



NORTH  
**Dakota**

Be Legendary.

**Business Gateway**  
**Market Research & Analysis**

**Findings Presentation**

# AGENDA

- Purpose & Goals
- Conclusions
- Activities
- Findings
- Closing Thoughts

# **PURPOSE & GOALS**

## **OVERVIEW**

# PURPOSE & GOALS

## Purpose

“Understand the need for and value of creating an online Business Gateway for new and existing businesses in the state.”

## Goals

1. Conclude if a Business Gateway would be valuable.
2. Gather convincing evidence to support this conclusion.
3. Understand which Business Gateway features would be most valuable.

**CONCLUSIONS**

**OVERVIEW**



## A business gateway will...

**Be of great value in helping both ND businesses and ND state agencies be more successful.**

- Save businesses **time, money,** and **confusion**
- Save state agencies **time, money,** and **reputation** by helping businesses comply more efficiently
- **Grow ND's economy** by providing businesses easier access to funding and resource opportunities

# **ACTIVITIES**

# **OVERVIEW**



## Activities Overview

- **Strategy:** Developed market research and analysis strategy/plan
- **Expert Consult:** Interviewed stakeholders from the state
- **Interviews:** Conducted interviews with business leaders around the state
- **Surveys:** Surveyed North Dakota business leaders
- **Analysis:** Analyzed the data collected
- **Discoveries:** Compiled findings

**ACTIVITIES**

**GATHERING DATA &  
EXPERTISE**

## Steering Committee

### Interviewed the following leaders from ND agencies

- **Tammy Miller**, Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Governor, State of North Dakota
- **Shawn Kessel**, COO / Interim Commissioner, North Dakota Department of Commerce
- **Pat Bertagnolli**, Executive Director, Job Services of North Dakota
- **Jim Silrum**, Deputy Secretary of State, North Dakota Secretary of State
- **Bryan Klipfel**, Director, North Dakota Workforce Safety & Insurance
- **Brian Kroshus**, Tax Commissioner, North Dakota Office of State Tax Commissioner
- **Shawn Riley**, Chief Information Officer, North Dakota Information Technology Department

## Interviewing Business Leaders

We pursued business interviews in 9 key market segments to ensure a diverse representation of business insight

- **Small Businesses** (< 25 employees)
- **Large Businesses** (25 - 500 employees)
- **Extra Large Businesses** (> 500 employees)
- **New Businesses** (< 3 years old)
- **Existing Businesses** (> 3 years old)
- **Domestic Businesses** (incorporated in ND)
- **Foreign Businesses** (not incorporated in ND)
- **Primary Sector Businesses**
- **Non-Primary Sector Businesses**

## Interviewing Business Leaders

The following demographics of businesses were interviewed

**27** Small Businesses

**12** Large Businesses

**7** Extra Large Businesses

**9** New Businesses

**37** Existing Businesses

**39** Domestic Businesses

**7** Foreign Businesses

**5** Primary Sector Businesses

**41** Non-Primary Sector Businesses

**46** Total Businesses interviewed

## Surveying Businesses

**Interviewing businesses provided quality information from a diverse perspective. The next step was validating that information by surveying a larger number of businesses.**

