ColumbiaComeback

Business Recovery Survey Summary

Summary

Columbia Economic Development Corporation and Columbia County Chamber of Commerce worked with **Audience Research and Analysis** to conduct a survey to inform the reopening of Columbia County

Goal

To better understand how local agencies can assist Columbia County businesses to safely and successfully reopen.

Process

The online survey ran:

May 15 - June 1

Survey promoted across CEDC and Chamber channels: 1500+ recipients

- Newsletters
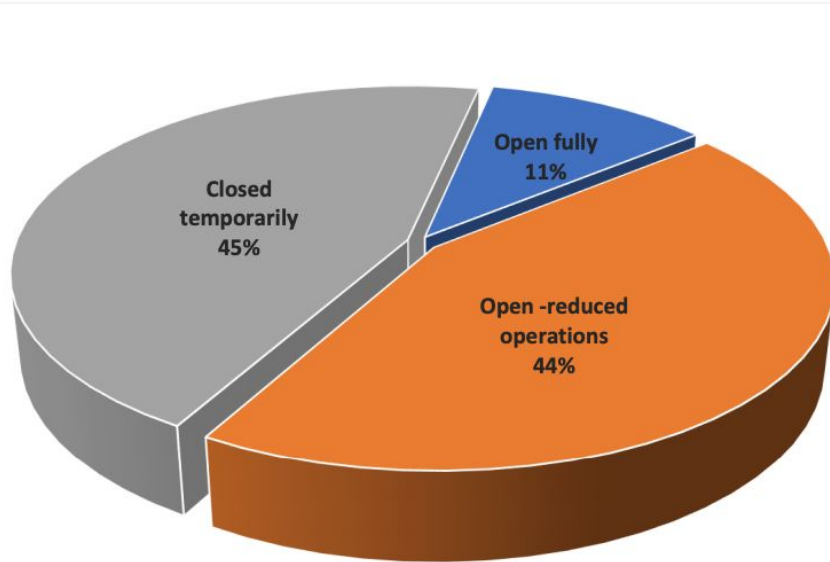- Facebook
- Instagram
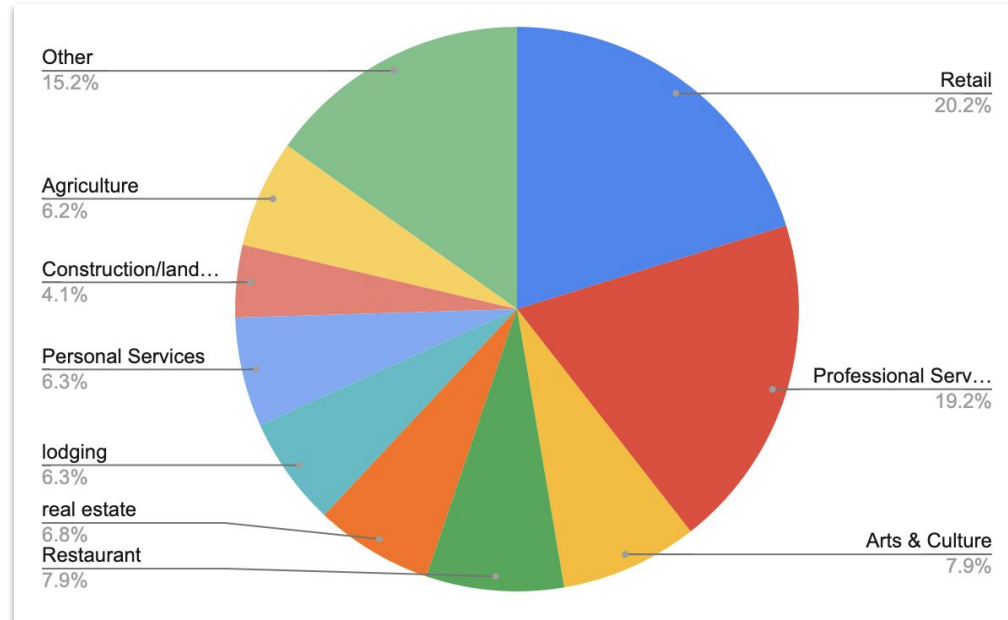- Websites

