



Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development

Findings and Recommendations

Bath, Maine
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Main Street America



About Main Street America

Main Street America has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for nearly 40 years. Today it is a network of thousands of neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, Inc., a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Since 1980, over 2,000 programs have used the Main Street Approach, our time-tested framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization. The National Main Street Center conducts research to document our impact by annually collecting statistical information on the preservation, revitalization, and economic activities in local Main Street programs throughout the country.



About the Maine Downtown Center – SBA Appropriated Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Program

Maine Development Foundation's Maine Downtown Center (MDC) is a Main Street America® Coordinating Program and was established in 1999. MDC currently has 10 nationally designated Main Street Maine programs, 14 state designated Maine Downtown Affiliate programs, and works with scores of other communities on revitalization and improvement efforts. The program is staffed by Senior Program Director Anne Ball (aball@mdf.org), Program Director Sylvie Piquet (spiquet@mdf.org), and Program Coordinator Perri Williams (pwilliams@mdf.org).



The MDC-SBA Appropriated Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Program is focused on 10 designated and/or affiliate Maine Main Street Programs and builds off the highly successful ecosystem pilot in Lisbon, Monson and Skowhegan, Maine. The project consists of ecosystem technical assistance and grants for project implementation.

About the Main Street Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Approach

The Main Street Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Approach is a framework for supporting a local and/or regional support system for entrepreneurs and small businesses in which “Place” centers our work.



Successful Entrepreneurial Ecosystems depend on cross-sector partnerships and collaboration. Main Street programs are in a prime position to convene key partners to assess gaps and opportunities within the local ecosystem.

Additionally, the importance of place is often missing from the dialogue around Entrepreneurial Ecosystems. Main Streets are well-positioned to bring this place-based perspective to the table and help ensure that entrepreneurship support strategies leverage the distinct sense of place that makes your community unique.

The Seven Critical Factors of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

We think of Ecosystem building through the lens of seven (7) critical Factors. Given the diversity of needs to support the launch, growth/ scaling, and even the exiting of businesses, it is important to understand that Ecosystem building takes the alignment of many organizational stakeholders, grounded through input from entrepreneurs, in order to be successful and sustainable.



The Place Factor acknowledges that the external environment in which a business operates is extremely important relative to overall success. In addition, much of the programming and real estate components that serve to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses tend to have a spatial element, commonly centered in a downtown, where commerce, civic functions, housing, and recreation converge. Place Factors largely consist of the following examples:

- Real Estate — unique buildings (think breweries); move-in ready spaces; affordable start-up spaces, diversity of housing
- Launch support spaces — maker spaces, incubators/accelerators, shared-use food kitchens, night kitchens, mobile retail/food trucks, co-workspaces, entrepreneur hub centers
- Programming — pitch contests, pop-up programming, soup events
- Third Spaces — breweries, coffee houses, libraries — places that allow for entrepreneurs, remote workers, and small businesses to interact and accidental collisions.



The Social Capital Factor examines the ecosystem at the relationship level, primarily focused on mentorship and networking. We also examine the formal or informality of how entrepreneurs and small businesses make connections, find information, and interact with stakeholders and fellow business owners. The Social Capital Factor largely consists of the following examples:

- Networking events
- Entrepreneur and/or small business network groups
- Access to Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)



The Financial Capital Factor looks at the availability and diversity of capital resources available to small businesses at all points of their life cycle; from early formation and launch, scaling and growing, maturity, and ultimately an exit or transition. Financial Capital for most communities needs to be evaluated locally, but also regionally, as many programs and tools tend to develop at a broader geographic scope than our own communities. The Financial Capital Factor largely consists of the following examples:

- Personal equity (home, credit cards, personal savings, friends and family)
- Government loans and grants (local, state and federal)
- Bank lending tools
- Nonprofit entities (CDFIs, façade loan programs, low-interest loans from economic development groups)
- Private equity (angel and venture capital investors)



The Culture Factor is more qualitative and appears in local attitudes about entrepreneurship, support of small businesses, celebration of new business openings, and even our willingness to accept the risk of failure with new business ideas and concepts. The Culture Factor largely consists of the following examples:

- Media features on small business and new business announcements
- Presence of buy local and promotions like “Shop Small” campaigns
- New residents opening businesses • Small business owners engaged in local civic organizations



The Government/Regulatory Factor evaluates the policies, ordinances, and the experience of entrepreneurs and small businesses as they work with the public sector to launch and scale their business operations. In an unhealthy support system, entrepreneurs find the process for getting permits difficult and an environment focused on what you can’t do rather than how do we find a solution. It also examines the prioritization of entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy. Examples of Government/Regulatory Factor to be evaluated include:

- Community-specific web resources on how to start a business
- Economic development resources and capacity targeting small business development

- Zoning practices that provide for protections while allowing for a broader mix of uses and functions



The Education and Training Factor examines not only access and availability of educational resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs but should also evaluate these aspects from the perspective of the business life cycle. As such, there may be a great deal of workshops and on demand content for business planning or even digital commerce, but very little for how to think through business model shifts, succession planning, or even dealing with supply chain issues. Thus, examples of the

Education and Training Factor consist of the following:

- Involvement and engagement from a Small Business Development Council (SBDC), Women’s Business Center (WBC) and/or Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)
- Annual small business needs assessment
- Diversity of access to education and training: traditional onsite, virtual, and on-demand
- Local colleges and universities with entrepreneurship training programs



The Human Capital Factor is multi-faceted. As such, it examines a far range of human capital related variables including access to talent that might start and grow a business, the workforce necessary to support launching and growing businesses, and even the attraction of remote workers. Importantly, Human Capital also evaluates the level of equity and inclusiveness that enables women and minority businesses to engage in entrepreneurship. The Human Capital Factor consists of the following examples:

- Levels of minority and women-owned businesses as compared to local demographic profiles
- Youth entrepreneurship programming
- Engagement of local universities and colleges in workforce development matched to local market needs



Place-Based

This factor relates to the physical spaces, building fabric, amenities, and place assets that collectively provide the environment for entrepreneurs to be successful. Place-based indicators tend to focus on real estate support tools, like incubators, drop-in spaces, and maker spaces. However, amenities such as trail systems, diversity of housing options, and “fail fast” pipelines (like pop-ups, pitch it contests, and in-store product displays) represent critical indicators to having a place-based ecosystem factor.

Place-Based Factor in Bath	
Owner	Main Street Bath; Union + Co; City of Bath
Main Street Bath’s Role	Primary Lead, Developer, Connector, Advocate, Provider, Supporter, Convener
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The local trade area positions Bath as a central hub, with Bath Works also providing a stable large employer to leverage.• Downtown Bath is a vibrant retail center, with some new investments creating a vibrant waterfront.• Union+Co investments in co-work and start-up spaces is a tremendous resource and example for other investors.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The primary gap, like so many successful Main Streets is the lack of vacant spaces for new businesses.• Downtown lacks place-programming such as pop-ups and pitch events.



Government Policy/Regulations

This factor focuses on the public sector’s role within the Ecosystem. Indicators reflect the government’s role in developing supportive business policies and creating streamlined regulatory, permitting, and zoning practices that encourage a broad range of business ventures, while also making critical capital investments in cell service and internet fiber that result in strong public infrastructure.

Government Policy/ Regulations Factor in Bath	
Owner	City of Bath
Main Street Bath’s Role	Supporter and Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City has made focused investments in the waterfront and park infrastructure.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parking was voiced as an issue, especially with the layout of lots and Bath Works traffic.• There is restrictive ordinance language that makes it difficult to have outdoor dining and café seating.



Financial Capital

This factor examines the depth and breadth of financial resources available to entrepreneurs at all stages of the business life cycle, including traditional bank lending, crowdfunding, and microlending initiatives.

Financial Capital in Bath	
Owner	SBA Maine; Local Banks, Coastal Enterprises Inc.
Main Street Bath's Role	Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local banking community appears active engagement potential with the SBA.Given the presence of a larger manufacturer and a regional commercial hub, there is opportunity to leverage creative hyper-local financing tools.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many entrepreneurs seemed to lack understanding and knowledge around crowdfunding opportunities as well as private equity and/or angel investments.



Social Capital

Entrepreneurs exist in a world where relationships, trust, and connections are significant in all aspects of the launch, growth, and sustainability of a business. This factor evaluates the community programs and activities that either proactively and/or organically add value to the entrepreneurship social network by promoting trust, reciprocity, and cooperation.

Social Capital in Bath	
Owner	Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath
Main Street Bath's Role	Primary Lead, Convener, Supporter, Developer, Provider, Advocate
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The level of networking events and activities was rated high, however, there may be a disconnect with knowledge of local businesses and entrepreneurs.The SCORE chapter is engaged in the area, but there is an opportunity for growing that more formally.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is a lack of more formal networking activities, including peer-to-peer learning opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs.Given the multiple entry points into the ecosystem, there is a gap of who has what resources and access, including within the private sector.



Education and Training

Technical assistance in the form of education and training opportunities represents a critical factor for the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem. Indicators examine opportunities for entrepreneurs to participate in the basics of entrepreneurship, as well as more sophisticated programming in logistics, multi-channel marketing, etc. Communities should have a sound grounding in both public and private education and training programming.

Education and Training in Bath	
Owner	Maine SBDC; Roux Institute; CEI; Maine SCORE
Main Street Bath's Role	Provider and Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Based on the inventory, there are services and assistance throughout the life cycle relative to education and training programs.There is an opportunity to both host and engage Union+Co with a variety of educational activities, given the built-in audience.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is an opportunity to build a deeper partnership with the SBDC in providing targeted programs based on survey results.Need areas revolve around e-commerce, business model shifts/diversification of revenues, and pricing strategies.



Culture

Localized attitudes toward entrepreneurship as a career option and as a social activity define regional entrepreneurship culture, which in turn impacts personal choices to engage in entrepreneurial activities, as well as investor confidence. This factor contains indicators that examine a community's perspectives on risk-taking, innovation, career self-determination, business regulation, and acceptance from outsiders and their ideas, as well as how entrepreneurship is portrayed in the media.

Culture in Bath	
Owner	Main Street Bath
Main Street Bath's Role	Primary Lead, Supporter, Provider, Advocate, Connector and Developer
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There's a strong sense of collaboration and cooperation among existing and aspiring entrepreneursLocal media coverage is supportive of providing features of local businesses and start-ups. Main Street also has a strong social media following.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Programming that would engage or support entrepreneurs and small businesses to be more active in civic life.






