

NOVEMBER
2023

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	18%	1	*
Plans to Make Capital Outlays	23%	-1	*
Plans to Increase Inventories	-3%	-3	*
Expect Economy to Improve	-42%	1	*
Expect Real Sales Higher	-8%	2	*
Current Inventory (too low)	0%	3	*
Current Job Openings	40%	-3	*
Expected Credit Conditions	-11%	-2	*
Now a Good Time to Expand	8%	2	*
Earnings Trends	-32%	0	*
Total Change		0	

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 Optimism Index decreased 0.1 point in November to 90.6. This is the 23rd consecutive month below the 50-year average of 98. The last time the Index was at or above the average was December 2021. The Index has hovered around the “90” level all year. Of the 10 index components, 5 increased, 4 decreased, and 1 was unchanged.

LABOR MARKETS

Forty percent (seasonally adjusted) of all owners reported job openings they could not fill in the current period, down 3 points from October. Thirty-three percent have openings for skilled workers (down 4 points) and 14 percent have openings for unskilled labor (down 4 points). The difficulty in filling open positions is particularly acute in the construction, manufacturing, and transportation sectors. Job openings in construction were down 9 points from last month but still nearly half have a job opening they can’t fill. Openings are lowest in the agriculture and finance sectors. Owners’ plans to fill open positions remain elevated, with a seasonally adjusted net 18 percent planning to create new jobs in the next three months, up 1 point from October and 14 points below its record high reading of 32 percent reached in August 2021. Overall, 54 percent reported hiring or trying to hire in November, down 7 points from October. Fifty percent (93 percent of those hiring or trying to hire) of owners reported few or no qualified applicants for the positions they were trying to fill (down 5 points). Twenty-six percent of owners reported few qualified applicants for their open positions (down 5 points) and 24 percent reported none (unchanged). Labor quality reported as the single most important problem for business owners increased 1 point to 24 percent, and labor cost declined 1 point to 8 percent.

CAPITAL SPENDING

Sixty-one percent reported capital outlays in the last six months, up 4 points from October, a solid gain. A recovery in investment is needed to support an improvement in productivity, but this is unlikely to occur while owners remain pessimistic about future business conditions and lending standards tighten with rising interest rates. Longer term, the worker shortage has given firms an incentive to invest in labor saving technology. But, overall, capital spending is not strong historically. Of those making expenditures, 41 percent reported spending on new equipment (up 4 points), 23 percent acquired vehicles (down 1 point), and 17 percent improved or expanded facilities (down 1 point). Eleven percent spent money on new fixtures and furniture (down 1 point) and 6 percent acquired new buildings or land for expansion (down 1 point). Twenty-three percent (seasonally adjusted) plan capital outlays in the next few months, down 1 point from October. A more positive view of the future economy and economic policy would help stimulate longer term investment spending, but currently, owners’ views about the future are not supportive and financing costs are very high.

SALES AND INVENTORIES

A net negative 17 percent of all owners (seasonally adjusted) reported higher nominal sales in the past three months, unchanged from October and remaining the lowest reading since July 2020. The net percent of owners expecting higher real sales volumes improved 2 points to a net negative 8 percent. The net percent of owners reporting inventory gains increased 3 points to a net negative 3 percent. Not seasonally adjusted, 14 percent reported increases in stocks (up 3 points) and 16 percent reported reductions (unchanged). A net 0 percent of owners viewed current inventory stocks as “too low” in November, up 3 points from October. By industry, shortages are reported most frequently in the retail (14 percent), finance (13 percent), and services (10 percent) sectors. A net negative 3 percent of owners plan inventory investment in the coming months, down 3 points from October.

COMPENSATION AND EARNINGS

Seasonally adjusted, a net 36 percent reported raising compensation, unchanged from October. A seasonally adjusted net 30 percent plan to raise compensation in the next three months, up 6 points from October and the highest reading since December 2021. Eight percent cited labor costs as their top business problem, down 1 point from October. Twenty-four percent said that labor quality was their top business problem (up 1 point). The frequency of reports of positive profit trends was a net negative 32 percent, unchanged from October. Among owners reporting lower profits, 36 percent blamed weaker sales, 16 percent blamed the rise in the cost of materials, 14 percent cited labor costs, 9 percent cited lower prices, 6 percent cited the usual seasonal change, and 5 percent cited financing costs. For owners reporting higher profits, 60 percent credited sales volumes, 14 percent cited higher selling prices, and 11 percent cited usual seasonal change.

CREDIT MARKETS

Two percent of owners reported that all their borrowing needs were not satisfied (unchanged). Twenty-five percent reported all credit needs met (up 2 points) and 63 percent said they were not interested in a loan (down 1 point). A net 8 percent reported their last loan was harder to get than in previous attempts (up 1 point). Five percent reported that financing was their top business problem (unchanged). A net 25 percent of owners reported paying a higher rate on their most recent loan, down 3 points from October. The average rate paid on short maturity loans was 9.3 percent, up 0.2 percentage points from last month. Thirty-one percent of all owners reported borrowing on a regular basis (up 4 points).

INFLATION

The net percent of owners raising average selling prices decreased 5 points from October to a net 25 percent seasonally adjusted. Twenty-two percent of owners reported that inflation was their single most important problem in operating their business, down 1 point from last month. Unadjusted, 14 percent (up 3 points) reported lower average selling prices and 36 percent (down 3 points) reported higher average prices. Price hikes were most frequent in finance (48 percent higher, 10 percent lower, as interest rates rise), retail (47 percent higher, 9 percent lower), construction (42 percent higher, 11 percent lower), wholesale (32 percent higher, 16 percent lower), and services (30 percent higher, 9 percent lower). Seasonally adjusted, a net 34 percent plan price hikes (up 1 point).

