

Wave 3 Results

September 1 – 30, 2025



AROUND 7 IN 10 REMAIN CONFIDENT IN THEIR INDUSTRY - though anxiety around economic slowdown and policy uncertainty continues to rise.

INSIDE THE RESULTS

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

WORKPLACE SNAPSHOT

Leadership confidence holds steady, though job-security sentiment eased slightly, with just over half (51%) feeling secure in their roles.

TRUST CHECK

Company leaders and trade associations remain most trusted sources of information. Trust in local news and trade publications edged up slightly, while federal government confidence remains lowest

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 3 results reflect input from 590 U.S. professionals across more than 20 industries (September 1–30, 2025). Respondents continue to represent a broad cross-section of sectors — including construction, manufacturing, technology, healthcare, and logistics — with the majority holding management or leadership roles, consistent with earlier waves.

Institutional Trust: Trust remains highest in company leadership and trade associations, while the federal government continues to rank lowest. Trust in local news and trade publications improved slightly compared with August.

Workplace Confidence:

Confidence across leadership levels held mostly steady, with only marginal softening. Just over half (51 %) continue to feel secure in their current roles (–2 pp vs August).

Personal Outlook:

Personal financial confidence edged down slightly, while job-change intent rose modestly—suggesting increased caution among workers.



Top Concerns

Economic slowdown overtook inflation as top overall concern

Policy/government uncertainty up ~2 pts.

Labor shortages remain prominent (flat vs August)

Tech disruption/AI continued to ease slightly)

Media Trust:

After two months of decline, trust in local and traditional media rebounded modestly in September.



Top threats: Economic slowdown and policy uncertainty are now cited more often than inflation, while labor shortages continue to challenge many sectors.

Industry Confidence: Industry outlook confidence remains steady at ~69 %, consistent with August.

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 **September 1 and September 30, 2025**, 590 professionals from more than 20 industries across the United States took part in the third wave of the Confidence in Action: Tracking the Workforce Perspective survey.

Respondents again represented a broad 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 services; logistics and transportation; retail and consumer goods; and the public sector. Additional insights were contributed by professionals in energy and utilities, safety and security, agriculture, environmental services, and other specialized sectors.

As in prior waves, the majority of participants hold management or leadership positions — ranging from owners and senior executives to department heads and team leads. The survey also included valuable input from technical and skilled-trade professionals, sales and business-development staff, and administrative roles, providing a balanced 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?” 69 % expressed at least some level of confidence — a one-point dip from August and four points below Wave 1, indicating continued stability despite mild softening.

Even among those confident in their sector’s outlook, respondents pointed to several factors that could hinder growth in the year ahead. Economic slowdown and policy uncertainty now lead the list of concerns, followed by rising costs and persistent 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 order remains consistent with prior waves:

1. **Company leadership (mean 1.77)**
2. **Industry trade associations (mean 1.96)**
3. **Business media covering their sector (mean 3.20)**
4. **State / local government (mean 3.61)**
5. **Federal government (mean 4.45)**

Trust in company leadership and trade associations remains strong, while the federal government continues to rank lowest. Business media and local government hold middle positions, with only minor shifts from August (all within ± 0.05 points).

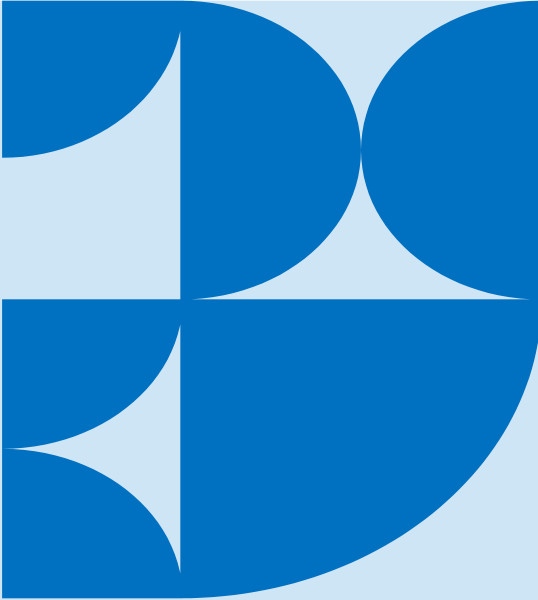
Confidence in Federal Policy Support

Just 29 % report a fair amount or great deal of confidence that federal policies support their industry — a slight one-point decline from August and continuing the low-confidence trend observed in earlier waves.

