



# INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Removing Barriers and Increasing Women's Access to Capital

### Summary of Key Findings of a Survey of Wisconsin Women Entrepreneurs

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## OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY APPROACH

In the fall of 2023, the Universities of Wisconsin's Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship (IBE) was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency to design and pilot a new curriculum to help Wisconsin women in their search for small business capital.<sup>1</sup> Research shows that women often confront difficulties in obtaining capital for their small businesses.<sup>2</sup> For example, IBE historically finds fewer women entrepreneurs get capital and overall receive smaller amounts compared to men. In 2022, 47% of IBE women clients received capital vs. 50% percent of men, but women received \$64M in total capital compared to men at \$142M. Women's struggles are confirmed by entrepreneurs themselves in Bank of America's 2023 Women & Minority Business Owner Spotlight, which reported that 31% of women business owners say they have experienced challenges accessing capital. Among those who reported challenges, 42% said they do not have a relationship with a lender and 31% feel they do not have the proper information/qualifications to feel confident applying for capital funding.<sup>3</sup>

With the assistance of the Minority Business Development Agency grant, IBE aims to help address these concerns for Wisconsin women entrepreneurs by developing and piloting an innovative outreach program that will create customized resources to address specific capital issues for women. IBE intends to have its first cohort of women participating in this new capital readiness program in the fall of 2024. To help inform the development and planning of the outreach program, IBE sought to obtain feedback directly from (1) Wisconsin women entrepreneurs about their business challenges; experiences applying for and accessing funding; and their needs for future success and from (2) lenders and other financial professionals about their perspectives on barriers women face when accessing capital. This feedback will help IBE identify critical information gaps and contribute to the planning of the new pilot program. To gather and analyze this feedback, IBE partnered with other Universities of Wisconsin organizations, including the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS) Research Partners and UW Eau Claire, to develop and administer a survey of women entrepreneurs, including those who had successfully obtained capital as well as those who were not successful or had not yet sought capital funding.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the survey, IBE partnered with WIPPS Research Partners to conduct six focus groups with lenders, investors, and financial professionals from across the state. This report summarizes the findings from the survey; a separate report summarizes the findings from the focus groups.

The survey was designed to better understand to better understand women entrepreneurs' experiences requesting funding and their perceptions of the challenges they must overcome to gain access to capital. All respondents were asked as series of initial demographic questions, such as age, race and ethnicity, and education, followed by questions about their motivations for starting their business; satisfaction with the status of their business; and business characteristics such as business structure, firm size, industry classification, length of time in business, current sources of business funding, and what materials they may have prepared in order to apply for funding. After completing these baseline personal and business characteristic questions, respondents proceeded to one of two possible pathways based on their response to a question about whether they had applied for any type of capital funding for their business in the 24 months prior to the survey. Those who answered "no" were asked questions about the reasons why they had not pursued funding, as well as the extent to which certain topics were challenges for their business. Those who answered "yes" to whether they applied for capital were asked a different set of questions about the kinds of capital they applied for and the outcomes of their requests. Those who were denied funding were asked about the reasons for the denial.

<sup>1</sup> Information about IBE can be found at: <https://business.wisconsin.edu/>.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-Y3\\_W84\\_4-PURL-gpo121110/pdf/GOVPUB-Y3\\_W84\\_4-PURL-gpo121110.pdf](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-Y3_W84_4-PURL-gpo121110/pdf/GOVPUB-Y3_W84_4-PURL-gpo121110.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://about.bankofamerica.com/en/making-an-impact/women-and-minority-business-spotlight-2023>

<sup>4</sup> Information about WIPPS Research Partners can be found at: <https://wipps.org/research-partners/>.

This pathway also asked questions about the challenges those women faced in their experiences asking for funding. The survey ended by asking all respondents to think about their plans for their business over the next 24 months and how important a series of topics would be to their future success as an entrepreneur. The topics in this section were selected to cover components that IBE may include in its pilot program curriculum. All respondents also had the option to provide any additional feedback they wished to share relevant to removing barriers to women accessing capital in an open-ended question. The survey instrument questions, response categories, and structure were carefully reviewed by members of IBE leadership and staff prior to its distribution.

The survey instrument was programmed into the Qualtrics survey platform and was administered online. See Appendix B for the questions that were programmed into Qualtrics. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous. No direct incentives were used to elicit responses. To ensure that a diverse set of individuals completed the survey, reflecting a wide range of experiences, multiple distribution pathways were used to administer the survey to potential respondents. Potential respondents were contacted via email primarily through two main contact management systems used by IBE and the Food Finance Institute (FFI).<sup>5</sup> For IBE, outreach was managed via CenterIC. Invitations to complete the survey were sent via email to all women entrepreneurs who had engaged with the IBE between Jan 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023. Survey invitations were sent to 4,611 email addresses. Of those, 203 were undeliverable, resulting in a distribution by IBE to 4,408 emails. For FFI, outreach was managed via Salesforce. Individuals were selected from a report filtered by geography (Wisconsin) and contact type (entrepreneur). FFI does not ask "gender" as a standard demographic input; however, FFI performed a manual sort to remove traditionally male names as a proxy for gender. For gender neutral names, FFI defaulted to leaving them on the list. This resulted in an outreach list of an additional 327 individuals. Combined, the IBE and FFI sources included a distribution to approximately 4,735 contacts. Language was included in the email to invite the individual themselves or "women [they] know" to participate in the survey. This way if the "name" proxy for gender included nonfemale identifying individuals, potential respondents could hopefully see themselves in the "women they know" or as a referral source to women entrepreneurs. To expand outreach efforts, IBE asked several minority Chambers of Commerce if they could assist with survey distribution to their members; the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce offered to write a newsletter article including a link to the survey. Finally, a notice was posted on the grant project's landing page inviting women entrepreneurs to contact IBE for a survey link. The survey was open for completion between February 12 and March 1, 2024 (a total of three weeks).

A total of 623 women entrepreneurs responded to the survey. Of these, 62% (N=388) had not requested funding for their business in the 24 months prior to the survey and 36% (N=227) had requested funding. Eight (8) respondents did not report whether they had requested funding. We do not have an accurate estimate of the total number of individuals who may have received the survey from the outreach efforts beyond the IBE and FFI distribution lists. Based solely on the 4,735 contacts who received direct email invitations from the IBE and FFI lists, we can approximate a response rate of up to 13%. The 623 completed surveys provide an adequate number for reporting descriptive statistics on the sample, as well as for reporting results for the subsets of those who had requested funding and those who had not. Since it was not IBE's intention to generalize the survey results to the full population of Wisconsin women entrepreneurs, but rather to gain insights reflecting a range of women's experiences, we were less concerned about sample representativeness and making direct assessments of the extent to which the sample mirrors the population. However, a review of the respondents' characteristics suggests that they do indeed reflect a range of backgrounds and business characteristics. See Tables 1 to 7.

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<sup>5</sup> Information about the Food Finance Institute can be found at: <https://foodfinanceinstitute.org/>.

In this report we focus primarily on summarizing the results based on the full sample of respondents and when applicable, we summarize the questions asked for the two pathways of those who had requested funding vs. those that had not. In each of the tables where we collected data for the full sample, we also provide data for the “respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months” and “respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months.” These are provided for reference for those who may be interested in those detailed comparisons. In a few tables we also distinguish between ideation/early-stage businesses and growth/maturity stage businesses.

