

ECONOMIC, TOURISM AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 | 9:00 am
Saugeen Room, Civic Centre / Zoom

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89422735866>

MEMBERS PRESENT

OTHERS PRESENT

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

DELEGATIONS

DISCUSSIONS & DECISIONS

1. Adoption of January 21, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes
2. Adoption of February 11, 2026, Regular Cultural Roundtable Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
3. Adoption of February 19, 2026, Regular Heritage Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Business Arising from Minutes
5. Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) Next Steps Session
 - 5.1.1. Town of Hanover BR&E Report 2026
 - 5.1.2. BR&E Respondents Presentation
6. Downtown Plan
7. Community Partners and Initiatives Updates
 - 7.1.1. Grey County
 - 7.1.2. Saugeen Municipal Airport
 - 7.1.3. Saugeen Connects | WOWSA
 - 7.1.4. Hanover Chamber of Commerce
 - 7.1.5. DIA
 - 7.1.6. Clean Energy Frontier | Southwestern Ontario Isotope Coalition
8. Correspondence
 - 8.1.1. 2025 4th Quarter Building Permits
9. New Business
10. Adjournment

Next Meeting Date: May 20, 2026, at 9:00am

**ECONOMIC, TOURISM AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Wednesday, January 21, 2026, | 8:30 am

Virtual | Zoom with Hanover Chamber of Commerce, DIA, Cultural Roundtable & JL Richards

MEMBERS PRESENT Chair Dave Eccles | Jason Rahn | Susan Sakal | Pat Butler | Alina Rehkopf | Jennifer Olivero | Georgina Barlow |

REGRETS Jason Radstake

OTHERS PRESENT April Marshall | Laura Christen | Sherri Walden | Stephen Ferguson | Carolyn Caskanette | Adam Olivero | Brandon Dobson | Bev Morgan | Stacie Baack | Robert Voigt | Alex Taylor | Alison Bucking | Aindrila Sengupta | Lisa Lina | Cindy Schaus

**DISCLOSURE OF
PECUNIARY INTEREST** None

DELEGATIONS None

DISCUSSIONS & DECISIONS

1. **Adoption of October 15, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes**

Moved by SUSAN SAKAL / Seconded by PAT BUTLER

THAT the minutes of the October 15, 2025, Regular Meeting be approved as printed and circulated.

CARRIED

2. **Adoption of November 5, 2025, Regular Cultural Roundtable Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes**

Pat Butler provided a brief overview of the key highlights from the Cultural Roundtable Sub-Committee meeting. She reported that Music in the Square was once again a major success during the 2025 summer season and has been confirmed to continue in 2026. The Driftscape app has been extremely well received by the community with the Cemetery Tour and Historical Walking Tour of Downtown identified as the two most popular experiences.

P. Butler further noted that the Cultural Bus Tour held in October received very positive feedback from participants and that Family Day programming is well underway.

In addition, the Hanover Community Players' production of School of Rock was reported as being very well attended and positively received by the community, reflecting strong local support for the arts.

Moved by JENNIFER OLIVERO / Seconded by SUSAN SAKAL

THAT the minutes of the November 5, 2025, Regular Cultural Roundtable Sub-Committee meeting be approved as printed and circulated.

CARRIED

3. **Adoption of December 18, 2025, Regular Heritage Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes**

Jason Rahn provided an update on the Heritage Sub-Committee, noting that Mark McKenzie has joined the committee and brings valuable experience in historical research and building history. He advised that the heritage components of the Driftscape platform continue to receive strong public interest and positive feedback.

J. Rahn concluded by noting that the sub-committee is actively moving forward with planning and program development for 2026.

Moved by GEORGINA BARLOW / Seconded by ALINA REHKOPF

THAT the minutes of the December 18, 2025, Regular Heritage Sub-Committee meeting be approved as printed and circulated.

CARRIED

4. **Receipt of November 19, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes-Unofficial**

April Marshall clarified that quorum was not met, and the notes are for information only, as the Chamber of Commerce and DIA members were invited and discussion ensued on ways that our organizations can build collaboration efforts and find efficiencies.

5. **Business Arising from Minutes**

None

6. **Downtown Plan: Input session with the Chamber of commerce, Cultural Roundtable and DIA (Facilitated by JL Richards)**

April Marshall provided background to the Committee regarding the intent and direction of the Downtown Action Plan and clarified how it differs from the previously adopted 2015 Streetscape Plan to help clarify previous questions brought forward about it. She explained that while the Streetscape Plan was

primarily focused on the physical appearance of the downtown core including design, landscaping, lighting, and street furniture, the new Downtown Plan is intended to be a much broader, community-driven vision and action strategy.

A. Marshall emphasized that the Downtown Plan extends beyond physical improvements and is designed to address the overall vitality of the downtown through a combination of economic development, community engagement, branding, cultural programming, and long-term sustainability. The objective is to ensure that downtown Hanover continues to evolve as a vibrant, welcoming, and economically resilient destination for residents, businesses, and visitors.

For clarity, A. Marshall highlighted several elements of the 2015 Streetscape Plan that have already been successfully implemented, including the installation of bike racks, benches, and downtown planters, the rehabilitation of the WOW Wing settler's mural by artist Cliff Smith, the addition of downtown location markers, improvements to street lighting, and the installation of downtown parking signage. These initiatives have significantly enhanced the character and functionality of the downtown and now serve as a foundation upon which the new Action Plan will build.

Rob Voigt and Alison Bucking of JL Richards and Associates then delivered a presentation outlining the purpose, process, and engagement strategy for the Downtown Plan. They explained that the project is intended to be highly collaborative and community focused, ensuring that residents, business owners, organizations, and community stakeholders all have meaningful opportunities to contribute. Engagement tools include an online asset-mapping questionnaire, the identification of community connectors, public podcast discussions, and interactive workshops. A virtual whiteboard platform was also used during the session to collect real-time feedback and ideas from participants.

The consultants emphasized that the Downtown Plan is guided by four strategic pillars, Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. They noted that many revitalization initiatives fail when they focus solely on aesthetics or events without addressing business support, organizational capacity, and long-term economic sustainability. By integrating all four pillars, the plan aims to create a transformational strategy that not only enhances the physical appearance of the downtown but also strengthens its economic base, improves coordination among stakeholders, and fosters a sense of community ownership.

Mr. Voigt further noted that the Downtown Plan will build on Hanover's existing strengths and assets rather than attempting to reinvent the downtown. The intent is to create a practical, action-oriented framework that will guide decision-making and investment, ensuring that downtown remains a thriving and inclusive hub for years to come, while also including a focus on growing tourism.

Guests departed the meeting and the Committee continued with the agenda.

7. **Stakeholder and Initiative Updates:**

7.1. **Saugeen Connects – 2025 Year in Review & Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

April Marshall presented an overview of the 2025 Year in Review for Saugeen Connects, highlighting the role the initiative continues to play in supporting local economic development, workforce attraction, and regional collaboration. She advised the Committee that the existing partnership between Saugeen Connects, Town of Hanover, and four other neighbouring municipalities has been successful and that staff are recommending its continuation through a renewed Memorandum of Understanding for 2026.

A. Marshall explained that the MOU is renewed annually to ensure alignment with municipal priorities and to allow for ongoing evaluation of outcomes. She requested the Committee's formal support of the partnership moving forward.

Moved by GEORGINA BARLOW/ Seconded by ALINA REHKOPF
THAT the Economic, Tourism and Cultural Development Advisory Committee supports the Memorandum of Understanding between Saugeen Connects and the Town of Hanover.

CARRIED

A. Marshall also highlighted the upcoming Saugeen Connects initiatives to support women entrepreneurship which includes an International Women's Day event on March 12, 2026, and the AWE (Advancing Women Economically) free virtual webinar series designed to support starting and growing a business through tailored training topics.

7.2. **Team Grey – Memorandum of understanding (MOU)**

The Memorandum of Understanding with Team Grey was highlighted for information. No discussion was raised at this time.

7.3. **BR+E Study**

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Study update was received for information. The committee contributed to plans for a presentation to respondents and other business community members that will be held on February 27, 2026.

7.4. **HIPP Apprentice Municipal Youth Challenge**

Information regarding the HIPP Apprentice Municipal Youth Challenge was received for information. A. Marshall shared that there has been a great response from JDSS to help deliver and incorporate the competition into this semester's curriculum for students in Grades 9-12. The competition is designed to strengthen youth engagement and retention by empowering young people to contribute innovative solutions to real municipal and

community challenges. This initiative will foster civic pride, leadership skills, and collaboration while addressing local issues.

7.5. **Updates From the Chamber of Commerce & DIA Representative**

Georgina Barlow advised that the Hanover Chamber of Commerce is currently undertaking efforts to revamp and strengthen its operations. She noted that discussions have been held with other chambers to learn from their practices and emphasized the importance of implementing changes to ensure the Chamber's long-term sustainability. G. Barlow further indicated that a meeting is scheduled for the 27th of January to review the Chamber's mission statement, future direction, goals, and challenges. As part of these efforts, the Chamber is also testing a shift from luncheon meetings to breakfast meetings to assess member interest and participation.

Jennifer Olivero, representing the Downtown Improvement Area (DIA), provided an update on recent activities and upcoming initiatives. She advised that the DIA has completed its review of the 2026 event calendar and reflected on the outcomes of the December 6 downtown activities. Following this review, the Market Committee has decided to discontinue the Christmas Market due to challenges associated with winter weather, low outdoor vendor participation, and logistical demands. While outdoor vendors experienced limited traffic, indoor vendors were well attended, highlighting the impact of weather on event success.

J. Olivero noted that Beavertails reported strong sales during the event, with consistent lineups throughout the day. This demonstrated the volume of foot traffic downtown and reinforced the potential for future programming during community events.

She further explained that the DIA is reviewing its social media strategy to improve engagement, better promote local businesses, and strengthen collaboration with the Hanover Chamber of Commerce. Upcoming initiatives include a Valentine's Day Giveaway and the popular Shamrock Hunt, which encourages residents and visitors to explore downtown businesses and share their experiences online.

8. **Correspondence**

None

9. **New Business**

None

10. **Adjournment**

THAT this meeting now be adjourned at 10:58 am.

Next Meeting Date: March 18, 2026 @ 9:00am

Chair, Dave Eccles

Committee Secretary, April Marshall

CULTURAL ROUNDTABLE SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, February 11th, 2026 | 10:00am
Virtual on Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT Bev Morgan | Stephen Ferguson | Kathi Maskell | Pat Butler

OTHERS PRESENT April Marshall | Carolyn Caskanette

REGRETS

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST- Nil

DELEGATIONS: Nil

DISCUSSIONS & DECISIONS

1. Member Update

K. Maskell was welcomed as the new Hanover Library Board of Directors representative. C. Caskanette was also recognized for participating. Members further discussed the current committee structure and flow between ETCDAC and the roundtable as a sub-committee.

2. Adoption of November 4th, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Moved by P. Butler | Seconded by S. Ferguson

THAT the minutes of the November 4th, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes be approved as printed and circulated. **CARRIED**

3. Business Arising from Minutes – Nil

4. Initiative Updates

4.1. Downtown Plan

A. Marshall shared a status update on development of the Downtown Plan for Hanover. Members provided a recap of their participation in recent engagement sessions, including the Idea Jam and the special meetings held with ETCDAC. The vision board developed during the Idea Jam was shared with the committee, reflecting the key themes and ideas heard throughout the engagement process. Members expressed how impressed they have been with the thoroughness and creativity of the process to date and shared their excitement for the outcomes and direction of the forthcoming Downtown Plan.

4.2. Music in the Square

In preparation in planning this summer's music series, members discussed some ongoing feedback about the change in event days and considered whether the objective of the series should be a standalone cultural activity or continue to be coordinated to

CULTURAL ROUNDTABLE SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

better support other events, collaborations, and promote farmers' market and downtown shopping. Attendance remains consistent, though demographics now differ between Saturdays and Sundays, and audiences tend to move around rather than stay for full performances, which can be discouraging for artists. The Library and Hanover Community Players explored opportunities to offer shared craft activities, and the Saugeen Artists Guild is considering participation this summer. Members emphasized the need for access to the Civic Centre for public washrooms and supporting the Eat Well Market. It was also noted that emerging Downtown Plan engagement themes highlight the importance of collaboration for greater impact, as well as consideration for limited municipal capacity to produce numerous events. The Business Retention & Expansion survey results also indicated Music in the Square positively impacts local sales. Members introduced the idea of collecting further community feedback on preferred event timing for consideration at a future meeting.

4.3. Downtown Street Banners

B. Morgan has begun working with the Saugeen Artists Guild on collecting art works to develop new downtown street banners, as the existing banners are worn and no longer reflect the current Guild membership. She will collect artwork submissions, and the Cultural Roundtable will participate in jurying the pieces. The new banner designs will also incorporate and promote the HIPP Culture brand. B. Morgan additionally reiterated her ongoing interest in a future cultural centre and noted that incorporating the murals into the self-guided public art tour would be a valuable addition for Culture Days.

