



Elk Valley
Economic Initiative



Elk Valley Business Retention & Expansion Report

SPRING 2022

ABOUT THE EVEI

The Elk Valley Economic Initiative (EVEI) has members representing the City of Fernie, the District of Sparwood, the District of Elkford, as well as each communities' Chambers of Commerce. We are supported by representatives from the BC Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, Community Futures East Kootenay, Columbia Basin Trust, Economic Trust of the Southern Interior, and Teck Coal Limited as the industry partner.

The purpose of the Initiative is to collaboratively pursue regional economic development projects and initiatives in the Elk Valley, striving to expand opportunities for existing businesses, attract new ones and diversify the types of businesses. In addition, we aim to increase the number of permanent, full-time residents who spend their money locally thereby contributing to the region's sustainability.

The Elk Valley Economic Initiative will champion, support and articulate opportunities for projects and initiatives while creating a network and increasing communications among individuals and organizations involved in economic development.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS





TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	01
Key Research Findings	02
Company Information	02
Workforce	03
Housing	04
Business Expansion & Growth	05
Micro & Home-based Business	06
Additional Findings	07
Next Steps and Potential Action Items	08
Workforce Recruitment & Retention	09
Workforce Housing	10
Business Retention and Expansion	11
Micro & Home-based Business	13
 PROJECT OVERVIEW	 14
Project Objectives	14
EVEI Committee	15
BRE Survey Creation	16
Data Collection	16
Confidentiality	17
Data Analysis	17
 LIST OF FIGURES	 18
 APPENDIX	 20



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes findings from a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) survey conducted online via Survey Monkey from October 22nd to December 22nd, 2021, by the Elk Valley Economic Initiative for businesses operating in the Elk Valley. 318 individual business responses were received, amounting to approximately 1 out of 3 licensed businesses in the Elk Valley. BRE is an effective economic development tool that encourages local businesses to stay and grow in the community through identifying and responding to their needs.

There will be an additional three BRE reports created from this survey data, one for each community in the Elk Valley (Sparwood, Elkford, and Fernie). This report focuses exclusively on the Elk Valley, with summarized data presented in the key research findings and the appendix section showcasing the full quantitative data obtained from the BRE survey.

The three biggest factors impacting businesses in the Elk Valley are cost of doing business, housing, and workforce attraction. The latter two factors need to be addressed as they are major impediments to business expansion and retention in the Elk Valley, as well as future investment attraction and overall economic growth.

Challenges identified in this report are not necessarily unique to the Elk Valley, however it is important that specific supports and action items are developed for the region's businesses to stimulate a strong economic climate.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Company Information

22.6%

of businesses identified as operating in **all three communities** (Elkford, Sparwood & Fernie)

29.2%

of businesses identified as operating in **at least two communities**

49.8%

of businesses reported an average gross **revenue of under \$250,000**

The highest number of businesses are classified as **"Construction"**, **"Retail"**, and **"Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services"** under the NAICS at **13.8%, 13.5%, and 11.2%** respectively

Cost of doing business

was identified as the biggest challenge facing Elk Valley businesses **other than labour**

30.2%

of businesses in the Elk Valley have **been in operation for over 20 years** compared to

30.9%

of businesses that have **been in operation from 0-4 years**

6.4%

of businesses listed themselves as **"emerging / start-up"** compared to

4.8%

of businesses listed as **"declining"**

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Workforce

49%

of businesses stated **employee recruitment** has been a problem in the last 3 years while

28.9%

of businesses stated **employee retention** has been a problem in the last 3 years

46.7%

of businesses expect their number of employees to **increase** over the next 3 years, while

4.9%

of businesses expect their number of employees to **decrease**

The **average entry level wage** (median range) in the Elk Valley is

18.00-\$20.99

Lack of skilled staff

was listed as a **major barrier of expansion** by

39.6%

of businesses

69.7%

of businesses experiencing employee recruitment issues stated that "**lack of applicants**" was an underlining issue and

51%

stated "**attracting the right candidates**" was an underlining issue

The average number of **full-time employees** at a business is

6*

(mean calculation)

*Teck has been removed from the data to avoid skewing the results

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Housing

50.8%

of businesses listed housing as ***“Very to extremely important”*** to their business success

Housing was listed as both an underlining issue regarding **employee recruitment (48.3%)** and **employee retention (48.8%)**

38.4%

of businesses listed housing as a **top community weakness** as a place to do business, the 2nd highest behind **cost of living** at

41.6%

Lack of housing

was selected as the **third biggest challenge** facing businesses (other than labour) behind **cost of doing business** and **supply chain**

Businesses that listed housing as ***“Not at all important”*** have an average of

2 full time employees,

while businesses that listed housing as ***“extremely important”*** have an average of

8 full time employees

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Business Expansion & Growth

86.6%

of businesses stated they have at least **one barrier of growth**

44.9%

of businesses listed their current **state of business as growing** (customers know about your product / services and revenue is increasing)

Lack of staff

was listed by

21%

of businesses as to why they are not expanding

76.5%

of new business (0-4 years old) in the Elk Valley **intended to expand** in the next 3 years

The highest ranked major barriers to growth were "**Lack of skilled staff**", "**Finance**", and "**Availability of buildings for lease or purchase**" at

39.6%, 26.2%, and 26.2% respectively

58.8%

of businesses stated they **plan to expand their business** in the next 3 years

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Micro & Home-based Business

56.3%

of businesses responses were classified as a **"Microbusiness"** (those with fewer than 5 employees, including self-employed individuals without staff)

21.4%

of overall businesses listed themselves as **"Work from Home / Remote"**

72%

of "Work from home / remote" businesses listed their company as **"Emerging"** or **"Growing"** and of these, 50% are new businesses (0-4 years old)

40.2%

of micro businesses identified **"Availability of buildings for lease or purchase"** or **"Availability of appropriately zoned and/or serviced land"** as a major barrier to expansion

The top 3 biggest challenges facing "Work from Home / Remote" businesses, other than labour, are **"Cost of doing business"**, **"E-commerce / Digital adaptation / Online presence"** and **"Marketing"** at

25%, 19.1%, and 17.7% respectively

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Additional Findings

Tourism and Construction

were the highest ranked sectors to attract to the Elk Valley **that would benefit businesses**

"Outdoor activities & Recreational Opportunities"

then

"Customer loyalty"

were identified as the **top community strengths** as a place to do business

The **average lease rate** (based on triple net lease) in the Elk Valley is
\$12.46 per square foot
(weighted average calculation)

20.1%

of businesses stated that they plan to **retire or sell their business** within the next 3-5 years

The **top desired business support** that is currently not available was identified as

"Leadership / Management training"



NEXT STEPS AND POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

The results of this survey can be used by the EVEI and its member organizations to make well informed and data driven decisions.

The forthcoming community BRE reports will analyze the survey data based on businesses operating in that specific community. It must be noted there are opportunities for further data analysis by breaking down the data into additional categories and classifications. This data could be used to support current and future economic development in the Elk Valley and reviewed & released upon request at the discretion of the EVEI committee. Economic development is defined by programs, policies, or activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community.

Through data analyzation, and based on the key research findings, the following action items have been identified to have the greatest impact on improving the Elk Valley business climate:

Workforce Attraction

The Elk Valley is experiencing a workforce shortage. Lack of skilled workers has been identified as a major barrier to expansion for businesses and in the last 3 years employee recruitment has been a problem for half of all businesses in the Elk Valley. While these issues are not exclusive to the Elk Valley, or British Columbia as a whole, there are a set of recommendations listed below that the Elk Valley can act on to lessen this effect. The recommendations are as follows:



ACTIVELY RECRUIT OUTSIDE OF THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA

The Fernie Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Fernie currently host the “Work in Fernie” website which helps market Fernie and Elk valley jobs to a larger area. It is recommended that the Fernie Chamber of Commerce host an information session with the other two chambers and relevant parties to discuss officially expanding / marketing the website to the Elk Valley as a whole. Further research into the Elk Valley labour market and the classification of workers required by businesses would also be beneficial to workforce recruitment and a strong baseline for an official Elk Valley workforce attraction strategy.



PROMOTE THE ELK VALLEY REGION

A regional approach to the promotion of the Elk Valley as a place to live and work would be beneficial to workforce recruitment. Recruitment initiatives should highlight the business climate factors that businesses identified as strengths in the community. The EVEI investment profile, earmarked to be released in summer 2022, should focus on highlighting these positive community aspects in the Elk Valley, along with the key market research data obtained in the BRE survey. This data can act as promotional material to entice workers to move to the Elk Valley. To ensure visibility, the investment profile should be readily available on the new EVEI website in PDF format.



PROMOTE AND SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

There are a wide variety of employment programs that focus on workforce attraction and development offered through the BC government and Columbia Basin Trust. Some programs of note are the “School Works Wage Subsidy”, “Career Internship Program”, and “BC Employer Training Grant”. Raising awareness of these supports would be beneficial for businesses looking to increase their number of employees. The EVEI should create a webpage listing these employment programs and host an education session, utilizing its support organizations, for the three chambers of commerce in the Elk Valley to ensure they have the knowledge to help support local businesses in applying for these grants.

Workforce Housing

The lack of housing in the Elk Valley is clearly defined by the data provided in the key research findings. It is a major issue for employee recruitment, listed as a top community weakness, an underlining issue for employee retention, and viewed by most businesses as very important to their success. Two responses from the survey accurately sum up this data - "Low-cost housing is a huge barrier to economic growth" and "How do you attract more business when no one can afford to live here". To encourage housing improvements in the Elk Valley the following action items are recommended:



UTILIZE PARTNERSHIPS TO FOCUS ON A REGIONAL APPROACH TO HOUSING IN THE ELK VALLEY

Facilitating conversations between communities and support organizations to share housing information and data is crucial to ensuring a collaborative and streamlined approach to housing in the Elk Valley. The EVEI should bring key partners together to discuss regional demands and appropriate regional responses. Beforehand, the EVEI can review housing needs reports & housing market studies to help identify these demands through data analysis.



STIMULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HOUSING BY ENHANCING GOVERNMENT PROCEDURES TO HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Businesses that operate as "Construction" disproportionately selected local government regulations as a top 3 biggest challenge facing their business at 37.8% compared to overall at 15.3%. The EVEI should bring forward qualitative data obtained from business responses in the BRE survey to the planning departments of each community to provide data driven research on housing barriers in local government regulations. This data can be used to support planning departments and streamline development processes.



SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The EVEI should bring together all housing organizations in the Elk Valley for a roundtable discussion on how the EVEI can provide support to these organizations to increase affordable housing for the Elk Valley workforce. The strongest support could come from political advocacy by the EVEI committee to all levels of government. In this discussion, the EVEI should present housing specific data, obtained in the BRE report, to the housing organizations.

Business Retention and Expansion

Action items outlined to assist the previous key research findings of workforce attraction and housing will be crucial to supporting business expansion and growth in the Elk Valley. Additionally, Selkirk Innovates outlined two action items to support business expansion in previous BRE reports that are upheld by the new survey data. They are:



ASSISTANCE WITH IDENTIFYING AND SECURING NEW SITES

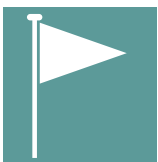
In 2019 an employment lands inventory research project was conducted by Selkirk College on behalf of the Regional District of the East Kootenay and is available online. The EVEI should explore creating a webpage to highlight this resource, discuss who will update pertinent information, and identify appropriate contact information for businesses that are looking to identify and secure new business sites.



ASSISTANCE EXPLORING FINANCING OPTIONS

26.2% of businesses looking to expand identified “Finance” as a major barrier to their expansion. It is recommended that Community Futures East Kootenay run a business finance workshop for Elk Valley business to enhance awareness of financing options available to them.

To ensure improved business retention in the Elk Valley, the following action items can be applied to support businesses:



IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO RED FLAGS

These are individual business issues identified through the BRE survey that should be addressed immediately. The EVEI should contact these businesses to offer support and if necessary, put them in touch with the Basin Business Advisor program.



HIGHLIGHT SUCCESSION TRAINING RESOURCES

14.3% of businesses that plan to retire or sell their business in the next 2-5 years either have no plan or will close / cease operations. Succession training is crucial to ensuring longevity of local businesses. The EVEI can support by providing resources on the new EVEI website with detailed succession planning training such as the Basin Business Advisors “How to sell your business” workshop, as well as promote the BC Business match program. Having succession training available online while providing resources for additional information will create a long-lasting improvement to business succession planning in the Elk Valley.



SUPPLY CHAIN RESEARCH

“Supply chain” was listed as the second biggest challenge facing businesses (other than labour), after “cost of doing business”. Data from previous BRE reports show the most common reason of why supplies are sourced outside the region is because they are not available locally. Qualitative data shows there is a large demand for an additional local supplier of construction and building supplies in the Elk Valley, as well as general office and cleaning supplies. It must be noted that this data was obtained during Covid-19 and further research is needed for statistical analysis. The EVEI should chair a round table discussion to initiate the conversation on how to increase local supplies for businesses. Further research into supply chain issues, such as the Lower Columbia Initiatives regional supply chain study, would be beneficial to the Elk Valley, allowing regional partners to make data driven long-term decisions to improve the supply chain for local businesses.



STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES

The EVEI should host a business facing information session for the Elk Valley BRE report, focused on presenting the action items outlined. This will help increase awareness of supports available for businesses, communicate the strategic goals of the EVEI, and build connections between the EVEI and Elk Valley business.

Micro & Home-based Business

This is a growing business industry that has been historically overlooked in the Elk Valley. Qualitative data shows that even in the EVEI BRE survey, home based businesses felt that they had been forgotten and certain questions were missing micro and home-based business specific answers. In addition to the above action items, the following recommendations can improve support for this industry:



PROVIDE BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT / LEADERSHIP TRAINING

These were the top two desired business supports identified by micro and home-based businesses. The three chambers of commerce, through a joint initiative, should host two workshops with industry experts to provide training and knowledge for Elk Valley businesses and record the sessions for future use. These supports can help improve business retention and expansion, as well as employee retention for local businesses.



IMPROVE AVAILABILITY OF BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING

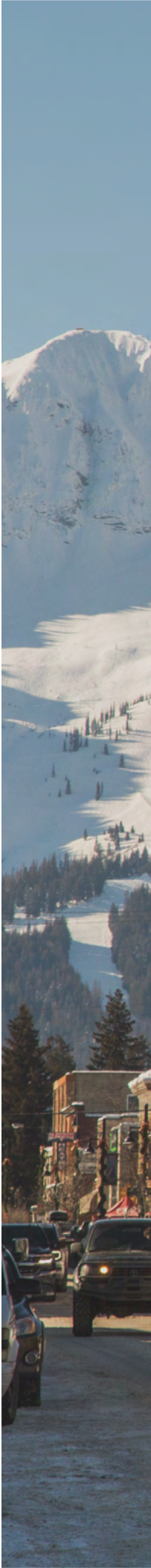
The EVEI, through their current website rebuild, should provide resources of available business skills training for local business. Over the last two years there has been a plethora of business skill training hosted online and consolidating this information could be a beneficial and time saving resource for local businesses. Specific consideration should be given to “E-commerce / Digital adaptation / Online presence” and “Marketing” training as these were identified as top challenges facing “Work from Home / Remote” businesses.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This report describes findings from a BRE survey conducted online from October 22nd to December 22nd, 2021, for registered businesses in the Elk Valley. The BRE survey and report came to fruition via a funding grant from ETSI-BC (Economic Trust of the Southern Interior) with support from the Province of British Columbia. The Fernie Chamber of Commerce received full funding on behalf of the EVEI to hire an Elk Valley Economic Recovery Advisor based on the EVEI's 2021 strategic plan that identified the need for Elk Valley wide data and a better understanding of business needs to enhance business retention and expansion. The Elk Valley Economic Recovery Advisor was responsible for the project and was supported by the EVEI committee and its partner organizations.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Identify business development needs / challenges
2. Create goal-oriented action items to allow the EVEI committee to respond to a business development need / challenge
3. Complete Elk valley wide market research & data collection to increase investment preparedness
4. Build awareness and connections between EVEI and Elk Valley business



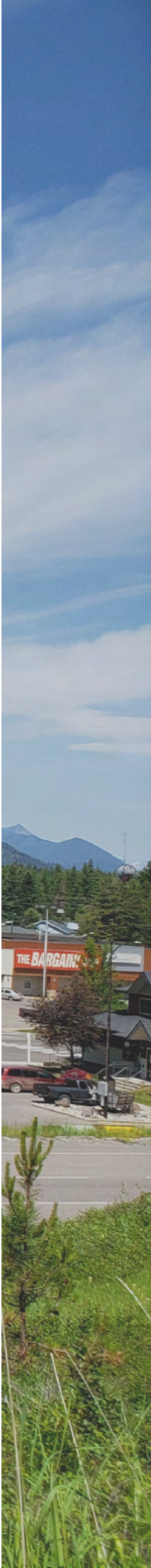
EVEI COMMITTEE

VOTING MEMBERS

- **Shawna Bryant**
CEO, Founder of EV Ergonomics (Elkford Chamber of Commerce Representative)
- **Michael Boronowski**
Chief Administrative Officer, City of Fernie
- **Sharon Strom**
Coordinator Sustainability, Teck Coal Limited
- **Sheila Byers**
Sales Representative, Royal Lepage East Kootenay Realty (Sparwood Chamber of Commerce Representative)
- **Jeremy Johnston**
Director, Planning & Development Services, District of Elkford
- **Andy Cohen**
General Manager, Fernie Alpine Resort (Fernie Chamber of Commerce Representative)
- **Patrick Sorfleet**
Director of Planning and Development, District of Sparwood

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

- **Robyn Peel**
Community Economic Development Coordinator, Community Futures East Kootenay
- **Gerri Brightwell**
Regional Manager Central/East Kootenay of Rural Development Unit, Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation
- **Brad Parsell**
Executive Director of Fernie Chamber of Commerce, EVEI Coordinator
- **Kaylyn Gervais**
Manager, Community Relationships East, Columbia Basin Trust
- **Paul Wiest**
Business & Economic Development Consultant, ETSI-BC



BRE SURVEY CREATION

The BRE survey was developed using a variety of methods to ensure that the qualitative data captured would be accurate, relevant, and effective for long term economic development in the Elk Valley. The methods were as follows:

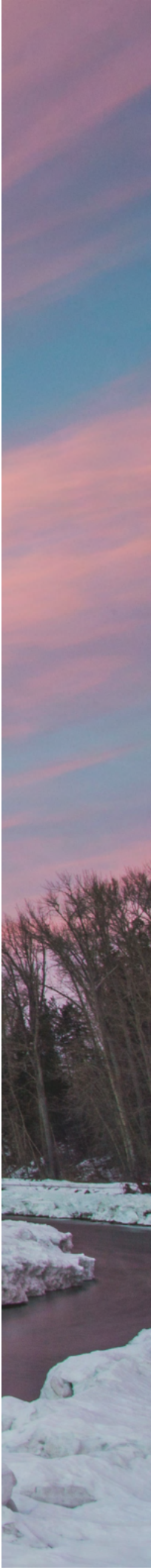
- The core of the BRE Survey was generated through material from Selkirk Innovates (formally the Columbia Basin Research Development Institute) and their 2015/16 BRE surveys on Fernie and Sparwood to ensure standardized data collection with additional material from more recent business surveys completed in Creston, Cranbrook, and Golden
- Meetings with 41 Elk Valley businesses to identify their current key issues and barriers to growth
- Meetings with individual EVEI committee members to discuss the current business climate and BRE survey to ensure the data obtained would be beneficial for each community and the Elk Valley as a whole
- Meetings with Community Futures East Kootenay to consolidate all information sources into a working BRE survey, workshopping Elk Valley specific questions, and reviewing the overall goals of the survey to ensure each question was quantifiable and a building block for future economic development work.
- Meeting with Selkirk Innovates to certify all questions were non-leading, the answers were unbiased, and that the data captured was analytics based
- Skip logic, through advanced branching, was built into the survey to increase the efficiency and completion rate of the survey. This allowed the survey to send businesses to different questions depending on their responses, skipping specific questions that were identified as non-applicable to certain businesses.

