



**HELENA**  
Area Chamber of Commerce

**HELENA BUSINESS  
CLIMATE  
5-YEAR TRENDS REPORT  
From 2016 through Dec.  
2020**

*Cathy Burwell, President/CEO  
(updated January, 2021)*



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## HELENA FACTS-

- ❖ Historically Most Stable Economy Of The Larger Cities In Montana
- ❖ Higher Median Income Levels
- ❖ 60% of workforce is connected to State government positions.



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## MORE FACTS TO REMEMBER....

- ▶ 82% of L&C County's population lives in the Greater Helena Area
- ▶ Helena's share of Lewis & Clark County's employment & income is close to 90%
- ▶ As of Dec. 2020 Lewis and Clark county had a total of 35,277 in our Labor Force up 681 from 2019; We have 33,865 currently employed resulting in 4% (Dec. 31) unemployment or approx. 1412 unemployed.



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# Helena and Surrounding Area Trends



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# Policom Ranking for Economic Strength.....

Of 550 cities across the nation under 50,000  
People

2012 - 2013: Helena ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>!!!!

2014: Helena ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>!!!

2015: Helena ranked 14<sup>th</sup> (ND oil towns....!)

2016: Helena ranks 8<sup>th</sup> (back in top 10)

2017 - 38<sup>th</sup>

2018 - 54<sup>th</sup>

2019 - 49<sup>th</sup>

**2020 - 24<sup>th</sup>**

**2021 - 40<sup>th</sup>**

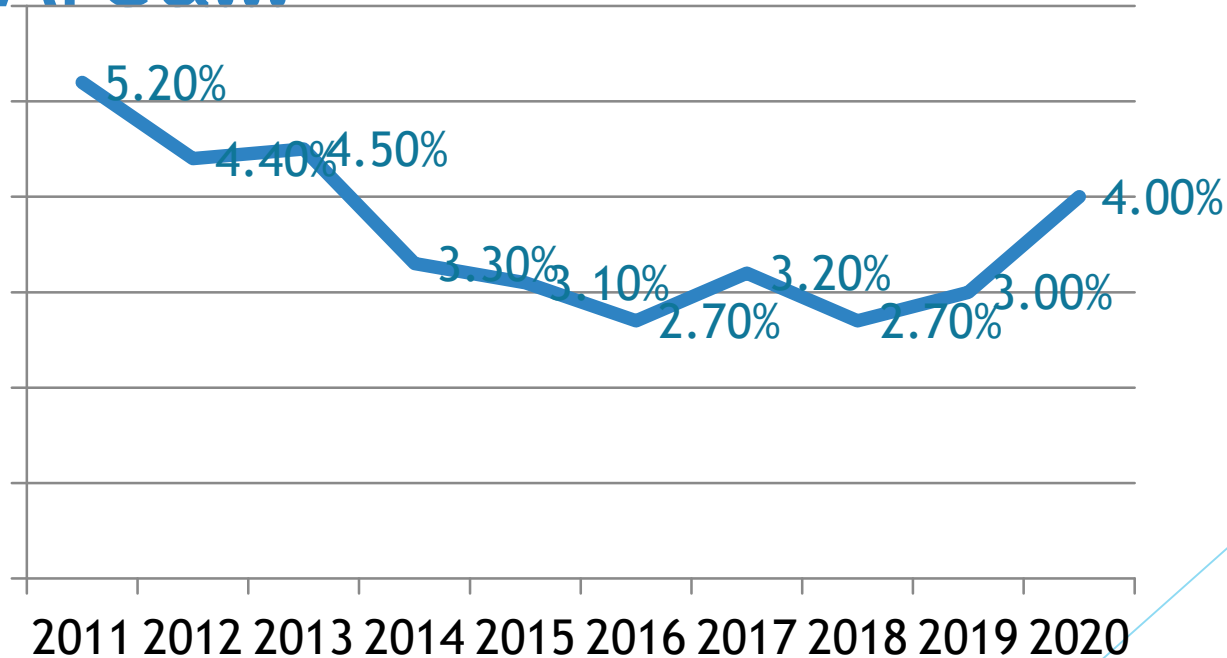
*“Economic strength is the long term tendency for an area to consistently grow in both size and quality.”*

*Helena has been in the top rankings since 2010*



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# Employment in Helena Area...



