YOUR VOICE

Survey Results
April 2026

Insights From Canada's
Small Business Owners



About this survey

Purpose and Context:
The CFIB Your Voice omnibus survey is conducted bi-monthly, focusing on issues that matter most to small business owners across Canada. For over five decades, CFIB has used its in-house surveys to amplify member voices and deliver data-driven policy insights on small business priorities.

Impact:
The survey's insights are gathered directly from CFIB members, ensuring an authentic representation of small business priorities. These responses help shape CFIB's advocacy efforts, driving policies that are aligned with the evolving needs of the small business community.

Your Voice April 2026

Survey Type:
Controlled-access online CFIB survey.

Survey Period:
April 9 - April 27, 2026.

Sample:
Based on responses from 1,611 CFIB members who are owners of Canadian independent businesses, from all sectors and regions of the country. For comparison purposes, a probability samples with the same number of respondents would have a margin of error of +/- 2.44%, 19 times out of 20.

Notes:
In some instances, responses may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

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April Your Voice Survey Insights

Low business owners' confidence in government support

SME confidence in government support is low at all levels, with only about one in four businesses feeling supported. Small businesses need governments to take concrete action to support them and improve business conditions.

A challenging business environment marked by rising fuel costs

Rising fuel costs are the leading pressure on businesses (58%), followed by taxes squeezing margins (48%). Other operating costs and economic and political uncertainty (both 43%) are further making it difficult to do business.

Small business strategies to manage rising fuel costs

To cope, most businesses are absorbing higher fuel costs (71%) or raising prices (48%), reducing margins and weakening demand in an already uncertain trade environment.

Tariff impacts accelerate move away from U.S. trade

Steel and aluminum tariffs are the most damaging, accelerating a shift away from U.S. trade. Nearly three-quarters of firms are pivoting domestically—primarily toward Ontario—while Asia and the EU are key alternatives, though high shipping costs and border frictions limit broader diversification.

Mandate Vote

Businesses shared their views on key advocacy issues through our Mandate Vote supported by short, neutral backgrounders.

Pricing fairness: A majority support prohibiting the use of personal data/algorithms to charge different prices for the same good.

High-speed rail: Views are mixed on proceeding with a Toronto–Québec City high-speed rail corridor.

Tax compliance: A clear majority support compensating small businesses for collecting and remitting GST/HST.

Explore More Insights

- Region
- Business size
- Years in business

View Dashboard

Business Owners’ Confidence in Government Support

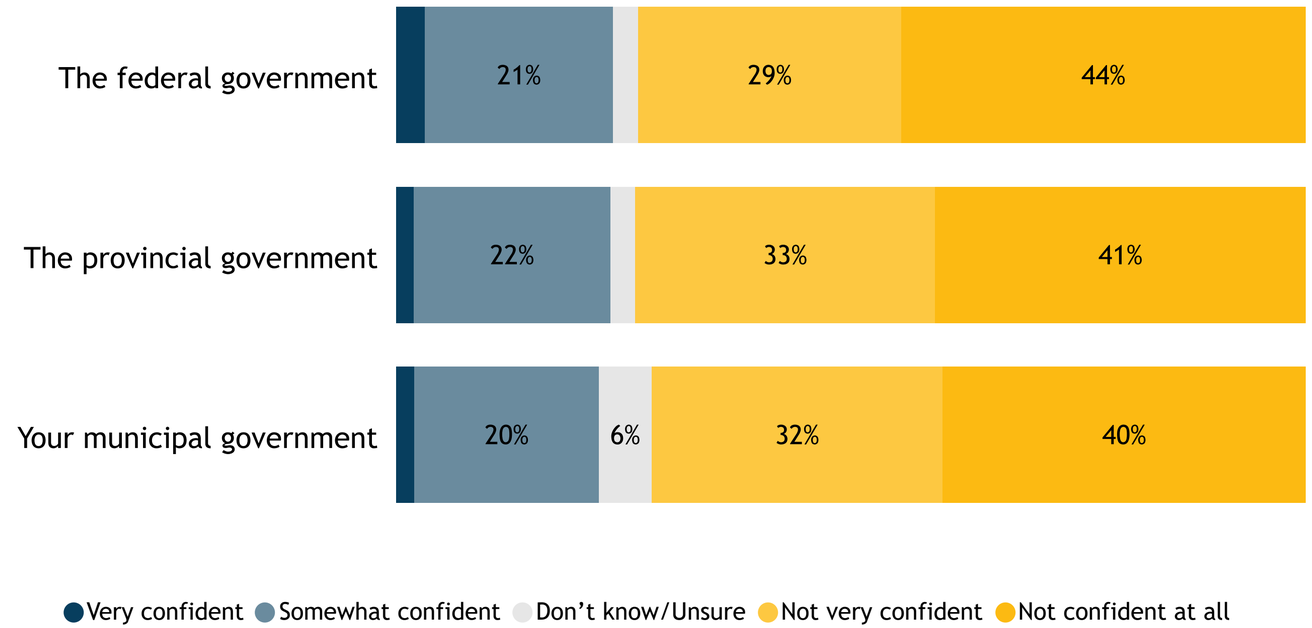


Only about one-quarter of SMEs feel confident that government has their back.

Confidence in the **federal government** is low across all provinces, with particularly low levels among businesses in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec.

Confidence in **provincial governments** is lowest in British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec, and highest in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

How confident are you that each of the following levels of government has your back as a business owner?



Question: How confident are you that each of the following levels of government has your back as a business owner (i.e., supports your business, looks out for the interests of small business, and has plans to help businesses manage rising costs and economic uncertainty) ? (Select one for each line)

1,576 Responses

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

Overview of current business conditions



Fuel costs are SMEs' top concern, followed by taxes, political and economic uncertainty, and other operating costs.

