

Regional Consumer Confidence Trend Analysis

August 2020

Background:

In collaboration with [Schmidt Market Research](#) and leveraging its [Pittsburgh Speaks™](#) community of 5,000 Southwestern PA residents, the Allegheny Conference has tracked consumer confidence since the beginning of the regional outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The data has been collected in periodic waves, initially bi-weekly and later every three weeks.

This report synthesizes residents' sentiments toward the overall economy as well as toward their own personal economic situation.

Key Takeaways:

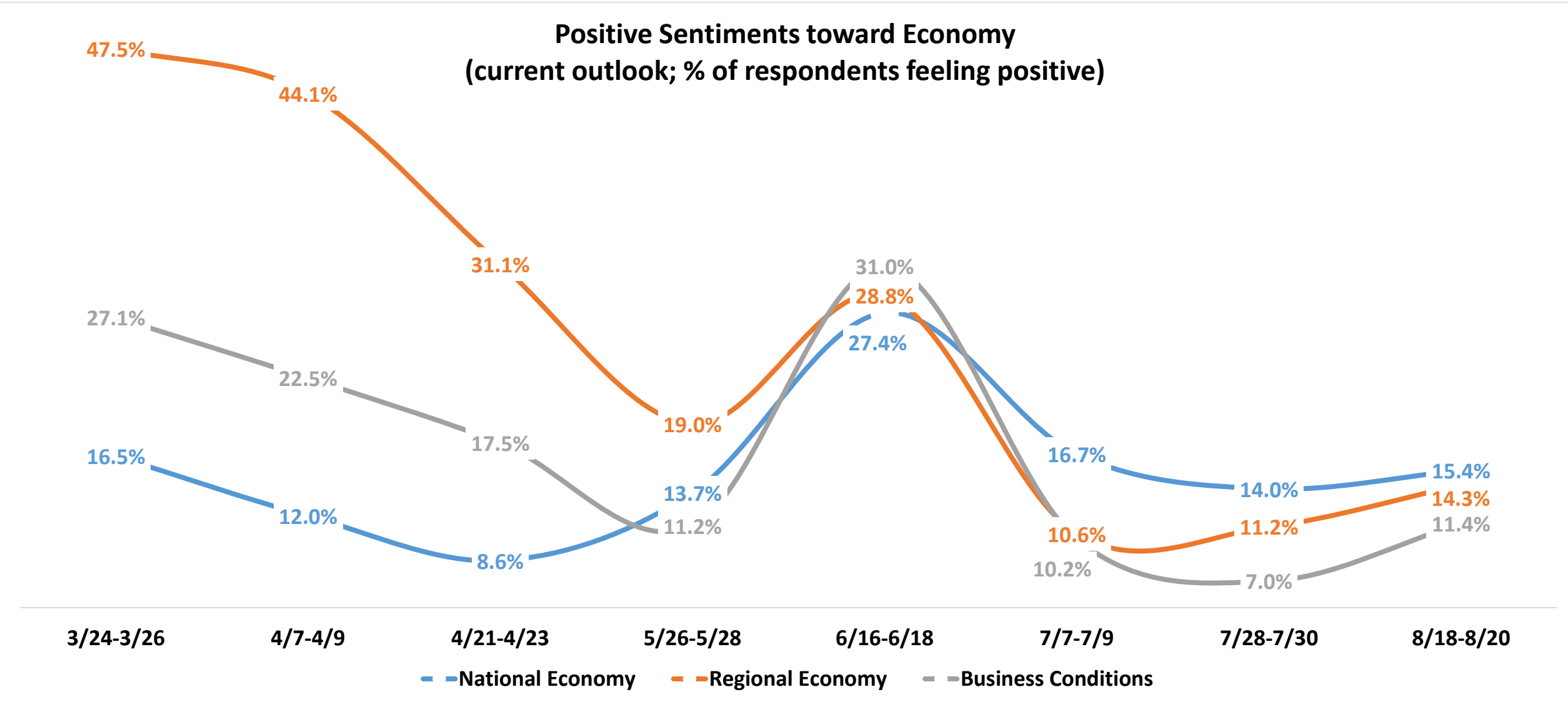
Consumer confidence in the CURRENT economy is very low. While the reopening of the regional economy brought about a much needed **boost of positive sentiments**, these sentiments **deteriorated quickly** in the post July 4th time period.

