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HUNT INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS



BUSINESS ONE STOP SHOP QUARTERLY REPORT

Quarter III - 2025



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ECONOMIC
TRANSFORMATION

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Survey Response Summary	4
Challenges	4
Business Profile	5
<i>Business Physical Address</i>	5
<i>Majority Type of the Business Ownership</i>	5
<i>Business Sectors</i>	5
<i>Business Industries by Zip Code</i>	6
<i>Years of Business Operations</i>	7
<i>Number of Employees (Excluding Owner(s))</i>	7
<i>Legal Establishment</i>	7
<i>Business Permits or Licenses Required</i>	7
2022 Business Performance	8
<i>Business Total Annual Gross Income in 2022</i>	8
<i>Business Total Annual Gross Income Less than \$10,000 by Sector</i>	8
<i>Business Expenses in 2022</i>	8
<i>Business Financial Status in 2022</i>	9
<i>Key Business Challenges in 2022</i>	9
Technical Assistance and Financial Literacy	10
<i>Areas that Require Technical Assistance</i>	10
<i>Areas that Require Financial Literacy Training</i>	10
Access to Capital	11
<i>Relationship with a Bank or Financial Institution for Business Banking Needs</i>	11
<i>Encountered Challenges While Seeking Business Financing</i>	11
<i>Business Support and Resources for Accessing Capital</i>	12
Marketing	13
<i>Marketing Tools Employed</i>	13
<i>Primary Challenges Encountered During Marketing Campaigns</i>	13
Digital Transformation	14
<i>Major Challenges Encountered in Adopting New Technologies for Business</i>	14
<i>Digital Literacy Rating</i>	14
<i>Areas that Require Digital Transformation Training</i>	15
Workforce Development	16
<i>Volunteer Labor for Businesses</i>	16
<i>Key Workforce Development Challenges</i>	16
<i>Employment Change Expectations</i>	17
<i>Areas Requiring Assistance to Meet Employment Change Expectations</i>	17
<i>Open to Recommendations for Support and Service Connections</i>	18
<i>Top Five Business Goals Prioritized for the Next 1-2 Years</i>	18
<i>Biggest Challenges in Achieving Business Goals</i>	19
Procurement	19
<i>Businesses that Have Contracted with a Public Local Entity</i>	19
Conclusion	20
Appendix	21
<i>Business Concentrations by Representative District</i>	21
<i>Business Concentrations at Zip Code 79901</i>	22
<i>Business Concentrations at Zip Code 79912</i>	22
<i>Business Concentrations at Zip Code 79925</i>	22
<i>Business Concentrations at Zip Code 79936</i>	23
<i>Business Concentrations at Zip Code 79938</i>	23

Executive Summary

The Small Business Survey conducted in El Paso County, Texas, offers valuable insights into the strengths, challenges, and needs of the city's entrepreneurial community. This report reflects the perspectives of small business owners, highlighting critical areas that can drive growth, enhance operations, and build resilience. In response to these challenges, the City of El Paso established the Business One Stop Shop (BOSS), a program designed to simplify the complex landscape that local small businesses navigate.

The BOSS program is a comprehensive initiative that provides a wide range of services to empower small and micro business owners, entrepreneurs, and foreign direct investors in El Paso. By offering business education, technical support, and tailored financial products, BOSS equips stakeholders with the tools and resources needed to thrive in a competitive market. Through these targeted efforts, the program seeks to foster a supportive environment for small business growth and sustainability, contributing to the broader economic development of the region.

Survey findings indicate that access to capital remains the most significant barrier to growth. Approximately 60.0% of businesses reported that lack of funding is their biggest challenge in achieving business goals such as increasing revenue, improving profitability, and enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Businesses identified several areas where support is needed to improve access to capital. Networking opportunities with other business owners topped the list at 48.5%, followed closely by education on financing options at 48.1%, and assistance in identifying financial institutions that provide loans suitable for their business type at 46.0%. Additional needs include support with the loan application process at 35.2% and referrals to lenders or investors at 34.0%.

Workforce development also remains a critical concern. Approximately 38.0% of businesses reported recruitment and hiring as their top priority, while 30.0% highlighted employee retention and engagement. Nearly half of the surveyed businesses are exploring alternative solutions, such as apprenticeships and internships, to strengthen their workforce and build talent pipelines.

Marketing campaigns also emerge as a central concern. The majority of businesses, 71.4%, expressed that they have limited budgets for marketing campaigns, 42.6% have issues targeting the right audience, and 39.1% lack the knowledge and skills to run a marketing campaign. These challenges are particularly important given that 88.4% of surveyed businesses aim to increase revenue over the next one to two years, while 65.8% plan to improve profitability, and 51.9% focus on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of the BOSS project, which provides targeted support to small businesses. By addressing barriers related to capital, workforce, and marketing, El Paso can cultivate a more resilient, inclusive, and dynamic small business ecosystem.

Business One Stop Shop



This report summarizes the key challenges and opportunities identified through the survey. It provides actionable insights for policymakers, service providers, and community partners seeking to support small businesses with targeted programs in areas such as funding access, workforce development, marketing, and technology adoption

Small businesses play a vital role in El Paso's economy, driving job creation, fostering innovation, and shaping the city's entrepreneurial landscape. To gain a deeper understanding of these businesses' challenges, needs, and priorities, the City of El Paso launched the Business One Stop Shop (BOSS) initiative and conducted a comprehensive survey of local small enterprises.

The survey highlights a dynamic and diverse business community, ranging from sole proprietors to growing firms. These businesses face a variety of challenges, including limited access to capital, difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled talent, and the need to adapt to rapidly evolving technological demands. While many demonstrate resilience and ambition, gaps in financial literacy, marketing capabilities, and workforce development continue to limit their growth potential.

This report summarizes the key challenges and opportunities identified through the survey. It provides actionable insights for policymakers, service providers, and community partners seeking to support small businesses with targeted programs in areas such as funding access, workforce development, marketing, and technology adoption.

Survey Response Summary

Between **July 20, 2023**, and **September 30, 2025**, the City of El Paso administered surveys to local businesses, resulting in 594 valid responses after the removal of duplicate and incomplete entries. The purpose of the survey was to assess the challenges encountered by businesses and to identify opportunities for linking them with relevant programs and resources.

Survey Type	Number of Responses
LiftFund	287
Pioneers 21	260
People Fund	25
Borderplex Community Capital	9
Bridgify group	5
UTEP Marketing	7
LiftFund Loans	1
Total Responses	594

Source: Hunt Institute using data from the survey.

Challenges



Name Discrepancies

While collecting and cleaning survey data, the Hunt Institute encountered challenges because some businesses provided names that did not match the initial list. These discrepancies arose because some businesses did not have a legal name when the initial list was created.



Duplicate Responses

Another issue emerged as some businesses submitted multiple survey responses, leading to duplicate answers and data complications. This occurred because the same survey link was used for a separate marketing program, resulting in multiple entries for the same business. Manual intervention was needed to eliminate duplicates. All duplicated and incomplete data were not included in this report.

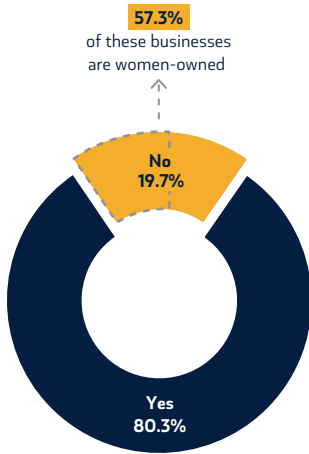


Adding New Businesses

While cleaning data, the Hunt Institute identified businesses not initially included in the recipient list provided by the BOSS partner. Consequently, new companies were added to the recipient list to ensure comprehensive coverage.

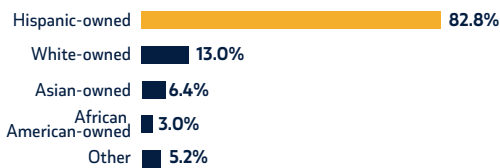
Business Profile

Business Physical Address



Survey findings show that 80.3% of respondents reported having a physical business address in El Paso, while 19.7% operate without a fixed location, reflecting the presence of non-traditional, digitally enabled business models. Of the location-independent businesses, 57.3% are owned by women.

