

Michigan CEO Optimism Moderates in Second Quarter, While Company Plans Show Resilience

Business Leaders For Michigan's latest survey finds renewed caution amid global uncertainty, but employers remain steadier than a year ago on investment, jobs and Michigan footprint

DETROIT — Michigan's top CEOs grew more cautious about the state's economy in the second quarter of 2026, even as they remained far less pessimistic than a year ago, according to the latest results of Business Leaders For Michigan's Economic Outlook Survey.

On Michigan's economy, nearly 60% of CEOs expect conditions to decline over the next six months. This is up from 35% last quarter, but well below the 87% who expected decline a year ago. For the U.S. economy, 57% now expect a decline, compared with 32% last quarter and 81% a year ago.

At the company level, CEO's own plans point to continued resilience despite a more cautious economic outlook. Most executives expect capital spending to hold steady or increase over the next six months, and the share expecting cuts remains well below where it stood a year ago. Michigan employment plans also show signs of stability, with more CEOs planning to add jobs than at this time last year and more than half expecting no change. Real estate expectations remain especially steady, with roughly 8 in 10 CEOs expecting to maintain their Michigan footprint.

The takeaway: while executives are watching broader economic conditions closely, Michigan's largest employers are largely staying the course by continuing to invest, maintain jobs, and anchor their operations in the state.

The first-quarter survey was conducted before the war in Iran began in late February; the second-quarter survey was fielded in May, after a ceasefire took effect in April, amid continued global uncertainty.

The results reinforce why Michigan must shape its own future by focusing on the fundamentals within its control, regardless of national and global conditions. Through its [Michigan in a New Era](#) plan, Business Leaders For Michigan has outlined a long-term framework built on three priorities: transforming education as Michigan's defining mission, making Michigan the easiest state to build and grow, and activating the state's full economic potential.

"When optimism swings quarter to quarter on forces well beyond our borders, it's a reminder that Michigan's job is to control what it can control," said Jeff Donofrio, President and CEO of Business Leaders For Michigan. "That means helping more children succeed in school and connect to college, careers, and apprenticeships; clearing the barriers that slow investment and growth; and building an economy that competes for jobs and talent. Those fundamentals don't move with the headlines — and they're how we deliver lasting, shared prosperity."

How Michigan CEOs view the economy over the next six months

Michigan economy	Improve	No change	Decline
One year ago (Q2 2025)	2%	11%	87%
Last quarter (Q1 2026)	17%	48%	35%
This quarter (Q2 2026)	5%	35%	60%

U.S. economy	Improve	No change	Decline
One year ago (Q2 2025)	9%	9%	81%
Last quarter (Q1 2026)	35%	33%	32%
This quarter (Q2 2026)	25%	17%	57%

Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

How CEOs view their own companies over the next six months

Company plans	Increase	No change	Decrease
Capital spending (Q2 2026)	16%	61%	23%
Capital spending (Q2 2025)	15%	43%	42%
Michigan employment (Q2 2026)	16%	54%	30%
Michigan employment (Q2 2025)	9%	57%	34%
Real estate footprint (Q2 2026)	10%	82%	8%
Real estate footprint (Q2 2025)	6%	91%	4%

For real estate, columns reflect a larger, unchanged, or smaller Michigan footprint. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Methodology: The Business Leaders For Michigan Economic Outlook Survey gathers the six-month expectations of chief executives, chairs or top Michigan executive at the organization's member companies — among them, CEOs of many of Michigan's largest employers — for the Michigan and U.S. economies and for their own companies' capital spending, Michigan employment, and real estate footprint. The most recent survey was fielded the week of May 11, 2026, with responses from 63 member CEOs; the prior survey was fielded the week of February 23, 2026, with responses from 67. Figures reflect the responses of participating CEOs and may not total 100% due to rounding.

About Business Leaders For Michigan:

Business Leaders For Michigan is a statewide, nonpartisan organization driven by CEOs from the state's leading employers, all working toward a shared goal: making Michigan a Top 10 state for jobs, talent, and a thriving economy and shared prosperity. Our members drive 40% of the state's economy, generate over \$1 trillion in annual revenue, directly employ over 545,000 residents and serve more than half of all Michigan public university students. Find out more at www.businessleadersformichigan.com.