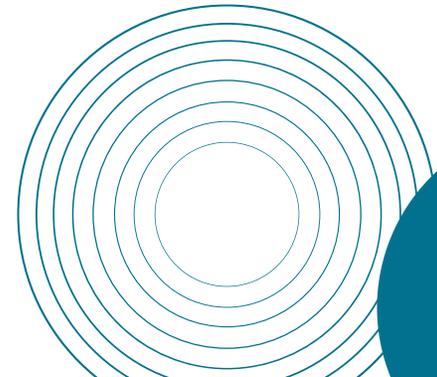


# Woolwich Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) Report

2022/2023



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# CONTACT

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## Economic Development and Tourism

### Township of Woolwich

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Elmira, ON, N3B 2Z6

# PROJECT SUMMARY

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This project is being completed by the Township of Woolwich Economic Development & Tourism Department to help guide business recovery and retention efforts. Businesses were to complete a BR+E survey either online or in-person as a follow-up to the COVID-19 Impact Report generated in September 2021, to help gauge the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business activities, and provide detailed information to inform strategic action planning and work towards economic recovery in the township. A total of 80 online surveys and interviews were completed within the 10 Woolwich communities.

## GOAL

COVID-19 brought forth many concerns and opportunities for the business community. We would like to identify these issues and work towards an action plan which will benefit our businesses. The COVID-19 Impact Survey Report was the first step to a greater Economic Recovery Strategy in the area. The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Project will help us identify future plans and needs of our local businesses, and how they feel about Woolwich as a place to do business. Information gathered from this report will be used towards recovery efforts and to plan future economic development activities.

## WHAT IS A BR + E?

Developed by the Province of Ontario, the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) program focuses on supporting the community's existing businesses by creating modes of engagement and building relationships amongst the local government and the local business community.

The Woolwich BR+E project is a community-wide effort that emphasizes making connections with local businesses. Specifically, the objectives of the project are to:

- Identify the needs, concerns, and opportunities of existing local businesses in order that, where appropriate, local action can be taken to respond to the businesses' needs or development opportunities.
- Learn of the future plans of the area's local businesses with respect to expansion, relocation, and/or retention and assess where assistance can be provided.
- Demonstrate the community's pro-business attitude and develop an effective means of communication with local businesses.
- Address immediate issues and opportunities



# PROJECT SUMMARY

## SECTORS INTERVIEWED

- 11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- 23 - Construction
- 31 - Manufacturing, (food, beverage, etc.)
- 42 - Wholesale Trade
- 44 - Retail Trade, (motor vehicle, furniture, etc.)
- 48 - Transportation and Warehousing, (air, rail, truck, etc.)
- 51 - Information
- 52 - Finance and Insurance
- 53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- 54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- 55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises
- 56 - Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
- 61 - Educational Services
- 62 - Health Care and Social Assistance
- 71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- 72 - Accommodation and Food Services
- 81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)



**80**

Business Surveys/Interviews Completed

Data was collected between  
July 2022 - November 2022

## PROJECT TIMELINE

### Data Collection & Analysis

- Surveys sent out and collected
- Survey results compiled & analyzed
- Identify key issues and opportunities

*July - Nov. 2022*

### Develop Goals & Action Plan

- Identify and address key findings
- Gather data in preparation of final report

*Nov. 2022 - Feb. 2023*

### Prepare Final Report

- Complete final report and share results with the community, council, industry partners, etc.

*Jan. - March 2023*

### Implement Actions

- Implement action items
- Identify/create future supporting projects

*March 2023 - Nov. 2023*

### Monitor & Track Progress

*March 2023 - Dec. 2023*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH BUSINESS OWNERS

Thank you to our wonderful Woolwich business owners who took out time from their very busy schedules to complete the BR+E survey with us! Thank you for your continuous support in our endeavors towards economic recovery in the Township of Woolwich.

## OMAFRA

Thank you to OMAFRA for providing the necessary information, training, survey questions and support to successfully implement the BR+E project in our community.

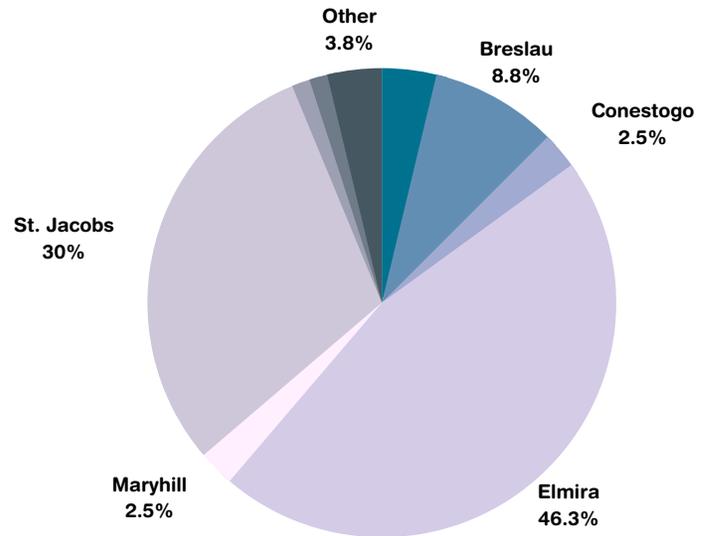
## WELLINGTON-WATERLOO COMMUNITY FUTURES (WWCF)

WWCF was a co-applicant and funding partner on this project. Thank you for supporting with the research and creation of the Woolwich BR+E Project.

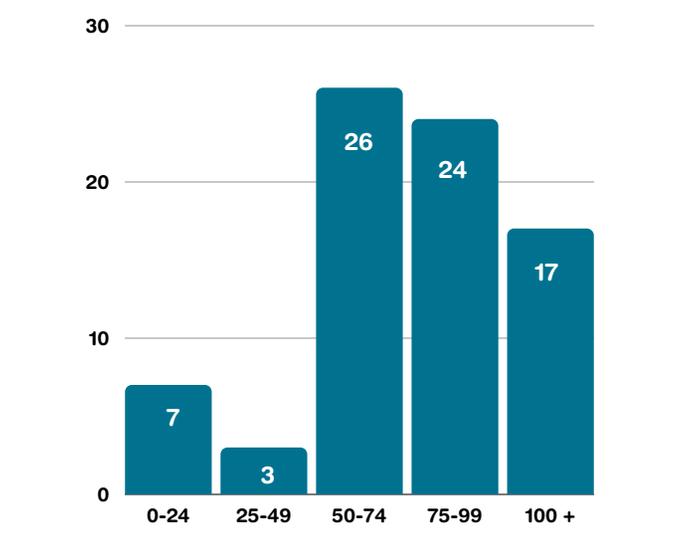


# BUSINESS INFORMATION

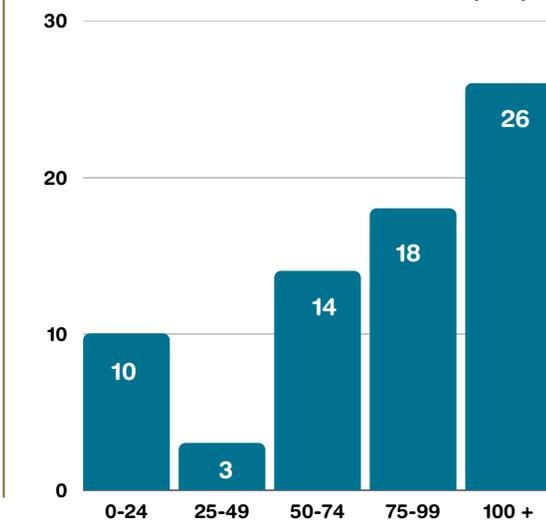
## PRIMARY LOCATION OF BUSINESS



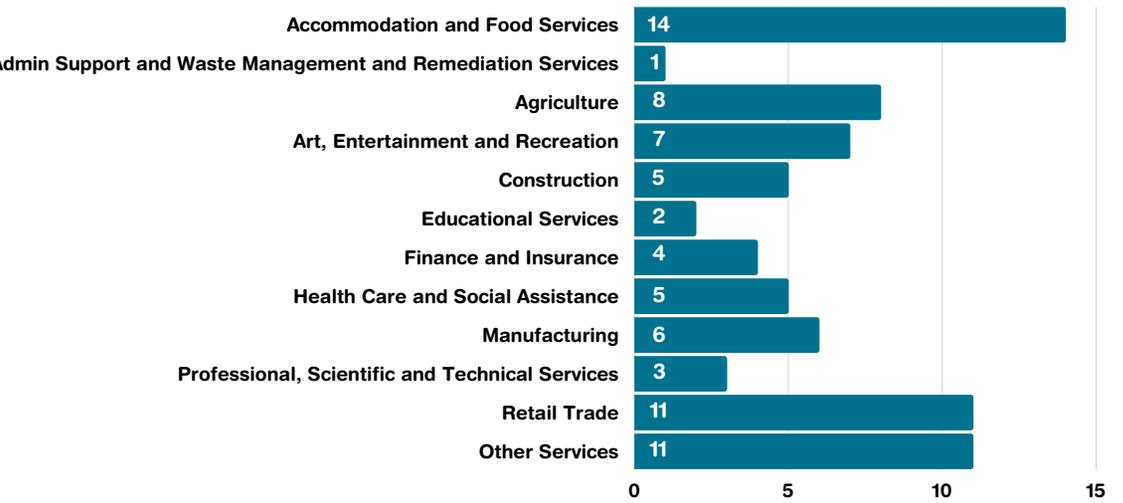
## CURRENT OPERATING LEVEL (%)



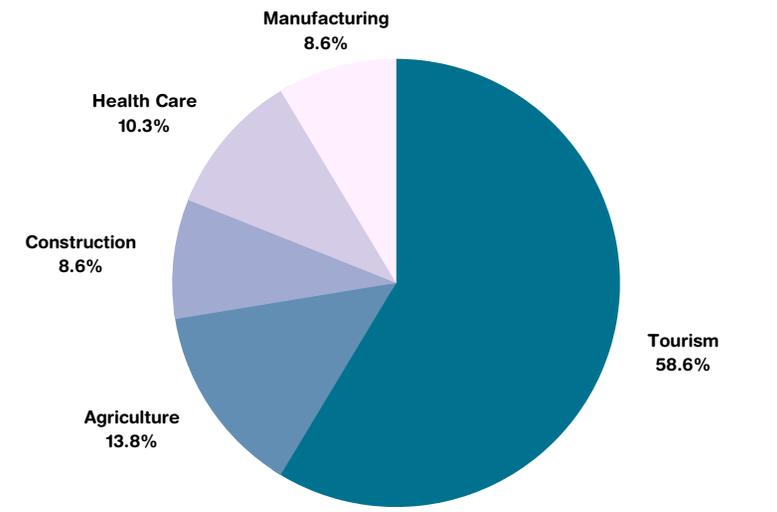
## CURRENT MONTHLY REVENUES vs. 2019 (%)