DATA COLLECTION

Survey data was obtained online via survey monkey. The Elk Valley Economic Recovery Advisor was solely responsible for the data collection and a focus was put on trying to contact every licensed business in the Elk Valley for a comprehensive data set.

Methods used to contact businesses and obtain responses were as follows:

- Direct email to 715 businesses operating in the Elk Valley
- 196 businesses called to request email addresses to send the survey link and to provide additional information about the EVEI and the BRE survey
- Direct Facebook messages to 29 businesses
- Working with each Chamber of Commerce to send the survey to their members via email distribution lists
- 400 EVEI marketing postcards mailed to business PO boxes in the Elk Valley
- Facebook ad campaign targeting businesses, seen by 3,250 people in the Elk Valley
- Advertising and articles in the Fernie Free Press, Fernie Fix, and on local radio
- Additional email marketing specifically to Inter-Community business license holders



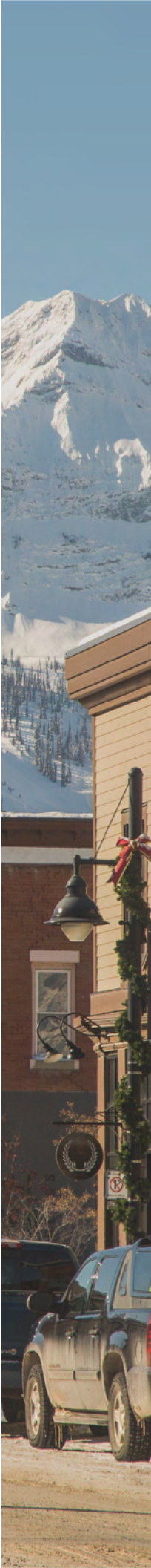
CONFIDENTIALITY

All data collected is stored in a password protected electronic format and only the paid contractor of the EVEI has access to the individual business answers from the BRE survey. All data released in the Elk Valley BRE report is quantitative and no individual business responses are used.

DATA ANALYSIS

The Elk Valley Economic Recovery Advisor, as the paid contractor of the EVEI, was responsible for the quantitative and qualitative data analysis of the BRE survey data. Quantitative data was analyzed using data software programs and descriptive statistics were obtained to summarize given data sets. To ensure robust and accurate data, with the support of Selkirk Innovates and Community Futures East Kootenay, statistical average calculations were utilized and data outliers were reviewed. Based on the results of the initial quantitative data, key research findings were presented to the EVEI committee, then recommendations based off these findings were written and compiled into the BRE report by the Elk Valley Economic Recovery Advisor.

As mentioned earlier, there is opportunity to conduct further data analysis on the survey data, broken down into a wide variety of business classifications. If there are any questions about the data, or an organization has identified a data point that could help with their economic development, please contact the EVEI at coordinator@theelkvalley.ca for further discussion.





LIST OF FIGURES

- **Question 2:** Please select which communities in the Elk Valley that you operate in.
- **Question 3:** Is your business 51% or more owned by any the following groups?
- **Question 4:** What is your business industry?
- **Question 5:** What is the current state of your business?
- **Question 6:** How many years has your business been in operation?
- **Question 7:** If you think about the last 2-4 years, what is the average annual gross revenue of your company?
- **Question 8:** What is the typical number of employees at your business? (the owner classifies as an employee)? - with Teck Coal Limited removed
- **Question 9:** Do you expect the number of employees to change over the next 3 years?
- **Question 11:** What is the average hourly wage of your employees? Entry Level
- **Question 12:** What is the average hourly wage of your employees? Semi-Skilled
- **Question 13:** What is the average hourly wage of your employees? Skilled / Professional
- **Question 14:** Has employee recruitment been a problem in the last 3 years?
- **Question 15:** What are the underlining issues impacting employee recruitment for your business?
- **Question 16:** What strategies / factors have you employed that make employee recruitment not a problem?
- **Question 17:** Has employee retention been a problem in the last 3 years?
- **Question 18:** What are the underlining issues impacting employee retention for your business?
- **Question 19:** What strategies / factors have you employed that make employee retention not a problem?
- **Question 20:** What are the biggest challenges facing your business, other than labour? (Please select top 3)



LIST OF FIGURES

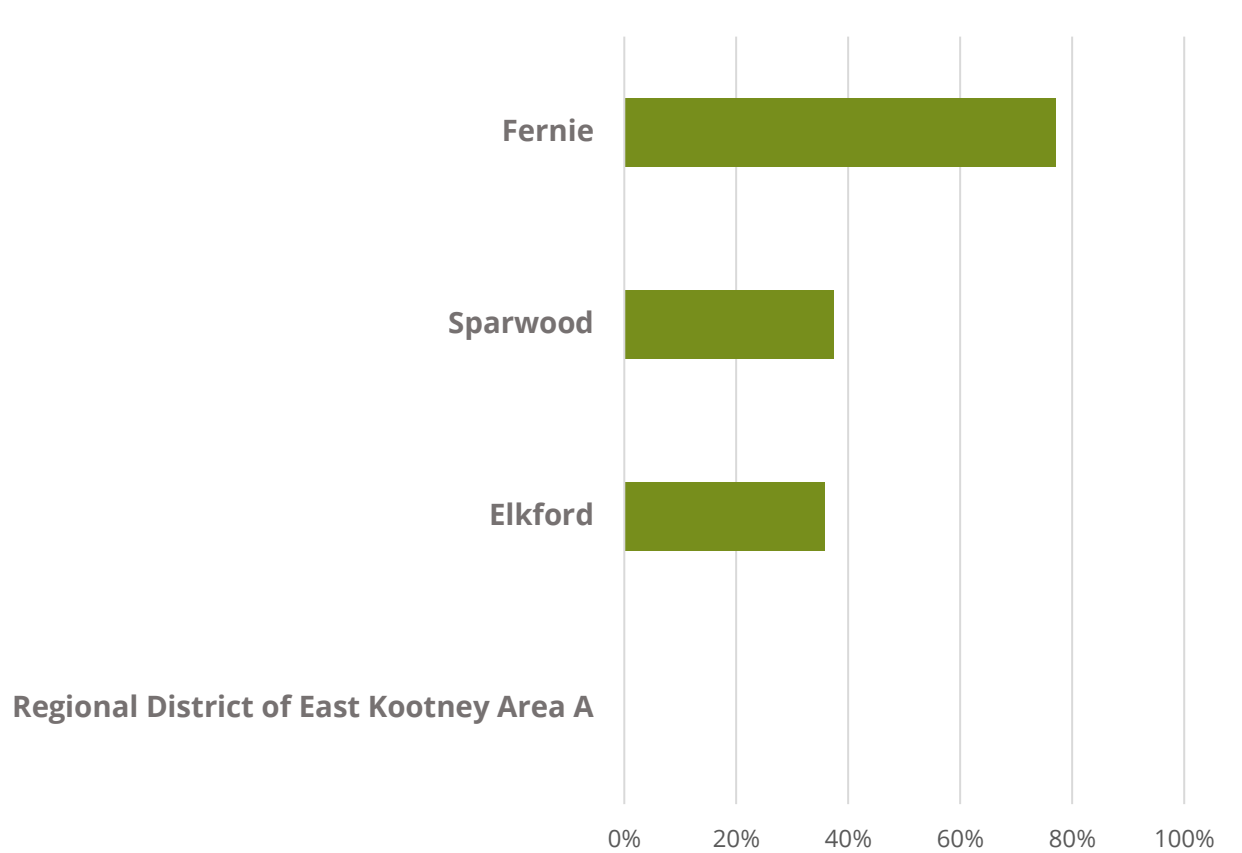
- **Question 22:** On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important and 5 being extremely important, please rate how important the following categories are to your business's success.
- **Question 23:** What are the community's strengths as a place to do business? (Please select 1-3 answers)
- **Question 24:** What are the community's weaknesses as a place to do business? (Please select 1-3 answers)
- **Question 26:** Do you plan to expand your business in the next 3 years?
- **Question 27:** What are the major barriers for your expansion?
- **Question 28:** Why do you not plan on expanding?
- **Question 30:** Do you plan to retire or sell your business within the next 3-5 years?
- **Question 31:** How do you intend to exit the business?
- **Question 32:** What is the status of your business's building?
- **Question 33:** What is your current lease rate, based on triple net lease? (Lease agreement on a property whereby the tenant or lessee promises to pay all the expenses of the property, including real estate taxes, building insurance, and maintenance)
- **Question 34:** Do you have any barriers to updating your building, if needed?
- **Question 35:** If an effort was made to attract a business, sector, or industry to the Elk Valley, which options below would benefit you? (Please pick up to 2 answers)
- **Question 36:** What products or services, if any, are you purchasing from outside the area for which you would like to have a local supplier?
- **Question 37:** Do you have any desired business supports that are not currently available to you?



APPENDIX

Q2 Please select which communities in the Elk Valley that you operate in

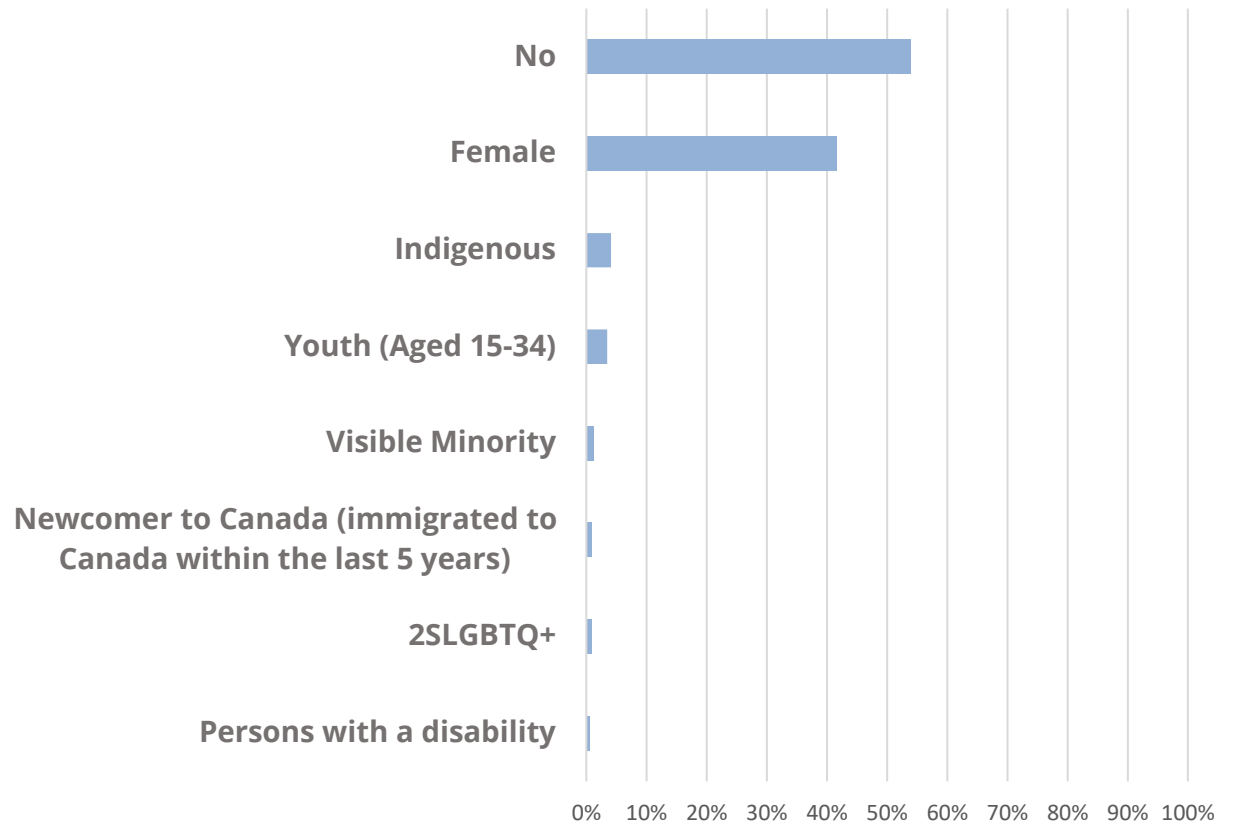
Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fernie	77.04%	245
Sparwood	37.42%	119
Elkford	35.85%	114
Regional District of East Kootney Area A	0%	0
Total Respondents:		318

Q3 Is your business 51% or more owned by any the following groups?

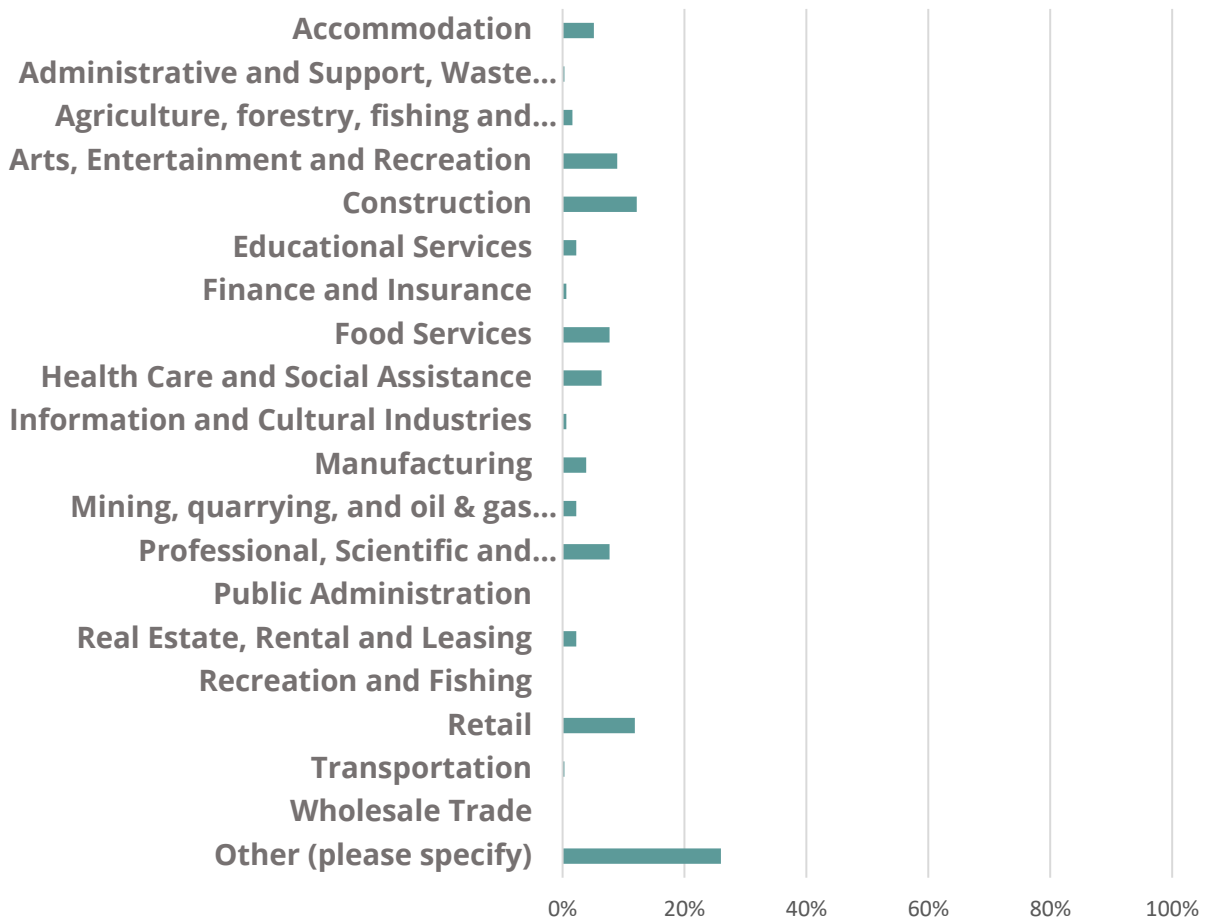
Answered: 315 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	53.97%	170
Female	41.59%	131
Indigenous	4.13%	13
Youth (Aged 15-34)	3.49%	11
Visible Minority	1.27%	4
Newcomer to Canada (immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years)	0.95%	3
2SLGBTQ+	0.95%	3
Persons with a disability	0.63%	2
Total Respondents:		315

Q4 What is your business industry?