Majority Type of Business Ownership

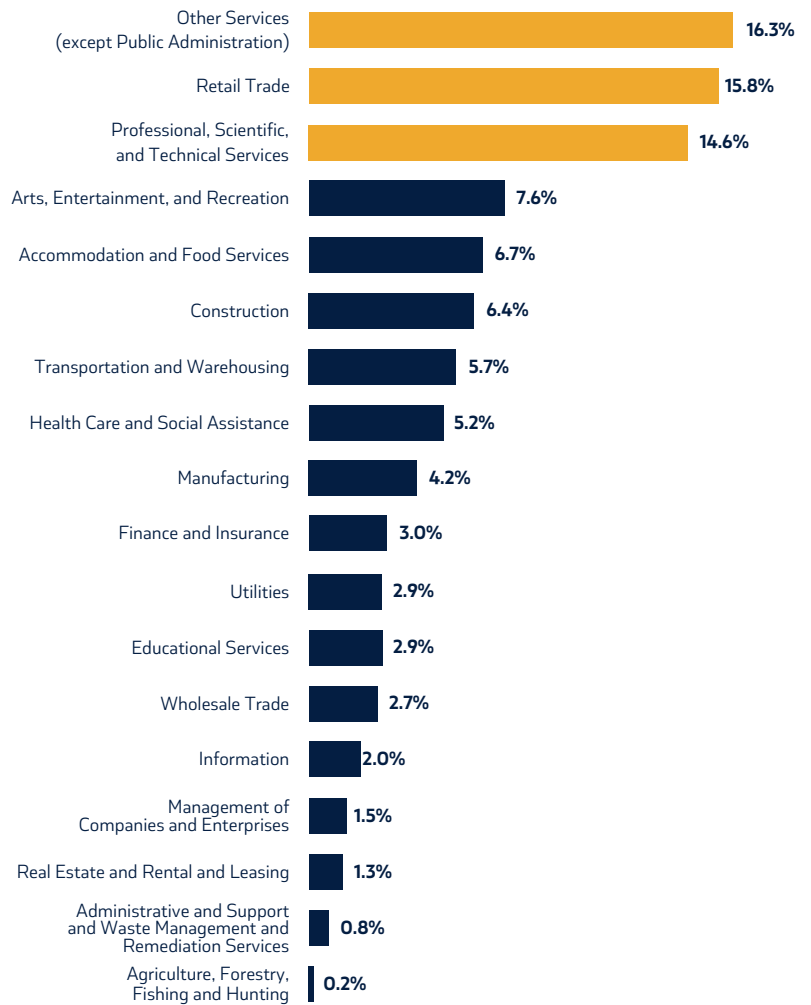


Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

Source: Hunt Institute using data from the survey.

Hispanic-owned businesses represent the largest share of surveyed small businesses in El Paso at 82.8%, a figure that closely aligns with the city’s demographics, where approximately 83.0% of residents identify as Hispanic. White-owned businesses account for 13.0%, Asian-owned businesses 6.4%, and African American-owned businesses 3.0%. This distribution reflects the city’s diverse entrepreneurial landscape and underscores the central role of Hispanic business owners in the region’s economy.

Business Sectors



Among surveyed small businesses in El Paso, the three largest sectors are other services (except public administration), retail trade, and professional, scientific, and technical services, accounting for 16.3%, 15.8%, and 14.6% of businesses, respectively.

Within the other services sector, 63.9% of businesses are engaged in personal and laundry services, including dry cleaning, salons, and other personal care establishments. An additional 22.7% specialize in repair and maintenance activities, such as automotive and electronic repairs, while 13.4% are affiliated with religious, civic, or professional organizations.

In the retail trade sector, clothing and accessories stores comprise the largest share at 21.3%, followed by general merchandise stores at 17.0% and food and beverage stores at 16.0%.

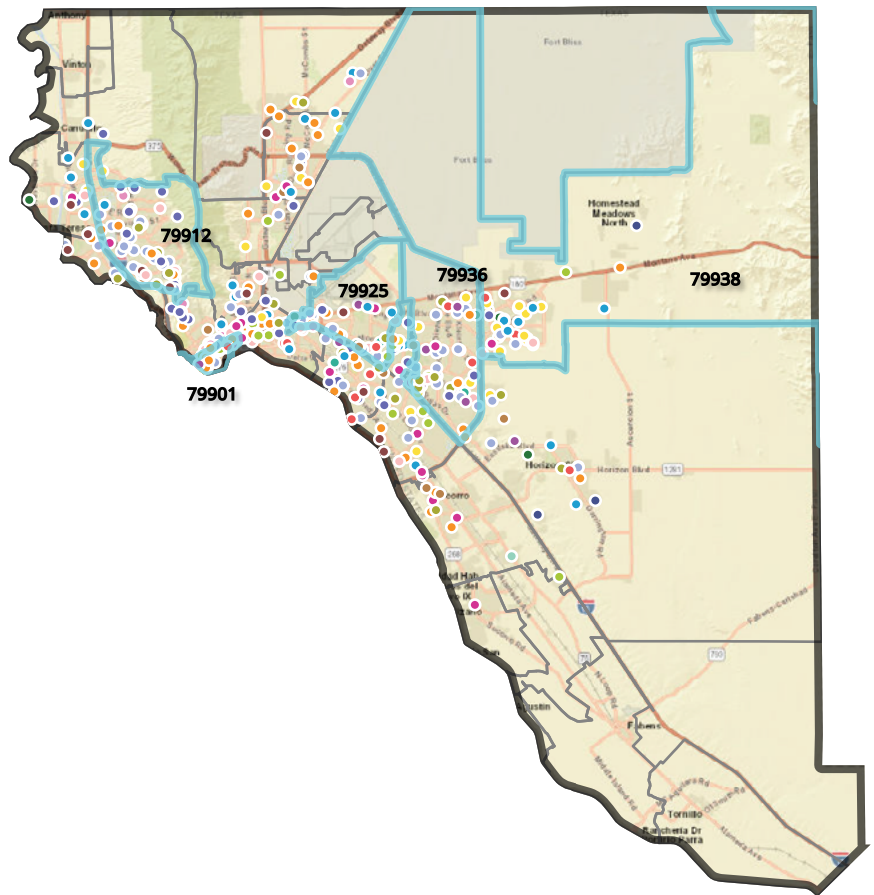
Business Industries by ZIP Code

Business Type

- Utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Information
- Finance and Insurance
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Support and Waste Services
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting

Business Share by ZIP Code

ZIP Code	Share of Businesses
79835	0.4%
79836	0.2%
79849	0.2%
79901	8.2%
79902	6.9%
79903	5.7%
79904	1.5%
79905	3.1%
79906	0.8%
79907	3.8%
79911	0.4%
79912	13.0%
79915	6.7%
79922	1.3%
79923	0.2%
79924	4.2%
79925	8.2%
79927	2.1%
79928	3.4%
79930	2.5%
79932	2.5%
79934	1.5%
79935	3.6%
79936	10.9%
79938	7.3%



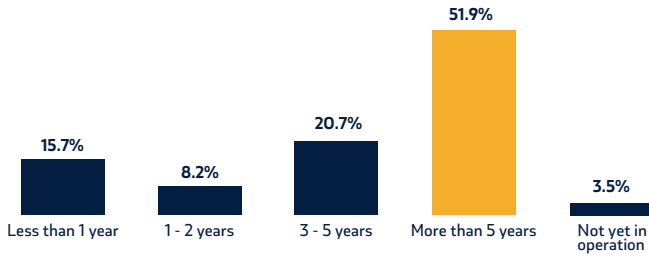
Source: Hunt Institute using data from the survey.

The map above illustrates the geographic distribution of all surveyed businesses across the El Paso region. The five ZIP codes with the highest concentration of businesses are 79912, 79936, 79925, 79901, and 79938, accounting for 13.0%, 10.9%, 8.2%, 8.2%, and 7.3% of respondents, respectively.

Distinct patterns emerge within each area. The West and Central regions, including ZIP codes 79912 and 79925, are characterized by a strong presence of businesses in other services, professional, scientific, and technical services, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade. In the Far East, ZIP codes 79936 and 79938 reflect a growing concentration of firms in transportation and warehousing, consistent with ongoing industrial expansion in that area. Meanwhile, the Downtown area (ZIP code 79901) remains a hub for wholesale trade and accommodation and food services, reinforcing its role as a commercial and service-oriented center.

