

October
2025

NFIB

SMALL BUSINESS

ECONOMIC

TRENDS

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SMALL BUSINESS OPTIMISM INDEX COMPONENTS

Index Component	Seasonally Adjusted Level	Change from Last Month	Contribution to Index Change
Plans to Increase Employment	15%	-1	*
Plans to Make Capital Outlays	23%	2	*
Plans to Increase Inventories	-2%	-3	*
Expect Economy to Improve	20%	-3	*
Expect Real Sales Higher	6%	-2	*
Current Inventory (too low)	-4%	3	*
Current Job Openings	32%	0	*
Expected Credit Conditions	-3%	4	*
Now a Good Time to Expand	13%	2	*
Earnings Trends	-25%	-9	*
Total Change		-7	

Based on a Survey of Small and Independent Business Owners

NFIB
SMALL BUSINESS
ECONOMIC TRENDS

NFIB Research Center has collected Small Business Economic Trends Data with Quarterly surveys since 1973 and monthly surveys since 1986. The sample is drawn from the membership files of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). Each was mailed a questionnaire and one reminder. Subscriptions for twelve monthly SBET issues are \$250. Historical and unadjusted data are available, along with a copy of the questionnaire, from the NFIB Research Center. You may reproduce Small Business Economic Trends items if you cite the publication name and date and note it is a copyright of the NFIB Research Center. © NFIB Research Center. ISBS #0940791-24-2. Chief Economist William C. Dunkelberg and Executive Director of the NFIB Research Center Holly Wade are responsible for the report.

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SUMMARY

OPTIMISM INDEX

The Small Business Optimism Index for October was 98.2, down 0.6 points from September but remaining above its 52-year average of 98. Of the 10 Optimism Index components, four increased, five decreased, and one was unchanged. A deterioration in earnings trends contributed most to the drop in the Optimism Index. As optimism declined in October, so did the level of uncertainty. The Uncertainty Index fell 12 points from September to 88, the lowest reading of this year (but historically high). A decrease in owners reporting that they are uncertain about expansion outlook contributed most to the fall in the Uncertainty Index.

LABOR MARKETS

In October, 32% (seasonally adjusted) of all owners reported job openings they could not fill in the current period, unchanged for the second consecutive month. Before August, the last time unfilled job openings hit 32% was in December 2020. Twenty-eight percent had openings for skilled workers (unchanged from September), and 11% had openings for unskilled labor (down 2 points). A seasonally adjusted net 15% of owners plan to create new jobs in the next three months, down 1 point from September. This marks the first decline since hiring plans started to increase in May 2025. Overall, 56% reported hiring or trying to hire in October, down 2 points from September. Forty-nine percent (88% of those hiring or trying to hire) of owners reported few or no qualified applicants for the positions they were trying to fill (down 1 point). Thirty-one percent of owners reported few qualified applicants for their open positions (up 2 points), and 18% reported none (down 3 points). The last 12 months show clear movement towards a somewhat easier hiring environment, as the percent reporting “few” has strongly exceeded the percent reporting “none.” In October, 27% of small business owners cited labor quality as their single most important problem, up 9 points from September and the highest level since the record high of 29% in November 2021. Labor quality ranked as the top problem and was 11 points higher than taxes which ranked second. Labor quality reported as the single most important problem was the highest in the construction, transportation, and professional services industries, and lowest in finance and agriculture. Nearly half (49%) of small businesses in the construction industry reported labor quality as their single most important problem, 22 points higher than for all firms.

CAPITAL SPENDING

Fifty-five percent of small business owners reported capital outlays in the last six months, down 1 point from September. Of those making expenditures, 36% reported spending on new equipment (down 6 points), 22% acquired vehicles (unchanged), and 14% improved or expanded facilities (unchanged). Thirteen percent spent money on new fixtures and furniture (up 2 points), and 3% acquired new buildings or land for expansion (down 2 points). Twenty-three percent (seasonally adjusted) plan capital outlays in the next six months, up 2 points from September. A bit anemic overall however.

This survey was conducted in October 2025. A sample of 10,000 small-business owners/members was drawn. Nine hundred eighty-four (984) usable responses were received — a response rate of 9.8 percent.

SALES AND INVENTORIES

A net -13% of all owners (seasonally adjusted) reported higher nominal sales in the past three months, down 6 points from September. The net percent of owners expecting higher real sales volumes fell 2 points from September to a net 6% (seasonally adjusted). The net percent of owners reporting inventory gains fell 3 points to a net -6% (seasonally adjusted). Not seasonally adjusted, 10% reported increases in stocks (unchanged), and 15% reported reductions (up 3 points). A net -4% (seasonally adjusted) of owners viewed current inventory stocks as “too low” in October, up 3 points from September’s largest monthly decline in the survey’s history. A net -2% (seasonally adjusted) of owners plan inventory investment in the coming months, down 3 points from September. In October, 60% of small business owners reported that supply chain disruptions were affecting their business to some degree, down 4 points from September. Four percent reported a significant impact (down 1 point), 17% reported a moderate impact (down 1 point), 39% reported a mild impact (down 2 points), and 39% reported no impact (up 4 points).

COMPENSATION AND EARNINGS

Seasonally adjusted, a net 26% reported raising compensation, down 5 points from September. A seasonally adjusted net 19% plan to raise compensation in the next three months, unchanged from September. The frequency of reports of positive profit trends fell 9 points from September to a net -25% (seasonally adjusted). This component contributed the greatest to the decline in the Optimism Index. Among owners reporting lower profits, 33% blamed weaker sales, 16% cited the rise in the cost of materials, 9% cited price change for their product(s) or service(s), and 9% cited labor costs. Among owners reporting higher profits, 53% cited sales volume, 17% cited usual seasonal change, and 11% cited higher selling prices.

CREDIT MARKETS

A net 5% reported their last loan was harder to get than in previous attempts, down 2 points from September’s highest reading of this year. In October, a net 1% of owners reported paying a higher interest rate on their most recent loan, down 6 points from September. The average rate paid on short maturity loans was 8.7% in October, down 0.1 points from September. Twenty-three percent of all owners reported borrowing on a regular basis, down 3 points from September.

INFLATION

In October, both actual and planned price increases fell from the previous month. The net percent of owners raising average selling prices fell 3 points from September to a net 21% (seasonally adjusted). Despite the decline, price increases remain above the monthly average of a net 13%, suggesting continued inflationary pressure. Unadjusted, 31% reported higher average prices (down 2 points), and 12% reported lower average selling prices (up 2 points). Looking forward to the next three months, a net 30% (seasonally adjusted) plan to increase prices (down 1 point from September). Twelve percent of owners reported that inflation was their single most important problem in operating their business (higher input costs), down 2 points from September.

