

2023 Q4

# CFI Business Climate Survey

---

Regional Economic Research Institute  
Florida Gulf Coast University

This page is intentionally blank.

# Table of Contents

<b>ABOUT THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATIONS SURVEY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
PRIOR TO HURRICANE IAN, HOW MANY TOTAL UNITS DID YOUR BUSINESS HAVE AVAILABLE FOR RENT? .....	6
HOW MANY TOTAL UNITS DOES YOUR BUSINESS CURRENTLY HAVE? .....	7
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF UNITS, PRE-HURRICANE IAN TO TODAY .....	8
WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR TOTAL UNITS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR OCCUPANCY? .....	9
WHAT IS THE PROBABILITY OF YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS BEING 100 PERCENT AVAILABLE FOR OCCUPANCY IN THE FOLLOWING TIME PERIODS? .....	10
WHEN YOUR BUSINESS IS BACK TO BEING FULLY OPERATIONAL, HOW WILL YOUR UNITS BE RENTED? .....	11
HOW BIG OF AN OBSTACLE ARE THE FOLLOWING IN BECOMING FULLY OPERATIONAL? .....	12
HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DID YOU EMPLOY ON THE ISLAND PRIOR TO HURRICANE IAN? .....	13
HOW MANY EMPLOYEES ARE CURRENTLY WORKING FOR YOUR BUSINESS COMPARED TO BEFORE HURRICANE IAN, AS A PERCENTAGE? .....	14
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES FROM PRE-HURRICANE IAN TO TODAY .....	15
HOW ARE YOU MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS? .....	16
<b>NON-ACCOMMODATIONS SURVEY.....</b>	<b>17</b>
ARE YOU CURRENTLY OPEN FOR BUSINESS ON SANIBEL AND CAPTIVA ISLANDS?.....	17
HAVE YOU RELOCATED YOUR BUSINESS OFF ISLAND? .....	18
DO YOU PLAN ON REOPENING YOUR BUSINESS ON THE ISLANDS?.....	19
CURRENT STATUS OF NON-ACCOMMODATIONS.....	20
AT WHAT VOLUME IS YOUR BUSINESS OPERATING COMPARED TO BEFORE HURRICANE IAN?.....	21
HOW MANY YEARS HAD YOUR BUSINESS BEEN OPERATING ON THE ISLANDS PRIOR TO HURRICANE IAN?.....	22
HOW BIG OF AN OBSTACLE ARE THE FOLLOWING IN BECOMING FULLY OPERATIONAL? .....	23
HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DID YOU EMPLOY ON THE ISLAND PRIOR TO HURRICANE IAN? .....	24
HOW MANY EMPLOYEES ARE CURRENTLY WORKING FOR YOUR BUSINESS COMPARED TO BEFORE HURRICANE IAN, AS A PERCENTAGE? .....	25
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES FROM PRE-HURRICANE IAN TO TODAY .....	26
HOW ARE YOU MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS? .....	27
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS CONDITIONS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>FOCUS GROUP.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS .....</b>	<b>31</b>
WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ROLE IN YOUR BUSINESS? .....	31
WHERE IN LEE COUNTY DOES YOUR BUSINESS PRIMARILY OPERATE?.....	32
WHAT INDUSTRY DOES YOUR BUSINESS PRIMARILY OPERATE IN?.....	33
<b>APPENDIX A. FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES.....</b>	<b>34</b>

# About the Regional Economic Research Institute

The Regional Economic Research Institute studies, analyzes and reports on the regional economy encompassing Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties. Established in 2005, it serves as a public service and economic development unit of the Lutgert College of Business' Dean's Office and strives to connect Southwest Florida to the resources of Florida Gulf Coast University.

In its many regular and occasional publications, and custom economic research, the RERI focuses on areas such as economic development and forecasting, economic impact analysis, secondary data analysis and surveys. The RERI often partner with different economic development organizations and chambers of commerce in our region, and works closely with the Lucas Institute for Real Estate Development and Finance, the Small Business Development Center and the Southwest Florida Leadership Institute, all of which are housed in the Lutgert College of Business at FGCU, as well as the Institute for Entrepreneurship.

## Project Information

This report was created by Florida Gulf Coast University's Regional Economic Research Institute for the Charitable Foundation of the Islands and the SanCap Chamber of Commerce. This work would not have been possible without the RERI's student researchers.



## Project Staff

- **Amir B. Ferreira Neto, PhD** *Director*  
[aborgesferreiraneto@fgcu.edu](mailto:aborgesferreiraneto@fgcu.edu)
- **John Shannon**, *Research Economist*  
[jmshannon@fgcu.edu](mailto:jmshannon@fgcu.edu)
- **Lily Hobson**, *Undergraduate Research Assistant*  
[lhobson@fgcu.edu](mailto:lhobson@fgcu.edu)
- **Sydney Kiick**, *Undergraduate Research Assistant*  
[skiick@fgcu.edu](mailto:skiick@fgcu.edu)

# Executive Summary

The CFI Business Climate Survey was distributed to 318 email addresses provided by the Charitable Foundation of the Islands (CFI) and the SanCap Chamber of Commerce on November 15th, 2023. The survey remained open until December 22nd, 2023, during which two reminder emails were sent out. Both the CFI and SanCap Chamber provided support in reaching out to various members to encourage participation. The survey received 92 full and partial responses, giving the survey a response rate of 29 percent.

Twenty-one of 91 respondents (23 percent) indicated their business primarily operated in the accommodations industry, while the other 70 of 91 respondents (77 percent) were non-accommodations. Below are some findings from both the accommodation and non-accommodation portions of the survey.<sup>1</sup>

## Accommodations

- 10 of 21 respondents (48 percent) said their business had more than 100 units prior to Hurricane Ian. Comparisons of pre-Ian and today found that 25 percent of respondents indicated their total number of units decreased, while 75 percent remained unchanged.
- 38 percent of respondents said that none of their total units were currently available for occupancy, while another 14 percent stated only 1 to 20 percent of units were available. Only two respondents said all of their units were currently available.
- Of the respondents who said their accommodations were not fully operational, 18 percent of respondents attributed at least a three-fourths chance their business will be fully available in the next six months. This share increases to 50 percent in the next 12 months, 67 percent in the next 18 months and 93 percent over the next 24 months.
- Four obstacles were identified for accommodation businesses that were not currently fully operational – construction related issues, access to labor, supply chain issues and condo association related issues.
- 13 of 20 respondents (65 percent) said employment levels at their business were less than 40 percent compared to before Hurricane Ian.

## Non-Accommodations

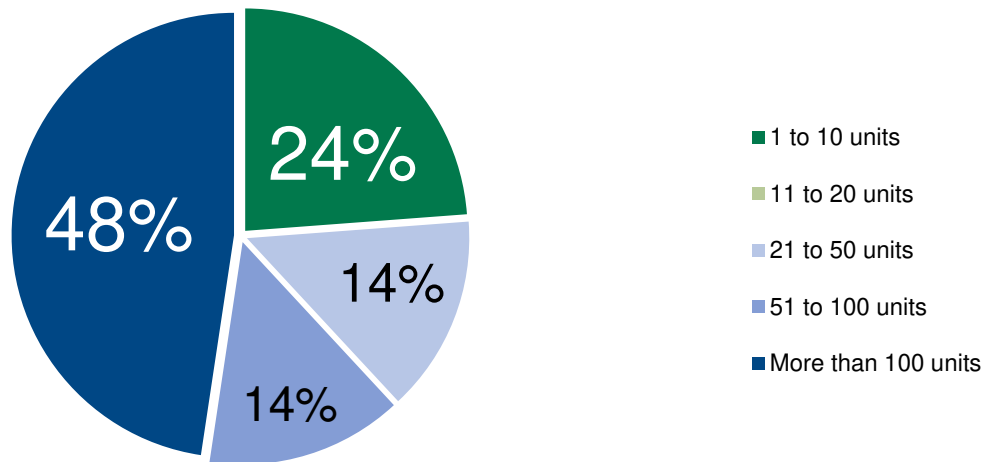
- 55 of 70 respondents (79 percent) said they were currently open for business on the Sanibel and Captiva Islands, while 21 percent were not currently open.
- Of those businesses that were open, 44 percent were fully operational, while 36 percent were operating at less than 40 percent volume.
- The one significant obstacle cited by non-accommodations was the lack of accommodations available on the island, an opinion shared by 71 percent of total respondents.
- Other noted obstacles included construction related issues, access to labor, access to capital, issues with insurance claims and supply chain issues.
- 24 of 65 respondents (37 percent) indicated that employment levels at their business were between 81 and 100 percent compared to before Hurricane Ian. Furthermore, 14 percent said employment levels were more than 100 percent.

About 74 percent of respondents identified themselves as holding an executive position such as executive director, vice president, president or owner. This meant approximately a quarter of responses were provided by individuals with managerial or operational roles within the business they were responding on behalf of. It's important to acknowledge this as a limitation of the survey, as those in operational or managerial positions may have limited knowledge regarding business decisions and expectations.

---

<sup>1</sup>Some respondents did not provide answers to every question. In these situations, percentages are only calculated based on total number of responses toward the question.

**Chart 1.** Prior to Hurricane Ian, how many total units did your business have available for rent?  
(N = 21)



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Accommodations Survey

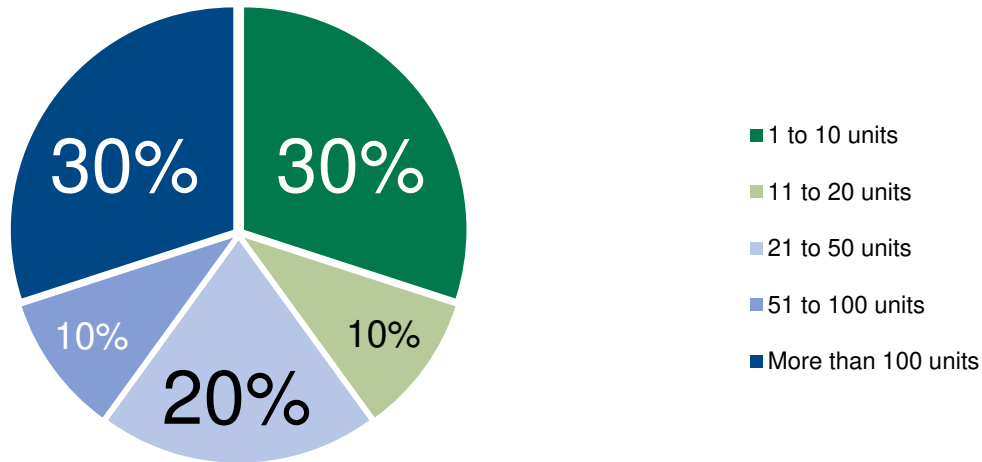
### Prior to Hurricane Ian, how many total units did your business have available for rent?

Table 1 reports the number of total units that a business had available for rent prior to Hurricane Ian. Out of 21 responses, nearly half of the respondents reported having more than 100 units (47.6 percent) available for rent prior to Hurricane Ian. Furthermore, 23.8 percent of respondents said they had 1 to 10 units available for rent prior to Hurricane Ian, while 14.3 percent each said they had 21 to 50 units and 51 to 100 units available for rent. There were no responses with 11 to 20 units.