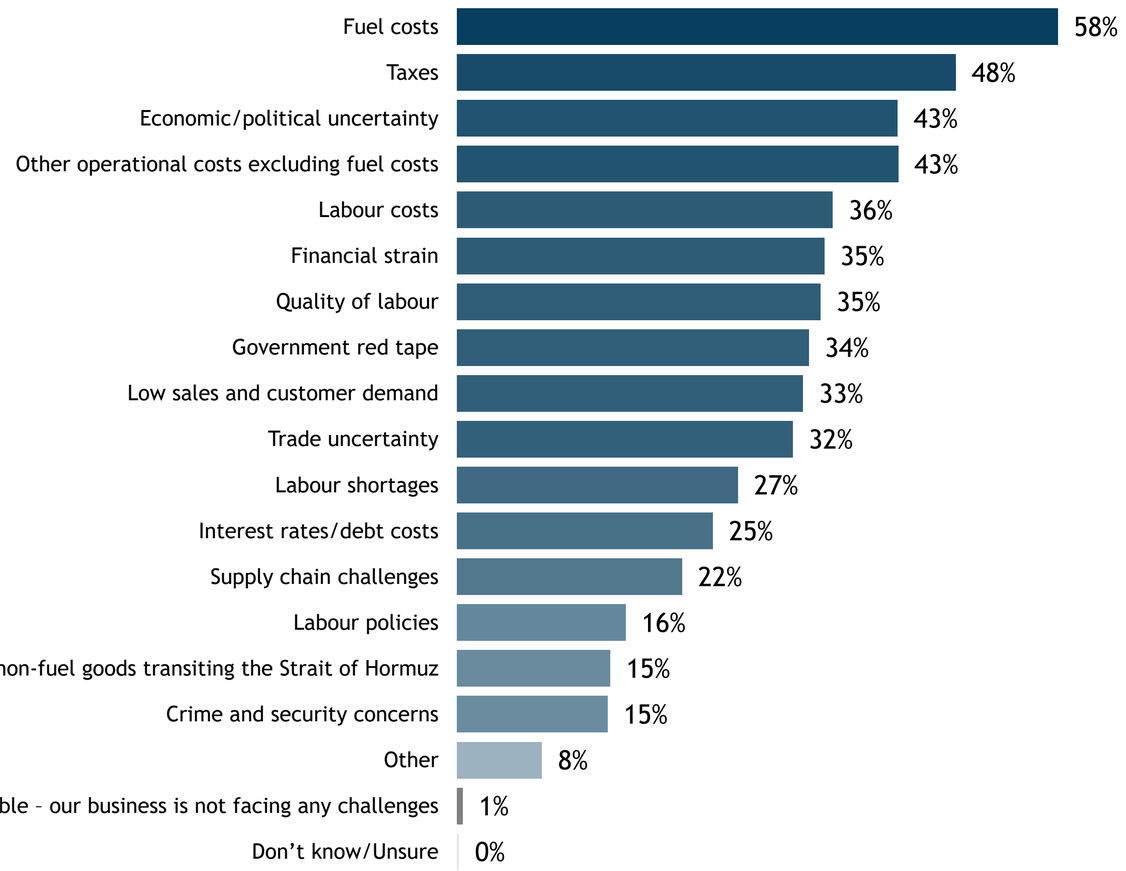
Nearly all SMEs face challenges.

Fuel costs (58%) and taxes (48%) are the largest margin squeezes, compounded by other operating expenses (43%) and economic and political uncertainty (43%).

These pressures are broadly consistent across provinces and sectors.

Labour-related challenges intensify with firm size and are especially acute in hospitality, construction, and manufacturing, while larger firms are increasingly exposed to economic, trade, and regulatory uncertainty.

What are the biggest challenges your business is facing right now?



Question: What are the biggest challenges your business is facing right now? (Select all that apply)

1,611 Responses

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

Small business strategies to manage rising fuel costs



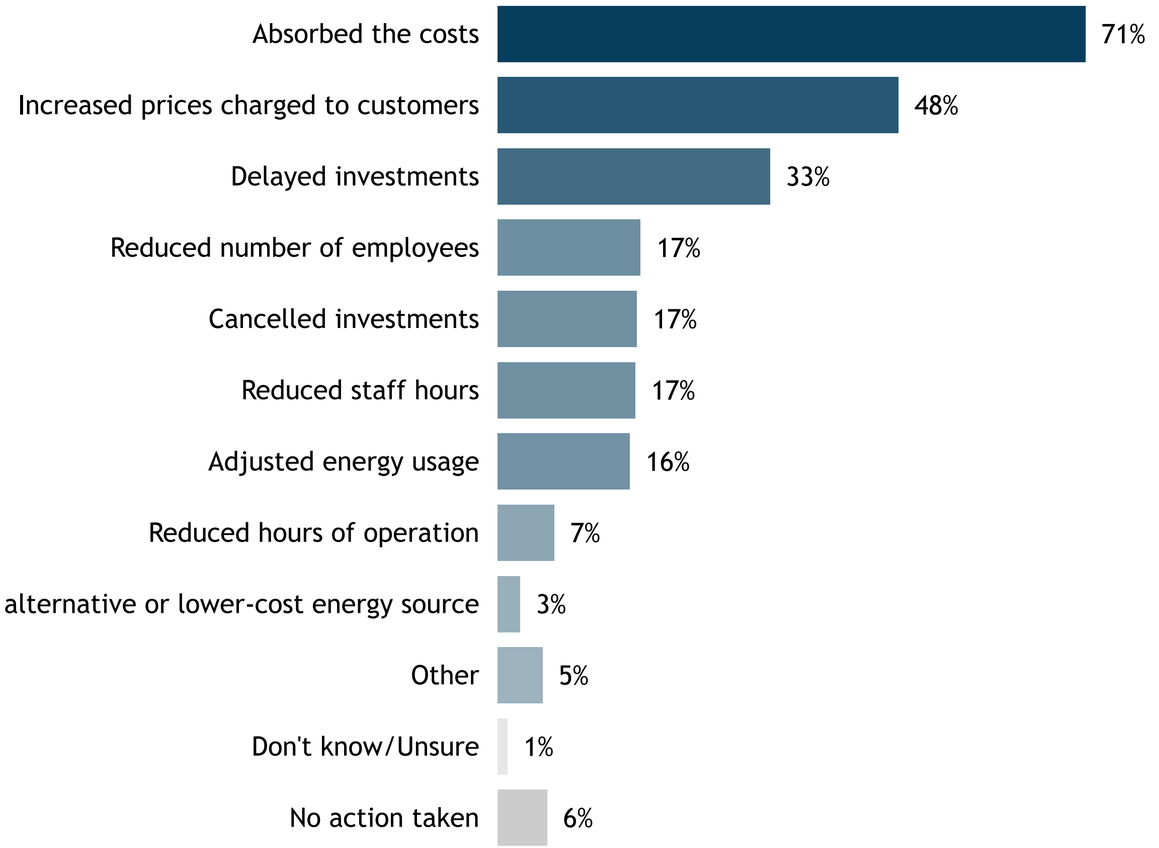
Most businesses have absorbed higher fuel costs or passed them on to customers, with fewer delaying investment or operations.

