



Case Studies for Economic  
Developers to Mitigate Damage from  
**The Coronavirus Pandemic**

&

National Survey Results About the  
Economic Development Response to  
**Business Impacts of Coronavirus**



SizeUp



The coronavirus pandemic is disrupting the world in many ways. The primary concern is that lives are protected, and the crisis passes quickly. Along with the disastrous public health effects, the spread of the disease is having devastating economic impacts on workers, families, and businesses.

While public health, public policy, and businesses are working to respond to the impact of this novel coronavirus, so too must the profession of economic development. Economic developers and policy makers are seeing guidance on how their communities can manage a response in the midst of this crisis. Fortunately, there are solid examples of how economic developers and policy makers are taking action in response to the economic impact.

**The following are ten case studies of how economic development organizations (EDOs), businesses, and individuals are proactively engaging to protect their local workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses. They are models that can be implemented by economic developers in their own communities.**

Interspersed with these case studies are the results of an April 8-15, 2020 national survey of economic developers. The survey results provide economic development practitioners with information related to how their peers are experiencing and responding to the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The survey results fall into eight overall findings which economic development organizations (EDOs) can use to:

- Develop policy and programs to assist their local business community.
- Compare their community's situation to others.
- Compare their organization's response to other EDOs.
- Evaluate the change in focus, programs, and in the economic development profession

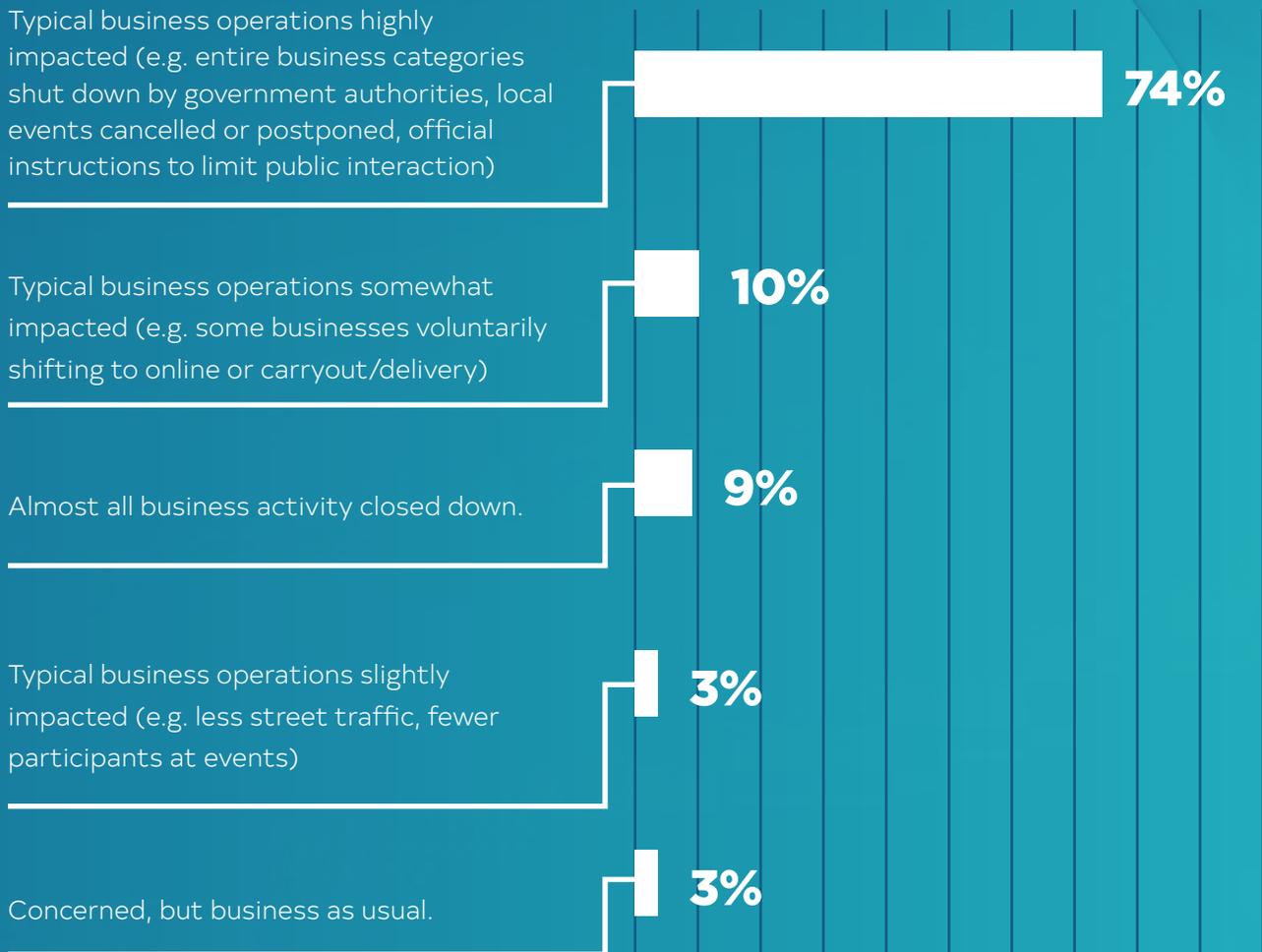
# Survey Results A

## Economic Damage is Deep

The public policy and personal decisions of individuals to stay at home, away from work, and away from businesses they typically frequent has resulted in comprehensive economic impacts on communities.

74% of economic developers reported that their community was experiencing typical business operations being highly impacted with 9% indicating that almost all business activity has closed down.

### How would you describe your community's current situation?



# 1. Transition Work

As people work remotely, schools close, and people implement social distancing, it is destroying demand for Uber rides and the income drivers receive to take people around. But people staying home can create new jobs in which these ride-share workers can immediately transition. For example, they can serve emerging market demands such as becoming delivery people. Grocery delivery drivers are experiencing booming business. Becoming a restaurant delivery driver can help the ride share worker keep income coming in and also keep local businesses open and employing their workers. As another example, a 5-star, fine-dining caterer in Richmond, California was negatively impacted from corporate cancellations, so they reinvented their offerings to provide drive-through farm-to-table artisan pizza and salad. They are also willing to deliver the pizza or rent out their private chefs to peoples' homes. Economic developers need to work with the entrepreneurs and businesses in their community to identify how the type of work they are doing may be able to be transitioned into some other type of work.

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Kim Bavington is the owner and lead instructor of the Las Vegas, Nevada-based company, Art Classes for Kids. Her company, and therefore her income, comes from art lessons attended by kids after school, during holiday weeks, and during summer art camps. Due to Coronavirus she had to cancel her weekly classes and spring break art camps. She also is

nervous about being able to have her summer art camps because of ongoing coronavirus risks and limitations. These summer camps represent about half of her company's annual revenue.

To make the market even worse, restaurants and casinos are closing in Southern Nevada where, according to Dr. Stephen Miller, director of the



Center for Business and Economic Research at UNLV, gaming and hospitality represent more than 70 percent of the total economy. When the businesses that represent over 70 percent of the economy turn off, that impacts her market of customers who now have less in their wallets to pay for her services.

Anticipating a risky future with the possible disappearance of the income from her summer peak season, Ms. Bavington immediately pivoted out of necessity to find new revenue opportunities by transitioning her work from face-to-face instruction to online education. On March 16 she hosted her first YouTube live art class teaching how to draw Van Gogh's sunflowers. The number of attendees was so encouraging that she plans to continue these free art classes for children, many of which are home while their schools are closed and need activities to do during the day. She is growing

her audience base and as it grows so can her income because she receives a share of the sale of the art supplies she uses in her lessons, which viewers can purchase through her ART CLASSES FOR KIDS website at

**[www.artclassesforkids.com](http://www.artclassesforkids.com)**.

Within hours of her first day live streaming her art class her company and the online class made the local news on the Las Vegas NBC affiliate.

Transitioning her business to the Internet expands her market from just the people living in the Las Vegas metro area into a global audience of parents who want their kids to learn how to create and learn about art as well as keep them engaged with an educational and fun activity for FREE as they are out of school and stuck at home.

More information at **[www.artclassesforkids.com](http://www.artclassesforkids.com)** and **[www.youtube.com/artclassesforkids](https://www.youtube.com/artclassesforkids)**



