

2021 City of Monroe Business Survey

Presented Tuesday, April 19, 2022

Response Rate

34

Total Responses

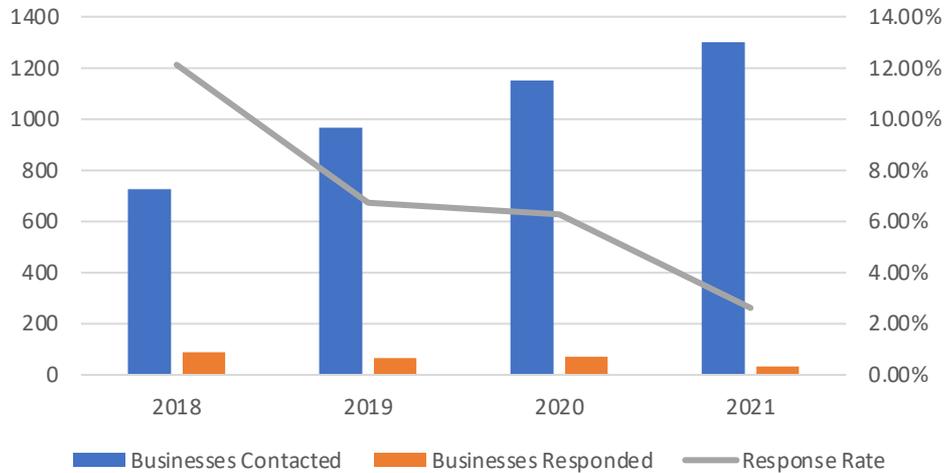
Date Created: Monday, September 13,
2021

Complete Responses: 34

Response Rate

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Businesses Contacted	726	966	1150	1299
Businesses Responded	88	65	72	34
Response Rate	12.12%	6.73%	6.26%	2.62%

Business Survey Response Rate



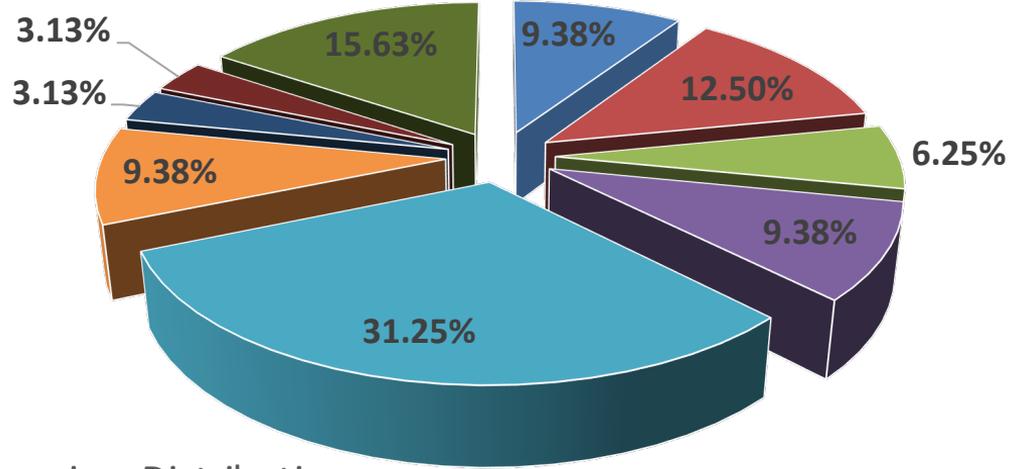
Response Rate Continues to Decline

- Businesses feel they don't have time
- Unsure of the value of taking the survey
- Didn't read announcements, unaware of the survey