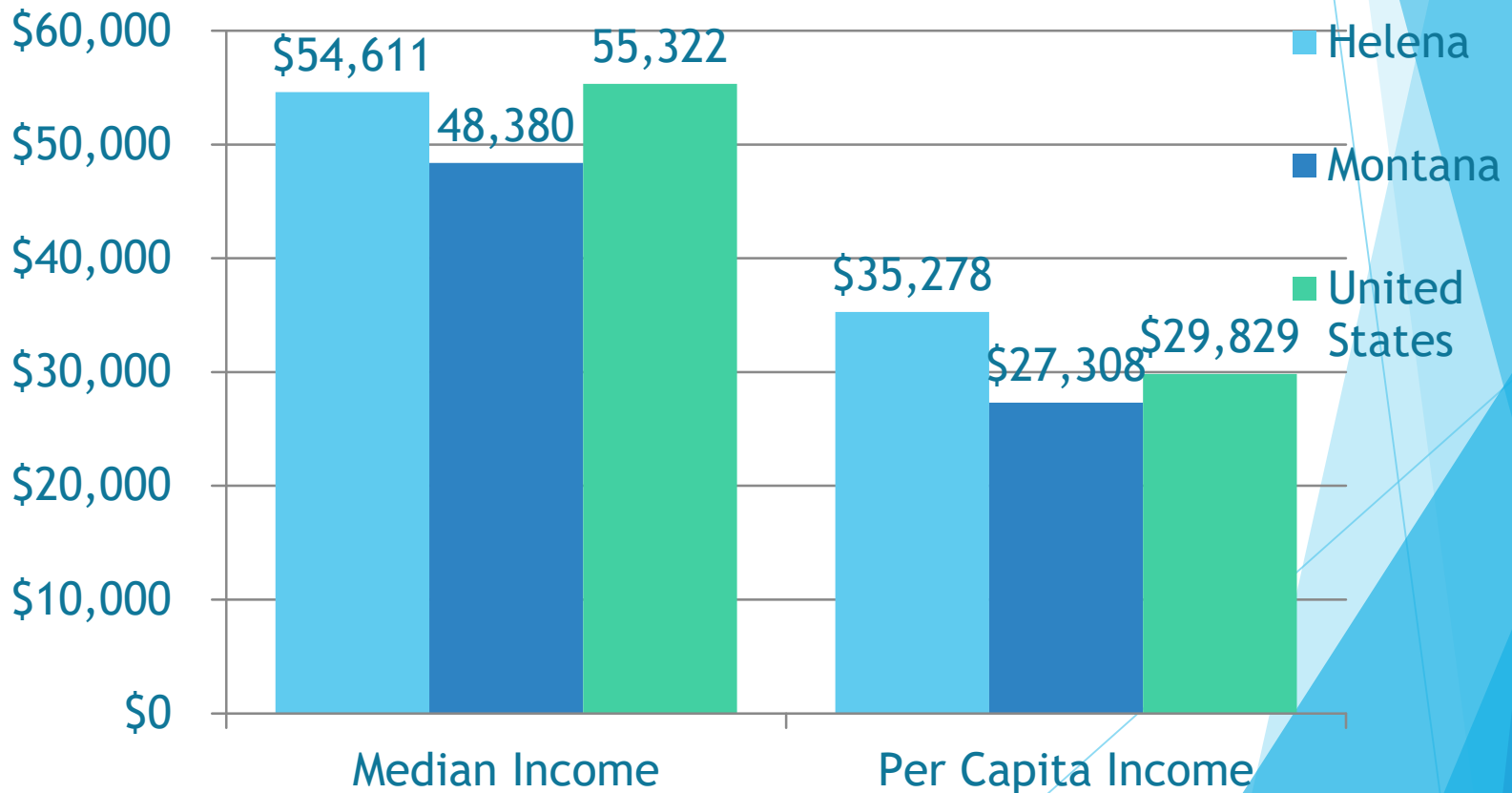
**Covid brought an all-time high of 10.7% UE rate in April 2020**