COMMENTARY

The economy grew at a totally unexpected and astounding rate in the third quarter according to government statistics, taking the rate from a slow 2% pace to over 5%. That much growth requires a lot more labor, one would expect more than what was reported in the last few months of BLS data. Indeed for most of the year, the “rosy” reports of job growth were accompanied by downward revisions in the number of jobs reported in the preceding two months muting initial jobs excitement. The net percent of NFIB firms increasing employment has been negative since March, with more firms decreasing jobs than adding them. The percent of owners reporting unfilled job openings has declined from 51% (in 2020) to 40% in November, a shift in the labor market now reflected in the JOLTS report. So, openings remain elevated but the surge in the economy did not bring a strong wave of workers to fill open positions.

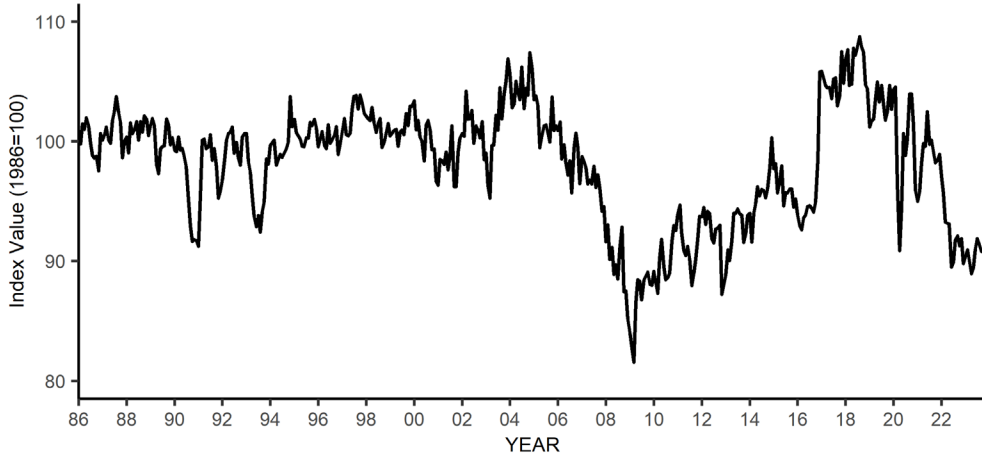
Such strong growth should also show up in sales gains. The net percent of firms reporting higher sales volumes began the year at -4%, but fell steadily to -17% in November. Hopefully that will improve for December! But that’s not “5%” growth. There was a significant increase in “inventory investment,” a result of making stuff and paying workers, but not selling the product to a final user (consumer or business). Visually, a parking lot full of unsold electric vehicles, a drag on Q4 growth most likely.

For the Fed, the policy picture gets muddier. The basic idea behind raising interest rates was to cool spending, resulting in less pressure on prices (or even price cuts). Volcker found inflation hard to tame and raised the policy rate to double digit levels. Inflation is still around 3.5%, well below the 9% high for this cycle, but above the Fed’s 2% target. Will this surge in spending cause inflation to rise? Small businesses didn’t experience the surge in spending and the percent who raised prices fell 5 points to 25% of all firms, down from over 60% when inflation started. This will be a comfort for the Fed. In the meantime, the Fed and consumers will have to wait for new data to provide some perspective on what’s really happening in the economy.

OVERVIEW - SMALL BUSINESS OPTIMISM

OPTIMISM INDEX

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



OPTIMISM INDEX

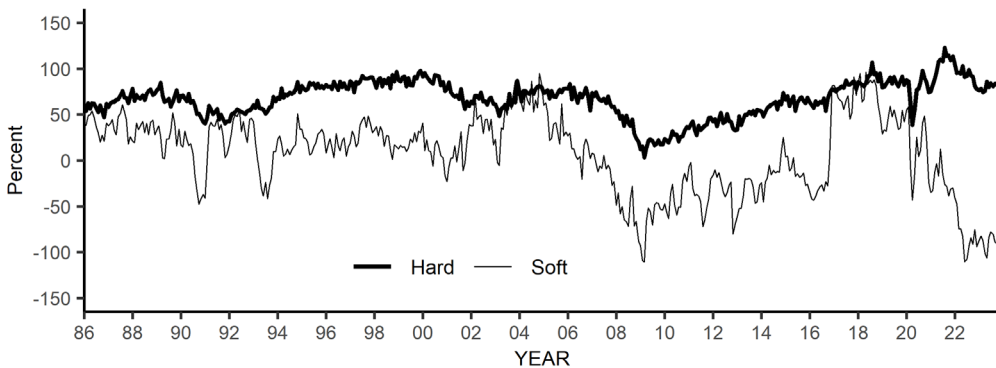
Based on Ten Survey Indicators
(Seasonally Adjusted 1986=100)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	106.9	107.6	104.7	104.8	107.8	107.2	107.9	108.8	107.9	107.4	104.8	104.4
2019	101.2	101.7	101.8	103.5	105.0	103.3	104.7	103.1	101.8	102.4	104.7	102.7
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	

OPTIMISM INDEX COMPONENTS

Hard: Job Creation Plans, Job Openings, Inventory Plans, Earnings, Capital Expenditure Plans