Eligibility & Response

- Must be a business located in Columbia County

- Must not be permanently closed

A total of 204 eligible Columbia County businesses replied

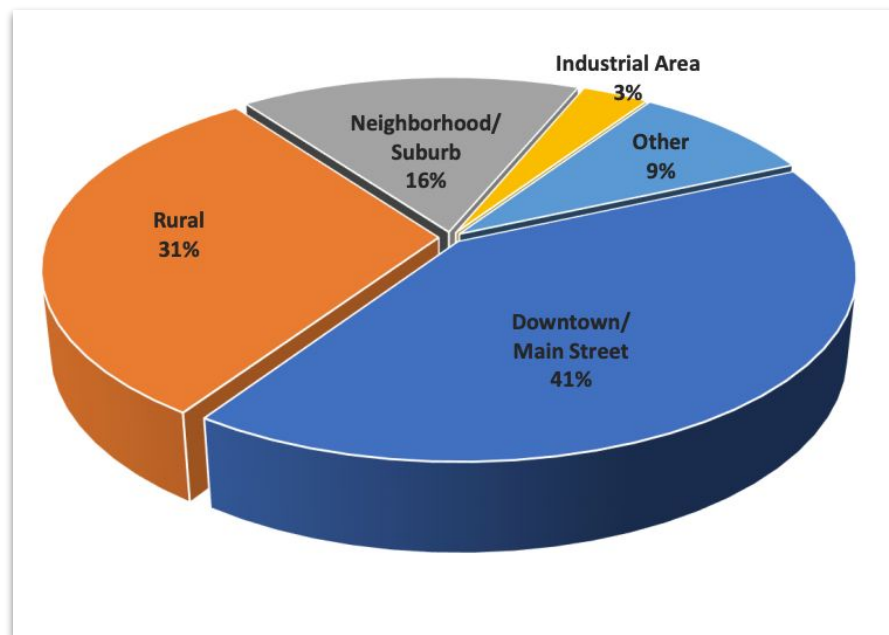# Business Status & Industry Breakdown

*90% temp closed or reduced
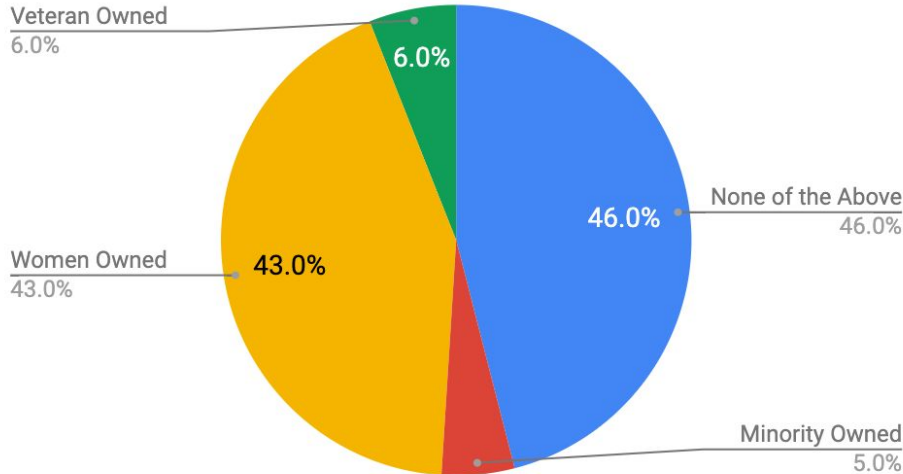
*other included non-profits, transportation and education

Geographic Breakdown

Town	Percent
City of Hudson	27.6
Town of Chatham	12.0
Town of Claverack	7.3
Town of Hillsdale	7.3
Town of Kinderhook	7.3
Town of Ghent	5.7
Town of Greenport	5.2
Town of New Lebanon	5.2
Village of Chatham	5.2
Village of Valatie	4.7
Village of Kinderhook	2.6
Town of Ancram	2.1
Town of Canaan	1.6
Town of Germantown	1.6
Town of Copake	1.0
Town of Livingston	1.0
Town of Stuyvesant	1.0
Towns of Austerlitz, Clermont and Stockport (each 0.5 percent)	0.5

Pie chart:
- Industrial Area 3%
- Neighborhood/Suburb 16%
- Other 9%
- Rural 31%
- Downtown/Main Street 41%

Business Breakdown

Business Ownership

- Veteran Owned 6.0%
- Women Owned 43.0%
- None of the Above 46.0%
- Minority Owned 5.0%

