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To: Morrisville Town Council

From: Sara Ellis, Small Business Program Specialist  
Michael James, Fiscal Recovery Officer

Date: February 28, 2023

Re: **Small Business Outreach Survey Results**

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The Town of Morrisville received a grant from the Small Business Administration to provide programming and micro-grants to Town businesses. The grant will catalyze the beginning of ongoing, Town budget-supported effort. To determine the types of programming to offer, and to provide the Town's small businesses with information about the micro-grant program, a three-phase engagement plan was developed.

The first phase of engagement included a survey and introduction of the small business programming being developed. Staff administered the survey via email, in-person visits, and through direct mail. The result was a survey that was sent directly to 145 small businesses in Town. The survey helped gauge broad interest in a menu of potential programming options and understand preferred communication methods. A snapshot of the survey results is included below:

- 95% of respondents prefer to be contacted via email, with some requests for text message
- 47% of respondents reported their largest challenge is finding qualified workers
- The top three areas the Town of Morrisville can support small businesses are:
  - Free opportunities to showcase their business at Town events (65.22%)
  - Networking opportunities with other businesses (57.97%)
  - Promotional spotlights on different industries like a Morrisville Restaurant Week or Health and Wellness Week (56.52%)

The full survey summary including detailed results and outreach tools is included in the following section of this document. The second phase of engagement will begin in the Spring of 2023 and will focus on refining our understanding of potential Town offerings and reaching small business who were not engaged during the first phase.

# Town of Morrisville Small Business Outreach Program Survey Summary

Funded [in part] through a Grant with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

February 28, 2023  
Town Council Admin Report

**Prepared by:**  
Sara Ellis, Small Business Program Specialist  
Michael James, Fiscal Recovery Officer

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## Overview

The Town of Morrisville’s Budget and Strategic Management and Communications and Outreach Departments developed and administered an online and paper survey available in English, to understand the needs of small businesses. The survey was open from November 1, 2022 – December 30, 2022 and included 12 questions about business support and four optional demographic questions.

## Engagement Summary

The first step in the engagement process was to compile a database of small businesses located in Morrisville. A small business for the purpose of this engagement effort met the following criteria:

- The business is physically located within the Town limits of Morrisville.
- The business does not have chains with locations outside of the Triangle.

Using the above criteria, staff compiled a database of small businesses within Town limits from the following data sources:

- Data Axle: A proprietary database that pulls information from the North Carolina Secretary of State and several other business datasets.
- Existing Town data: Several Town of Morrisville Departments work with and collect contact information from small businesses.
- Field visits: Staff visited various shopping centers to fill in any gaps in the dataset.

The result was a database of 193 small businesses. Staff used this number to track the efficacy of the outreach efforts and to understand where engagement can be improved. While the survey was open to all small businesses, Town staff used the micro-grant program eligibility criteria Council agreed to on October 11, 2022 to prioritize more intensive outreach such as targeted follow-up emails, in-person visits, and handwritten notes. This included a focus on businesses in industries most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and businesses with annual revenues of \$500,000 or less.

<b>Survey Outreach Summary</b>				
<b>Business Category</b>	<b>Estimated # of Small Businesses</b>	<b>Directly Received Survey*</b>	<b>Staff Visited (#)</b>	<b>Staff Visited (%)</b>
Food Service & Drinking	58	54	25	43%
Personal Services	45	24	10	22%
Professional & Technical Services	28	20	1	4%
Educational & Rec Services	22	19	2	9%
Retail	20	16	5	25%
Health Care	10	9	0	0%
Construction & Manufacturing	10	3	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>22%</b>

\*Staff provided the survey directly to 145 businesses either through email, phone call, or in-person visit. Staff was unable to directly contact all 193 businesses and provide them with the survey for various reasons such as lack of contact information and lack of physical access to the business. In some cases, staff did not directly provide the survey to businesses during in-person visits when doing so would have caused disruptions to the business and its customers. Businesses that were not directly provided the survey may have been reached through other Town communications (Town social media, fliers, partner relationships) and would have had the opportunity to complete the survey via publicly available links.

## Survey Response Data

The survey received a total of 70 responses.

- 55 of 70 respondents indicated a specific business they were responding on behalf of.
  - The other 15 respondents did not list a business name, so it was unclear if they responded as an individual or on behalf of a small business.
  - 33 of the 55 that indicated a business name were businesses listed in the Town's pre-identified listing of 193 businesses.

To reach the businesses, staff used a variety of contact methods to ensure they were aware of the survey and understood the purpose of completing it. The following section summarizes the different tools used to reach the Town of Morrisville's small businesses.

## Engagement Tools

- Direct emails to businesses inviting them to take the survey
- Follow up direct emails to 66 businesses
- In person visits to 43 businesses where each business was invited to fill out the survey on an iPad or complete a paper copy and return it back by emailing a photo.
- Mailed out 24 handwritten invitations to the take survey with link
- Morrisville Chamber emailed survey out to their members
- Morrisville Rotary Club emailed survey out to their members
- Next Week In Morrisville (NWIM) Sent to 2,814 people, and 1,295 opened it and 2 clicked the link
- Posted on Town website under "business announcements"
- Posters advertising the survey placed in Town facilities
- Social Media Posts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram) 4,570 impressions across social with 122 clicks on the link. It was posted 23 times.
- Reached out to local organizations to ask for their help spreading the word:
  - Hindu Society of North Carolina
  - Islamic Center of Morrisville
  - Localista
  - Sampige Triangle Kannada Association
  - Southern Bridge International
  - Triangle Gujarati Association
  - Triangle United Telugu Association

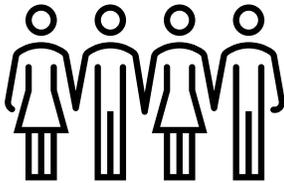
## Summary of Survey Results

The information collected helped the Town understand how small businesses would like to be communicated with, their biggest challenges and how they want to be supported. The detailed survey results can be found in the full Small Business Engagement Summary report. The following is a snapshot of the results:



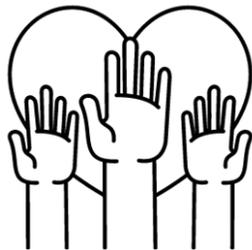
### Preferred Contact Method

- The majority or 95% of businesses prefer to be contacted and provide feedback via email, with some requests for text message.



