

Small Business Pulse Survey

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Economic Programs, US Census Bureau

June 4th 2020

What is the Small Business Pulse Survey?

- **Experimental, prototype**
- **Small Business**
 - Single location businesses
 - 1-499 employees, \$1,000 or more in revenues
 - (Almost) all non-farm sectors
 - 50 states plus DC, Puerto Rico
- **Pulse**
 - Weekly survey and data products
- **Survey**
 - Over 90,000 small businesses each week
 - Estimates are representative at national, state, sector, state*sector, sub-sector, MSA levels

Why do the Small Business Pulse Survey?

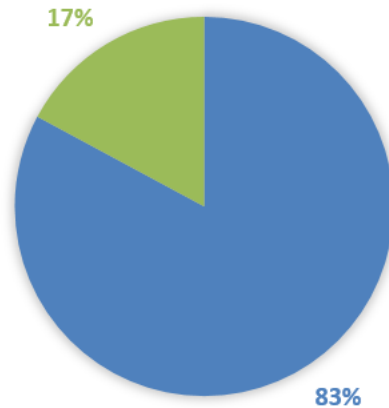
Small businesses are:

- An important part of the U.S. economy
- The target of many federal relief programs
- The best fit for our contact strategy and planned products
- Of wide interest

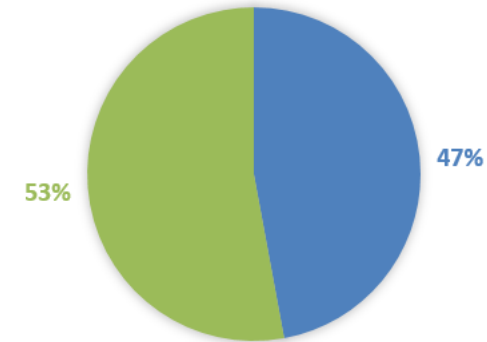
We are in a decision making period that is rapidly changing but with few high frequency official statistics about the economy.

Small businesses are an important part of the U.S. economy

MAJORITY OF BUSINESSES ARE SMALL



AND OVER 40% OF EMPLOYEES ARE IN SMALL BUSINESSES



Source: 2017 SUSB, 1<= employee<500 employee enterprises (includes multi-unit)

Small businesses are the target of relief programs

[Back to coronavirus.gov](#)



FEMA

Supporting Small Businesses

President Trump is helping small businesses bridge this economic emergency by giving them the funds they need to keep their employees on their payroll and stay in business. Thanks to The CARES Act, President Trump is helping hardworking American business owners by:

- **Providing \$350 billion in forgivable loans for small businesses through the Paycheck Protection Program**
- **Providing advances on SBA disaster loans that never have to be repaid**
- **Forgiving existing non-disaster SBA loan payments over the next six months**

Small businesses
are a good fit for
email contact
strategy and
geographically
detailed data
products

SMALL BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU:

As businesses and our nation collectively adapt to meet unprecedented challenges posed by Coronavirus (COVID-19), the U.S. Census Bureau is committed to producing critical information to measure the impacts to the economy and people of the United States. To better understand the needs of the many small businesses, we are reaching out to take our nation's economic pulse. Your answers can guide decisions made by federal officials and policymakers targeting aid, assessing programs' effectiveness, and facilitating America's economic recovery.

This is a **short survey with 16 checkbox questions that should take 5 minutes or less to complete**. The survey will assess your business' activities in the last week and since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please use the following information to respond to the **Small Business Pulse Survey**:

Login ID:

Due Date: May 28, 2020

Website: <https://census.gov/businesspulse>



Take the Small Business Pulse Survey - census.gov

Make your voice heard by responding to this 5-minute survey about how the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected businesses like yours.

Component ID: #ti28880866 Your response could provide valuable information to businesses and policymakers for understanding changes in employment, operating status ...

census.gov

Thank you in advance for your time and participation. I wish for your continued health and safety during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Dillingham
Director
U.S. Census Bureau

Small businesses are of wide interest

SALES ACTUALLY INCREASED IN APRIL ACCORDING TO LSUA REPORT



Wed, 05/20/2020 - 8:29pm

LSUA UPDATED ECONOMIC DASHBO

ALEXANDRIA – The Louisiana State University of Alex

April sales tax revenue increased between 15% and 41% in St. Landry, St. Charles, and St. Evangeline, and St. Landry which reflected overall sales tax revenue increased between 16% and 41% during the period.

“March consumer spending in Central Louisiana was much lower than expected according to April tax revenues,” said Dr. Rance L. Smith, Dean of the LSUA College of Business. “Louisiana small businesses are still recovering from a recent U.S. Census survey).”

Although 45% of small businesses in Louisiana said COVID-19 had a negative impact on their business, it fell below the 51% reported nationally according to a new Small Business Pulse Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Likewise, Louisiana small businesses were more optimistic about the future than the national average. Thirty-eight percent of the small businesses surveyed between April 26 and May 2 expect the economy to recover within 6 months, compared to 28% nationwide. Furthermore, 48% of Louisiana businesses received assistance from the Payroll Protection Program, compared to 38% nationally.

BREAKING NEWS NEWS STATE



The Seattle Times

Coronavirus Economy daily chart: In Washington, Oregon and U.S., small businesses are hit hard

May 14, 2020 at 2:01 pm | Updated May 14, 2020 at 9:15 pm

Small businesses report widespread impact from pandemic

The first in a planned series of weekly U.S. Census surveys on how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting small companies shows many have been hit hard. Among the Washington firms surveyed, 54.8% said the contagion had a “large negative effect”; nationally, 51.4% gave that answer.

QUESTION	U.S.	WASHINGTON	OREGON
Did this business temporarily close any of its locations for at least one day in the past week?	41.4	47.5	39.8
Did this business have a decrease in operating revenues this week?	74.0	74.2	68.5
Since March 13, 2020, has this business missed any loan payments?	11.5	9.8	10.3
How much time do you think will pass before this business returns to its usual level of operations?			
1 month or less:	3.9	3.7	3.0
2-3 months:	24.1	22.3	25.7
4-6 months:	27.7	23.9	26.1
More than 6 months:	31.4	34.5	32.2
This business will not return to its usual level:	6.2	8.4	5.7
There's been little to no effect on this business's usual level of operations:	6.7	7.2	7.3

Source: U.S. Census Small Business Pulse Survey

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

By Seattle Times business staff

A new survey of small businesses by the U.S. Census published Thursday shows nearly three-quarters in Washington state and nationally saw lower revenue this week due to the coronavirus pandemic.

