

BRIDGETON  
AREA  
Chamber of Commerce



BA  
CC



Greater  
MILLVILLE  
Chamber of Commerce



## Coronavirus Business Re-Opening Survey

### Survey Purpose

This survey is a cooperative project of Bridgeton Area and Greater Millville Chambers of Commerce. Our officers and staff created the survey in order to gather information and ideas from our Chamber members and all interested businesses in Cumberland County. We will share the survey results with our members, all who participated in the survey, the business community and with local, county and state officials who are making plans and setting guidelines for the safe and successful, full re-opening of businesses and activities.

### Acknowledgements

The Bridgeton Area and Greater Millville Chambers of Commerce thank our partners in business and economic development, including Cumberland Development Corp., the Chamber by the Bay, Cumberland County Improvement Authority, Cumberland County Freeholders, Cumberland County Department of Workforce and Economic Development, Millville Development Corp. and other business organizations who helped formulate and/or circulate the survey.

We thank the more than 100 business owners, managers and leaders who participated in the survey, providing their responses, insights, and suggestions.

#### **Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce**

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### Analysis

This is a summary of the results. The detailed results follow. You may also obtain the results via links on our Chamber websites including [www.baccnj.com/survey](http://www.baccnj.com/survey), [www.CumberlandCountyChambers.com](http://www.CumberlandCountyChambers.com) and [www.Millville-nj.com](http://www.Millville-nj.com).

117 people responded to the survey.

2. Respondents' businesses / organizations are located in 11 of Cumberland County's 14 municipalities and some nearby areas.
  - a. 43% from the Bridgeton area
  - b. 32% from the Millville area
  - c. 18% from the Vineland area
  - d. 7% from other areas
3. More than 15 types of businesses responded.
  - a. 17% retail
  - b. 12% non-profit services
  - c. 8.65 industrial / manufacturing
  - d. 4% restaurants / prepared foods
  - e. 6% arts, music entertainment
5. 55% of respondents said the coronavirus crisis has somewhat to very negatively affected their businesses. 27% said their businesses have been temporarily closed.
6. Regarding full-time equivalent number of employees:
  - a. 1237 before covid-19
  - b. 1113 now, a 10.1% decrease
  - c. 1111 1 month after reopening
  - d. 1184 6 months after reopening, a 4.3% decrease from pre-virus period
7. The greatest concerns during this crisis include
  - a. Reduction in sales and profits
  - b. Meeting payroll, keeping people employed
  - c. Paying mortgages or rent
  - d. Ensuring worker and customer health and safety
8. 19.6% said paying past due rent payments is a major concern.
9. 16.7% have received modified loan terms from their lenders.
10. Regarding state and federal loan / grant program participation:
  - a. 9.7% have received funds from SBA EIDL program
  - b. 28.2% have received funds via the PPP program
  - c. 2.74% received funding from NJ EDA grant program
  - d. 0 received NJ EDA loans program funding
11. How do businesses feel about their performance once re-opening happens?
  - a. 77.6% are somewhat to very optimistic
  - b. 14.6% are somewhat to highly pessimistic
  - c. 16% are not sure
12. Taking business and health matters into consideration, which possible operating procedures are acceptable?
  - a. 85.2% social distancing
  - b. 80.1% face coverings for employees and customers
  - c. 91.1% ongoing sanitizing
13. How soon do you feel your business should be permitted to reopen?
  - a. 38.2% never closed
  - b. 16.1% immediately
  - c. 7.3% 1-2 weeks

