Responses collected from September 29 to October 2, 2020

Note: We received input from a total of 154 firms. Of those 154 respondents, 152 answered question 1.

1. For the week ending September 27, considering what you had expected before the COVID-19 outbreak, what would you say has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated effects on the past week’s new orders or sales?

Almost 47 percent of all responding firms reported decreases of more than 5 percent in new orders or sales (little changed from last month), while 20 percent reported increases of more than 5 percent (down from 26 percent). Roughly 32 percent reported changes between -5 percent and 5 percent (up from 24 percent). Although similar shares of manufacturers and nonmanufacturers reported overall increases, a larger share of nonmanufacturers reported little to no change while a larger share of manufacturers reported decreases. More than 1 percent of the firms reported a temporary shutdown (down slightly from last month); no firms reported a permanent shutdown.

The chart below shows an estimated average percent change in new orders or sales by firm type based on responses to question 1, which is calculated using the midpoints of the ranges of each answer option and likely includes measurement error. The estimated average percent change in new orders or sales from the week ending August 30 to the week ending September 27 remained negative but edged up from -14.5 percent to -13.9 percent for all firms, from -8.7 percent to -8.2 percent for manufacturers, and from -16.7 percent to -16.2 percent for nonmanufacturers.

Note: Dashed lines leading up to April 5, 2020, indicate sample size changes over the first two weeks. Beginning on July 5, the survey frequency changed from weekly to monthly; dotted lines indicate the average weekly trend between monthly surveys.
Note: Of the 154 total respondents, 153 answered question 2. Respondents were able to choose as many options as applied.

2. **What labor force decisions did your firm make in September?**

Over 46 percent of the firms reported no changes to their labor force in September. Roughly 35 percent of the firms reported hiring new full- or part-time employees. Larger shares of manufacturers indicated hiring new employees and increasing the number of temporary workers, while larger shares of nonmanufacturers indicated laying off employees, reducing the number of temporary workers, and furloughing employees.

Note: Of the 154 total respondents, 59 answered question 3. Respondents were able to choose as many options as applied.

3. **Were there any impediments to hiring or recalling workers in September?**

Of the 59 firms above that indicated having hired new employees, recalled workers, or increased the number of temporary workers or contractors in September, 49 percent indicated no impediments to hiring or recalling workers. Smaller but similar shares of firms indicated lack of childcare (27 percent), expanded unemployment benefits (27 percent), and fear of infection (22 percent) as impediments. Larger shares of manufacturers noted a lack of childcare as impediments relative to nonmanufacturers, while a larger share of nonmanufacturers noted a fear of infection.