

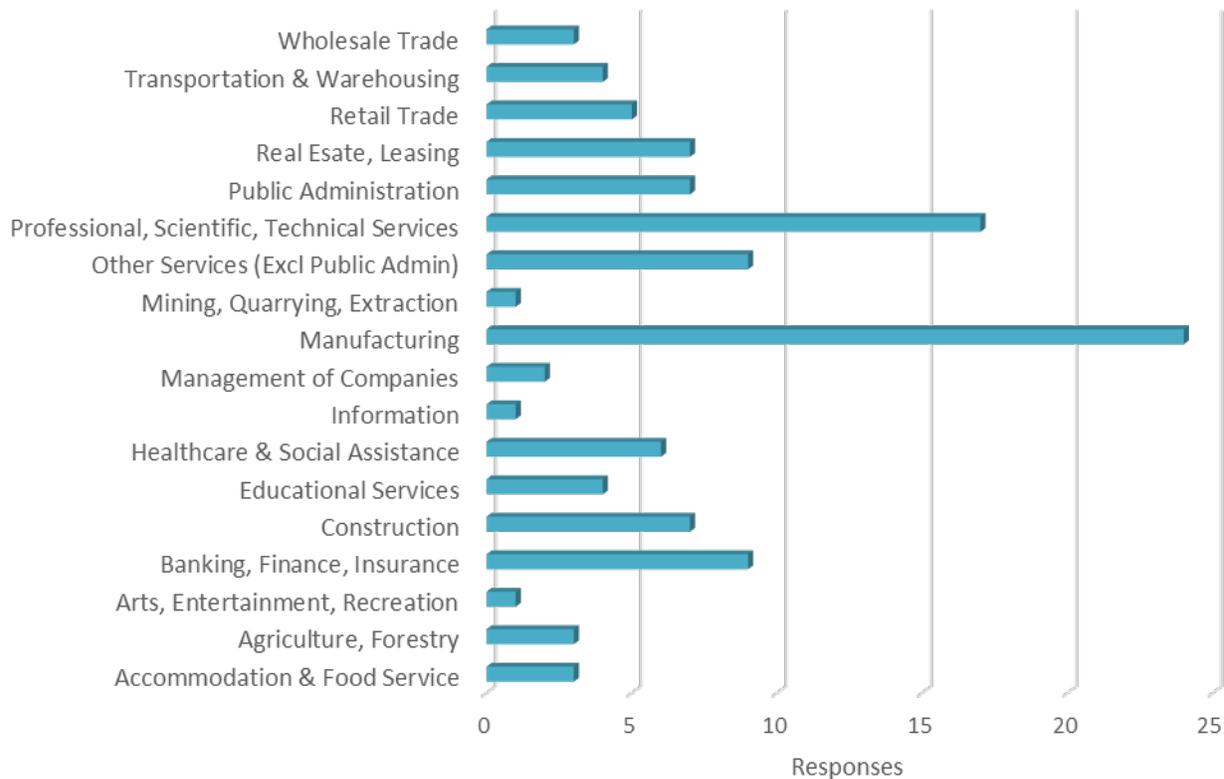


## NLEP Releases Results of COVID-19 Business Impact Survey

On April 16, the North Louisiana Economic partnership sent a COVID-19 Business Impact survey to companies throughout its 14-parish footprint in North Louisiana to gauge the impact of the pandemic on their business operations and staffing, as well as to learn where they might need assistance resuming operations as state mandates allow. The survey was closed April 24.

NLEP received 113 unique responses to the survey. The analysis below is based on these responses.

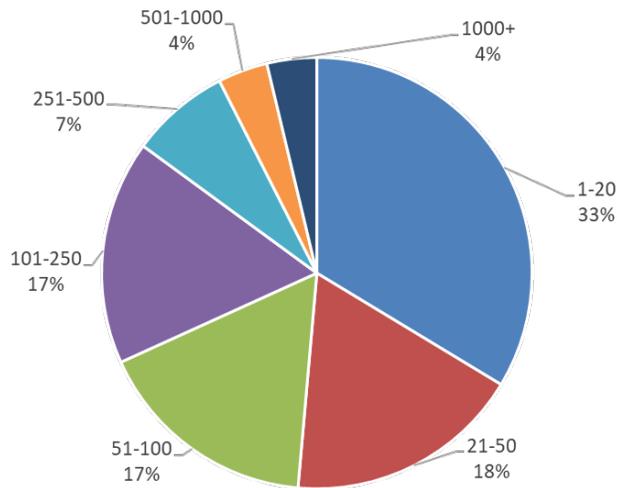
### Industry Breakdown



Manufacturers represented 21% of the respondents, with Professional, Scientific and Technical Service companies representing the next highest group at 15%. The latter category includes companies that provide services such as engineering, information technology, accounting and legal.

