

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cook County Bureau of Economic Development and the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) collaborated to conduct a phone survey of the 5,000+ manufacturing firms located in suburban Cook County – to identify the relative urgency of key business drivers for manufacturers to recover and rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic. **More than 1,000 firms responded to the 10-question survey.**

The primary survey goals were to provide immediate support for requested urgent issues, and to identify policy actions to support a strong manufacturing rebound from the pandemic. To achieve these goals, the survey provided insight into how manufacturers have been affected, what areas they prioritize as well as the relative importance of key drivers of manufacturing success.

The survey results provide a deeper understanding of the varying needs of these manufacturers. With respect to the key drivers, we see a hierarchy of business needs based on size. Unsurprisingly, all manufacturers have similar needs in topics such as to create market growth opportunities, lead their organization toward high performance, drive productivity and efficiency in their processes, and improve safety, hygiene, and sanitation. There are pronounced differences when accounting for size of firms. The location in the county or type of manufacturing mattered little.

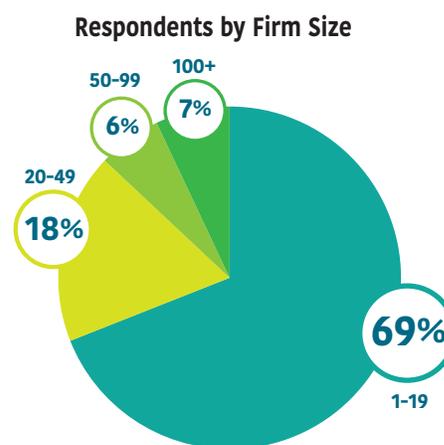
The smaller firms (1-19 employees) focused significantly on market growth and as manufacturer size increases, they require blended solutions. Solution sets that match needs with size provide comprehensive and deeper support can strengthen their competitive position and improve job quality.

This survey and report serve as a beginning to regularly gain insights into manufacturer needs and create policy solutions, to strengthen manufacturing in one of the largest manufacturing counties in the nation.

Smaller firms (under 20 employees) make up the bulk of the manufacturers and the clear priority for these sized firms is **‘Create growth opportunities.’**

Manufacturers with less than 20 employees represent nearly 70% of the county’s manufacturers. Policies which effectively support their market growth provide a foundation for their future growth.

Mid-sized firms (20-49 employees) and especially **Larger-sized firms** (50 to 99 and 100+ employees) have a relatively wide range of priorities, suggesting a number of constraints they see in growing their business to the next level.



The survey provides the following policy recommendations for guidance:

- #1 Segment policy solutions to address differences by company size
- #2 Promote access to global and local market access
- #3 Facilitate global competitiveness through productivity and technology adoption
- #4 Promote connections among firms and workforce solution providers
- #5 Ease of doing business and addressing structural costs
- #6 Establish an ongoing method to gain insights from county manufacturers

THE Cook County MANUFACTURING ECONOMY

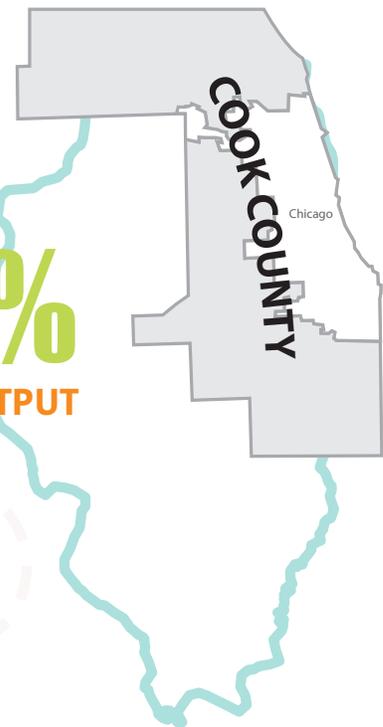
Today, the U.S. is the **second-largest manufacturing nation**, behind China. Manufacturing represents **10-12% of Gross Domestic Product** and employment in the U.S., but it drives **35%** of productivity growth, **60%** of exports, and **70%** of R&D.

