City of Brockville

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Business Survey: COVID-19 Report

BROCKVILLE
CITY OF THE 1000 ISLANDS

Revised April 23, 2020

Survey Timeframe: March 30 – April 3, 2020

Prepared by:

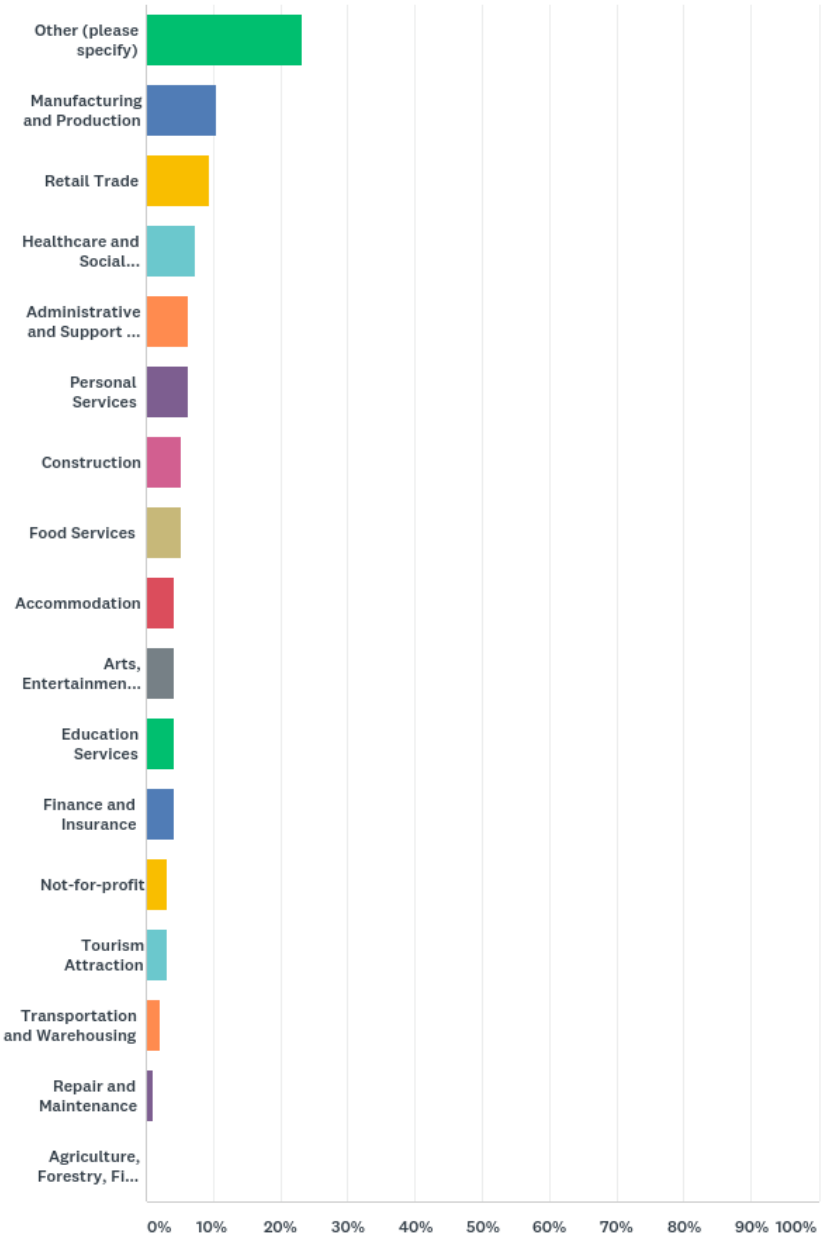
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON

Leeds Grenville
where lifestyle grows good business

www.investleedsgrenville.com/covid19

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



#2 Continued…

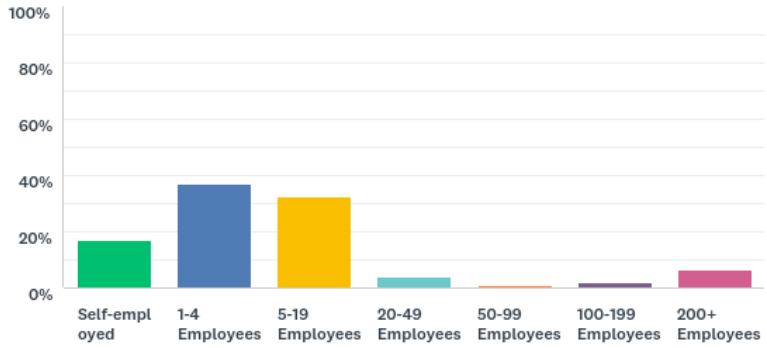
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Other (please specify)	23.16%	22
Manufacturing and Production	10.53%	10
Retail Trade	9.47%	9
Healthcare and Social Assistance	7.37%	7
Administrative and Support - Business Services	6.32%	6
Personal Services	6.32%	6
Construction	5.26%	5
Food Services	5.26%	5
Accommodation	4.21%	4
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	4.21%	4
Education Services	4.21%	4
Finance and Insurance	4.21%	4
Not-for-profit	3.16%	3
Tourism Attraction	3.16%	3
Transportation and Warehousing	2.11%	2
Repair and Maintenance	1.05%	1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	0.00%	0
TOTAL		95

Other (please specify)

- Real estate sales x3
- Consulting x2
- Security
- Martial arts training
- Automotive repair and parts sales
- Custom picture framing
- Event services & retail
- Law
- HVAC
- Self-storage / cargo trailer and U-Haul rentals
- Wellness spa
- Travel agency
- Wholesale and warehouse
- Fitness
- Media and publishing
- Steel recycling and new steel sales
- Commercial printing
- Plumbing

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

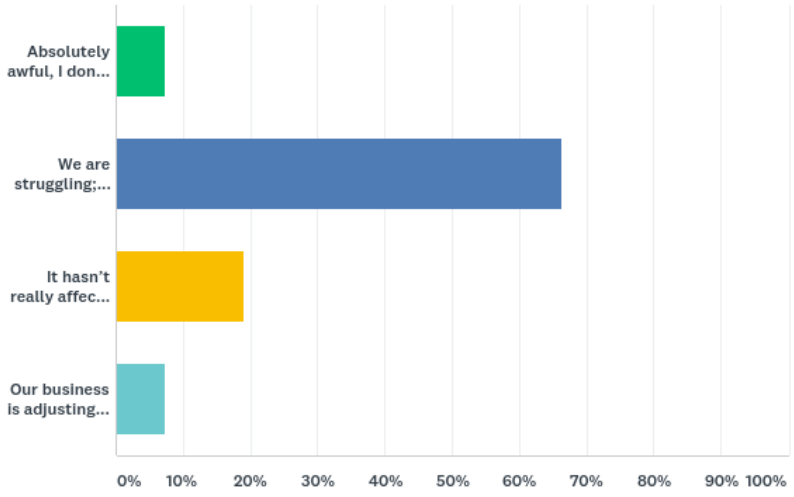
Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	16.84%	16
1-4 Employees	36.84%	35
5-19 Employees	32.63%	31
20-49 Employees	4.21%	4
50-99 Employees	1.05%	1
100-199 Employees	2.11%	2
200+ Employees	6.32%	6
TOTAL		95

