

The Survey Center

# NH Small Business Development Center

Phase 3 Business Resiliency Survey
September 2021

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# The University of New Hampshire Survey Center

The UNH Survey Center is an independent, non-partisan academic survey research organization and division of the UNH College of Liberal Arts.

The Survey Center conducts telephone, mail, web, and intercept surveys, as well as focus groups and other qualitative research for university researchers, government agencies, public non-profit organizations, private businesses and media clients.

Our senior staff have over 50 years experience in designing and conducting custom research on a broad range of political, social, health care, and other public policy issues.

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The NH Small Business Development Center (NH SBDC) is the leading resource for business advising and education for small businesses in the Granite State. SBDC's team of certified business advisors provides highly individualized, confidential advising, at no charge to NH enterprises. Whether a company is just getting started, seeking capital, bringing new products to market, or improving operations, SBDC's team can help them achieve their goals.

NH SBDC is funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and through assistance provided by the State of NH. NH SBDC is an outreach program of the UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics in conjunction with SBA, the State of NH (BEA), the University of NH, and the private sector.

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# **Executive Summary**

The University of New Hampshire Survey Center conducted a survey for the NH Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to assess the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses throughout New Hampshire. This is Phase 3, the third iteration of the SBDC Business Resilience Survey, following the first iteration which was conducted in June 2020 and the second iteration which was conducted in February 2021. By better understanding the challenges and needs of NH business owners, economic development partners can more effectively help businesses recover and become more resilient.

Sixty-four business organizations partnered with the NH SBDC by sending an open-link email invitation to participate in the survey to their member businesses. The survey partners represented a wide range of industries, business associations, and regions. They were encouraged to send periodic reminders to potential respondents. Overall, one thousand fifty-seven (1,057) participants from 165 towns and cities completed the survey between September 15 and October 11, 2021.

The following figures display survey results including any demographic differences. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

The Phase 3 NH SBDC Business Resiliency Survey was made possible with funds from the CARES Act.

## **Key Findings**

#### **Demographics**

Businesses located in the Seacoast and in Northern NH responded most prodigiously. Responding businesses most commonly report belonging to the arts, entertainment, and recreation, the accommodation and food services, the retail trade, and the professional, scientific, and technical services industries. About half of respondents who own their business are men while slightly fewer are women.

#### **Open Status**

Four in ten respondents say their business has reduced its hours of operation since the COVID-19 pandemic began and three in ten have closed temporarily at least once in that time. Among those who did temporarily close, nearly seven in eight say that they were closed for one month or more. Among those who have reduced their hours at some point, six in ten are still operating with reduced hours and one in ten currently are operating with their hours reduced by 50% or more.

Respondents most frequently cite health and safety concerns, being required to close due to a government order, a loss in revenue, or being unable to get a sufficient workforce as reasons for reducing hours or closing temporarily. Respondents are more likely than in February to cite a lack of sufficient workforce and exposure to COVID-19 as reasons for reducing hours or temporarily closing.

#### **Finances**

The self-reported financial situation of responding businesses continues to improve. In June 2020, more than four in five reported their monthly revenue having decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, currently just over half report that their revenue has been negatively affected by the pandemic and nearly one in five say their revenue has actually increased. Larger businesses and those in the construction and retail trade industries are most likely to say the pandemic has increased their revenue or not affected it. One-third of respondents say their business is better off financially overall than they were in February while just over a quarter say they are worse off. When asked what is currently causing them to experience financial losses, respondents most frequently cite reduced customers or clients, supply chain interruptions, being unable to get a sufficient workforce, and a decline in sales.

#### **Management of Business**

Nearly half of respondents report that their employees are currently using personal protective equipment (PPE) while one in ten say their employees did this earlier during the pandemic and about one-third say they have provided health and safety training for their employees. One in five responding businesses currently require both customers and employees to wear masks, smaller numbers previously required customers and employees to wear masks but no longer do, and four in ten say they have never required customers or employees to wear masks.

To control costs, about a quarter of respondents say their business's owner is currently working without a salary and one in seven did so earlier during the pandemic, while others report having laid off or furloughed employees, though most say they did this earlier in the pandemic but don't currently have laid off or furloughed employees. About a quarter of respondents indicate that in response to the pandemic they have made physical changes to their location or are offering new products or services, while smaller numbers report collaborating with others businesses, engaging in e-commerce, or offering curbside delivery, takeout, or home delivery. When asked an open-ended question about what one thing they have done in response to the pandemic that has been successful, respondents most frequently mention how they changed how they deliver or produce products or services or how they protected the health of employees or customers.

#### **Employees**

The average respondent's business has about twelve employees which is largely unchanged since February 2021 but is down slightly compared to February 2020, when the average business had a reported average of about fourteen employees. Nearly half say they currently have the same number of employees as they did in February 2020 while three in eight report having fewer employees. More than two-thirds of respondents say they are very or somewhat concerned about being able to find new employees and paying their employees competitive wages. More than half say they have struggled a lot or some to hire new employees in the past six months and seven in ten say they have increased compensation offered to prospective employees, while others report reducing their hours of operation, increasing efficiency or automation, or offering one-time bonuses to prospective employees to try to help ameliorate their hiring situation.

#### **Supply Chain**

Two-thirds of respondents report being affected a lot or some but supply chain issues in 2021. More than half say they have been affected by increased costs of goods from domestic suppliers and delays in sourcing from domestic suppliers while four in ten have been affected by higher domestic shipping costs.

#### Relief

Nearly three-quarters of respondents say their business applied for relief in 2020, just under half have applied in 2021, and just over half would consider applying if more relief funds were made available in the future. Among federal programs, more than nine in ten businesses received aid through the Payroll Protection Program while more than half received aid through an EIDL Advance or Loan. Among state, municipal, or private relief programs, more than four in ten report having received aid through unemployment for their employees or themselves or through the Main Street Relief Fund or its 2.0 iteration.

#### Resiliency

Only one in five respondents say their business had a resiliency or continuity plan prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but one in seven say their business has developed one since. Larger businesses and those in the manufacturing and health care and social assistance industries are more likely than others to have had a plan before the onset of the pandemic. Most businesses who do have a resiliency or continuity plan report lacking at least one important component of their plan.

#### **Business Concerns**

Respondents most frequently cite maintaining sales or revenue, a resurgence in COVID-19 cases, maintaining customers, supply chain disruptions, and public acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine as things they are currently concerned about, while slightly fewer mention being concerned about energy costs and cybersecurity. Relatively few report being concerned about defaulting on existing loans, access to PPE, or being forced to lay off or furlough employees. Most who report being concerned about these things anticipate that these things will remain areas of concern for their business in the future.

## **Going Forward**

Despite widespread concerns, respondents are very optimistic about the continued operation of their business in the foreseeable future, as nine in ten say they are very or somewhat confident their business will be operating in twelve months, up from only three-quarters who felt this way in June 2020. Respondents have more mixed feelings about their economic outlook for the state as a whole: one-third anticipate good conditions for New Hampshire businesses over the next twelve months, one in ten anticipate bad conditions, and more than half anticipate mixed conditions. These results largely match those provided by the general public in a recent poll.

# **Demographics**

Overall, businesses from 165 towns and cities in New Hampshire responded to the survey. Thirty-four percent of these respondents say their business is located in the Seacoast region, 26% are located in Northern NH, 17% are located in Hillsborough County, 14% are located in the Central/Lakes Region, and 10% are located in Western NH.

