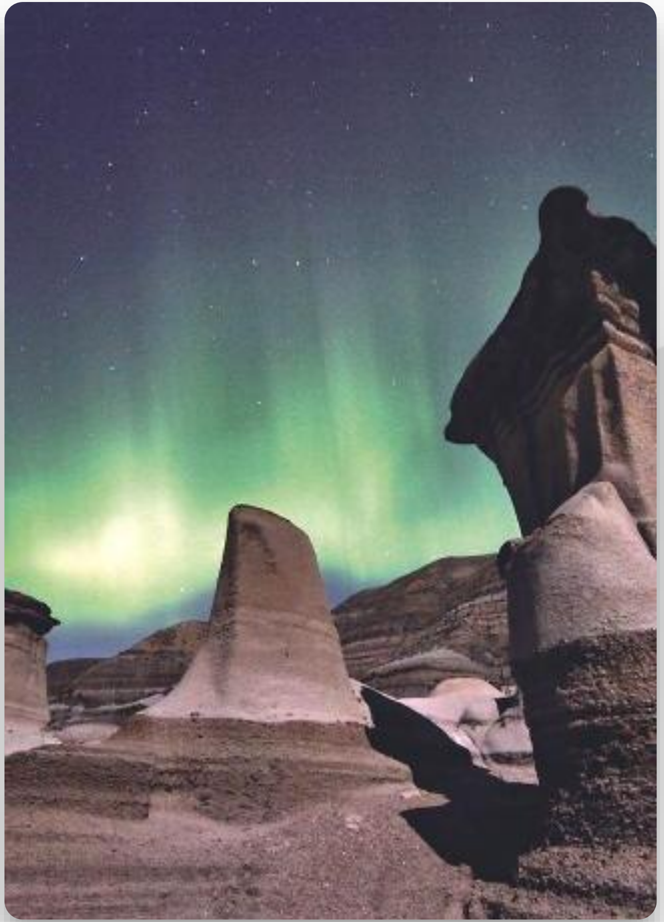
Report

TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

2026 Survey

March 2026

Contents



Project Overview

Background & Objectives

To assist in helping Alberta businesses grow and to understand the top issues affecting the tourism industry, the Travel Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA) has been conducting a semi-annual online survey of tourism businesses across the province.

The surveys assess the current (and future) state of tourism businesses in the province. Results will be used to help educate operators across the province and help businesses adapt over time by creating better understanding of the current situation, anticipated challenges, and available opportunities.

Throughout this report, **FEB 2026** results are compared to previous waves, where applicable. Note that due to wording changes to questions over time, some direct comparisons are not shown.

The research is designed to track against previous waves (where applicable) and to provide up-to-date data on:

- The top issues facing the tourism sector;
- Business viability by year end;
- Business conditions if the market stays where it is;
- Impact of rising costs of inputs;
- Rising costs such as insurance premiums and inflation;
- Labour force challenges; and,
- Finance and debt.

• Methodology & Sample

Methodology

Online 10-minute survey of Alberta tourism operators.

Operators invited via email by TIAA with unique link to complete the survey. Generic open link and social media link also created.

Sample Size

In Feb 2026, a total of 137 responses were received. Wave and regional details are provided in adjacent tables.

Significant Differences

Throughout the report, where applicable, comparisons across key regions and sectors are noted. Significant differences between waves are marked as follows:

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Regional Breakdown FEB 2026

Canadian Rockies	28%
Calgary and area	23%
Edmonton and Area	29%
Alberta South	26%
Alberta Central	26%
Alberta North	15%

Wave	**FEB 2023**	**OCT 2023**	**FEB 2024**	**FEB 2025**	**FEB 2026**
Fielding	Jan 13-Feb 3	Sep 25-Oct 31	Feb 26 - Apr 24	Jan 20-Feb 26	Jan 16 – Feb 13
Responses	n=173	n=123	n=131	n=117	n=137

Key Findings

Key Findings: Performance & Outlook

With relatively strong 2025 performance, there is cautious optimism for 2026.

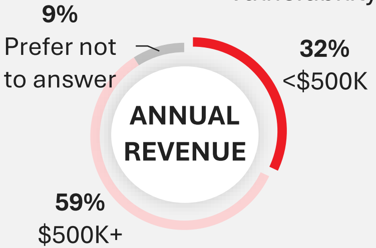
TOTAL PERFORMED AS EXPECTED / BETTER

AB Tourism Operators

42% performed **better than expected**

Over 8-in-10 Alberta tourism businesses (83%) report performing as expected or better in 2025, an uptick from **77% last year**, suggesting increased stability across the sector.

Businesses with annual revenue under $500K make up a third of the operator landscape and are more likely to report underperformance, pointing to more vulnerability among smaller operators.



WORSE THAN EXPECTED

<$500K Revenue	$500K+ Revenue
30%	11%

Revenue expectations are **broadly positive** with close to 7-in-10 forecasting growth. However, **forecasts are more moderate**, suggesting operators are growth-oriented but with measured expectations.

0 to –10% or more	Growth	+1 to +10%	+11 to +20%
18% vs. 11% 2025	69% vs. 80% 2025	46% vs. 46% 2025	17% vs. 21% 2025

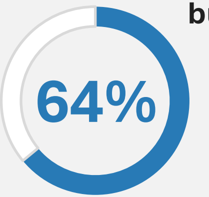
Optimism heading into 2026 has strengthened compared to a year ago, driven by growth in the "somewhat optimistic" sentiment and a decline in uncertainty.

	Outlook 2026	2025
Optimistic	20%	22%
Somewhat Optimistic	47%	38%
Somewhat Uncertain	28%	28%
Uncertain	4%	10%

Key Findings: Operating Environment & Risk Landscape

While confidence in the sector is strengthening, the 2026 operating environment is defined by cost pressures and external risks, with impacts varying by business size, tenure, and region.

Higher operating costs are by far the most common operating reality of 2025 across AB tourism businesses.



Higher operating costs decreased profit margins

Larger businesses ($1M+ in revenue) are more likely to report experiencing U.S. tariffs and trade barriers, extreme weather disruptions, workforce housing affordability challenges, and supply chain issues – pointing to broader macroeconomic and externally driven pressures that extend beyond local market conditions.

US/Canada trade tariffs
40% vs. 23% <$1M

Wildfire / extreme weather
33% vs. 11% <$1M

Affordability of workforce housing
31% vs. 14% <$1M

Supply chain disruptions
29% vs. 9% <$1M

Top three risks identified for 2026:

Inflation impacts are particularly acute among businesses with annual revenue under $1M, suggesting smaller operators may be more sensitive to cost volatility. Regulatory uncertainty is more pronounced among newer businesses.

35%
Inflation impacting input costs
(43% <$1M Revenue)

32%
Declining domestic consumer spending

25%
NET: Regulatory Uncertainty
(39% <10 yrs in Operation)

Key Findings: Growth & Investment

Businesses are positioned for growth, with strong intentions to invest and clear signals around what will enable expansion in Alberta.

