



# Business Climate Survey Report



**2025**

# EDASC Business Climate Survey Report

## Introduction

The Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County (EDASC) conducted the **Business Climate Survey** in early 2025 to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing local businesses. It is critical to assess the needs of businesses across various industries to ensure they have the resources and support necessary for long-term success.

Through this survey, we aimed to gather insights directly from business owners and decision-makers on key issues such as workforce availability, infrastructure, access to capital, and overall economic conditions. The feedback collected will help inform EDASC's strategic initiatives and shape programs designed to strengthen the regional economy.

By identifying barriers to growth and areas for improvement, EDASC can work alongside businesses, government agencies, and community partners to create a more resilient and thriving business environment in Skagit County.

EDASC received 81 responses to this survey, which will be repeated annually. Thank you to all of the businesses that participated.

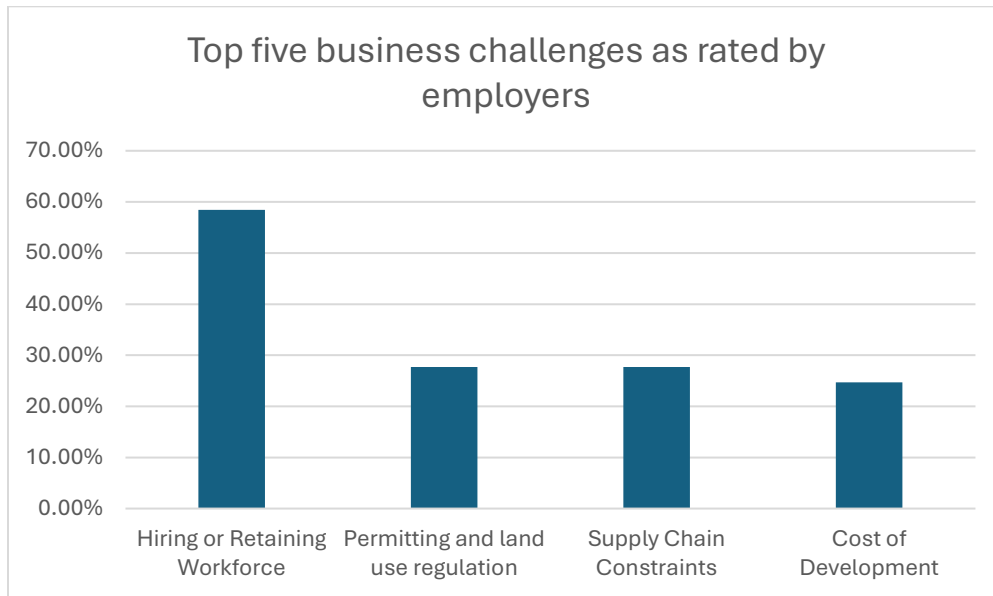
## Overall Business Climate in Skagit County

- **Respondents were optimistic about the business environment** in Skagit County, with most rating the business atmosphere as good or very good (61%), followed by neutral (33%) and poor (6%).
- **Businesses did not expect much to change** over the next six months, with most selecting the business climate would stay the same (63%), followed by improve (24%) and get worse (13%).
- **Most businesses expect stability** in employment and revenue over the next six months, though some foresee growth. **Industries predicting growth** include **tourism, construction, and select retail sectors**.
- **Most (81%) respondents said they'd recommend Skagit County** as a good place to do business.

## Key Challenges Facing Businesses

1. **Workforce Issues** – A significant number (58%) of businesses struggle with **hiring and retaining employees**.

2. **Cost of Development & Regulations** – Concerns over **permits, land-use regulations, utility barriers, and increasing business costs** were commonly cited.
3. **Access to Capital & Lending** – Many small businesses, particularly those in retail and service industries, reported difficulty securing funding for expansion or stability.
4. **Supply Chain Constraints** – Manufacturing, agriculture, and food service businesses noted issues with supply chain disruptions.
5. **Childcare & Housing** – The **lack of affordable housing and childcare availability** for employees were identified as major barriers to workforce retention.



## Infrastructure & Business Support Needs

- **Infrastructure satisfaction was mostly positive**, with 66% of respondents choosing satisfied or very satisfied, followed by neutral (23%), and dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (10%).
- Businesses highlighted the need for **marketing and promotional support, technical assistance for expansion, and confidential business advising**.
- Several businesses emphasized the importance of **public transportation improvements** to enhance workforce accessibility.

## Respondent Information

The **EDASC Business Climate Survey** received 81 responses from a diverse range of businesses across Skagit County, representing various industries, business sizes, and

ownership types. Understanding the demographics of participating businesses helps provide context to their challenges and outlooks.

