

Wave 4 Results

October 1 – 31, 2025



AROUND TWO IN THREE REMAIN CONFIDENT IN THEIR INDUSTRY – but concern over economic slowdown and policy uncertainty continues to climb.

INSIDE THE RESULTS

See what's keeping professionals up at night, from staffing shortages to rising costs.

WORKPLACE SNAPSHOT

Leadership confidence stays steady, but job security has softened—fewer than half (47%) now feel secure in their roles.

TRUST CHECK

Company leaders and trade associations are still the most trusted voices. Trust in business media and local government is steady, while confidence in the federal government hit a new low

Why your participation matters!

You are part of the ongoing **Confidence in Action: Tracking the Workforce Perspective** survey.

This project establishes a continuous measure of worker confidence in the U.S. workforce. With each new wave, we compare results to see:

- Where confidence is growing or falling
- How trust in institutions shifts
- Whether career mobility is increasing or slowing
- What new challenges are emerging

Your insights help create a clearer, data-driven picture of the workforce; insights that can guide businesses, industry leaders, and policymakers.

If you receive another invitation in the future, we hope you'll take part again. By continuing to share your views, you'll help us monitor these trends over time, and you'll always receive some results so you can see how things are evolving.

In Brief: Key Insights



Survey Scope: Wave 4 results reflect input from 760 U.S. professionals across more than 20 industries (October 1–31, 2025). Respondents continue to represent a broad mix of sectors—including construction, manufacturing, technology, healthcare, and professional services—with most in management or leadership roles, consistent with earlier waves.

Institutional Trust: Trust remains highest in company leadership and trade associations, while confidence in the federal government fell to its lowest point yet. Trust in business media and local government held steady this wave.

Workplace Confidence:

Confidence in leadership remained largely stable, though job security softened—47% now feel secure in their roles (down from 51% in September).

Personal Outlook:

Financial confidence eased slightly, while job-change intent increased, suggesting growing caution and restlessness among workers.



Top Concerns

Economic slowdown remains the top concern

Policy and government uncertainty rose slightly

Labor shortages remain steady and widespread across sectors

Tech disruption/AI concerns ticked up after easing in prior waves

Media Trust:

Trust in local and traditional media held steady this wave, after a modest rebound in September.



Top threats: An economic slowdown and policy uncertainty now top the list of industry threats, surpassing inflation. Labor shortages remain a persistent concern.

Industry Confidence: Two in three respondents remain confident in their industry's 12-month outlook—steady overall, but slightly below prior months.

Who Took Part?



Sectors represented

Built environment:
architecture, engineering,
construction, mechanical
systems

Manufacturing: industrial and
food & beverage processing

Technology & IT services

Healthcare & life sciences

Professional and business
services

Specialized sectors: roofing
and building envelope, energy
and utilities, safety and
security, logistics and
transportation, financial
services, retail and consumer
goods, education, government,
agriculture, and environmental
services

Roles represented

Leadership & management:
owners, executives,
department heads, team leads

Technical & skilled trades

Sales, business development,
and administrative staff

Between **October 1 and October 31, 2025**, 760 professionals from more than 20 industries across the United States participated in the fourth wave of the Confidence in Action: Tracking the Workforce Perspective survey.

Respondents once again represented a diverse cross-section of the U.S. economy — including architecture, engineering, construction, and mechanical systems; manufacturing and food & beverage processing; healthcare and life sciences; technology and IT services; professional and business services; logistics and transportation; retail and consumer goods; and the public sector. Additional perspectives came from professionals in energy and utilities, safety and security, agriculture, environmental services, and other specialized fields.

As in earlier waves, the majority of participants hold management or leadership roles, ranging from owners and senior executives to department heads and team leads. The survey also captured valuable perspectives from skilled-trade professionals, technical specialists, sales, and administrative staff, providing a well-rounded view of workforce sentiment across roles and industries..

We'll continue to track these perspectives in future waves — watching for shifts in who's taking part and what they have to say. If you're invited to participate, we hope you'll add your voice to the conversation.

Industry & Economic Outlook

When asked, “Considering your specific industry sector, how confident are you in its overall economic outlook for the next 12 months?”, 66% expressed at least some level of confidence — a slight dip from September and three points below Wave 1, signaling mild softening but continued overall stability.

Even among those who feel confident, respondents pointed to several headwinds that could hinder growth in the year ahead. Economic slowdown and policy uncertainty now top the list of concerns, followed by rising costs and ongoing labor shortages.



Confidence in Institutions

Participants were asked which institutions they trust most to act in the best interest of their industry. Ranked from most to least trusted, the ranking below remains largely consistent with previous waves:

1. **Company leadership (mean 1.83)**
2. **Industry trade associations (mean 1.94)**
3. **Business media covering their sector (mean 3.16)**
4. **State / local government (mean 3.60)**
5. **Federal government (mean 4.47)**

Trust in company leadership and trade associations remains strongest, while the federal government continues to rank lowest. Trust in business media and local government held steady, with only minor shifts from September (all within ± 0.05 points)

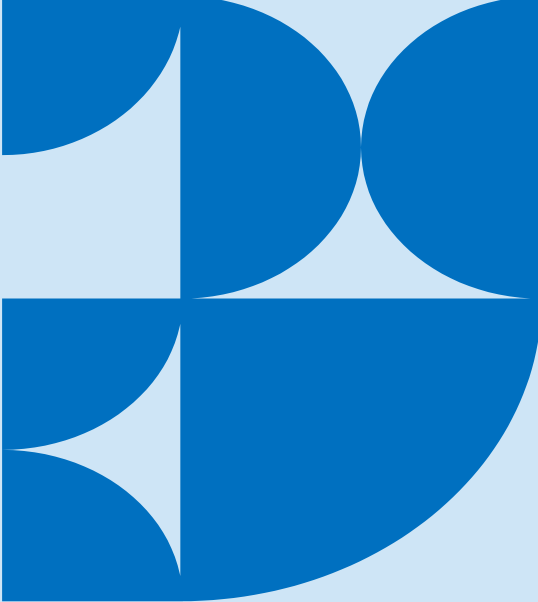
Confidence in Federal Policy Support

Only 24% report a fair amount or great deal of confidence that federal policies support their industry — down 5 points from September, and continuing a clear trend of low and declining federal confidence across waves.