Figure 1: Town where business located - September 2021

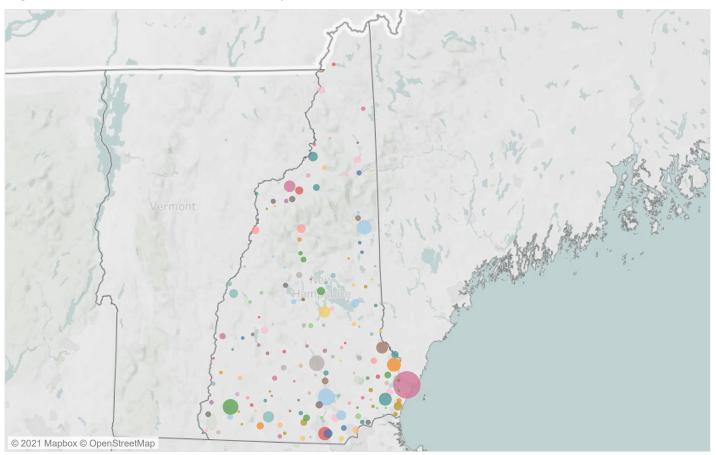
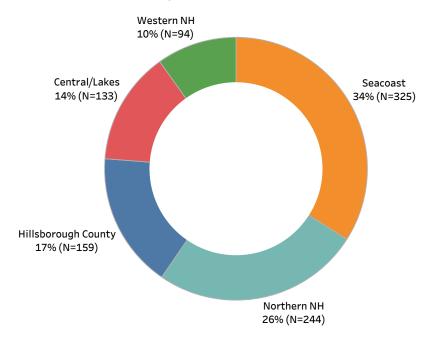
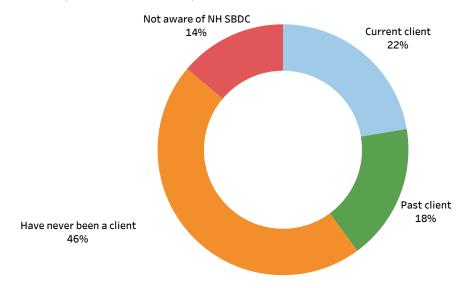


Figure 2: Region where business located - September 2021



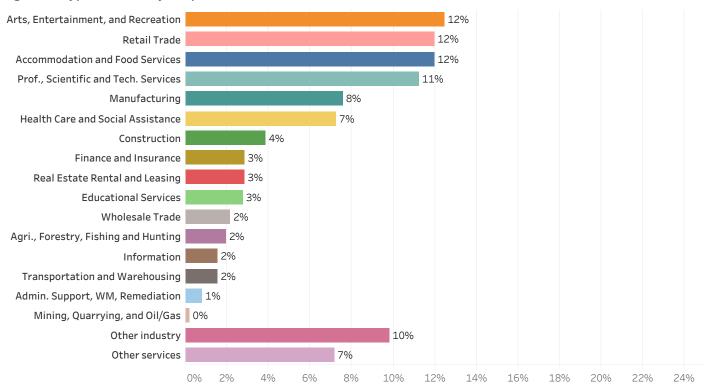
Twenty-two percent of respondents are current clients of the NH SBDC while 18% are past clients. Just under half (46%) of respondents have never been a client of the NH SBDC while 14% are not aware of the NH SBDC.

Figure 3: Relationship with NH SBDC - September 2021



Twelve percent of respondents each say their business is in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry, the retail trade industry, or the accommodation and food services industry, while 11% are in the professional, scientific, and technical services industry, 8% are in the manufacturing industry, and 7% are in the health care and social assistance industry. Fewer respondents say their business is in the construction (4%), finance and insurance (3%), real estate rental and leasing (3%), educational services (3%), wholesale trade (2%), agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (2%), information (2%), transportation and warehousing (2%), administrative support, waste management, and remediation (1%), or in the mining, quarrying, and oil or gas industry (<1%). Ten percent say their business belongs to another type of industry while 7% say their business is part of another type of services.

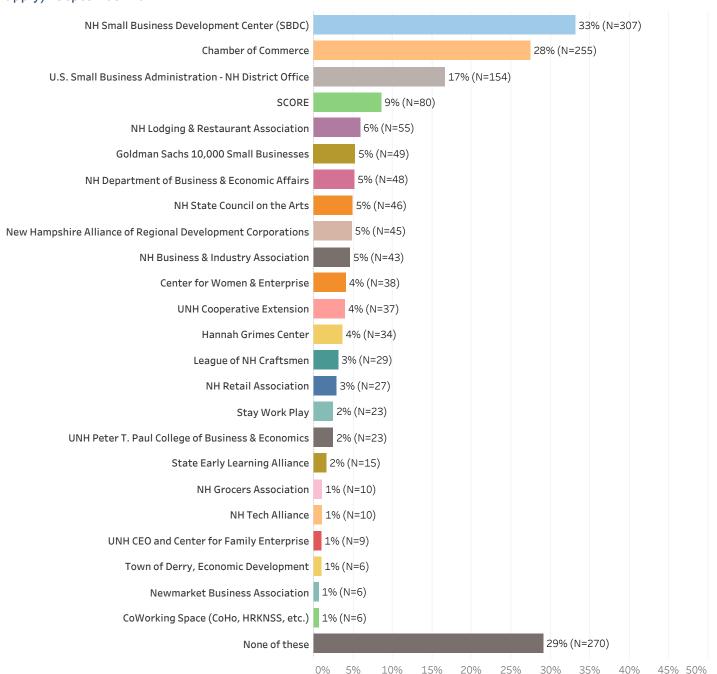
Figure 4: Type of Industry - September 2021



Thirty-three percent of respondents say their business is currently affiliated with the NH Small Business Development Center (SBDC), 28% are affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce, 17% are affiliated with the U.S. Small Business Administration - NH District Office, 9% are affiliated with SCORE, and 6% are associated with the NH Lodging & Restaurant Association. Five percent of respondents or less say their business is affiliated with Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses (5%), the NH Department of Business & Economic Affairs (5%), the NH State Council on the Arts (5%), the New Hampshire Alliance of Regional Development Corporations (5%), the NH Business & Industry Association (5%), the Center for Women & Enterprise (4%), UNH Cooperative Extension (4%), the Hannah Grimes Center (4%), the League of NH Craftsmen (3%), and the NH Retail Association (3%).

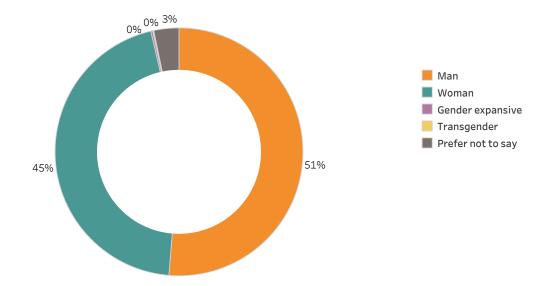
Two percent or less say they are affiliated with Stay Work Play (2%), the UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business & Economics (2%), the State Early Learning Alliance (2%), NH Grocers Association (1%), NH Tech Alliance (1%), UNH CEO and Center for Family Enterprise (1%), Town of Derry Economic Development (1%), the Newmarket Business Association (1%), or CoWorking Space (1%). Twenty-nine percent of respondents say they are not currently affiliated with any of these groups.

Figure 5: With which of the following survey partners are you currently affiliated? (Please select all that apply) - September 2021



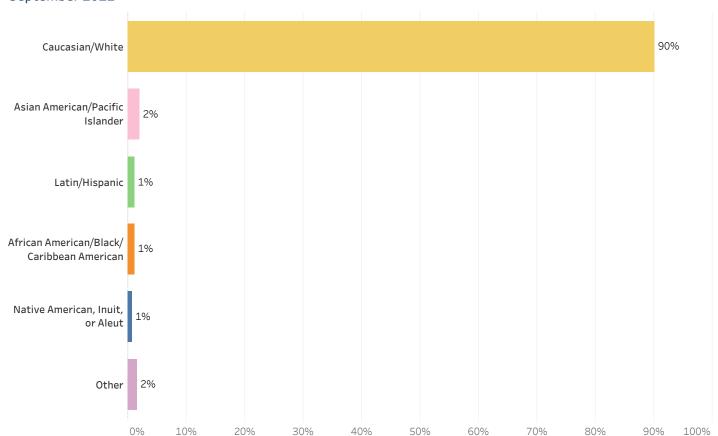
Among those who say that they are the owner or proprietor of their business (N=797), 51% describe themselves as a man, 45% as a woman, less than 1% as gender expansive or transgender, and 3% prefer not to say.

Figure 6: Which of the following best describes your gender? - September 2021



Among those who say that they are the owner or proprietor of their business (N=797), 90% identify as Caucasian or White, 2% identify as Asian American or Pacific Islander, 1% each identify as Latin or Hispanic, African American, Black, or Caribbean American, or as Native American, Inuit, or Aleut, while 2% identify with another group.

