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Status of Florida's Efforts to Address Challenges to Business Establishment and Expansion

at a glance

Business association representatives and economic development experts identified several common barriers to business establishment and expansion in Florida. These include access to capital, workforce availability and quality, and government regulations. In our more in-depth analysis of regulation as a barrier in the area of residential contracting, we found varied opinions regarding issues often described as barriers; these issues include state and local licensing requirements, permitting and zoning processes, and inspection procedures.

Florida state agencies have recently implemented initiatives aimed at making it easier for businesses to establish and expand in the state, including facilitating online registration and licensing and streamlining regulatory processes. Other southeastern states have also sought to address barriers to business growth and are examining regulatory reform, directing state agencies to revise rules, and soliciting information about business barriers and related feedback from the private sector.

During the 2013 session, the Legislature addressed several issues identified as important to fostering a business-friendly environment. In addition to monitoring these recent legislative actions and the agency initiatives noted in this report, the Legislature could consider options to improve access to local regulatory and business information.

Scope

As directed by the Legislature, OPPAGA examined barriers to business establishment and expansion in Florida and answered five questions.

1. What are the primary barriers to business establishment and expansion in Florida?
2. Does state and local regulatory overlap act as a barrier to Florida's residential construction industry?
3. What have Florida's state agencies done to address barriers to business establishment and expansion?
4. How have other states identified business barriers and what have they done to address these barriers?
5. What additional options exist for cultivating a business-friendly environment in Florida?

Background

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau identified over 491,150 firms in Florida employing more than 6.6 million employees. Of these firms, nearly 90% had fewer than 20 employees. The largest group of employees (17.6%) fell into the administration and support and waste management and remediation category, followed by health care and social assistance (14.3%) and retail (13.8%). (See Exhibit 1.)

Exhibit 1

Florida Firms Employ Over 6.6 million Employees in Diverse Industries Ranging from Agriculture and Forestry to Retail Trade and Food Services

Type of Firms	Number of Firms	Number of Employees
Administration and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	32,062	1,167,504
Health Care and Social Assistance	54,241	950,331
Retail	70,627	912,727
Accommodation and food service	35,543	729,533
Professional, scientific, and technical	69,056	418,190
Finance and Insurance	31,305	328,994
Construction	45,041	297,998
Other (except public administration)	43,564	291,446
Wholesale Trade	30,212	276,704
Manufacturing	12,616	271,861
Transportation and warehousing	12,538	204,612
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7,462	158,824
Information	7,806	151,880
Real estate and leasing	28,212	144,219
Educational Services	5,797	143,820
Management of company/enterprises	2,574	132,954
Utilities	585	26,859
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	984	12,528
Mining, quarrying, oil and gas excavation	264	4,854
Not classified	661	720
Total	491,150	6,626,558

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The state’s business climate and the ease of establishing new businesses have long been topics of interest to government officials, business owners, and industry associations. Numerous studies have addressed these issues but have often yielded varied results. In particular, reports have presented different findings regarding the issues that businesses consider the most burdensome.

For example, the Florida Chamber of Commerce regularly conducts surveys to identify the top five issues facing the state’s small businesses. The organization’s most recent survey report listed the top two issues for such businesses as access to capital (31%) and economic uncertainty (28%); issues related to growth management (9%), workforce quality (7%), and government regulations (6%) were listed by significantly fewer businesses.¹ However, a 2011 survey by Open for Business,

a Central Florida economic development partnership, found that many business leaders reported that uncertainty in the regulatory process was a significant barrier to growth. A frequent response to a question asking what the most important thing government could do to help businesses overcome their barriers was to “get out of the way.”² (See Appendix A for additional information about recent state and national business surveys.)

In an effort to address some of the concerns raised by these and other studies and to encourage business growth, the Legislature and other state entities have taken various actions. For example, to obtain feedback on how to make Florida more business friendly, the 2011 Legislature created an online survey tool, the “Your Voice” for Florida Business; the survey sought to gather information from current and potential Florida business owners

¹ [Florida Small Business Index: 2012-2013 Quarter 4 Survey Results](#), Florida Chamber of Commerce Small Business Council, October 2013.

² [Central Florida Business Climate Survey](#), Open for Business, March 2011.

and stakeholders that could be used to enhance or revise existing rules and regulations. Similarly, in 2012, a constitutionally established task force submitted recommendations for improving governmental regulations and reducing costs. In addition, the Governor's Office of Fiscal Accountability and Regulatory Reform conducts on-going reviews of state agency regulations.

