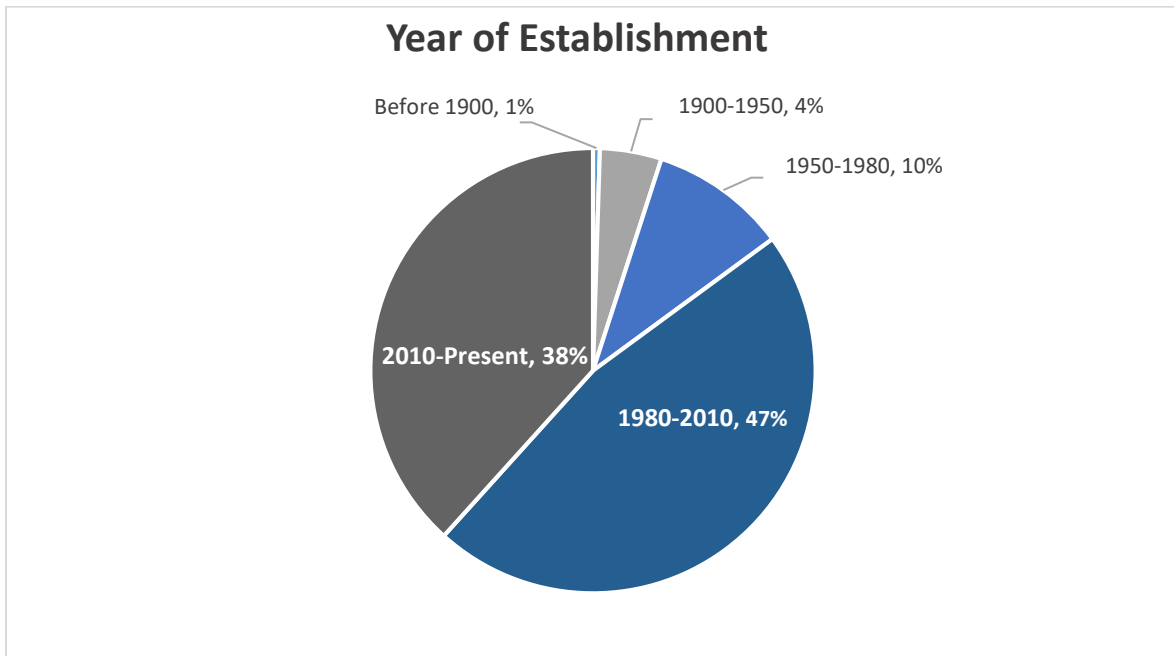


2021 Business Survey Results

Two hundred and eleven businesses located in Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, and Washington counties participated in a survey to share their perceptions of opportunities and barriers within their industry and the region where they do business. Responses also describe the economic challenges regional businesses have faced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery efforts these entities have made in response. The results of the survey are provided below (note that not all interviewees responded to every question so the total number of responses per question fluctuates).

I. General Background Information

When was your business founded?

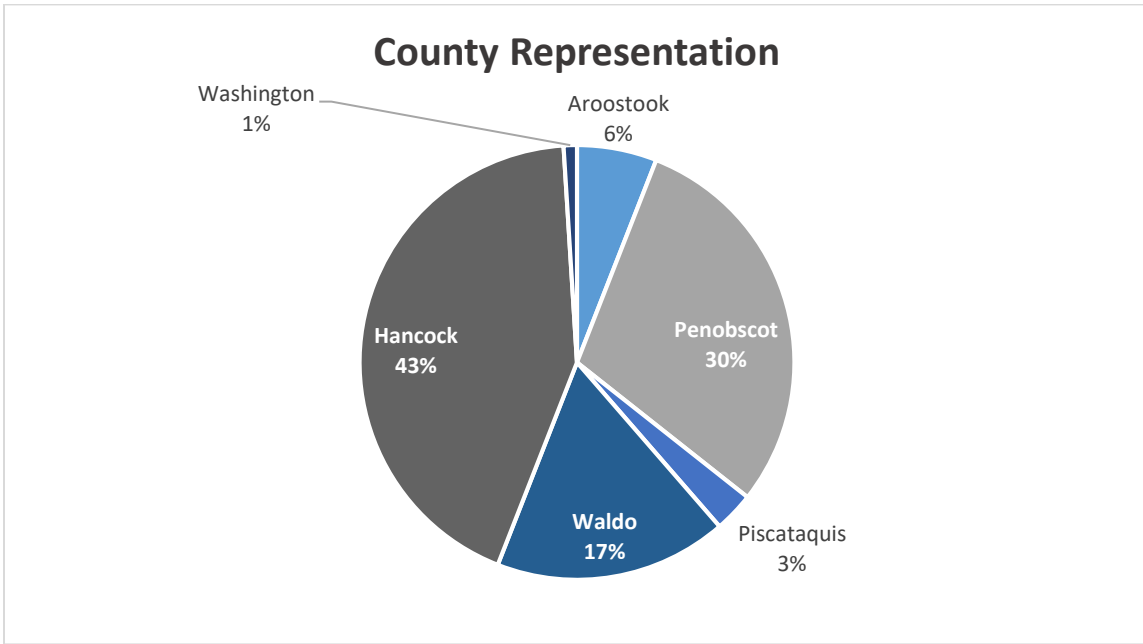


In which municipality is your business located?

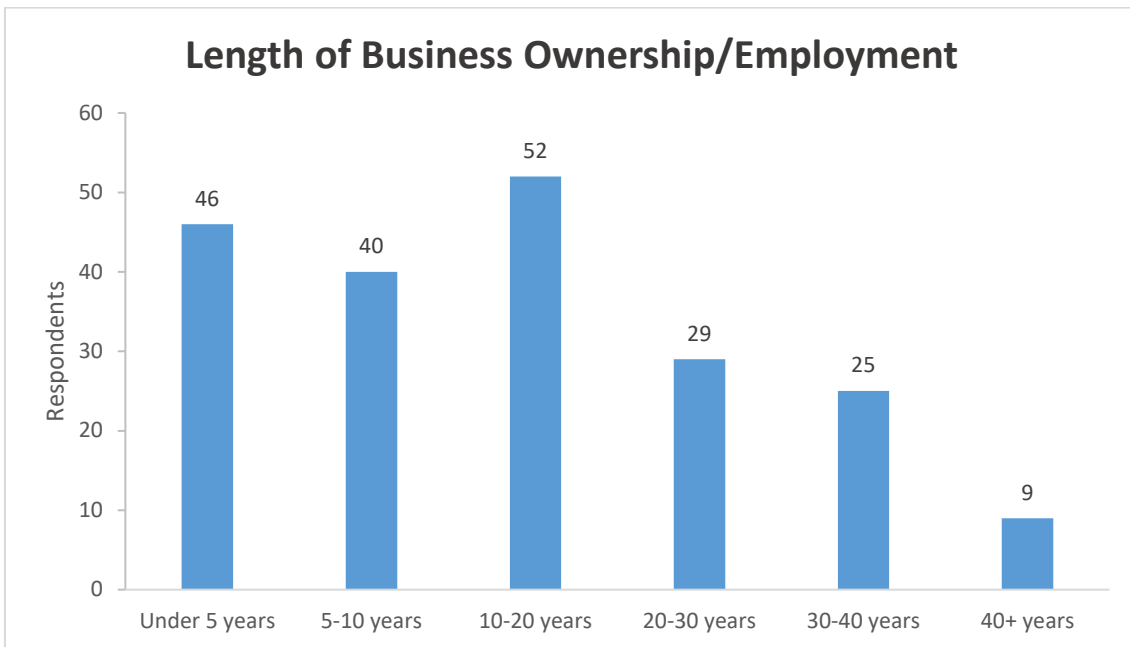
A total of sixty-four municipalities were represented in the survey. The table below shows the top five municipalities in which the businesses of survey respondents are located.

<u># of Towns</u>	<u>Town Name</u>
27	Bangor
26	Bar Harbor
15	Brewer
11	Ellsworth
9	Hermon

In which county is your business located?



How long have you been in your present position (or owned the business)?



How many locations does your business have?

<u>Locations</u>	<u>Businesses</u>
1 Location	170
2 Locations	22
3 Locations	3
3+ Locations	10
TOTAL	205

Why did you start your business here, in this region, and in Maine?

	<u>Responses</u>
Founder lived locally	79
Advantageous Location	56
Saw a need/opportunity	32
Family Business	12
Purchased existing business	7
Spinoff from other companies	5
TOTAL	191

II. Locational Aspects & Regional Assets

From a business standpoint, what is advantageous about our region?

	<u>Responses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Location	70	32%
Tourism	64	30%
Quality of Life/Scenic Beauty	41	19%
Emerging Growth in Maine	15	7%
High-Quality Workforce	10	5%
Low competition	7	3%
Proximity to Higher Education	5	2%
Cost of Doing Business	4	2%
TOTAL	216	

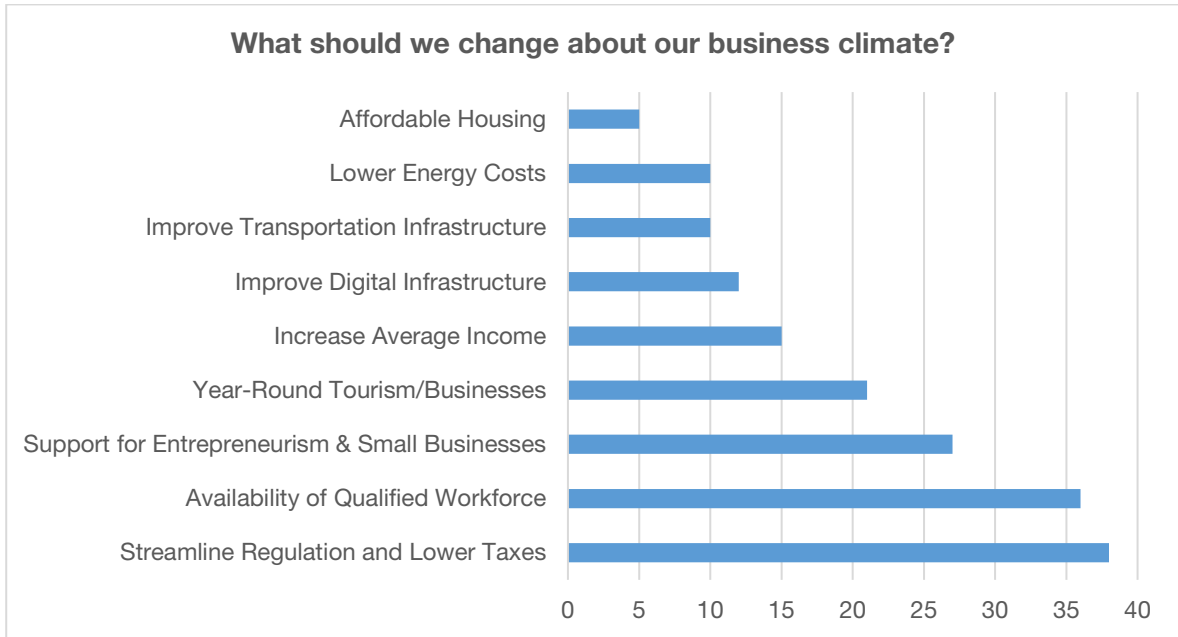
From a business standpoint, what is disadvantageous about our region?

	<u>Responses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Low Population of Customers & Workers	46	23%
Remote Location	35	18%
Short Seasonal Business Cycle	31	16%
Energy Costs	22	11%
Poor Roads and Transportation Infrastructure	22	11%
Low Income Population	13	7%
Deficient Digital Infrastructure	11	6%
Lack of Job Opportunities	7	4%
Harmful Regulatory Climate	6	3%
Lack of Collaboration between Businesses	4	2%
Aging Workforce	2	1%
TOTAL	199	

What regional advantages do you find most important?

	<u>Responses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Acadia National Park/Tourism/Recreation Opportunities	72	40%
Location	54	30%
Strong Sense of Community/Quality of Life	34	19%
High-Quality Workforce	6	3%
Community Partnerships/Networking	5	3%
Low Cost of Living	4	2%
Colleges & Universities	3	2%
International Airport	3	2%
TOTAL	181	

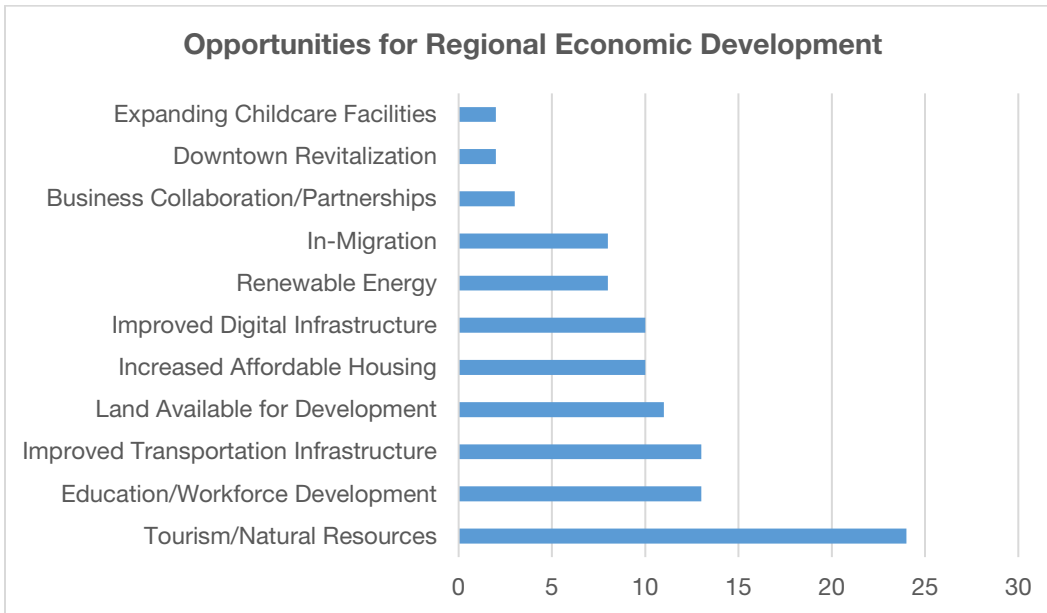
If you could, what two things would you change regarding the business climate?



Other notable items:

- *Several respondents noted that the State’s minimum wage significantly impacts the income of their business, especially when their employees are primarily young workers with few workforce skills.*
- *The seasonality of tourism in the region presents a barrier to business growth. Developing strategies to foster year-round tourism will enable more businesses to remain open and busy throughout the year.*

What opportunities exist for economic development in the region?

