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Job Vacancy Survey Provides Unique Snapshot of Employer Demand

Background

At the Center for Workforce Research and Information, we surveyed private firms to gather information about hiring demand for use by job seekers, employers and policymakers. These data, gleaned directly from Maine employers, provide a unique snapshot of the recent job market: the number and types of jobs available and their characteristics. The survey was conducted by mail, on-line and by telephone, and sent to 3,400 workplaces during the fall of 2014.

We asked employers to report openings for which they were actively recruiting during the month of September 2014. We asked the number of jobs, their titles, whether they were full or part time (fewer than 35 hours per week) and other job characteristics or requirements. [View the survey here.](#)

The sample was designed to develop findings by region: Aroostook-Washington, Tri County (Hancock, Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties), Central-Western (Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford and Somerset Counties), North Coastal (Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc and Waldo Counties), and South Coastal (Cumberland and York Counties); by employer size class: small firms with employment of 2 to 19, mid-sized firms (20 to 99) and large firms (100 or more); and by industry (16 sectors).

In total, 70 percent of those surveyed responded. Of nearly 2,400 responses, 755 (31%) indicated they had one or more job openings.

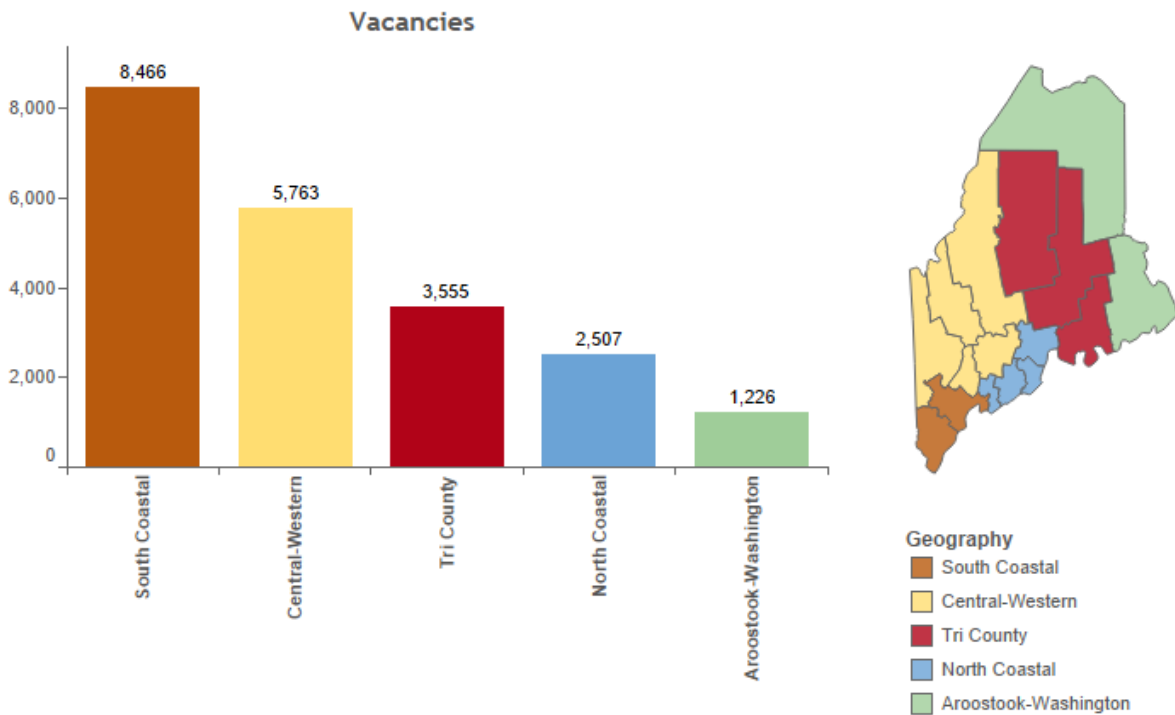
Overview of Findings

In total, there were 21,520 job vacancies in September 2014, representing a vacancy rate of 4 percent, or four job openings per 100 jobs. Sixty-two percent were full time (more than 35 hours per week) and about a tenth were seasonal or temporary (12%).

