

NORTH CLAYBELT

COVID – 19 BUSINESS IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND ON THE WORKFORCE

October 2020



INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of the October COVID-19 Business Impact Survey conducted by the Far Northeast Training Board in partnership with the Economic Development Corporations in Cochrane, Smooth Rock Falls and Iroquois Falls, the Kapuskasing Chamber of Commerce, the Iroquois Falls Chamber of Commerce, the Cochrane Board of Trade and North Claybelt Community Futures Development Corporation.

The October survey was conducted between October 1st and 21. Because it was optional for survey respondents to indicate the name of their company or organization, comparing the results of the questions posed in the October survey with the responses to those questions from the surveys that were conducted in April, May and July is challenging. It is important to note that the results for the month of July encompass the entire North Claybelt region. The community of Kapuskasing participated in the July and October surveys only. The results for the months of April and May include businesses and organizations in the communities of Cochrane, Smooth Rock Falls and Iroquois Falls.

The following should therefore not be interpreted as a comparative analysis but rather as general observations based on the responses to some of the key questions asked in April, in May, July and October recognizing that those responses are reflective of the relevance of the questions to the participating businesses and organizations.

The timing of the release of the survey in a quickly changing environment should also be considered when looking at the results. Adjustments to the safety measures and the announcements of business assistance and supports all have an impact on respondents perspectives and assessment of their situation at any given time.

WHO ANSWERED THE SURVEY?

RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY

	APRIL	MAY	JULY	OCT
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6	3	12	8
Mining, Quarrying or Oil & Gas Extraction	2	1	1	2
Utilities	2	0	1	3
Construction	7	5	10	8
Manufacturing	2	2	4	2
Wholesale	0	0	1	4
Retail trade	27	7	50	24
Transportation and Warehousing	7	4	4	7
Information and Cultural Industries	2	0	0	5
Finance and Insurance	4	1	6	8
Real Estate and Rental & Leasing	3	2	0	2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	5	5	0	6
Management of companies and Enterprises	0	0	0	4
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	0	0	5
Educational Services	1	5	4	9
Healthcare and Social Assistance	7	4	11	10
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	6	1	0	6
Accommodation and Food Services	11	8	18	11
Public Administration	1	1	5	4
Other Services (except Public Administration	9	5	3	5

Please note that some totals may not add up due to rounding and respondents who provided multiple answers to certain questions.

RESPONDENTS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

	APRIL	MAY	JULY	OCT
0 – employees	21	10	15	12
1 – 19 employees	39	27	55	59
20 – 49 employees	5	1	8	13
50 – 99 employees	2	0	1	4
100+ employees	1	3	2	4

RESPONDENTS BY TYPE OF BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION

	APRIL	MAY	JULY	OCT
Number of responses	78	42	115	94
Private	70%	79%	86%	72%
Public	27%	7%	5%	8%
Not-for-profit	3%	14%	9%	19%

	April	May	July	OCT
Kapuskasing	1		42	55
Opasatika			3	
Val Rita-Harty			4	1
Moonbeam			4	
Fauquier-Strickland			3	
Cochrane	53	26	28	42
Smooth Rock Falls	19	9	6	7
Iroquois Falls	11	16	2	23
Other	5	6	28	

Impact of COVID – 19 on OPERATIONS

	APRIL	MAY	JULY	OCT
High This could put us out of business	27%	24%	16%	14%
Medium This has a significantly impact our finances	46%	45%	34%	42%
Low This may impact our finances, but we are confident we can weather the storm.	19%	17%	40%	26%
Positive Impact Increased our business	NA	NA	NA	7%
No impact	8%	12%	11%	12%



ESTIMATED FINANCIAL LOSS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF COVID-19



	APRIL	MAY	JULY	OCT
Number of respondents	55	39	75	77
\$20,000	42%	49%	45%	44%
\$20,000 to \$50,000	36%	33%	21%	23%
\$50,000 to \$100,000	11%	8%	23%	13%
\$100,000 to \$500,000	11%	8%	11%	15%
\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	NA	0%	0%	4%
\$1,000,000 or more	NA	3%	0%	0%

