

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2021 / 2020 Comparative

Business Survey Report: COVID-19

July 5, 2021



Survey Timeframes:

May 4 – May 18, 2021

March 30 – April 3, 2020

Communities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge
Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott
Rideau Lakes | Westport

Prepared by:

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON

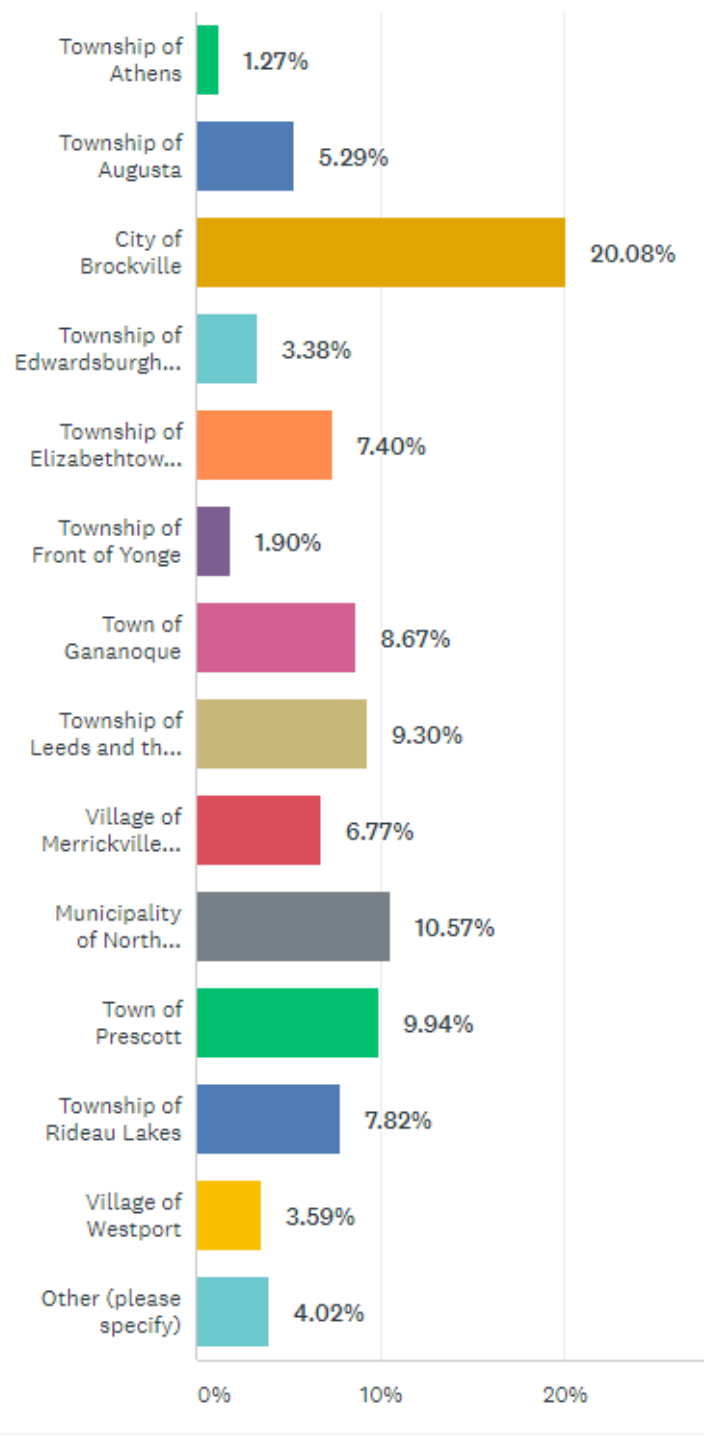
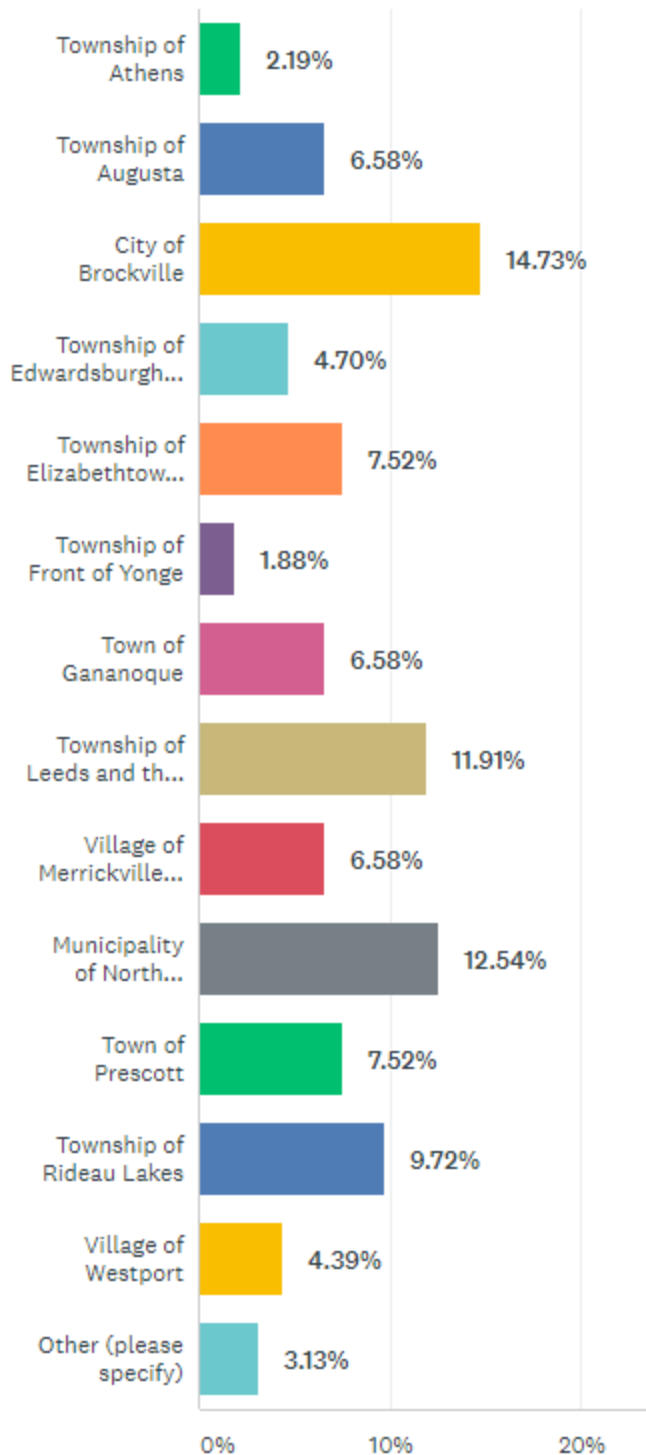
www.investleedsgrenville.com/covid19