Finally, many of the survey questions provided a response option of “other” along with the opportunity to explain an answer in more detail in a text box. In reviewing the responses for those who chose “other” and provided additional detail, we identified the need to recode some of those responses into one of the main response categories. A member of the WIPPS Research Partners team manually reviewed all of the “other” responses to identify possible recodes; these proposed recodes were then reviewed by a second member of the research team to ensure agreement. The number of recodes varied by question, but by taking this additional data quality step, we ensured more accurate reporting of the data. A supplemental internal report that contains the “other” responses that were not recoded into an existing category has been provided to IBE for reference. This supplemental report also includes detailed responses to two open-ended survey questions related to reasons for respondents’ selection of their current level of satisfaction with their business and whether they wished to provide more feedback about barriers to women accessing capital. This supplemental report provides additional qualitative insights into women’s experiences with their businesses and the barriers some face in accessing capital.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SURVEY RESULTS

In this section we highlight survey findings that may be particularly relevant to IBE's plans for designing an outreach program and curriculum to help Wisconsin women entrepreneurs access capital. The supporting tables and figures, as well as more detailed data, are included in the subsequent sections of the report.

- • **Wanting to make a difference or meet a customer need were the most frequent key factors motivating Wisconsin women to start their own businesses.** More than half of the respondents (56%) cited these as factors motivating their decision to start their own business.
- • **Many women reported relying on personal savings to fund their businesses. External sources of capital such as loans and grants were less common compared to the use of personal funds and savings.** More than half (53%) of the women entrepreneurs who responded to the survey reported that they were currently funding their business from personal sources of savings; 22% percent indicated that they were using a personal credit card and carrying a balance. One-third (36%) reported using business cash flow to fund operations. Loans were less common. Seventeen (17) percent reported funding their business with a business loan from a bank or financial institution and a similar percentage (16%) reported that grants were a current source of capital. Lower percentages were using a business loan from a local, state, or federal government (8%); a business loan/investment from family or friends (7%); or a personal/family home equity loan (5%). Very few (1%) responded that their business was currently funded by venture capital or angel investments.
- • **A majority of women entrepreneurs (62%) had not sought capital funding for their businesses during the two years prior to the survey.** When those who had not sought funding were asked about their reasons, 16% indicated that their business was not yet in operation and 33% indicated that their business was operating, but they did not need funding. After accounting for those respondents, this would suggest that approximately half (51%) of women entrepreneurs who had not sought funding actually might have wanted or needed it, but chose not to seek it for one reason or another.
- • **Concerns about debt and lack of awareness about sources of funding and the overall funding process were among the key reasons why women did not seek funding for their businesses.** When the women who had not sought funding were asked to identify the reasons they had not sought funding, the reasons most frequently clustered around two kinds of factors: (1) concerns about not wanting to accrue debt (34%) or not having adequate cash flow to support the debt (24%); or (2) factors related to the process of applying for funding, such as being uncertain about possible funding sources (29%); being uncertain about how to apply for funding (27%); or feeling like the loan process would be too complex (11%) or too time consuming (10%). Efforts to increase women entrepreneurs' understanding of the external funding environment, including the range of options for funding and how to apply, might help increase women's comfort level or confidence in seeking needed funding.

- • **Of the women entrepreneurs who had not sought funding for their business, a lack of cash flow was the most frequent major challenge they faced (38%), followed by having to use personal finances to fund their business (35%).** Among the other major challenges identified by women who had not sought funding, one in four mentioned not having funds for marketing or paying for unexpected expenses.
- • **Of the 36% of survey respondents who indicated that they had sought funding for their business during the two years prior to the survey, grants were by far the most common type of external funding sought by the respondents, followed by a traditional loan.** Relatively few women entrepreneurs indicated they had sought venture capital or angel investment in comparison to the other types of funding sources.
- • **Of those who reported that they had applied for funding in the 24 months prior to the survey, a majority had their funding request denied.** Approximately 61% reported that they had received a denial of a funding request; 39% responded that they had not been denied funding. Of those who confirmed that they had applied for specific types of funds, denial rates for venture capital were 78% and angel investments were 40%. Despite being the most frequently sought kinds of funds, denial rates for grants and loans were in the range of 32 to 38%. In contrast, funding from family or friends offered the lowest denial rate (16%) and the highest rate of success, with 77% reporting funding secured.
- • **Among those who had been denied funding, one of the most common reasons was that their business was not yet mature; 27% indicated this was among the reasons their funding request was denied.** Other common reasons were having a poor credit score (24%); too much debt (24%); too much risk (21%); and insufficient collateral (19%). Among those who had been denied funding, 14% perceived that potential bias based on factors such as gender, age, education, race, or ethnicity might have been among the reasons for the denial of their funding request.
- • **Nearly one in four women (22%) who had a funding request denied in the past 24 months indicated that they were unsure of the reason(s) for their denial.** This suggests a potential opportunity for lenders and funding sources to better inform women about why their funding request was denied and to offer opportunities to address issues that might increase their future success in reapplying for funding.
- • **Consistent with those who had not applied for funding, those who had applied for funding identified aspects of the funding process as being major challenges with their overall experience.** The most frequent major challenge experienced by those who had applied for funding was having limited knowledge of funding sources (49%). Other aspects of the funding process were also frequently identified as major challenges, including having time to apply for funding (45%); understanding how to apply (33%); preparing documents needed to apply (33%); and determining how much to ask for (31%). Increasing women entrepreneurs' access to information about sources of funding and providing education and assistance with the process of applying could potentially help reduce challenges in applying for funding. These kinds of "process" factors were more often identified as major challenges compared to business-specific factors like insufficient collateral; having too much debt; cash flow projections; credit history; or perceived business risk. Potential bias based on gender, age, education, race, or ethnicity were identified as major challenges by 15 to 17% of those who had applied for funding.

- • **Ideation and early stage businesses could potentially benefit from assistance with business and marketing plan development, whereas those at growth and maturity stages could potentially benefit from assistance with preparation of financial materials such as tax returns and personal financial statements.** As might be expected, a greater percentage of those at the ideation or early stage had prepared a business plan (60%), marketing plan (35%), or business pitch presentation (37%) in the 24 months prior to the survey compared to those at the growth or maturity stage. In contrast, a greater percentage of those at the growth or maturity stage had prepared three years of tax returns (30%) and a personal financial statement (30%) compared to those at the ideation or early stage. These results might help IBE tailor or customize aspects of the capital access curriculum depending on program participants' stage of business.
  
- • **For all respondents, the highest priority topics of importance for their success as entrepreneurs in the next two years include:<sup>6</sup>**
  - Communication skills
  - Increasing awareness of resources for help and technical assistance
  - Presentation skills
  - Determining sources of capital
  - Developing a digital presence and/or a digital marketing plan
  - Being able to access resources for help and overall technical assistance with business
  - Negotiating skills
  - Developing a marketing plan
  - Getting help/training with budgeting/financial issues
  - Determining capital needs
  - Navigating the funding application process
  - Networking with other entrepreneurs
  - Developing a better work-life balance
  
- • **In addition to the topics listed above, women with businesses in the ideation or early stage identified the following areas as higher priority to their future success:**
  - Increasing confidence in business/professional settings
  - Assembling materials needed to apply for funding
  - Networking with funders
  - Conducting market research
  - Training in how to ask for money (pitch training)
  
- • **“Business literacy” may be an important need for some women entrepreneurs and defining common terminology may be relevant to the development of a program to increase women’s access to capital.** Some questions received a relatively high percentage of respondents selecting “unsure” as their response option. For example, 12% of respondents selected “unsure” to the question about what kinds of materials they had prepared for their business in order to apply for funding. Response options included business plan, marketing plan, pro forma statements, tax returns, personal financial statement,

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<sup>6</sup> See Tables 14, 15, and 16 for a detailed ranking of the percentage of respondents who identified a range of specific topics as “very important” to their success as entrepreneurs in the next two years. Table 14 provides this ranking based on all respondents. Table 15 provides the ranking for the subset of respondents who indicated that their business was in the early or ideation stage. Table 16 provides the ranking for the subset of respondents who indicated that their business was in the growth or maturity stage. Tables 17 to 23 group the topic areas by category and within each table, data are reported separately for all respondents; those that had not applied for funding; and those that had applied for funding.

a business pitch presentation, and other. Eighteen (18) percent were unsure of their business NAICS code and 22% were unsure of the reasons their funding request was denied.<sup>7</sup> When asked about the importance of “customer discovery training” to their future success, 10% answered unsure. They may not have understood what this term meant. During the data quality check process, we also found that many respondents chose “other,” yet the content of their “other” response fell clearly into a main response category, which suggests they may not have always understood the meaning of terms within the main response categories. While the survey did not explicitly ask about familiarity with business terms or concepts, these data underscore the importance of explaining terminology and providing a common understanding or glossary.