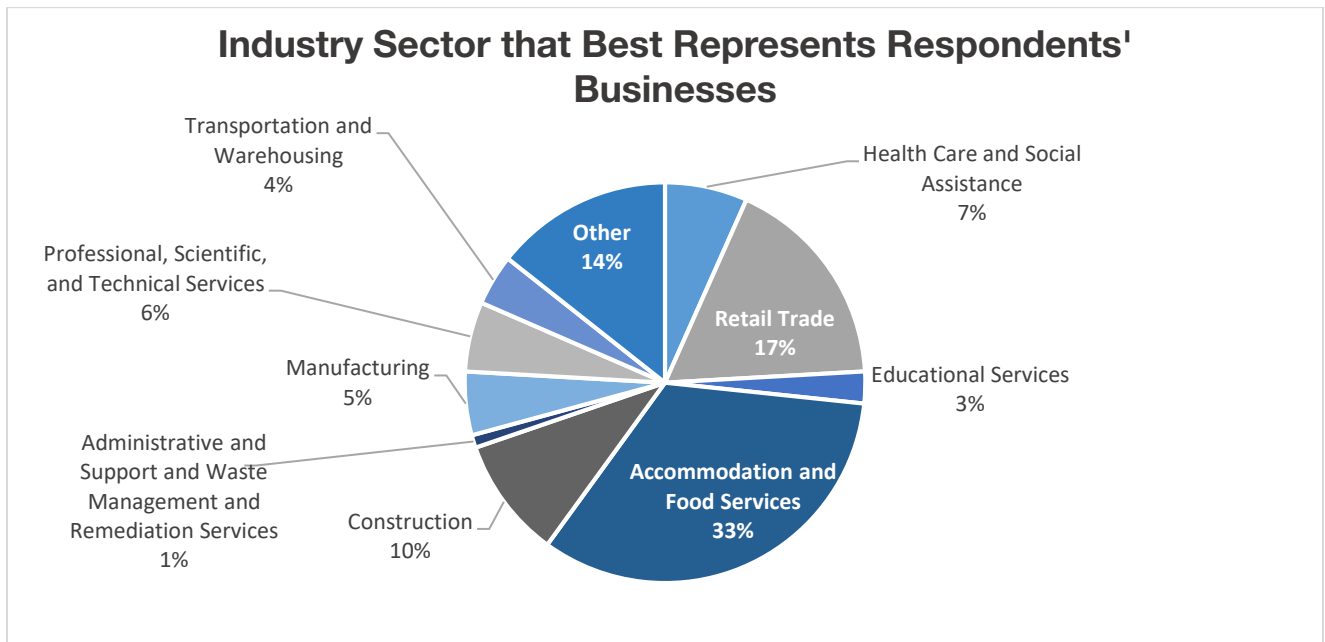


Other notable items:

- *The attraction and retention of skilled and educated professionals presents a great opportunity for the economic prosperity of the region.*
- *Promoting the region’s natural and historical resources will support year-round tourism and local spending.*
- *Increased childcare options and improved digital infrastructure (e.g. broadband) will serve as an incentive to attract and keep young professionals in the region.*

III. Value Chain: Markets, Competitors, and Suppliers

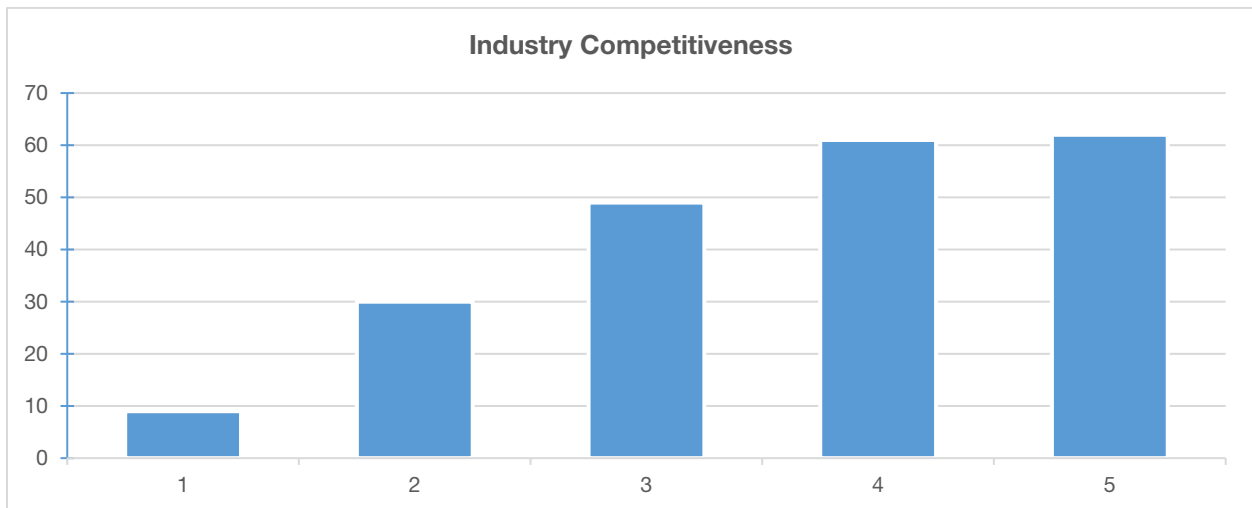
Which industry sector best represents your business?



Other notable items:

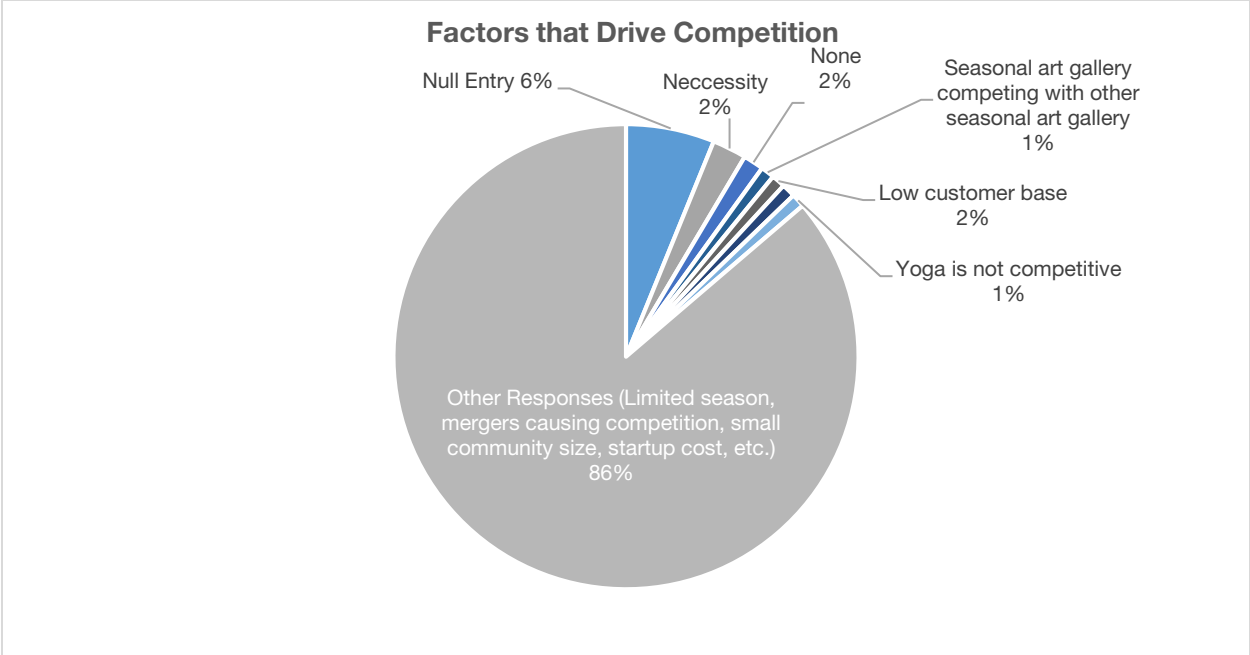
- The “Other” category is made up of a variety of industry sectors not identified in the graph above, including Forest Products, Arts & Entertainment, and Recreational Tourism.

On a scale of 1-5, how competitive do you find your industry?

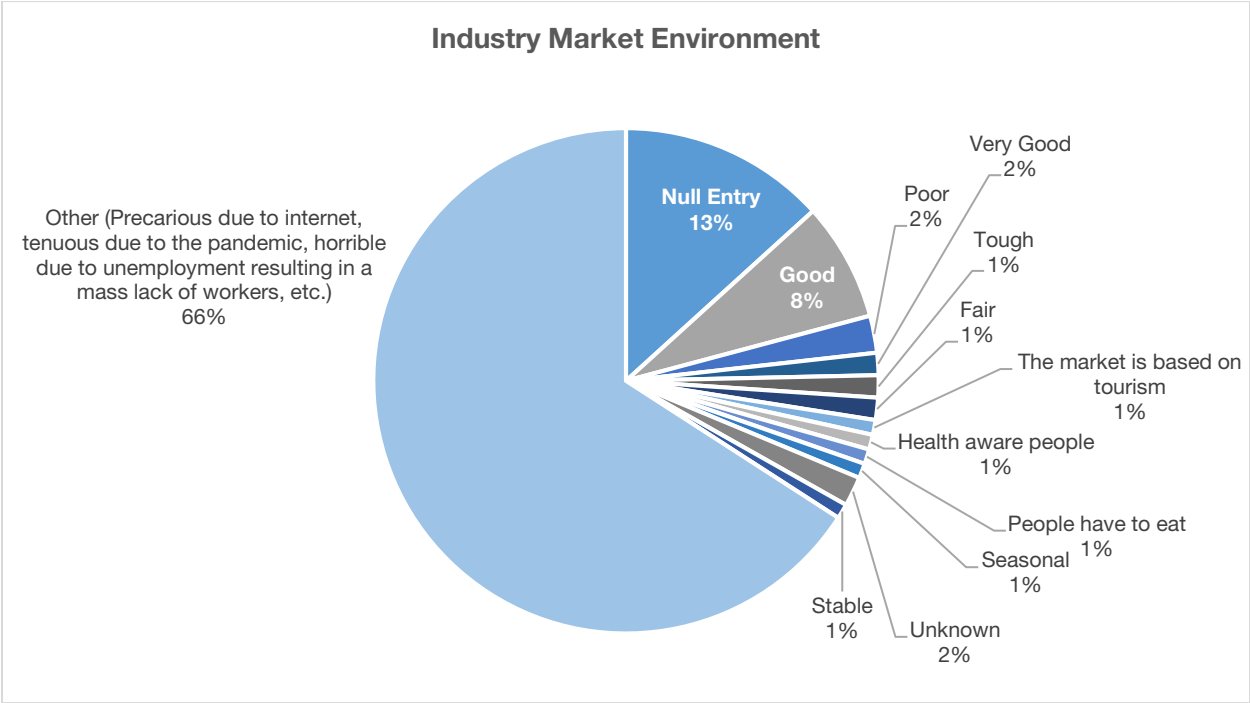


Note: “5” indicates “very competitive” and “1” indicates “not at all competitive.”

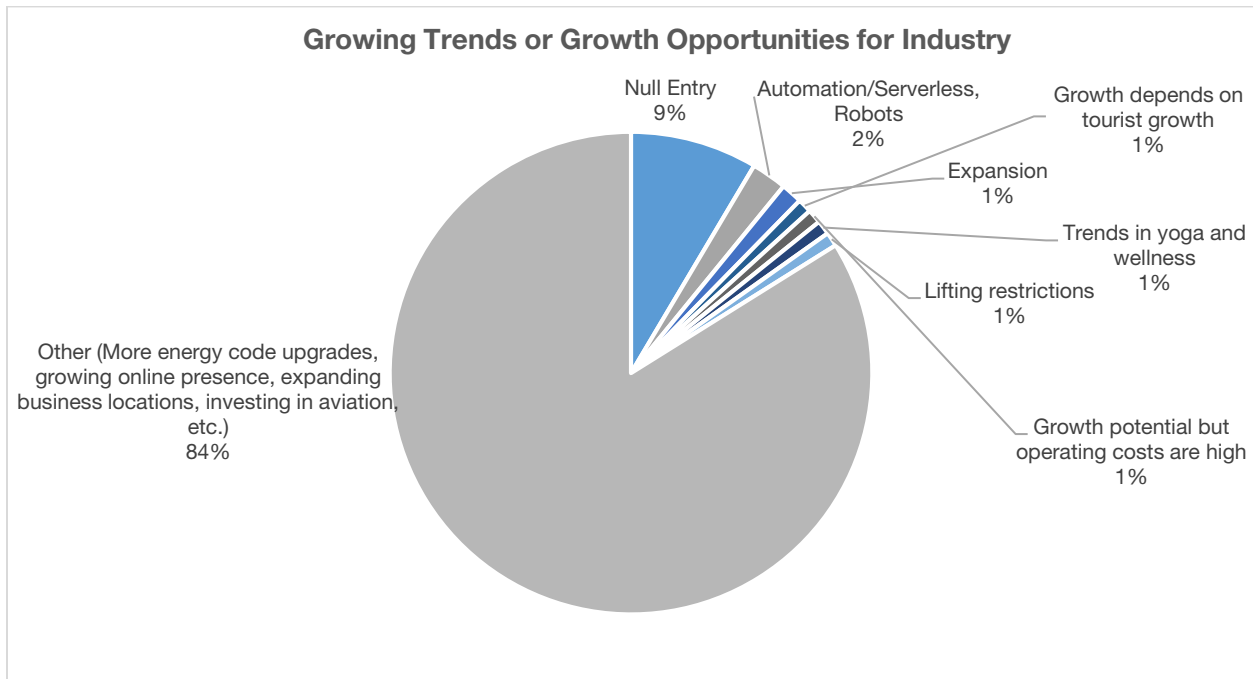
What factors drive this competition?



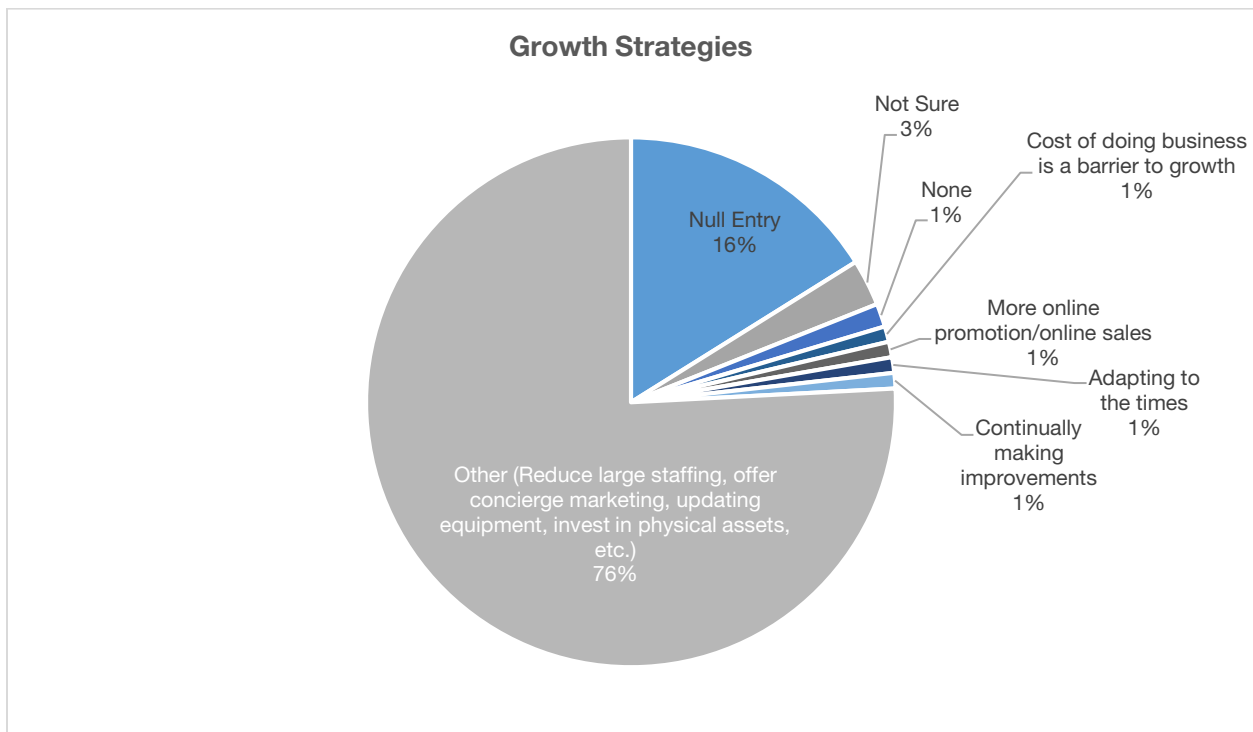
What is the overall market environment for your industry?