Making It In America: Revitalizing US Manufacturing
McKinsey & Company, November 2017

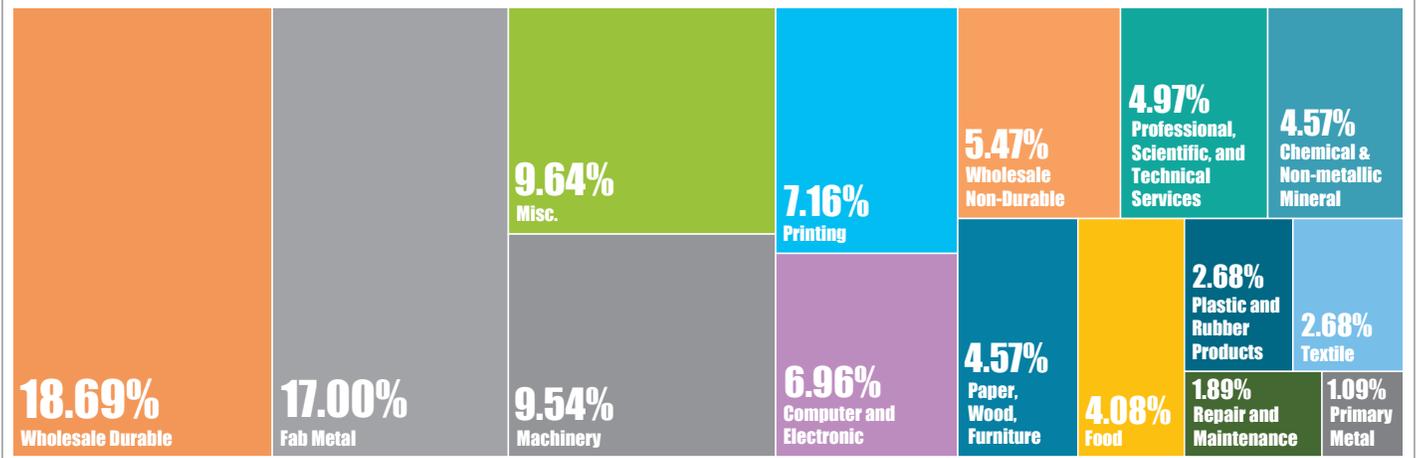
Manufacturing in Cook County

is an economic engine, driven not by a powerhouse of a few large multi-nationals, but a vast community of people who live and work in the Chicago region,

GENERATING MORE THAN 80% OF THE TOTAL MANUFACTURING OUTPUT OF THE ENTIRE STATE OF ILLINOIS.



INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS BY MANUFACTURING SECTOR

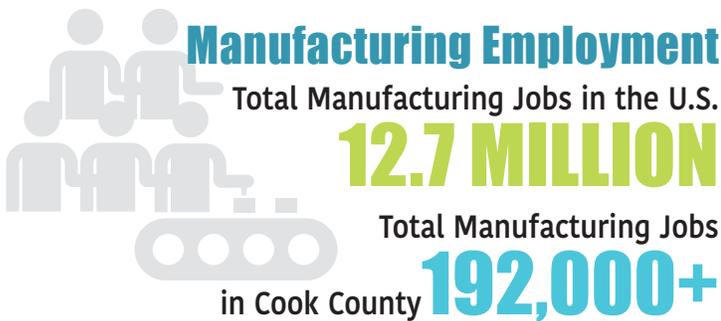


5,800+ MANUFACTURING FIRMS in Cook County

Manufacturers in suburban Cook County are, for the most part, small, locally owned firms operating in a wide variety of sectors ranging from food processing and packaging companies, metal fabrication for aerospace and defense industries, to firms making and supplying the components of industry, so vital to America's supply chain.

The Chicago region – and suburban Cook County – remains one of the largest metals manufacturing regions in the nation in terms of both employment and total output. The scale and concentration of this activity forms an entire supply chain within the region with firms specializing in numerous stages of the metals manufacturing process—from rolling and extrusion to fabrication and machinery manufacturing. Tube, sheet and bar steel is fabricated into components such as fasteners and containers, for a wide variety of products bound for the construction, automotive and machinery industries.

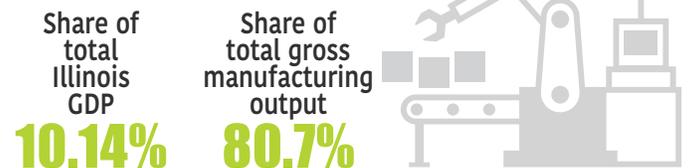
In the west suburban community of **ELK GROVE VILLAGE**, for example, more than **12,000 workers** are employed in over **400 manufacturing firms**, in what is billed as the largest industrial park in the United States.



Average Weekly Earnings in Manufacturing



Cook County Manufacturing Output (\$billions, 2019) \$87.5



According to the U.S. Census County Business Patterns, **67% of Cook County manufacturing firms have fewer than 20 employees** (U.S. Census Bureau) which aligns with the respondents to this survey. This survey closely mirrors the sector in terms of firm size.

FIRM SIZE BY EMPLOYMENT	Census	Survey Respondents
1-19 employees	67%	69%
20-49 employees	17%	18%
50-99 employees	8%	6%
100+ employees	8%	7%