## PRIMARY BUSINESS INDUSTRY

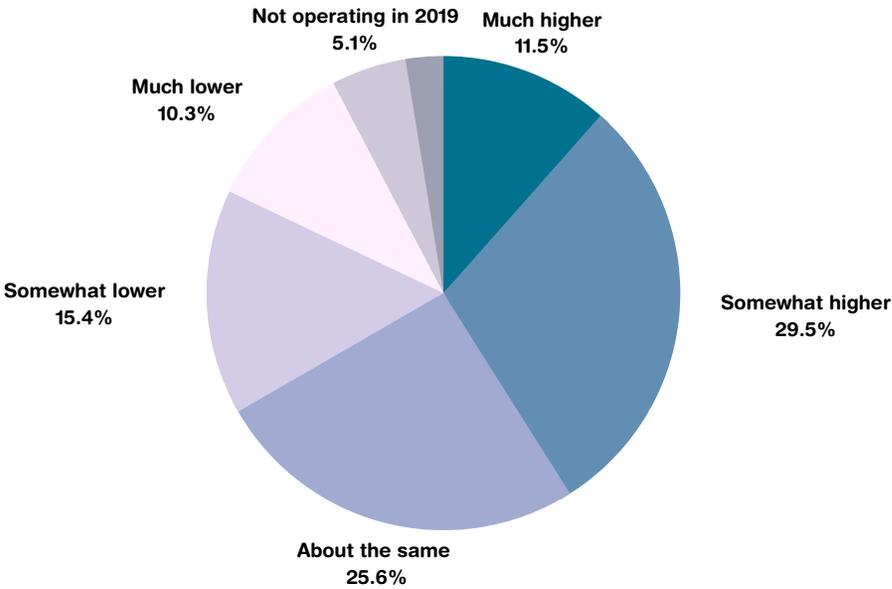


## RESPONSES BY WOOLWICH'S MAIN 5 INDUSTRIES

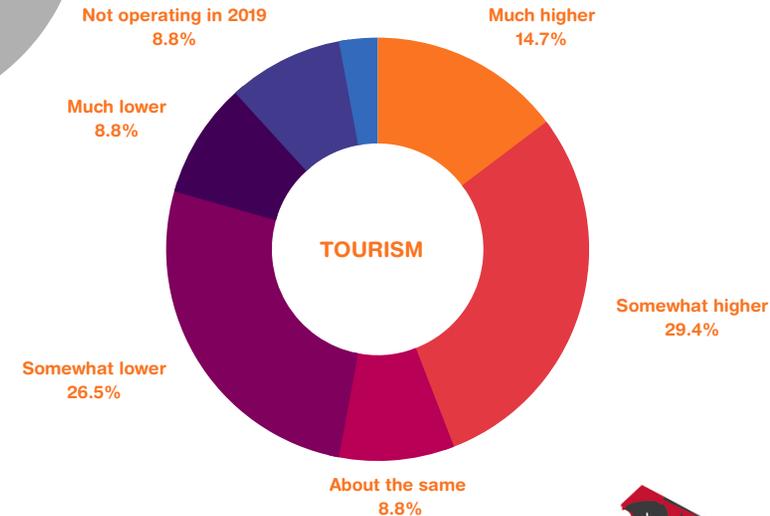
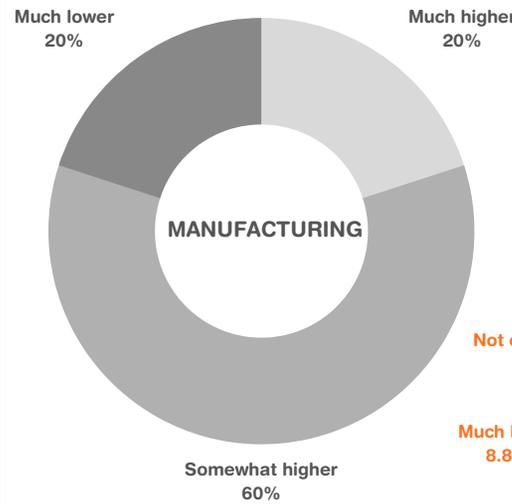
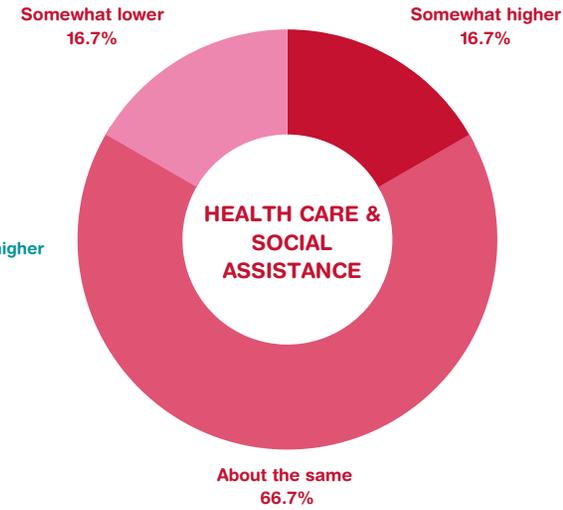
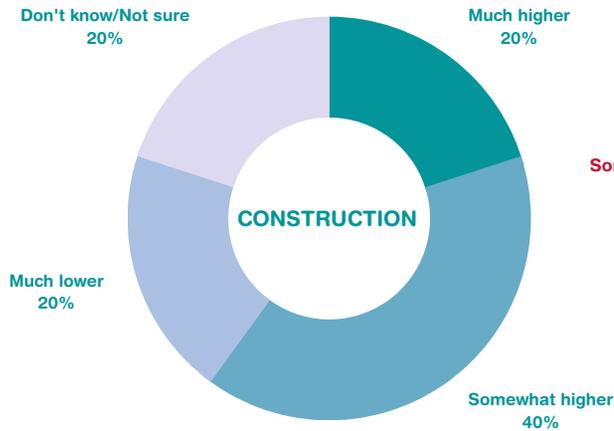
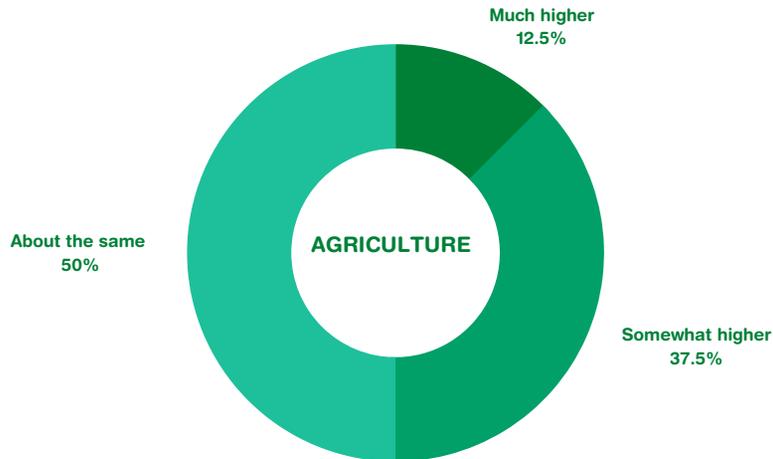


# BUSINESS INFORMATION

## CURRENT MONTHLY REVENUES vs. 2019



## CURRENT MONTHLY REVENUES vs. 2019 BY INDUSTRY



# BUSINESS INFORMATION



**60%** of business owners said that they were experiencing issues receiving required supplies and services

"Raw materials and components"

"Citric acid and sugar"

"Construction supplies, mechanical equipment"

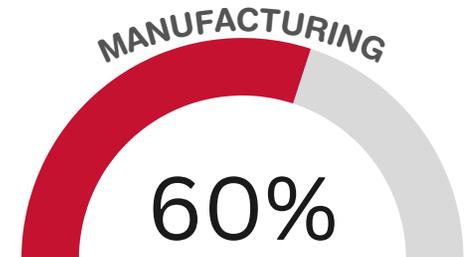
"Anything that needs to be imported"

"Food products and ingredients"

"Agricultural chemicals"