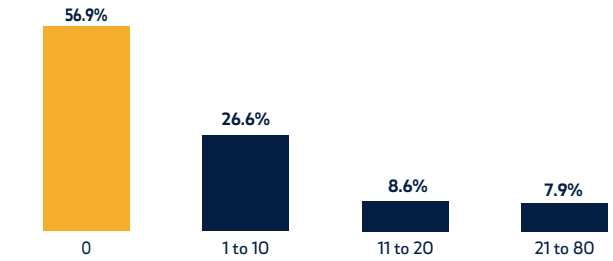
Business Profile

Years of Business Operations



More than half of the surveyed businesses, 51.9%, have been operating for over five years, underscoring the stability of key sectors such as other services (except public administration), professional, scientific, and technical services, and retail trade. Additionally, one-fifth of the surveyed businesses have been in operation for three to five years, further demonstrating the maturity of El Paso's small business landscape. In contrast, 15.7% of respondents represent newly established businesses that have been operating for less than one year. Many of these emerging enterprises are concentrated in the retail trade and professional, scientific, and technical services sectors, suggesting a growing wave of entrepreneurship and identifying potential areas for continued growth and innovation across the region.

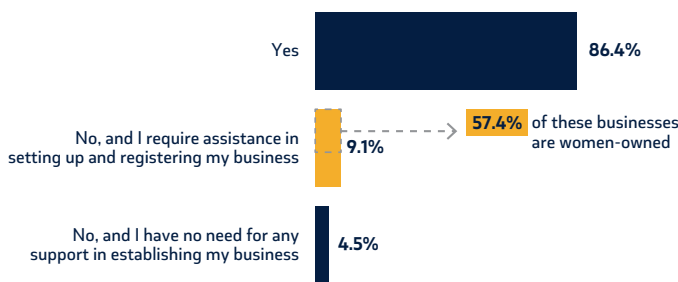
Number of Employees (Excluding Owner/s)



Note: Number of full-time employees

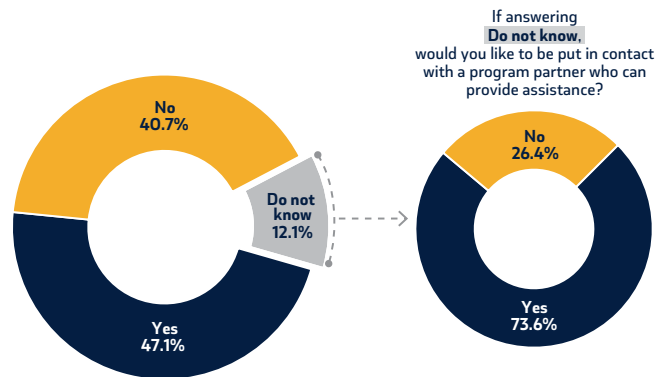
In El Paso, nonemployer businesses represent the largest share of surveyed small businesses at 56.9%, underscoring the significant role that sole proprietors and owner-operated ventures play in the economy. An additional 26.6% of respondents reported employing between one and ten workers, highlighting the strong presence of micro-enterprises across the region. These findings reinforce the importance of supporting small but highly impactful businesses, consistent with the broader national trend in which 99.9% of U.S. firms employ fewer than 500 people. Collectively, these enterprises contribute to the economic diversity, innovation, and resilience of the El Paso community.

Legal Establishment



Survey results indicate that 86.4% of respondents have already established their businesses. In contrast, 9.1% have not yet done so and expressed a need for assistance with business setup and registration, with 57.4% of this group identifying as women-owned. An additional 4.5% of respondents reported not having established a business and not requiring support. These findings highlight both the strong rate of business formation in the region and the continued need for targeted assistance, particularly for women entrepreneurs in the early stages of business development.

Business Permits or Licenses Required

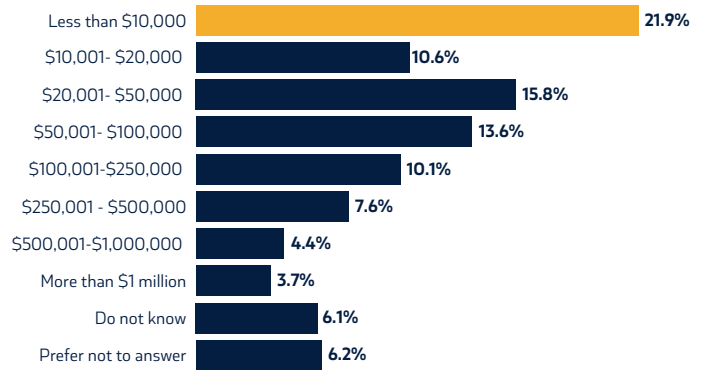


The survey results indicate 47.1% of respondents reported requiring permits or licenses for their businesses, while 40.7% indicated they did not. An additional 12.1% were uncertain about their specific requirements, with 73.6% of this group expressing interest in receiving assistance. These findings highlight an opportunity for program partners to provide targeted guidance, helping businesses navigate regulatory requirements and promote compliant, efficient operations.

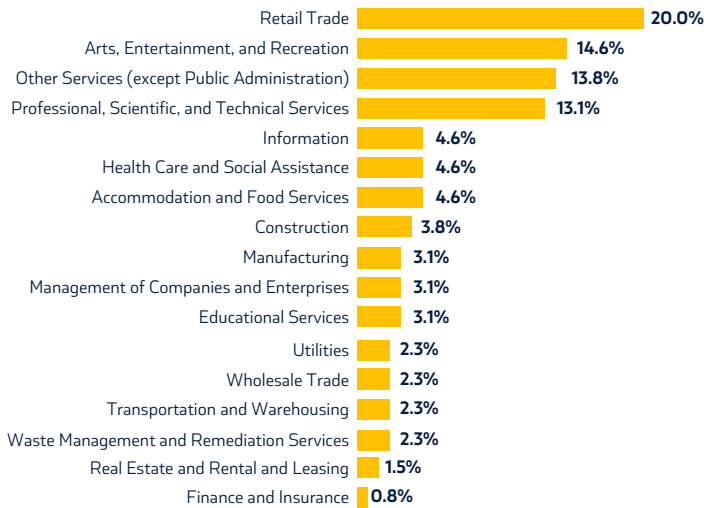
2022 Business Performance

Business Total Annual Gross Income in 2022

In 2022, just over one-fifth of surveyed businesses reported gross incomes below \$10,000, followed by 15.8% earning between \$20,001 and \$50,000, and 13.6% earning between \$50,001 and \$100,000. At the higher end of the scale, only 3.7% of respondents reported gross incomes exceeding \$1 million. Additionally, 6.1% of businesses were uncertain about their annual revenue, suggesting potential gaps in financial recordkeeping or reporting. These findings highlight an opportunity for the City’s program partners to strengthen financial literacy initiatives, helping businesses improve income tracking, enhance financial reporting accuracy, and build long-term financial stability and growth.



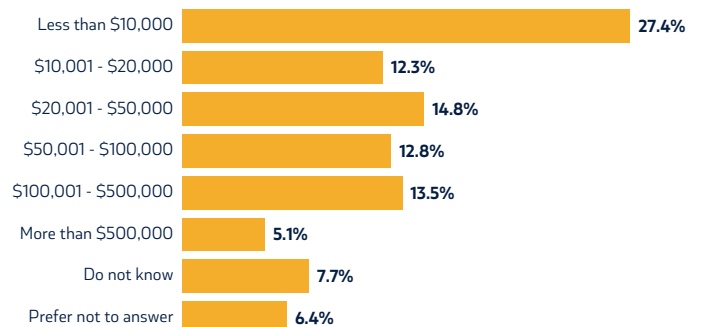
Business Total Annual Gross Income Less than \$10,000 by Sector



In 2022, slightly more than 60.0% of businesses reporting gross incomes below \$10,000 were concentrated in four key sectors. Retail trade accounted for the largest share at 20.0%, followed by arts, entertainment, and recreation at 14.6%, other services (except public administration) at 13.8%, and professional, scientific, and technical services at 13.1%. The remaining businesses, representing less than 40.0%, were distributed across sectors such as information, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services, each at 4.6%; construction at 3.8%; and manufacturing, management of companies and enterprises, and educational services, each at 3.1%.

