

Town of Prescott

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Business Survey: COVID-19 Report



Survey Timeframe: March 30 – April 3, 2020

Prepared by:

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

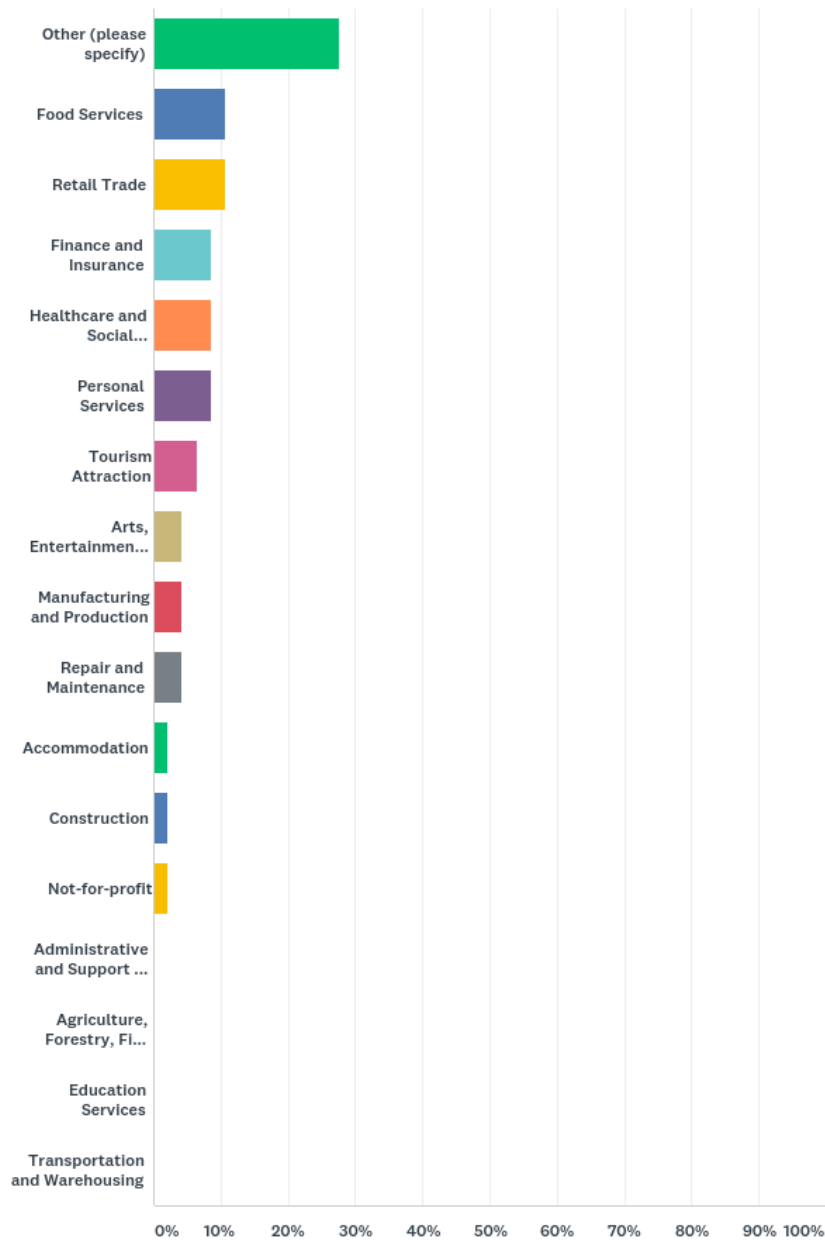


www.investleedsgrenville.com/covid19

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 47

Skipped: 0



#2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Other (please specify)	27.66%	13
Food Services	10.64%	5
Retail Trade	10.64%	5
Finance and Insurance	8.51%	4
Healthcare and Social Assistance	8.51%	4
Personal Services	8.51%	4
Tourism Attraction	6.38%	3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	4.26%	2
Manufacturing and Production	4.26%	2
Repair and Maintenance	4.26%	2
Accommodation	2.13%	1
Construction	2.13%	1
Not-for-profit	2.13%	1
Administrative and Support - Business Services	0.00%	0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	0.00%	0
Education Services	0.00%	0
Transportation and Warehousing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		47

