

## **Small Business Owners Still Feel Pain of Pandemic and Fear More to Come**

*View of national economy continues to improve, but majority of businesses still need additional Federal help*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Small businesses anticipate the worst of the pandemic is still ahead and half (50%) of small businesses see their operations continuing for a year or less in the current business climate before having to permanently close according to a new poll taken October 30 – November 10 and released today by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and MetLife.

Amid a new surge in cases across the nation, most (62%) small businesses fear that the worst is still to come with COVID-19's economic impact and three-quarters (74%) of all small business owners say they need further government assistance to weather the storm. That percentage increases to 81% when looking at minority-owned businesses. Only four in 10 (40%) of all small business owners believe their business can continue to operate indefinitely without having to shut down permanently.

“The impact of coronavirus continues to take a devastating toll on America’s small businesses. In fact, half of them say they can operate for a year or less before closing permanently,” said Neil Bradley, executive vice president and chief policy officer at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “We must ensure small businesses across the country receive the assistance they need from the federal government. Not passing the bipartisan compromise for temporary and targeted relief risks the permanent loss of tens of thousands of small businesses, financial hardship for millions of Americans, and unnecessary delays in combatting the pandemic.”

Most small businesses see the need for further government support to see them through the pandemic’s negative impact. A majority (56%) *disagree* that they have all the support they need from the federal government for their business to succeed.

“Small businesses are the heart and soul of communities and need help from the federal government to survive. We are now 9-months into the COVID-19 pandemic and this survey shows how hard Main Street has been hurt.” Bryan Owen, owner of Between Pixels in Marietta GA said. “My employees and my customers are counting on a renewed bi-partisan effort in our nation’s capital to provide more help.”

The biggest concern at the moment is how COVID-19 will impact the economy. Across all subgroups—business size, region, sector, gender or ethnicity of the owner—80% or more are concerned about the virus’ impact on America’s economy.

Minority-owned businesses are feeling a bigger impact from the pandemic, report assistance being more vital, and have heightened concern about the pandemic’s impact on the local economy, their businesses, and mental health:

- 83% of minority-owned small businesses say that more federal small business relief funds are important versus 72% for non-minority-owned small businesses saying the same.
- Just over half (51%) of minority-owned small businesses are very concerned about the virus’s impact on the local economy versus 35% of non-minority-owned small businesses.
- 41% of minority-owned small business are very concerned about the impact of the pandemic on their small business compared to 31% of non-minority-owned businesses who said the same.

- Veteran- (44%) and minority- (39%) owned businesses are very concerned about the pandemic's impact on their mental health, 21 and 16 percentage points higher than non-minority-owned businesses (23%) expressing the same concern.

Most small businesses see a long haul before things return to normal. Just a quarter of small businesses think the U.S. small business climate will return to normal in under six months, with more than half (56%) predicting between six months to a year for a return to normalcy. This is in line with sentiments expressed last quarter and in May (six months ago).

“Despite the overall view of the economy improving slightly from last quarter, far too many small businesses fear they won't make it another year,” said Jessica Moser, senior vice president, Small and Specialty Business at MetLife. “It's vital that the voices of small business owners are heard. They still need help – a lot of it.”

COVID and the economy are the top policy issues for small business as we head into 2021. Combatting COVID-19 (44%) and the economy (44%) are the two top small business priorities for the incoming president and Congress.

The current Small Business Index score is 52.9 (a slight increase of 2.6 points from 50.3 in Q3). However, the new score remains substantially below findings before the pandemic struck: the Index score was 71.7 in Q1 of 2020, based on data collected before the full economic impact of the coronavirus set in.

#### **About the Small Business Index**

The MetLife & U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index is part of a multiyear collaboration by MetLife and the U.S. Chamber to elevate the voice of America's small business owners and highlight the important role they play in the nation's economy. The initiative produces the quarterly Index, which is a survey of 1,000 small businesses to take the temperature of the sector, see where small business owners are confident, and where they are experiencing challenges.

From April – July 2020, MetLife and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce had switched to producing a special monthly coronavirus report, the Small Business Coronavirus Impact Poll. To read those reports, visit [uschamber.com/sbpoll](https://uschamber.com/sbpoll).

For small business resources on the coronavirus, please visit [uschamber.com/co](https://uschamber.com/co). The latest resources, step-by-step guidance, and insights to help American businesses, workers, and families is available at [uschamber.com/coronavirus](https://uschamber.com/coronavirus).

#### **About the U.S. Chamber of Commerce**

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business organization representing companies of all sizes across every sector of the economy. Our members range from the small businesses and local chambers of commerce that line the Main Streets of America to leading industry associations and large corporations. They all share one thing: They count on the U.S. Chamber to be their voice in Washington, across the country, and around the world. For more than 100 years, we have advocated for pro-business policies that help businesses create jobs and grow our economy.

#### **About MetLife**

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