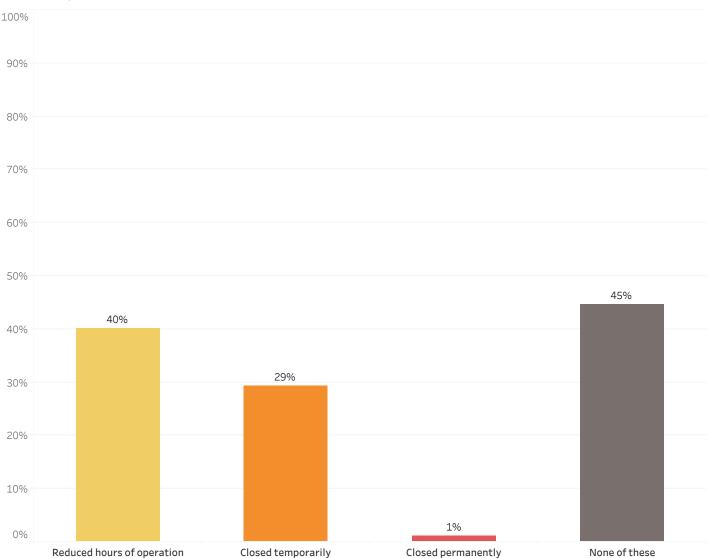
Figure 7: Which of the following ethnic or racial groups do you identify with? (Please select all that apply) - September 2021



# **Open Status**

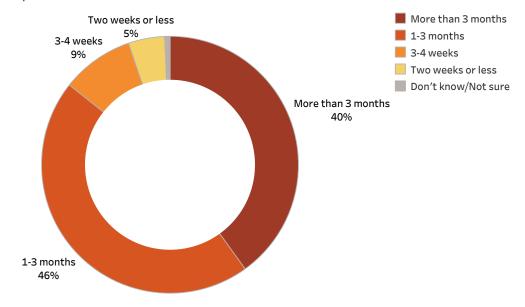
Forty percent of respondents say that their business reduced their hours of operation since February 15, 2020, 29% say that their business closed temporarily, 1% say that their business closed permanently, and 45% say their business has had no change in its open status since that time.

Figure 8: Which of the following has happened to your business since February 15, 2020? (Please select all that apply) - September 2021



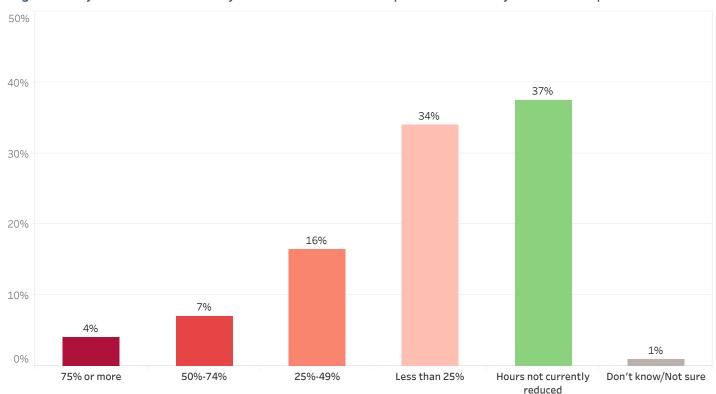
Among those who say their business has closed temporarily since February 2020 (N=307), 40% say their business has been closed for more than three months in total, 46% say their business has been closed for 1-3 months, 9% say their business has been closed for 3-4 weeks, 5% say their business has been closed for two weeks or less, and 1% don't know or are unsure.

Figure 9: Since February 15, 2020, how long in total has your business been temporarily closed? (If unsure, please estimate) - September 2021



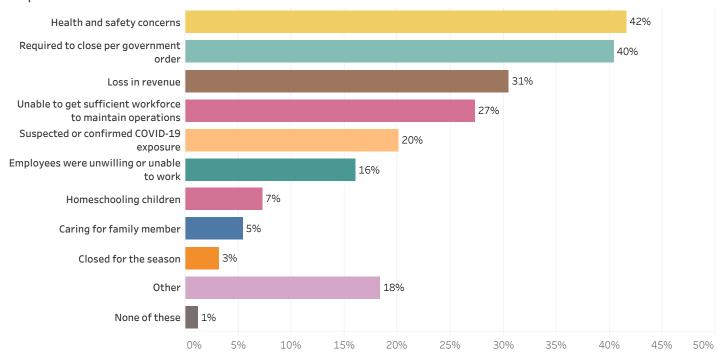
Among those who say that their business has reduced their hours of operation since February 2020 (N=414), 4% say their business's hours are currently reduced by 75% or more, 7% say their hours are reduced by 50%-74%, 16% say their hours are reduced by 25%-49%, 34% say their hours are reduced by less than 25%, and 37% say their business's hours are not currently reduced.

Figure 10: By about how much are your business's hours of operation currently reduced? - September 2021



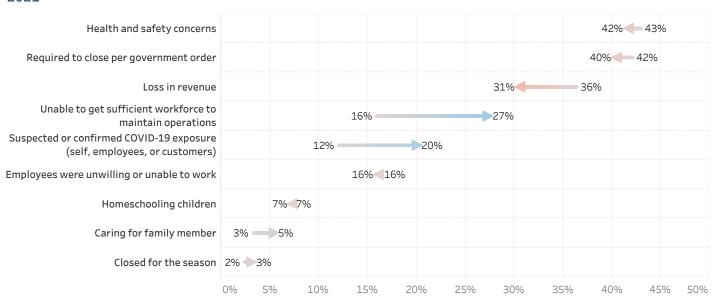
Among those who say their business reduced their hours or closed temporarily since February 15th, 2020 (N=567), about four in ten say they reduced their hours or closed temporarily because of health and safety concerns (42%) or because they were required to close per government order (40%), while 31% cite a loss of revenue and 27% say they were unable to get a sufficient workforce to maintain operations. Twenty percent say that they closed or reduced their hours because of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 exposure and 16% say that employees were unwilling or unable to work, while fewer cite homeschooling children (7%), caring for a family member (5%), or closing for the season (3%). Eighteen percent say they reduced hours or closed for another reason while 1% say none of these are reasons they reduced hours or closed.

Figure 11a: Why did your business close or reduce its hours of operation? (Please select all that apply) - September 2021



Respondents are more likely than in February to say that since the pandemic started, their business has closed or reduced its hours of operation because they were unable to get a sufficient workforce to maintain operations (+11 percentage points) or because of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 exposure (+8), while they are slightly less likely to cite a loss in revenue (-6).

Figure 11b: Why business closed or reduced hours of operation - Change from February 2021 to September 2021

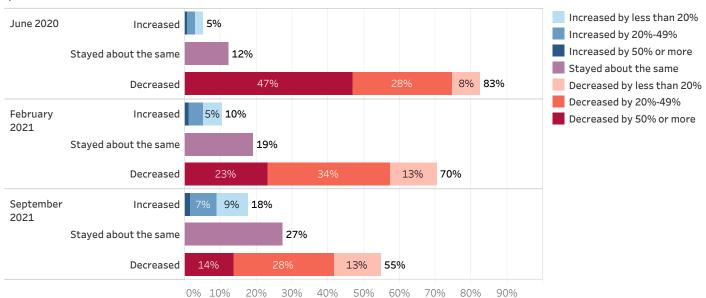


#### **Finances**

Fifty-five percent of respondents say their business has seen its monthly revenue decrease as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; 13% of respondents say their business's monthly revenue has fallen by less than 20%, 28% say their revenue has fallen by 20%-49%, and 14% say their revenue has fallen by 50% or more. Twenty-seven percent of respondents say their monthly revenue has stayed about the same, while 18% say their revenue has increased by less than 20% (9%), 20%-49% (7%), or by 50% or more (2%).

The proportion of respondents who say that their monthly revenue has decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to fall; in June 2020, 83% said their monthly revenue had declined and 70% said in February 2021 that was the case for their business.

Figure 12a: To the best of your knowledge, how has your monthly revenue been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?



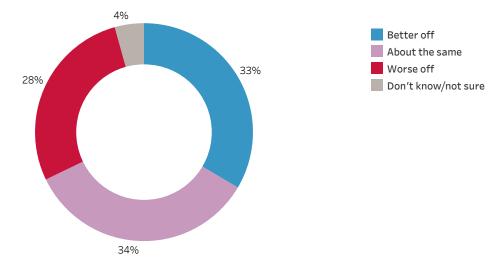
Businesses of all sizes and nearly all industries are more likely than in February to say that their monthly revenue has increased or stayed about the same as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses with more than 25 employees (+21 percentage points) and those in the accommodation and food services industry (+27), the construction industry (+16), and the health care and social assistance industry (+16) are particularly likely to say this is the case for their business.