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

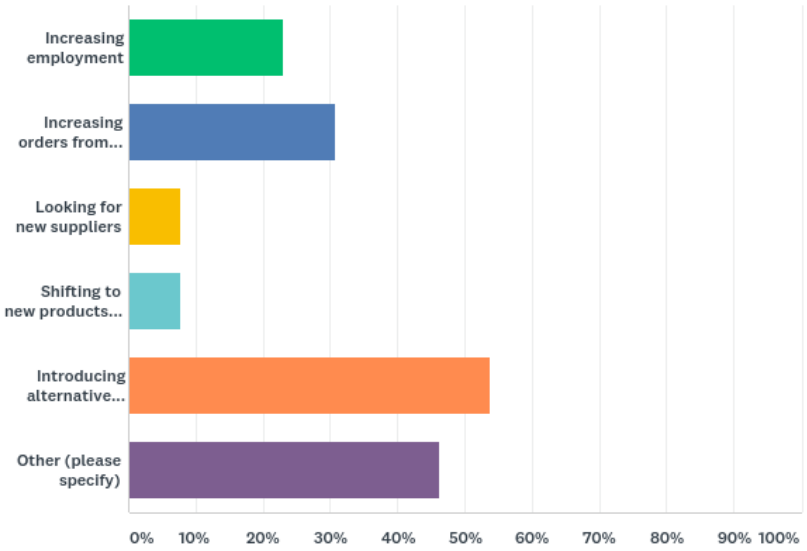
Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Absolutely awful, I don't think our business will make it through (PROCEED TO QUESTION 6)	7.37%	7
We are struggling; recovering for this could take some time (PROCEED TO QUESTION 6)	66.32%	63
It hasn't really affected us yet (PROCEED TO QUESTION 7)	18.95%	18
Our business is adjusting and growing (PROCEED TO QUESTION 5)	7.37%	7
TOTAL		95

#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: 13 Skipped: 82



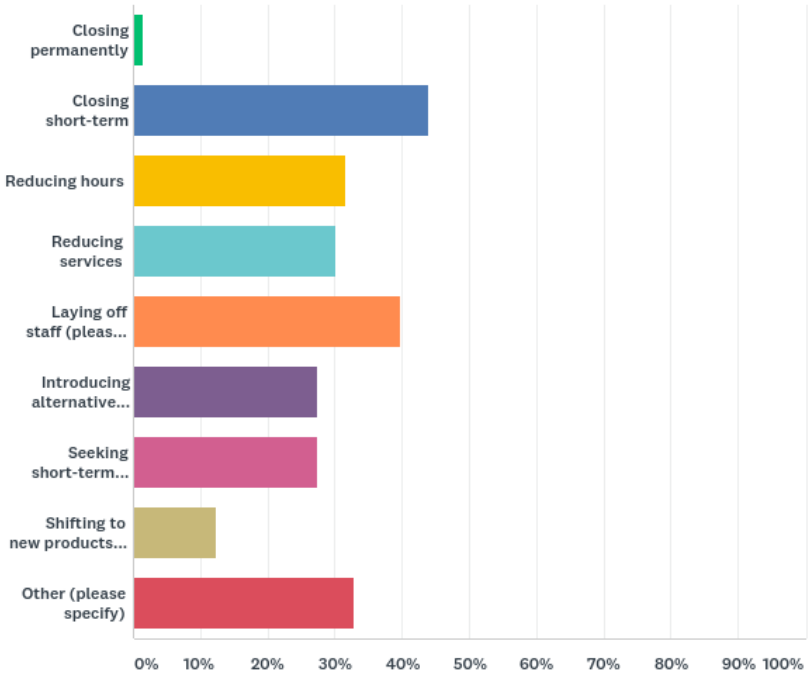
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increasing employment	23.08%	3
Increasing orders from suppliers	30.77%	4
Looking for new suppliers	7.69%	1
Shifting to new products or services	7.69%	1
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	53.85%	7
Other (please specify)	46.15%	6
Total Respondents: 13		

Other (please specify)

- Procedures in place for interacting with customers have changed
- Our customers may call in their orders, leave a credit card and we will bring their orders to their cars

#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: 73 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Closing permanently	1.37%	1
Closing short-term	43.84%	32
Reducing hours	31.51%	23
Reducing services	30.14%	22
Laying off staff (please specify number) _____	39.73%	29
Introducing alternative ways of working (working from home, working remotely)	27.40%	20
Seeking short-term financing	27.40%	20
Shifting to new products or services	12.33%	9
Other (please specify)	32.88%	24
Total Respondents: 73		

