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INVESTING IN WEST KENDALL'S RECOVERY & FUTURE:

BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS



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With Support from



West Kendall
Baptist Hospital

BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA

An academic affiliate of the

FIU | Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine

Table of Contents

- Introduction 1
- Methodology 2
- COVID-19 Impact on Small Businesses..... 3
- Survey Results 6
 - Respondent Characteristics..... 6
 - COVID-19 Impact 8
 - Workforce Skills..... 10
- Survey Highlights and Recommendations..... 15

- Appendix A: How can the local business community support you?..... 17
- Appendix B: How can the local higher education ecosystem (Miami Dade College and Florida International University) support you in meeting your business goals? 19
- Appendix C: How can West Kendall Baptist Hospital better meet your health care needs? 21
- Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire 23

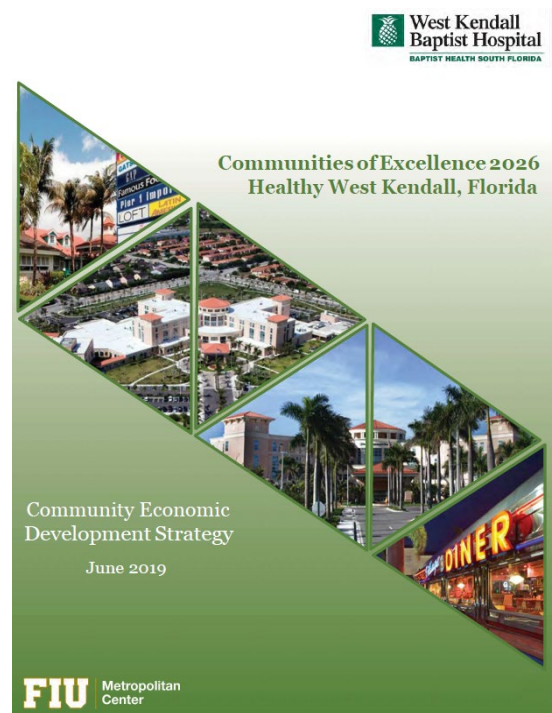


Introduction

In June 2019, the FIU Metropolitan Center completed the [Healthy West Kendall Community Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) that provides the framework for advancing the “Economic Vitality” goals of the Healthy West Kendall Communities of Excellence 2026 Initiative. The CEDS planning and community engagement process resulted in the formation of the priority strategies that will serve as the economic vitality launchpad. Given the structure of the local economy, many of the strategies focused on supporting small businesses, and others related to workforce and housing development.

The pandemic temporarily halted the initial drive to advance many of these strategies, but also highlighted their importance as a tool to prevent future shocks to the community as a result of economic downturns. Addressing housing affordability and workforce skills and focus on competitive advantages, such as presence of large employers in area and the vicinity, are certainly no less important today than they were in the pre-pandemic years. However, the pandemic further illuminated the barriers and needs for the area’s business development.

The West Kendall business survey results, presented in this report illustrate some of the employer challenges in the pandemic environment, but also highlight some of the indicators for long-term success. The survey was one of the recommendations in the CEDS report which recommended “a survey of employers across West Kendall to assess their hiring plans, occupational, and skill requirements.” The survey questions provide insight into both the current pandemic challenges, as well as the broader business and workforce skills needs in the area.



Methodology

FIU's Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center and West Kendall Baptist Hospital teamed up to conduct a survey to ensure we understand how the West Kendall business community is managing through the COVID-19 crisis. The survey provides information on the current conditions of businesses in the area, the types of support that could be beneficial, and talent and workforce needs. (See [Appendix D](#)) The survey results will be used to inform community partners of business challenges and needs and will help guide the development of initiatives that can sustain and grow the business community. Survey questions required a response from a senior leader at the business establishments.

In the beginning of 2020, the seven zip codes in the area had 5,582 businesses with employees.¹ The survey was distributed by email to 1,984 businesses for whom emails were available, from a list of 8,124 businesses in the target zip codes. The list was obtained from InfoUSA, a publicly traded company for business and consumer data. This list includes also nonemployer establishments which are not included in the database of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). Florida DEO includes only establishments that are paying unemployment insurance.

To encourage participation from a broad number of businesses, the survey questionnaire was also available in Spanish. In December 2020, the research team commenced phone data collection, and, in January 2021, survey responses were obtained through in person visits to a random list of establishments who had not responded via email or phone. The in-person data collection aimed to reduce the respondent skew towards businesses that were more likely to respond – larger establishments from sectors with greater digital presence.

Following is a summary of the responses obtained from **355 businesses**.

¹ Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Quarter 1, 2020.

COVID-19 Impact on Small Businesses

The pandemic has made a significant impact on the small business economy in Miami-Dade County and the United States overall. Following the initial shock of business closures, layoffs and furloughs, the local and national economies seemed to stabilize. From April to August 2020, the unemployment rate steadily decreased. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in April at the height of the COVID-19 crisis, the unemployment rate in the U.S. had risen to an astounding 14.7 percent but has since decreased significantly to 8.4 percent in August. Although the unemployment rate is steadily improving since the onset of the pandemic, when compared to the unemployment rate from August of 2019 (3.7 percent), it is apparent that the American economy has a long road to recovery, especially for small business owners.

According to a Special Report on Coronavirus and Small Business by MetLife and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in April 2020, 24 percent of small businesses in the United States had already shut down temporarily due to COVID-19, and 40 percent of small businesses that were open at the time reported having to shut down temporarily within the next two weeks. Almost 43 percent of small business owners estimated that they had less than six months until they would have to shut down permanently. Federal aid to business owners through the CARES Act² passed by Congress on March 27 2020, helped to diminish the devastating economic impact of COVID-19 on the national economy from the onset of the pandemic through the summer months. The CARES Act was a \$2 trillion economic relief package meant to provide fast and direct financial assistance for individuals and families, and small businesses in the U.S. The CARES Act established the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), intended to provide small businesses with up to 8 weeks of payroll costs, including benefits. This program also applied to self-employed or independent contractors, and funds could also pay interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities. The CARES Act also established the Economic Injury Disaster Loans program for small business owners in the U.S. to apply for a loan of up to \$10,000 to help supplement revenue during the economic crisis. This program was indented specifically for small businesses with fewer than 500 employees, private nonprofit organizations, or veterans' organizations, affected by COVID-19.

While federal aid for small businesses through the PPP helped many business owners to remain operational and continue to pay their employees over the trying summer season, as the pandemic continues, need for additional financial assistance is apparent. According to a July survey, conducted by Goldman Sachs with over 1,500 small business owners,³ 84 percent of PPP loan recipients were estimated to exhaust their federal funding by the first week of August, and only 16 percent were very confident they could maintain their payroll without further federal relief funds. Only 37 percent of small business owners surveyed said that their business could survive another wave of COVID-19 if shutdown protocols were put in place again. Only 7 percent of black business owners were very confident they would be able to maintain payroll without more government relief packages, and only 28 percent believed they could survive another wave of the pandemic if shutdown orders were enacted again.

