



PROSPERITY
PULSE

INSIGHT FROM OHIO BUSINESS LEADERS



**Research
Foundation**

Thank you for participating in the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation’s 1st Quarter 2021 *Prosperity Pulse* survey. Every quarter, we are grateful for the opportunity to hear directly from business leaders across the state through our survey regarding current and expected future conditions of Ohio’s economy. These updates are made possible only through the contributions of time and insight made by leaders across Ohio’s business community, and for that, we again thank you.

Our latest *Prosperity Pulse* Index gives us a reading of 112, which is a jump from the 4th Quarter reading of 93.8, but still lagging behind readings taken prior to the pandemic in 2018 and 2019. This quarter, Ohio business leaders see more light at the end of the pandemic tunnel and remain optimistic that conditions will continue to improve. This is reflected in four of the five key indicators of the Index seeing growth quarter-over-quarter, and certainly a significant improvement over last year’s survey at the start of the pandemic. Over 90% of Ohio business leaders who participated in our survey plan to add jobs to their companies in the coming weeks and months as the economy churns its way back toward normal operations.

Unsurprisingly, the Economic Uncertainty created by the pandemic and the Cost of Healthcare remain the most pressing issues of concern to Ohio’s business leaders. While Federal Regulations moves up one space as business leaders try to gauge the ongoing impact of the federal response to the pandemic and easing of restrictions on the economy, workforce issues dominated by recent news reports of labor market concerns puts that issue in the top five this quarter.

Please read on for the rest of the highlights of the latest *Prosperity Pulse*, and again, thank you for sharing your insights.

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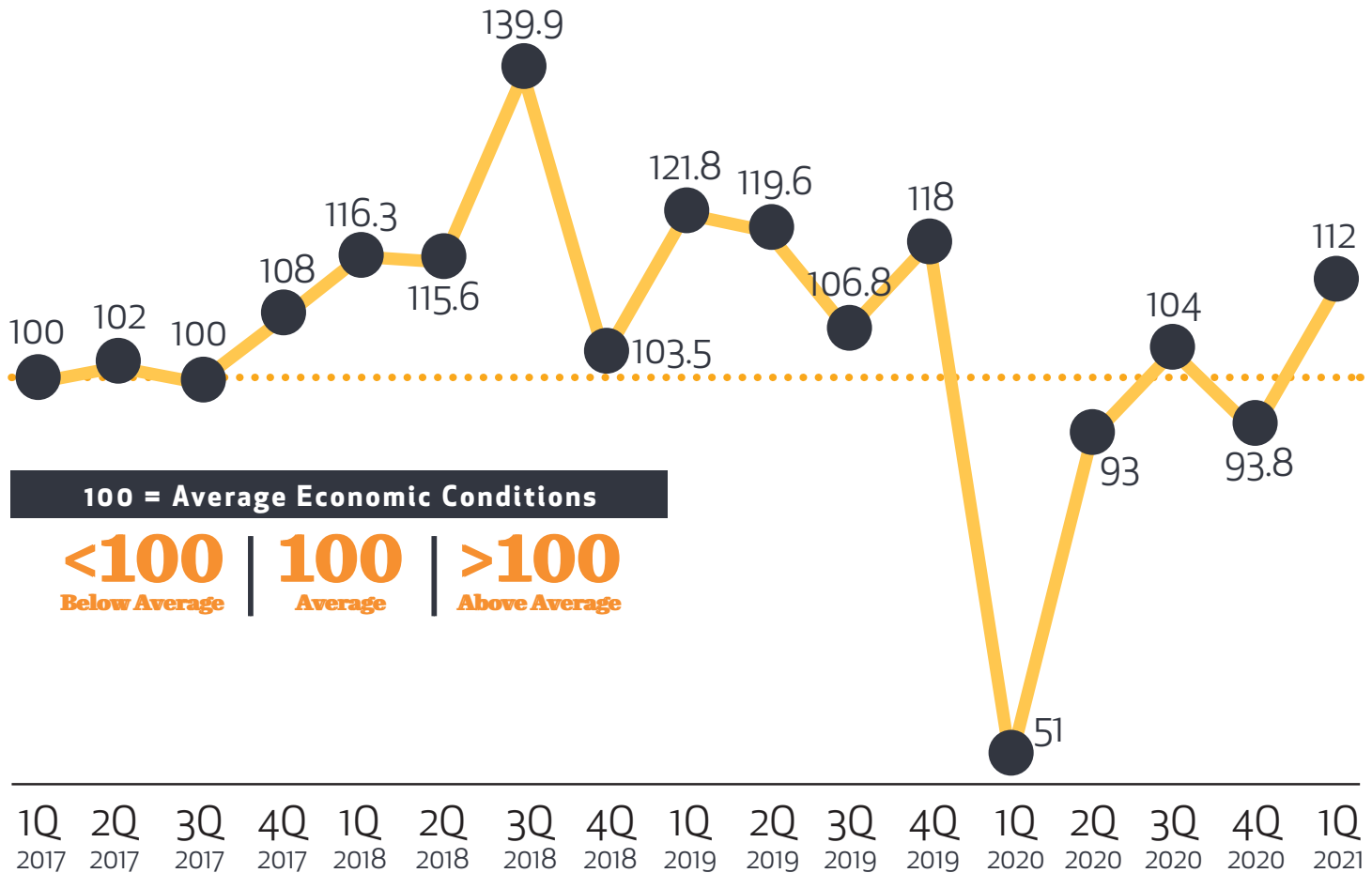
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ABOUT THE OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide non-partisan, educational resources on public policy issues that may impact Ohio’s economy, job creation, and long-term competitiveness.