Most operators intend to increase or maintain investment and operational capacity in 2026, signaling continued forward momentum.

INCREASE
(MAINTAIN)

54%	50%	48%
(39%)	(44%)	(49%)
Promotional activities	Product / Service Pricing	Product / Service Offer

Reinvestment decisions are strongly influenced by government programs and land use/permitting considerations – nearly half identify Alberta government supports as critical to enabling expansion.

50%	47%	43%	26%
NET Gov't	AB Gov't	Market Demand	NET Land Use

Just over half cite growing markets as an opportunity (28% domestic; 26% non-U.S; 8% U.S)

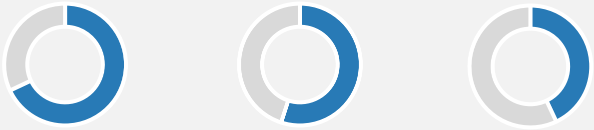
While **growing domestic and non-U.S. markets is the top opportunity overall**, opportunity perceptions vary: higher-revenue businesses are more likely to see potential in international market access and broader-scale expansion. Lower-revenue operators more often identify rural and Indigenous tourism, agritourism, and niche growth areas as promising pathways, reflecting more localized strategies.

GROWING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS	RURAL & INDIGENOUS TOURISM	AGRITOURISM GROWTH
38% $1M+	11% $1M+	7% $1M+
17% <$1M	33% <$1M	20% <$1M

Key Findings: Workforce Realities & Digital Improvements

Alberta tourism businesses are also investing in technology, while long-standing cost and labour challenges remain central to decision making and continue to shape the operating landscape.

Digital marketing and enhancements to websites, ecommerce, and online booking systems are the largest priorities.



68%
Digital marketing strategies

55%
Enhance website/ ecommerce solutions

43%
Online booking/ reservation /CRM system

Workforce pressures remain structural. The inability to offer stable, year-round employment continues to define recruitment and retention challenges, alongside limited time and budget for training and a lack of clear career development pathways – persistent characteristics of the tourism sector.

OVER HALF RANK IN TOP 5

Top Recruitment & Retention Challenges

- Inability to offer stable, year-round employment
- Competition with other sectors
- Lack of qualified applicants
- Inability to pay competitive wages

Top Career, Training, Skills Challenges

- Limited time/budget for training
- Lack of career development pathways

Tourism Operator Profile

Industry Sector

The top three sectors among participating Alberta tourism businesses are:

- Food and Beverage
- Attraction and Experience Management
- Entertainment

The significant increase in Attraction and Experience Management is likely due to the updated wording to include "experience."

Q20. Which of the following tourism sectors does your business fall under? Base: All respondents Feb 2026 (n=137); Feb 2025 (n=117).

*Note: responses of 4% or more shown.
*Note: Wording changed from Attraction Management to Attraction **and Experience** Management in 2026.

	FEB 2026	FEB 2025
Food and Beverage	36%	32%
Attraction and Experience Management	31%	20%
Entertainment	29%	27%
Guided Tours, Outdoor Recreation	23%	25%
Accommodation	20%	23%
Meeting / Conference / Wedding Facilities	18%	20%
Recreation	18%	19%
Rentals	13%	14%
Transportation	9%	12%
Campground / RV Park	9%	9%
Tourism Organizations	9%	10%
Travel Services	6%	11%
Sport or Rec Facility	5%	10%
Agriculture / Agritourism	4%	2%
Retail	4%	n/a

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Region of Business Location

Among tourism businesses surveyed in 2026, operations are reported across all regions of the province, though a lower share of respondents this year indicate operating in the Canadian Rockies and Alberta North compared to prior waves.

	FEB 2026	FEB 2025 (n=117)	FEB 2024 (n=131)	OCT 2023 (n=123)	FEB 2023 (n=173)
Edmonton and area	29%	39%	30%	36%	29%
Canadian Rockies	28%	41%	44%	48%	39%
Alberta Central	26%	30%	27%	34%	24%
Alberta South	26%	25%	24%	32%	24%
Calgary and area	23%	33%	35%	28%	32%
Alberta North	15%	26%	31%	17%	18%

*Note: Question wording changed FEB 2026 wave
Q3. What region(s) of Alberta does your organization operate in?
Base: All respondents, FEB 2026 (n=137)

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Industry by Region Business Location: Feb 2026

Food and Beverage, Attraction and Experience Management, and Entertainment industries are consistently the top 3 industries across most regions, though Guided Tours, Outdoor Recreation is directionally higher in Calgary and the Rockies.

	TOTAL (n=137)	Calgary and area (n=32)	Canadian Rockies (n=39)	Alberta Central (n=35)	Alberta South (n=40)	Edmonton and area (n=40)	Alberta North (n=21)
Food and Beverage	**36%**	22%	31%	37%	37%	38%	24%
Attraction and Experience Management	**31%**	25%	21%	29%	40%	13%	10%
Entertainment	**29%**	25%	18%	37%	40%	35%	19%
Guided Tours, Outdoor Recreation	**23%**	47%	46%	29%	31%	23%	29%
Accommodation	**20%**	13%	26%	17%	11%	20%	19%
Meeting / Conference / Wedding Facilities	**18%**	22%	10%	17%	23%	18%	14%
Recreation	**18%**	6%	13%	20%	11%	20%	19%
Rentals	**13%**	6%	10%	20%	9%	20%	10%
Transportation	**9%**	19%	28%	11%	9%	10%	10%
Campground / RV Park	**9%**	6%	-	14%	6%	15%	14%
Tourism Organizations	**9%**	-	-	11%	6%	-	19%
Travel Services	**6%**	16%	15%	11%	11%	8%	10%

Q20. Which of the following tourism sectors does your business fall under? Values 5% or less are not labelled. Industries that have 5% or less presence across all regions are not included.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137). Note: Regions / Sectors with <20n not shown

Time in Business

Median time in business remains stable in 2026, with most businesses operating for more than 10 years.

