Employment declines were highest among businesses with fewer than 50 employees, with business closures occurring more frequently among interpersonal businesses.

Employment declines during the Pandemic Recession were much larger for businesses with fewer than 50 employees, with closures playing an even larger role for this size group. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees saw paid employment declines of more than 25 percent through April 18, while those with between 50 and 500 employees and those with more than 500 employees, respectively, saw declines of 15-20 percent during that same period, and reached troughs a week or two later than the smallest businesses.

The largest declines in employment were in sectors that require substantive interpersonal interactions. Through late-April, paid employment in the “arts, entertainment and recreation” and “accommodation and food services” sectors (i.e., leisure and hospitality) both fell by more than 45 percent while employment in “retail trade” fell by almost 30%. Businesses like laundromats and hair stylists also saw employment declines of nearly 30%. Despite a boom in emergency care treatment within hospitals, the “health care and social assistance” industry experienced a 16.5% decline in employment through late April.