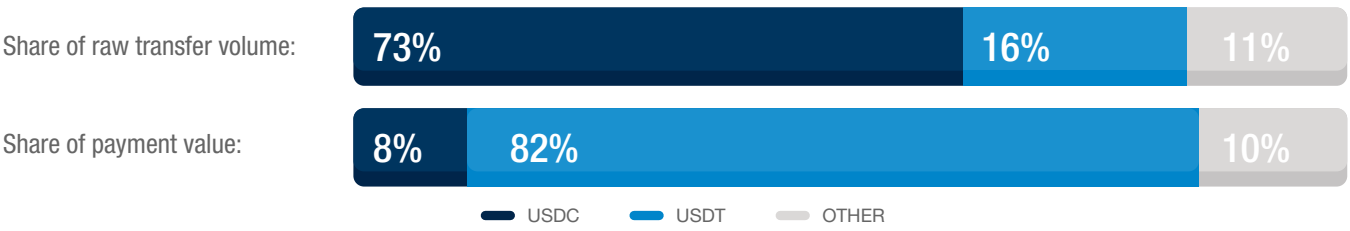
Up to 13%
Payments share
After activity classification

$401B
Stablecoin payments
Minimum, Jan-Aug 2026

+42%
YoY growth
Vs. same period in 2025

The clearest illustration of how much the filtering matters is the gap between the two largest issuers. In August 2026, Circle's USDC accounted for 73% of raw transfer volume but only 8% of payment value. Tether's USDT was the mirror image, at 16% of raw volume and 82% of payment value. The two measures therefore rank the issuers in opposite order, with Circle leading on raw volume and Tether on payment value.

Raw volume and real payments point at different issuers



On Allium's data, payment volume grew 42% year over year while supply grew 6%. The durability of that growth rests on its composition. Payment volume is a function of business operating cycles, which move slowly and largely independently of crypto prices or market sentiment.

For scale, the major card networks collectively process over $25 trillion annually. Stablecoin payments remain a small fraction of global payment flows. Their growth rate, however, is many times that of conventional rails.

BUSINESSES RECEIVE 58% TO 64% OF STABLECOIN PAYMENTS

Under every one of the four classification methods Allium tests, 58% to 64% of payment volume goes to businesses. Business-to-business settlement accounts for $137 billion to $153 billion of that. The four lanes overlap, and none emerges as clearly the largest.

B2B against all payments



Market Structure and B2B Share

Reported B2B shares vary across published estimates depending on computational methodology.

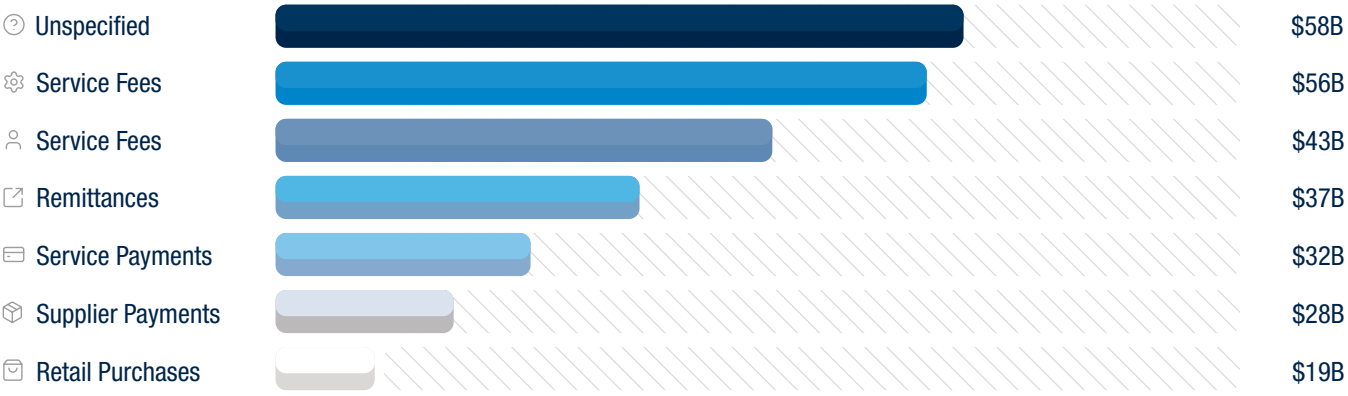
This report adopts the convention that a B2B payment is a transfer where both wallets are classified as businesses. That includes a company paying a supplier invoice, but it may also include a company moving money between its own accounts, a trading firm funding its own desk, and a payment processor settling up with merchants. All of those are businesses sending money to businesses; only the first is a purchase. The B2B figure is therefore larger than the amount of commerce inside it, and no public estimate separates the two. For a bank sizing the opportunity, that distinction is the whole question.