## Survey Results B

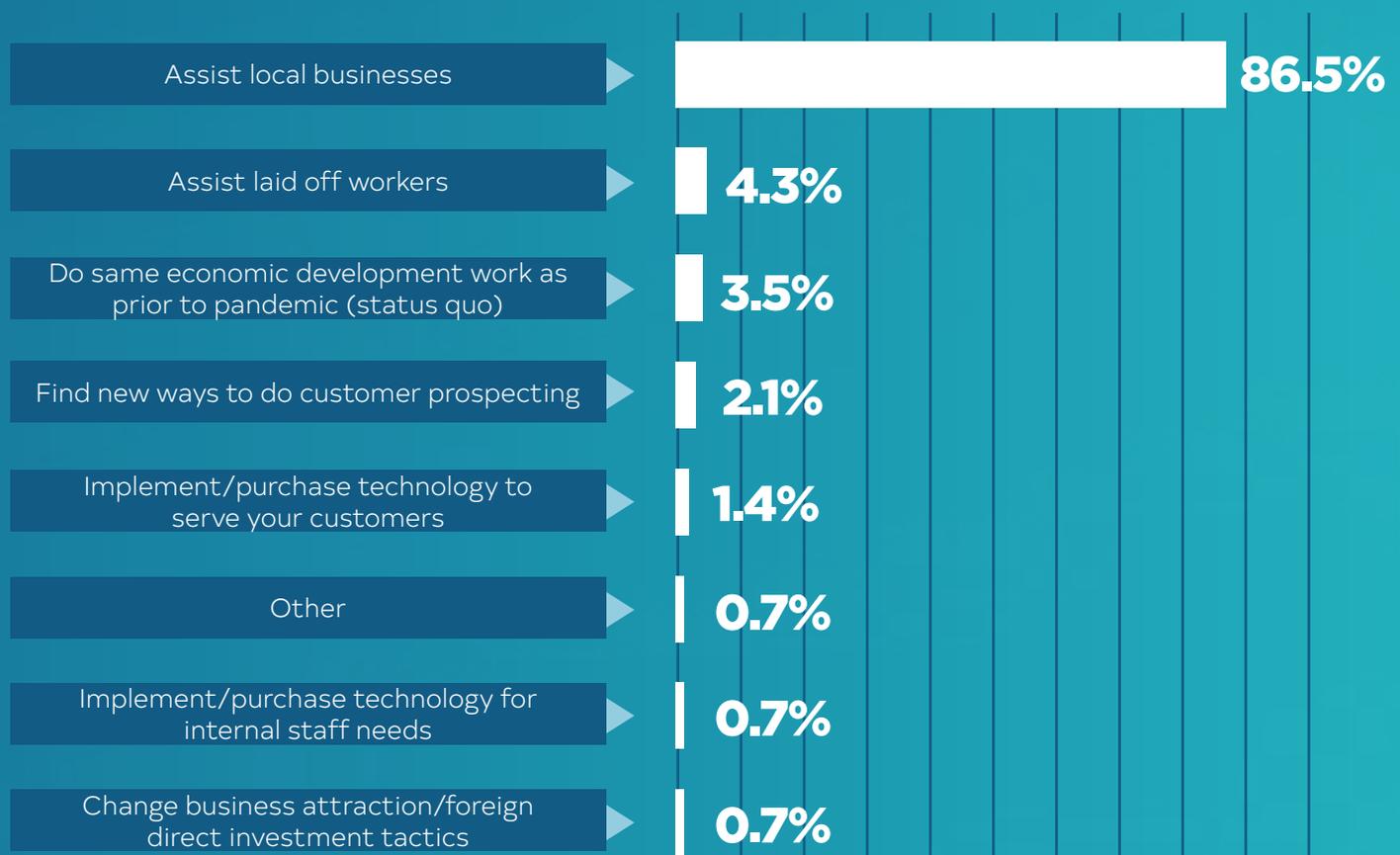
# Assisting Local Businesses is The Top Priority. Everything Else Barely Registers.

The coronavirus crisis has revealed what data has shown all along, which is that local businesses are the economy of every community. When it comes to economic developers saving their economy, they are hyper-focused on supporting local businesses. Everything else has become nearly insignificant.

87% of economic developers' top priority is assisting local businesses. When combined with the 4% that have made assisting laid off workers their top priority, over 90% of the top priority is local businesses and workers.

Less than 4% are trying to maintain the status quo of doing the same work they were doing prior to the pandemic in the least status quo situation of most economic developers' careers.

## In today's context of the Coronavirus pandemic, what is your highest priority in economic development now?

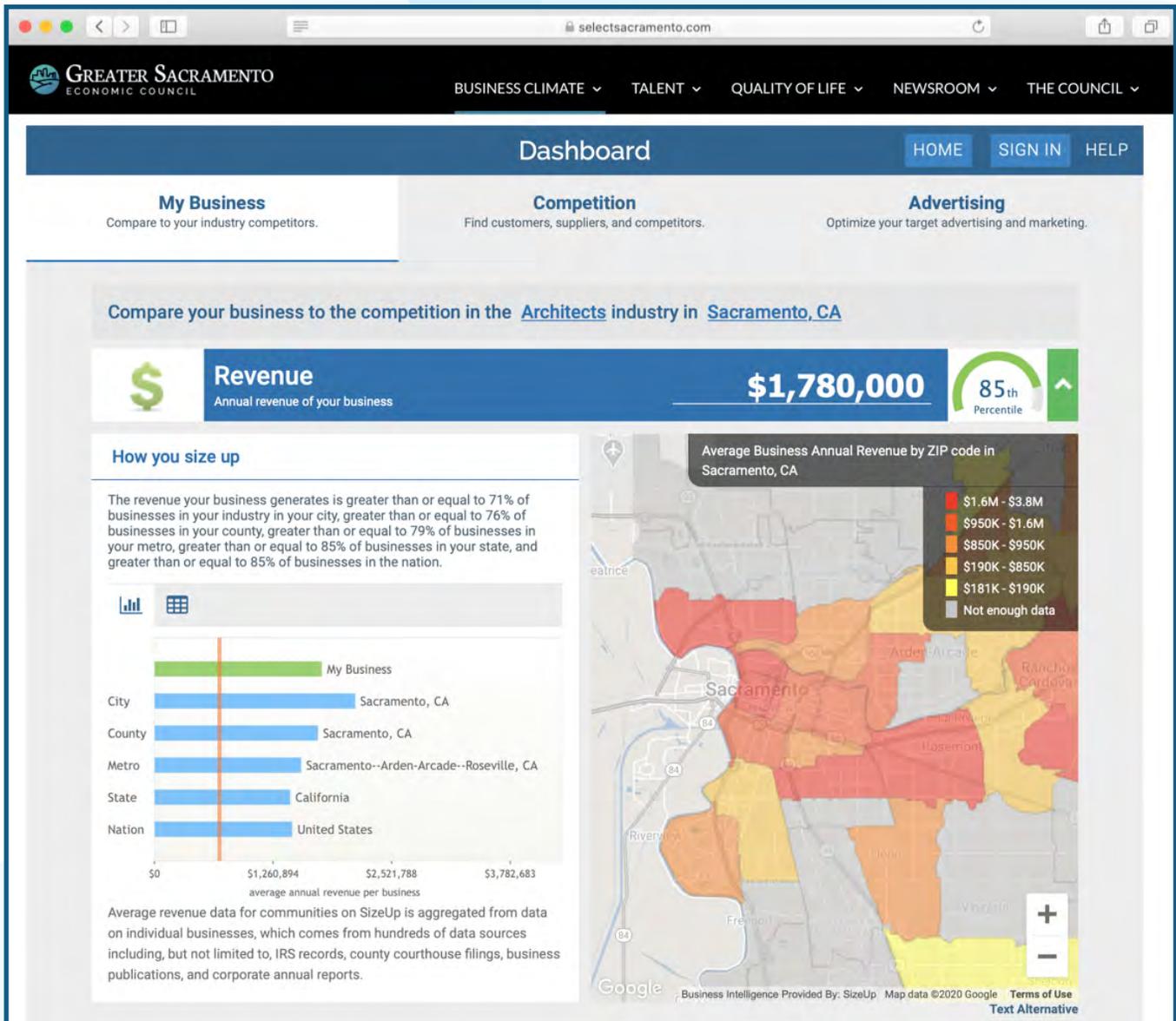


## 2. Online Local Business and Entrepreneur Assistance

Local and small businesses have always been the primary driver of economic growth, including the vast majority of new job creation. From 1993 to 2015 small businesses created 425% more net new jobs than large businesses (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics). Small businesses are even more important to the economy in the current climate and future recovery. Yet local entrepreneurs and businesses are facing existential challenges due to the economic impact of coronavirus.

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA – Government coronavirus policies require that certain businesses shut their doors for what could be an extended period of time and asking residents to remain at home except for essential needs. This

leaves business owners at home thinking about how they can improve business and gain back lost revenues once things get back to normal. With no ability to go and sit down with any business advice experts because of physical distancing



restrictions, online resources will be the only option for most local business owners. This has heightened the need for economic development organizations to provide online services.

The Greater Sacramento Economic Council decisively responded to the crisis local businesses and entrepreneurs are facing by choosing to provide online business assistance on their website. "During this social stay order, getting information in the hands of our businesses is our top priority," said Barry Broome, CEO of GSEC, who was interviewed on CBS and iHeartRadio's KFBK news about the launch. "SizeUp is simple to use even for people with no technical expertise. This will be a great turnkey tool for our small businesses."

GSEC went from having the initial idea to the public launch of SizeUp LBI on their website in less than one week. The strong demand and use of the service surprised even the GSEC staff.

Within one week of launching the business assistance software on our website the SizeUp page immediately became the 6th most visited page in total visits compared to all other webpages over the last 6 months," said Danielle Casey, Executive VP at GSEC.

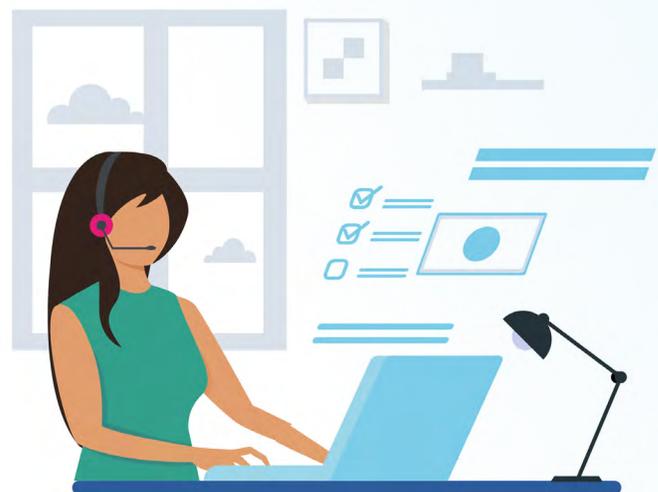
"This tool is beneficial so that any business in the Greater Sacramento region can access market research and business intelligence. This is going to be critical for starting a new business or gathering Industry information if you're an existing company. Especially now, this tool is designed to be helpful to business owners who are at home thinking about what they can do to improve business and gain back some lost revenues once normal operations resume.