Views on Regulation

Perceptions of the regulatory environment remain largely unchanged.

About half of respondents continue to disagree that regulations are transparent, consistently applied, or based on industry expertise, and only about one-third believe current policies encourage innovation or business growth.



Confidence in federal government policy support

Personal Finances:



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

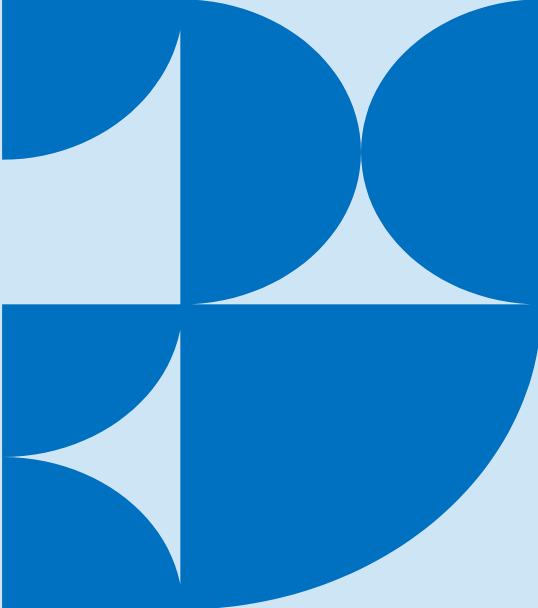
A closer look shows that 33% are only somewhat confident, while nearly 1 in 5 express low confidence — including 15% who are not very confident and 6% who are not at all confident. Just 14% feel extremely confident in their outlook.

Only 30% report a fair amount or great deal of confidence.
(↓ ~2.5 pp from 33%)

Views on regulations:

- **48%** disagree that “regulations are based on industry expertise.” (unchanged — remains high skepticism)
- **55%** disagree that the “regulatory process is transparent.” (steady at ~55%)
- **54%** disagree that “regulations are applied consistently.” (flat at ~54%)
- Only **33%** agree that “regulations support innovation.” (flat vs. Wave 1)
- Only **35%** agree that “consumer protection is well balanced with business needs.” (no real movement)
- Only **32%** agree that “government policies enable business growth.” (steady, 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

Economy, Demand & Budgets

- *“I am concerned that due to economic conditions, my role will be eliminated.”*
- *“Decreases in consumer spending leading to contraction within the company.”*

Costs & Inflation

- *“Inflation will cause consumers to pull back, affecting how much product our company will sell.”*
- *“The rising costs and inflation directly impact ecommerce and the ability people are buying and advertising for products.”*

Labor & Staffing Shortages

- *“Finding skilled labor with a good work ethic.”*
- *“Staffing and manpower issues. Finding enough people to do the work that we have.”*

AI & Technological Disruption

- *“AI taking my job.”*
- *“Automation and artificial intelligence may replace people in roles such as mine.”*

Inside the Organization

- *“Not enough time in the day to get all of my work done.”*
- *“How much my upper management really knows what we need to do our job safely and efficiently.”*



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 gave similar ratings across all levels:

Executive leadership: **57%** Strong or Complete confidence (↑ from 55%)

Department or team leadership: **56%** Strong or Complete confidence (↓ from 59%)

Direct manager or supervisor: **58%** Strong or Complete confidence (↓ from 59%)

When asked how secure they feel in their current role, just over half (**53%**) said they feel Very or Completely secure (↑ from 52%).



Career plans show greater stability in Wave 2:

30% are actively job hunting, planning to start looking soon, or considering a move within the next year (↓ from 33%).

Meanwhile, **53%** report no plans to change jobs in the next 12 months (↑ from 51%).

This may point to a more settled core workforce — or simply greater caution about making a move in the current environment.



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.