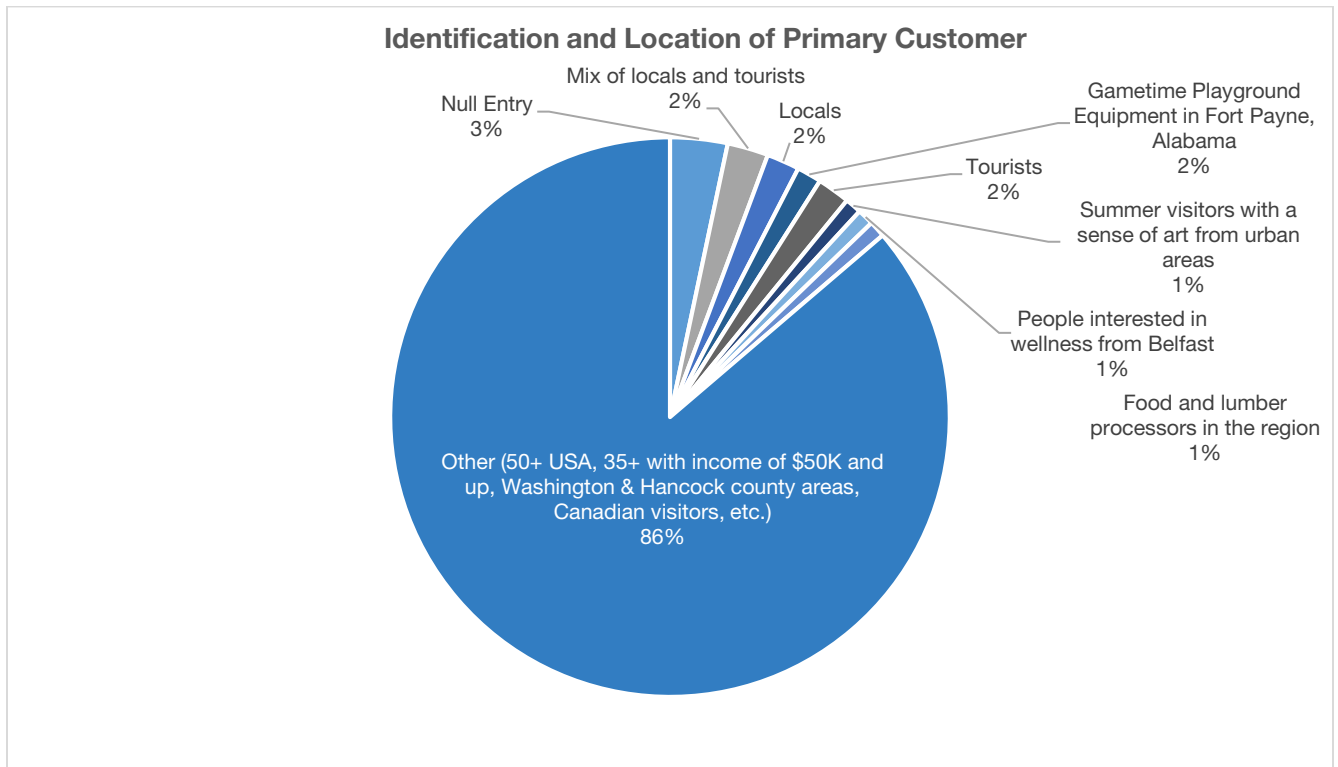
What are the growing trends or growth opportunities for your industry?



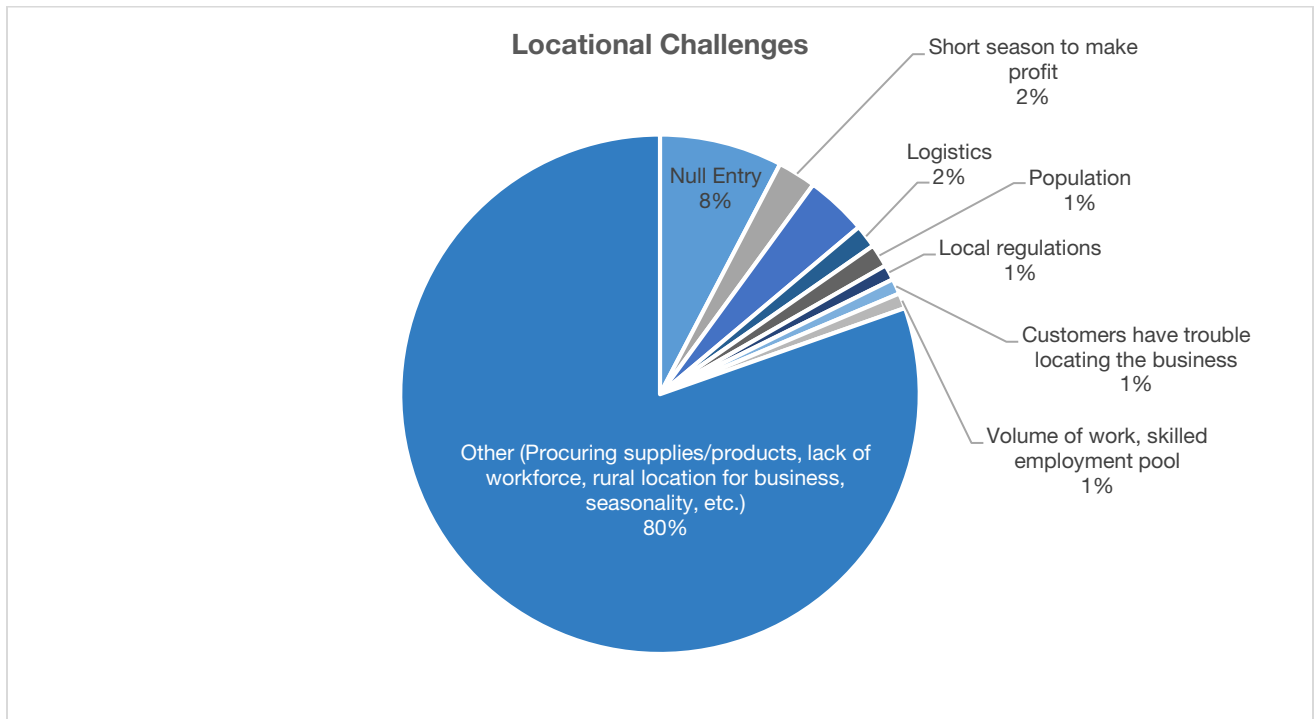
What is your growth strategy and how do you think it compares to the industry? Does this reflect the growth potential of the primary industries you operate in?



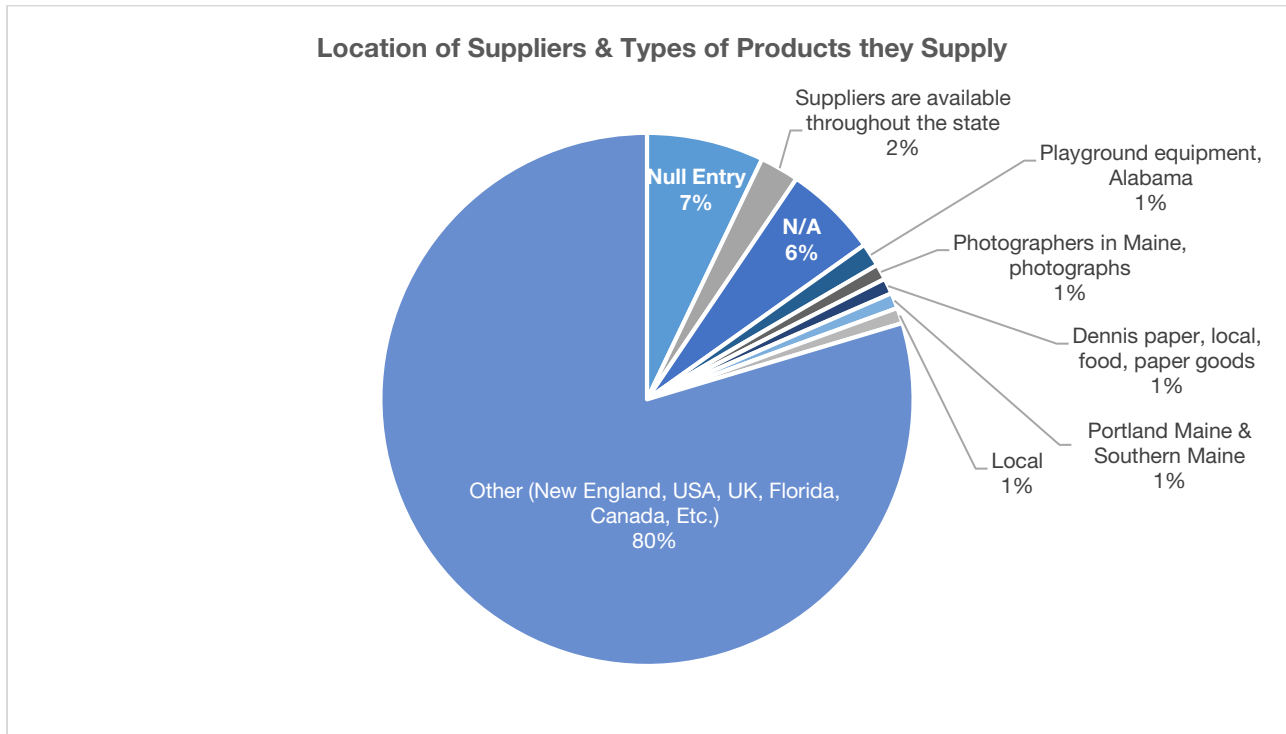
Who is your primary customer and where are they located?



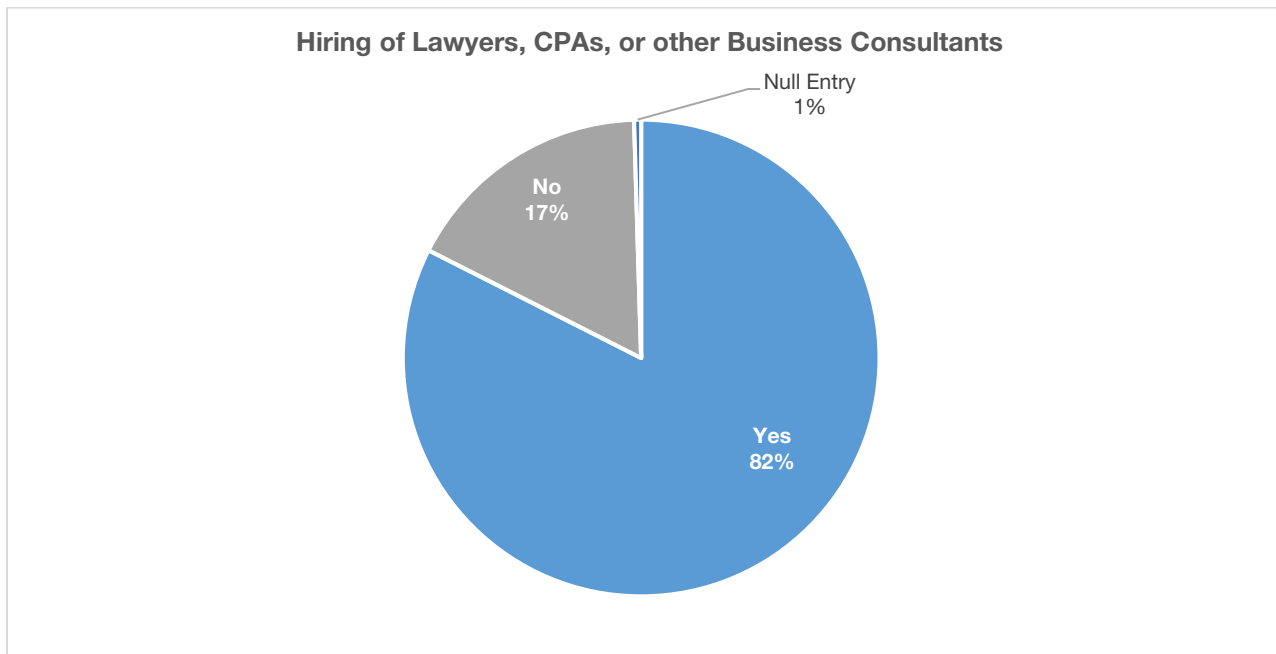
What challenges arise because of your location?



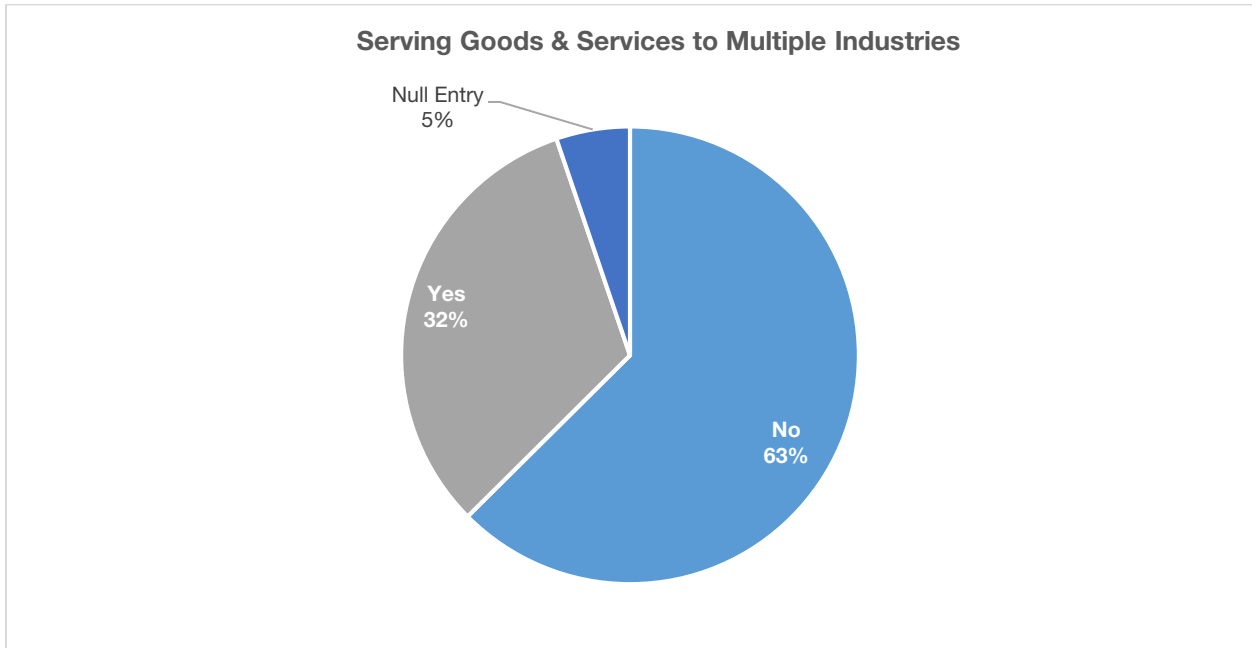
Where are your suppliers located and what type of products do they supply (raw resources, parts, etc.)?