Additionally, aspiring entrepreneurs may be at home planning to open a business they've always dreamed of but have never had the time to put together a plan. Lastly, workers who have been laid off may be planning a business out of necessity due to company closures. Online resources are the top option available right now and are generally the best option anyway because entrepreneurs tend to work outside of traditional 9-5 work hours. Businesses need help now more than ever and providing SizeUp is one way that GSEC will directly give them assistance," said Casey.

Online economic development software has been a growing trend for EDOs to provide as a service. They will be a long-term complement to personal services moving forward.

More information at:

[www.SelectSacramento.com/sizeup](http://www.SelectSacramento.com/sizeup) and  
[www.SizeUp.com](http://www.SizeUp.com)

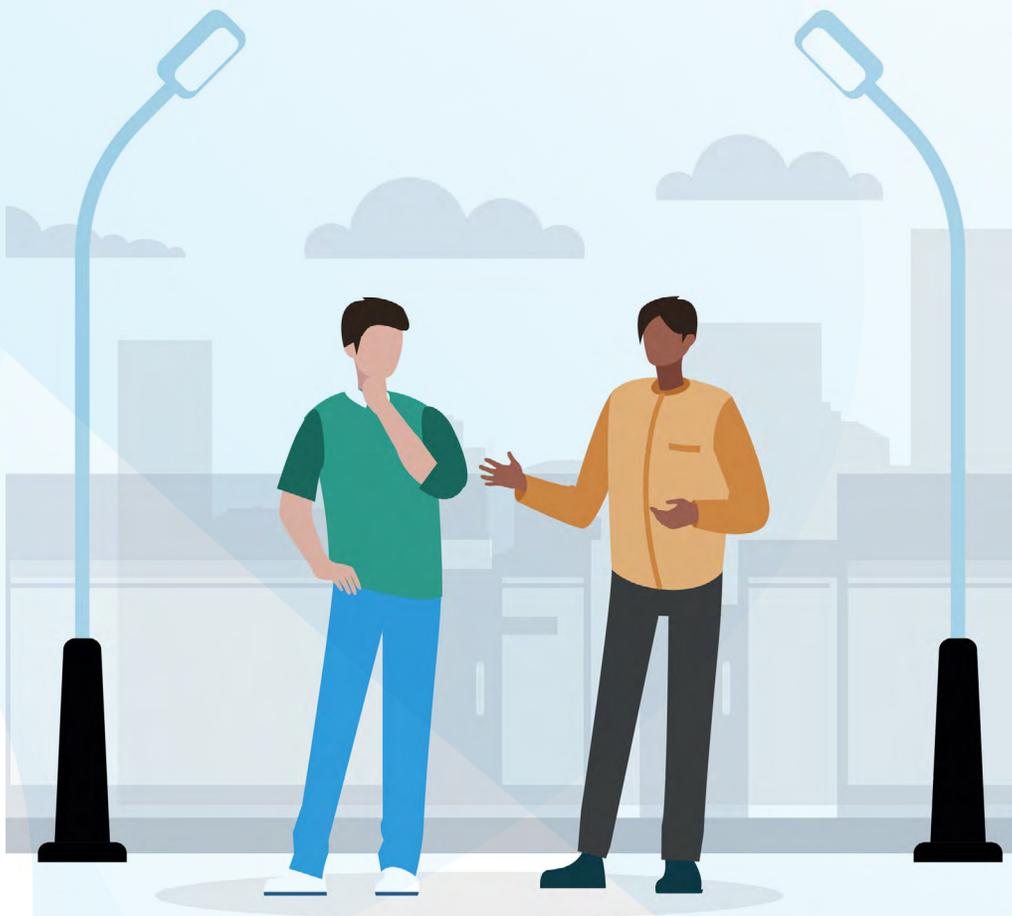


### 3. Engaging Property Owners

Property owners may want their business tenants to pay their rent on time and the banks that have mortgages on small business owned properties may also want their regular payment. However, if that small business goes out of business the property owner is not going to get paid. Property owners, banks, and small businesses need to see their interconnected success or failure. Economic developers need to help facilitate these difficult conversations and motivate all parties to accept a shared sacrifice, so every business is able to survive. It doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing conversation but in the short-term people may need to pay what they can as best as they can. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti temporarily suspended commercial evictions for business owners unable to pay rent due to the coronavirus emergency.

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS - Numerous restaurants are facing the difficult decision whether they may need to close their businesses as a result in the steep decline of business as people no longer go out to lunch at work or are being directed to stay home. Young Investment Company, a Jonesboro, Arkansas-based property

owner of downtown buildings that house many of the city's most popular restaurants responded to this problem by announcing through social media announced it would not expect its restaurant tenants to pay rent in April. The company houses many of the city's most popular restaurants including Eleanor's Pizzeria, Main Street Coffee,



The Parsonage, Roots, and City Wok. Instead of paying rent, Clay Young, President and CEO, urged owners to “pay your employees and take care of your family. We will get through this together.”

The idea to stop collecting rent was sparked by a tenant, who called to ask if Young Investment had cashed the March rent checks. They had not cashed the checks, so the tenant asked for help. Young tore up the check.

This is an example of a charitable act by Young Investment Company and it is also a smart business decision. As their CEO recognized, not collecting April rent is good business in the long term, for both the restaurants and his company. According to Young, it's better to help them than risk their businesses closing and having to find replacement tenants. Time owning a vacant property is also costly. It's something he thinks

other landlords should consider. “I think it's a no brainer in the sense [that landlords] have to look at the big picture and the long term ... If they've got great tenants, then they should protect them. And work with them through whatever crisis or whatever is going on, but certainly we've got great tenants, and we want to protect them. And we want them to stay with us for a long time.”

While it was fortunate that Young Investment Company was in a financial situation to be able to forgo receiving rent from their restaurant tenants, not all property owners will be in this situation as they have their own expenses and employees to pay. Like other businesses, government may need to provide financial assistance to these landlords because of the chain reaction of tenants being unable to pay.



## Survey Results C

# Business Attraction and Site Selection is Getting Wiped Out.

**Over 80% of economic developers indicate that the business attraction projects they were working on have been cancelled, put on hold, or they have no projects at all.** Without an ability for businesses and location advisors to travel so they can visit and evaluate a potential location and meet with partners that would be involved in implementing a new facility the practice of business attraction has largely come to a screeching halt. As an economic developer who preferred to remain anonymous described, "No business is going to make a multi-million-dollar decision about investing in a location without visiting the location. Project announcements are going to be delayed or cancelled."

Currently, only 19% of economic developers indicated that nothing has changed in terms of their business attraction activity. This number may decline as shelter in place extends for a longer period of time.

For businesses emerging out of the coronavirus pandemic their priorities may change, and they may be forced to focus on saving and supporting their existing business operations instead of expanding with new facilities.

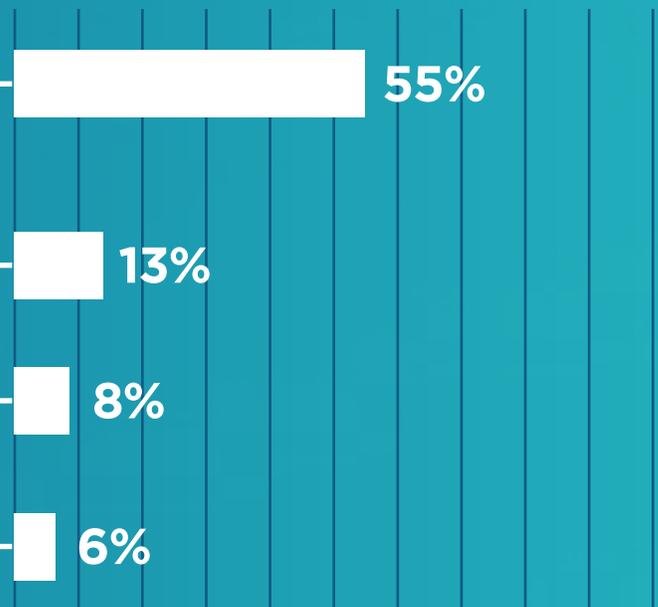
## Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, which of these is most true about the companies you have been trying to attract to your community?

Companies are putting site selection/ expansion projects on pause and taking a "wait and see" how the coronavirus pandemic plays out approach.

Nothing has changed yet. Companies are still just as interested in expanding into our area.

We have no business attraction projects at this time.

Companies have cancelled their plans to expand until further notice.





In a webinar hosted by Global Trade magazine, Mike Running, Executive Director of the Dumas EDC in Texas, describes, "You have to prioritize...marketing and advertising is cut out. There is no need for us to market or advertise outside of our community for any purpose right now because we have enough to worry about with our existing business. So, it's all focused on retention efforts."

32% of economic developers have completely stopped or significantly reduced business attraction efforts. This may be an indication of the futile situation of trying to do business attraction at this time or a transition to higher priorities as a result of the pandemic.