**Table 1.** Prior to Hurricane Ian, how many total units did your business have available for rent?

Response	Count	Percent
1 to 10 units	5	23.8%
11 to 20 units	0	0.0%
21 to 50 units	3	14.3%
51 to 100 units	3	14.3%
More than 100 units	10	47.6%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 2.** How many total units does your business currently have? (N = 20)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

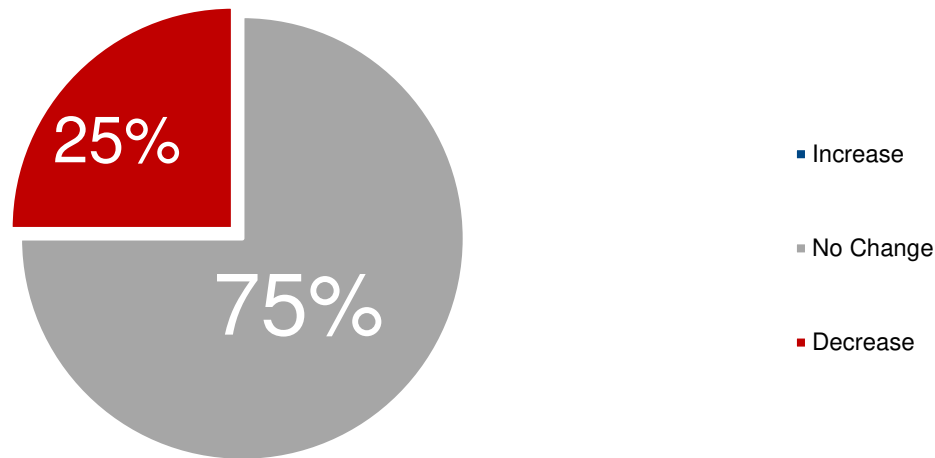
## How many total units does your business currently have?

Table 2 represents the number of total units businesses have currently. Out of 20 total responses, 30 percent indicated they currently had more than 100 units, while 10 percent said they had 51 to 100 units. Moreover, 20 percent of respondents said they currently had 21 to 50 units, 10 percent said they had 11 to 20 units, and 30 percent said they had 1 to 10 units.

**Table 2.** How many total units does your business currently have?

Response	Count	Percent
1 to 10 units	6	30.0%
11 to 20 units	2	10.0%
21 to 50 units	4	20.0%
51 to 100 units	2	10.0%
More than 100 units	6	30.0%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 3.** Change in total number of units, pre-Hurricane Ian to today (N = 20)

*Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute*

*Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 15th, 2023*

## Change in Number of Units, Pre-Hurricane Ian to Today

Results were compared to determine how businesses have adjusted the total number of units available at their accommodations, pre-Hurricane Ian to today. The total number of units represents all the units at the establishment, regardless of whether or not it is currently available for rent. The total number of units is defined to have increased if the range of units available currently is greater than the range of units available prior to Hurricane Ian, whereas total number of units is defined to have decreased if the range of units available currently is less than the range of units available prior to Hurricane Ian. If the same range was provided for both questions, then it is determined that no change in total number of units was made.

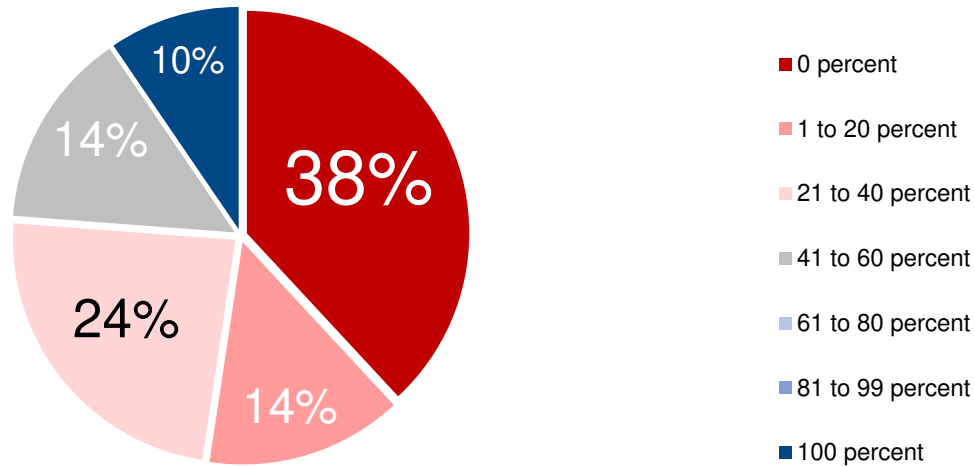
Table 3 reports the change in total number of units available for rent from before Hurricane Ian to today. Seventy-five percent of businesses reported no change in the total number of units. The remaining twenty-five percent of businesses reported a decrease. There were no businesses with increases in the total number of units for rent.

**Table 3.** Change in total number of units available for rent

Response	Count	Percent
Increase	0	0.0%
No Change	15	75.0%
Decrease	5	25.0%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023*



**Chart 4.** What percentage of your total units are currently available for occupancy? (N = 21)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## What percentage of your total units are currently available for occupancy?

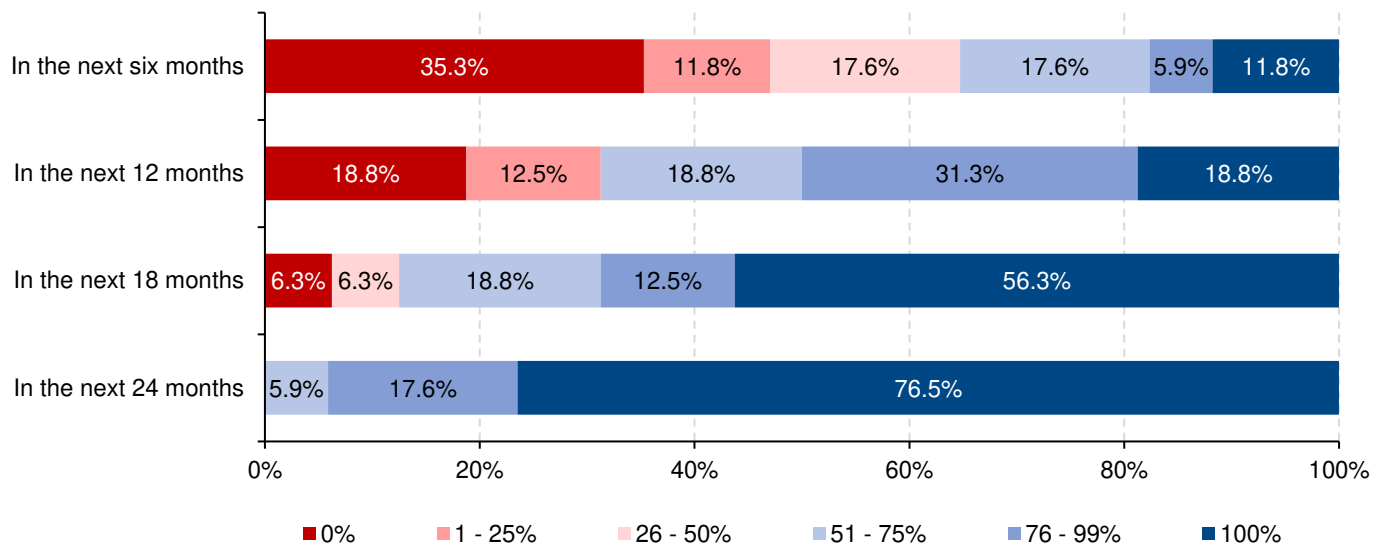
Table 4 reports the percentage of total units currently available for occupancy. Only two businesses (9.5 percent) reported that they have 100 percent of their total units currently available. The remaining 19 responses all fell within the range of 0 to 60 percent, with 38.1 percent indicating they had no units available for occupancy.

**Table 4.** What percentage of your total units are currently available for occupancy?

Response	Count	Percent
0 percent	8	38.1%
1 to 20 percent	3	14.3%
21 to 40 percent	5	23.8%
41 to 60 percent	3	14.3%
61 to 80 percent	0	0.0%
81 to 99 percent	0	0.0%
100 percent	2	9.5%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 5.** What is the probability of your accommodations being 100 percent available for occupancy in the following time periods? (N = 17)



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

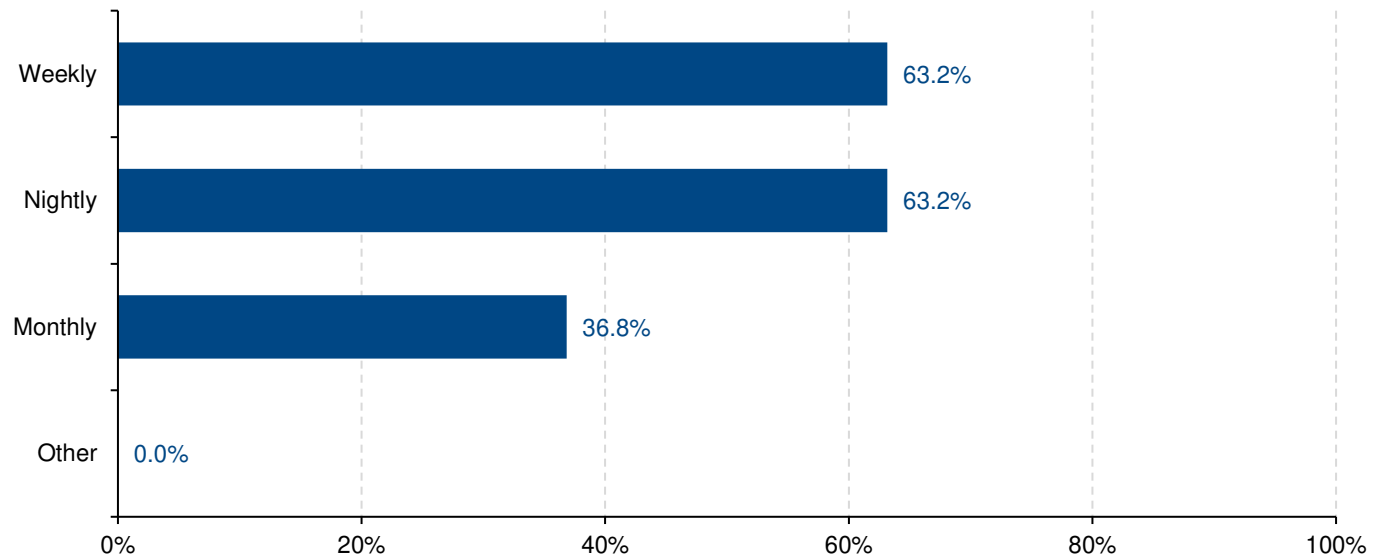
## What is the probability of your accommodations being 100 percent available for occupancy in the following time periods?

Respondents who indicated that less than 100 percent of their total units are currently available for occupancy were asked to assess the probability that they would be fully available over the next six months, 12 months, 18 months and 24 months.<sup>2</sup> Of the 17 total businesses who responded to the question, only 11.8 percent of businesses believe that they will be fully available within the next six months. The largest percentage of responses (35.3 percent) believe that there is a zero percent chance of the business being fully available within the time frame. However, within the next 12 months, the percentage of businesses who believe they will be fully available grows 7 percentage points to 18.8 percent. Within the next 18 months, this percentage continues to grow to 56.3 percent. In the largest time frame of within the next 24 months, 76.5 percent of businesses believe that they will be 100 percent available in occupancy. Moreover, 17.6 percent of businesses believe there is only a 76 to 99 percent chance of being fully available in the next 24 months, and the remaining 5.9 percent believe that there is a 51 to 75 percent chance of being fully available over the same period.

<sup>2</sup> There were some instances in which a respondent answered 100 percent for a specific time period and then left larger time periods blank (i.e. the respondent assigned 100 percent probability to being fully open within the next 12 months, then left the 18 month and 24 month question blank). In these cases, we assume that a respondent will expect to remain fully available in later periods and impute these values as 100 percent probability as well.

**Chart 6.** When your business is back to being fully operational, how will your units be rented?

(N = 19)



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## When your business is back to being fully operational, how will your units be rented?