**166** Small Businesses

**59** Large Businesses

**6** Extra Large Businesses

**33** New Businesses

**195** Existing Businesses

**207** Domestic Businesses

**18** Foreign Businesses

**231** Total Businesses Responded to Survey

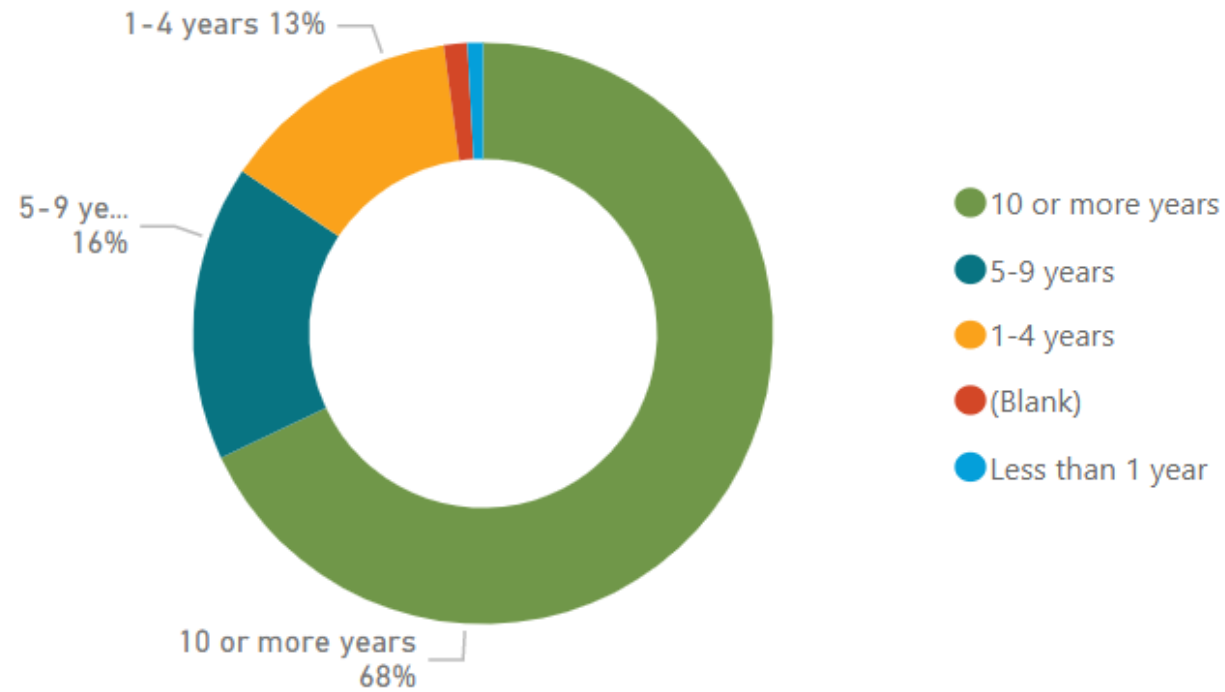
**FINDINGS**

**SURVEY OVERVIEW**

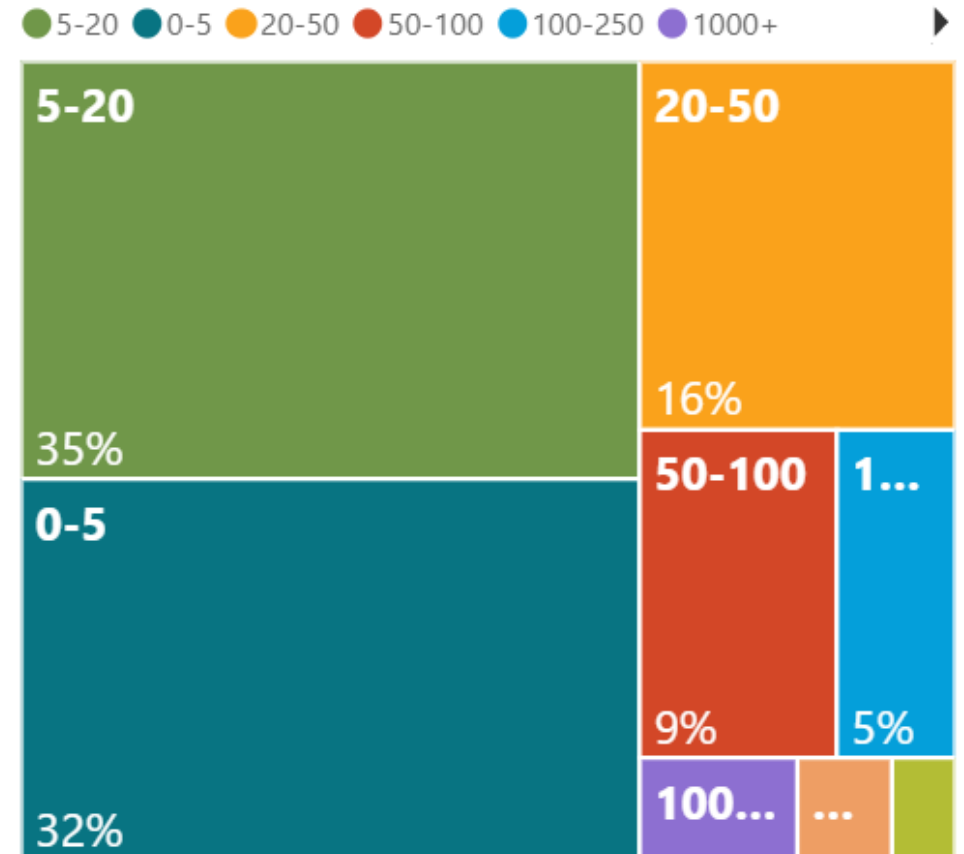


# SURVEY OVERVIEW

## How long have you been in business?

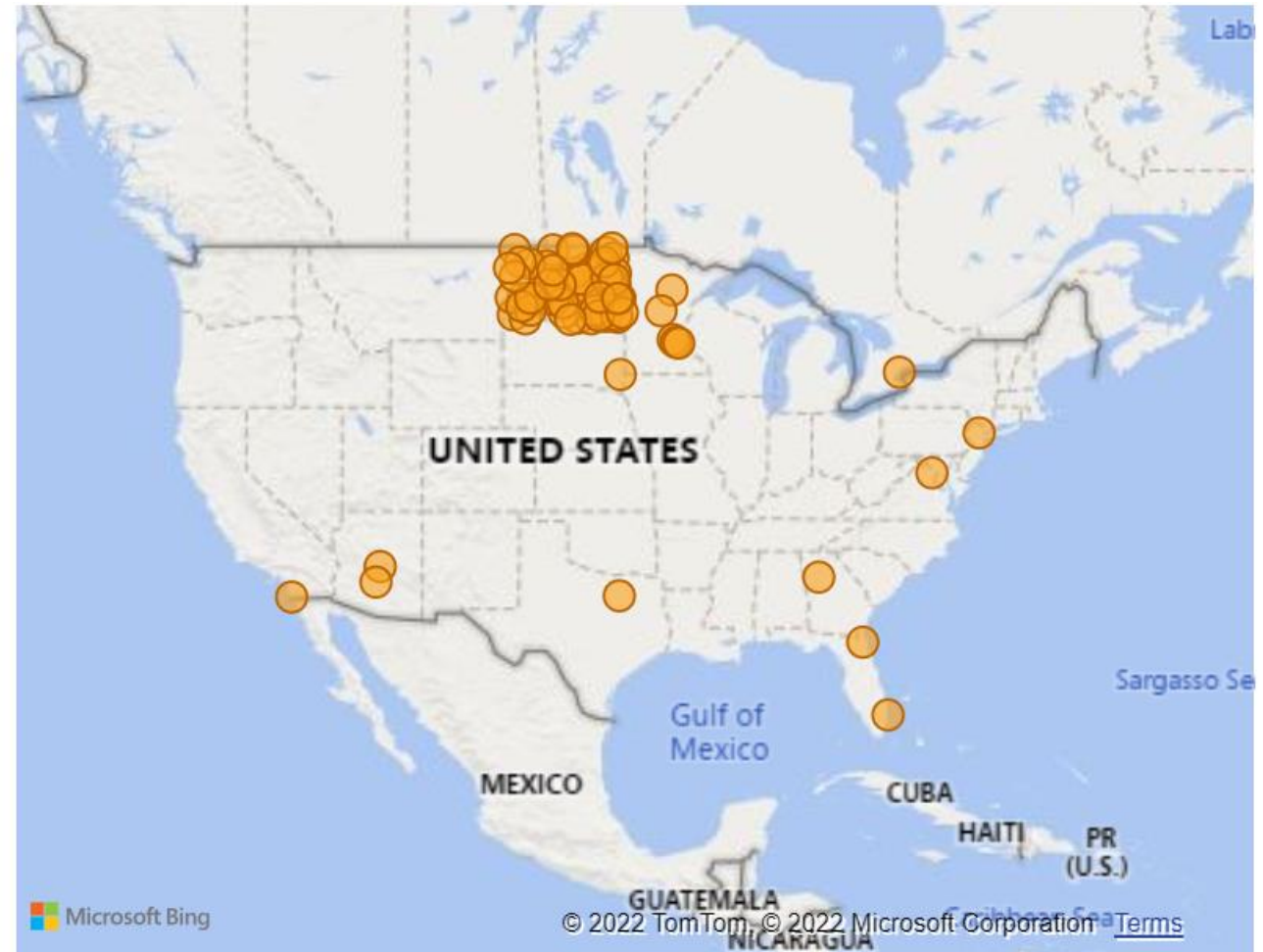
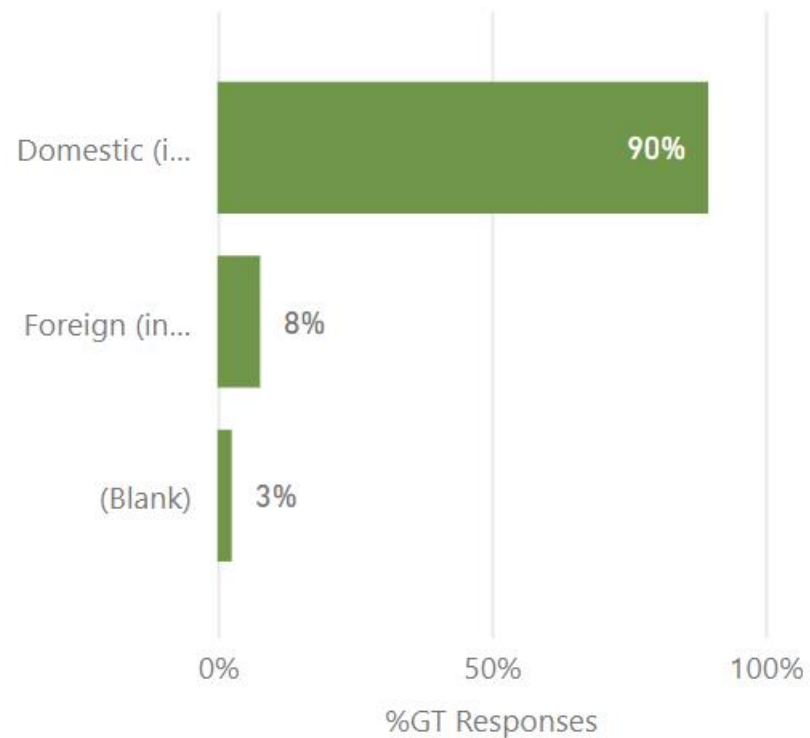