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<sup>7</sup> Some of the respondents who selected “unsure” might not have been provided a reason by the funding source; others may have not clearly understood how their denial fit into the question response categories.

# DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

As shown in Table 1, a majority (57%) of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 49. Seventy-seven (77) percent reported their race and/or ethnicity as “White or Caucasian,” with 10% reporting their race as “Black or African American.” Approximately 4% were “Hispanic or Latino” and 3% were “Asian.” More than two-thirds (68%) had a college or advanced degree; 21% had an associate degree or some college.

**Table 1. Profile of the Sample (percent of respondents in each demographic group)**

	Full sample (n=623)	*Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	*Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)
<b>Gender</b>			
Woman	98	99	98
Nonbinary	<1	<1	1
(Prefer not to answer)	1	1	1
<b>Age</b>			
<18	<1	<1	0
21-29	6	5	5
30-39	28	26	33
40-49	29	29	29
50-59	22	22	23
60-69	12	13	8
70+	2	3	2
(Prefer not to answer)	1	2	0
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Alaskan, American Indian, or Native American	1	1	<1
Asian	3	4	2
Black or African American	10	8	13
Hispanic or Latino	4	4	4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1	<1	0
White or Caucasian	77	77	78
Multiracial or Biracial	1	1	2
Other	<1	1	0
(Prefer not to answer)	3	4	0
<b>Education</b>			
Some high school	1	1	<1
High school graduate/GED	5	4	7
Nontraditional education	1	1	2
Trade school	3	3	4
Some college, no degree	11	11	12
Associate degree	10	11	7
Bachelor's degree	35	37	32
Master's degree	25	24	27
Professional degree	8	8	9
(Prefer not to answer)	1	1	0

\*Eight respondents did not report whether or not they had requested funding in the past 24 months.

## BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Respondents were asked what motivated them to start their business or to start planning their business. The question allowed respondents to choose all options that applied. As shown in Table 2, the most common reason was, “I wanted to make a meaningful difference or to meet a customer need.” More than half of the respondents (56%) cited this as a motivating factor, followed by “a desire for more financial independence”; “wanted an overall better work-life balance”; and “wanted to build wealth and improve income.” These categories were each cited by 34% of respondents. A desire of flexibility was also a key motivating factor for women starting their businesses. Twenty-nine (29) percent of respondents cited, “I wanted a more flexible schedule to focus on my personal needs” and 26% of respondents cited, “I wanted a more flexible schedule to focus on my family’s needs.” About one in four women (25%) cited the desire for a career change as a motivating factor or they started their business as a hobby (23%).

**Table 2. Motives for starting a business (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=623)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)
Wanted to make a meaningful difference or to meet a customer need	56	52	63
Desired more financial independence	34	34	33
Wanted to build wealth and improve income	34	30	41
Wanted an overall better work-life balance	34	34	36
Wanted a more flexible schedule to focus on my personal needs (exercise, health, hobbies)	29	31	26
Wanted a more flexible schedule to focus on my family’s needs	26	27	25
Wanted a career change	25	26	22
Started as a hobby	23	25	18
Carrying on a family tradition of entrepreneurship	11	9	15
Unemployed and/or had difficulty finding a job	9	9	9
Other	4	4	4

*Note.* Participants checked all that applied. One respondent (not shown in the table) chose “unsure.”

Table 3 provides information on the stage of respondents' businesses at the time the survey was conducted. Approximately one-third (32%) reported that they were in the "early/start up" stage, with an additional 13% in the "ideation" stage.<sup>8</sup> About one-third (34%) reported that they were in the "growth stage," with an additional 14% in the "maturity" stage. A combined 4% reported that their business was in "decline" or "no longer in business."

**Table 3. Current stage of their business (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=622)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)
Ideation	13	18	6
Early/startup	32	30	36
Growth	34	32	39
Maturity	14	14	13
Decline	3	2	4
No longer in business	1	<1	1
Unsure	1	1	<1
Other	2	2	1

As shown in Table 4, more than half (57%) of respondents indicated that their business had been in operation for at least two years; 28% had been in operation for two years or less. An additional 14% were still developing their business and were not yet in operation.

**Table 4. Length of time in operation (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=622)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)
Developing; not yet in operation	14	18	7
Less than 1 year	13	13	12
1 to 2 years	15	14	17
More than 2 but less than 5 years	25	23	30
5 or more years	32	31	34
Unsure	1	1	<1

<sup>8</sup> The "ideation" stage was defined in the survey as, "I am developing my business plan and am not yet in operation." An "early/start-up" business was defined as one that is "starting to gain traction." A business in the "growth" stage was defined in the survey as one that the entrepreneur was "taking to the next level." A business at "maturity" would be "secure in market share with the potential to expand if desired."

A limited liability company (LLC) was the most common business structure, with 65% selecting this response category. Generally equal percentages selected “C-Corp or S-Corp” (13%) or “Sole proprietorship” (12%) as their current business structure. Two (2) percent, respectively, selected “Partnership” or “Non-profit organization” as their business structure; 6% of respondents did not yet have a formal business structure. These data are summarized below in Table 5.

**Table 5. Business structure (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=622)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=226)
Developing; do not have a formal structure	6	9	1
Sole proprietorship	12	13	9
Partnership	2	2	2
Limited Liability Company (LLC)	65	65	65
Corporations (C-Corp and S-Corp)	13	9	19
Non-profit organization	2	1	3
Unsure	1	1	0

Most of the respondents had very few employees. Forty-four (44) percent of respondents indicated that they were the only employee of their business, with 28% reporting two to five total employees, including themselves. About 12% of respondents indicated they employed between six and 19 employees and approximately 4% employed 20 or more. See Table 6.

**Table 6. Number of people employed by business, including self (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=622)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)
0; Developing, not yet in operation	11	14	6
1	44	51	32
2 to 5	28	24	36
6 to 9	7	4	12
10 to 19	5	3	7
20 to 49	3	2	6
50 to 99	1	1	<1
100 to 249	<1	0	<1
Unsure	1	<1	1

The respondents reflected a wide range of business types based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes. Table 7 illustrates that the most common industry types were “Retail Trade” (12%); “Health Care and Social Assistance” (10%); “Accommodation and Food Service” (8%); and “Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services” (7%). It is noteworthy that a relatively large percentage (18%) were unsure of their NAICS code.

**Table 7. Business NAICS code (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=622)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=387)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)
00 Developing, not yet in operation	9	13	2
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6	4	9
22 Utilities	0	0	0
23 Construction	2	3	1
31 Manufacturing	5	3	9
42 Wholesale Trade	1	<1	2
44 Retail Trade	12	11	12
48 Transportation and Warehousing	<1	0	2
51 Information	<1	0	1
52 Finance and Insurance	1	1	<1
53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2	2	1
54 Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	7	8	6
55 Management of Companies and Enterprises	<1	<1	0
56 Administrative and Support	1	1	1
61 Educational Services	6	5	6
62 Health Care and Social Assistance	10	9	11
71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6	7	5
72 Accommodation and Food Services	8	6	12
81 Other Services (except Public Administration)	6	7	4
92 Public Administration	<1	0	<1
95 Waste Management & Remediation Services	<1	0	<1
99 Unsure	18	19	15

As shown in Table 8, a majority of respondents reported that they were currently funding their business from personal sources of savings. This includes those who responded with “personal/family savings or owner(s) (53%) and “personal/family other than savings” (9%). Twenty-two (22) percent indicated that they were using a personal credit card (and carrying a balance) to currently fund their business. Approximately one-third (36%) reported using cash flow from their business to fund its operations.