#1 Where is your business located?

2021 - Answered: 319 Skipped: 0

2020 Answered: 473

Skipped: 1



Comment: Businesses from each municipality responded to the surveys. 2021 saw a reduction in the number of surveys completed, as survey fatigue is certainly a factor. Surveys were directly emailed to approximately 3,800 active business email addresses plus promoted by the Business Support Working Group.

#1 continued...

2021

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Township of Athens	2.19%	7
Township of Augusta	6.58%	21
City of Brockville	14.73%	47
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal	4.70%	15
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	7.52%	24
Township of Front of Yonge	1.88%	6
Town of Gananoque	6.58%	21
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	11.91%	38
Village of Merrickville-Wolford	6.58%	21
Municipality of North Grenville	12.54%	40
Town of Prescott	7.52%	24
Township of Rideau Lakes	9.72%	31
Village of Westport	4.39%	14
Other (please specify)	3.13%	10
TOTAL		319

2020

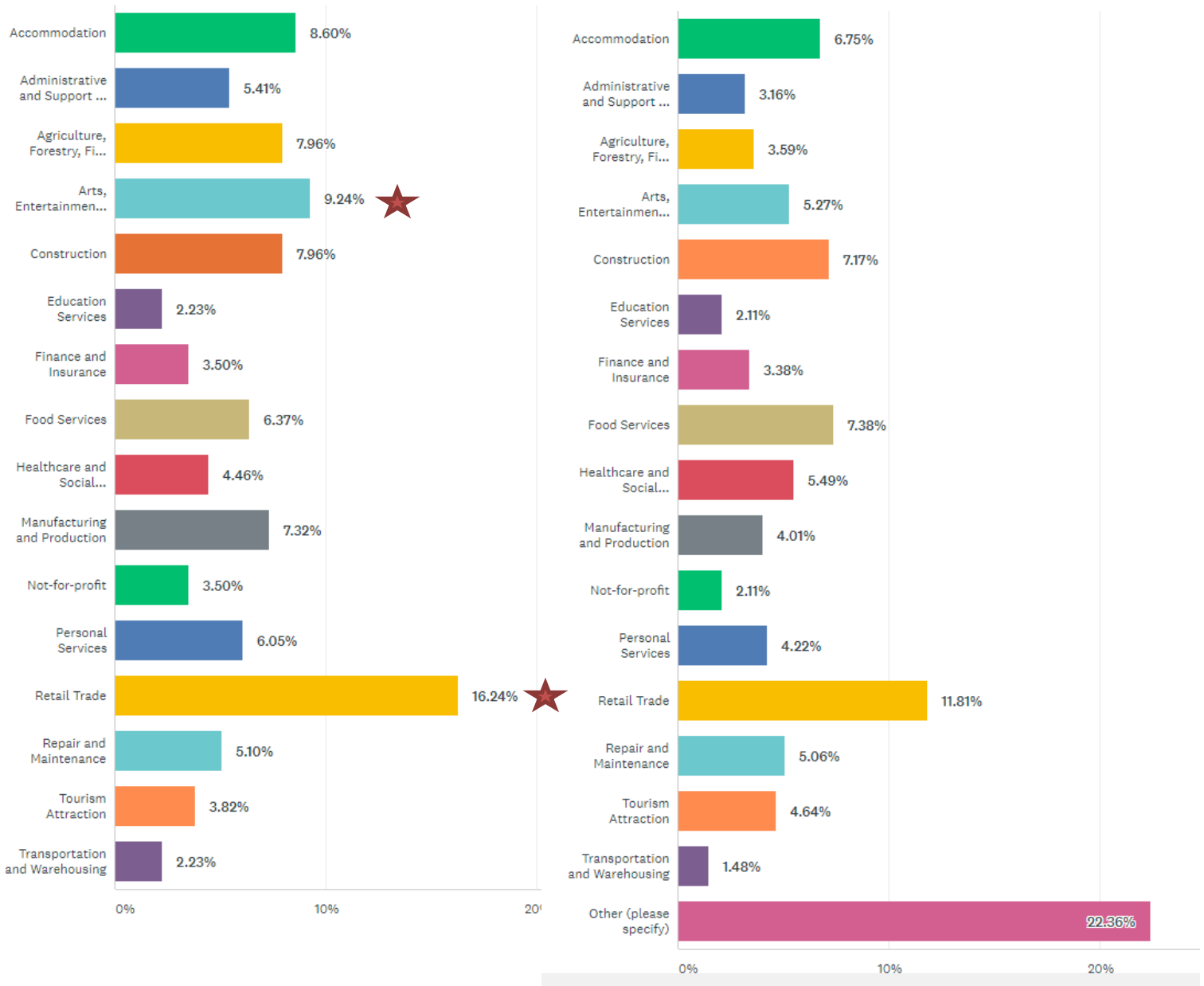
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Township of Athens	1.27%	6
▼ Township of Augusta	5.29%	25
▼ City of Brockville	20.08%	95
▼ Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal	3.38%	16
▼ Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	7.40%	35
▼ Township of Front of Yonge	1.90%	9
▼ Town of Gananoque	8.67%	41
▼ Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	9.30%	44
▼ Village of Merrickville-Wolford	6.77%	32
▼ Municipality of North Grenville	10.57%	50
▼ Town of Prescott	9.94%	47
▼ Township of Rideau Lakes	7.82%	37
▼ Village of Westport	3.59%	17
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 4.02%	19
TOTAL		473

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

• **2021** Answered: 314 Skipped: 5