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**Median Household Income:  
\$66,075.00**

## Income Comparisons

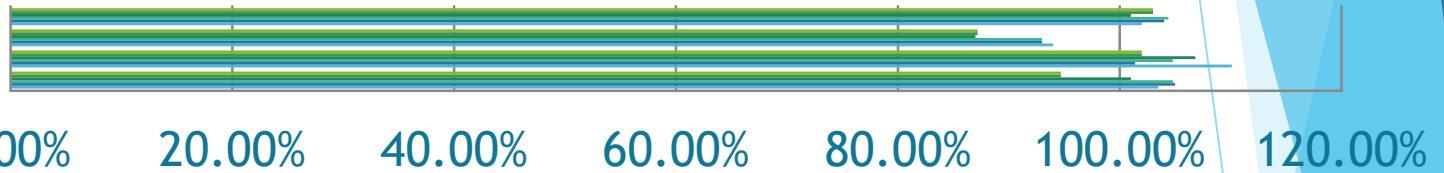




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# COST OF LIVING INDEX



	Overall Index	Food	Utilities	Other
■ 2020	94.70%	102.00%	87.20%	103.00%
■ 2019	94.70%	102.00%	87.20%	103.00%
■ 2018	101.00%	106.80%	87.00%	101.00%
■ 2017	104.80%	104.80%	93.00%	104.40%
■ 2016	105.00%	101.40%	93.00%	104.00%
■ 2015	103.50%	110.10%	94.00%	102.00%

\*Based on US cost of living average of 100. Above 100 is more expensive and below 100 is less expensive than US average

\*info from [www.BestPlaces.net](http://www.BestPlaces.net) BOZEMAN 118.5%, Montana Overall - 94%





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## BUSINESS FACTS...

- ▶ **78% of all businesses in the Helena Area have 10 or less employees**
- ▶ **There are approx. 3500 businesses in the entire Helena Valley**
- ▶ **3000+ Jefferson Co. & 600+ Broadwater Co. workers travel to Helena to work each day.**



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# Residential Permits

## ▶ RESIDENTIAL - City of Helena

- ▶ 2015 - 301 permits = \$33.3 million
- ▶ 2016 - 217 permits = \$94.8 million
- ▶ 2017 - 232 permits = \$28.9 million
- ▶ 2018 - 364 permits = \$43.65 million
- ▶ 2019 - 316 permits = \$42.3 million
- ▶ **2020 - 247 permits = \$22.5 million**

HOUSING STARTS (2020) IN CITY OF HELENA:

39

PLUS 260 permits for new septic systems in the valley  
outside city limits (L&C County)