Possible Solutions

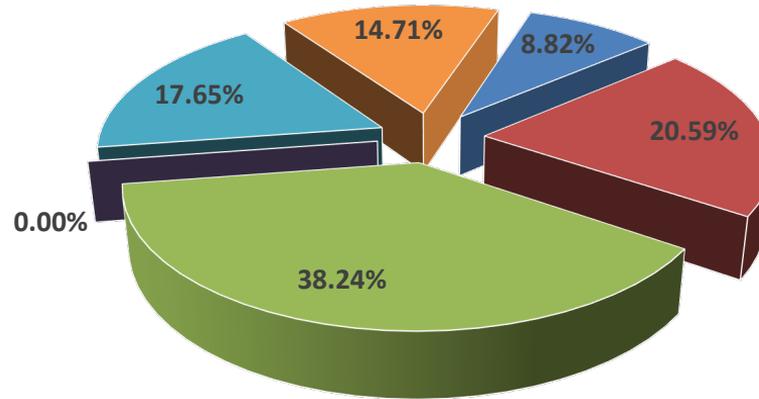
- Hire professional pollsters to administer the survey
- Provide incentives to businesses to take the survey
- Increase communication on how the survey is used in public policy decision making

Q5: What Business Sector are You In?



- Industrial, Machining, Manufacturing, Warehousing, Distribution
- Restaurant/Food Service/Coffee Shops
- Large Retail (more than 20 employees)
- Small Retail (less than 20 employees)
- Professional Services (Accounting, Legal, Medical, Dental, Architecture, Engineering, Consulting)
- Personal Services (Salons, Gyms, Wellness, Tattoo)
- Learning/Daycare
- Construction/Maintenance/Landscaping
- Other (please specify)

Q6: What has been the biggest change to your workforce in the last two years?



