



The Small Business Pulse Survey

Measuring the effect of COVID-19 on Small Businesses

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United States[®]
**Census
2020**

Goals, Timeline, and Collaboration

Goal

The Small Business Pulse Survey was designed to measure the effects of the pandemic on businesses overall as well as on aspects of their operations and finances, leveraging existing infrastructure and producing high frequency geographic and industry detail.

Timeline

Phase 1: April 26 – June 25, 2020

Phase 2: August 9 – October 10, 2020

Experimental Rapid Response Survey

Proof of Concept

Partners

Phase 1

Small Business Administration
Federal Reserve Board of Governors
International Trade Administration
Minority Business Development Agency

Phase 2 Additional Agencies:

Bureau of Transportation Statistics
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Office of Tax Analysis, Department of Treasury
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Platform and Frame

Platform: Centurion

- Census Bureau in-house collection system
- Economic Programs database for back-end processing

Email Invitations to Take an Online Survey

- Weekly email on Sunday, follow up email on Wednesday.
- High voluntary response rate of over 25%, conversion rate over 35% in Phase 1

Frames: Used Existing Email from 2017 Economic Census

- Include all single-location businesses with 1-499 employees and \$1000+ revenue that reported an email address
- Approx. ~1 million small businesses in target population for SBPS
- Representative of 5.6 million small businesses
- Ability to link to Census Bureau business data infrastructure meant only timely, relevant measures need to be surveyed as other important measures (industry, location, size) previously collected

Content: Phase 1

Overall Effect

Overall effect of the pandemic on the business with 5-bin response ranging from Large negative effect to Large positive effect.

Operations questions

Change in revenue, level of revenue, change in number of employees, change in employee hours, temporary closures.

Challenges questions

Pivot to new goods or services, pivot to curbside/carry-out/delivery, supply chain disruptions.

Finance questions

Cash on hand , loan or other payment defaults, requests for assistance, receipt of assistance.

Outlook

Expectations. How much time until the business returns to average/normal level of operations.

Content: Phase 2

Overall Effect

No changes.

Operations questions

Additional questions:

- Rehiring of laid-off or furloughed employees
- Change in hours worked from home
- Change in use of online platforms

Challenges questions

Dropped two 'pivot' questions.

Additional questions:

- Factors that impact business's capacity
- Change in business's capacity
- Future needs

Finance questions

Additional response options for assistance questions:

- Fed's Main Street Lending Program
- IRS's tax deferral, credits

Outlook

Additional response options for expectations:

- Returned to normal
- Business permanently closed

Data Collection

- 9 week collection period for each phase
- Email invitation Sunday and follow-up Wednesday
- Weekly Sunday through Saturday data collection
- Weekly data releases through interactive data tool, static tables the Thursday following survey close-out
- National and state-level data and 50 largest MSAs
- NAICS 2-digit (sector) level data nationally and by state
- Same target population for both phases