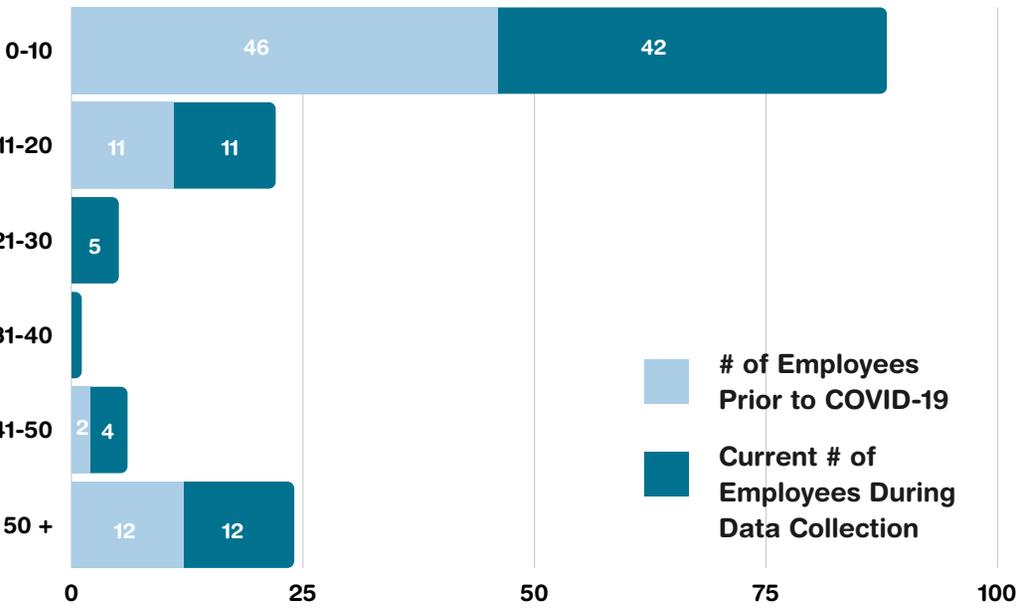
## ISSUES RECEIVING REQUIRED SUPPLIES AND SERVICES



**80%** of business owners said that they were able to ship and deliver 75% or higher of their goods and services

# WORKFORCE

## NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



**40%** of business owners said that 81 - 100% of their employees were permanent full-time

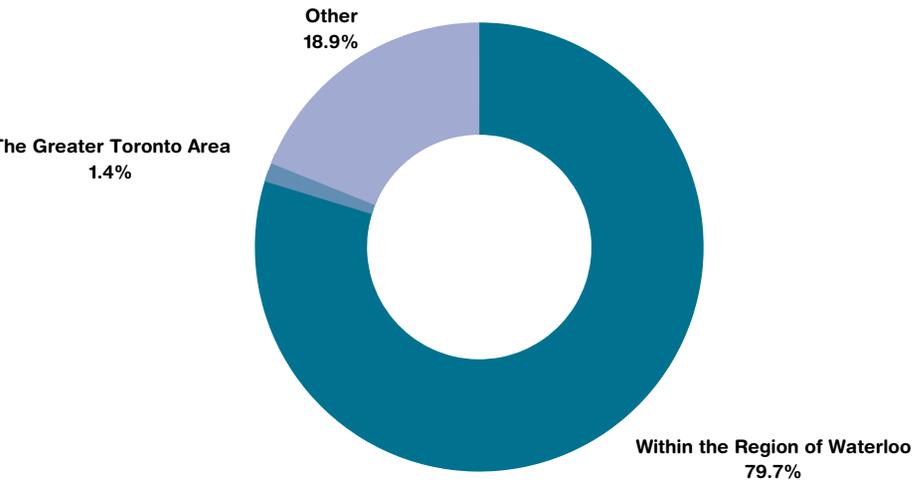


**37.5%** of business owners said that they anticipated hiring staff in the next 3 months

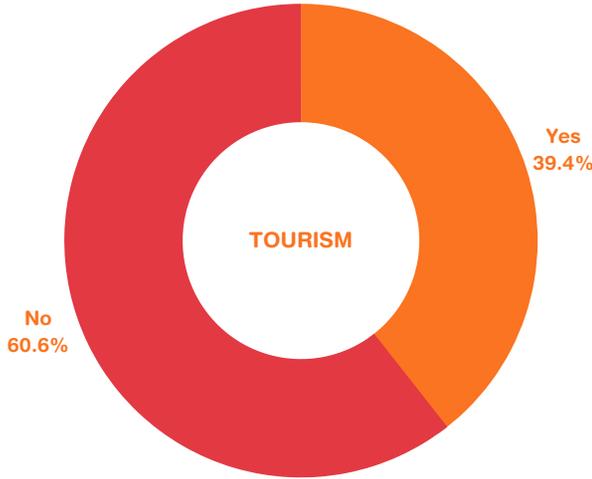
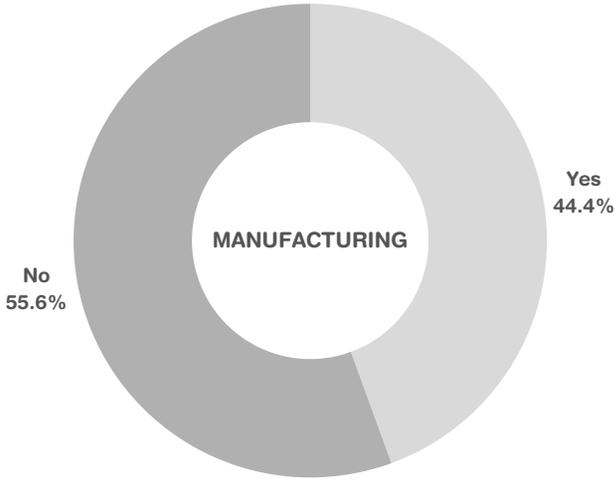
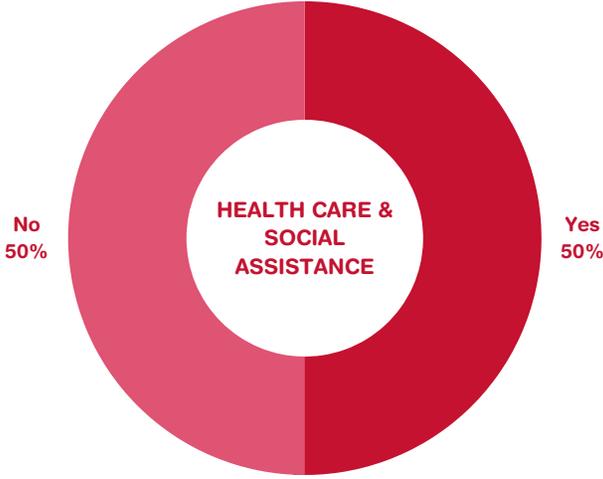
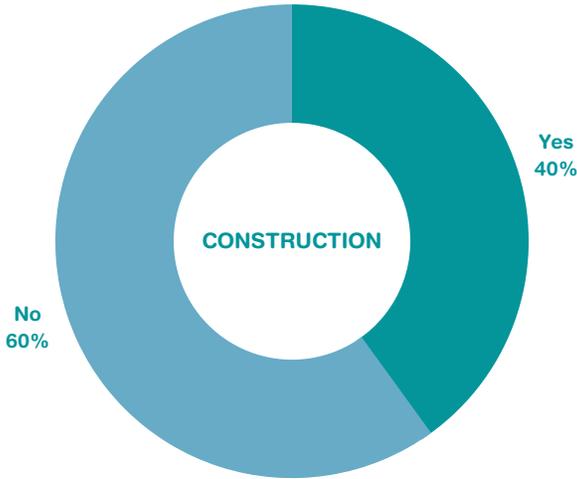
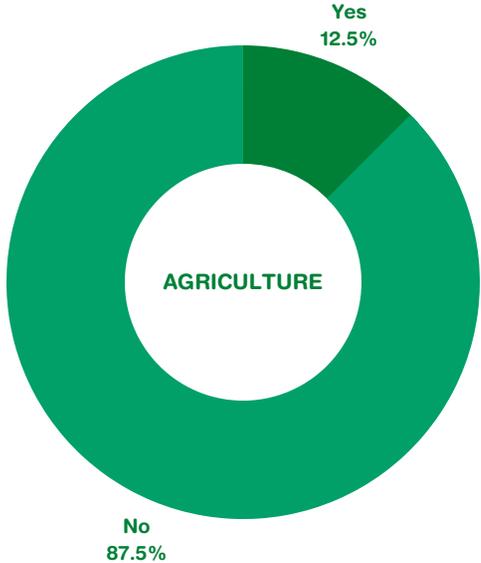


**70%** of business owners said that they anticipated hiring between 1-10 new employees

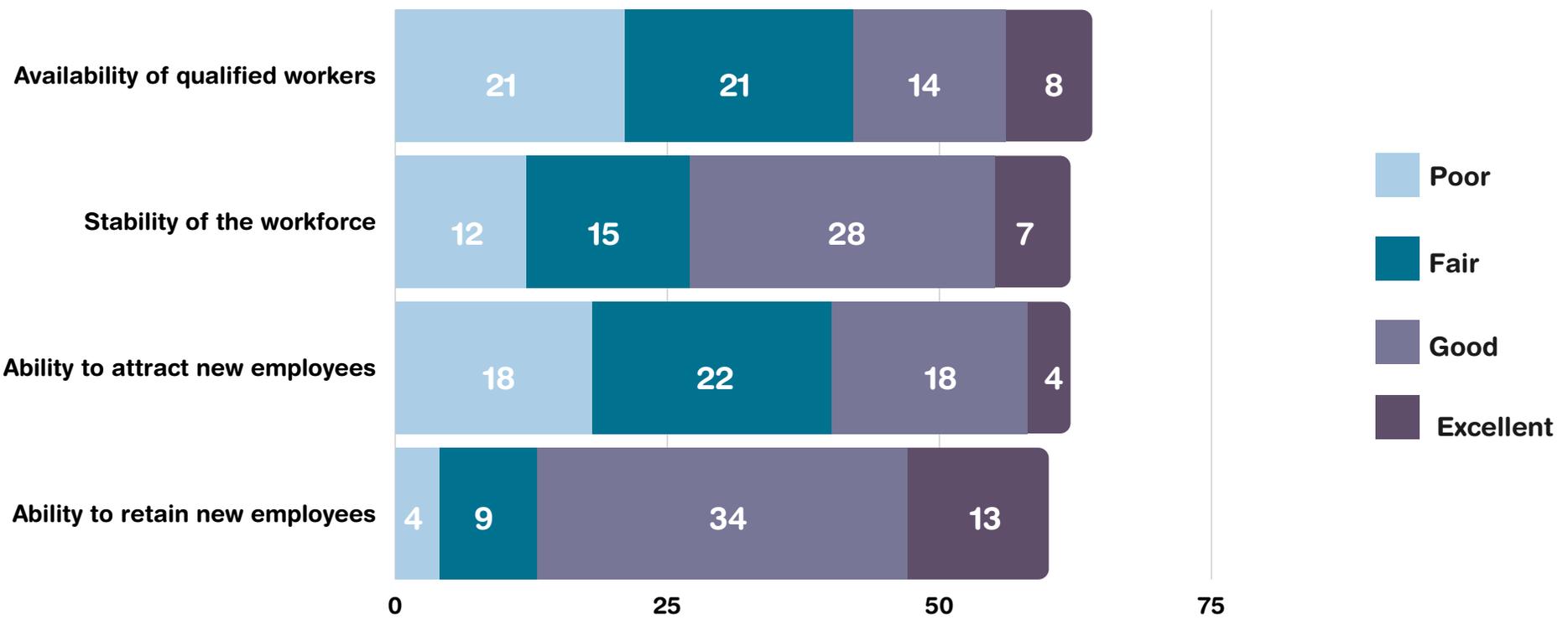
## EMPLOYEES COMMUTE FROM...