The 2013 Legislature recently addressed workforce issues by revising educational programs and created funding incentives to increase the likelihood that educational programs in Florida's public schools, colleges, and universities will better prepare students for future occupations and careers. The 2013 Legislature also modified the size and make-up of the Small Business Development Center Network's statewide advisory board and codified support services the network must provide to small businesses. Support services must target the needs of businesses employing fewer than 100 persons and demonstrating a capacity to grow in employment or revenue.

Questions and Answers—

What are the primary barriers to business establishment and expansion in Florida?

To identify major barriers to business establishment and growth in Florida, we reviewed research and interviewed representatives of economic development organizations and business associations.³ We asked these stakeholders to reflect on state, local, and federal barriers to business growth

within Florida and to suggest options for addressing such challenges.⁴

Recent business surveys and our stakeholder interviews identified several commonly mentioned barriers to business establishment and expansion. These include issues related to access to capital, workforce, and regulation.

Stakeholders most frequently cited access to capital as a barrier to their efforts to expand and grow. Representatives of economic development organizations and business associations reported that access to capital was more of a barrier for small business growth than for larger businesses (e.g., small construction companies versus publicly held construction companies). In addition, surveys conducted by the Small Business Development Center identified financing or capital access as a major barrier.

Stakeholders consistently reported that availability of qualified and skilled workers was a major issue. Both business association and economic development organization representatives noted there was a limited supply of workers with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related training. Both groups also commented on other workforce-related issues, including poor performing K-12 schools, burdensome local work rules, and lack of state training funds.

Business organizations more frequently cited regulation as a problem than did economic development organizations. Most business concerns centered on environmental permitting and additional regulations placed on businesses by local governments (e.g., difficulties in obtaining environmental permits in comparison to other states and varying construction regulations across municipalities). In addition, construction industry representatives cited variations in licensing categories for contractors across counties and

³ We interviewed representatives of the Florida Economic Development Council, the Florida Regional Planning Council Association, the Florida Small Business Development Center, GrowFL, Associated Industries of Florida, the Florida Association of Manufacturers, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Home Builders Association, the Florida Retail Federation, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, and local economic development organizations.

⁴ We asked stakeholders about specific barriers we identified through our prior research in areas such as regulation, facilities and infrastructure, business taxes, availability of capital, and the business environment in their counties. We also asked stakeholders to identify any other significant barriers they believed affected business establishment and growth.

cities and duplicative regulation across levels of government as barriers for their industry.

Conversely, several economic development organization representatives reported specific regulatory concerns. These individuals noted the environmental permitting processes needed to be streamlined; however, some economic development organization representatives believed that the Department of Environmental Protection and the water management districts were making progress on this issue. Representatives of other organizations noted that regulation did not currently present specific concerns for businesses.

Does state and local regulatory overlap act as a barrier to Florida’s residential construction industry?

To conduct a more in-depth analysis of regulation as a business barrier, we conducted case studies of five counties to examine state and local regulatory overlap within Florida’s residential construction industry.⁵ We selected the construction industry because it is projected to be one of the state’s fastest growing industries in employment from 2012 to 2020 and has historically generated a substantial portion of the state’s gross domestic product.

We found that residential construction contractors in the five target counties differed in their opinions regarding state and local licensing requirements, business taxes and fees, permitting and zoning processes, and inspection procedures.

Licensing requirements. To become a licensed contractor in Florida, a person can pursue one of two paths—*certified contractor* or *registered*

contractor. The *certified contractor* path is one in which the state licenses (“certifies”) the contractor to build in all Florida counties. Conversely, individuals who wish to become licensed contractors but only work in certain counties or municipalities can obtain licensure as a *registered contractor*. Among counties, licensing requirements for registered contractors vary; some counties have local licensing boards that approve license applications while others do not have such boards. In addition, some counties require a state licensed contractor to pay a local license fee, while others waive the license fee for state-licensed contractors.

Contractors from our five target counties expressed differing opinions regarding the need for local licenses. Some felt that everyone should seek state certification, with some local officials encouraging applicants to pursue this route. However, other stakeholders suggested that local licensing provides a higher degree of customer protection and legitimacy. For example, local licensing boards may review contractors’ experience and credit ratings before issuing a license, or a county licensing office may track and take action on customer complaints about locally licensed contractors.