Most businesses are responding to higher fuel costs by absorbing them (71%) or raising prices (48%).

Results are consistent across provinces, though Quebec firms are less likely to raise prices.

By sector, construction and wholesale firms are more likely to pass on costs, while agriculture, manufacturing, and hospitality businesses tend to absorb them.

What actions, if any, has your business taken in response [to fuel costs]?



Question: What actions, if any, has your business taken in response [to fuel costs]? (Select all that apply)

921 Responses

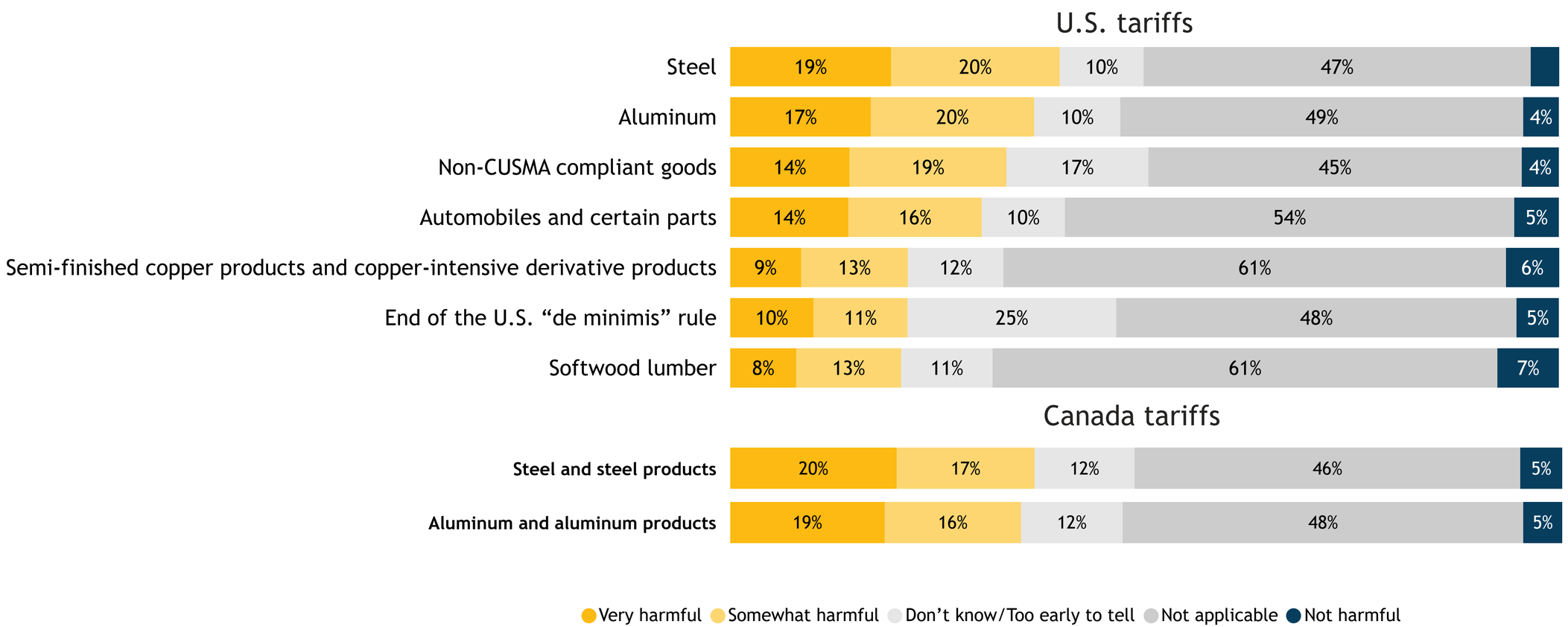
Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

Ongoing tariff impacts on small businesses



Steel and aluminum tariffs are the most harmful tariffs for small businesses, with over one-third to two-fifths reporting harmful impacts from both Canadian and U.S. tariffs.

How harmful are the following tariff related measures to your business?



Question: How harmful are the following tariff related measures to your business? (Select one for each line)

