



Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development

Findings and Recommendations

Biddeford-Saco, Maine
April 30, 2023

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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 Biddeford-Saco	
Owner	Biddeford-Saco Chamber; Saco Main Street; Heart of Biddeford
Biddeford-Saco Main Streets' Role	Primary Lead, Developer, Supporter, Advocate, Convener, Provider
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proximity to Portland is a plus, with the ability to leverage talent pool to launching a business in authentic downtown areas.Both downtowns complement one another and offer something different: The Mill District in Biddeford is incubating a number of small-scale production businesses. Downtown Saco is small and walkable.There is strong sense of diversity, equity and inclusiveness in the design of the ecosystem.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Building greater connectivity between the two districts is currently in progress and represents a great opportunity to benefit both communities, residents, businesses and visitors.There isn't a great deal of place-enabled programming like pop-up, co-op or micro retailing.



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 Biddeford-Saco	
Owner	City of Biddeford; City of Saco
Biddeford-Saco Main Streets' Role	Supporter and Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Current zoning allows for a great deal of latitude in uses and functions in the community, including things like small-scale production.In addition, there are ordinances permitting outdoor dining and café seating.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More of a City of Saco gap around a checklist and greater assistance with permitting and zoning.



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 Biddeford-Saco	
Owner	SBA Maine; Local Banks, Coastal Enterprises Inc.
Biddeford-Saco Main Streets' Role	Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local banking community appears strong and there is active engagement potential with the SBA.Given proximity to Portland, there are also a number of more equity tools for local entrepreneurs and small businesses.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many entrepreneurs seemed to lack, however, how to access or be positioned for private equity and/or angel investments, as well as general financing tools.



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 Biddeford-Saco	
Owner	Biddeford-Saco Chamber; SCORE Maine; Heart of Biddeford; Saco Main Street
Biddeford-Saco Main Streets' Role	Supporter and Advocate
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The business community is very supportive of one another as well as newcomers.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.Opportunities for inclusion of New Mainers in networks.No “one-stop” resource provider or agglomerated list that is shared among ecosystem stakeholders.



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 Biddeford-Saco	
Owner	Maine SBDC; CEI; Maine SCORE; Biddeford CT; Biddeford-Saco Chamber; New Ventures Maine
Biddeford-Saco's Main Streets' Role	Provider and Connector
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area SBDC/CEI is engaged and active in Biddeford-Saco, with opportunities for greater programming activity. • There are services and assistance throughout the life cycle relative to education and training programs. • Private sector services are plentiful and have depth to the life cycle.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding new customers through new tactics (e.g., Social Commerce)



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 Biddeford-Saco	
Owner	Common Roots Studio; Heart of Biddeford; Saco Main Street
Biddeford-Saco Main Streets' Role	Primary Lead, Supporter, Provider and Developer
Existing Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a strong sense of collaboration and cooperation among existing and aspiring entrepreneurs • Both Main Street programs have strong social media followings. Opportunities exist to leverage for greater entrepreneurship coverage.
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. • Local media coverage could be more supportive of providing features of local businesses and start-ups.







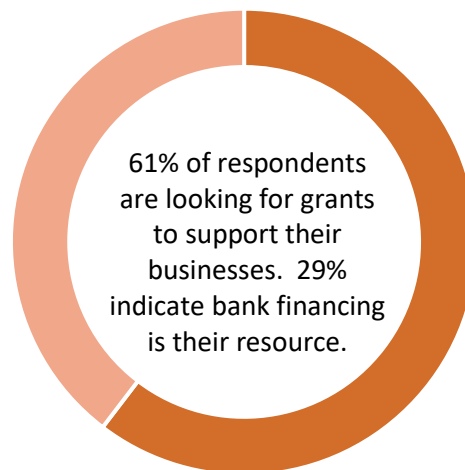
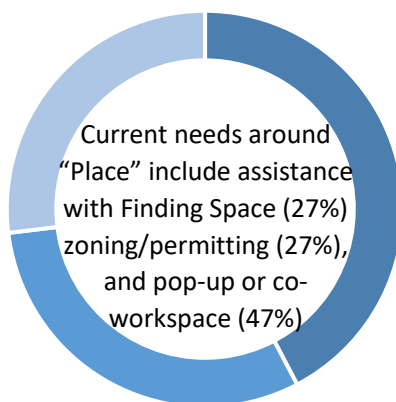
Human Capital

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 Biddeford-Saco	
Owner	Biddeford CT; Thornton Academy and Biddeford High School; UNE and YCCC
Biddeford-Saco Main Streets' Role	Supporter
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.
Primary Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like most places across the country, Biddeford-Saco is experiencing challenges in workforce retention and attraction.• Programming that would directly support and encourage greater diversity, equity and inclusion in entrepreneurship and workforce development, in particular with New Mainers.

Biddeford-Saco Entrepreneurs Survey Summary

 Place-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business could benefit from additional assistance with finding space. Finding affordable space was the top business location issue. <u>Highly significant increase</u> in moving from the home-based business to an independent storefront. The key is how to identify, connect and build a network pipeline.
 Financial Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants need guidance and connectivity on overall financial programs. Securing financing was a significant issue.
 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 in with networking and mentorship. Looking for assistance with marketing and promotions. Critical to engage the private sector given its standing in being a connection.



Biddeford-Saco Entrepreneurs Focus Group –

Place-Based & Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking an opportunity to use ecosystem building as way to bring the two communities together. E.G. Joint Networking or Educational Programming. Saco Specific – Need for checklist or Clearer Process for Starting a Business
Financial & Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More programs or linkages for start-up capital. Need more education. Hiring and retention of qualified staff Better linkages between New Mainers and entrepreneurship/employment
Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need more connection or qualified list of private sector vendors for business assistance (legal, accounting, banking, marketing, etc.)

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 • Future desire is going from home to a Stand-Alone Storefront and/or Co-Op Retail Location • Dedicated space for New Entrepreneurs, Solo-preneurs and Remote Workers • Need more Place programming and support (pop-ups, pitch, etc.) • Lack of opportunities that leverage the scale of joint initiatives between Saco and Biddeford (e.g., Pitch, Educational Programs, Incubator facilities, 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 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.).
 Govt - Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a checklist and/or resource guide for starting and growing a business within Saco specifically.
 Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of media coverage (both traditional and social) that could support and highlight local small businesses, activities, events, etc.
 Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and developing new customers pipelines
 Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding and retaining workforce remains one of the highest priorities and challenges for most businesses. • Programming that would directly support and encourage greater diversity, equity and inclusion in entrepreneurship, especially with New Mainers.

Local Ecosystem Roles - Biddeford-Saco

	Financial Capital	Social Capital	Place Factors	Govt Policy and Regulatory	Education/Training	Culture	Human Capital/Workforce
–PRIMARY	SBA Maine; Banks? SMFA? CEI	Biddeford-Saco Chamber; SCORE Maine; Heart of Biddeford; Saco Main Street	Biddeford-Saco Chamber; Saco Main Street; Heart of Biddeford	City of Biddeford; City of Saco	Maine SBDC; CEI; Maine SCORE; Biddeford CT; Biddeford-Saco Chamber; New Ventures Maine	Common Roots Studio; Heart of Biddeford; Saco Main Street	Biddeford CT; K-12? (Thorton Academy and Biddeford HS) UNE? YCCC
–SUPPORTER		Realize Maine Network; City of Biddeford; Common Roots Studio; Saco Main Street; City of Saco	Maine Downtown Center; City of Biddeford; Saco Main Street; Heart of Biddeford	Biddeford-Saco Chamber; Heart of Biddeford; Saco Main Street	Maine SCORE	City of Biddeford; Saco Main Street; City of Saco	City of Biddeford; Biddeford CT; Biddeford-Saco Chamber; UNE; Heart of Biddeford, Saco Main Street
–CONVENER	City of Biddeford	Realize Maine Network; City of Biddeford; Biddeford-Saco Chamber; Saco Main Street	Maine Downtown Center; Saco Main Street; Heart of Biddeford		Maine DOL; Maine SCORE	City of Biddeford	Maine DOL; City of Biddeford; Biddeford-Saco Chamber; UNE
–ADVOCATE		Maine SCORE; Common Roots Studio	Maine Downtown Center; Saco Main Street; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford	SBA Maine	Maine SCORE; Biddeford CT; Think Tank	City of Biddeford; Common Roots Studio	City of Biddeford; Biddeford CT; UNE
–PROVIDER	Roux Institute; CEI; SBA Maine; City of Biddeford; FAME	Roux Institute; Realize Maine Network; City of Biddeford; Common Roots Studio; Heart of Biddeford	Maine Downtown Center; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford; Saco Main Street	City of Biddeford	Maine DOL, CEI; Maine SBA; Maine SCORE; Biddeford CT; Common Roots Studio; Saco Main Street; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford; Roux Institute;	Common Roots Studio; Heart of Biddeford	Maine DOL; Biddeford CT; UNE
–CONNECTOR	Maine SBDC; CEI; SBA Maine; Maine SCORE; City of Biddeford; Saco Main Street; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford; City of Saco	Maine SBDC; Realize Maine Network; Maine SCORE; City of Biddeford; Common Roots Studio; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford	Maine SBDC; Maine Downtown Center; Maine SCORE; City of Biddeford; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford; City of Saco	Maine SBDC; Maine SCORE; City of Biddeford; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford, City of Saco	Maine SBDC; Maine DOL; CEI; Maine SBA; Maine SCORE; Common Roots Studio; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford; City of Saco	Maine SCORE; Common Roots Studio; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford	Maine SBDC; Maine DOL; Biddeford CT; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford; City of Saco; UNE
–DEVELOPER	CEI; City of Biddeford	Biddeford-Saco Chamber; Common Roots Studio; Heart of Biddeford	Roux Institute; Maine Downtown Center; City of Biddeford; Biddeford-Saco Chamber; Think Tank; Heart of Biddeford		Roux Institute; CEI; Maine SBA; Maine SCORE; Biddeford CT; Common Roots Studio; Think Tank	City of Biddeford; Biddeford-Saco Chamber; Common Roots Studio; Heart of Biddeford	Biddeford CT; UNE; Thorton Academy

