



**Economic  
Outlook**

**Confidence in Action:**  
**Tracking the Workforce Perspective**

**Waves 4–6**

**October 2025 through January 2026**

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# Study Overview

## Background

The *Workforce Confidence Index* is a multi-wave quantitative tracking study conducted collaboratively by [RONIN International](#) and [myCLEARopinion Insights Hub](#).

It measures U.S. workforce sentiment toward job security, financial confidence, institutional trust, and economic outlook.

This edition draws on data collected between **October 2025 and January 2026** from more than 2,000 professionals across key sectors including industrial, construction, manufacturing, engineering, food and beverage, technology, energy, healthcare, and professional services.

## Methodology

Respondents were screened for U.S. employment across a diverse mix of sectors, including construction, engineering, HVACR and mechanical systems, manufacturing, food and beverage, energy, logistics, technology, healthcare, and professional services.

Wave	Field Dates	Sample (n)
Wave 4	Oct 2025	748
Wave 5	Nov/Dec 2025	643
Wave 6	Jan 2026	677

# Economic Outlook

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# Economic Outlook: Context Markers

## October 2025 (Wave 4)

Federal Reserve cut target rate again to 3.75%–4.00% at the October meeting ([Federal Reserve](#))

Official October CPI and employment/unemployment data were not published due to the federal government shutdown; October reflects a gap in official economic reporting.

## November–December 2025 (Wave 5)

U.S. economy continued to release monthly employment reports during November and December following the government shutdown ([BLS](#))

Inflation (CPI) data releases resumed during November and December after the October reporting gap ([BLS](#))

Federal funds rate remained at 3.75%–4.00% throughout November and December ([Federal Reserve](#))

## January 2026 (Wave 6)

Federal Reserve held the federal funds target rate steady at 3.50%–3.75% at the January FOMC meeting ([Federal Reserve](#))

Official January employment and CPI data were not published during fieldwork for this wave due to delayed release schedules; the Bureau of Labor Statistics rescheduled the January jobs report and the January CPI report to early/mid-February ([BLS](#))

Private employment indicators (e.g., ADP) suggested modest job growth in January, below market expectations ([ADP](#))

# Economic Outlook

## ➤ Confidence in your industry's economic outlook over the next 12 months



Q200. Considering your specific industry sector, how confident are you in its overall economic outlook for the next 12 months?

# Economic Outlook: **Summary**

The sharp shift in outlook occurred between October and November/December. January does not show a further rise in confidence, but rather a **stabilization of sentiment at these improved levels.**

Low-confidence responses remain well below October levels (25% vs. 35%), while the share who are somewhat confident continues to grow (41%). At the same time, the proportion of workers reporting they are extremely confident eased slightly from Wave 5.

This pattern suggests that workers are **not becoming more optimistic, but more settled in their expectations.** Rather than moving into the highest confidence tier, many appear to be **consolidating in the middle**, reflecting a cautious but steadier outlook as they move into 2026.

In other words, the rebound seen at the end of the year has **held, but has not accelerated.**

# Demographics

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# Industry Sector

	Wave 4 – Oct 2025 (n=748)	Wave 5 – Nov/Dec 2025 (n=643)	Wave 6 – Jan 2026 (n=677)
Architecture / Engineering / Construction (AEC)	13%	24%	12%
Technology / Software / IT Services	10%	5%	12%
Healthcare / Pharmaceuticals / Life Sciences	12%	4%	11%
Manufacturing (General Industrial)	7%	13%	9%
Mechanical Systems / HVACR / Plumbing	8%	12%	9%
Professional / Business Services	7%	5%	7%
Education / Training / Research Institutions	8%	2%	7%
Food & Beverage Manufacturing / Processing	4%	7%	5%
Retail / Consumer Goods / eCommerce	6%	4%	5%
Financial Services / Insurance	5%	3%	4%
Roofing, Flooring, or Building Envelope Trades	3%	4%	3%
Government / Public Sector / Military	3%	3%	3%
Transportation / Automotive	1%	2%	2%
Energy / Utilities / Oil & Gas	1%	1%	2%
Safety / Security / Risk Management	1%	3%	1%
Supply Chain / Logistics / Warehousing	1%	1%	1%
Agriculture / Agribusiness	1%	1%	1%
Telecommunications	1%	1%	1%
Environmental Services / Water Infrastructure	<1%	0%	<1%
Other	5%	5%	5%

Q100. Which industry sector best represents your organization?