THE PROSPERITY PULSE INDEX

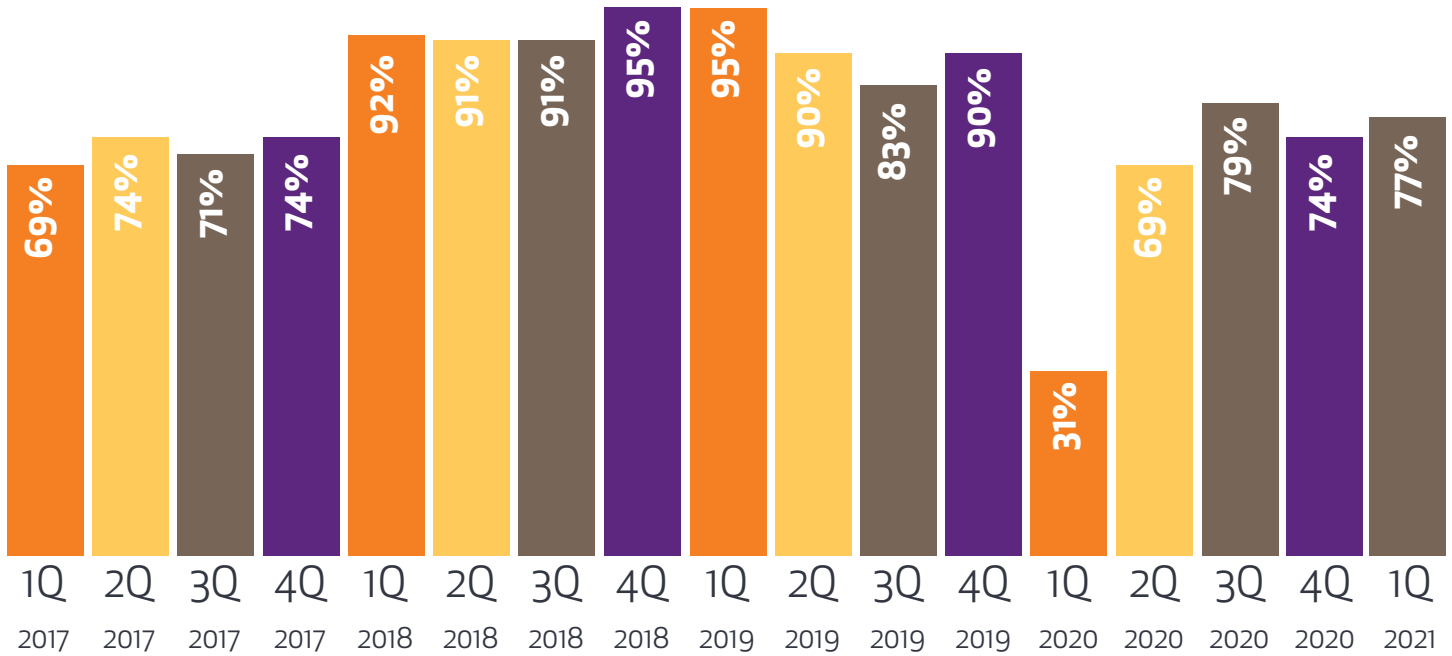
The *Prosperity Pulse* is an index measurement of the economic health of Ohio companies, taking into consideration the future outlook of five key indicators: profits, employment levels, unfilled openings, capital expenditures, and overall economic optimism. *Note that starting with polls conducted in 2019 (including 4Q 2018), the overall Index is calculated to reflect only those who saw either an increase or decrease in these business indicators.*