## How many employees do you have?



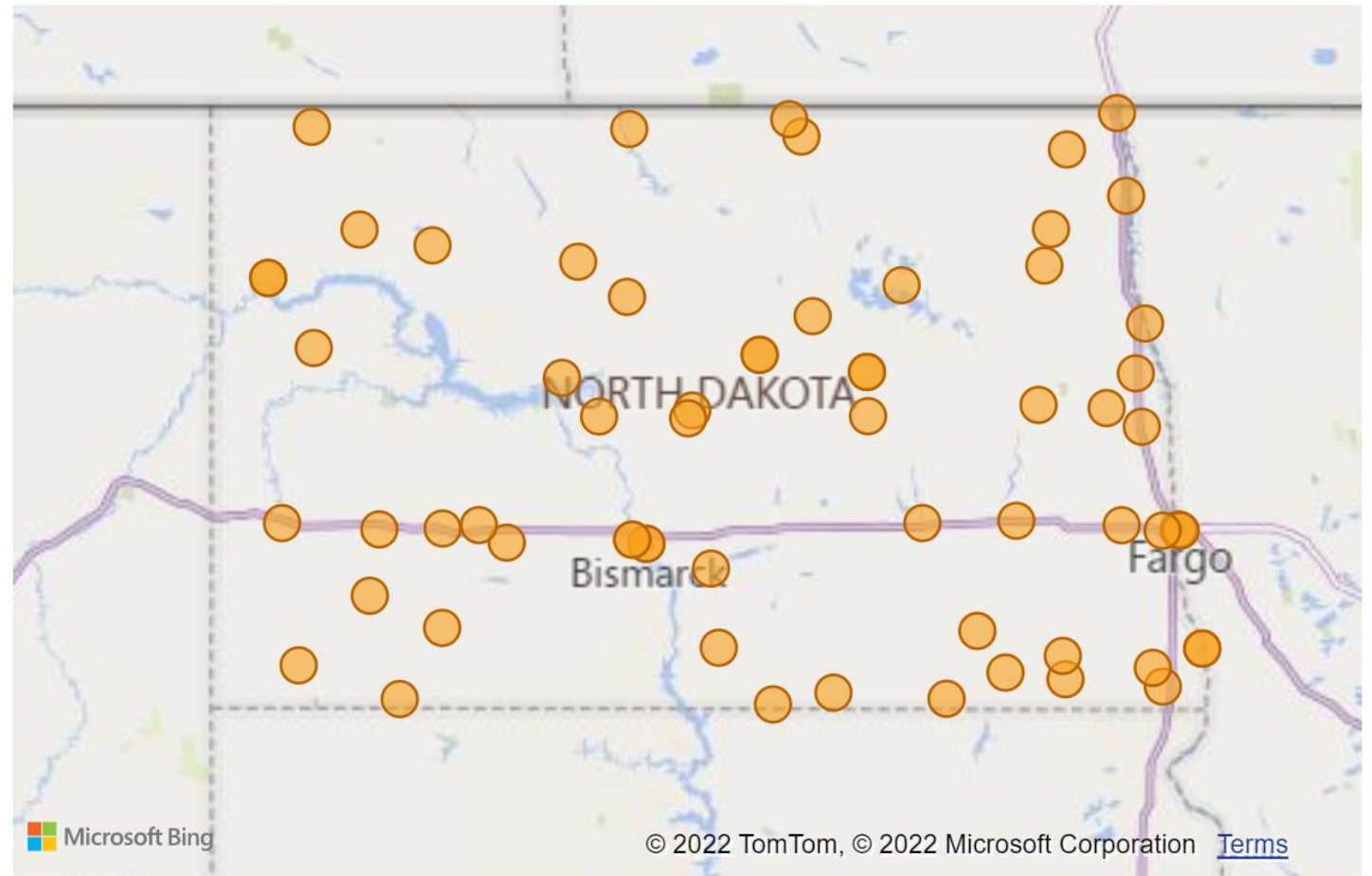
# SURVEY OVERVIEW

Is your business registered as a domestic or foreign corporation in the state of North Dakota?



