



2025 Business Survey Findings

A Baseline in Business Needs

Presented by The Office of Economic Development

Survey Overview

- ◆ **Total Responses:** 44 Businesses
- ◆ **Survey Period:** Mid February- Mid April
- ◆ **Method:** Online Questionnaire with mailed campaign, email campaign, partnership support and direct outreach

Business Types:

- Retail: 27%
- Manufacturing: 18%
- Office/Professional Services: 34%
- Hospitality/Food Service: 11%
- Other: 9%

Business Size:

- Small Businesses (under 10 employees): 66%
- Medium Businesses (10-49 employees): 27%
- Large Businesses (50+ employees): 7%

Key Findings at a Glance

A horizontal decorative bar composed of several colored segments: purple, olive green, blue, grey, yellow, maroon, dark blue, tan, teal, and olive green.

80% of business surveyed would choose to locate in Staunton again

57% of business surveyed are familiar with the Enterprise Zone

79% of business surveyed expect steady or increased sales in the coming year

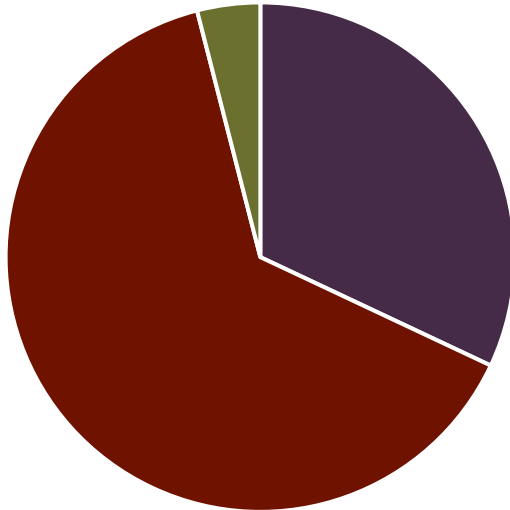
9% of business surveyed report having utilized Enterprise Zone Incentives

70% of business surveyed report struggles of finding qualified workers

84% of business surveyed are interested in learning more about incentive programs

Employment Plans

Employment Plans



■ Increase Employment
■ Decrease Employment

■ Maintain Current Staffing Levels

32% Increase Employment

On a ten-point scale, 32% of businesses specified a 6-10 indicating an expected increase in employment.

64% Maintain Current Staffing Levels

On a ten-point scale, 64% of businesses specified a 5 indicating intent to maintain current staffing levels.

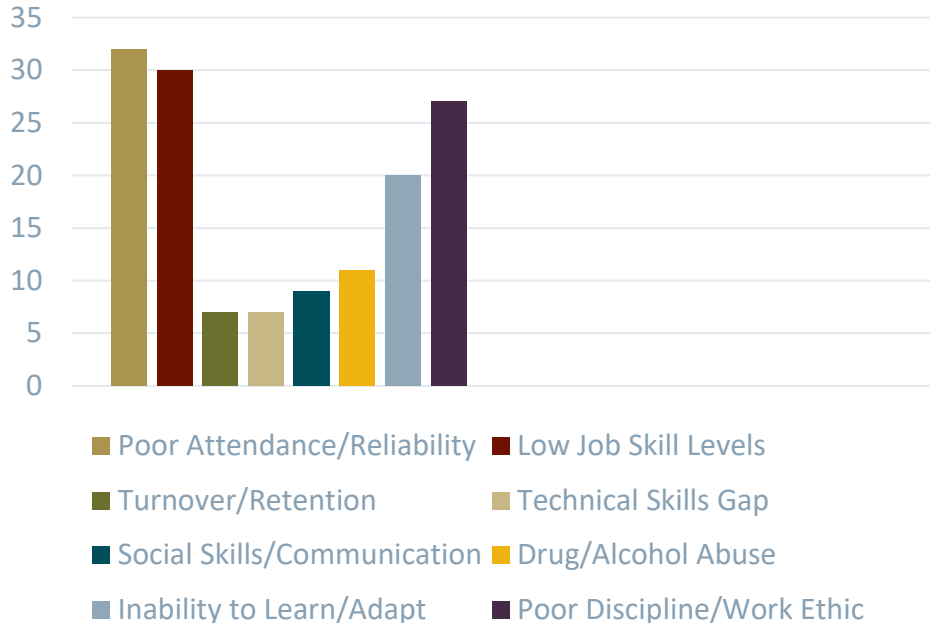
4% Decrease Employment

On a ten-point scale, 4% of businesses specified a 1-4 indicating an expected decrease in employment.

Positive indicator of business stability and potential growth

Workforce Challenges

Reported Challenges



Average Hiring
Difficulty Rating:

6.6

54%

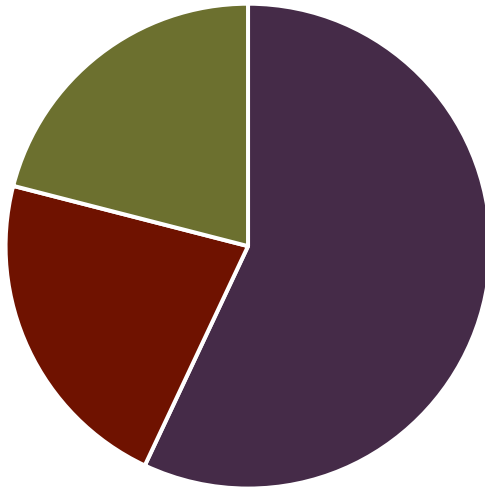
of business surveyed
reported difficulty hiring
as seven or higher on a
ten-point scale

16%

of business surveyed
reported difficulty hiring
as ten, extremely
difficult

Business Outlook

Business Outlook



■ Increase in Sales ■ Steady Sales ■ Decrease in Sales

The average business outlook score
among all surveyed businesses

5.8

■ **57% Increase in Sales**

On a ten-point scale, 57% of businesses specified a 6-10 indicating an expected increase in sales.