Businesses Profit vs. Non-Profit

- Not for Profit 13%
- For Profit 87%
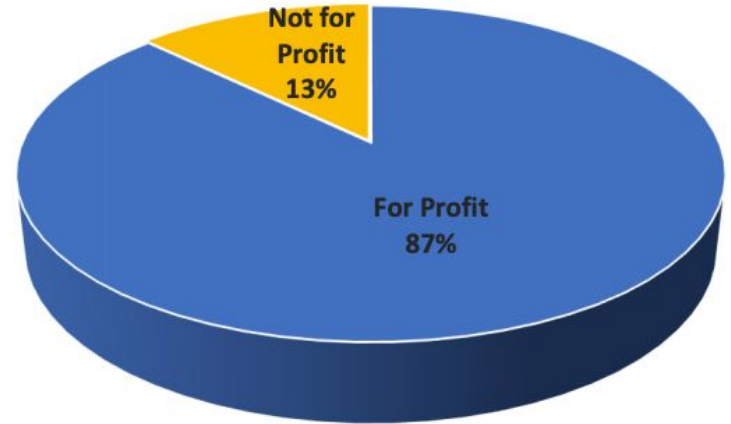
* 68% of businesses had been in operation for 10+ years

# COVID-19 Business Impact

Business impact
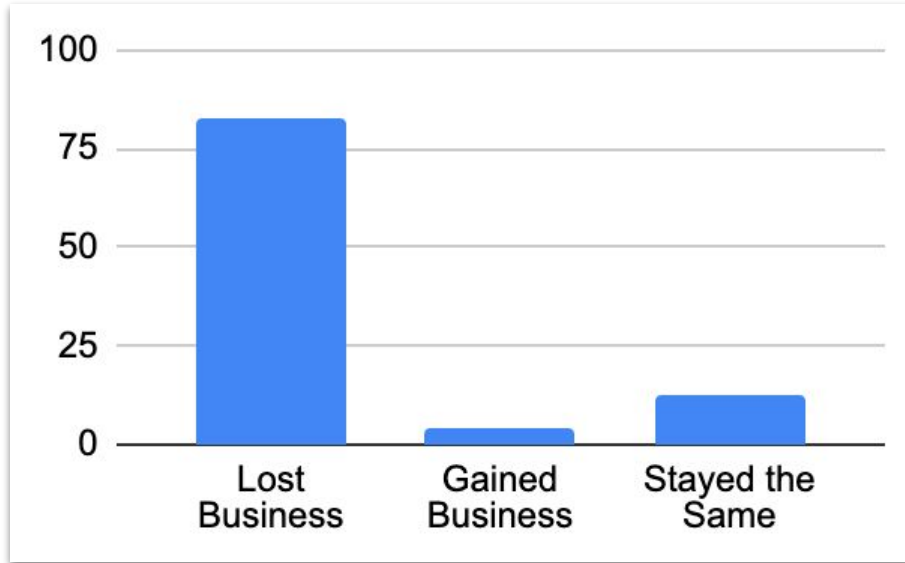
- In normal times, an average of 38% of sales are based on tourism

- On average, businesses would need 70% of usual traffic to open profitably

*The estimated average loss of business was 74 percent (including 50 businesses, or 36 percent, with a 100 percent loss). Among those reporting a gain, on the other hand, the increase averaged 31 percent

Business Assistance

Assistance Programs

Three-quarters of businesses have applied for government or community assistance programs (e.g., SBA, unemployment, loans, and grants) .
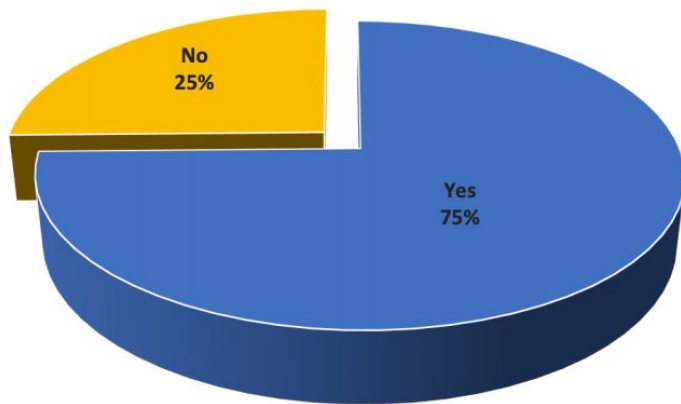
Types of Assistance Programs

Seven out of ten applied for the *Paycheck Protection Program*, and almost half for *Economic Injury Disaster Loans*.

