# Conducted by the:



Survey Research Office

Sponsored by the University of Illinois Springfield Chancellor's Office, the Center for State Policy and Leadership at UIS, and The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

# Methodology

The Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey is a mail survey examining the economic perceptions, expectations, and evaluations of Sangamon County businesses and non-profit organizations. The survey has been conducted biannually (March and September) since 2008<sup>1</sup> with the goal of providing a longitudinal analysis of the local economy through the lens of area organizations. The original sample included all known businesses/firms/organizations in Sangamon County with 10 or more employees, provided by the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce in the fall of 2007. The Spring 2013 sample was updated by the GSCC in February 2013.

The final sample included 1627 Sangamon County organizations representing the private sector, the non-profit sector, and the public sector. A printed questionnaire and letter requesting participation in the study were sent to these individual businesses and non-profit organizations on March 14th, 2013, with follow-up questionnaires being sent on March 27th. The survey was closed on April 10th. The survey also included a web option. Respondents were required to enter their unique project ID number to complete the web version in order to eliminate duplicate responses.

The Spring 2013 results are from 174 respondents. The overall survey has an 11.2% response rate.

#### **Intensity Index Scores**

The "Intensity Index Score" is developed using the economic indicator questions, which have consistently appeared in every Outlook Survey. The score is the average of all ratings when the following values are assigned to each response: large decline (-100), small decline (-50), stay the same (0), small increase (+50), and large increase (+100).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The only exception being September 2011.

Table 1 presents the business demographics for the respondents.

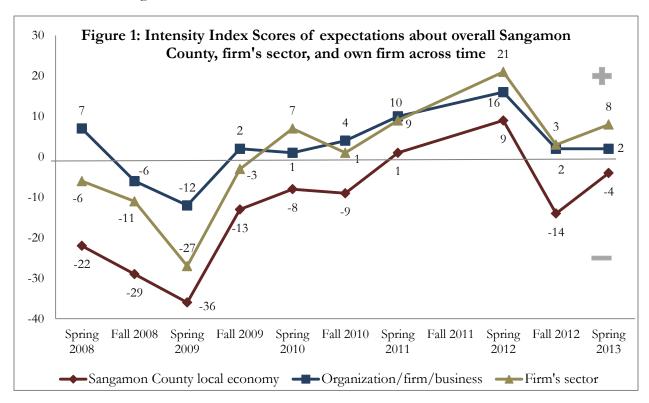
Table 1 Business demographics of respondents

	Responses	Valid frequency
Sector	_	-
Private sector (for-profit)	108	62.1%
Non-profit sector	21	12.1%
Public sector (government)	17	9.8%
Unidentified	28	16.1%
Primary Economic Activity		
Construction	20	11.5%
Manufacturing	7	4.0%
Wholesale trade	3	1.7%
Retail trade	13	7.5%
Transportation/ warehousing	1	.6%
Finance/insurance/real estate	8	4.6%
Medical/ health care	8	4.6%
Education/ educational services	9	5.2%
Accommodations/food/entertainment/recreation	6	3.4%
Information and communications systems	2	1.1%
Business and professional support services	12	6.9%
Personal services	8	4.6%
Other	8	4.6%
Unidentified	69	39.7%

# **Executive Summary**

The Spring 2013 Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey studies local businesses, firms, and non-profits in order to gauge expectations for the next twelve months across several economic indicators. This survey follows six months after the Fall 2012 survey, which marked the lowest expectations for economic conditions in Sangamon County since Spring 2010.

Figure 1 displays the longitudinal analysis of Intensity Index Scores (IIS) for economic evaluations about the overall Sangamon County economy, respondents' firm's sector, and individual firms/businesses/organizations.



Across time, respondents are more positive about their own business' growth and their own firm's sector than the overall Sangamon County economy.