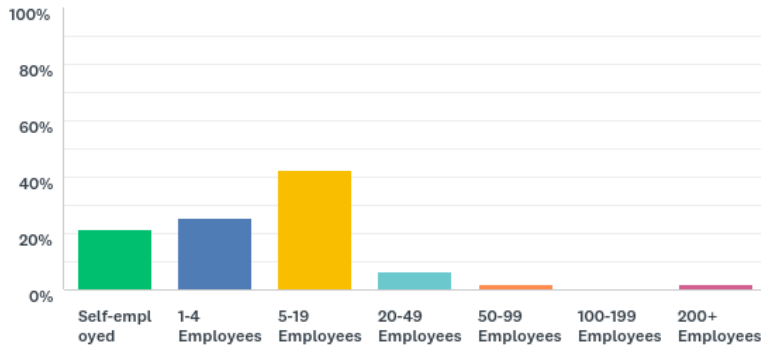
Other (please specify)

- Real estate x2
- Photographer
- Co-op local crafters and artisans store
- Professional Services
- HVAC
- Employment Services - Employers and Job Seekers
- Public Accounting
- Technology - software development
- Law
- Funeral Home
- Spiritual wicca
- Utilities

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

Answered: 47

Skipped: 0

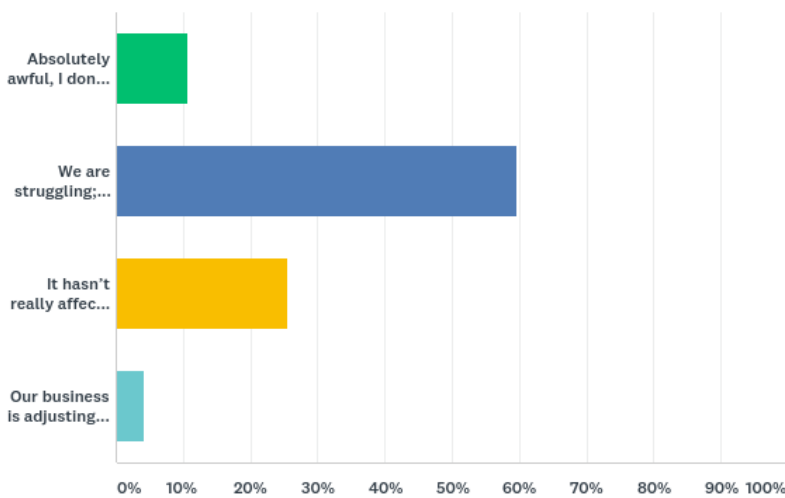


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	21.28%	10
1-4 Employees	25.53%	12
5-19 Employees	42.55%	20
20-49 Employees	6.38%	3
50-99 Employees	2.13%	1
100-199 Employees	0.00%	0
200+ Employees	2.13%	1
TOTAL		47

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

Answered: 47

Skipped: 0



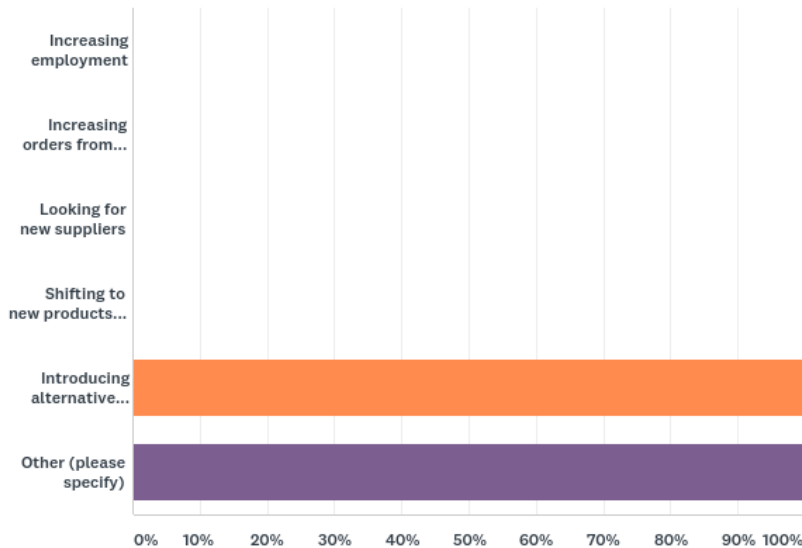
#4 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Absolutely awful, I don't think our business will make it through (PROCEED TO QUESTION 6)	10.64%	5
We are struggling; recovering for this could take some time (PROCEED TO QUESTION 6)	59.57%	28
It hasn't really affected us yet (PROCEED TO QUESTION 7)	25.53%	12
Our business is adjusting and growing (PROCEED TO QUESTION 5)	4.26%	2
TOTAL		47