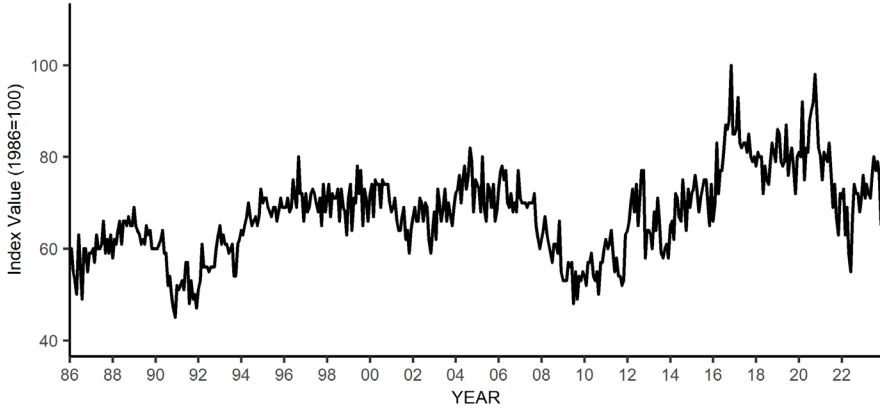
Soft: Expected Business Conditions, Outlook for Expansion, Expected Real Sales, Expected Credit Conditions, Inventory Satisfaction



SMALL BUSINESS UNCERTAINTY

UNCERTAINTY INDEX

Sum of "Don't Know" & "Uncertain" Answers on 6 Questions
(Seasonally Adjusted 1986=100)



UNCERTAINTY INDEX

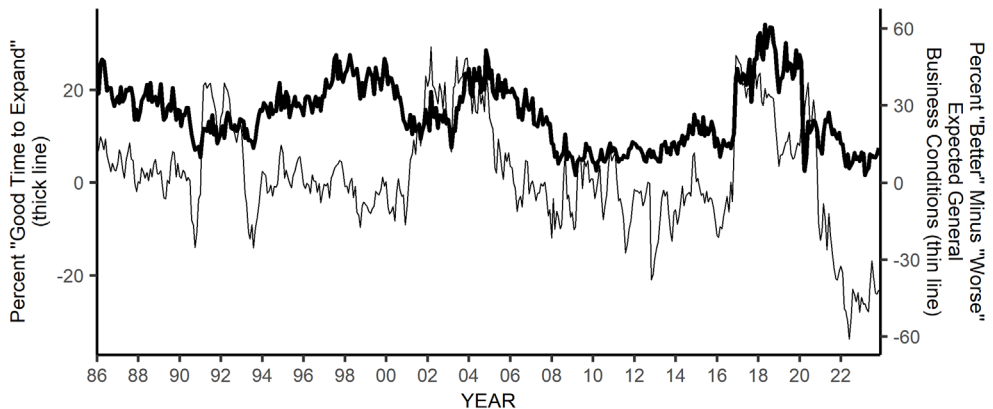
Based on Ten Survey Indicators
(Seasonally Adjusted 1986=100)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	78	81	80	80	72	78	75	74	79	83	81	79
2019	86	85	79	78	79	87	76	80	82	78	72	80
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	

SMALL BUSINESS OUTLOOK

OUTLOOK

Good Time to Expand and Expected General Business Conditions
January 1986 to November 2023
(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
2018	32	32	28	27	34	29	32	34	33	30	29	24
2019	20	22	23	25	30	24	26	26	22	23	29	25
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	

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR EXPANSION OUTLOOK

Reason Percent by Expansion Outlook
November 2023

Reason	Good Time	Not Good Time	Uncertain
Economic Conditions	2	38	15
Sales Prospects	3	2	0
Fin. & Interest Rates	0	12	2
Cost of Expansion	0	4	2
Political Climate	1	9	6
Other / Not Available	1	1	0

OUTLOOK FOR GENERAL BUSINESS CONDITIONS

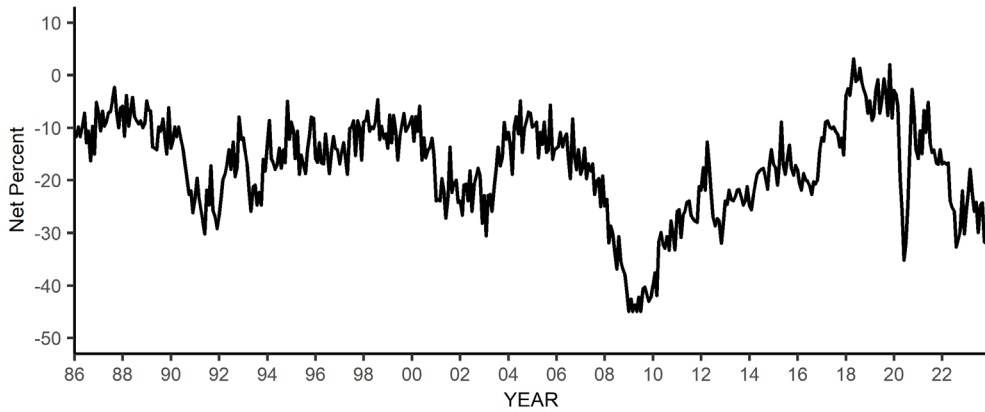
Net Percent ("Better" Minus "Worse") Six Months From Now
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	41	43	32	30	37	33	35	34	33	33	22	16
2019	6	11	11	13	16	16	20	12	9	10	13	16
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	