Payment Mix

Breaking payments down by purpose, the operational categories outweigh retail. Among the largest categories, service fees account for $56 billion, salary and payroll for $43 billion, remittances for $37 billion, service payments for $32 billion, and supplier payments for $28 billion, against $19 billion in retail purchases. The largest single category is none of these: $58 billion remains unspecified. These figures are lower-bound estimates, and the categories themselves are assigned by transaction size band rather than observed purpose, so Allium's own caution applies: the labels describe behavior rather than intent. The $43 billion salary figure is inferred from payment size rather than observed directly.

Stablecoin payments by purpose

Annualized volume (early 2026)



Lower-bound estimates, categories assigned by ticket size.

BUSINESSES RECEIVE 58% TO 64% OF STABLECOIN PAYMENTS

Geography and Cross-Border Activity

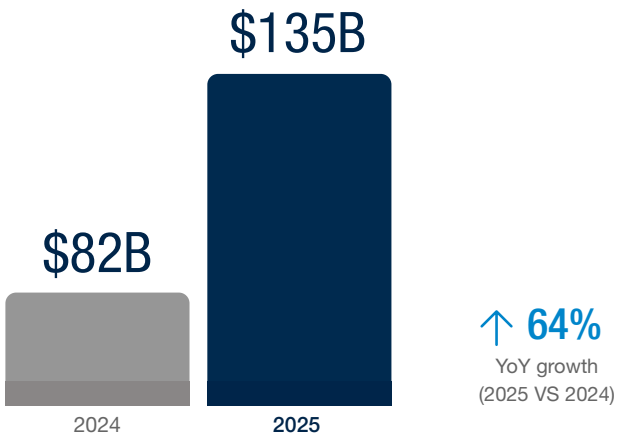
Geography complicates the assumption that stablecoins are primarily a cross-border tool, though the evidence here is thinner than the headline suggests. Allium can identify a country at both ends of a payment for only 3.4% of volume. Within that slice, 61% stayed domestic. For the rest, the location of the transaction is unknown. 828 transfers are the most cross-border lane at 43%, which is the expected pattern; the more interesting point is that even 828 remains 57% domestic.

Where stablecoins do cross borders, they are growing faster than any other rail, though from a small base. A joint FXC Intelligence and Allium analysis put cross-border stablecoin volume at $135 billion in 2025, up 64% from $82 billion, against 9% growth for conventional fiat rails. In share terms that is 0.31% of $44.3 trillion in retail cross-border payment volume, up from 0.2% in 2024.

The lane-level detail cuts against the common framing: consumer-to-consumer adoption runs at 0.95% and business-to-consumer at 0.89%, while 828 stablecoin payments account for just 0.19% of 828 cross-border volume. Stablecoins have made more progress as a consumer cross-border instrument than as a corporate one.

Cross-border stablecoin volume

A joint FXC Intelligence and Allium analysis



Emerging Payment Use Cases

29M

Monthly transfers
Agentic payments have grown sevenfold by count over the past year.

7x

Growth by count
Since October 2025

$3.6M → $3.6M

Monthly value
Dollars moving through agentic payments fell from $3.6 million a month to $1.6 million.

Agentic payments have grown sevenfold by count since October 2025, to 29 million monthly transfers, while the dollars moving through them fell from $3.6 million a month to $1.6 million. That growth has been led by x402, a protocol that lets software agents pay for services like data and API calls without a human in the loop. The average payment is now six cents, so the rail is scaling by transaction count rather than by value. On the consumer side, card-linked spending continues to grow, with Ether.ti Cash reaching $108 million in monthly spend by July 2026, the last complete card month in Allium's data. Allium tracks card spend separately from the $401 billion payment figure.

Ether.fi Cash

$108M

Monthly spend by July 2026

On the consumer side, card-linked spending continues to grow, with Ether.ti Cash reaching $108 million in monthly spend by August 2026

Card spend tracked separately

Allium tracks card spend separately from the $401 billion payment figure.