Biddeford-Saco Ecosystem Recommendations

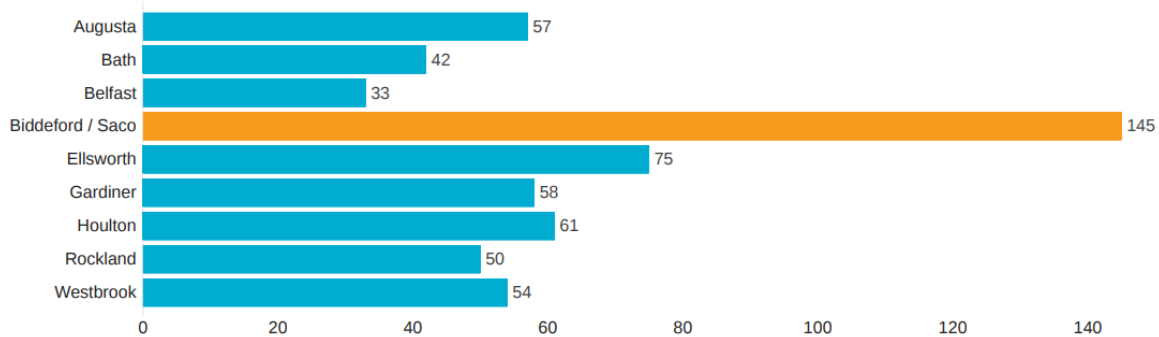
1. **(Joint)** Host a joint Biddeford-Saco Pitch Contest geared toward home-based businesses. This could be in conjunction with respective “place/space” initiatives proposed below in each community. Given the high number of home-based businesses, and likelihood many are traditional under representative groups, this Pitch Contest would allow the collective group to build out a database for future networking and educational programming. Recommend more of a “Soup Event” style pitch night and allow for social/community solving pitches as well.
<https://www.soupnation.org/about-us/faqs/> ; <https://detroitssoup.buildinstitute.org/submit-detroit-soup/>
2. **(Biddeford Specific)** In conjunction with #1 and given affordability issues, consider having Heart of Biddeford to take out a master lease to create a Micro-Market retail initiative. The Micro-Market could be exclusive or with spots held for New Mainers. Seek a partnership with CEI for specific wrap around training and programming. A great model is the program is in Lansing, Michigan called: Middle Village Micro-Market:
<https://www.facebook.com/middlevillagemicromarket/>
3. **(Saco Specific)** In conjunction with #1, create 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 Saco and limitations on space, there is an opportunity to build retail and new business density by

	<p>focusing on shared spaces. In addition, Saco Main Street could expand its “pipeline” of start—up spaces by examining opportunities to leverage ancillary properties like current or former churches, civic spaces, as well as the library for temporary business locations. As with previous examples in Lisbon and Skowhegan, these entrepreneurial hubs/centers were in more ancillary properties.</p>
4.	<p>(Joint) As an extension of a “resource directory” 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>
5.	<p>(Joint) 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 Biddeford-Saco team and a chance to showcase ecosystem partnerships</p>
6.	<p>(Biddeford Specific) Encourage local stakeholders to review Forward Cities’ “Promising Practices” Webinar Series that examines the institutionalization of diversity, equity and including within ecosystems and entrepreneurial programming/engagement. https://forwardcities.org/learning/promising-practices/ Promote as a new education series targeting the broader small business and entrepreneurial community.</p>
7.	<p>(Joint) 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. This can be done with a simple “AirTable” database, or more subscription models such as https://www.joinsourcelink.com/ and EcoMap https://www.ecomap.tech/</p>
8.	<p>(Specific Saco) Develop a “Getting Started in Saco” checklist that walks through the process of starting a business within the city. Here is a very good example from Charlottesville, Virginia: https://www.charlottesville.gov/216/Starting-a-Small-Business</p>
9.	<p>(Joint) 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>
10.	<p>(Joint) It was difficult to determine market overlays to your respective ecosystems. Suggestions for each: (Biddeford) – Consider examining opportunities to grow out more small-scale producers associated with the Mill projects. Given the number of food producers and opportunities with more ethnic foods, consider evaluating a Mobile Food Truck incubation program. A great example is Lovington, NM’s program that has business program and use of a mobile food truck “incubator” for a set period of time: https://lovingtonmainstreet.org/local-innovators-institute/ (Saco) – Given proximity to Portland and growth of remote work, consider examining a co-work space in conjunction with #3 above. Many times, entrepreneurial hubs often serve remote workers. https://www.charlevoix.org/thevault/</p>

Appendix – Entrepreneurs Survey Results

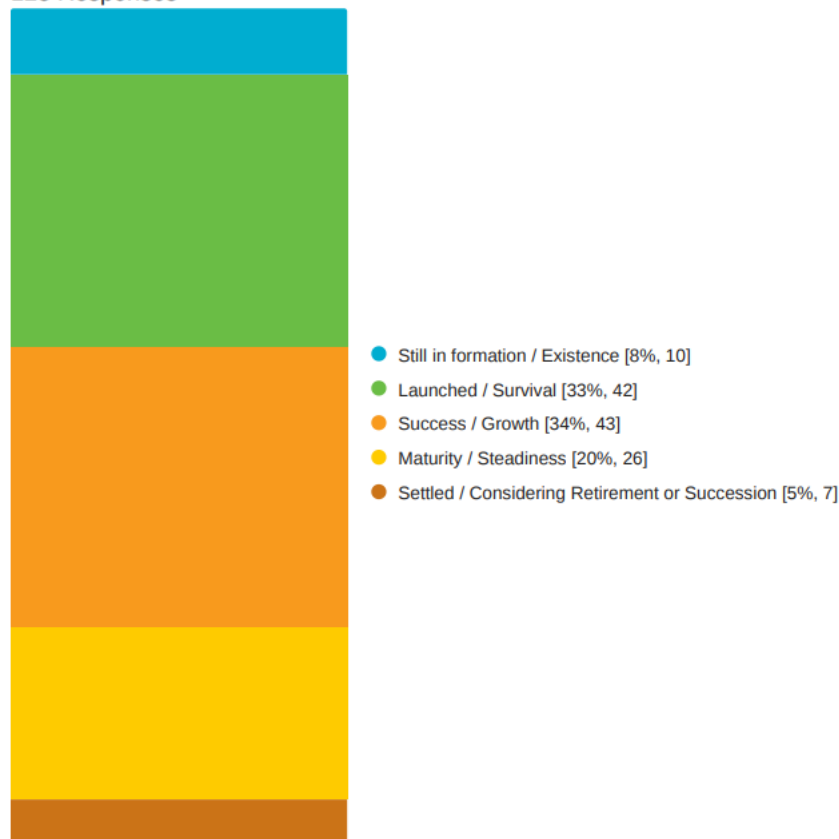
Q1 - To start, please identify the community nearest where you do most of your business or where you've been developing your business idea.

575 Responses



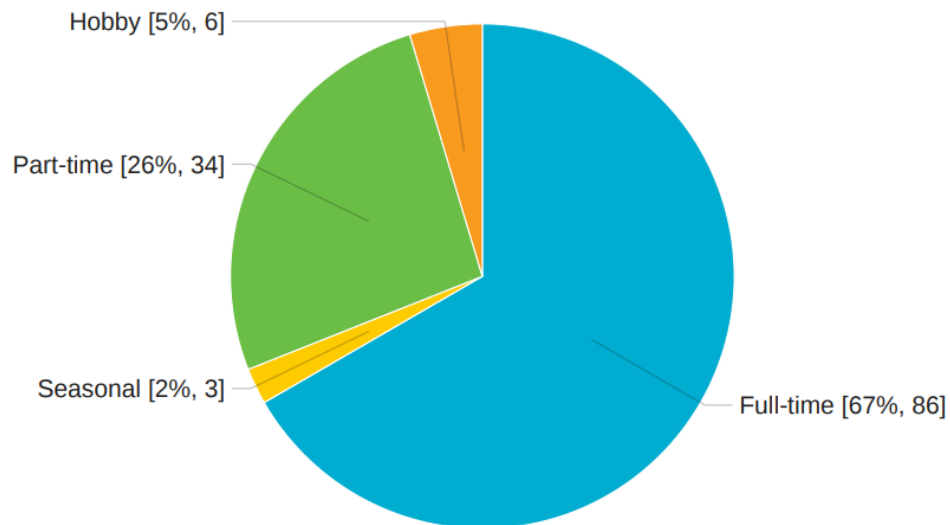
Q2 - What stage best characterizes you and your business or business idea's current state?