While also fairly low, consumer confidence toward **CURRENT personal economic situation** is holding higher than confidence toward the overall economy. Consumer confidence in one's own **employment situation is the lowest**; only **18% feel positive** about their continued **job prospects**.

All three measures of consumer confidence toward the **LONG-TERM economic outlook** has been fairly low since the beginning of the pandemic, especially in July.

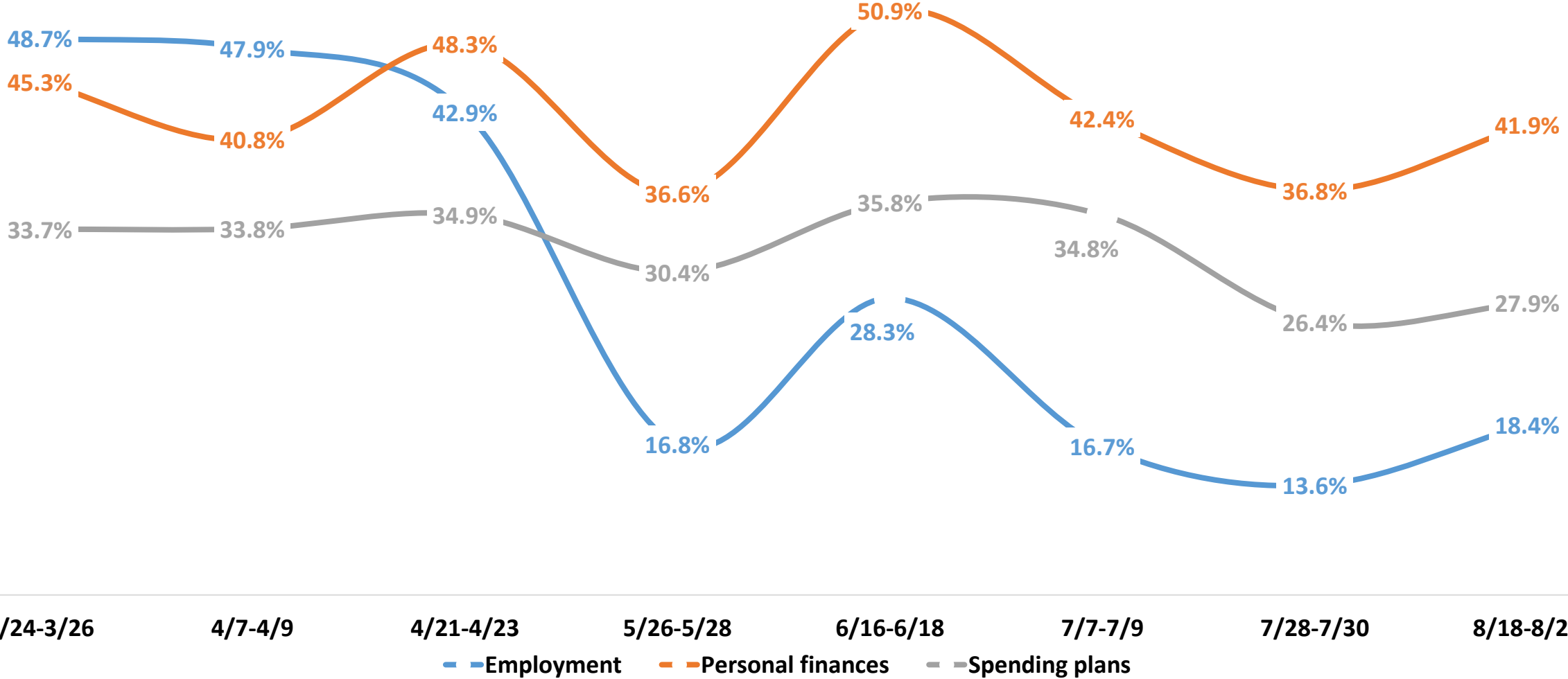
Positive sentiments toward the **LONG-TERM personal economic situation** are among the highest.

Consumer confidence in the CURRENT economy continues to be very low. While the reopening of the regional economy brought about a much needed boost of positive sentiments especially toward business conditions and the regional economy, these sentiments deteriorated quickly in the post July 4th time period. The latest wave suggests a moderate increase in positive sentiments.