External sources of capital were less common compared to personal funding. This reflects the combination of “business loan from a bank or financial institution (17%); “business loan for a local, state, or federal government (8%); “business loan/investment from family or friends” (7%); “personal/family home equity loan” (5%); and “government-guaranteed business loan from a bank or financial institution” (3%). Sixteen (16) percent reported using a business credit card to fund their business. Sixteen (16) percent identified “grants” as a current source of capital to fund their business. Very few (1%) responded that their business was funded by venture capital or angel investments.

Included among the “other” sources of capital were donations, contracts, “reselling,” and winnings from a pitch competition.

**Table 8. Current sources of capital to fund the business (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=623)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)
<b>Funding not needed or using business cash flow</b>			
Developing, not yet in operation	10	14	3
Operating my business, but do not need funding	16	21	9
Cash flow from business operations	36	31	44
<b>Personal sources of funding</b>			
Personal/family savings of owner(s)	53	52	56
Personal/family other than savings of owner(s)	9	7	11
Personal/family home equity loan	5	4	7
Personal credit card(s) carrying balances	22	17	32
<b>External sources of funding or other</b>			
Business loan/investment from family/friends	7	4	12
Business loan from a bank or financial institution	17	10	29
Business loan from federal, state, or local government	8	4	14
Business credit card(s) carrying balances	16	10	25
Government-guaranteed business loan from a bank or financial institution	3	1	7
Angel investment	1	<1	3
Venture capital	<1	<1	<1
Grants	16	6	33
Other source(s) of capital	2	2	3

*Note.* Respondents could check all funding options that applied to them. Seven respondents (1%; not shown in the table) selected “unsure.”

Respondents were asked if, over the past 24 months, they had prepared any specific materials to apply for funding. These data are shown in Table 9. About half (48%) had prepared a “business plan”; 29% had prepared a “marketing plan” or a “business pitch presentation,” respectively. Fairly similar percentages (28%) had prepared a “personal financial statement” and “three years tax returns” (24%). It is noteworthy that 12% of respondents were “unsure” if they had prepared any of the listed materials, perhaps suggesting that they were unclear about what the terms meant. In this specific table we provided additional results for the subset of businesses at the ideation or early stage vs. those at the growth or maturity stage. As might be expected, a greater percentage of those at the ideation or early stage had prepared a business plan (60%), marketing plan (35%), or business pitch presentation (37%) in the 24 months prior to the survey compared to those at the growth or maturity stage (39%, 24%, and 19%, respectively). A greater percentage of those at the growth or maturity stage had prepared three years of tax returns (30%) and a personal financial statement (30%) compared to those at the ideation or early stage (16% and 25%). These results might help IBE tailor or customize aspects of the capital access curriculum depending on program participants’ stage of business.

**Table 9. Respondents’ preparations, in the last 24 months, to apply for funding (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Full sample (n=623)	Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=227)	Respondents with businesses at the Ideation or Early Stage (n=283)	Respondents with businesses at the Growth or Maturity Stage (n=299)
Business plan	48	41	61	60	39
Marketing plan	29	24	37	35	24
Pro forma statements	10	5	20	11	10
Three years tax returns	24	16	40	16	30
Personal financial statement	28	16	49	25	30
Business “pitch” presentation	29	21	43	37	19
Unsure	12	14	7	12	11
Other	7	9	4	7	7

*Note.* Many who selected “other” wrote that they had prepared none of the options or that they did not need funding.

Respondents were asked to think about the current status of their business or business plan and how satisfied they were overall with how it is going. While 47% reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied,” one in four respondents (24%) indicated that they were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.” See Table 10 below.

**Table 10. Respondents’ satisfaction with the current status of their business or business plan (percent of respondents selecting each option)**

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral/ Undecided	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Full sample (n=622)	5	19	30	36	11
Respondents who have not requested funding in the last 24 months (n=388)	3	17	34	36	10
Respondents who have requested funding in the last 24 months (n=226)	8	22	22	37	12

## ENTREPRENEURS WHO APPLIED FOR CAPITAL

Thirty-six (36) percent of respondents indicated that they had applied for funding in the 24 months prior to the survey. When considering the kinds of funding applied for, “grants” and “traditional loans” were the most frequent types of funding requested, followed by requests to “family and friends.” These data are shown in Table 11. Readers will note that in Table 11 we do not report the percentage of women entrepreneurs who applied for each funding type. Instead, we report the raw count of the number of respondents. We made this decision because the total N for each funding type varied considerably, driven by a varying number of “missing” responses for each type. We noticed that while they had responded affirmatively to the prior survey question about whether they had applied for funding within the past 24 months, some respondents did not select any of the options to the follow-up questions seeking more detail about the outcomes of their funding requests, including not selecting “I did not apply for this type of funding.” We were concerned about the implications of assuming that all those who did not select a response should have selected the “I did not apply for this type of funding” option, when in reality, some of them may have indeed applied but did not understand where their request fit among the options. The raw count of the number of responses can still give a general sense of the relative magnitude of the differences in the kinds of funding types that the respondents sought for their businesses. In other words, in looking at the table, it is still useful to observe that women more frequently sought funding for grants and loans compared to other sources like venture capital, angel investments, and BID grants.

The types of funding sources with the highest rates of success, as measured by the percentage of those who applied who also reported that funding was secured were “family and/or friends” at 77%, followed by a “revolving loan” (65%) and a “Business Improvement District (BID) grant” (64%). While “grants” and “traditional loans” were the most common type of funding requested, the success rate for these two types of funds was about 56%, respectively. These data are reported in Table 11.

**Table 11. Among those who have applied for funding within the last 24 months, what they applied for and the status of the funding requests**

	Number who have applied	% Funding denied	% Awaiting decision	% Funding secured
Grant	160	36	8	56
Traditional loan	118	32	12	56
Loan or investment from family and/or friends	57	16	7	77
Revolving loan	49	33	2	65
Community development grant	47	38	15	47
Angel investor	15	40	20	40
Business Improvement District (BID) grant	11	18	18	64
Other capital	12	33	8	58
Venture capital	9	78	11	11

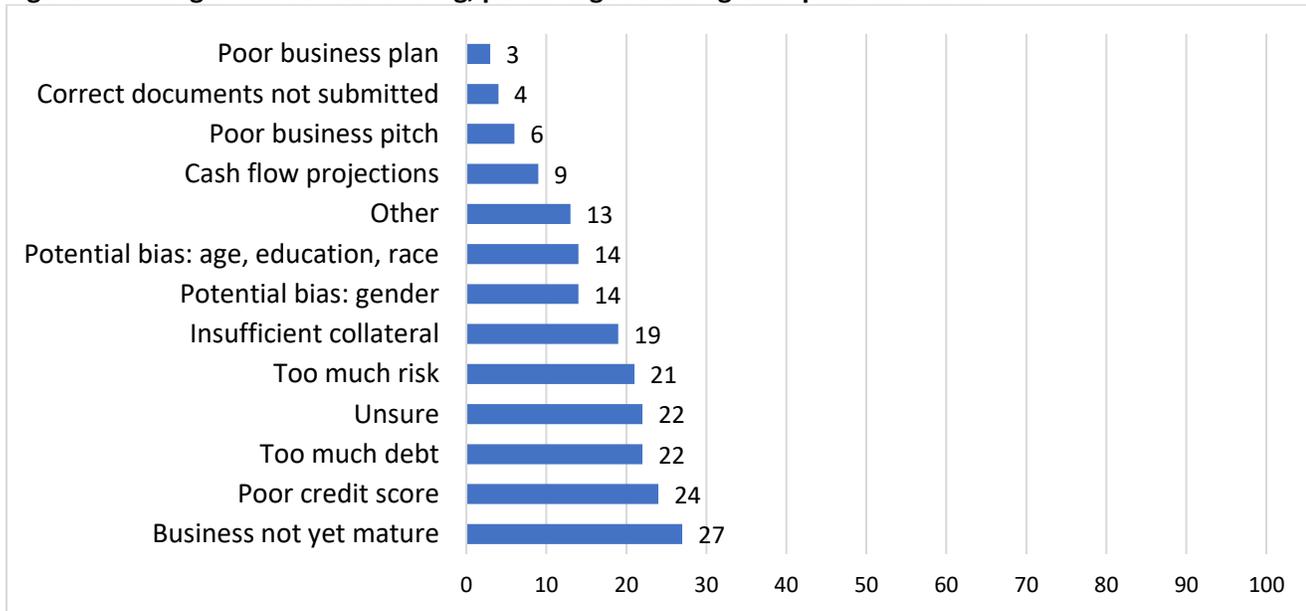
*Note.* Respondents who selected “other” mentioned donors, crowdfunding, personal finances, or an additional loan or grant.