Human Capital

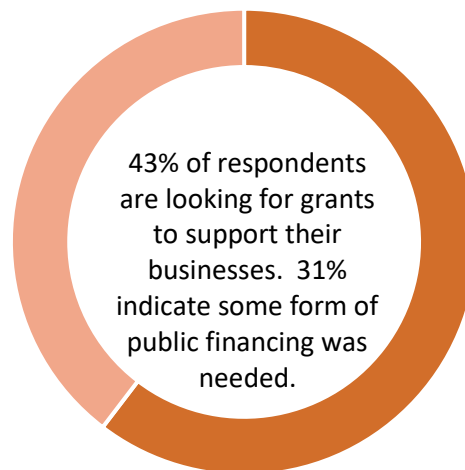
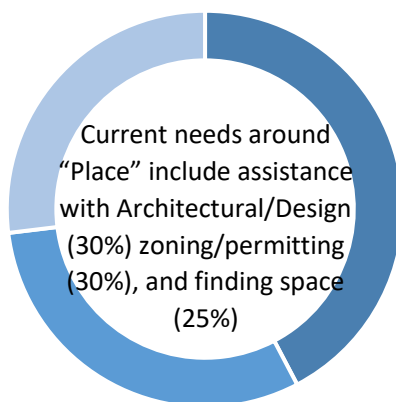
Human Capital explores whether communities are creating pipelines of entrepreneurial talent from example academic institutions and whether they have the human capital in their workforce to fill positions as entrepreneurs grow their businesses. This is especially important in areas facing workforce shortages and/or areas where entrepreneurs operating in niche fields need specialized talent.

Human Capital in Bath

Owner	Bath-Brunswick Chamber; K-12 (Jobs to Maine Graduates & EOL); YMCA – Child Care
Main Street Bath's Role	Supporter and Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both communities' secondary schools have some entrepreneurial programming for students.• Local colleges/universities within the area also offer entrepreneurial programming.• Childcare has emerged as a key economic and workforce development asset. It's great to see importance to this as a call out with the YMCA.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like most places across the country, Bath is experiencing challenges in workforce retention and attraction.

Bath Entrepreneurs Survey Summary

 Place-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business could benefit from additional assistance with finding space. • Property condition was significant priority, especially given limited vacancies. • <u>Highly significant increase (two-thirds in fact!)</u> in moving from the home-based business to an independent storefront. The key is how to identify, connect and build a network pipeline. • Architectural assistance was noted as a key missing element/challenge.
 Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding and Retaining Employees is Most Significant Barrier to Business Operations.
 Education & Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for assistance with ecommerce, pricing strategies, business model shifts and strategies for reaching new customer markets. • Looking for assistance with marketing and promotions. • Key Connectors – City, Main Street and Private Sector



Bath Entrepreneurs Focus Group – Challenges

Place-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having adequate space for current businesses to expand as well as new businesses to locate outside of the home. • Parking (unsure if it's a number of spaces or more of a management issue.) • Childcare while present with the YMCA is remains a challenge for many.
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying Revenue Streams/Business Model Shifts, recognizing consumer needs and macro-economic challenges. This also includes consumer pricing elasticity.
Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire additional networking events and activities. Specifically also seeking more connections to industry/trade associations and broader networking and learning opportunities.

Critical Gaps Summary

 Place-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with finding spaces for new or growing businesses. • Examining issues around affordability for getting started in a downtown facility. • Pop-Up, Micro-Retailing, Co-op and Mobile Retailing Pipeline Programming and Spaces. • Need more Place programming and support (pop-ups, pitch, etc.)
 Financial Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to known resources as gathered in the Inventory Map. • Need more education and understanding of equity and crowdfunding financing tools. • Securing financing is one of the most significant issues holding back growing and scaling businesses.
 Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional networking and mentoring options • Having a “one-stop” for access to resources and assistance. • Seeking “qualified” list of private sector service providers (marketing, legal, accounting, web development, etc.).
 Government & Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-examining opportunities for outdoor dining and use of sidewalks for limited café seating. • Need a checklist and/or resource guide for starting and growing a business within Bath. • Parking – as mentioned early, unsure if its number of spaces or needs for management.
 Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and developing new customers pipelines; Business model shifts, pricing strategies, and ecommerce.
 Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding and retaining workforce remains one of the highest priorities and challenges for most businesses. • Additional support for more childcare facilities.

Local Ecosystem Roles - Bath

	Financial Capital	Social Capital	Place Factors	Govt Policy and Regulatory	Education/Training	Culture	Human Capital/Workforce
–PRIMARY	SBA Maine; CEI; Local Banks	Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath	Main Street Bath; Union + Co; City of Bath	City of Bath	Maine SBDC; Roux Institute; CEI; Maine SCORE	Main Street Bath;	Bath-Brunswick Chamber; K-12 (Jobs to Maine Graduates & EOL) YMCA – Child Care;
–SUPPORTER	Bath-Brunswick Chamber	Realize Maine Network; Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Main Street Bath	Maine Downtown Center; Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Main Street Bath; Realtors?	Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Main Street Bath	Maine SCORE; Bath-Brunswick Chamber; City of Bath	Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Main Street Bath	Bath-Brunswick Chamber; City of Bath; Main Street Bath
–CONVENER	Bath-Brunswick Chamber	Realize Maine Network; Main Street Bath	Maine Downtown Center; Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Downtown Owners Collaborative; Main Street Bath	Bath-Brunswick Chamber	Maine DOL; Maine SCORE; Bath Brunswick Chamber	Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Main Street Bath	Maine DOL
–ADVOCATE		Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath	Maine Downtown Center; Main Street Bath; SPI (Historic)	SBA Maine; Bath-Brunswick Chamber	Maine SCORE; City of Bath	Main Street Bath	Bath-Brunswick Chamber; City of Bath
–PROVIDER	Roux Institute; CEI; SBA Maine; City of Bath; MCOG	Roux Institute; Realize Maine Network; Main Street Bath	Maine Downtown Center; Main Street Bath		Maine DOL; CEI; Maine SBA; Maine SCORE	Main Street Bath; City of Bath; Alumni Association; Local NGOs	Maine DOL; Midcoast Youth Center
–CONNECTOR	Maine SBDC; CEI; SBA Maine; Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath	Maine SBDC; Realize Maine Network; Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath City of Bath	Maine SBDC; Maine Downtown Center; Maine SCORE; Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Main Street Bath	Maine SBDC; Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath	Maine SBDC; Maine DOL; CEI; Maine SBA; Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath; City of Bath	Maine SCORE; Main Street Bath	Maine SBDC; Maine DOL; Bath-Brunswick Chamber; Main Street Bath; City of Bath
–DEVELOPER	CEI	Main Street Bath; Maine SCORE	Roux Institute; Maine Downtown Center; Main Street Bath	Bath-Brunswick Chamber	Roux Institute; CEI; Maine SBA; Maine SCORE; Bath-Brunswick Chamber	Main Street Bath	Bath-Brunswick Chamber

Bath Ecosystem Recommendations

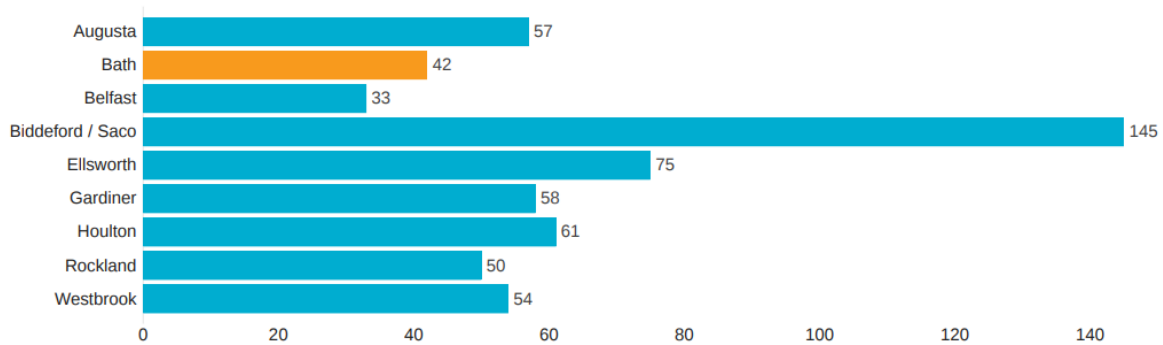
1. Leverage the Ecosystem Life Cycle Inventory we developed of hyper local and statewide/federal resources and establish an updatable resource tool for sharing with partner stakeholders and hosted on the respective stakeholders' websites. Depending upon resources, you could also consider a more interactive version that would walk the entrepreneur through more of a "decision tree" process and then provide a set of resource connections and some form of education. This is what Main Street America did with ecommerce and its Main Street Online tool. <https://mainstreetonlinetool.org/> In addition, there are database tools such as "Air Table" that can be used to support this work, or more subscription models such as <https://www.joinsourcelink.com/> and EcoMap <https://www.ecomap.tech/>
2. Given the level of occupancy and thus less availability of "entry" space, build out a comprehensive property inventory with not only vacant spaces and their current suitability and details for occupancy, but a review of current business owners and their interest in serving as a "co-op" site for a complementary new business to take some space in the form of a getting started space. Given the scale of downtown, there is an opportunity to build retail and new business density by focusing on shared spaces. This is the model Union +Co have employed with their new project. In addition, include more ancillary properties like current or former churches, civic spaces, as well as the library for temporary business locations. The Morse High School building may also come into the play as a potential housing, live/work or business incubation

