

# Miami County Pulse Survey

SURVEY ROUND 2 RESULTS & SUMMARY  
AUGUST 20, 2020

**Provided to:**

**Janet McRae**

Economic Development Director

Miami County

201 S. Pearl, Ste 202

Paola, KS 66071, US

913.294.4045

[jmcr@miamicountyks.org](mailto:jmcr@miamicountyks.org)

# Background, Objective, and Methodology

## BACKGROUND

Miami County recently completed an Economic Development Strategic Plan with Ady Advantage. The completion of the strategic plan document coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought new urgency and may lead to a re-prioritization of economic development efforts within Miami County.

Meanwhile, Ady Advantage has been working with Evergy, the investor-owned utility serving Miami County, to develop community preparedness programs for the communities in its service territories. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we developed additional tools that became part of the Evergy Economic Development toolbox. The process we used to develop these tools was agile and nimble, and relied heavily on the feedback we received from Miami County on early iterations of potential data and reports. These tools are now formally available, and Miami County is taking advantage of the Business Recovery & Economic Impact program elements from the Evergy Community Preparedness toolbox.

## OBJECTIVE

Therefore, the primary objective of this project is to help Miami County determine the baseline of where its existing industry base and economy are now, and how it will track its progress going forward. This includes the following:

- Provide economic risk information for Miami County, specifically comparative data on economic vulnerability, industry diversity, and occupational diversity.
- Conduct Pulse Surveys and analysis among existing businesses (four rounds through the end of 2020).
- Provide four consultations with Janet Ady through the end of 2020.

## METHODOLOGY

Ady Advantage developed a Pulse Survey, with the second round of deployment consisting of 15 questions total. The survey was deployed to local business and industry of all sectors, for a two-week response window. Ady Advantage then conducted analysis on the survey results to identify key trends and takeaways to provide insight and guidance to Miami County in its efforts to help local businesses remain resilient and prosperous. This analysis can be found on the following slides.

In the second round of the survey, 104 employers were invited to participate and 66 responded, a response rate of 63%. Of those who responded, 55 completed the survey entirely for a completion rate of 83%. These both exceeded the estimated response and completion rate projected by the survey service, Survey Monkey. It also exceeds the average survey response rate, which is about 33% (varying depending on the type of survey, the audience, if there are pre-established relations, etc.). A response rate above 50% is generally considered to be exceptional.

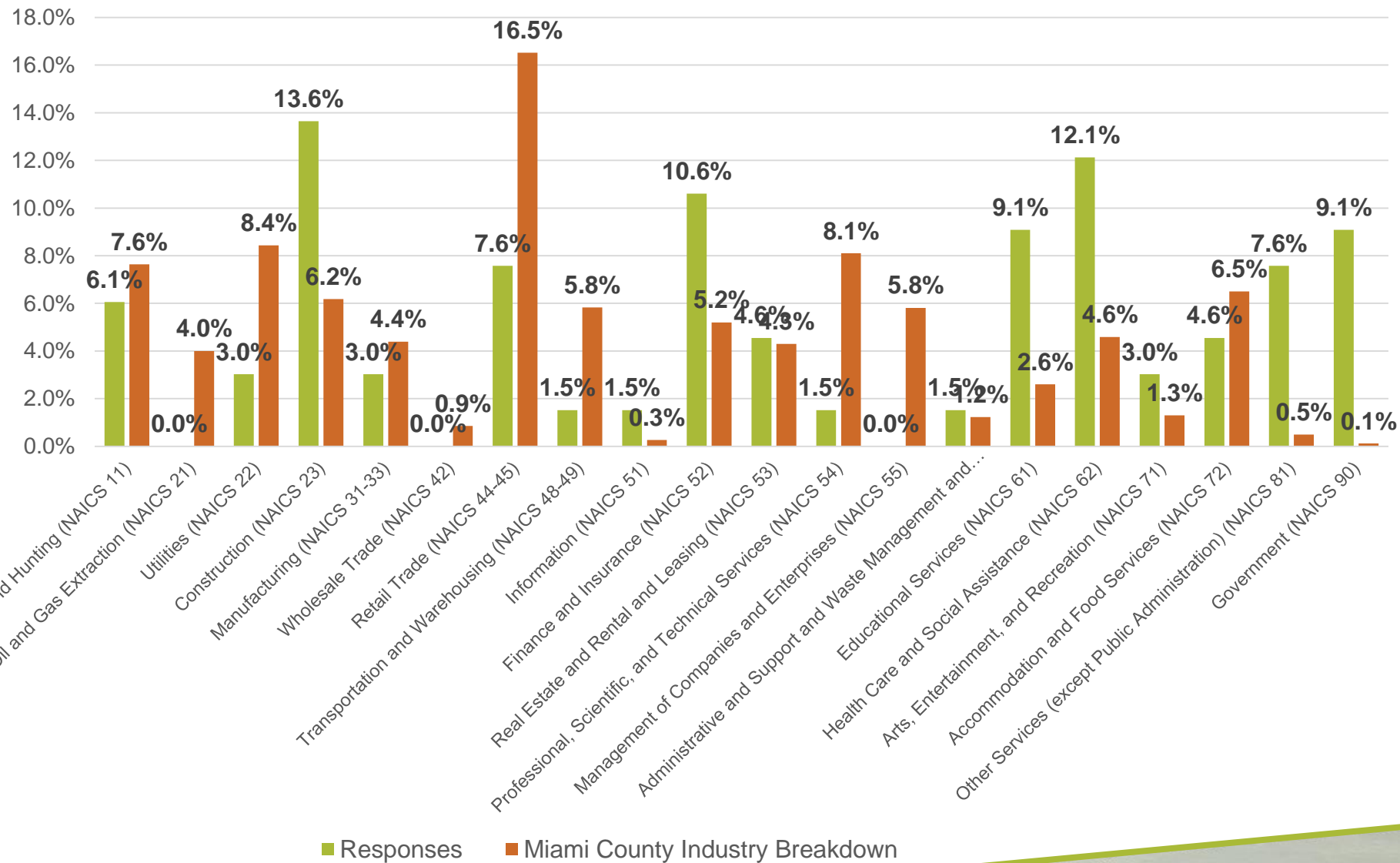
# Pulse Survey Results

## KEY TAKEAWAYS OF SECOND PULSE SURVEY DEPLOYMENT

- There is a fairly even spread of responses by employers across business industry type, with no industry representing more than 14% of the total.
- While Paola businesses constitute the majority of responses, all cities are represented in the survey at about 20% (15% for Spring Hill combining Spring Hill City, Miami County and Spring Hill City, Johnson County).
- Nearly all employers who responded are operating in some capacity; however, a quarter of employers reported they are not currently operating at full capacity. Those who are not operating expect to reopen.
- Since the June survey, there has been a slight uptick in average full-time equivalent employees employed. It has increased from 48.9 in June to 51.8 in August, on par with the pre-COVID employment average of 51.7 on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Since the June Survey, there has been a 25 percentage point increase in employers who say that full operations are now underway (41% in June to 66% now).
- Employers indicated the top actions their business would benefit from to be (1) help obtaining PPE, (2) cleaning and sanitation, (3) implementing safety protocols and social distancing, and (4) testing of workers.
- Employers indicated the top programs that would provide their business the most benefit are (1) continuing education and certification programs, (2) existing worker training and retraining, (3) job postings, and (4) on-the-job training.
- Employers indicated skills or training needs as it relates to soft skills, technology, safety, healthcare, and technical skills.
- Employers indicated the top programs their business would benefit from to be (1) internet/broadband infrastructure upgrades, (2) online marketing, (3) work from home, and (4) cybersecurity. Employers indicated internet/broadband infrastructure upgrades over all other programs by over an over 2-1 margin (67%)
- Employers indicated the most common actions that they have taken to address inventory and supply chain disruptions to be (1) analyzing current supply chain to identify inefficiencies or new opportunities, (2) identifying new vendors, (3) increasing inventory on hand, and (4) identifying alternative components to replace hard-to-source items.
- Since the June survey, there has been a slight uptick in employers who anticipate needing additional financial assistance within the next year (21% in June, 25% in August).
- Employers generally indicated a moderate to high degree of confidence in repaying additional debt taken on at this time. Twenty-nine percent indicated a high degree of confidence, 29% indicated a somewhat high degree of confidence, and 7% indicated a somewhat low degree of confidence. Thirty-five percent indicated that they had not taken on additional debt at this time, and no employers indicated a very low degree of confidence in repaying debt.
- Employers shared a variety of best practices they had developed or advice they have for other business owners in coping with these challenging times. These included practices and advice around adapting their business model, increasing flexibility, shopping local, utilizing technology and virtual interaction, a focus on customer service, and a focus and improvement of workforce.