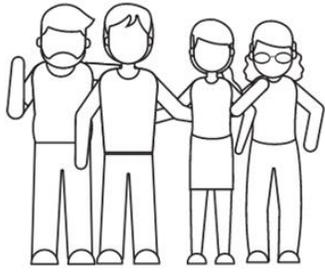
### Biggest Challenge

- The majority or 47% of respondents are struggling to find qualified workers.
- This question received the most open-ended comments in the survey about outreach assistance, increasing rent prices, attracting, and retaining new clients and more.



### How the Town Can Support Smalls

- The majority or 65% would like to participate in Town events that include free opportunities to showcase their business at festivals or other events.



## Demographics

- 53% of small business respondents are men, and the other 40% who provided that information are women.
- 47% of respondents identified as White, followed by 26% who identified as Asian. (Respondents could identify with multiple categories).

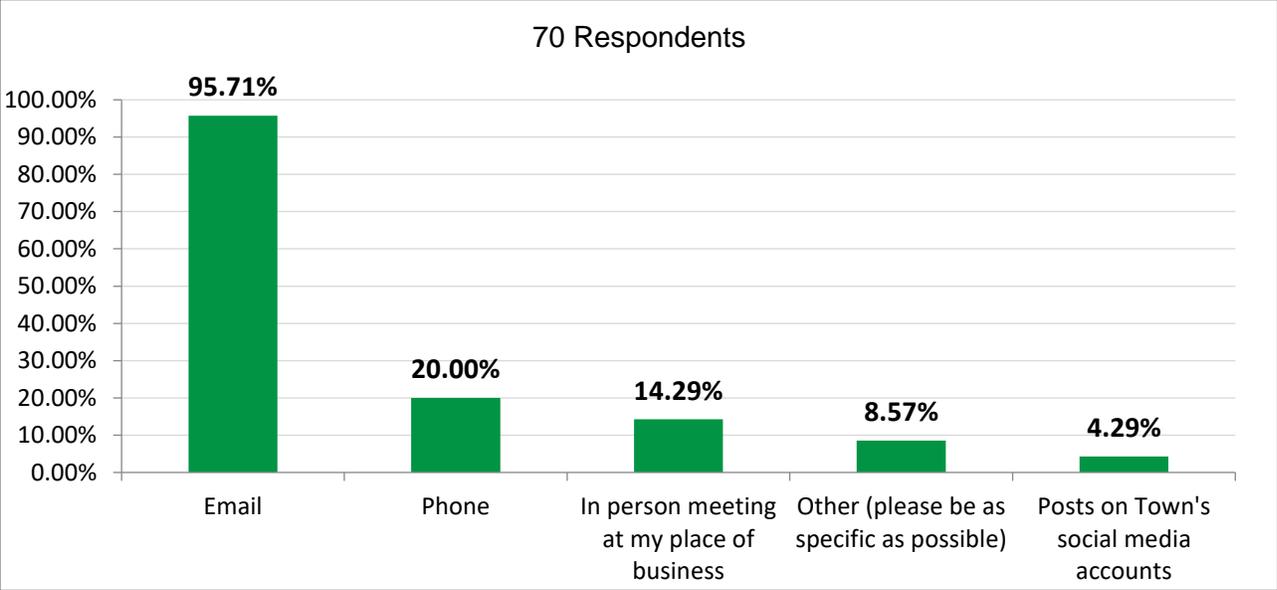
# Detailed Survey Results

## Section 1: Understanding Small Business Needs and Challenges

Town Staff developed and administered an online and paper survey to capture the needs and communication preferences from our small business community. The survey was hosted online using SurveyMonkey, and available in paper copy. Staff also administered the survey using both paper copies, and an iPad during in-person business visits. Small businesses who completed the survey in person were offered Town of Morrisville swag (shop local promotion items, tote bags and various Town branded items).

The survey completion rate was 84%, which means about 16% did not answer every question. The survey took online respondents about three minutes to complete. The following section summarizes the 70 survey responses:

### 1. What is the best way for the Town of Morrisville to communicate with you?

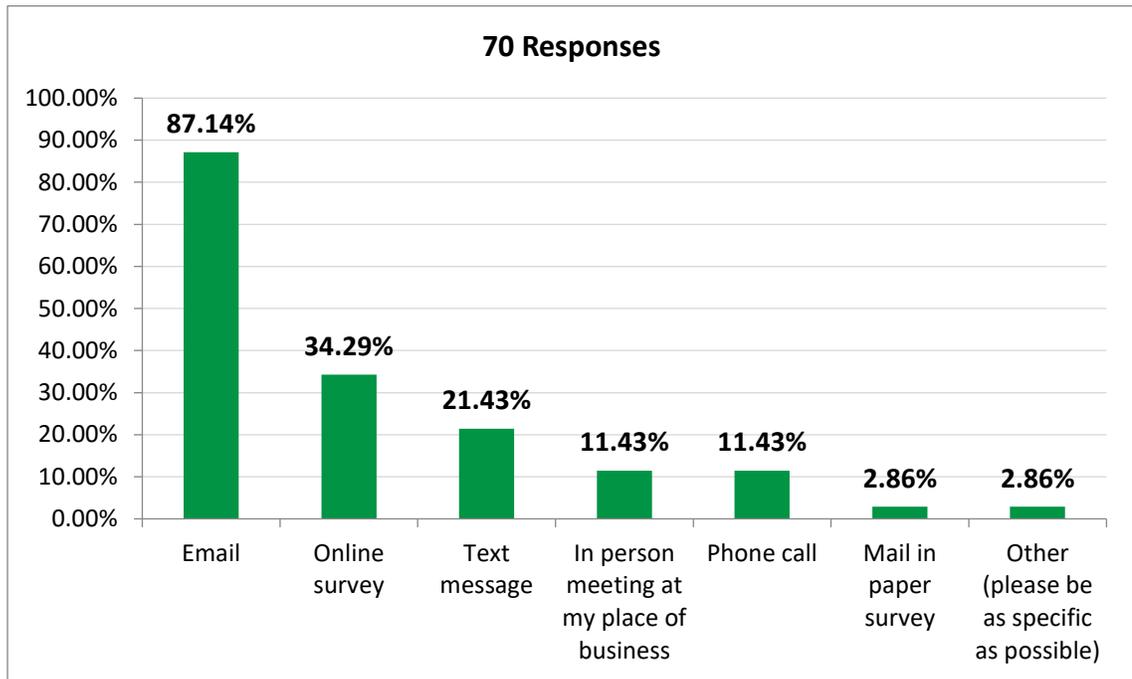


(Check all that apply)

Responses to the “other” question included:

- (2) Text Message
- At the Town Offices

2. What is the easiest way for you to provide feedback to the Town of Morrisville on small business services and support? (Check all that apply)



Responses to the “other” question included:

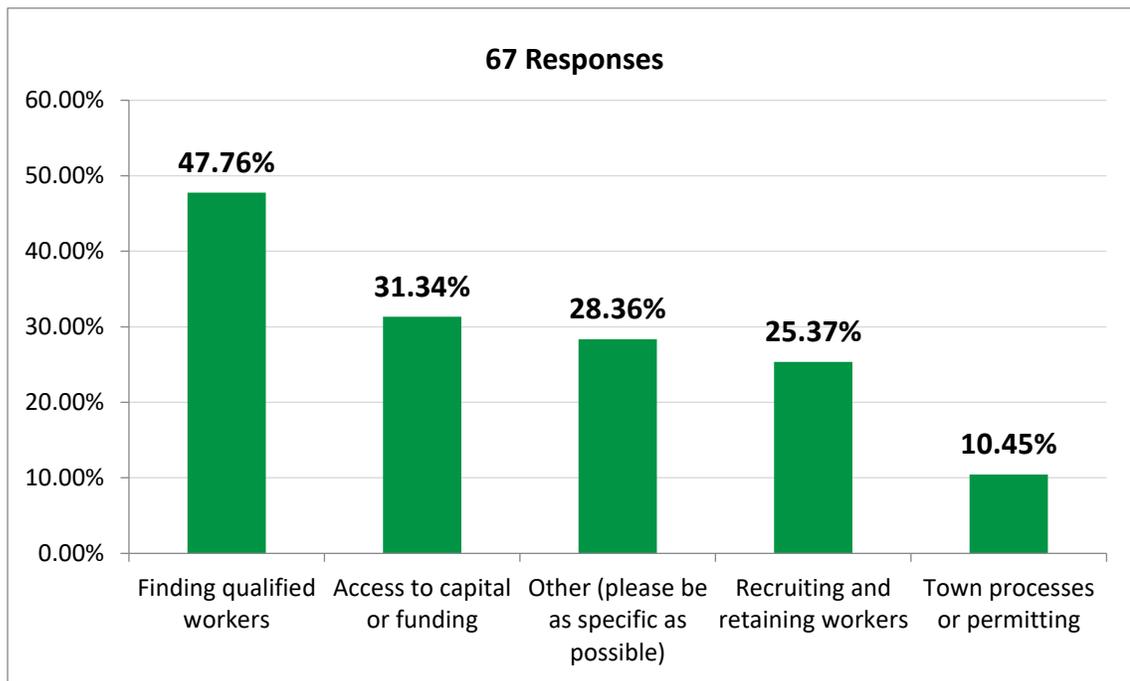
- Text Message
- Email

3. Is there a language other than English you would like to be contacted in? If so, please tell us which language. (Open ended text question)

Most respondents, or 77%, skipped this question; of those who responded they requested the following languages:

- (1) Hindi
- (1) Chinese

4. What is the biggest challenge currently facing your business? (Check all that apply)



Responses to the “other” question included:

- Cost of living is high, and customers are leaving Morrisville due to the rising rents
- Getting customers in seats and staffing
- Getting in front of my ideal clients
- Identifying customers as a new business
- Inflation has raised the prices of groceries, so the customers are buying less
- Interest rate environment
- Intersection configuration at Chapel Hill Road and Market Center Drive is dangerous
- None of the above
- Not enough draw to my shopping area, its expensive and challenging to get approval for additional signage
- Retail business outreach
- Rising rents
- Starting pay for employees is difficult to match up the average rent in Morrisville
- Visible signage so customers are aware the business exists

5. How can the Town best support your small business' success? (Please check all that apply)



Responses to the "other" question included:

- More communication about the Western Wake Farmer's Market through email and on social media and why supporting local is important
- All the above and access to join partnerships
- Morrisville restaurant week
- Positive support
- Gatherings for face-to-face conversations with decision makers in big companies
- Training in outlook, iPhone and Office 365
- Reevaluate restrictions related to signage and expanding seating into the parking lot

