

COVID-19 Winston-Salem Small Business Impact

129 Responses

How many employees does your business have?

36.4% - 2-5 Employees

36.4% - 0-1 Employees

12.4% - 11-20 Employees

10.1% - 6-10 Employees

4.7% - 20+ Employees

Financial Assistance and Impact

93.8% Have experienced a financial loss

56.6% did NOT apply for the EIDL Loan

41.9% DID apply

49.6 did NOT apply for the Paycheck Protection Program

49.6 DID apply

49.6% will use personal savings to assist during the shutdown

20-21% will be using PPP, EIDL, nothing and landlord rent relief

48.1% have had to lay off or furlough employees

51.9% have NOT

Open Answer – how do you plan to finance your reopening?

Savings

Loan

Upcoming sales

Customers

No plan

EIDL

PPP

Loans

Credit

Luck

Life saving is almost gone

Scrappy work

A miracle

Hopes and dreams

Bootstrapping

Prayer

Moving Forward

- 70% of respondents have been required to shift their business model
- 64% of respondents need to social distance to operate safely
- 70.5% of respondents believe that PPE is required to operate safely in reopening
- 40.3% of respondents are concerned about cost of PPE
- 56.6% of respondents are concerned about PPE scarcity
- 73.6% of respondents are concerned about their/employees safety in reopening
- 75.2% of respondents are concerned about customer safety in reopening

Reopening

- 34.9% of respondents are not financially stable for more than one reopening
- 34.1% of respondents don't know if they are financially stable enough
- 20.2% of respondents are financially stable enough for more than one opening
- 10.9% of respondents chose not applicable

Questions for Winston-Salem Officials and Stakeholders

Duplicate responses have been removed, responses that can be answered or attended to by city government highlighted.

- Where is support for downtown?
- Do you expect money available for gig workers or contractors?
- Plans for a second shutdown, if necessary
- Seeing lots of reports on Coronavirus health updates daily, would like to see more small business statistics shared weekly; closures, negative impacts, reopenings, resources granted, etc.
- What reopening looks like for music events
- Landlord assistance would help pressure on us with our rents.
- What sort of aid will there be if we have to shut down again? Why are they trying to reopen so soon when we haven't met all of the thresholds we were supposed to? How can we trust them to do right by us when the majority of small business owners haven't received anything?
- How are we supposed to furnish PPE to ourselves and clients when there's a scarcity? How will this affect my insurance and liability?
- We have no clear directives

-How is the city planning to help?

-COVID-19 testing, why so few are being tested.

-Why isn't there a more cohesive and highly visible/promoted city led public health effort to distribute and get as many folks as possible actually wearing masks? Mask the City seems to have faded away.

-How can small business as a collective lobby for reasonable and worthwhile requirements for loans and pay backs? To hire employees when the doors are shuttered is ridiculous and not a worthwhile use of money. Question 2. How can we as a collective lobby to reset the exorbitant rent we pay as commercial businesses when we CANNOT AFFORD IT?

-Clear, consistent re-opening guidelines

-I took over ownership of the business from a previous owner in May of 2019. Business declined significantly during the shutdown of Business 40. Once the project was completed, a gradual uptick in business was seen. Then COVID-19 hit and, while I am considered essential, business decreased dramatically once again. What can be done to help those of us in the downtown area that have experienced back to back blows to our small businesses, first to the roadway construction/shutdown and now COVID-19?

-As a business that works with the public, what systems will I need to have in place to ensure my safety and the safety of my clients?

-Who selected what business got a personal handout of money that was donated to the city. I know of 2 business owners given 10k each by a commissioner.

-Will restaurants and bars have a legible set of guidelines for reducing occupancy?

-What policies are in place for supplying customers / clients with PPE if they enter without PPE, or refuse to wear it?

-Is there a way to distribute PPE and cleaning products to all businesses if the choice is made to reopen, and can we set a city ordinance that enforces mask use?

-Why is no media source working to track closings, damages, and losses of businesses to show a gauge of how our overall region is faring in this?

-What happens when there is a second wave? What sort of relief will be available in the future? If we start to plan now, maybe we can be more prepared for another wave.

-What is the city doing for independent restaurants to keep the local hospitality afloat? With business 40 shutdown, it caused a lot of restaurants, bars and other local businesses to close or take a hit in sales. City did nothing for this and I feel there will be nothing done to overcome Covid 19.

-What is the city doing to support small business

-I have a lot of infection control questions!

-Will our city leaders help us finance reopening.

-What is the plan to make mass testing available?

-Patio restrictions

-How can small businesses that need PPE to open safely get access to that? When is diagnostic testing going to be available to anyone who seeks it? When is antibody testing going to be available?

-We are essential and open, but we have had a lot of support from our buying group, Nationwide Marketing Group (the largest group of independent retailers in the country). They have been very helpful in providing good info, strangles, guidance etc (even in securing a supplier to provide PPE. They are partially based right here in WSNC. They could be a great resource.

-Why has the mayor not signed a declaration of emergency order and responded directly to the business owners impacted by business 40? Why have they not responded to our request! We just need this paperwork to negotiate debt. It seems like a simple request.

-I'm a massage therapist and I don't know how I'm going to be able to operate safely until there's a vaccine.

-How do i apply for unemployment as a business owner?

-How a restaurant will be able to make money with a dining room.

-When will we all be able to be tested?