OUTLOOK

In October, overall business health declined from the previous month as fewer owners reported it as good and more reported it as fair. When asked to evaluate the overall health of their business, 12% reported it as excellent (up 1 point), and 51% reported it as good (down 6 points). Thirty-three percent reported the health of their business as fair (up 6 points), and 4% reported it as poor (unchanged). The net percent of owners expecting better business conditions fell 3 points from September to a net 20% (seasonally adjusted), the lowest level since April but remaining above the historical average of net 4%. In October, 13% (seasonally adjusted) reported that it is a good time to expand their business, up 2 points from September. Compared to readings during economic expansions, this is a relatively weak reading.

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

In October, labor quality ranked as the top problem for small business owners and was 11 points higher than taxes which ranked second. The percent of small business owners reporting labor quality as the single most important problem for their business rose 9 points from September to 27%. This was the highest level since the record high of 29% in November 2021. Labor costs reported as the single most important problem for business owners fell 3 points from September to 8%. Sixteen percent of small business owners reported taxes as their single most important problem, down 2 points from September and ranking as the second top problem. The percent of small business owners reporting government regulations and red tape as their single most important problem rose 1 point to 7%. Twelve percent of owners reported that inflation was their single most important problem in operating their business, down 2 points from September. The percent of small business owners reporting poor sales as their top business problem remained at 10%. In October, 8% reported the cost or availability of insurance as their single most important problem, unchanged from September. Two percent reported that financing and interest rates was their top business problem in October, down 2 points from September. Five percent reported competition from large businesses as their single most important problem, unchanged from September.

COMMENTARY

OVERVIEW

Uncertainty, while lower than in September, remained high. The upcoming elections (Oct. Survey) and government shutdown likely played a role. Small business owners were reasonably optimistic at the start of the year (Optimism Index at 102.8), but it has been a downhill slide through the last nine or so months with the current reading closing in on the 52-year average of 98. Foreign policy dominates the headlines, with a focus on tariff policy, raising lots of consternation about the cost of inputs and pressures to raise prices. Sales were not strong, and profits took a hit in the third quarter; lots of owners reported profit declines.

Attempts to hire and fill open positions met with little success, leaving job growth negligible even though compensation raised remains above the historical average. The shutdown will depress wage growth as many government employees won't get paid. Much of the missed pay will be disbursed once the shutdown is over, but until then, life will be difficult for many. This will directly and indirectly impact some small businesses.

The shutdown will be resolved by year-end, hopefully sooner, but until then our economic measures will show weak economic growth expectations, slowing sales, and weak job growth. Owners are resilient but it won't be pleasant until the shutdown is ended and the government gets back to business.

Quotes from NFIB Members

"Government continues to put more financial pressure on the construction business. There are more regulations and higher OSHA fines against the people who actually build this country." - Construction, OR

"It is becoming increasingly difficult to provide medical insurance that the company and employees can afford." - Manufacturing, OH

The cost of health insurance goes up every year since ACA, and no small business can keep up with the costs. This increase will surely kill many small businesses in the next couple of years. Soon I will no longer be able to offer health insurance to my employees. In turn this will cost me good employees." - Manufacturing, PA

As usual, taxes at the county and state level are always rising, however our prices to sell our goods remain similar to last year as consumers are struggling (in this state) with the same tax burdens." - Agriculture, WA

"Expecting an economic slowdown due to interest rates still being relatively high." - Construction, MT

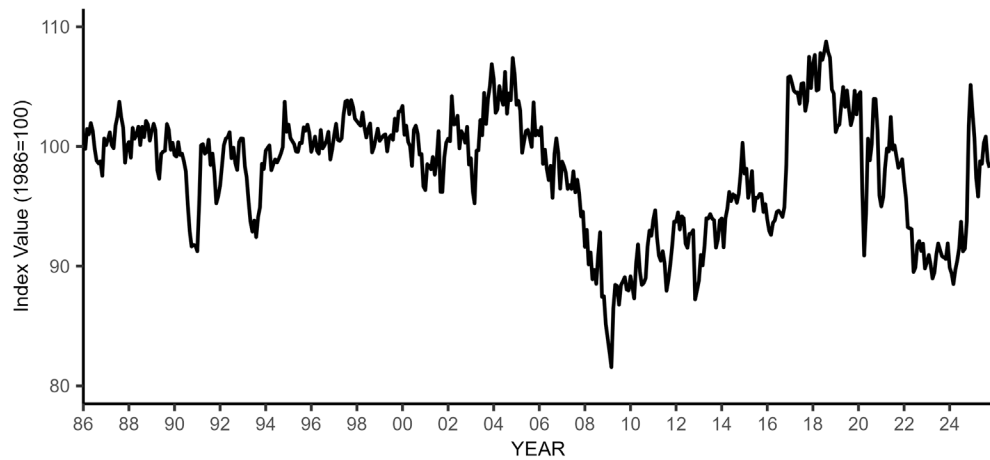
"Insurance rates are preventing us from making capital improvements." - Services, OH

"I feel the demand for my products is stagnant. It seems to be the same for others as well." - Wholesale, ME

OVERVIEW - SMALL BUSINESS OPTIMISM

OPTIMISM INDEX

Based on Ten Survey Indicators
(Seasonally Adjusted 1986=100)



¹ Questions included in the Optimism Index (see pages 22-23)

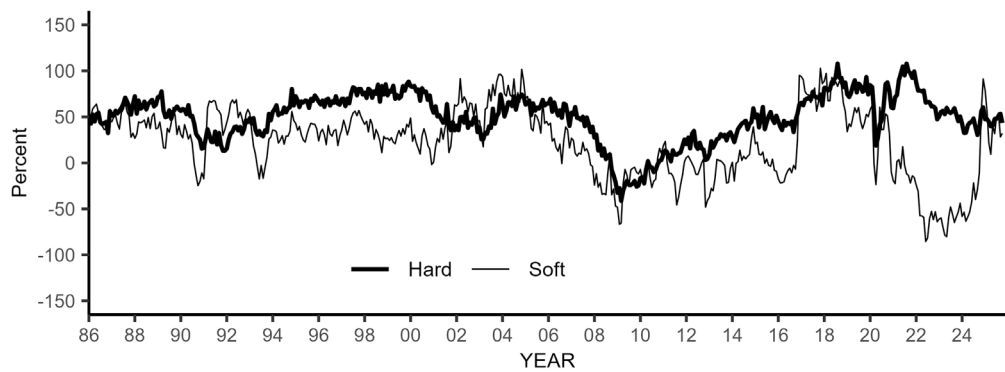
OPTIMISM INDEX

Based on Ten Survey Indicators
(Seasonally Adjusted 1986=100)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	104.3	104.5	96.4	90.9	94.4	100.6	98.8	100.2	104.0	104.0	101.4	95.9
2021	95.0	95.8	98.2	99.8	99.6	102.5	99.7	100.1	99.1	98.2	98.4	98.9
2022	97.1	95.7	93.2	93.2	93.1	89.5	89.9	91.8	92.1	91.3	91.9	89.8
2023	90.3	90.9	90.1	89.0	89.4	91.0	91.9	91.3	90.8	90.7	90.6	91.9
2024	89.9	89.4	88.5	89.7	90.5	91.5	93.7	91.2	91.5	93.7	101.7	105.1
2025	102.8	100.7	97.4	95.8	98.8	98.6	100.3	100.8	98.8	98.2		