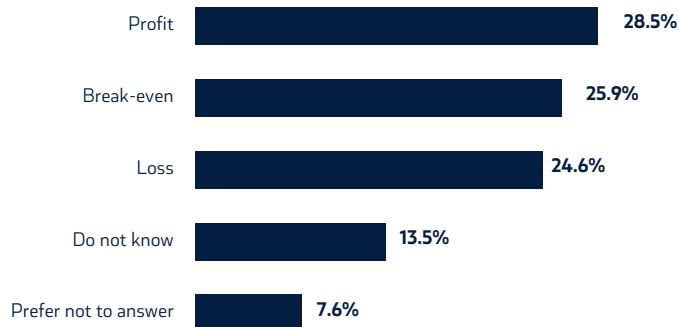
Business Expenses in 2022

In 2022, nearly 30.0% of surveyed businesses reported annual expenses below \$10,000, representing the largest group among respondents. An additional 12.3% reported expenses between \$10,001 and \$20,000, and 14.8% reported expenses between \$20,001 and \$50,000. Combined, 54.5% of surveyed businesses operated with annual expenses under \$50,000. This distribution reflects the overall composition of the small businesses, in which 83.5% of firms are classified as sole proprietorships or micro-enterprises. These smaller operations often function with constrained budgets, emphasizing the importance of targeted initiatives to improve access to operating capital and enhance financial planning for long-term stability and growth.



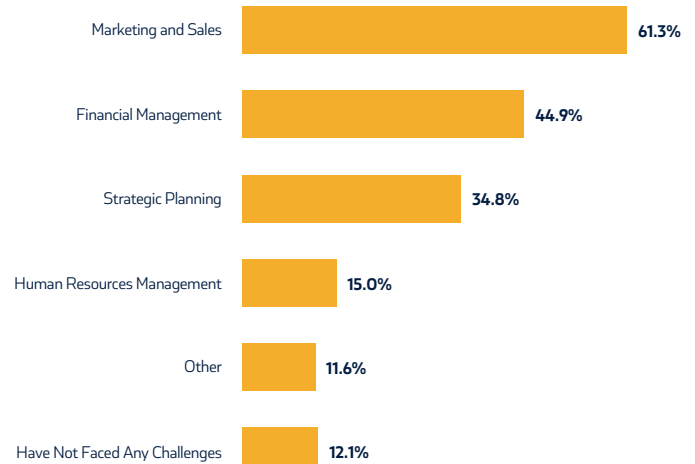
2022 Business Performance

Business Financial Status in 2022



In 2022, survey results showed that 28.5% of businesses reported earning a profit, while 25.9% broke even. Conversely, 24.6% experienced financial losses during the year. An additional 13.5% of respondents were uncertain about their financial performance, indicating a need for stronger financial tracking and reporting practices. These findings emphasize the importance of advancing financial literacy and expanding support programs that help businesses enhance profitability and improve financial management.

Key Business Challenges in 2022



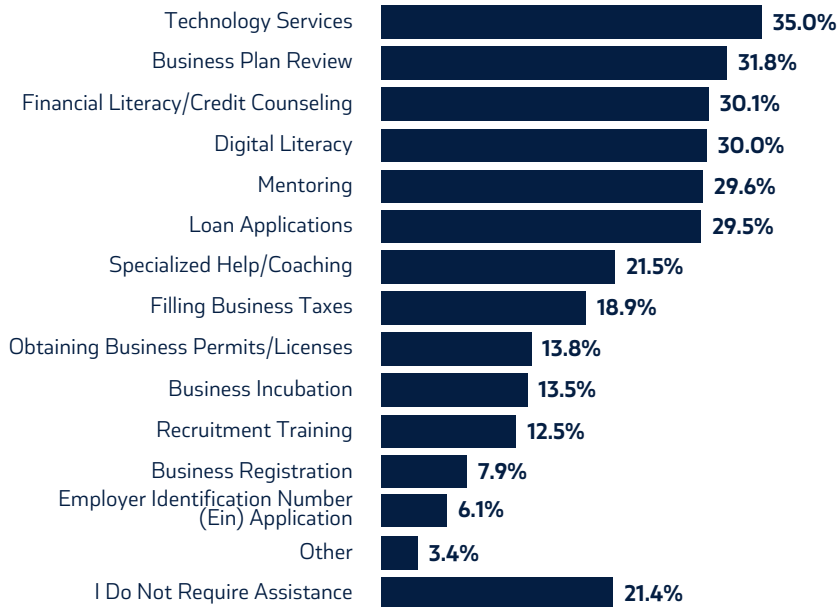
Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

In 2022, the primary challenges reported by businesses were marketing and sales, cited by 61.3% of respondents, followed by financial management at 44.9% and strategic planning at 34.8%. An additional 15.0% of businesses identified human resources management as a significant challenge.

Marketing and sales are fundamental to business survival and growth, as they directly influence revenue generation and customer retention. Likewise, effective financial management is critical for planning and controlling expenses, maintaining healthy cash flow, and supporting sound investment decisions. These findings present an opportunity for the BOSS program and its partners to align their support services with the identified challenges by offering targeted resources, training, and technical assistance.

Technical Assistance and Financial Literacy

Areas that Require Technical Assistance

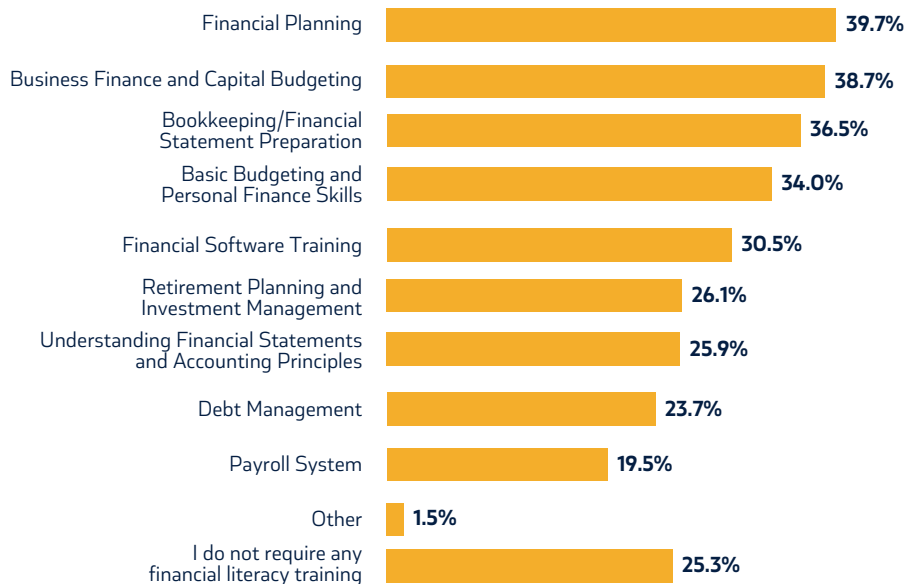


Survey results indicate that technology services represent the most pressing area in which businesses require technical assistance, cited by 35.0% of respondents. This finding reflects the growing importance of adopting digital tools and platforms to remain competitive in today's business environment. Respondents also highlighted additional areas of need, including business plan review at 31.8%, financial literacy at 30.1%, and credit and digital literacy at 30.0%.

The demand for these services is particularly concentrated in sectors such as retail trade, other services, and professional, scientific, and technical services. This underscores the need for targeted business development programs that address industry-specific challenges and equip entrepreneurs with the tools and knowledge necessary for sustainable growth.

Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

Areas that Require Financial Literacy Training

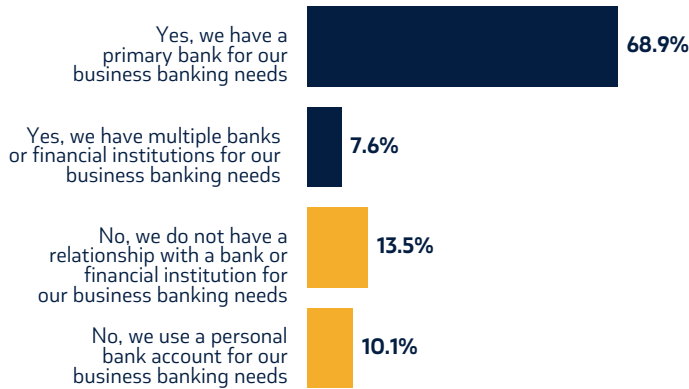


Survey results indicate that the top four areas where businesses require financial literacy training are financial planning at 39.7%, business finance and capital budgeting at 38.7%, bookkeeping and financial statement preparation at 36.5%, and basic budgeting and personal finance skills at 34.0%. These findings highlight key opportunities for city partners to provide targeted training and resources that strengthen the financial management capabilities of local businesses, enhance their decision-making, and promote long-term financial sustainability.

Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

Access to Capital

Relationship with a Bank or Financial Institution for Business Banking Needs



Survey results show that 76.5% of businesses maintain relationships with one or more banks or financial institutions. However, 13.5% reported having no such relationship, which may limit their access to essential financial services such as business loans and credit lines. Additionally, 10.1% of businesses indicated that they rely on personal bank accounts for business transactions, a practice that can complicate financial management and hinder credit development.

Businesses without banking relationships are most concentrated in retail trade, other services, and professional, scientific, and technical services. Similarly, the use of personal accounts for business transactions is most common among firms in other services, followed by professional, scientific, and technical services, and both arts, entertainment, and recreation, as well as retail trade.

Encountered Challenges while Seeking Business Financing



Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

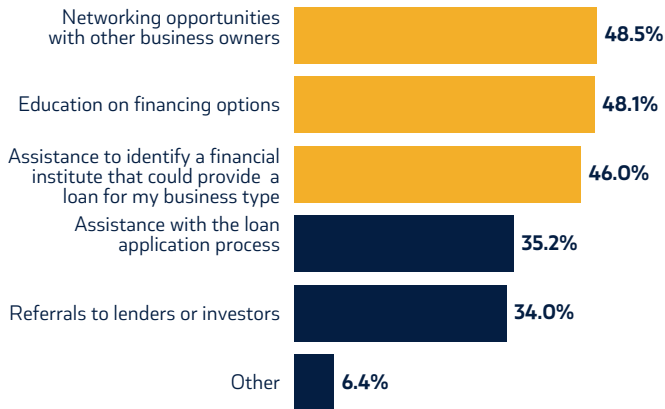
Businesses face significant challenges when seeking financing to support their operations and growth. The most reported barriers were high interest rates and fees, cited by 35.7% of respondents, and difficulty finding appropriate financing options, reported by 35.2%. These issues limit businesses' ability to obtain the capital needed for expansion, innovation, and day-to-day operations.

In addition, 21.5% of businesses pointed to unfavorable loan terms. Another 20.5% expressed uncertainty about where to seek financial assistance, reflecting a lack of awareness or accessibility of available funding sources.

Together, these challenges highlight the persistent financing gap faced by small businesses, particularly those without established credit histories or banking relationships.

Access to Capital

Business Support or Resources Benefit for Accessing Capital



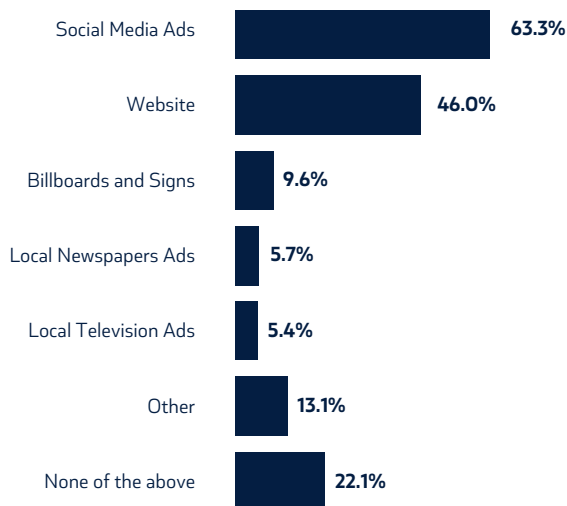
Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

Business support and resources to improve access to capital remain a key need among surveyed businesses. Networking opportunities with other business owners ranked as the highest priority, cited by 48.5% of respondents. Nearly as many, 48.1%, expressed interest in education on financing options, while 46.0% emphasized the importance of identifying financial institutions that offer suitable loan products. Additionally, 35.2% of businesses indicated a need for assistance with the loan application process, and 34.0% sought referrals to lenders or investors. A smaller share, 6.4%, identified other financial support needs.

These support needs are especially concentrated in sectors such as retail trade, other services, and professional, scientific, and technical services. Addressing these challenges through targeted initiatives, such as financial education programs, lender matchmaking, and technical assistance for loan applications, will be essential to improving access to capital, strengthening business networks, and fostering long-term growth and sustainability.

Marketing

Marketing Tools Employed

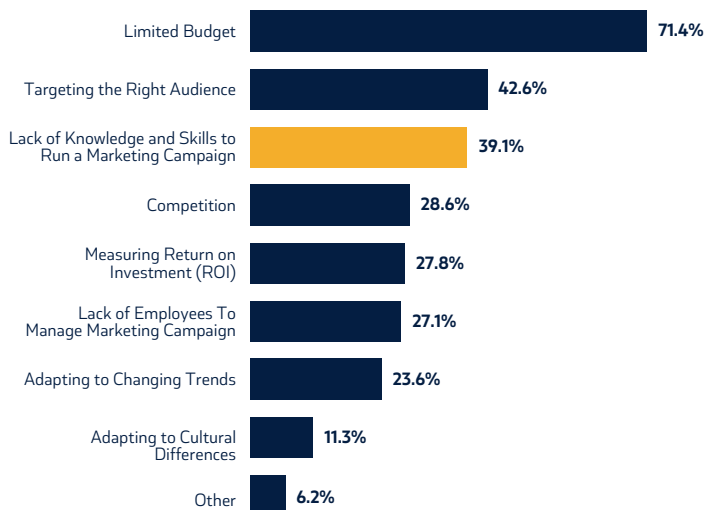


Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

Digital marketing has become the leading promotional strategy among surveyed businesses, with 63.3% using social media advertising and 46.0% maintaining websites. In contrast, traditional marketing approaches are less common, with 9.6% relying on billboards and signs, 5.7% using local newspaper advertisements, and 5.4% opting for local television advertisements.

Additionally, 13.1% of businesses reported using other advertising tools, including email campaigns, word-of-mouth referrals, and Google ads. Meanwhile, 22.1% indicated that they do not engage in any of the listed advertising strategies. These businesses are most concentrated in professional, scientific, and technical services, transportation and warehousing, and retail trade.

Major Challenges Encountered During Marketing Campaigns



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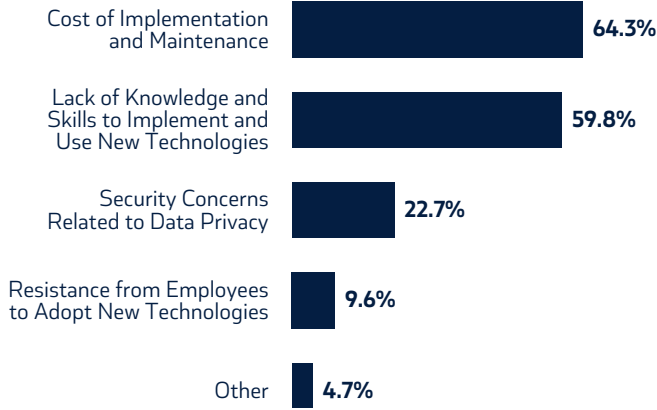
Surveyed businesses reported facing significant challenges in executing effective marketing campaigns. A large majority, 71.4%, identified limited budgets as their most pressing constraint. This financial limitation often restricts their ability to invest in advertising, digital tools, and professional marketing expertise needed to deliver successful campaigns. Beyond financial barriers, 42.6% of respondents cited difficulties in reaching their target audience, leading to inefficient outreach and limited returns on marketing efforts.

Additionally, 39.1% of businesses pointed to a lack of marketing knowledge and skills as a major obstacle. Among those facing skills gaps, the highest concentrations were in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector at 17.7%, followed by other services at 16.4% and retail trade at 15.1%.

These findings underscore the need for accessible marketing education, hands-on training, and targeted capacity-building initiatives to help businesses strengthen their marketing capabilities and compete more effectively in today's dynamic marketplace.