# SURVEY OVERVIEW

**Participation  
across the  
entire state**



**FINDINGS**

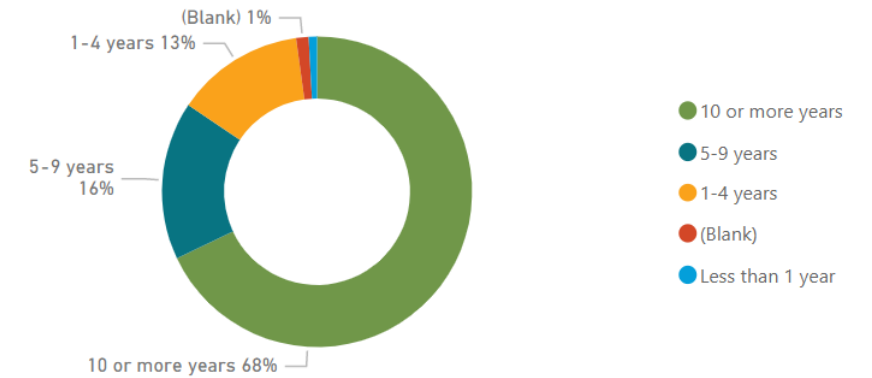
**CURRENT SCENARIO**

# CURRENT SCENARIO

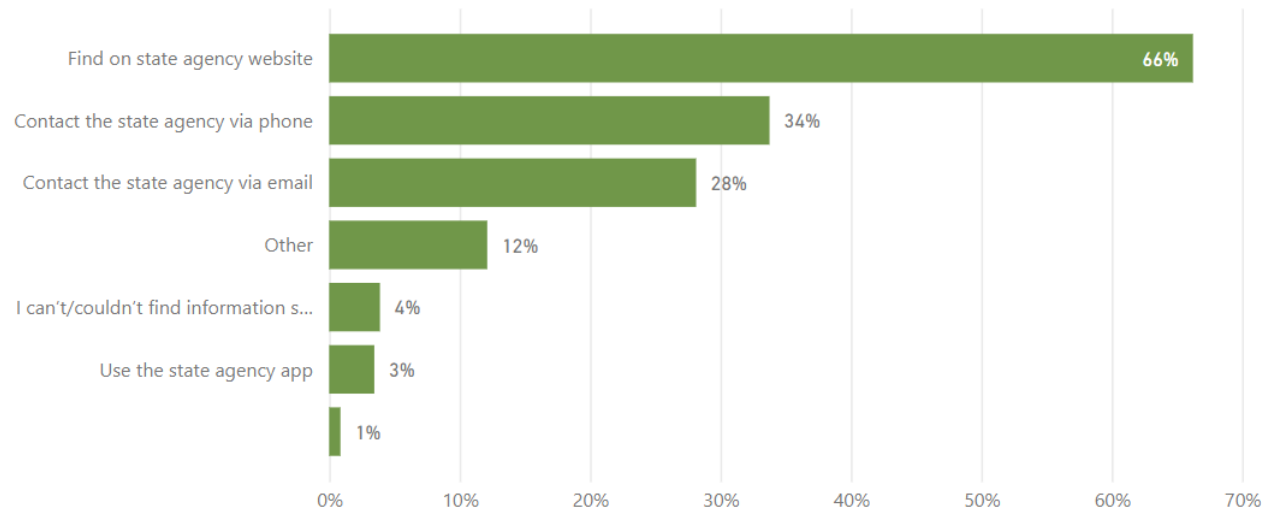
Is there currently an easy way to share thoughts, ideas, comments, or concerns to the state?



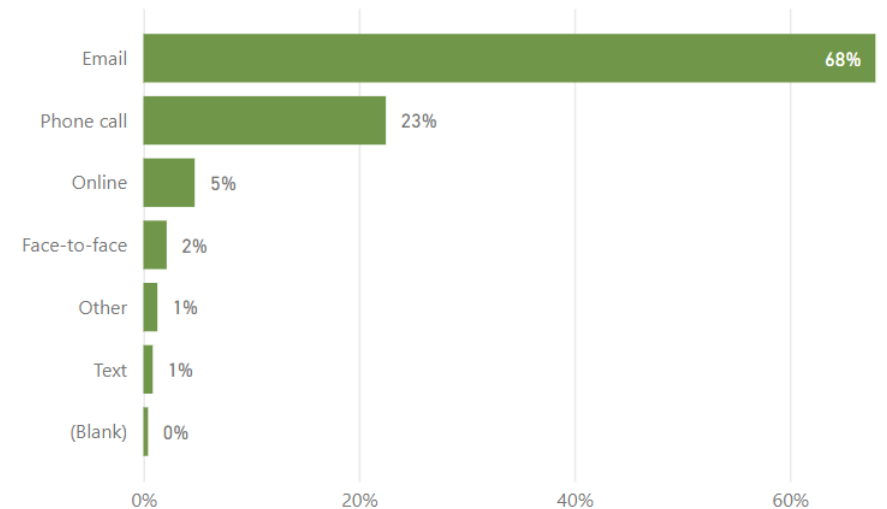
How long have you been in business?



Currently, where do you find information on how to complete documents required by the state?



When required, what is your preferred method of communication with state agencies?