Views on Regulation

Sentiment toward the regulatory environment remains largely unchanged.

About half of respondents continue to disagree that regulations are transparent, consistently applied, or based on industry expertise. Just one in four believes that current policies encourage innovation or enable business growth — a continued warning sign for policymakers and industry stakeholders.



Confidence in federal government policy support

Personal Finances:



Looking ahead, 43% of participants say they feel very or extremely confident about their personal financial situation over the next six months (↓ from 45% in September). A majority, however, remain only somewhat confident or less.

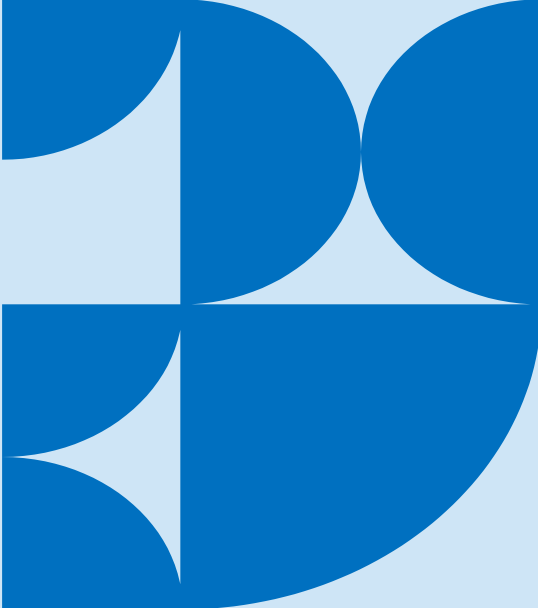
A closer look shows 38% are somewhat confident, while nearly 1 in 5 express low confidence — including 13% who are not very confident and *7% who are not at all confident. Just 14% feel extremely confident in their outlook.

Just 24% report a fair amount or great deal of confidence that federal policies support their industry

Views on regulations:

- **55%** disagree that “regulations are based on industry expertise.” (↑ from 48% in September)
- **63%** disagree that the “regulatory process is transparent.” (↑ from 55% — now at its highest level this year)
- **63%** disagree that “regulations are applied consistently.” (↑ from 54% — another notable uptick)
- Only **25%** agree that “regulations support innovation.” (↓ from 33% — lowest point across all waves)
- Just **27%** agree that “consumer protection is well balanced with business needs.” (↓ from 35% — slight but steady erosion)
- Only **30%** agree that “government policies enable business growth.” (flat vs. September — still low)).





Across industries, professionals remain focused on maintaining stability amid rising costs, evolving technologies, and continued pressure to do more with less — while balancing workforce challenges, regulatory uncertainty, and the need to adapt to shifting customer demand.

What's Worrying Professionals in Their Roles — *Here's What They Said...*

When asked, “*What’s your number-one concern in your current role?*” five recurring themes emerged from participants’ verbatim responses

Economic Slowdown & Job Security

- “A major economic slowdown would negatively affect our customers and, in turn, my organization.”
- “Business slowdown due to recession.”
- “Being laid off.”

AI & Job Replacement

- “AI taking over my role.”
- “AI will replace most white collar jobs by 2030. There is not much we can do except to regulate AI, tax AI use and route some of the proceeds to displaced workers.”
- “AI technology will automate a lot of reporting and analytics work I’m currently doing.”

Costs, Tariffs, & Financial Strain

- “Costs of materials are a lot.”
- “Price climbing out of control due to inflation.”
- “Tariffs are ruining everything. The cost of goods is too high.”

Labor & Staffing Gaps

- “Finding qualified workers who are committed to their job.”
- “Finding enough people to do the work that we have.”
- “Skilled labor shortage. Employees unable, unwilling, indifferent to following directive.”

Organizational Stress & Burnout

- ““Burnout -- not able to do all the tasks required for my job in a regular 40-hour work week.”
- “Too much to do. Currently filling 2 roles and unable to hire a backfill.”



Workplace Leadership, Job Security & Career Movement

When asked how confident they are in their organization's leadership to make sound decisions in the current economic climate, participants responded as follows:

Executive leadership: **51%** Strong or Complete confidence (↑ from 57%)

Department or team leadership: **51%** Strong or Complete confidence (↓ from 56%)

Direct manager or supervisor: **54%** Strong or Complete confidence (↓ from 58%)

When asked how secure they feel in their current role, just over half (**47%**) said they feel Very or Completely secure (↓ from 53%)



In Wave 4, career plans show a shift toward greater caution:

36% are actively job hunting, plan to start looking soon, or are considering a move within the next year (↑ from 30%)

49% report no plans to change jobs in the next 12 months (↓ from 53%)

This may signal growing hesitation about career mobility amid economic uncertainty — or a desire to stay put until conditions stabilize.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to share your perspective.

Your participation helps us track how worker confidence, trust, and career outlooks shift over time and gives you insight into how your views compare with others across industries.

We hope you'll take part in future waves so we can continue building this picture together.