Another informative survey, regarding the impact of COVID-19 on residents throughout the United States, is the Household Pulse Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Over the 12 weeks

² U.S. Department of the Treasury, The CARES Act Provides Assistance to Small Businesses, <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/assistance-for-small-businesses>

³ Goldman Sachs, Survey: If Congress CARES, Round Two Must Go Through, <https://www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000-small-businesses/US/infographic-round-two/>

since this data has been deployed to the public, in Florida, an average of 49.0 percent of residents or households each week experienced loss of employment income since March 13th, and an average of 37.9 percent of householders expected a loss of employment income in the next four weeks.⁴

According to the Florida DEO, the unemployment rate in the Florida reached a peak of 13.8 percent in April 2020 and has since been steadily decreasing each month to 6.3 percent in November 2020. In February 2020, the last pre-pandemic month, the unemployment rate was 2.8 percent.⁵ Miami-Dade's unemployment in February was 1.5 percent (not seasonally adjusted), but the unemployment rate peaked to 14.5 percent in July, declining to 7.4 percent in November 2020.

While the precise long-term impact of COVID-19 on the small business economy is still unknown, it is predicted to be catastrophic for South Florida's tourism and hospitality-based economy. Half of Miami-Dade's economic output comes from small businesses, which are more vulnerable to economic shocks and will likely make the long-term recovery much harder. In a 2019 report, the JPMorgan Chase Institute researchers presented evidence of the vulnerabilities of small businesses in the Miami Metro Area. Authors, Farrell and Wheat, found that 75 percent of the Miami metro firms in their sample were profitable, the majority had limited cash liquidity. Approximately 30 percent of Miami businesses had seven or fewer cash liquidity days, and less than half had at least 14 cash buffer days. The median small business in Miami had 11 cash buffer days than the median of 15 cash buffer days in the author's sample of 25 U.S. Metro areas.⁶

The study also found that 60 percent of small businesses in predominantly White communities had between 14 and 21 cash buffer days, compared to only 15 percent in Hispanic communities, 6 percent in Black communities, and 17 percent in foreign-born communities. About 85 percent of small businesses in Hispanic-majority communities, and 94 percent in Black-majority communities have only 7 to 14 cash buffer days.

The Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS) of the U.S. Census Bureau measures the effect of changing business conditions during the Coronavirus pandemic on our nation's small businesses. Data is available by sector and state for the fifty most populous Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The table shows how the economy came to a grinding halt at the onset of the pandemic and changes over time, as economic conditions improved. In the last week of April 2020, almost 78 percent of businesses in the Miami Metro Area reported a decrease in operating revenues/sales/ receipts over the previous week, not including any financial assistance or loans. Over time, this indicator of business activity improved, and, by February 2021, less than a third of businesses experienced a decrease in revenues. There were substantial improvements across other important indicators, such as decrease in employees and decrease in total number of hours worked by paid employees. The February data also showed 22.3 percent of businesses have no physical presence of employees, and 15.7 percent indicated their operating capacity had been affected by availability of employees to work.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey Data Tables, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>

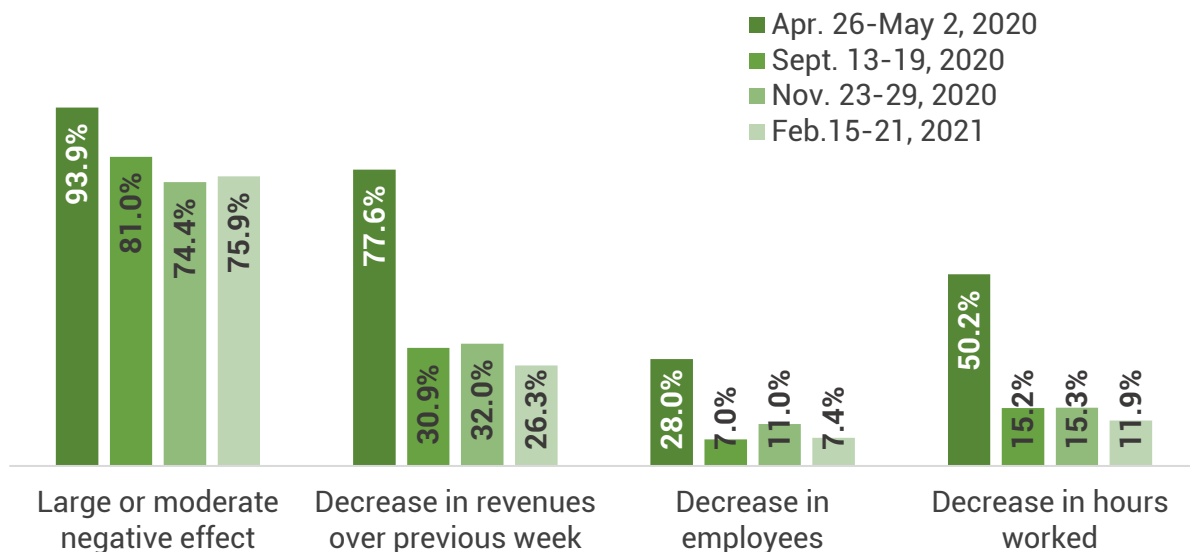
⁵ Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

⁶ Diana Farrell and Christopher Wheat (2019). JPMorgan Chase Institute. Small Business Financial Outcomes in Miami Communities.

	Apr. 26-May 2, 2020	Sept. 13-19, 2020	Nov. 23-29, 2020	Feb.15-21, 2021
Large or moderate negative effect	93.9%	81.0%	74.4%	75.9%
Decrease in revenues over previous week	77.6%	30.9%	32.0%	26.3%
Decrease in employees	28.0%	7.0%	11.0%	7.4%
Decrease in hours worked	50.2%	15.2%	15.3%	11.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Business Pulse Survey.

Pandemic Impact on Small Businesses Small Business Pulse Results for Miami Metro Area



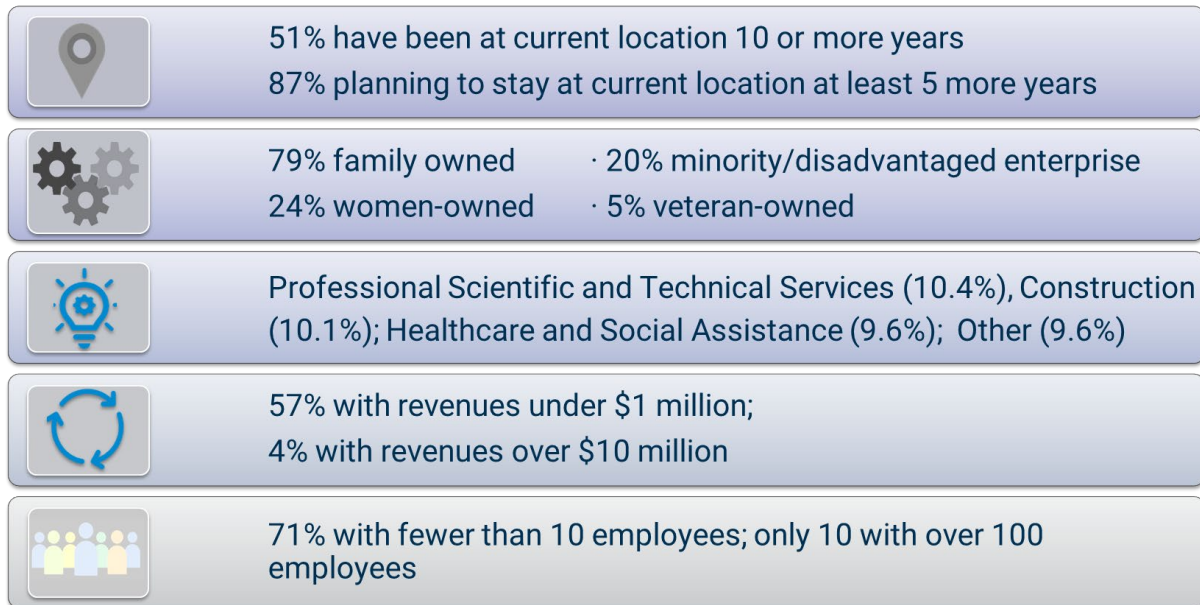
All data points to the significant shock the pandemic produced on business activity. The pandemic exposed some of the vulnerabilities of the local economy. The West Kendall business survey provides more specific data – not only on the challenges businesses in the area have been experiencing, but also insight into some of the possible services that can be directed towards supporting their survival and growth. The [Results](#) section will show the results from the survey that mirrors some of the broader indicators in the Miami Metro Area.