FORT WORTH BUSINESS PRESS

NEWS COVID-19 E-EDITIONS EVENTS LISTS SUBSCRIBE COLLIN NEWS MORE



business > New small-business Pulse Survey shows COVID-19 impact on businesses

Small-business Pulse Survey shows COVID-19 impact on businesses

BP Staff May 18, 2020



What did we ask about in the SBPS ?

We partnered with SBA, FRB, ITA, MBDA to develop SBPS content

16 (almost exclusively) qualitative questions:

- One question about overall well-being
- Five questions about Operations
- Three questions about Challenges
- Five questions on Finances
- One question about Outlook /Return to usual operations
- Asks one identification question (EIN)

What products are available?

// Census.gov > Data > Experimental Data Products > Small Business Pulse Survey > Small Business Pulse Survey Data

Small Business Pulse Survey

Updated May 28th, 2020

[DATA](#) [WEEKLY COMPARISONS](#) [DOWNLOADS](#) [ABOUT THE DATA](#) [HOW THE DATA ARE COLLECTED](#) [HELP](#)

Downloads and Documentation

Dataset	4/26 - 5/2	5/3 - 5/9	5/10 - 5/16
National, Sector	XLS	XLS	XLS
National, State	XLS	XLS	XLS
National, State by Sector	XLS	XLS	XLS
Top 50 MSA	XLS	XLS	XLS
Sub-sector (NAICS3)	XLS	XLS	XLS
Unit Response Rate	XLS	XLS	XLS
All Files	ZIP	ZIP	ZIP
Documentation	4/26 - 5/16		
SBPS Questionnaire	PDF		
Codebook	XLS		
Data Dictionary	CSV		
README	TXT		

national_state_sector_24May20_30May20 [Compatibility Mode] - Excel

File Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View ACROBAT SAS Tell me what you want to do...

Show Queries From Table Get External Data Existing Connections Refresh All Edit Links Connections Sort & Filter Data Tools Forecast

Get & Transform Get External Data Connections Sort & Filter Data Tools Forecast

13606

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ST	NAICS_SECTOR	INSTRUMENT	ANSWER_IC	ESTIMA	SE				
3589	FL	72	1	1	77.6%	4.82				
3590	FL	72	1	2	16.5%	3.05				
3591	FL	72	10	3	18.5%	2.95				
3592	FL	72	10	4	32.7%	3.85				
3593	FL	72	10	5	19.9%	4.53				
3594	FL	72	11	1	19.3%	2.20				
3595	FL	72	11	2	80.7%	2.20				
3596	FL	72	12	1	38.2%	4.55				
3597	FL	72	12	2	61.8%	4.55				
3598	FL	72	13	1	89.3%	2.89				
3599	FL	72	13	2	56.8%	4.84				
3600	FL	72	13	3	18.5%	2.78				
3601	FL	72	13	6	15.0%	4.68				
3602	FL	72	13	7	21.0%	4.12				
3603	FL	72	14	1	84.7%	3.36				
3604	FL	72	14	2	30.1%	4.53				
3605	FL	72	14	3	11.5%	2.85				

Sheet 1

Ready 41 of 12956 records found

What visualizations are available?

National map

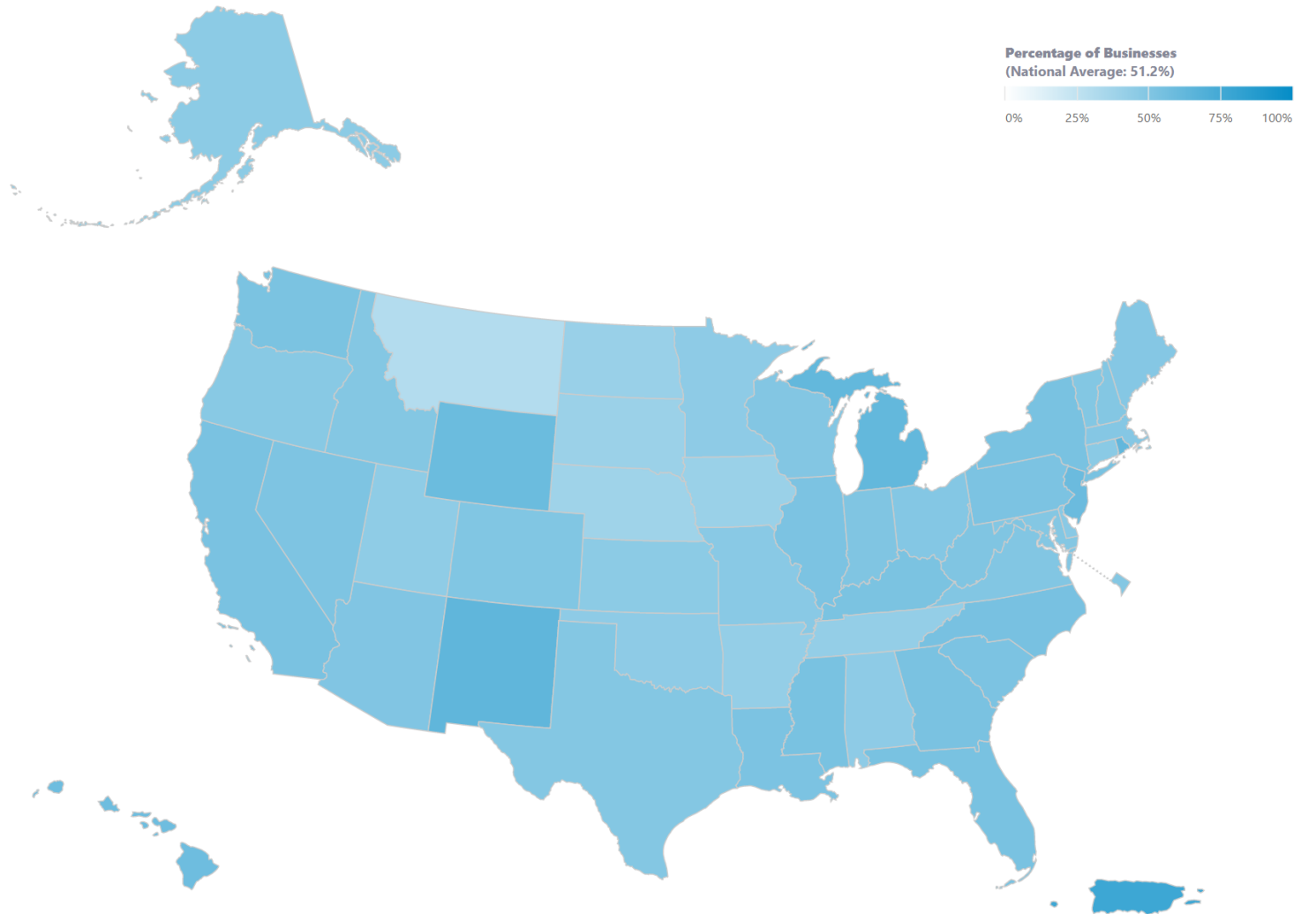
Collection Dates:

Survey Question:

Survey Answer:

In the last week, did this business have a change in the total number of hours worked by paid employees?

Data Collected 4/26 to 5/2



Collection Dates: Week 5 (5/24 to 5/30) ▼

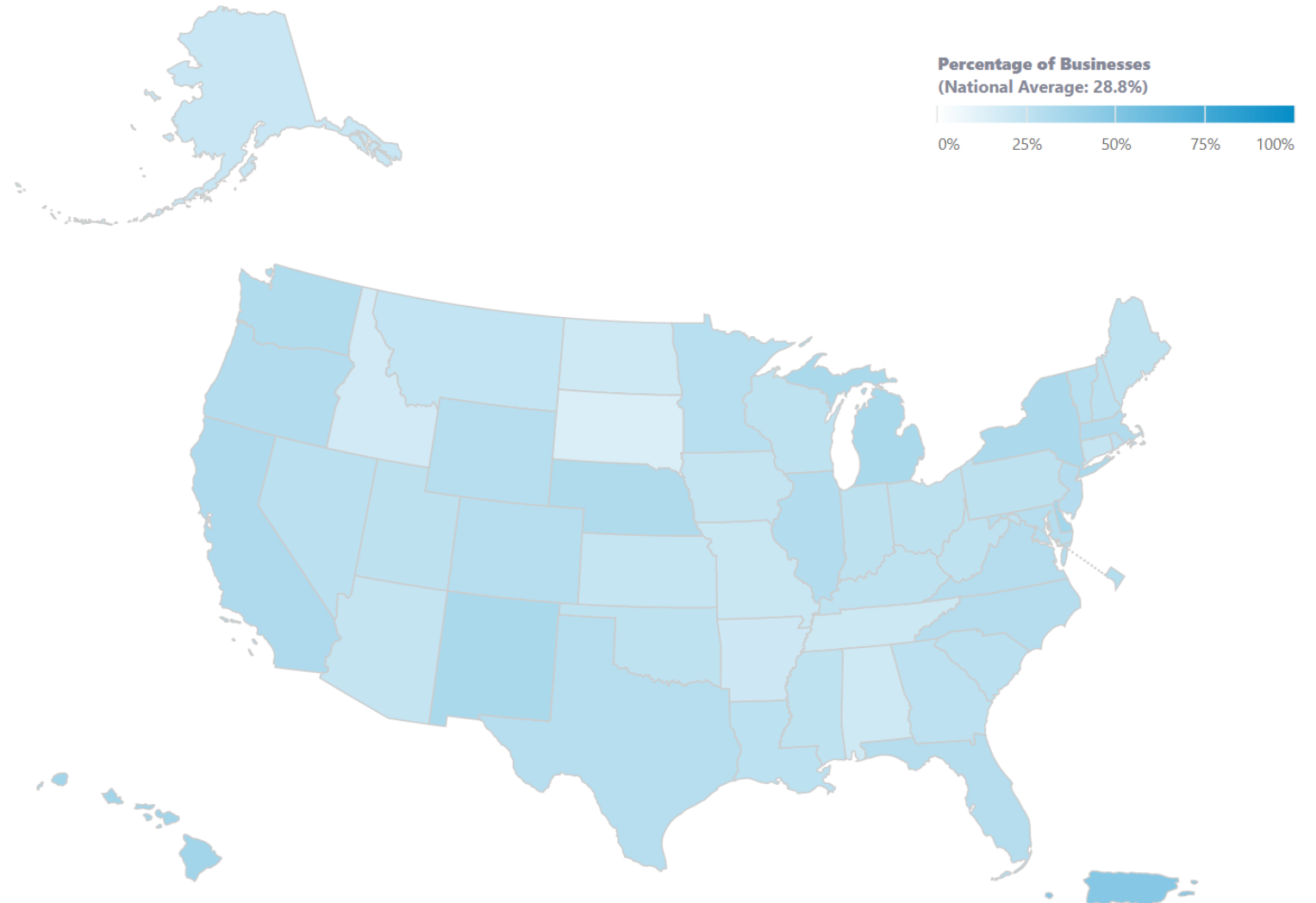
Survey Question: Change in employee hours ▼

Survey Answer: Yes, decreased ▼

In the last week, did this business have a change in the total number of hours worked by paid employees?