- d. 8.8% 3-4 weeks
  - e. 29.4% when state / other governments allow
14. Items of concern when re-opening ranked in order of concern:
- a. Meeting health and safety guidelines to protect customers and employees
  - b. Regaining customer confidence in shopping, dining, gathering in public
  - c. Enough sales and profits to cover costs of re-opening
  - d. Overly burdensome government regulations
15. Rating of effectiveness of government and other responses in order of most highly rated:
- a. Chambers of Commerce – 77.2% satisfactory or better
  - b. County government – 70.8% satisfactory or better
  - c. Local government – 69% satisfactory or better
  - d. State government – 60.3% satisfactory or better
  - e. Federal government – 54.4% satisfactory or better
16. In what ways can government, the Chamber, and, others help businesses as re-opening takes place?
- a. Give people the confidence they will need to go back to these businesses with a good feeling
  - b. Share experiences, announce to community who is open for business,
  - c. Continue with masks and social distancing and limit the amount of people. Look at amount of cases. Go slow,
  - d. Let us work
  - e. Lobby the state to allow everyone to open when they are ready
  - f. Remind everyone to be diligent about understanding the many ways this virus spreads.
  - g. Accurate timely information.
  - h. Stop price gouging, make sanitation products more available.
  - i. Start back shopping at the businesses and help them if you hear they need help in some way.
  - j. The major issue is lack of revenue to pay the bills. Government should forgive PPP loans and provide other grants and 0% interest loans.
  - k. Provide a toolkit for businesses from leadership
  - l. Continue to provide up to date city/county confirmed virus numbers and fatalities. Provide as much federal, state, local guidance as possible.
  - m. Continue to follow recommended guidelines
  - n. Just to let it happen enough is enough
  - o. Permit business to resume as usual, perhaps with a few non-intrusive measures needed
  - p. Make regs clear to understand and readily accessible.
  - q. Ease up on the small, local businesses and don't lump them with the big retail
  - r. Clearly Communicate guidelines And responsibilities for businesses and their customers
  - s. Encourage the public to continue to support local businesses.
17. What suggestions / ideas do you have for safe and successful full re-opening of businesses?
- a. People being kind to one another and being safe
  - b. Follow health guidelines and distancing if possible.
  - c. Continue with masks and social distancing and limit the amount of people. Look at amount of cases. Go slow

- d. Uncertain other than following established guidelines.
- e. Lobby the state to allow everyone to open when they are ready
- f. Requiring face masks by all employees
- g. Testing needs to be recurring and contact tracing needs to be enhanced. Since many carriers of the virus are asymptomatic, temperature taking is a small piece of the eradicating puzzle
- h. Limiting client / employee exposure.
- i. Follow a staged approach. Voluntary at first, then stagger staff at no more than 50-60% to allow full social distancing.
- j. Everyone that are working in each business do what they are suppose to do to keep safe when the shoppers come in and make sure the shoppers do what they are suppose to do to keep healthy or else they cannot shop.
- k. More presence from authorities on the ground walking by and checking in with the business community
- l. Follow recommendation State and local guidance.
- m. Wait until there is a significant drop in active, new, recovered cases & deaths
- n. Allow employees, volunteers, and clients/members to use the common sense procedures that they have developed over the last 8 weeks, to police themselves in relation to contact and distancing
- o. Consider the small, privately run businesses.
- p. Don't force it, people are ready to come out and enjoy life again. I believe we will see a safe and successful reopening as long as we keep our businesses clean, provide protection/guidelines for our employees, and ensure that customers follow rules.
- q. Why can big box stores be open where social distancing is difficult to control but small businesses which can limit number of consumers remain closed? Open small business with a tax relief program
- r. the people choose what they want not the government
- s. We will have to revamp how we sell with no people touching any products. They will have to be serviced by one of the employees
- t. Using sanitizers, restricting number of students in the facility, staggered classes to clean between classes, no parents can wait inside the studio
- u. Public opinion on safety is going to be paramount. Until its safe to run at 100% businesses like ours are in deep trouble
- v. Just let us do our job. We know what to do. We are not children.
- w. I think face masks are necessary for medium term
- x. Do it in phases with balance.
- y. Extensive testing. Temperature taken upon entry to building. Masks and gloves. Follow CDC guidelines.
- z. Monitor public's compliance with safe behavior requirements.
- aa. To listen to science, not leaders who are leveraging this situation for political advantage.
- bb. Allow local gov't to provide guidance and guidelines and then allow businesses to formulate their own plans.
- cc. Hand sanitizing station number of customers in store not curbside

