



Commissioner
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MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR

The Waste Management Industry - Maine

- There was an average of 2,200 jobs in the “waste management and remediation” industry in Maine in the 12 months through June 2021.
- The industry paid \$117 million in total wages with an average of \$52,240 per job.
- Waste management jobs are generally concentrated near population centers.
- Demographics (as of 2020):
 - 53% of wage and salary workers in the industry were age 45+ and 29% were age 55+. Just 9% were under 25 and 28% were under 35.
 - 84% of workers were male.

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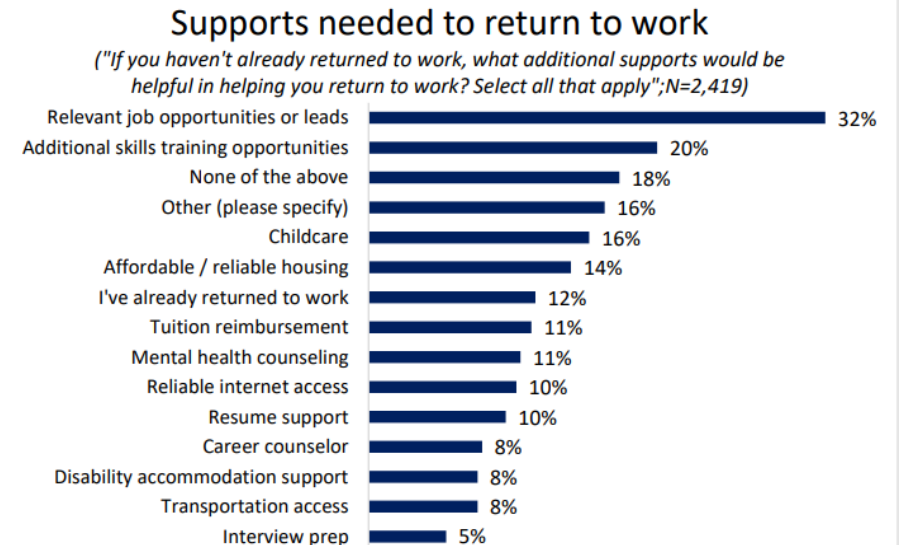
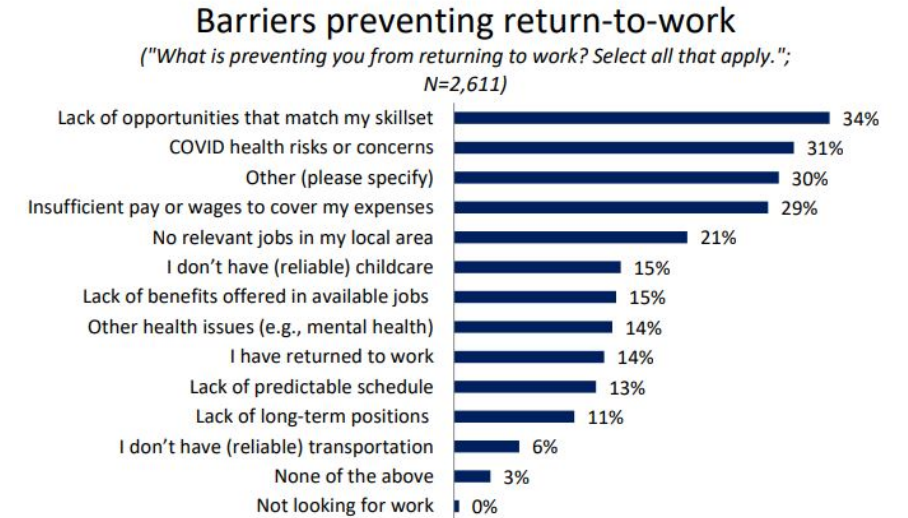
- Outside of Heavy & Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers, jobs in waste management typically require a high school diploma or equivalent, and have low barriers to employment. Most of these jobs are very “hands-on,” involving a large amount of physical labor.
 - 40% of jobs are in two occupations: Heavy & Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers and Refuse & Recyclable Material Collectors.
 - A small number of jobs as managers, estimators, or mechanics require postsecondary education or long-term on-the-job trainings.
- Of the nearly 27,000 jobs currently posted on Maine JobLink, over a thousand are for occupations directly connected to solid waste management- from dispatchers to drivers, quality control, engineers, technicians, laborers and maintenance, diesel techs... and thousands more for those from sectors with worker needs that directly connect to the needs of your industry