OPTIMISM INDEX COMPONENTS

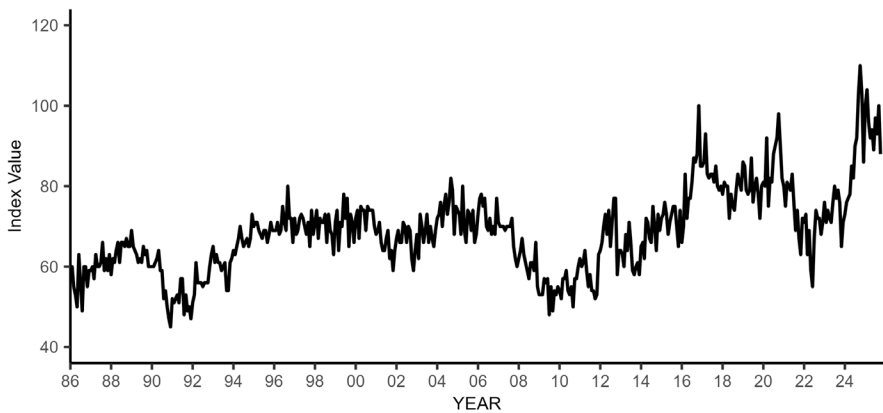
Hard: Job Creation Plans, Job Openings, Inventory Plans, Earnings, Capital Expenditure Plans
Soft: Expected Business Conditions, Outlook for Expansion, Expected Real Sales, Expected Credit Conditions, Inventory Satisfaction



SMALL BUSINESS UNCERTAINTY

UNCERTAINTY INDEX

Sum of "Don't Know" & "Uncertain" Answers on 6 Questions



² Questions included in the Uncertainty Index (see pages 22-23)

UNCERTAINTY INDEX

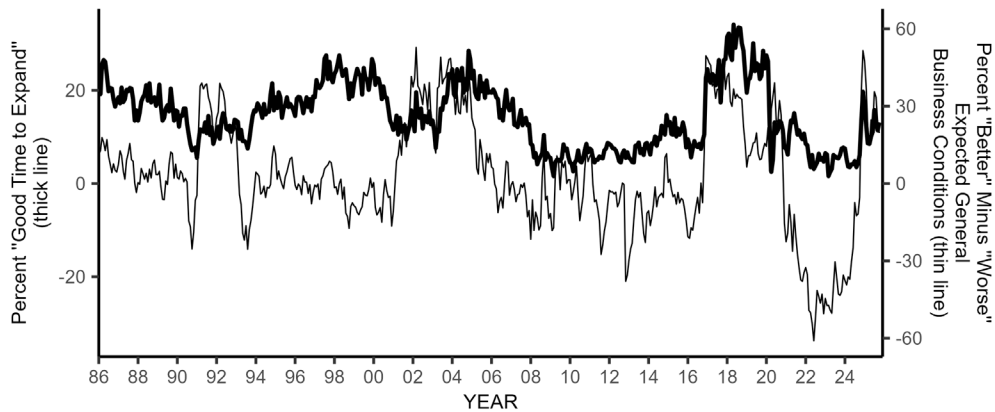
Sum of "Don't Know" & "Uncertain" Answers on 6 Questions

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	81	80	92	75	82	81	88	90	92	98	90	82
2021	80	75	81	80	79	83	76	69	74	67	63	72
2022	71	73	63	69	59	55	67	74	72	72	68	71
2023	76	71	74	72	71	76	80	77	79	76	65	71
2024	73	76	77	78	85	82	90	92	103	110	103	86
2025	100	104	96	92	94	89	97	93	100	88		

SMALL BUSINESS OUTLOOK

OUTLOOK

Good Time to Expand and Expected General Business Conditions
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



SMALL BUSINESS OUTLOOK (CONTINUED)

OUTLOOK FOR EXPANSION

Percent Next Three Months "Good Time to Expand"
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	28	26	13	3	5	13	11	12	13	13	12	8
2021	8	6	11	14	13	15	13	11	11	10	10	11
2022	9	8	6	4	6	3	4	5	6	5	6	5
2023	7	6	2	3	3	6	6	6	5	6	8	8
2024	8	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	6	14	20
2025	17	12	9	9	10	11	16	14	11	13		

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR EXPANSION OUTLOOK

Reason Percent by Expansion Outlook
October 2025

Reason	Good Time	Not Good Time	Uncertain
Economic Conditions	5	23	17
Sales Prospects	2	4	3
Fin. & Interest Rates	0	4	3
Cost of Expansion	0	6	6
Political Climate	3	7	8
Other / Not Available	0	3	2

OUTLOOK FOR GENERAL BUSINESS CONDITIONS

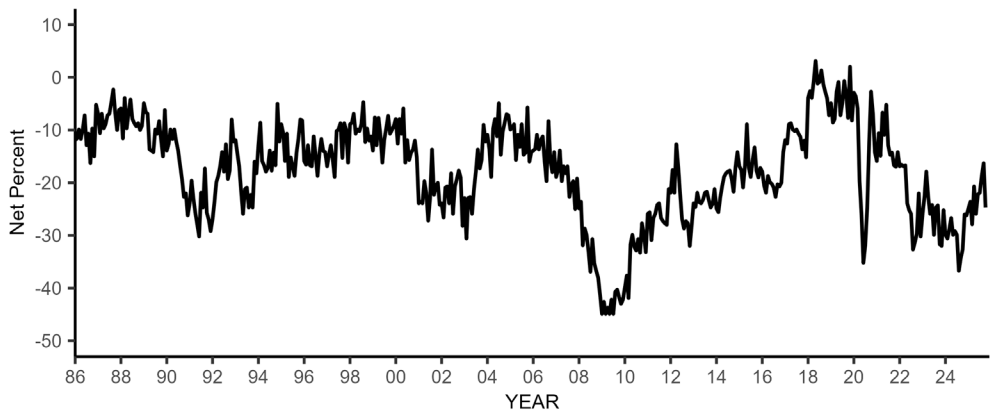
Net Percent ("Better" Minus "Worse") Six Months From Now
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	14	22	5	29	34	39	25	24	32	27	8	-16
2021	-23	-19	-8	-15	-26	-12	-20	-28	-33	-37	-38	-35
2022	-33	-35	-49	-50	-54	-61	-52	-42	-44	-46	-43	-51
2023	-45	-47	-47	-49	-50	-40	-30	-37	-43	-43	-42	-36
2024	-38	-39	-36	-37	-30	-25	-7	-13	-12	-5	36	52
2025	47	37	21	15	25	22	36	34	23	20		