- dd. Training for the new normal. More technology driven ideas that can relate to more businesses.
  - ee. inviting special clients in for a light social distancing social
  - ff. Keep your distancing, use wipes to keep things clean and common sense.
  - gg. Continue to follow the guidelines laid out by the State and Local Gov, and have good common sense.
  - hh. Allow many small businesses with low customer contact volume to run with safety precautions not just big box stores
18. What best practices (changes / adaptations to your business operations) you used during the crisis would you continue and/or expand after re-opening and share with other businesses? Briefly explain them
- a. masks and hand sanitation
  - b. frequent handwashing, masks for staff, distancing when possible.
  - c. Limit the amount of employees returning at one time. Rotate essential employees.
  - d. Common sense
  - e. Teletherapy and change in contact with others.
  - f. Risk identification is an important part of any safety program. We have to be diligent in knowing where these risks (germs) may exist and mitigate that risk by taking the proper precautions such as utilizing proper PPE and Hygiene. I am fearful many will not take this invisible risk seriously causing many more cases and high levels of anxiety. We must bide our time wisely until a vaccine is available.
  - g. Installing "safety shields" between employee client when interacting.
  - h. Get comfortable with allowing work from home more frequently. Use technology to help bridge communications gaps.
  - i. We will have to still wear mask and stay a part from everyone like you are suppose to do until this gets better or else it will never get better. Everyone has to listen as it will not be over for a long time.
  - j. Follow all the the guidelines from the CDC. Pick up the phone to contact your chamber if you have a question no matter how small
  - k. Sanitizing
  - l. Encourage members to use electronic services for their banking needs.
  - m. More sanitizing than normal
  - n. Availability of parking lot pick up if they choose not to browse.
  - o. Limit to customers allowed in at one time.
  - p. We moved equipment to promote social distancing. Throughout cleaned and disinfected the entire facility.
  - q. Make community business aware of my non profit and how it can benefit the community. Increase my presence at small business/ chamber events
  - r. Hand washing.
  - s. Providing clear and concise guidance and mandates to consumers. However we have not been able to do much of that as we have been closed.
  - t. We may continue to offer classes virtually.

- u. We have switched to a take out model and our customers are supporting us. However as other places open and the economy worsens through layoffs and other closures disposable income will dry up short term
- v. Conducted business over the internet and through mail slot with doors closed to the public.
- w. Taking orders by phone and internet primarily. Introducing curbside service. Minimizing walk in contact for at least the next six months. Feel free to use our name.
- x. Virtual education and lessons will continue to be utilized. This can serve those who are disabled as well.
- y. Teleconferencing has improved remote accessibility and will likely continue in the future. Conduct of meetings, court hearings, patient interviews via zoom are all adaptations which will likely continue because they are safer, more economic and oftentimes more inclusive of those participants who could not attend a meeting or hearing due to disability, distance or timing conflict.
- z. The development of more online resources for our audiences. I'd want to be contacted before you use my responses in a public way.
  - aa. Cautiously and slowly reopen and abide by the NJ rules.
  - bb. Changing the amount of space I operate in. I think I can downsize my space and have the same income with less insurance and utilities
  - cc. We use wipes in all the trucks and masks if more than one person in the truck at a time. Would continue to do this until we feel it is safe.
  - dd. Cleaning service comes in twice a week for a thorough cleaning and daily wipe down of hard surfaces.
  - ee. Increased use of online meetings Enhanced use of social media Some non office work hours

