

MGC Research Snapshot

New Employee Survey at Encore Boston Harbor
January 2019 through December 2021

December 2022

What you need to know

This report summarizes the results of a survey administered by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) to the incoming employees hired at Encore Boston Harbor (EBH). Survey respondents reported improved economic situations through increased income, access to benefits, and employment status, though there is still some unmet demand for full-time employment and higher pay.

What is this research about?

Through the establishment of the casino industry in Massachusetts, lawmakers provided avenues for the creation of new jobs, revenue, and economic growth in the state. The Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA) study strives to understand the impact of the casinos on the people and economy of Massachusetts.

The New Employee Survey was designed to gather information on work-related characteristics of new casino employees that could not be collected from any other source. The survey data can help workforce development providers and policymakers better understand the workforce at the three casinos in the state. This report summarizes the results of a survey administered by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) to the incoming employees hired at Encore Boston Harbor (EBH).

What did the researchers do?

Researchers conducted a survey of new employees at EBH from January 2019 to December 2021. The findings draw from a sample of all employees who elected to participate and captured hires from start-up hiring through 2.5 years afterward.

Overall, there were 2,729 valid and complete responses, an 86% completion rate among workers who responded. Responses represent 37% of the 7,438 employee hires reported by EBH for the same period and researchers found it to be a representative sample.

It is important to note that this study was conducted before and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

To gain insight into how casino jobs meet the needs of workers, the survey contained questions concerning demographics, previous employment, residency, experience, and other economic measures.

What did the researchers find?

Analysis showed that casino employment has been serving several purposes for the Commonwealth's workers, including those who have been underemployed, younger workers, women, and workers of color. For many, casino employment is a way to leverage existing experience from other fields such as the food, retail, or hospitality industries and continue a career with the potential for growth. Casino hires also include the unemployed; new workers joining the workforce for the first time; retired individuals; and some workers needing non-traditional hours.

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Respondents to the survey also noted experiencing:

- **Stable and flexible work opportunities**—79% of new hires surveyed obtained one full-time job; one in four surveyed new employees who are taking full-time positions at the casino previously worked less than full-time; and the majority of workers who wanted full-time work at the casino obtained it. However, 63% of part-time workers at EBH reported that they wanted to work full-time but did not obtain full-time jobs, and 83% moved into hourly positions rather than salaried.
- **Increased pay and improved benefits compared to their previous jobs**—41% of respondents expect to earn more income than they did at their previous job, and 29% expect to earn roughly the same. Of 30% who expect to earn less, half expect to earn tips. Regardless of full-time status, EBH provided some type of benefits package to 91% of new workers. 23% of surveyed workers gained paid time off, 26% gained health care benefits, and 29% gained retirement benefits over their previous jobs.
- **Career potential and training opportunities in the casino industry**—65% of respondents noted choosing to work at a casino for the opportunity of career advancement. 94 of workers reported being either somewhat or very interested in a career in the casino industry.
- **Employment for long-term and local residents**—79% of the surveyed workforce were long-term state residents, while 21% moved to the state less than one year before hire. 86% of survey respondents reported state residency at time of hire, and 80% of surveyed new employees reported residencies within 30 miles of the casino.
- **Improved employment opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups**—White workers account for the largest share of surveyed workers (35%), Asian workers make up the next-largest share (20%), followed by Hispanic or Latino workers (23%), and then Black workers (18%). 43% of the surveyed workforce were women, and 43% were born outside of the U.S.

Work experiences across demographic groups

Workers of color represented 65% of survey respondents, and 70% of respondents who were working less than full-time at the casino. Just over 41 percent of minorities and women respondents, respectively, reported that they are expecting to make higher salaries than they did in their most recent job, at rates proportional to respondents as a whole. Women, unemployed and underemployed workers, and minority workers received or retained benefits at proportional rates to that of all respondents. Unemployed and underemployed workers who wanted full-time positions were less likely to get full-time positions than other groups and all respondents. It appears that EBH's diversity hiring goals positively impacted the availability of full-time jobs; there was relative parity across demographic groups among those who wanted a full-time job.

About the researchers

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Male or white employees reported very slightly higher rates of full-time employment while female or Asian workers had slightly lower rates of full-time employment. Black and Hispanic workers had a proportionate share of full-time jobs for those who sought one.

Next steps

Next steps for new employee research include continued surveying of new employees at the casinos and further analysis of the data from the survey in combination with casino employer administrative data to conduct a casino jobs and employment impacts study across the three Massachusetts casinos.

Citation

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Key Words

Economic Impact; Employment; Everett

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About this Snapshot

MGC Snapshots are intended to translate lengthy and sometimes technical reports into an easily understandable overview of the research. The findings and recommendations in the Snapshot are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the position of the MGC.

