



Job Trends in Nursing and Residential Care

Introduction

Two years after a pandemic was formally declared in the U.S., most sectors of Maine's labor market have rebounded to staffing levels near or well above those seen in 2019. Only three sectors of the labor market have noticeably lower staffing levels today: healthcare and social assistance, leisure and hospitality and state and local governments (primarily in K-12 and higher education).

Among the reduction in jobs that has occurred in healthcare and social assistance relative to 2019 levels, about 2 out of 3 of the net reduction in jobs has happened in nursing and residential care facilities. The healthcare and social assistance sector also includes hospitals, ambulatory health care (which includes offices of physicians, dentists and diagnostic laboratories) and social assistance. Jobs in Maine's nursing and residential care facilities remain about 1,725 lower compared to the 2019 average.

The reduction in jobs in nursing and residential care is the result of workers laid off during the pandemic who have not returned to a job in the industry and those who voluntarily left a job: to pursue a better opportunity in another industry, due to retirement, due to health risks associated with their job and due to disruptions to schools and available childcare.

According to Maine's Occupation Employment and Wage Statistics, more than half of all jobs in nursing and residential care are in occupations that provide basic and direct care such as home health and personal care aides and nursing assistants. These occupations are generally lower paying with average wages of \$15.36 and \$16.16 per hour respectively. Demand for these types of direct care workers is expected to continue to increase as an aging population will lead to increased demand for care. At the same time, employers providing direct care services are struggling to meet their current staffing needs because of low compensation, a challenging work environment, high rates of turnover in direct care jobs and health risks arising during the pandemic associated with these jobs.

Occupational Employment, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities

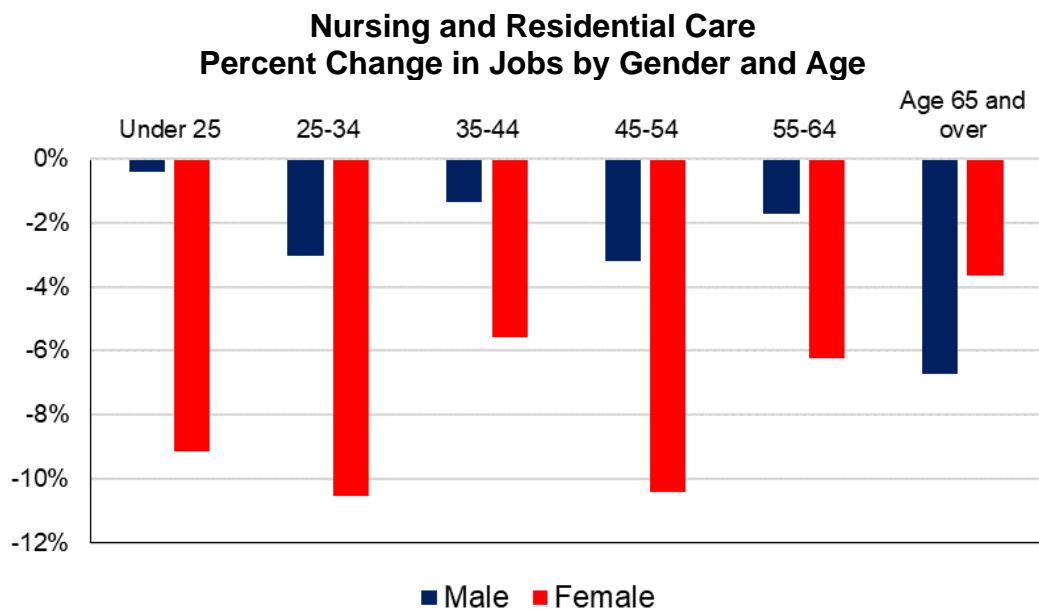
Occupation Title	Estimated Employment	Average Hourly Wage
Total all occupations	20,910	\$18.40
Healthcare Support Occupations	10,760	\$15.77
<i>Home Health and Personal Care Aides</i>	6,120	\$15.36
<i>Nursing Assistants</i>	4,460	\$16.16
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	2,230	\$15.34
Personal Care and Service Occupations	1,830	\$16.48
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	1,770	\$30.55
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	1,170	\$15.14
Community and Social Service Occupations	830	\$22.13
Management Occupations	810	\$38.64
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	770	\$18.16
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	240	\$21.12
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	160	\$29.31
Production Occupations	160	\$13.83

2021 Maine Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics. This table has been restricted to occupational groups with at least 100 jobs

Demographics of Job Holders and Job Change

In the year leading up to the pandemic, about 75 percent of jobs in Maine’s nursing and residential care industry were held by women. About 89 percent of jobs were held by White workers.

Of the reduction in jobs that has occurred, 91.5 percent was among women. The largest reduction in both absolute and relative terms was among women ages 25-34 and ages 45-54. There were 380 fewer jobs (10.5 percent) among women ages 25-34 and 365 fewer jobs (10.4 percent) among women ages 45-54. Jobs held by White workers have decreased by 1,700 (8 percent). Jobs held by Black or African American workers have increased by 180 (11 percent) during the same time period.