#5 If your business is growing due to COVID-19, what will you or are you doing to address this? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 2

Skipped: 45



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increasing employment	0.00%	0
Increasing orders from suppliers	0.00%	0
Looking for new suppliers	0.00%	0
Shifting to new products or services	0.00%	0
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	100.00%	2
Other (please specify)	100.00%	2
Total Respondents: 2		

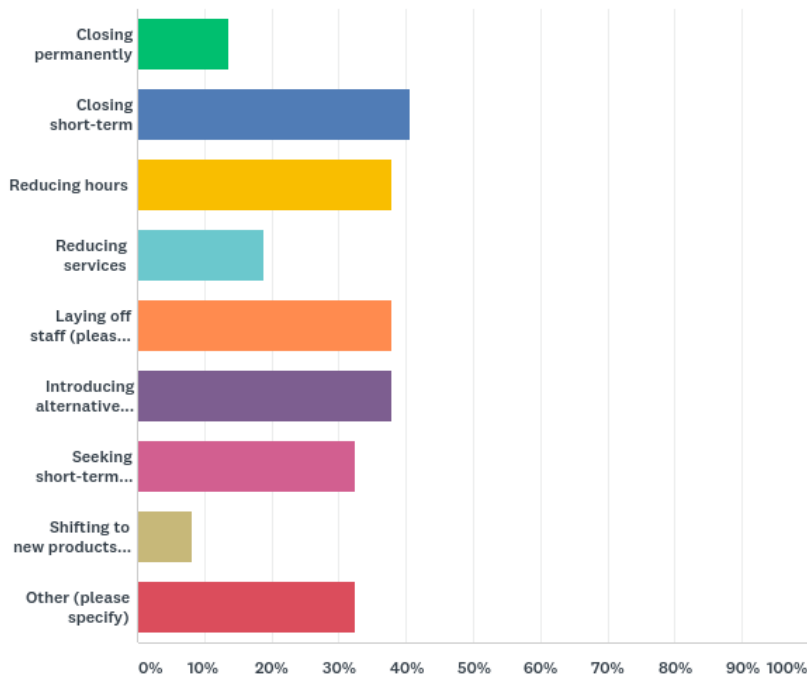
Other (please specify)

- No interaction with clients. Records drop off and email fax phone for communication

#6 If your business is affected negatively by COVID-19, what will you or are you doing to address this? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 37

Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Closing permanently	13.51%	5
Closing short-term	40.54%	15
Reducing hours	37.84%	14
Reducing services	18.92%	7
Laying off staff (please specify number) _____	37.84%	14
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	37.84%	14
Seeking short-term financing	32.43%	12
Shifting to new products or services	8.11%	3
Other (please specify)	32.43%	12
Total Respondents: 37		

#6 continued...