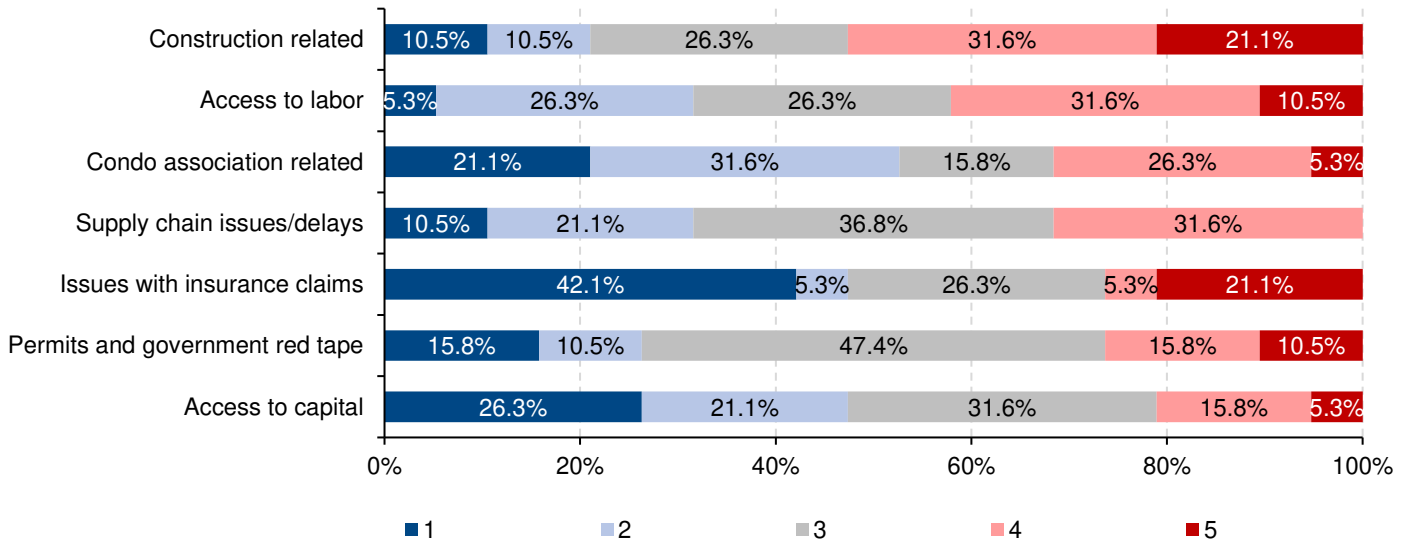
Respondents who indicated that less than 100 percent of their total units are currently available for occupancy were asked how they would rent their units once they became fully operational, and were allowed to select multiple responses. Table 5 reports how units will be rented whenever the business is back to fully operational. Twelve of the 19 businesses (63.2 percent) responded that their units would have the option to be rented weekly. There were also 12 businesses who will have the option of renting units nightly. Seven of the businesses will be available to rent monthly.

**Table 5.** When your business is back to being fully operational, how will your units be rented?

Response	Count	Percent
Weekly	12	63.2%
Nightly	12	63.2%
Monthly	7	36.8%
Other	0	0.0%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 7.** On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being not an obstacle at all and five being a major obstacle, how big of an obstacle are the following in becoming fully operational? (N = 19)



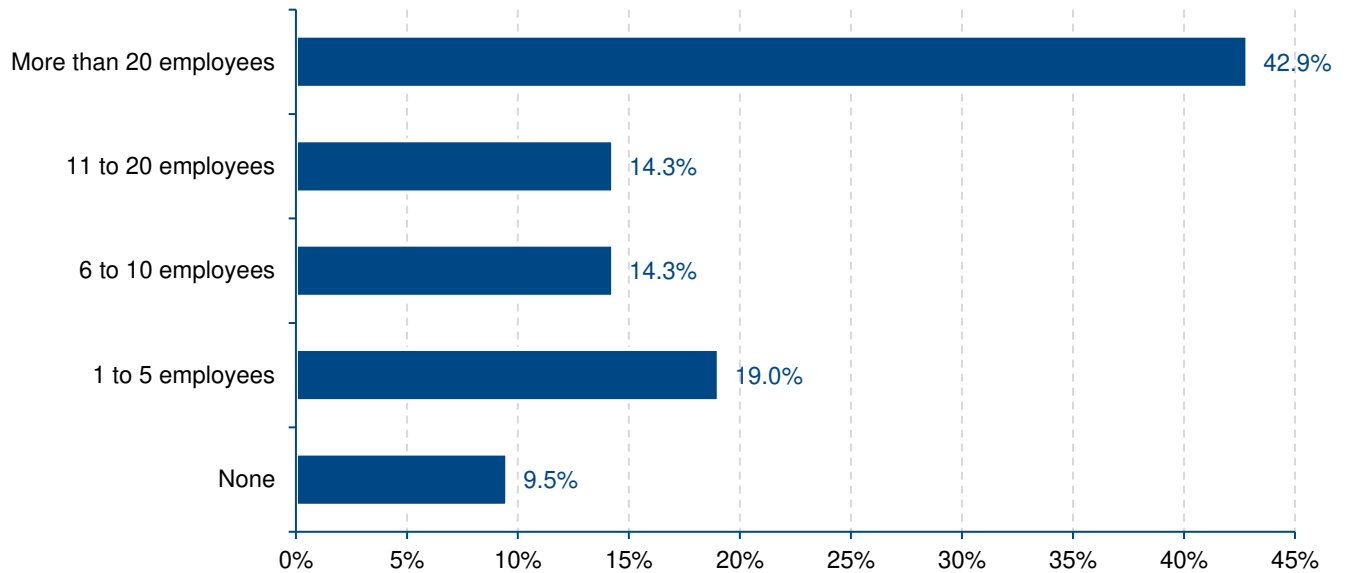
Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

### How big of an obstacle are the following in becoming fully operational?

Respondents who indicated that less than 100 percent of their total units are currently available for occupancy were asked to rate various potential obstacles on a scale, with one meaning not an obstacle at all and five being a major obstacle. For the purposes of analyzing this question, we define an obstacle as significant if it was rated at least a 4 on the scale.

Construction related issues were the most significant obstacle to becoming fully operational, with 52.7 percent of respondents identifying it as significant obstacle. Access to labor was the next most significant obstacle indicated by accommodation respondents (42.1 percent), followed by condo associated related issues (31.6 percent) and supply chain issues and delays (31.6 percent). Issues with insurance claims and permits and government red tape were significant obstacles to 26.4 percent of respondents each, while access to capital was a significant obstacle for 21.2 percent of respondents.

**Chart 8.** How many employees did you employ on the island prior to Hurricane Ian? (N = 21)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## How many employees did you employ on the island prior to Hurricane Ian?

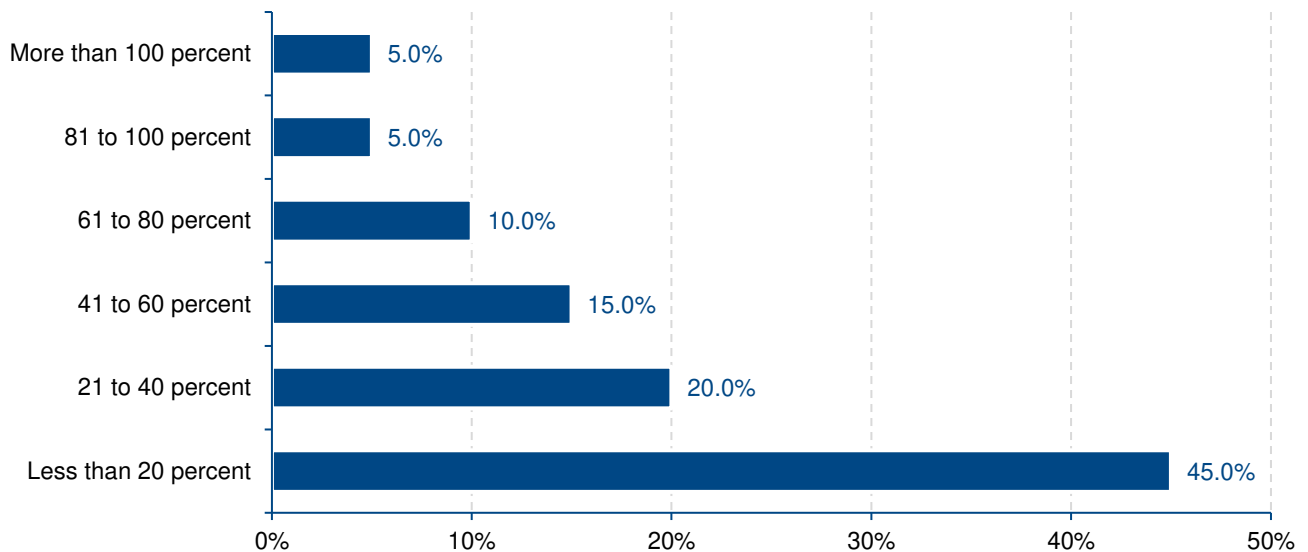
Table 6 reports the number of employees who were employed on the island prior to Hurricane Ian. Out of the 21 businesses who responded, 9 respondents (42.9 percent) reported that they had more than 20 employees prior to Hurricane Ian. Furthermore, 14.3 percent each said they had 11 to 20 employees and 6 to 10 employees, while 19 percent of respondents indicated they had 1 to 5 employees prior to Hurricane Ian. Two businesses reported that they did not have any employees prior to Hurricane Ian.

**Table 6.** How many employees did you employ on the island prior to Hurricane Ian?

Response	Count	Percent
None	2	9.5%
1 to 5 employees	4	19.0%
6 to 10 employees	3	14.3%
11 to 20 employees	3	14.3%
More than 20 employees	9	42.9%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 9.** How many employees are currently working for your business compared to before Hurricane Ian, as a percentage? (N = 20)



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

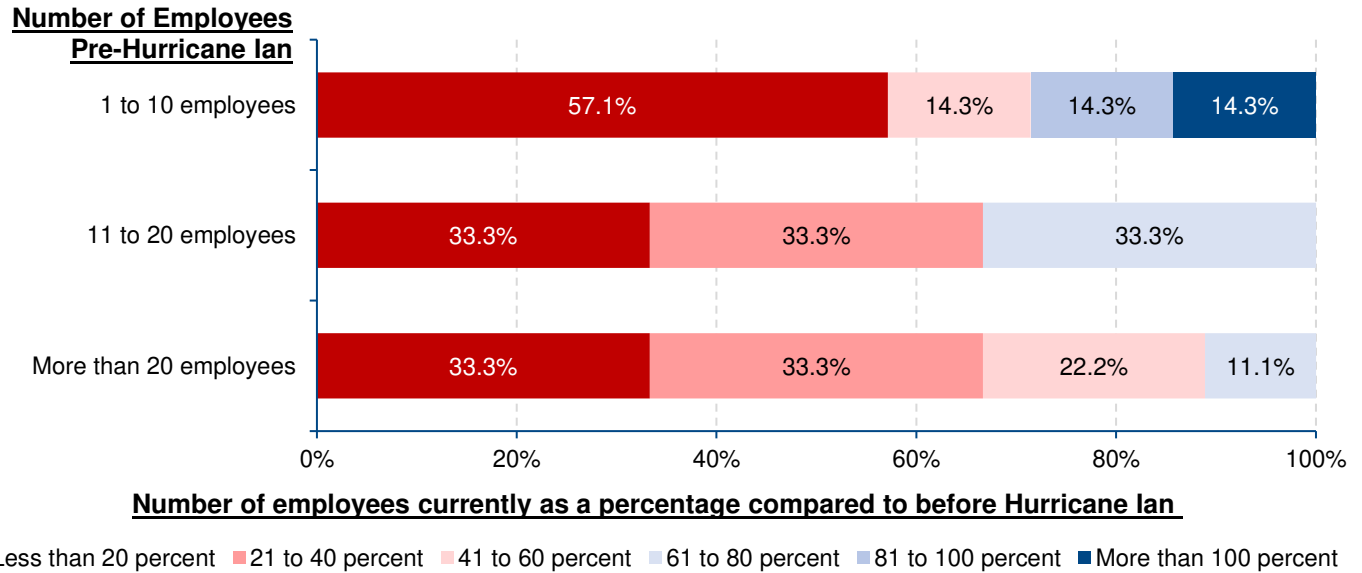
## How many employees are currently working for your business compared to before Hurricane Ian, as a percentage?