# Pulse Survey Results

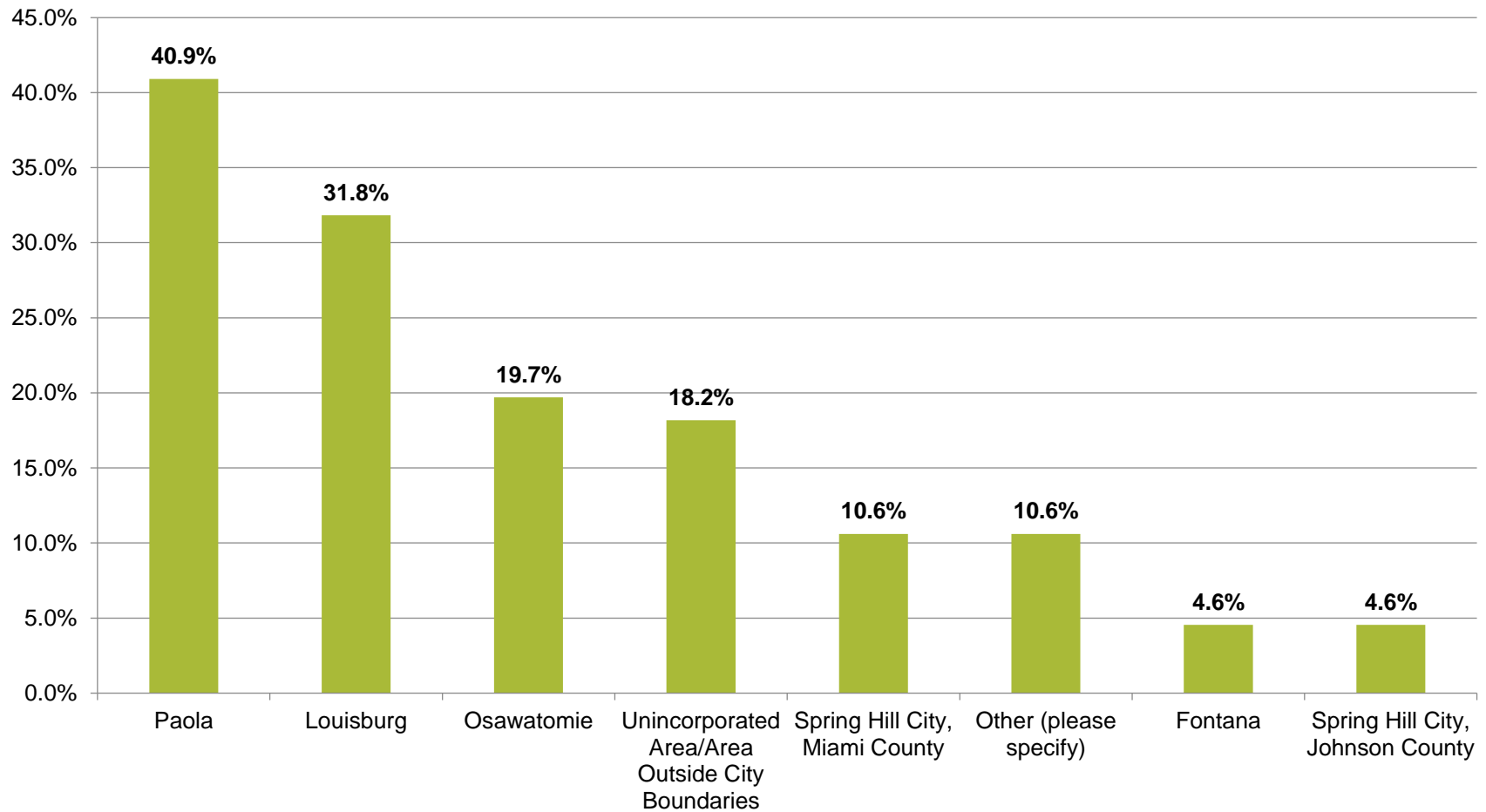
## WHICH INDUSTRY BEST DESCRIBES YOUR BUSINESS?



n =  
66

# Pulse Survey Results

WHERE DOES YOUR BUSINESS HAVE LOCATIONS? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