128 Responses



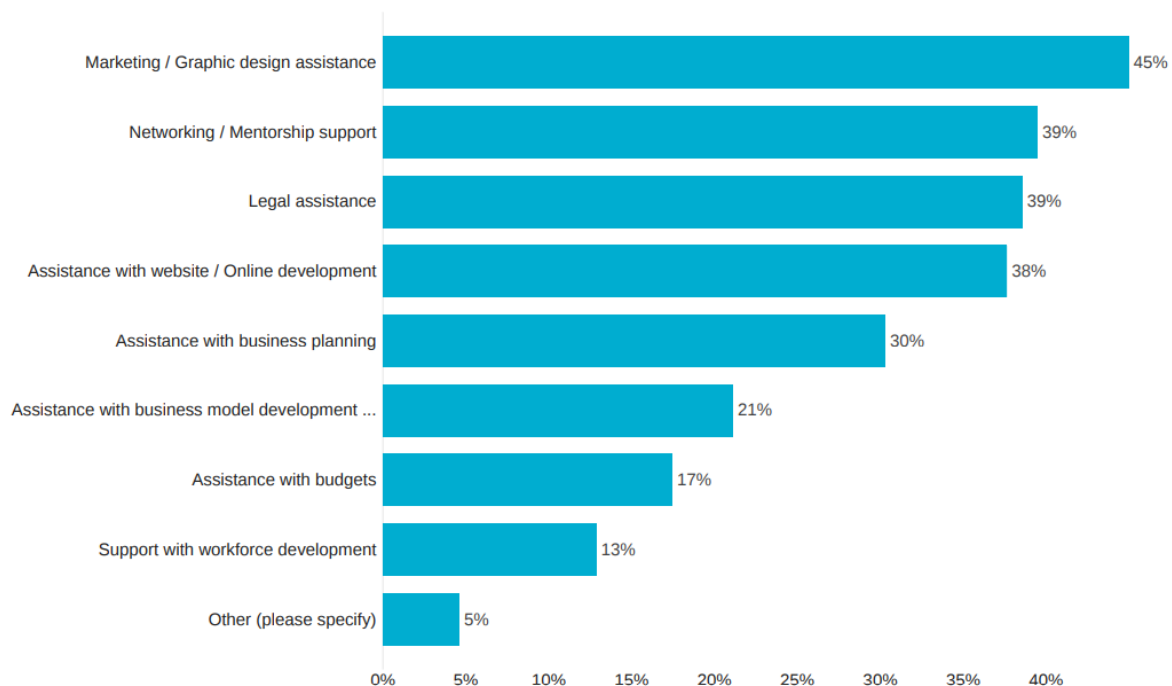
Q3 - How much time do you put into your business or business idea? (Please select all that apply.)

127 Responses



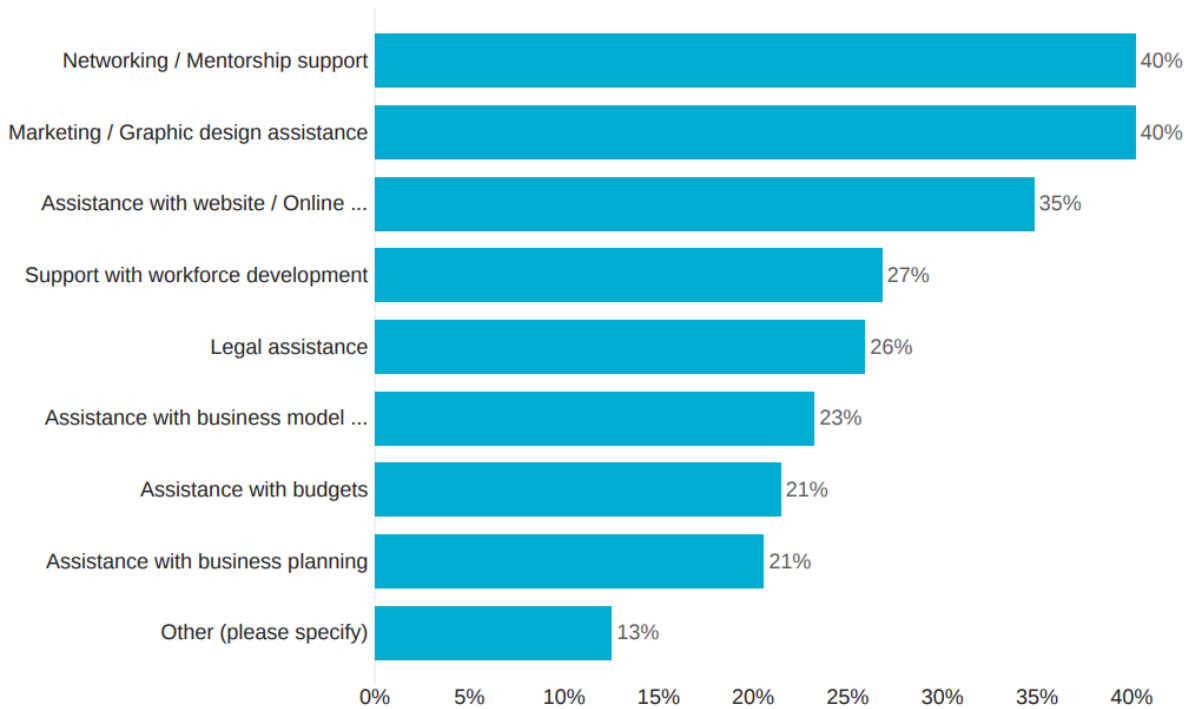
Q4 - What forms of business support and technical assistance have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Select all that apply.)

109 Responses



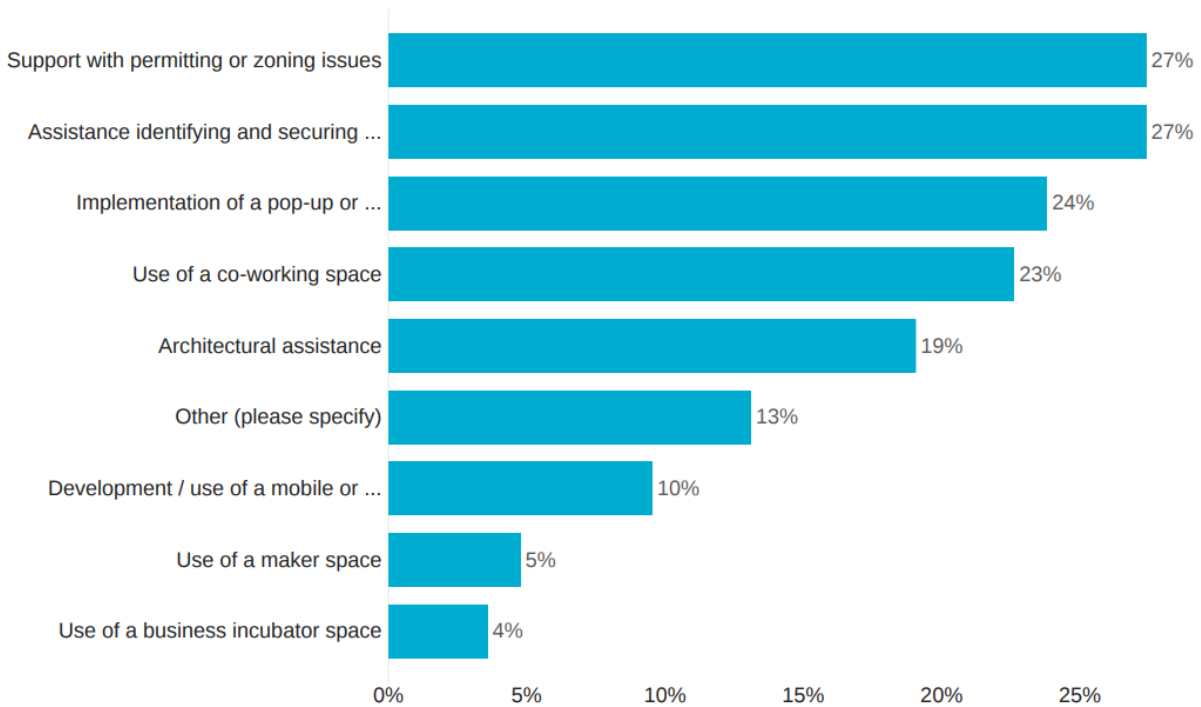
Q5 - What forms of business support and technical assistance could you currently benefit from as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

112 Responses



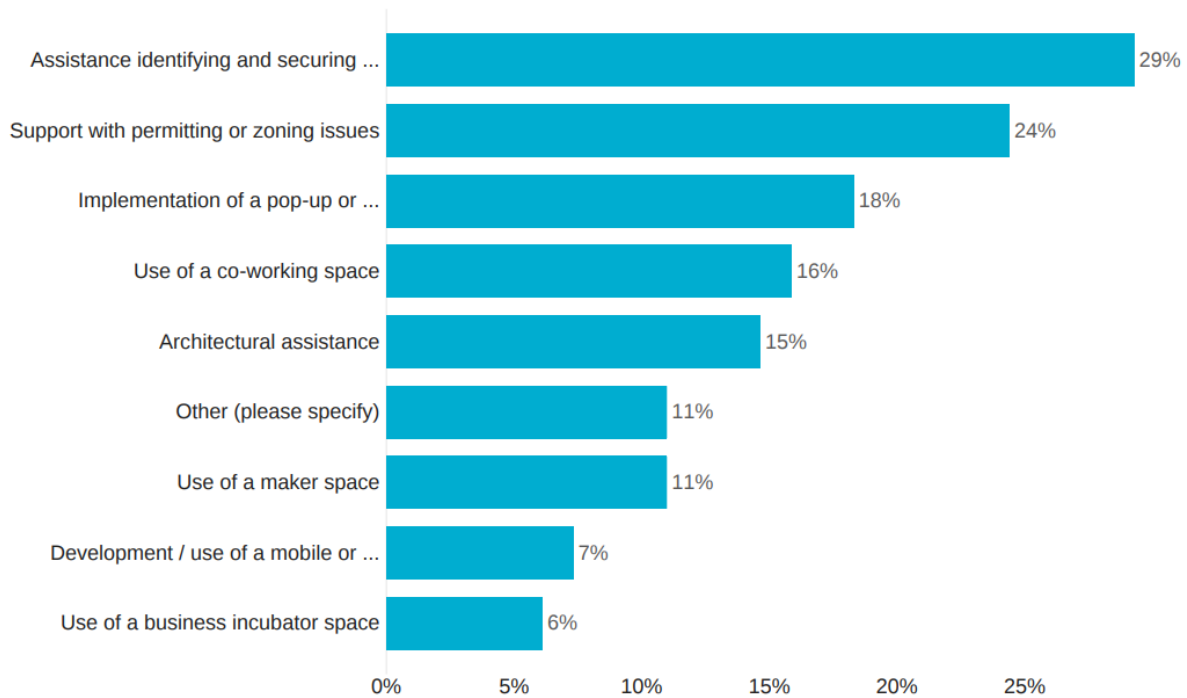
Q6 - What forms of real estate, design, or architectural support have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