2020 Answered: 474

Skipped: 0



Comment: Excellent sector representation in both years. In 2021, the highest number of responses was from the Retail sector followed by Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. In 2020, 'Other' was listed as a sector – it was identified businesses just chose this out of ease and noted their business type in the qualitative answers, which in most situations fit in the listed sectors provided.

#2 continued...

2021

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	8.60%	27
Administrative and Support - Business Services	5.41%	17
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	7.96%	25
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	9.24%	29
Construction	7.96%	25
Education Services	2.23%	7
Finance and Insurance	3.50%	11
Food Services	6.37%	20
Healthcare and Social Assistance	4.46%	14
Manufacturing and Production	7.32%	23
Not-for-profit	3.50%	11
Personal Services	6.05%	19
Retail Trade	16.24%	51
Repair and Maintenance	5.10%	16
Tourism Attraction	3.82%	12
Transportation and Warehousing	2.23%	7
TOTAL		314

2020

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Accommodation	6.75%	32
▼ Administrative and Support - Business Services	3.16%	15
▼ Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	3.59%	17
▼ Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5.27%	25
▼ Construction	7.17%	34
▼ Education Services	2.11%	10
▼ Finance and Insurance	3.38%	16
▼ Food Services	7.38%	35
▼ Healthcare and Social Assistance	5.49%	26
▼ Manufacturing and Production	4.01%	19
▼ Not-for-profit	2.11%	10
▼ Personal Services	4.22%	20
▼ Retail Trade	11.81%	56
▼ Repair and Maintenance	5.06%	24
▼ Tourism Attraction	4.64%	22
▼ Transportation and Warehousing	1.48%	7
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 22.36%	106
TOTAL		474