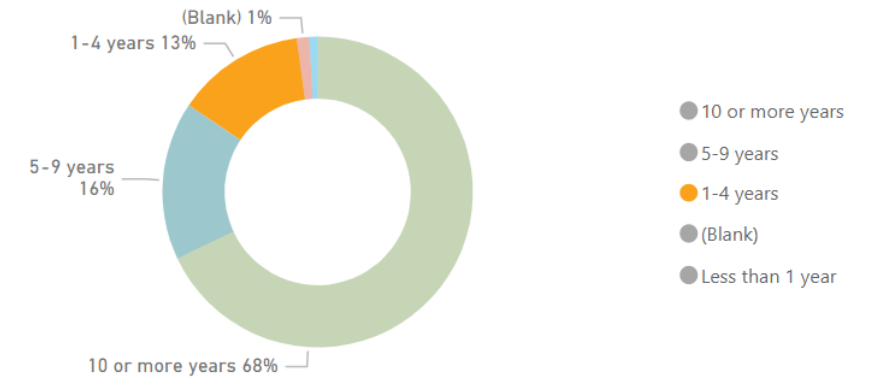


# CURRENT SCENARIO, 1-4 YEAR BUSINESSES

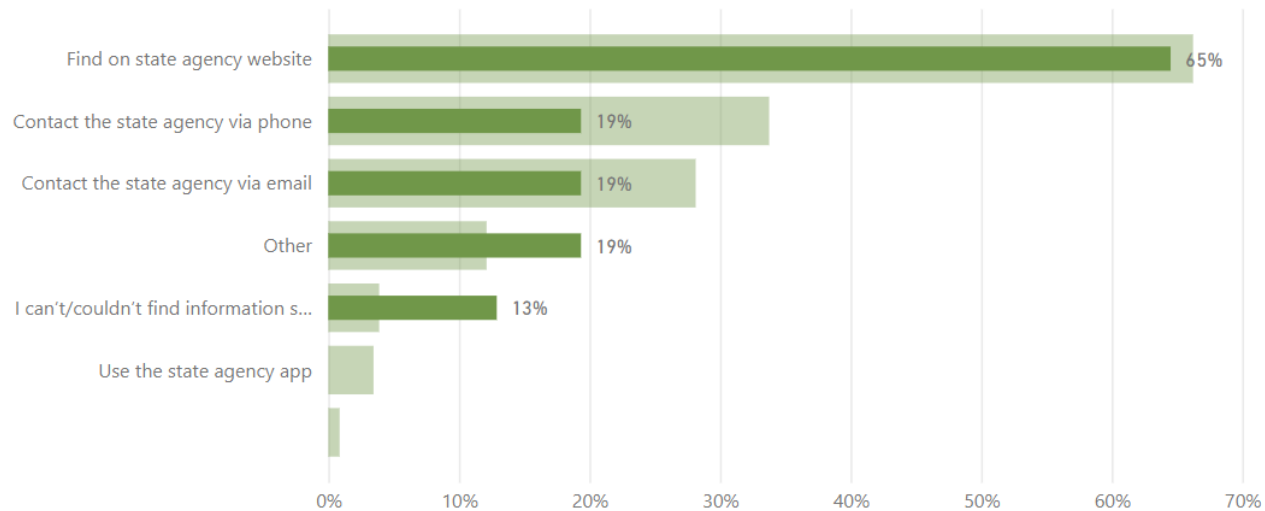
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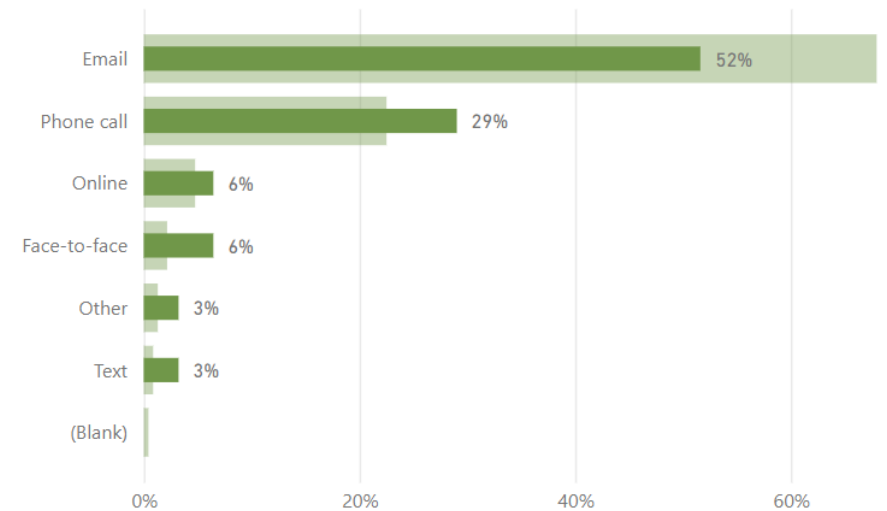
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Currently, where do you find information on how to complete documents required by the state?



When required, what is your preferred method of communication with state agencies?



**FINDINGS**

**PAIN POINTS**



## Pain Points – Quotes from Interviews

**“I want to comply – I just hope I’m doing everything in the correct way”**

**“Understanding who does what among the agencies is confusing”**

**“You feel lost when starting, scared you didn’t fill something out right”**

## Pain Points – Described from Interviews

- Not knowing how to comply
- Remembering compliance deadlines can be difficult
- Difficulty finding information, resources, and personnel contact information
- Not knowing what is needed with starting a new business – or how to find it
- Too many logins

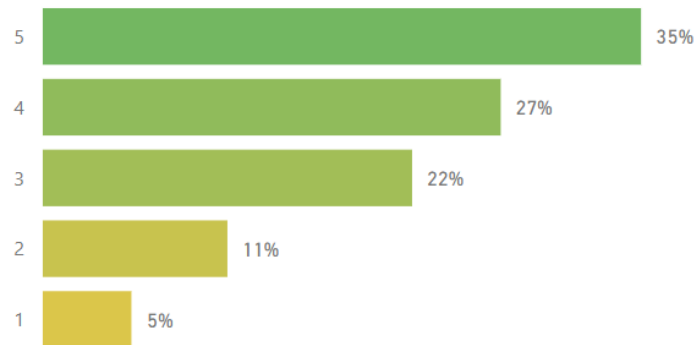
The survey validated many of these common pain points

# PAIN POINTS – SURVEY RESULTS

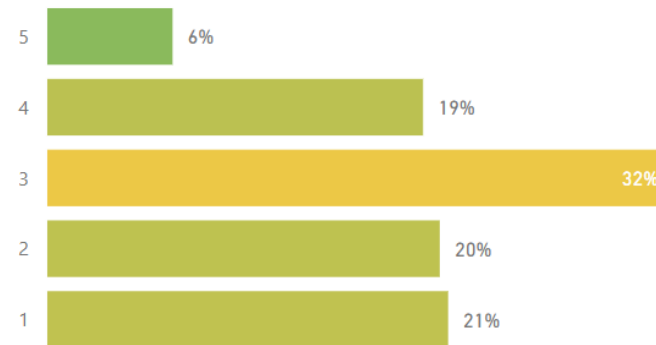
Rate your level of awareness of the following:

On a scale of 1 – 5, “Unaware” - “Very Aware”

