



Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development

Findings and Recommendations

Belfast, 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 Belfast	
Owner	Our Town Belfast
Our Town Belfast’s Role	Primary Lead, Developer, Connector, Advocate, Provider, Supporter, Convener
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The local trade area positions Belfast as a central hub, coupled with a tourism economy, there are few vacancies.• While not directly in the downtown core, there are a number of existing and potential start-up “incubation” spaces, including Waterfall Arts; United Farmers Market of Maine, and The Belfast Business Center.
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, co-op retailing and pitch events.• Belfast has experienced growth of remote workforce, however there is a lack of cowork spaces.



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 Belfast	
Owner	City of Belfast
Our Town Belfast’s Role	Supporter and Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This may be a first, in that throughout the survey, focus groups and audit, there was very little in the area of issues relative to starting and/or scaling a business in Belfast.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In a review of the City of Belfast’s website there wasn’t a section on “Starting a Business” nor a checklist on permitting, zoning, etc.



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 Belfast	
Owner	SBA Maine, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Local Banks
Our Town Belfast's Role	Connector and Supporter
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local banking community appears active engagement potential with the SBA.The City of Belfast leverages CDBG to support a façade grant program up to \$10,000.
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.There is a lack of other financing tools that may assist with start-up/microlending locally. However, regionally there are opportunities through ecosystem support partners.



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 Belfast	
Owner	SCORE Maine; Our Town Belfast; Belfast Chamber of Commerce
Our Town Belfast's Role	Primary Lead, Supporter, Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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.Greater networking opportunities that “bridge” small businesses from across the bridge with those in downtown.



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 Belfast	
Owner	Maine SBDC; Roux Institute; CEI; Maine SCORE; Belfast Area of Chamber of Commerce
Our Town Belfast's Role	Supporter, Convener 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 are a number of private sector agencies and businesses providing local services to small business owners.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Need areas revolve around e-commerce, business model shifts/diversification of revenues, customer discovery, managing and marketing seasonal tourism economy, and budgeting for businesses.



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 Belfast	
Owner	Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce; Our Town Belfast
Our Town Belfast's Role	Primary Lead, Supporter, Provider, Advocate, Connector and Developer
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There's a 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.






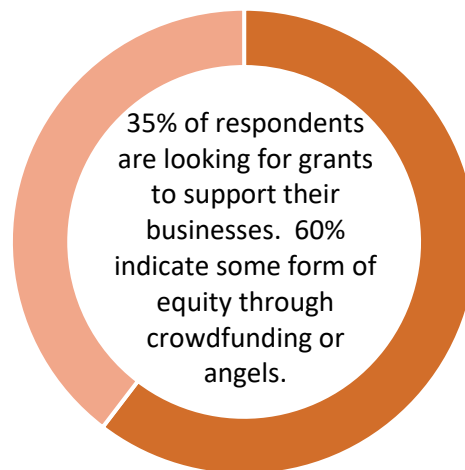
Human Capital

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 Belfast	
Owner	Hutchinson Center (Univ of Maine); Waldo County Technical Center; BCOPE HS & Adult Ed Program
Our Town Belfast's Role	Supporter and Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local colleges/universities within the area also offer entrepreneurial programming.• Still exploring the level (if any) of entrepreneurial programming at the local school system.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like most places across the country, Belfast is experiencing challenges in workforce retention and attraction.• There are no primary leads identified that are solely focused on workforce.

Belfast Entrepreneurs Survey Summary

 Place-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance with Finding Space was considered a significant need. Cowork space was cited as a top need relating to place real estate. Home based businesses totaled 31% of businesses. Asked about future space desires, that total drops to by more than half to 12%, with increases coming to more independent storefronts. Large increase in Pop Up desire and Shared Spaces
 Human & Financial Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding and Retaining Employees is Most Significant Barrier to Business Operations. Understanding and Using Crowdfunding (Financial Capital)
 Education & Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and training assistance was needed in the following areas: Business Model Shifts; Business Budgeting and selling products online. Key Connectors – City, Main Street and Private Sector



Belfast Entrepreneurs Focus Group – Challenges

Place-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With downtown being very compact and overall economic vibrancy of the city, there is an overall lack of commercial real estate within Belfast.
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing in Seasonal Economy Customer Discovery and Marketing Assistance w/E-Commerce and Selling Online
Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking – Connections to Industry as well Connecting downtown businesses and outside downtown businesses together for peer-to-peer learning, mentorship and networking.

Critical Gaps Summary

 Place-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the rise in remote workers relocating to the Belfast area, there is a void in cowork spaces that might have critical internet infrastructure and opportunities for interaction and programming. • Pop-Up, Micro-Retailing, Co-op and Mobile Retailing Pipeline Programming and Spaces. • Need more Place programming and support (pop-ups, pitch, etc.) • Connections to existing “incubators” within Belfast based on strategy.
 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.
 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"> • Need a checklist and/or resource guide for starting and growing a business within Belfast.
 Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need areas revolve around e-commerce, business model shifts/diversification of revenues, customer discovery, managing and marketing seasonal tourism economy, and budgeting for businesses. • Note some of these could be held in conjunction with tenants from the three “incubator” facilities and encouragement of non-downtown businesses to participate. This has the added value of creating de facto networking opportunities.
 Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding and retaining workforce remains one of the highest priorities and challenges for most businesses.

Local Ecosystem Roles - Belfast

	Financial Capital	Social Capital	Place Factors	Govt Policy and Regulatory	Education/Training	Culture	Human Capital/Workforce
–PRIMARY	SBA Maine; CEI, Local Banks	SCORE Maine; Our Town Belfast; Belfast Chamber of Commerce	Our Town Belfast	City of Belfast	Maine SBDC; Roux Institute; CEI; Maine SCORE; Belfast Area of Chamber of Commerce	Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce; Our Town Belfast	Hutchinson Center (Univ of Maine); Waldo County Technical Center; BCOPE HS & Adult Ed Program (Jim will check on this)
–SUPPORTER	Our Town Belfast	Realize Maine Network; Our Town Belfast	Maine Downtown Center; Our Town Belfast	Our Town Belfast; Town of Belfast	Maine SCORE; Our Town Belfast	Our Town Belfast	Our Town Belfast
–CONVENER		Realize Maine Network	Maine Downtown Center; Our Town Belfast	Town of Belfast	Maine DOL; Our Town Belfast; Maine SCORE	Our Town Belfast	Maine DOL
–ADVOCATE			Maine Downtown Center; Our Town Belfast	Town of Belfast	Maine SCORE	Our Town Belfast	
–PROVIDER	Roux Institute; CEI; SBA Maine	Roux Institute; Realize Maine Network; Maine SCORE	Maine Downtown Center; Our Town Belfast	Town of Belfast	Maine DOL; CEI; Maine SCORE; Maine SBA; Industry Specific Partners (Hospitality & Health)	Our Town Belfast	Maine DOL
–CONNECTOR	Maine SBDC; CEI; Our Town Belfast; SBA Maine; Maine SCORE; Belfast Chamber	Maine SBDC; Realize Maine Network; Maine SCORE; Belfast Chamber; Our Town Belfast	Maine SBDC; Maine Downtown Center; Belfast Chamber; Our Town Belfast	Maine SBDC; Town of Belfast; Maine SCORE; Belfast Chamber; Our Town Belfast	Maine SBDC; Maine DOL; CEI; Maine SCORE; Maine SBA; Belfast Chamber; Our Town Belfast	Maine SCORE; Belfast Chamber; Our Town Belfast	Maine SBDC; Maine DOL; Maine SCORE; Belfast Chamber; Our Town Belfast
–DEVELOPER	CEI	SCORE Maine; Belfast Chamber of Commerce	Roux Institute; Maine Downtown Center, Our Town Belfast	Town of Belfast; Maine SCORE	Roux Institute; CEI; Maine SCORE; Maine SBA	Our Town Belfast	

Belfast Ecosystem Recommendations

1. With the Waterfall Arts, United Farmers Market of Maine, and The Belfast Business Center facilities, there are a number of opportunities for creating new pipelines for emerging microventures in Belfast. The “block” is simply the availability of existing downtown space for those that want to essentially grow out of those spaces. The next logical step may be in more of “co-op” relationship. Conduct a survey of downtown business and property owners to gauge their interest in hosting a new emerging business as part of their own store. This could take on something as simple as displaying an artist’s work inside of restaurant. Or a Night-Only business that opens after the primary owner closes the store for the day, which extends activity of the downtown into the evening. A great example of this is the False Front Bar (<https://www.thefalsefrontbar.com/>) in New Buffalo, Michigan that opens in the evening, while another business David’s Delicatessen operates in the same location in the front of the building during the day.
2. During the pandemic, Waldo County and Belfast in particular experienced a great deal of growth of remote workers. Many may have been seasonal residents and decided to go full-time, but nonetheless, based on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Migration data, there were 1,280 new filings representing 2,246 more people in Waldo County from 2019 to 2020. Nearly 43% of those were from out of state. Of the instate transfers, nearly 16% were from Penobscot County. Conduct a cowork space/remote work feasibility study to examine opportunities to create a cowork space in downtown Belfast. This may be an opportunity to also develop a new revenue