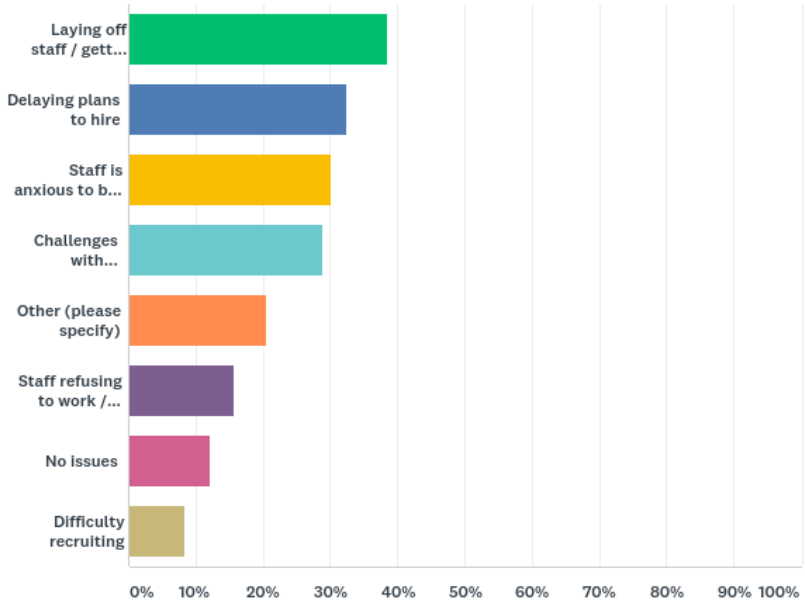
#6 continued…

Other (please specify)

- Reducing employee hours as well as business hours
- Temporarily reducing payments towards accounts payable (suppliers and utilities) but maintaining accounts as best possible
- 6 companies | 24-31 staff laid off in total
- 2 of 5 laid off currently
- Working from home, need to get the 75% subsidy asap
- Mandated closed, waiting for information from the federal government on what support program will work and whether or not we can offer alternative services
- Deferring government HST payment, WSIB payment, hopefully using the 75% wage subsidy
- Looking at appointment only or email consultation models
- Reduction in income for me and staff
- I am very worried that business will not survive and about my health
- Possibly declaring bankruptcy
- I am paying my employees their normal income despite no income; I may go bankrupt as my business is my sole source of income and I may go personally bankrupt but at least my 2 employees can eat and live
- Sharing loss of billable hours
- Reducing hours for now and continuing the construction projects and service work has slowed
- Maintaining operations as best possible in an effort to avoid layoffs
- We are an improvement association, so we are adjusting to support our members who are experiencing all of the above; we have had to postpone all events and move to being a virtual service provider
- Already work from home but because of my business, I travel into various parts of our communities to distribute my publications, it would not be responsible to visit the various communities under the circumstances
- Looking at and hopefully using programs being offered by federal government and adjusting accordingly
- Trying to keep my 1 employee as long as I can
- Our key account advised Saturday our contract has been frozen

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

Answered: 83 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Laying off staff / getting them onto EI	38.55%	32
Delaying plans to hire	32.53%	27
Staff is anxious to be working	30.12%	25
Challenges with alternative ways of working (ie. working from home, working remotely)	28.92%	24
Other (please specify)	20.48%	17
Staff refusing to work / absenteeism	15.66%	13
No issues	12.05%	10
Difficulty recruiting	8.43%	7
Total Respondents: 83		

Other (please specify)