■ Staff Reduced Permanently

■ Staff Reduced Temporarily

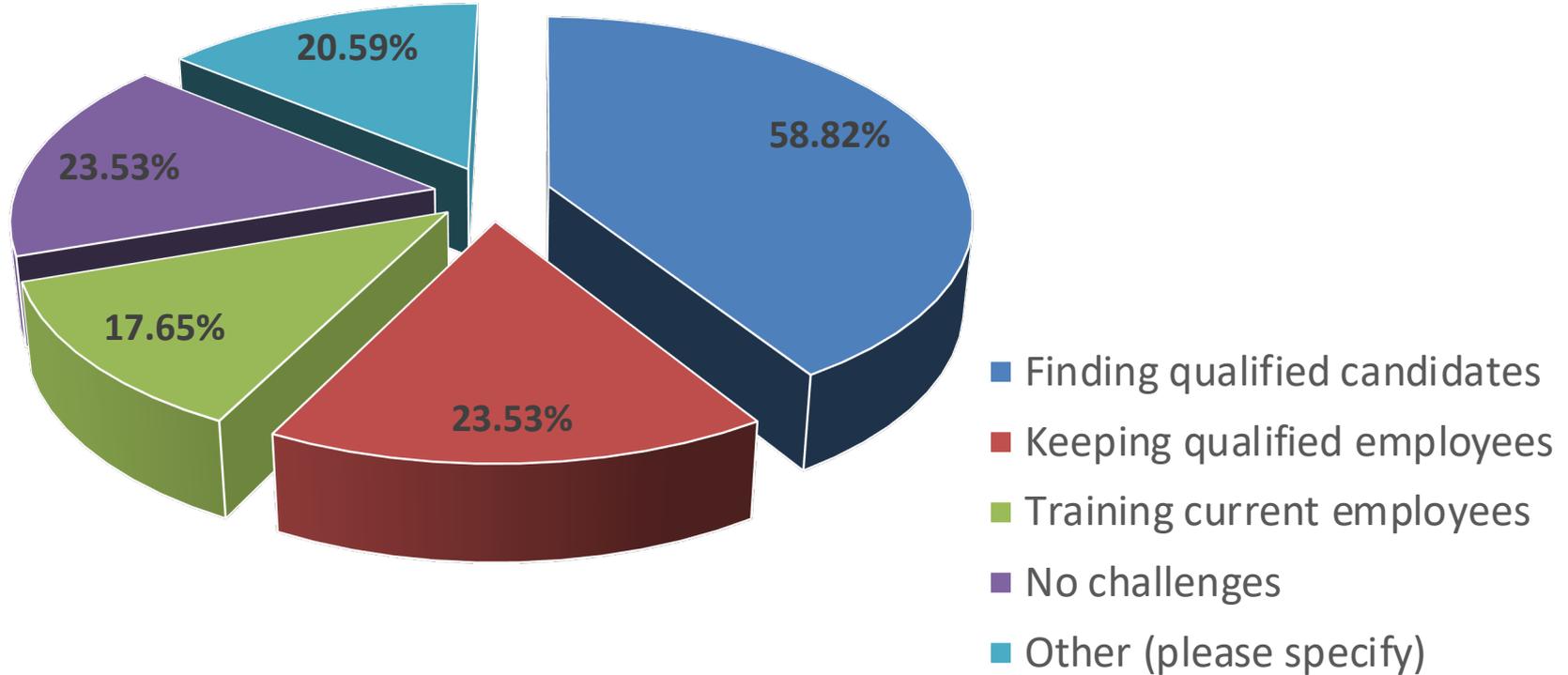
■ No Change

■ Staff Increased Temporarily

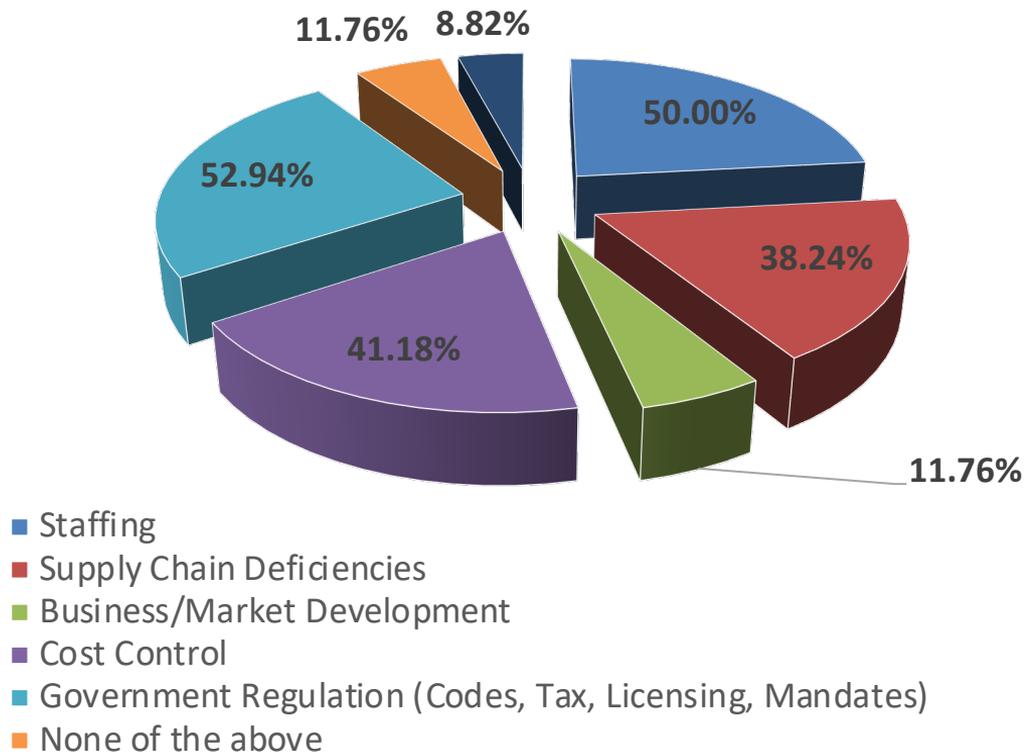
■ Staff Increased Permanently

■ Other (please specify)