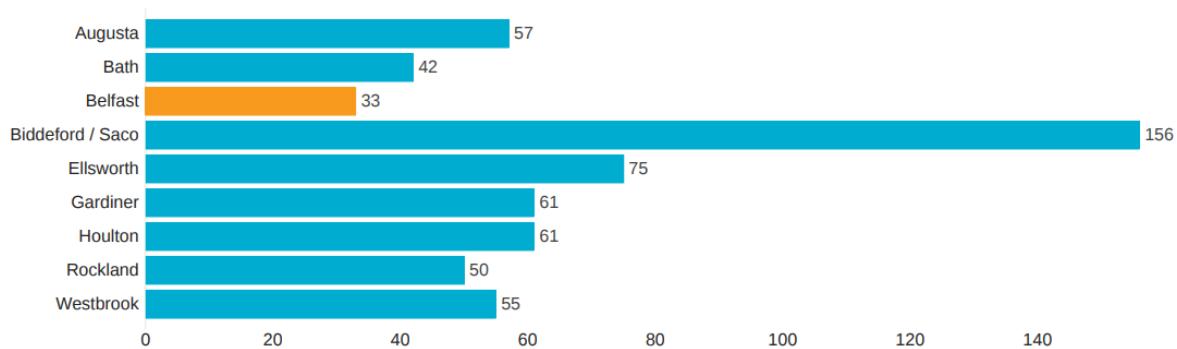
	<p>stream for Our Town Belfast through space memberships. The space could be hosted out of for example the Library, or an underutilized local sponsoring bank. That is what happened in Charlevoix, Michigan with there local Main Street and Chamber teamed up to open the “The Vault” in the current Hunington Bank branch facility basement that had it’s own entrance.</p> <p>https://www.charlevoix.org/thevault/</p>
3.	<p>The United Farmers Market of Main facility represents a wonderful opporutnity to have pop-up or even a micro market situation (example https://www.facebook.com/frontporchmarketplacedonelsonville/) but on a more frequent basis than currently they operate. Inquire with ownership around long-term strategy and vision for the property. Is there an opporutnity in which Our Town Belfast could partner with ownership on a grant to create more activity, use and function of the space with artisans or food-based vendors? One option may be a joint USDA grant. Examine the partnership that Skowhegan Main Street is establishing with a private vendor to build our a share-kitchen facility. This may be a good model in which to follow.</p>
4.	<p>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/</p>
5.	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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 Belfast team and a chance to showcase ecosystem partnerships</p>
6.	<p>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.</p>
7.	<p>Work with the City of Belfast to scope out a more comprehensive parking study. Based on feedback from the stakeholders and entrepreneurs/small business owners, it seems there may be ways to create more short-term parking and/or drop off/pick-up spaces to create more turn-over of parking spaces. It’s unlikely that new spaces would be created so things like wayfinding; creating experiences from off-downtown parking lots to the downtown during high tourism season, and always encouraging employees to park away from the downtown to free up those spaces.</p>
8.	<p>In evaluating the Ecosystem Organizational Matrix, Main Street Belfast 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</p>

	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 marketing opportunities for their mentorship programs and perhaps even workspace at the Main Street Belfast office. Review with the Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce 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.
10.	Explore an opportunity to create a programming partnership with the Maine Office of Tourism to provide some short educational trainings around season tourism economy assistance for small businesses, marketing to tourists, and budgeting for tourism-based businesses. This may also be in conjunction with your SBDC office.

Appendix – Entrepreneurs Survey Results

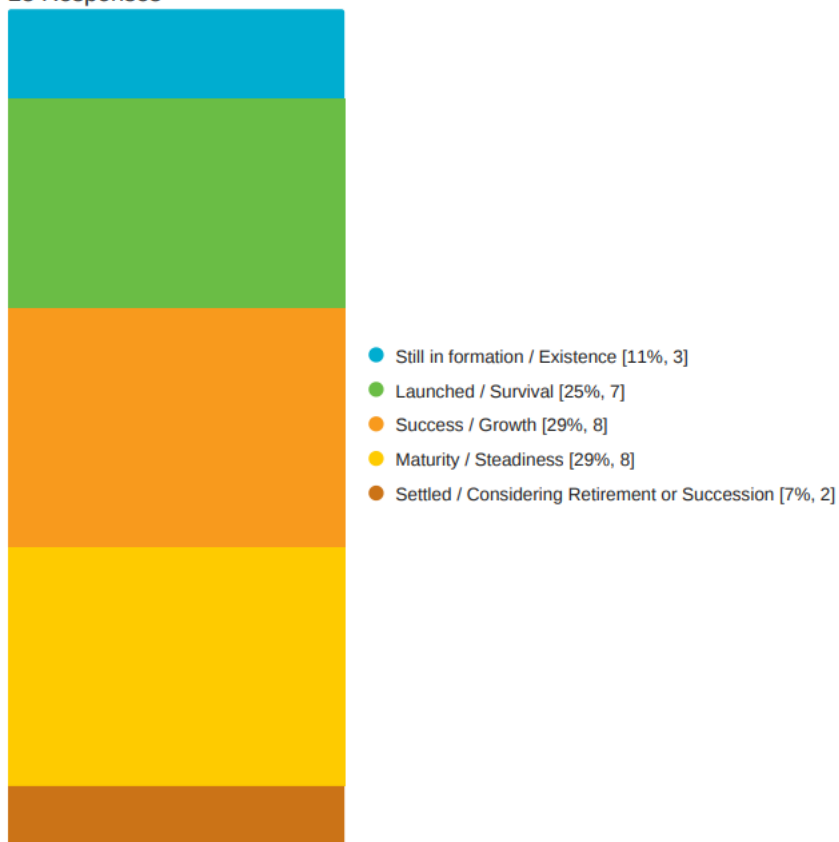
Q1 - To start, please identify the community nearest where you do most of your business or where you've been developing your business idea.

590 Responses



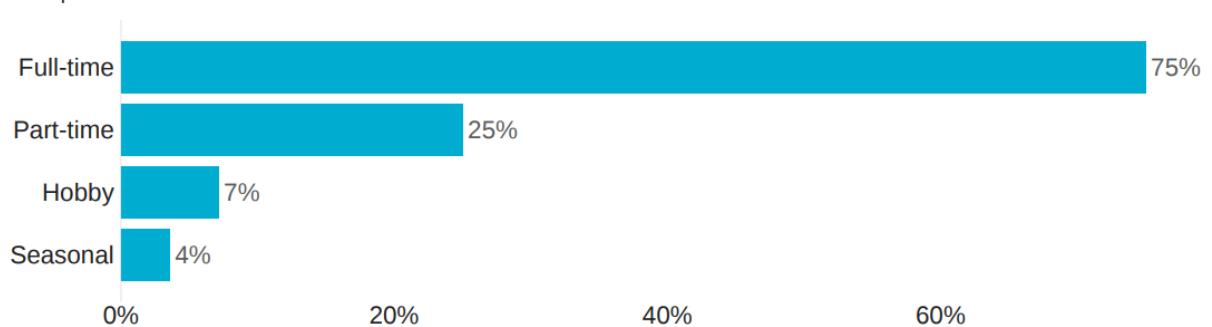
Q2 - What stage best characterizes you and your business or business idea's current state?

28 Responses



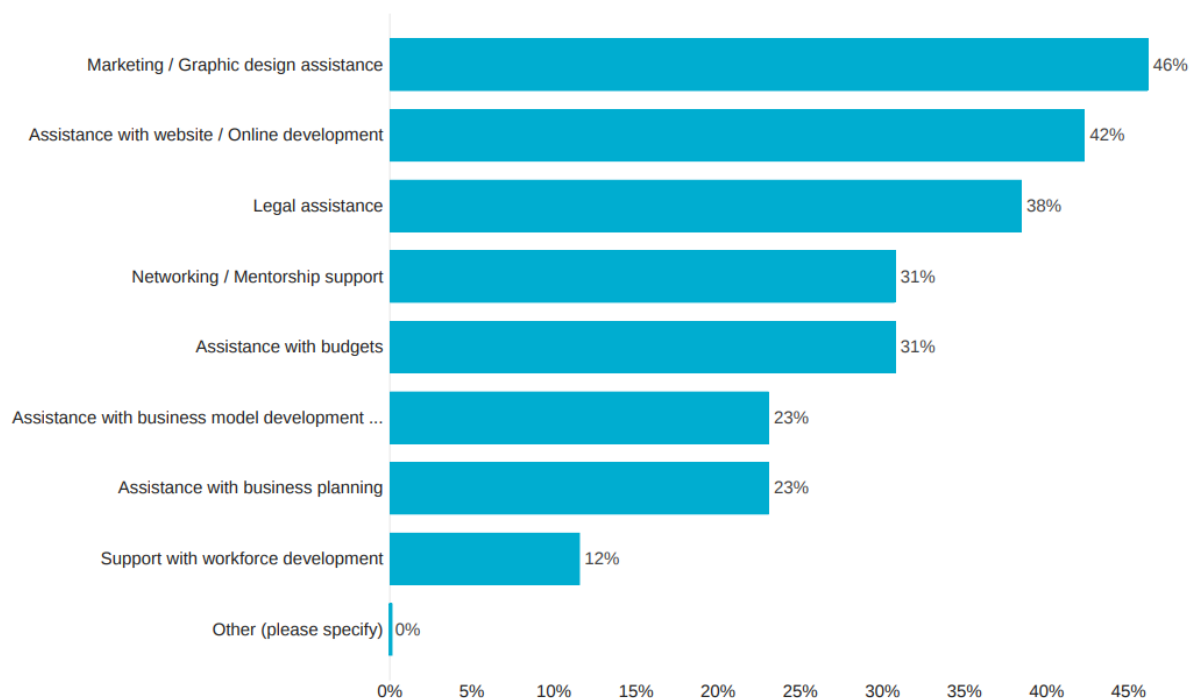
Q3 - How much time do you put into your business or business idea? (Please select all that apply.)