Figure 12b: To the best of your knowledge, how has your monthly revenue been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?- Change from February 2021 to September 2021

Increased or stayed about the same **OVERALL** 30% Overall 24% 0-1 employees 39% Current 2-9 employees 32% 48% Number of 10-25 employees 45% 31% **Employees** More than 25 employees 35% Accommodation and Food Services 10% 37% Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation 11% 21% Construction 42% 59% **Educational Services** 28% 30% Industry Health Care and Social Assistance 29% 45% Manufacturing 35% 43% Prof., Scientific and Tech. Services 39% 45% **Retail Trade** 45% 52% 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 70% 80% 90% 100% 60%

One-third (33%) of respondents report that their business is better off financially than they were in February 2021, 34% say their business is doing about the same financially, 28% say they are worse off, and 4% don't know or are unsure.

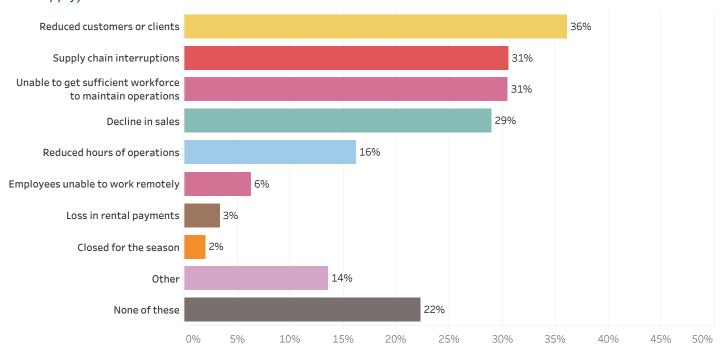
Figure 13: Would you say that your business is better off or worse off financially than you were in February 2021? - September 2021



Thirty-six percent of respondents say that their business is currently experiencing financial losses due to reduced customers or clients while just under one-third are experiencing losses due to supply chain interruptions (31%), being unable to get a sufficient workforce to maintain operations (31%), or due to a decline in sales (29%). Sixteen percent say their business is currently experiencing losses due to reduced hours of operations while less than 10% cite employees being unable to work remotely (6%), a loss in rental payments (3%), or being closed for the season (2%) as current causes of financial losses for their business. Fourteen percent mention something else that is causing their business to experience losses while 22% say none of these are currently causing their business to experience losses.

When asked what is having the greatest impact on their business's finances, respondents most frequently mention a decline in sales (35%) and being unable to get a sufficient workforce to maintain operations (32%).

Figure 14: Which of the following is currently causing you to experience financial losses? (Please select all that apply)

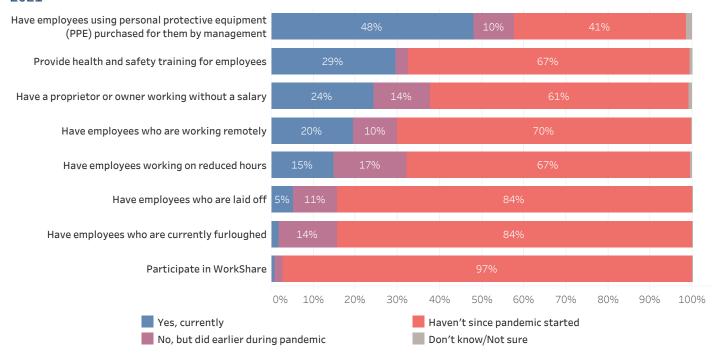


# **Management of Business**

Nearly half (48%) of respondents say they currently have employees using personal protective equipment (PPE), 10% say their employees were doing this earlier in the pandemic, 41% say their employees haven't done this since the pandemic began, and 1% don't know or are unsure. Twenty-nine percent are currently providing health and safety training for employees and 3% were earlier during the pandemic, 24% say their business has a proprietor or owner working without a salary and 14% say this was the case earlier during the pandemic, 20% currently have employees working remotely and 10% had some working remotely earlier during the pandemic, and 15% currently have employees working on reduced hours while 17% did earlier during the pandemic.

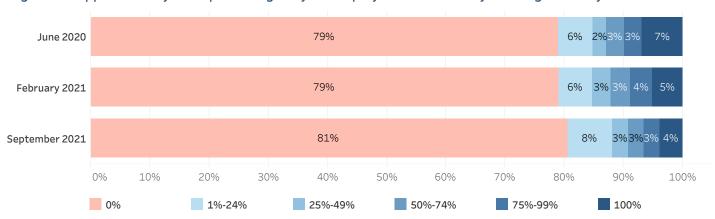
Five percent say they currently have employees laid off while 11% did earlier during the pandemic, 2% have furloughed employees while 14% did earlier, and only 1% are currently participating in WorkShare while 2% did earlier during the pandemic.

Figure 15: Have you done the following things since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic? - September 2021



Eighty-one percent of respondents say that none of their employees are currently working remotely, 8% say that 1%-24% of their employees are working remotely, 3% say that 25%-49% are working remotely, 3% say that 50%-74% are working remotely, 3% say that 75%-99% are working remotely, and 4% say that all of their employees are currently working remotely. The percentage of employees working remotely has remained largely stable since June 2020.

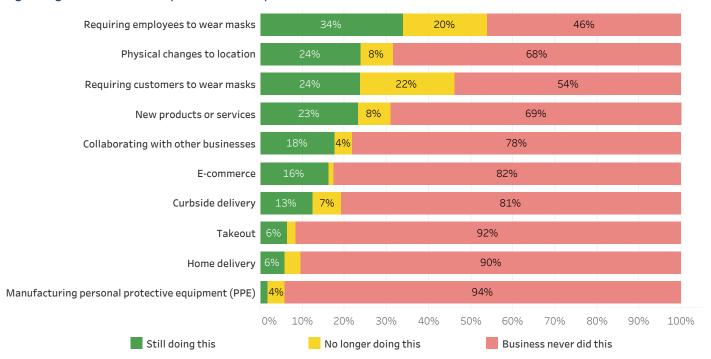
Figure 16: Approximately what percentage of your employees are currently working remotely?



When asked about innovations or modifications they have implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, one-third (34%) of respondents say they currently require employees to wear masks, 20% previously required employees to wear masks but no longer do so, and 46% never required employees to wear masks. Twenty-four percent made physical changes to their location and have kept these changes while 8% are no longer operating with these physical changes, 24% currently require customers to wear masks while 22% previously did so but no longer are, and 23% are continuing to offer new products or services while 8% are no longer doing this.

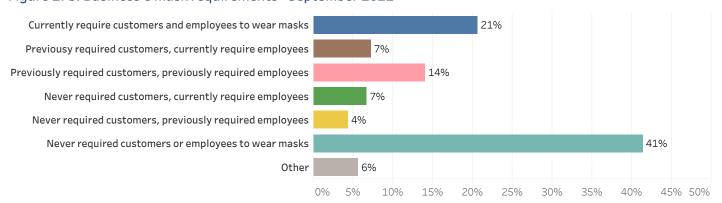
Less than one-fifth of respondents are collaborating with other businesses while 4% previously did this during the pandemic, 16% are now engaging in e-commerce while 1% previously did this, 13% now offer curbside delivery while 7% previously did this, 6% now offer takeout while 2% previously did this, 6% now offer home delivery while 4% previously did this, and 2% are now manufacturing personal protective equipment (PPE) while 4% previously did this during the pandemic but are no longer doing so.

Figure 17a: Which of the following innovations or modifications has your business implemented since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic? - September 2021



Twenty-one percent of respondents say they currently require customers and employees to wear masks, 7% previously required customers to wear them and currently require employees to do so, and 14% previously required customers and employees to wear masks but no longer. Seven percent say they never required customers to wear masks but currently require employees to do so, 4% never required customers to wear masks and previously required employees to do so, while 41% say their business never required customers or employees to wear masks.