-To what extent will business owners be held accountable if a customer feels they obtained the virus from our location? We plan to do everything possible to create a safe environment. Still, it seems that the owner is dealing with a high liability situation while customers are considered victims.

-What happens if I get sick as a direct result of working with potential clients if we reopen too soon? Or vice versa?

-Will private schools and/or daycares who shut down but did not reimburse tuition be held financially responsible. Will there be lawsuits?

-How are Massage Therapists supposed to safely reopen without being concerned about getting myself or my clients sick or contributing to the spread?

-Why is it that insurance companies do not honor loss of income or business interruption due to the virus? Could it be mandated that businesses forced to close could file claims?

-If/ when salons reopen, What will be the new safety protocols. I would love to order what I need in advance.

-When can LIVE theatres reopen?

-I'm in the event business. How long should we expect group restrictions and what will those numbers look like. (I.E. Wedding Guest Attendance Numbers)

-Will Richard Burr go to prison ASAP?

-How long will unemployment last and when does the \$600 federal supplement come?

What do you need from the city of Winston-Salem to have a successful reopening?

-Community Support

-Strategy and vision for a downtown that might look different - as it should!

-Clear communication

-For our economy to rebound, the city needs to require more mask use of customers and do more to get the general public to practice hand washing and social distancing.

-More direction on local resources, without feeling like we're all digging around for it. It should be simple to find and apply for these resources if any. Also, when reopening phases begin it would be great to have WS do what some other cities are doing for restaurants by having outdoor seating areas in compliance with distancing etc in common food areas to expand outdoor dining options and increase business. Example: downtown in Bailey Park or on 4th street there could be free parking and temporary seating options to allow more restaurants to

provide seating for outdoor customers.

-A new mayor

-Loan

-Guidance, information

-Ad space or something like that for Winston-Salem journal, or 88.5 spot for these businesses

-Protective Masks

-My biggest concern, next to client and employee safety, is a second shut down in the case of an early reopening. Just speaking for myself, I feel it is the most helpful to continue an order for as long as the medical community advises to protect to people that make my business successful. It is very scary to think of needing to continue to stock perishable product, and then have that product be a loss if we have to take steps backward.

-Clarity on phases of reopening

-Financial Grants

-Let the people know that we need your support to survive.

-Could just use some guidance and resources

-More aid to help with non-essential businesses make it through an inevitable second (and maybe third...) lockdown. More PPE since we will all need to wear masks while working with the public. A better plan when this virus rebounds in the fall AND a plan in place for a spike in cases once we reopen prematurely. More testing & maybe even \$\$ or some sort of incentives to help us purchase PPE, thermometers, etc

-Communication and clear direction. I own and operate two 1M+ businesses downtown and own residential and commercial real estate in the city. No one from the city, county or downtown has contacted me in any way.

-Direction, guidance, help with masks - what happened to mask the city?

-SLOW reopening, I do not want a repeat of these last few months... greatest fear is opening to quickly and have a huge spike in cases.

-Street Parking costs need to be waived. Services and shopping are going to be more of a hassle and take longer. We need to treat downtown visitors better and

be more accommodating in this regard.

-Advice. Marketing. Grants. Represent us to out of state leasors

-A phone call to every small business operating in WS to see how we've all been affected

-Some sort of financial help would be ideal. A dramatic increase in marketing and promoting downtown area businesses.

-More support for small business and every day working people especially since the 40 shutdown led right into a global pandemic, while city leaders hand out millions of dollars like candy to people who are NOT in need.

-Looser patio boundaries to allow for more distancing. Basically a minimal stance on enforcement if folks are a little outside of a patio with a wine or cocktail.

-Clear directions about what's safe and not safe supported by science.

-Funding for alternative arts outlets. My business is largely based in the entertainment industry so we'll be waiting for that to bounce back while we explore other potential avenues for our services.

-I think the city should have a focus on small local businesses instead of larger companies.

-Advertising, media, safety precaution clarity, features on podcasts and events

-Citywide requirement to wear masks

-I think free parking throughout downtown would help a lot. This has been an issue discussed for a long time. My business will no longer be able to allow customers to wait inside for their services and sometimes they may be parked far away.

-Investment in local restaurants and hospitality industry

-City could really help by providing consulting, Zoom workshops on infection control. I inquired at the Health Dept and they currently have no program to help.

-Restaurants must have help with food inventory. I donated \$3,000 worth of food when we closed. We need grants to support us. And for city leaders to encourage landlords to offer half price rent upon reopening!!

-I expect nothing from the city

-Honestly, fiscal help would be best, but if they can help with infrastructure or storage that would be great.

-Make sure that breweries and restaurants are able to safely reopen and have access to the equipment they need to operate safely.

-A break on fees would be nice...

-Educate the locals. Keep them aware.

- Remove tyranny

-To just let me operate my business. I have never gotten any assistance from the city!

-Solid plan to promote small business over big business

-I don't expect anything from the city... I am expecting more self-congratulatory back patting while exhibiting total deafness to the needs of small business. Status quo.

-Again, not sure. What I really need is \$\$ to keep things afloat, and provide salary for myself. My business is 1yr old. And was just starting to support a salary for me. But the last year already dwindled my savings.. So there's not much left.

-Marketing support, bridge loans, free public transit,

-There needs to be clear guidelines, as of right now many massage therapists have applied for and gotten "essential" status despite no way to safely operate. It's unfair to grant some and not others. I do NOT think massage should be allowed at this time.

-Advertising, media, safety precaution clarity, features on podcasts and events