

Member Opinions Mixed on State of Consumers Today

This week's special question asked AAIL members how they thought the average consumer is faring relative to a year ago. About one-third (32%) of all respondents said the average consumer is doing better. An additional 12% said the average consumer is doing somewhat or slightly better. The ongoing improvement within the job market was the most common reason given as to why. Lower fuel prices were a secondary reason, and were cited by the majority of all respondents. Slightly more than 20% of respondents said the average consumer is faring about the same as last year, with several citing low wage growth as a headwind. More than 21% of respondents think the average consumer is worse off or is otherwise struggling, primarily because of wage increases not keeping up with inflation in goods and services other than fuel.

Here is a sampling of the responses:

- "Better. Gas prices are down and real wages are up from a year ago, resulting in improved consumer confidence."
- "Better. Wages are improving and the cost of living is the same or better, mostly from lower gasoline prices."
- "I think slightly less well than before. Gas prices are down, but food costs seem higher."
- "I would say generally better. It seems like retail and dining establishments are busy."
- "Not as well. Food prices have increased and salaries have not kept up."
- "No different as wages have stagnated."