

## South Omaha Business Impact Report

Date of Visit: June 18, 2025

Prepared by: Nebraska Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation

### Executive Summary

On Tuesday, June 10, 2025, federal immigration authorities conducted coordinated raids across several plants and companies in Omaha, resulting in the arrest of over 100 individuals. This operation had an immediate and profound impact on the local economy and sense of safety, particularly among immigrant-owned businesses in South Omaha.

In response, the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation connected to every business located along the 24th Street Corridor, from 24th & B Street to 24th & Q Street, including businesses on Vinton Street. We visited in-person each one of them. This area was especially affected by the raids, with 90% of the businesses closing their doors on the day of the operation. An additional 15% remained open with locked doors, operating under fear and uncertainty. Only 5% of businesses stayed open as usual, primarily because they had complete legal documentation and felt less at risk.

Throughout the entire week following June 10, streets in this business corridor remained largely empty, reflecting the community's distress. This atmosphere of fear and silence led the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber to take direct action, visiting and checking in with as many business owners to assess needs, offer support, and understand the scope of the disruption.

In the first weekend after the raids, operations in the district remained minimal. By the second weekend, activity began to slowly increase as trust was rebuilt and reassurance was provided by the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber and community leaders. As of the latest update, 43 businesses are now open and operating, including 5 previously closed businesses that have since reopened, and 6 more that are in the process of reopening.

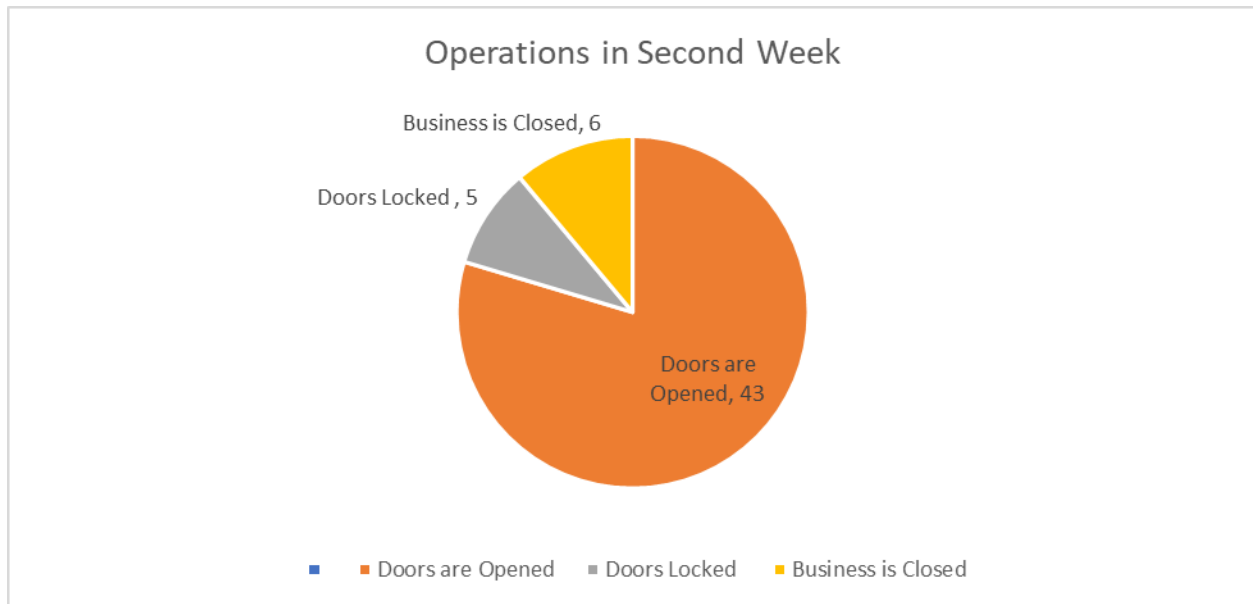
These immediate actions reflect the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber's commitment to economic resilience, business protection and the well-being of the South Omaha business community and the Hispanic businesses across the State.

On June 18, 2025, the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation conducted an in-person outreach effort, surveying only a sample of 54 businesses along the South Omaha

corridor, and Vinton Street. The initiative sought to collect firsthand data on the economic impact of recent immigration enforcement actions and the resulting atmosphere of fear in the area.