Survey Results

Respondent Characteristics

An estimated 57.7 percent of businesses indicated they had fewer than 10 full-time employees, and 75.8 percent indicated their business had fewer than 100 employees. Only 2.8 percent of respondents were establishments with over 100 full-time workers. The average size of respondent businesses is 25 full-time employees. Overall, the surveyed businesses employed 7,069 workers before the pandemic shutdown of business activity. There were also 1,646 part-time workers in the surveyed businesses.

Business Characteristics

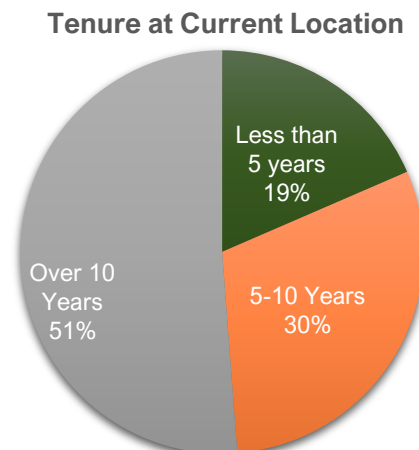


Location

Respondents noted long-term tenure at their current location and plans to remain there in the future. Over half of the respondents (51 percent) have been at their current location for more than 10 years. Over 30 percent have been at their current location for 5 to 10 years, and 19 percent residing at their current location for less than 5 years.

An overwhelming majority (87 percent) plan to remain at their current location for the next five years, with only 13 percent stating they do not plan do so.

Of these locations, 71.5 percent are single locations. Only 18 percent are headquarters, and 10 percent are branch locations. Very few are subsidiary headquarters at just .3 percent.



Industry

The survey respondents represent all industry categories with the highest percentages in utilities (30 percent): Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (10.4 percent), Construction (10.1 percent), Health Care and Social Assistance (9.6 percent), and Other (9.6 percent). The category “Other” includes businesses that provide various consumer services including laundromats, hairstylists, tattoo parlors, auto repair and others. The Education and Accomodation & Food Service industries, two notable areas heavily impacted by COVID-19, are also represented.

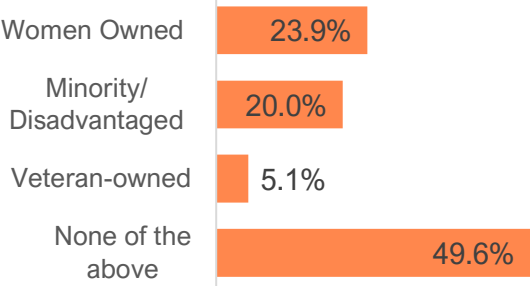
Primary Industry



Ownership

Ownership demographics highlight a majority of respondents (78.9 percent) identifying as a ‘Family-Owned’ business. In addition, almost half of respondents (43.9 percent) are women or minority/disadvantaged owned enterprises. Approximately 5.1 percent are veteran-owned enterprises.

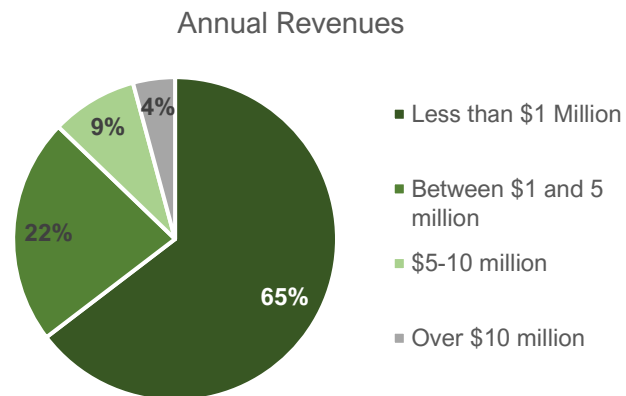
Owner Identification



Conducting Work and Transactions

As an international hub of business and residence, West Kendall businesses conduct business in several languages. English (94 percent) and Spanish (70 percent) are claimed as the most used languages, in addition to Haitian Creole (2.8 percent), Portuguese (4.8 percent), and Chinese Mandarin (.3 percent). Businesses also utilize social networking as a form of communication. This is one of several uses of online transactions (customer outreach 32 percent) along with purchases (36 percent), sales (38 percent), and other (12 percent). Respondents also shared what accounts are used for financial transactions: store website (23.9 percent), PayPal (15.2 percent), Amazon (8.7 percent), other (19 percent), and some using no accounts (33 percent). The usage of online accounts and transactions may also contribute to the ability to work remotely. Respondents noted their ability to work remotely with 42 percent stating they could not, 30.7 percent only partially, and 27.3 percent stating 'mostly yes'.

The majority of businesses (57 percent) reported less than \$1 million in annual revenues. Additionally, 20 percent reported between \$1 and 5 million, 7.6 percent between \$5 and 10 million, and 15.4 percent over \$10 million.



COVID-19 Impact

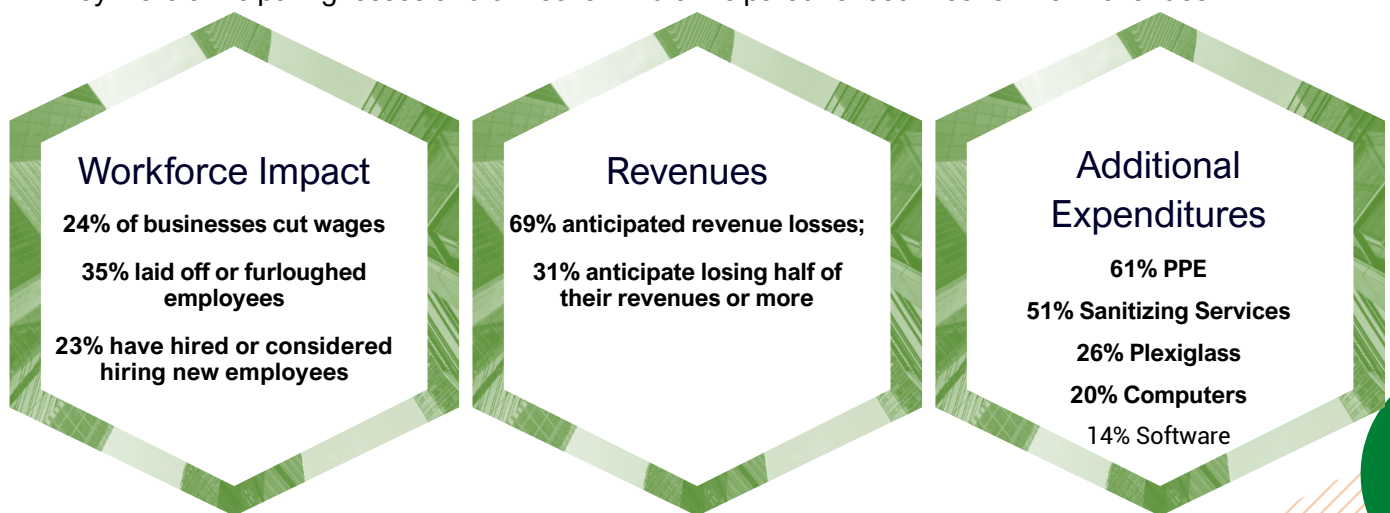
The pandemic had immediate effects on businesses, with over a third of ceasing operations temporarily, which led to challenges in paying rent (27.4 percent), reductions in hiring and salary cuts (24.5 percent).