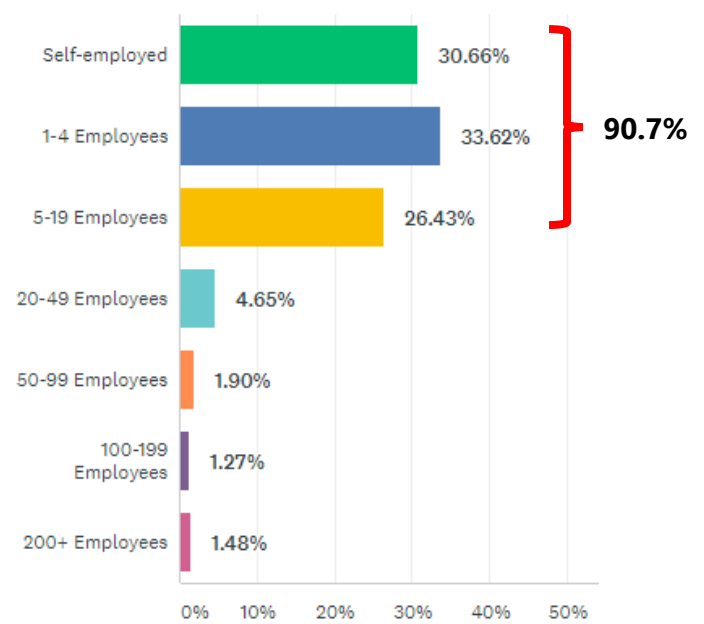
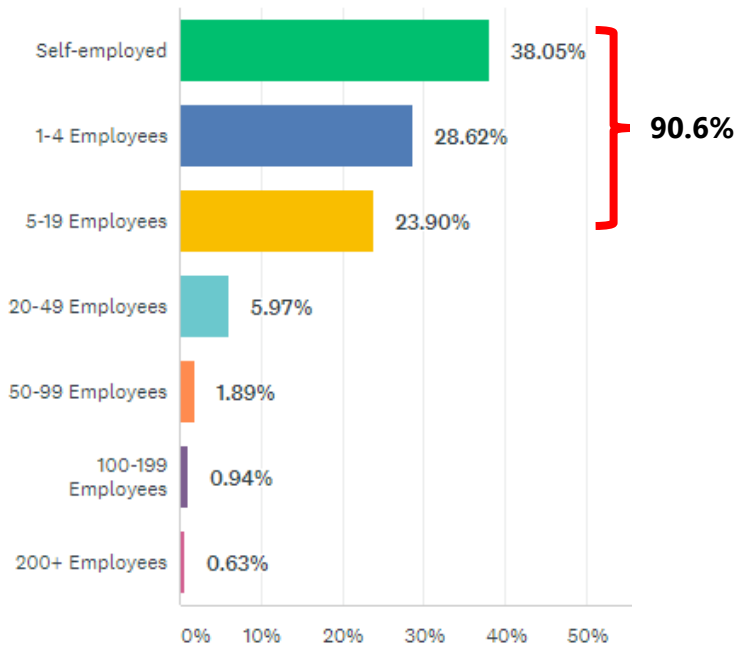
#3 Typically, how many employees does your company have?

2021 Answered: 318

Skipped: 1

2020 Answered: 473

Skipped: 1



2021

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Self-employed	38.05% 121
1-4 Employees	28.62% 91
5-19 Employees	23.90% 76
20-49 Employees	5.97% 19
50-99 Employees	1.89% 6
100-199 Employees	0.94% 3
200+ Employees	0.63% 2
TOTAL	318

2020

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Self-employed	30.66% 145
1-4 Employees	33.62% 159
5-19 Employees	26.43% 125
20-49 Employees	4.65% 22
50-99 Employees	1.90% 9
100-199 Employees	1.27% 6
200+ Employees	1.48% 7
TOTAL	473

Comment: The number of small businesses responding to the survey is a reflective ratio of the number of small businesses in the region. In 2021, a higher ratio of self-employed responded to the survey.

#4 How would you describe the impacts of COVID-19 on your business?

2021 Answered: 316 Skipped: 3

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Absolutely awful, I don't think our business will make it through (proceed to question 6)	10.13%	32
We are struggling; recovering from this could take some time (proceed to question 6)	36.08%	114
It hasn't really affected us yet (proceed to question 7)	8.54%	27
Our business is adjusting and maintaining status quo (proceed to question 7)	28.16%	89
Our business is adjusting and growing (proceed to question 5)	17.09%	54
TOTAL		316

2020 Answered: 470 Skipped: 4

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Absolutely awful, I don't think our business will make it through (PROCEED TO QUESTION 6)	11.70%	55
▼ We are struggling; recovering for this could take some time (PROCEED TO QUESTION 6)	63.19%	297
▼ It hasn't really affected us yet (PROCEED TO QUESTION 7)	20.21%	95
▼ Our business is adjusting and growing (PROCEED TO QUESTION 5)	4.89%	23
TOTAL		470

Comment: In 2021 this question was modified to reflect businesses adjusting and maintaining status quo. There is a slight ratio reduction in the number of businesses that are doing awful and don't think they are going to make it. Based on the total number of businesses in the directory, an estimated 425 businesses could be in this situation. There is also a shift in the number of businesses struggling in 2021 to 36% from 2020, that saw 63%. There was a positive shift in the number of businesses that are adjusting and growing in 2021 to 17% from nearly 5% in 2020.