SMALL BUSINESS EARNINGS

EARNINGS

Actual Last Three Months
January 1986 to November 2023
(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
2018	-4	-3	-4	-1	3	-1	-1	1	-1	-3	-4	-7
2019	-5	-9	-8	-3	-1	-7	-5	-1	-3	-8	2	-8
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	

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR LOWER EARNINGS

Percent Reason
November 2023

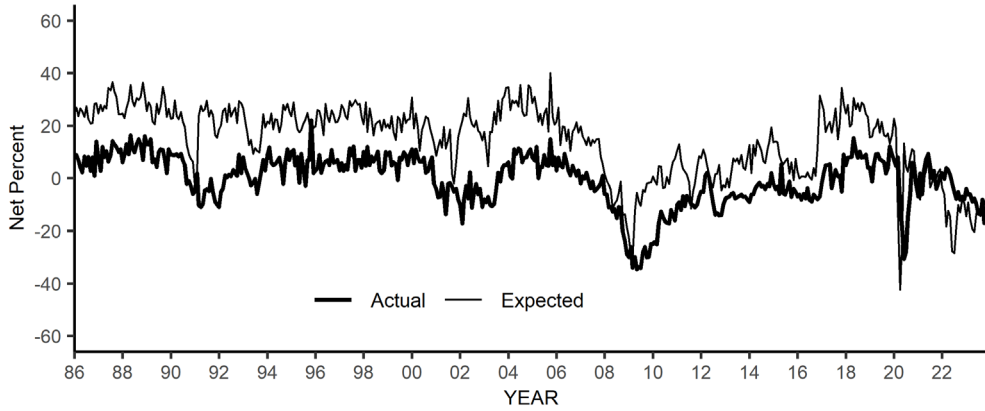
Reason	Current Month	One Year Ago	Two Years Ago
Sales Volume	16	9	8
Increased Costs*	16	15	17
Cut Selling Prices	4	3	4
Usual Seasonal Change	3	2	3
Other	1	1	2

* 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 November 2023
 (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
2018	5	8	8	8	15	10	8	10	8	8	9	4
2019	4	-1	5	9	9	7	7	6	2	4	12	9
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	

SALES EXPECTATIONS

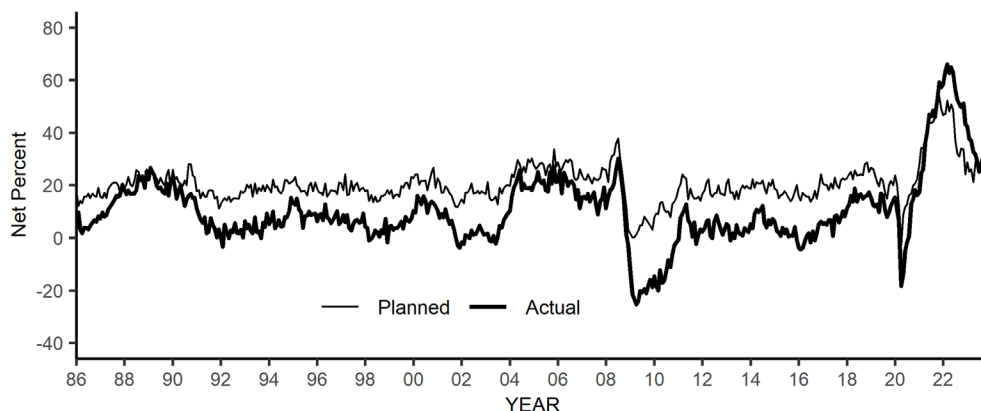
Net Percent ("Higher" Minus "Lower") During Next Three Months
 (Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	25	28	20	21	31	26	29	26	29	28	24	23
2019	16	16	19	20	23	17	22	17	16	17	13	16
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	

SMALL BUSINESS PRICES

PRICES

Actual Last Three Months and Planned Next Three Months
 January 1986 to November 2023
 (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
2018	11	13	16	14	19	14	16	17	15	16	16	17
2019	15	13	12	13	10	17	16	11	8	10	12	14
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	

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
2018	23	24	25	22	26	24	24	24	24	28	29	25
2019	27	26	24	21	20	23	22	17	15	20	22	20
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	

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
2018	4	4	4	7	7	3	6	5	1	5	5	5
2019	7	9	12	7	9	5	3	5	4	4	10	6
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	

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR JOB OPENINGS

Percent Few or No Qualified Applicants

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	49	47	47	50	48	55	52	55	53	53	53	54
2019	49	49	54	49	54	50	56	57	50	53	53	50
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	

EMPLOYMENT

Planned Next Three Months and Current Job Openings
January 1986 to November 2023
(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
2018	34	34	35	35	33	36	37	38	38	38	34	39
2019	35	37	39	38	38	36	39	35	35	34	38	33
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	