Data Collected 5/24 to 5/30

National map



Sector comparisons

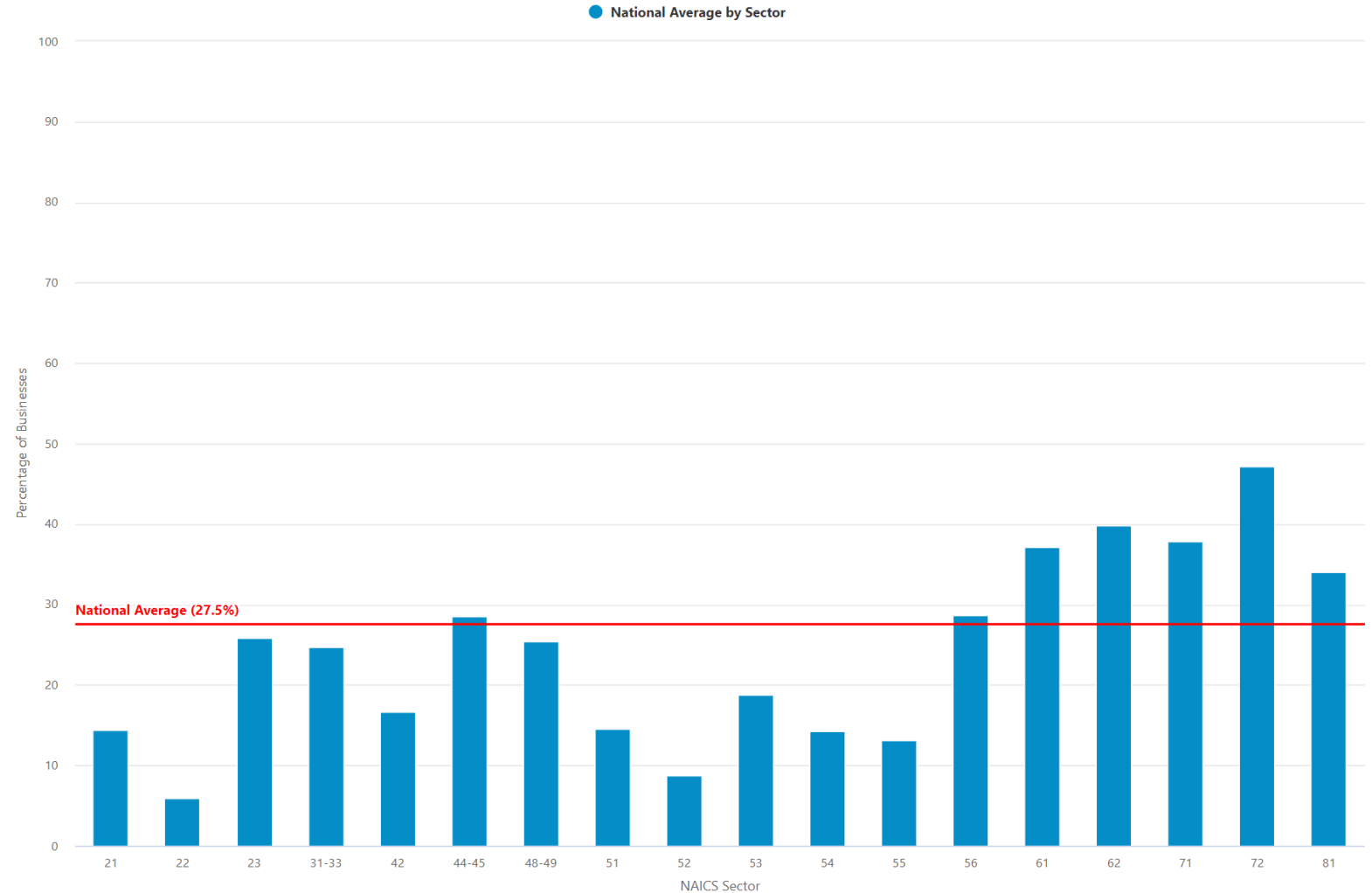
Collection Dates: Week 1 (4/26 to 5/2) ▼

Survey Question: Change in employees ▼

Survey Answer: Yes, decreased ▼

In the last week, did this business have a change in the number of paid employees?

Data Collected 4/26 to 5/2



Sector comparisons

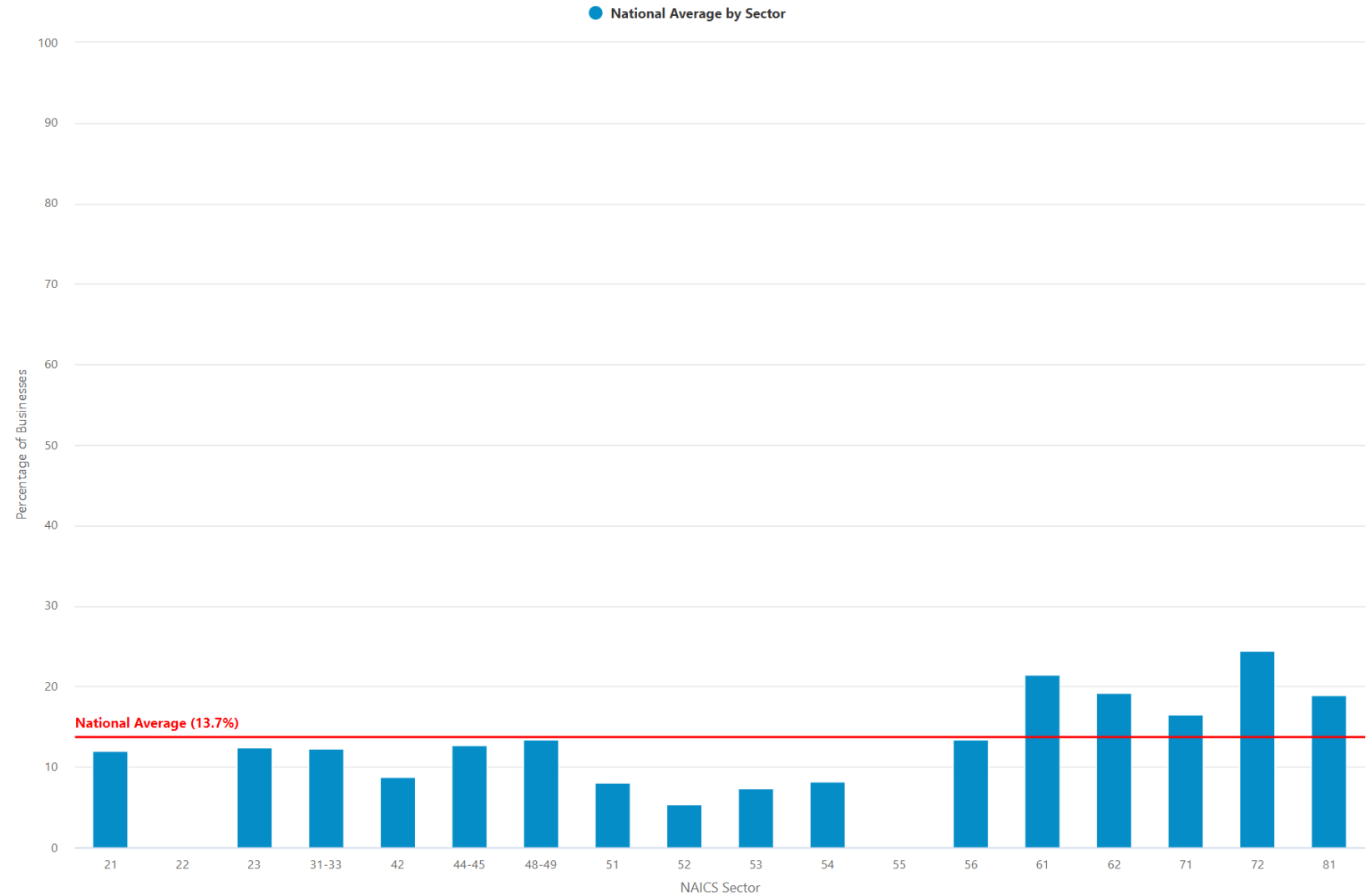
Collection Dates: Week 5 (5/24 to 5/30) ▼