Digital Transformation

Major Challenges Encountered in Adopting New Technologies for Business



Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

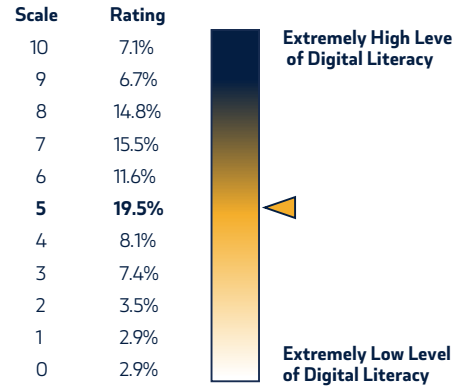
Adopting new technologies poses several significant challenges for businesses. The cost of implementation and maintenance emerges as the most critical barrier, with 64.3% of the businesses identifying this expense as a primary concern. This finding highlights the financial strain placed on small businesses with constrained budgets, making it difficult for them to invest in cutting-edge solutions.

Additionally, 59.8% of businesses reported lacking the necessary knowledge and skills to implement and use new technologies effectively. This skills gap is particularly pronounced in retail trade, other services, and professional, scientific, and technical services, with 18.3%, 16.1%, and 12.7%, respectively.

Security concerns, particularly related to data privacy, were cited by 22.7% of respondents. These concerns reflect a growing awareness of cybersecurity risks, which can discourage businesses from embracing new technologies due to fears of data breaches and the associated liabilities.

Together, these challenges point to a critical need for financial assistance, skillset training, and cybersecurity education to support successful technology adoption across small businesses.

Digital Literacy Rating

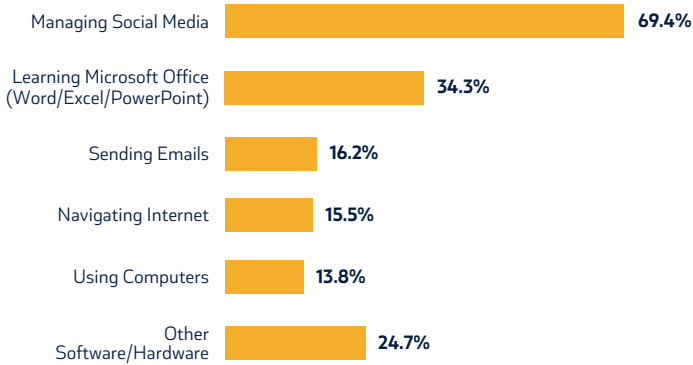


Digital literacy among El Paso businesses varies widely, reflecting different levels of technological readiness across the local business community. About 19.5% of respondents rated their digital literacy as average, indicating a moderate level of comfort with technology. A smaller share, 7.1%, described their digital literacy as extremely high, demonstrating strong capability in using digital tools to manage and grow their operations. Overall, 75.3% of surveyed businesses rated their digital literacy at average or above, suggesting that most have at least a functional understanding of digital systems.

In contrast, only 2.9% of businesses rated their digital literacy as extremely low. While this represents a small portion of respondents, it highlights a segment that may face difficulties performing basic digital tasks, an obstacle that could limit their efficiency, growth potential, and competitiveness in an increasingly technology-driven economy.

Digital Transformation

Areas that Require Digital Transformation Training



Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

A major priority for businesses pursuing digital transformation is social media management, with 69.4% of respondents expressing a need for training to improve marketing, customer engagement, and brand visibility. The highest demand for this training comes from the other services sector at 17.0%, followed by retail trade at 16.0% and professional, scientific, and technical services at 15.5%.

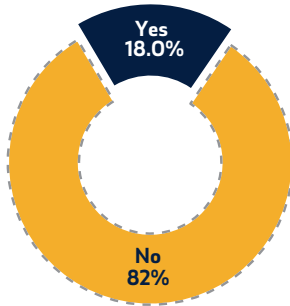
Training in essential digital tools such as Microsoft Office is also a key area of focus, identified by 34.3% of businesses. Proficiency in these tools is vital for improving operational efficiency, documentation, and communication. The greatest demand for Microsoft Office training is found in other services at 20.6%, retail trade at 16.2%, and construction at 9.3%.

In addition, many businesses need support with basic digital skills: 16.2% require help with email, 15.5% with internet navigation, and 13.8% with computer use. Addressing these gaps through tailored digital literacy initiatives will be essential for strengthening overall technological capacity and enhancing productivity across El Paso's small business community.

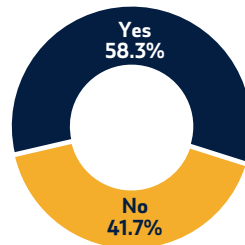
Workforce Development

Volunteer Labor for Businesses

Does your business use any volunteer labor to carry out certain tasks or projects?



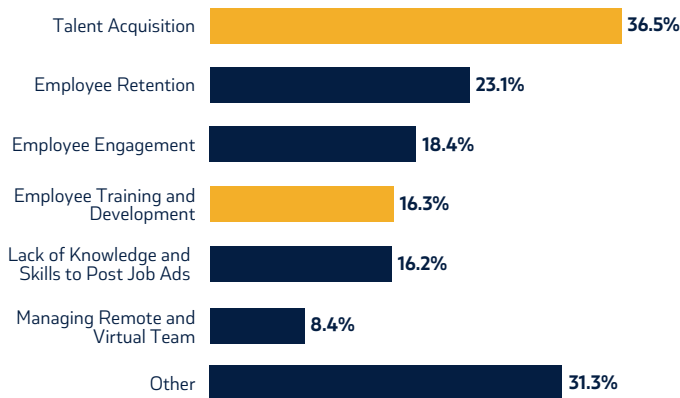
If **No**, would your business be interested in an apprentice/intern for 3 months at no cost?



Volunteer participation among El Paso businesses remains limited, with only 18.0% currently utilizing volunteer labor for specific tasks or projects, while the remaining 82.0% do not engage volunteers. However, many of these businesses expressed a strong interest in exploring alternative workforce support models. Among those not currently using volunteers, 58.3% indicated a willingness to host apprentices or interns for a three-month period at no cost, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen local talent development while providing support to small businesses.

This interest is particularly concentrated in professional, scientific, and technical services at 18.3%, retail trade at 14.1%, and other services at 12.7%. The growing demand for apprenticeships and internships highlights their value as practical solutions, providing businesses with extra support while helping train and develop a skilled local workforce

Key Workforce Development Challenges



Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

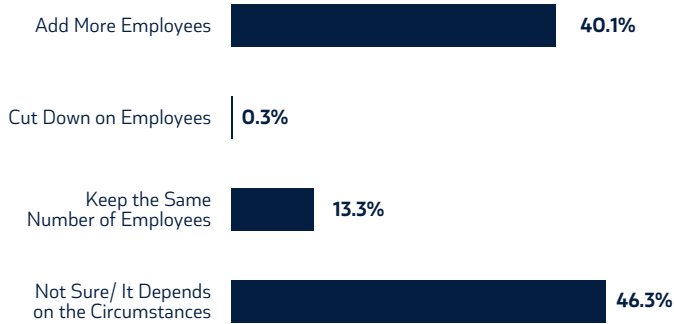
Small businesses in El Paso face various workforce development challenges. Talent acquisition is the most pressing issue, cited by 36.5% of respondents, followed by employee retention at 23.1% and employee engagement at 18.4%. Another 16.3% emphasized the need for improved training and development, and 16.2% addressed knowledge gaps in posting job ads. Managing remote or virtual teams was also cited as a challenge by 8.4% of businesses.

El Paso surveyed businesses face a range of workforce development challenges that impact their ability to grow and remain competitive. Talent acquisition emerged as the most significant issue, cited by 36.5% of respondents, followed by employee retention at 23.1% and employee engagement at 18.4%. Additionally, 16.3% of businesses identified the need for improved employee training and development opportunities, while 16.2% pointed to difficulties in posting job advertisements effectively. Managing remote or virtual teams was also noted as a challenge by 8.4% of respondents.

Furthermore, 31.3% of businesses reported "other" workforce concerns, which include limited financial resources to hire additional staff or operating without employees altogether. These findings underscore the complexity of workforce issues across small businesses and the need for tailored strategies that address both structural and operational barriers.