Prosperity Pulse Components	1Q Positive	Change from 4Q	Change from 1Q 2020
Anticipate Increased Profits	38%	+21 ↑	+30 ↑
Plans to Add Jobs	93%	+23 ↑	+59 ↑
Unfilled Jobs	26%	+1 ↑	+18 ↑
Planned Capital Expenditures	16%	-8 ↓	-1 ↓
Overall Economic Outlook	48%	+18 ↑	+37 ↑

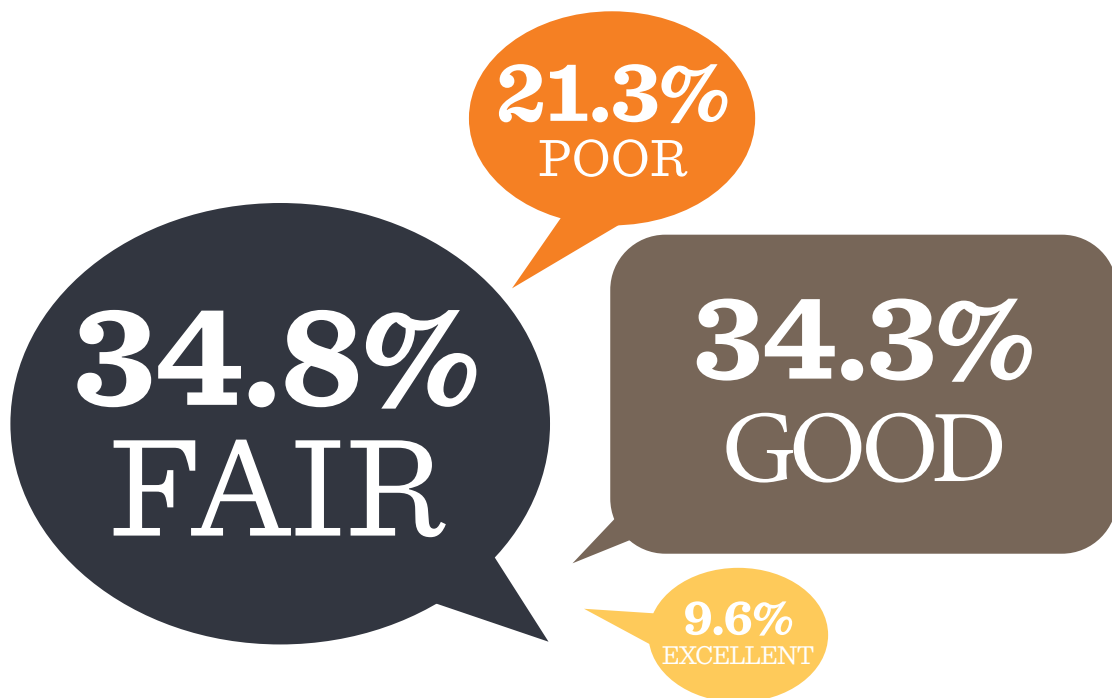
OPTIMISM

Percentage of business leaders that are OPTIMISTIC about the future economic health of their company:



ECONOMIC CLIMATE

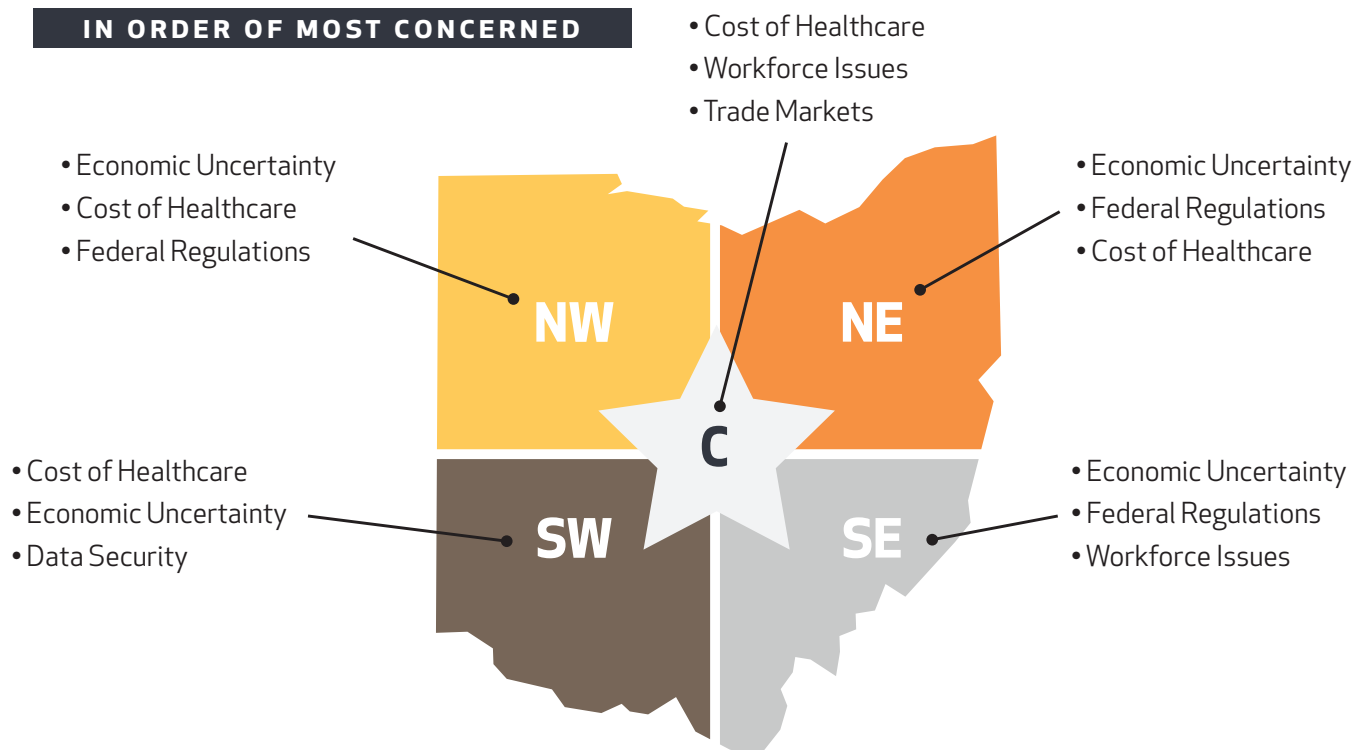
Percentage of business leaders that say the economic climate is...