## TOP 5 INDUSTRIES HIRING IN THE NEXT 3 MONTHS



# WORKFORCE



# WORKFORCE



**57%** of business owners said that they were experiencing hiring challenges

## TOP 3 CHALLENGES TO HIRING EMPLOYEES

- 
Lack of applicants with relevant work experience **34%**
- 
Too few applicants in general **30%**
- 
Lack of applicants with required skills/training/education **28%**

*"Lack of applicants with reliable transportation, and the bus system is insufficient"*

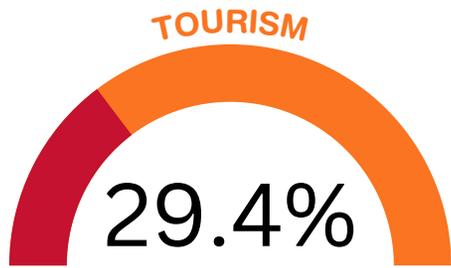
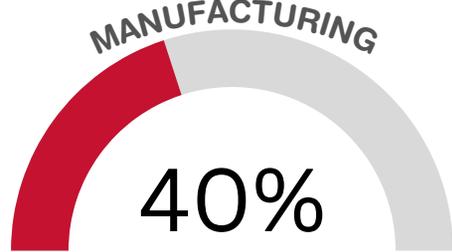
*"Limited transportation to Elmira from KW area, new Canadian's do not have a license and/or vehicle"*

*"Lack of applicants willing to work"*

*"Lack of specialized knowledge"*

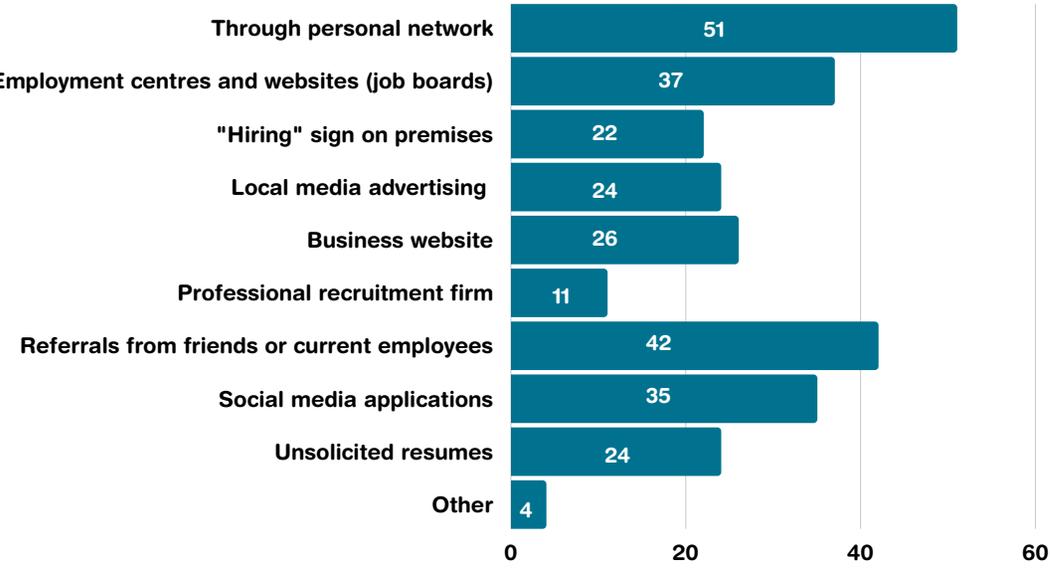
*"Low quality applicants"*

## LACK OF APPLICANTS WITH REQUIRED SKILLS/TRAINING/EDUCATION

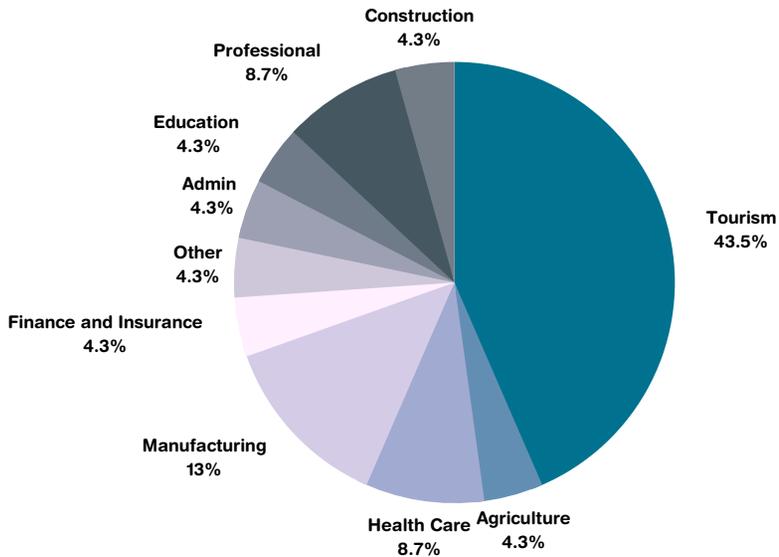


# WORKFORCE

## HIRING METHODS



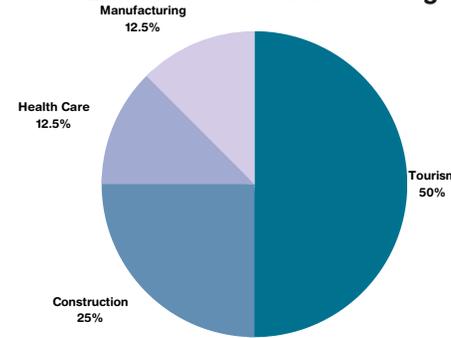
## INDUSTRIES RECEIVING UNSOLICITED RESUMES



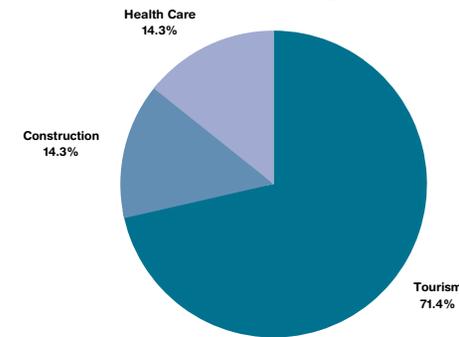
## TOP 3 CHALLENGES TO RETAINING EMPLOYEES

-  Competition from other employers **20%**
-  Lack of affordable housing options **14%**
-  Wages **12%**

### Challenges to Retaining Employees: Lack of Affordable Housing

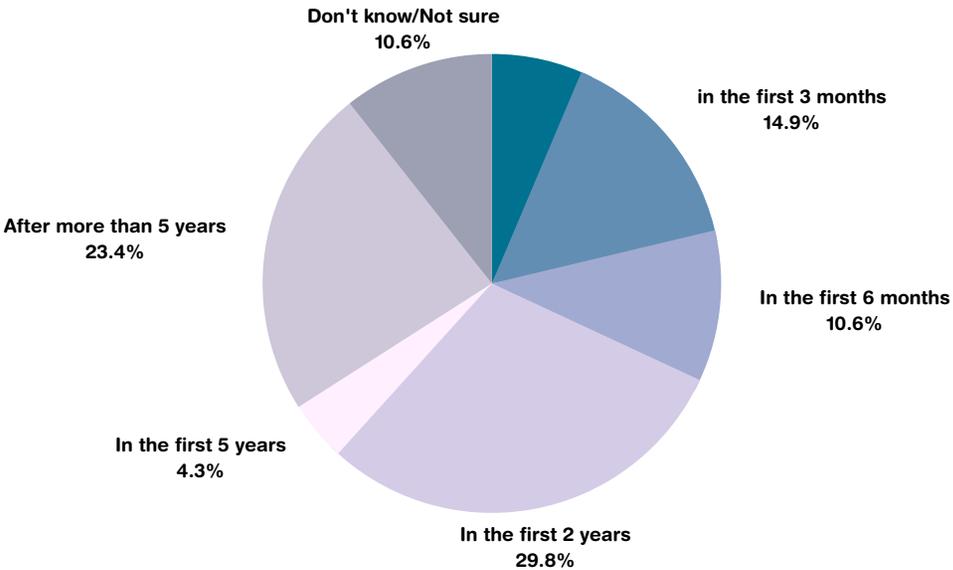


### Challenges to Retaining Employees: Wages



# WORKFORCE

## EMPLOYEES LEAVE...



"Lack of public transportation"

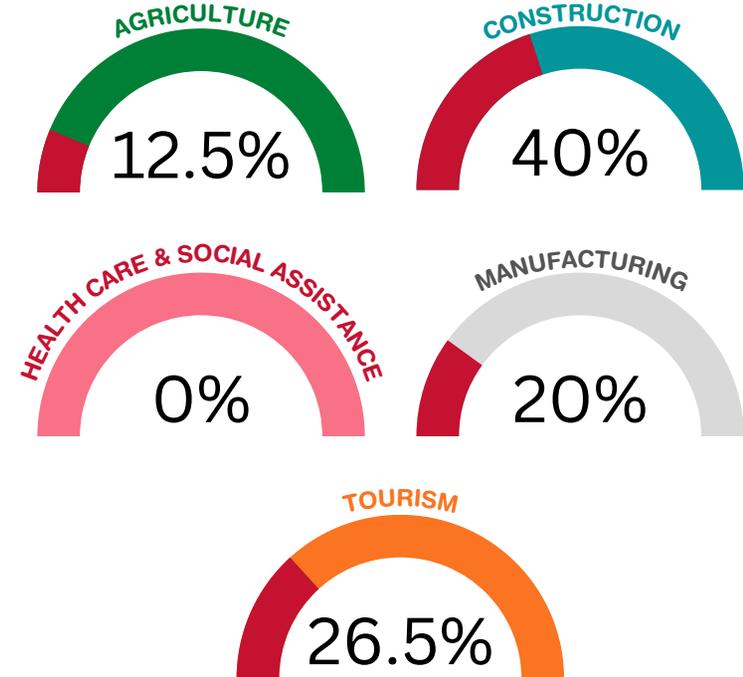
"Lack of education"

"People leaving the unstable hospitality industry for other, more stable industries"

"Rising cost of living, out pacing wage increases"

"Physically demanding work"