Only 11.5 percent of respondents indicated the pandemic had no impact on their operations and services. This small percentage is also correlated with the businesses who were able to shift to remote work (16.4 percent), and with companies that were able to continue to provide services virtually (18.7 percent).

How has the COVID-19 crisis affected the operations and services of your business?

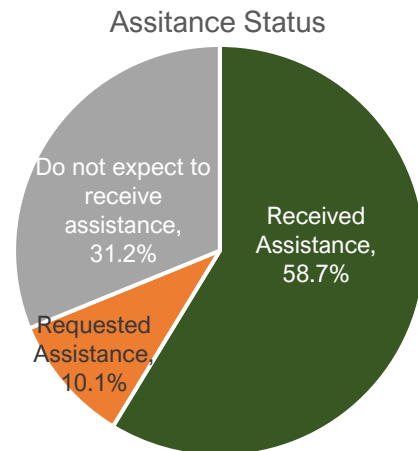


Over a third of respondents indicated their companies laid off or furloughed full-time workers, with a total workforce loss of 362 employees. This represents about 5 percent of the 7,069 full-time workers, reported by the responding companies. It should be noted that this estimate is likely not representative of the total labor force losses in the area. There might be companies that had not resumed operations at the time of the survey data collection and other that had ceased operations. Interestingly, **23 percent of respondents indicated they had hired or considered hiring new employees as a response to COVID-19.** This finding is an indication of the uneven impact of the economic downturn on businesses from different sectors. Over a third of the companies indicated they were anticipating losses and almost a third anticipated to lose most of their revenues.



Most businesses (58.7 percent) in the area had received assistance from various sources. Of the businesses who received assistance, the majority had received financial relief from the PPP (82.7 percent). Other sources include:

- State emergency loans (33.3%)
- Other government assistance, including the Small Business Administration (SBA) (27.2%)
- Foundation and grant support (11.7%)



Workforce Skills

The survey asked open-ended questions of the employers about the top three skills they believe will become increasingly important for prospective workers to access jobs in their organization. For these questions the business executives had to write their own answer. Customer service and interpersonal communication, computer literacy, sales and online sales specifically were the most frequently mentioned.

A series of questions inquired about the employers' level of satisfaction with various skills that fall into three groups. **Baseline skills** or "soft skills" are the foundation of every position in the job market. These non-specialized skills are linked to a broad range of job types. These skills include communication, problem-solving, detail-orientation, and creativity. However, it also includes things, like basic computer literacy, communication skills, teamwork, and organizational skills, have remained the top priority for employers over the last five years. Other consistent baseline skills over the same period have been problem-solving, detail-oriented, Microsoft Excel, planning, writing, and computer literacy, or able to work with Microsoft Office.

Almost half of respondents (48.9%) foresee an increased need for digital literacy skills for their frontline or entry-level staff.

Specialized skills or "hard skills" are technical knowledge or training, gained through a career or an education. The third category includes **Software Skills** which require specialized knowledge of software programs, such as Adobe Photoshop, SQL, and AutoCAD. These skills are a subset of computer skills that help job seekers efficiently use computer programs and applications. Job postings data show that the most required software skills in the labor market programs are within the Microsoft Office platform (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint).

Only about half of the executives expressed satisfaction across most categories. The results point to opportunities to support businesses in the area through workforce development. This topic of business support services will be explored further in a following section. Employer satisfaction with the skills of the South Florida workforce is as follows:

Baseline Skills:

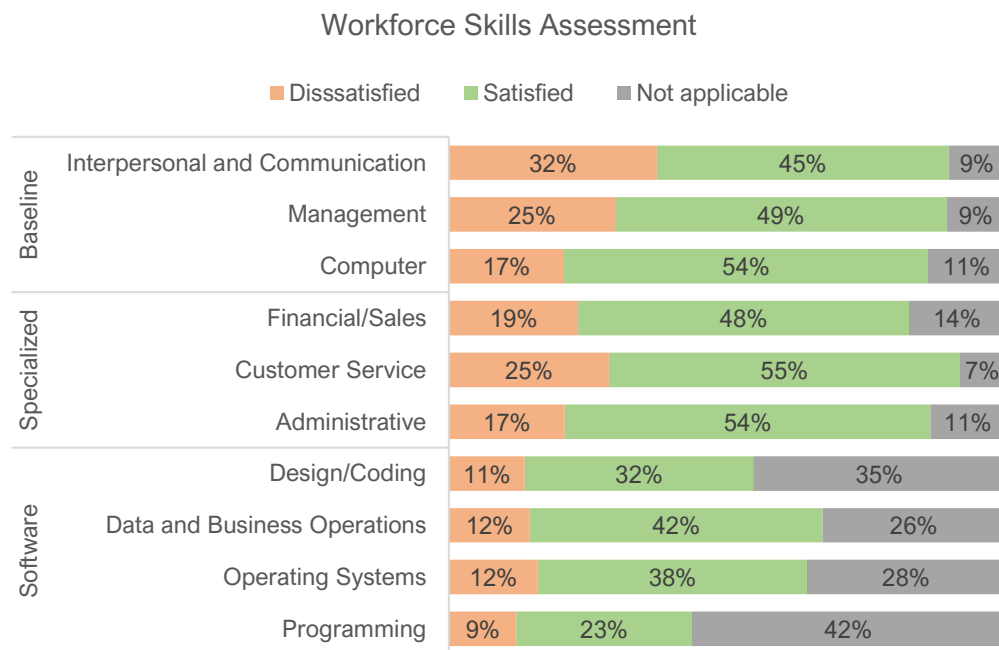
- 44.8% are satisfied with interpersonal and communication skills of the South Florida workforce. This category includes verbal and written communication, and collaboration
- 49.2% with management; category include problem solving, time management and organizational skills
- 54.0% with computer skills; category includes Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Internet

Specialized Skills:

- 48.3% with Financial/sales (accounting and budgeting)
- 54.6% Administrative (data entry, administrative support, clerical)
- 53.7% Customer Service

Software Skills:

- 32.0% Design (Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, SQL)
- 42.2% Data and Business Operations (Salesforce, QuickBooks, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP))
- 37.6% Operating Systems (Microsoft, Linux, Java, MacOS)
- 23.3% Programming (Python, JavaScript, SQL)



