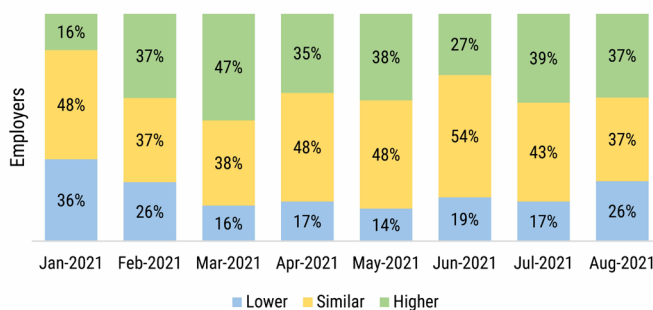


COVID-19 Impacts on Geoscience Business Operations, January – August 2021

Between January and August 2021, over one-third of employers reported expectations of better financial performance relative to 2020, and between 37% and 54% of employers reported similar expectations of financial performance to 2020. By August 2021, nearly one-quarter of employers reported expectations of better financial performance relative to pre-pandemic times, and nearly one-third reported lower expectations of performance.

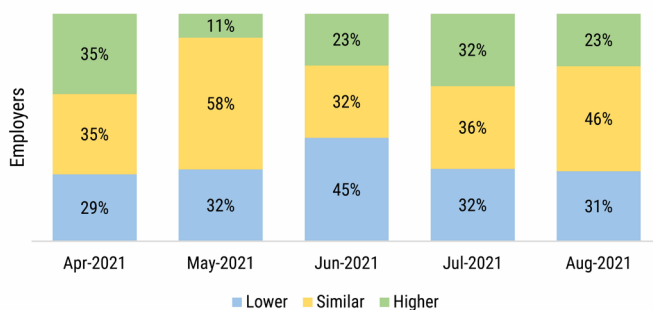
With the exception of March, July, and August 2021, less than one-quarter of employers reported receiving financial assistance in 2021. Federal assistance comprised the majority of aid received, followed by state and local aid, and then investment by business owners into their companies.

Expectations for financial performance: current calendar year relative to last year



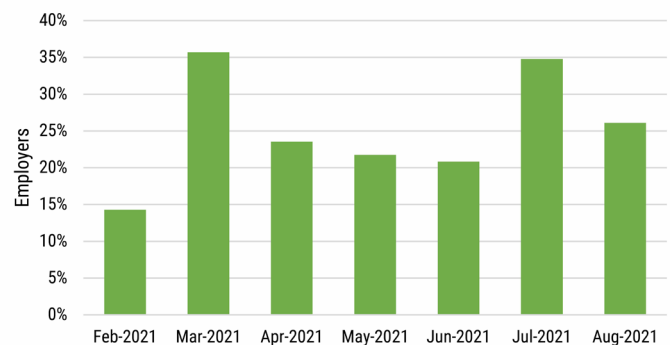
Credit: AGI, data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Impacts Study

Expectations for financial performance: current calendar year relative to pre-pandemic



Credit: AGI, data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Impacts Study

Received financial assistance in the past month



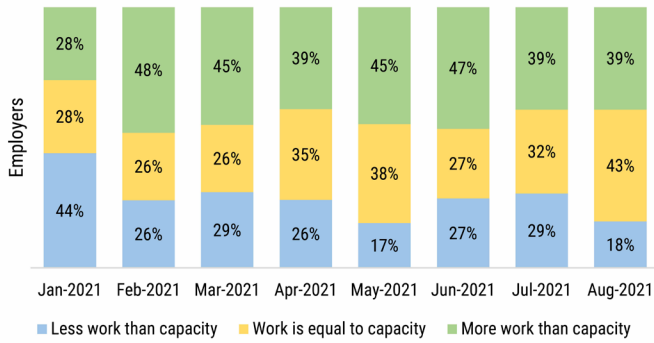
Credit: AGI, data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Impacts Study

Productivity

Since February 2021, just less than half of employers reported increased workloads relative to staffing, which is an increase over 2020 productivity reporting. In May and August 2021, about 18% of employers reported excess staffing capacity relative to workload, which was the lowest since June 2020.

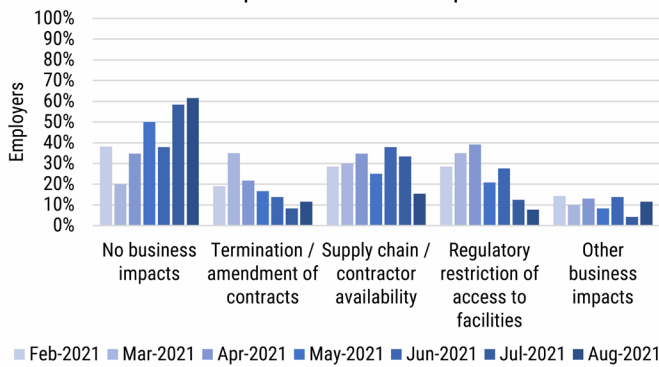
Through 2021, employers have increasingly reported no impacts on business operations. The number of employers reporting termination or amendment to revenue-generating contracts has declined, as has regulatory restriction of access to facilities over the course of 2021. Supply chain disruptions continued to impact over one-quarter to one-third of employers through July 2021, but in August, this percentage had declined to 15%.

Level of work relative to capacity



Credit: AGI, data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Impacts Study

COVID-19 impacts to business operations



Credit: AGI, data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Impacts Study

Strategies, Concerns, and Opportunities

Geoscience employers continued to deal with COVID-19 impacts in 2021 predominantly by investing in remote work resources followed by implementation of health and safety protocols for those working in facilities, offices, and at field sites. COVID vaccines, which were not required by all employers responding to the survey, were listed as a strategy by 18% of employers. Other strategies used by employers included increased automation of operations to improve business operation efficiencies, plans for permanent telework policies to reduce operational costs and increase employee retention, re-prioritizing workloads to maintain operations and production capacity, and reducing overhead expenses where possible.

Employers commented on the benefits of virtual technology platforms in reducing travel costs, increasing communication

with clients both domestic and international, and the efficiency platforms provide for meetings and continuing education. Employers also mentioned issues related to increased workloads to ensure efficient communication when using virtual technologies. They also mentioned that there has been a break-down in synergy from the lack of in-person communication, which has been a common challenge among employers, academic departments, and individuals throughout the pandemic. Some employers commented on the impact to infrastructure which is not getting regular maintenance since staff have not been regularly in the office.

The most reported pandemic-related employer concern continues to be workplace safety, with one-third of employers reporting this as a major concern in August 2021. The percentage of employers reporting other concerns driven moderately to extremely by the pandemic has declined since January 2021, except regulations related to business operations, which has increased. In addition, concerns over supply chain disruptions peaked in May 2021, with just over one-third of employers reporting this concern. All categories of concerns are down relative to December 2020 except for regulations related to business operations.

Employer concerns moderately to extremely driven by COVID-19



Credit: AGI, data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Impacts Study

We will continue to provide current snapshots on the impacts of COVID-19 on the geoscience enterprise throughout the year. For more information, and to participate in the study, please visit: <https://www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/covid19>

Funding for this project is provided by the National Science Foundation (Award #2029570). The results and interpretation of the survey are the views of the American Geosciences Institute and not those of the National Science Foundation.