1,494 Responses

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

Business owners’ perspectives amid the trade war



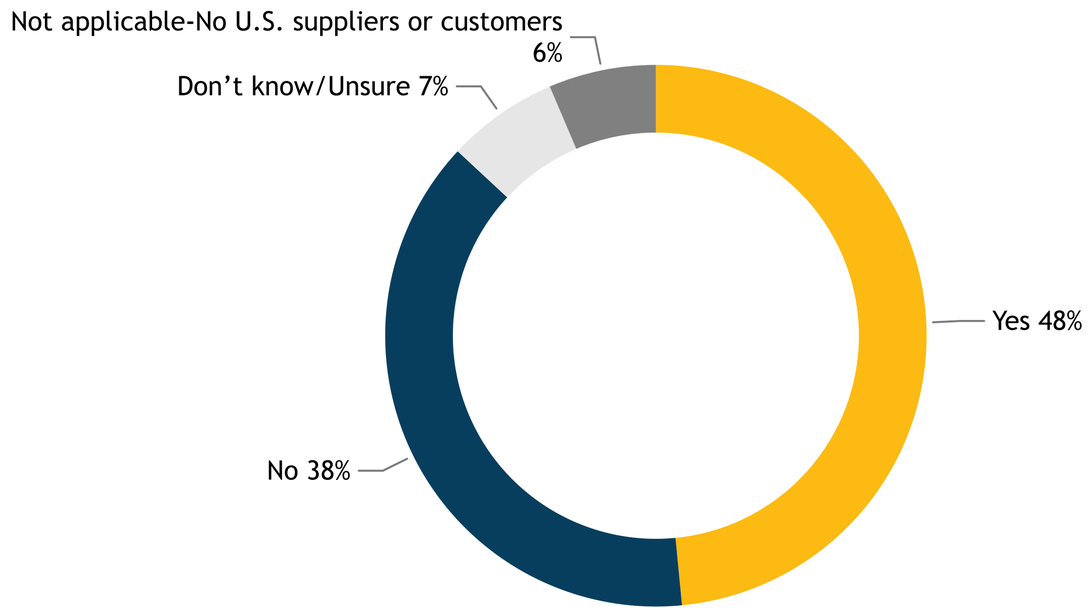
Nearly half (48%) of businesses trading with the U.S. have shifted to non-U.S. suppliers or customers due to the trade war.

Nearly half of small businesses trading with the U.S. have shifted away from U.S. suppliers or customers.

This pattern is consistent across provinces, with higher rates in British Columbia and Ontario.

Sectorally, retail, manufacturing, and professional services are pivoting more, while agriculture, hospitality, and transportation remain more constrained by rigid supply chains.

In the past 12 months, has your business pivoted to non-U.S.-based suppliers or customers?



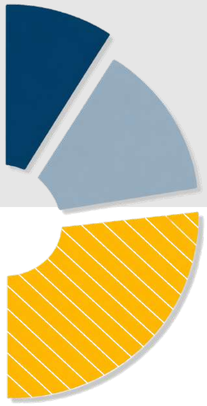
Question: In the past 12 months, has your business pivoted to non-U.S.-based suppliers or customers? (Select one)

780 Responses

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

Among businesses pivoting away from U.S. markets, nearly three-quarters are pivoting to domestic markets. Other popular U.S. alternatives include Asia (40%) and EU countries (39%).

Where is your business pivoting to find alternatives to U.S.-based suppliers or customers?





74%
Canada



19%
Mexico



6%
Latin America

Pivot destinations for Canadian SMES seeking alternatives

3%
Other countries

2%
Don't know/Unsure



20%
United Kingdom



39%
European Union countries



40%
Asia



8%
Australia/New Zealand

Question: Where is your business pivoting to find alternatives to U.S.-based suppliers or customers? (Select all that apply)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

378 Responses

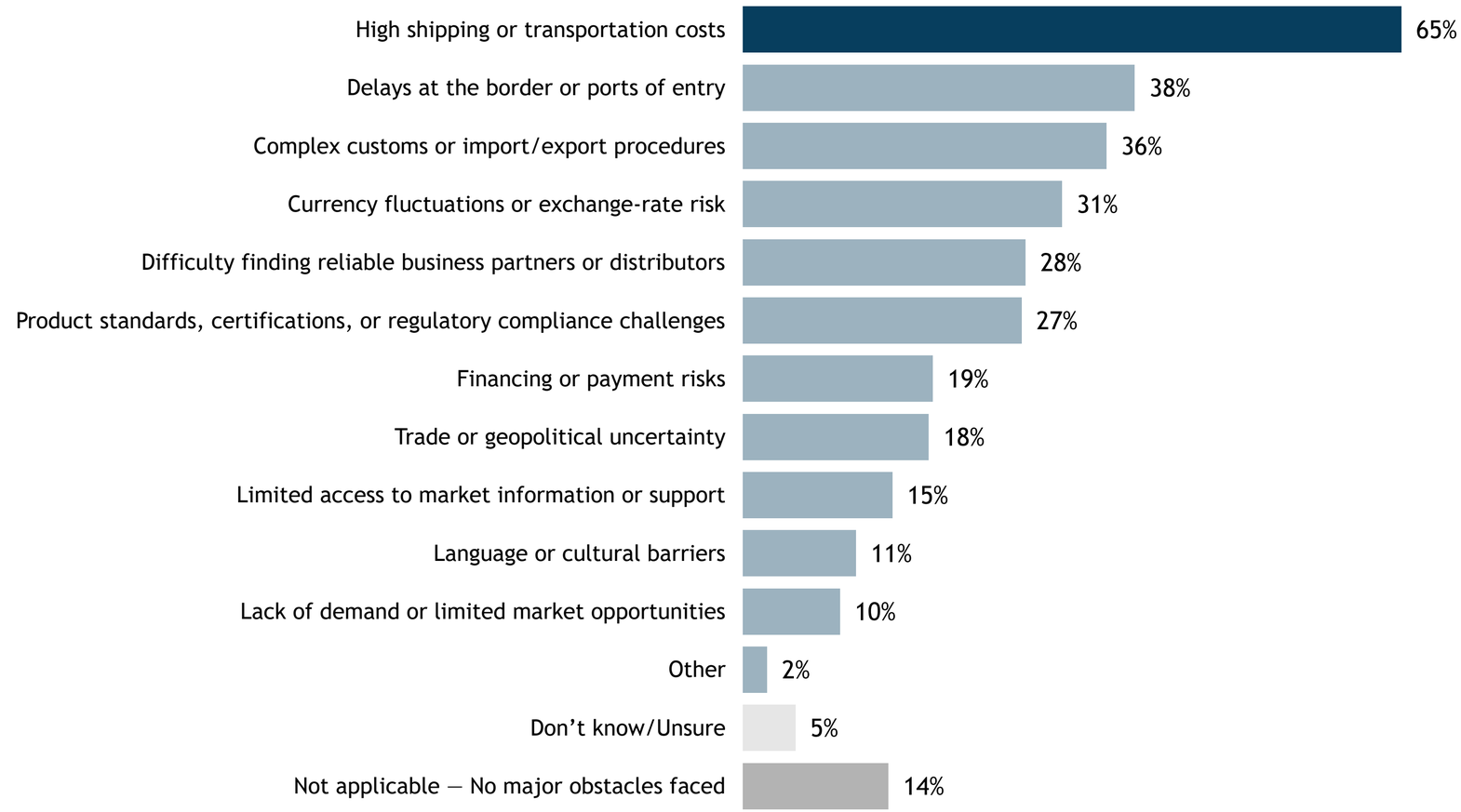
High shipping costs are the main barrier to international market diversification.