As seen in Figure 1, across all years, respondents have more positive expectations about their own firm and their own firm's sector than the overall Sangamon County economy. The most recent survey, Spring 2013, continues this trend with respondents reporting positive expectations about both their own firm's sector (+8), which is a five point increase from Fall 2012 and their own business/organization (+2), which stayed consistent from the fall survey. Despite these positive expectations, respondents are still reporting negative expectations about the overall Sangamon County local economy (-4). And while expectations for the overall economy are still negative, we do find a 10 point increase in expectations since the Fall 2012 survey. Overall, respondents report more positive expectations in Spring 2013 than in Fall 2012. In the Fall 2012 survey, 18.3 percent of respondents reported expecting any type of increase (large or small) in the overall Sangamon County

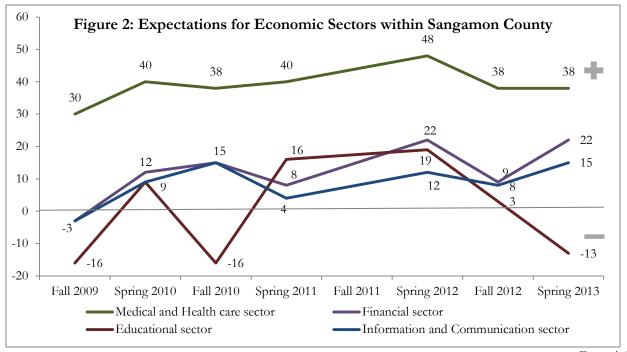
economy over the next 12 months. One-third of respondents in the Spring 2013 survey reported that they expect a small increase (no respondents reported expecting a large increase).

### Employment improving but not growing

One of the more troubling trends in the Fall 2012 survey was the negative projections for employment in Sangamon County. The Spring 2013 survey finds increased expectations (+1) but not at a rate indicating significant growth in employment. Forty-one percent of respondents expect employment to "stay the same," while 29.9 percent expect a "small increase" and 1.2 percent expect a "large increase." In addition, 28.1 percent of respondents report that there will either be a "small decline" (25.1 percent) or a "large decline" (3 percent) in the overall employment in Sangamon County over the next 12 months. This is consistent with the analysis conducted by Moody's Analytics in March 2013, which found that while the national unemployment rates have been falling in recent months, Illinois' unemployment has been trending mostly upward.

#### Concerns about the educational sector; medical sector still strong

When examining expectations across different economic sectors, several key trends emerge. First, the medical/health care sector continues to be the sector in which the most growth is expected. As seen in Figure 2, the medical and health care sector has consistently received the highest expectations since 2009. In the Fall 2012 survey, over 70 percent of respondents reported expecting either a small increase (58.1 percent) or a large increase (13.2 percent) in the medical/health care sector. The Spring 2013 survey results are almost identical with 53 percent expecting a small increase and 18.3 percent expecting a large increase. In addition to the medical and health care sector, both the information and communication sector and financial sector continue to see increases in expectations. Interestingly, according to the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, the Sangamon County health care sector is expecting a 1.8 percent annual growth rate over the next five years, the financial sector is expecting a .6 percent growth rate, and information and communication are projected to also experience a .6 percent growth rate over the next five years.

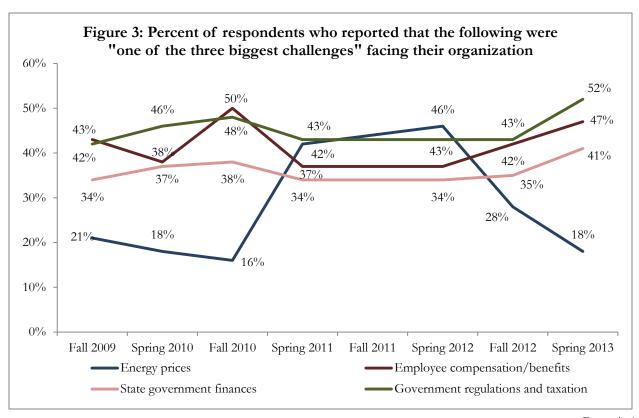


The educational sector received the most negative expectations since Fall 2010 with 39.2 percent of respondents expecting a small or large decline over the next 12 months. In fact, only 18.4 percent of respondents reported that they expect any increase (large or small). The educational sector was also the only sector that saw a decrease in expectations from the Fall 2012 survey with a decrease in the Intensity Index Scores of -16 (down from +3 in Fall 2012 to -13 in Spring 2013).

