

OKLAHOMA BUSINESS LEADERS POLL 2025



THE STATE CHAMBER

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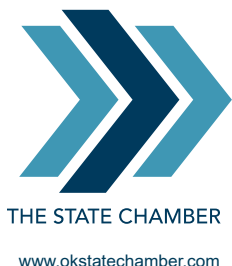
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ABOUT THE BUSINESS LEADERS POLL

The Business Leaders Poll (BLP) is the “pulse check” of the Oklahoma business community. A collaborative project of The State Chamber, the Oklahoma Business Roundtable, and The State Chamber Research Foundation, the BLP is the only statewide, scientific survey that annually measures the sentiments, concerns, and outlook of business leaders—from the C-suites to the corner stores—who shape Oklahoma’s economy.

The 2025 BLP surveyed 302 business owners and executives in Oklahoma over four weeks in early Spring 2025. The survey aimed to understand a broad array of issues, including current economic conditions, workforce issues, public policy priorities, and the broader role of businesses in society.

The BLP is meant to be a resource for businesses, policymakers, and the public. It was conceived with the conviction that it is impossible to create the conditions for a prosperous and growing Oklahoma without first understanding the views of those who are on the front lines of Oklahoma’s economy, the business leaders we are counting on to deliver that future Oklahoma.



We're pleased to share the 2025 edition of the Oklahoma Business Leaders Poll (BLP)—a collaborative initiative of The State Chamber, the Oklahoma Business Roundtable, and The State Chamber Research Foundation. This annual survey captures the outlook, priorities, and concerns of business leaders across Oklahoma and serves as a vital tool for shaping sound economic and public policy.

Key Insights from the 2025 BLP:

- **70% believe Oklahoma is on the right track**—more optimistic than their view of the national economy.
- **88%** plan to invest in Oklahoma; the top barrier is workforce availability.
- Oklahoma is competitive on **costs and energy reliability**, but lags in **infrastructure, skilled labor, and capital access**.
- **84%** say improving health outcomes would strengthen the workforce and reduce costs.
- **70%** prioritize infrastructure investment over personal income tax cuts.

The BLP remains a valuable resource for guiding decision-making, aligning policy with business needs, and advancing Oklahoma's economic future. As we continue to expand the BLP's reach and refine its methodology, we aim to continually deliver a robust and reliable resource that informs decision-making and shapes public policy to benefit Oklahoma's economy. We thank the business community for its continued engagement and commitment to making Oklahoma a stronger, more competitive state.

With a strong business community leading the way and public policy grounded in robust data, Oklahoma's economic future is bright.

Sincerely,



CHAD WARMINGTON
President & CEO
The State Chamber



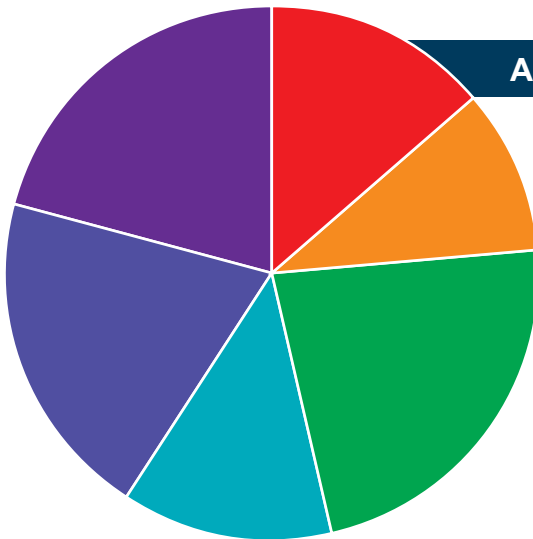
MARK FUNKE
President & CEO
Oklahoma Business Roundtable