WHERE THE PAYMENTS LAND AND WHICH CHAINS CARRY THEM

Where the payments land?

Allium can identify the receiving country for about 13.5% of payment volume, and within that slice the picture is more mixed than the emerging-markets framing suggests.

Through August 2026, wallets in Thailand received an estimated $10.8 billion, followed by Turkey at $7.8 billion, Indonesia at $6.3 billion, Mexico at $6.1 billion, and the United States at $5.7 billion, with South Korea, Australia, and Taiwan close behind. Half of the top eight are high-income markets. The pattern reflects where dollar access, trade finance, and remittance demand overlap, but it is not a story about emerging markets alone.

Top Receiving Markets

(Estimated wallet receipts, Jan-Aug 2026)



Source: Allium, Jan-Aug 2026. Attributed volume; not a complete ranking.

Stablecoins in practice: Argentina and beyond

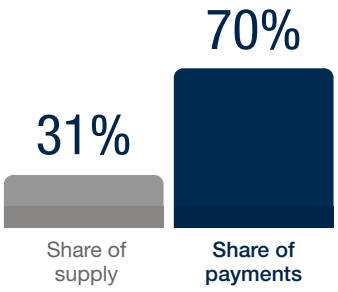
In countries where local currencies are volatile, banking infrastructure is limited, or cross-border payments through traditional channels are slow and expensive, stablecoins have become a practical tool for holding and moving dollars.

Argentina is the clearest case: stablecoins account for 94% of all peso-denominated cryptocurrency trading, the highest such ratio among major fiat currencies tracked by Artemis, according to a162 crypto research published in August 2026. Years of triple-digit inflation, which peaked at 289% year over year in April 2024, made Argentines expert dollar-seekers, and stablecoins turned out to be the most accessible path to dollar exposure when capital controls restricted the traditional alternatives.

Even after the government lifted most personal dollar-purchase restrictions in April 2025, a162 found that USDC paycheck payments through Deel leveled off rather than reversing, while wallet data showed downloads climbing every quarter as monthly inflation fell from 25.5% to 2.1%.

India, Nigeria, Vietnam, Turkey, and the Philippines follow similar patterns with local variation. India ranked first globally in Chainalysis' 2025 Global Crypto Adoption Index for the third consecutive year, with over 100 million people holding crypto across wallets, exchanges, and self-custody solutions.

Stablecoins serve as both a remittance rail for the country's diaspora flows and an on-ramp for fintech companies integrating blockchain-based payments with domestic infrastructure like UPI, India's real-time interbank payment system. In Latin America, 71 % of institutional respondents in a 2025 Fireblocks survey of 295 executives reported using stablecoins for crossborder payments, the highest regional adoption rate globally and well above the 49% global average.



Which chains carry the payments?

The same divergence appears at the chain level. In August 2026, Tron held 31 % of stablecoin supply but carried 70% of payment volume. It handles over $20 billion in daily stablecoin transfers, and USDT running on Tron is the dominant configuration across most emerging economies. Most of the cost in a stablecoin remittance sits at the fiat on-ramp and off-ramp rather than in the network fee.

THE INSTITUTIONAL TRANSITION NOW UNDERWAY

In September 2026, twenty-one financial institutions announced plans to form a dedicated company to issue a U.S. dollar-denominated stablecoin, with a target launch in the first half of 2027. The group spans North America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, and includes Bank of America, Citi, Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo, Deutsche Bank, UBS, Santander, MUFG, and Fidelity Investments. Separately, JPMorgan, Bank of America, Citi, and Wells Fargo are building a shared tokenized deposit network through The Clearing House. Banks see the stakes as substantial: on Bank of America's fourth-quarter 2025 earnings call, chief executive Brian Moynihan cited Treasury Department studies suggesting that up to $6 trillion in deposits, roughly 30% to 35% of U.S. commercial bank deposits, could move out of the banking system if interest-bearing stablecoins were permitted.

21M institutions — Announced plans to form a dedicated company to issue a U.S. dollar-denominated stablecoin, with a target launch in the first half of 2027.