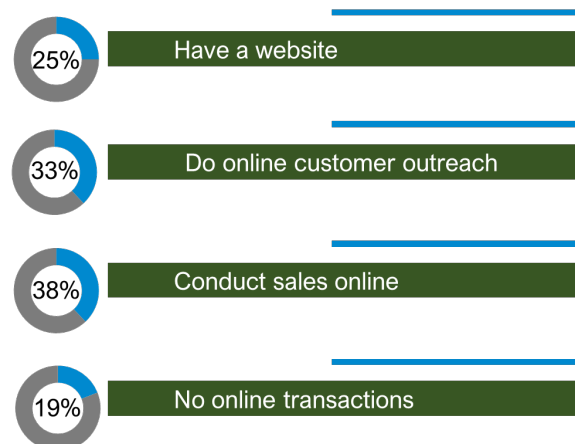
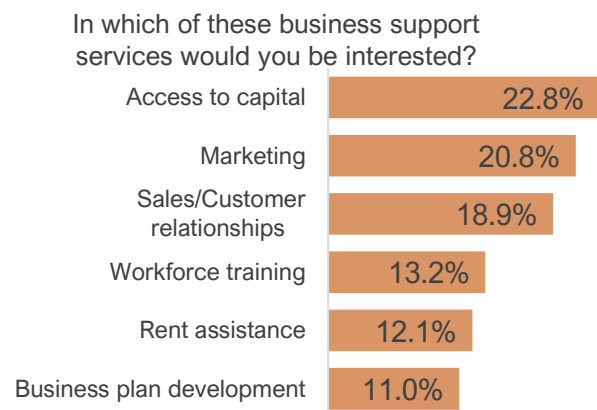
Business Support Services

While almost half of respondents (48.9 percent) see an increased need for digital literacy skills for their frontline or entry-level staff, only 53 percent of them indicated what specific skills are needed. Some of the most often mentioned in demand digital literacy skills were basic computer skills, digital marketing, communications and customer service, and data management. Most businesses also did not indicate who should provide these skills. From the businesses that provided an answer to that question, the answers varied – schools and colleges, internal company training, private providers, and digital platforms, such as YouTube.

Access to capital was the most frequently mentioned need for business support, which is the result of the pandemic, but also a recurring challenge for small businesses even under normal economic conditions. Marketing was the second most frequently mentioned need. This finding is also related to the characteristics of businesses who responded and the increased need for digital presence. **Only one in four businesses surveyed in the area have a website.** This proportion is significantly lower than national estimates. According to some estimates, of the 30 million businesses in the U.S., 64 percent of small businesses have a website.⁷

Lack of digital presence is likely an important factor that provided a barrier for some businesses to sustain their customer relationships. In the West Kendall Area, **76 percent of the businesses, that ceased operations temporarily, did not have a website. The lack of a business website is pervasive across various sectors.**⁸ In the most represented sector, Professional, Scientific and Technical services, only 8 percent of businesses indicated they have a website. Only 19 percent of establishments in the Accommodation and Food Services sector have a website.

During the pandemic, small businesses have gained increased awareness and appreciation of the importance of digital presence. A 2020 survey from Visual Objects, a portfolio website, found that nearly one-third of small businesses in the United States (29 percent) say they plan to start using a website this year. Another 29 percent indicated their website needs improvement.⁹



⁷ The Hidden Mystery Behind Why 36% of Small Businesses STILL Don't Have a Website. May 16, 2019. <https://smallbiztrends.com/2019/05/easy-website-maker.html>

⁸ The distribution of responses across all sectors does not allow for statistical relationships between industry sector and website ownership to be established.

⁹ Visual Objects, 2020 Small Business Marketing Statistics. <https://visualobjects.com/digital-marketing/small-business-statistics-2020>.

Respondents were asked to provide open-ended answers to the question ‘**How can the local business community support you?**’ The full list of verbatim responses is included in [Appendix A](#). Some responses include:

- Access to capital is always a bit of challenge, especially now under current strenuous conditions due to COVID-19
- Purchasing our product directly through catering and co-marketing our product along with their continued services to the community
- More knowledge and access to government grants. Also, offer free workshops/training for specifically young adults and for Spanish speakers
- Offer relevant community college continuing education courses
- Offer training in customer service, taking care of the customer experience
- Buying locally would help. For example, we are vendors of Baptist and FIU and reach out to departments regularly, but don't get the chances we would appreciate
- Help the small companies with tech support
- More networking, looking out for each other; supporting businesses in your immediate area; knowing what businesses exist
- Promote incubators in West Kendall area and innovation zones
- More networking, looking out for each other supporting businesses in your immediate area knowing what businesses exist
- More referrals
- Providing incentives to big corporations to do business with the West Kendall Area

Only five businesses indicated they were interested in leasing a coworking space. Coworking is an arrangement in which freelancers or remote employees working for various companies share an office or other workspace.

Respondents were asked to provide open-ended answers to the question ‘**How can the local higher education ecosystem (Miami Dade College and Florida International University) support you in meeting your business goals?**’ The full list of verbatim responses is included in [Appendix B](#). Some responses include:

- Awareness of available classes and training to community business owners
- Encourage travel, provide free online courses that are relevant
- Help businesses with law matters to avoid lawsuits
- I would like to tap MDC and FIU for internships and entry level positions. I would need direction how to post a job and find candidates
- Include more vocational units and work-experience in academic programs
- Marketing is very important, we need people to know we are still alive, we have survived this economic crisis, and to please frequent our business
- Non-Credit classes to basic IT skills
- Provide courses to better prepare students for real life situations

Respondents were asked to provide open-ended answers to the question ‘**How can West Kendall Baptist Hospital better meet your health care needs?**’ The full list of verbatim responses is included in [Appendix C](#). Some responses include:

- Buy from local businesses, help us connect with each other
- Expanding the Healthy hub to other Baptist locations to be more accessible on a more frequent basis
- Offer workshops in mental health, coping strategies during difficult times
- Offer at-home COVID Test or faster response time for in-house COVID Test
- Counseling
- Implement safety training programs - local and accident prevention
- Have a center for employees of the area to be tested rapidly
- Exercise programs and nutrition/cooking skills
- Continuing to have a strong focus on prevention and wellness
- Continuing to address the different factors that affect health

Survey Highlights and Recommendations

Digital Connectivity

One of the recommendations of the Healthy West Kendall CEDS was that “investing in an “ultra-high-speed Internet backbone” would be an important, critical and effective business infrastructure investment in West Kendall”. The COVID-19 pandemic shows that digital connectivity is critical to societal resilience and business continuity in times of crisis. In 2018, Deloitte’s analysis in *Connected Small Businesses US* found that, relative to businesses that have low levels of digital engagement, digitally advanced small businesses:

- Earned 2 times as much revenue per employee
- Experienced revenue growth over the previous year that was nearly 4 times as high
- Were almost 3 times as likely to be creating jobs over the previous year
- Had an average employment growth rate that was more than 6 times as high
- Were also 3 times as likely to have exported over the previous year¹⁰

Before small business can take advantage of faster speeds, they need to have the basics. The Healthy West Kendall report recommended establishing a grant program to help underwrite the cost of investments in new technology for small firms. The survey results confirm the importance of this investment.