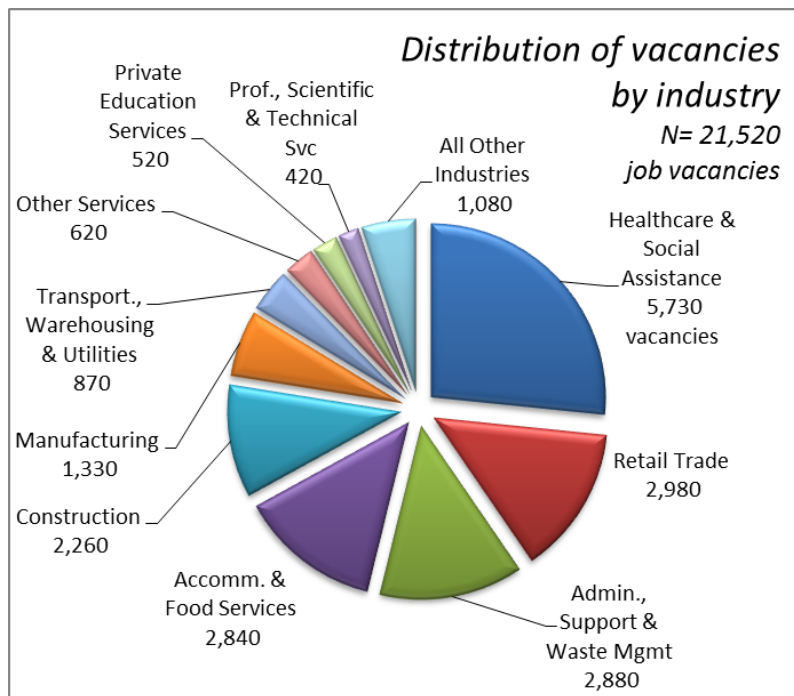
By region, job vacancies occurred in similar geographical distribution to jobs and population, with the largest shares of vacancies located in regions that contain Maine's metropolitan areas: 39 percent in the South Coastal region (Portland); 27 percent in the Central-Western region, (Lewiston-Auburn); 17 percent in the Tri County region (Bangor). Twelve percent of vacancies were located in the North Coastal region and 6 percent in the Aroostook-Washington region.

Geography	Vacancies	Full-time Positions	Part-time Positions	Difficult to Fill	Seasonal or Temporary
South Coastal	8,466	63%	36%	81%	4%
Central-Western	5,763	67%	32%	63%	24%
Tri County	3,555	60%	39%	69%	14%
North Coastal	2,507	46%	54%	52%	10%
Aroostook-Washington	1,226	65%	34%	71%	2%
Maine (statewide)	21,517	62%	38%	70%	12%