Figure 17b: Business's mask requirements - September 2021

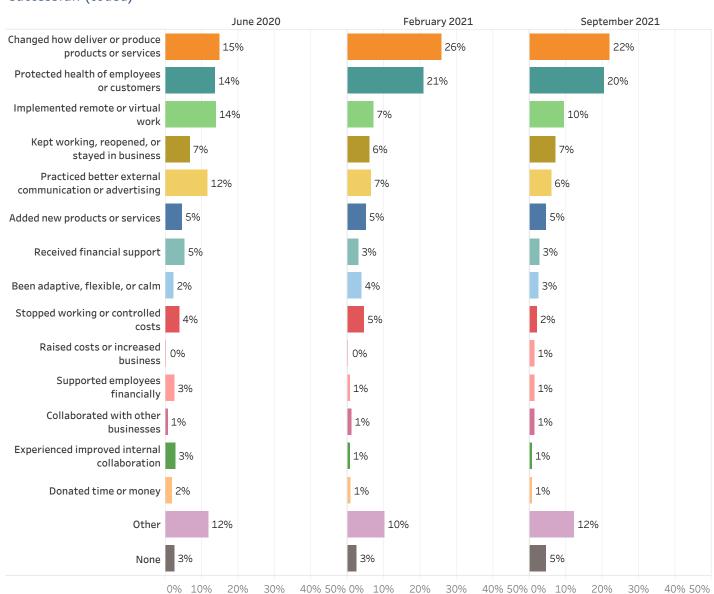


When asked for one thing their business has done in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that has been successful, 22% mention something related to changing how they deliver or produce products or services, 20% mention how they protected the health of employees or customers, and 10% mention how they implemented remote or virtual work.

Fewer respondents say one successful thing their business has done in response to COVID-19 is that they kept working, reopened, or just stayed in business (7%), practiced better external communication or advertising (6%), added new products or services (5%), received financial support (3%), were adaptive, flexible, or calm (3%), or stopped working or controlled costs (2%), while 1% each mention how they raised costs or increased their business (1%), supported their employees financially (1%), collaborated with other businesses (1%), experienced improved internal collaboration (1%), or donated time or money (1%). Twelve percent mention another type of successful thing their business has done in response to COVID-19 while 5% say nothing has been successful.

Respondents' responses largely mirror those provided in February 2021.

Figure 18: What is one thing your business has done in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that has been successful? (coded)



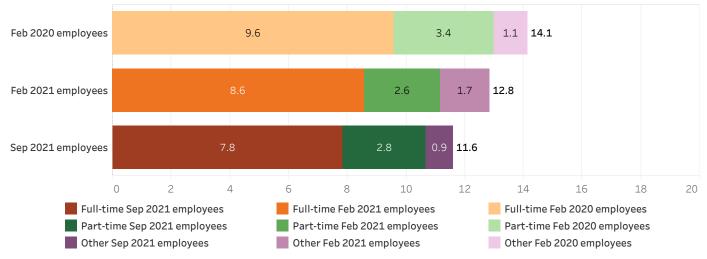
## **Employees**

Respondents report that on February 15th, 2020, their businesses on average employed 14.1 people in the state of New Hampshire; on average they had 9.6 full-time employees, 3.4 part-time employees, and 1.1 other types of employees at that time.

In February 2021, respondents report their businesses employed on average 12.8 people in New Hampshire; on average they had 8.6 full-time employees, 2.6 part-time employees, and 1.7 other types of employees.

Currently, respondents say their businesses employ on average 11.6 people in New Hampshire; on average they have 7.8 full-time employees, 2.8 part-time employees, and .9 other types of employees.

Figure 19a: Number and type of employees - September 2021

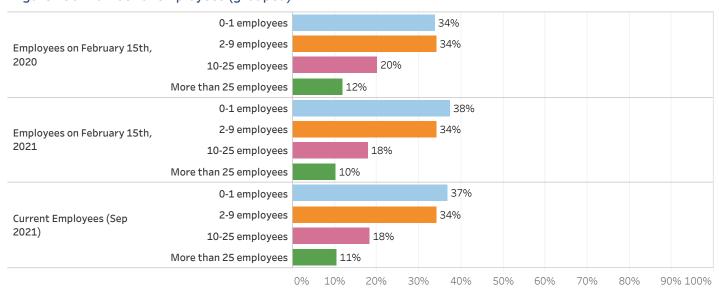


On February 15th, 2020, 34% of respondents say their business employed one person or no one, 34% employed 2-9 people, 20% employed 10-25 people, and 12% had more than 25 employees.

On February 15th, 2021, 38% report their business employed one person or no one, 34% say they employed 2-9 people, 18% employed 10-25 people, and 10% had more than 25 employees.

Currently, 37% of respondents say their business employs one person or no one, 34% employ 2-9 people, 18% employ 10-25 people, and 11% have more than 25 employees.

Figure 19b: Number of employees (grouped)

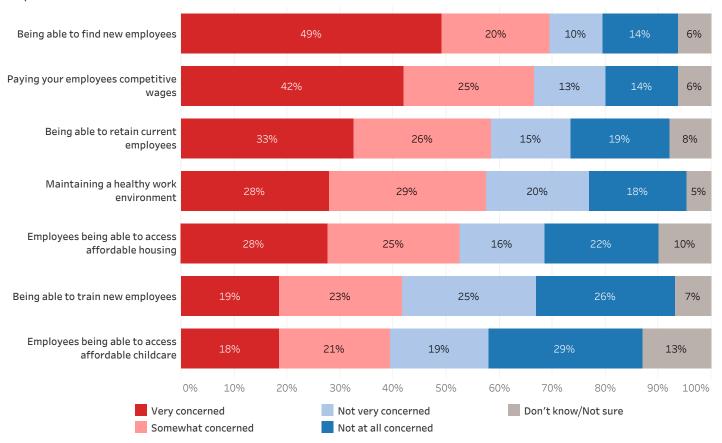


Seven in ten respondents (70%) say that they are very (49%) or somewhat (20%) concerned about being able to find new employees while two-thirds (67%) are very or somewhat concerned about paying their employees competitive wages. More than half say they are very or somewhat concerned about being able to retain their current employees (58%), maintaining a healthy work environment (57%), and employees being able to access affordable housing (53%) while less than half are

concerned about being able to train new employees (42%) and employees being able to access affordable childcare (39%).

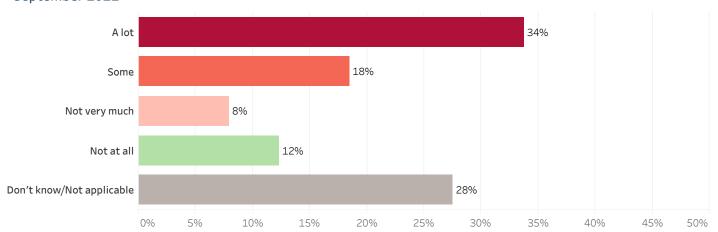
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Figure 20: How concerned are you about the following things regarding your business's employees? - September 2021



One-third (34%) of respondents say that they have struggled a lot to hire employees in the past six months, 18% say they have had some struggles to hire employees in the time, 8% have not struggled very much, 12% have not struggled at all, and 28% don't know or say the question is not applicable.

Figure 21: How much, if at all, would you say you have you struggled to hire employees in the past six months? - September 2021

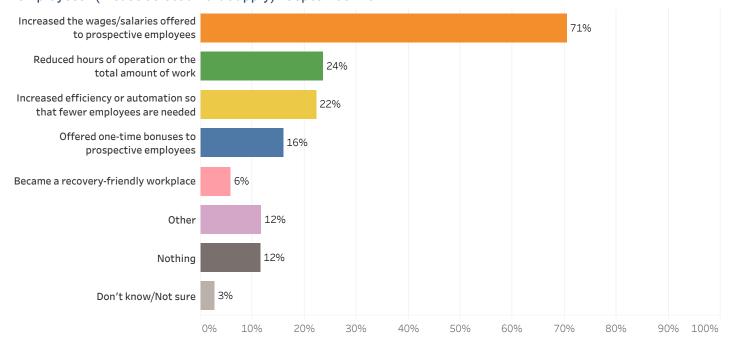


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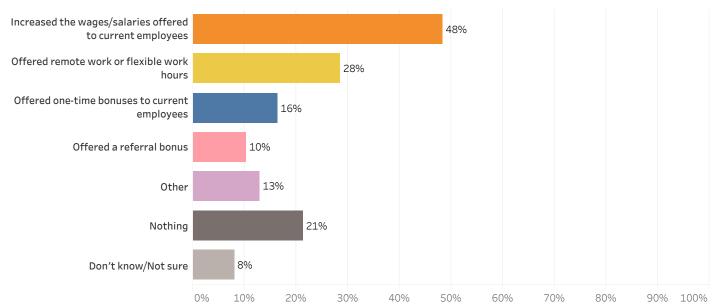
Among those who say they have struggled at least a little to hire employees (N=611), seventy-one percent say that they have tried to help with hiring employees by increasing the wages or salaries offered to prospective employees. Far fewer say that they have reduced their hours of operation or the total amount of work at their business (24%), increased efficiency or automation so that fewer employees are needed (22%), offered one-time bonuses to prospective employees (16%), or become a recovery-friendly workplace (6%). Twelve percent say they have done something else in response to their hiring struggles, another 12% have done nothing, and 3% don't know or are unsure.