Workforce Development

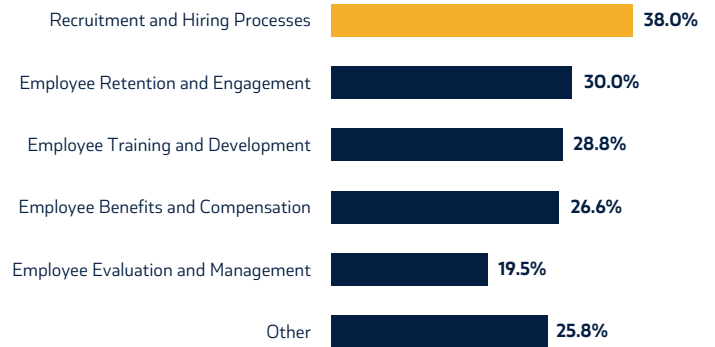
Employment Change Expectations



Regarding employment expectations for the coming year, 40.1% of surveyed businesses indicated plans to increase their workforce, reflecting optimism about growth prospects and confidence in the local economy. The strongest hiring intentions are observed in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector at 18.9%, followed by other services at 17.6% and accommodation and food services at 10.5%, a sector typically responsive to fluctuations in consumer demand.

In addition, 13.3% of businesses plan to maintain their current staffing levels, suggesting a sense of stability and satisfaction with their current workforce. In contrast, only 0.3%, just two respondents from the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, reported plans to reduce their workforce. However, a substantial 46.3% of businesses remain uncertain about their hiring plans, likely due to evolving market dynamics, cost pressures, and broader economic uncertainty.

Areas Requiring Assistance to Meet Employment Change Expectations



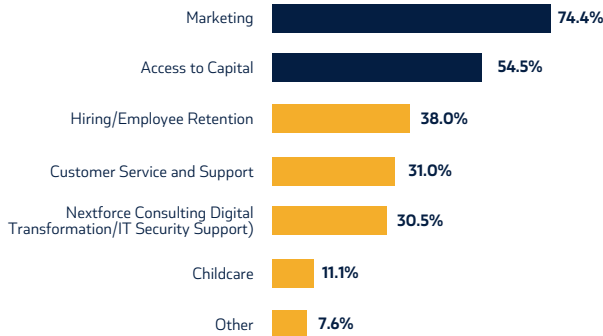
Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

Regarding the areas where businesses need assistance to meet their employment goals, recruitment and hiring emerge as the top priorities, with 38.0% of businesses seeking support in these areas. Employee retention and engagement follow closely, identified by 30.0% of respondents as ongoing challenges. Additionally, 28.8% of businesses stress the need for enhanced employee training and development, while 26.6% seek guidance on improving benefits and compensation strategies.

Together, these insights underscore the growing need for targeted workforce initiatives designed to help businesses attract, retain, and develop skilled talent amid a highly competitive labor market.

Workforce Development

Open to Recommendations for Support and Service Connections



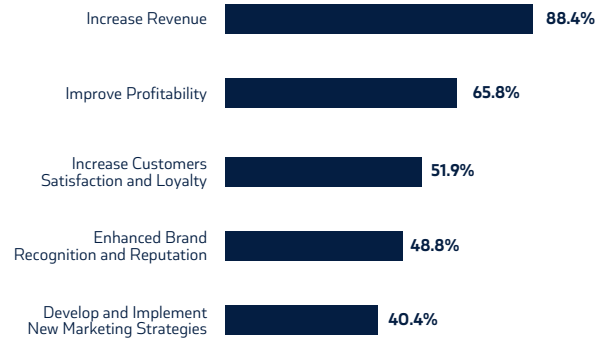
Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

Businesses in El Paso have shown a strong willingness to receive recommendations and connect with support services. Marketing stands out as the top priority, with 74.4% of respondents indicating a need for assistance in this area. The highest demand for marketing support is found in retail trade at 17.6%, followed by professional, scientific, and technical services at 15.4%, and other services at 15.2%. These results underscore the growing importance of effective marketing strategies, particularly in digital marketing, social media engagement, and customer outreach, to enhance visibility, attract new customers, and drive revenue growth in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Access to capital is another major need, cited by 54.5% of businesses as a key area for support. The retail trade sector shows the greatest need for financial assistance at 16.0%, followed by professional, scientific, and technical services at 15.1% and other services at 14.2%. Many businesses report difficulties navigating loan processes, choosing financial institutions, and identifying suitable funding opportunities, highlighting the need for tailored financial advisory services.

Additionally, 38.0% of businesses identified hiring and employee retention as critical areas for improvement, reinforcing the importance of workforce development in sustaining growth. Collectively, these insights reveal the top areas where targeted support can help local businesses strengthen operations, enhance competitiveness, and achieve long-term success.

Top Five Business Goals Prioritized for the Next 1-2 Years



Note: Values will not sum to 100% due to the presence of multiple answers.

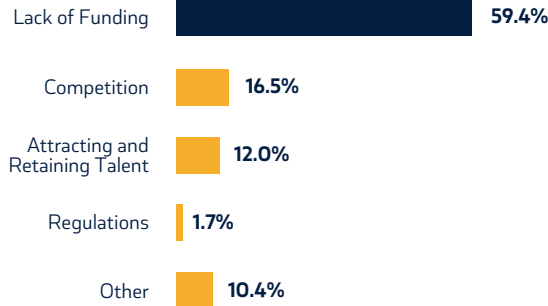
Small businesses are placing a strong emphasis on financial and customer-focused goals over the next one or two years. Topping the list, 88.4% of respondents prioritize increasing revenue, reflecting a collective drive for growth and expansion. Improving profitability is another critical objective, with 65.8% of businesses aiming to enhance their financial performance.

Customer satisfaction and loyalty also rank high, with 51.9% focusing on building stronger relationships with their clients. Meanwhile, 48.8% of businesses are working to boost brand recognition and reputation, and 40.4% prioritize adopting new marketing strategies.

Together, these priorities reflect a strategic push to grow revenues, improve customer relationships, and strengthen market presence.

Workforce Development

Biggest Challenges in Achieving Business Goals



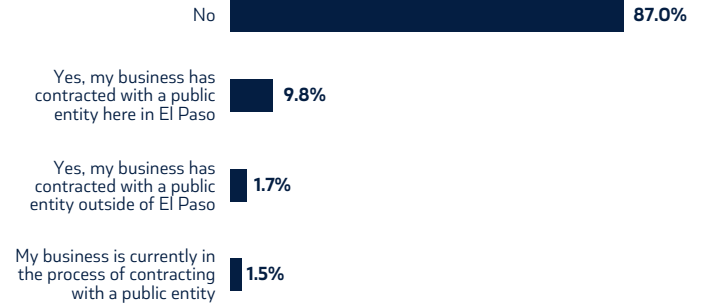
Funding shortages are the most significant hurdle for businesses in El Paso, with 59.4% of respondents identifying them as a major challenge to achieving their goals. The most affected sectors include retail trade, at 17.6%, professional, scientific, and technical services, at 15.3%, and other services, at 13.0%. Limited access to capital restricts businesses from expanding operations, investing in new technologies, and sustaining daily activities, making financial support a critical need.

Beyond funding, 16.5% of businesses point to competition as a key concern, while 12.0% report difficulties in attracting and retaining talent. Regulatory issues, by contrast, are a minimal concern, affecting just 1.7% of respondents.

These findings highlight the pressing need to address funding constraints, navigate competitive pressures, and enhance talent management strategies to support growth and success in the local business landscape.

Procurement

Businesses that Have Contracted with a Public Local Entity



The majority of the surveyed El Paso businesses, 87.0%, have not contracted with any local public entity. This trend is particularly evident in the largest business sector, other services, which primarily includes personal and laundry services, such as dry cleaning, laundry, and personal care establishments like hair and nail salons. These businesses typically do not align with the needs of public entity contracts.

In contrast, 9.8% of businesses have successfully secured contracts with local public entities, 1.7% have collaborated with public entities outside El Paso, and 1.5% are currently pursuing contracts with public entities.

These findings highlight varying levels of participation in public procurement and suggest potential opportunities for increased engagement in this area.