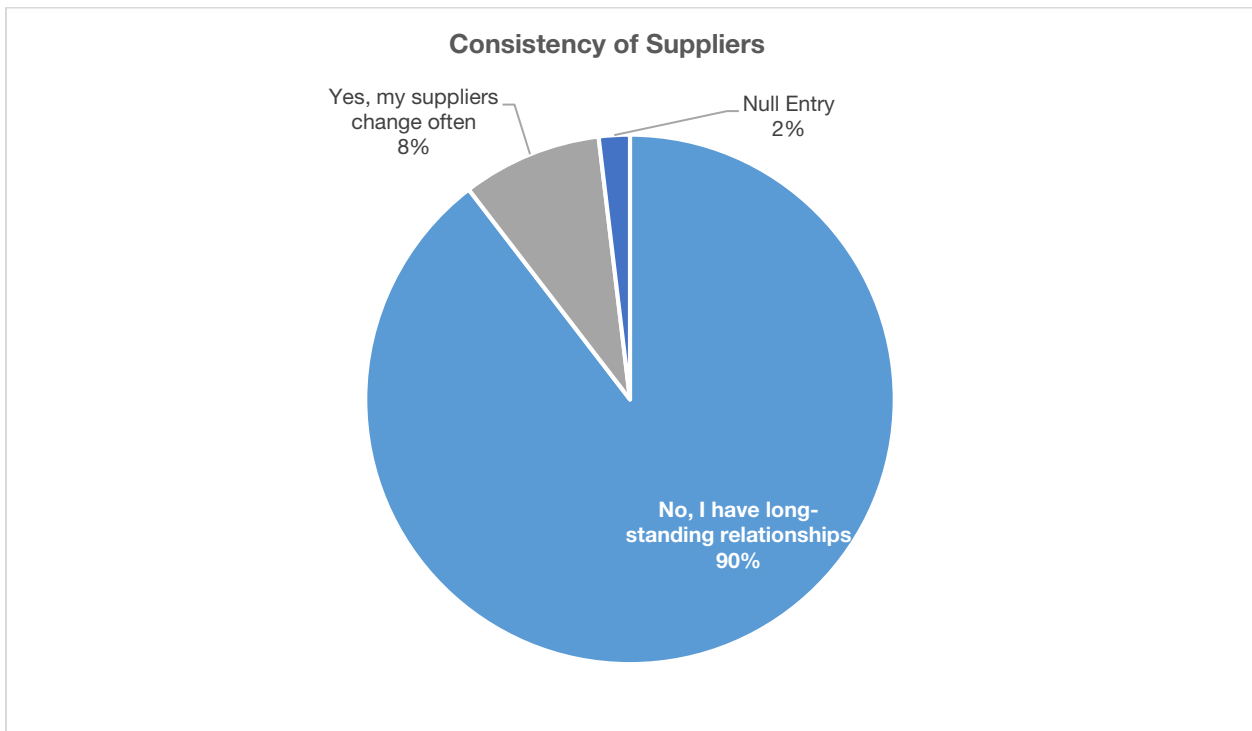
Do you hire lawyers, CPAs, or other business consultants?



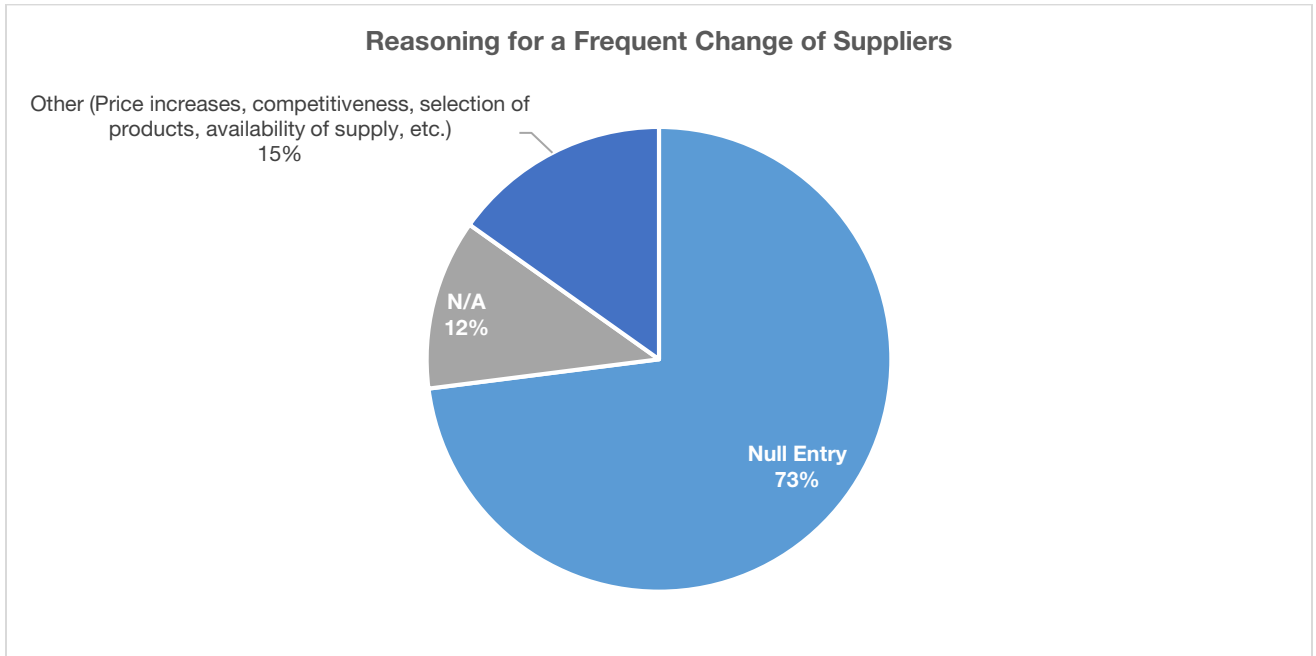
Do you supply more than one industry with goods and services?



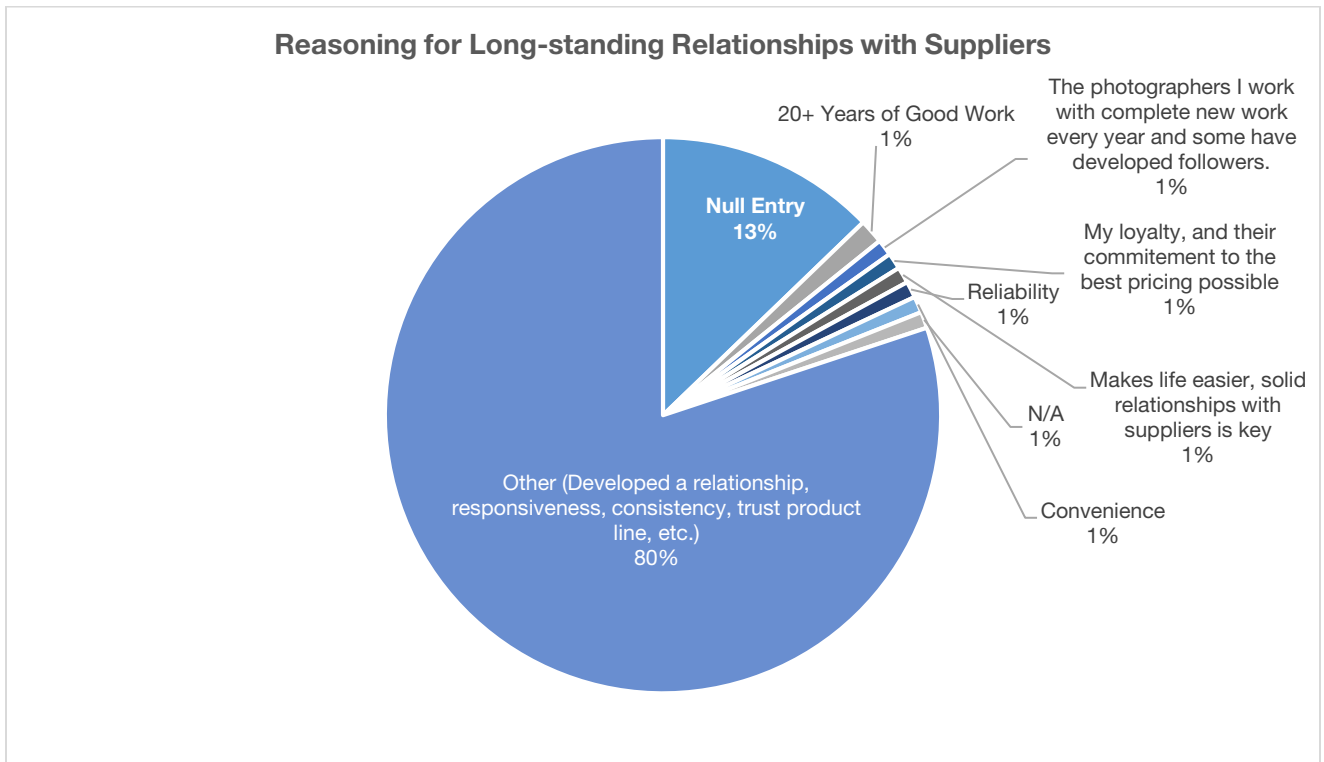
Do your suppliers change often or do you have long-standing relationships?



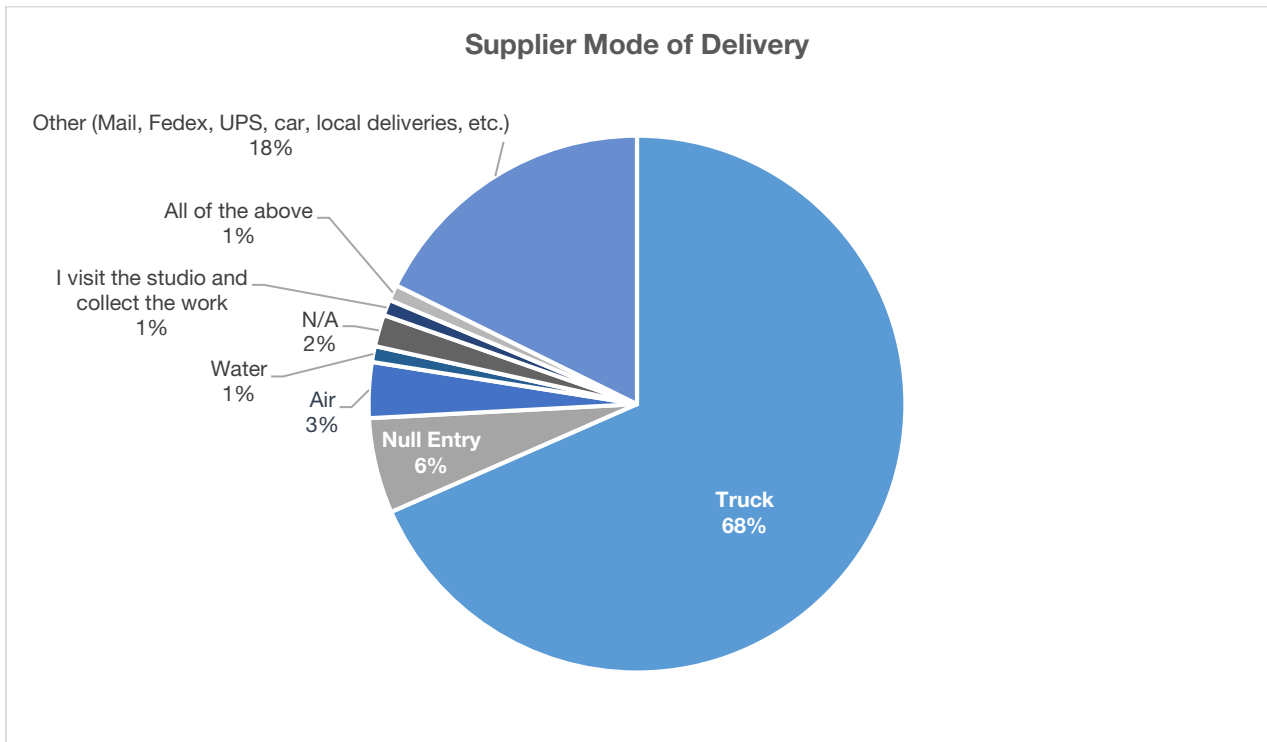
If your suppliers change often, why is that the case?



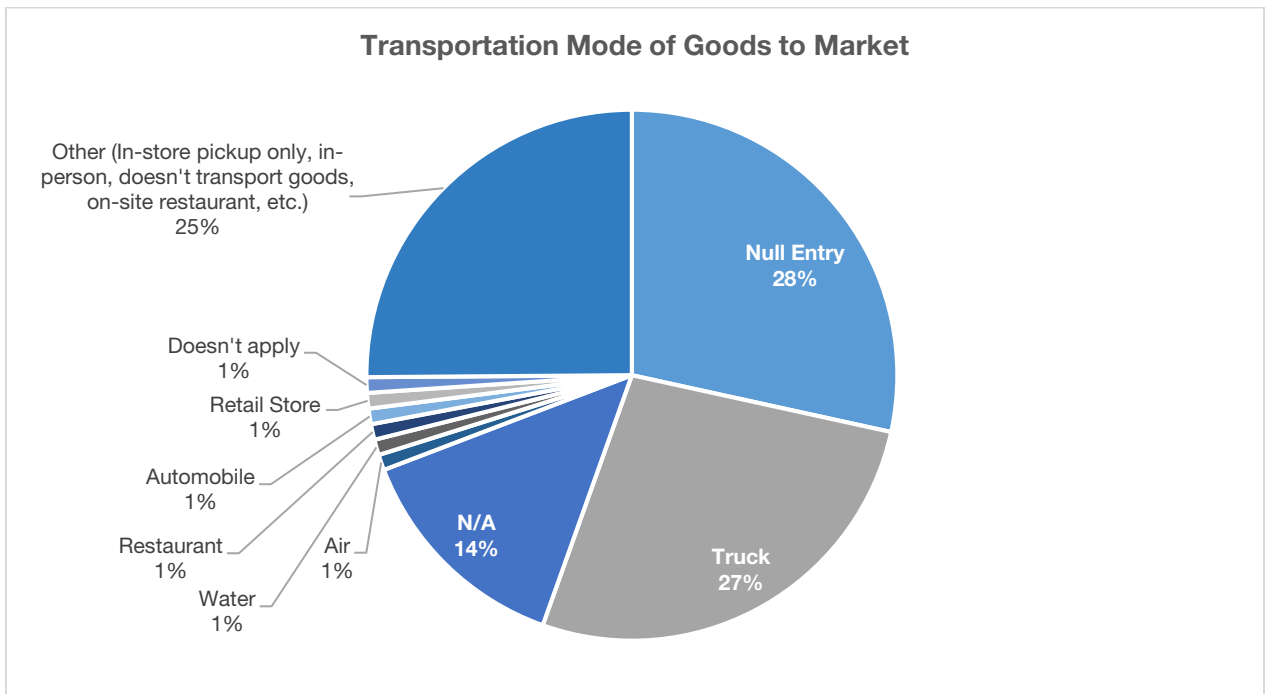
If you have long-standing relationships with your suppliers, why is that?