	site. It should be noted that in both Lisbon and Skowhegan, these entrepreneurial hubs/centers were in more ancillary facilities.
3.	Given the interest in finding new customers/marketing and ecommerce consider building out an agglomerated set of on-demand educational opportunities, such as “Grow with Google Tools” https://grow.google/ and GoDaddy’s Empower Program - https://www.godaddy.com/godaddy-for-good/empower The SBDC, SBA, IRS and SCORE also have a number of on-demand programs for small business and entrepreneurs.
4.	Given the limitations on space and needs to develop more pipeline program, consider conducting a market analysis to identify key niche opportunities. Currently Union+Co has an Arts Space and thus combined with the manufacturing heritage of the area, could some sort of small scale production/artisan niche (Transformation Strategy) be considered. Knowing this could help in then considering how to leverage pop-up programming or a pitch contest to incentivise this form of business so that the limited spots you do have are taken up by those within the niche.
5.	While not in the downtown, there may be an opportunity to leverage the failed shopping center for some sort of start-up and/or incubation facility, that ultimately could feed additional downtown stores over time. Attaching a link to Downtown Frostburg, Maryland’s pop-up incubator program that divides out the participants into “spatial” groups that is interested and something to evaluate in Bath. https://www.downtownfrostburg.com/frostburgfirst-pop-up-shop-business-incubator-program/ The Shopping Center may act as one of those categories. Here are some additional news/programs in that area: https://www.westnewsmagazine.com/news/chesterfield-mall-to-offer-business-incubator-spaces/article_761cacac-89c9-11ec-b033-afc94dfc6eae.html ; https://www.inquirer.com/philly/business/retail/incubator-1776-is-coming-to-the-cherry-hill-mall-20180724.html
	Work with the regional U.S. SBA representative to conduct a “lunch and learn” type of event around different SBA programs and the diversity of financial capital types and programs within the state of Maine and federal ecosystem. This is a wonderful “light lift” project that can be co-sponsored by your local Bath team and a chance to showcase ecosystem partnerships
6.	Formalize the E.E. Stakeholder Group by creating a joint workplan focused on entrepreneurs. Meet with the group every two months to update. Review Skowhegan Plan as an example to follow/guide the effort. This will further solidify that working relationship across the river and potentially rise additional opportunities for collaboration and building scale.
7.	Work with the City of Bath to scope out a more comprehensive parking study. Based on feedback from the stakeholders and entrepreneurs/small business owners, it seems there may be some underutilized lots in some cases, or even opportunities to identify potential infill projects that could enhance density.
8.	In evaluating the Ecosystem Organizational Matrix, Main Street Bath has a number of primary lead responsibilities. While it’s terrific that the organization is so well-positioned in support of small business and entrepreneurship, it would be great if co-leads could be positioned to truly be the primary. This is most prevalent in the area of Social Capital. Place is a natural, and due to events and social media presence, Culture also can be expected. Under Social Capital work with SCORE to outline mentorship opportunities and perhaps even workspace at the Main Street Bath office or Union+Co as drop in sites. Review with the Brunswick-Bath Chamber how to link and support networking events and activities as a primary lead. In that case, SCORE can be the primary on mentorship and the Chamber the lead on networking.
9.	As part of the resource directory, consider including a private sector tab for service providers to market their services, areas of expertise, etc.

Appendix – Entrepreneurs Survey Results

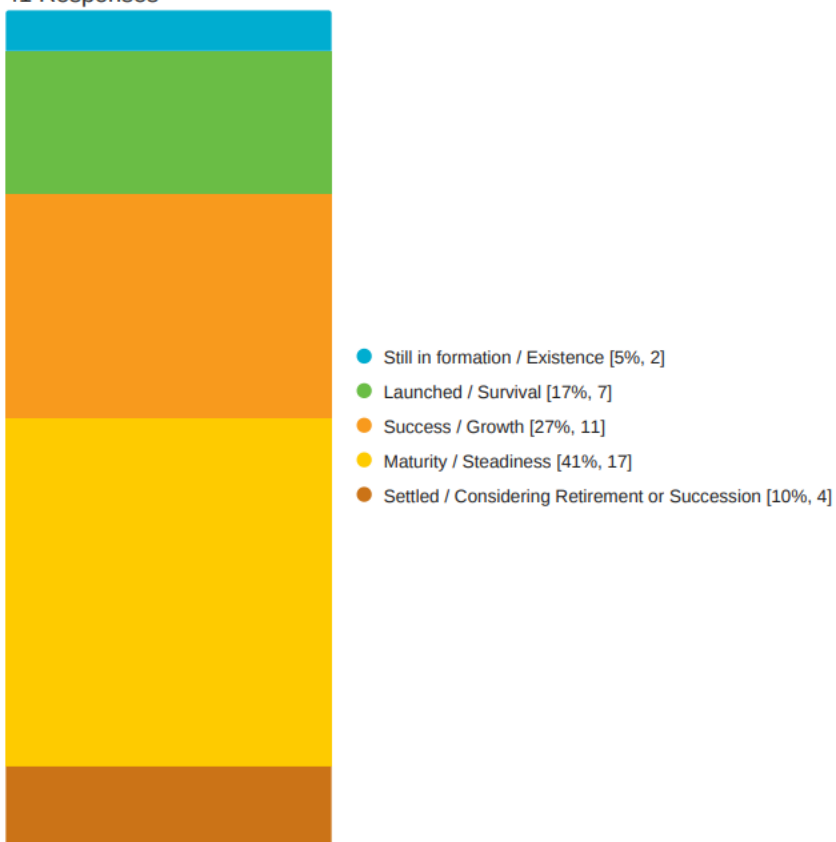
Q1 - To start, please identify the community nearest where you do most of your business or where you've been developing your business idea.

575 Responses



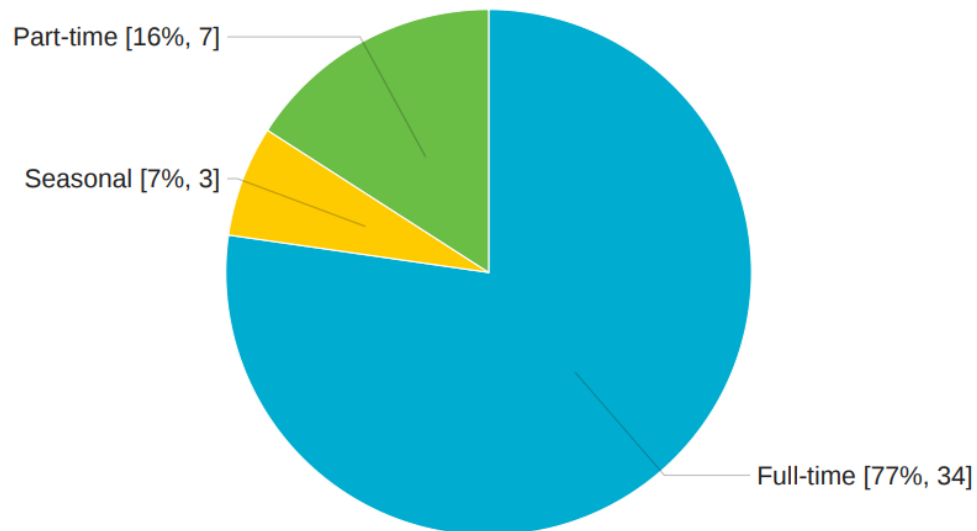
Q2 - What stage best characterizes you and your business or business idea's current state?

41 Responses



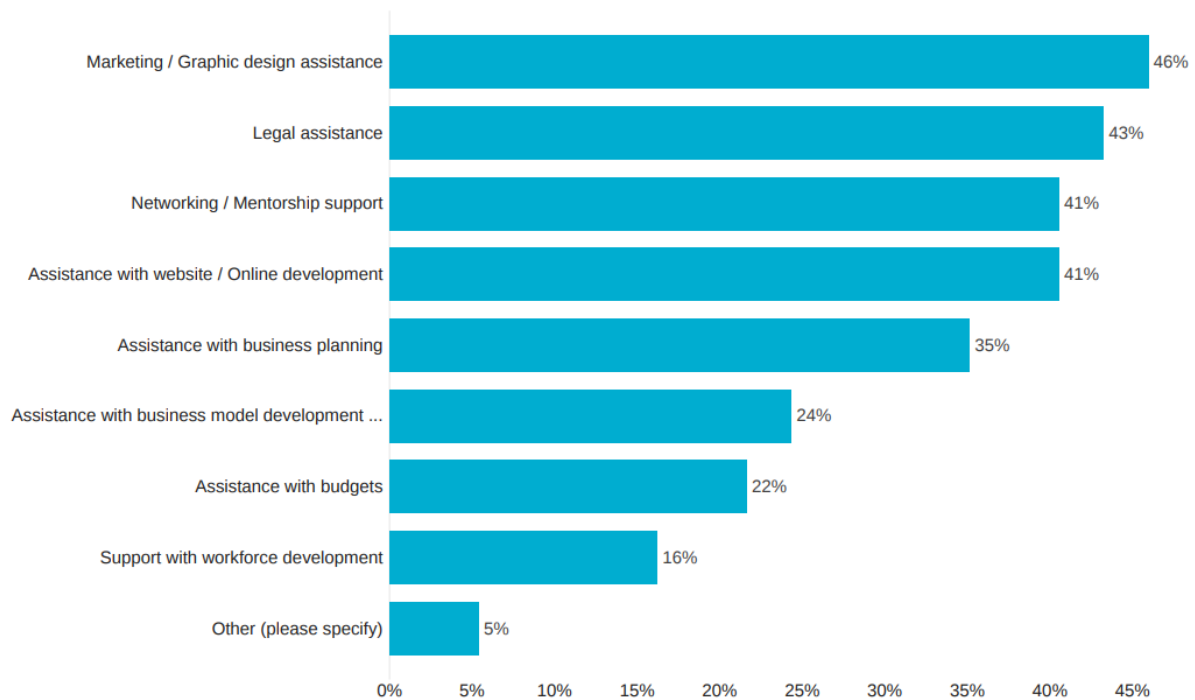
Q3 - How much time do you put into your business or business idea? (Please select all that apply.)

41 Responses



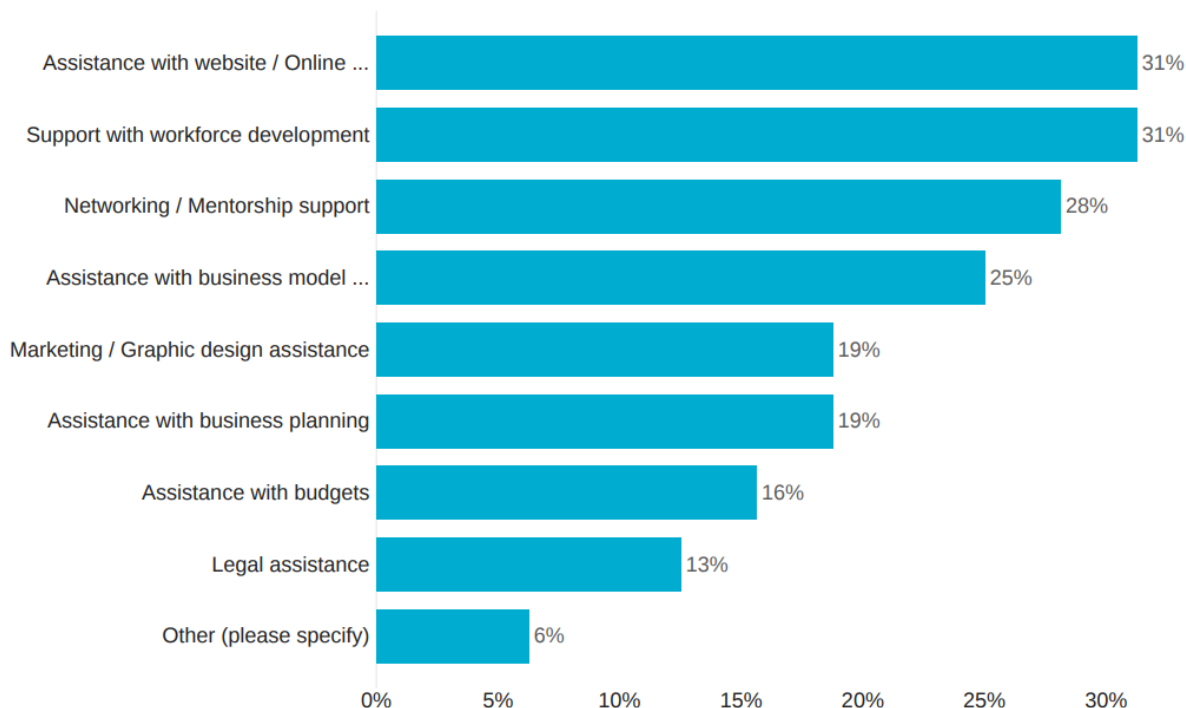
Q4 - What forms of business support and technical assistance have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Select all that apply.)