5. Joint Cultural Roundtable- With Minto & Wellington North

5.1. Cultural Symposium

A. Marshall shared that plans are underway with partners to deliver the third annual cultural symposium on Friday, April 24, 2026, to be held at the Arthur Community Centre. The keynote speaker will be from the Moccasin Identifier organization, and other activities will include a stenciling activity and brochure swap with participants.

6. Roundtable Member Updates | New Business

6.1. S. Ferguson – Shared the success of the School of Rock production and \$705 raised from the \$1 / ticket adult programming being donated to support Bruce Grey Mentorship. The AGM will be held February 17th at the P&H Centre. Upcoming events include Winterlude on February 28th, featuring short skits and music, rehearsals for Unnecessary Farce, April 24th – May 3rd, and the Western Ontario Drama League Festival, May 14th – 17th, where three plays will be judged and other workshops and events will be organized for 800 attendees.

6.2. C. Caskanette – Shared that the Hanover Library is investigating policy update to showcase local artwork in the Civic Centre / Library and that they are bringing back the 'Coffee With' series, plus promoting 'Tea with Staff' series. Planning underway for a fundraiser in June.

CULTURAL ROUNDTABLE SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

- 6.3. K. Maskell** – Promoted that February is Love Your Library month and they visited 56 businesses with a request to display a decal to this effect in their windows.
- 6.4. B. Morgan** – Shared that the Saugeen Artists Guild will be at the Holstein Maplefest Syrup Festival this year, happening April 11th and 12th. They are also connecting with the Eat Well Market to set up a tent for a couple of days this season. She confirmed that they are not organizing the Plein Air or Quick Paint events this year. They will once again be open for studio tours as part of the Autumn Leaves Studio Tour, and she will share her home studio space with four artists. The Guild will also be featured at the Minto Arts Gallery this September.
- 6.5. A. Marshall** – Reminded members about upcoming Family Day activities at the P&H Centre and asked for them to start thinking about Culture Days activities. She promoted members being involved in coordination of these events and to please reach out anytime with ideas or how they would like to get more involved in all initiatives.

7. Correspondence- Nil

8. Adjournment

Moved by S. Ferguson

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 11:02am.

CARRIED

Next Meeting: April 1, 2026 @ 10:00am.

 HANOVER HERITAGE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, February 19, 2026 | 10:00 am
 Location: St. Matthews Evangelical Church

MEMBERS PRESENT Al Morrow | Gary Fleischauer | Stu Lamont | Jim Rahn | Bill Switzer | Mark Mackenzie

REGRETS Andrew Edgcumbe, Jason Rahn

OTHERS PRESENT Laura Christen, Carol Hudson

1. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST – Nil

2. ADOPTION OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2025 MINUTES
Moved by G. Fleischauer Seconded by B. Switzer

That the minutes of the December 18, 2025 regular meeting be approved as printed and circulated. **CARRIED**

3. DELEGATION: Nil

4. MYSTERY PHOTO | A. Morrow provided mystery photo featuring photos of the Marl drudging at the lake from approximately 19230. The photo features a floating barge loading Marl onto the dinky train that brought the marl into town to the cement plant.

5. FOR INFORMATION/ DONATIONS:

5.1. Donations Received:

-1930's Pocket watch and cigarette case **DONATED BY:** The Schenk Family

-United Church Name Quilt **DONATED BY:** Sally Kormann

5.2. Bruce County Heritage Association Toy Show | March 29, 2026, K of C Hall

6. ITEMS FOR DIRECTION / DISCUSSION-

6.1. Heritage Week Feb. 16- 22 | Members discussed opportunities to participate in Heritage Week on an annual basis. For 2027, the committee proposes using this nationally recognized week to engage local schools to connect with younger members of the community through activities such as genealogy exploration, show and tell, storytelling, and a potential school based project. **Action:** L. Christen to add this topic to the September 17, 2026 meeting agenda to further develop the concept and initiate discussions with local schools, as their participation will be essential to the program's success.

6.2. Review of Windows in Time posters – The committee approved a draft letter to invite local businesses to participate in the Windows in Time refresh, which will be coordinated with the 2026 Canada Day celebrations.

6.3. Historical Homes Update- The committee provided direction that the historical homes recognition plaques be modeled after the business recognition plaques. 10x 12” with an oval shape with dark brown background and gold coloured font.

6.4. P & H Centre Display | Furniture factory currently installed. **ACTION:** A. Morrow volunteered to come up with a new topic for the switchover of the display.

6.5. Child Remains Update | A. Morrow provided an update regarding the 18-month-old skeleton from the 1800s that was discovered on a commercial property in town. The remains have now been released, and the committee has been invited to participate in a burial ceremony scheduled for the spring. The committee has been asked to share remarks reflecting on what life was like during that period. **ACTION:** A Morrow to communicate the committees intention to participate and deliver the words on behalf of the committee.

7. NEXT MEETING Thursday April 23, 2026

8. ADJOURNMENT
Moved by: B. Switzer

THAT this meeting be adjourned at 11:28 am.

CARRIED

Committee Chair

Laura Christen, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture



Town of Hanover BR+E 2026



Introduction

The Town of Hanover’s Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) initiative is part of a province-wide, community-based economic development program supported by the **Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness**. The BR+E program is designed to strengthen local economies by helping communities understand the needs of existing businesses, identify opportunities for growth, and develop actions that support long-term investment and job creation.

The Ministry provides communities with structured tools and resources—including a coordinator’s manual, implementation guidance, and standardized survey templates. These templates ensure consistency and reliability in data collection across core themes such as business climate, workforce, development opportunities, and community needs. Additional sector-specific surveys allow communities to tailor their approach while maintaining a formalized and comparable methodology.

In Hanover, BR+E surveys were conducted between **August and October 2025**, resulting in **61 responses** from businesses representing a range of sectors. Respondents were advised of the “**skip it**” rule, meaning they were free to skip any questions they could not answer or preferred not to answer. This ensured that participants could engage comfortably and voluntarily with the survey process. All information provided is **strictly confidential**—responses are aggregated and presented only as **percentages, averages, or grouped summaries**, guaranteeing complete anonymity for all participating businesses.

These responses provide meaningful insight into the current business environment, future plans, operational challenges, and supports needed to enhance local economic resilience and growth.

This report reflects all findings from the 2025 BR+E survey. Additional reporting will be developed to highlight key themes and recommended actions emerging from this data, as well as comparative analysis with the Town’s previous BR+E surveys conducted in **2015** and the **2021 Recovery Report**. This comparative work will help identify long-term trends, shifts in business sentiment, and areas of improvement since the post-pandemic recovery period.

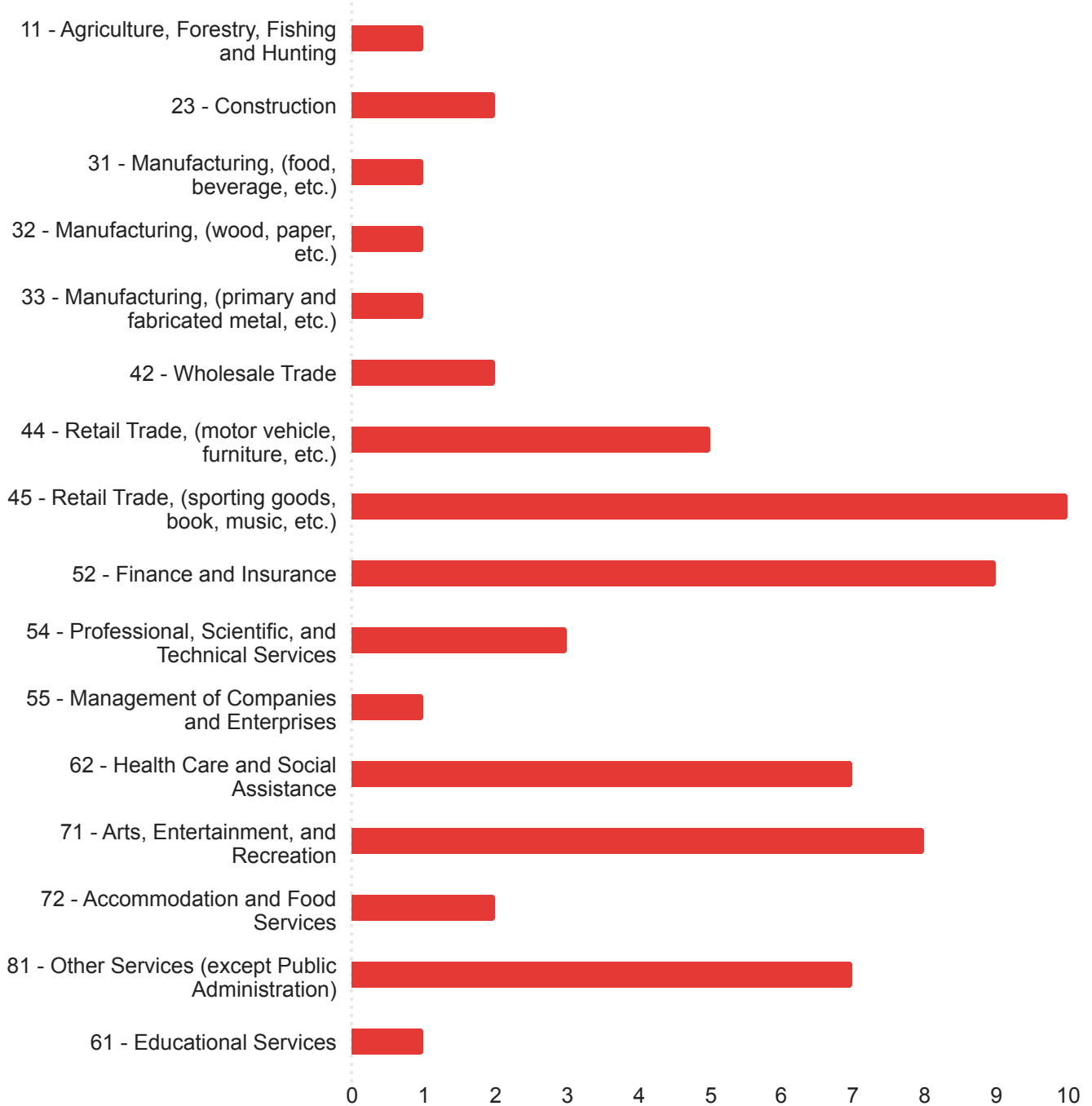
Beyond benchmarking past performance, the insights gathered through this BR+E process will provide **significant added value** to Hanover’s economic development efforts. These findings will:

- **Inform policy and program development** by pinpointing priority areas where municipal support can have the greatest impact.
- **Guide strategic planning** for business retention, workforce development, and investment attraction.
- **Support evidence-based decision-making** for council, economic development partners, and community stakeholders.
- **Strengthen communication and partnerships** with local businesses by identifying both immediate concerns and long-term opportunities.
- **Enhance resiliency planning**, helping the Town prepare for future economic shifts by understanding emerging challenges and sector-specific needs.

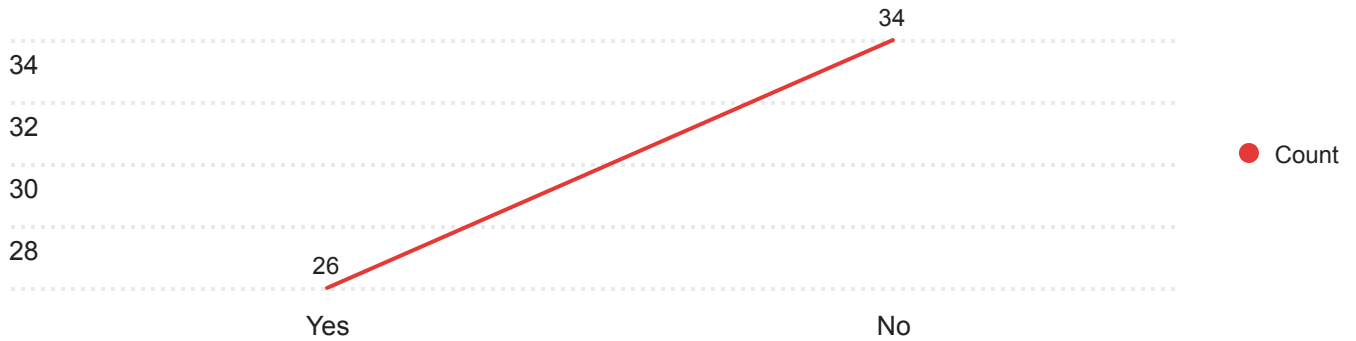
The Town of Hanover extends sincere appreciation to all participating businesses for their time and contributions. Their insights play an essential role in shaping informed, community-driven economic development strategies and ensuring Hanover remains a vibrant and competitive place to do business.

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Which NAICS code(s) best describes your business?