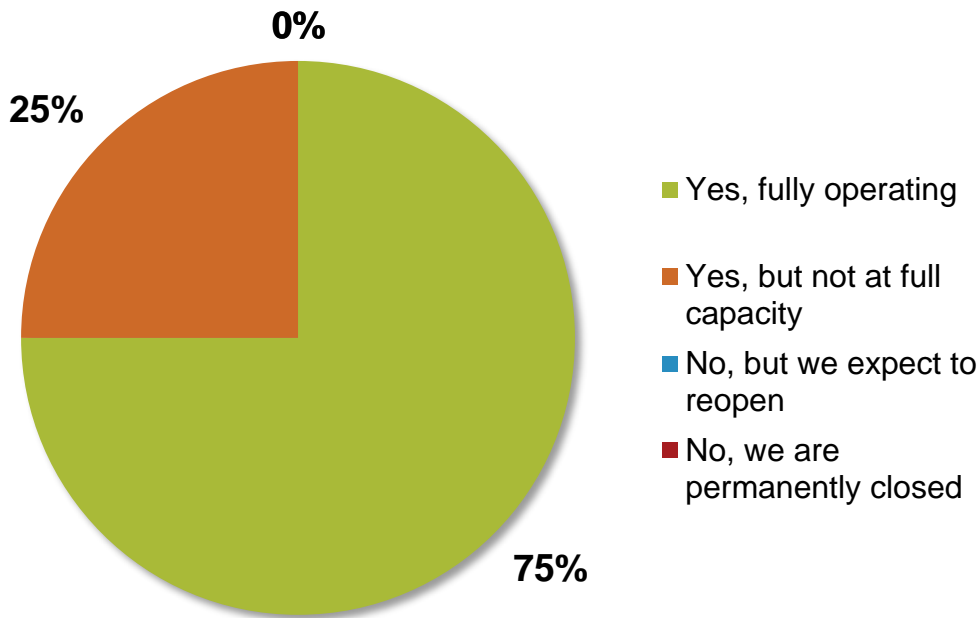


n =  
66

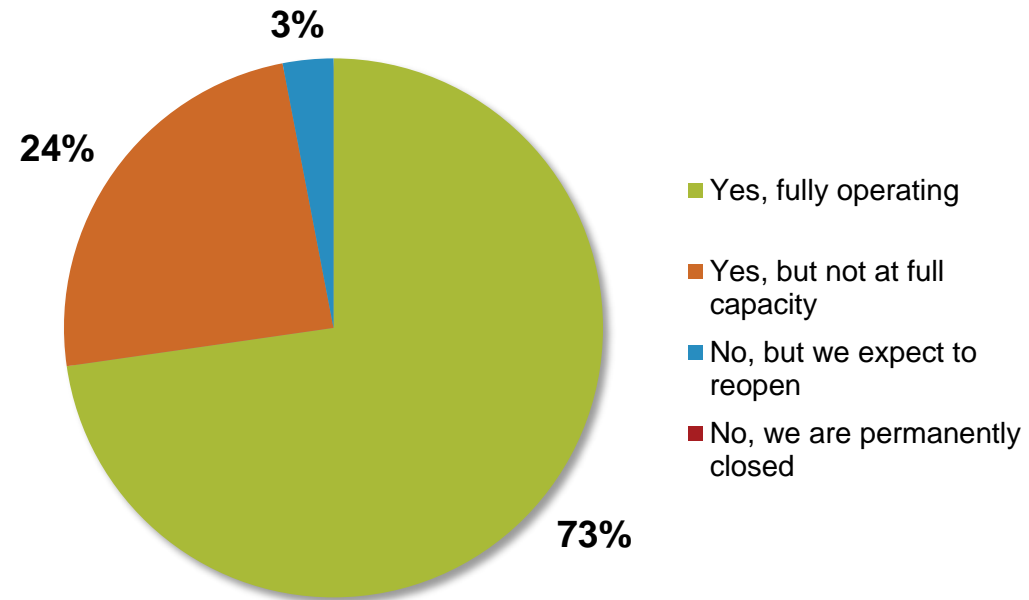
# Pulse Survey Results

IS YOUR BUSINESS CURRENTLY OPERATING?

## Round One (June 2020)



## Round Two (August 2020)



n =  
66

# Pulse Survey Results

HOW MANY FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES DID YOU, OR DO YOU EXPECT TO HAVE, ON THE FOLLOWING DATES?

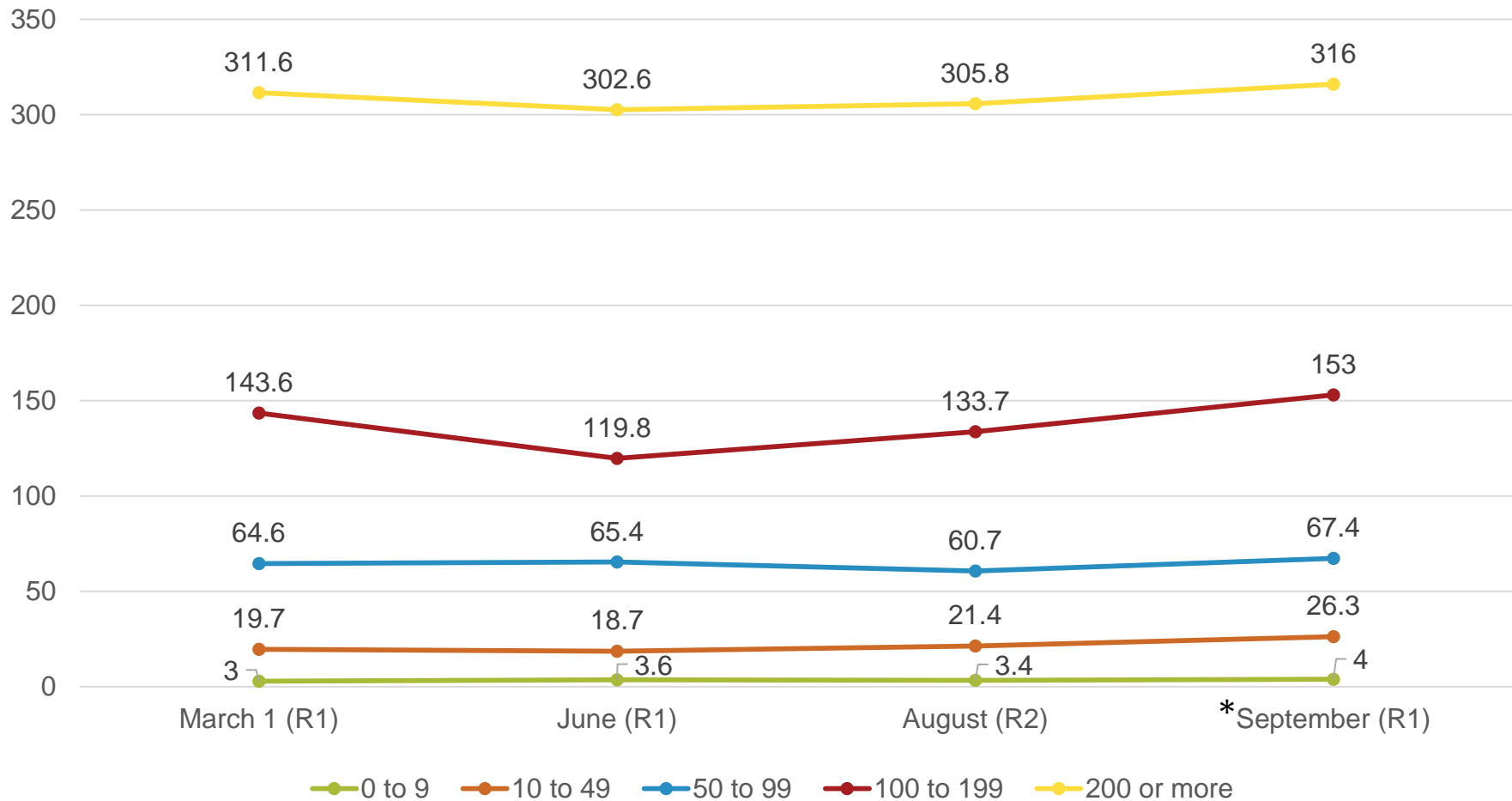
Employee Range	March 1, 2020 Average (From Round 1)	June 2020 (Round 1)	August 2020 (Round 2)	September 2020 (Projected, From Round 1)
0-9	3.0	3.6	3.4	4.0
10-49	19.7	18.7	21.4	26.3
50-99	64.6	65.4	60.7	67.4
100-199	143.6	119.8	133.7	153.0
200 or more	311.6	302.6	305.8	316.0
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>54.5</b>
Outlier*	2000	2000	N/A	3000

\*Outlier answer replied with an employee number significantly higher than all other responses and displayed separately from other responses.

**Round 1: n = 56    Round 2: n = 66**

# Pulse Survey Results

HOW MANY FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES DID YOU, OR DO YOU EXPECT TO HAVE, ON THE FOLLOWING DATES?



Round 1: n = 56 Round 2: n = 66

\*September Numbers are projections of employment in September from Survey Round One.