Of those who responded that they had applied for funding in the 24 months prior to the survey, approximately 61% had received a denial of a funding request.

Respondents who reported that they were denied funding were also asked to think overall about the key reasons they were denied. Because an individual may have applied for multiple sources of funding over the course of the 24-month period referenced in the question, they were asked to think about their denials overall and to select all of the options that applied.

As shown in Figure 1, approximately 1 in 5 respondents (22%) indicated that they were “unsure” about the reason for their denial. At 29%, the most frequently cited reason was that their “business was not yet mature enough (not enough time in business).” Additional frequently cited reasons for a denial include a “poor credit score” (24%); “too much debt” (22%); “too much risk” (21%); and “insufficient collateral” (19%). Fourteen (14) percent of respondents identified “potential bias based on age, education, race or ethnicity” as a potential reason for the denial of their funding request; a similar percentage (14%) identified “potential bias based on gender” as a reason for the denial of their funding request.

**Figure 1. Among those denied funding, percentage selecting each potential reason**



*Note.* Of 227 who said they had applied for funding in the last 24 months, 88 said they had not been denied funding. Thus, these percentages were calculated using a denominator of 227-88=139. Several respondents who selected “other” mentioned limited funding available from source or there being more applicants than funding available.

Women who had applied for funding in the 24 months prior to the survey were asked to identify the extent to which certain aspects of the funding process were challenges. These challenges are shown in Table 12. The most frequently cited major challenge as having “awareness of funding sources” (49%). Nearly half of those who applied for funding had indicated that this was a major challenge for them; an additional 36% noted that this was a minor challenge.

Additional aspects of the funding process were also identified as a major challenge including “having time to apply” (45%); “understanding how to apply” (33%); “preparing documents to apply” (33%); and “determining how much to ask for” (31%). “Interest rates” were identified by 39% of respondents as a major challenge.

Seventeen (17) percent thought that “potential bias based on age, education, race or ethnicity” was a major challenge. A similar percentage (15%) though “potential bias based on gender” was a major challenge.

**Table 12. Among those who had applied for funding, their evaluation of past and current challenges**

	% No challenge	% Minor challenge	% Major challenge	% Unsure
Awareness of funding sources	13	36	49	2
Having time to apply	17	36	45	2
Interest rates	22	25	39	14
Understanding how to apply	23	43	33	2
Preparing documents to apply	24	40	33	3
Determining how much to ask for	24	42	31	3
Insufficient collateral	37	26	28	9
Too much debt	46	23	27	3
Cash flow projections	27	41	22	9
Credit history	53	23	21	3
Too risky	34	31	20	15
Potential bias based on age, education, race	41	18	17	24
Potential bias based on gender	41	18	15	26
Other	60	2	7	32

*Note.* Most respondents who selected “other” did not explain what they meant by “other.” Those who did provide an explanation mentioned specific challenges such as disability, lack of experience, rule inconsistencies.

# ENTREPRENEURS WHO HAD NOT APPLIED FOR CAPITAL

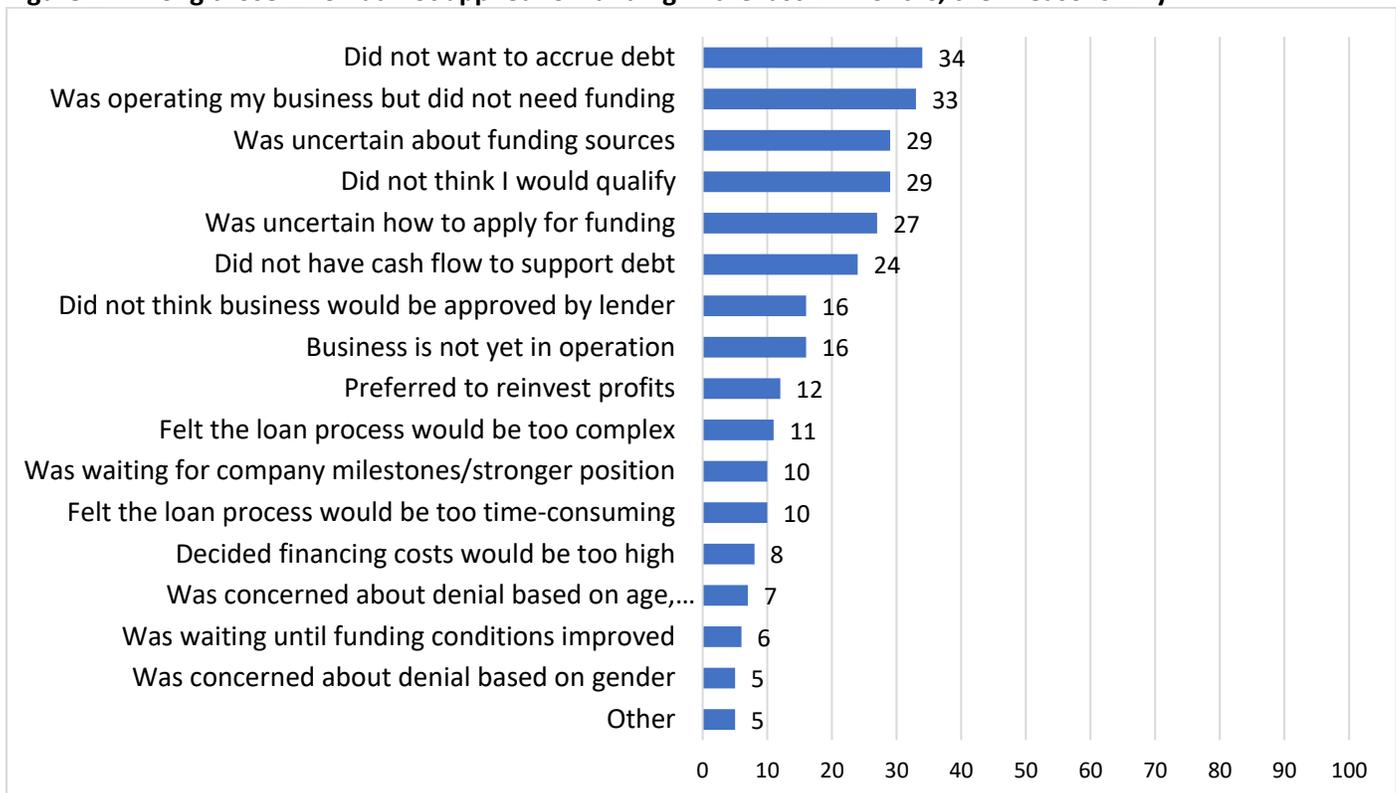
Approximately 62% of the women surveyed indicated that in the past 24 months, they had not applied for funding for their business. When asked to identify the reasons they had not applied for funding, as shown in Figure 2, about one-third (33%) responded that they “were operating [their] business and did not need funding.” Sixteen (16) percent indicated that their business was not yet in operation.