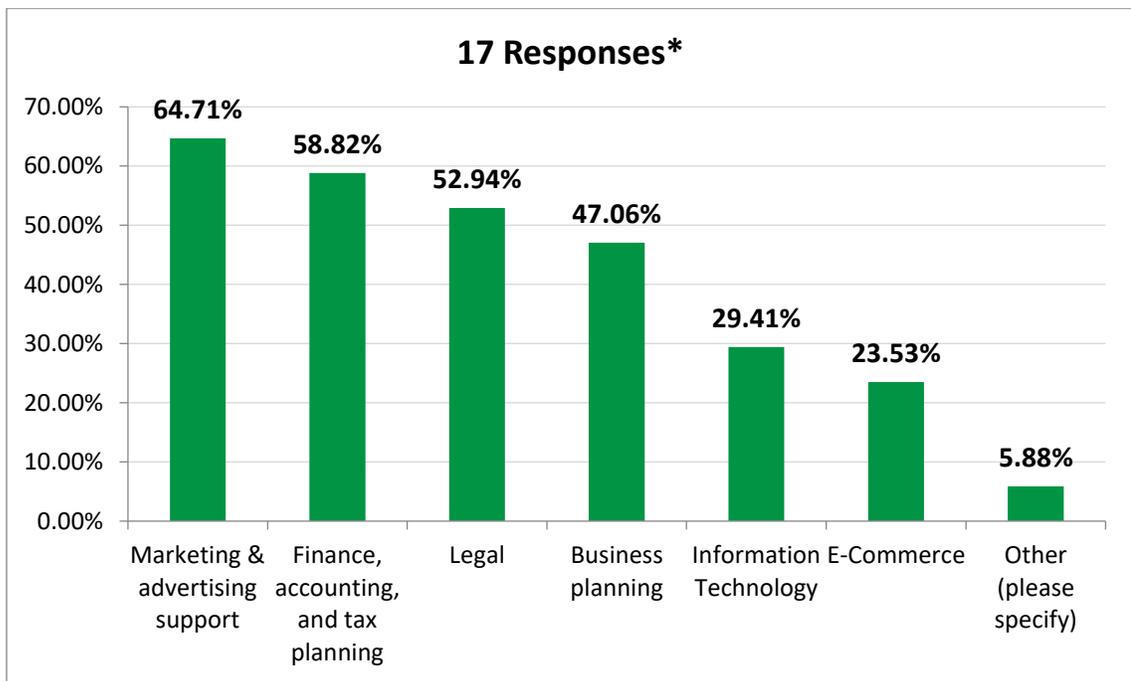
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with the Town of Morrisville about your small business and its needs?

This question received 30 individual responses, including requests for more visible signage, different types of partnerships and customer outreach. The following is a summary of those responses, the full text of responses is in Appendix A.

- Access to join venture partnerships
- Assistance finding IT/web/PC software
- Bigger signage on the road
- Capital funds for my business to pay rent and expand services.
- Coworking or commons spaces like RTP HUB
- Help with customer outreach and exposure

- Move the Chamber of Commerce monthly meetings later to accommodate daycare drop-off
- Mutual partnerships to make businesses feel welcomed by the Town Administration
- Permitting process was delayed due to new staff
- Request for two-way traffic to enter Market Place Drive off Chapel Hill Road to make ingress and egress easier for customers. Respondent noted customers u-turning on Chapel Hill is a safety concern
- Town financial support of small businesses
- Town Staff shopping at the Western Wake Farmer’s Market to show support

7. Which types of technical assistance are most helpful to you?

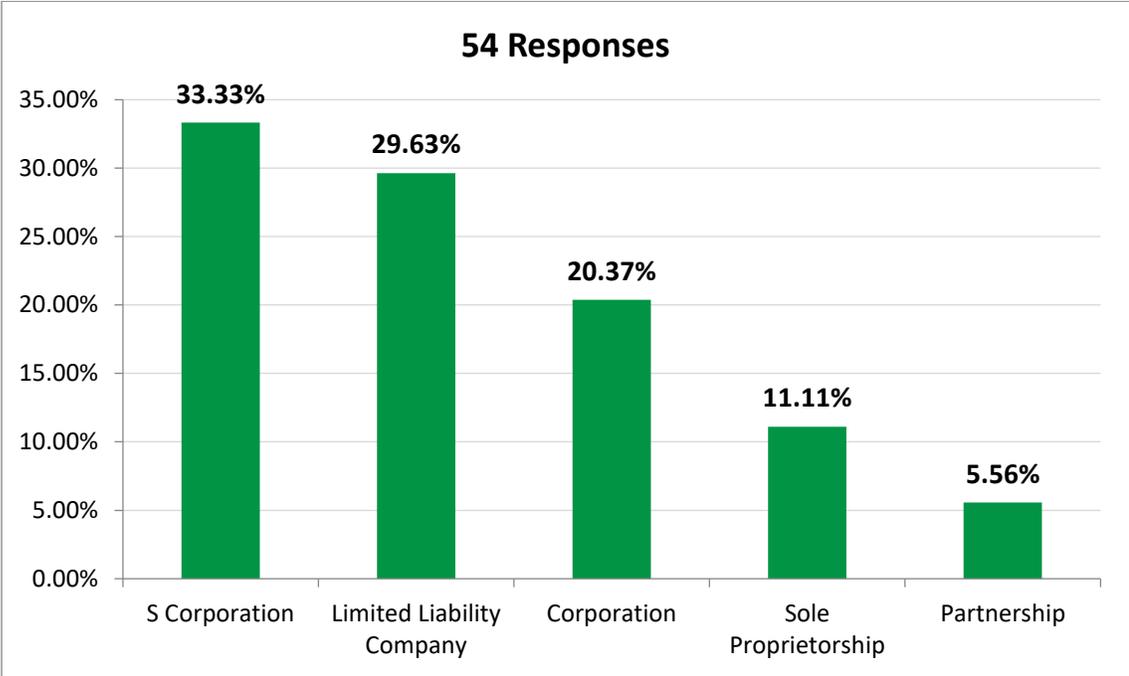


\*Note this question was only available to respondents who selected “technical assistance” on question 5. However, 100% of the respondents who indicated they would like technical assistance completed this question.

