

**AJAX-PICKERING BOARD OF TRADE
BUSINESS RECOVERY
SURVEY**



Introduction & Methodology

The Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade (APBOT) released the Business Recovery Survey in an effort to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on member businesses, the effectiveness of government response, and top concerns of members as the province and country reopen. The intention is to use the results of the survey to inform APBOT events and advocacy during the recovery period.

The survey was conducted over a ten-day period from May 20-29, 2020 and was distributed via email to active members of the APBOT.

The survey was drafted by the 2020 advocacy committee, which includes Christine Ashton of Wilson Vukelich LLP, Tracy Paterson of the Ajax Pickering Hospital Foundation, Joan Wideman of Lenbrook Group of Companies, Analiese St. Aubin of Ontario Power Generation, Glen McFarland of McGovern Hurley LLP, Paul Pryzbylo of Walker Head Lawyers and Nicole Gibson and Samantha Paterson of the APBOT.

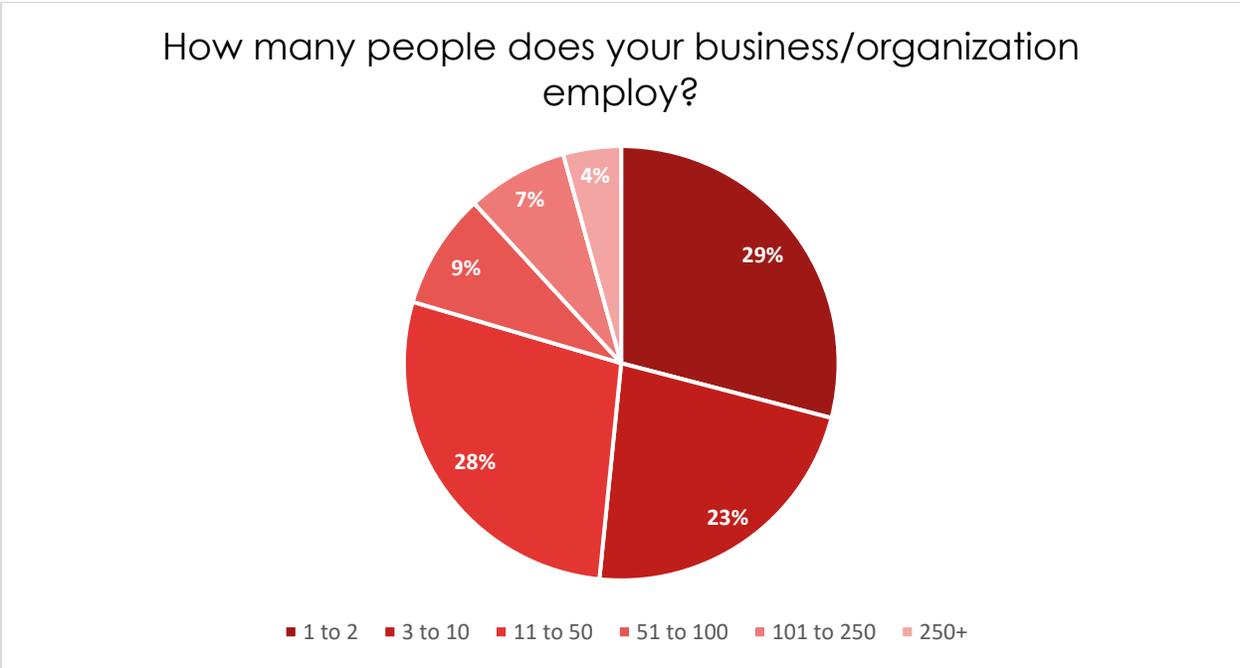
About the Board of Trade

Established in 1955, the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade (APBOT) is the recognized voice of business in Ajax and Pickering, ON. With more than 650 members, APBOT represents a vast array of business sectors and small to large organizations. APBOT is a proud member of the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce, as well as the Joint Chambers of Durham Region. For more information regarding the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, visit: www.apboardoftrade.com.