For businesses expanding beyond Canada, high shipping and transportation costs are the biggest barrier, affecting nearly two-thirds.

Border delays and complex customs procedures add further friction.

Overall, cost pressures and border inefficiencies remain the main constraints on successful international expansion.

What obstacles or barriers has your business encountered when pivoting to new markets outside of Canada?



Question: What obstacles or barriers has your business encountered when pivoting to new markets outside of Canada? (Select all that apply)

252 Responses

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

In Canada, Ontario is the leading province where business owners are looking beyond the U.S. market for suppliers and customers.

Canadian firms aren't just replacing U.S. partners—they're reinforcing interprovincial ties.

Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec act as the main anchors, while Atlantic and Prairie provinces are more often the ones pivoting outward.

A counterintuitive finding is Quebec's position: despite being Canada's second-largest economy, it ranks only fourth as a destination for SMEs reshoring from the United States.

Origin Province	Destination #1	Destination #2	Destination #3
*Newfoundland and Labrador	ON (42%)	BC (17%)	AB, NB, QC (13%)
*Prince Edward Island	ON (38%)	AB, BC, NB (17%)	QC (8%)
Nova Scotia	ON (44%)	NB (12%)	AB, BC, QC (9%)
*New Brunswick	ON (42%)	QC (16%)	BC (13%)
Quebec	ON (41%)	QC (17%)	BC (14%)
Ontario	ON (42%)	BC (19%)	QC (13%)
Manitoba	ON (41%)	MB (16%)	AB, BC (13%)
Saskatchewan	ON (29%)	AB (23%)	BC (15%)
Alberta	ON (30%)	BC (27%)	AB (19%)
British Columbia	ON (37%)	BC (25%)	AB (18%)

Question: Which Canadian provinces or territories is your business pivoting to for alternatives to U.S.-based suppliers or customers? (Select all that apply)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

Note: Small sample size (<40)

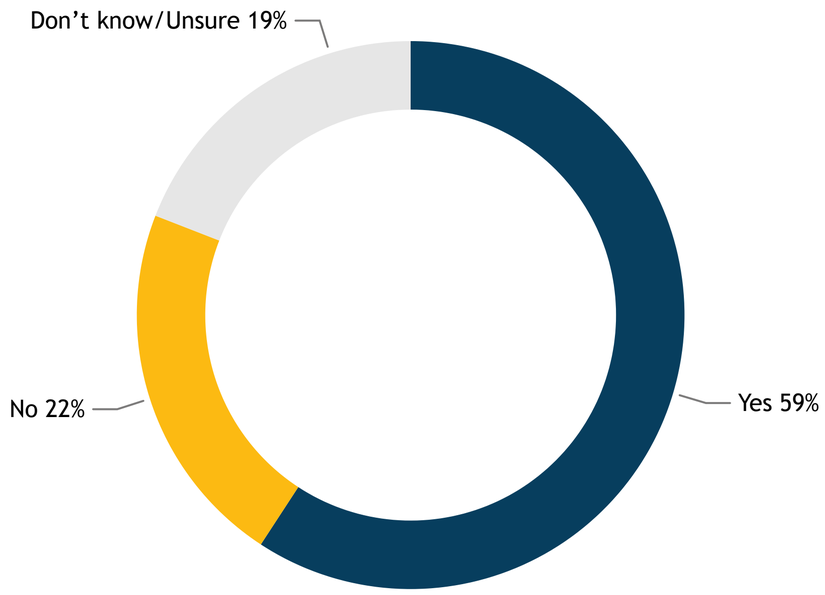
Mandate Vote: Where our members help shape our position on key issues