R1 = Survey Round 1  
R2 = Survey Round 2

# Pulse Survey Results

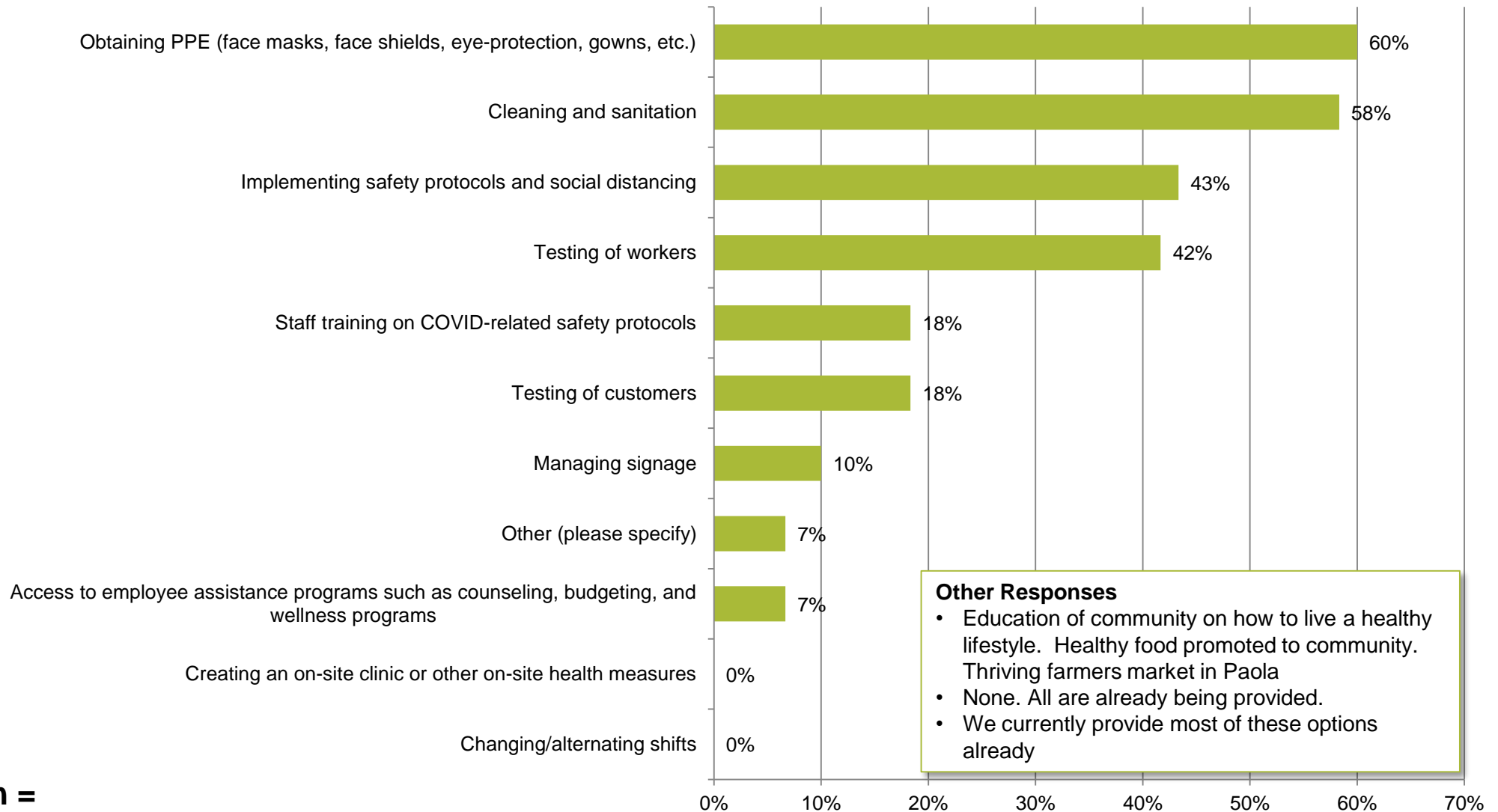
WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO RETURN TO A PRE-COVID LEVEL OF ACTIVITY OR OPERATIONS?



n =  
66

# Pulse Survey Results

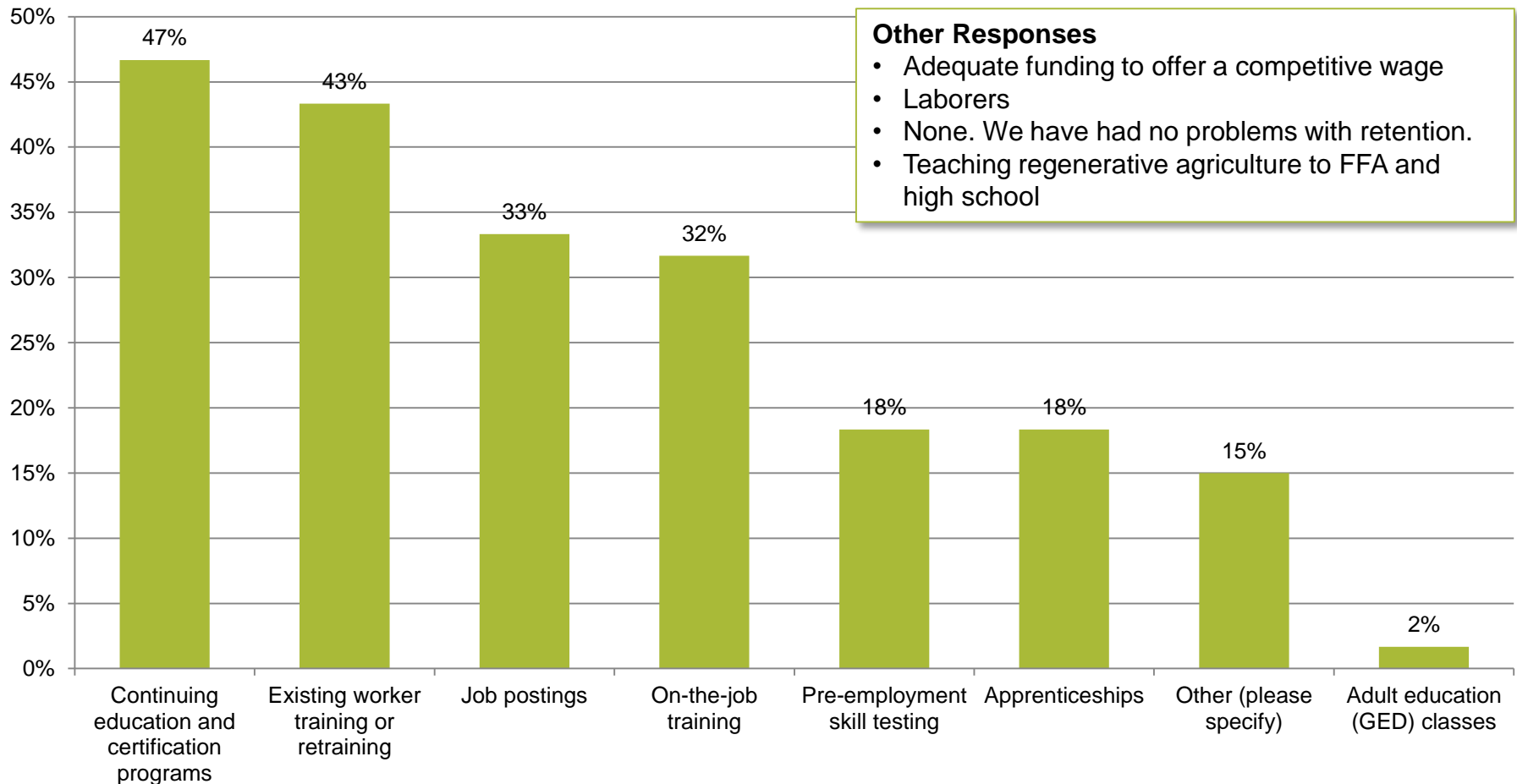
IN THE JUNE SURVEY, EMPLOYERS RANKED MAINTAINING THE HEALTH OF THEIR WORKFORCE AS ONE OF THEIR TOP CONCERNS. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WOULD PROVIDE YOUR COMPANY WITH THE MOST BENEFIT? SELECT YOUR TOP THREE.



n =  
60

# Pulse Survey Results

IN THE JUNE SURVEY, EMPLOYERS RANKED RETAINING AND RETRAINING THEIR EXISTING WORKFORCE AS ONE OF THEIR TOP CONCERNS. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS WOULD PROVIDE YOUR BUSINESS WITH THE GREATEST ASSISTANCE? SELECT YOUR TOP THREE.



n =  
60

# Pulse Survey Results

WHAT TYPES OF SKILLS OR SPECIFIC TRAINING NEEDS DO YOU HAVE THAT THE PROGRAMS LISTED ABOVE COULD HELP TO ADDRESS? (FOR EXAMPLE: TRAINING ON AUTOMATION, SOFT SKILLS, HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS, ETC.)