37 Responses



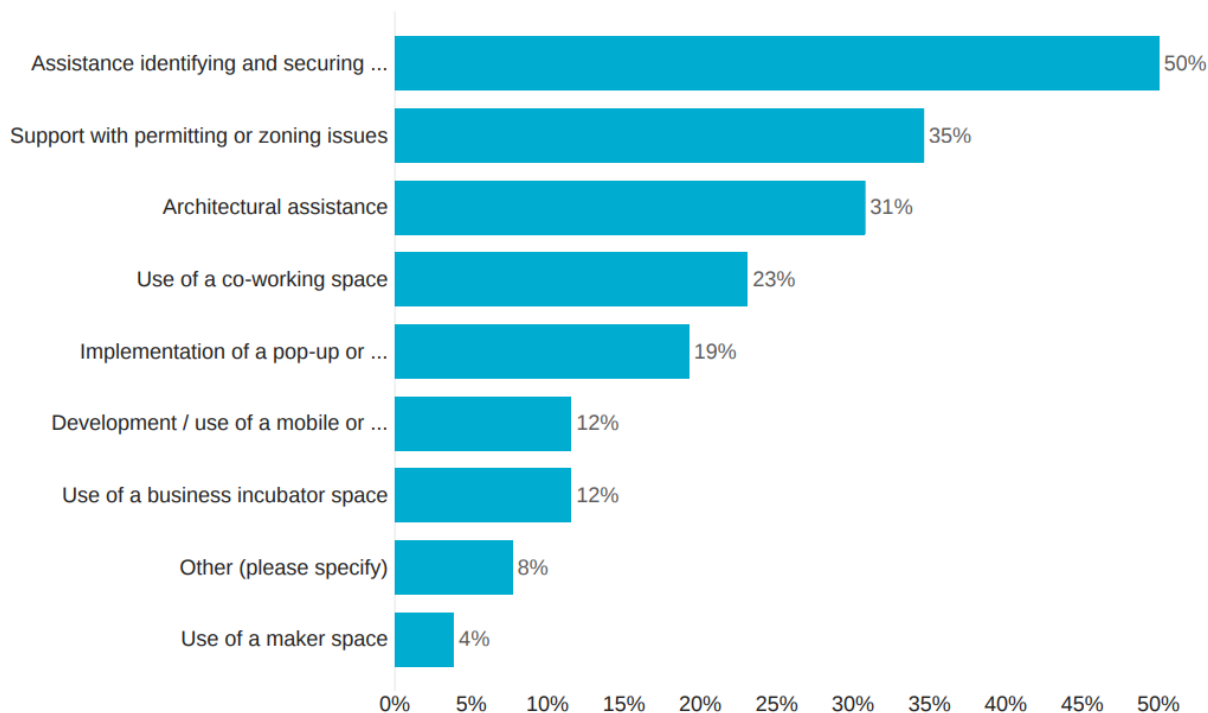
Q5 - What forms of business support and technical assistance could you currently benefit from as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

32 Responses



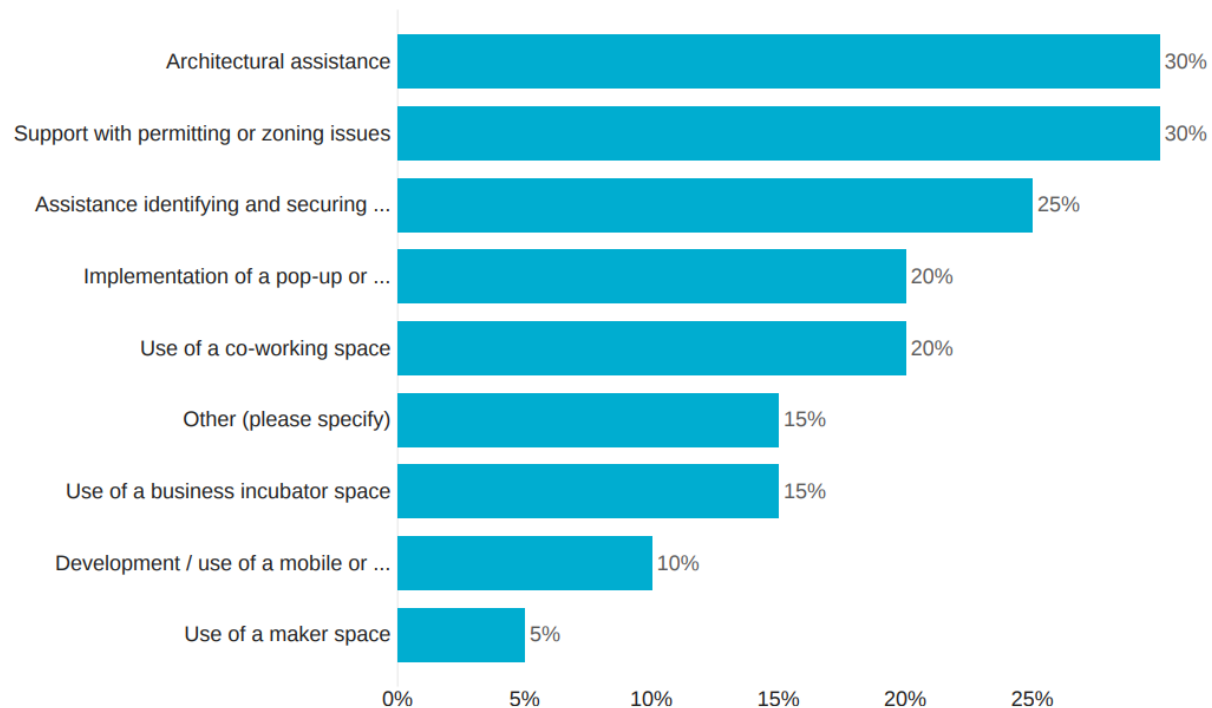
Q6 - What forms of real estate, design, or architectural support have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

26 Responses



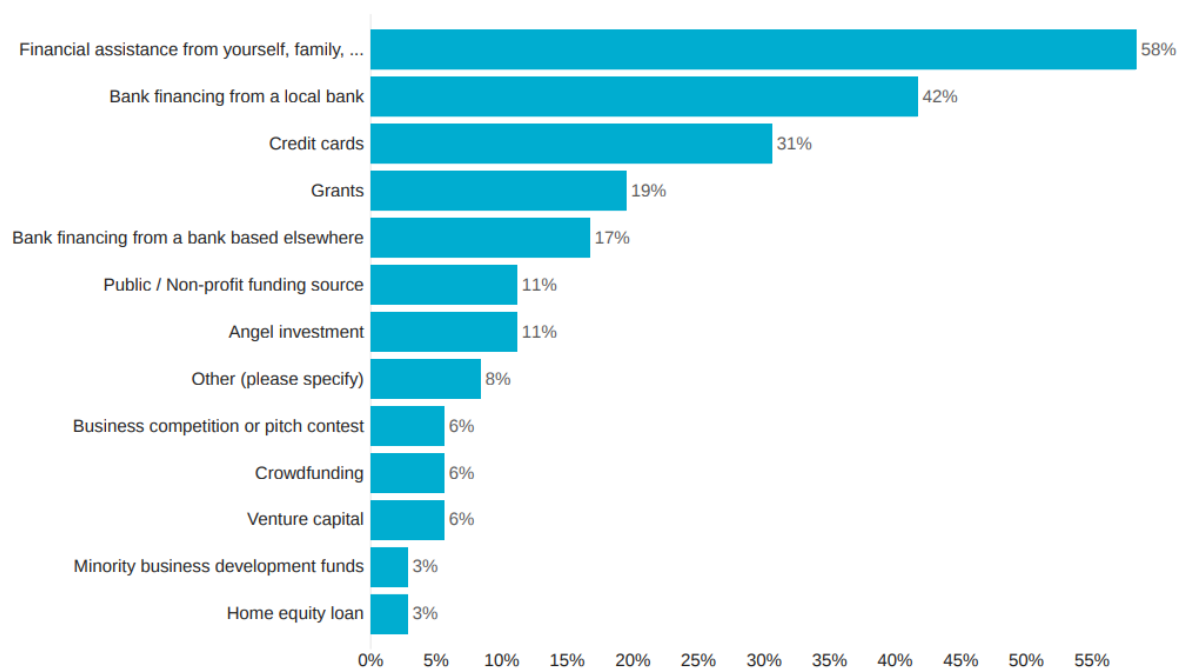
Q7 - What forms of real estate, design, or architectural support could you currently benefit from as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

20 Responses



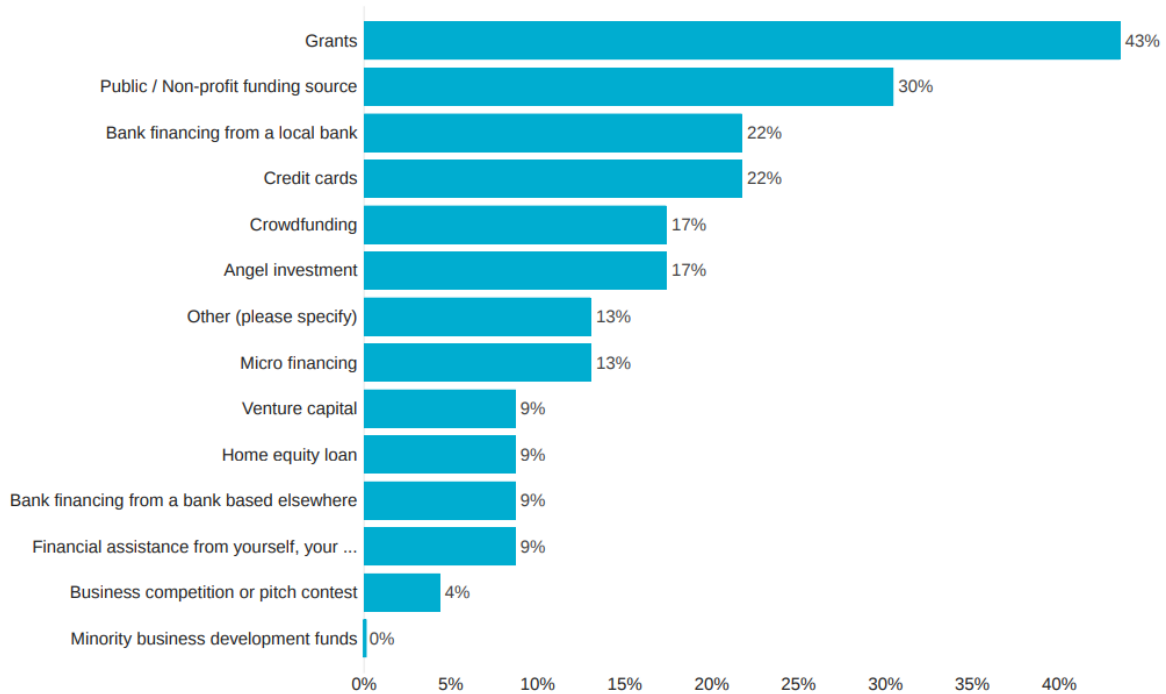
Q8 - What forms of financial assistance or support have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Reminder: Your responses to all questions will be kept confidential and will only be distributed in anonymized / aggregated form.)