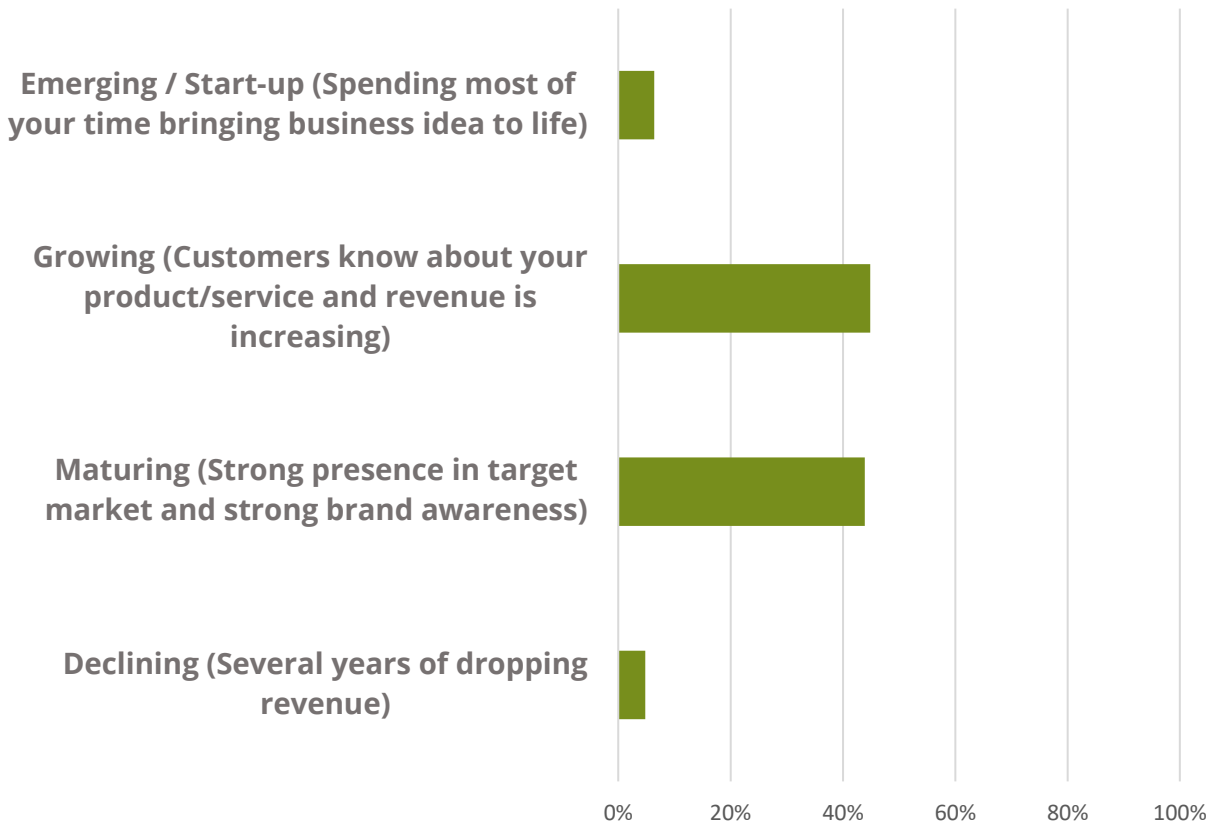
Answered: 312 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	5.13%	16
Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	0.32%	1
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.60%	5
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	8.97%	28
Construction	12.18%	38
Educational Services	2.24%	7
Food Services	7.69%	24
Finance and Insurance	0.64%	2
Health Care and Social Assistance	6.41%	20
Information and Cultural Industries	0.64%	2
Manufacturing	3.85%	12
Mining, quarrying, and oil & gas extraction	2.24%	7
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	7.69%	24
Public Administration	0.00%	0
Recreation and Fishing	0.00%	0
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	2.24%	7
Retail	11.86%	37
Transportation	0.32%	1
Wholesale Trade	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	25.96%	81
Total Respondents:		312

Q5 What is the current state of your business?

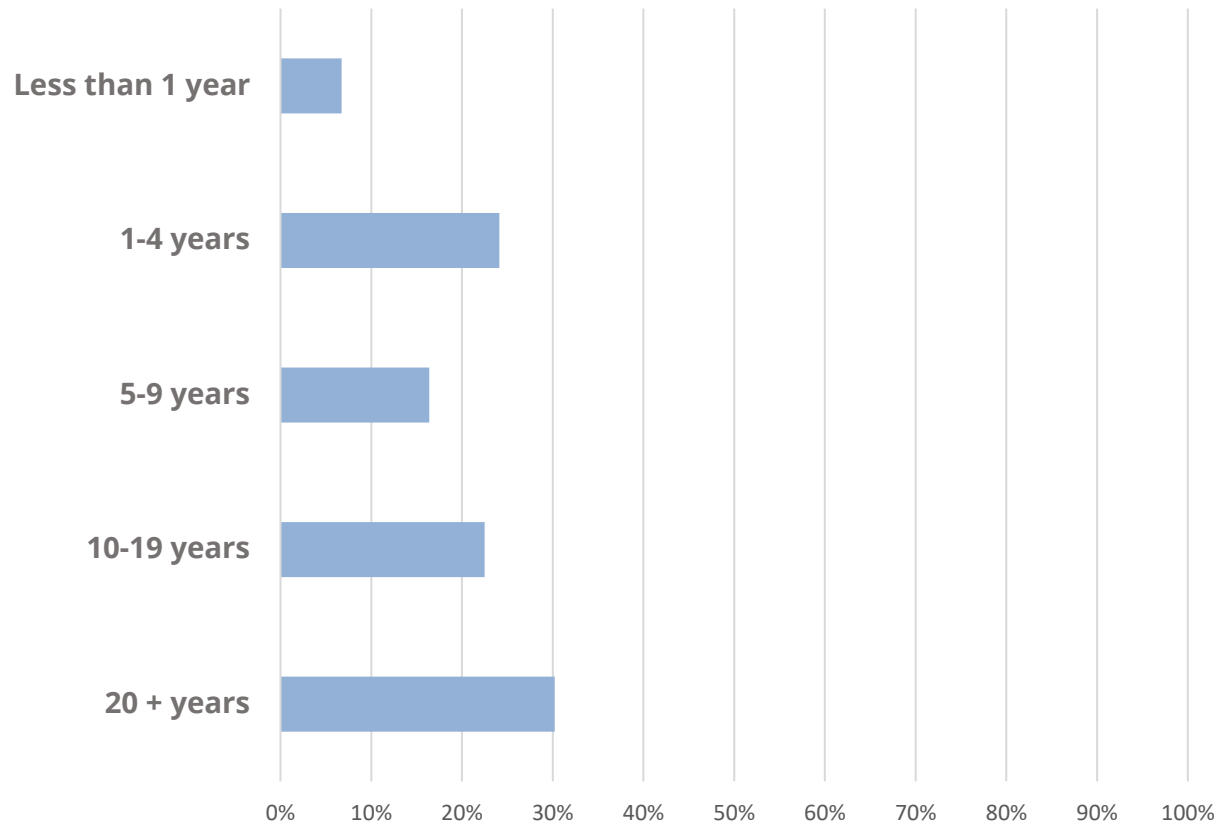
Answered: 312 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Emerging / Start-up (Spending most of your time bringing business idea to life)	6.41%	20
Growing (Customers know about your product/service and revenue is increasing)	44.87%	140
Maturing (Strong presence in target market and strong brand awareness)	43.91%	137
Declining (Several years of dropping revenue)	4.81%	15
Total Respondents:		312

Q6 How many years has your business been in operation?

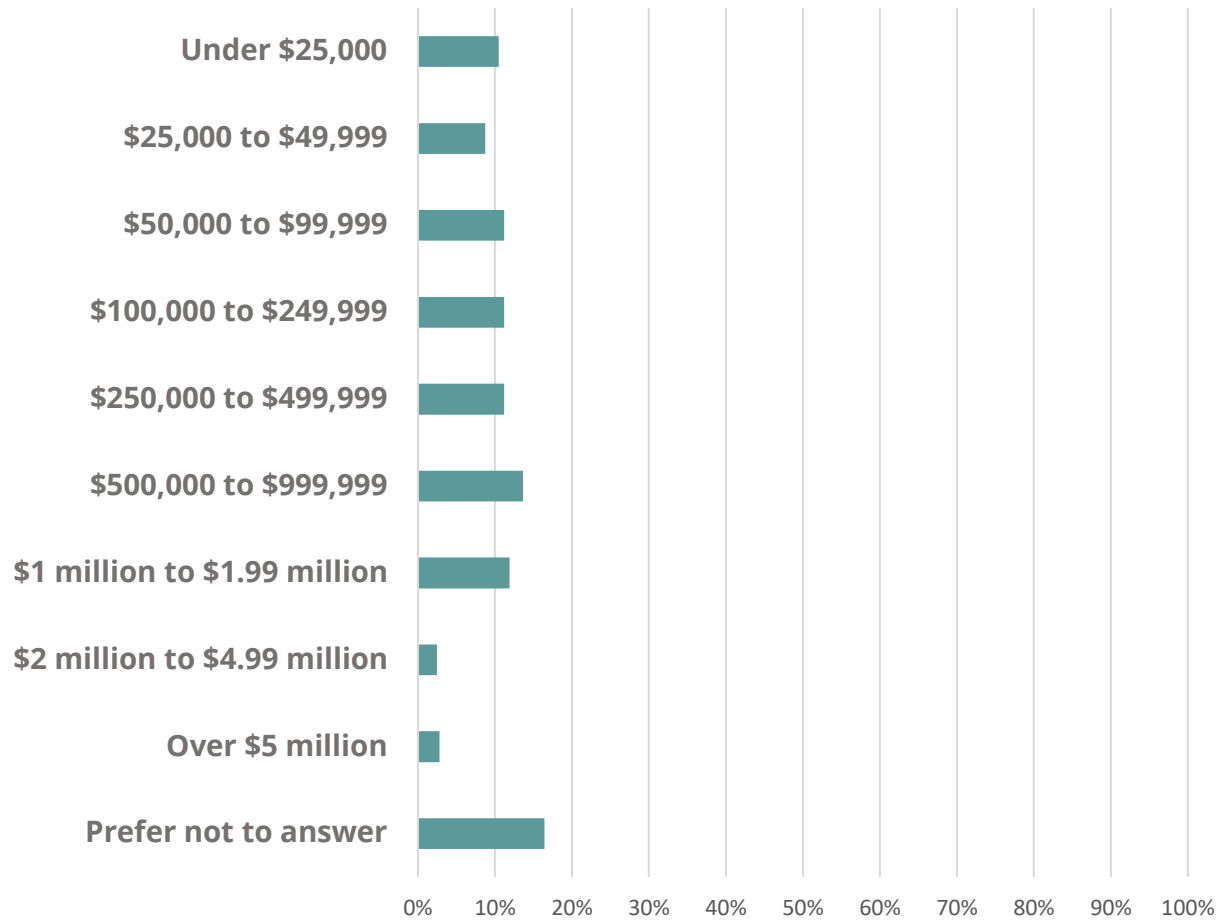
Answered: 311 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	6.75%	21
1-4 years	24.12%	75
5-9 years	16.40%	51
10-19 years	22.51%	70
20 + years	30.23%	94
Total Respondents:		311

Q7 If you think about the last 2-4 years, what is the average annual gross revenue of your company?

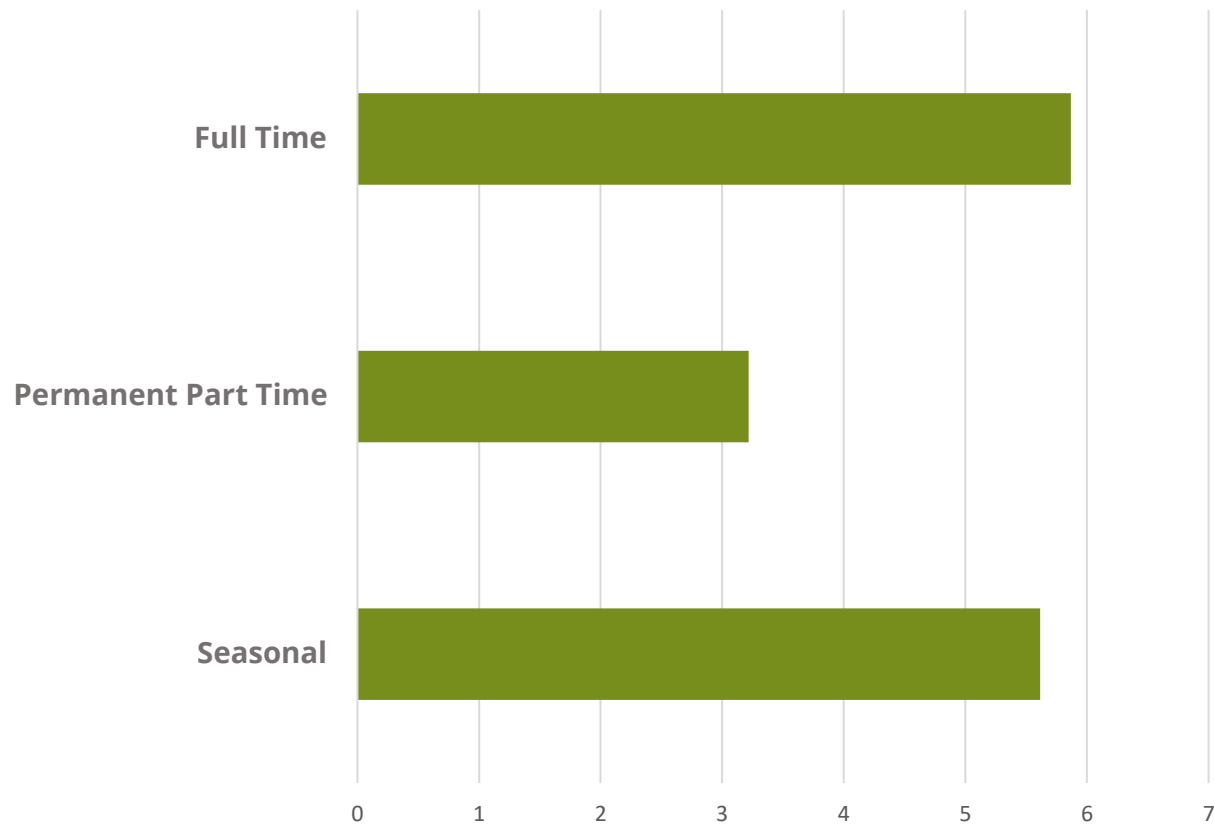
Answered: 286 Skipped: 32



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under \$25,000	10.49%	30
\$25,000 to \$49,999	8.74%	25
\$50,000 to \$99,999	11.19%	32
\$100,000 to \$249,999	11.19%	32
\$250,000 to \$499,999	11.19%	32
\$500,000 to \$999,999	13.64%	39
\$1 million to \$1.99 million	11.89%	34
\$2 million to \$4.99 million	2.45%	7
Over \$5 million	2.80%	8
Prefer not to answer	16.43%	47
Total Respondents:		286

Q8 What is the typical number of employees at your business? (the owner classifies as an employee)? - with Teck Coal Limited removed

Answered: 306 Skipped: 12

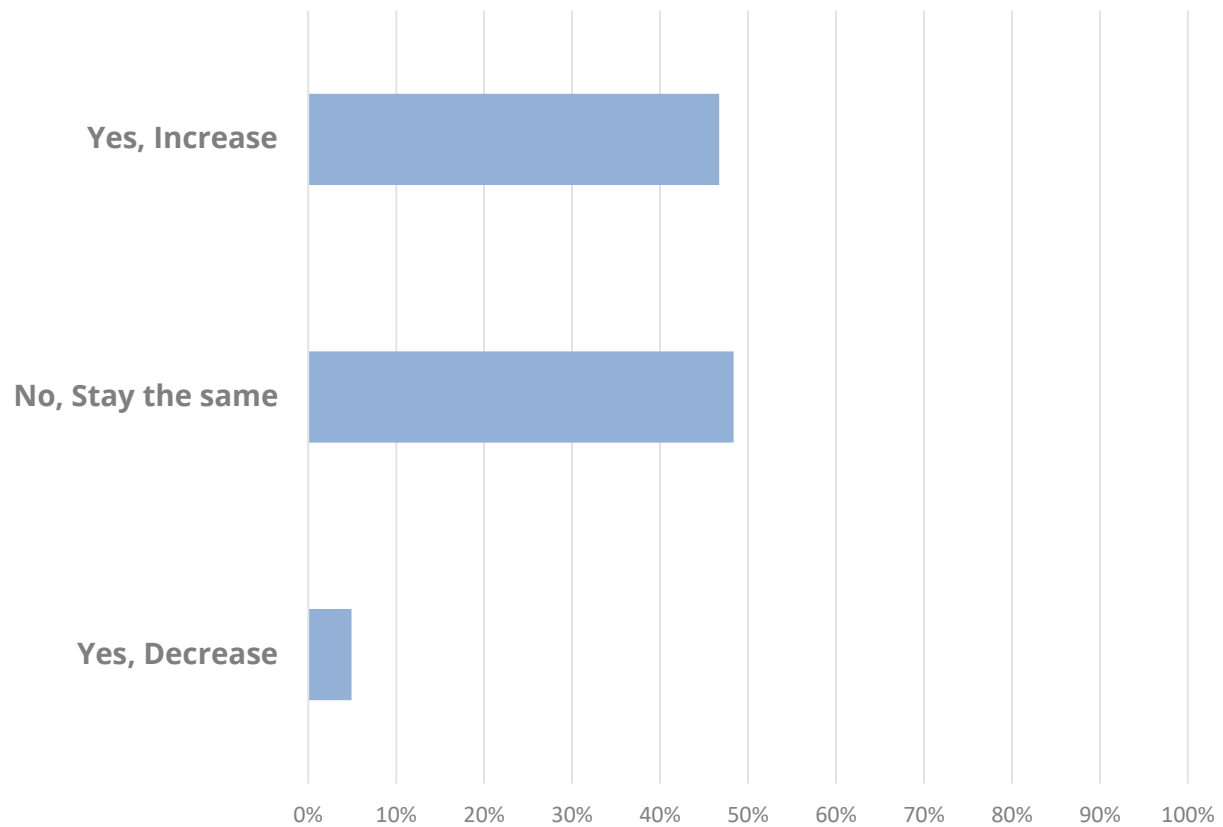


ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Full Time	5.616	629	112
Permanent Part Time	3.217	489	152
Seasonal	5.866	1,578	269
Total Respondents:			306

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEDIAN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Full Time	0.00	120.00	2.00	5.87	11.74
Permanent Part Time	0.00	80.00	2.00	3.22	7.53
Seasonal	0.00	150.00	1.00	5.62	16.57

Q9 Do you expect the number of employees to change over the next 3 years?

