

Opinion poll: Brick-and-mortar small businesses share views on public safety in their communities

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Download full report from our website: <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/brick-and-mortar-small-businesses-share-views-public-safety-their-communities>

Methodology

This poll reflects a survey of 500 owners and decision-makers of brick-and-mortar small businesses. The poll was an online and phone survey conducted by Chesapeake Beach Consulting between March 19th-24th, 2024. The margin of error is +/-4% at a 95% confidence level.

Survey Toplines

1. Are you the owner or manager of a small business?

Yes, owner	95%
Yes, manager	5%

2. How many physical locations do you own or lease for your business, not including any home offices.

One	81%
Two.....	13%
Three	3%
Four.....	2%
Five.....	1%

3. Which of the following categories best describes your business?

Agriculture & Mining	3%
Consulting & Business Services.....	8%
Education & Youth Services	1%
Energy & Utilities	1%
Engineering.....	<1%
Food & Beverage	6%
Health, Beauty, Fitness	4%
Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals & Biotech.....	3%
Insurance & Financial Services	2%
Manufacturing.....	3%
Media & Entertainment	2%
Non-profit	1%
Real Estate & Construction	17%
Retail	14%
Service and Consumer Services.....	8%

Software & Internet.....	1%
Technology, Computers & Electronics	2%
Telecommunications	<1%
Transportation & Storage.....	3%
Travel, Recreation & Leisure.....	1%
Wholesale & Distributors	2%
Other	16%

4. What year did you start your business?

Before 1960	1%
1960 to 1980.....	3%
1981 to 2000	16%
2001 to 2007	10%
2008 to 2015	25%
After 2015.....	46%

5. How many people does your company employ including yourself? Please include full-time and part-time employees, but do not include independent contractors.

One.....	25%
2 to 10.....	44%
11 to 24	15%
25 to 49.....	11%
50 to 74.....	3%
75 to 100.....	2%

6. What is your business' annual revenue?

Less than \$25,000	12%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	14%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	17%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	17%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	13%
\$500,000 to \$999,999.....	12%
Over \$1 million.....	14%
Refused.....	1%

7. How optimistic or pessimistic are you about your business prospects over the next 6 months?

Very optimistic	35%
Somewhat optimistic.....	40%
Neither optimistic or pessimistic	12%
Somewhat pessimistic	9%
Very pessimistic	3%
Don't know	1%
Refused.....	<1%

8. Please rank the overall state of your business, where 1 indicates that your business is performing very poorly and 5 indicates that your business is performing very well.

One (very poorly)	2%
Two.....	8%
Three	31%
Four.....	41%
Five (very well).....	17%

9. In the past three months, has your revenue increased, decreased or stayed the same?

Increased.....	43%
Decreased.....	20%
Stayed the same.....	38%

10. In the past three months, have your expenses increased, decreased or stayed the same?

Increased.....	51%
Decreased.....	6%
Stayed the same.....	42%

11. In the past three months, has the number of people you employ increased, decreased or stayed the same?

Increased.....	17%
Decreased.....	6%
Stayed the same.....	77%

12. Thinking about the following issues that a small business such as yours might face, please rank each of the following in terms of degree of concern to your business, with 1 meaning not a concern at all and 5 meaning a major concern.

Workforce shortages

One (Not a concern at all)	40%
Two.....	23%
Three	20%
Four.....	12%
Five (A major concern).....	5%

Taxes

One (Not a concern at all)	13%
Two.....	17%
Three	26%
Four.....	23%
Five (A major concern).....	20%

The economy

One (Not a concern at all)	5%
Two.....	10%
Three	23%
Four.....	29%
Five (A major concern).....	33%

General business conditions

One (Not a concern at all)	13%
Two.....	18%
Three	35%
Four.....	22%
Five (A major concern).....	12%

Crime and public safety

One (Not a concern at all)	29%
Two.....	23%
Three	23%
Four.....	13%
Five (A major concern).....	12%

Inflation

One (Not a concern at all)	7%
Two.....	8%
Three	21%
Four.....	25%
Five (A major concern).....	39%

Market competition

One (Not a concern at all)	14%
Two.....	22%
Three	36%
Four.....	19%
Five (A major concern).....	9%

13. Thinking about crime in the country, would you say crime is a major problem, a minor problem, not really a problem or not a problem at all?

A major problem	64%
A minor problem	28%
Not really a problem.....	6%
Not a problem at all.....	2%

14. Thinking about crime in the community where your principal business location is, would you say crime is a major problem, a minor problem, not really a problem or not a problem at all?

A major problem	20%
A minor problem	49%
Not really a problem.....	23%
Not a problem at all.....	8%

15. Have you ever considered relocating your business due to concerns about crime in your community? (Asked of those who say crime is a problem in their communities N=344)

Yes	4%
No.....	25%
Not sure.....	71%

16. Thinking about other business owners in your community, do you think they believe that crime is a major problem, a minor problem, not really a problem or not a problem at all?

A major problem	23%
A minor problem	43%
Not really a problem.....	17%
Not a problem at all.....	8%
Not sure.....	8%

17. Would you say the level of crime in your community has gotten worse, remained the same or gotten better in recent years?

Much worse	7%
Somewhat worse	28%
Remained the same	46%
Somewhat better	15%
Much better	4%

18. On a scale of one to five, with one being not at all impactful and five being very impactful, please tell me how impactful each of the following are to your business.

