



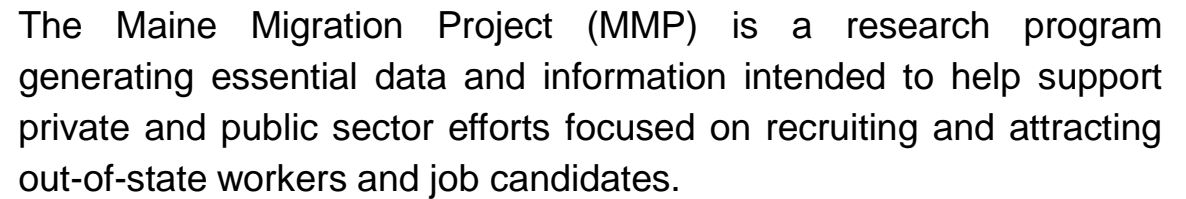
Why People Move to Maine

Key findings from a recent survey of migrants

Webinar February 10, 2025

MAINE.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



1. Talent Attraction Strategies in the US
2. Database of Talent Attraction Strategies in the US
3. Characterizing Migration in Maine with US Census Data
4. Workforce Attraction and Recruitment: Experiences of Maine Employers
5. Why People Move to Maine: A Study of Recent Migrants
6. Workforce Attraction and Recruitment in Maine: What Policymakers, Employers, and Supporting Organizations Need to Know



The Flow

- 01** Project Overview
- 02** Household Demographics
- 03** Employment and Work
- 04** Maine Connections
- 05** The Maine Attraction
- 06** Barriers
- 07** Implications for Recruitment and Attraction
- 08** Questions

WHY PEOPLE MOVE TO MAINE

A STUDY OF RECENT MIGRANTS

MAINE.
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

PREPARED FOR
Maine Department of Economic
and Community Development &
Maine Department of Labor

PREPARED BY
Wallace Economic Advisers, LLC

JANUARY 2025

Project Overview

- Electronic survey of driver's license registrants 2019 - 2023
 - Reciprocity from another state between ("BMV data")
- Sample of 2,500 responses collected spring of 2024
 - Age 18 and older, though responses skewed older
- Some considerations for representation of population
- Differences by tourism region and life-cycle age cohorts

Migrant defined as person that moved to and established residency in Maine from another U.S. state or international origin.

Brief Summary of Household Demographics





Where did migrants come from? Where do they reside?