Tight Labor Market

- Waste management was among the most *recession resistant* industries during the pandemic, with little change in jobs in 2020 or 2021.
- However, like other states, Maine has been challenged for years with a tight labor market. After the COVID-19 pandemic first brought a range of economic activities to a halt, a robust jobs recovery quickly led to the reemergence of tight labor market conditions.
- Nationally there are approximately 2.4m excess retirements (approximately .92%) due to COVID. (St. Louis Fed Reserve).
- Maine has an older workforce than other states - This increase in earlier than planned retirements will impact a state like Maine more than others. While this impact to our workforce happened quickly and is related to the pandemic, 20 years ago workforce experts were identifying this a long-term challenge.
- These conditions are creating an environment in which employers must compete to attract and retain workers and has improved the job prospects of many in the labor force.

Barriers to Employment

- In July 2021, Maine Department of Labor circulated a brief survey to unemployment claimants and job seekers to better understand the barriers faced in returning to work.
- More than 2,600 individuals responded to the anonymous survey
- Top barriers cited: “lack of opportunities that match my skillset” (34%) and “COVID health risks or concerns” (31%)
- Additional reasons preventing return to work (graphs to the right)
- The full results of the survey can be found on MDOL’s website:
https://www.maine.gov/labor/docs/2021/Barrierstoemployment_Findings%20and%20Analysis_091321.pdf



So what can employers do?

- Identify target groups for recruitment – who is missing from your workforce? What are your equity & diversity goals?
 - Skills sets
 - Women
 - People of color
 - People with disabilities
 - Young people
 - Formerly incarcerated individuals
 - People in recovery
 - New Americans
- Partner with groups that are trusted around recruitment:
 - Especially important for companies serving large geographic areas to have local, trusted partners.
 - Partnering with American Jobs Centers (CareerCenters in Maine) will help employers connect and start to develop relationships with these groups.

“Pulse check”

- What can be done to meet your workers “where they’re at?”
- Step back and take a look at assets, as well as challenges:
 - Schedules- are your work hours impossible to manage for childcare needs and can they be adjusted?
 - Transportation and how your workers get to and from job sites- can you be more intentional around coordinating and incentivizing ride share between employees?
 - Benefits- where can you be flexible? Creative?
 - Wages- are they competitive in your region? For your industry?

Employment/Retention Strategies Cont.

- Take information from your pulse check, and modify your job posting to stand out - highlight not just what you are looking for, but the company's assets and what the job seeker may be looking for:
 - COVID-19 precautions in the workplace?
 - Flexible schedules?
 - How do you talk about your company, your work, and your impact in your position descriptions?
- How are you growing talent and developing/communicating career pathways in your workforce? Pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, advisory councils at CTEs/Adult Education and Community Colleges.

Employment Strategies Cont.

- Registered Apprenticeship:
 - 94% of apprentices remain employed after completing their program
 - There are currently 1,137 apprentices in Maine, 113 of which are in the waste management field – with a lot of room to grow!

Benefits of Apprenticeship

Apprentices:

- Increased skills
- Paycheck while in training
- Higher wages
- Mentor support
- Job security
- Safer workplace
- Nationally recognized, portable credential

Employers:

- Improved recruiting
- More diverse workforce
- Reduced turnover costs
- Higher productivity and fewer accidents
- Connection to training funds
- Apprenticeship program can be customized to meet employer needs
- Formalized approach that enhances existing business practices
- Average return on investment of \$1.47 for every \$1 invested¹



Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)

- Represent significant pool of job seekers – At any given time, BRS is working with approximately 3,500 individuals with disabilities across the state who are actively seeking employment and have specific job goals.
- At that same time, there are approximately another 500 individuals who are in the process of employment planning with our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors.
- Job seekers are fully vetted regarding job fit and ability to perform the essential functions of the job
- BRS provides a range of services to those job seekers, including job training and supports, and is also able to assist employers with recruitment and retention of this largely untapped workforce.