Survey Question: Change in employees ▼

Survey Answer: Yes, decreased ▼

In the last week, did this business have a change in the number of paid employees?

Data Collected 5/24 to 5/30



Comparison tool

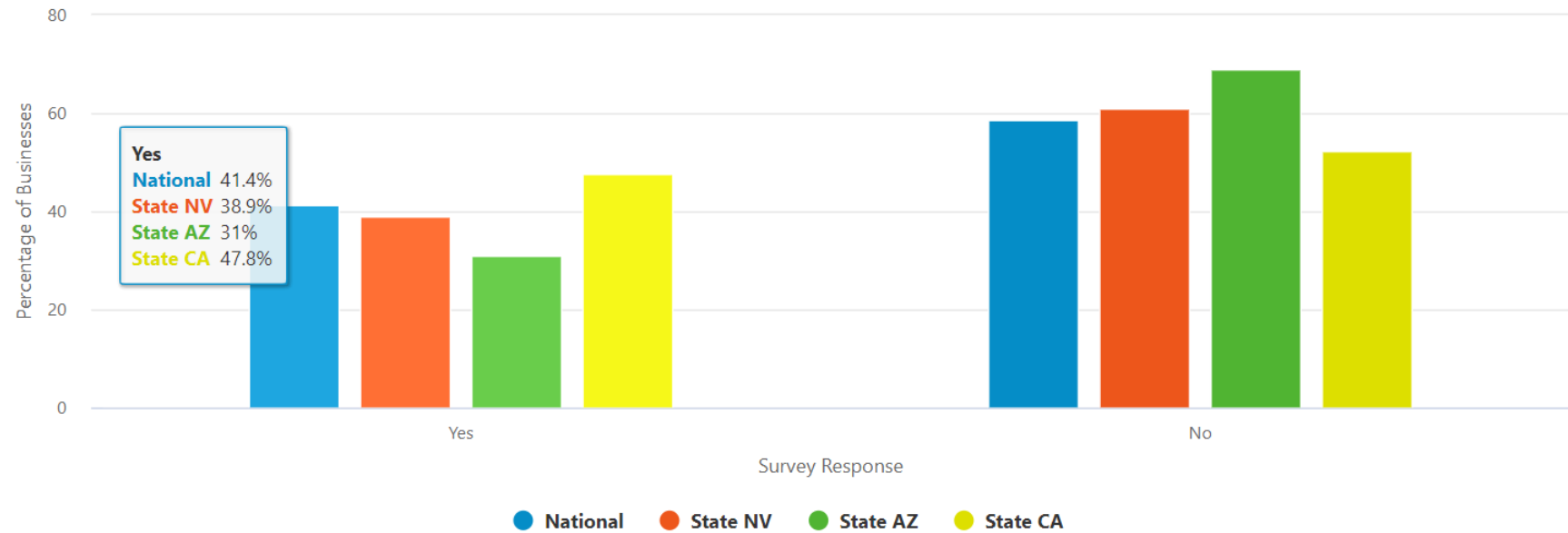
Collection Dates: Week 1 (4/26 to 5/2) ▼

Survey Question: Temporary closings ▼

Compare: STATE Arizona, California, Nevada ▼

In the last week, did this business temporarily close any of its locations for at least one day?

Data Collected 4/26 to 5/2



Comparison tool

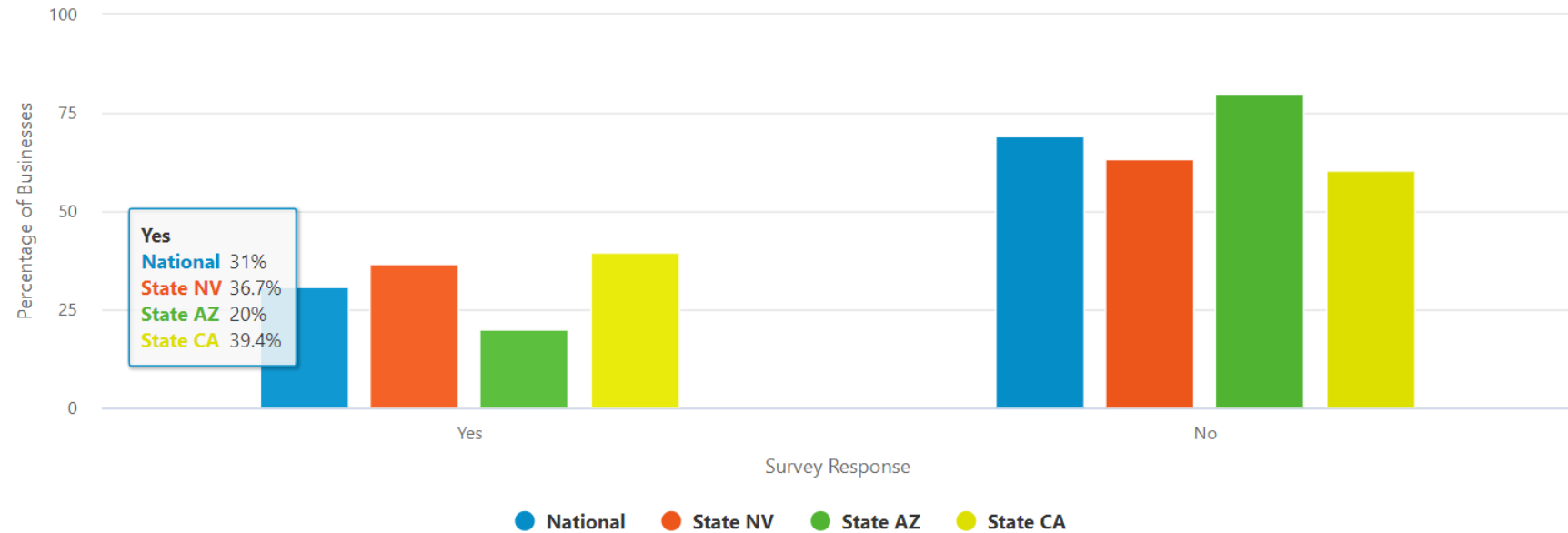
Collection Dates: Week 4 (5/17 to 5/23) ▼