TOP 5 CONCERNS *of* OHIO BUSINESS LEADERS

1Q 2021	4Q 2020 (Last quarter)	1Q 2020 (Last year)
1. Economic Uncertainty	2 ↑	1 <->
2. Cost of Healthcare	1 ↓	2 <->
3. Federal Regulations	4 ↑	5 ↑
4. Workforce Issues	6 ↑	8 ↑
5. Cost of All Employee Benefits	5 <->	3 ↓

TOP CONCERNS *by* REGION:

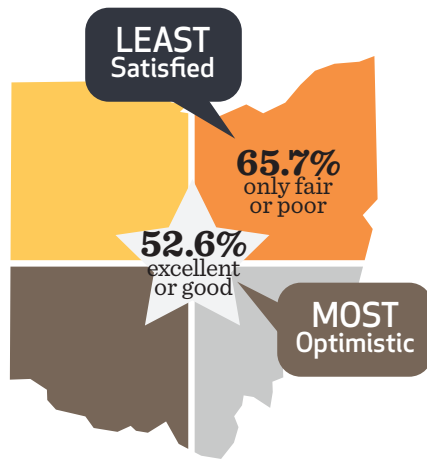


THE NATION COMPARED TO OHIO

Most Important Issue Is...

ISSUE	NATION	OHIO
Quality of Labor	24%	15.2% (2nd)
Taxes	19%	9.6% (T-3rd)
Government Regulations	13%	9.6% (T-3rd)
Poor Sales	8%	8.6% (5th)

National Comparison: NFIB Research Foundation Small Business Optimism Index, April 2021



Region of the state **most satisfied** with the overall economic conditions?

Central Ohio 52.6% excellent or good

Least Satisfied?

Northeast Ohio 65.7% only fair or poor

FINDINGS of NOTE



Companies in **NORTHWEST** Ohio have the strongest hiring plans this quarter, with **71.7%** of respondents from that region saying they plan to add **25** or more employees in the next three months.



The **HEALTHCARE** industry is most concerned with state regulations, with

48% of respondents saying they are “very concerned,” the top level of concern about the issue.

Businesses in **SOUTHEAST** Ohio had a very expensive start to the year, with **61.8%** of respondents from that region indicating their business costs increased by **10%** or more.



Businesses in the **MANUFACTURING** sector have the greatest concern about workforce issues, with **48.9%** of respondents indicating they are very concerned about the issue.