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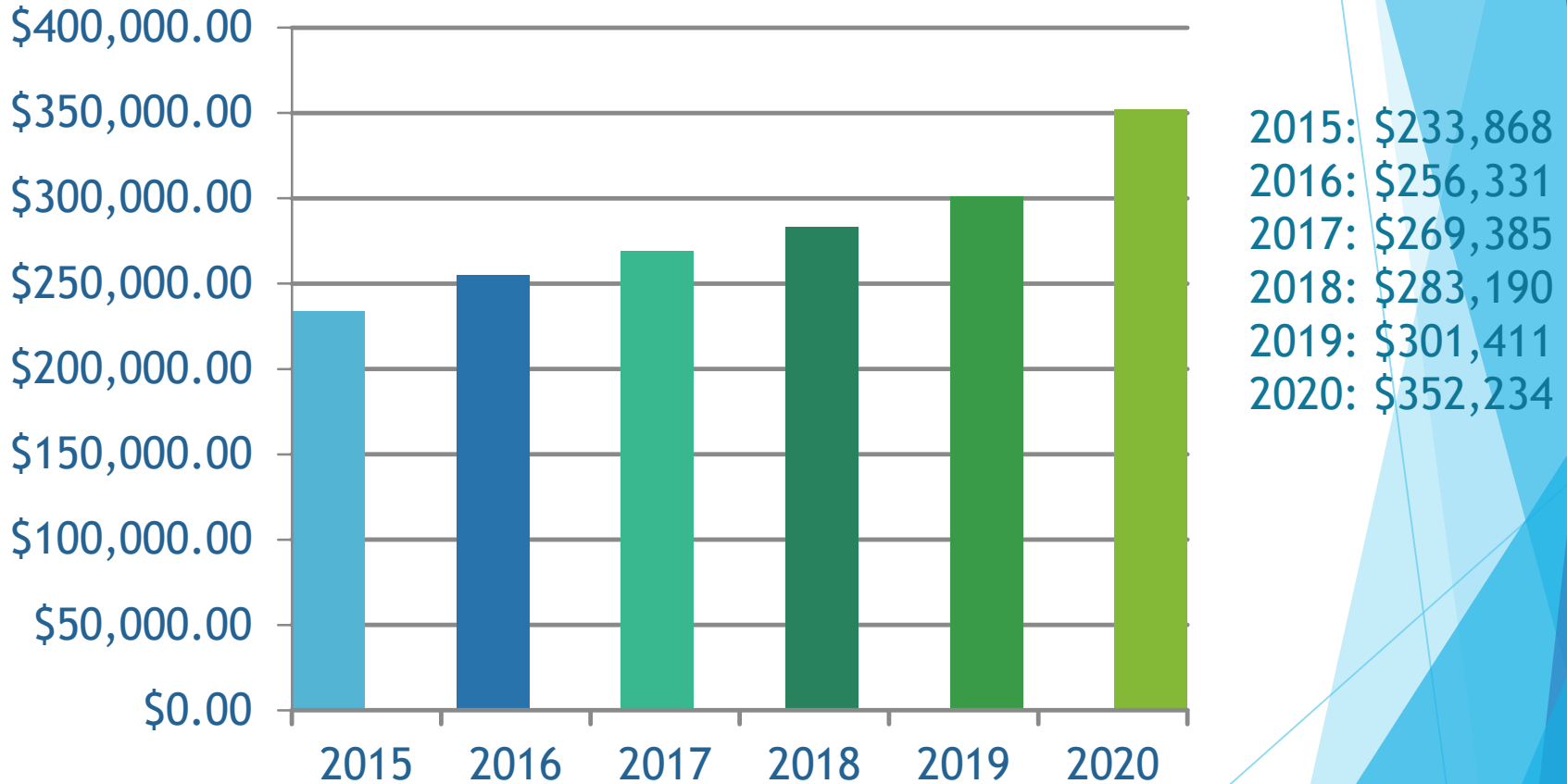
## CITY: HOME PERMIT INFO

- ▶ Of the Residential permits = 39 total new residences Single Family Dwellings (within city limits)
- 83 new multi-family Dwellings (within city limits)(duplexes, tri-plexes, four-plex, etc.) Nearly double the 2019 amount)



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# Average Home Sale Prices



**\*\_1050\_ homes sold in 2020 -  
Ave D.O.M. - 10 (comp. to 53 in '19)**



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# Housing Starts

**Lewis and Clark County:**

**Housing Starts:**

2013 - 257	- Up 28.9%
2014 - 203	- Down 21%
2015 - 182	- Down 10%
2016 - 212	- up 16.5%
2017 - 225	- up 6.1%
2018 - 183	- down
2019 - 208	- up 13.5% (note down 23% over 2013)
<b>2020 - - 260</b>	<b>- up 28% (and now up to 2013 builds) (plus</b>
<b>39 in town)</b>	



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## Commercial Building permits in the City