Table 7 reports the number of employees that businesses currently have working for them compared to the number of employees before Hurricane Ian. The largest share of businesses reported that they have less than 20 percent of their employees compared to before Hurricane Ian (45.0 percent). Twenty percent of businesses reported that their employee base was 21 to 40 percent of their base prior to Hurricane Ian, while 15 percent of respondents said this percentage was between 41 and 60 percent. Furthermore, 10 percent said they had 61 to 80 percent of their employee base compared to pre-Hurricane Ian, 5 percent indicated this share was between 81 and 100 percent, and the remaining 5 percent of businesses reported that they have increased their number of employees for a percentage over 100 percent.

**Table 7.** How many employees are currently working for your business compared to before Hurricane Ian, as a percentage?

Response	Count	Percent
Less than 20 percent	9	45.0%
21 to 40 percent	4	20.0%
41 to 60 percent	3	15.0%
61 to 80 percent	2	10.0%
81 to 100 percent	1	5.0%
More than 100 percent	1	5.0%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

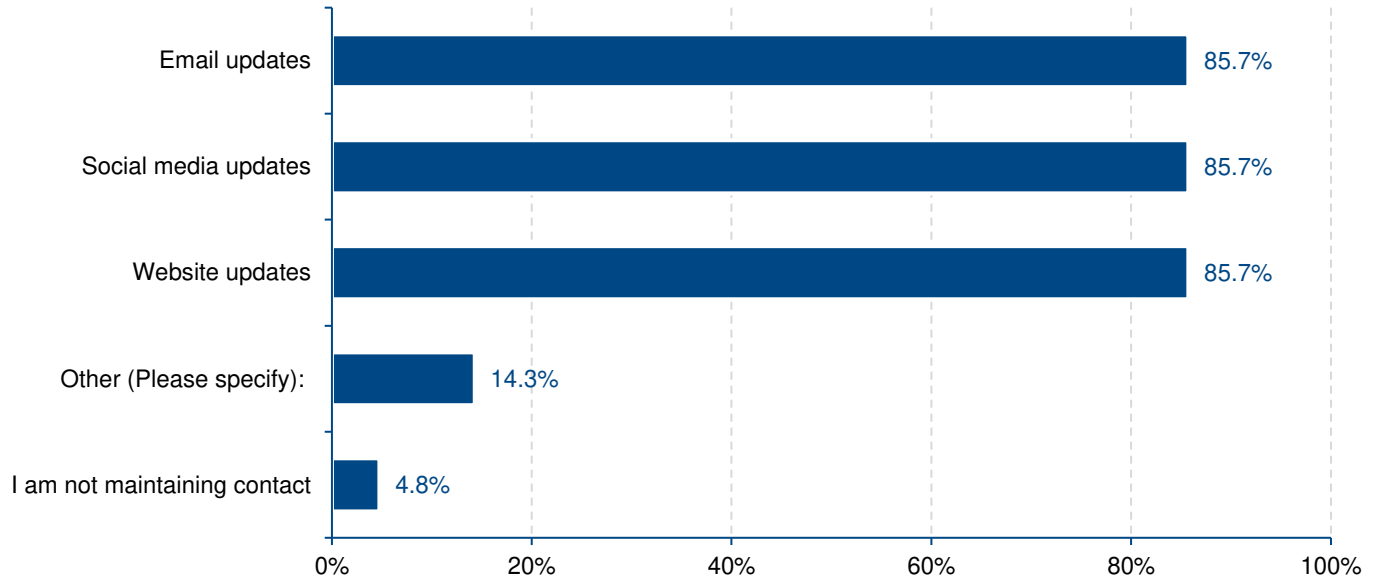
**Chart 10.** Employment prior to Hurricane Ian to now for accommodation businesses (N = 19)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Change in Number of Employees from Pre-Hurricane Ian to Today

Results were compared to determine how the share of employees today relative to before Hurricane Ian changed depending on the size of the firm. Chart 10 illustrates this by number of employees the business had prior to Hurricane Ian. For businesses that had between 1 and 10 employees before Hurricane Ian, nearly three-fourths (71.4 percent) of respondents said they currently had an employment level that was less than 60 percent compared to before the hurricane. This percentage decreased to 66.7 percent for businesses that had 11 to 20 employees before the hurricane, and was 88.9 percent for businesses with more than 20 employees pre-Hurricane Ian.

**Chart 11.** How are you maintaining contact with your customers? (N = 21)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## How are you maintaining contact with your customers?

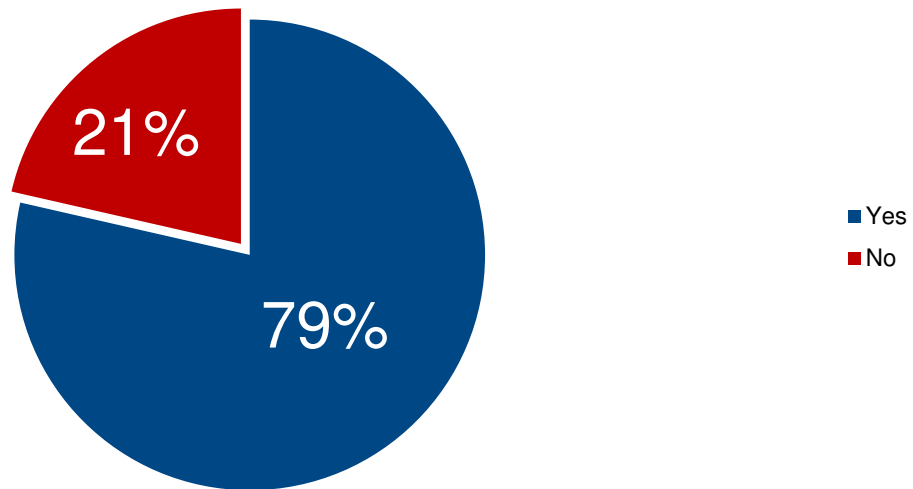
Table 8 reports the different ways that businesses are currently maintaining contact with their customers. Respondents were able to select multiple responses. Email updates, social media updates, and website updates all had 18 responses each (85.7 percent each). Three businesses reported that they are maintaining contact in other ways, and one business is not maintaining contact.

**Table 8.** How are you maintaining contact with your customers?

Response	Count	Percent
Email updates	18	85.7%
Social media updates	18	85.7%
Website updates	18	85.7%
Other (Please specify):	3	14.3%
I am not maintaining contact	1	4.8%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023



**Chart 12.** Are you currently open for business on the Sanibel and Captiva Islands? (N = 70)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Non-Accommodations Survey

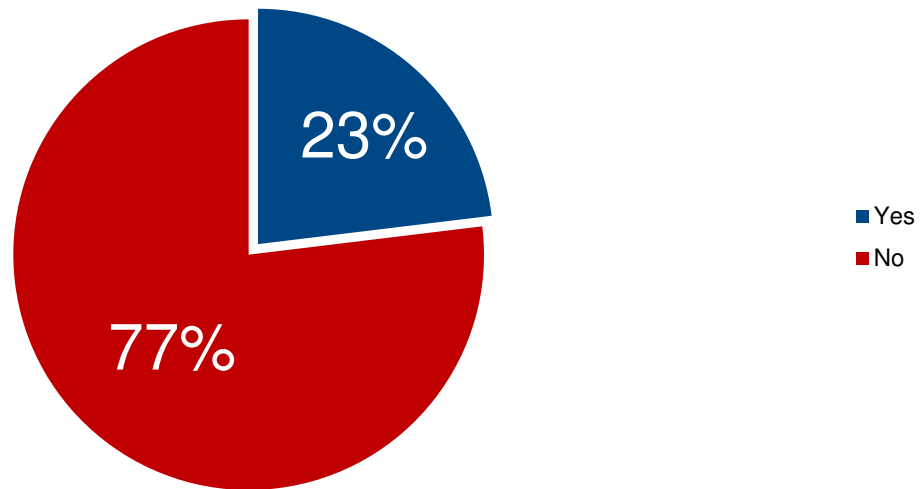
### Are you currently open for business on Sanibel and Captiva Islands?

Table 9 displays the breakdown of the number of businesses currently open on Sanibel and Captiva Islands. Over three-fourths of the total businesses are currently open for business (78.6 percent). The remaining 15 businesses who responded are not currently open (21.4 percent).

**Table 9.** Are you currently open for business on the Sanibel and Captiva Islands?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	55	78.6%
No	15	21.4%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 13.** Have you relocated your business off island? (N = 13)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

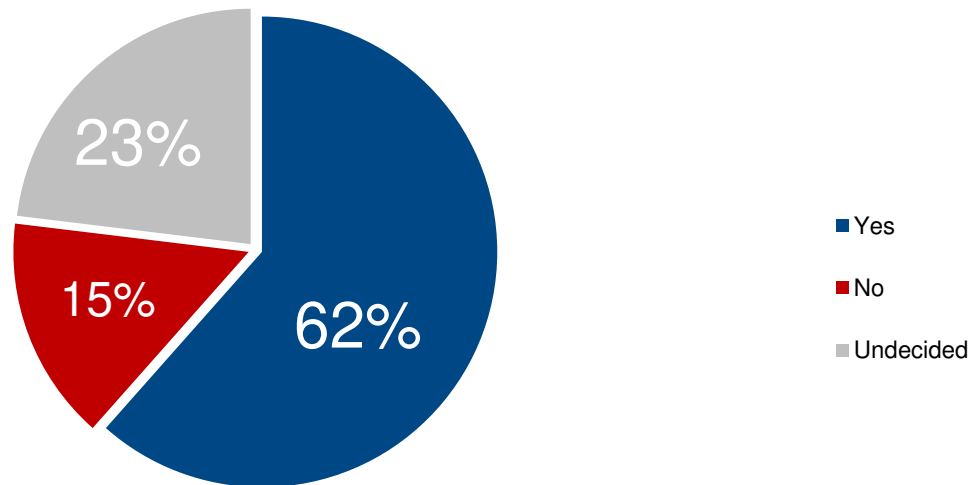
## Have you relocated your business off island?

Respondents who indicated that they were not currently open for business on Sanibel and Captiva Islands were asked if they relocated off the island. The majority of the businesses that are not open did not relocate their business off of the island (76.9 percent). However, the remaining 3 businesses did relocate (23.1 percent).

**Table 10.** Have you relocated your business off island?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	3	23.1%
No	10	76.9%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 14.** Do you plan on reopening your business on the islands? (N = 13)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Do you plan on reopening your business on the islands?

Respondents who indicated that they were not currently open for business on Sanibel and Captiva Islands were asked if they planned on reopening their business back on the islands. Most of the businesses responded that they are planning on reopening their business back on the island (61.5 percent). Two businesses decided that they are not planning to reopen on the island (15.4 percent) and the remaining 3 businesses are undecided (23.1 percent).