Business/Organization Size

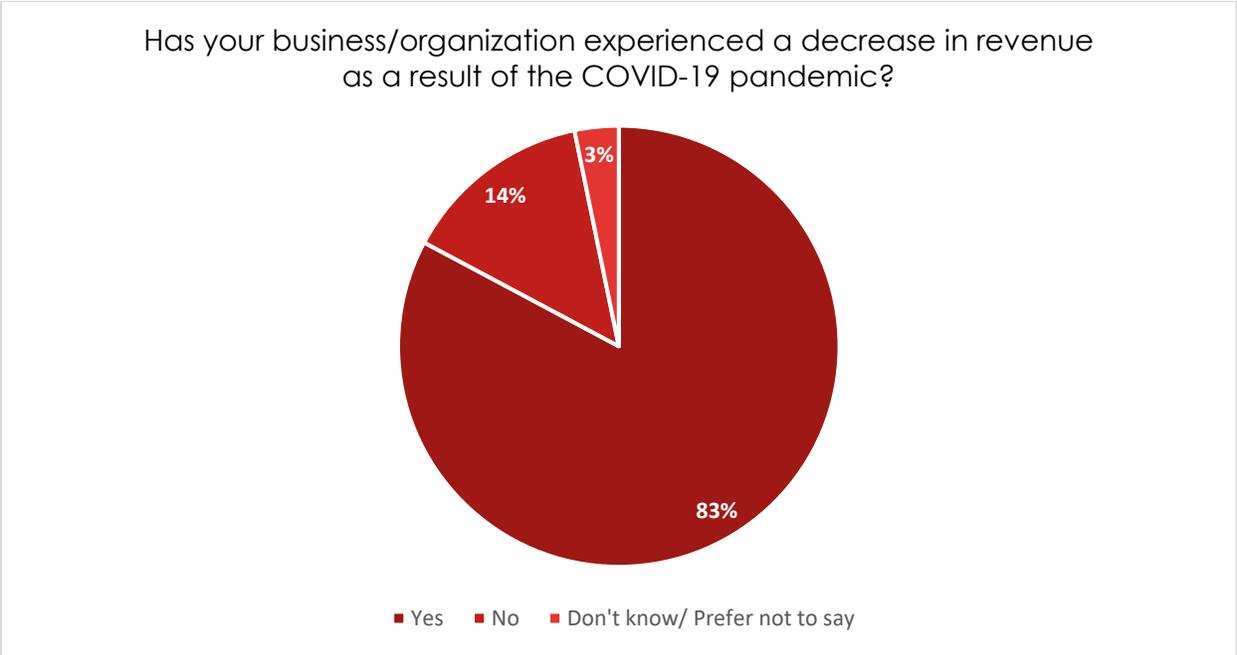
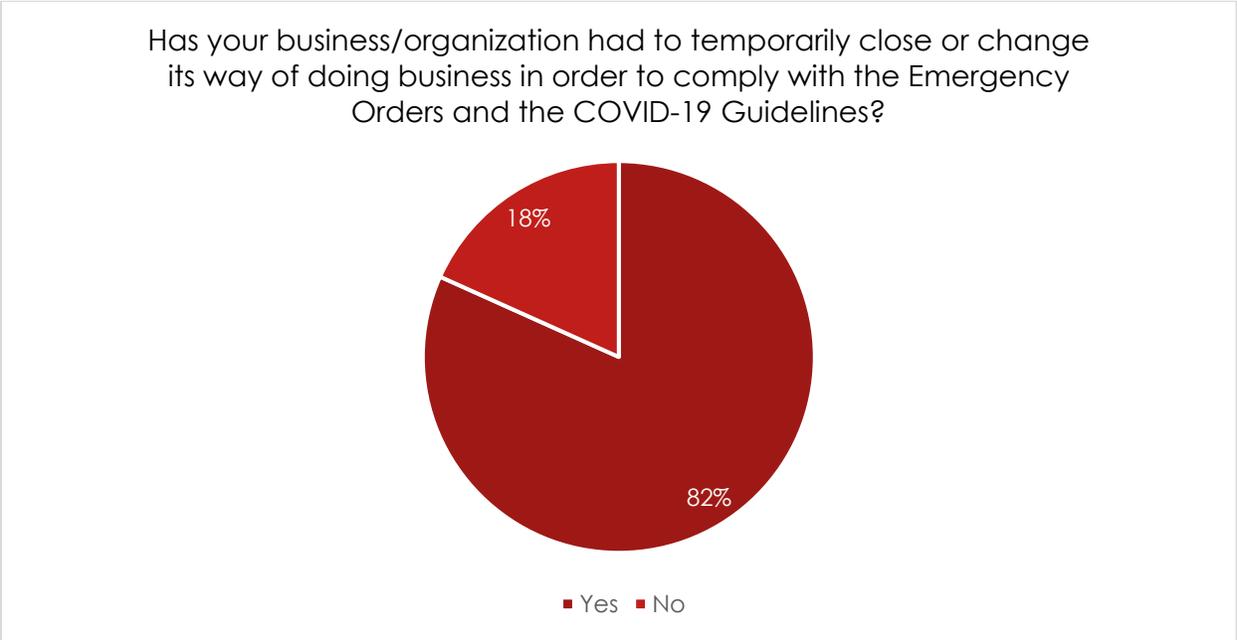
A total of 93 members responded to the 14-question survey.