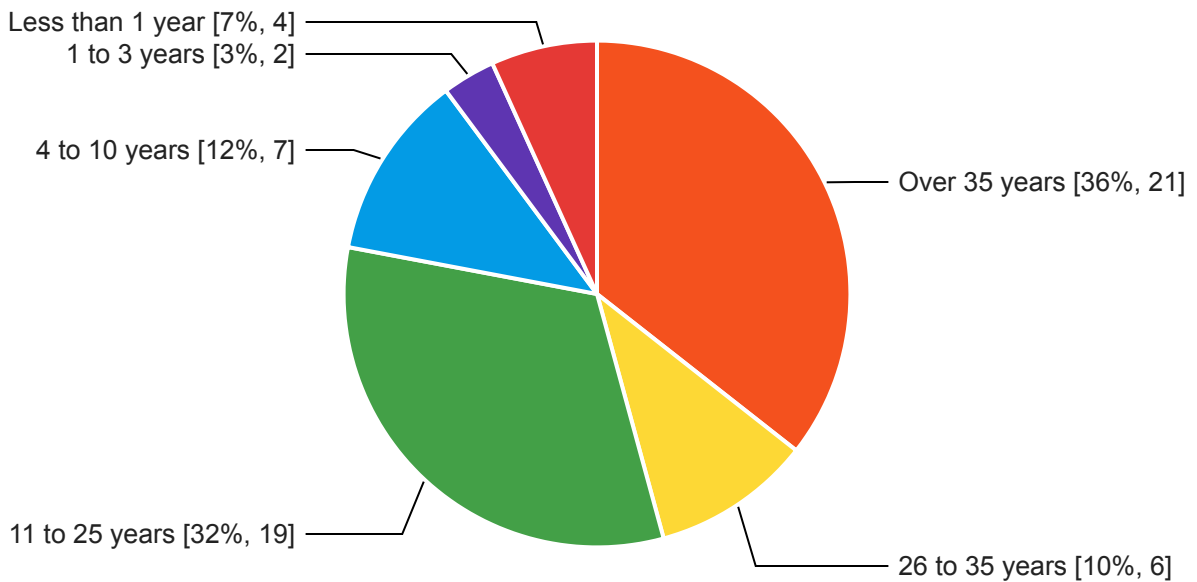
Is your business a sole-proprietorship?



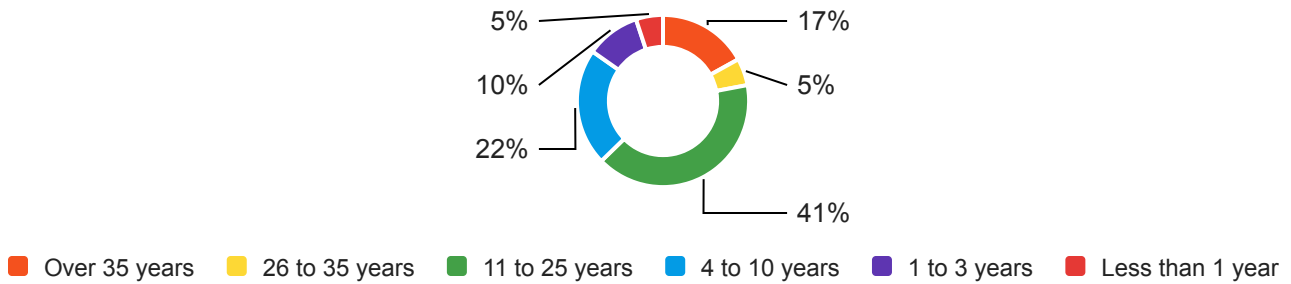
Is at least one of the owners involved in the day-to-day operation of the business?



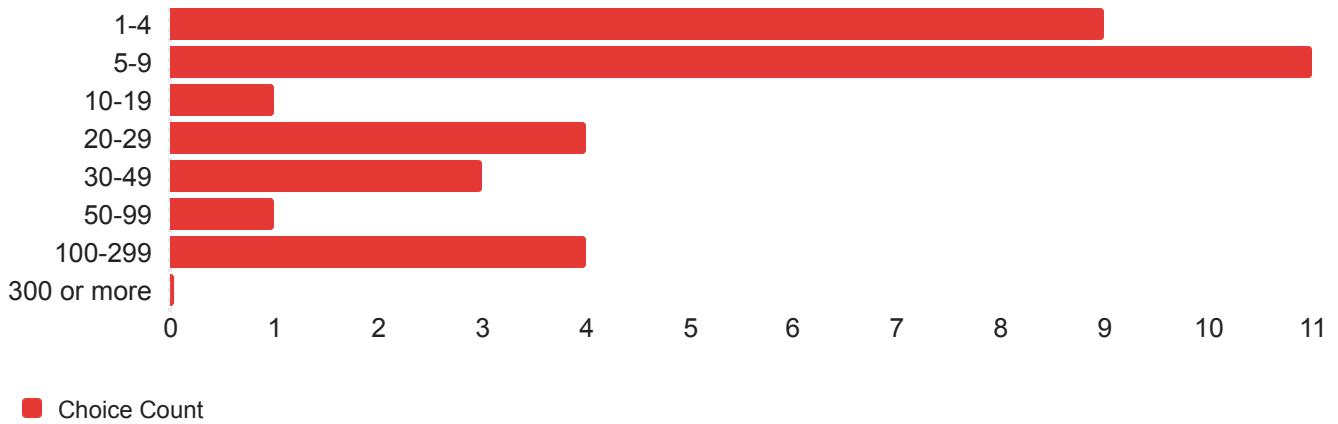
How many years has your business been in operation in this community?



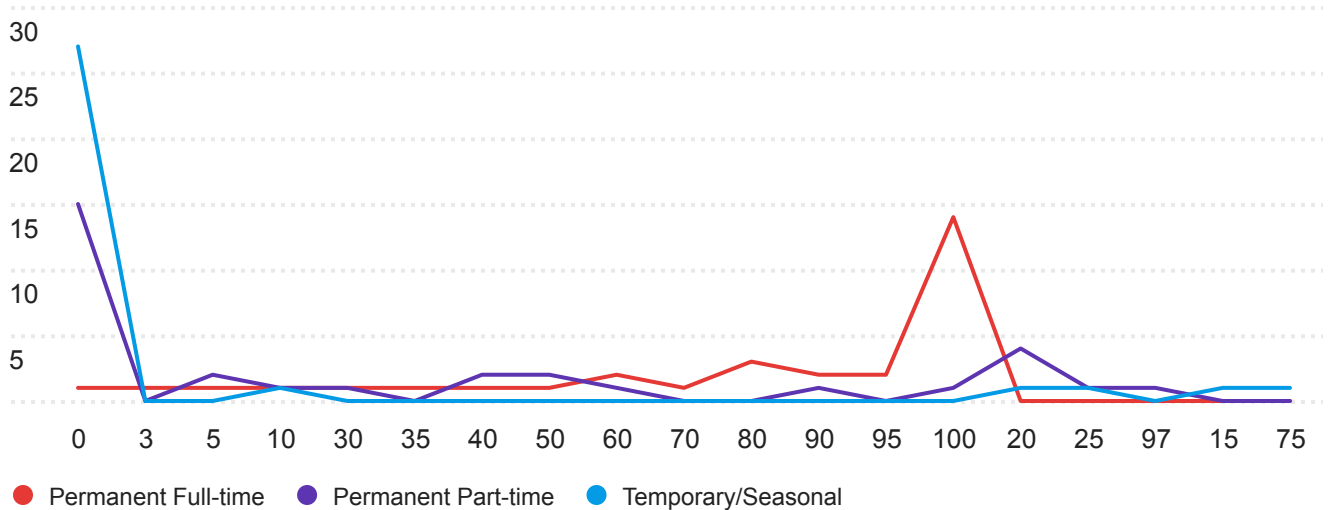
How many years have the current owner/owners been operating this business?



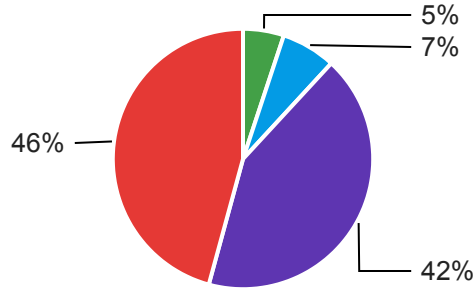
Including owner/owners, how many employees work at this location?



What percentage of these employees are:

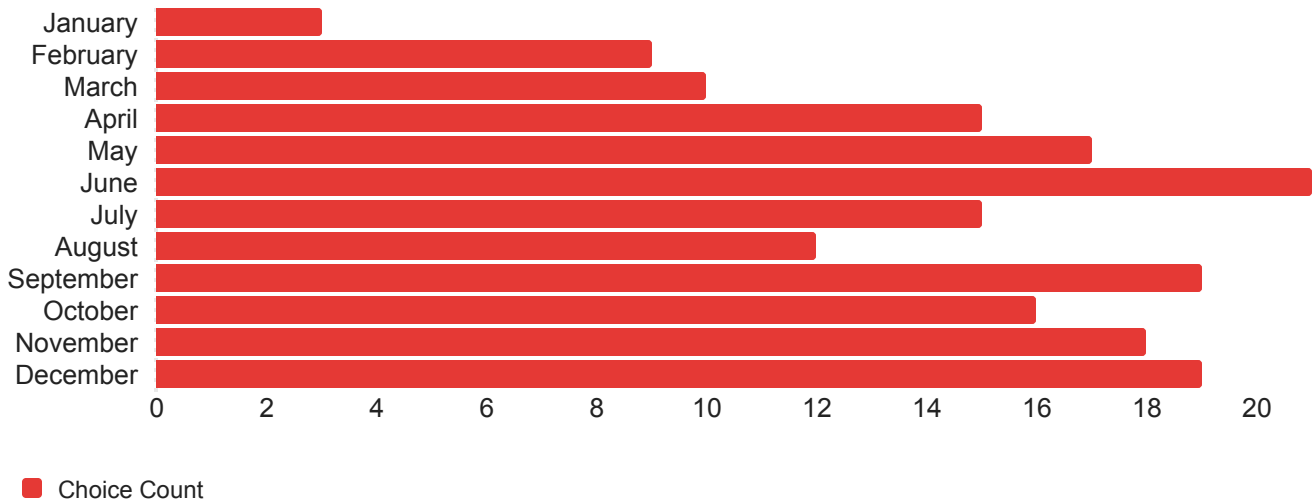


The primary market of your business is:

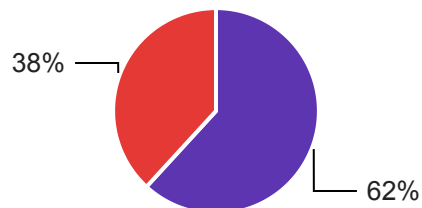


■ International
 ■ National
 ■ Regional
 ■ Local

What are the three busiest months of the year for this business?



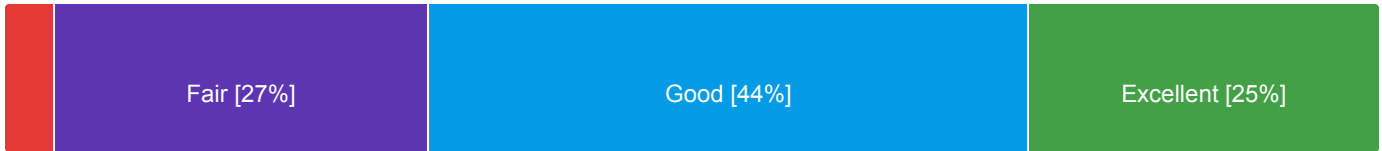
Do you as the business owners or any composition of your workforce, identify as part of an equity-seeking group?



■ No
 ■ Yes

BUSINESS CLIMATE

What is your general impression of Hanover as a place to do business?



In the past 3 years has your attitude about doing business in this community changed?