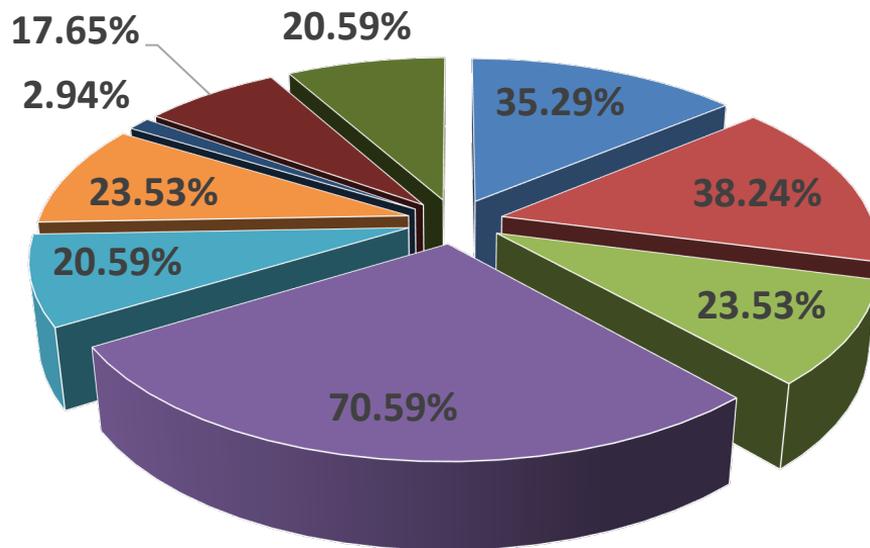
Q7: What is your biggest challenge regarding workforce? Check all that apply.



Q8: What are your challenges specific to your industry? Check all that apply.



Q9: What has been the biggest change in your business in the last two years? Check all that apply.



■ Drop in Revenues

■ Drop in Customers

■ Decrease in employee count

■ Cost Increases

■ Increase in Revenues

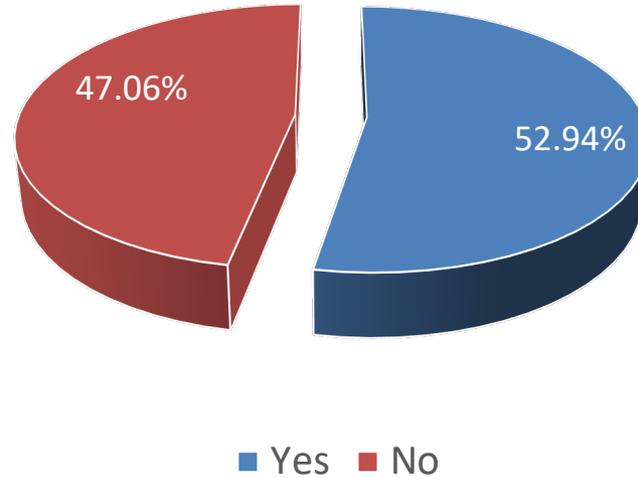
■ Increase in Customers

■ None of the above

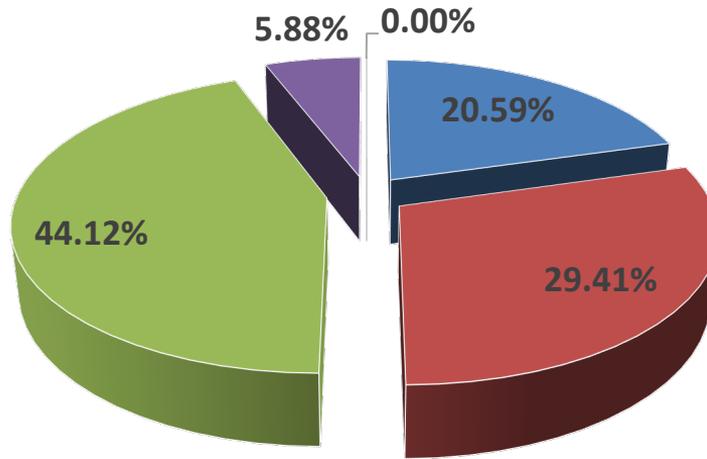
■ Increase in employees

■ Other (please specify)

Q10: Are you planning an expansion of your business in the next 5 years?