36 Responses



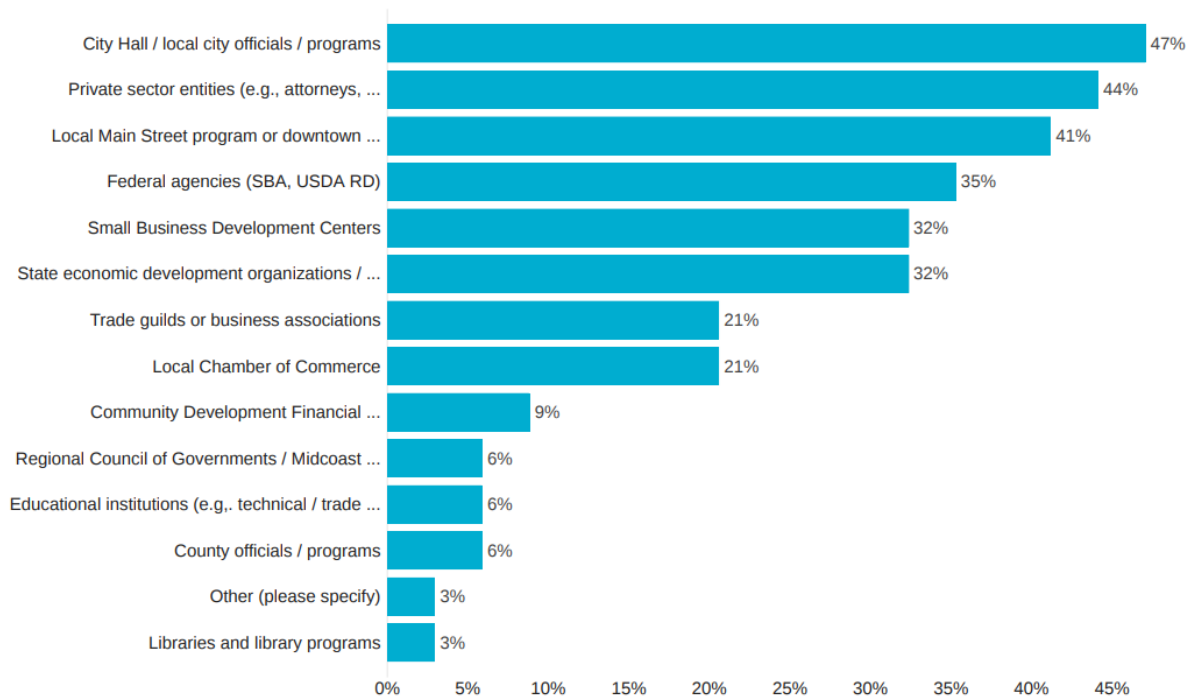
Q9 - What forms of financial assistance or support could you currently benefit from as part of your business development?

23 Responses



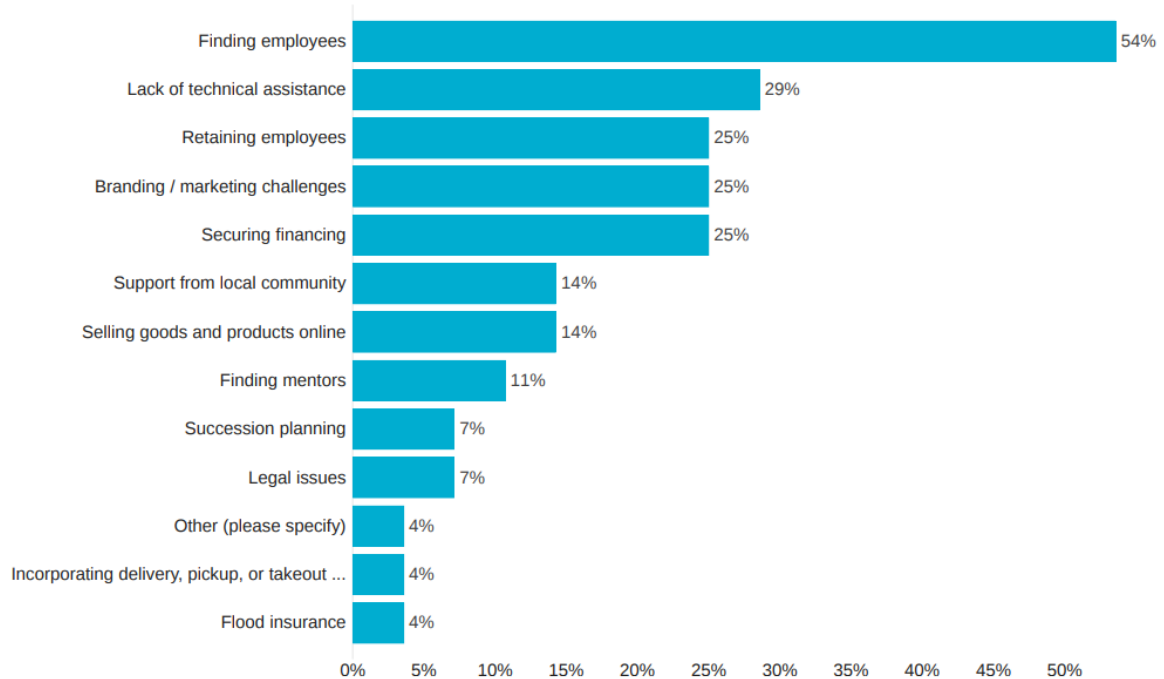
Q10 - Which of the following entities have provided you business-related support as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

34 Responses



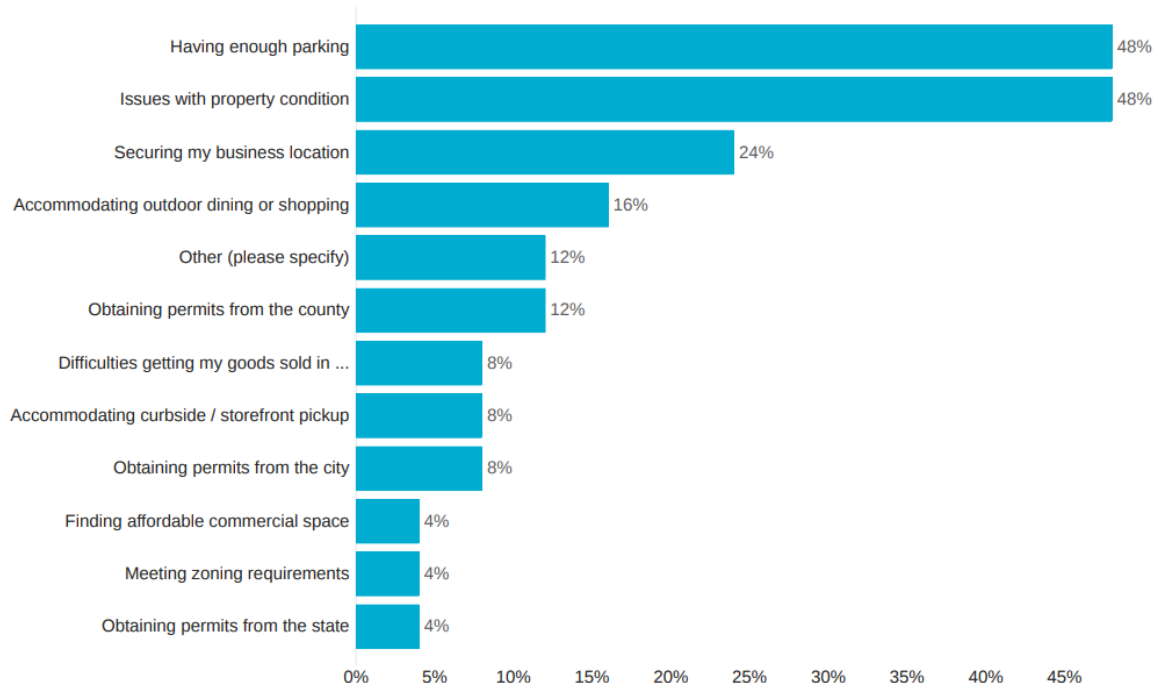
Q11 - What issues / barriers related to business planning, operations, and financing have you faced, either as you are launching your business idea or as a current business owner? (Please check all that apply.)

28 Responses



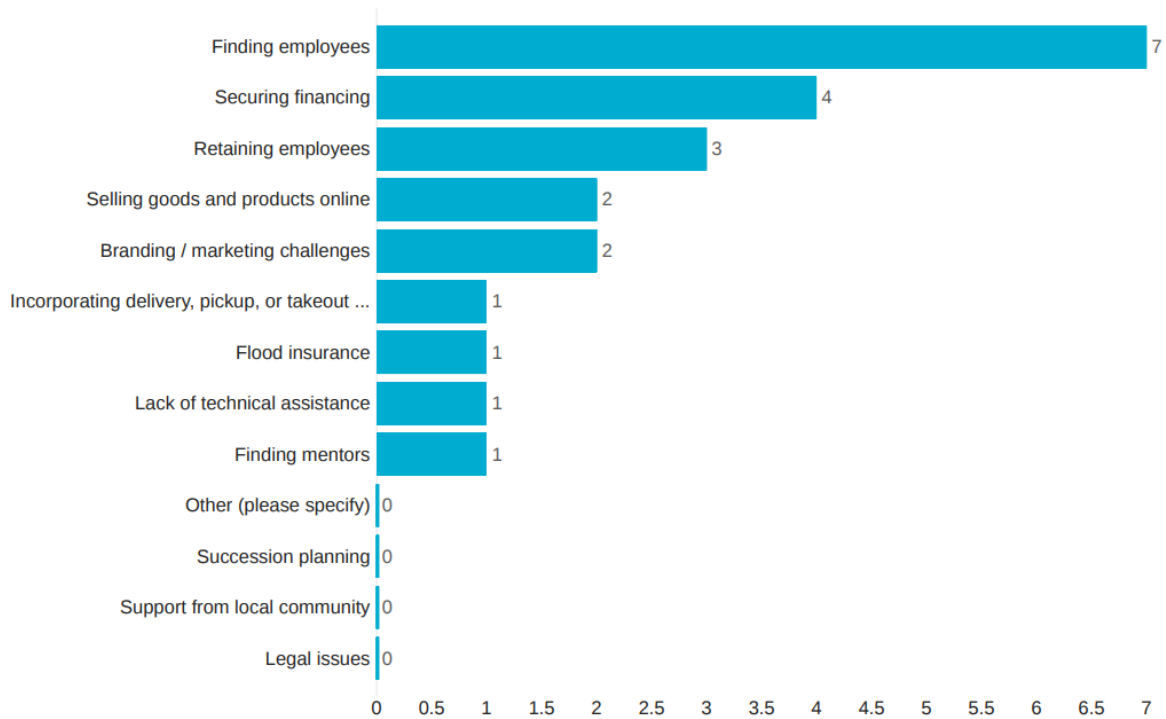
Q12 - What issues / barriers related to your present or potential business location and location design have you faced, either as you are launching your business idea or as a current business owner? (Please check all that apply.)