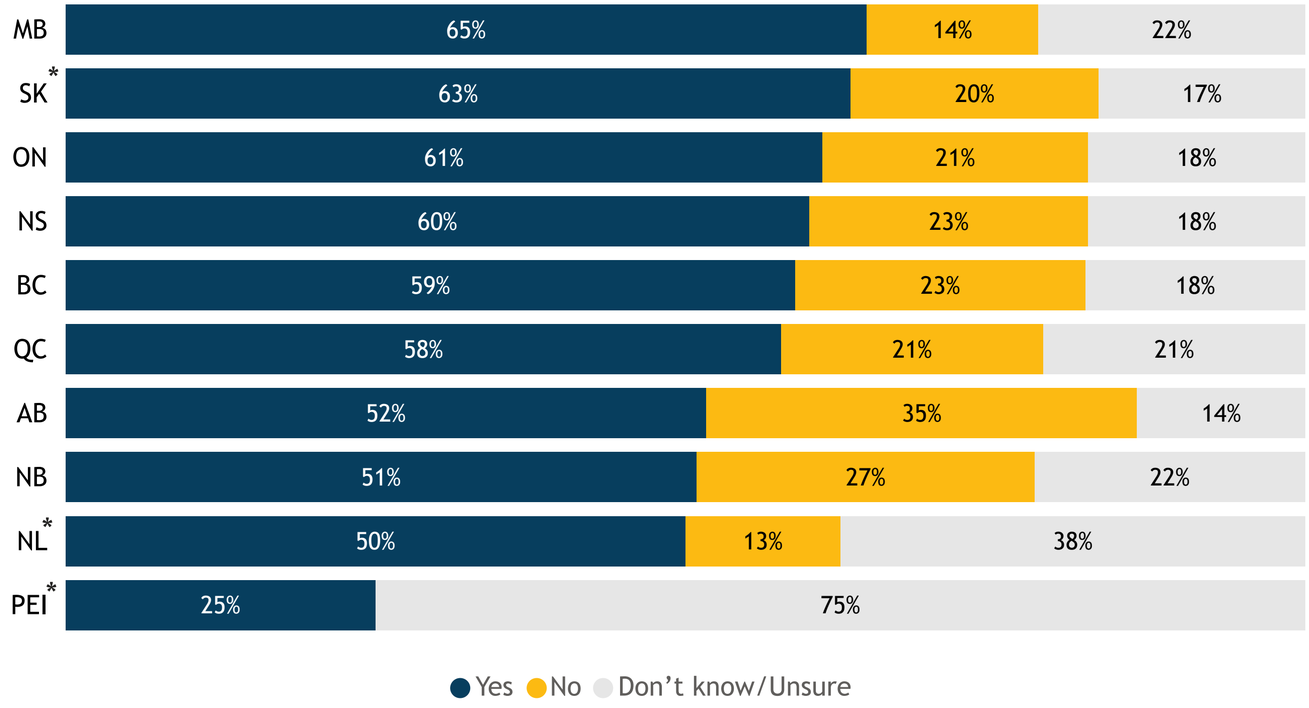


A majority of businesses support the adoption of rules prohibiting the use of personal data/algorithms to charge different prices to different customers for the same good.

Should government adopt rules to prohibit businesses from using personal data or algorithms to charge different prices to different customers for the same goods?

Canada





Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

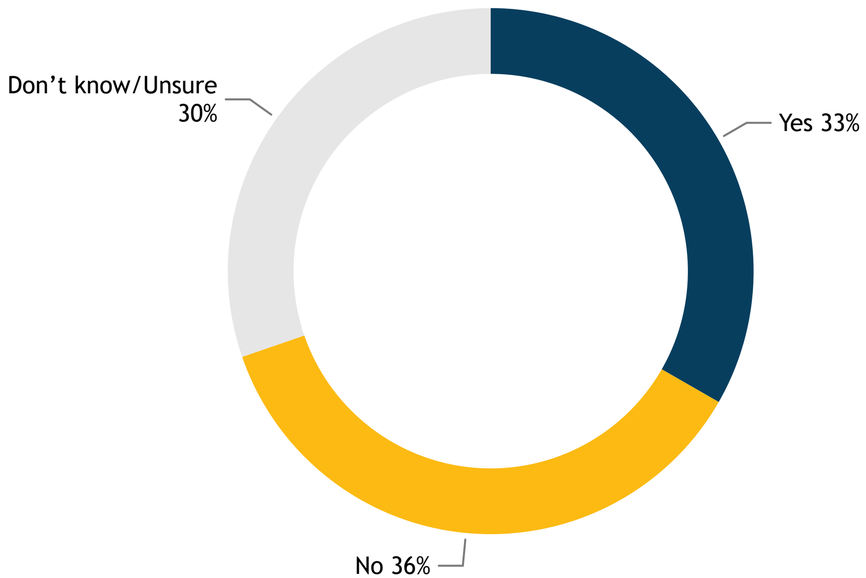
1,498 Responses

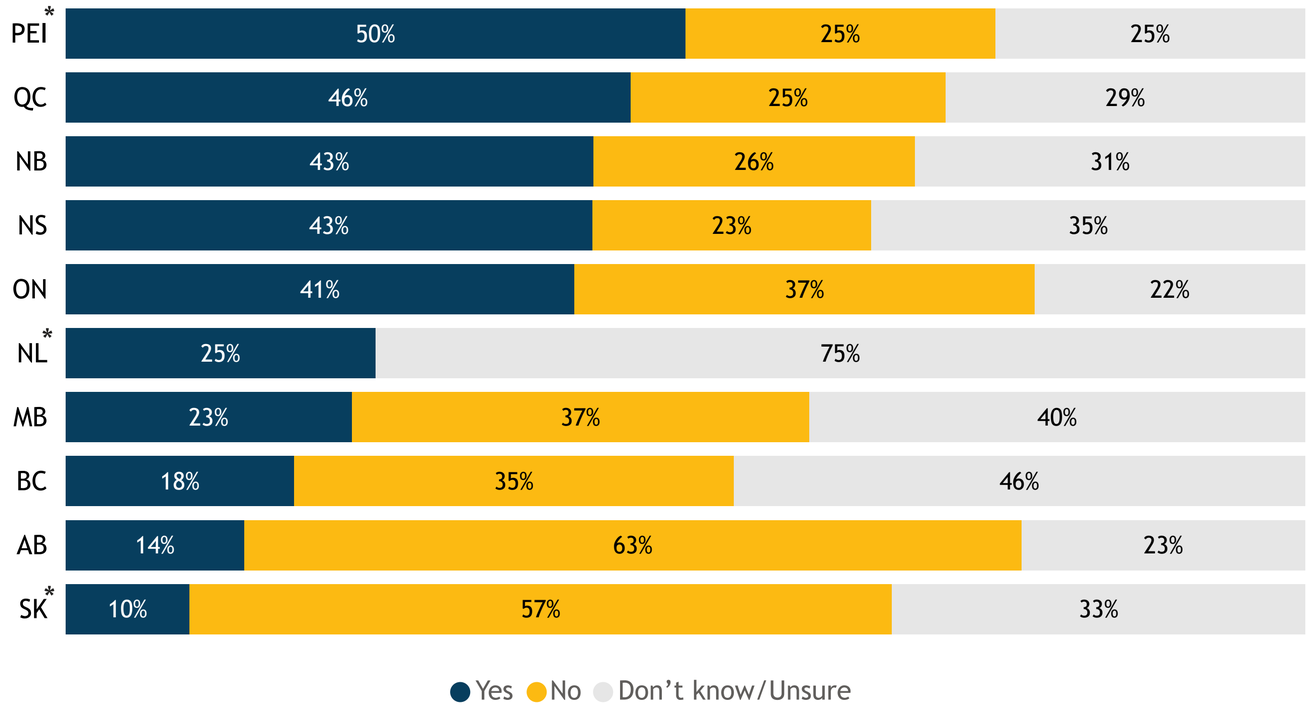
Note: *Small sample size (<40).