Maine CareerCenter Services

- Maine JobLink
- Individualized services
 - We have a new “Customized Connections” program, where job seekers answer a survey, with questions such as what industry they are interested in, and what their perfect job would look like, and staff then work with them to connect with employers who may be a good fit. If you are hiring, we want to know so we can connect these job seekers with you!
 - We will work with employers one-on-one to help assess their hiring and retention strategies, and connect them with resources and programs that fits their needs
 - Host hiring events – virtual, in-person, even drive-by

5. What kind of work are you looking for? *Select your top 3 areas*

- Construction/Infrastructure
- Financial/banking/Computer
- Food Service/ Hospitality
- Healthcare
- General Office/Admin
- Manufacturing/Production
- Retail/Customer Service
- Social Services
- Trades
- Transportation
- Other

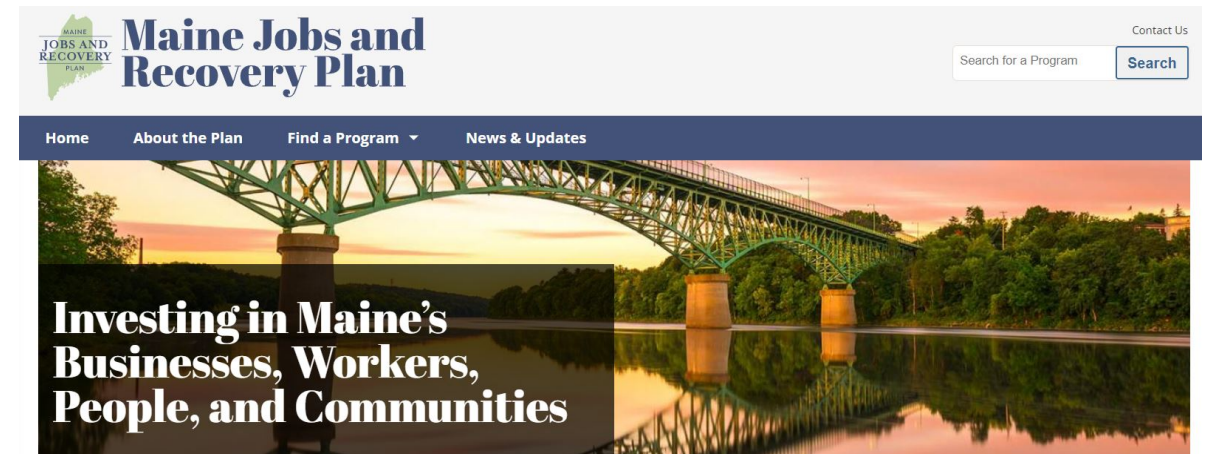
6. Briefly describe your perfect job match. *

Enter your answer

Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan

- **Industry Partnerships for Workforce Development Initiative - Allocation: \$3,700,000**
- Job training programs can improve the employment and wage outcomes for under- and unemployed workers, but only if they are preparing participants for in-demand positions and with the skills that industry employers are seeking.
- MDOL is launching an Industry Partnerships Initiative to encourage businesses, labor organizations, and industry associations to form sector-based partnerships to facilitate more effective job training programs for Mainers. In industries critical to Maine's recovery and growth – including health care, clean energy, construction and trades, manufacturing, agriculture, and others – these collaborations will help companies work together to attract potential employees to the field, strengthen career ladders that let entry-level workers advance to higher-wage positions, and partner with educational and training institutions to shape curricula aligned with industry talent needs.

The Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan is Governor Mills' plan, approved by the Legislature, to invest nearly \$1 billion in federal American Rescue Plan funds to improve the lives of Maine people and families, help businesses, create good-paying jobs, and build an economy poised for future prosperity.



More info: <https://www.maine.gov/jobsplan/>



Contact Information

- Maine Department of Labor: <https://www.maine.gov/labor/>
 - Maine CareerCenters: www.mainecareercenter.gov
 - Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services:
<https://www.maine.gov/rehab/>
 - Maine Apprenticeship Program:
https://www.maine.gov/labor/jobs_training/apprenticeship/
 - Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan:
<https://www.maine.gov/jobsplan/>
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