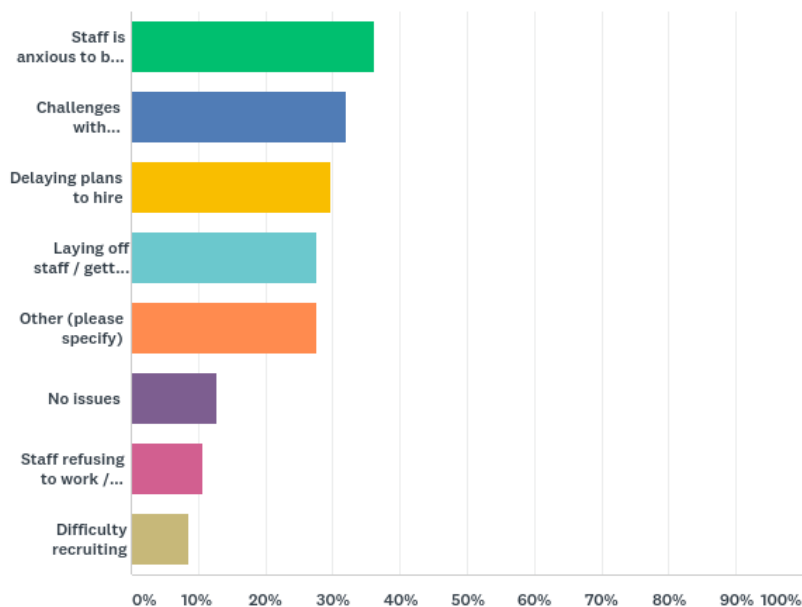
Other (please specify)

- Adjusting in regards to the pandemic and the effects to our communities. We are working from home, shifting our services to accommodate the needs of the communities.
- Try to rent out the space to bring in some \$, no help from banks or government as of yet. Taking it day by day
- Delivery...or curbside pick-up
- Closing and hoping to reopen and start all over once this passes
- We have been just holding our own but since we have temporarily closed our doors to the public
- Supporting clients as best we can
- I have laid off
- Work as much as I can when I get back, if we don't work we don't get paid
- I have closed the boutiques, the salon is still in the air
- Strategizing with others re readiness for tourism and bio-economy
- Continue to work 12 to 14 hours a day. Offering additional classes and new products
- May delay future endeavors
- Will need to find a job to avoid personal bankruptcy and the loss of our home

#7 What issues or challenges are you experiencing with your employees/workforce due to COVID-19? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 47

Skipped: 0



#7 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Staff is anxious to be working	36.17%	17
Challenges with alternative ways of working (ie. working from home, working remotely)	31.91%	15
Delaying plans to hire	29.79%	14
Laying off staff / getting them onto EI	27.66%	13
Other (please specify)	27.66%	13
No issues	12.77%	6
Staff refusing to work / absenteeism	10.64%	5
Difficulty recruiting	8.51%	4
Total Respondents: 47		

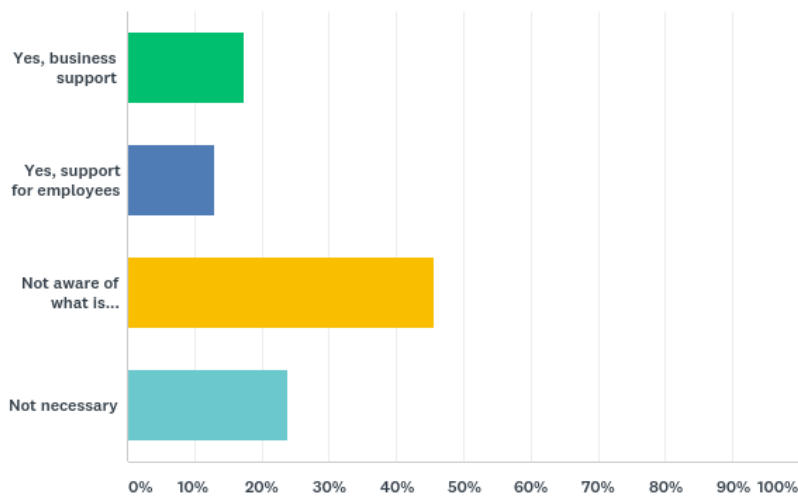
Other (please specify)

- I've lost my location and had to close
- Some staff are a little anxious however we have put many safeguards in place to keep them safe and alleviate any anxiety
- It's only me and I can't work
- Lack of supplies - gloves and masks
- Because we are deemed a non-essential, we closed our doors as mandated to the public. As a result as a group we will be unable to pay our rent, insurance and utility bills
- The nature of the work does not permit work from home. We are doing our utmost to provide some hours even though we do NOT have any customers
- Costs of adapting business to make staff and customers feel safe as well as to meet government requirements
- We are closed currently
- Currently I am self-employed, concerned about lack of planning and action for our historic downtown
- I run the shop myself
- My business is a service that specifically targets people who are away from their home, therefore during this time, I have lost clients as no one is leaving their homes
- I have no employees
- Was seeking employee through Indeed to start season but will not now

#8 Have you accessed any government support programs currently available?