Yes, more positive [20%] Yes, more negative [11%] No Change [69%]

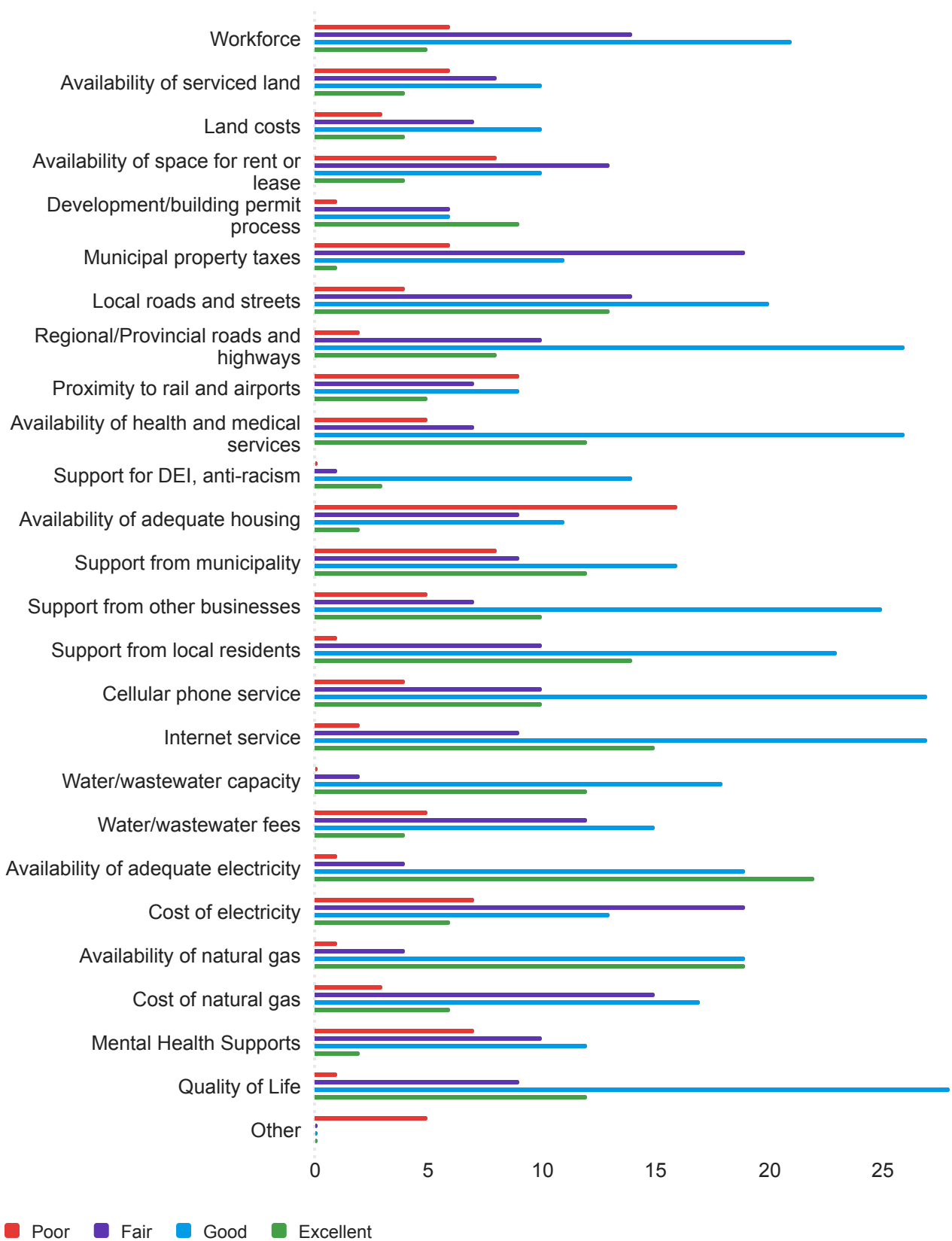
Please explain your positive change in attitude:



Please explain your negative change in attitude:



How would you rate the following factors of doing business in this community?



Other items rated poor:



From the perspective of your business, rate your level of satisfaction with the following community services?

- Child care services
 ■ Schools (elementary and secondary)
 ■ Workforce planning/development board
- Chamber of Commerce / Board of Trade
 ■ Downtown Improvement Area (DIA)
- Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)
 ■ Grey Business Enterprise Centre
- Settlement & Newcomer Services
 ■ Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership / YMCA
- Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership / YMCA

50

40

30

20

10

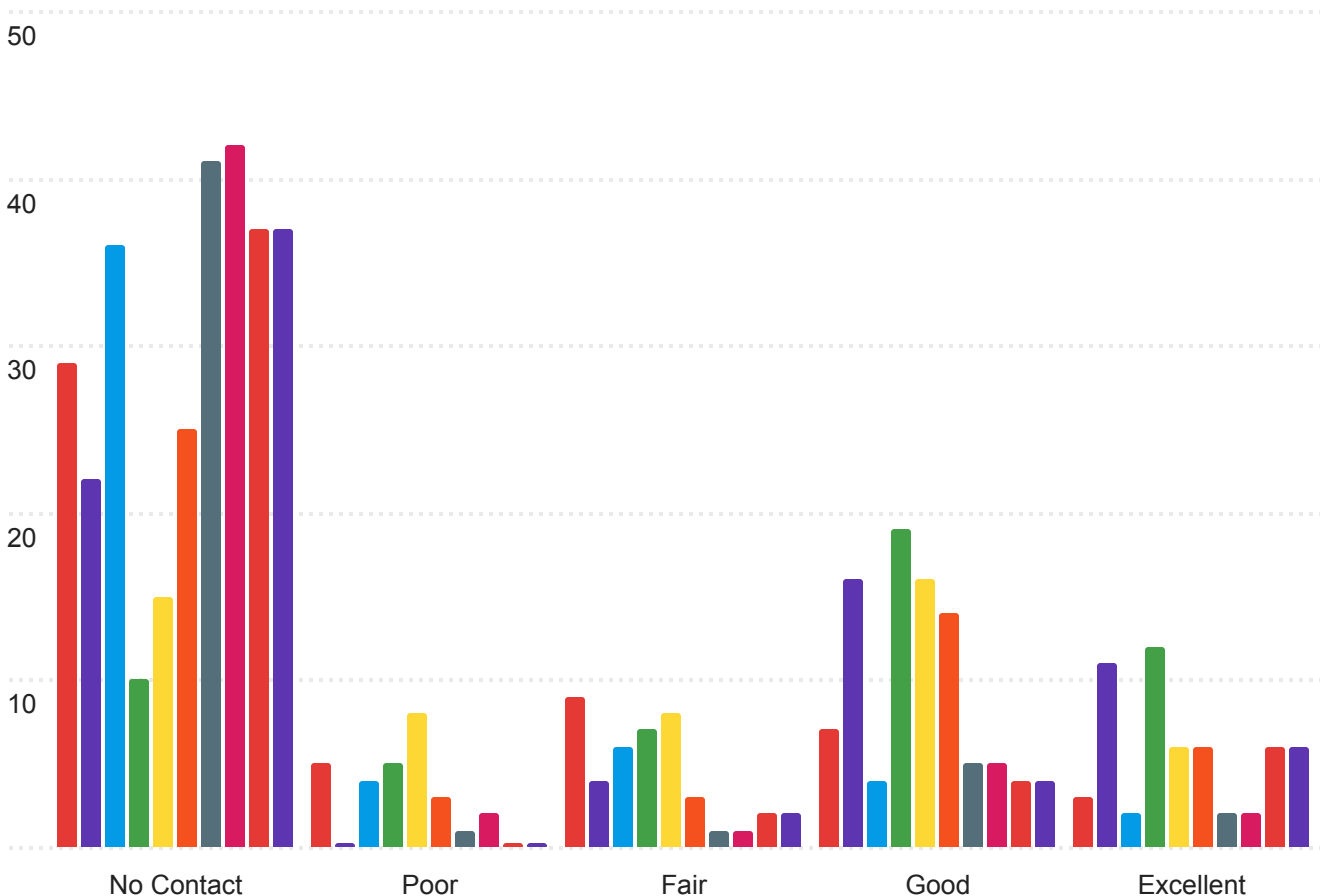
No Contact

Poor

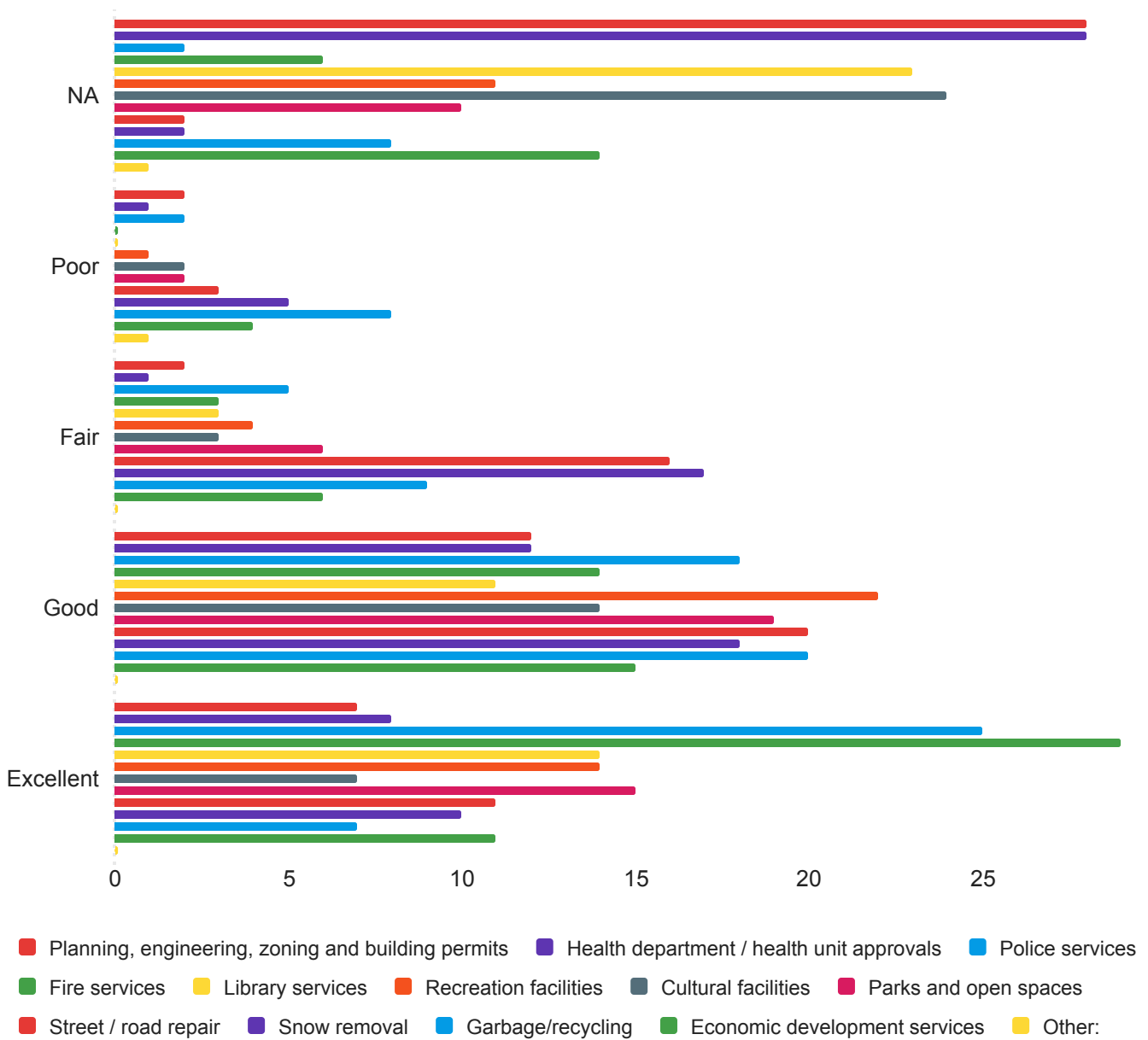
Fair

Good

Excellent



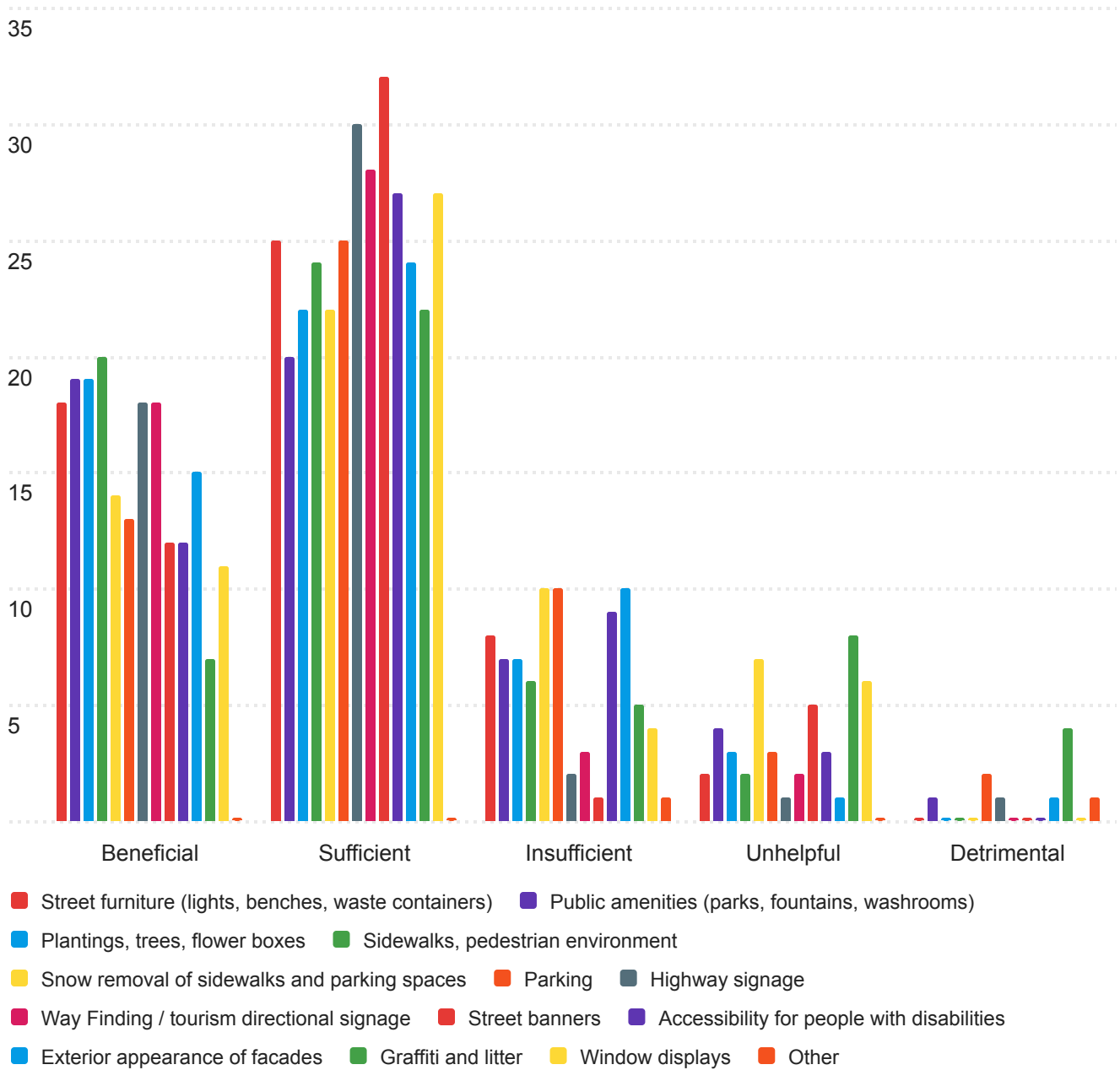
From the perspective of your business, rate your level of satisfaction with the following government services?