25 Responses



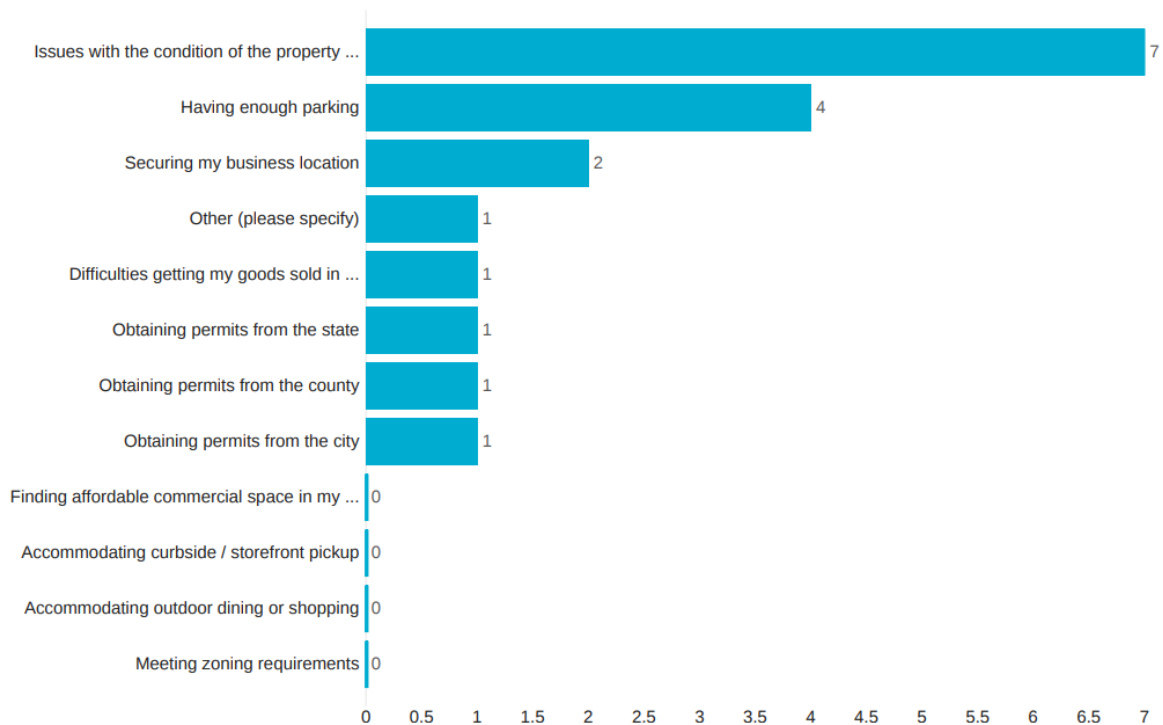
Q13 - As you think about the issues and barriers related to business planning, operations, and financing that you have faced or are currently facing, which do you think is most significant?

22 Responses



Q14 - As you think about the issues and barriers related to business location and design that you have faced or are currently facing, which do you think is most significant?

18 Responses

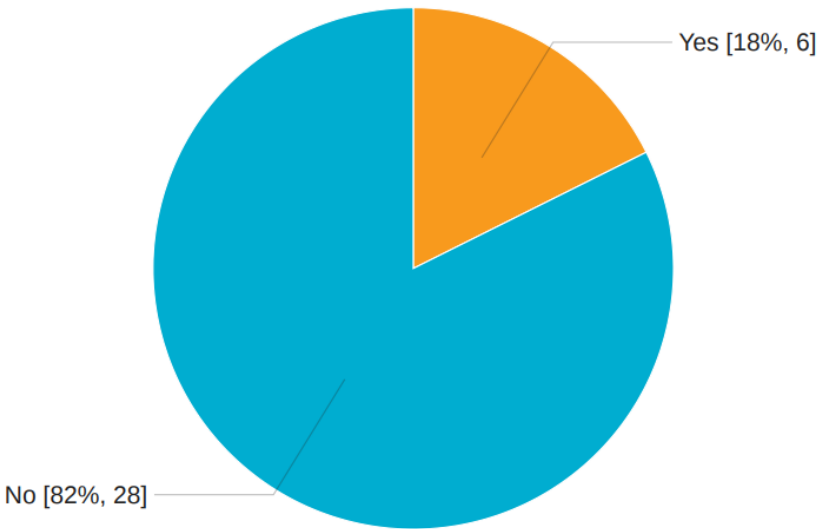


Q15_1 - Single / Greatest Current Need

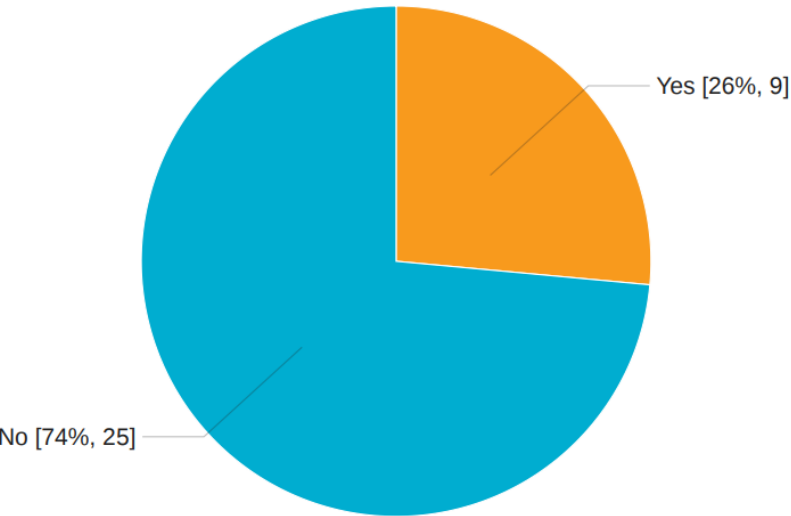
35 Responses

Single / Greatest Current Need	Second Greatest Need (Optional)	Third Greatest Need (Optional)
online	diversification of product	marketing
More clients	Business plan past next 2 years	Loan from local bank to launch next phase
A landlord who is willing to do a % of sale agreement and not exploit me	N/A	N/A
Market development	N/A	N/A
Marketing	N/A	N/A
2	2	2
Having tourists consider Washington St. as part of the Bath business communi	N/A	N/A
Finance	Networking	Permit
More Clients	N/A	N/A
Low interest equipment financing	N/A	N/A
Staffing	N/A	N/A
Reducing overhead inflation	Staffing	N/A
Reliable employees	Stable economy	Reliable land lord
a better point of sale system	N/A	N/A
Finding & retaining qualified staff: housing, transportation, and wage competition have become huge issues.	Technical business advice (ie. HR, legal compliance etc). These are expensive and not easily accessible for small businesses.	Affordable healthcare/benefits options especially paid family leave.
2	N/A	N/A
Communication	N/A	N/A
Local government support	Source of goods	Sales channel
Customer demand orientation	N/A	N/A
Employees	N/A	N/A
Financing	N/A	N/A
Single / Greatest Current Need	Second Greatest Need (Optional)	Third Greatest Need (Optional)
brick and Mortar Awareness	Social Media Support	Customer engagement
parking lot upgrade	N/A	N/A
Retaining employees	Continuation of good economy	Succession planning
Support from the city of Bath	Snow removal	Free parking for small business owners
Employees	Employees	Time off
Aging building/ costs of construction	N/A	N/A
Grant funding to improve my historic building	N/A	N/A
Employees to work weekends	Cost of goods	more clients
Money	Staff	Building repairs and restoration
Grants to pay off opening costs	Ability to advertise my business on the outside of my business building in Bath	N/A
Qualified employees	N/A	N/A
Marketing	N/A	N/A
Na	N/A	N/A
Less restrictive regulation or fairer regulations.	N/A	N/A

Q16 - Does the availability of housing currently impact where you choose to open or operate your business?
34 Responses



Q39 - Does the affordability of housing currently impact where you choose to open or operate your business?
34 Responses



Q16-1 - How significant is the impact of housing on where you choose to open or operate your business?

9 Responses

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
In terms of overall availability	1.00	5.00	3.33	1.70	2.89	6	20.00
In terms of affordability	1.00	5.00	2.75	1.56	2.44	8	22.00

Q17 - Overall, how would you rate Bath ...

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
As a place with a strong entrepreneur network / programs supporting entrepreneurs	2.00	5.00	3.83	0.87	0.76	29	111.00
As a place where entrepreneurs can locate and succeed	1.00	5.00	3.97	1.07	1.14	29	115.00

Q18 - (Optional) Could you share more about why you rated Bath the way you did?

19 Responses

We have found it an incredibly supportive community

I tried to open a restaurant. Tried to find an affordable commercial space. I gave up.

Good co-working space. Good daytime support for business (food, coffee)

Access to parking

Apart from financing issues, Bath regulations is easy and encouraging.

There could be additional supports for entrepreneurs in this area. The regional COG should play more of a role.

I see a lot of business supporting business in the Bath market

Once you are established Bath is an incredibly supportive community, but the labor shortage (see housing/BIW), seasonality, and limited physical space mean there is not much "runway" for businesses to get their bearings so we've seen a lot of smaller, less well-financed entities fail that really were good businesses and would have been an asset to the ecosystem had they had more time and resources to grow. MSB is great once you're up and running and the City is a good partner, other businesses are a pretty supportive network. We are at risk of becoming a "remote work" hub and commuter town which may bring money and good people and ideas into the community but which also risks displacement, suburbanization, and a challenge to having enough non-remote workers (servers, retail, nurses, tradespeople, etc).