84 Responses



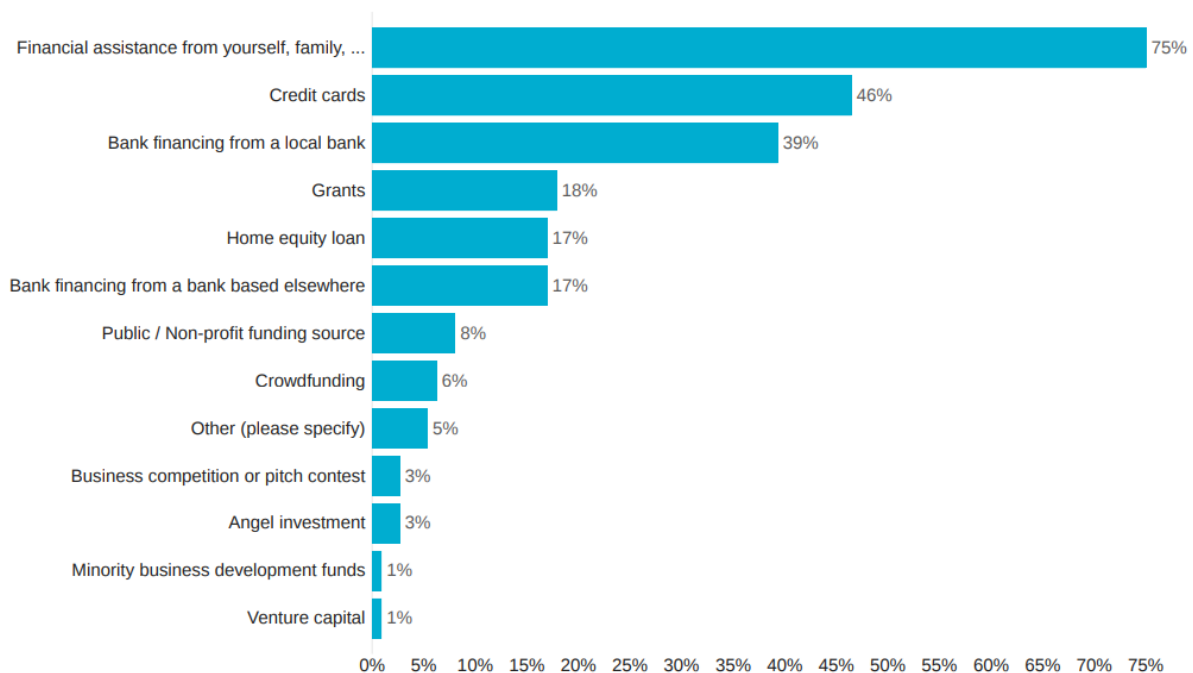
Q7 - What forms of real estate, design, or architectural support could you currently benefit from as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

82 Responses



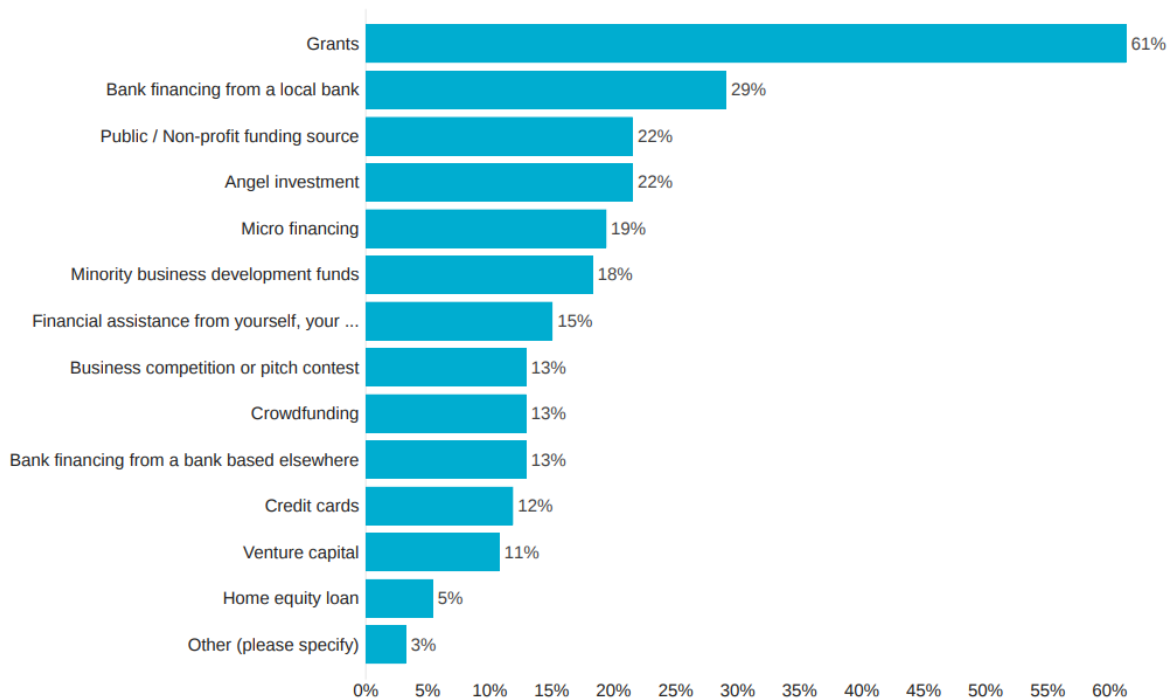
Q8 - What forms of financial assistance or support have you used in the past as part of your business development? (Reminder: Your responses to all questions will be kept confidential and will only be distributed in anonymized / aggregated form.)

112 Responses



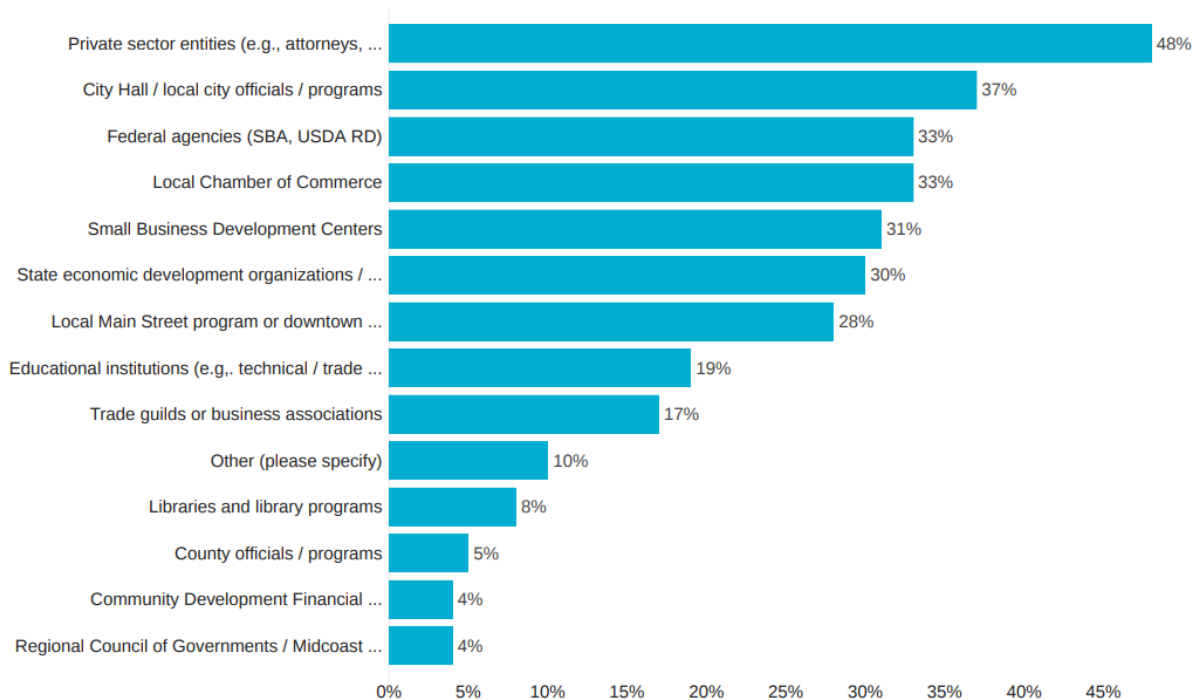
Q9 - What forms of financial assistance or support could you currently benefit from as part of your business development?

