About the Florida Chamber’s Small Business Council

Florida’s small businesses are essential to the continuing recovery of the Florida economy. The Florida Chamber’s Small Business Council works directly with state and national leaders to pass important legislation such as reducing the business rent tax and reducing the cost of healthcare.

The Florida Chamber’s Small Business Council provides a unified voice for all small businesses in our mission to secure Florida's future. Participants meet with legislators, contact media, and testify before both Florida’s House and Senate on issues important to small businesses.

Survey Overview


This survey is a nonscientific, random sampling of small business owners in Florida. It was conducted November 28, 2018 through January 3, 2019 and received 168 responses. The electronic survey was e-mailed to small businesses in Florida; and distributed by local chambers of commerce throughout the state; and posted on social media including Facebook and Twitter.

Of those responding:

- 44% of respondents employ less than 5 employees;
- 40% employ 5 to 49 employees;
- 7% employ 50 to 99 employees; and
- 9% employ 100 to 500 employees.

Additionally:

- 77% of respondents employ less than 5 part-time employees;
- 19% employ 5 to 49 part-time employees;
- 0% employ 50 to 99 part-time employees; and
- 4% employ 100 or more part-time employees.
**Survey Analysis**

The Florida Chamber’s 1st Quarter survey of 2019 shows that Florida’s small businesses are most concerned about “Economic Uncertainty”, with 23 percent of respondents citing it as their top issue. They also continue to be concerned about workforce quality, with 18 percent of respondents indicating workforce quality was their top issue. “Workforce Quality” had been either number one or tied for the top issue for Florida’s small businesses for the previous eight quarters.

Tied for third place are “Growth Management Process” and “Government Regulations” with 9 percent each. “Access to Capital” rounds out the top five issues for Florida’s small businesses with 8 percent indicating that was their top issue.


When asked about their outlook for the Florida economy over the next year, 47 percent of respondents expect the economy to improve, down from 77 percent one year ago. More interesting is that 41 percent of businesses expect the economy to weaken over the next year – up from 20 percent in last quarter’s survey and 10 percent one year ago.

**Small Business Employment Outlook:**

- 42 percent of respondents expect to hire in the next six months – this is down from the 48 percent planning to hire in our Q4 2018 survey and 52 percent one year ago.

- An indicator of small business expansion in Florida – 43 percent of businesses have plans to make investments in plants or equipment, down from 53 percent one year ago.

A possible indicator of some of the effects of higher interest rates on Florida’s small businesses is the number of respondents who indicated their ability to obtain financing would be easier during the next 6 months, which fell from 25 percent one year ago to 13 percent during this survey. The number of respondents who indicated that financing would become harder increased from 21 to 34 percent over the past year.
Survey Results

Comparisons

Q1: Top issues facing Florida small businesses today:

1. Economic Uncertainty – 23%
2. Workforce Quality – 18%
3. Growth Management Process – 9%
4. Government Regulations – 9%
5. Access to Capital – 8%

Q4:

Company Sales Over the Last 3 Months Compared to the Same Period Last Year

- Higher: 46%
- Lower: 24%
- Unchanged: 30%
Q5: Company Sales Over the Last 3 Months as Compared to Prior 3 Months

- Higher: 40%
- Unchanged: 24%
- Lower: 36%

Q6: How Do You Expect the Economy Will Change Over the Next Year?

- Improve Significantly: 33%
- Improve Slightly: 40%
- Remain Unchanged: 8%
- Weaken Slightly: 7%
- Weaken Significantly: 12%
Q7: How Do You Expect the Economy Will Change Over the Next 3 Years?

- Improve Significantly: 14%
- Improve Slightly: 28%
- Remain Unchanged: 8%
- Weaken Slightly: 13%
- Weaken Significantly: 37%

Q8: How Do You Expect Your Company's Sales Will Change Over the Next 3 Months?

- Increase: 55%
- Remain Unchanged: 32%
- Decrease: 13%
Q9: How Do You Expect Your Company's Sales Will Change Over the Next Year?

- Increase: 71%
- Remain Unchanged: 16%
- Decrease: 13%

Q10: Does your company do business internationally?

- Yes: 21%
- No: 79%
Q12: Employment Plans During the Next Six Months

Q13: Top obstacles preventing you from hiring new employees?
Q14:

**Plans to Increase Investments in Plant or Equipment**

- Yes, less than 6 months: 18%
- Yes, more than 1 year: 16%
- Yes, 6-12 months: 9%
- No, no plans: 36%
- No, does not apply: 21%

Q15:

**Is Your Business Better Off Today Than It Was Six Months Ago?**

- Much Better: 40%
- Better: 31%
- Same: 14%
- Worse: 10%
- Much Worse: 5%
Q16: Overall, how reasonable are state government regulations of small businesses today?

- Very Reasonable: 5%
- Somewhat Reasonable: 37%
- Somewhat Unreasonable: 9%
- Very Unreasonable: 49%

Q17: Worried about regulations, restrictions and taxes that have been put on your business in Tallahassee, negatively impacting your ability to do business?

- Not at all worried: 9%
- Not very worried: 33%
- Somewhat worried: 39%
- Very worried: 19%

Q19:
Q21: Confidence in the Direction the State is Taking to Make Florida a Better Place to Conduct Business

- Very Confident: 4%
- Confident: 19%
- Neutral: 23%
- Somewhat Confident: 31%
- Not Confident: 23%

Q22: Able to Obtain Financing During the Last 6 Months

- Yes: 29%
- No: 14%
- I did not need capital financing: 57%
Ability to Obtain Financing During the Next 6 Months

- Easier: 13%
- Harder: 34%
- Not Applicable: 53%