Stakeholders reported several concerns about state and local licensing. Some stakeholders questioned the necessity of local licenses for construction activities that are not licensed at the state level (e.g., painters and concrete finishers). Moreover, contractors reported some difficulties, particularly in rural areas, with meeting state certification fingerprinting and testing requirements because long-distance travel may be required.

In addition, while some counties offer county licensure reciprocity with neighboring local governments, contractors that work in more than one county and municipality may still pay licensing fees in those jurisdictions. For example, contractors working in Lake, Marion, and Sumter counties reportedly pay \$30 to \$40 fees to each jurisdiction annually.

⁵ The selected counties were Hendry, Orange, Santa Rosa, Sumter, and Suwannee. In our case studies of residential contracting, we researched county/municipal regulations; interviewed county officials; and interviewed local contractors’ association representatives and/or home builders regarding local licensing requirements and home building regulations. Local builders we interviewed also operated in surrounding counties, including Brevard, Escambia, Lake, Marion, and Seminole counties.

Permitting and zoning. To obtain a building permit in Florida, contractors must verify zoning and submit engineering plans, product approval forms and instructions, septic tank approval forms, and several other documents. Our case study of permitting in the five selected counties found that the approval process varies across counties. In addition, stakeholders we interviewed noted that the inability to submit required documents electronically increased the amount of time to complete the permitting process.

Some contractors noted inefficiencies in the building approval process that delayed obtaining permits. For example, several contractors noted that a lack of concurrent building plan and wastewater disposal (e.g., septic tanks) review increased the time necessary to obtain a building permit. They also noted that this is often inconvenient for builders, as a separate application may be required and county environmental health offices are not necessarily co-located with building departments.

In addition, several contractors noted duplicative or burdensome paperwork requirements that delay the permitting process. While some counties have online applications for building permits, submission of plans and other required documents is still generally paper-based. Moreover, contractors in our case study counties reported variations in the number of paper copies they are required to submit with permit applications. Contractors reported that online plan submission would

- eliminate the need to send multiple paper copies of the same document to various permitting and zoning offices;
- eliminate builders having to pay fees for numerous copies of larger-sized documents (e.g., building plans); and
- speed up the permitting process.

Respondents also noted that state requirements for contractors to produce Florida-approved product/material installation instructions, in addition to requiring

contractors to provide the product numbers for those materials, were both duplicative and paper intensive.

Inspections. New home construction requires electrical, plumbing, gas, mechanical, and building inspections prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy to ensure compliance with the Florida Building Code and local regulations. According to stakeholders we interviewed, some inspection procedures impede the timeliness of the building process.

Although inspection requirements are the same across the state, contractors reported variation in inspection processes across counties. For example, some counties require a separate inspection visit for each type of inspection, which can be time consuming for the builder. However, other counties employ cross-trained inspectors who can conduct all necessary inspections. As a consequence, the contractors we interviewed reported being able to get through the regulatory process faster in some localities than in others.

What have Florida's state agencies done to address barriers to business establishment and expansion?

In recent years, state agencies have implemented a number of initiatives aimed at reducing barriers to business establishment and expansion. We identified such initiatives at four state agencies that interact frequently with businesses looking to establish or expand in Florida – the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Revenue.

The **Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)** is implementing an initiative to allow regulated entities to apply for licenses online. For example, online registration or license renewal is available for many regulated agents, including pesticide applicators, private security officers, movers, and sellers of travel. In addition, the department now provides

online fine payment for infractions such as failed petroleum and food safety inspections. The department is also exploring ways to reduce the number of inspectors that visit each business and is cross-training a limited number of inspectors.

The **Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR)** has taken several steps to make it easier to transact business in Florida. Through DBPR's Apply Now! Project, the department reviewed the rules and statutory authority for various applications and revised applications and rules to increase application accuracy and completeness, including for those submitted online. The department noted that each year, it increases the number of professions that can electronically submit license applications and associated documentation. Subsequent to the Apply Now! Initiative, the department launched Customer Success!, an effort to determine which business processes help DBPR customers succeed, measure the success of those processes, and find ways to improve them.

The **Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** has also made efforts to facilitate business establishment and growth. The department created the DEP Business Portal, which allows businesses to submit permit applications and pay associated fees online. DEP also conducts pre-application workshops to provide businesses an opportunity to address application and permitting questions prior to application submission. Due in part to these efforts, the department reported that it has reduced the average permitting time from 79 days to 30.5 days.