93 Responses



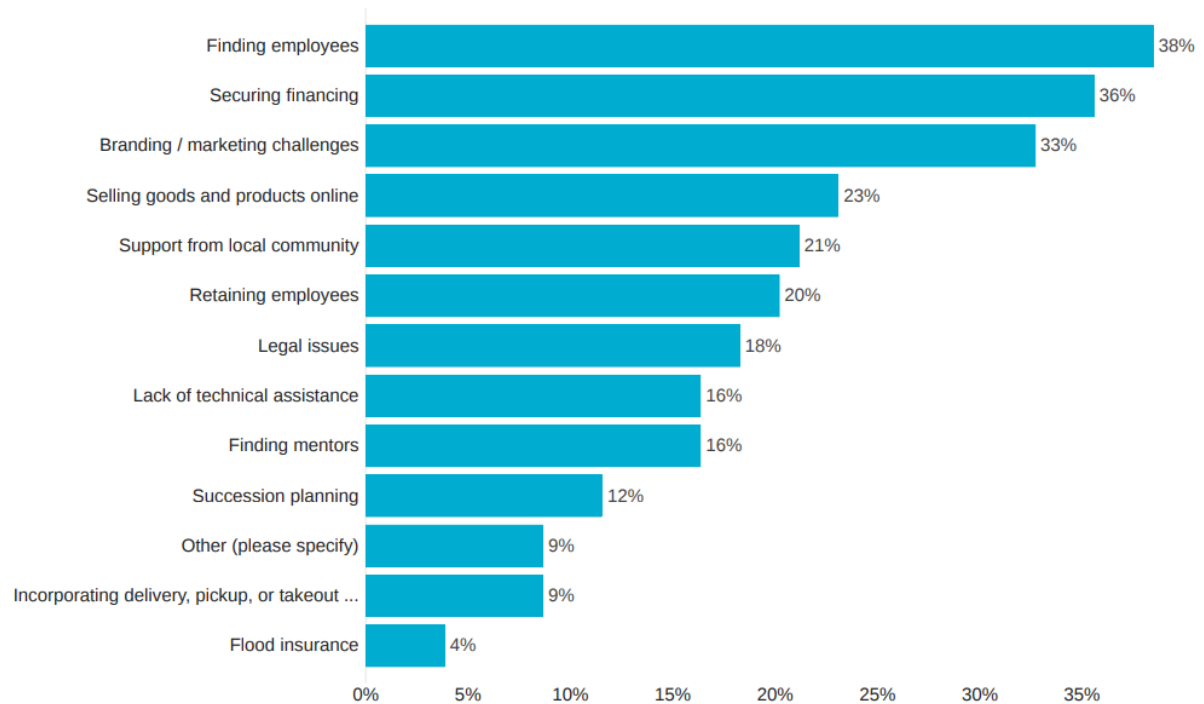
Q10 - Which of the following entities have provided you business-related support as part of your business development? (Please check all that apply.)

100 Responses



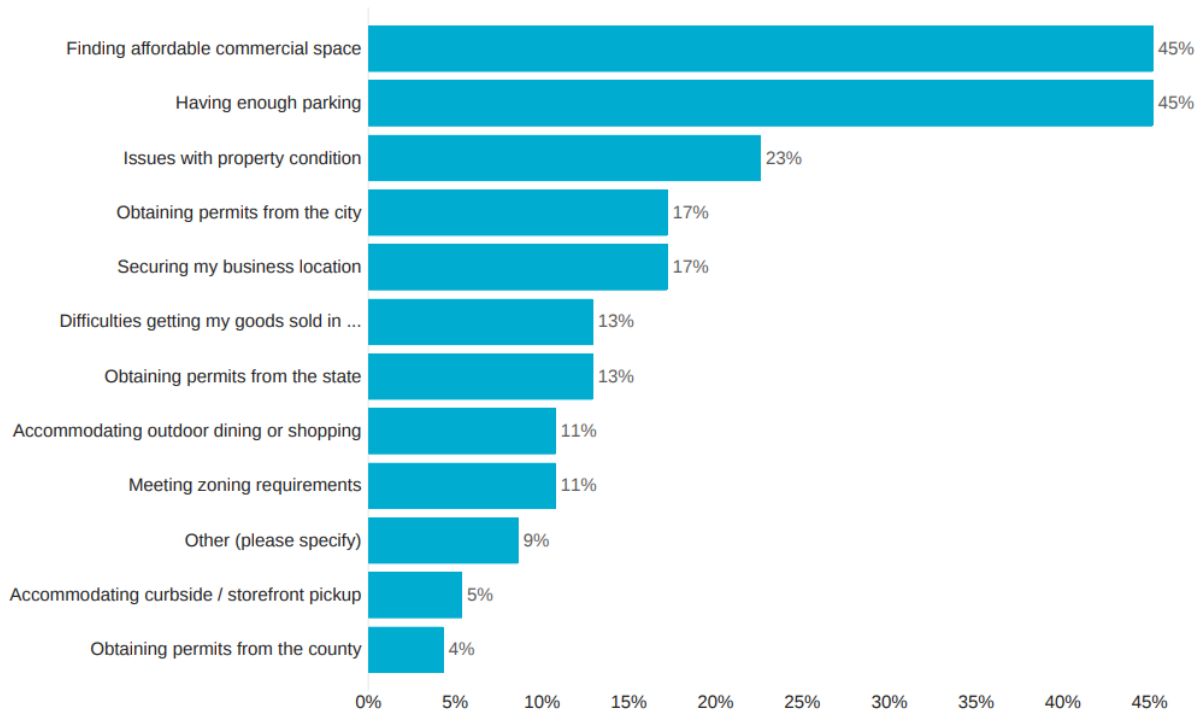
Q11 - What issues / barriers related to business planning, operations, and financing have you faced, either as you are launching your business idea or as a current business owner? (Please check all that apply.)

104 Responses



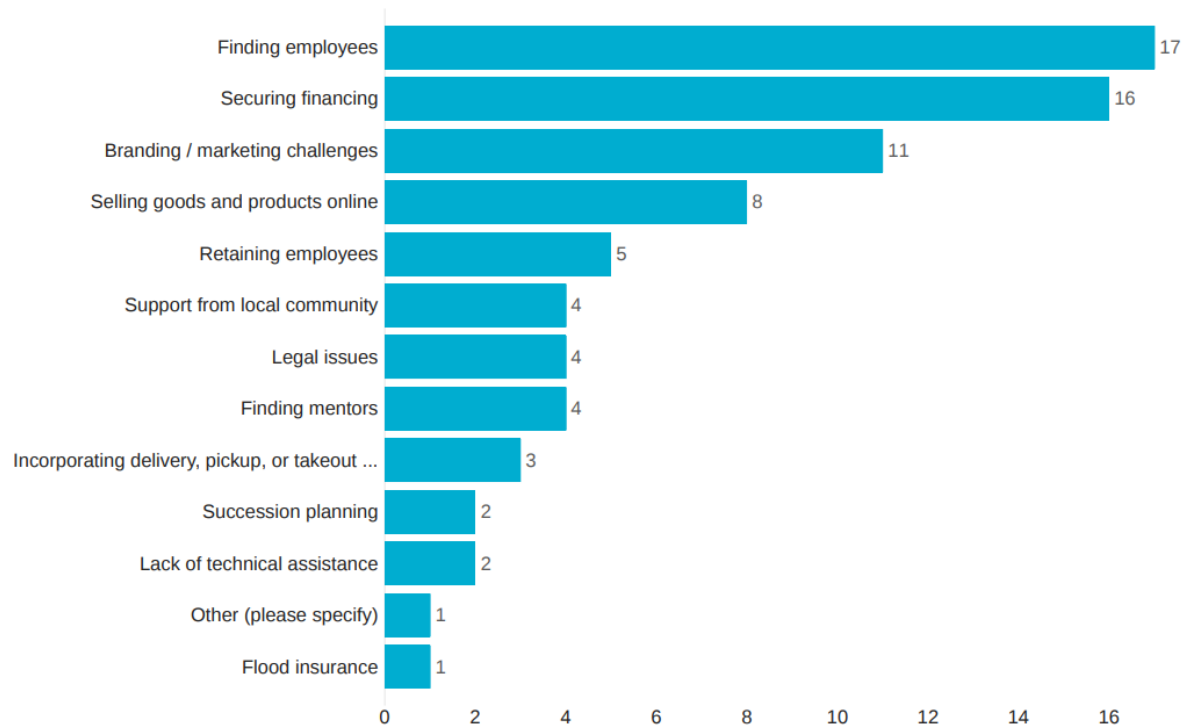
Q12 - What issues / barriers related to your present or potential business location and location design have you faced, either as you are launching your business idea or as a current business owner? (Please check all that apply.)

