

Small Businesses Need a Seat at the Table in Washington

Small Businesses Drive Economic Growth and Create Essential Jobs.

Small businesses employ nearly half of private sector employees*.

These small businesses are **optimistic about their growth trajectory**, and yet they **face significant headwinds**: limited access to affordable capital, challenges hiring and retaining skilled workers, keeping pace with new technologies like artificial intelligence and the unique difficulties of operating as a small manufacturer.

According to a recent *10,000 Small Businesses Voices* survey, **74% of small business owners have plans to grow and 41% expect to create new jobs**.

To help them achieve their growth goals, these business owners want the federal government to:

- 54%** Address inflation
- 40%** Provide more policy certainty
- 40%** Support them in offering competitive benefits
- 35%** Increase access to affordable capital

When policymakers give small businesses a seat at the table, they strengthen America's economy and ensure that communities across the country thrive.

Supportive Policies Help Unlock Small Business Growth, Innovation, and Opportunity

10,000 Small Businesses Voices Survey Findings

Rising Costs and Access to Affordable Capital are Squeezing Small Businesses

73% of small business owners are concerned with their ability to access capital.

65% say it is not affordable for average Americans to own and operate a small business.

Hiring Remains a Top Challenge as Small Businesses Struggle to Offer Benefits and Find Skilled Workers

91% of hiring small businesses are finding it difficult to recruit qualified employees.

Their top challenges are competition with larger employers on pay and benefits (**63%**) and a lack of qualified workers (**62%**).

AI Presents a Major Opportunity for Small Businesses — But Many Still Lack the Tools and Expertise to Fully Adopt It

72% of small businesses are currently using artificial intelligence (AI) and nearly all (**94%**) of them say it's having a positive impact.

Yet, even among the small businesses already using AI, **45%** say a lack of technical expertise and **47%** cite difficulty choosing the right AI tools as barriers to integrating it into their businesses.

Small Business Owners Want Their Voices Heard as Policies Are Developed

81% believe small businesses don't have enough of a voice in Washington.

97% believe it's important that small business perspectives are considered when policymakers debate and develop policy.

Support America's Small Businesses: Policy Opportunities for Small Business Growth

These proposed solutions can help further propel small business growth and opportunity.⁺

1. **Increase access to flexible, affordable capital**
 1. Prioritize support for small business lenders, such as Small Business Investment Companies
 2. Encourage lenders to adopt technological tools that will help streamline loans and application processes for small businesses
 3. Improve technical assistance for financing to ensure it is comprehensive and accessible
2. **Address workforce and competitiveness challenges**
 1. Foster greater connectivity between small businesses and community colleges that offer job and skills training programs
 2. Encourage the development of a benefits resource guide for small businesses
3. **Increase training and education resources on how artificial intelligence can support the small business workforce**
 1. Encourage AI literacy and skill building for small businesses
 2. Ensure the infrastructure needed to support small business use of AI and digital tools is in place
 3. Give small businesses a seat at the table in stakeholder convenings to develop AI standards
4. **Support the unique needs of small manufacturers**
 1. Enhance capital access for small manufacturers
 2. Reauthorize and improve accessibility to the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs
5. **Enhance government contracting opportunities**
 1. Improve training and technical assistance that help small businesses compete for government contracts
 2. Increase the simplified acquisition threshold to \$250,000

Small businesses are leaders in their communities. Their voices and perspectives are an important part of ensuring continued economic growth. By giving small businesses a seat at the table in Washington, policymakers are laying the groundwork for a more dynamic and innovative American economy.

⁺"Policy Opportunities for Small Business Growth" by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Voices and the Bipartisan Policy Center: https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/BPC_Goldman-ES_2025-UPDATE.pdf