

# News Release

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## **Durham Releases First General Business Survey Results**

*Information Now on Open Data Website; Data Focuses on Race and Gender Equity*

DURHAM, N.C. – The City of Durham now knows more about its small business community and what they need to thrive thanks to the results from its first-ever business survey.

The City’s Budget and Management Services, Equity and Inclusion, Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and Technology Solutions departments have just released the findings from their [2019 General Business Survey](#). The goal of the survey was to learn more about the Bull City’s business community, and to understand how local City government can better serve these businesses.

ETC Institute, which also administers the City’s annual resident satisfaction survey, was selected to manage the business survey. Conducted over three months in the summer of 2019, the City received responses from 754 randomly-selected Durham business owners, representing a wide variety of characteristics and demographics: 31% were businesses owned by women; 24% were businesses owned by people of color; and 38% were legacy businesses in operation for 20 or more years.

According to Senior Economic Development Coordinator Brian Smith with the City’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, this new data will be useful for both City government as well as the business community and residents. “The survey has given us a window into our business community, and we want residents to have access to that same information,” Smith said. “We’ve already begun using the data to help shape our policies, programs, and practices so that we can better help businesses thrive in our community.”

The website organizes the survey findings into several categories with key insights related to: business owner demographics; business climate; day-to-day business operations; employment information; revenue data; barriers to growth and profitability; and ease of contracting with City government. The report also shares ways that the City is assisting small businesses and helping dismantle barriers to success.

The survey results indicate that barriers still exist for minority and women-owned businesses. For example, 20% of minority-owned businesses report annual revenues of less than \$25,000, while just 6% of white-owned businesses report the same. In addition, 15% of businesses owned by women report annual revenues of less than \$25,000; just 7% of men-owned businesses report the same. According to Smith, given that much of this data was gathered prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of these disparities have likely increased, and the City’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development is now working with other small business ecosystem partners in Durham on a long-term recovery plan for small businesses.

Those interested in taking a deeper dive into the data can now use the interactive dashboard, which allows users to view results for specific types of respondents based on race, gender, business size, and other characteristics. The complete survey findings are available on the [General Business Survey website](#), which is part of the Open Data program, a joint project between Durham City and County governments to enhance data accessibility and allows users to explore, visualize, and download data in a simplified, easy-to-use format.

Small business owners who would like to learn more about City-provided resources and opportunities can [sign up](#) to join the City's business directory. For more information, visit the [General Business Survey website](#) or contact Smith by [email](#) or at (919) 560-4965, ext. 15205.

**About the City of Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development**

Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the [Office of Economic and Workforce Development](#) works to pursue an inclusive and equitable economic development strategy that improves the economic well-being of the Durham community through efforts that unlocks the full potential of the local economy by expanding opportunities and dismantling barriers in support of business expansion, retention and job creation; growing the commercial tax base and improving the quality of life of Durham residents.

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