## EMPLOYEES LEAVE IN THE FIRST 2 YEARS BY INDUSTRY

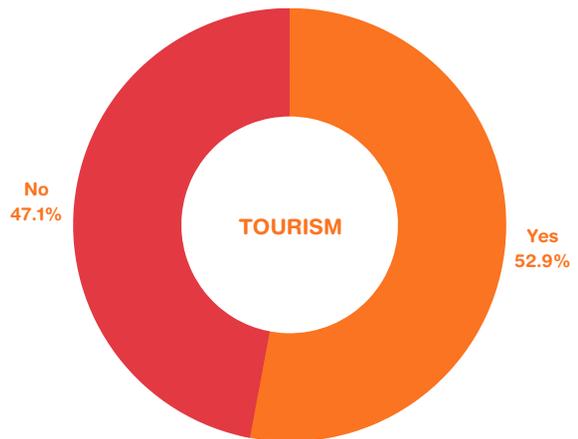
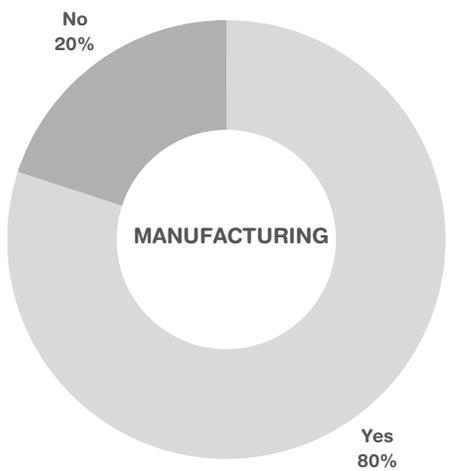
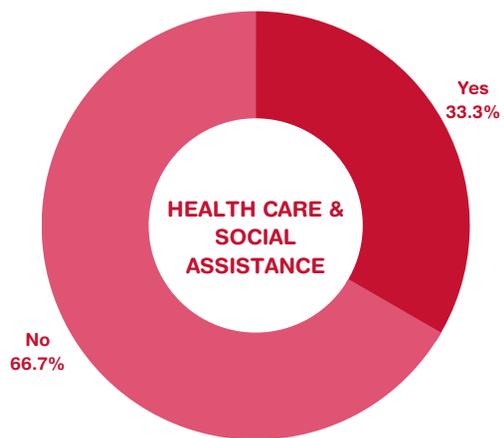
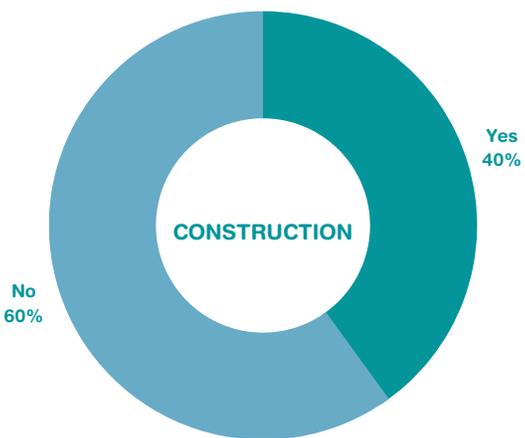


# WORKFORCE



**50%** of business owners had summer jobs for youth (15 to 30) in 2022, primarily looking to hire between the ages of 15 and 24

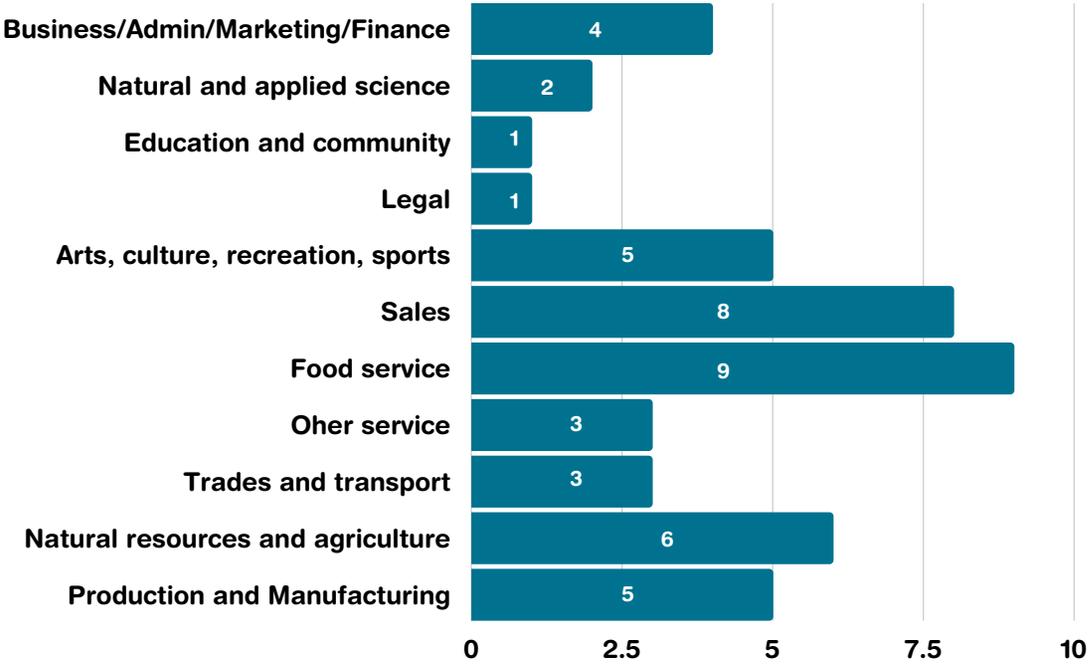
## SUMMER JOBS FOR YOUTH BY INDUSTRY



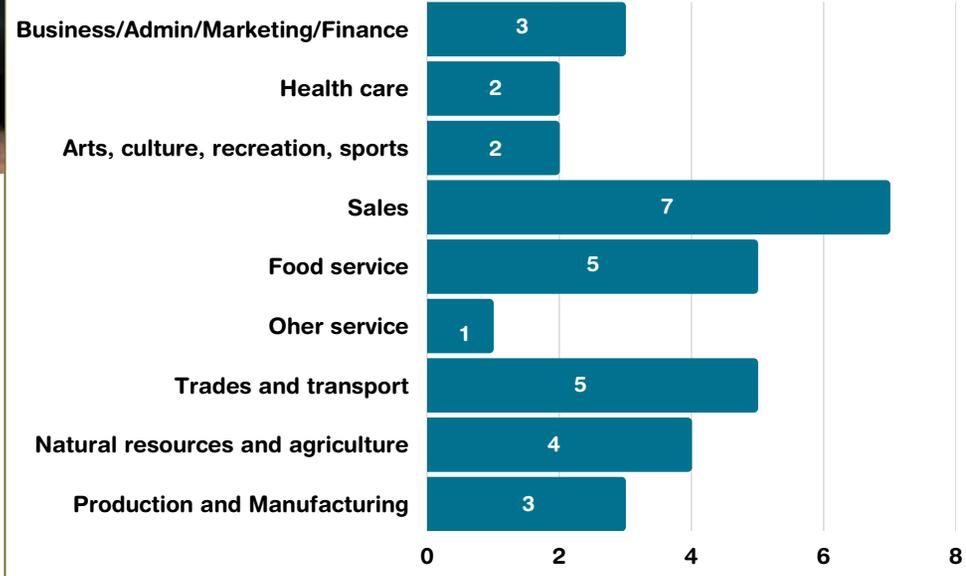


**79%** of business owners in Woolwich did not have trouble recruiting youth into roles compared to past years

### HIRING YOUTH FOR ROLES IN...



### CHALLENGES TO HIRING YOUTH FOR ROLES IN...



*"Lack of interest, liability"*

*"Lack of experience, willingness to be available for work for all days required and limited hours"*

*"The issues are that we don't have the volume of visitors/buyers, thus its hard to keep summer students if you can't pay them, lower sales, lower revenue. Student's want more hours and I can't pay for more"*