The **Department of Revenue (DOR)** is the lead agency for the statewide one-stop business registration portal. Phase I of the portal will serve new businesses that have never submitted a business or license application. Phase I includes six state agencies: the Departments of Business and Professional Regulation, Financial Services, Lottery, Management Services, Revenue, and State.

Phase I was scheduled to be completed in December 2013, but during the initial testing phase of the portal's "wizard" functionality, DOR became aware that the application was not functioning as anticipated. Portal implementation has been delayed to allow time to analyze and address these issues.

How have other states identified business barriers and what have they done to address these barriers?

Like Florida, other states in the region and across the country have given consideration to addressing barriers to business establishment and expansion. Because Florida competes with other southeastern states for business growth, we reviewed efforts in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. We also identified several other states that have taken recent action to address burdensome business regulations (Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Washington); to date, most of these efforts have consisted of conducting reviews or setting up advisory groups.

In general, initiatives in other southeastern states were governor-lead efforts that included similar strategies. For example, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina formed taskforces that examined regulatory reform and/or improving competitiveness. North Carolina and South Carolina also asked state agencies to retool their rules or submit for executive review rules considered barriers to job creation. Alabama and South Carolina solicited information about business barriers and related feedback from the private sector.

In general these southeastern states issued final reports as their last project step; however, Georgia used findings from its Competitiveness Initiative to continue tax exemptions for certain investors and to eliminate the sales tax on energy used in agriculture, manufacturing, and mining.

States outside of the southeast have also conducted reviews to address barriers to business establishment and growth, including

environmental permitting and other regulatory issues. In 2010, the Minnesota Legislative Audit Commission examined concerns about the timing and costs of obtaining environmental permits; the study found that the state's environmental review and permitting processes can be very complex and time consuming and made several suggestions for improving the process. A 2011 Washington Research Council study examined duplicative environmental regulations. The study made recommendations for eliminating state and federal overlap by using a federal standard only, giving a single state agency or a single jurisdiction permit authority, and establishing a permanent task force on regulatory review. A 2012 Oregon study generated similar recommendations as well as a proposal to designate a lead agency for permitting.

States have also reviewed other regulatory processes in an attempt to improve the business climate. In 2011, Maine's governor signed into law the state's Act to Ensure Regulatory Fairness and Reform; the act's primary goal is ensuring regulatory fairness and reform among departments and agencies by reviewing aspects of the regulatory process and reforming processes as necessary to eliminate duplicate or unnecessary regulations. Similarly, Michigan expanded the responsibilities of its Office of Regulatory Reinvention, ordered a cost-benefit analysis of all proposed rules, and created stakeholder advisory groups to seek input on proposed

rules. New Jersey's governor issued an executive order that established a Red Tape Review Commission that generated a range of recommendations for state government, including a proposal to streamline occupational licensing regulations.

What additional options exist for cultivating a business-friendly environment in Florida?

Our review of information from business development and regulation research, interviews with economic development organization and industry association representatives, and examination of actions taken by other states found that several issues are key to fostering a business-friendly environment in Florida. These issues include

- addressing workforce concerns;
- expanding access to capital;
- reducing tax burdens;
- exploring regulatory reform; and
- improving the effectiveness of economic incentives.

During the 2013 session, the Legislature addressed several of these issues. In addition to monitoring these recent legislative actions and the agency initiatives noted in this report, the Legislature could consider options to improve access to local regulatory and business information. (See Exhibit 2.)

Exhibit 2 Cultivating a Business-friendly Environment in Florida

Recent Legislative Actions

Monitor implementation of recent legislation intended to improve the state's business climate, including workforce, access to capital, tax relief, and other issues. Monitoring will also help identify additional changes needed in order to support business establishment and expansion in the state.