28 Responses



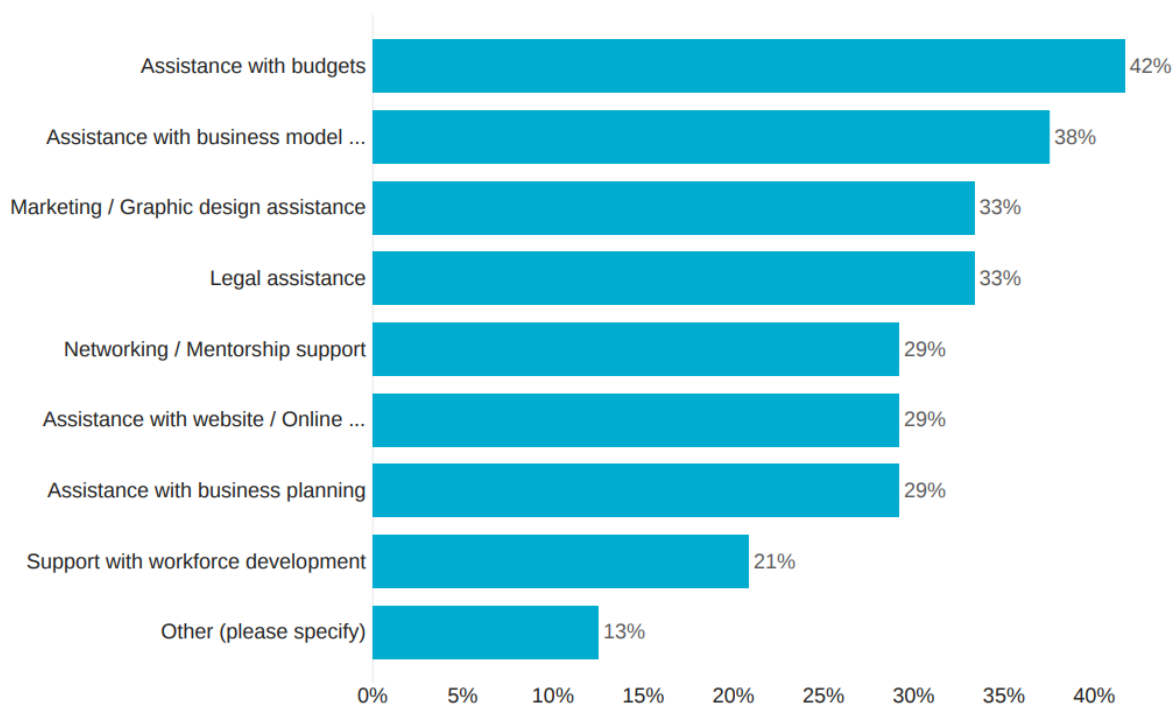
Q4 - What forms of business support and technical assistance have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Select all that apply.)

26 Responses



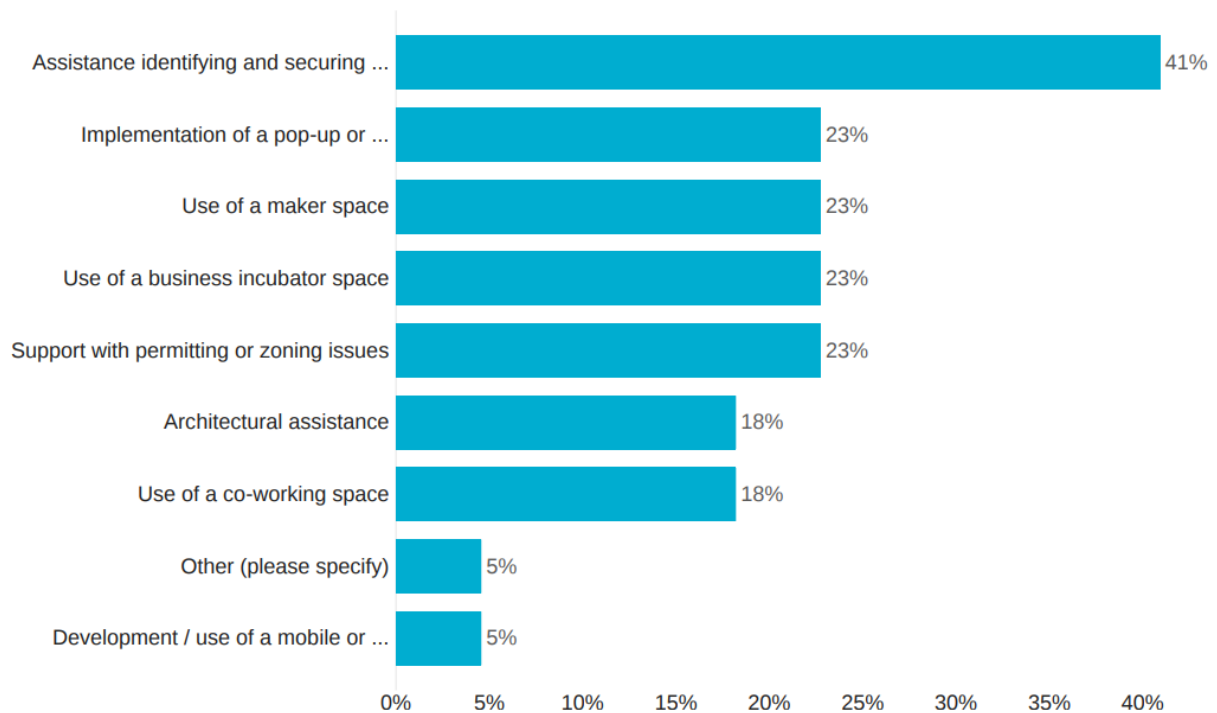
Q5 - What forms of business support and technical assistance could you currently benefit from as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

24 Responses



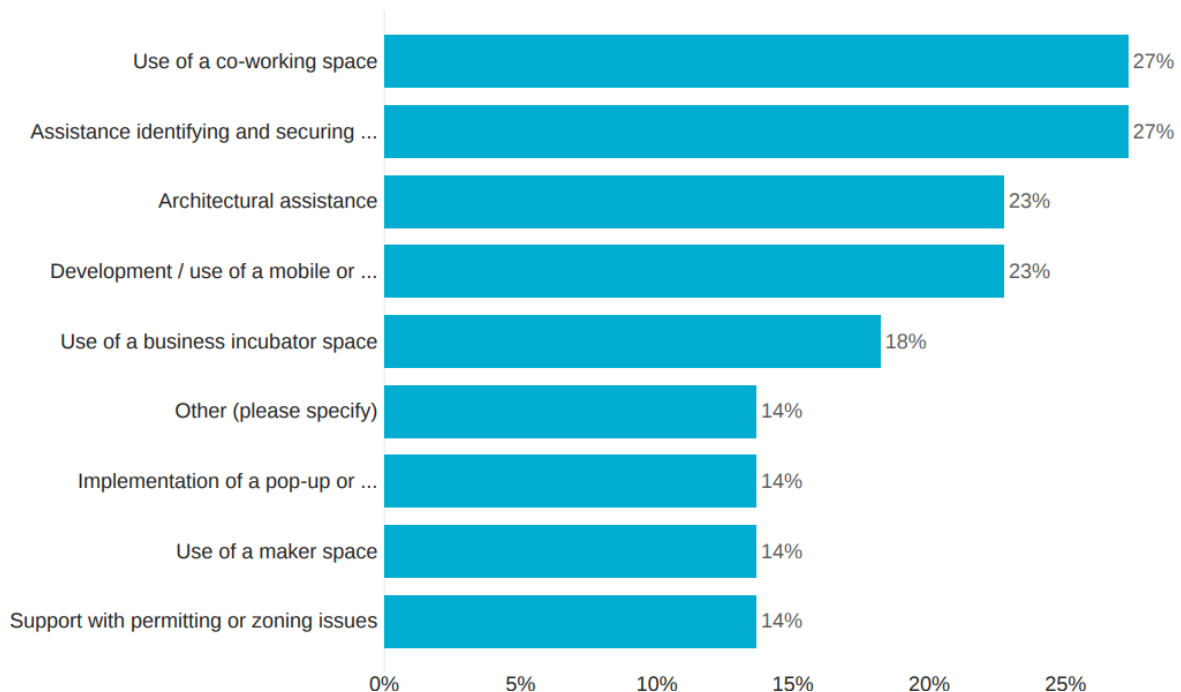
Q6 - What forms of real estate, design, or architectural support have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