Answered: 304 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, Increase	46.71%	142
No, Stay the same	48.36%	147
Yes, Decrease	4.93%	15
Total Respondents:		304

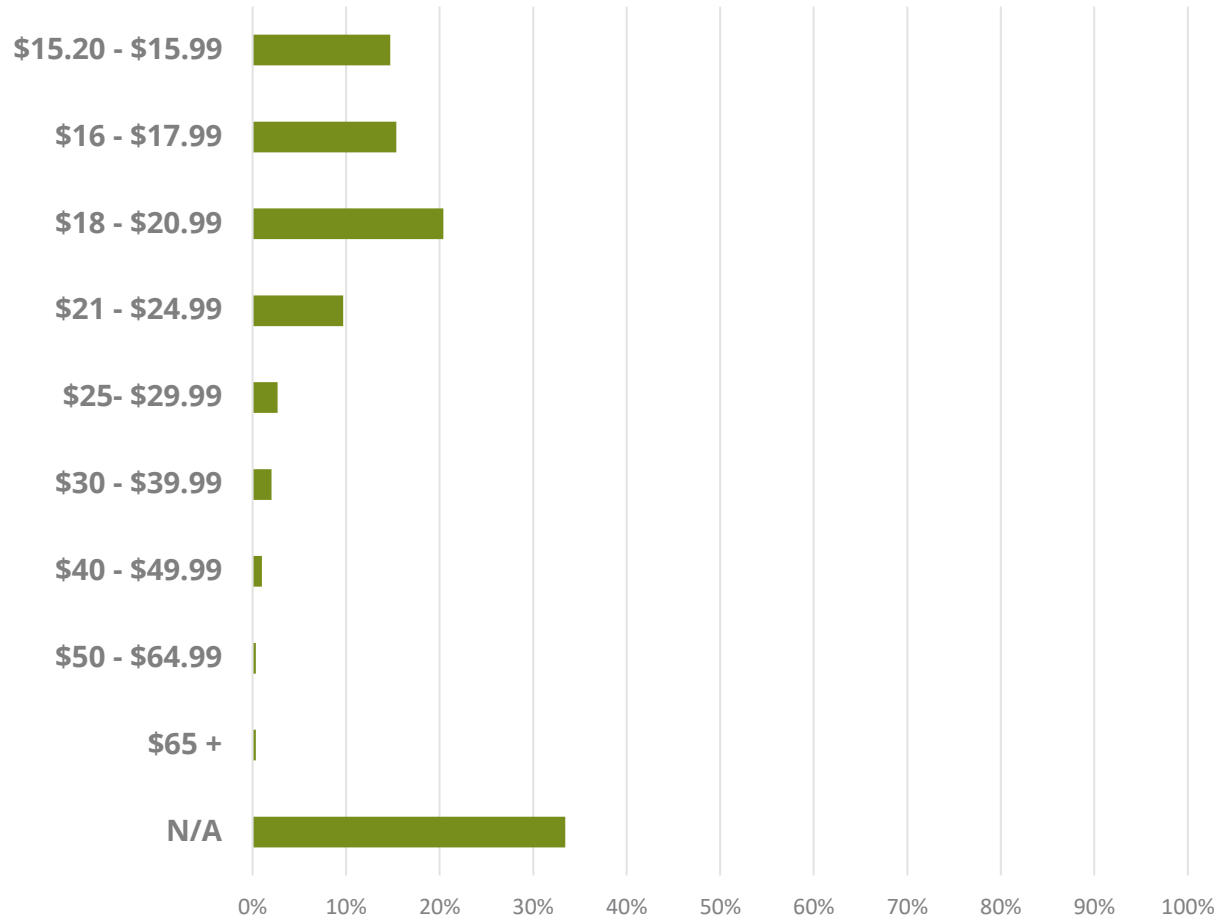
Q10 Why do you expect this?

Answered: 273 Skipped: 45

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Q11 Entry Level

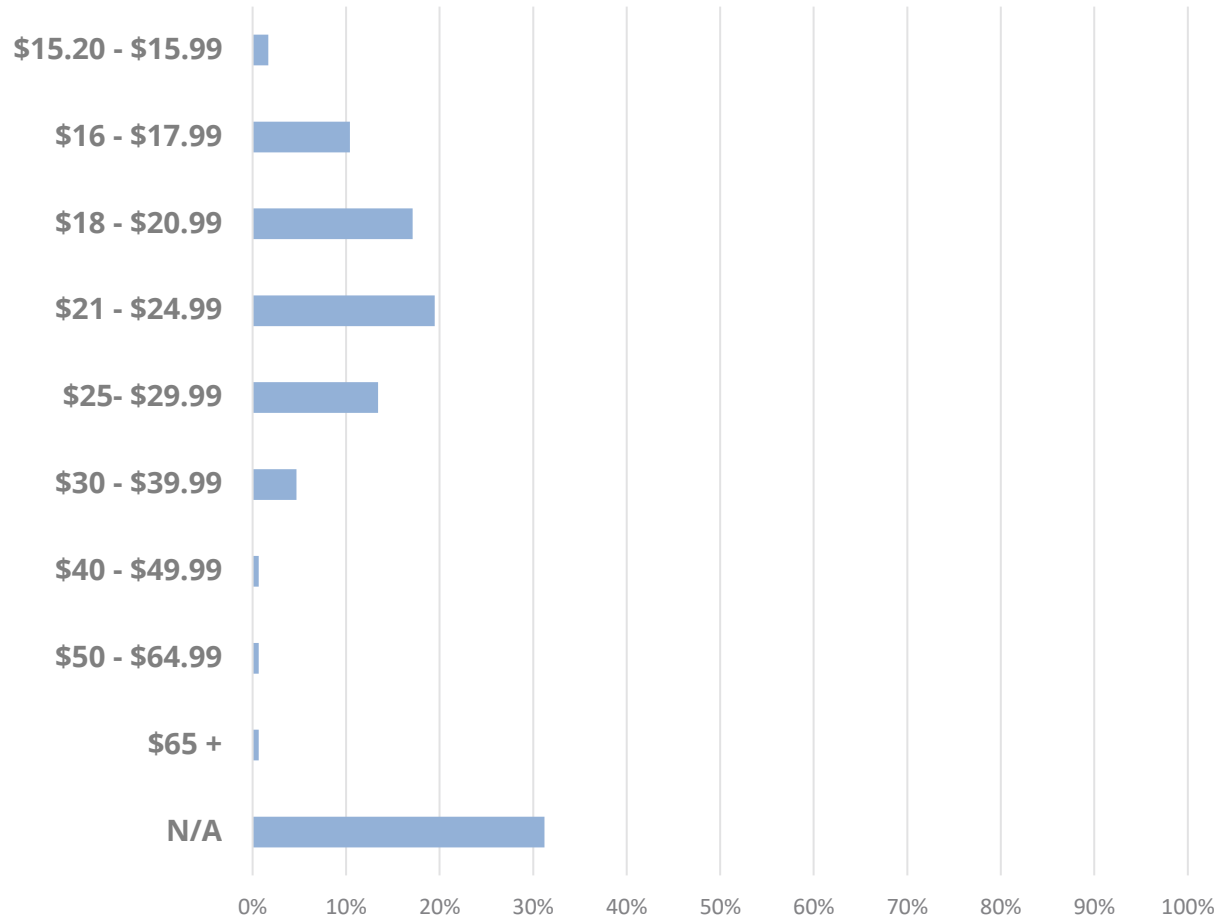
Answered: 299 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
\$15.20 - \$15.99	14.72%	44
\$16 - \$17.99	15.38%	46
\$18 - \$20.99	20.40%	61
\$21 - \$24.99	9.70%	29
\$25 - \$29.99	2.68%	8
\$30 - \$39.99	2.01%	6
\$40 - \$49.99	1.00%	3
\$50 - \$64.99	0.33%	1
\$65 +	0.33%	1
N/A	33.44%	100
Total Respondents:		299

Q12 Semi-Skilled

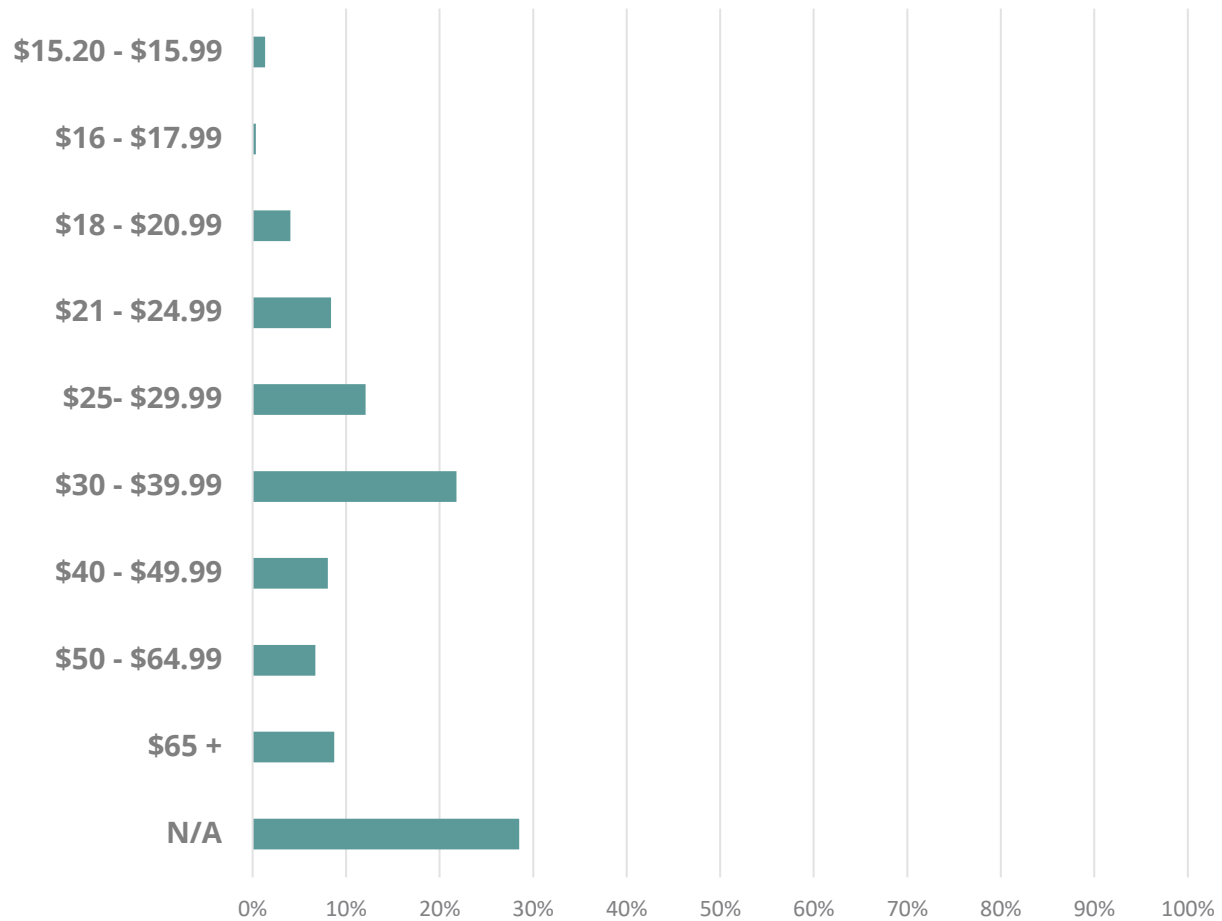
Answered: 298 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
\$15.20 - \$15.99	1.68%	5
\$16 - \$17.99	10.40%	31
\$18 - \$20.99	17.11%	51
\$21 - \$24.99	19.46%	58
\$25 - \$29.99	13.42%	40
\$30 - \$39.99	4.70%	14
\$40 - \$49.99	0.67%	2
\$50 - \$64.99	0.67%	2
\$65 +	0.67%	2
N/A	31.21%	93
Total Respondents:		298

Q13 Skilled / Professional

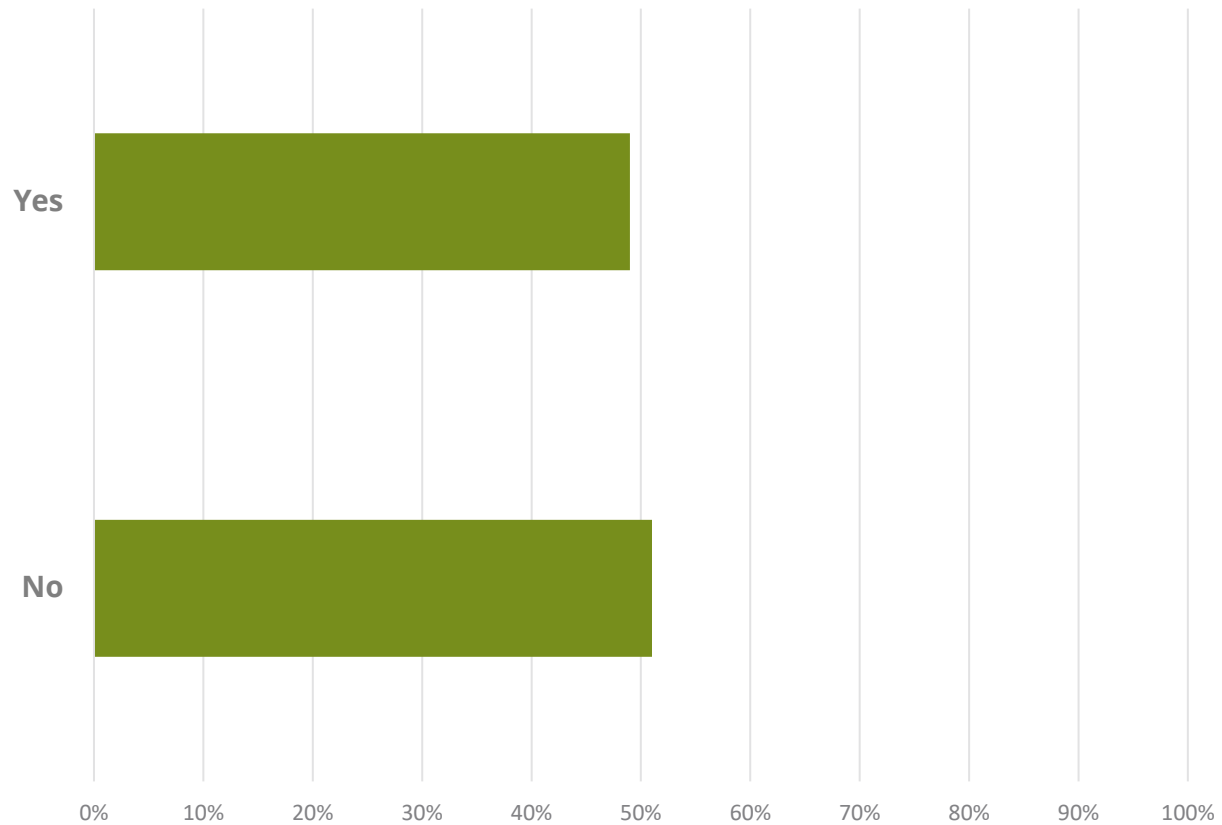
Answered: 298 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
\$15.20 - \$15.99	1.34%	4
\$16 - \$17.99	0.34%	1
\$18 - \$20.99	4.03%	12
\$21 - \$24.99	8.39%	25
\$25 - \$29.99	12.08%	36
\$30 - \$39.99	21.81%	65
\$40 - \$49.99	8.05%	24
\$50 - \$64.99	6.71%	20
\$65 +	8.72%	26
N/A	28.52%	85
Total Respondents:		298

Q14 Has employee recruitment been a problem in the last 3 years?

