

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

economy's prospects since the third quarter of 2021.

**Isaac M. O'Bannon** • Mar. 07, 2024



For the past two years, many business owners were concerned a recession was just around the corner. But as key economic indicators, including the unemployment, inflation and the stock market, have continued to show healthy signs, those fears of recession have waned for most economists and business executives.

In the latest [AICPA & CIMA Economic Outlook Survey](#), business decision makers reported their highest level of optimism about the U.S. economy's prospects since the third quarter of 2021. The Q1 2024 survey polls chief executive officers, chief financial officers, controllers and other certified public accountants in U.S. companies who hold executive and senior management accounting roles.

Inflation still remains a top concern but the specter of recession has diminished

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

organizations' outlook also rose, with 49% expressing optimism compared to 43% last quarter.

"We saw across-the-board increases in sentiment in the survey this quarter," said Tom Hood, AICPA & CIMA's executive vice president for business engagement and growth. "In recent months, there's been a disconnect between U.S. economic indicators – which have been largely positive on growth, unemployment and declining inflation – and the perception of how the economy is faring. This quarter looks like a bit of a reset."

The hiring outlook remains strong, and business executives cite "availability of skilled personnel" as their No. 3 concern after inflation and employee and benefit costs. Some 37% of business executives said they have too few employees, with 22% saying they were looking to hire immediately and 15% saying they were hesitant to recruit due to uncertainty.

The AICPA survey is a forward-looking indicator that tracks hiring and business-related expectations for the next 12 months. In comparison, the U.S. Department of Labor's February employment report, scheduled for release tomorrow, looks back on the previous month's hiring trends.

Other key findings of the survey:

- A bare majority (51%) of business executives say their companies plan to expand over the next 12 months, up slightly from 48% last quarter.
- Raw material costs were the one inflationary category that saw an increase over last quarter. "Materials, supplies and equipment costs" is now the No. 5 top concern for businesses – it wasn't in the top 10 last quarter.
- 85% of survey respondents said their companies had not engaged in significant layoffs recently.

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us