## Q2 Municipality Where Business / Organization is Located (main location if more than 1)

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bridgeton	21.37%	25
Commercial	1.71%	2
Deerfield	3.42%	4
Downe	0.00%	0
Fairfield	1.71%	2
Greenwich	0.85%	1
Hopewell	6.84%	8
Lawrence	0.00%	0
Maurice River	0.00%	0
Millville	29.91%	35
Shiloh	0.00%	0
Stow Creek	1.71%	2
Upper Deerfield	9.40%	11
Vineland	17.95%	21
Other Municipality (please specify)	5.13%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>117</b>

### Q3 What type of business / organization

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Retail sales and/or services	17.09%	20
Restaurants, Prepared Food Sales	4.27%	5
Commercial services - Sell mainly to other businesses	3.42%	4
Industrial / manufacturing	8.55%	10
Professional services – CPA's, Lawyers, Realtors, Insurance, Engineers, Etc.	7.69%	9
Banks / financial services	6.84%	8
Healthcare services	1.71%	2
Non-profit community service agencies	11.97%	14
Education providers	5.13%	6
Childcare services	1.71%	2
Arts, music, entertainment	5.98%	7
Agriculture products and services	0.85%	1
Government	3.42%	4
Construction	1.71%	2
I. Other organization types not provided above: (please specify)	19.66%	23
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>117</b>



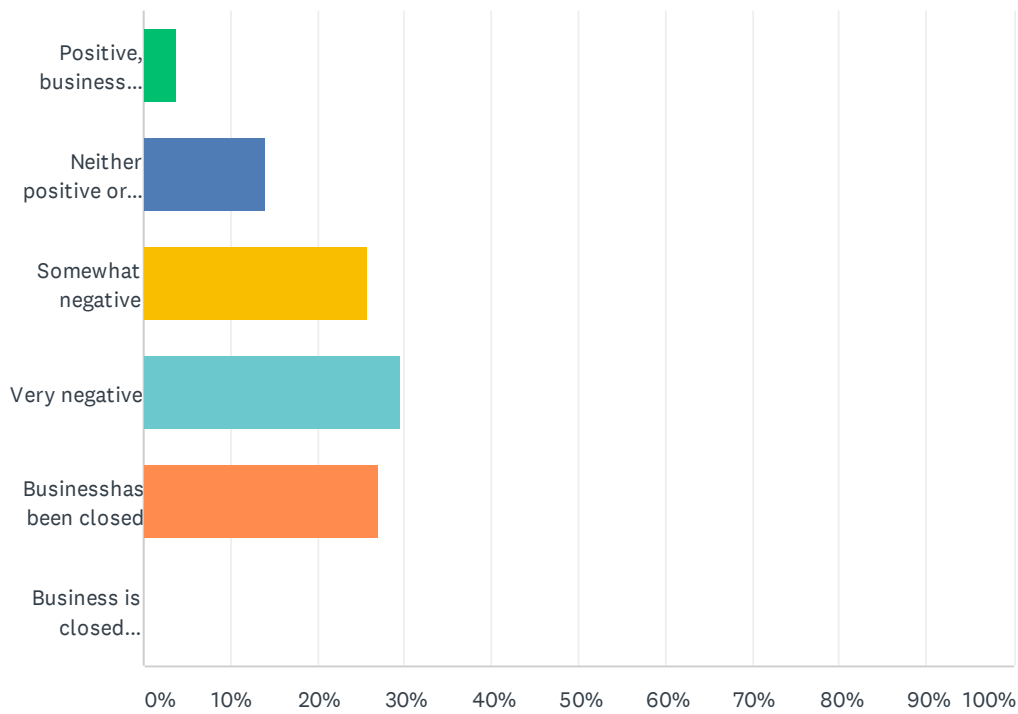
## Q4 Member of 1 or more of these Chambers of Commerce (select all that apply)

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bridgeton Area	42.74%	50
Greater Millville	23.93%	28
Chamber by the Bay	0.85%	1
Greater Vineland	23.93%	28
None	35.04%	41
Other Chamber(please specify)	10.26%	12
Total Respondents: 117		