**Table 11.** Do you plan on reopening your business on the islands?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	8	61.5%
No	2	15.4%
Undecided	3	23.1%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Current Status of Non-Accommodations

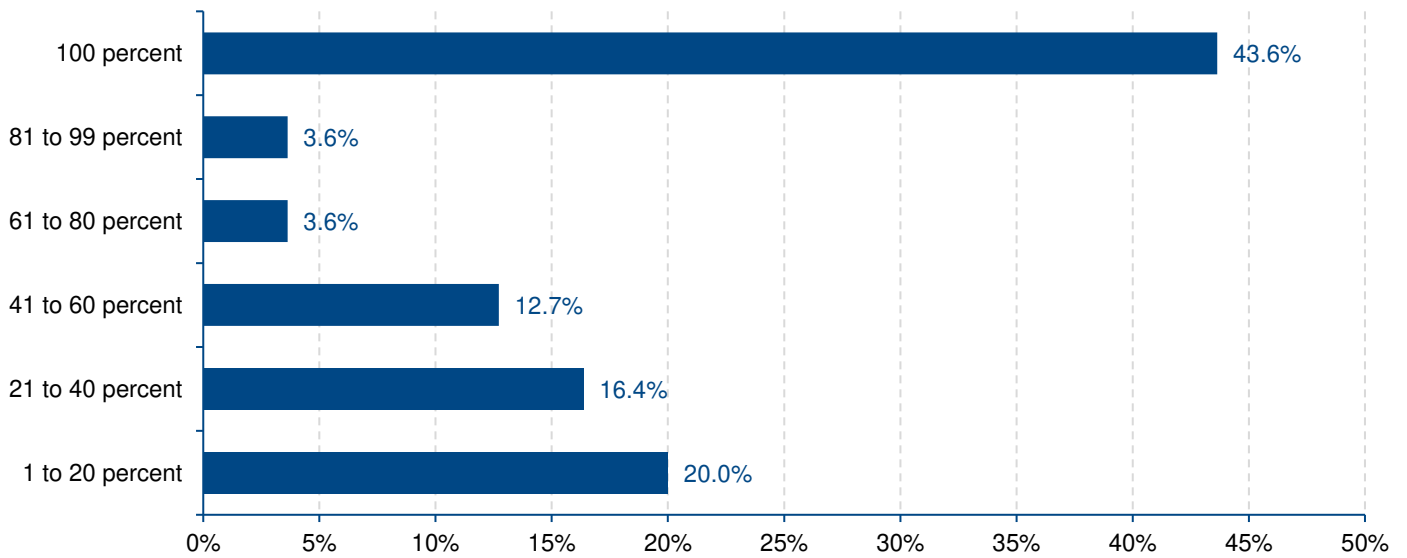
Table 12 reports the current status of non-accommodation businesses. Fifty-five of the 68 businesses that responded are open for business on the island (80.9 percent of total). Three businesses have relocated off of the island, with one planning to reopen on the island (1.5 percent of total) and two that are undecided on whether to open on the island (2.9 percent of total). Ten businesses are not open for business, seven plan to reopen on the island (10.3 percent of total), two businesses have no plan to reopen on the island (2.9 percent of total), and one business is undecided on whether to reopen on the island (1.5 percent of total).

**Table 12.** Current status of non-accommodation businesses

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Open for business on island	55	80.9%
Relocated off Island, plan to reopen on island	1	1.5%
Relocated off island, no plan to reopen on island	0	0.0%
Relocated off island, undecided on whether to reopen on island	2	2.9%
Not open for business, plan to reopen on island	7	10.3%
Not open for business, no plan to reopen on island	2	2.9%
Not open for business, undecided on whether to reopen on island	1	1.5%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023*

**Chart 15.** At what volume is your business operating compared to before Hurricane Ian? (N = 55)



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## At what volume is your business operating compared to before Hurricane Ian?

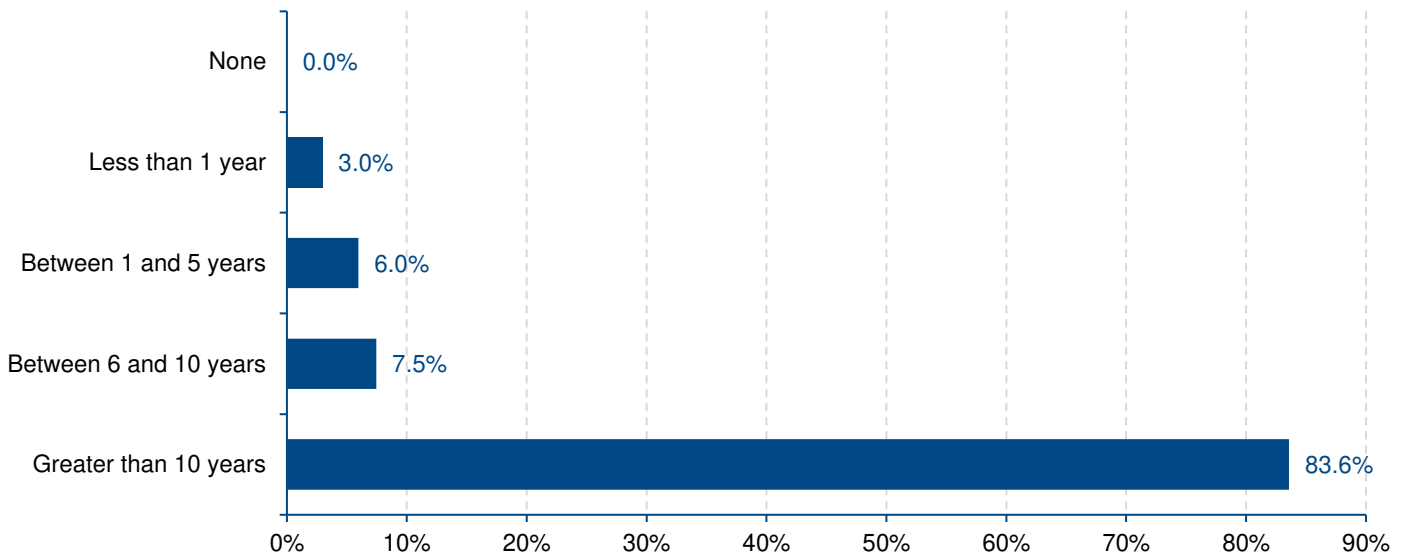
Respondents that said they were currently open for business on the islands were asked about the current volume their business was operating at compared to before Hurricane Ian. The majority of businesses reported that their business is operating at 100 percent when compared to before Hurricane Ian (43.6 percent). The next largest group are businesses who believe they are only operating at 1 to 20 percent (20.0 percent). There were 9 businesses that reported that they are operating at 21 to 40 percent (16.4 percent) and 7 that reported that they are operating at 41 to 60 percent (12.7 percent). For the responses of 61 to 80 percent and 81 to 99 percent, there were 2 businesses each (3.6 percent each).

**Table 13.** At what volume is your business operating compared to before Hurricane Ian?

Response	Count	Percent
1 to 20 percent	11	20.0%
21 to 40 percent	9	16.4%
41 to 60 percent	7	12.7%
61 to 80 percent	2	3.6%
81 to 99 percent	2	3.6%
100 percent	24	43.6%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 16.** How many years had your business been operating on the Islands prior to Hurricane Ian? (N = 67)



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## How many years had your business been operating on the Islands prior to Hurricane Ian?

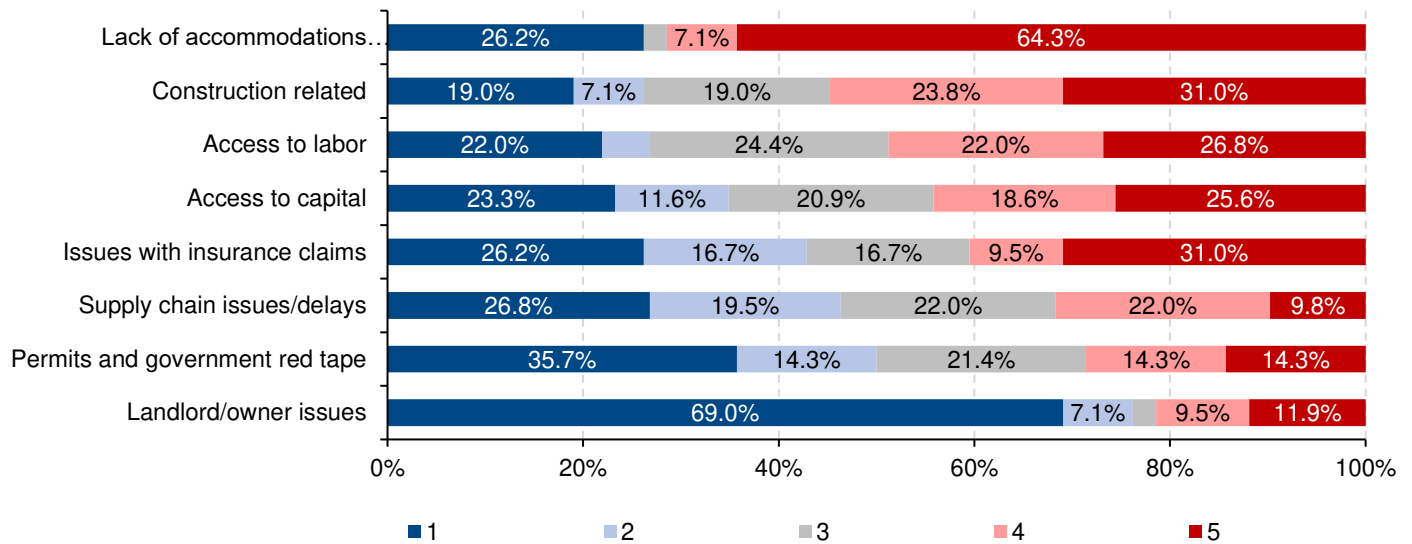
Table 14 reports the number of years a business had been operating on the islands prior to Hurricane Ian. The majority of businesses had been on the island for greater than 10 years (83.6 percent). There were 5 businesses who were on the Islands for between 6 and 10 years (7.5 percent), 4 businesses who were there for between 1 and 5 years (6.0 percent), and 2 businesses that were on the Islands for less than a year (3.0 percent).

**Table 14.** How many years had your business been operating on the Islands prior to Hurricane Ian?

Response	Count	Percent
None	0	0.0%
Less than 1 year	2	3.0%
Between 1 and 5 years	4	6.0%
Between 6 and 10 years	5	7.5%
Greater than 10 years	56	83.6%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 17.** On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being not an obstacle at all and five being a major obstacle, how big of an obstacle are the following in becoming fully operational? (N = 42)



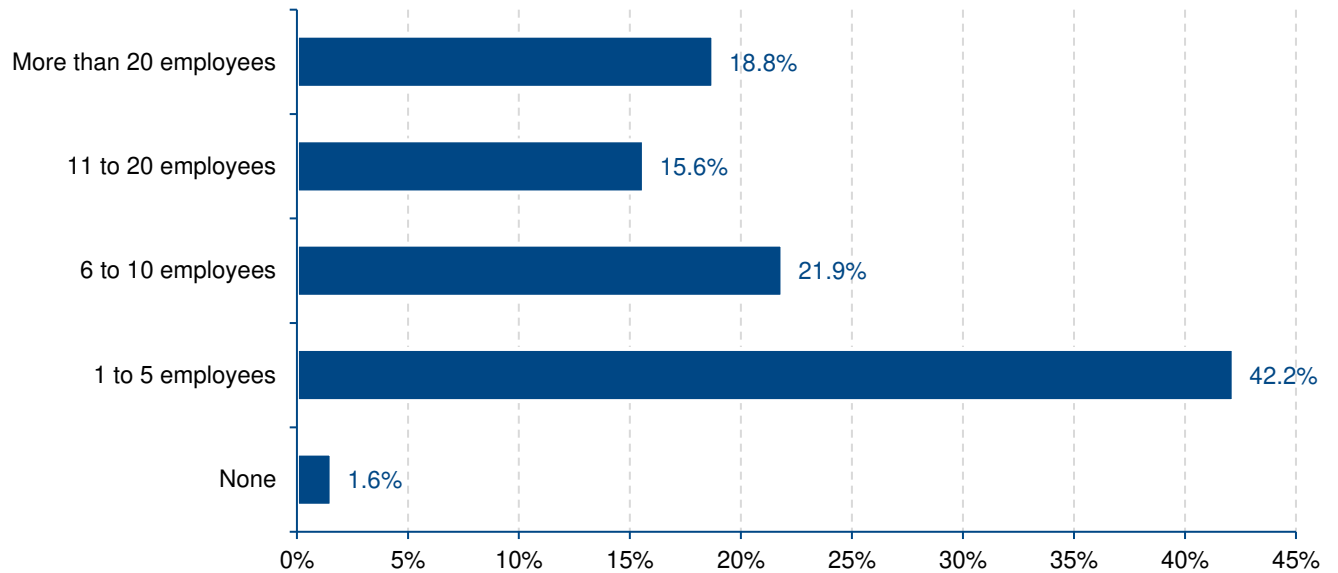
Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## How big of an obstacle are the following in becoming fully operational?

Respondents who indicated that their business was not fully operational were asked to rate various potential obstacles on a scale, with one meaning not an obstacle at all and five being a major obstacle. For the purposes of analyzing this question, we define an obstacle as significant if it was rated at least a 4 on the scale.