No

The local government and the banks have given me great support and I think they have done a good job

Our business is often unaware of arts related events the town is participating in. We seldom receive any announcements of upcoming opportunities which seem stem from multiple organizations not communicating in one place what is taking place.

Downtown is friendly, accessible and easy to navigate if you don't have physical limitations

Started my business in 2008 and grew with the economy by working hard. Adopted Bath as my hometown.

Q19 - What would make Bath a community that is more hospitable and supportive of entrepreneurs?

22 Responses

networking among business owners

Public good funding/landlords. Landlords who care more about creating a healthy community rather than profiteering

More reliable internet providers. More evening options for dinners with clients.

Better winter cleanup.

Encouraging business ideas and development

There needs to be an understanding at City level throughout all departments and at the City Council level what kinds of support entrepreneurs need to succeed. There are barriers to entrepreneurial pursuits, a major one being cost of retrofitting existing and historic buildings for modern uses. There needs to be support at the City level for creative solutions to allow more types of business to flourish in Bath.

The Bath business community has majority of local owners

Better and more housing at all levels, and improved regional transportation. More technical support for businesses and more connections to create "clusters" of complementary businesses.

BIW's impact on the community also needs to improve because it affects everything else (parking/transportation, housing, disproportionately low contribution to community initiatives/taxes, and drain on infrastructure, environmental impact).

Management

The locals are very hospitable and friendly to people doing business

Natural geographical advantages

Q20 - Tell us what makes Bath a great place to be an entrepreneur. Why should someone choose this community for their business?

26 Responses

there is a sense of supporting local business

There is a vibrant downtown, a culture of support vs competition. We have easily found other business owners to connect with and have had numerous folks from local businesses and the Downtown Bath association actively support and promote our business.

It's a great little town. The downtown is all small businesses, not really any chain stores.

Support from Main Street and fellow merchants

Many buyers and sellers are dwelling in town and people seems friendly

There is a small-town feel with a big audience. Bath pulls from its surrounding communities, so there's a larger potential client/customer pool than just the population of Bath. There are a lot of supportive people here as well, but it can be difficult to navigate the rules & requirements (state & local) for someone just starting out.

It truly seems to be a shop local, support local belief

The supportive shoppers in our community

Beautiful and good quality of life, engaged community, supportive local government, Main Street keeps downtown lively, good location on Route 1 with access to both natural resources and other communities.

There are several potential "thematic clusters" of businesses that are currently underdeveloped but could increase each other's viability.

Practical

Firstly, the transportation is convenient. Secondly, the local government's policy also gives us great convenience

There is a wealth of high-end intellectuals here

Q21 - Imagine someone handed you \$1M and said: "Invest this in your community to grow it as an innovative place." What would you do and why? What project would have the biggest impact on establishing the community as an innovative place?

21 Responses

parking garage

Open a vegan food co-op (co-working space) where the chefs receive a % of sales of their food sold. This concept would support local farms, promote healthy eating and build community around food and entrepreneurship

Union + Co

Parking and traffic flow

Invest in the funds on vegetables farming will be my top agenda

Shared commissary kitchen with an associated retail store (or placement in local retail stores) that allows people to manufacture & assemble food/goods and scale up their food businesses.

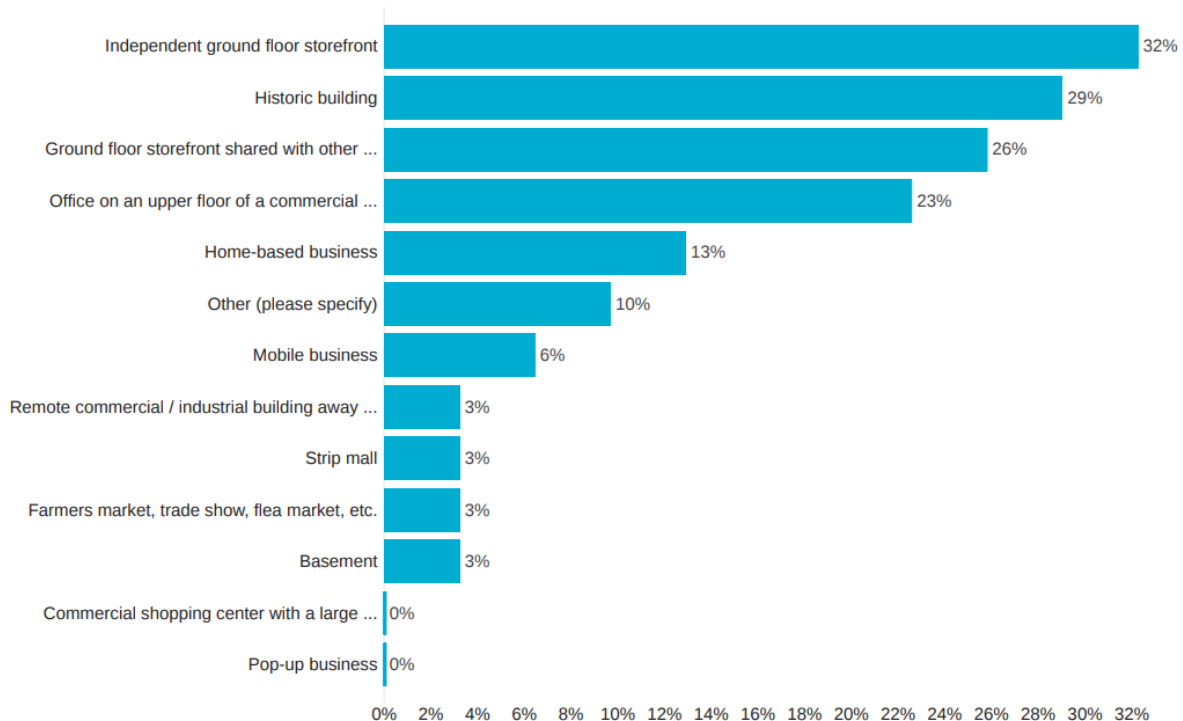
Communication

First of all, I will choose a large place again and decorate it again to design a very large shopping mall, which can be used for eating or shopping. It will become a landmark building of the community, which is good for people's consumption and tourism development, because it can attract people from outside communities to come and consume

I would invest in services, in a society where people are looking for better services

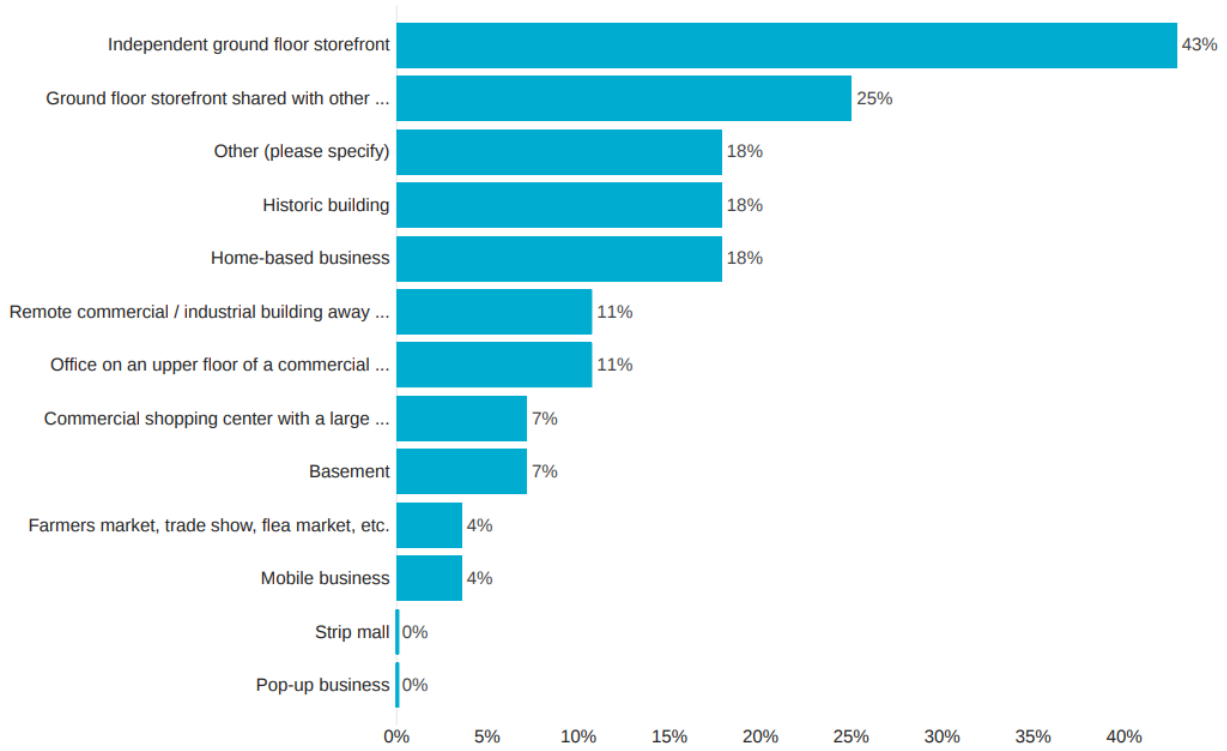
Q22 - Which of the following words or phrases could describe your current business location(s)? (Please select all that apply.)

31 Responses



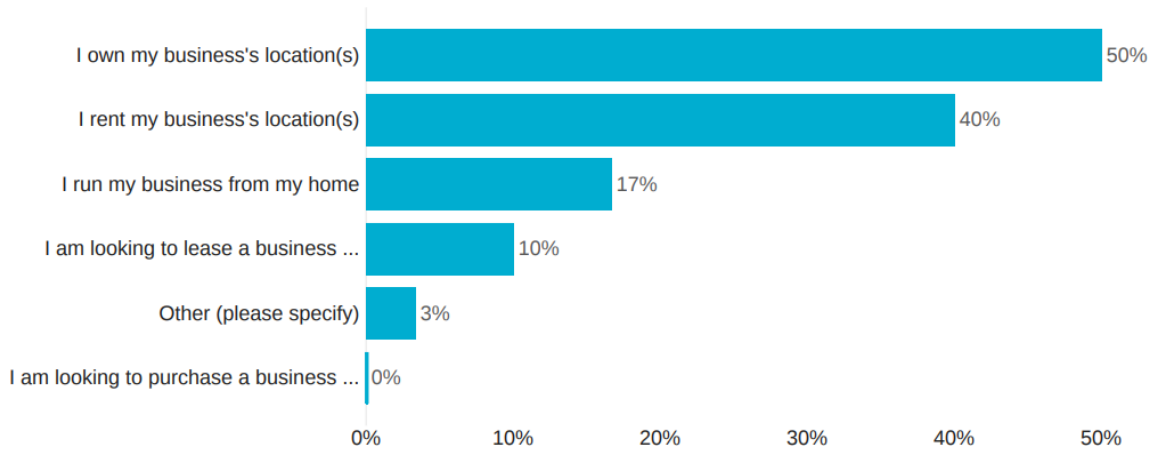
Q23 - Which of the following words or phrases could describe your ideal future business location(s)? (Please select all that apply.)

