



Family Enterprise USA 2026 Annual Family-Owned Business Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Family Enterprise USA Annual Family-Owned Business Survey is among the largest and most comprehensive survey taken among America’s family-owned businesses. The survey gauges the sentiment, concerns, and priorities of family-owned businesses, which are then shared with lawmakers in Washington, D.C. This year, the survey had 710 respondents from 46 states.

America’s family-owned businesses are the largest private employer in the country, accounting for 83.3 million jobs in some 32 million family businesses across the country and contributing \$7.7 trillion annually to U.S. gross domestic product (Source: 1). Traditionally, family-owned businesses are concerned most about income taxes, the national debt, and estate taxes. But this year, the survey showed these same businesses have shifted their priorities dramatically toward healthcare and the emerging development of new state and federal “Wealth Taxes.”

This year’s survey was conducted from December of 2025 to April 2, 2026. The full report can be found at www.familyenterpriseusa.com.

Key Findings from: The Family Enterprise USA Family-Owned Business Annual Survey 2026

Survey Overview

This year’s survey found 82% of family-owned business respondents were “Sole or Majority Owners” of their businesses and 79% were “Pass Through Entities,” with 55% being “S Corporations.”

The top three industry categories were “Manufacturing/Operations” with 22% of respondents stating this, while 14.5% were in “Construction/Facilities,” and 8% were in “Real Estate.”

It was found that 72.5% of family businesses had majority ownership from first and second generations of family members while only 36% have passed “Full or Controlling Ownership” on to the next generation. In addition, 80% of family businesses have been in operation for 20 years or more, results showed.

In questioning why 66% of family-owned business have not passed ownership on to the Next Generation, there are several reasons, according to Pat Soldano, President of Family Enterprise USA, sponsors of the annual survey.

The reasons include a “capital solutions” to finance the hand-off of the business, a “lack of focus” or desire to give up control by the controlling generation, the lack of ability for the Next Gen to “lead the business,” and a general “lack of planning.”

In terms of size, 49% of family-owned businesses employ 51 workers or more. It was also found 71% have “Generational Employees,” that is, non-family employees with their family members working in the business for several generations. The survey also found that 67% of Next Generation family members work in the family business.

Economic Overview

The survey showed 33% of family-owned businesses had between \$0 and \$5 million in gross revenues in 2025, and 39% of respondents had revenues of over \$21 million. The survey said 64% of family businesses grew last year, while 22% saw a decline.

Questions about “2026 Growth” revealed 78% of family-owned businesses expected to grow this year. When asked about the “Greatest Impediment to Growth” this year and next, 31% of respondents said “Market Conditions” were the biggest barrier, while 22% said “Cost/Availability of Labor” was the greatest impediment to growth.

When it comes to “Salary and Benefits,” 88% of family-owned businesses pay “Above Average or Average” wages and benefits.

As for supporting local communities, it was found that 72% of family-owned businesses contribute from 60% to 100% of their charitable contributions to local charities or local chapters of national charities.

Policy Overview: Jumps in Healthcare and Wealth Tax Concerns

The 2026 survey found the three tax policies “Of Top Concern” to family-owned businesses were (by percentage of respondents): 1) Income taxes (57%); 2) Estate taxes (“Death Tax”) (19%); 3) Capital Gains taxes (12%), and 4) Wealth taxes, which jumped from 5% to 10% over the last year.

In the 2025 survey, it was found the top economic policy priorities for family-owned businesses were “Reduce the Federal Budget/Debt,” at 32%, and at number two, “Reduce Income Taxes,” at 21%.

In the new 2026 survey, the top economic concern is “Healthcare,” with 51% of respondents saying it’s the top priority. In the 2025 survey, “Healthcare” was not mentioned as a top economic concern.

The number two economic priority this year is “Tax on Assets/Wealth Tax,” with 22.5% saying it’s a top economic priority. This latter datapoint on “Wealth Taxes” jumped 16 percentage points over the span of 12 months.

About This Year’s Survey, From Pat Soldano, President, Family Enterprise USA

“Our annual survey on family-owned businesses in America is a key indicator on key issues, concerns, and priorities for our country’s number one job creator and engine, family-owned businesses,” said Pat Soldano, President, Family Enterprise USA, about this year’s results. “We are seeing some major shifts, including shifts in concerns over healthcare and wealth taxes. Last year, these concerns weren’t even on the radar of family business leaders,” she said. “These findings are critical for our Congressional leaders to understand the pressing issues facing family-owned businesses,” she said. “This research helps educate our policy makers so they can make better policy decisions to help family businesses grow and prosper for generations to come.”

1) SOURCE: Update 2021: Family Businesses’ Contribution to the U.S. Economy, by Torsten M. Pieper, Ph.D., Franz W. Kellermanns, Ph.D., and Joseph Astrachan, Ph.D.