

The Indigenous Business COVID-19 Response Taskforce reveals findings of their recent Indigenous Business Survey. The results highlight the unique impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indigenous businesses, current barriers to accessing government relief programs, and capabilities of these businesses to supply PPE to the federal government.

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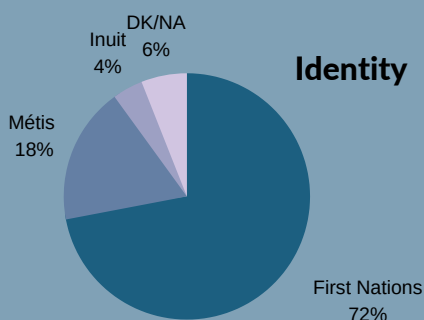


On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, leading countries and communities around the world to adopt strict health and safety measures, including commercial shutdowns and restrictions to mitigate the spread of the virus. Early on, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities were identified as particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic, given the lack of access to potable water, substandard housing on reserves, and ongoing inequality in healthcare services.

Indigenous businesses, both urban and rural, provide essential services and economic opportunities for their communities. Ensuring adequate financial support to maintain operations can help Indigenous businesses continue to deliver essential services and functions, such as fundamental food items and personal protective equipment (PPE), retain Indigenous employees, and continue to grow the Indigenous economy for the betterment of all Canadians.

Respondent Characteristics

This report presents the results of a self-selected online survey conducted with 838 Indigenous business professionals between April 29, 2020 and May 22, 2020 and promoted through the Taskforce's business networks.



Top Five Industries:

1. Professional, scientific, and technical services (13%)
2. Construction (11%)
3. Retail trade (9%)
4. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (7%)
5. Other services (18%)

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Most businesses are small, privately owned, and come from Ontario, BC, or Québec.



- 60% have 1-19 employees and another 25% are sole proprietorships.
- 76% are privately owned businesses, 10% are community owned, and 7% are Aboriginal Economic Development Corporations.
- Respondents are located across Canada and mostly concentrated in Ontario, British Columbia and Québec.

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Impacts of COVID-19 to Indigenous Businesses in Canada

91% of Indigenous businesses experienced a negative impact from COVID-19.

50% or more experienced a decrease in revenues (76%); decrease in demand for products or services (65%); and cancellation of meetings, gatherings, or events (59%).

30% reported a shutdown of offices and facilities.

67% have seen a decrease in revenues from January to March 2020, when compared to revenues earned from the same time period in 2019. Of those businesses, 38% reported a decrease in revenues of 40% or more.

47% plan to or have applied for government financial assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly half of these will require over \$50,000 in financial assistance to maintain normal business operations.

68% have seen an impact to staffing during this time. Most notably, 11% of respondents report that none of the firm's employees are able to work normally during the pandemic.

12% provide supplies or equipment to meet Canada's medical needs or can rapidly scale up/pivot production to provide PPE (8%).

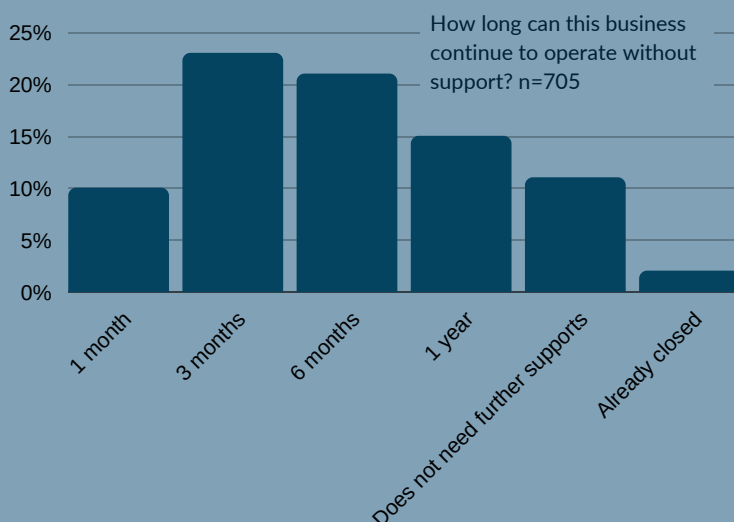
Some impacts are felt more intensely among different groups

61% of women-owned businesses report a "very negative" impact compared to 53% of men-owned businesses.

38% of Inuit-owned businesses experienced a revenue drop of 50% or more, compared to 27% of Métis and 31% of First Nations-owned businesses.

Business Survival

When asked how long their business could continue to operate if no further supports were made available, just under half (44%) of Indigenous businesses indicated that, without support, they are likely to fail after 3-6 months. While 10% of businesses predicted operations could not last more than a month without support, and 2% indicated that the business has already closed.



Calls to action

1. Develop and implement policies, programming and other supports that address barriers facing Indigenous businesses as well as the additional effects of gender, identity, and location of business.
2. Provide additional funding and supports to Indigenous businesses who have indicated they are likely to close in the immediate future.
3. Develop and implement a proactive procurement strategy for Government of Canada to directly engage Indigenous businesses that can supply or pivot to supply PPE.
4. Conduct further research to understand the impacts and needs of Indigenous businesses as they continue to evolve throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and into the recovery period.