Respondents were asked to identify how many people are employed by their business/organization. Half of all respondents (52%) identified having 10 or fewer people employed by their business/organization, 28% represented companies with 11 to 50 employees, 9% represented companies with 51 to 100 employees, and 11% represented companies with over 100 employees. These figures are representative of the make-up of the APBOT membership.



Impacts of the Pandemic

The survey asked respondents to reflect on the impacts of the pandemic on their business/organization. Members shared the deeply negative effects COVID-19 has had on their ability to remain open, their revenue, and their supply chain. Over 80% of respondents shared that they had to temporarily close or change their way of doing business, and that they had experienced a decrease in revenue.



Impacts of the Pandemic (continued)

When asked about the impacts to their supply chain, 70% of respondents shared that they have seen issues.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) was frequently mentioned by the membership as difficult to source and more expensive than usual. Respondents also noted challenges with increased freight costs, delayed shipments and challenges resulting from using foreign suppliers.

“Raw materials and packaging supplies linked to COVID are impossible to get or drastically higher in prices.”

“It was very hard to get Personal Protective Equipment to protect myself and my Personal Support Workers when going in to see clients.”

“Huge freight surcharge increases, [and] slowed freight delivery due to peak volumes.”

“Import shipments have been delayed or stopped or have become very expensive.”