#5 If your business is growing, what are your biggest challenges?

2021 Answered: 89

Skipped: 230

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Increasing product prices	44.94% 40
Supply shortages	41.57% 37
Staffing shortages	29.21% 26
Other (please specify) Responses	29.21% 26
Product shortages	24.72% 22
Shifting to new products or services	20.22% 18
Increasing employment	15.73% 14
Looking for new suppliers	15.73% 14
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	13.48% 12
Finished product shortages/delays	13.48% 12
Increasing orders from suppliers	8.99% 8
Total Respondents: 89	

2020 Answered: 45

Skipped: 429

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	51.11% 23
Other (please specify) Responses	48.89% 22
Shifting to new products or services	22.22% 10
Increasing employment	17.78% 8
Increasing orders from suppliers	13.33% 6
Looking for new suppliers	2.22% 1
Total Respondents: 45	

Comment: All qualitative responses are listed in the annual reports. Key 'Other' comments in 2021 included poor internet services with relation to e-commerce and increased insurance costs. In 2020, other comments noted were changing procedures for interactions with customers, selling online and delivering products to customers.

#6 If your business has been negatively impacted by the pandemic, what will you or are you doing to address this? (Choose all that apply.)

2021 Answered: 169

Skipped: 150

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Shifting to new products or services	33.14% 56
Other (please specify) Responses	32.54% 55
Seeking short-term financing	30.18% 51
Reducing hours	29.59% 50
Reducing services	24.26% 41
Closing short-term	22.49% 38
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	21.89% 37
Laying off staff (please specify number in comments section for 'Other')	20.12% 34
Closing permanently	7.10% 12
Total Respondents: 169	

2020 Answered: 388

Skipped: 86

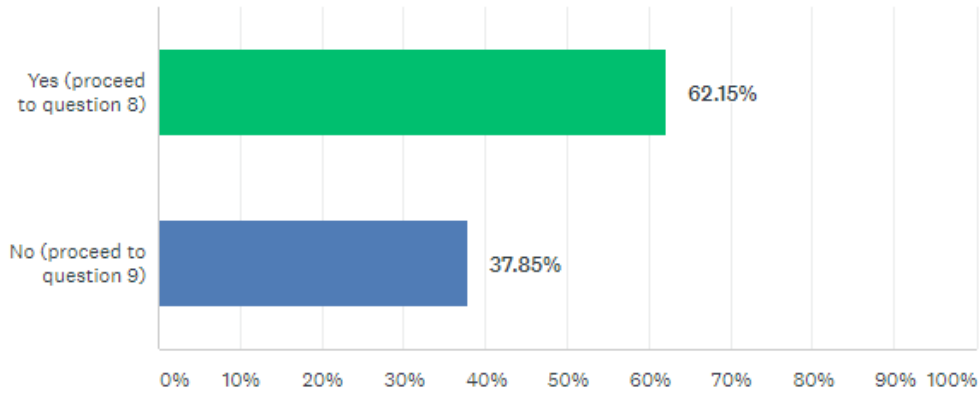
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Closing short-term	43.81% 170
Laying off staff (please specify number) _____	36.86% 143
Other (please specify) Responses	30.67% 119
Seeking short-term financing	30.41% 118
Reducing hours	27.84% 108
Reducing services	26.03% 101
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	24.74% 96
Shifting to new products or services	13.40% 52
Closing permanently	5.67% 22
Total Respondents: 388	

Comment: All qualitative responses are listed in the annual reports. Key 'Other' comments in 2021 and 2020 included the importance of online sales and virtual services. Having the Digital Service Squads available was key for the region.

#7 Have you accessed any government support programs?