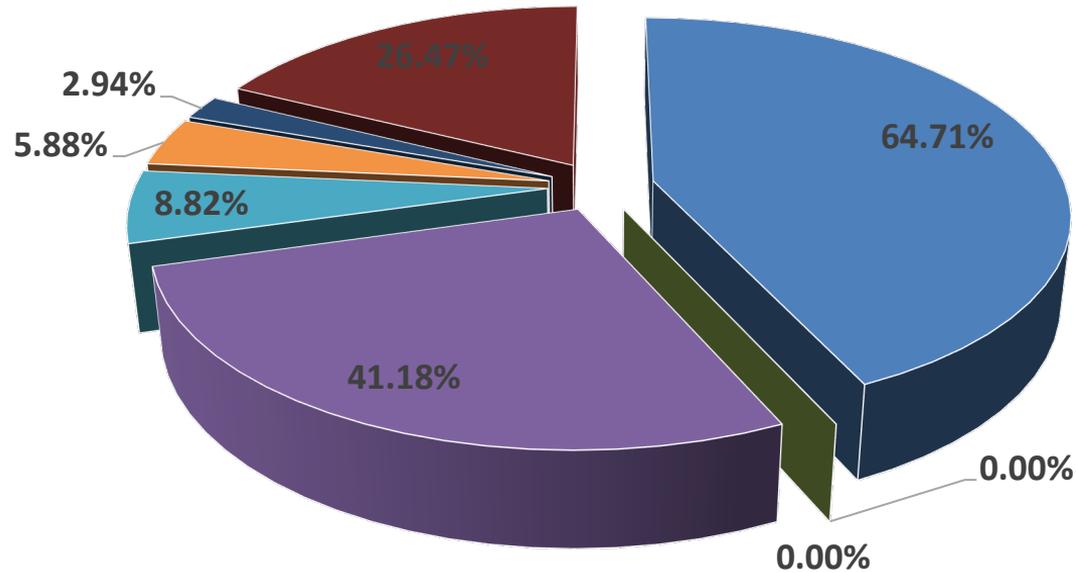


Q11: What is the outlook for your business?



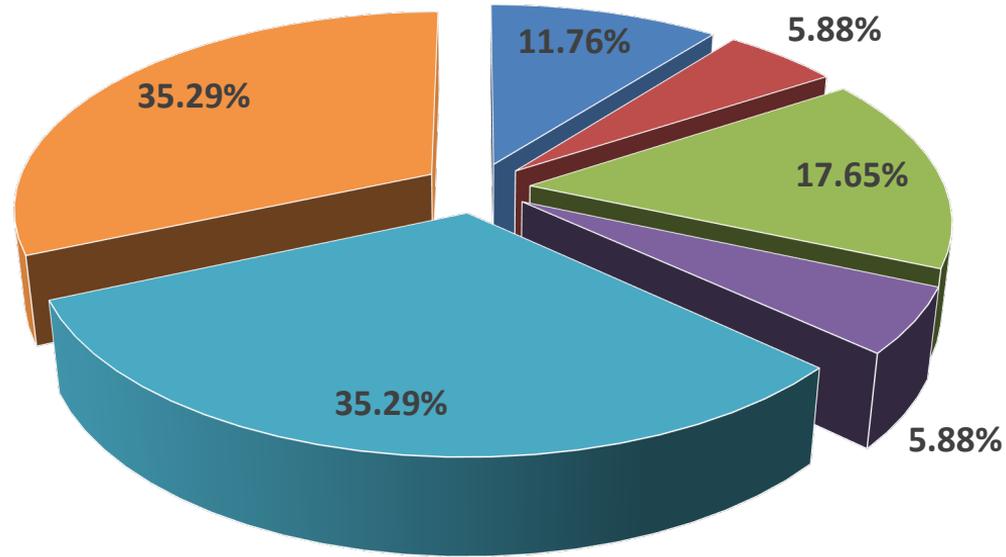
- Future looks excellent
 - Future looks good
 - Hard to tell right now
 - Future isn't looking so good
 - There is no future for my business, I'm closing down.
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Q12: What attracted you to Monroe as a location for your business? Check all that apply.



