



CHICAGOLAND  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BMO  Harris Bank

# Small Business Outlook Survey

with support from



QUINLAN  
SCHOOL of BUSINESS

2020

## Small businesses are the backbone of our region's economy.

Small businesses anchor our communities, provide jobs, and define our neighborhoods. The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and BMO Harris Bank are committed to helping small businesses make **real financial progress**. In partnership with Loyola University Chicago's Quinlan School of Business, the following survey explores what's top of mind for small business owners across Chicagoland as we enter a new decade.

# The LANDSCAPE

## UNITED STATES

**30.2** MILLION  
SMALL BUSINESSES



**47.5%** of the workforce  
is employed by  
small businesses

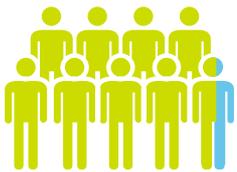
## ILLINOIS

**1.2** MILLION  
SMALL BUSINESSES



**99.6%** of Illinois  
businesses are  
small businesses

## WORKFORCE IN ILLINOIS



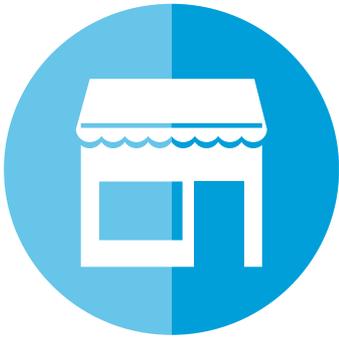
**2.5** million people  
employed by  
small businesses



**45%** of the workforce  
is employed by  
small businesses

# The **OUTLOOK**

Overall, small business owners feel **OPTIMISTIC** about the future and prospects for growth.



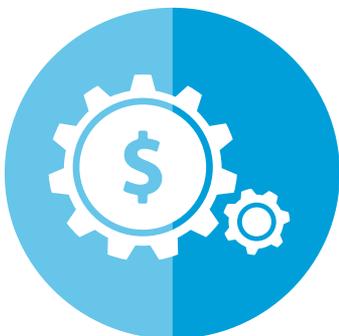
**77%**

Plan to expand their business in the next year.



**58%**

Expect to increase their revenues in the future.



**39%**

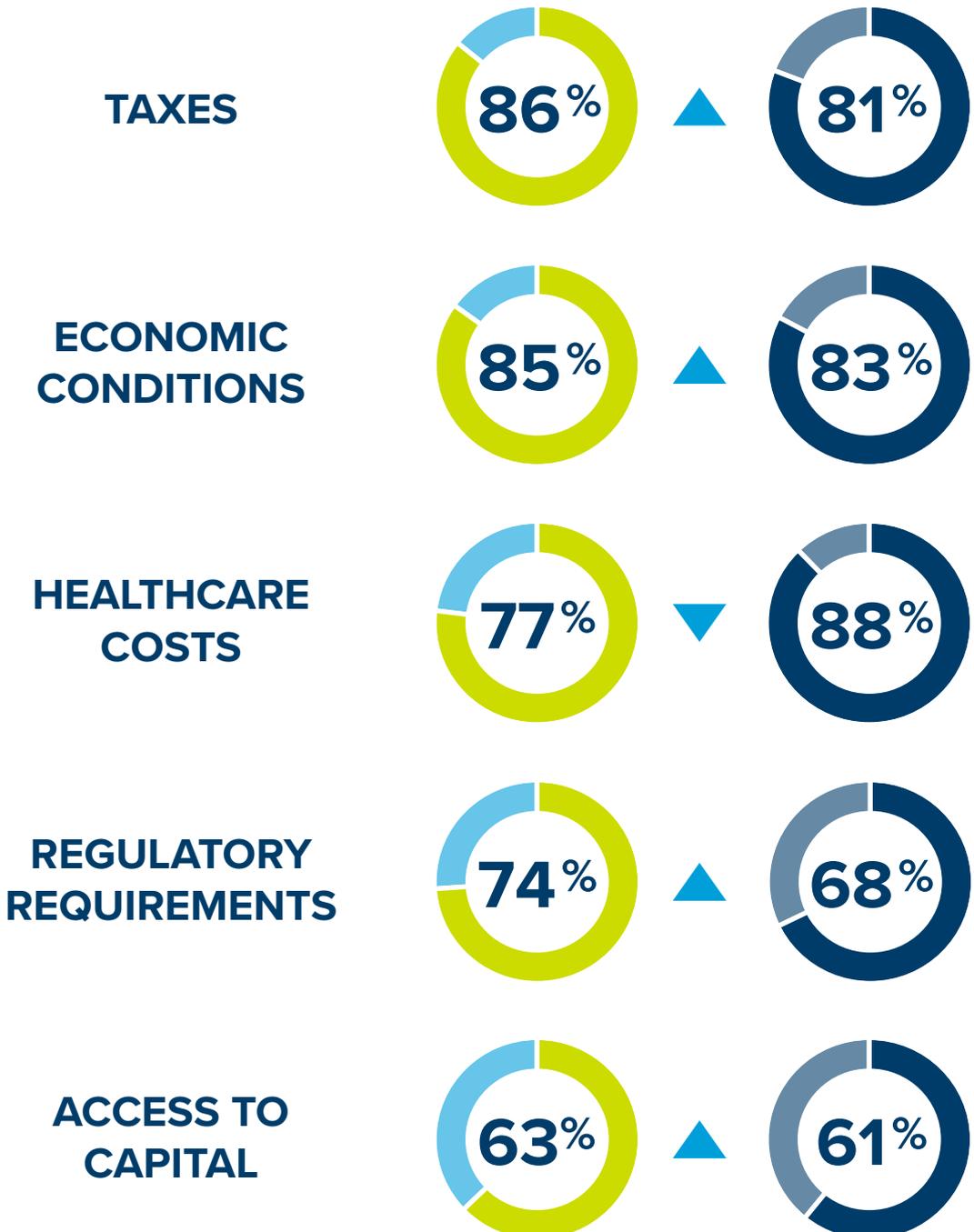
Plan to seek access to capital in the coming year.