2021 Answered: 317

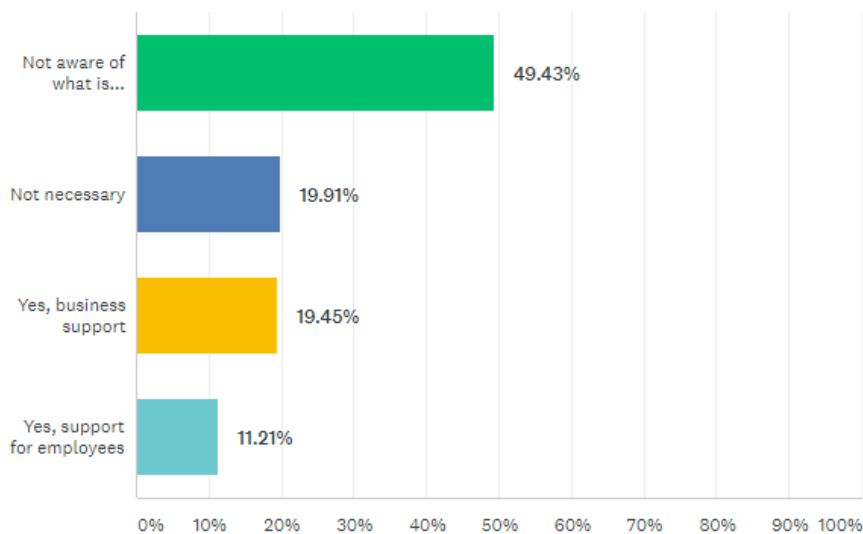
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes (proceed to question 8)	62.15%	197
No (proceed to question 9)	37.85%	120
TOTAL		317

2020 Answered: 437

Skipped: 37



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not aware of what is available	49.43%	216
Not necessary	19.91%	87
Yes, business support	19.45%	85
Yes, support for employees	11.21%	49
TOTAL		437

#7 continued...

Comment: Nearly 50% of businesses were not aware of funding programs in 2020, which was a significant concern. Counties Economic Development led strategies through the Business Support Working Group to ensure businesses became aware of the funding programs available. In 2021, over 60% of businesses not only knew about the programs but have accessed some type of funding program.

#8 If you answered yes to question #7, what government support programs did you access? (Choose all that apply.)

2021 Answered: 203

Skipped: 116

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)	47.29% 96
Ontario Small Business Support Grant	37.93% 77
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy - 75% (CEWS)	35.47% 72
Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS)	18.72% 38
Other (please specify) Responses	16.75% 34
Property Tax and Energy Cost Rebate	14.29% 29
Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) from local CFDC	7.39% 15
Not applicable to my business	5.91% 12
Tourism Adaptation Fund (Regional Tourism Organization 9)	4.93% 10
Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) from Fed Dev Ontario	2.96% 6
Total Respondents: 203	

Other (please specify)

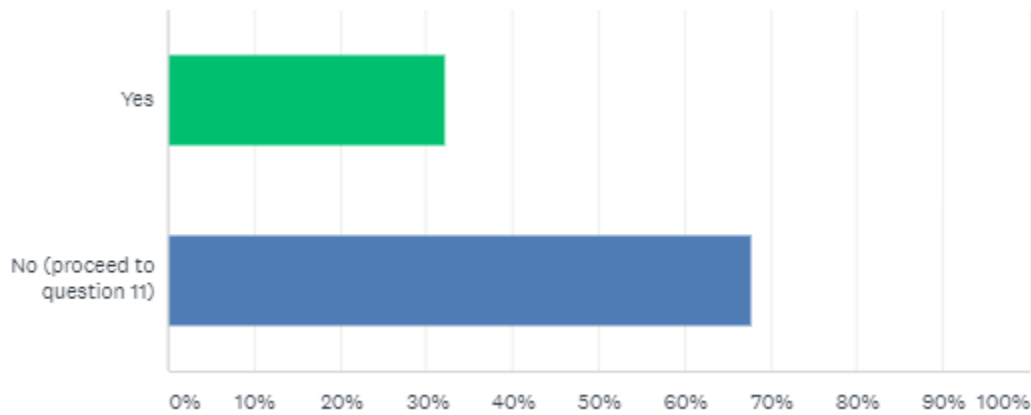
- Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). (x12)
- Digital Main Street Digital Service Squad. (x4)
- Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB). (x2)
- Digital Main Street Grant. (x2)
- Digital Main Street ShopHere. (x2)
- Digital Main Street Future Proof

Comment: All qualitative responses are listed in 2021 report. This question was not asked in the 2020 survey.

#9 Have you had any problems accessing government support?