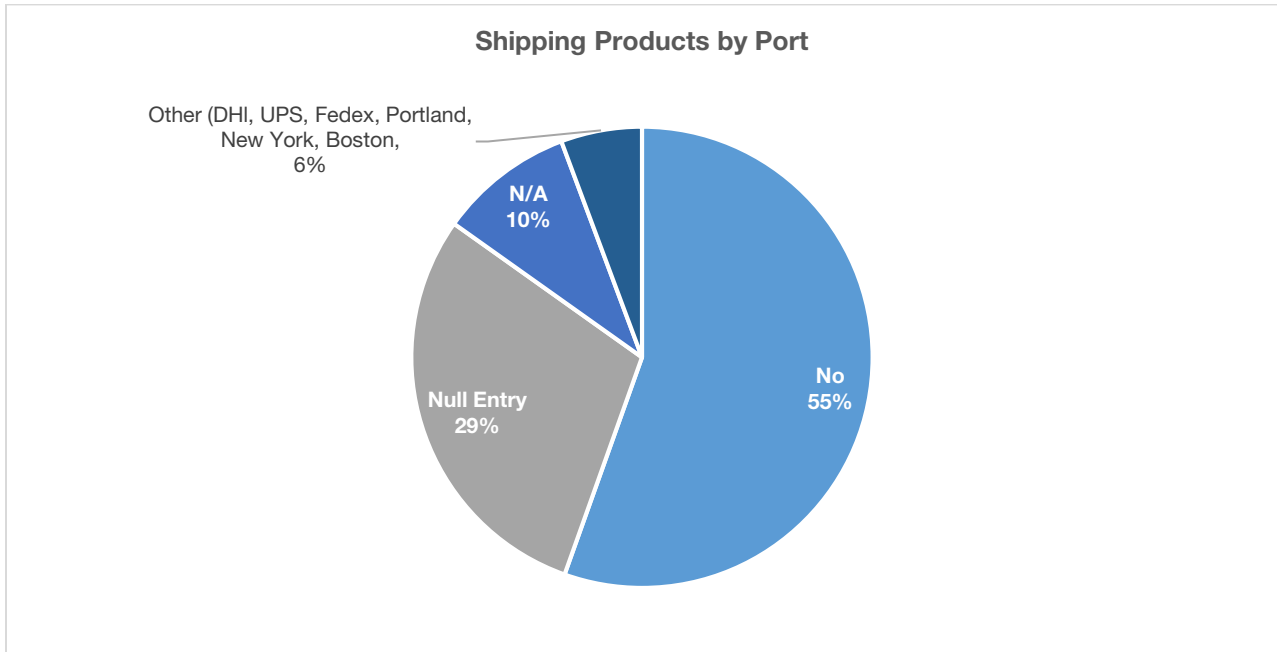
How do your suppliers deliver their goods?



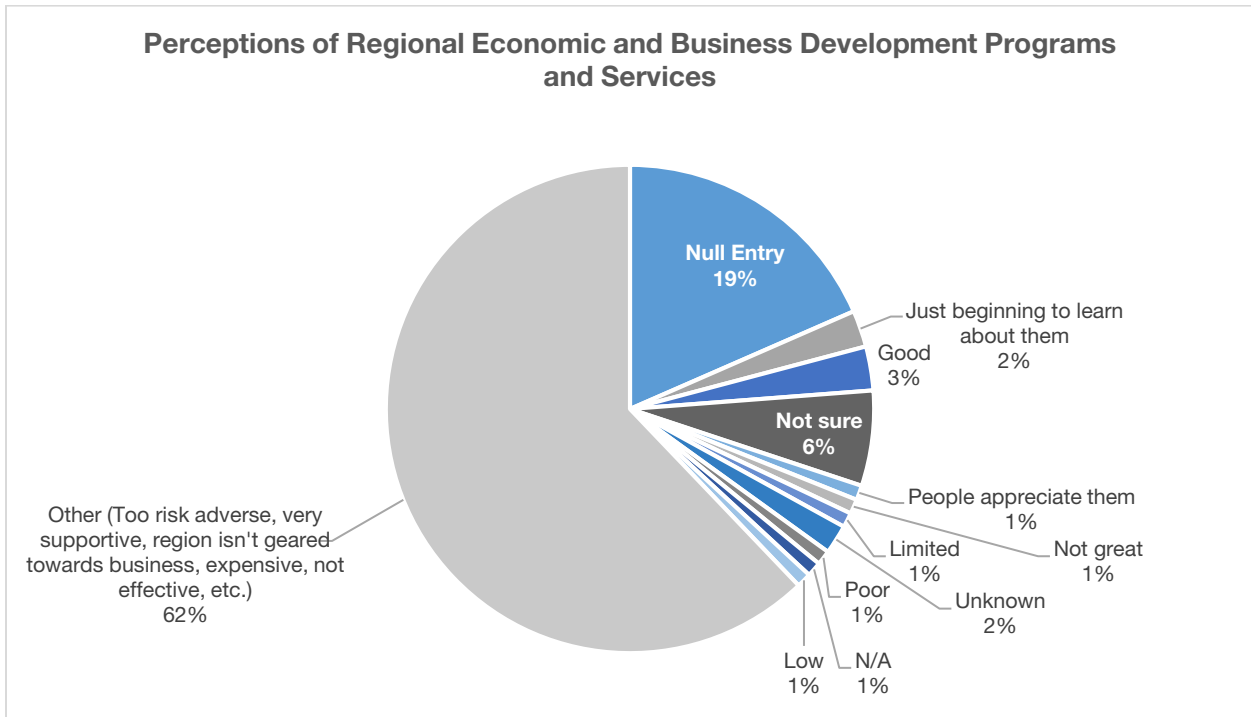
How do you transport your goods to market?



Do you ship any products through a port? If so, where?

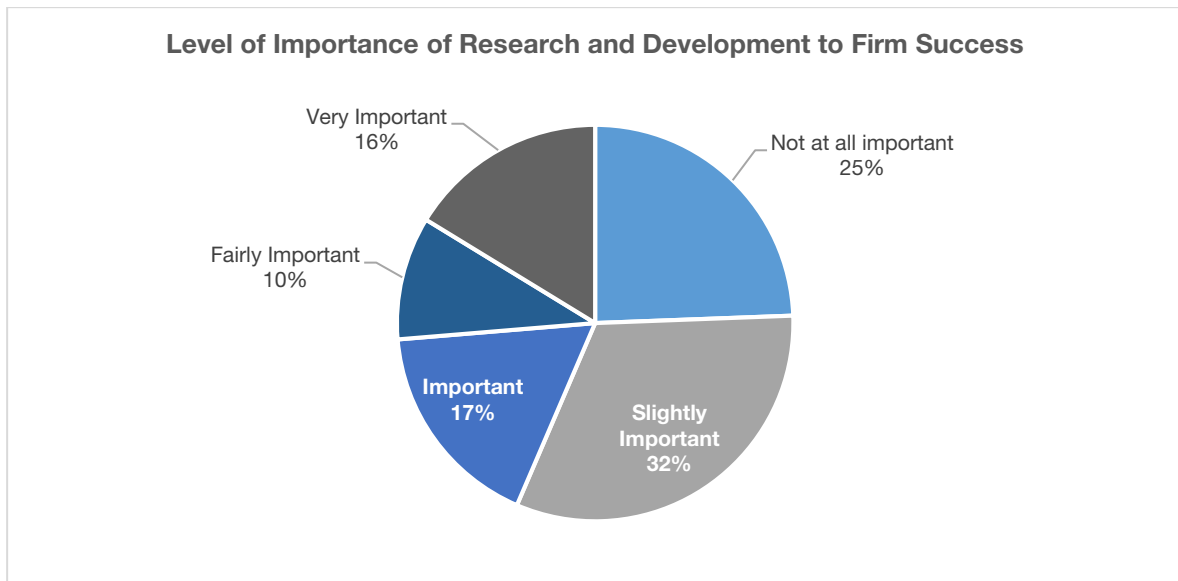


What are the perceptions of economic and business development programs and services in the region?

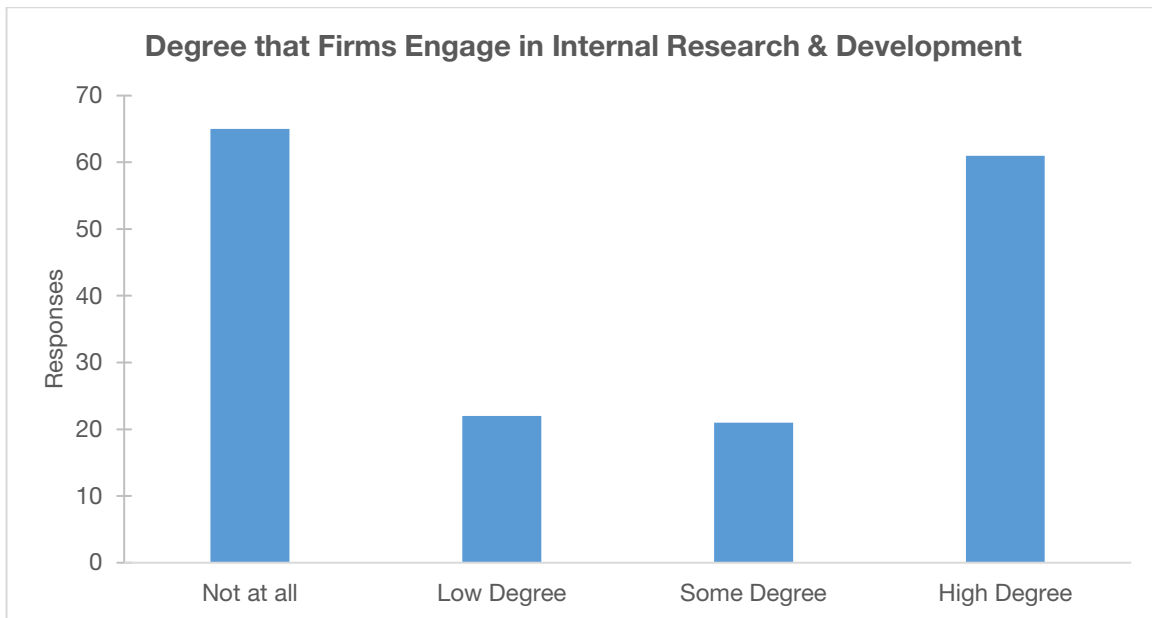


IV. Innovative Activities

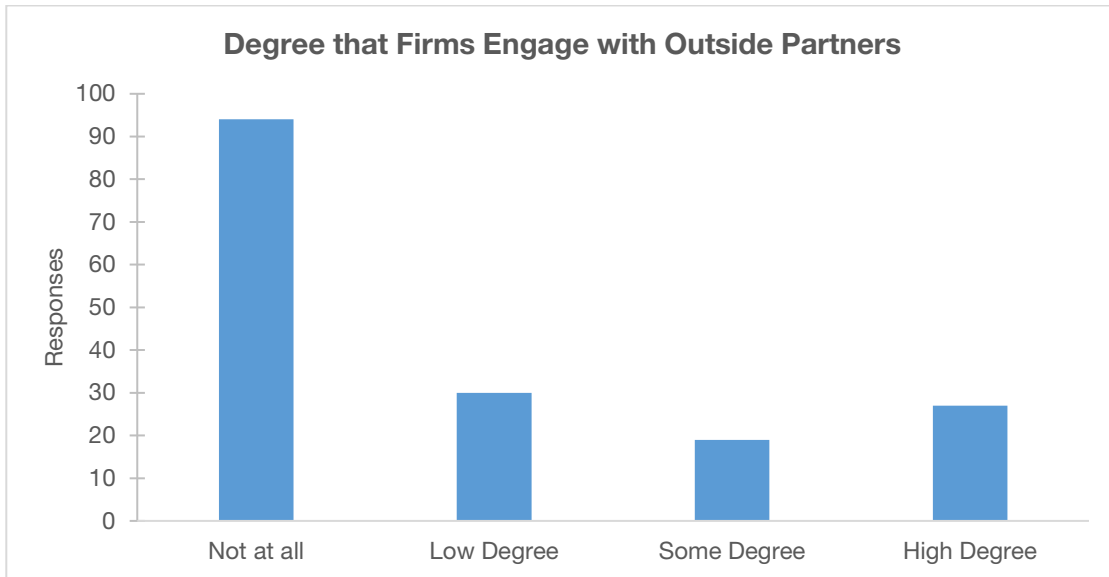
How important is research and development to your firm's success?



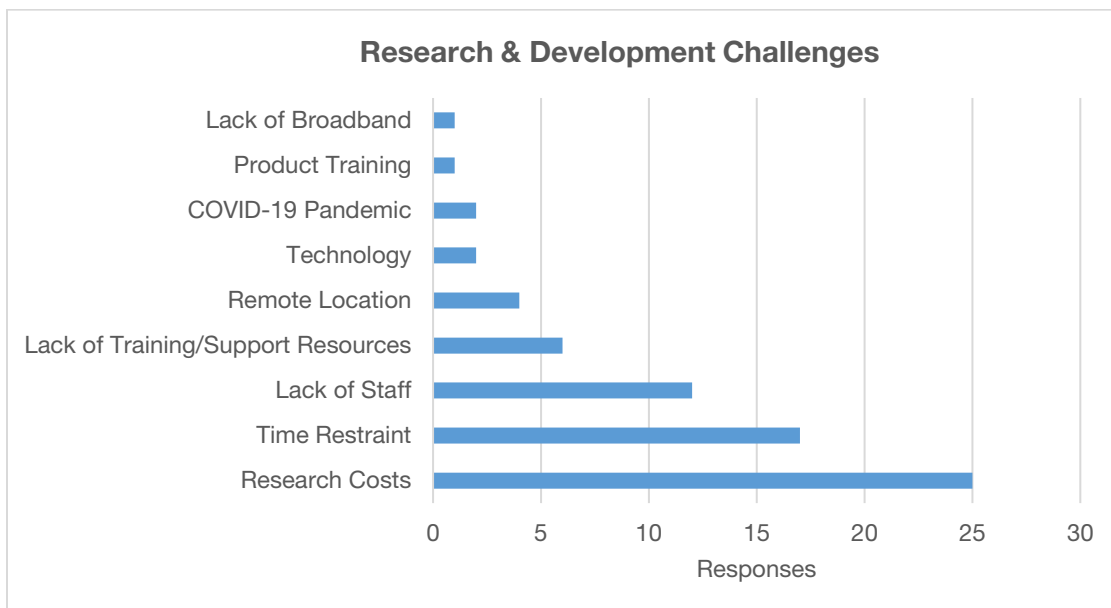
To what degree does your firm engage in research and development internally?