$6T in deposit at risks — 30% to 35% of U.S. commercial bank deposits

Dual track strategy

The two initiatives represent a dual-track strategy. Tokenized deposits are the defensive move: keeping deposit-like value within the regulated banking perimeter, settling on permissioned infrastructure the banks control. The stablecoin consortium is the offensive play: issuing tokens that can move across public blockchains, competing directly with USDT and USDC in the same open markets where adoption is already entrenched.

SoFi launched SoFiUSD to enterprise clients in December 2025 and brought it into its consumer app in May 2026, making it the first stablecoin from a U.S. nationally chartered bank available directly in a banking app. The token itself is not interest-bearing and is not FDIC-insured. JPMorgan rolled out JPMD on Coinbase's Base network. BNY expanded its USDC infrastructure to let institutional clients custody, mint, and redeem the token directly.

Defensive move
Tokenized deposits
Keeping deposit-like value within the regulated banking perimeter and settling on permissioned infrastructure the banks control.

Offensive play
The stablecoin consortium
Issuing tokens that can move across public blockchains and compete directly with USDT and USDC in the same open markets where adoption is already entrenched.

The payment networks have progressed on a similar timeline. Visa announced on September 8, 2026 that its stablecoin settlement volume had crossed a $20 billion annualized run rate, up more than fifteenfold year over year and up from roughly $7 billion in April; as of its fiscal second quarter, more than 160 stablecoin-linked card programs were live globally. Mastercard agreed in March 2026 to acquire stablecoin infrastructure firm BVNK for $1.5 billion plus up to $300 million contingent consideration, a transaction that closed on August 3, 2026. Stripe, which acquired Bridge for $1.1 billion in a deal announced in late 2024, reported in its annual letter that Bridge's stablecoin volume more than quadrupled over the year.

The Genius Act: First Federal Framework

The GENIUS Act, passed in 2025, is the first comprehensive U.S. federal stablecoin framework. Every token must be fully backed, and reserves are restricted to cash and very short-dated government instruments: Treasury securities with 93 days or less remaining, repos secured by them, government money market funds, and deposits at the Federal Reserve or an insured bank. The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), the federal bank regulator, is the lead supervisor, with carve-outs for bank-owned issuers and for issuers under $10 billion. Qualifying stablecoins fall outside the SEC's and CFTC's remit.

Accounting rules are also gaining clarity, which will be a key unlock for corporate treasury adoption. On August 18, 2026, FASB released a proposed Accounting Standards Update that would clarify how qualifying stablecoins can be classified as cash equivalents on corporate balance sheets. To qualify, a stablecoin must carry an on-demand contractual redemption right directly with the issuer, redeem at a known par value in fiat currency, and be backed by segregated reserves at a 1 :1 ratio in short-term, highly liquid assets. The proposal is in a 90-day comment period ending November 19. If finalized, it removes a significant obstacle to corporate treasurers holding stablecoins the way they hold money market funds, though custody, tax treatment, audit, and bank-counterparty questions remain unresolved. The pace at which other jurisdictions build equivalent regulatory and accounting clarity will shape whether institutional adoption accelerates globally or fragments across regimes.



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METHODOLOGY NOTE

Supply, volume, payment, chain, and country figures are from Allium's State of Stablecoins and Payments, September 2026, covering January to August 2026. Allium publishes payments as a range and describes its classifications as estimates from entity labeling rather than measurements. Country attribution covers 13.5% of payment volume and the domestic split 3.4%; both should be read as rankings within the attributed slice. Purpose categories are assigned by transaction size band.

Reserve figures are from Tether International's Financial Figures and Reserves Report as of 30 June 2026, on which BDO Advisory Services issued an ISAE 3000R assurance opinion, which is not an audit. Also referenced: Citizens and Allium (April 2026); FXC Intelligence and Allium (July 2026); Artemis (October 2025); a16z crypto (August 2026); Chainalysis' 2025 Global Crypto Adoption Index; Fireblocks (2025); Bank of America's fourth-quarter 2025 earnings call; FASB's proposed ASU on cash equivalents (August 2026); and Citi and Standard Chartered. Institutional and payment-network developments are drawn from public company announcements, SEC filings, and Visa investor disclosures.

Allium dashboards: go.allium.so/stablecoins-sep-2026, go.allium.so/payments-sep-2026, go.allium.so/geo-sep-2026.

Data as of September 15, 2026; Allium's underlying data runs through August 31, 2026. Informational only. Not investment advice.

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