93 Responses



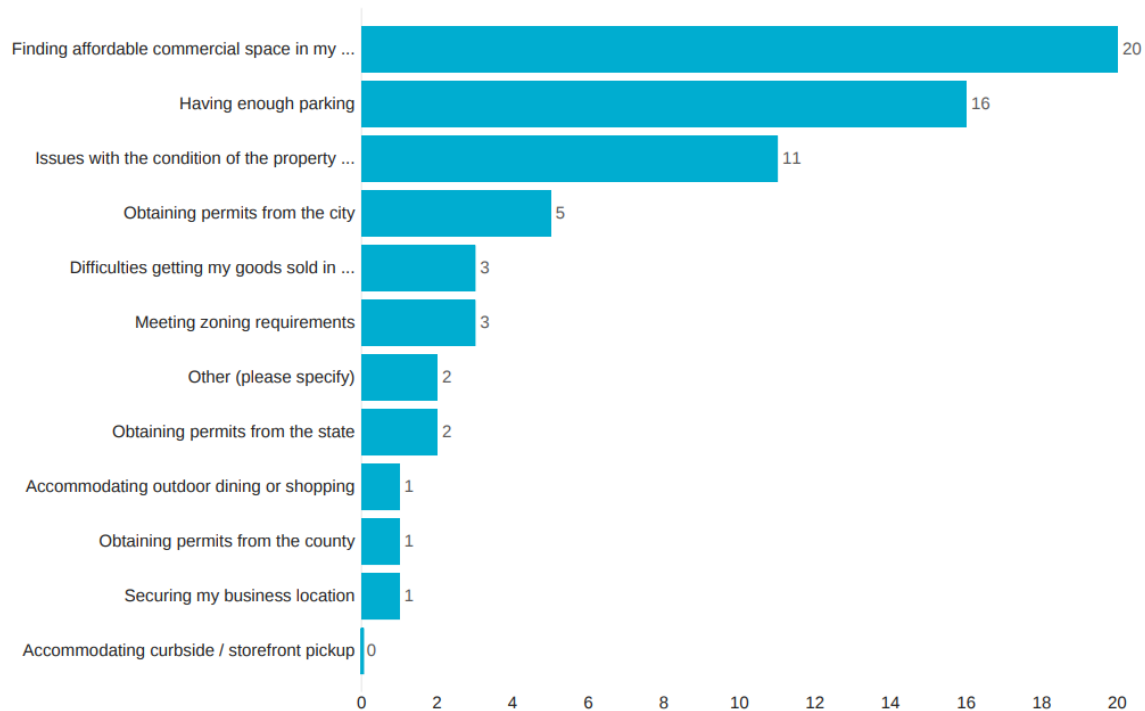
Q13 - As you think about the issues and barriers related to business planning, operations, and financing that you have faced or are currently facing, which do you think is most significant?

78 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?

65 Responses



Q15_1 - Single / Greatest Current Need

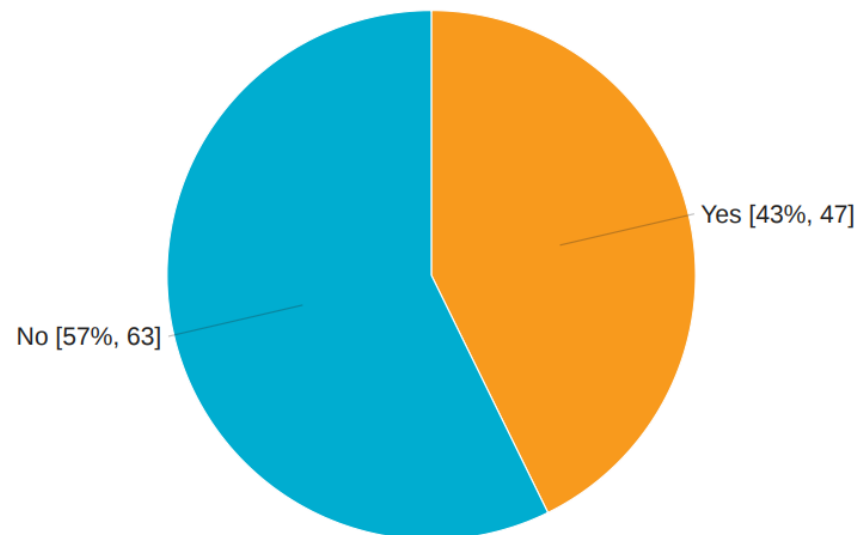
111 Responses

Single / Greatest Current Need	Second Greatest Need (Optional)	Third Greatest Need (Optional)
A clear channel or community platform for marketing and advertising	Heads of community showing up to my business	N/A
None	N/A	N/A
Finances	Hiring	Mentorship
Having the time to design.	Being able to have a steady income to leave my current ft job.	N/A
needing a commercial kitchen to do takeaway food	N/A	N/A
create more business	N/A	N/A
more support re; human resources	marketing/advertising	N/A
Financing	Affordable location	Suitable location
Legal assistance	Financial assistance	Marketing
Financing	Code enforcement information from City Hall. Only one person can answer this questions? Ridiculous	Information on holiday markets, pop ups, etc.
Additional sources of revenue	N/A	N/A
Maker space in the downtown not pushed to the fringes	Affordability	Quick startup financing
Supportive zoning	Affordable real estate	Grants
Access to more parking	N/A	N/A
Financing for a physical location	N/A	N/A
Solid business plan	Financing	Employees
Develop workforce	Training programs	N/A
Grants to help with upkeep of historic house	Zoning for expansion	Parking restrictions
foot traffic in Saco	N/A	N/A
Marketing	Growth	N/A
Money!	Fundings!	Grants!

Single / Greatest Current Need	Second Greatest Need (Optional)	Third Greatest Need (Optional)
none	none	none
Finding good employees	N/A	N/A
Additional locations	Financing	Relief from municipal zoning obstructions
Hiring employees	N/A	N/A
Brand awareness	Clientele	Finances
Customer Parking	Employee Parking	Parking
Finding employees	N/A	N/A
Securing financing	Branding	Finding and retaining employees
Employees	Parking	Renovations
Online permitting	One person to deal with permitting process	N/A
appropriate placement for my work	marketing	on line sales
Managing debt service on covid loans	Providing competitive wages and benefits for employees	Affordable housing and commercial space
Marketing/audience	N/A	N/A
financing	N/A	N/A

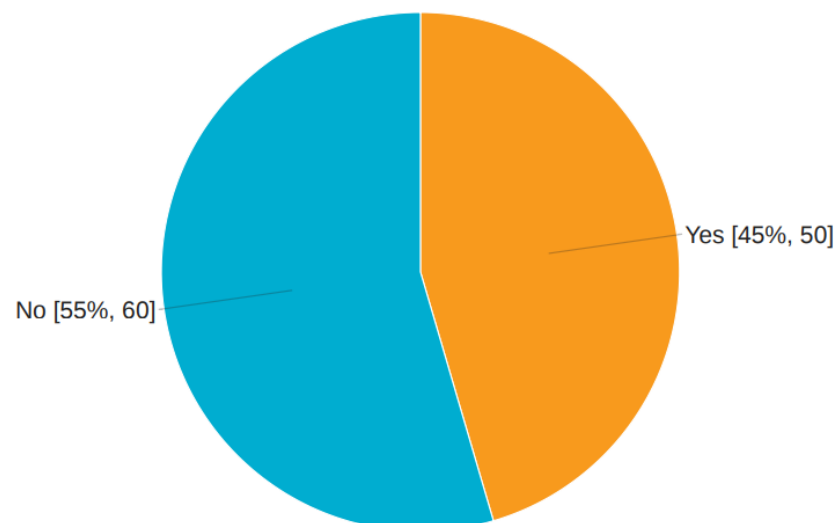
Q16 - Does the availability of housing currently impact where you choose to open or operate your business?

110 Responses



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

110 Responses



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

52 Responses

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
In terms of overall availability	1.00	5.00	4.02	0.99	0.98	44	177.00
In terms of affordability	1.00	5.00	4.02	1.15	1.33	46	185.00

Q17 - Overall, how would you rate Biddeford / Saco ...

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
As a place with a strong entrepreneur network / programs supporting entrepreneurs	1.00	5.00	3.74	1.05	1.10	101	378.00
As a place where entrepreneurs can locate and succeed	1.00	5.00	3.75	0.97	0.94	101	379.00

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

52 Responses

Outstanding support from local agencies, chamber of commerce etc and its getting better

Business community was welcoming, but had few resources available to us as new owners

Theres alot empty commercial spaces but no public information. If we werent connected with HOB, we would have no idea how to contact this landlords. Also, now Portland developers and real estate agents have bought alot of the building inventories the town offers and the square footage has increased atleast a 85%. Its about to become not affordable for families trying to set roots here to open small business.

The growth over the last five plus years has been remarkable to see!

Little support with finding a location, little support for financing options

Restrictive zoning, lack of affordable housing, lack of community event/workshop space

I have launched another business here and have been successful, but was gentrified out of my original space. The orgs like HOB and Engine are supportive, but city seems to be more focused on larger projects, not supporting little guys.

City hall places too many obstacles in front of businesses

In combination with SMS and the CoC the Twin Cities have the tools necessary to best welcome new business and help support existing businesses as long as it remains consistent and transparent.

Does not have a strong, consistent hub for entrepreneurs

From what I can tell, it is very welcoming and supportive

Good place to live and work

Commercial lease prices are increasing well beyond what the average business can accommodate with the current population and spending habits

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

71 Responses

Affordable housing for those that run a business from their homes/apts. I currently am working another ft job to keep myself afloat and not lose my home/apt.

acceptance of the community

more people

Continuing to move forward with revitalization of downtown and ALSO other business areas in Biddeford. Manage traffic better from turnpike

A program for first-time small/local business owners (as opposed to large/nat'l chains) specific to this region to help navigate permitting, securing financing, locating space(s) and negotiating rent/purchase of same, and so on

Make the legal process more succinct and less confusing

MORE INFORMATION FROM CITY HALL.

How is it possible that only one person can respond code enforcement questions? When we applied for our zoning permit for our home business it took us 5 months to get the permit. In fact, we applied and the person incharge forgot about our application and it was until we called back he sort of "remembered our weird last name"

More commercial space options available, that are affordable! More parking. Saco being more forward thinking, like Biddeford. More joint progress between the communities from the business sector.

Creating mixed use development vs all expensive housing and less focus on expensive food/drink and more focus on the other types of businesses including arts and cottage industry. There are some very talented makers in Biddeford.

