

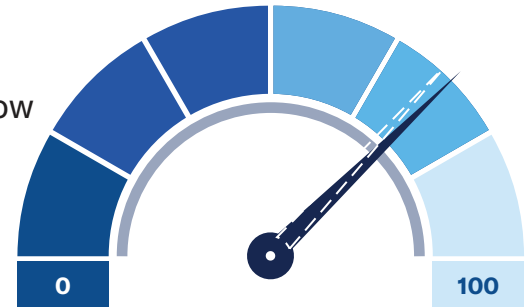


Justworks and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index **Q3 2026**

Small Business Confidence Rises as Owners Report Stronger Business Health and Cash Flow

Small businesses report greater confidence in their own operations, stronger business health, and improved cash-flow comfort in the third quarter. Inflation, however, remains the top challenge.

The Small Business Index score for Q3 2026 is 70.5, up from 66.5 last quarter and near the record-high score (72.0) one year ago.



Key Takeaways

Business health improves

71% say their business is in good health, while 35% rate it as very good.

Cash flow remains strong

72% are comfortable with their cash flow.

Inflation remains the top concern

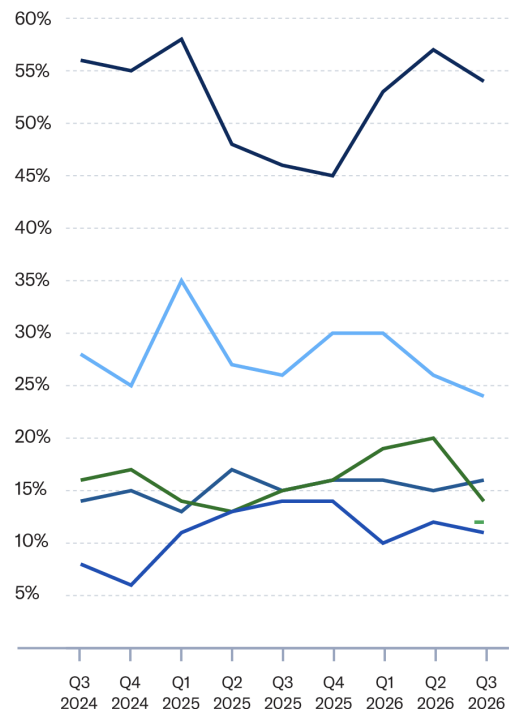
54% cite inflation as their biggest challenge, marking the third consecutive quarter it has led all concerns.

Growth plans continue

62% expect revenue growth, 38% plan to increase investment, and 36% expect to add staff.

Biggest challenges facing small business owners (Top 6 shown)

- Inflation costs
- Revenue
- Supply chain issues
- Attracting talent
- Access to capital
- Affording employee benefits/healthcare



Small Business Voice: Ian MacLean

President, Highland Landscaping, LLC (Southlake, Texas)

“Our local economy is fairly strong, but many locals are reluctant to make major investments. We believe this reflects a general sense of uncertainty.”

**Q3 2026 Spotlight**

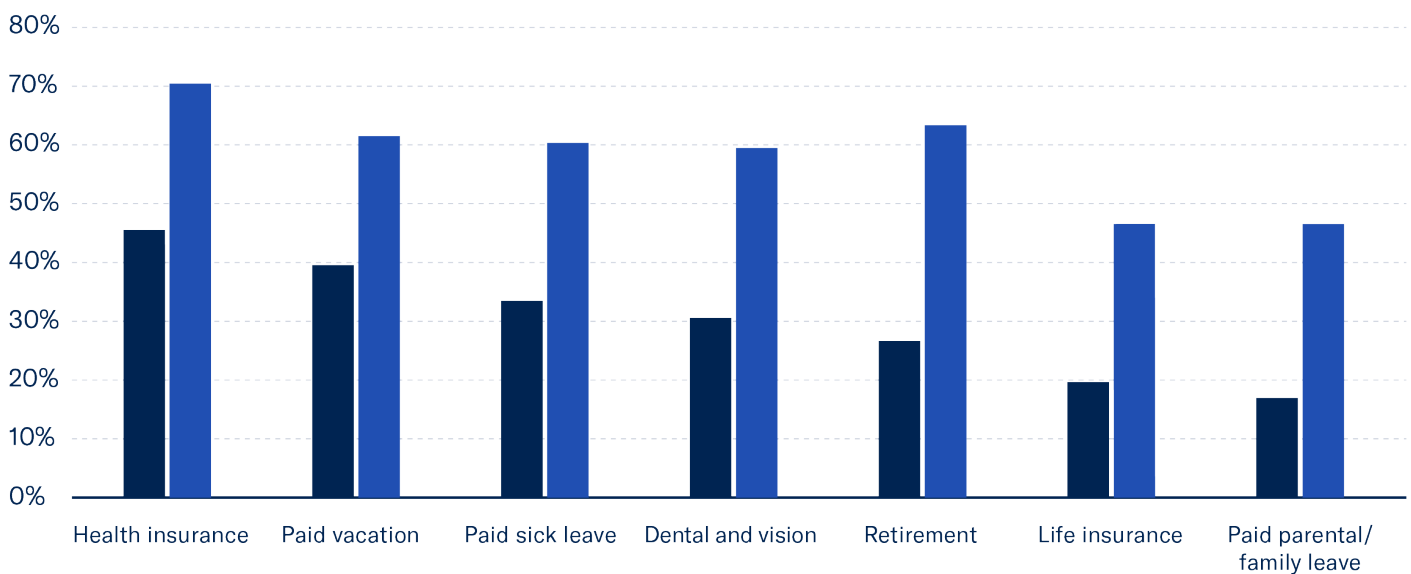
More Small Businesses are Investing in Employee Benefits

Small business owners recognize that benefits and employee development are essential to building strong workplaces. More businesses are offering key benefits than last year, even as rising costs, limited budgets, and capacity constraints create difficult tradeoffs.

Employee benefits offerings

● Currently offered

● Would like to offer

**Benefits Help Build Stronger Workplaces**

Small business owners overwhelmingly believe benefits:

- Demonstrate care for employees and families (95%)
- Improve productivity and engagement (95%)
- Boost morale (95%)
- Help retain employees (94%)
- Help attract talent (89%)

Employers Navigate Cost and Capacity Pressures

Despite investing in employees:

- 67% wish they had outside help selecting benefits.
- 58% struggle to keep up with employee pay expectations.
- 45% lack the time or resources to focus on employees as much as they would like.

Small Business Voice: Stevie Straka

Vice President of People, Blumira, a Justworks customer (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

“Health insurance premiums climb nearly every renewal cycle, forcing a tough tradeoff between absorbing rising costs, shifting more of the burden to employees, or scaling back coverage.”



Read the full Q3 2026 Small Business Index