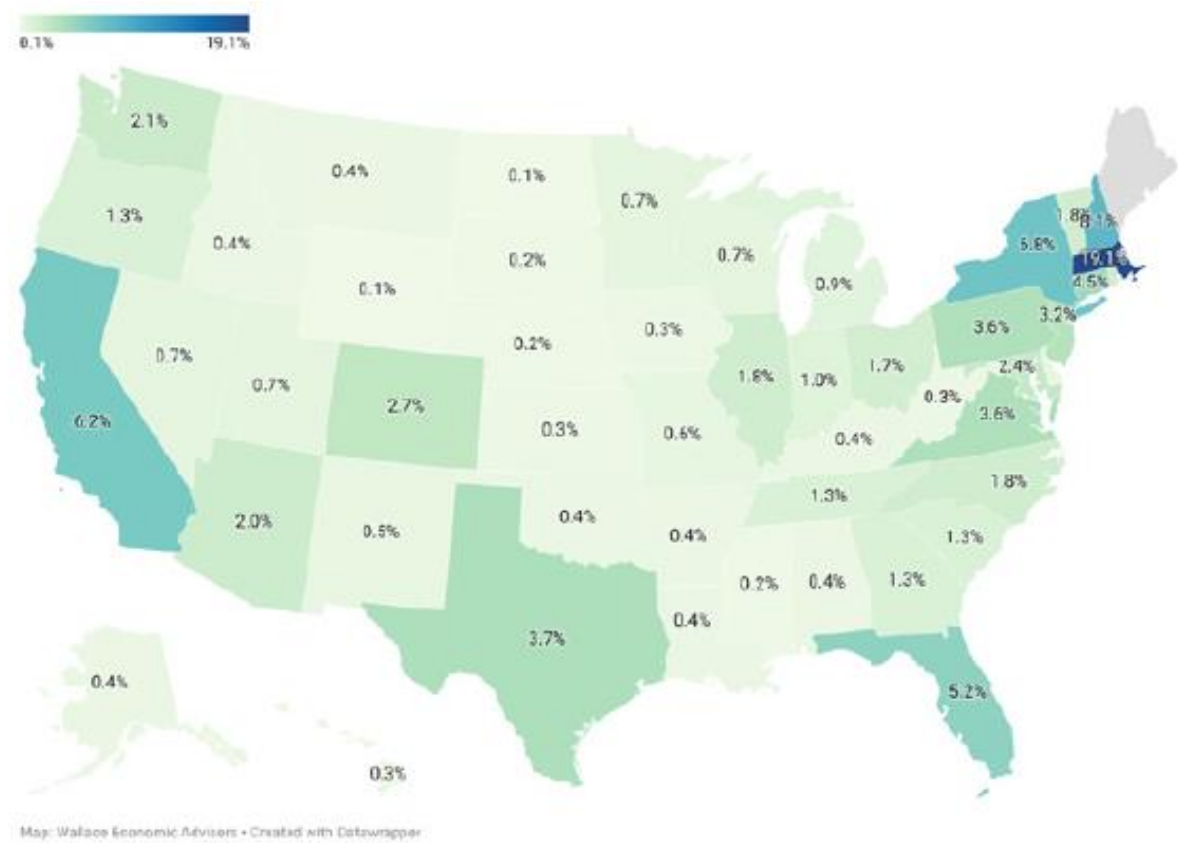


Figure 6: Where Survey Respondents Moved From

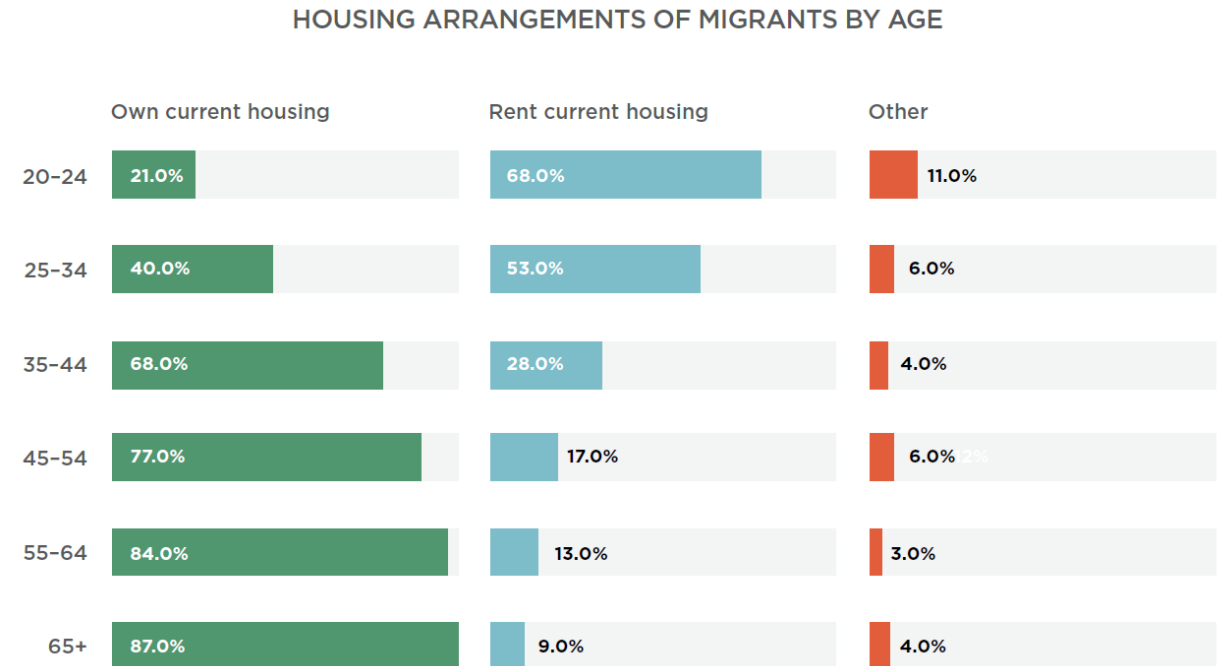
	Migrant Population Share	Survey Sample Share	Population (2023)
Aroostook County	4%	4%	5%
Downeast & Acadia	5%	9%	6%
Greater Portland & Casco Bay	28%	23%	22%
Kennebec & Moose River Valleys	9%	5%	13%
Maine Lakes & Mountains	10%	14%	15%
Mid-coast	12%	16%	11%
The Maine Beaches	21%	19%	16%
The Maine Highlands	10%	11%	12%

Figure 4: Regional Distribution of Migrant License Registrations and Survey Respondents³⁰



Core socio-economics largely consistent with Census

- Migrants were largely white (92%)
- Three-quarters with Bachelor's degree or higher
- More than 50% had household incomes of \$100,000 or more
 - state median approximately \$75,000
- More likely to own their homes (75%), consistent with statewide rates
- 2 of 3 moved with partner/spouse; 1/4 moved alone
- 16% reported moving with school-aged children to the state
 - Likely under-estimates to a degree





Migrants are investing time and money in communities



Figure 14: Community Engagement Activities of Migrants

Employment and Work





Virtually all migrants in the labor force are employed, just 2% reported “not employed and searching for work”

Employment Status		Self	Partner or Spouse		55-64	65+
Working full-time	Working full-time	46.1%	44.2%	6	43%	11%
Retired	Retired	35.4%	38.0%	6		
Working part-time	Working part-time	9.3%	9.2%	6	34%	77%
Other	Other	2.6%	2.2%	6	12%	9%
Stay-at-home parent or caregiver	Stay-at-home parent or caregiver	1.9%	2.4%	6	3%	2%
Not formally employed, not searching	Not formally employed - not searching	1.9%	1.8%	6	5%	2%
Not formally employed, searching	Not formally employed - searching	1.8%	1.7%	6	1%	0%
Student	Student	1.0%	0.4%	6	2%	0%
				6	0%	0%

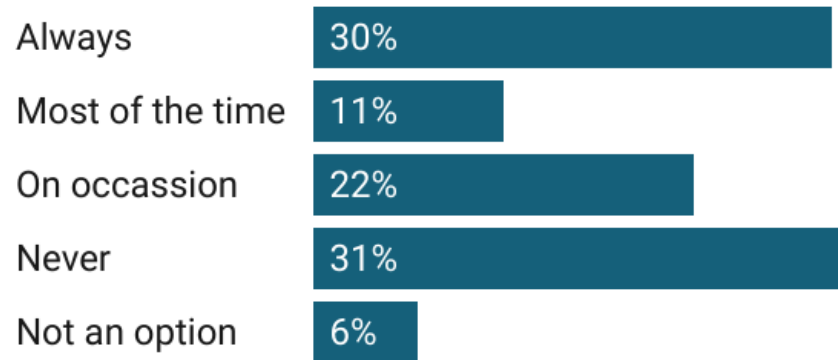
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43% work for an employer with no physical location in Maine.



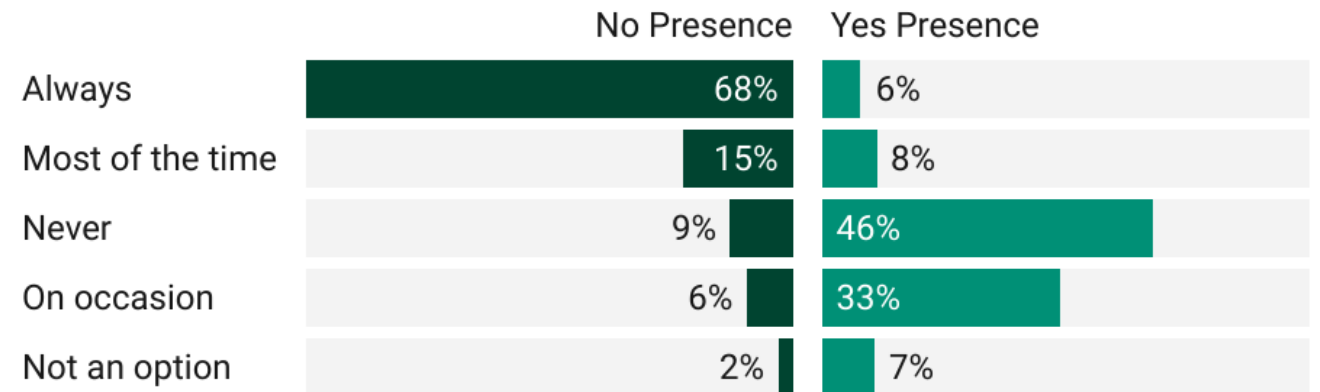
Over 40% of employed migrants primarily work remotely