Overall Effect

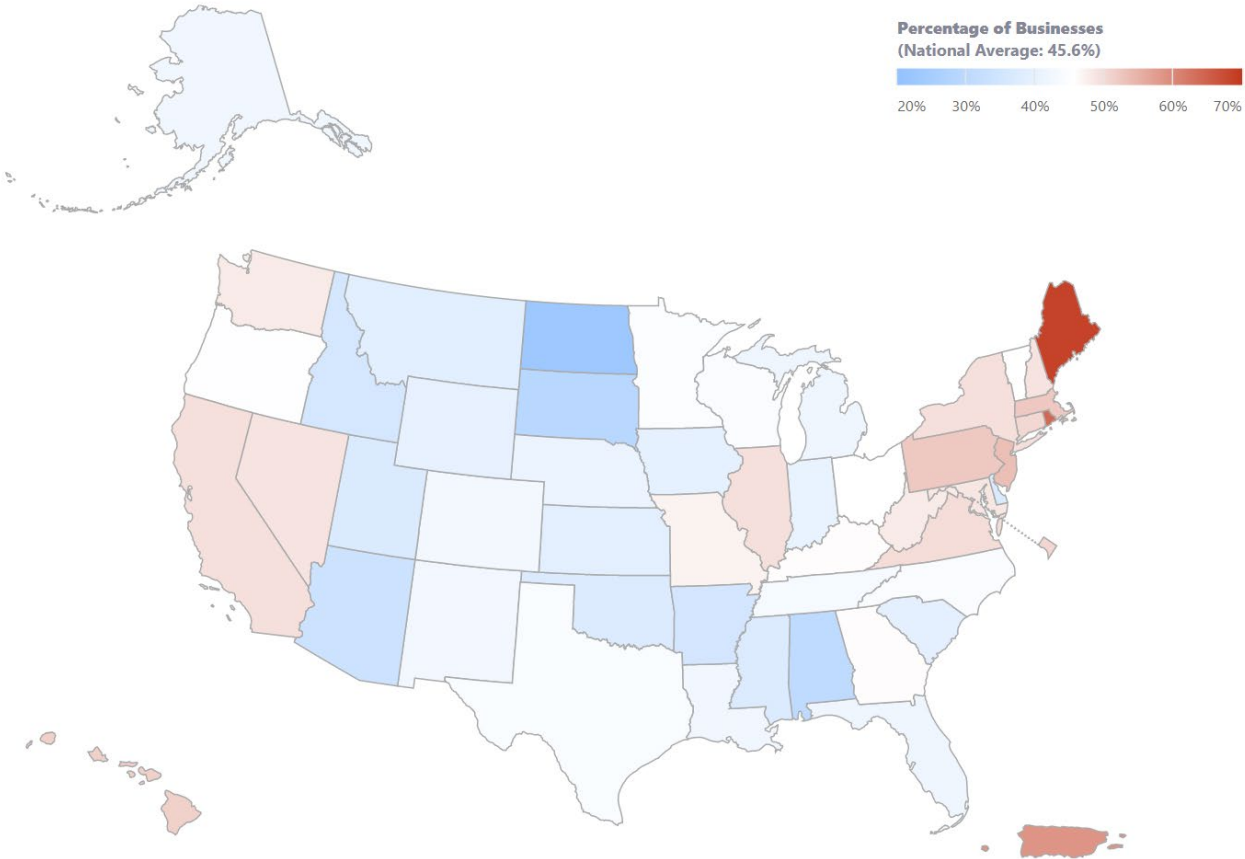
Collection Dates: 9/13 to 9/19 ▾

Survey Question: Expectations ▾

Survey Answer: More than 6 months ▾

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

Data Collected 9/13 to 9/19



Current Challenges

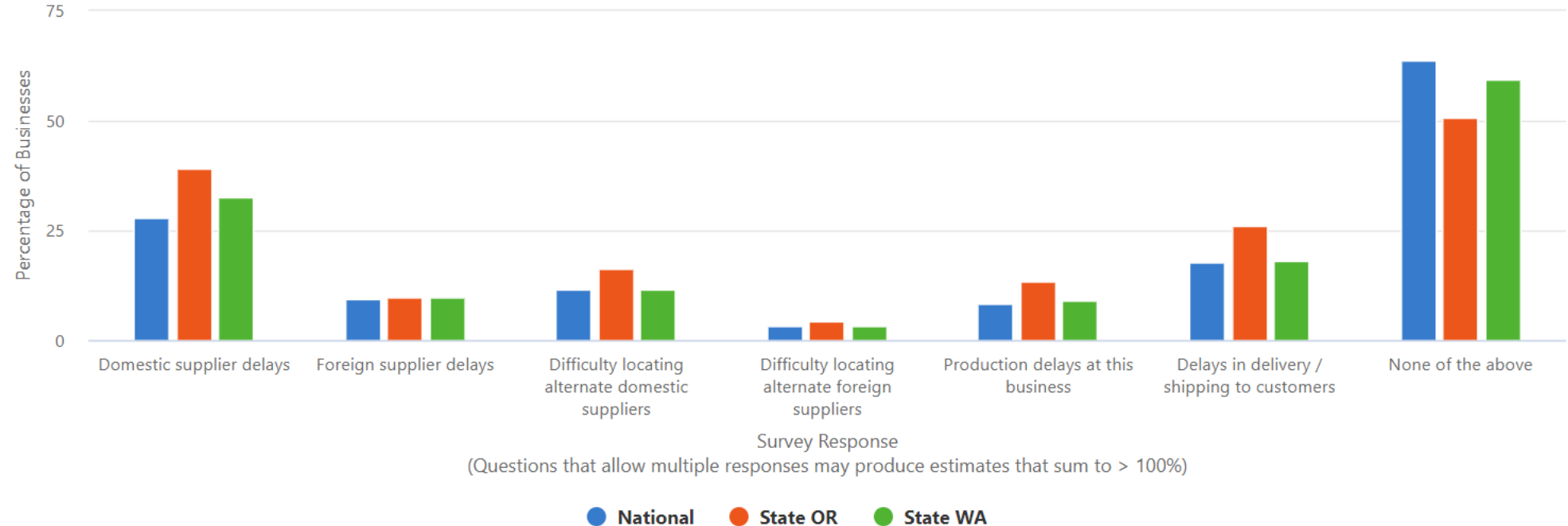
Collection Dates: 9/13 to 9/19 ▾

Survey Question: Delays/Difficulties ▾

Compare: State ▾ Oregon, Washington ▾

In the last week, did this business have any of the following?