## Soft Skills

- Customer service traits
- Labor skills, good work ethic, here on time every day
- Phone skills, customer service, technical components of an eye care office
- Reservation/store clerk
- Sales
- Soft skills, health and safety
- Soft skills, learning to utilize technology
- Soft skills, mental acumen
- Soft skills, pass background check
- Soft skills, work ethics, basic education
- Writing classes

## Technology

- Computer skills
- Getting comfortable working online (real time) with clients. Aka Zoom.
- Virtual office training/software
- Technology, retraining in trade-based skills.
- Zoom needs to be taught.

## Safety

- Communication, health and safety protocols
- First aid & CPR
- Health and safety
- Health and safety protocols
- Health and safety protocols
- Safety
- Safety and health
- Safety protocols
- Sanitation - sufficiency, frequency
- Sanitation training

## Healthcare

- ACLS, ATLS, CPR, PALS
- Behavioral health certification training
- CEU's for addiction counseling
- Bloodborne and airborne pathogens training
- Free CEU's are important to our providers, in person training is usually preferred (though with COVID that feels different.)
- Various health, educational, and social skills required by KDHE
- Regenerative agriculture needs taught for better health.

## Technical Skills

- Auto technician training - computer and electrical
- CDL drivers and quality applicants
- CDL/heavy equipment operator
- Equipment operator
- HVAC and appliance repair
- Machinery operation training
- Marine/boat tech training
- Mechanical
- Payrolls and tax educated employees
- Tower climbing, installation technicians, customer service.
- Vocational technical training
- Water and wastewater plant operators
- Water and wastewater systems training.
- Welding and basic hands on tool training

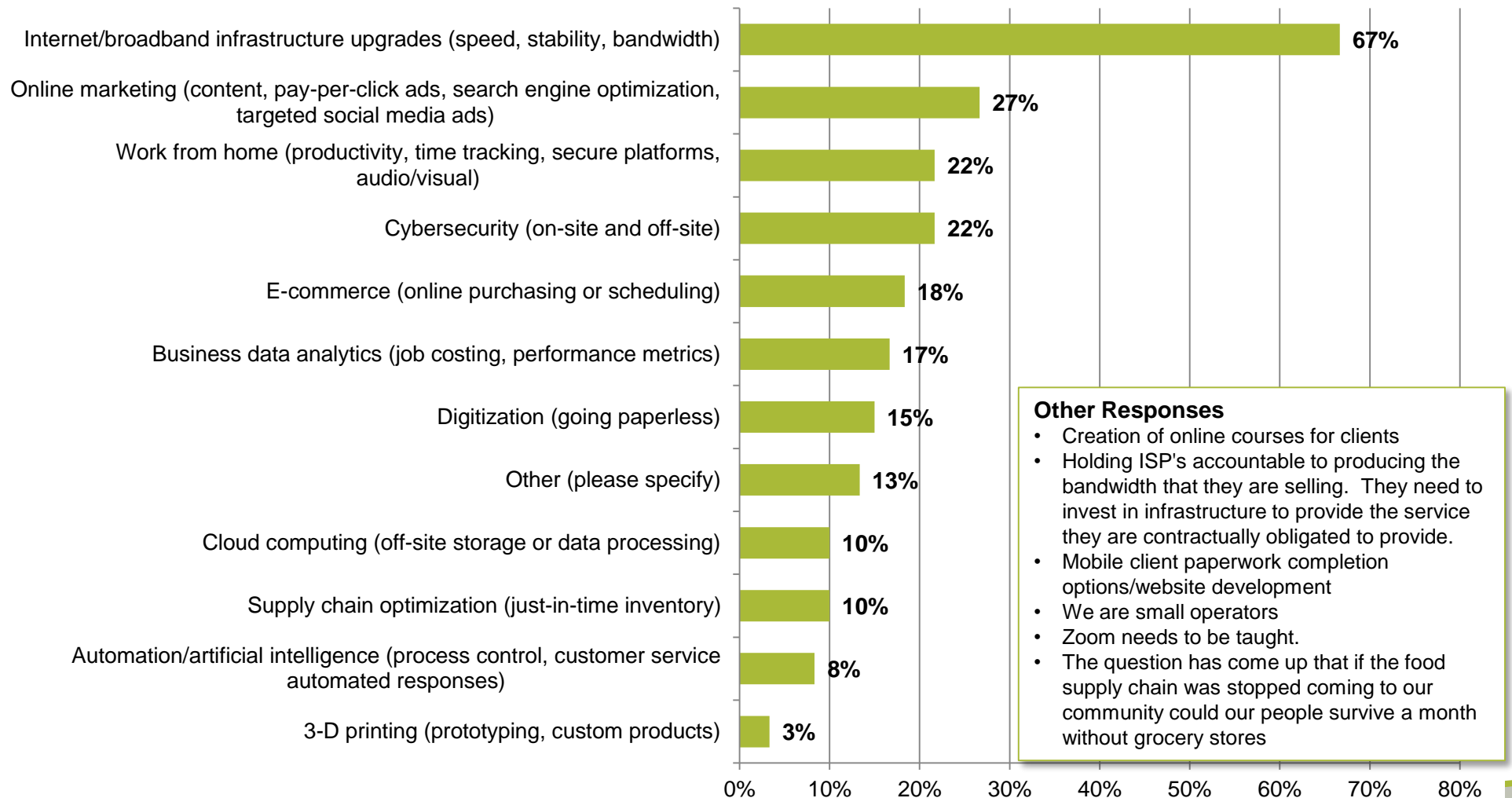
## Miscellaneous

- Any retraining of workforce.
- Law enforcement officers, detention center operations
- Most of our provider positions require a college degree.
- Religious
- We have it available at this time.