SMALL BUSINESS EARNINGS

EARNINGS

Actual Last Three Months
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



ACTUAL EARNINGS CHANGES

Net Percent (“Higher” Minus “Lower”) Last Three Months
Compared to Prior Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	-3	-4	-6	-20	-26	-35	-32	-25	-12	-3	-7	-14
2021	-16	-11	-15	-7	-11	-5	-13	-15	-14	-17	-17	-14
2022	-17	-17	-17	-17	-24	-25	-26	-33	-31	-30	-22	-30
2023	-26	-23	-18	-23	-26	-24	-30	-25	-24	-32	-32	-25
2024	-30	-31	-29	-27	-30	-29	-30	-37	-34	-33	-26	-26
2025	-25	-24	-28	-21	-26	-22	-22	-19	-16	-25		

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR LOWER EARNINGS

Percent Reason
October 2025

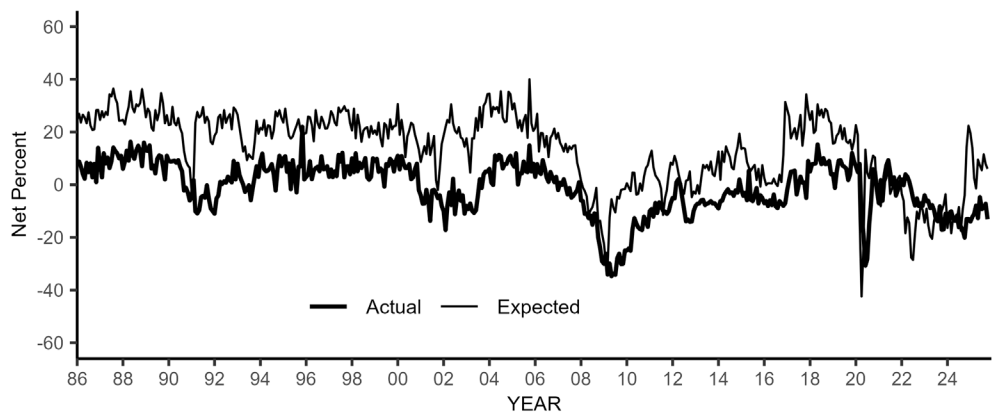
Reason	Current Month	One Year Ago	Two Years Ago
Sales Volume	12	16	13
Increased Costs*	10	14	18
Cut Selling Prices	3	3	4
Usual Seasonal Change	4	3	3
Other	2	1	1

* Increased costs include labor, materials, finance, taxes, and regulatory costs.

SMALL BUSINESS SALES

SALES

Actual (Prior Three Months) and Expected (Next Three Months)
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



ACTUAL SALES CHANGES

Net Percent ("Higher" Minus "Lower") Last Three Months
Compared to Prior Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	7	5	8	-11	-19	-31	-28	-15	-6	6	5	-2
2021	-7	2	-6	3	7	9	5	0	3	-4	-2	1
2022	2	0	4	3	1	-2	-5	-8	-5	-8	-7	-8
2023	-4	-6	-6	-9	-8	-10	-13	-14	-8	-17	-17	-11
2024	-11	-13	-10	-13	-14	-12	-16	-16	-17	-20	-13	-13
2025	-14	-12	-11	-8	-13	-5	-9	-9	-7	-13		

SALES EXPECTATIONS

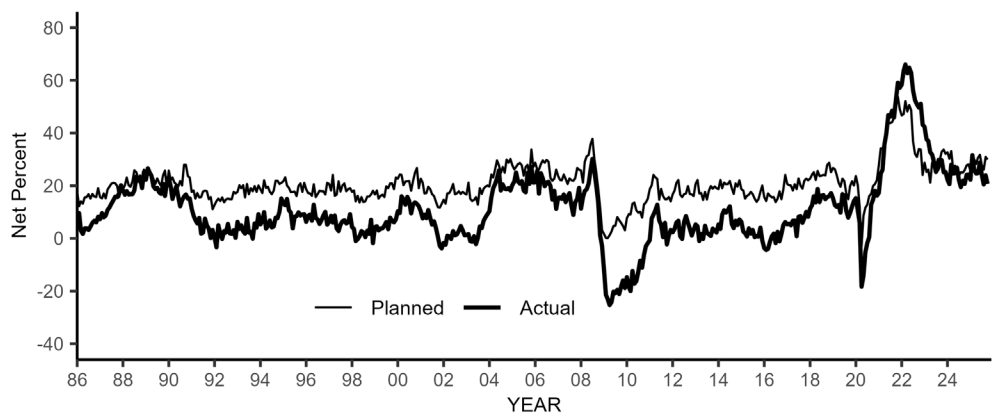
Net Percent ("Higher" Minus "Lower") During Next Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	23	19	-12	-42	-24	13	5	3	8	11	10	-4
2021	-6	-8	0	1	3	7	-4	-2	2	0	2	3
2022	-3	-6	-18	-12	-15	-28	-29	-19	-10	-13	-8	-10
2023	-14	-9	-15	-19	-21	-14	-12	-14	-13	-10	-8	-4
2024	-16	-10	-18	-12	-13	-13	-9	-18	-9	-4	14	22
2025	20	14	3	-1	10	7	6	12	8	6		

SMALL BUSINESS PRICES

PRICES

Actual Last Three Months and Planned Next Three Months
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



ACTUAL PRICE CHANGES

Net Percent ("Higher" Minus "Lower")
Compared to Three Months Ago
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	15	11	6	-18	-14	-5	-2	1	13	15	18	16
2021	17	25	26	36	40	47	46	49	46	53	59	57
2022	58	64	66	63	65	63	56	53	51	50	51	43
2023	42	38	37	33	32	29	25	27	29	30	25	25
2024	22	21	28	25	25	27	22	20	22	21	24	24
2025	22	32	26	25	25	29	24	21	24	21		

PRICE PLANS

Net Percent ("Higher" Minus "Lower") in the Next Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	24	20	12	-3	9	12	13	16	17	20	21	22
2021	28	34	34	36	43	44	44	44	46	51	54	49
2022	47	47	52	48	51	49	37	32	31	34	34	24
2023	29	25	26	21	29	31	27	30	30	33	34	32
2024	33	30	33	26	28	26	24	25	25	26	28	28
2025	26	29	30	28	31	32	28	26	31	30		

SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT

ACTUAL EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") in the Last Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	9	13	8	-12	-16	-16	-11	-12	-6	-2	-2	-5
2021	0	-3	-2	1	-5	-2	-6	-8	-1	-2	-1	1
2022	-1	1	-2	-2	-4	-2	-4	-8	-4	-2	-3	1
2023	2	4	2	-2	-4	-2	-2	-4	-2	-3	-2	-2
2024	0	-1	-2	0	-2	-5	-3	-6	-4	-3	-1	-3
2025	1	-3	-1	1	-2	-8	-2	-5	-3	-4		