Other responses (1) included a comment about zoom audio issues experience during a Morrisville Chamber of Commerce meeting.

## Section 2: Contact Information

8. How is your business structured?



Note on business types:

- Sole Proprietorship: A sole proprietor is someone who owns an unincorporated business by themselves.
- Partnership: A relationship between two or more people who each contribute money, property, labor and shares in the profits and losses of the business.
- Corporation: A business entity that distributes its profits to shareholders.
- S Corporation: Similar to a C-Corporation but has some tax benefits that are helpful to a small business, including lower self-employment taxes.
- Limited Liability Company: A business structure that protects its owners from liability and allows the business to be recognized as a taxable entity.

9. What is the name of your business?

55 of the 70 respondents filled out this question, the full text of their responses can be found in Appendix A. The respondents who did not provide a name for the business may have done so in error, out of a privacy concern or may not be small business owners but were interested in providing input.

10. What is the name of the business owner, or main point of contact?

54 of the 70 respondents answered this question, their responses were recorded in the database staff is compiling.

11. What is the email address of the business owner, or main point of contact?

54 of the 70 respondents answered this question, their responses were recorded in the database staff is compiling.

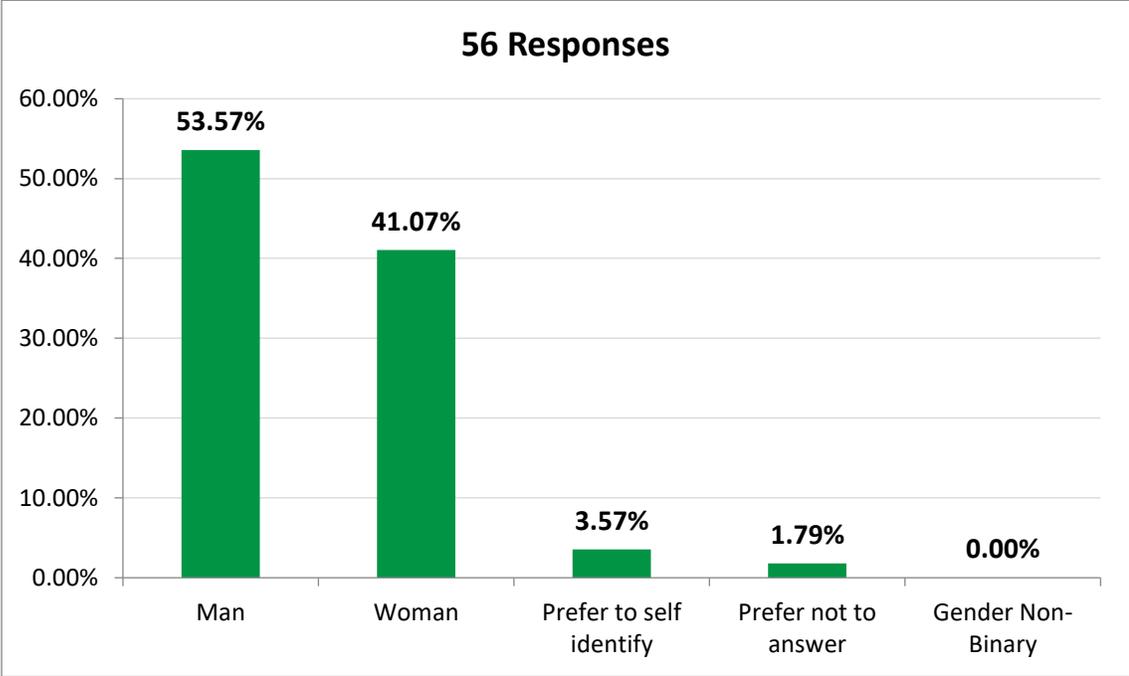
12. What is the best phone number to reach the business owner, or main point of contact?

51 of the 70 respondents answered this question, their responses were recorded in the database staff is compiling.

### Section 3: Optional Demographic Information

The following four demographic questions were asked to keep in compliance with the Small Business Administration (SBA) Grant funding this work. In keeping Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities, a term of the SBA’s agreement, voluntary demographic data was captured.

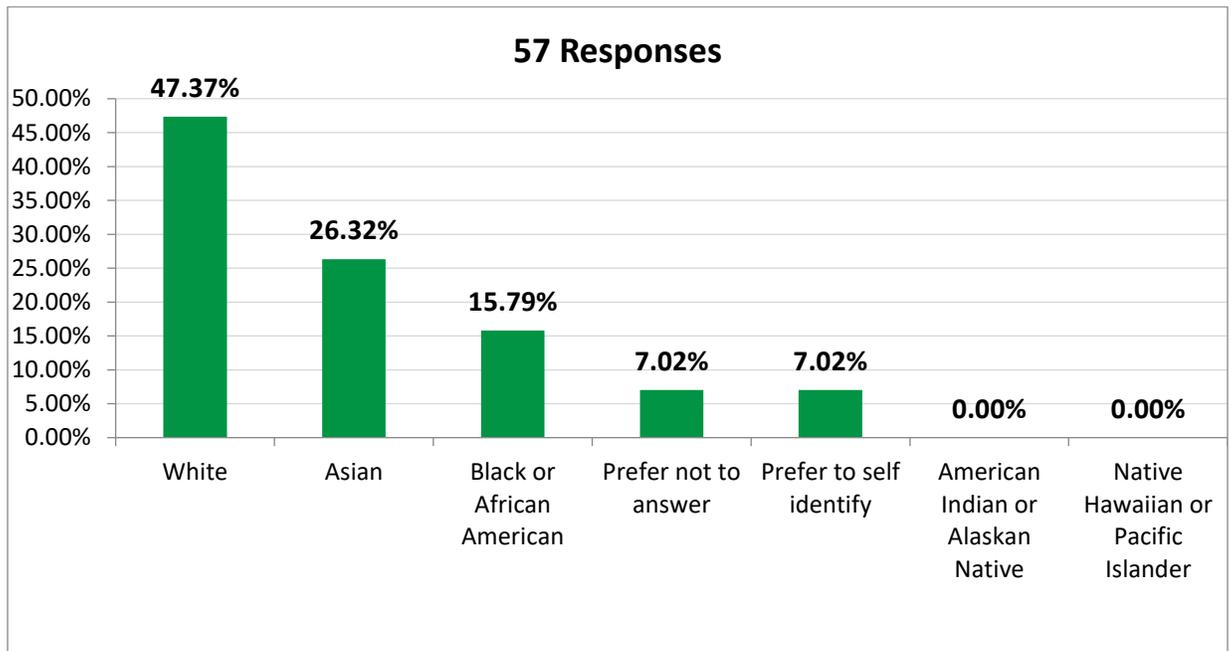
13. What is the gender identity of the business owner?