Share of Employed Migrants by Remote Work Frequency



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... Employer Presence in Maine



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Remote work is a key factor enabling a substantial share of migrants to move to Maine while keeping their jobs

Share of Employed Migrants Working Remotely

It enabled me to keep my job while making the move

81%

It did not make a difference

14%

Enabled partner/spouse to move

4%

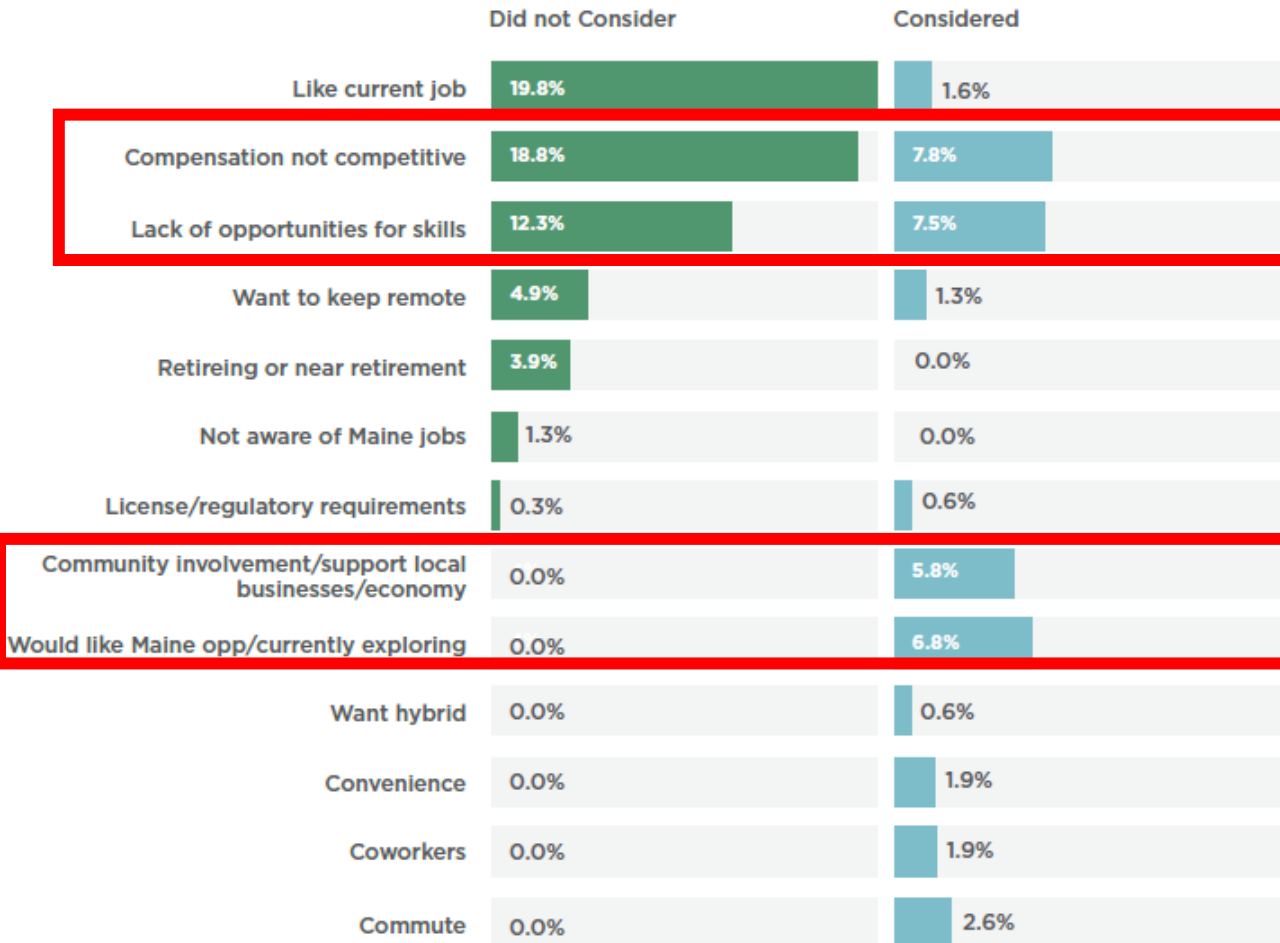
Other

4%

*How did the ability to work remotely factor into your decision to move to Maine?
Select all that apply.*



REASONS FOR CONSIDERING OR NOT CONSIDERING EMPLOYMENT WITH A MAINE-BASED EMPLOYER



43% of employed migrants do not work for a Maine employer

Have you considered employment opportunities with a local Maine-based business, organization, or government? Why, or why not?

“Being able to keep my job and work remote was one of the biggest factors for my move. From what I’ve seen, the job market in Maine and the salaries aren’t keeping up with what’s needed to survive here.”