Only one in four businesses surveyed in the area have a website, compared to 64 percent of businesses in the U.S. As the Deloitte study showed, the lack of online presence has a significant negative impact on small businesses. Having a website is one of the baseline steps for engagement with a broader audience, but beyond this initial investment, businesses also need to build their presence through digital marketing. Local providers like the Small Business Development Center at FIU, Prospera and others, have focused a lot of their work on connecting businesses with the digital economy.

Targeted and Varied Support

The Healthy West Kendall CEDS recommended the development of shared, satellite, and co-working space in the area to meet local demand. However, only five businesses indicated they were interested in leasing a coworking space. COVID-19 is likely reducing demand significantly, both as a result of health concerns but also likely reductions in the workforce of some businesses and the refocusing of their efforts on survival.

Almost 23 percent of businesses surveyed were interested in access to capital. Other areas in which they need support include marketing and sales, selected by almost one in four respondents.

Workforce Development

The Healthy West Kendall report recommended partnerships with Miami Dade College and CareerSource South Florida to create targeted training programs, addressing market area hiring needs. The survey provides insight into some of the business needs in that regard. Over 13 percent of businesses indicated they need support in workforce training. The workforce needs of

¹⁰ Deloitte. 2018. Small business technology trends. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/connected-small-businesses.html>

area businesses vary, depending on industry and types of occupations, but the survey provides some insights into the types of skills that are in high demand overall.

Almost **one in three businesses are not satisfied with the interpersonal and communication skills of the South Florida workforce**. One in four are dissatisfied with the customer service skills of South Florida workers. These types of skills are often referred to as “soft skills”. Soft skills are a synonym for “people skills.” The term describes those personal attributes that indicate a high level of emotional intelligence. Unlike hard skills, which describe a person’s technical skill set and ability to perform specific tasks, soft skills are broadly applicable across job titles and industries. These local indicators of soft skills demand are in line with results from other research. In its Job Outlook 2018 survey, which polled more than 200 employers, the National Association of Colleges and Employers found the skills employers most desire are problem solving, communication and the ability to work in a team.

Other skills that need to be developed according to the area’s employers include management skills (25 percent), financial/sales (19 percent), computer (17 percent), and administrative (17 percent). These in-demand skills do not necessarily require traditional academic degrees, but can be acquired through shorter, more targeted professional development. In fact, surveys show that Americans strongly prefer non-degree programs and skills training over degree programs.¹¹ Enrollment of education providers (traditional and otherwise) that offer online, short-term credentials closely aligned to in-demand skills and industry needs, will likely continue to increase and present opportunities for upskilling quickly and effectively to meet business needs.

Florida has the Florida Ready to Work Credential and the Florida Soft Skills Credential that are recognized as a common measure of readiness for most jobs, across industry sectors, by employers large and small. Miami Dade College offers training and testing for both credentials.

Business Connections – to consumers, other businesses and largest institutions

The Healthy West Kendall report recommended the development of a central business information portal, to improve local information sharing and networking between small businesses, lenders, investors, service providers and technical expertise. A related recommendation is the implementation of a buy local program with local large businesses. “Buy Local” efforts have become a popular tool to drive more investment toward local economies by spotlighting local innovation and improving the financial resources to locally owned businesses and to the networks that support their success.

In open-ended comments some businesses pointed out their desire to connect more with other businesses and to have their products and services procured locally, especially by large institutions like FIU and Baptist Hospital.

To meet many and varied needs of local businesses, service providers, large employers, public and private sectors will have to work collaboratively towards the development of a local ecosystem, capable of supporting entrepreneurship, enterprise and job creation and growth. The pandemic has only heightened the need for broad engagement of stakeholders combined with more granular and targeted approaches.

¹¹ 2020 Public Viewpoint Survey, Strada Center for Education Consumer Insights.

Appendix A: How can the local business community support you?

- Access to capital is always a bit of challenge, especially now under current strenuous conditions due to covid-19
- Accurate training and support systems
- Ask for direct gov help not manage by banks
- Assisting each other, and make a better tomorrow
- Better training on soft skills like customer service
- Bring us printing jobs
- Buy more from me! :-)
- Buying locally would help. For example, we are vendors of Baptist and FIU and reach out to departments regularly, but don't get the chances we would appreciate
- By modernizing their approach and leaving politics out of business considerations
- By now nothing happens with us and any business community support us
- By providing real life scenarios as presented with internships
- Cater food for events from us
- Communication tv, radio, Facebook, Instagram, emails
- Community is not responsible; it is all of our responsibilities to do our own job
- Company exposure and staying up to date with market trends.
- Connections and guidance on how to reach out to organizations
- Continue to provide resources and financial support
- Creating monthly or quarterly meetings to help the small businesses with ideas and programs
- Deal honestly and truthfully
- Ease out regulations
- Ease up on restrictions
- Effective webinars. Not just entertaining
- English skills are dreadful - spelling and grammar are below par for high school graduates - they are the nicest people, but poorly educated in language skills
- EXPOSURE OF BRAND
- Financial (line of credit), Marketing
- Financial Assistance
- Find honest working people
- Grant and loan programs. That don't run out of money in the first 20 min. Before I get a chance to submit my application (This has happened at least 4 times)
- Help the small companies with tech support
- High school and college education
- I don't think anyone is aware we are working remotely - not much has changed
- I would like to be involved more in clinical labs and pathology laboratories
- Improve customer service, enforce govt mandated requirements (i.e., usage of mask)
- Improve education, reduce corruption in local government. Eliminate political animosities
- Information about assistance and more assistance with PPE
- Just let the educational institutions know how we can be of service to support the talent development and business support needs. We will evaluate the short and long-term credentials to determine how to provide what is needed and create what is missing
- Keep bars, restaurants and hotels open. Let's have some context in reporting COVID cases. How many are really sick, how many are recovering, how many are dying
- Keep the exterior of your home or business clean
- Language barrier; not conducive to non-Latin companies. do a lot of work out of state, local is very unhelpful

- Local Virtual Art Shows offering prize money and ability to sell online through those venues
- Marketing
- Mejores planes de prestamos (Better loan plans/rates)
- Monitor other businesses for fraudulent activity. Supportive to small businesses.
- More economic assistance
- More knowledge and access to government grants. Also, offer free workshops/training for specifically young adults and for Spanish speakers
- More networking, looking out for each other supporting businesses in your immediate area knowing what businesses exist
- More support of local small businesses by networking and marketing
- Networking (9 responses)
- Not sure yet. (3 responses)
- Offer relevant community college continuing education courses.
- Offer training in customer service, taking care of the customer experience
- Open schools so we can return to work
- Order food
- Web page
- Partnering with schools and colleges
- promote incubators in West Kendall area and innovation zones
- Providing incentives to big corporations to do business with the West Kendall Area.
- Purchasing our product directly through catering and co-marketing our product along with their continued services to the community
- Qualified staff, education
- Reading what we are offering
- Recommending us to others (referrals)
- Resources and assist with technology and resigning all structures about web
- Send more referrals
- Small business grants
- Sponsors for underprivileged youth
- The reopening of South Florida and its unique follow of International visitor with Tourist and visitor bring in stimulus by purchasing will have the largest impact to both what is needed currently and what will be needed is the largest support that the Business community can do!
- There should be more promotion of local businesses
- Think of us first for any auto repair needs or services
- Thinking more in small businesses
- This is a social venue so due to the nature of the business all we need are more grants to get through the next few rough few months
- Training and education
- We are a not-for-profit arts organization. Due to COVID-19 we have had to cancel all of our programming for 2020. The business community can help by supporting our cultural endeavors once theaters, concert halls open for business

Appendix B: How can the local higher education ecosystem (Miami Dade College and Florida International University) support you in meeting your business goals?