### Q5 How has the coronavirus pandemic affected your overall business operations?

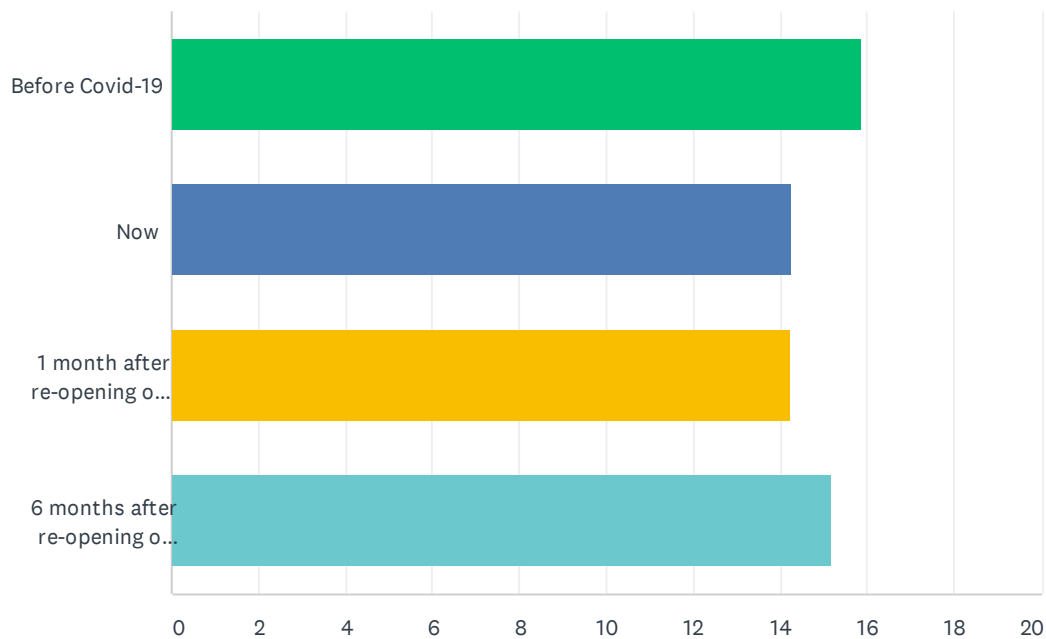
Answered: 78 Skipped: 39



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Positive, business improved	3.85%	3
Neither positive or negative	14.10%	11
Somewhat negative	25.64%	20
Very negative	29.49%	23
Business has been closed	26.92%	21
Business is closed permanently	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>78</b>

**Q6 How many full time equivalent employees did you have before the emergency began, today and expected 1 month and 6 months after re-opening of businesses, taking possible health-related operating procedures and your expectation of how customers will react into consideration? ( A whole number )**

Answered: 78 Skipped: 39



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Before Covid-19	16	1,237	78
Now	14	1,113	78
1 month after re-opening of businesses	14	1,111	78
6 months after re-opening of businesses	15	1,184	78
Total Respondents: 78			

**Q7 Which of these challenges has your organization experienced as the result of coronavirus emergency? Please rate them from high impact to low impact, 4=great impact; 3=high impact 2=moderate, 1=little; 0=no impact**