Homelessness

One (not at all concerned).....	33%
Two.....	22%
Three	17%
Four.....	15%
Five (very concerned).....	14%

Alcohol and drug addiction

One (not at all concerned).....	30%
Two.....	19%
Three	21%
Four.....	16%
Five (very concerned).....	14%

Petty theft

One (not at all concerned).....	28%
Two.....	23%
Three	25%
Four.....	14%
Five (very concerned).....	10%

Vandalism

One (not at all concerned).....	32%
Two.....	28%
Three	22%
Four.....	11%
Five (very concerned).....	8%

Mental health

One (not at all concerned).....	22%
Two.....	21%
Three	25%
Four.....	17%
Five (very concerned).....	16%

19. On a scale of one to five, with one being not safe at all and five being very safe, please tell me how safe you feel in your community?

One (not safe at all)	2%
Two.....	8%
Three	26%
Four.....	39%
Five (very safe)	27%

20. In what ways, if any, do you feel crime impacts your business? (Select all that apply)

Decreased revenue	23%
Increased insurance costs	38%
Negative impact on employee morale	23%
Loss of trust in the community	38%
Loss of business.....	22%
Other	2%
No impact.....	31%

21. On a scale of one to five, with one meaning your local justice system responds very poorly and five meaning your local justice system responds very well, how would you rate your local justice system’s response to each of the following issues?

Homelessness

One (very poorly)	27%
Two.....	23%
Three	28%
Four.....	13%
Five (very well).....	10%

Alcohol and drug addiction

One (very poorly)	18%
Two.....	24%
Three	32%
Four.....	16%
Five (very well).....	9%

Petty theft

One (very poorly)	15%
Two.....	21%
Three	34%
Four.....	19%
Five (very well).....	11%

Vandalism

One (very poorly)	15%
Two.....	22%
Three	32%
Four.....	19%
Five (very well).....	11%

Mental health

One (very poorly)	22%
Two.....	25%
Three	33%
Four.....	11%
Five (very well).....	9%

22. On a scale of one to five, with one meaning your local police or sheriff's department deals with the issue very poorly and five meaning your police or sheriff's department deals with the issue very well, how would you rate your local police or sheriff's department's response to each of the following issues?

Homelessness

One (very poorly)	26%
Two.....	24%
Three	28%
Four.....	16%
Five (very well).....	6%

Alcohol and drug addiction

One (very poorly)	21%
Two.....	22%
Three	32%
Four.....	16%
Five (very well).....	8%

Petty theft

One (very poorly)	14%
Two.....	22%
Three	33%
Four.....	19%
Five (very well).....	12%

Vandalism

One (very poorly)	14%
Two.....	21%
Three	33%
Four.....	19%
Five (very well).....	12%

Mental health

One (very poorly)	24%
Two.....	20%
Three	33%
Four.....	16%
Five (very well).....	8%

Many communities around the country have implemented programs to send unarmed mental health professionals into the community to help people experiencing a mental health crisis or struggling with addiction.

23. Does such a program exist in your community?

Yes	23%
No.....	37%
Don't know	40%

24. Would you support or oppose such a program being implemented in your community?
(Asked of those who responded “No” or “Don’t know” above. N=383)

Strongly support.....	47%
Somewhat support	34%
Somewhat oppose	5%
Strongly oppose.....	3%
Not sure.....	10%

Many communities around the country have implemented programs that offer community-based programs or initiatives that offer alternatives to jail for non-violent offenses.

25. Does such a program exist in your community?

Yes	32%
No.....	29%
Don't know	40%

26. Would you support or oppose such a program being implemented in your community?
(Asked of those who responded “No” or “Don’t know” above. N=342)

Strongly support.....	38%
Somewhat support	39%
Somewhat oppose	8%
Strongly oppose.....	5%
Not sure.....	11%

27. How satisfied are you with the level of support and resources provided by your local government to small businesses such as yours that have been affected by crime?

Very satisfied.....	14%
Somewhat satisfied	27%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied.....	36%
Somewhat dissatisfied.....	17%
Very dissatisfied	6%

28. Do you believe that small businesses such as yours have a role to play in supporting individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system through employment or other means?

Yes	51%
No.....	25%
Not sure.....	24%

29. Which of the following do you believe is a better way to spend your tax dollars?

On more rehabilitation and support for individuals dealing with drug addiction and/or homelessness	46%
More funding for police and jails to arrest and incarcerate offenders	13%
Both, equally	40%
Other	2%

The following questions are for statistical purposes and to ensure we have a representative sample.

30. Please indicate your gender.

Male.....	51%
Female.....	48%
Gender nonconforming and/or nonbinary	<1%
Prefer not to disclose.....	0%
Another option not listed here	<1%

31. In what year were you born?

Before 1960	18%
1960 to 1969.....	18%
1970 to 1979	22%
1980 to 1989.....	25%
1990 to 2000.....	15%
After 2000.....	1%

32. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat or Independent?

Republican	34%
Independent.....	30%
Democrat.....	31%
Other	2%
Don't know	1%
Refused.....	2%

33. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party? (if independent, other or don't know - N=165)

Closer to the Democratic Party	23%
Closer to the Republican Party.....	31%
Neither	44%
Don't know	2%
Refused.....	0%

34. Which race do you identify with?

Asian/Asian American/East Asian/South Asian/Southeast Asian	2%
Black/African/African American	13%
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin	9%
Middle Eastern/North African	<1%
Native American/Alaskan Native.....	2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%
White/Caucasian.....	73%
Other	1%
Prefer not to answer	<1%

35. Is your primary language English?

Yes	98%
No.....	2%
Refused.....	0%

36. Are you an immigrant or a first-generation U.S. citizen, meaning both your parents were born in another country?

Yes	13%
No.....	86%
Refused.....	1%

37. Is your principal business location in an urban area, a suburban area or a rural area?

Urban	30%
Suburban.....	46%
Rural.....	24%

38. Is your principal business location in a commercial area, industrial area or residential area?

Commercial	40%
Industrial.....	7%
Residential	53%

39. Region

Northeast.....	19%
Midwest.....	22%
South	46%
West	13%