- ▶ 2014 - 229 permits - 49.3 million
- ▶ 2015 - 261 permits - 68.9 mill
- ▶ 2016 - 217 permits - 67.2 mill
- ▶ 2017 - 196 permits - 47.1 mill
- ▶ 2018 - 169 permits - 99.4 mill
- ▶ 2019 - 156 permits - 46.2 mill
- ▶ **2020 - 146 permits - 51.8 mill**



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## Larger Projects permitted in 2019 completed in 2020:

- E. Helena High School - 29.5 million
- Helena Regional Airport Terminal - 11 Million
- L&C County Jail - Demolition and build/remodel - 8.8 million
- St. Peters Health - Operating Room Reno, Parking lot, and Pharmacy renos - 7.41 Million
- Farmers State Bank -New Bank - 5.23 million
- Lewis and Clark Library - 4.5 million



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More permitted in  
2019 for 2020

- ▶ U=Haul project at K-Mart -  
1.29Million
- ▶ High Country Outfitters Rifle Range  
- \$900,000+
- ▶ Heidi's Casino - \$950,000
- ▶ Salvation Army - \$845,000





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## Notable Projects Coming:

**Montana Historical Society History  
Museum - approx. 40 million**

**Greenway bike path between E.  
Helena and Montana City - 3.2 million  
(ASARCO funds through Prickly Pear  
Land Trust)**



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## Projects Coming and possible....

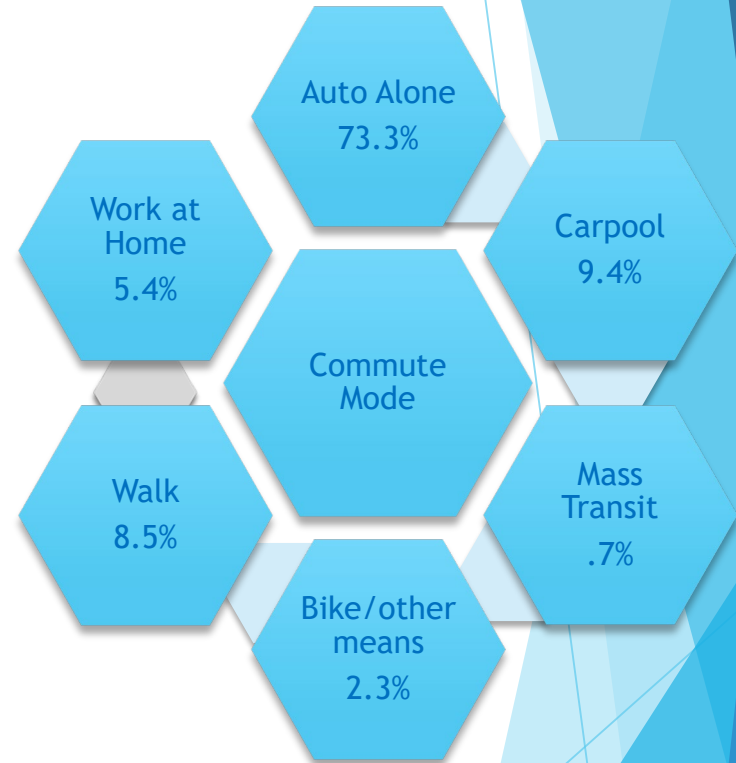
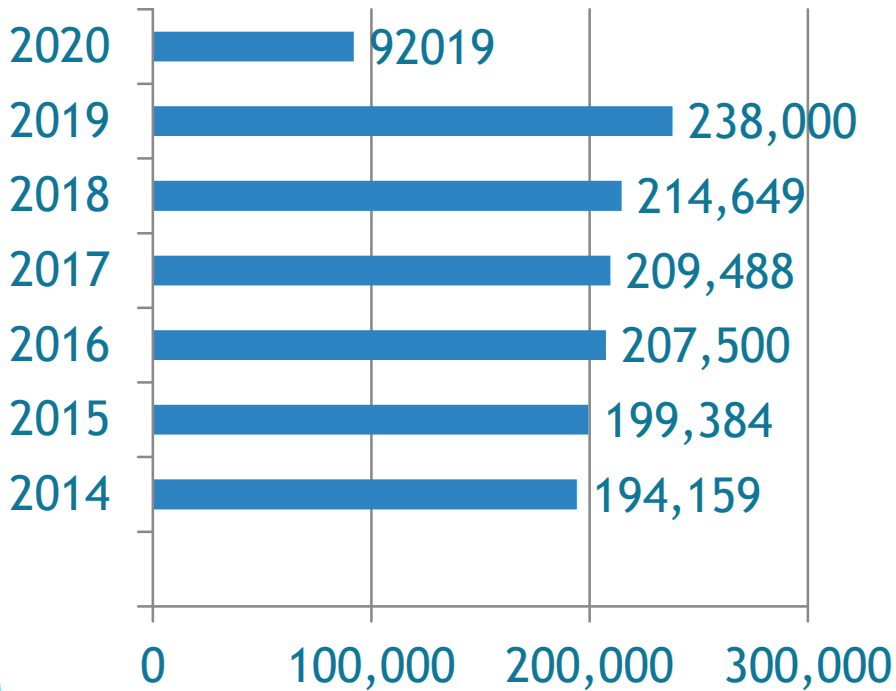
- Flying Giant Adventure Zone 15,000 sq. ft.  
(just opened today)
- Projects at the mall site.....
  - Benefis Medical Building
  - Starbucks
  - Stockman Bank
- New Benefis Clinic (IHOP building)