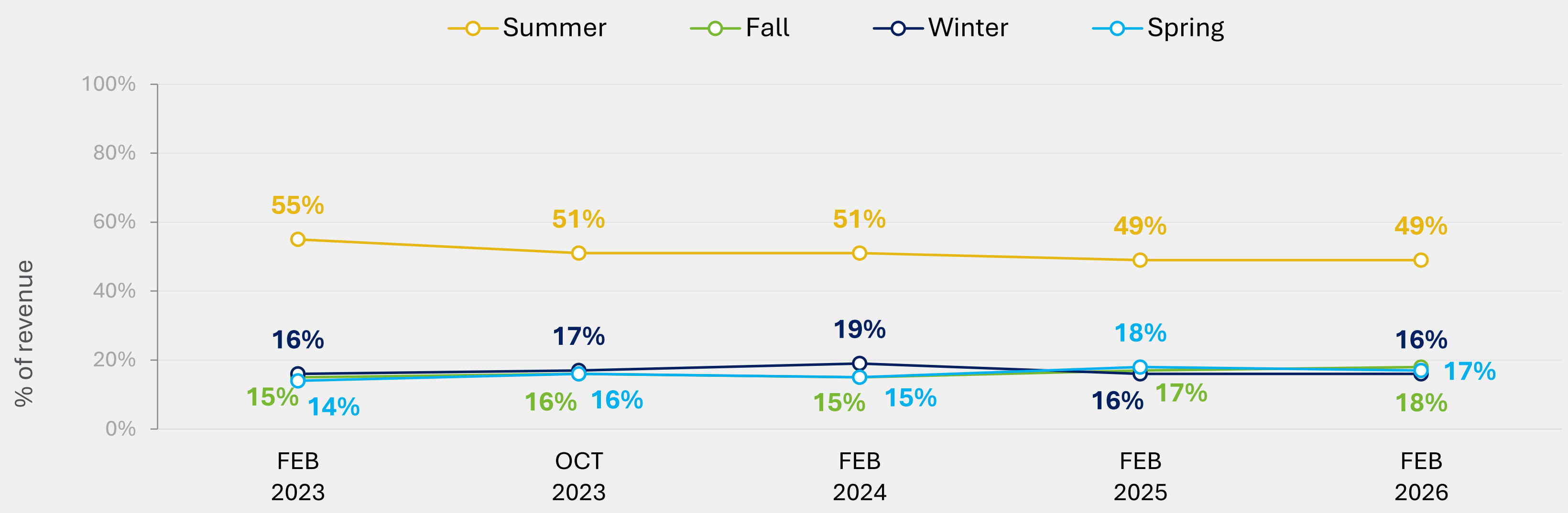
	FEB 2026	FEB 2025 (n=117)	FEB 2024 (n=131)	OCT 2023 (n=123)	FEB 2023 (n=173)
5 years or less	14%	23%	19%	20%	13%
6 to 10 years	14%	9%	12%	11%	15%
Over 10 years	72%	68%	69%	70%	72%
Median Time In Business	**20 Years**	**18 years**	**20 years**	**20 years**	**25 years**

Q15. How long has your business been in operation?
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Tourism Revenue Generated by Season

The proportion of tourism revenue generated remains stable across all seasons, though there's been a slight downward trend in summer revenue since Feb 2023.

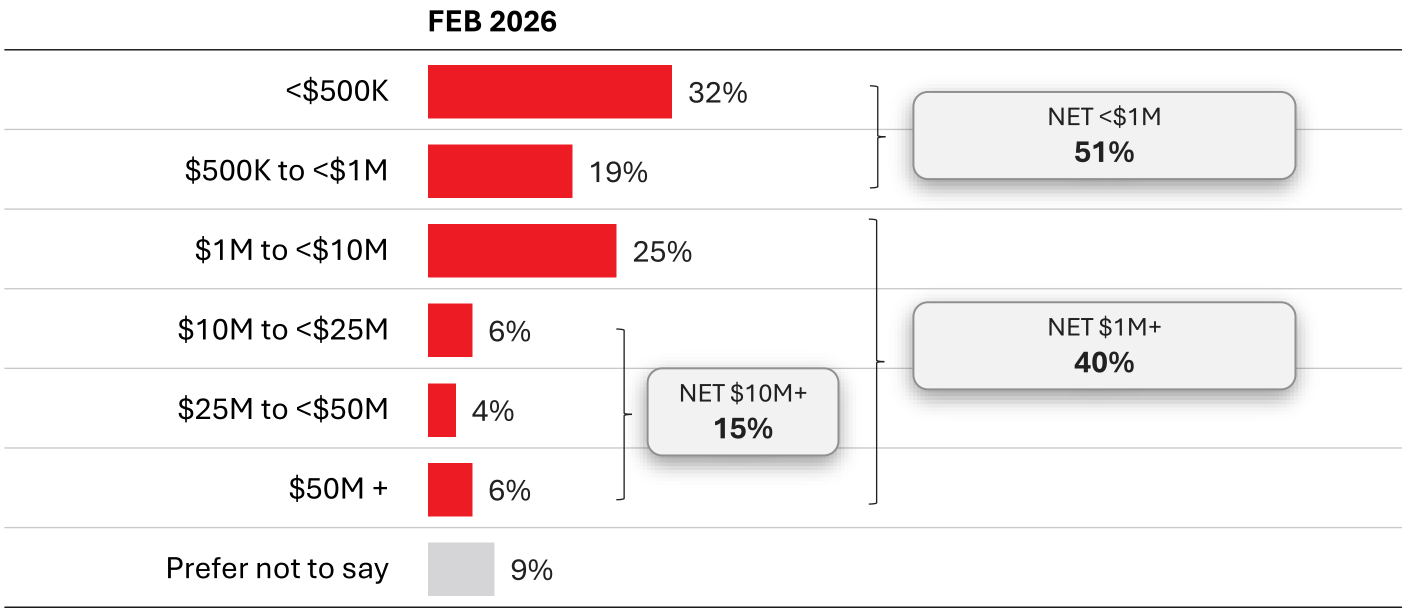


Q19. What percentage of your tourism related revenue is generated in each of the four seasons? (must equal 100%)
Base: All respondents, Feb 2023 (n=173); Oct 2023 (n=123); Feb 2024 (n=131); Feb 2025 (n=117); Feb 2026 (n=137)

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Annual Revenue

About half of Alberta tourism organizations report annual revenue under $1M, including nearly one-third under $500K.



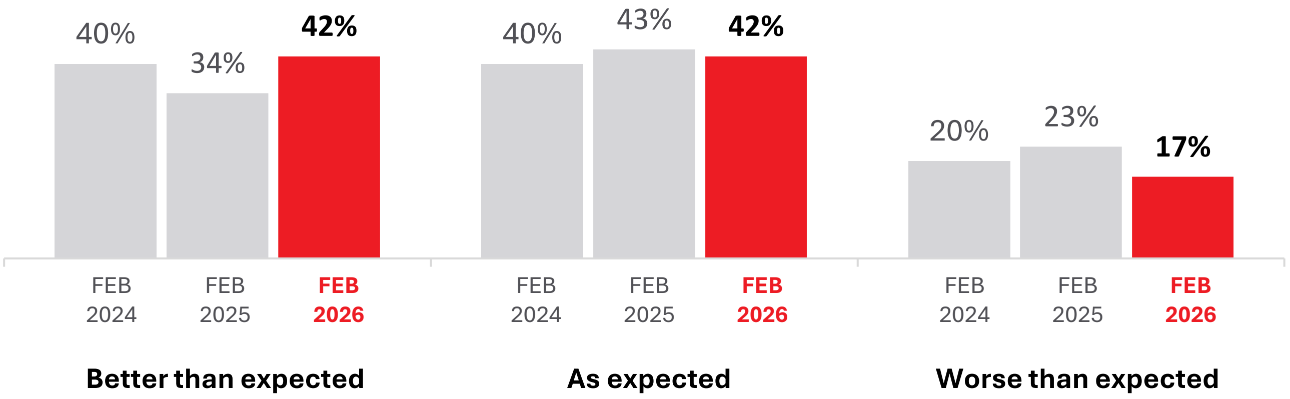
Most businesses reporting revenue over $10M are located in the Canadian Rockies (33%) and Calgary area (22%).