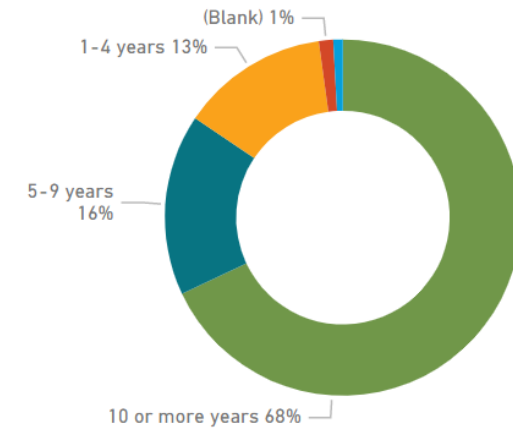
## Deadlines for required filings



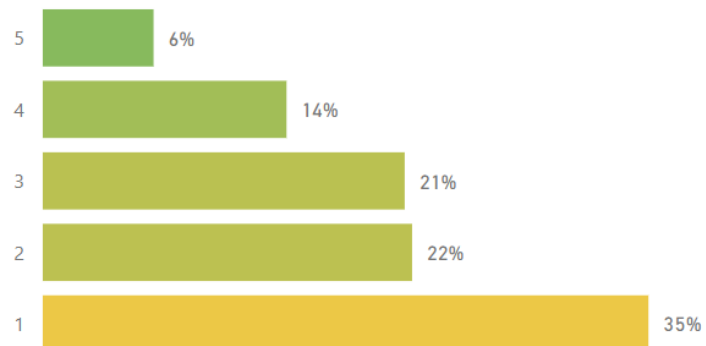
## Who to contact with specific questions



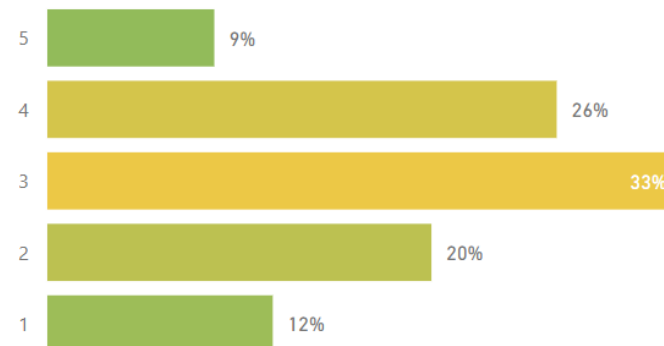
## How long have you been in business?



## Opportunities for grants and other funding



## How to find information from agencies

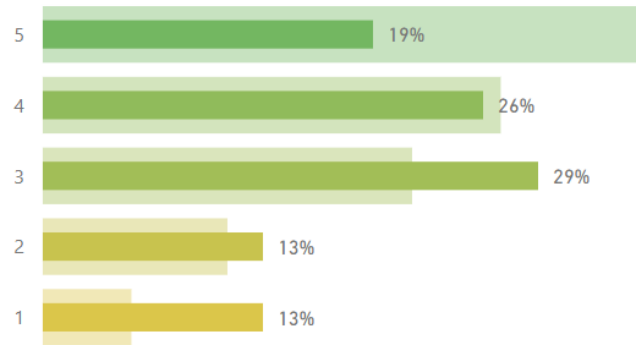


# PAIN POINTS, 1-4 YEAR BUSINESSES

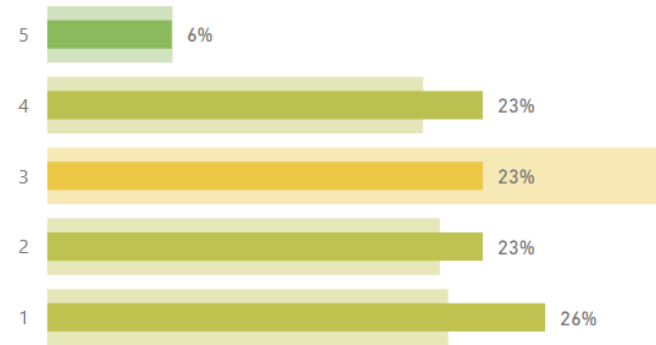
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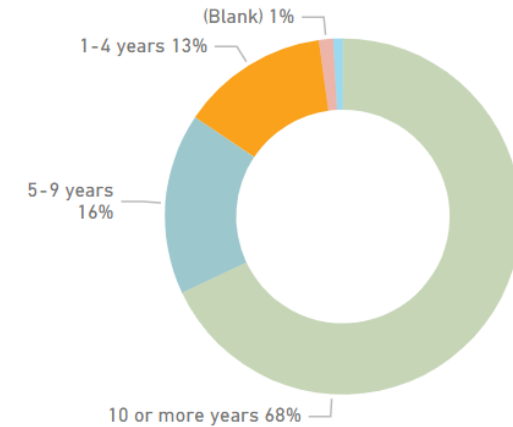
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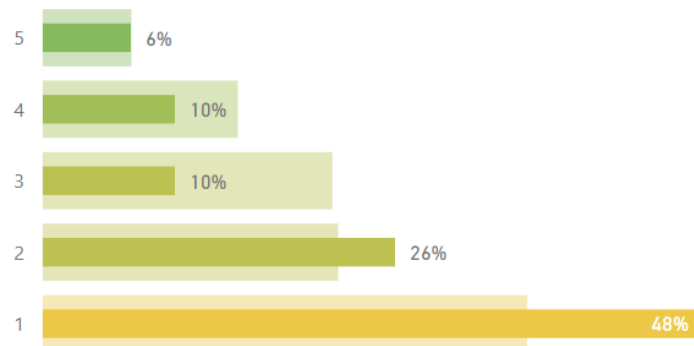
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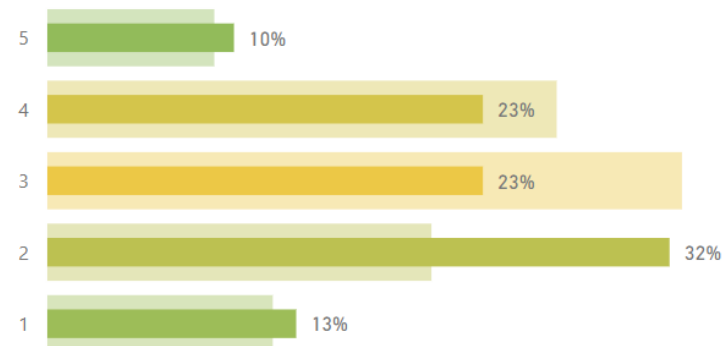
## How long have you been in business?



## Opportunities for grants and other funding



## How to find information from agencies



**FINDINGS**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

## Improvement ideas from businesses in general

- Being able to find resources and information quickly and easily
- One place to go / centralized / one-stop-shop
- Checklist for setting up a business
- Easily seeing due dates for compliance or any kind of action needed.
- Notifications for upcoming compliance deadlines

## Business Gateway – Quotes from interviews

**"Opportunity for ND to attract businesses, especially in this remote environment. "**

**"110% would like to see something like this. It is scary and overwhelming to start a new business"**

**"If it's easier for us to provide the information [to agencies]... it makes it a win-win for everybody. "**



## Business Gateway Requests – Structural

### One stop shop / Centralization / Under one umbrella

- *"Like a one-stop-shop, just like normal shopping is"*
- *"Be able to all areas a one glance and then drill down into the specific area"*
- What's done and what needs to get done in the same spot.