2021 Answered: 310

Skipped: 9



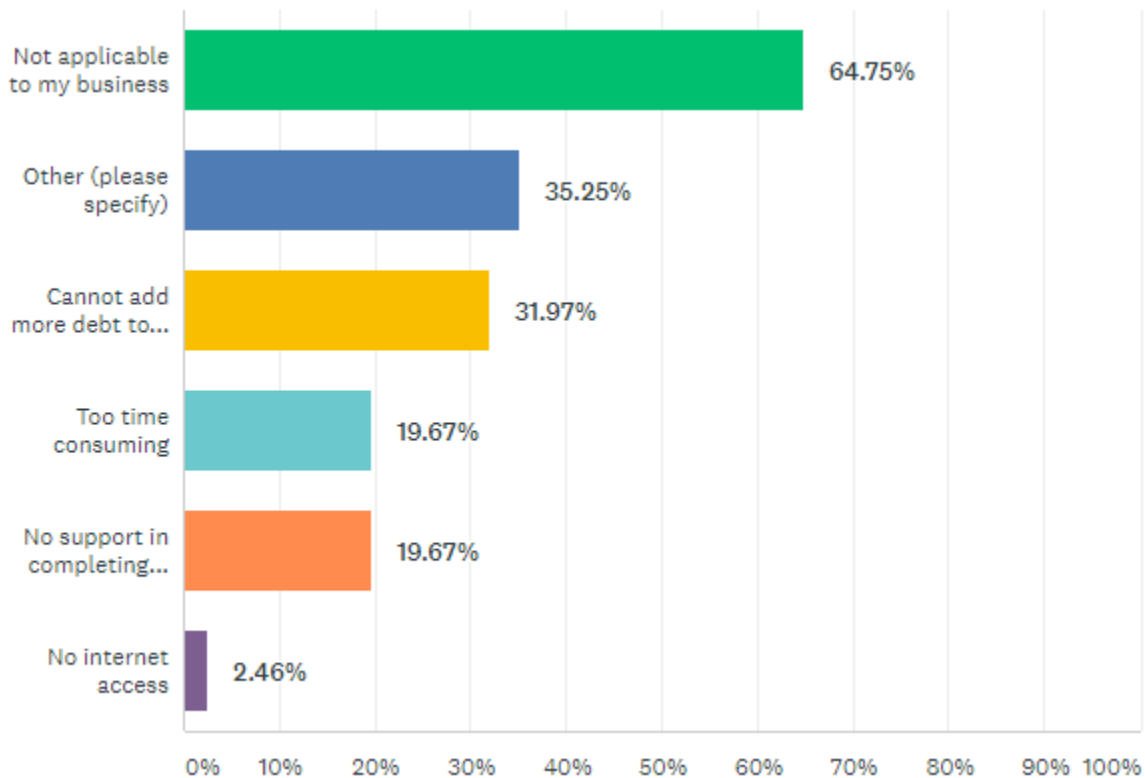
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	32.26%	100
No (proceed to question 11)	67.74%	210
TOTAL		310

Comment: This question was not asked in the 2020 survey.

#10 What type of problems have you had accessing government support? (Choose all that apply.)

2021 Answered: 122

Skipped: 197



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Not applicable to my business	64.75% 79
Other (please specify)	Responses 35.25% 43
Cannot add more debt to business	31.97% 39
Too time consuming	19.67% 24
No support in completing application	19.67% 24
No internet access	2.46% 3
Total Respondents: 122	

Comment: This question was not asked in the 2020 survey. Some of the tourism businesses were not eligible for the Ontario Small Business Grant. Those businesses that have applications still pending are encouraged to connect with the MPP's office. Since this survey was completed, the Ontario Tourism and Travel Small Business Grant has been released, with an application period open until July 9, 2021. Some businesses noted they were not eligible for Digital Main Street programs. It is anticipated the third release of Digital Main Street is forthcoming and will provide broader parameters for businesses to participate. Additional qualitative responses are listed in the 2021 report.

#11 What type of support are you looking for from government right now? (Please specify.)

2021 Answered: 234

Skipped: 85

Top Qualitative Responses

- None (x50)
- Financial grants (x41)
- Lockdowns to end (x18)
- Financial loans (15)
- Less government and red tape (x6)
- Assistance with operating costs (rent, utilities, property taxes, loans, leases) (x6)
- Continue and increase funding to support all aspects of online commerce and marketing throughout Leeds Grenville (x6)
- Continuation of Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) (x5)
- Continuation of Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) (x5)
- Ontario Small Business Support Grant (x3)
- Tax breaks, keep taxes low (3)
- Continuation of Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) (x3)
- Canada/US border to open (x2)
- Hold media accountable, stop fear mongering, news needs to be concise, to the point and accurate. (x2)
- Reliable, affordable rural internet (x2)
- Allow the opening of outdoor dining/patios (x2)
- Clear messaging from government would be helpful. Don't announce that sectors such as retail are open for business and in the same breath state that everyone should stay home unless it's essential (x2)
- Return to in-store shopping with reasonable limits (x2)
- Getting essential workers, hot spots and other vaccinated so we can get back to business (x2)
- Require workers (x2)