Q4. What is your organization's approximate annual revenue?
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)
Note: Question added Feb 2026.

2025 At a Glance

Business Performance in Past Year

Overall, over 8-in-10 businesses performed better than, or as expected, during 2025 – an uptick from last year with directionally more performing better than expected.



Businesses with revenue less than $500K are more likely to report worse than expected business performance (30% vs. 11% $500K+).

N1. Overall, how did your business perform for the entirety of 2025?
Base: All respondents, Feb 2024 (n=131); Feb 2025 (n=117); Feb 2026 (n=137)

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Forward Looking

Outlook for This Year Overall: Tracking

Over two-thirds of tourism operators are optimistic about their overall outlook for 2026. The directional increase in those feeling positive is driven by growth in those who are “somewhat optimistic” and a decline in uncertainty, suggesting cautious but strengthening confidence in the year ahead.

	FEB 2026	FEB 2025 (n=117)	FEB 2024 (n=131)	OCT 2023 (n=123)	FEB 2023 (n=173)
NET OPTIMISTIC	**67%**	**60%**	**65%**	**60%**	**72%**
Optimistic	20%	22%	27%	20%	23%
Somewhat Optimistic	47%	38%	37%	40%	49%
NET UNCERTAIN	**32%**	**38%**	**34%**	**39%**	**27%**
Somewhat Uncertain	28%	28%	28%	33%	22%
Very Uncertain	4%	10%	6%	6%	5%
Unsure	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%

Q13. Based on current economic and geopolitical conditions, what is your organization’s outlook for 2026 overall?
Base: All respondents, Feb 2023 (n=173); Oct 2023 (n=123); Feb 2024 (n=131); Feb 2025 (n=117); Feb 2026 (n=137)

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Revenue Forecast: Tracking

Estimated change in revenue from 2025 to 2026

		FEB 2025 (n=117)
-10% or more	9%	4%
-9% to -5%	3%	2%
-4% to 0%	5%	5%
1 to 5%	24%	22%
6% to 10%	22%	24%
11% to 15%	9%	15%
16% to 20%	8%	6%
21% to 30%	4%	5%
31% to 40%	1%	3%
41% to 50%	0%	1%
51% or more	1%	3%
Not applicable	1%	1%
Unsure	13%	8%

NET 1% to 10%
46%

NET 11% to 20%
17%

Forecasts are more cautious in 2026 but remain positive, with close to 7-in-10 predicting an increase in their 2026 revenue compared to 2025 (down from 80% last year).

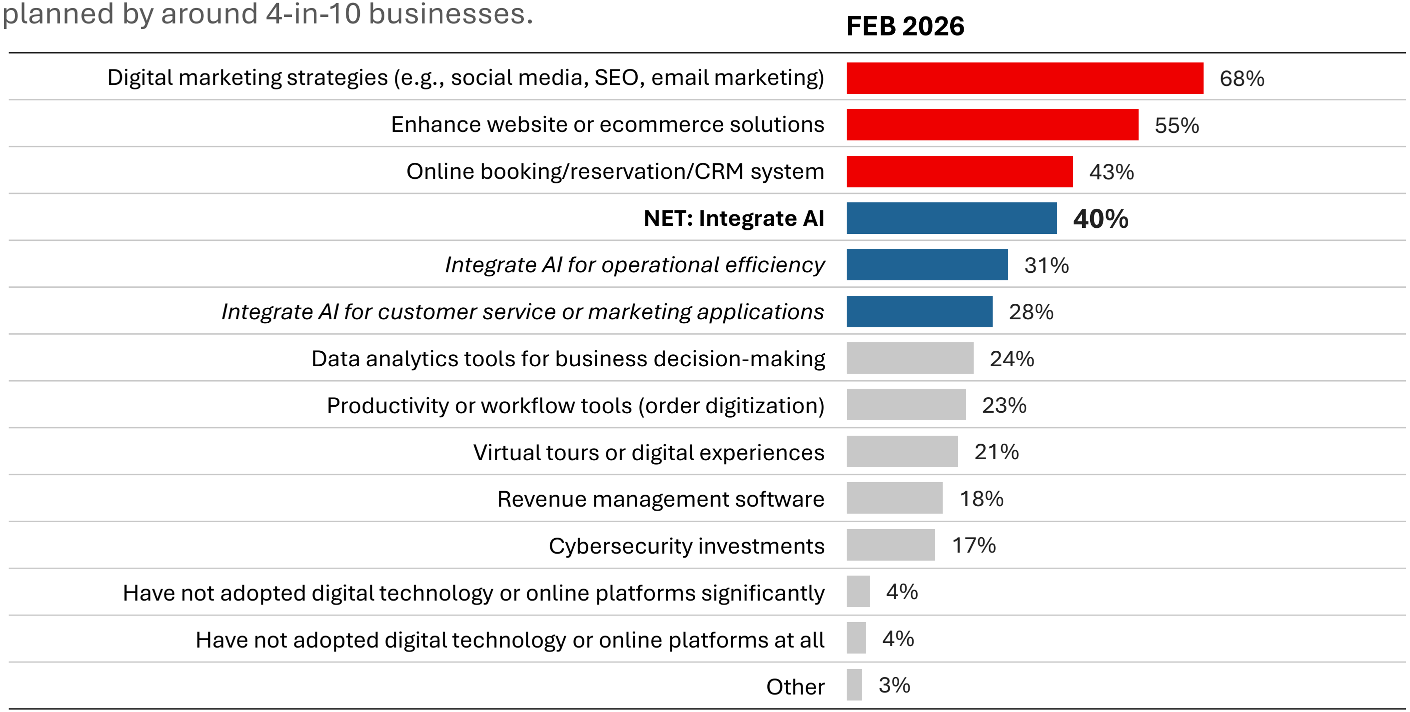
Similar to last year, the largest share (46%) of businesses are forecasting a 1-10% increase, with fewer anticipating an 11%-20% increase (17%).

Q14A. At this moment, please forecast estimated change in revenues for your organization for 2026.
Base: All respondents (n=137)
* Numbers in chart may not add up due to rounding.

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

Intended Investment in Digital or Technology Improvements: Feb 2026

In 2026, close to 7-in-10 Alberta businesses intend to invest in digital marketing strategies, and over half plan to enhance their website or ecommerce solutions. Improvements to online booking, reservation or CRM systems, as well as AI integration are planned by around 4-in-10 businesses.