Lack of accommodations were the most significant obstacle to becoming fully operational, with 71.4 percent of respondents identifying it as significant obstacle. Construction related issues was the next most significant obstacle indicated by non-accommodation respondents (54.8 percent), followed by access to labor (48.8 percent), access to capital (44.2 percent) and issues with insurance claims (40.5 percent). Supply chain issues were a significant obstacle for 31.7 percent of respondents, permits and government red tape were an obstacle for 28.6 percent of respondents, and landlord/owner issues were a significant obstacle for 21.4 percent of respondents.

**Chart 18.** How many employees did you employ on the island prior to Hurricane Ian? (N = 64)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## How many employees did you employ on the island prior to Hurricane Ian?

Table 15 reports the number of employees who were employed on the island prior to Hurricane Ian. Out of the 64 businesses who responded, 12 respondents (42.2 percent) reported that they had more than 20 employees prior to Hurricane Ian. Furthermore, 15.6 percent said they had 11 to 20 employees, 21.9 percent said they had 6 to 10 employees and 42.2 percent of respondents indicated they had 1 to 5 employees prior to Hurricane Ian. One businesses reported that they did not have any employees prior to Hurricane Ian.

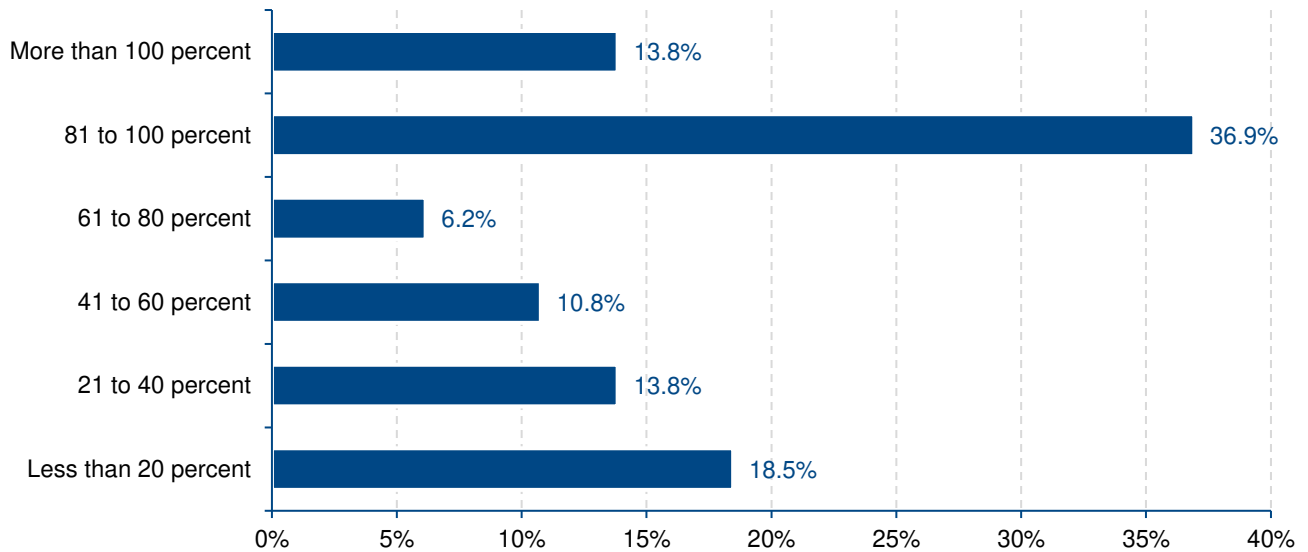
**Table 15.** How many employees did you employ on the island prior to Hurricane Ian?

Response	Count	Percent
None	1	1.6%
1 to 5 employees	27	42.2%
6 to 10 employees	14	21.9%
11 to 20 employees	10	15.6%
More than 20 employees	12	18.8%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023



**Chart 19.** How many employees are currently working for your business compared to before Hurricane Ian, as a percentage? (N = 65)



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## How many employees are currently working for your business compared to before Hurricane Ian, as a percentage?

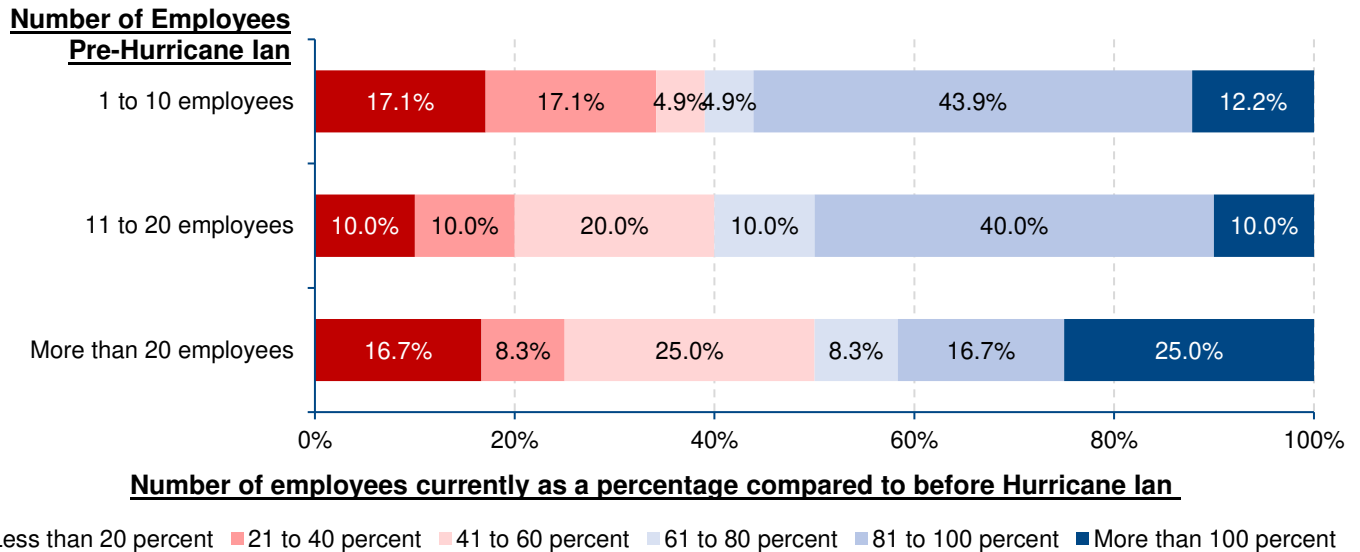
Table 16 reports the number of employees that businesses currently have working for them compared to the number of employees before Hurricane Ian. Twelve of the 65 responding businesses (18.5 percent) indicated they have less than 20 percent of their employees compared to before Hurricane Ian. Furthermore, 13.8 percent of businesses reported that their employee base was 21 to 40 percent of their base prior to Hurricane Ian, while 10.8 percent of respondents said this percentage was between 41 and 60 percent. Four respondents (6.2 percent) said they had 61 to 80 percent of their employee base compared to pre-Hurricane Ian and 36.9 percent indicated this share was between 81 and 100 percent. The remaining 13.8 percent of businesses reported that they have increased their number of employees for a percentage over 100 percent.

**Table 16.** How many employees are currently working for your business compared to before Hurricane Ian, as a percentage?

Response	Count	Percent
Less than 20 percent	12	18.5%
21 to 40 percent	9	13.8%
41 to 60 percent	7	10.8%
61 to 80 percent	4	6.2%
81 to 100 percent	24	36.9%
More than 100 percent	9	13.8%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 20.** Employment prior to Hurricane Ian to now for non-accommodation businesses (N = 63)

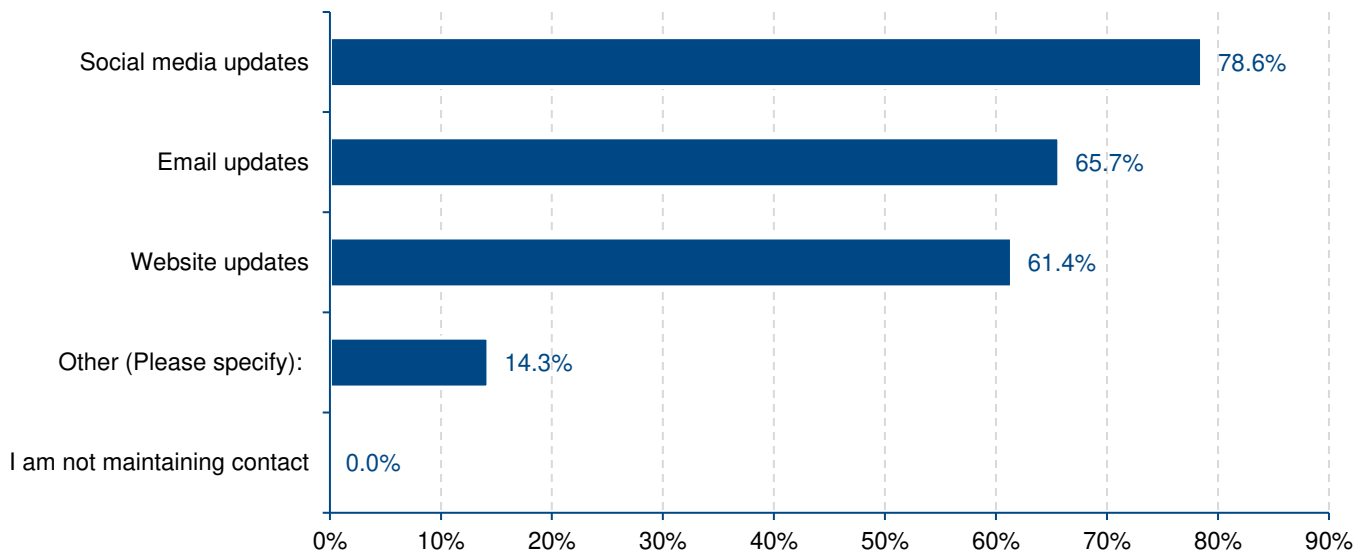


Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

### Change in Number of Employees from Pre-Hurricane Ian to Today

Results were compared to determine how the share of employees today relative to before Hurricane Ian changed depending on the size of the firm. Chart 20 illustrates this by number of employees the business had prior to Hurricane Ian. For businesses that had between 1 and 10 employees before Hurricane Ian, 39 percent of respondents said their business currently had an employment level that was less than 60 percent compared to before the hurricane. This percentage was slightly higher for businesses that had 11 to 20 employees before the hurricane (40.0 percent), and was 50.0 percent for businesses with more than 20 employees pre-Hurricane Ian.

**Chart 21.** How are you maintaining contact with your customers? (N = 70)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## How are you maintaining contact with your customers?

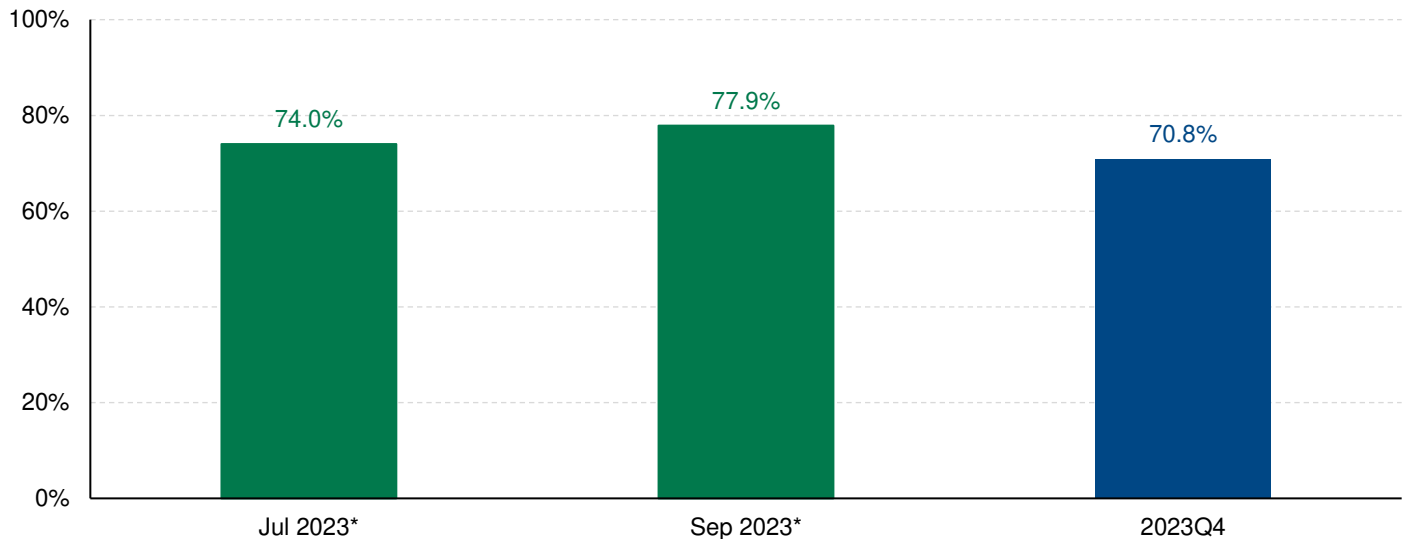
Table 17 reports the break down of how businesses are remaining in contact with their customers. Respondents were able to select multiple responses. Fifty-five businesses reported that they are maintaining contact through social media (78.6 percent). Furthermore, 46 businesses are using email updates (65.7 percent) and 43 businesses are using website updates (61.4 percent). There were 10 businesses who reported that they are using other methods of communication (14.3 percent).