22 Responses



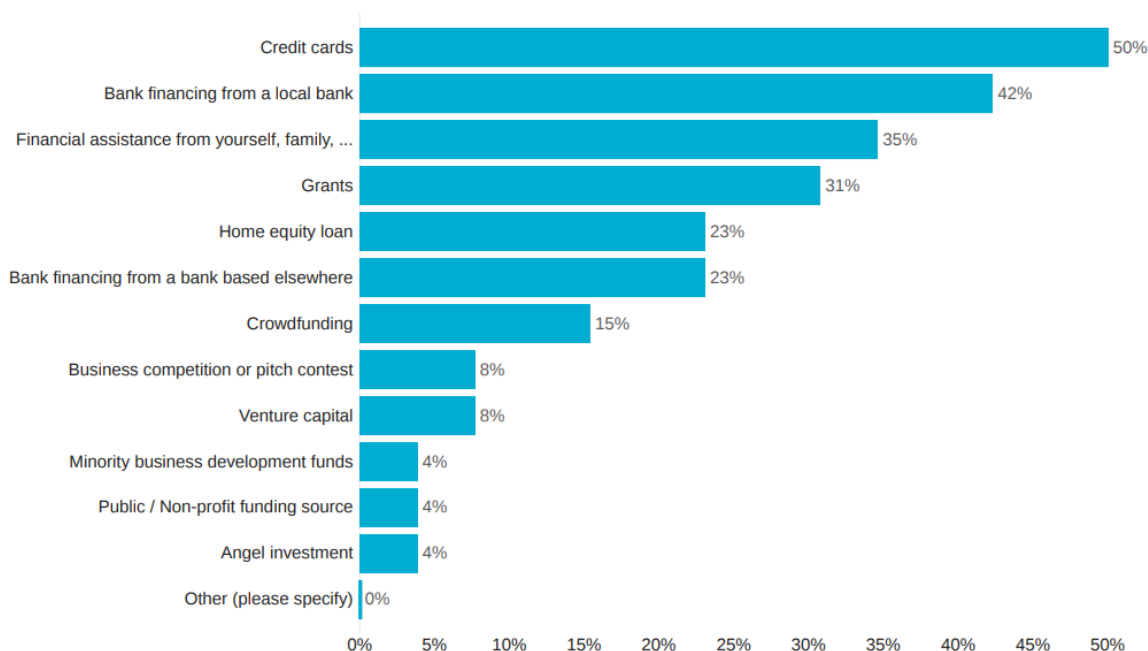
Q7 - What forms of real estate, design, or architectural support could you currently benefit from as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

22 Responses



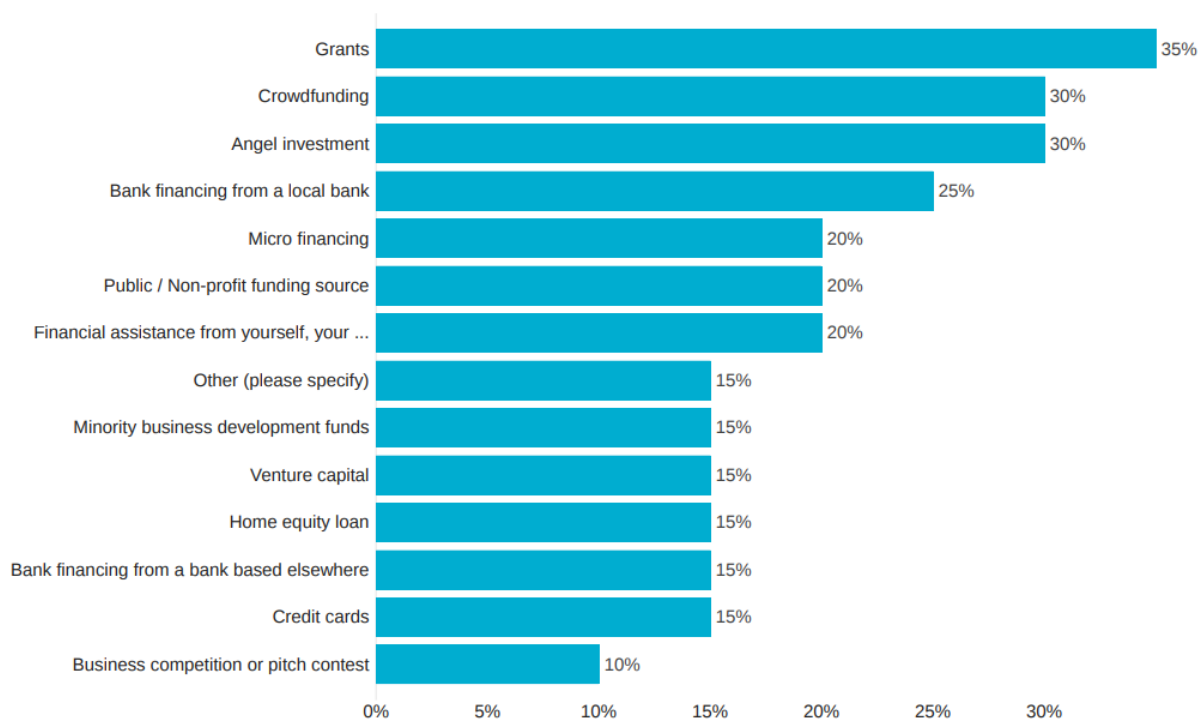
Q8 - What forms of financial assistance or support have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Reminder: Your responses to all questions will be kept confidential and will only be distributed in anonymized / aggregated form.)

26 Responses



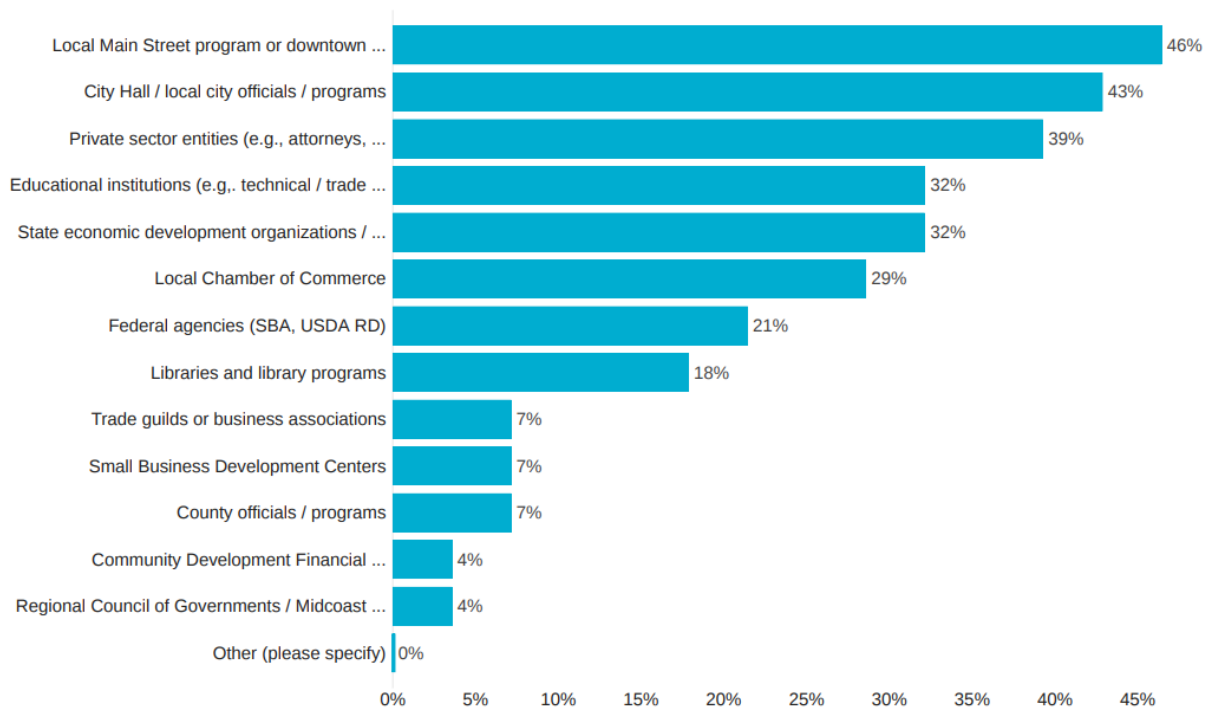
Q9 - What forms of financial assistance or support could you currently benefit from as part of your business development?