- Monroe or nearby resident and wanted to be close
- Access to talent
- Recommendation from current Monroe business owner
- None of the above
- Access to transportation
- Small town atmosphere
- Access to Market/Market Demand
- Other (please specify)

Q13: What challenges does your current location present? Check all that apply.



■ Too small for our current needs, does not accommodate growth

■ Too hard for employees to get here

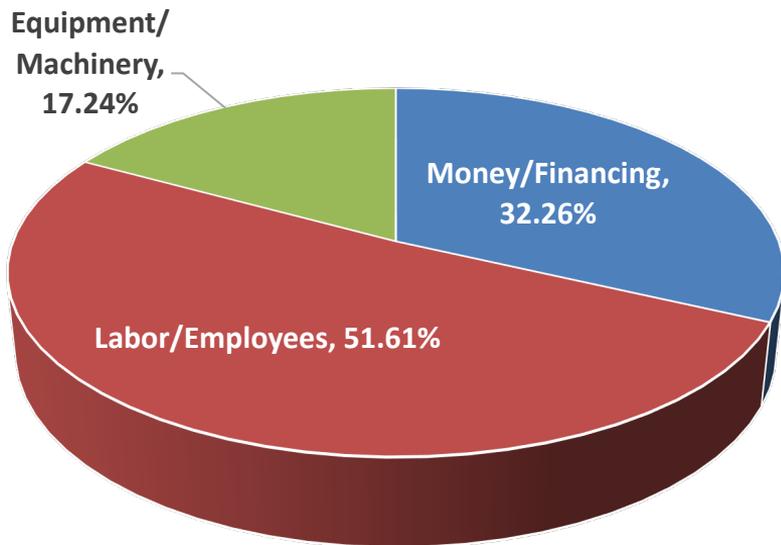
■ Cost too high for this region

■ Too far from customers

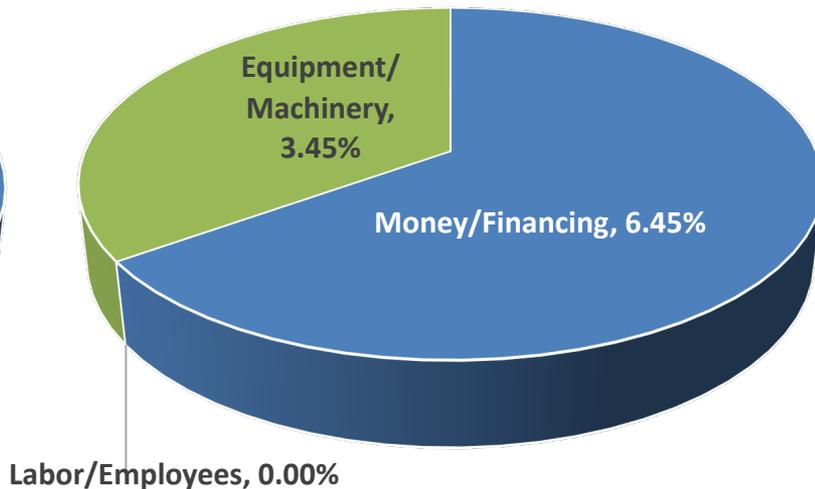
■ None of the above

■ Other (please specify)

Q14: Rank the difficulty in obtaining your current capital asset needs?