Data Collected 9/13 to 9/19



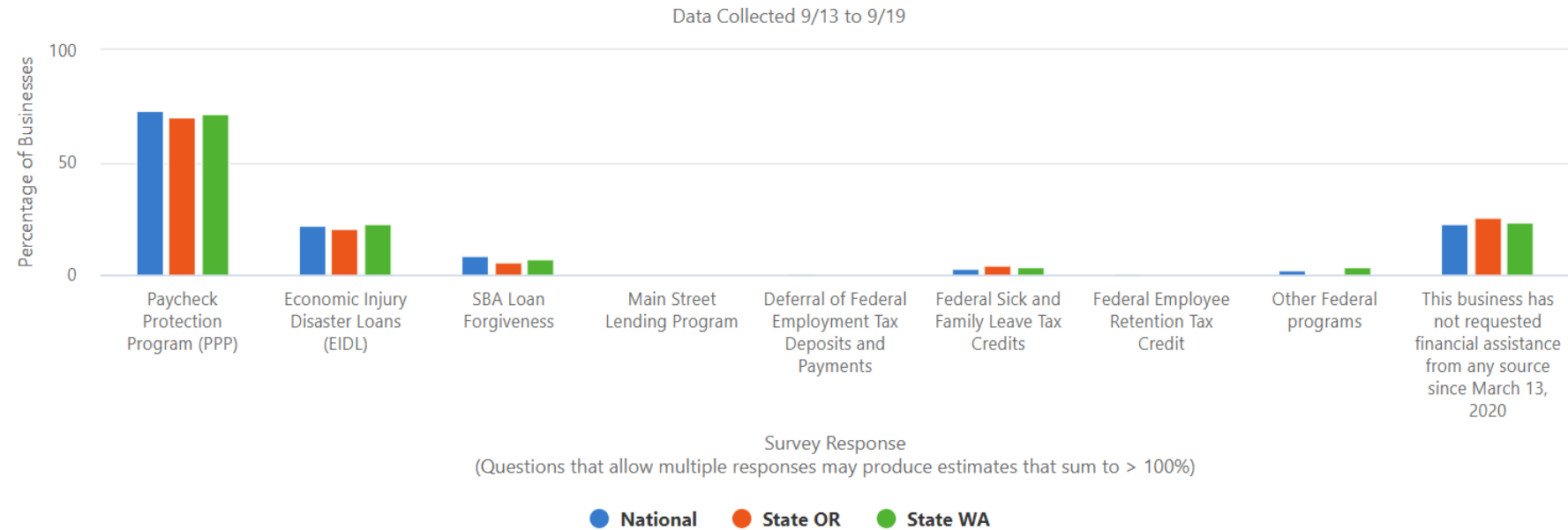
Finance

Collection Dates: 9/13 to 9/19 ▾

Survey Question: Received assistance ▾

Compare: State ▾ Oregon, Washington ▾

Since March 13, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of these programs from the Federal government?