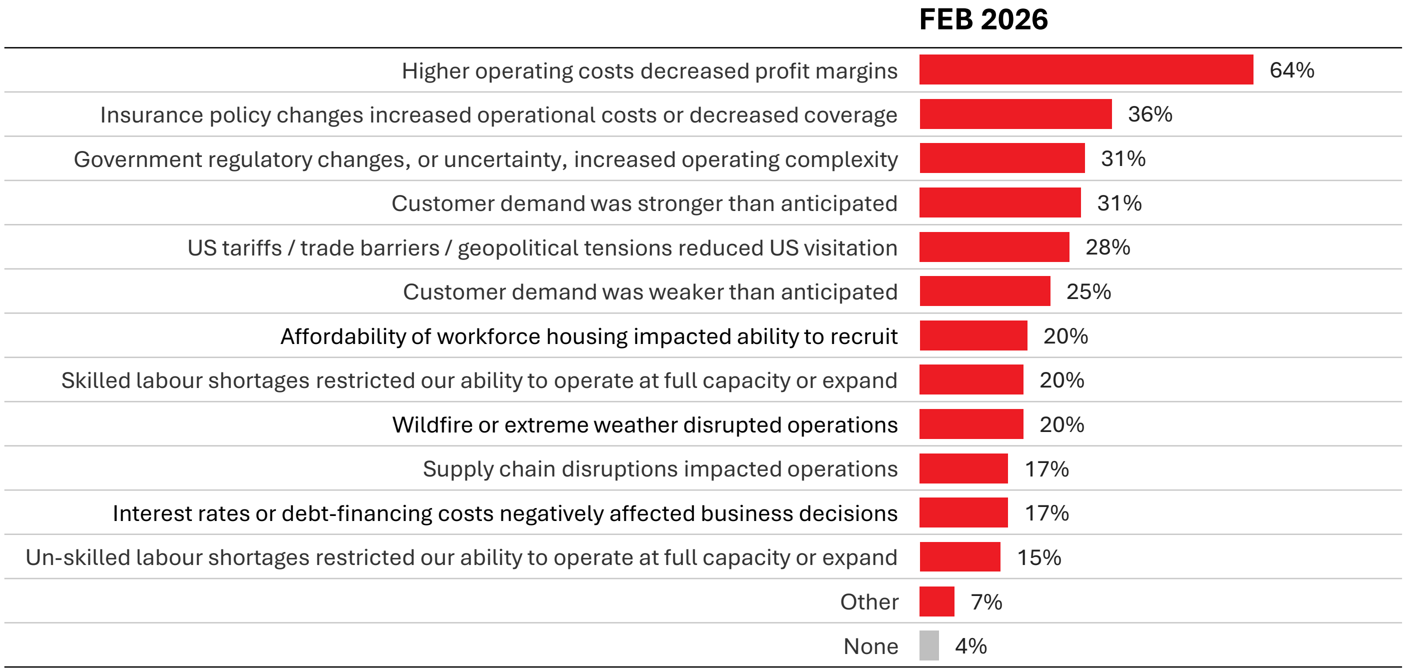
Operators in the Canadian Rockies are most likely to be integrating AI (51% vs. 20% Alberta Central and 23% in each of Alberta South and Edmonton and area).

Q16. Which **digital or technology improvements** do you intend to invest in for 2026?
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Business Impact

Operating Realities Experienced: Feb 2026

Almost two-thirds of Alberta tourism organizations experienced higher operating costs that reduced profit margins in 2025, underscoring a high-cost environment and sustained pressure on profitability. Insurance policy changes, regulatory complexity, and stronger-than-anticipated demand were the next most common experiences.



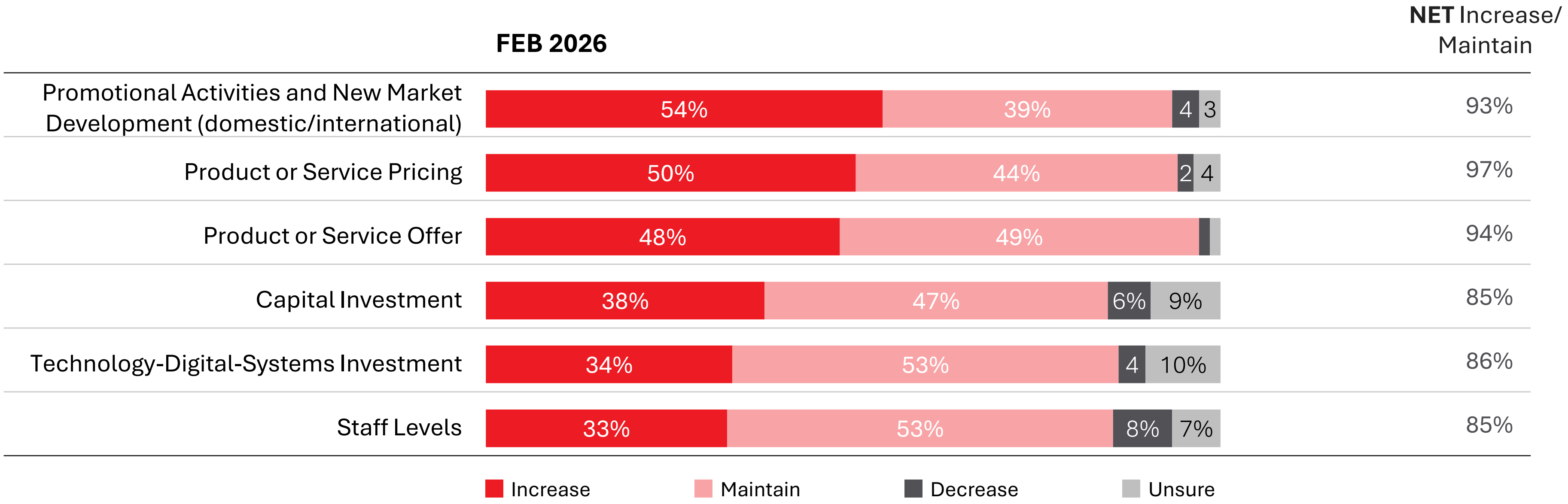
Businesses with revenues of **$1M+** are **more likely** to report experiencing the following:

- **US tariffs/trade barriers** (40% vs. 23% <$1M)
- **Wildfire or extreme weather disruptions** (33% vs. 11%)
- **Affordability of workforce housing** (31% vs. 14%)
- **Supply chain disruptions** (29% vs. 9%).