# Small Business CONCERNS

Survey results indicate that small business owners feel uncertainty about **TAXES** and **REGULATIONS**.

Interestingly, concerns about **HEALTHCARE COSTS** have **SIGNIFICANTLY DROPPED**.

2020 compared to 2018



# Small Business **EXPANSION**

Overall, we are seeing a **SLIGHT DECREASE** in the number of small businesses who anticipate expanding. Of the 77% of small business owners who plan to expand their business in the next year:



## 57%

**Plan to expand in Illinois in 2020**

▼ compared to 61% in 2018

## 31%

**Plan to expand into other states in 2020**

▼ compared to 32% in 2018



## 17%

**Plan to expand internationally in 2020**

▼ compared to 18% in 2018

# Small Business **WORKFORCE**

We took a deeper dive into workforce and employment and saw a **SIGNIFICANT DECLINE** in the number of small business owners who expect to add full time employees, perhaps due to the **CHALLENGES** they are facing in **FINDING SKILLED AND QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES.**

## 27%

Expect to add full time employees



▼ compared to 41% in 2018

## 33%

Expect to add part time employees



▼ compared to 36% in 2018

## HIRING CHALLENGES

# 56%

*of companies feel challenged in finding qualified candidates because:*



## 29%

Lack of candidates with qualified skills



## 23%

Salary expectations of candidates



## 13%

Business could not provide requested benefits



## 12%

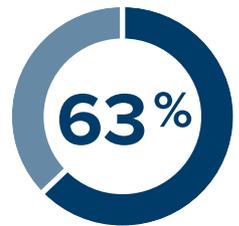
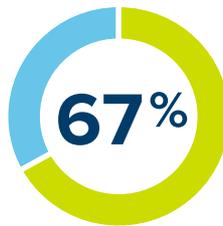
Candidates prefer to work for larger employers

# Small Business NEEDS

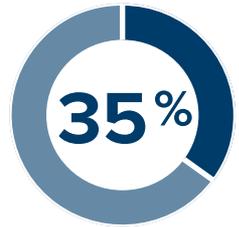
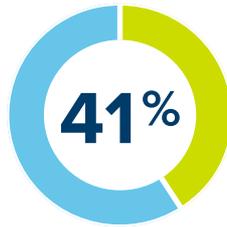
Small business owners often lack the bandwidth and expertise to tackle issues important to their business success. Results indicate that small businesses increasingly need assistance with navigating **LOCAL GOVERNMENT** and **SECURING ACCESS TO CAPITAL**.

2020 compared to 2018

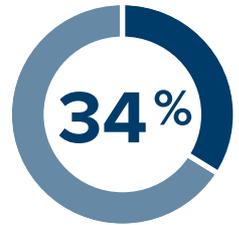
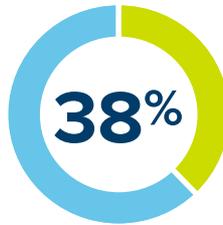
**MARKETING  
RESEARCH**



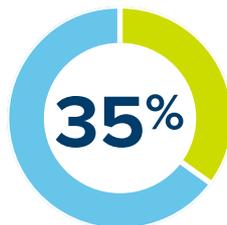
**ACCESS TO  
CAPITAL**



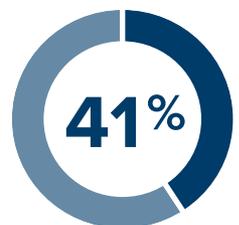
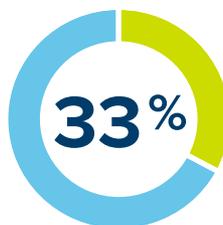
**HIRING SKILLED  
WORKERS**



**DEALING WITH  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



**USING  
TECHNOLOGY**





## MISSION

The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce combines the power of people, with our legacy of leadership and business advocacy, to drive a dynamic economy. We focus on delivering value for our members, making Chicagoland a world-class place to live and work.

*Source: Survey was conducted by the Illinois Small Business Development Center at the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. For questions regarding the data and metrics of this survey, please contact Loyola Quinlan School of Business, Alex Krasnikov at [akrasnikov@luc.edu](mailto:akrasnikov@luc.edu)*



### **About BMO Harris Business Banking**

As a business owner, you need cash management solutions to operate more efficiently, credit solutions to fund growth, and expert guidance to take your business to the next level. BMO's dedicated bankers listen to small business owners' needs and goals in order to help them make real financial progress. Everything we do at BMO – from designing products and services, to supporting our communities – is designed to boldly grow the good. BMO's customers know it's possible to have both the strength and innovation of a large bank and the accessibility and warmth of a bank rooted in your community.