Prefer to self-identify (2):

- Two owners, a man and a woman
- Private corporation

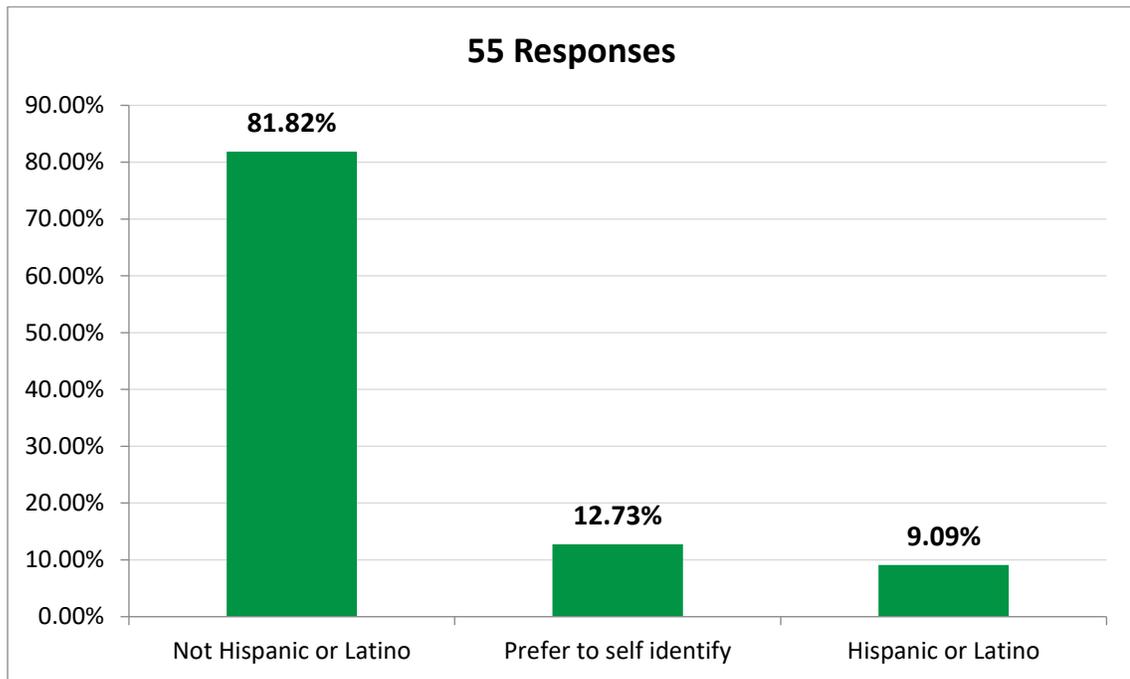
14. What is the racial identity of the business owner?



Self-Identify Answers (4):

- (2) Brazilian
- Asian Indian
- Private Corporation

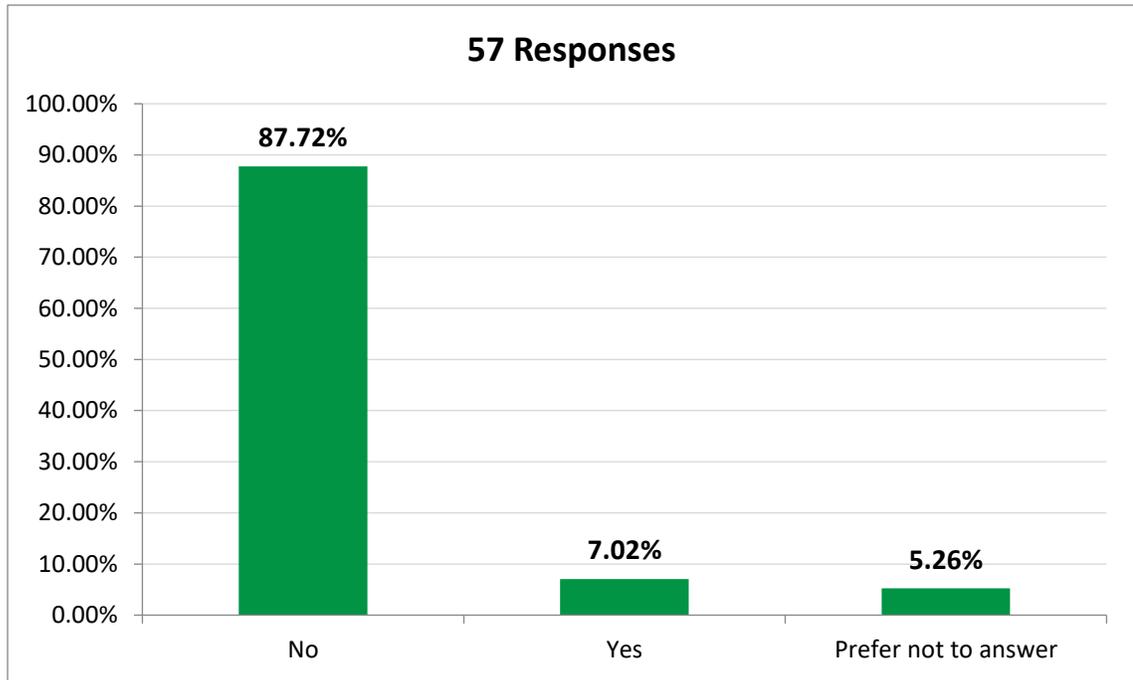
15. What is the ethnicity of the business owner?