Figure 26: Reasons for Considering or Not Considering Employment with a Maine-based Employer

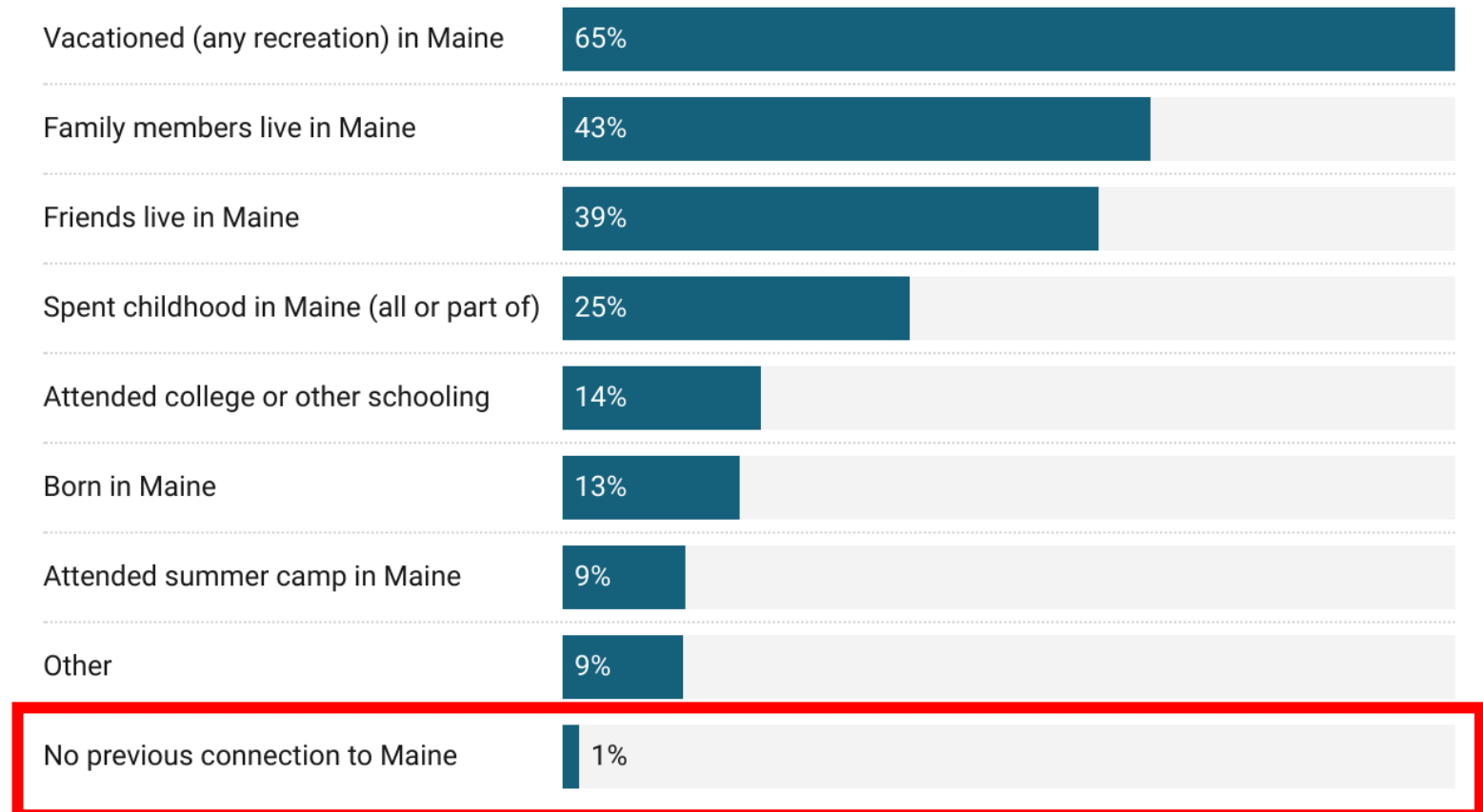
Maine Connections





Virtually every migrant household has some connection to, or previous experience with, Maine

*Indicate previous experiences or connections to Maine before your move. (Self and Partner/Spouse)
Select all that apply.*



The Maine Attraction





How much did the following influence your choice to move to the specific region of Maine where you now live?

Factor	Relative Weighted Index ▼	5 - Extremely strong influence	4 - Somewhat strong influence	3 - Moderate influence	2 - Minimal influence	1 - No influence at all
Outdoor recreation amenities	3.28	25%	26%	21%	7%	21%
Social connections (closer to family, friends, network)	2.66	24%	13%	13%	7%	44%
Community safety	2.64	14%	19%	21%	9%	37%
A culture of equality, acceptance, or openness	2.37	11%	15%	18%	8%	47%
Cost of living	2.31	7%	13%	24%	15%	41%
Political climate I/we agree with	2.19	6%	14%	20%	11%	49%
Ability to work remotely (self or partner)	2.10	16%	8%	8%	6%	62%
Cultural and entertainment amenities	2.04	4%	11%	19%	16%	50%
Employment opportunity (self or partner)	1.99	15%	6%	7%	7%	65%
Family circumstance (e.g. care for extended family)	1.92	13%	7%	7%	5%	68%
Pandemic (COVID-19) motivated	1.68	6%	6%	8%	8%	71%
Quality of local K-12 schools	1.44	4%	4%	5%	6%	81%
Attend educational schooling or training	1.23	3%	1%	2%	3%	90%
Veteran community, support, or other resources	1.12	1%	1%	2%	1%	95%
Social media posts	1.11	0%	1%	2%	5%	93%