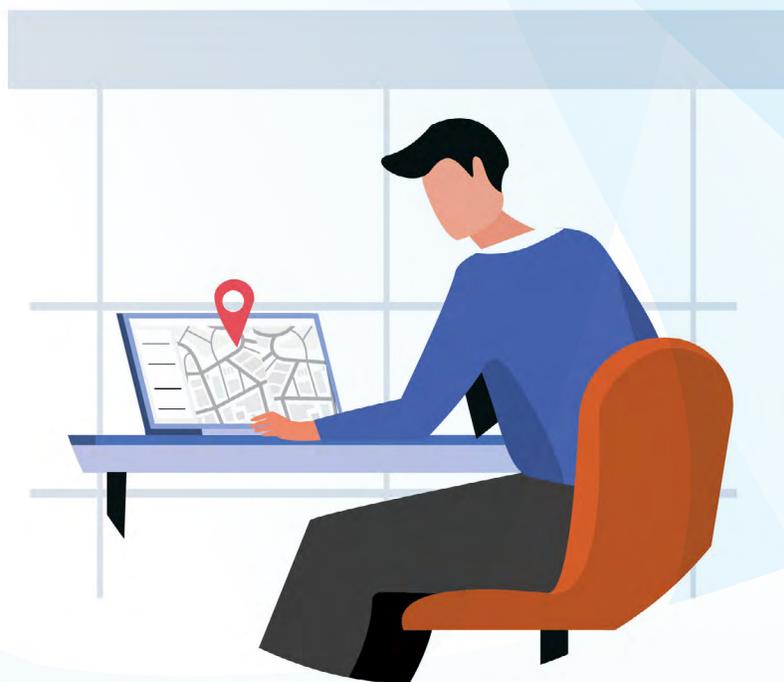
This rapid change away from business attraction may become a job security risk for economic development professionals for which business attraction is their exclusive focus. This risk could be heightened for EDOs working at public-private partnerships which are embarking on the start of their fundraising cycles as funders may have less budget to give. Conversely, it may be less risky in the near-term for government economic developers that may have more job protections or tax revenue security.

## 4. Corporate Site Selection Visits Decline or Disappear

Like everyone else, corporate real estate, executives, and site selection consultants must minimize their travel and exposure, which is increasingly preventing them from visiting communities to evaluate locations for expansions and relocations. This will slow the timing of projects happening or delay the start of new corporate real estate expansions. However, businesses still want to grow and evaluate expansions into new communities. What they need is a way to get as much of the site selection analysis completed without a physical visit or face-to-face meetings. Economic development organizations (EDOs) can facilitate this by providing online site selection assistance so that companies and their site selection advisors can make progress moving through the phases of site selection. EDOs that provide this with interactive online site selection analysis tools using GIS Planning will expand their advantage over EDOs that do not. ([www.GISplanning.com](http://www.GISplanning.com))

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO – Expand Greater Springfield is responsible for economic development in Clark County, Ohio and it has an online strategy to respond to the new reality facing every economic development organization out there. This includes the cancellations of industry events, government limitations on travel, and the inability of corporate real estate professionals to personally visit their community.

Horton Hobbs, Vice President of Economic Development at Expand Greater Springfield, recognized several years ago that virtual site selection analysis was a growing trend to better serve corporate real estate professionals and site selection consultants. His investment in implementing GIS Planning's ZoomProspector software created an important solution to deliver online site selection analysis virtually.

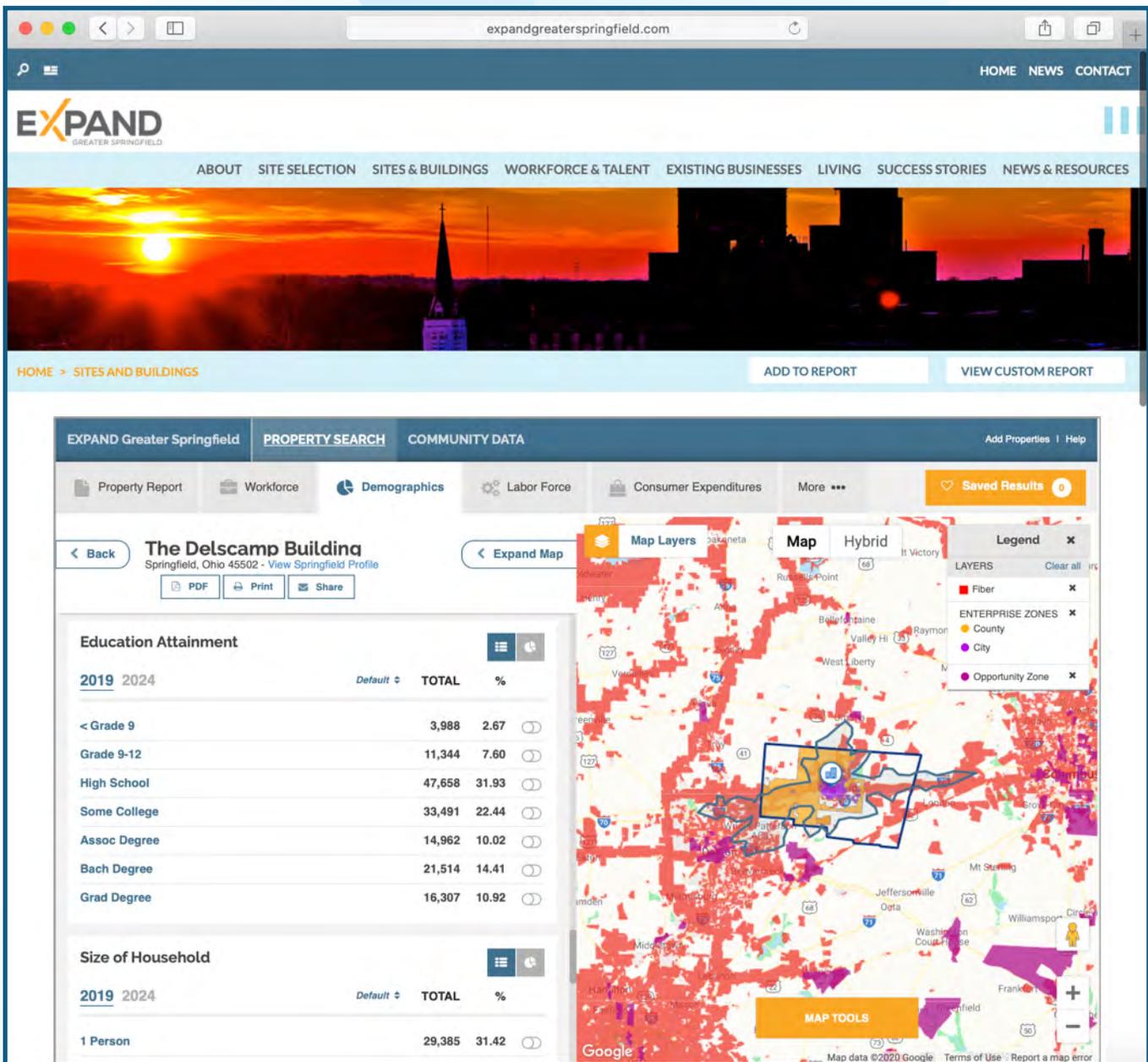


“By providing businesses with interactive and customized geospatial site selection analysis on our website using GIS Planning software, we are able to deliver the types of information that site selectors need and that they can access from the safety of their home computers. Businesses and corporate location advisors can search sites and buildings directly from our website (www.ExpandGreaterSpringfield.com), as well as access interactive, location-specific demographic reports, industry analysis, labor force information, employment wages, and talent pipeline information customized for their exact needs,”

said Hobbs. “We recognize that eventually, the companies will come to visit us to perform their physical due diligence. However, we are going to help them through all of the initial stages of online site selection analysis from the comfort of their home offices using our website software until the COVID 19 pandemic subsides. We’re going to be ready to emerge from this crisis by delivering high-quality online services all the way through it.”

More information at:

[www.ExpandGreaterSpringfield.com/sites-and-buildings](http://www.ExpandGreaterSpringfield.com/sites-and-buildings) and [www.GISplanning.com](http://www.GISplanning.com)



# Survey Results D

## The Changing Work of Economic Development

Economic developers have made changes to the work that they do with the primary changes falling into local business assistance and community relations/communications. These trends were followed in the amount of change with increased use of technology use to work with coworkers and to serve their customers and multi-disciplinary collaboration.

Some of these changes may result in a new normal for EDOs as the heightened awareness of the importance of their work to help local businesses and as an important source of information has been highlighted as a result of the economic crisis. In addition, investments in technology can have strong inertial for continued use as staff is introduced to new tech that can benefit their work through automation and efficiency both internally and as means to more effectively serve their customers.

How have you changed your economic development work?	Percent
Made local business assistance the primary focus	74%
Increased community relations and communications	64%
Increased focus using technology tools to work with co-workers (web conferencing, Slack, etc.)	48%
Increased focus using technology tools to serve customers (web conferencing, online chat, social media, site selection, local business intelligence, etc.)	46%
Multi-disciplinary collaboration with other professions or economy-related fields. (Public health, city planning, workforce development, banking, social services).	46%
Direct assistance to businesses that government policy has closed. (e.g. restaurants, bars, salons, gyms)	41%
Stopped or significantly reduced business attraction and prospecting	32%
Providing emotional support for local businesses and residents	31%
Increased policy advisory services to elected officials	20%
Assisting employment organizations responsible for laid off workers	15%
Work efficiency challenges without access to office resources (only if you are working from home)	14%
Investigating acquisition of economic development software for your website to serve businesspeople working online from home.	6%
Increased business attraction and prospecting	4%
Other	1%

## 5. Social Distancing Bingo

Economic developers can help your local businesses and the low-income workers that may have their hours cut or jobs eliminated if the virus has a prolonged impact on the economy. For businesses, your EDO can help them with policies that will help customers feel safe visiting their businesses (e.g. hand sanitizers at the door), social distancing strategies, and marketing promotions to incentivize customer activity. However, new public health policies may result in customers only being able to go to certain types of businesses or just being able to pick up items and leave. Should this trend continue, it will be even more important for local businesses to have online means for customers to make orders and adjust their operations for easy pick up.

FERNDALE, MICHIGAN - Going out to financially support local businesses is difficult when public policy keeps people home and social distancing keeps people apart. But downtown Ferndale, Michigan came up with a way to follow public

health rules, get people spending in businesses, and having some fun. They make this happen with "Social Distancing Bingo."