Other items rated poorly:



How effective do you rate the function/condition of the area surrounding your business?

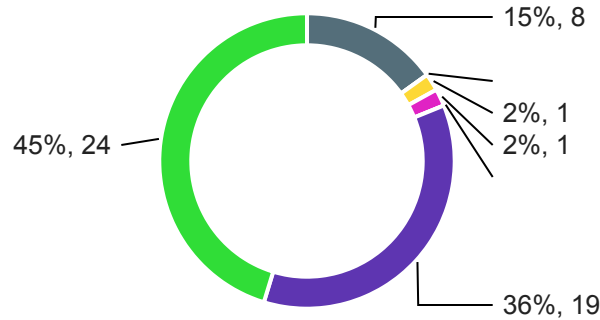


Other items noted:

speed downtown love sign walk
 support financial cut drive quick
 school high block garbage vehicle
 receive leave digital move student
 property

FUTURE PLANS

Within the next 18 months, do you plan on:

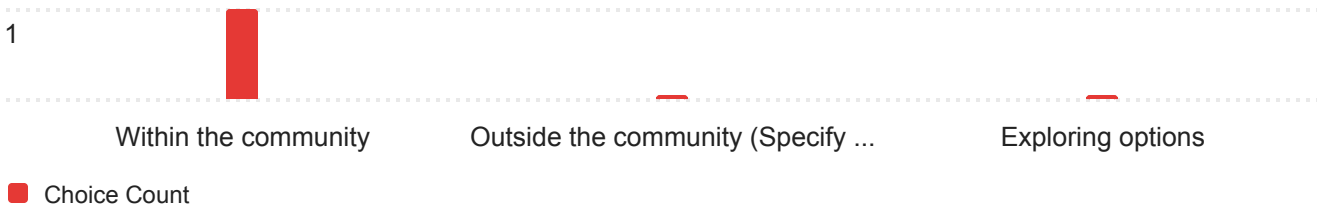


- Transitioning out of the business within the next 5 year
- Closing
- Selling within one year
- Relocating
- Downsizing
- Expanding
- Remaining the same size

What are the main reasons for remaining the same size?



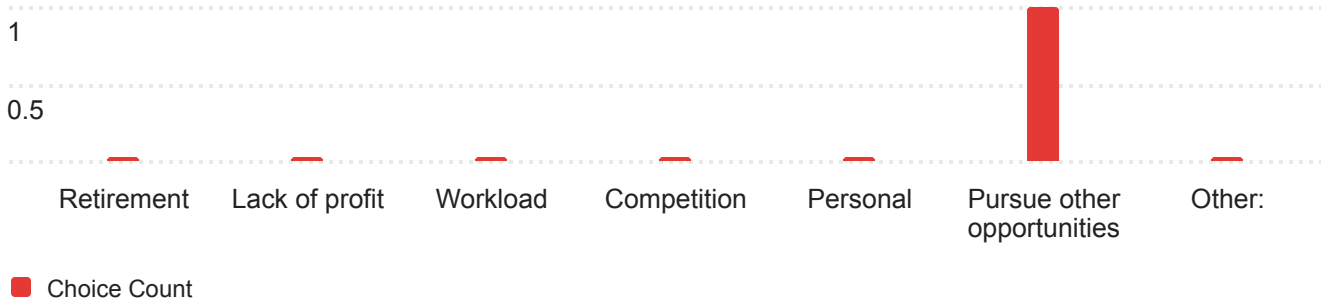
Where do you plan to relocate this business?



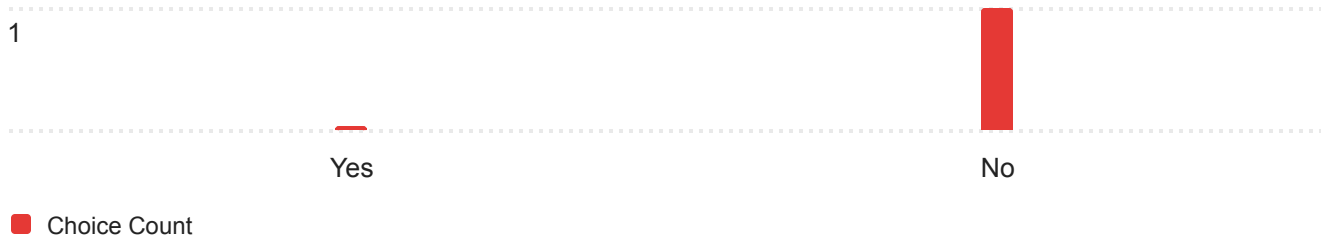
Why are you planning to relocate the business?

better for the company, more efficient and more space, offer new services

Why are you selling your business?



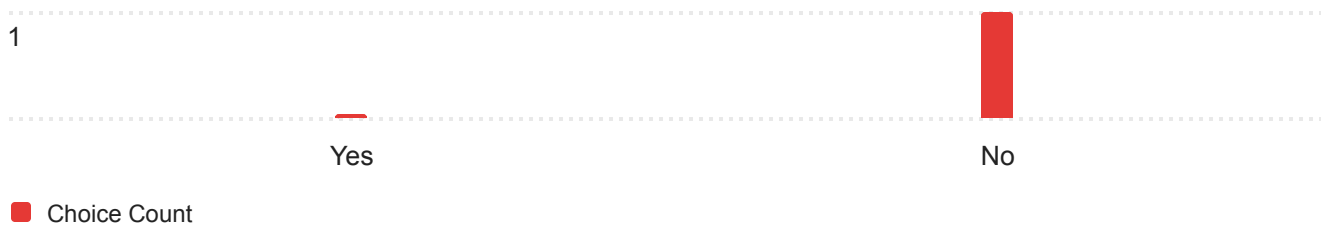
Do you have a succession plan for your business?



Would you like assistance/information with developing a succession plan?



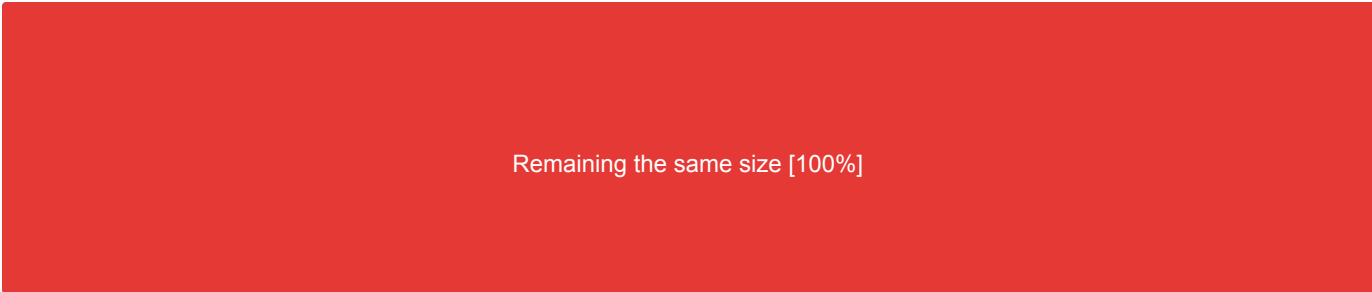
Would you like assistance/information on selling your business?



Specified areas of support:



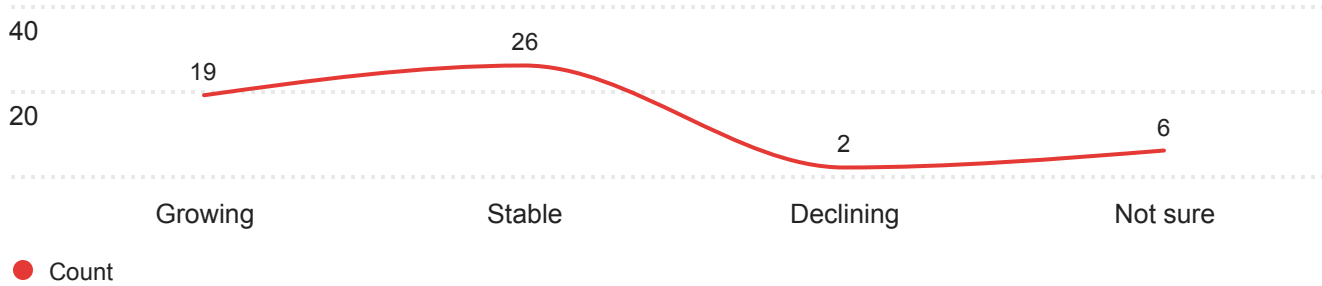
Has your business made any changes to its business operations in response to DEI considerations in the last year?



Next section to follow. This space has intentionally been left blank.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

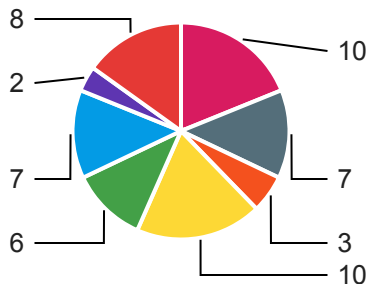
What is the outlook for your industry?



What do you feel are the main reasons for this?



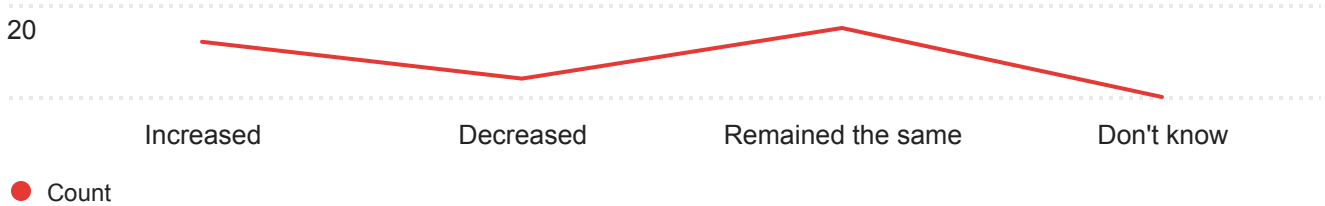
Please give an approximate annual sales range for your business:



- Prefer not to answer
- + \$10,000,000
- \$5,000,000 – \$9,999,999
- \$1,000,000 – \$4,999,999
- \$500,000 – \$999,999
- \$250,000 – \$499,999
- \$100,000 – \$249,999
- \$0 – \$99,999

WORKFORCE

During the past 3 years, has the number of people you employ in this business increased, decreased or stayed the same?

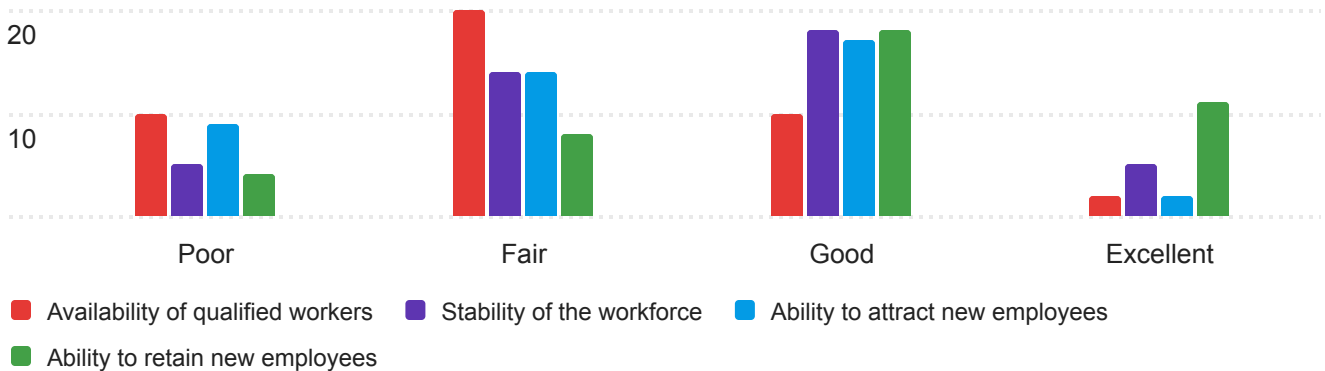


Respondents reported an increase of **92 employees** during the past 3 years and a decrease of **47 employees**, for an overall increase of **45 employees**.