28 Responses



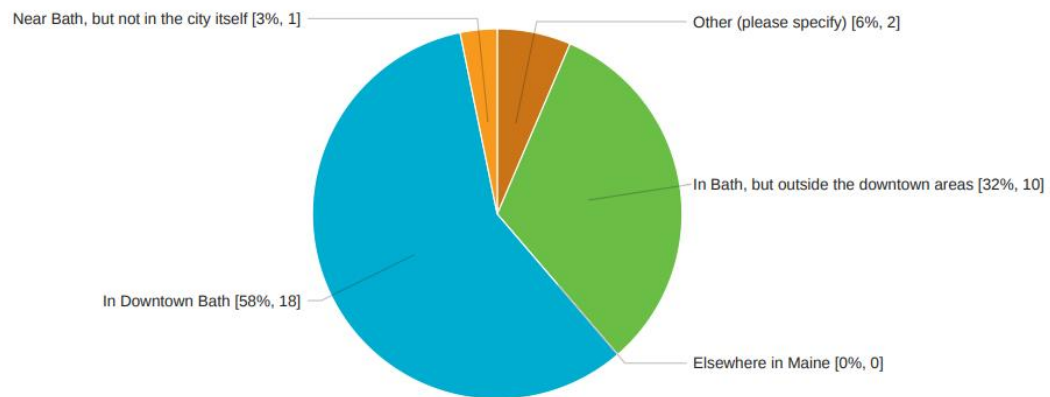
Q24 - What is your current situation relative to your business's location? (Please check all that apply.) - Selected Choice

30 Responses



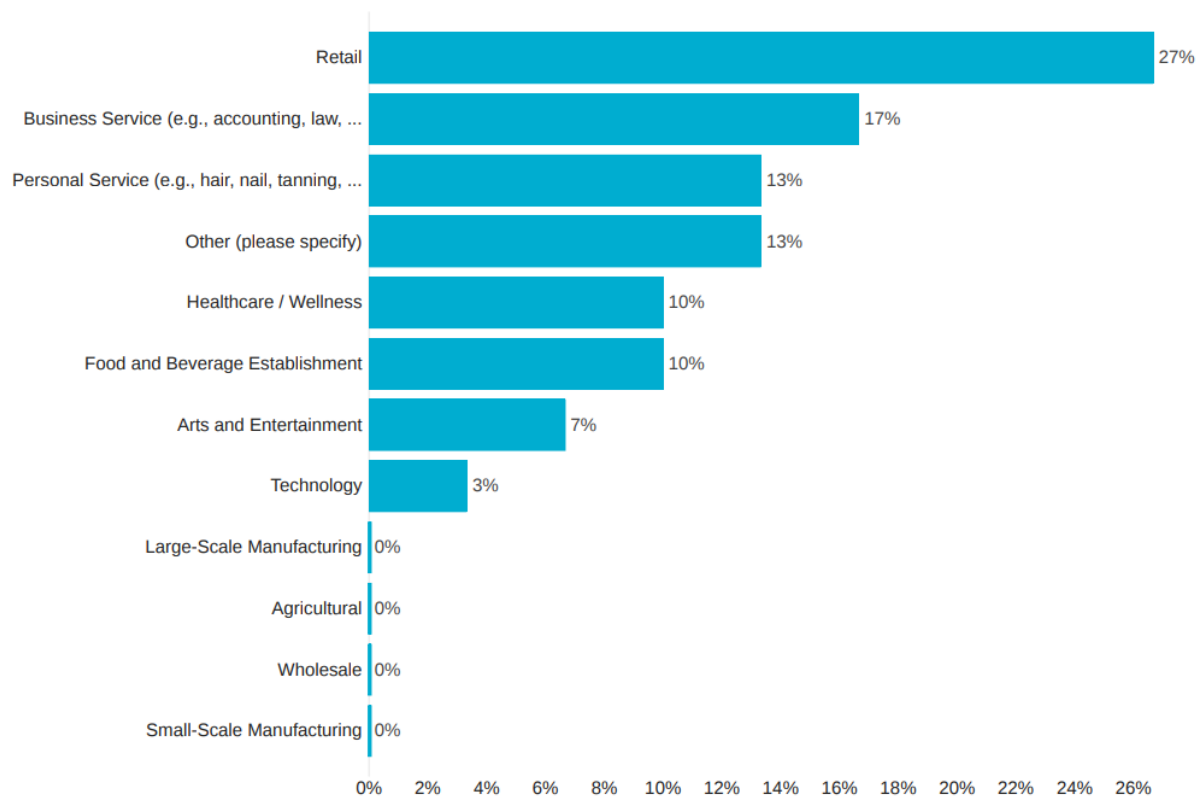
Q25 - What is the primary location of your business?

31 Responses



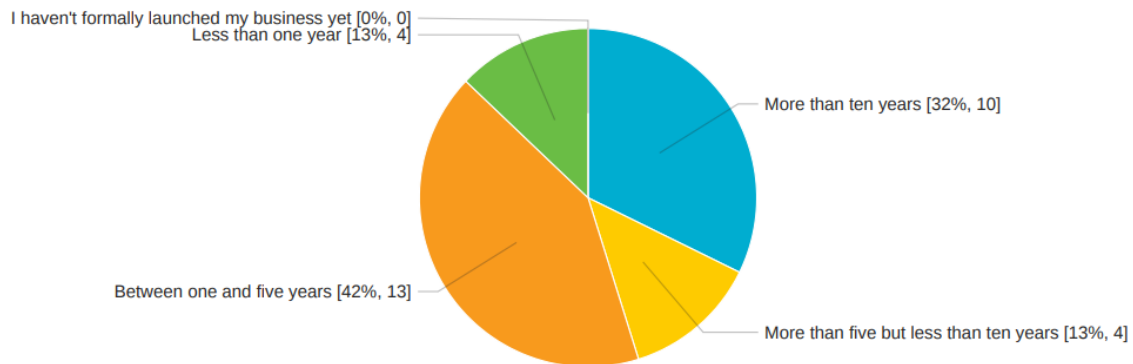
Q26 - What sector best describes your business or business idea?

30 Responses



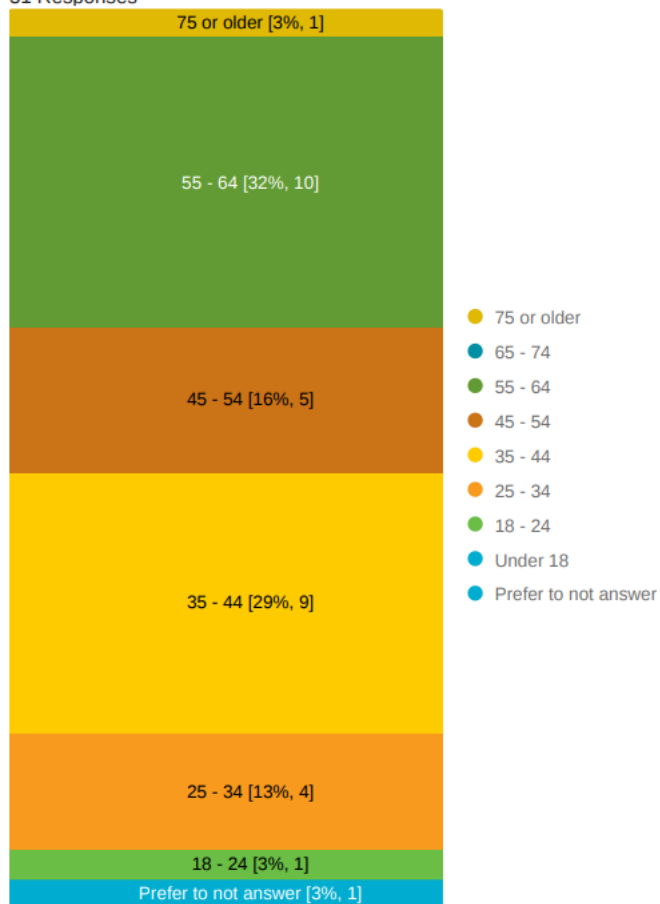
Q27 - How long have you been in business?

31 Responses



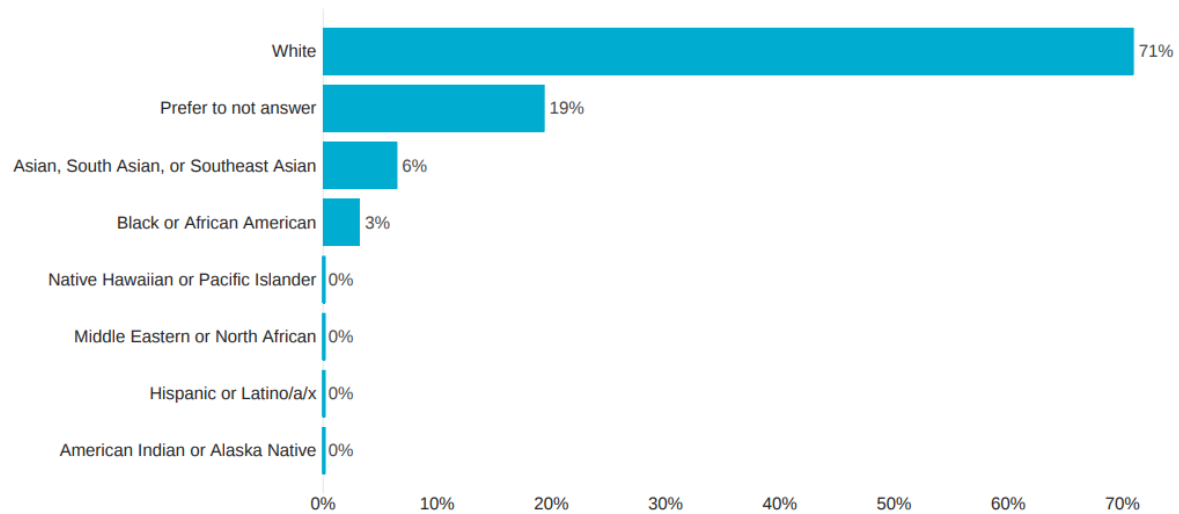
Q28 - How old are you?

31 Responses



Q29 - How do you identify in terms of race and ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)

31 Responses



Q30 - How do you identify in terms of your gender? (Please select all that apply.)

31 Responses