AMANDA HALL
Policy & Research Director
The State Chamber
Research Foundation

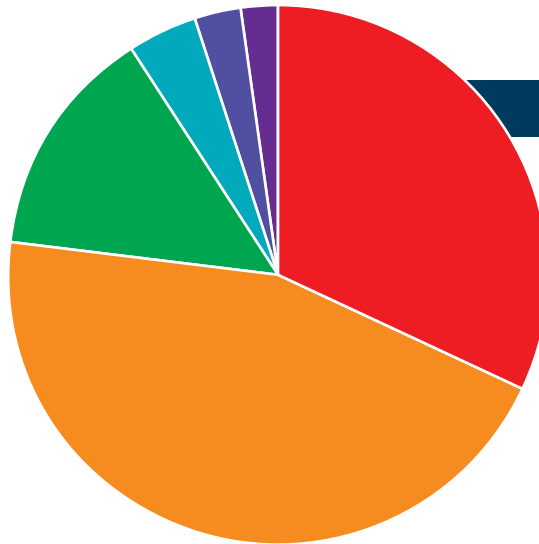
WHO TAKES THE SURVEY?

AREA OF CUSTOMER BASE



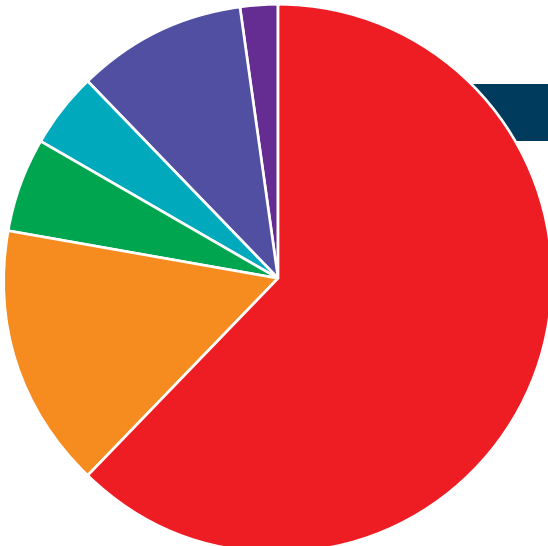
14%	OKC
10%	Tulsa
23%	Rural
13%	Statewide
20%	Multiple States
21%	National /International