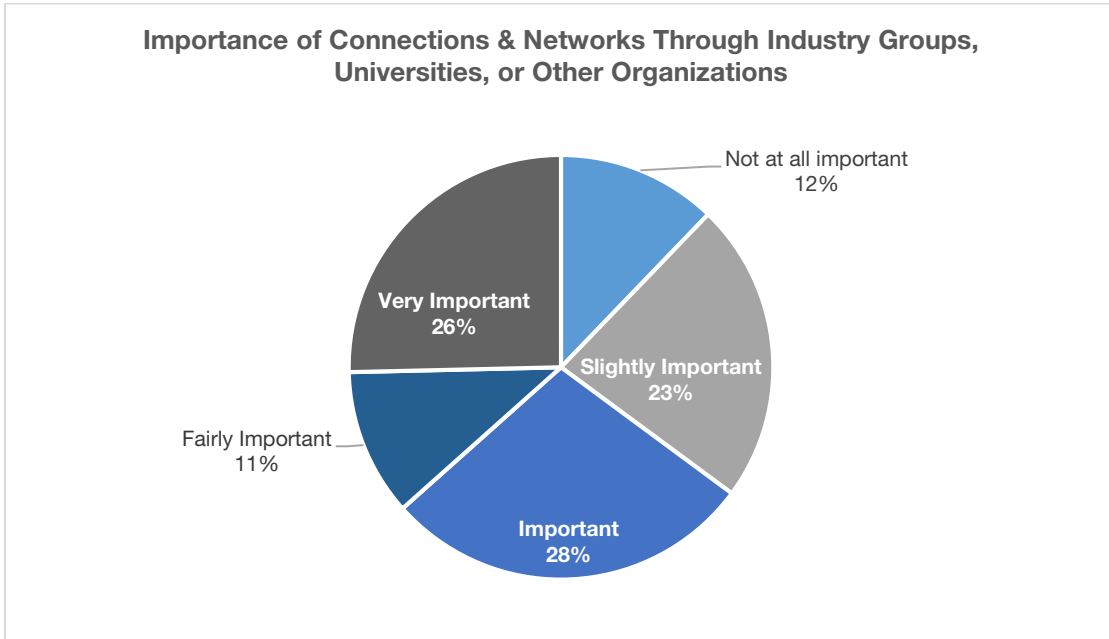
To what degree does your firm engage in research and development with outside partners, either organizations, suppliers, partners, or research institutions?



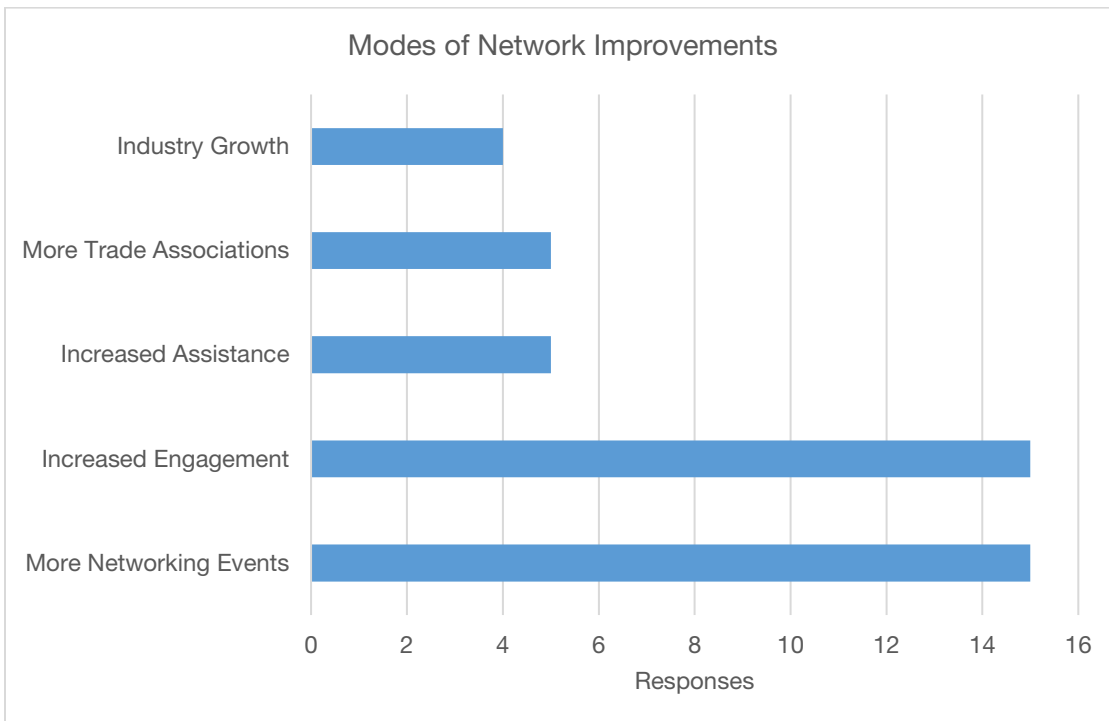
What are the biggest challenges you face related to research and development and innovation activities?



How important are connections and networks through industry groups (trade associations), universities, or other organizations?



Could these networks be improved? If so, how?

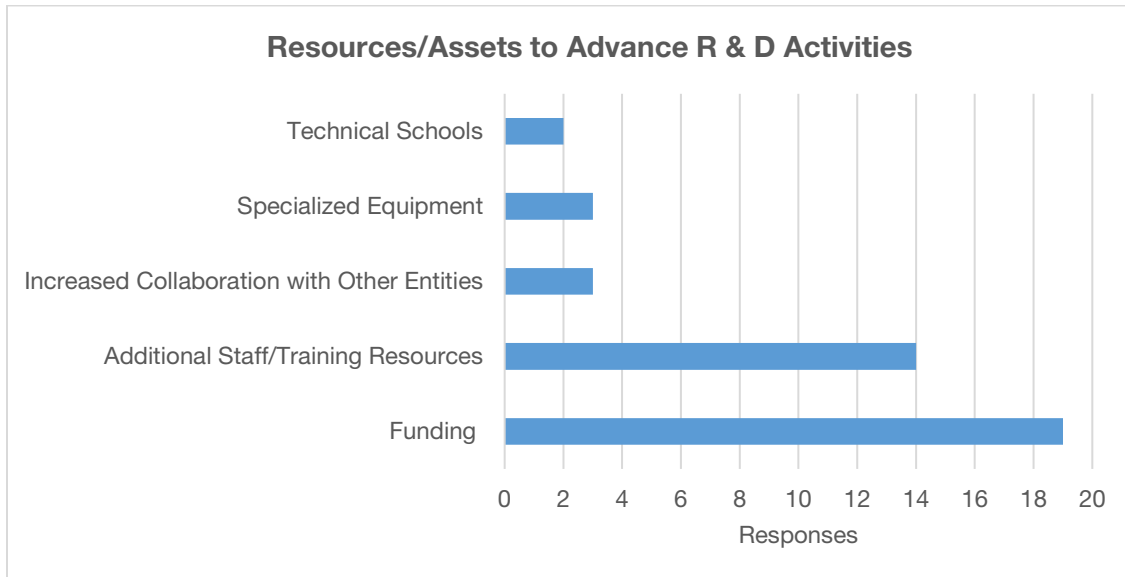


In your industry, where does most of the R & D occur, both geographically and by whom?

Where
Alabama
Arkansas
Augusta, ME
California
China
Europe
Germany
Gift Shows
Globally
Hancock County, ME
Hermon, ME
In House
International Forum
Japan
Locally
Media
Nationally
On Site
Online
Orrington, ME
Penobscot County, ME
Quality Control Lab, Portland, ME
Southern Maine

Whom
Airbnb
Auto Manufacturers
Clientele
Congregation
Department of Tourism
Distributors
Engineering firms
Equipment Manufacturers
Farmers
Fisheries
Gifts & Decorative Accessories
Magazine
Industry Trade Organizations
Large Corporations
Maine Arts Commission
Maine CDC
Maine Hospitality Group
Maine Office of Tourism
Member Organizations
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Owner
Professional Research Firms
Suppliers
Teachers
Tourist Organizations
U.S. CDC
University of Maine

What resources/assets would advance your R & D activities, whether located in the region or outside?



V. Networks and Linkages

What partners in your industry and supporting institutions (trade groups, etc.) have you engaged or worked with in the past 12 months?

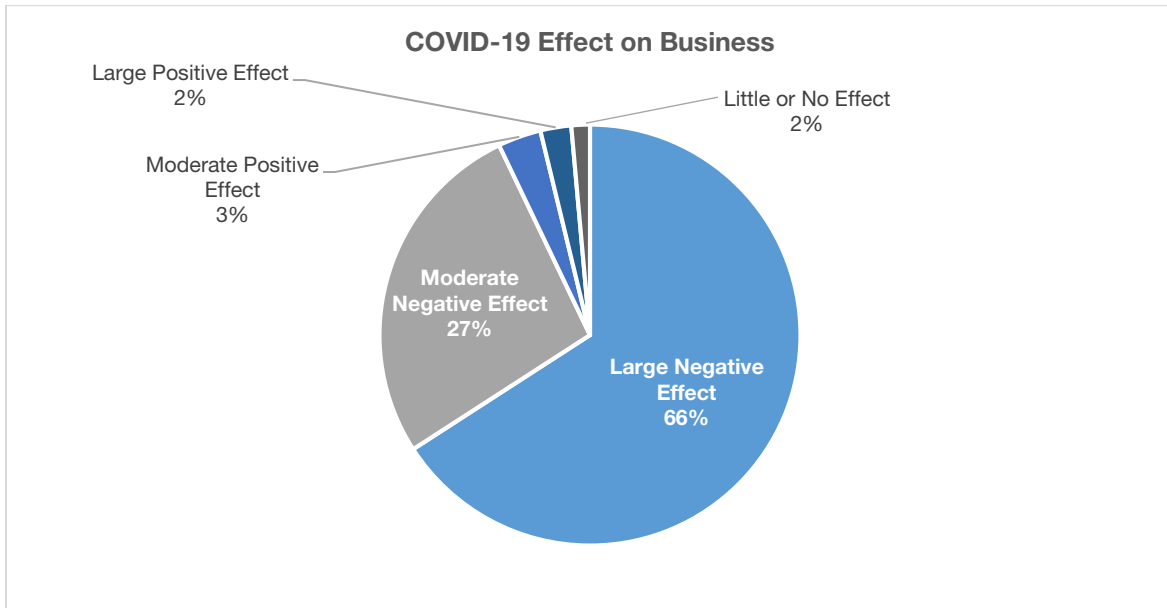
Partners	Responses
None	100
Other Local Businesses	32
Local Chambers	15
Industry Specific Trade Association	12
Development Companies/ Groups	9
Industry Specific National Supplier	7
Small Business Association	6
Hospitality Maine	6
Maine Tourism Association	6
Community College System	4
University of Maine System	4
Professional Logging Contractors of Maine	3
Our Town Belfast	3
Heart of Ellsworth	3
Tourism Associations	2
Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI)	2
Maine Forestry Service	1
Career Center Network	1
Aroostook Partnership	1

Maine Pellet Fuels Association	1
Maine Forest Product Council	1
Forest Stewardship Council	1
Efficiency Maine	1
Maine PTAC	1
Bangor Region Leadership Institute	1
Insurance Providers	1
Trip Advisor	1
Mano en Mano	1
Airbnb	1
Etsy	1
Union of Maine Visual Artists	1
USDA	1
Center for Community Inclusion	1
Bowling Proprietors of America	1
International Candlepin Bowling Assoc.	1
Maine State Bowling Assoc.	1
Maine International Trade Center	1
USA Ice Rinks	1
Department of Economic and Community Development	1
National Environmental Information Resource Center	1
Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, Restoration Certification	1
North East Diesel Collaborative	1
National Association of Catering and Events	1
Professional Beauty Association	1
American Massage Therapy Association	1
Maine Maritime Academy	1
College of the Atlantic	1
New England Made Shows	1
New England Apparel Club	1
Maine Crafts Association	1
Haystack Craft School	1
Deer Isle Artists Association	1
National Rifle Association	1
Maine Innkeepers	1
Associated General Contractors	1
Maine Better Transportation Association	1
Society of Collision Repair	1
Auto Body Resource Network	1
Mechanical Service Contractors of America	1
Maine Winery Guild	1
Maine Brewers Guild	1
Maine Grocers and Food Producers	1

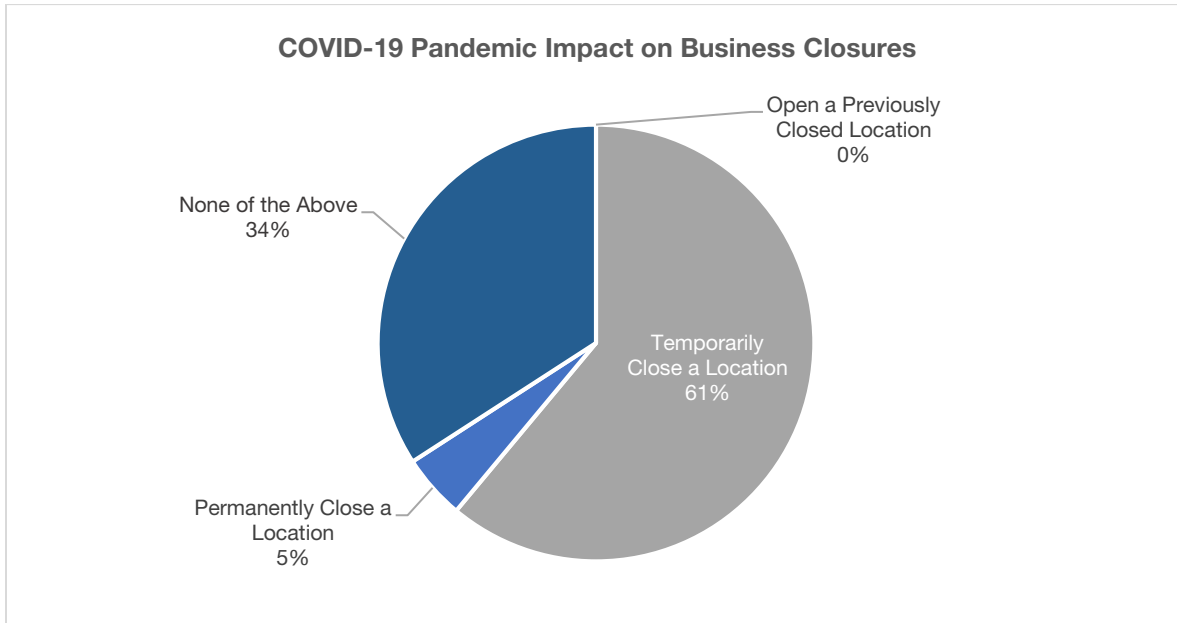
Habitat for Humanity	1
Maine Outdoor Brands	1
Promotional Products Association International	1
Northeast Public Power Association	1
Maine Chiropractic Association	1
Restaurant workers of ME	1
Belfast Restaurant group	1
Professional Picture Framers' Association	1
American Institute for Conservation	1
Maine state gymnastics league	1
American Forest Management	1
Blue Hill Heritage Trust	1
East Coast Shellfish Growers Association	1
Shellfish Climate Network	1
Maine Aquaculture Association	1
Penquis Transportation	1
Higher Ground	1
Bangor Area Recovery Network	1
Health Affiliates of Maine	1
Department of Health and Human Services	1
Office of Substance Abuse	1
TOTAL	281