Answered: 46

Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, business support	17.39%	8
Yes, support for employees	13.04%	6
Not aware of what is available	45.65%	21
Not necessary	23.91%	11
TOTAL		46

#9 What support are you looking for from the federal and provincial governments right now?

Answered: 41

Skipped: 6

- Financial assistance x4
- Emergency benefit x2
- Nothing yet x2
- A possible push to banks to give alternative options that don't include going into more debt. It would be helpful to be able to consolidate all debt and only have one payment with little to no hoops to jump through, it would be helpful to pause all mortgage or rent payments, as we have no money coming in the door.
- Short term zero interest financing
- Break on HST remit
- Financial Assistance with staffing costs
- Financial support, tax exemption
- Mainly rent relief right now there is no cash flow

#9 continued...

- Supply chain
- Cash for businesses with no employees other than self
- Hoping for financial help to cover our rent, insurance and utility cost for the duration of Government mandate to close our store until we get the approval to reopen our store to the public
- Cancel Carbon Tax. Return HST payments for last 6 months, HST holiday for next quarter.
- I am not a fan of handouts or loans but I may have to accept at least one of the two if this lasts long enough
- Wage subsidies
- The program that is rolling out to subsidize wages will be helpful for staff however there are still meaningful operating expenses that will not be covered by the subsidies being offered
- Continue to enforce the suggestions of the medical advisors regarding how we should be going about our business. Encouragement of everyone to show some leniency to others who are affected more than themselves. ie landlords, banks, creditors. Mostly, easier access to assistance
- Any help to support business
- Clarity on programs for helping small business. The 10% plan would have been accessible by us but no longer. Since our revenues are not down more than 30% can't benefit from new proposal but I as an owner will be either experiencing losses or making significantly less income. Also our clients are asking us how to access government programs but without clear guidelines ie. revenues must be 30% less than last month or last year. Current wage subsidy program seems to indicate that I might be better off shutting down or at least only working for clients that can pay now. I have had little success in requesting a loan from my banker. I'm awaiting answer from BDC on loan request submitted to them. I expect clients will have difficulty paying for our services in the short run so in order to continue working will need some access to financing to meet payroll and expenses without financing help
- Reduced reporting and payment
- Financial support for business as well as for employees if they need to be laid off
- The 75% wage subsidy is more than we could have hoped for
- Just to keep measures in place and increase measures to slow the spread
- Support to sustain the business
- None
- PPE supplies
- I am hoping that they are able to put their promised plan in action of the \$2,000 a month. This will only help to pay 2/3 of the mortgage however it will help a little. I would love the government to get banks to help out a bit more or some support for us small businesses
- Lowering of bank interest rate will help
- Continue to implement ways for people to stop spreading this virus
- Any sort of financial relief or incentive programs
- Force banks to suspend payments and interest on all loans, mortgages, credit cards, etc.

#10 What support are you looking for from your local municipal government right now?