- Monitor implementation of recent laws, including the following that were passed in the 2013 session.
 - [Chapter 2013-27](#), *Laws of Florida*, revised educational programs and created funding incentives to increase the likelihood that educational programs in Florida's public schools, colleges, and universities will better prepare students for future occupations and careers.
 - [Chapter 2013-39](#), *Laws of Florida*, provided a sales tax exemption for certain industrial machinery and equipment.
 - [Chapter 2013-39](#), *Laws of Florida* and [Chapter 2013-42](#), *Laws of Florida*, required the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to annually analyze state economic development programs according to a recurring schedule.
 - [Chapter 2013-39](#), *Laws of Florida*, modified the size and make-up of the Small Business Development Center Network's statewide advisory board and codified support services the network must provide to small businesses.
 - [Chapter 2013-120](#), *Laws of Florida*, directed the Institute for the Commercialization of Public Research to create a corporate subsidiary called the Florida Technology Seed Capital Fund.
 - [Chapter 2013-224](#), *Laws of Florida*, created the "Manufacturing Competitiveness Act," and authorized local governments to adopt a local manufacturing development program to grant master development approval for the development, expansion, or modification of manufacturing facilities located within its jurisdiction.

Agency Initiatives

Monitor the impact of state agency initiatives to reduce barriers to business establishment and expansion; in particular, DOR's one-stop business registration portal, DEP's Business Portal, and DBPR's Apply Now! initiative.

- Require agencies to provide frequent status reports
- Direct OPPAGA to survey licensees, permittees, and businesses regarding their experiences using the agencies' new systems

Access to Local Regulatory and Business Information

Require or create incentives for counties or cities to create websites that provide businesses the tax, license, and fee information necessary to establish or expand operations in Florida.

- Explore the feasibility of local governments collecting relevant tax, license, and fee information and making it available on a consolidated, publically accessible website
- Request that local governments provide cost estimates for developing the informational website

Require or create incentives for counties or cities to create online systems that allow individuals and businesses to apply for licenses, registrations, and permits online.

- Explore the feasibility of local governments developing a system that facilitates online application for licenses, registrations, permits, and other items necessary to expand or establish a business
- Request that local governments provide cost estimates for developing the online licensing systems

Source: OPPAGA analysis.

Appendix A

Recent State and National Business Surveys

Exhibit A-1

Numerous Florida-specific and National Surveys Have Addressed Barriers to Business Establishment and Growth

Name	Description	Results by Issue				
		Regulation	Taxes	Capital	Workforce	Other Barriers
Florida-specific						
Florida Small Business Development Center Network <i>Annual Satisfaction, Impact, and Needs Assessment</i> (2013)	Surveyed nearly 20,000 entrepreneurs and small businesses served by the network over the past two years; received over 4,000 responses	8.4% of businesses indicated that regulations and taxes were among the top three challenges facing their small business.	8.4% of businesses indicated that regulations and taxes were among the top three challenges facing their small business.	22.2% of businesses indicated that accessing capital and financing were among the top three challenges facing their small business.	5.5% of businesses indicated that human resources were among the top three challenges facing their small business.	22.1% of businesses indicated that market development was among the top three challenges facing their small business.
GrowFL, <i>Additional Services Survey</i> (2013)	Surveyed 658 companies that applied for GrowFL services between June 20, 2012, and June 20, 2013; 192 companies responded	2.12% of companies identified state permitting/regulations and 1.59% identified local permitting/regulations as among the top three business concerns.	3.17% of companies identified state taxes/fees and 2.12% of companies identified local taxes/fees as among the top three business concerns.	48.15% of companies identified financing growth opportunities and 18.52% identified venture capital and angel funding as among the top three business concerns.	34.39% of companies identified employee recruitment as among the top three business concerns.	Other top three concerns identified by companies included marketing (55.56%), cash flow (47.09%), and expansion (32.28%)
Thumbtack.com and the Kauffman Foundation, <i>2013 Thumbtack.com Small Business Friendliness Survey</i> (Florida-specific results) (April 2013)	Surveyed 7,766 business owners between October 25, 2013, to January 2, 2013	Graded as B- for overall regulatory friendliness	Graded as B+ for friendliness of tax code	Not identified	Graded as B for ease of hiring a new employee	Graded as C- for overall small business friendliness Graded as C for ease of starting a small business
Florida Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Council, <i>Florida Small Business Index, 2012-2013 Quarter 4 Survey Results</i> (October 2013)	Surveyed small business owners from September 9, 2013, through September 27, 2013; received 594 unique responses	6% of respondents identified government regulations as among the top five issues facing Florida's small businesses.	Not identified	31% of respondents identified access to capital as among the top five issues facing Florida's small businesses.	7% of respondents identified workforce quality as among the top five issues facing Florida's small businesses.	28% of respondents identified economic uncertainty as among the top five issues facing Florida's small businesses.