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR JOB OPENINGS

Percent Few or No Qualified Applicants

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	49	52	47	41	37	43	44	46	50	48	47	48
2021	46	51	51	54	57	56	57	60	62	58	56	57
2022	55	57	55	55	61	60	57	57	57	55	54	51
2023	52	54	53	55	55	54	56	54	57	55	50	49
2024	49	51	48	51	51	51	49	56	52	46	48	49
2025	47	48	47	47	48	50	48	43	50	49		

EMPLOYMENT

Planned Next Three Months and Current Job Openings
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT (CONTINUED)

JOB OPENINGS

Percent With Positions Not Able to Fill Right Now
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	37	38	35	24	23	32	30	33	36	33	34	32
2021	33	40	42	44	48	46	49	50	51	49	48	49
2022	47	48	47	47	51	50	49	49	46	46	44	41
2023	45	47	43	45	44	42	42	40	43	43	40	40
2024	39	37	37	40	42	37	38	40	34	35	36	35
2025	35	38	40	34	34	36	33	32	32	32		

HIRING PLANS

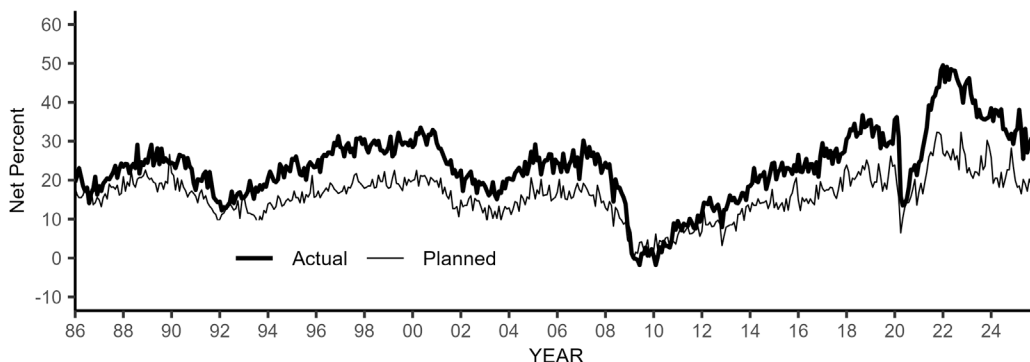
Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") in the Next Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	19	21	9	1	8	16	18	21	23	18	21	17
2021	17	18	22	21	27	28	27	32	26	26	25	28
2022	26	19	20	20	26	19	20	21	23	20	18	17
2023	19	17	15	17	19	15	17	17	18	17	18	16
2024	14	12	11	12	15	15	15	13	15	15	18	19
2025	18	15	12	13	12	13	14	15	16	15		

SMALL BUSINESS COMPENSATION

COMPENSATION

Actual Last Three Months and Planned Next Three Months
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



SMALL BUSINESS COMPENSATION (CONTINUED)

ACTUAL COMPENSATION CHANGES

Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") During Last Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	36	36	31	16	14	14	15	18	23	23	24	21
2021	25	25	28	31	34	39	38	41	42	44	44	48
2022	50	45	49	46	49	48	48	46	45	44	40	44
2023	46	46	42	40	41	36	38	36	36	36	36	36
2024	39	35	38	38	37	38	33	33	32	31	32	29
2025	33	33	38	33	26	33	27	29	31	26		

COMPENSATION PLANS

Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") in the Next Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	24	19	16	7	10	13	14	14	16	18	20	14
2021	17	19	17	20	22	26	27	26	30	32	32	32
2022	27	26	28	27	25	28	25	26	23	32	28	27
2023	22	23	22	21	22	22	21	26	23	24	30	29
2024	26	19	21	21	18	22	18	20	23	23	28	24
2025	20	18	19	17	20	19	17	20	19	19		

PRICES AND LABOR COMPENSATION

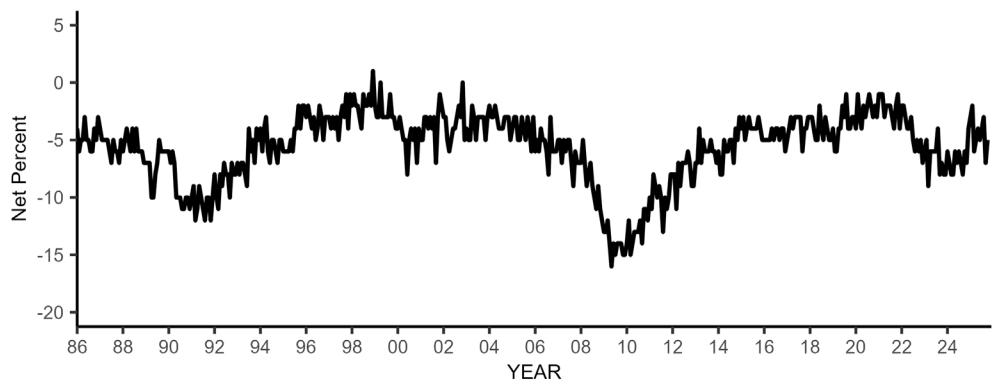
Net Percent Price Increase and Net Percent Compensation
(Seasonally Adjusted)



SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT CONDITIONS

CREDIT CONDITIONS

Loan Availability Compared to Three Months Ago*
January 1986 to October 2025



REGULAR BORROWERS

Percent Borrowing at Least Once Every Three Months

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	31	28	26	29	26	27	26	24	26	25	22	26
2021	23	26	23	24	23	21	21	20	20	23	21	23
2022	23	23	25	26	23	25	26	27	26	28	27	28
2023	29	30	30	31	29	28	27	28	31	27	31	29
2024	29	25	28	31	31	28	27	27	26	25	28	25
2025	27	24	28	26	25	26	25	23	26	23		

AVAILABILITY OF LOANS

Net Percent ("Easier" Minus "Harder")
Compared to Three Months Ago
(Regular Borrowers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	-4	-1	-3	-4	-2	-3	-2	-1	-2	-3	-2	-3
2021	-1	-1	-1	-3	-2	-2	-2	-3	-4	-2	-1	-4
2022	-2	-2	-3	-4	-4	-3	-5	-6	-5	-6	-5	-7
2023	-6	-5	-9	-6	-6	-6	-6	-4	-8	-7	-8	-8
2024	-6	-7	-8	-8	-6	-7	-6	-7	-8	-6	-7	-4
2025	-3	-2	-6	-5	-4	-5	-4	-3	-7	-5		

SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT CONDITIONS (CONTINUED)