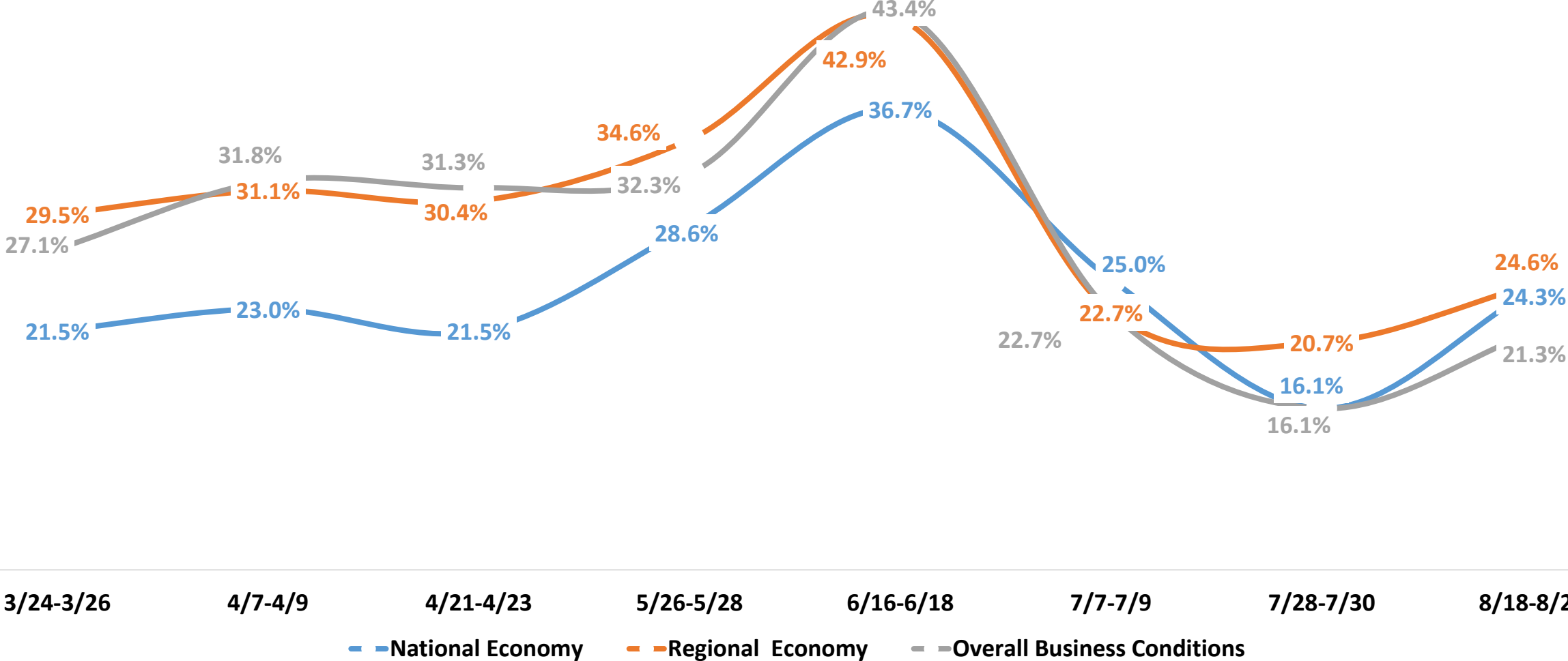
While also fairly low, consumer confidence toward **CURRENT personal economic situation** continues to hold higher than confidence toward the overall economy. Consumer confidence in one's own **employment situation is the lowest**, with only **18% of respondent feeling positive** about their continued **job prospects**, compared to 49% feeling the same around the end of March.

Positive Sentiments toward Personal Situation
 (current outlook; % of respondents feeling positive)