### **Industries represented**

Businesses from multiple sectors participated, with the top six industries being:

- **Manufacturing (15%)**
- **Retail Trade (14%)**
- **Accommodation and Food Services (10%)**
- **Construction (5%)**
- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (5%)**
- **Health Care and Social Assistance (4%)**

### **Business Size (Number of Employees)**

The businesses varied in size, ranging from sole proprietorships to large employers:

- **1–4 employees:** Small retailers and service providers
- **5–19 employees:** Mid-sized local businesses
- **20–49 employees:** Growing enterprises in manufacturing, food service, and professional services
- **50–249 employees:** Larger organizations, including nonprofits and industrial firms
- **1,000+ employees:** A small number of large-scale employers

### **Annual Gross Revenue**

- Businesses reported a wide range of annual revenues, from under **\$250,000** to over **\$4 million**.

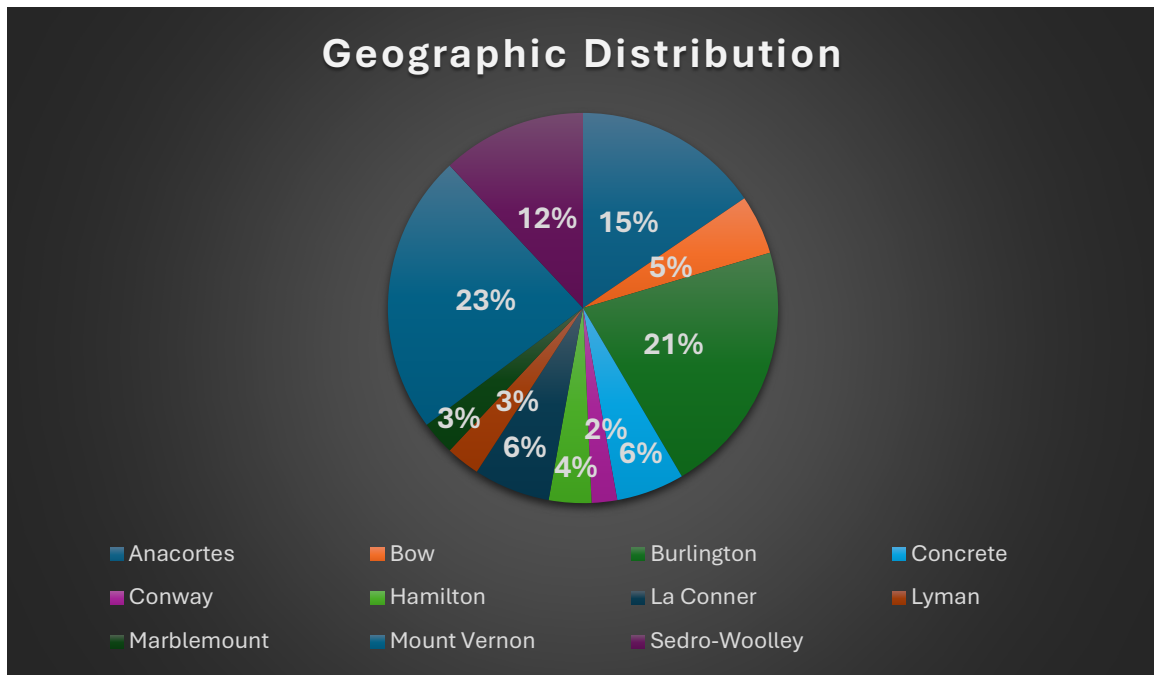
Many small businesses (particularly in retail and services) reported lower revenue brackets, while manufacturing, real estate, and agriculture businesses tended to fall into higher revenue categories.

### **Business Ownership Representation**

The survey captured responses from a diverse group of business owners:

- **Woman-Owned Businesses** – A strong representation, particularly in retail, food service, and professional services.

- **BIPOC-Owned Businesses** – Several businesses identified as minority-owned, spanning various industries.
- **Veteran-Owned Businesses** – A number of respondents noted veteran ownership, particularly in service and construction industries.
- **Disability-Owned Businesses** – Some businesses indicated ownership by individuals with disabilities.



### How EDASC Supports Local Businesses

The EDASC team is dedicated to building a **strong, resilient** business community in Skagit County. Whether you are facing workforce shortages, regulatory challenges, or looking to grow, we are here to help. Call or email Economic Development Manager Aaron Weinberg at [aaron@skagit.org](mailto:aaron@skagit.org) or 360-639-8849 for support.

### How We Can Assist Your Business:

- **Workforce Development & Retention** – Connecting businesses with training programs, talent pipelines, and workforce solutions.
- **Business Financing & Capital Access** – Providing guidance on loans, grants, and investment opportunities.
- **Permitting & Regulatory Assistance** – Helping businesses navigate local regulations and land-use challenges.

- **Infrastructure & Advocacy** – Advocating for improved broadband, transportation, and utilities to support business growth.
- **Confidential Business Advising** – Offering one-on-one support for business planning, expansion, and succession strategies.
- **Marketing & Promotion Assistance** – Helping businesses enhance visibility and reach new customers.

By working together with business owners, community leaders, and policymakers, EDASC strives to create an environment where businesses can **thrive, innovate, and drive economic growth**. If you need support, we encourage you to reach out – we are here to help.