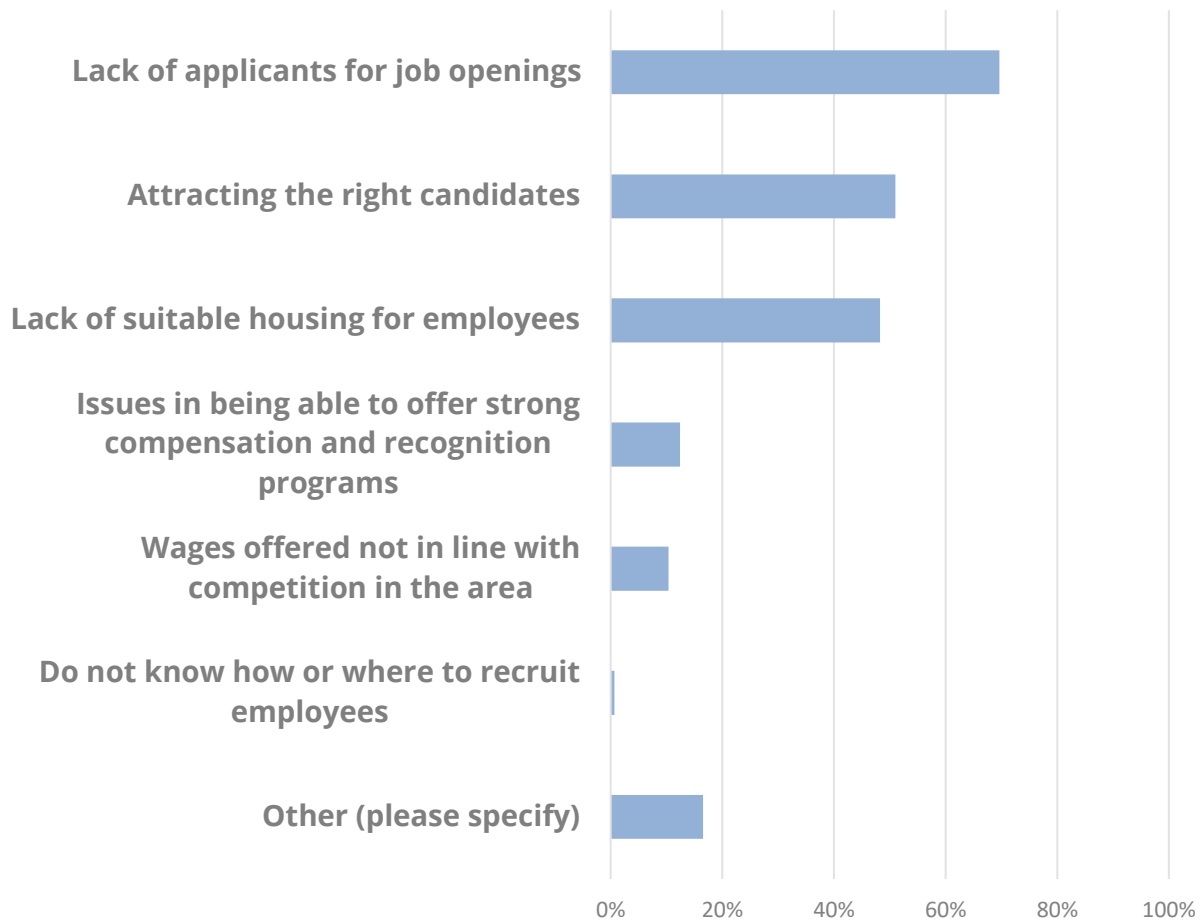
Answered: 296 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	48.99%	145
No	51.01%	151
Total Respondents:		296

Q15 What are the underlining issues impacting employee recruitment for your business?

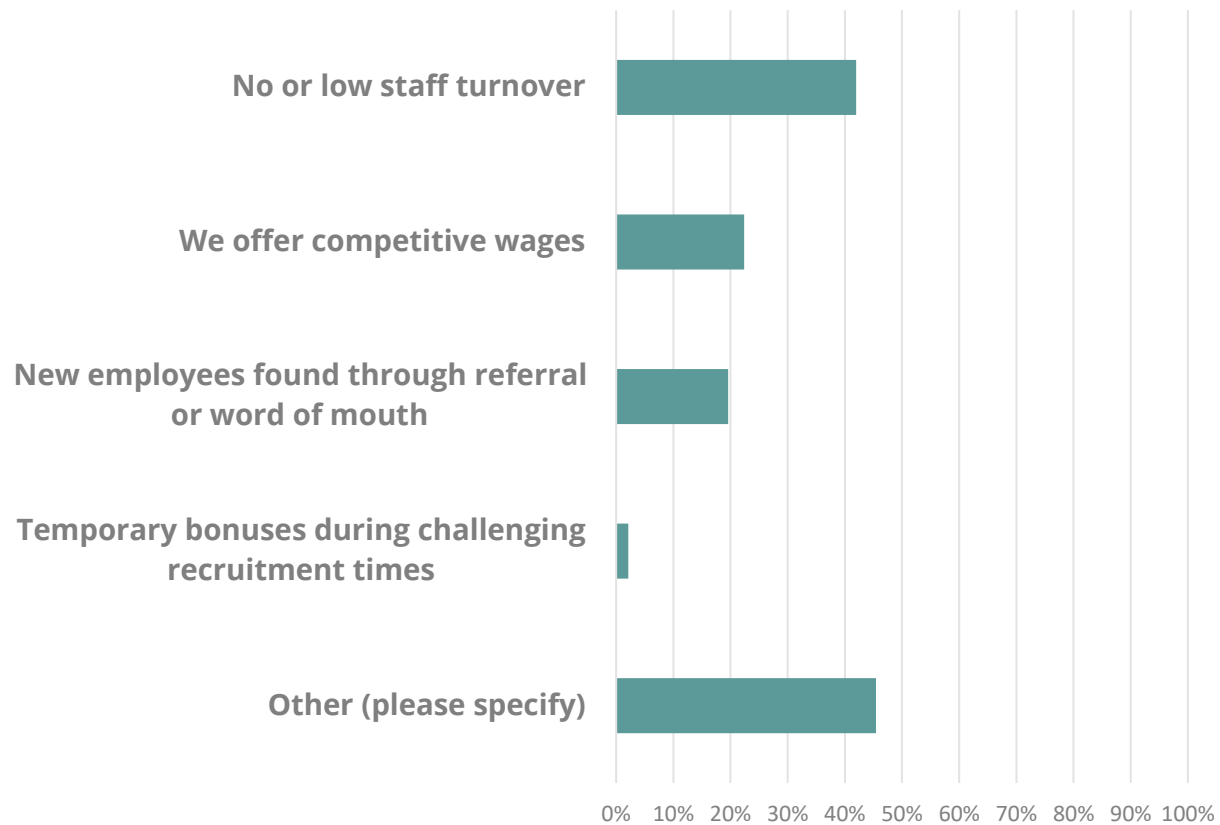
Answered: 145 Skipped: 173



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of applicants for job openings	69.66%	101
Attracting the right candidates	51.03%	74
Lack of suitable housing for employees	48.28%	70
Issues in being able to offer strong compensation and recognition programs	12.41%	18
Wages offered not in line with competition in the area	10.34%	15
Do not know how or where to recruit employees	0.69%	1
Other (please specify)	16.55%	24
Total Respondents:		145

Q16 What strategies / factors have you employed that make employee recruitment not a problem?

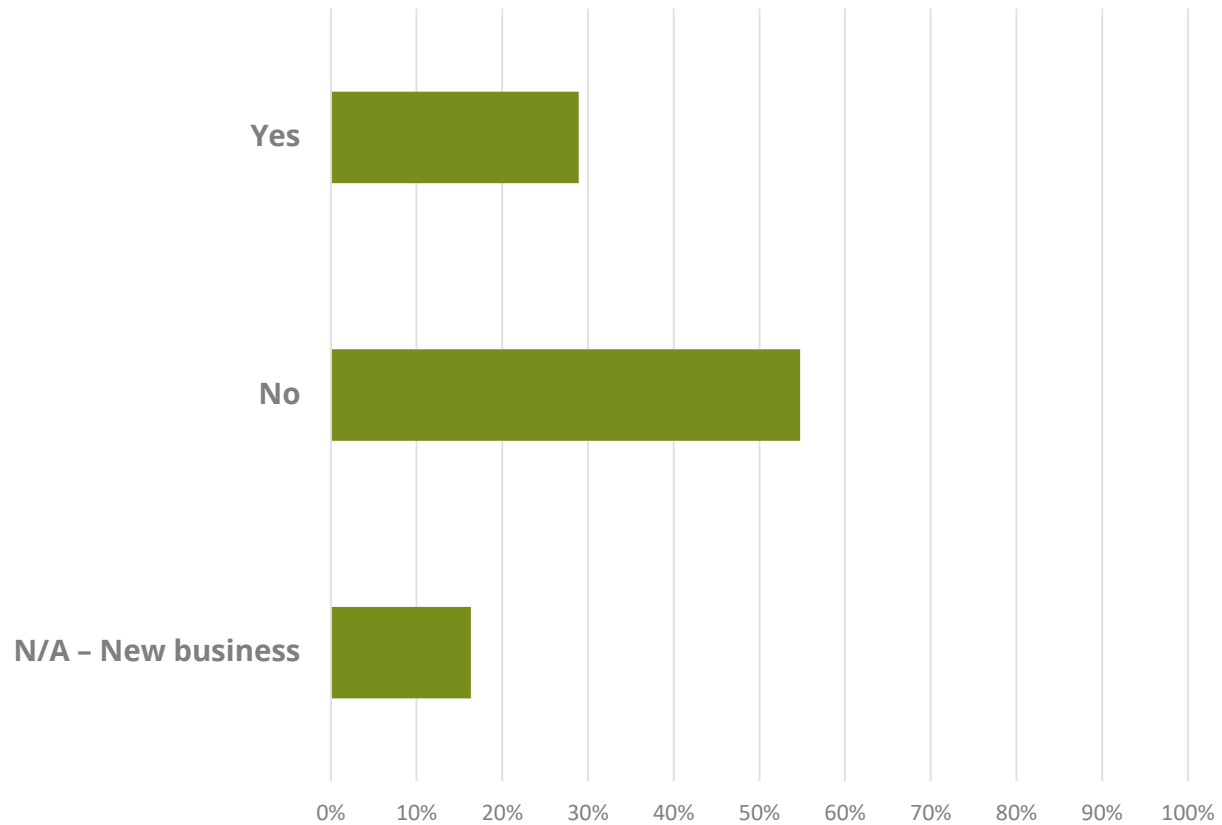
Answered: 143 Skipped: 175



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No or low staff turnover	41.96%	60
We offer competitive wages	22.38%	32
New employees found through referral or word of mouth	19.58%	28
Temporary bonuses during challenging recruitment times	2.10%	3
Other (please specify)	45.45%	65
Total Respondents:		143

Q17 Has employee retention been a problem in the last 3 years?

Answered: 294 Skipped: 24

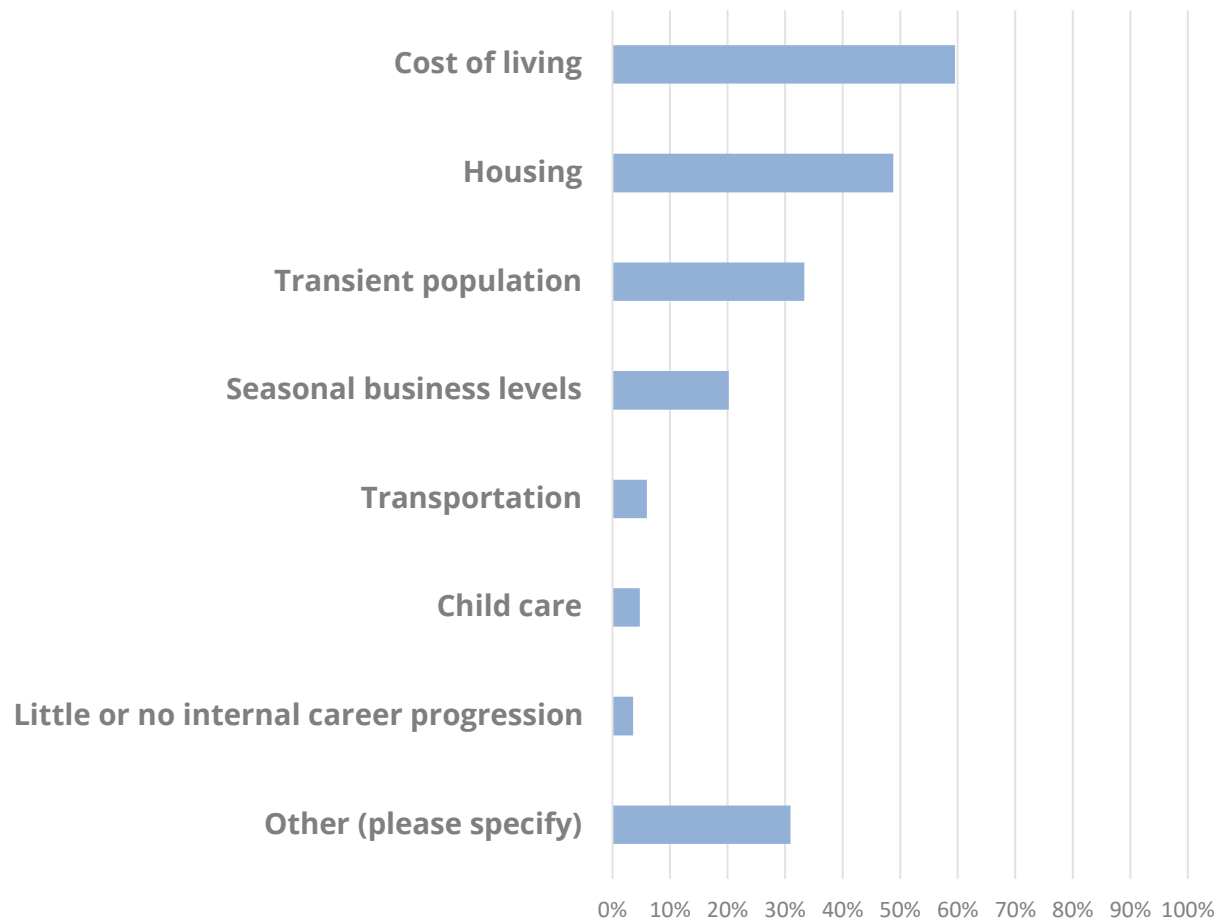


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	28.91%	85
No	54.76%	161
N/A - New business	16.33%	48
Total Respondents:		294

Q18 What are the underlining issues impacting employee retention for your business?

Answered: 84

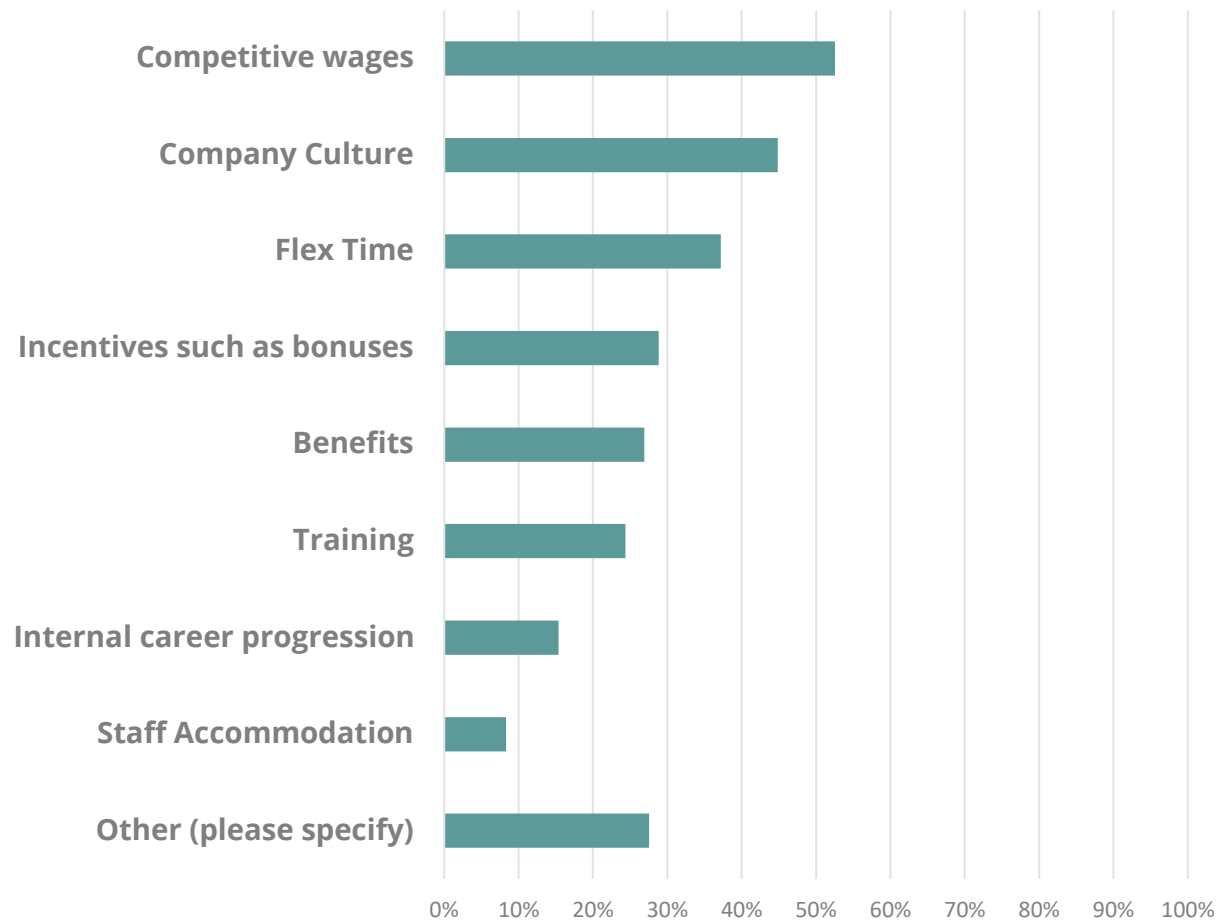
Skipped: 234



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Cost of living	59.52%	50
Housing	48.81%	41
Transient population	33.33%	28
Seasonal business levels	20.24%	17
Transportation	5.95%	5
Child care	4.76%	4
Little or no internal career progression	3.57%	3
Other (please specify)	30.95%	26
Total Respondents:		84

Q19 What strategies / factors have you employed that make employee retention not a problem?