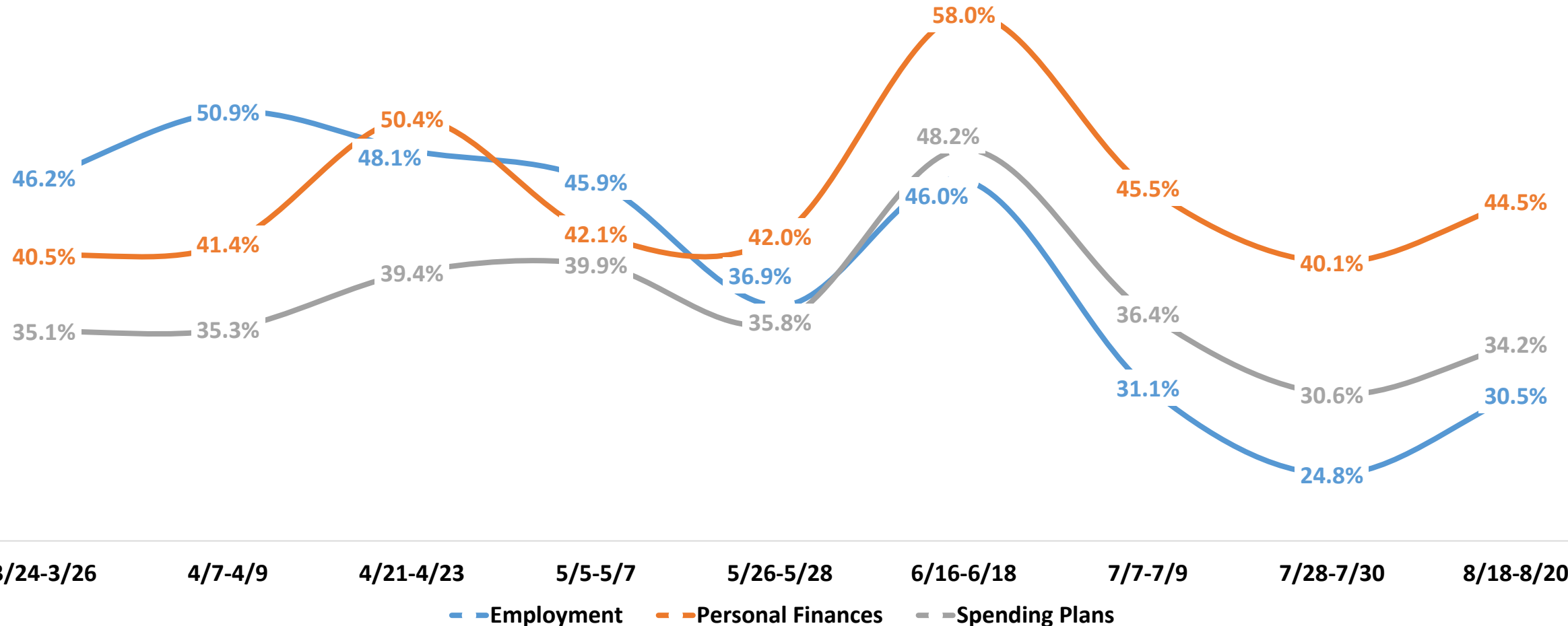
All three measures of consumer confidence toward the **LONG-TERM economic outlook** has been fairly **low** since the **beginning of the pandemic**. While positive sentiments improved significantly with the reopening of the economy in June they **declined sharply** with the **July surge of new cases**. The latest wave shows moderate improvement with confidence levels similar to those at the beginning of the pandemic.

Positive Sentiments toward FUTURE Economy
(6 months outlook; % of respondents feeling positive)



Positive sentiments toward the **LONG-TERM personal economic situation** are among the highest but also showing a bit more erratic trajectory especially in the earlier phases, likely reflecting some of the CARES Act interventions such as supplemental unemployment pay. July data showed a sharp and continued decline of positive sentiments toward all three aspects of personal economic situation, but August indicated a slight improvement.

**Positive Sentiments toward FUTURE Personal Situation
(6 months outlook; % of respondents feeling positive)**



Age Comparison of Sentiments toward Current Economy

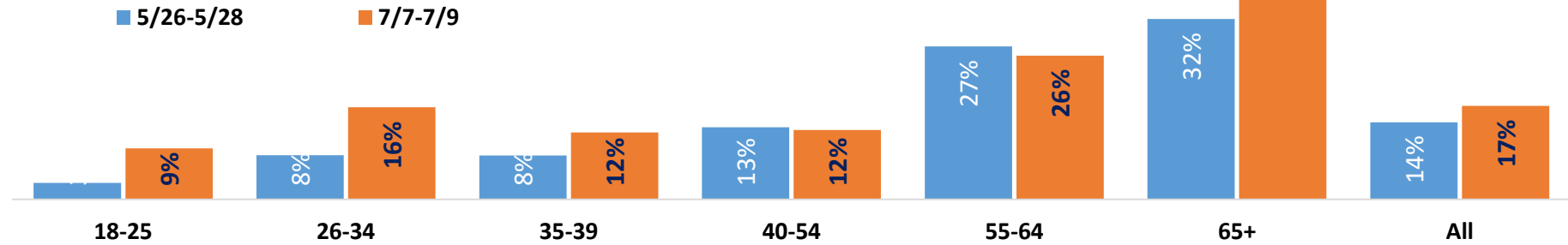
(May 26-28 & July 7-9):

Overall, younger residents tend to be less optimistic about the current economy than their older counterparts.

