

WISCONSIN
EMPLOYER SURVEY

SUMMER 2026

TAXES

WISCONSIN EMPLOYER SURVEY

SUMMER 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

SURVEY: Property Tax Hikes Drive Push for State Tax Reform

Employers report higher property taxes – and back eliminating Wisconsin's income tax

A majority of Wisconsin employers say the state's business climate is headed in the wrong direction, with their responses underscoring growing concerns about taxes and the state's workforce, according to the latest **Wisconsin Employer Survey**. Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) – the combined manufacturers' association and state chamber of commerce – conducts the survey twice a year to gauge top issues facing the state's business climate and economy.

Over half of the nearly 200 respondents (56 percent) said Wisconsin is headed in the wrong direction when asked, "Would you say that things here in Wisconsin are headed in the right or wrong direction?" Similarly, when asked, "How do Wisconsin's state and local taxes impact your company's ability to compete with businesses in other states," 51 percent said taxes weaken their competitiveness, while just 6 percent said they improve it.

Concerns about Wisconsin's tax environment were reinforced by property tax trends. A staggering 71 percent of respondents reported an increase in their property tax bill for owned or leased commercial property over the past year, while less than 1% saw a decrease.

"It's no wonder employers say Wisconsin is headed the wrong way: we're already among the highest-taxed states in the nation, with top-10 individual and property tax burdens and a top-12 corporate tax burden," said Kurt R. Bauer, WMC President/CEO. "Property taxes are a punishing fixed cost, owed whether a business is just starting out, expanding, or struggling. With Governor Evers' 400-year autopilot increase, Wisconsin is on track to climb even higher."

In addition to weary sentiment about the state's tax environment, a majority of employers (71 percent) support eliminating Wisconsin's personal income tax, with 46 percent saying they "strongly support" it. Only 14 percent of respondents opposed eliminating the state's income tax.

"Some states roll out the red carpet for businesses; others roll out the red tape," Bauer continued. "Wisconsin taxes 95% of its businesses through the individual income tax rate—what many rightly call a 'small business tax'—hitting them with one of the highest top rates in the country. If Wisconsin seeks to attract investment and businesses, we must reform our tax climate to make it more competitive with neighboring states and those across the country. More red carpet—less red tape."

About the Wisconsin Employer Survey

The **Wisconsin Employer Survey** provides a snapshot of where Wisconsin's employers stand on important issues and outlines their economic outlook for both Wisconsin and the United States. For the Summer 2026 edition, WMC surveyed 196 employers that make up a representative sample of its membership and the state's business community as a whole.

Generally speaking, would you say things here in Wisconsin are headed in the **right or wrong direction?**

**RIGHT
DIRECTION**

44%

**WRONG
DIRECTION**

56%

How do Wisconsin's state and local taxes impact your company's ability to compete with businesses in other states?

SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKEN	6%
SOMEWHAT WEAKEN	45%
SOMEWHAT STRENGTHEN	6%
SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHEN	1%
NO MEANINGFUL IMPACT/NOT SURE	43%

** Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

SUMMER 2026

In the past 12 months, has your business experienced an **increase in its property tax bill** for business or commercial property you own or lease?

INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY	13%
INCREASED MODESTLY	58%
STAYED ABOUT THE SAME	17%
DECREASED	1%
NOT APPLICABLE	11%

Do you support or oppose **eliminating Wisconsin's personal income tax?**

STRONGLY SUPPORT	46%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	25%
NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE	11%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	9%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	5%
NOT SURE	4%