Figure 22: Which of the following, if anything, has your business done in 2021 to try to help with hiring new employees? (Please select all that apply) - September 2021



Nearly half (48%) of businesses say that their business in 2021 has increased the wages or salaries offered to current employees to help retain their employees, 28% have offered remote work or flexible work hours, 16% have offered one-time bonuses to current employees, 10% have offered a referral bonus, and 13% have done something else to help retain their employees. Twenty-one percent say they have done nothing to help retain their employees while 8% don't know or are unsure.

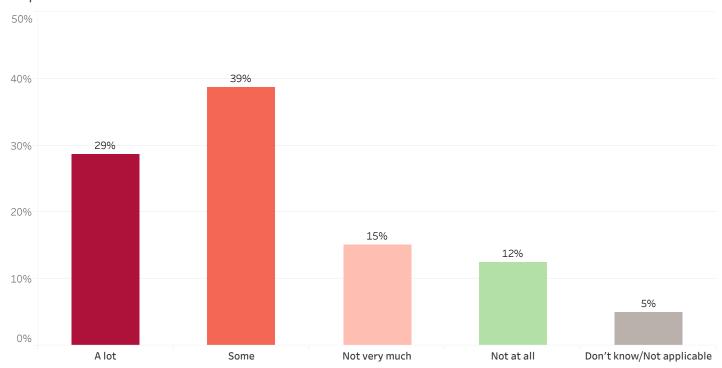
Figure 23: Which of the following, if anything, has your business done in 2021 to try to help with retaining your current employees? (Please select all that apply) - September 2021



# **Supply Chain**

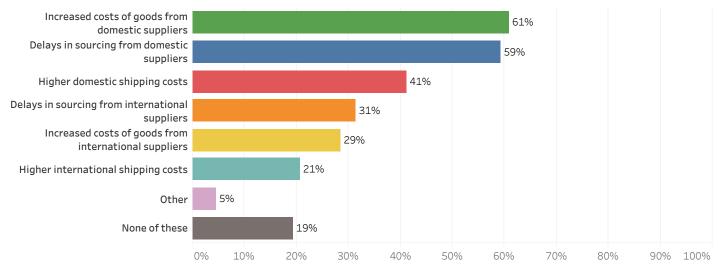
Twenty-nine percent of respondents say that their business has been affected a lot by supply chain issues in 2021, 39% say their business has been affected somewhat, 15% say their business has not been affected very much, 12% say their business has not been affected at all, and 5% don't know or say the question is not applicable.

Figure 24: How much, if at all, has your business been affected by various supply chain issues in 2021? - September 2021



Six in ten respondents say that in 2021 their business has been affected by increased costs of goods from domestic suppliers (61%) and by delays in sourcing from domestic suppliers (59%). Four in ten (41%) say they have been affected by higher domestic shipping costs, 31% have been affected by delays in sourcing from international suppliers, 29% have been affected by increased costs of goods from international suppliers, and 21% have been affected by higher international shipping costs. Five percent say their business has been affected by other supply chain issues in 2021 while 19% say their business has not been affected by any of these supply chain issues.

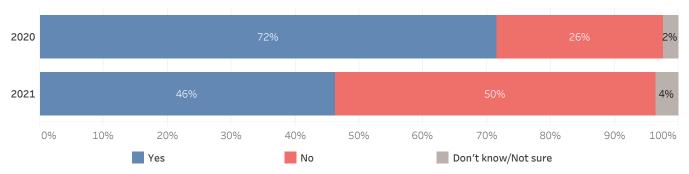
Figure 25: In which of the following ways has your business been affected by supply chain issues in 2021? - September 2021



#### Relief

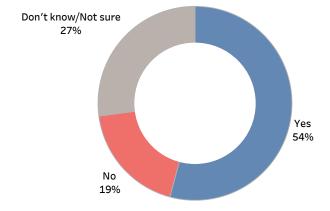
Just under three-quarters (72%) of respondents report that their business applied for some type of relief in 2020, 26% did not do so, and 2% don't know or are unsure. However, less than half (46%) of respondents have applied for relief in 2021, 50% have not, and 4% don't know or are unsure. Among those who applied for relief in 2020 (N=733), 61% have also applied for aid in 2021, while 10% of those who did not apply in 2020 (N=266) have applied in 2021.

Figure 26: Did you business apply for relief in... - September 2021



Just over half (54%) of respondents say that they would consider applying if more relief funds were made available in the future, 19% say they wouldn't consider applying, and 27% don't know or are unsure. Among those who have applied for relief in 2021 (N=457), 78% say they would consider applying if additional relief was made available in the future, while 31% of those who have not applied for relief in 2021 (N=495) would consider applying for future relief.

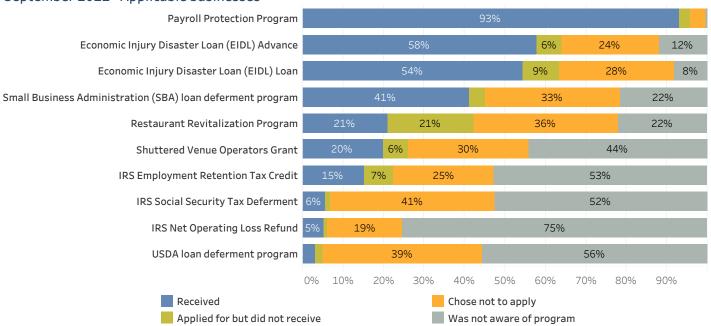
Figure 27: If more relief funds were made available in the future, would you consider applying? - September 2021



Among respondents who say the following programs are applicable to their business, nearly all (93%) say their business received relief from the Payroll Protection Program in 2020 or 2021, while an additional 3% say they applied but did not receive relief from this program, 4% say they chose not to apply, and less than 1% say they were not aware of the program. More than half say they received relief through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Advance (58%) or the EIDL Loan (54%) programs, while just under one in ten say they applied for but did not receive relief through these programs and around a quarter chose not to apply. Four in ten (41%) say they received aid through the Small Business Administration (SBA) loan deferment program, 4% applied for this program but did not receive aid, 33% chose not to apply, and 22% were not aware of it.

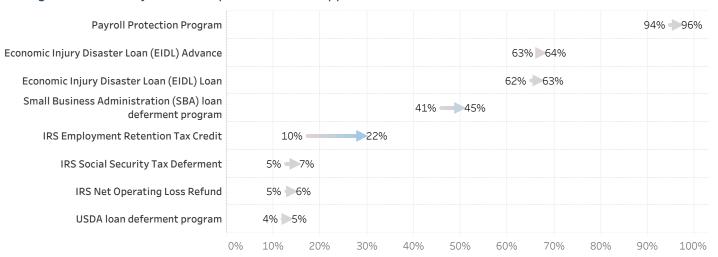
About one in five respondents received relief through the Restaurant Revitalization Program (21%) or the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (20%), while 15% have received relief through the IRS Employment Retention Tax Credit. Very few respondents received relief through the IRS Social Security Tax Deferment program (6%), the IRS Net Operating Loss Refund program (5%), or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan deferment program (3%).

Figure 28a: What did your business do with regard to the following federal relief programs in 2020 or 2021? - September 2021 - Applicable businesses



There have been relatively few changes since February in the percentage of respondents who say their business has applied for or received aid through the following programs. The percentage who have applied for or received aid through the IRS Employment Retention Tax Credit has increased by thirteen percentage points, by far the most of any program.