Q1. What are the operating realities you believe your organization experienced during the past year (2025)?
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Business Investment and Operational Capacity Intentions: Feb 2026

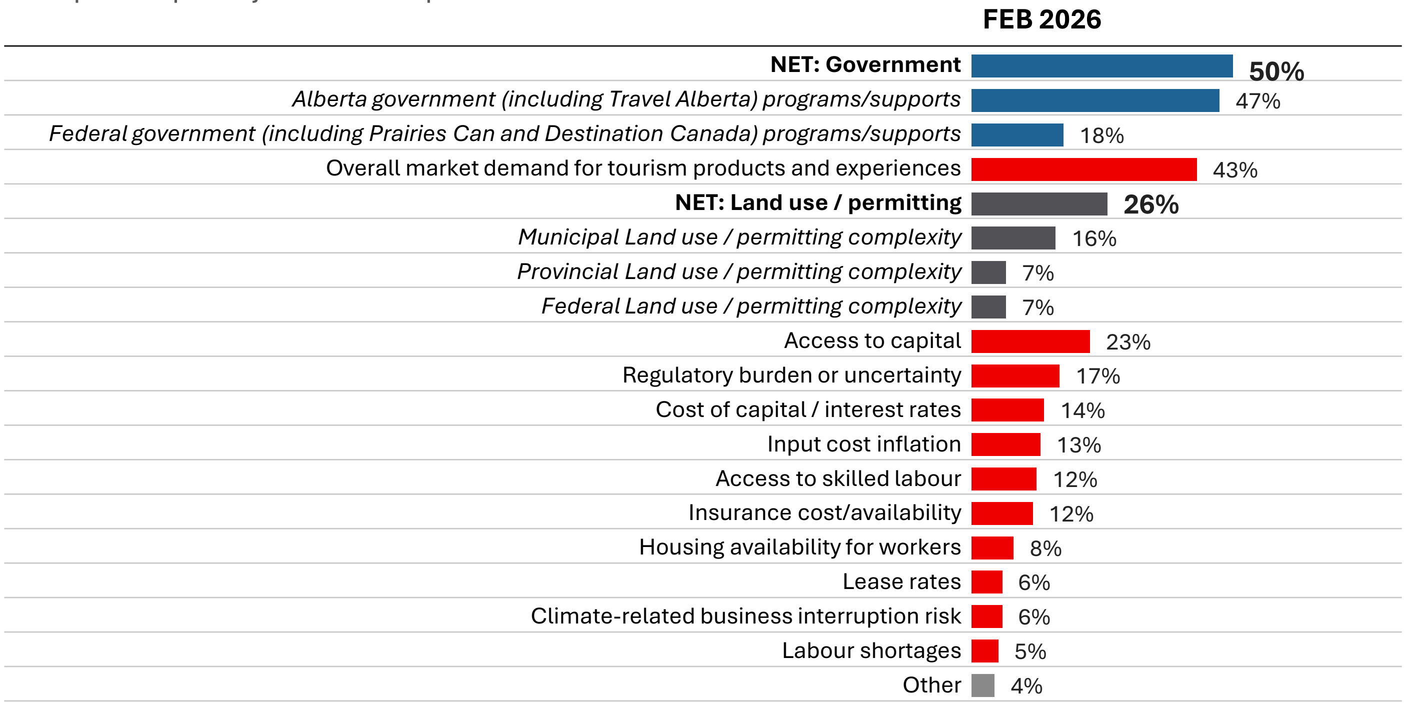
Businesses are primarily looking to increase and maintain operational capacity in 2026, with over 9-in-10 businesses intending to increase or maintain product/service pricing, offerings, and promotional and marketing activities.



Q10 . What are your business investment and operational capacity intentions for 2026?
Note: Question added Feb 2026
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Factors Likely to Influence Reinvesting or Expanding in Alberta: Feb 2026

The top factors influencing reinvestment or expansion by Alberta businesses are provincial, and to a lesser extent federal, government programs/supports, with half of operators noting this, followed by overall market demand and-land use and permitting factors. Access to capital impacts just under a quarter of businesses.



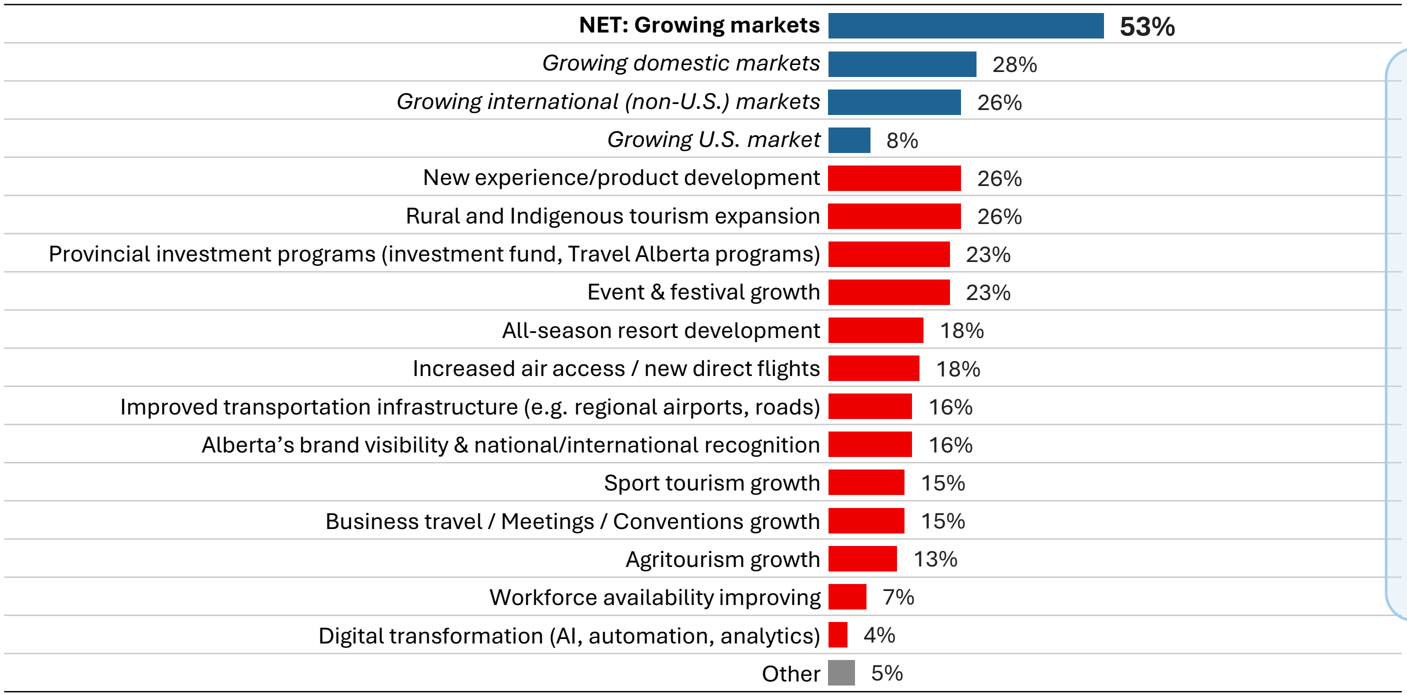
Federal Land use/ permitting complexity is most likely to influence business decisions for operators in the Canadian Rockies (18%) as well as businesses with $1M+ in revenue (11% vs. 1% <$1M)

Q11. Which three factors are most likely to influence your decision to reinvest or expand in Alberta?
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Opportunities for Alberta Tourism Sector: Feb 2026

Growing markets overall, particularly domestic and non-U.S., stands out as the main opportunity for the tourism sector (53%). New experience/product development and rural and Indigenous tourism expansion follow at just over one-quarter each.