Future Needs

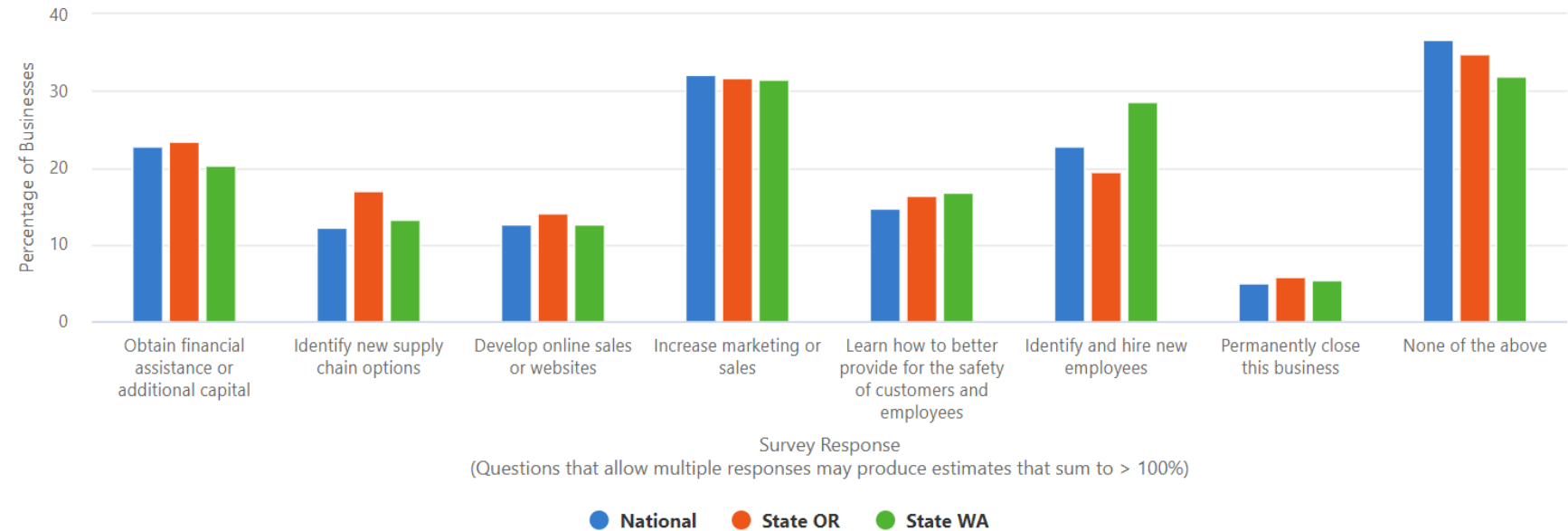
Collection Dates: 9/13 to 9/19 ▾

Survey Question: Future needs ▾

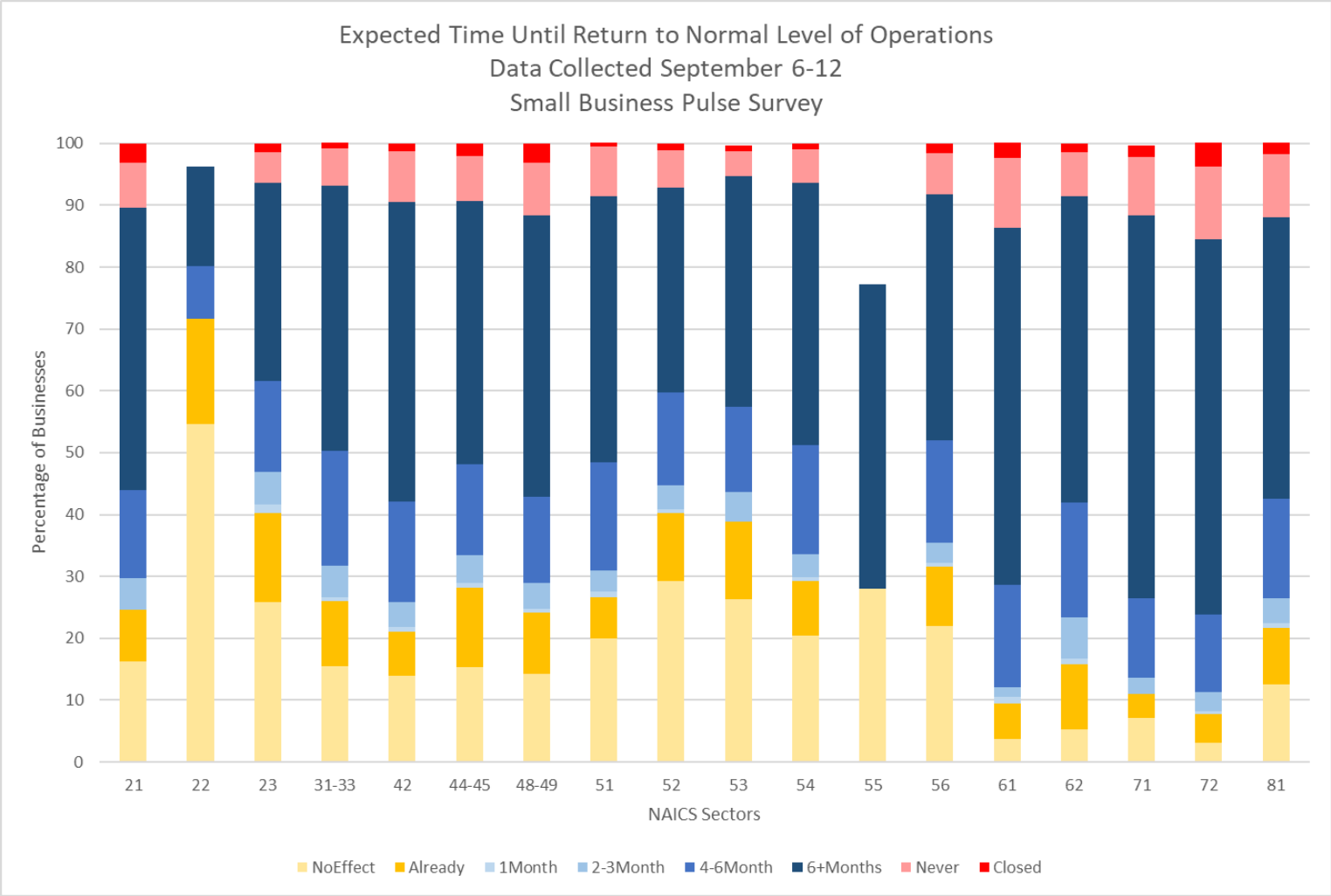
Compare: State ▾ Oregon, Washington ▾

In the next 6 months, do you think this business will need to do any of the following?