More community/coop space, more public / low income housing, less restrictive zoning for flex use of space

More inclusive outreach and support of broader scope of up and coming businesses

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

68 Responses

They're both smaller towns with growth opportunities as Biddeford is now considered the youngest town in the entire state, which is booming with major potential for more local small business opportunities.

nice people

Up and coming, recognized as foodie location, mills being remodeled changed the entire town's reputation after being considered a low income unappealing area for years

Wonderfully diverse and unique community with a great history that has not been overrun like Portland

Affordable commercial rent and amazing community

The Heart of Biddeford.

We would be non where without them.

All the activities they provide all year round, the women owning businesses monthly meetings, small business information, the support.

A community filled with so much momentum around entrepreneurship, history, and local community!

Used to be the availability of affordable space but expensive housing and rising commercial rents are making it difficult for the startup business owner to locate in the downtown

Population is growing and there's a good energy that runs through the community.

There's still a lot of undeveloped space in the downtown core that can be part of a thriving community with affordable housing and available services. The market isn't yet saturated in most industries.

Great location

Great access

Great local agricultural presence

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?

75 Responses

I would want to help revamp already existing buildings and expand the arts community. I would love redo all the roads and make everything feel more welcoming to draw more folks in, but I would probably focus more putting in the work towards lower income housing and building them up and fixing folks foundations on homes so that they could stay where they've lived and grown up to watch the city around them grow with them. Help building each other up rather than putting more money into buying homes and selling them for a profit thus leaving more and more folks homeless is what I've noticed more in 2021/2022 and it's really sad to see such a cute community crumble on the core of what Biddeford used to be.

create more online business

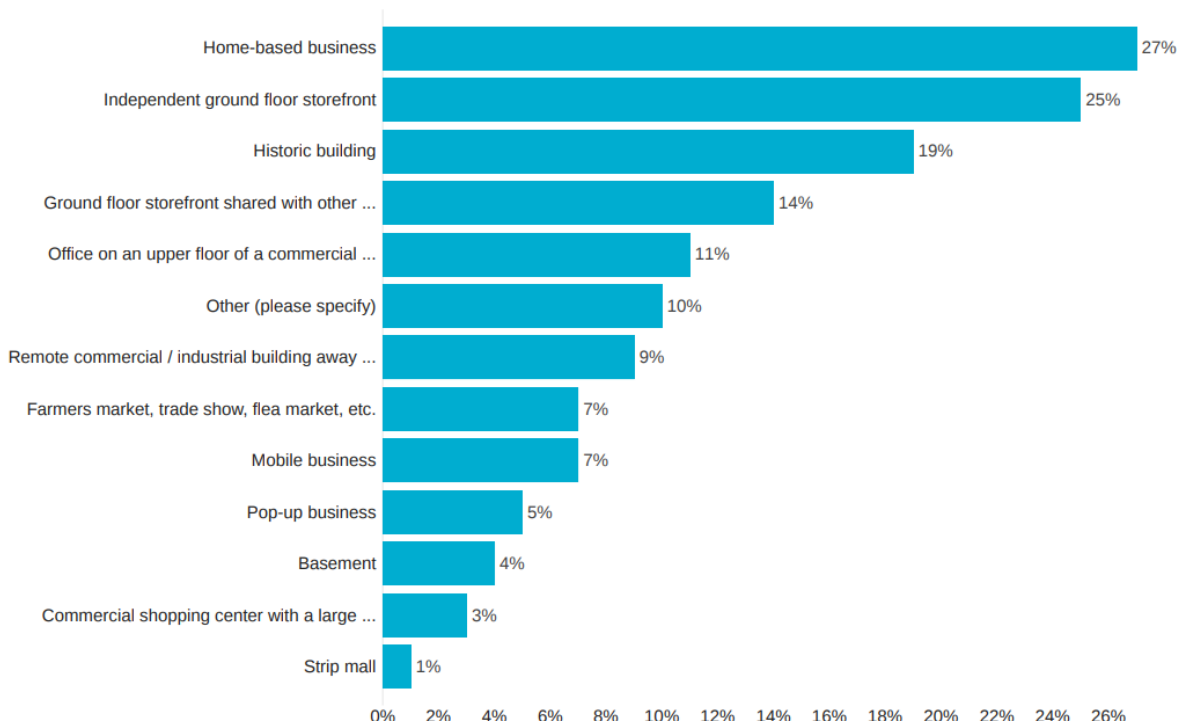
I would work to connect low income and upper income people, making the whole town more accessible and appealing to people of lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Similar to the Winterfest recently held - appealed to both classes of residents

A small business incubator program to help provide education and seed funding upon completion of the program to help establish and nurture typically disenfranchised groups who dream of setting up their own businesses; alternately, establishing a tenants' rights group or renters' union to act as an advocacy group to help collect the concerns of the local renting community and protect their interests, from rent control to parking issues to seasonal rentals and souch more, as these issues disproportionately affect the creative and DIY populations in our community, and that's a big part of what makes us so unique, vibrant, and interesting

Create more accessible art spaces, and invest in community focused spaces

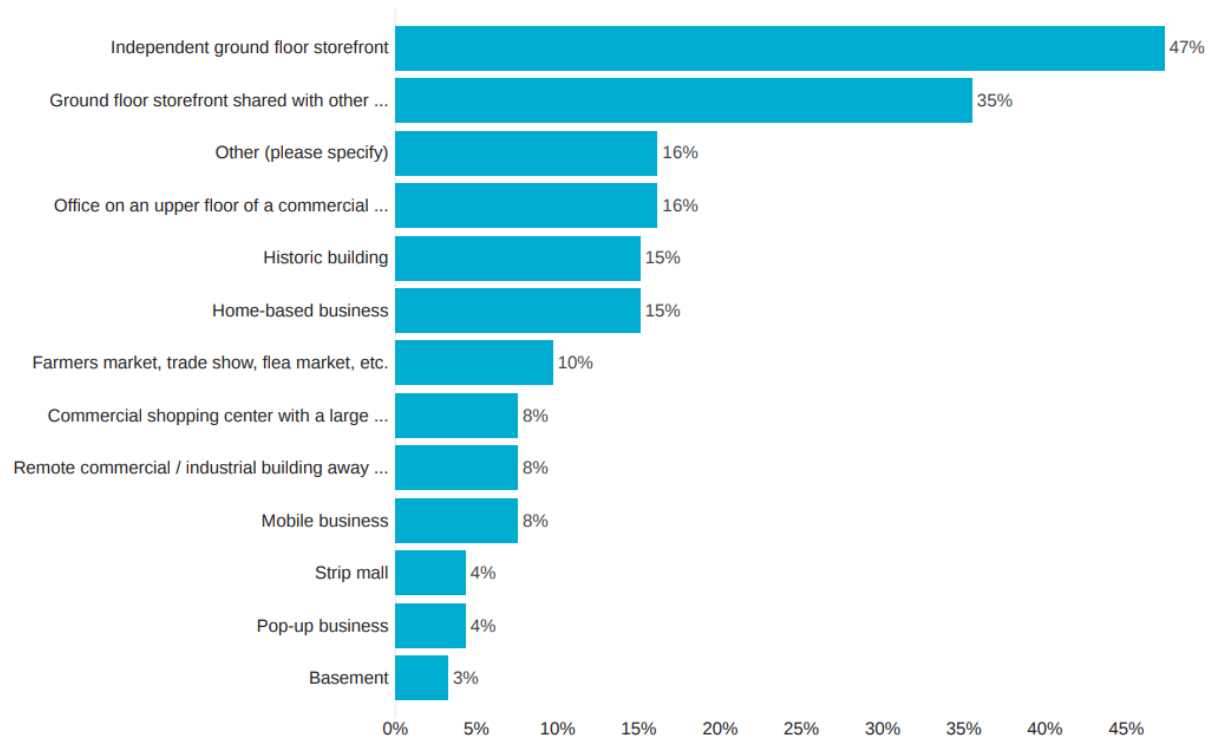
Q22 - Which of the following words or phrases could describe your current business location(s)? (Please select all that apply.)

100 Responses



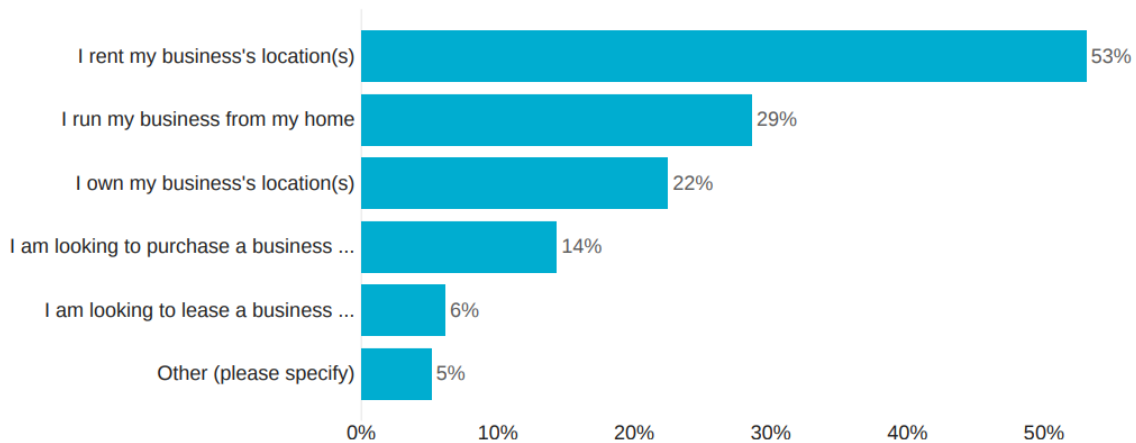
Q23 - Which of the following words or phrases could describe your ideal future business location(s)? (Please select all that apply.)