Outdoor recreation amenities most significant asset and key economic driver

Outdoor Recreation Amenities

1 - No influence at all

21%

2 - Minimal influence

7%

3 - Moderate influence

21%

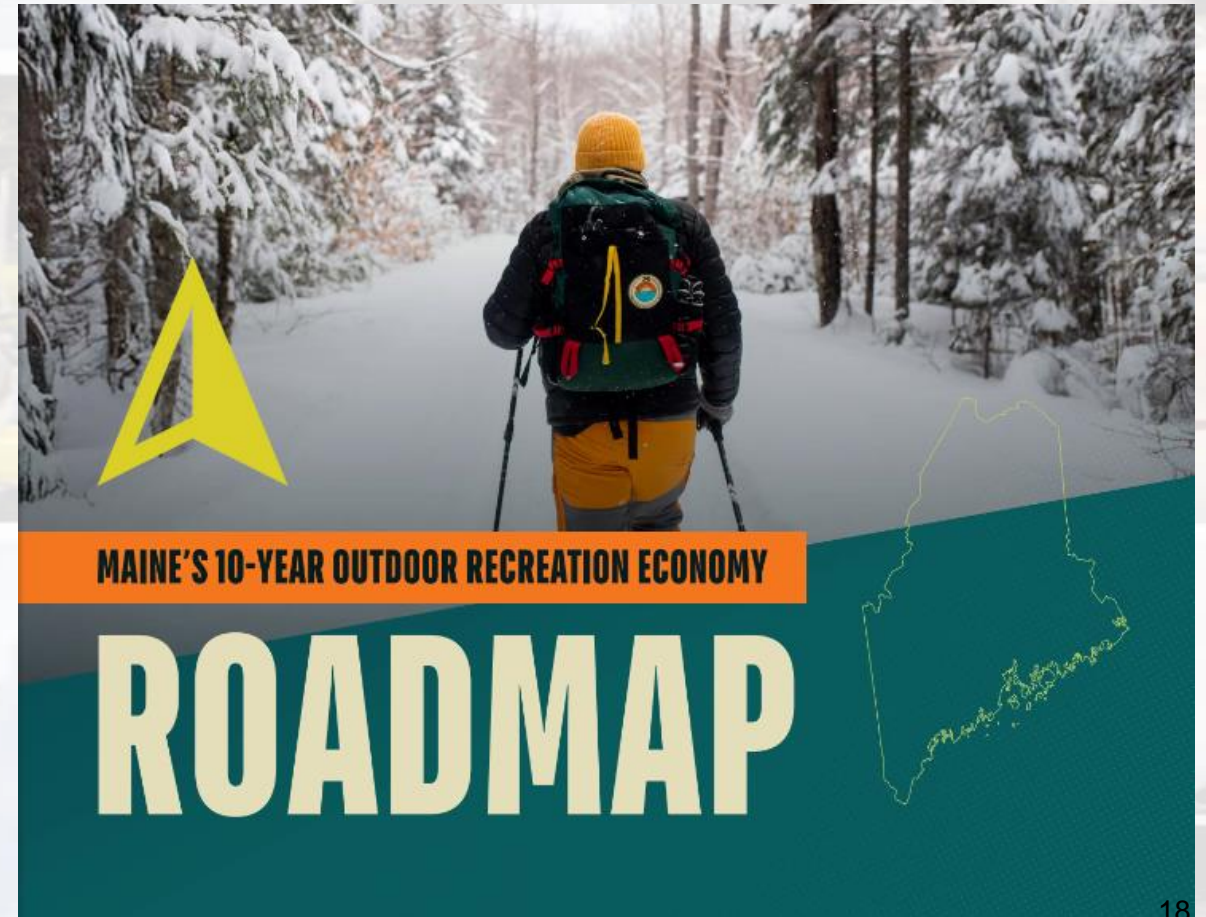
4 - Somewhat strong influence

26%

5 - Extremely strong influence

25%

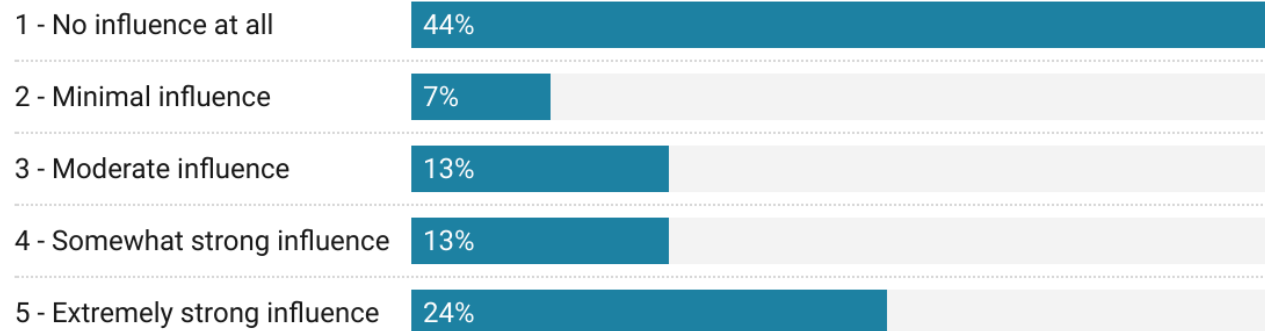
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People attract people

Social Connections



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“Family members and friends moved to Maine. We moved to be closer to family/friends and enjoy outdoor activities together more often.”



Secondary influence in safety, cost of living, culture of equality, acceptance, and openness

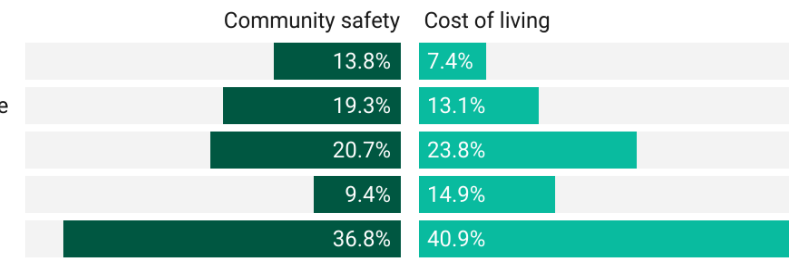


Safest States in the U.S.

Overall Rank* ↕	State	Total Score ↕	Personal & Residential Safety Rank ↕	Financial Safety Rank ↕	Road Safety Rank ↕	Workplace Safety Rank ↕	Emergency Preparedness Rank ↕
1	Vermont	67.94	6	1	4	2	
2	New Hampshire	65.58	1	2	8	42	
3	Maine	64.19	4	3	15	22	
4	Massachusetts	63.59	3	4	3	24	
5	Utah	62.67	27	14	7	1	

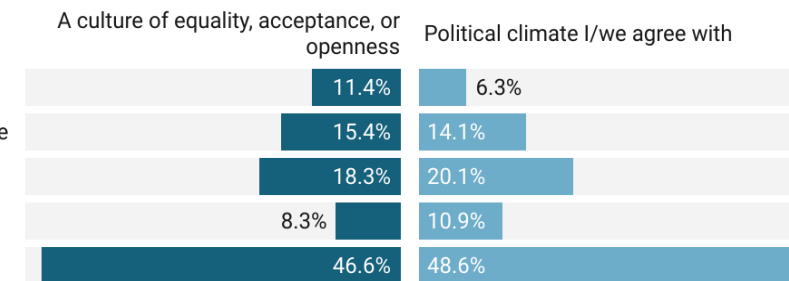
- 5 - Extremely strong influence
- 4 - Somewhat strong influence
- 3 - Moderate influence
- 2 - Minimal influence
- 1 - No influence at all