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# Transportation

## Total Flight Passengers In & Out of HLN Airport





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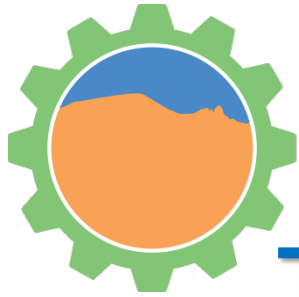
# Helena Regional Airport Update

## Passenger Traffic

- Down 61% (covid) from 2019 (92,019 passengers - on and off)
- Nationally - ave. was down 79%
- New Terminal building completed.

Working to get direct flight to Phoenix on American Airlines





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## TOURISM -

## Helena Hotels - 2020

### TOURISM – Helena Hotels – 2020

- **Occupancy was down 37%**
- **Average Daily Rate was down 10% \$88.26**
- **Total Revenue down 43% to \$19.7 Million after being over \$36 Million in 2019–  
(Highest ever) *Smith Travel Research Report***



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## ➤ **Business Survey Notables:** When asked “how was your business impacted negatively by the pandemic?”

- \* 48.6% noted that mandates by L&C Health Dept. impacted their bottom-line.
- \* 49% noted that schools not being open 5 days a week + lack of daycares had great impact.
- \* 41% said their supply chains were interrupted.
- \* 29% had to decrease their staff
- \* 32% lost productivity due to staff contracting Covid-19



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➤ **Business Survey Notables:**  
*During Covid-19 in 2020 - their business:*

- 76% received PPP Funds
- 19% received EIDL Funds
- 30% received stimulus funds from the State
- 14% did not qualify for pandemic funding
- 8% got private funding
- 13.5% had a good year w/o assistance



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## CREDITS.....

- ▶ City of Helena \* L & C County \* Helena Chamber CVB
- ▶ Helena Airport Authority \* Helena Association of Realtors
- ▶ City-Data.com \* US Census 2000
- ▶ [www.policom.com](http://www.policom.com) \* Smith Travel and Research
- ▶ Ourfactsyourfuture.org \* Bestplaces.net
- ▶ Montana Building Industry Assoc.
- ▶ MT National Guard - Department of Military Affairs
- ▶ Helena Area Chamber of Commerce  
& Convention & Visitor Bureau

***THANKS TO MY STAFF for their help with this presentation!***





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# The Helena Area Chamber of Commerce

YOUR BUSINESS ADVOCATE