20 Responses



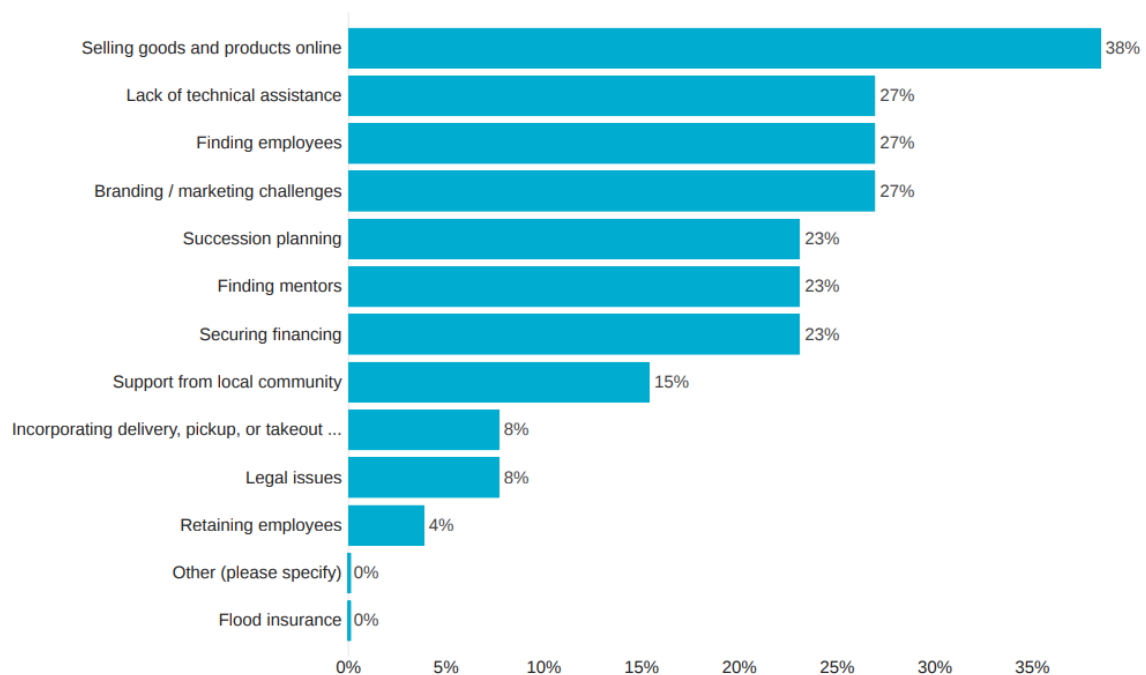
Q10 - Which of the following entities have provided you business-related support as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

28 Responses



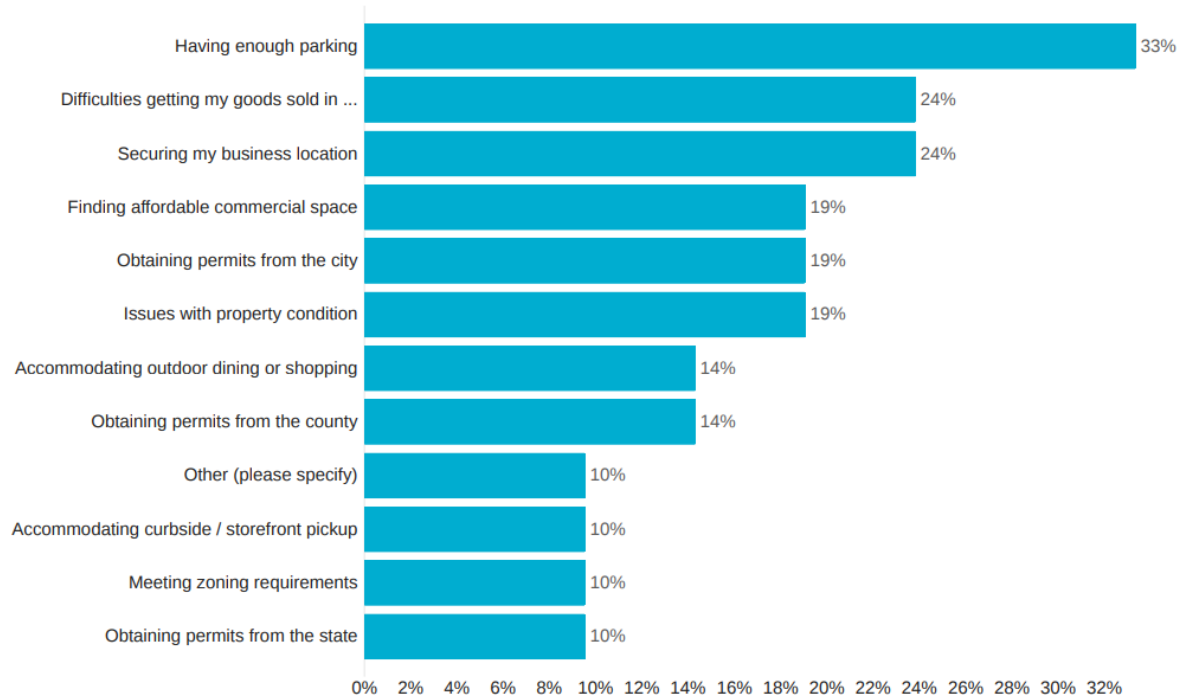
Q11 - What issues / barriers related to business planning, operations, and financing have you faced, either as you are launching your business idea or as a current business owner? (Please check all that apply.)

26 Responses



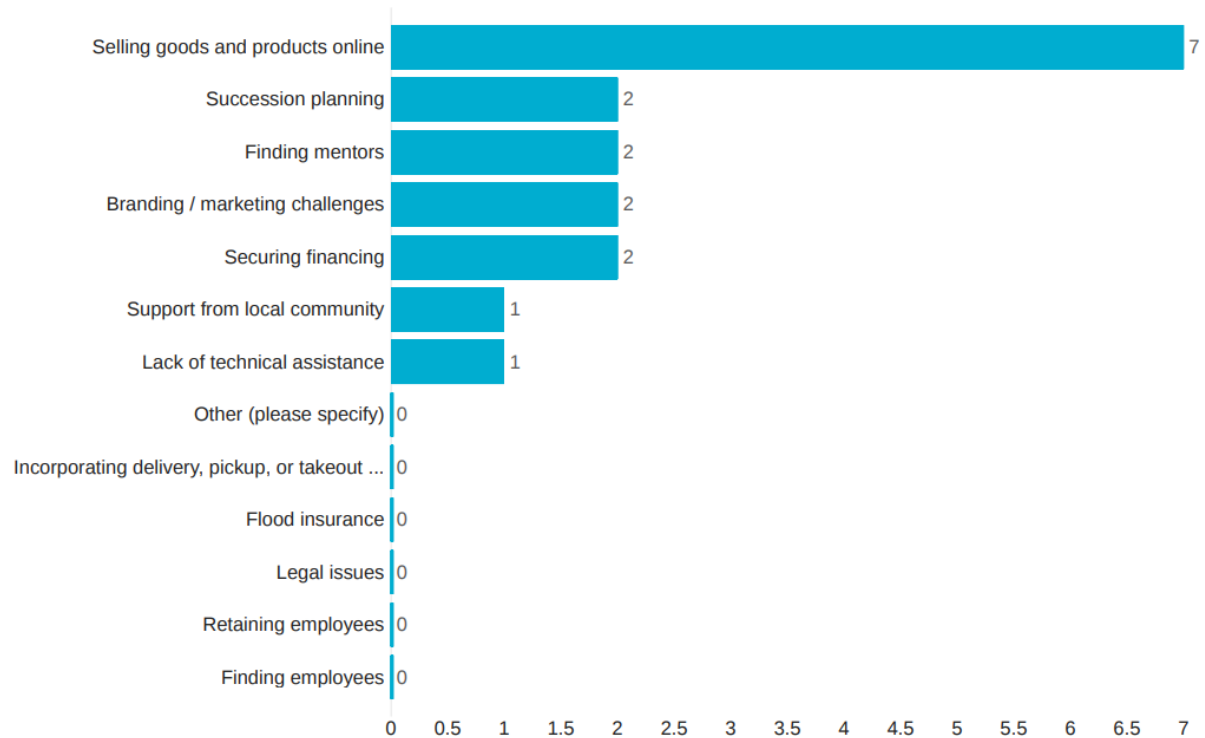
Q12 - What issues / barriers related to your present or potential business location and location design have you faced, either as you are launching your business idea or as a current business owner? (Please check all that apply.)

21 Responses



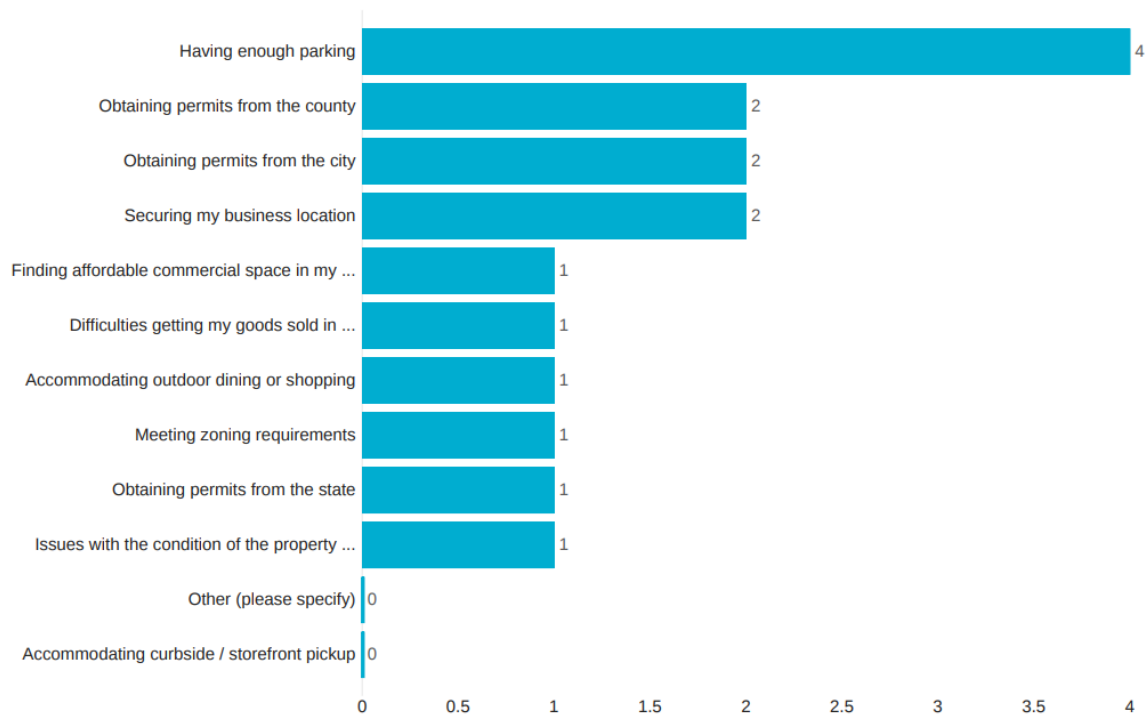
Q13 - As you think about the issues and barriers related to business planning, operations, and financing that you have faced or are currently facing, which do you think is most significant?