Common reasons for not applying for funding related to uncertainty about sources of funding; whether they would qualify; and/or the application process. For example, respectively, 29% responded they were “uncertain about funding sources” or “I did not think I would qualify.” Twenty-seven (27) percent selected that that were “uncertain about how to apply for funding.”

Other common reasons were related to concerns about debt: 34% of respondents noted that they “did not want to accrue debt” and 11% said they “did not have the cash flow to support debt.”

About five to seven percent of respondents noted concerns that that the would be denied based on their gender, age, education, race or ethnicity.

**Figure 2. Among those who had not applied for funding in the last 24 months, their reasons why**



*Note.* Only 3 respondents (.8%) selected “unsure;” they are not shown in the figure. Respondents who selected “other” mentioned a variety of specific reasons, such as being unsure what to do next, looking for a suitable property, not needing to apply until now, etc.

Women entrepreneurs who had not applied for funding in the 24 months prior to the survey were asked to think overall about their business and the extent to which certain topics were challenges. As shown in Table 13, the most frequently cited major challenges were: “lack of cash flow” (38%); “using personal finances to fund their business operations” (35%); “having funds for marketing” (30%); “paying for unexpected expenses” (25%); and “managing cash flow/following a budget” (19%).

**Table 13. Among those who had NOT applied for funding, their evaluation of past and current challenges for their business**

	% No challenge	% Minor challenge	% Major challenge	% Unsure
Lack of cash flow	22	34	38	6
Using personal finances to fund business operations	28	32	35	4
Having funds for marketing	29	34	30	7
Paying for unexpected expenses	36	33	25	6
Managing cash flow/following a budget	30	44	19	7
Hiring employees	57	20	15	9
Paying taxes/tax compliance	51	26	13	9
Keeping up with demand (maintaining inventory)	56	25	11	8
Purchasing products and supply chain issues	54	29	10	6
Paying bills on time	61	27	6	6
Retaining employees	72	11	5	11
Other	33	13	20	34

*Note.* Respondents who selected “other” mentioned a variety of specific reasons, such as needing advice; time; not being up and running yet; seeing their own value; finding a facility; managing unpaid hours; etc.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

All respondents were asked to think about the plans for their business over the next 24 months and to rate the extent to which a range of 26 specific topics would be important to them in terms of their future success as an entrepreneur. These 26 topics were clustered into six different categories: (1) technical and financial literacy resources; (2) supports specifically for women entrepreneurs; (3) leadership development; (4) programs for identifying and growing customers; (5) business planning; (6) capital needs and sources; and (7) pitch training and networking. Appendix A includes detailed tables of results for the topics organized by category. Table 14 below provides a ranking of the topics based on the percentage who identified each topic as “very important.”

**Table 14. Respondents’ ratings of the importance of factors for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Higher Priority Topics (&gt; 50% Very important)</b>				
Communication skills	9	21	69	2
Increasing awareness of resources for help and technical assistance	8	28	62	2
Presentation skills	13	27	60	1
Determining sources of capital	13	24	59	5
Developing a digital presence and/or a digital marketing plan	6	32	59	3
Being able to access resources for help and overall technical assistance with business	9	30	59	2
Negotiating skills	13	27	58	2
Developing a marketing plan	11	33	53	3
Getting help/training with budgeting/financial issues	15	31	53	1
Determining capital needs	13	30	52	5
Navigating the funding application process	18	26	52	4
Networking with other entrepreneurs	9	38	51	2
Developing a better work-life balance	20	27	51	2
<b>Moderate Priority Topics (45 to 50% Very important)</b>				
Networking with funders	21	25	50	5
Assembling materials needed to apply for funding	20	26	50	4
Increasing confidence in business/professional settings	22	27	49	2
Conducting market research	13	38	46	2
Improving self-care	22	30	46	2
Training in how to ask for money (pitch training)	25	26	45	4
Modifying an existing business plan for growth	16	33	45	6
<b>Lower Priority Topics (&lt; 45% Very important)</b>				
Conflict resolution	24	32	42	3
Developing a “pitch” for your business	24	33	40	3
Customer discovery training	20	35	35	10
Creating or completing an initial business plan	40	21	34	5
Developing an e-commerce platform	29	29	34	8
Accessing child care	77	9	13	2

*Note.* Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding. The designations of “Higher,” “Moderate,” and “Lower” Priority Topics were based on the percentage responding that the topic was “Very important.” The ranges for these designations are somewhat subjective and other readers may choose to apply different cut-offs or groupings.

**Table 15. Ratings of the importance of factors for their success as an entrepreneur, from respondents whose business is in the Ideation/Early Stage (n=283)**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Higher Priority Topics (&gt; 50% Very important)</b>				
Communication skills	8	17	73	2
Increasing awareness of resources for help and technical assistance	5	23	70	3
Being able to access resources for help and overall technical assistance with business	5	24	68	3
Developing a digital presence and/or a digital marketing plan	2	28	66	3
Determining sources of capital	7	21	66	6
Presentation skills	10	26	62	2
Negotiating skills	12	24	62	2
Developing a marketing plan	7	28	61	5
Getting help/training with budgeting/financial issues	10	29	59	2
Determining capital needs	7	29	58	6
Increasing confidence in business/professional settings	16	24	58	2
Networking with other entrepreneurs	6	34	57	3
Navigating the funding application process	11	27	57	5
Assembling materials needed to apply for funding	12	27	56	5
Networking with funders	14	24	56	6
Conducting market research	7	34	55	4
Developing a better work-life balance	16	27	54	3
Training in how to ask for money (pitch training)	14	28	51	7
<b>Moderate Priority Topics (45 to 50% Very important)</b>				
Conflict resolution	20	30	48	3
Developing a "pitch" for your business	17	33	46	4
<b>Lower Priority Topics (&lt; 45% Very important)</b>				
Modifying an existing business plan for growth	15	34	44	8
Improving self-care	25	30	43	3
Creating or completing an initial business plan	29	24	43	5
Developing an e-commerce platform	23	28	40	9
Customer discovery training	15	36	39	10
Accessing child care	73	12	12	3

*Note.* Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding. The designations of "Higher," "Moderate," and "Lower" Priority Topics were based on the percentage responding that the topic was "Very important." The ranges for these designations are somewhat subjective and other readers may choose to apply different cut-offs or groupings.

**Table 16. Ratings of the importance of factors for their success as an entrepreneur, from respondents whose business is in the Growth/Maturity Stage (n=299)**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Higher Priority Topics (&gt; 50% Very important)</b>				
Communication skills	8	25	65	1
Presentation skills	14	29	57	<1
Negotiating skills	13	31	55	1
Increasing awareness of resources for help and technical assistance	11	35	54	1
Developing a digital presence and/or a digital marketing plan	11	36	52	2
Being able to access resources for help and overall technical assistance with business	11	37	51	1
<b>Moderate Priority Topics (45 to 50% Very important)</b>				
Improving self-care	20	30	50	1
Determining sources of capital	18	28	50	4
Getting help/training with budgeting/financial issues	19	32	48	<1
Developing a better work-life balance	23	28	48	1
Determining capital needs	18	32	47	3
Modifying an existing business plan for growth	17	31	47	5
Navigating the funding application process	26	23	47	4
Developing a marketing plan	15	38	46	2
<b>Lower Priority Topics (&lt; 45% Very important)</b>				
Networking with other entrepreneurs	11	44	44	1
Assembling materials needed to apply for funding	27	25	44	3
Networking with funders	28	26	43	3
Increasing confidence in business/professional settings	27	30	40	2
Conducting market research	19	42	38	2
Conflict resolution	26	34	38	2
Training in how to ask for money (pitch training)	35	26	37	2
Developing a "pitch" for your business	30	35	33	2
Customer discovery training	25	33	31	11
Developing an e-commerce platform	36	30	28	7
Creating or completing an initial business plan	51	20	24	5
Accessing child care	79	6	14	2

*Note.* Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding. The designations of "Higher," "Moderate," and "Lower" Priority Topics were based on the percentage responding that the topic was "Very important." The ranges for these designations are somewhat subjective and other readers may choose to apply different cut-offs or groupings.