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- 5 - Extremely strong influence
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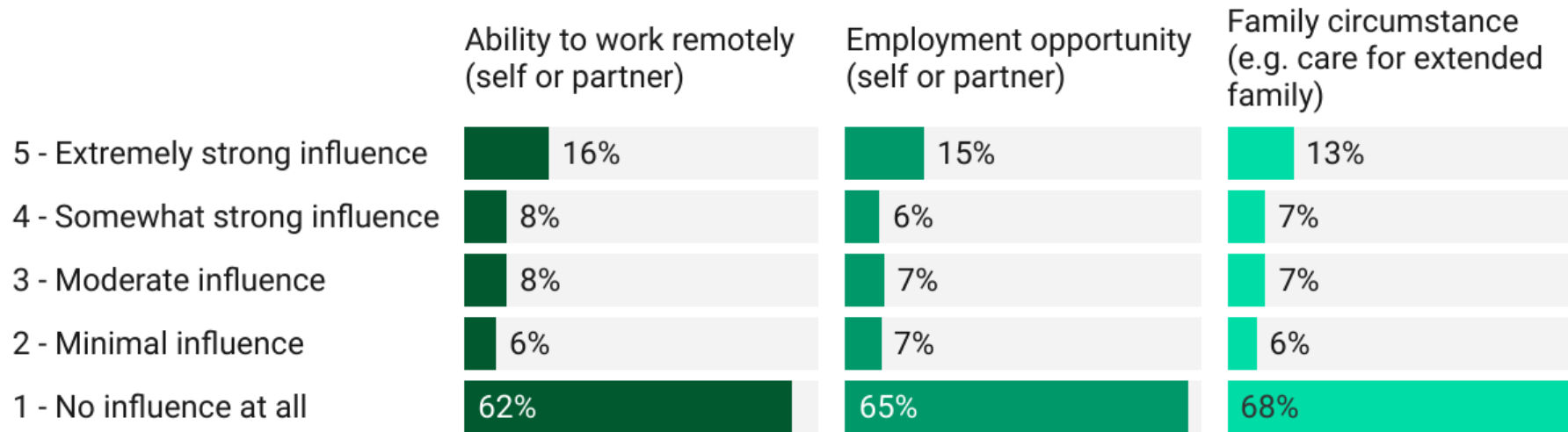
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“Maine is a beautiful, safe state. Safety and well-being for my kids was key for me.”



Extremely strong influence across several factors – key reasons for some moving



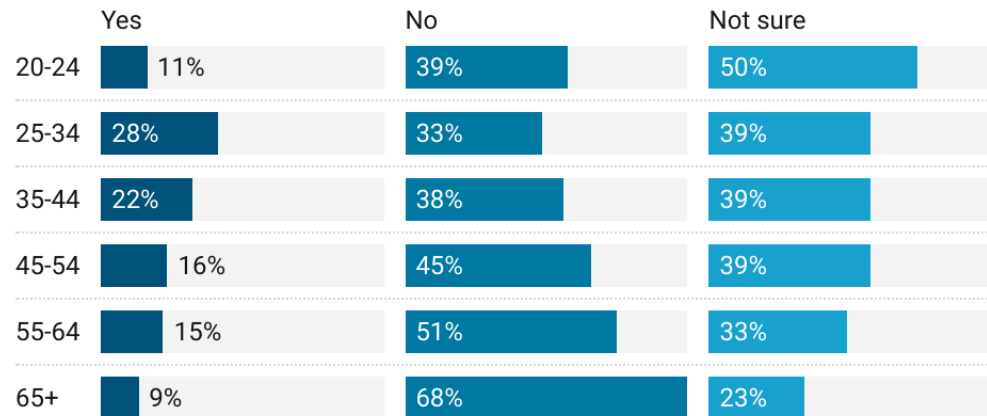
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“Elder and sibling care occasioned the move, and remote work opportunities enabled it. It was a great community to raise my young family, which made it easy to make the jump.”



Incentives greater sway with young professional groups

If other locations you considered moving to offered financial incentives such as tax credits or reimbursements, would that have been enough to change your decision to move there compared to Maine?

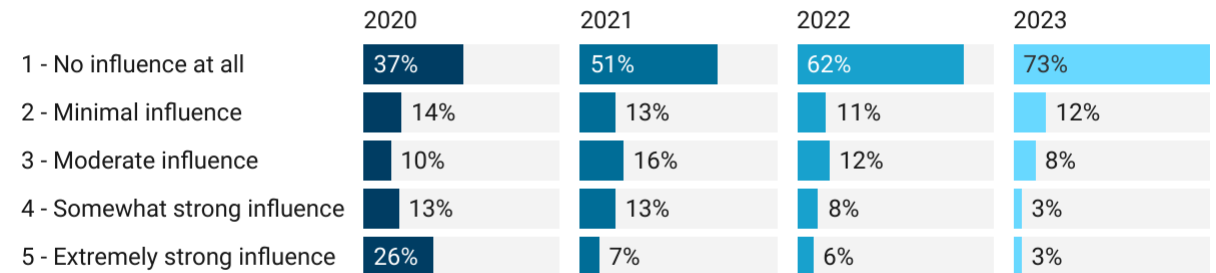


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“Partner’s job was the main consideration. Student loan repayment tax credit and outdoor recreation will keep us here.”

Pandemic influence was significant for 2020, less so after

Influence of Pandemic by Year of Move



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“Through the pandemic, I could work remotely from anywhere in the US. I chose Maine as I love the coast, forests, and the climate — yet I could still afford to move and live here compared to other states that fit my criteria.”



Climate migration is occurring

What level of influence do you think weather or climate-related issues (more intense droughts, extreme storms, wildfires, etc.) had on your decision to move to Maine from your previous location?