Prefer to self-identify (7):

- (2) Brazilian
- Pakistani
- Indian Asian
- Asian
- Black

16. Has the business owner currently, or previously served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, military Reserves, or National Guard?



## Next Steps

Staff will use the results of the survey to begin planning support programming aligned with the requested areas of assistance.

Additionally, staff will continue business engagement efforts. The survey is just the beginning of Town outreach to inform spending of the Town's SBA grant funds. Staff is continuing to visit businesses and engage with prospective program partners, and staff will be following up with survey respondents as programming they requested is developed.

A specific focus of the next phase of engagement will be to reach businesses the Town did not connect with during this survey. The 2021 U.S. Census Data Estimates indicate the Town of Morrisville's residential population is about 41 percent Asian. Assuming the business community makeup is in line with the census data, that population appears to be underrepresented in the survey results as just over 26 percent of respondents to the optional demographic question identified as Asian.

Engagement options to better reach this community may include:

- Continued in person visits to the Town's small businesses to introduce our programming and build the relationship.
- Exploring written and oral translation options to make information more accessible for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals or first-generation business owners.
- Outreach to the Town's Advisory Citizen Advisory Committees to request assistance spreading the word about Town programming.
- Promoting future small business engagement opportunities on local radio stations such as Radio Nyra.
- Working with trusted community members to get introductions to business owners and members of the community who staff were unable to get feedback from.
- Launch the small business micro-grant program to provide a tangible and immediate resource to help Town businesses succeed.

# Appendix A – Survey Responses

## Survey Text Responses

### What is the biggest challenge currently facing your business? (Other responses)

- Be known
- Butts in seats and then staffing.
- Escalating rent expense....
- finding network to partner with
- Gathering new clientele.
- Getting in front of my ideal clients.
- Identifying customers - new business
- Inflation is higher than it really seems. Some of the products have doubled in price. They make their own bread, the flour used to come from India but there is a ban on it due to supply. Customers are prioritizing basics instead of buying snacks. People who want to come to work don't have enough social skills, documentation for workers is also an issue as many are undocumented. Starting pay is hard to match the rent in town. Deferred mortgage program from Covid ending. Workers want \$15, but I can't afford that
- Interest Rate Environment
- Material shortages. Long lead-times on items that contain metals or semiconductors.
- Meeting good prospects
- Morrisville is a very nice town to live in. Also, I feel lucky and blessed to own a small business, nail salon, in town of Morrisville. The downside is, it has been so expensive, living and price of food, product, items, that are essential to our living, has been raised in such quick timing and tremendously high. I often now hear from my clients that some of them are moving out of Morrisville and move to Raleigh because Raleigh are the only place that has lowered the rents for apartments and rentals. I hope Morrisville will consider the pricing of living so small businesses and the people will have the flexibility to life. Also, our shopping center, I hope the city will reconsider building the lights to make an exit out of our shopping center. My business has been slow and finding help has not been easy. I hope to receive loans for capital fundings.
- none of the above
- Not enough draw to my shopping area....if we want to use signage a little of pain.....approval.....monies.....to put signage out!
- Recruiting and retaining members for a non-profit
- Retail customer outreach.
- Sales leads and business networking opportunities.
- Visible signage so people know we're there.
- Volunteers needed

### **How can the Town best support your small business' success? (Other responses)**

- More communication about the WWFM through email, more on social media. I know you share what I post, but it would be helpful if the town emphasizes how important it is to shop at the farmers market & why.
- Small businesses need all of the above and access to Joint Venture Partnerships
- I was creating a Morrisville Restaurant Week when the COVID hit. I already have everything ready to go. Check out. <https://morrisvilleresaurantweek.com/> I was creating it with Apex, Garner, Holly Springs, Wake Forest etc. All the surrounding areas. Let's work on this.
- Positive support..
- 1. Gatherings for face-to-face conversations with decision makers in new or big companies 2. Training in Outlook, iPhone, Office 365, etc. [focused, non-beginner, 1-hour sessions] 3. I give free, 1-hour overviews in Crisis Mgmt to any business: get me some audiences
- There are several restrictions in place that we'd like to be re-evaluated by the town such as signage and also the ability to expand our patio seating into 1-2 parking space in our private lot. While our landlord okay'ed this, the town shared we were not permitted to even though it did not impact any type of handicap access, sidewalk access, ingress, egress, etc.
- not sure.
- Town indicated that the "Church" was setup for the "Town's needs". Was any consideration given to the users of the facility? Was the conferencing system (audio) tested for Zoom calls? AV systems need a quarterly "check up" to make sure all the function are working correctly. Has the Church's av system been checked recently and was the audio system checked for Zoom conferencing? Audio part of Zoom calls is not up to professional standards.
- I work for a bank and do not consider it a small business, and answered on what I know my small business customers most need
- That is all great ideas

### **Is there anything else you would like to share with the Town of Morrisville about your small business and its needs? (Open ended question)**

- As the landlord and owner of a local shopping center my responses to questions 1-5 are reflective of my tenants. I have great, long-term tenants who have made a commitment to Morrisville.
- Our business is delighted to serve the people Morrisville as we grow our followers not only in the Latin community but in all nationalities.
- I hope to receive the approval for capital fundings so my business will have the flexibility to capital and using the funding to pay my rents and expand services. I hope the city of Morrisville will consider building the exit lights where Verizon side located, instead of customer making the U turn at the light on Chapel Hill Rd. It is inconvenient and dangerous. I see a lot of accidents when people make u turns. It will help our shopping center bring in more traffic and clients.
- I think this is amazing and Sara you are off to a great start! Looking forward to seeing more from you and the Town!
- I will be joining the Chamber and look forward to partnering.