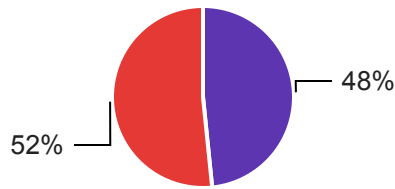
What factors are responsible for this change?



How would you rate the following factors in this community for your business needs?

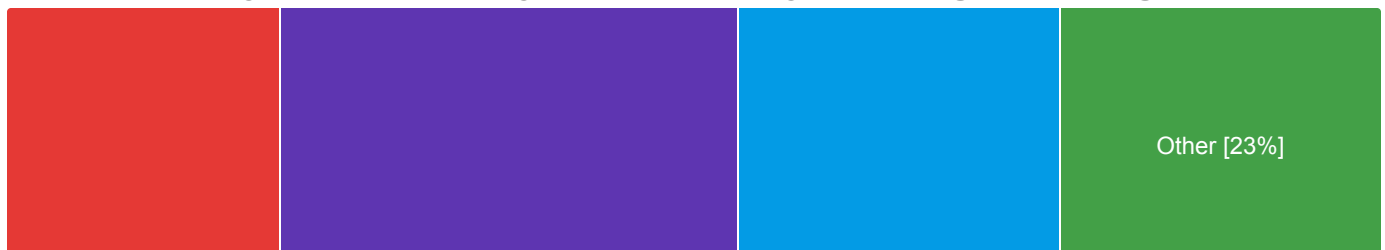


Does your business currently have difficulties hiring?



■ No ■ Yes

How would you describe your company's hiring challenges?



■ Too few applicants [20%] ■ Lack of appropriate skills or training [33%] ■ Lack of relevant experience [23%]
■ Other [23%]

Other noted items:



Are the hiring challenges specifically related to the community or industry?

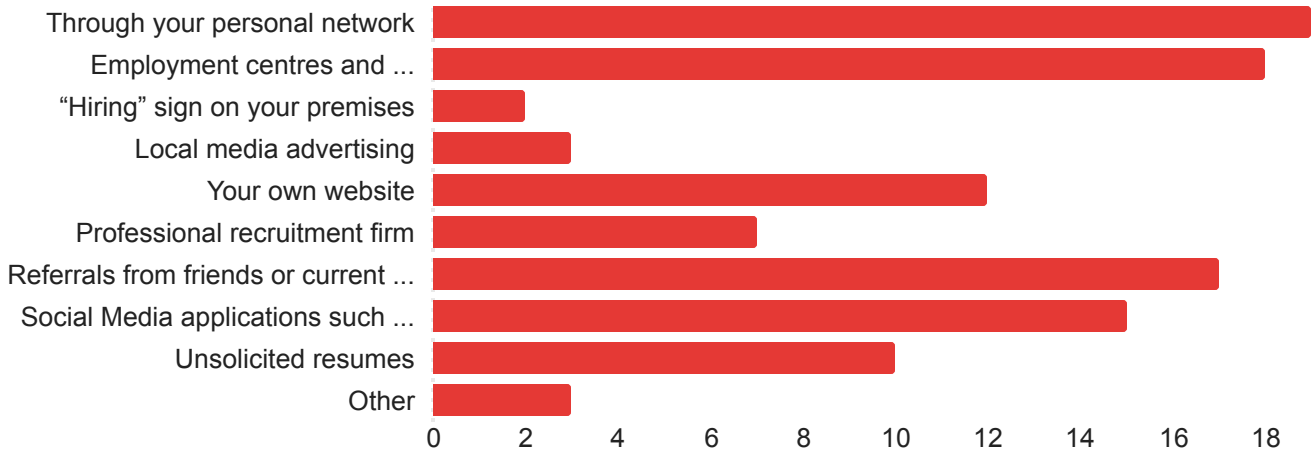


■ Industry ■ Community

Top occupations difficult to recruit for:



How do you currently recruit new employees?

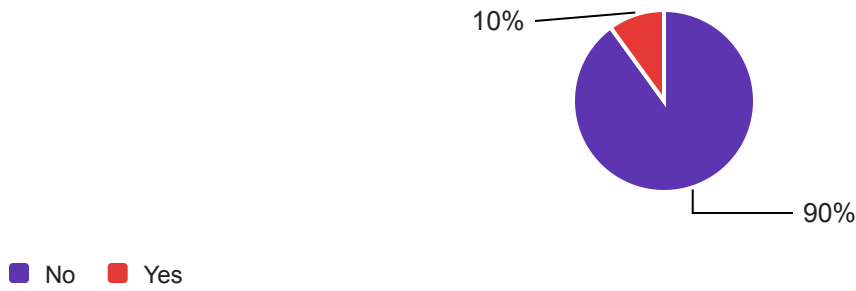


Choice Count of Top 3

Other noted ways to recruit:



Does your business have difficulty retaining employees?



What are the reasons for these difficulties in retaining employees?

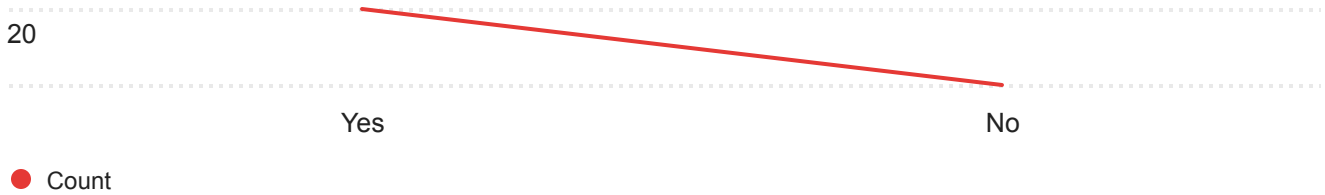


Respondents noted that their industry and travel time contribute to their difficulties in retaining employees.

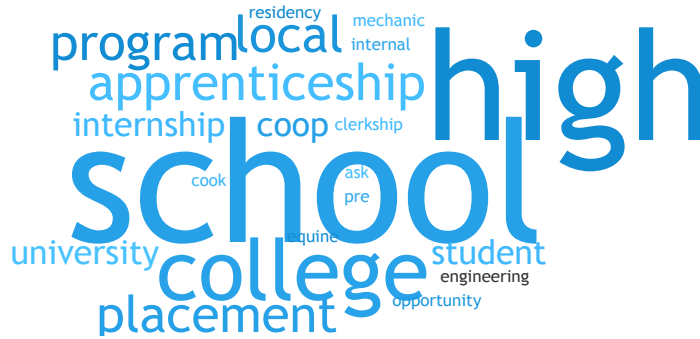
What assistance could the community provide to assist you in hiring new employees?



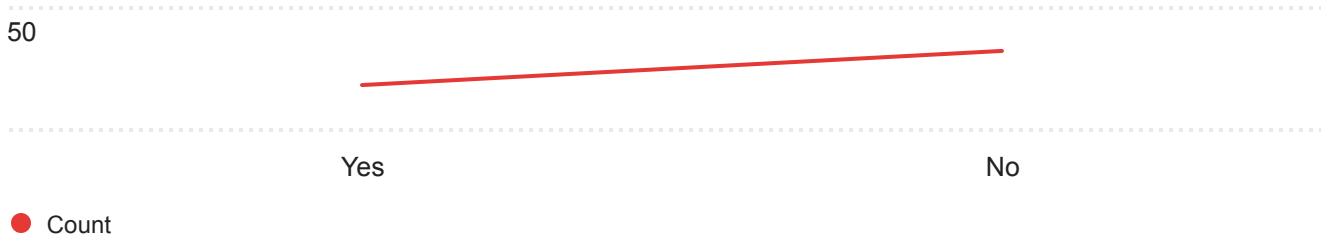
Does your business currently participate in any co-op, internship or apprenticeship programs?



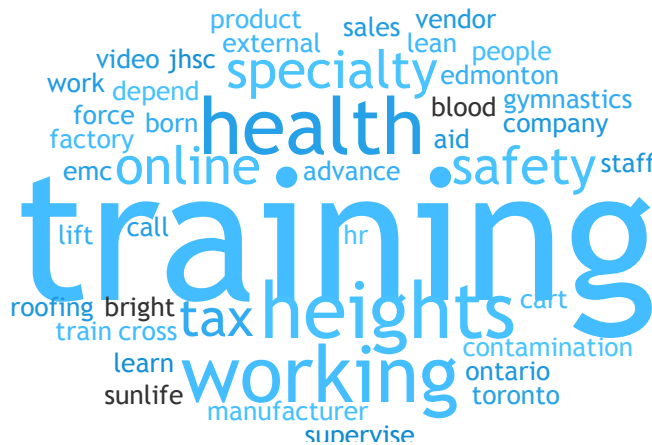
Types of programs that businesses noted participating in:



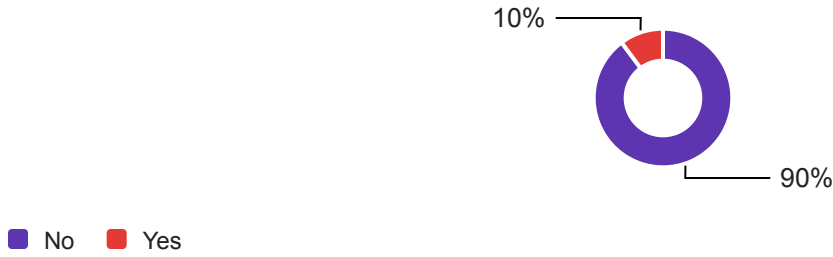
Does your business currently use any external training?



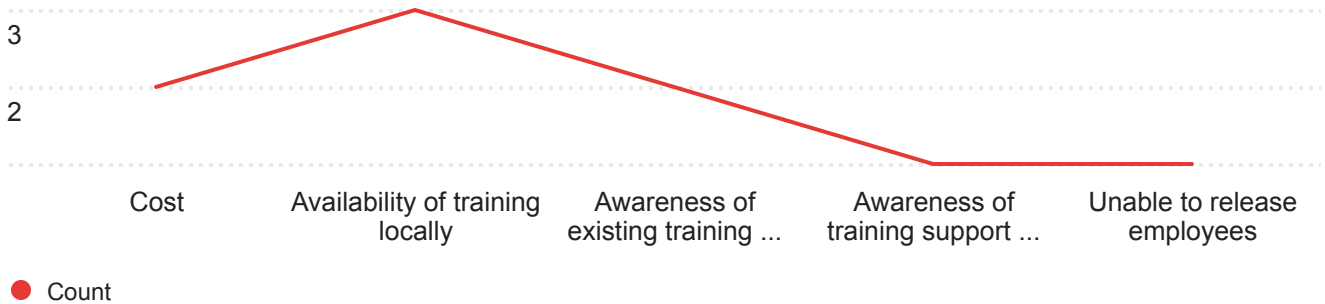
Types of external training noted:



Are there currently any barriers for you and/or your employees receiving the necessary training?



If yes, please specify:



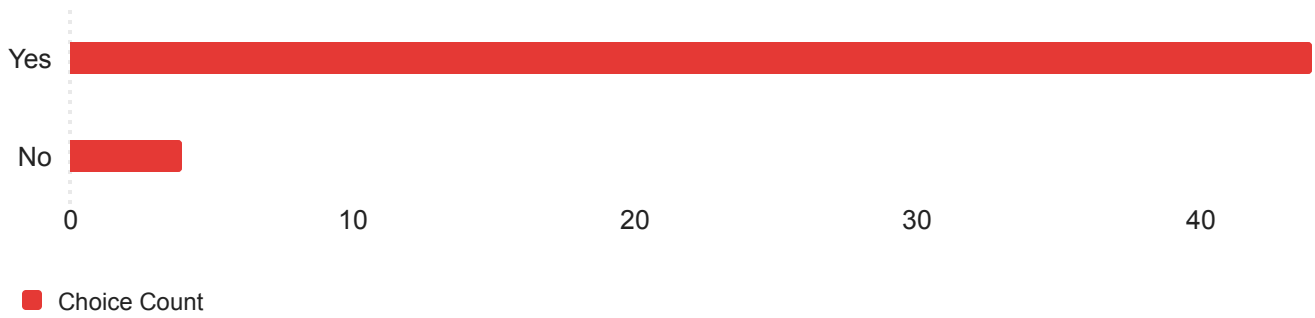
Are there any training programs/topics that would be beneficial to you and your employees?