Answered: 78 Skipped: 39

	GREAT IMPACT	HIGH IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	LOW IMPACT	NO IMPACT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Reduction in Sales and Profits / Loss	46.15% 36	15.38% 12	17.95% 14	8.97% 7	11.54% 9	78	2.76
Meeting payroll costs	21.92% 16	8.22% 6	26.03% 19	19.18% 14	24.66% 18	73	1.84
Paying the rent / mortgage	18.67% 14	14.67% 11	6.67% 5	22.67% 17	37.33% 28	75	1.55
Repaying existing loans	18.06% 13	8.33% 6	9.72% 7	15.28% 11	48.61% 35	72	1.32
Ensuring worker health & safety	17.57% 13	21.62% 16	21.62% 16	16.22% 12	22.97% 17	74	1.95
Ensuring customer health and safety	20.78% 16	22.08% 17	12.99% 10	15.58% 12	28.57% 22	77	1.91
Getting supplies / inventory	20.78% 16	18.18% 14	24.68% 19	22.08% 17	14.29% 11	77	2.09
Paying taxes – property, payroll, other	22.08% 17	9.09% 7	14.29% 11	16.88% 13	37.66% 29	77	1.61
Complying with labor mandates	8.00% 6	5.33% 4	16.00% 12	25.33% 19	45.33% 34	75	1.05
Cost of maintaining equipment	10.39% 8	5.19% 4	19.48% 15	22.08% 17	42.86% 33	77	1.18
Finding enough employees to fill my workforce needs	6.67% 5	5.33% 4	5.33% 4	10.67% 8	72.00% 54	75	0.64
Lawsuits or concern for future lawsuits related to the virus	8.00% 6	2.67% 2	4.00% 3	21.33% 16	64.00% 48	75	0.69
Getting information and guidance regarding assistance	6.58% 5	14.47% 11	25.00% 19	23.68% 18	30.26% 23	76	1.43
Obtaining assistance from government programs	20.78% 16	15.58% 12	20.78% 16	10.39% 8	32.47% 25	77	1.82

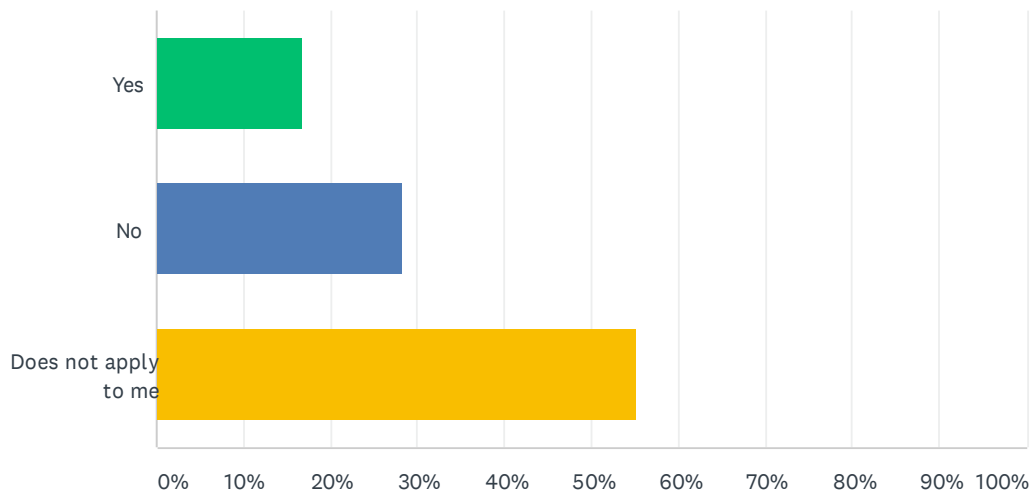
### Q8 Please provide additional information regarding rent payments here.

Answered: 78 Skipped: 39

	DOES NOT APPLY TO ME	HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO MAKE RENT PAYMENTS ?	HAS YOUR LANDLORD PROVIDED OFFICIAL RELIEF FOR YOU?	IS PAYING CURRENT AND PAST DUE RENT PAYMENTS A MAJOR CONCERN FOR YOU?	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Yes	62.86% 44	24.29% 17	2.86% 2	10.00% 7	70	1.73
No	71.15% 37	9.62% 5	9.62% 5	9.62% 5	52	1.77

# Q9 Has your lender modified any of your loan terms for you during the Covid crisis?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 39



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	16.67%	13
No	28.21%	22
Does not apply to me	55.13%	43
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>78</b>