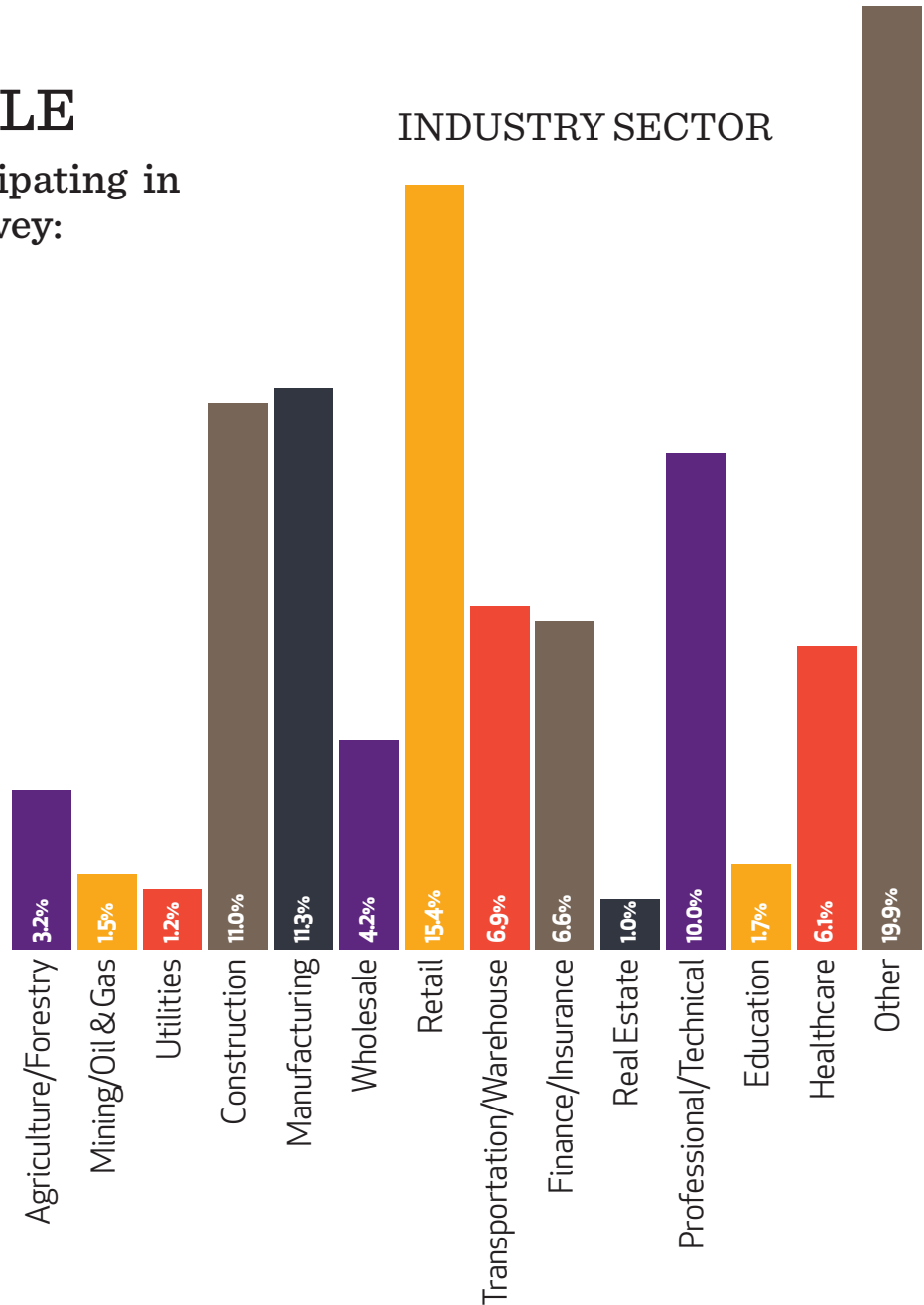
SURVEY PROFILE

Business Leaders Participating in 1Q Prosperity Pulse Survey:

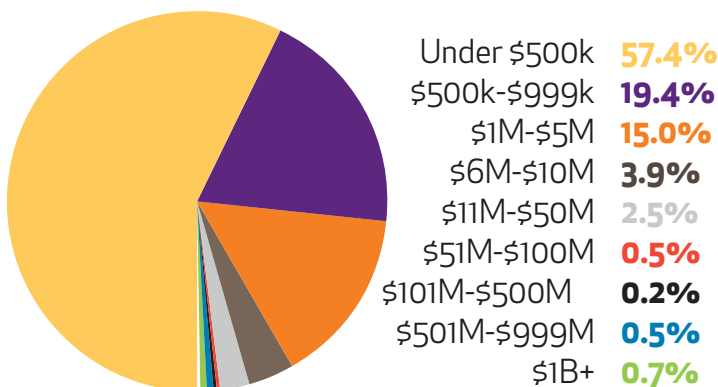
The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation partnered with Clout Research to conduct the *Prosperity Pulse*, a quarterly survey of business leaders in various sectors across the State of Ohio regarding the strength of their companies and the state economy.

The survey included 408 respondents who completed survey interviews online and on the telephone with live agent interviewers in April-May, 2021. It carries a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 4.85 percentage points.

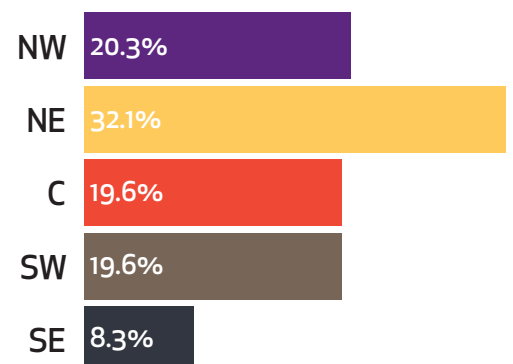
INDUSTRY SECTOR



BY COMPANY GROSS REVENUE



REGION



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