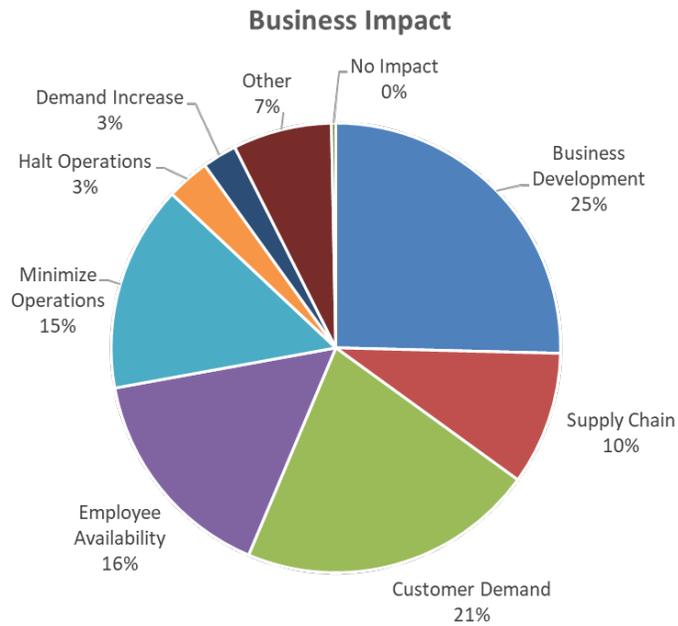
The companies responding to the survey represent a minimum of 16,400 jobs in North Louisiana pre-COVID pandemic (not all respondents provided pre-COVID employee count). Approximately 68% employ 100 or less. The respondent size breakdown was as follows:

### Company Size (Employee Count)



### Business Impacts

Survey respondents were asked how their business has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and were given a list of choices as well as an "Other" field to provide additional impacts. Respondents could choose more than one answers. The breakdown of business impacts is below.



Business Development refers to a company's ability to host/attend meetings, allow employee travel, etc. As expected, given the Governor's stay-at-home order, this has had the largest impact with 25% companies reporting, with customer demand being the next highest at 21%. Eighteen percent (18%) have

been required to minimize or halt operations due to Louisiana mandates. Operations have been reduced to some degree at 48% of the companies.

### **Employment Impacts**

In response to the question asking if they have laid off employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 30 answered yes (26% of those answering the question), representing 3,563 jobs impacted (22% of total jobs represented by the survey). Approximately 53% of the companies that laid off or furloughed workers expect the impacted jobs will all be reinstated, which represents 869 jobs. 47% of the companies that laid off/furloughed employees selected “Jobs May Return/Too Soon to Tell,” representing 2,689 impacted jobs. Only one company responded that they had permanent layoffs due to COVID-19, representing 5 jobs. Five respondents noted that they have added employees during COVID-19, though no quantifying numbers were provided.

As there were few responses from North Louisiana companies in the Accommodation & Food Service and Retail Trade industries, we are not trying to paint a rosier picture than the reality our regional economy faces. Based on statewide initial unemployment claims as reported by the Louisiana Workforce Commission through April 18, approximately 35% of total claims came from these two industries (data not yet available on a parish by parish basis), and it is our expectation that these may take the longest to recover. In North Louisiana, these industries represented approximately 22% of jobs in 2019, so we expect the COVID-19 impacts on jobs in these industries to be high and longer-lasting.

### **Childcare Impacts**

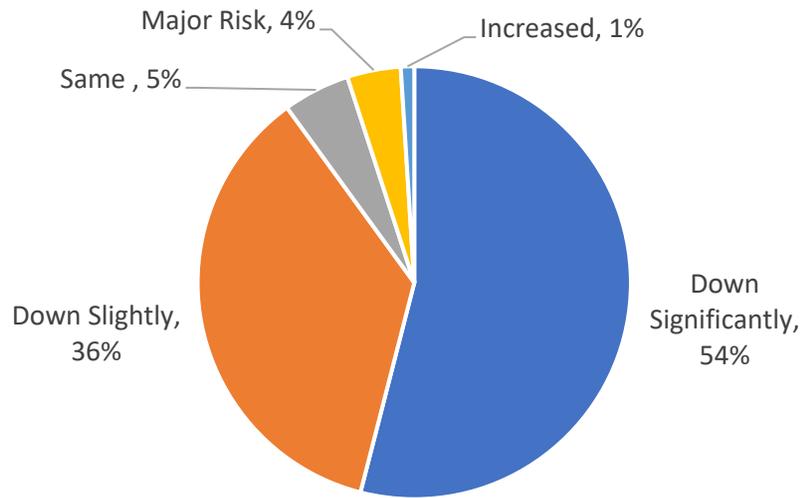
Access to affordable childcare was a common reason that many Louisiana residents were unemployed or inconsistently employed pre-COVID-19, but this factor has increased in significance post-COVID-19 as approximately one-third of certified Louisiana childcare providers have noted that they may not be able to operate going forward because of financial impacts caused by the pandemic.

NLEP survey respondents were asked if a lack of childcare is a barrier to their employees’ ability to work, and 49 companies (43%) said childcare is an issue. This is something our state will need to give much attention to as the economy begins to reopen.