### Q10 During the emergency, which of the Federal and State loan and grant programs did you apply for and/or receive approval for or funding from?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 39

	APPLIED FOR	APPROVED FOR	RECEIVED FUNDING FOR	HOW LONG DID THE PROCESS TAKE?	DID NOT APPLY FOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Grant and Loan	22.22% 16	2.78% 2	9.72% 7	0.00% 0	65.28% 47	72	3.18
Paycheck Protection Program through Your Bank (PPP)	12.82% 10	7.69% 6	28.21% 22	0.00% 0	51.28% 40	78	3.18
NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Grant	15.07% 11	0.00% 0	2.74% 2	0.00% 0	82.19% 60	73	3.52
NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Loan	6.94% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	93.06% 67	72	3.79

## Q11 Generally, how do you feel about how your business will perform once businesses are permitted to open?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 49

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Optimistic	33.82%	23
Somewhat Optimistic	33.82%	23
Not sure	16.18%	11
Somewhat pessimistic	4.41%	3
Highly pessimistic	10.29%	7
I will not reopen	0.00%	0
Other Comments Regarding This Question (please specify)	1.47%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>68</b>



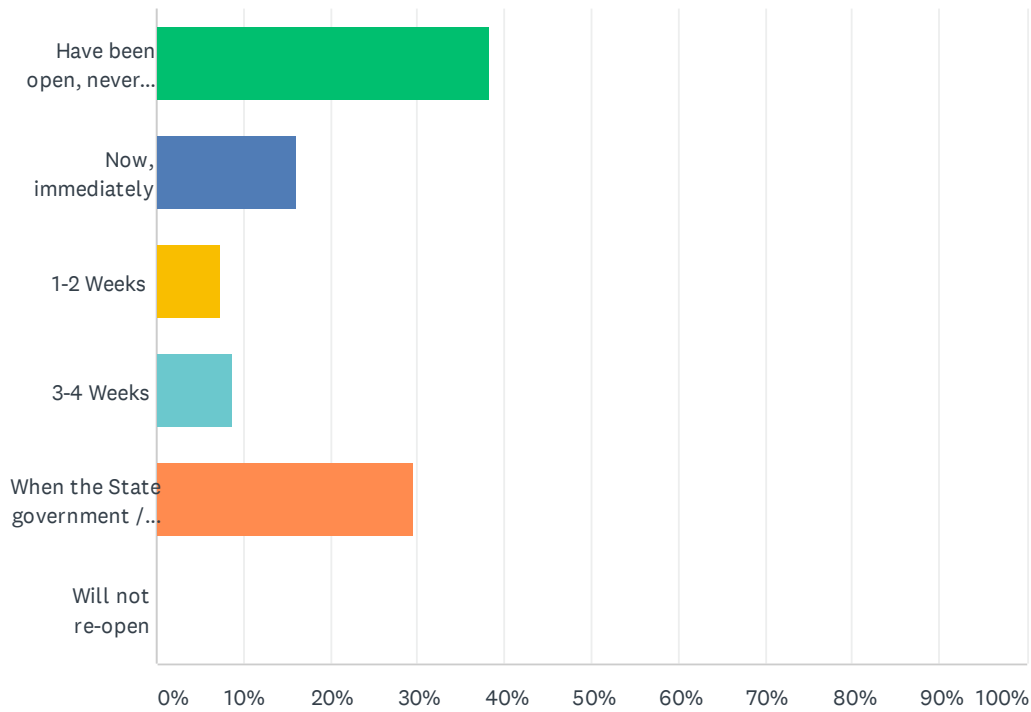
## Q12 Taking both business and health issues into consideration, are the following possible operating procedures acceptable to you? Yes, no, not sure