17 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?

16 Responses



Q15_1 - Single / Greatest Current Need

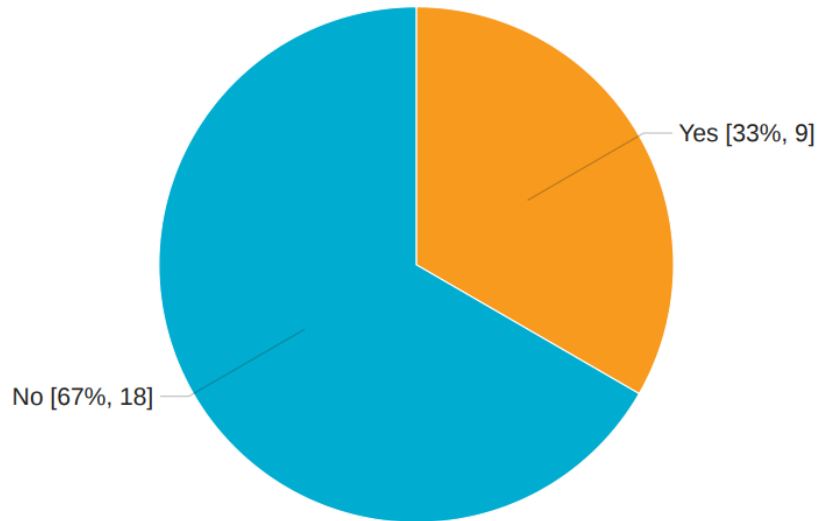
28 Responses

Single / Greatest Current Need	Second Greatest Need (Optional)	Third Greatest Need (Optional)
NTA	NA	TNA
Marketing	N/A	N/A
Collaboration with other orgs	Public funding for programs for the public good	N/A
Advertising	Technical support	Adequate display and layout
Exposure	opportunity	marketing
Financial support	Long-term affordable space	Community involvement/support
There are more customers.	N/A	N/A
Financial support	Financial support	Financial support
Financial support	Personnel support	Technical support
scale	N/A	N/A
More foot traffic	Better SEO	More time in the day
Locating a storefront for my business	N/A	N/A
succession planning	N/A	N/A
Business and management models	N/A	N/A
Online sales	propaganda	money
Deliver high quality products and services	N/A	N/A
wet	N/A	N/A
Younger full-time employees with long term interest in my business	More support/focus from city	Affordable lease
Employees	Parking	N/A
Children	N/A	N/A
Finding employees	N/A	N/A

Single / Greatest Current Need	Second Greatest Need (Optional)	Third Greatest Need (Optional)
Find ways to increase accessibility of our retail space	Reaching and retaining a broader demographic of customers	N/A
Maintain sales in the winter months	N/A	N/A
What step to take next to learn what I don't know	N/A	N/A
customer	N/A	N/A
NA	NA	NA
Grant money	N/A	N/A
Exposure	N/A	N/A

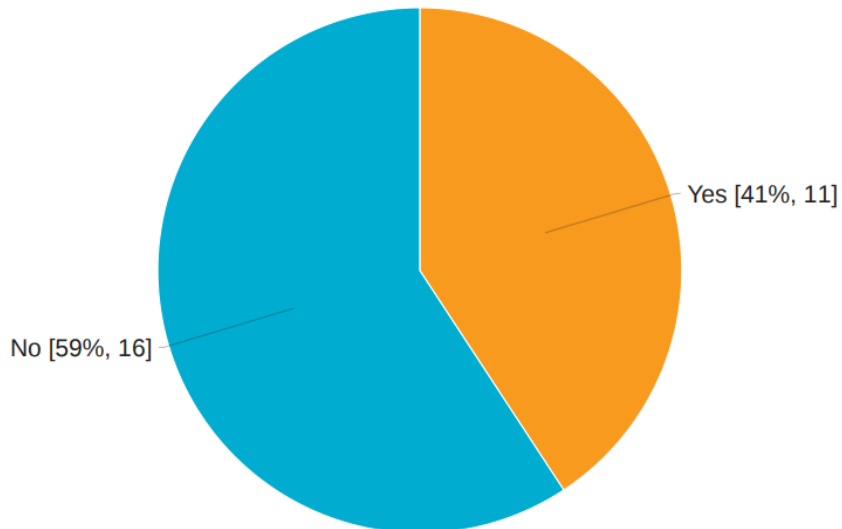
Q16 - Does the availability of housing currently impact where you choose to open or operate your business?

27 Responses



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

27 Responses



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

10 Responses

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
In terms of overall availability	1.00	5.00	3.50	1.22	1.50	8	28.00
In terms of affordability	1.00	5.00	3.78	1.31	1.73	9	34.00

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

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
As a place with a strong entrepreneur network / programs supporting entrepreneurs	2.00	5.00	3.89	1.03	1.06	27	105.00
As a place where entrepreneurs can locate and succeed	2.00	5.00	3.93	0.94	0.88	27	106.00

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

18 Responses

great success stories in the area

I can't really say. I have met with good success, and have found it an open and creative area. But I can't speak for others, and think I might be an anomaly (for ex, I'm an anomaly re: affordable housing. I can afford my apartment, and our organization can afford its venues, but that's because we are lucky to have found compatible property owners. Others are not so fortunate.)

I've been here in business going on 3 years, I stay very busy with the labor and preparation, and am not knowledgeable of entrepreneurship, networking or related support yet.

Belfast has such a strong downtown, it's wonderful

I really mind.

Can't

High comfort

Businesses work together to support each other

Both the Chamber of Commerce and the Our Town program are extremely helpful to, and involved with, the community.

Belfast is a draw because there are not big boxes and we are a useful downtown year round.

Because the local government does little to support business

qt

Belfast has far too much economic focus on attracting large industrial development

Belfast seems to have a good mix of seasoned business owners and younger entrepreneurs with energy

More Support As A Team

Belfast is a wonderful community filled with many opportunities to thrive. Very supported by our community members and we are a destination for tourists being on the coast of Maine.

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

20 Responses

co working space, small offices that are affordable

City owned and maintained music/performing/dance arts center - with performance space for concerts and other shows, open space with sprung floor for dancing, movies, lessons, workshops, shared work spaces, meeting spaces, etc. A real community hub that's not subject to profit-motive owners who charge rent that's unaffordable (e.g. United Farmers Market or Crosby Center)

For me it's been communication, and putting myself out there publicly to make the connections needed. I've recently become joined the Belfast Chamber, so now I'm slowly becoming more involved and understanding things.

Networking opportunities

Deeper community support and cross-promotion, affordable/free promotion by the city

It is helpful for entrepreneurs.

I don't know

ability

From my personal experience, I think Belfast is truly a small business haven. Apart from needing a few more retail spaces, there is not much that I can see that needs to be done.

More available spaces to set up.

Mature industrial system

People of the community

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

22 Responses

People love Belfast and see it as a place where people love to visit, stay and work.

Engaged people, beautiful place, progressive thinkers

Wonderful people and customers make my experience very rewarding. Programs that I can donate clothing, dresses, etc to help me help this wonderful community. Meeting such wonderful people daily in this town enriches my soul.

But for anyone to come into this growing community with such artistry and innovation it's a great place to create and grow a new business and thrive.

This is a thriving community and work is out there, but difficult to break into if you don't know a lot of people or are from 'away'.

Such a strong local community! And, so open to outsiders and creative people.

The reason why it becomes a good place for entrepreneurship is that it is particularly friendly to entrepreneurs.

It could be luck

Keep up with The Times

I don't know

As I said in Q19, Belfast is built on small businesses. The locals are helpful, supportive, and so willing to lend a helping hand or simply encourage new ideas. The camaraderie between local businesses, downtown and the surrounding area, really defines the generosity of spirit that Belfast thrives on.

See above. We have retail AND services that are important for locals and interesting for tourists.

There are a lot 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?

20 Responses

Small business micro enterprise site, small affordable offices, common shared space (kitchen, lobby, parking, reliable high speed internet, copiers,)

See Q19 (community-owned music/dance/performing arts center)

Oh my word, I'd definitely want to expand my business people in need can have an outfit for a new job, a coat and boots to keep warm in the winter, a nice dress for prom or a school dance, a wardrobe for a mother leaving an abusive spouse, a college student in need of something for their graduation or an event, high school girls wanting to trade some gently used, vintage or new things for shopping credit.

I want to create a business in which any budget can get what they NEED.