Conclusion

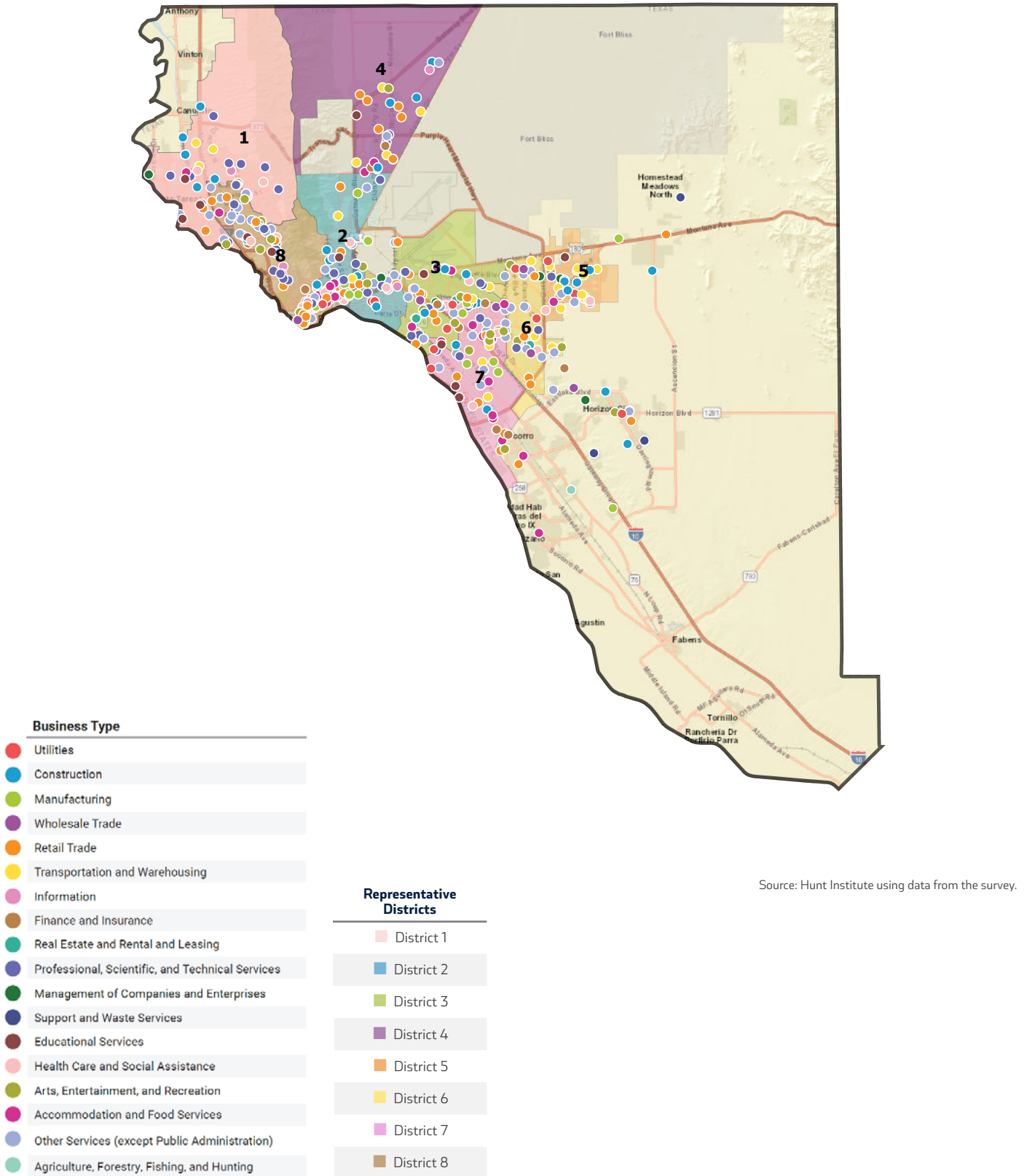
The City of El Paso Business Survey highlights both the strengths and challenges of El Paso's entrepreneurial community, providing a clear picture of the support needed to foster growth, resilience, and sustainability. While small businesses demonstrate optimism and ambition, aiming to increase revenue, improve profitability, and enhance customer satisfaction, they face significant barriers in accessing capital, developing a skilled workforce, and executing effective marketing strategies.

The survey underscores that access to funding remains the most pressing obstacle, with nearly 60.0% of businesses identifying insufficient capital as a key constraint. Workforce development and retention challenges further compound these difficulties, while limited marketing budgets and knowledge gaps hinder businesses from reaching their target audiences and growing their customer base.

Programs like the Business One Stop Shop (BOSS) are critical in addressing these challenges by providing business education, technical support, tailored financial products, and workforce development resources. The findings indicate that targeted support in networking, financing guidance, loan access, recruitment, employee training, and marketing can significantly strengthen the local small business ecosystem.

Appendix

Business Concentrations by Representative District



Source: Hunt Institute using data from the survey.

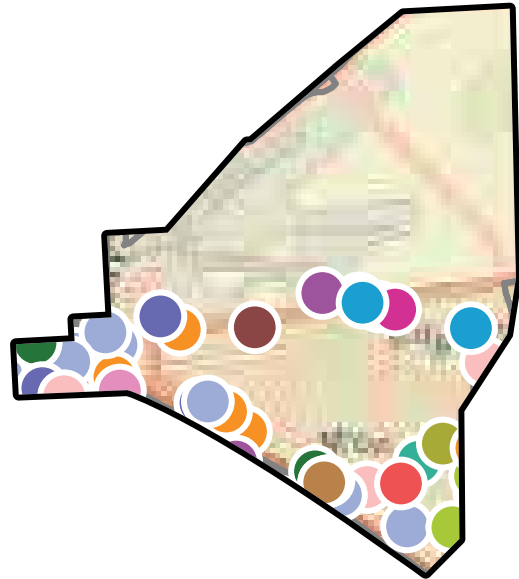
Appendix

Business Concentrations by ZIP Codes

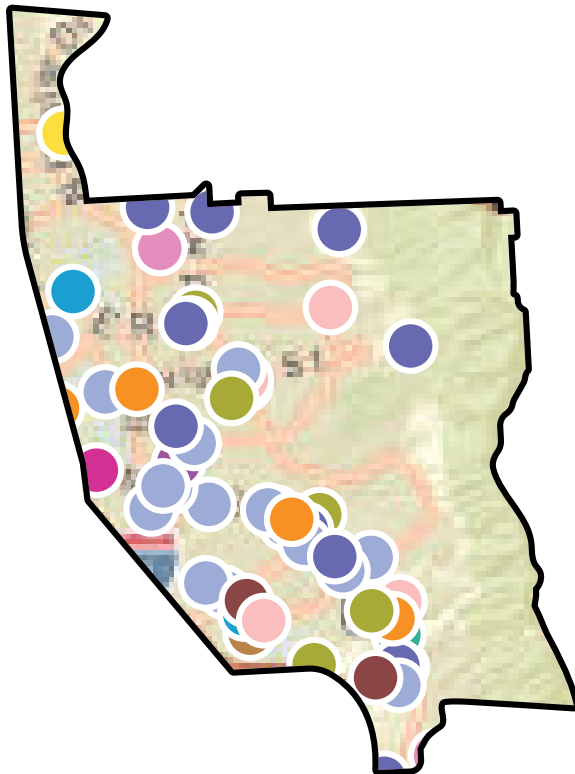
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79912



Business Type

- Utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Information
- Finance and Insurance
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Support and Waste Services
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting

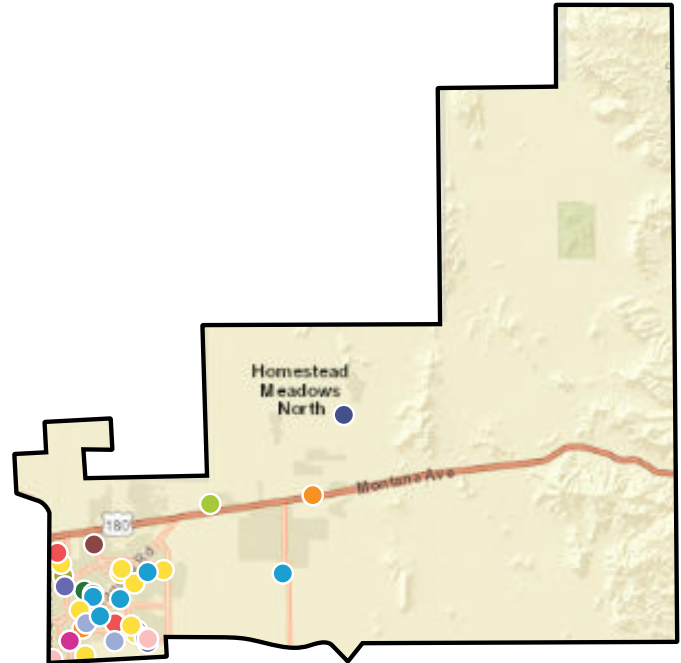
Appendix

Business Concentrations by ZIP Codes

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79938



Business Type

- Utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Information
- Finance and Insurance
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Support and Waste Services
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
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