Survey Question: Temporary closings ▼

Compare: STATE Arizona, California, Nevada ▼

In the last week, did this business temporarily close any of its locations for at least one day?

Data Collected 5/17 to 5/23



Time series tool

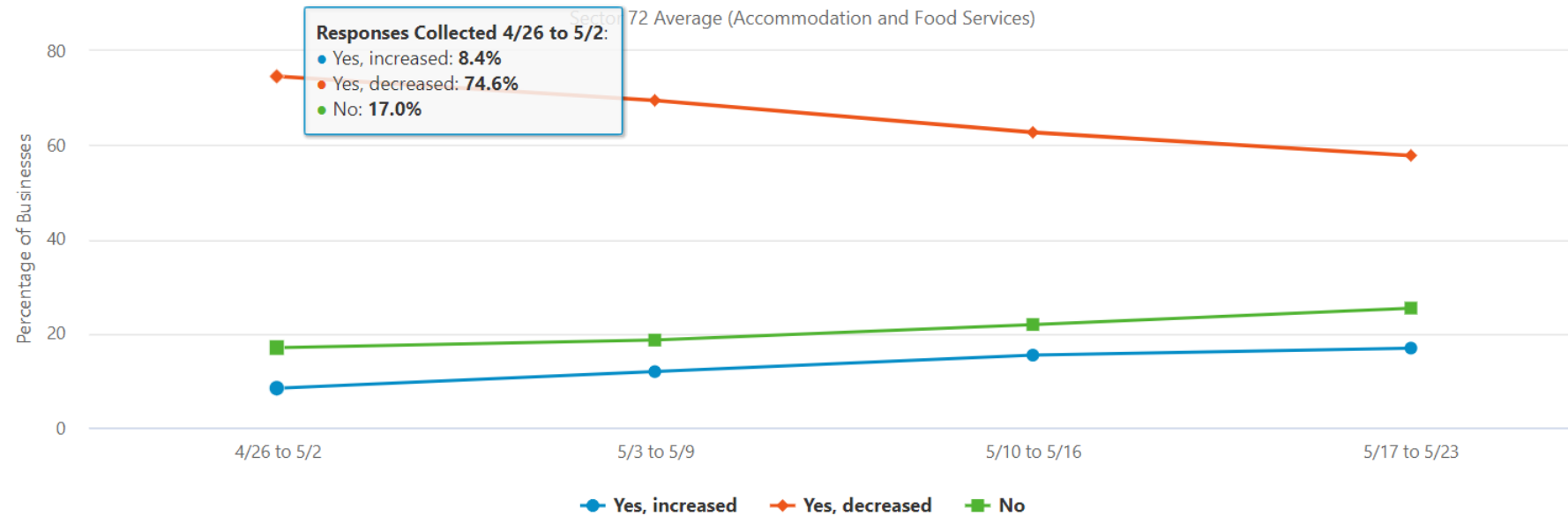
Survey Question: Change in Revenues ▼

Filter:

NAICS

72: Accommodation and Food Services ▼

In the last week, did this business experience a change in operating revenues/sales/receipts, not including any financial assistance or loans?



Time series tool

Survey Question: Change in Revenues ▼

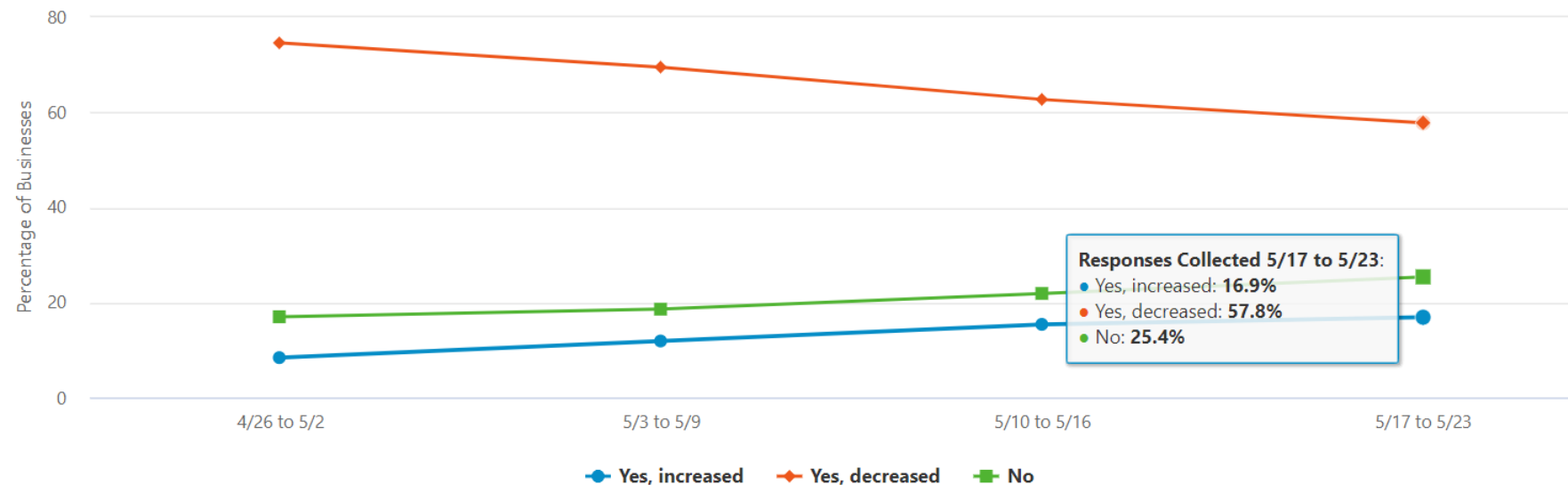
Filter:

NAICS

72: Accommodation and Food Services ▼

In the last week, did this business experience a change in operating revenues/sales/receipts, not including any financial assistance or loans?