HIRING PLANS

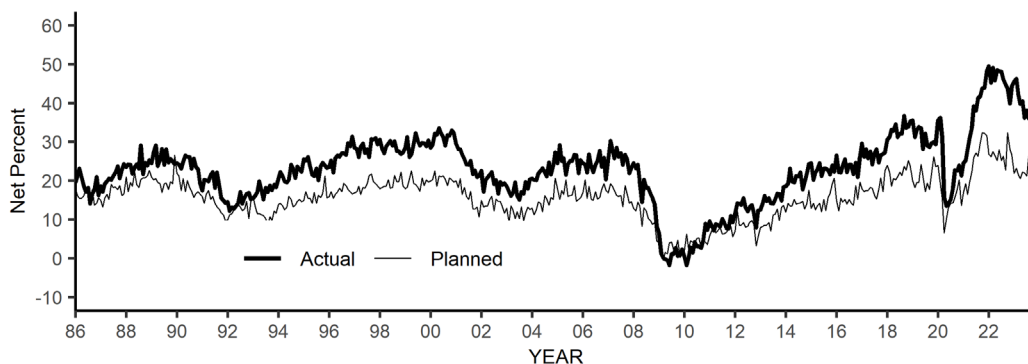
Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") in the Next Three Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	20	18	20	16	18	20	23	26	23	22	22	23
2019	18	16	18	20	21	19	21	20	17	18	21	19
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	

SMALL BUSINESS COMPENSATION

COMPENSATION

Actual Last Three Months and Planned Next Three Months
January 1986 to November 2023
(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
2018	31	31	33	33	35	31	32	32	37	34	34	35
2019	36	31	33	34	34	28	32	29	29	30	30	29
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	

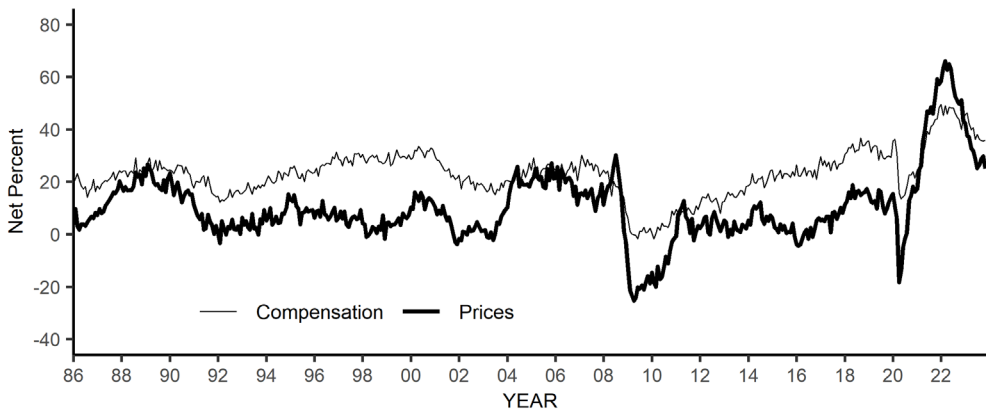
COMPENSATION PLANS

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	24	22	19	21	20	21	22	21	24	23	25	24
2019	20	18	20	20	24	21	17	19	18	22	26	24
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	

PRICES AND LABOR COMPENSATION

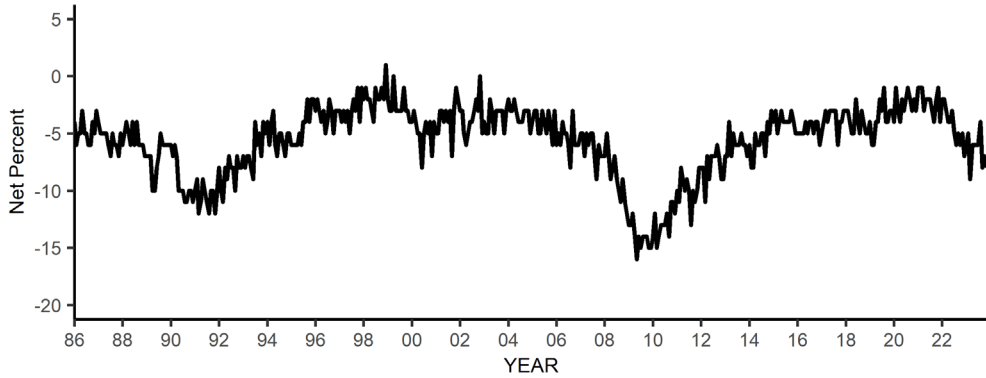
Net Percent Price Increase and Net Percent Compensation
(Seasonally Adjusted)



SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT CONDITIONS

CREDIT CONDITIONS

Loan Availability Compared to Three Months Ago*
January 1986 to November 2023



* For the population borrowing at least once every three months.

REGULAR BORROWERS

Percent Borrowing at Least Once Every Three Months

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	31	31	32	31	34	28	32	32	29	32	32	35
2019	33	33	34	31	31	28	28	33	30	29	28	29
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	

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
2018	-3	-3	-4	-5	-5	-2	-4	-5	-3	-4	-5	-5
2019	-4	-6	-6	-4	-4	-2	-3	-1	-4	-4	-3	-3
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	

SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT CONDITIONS (CONTINUED)

BORROWING NEEDS SATISFIED

Percent of All Businesses Last Three Months Satisfied/
Percent of All Businesses Last Three Months Not Satisfied
(All Borrowers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	31/3	32/2	31/4	32/4	37/4	30/3	32/3	33/3	27/3	30/3	32/3	32/4
2019	33/3	34/3	33/3	32/4	34/3	29/3	28/3	31/4	30/2	29/3	28/3	29/3
2020	30/3	32/2	29/3	29/5	33/3	34/3	35/3	31/3	33/2	29/3	25/2	26/3
2021	24/2	28/2	27/2	26/2	23/3	25/3	23/2	22/2	20/2	23/2	23/2	26/2
2022	25/3	25/2	26/4	26/2	22/2	27/1	25/3	23/4	26/2	26/2	22/2	25/2
2023	26/2	25/3	29/2	30/2	27/1	27/2	25/3	27/2	23/2	23/2	25/2	