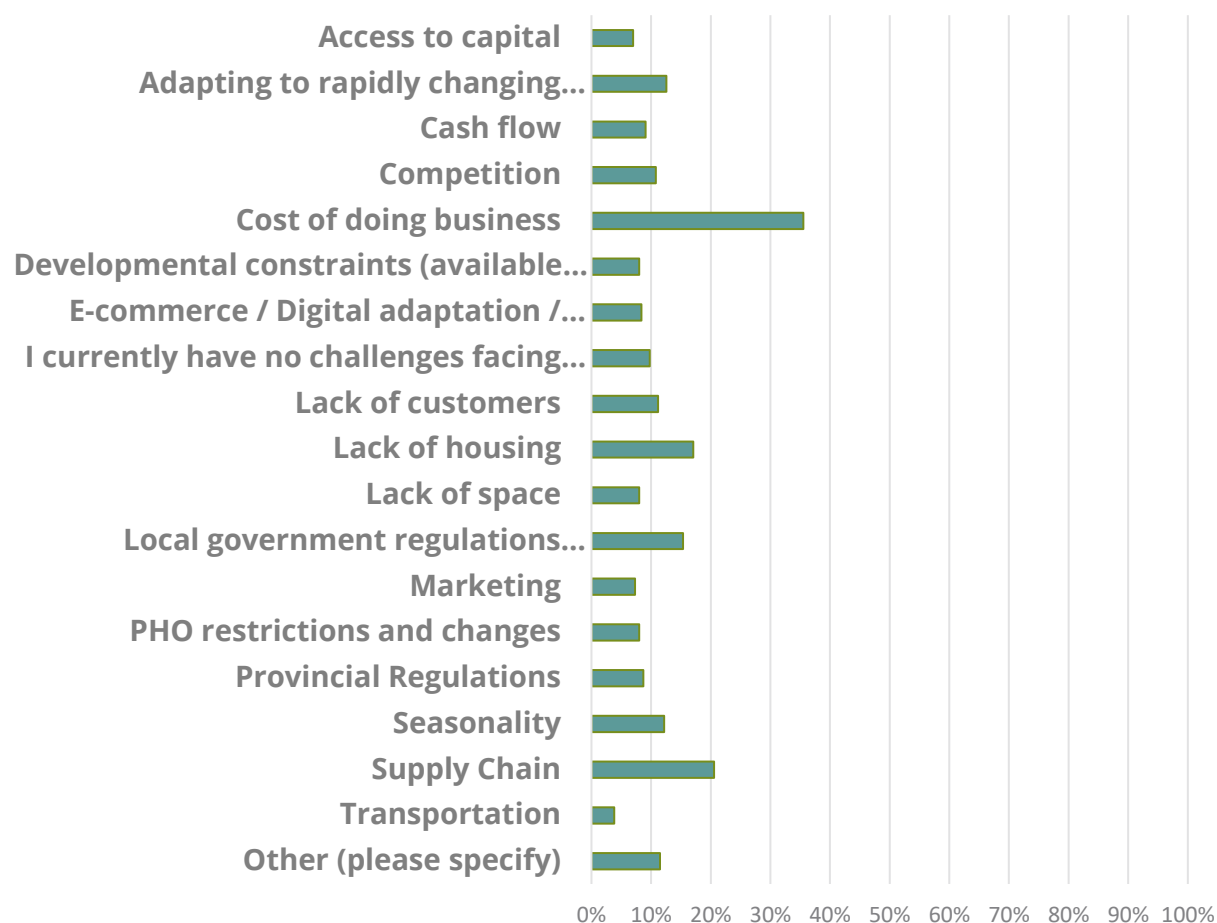
Answered: 156 Skipped: 162



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Competitive wages	52.56%	82
Company Culture	44.87%	70
Flex Time	37.18%	58
Incentives such as bonuses	28.85%	45
Benefits	26.92%	42
Training	24.36%	38
Internal career progression	15.38%	24
Staff Accommodation	8.33%	13
Other (please specify)	27.56%	43
Total Respondents:		156

Q20 What are the biggest challenges facing your business, other than labour? (Please select top 3)

Answered: 287 Skipped: 31



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Access to capital	6.97%	20
Adapting to rapidly changing business landscape	12.54%	36
Cash flow	9.06%	26
Competition	10.80%	31
Cost of doing business	35.54%	102
Developmental constraints (available land, financing, age)	8.01%	23
E-commerce / Digital adaptation / Online presence	8.36%	24
I currently have no challenges facing my business	9.76%	28
Lack of customers	11.15%	32
Lack of housing	17.07%	49
Lack of space	8.01%	23
Local government regulations (approval process, inspections, licensing, bylaw, "red tape")	15.33%	44
Marketing	7.32%	21
PHO restrictions and changes	8.01%	23
Provincial Regulations	8.71%	25
Seasonality	12.20%	35
Supply Chain	20.56%	59
Transportation	3.83%	11
Other (please specify)	11.50%	33
Total Respondents:		287

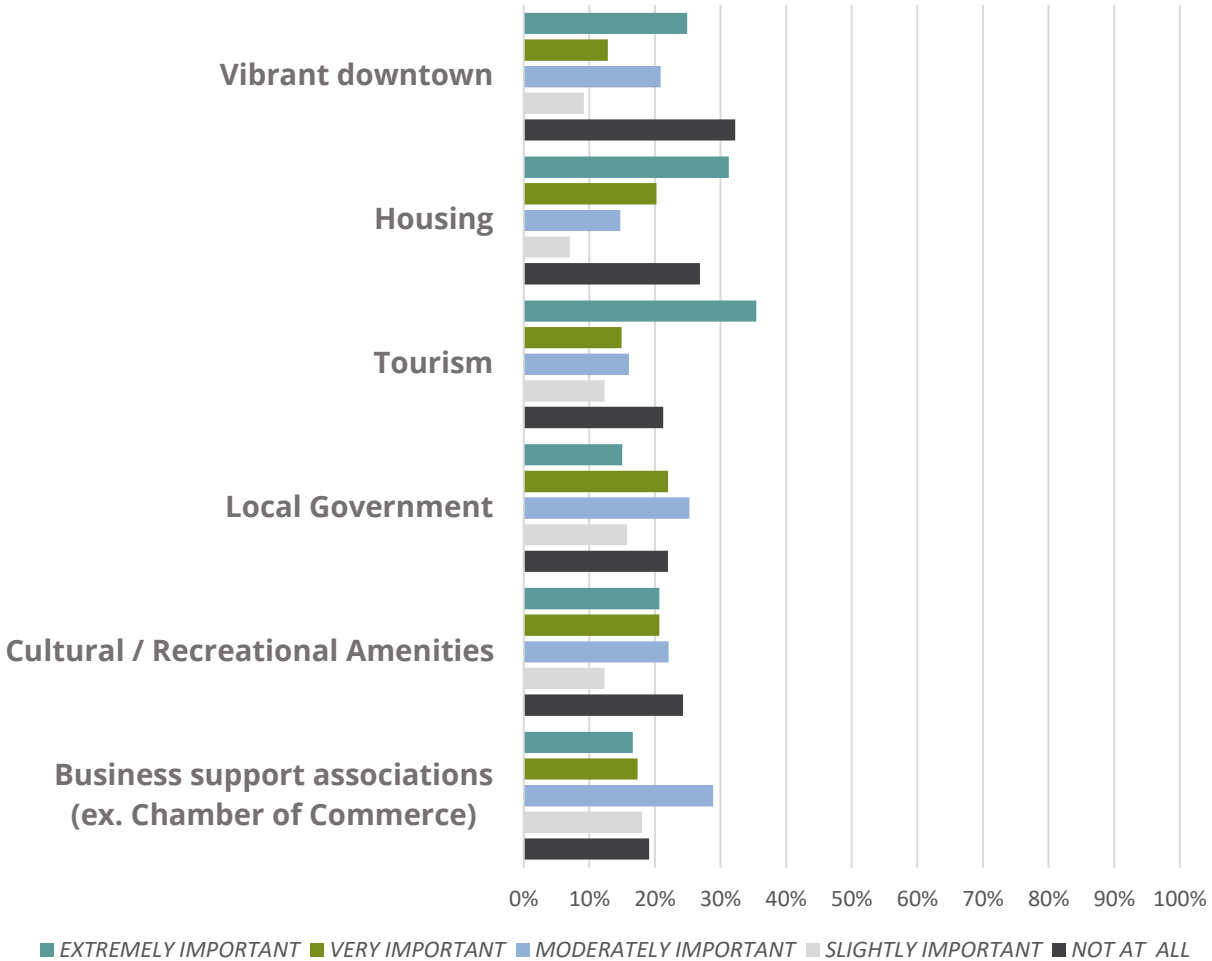
Q21 What specifically about "Development constraints" or "Local government regulations" are a challenge for your business? Please feel free to provide as much detail as wanted.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 288

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Q22 On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important and 5 being extremely important, please rate how important the following categories are to your business's success.

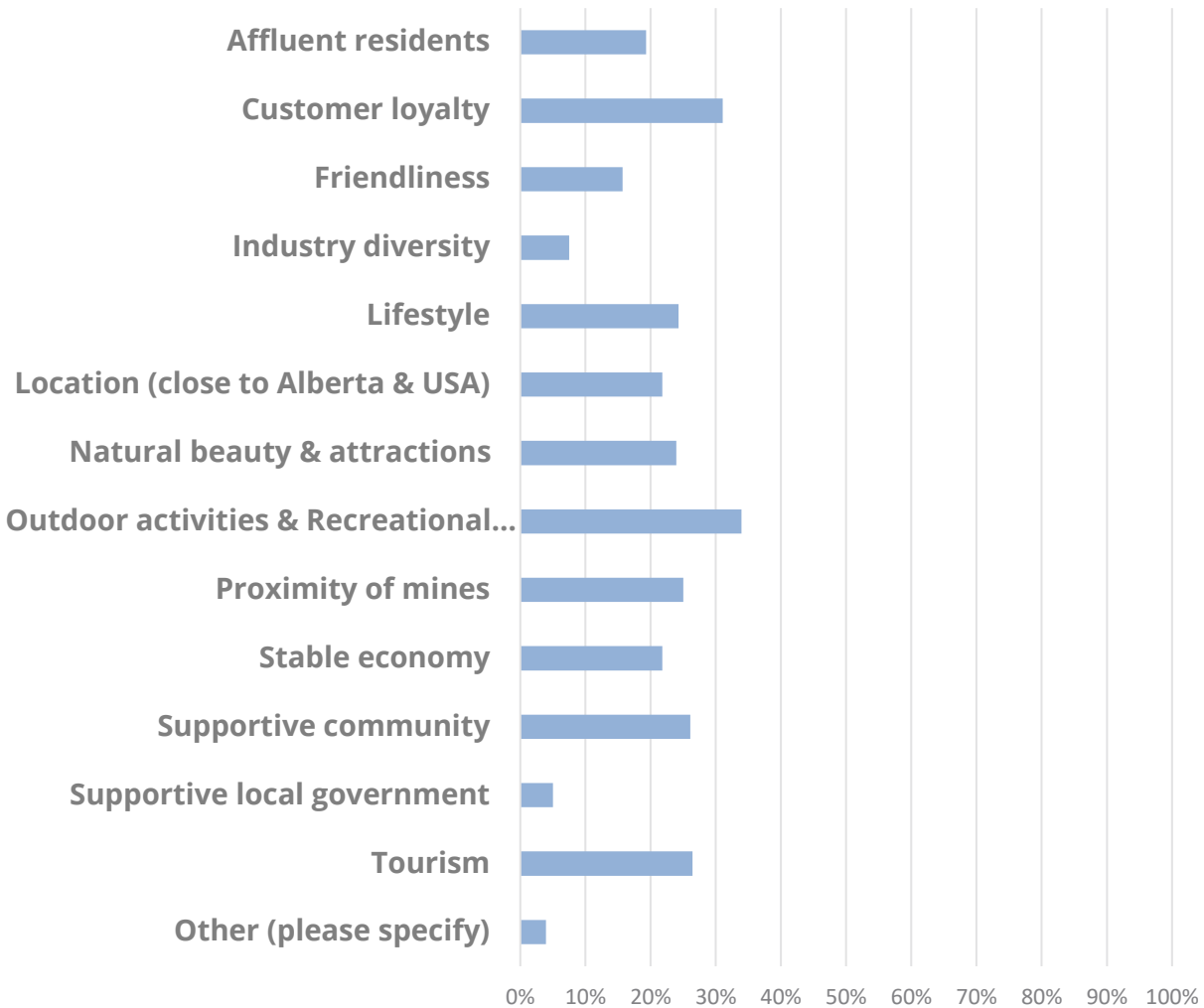
Answered: 280 Skipped: 38



	NOT AT ALL	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Business support associations (ex. Chamber of Commerce)	19.13% 53	18.05% 50	28.88% 80	17.33% 48	16.61% 46	277
Cultural / Recreational Amenities	24.28% 67	12.32% 34	22.10% 61	20.65% 57	20.65% 57	276
Local Government	21.98% 60	15.75% 43	25.27% 69	21.98% 60	15.02% 41	273
Tourism	21.27% 57	12.31% 33	16.04% 43	14.93% 40	35.45% 95	268
Housing	26.84% 73	6.99% 19	14.71% 40	20.22% 55	31.25% 85	272
Vibrant downtown	32.23% 88	9.16% 25	20.88% 57	12.82% 35	24.91% 68	273

Q23 What are the community's strengths as a place to do business? (Please select 1-3 answers)

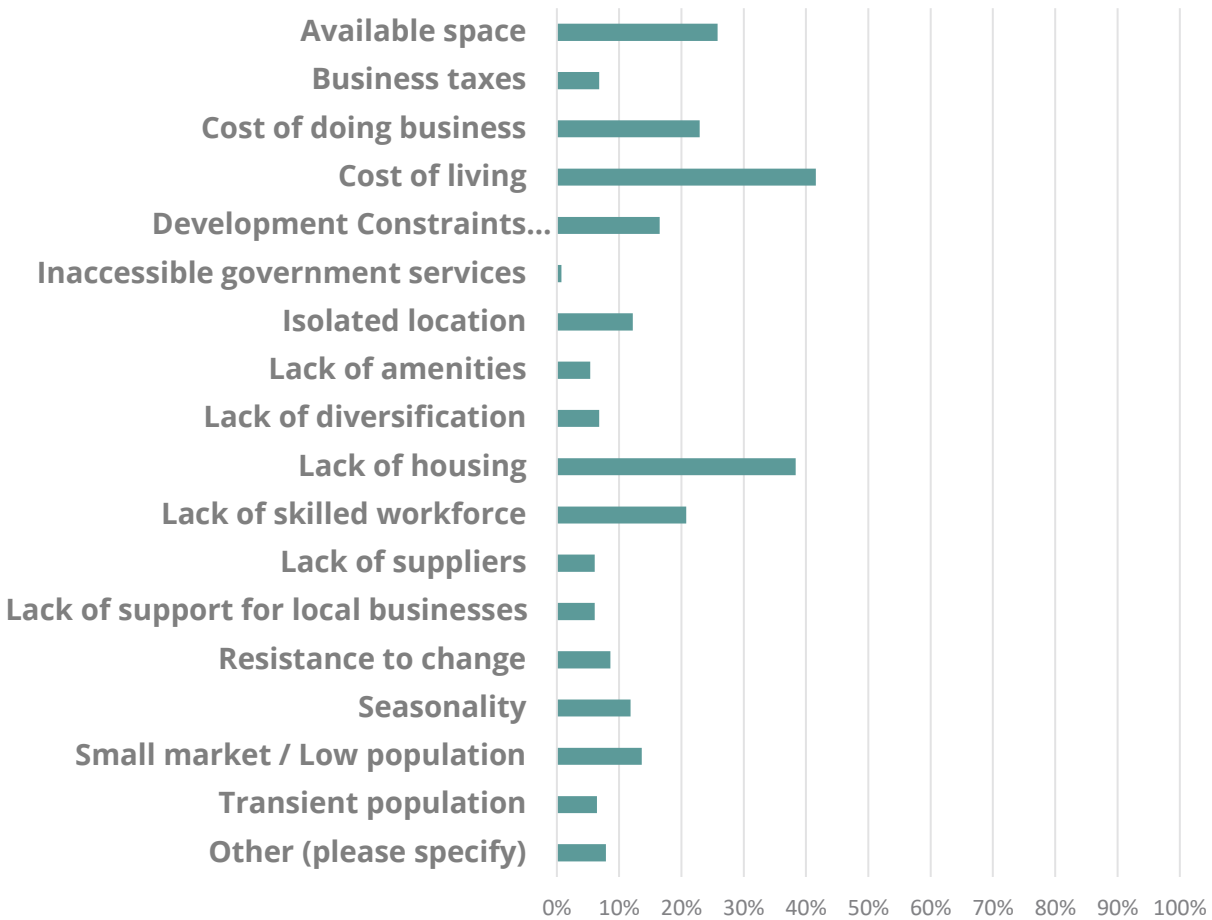
Answered: 280 Skipped: 38



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Affluent residents	19.29%	54
Customer loyalty	31.07%	87
Friendliness	15.71%	44
Industry diversity	7.50%	21
Lifestyle	24.29%	68
Location (close to Alberta & USA)	21.79%	61
Natural beauty & attractions	23.93%	67
Outdoor activities & Recreational Opportunities	33.93%	95
Proximity of mines	25.00%	70
Stable economy	21.79%	61
Supportive community	26.07%	73
Supportive local government	5.00%	14
Tourism	26.43%	74
Other (please specify)	3.93%	11
Total Respondents:		280

Q24 What are the community's weaknesses as a place to do business? (Please select 1-3 answers)

Answered: 279 Skipped: 39



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Available space	25.81%	72
Cost of doing business	22.94%	64
Development Constraints (Zoning/Bureaucracy/Permits)	16.49%	46
Business taxes	6.81%	19
Cost of living	41.58%	116
Inaccessible government services	0.72%	2
Isolated location	12.19%	34
Lack of housing	38.35%	107
Lack of amenities	5.38%	15
Lack of diversification	6.81%	19
Lack of skilled workforce	20.79%	58
Lack of suppliers	6.09%	17
Lack of support for local businesses	6.09%	17
Resistance to change	8.60%	24
Seasonality	11.83%	33
Small market / Low population	13.62%	38
Transient population	6.45%	18
Other (please specify)	7.89%	22
Total Respondents:		279

Q25 If you would like to expand on the community weakness's you identified above, please enter your comments below.