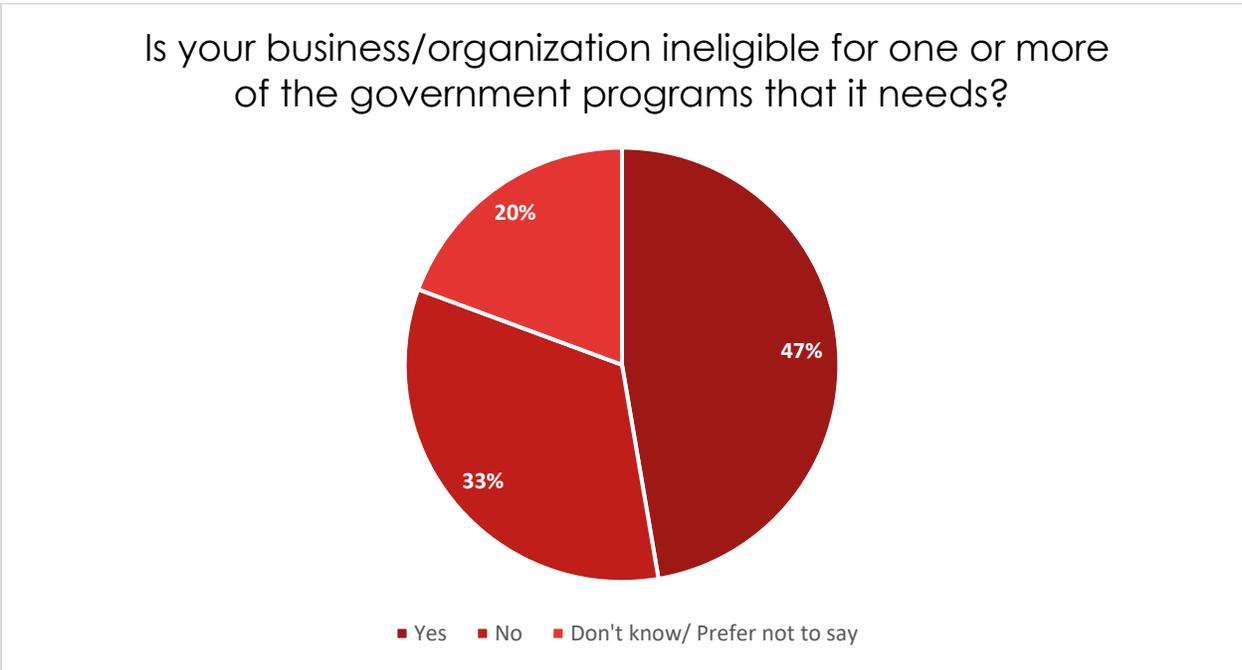
“Unable to get PPE to try and prepare for eventual reopening”

“We stock a lot of product from Europe and it has not been available.”

“We already use gloves and masks in our classrooms, now we have to pay a ridiculous amount to get them.”

Emergency Supports

Governments have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with numerous programs to provide individuals, businesses, and organizations with relief. Sixty percent of respondents shared that they would be receiving financial support from the government under one of the emergency programs (e.g. the CEWS, the CEBA, the CECRA, etc.). However, respondents also noted in great numbers that they would not be eligible for certain emergency programs. Some who commented said the programs were not built for the self-employed or small family businesses, while others mentioned that the impact to their revenues, while severe, did not meet the program thresholds.



Emergency Supports (continued)

The survey asked respondents to reflect on what, if anything, they would change about the current emergency financial relief programs. Fifty-seven respondents took the time to share their thoughts and concerns.

Regarding the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) some stated that their home-based business did not qualify, while others noted that new businesses were ineligible. Others still hoped for a larger portion of the \$40,000 loan to be forgivable.

“Less money should need to be re-paid... More incentive for business to succeed.”

Regarding the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) some respondents thought the eligibility should be based on profit loss, not revenue drop, while others felt that covering 75% of employee wages was not sufficient.

“CEWS only covers 75% of employees. Not enough to cover the full cost of keeping employees.”

Many respondents commented on the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA), recommending that the program not have to go through landlords, as many are refusing to participate.

“Let the tenants apply rather than the landlords. Give us the 50% reduction in rate, and not force the landlords to pay the 25%”

“The rent program is not being supported by many landlords. There should be a way to allow the tenant to get that rent relief.”