VI. COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

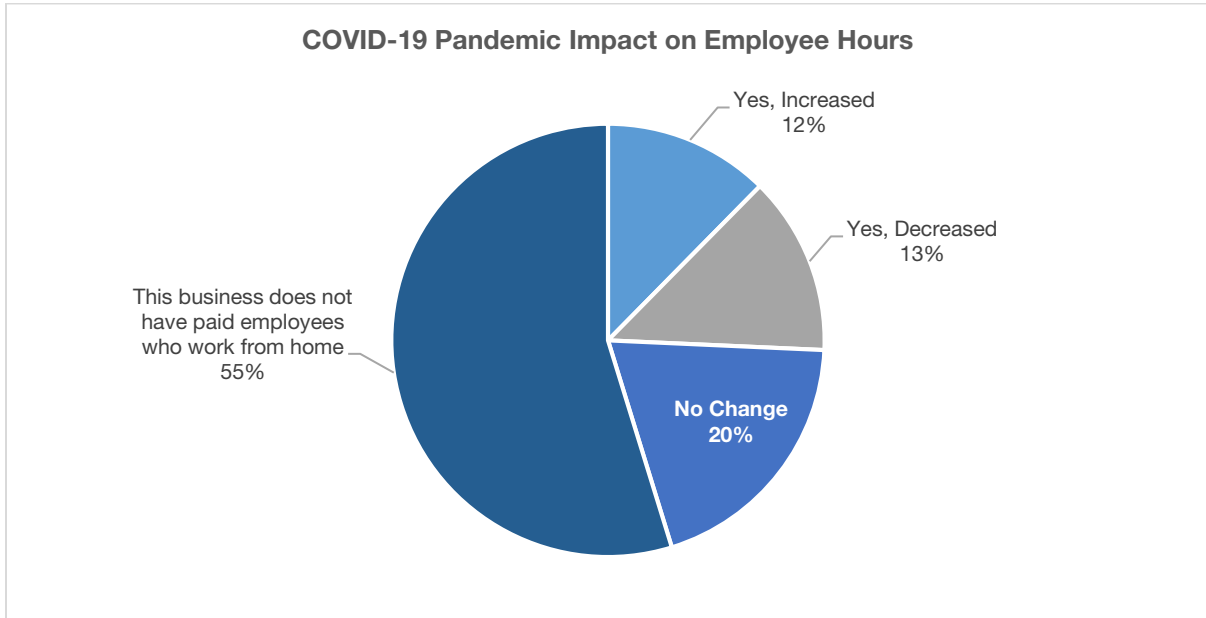
How has your business been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?



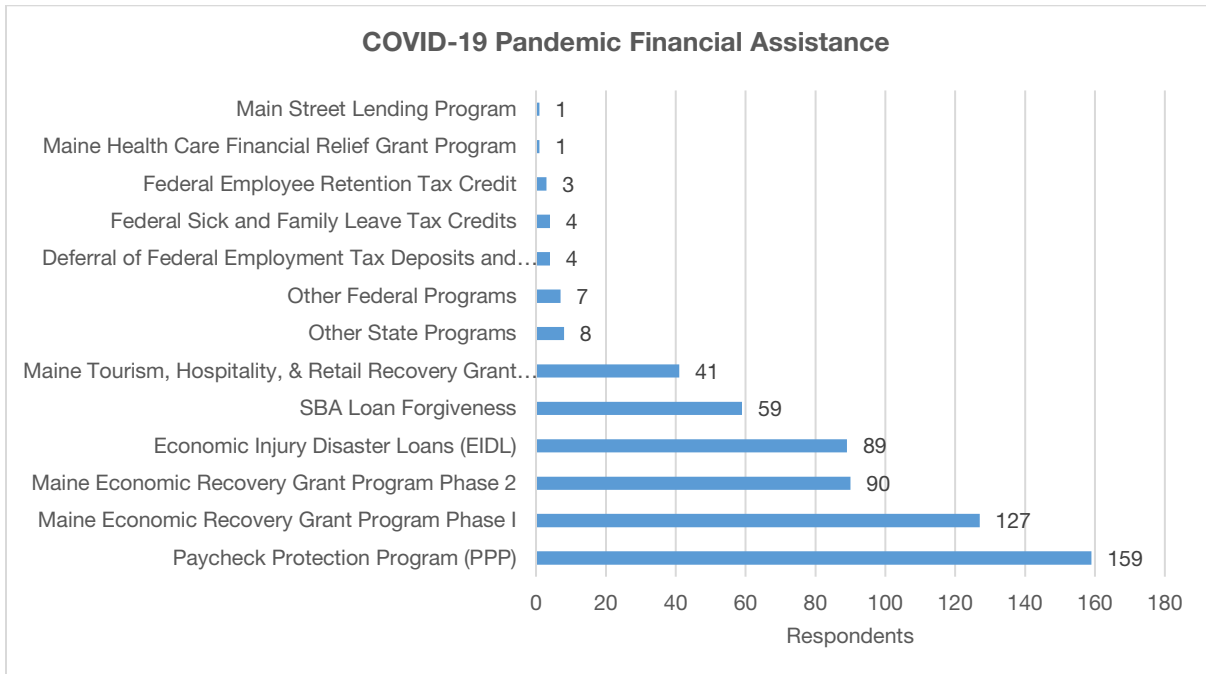
Did the COVID-19 pandemic cause you to do any of the following?



Did your business have a change in the total number of hours paid employees worked from home?

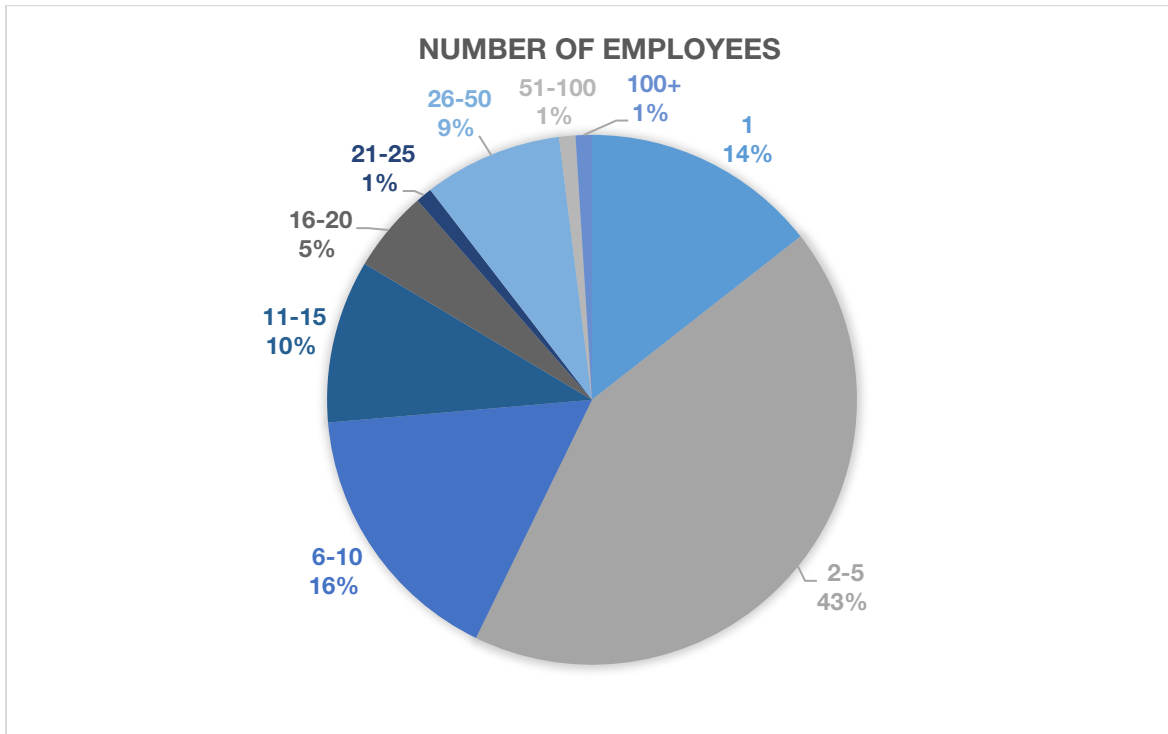


Since March 13, 2020, has your business received financial assistance from any of these programs from the State or Federal government?

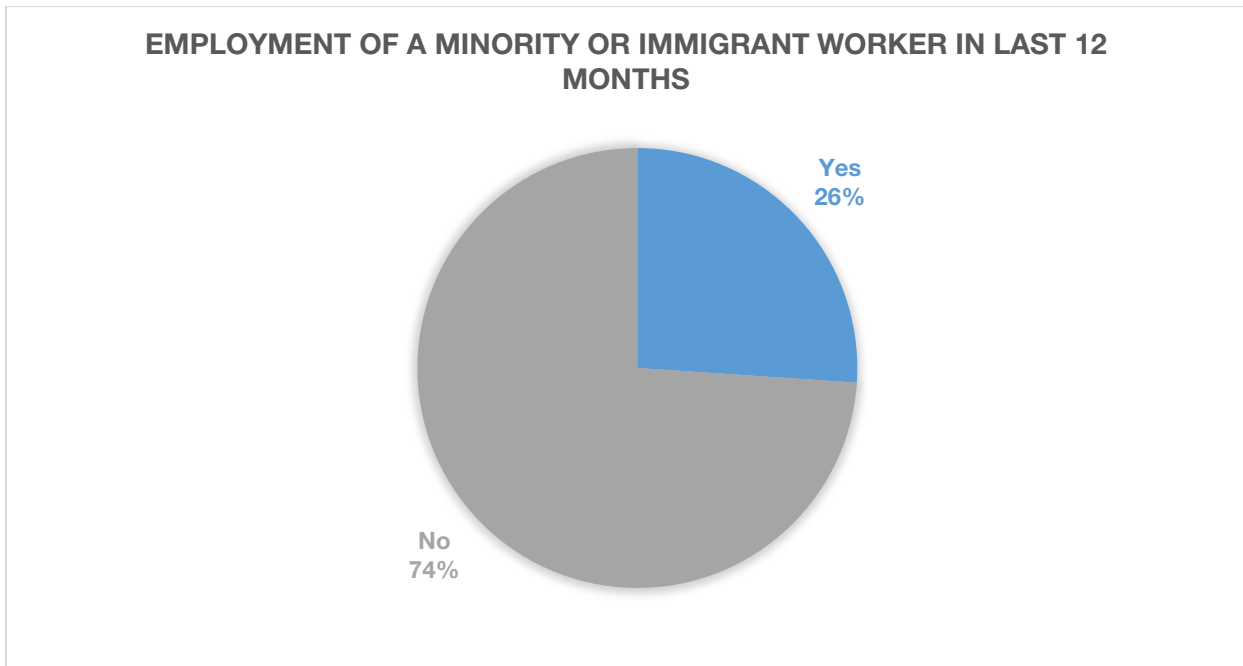


VII. Labor Market & Workforce

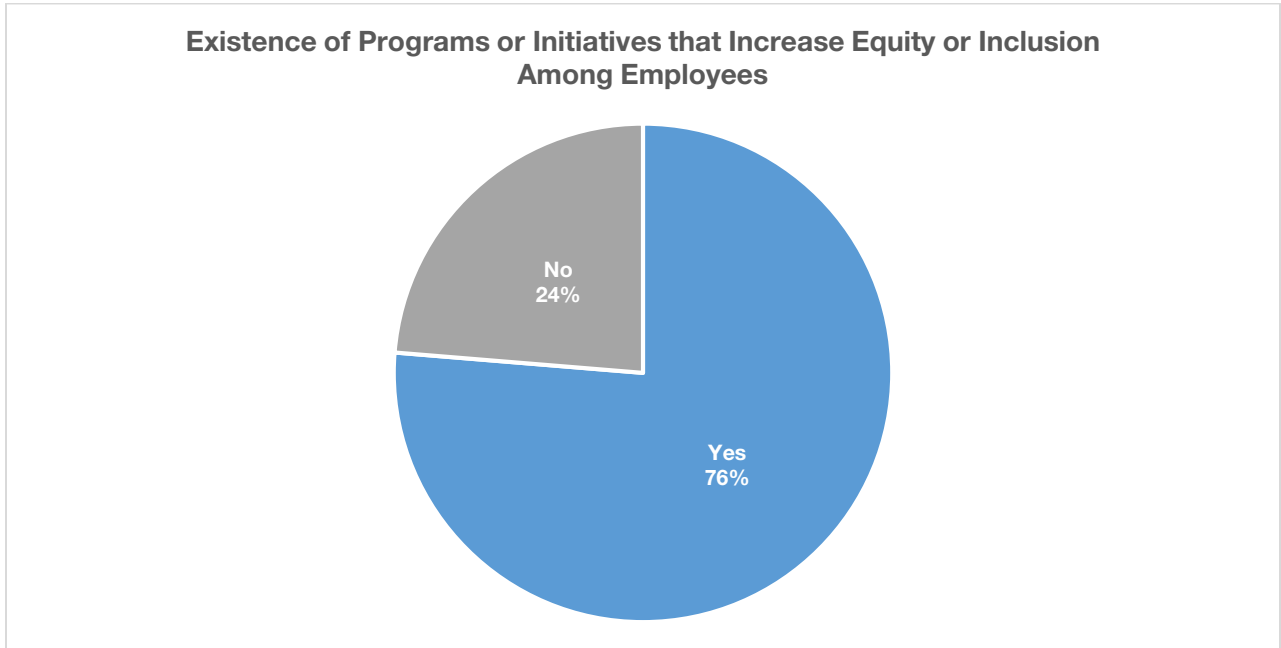
About how many people work for your company?