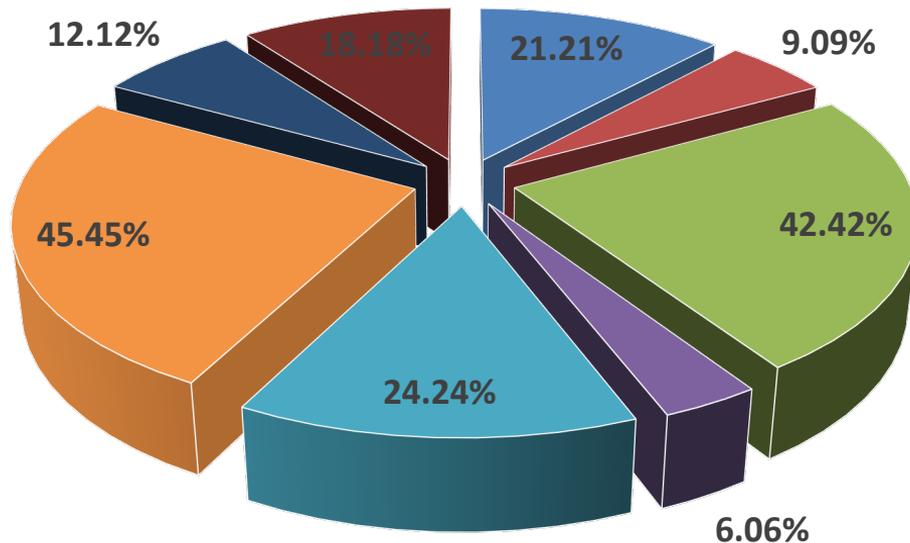


Difficult to Obtain



Easy to Obtain

Q15: What is the greatest hindrance to your growth? Check all that apply.



■ Not enough customers

■ Can't find enough staff

■ External factors beyond control

■ None of the above

■ Unable to find adequate space

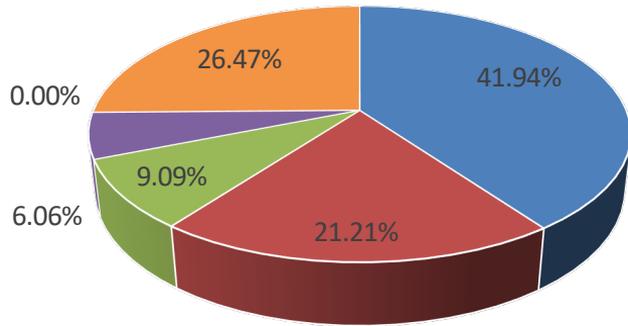
■ Can't access capital (cash or machinery/equipment)

■ Government Regulation (Codes, Tax, Licensing, Mandates)

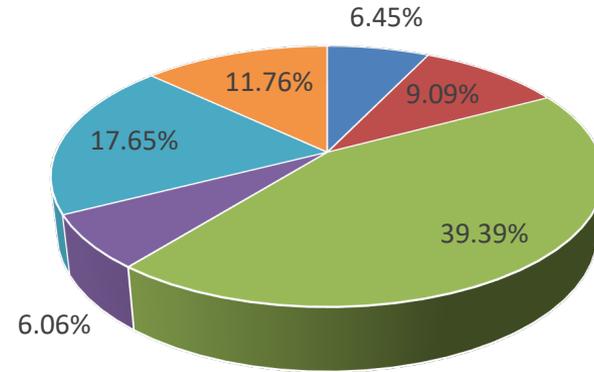
■ Other (please specify)

Q16: Please rank the city's Economic Development investment priorities.

Top Priority



Lowest Priority



- Request State Legislature finish State Route 522 between Monroe and Paradise Rd.
- Capacity improvements on US2 between Monroe and Stevens Pass
- Provide shelter and services to chronically homeless
- Support affordable housing adjacent to business districts.
- Partner with Everett Community College to provide workforce training.
- Financial support for small businesses impacted by COVID-19

Q17: What tools, actions, could government (City of Monroe, Snohomish County or WA State) take to assist in your business growth or expansion, or prevent a downsize, relocation or closure?