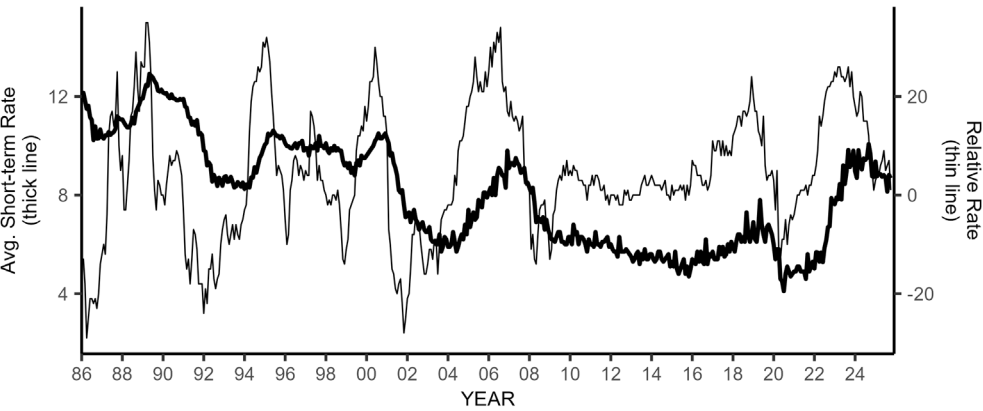
EXPECT EASIER CREDIT CONDITIONS

Net Percent ("Easier" Minus "Harder") During Next Three Months
(Regular Borrowers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	-4	-1	-4	-6	-4	-6	-5	-4	-5	-4	-3	-5
2021	-3	-6	-3	-3	-3	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-3	-4
2022	-4	-4	-4	-5	-4	-5	-7	-8	-6	-8	-6	-9
2023	-8	-6	-9	-8	-10	-8	-8	-6	-10	-9	-11	-8
2024	-8	-6	-8	-9	-7	-7	-7	-8	-8	-6	-5	-2
2025	-4	-3	-4	-7	-4	-4	-4	-4	-7	-3		

INTEREST RATES

Relative Rates and Actual Rates Last Three Months
January 1986 to October 2025



RELATIVE INTEREST RATE PAID BY REGULAR BORROWERS

Net Percent ("Higher" Minus "Lower") Compared to Three Months Ago

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	3	-3	5	-11	-13	-9	-9	-5	-10	-6	-4	-5
2021	-4	-2	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	4
2022	4	6	9	16	14	16	19	21	22	22	23	23
2023	25	24	26	26	24	24	23	24	26	22	25	20
2024	18	16	17	21	20	15	15	15	12	5	5	1
2025	3	4	4	6	7	9	5	6	7	1		

Borrowing at Least Once Every Three Months.

SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT CONDITIONS (CONTINUED)

ACTUAL INTEREST RATE PAID ON SHORT-TERM LOANS BY BORROWERS

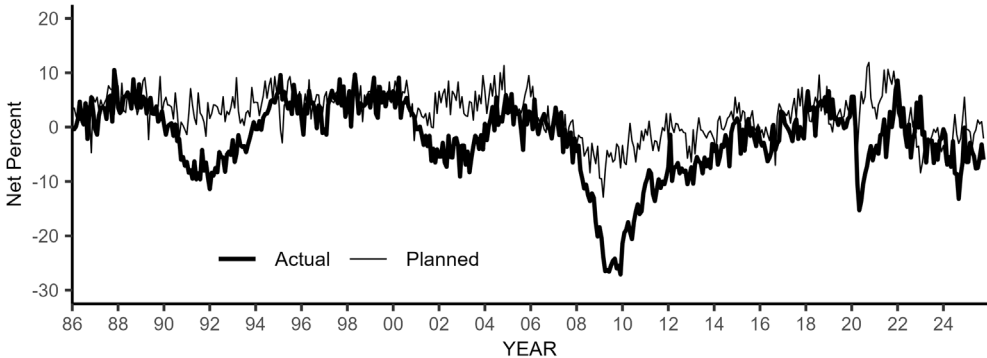
Average Interest Rate Paid

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	6.0	5.4	5.8	5.8	4.6	4.5	4.1	4.8	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.8
2021	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.6	5.6	4.9	5.1	5.3
2022	5.0	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.7	5.3	5.9	6.2	6.7	6.7	7.9	7.7
2023	7.6	7.9	7.8	8.5	7.8	9.2	8.5	9.0	9.8	9.1	9.3	9.8
2024	9.0	8.7	9.8	9.3	9.0	9.5	9.4	9.5	10.1	9.7	8.8	8.7
2025	9.4	8.8	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.1	8.8	8.7		

SMALL BUSINESS INVENTORIES

INVENTORIES

Actual (Last Three Months) and Planned (Next Three Months)
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



ACTUAL INVENTORY CHANGES

Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") During Last Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	6	6	0	-11	-15	-14	-11	-9	-7	-5	-4	-6
2021	-4	-3	-5	-2	-1	1	-6	-2	3	0	3	7
2022	9	5	0	4	-1	-4	1	-6	-2	-1	5	0
2023	6	-1	-1	-7	-2	-3	-3	-7	-3	-6	-3	-2
2024	0	-1	-7	-6	-7	-3	-9	-9	-13	-9	-7	0
2025	-6	-6	-3	-5	-5	-8	-8	-6	-3	-6		

SMALL BUSINESS INVENTORIES (CONTINUED)

CURRENT INVENTORY (TOO LOW)

Net Percent ("Too Low" Minus "Too Large") at Present Time
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	-3	-4	-2	-7	-5	1	1	3	5	4	5	7
2021	5	5	3	7	8	11	12	11	10	9	15	9
2022	7	7	9	6	8	5	2	3	1	0	-2	1
2023	-1	-4	1	-5	-3	-4	-4	-5	-4	-3	0	-5
2024	-4	-4	-5	-4	-8	-2	-4	-5	-4	-2	-2	-1
2025	-1	-5	-7	-6	1	-5	-3	0	-7	-4		

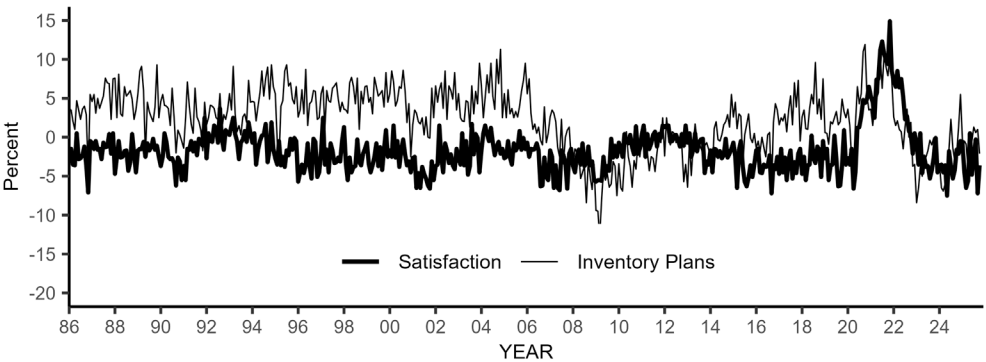
INVENTORY PLANS

Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") in the Next Three to Six Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	4	2	-3	-4	2	7	4	6	11	12	5	4
2021	4	2	4	5	6	11	6	11	9	8	10	8
2022	3	2	2	1	1	-2	1	4	0	2	-4	-4
2023	-8	-7	-4	-5	-2	-3	-2	0	-1	0	-3	-5
2024	-3	-7	-7	-6	-6	-2	2	-1	-3	-2	1	6
2025	0	-1	-1	-4	-1	-1	1	1	1	-2		