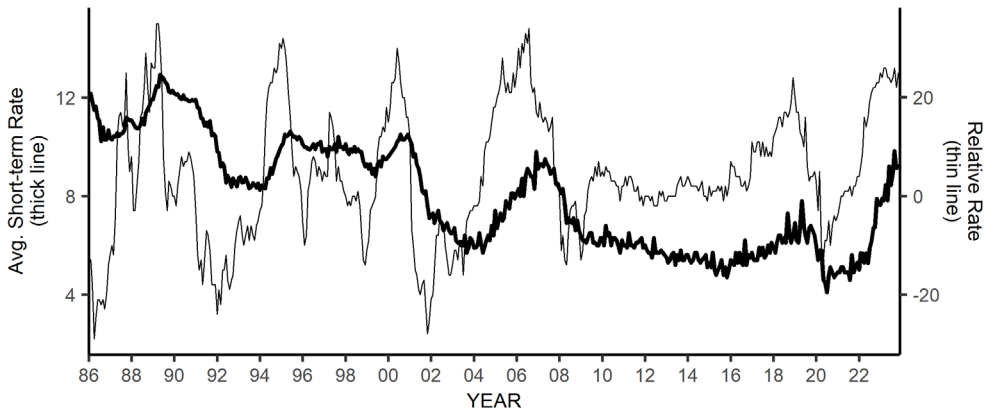
EXPECT EASIER CREDIT CONDITIONS

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

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	-4	-3	-6	-6	-5	-4	-4	-6	-5	-5	-5	-6
2019	-5	-5	-7	-4	-5	-3	-4	-2	-4	-3	-3	-3
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	

INTEREST RATES

Relative Rates and Actual Rates Last Three Months
January 1986 to November 2023



SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT CONDITIONS (CONTINUED)

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
2018	12	13	14	16	16	14	17	17	16	17	19	24
2019	20	17	17	13	12	10	16	6	3	4	4	5
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	

Borrowing at Least Once Every Three Months.

ACTUAL INTEREST RATE PAID ON SHORT-TERM LOANS BY BORROWERS

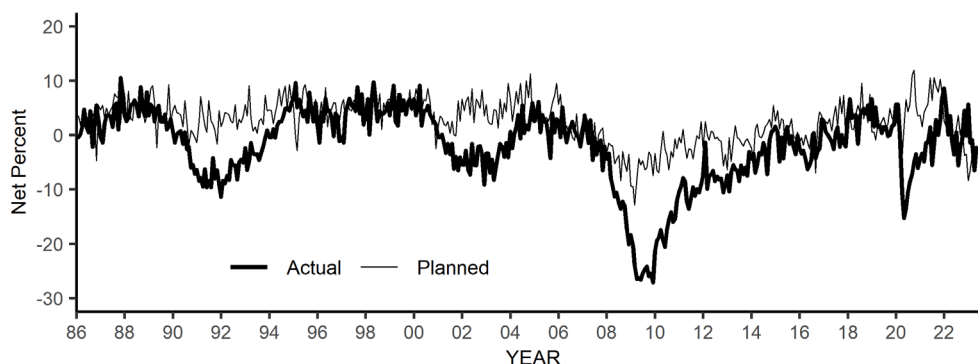
Average Interest Rate Paid

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	5.9	5.7	6.1	6.4	6.4	6.1	6.3	6.1	7.3	6.4	6.1	6.4
2019	6.9	6.2	6.1	6.7	7.8	6.8	6.4	6.1	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.4
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	

SMALL BUSINESS INVENTORIES

INVENTORIES

Actual (Last Three Months) and Planned (Next Three Months)
January 1986 to November 2023
(Seasonally Adjusted)



SMALL BUSINESS INVENTORIES (CONTINUED)

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
2018	4	7	3	4	4	-2	4	4	5	4	6	3
2019	7	2	5	2	2	0	2	1	0	0	2	2
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	

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
2018	-5	-3	-6	-4	-4	0	-3	-3	-1	-2	-5	-1
2019	-3	-2	-6	-4	-4	0	-3	-6	-6	-4	1	-4
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	

INVENTORY PLANS

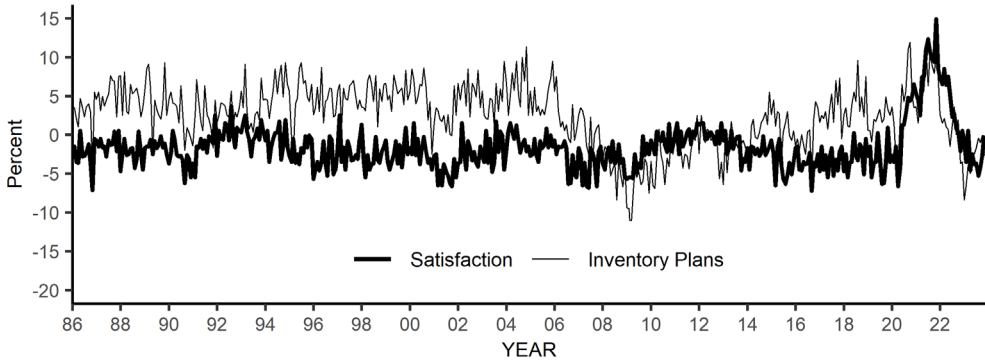
Net Percent ("Increase" Minus "Decrease") in the Next Three to Six Months
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	3	4	1	1	4	6	4	10	3	5	2	8
2019	1	1	-1	2	2	3	3	2	2	5	3	3
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	

SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL OUTLAYS

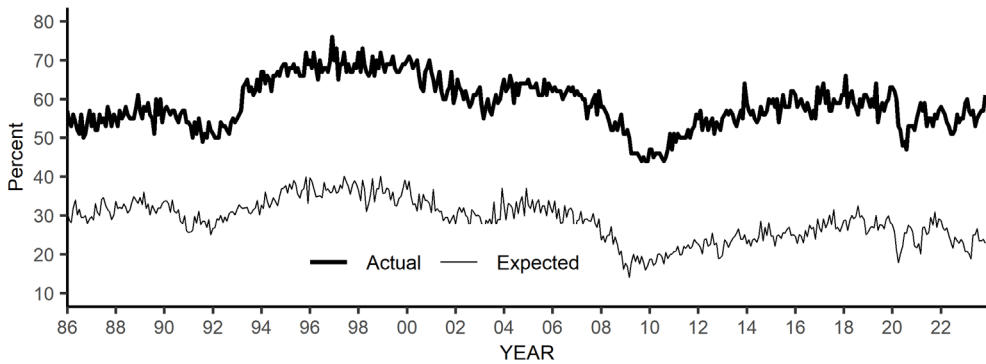
INVENTORY SATISFACTION AND INVENTORY PLANS

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)



CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

Actual Last Six Months and Planned Next Three Months
 January 1986 to November 2023
(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
2018	61	66	58	61	62	59	58	56	60	58	61	61
2019	60	58	60	58	64	54	57	59	57	59	60	63
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	

SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL OUTLAYS (CONTINUED)

TYPE OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURES MADE Percent Purchasing or Leasing During Last Six Months

Type	Current Month	One Year Ago	Two Years Ago
Vehicles	23	19	22
Equipment	41	39	39
Furniture or Fixtures	11	11	13
Add. Bldgs. or Land	6	5	6
Improved Bldgs. or Land	17	12	14

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	2	2	2
\$1,000 to \$4,999	6	5	6
\$5,000 to \$9,999	7	6	5
\$10,000 to \$49,999	13	16	19
\$50,000 to \$99,999	13	8	11
\$100,000 +	20	16	13
No Answer	1	2	2

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
2018	29	29	26	29	30	29	30	33	30	30	29	25
2019	26	27	27	27	30	26	28	28	27	29	30	28
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	

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

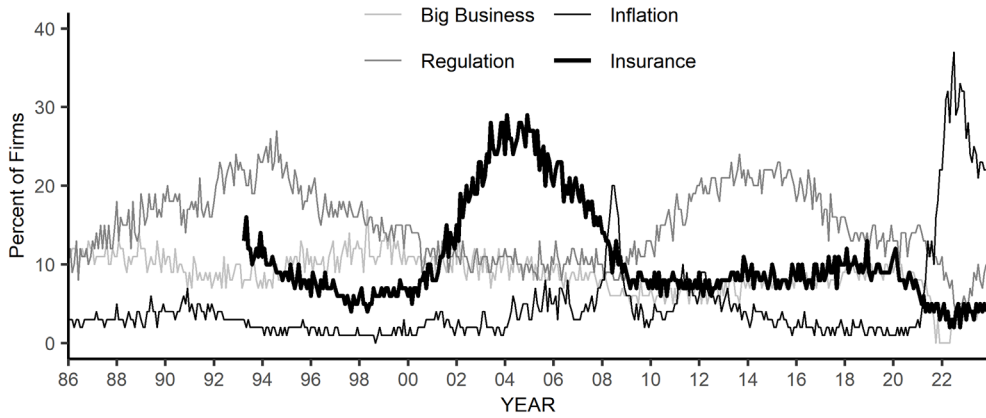
SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

November 2023

Problem	Current	One Year Ago	Survey High	Survey Low
Taxes	14	11	32	8
Inflation	22	32	41	0
Poor Sales	5	4	34	2
Fin. & Interest Rates	5	3	37	0
Cost of Labor	8	9	13	2
Government Regulation	10	5	27	4
Comp. from Large Bus.	4	5	14	0
Quality of Labor	24	21	29	3
Cost/Avail. of Insurance	4	4	29	0
Other	4	6	31	1

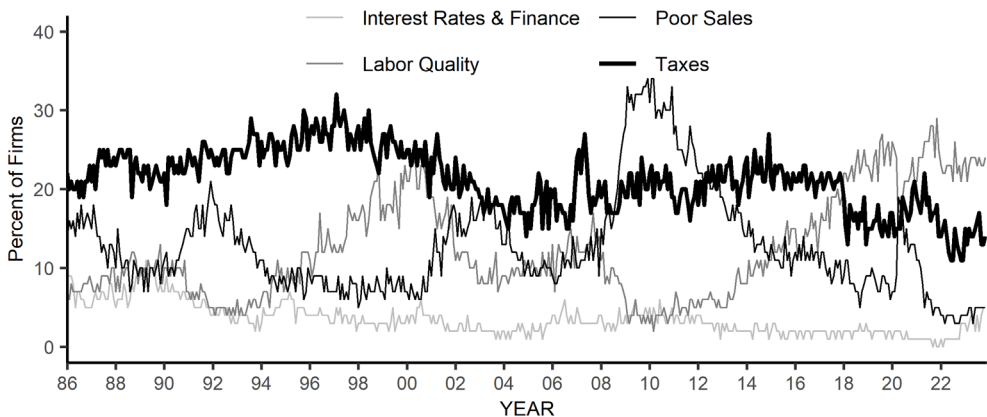
SELECTED SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