#### Biggest challenges facing your business/firm/organization

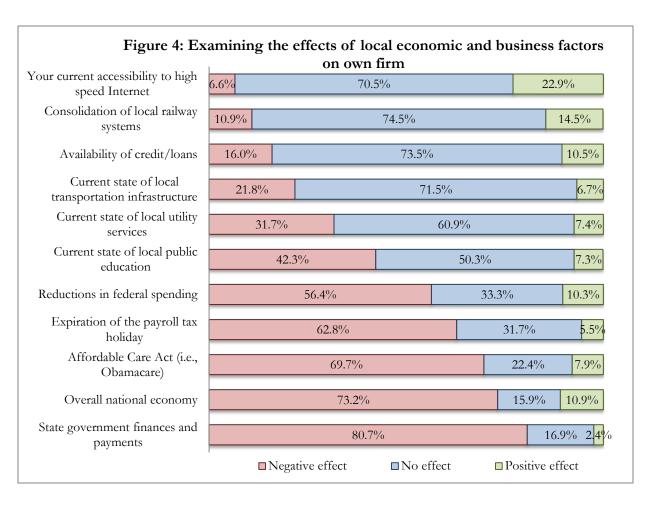
Survey respondents are asked to identify the three biggest challenges for their business/firm/organization over the next 12 months from a list of challenges including: inflation, interest rates, employee compensation, consumer confidence, energy prices, commodity prices, availability of skilled workers, competition from local/state/national firms, global competition, state government finances, government regulations and taxation, and other.

In the Spring 2013 survey, the most frequently identified challenges were government regulations and taxation (52.3 percent), employee compensation/benefits (46.6 percent), and state government finances (40.8 percent). These are only slightly different from Fall 2012, when consumer confidence/spending weighed more heavily on employers (40.6 percent) than state government finances (34.7 percent). The Spring 2013 survey shows a 6 percentage point increase in the percent of individuals who now rate state government finances as one of the three biggest challenges facing their business or organization. In addition, in the past year the percent of individuals who reported that energy prices were one of the biggest challenges facing their business/organization decreased significantly. In Spring 2012, 46 percent of respondents reported that energy prices were one of the biggest challenges. In Spring 2013, this drops to only 18 percent of respondents.



### Concerns about how factors will affect own firm/organization

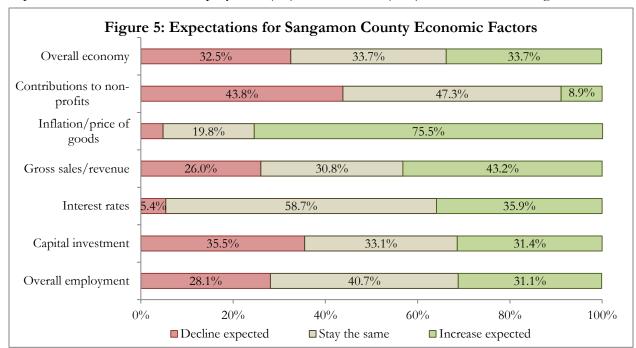
While the majority of the survey is a longitudinal comparison of expectations of the overall economy, individual sectors, and individual's own firm/organization; each survey also includes a topical section. The Spring 2013 survey asked respondents what type of an effect, if at all, a variety of different factors would have on their own firm or business. As seen in Figure 3, the majority of respondents reported that five factors (state government finances and payments, overall national economy, Affordable Care Act, expiration of the payroll tax holiday, and reductions in federal spending) will have a negative effect on their organization over the next 12 months. In fact, over 80 percent of respondents reported that they expect state government finances and payments to have either a large negative effect (36.7 percent) or small negative effect (44 percent).



The majority of respondents reported that the current state of local public education, current state of local utility services, current state of local transportation infrastructure, availability of credit/loans, consolidation of local railway systems, and access to high speed Internet would have no effect on their firm over the next 12 months. No item had the majority of respondents reporting that it would have a positive effect.