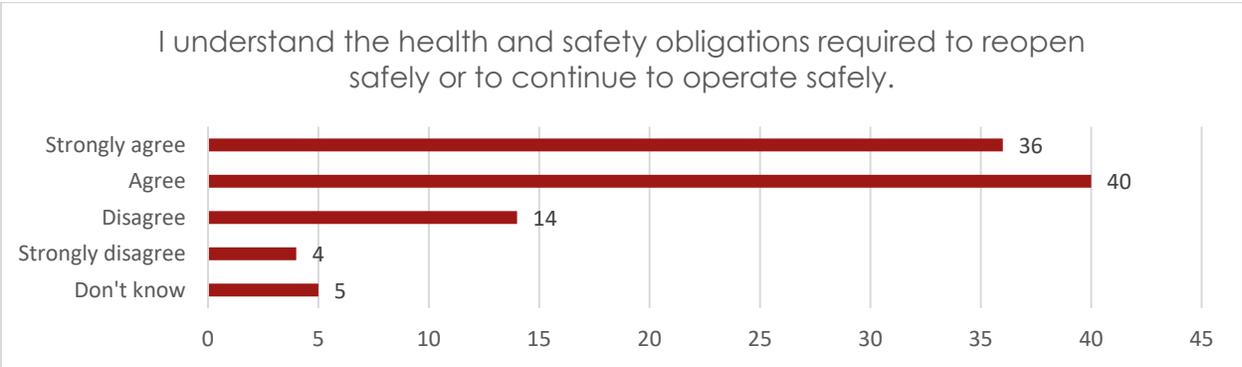
Regarding the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), some respondents felt that their workforce may be more inclined to make use of the program than return to work.

“The CERB program needs to change. Too many employees would rather collect CERB then come to work and are trying to dictate to us how much they can work.”

Respondents also called for quicker payments, clarity on the payback requirements, and extended relief through the gradual reopening.

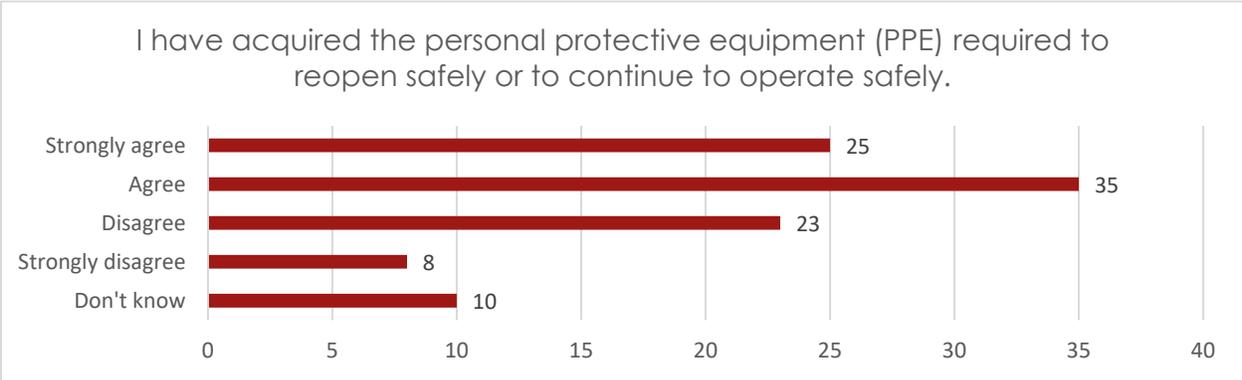
Re-opening the Economy: Health and Safety

The survey asked respondents to reflect on how prepared they are for the re-opening of the economy and where they might need more supports. PPE came back as an area of concern for many businesses/organizations, while many respondents also seemed uncertain about their staff's willingness and ability to return to work.



When asked about their understanding of the health and safety obligations, many wrote in the comments that the regulations were vague, or that there was not anything to reflect their specific workplace.

“More clarity is needed on what is recommended vs mandatory on PPE equipment.”