- Access to your internship candidates
- Anything with a computer, more knowledge for programs
- Assist with individual with basic skills to assist patients with special needs
- Awareness of available classes and training to community business owners
- Becoming an authorized vendor
- Better advertisement
- Better hands-on training
- Better trained graduates
- Better workforce with a great background education
- Building business relationship with MDC and FIU
- Candidates typically lack self-responsibility and motivation often resulting in management acting more like babysitters. Pride in work product is a lost with many new hires
- Company exposure and mentorship
- Culinary courses
- Dar conocimientos de nuevos códigos de construcción res. a lo acústico (give advice on new construction codes in regard to noise)
- Desarrollar programas para técnicos en manufactura y análisis químicos (roll out programs for manufacturing techniques and chemical analysis)
- Easily accessible, low-cost training
- Encourage travel, provide free online courses that are relevant
- Existing education opposes time honored American morals. They could stop teaching this ideology
- Find people with skills on computer web design and SQL databases
- Greater supply of technically skilled labor
- Help businesses with law matters to avoid lawsuits
- Help people know who we are, to volunteer and make a difference in lives of these kids and families
- Help to promote our business
- Helping us find the necessary resources
- I am from MDC and would like to connect with FIU. Perhaps through the education committee when the time is right, we can think about how to work together.
- I don't know. You can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Kids need to care more
- I need help in getting financial support from Government
- I work with preschools
- I would like to tap MDC and FIU for internships and entry level positions. I would need direction how to post a job and find candidates
- I would need to speak with someone at FIU to zero in on that.
- If we are able to begin operations in 2012, we would need their support by providing free rental spaces to carry out performances to the community
- Include more vocational units and work-experience in academic programs
- Job-specific training
- Making people ready for digital economy
- marketing
- Marketing is very important, we need people to know we are still alive, we have survived this economic crisis, and to please frequent our business
- Marketing our business
- Maybe can help to develop more in business goal
- Modernize their training to LEAD technology, NOT to follow it a few YEARS later.

- My employees don't need those skills
- Networking, grants to alumni
- Non-Credit classes to basic IT skills
- Offer Programs at low cost
- Offer training in customer service, taking care of the customer experience.
- Ofreciendo los programas disponibles a los pequenos negocios (offering available programs to small businesses)
- Online training for marketing
- Promote us
- Provide courses to better prepare students for real life situations.
- Provide more targeted training to business needs
- Provide venue for promoting our financial services.
- Recommending us to others (referrals)
- Sending people that can read
- Short Term Training Courses in both English and Spanish
- Sponsors
- Take small business into consideration
- The higher education system is doing their job. We have a lot of talent here in South Florida. However, when it comes employment those tech businesses and corporations are not located here. Too much of our talent leaves to either Broward county or other parts of Florida for higher pay and lower cost of living
- Train students in computer programming
- Training
- Training for employees
- Training students in digital skills
- Training young people with computer skills and Marketing
- With Talented, and Professional Graduate willing to set a goal, for them self and/or business
- Would love for more workshops in the area, to further train our work force
- Yes, helping my business find more interns
- You guys are good with online seminars, and we would always be willing for more... But like mentioned above, more business opportunities would be appreciated. We get a decent amount of business from Miami Dade College, but we are licensed with FIU and barely get anything despite our marketing efforts

Appendix C: How can West Kendall Baptist Hospital better meet your health care needs?

- Covid vaccinations for staff and testing for parents and students
- Any possible access to health insurance, offer as a company to our employees
- Buy from local businesses, help us connect with each other
- Centros e emergencia (emergency centers)
- Close to office/primary residence
- Continue to offer the great services you are currently providing
- Continued cooperation through the sanitizing program started before covid19. Great program! Continued health test stats program operated pre-covid19, another great program
- Continuing to have a strong focus on prevention and wellness. Continuing to address the different factors that affect health
- Crear seguros medicos asequibles en precio para la comunidad y costos medicos asequibles (create insurance plans that have accessible prices for the community and accessible medical costs)
- Easier phone system. Very difficult to speak to your physician
- Enrolandose a mas programas de salud y ofreciendo a personas negocios (enrolling in more health programs and offering individuals' businesses)
- Exercise programs and nutrition/cooking skills
- Expanding the Healthy hub to other Baptist Locations to be more accessible on a more frequent basis
- Free and fast COVID tests for staff
- Great service
- Have a center for employees of the area to be tested rapidly
- Having an Urgent Care department as well as emergency and resuscitation unit, so that some critical care would be more accessible and less costly
- Health is more of an emphasis for everyone. if they also push that envelope with animal medicine, would be helpful
- Hire BMCA International Corp. as your biomedical engineer's
- I love this facility and have gone there for many issues! I think they do an excellent job and offer so many services. It is also very close to where I live
- I work with preschools
- Implement safety training programs Local and accident prevention
- Just being there when needed
- Keep working on handling COVID-19, thank you for that work
- Lower cost of services
- Lower your prices and have more transparency in pricing. Health care is inaccessible and health insurance is highway robbery
- Lowering costs
- Medical insurance
- More access to the program maybe they have but don't know, more information about all plans and programs could be great
- More employee health policies
- No Surprise billing. It is killing the community
- Not sure. Need more info. Counseling?
- Offer at-home Covid Test or faster response time for in-house Covid Test
- Offer more preventative care information and nutritional advice
- Offer workshops in mental health, coping strategies during difficult times
- Patient referrals/recommendations

- Promote more actively health wellness programs.
- Promote us
- Provide access to vaccinations
- Provide an app for patients to integrate with the hospital and its services. The app could help enforce covid social distancing using Bluetooth, provide access to physician calendars, receive news of hospital events for the community. And lower your prices to something reasonable and affordable
- Reduce cost of healthcare, better training for hospital employees for better customer service and cleanliness
- Reduce deductibles...
- Same as above, also help the kids in the pediatric cancer section, let us in to do activities, that would be great
- Service is good
- Sponsors
- Testing and giving access to clean spaces for primary care.
- They are amazing so far
- They do a good job
- To be accessible to people with and without insurance
- We love West Kendall Baptist. The evolution of our daily life is changing rapidly and as it changes, we expect for Baptist Hospital to continue to make changes to better meet the wellbeing of others. Set up a health plan for the needy people
- We really like Baptist
- West Kendall Baptist Hospital already met my needs. They provide a safe, secure and quality medical care
- With affordable prices to everyone
- You are doing great! We very much appreciate all that you do. Please stay safe

Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire

Investing in West Kendall's Recovery and Future

Dear business executive,

We hope you are well during these trying times.

FIU's Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center and West Kendall Baptist Hospital have teamed up to conduct a survey to ensure we understand how the West Kendall business community is managing through the COVID-19 crisis.