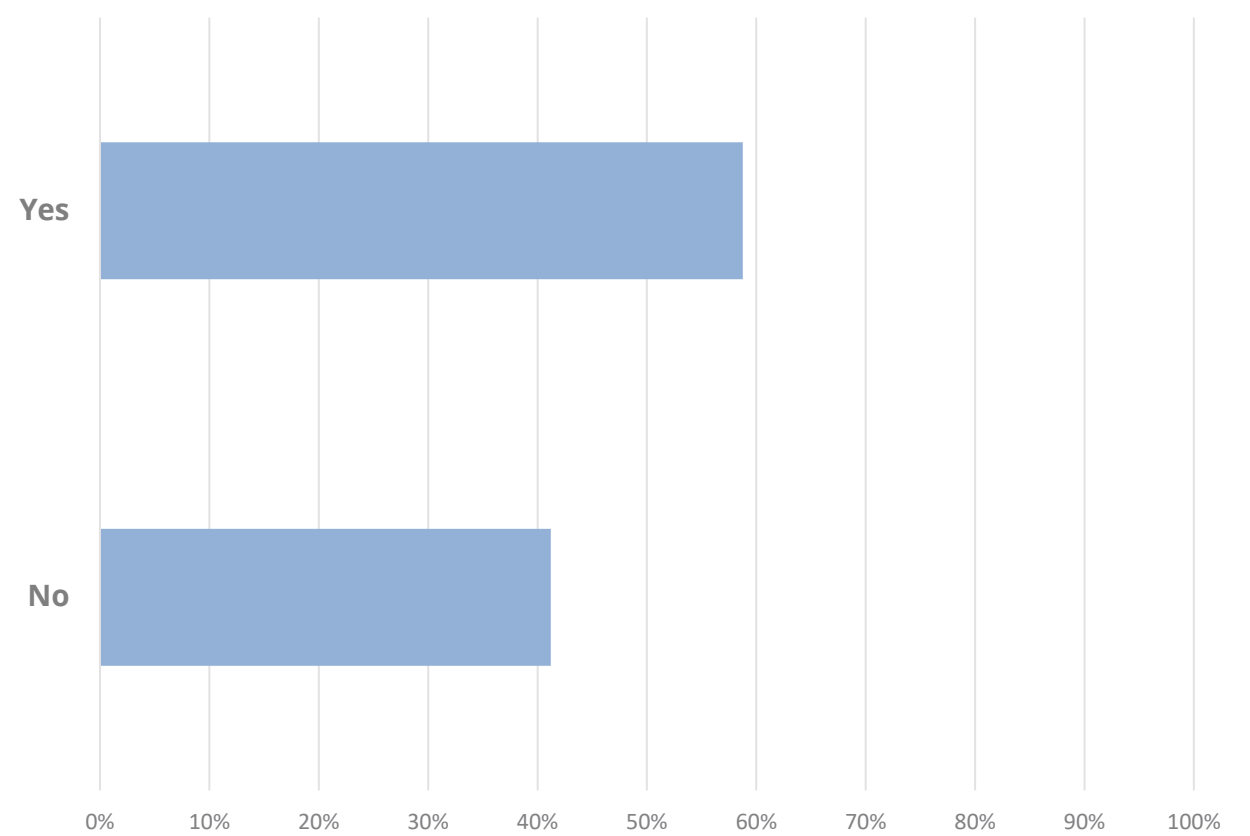
Answered: 74

Skipped: 244

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Q26 Do you plan to expand your business in the next 3 years?

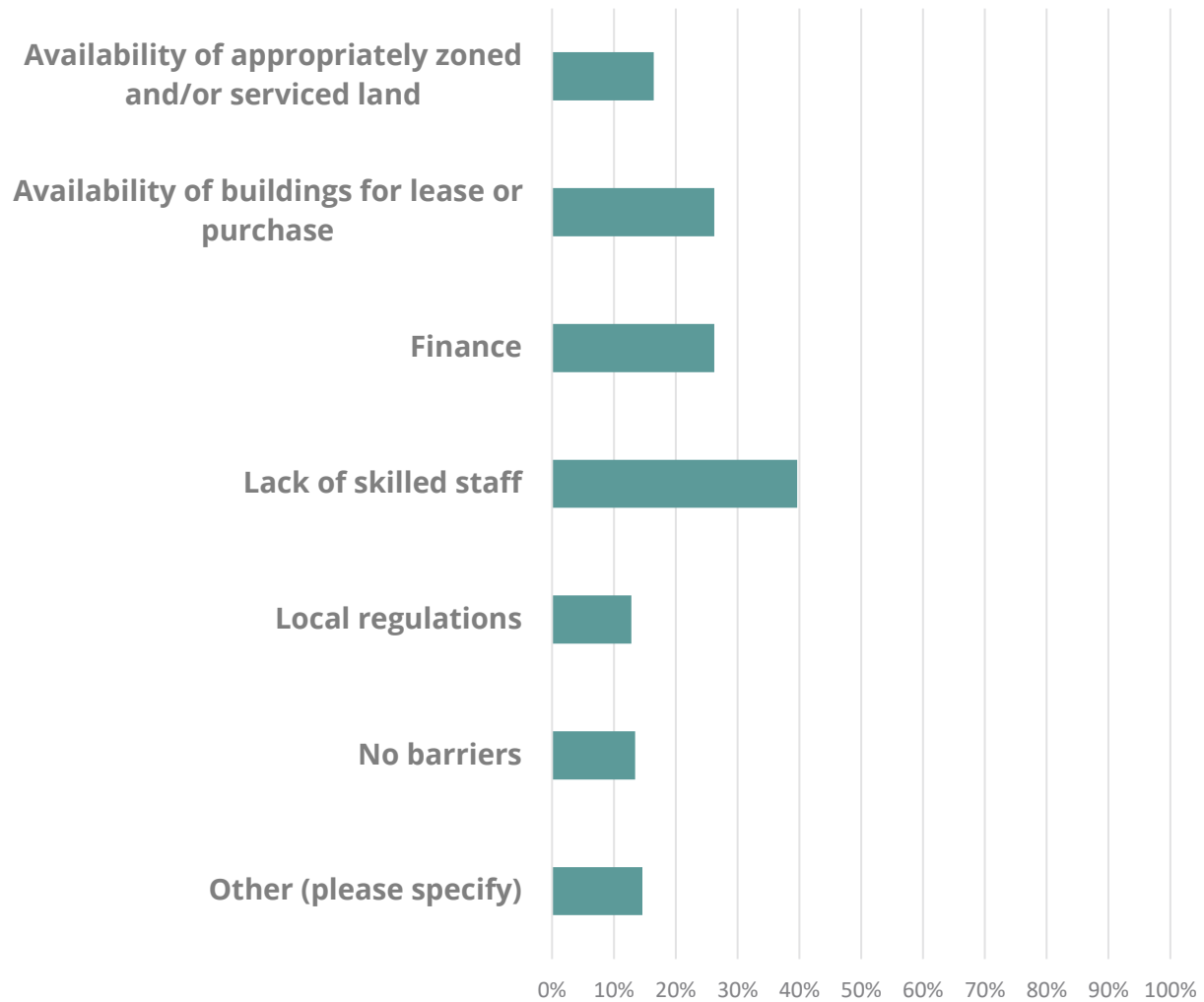
Answered: 279 Skipped: 39



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	58.78%	164
No	41.22%	115
Total Respondents:		279

Q27 What are the major barriers for your expansion?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 154



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Availability of appropriately zoned and/or serviced land	16.46%	27
Availability of buildings for lease or purchase	26.22%	43
Finance	26.22%	43
Lack of skilled staff	39.63%	65
Local regulations	12.80%	21
No barriers	13.41%	22
Other (please specify)	14.63%	24
Total Respondents:		164

Q28 Why do you not plan on expanding?

Answered: 115 Skipped: 203



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Covid-19 restrictions creating uncertainty	18.26%	21
I do not have the resources (available space, additional equipment, increased operational work etc.)	25.22%	29
I do not want debt / I do not want more debt	13.04%	15
Lack of staff	20.87%	24
Lifestyle choice (less stress, more time for yourself, family etc.)	47.83%	55
The time or industry is not right	7.83%	9
Other (please specify)	19.13%	22
Total Respondents:		115

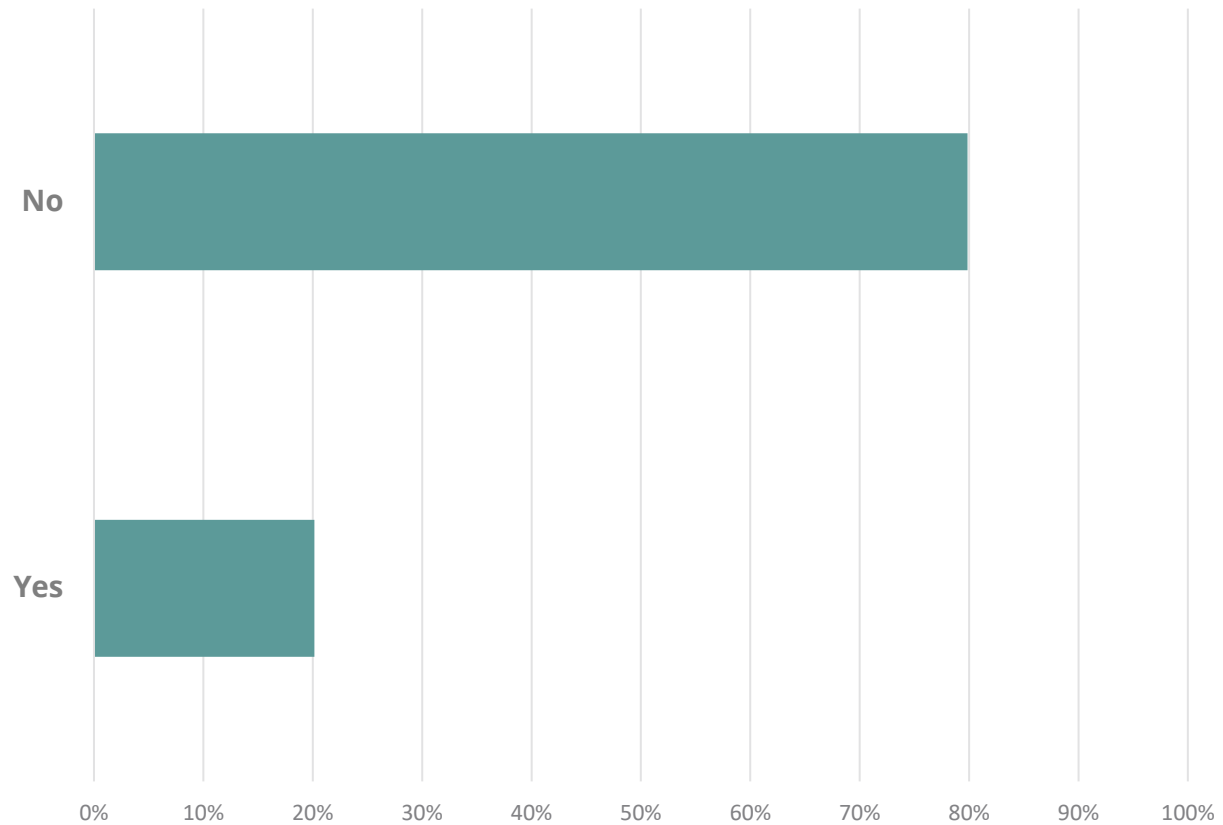
Q29 What specifically about "Local regulations" are a barrier to your expansion? Please feel free to provide as much detail as wanted.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 303

QUALITATIVE DATA – CONFIDENTIAL

Q30 Do you plan to retire or sell your business within the next 3-5 years?

Answered: 278 Skipped: 40

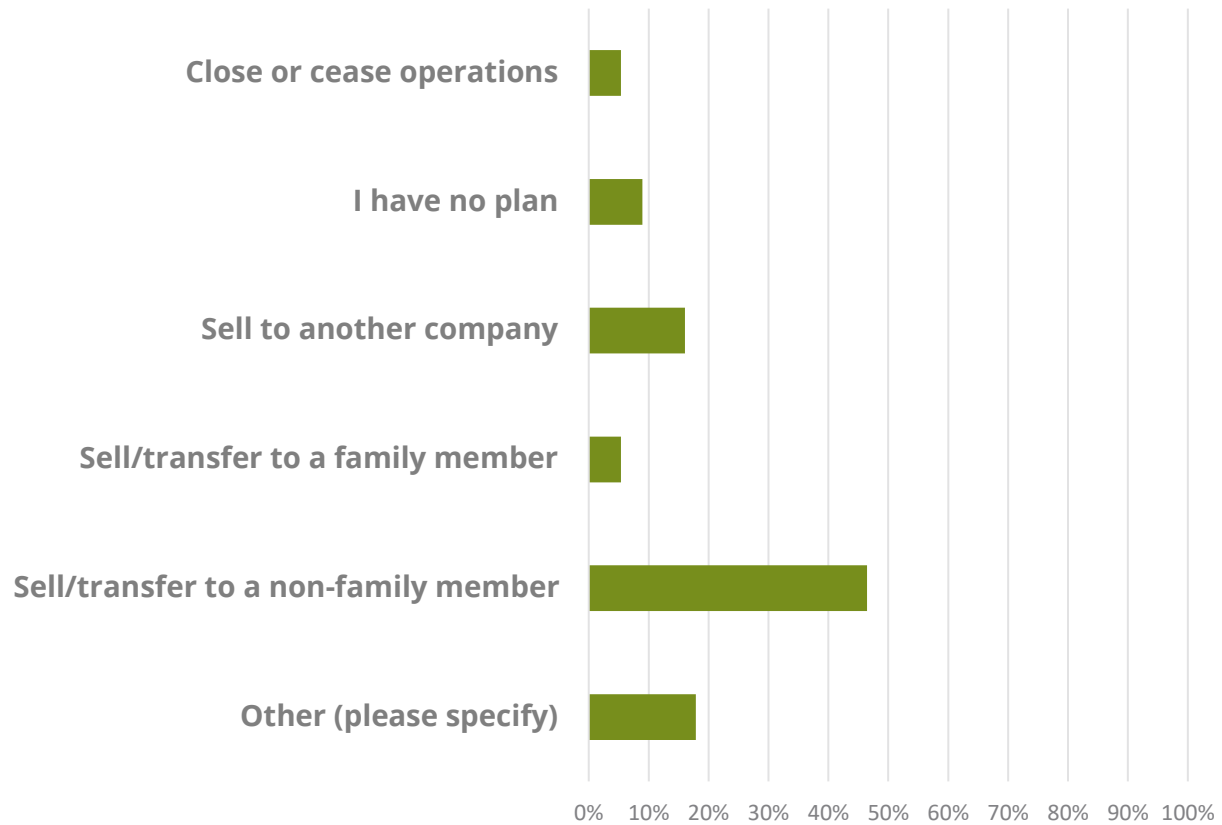


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.14%	56
No	79.86%	222
Total Respondents:		278

Q31 How do you intend to exit the business?

Answered: 56

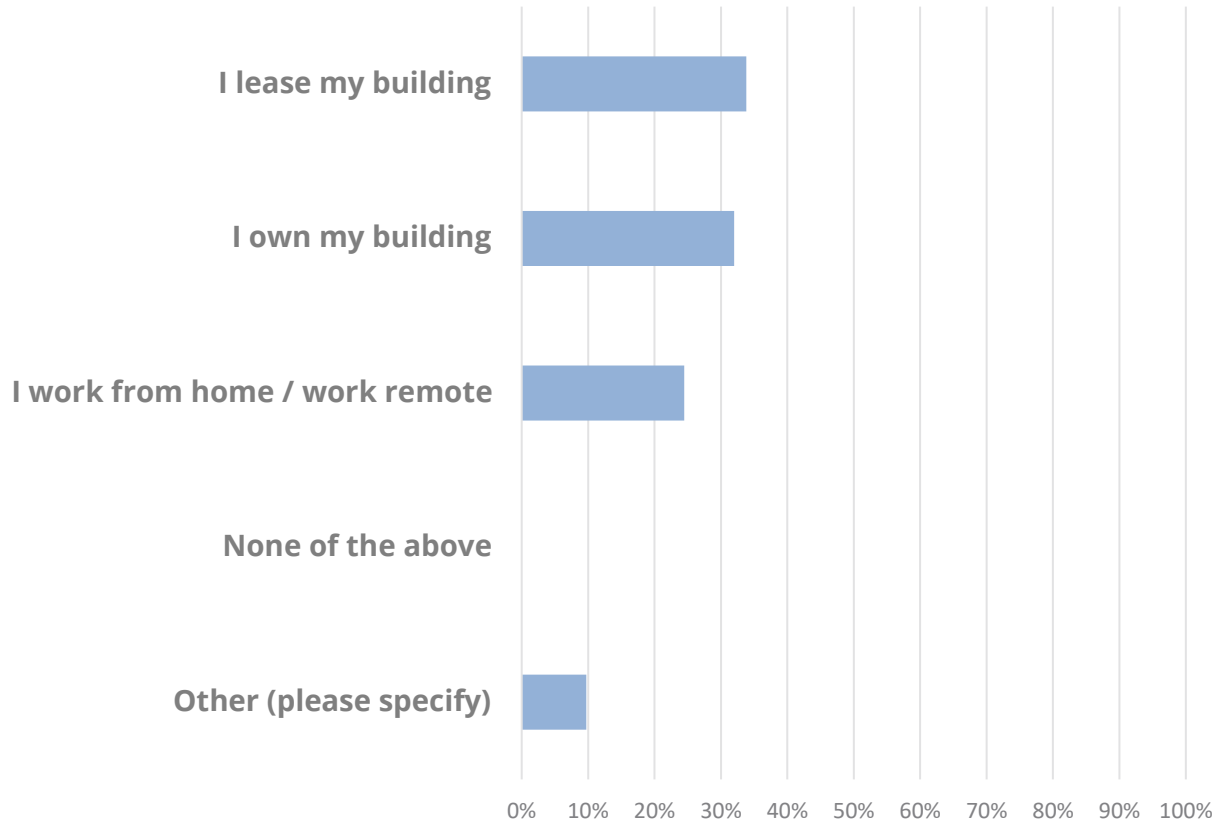
Skipped: 262



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Close or cease operations	5.36%	3
I have no plan	8.93%	5
Sell to another company	16.07%	9
Sell/transfer to a family member	5.36%	3
Sell/transfer to a non-family member	46.43%	26
Other (please specify)	17.86%	10
Total Respondents:		56

Q32 What is the status of your business's building?