## APPENDIX A

### “SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE” TABLES BY CATEGORY

**Table 17. Respondents' ratings of the importance of technical and financial literacy resources for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Increasing your awareness of resources for help and overall technical assistance with your business</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	10	30	58	2
Respondents who have applied for funding	6	25	68	1
<b>Being able to access resources for help and overall technical assistance with business</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	9	33	55	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	7	25	67	1
<b>Getting help and training with budgeting and financial issues</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	16	30	52	2
Respondents who have applied for funding	12	32	55	1

Note. Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

**Table 18. Respondents' ratings of the importance of supports for women for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Increasing confidence in business and/or professional settings</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	19	29	49	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	26	25	48	1
<b>Developing a better work-life balance</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	21	28	48	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	16	26	57	1
<b>Accessing child care</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	77	9	12	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	76	8	14	1
<b>Improving self-care</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	25	29	44	2
Respondents who have applied for funding	18	30	51	1

Note. Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

**Table 19. Respondents' ratings of the importance of leadership development for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Conflict resolution</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	28	30	39	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	16	36	47	2
<b>Negotiating skills</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	15	27	56	2
Respondents who have applied for funding	9	27	62	1
<b>Communication skills</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	9	23	66	2
Respondents who have applied for funding	7	18	74	1
<b>Presentation skills</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	12	26	60	2
Respondents who have applied for funding	13	27	60	1

Note. Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

**Table 20. Respondents' ratings of the importance of marketing programs for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Conducting market research</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	15	36	46	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	10	42	47	1
<b>Customer discovery training</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	20	34	37	10
Respondents who have applied for funding	20	37	32	11
<b>Developing a marketing plan</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	12	33	51	4
Respondents who have applied for funding	10	33	55	2
<b>Developing a digital presence and/or a digital marketing plan</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>3</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	7	30	60	4
Respondents who have applied for funding	7	35	57	1
<b>Developing an e-commerce platform</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	31	26	34	9
Respondents who have applied for funding	27	34	32	8

Note. Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

**Table 21. Respondents' ratings of the importance of business planning for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Creating or completing an initial business plan</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>5</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	35	22	39	5
Respondents who have applied for funding	51	21	23	5
<b>Modifying an existing business plan for growth</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	19	31	42	7
Respondents who have applied for funding	10	36	50	4

Note. Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

**Table 22. Respondents’ ratings of the importance of capital needs and sources for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Determining capital needs</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>5</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	17	32	44	7
Respondents who have applied for funding	5	29	65	1
<b>Determining sources of capital</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>5</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	18	25	50	7
Respondents who have applied for funding	5	21	72	1
<b>Assembling materials needed to apply for funding</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>4</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	27	22	45	6
Respondents who have applied for funding	8	32	58	1
<b>Navigating the funding application process</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>4</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	24	23	47	6
Respondents who have applied for funding	8	30	60	2

Note. Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

**Table 23. Respondents’ ratings of the importance of pitch training and networking for their success as an entrepreneur**

	% Not important	% Somewhat important	% Very important	% Unsure
<b>Developing a “pitch” for your business</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	28	29	41	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	19	39	39	3
<b>Training in how to ask for money (pitch training)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	39	24	43	5
Respondents who have applied for funding	19	31	47	3
<b>Networking with other entrepreneurs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	10	36	51	3
Respondents who have applied for funding	9	42	50	0
<b>Networking with funders</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>5</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	25	24	45	6
Respondents who have applied for funding	14	25	59	3
<b>(Other ideas)</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>43</b>
Respondents who have not applied for funding	28	1	28	42
Respondents who have applied for funding	39	0	17	44

Note. Numbers may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding. Respondents who provided a description of “other ideas” mentioned funding, grants, nonprofits training.

# APPENDIX B

## Survey Instrument

### UNIVERSITIES OF WISCONSIN INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP SURVEY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

**NOTE:** This survey was programmed into Qualtrics and was administered electronically.

The Universities of Wisconsin Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship (IBE) is conducting this survey to learn more about the experiences of women business owners. Specifically, this survey will help IBE discover and understand the successes and challenges that influence women's access to capital and other sources of funding to help with business operations and growth. **Your shared experiences are important, and we value your feedback.** By completing this survey, you will help identify critical information gaps and contribute to an innovative curriculum tailored to help women entrepreneurs access capital. This survey is open to all Wisconsin women-owned businesses regardless of where they are in their entrepreneurial journey and regardless of whether capital funding has been secured. The Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service, a unit of the Universities of Wisconsin, is assisting IBE with the collection and analysis of the survey responses. **Your responses to this survey are anonymous.** Thank you in advance for your time. We estimate it will take less than 10 minutes to complete this survey.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

##### How do you identify?

- Man
- Woman
- Nonbinary
- Other
- I prefer not to answer this question

##### Which of the following best describes your age?

- Under 18
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70+
- I prefer not to answer this question

##### Which of the following best describes your race and ethnicity?

- Alaskan, American Indian, Indigenous, or Native American
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Multiracial or Biracial
- A race/ethnicity not listed here
- I prefer not to answer this question

**What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?**

- Some high school
- High school graduate/GED
- Nontraditional education
- Trade school
- Some college, no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- I prefer not to answer this question

**BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Which of the following best describes the current stage of your business?**

- Ideation – I am developing my business plan and am not yet in operation
- Early/startup – starting to gain traction
- Growth – taking my business to the next level
- Maturity – secure in our market with potential to expand if desired
- Decline – dropping in revenue or market share
- No longer in business
- Other [open-ended text box]
- Unsure

**What motivated you to start your business or to start planning your business? Check all that apply.**

- Started as a hobby
- Carried on a family tradition of entrepreneurship
- Unemployed and/or had difficulty finding a job
- Wanted a career change
- Desired more financial independence
- Wanted to build wealth and improve income
- Wanted an overall better work-life balance
- Wanted a more flexible schedule to focus on my personal needs (exercise, health, hobbies)
- Wanted a more flexible schedule to focus on my family's needs
- Wanted to make a meaningful difference or meet a customer need
- Other [open-ended text box]
- Unsure

**How long has your business been in operation?**

- I am developing my business plan and am not yet in operation
- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- More than 2 but less than 5 years
- 5 or more years
- Unsure

**Which of the following best describes your business structure?**

I am developing my business plan and do not yet have a formal business structure

- Sole proprietorship
- Partnership
- Limited Liability Company (LLC)
- Corporations (C-Corp and S-Corp)
- Non-profit organization
- Unsure

**How many people, including yourself, does your business employ? Please include both part-time and full-time employees.**

- 0 – I am developing my business plan and am not yet in operation
- 1 – I am the only employee
- 2 to 5
- 6 to 9
- 10 to 19
- 20 to 49
- 50 to 99
- 100 to 249
- 250 to 499
- 500 or more
- Unsure

**Which 2-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code corresponds to your business? If you are developing your business plan and do not yet have a NAICS code, please choose 00. If you are not sure of your NAICS code, please choose 99.**

- 00 I am developing my business plan and do not yet have a NAICS code
- 11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- 22 Utilities
- 23 Construction
- 31 Manufacturing
- 42 Wholesale Trade
- 44 Retail Trade
- 48 Transportation and Warehousing
- 51 Information
- 52 Finance and Insurance
- 53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- 54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- 55 Management of Companies and Enterprises
- 56 Administrative and Support
- 61 Educational Services
- 62 Health Care and Social Assistance
- 71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- 72 Accommodation and Food Services
- 81 Other Services (except Public Administration)
- 92 Public Administration
- 95 Waste Management and Remediation Services
- 99 Unsure