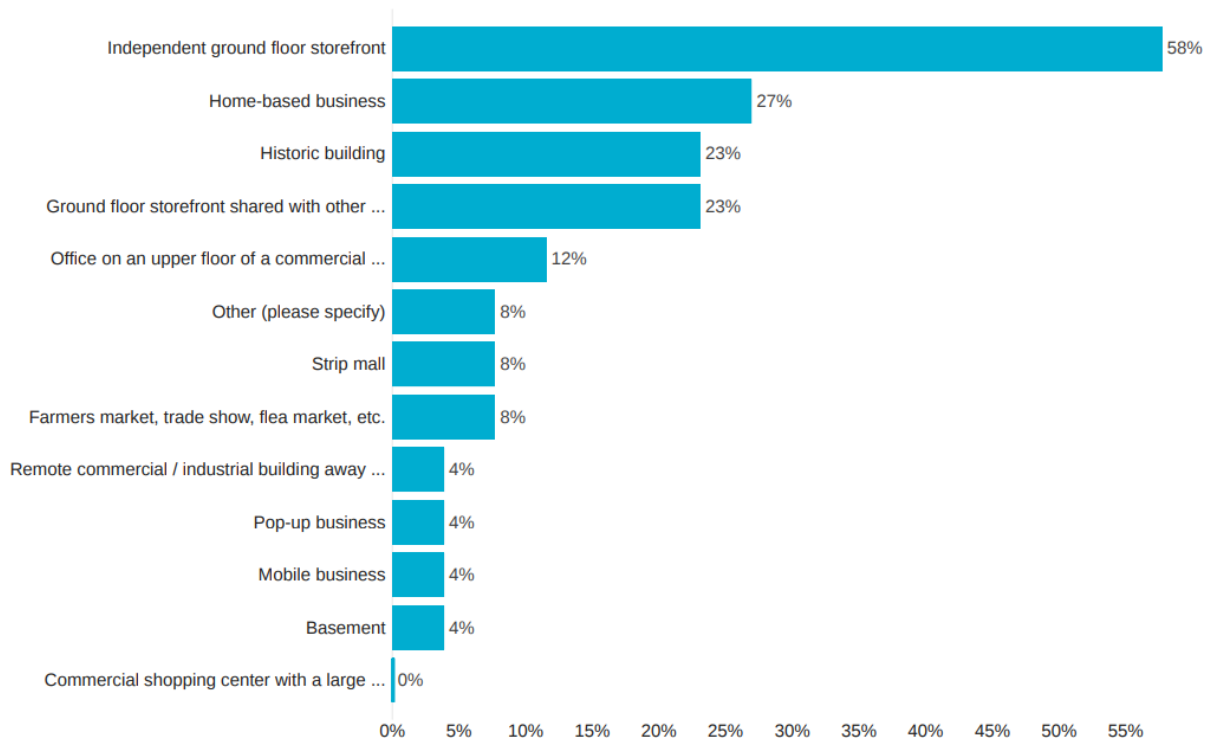
I have been trying to get funding for building entry level homes and apartments- both needed to not only encourage a younger generation to stay here, but attract new talent. Belfast has an aging demographic. Younger families and people starting out need equitable access to housing if we want Belfast to continue to thrive into the next generation.

More outdoor public spaces for working/playing/growing together. Subsidize more art programming and rent for small businesses and artists.

I will set up an innovation and entrepreneurship foundation to give more opportunities to people who want to start businesses and innovate.

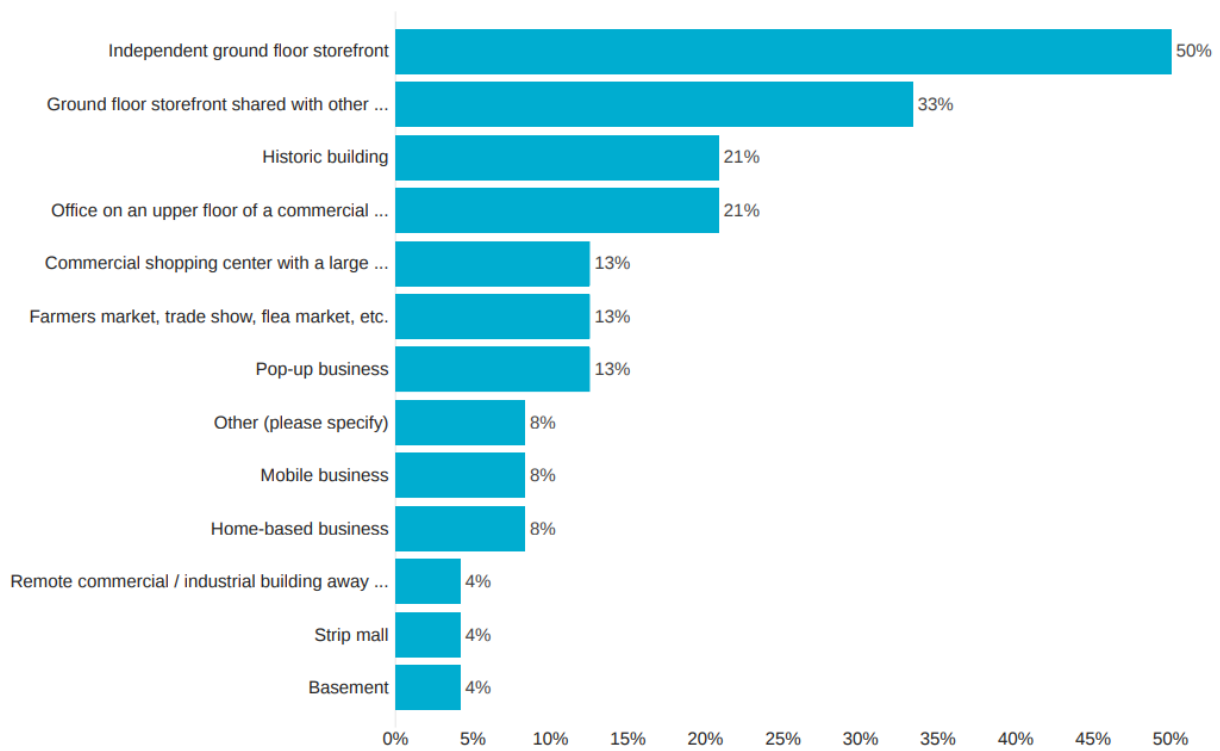
Q22 - Which of the following words or phrases could describe your current business location(s)? (Please select all that apply.)

26 Responses



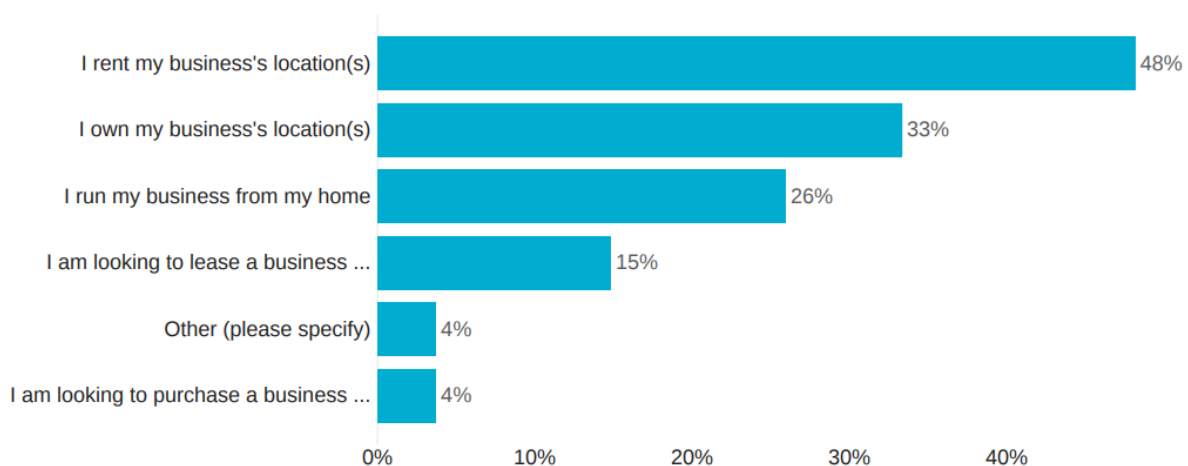
Q23 - Which of the following words or phrases could describe your ideal future business location(s)? (Please select all that apply.)

24 Responses



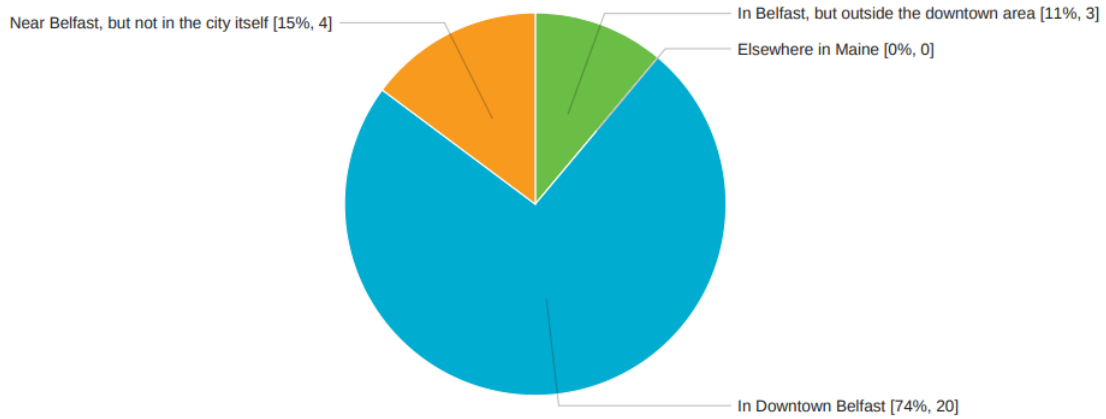
Q24 - What is your current situation relative to your business's location? (Please check all that apply.)