LENGTH IN OKLAHOMA



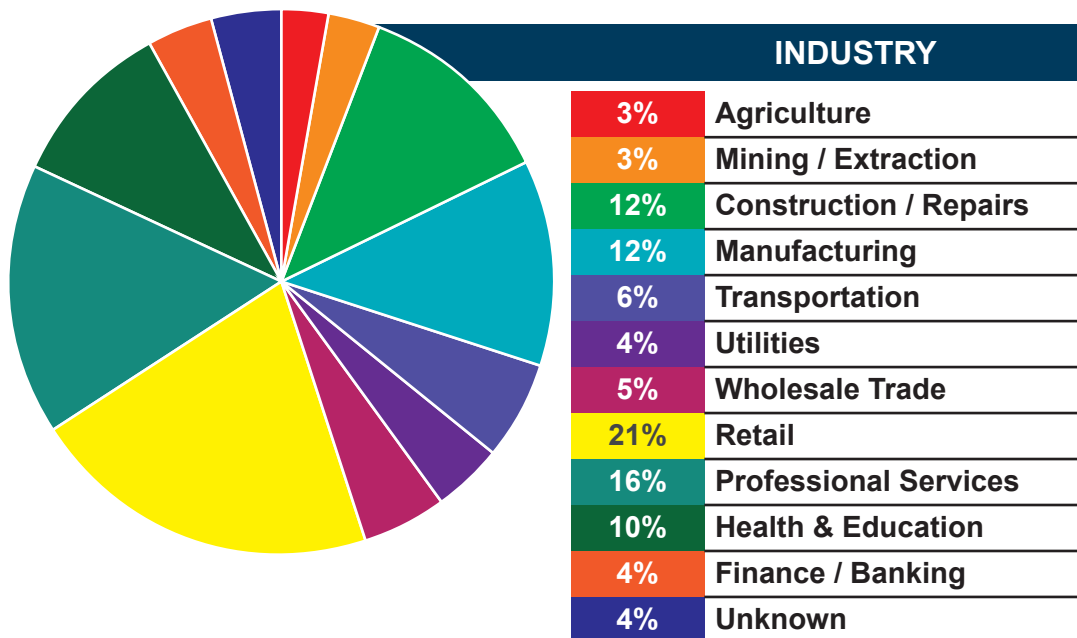
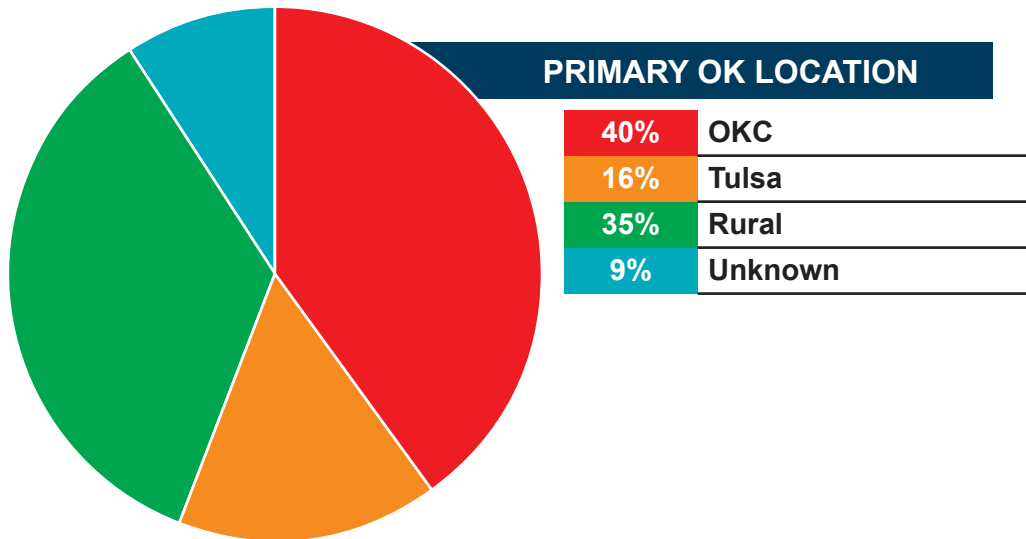
32%	Over 50 Years
45%	20-50 Years
14%	10-19 Years
4%	6-9 Years
3%	3-5 Years
2%	Less Than 3 Years

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



56%	Under 100
14%	100-250
5%	251-500
4%	501-1,000
9%	1,000-10,000
2%	Over 10,000

WHO TAKES THE SURVEY?



ECONOMIC & BUSINESS TRENDS

BY THE NUMBERS

Business leaders believe Oklahoma is on the right track and a good place to invest. But smaller business respondents are fearful of the economy. For businesses with less than 100 employees, the workforce and the economy are nearly tied for top concern. This group likely feels uncertainty around how tariffs may impact their business.

In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing businesses in Oklahoma today? (open ended)

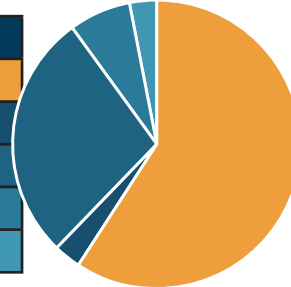
	2025	2024	2023
Workforce	21%	32%	34%
Taxes	10%	7%	6%
Supply Chain	0%	1%	1%
Education	9%	10%	10%
Economy	18%	11%	9%
Regulations	6%	4%	6%
Government Leadership	5%	6%	7%
Infrastructure	1%	2%	1%
Incentives	4%	4%	6%
Workforce Housing	1%	1%	NA
Cost of Insurance (non-health)	1%	2%	NA
Health costs / Health Insurance	1%	NA	NA
Miscellaneous	2%	2%	
Do Not Know	20%	20%	21%

Which of the following is the greatest obstacle to the profitability and growth of your business?