n =  
60

# Pulse Survey Results

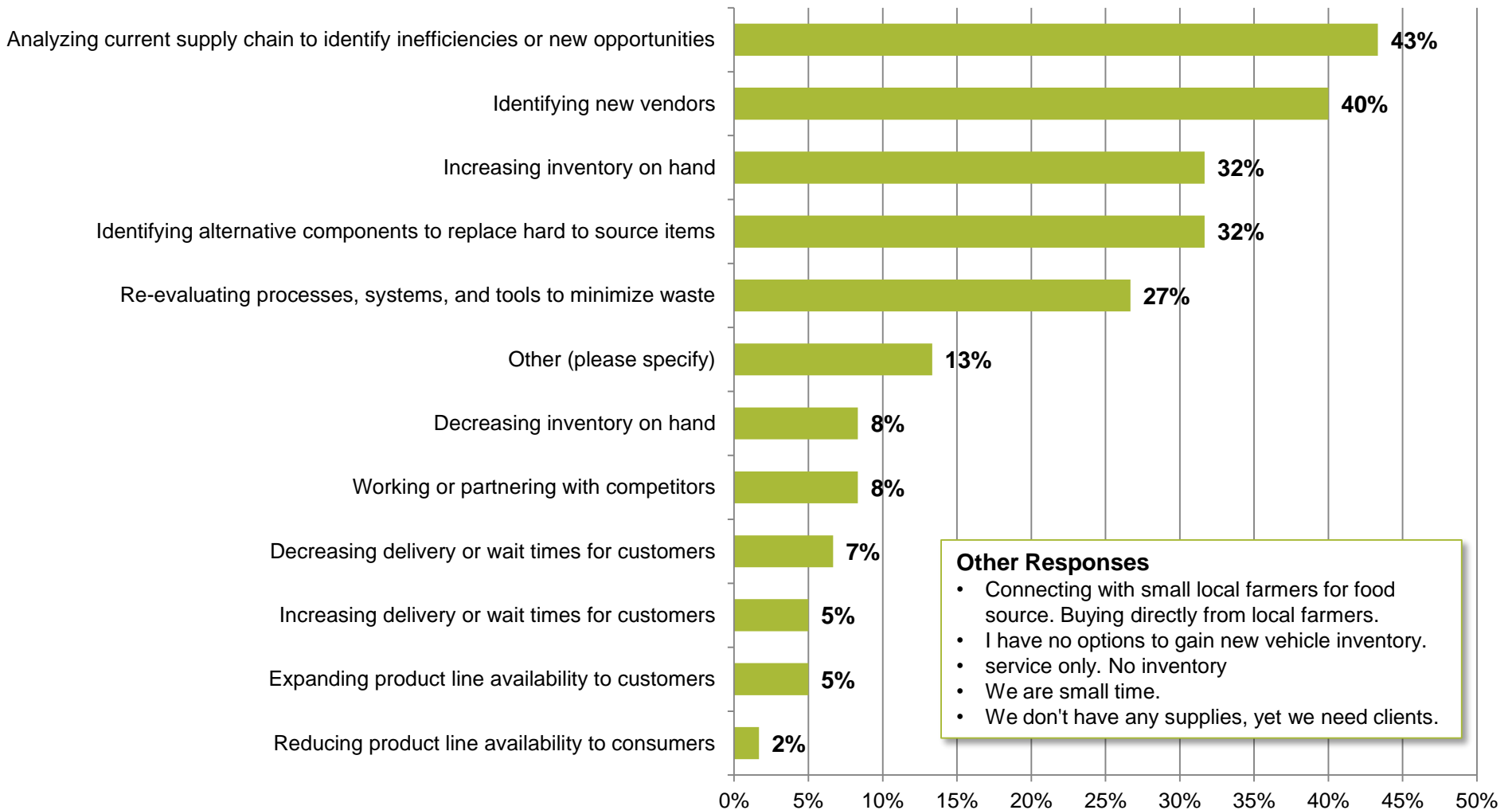
IN THE JUNE SURVEY, EMPLOYERS RANKED INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY AS ONE OF THEIR TOP PRIORITIES. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS WOULD ASSIST YOUR BUSINESS THE MOST? SELECT YOUR TOP THREE.



n =  
60

# Pulse Survey Results

WHAT ACTIONS HAS YOUR BUSINESS TAKEN TO ADDRESS INVENTORY AND SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

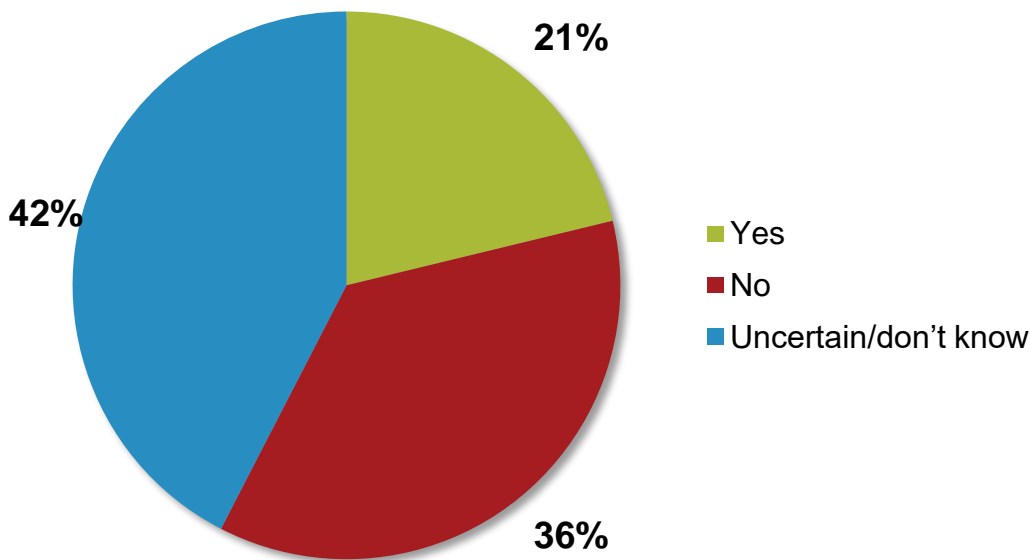


n =  
60

# Pulse Survey Results

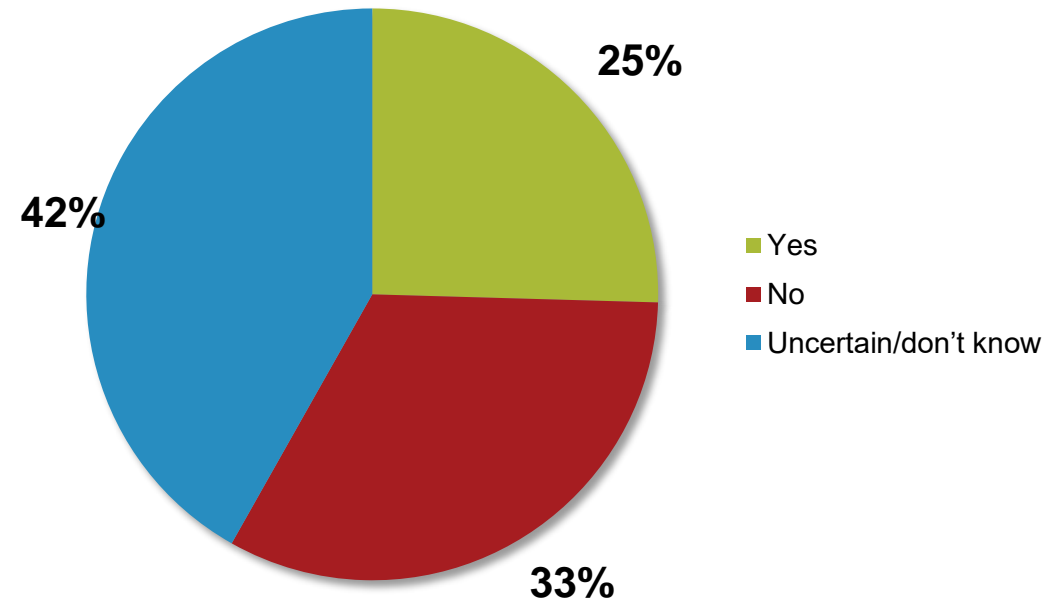
BEYOND WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED, DO YOU ANTICIPATE NEEDING ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR?