#### The Sangamon County Economy

The Spring 2013 survey indicates that expectations for the overall Sangamon County economy are mixed. When examining the most recent Intensity Index Scores (IIS), we find that while respondents expect an increase in overall employment (+1), interest rates (+15), and an increase in gross



sales/revenue (+6), they expect a decline in contributions to non-profits (-22), capital investment (-4), and the overall economy (-3). In addition, respondents are still very concerned about increases in inflation with 75.5 percent of respondents expecting an increase over the next 12 months.

Table 2 displays the current Intensity Index Scores, the Fall 2012 Intensity Index Scores, as well as the change between the scores. As seen in the table, for all of the indicators except capital investment and contributions to non-profits (which remained the same), the Spring 2013 survey had more positive expectations than the Fall 2012 survey.

Table 2	Intensity Index	x Scores	
	Fall 2012 IIS	Spring 2013 IIS	Difference (Spring 2013- Fall 2012)
Overall employment	-4	+1	+3
Capital investment	-2	-4	-2
Interest rates	+6	+15	+9
Gross sales/revenue	-1	+6	+5
Inflation/ price of goods	+48	+40	-82
Contributions to non-profits	-22	-22	no change
Overall economy	-14	-3	+11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Inflation is the only indicator for which a negative value indicates a positive expectation.

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#### **Examining Expectations by Sector**

When respondents were asked about their expectations for economic sectors in Sangamon County, every sector except the educational sector and the medical sector (in which there was no change) saw an increase in expectations from Fall 2012 to Spring 2013. Not only did respondents have an increase in expectations in their own sector (+6 point change in IIS), but construction, (+13) retail trade (+11), and financial industry (+13) all saw double digit increases from Fall 2012 to Spring 2013.

Table 3 Intensity Index Scores for specific e sectors	economic		
Sectors	Fall 2012 IIS	Spring 2013 IIS	Difference (Spring 2013- Fall 2012)
Own firm's sector <sup>3</sup>	+2	+8	+6
Construction	0	+13	+13
Manufacturing	-15	-13	+2
Wholesale trade	-7	-2	+5
Retail trade	-2	+9	+11
Transportation/warehousing	-7	+1	+8
Finance/insurance/real estate	+9	+22	+13
Medical/ health care	+38	+38	no change
Education/ educational services	+3	-13	-16
Accommodations/ food/ entertainment/ recreation	-1	+7	+8
Information and communications systems	+8	+15	+7
Business and professional support services	-4	+4	+8
Personal services	-6	-1	+5

The continual decrease in expectations for the educational sector is troubling for Sangamon County. Expectations for education and educational services have dropped 32 points in the IIS since Spring 2012. The most recent results are almost as negative as the lowest expectations recorded in Fall 2010 (-16).

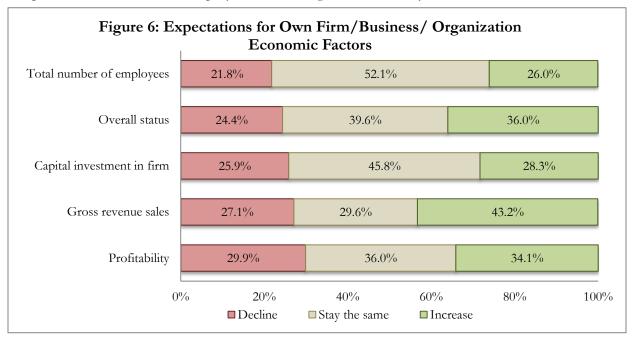
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This variable was constructed by combining a self-report of own firm's "primary economic activity" which was then coded into one of the appropriate twelve sectors, and the individual response with the corresponding sector category.

### Overall Expectations for "Your" Firm/Organization

Expectations for individual's own business/firm/organization over the next 12 months were fairly stable in Spring 2013. When asked about the overall status of their own firm, 36 percent of respondents expected an increase over the next 12 months, 39.6 percent expected no change, and 24.4 percent expected a decline. In addition, the IIS increased one point to +4, from +3 in Fall 2012.