# Company Size

	Wave 4 – Oct 2025 (n=740)	Wave 5 – Nov/Dec 2025 (n=636)	Wave 6 – Jan 2026 (n=670)
Self employed	8%	11%	9%
2–9 employees	11%	17%	12%
10–49 employees	16%	20%	13%
50–99 employees	9%	10%	9%
100–499 employees	15%	14%	15%
500–999 employees	6%	5%	10%
1,000 or more employees	35%	23%	32%

*“Not sure” responses removed for analysis*

QD2. Including yourself, how many employees are part of your organization?

# Job Role

	Wave 4 – Oct 2025 (n=748)	Wave 5 – Nov/Dec 2025 (n=643)	Wave 6 – Jan 2026 (n=677)
Mid-level management or team lead	29%	23%	27%
Senior management	26%	20%	23%
Owner / Partner / Principal	17%	29%	19%
Field staff / Skilled trades / Technical role	16%	15%	19%
Executive leadership	7%	5%	6%
Sales / Business development	2%	3%	3%
Office / Administrative support	3%	2%	1%
Other	1%	1%	3%

QD1. Which of the following best describes your current role in your organization?

# Industry Experience

Time in Current Industry	Wave 4 – Oct 2025 (n=747)	Wave 5 – Nov/Dec 2025 (n=643)	Wave 6 – Jan 2026 (n=677)
Less than 1 year	2%	1%	2%
1–3 years	7%	5%	6%
4–7 years	13%	8%	11%
8–15 years	20%	14%	21%
16–25 years	22%	19%	19%
More than 25 years	36%	53%	41%

Time with Current Organization	Wave 4 – Oct 2025 (n=741)	Wave 5 – Nov/Dec 2025 (n=640)	Wave 6 – Jan 2026 (n=672)
Less than 6 months	4%	1%	4%
6 months to 1 year	5%	3%	4%
1–3 years	21%	15%	18%
4–7 years	24%	18%	24%
8 or more years	47%	63%	51%

QD3. How many years have you worked in your current industry?  
 QD4. How long have you been with your current organization?

# Gender & Age

Gender	Wave 4 – Oct 2025 (n=734)	Wave 5 – Nov/Dec 2025 (n=635)	Wave 6 – Jan 2026 (n=667)
Male	75%	79%	78%
Female	25%	20%	22%
Non-binary	<1%	<1%	<1%

Age	Wave 4 – Oct 2025 (n=748)	Wave 5 – Nov/Dec 2025 (n=643)	Wave 6 – Jan 2026 (n=677)
18–27	1%	1%	2%
28–44	30%	17%	27%
45–60	42%	38%	40%
61–79	27%	43%	32%
80 or older	<1%	1%	<1%
<i>Average age</i>	52	57	53

QD5. To which gender do you most closely identify?  
 QD6. In what year were you born?

# About the Partners

## [RONIN International](#)

RONIN International is an independent global research agency specializing in high-quality data collection, market research consultancy, and strategic intelligence. With deep expertise in hard-to-reach B2B audiences and custom fieldwork solutions, RONIN guarantees transparent, reliable measurement of sentiment and behavior across industries and geographies. Its advanced research operations and rigorous quality controls ensure that insights are trusted, consistent, comparable, and decision-ready.

## [myCLEARopinion Insights Hub](#)

myCLEARopinion is the B2B research division of BNP Media, providing both full-service custom research and direct access to verified trade-industry respondents. Built on BNP Media's audited subscriber base and industry-specific events, myCLEARopinion offers highly targeted access to skilled professionals across construction, manufacturing, engineering, HVACR, food & beverage, and related industrial sectors.

Organizations rely on myCLEARopinion for high-quality respondent access as well as end-to-end research support, including survey design, fieldwork, analysis, and reporting – delivering accurate, industry-grounded insights for strategic decision-making.