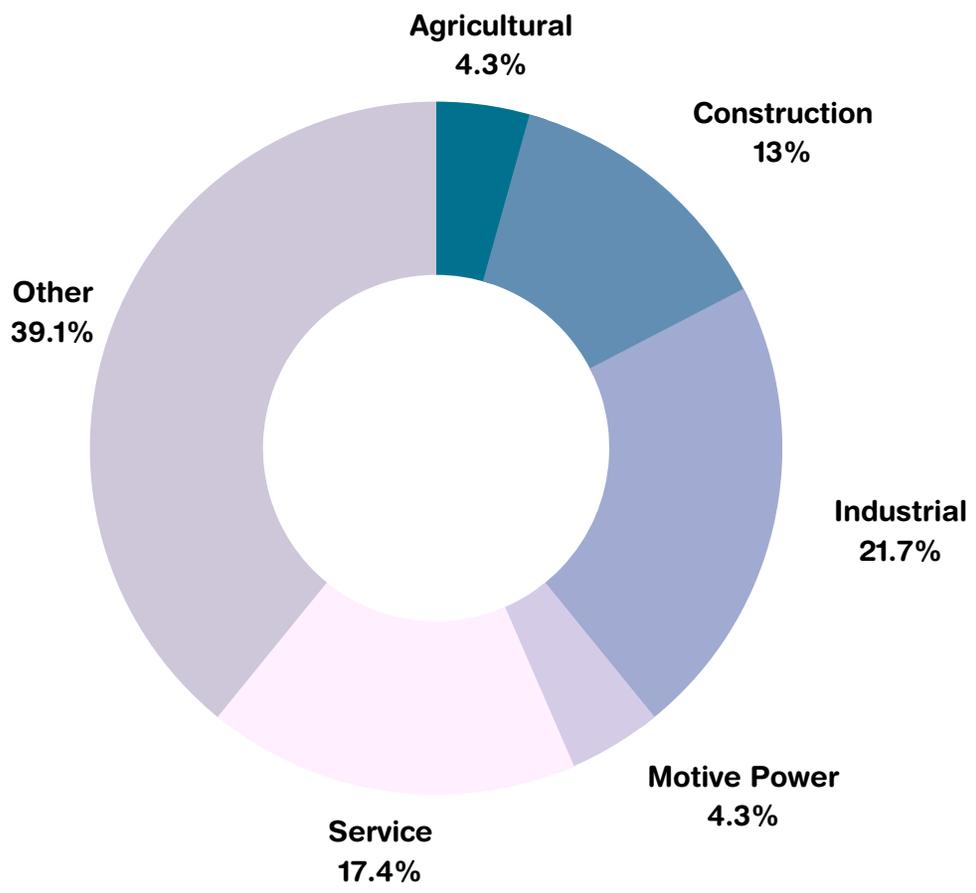
*"Lack of transportation"*

# WORKFORCE



**26%** of business owners in Woolwich offered apprenticeship opportunities

## APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED



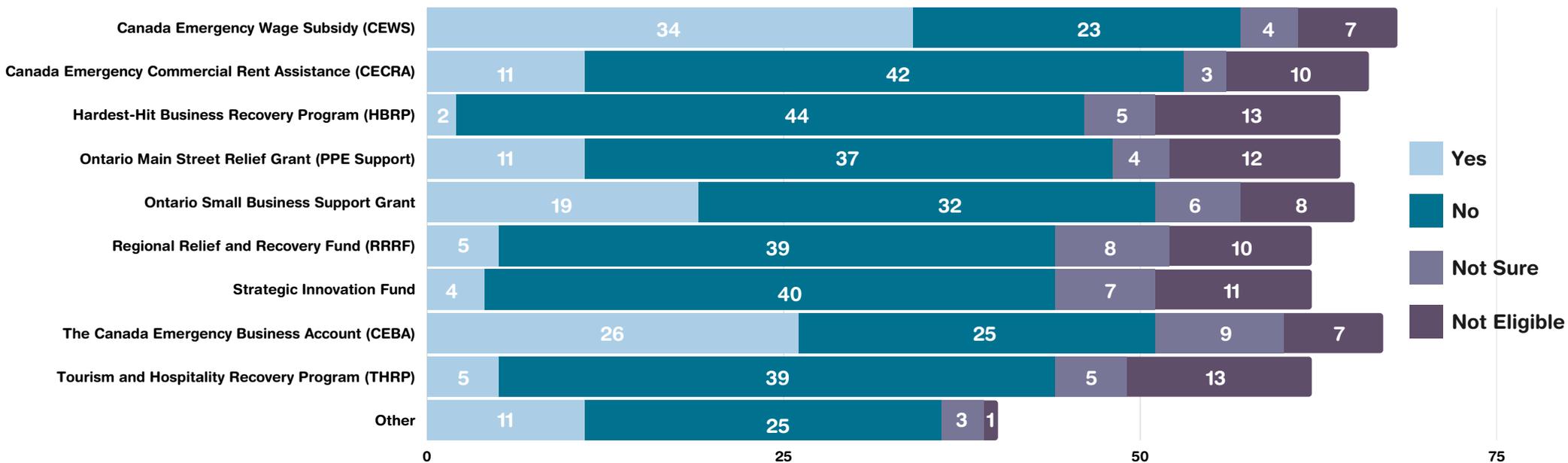
## APPRENTICESHIP/CO-OP OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY BUSINESSES

- "Chef/Cook"
- "Funeral services internships, co-op placements"
- "Pastoral exploration"
- "Leader in training program"
- "Aircraft Technician"
- "Turf or golf professional"
- "Volunteer/coop/student placements for KIN and Physiotherapists"



# RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SUPPORTS



"RTO4 Tourism Relief Fund"

"COVID relief fund funded by MCCSS"

"Digital Main Street"

"Canada Summer Jobs"

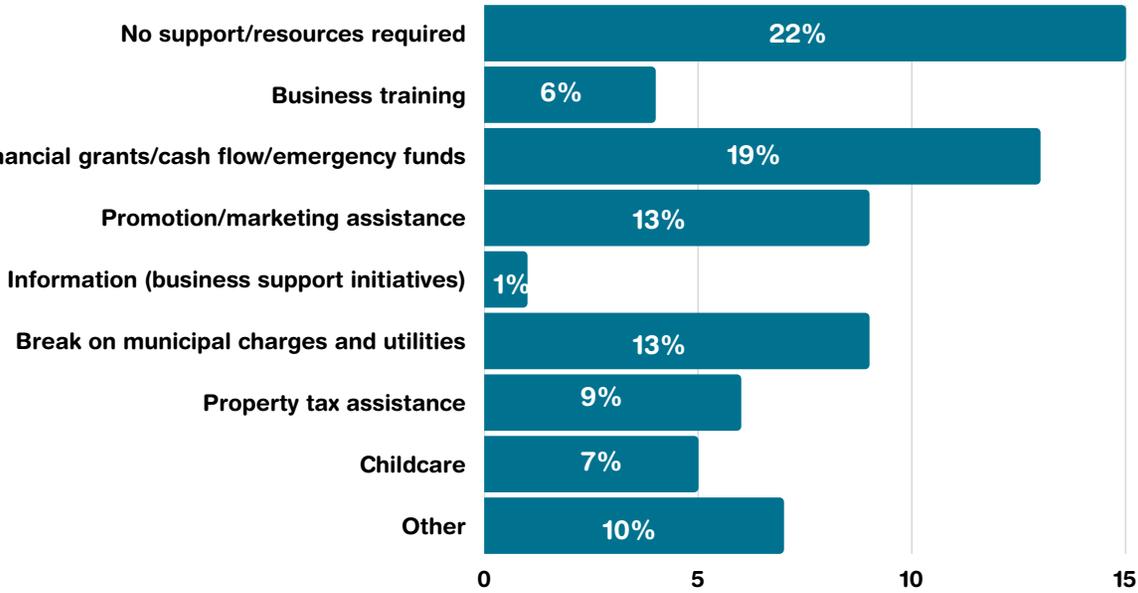
"Food processing support program"

"CRB"



# RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS REQUIRED CURRENTLY



*"Public transportation"*

*"More immigration"*

*"Joint recruitment strategy with the township, other organizations and businesses to attract people to work in Elmira"*

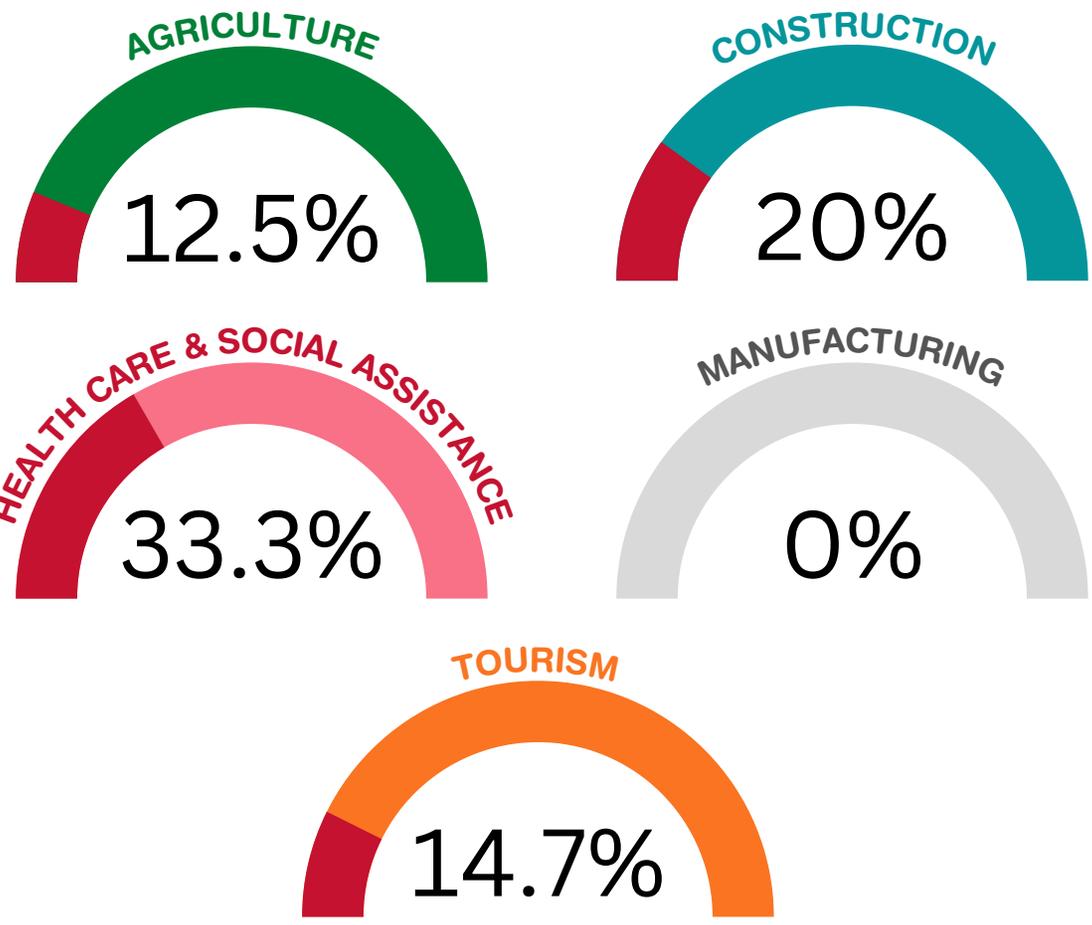
*"Township planning would be supportive of growth"*

*"A combination of things but really around financial aid, whether through payment relief, loans or grants, but cash flow management continues to be a huge issue and prevents implementing the solutions we may have to the issues listed in prior questions"*



# RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS REQUIRED CURRENTLY BY INDUSTRY: **FINANCIAL GRANTS/CASH FLOW/EMERGENCY FUNDS**



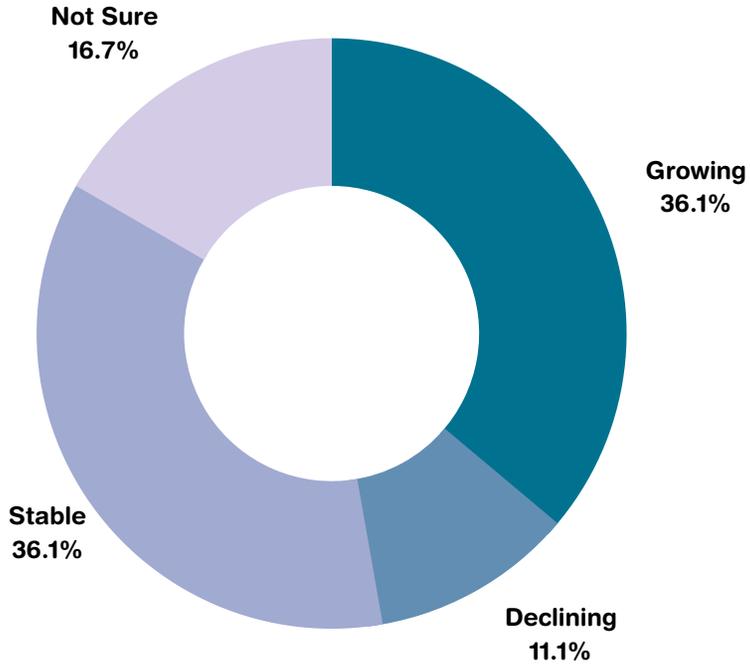
**51%** of business owners in Woolwich would like more information on available business resources



- "Grant applications and available grant opportunities"
- "Marketing and website development"
- "Update on business support initiatives"
- "Business training support"
- "Event support"
- "Anything to do with hiring"
- "Façade improvements"
- "Training in customer service"

# OUTLOOK

## INDUSTRY OUTLOOK



"People are not going out as much as pre COVID"

"Inflation, potential recession"