Assistance Programs	Percent
Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)	**70.9**
Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)	**47.9**
Community Loan Fund Grant	23.9
Unemployment Insurance	23.1
U S Chamber of Commerce Grant	1.7
Other	13.7

Note: Multiple responses accepted

How Businesses Adapt to COVID-19 Measures

What Done to Stay in Business	Percent
Used personal savings	**46.8**
Applied for grant(s)	**42.4**
Drawn down cash reserves	38.6
Applied for a loan(s)	31.0
Drawn on line of credit	23.4
Not needed to access additional funds	22.2

How Adapted to COVID-19	Percent
Curbside pick-up	**20.5**
Contactless service	**20.5**
Online shop	17.3
Take out	13.5
Sell Gift Cards	9.6
Delivery	7.1
Other	20.5
None of the above/Not applicable	40.4

** Curbside/take out significantly higher (>50/79% respectively) from Food service. Of the 20% of 'Other'
responses to the Adapt to COVID-19 - majority included pivot to virtual offerings*

Business Needs

Challenges & Obstacles to reopening

Challenges or Obstacles Facing Your Business	Percent
Ability to cover expenses while operating at reduced capacity	**60.7**
Customers uncomfortable receiving service	49.3
Lack of clarity of COVID-19 safety guidelines	36.7
Liability for safety of employees and customers	36.0
Lack of sufficient foot traffic	35.3
Market I serve is pretty much shut down now	34.7
Access to COVID-19 safety equipment and materials	32.7
Space does not meet capacity or social distancing requirements	20.0
Capital to buy COVID-19 safety equipment and materials	18.7
Consumers not knowing the business is open	16.0
Lack of digital presence (website, online store, marketing know-how)	9.3
Access to reliable Internet/phone	6.7
Unable to do delivery/curbside/ take out	4.0
Other (e.g., travel restrictions, employees returning to work with children)	16.0
None of the above	6.0

1. Ability to cover expenses at reduced capacity

2. Customers OK receiving service

3. Lack of Clarity on Safety guidelines

4. Liability

5. Access to supplies

Short-term Needs to Reopen

Tools and Resources Needed	Percent
Centralized and up-to-date information on official reopening guidelines	59.3
Centralized and up-to-date information on cleaning and health best practices for employees and customers	54.5
Access to COVID-19 safety equipment and supplies	49.7
Access to economic assistance (loans, credit line, grants, etc.)	45.5
Marketing assistance (design, social media, emails, audience engagement & development)	31.7
Updated digital presence (business software/website/online store)	24.8
Financial/Accounting planning assistance	13.8
Other tools or resources needed	7.6
None of these	9.0

1. Being able to be open!

2. Clear information on reopening guidelines

3. Information on cleaning and safety best practices

4. Access to PPE

5. Access to economic Assistance

Long-Term Needs to Reopen

Long-term Needs or Tools	Percent
Encouraging residents and visitors to shop local	**45.5**
Expanding business revenue streams	**44.1**
Stronger digital presence	36.6
Increased savings	34.5
Increased cleaning and health supplies	31.7
Centralized resource with state/county guidelines and information	30.3
Creating an economic disruption plan	24.8
More flexible business model (delivery/takeout/curbside a core part of business)	15.9
Financial/Accounting guidance	13.1
Other long-term tools or resources	8.3
None of the above	11.0

1. Encouraging residents and visitors to shop local

2. Expanding business revenue streams

3. Stronger digital presence

Workforce Training Needs to Aid Reopening

New Workforce Training for Employees	Percent
Cleaning and safety practices	52.1
Marketing skills (social media, email, etc.)	23.6
Social & emotional skills / critical thinking	22.9
Digital Literacy (website, online store)	18.8
Training or retraining for new positions	18.1
Remote worker training	15.3
Crisis management	13.9
Business software (accounting, bookkeeping, POS)	9.0
Other workforce training	6.3
No training needed	26.4

Write-in Additional Thoughts

- Information on spaces available to rent to reopen (occupancy issues)

- Information on enforcement of guidelines

- Access Child-care

- Access to internet speed needed (especially in rural areas)

- Change local to zoning, permits, SLA laws etc., to enable small business to comply with COVID requirements
  - Allow use of outdoor seating/retail, Serving alcohol outdoors

Summary and Next Steps

Summary

ColumbiaComeback Efforts can continue to focus on:

- Centralize, demystify and communicate reopening guidelines
- Direct businesses to Columbiacomeback and encourage them, to sign up to newsletters (especially minority owned and 'young' businesses) to receive up to date information
- Facilitate access to PPE + Safety best practices
- Provide a channel for reopening questions (info@columbiacomeback.com)
- Encourage local and visiting communities to support local businesses
- Facilitate Grant programs, loan programs and economic assistance

Resources

- **Attend** Columbia Comeback meetings (open to public)

- **Visit** Columbiacomeback.com

- **Visit** NYforward & Reopening Tool to know if your business can open

- **Sign** the Business Affirmation - submit to reopen

- **Create** a Safety Plan template - needed to reopen

- **Write** info@columbiacomeback.com with additional questions

- **Shop local** at: https://columbiacountytourism.org/

  - Write tourism@columbiacountyny.com have your business listed. CC Tourism, Chamber and CEDC will be promoting this initiative throughout the summer

ColumbiaComeback

Thank You