Views are mixed on proceeding with a Toronto-Québec City high speed rail corridor.

Should the federal government proceed with building a high speed rail corridor between Toronto and Québec City?

Canada





Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

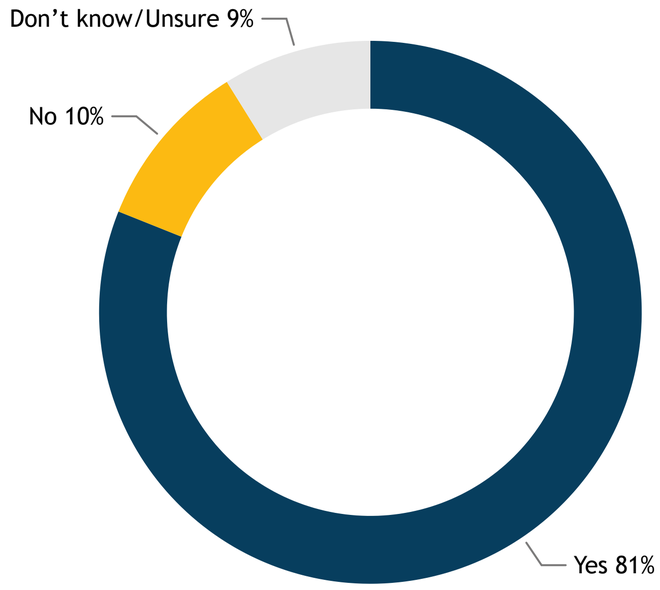
1,499 Responses

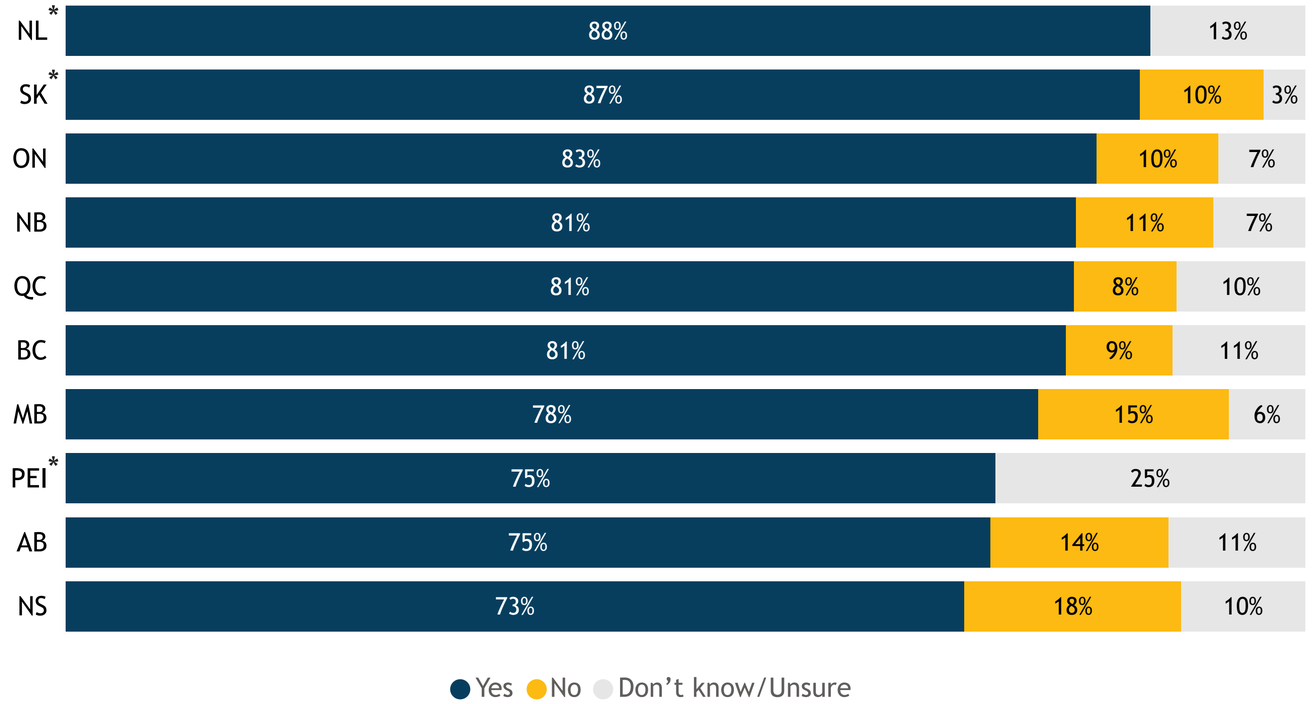
Note: *Small sample size (<40).

A clear majority of businesses support giving small businesses compensation for the collection and remittance of GST/HST.

Should small businesses receive compensation for the collection and remittance of GST/HST?

Canada





1,499 Responses

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

Note: *Small sample size (<40).

Members corner

Confidence in Government Support

I feel completely invisible from all levels of government.

Manufacturing, ON, 100-499 employees

Perspectives Amid the Trade War

We've transitioned 15% of our inputs to the EU. There's a high risk in transitioning key components and huge delay.

Manufacturing, BC, 5-19 employees

Rising costs and financial burden

UPS and FedEx brokers have ignored [USMCA certificates] and we have a cumulative ~$15,000+ of incorrectly assessed duties in dispute… This is a huge burden.