■ **22% Steady Sales**

On a ten-point scale, 22% of businesses specified a 5 indicating an expected steady hold in sales.

■ **21% Decrease in Sales**

On a ten-point scale, 21% of businesses specified a 1-4 indicating an expected decrease in sales.

80%

of business surveyed would choose
to locate in Staunton again

Why Businesses Choose Staunton:

- Downtown or Beverley Street Location: 36 %
- Central Location in the Valley: 27%
- Walkability/ Foot Traffic: 18%
- Highway Accessibility: 11%
- Business Community: 9%

80%

of business surveyed would choose
to locate in Staunton again

Top Challenges to Locating in Staunton

- Parking Challenges: 32 %
- High Costs/ Taxes: 27%
- Limited Foot Traffic (in certain areas): 14%
- Empty Storefronts: 9%
- Aging Demographics: 9%

Public Services Ratings

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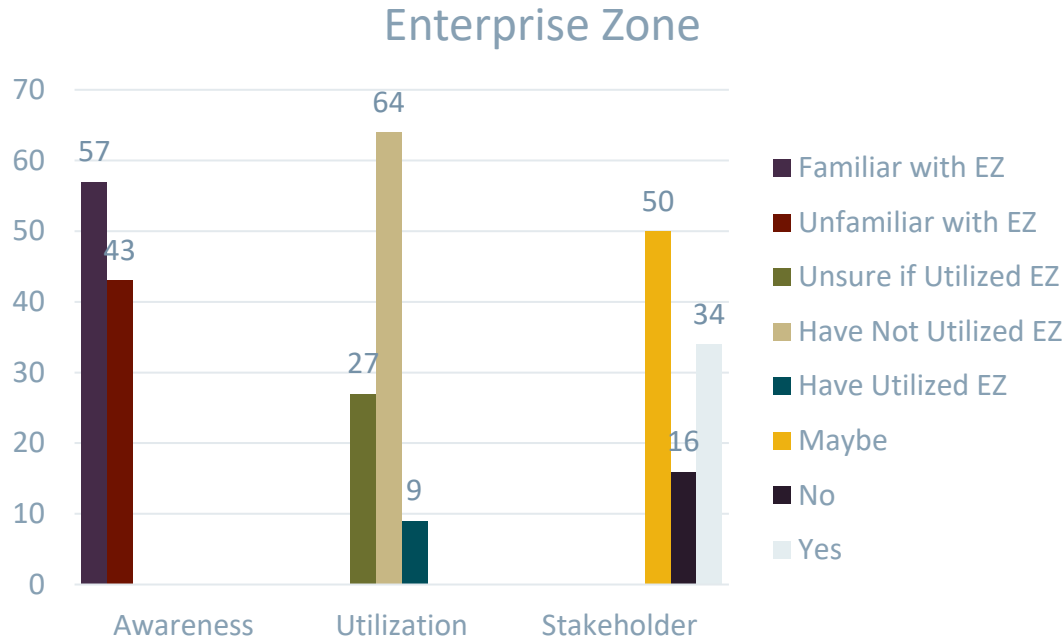
Highest Rated (0-5 Scale)

- Fire Protection: 4.3
- EMS: 4.2
- Police Protection: 3.9
- Parks & Recreation: 3.9

Lowest Rated (0-5 Scale)

- Airport: 2.4
- Solid Waste Disposal Costs: 2.7
- Sewage Disposal Costs: 2.9

Enterprise Zone



- **57%** familiar with Staunton Enterprise Zone
- **Only 9%** have utilized Enterprise Zone incentives
- **27%** unsure if they've utilized incentives
- **84%** interested in stakeholder meetings or learning more

Significant opportunity to increase program utilization

The Data

- **48%** have not utilized any business assistance programs
- **25%** utilized COVID-related assistance
- **16%** utilized local resources (SCCF, Chamber)
- **9%** utilized state-level programs
- Many reported uncertainty about available programs

Over all, the responses from businesses communicated the following:

- Lack of awareness about available programs (both local and beyond)
- Challenges with accessibility for small businesses
- Interest in greater engagement & participation
- Desire for more information

Engagement Insights

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What we learned about business engagement:

1. Multiple touchpoints required beyond formal surveys
2. Different sectors have different communication preferences
3. Relationship-based approach yields better participation
4. Qualitative feedback provides actionable insights
5. Many businesses want to engage but need flexible options



Where do we go from here...

1. Enterprise Zone

- Continue to engage in amending incentives to better align with needs of business community, to include meeting with stakeholders who expressed interest

2. Develop Strategic Plan for Department

- Create programs and initiatives to address identified gaps and needs and
- Work with partner agencies to improve communication and ensure limited duplication of efforts and clear roles
- Create strong Community for Small Businesses
 - To include more robust resources and programming housed on updated EDO website

Thank You



Thank you to all 44 businesses that participated in this survey. Your feedback is invaluable in shaping Staunton's economic future.

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