Inflation, Big Business, Insurance and Regulation
January 1986 to November 2023



SELECTED SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

Taxes, Interest Rates, Sales and Labor Quality
January 1986 to November 2023



SURVEY PROFILE

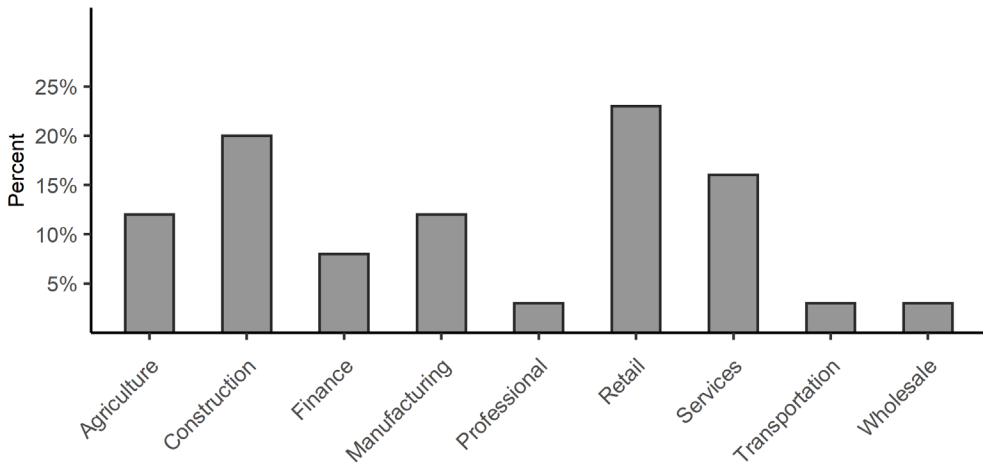
OWNER/MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC SURVEY NFIB

Actual Number of Firms

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	1658	642	570	1554	562	665	1718	680	642	1743	700	621
2019	1740	526	643	1735	650	606	1502	680	603	1618	500	488
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	

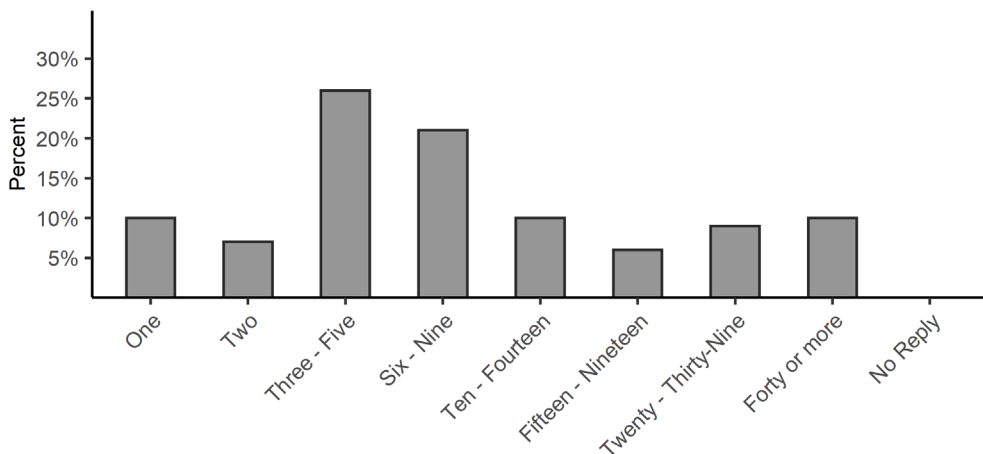
NFIB OWNER/MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC SURVEY

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 business to expand substantially? Why?	5
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?	6
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?	7
If higher or lower, what is the most important reason?	7
During the last calendar quarter, was your dollar sales volume higher, lower, or about the same as it was for the quarter before?	8
Overall, what do you expect to happen to real volume (number of units) of goods and/or services that you will sell during the next three months?	8
How are your average selling prices compared to three months ago?	9
In the next three months, do you plan to change the average selling prices of your goods and/or services?	9
During the last three months, did the total number of employees in your firm increase, decrease, or stay about the same?	10
If you have filled or attempted to fill any job openings in the past three months, how many qualified applicants were there for the position(s)?	10
Do you have any job openings that you are not able to fill right now?	11
In the next three months, do you expect to increase or decrease the total number of people working for you?	11
Over the past three months, did you change the average employee compensation?	12
Do you plan to change average employee compensation during the next three months?	12

SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY QUESTIONS

PAGE IN REPORT

Are...loans easier or harder to get than they were three months ago?	13
During the last three months, was your firm able to satisfy its borrowing needs?	14
Do you expect to find it easier or harder to obtain your required financing during the next three months?	14
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?	15
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 inadequate?	16
Looking ahead to the next three months to six months, do you expect, on balance, to add to your inventories, keep them about the same, or decrease them?	16
During the last six months, has your firm made any capital expenditures to improve or purchase equipment, buildings, or land?	17
If [your firm made any capital expenditures], what was the total cost of all these projects?	18
Looking ahead to the next three to six months, do you expect to make any capital expenditures for plant and/or physical equipment?	18
What is the single most important problem facing your business today?	19
Please classify your major business activity, using one of the categories of example below	20
How many employees do you have full and part-time, including yourself?	20