The rules to the game, which can earn players a \$50 gift card if they are amongst the first to win,



are simple:

- Stay six feet apart
- Limit 5 people in an establishment
- Wash hands after every transaction

Filling out the gridded bingo card requires performing tasks pickup or delivery from local restaurants, placing an online order with a local store, thanking a garbage person from 6 feet away, shopping for groceries, and taking a walk.

Lena Stevens, Executive Director of the city's Downtown Development Authority, points out that this type of strategy keeps Ferndale residents safe at the same time it keeps local businesses afloat.

She also recognized the innovation, collaboration, and care that businesses offer. "Western Market is a wonderful local market and they're offering a dedicated business hour from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. for shoppers with compromised immune systems," said Stevens, who also noted that some restaurants have joined forces to provide delivery service.

The City of Ferndale has also supported local businesses by providing 30 minutes of free parking for takeout orders.

More information at: <http://www.downtownferndale.com/dda-announces-social-distancing-bingo>


Support Local & Social Distancing Bingo

<h3 style="margin: 0;">RULES</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay 6 feet apart</li> <li>• Limit 5 people in an establishment</li> <li>• Wash hands after every transaction</li> </ul> <h3 style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">TO WIN</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a line with 5 boxes (diagonal or straight)</li> <li>• Email your proof of purchases to <a href="mailto:info@downtownferndale.com" style="color: white;">info@downtownferndale.com</a></li> </ul> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">First 10 winners will receive a \$50 gift certificate to the Ferndale business of their choice!</p>	Pickup/ Delivery Pizza	Order Delivery	Place An Online Order With A Local Store	Pickup/ Delivery Sandwiches	Shop Local For Groceries/ Supplies	
	Thank A Firefighter/ Police Officer From 6 Feet Away	Shop Local For Groceries/ Supplies	Pickup/ Delivery Desserts	Purchase Gift Card To A Local Business	Order Takeout	
	Order Delivery	Purchase Gift Card To A Local Business	<b>Almost Shook Hands But Stopped</b>	Pickup/ Delivery Breakfast	Try A New Restaurant/ Food	
	Shop Local For Groceries/ Supplies	Pickup/ Delivery Brewery or Distillery	Pickup/ Delivery Coffee	Order Takeout	Go For A Walk	
	Place An Online Order With A Local Store	Try A New Restaurant/ Food	Pickup/ Delivery International Cuisine	Thank A Garbage Person From 6 Feet Away	Purchase Gift Card To A Local Business	

## 6. Fashion and Sports Repurpose Manufacturing

A U.S. Conference of Mayors survey on coronavirus preparedness indicates that nearly 90 percent of mayors say their cities lack enough tests kits, face masks and other protective equipment for their emergency responders and medical workers. These shortages could lead cities to be quickly overwhelmed if the virus spreads through their location. The cities reported a need for 28.5 million face masks, 24.4 million items of personal protective equipment such as gowns and gloves, 7.9 million coronavirus test kits, and 139,000 ventilators. According to the report, "Despite their best efforts, most cities do not have and cannot obtain adequate equipment and supplies needed to protect their residents."

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA – In Los Angeles, a city known for high couture, fashion designer Puey Quinones, whose clothing is part of the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art alongside the creations of Christian Dior, Cristobal Balenciaga, and Alexander McQueen, is leading an effort to

manufacture personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to combat the coronavirus crisis.

According to Quinones, "One day, a friend of mine messaged me asking if I know someone that can make a hazmat suit. I told her I think I can do it, as long as we have the right materials



and specifications. Shortly after, upon doing my own research I was led to Mich Dulce's Instagram post looking for volunteers to make the PPEs and I messaged her, I told her I would very much want to help. She sent me a copy of the specifications, and my friend Cathy Binag ordered 500 yards of spun-bond fabric to help me out. Luckily, some friends pledged more materials like zippers and garters. I have an in-house seamstress, who I am very grateful for. She has been sewing day and night since we started this project in hopes of helping as many people as we possibly can."

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Not only is industry pitching-in but so are sewers everywhere. "Sewers, we've always stepped up and done this thing," said Denise Voss, the head of the Inland Empire chapter of the American Sewing Guild. "We're made for this time. We're happy to stay home and sew. And we all have stashes of fabric." Her Southern California group



has about 130 members is making hundreds of face masks at the request of the Riverside University Health System Medical Center.

BLAINVILLE, QUEBEC & LIVERPOOL, NEW YORK – Bauer, one of the leading manufacturers of hockey equipment, repurposed its manufacturing to make PPE face shields for medical workers treating patients with the coronavirus.

Mary-Kay Messier, Bauer vice president of global marketing, said Bauer went from the initial brainstorming session to developing early prototypes in about four days. “They do have the capacity to ramp up (very quickly),” said

Messier. “I wouldn’t say it’s easy, but it’s doable, and when you have people that are really passionate and talented, you make it happen.”

The protective shields are being made by 40 employees at both Bauer’s R&D facility in Blainville, Quebec, and its facility in Liverpool, New York, which primarily produces Bauer’s lacrosse gear. Bauer made its manufacturing package public on its website, including design, material specifications and instructions, hoping other companies can use it to make similar shields.



## 7. Utility Companies Create Their Own Stimulus

Power companies have been longtime partners for local economic development organizations and even have their own professional development association, the Utility Economic Development Association.

MONCKS CORNER, SOUTH CAROLINA - South Carolina's largest member-owned co-op, the Berkeley Electric Cooperative, created its own form of pandemic stimulus returning \$4.8 million for 34,000 of its members. The \$4.8 million dollars is a refund of the security deposits their customers paid to connect to the electrical system. This will average out to approximately \$140 per customer although some will receive less or more. In addition, it suspended disconnections and late fees for nonpayment.

"We know the COVID-19 pandemic will cause financial hardships for families — many members are facing reduced employment or unemployment. They also need electricity more than ever as they follow health officials' recommendations to stay home to slow the spread of the virus," Dwayne Cartwright, president and CEO of Berkeley Electric, said in a press release. "We want to do everything in our power to help our members and the economy during this difficult time."

PHOENIX, ARIZONA - Arizona's largest electric utility took rapid and intentional action to address the economic consequences of COVID-19. Arizona Public Service stepped forward to help Arizona businesses by launching an online market research and business intelligence service to Arizona businesses and entrepreneurs.

"With small businesses encompassing over 99% of Arizona's economy we need to ensure these organizations stay viable. APS has researched multiple tools specifically designed to help small businesses identify their competitive advantage and are excited to now offer SizeUp for Arizona. SizeUp offers every business across the state access to data typically only available to large corporations due to cost. Leveling the information playing field will be critical to ensuring these organizations are successful once we advance out of the current economic crisis," said Kelly Patton, Senior Economic Development Consultant of Statewide Programs for APS.



## 8. Swapping Companies Temporarily

BERLIN AND MIAMI - Many companies, especially retail, restaurants, hotels, and other industries that require physical contact between employees and customers, have shut down. However, not all businesses are closing. Other types of industries are under intense strain as the coronavirus pandemic has increased demand on their services because they have become so needed under the current conditions. These include industries such as medical device manufacturers, grocery stores, pharmacies, and online stores.

Companies that are closed can both protect the income of their employees and help businesses experiencing high demand by temporarily loaning out their workforce who is not working.

German grocer Aldi, in its grocery chains Aldi Süd and Aldi Nord, partnered with McDonald's Germany to take in their employees. According to their announcement, McDonald's workers can be deployed to Aldi as long as needed and, after their assignment, can return to their jobs at McDonald's.

"We are very pleased that we are receiving support from McDonald's Germany in such an uncomplicated manner," said Stefan Kopp, Managing Director of Buying and Spokesman for Aldi Süd's Board of Directors. "In sales and logistics in particular, our employees work tirelessly to cope with the high demand and to secure the food supply."

It's a win for Aldi, McDonald's, and Germany too. "Everyone in Germany is currently asked to do their part to cope with the crisis. With this solution, we can do this and at the same time offer a classic win-win situation: Our employees can—if they want to—continue to be employed. At the same time, Aldi benefits from additional resources. And this ensures for the company in Germany that Aldi can act fully even during the crisis," said Holger Beeck, CEO of McDonald's Germany.

In Miami, Florida, a similar partnership has taken place. Sedano's supermarkets and local chain restaurants Versailles and La Carreta partnered to provide temporary jobs for the restaurants' employees that could become laid off as a result of forced closings of their dining rooms. Sedano's, an independent Hispanic grocery chain, needed to add up to 400 full and part-time positions to its stores due to the increase in demand.

"This collaboration reflects who we are as companies in our community," said Javier Herran, CMO of Sedano's Supermarkets. "During difficult times, local businesses and communities need to support one another."

As Miami stores for Walmart, Publix, and Winn-Dixie all shortened their operating hours, Sedano's kept its regular store hours.