	2025	2024	2023
Access to Capital	10%	10%	8%
Taxes	15%	9%	12%
Government Regulation./ Mandates	23%	23%	22%
Legal costs/frivolous lawsuits	2%	2%	1%
Employee Recruitment and retention	46%	42%	52%
do not know	5%	6%	5%

Should your company make significant investments in the future, where is it most likely your company would make those investments?

	2025
In Oklahoma	60%
Out of State	3%
Both in Oklahoma and out of state	28%
Won't Make investment	7%
Undecided	3%



What hesitancy, if any, would your company have in choosing Oklahoma for investments or expansion in the future?

Regulatory Burden and General Business Climate	9%
Lack of Qualified and Available Workforce	23%
Non-Competitive Tax Structure	4%
Poor Legal Environment	2%
Absence of Needed Infrastructure	3%
Poor Overall Economic Conditions	15%
Lack of Access to Capital for Expansion	4%
Or Something Else	—
Or Do You Not Have Hesitancy?	31%
Don't Know	10%



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- ▶ Oklahoma business leaders remain optimistic about Oklahoma's economy.
 - **70% say Oklahoma is on the right track. This matches the sentiment in 2023.**
- ▶ Workforce continues to be an obstacle for business leaders: **46% in 2025, 42% in 2024, and 52% in 2023.**
- ▶ **Only 10%** of business leaders say they won't be making an investment in Oklahoma. Workforce is the highest-rated point of hesitancy to invest in Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA'S COMPETITIVE EDGE

WHY FOCUS ON COMPETITIVENESS?

Businesses have the freedom to choose where they operate, which means states are constantly competing, not only to retain existing employers but also to attract new ones and grow a skilled workforce. At the core, this competition centers around three key factors: **cost, efficiency, and innovation**.

- When asked to compare Oklahoma to other states, business leaders note Oklahoma falls short in key categories. Oklahoma maintains a strong low-cost advantage compared to other states. **But Oklahoma has a lower quality of infrastructure, lower access to capital, and lower access to a skilled workforce.**

Business leaders also see the need to compete for jobs with incentives.

- For each of the following items, please rank your perception of where Oklahoma compares to other states in the region and states where our businesses often have to compete. Please indicate if that item in Oklahoma is much higher, comparable, or much lower than what your perception is about other states.

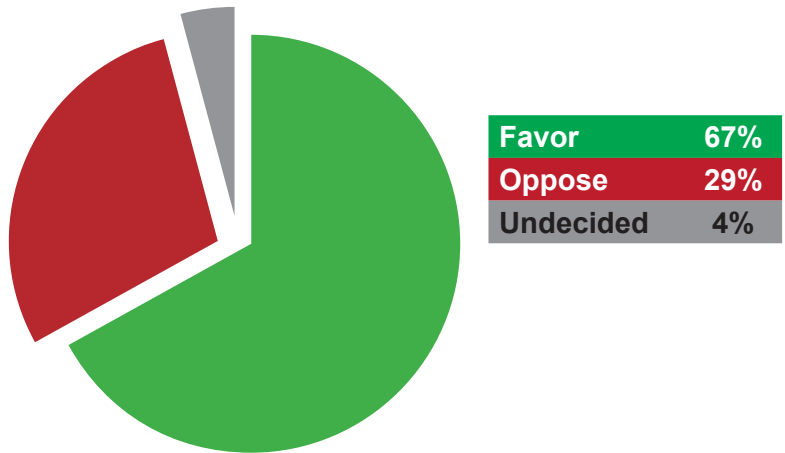
	Much Higher in Oklahoma	Comparable to other states	Much Lower in Oklahoma	Undecided	
Wage costs	3%	49%	46%	2%	COST ✓
Energy costs	11%	47%	39%	4%	
Cost of commercial real estate	7%	39%	46%	8%	
Cost of living for employees	7%	32%	59%	1%	
The overall tax burden	19%	54%	21%	6%	
Quality of physical infrastructure like roads, airports, and telecom	6%	35%	57%	2%	EFFICIENCY X
Access to skilled employees	3%	46%	47%	3%	
Energy reliability	37%	48%	11%	5%	INNOVATION X
Access to capital for businesses	5%	57%	25%	13%	

Business leaders want the state to create a marketing campaign promoting Oklahoma products and services to encourage businesses and people to move into the state.