- Complete hwy projects for easier access to and from Monroe
- Affordable rent / better understanding of demographics information for informed retail expansion decision making.
- Streamline permitting and inspection processes.
- I haven't looked for a new staff member to replace the one I lost at the end of last year. I am hesitant to start looking since people are wanting \$55 an hour and that's more than I can afford. My work is 100% remote and finding people who can work independently is difficult.
- It's time to open the state back up. Stop funding employees to stay home. Start cleaning up the streets and make the homeless population either move into shelters, or get a job. It's time to clean up Monroe
- "We would like to stay in Monroe, but recognize that we would also like to grow/expand. We are actively looking for a space or looking to build a space. Parking in downtown Monroe is very difficult for our clients. In 2016, the state of Washington began taxing our type of service as a retail. This means taxes are significantly higher for our type of business as well.

Q17: What tools, actions, could government (City of Monroe, Snohomish County or WA State) take to assist in your business growth or expansion, or prevent a downsize, relocation or closure?

- overstep of their power. End all mandates now.
 - Help prevent negative comments on social media
 - It has become increasingly hard for potential and existing students/customers to find parking on West Main Street. There are owner operated businesses in downtown Monroe, like myself, who have not qualified for Covid-19 assistance and we continue to struggle as we are impacted by issues like a lack of public parking for our clients. I would like to see the City make it easier for local, actually small owner operated business like mine to stay in business in Monroe. As a city licensed and tax paying business owner in downtown Monroe, I feel that the city appears to have very little interest in promoting this area and driving people to it. It is all left up to Monroe Chamber of Commerce and any other small downtown groups to promote this area.
 - resolve the unwarranted COVID restrictions before I move out of state.
 - Small town and not enough available retail space available in 15,000 sq. ft. plus size.
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Q17: What tools, actions, could government (City of Monroe, Snohomish County or WA State) take to assist in your business growth or expansion, or prevent a downsize, relocation or closure?

- Vote to get rid of any COVID related restrictions. Do not allow any COVID related mandates.
 - Don't be anything like King County
 - city of Monroe in my eyes is doing an excellent job of communicating with business owners, Organizations, Community members, Workers in the community, and all around involvement with on going interest and events in Snohomish County especially local in Monroe. Monroe shows appreciation to and for the community and its members. I wish all towns were more like the City of Monroe. Well Organized, efficient, caring, interested, involved. Thank You for all you do, and the support you have given me during my transition into the East County Navigation position, contracted through Snohomish County. It has been a pleasure working with the city of Monroe and its staff members.
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- Better commute for possible employees outside Monroe, 522 and Hwy 2
 - With additional population growth, i.e. more cars on the road, there needs to be more funding put towards transportation and easing congestion on roadways. E.g. US 2 needs to be four lanes from Everett to the top of Stevens Pass. Also bypassing would be another option to look at. Thanks for your interest!
 - Greater emphasis on vaccinating residents. There was great difficulty finding an appropriate booster shot. Finally find one in City of Snohomish.
 - More Zoning for Business properties
 - Relocation is on the table for us due to not feeling safe getting from our office to cars, especially late at night. The police force has been rude to my employees, making me look for new office space.
 - Remove the mandates.
 - Keep a lid on local sales tax increases
 - The businesses that are NOT on Main street need to be acknowledged! Signage on hiway 2 and on 522 coming into Monroe.
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Take Aways from 2021 Results

- ✓ Response rate continues to decline
 - ✓ Task the Business Recruitment, Retention and Expansion Subcommittee with evaluating causes and solutions to low response rate.
 - ✓ The Industry Sector composition of the community continues to show a large segment in Professional Services (Accounting, Legal, Medical, Dental, Architecture, Engineering, Consulting) and Personal Services (Salons, Gyms, Wellness, Tattoo)
 - ✓ Main obstacles to businesses right now are finding an adequate workforce and dealing with current inflationary pressures.
 - ✓ Majority of Businesses will be looking to expand their business in 2022.
 - ✓ Most choose Monroe as their business location to be close to home and reduce commuting time.
 - ✓ Top Priority for businesses is mitigating traffic issues from Hwys 2 & 522
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