**Table 17.** How are you maintaining contact with your customers?

Response	Count	Percent
Social media updates	55	78.6%
Email updates	46	65.7%
Website updates	43	61.4%
Other (Please specify):	10	14.3%
I am not maintaining contact	0	0.0%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 22: Current Business Conditions**  
Percent of total businesses open in Sanibel and Captiva



Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Note: Data denoted with an asterisk (\*) provided by the SanCap Chamber of Commerce

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the SanCap Chamber of Commerce and CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Current Business Conditions

Chart 22 illustrates current business conditions in Sanibel and Captiva. Data for July 2023 and September 2023 was provided by the SanCap Chamber of Commerce, while data from 2023Q4 comes from the CFI Business Climate Survey. Comparison of the two different data sources helps establish a baseline for the index.

Approximately 70.8 percent of businesses surveyed in the CFI Business Climate Survey were currently open for business in 2023 Q4. While this was slightly below the September 2023 values captured by the SanCap Chamber of Commerce, the variability could be related to different sampling designs used for each survey. We will continue to track this indicator in subsequent surveys.

## Focus Group

A subset of respondents were identified to answer some longer form questions relating to the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that the Sanibel and Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. The focus group received a total of eleven responses for the questions – five from accommodations and six from non-accommodations. Below we highlight the overarching theme from the responses received from these questions. A complete list of responses (de-identified to maintain respondent confidentiality) can be found in Appendix A.

### Please describe the strengths in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

When asked to describe the strengths of the Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen, “community support” was a commonality amongst most of the respondents, and was consistent between both accommodations and non-accommodations. Some respondents also acknowledged communication and assistance from the city. As one respondent mentioned,

*“The City’s relationship with the County and State level officials has made the recovery efforts smoother (if that was possible) and gained traction where and when it was needed to aid in our recovery.”*

Other strengths mentioned by respondents included desire for people to come back, weather, beaches, and the quick repair and maintenance of infrastructure on the islands.

### Please describe the weaknesses (impediments) in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

When asked to describe weaknesses and impediments of the Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen, a number of different responses were offered. First, multiple respondents from both accommodations and non-accommodations offered up causeway traffic as a weakness, with one non-accommodation respondent mentioning that

*“Traffic is at an appalling level in attempts to get on and off the island, it is so bad from 3:00-5:00 pm that many contractors are not willing to come out.”*

Multiple respondents also cited lack of labor and lack of visitation to the islands as a weakness to the island, possibly related to causeway traffic and unavailability of accommodations.

Other weaknesses cited by respondents included increased commercial rents, product logistics and inability to obtain insurance.

### Please describe the challenges (threats) in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

When asked to describe threats and challenges of the Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen, respondents offered various responses. Tourism and waning interest in demand for hospitality offered by Sanibel and Captiva was the first threat noted. As one accommodations respondent mentions:

*“The mainland offers a whole lot of unique shops and dining experiences which used to be exclusive to Sanibel and Captiva.*

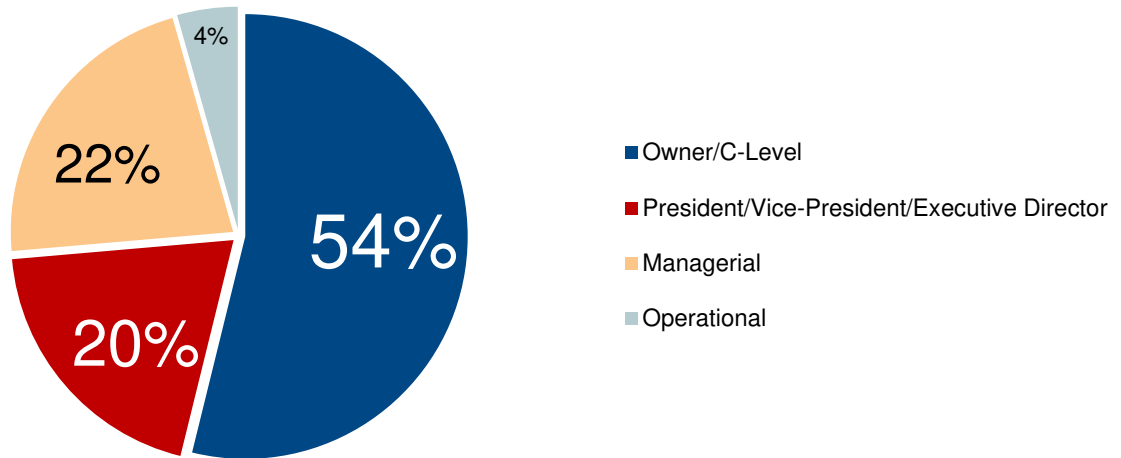
*There is no reason to drive to the edge of the earth to get to the islands to have an amazing dining experience or retail shopping spree when there are so many to choose from that are closer to where locals live on the mainland. If a business is going to reopen, it needs to be special and offer an experience or product that makes driving to or staying on the island worth the time and expense to get here.”*

Relating to the impact on tourism, causeway traffic was also offered as a threat by multiple respondents across both accommodations and non-accommodations. Other challenges offered by respondents included concern of more hurricanes, slow funding and insurance spiraling out of control.

## Please describe the opportunities (lessons learned) in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

When asked to describe opportunities and lessons learned of the Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen, there was no one common theme but multiple themes that popped up. For instance, multiple accommodation respondents noted that having good relationships with the local chamber and city both proved to be essential in the recovery process. Multiple respondents also noted that having some sort of plan or recovery roadmap provided helpful assistance in the recovery process.

Other opportunities and lessons learned mentioned by respondents included patience and urgency working through the situation, banking relations and having good insurance.

**Chart 23.** What best describes your role in your business? (N = 91)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Demographics

### What best describes your role in your business?

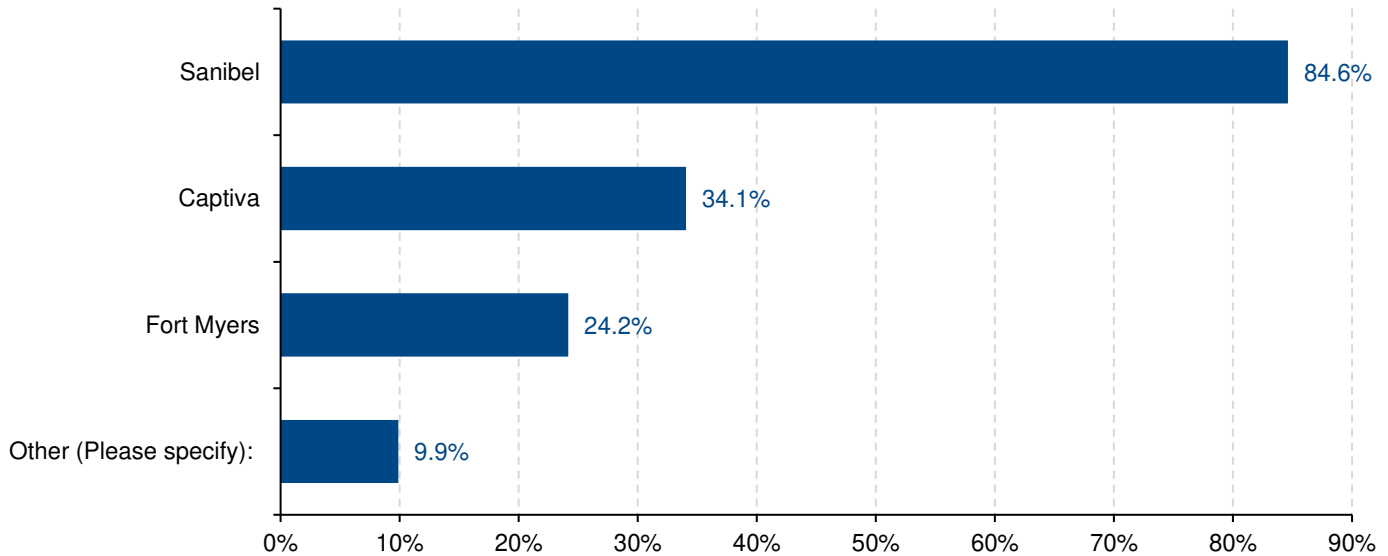
Table 18 reports the role that the respondent has in their business. Forty-nine people describe themselves as the owner/c-level (53.8 percent), 18 people describe themselves as the president/vice-president/executive director (19.8 percent), 20 people describe themselves as managerial (22.0 percent), and the remaining four people describe themselves in the operational role (4.4 percent).

This means approximately a quarter of responses were provided by individuals with managerial or operational roles within the business they were responding on behalf of. It's important to acknowledge this as a limitation of the survey, as those in operational or managerial positions may have limited knowledge regarding business decisions and expectations.

**Table 18.** What best describes your role in your business?

Response	Count	Percent
Owner/C-Level	49	53.8%
President/Vice-President/Executive Director	18	19.8%
Managerial	20	22.0%
Operational	4	4.4%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

**Chart 24.** Where in Lee County does your business primarily operate? (N = 91)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Where in Lee County does your business primarily operate?

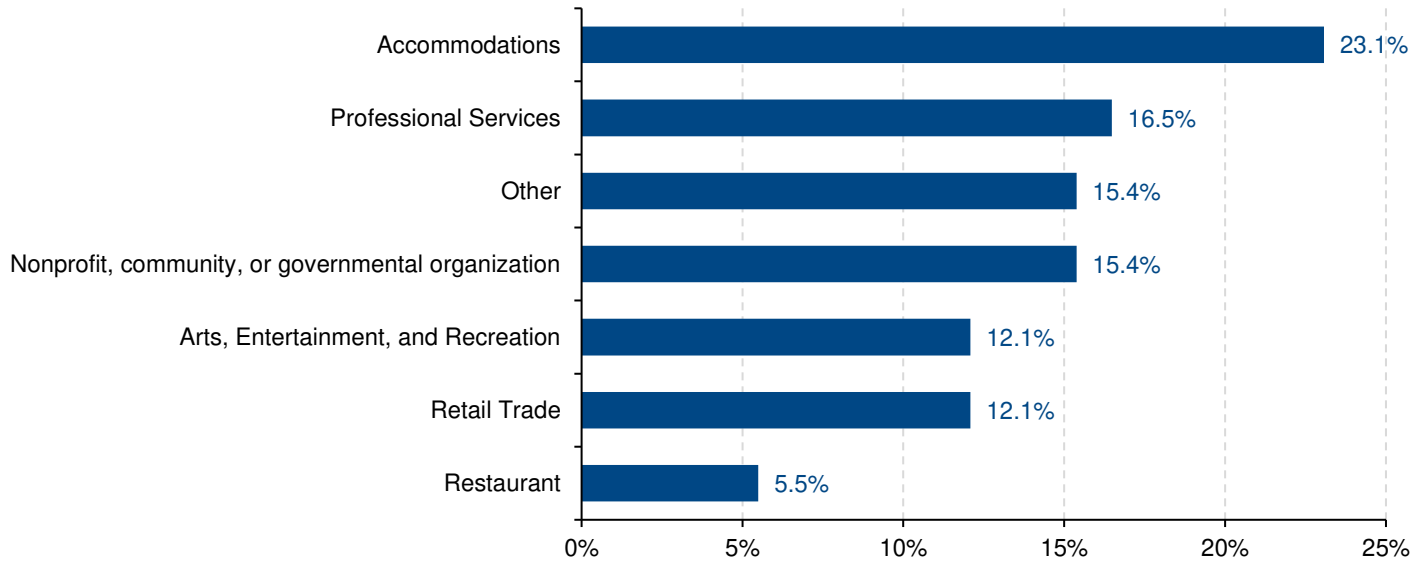
Table 19 reports where in Lee County a business primarily operates. Seventy-seven businesses reported that they operate primarily on Sanibel Island (84.6 percent), 31 businesses primarily operate on Captiva Island (34.1 percent), and 22 businesses primarily operate in Fort Myers (24.2 percent). The remaining 9 businesses (9.9 percent) reported that they are primarily operating elsewhere.