### **Revenue Impacts**

Respondents were asked to address the expected impact of the pandemic on their revenue for the first half of 2020. Fifty eight percent (58%) responded that it would be down significantly or was a major risk for them.

## H1 2020 Revenue Impacts



About half the companies that responded said they had postponed or canceled a project or expansion.

### Skill Needs in Current or Future Hiring

This was an open-ended question that asked respondents the following: “What occupational skills will you be looking for as you recover from COVID-19? (please list skills, certifications or common job titles).”

The majority of responses mirrored needs we observed before the pandemic. 36% of the total respondents listed skills, and of those 59% are in need of skills that fall into the Industrial/Skilled Trade Occupations that are commonly employed by Manufacturing, Construction, Utilities and Oil & Gas companies, including CNC machine programmers/operator, welder, fabricator, millwright, maintenance technician, carpenter, production operator and general construction laborer. Commercial Drivers License (CDLs) was also noted by several companies. A few companies listed accounting/notary/Quickbooks proficiency, software development, customer service and improved computer usage skills including remote working adaptability.

### Remote Work

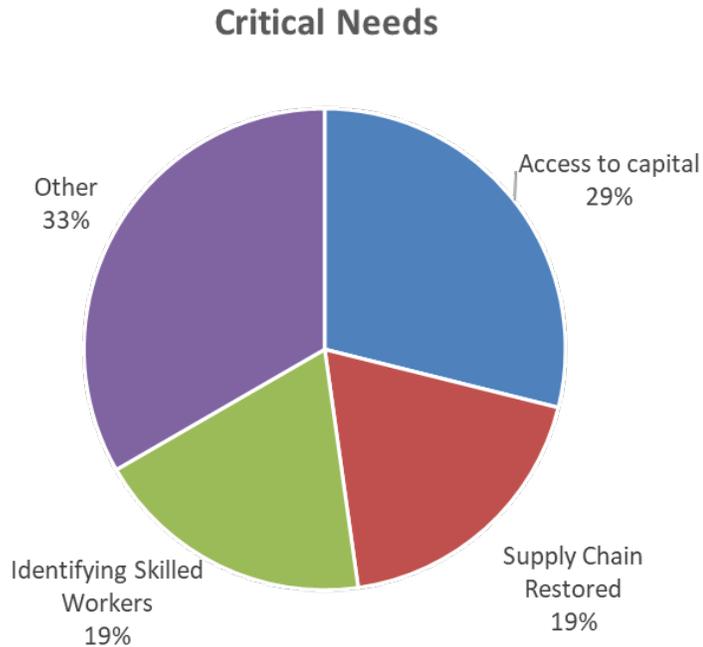
The majority of respondents (82%) said they were using remote work tools to conduct business, and though a majority noted that these tools have worked well for them, almost one quarter (24%) were having difficulty due to inadequate internet access, a problem we have heard repeatedly during the pandemic as it impacts provision of education, telehealth and other critical aspects of life for rural and low-income residents.

### Supply Chain

Approximately 27% of survey respondents said they were having supply chain disruptions that would prevent or slow their return to full operations; 35% of those responses noted that poor access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE such as masks, gloves), cleaning products and health testing equipment was impacting their ability to operate now or in the future.

### Critical Needs

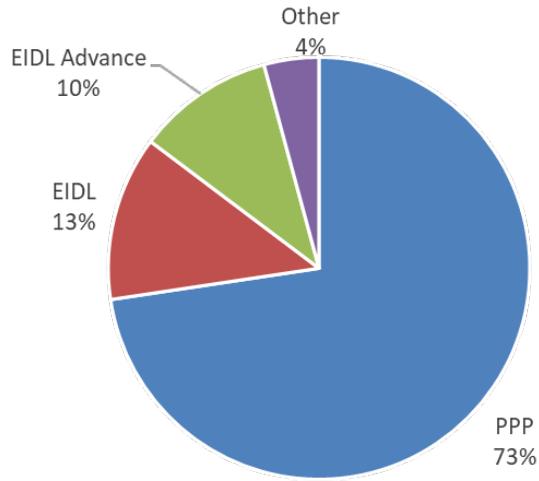
Respondents were asked what the most critical needs are that they need help addressing and they were allowed to select more than one from the list provided. Responses from 90 of the companies are below.



### Disaster Relief

Respondents were asked if they applied for any of the disaster relief programs offered by various agencies as a result of the pandemic. Options included the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), EIDL Advance, the Louisiana Loan Guarantee Program, and Other. 88 companies responded and could select more than one answer, the majority selected the Paycheck Protection Program as shown below.

### Disaster Assistance Participation



The NLEP will be sharing this data with our partners at the local, regional, state and federal level as we collectively work to prepare for the state economy reopening. NLEP staff members are serving on the Economic/Community Development and Education/Workforce Development Task Forces of the Governor’s Resilient Louisiana Commission, and the Louisiana Legislative Advisory Task Force on Economic Recovery, and we will use this information to ensure the needs of North Louisiana companies are adequately addressed by the recommendations these bodies make to state and federal leadership.