Types of training programs/topics that would be beneficial:



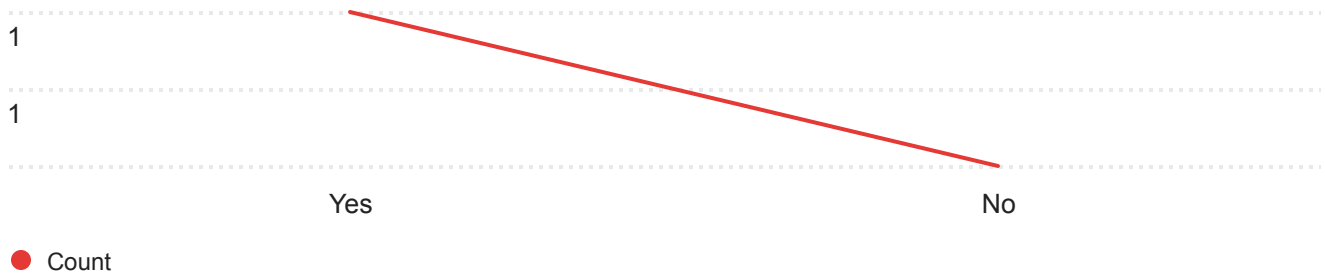
Does your business embrace diversity in its workforce?



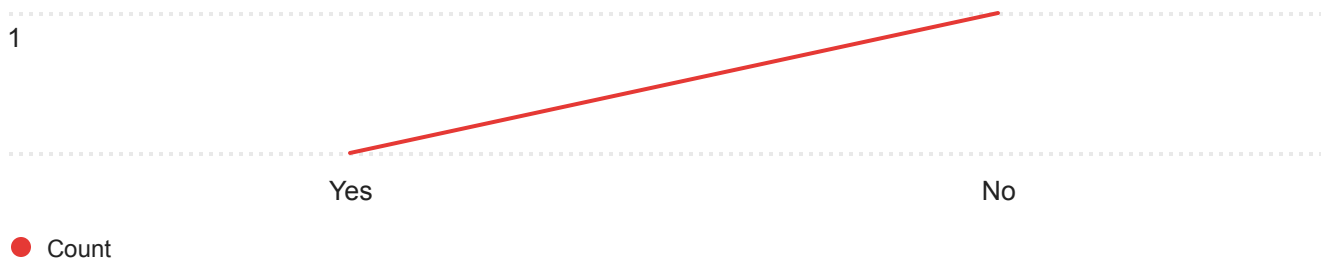
Does your business have a formal HR Policy?



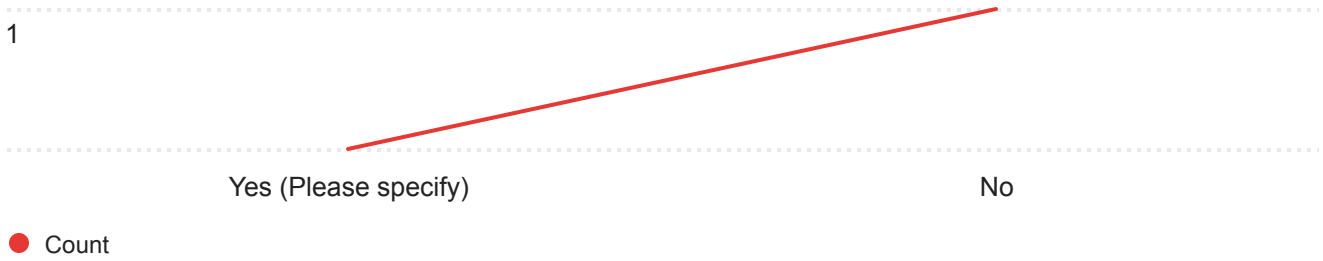
Does your HR policy support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)?



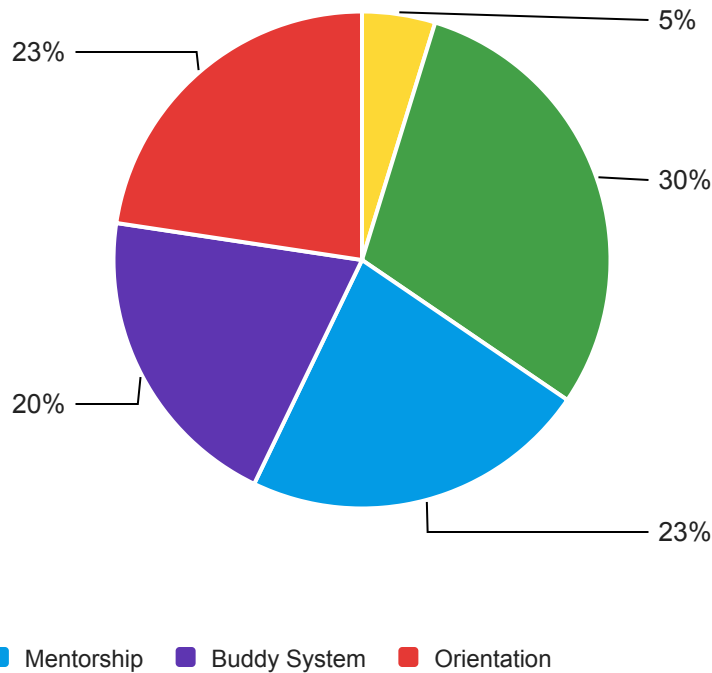
Would you like support in how to include DEI policies in your HR policies?



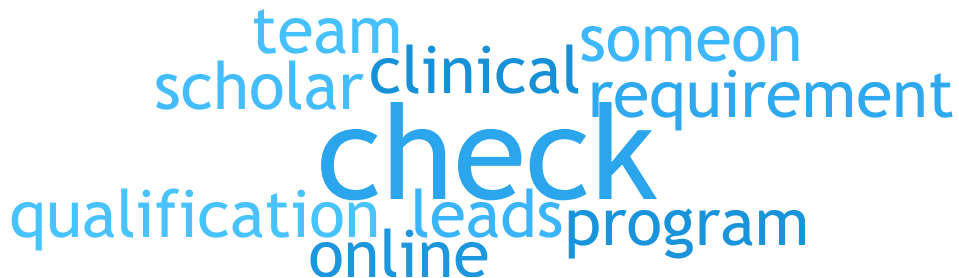
Does your business currently participate in any DEI training, co-op, internship, or apprenticeship programs?



How does your business support new hires and maintain a diverse workforce?

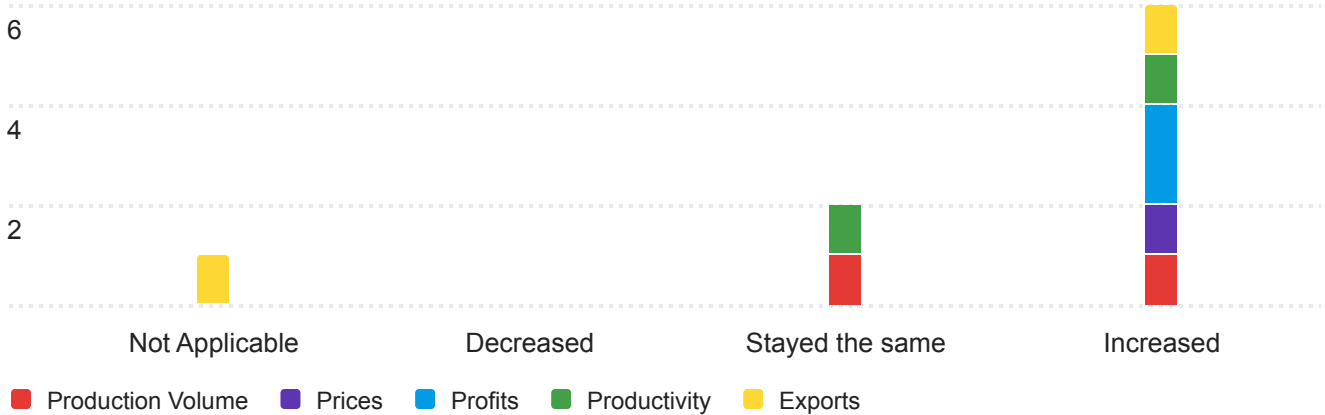


Other ways new hires are supported:

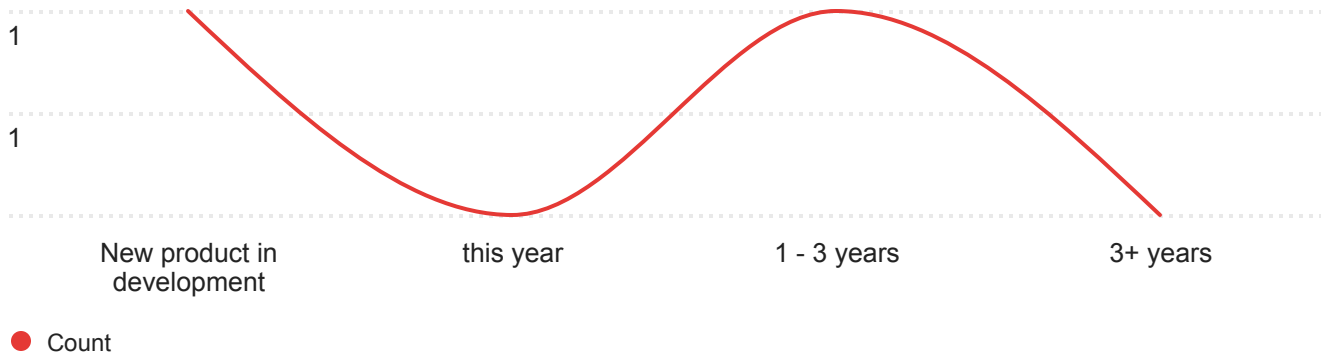


MANUFACTURING SECTOR SPECIFIC

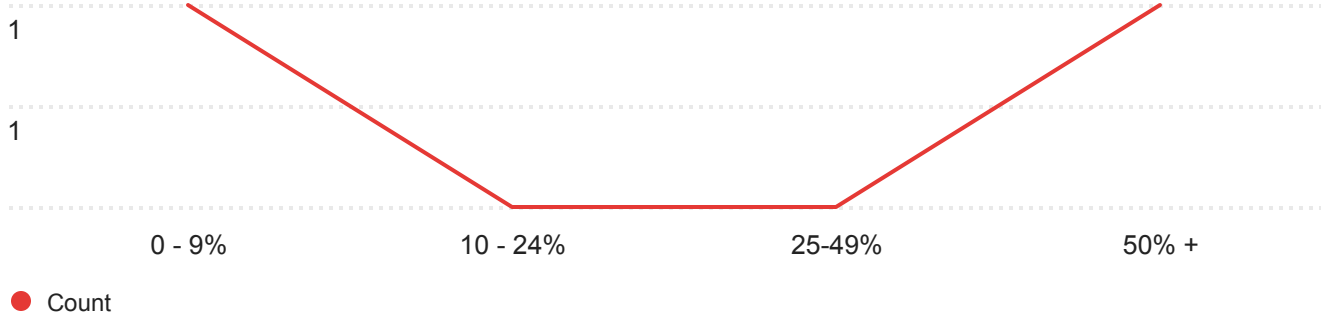
Compared to 2 years ago, have any of the following aspects changed?



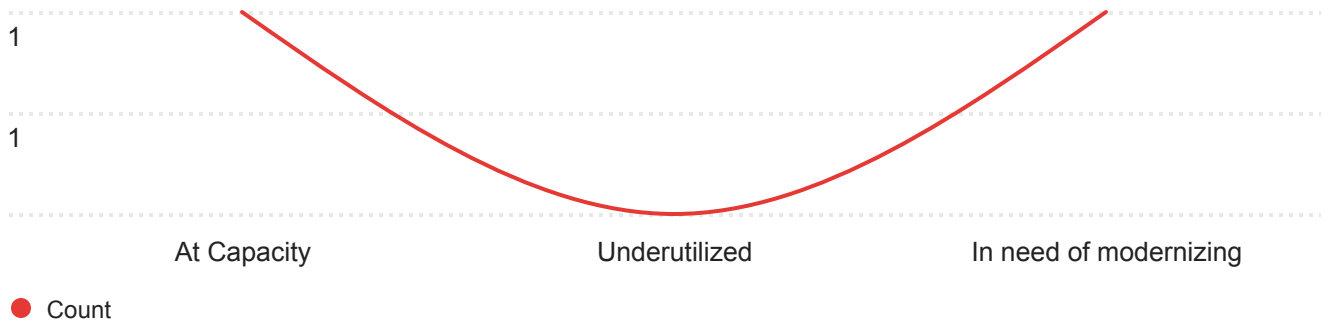
When did your company last introduce a new product to the market?