Table 4 Intensity Index Scor firm/business/organization			
, , ,	Fall 2012 IIS	Spring 2013 IIS	Difference (Spring 2013-Fall 2012)
Capital investment	+10	0	-10
Total number of employees	+2	+1	-1
Gross revenue/sales	+7	+7	no change
Profitability	-3	0	+3
Overall status	+3	+4	+1

As seen in Figure 6, respondents were fairly split on their expectations for their own firm or organization. While they expect some improvement (ranging from 43.2 percent in gross revenue/sales to 26 percent in the total number of employees), they also expect declines (ranging from 21.8 percent in total number of employees to 29.9 percent in profitability). As discussed earlier, employment seems to be the most stable with 52.1 percent of respondents reporting that they expect the total number of employees at their organization to stay the same for the next 12 months.



# **SCEOS Survey Topline Results**

(N=174)

### Section 1: Sangamon County Economic Expectations

Over the next 12 months, what are your expectations for <u>the local economy</u> in Sangamon County? Do you think each aspect of the local economy will see a large decline, small decline, stay the same, small increase, or large increase?

**Overall employment** (Intensity Index Score = +1)

	Frequency (n)	
Large decline	3.0% (5)	
Small decline	25.1% (42)	
Stay the same	40.7% (68)	
Small increase	29.9% (50)	
Large increase	1.2% (2)	

**Capital investment** (Intensity Index Score = -4)

	Frequency (n)	
Large decline	5.9% (10)	
Small decline	29.6% (50)	
Stay the same	33.1% (56)	
Small increase	29.6% (50)	
Large increase	1.8% (3)	

**Interest rates** (Intensity Index Score = +15)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	1.2% (2)
Small decline	4.2% (7)
Stay the same	58.7% (98)
Small increase	34.7% (58)
Large increase	1.2% (2)

**Gross sales/revenue** (Intensity Index Score = +6)

, , , ,	Frequency (n)
Large decline	4.1% (7)
Small decline	21.9% (37)
Stay the same	30.8% (52)
Small increase	43.2% (73)
Large increase	0.0% (0)

**Inflation/price of goods** (Intensity Index Score = +40)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	2.4% (4)
Small decline	2.4% (4)
Stay the same	19.8% (33)
Small increase	63.5% (106)
Large increase	12.0% (20)

Contributions to non-profits (Intensity Index Score = -22)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	8.3% (14)
Small decline	35.5% (60)
Stay the same	47.3% (80)
Small increase	8.9% (15)
Large increase	0.0% (0)

The overall economy (Intensity Index Score = -3)

	Frequency (n)	
Large decline	6.6% (11)	
Small decline	25.9% (43)	
Stay the same	33.7% (56)	
Small increase	33.7% (56)	
Large increase	0.0% (0)	

# Section 2: Expectations for Sangamon County Economic Sectors

Over the next 12 months, what are your expectations for the following <u>economic sectors</u> in Sangamon County? Do you think each aspect of the local economy will see a large decline, small decline, stay the same, small increase, or large increase?

**Construction** (Intensity Index Score = +13)

``	Frequency (n)
Large decline	3.0% (5)
Small decline	19.9% (33)
Stay the same	28.3% (47)
Small increase	45.8% (76)
Large increase	3.0% (5)

**Manufacturing** (Intensity Index Score = -13)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	3.1% (5)
Small decline	30.1% (49)
Stay the same	57.1% (93)
Small increase	9.2% (15)
Large increase	0.6% (1)

**Wholesale trade** (Intensity Index Score = -2)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	2.5% (4)
Small decline	20.9% (34)
Stay the same	56.4% (92)
Small increase	19.6% (32)
Large increase	0.6% (1)

**Retail trade** (Intensity Index Score = +9)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	1.2% (2)
Small decline	23.9% (39)
Stay the same	31.9% (52)
Small increase	42.3% (69)
Large increase	0.6% (1)

**Transportation/warehousing** (Intensity Index Score = +1)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	0.0% (0)
Small decline	21.4% (34)
Stay the same	56.6% (90)
Small increase	21.4% (34)
Large increase	0.6% (1)