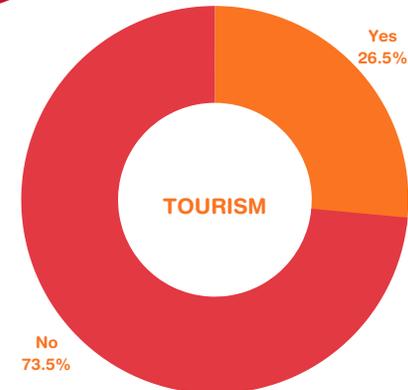
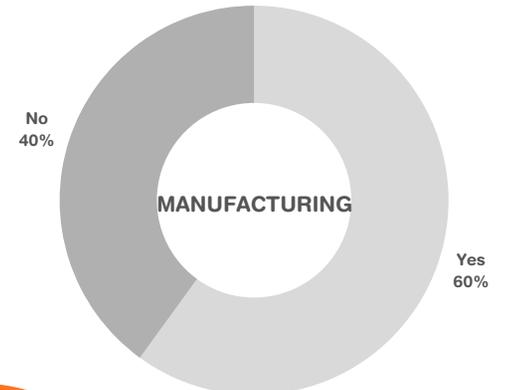
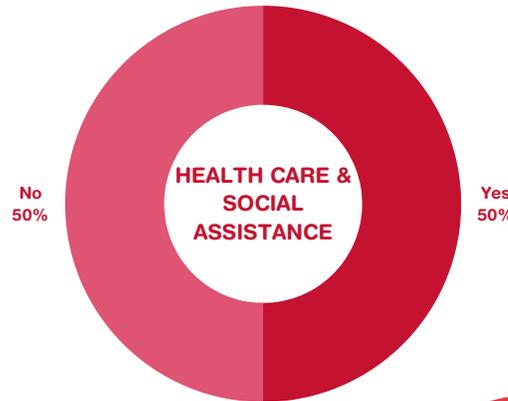
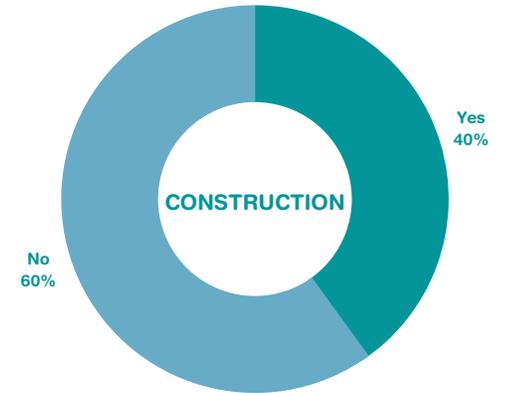
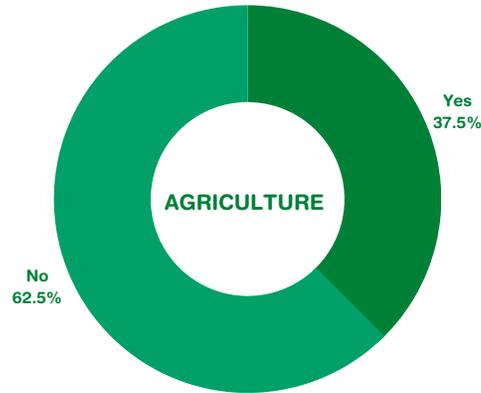
"Retirement and consolidation"

"People travelling less and don't have money to spend"

"Local food continues to expand in popularity"

"People are trying harder to support local"

## GROWING OUTLOOK BY INDUSTRY

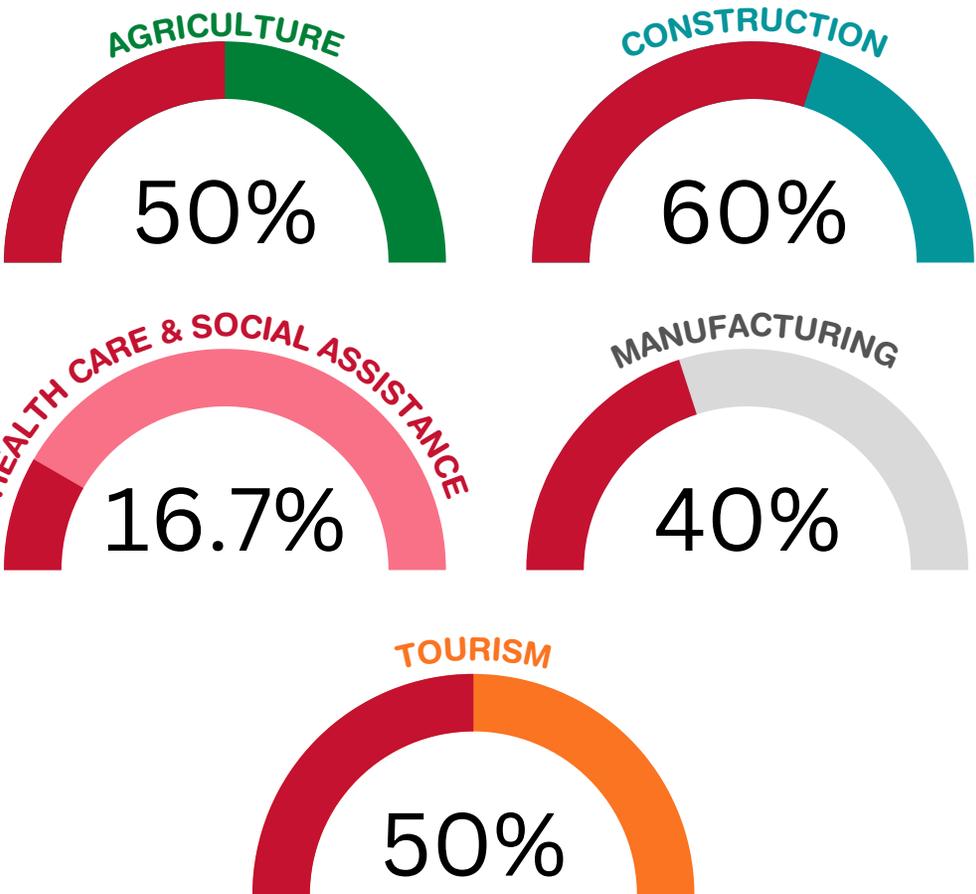


# OUTLOOK



**38%** of business owners in Woolwich were thinking about expanding their business in the next 18 months

## EXPANDING BUSINESS IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS BY INDUSTRY



"Sales growth has maximized space and equipment. Need more space"

"Grown through COVID and given opportunity to expand current location as well as opening new locations"

"Expanding business offerings, more tourism products to specific audiences"

"Would love to build an addition but too much red tape and costs"

## TOP CONCERNS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

- Global or Canadian recession **20%**
- Decreasing consumer confidence/spending **16%**
- Supply chain disruptions **12%**
- Employee stress/health **12%**

"Interest rates"

"On farm sales in 2022 are shrinking, we expected this due to interest and gas prices. We expect the same in 2023"

# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FROM COVID-19

*"Getting people out to restaurants Monday-Friday"*

*"Move to a more closed circle, strategically local focused sustainable economy. We have all of the access leadership and funds to be a Canadian leader in environmentally sound builds, energy and growth. Lets lead!! Spend it on new ideas, enough of the old"*

*"A return to normal for the community in way of our tourism by having maple syrup festivals, full return to sport, school and a focus on the business's in the area"*

*"To become more efficient and effective knowing people's priority"*

*"People are getting out of their homes again and shopping in person rather than just online"*

*"The ability to create new opportunities and not do as it has always been done"*

*"People will be more inclined to stay close to home. Offering an exciting or educational experience is an opportunity"*

*"Agriculture and all related local industries will be strong going forward"*

*"Developing a strategic plan for the towns and township as a whole, as to what the goals are for the next 5-10-25 years and involving all stakeholders to provide input: Residents, Businesses and Government"*

*"Support local and have people still maintaining supporting local; this has been a big opportunity. Having day trippers come back, opportunity for them to come out and support our town"*

*"Increasing consumer confidence and spending. Attracting Tourism here. We depend solely on the community for business"*

*"Learning to build on reliable LOCAL SOLUTIONS to provide better results - better service, higher quality, reliable delivery"*

*"Take what we have learned from the pandemic and find ways to use that information to prepare and grow our communities"*

*"Truthfully - competition is closing meaning there are fewer options in the market so the remaining sellers have a greater opportunity to succeed"*

*"Getting people out and gathering to build community back"*

*"People starting to prioritize their health more"*

*"Investment in trained employees"*

# THOUGHTS, ISSUES & ACTIONS

*"I think this is an issue for most small towns. Inconsistency with shop days open and hours. Tourists are often disappointed when they arrive in our Village and only 50% open. They come to the stores that are open to complain. It would be helpful if stores posted their hours and were open as posted. We wouldn't lose the traffic it has taken us years to build"*

*"We need to fix the bus situation. We are 13 km from Waterloo, easily hire people from there. Have a store on Northfield, no problem hiring there but not the same here. Bus schedule does not help with the staffing situation. **BIG CONCERN.**  
Lack of Housing - manager would love to stay, currently live in Kitchener but not enough housing in Elmira to accommodate (affordable housing)"*

*"Pick one specific advantage we have in this community and make it spectacular. Green space, outdoor park space and bike paths, hiking paths. Connect, build, and integrate all of them. Have specific areas for hiking, frisbee golf, dog walking, hill climbing, etc. Build around peoples love of the outdoors, that will lead businesses to invest heavily into green best practices, which will attract more people of like mind. We can't fix 20 problems at once, but if we solve one, then it will show we can do it, then the next issues that are adjacent will be solved."*

*"With the possibility of heading into a recession, it is important to keep support readily available to those who may need them. A plan of action should be put in place"*

*"Business and government need to continue to find ways to work together to ensure that there is an adequate labour pool to fulfill existing positions and attract new employees"*

*"Product development- ad promoting in the area should be about something uniquely different to this area. What is unique in Woolwich?"*

*"I think the Region has an opportunity to better position itself. Many 'hidden' assets, city life in the country, natural beauty, unique food culture, unique furniture & design culture, etc."*