Sector 72 Average (Accommodation and Food Services)



Time series tool - MSA

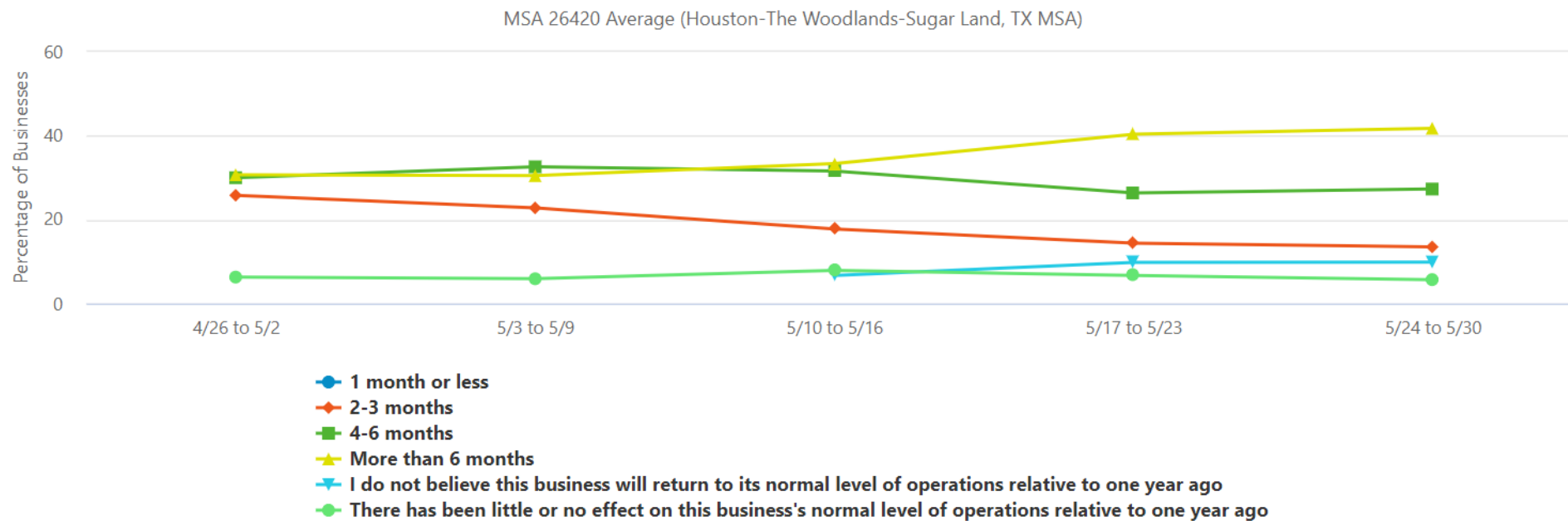
Survey Question: Outlook ▼

Filter:

MSA ▼

26420: Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX ▼

In your opinion, how much time do you think will pass before this business returns to its normal level of operations relative to one year ago?



What's next for the SBPS?

- Research project
 - Link to Annual Business Survey, LBD
 - Business and owner characteristics (size, age, race, ethnicity, gender)
- Second phase
 - Outreach to original partners as well as additional federal agencies and offices
 - Planning for ~August – Oct collection pending approval

More information

Contact me:

catherine.d.buffington@census.gov

SBPS landing page:

<https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/small-business-pulse-survey.html>

Backup slides

Email invitation to respond

IS THIS A LEGITIMATE SURVEY REQUEST?

We understand and appreciate concerns about legitimacy regarding emailed requests to participate in surveys. The U.S. Census Bureau will always send email invitations for surveys from an email address that ends with @census.gov. If you receive an invitation to participate in a Census Bureau survey with an email address that does NOT end with @census.gov, please do not click on any links or open any attachments. Additionally, you can verify what surveys we are currently conducting by going to our census.gov website. Along the top banner, you will see a menu item for “Information for...” and once you click on that option, please select “Survey Participants/Respondents.” Look for a link to “List of surveys” in the left menu.

OMB Number

This collection has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The eight-digit OMB approval number is 0607-1014 and appears at the upper right of the login screen. Without this approval, we could not conduct this survey.

Authority and Confidentiality

Title 13, United States Code, Sections 131 and 182, authorizes the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct this collection and to request your voluntary assistance.

Methodology

- Universe and Respondent Selection
- The target population is all non-farm, single-location employer businesses (receipts \geq \$1,000) with 1-499 employees
- Includes 50 states, DC and Puerto Rico, by Industry
- The universe was subdivided into nine groups. Each group of ~98k different businesses will receive the survey each week for 9 weeks.
- This will minimize respondent burden, while also providing the data needed to produce detailed weekly estimates by sector and state and for the top 50 MSAs.

Methodology cont.