The participating businesses, primarily in retail, food service, and small-scale personal services, shared a strong, collective concern about safety, community trust, and the viability of their livelihoods. Many owners posed desperate questions, such as:

- *“Is this going to stop?”*
- *“Are they trying to close all the businesses?”*
- *“Why would anyone open a business right now?”*
- *“Why there is an assumption that every immigrant is undocumented?”*
- *“This is impacting all of us.”*



## Methodology

Date Conducted: June 18, 2025

Location: South Omaha Corridor and Vinton Street

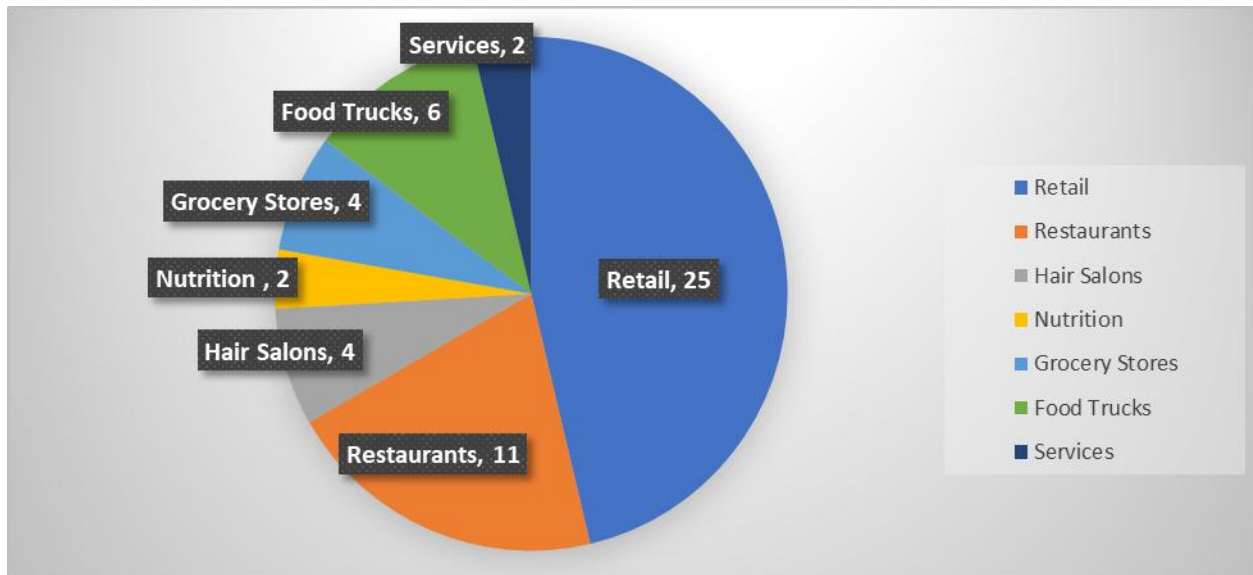
Total Businesses Surveyed: 54

Survey Tool: Short standardized questionnaire conducted in person

Industries Represented:

- Retail (boutiques, groceries, convenience stores)
- Restaurants and food vendors
- Personal and professional services

To analyze responses collectively and safely each surveyed business was coded as SO followed by a number. This approach ensures anonymity, confidence to respond, and objective results.



## Key Findings

### 1. General Sentiment

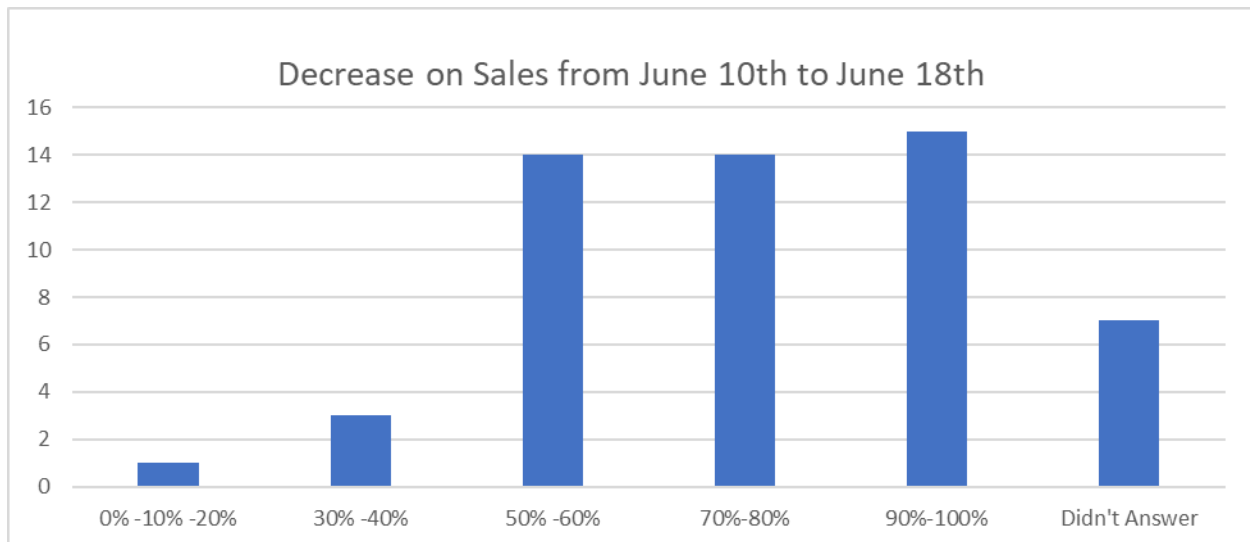
- 100% of the businesses expressed deep concern about immigration enforcement in the area.
- Many described feeling unsafe, anxious, and uncertain about the future of their businesses, and the community.
- New business activity has paused entirely, due to fear of visibility.