While the different groups had more similar levels of positive sentiments toward the current aspects of the regional economy, the younger groups were significantly less positive about the national economy.

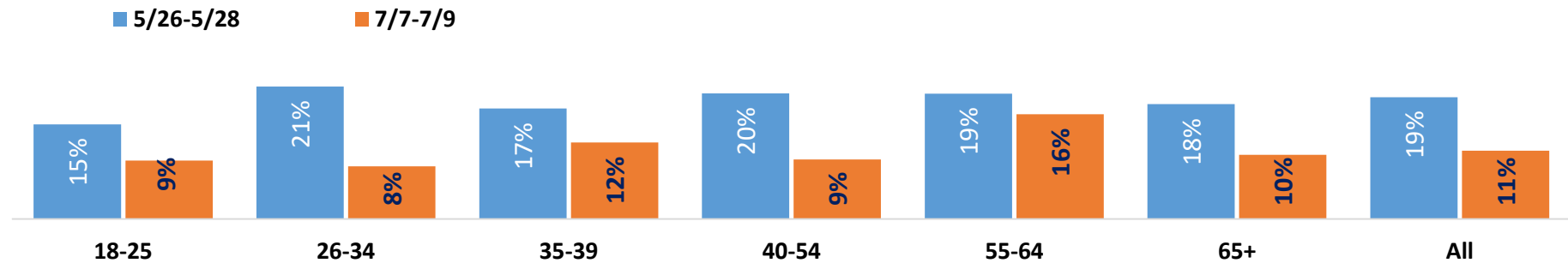
Positive Sentiments toward National Economy

(current outlook; % of respondents feeling positive, by age)



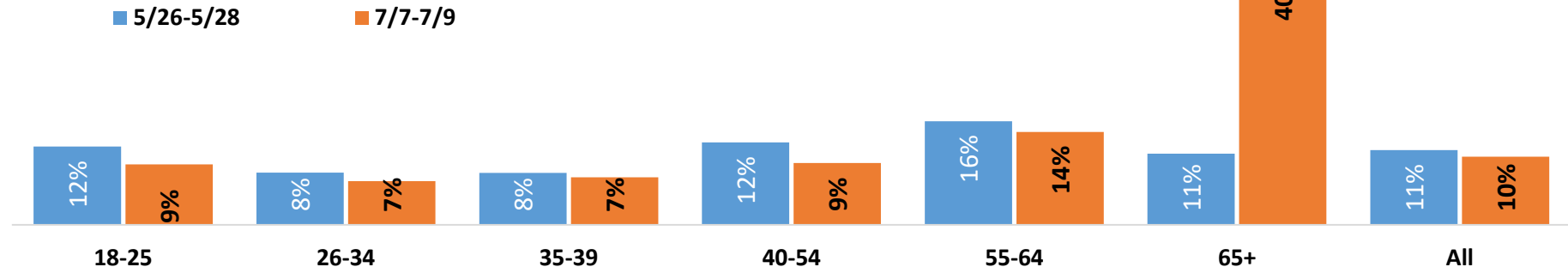
Positive Sentiments toward Regional Economy

(current outlook; % of respondents feeling positive, by age)



Positive Sentiments toward Business Conditions

(current outlook; % of respondents feeling positive, by age)



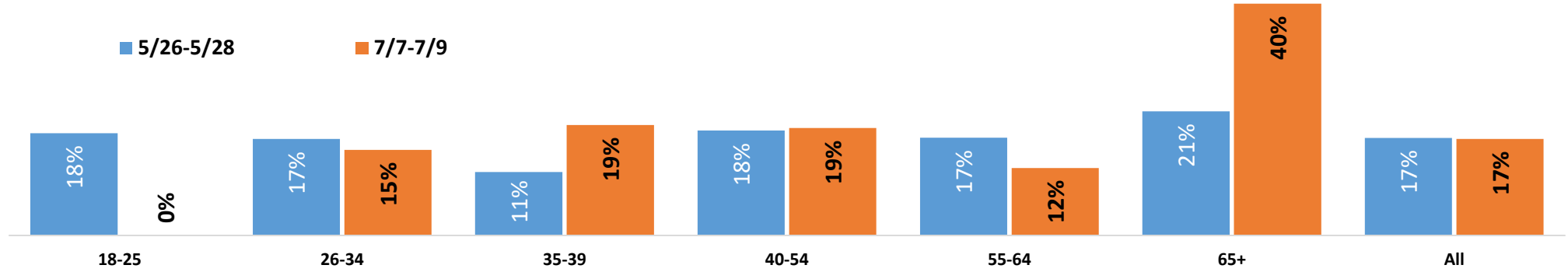
Age Comparison of Sentiments toward Personal Situation