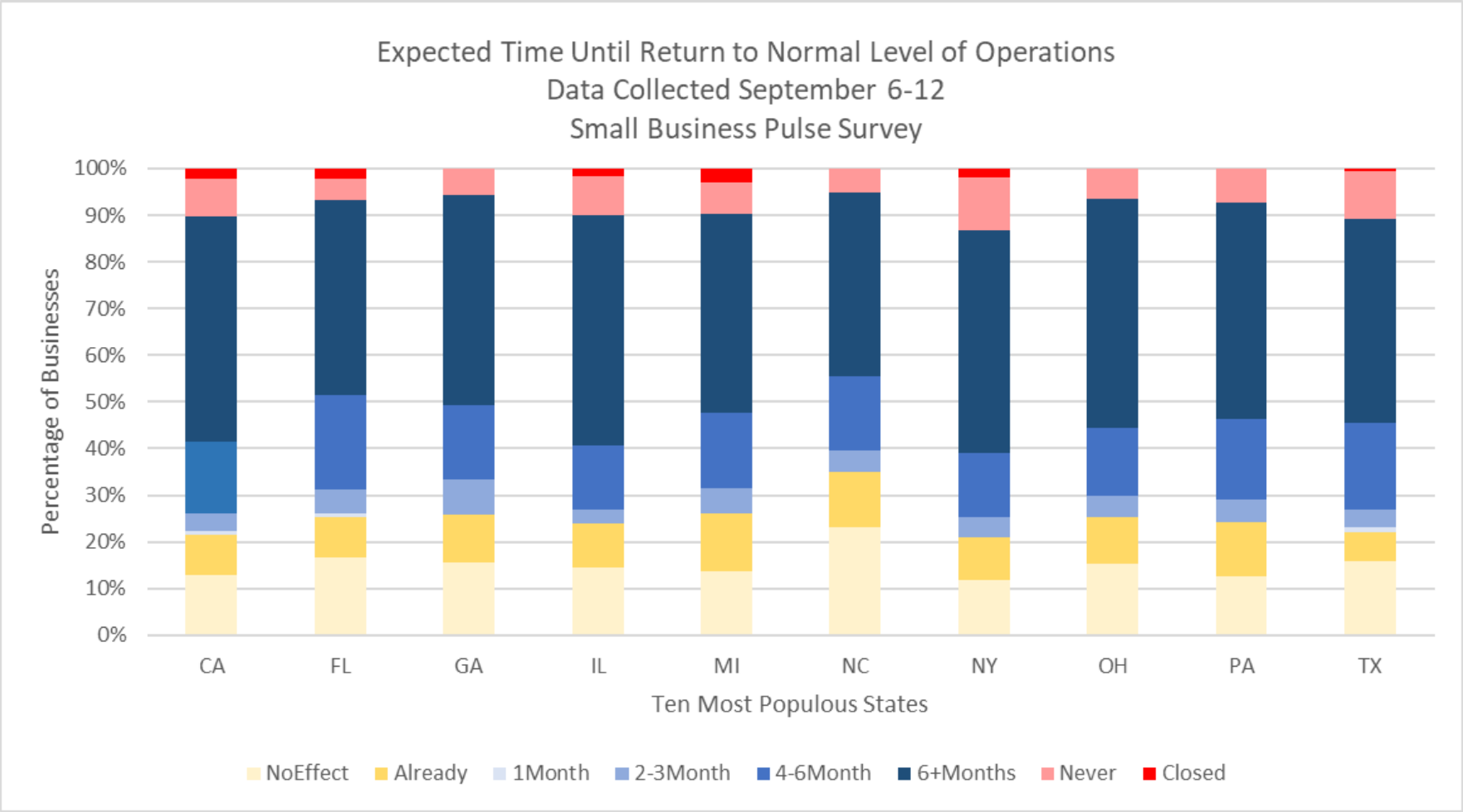
Data Collected 9/13 to 9/19



Outlook by Sector



Outlook by State



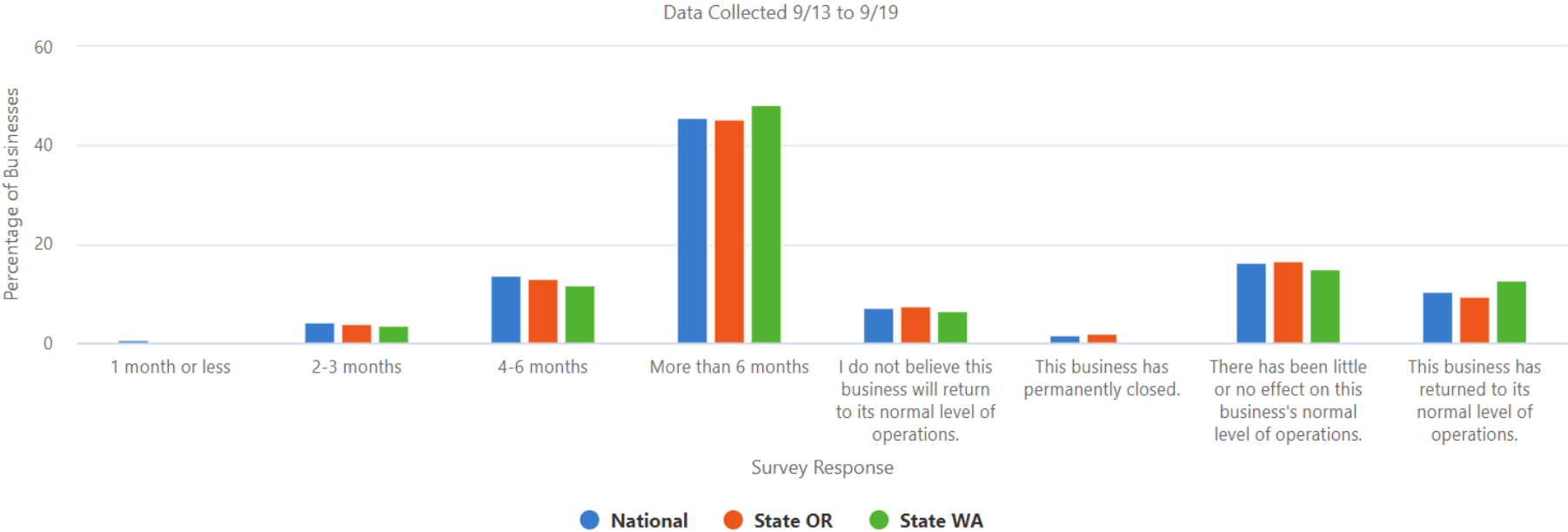
Outlook by State

Collection Dates: 9/13 to 9/19 ▾

Survey Question: Expectations ▾

Compare: State ▾ Oregon, Washington ▾

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



Downloads and Documentation

Weekly Data

Select Date Range: 6/14 to 6/20

Filter by Interest: All National Sector (NAICS) State MSA Employment Size Metrics

File	File Type	Date Range	Tags
National, Sector	XLS	6/14 to 6/20	National Sector (NAICS)
National, State	XLS	6/14 to 6/20	National State
National, State by Sector	XLS	6/14 to 6/20	National State Sector (NAICS)
National, State, Sector by Employment Size	XLS	6/14 to 6/20	National State Sector (NAICS) Employee Size
Unit Response Rate	XLS	6/14 to 6/20	Metrics State
All Files	ZIP	6/14 to 6/20	National State Sector (NAICS) MSA Employee Size Metrics

General Info and Documentation

EXPAND ALL COLLAPSE ALL

Survey Questionnaires

SBPS Questionnaire (4/26 - 5/16)
SBPS Questionnaire (5/17 - 6/27)
SBPS Questionnaire (8/9 - 10/10)

Codebooks

Codebook (4/26 - 5/16)
Codebook (5/17 - 6/27)
Codebook (8/9 - 10/10)

Data Dictionary

Data Dictionary

README

README

Index Construction

Index-construction-for-the-Small-Business-Pulse-Survey.pdf

Where to find the data

Small Business Pulse Survey main page: <https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/small-business-pulse-survey.html>

Data tool: <https://portal.census.gov/pulse/data/#data>

Data Tables main page: <https://portal.census.gov/pulse/data/#downloads>

Technical Documentation: <https://portal.census.gov/pulse/data/#methodology>

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