- Common statements included:
  - *“This is enough.”*
  - *“No one is on the streets. We need to pay rent. This is my livelihood”*
  - *“My gosh we are businesses under the state of Nebraska, paying taxes”*
  - *“There is fear everywhere, you can feel it.”*
  - *“We don’t want to be the next ones targeted.”*

## 2. Sales Impact (June 10–18, 2025)

Of the 54 businesses surveyed:

- 15 businesses reported their sales decreased between 90–100%, with no sales recorded between June 10 and June 18.
- 28 businesses said their sales dropped between 50–80%.
- 3 businesses reported losses of 30–40%.
- 7 businesses did not provide specific sales data.



These findings reflect an economic emergency that disproportionately affects South Omaha’s immigrant-owned and Latino-owned businesses. Immediate action and coordinated community support are critical.

### **3. Workforce Impact**

Beyond the financial toll on business operations, the immigration-related disruptions have also caused serious consequences for the workforce in South Omaha's small businesses.

- **Temporary Layoffs**

15 individuals faced temporary layoffs from South Omaha businesses. Employers reported implementing temporary layoffs, citing a lack of customers, reduced revenue, and general inactivity in the neighborhood. Business owners stated: "With no people walking the streets, there is no business. Without business, there is no money to pay employees."

These layoffs have created a ripple effect, as displaced workers, many of whom live in or near the area are left without income or clarity on when, or if, they will return to work.

- **Job Separations**

5 individuals in the South Omaha small business zone were separated from their jobs between June 10 and June 18. Some resigned voluntarily due to fear or personal circumstances related to immigration concerns, or profiling. Others were terminated due to the inability of businesses to maintain payroll during the downturn.

This sample of only 54 businesses surveyed demonstrates that this situation will affect Nebraska's economic stability (example: less sales taxes collected)

These workforce impacts represent not only lost income but also rising emotional and psychological distress for affected employees and their families, especially those tied to immigrant communities who are navigating legal uncertainties alongside financial insecurity.

#### **Comments from Business Owners**

"Even our regular customers are too scared to come in."