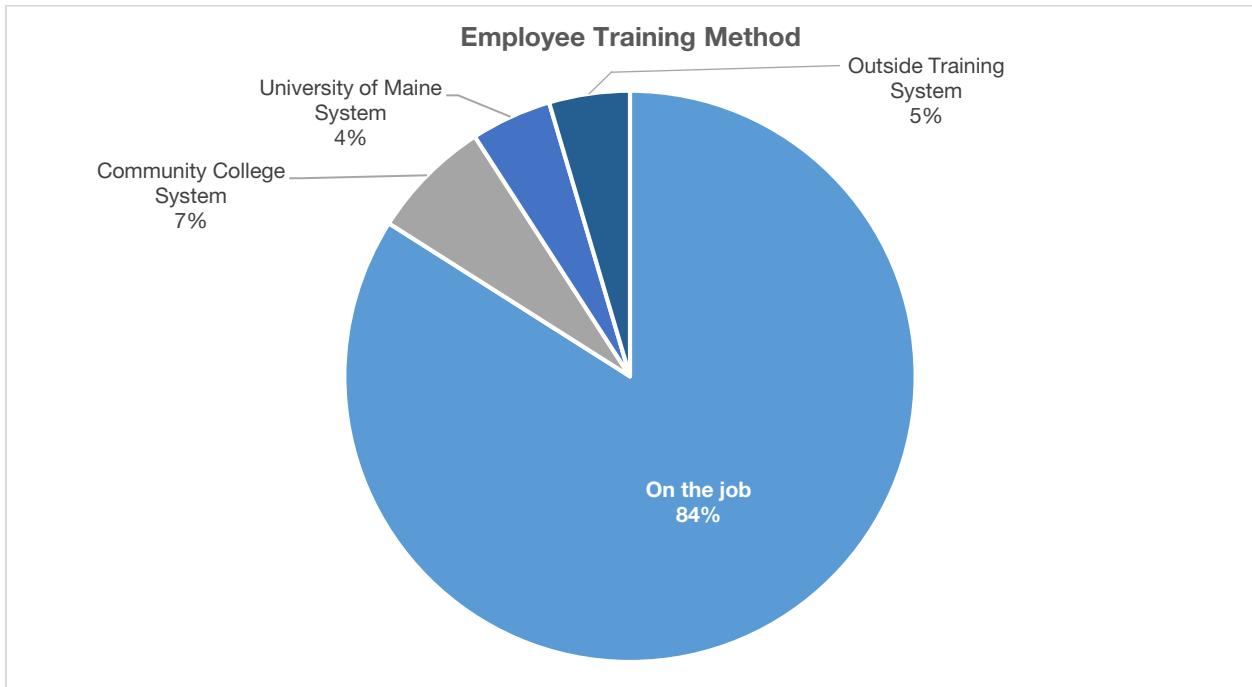
Have you employed a minority or immigrant worker in the last 12 months?



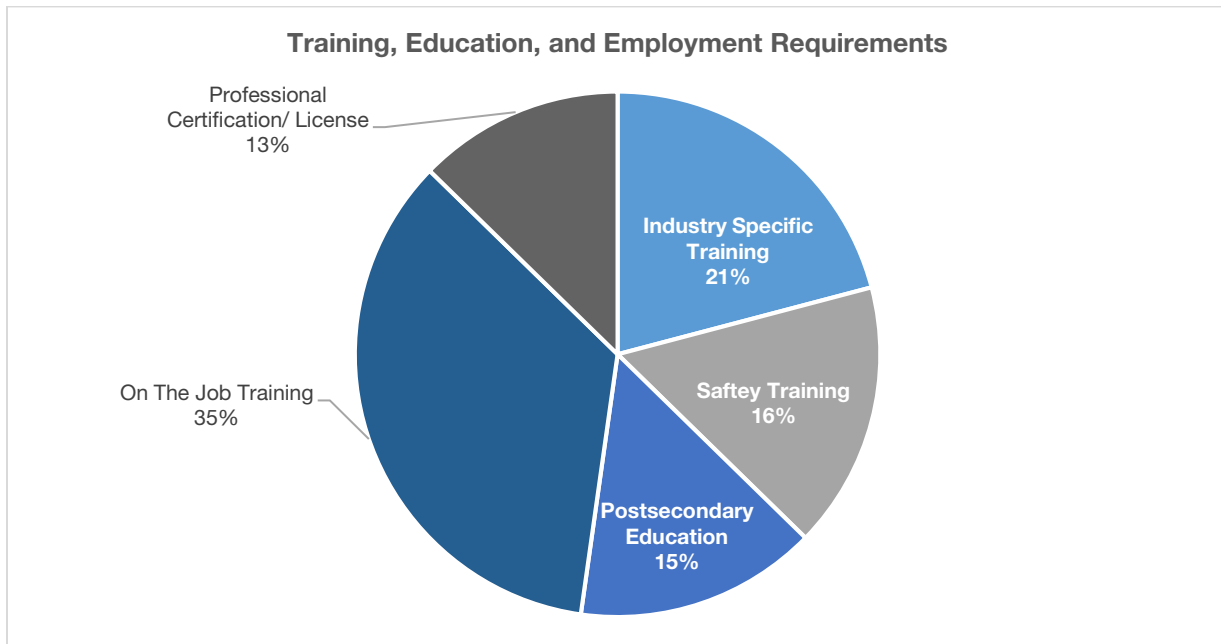
Does your business have any programs or initiatives that aim to increase equity or inclusion among your employees?



Where are your workers trained?



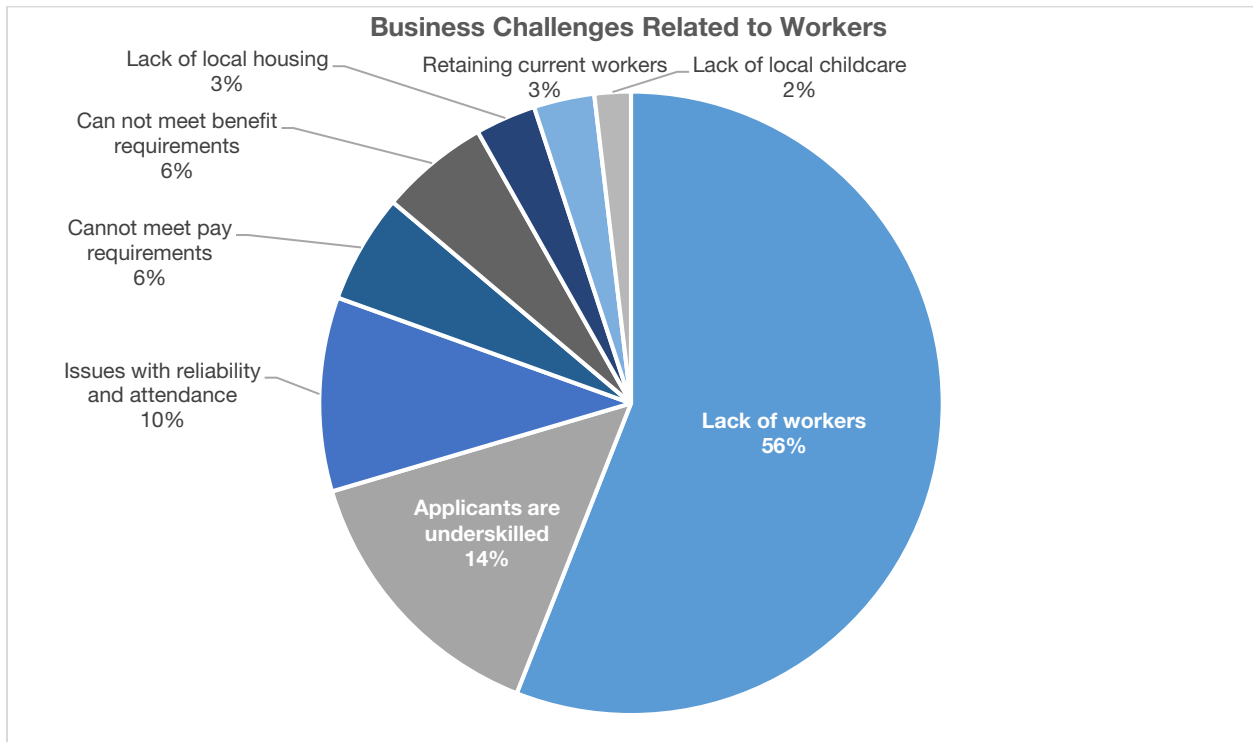
What training, education, and employment requirements exist for your workers?



Do you have partnerships with educational institutions or workforce development programs that train your workers? If so, what organizations or institutions?

<u>Organizational/Institutional Partnerships</u>	<u>Responses</u>
University of Maine System	5
Community College System	3
PLC logger training program	2
NMCC	1
Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification	1
KVCAP	1
Maine roads to quality	1
Beauty and massage schools	1
High Schools	1
A4T Development	1
FedCap	1
AGC Maine	1
OSHA	1
EMCC	1
Katahdin Region Higher Education Center	1
Local Municipalities	1
Adult Education	1
TOTAL	24

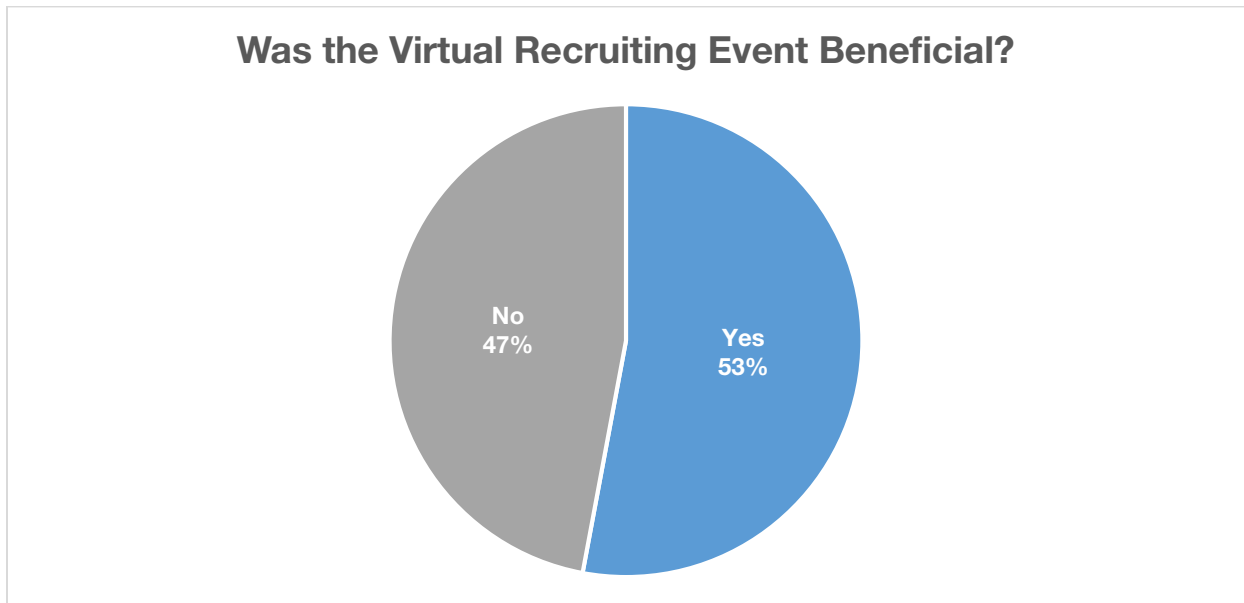
What is the biggest challenge your firm faces related to workers? Why?



Have you participated in any virtual recruiting events?



If yes, did you find the virtual recruiting event beneficial?



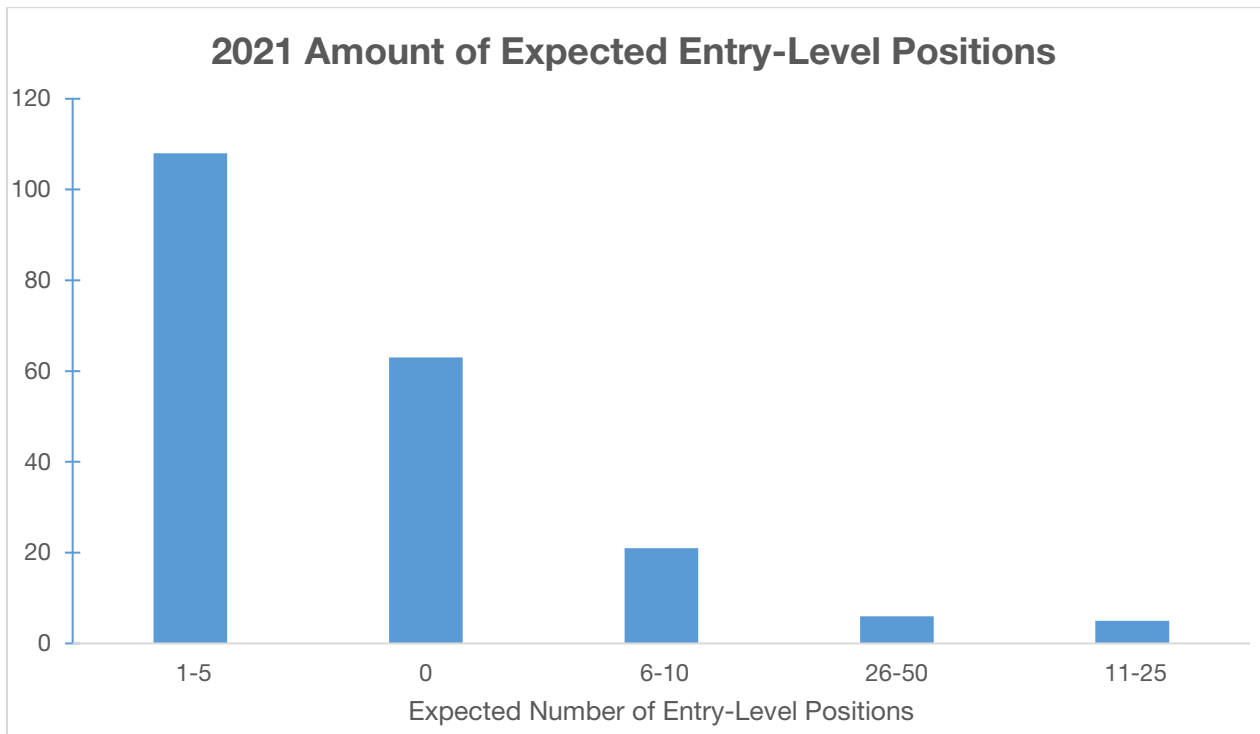
Which virtual platforms do you use to recruit new employees?

<u>Virtual Platforms</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Facebook	79
None	54
Online Job Search Engine	45
Other	28
Zoom	16
Virtual Flyers	10
LinkedIn	9
Maine Job Link	8
Word of Mouth	3
Radio	2
Craigslist	2
Indeed	2
TOTAL	258

Which of these recruitment methods yield the best results?

<u>Recruitment Methods</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Facebook	64
Online Search Engine	30
Other	23
Newspapers	17
Zoom	9
Word of mouth	9
None	6
Virtual Flyers	4
Maine Job Link	2
Indeed	2
TOTAL	166

How many entry-level positions do you expect to recruit in 2021?



Have you used any of the following programs?