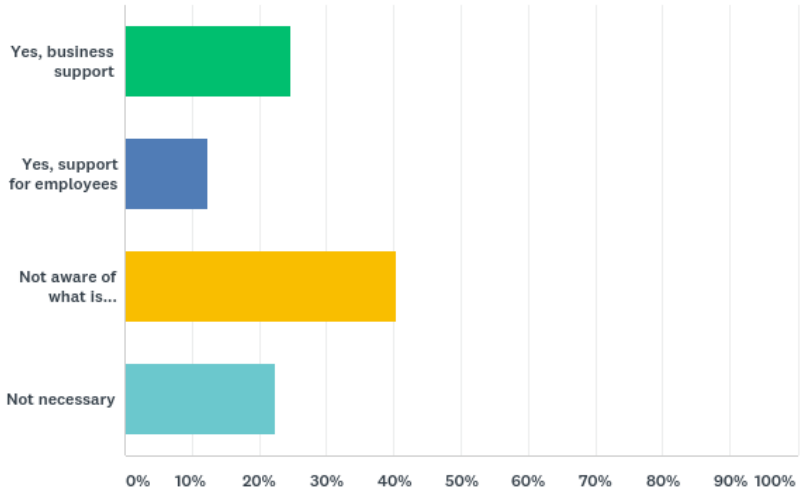
- Some clients do not want staff in home to undertake repairs or improvements
- We have a trade walk-in counter that presents challenges in adjusting to physical distancing, as our doors are still open; we are offering curb-side pick-up and delivery options
- Paying employees to be home until safe to work again
- Setting up access to files to allow work from home
- Staff are commission based with no or limited work
- Reduced hours, reduction in job capabilities

#7 continued…

- I am the only employee and feel a little nervous to be meeting customers, but thorough to wash my hands and wipe down the door handles, desk, etc.; often customer contact is not necessary for regular business
- Dealing with fears of employees of clients
- I am available to work, but buyers and sellers not available
- Client is in the US in a different time zone - hard to provide the same level of service as we could when we could have people on-site
- Low sales
- Yacht clubs and municipal marinas are not listed as "essential services;" the province has announced no access to seasonal residences and all non-commercial shipping has been banned on the St. Lawrence Seaway; in addition, we are anticipating another year of flooding at our business
- Cannot meet clients one-on-one and telephone counselling is not really acceptable

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

Answered: 89 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, business support	24.72%	22
Yes, support for employees	12.36%	11
Not aware of what is available	40.45%	36
Not necessary	22.47%	20
TOTAL		89

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

Answered: 76 Skipped: 19

- Income replacement / financial assistance (grants) x22
- Wage subsidy x13
- Assistance for small businesses, self-employed that do not qualify for CERB x10
- Clear and concise information and easy access to support programs that may be applicable x10
- Nothing at this time x4
- Loans x3
- Nothing x3
- Relief from government remittances x3
- Working capital x2
- Close all businesses including those that have pick-up, drive thru and deliveries; flatten the curve and keep employees and the public safe to end crisis x2
- Deferred rent x2
- Tax relief / forgiveness for past 6 months x2
- Easy access to EI x2
- Interest free loans administered by government, not banks
- Assistance starting new business
- More PPE for staff
- All hotels and motels be given a grant of $40 per day per room for March, April, May and
- June to cover base costs
- Mandate that all banks freeze mortgage and loan payments along with interest for small businesses
- Anything
- Rebates on energy, telephone, internet, better hydro rates
- Stimulus for the manufacturing sector

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

Answered: 63 Skipped: 32

- Keep us informed and implement strict non-essential travel requirements and close all businesses, including drive-thru to keep us safe and flatten the curve x5
- Nothing x5
- Income replacement / financial assistance (grants) x5
- Property tax relief x4
- Deferral of property taxes x3
- Deferral of payments, rent, hydro, phone, water x3
- Anything available x3
- Not sure what is available x2
- Reduce property taxes x2
- Nothing at this time x2
- Information about what is happening locally x2
- Support healthcare efforts, primary care, seniors care and hospitals, including supplies x2
- Freeze property taxes
- Wage subsidy
- Clear, concise information on what support programs are available and how to access them
- Stop the fear mongering, negative news media, many people have recovered
- Stop people racing around blockhouse island and up and down the general area
- Working capital
- Reduce water rates
- Help to remain in business
- Support in the future for small local businesses to help recovery
- Nothing, have not had a good relationship with them at all
- Presence at any planning tables, especially if there are any interests in sharing of services or facilities during the pandemic crisis
- Be there and ready when and if required
- More info on what is available and open locally
- None, they are not helpful in Brockville
- Exempt downtown hotels permanently from DBIA charges as the hotels do not benefit from it
- Leadership
- A support program for small businesses and self-employed persons that have lost a lot of revenue but are still earning some revenue
- Easier access to EI for employees
- Maintain order
- Forgiveness and deferral programs
- Ad revenue to support my publications and to promote shop local