- Thinking about government incentives for businesses in general, which of the following comes closest to your beliefs?

There should be no government incentives, the free market should be solely responsible	20%
Government incentives should be limited and only targeted for specific industries	13%
Oklahoma needs to recognize the states and nations we compete with for jobs are providing incentives, so we must compete or else we risk not growing our economy	62%
Undecided	5%

- Would you favor or oppose Oklahoma investing \$25 million in a national marketing campaign similar to those successful efforts which would promote Oklahoma products and services in other states while encouraging workers and businesses to locate in Oklahoma?



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- ▶ Oklahoma has higher energy reliability compared to other states.
- ▶ Oklahoma must improve on its quality of infrastructure, access to a skilled workforce, and access to capital.
- ▶ When compared to other states, Oklahoma is a low-cost place to do business.
- ▶ Business leaders favor an investment in marketing Oklahoma (67%) to grow.

TAXES, REGULATIONS, & FISCAL POLICY

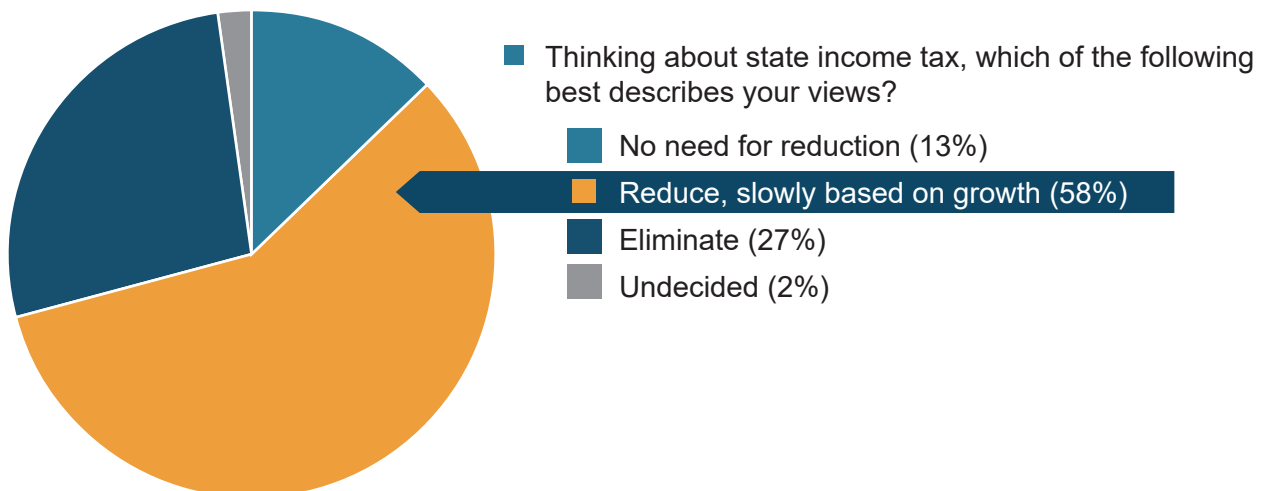
A majority of business leaders continue to share the sentiment that businesses pay about the right amount of taxes, matching last year's 54%. Companies with 250 employees or more are more likely to think they are paying the right amount of taxes than businesses with under 250. While this year's data continues to show a spread on what tax needs to be reformed, **93% of business leaders agree that there needs to be tax reform.**

- When it comes to taxes that fund state and local government, do you think that your business pays too much in taxes, not enough, or about right?