Finance/insurance/real estate (Intensity Index Score = +22)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	1.2% (2)
Small decline	11.7% (19)
Stay the same	30.7% (50)
Small increase	54.0% (88)
Large increase	2.5% (4)

Medical/health care (Intensity Index Score = +38)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	4.3% (7)
Small decline	5.5% (9)
Stay the same	18.9% (31)
Small increase	53.0% (87)
Large increase	18.3% (30)

Education/educational services (Intensity Index Score = -13)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	6.7% (11)
Small decline	32.5% (53)
Stay the same	42.3% (69)
Small increase	16.6% (27)
Large increase	1.8% (3)

Accommodations/food/entertainment/recreation (Intensity Index Score = +7)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	2.4% (4)
Small decline	18.2% (30)
Stay the same	43.6% (72)
Small increase	34.5% (57)
Large increase	1.2% (2)

**Information and communications systems** (Intensity Index Score = +15)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	0.6% (1)
Small decline	9.9% (16)
Stay the same	50.0% (81)
Small increase	38.9% (63)
Large increase	0.6% (1)

**Business and professional support services** (Intensity Index Score = +4)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	1.2% (2)
Small decline	19.5% (32)
Stay the same	49.4% (81)
Small increase	29.3% (48)
Large increase	0.6% (1)

**Personal services** (Intensity Index Score = -1)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	2.5% (4)
Small decline	22.2% (36)
Stay the same	50.0% (81)
Small increase	25.3% (41)
Large increase	0.0% (0)

What economic sector best describes your firm's primary economic activity:

	Frequency (n)	
Construction	19.0% (20)	,
Manufacturing	6.7% (7)	
Wholesale trade	2.9% (3)	
Retail trade	12.4% (13)	
Transportation/warehousing	1.0% (1)	
Finance/insurance/real estate	7.6% (8)	
Medical/health care	7.6% (8)	
Education/educational services	8.6% (9)	
Accommodations/food/entertainment/recreation	5.7% (6)	
Information and communications systems	1.9% (2)	
Business and professional support services	11.4% (12)	
Personal services	7.6% (8)	
Other	7.6% (8)	

## Section 3: Expectations for Your Business/Firm/Organization in Sangamon County

Over the next 12 months, what are your expectations for **your business/firm/organization** in Sangamon County? Do you think each aspect of the local economy will see a large decline, small decline, stay the same, small increase, or large increase?

**Capital investment in firm** (Intensity Index Score = 0)

1	,
	Frequency (n)
Large decline	6.0% (10)
Small decline	19.9% (33)
Stay the same	45.8% (76)
Small increase	24.7% (41)
Large increase	3.6% (6)

**Total number of employees** (Intensity Index Score = +1)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	4.2% (7)
Small decline	17.6% (29)
Stay the same	52.1% (86)
Small increase	24.8% (41)
Large increase	1.2% (2)

**Gross revenue/sales** (Intensity Index Score = +7)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	4.9% (8)
Small decline	22.2% (36)
Stay the same	29.6% (48)
Small increase	40.7% (66)
Large increase	2.5% (4)

**Profitability** (Intensity Index Score = 0)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	6.7% (11)
Small decline	23.2% (38)
Stay the same	36.0% (59)
Small increase	32.3% (53)
Large increase	1.8% (3)

Overall status (Intensity Index Score = +4)

	Frequency (n)
Large decline	4.9% (8)
Small decline	19.5% (32)
Stay the same	39.6% (65)
Small increase	34.8% (57)
Large increase	1.2% (2)

Right now, as you look over the next 12 months, what are the <u>three</u> biggest challenges facing <u>your business/firm/organization</u>.

	Frequency (n)	
Inflation	9.8% (17)	
Interest rates	9.2% (16)	
Employee compensation/benefits	46.6% (81)	
Consumer confidence/spending	34.5% (60)	
Energy prices	18.4% (32)	
Commodity prices	12.1% (21)	
Availability of skilled/trained workers	17.8% (31)	
Competition from local/state/national firms	20.7% (36)	
Global competition	1.7% (3)	
State government finances	40.8% (71)	
Government regulations and taxation	52.3% (91)	
Other, specify:	14.9%(26)	

Others mentioned: sales tax, state of Illinois not paying bills, company reorganization, corrupt political environment, health insurance (8), fuel, federal funding, decrease in nonprofit contributions, local government finances, organized labor, slow reimbursement from the state, technology investment, state policies, weather, unlicensed contractors, trend toward growth of major metro areas, too much pay and benefits, state pension issues.

