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**COVID-19**

# Businesses are Feeling Recovery, But is it Stable?

At the same time, most also agree that the small business economy is far from out of the woods yet, especially as COVID case counts increase in many areas and skyrocketing costs of supplies fuel worries about inflation.

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The [Alignable Recovery Projections Poll](#), gauging the outlook of small business owners as signs of a recovery start to emerge, reveals two extremes:

- 37% report that their recovery could be lengthy, extending into 2022 or even 2023
- while another 31% say they've already matched or surpassed their pre-COVID revenue numbers.

Regardless of polltakers' recovery status, most noted that the expedited distribution of COVID vaccines has injected more hope into their business prospects.

At the same time, most also agree that the small business economy is far from out of the woods yet, especially as COVID case counts increase in many areas and skyrocketing costs of supplies fuel worries about inflation.

Exposing that bundle of uncertainty, [Alignable's April Road To Recovery Report](#), also released today, shows that the No. 1 concern among small business owners is no longer running out of cash, as it was last month. Instead, the top worry is that the government might force them to close again because of new outbreaks.

## What's Happening Among Minorities, Women or Veterans?

Conducted from 3/27/21 to 3/31/21 among 10,440 small business owners, the [Alignable Recovery Projections Poll](#) also shows a wide range of results among more vulnerable demographic groups, as well as struggling industries and states.

- **43% of minority-owned businesses say it will take at least until 2022 for them to rebound fully.** And 17% said recovery wouldn't come until 2023 or later, while 4% predicted they'll never fully rebound. However, there's a silver lining: **19% of minority small business owners say they've already reached or exceeded their pre-COVID sales.**
- **38% of women business owners also expect it will take longer than the rest of this year to regain their pre-COVID revenues, 14% are already looking at 2023, and 5% think a rebound will never happen. However, 29% of women-owned businesses have already reached or exceeded their pre-COVID earnings.**
- It's a similar story for veterans; however, their outlook is a bit more positive. While 38% of veteran-owned businesses expect their full recovery to occur in 2022 or later, **31% are already earning as much, if not more, than they did prior to COVID.**

# Industry Health Dictates Recovery Predictions

Anyone following the ups and downs of the COVID Era knows that several industries have been devastated — many for more than a year.

As expedited vaccine distribution plans have led to more businesses reopening, we're witnessing a reversal of several distressing trends in [Alignable's March Road To Recovery Report](#). While this is a very positive development, it doesn't mean that these troubled industries are in the clear.

This chart shows that many small business owners in the most COVID-ravaged industries realize their recovery will require patience and hard work.

 [Alignable chart on struggling industries predicting recovery projections](#)

As you can see, 42% to 62% of small business owners in the hardest-hit industries believe their recovery will be gradual, given that many have been paralyzed by enforced shutdowns.

Event management, travel/lodging, entertainment, and photography/video companies will likely be among the slowest to recover, as many small business leaders in these industries are still on ice.

Others are starting to benefit from reopenings and fewer restrictions, but still feel it will be a long time until customers or their employees will be fully engaged with their businesses.

These SMBs include 46% of massage therapists, 46% of yoga studio owners, 46% of manufacturers, 45% of retailers, 43% of beauty salon or barber shop owners, 42% of restaurant owners, and 38% of personal trainers/gym owners.

## Finance, Insurance & Real Estate SMBs Surge Ahead

On the flip side, several industries that have not been as negatively impacted by COVID are reporting very encouraging numbers from this poll. These sectors include accountants, payroll managers and others in the world of finance.

In fact, **51% of these money experts say they're already making what they made prior to COVID, if not more.**

Some **40% of insurance agents, 35% of realtors, and 30% of lawyers** also have met or exceeded their pre-COVID income levels.

And given how hot the real estate market is in many regions, it's no surprise that **59% of home inspectors also say they've fully recovered.**

## **A Few States Are Off To A Better Start, Too**

Just as recovery projections vary by industry, the situation differs greatly depending on where small business owners reside.

**In the most optimistic states, the percentage of small business owners saying they're already earning as much if not more than they did prior to COVID is higher than those who say a full recovery is a long way off.**

Utah leads the pack, where **42% say they've already bounced back**, while another 32% say the recovery is way off. Similar numbers have emerged for these states, too:

- **KS: 38% have already achieved pre-COVID levels vs. 32% who predict their economic recovery will be slow**
- **MO: 37% vs. 31%**
- **IN: 34% vs. 32%**
- **AL: 39% vs. 37%**
- **OH: 35% vs. 32%**

Meanwhile, many other states so far are not as optimistic. In these states, smaller percentages of SMBs have already matched or exceeded their pre-COVID numbers. And more of them are buckling up for a long ride on the road to recovery. Here are some prominent examples:

- **CA: 25% are at or above pre-COVID revenues vs. 42% don't expect to be fully recovered until at least 2022**
- **LA: 28% vs. 52%**
- **NV: 19% vs. 38%**
- **NY: 29% vs. 44%**
- **MA: 27% vs. 42%**
- **MI: 28% vs. 41%**
- **FL: 31% vs. 39%**
- **TX: 31% vs. 36%**
- **NJ: 35% vs. 37%**
- **AZ: 33% vs. 35%**
- **NC: 32% vs. 33%**
- **GA: 30% vs. 33%**

- CT: 35% vs. 38%

As you can see, many more states have small business owners who expect a longer recovery. Yet, in each state, some small business owners are already claiming a tentative economic victory over the COVID Era. And that's a positive sign for everyone.

Alignable is the largest online referral network for small businesses with over 6 million members across North America.

We established our research center in early March 2020, to track and report the impact of the Coronavirus on small businesses, and to monitor recovery efforts, informing the media, policymakers, and our members.

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 [Chuck Casto](#)

*As Head of PR & a former SMB owner himself, [Chuck Casto](#) is a small business crusader. He's deeply invested in letting national media and social influencers know what's really happening on Main Street. From promoting our polls, to running contests celebrating member achievements, to writing advice columns, Chuck's one of our chief storytellers. Before Alignable, he led branding, PR & social campaigns for companies from Haagen-Dazs to Harley-Davidson & Wendy's to Wayfair. Prior to PR, Chuck was a TV reporter in NY, and an editor for local Gannett newspapers. Chuck holds a B.A. from Brown & an M.S.J. from Northwestern.*

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