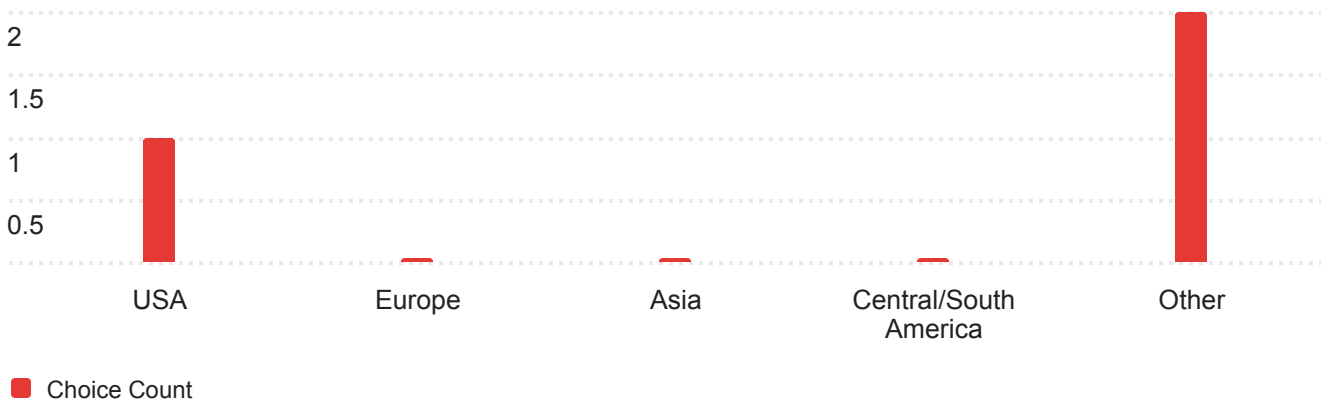
What percentage of your products' components is sourced locally?



Is your facility or equipment:

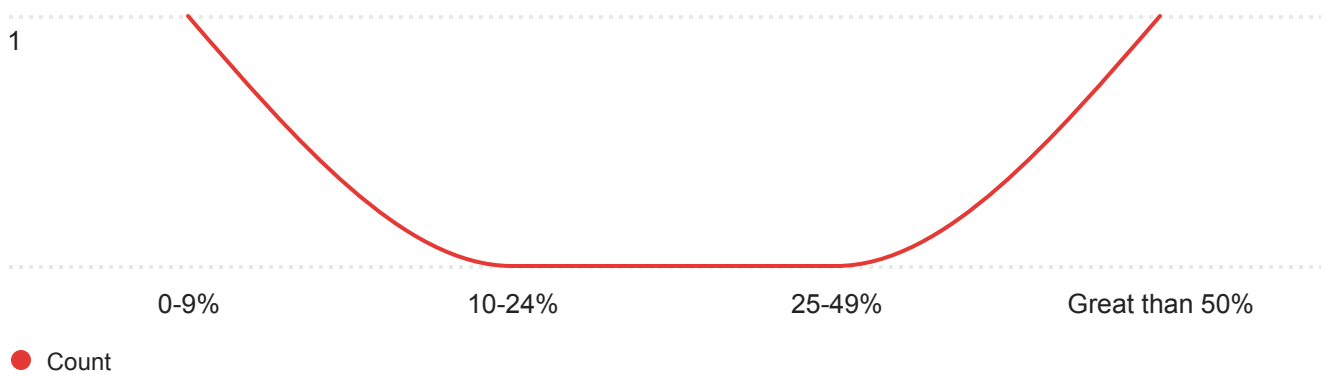


Where do you currently export to?



Other areas exported to include Nationally and North America / Mexico.

What percentage of your business sales is related to exports?



End of survey.

5.1.2.



Business Retention & Expansion

This presentation provides an analysis of the Town of Hanover Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) 2026 Study, highlighting key findings identified themes.

Presented by April Marshall, Ec.D.
Economic Development Manager





About the Study

Background Info

A structured approach to understanding the needs, concerns, and opportunities of local businesses. Through confidential interviews and surveys, to gather insights that help us develop strategic action plans tailored to support business growth and address challenges.

Survey Base

61 businesses, surveyed July–October 2025



Businesses represent a broad mix of sectors, including retail, personal and professional services, construction, manufacturing, healthcare, and accommodation/food services.





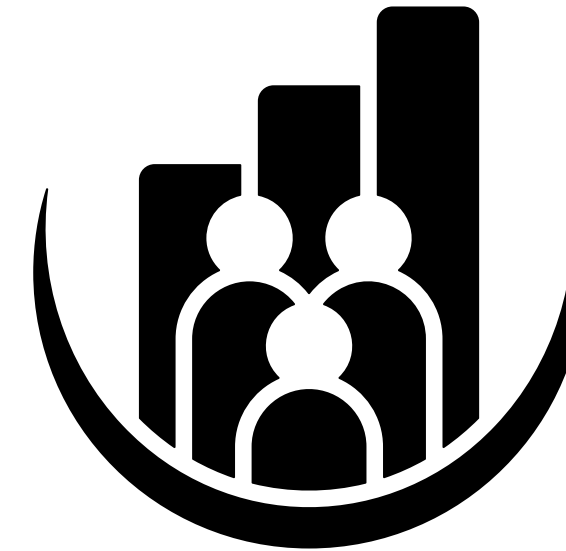
Business Profile & Structure

75%

The business community is dominated by locally owned, single-location firms

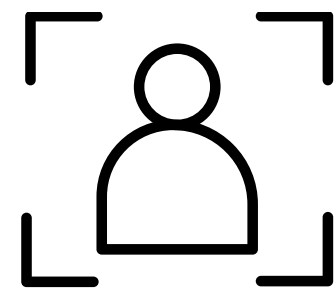
85%

Owner-operated businesses are the norm, with owners directly involved in daily operations



Hanover has a well-established business base:

- Nearly 70% of respondents have operated locally for more than 11 years.
- Over one-third have been in operation for 35+ years.



38% of respondents identify as part of an equity-seeking group, most commonly women-owned businesses and youth-led enterprises.



Most businesses rely on local (46%) and regional (42%) markets, highlighting the importance of population growth, regional connectivity, and local purchasing power.



Business Climate

Key challenges affecting the business climate

- Workforce availability remains one of the most significant concerns.
- Housing affordability and availability affect both owners and employees.
- Land and building availability, particularly for expansion or relocation, is limited.
- Infrastructure and operating costs (utilities, internet, cellular service) are frequently cited pressures.



Business confidence is generally stable:

- 69% report no change in attitude toward doing business in Hanover over the past three years.
- 69% rate Hanover as good or excellent as a place to do business.

What businesses value

- Strong community support, quality of life, and local leadership contribute to positive perceptions.
- Emergency services, recreation, and parks are consistently rated well.



Future Plans



Business intentions

- 36% of businesses plan to expand within the next 18 months.
- 45% expect to remain the same size, often citing market uncertainty, workforce limits, or space constraints rather than lack of ambition.
- Very few businesses anticipate downsizing, relocation, or closure.

Barriers to growth

- Expansion is constrained by:
 - Cost of growth and access to financing
 - Availability of suitable land or buildings
 - Approval timelines and regulatory complexity
 - Difficulty finding qualified employees

Succession and ownership transition

- A small but notable group of owners are considering retirement or sale.
- Most do not have a formal succession plan, increasing the risk of future closures or loss of locally owned businesses.



Business Development & Performance

Businesses express strong interest in:

✔ Joint marketing and promotion

✔ Shared training opportunities

✔ Networking and information sharing

✔ Cooperative purchasing

Industry outlook and sales

- Most respondents describe their industry outlook as stable or growing.
- Projected sales are more likely to increase or remain steady than decline.
- Growth is driven by local demand, service diversification, reputation, and population trends.

Local purchasing patterns

- Many businesses purchase supplies, services, and specialized inputs outside the community.
- This reflects both limited local availability and potential gaps in the local supply chain.

Facilities and assets

- A high proportion of businesses own their facilities, reinforcing commitment to Hanover but limiting short-term flexibility to expand or relocate.

45

Respondents report a net gain of 45 **jobs** over the past three years.

52%

Businesses report difficulty hiring, driven by:

- Skills and training gaps
- Lack of relevant experience
- Too few applicants overall

Challenges are more often **industry-wide** than specific to Hanover alone.

90%

Employee retention is relatively strong (90% report no major retention issues).

Barriers to training include:

- Cost
- Limited local availability
- Difficulty releasing staff during work hours



Community Development

Strengths

- Central location within the region
- Small-town character and sense of community
- Overall quality of life

Challenges influencing business success

- Limited availability of land and commercial space
- Housing affordability
- Transportation and connectivity
- Visibility and awareness of local businesses

Events and activity

- 39% of businesses report increased sales from community events.
- Others note limited impact depending on business type, hours, or customer base.





Emerging Themes

The BR&E 2026 Study shows a resilient, locally committed business community with clear interest in growth and collaboration. Addressing workforce supply, housing availability, space constraints, and succession planning through coordinated, evidence-based action will be critical to sustaining and strengthening Hanover's economy over the coming decade.

01 **Stability with constraints**
Businesses are committed to Hanover but face limits related to labour, space, and cost.

03 **Growth interest exceeds growth capacity**
Many want to expand, but lack the conditions to do so.

02 **Workforce and housing are linked**
Labour challenges cannot be addressed without housing solutions.

04 **Succession risk is emerging**
An aging ownership base without formal plans poses long-term risk.

05 **Collaboration is an opportunity**
Businesses are open to working together if structures and supports exist.





Comparative BR&E Insights (2009 → 2015 → 2021 → 2026)

Business Climate & Confidence

- Strong across all cycles, but off the 2009 peak (93% good/excellent → 69% in 2026).
- Current confidence remains solid and durable.

Growth Intentions

- Consistent expansion mindset across all years.
- 36% planning expansions in 2021 and 2026, echoing 2009 patterns.

Succession & Continuity

Increasing transition risk: 19% considering retirement/sale (2021). 2026 shows continued transition plans with limited formal succession.

Land, Space & Costs

- Long-standing space and serviced-land constraints (2009 → 2026).
- Lower ratings for available leased space and serviced land persist.
- Rising pressure: utility and telecom costs/quality more frequently flagged.

Downtown Signals

- Recurrent focus on operational basics, not events.
- Persistent issues: parking, cleanliness, snow/sidewalks, signage, accessibility.
- Event impact mixed: 39% report sales lift (2026).

Workforce

- Shift from general availability concerns to skills and experience shortages.
- 52% (2026) face hiring challenges (skills gaps, too few applicants).
- Retention stable.
- 2021 recovery signal: 54% planned near-term hiring (327 jobs).

Collaboration & Supports

- Ongoing demand for joint marketing, networking, shared training, co-purchasing.
- Communications/mentorship emphasized in 2015, remains relevant.



Thank You For Joining Us

Feel free to reach out with questions, feedback, comments, suggestions, insights, proposals, resources, or collaboration ideas anytime.



519.364.2780



hanover.ca



amarshall@hanover.ca



**TOWN OF HANOVER
BUILDING PERMIT STATS**

8.1.1

MONTH	# OF PERMITS ISSUED		PERMIT VALUE		COST OF CONSTRUCTION		DWELLING UNITS CREATED			
	2025	2024	2025	\$ 2024	2025	\$ 2024	SFD	MR	SFD	MR
							2025	2024	2025	2024
JANUARY	4	9	2,741.00	1,124.40	236,700	143,192	0	0	0	0
FEBRUARY	3	4	40,885.50	12,648.30	3,701,700	1,425,000	1	0	3	0
MARCH	10	5	39,311.80	23,243.78	3,366,900	2,108,301	1	2	1	0
1ST QUARTER	17	18	82,938.30	37,016.48	7,305,300	3,676,493	2	2	4	0
APRIL	16	17	39,362.54	34,944.84	3,368,350	3,271,900	2	6	4	4
MAY	8	9	19,190.89	23,385.34	1,683,000	2,357,275	0	4	5	0
JUNE	15	8	3,771.07	11,969.00	338,094	1,331,000	0	0	1	0
2ND QUARTER	39	34	62,324.50	70,299.18	5,389,444	6,960,175	2	10	10	4
JULY	7	14	901.00	21,968.50	170,519	2,099,300	0	0	3	3
AUGUST	13	6	49,986.92	588.27	4,175,743	45,159	0	0	0	0
SEPTEMBER	1	12	21.00	17,532.00	1,700	1,883,500	0	0	4	0
3RD QUARTER	21	32	50,908.92	40,088.77	4,347,962	4,027,959	0	0	7	3
OCTOBER	14	9	33,205.54	25,307.35	1,962,214	2,130,099	1	2	2	0
NOVEMBER	9	9	33,531.57	51,844.91	5,171,839	4,372,800	1	5	2	4
DECEMBER	6	6	28,033.53	18,324.50	1,379,500	2,055,200	0	9	0	7
4TH QUARTER	29	24	94,770.64	95,476.76	8,513,553	8,558,099	2	16	4	11
TOTALS	106	108	290,942.36	242,881.19	25,556,259	23,222,726	6	28	25	18