

Washington

To better understand the needs of customers, Columbia Bank conducts a survey annually of business owners and executives nationwide to assess their mood, mindset and priorities.*

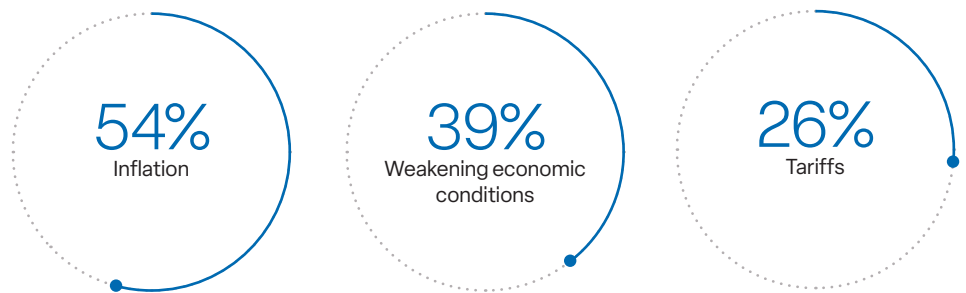
Economic & Business Outlook

Washington businesses give the economy low marks on current market conditions. Roughly 4 in 10 companies expect the economy to improve over the next 12 months, though significant percentages of businesses still indicate expectations for growth in the year ahead.

MOOD ON THE ECONOMY

Rate the economy as excellent or good (64% say fair or poor)	36%
Believe the economy will improve over the next 12 months (vs. 24% saying it will worsen)	42%

TOP THREE CONCERNS



EXPECTATION FOR GROWTH

Expect demand to increase	79%
Expect profitability to increase	59%
Expect revenue to increase	59%

Investment Priorities

Leaders are relatively confident in their 12-month outlook, though more than half indicate they plan to delay major decisions for at least six months as they monitor near-term pressures from tariffs, inflation and rising energy costs.

GROWTH-MINDED BUT CAUTIOUS

Prioritize investment	64%
Prioritize cost-cutting	33%
Will wait 6-12 months before major decisions	54%

TOP INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Artificial intelligence	60%
Marketing	50%
Cybersecurity	38%



*On behalf of Columbia Bank, DHM Research conducted an online survey of 1,186 owners, executives and financial decision-makers at U.S. small and middle market businesses in 2026.

Challenges & Opportunities

Survey and focus groups indicate that recent advances in AI capabilities are in part driving a relatively strong 12-month outlook, even as businesses navigate current challenges.

AI IMPACT

Expect AI will (significantly/somewhat) increase productivity	96%
Expect AI will help employee satisfaction/retention	78%
Expect AI will help strengthen business	77%

FRAUD & CYBERSECURITY IMPACT

Experienced related fraud or attack in the last 12 months	78%
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MOST COMMON TACTICS



REPORTED LOSSES



(Very/somewhat) likely to invest in tools to protect payment systems	90%
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TARIFF IMPACT

Say tariffs harmed their business	48%
Will seek tariff refunds	58%
Expect trade volatility, tariff impacts to last 1-2 years	46%

To read the report or find out how Columbia Bank can help your business, visit:
ColumbiaBank.com/Business-Barometer