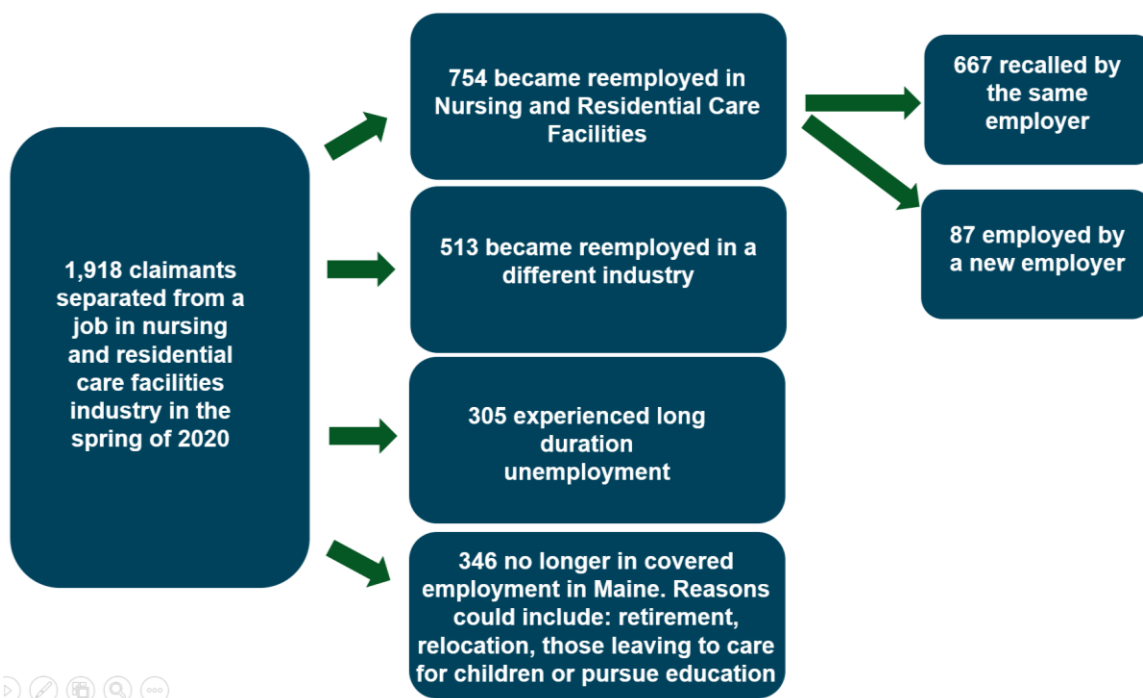
Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators. These data compare average jobs by gender and age in the four quarters leading to the pandemic through Q1 2020 and the most recent four quarters available in the data through Q3 2021.

Job Displacement and Trends in Reemployment

The reduction in jobs in nursing and residential care since 2019 can be attributed to a combination of workers who were laid off during the pandemic and those who voluntarily left a job. Claims for unemployment insurance are used to better understand those who were affected by job loss. Among those who filed an initial claim between March and June of 2020, 1,918 claimants were separated from an employer in the nursing and residential care industry.

Claimant Population by Gender and Age		
	Female	Male
Under 25	9.0%	2.1%
25-34	24.6%	6.0%
35-44	15.2%	5.1%
45-54	12.0%	4.7%
55-64	12.2%	3.4%
Age 65 and over	4.0%	1.8%
Total all ages	76.9%	23.1%

As the economy rebounded throughout 2020 and 2021, 754 (39 percent) became reemployed in the nursing and residential care industry. 1,164 (61 percent) did not return to a job in this industry with the largest group becoming reemployed in a different industry. The four most common industry transitions were into social assistance, hospitals, educational services and ambulatory health care services.



Across all industries, nearly 95,000 jobs were lost in the early months of the pandemic. While many workers separated from an employer in the nursing and residential care industry did not return to a job in this industry, the disruption caused by the pandemic created a new pool of displaced workers who could potentially seek a job in nursing and residential care. Many employers in this industry have high job vacancy rates and have been actively recruiting. It appears that few have made this transition, however. Among those filing a claim for unemployment insurance in the first three months of the pandemic and who became reemployed, 670 have made a transition into the nursing and residential care industry. The most common such industry transitions were among workers displaced from a job in social assistance, food service and drinking places and ambulatory health care.

Definitions

Claimants for unemployment insurance: unemployment insurance claims data cited in the brief are based on snapshots of claimants who filed a continued claim during the week that includes the 12th day of the month. The claimant population considered in this article are those who filed an initial claim for unemployment insurance after March 10, 2020 and who file a continued claim during the week that included April 12th, May 12th or June 12th 2020.

Reemployed: includes those from the claimant population with a quarterly wage record of \$1,000 or more in the third quarter of 2021 working in a job covered by Maine's unemployment insurance compensation system.

Long Duration Unemployment: of the initial cohort of claimants, those considered to have experienced long duration unemployment filed continued jobless claims in at least 9 out of 12 months between August 2020 and 2021.