## 9. The Business of Food is Necessary

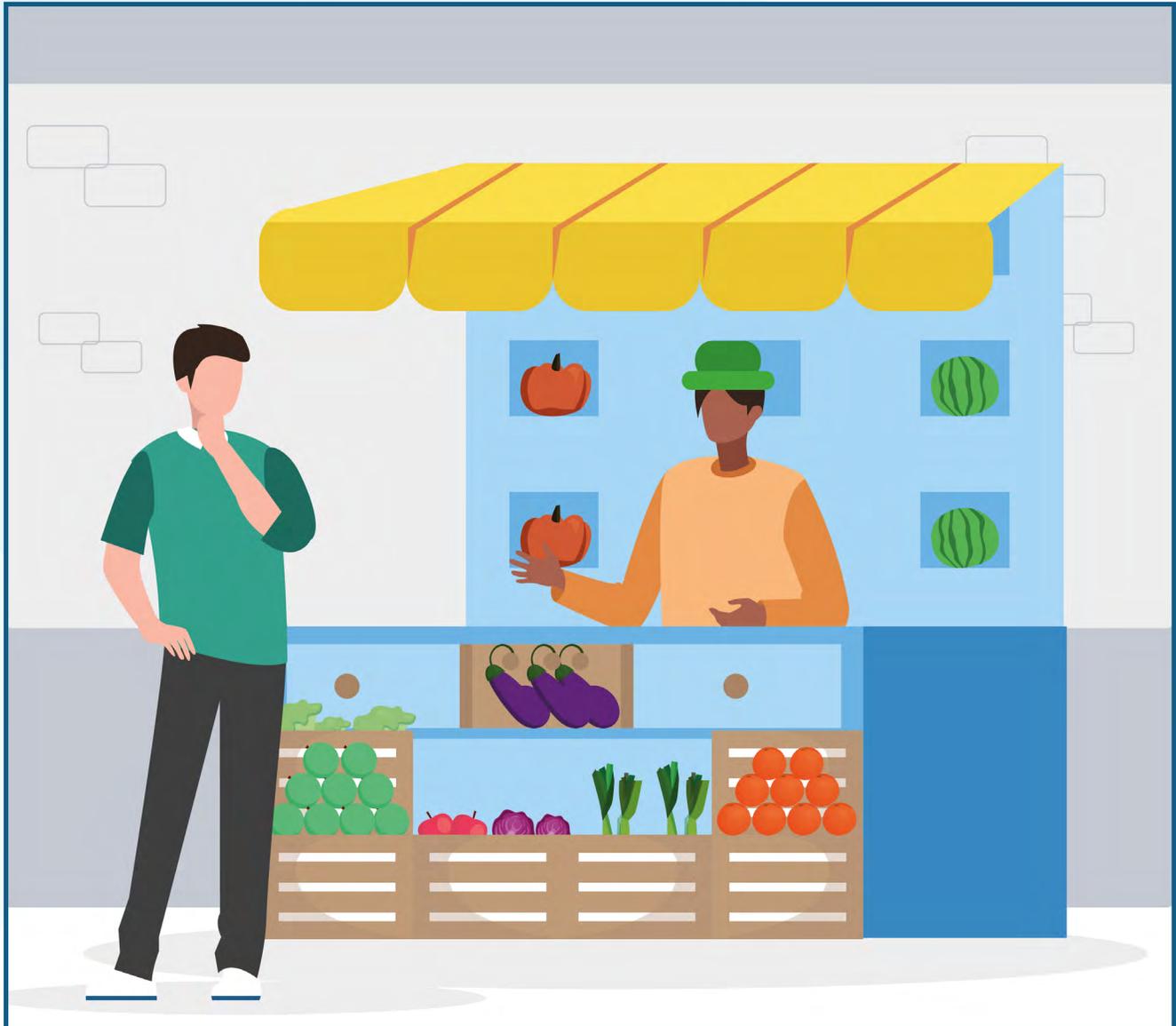
There are many things that people stop doing when they are sheltering in place at home such as spending face to face time at work, exercising at a gym, or getting together with friends at the park. But everyone must eat and have a way to get new food to their homes. Although a few people have gardens and livestock in their homes, most people get their food through the business economy of food. Everyone must eat.

Businesses and economic developers can help enable access to necessary food through

assisting local businesses with new ways to feed the community, finding ways to make food available that decreases crowds and physical contact, and protect the workers responsible for our ability to have food.

- **FROM RESTAURANT TO GROCERY STORE**

- When government requirements allowed only essential businesses to remain open, dine-in restaurant revenue collapsed and grocery stores experienced a rush of customers. Grocery stores changed how



they operated including increased sanitary protocols, decreased hours for restocking, restricting the number of people allowed at the same time, and limiting purchases on certain items. A new restaurant was about to open in San Francisco with a concept of family-style dining around a common table with strangers – exactly where you don't want to be in a pandemic. Anthony Strong, the restaurant owner didn't want to quit and close the business, so he turned it into Prairie General Store, specializing in bulk goods below retail prices, items that are likely to be sold out in grocery stores, and meal kits. "I have never done a grocery store before," said Strong. "One thing being a small independent solo operation has taught me in a year is to take some punches, figure stuff out and make quick decisions on the fly." Economic developers and city planners can help businesses adjust their offering even if it doesn't currently comply with land use or zoning regulations.

- **FARMERS MARKET** - Grocery stores serve hundreds of people every day, making them some of the most dangerous places to be during a pandemic where physical proximity to infected people can pass disease. But there are other options to get fresh produce such as local farmers markets. These open-air gatherings to buy directly from farm producers have been a longtime fixture of Main Street economic development programs. Now these markets can be a venue for people to more easily access needed produce outside where the grocery "aisles" can be expanded significantly to provide room for people to walk around with less proximity to others in which people can find many of the items frequently unavailable in grocery stores. "Right now I think definitely farmers

markets are a much safer environment in that you are outside in open air, and there's a lot more room to move and maneuver than in a grocery store," said Brie Mazurek, communications director at the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture. "The food is also coming a much shorter distance – there are fewer hands handling it from the moment it's picked to the moment it's available at the market." As many farmers markets occur in public spaces, economic developers and city planners can regulate aisle distances, expand the area of current markets, and make space available to these farmers for more days each week.

- **THE FRONT LINE OF FOOD** – You might get your food at a grocery store or restaurant, but before they had it, it was harvested by farmworkers. These are the essential workers that are still in the fields cutting asparagus, picking strawberries, and helping get your food to you. Many of the farmworkers lack health insurance, and don't qualify for unemployment insurance or federal coronavirus relief, making them especially vulnerable. For economic reasons they may have to work whether sick or at risk of exposing themselves to sick coworkers. For workers paid by the piece and not by the hour, they are incentivized to work fast, so spending 20 seconds washing hand costs them money. "You can't pick strawberries over Zoom," said Lucas Zucker, policy and communications director at Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy. Economic developers can facilitate policies to protect the health of workers and to make sure protocols are in place to safeguard the food they touch that people eventually consume.

# Survey Results E

## Online Assistance When Physical Interaction is Constrained

Economic developers and the businesses and workers they serve are all constrained in their ability to have physical meetings to receive assistance. The services that economic developers are providing on their website is a mix of information which is relevant and could be posted rapidly, urgent with mixed implementation challenges, legacy software, and newer local business assistance services.

- **RELEVANT AND FAST**

The most prevalent information on EDO websites is 85% that provide coronavirus resources for businesses and entrepreneurs, 59% that offer coronavirus resources for residents and workers.

- **URGENT WITH MIXED IMPLEMENTATION**

48% of economic developers provide lists of local businesses that are currently open and provide pickup/delivery. The execution of this has been mixed with some EDOs simply putting up static text listing businesses, others that have some level of interactivity, and then in early April, some that launched professional online software to list open businesses provided by GIS Planning.

- **LEGACY SOFTWARE**

Interactive site selection research assistance information is an economic development software that has been growing in usage for over 20 years, invented by GIS Planning. As such, it is a legacy software that EDOs were immediately able to provide a source of automated site selection assistance as economic developers doing this work transitioned to crisis related tasks.

- **SURVEYS**

Surveys have fallen out of favor with BRE experts recently, but they made a comeback as a tool to assess the needs and condition of local businesses. Facilitated by Blane Canada and Whittaker Associates, a group of economic developers met regularly to organize a survey model which was widely distributed to help communities assess current business conditions.

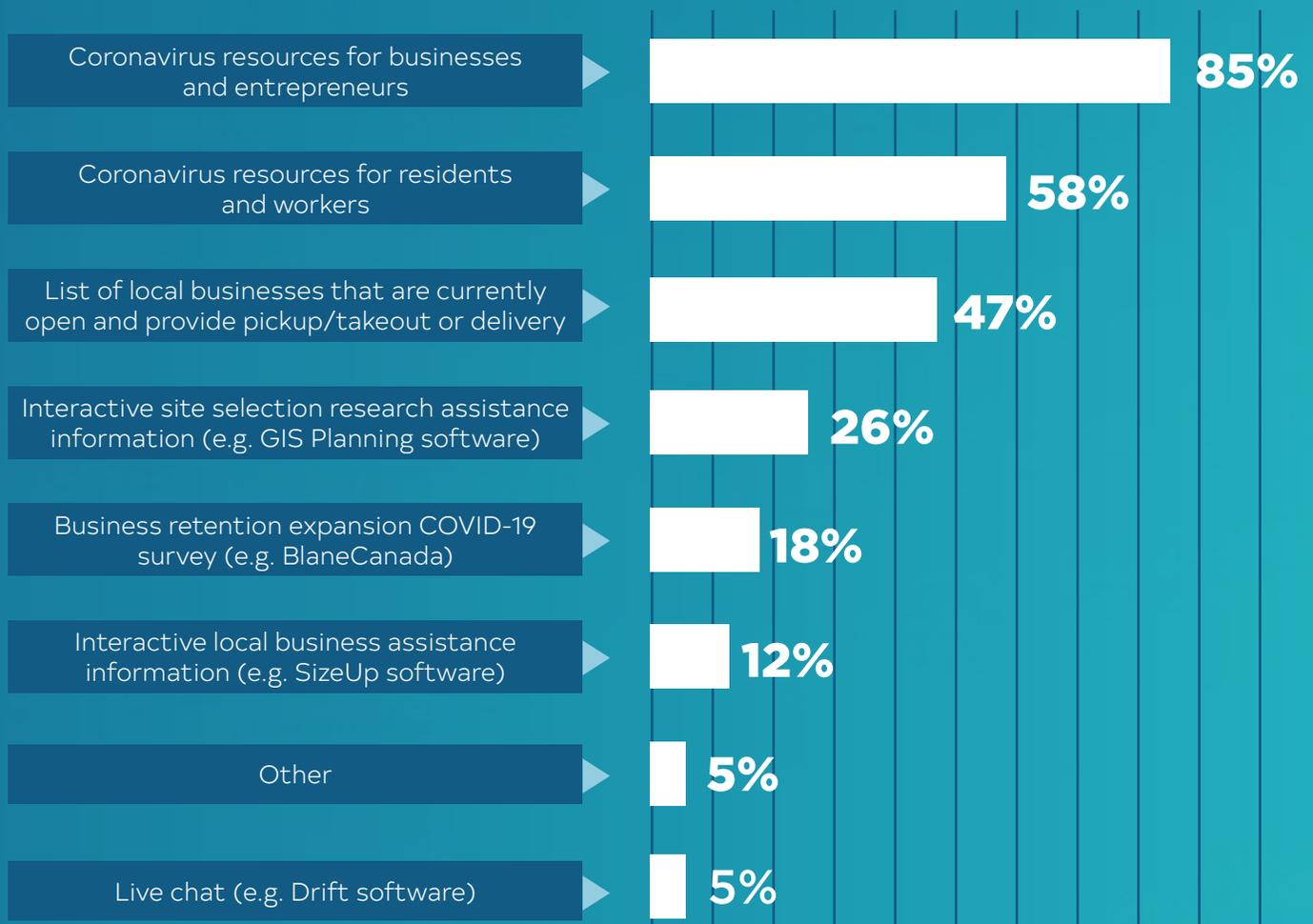
- **LOCAL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE DATA**