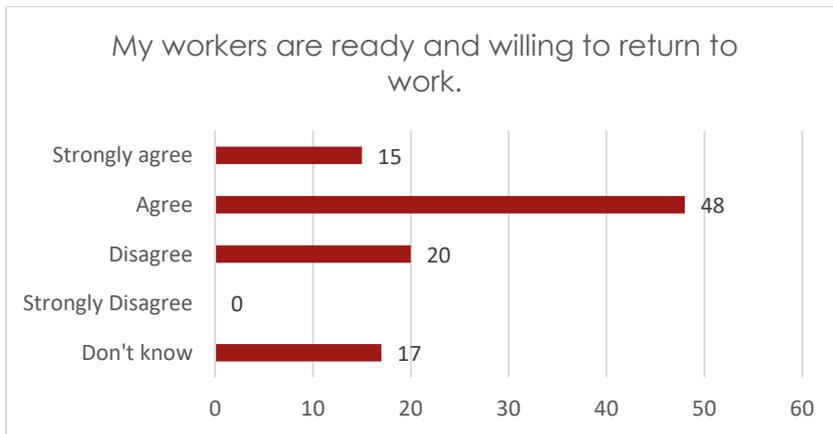


Many respondents shared that they were unclear on what specific PPE would be required for their workplace, while others commented that products are on back order and overpriced.

“Long wait periods for sneeze guards, masks, wipes, etc through the usual means.”

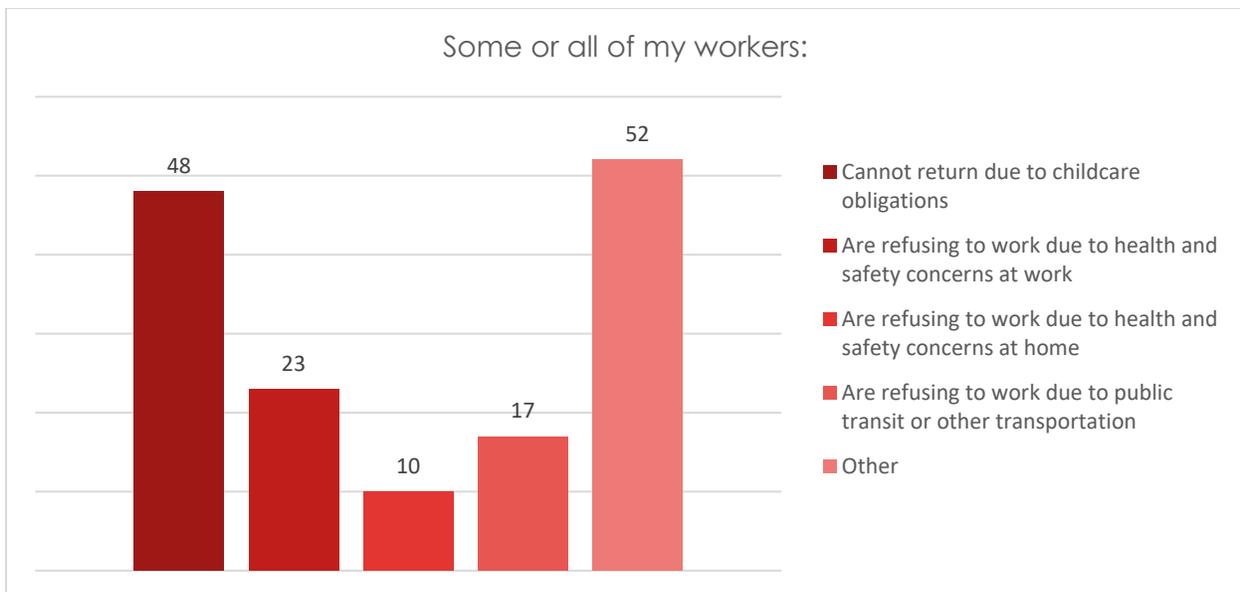
Re-opening the Economy: Workforce

While most respondents felt that their workers are ready and willing to return to work, some were unsure. In the comments, they expressed that many workers feel nervous about returning to work, while many shared that childcare will be an issue when normal operations resume.