INVENTORY SATISFACTION AND INVENTORY PLANS

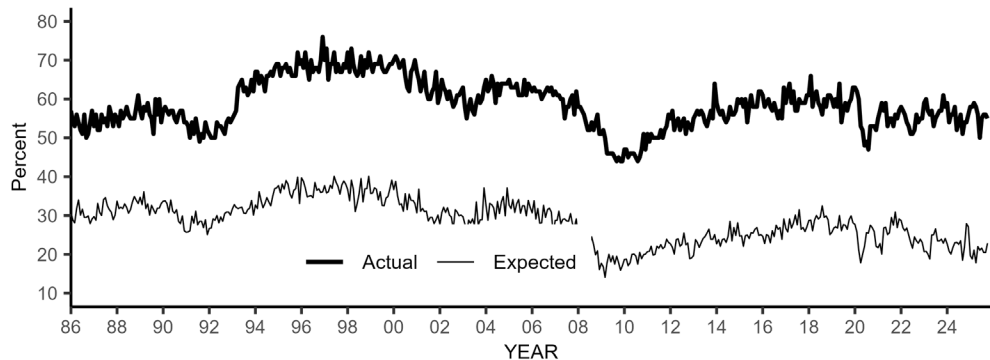
Net Percent ("Too Low" Minus "Too Large") at Present Time
Net Percent Planning to Add Inventories in the Next Three to Six Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)



SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL OUTLAYS

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

Actual Last Six Months and Planned Next Three Months
January 1986 to October 2025
(Seasonally Adjusted)



ACTUAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

Percent Making a Capital Expenditure During the Last Six Months

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	63	62	60	53	52	48	49	47	53	53	53	52
2021	55	57	59	57	59	53	55	55	53	56	55	57
2022	58	57	56	54	53	51	51	52	56	54	55	55
2023	59	60	57	56	57	53	55	56	57	57	61	58
2024	59	54	56	56	58	52	54	56	51	54	54	56
2025	58	58	59	58	56	50	55	56	56	55		

TYPE OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURES MADE

Percent Purchasing or Leasing During Last Six Months

Type	Current Month	One Year Ago	Two Years Ago
Vehicles	22	23	24
Equipment	36	35	37
Furniture or Fixtures	13	11	12
Add. Bldgs. or Land	3	5	7
Improved Bldgs. or Land	14	14	18

SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL OUTLAYS (CONTINUED)

AMOUNT OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURES MADE

Percent Distribution of Per Firm Expenditures
During the Last Six Months

Amount	Current Month	One Year Ago	Two Years Ago
\$1 to \$999	3	1	2
\$1,000 to \$4,999	8	5	4
\$5,000 to \$9,999	5	5	5
\$10,000 to \$49,999	15	17	15
\$50,000 to \$99,999	12	10	12
\$100,000 +	10	15	16
No Answer	1	1	3

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLANS

Percent Planning a Capital Expenditure During Next Three to Six Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	28	26	21	18	20	22	26	26	28	27	26	22
2021	22	23	20	27	27	25	26	30	28	31	27	29
2022	29	27	26	27	25	23	22	25	24	23	24	23
2023	21	21	20	19	25	25	27	24	24	24	23	24
2024	23	21	20	22	23	23	23	24	19	22	28	27
2025	20	19	21	18	22	21	22	21	21	23		

SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH

OVERALL HEALTH OF BUSINESS

October 2025

Rating	Current Month	One Month Ago	Two Months Ago
Excellent	12	11	14
Good	51	57	54
Fair	33	27	27
Poor	4	4	4

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

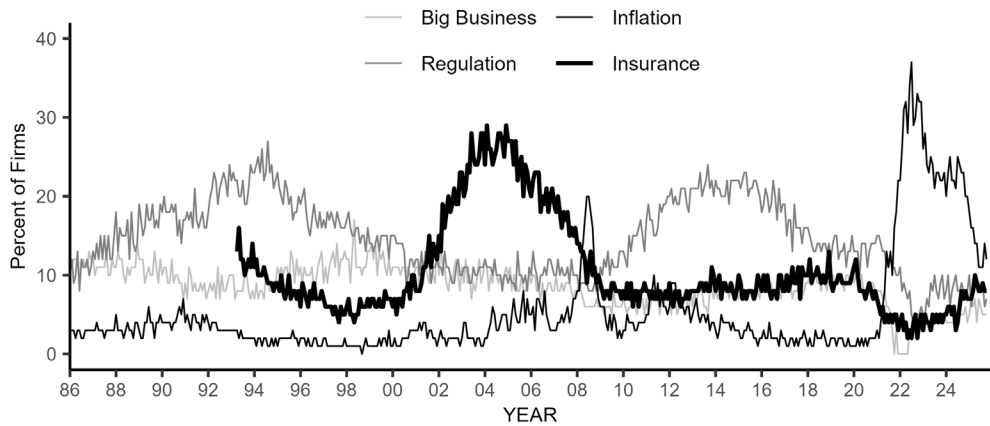
SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

October 2025

Problem	Current	One Year Ago	Survey High	Survey Low
Taxes	16	16	32	8
Inflation	12	23	41	0
Poor Sales	10	9	34	2
Fin. & Interest Rates	2	3	37	0
Cost of Labor	8	8	13	2
Government Regulation	7	8	27	4
Comp. from Large Bus.	5	5	14	0
Quality of Labor	27	20	29	3
Cost/Avail. of Insurance	8	7	29	0
Other	3	1	31	0

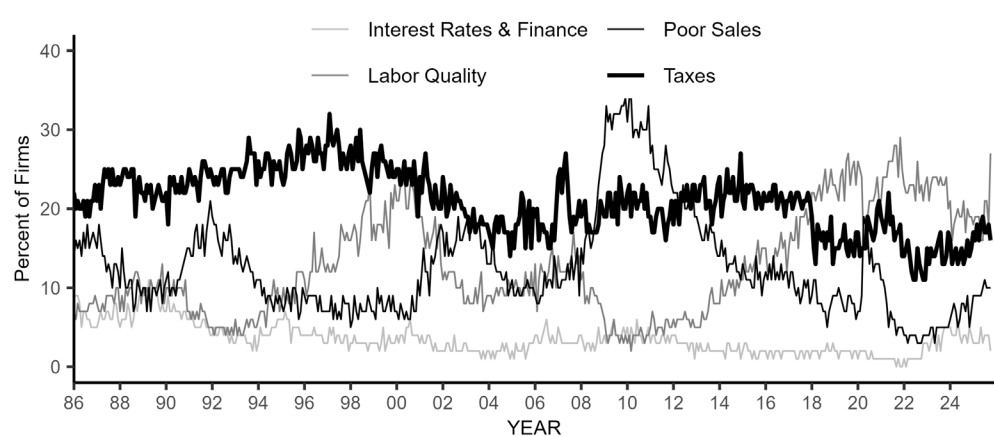
SELECTED SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