- I wish the chamber of commerce meeting were after 9 so I could drop my daughter off at day care to attend. I've never been able to attend a meeting because of this.
- I would like to have a bigger sign on the Rd
- If you indicate that organizations can operate Zoom calls, please have the system checked for the audio by the installer. Why doesn't the equipment allow for the addition of wireless microphones? If it does not, the equipment is low-end and not suitable for Zoom conferencing.
- It would be helpful if Town staff actually shopped at the market to show your support. Thank you!
- It'd be great to have coworking space or a common space like RTP Hub where small business owners and freelancers can hangout and exchange ideas and potential business opportunity.
- Mutual partnership to make them feel like they are welcomed by the Town Administration
- N/A
- No
- Other cities are supporting their businesses thru the difficult times by way of financial support. Can you do that?
- Permitting took longer than expected all the staff were new and no one was familiar with the process and it resulted in a couple month delay.
- Small businesses need all of the above and access to Joint Venture Partnerships
- Spotlights on local non-profits in the Morrisville area working to create real change in underserved communities.
- Our business has been at this location in Morrisville for over 12 years. We have had much success due to the business park customers. I'm unfortunately after Covid all of our customers are working from home, and we are struggling to attract more retail customers. We mainly need help with customer outreach and more exposure. We are on Instagram.
- Town of Morrisville is great!! We love the staff and all they do
- We are a Non-Profit and always looking to recruit volunteers
- We are a veteran owned sporting goods store that focuses on service and repairing sports equipment. We also offer a wide variety of uniform and team apparel options.
- Where do I find local, competent IT/web/PC/software repair people? I need to call local experts with 2-3 urgent problems and get them fixed now.
- You guys did great job. Thankfully to fire department, police department.... All officers hard working to help our town stay safe, beauty, great place to live, shop and everyone love each other!! Thank you!!

#### List of Businesses who responded

Aeonic Enterprise, LLC dba Venice Nail Bar  
 Al Kareem Grocery  
 Alicia Knows

Baby moon cafe  
Bladez Barbershop  
Business of Life CC  
C&T Wok  
Catering by Design  
Close HR Connections  
Computerbilities  
Crossroads B2B Consulting  
Cuts-R-Clips Hairsalon  
Echo Media and Stories LLC  
Economy Exterminators  
Edward Jones  
Empanadas and more  
First Choice Solar Solutions  
Fount Coffee + Kitchen  
Georgina's  
Goels Plaza, LLC.  
Hoppy House  
Human Performance Consulting (dba Athletic Lab)  
Idle investment recovery of nc  
Indigo Salon  
Inuganti IT Corporation dba CMIT Solutions of Cary-Apex  
Janney Montgomery Scott, LLC  
KDY Automation Solutions  
Maharaja  
Morrisville Dry Cleaners  
Morrisville Square, LLC and Dzamba, LLC  
MRN Web Designs  
Muddy Dog Roasting Company  
Nails-R-Fun & Spa  
Paw Pack Place of the Carolinas, LLC  
Predestinated Consulting Inc.  
Pro skate balance  
Randy's Pizza  
Ruckus Pizza  
Rush Hour Karting  
Rush Hour Karting  
SiFangCai LLC, dba, Dim Sum House  
Sonder Luxe Solutions  
Sonder Luxe Solutions  
Taurya  
Teriyakin Inc  
The Kupkake Fairy  
The Stockdale Group  
The Wakaboomee Program  
Triangle Health Center  
Turmeric Zone  
Two guys grille

VerveFilms  
Western Wake Farmers Market  
Wilson Enterprise Inc  
Winstead Landscape Services

## Appendix B – Outreach Materials

### Template letter sent to businesses

A handwritten letter was sent out to businesses who did not respond to initial emails and or business visits. The idea behind the handwritten letter was that it might capture the attention of the owner and demonstrate the Town cares about their feedback. The letters included a handwritten invitation to complete the survey, and a slip of paper with a QR code to access it online.

**Take the Town of Morrisville’s small business program survey online at:**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/morrisvillesmallbiz>**

**or by scanning the QR code below:**



Script used for handwritten invitation:

“Hello [Name of Business Owner or Business],

I am reaching out from the Town of Morrisville to ask for your help! We are developing a small business program and would like to hear from you. Please take five minutes to fill out our short survey.

Thanks!

Sara

## Template Business Outreach Email

The following template email was developed and sent to businesses with available email addresses:

*“Good Morning /Afternoon [Name of Business Owner or Business]*

I am reaching out on behalf of the Town of Morrisville to learn more about your business and how we can best support you. **Do you have five minutes to fill out this [short survey](#) that will help us design a Small Business Outreach and Engagement Program?** Please read below for some background on the survey and the small business program.

The Town of Morrisville is developing a small business outreach and engagement program. The goals of the program are to:

1. Develop a method of two-way communication between the Town and Morrisville small businesses.
2. Understand the needs and barriers to small business success in Morrisville.
3. Provide programs and services that support small businesses in Morrisville.

This survey was developed as the first piece of the engagement process. It will be open from November 1-December 30, 2022, and the data collected will be analyzed by Town staff to build small business program tools that support your needs. All answers are voluntary and will remain confidential.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information from me. I am also more than happy to schedule time to speak with you on the phone, or at your place of business to discuss the program in more detail.

Best,

Sara

**Sara Ellis**  
Small Business Program Specialist  
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