Answered: 32

Skipped: 15

- Nothing x5
- Property tax deferral x2
- No property tax due date and no interest penalty for all of 2020
- Possible reduction on taxes, clear instructions on possible grants or other options we may have as a business. Plans in place to push small business once we are through this pandemic. Representation from our MP to help us have a voice
- Will be reaching out to our United Counties to seek funding to support our initiatives to support homeless youth. Received financial support from two townships to support initiatives. Waiting to hear from another.
- Supporting delivery of health Canada safety messages to general public. Prescott I find is doing well in this regard.
- Leadership
- Financial help
- Keeping people distancing
- Hoping for financial help to cover our rent, insurance and utility cost for the duration of government mandate to close our store until we get the approval to reopen our store to the public
- They have enough on their hands right now and don't have the finances to bail out a small business like mine that doesn't employ anyone
- Any tax reductions locally would be appreciated
- Looking to them to enforce the rules of isolation, and to encourage leniency to those who are financially vulnerable right now. Easier access to assistance
- Any help that can support a small business locally
- Don't scare customers away
- Mostly communications
- Keeping us up-to-date and hopefully helping local business that rely on the local economy
- Just keep us up-to-date on how to navigate the future
- Positive and confident messages that support business
- Pause of taxes and fees
- Do plan for tourism, support of community assets that have become run down, no effort to open our historic Forwarder's Museum, no tourism planning for downtown, no marketing that I know of
- For them to continue diligence in having people do what they are supposed to, help fight this virus
- Any sort of financial relief or incentive programs

#11 What support are you looking for from your local community organizations right now? (ie. Chambers, Employment Services, BIAs, Small Business Centres)

Answered: 31

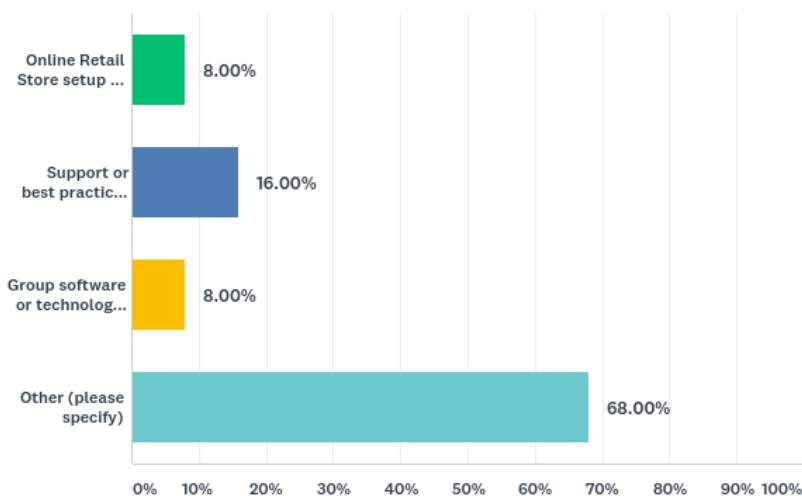
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- Nothing x5
- Possibly use funds allocated to BIA to help in aid for small business
- Assistance in finding a job as my business is now closed
- United Way of Leeds and Grenville financial support - referrals and connection from other community organizations
- Leadership
- Keep people off the streets. Help small business migrate to online sales
- Keeping people distancing
- Financial help
- Links / directions on how to find funding for self-employed single proprietors
- For guidance and support to find financial help to during this time
- Passing on vital information on government programs / incentives. Free online programs.
- Easy access to information and services as well as quick response to financial services
- Keep me informed on different programs
- Support in learning new ways to do business and how to advertise without risking using fear to grow our businesses
- Representation for all business lines
- Any help to support a small business in a small town
- Mostly communications
- Support and promotion of businesses that are open
- Innovation. Free learning
- My employees are very understanding, please make EI or equivalent easily accessible
- Hoping that Chamber and BIA will support tourism
- Ways to continue growing my business so when we return to "normal" I can gain customers and hopefully not lose any due to fear of travelling this virus has created
- Deferral of any fees. Social media business spotlights once this has passed

#12 What would be helpful right now to assist your business with transition and recovery?