93 Responses



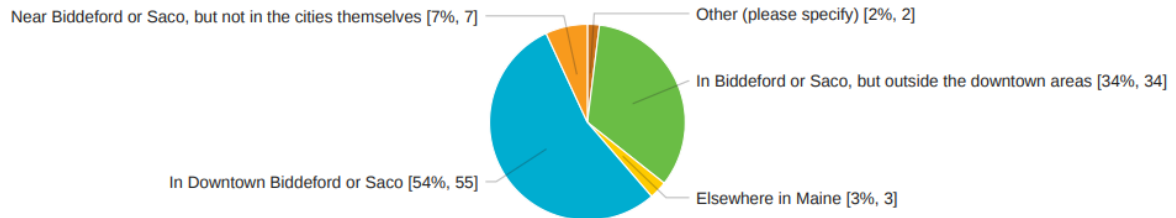
Q24 - What is your current situation relative to your business's location? (Please check all that apply.)

98 Responses



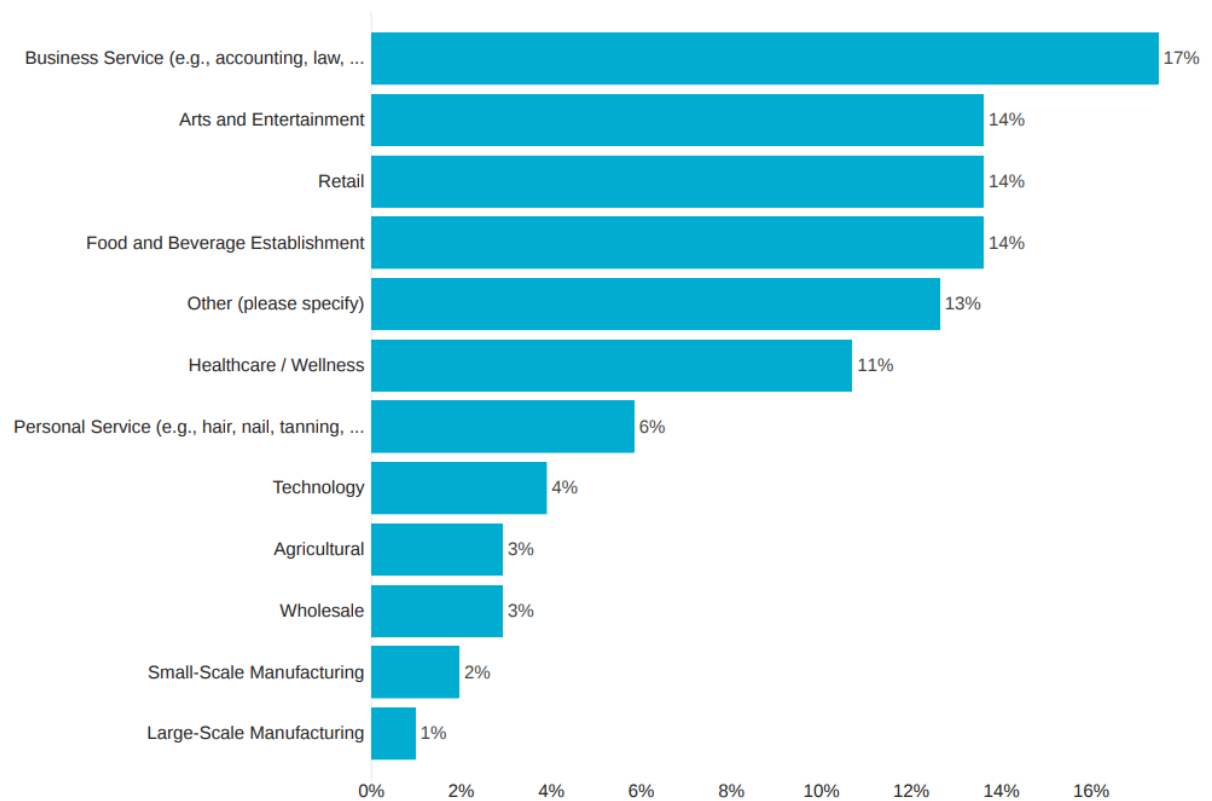
Q25 - What is the primary location of your business?

101 Responses



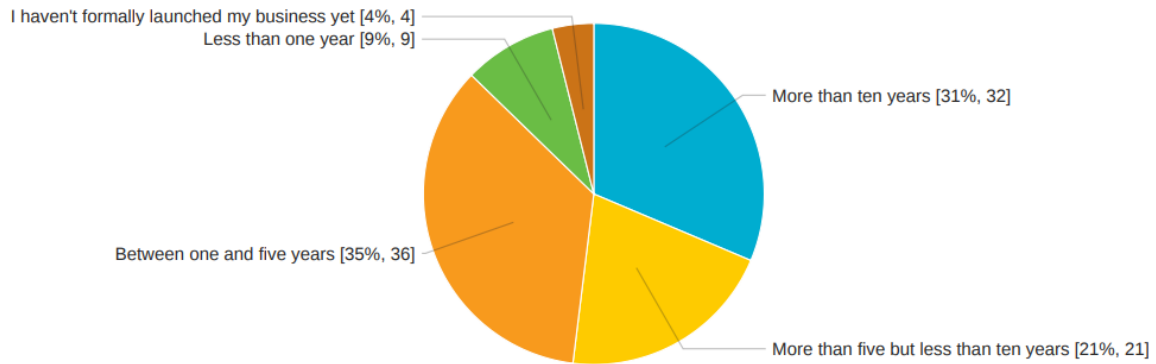
Q26 - What sector best describes your business or business idea?

103 Responses



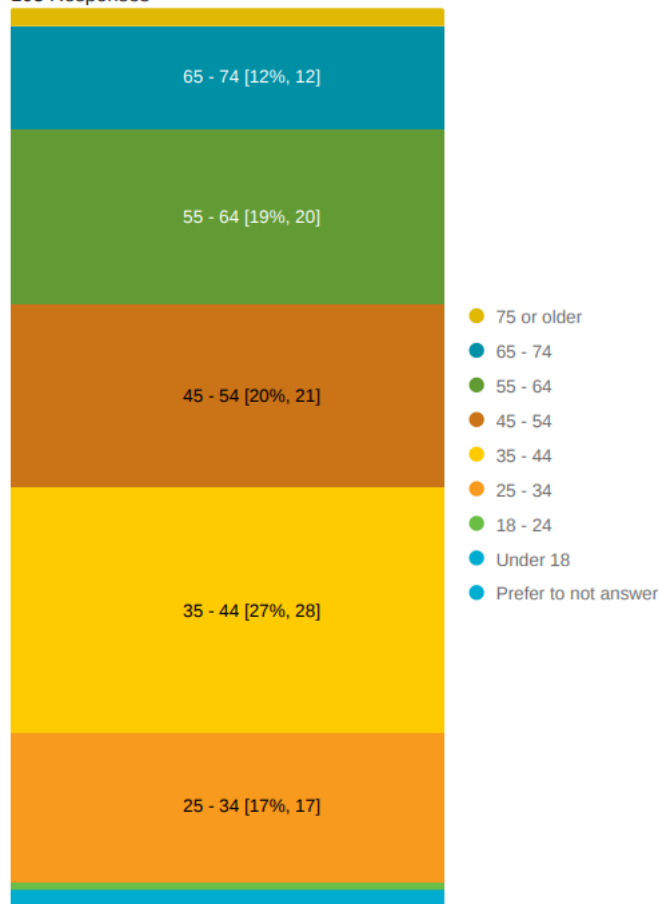
Q27 - How long have you been in business?

102 Responses



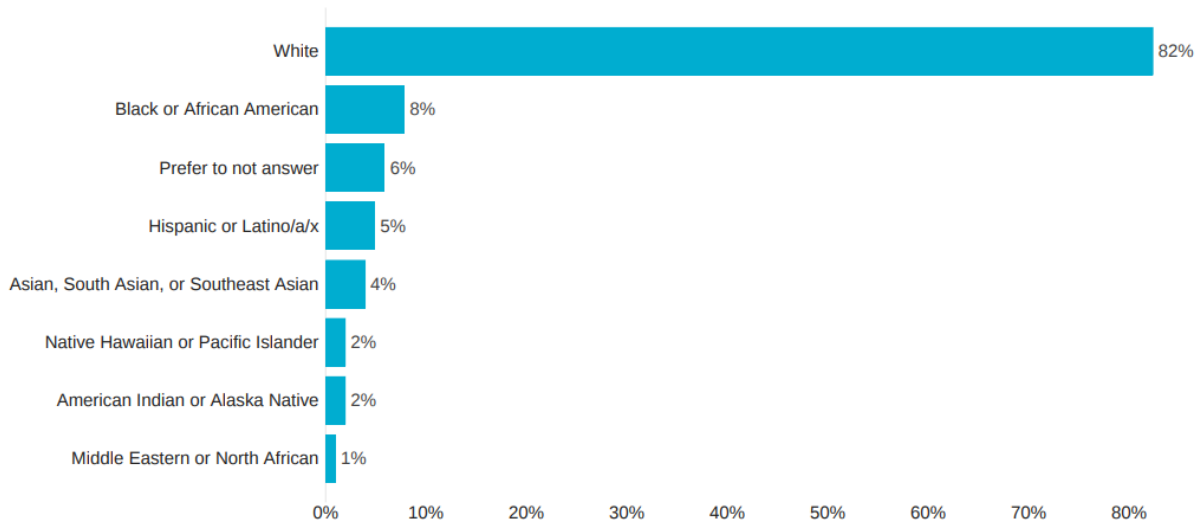
Q28 - How old are you?

103 Responses



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

102 Responses



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

100 Responses