Answered: 68 Skipped: 49

	YES	NO	NOT SURE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Social distancing precautions for employees & customers	85.29% 58	8.82% 6	5.88% 4	68	2.79
Use of face coverings by employees and customers	80.88% 55	7.35% 5	11.76% 8	68	2.69
Ongoing sanitizing of shared surfaces	91.18% 62	4.41% 3	4.41% 3	68	2.87
Limits on the number of customers permitted in facility	80.88% 55	14.71% 10	4.41% 3	68	2.76
Providing plastic / other type of physical barriers between employees and customers	55.22% 37	32.84% 22	11.94% 8	67	2.43
Health checks, temperature, etc. for employees	50.75% 34	22.39% 15	26.87% 18	67	2.24
Health checks, temperature, etc. for customers	25.37% 17	38.81% 26	35.82% 24	67	1.90

### Q13 How soon do you feel you should be permitted to re-open in some form

Answered: 68 Skipped: 49



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Have been open, never closed	38.24%	26
Now, immediately	16.18%	11
1-2 Weeks	7.35%	5
3-4 Weeks	8.82%	6
When the State government / other governments permit me to open	29.41%	20
Will not re-open	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>68</b>

## Q14 Rate your level of concern regarding these items related to re-opening businesses?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 49

	VERY HIGH CONCERN	HIGH CONCERN	MEDIUM CONCERN	LOW CONCERN	NO CONCERN	NOT SURE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Meeting health and safety requirements / guidelines to protect employees & customers	35.29% 24	35.29% 24	13.24% 9	8.82% 6	5.88% 4	1.47% 1	68	3.81
Regaining customer confidence in safely shopping, dining and gathering	35.29% 24	25.00% 17	20.59% 14	5.88% 4	10.29% 7	2.94% 2	68	3.60
Enough sales, profit and cash flow to cover costs of re-opening	32.35% 22	20.59% 14	17.65% 12	16.18% 11	5.88% 4	7.35% 5	68	3.35
Accessing government / other financial assistance	26.47% 18	14.71% 10	14.71% 10	14.71% 10	20.59% 14	8.82% 6	68	2.85
Overly Burdensome government guidelines and regulations	34.33% 23	16.42% 11	16.42% 11	13.43% 9	16.42% 11	2.99% 2	67	3.30
Finding needed employees	8.82% 6	2.94% 2	16.18% 11	22.06% 15	42.65% 29	7.35% 5	68	1.91
Limiting number of customers in your business	26.87% 18	20.90% 14	14.93% 10	11.94% 8	20.90% 14	4.48% 3	67	3.07
Changing / adjusting work hours / shifts	11.76% 8	10.29% 7	13.24% 9	26.47% 18	32.35% 22	5.88% 4	68	2.25
Establishing sanitizing stations	10.29% 7	22.06% 15	19.12% 13	20.59% 14	20.59% 14	7.35% 5	68	2.59

**Q15 How would you rate the effectiveness of government, health and business organizations response and services during the health and business emergency? 5=excellent, 4=very good, 3=satisfactory, 2=below average, 1= poor. 0= no opinion**

Answered: 68 Skipped: 49

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Federal government	8.82% 6	13.24% 9	32.35% 22	22.06% 15	20.59% 14	2.94% 2	68	2.59
State government	13.24% 9	25.00% 17	22.06% 15	16.18% 11	19.12% 13	4.41% 3	68	2.84
County government	11.76% 8	17.65% 12	42.65% 29	7.35% 5	7.35% 5	13.24% 9	68	2.79
Local government	8.82% 6	19.12% 13	41.18% 28	11.76% 8	5.88% 4	13.24% 9	68	2.74
Chamber of Commerce	30.88% 21	30.88% 21	16.18% 11	0.00% 0	2.94% 2	19.12% 13	68	3.29
Other business organizations	4.48% 3	19.40% 13	32.84% 22	4.48% 3	1.49% 1	37.31% 25	67	2.09
Non-profit community services	8.96% 6	29.85% 20	23.88% 16	4.48% 3	1.49% 1	31.34% 21	67	2.46