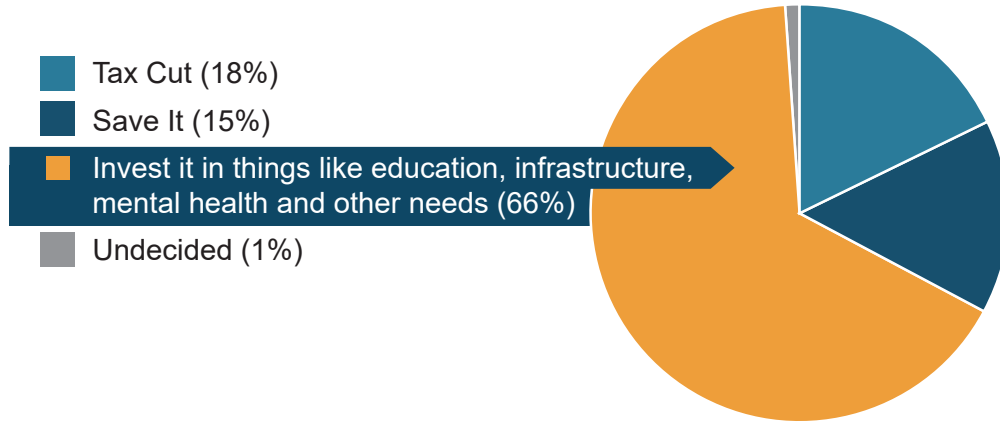
	2025	2024	2023
Too much	36%	38%	30%
Not enough	4%	4%	5%
About the right amount	54%	54%	55%
Undecided	6%	3%	10%

- To make Oklahoma more competitive on a regional basis, which of the following tax policies most needs to be reformed?

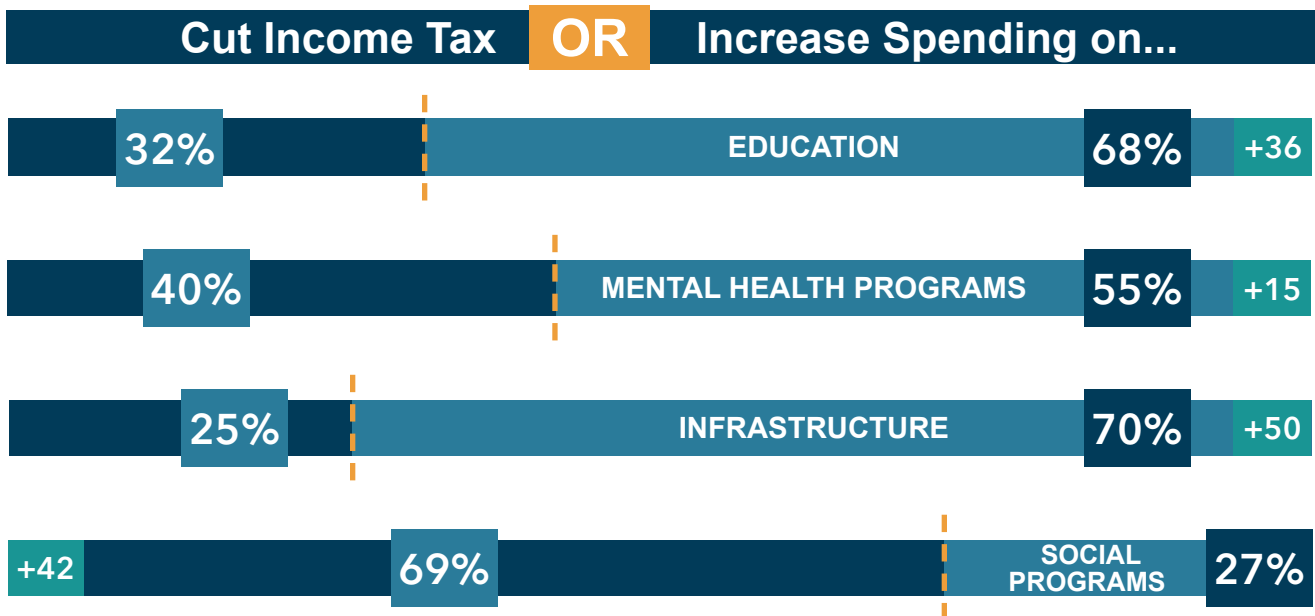
	2025	2024	2023
Individual income tax	33%	40%	34%
Taxes on businesses	22%	23%	25%
Property taxes	17%	21%	13%
Sales tax	21%	13%	20%
Undecided	7%	3%	8%



- As you may know, Oklahoma has a record amount in savings and has maximized what it can save in the stat's rainy day fund. What do you think should happen when the state hits record savings?