A newer software gaining use amongst economic developers is data-driven small business assistance that provides custom market research for entrepreneurs. EDOs with SizeUp software were able to immediately provide it to local companies and other EDOs quickly signed on to add it to their websites to assist struggling businesses.

- **CHAT**

Live chat using a form of instant messaging was the least available software provided by economic developers. While easy to install and a way to quickly respond to inquiries, its use was rare.

## Which resources do you currently provide on your website for business assistance?



## 10. Tech Industry Partnership

NEW YORK CITY and SILICON VALLEY - Technology has transformed our lives personally and professional. It has made it possible so that we can do things we never did before. It is core to how many people are changing their behavior during the coronavirus pandemic such as the use of Zoom for videoconferencing and online ordering of groceries. Technology is also delivering solutions to businesses and EDOS to mitigate the economic impacts of coronavirus.

### HELP MAIN STREET

On March 13, 2020, Nihal Mehta, Kevin Weatherman, and Oleg Kogan were discussing what they could do to help those in need during the COVID-19 crisis. Later that day, they saw a tweet from Mark Cuban saying "Went into a local office building coffee shop just to buy a coffee that I won't drink. They said their business was down 10 percent. #buylocal." This inspired them that gift cards could be the quickest no-interest loan to small businesses to put cash in their accounts immediately. Along with Lyel Resner, they rallied about a dozen volunteers and in under 72 sleepless hours they built helpmainstreet.com. The initial roll-out of the site featured 20,000 restaurants across all 50 states, the majority of which are located in New York and San Francisco. "Mom-and-pop-shops will not be able to pay rent or make payroll because no one is buying inventory from them," Mehta says. "It's just our civic duty to be able to use whatever skills you have to be helpful to people in need."

### GOOGLE

Google partnered with the State of California to provide more than 100,000 wi-fi broadband access points statewide to help bridge the digital divide for people who need internet access during the coronavirus shelter-in-place. In addition, it will also send thousands of Chromebooks for people in rural locations who needed a device to be able to take advantage of the free Wi-Fi access points, which would be provided at no charge for at least three months. "Those 100,000 points will help us substantially address the digital divide issues, the rural issues, the equity issues that are at play even in the best of times, but substantively are highlighted in these more difficult times," said Governor Gavin Newsom.

### SIZEUP

Governments around the country have made the difficult decision to ask certain businesses to shut their doors for what could be an extended period of time in response to the pandemic. This has left local business owners at home thinking about how they can improve business and gain back lost revenues once things get back to normal, entrepreneurial workers with time at home to plan the business they've always dreamed of opening, and some laid off workers with no choice but to pursue some type of self-employment. However, with no ability to go and sit down with any business advice experts because of lockdowns, online resources are the only option available to plan for their new business or to resurrect their

current company. SizeUp responded to this changed for economic developers by providing free setup of its online small business assistance software so the EDO's local businesses can access industry specific and hyper-local market research and business intelligence.

The Town of Gilbert, Arizona recognizes that the small businesses and entrepreneurs in our community benefit from online business assistance in good times and bad. We are committed to the success of our local businesses and an important way we can assist them is by delivering industry-specific and hyper-local market research and business intelligence on our website using SizeUp LBI software technology," said Dan Henderson, Director of Economic Development for the Town of Gilbert. ([www.gilbertedi.com/sizeup](http://www.gilbertedi.com/sizeup))

## GIS PLANNING

The majority of US states and 100 largest cities are served by GIS Planning's economic development software for business attraction and site selection analysis. As the coronavirus pandemic grew the company redirected its engineering resources to deliver its hundreds of EDO clients with new data and online services directly related to the coronavirus crisis. Its clients received not only this free data but also a free new software service that they can put on their website to show the businesses that are open, the services being provided, and other resources related to coronavirus. In addition, GIS Planning launched another free software service which it made available to all US-based EDOs and Chambers of commerce to put on their website with data related to coronavirus.

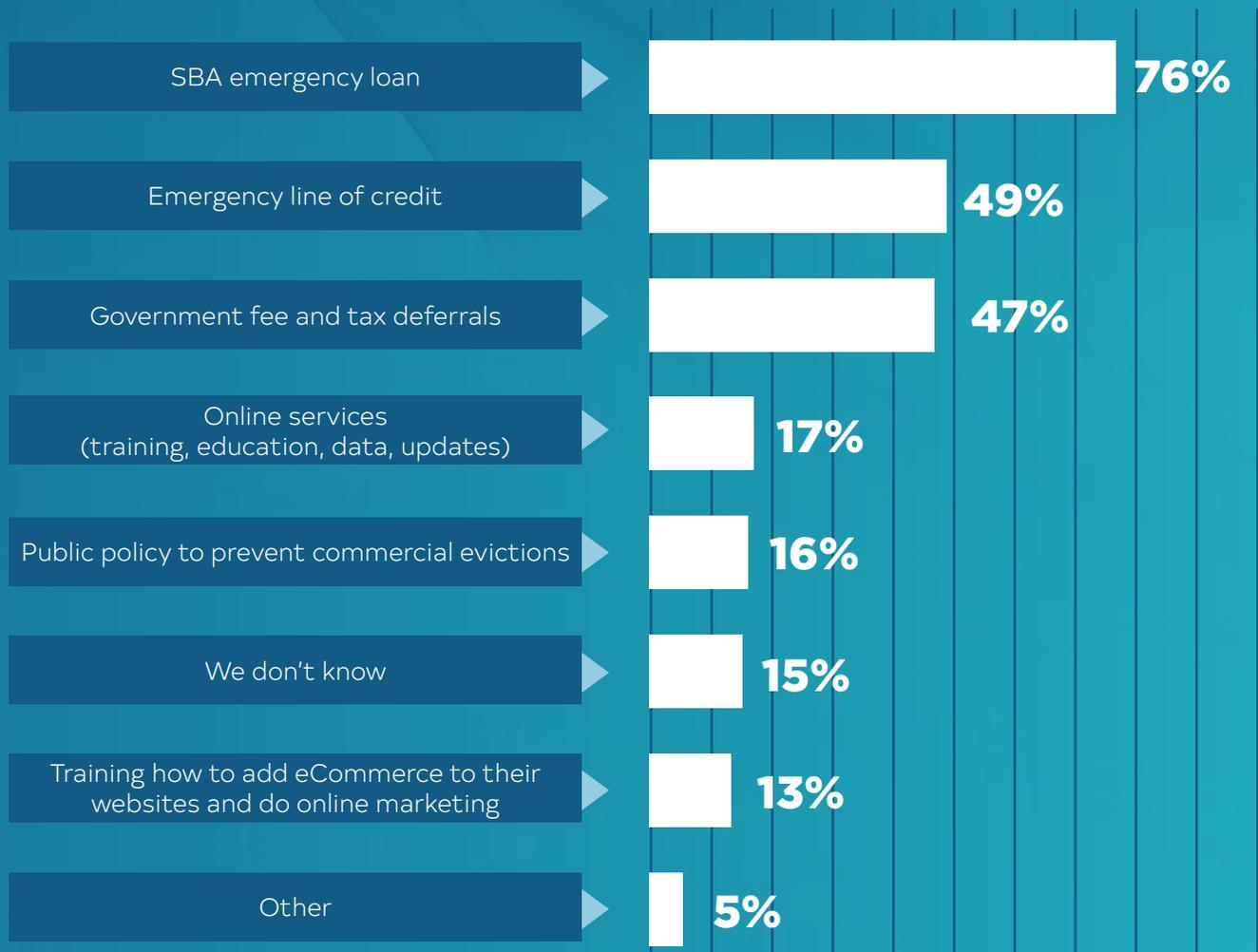


# Survey Results

## What Local Businesses Need.

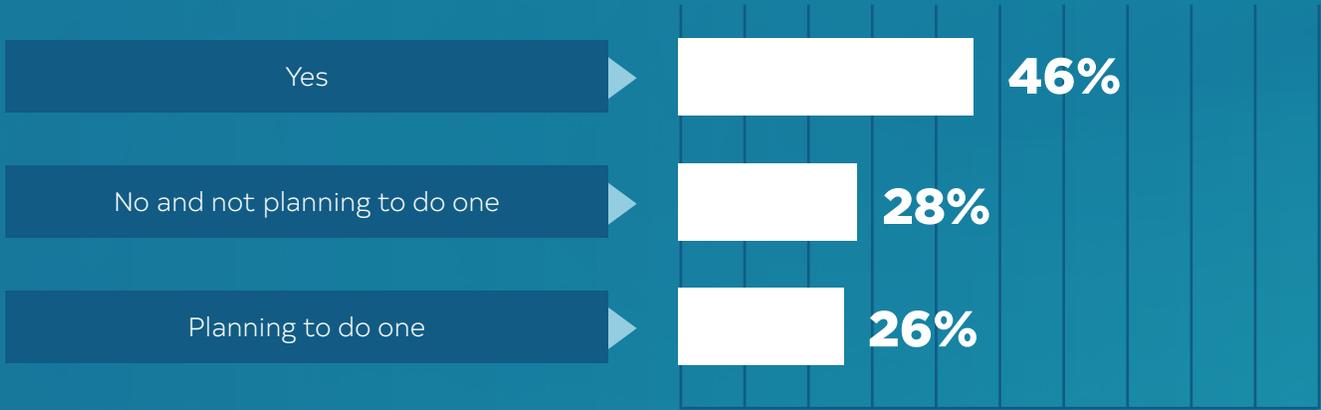
The things local businesses need from economic developers fall into two general categories. What they need most is cash assistance through loans, lines of credit, and tax deferrals. The second category of need is technical and policy assistance.