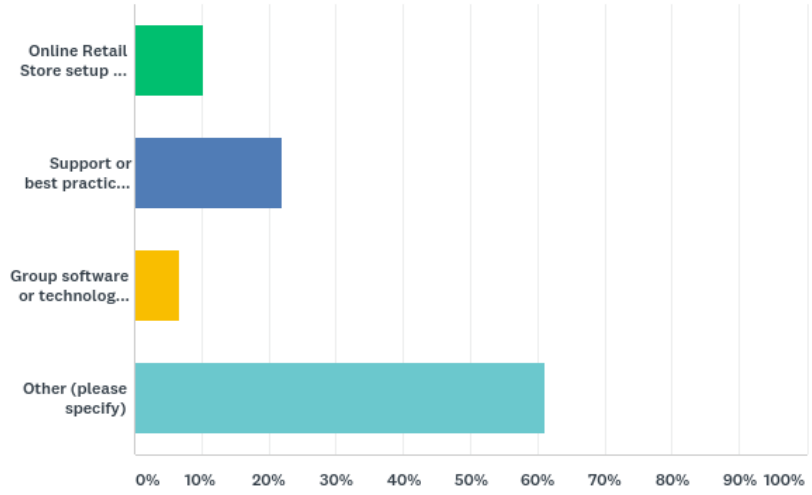
#11 What support are you looking for from your local community organizations right now? (ie. Chambers, Employment Services, BIAs, Small Business Centres)

Answered: 58 Skipped: 37

- Clear and concise information and assistance about available support x10
- Nothing x2
- Nothing at the present time x2
- Interest free loans x2
- Reduce or postpone chamber membership dues x2
- Negotiate better Moneris rates
- Any and all support that would assist my business
- Close all businesses including those that have mobile order, drive thru and deliveries; flatten the curve, keep the employees safe
- Guidance
- Payment deferral
- Funding grants
- Shop local and support local marketing
- Local showcasing of small businesses, not just those who have storefronts, many work from home and offer services to the community
- Platform where we can come together to help each other
- Taking it as an opportunity to restructure and refocus
- We need a voice for small businesses, businesses with 5 to 10 employees, sole proprietors, artisan shops, etc., that need tax relief not added debt
- Nothing, have not had a good relationship with the D.B.I.A.
- Open communications on matters of shared interest, and assurances for consultation about any strategies for moving forward
- Just keep on top of things
- New programs
- Chamber is not helpful, Ontario Approved has been doing a lot of sharing of information and working with companies who can help other businesses in these times
- Creating a winter destination
- Info and webinars keeping us up to date in regards to information and how we can continue on
- Regional advertising / marketing
- Leeds Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre has already started doing support with webinars for strategies and revised business plans; I applaud them for acting so quickly
- Best practices
- Continued support to help get through this
- Information on best Covid-19 practices for businesses
- Ad revenue to support my publication and to promote shop local, grants from small business centres to help with publishing for media
- To keep local small businesses in the forefront of everyone's mind, assistance in marketing once we are able to open again.

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

Answered: 59 Skipped: 36



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Online Retail Store setup and training	10.17%	6
Support or best practices on deliveries	22.03%	13
Group software or technology purchases to allow workers to work remotely	6.78%	4
Other (please specify)	61.02%	36
TOTAL		59

Other (please specify)