WOULD YOU RATHER....



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- 93% of business leaders believe at least one tax is in need of reform.
- Strong desire for excess revenue to be invested in education, infrastructure, mental health, or other needs.
- Business leaders support a slow reduction of the individual income tax (54%) over no reduction (13%) or full elimination (27%).
- Spending on education over cutting taxes is favored among business leaders over infrastructure spending, mental health spending or spending on social and safety net programs.

WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

Workforce and education remain the most important concerns for businesses in Oklahoma, with 46% responding that employee recruitment and retention as an obstacles of profitability, and of businesses with a hesitancy to invest in Oklahoma, the availability of qualified workers ranks the highest (23%).

Oklahoma business leaders are finding it difficult to fill skilled worker vacancies (54%) over any other level of skill or education. To increase workforce participation, business leaders think government programs need to stop discouraging work (38%), create more childcare solutions (28%) or create more attainable housing options (23%).

- What category of worker is most difficult to fill when vacancies arise?

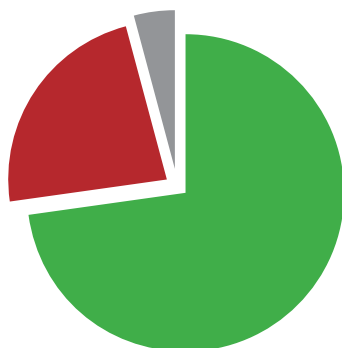
Entry level	20%
Skilled, including individuals with credentials, but not necessarily a 4-year degree	54%
College degree	9%
Executive/management	11%
Undecided	5%

- Do you think the quality of Workforce in Oklahoma is satisfactory?

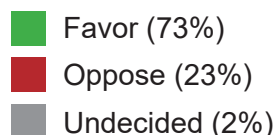


- Which of the following is your greatest concern with the available workforce in Oklahoma?

	2025	2024	2023
Finding employees with durable skills	43%	50%	60%
Finding employees trained with technical skills and ability to do specific jobs	34%	28%	24%
Finding employees that require college degrees and experience	7%	7%	10%
Retaining employees	14%	12%	14%



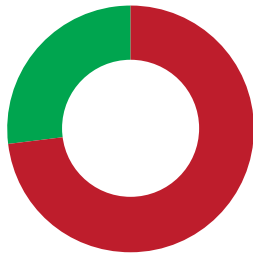
- Do you favor or oppose the state of Oklahoma pursuing policies that encourage the development of housing as a way to improve workforce recruitment in the state?



- Which of the following do you think would do the most to increase the number of Oklahomans to participate in the workforce?

Creating more attainable housing options for workers	23%
Investing in public transit / transportation for workers	5%
Reforming government assistance programs so they do not discourage people from working.	38%
Finding childcare / afterschool care solutions	26%
Allowing more legal immigration	6%
Undecided	2%

In the workforce pipeline, businesses do not believe that Oklahoma's high school graduates are prepared for the workplace. But are overall think the postsecondary opportunities in Oklahoma are doing well. Business leaders do believe, however, that the higher education system needs to do a better job at incentivizing the in-demand workforce degrees.