- Used email only, first time ever, to initiate the survey
- **Target population was small business that had an email address for:**
 - Single location business
 - Reported to the 2017 Economic Census
 - Still active in the Business Register

Not a survey sample, as we took all businesses meeting the criteria

Adjusted weights will be used in estimation to make them representative at the national, sector, state, and sub-state levels

Methodology deep dive

- Of the 8 million employer establishments in scope to the EC, about 2 million were classified as multi-unit and 6 million are classified as single units. Of the 6 million single unit employer businesses, almost 5 million have paid employees between 1 and 500. Approximately 1.7 million single unit businesses received an invitation to respond to the EC and administrative data was used for the remaining cases to minimize respondent burden. Out of the 1.7 million, 1.1 million had employees between 1 and 500.
-
- In total, 4 million establishments received an invitation to the 2017 EC and the associated response rate for single unit businesses was 70% and for multi-unit businesses was 79%. Nearly 1.2 million responses including authenticated email address from the single unit universe were captured as part of the EC data collection process. Roughly 550K units of the units that were active at the time of the EC would now be considered deaths due to having no payroll in 2018, 2019, or 2020; these were excluded from the SPBS frame.
-
- In April 2020, the Census Bureau extracted from the Business Register single-location businesses with e-mail addresses and with employment between 1 and 500 and payroll in 2018, 2019, or 2020. This resulted in approximately 950K units. We then matched these single location businesses to our current survey databases to determine if we had a more recent email address. Using date time stamps associated with update to the email address field, we found 91K email addresses that were more recent than what was collected in the EC. An additional 10K emails were removed due to validity checks, resulting in a target population of about 940K.

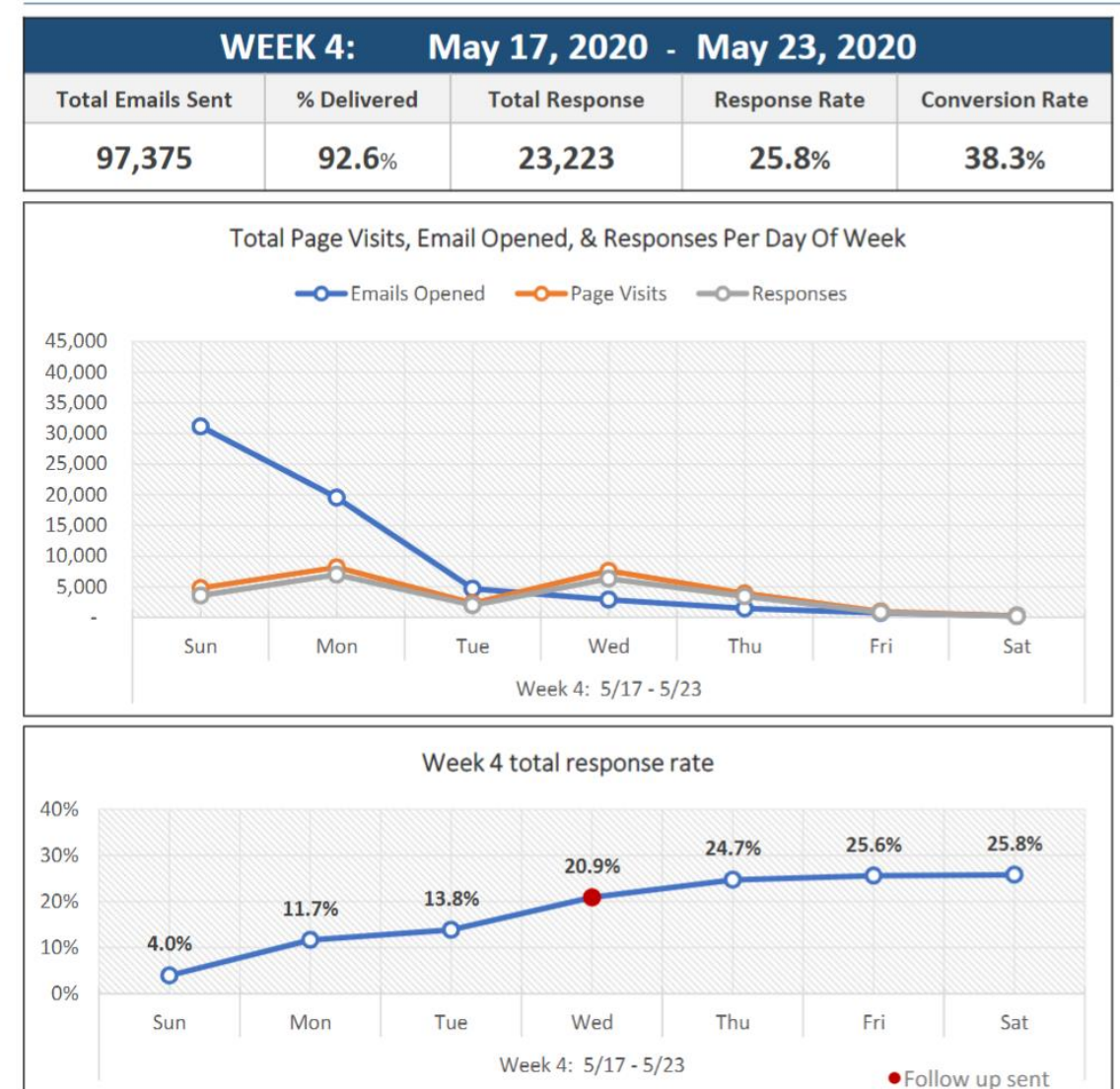
Top 25 internet requests for SBPS by Nielsen Designated Market Area (DMA)

1. New York (501)	14. Miami-Ft. Lauderdale (528)
2. Washington DC (Hagrstwn) (511)	15. Portland Or (820)
3. Los Angeles (803)	16. Houston (618)
4. Chicago (602)	17. Phoenix (Prescott) (753)
5. San Francisco-Oak-San Jose (807)	18. Detroit (505)
6. Boston (Manchester) (506)	19. Tampa-St. Pete (Sarasota) (539)
7. Philadelphia (504)	20. Cleveland-Akron (Canton) (510)
8. Atlanta (524)	21. Salt Lake City (770)
9. Seattle-Tacoma (819)	22. Baltimore (512)
10. Dallas-Ft. Worth (623)	23. San Diego (825)
11. Denver (751)	24. Orlando-Daytona Bch-Melbrn (534)
12. No Metro (0)	25. Sacramnto-Stkton-Modesto (862)
13. Minneapolis-St. Paul (613)	

Small businesses
want to tell
their story

SMALL BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY

WEEKLY UPDATE- **FINAL**



Last Updated May 29, 2020

Other programs

- Main Street Lending Program – FRB
- IRS
 - Defer employer payroll taxes
 - Tax credit for sick leave and family leave
 - Employee retention credit