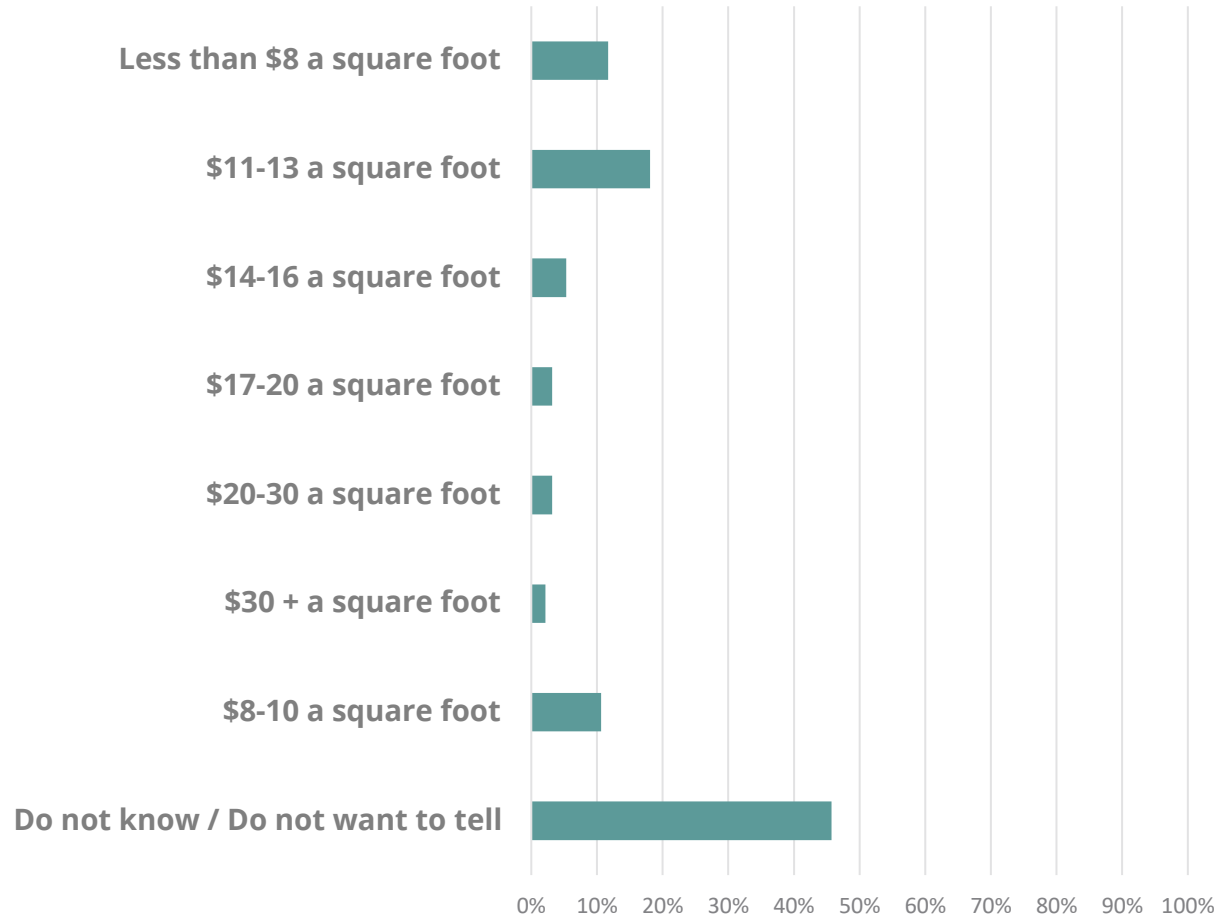
Answered: 278 Skipped: 40



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I lease my building	33.81%	94
I own my building	32.01%	89
I work from home / work remote	24.46%	68
None of the above	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	9.71%	27
Total Respondents:		278

Q33 What is your current lease rate, based on triple net lease? (Lease agreement on a property whereby the tenant or lessee promises to pay all the expenses of the property, including real estate taxes, building insurance, and maintenance)

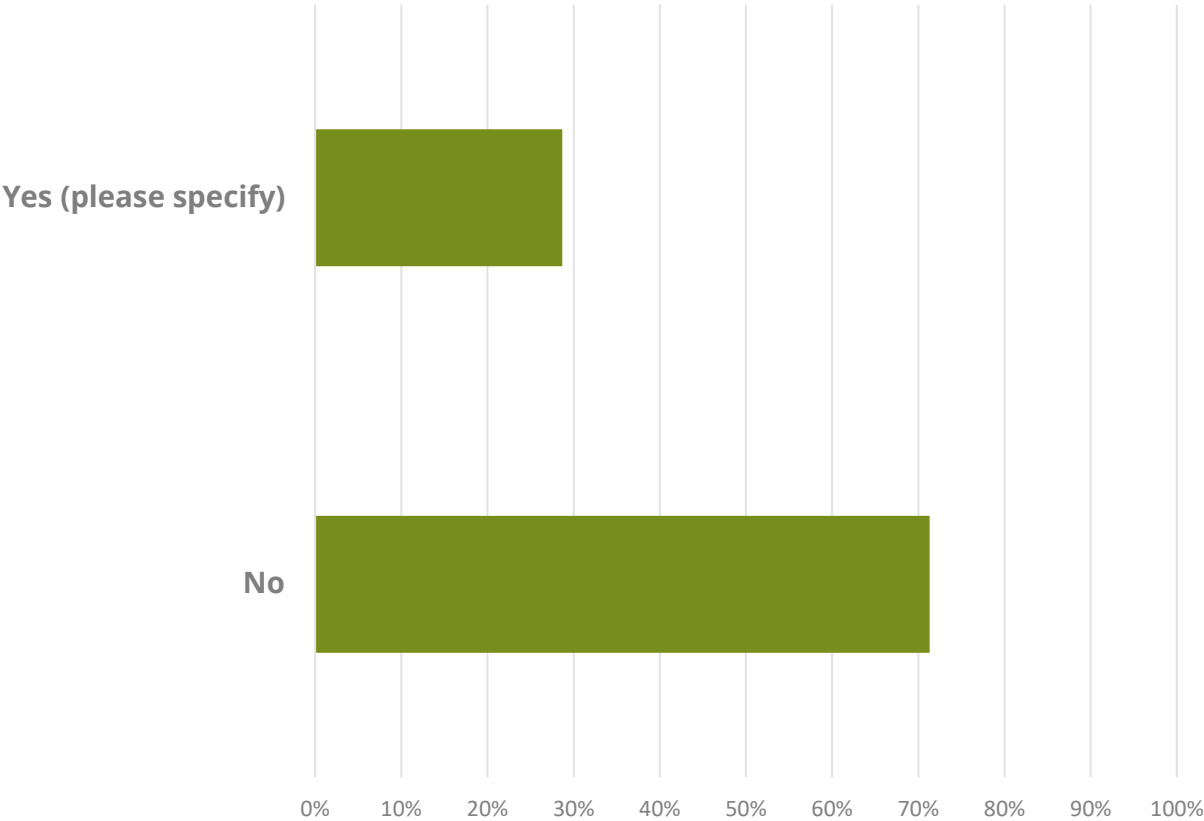
Answered: 94 Skipped: 224



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than \$8 a square foot	11.70%	11
\$8-10 a square foot	10.64%	10
\$11-13 a square foot	18.09%	17
\$14-16 a square foot	5.32%	5
\$17-20 a square foot	3.19%	3
\$20-30 a square foot	3.19%	3
\$30 + a square foot	2.13%	2
Do not know / Do not want to tell	45.74%	43
Total Respondents:		94

Q34 Do you have any barriers to updating your building, if needed?

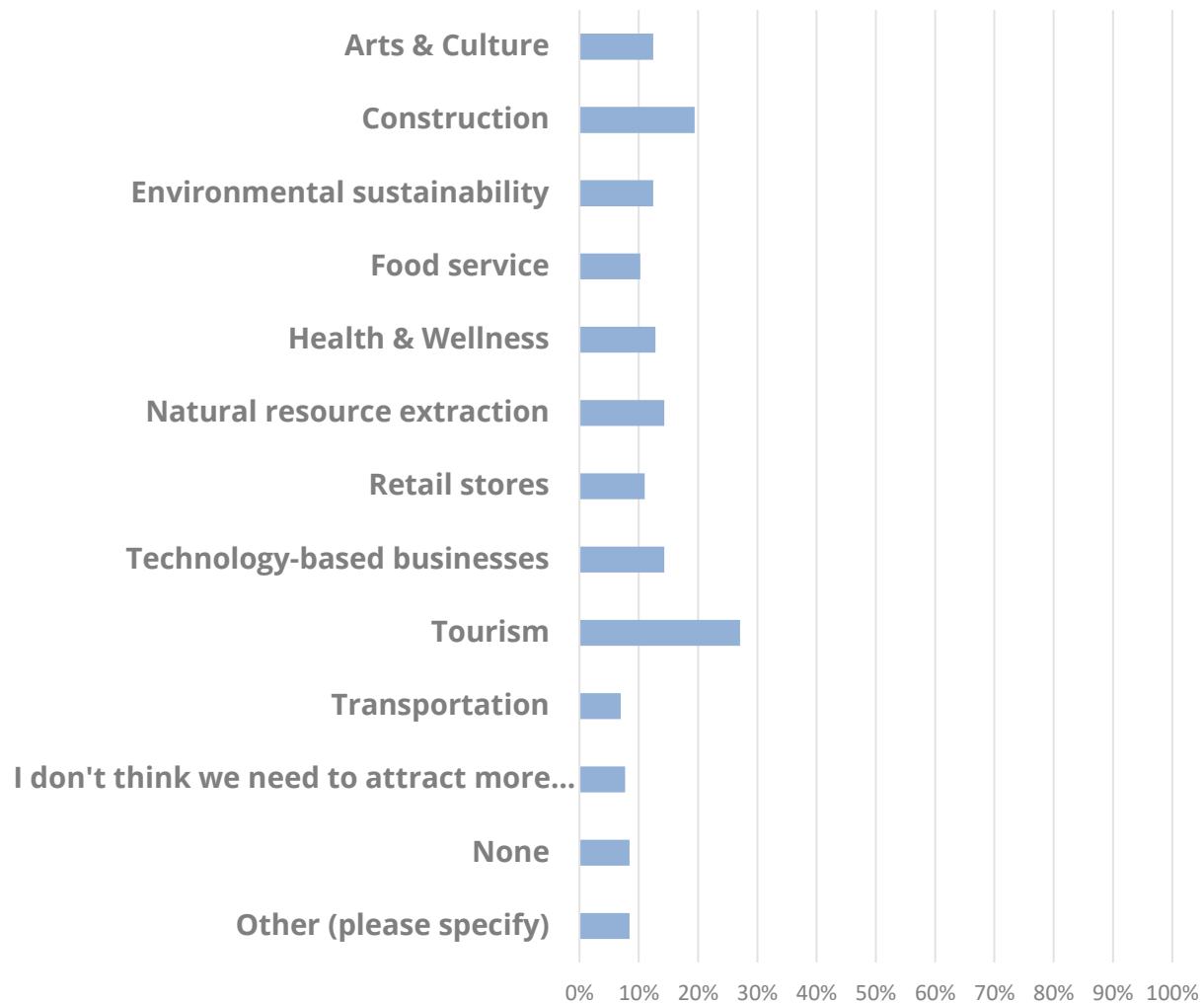
Answered: 129 Skipped: 189



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes (please specify)		28.68%	37
No		71.32%	92
Total Respondents:			129

Q35 If an effort was made to attract a business, sector, or industry to the Elk Valley, which options below would benefit you? (Please pick up to 2 answers)

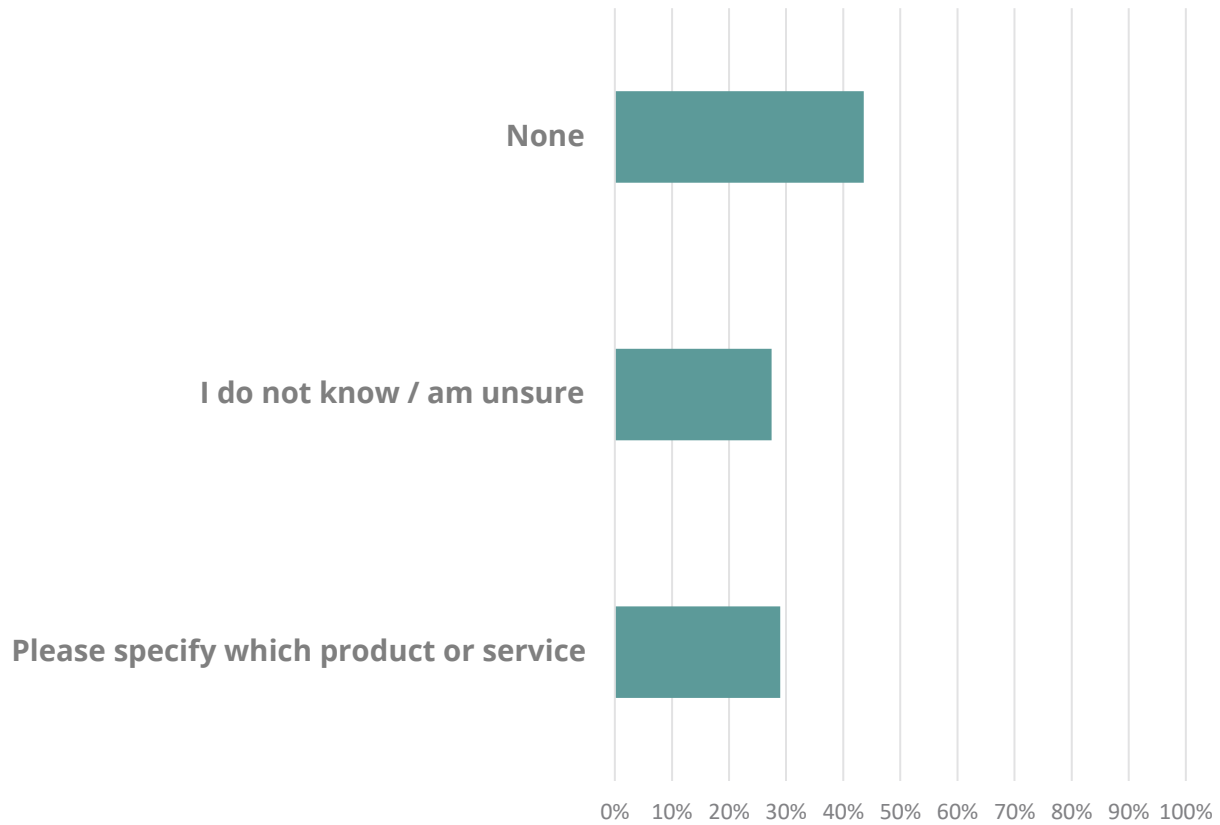
Answered: 273 Skipped: 45



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Arts & Culture	12.45%	34
Construction	19.41%	53
Environmental sustainability	12.45%	34
Food service	10.26%	28
Health & Wellness	12.82%	35
Natural resource extraction	14.29%	39
Retail stores	10.99%	30
Technology-based businesses	14.29%	39
Tourism	27.11%	74
Transportation	6.96%	19
I don't think we need to attract more business	7.69%	21
None	8.42%	23
Other (please specify)	8.42%	23
Total Respondents:		273

Q36 What products or services, if any, are you purchasing from outside the area for which you would like to have a local supplier?

Answered: 273 Skipped: 45



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	43.59%	119
I do not know / am unsure	27.47%	75
Please specify which product or service	28.94%	79
Total Respondents:		273

Q37 Do you have any desired business supports that are not currently available to you?

Answered: 245 Skipped: 73



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	60.00%	147
Business planning	7.35%	18
Customer Service Training	1.63%	4
Emergency Preparedness	2.86%	7
Exporting	1.22%	3
Financing	5.71%	14
Human Resources (Recruitment, Retention, Policies etc.)	8.57%	21
Leadership / Management training	11.02%	27
Marketing Partnerships	5.71%	14
Marketing Training	7.76%	19
Succession Planning	6.94%	17
Supply chain development	5.31%	13
Other (please specify)	4.49%	11
Total Respondents:		245

Q38 Is there something you would like to add, that we did not ask?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 245

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