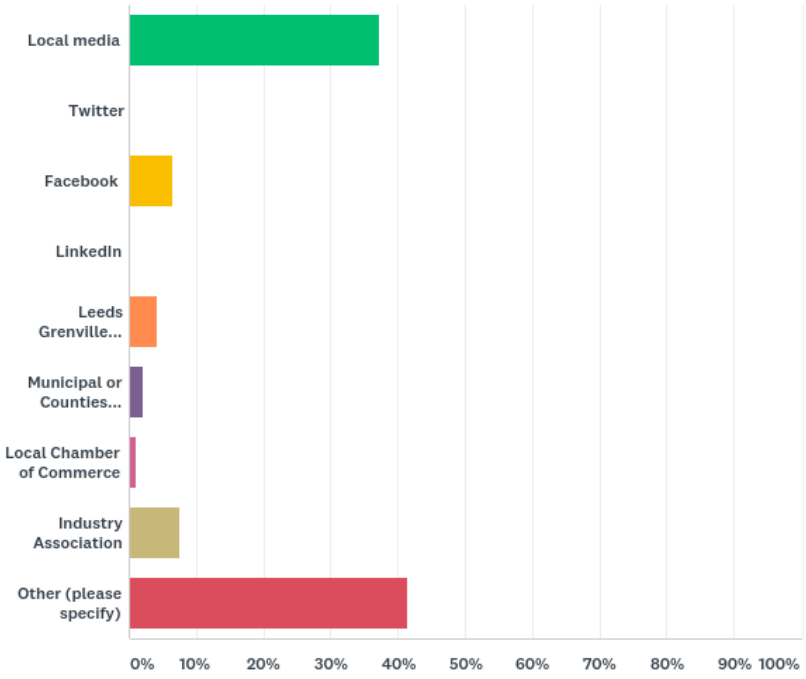
- Financial support / subsidy to return employees back to work x4
- Clear and concise information on support programs and assistance in accessing x2
- This is to be assessed, transition and recovery needs will be determined by how quickly we can start up business again, as per our provincial government
- We just have to make up for the tuition lost
- Working capital
- Deferral of payments on loans, mortgages, utilities, taxes
- My business had been ordered closed, working remotely not possible
- Close all non-essential business, only allow gas, groceries etc., no take-out, or drive-thrus
- Wage subsidy
- Ability to reopen on some level to gain some income
- Funding to purchase equipment for new business; I am a RMT who can not work and will close permanently
- Nothing really can be done, recovery plans once we are back to working normally again
- Income replacement / financial assistance (grants)

#12 continued...

- Open up the market place, if you attempt to control the market then you will lose the market; many small businesses will not reopen after these draconian measures to control free enterprise.
- None, due to the personal health services I provide, I cannot operate from home or online
- Digital training
- Anything available
- Online retail setup but also providing to businesses my skills to build best practices
- Best practices on operations
- More sales
- Financial options
- Grants for small media companies to help with continuing to publish

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

Answered: 94 Skipped: 1



#13 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local media	37.23%	35
Twitter	0.00%	0
Facebook	6.38%	6
LinkedIn	0.00%	0
Leeds Grenville Lanark District Health Unit	4.26%	4
Municipal or Counties website	2.13%	2
Local Chamber of Commerce	1.06%	1
Industry Association	7.45%	7
Other (please specify)	41.49%	39
TOTAL		94

Other (please specify)

- Canadian Broadcasting Network (CBC) x8
- Canadian Television Network (CTV) x7
- Federal and provincial government websites x7
- Television x2
- World Health Organization x2
- Television x2
- Centre for Disease Control
- Radio
- CBC Radio
- None, as to many sources have conflicting reports
- Online news
- YouTube
- Mainstream Media (M.S.M), check out different sites daily
- Conversation with friends / family
- ORCA and RHRA
- National / provincial media, definitely not the Health Unit
- Head Office newsletters
- We are following information on all media, including social media
- Online articles, government contact, lawyers
- The internet, Global, CBC, John Hopkins University
- Online news
- Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario and Ontario Dental Association
- Family sharing information on messenger group from news sources
- Various chat groups
- Small Business Enterprise Centre
- Business associates
- Ontario Approved Professionals

#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: 36 Skipped: 59

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Contact Name	100.00%	36
Business Name	100.00%	36
Contact Number	88.89%	32
Email	94.44%	34

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 Gananqoue | 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
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