(May 26-28 & July 7-9):

The **18-25** and **35-39** age groups tend to be the **least optimistic** about their current economic situations, **older cohorts** and the **26-34** age group are among the **most optimistic**.

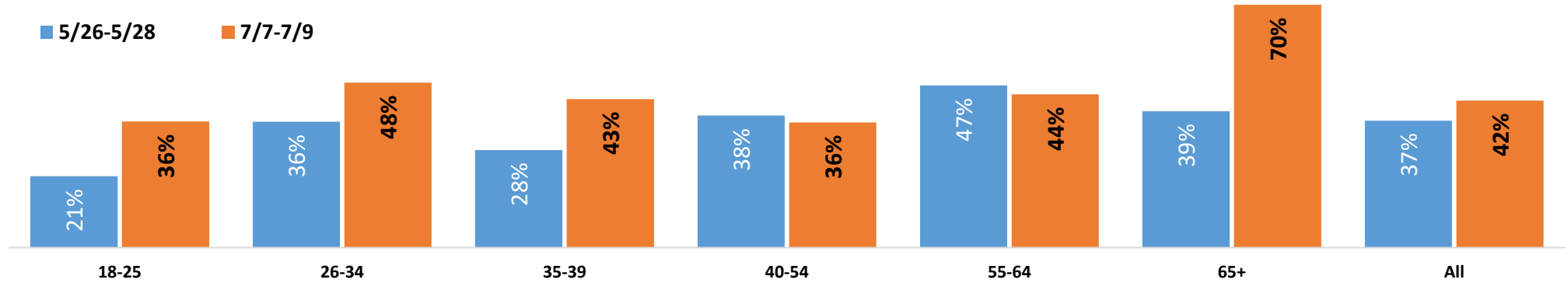
Positive Sentiments toward Future Employment

(current outlook; % of respondents feeling positive, by age)



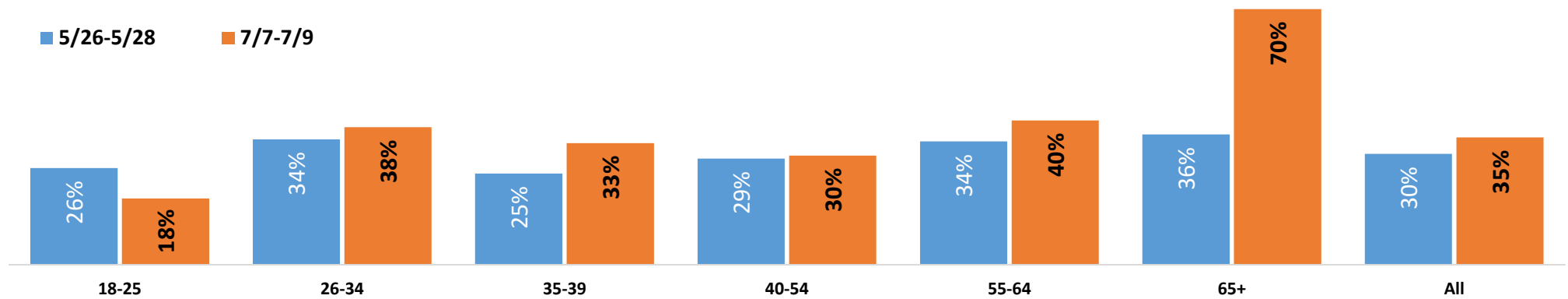
Positive Sentiments toward Personal Finances

(current outlook; % of respondents feeling positive, by age)



Positive Sentiments toward Spending Plans

(current outlook; % of respondents feeling positive, by age)





Report produced by the [Allegheny Conference on Community Development](#)

Data source: [Schmidt Market Research](#)

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