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS



	APRIL	MAY	JULY	OCT
Number of respondents	78	37	80	87
No impact	5%	10%	11%	5%
We are open and operating with full-time with required safety measures.	NA	NA	NA	39%
We are open and operating with part-time with required safety measures.	49%	34%	23%	40%
We are continuing operations remotely (full-time or part-time)	46%	26%	11%	11%
We closed our business temporarily.	38%	39%	13%	21%
We closed our business permanently.	1%	0%	0%	0%
Our supply chain is interrupted.	39%	35%	25%	40%
We had to cancel contracts.	32%	14%	10%	20%
We've had contracts cancelled.	14%	24%	28%	18%
Spending restrictions due to uncertainty.	65%	62%	36%	48%
We experience a decrease in sales (donations if not-for-profit).	66%	68%	34%	43%
We experienced an increase in sales.	NA	NA	NA	8%
We cancelled expansion plans.	NA	NA	NA	13%
We delayed planned hiring for new jobs.	NA	NA	NA	24%
We had to lay off staff, can't afford to have them return.	NA	NA	NA	7%
Shortage of labour.	NA	NA	NA	7%

CHALLENGES TO COMPLY TO THE SAFETY MEASURES AND GUIDELINES



	May	July	OCT
Total number of responses to this question	32	70	77
The measures required limit our capacity and as result, it is not profitable for us to reopen.	NA	14%	9%
The size of our facilities – not enough room for us to meet the guidelines for distancing employees.	22%	7%	13%
The nature of our work which requires proximity with clients/customers.	37%	21%	32%
Staffing – we lost some of our staff and will have to recruit and train new staff.	12%	10%	14%
Cost – we will have to purchase PPE and rearrange workspace when we are experiencing a decrease in revenue.	41%	41%	38%
We have trouble accessing the required personal protective equipment.	NA	NA	8%
Applying the guidelines will not be a problem for our business/organization.	31%	43%	27%
Having to ‘police’ clients who refuse to comply to the measures (ex: wearing a mask).	NA	NA	48%

Impact of COVID – 19 on HUMAN RESOURCES

IF YOUR BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION IS OPEN, ARE YOU CURRENTLY HIRING?



	MAY	JULY	OCT
Number of responses	33	77	8
Yes	18%	18%	30%
No	82%	82%	70%

IF YES, FOR WHICH OCCUPATIONS

MAY	JULY	OCTOBER
Labourers, surveyors, electrical, electronic designer, cashiers.	Cooks, servers, parts advisor, sales associates, maintenance workers, electronic designer, workers to stand at the door to clean carts, personal support workers, front counter clerks, nurses, skilled labourers, mechanics.	Personal support workers, nurses, sales and client services representatives, labourers.

Impact of COVID – 19 on HUMAN RESOURCES



OCCUPATIONS THAT ARE HARDEST TO FILL:

- Truck drivers
- Heavy equipment operators
- Labourers
- Client service workers
- Health care workers.

REASONS WHY OCCUPATIONS ARE HARD TO FILL

	OCT
Number of respondents	40
There are few suitable applicants for the positions	47%
Applicants do not have the technical skills required for the positions	17%
Applicants do not have the work experience required for the positions	22%
We have difficulty competing for employees due to our remote location and transportation issues	15%
We find it challenging to compete due to the nature of our work (seasonal, shift, irregular hours, job responsibilities)	20%
We have difficulty competing with wages, benefits packages and promotional opportunities offered by other employers	22%
We have difficulty finding people to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.	42%

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Has your business or organization received support since COVID-19, please indicate which program(s) you accessed (check all that applied).

