Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas survey
Survey Date: August 19 - 31, 2021

Many businesses in Ottawa’s BIAs have faced great challenges in the past 18 months. Within a short period of time, OCOBIA has collected 145 responses from bricks and mortar businesses within BIA boundaries in Greater Ottawa.

86.2% respondents of the survey were business owners or managers within BIAs, 12.4% owned both the business and the commercial property in the BIA.

Participating BIA Businesses

The survey was sent to all BIA Offices within the 19 Ottawa BIAs. The responses received were based on the BIA office outreach to business and property members in their respective BIA - OCOBIA did not conduct any direct outreach to business members.
The majority of responses by BIA:

- Bank Street BIA - 25.5%
- Barrhaven BIA - 22.1%
- Manotick BIA - 11%
- Glebe BIA - 9%
- Vanier BIA - 8.3%
- Kanata Central BIA - 7.6%
- Westboro Village BIA - 6.9%

**BIA Business Member sectors represented:**

Retailers represented the largest sector of respondents at 35.2%. Hospitality was second with 18.6% response rate.

**Number of Employees**

Small Businesses represent 96.6% of the BIA respondents - with 69% respondent businesses between 1-10 staff members.
**Business During the Pandemic**

77.2% of respondents were shut down for a period of time.

- **Your business location was shut down (public, employee access) for a period of time.**
  - 145 responses
  - 77.2% yes
  - 22.8% no

62% of respondents had to lay off staff. While 30.3% respondents’ staffing has remained unchanged.

- **During the pandemic, you had to**
  - 145 responses
  - 62.1% lay off staff
  - 30.3% hire more staff
  - 7.6% nothing changed with staffing

81.4% of respondents were negatively impacted financially, 12.4% of respondents’ financial situation remained unchanged.

- **Your business was impacted financially,**
  - 145 responses
  - 81.4% negatively - decreased revenue
  - 12.4% about the same
75.9% of respondents required financial support.

Your business required financial support/assistance
145 responses

62.1% of respondents received the CEBA loan. 58.6% of respondents received both CEWS and CERS.

Your business received the following (please check all) *
The largest funds have been listed, please add additional funds you received if possible

☐ Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)  58.6% respondents
☐ Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) as tenant  58.6% respondents
☐ Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) as property owner  6.2% respondents
☐ Ontario Small Business Support Grant  47.6% respondents
☐ Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA loan)  62.1% respondents
☐ Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program (HASCAP)  5% respondents
☐ None of these  20% respondents
☐ Other...
Reopening / Road to Recovery

47.6% respondents are understaffed and 17.2% are not hiring.

Your staff situation at present:
145 responses

67.6% of respondents have not returned to pre-pandemic sales.

Has your revenue returned to pre-pandemic sales?
145 responses

Top business challenges affecting revenue growth/recovery include supply chain disruption (41.4%), capacity restrictions (37.9%) and lack of staff (37.2%)

What are your business challenges affecting revenue growth/recovery? Select up to 4
145 responses
Increased expenses due to COVID-19 (49.7%) and debts/loans arising from COVID-19 (45.5%) represent the greatest financial burdens to businesses.

Canada Recovery Hiring Program is not being utilized to a desired capacity - 44.8% businesses do not need it at this time, 23.4% are having difficulty hiring, 24.1% do not qualify.

44.8% of respondents experienced an increase in commercial insurance expenses.
37.9% of respondents had banking or credit card fees increase

35.9% of respondents had an increase of transaction fee expenses

87.5% of respondents are concerned that capacity restrictions and closures will continue.
Economic Rebound and Legislative Change

**Vaccinations:** More respondents are amenable to mandating vaccinations in the workplace with legislative support, than vaccine passports. 69.7% of respondents support workplace mandated vaccination, 66.9% of respondents support a vaccine passport.

**Financial response:** 64.8% of respondents would like to see CEBA loan forgiveness to boost their business out of COVID. 49% would like to extend CERS (Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy)
Reducing card transaction fees (54.5% respondents) and commercial insurance premiums (50.3% respondents) are the top desired Government actions on financial related regulations.

**Economic stimulation:** Respondents commented that 1) return to work / office and 2) elimination of all restrictions imposed with COVID-19 are actions that must be taken.

Regarding stimulation coming out of the pandemic, offering consumer incentives via tax breaks and spending rebates are the top desired actions of the Government.