Answered: 25

Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Online Retail Store setup and training	8.00%	2
Support or best practices on deliveries	16.00%	4
Group software or technology purchases to allow workers to work remotely	8.00%	2
Other (please specify)	68.00%	17
TOTAL		25

Other (please specify)

- Giving small business a clear and concise list of all options that are available to them and making sure everyone knows what their options are and what is out there is for them. My fear is that this will push Prescott back years in the progress it has made as far as growth, new business
- There is no solution. I can't serve food from my home as it's not a certified kitchen and I have no income to create a certified space
- Best practices regarding working from home
- Helping with my business getting back on its feet. Photographers are going to be hurting long after this passes
- Cash
- As volunteers, it would be hard to set up online orders with deliveries, or services. So basically financial help until this virus is over
- Not sure other than the clearance to return to normal...the new normal. Whatever that is going to look like.
- Nothing at the moment.
- Nothing just need to pay my rent

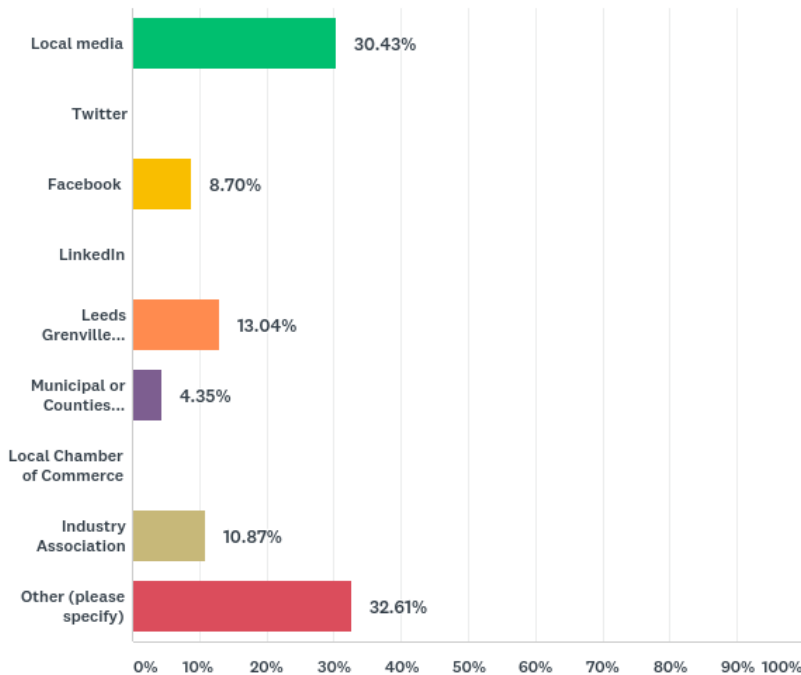
#12 continued...

- Programs, webinars
- Use of social media to communicate with customers. Currently there is a ban for this type of communication by Corporate office
- We are a hands-on service. Almost impossible to do anything in that sense as far as training goes
- Municipal effort to recruit new business in downtown, research on retail most likely to succeed
- I already sell online and offer online classes
- Right now I need financial support to get me through. For recovery, perhaps advertising and marketing support

#13 What is your primary source of information on COVID-19 and business support programs?

Answered: 46

Skipped: 1



#13 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local media	30.43%	14
Twitter	0.00%	0
Facebook	8.70%	4
LinkedIn	0.00%	0
Leeds Grenville Lanark District Health Unit	13.04%	6
Municipal or Counties website	4.35%	2
Local Chamber of Commerce	0.00%	0
Industry Association	10.87%	5
Other (please specify)	32.61%	15
TOTAL		46

Other (please specify)

- CBC Television
- Health Canada, Theresa Tam, Justin Trudeau and Doug Ford on social media, websites and press conferences
- Internal work provided updates
- Canada Public Health
- Government sites and national news outlets
- Online
- Sun Life Financial's COVID-19 updates
- CFIB
- International news updates and feeds by industry sector
- National media
- Federal government
- National media
- There are too many sources of information which is frightening workers
- CBC and two daily newspapers
- Federal / provincial media daily press conferences

#14 If you would like to speak to someone regarding support available to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, please provide your contact information:

Answered: 14

Skipped: 33

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Contact Name	100.00%	14
Business Name	92.86%	13
Contact Number	92.86%	13
Email	100.00%	14

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: March 30 – April 3, 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.
- 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 Enterprise 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 | Downtown Prescott | 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, we 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 is available on the webpage, along with any new programs and resources as they become available.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

W: investleedsgrenville.com/covid19 | E: ann.weir@uclg.on.ca