FEB 2026



Higher revenue businesses see more opportunity in growing international markets (38% vs. 17% <$1M) and increased air access (27% vs. 10%).

Lower revenue businesses focus more on rural and Indigenous tourism expansion (33% vs. 11% $1M+) and agritourism (20% vs. 7%).

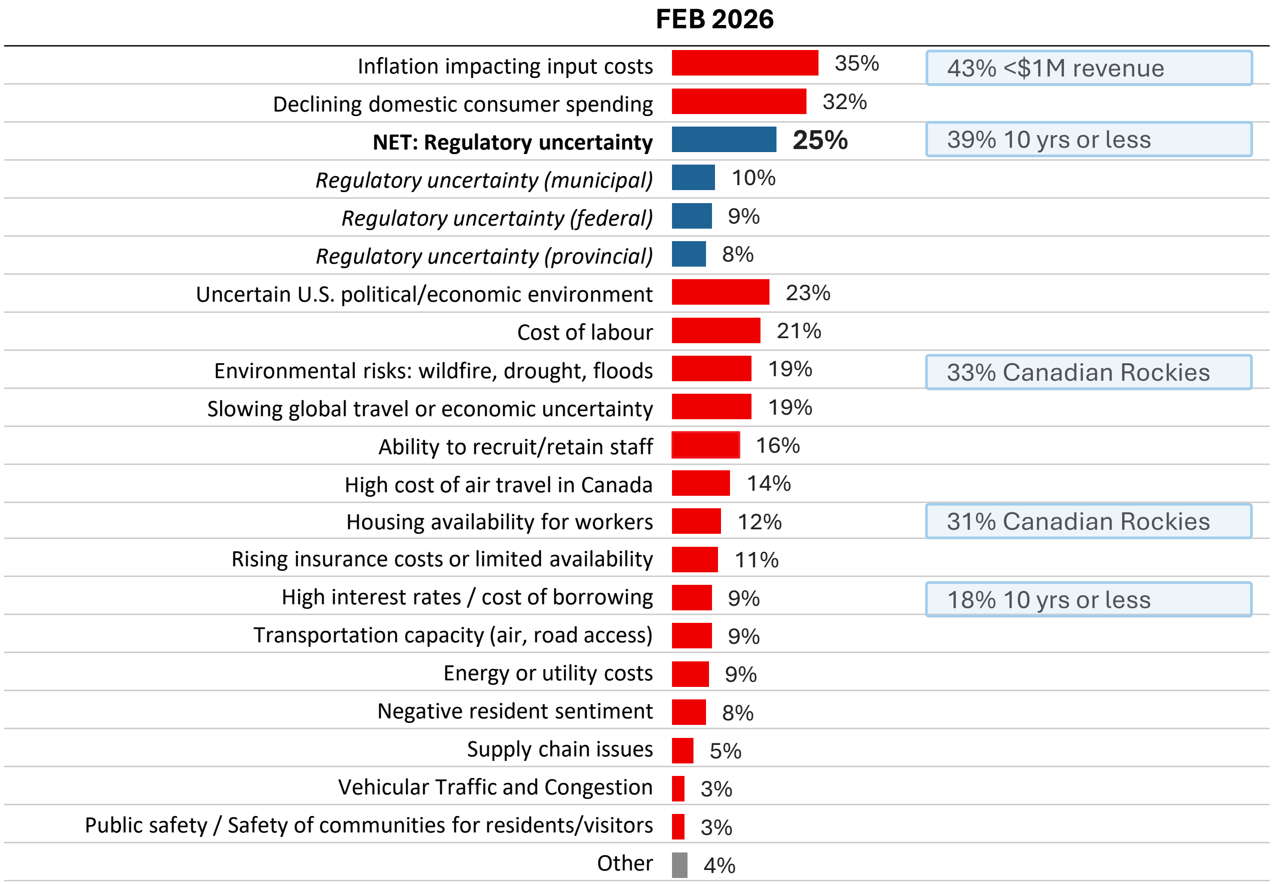
Growing the U.S. market is highest for Canadian Rockies operators (18%).

Q12. What do you see as the top 3 opportunities for Alberta's tourism sector?
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Risks and Challenges: Feb 2026

The top three risks or challenges facing Alberta tourism businesses in 2026 are inflation impacts on input costs (35%), declining domestic consumer spending (32%), and regulatory uncertainty (25%).

The uncertain U.S. political/ economic environment is a concern for just under a quarter of operators surveyed and more of a challenge for those in Calgary and area, Canadian Rockies, and Alberta South.

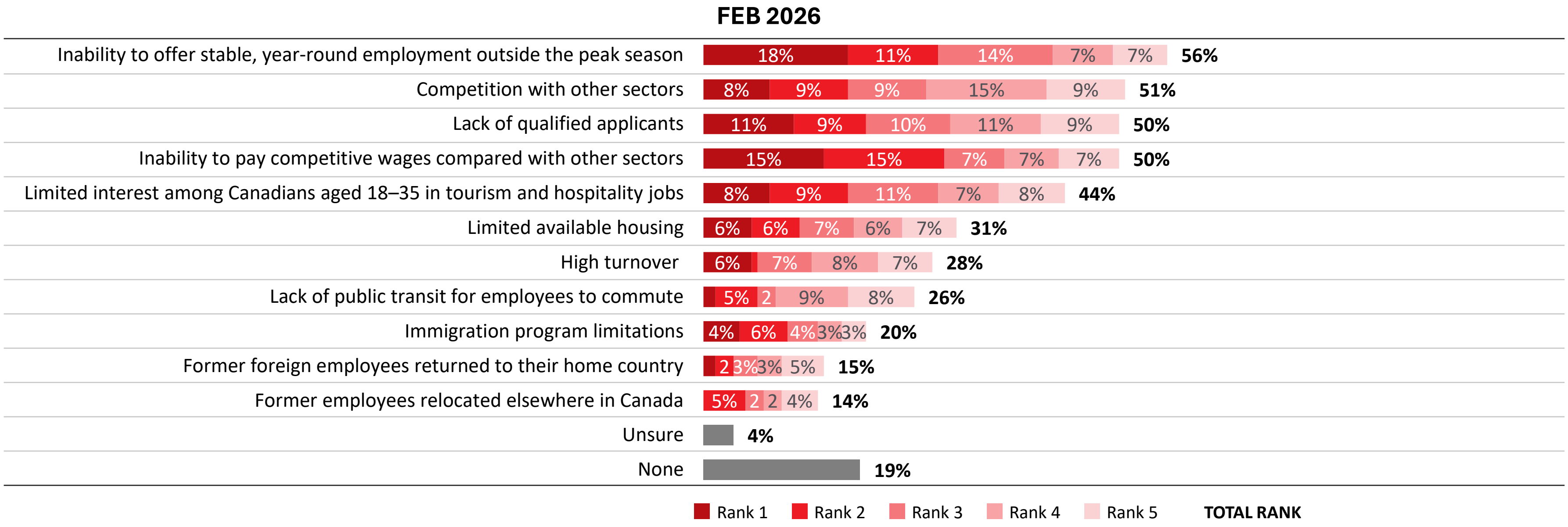


Q13B. What are the top 3 risks or challenges facing your business in 2026?
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Labour Force