2021 Answered: 384

Skipped: 90

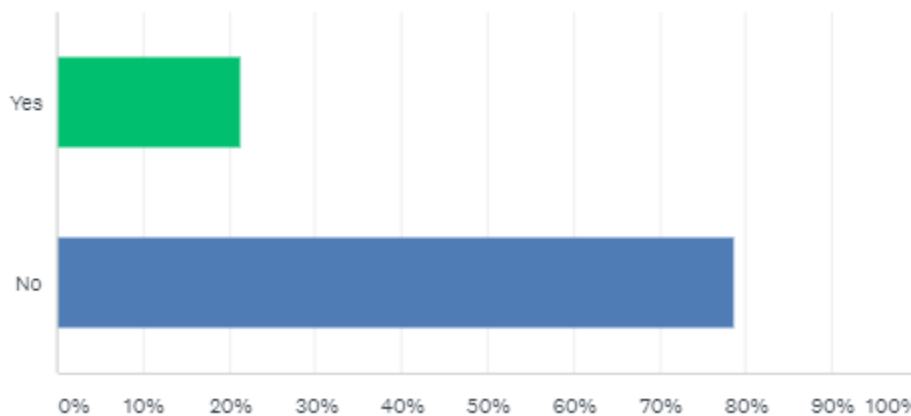
Top Qualitative Responses

- Income replacement / financial assistance (grants) x163
- Wage subsidies x48
- Clear information and easier access to programs x23
- Loans x19
- Deferral of operating costs (hydro, rent, mortgage payments, taxes, phone) x13
- Nothing x12
- Nothing right now x12
- Interest free loans x9
- Assistance for small businesses / self-employed that do not qualify for CERB x7
- HST / source deduction breaks / forgiveness x6
- Working capital x4
- An exit plan and help for tourism businesses further on x3

- Waiting for support to become available x2
- Enforcement of social distancing x2
- Tighten the shutdown to be more specific for construction industry x2
- Close all businesses including drive-thru and take-out, flatten the curve x2
- Deferral of income tax x2
- Daycare costs x2
- More PPE for staff x2

#12 Would you like to receive assistance with your online presence (website presence, online shopping/e-Commerce, digital marketing, social media)? Check yes or no and if yes, please provide your contact information in #14.

2021 Answered: 308 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.43%	66
No	78.57%	242
TOTAL		308

Comment: Follow-up by Digital Service Squads throughout the region addressed these requests. This question was not asked in the 2020 survey.

#13 If you would like to speak to someone regarding available support, please specify. Check yes or no and if yes, please provide your contact information in #14.

2021 Answered: 280

Skipped: 39

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	27.50%	77
No	72.50%	203
TOTAL		280

2020 Answered: 175

Skipped: 299

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	100.00%	175
Business Name	Responses	98.29%	172
Contact Number	Responses	91.43%	160
Email	Responses	97.71%	171

Comment: Follow-up requests were completed by Municipal representatives or the Counties Economic Development staff in both 2020 and 2021.

Additional Notes:

- **2021** Survey Timeframe: May 4 – May 18, 2021
- **2020** Survey Timeframe: March 30 – April 3, 2020
- **2021 & 2020** Survey Distribution: Businesses that were part the Counties Economic Development business directory, with active email addresses, received the Covid-19 survey directly. In addition, some members of Business Support Working Group distributed the survey through their membership lists and social media channels.
- **2021** Government of Ontario implemented a Province-wide Emergency Brake on April 3rd for a minimum of 4-weeks. On April 8th a Stay-at-Home order was issued, May 13th it was further extended until June 2nd.
- **2020** Government of Ontario modified Essential Workplace list on April 3, 2020 with additional business closures on April 4, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

Business Support Working Group:

Municipalities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge | Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott | Rideau Lakes | Westport

MP / MPP

MP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes
MPP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Community Futures Development Corporations

1000 Islands CDC | Grenville CFDC | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Enterprise Centres

Leeds Grenville Small Business Centre
Small Business Advisory Centre – Smiths Falls | Lanark

Chambers of Commerce

1000 Islands Gananoque | Brockville and District | Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay & District | Merrickville and District | North Grenville | South Grenville

BIAs

Downtown Brockville | Downtown Gananoque | Old Town Kemptville

Employment Services

CSE Consulting | Employment and Education Centre | KEYS Job Centre

Other Business & Education Agencies

Regional Tourism Organization 9 | St. Lawrence Corridor Economic Development Commission | Eastern Ontario Workforce Innovation Board | Rideau Lakes Business Network | St. Lawrence College | Kemptville Campus Education and Community Hub

THANK-YOU!

On behalf of the Business Support Working Group, I would like to thank each business who took the time to complete the survey. Members of the Working Group will be reaching out to assist businesses who indicated they would like assistance. The Working Group contact list is available on the webpage, along with any new programs and resources as they become available.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager
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