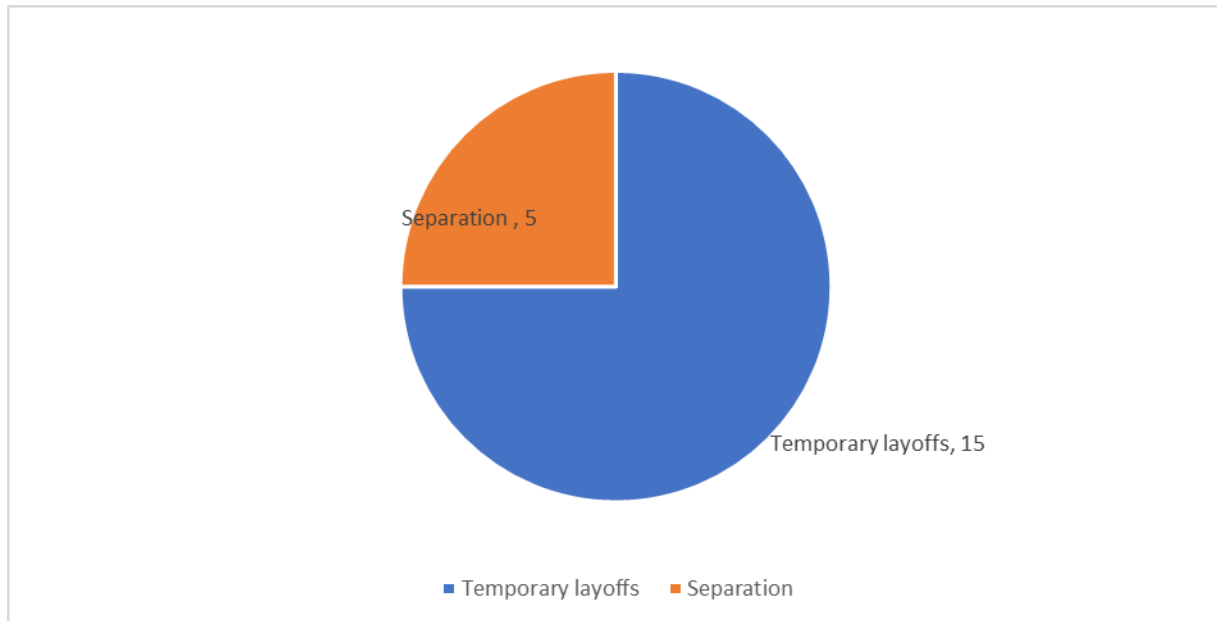
"We've lost everything in the last two weeks, absolutely no income."

"I can't pay rent or staff. I don't know if I'll reopen next month."

"No one's going to open a new business here, not after this."

"We need to close businesses. This is affecting us"

"Our customers are Latinos in the area, and the streets are empty due to fear"



## Conclusions

- South Omaha's businesses are experiencing immediate and disproportionate harm.
- Sales have declined severely due to fear of enforcement activity and raids.
- Trust has eroded in the neighborhood, damaging not only immigrant businesses but also the broader community economy.
- Urgent response is needed to stabilize this key cultural and economic corridor.

### Immediate Actions by the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

From the moment that all occurred, we immediately connected with all our members (and with many non-members as well.)

1. We held calls with members of SOBA (South Omaha Business Association) to discuss action plans. We personally visited as many businesses from 24th & B to 24th & Q Streets on the day to provide support.
2. In the days that followed, we continued working hand-in-hand with these businesses, helping them reopen, adjust their hours, and manage day-to-day operations (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., etc.). Last weekend they all decided to reopen under locked doors.

3. We also launched and promoted the **SHOP LOCAL, SHOP SOUTH O!** campaign. An investment was made in a social media campaign to encourage consumer support of local businesses. Several of our members of the South Omaha Business Association (SOBA) have joined in actively promoting this initiative.
4. Our outreach didn't stop in Omaha. We connected with rural communities to collaborate with local leaders across the state. Now, we are expanding our efforts through a **Shop Local, Shop Small Business** campaign focused on rural Nebraska.
5. We continue to invest resources from the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber and its Foundation to support marketing and communication efforts, and we remain committed to walking alongside our small businesses and families.
6. Expansion of Bilingual Immigration Sessions: Since December 2024, the Nebraska Hispanic Chamber has organized bilingual informational sessions (across the state) on immigration rights, business and safety planning, and access to legal services. These sessions are currently being reinforced and expanded due to latest news on immigration.
7. Partnerships with Local Leaders: Collaboration has been strengthened with community leaders, particularly in Omaha with Commissioner Roger Garcia, with the goal of supporting and representing immigrant communities and ensuring their protection.

## **Recommendations**

1. **Emergency Relief Fund**  
Deploy direct financial support to the most affected businesses immediately.
2. **“Shop Local. Shop Without Fear.” Campaign**  
Launch a culturally responsive campaign reassuring customers and encouraging solidarity.
3. **Legal Education & Safety Clinics**  
Continue organizing and supporting bilingual sessions to provide clarity on rights, immigration enforcement limits, business support services.
4. **We are expanding our NHCC South Omaha Business Safety Network- SOBA group**  
We are expanding our WhatsApp safety groups.

### **Next Steps**

The Nebraska Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will:

- Look for financial support for businesses who qualify to receive help.
- Share this report with local and state officials, nonprofit allies, and media partners.
- Conduct follow-up visits and collect updated data throughout the summer.
- Continue advocating for economic protection and community stability in South Omaha and the entire state of Nebraska.