5 - Extremely strong influence

9%

4 - Somewhat strong influence

13%

3 - Moderate influence

19%

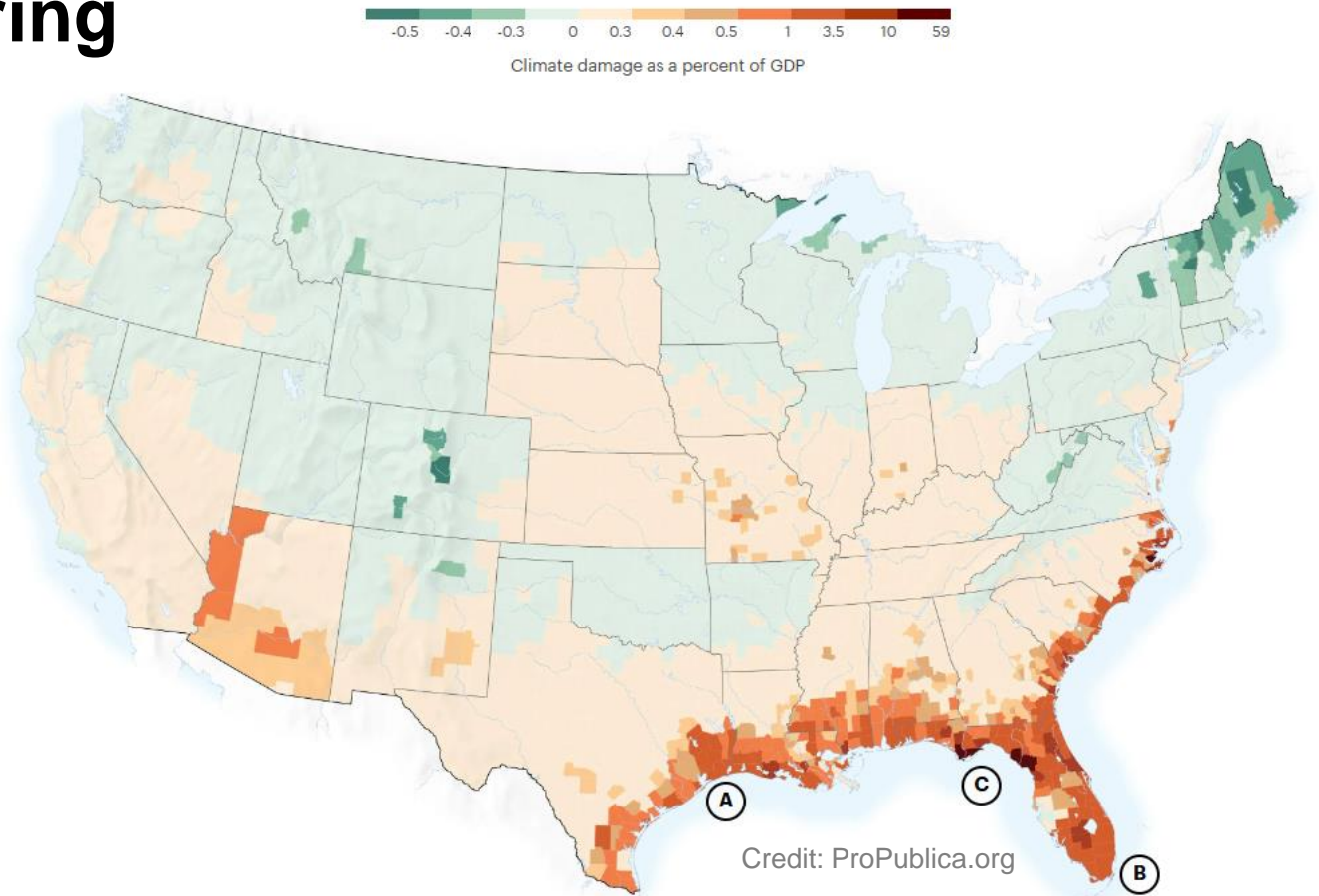
2 - Minimal influence

21%

1 - No influence at all

39%

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“Effects of climate change compelled me to move north.”

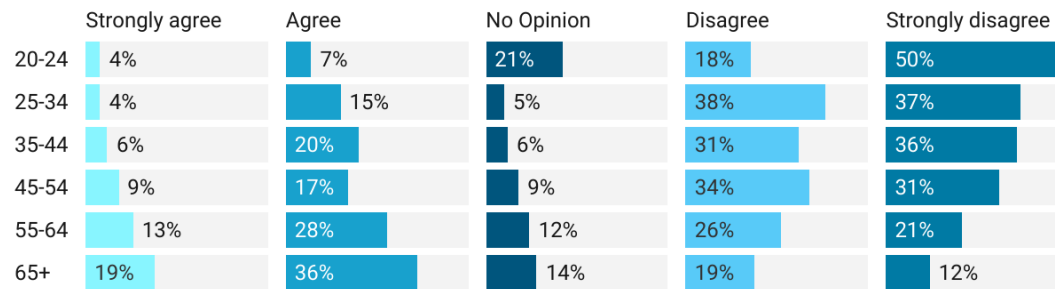
Barriers to moving to Maine





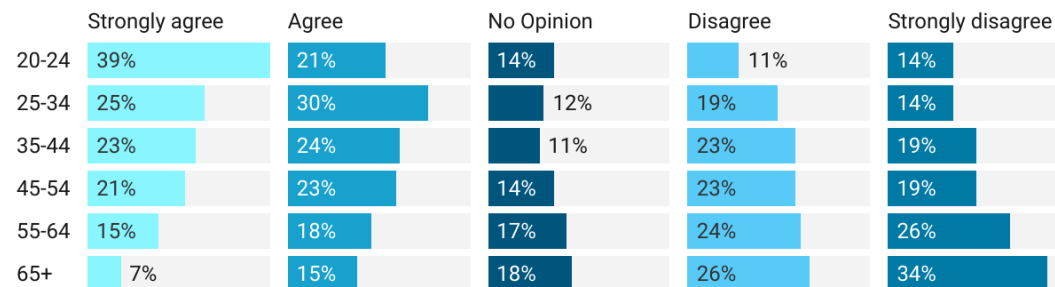
Housing expressed as a significant challenge; less of an issue for migrant retiree

Finding adequate or affordable housing was not a challenge.