Name	Description	Results by Issue				
		Regulation	Taxes	Capital	Workforce	Other Barriers
National						
International City/County Management Association and National League of Cities, <i>Economic Development 2009 Survey</i> (April 2010)	Surveyed 3,283 municipalities with a population of 10,000 and over and 556 counties with a population of 50,000 and over; the response rate was 22.2%	22.7% of respondents reported environmental regulations as a barrier to economic development. 12.4% of respondents reported a lengthy permit process as a barrier to economic development.	20.2% of respondents reported taxes as a barrier to economic development.	50.1% of respondents reported a lack of capital/funding as a barrier to economic development.	17.6% of respondents reported lack of skilled labor as a barrier to economic development.	53.4% of respondents reported the cost of land as a barrier to economic development. 52.4% of respondents reported the availability of land as a barrier to economic development.
American Sustainable Business Council, Main Street Alliance, and Small Business Majority. Opinion Survey, <i>Small Business Owners' Opinions on Regulations and Job Creation</i> (February 2012)	Surveyed 500 small business owners nationally between December 8, 2011, and January 4, 2012	14% of respondents identified the level of government regulation as the most important problem for small businesses.	12% of respondents identified the level of taxes as the most important problem for small businesses.	6% of respondents identified the availability of credit to invest in their businesses as the most important problem for small businesses.	5% of respondents identified the quality and skills of available workers as the most important problem for small businesses.	34% of respondents identified weak customer demand as the most important problem for small businesses.
U.S. Bank, <i>2013 Small Business Annual Survey</i> (April 2013)	Surveyed 3,210 small business owners in January 2013	14% of respondents identified government regulations as the single most significant challenge facing small businesses.	12% of respondents identified taxes as the single most significant challenge facing small businesses.	13% of respondents reported borrowing or trying to borrowing money for business purposes over the last six months.	Not identified	30% of respondents identified economic uncertainty as the single most significant challenge facing small businesses.
U.S. Chamber of Commerce, <i>Quarter 2 Small Business Study</i> (July 2013)	Surveyed 1,304 small business owners from June 21 to July 8, 2013	44% of respondents identified over-regulation as a challenge facing small business owners.	33% of respondents identified high taxes as a challenge facing small business owners.	Not identified	11% of respondents identified lack of qualified or educated employees as a challenge facing small business owners.	44% of respondents identified economic uncertainty as a concern.

Name	Description	Results by Issue				
		Regulation	Taxes	Capital	Workforce	Other Barriers
National						
National Small Business Administration, <i>2013 Mid-Year Economic Report</i> (August 2013)	Surveyed more than 1,100 small business owners from June 25 through July 17, 2013	30% of respondents identified regulatory burdens as one of the three most significant challenges to future growth and survival of their business.	22% of respondents identified federal taxes and 12% of respondents identified state and local taxes as one of the three most significant challenges to future growth and survival of their business.	20% of respondents identified lack of capital as one of the three most significant challenges to future growth and survival of their business.	12% of respondents identified lack of qualified workers as one of the three most significant challenges to future growth and survival of their business.	60% of respondents identified economic uncertainty as one of the three most significant challenges to future growth and survival of their business.
National Federation of Independent Business, <i>Small Business Economic Trends</i> (December 2013)	Surveyed 3,938 small business owners/ members; 762 usable responses were received	22% of respondents identified government regulations and red tape as the single most important problem faced by their business.	21% of respondents identified taxes as the single most important problem faced by their business.	2% of respondents identified financing as the single most important problem faced by their business.	51% of respondents hired or tried to hire in the last three months and 44% reported few or no qualified applicants for open positions. 5% of respondents reported that the cost of labor was the single most important problem faced by their business.	15% of respondents reported that poor sales was the single most important problem faced by their business.

Source: OPPAGA review of survey reports.

The Florida Legislature

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability



OPPAGA provides performance and accountability information about Florida government in several ways.

- [Reports](#) deliver program evaluation and policy analysis to assist the Legislature in overseeing government operations, developing policy choices, and making Florida government more efficient and effective.
- [PolicyCasts](#), short narrated slide presentations, provide bottom-line briefings of findings and recommendations for select reports.
- Government Program Summaries (GPS), an online encyclopedia, www.oppaga.state.fl.us/government, provides descriptive, evaluative, and performance information on more than 200 Florida state government programs.
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