# Section 4: The Effects of Current Economic Issues on your Firm

Finally, we are interested in how the following will affect <u>your business/firm/organization</u> over the <u>next twelve months</u>. Will they have a large negative effect, small negative effect, no effect, small positive effect, or large positive effect?

Availability of credit/loans

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	4.3% (7)
Small negative effect	11.7% (19)
No effect	73.5% (119)
Small positive effect	8.6% (14)
Large positive effect	1.9% (3)

Consolidation of local railway systems

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	1.8% (3)
Small negative effect	9.1% (15)
No effect	74.5% (123)
Small positive effect	12.1% (20)
Large positive effect	2.4% (4)

Current state of local utility services

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	5.0% (8)
Small negative effect	26.7% (43)
No effect	60.9% (98)
Small positive effect	6.8% (11)
Large positive effect	0.6% (1)

Current state of local transportation infrastructure

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	0.6% (1)
Small negative effect	21.2% (35)
No effect	71.5% (118)
Small positive effect	6.1% (10)
Large positive effect	0.6% (1)

Your current accessibility to high speed Internet

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	0.6% (1)
Small negative effect	6.0% (10)
No effect	70.5% (117)
Small positive effect	19.3% (32)
Large positive effect	3.6% (6)

Current state of local public education

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	8.6% (14)
Small negative effect	33.7% (55)
No effect	50.3% (82)
Small positive effect	6.1% (10)
Large positive effect	1.2% (2)

State government finances and payments

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	36.7% (61)
Small negative effect	44.0% (73)
No effect	16.9% (28)
Small positive effect	1.8% (3)
Large positive effect	0.6% (1)

Reductions in federal spending

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	17.0% (28)
Small negative effect	39.4% (65)
No effect	33.3% (55)
Small positive effect	7.3% (12)
Large positive effect	3.0% (5)

Expiration of the payroll tax holiday

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	14.0% (23)
Small negative effect	48.8% (80)
No effect	31.7% (52)
Small positive effect	4.9% (8)
Large positive effect	0.6% (1)

Affordable care act (i.e., Obamacare)

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	40.6% (67)
Small negative effect	29.1% (48)
No effect	22.4% (37)
Small positive effect	6.1% (10)
Large positive effect	1.8% (3)

Overall national economy

	Frequency (n)
Large negative effect	23.8% (39)
Small negative effect	49.4% (81)
No effect	15.9% (26)
Small positive effect	9.1% (15)
Large positive effect	1.8% (3)

Are you in the private sector, non-profit sector, or public sector?

	Frequency (n)
Private sector (for-profit)	74.0% (108)
Non-profit sector	14.4% (21)
Public sector (government)	11.6% (17)

# Survey Research Office

Center for State Policy & Leadership University of Illinois Springfield

The Center for State Policy & Leadership houses the Survey Research Office (SRO) at University of Illinois Springfield. The Survey Research Office is committed to conducting quality public affairs research through advanced survey technologies. The SRO specializes in public affairs research with the goal of advancing scholarly and practical research, while playing a leadership role in state and national policy development. The Survey Research Office is designed for meeting the research needs of organizations, non-profits, government agencies, University departments, and faculty members. We offer the credibility and objectivity associated with University research along with experience in conducting applied research.

The Survey Research Office has a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) lab, mail survey office, web survey hosting capabilities, in addition to advanced analytical services. The SRO is well-suited to help in every step of the research process. Uniquely located within the Center for State Policy & Leadership, the SRO benefits from a variety of different disciplines and intellectual assets within the Center and relies on these assets during the research process. Clients include Illinois Department of Transportation, The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Environmental Protection Agency, Quitline, and the University of Illinois system.

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