**What is the zip code of the location where your business is based? If you are developing your business plan, please include the zip code of where you intend to base your business. If you are unsure, please leave this blank.**

Enter zip code

**Which of the following sources of capital are you currently using to fund your business? Check all that apply.**

- I am developing my business plan and am not yet in operation
- Operating my business, but do not need funding
- Personal/family savings of owner(s)
- Personal/family other than savings of owner(s)
- Personal credit card(s) carrying balances
- Personal/family home equity loan
- Business loan/investment from family/friends
- Business loan from a bank or financial institution
- Business loan from federal, state, or local government
- Business credit card(s) carrying balances
- Government-guaranteed business loan from a bank or financial institution
- Angel investment
- Venture capital
- Cash flow from operations
- Grants
- Other source(s) of capital [open-ended text box]
- Unsure

**Thinking about the current status of your business or your business plan, how satisfied are you overall with how it is going?**

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral/Undecided
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

**Briefly describe the reason(s) for your answer above.**

[Open-ended text box]

**In the last 24 months, have you prepared any of the following for your business, either to apply for funding or in preparation to apply for capital funding in the future? Check all that apply.**

- Business plan
- Marketing plan
- Pro forma statements
- Three years tax returns
- Personal financial statement
- Business "pitch" presentation
- Other [open-ended text box]
- Unsure

**In the last 24 months, have you applied for any type of capital funding for your business? Capital funding could include things like a loan, grant, private equity, funding from family or friends, etc.**

No, I have not applied for funding for my business in the last 24 months

> skip to "ENTREPRENEURS WHO HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR FUNDING" Module

Yes, I have applied for funding for my business in the last 24 months

> skip to "ENTREPRENEURS WHO HAVE REQUESTED FUNDING" Module

**ENTREPRENEURS WHO HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR FUNDING**

**What are the reasons you did not pursue funding for your business in the last 24 months? Check all that apply.**

- Developing my business plan and am not yet in operation
- Operating my business, but did not need funding
- Uncertain about sources of funding
- Uncertain about how to apply for funding
- Did not believe I would qualify for funding
- Did not think business would be approved by lender (for example, too risky)
- Did not want to accrue debt
- Did not have the cash flow to support the debt
- Decided financing costs would be too high
- Decided to wait until the company hit milestones to be in stronger position to raise funds
- Decided to wait until funding conditions improved
- Felt the loan search/application process would be too time consuming
- Felt the loan search/application process would be too time complex
- Preferred to reinvest the business profits instead
- Concerned I would be denied based on my gender
- Concerned I would be denied based on my age, education, race, or ethnicity
- Other [open-ended text box]
- Unsure

**Thinking overall about your business over the last 24 months, please indicate the extent to which each of the following has been or is currently a challenge for your business.**

	No Challenge	Minor Challenge	Major Challenge	Unsure
Lack of cash flow				
Managing cash flow/following a budget				
Paying for unexpected expenses				
Paying bills on time				
Having to use personal finances to fund business operations				
Purchasing products and supply chain issues				
Keeping up with demand (maintaining inventory)				
Hiring employees				
Retaining employees				
Paying taxes/tax compliance				
Having funds for marketing				
Other [open-ended text box]				

>Skip to "SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE" question

### ENTREPRENEURS WHO HAVE REQUESTED FUNDING

Thinking overall about your business over the last 24 months, what types of funding have you applied for and what was the outcome of each funding request? If you applied several times for the same type of funding, choose the most recent funding request of that type when reporting the outcome.

	Did not apply for this type of funding	I applied and funding was denied	I applied and am waiting for a decision	I applied and funding was secured/awarded
Traditional loan				
Revolving loan				
Grant				
Community development grant				
Business Improvement District (BID) grant				
Venture capital				
Angel investor				
Family and/or friends				
Other capital [open-ended text box]				

Thinking overall about your funding requests that were denied over the last 24 months, what were the reason(s) they were denied? Check all that apply. If you were not denied funding, please choose "Not applicable" from the list.

- Correct documents not submitted
- Poor business plan
- Poor credit score
- Insufficient collateral
- Too much debt
- Too much risk
- Cash flow projections
- Poor business "pitch"
- Business not yet mature enough (not enough time in business)
- Potential bias based on gender
- Potential bias based on age, education, race, or ethnicity
- Other [open-ended text box]
- Unsure
- Not applicable. I was not denied funding.

Thinking overall about your experiences applying for funding for your business over the last 24 months, please indicate the extent to which each of the following was or is currently a challenge.

	No Challenge	Minor Challenge	Major Challenge	Unsure
Awareness of sources of funding				
Determining how much funding to ask for				
Understanding how to apply for funding				
Preparing documents needed to apply for funding				
Having time to apply for funding (process is too time-consuming)				
Credit history				
Too much debt				
Insufficient collateral				
Cash flow projections				
Too risky				
Interest rates				
Potential bias based on gender				
Potential bias based on age, education, race, or ethnicity				
Other [open-ended text box]				

**SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE** (all respondents are asked these questions)

Thinking about your plans for your business over the next 24 months, how important is each of the following to you personally in terms of your success as an entrepreneur?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Unsure
Increasing your awareness of resources for help and overall technical assistance with your business				
Being able to access resources for help and overall technical assistance with business				
Getting help and training with budgeting and financial issues				

Increasing confidence in business and/or professional settings				
Developing a better work-life balance				
Accessing child care				
Improving self-care				

Thinking about your plans for your business over the next 24 months, how important is each of the following to you personally in terms of your success as an entrepreneur?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Unsure
Conflict resolution				
Negotiating skills				
Communication skills				
Presentation skills				

Thinking about your plans for your business over the next 24 months, how important is each of the following to you personally in terms of your success as an entrepreneur?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Unsure
Conducting market research				
Customer discovery training				
Developing a marketing plan				
Developing a digital presence and/or a digital marketing plan				
Developing an e-commerce platform				
Creating or completing an initial business plan				
Modifying an existing business plan for growth				

Thinking about your plans for your business over the next 24 months, how important is each of the following to you personally in terms of your success as an entrepreneur?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Unsure
Determining capital needs				
Determining sources of capital				
Assembling materials needed to apply for funding				
Navigating the funding application process				

Thinking about your plans for your business over the next 24 months, how important is each of the following to you personally in terms of your success as an entrepreneur?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Unsure
Developing a "pitch" for your business				
Training in how to ask for money (pitch training)				
Networking with other entrepreneurs				
Networking with funders				
Other ideas [open-ended text box]				

Is there anything else you would like to share that would help us remove barriers to women accessing capital? [open ended text box]

**YOUR RESPONSE HAS BEEN SUBMITTED PAGE**

Thank you for completing the survey and for sharing your entrepreneurial experiences.

Interested in a new capital readiness opportunity for Wisconsin Women Entrepreneurs?

Using the feedback from this survey, the Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship (IBE) will be creating four curriculum pathways to assist Wisconsin women in their search for small business capital. IBE will have an opportunity for a limited number of women entrepreneurs to participate in our pilot capital readiness program which will include cutting edge instructors, prepared three-to-five-year financial statements, marketing assessment and recommendations, engagement with lending resources, and other resources that will support your access to capital and growth.

If you are interested in being considered for this NO COST grant funded opportunity, please provide your contact information here. [[> link provided to a separate Qualtrics survey](#)]

Please note that your responses to the survey you just completed remain anonymous.

## NEW FORM TO COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION IF INTERESTED IN THE PILOT

I am interested in more information about the Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship's Capital Readiness Pilot Program. My contact information is below.

First name:

Last name:

Email address:

Which of the following best describes your business?

Early stage

Growth stage

Technology industry

Food/agriculture industry

Other

Program Contact: Lora Bray, IBE Outreach Learning Manager

Email: [lora.bray@business.wisconsin.edu](mailto:lora.bray@business.wisconsin.edu)