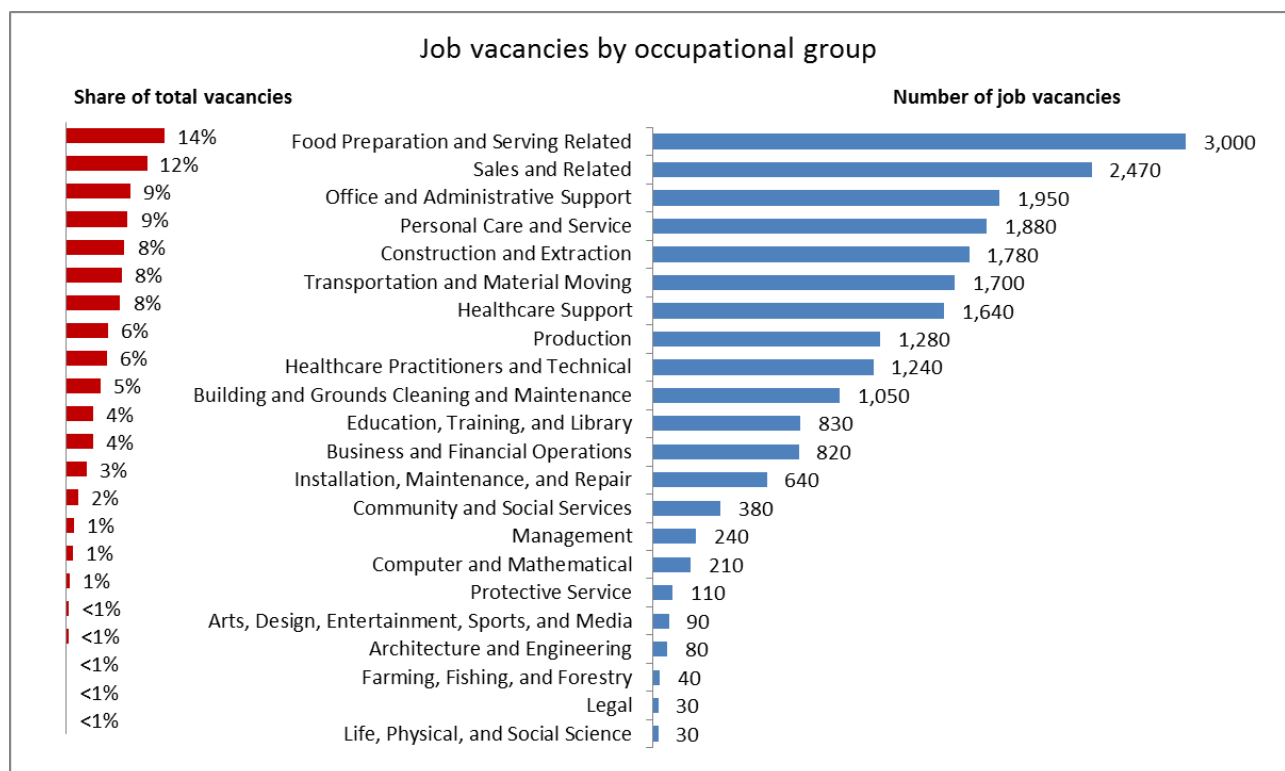
Display
Vacancies



Thirty-eight percent of job vacancies were located at mid-sized firms. Small firms and large firms each accounted for 31 percent of vacancies. By industry sector, the largest share of vacancies, 27 percent, was at firms in healthcare and social assistance, followed by firms in retail trade (14%), administrative support and waste management (13%), accommodation and food services (13%), and construction (10%). These five sectors accounted for more than three-quarters of total vacancies.



By occupational group, the largest share of vacancies was in food preparation and serving occupations (14%), followed by sales and related (12%), office and administrative support (9%), personal care and service (9%), and construction and extraction (8%). Healthcare support and practitioner/technical occupations accounted for 8 and 6 percent of vacancies, respectively.



While there were nearly 400 individual occupations with at least one identified job opening, one-quarter of total vacancies occur in five occupations: food prep and serving workers (1,530 job vacancies), personal care aides (1,350), cashiers (900), retail salespersons (820) and nursing assistants (820).

Other key characteristics:

- Thirty-eight percent of job vacancies were for part-time work. Part time was defined as fewer than 35 hours per week, and includes per diem positions.
- Twelve percent of job vacancies were for temporary or seasonal work.
- Thirty-two percent of vacancies require some type of education or training beyond a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Thirty-four percent of vacancies require one or more years prior work experience.
- Seventy percent of vacancies were described by employers as being difficult to fill.

2014 Job Vacancy Survey Summary		
	Number	Share of Total Vacancies
Total Estimated Vacancies	21,517	100%
Full Time Positions	13,320	62%
Seasonal or Temporary	2,510	12%
Difficult to Fill	15,116	70%
Length of time job has been open		
under 30 days	6,644	31%
30 to 59 days	4,177	19%
60 or more days	4,454	21%
Always open	5,343	25%
<i>[Unspecified]</i>	899	4%
Education Level Required		
None required	5,126	24%
High school diploma or equiv.	8,359	39%
Post-secondary training	2,106	10%
Associate's degree	632	3%
Bachelor's degree	1,965	9%
Graduate degree	401	2%
Other specified	1,884	9%
<i>[Unspecified]</i>	1,043	5%
Previous Experience Required		
No experience required	9,254	43%
Less than 1 year	3,662	17%
1 to 5 years	6,184	29%
More than 5 years	1,375	6%
<i>[Unspecified]</i>	1,375	6%

In upcoming blogs we will examine these and other characteristics of job vacancies in greater detail. Next topic: job vacancies by industry.