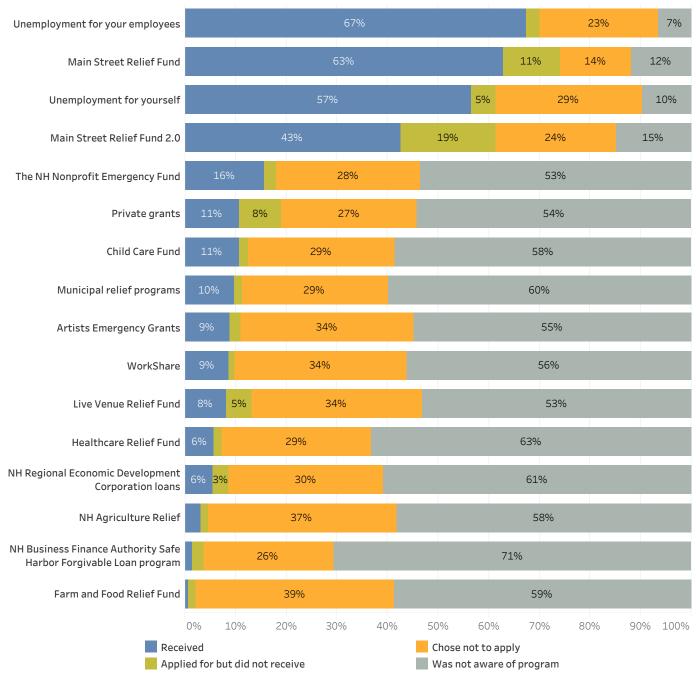
Figure 28b: Business received or applied for relief through following federal programs in 2020 or 2021 - Change from February 2021 to September 2021 - Applicable Businesses



Among respondents who say the following programs are applicable to their business, two-thirds (67%) say that in 2020 or 2021 their business received relief through unemployment for their employees, while an additional 3% say they applied but did not receive relief through this program, 23% say they chose not to apply, and 7% say they were not aware of the program. Just under two-thirds (63%) say they received relief through the Main Street Relief Fund program, 57% received relief through unemployment for themselves, and 43% received aid through the Main Street Relief Fund 2.0 program. Some say they applied for but did not receive relief through these programs and others chose not to apply.

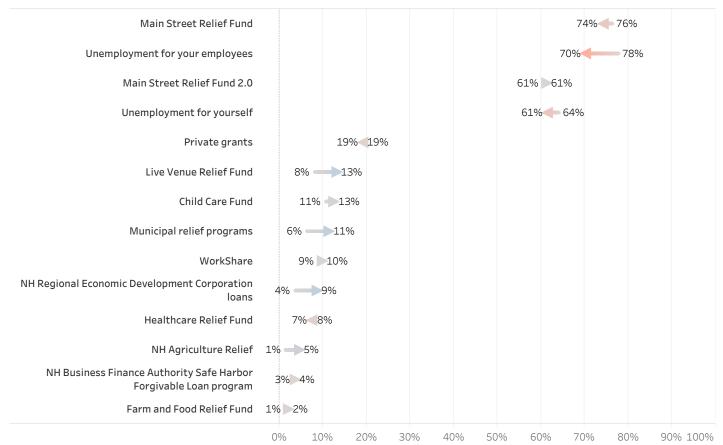
Fewer respondents received relief through the NH Nonprofit Emergency fund (16%), private grants (11%), the Child Care Fund (11%), municipal relief programs (10%), Artists Emergency Grants (9%), WorkShare (9%), the Live Venue Relief Fund (8%), the Healthcare Relief Fund (6%), NH Regional Economic Development Corporation loans (6%), NH Agriculture Relief (3%), the NH Business Finance Authority Safe Harbor Forgivable Loan program (1%), or the Farm and Food Relief Fund (<1%). Majorities say they were not aware of each of these programs while between 25% and 40% chose not to apply.

Figure 29a: What did your business do with regard to the following state, municipal, or private relief programs in 2020 or 2021? - September 2021 - Applicable businesses



There have been relatively few changes since February in the percentage of respondents who say their business has applied for or received aid through the following programs. The percentage who have applied for or received aid the Live Venue Relief Fund (+5 percentage points) and through NH Regional Economic Development Corporation loans (+5) have increased very slightly since February while the percentage who say they received aid through unemployment for their employees has slightly decreased (-8 percentage points).

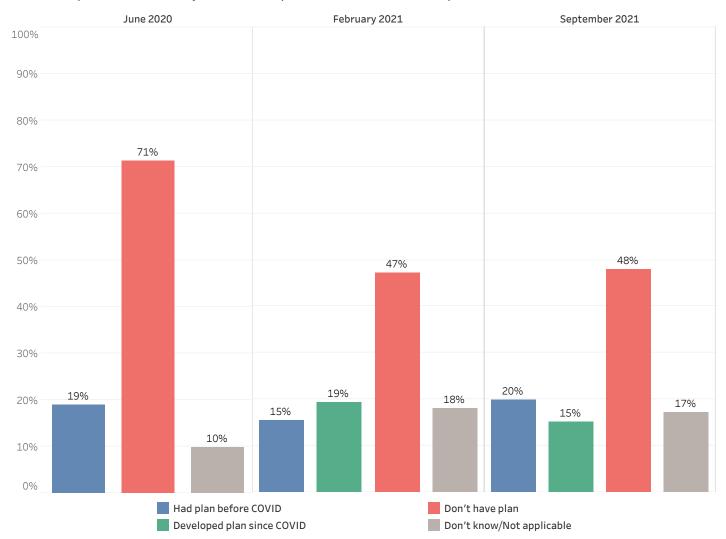
Figure 29b: Business received or applied for relief through following state, municipal, or private relief programs in 2020 or 2021 - Change from February 2021 to September 2021 - All respondents



# **Resiliency**

Twenty percent of respondents report that their business had a resiliency or continuity plan in the event of a disaster prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 15% have developed a plan since the pandemic began, 48% don't have a plan, and 17% don't know or say the question is not applicable. Respondents are no more likely than they were in February to say they had a resiliency plan before the pandemic or have developed one since, but they remain more likely than in June 2020 to report having a plan.

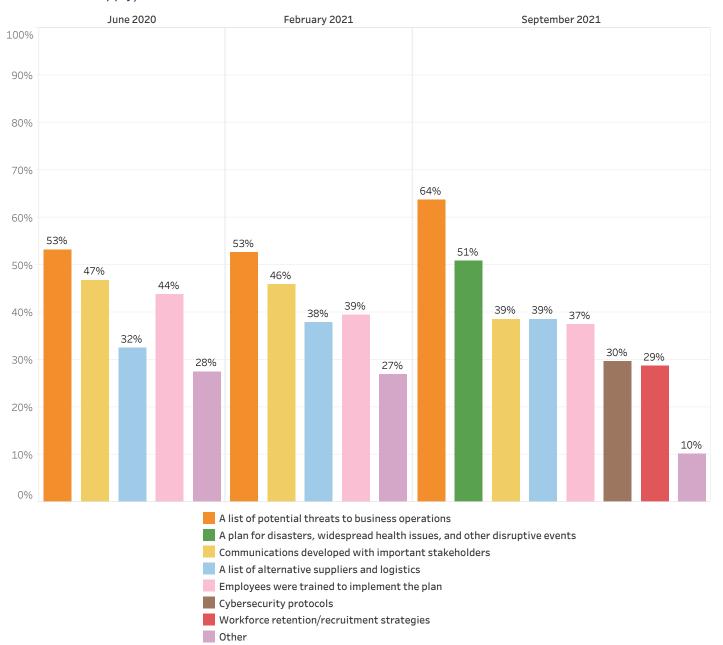
Figure 30: Did your business have a resiliency or continuity plan in the event of a disaster prior to the COVID-19 pandemic or have you created a plan since the start of the pandemic?



Among those who had a resiliency or continuity plan prior to the COVID-19 pandemic or have created one since (N=334), nearly two-thirds (64%) say a list of potential threats to business operations is included in their plan and 51% say their plan includes a plan for disasters, widesprad health issues, and other disruptive events. Thirty-nine percent each say their plan includes communications developed with important stakeholders or a list of alternative suppliers and logistics, 37% say their plan includes employees being trained to implement the plan, 30% say their plan includes cybersecurity protocols, 29% say their plan includes workforce retention or recruitment strategies, and 10% say their plan includes another component.

