

What Are We Hearing From Businesses?

South Carolina Chamber of Commerce
Presentation to the BEA
August 24th, 2020



Looking Back: May Survey

- 4,500 mostly small businesses
- 42% have furloughed workers and nearly half of those will not be able to rehire all employees.
- 47% cite lack of demand as their number one challenge, followed by the ability to cover payroll and debts, and access to supplies identified as the next greatest challenges.
- 66% applied for some type of federal small business assistance aid.
- 64% are worried about lawsuits related to workplace exposure to COVID-19.

Source: SC Chamber Poll



July Survey of Small Businesses

Guarded Optimism

- 86% of small businesses have fully or partially reopened since the pandemic began and the number of fully open businesses climbed 11 percentage points from May.
- More than half expect next year's revenues to increase (53% vs. 50% in May and 47% in April), while 18% expect them to decrease.
- 60% have maintained the same size staff over the last year (down from 67% in May) and 20% increased staff over the same period (up from 13% in May); but salaries and hours are adjusted for 29%.

Source: US Chamber/MetLife Poll

July Survey of Small Businesses cont.

Long Way to Go

- 65% concerned about having to close again or stay closed with second wave.
- Increased concern over the lack of guidance on proper reopening procedures, up eight percentage points since June (56% vs. 48%).
- 56% believe it will take six months to a year before the small business climate returns to normal.

Source: US Chamber/MetLife Poll

What We are Hearing Now

- **Workforce Concerns:** lack of childcare and schools still not fully re-opening are major challenges for employees who can't tele-work and employers trying to fully re-open.
- **Liability Exposure:** continues to be major concern for employers. Having a liability protection law is becoming a measure of economic competitiveness among states.
- **November Election:** On top of pandemic uncertainties, the November elections add more uncertainty over economic policies affecting businesses.