Inflation, Big Business, Insurance, and Regulation
January 1986 to October 2025



SELECTED SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

Taxes, Interest Rates, Sales, and Labor Quality
January 1986 to October 2025



SURVEY PROFILE

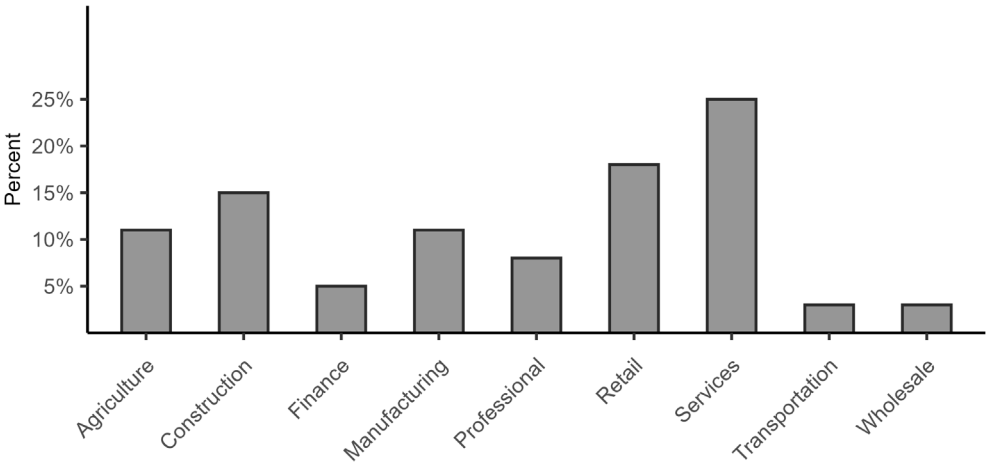
OWNER/MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC SURVEY NFIB

Actual Number of Firms

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	1692	641	627	1832	814	670	1652	751	604	1719	561	542
2021	1109	678	514	1516	659	592	1440	595	537	1431	613	639
2022	1504	665	560	1457	581	505	1351	622	557	1342	572	514
2023	1466	626	573	1365	632	496	1313	611	582	1382	573	518
2024	1287	604	506	1215	578	514	1309	590	559	1197	532	513
2025	1205	509	508	1078	485	382	953	472	403	984		

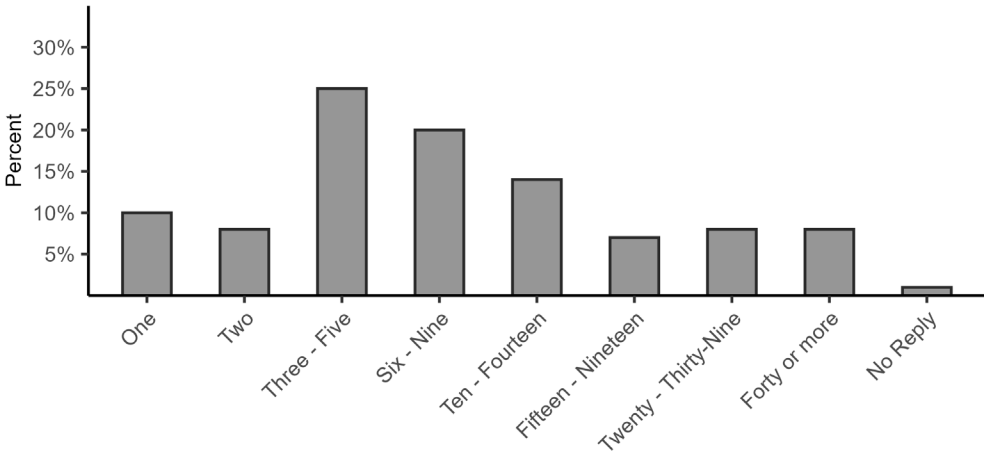
NFIB OWNER/MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC SURVEY

Industry of Small Business



NFIB OWNER/MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC SURVEY

Number of Full and Part-Time Employees



NFIB RESEARCH CENTER SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC SURVEY

SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY QUESTIONS

PAGE IN REPORT

Do you think the next three months will be a good time for small businesses to expand substantially? Why? ^{1, 2}	7
What about the economy in general, do you think that six months from now general business conditions will be better than they are now, about the same, or worse? ^{1, 2}	7
Were your net earnings or “income” (after taxes) from your business during the last calendar quarter higher, lower, or about the same as they were for the quarter before? ¹	8
If higher or lower, what is the most important reason?	8
During the last calendar quarter, was your dollar sales volume higher, lower, or about the same as it was for the quarter before?	9
Overall, what do you expect to happen to the volume of goods and/or services (number of customers, units, hours billed, etc.) that you will sell during the next three months? ^{1, 2}	9
How are your average selling prices now compared to three months ago?	10
In the next three months, do you plan to change the price of your goods and/or services?	10
During the last three months, did the total number of employees in your firm increase, decrease, or stay about the same?	11
If you have filled or attempted to fill any job opening in the past three months, how many qualified applicants were there for the position(s)?	11
Do you have any job openings that you are not able to fill right now? ¹	12
In the next three months, do you expect to increase or decrease the total number of people working for you? ^{1, 2}	12
Over the past three months, did you change average employee compensation (wages and benefits but not Social Security, U.C. taxes, etc.)?	13
Do you plan to change average employee compensation (wages and benefits but not Social Security, U.C. taxes, etc.) during the next three months?	13

NFIB RESEARCH CENTER SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC SURVEY

SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY QUESTIONS	PAGE IN REPORT
Are...loans easier or harder to get than they were three months ago?	14
Do you expect to find it easier or harder to obtain your required financing during the next three months? ^{1, 2}	15
If you borrow money regularly (at least once every three months) as part of your business activity, how does the rate of interest payable on your most recent loan compare with that paid three months ago?	15
If you borrowed within the last three months for business purposes, and the loan maturity (pay back period) was 1 year or less, what interest rate did you pay?	16
During the last three months, did you increase or decrease your inventories?	16
At the present time, do you feel your inventories are too large, about right, or too low? ¹	17
Looking ahead to the next three months to six months, do you expect, on balance, to increase your inventories, keep them about the same, or decrease them? ¹	17
During the last six months, has your firm made any of the following capital expenditures?	18
If [your firm made any capital expenditures], what was the total cost of these expenditures?	19
Looking ahead, do you expect to make any capital expenditures in the next three to six months? ^{1, 2}	19
How would you rate the overall health of your business today?	19
What is the single most important problem facing your business today?	20
Please classify your major business activity, using one of the categories of examples below.	21
How many employees do you have full and part-time, including yourself?	21