This survey will give us information on the current conditions of businesses in the area, the types of support that could be beneficial, and talent and workforce needs. **Your feedback will inform community partners of your challenges and needs and will help guide the development of initiatives that can sustain and grow our business community.**

Survey questions require a response from a senior leader at your organization. If you are not in a senior leadership position, please forward the survey to the appropriate person.

We encourage you to please take this important survey. It will only take about 20 minutes to complete. Your responses are important, anonymous, and confidential.

The survey data collection lead is Dr. Maria Ilcheva, Assistant Director of the Jorge Pérez Metropolitan Center, FIU. If you wish to obtain more information on the research, you can reach her via email, milcheva@fiu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

1. What is the zip code of your business?

- 33175 33183 33186 33196
 33177 33185 33193 Other _____

2. How long has your business been at your current location? _____years

3. Do you plan to stay at your current location for at least the next 5 years?

- Yes No

4. What is your organization's primary industry?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | <input type="radio"/> Management of Companies and Enterprises |
| <input type="radio"/> Accommodation and Food Services | <input type="radio"/> Manufacturing |
| <input type="radio"/> Admin. Support, Waste Management, Remediation | <input type="radio"/> Mining |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | <input type="radio"/> Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Construction | <input type="radio"/> Real Estate and Rental and Leasing |
| <input type="radio"/> Education | <input type="radio"/> Retail Trade |
| <input type="radio"/> Finance and Insurance | <input type="radio"/> Transportation and Warehousing |
| <input type="radio"/> Health Care and Social Assistance | <input type="radio"/> Utilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Information | <input type="radio"/> Wholesale Trade |
| | <input type="radio"/> Other (specify)_____ |

5. Is your business a... (select one of the following):
- Headquarter
 - Branch
 - Subsidiary Headquarter
 - Single Location
6. Is your business family-owned?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not Applicable
7. Which of the following best describes your business?
- Women Business Enterprise
 - Minority/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
 - Veteran-Owned
 - None of the above
8. In which of the following languages do you conduct transactions with clients, suppliers, financial institutions and advertisements? (mark all that apply)
- English
 - Spanish
 - Haitian Creole
 - Portuguese
 - Other_____
9. What were the annual revenues of your organization in the last fiscal year?
- Less than \$1 million
 - Between \$1 and \$2 million
 - \$2-5 million
 - \$5-10 million
 - \$10-25 million
 - Over \$25 million
 - Prefer not to respond
10. Is your business able to conduct work remotely?
- Mostly, yes
 - Only partially
 - No
11. Does your company use social networking sites like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to promote its products and services?
- Yes
 - No
12. Which of the following transactions does your business conduct online?
- Purchases
 - Sales
 - Customer outreach
 - Other (specify)_____
 - No online transactions
13. If you conduct online financial transactions, which of the following accounts does your business have?
- Store website
 - PayPal
 - Amazon
 - None
 - Other_____

COVID-19 Impact

14. How has the COVID-19 crisis affected the operations and services of your business? (Mark all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> We ceased operations temporarily due to COVID-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> We had to direct resources to other areas of service. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our employees are working remotely. | <input type="checkbox"/> We are reducing hiring in response to COVID-19. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We are providing services to clients virtually. | <input type="checkbox"/> We hired new staff to increase capacity to respond to COVID-19. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We had to invest in technology and other tools to help employees work remotely. | <input type="radio"/> No impact. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employees had to take a salary cut. | <input type="radio"/> Other (please describe) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We had difficulty paying our rent | |

If "We had difficulty..." is selected, ask

14.a. Are you interested in leasing a co-working space?

(Coworking is an arrangement in which freelancers or remote employees working for various companies share an office or other workspace.)

- Yes No

15. How many employees did your organization have, including contracted staff, before COVID-19 shutdown began?

- Full time _____ Part time _____

16. Has your organization laid off or furloughed any workers due to COVID-19?

- Yes No

If yes: How many workers has your organization laid off or furloughed?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Full time laid off ____ | <input type="radio"/> Part time laid off ____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Full time furloughed____ | <input type="radio"/> Part time furloughed____ |

17. Has your organization hired or considered hiring new employees as a response to COVID-19?

- Yes No

If yes: For which position(s)? _____

18. What changes to your projected revenues are you anticipating in 2020 due to COVID-19?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 1-4% loss | <input type="radio"/> 1-4% increase |
| <input type="radio"/> 5-24% loss | <input type="radio"/> 5-24% increase |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-49% loss | <input type="radio"/> 25-49% increase |
| <input type="radio"/> 50-74% loss | <input type="radio"/> 50-100% increase |
| <input type="radio"/> 75-100% loss | <input type="radio"/> Have not calculated |

19. If you have received financial assistance due to covid-19, or are expecting assistance, please write the approximate amount:

- Assistance received ____
- Assistance requested ____
- Do not expect to receive assistance
- We are in the process of requesting assistance

20. From what sources did you receive or request assistance?

- State emergency loans/assistance
- Federal Paycheck Protection Program
- Other government assistance
- Foundation or grant support
- Other (Please Specify): _____

21. Due to COVID-19 has your business pivoted in providing different goods and services than it normally provides?

- No
- Yes (Please specify) _____

22. What types of expenditures has your business needed to make in response to COVID-19? (Select all that apply)

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Sanitizing services
- Plexi-glass
- Additional computers/laptops/electronic devices
- Additional Software
- Other _____

23. What is your company's total projected increase in expenditures related to COVID-19 and the Coronavirus response in 2020? _____

Workforce Skills

24. What skills will become increasingly important to access jobs in your organization moving forward? (List the top three skills in order from most important to least important)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

25. Thinking about your current employees, what additional training do they need because of COVID-19?



26. How satisfied are you with the **baseline skills** of South Florida's workforce?

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not applicable
Interpersonal and Communication Skills (verbal and written communication, collaboration)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management (problem solving, time management, organizational skills)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer Skills (Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Internet)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. How satisfied are you with the **specialized skills** of South Florida's workforce?

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not applicable
Financial / Sales (Accounting, budgeting)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative (data entry administrative support)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. How satisfied are you with the **software skills** of South Florida's workforce?

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not applicable
Design / Coding (Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, SQL)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data and Business Operations (Salesforce, QuickBooks, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP))	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operating Systems and Software (Microsoft, Linux, Java, MacOS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programming (Python, JavaScript, SQL)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. Do you forecast/foresee an increased need for digital literacy skills for your frontline or entry-level staff?

- No Yes
- If yes:** What specific skills? _____
 - Who will provide these skills?

30. How can the local business community support you in meeting your goals? (open-ended question)

31. In which of these business support services would you be interested?

- Access to capital
- Rent assistance
- Workforce training
- Marketing
- Sales/Customer relationships
- Business plan development
- Other_____

32. How can the local higher education ecosystem (Miami Dade College and Florida International University) support you in meeting your business goals? (open-ended question)

33. How can West Kendall Baptist Hospital better meet your health care needs?

About your Business (optional)

Important: By completing this information you are consenting to share your contact information with Baptist Health. The information you provide will not be released to the public, and your survey responses will not be shared. The information about your business may be used by Baptist Health to contact businesses for purposes of outreach, such as to participate in meetings or its business advisory council. Otherwise, your information will remain anonymous.

1. Organization [legal name] _____
2. Official Contact name (first and last name) _____
3. Official Title _____
4. Official email _____