### What resources have your local businesses communicated they need from your economic development organization as a result of the coronavirus pandemic?



The majority of EDOs did not conduct surveys to identify what their local businesses needed and 29% had no intention of surveying them to find out. This may be an indication of the operational challenges that EDOs have with contacting businesses in their community and/or having survey tools or expertise to execute on this research.

## Have you performed an online survey to learn what your local businesses need as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic?



# Survey Results F

## What Economic Developers Need.

The needs of economic developers have increased as more has been asked of them. To respond to the economic damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic economic developers are most in need of financial resources, information, best practices, flexibility, and technology.

Most economic developers operate at the local level of municipalities, counties, and metropolitan regions. Yet much of the financial and new program resources necessary to combat the economic damage is controlled at the federal and state level.

What resources do you and your economic development organization need most?	Percent
State and federal financial resources allocated locally to respond to the economic crisis.	56%
Access to loan information for local businesses.	49%
State and federal programs to respond to the economic crisis.	43%
Information on national trends, policies, and programs for economic developers to respond to the coronavirus crisis.	40%
Best practices for online marketing and promotions for our local businesses.	36%
Access to unemployment benefits information for local residents.	33%
State and federal information resources.	30%
Reallocate staff time and budget resources to focus on the crisis.	28%
Unstructured sharing, brainstorming, and commiserating with my fellow local economy advocates nationwide or even internationally.	25%
Best practices for state and national public policy advocacy and lobbying for regulations, laws, and programs.	23%
Best practices on internet technologies such as online sales/ecommerce platforms for our local businesses.	23%
New/better technology to do your job. (e.g. software, online communication, CRM etc.)	23%
Elected officials to take faster action on your recommendations for action.	21%
Direction from elected officials how your EDO should respond.	21%
New/better technology to serve growing business customers' needs. (e.g. software, online communication, etc.)	14%

# Survey Results 7.

## Economic Developers Are Working from Home Efficiently

70% of survey respondents are currently working from home, 28% are working from their office, and 1% are home but not working until further notice. The amount working from home in this survey has increased dramatically over surveys taken the two weeks prior.

### ***Economic developers are not immune from layoffs***

Although the smallest response, one reason that economic developers are at home is because they are “not working from home until further notice.” This highlights a trend in economic developers being laid off, which may be undercounted in this survey as those laid off may no longer have access to their work emails to have received the survey. The anecdotal announcements of economic developers whose employment is being terminated seems to be growing overtime just as is occurring with business layoffs. Government employees appear to be more insulated from job cuts while public-private EDOs and those with less reliable funding are making layoffs the fastest.

### ***Mixed experiences from working at home***

Economic developers working from home are having a variety of different experiences.

## **EFFICIENCY**

The #1 experience is that they are experiencing improved efficiency due to eliminated commute and distractions from co-workers in the office. This is a trend that ED managers should pay attention to. While there are trends in private sector businesses to having more work from home time for employees which allows them to save in real estate costs from smaller offices that just require hot desks and conference rooms, the economic development profession has been slower to adopt these changes. Part of this may be due to the large portion of economic developers that work for government agencies which may be less likely to change with the times due to outdated perceptions of how public sector employees should work, it may also be that this is an experiment that has never been tried before in an EDO office. Now that this is an experience that is producing increased efficiency, it has the potential to become a new normal.

## **ADJUSTING**

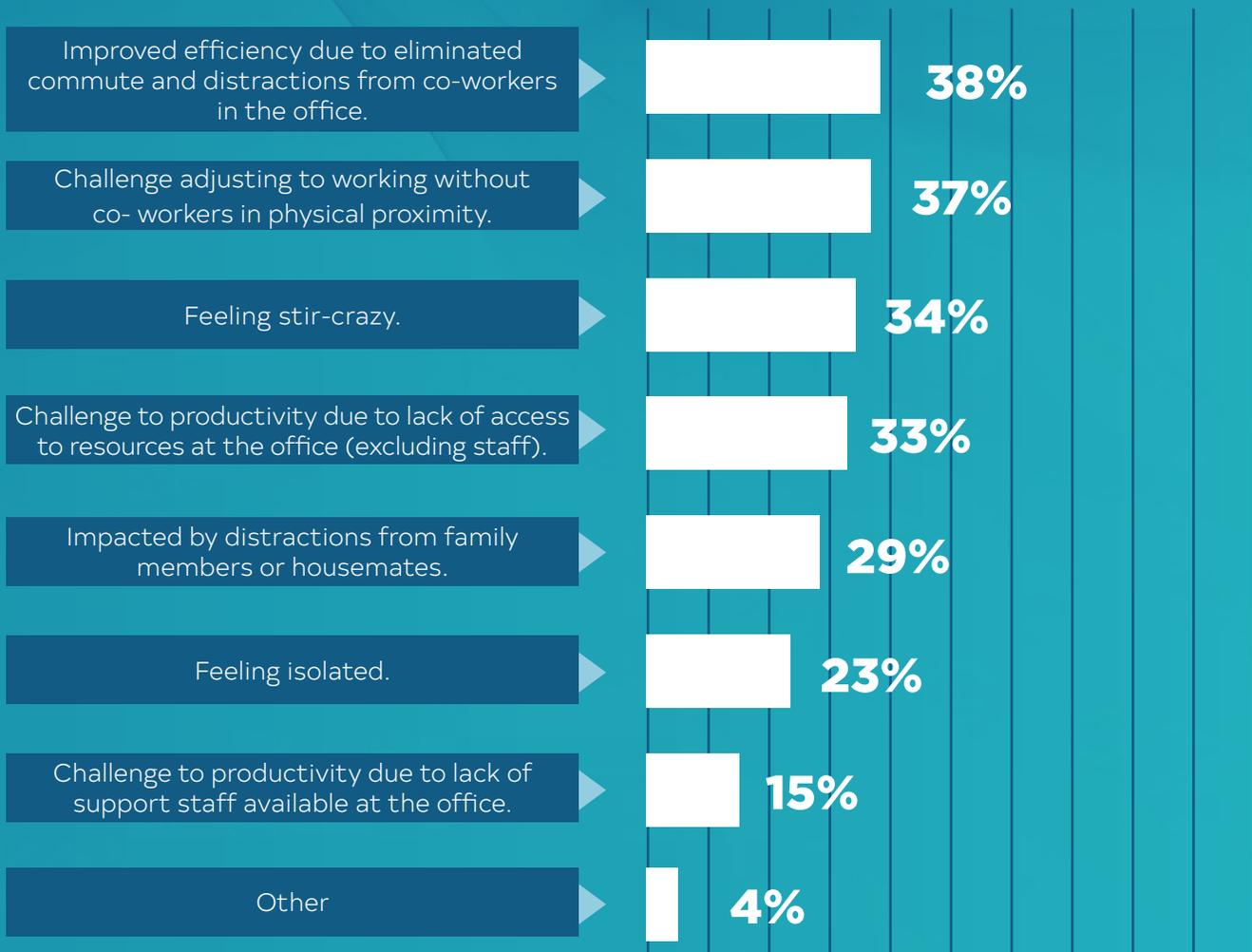
The #2 response is that it is a challenge adjusting to working from home without co-workers in physical proximity. Certainly, any change is going to be a challenge and economic developers are used

to working with people in close physical proximity. However, this challenge of working without people nearby is not a feeling of working in isolation, which was one of the lowest selected experiences.

## STIR-CRAZY

The 3rd highest response of EDpros is that they are feeling stir-crazy working at home. This could be for a variety of reasons including the lack of physical interaction, the lack of change of scenery, or the simple reality of being confined to the home for the work day followed by the remainder of the day.

## If you are working from home, how has working from home impacted you?





SizeUp helps economic development organizations better serve their local businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. It provides business intelligence and market research so they can make smarter decisions through data. SizeUp provides: 1. Competitive benchmarks; 2. Find customers, suppliers, and competitors; 3. Best locations to advertise; 4. Location-specific demographic analysis. It empowers economic development organizations to A) help local businesses succeed, B) assist aspiring entrepreneurs to plan for their business opening, C) automate business retention and expansion services using online software, D) reduce cost of service, and E) increase local company engagement.

Top executives from Google, Facebook, and Salesforce.com selected SizeUp as the United States Department of Commerce 1st place award winner for online tools to grow the economy (jury of Sheryl Sandberg, Vint Cerf, and Tim O'Reilly).

**[www.SizeUp.com](http://www.SizeUp.com)**