	OCT
Number of respondents	47
Deferrals of HST, income tax deferral, and/or tax filing extensions	6
Canada Emergency Business Account Loan - up to \$40,000 (CEBA)	25
Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (via your local CFDC)	4
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (75%)	15
Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)	8
Business Credit Availability Program	0
10% Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers	6
Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance	0
Other (please specify)	

		MAY	JULY	OCT
If you did not apply for government programs or assistance, please indicate why you have not applied?	Number of responses	20	36	41
	No need at this time	5	13	13
	Don't know how to apply	0	0	3
	Do not qualify	13	23	20



Given the situation on October 1st, 2020, what do you anticipate for the coming months?

	If the situation remains as it is currently	If a second wave results in another shutdown
Number of respondents	73	73
We will be expanding our services to meet an increased demand.	12%	7%
We will be bringing back laid-off employees.	5%	3%
We will be hiring for new positions.	14%	7%
We will continue full-time operations with required safety measures in place.	57%	30%
We will continue part-time operations with required safety measures in place.	26%	20%
We will continue full-time operations remotely.	9%	8%
We will continue part-time operations remotely.	9%	22%
We will be reducing our workforce due to a decrease in business	7%	16%
We will close temporarily	0%	20%
We will close permanently	0%	7%

What resources, support or information could assist you as we move forward?

If the situation remains as it is currently

- Grants geared to very small businesses.
- Subsidy programs for workers and employers.
- I'm not sure, I might have to just shut down.
- Help to expand digital sales.
- There is a big gap in funding and financial assistance for small businesses.
- Financial assistance for non-negotiable and essential overhead costs (utilities, insurance, rent, taxes).
- It costs a lot to purchase PPE.
- How to run events and programs safely. How to take programs virtually. Fundraising.
- More information on programs available for businesses. There is a lot of information. One central location, with very specific bullet points of interest would be fantastic, so that we don't have to spend hours reading. We are trying to stay above water, we don't need more work to pull us down.
- Any support to help with the cost of the extra measures.
- Webinars to help non-profit restart operations.
- \$30,000 funding for new businesses that emerged out of COVID that provides food, health and transportation.
- Standard COVID regulations for workplaces.

If a second wave results in another shutdown

- Capital funds for charities.
- More advertising by Township of those businesses that are open and to recognize that retailers are frontline workers too, it's not just medical staff.
- We will have to close. We cannot sustain overhead costs without any income and our classes cannot be done remotely.
- We would shut down and would have zero revenue coming in. I don't know what help could be offered to move past that.
- Strategic planning for our organization. One of our main operations is a large festival to promote economic stimulation and exposure of our community. If we cannot do that and with COVID restrictions and lack of funds, it would be beneficial to get help on how to operate in the future with an experienced person to give us direction. We also would be able to share this experience and knowledge with other non-profit organizations.
- Another shut down would be detrimental to our region. I think the government should make decisions based on regions and cases reported. The regulatory organizations (provincial, colleges, industries) also need to ensure that their decisions about shutting down are based on regional stats.

Partners involved in conducting the surveys



NORTH CLAYBELT
Community Futures Development Corporation
Société d'aide au développement des collectivités



FAR NORTHEAST TRAINING BOARD (FNETB)
your **Local Employment Planning Council**

COMMISSION DE FORMATION DU NORD-EST (CFNE)
votre **Conseil Local de Planification de l'Emploi**



Provincial government support for businesses

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-support-businesses>

Federal government support for businesses

<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/news/2020/04/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-new-support-to-protect-canadian-jobs.html>

FedNor Regional Relief and Recovery Fund

http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/h_07682.html

Town of Cochrane COVID-19 information

<http://www.cochraneontario.com/notice-category/covid-19/>

Town of Iroquois Falls

<http://www.iroquoisfalls.com/news/releases/notice-covid-19>

Town of Smooth Rock Falls

<https://www.smoothrockfalls.ca/living-here/community-events/news/>

Town of Kapuskasing

<http://www.kapuskasing.ca/en/living/Emergency-Services-and-Preparedness.aspx>