Students graduating high school in Oklahoma are well-prepared for success in the workplace

	2025	2024
Disagree	71%	80%
Agree	26%	19%



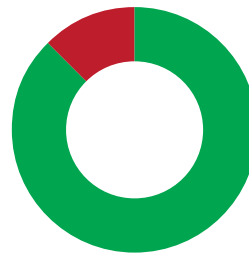
Oklahoma's career tech system does a good job at preparing students for the workforce

	2025	2024
Agree	85%	67%
Disagree	12%	31%



Oklahoma's public universities do a good job at preparing students for the workforce

	2025	2024
Agree	78%	83%
Disagree	20%	16%



Oklahoma's higher education system needs to do a better job of incentivizing students to study in fields where there is a greater workforce need

	2025	2024
Agree	85%	67%
Disagree	12%	31%



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Workforce and education remain a top concern for business leaders in Oklahoma.
- Business leaders are fairly split on being satisfied with Oklahoma's workforce. 52% are satisfied, while 45% are dissatisfied.
- While finding employees with durable skills is still the top concern, it has decreased over time, while finding employees with technical skills is rising.
- 73% of business leaders are in favor of investing in housing to improve recruitment in the state.
- More business leaders felt like Oklahoma high schools are preparing students for the workforce than last year (26% versus 19%).
- Business leaders strongly believe that career tech is doing a good job at preparing students for the workforce.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Oklahoma ranks 47th in health outcomes. This affects a business' access to a healthy workforce, as well as, the costs associated with an employee. For the time in this survey's history, we asked business leaders' their thoughts on Oklahoma's health outcomes. We found that 84% of business leaders make a connection between improving health outcomes, the workforce and associated costs.

- How vital is it to you that the state meaningfully address its poor health outcomes rankings?

Improving healthcare outcomes could have a major improvement so we can have more workers, lower insurance costs, and have fewer missed days due to health issues	53%
Improving healthcare outcomes will have a modest improvement on our workforce and related costs	31%
Improving health care outcomes wont affect workforce or costs	12%
Undecided	3%

- According to a recent study, **Oklahoma ranks 47th in health outcomes**. Which of the following do you think is most important for Oklahoma to do in this area?

Improve access to mental health programs and addiction recovery to increase workforce and reduce workplace reductions	44%
Address rural health care needs by increasing telemedicine, mobile clinics and incentives for healthcare providers to serve rural areas.	40%
Expand the scope of practice of healthcare professionals like nurse practitioners and physician assistants to increase access to healthcare	37%
Incentivize employer sponsored wellness initiatives to reduce chronic disease and absenteeism.	29%
Increasing residency slots at Oklahoma medical schools to address the physician shortage	22%
Further disincentivize vaping and tobacco youth by our youth because this is a significant predictor of future poor health outcomes.	19%
Undecided	10%



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- ▶ Business leaders understand that health outcomes impact workforce and costs, and 84% believe an improvement in health outcomes will improve the workforce.
- ▶ The top two solutions business leaders think could help increase health outcomes are improving access to mental health programs and addiction recovery (44%) and expansion of the scope of practice for health care professionals (37%).



THE STATE CHAMBER

ABOUT THE STATE CHAMBER

The State Chamber is the leading statewide advocate for business in Oklahoma. We work on behalf of our members, the Oklahoma business community, to affect legislative change and create a pro-growth climate statewide. The State Chamber leverages meaningful partnerships, resources and coalitions to achieve legislative results that strengthen Oklahoma's economy.

www.okstatechamber.com



ABOUT THE OKLAHOMA BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

The Oklahoma Business Roundtable (BRT) serves as Oklahoma's primary economic development support organization. BRT promotes new business investment throughout Oklahoma, including funding support for start-up, retention, expansion and attraction of business facilities and operations. Formed in 1991, the Roundtable is a 501(c)(6) non-profit, non-partisan corporation.

www.okbusinessroundtable.com



ABOUT THE STATE CHAMBER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The State Chamber Research Foundation (SCRF) is the business community's think tank. Through high quality research and analysis, SCRF educates policymakers and the public about the virtues of the free enterprise system, the public policy ideas that enable free enterprise to thrive, and the positive contributions of the business community to the prosperity and welfare of the people of Oklahoma. As a non-profit, non-partisan research and education organization, SCRF is dedicated to advancing free markets, increasing opportunity, and growing prosperity.

www.statechamberresearch.org

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