Recruitment and Retention Challenges: Feb 2026

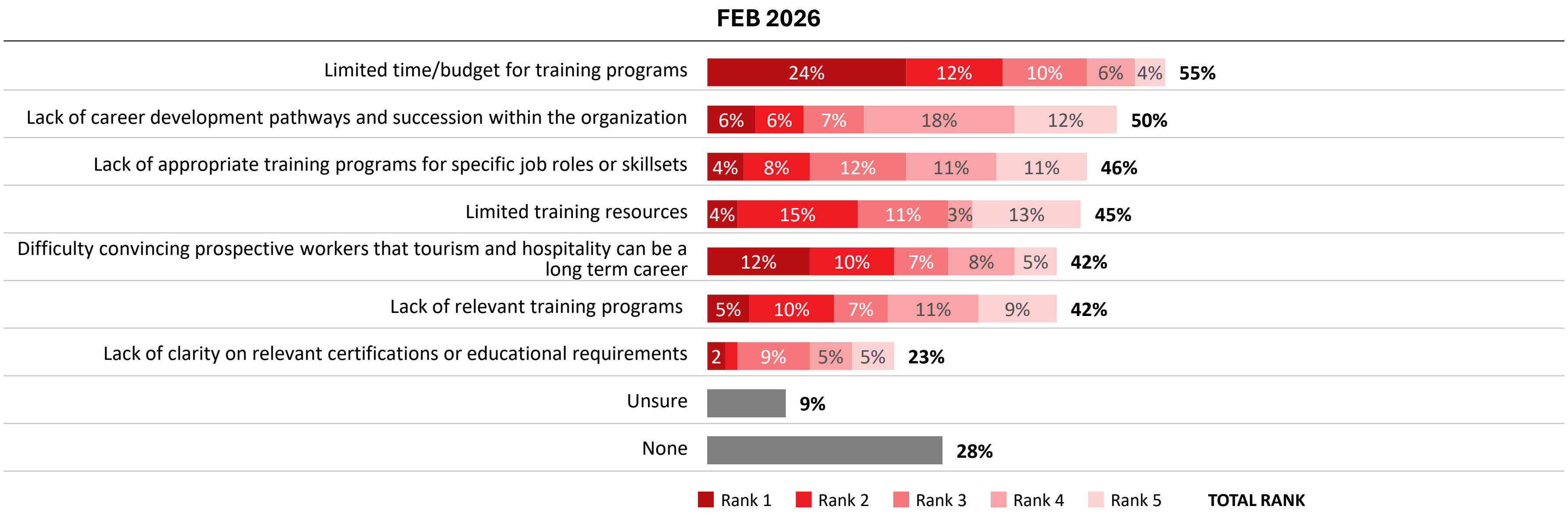
Half or more of Alberta tourism operators identify structural workforce challenges in retaining and recruiting employees. In particular, the inability to offer stable, year-round employment, competition from other sectors, difficulty finding qualified applicants, and challenges paying competitive wages underscore persistent labour market pressures.



Q14B. What were your 5 biggest **recruitment and retention** challenges you faced in 2025 to maintain your employee workforce? Rank your top 5 with 1 being the biggest challenge.
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Career Awareness, Training & Skills Development Challenges: Feb 2026

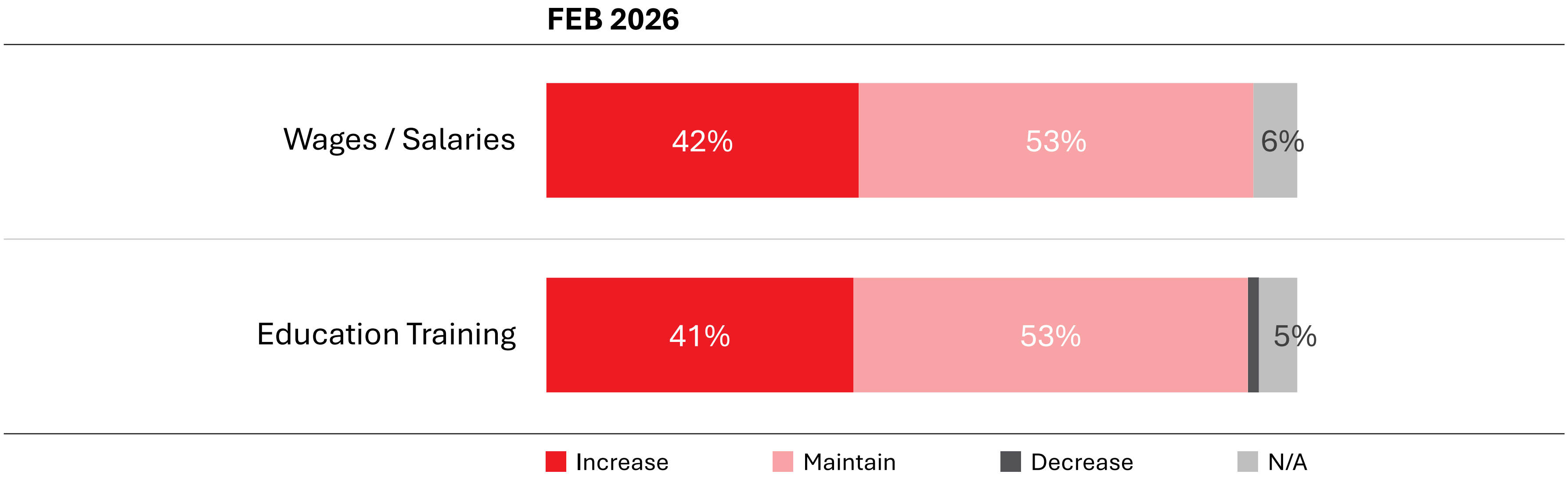
Limited time and budget for training programs emerges as the most significant barrier, with nearly a quarter ranking it as their #1 challenge (double that of the next highest #1 challenge, difficulty convincing workers of long-term career potential). Lack of career development pathways along with gaps in training programs and resources, round out the top 4 challenges.



Q14C. What were your 5 biggest **career awareness, training & skills development challenges** you faced in 2025 to maintain your employee workforce? Rank your top 5 with 1 being the biggest challenge.
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

Workforce Development and Retention Actions: Feb 2026

The majority of businesses will either increase or maintain wages/salaries and education training in 2026. Over 2-in-5 Alberta businesses intend to increase both, reinforcing a continued focus on workforce development and retention.



Q15B. What actions will your organization take in 2026 on workforce development and retention?
Note: Question added Feb 2026.
Base: All respondents, Feb 2026 (n=137)

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