*"Continue to remove red tape, make expansion easier"*

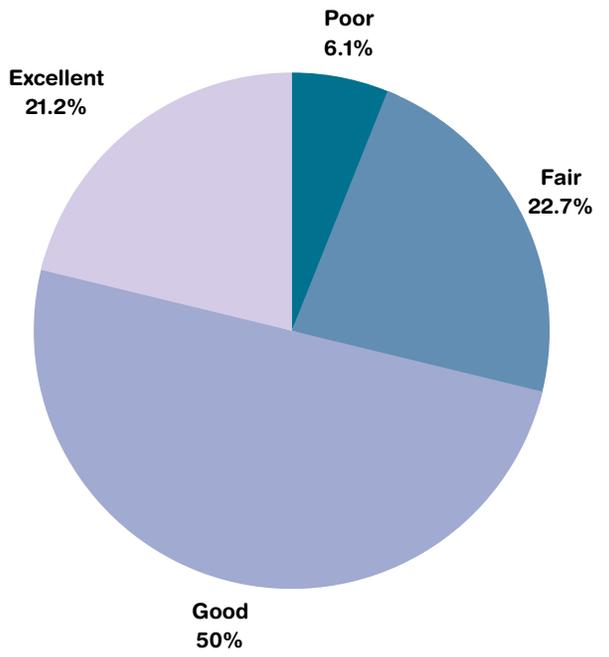
*"Community involvement is important. If people want to help the economy recover then we need to work together to do that"*

*"There needs to be more planning and communication between the Business community and residents. At present, there are a lot of business endeavours going on in all directions and not enough thought, planning, communication and leadership being provided"*

*"Directional signage, putting Elmira on the map. Allowing small businesses into town without some of the astronomical fees. Big corps - why do we need a Shoppers and a Rexall? Our small pharmacies are struggling"*

# THE WOOLWICH COMMUNITY

## WOOLWICH AS A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Connected community	Lack of available workforce
Proximity to urban centres	Red tape and development costs
Opportunity for tourism	Lack of directional signage
Growth & innovation	Not enough space for expansion
Diverse & creative economy	Lack of transportation & housing



# THE WOOLWICH COMMUNITY



**89%** of business owners in Woolwich said that only 0 - 10 % of their workforce is expected to continue to regularly telework or work remotely



**86%** of business owners said that only 0 - 10% of their business's gross revenue was generated online prior to the beginning of the pandemic



**76%** of business owners said that only 0 - 10% of their business's gross revenue was being generated online

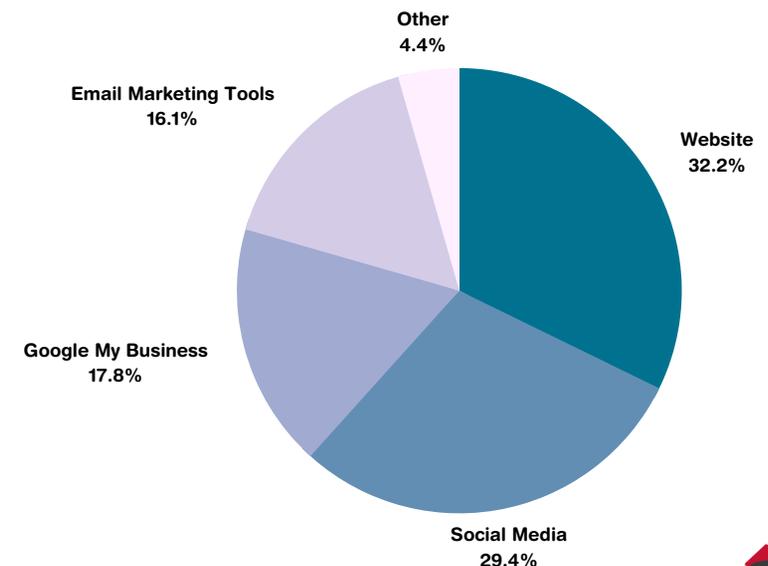


**87%** of business owners said their business has an online presence



**56%** of business owners said they would like to grow their online presence

## ONLINE PLATFORMS USED BY BUSINESS OWNERS

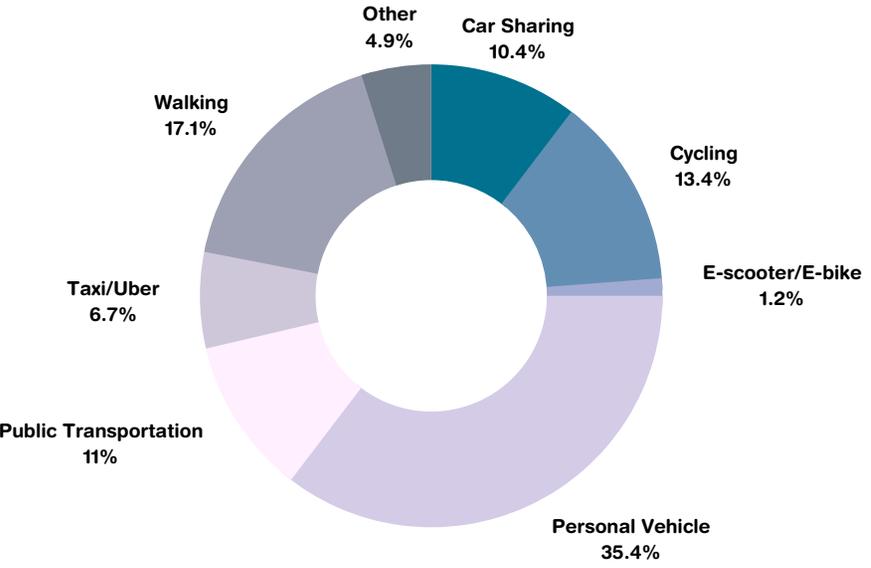


# THE WOOLWICH COMMUNITY

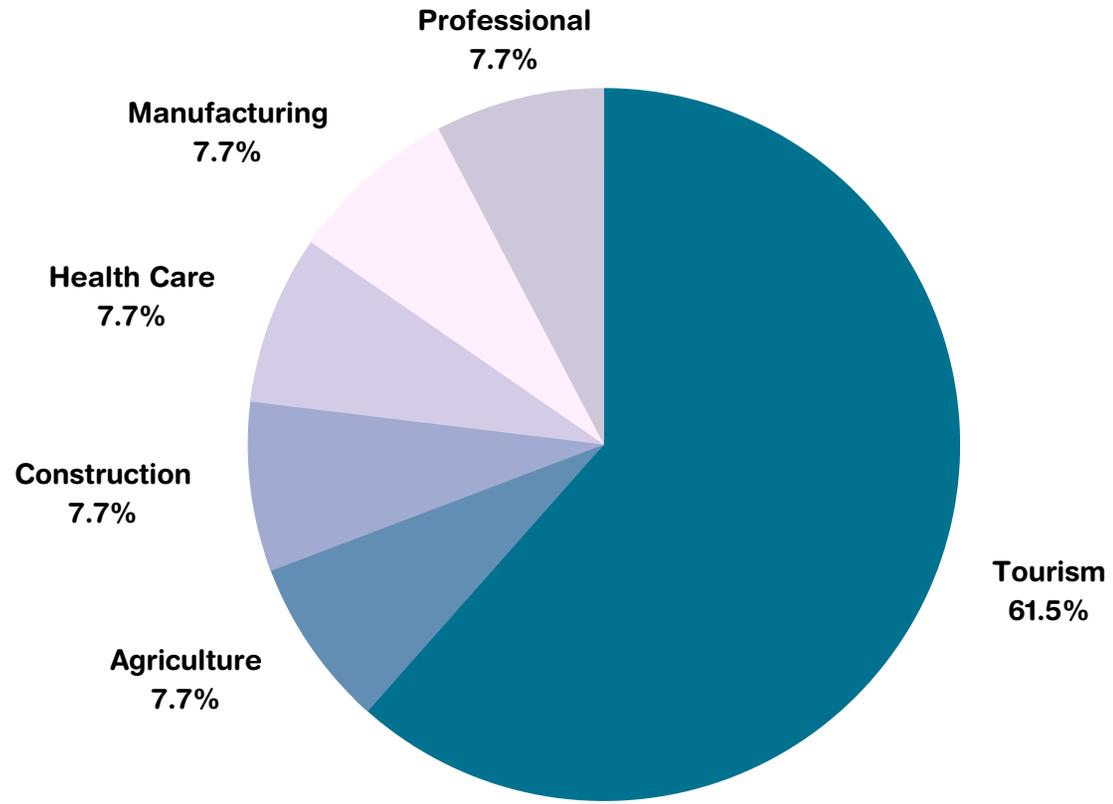
## MODES OF TRANSPORTATION USED BY EMPLOYEES TO GET TO WORK



**25%** of business owners would be interested in partnering with other businesses to begin a car share program



## OPT TO PARTICIPATE IN A CAR SHARE PROGRAM BY INDUSTRY



"Horse and Buggy"

"Live at work"

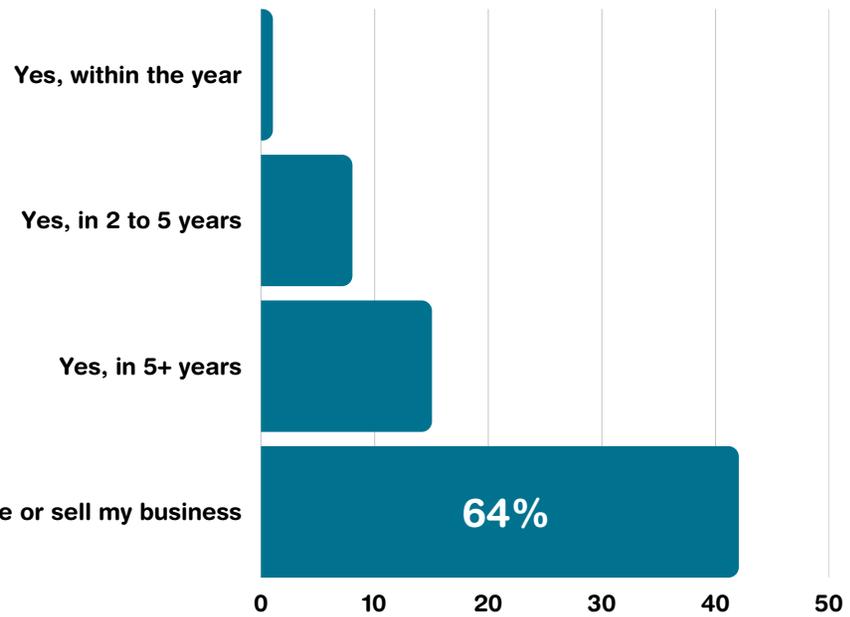
"Shuttle bus"



**38%** of business owners in Woolwich said that transportation is a hinderance in attracting and retaining employees

# THE WOOLWICH COMMUNITY

## PLANNING TO RETIRE OR SELL YOUR BUSINESS?



**21%** of business owners in Woolwich said that they require assistance or guidance with their retirement or succession planning

# AS A BUSINESS OWNER I FEEL.....



# TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH

## BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION REPORT