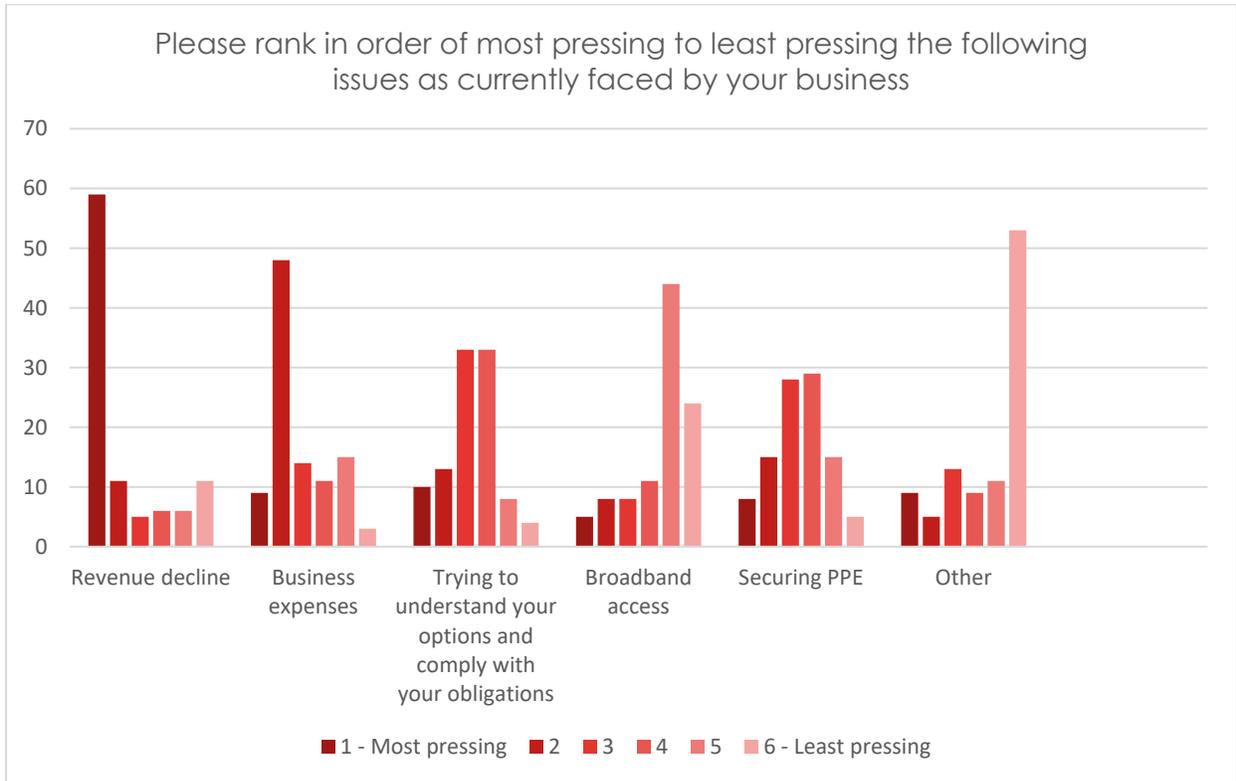
“They are still afraid to return to work indicating safety issues as we do not know much about the virus.”

“Workers cannot balance, work, young children needing home schooling and NO daycare. They are juggling all this from home and cannot work full time hours due to all the demands and stress.”



Re-opening the Economy: Pressing Concerns

Respondents answered that revenue decline and business expenses are the most pressing concerns currently faced by their business. Among the “other” issues noted by the respondents were securing appropriate technology for remote work, finding childcare solutions, and understanding their employer obligations.



“Trying to stay in business without coming out of this so heavily burdened with debt that it becomes the biggest problem for staying in business in the future”

“Understanding Ministry of Labour direction on those who are on layoff... or those who decline to return to a workplace that complies with the Workplace OH&S standards.”