27 Responses



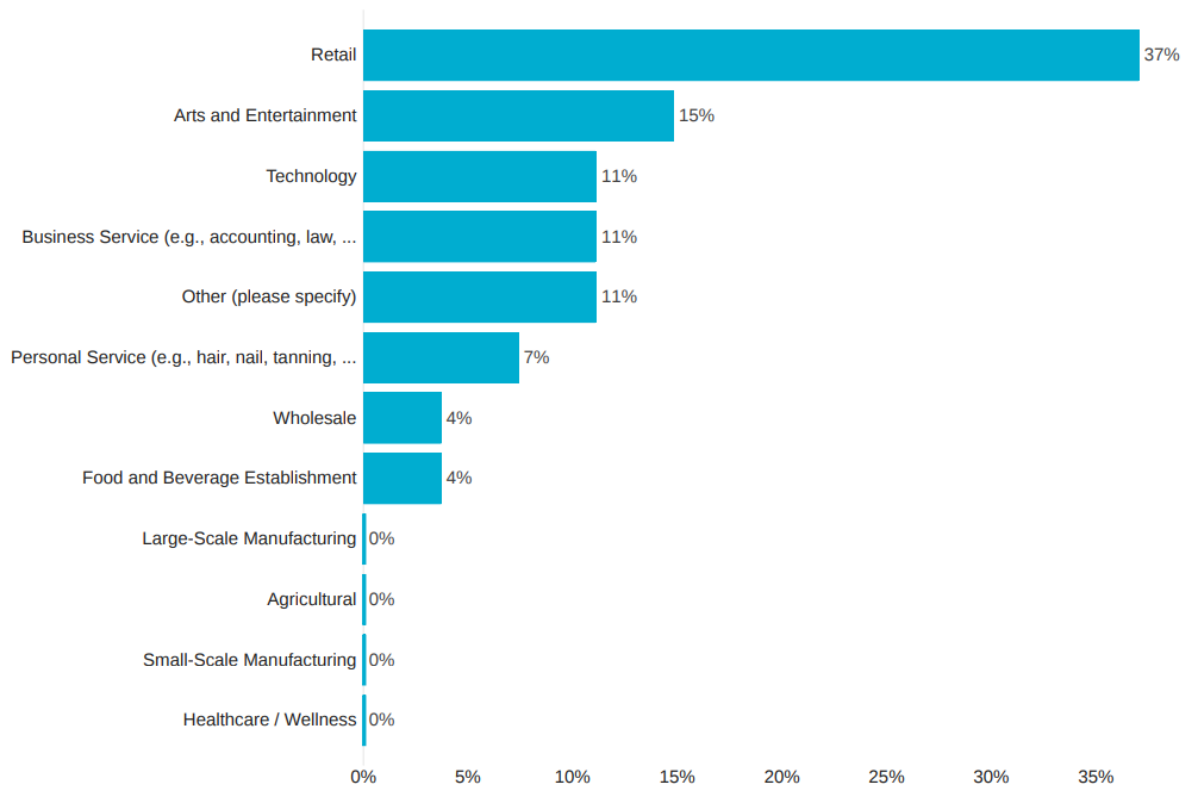
Q25 - What is the primary location of your business?

27 Responses



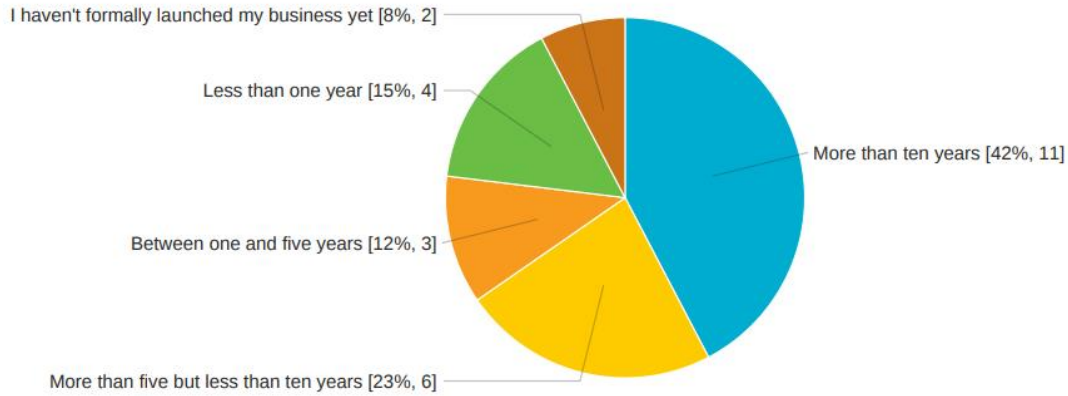
Q26 - What sector best describes your business or business idea?

27 Responses



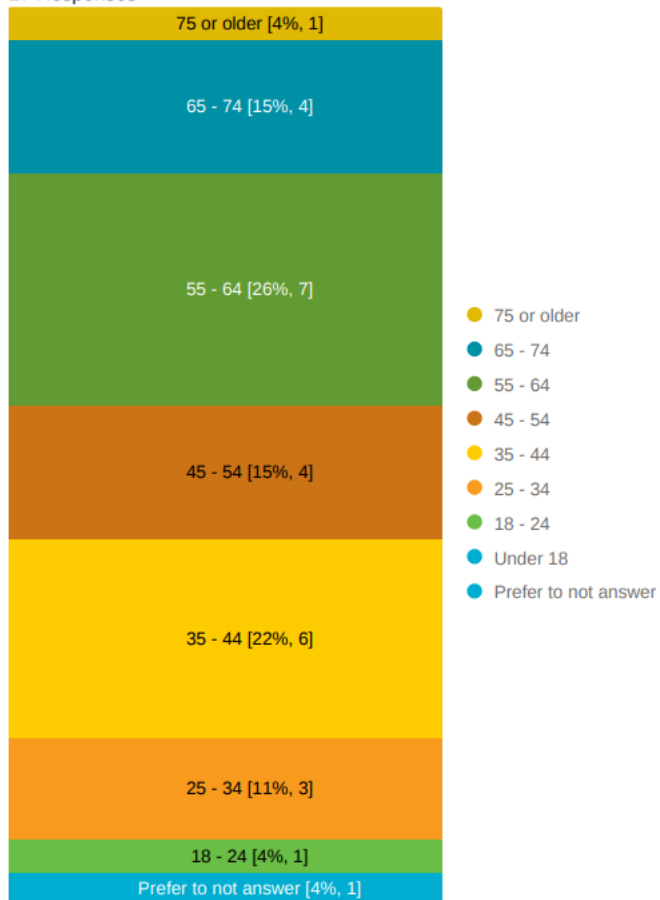
Q27 - How long have you been in business?

26 Responses



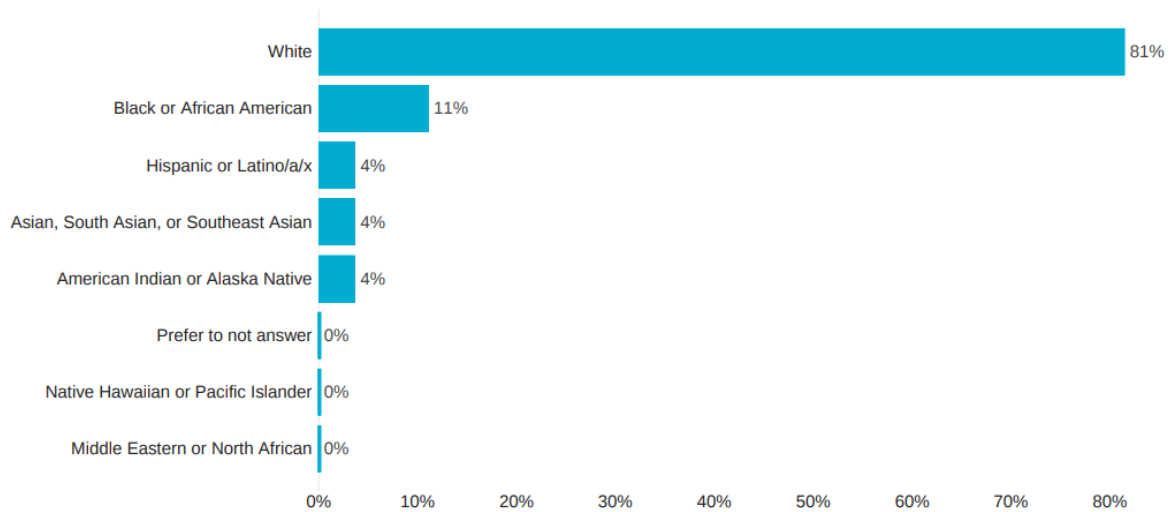
Q28 - How old are you?

27 Responses



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

27 Responses



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

26 Responses