### One login to handle everything agencies

- With MFA
- (As an accounting agency) *"Would be nice to log in as a firm and all of the clients would be associated with the firm, not an employee."*
- Employee specific logins. Be able to safely turn off an employee's access.

## Business Gateway Requests – Functional

### Notifications

- Reminders for compliance deadlines
- Current out-of-compliance notifications
- Funding / grants / resources
- If anything changes, compliance, laws

### Sharing information amongst agencies

- Entering business information once and all the relevant agencies receiving it.

### Submit more forms electronically

- More secure options for sending information

### Online payments right through that single site

### Chat with an agency option

- Help resolve the burden of a phone call on both businesses and agencies

### Real person / navigator to direct people to the correct resource

- *"I think in North Dakota, you still need person-to-person contact."*

### Turbo tax-like system

### Search bar - Great search engine

## Business Gateway Requests – Informational

### Checklist / steps for starting a business

- *"step by step for setting up business"*

### Resources: Collection of official resources

- State provided resources
- More trustworthy and accurate than a Google search
- Contact information: Emails, phone numbers
- Hyperlinks for forms
- Available funding and grants

### Tools available for economic development research

- Examples: traffic report, event report, community demographics, internet speed availability, utility boundaries, need for behavior health specialists, etc

### Tips, tricks, and best practices for new & existing businesses

- *"Reminders of things you should be doing as a new or small business. "*
- *"Things to continue to grow and thrive, continue to be an asset."*

### Compliance visibility

- See upcoming compliance deadlines
- See current compliance standings with each agency

## The most valued features requested of a Business Gateway

- Checklist for starting a business
- Reminders / Notifications for upcoming compliance
- Single Login
- Information for economic development / business growth
- Centralized / One-stop-shop

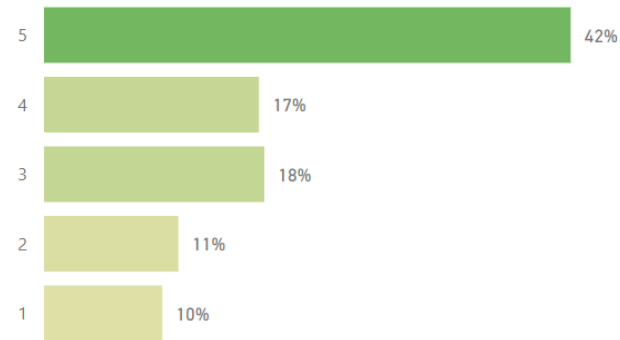
The survey validated many these common feature needs

# OPPORTUNITIES – SURVEY RESULTS

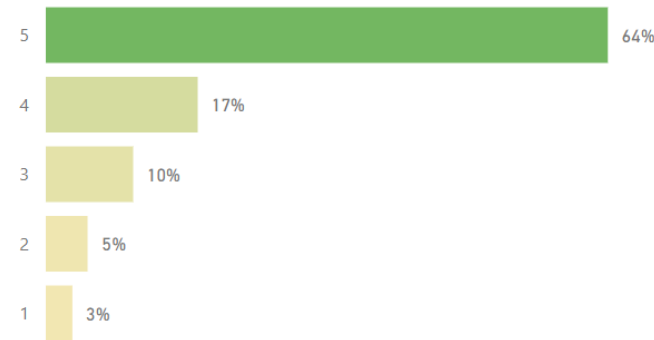
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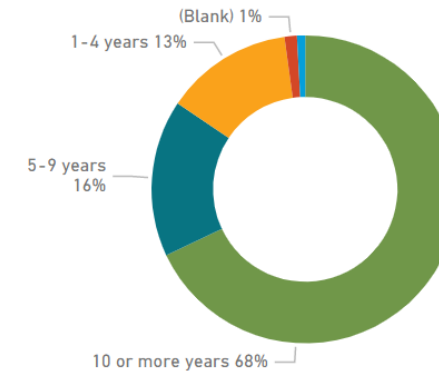
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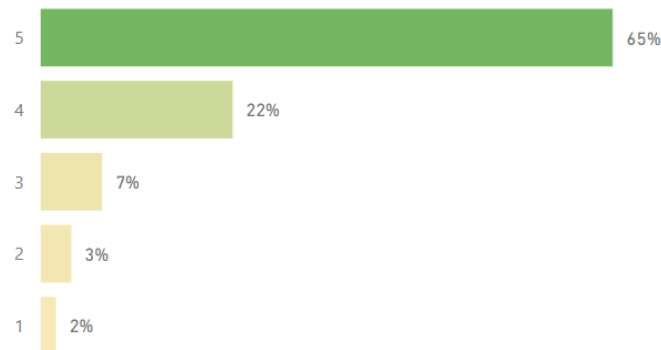
### Had a single sign on for all agency information and submissions



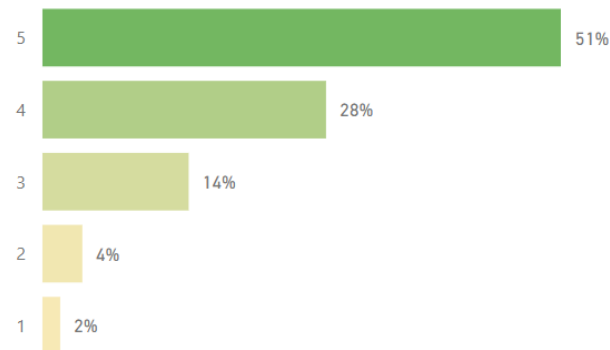
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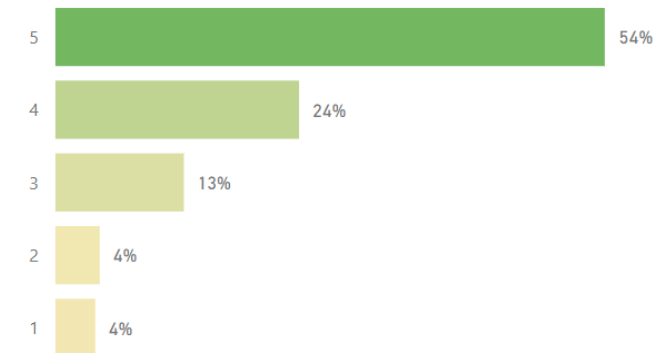
### Provided notifications and reminders for upcoming deadlines