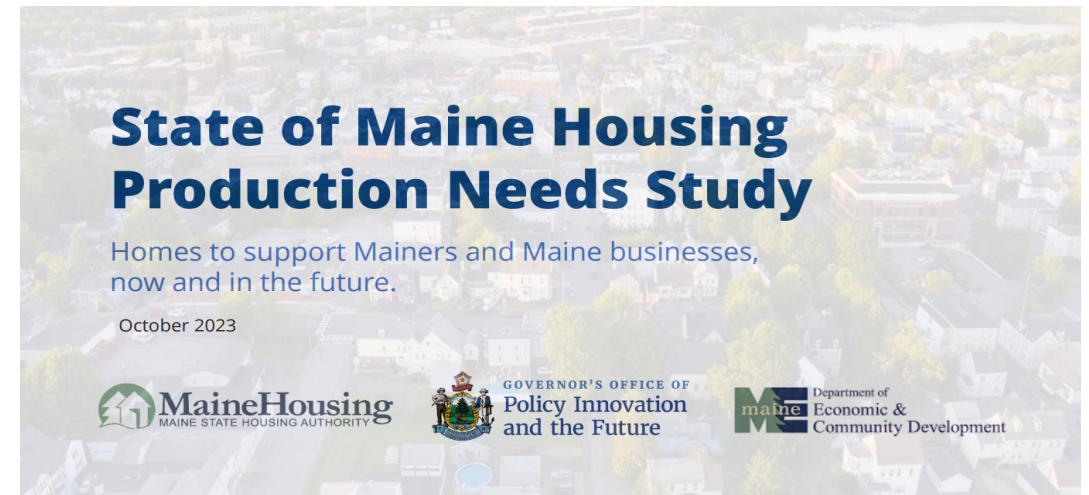


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Finding housing almost prevented my/our relocation.



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Barriers to moving to Maine and staying

INTENTIONS TO CONTINUE LIVING AND WORKING IN MAINE

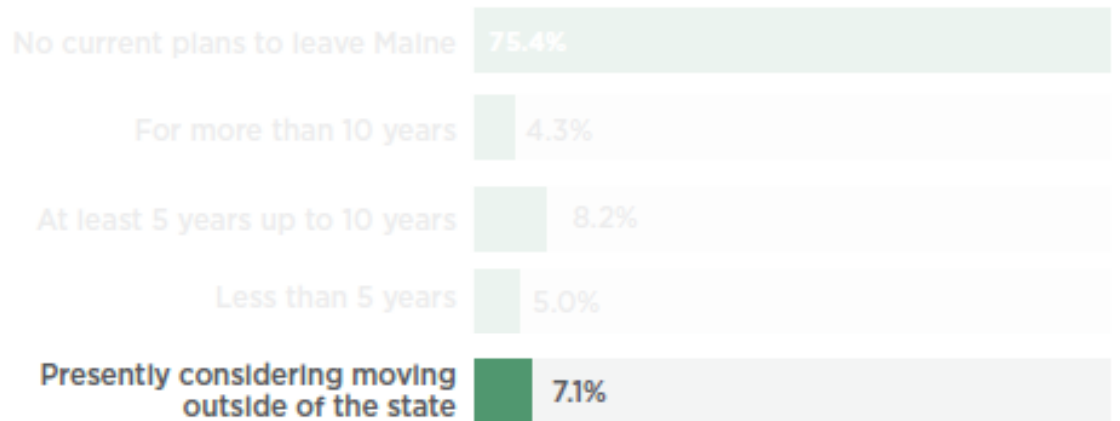


Figure 37: Intentions to Continue Living and Working in Maine

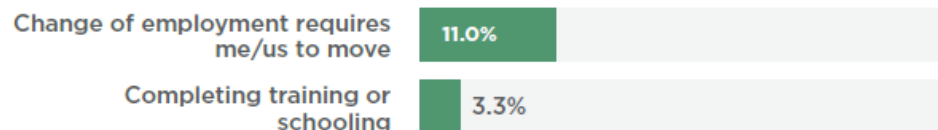


Figure 38: Reasons for Considering a Move Out of Maine

Implications for Policy and Recruitment





What's not in the data – each story is a unique experience

- The decision to move to a new state is full of emotion, excitement, risk, and uncertainty.
 - It cannot be boiled down to a few datapoints
- Focus on relationship building and connections
- The core drivers attracting people elicit strong emotions
- How can you reassure or reduce risks and uncertainty, real or perceived, by job candidates and their households?



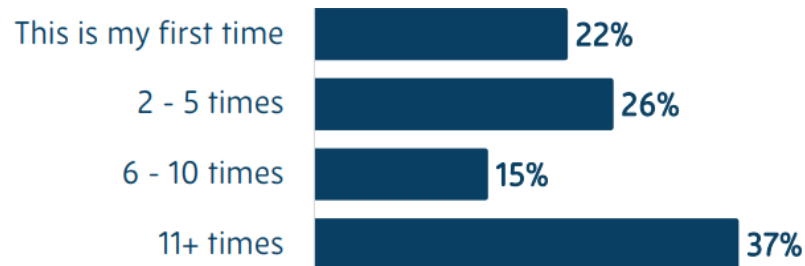


Markets are well defined – people that have current or previous experiences or connections with the state

Marketing assets and building off of tourism and social connections

- Prime working aged (<45) overnight tourists (~3 million per year)
- 22% of overnight visitors stayed with friends or family; 14% second home
- 39% of all visitors engaged in active outdoor rec
- Tourism gives people and opportunity to test out our product

Over **7 in 10** visitors to Maine were employed, most full-time





Implications for recruitment & attraction

From the Employer / Organizational Perspective

- A significant share of employers, primarily small, not recruiting out-of-state
 - See employer study
- Conversion / transitioning of remote to local employment may be more challenging
 - Address those barriers in wage and job mismatch (real or perceived)
 - Develop connect points for remote workers to local opportunities
- Developing targeted recruitment resources for employers
- Engage with and piggyback on tourism marketing
- Target people with required skills and past connections to Maine
 - Linked-in
 - Live and Work in Maine

OVER 90%
of employers with greater than
500 EMPLOYEES
are actively recruiting
out-of-state candidates

ABOUT 60%
of small employers
(fewer than 20 employees)
500 EMPLOYEES
are not actively recruiting
out-of-state workers



Moving forward

- Without alleviating housing market pressures and increases in demands of other services (child care, etc.), will continue to see crowding out effects by income groups
 - What is this impact?
- Mine tourism data and add question(s) to topline surveys –
 - Have considered moving to Maine?
 - What would push you to move hear?
- Better understanding the perception and reality of barriers – skills, occupational, etc.
- Motivations of specific groups



Questions

Thank you
for your time and attention!

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