Respondents with a resiliency or continuity plan are more likely than in February to say that their plan includes a list of potential threats to business operations (+11 percentage points).

Figure 31: Which of the following components were included in your resiliency or continuity plan? (Please select all that apply)

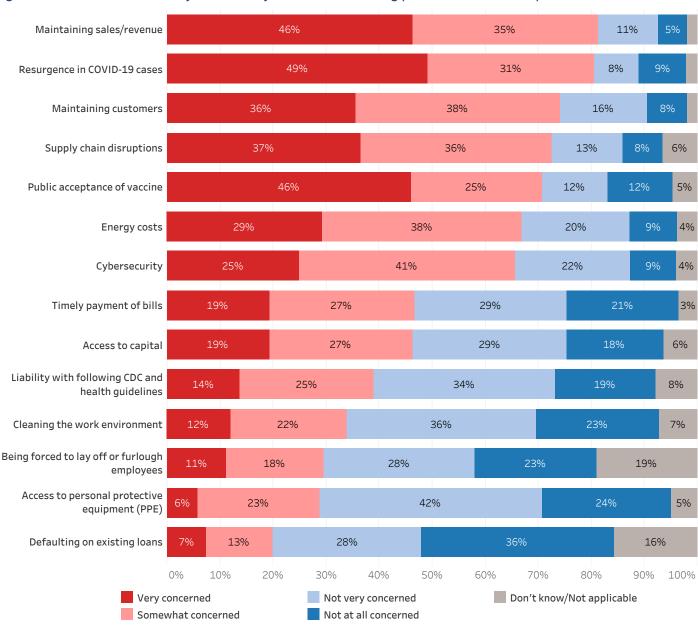


#### **Business Concerns**

Four in five respondents say that they are currently very or somewhat concerned about maintaining sales or revenue (81%) and a resurgence in COVID-19 cases (80%), while just under three-quarters are very or somewhat concerned about maintaining customers (74%), supply chain disruptions (73%), and public acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine (71%). Two-thirds say they are very or somewhat concerned about energy costs (67%) and cybersecurity (66%), while just under half are very somewhat concerned about timely payment of bills (47%) and access to capital (46%).

Less than four in ten respondents say they are currently very or somewhat concerned about liability with following CDC and health guidelines (39%), cleaning the work environment (30%), being forced to lay off or furlough employees (30%), access to personal protective equipment (PPE) (29%), or defaulting on existing loans (20%).

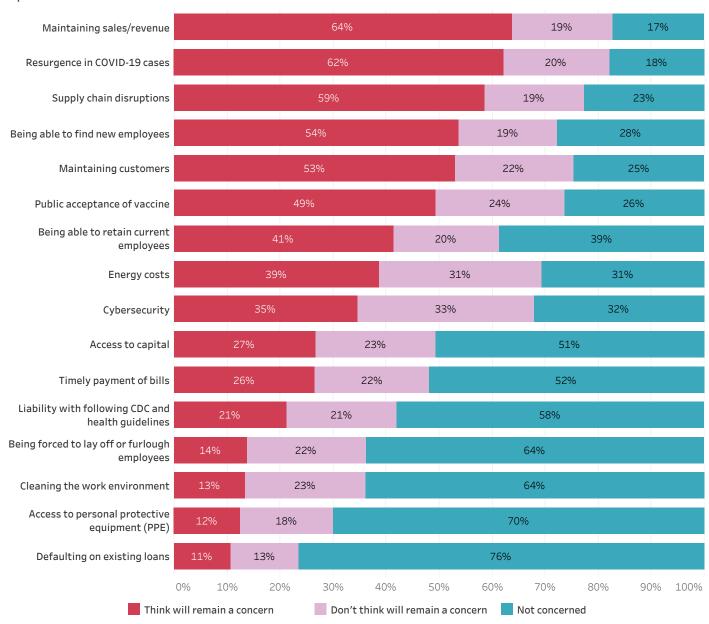
Figure 32: How concerned are you currently about the following potential issues? - September 2021



Sixty-four percent of respondents say they are currently concerned about maintaining sales or revenue and believe this will continue being an area of concern for their business going forward; 19% are currently worried about this but don't think it will remain a concern, and 17% are not concerned about this. About six in ten are concerned and anticipate remaining so about a resurgence in COVID-19 cases (62%) and supply chain disruptions (59%), while about half are currently concerned and anticipate remaining so about being able to find new employees (54%), maintaining customers (53%), and public acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine (49%).

About four in ten are currently concerned and anticipate remaining concerned about being able to retain their current employees (41%) and energy costs (39%), 35% are currently concerned and anticipate remaining so about cybersecurity, and about a quarter are currently concerned and anticipate remaining so about access to capital (27%) and timely payment of bills (26%). Less than a quarter of respondents are currently concerned and expect to continue being concerned about liability with following CDC and health guidelines (21%), being forced to lay off or furlough employees (14%), cleaning the work environment (13%), access to personal protective equipment (PPE) (12%), or defaulting on existing loans (11%). Respondents are most likely to cite energy costs and cybersecurity as issues they are currently concerned about but don't think will remain a concern for their business.

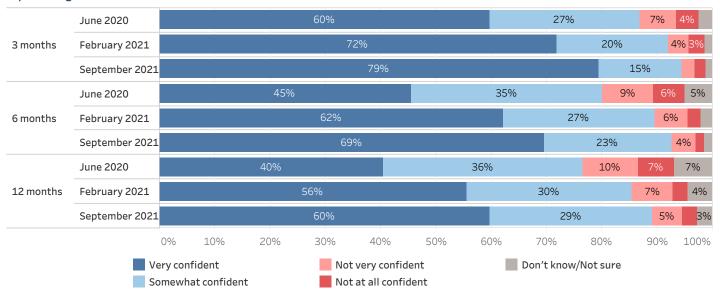
Figure 33: And which of these do you think will remain areas of concern for your business going forward? - September 2021



# **Going Forward**

Respondents continue to become more optimistic about their business's likelihood of remaining in operation in the near future. Ninety-five percent of respondents are very or somewhat confident that their business will be operating in one month, up from 92% in February, while 93% are very or somewhat confident they will be operating in six months, up from 90% in February. Nine in ten (89%) are very or somewhat confident that their business will still be operating in twelve months, up from 85% in February and up from 77% in June 2020.

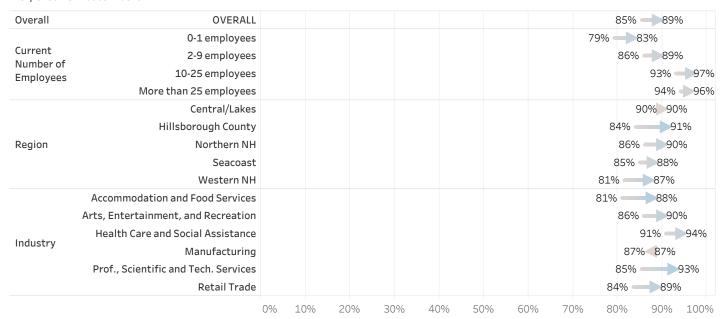
Figure 34a: Based on what you know now, how confident are you that your business will continue to be operating in...



Respondents with businesses of all sizes, locations, and types are slightly more likely than in February to report being very or somewhat confident that their business will be operating in twelve months. Respondents whose business is located in Hillsborough County (+7 percentage points) and those in the accommodation and food services industry (+7) and the professional, scientific, and technical services industry (+7) have seen the largest increases since February in the proportion who feel this way.

Figure 34b: Confidence business will still be operating 12 months from now - Change from February 2021 to September 2021

Very or somewhat confident



When asked how they expect New Hampshire business will do in the upcoming year, 33% of respondents think state businesses will enjoy good times financially, 10% think they will experience bad times, and 56% anticipate mixed conditions.

The general public has a generally similar economic outlook for the state: when asked this question in a UNH Survey Center Poll, 29% of state residents said they expected good times for New Hampshire businesses, 17% expected bad times, and 54% expected mixed conditions.

Figure 35: Thinking about business conditions in New Hampshire as a whole, do you think that during the next twelve months we'll have good times financially or bad times? - September 2021