### Listed tips and opportunities specific to each state agency



### Supported business success and growth with new programs, funding sources, networking, etc.

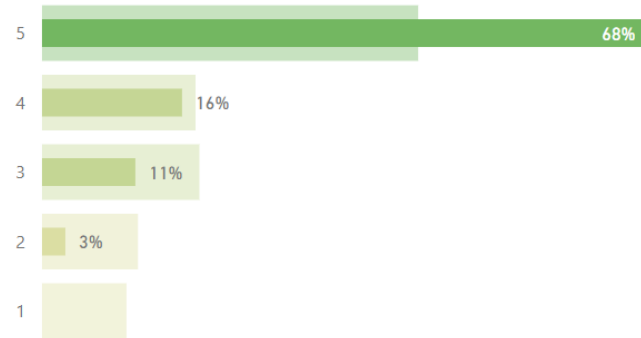


# OPPORTUNITIES, 5-9 YEAR BUSINESSES

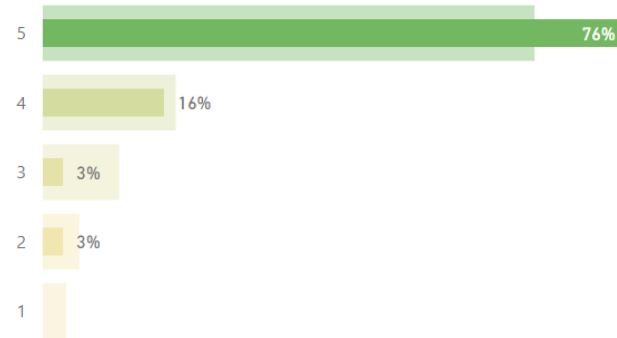
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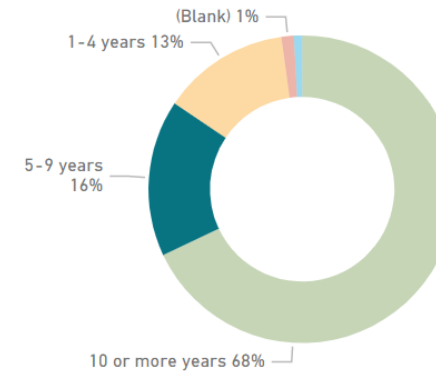
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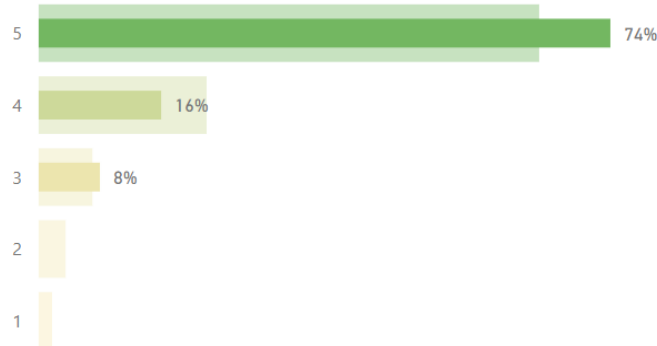
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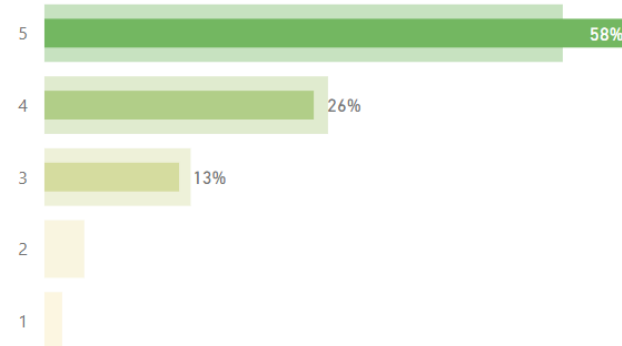
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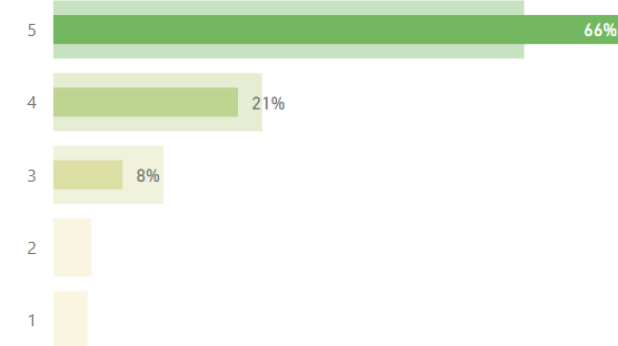
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# **CLOSING THOUGHTS** **& SUMMARIES**

## The data confirms common assumptions

### **Businesses confirmed they would benefit from knowing...**

- About grants and funding
- About resources to help them be successful
- How to comply
- How to save time, money, and confusion
- How to operate more efficiently



## Today's business landscape and opportunities

### **Businesses have opportunities they don't know about:**

- Historic federal grants available through ARPA of 2021 and Inflation Reduction Act of 2022
- Resources beyond grants that would help them succeed

## Return on investment

### Profitable returns are easy to conceive

- Cumulative savings of time produces a *respectable ROI*
  - Improving the efficiency of 40,000+ businesses in ND will have a large ROI.
  - Scenario: Save each business in ND 1 hour per quarter = \$5,000,000+ annually\*.
- Reducing person-to-person interactions has a *direct ROI* to state agencies.
  - Reducing emails and phone calls between businesses and state agencies saves time on both sides
  - Scenario: Eliminate a 20-minute phone/email exchange each year = \$800,000+ total annual savings
    - (\$400,000+ for ND state agencies and \$400,000+ for ND businesses)

\* Calculated using 42,000 active businesses and a wage of \$30.00/hour.

## Return on investment

### Profitable returns are easy to conceive

- Raising businesses awareness of opportunities (grants, services, and other resources) has the potential to produce an **incalculable, but substantial ROI**
  - Scenario: Access to resources enables 3% of ND businesses to add two employees = 2,000+ jobs added annually.

# THANK YOU

**Prominent**

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