**Table 19.** Where in Lee County does your business primarily operate?

Response	Count	Percent
Sanibel	77	84.6%
Captiva	31	34.1%
Fort Myers	22	24.2%
Other (Please specify):	9	9.9%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023



**Chart 25.** What industry does your business primarily operate in? (N = 91)

Prepared by the Regional Economic Research Institute

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## What industry does your business primarily operate in?

Table 20 reports what industry the businesses primarily operate in. Out of 91 responses, 21 businesses reported that they primarily operate in accommodations (23.1 percent). Fifteen businesses reported that they primarily operate in professional services (16.5 percent). In the response groups of Nonprofit, community, or governmental organization, and the other response group, there were 14 businesses each (15.4 percent each). The arts, entertainment, and recreation response group and the retail trade response group both had 11 businesses (12.1 percent each). The restaurant industry response group had the smallest representation with only 5 businesses (5.5 percent).

**Table 20.** What industry does your business primarily operate in?

Response	Count	Percent
Accommodations	21	23.1%
Professional Services	15	16.5%
Other	14	15.4%
Nonprofit, community, or governmental organization	14	15.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	11	12.1%
Retail Trade	11	12.1%
Restaurant	5	5.5%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: RERI analysis of data obtained from the CFI Business Climate Survey, conducted from November 15th, 2023 and December 22nd, 2023

## Appendix A. Focus Group Responses

The following lists include specific responses for each of the open-ended questions asked of focus group respondents. Some respondents did not answer all the focus group questions and left the questions blank.

### Please describe the strengths in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

1. The desire for people to come back.
2. Causeway was re-opened quickly.

Small community

3. It's a small community and many of us already know one another and support each other. The storm brought many business owners together that didn't know one another well.

The City now has a very clear understanding that Vacation Rentals are what drive the economy on the islands. The numbers don't lie.

The City's relationship with the County and State level officials has made the recovery efforts smoother (if that was possible) and gained traction where and when it was needed to aid in our recovery.

We still have our sugar sand shelling beaches, fabulous wildlife refuge and conservation lands, the wildlife and (for now) pristine waterways that are desirable to visitors and locals alike.

4. City communication. The weekly council meetings were a huge help and served a great purpose. The city's availability was a huge positive as well.

Organization of road clean up, debris removal.

Pop up stations offering food.

5. Weather; beach
6. Community support, well-organized recovery, excitement for the future, great opportunity.
7. We have our choice of locations.
8. Supportive community.
9. The community has been so supportive, especially with different resources.

10. The amount of time it is taking in general to open is not a huge issue as with no lodging to speak of available the resort traffic does not exist.

But I think it is important to get yourself re-established for when that time comes. In our case it is also important to our members and homeowners.

11. Community support.

## Please describe the weaknesses (impediments) in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

1. Lack of labor and supply chain issues.
2. Commute over causeway/traffic. We will continue to lose staff/partners until the causeway is finished.
3. Until guests can return for occupancy in hotel/motel/resort and weekly/monthly vacation rentals, there is no incentive for businesses to reopen.

Vacationing guests are predictable in their patterns as to when they shop for food, retail/gifts, rent bikes, and the frequency that they dine out.

Visitors that drive out for a day are not predictable at all. They are going to the beach and perhaps not shopping or dining at all. They are bringing their own bikes, so they're not renting them. They may or may not want to shop, and they can generally only eat at one establishment before they head off island.

For long term/seasonal stays: Lack of a pharmacy (coming Summer/Fall 2024) and meaningful healthcare, physical therapy, chiropractor, eye doctor, etc. are the reasons many guests are suspending their return until 2025.

These folks dine out frequently, shop at the retail establishments and spend money.

The restaurants, groceries, bike rentals and other businesses relied on vacation rental agencies to inform them of occupancy rates and big changeover days so that they could staff accordingly.

Without meaningful vacation rental activity, many businesses do not have the confidence or capital to reopen and forecast what they can sell to whom, when, let alone continue to pay overhead such as rent, insurance, labor, payroll taxes, purchase inventory or food - it's too unpredictable.

Commercial rents have increased as well.

4. No weaknesses caused by the islands with regards to a business reopening.
5. Bridge Traffic Due to construction

Labor shortages in construction crews

Staffing

Lower Business Levels compared to normalized years; guest's wary of traveling to the area.

6. Causeway traffic, staffing, product logistics, loan interest rates
7. Lack of tourism.

We cannot get insurance.

The mood of clients is not conducive to luxury retail.

8. Lack of accommodations

City of Sanibel slow in issuing permits to re-build.

Causeway traffic a nightmare.

Need strong & innovative support from local Chamber

9. Lack of customers/tourists

10. Traffic is at an appalling level in attempts to get on and off the island, it is so bad from 3:00-5:00 pm that many contractors are not willing to come out. My assumption is that they will be charging people in their fees to get workers on and off.
11. Lack of accommodations

## Please describe the challenges (threats) in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

1. People choosing to become loyal to other destinations.
2. Commute over causeway/traffic. We will continue to lose staff/partners until the causeway is finished.
3. The mainland offers a whole lot of unique shops and dining experiences which used to be exclusive to Sanibel and Captiva.

There is no reason to drive to the edge of the earth to get to the islands to have an amazing dining experience or retail shopping spree when there are so many to choose from that are closer to where locals live on the mainland. If a business is going to reopen, it needs to be special and offer an experience or product that makes driving to or staying on the island worth the time and expense to get here.

As for the on-island residents, many are displaced, and just as many are not returning. They are selling their properties and moving elsewhere, away from water, high insurance and an unpredictable future as they age out (on island healthcare and will we have medical facilities).

Attracting and maintaining staff was an issue prior to the hurricane, and now it is exacerbated. Affordable housing in Lee County was scarce to begin with, and it's even more hard to come by now. Potential employees are having to travel and commute from further away, and employers are having to offer much higher compensation packages to entice them to work here. The traffic and time spent commuting is often a reason for them leaving and seeking employment on the mainland. Quality of life matters, and when someone is spending an average of 10 - 15 hours a week commuting, that is the equivalent of more than 1 full workday that they are not being paid for.

The causeway is a temporary hurdle. The traffic will be with us forever.

Insurance is spiraling out of control, and after not being paid or struggling to be paid after Ian, it's a big consideration as to whether or not businesses can or will reopen and whether or not they will carry insurance going forward.

4. Initially, the bridge being closed.

Lack of available office space.

Lack of proper protocol for recovery to follow. Had there been a recovery road map of "what to do" post a catastrophic weather event, we could have added 4 months to our rebuild/recovery of properties, thus furthering along our rebuild process. Because of this delay, we are further behind in the rebuild, thus not in a position to accommodate travelers, thus not having customers to support our economy.

5. Extremely restrictive funding opportunities, interest rates, lack of support at county
6. Slow or no funding. SBA is not funding anyone that I know of.

High interest rates

Concern of more hurricanes

7. Time

Getting permits

Getting labor

Navigating the causeway problem for employees

Very few guests

Banking needs cannot be met if accommodations, permitting, etc. continue to creep along at snail pace.

8. Tourism
9. Lack of accommodations - will people who travel here annually find a new spot?

## Please describe the opportunities (lessons learned) in Sanibel/Captiva Islands for businesses to reopen.

1. Official have become more accessible which is very helpful.
2. If you own your own building, the hurdles and challenges are more manageable than if you rent. Ownership allows for control, whereas renting leaves businesses at the mercy of their landlord/owner.

Having good insurance is essential and understanding your coverages.

Having a business plan and a rainy day/emergency fund to draw on is key.

Having a good relationship with your Chamber of Commerce and City Council/Planning Commission and law enforcement/emergency responders is essential.

Bonus points for having friends with boats that are helpers and didn't charge you for rides back and forth when the causeway was destroyed.

3. Proactive vs. Reactive.

Have a recovery roadmap in place to provide guidance. What to do & Who to call.

City, (to have in place now), a contact list for each Association board president, Vice President, contact details and if they have an M.S.A. (Master Service Agreement) with a disaster company. We strongly suggest each association have an M.S.A. in place now, with a disaster relief company, so that the wheel is spinning as soon as a storm is approaching.

Ensure adequate reserves are in place. Minimum 12 months.

4. Elevate for the next one! Waterproof vital business operations.
5. Always have an off-island location
6. Do what is best for your business/labor/amended hours/inventory

Landlord cooperation

Banking relations

City permitting has to be pushed

Patience & Urgency of the situation

7. We definitely learned that we need to keep backup records in a computer out of the store. We unfortunately lost a lot of records that were paper that were in our store that got ruined that did not help us with insurance and taxes.
8. It takes hard work and dedication from your core staff and a willingness to envision the end result.

## Please describe any additional details or comments regarding the challenges faced in Sanibel/Captiva for businesses to reopen.

1. Being required to pay for an appraisal to appease the City officials for the 50/50 compliance was an unnecessary expense, given that my quote/bids to do the necessary repairs was well under my 50% threshold, and it did not change or increase when it was completed.

Having to spend money when we are not generating income on something as frivolous as an appraisal when I carried PRIVATE insurance (not affiliated with the NFIP) that did not hold me to the 50/50 FEMA rule was adding insult to injury.

The lengthy wait to get an appraisal slowed my reopening by MONTHS.

Being pressured, bullied and shamed into renting properties that are not safe, that would fall short of delivering an experience that is not up to our brand standards and would have a negative impact on our business and owner property brands has not been appreciated. Being told I have an obligation to reopen so that other small businesses that rely on us can survive is unrealistic.

All of the accommodations segment needs help as well, and we still believe that good things come to those who wait. We just have to get used to the waiting.

2. Lack of speed getting properties to rentable status. Lack of insurance payouts. There are many variables to these issues, but major issues as each delayed the rebuild process. Having no properties for rent, equivalent to no guest. If we do not have guests to host, we do not have the ability to fuel our economy.
3. Our business is open with a limited online store, you may consider adding that to your survey as I was unclear whether I should answer 'yes' for open off island. Many of the same challenges existed before such as staffing and traffic, but now they are extremely magnified. There is no funding available for small businesses that were well-prepared for business interruption, but not prepared to complete rebuilds from the ground up. These people have the ability to run their business if someone can find funds to give them a step up to recovery. Funding opportunities that are available are extremely restrictive and "not worth the trouble" because of requirements such as property liens. The longer recovery takes, the less stakeholder patience and sympathy will exist, so we are running against that clock.
4. Improvement of infrastructure.

Fix traffic problems if possible.

Plan a city center like St. Armond's Circle in Sarasota.

A circle would add circulation and help with traffic flow.

We have the opportunity to fix some of these issues now since we are closed indefinitely.





# FGCU

LUTGERT COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**Regional Economic  
Research Institute**

Copyright © 2024 FGCU - All rights reserved.