Manufacturing, BC 5-19 employees

Rising costs and financial burden

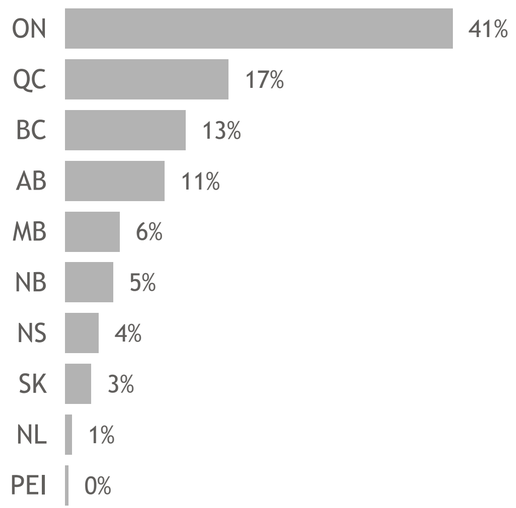
The main barrier is increased pricing to raw materials, negatively affecting our cash flow and profits.

Manufacturing, MB, 0-4 employees

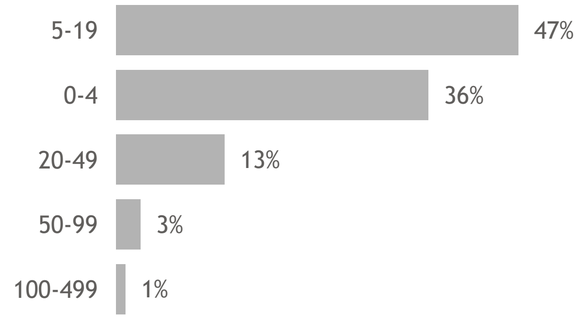
Appendix: Sample distribution

By location of the business

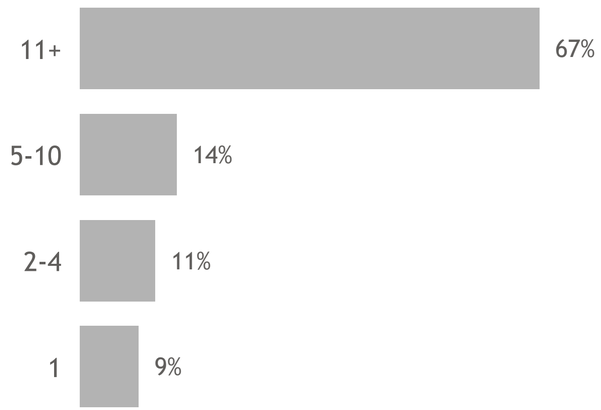




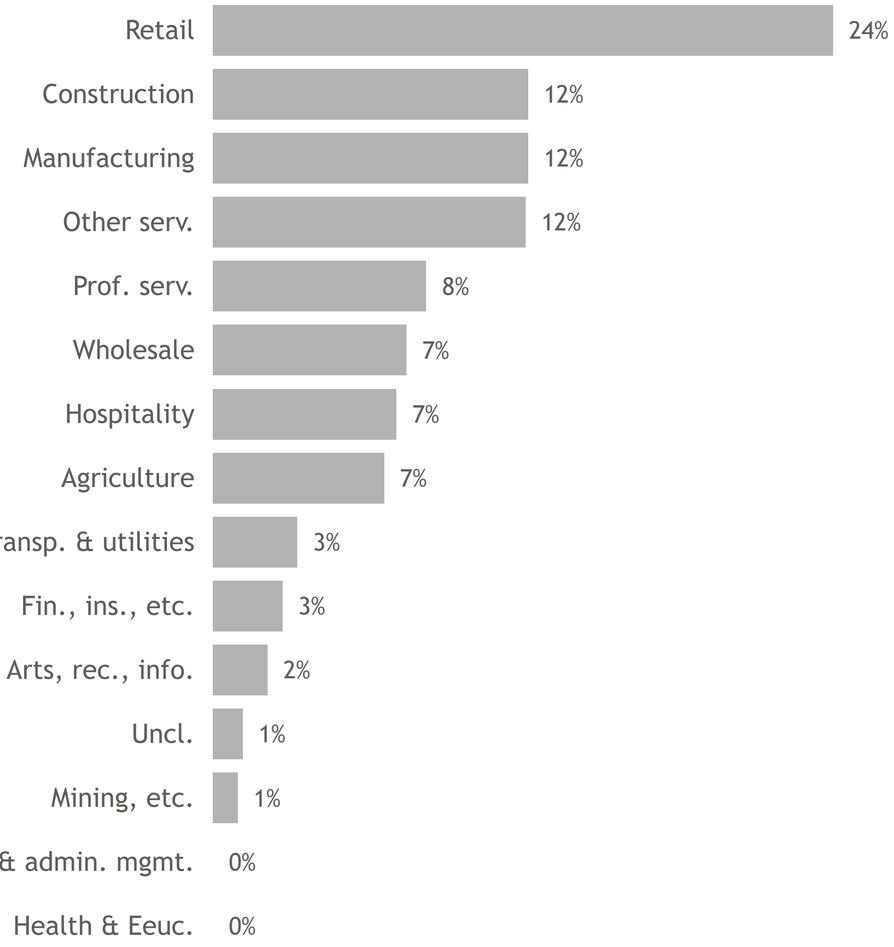
By number of employees



By years in business



By industry



Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey – April 2026, April 9 - 27, 2026, final results.

CFIB Research Publications and Business Stats



Monthly Business Barometer®

Our monthly survey tracks small business confidence, expectations and operating conditions in Canada.



Enterprise Pulse

Overview of self-employed, businesses with employees, entries/exits, and insolvencies.



Private Sector Job Vacancies in Canada

Quarterly insights on private sector job vacancies in Canada, highlighting vacancy rates by province, sector, and business size.

About Our Research

CFIB's research delivers timely, relevant and actionable insights to help small businesses navigate challenge and seize opportunities.

Questions or data requests



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We're here to help!

For any questions about this report or to request additional data, please don't hesitate to reach out.