

Business Retention and Expansion – Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Sector Backgrounder

Report Highlights

- Volunteer organizations interviewed represent more than 73,800 volunteer hours in the community.
- These organizations could be negatively impacted by declining youth and aging population demographics in the community. Nearly 85% of the organizations interviewed cited The County's aging population as both a challenge for recruiting and retaining volunteers and for adapting services to meet community need.
- Artists and musicians must adapt to keep pace with the changing needs of tourists and visitors, while sports leagues face challenges around limited spaces for play. Service organizations also report facing challenges in recruiting and retaining quality volunteers.
- Survey responses suggest that many entrepreneurs in the sector rely on additional sources of income – whether offering workshop classes, accommodations or working in the service sector in order to make ends meet.
- Sales tend to be seasonal and rely heavily on tourists as clientele. The report notes that expanding training in e-commerce and marketing may help artists, musicians, and others find new clients and stabilize their shoulder-season incomes. Exploring opportunities in experiential tourism may also produce higher returns for high-quality events and workshops.
- In the area of sports and recreation, long-standing community organizations, such as local service clubs and minor sports associations, report that they are struggling to find the volunteers necessary to continue providing the same level of service and support. Interviewees attribute this trend in part to an aging population.
- Public school closures have also resulted in a decrease in available gymnasium space to meet the growing demand for courts as sports such as basketball and pickleball become more popular. The findings reinforce the need for recreational facilities to reflect and adapt to the demands of an active senior community.
- The interviews revealed that a significant majority (95%) of businesses and organizations in the sector have no succession plan. More than 85% of them have no formal business or strategic plan, which indicates a possible area for further training and assistance.

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Surveys

Each year the Community Development Department surveys a business sector in the County of Prince Edward in order to understand trends, challenges, and opportunities. CDD conducts in depth interviews with more than 70 businesses over the course of eight weeks. Previous BR+E surveys have been conducted with the agricultural, manufacturing, professional services, and health-care sectors.

Results of these studies have helped set priorities and work plans while also garnering provincial and federal funding to help address the challenges and foster opportunities. Previous reports can be found [here](#).