Round 1 (June 2020)



n =  
33

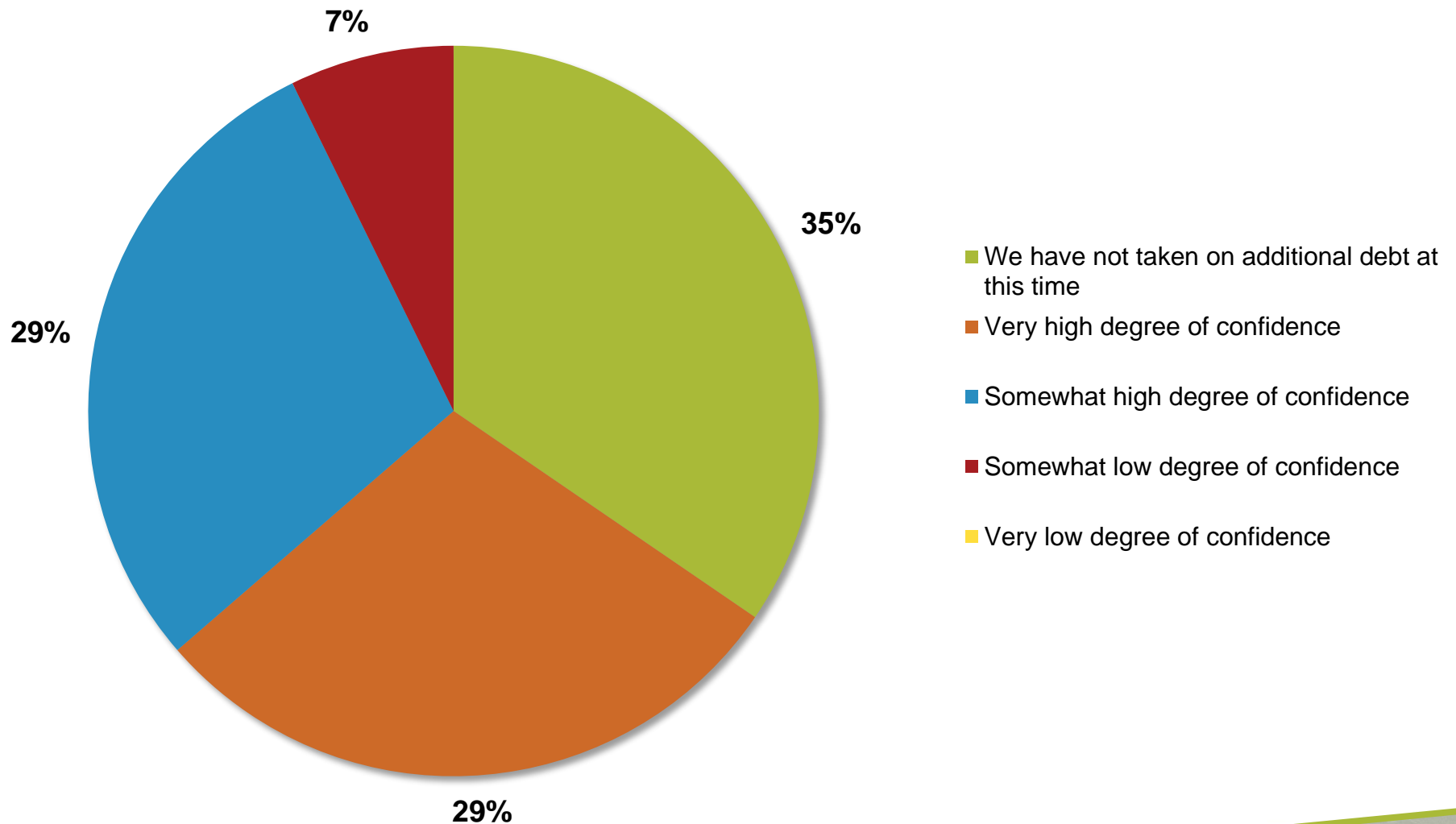
Round 2 (August 2020)



n =  
55

# Pulse Survey Results

WITH THE DEBT THAT YOUR BUSINESS HAS ALREADY TAKEN ON (IF ANY), WHAT IS YOUR DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RE-PAY IT?

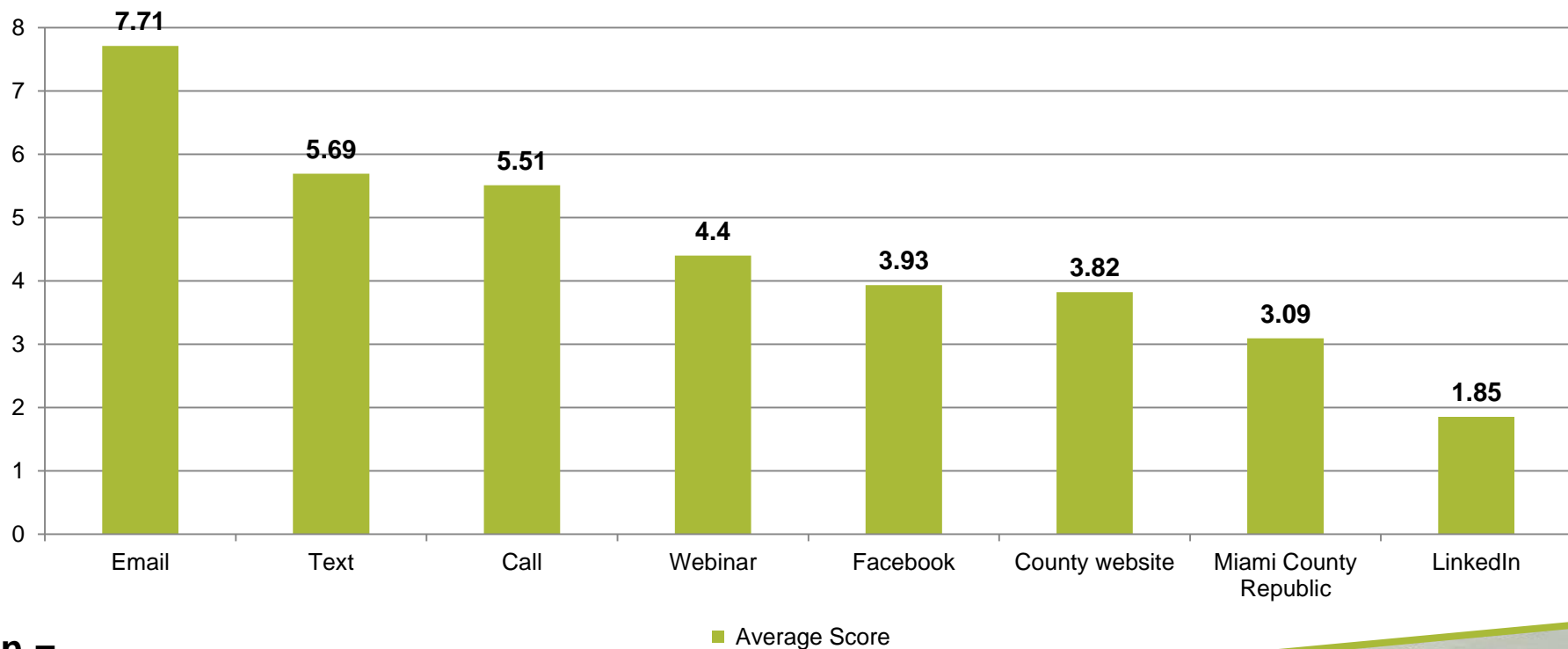


n =  
55

# Pulse Survey Results

IN THE JUNE SURVEY, COUNTY AND STATE AGENCIES WERE SELECTED AS TOP RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE. WE KNOW MANY EMPLOYERS ARE FEELING OVERWHELMED BY THE ONGOING HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DISRUPTIONS. WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD OF COMMUNICATING NEW PROGRAMS OR INFORMATION WITH YOU?

*The responses have been converted so that the results below show the best forms of communication from left to right. A higher score indicates a better/more preferred method of communicating.*



n =  
55

# Pulse Survey Results

THESE ARE CHALLENGING TIMES, BUT MANY BUSINESSES HAVE FOUND A SILVER LINING OR NEW OPPORTUNITY. WE WOULD LOVE TO SHARE A BEST PRACTICE YOU DEVELOPED OR A BIT OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR OTHER BUSINESS OWNERS. PLEASE SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF SOMETHING THAT YOU HAVE DONE, OR THAT MAY HAVE OCCURRED NATURALLY, THAT HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS. (continues on next slide)

## Adapted Business Model

- Adapted to develop a better at home delivery/pickup process.
- Become more parent/family centered.
- Changed business model from bigger festival events-to smaller events
- Realized I was working too hard. Improved efficiencies and reduced overhead resulting in a similar profit on less revenue. Probably would have never taken the time to analyze processes in so much detail
- Remodel of our waiting area.
- Taking the time to work on the business versus in it. Studied and developed processes to make us more efficient.
- These times forced us to change a lot of procedures and this took time and resources we did not normally have. Acquiring these resources allowed us to focus more on our employees and there needs which has helped the culture and in return it has brought the team together.
- We have been able to help customers through the drive-thru with things we used to only be able to do inside.
- We have had a major increase in walk-in traffic. Be prepared and staffed to handle. These people will be back.
- We seem to be more organized because we're forced to think through COVID-19 impacts
- We were finally able to open, at least with curbside service and limited on-site services so that our patrons can reconnect.
- With less overnight customers, we were able to spend a little bit more time on farm produce this year and participated in the Paola farmers market.

## Shopping Local

- More people are starting to understand the importance of shopping local.
- Connecting consumers to local small farmers for healthy food. Have connected over 150 people to small farmers, in fact have sold some of them totally out. They are stepping up their operation to meet demand. Talk to Hedgewood farm, five-mile farm.

## Flexibility:

- Be firm but fair when it comes to working with residents having financial challenges.
- Be flexible, respond to new health directives
- Keep an open mind
- Operational efficiencies of holding remote meetings / calls -vs- face to face. Alleviate travel time and meeting time
- Transparency is key in these times. Be as open and clear as possible.

n =  
60

# Pulse Survey Results

THESE ARE CHALLENGING TIMES, BUT MANY BUSINESSES HAVE FOUND A SILVER LINING OR NEW OPPORTUNITY. WE WOULD LOVE TO SHARE A BEST PRACTICE YOU DEVELOPED OR A BIT OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR OTHER BUSINESS OWNERS. PLEASE SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF SOMETHING THAT YOU HAVE DONE, OR THAT MAY HAVE OCCURRED NATURALLY, THAT HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS. (continued)

## Technology and Virtual Interaction:

- Dealing with vendors virtually. No face to face contact
- Forced to go paperless. We have been transitioning but when the stay at home order happened, we went completely paperless. Much better for the environment and storage.
- Providing PPE to employees and offer flexible work hours, including working remotely from home.
- Tele-health expansion opportunity
- To the extent possible creating automated process trackers. We expanded the client data base to allow more users. Testing offsite workspaces in the event someone contracts COVID
- Understanding that working from home is a viable method of maintaining productivity and providing safety.
- Using Zoom has turned out to be very beneficial for our organization and for our clients.
- We upgraded our ISP to 1.0 GBPS and have a VPN direct to our server. Makes it much easier for remote workers to access files.
- We rapidly moved to provision of health services via tele video and telephone, in addition to face-to-face. Unfortunately, utilization of services is still down 30-40% from normal.
- Zoom meetings

## Miscellaneous:

- Providing meals for families
- We have been deemed "essential". As an internet service provider, we custom configured work from home connections as our customers requested.
- We received no government assistance. We just continue to work hard for our clients
- Wife home made cloth masks for community members, free of charge

## Focus on Customer Service:

- Good customer service above and beyond what is expected
- Patients spend less time waiting since we bring them directly from outside back to their own room.
- Involving the staff on how we formulated the decisions, asking them for their input and or their cooperation in implementing the decisions
- Communication to all associates, one mission. Listening to customers and associates

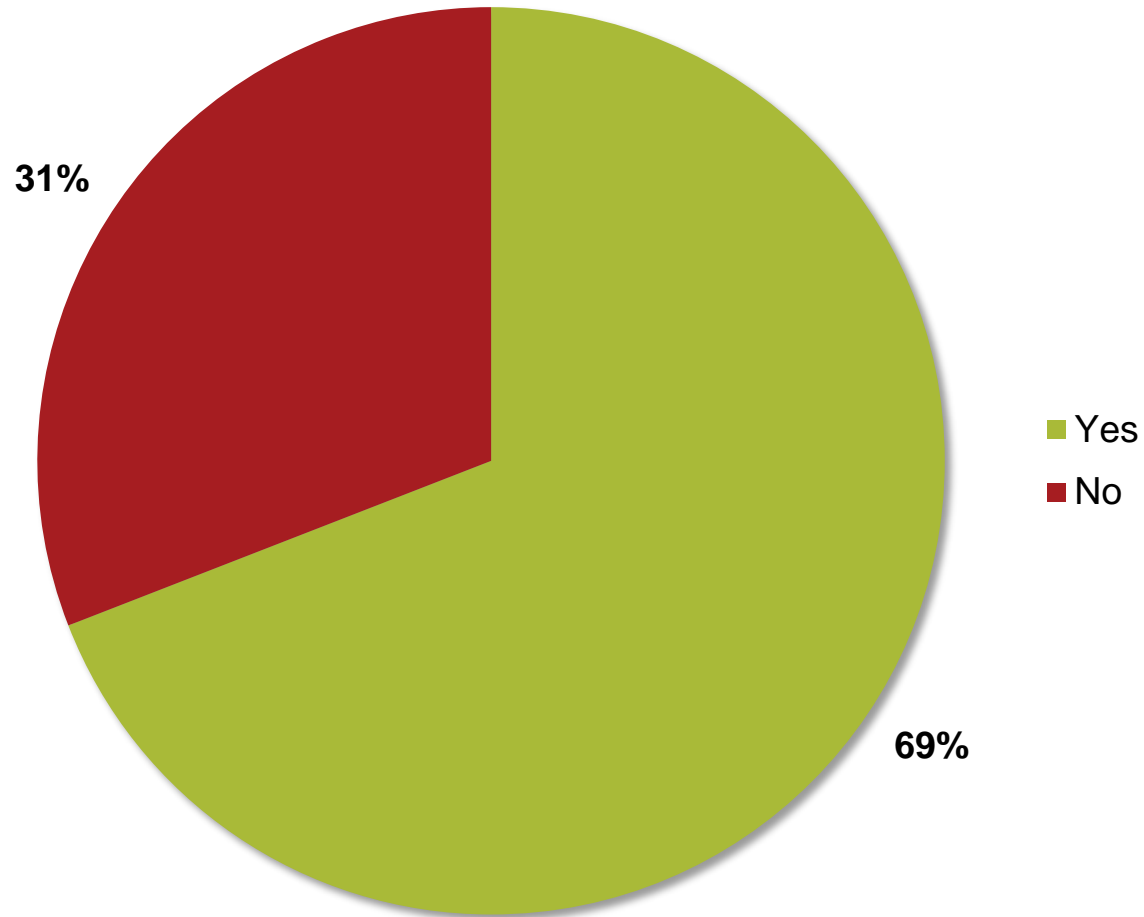
## Focus and Improvement of Workforce

- Good customer service above and beyond what is expected
- Patients spend less time waiting since we bring them directly from outside back to their own room.
- Having great people work for us
- Hired many new great employees!
- Involving the staff on how we formulated the decisions, asking them for their input and or their cooperation in implementing the decisions
- Our direct care workers have had to assume different roles than ever before, expanding their understanding of other positions within the agency.

n =  
60

# Pulse Survey Results

THERE MAY BE FREE, OR REDUCED COST, PROGRAMS THAT COULD ASSIST YOUR BUSINESS. DO WE HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO HAVE SOMEONE REACH OUT TO YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE SERVICES?



n =  
55

# Pulse Survey Next Steps

## NEXT STEPS

- Discuss any findings of particular interest from this report. What was surprising? Most helpful? Etc.
- Discuss development of third round of Pulse Survey (changes, alterations, edits, additional question responses to add, etc.)
- Confirm participants for next round.
- Discuss timing of deployment of third round of Pulse Survey (currently planned to be deployed the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>, but can potentially be deployed earlier based on the discussion during the consultation)

Thank You!