

SICOP Snowplow Operator Staffing Survey  
 February 2022

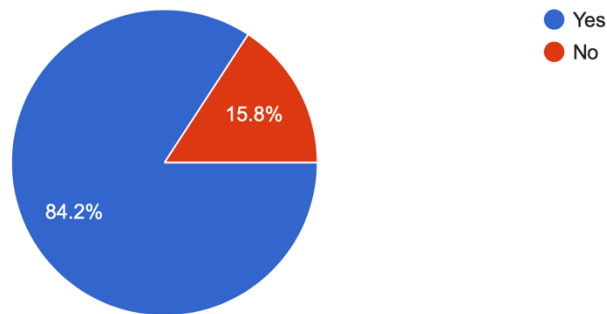
Total Responses: 114

63 responses from DOT's (31 unique DOT's - some states had multiple entries usually from different regions or districts)

51 responses from municipalities

1. Is your agency experiencing higher than normal vacancies regarding snowplow operators?

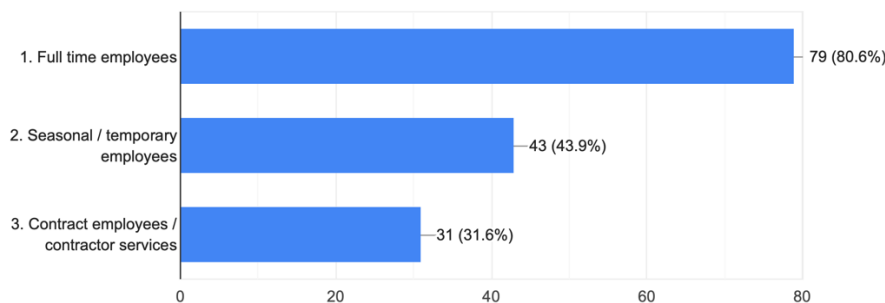
114 responses



Please rank the following statements regarding higher-than-normal vacancy rates or shortage of snowplow operators your agency is experiencing on a scale of 1 to 5.

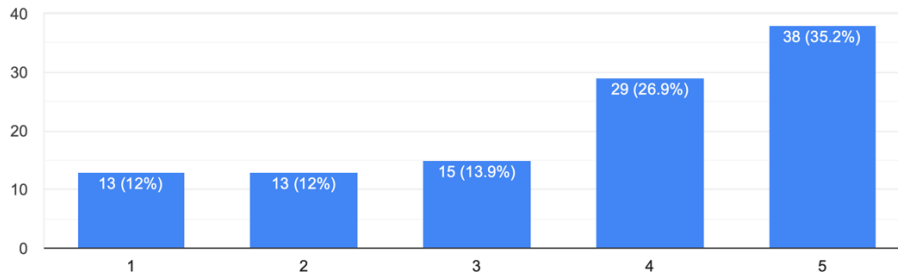
2. If you are experiencing higher than normal vacancies, are they occurring with: (pick all that apply)

98 responses



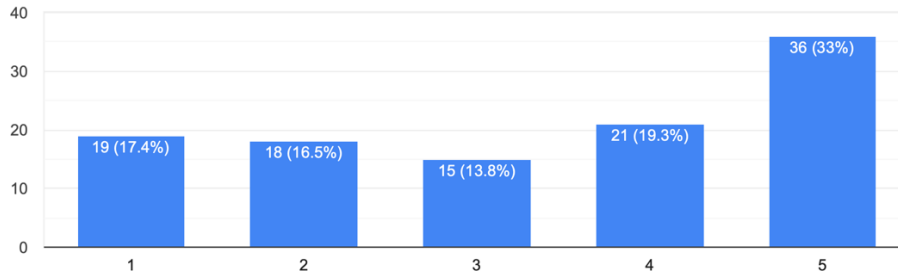
3a. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to the inability of attract applicants with CDL.

108 responses



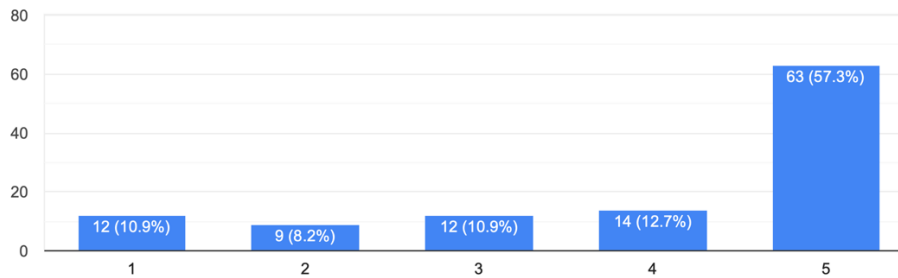
3b. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to the inability to retain operators with a CDL.

109 responses

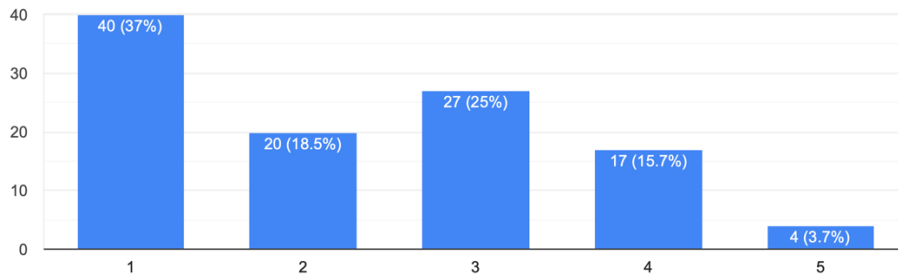


3c. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to the inability to provide competitive salaries of benefits.

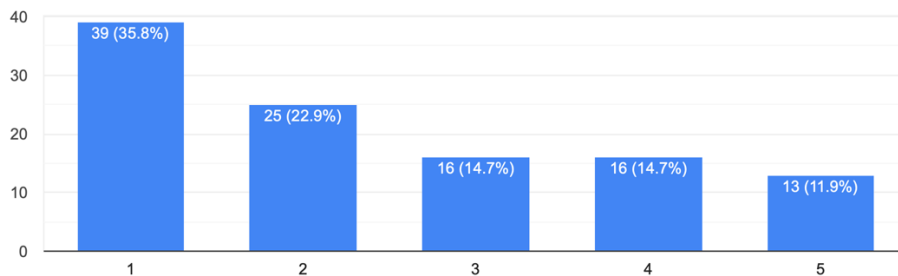
110 responses



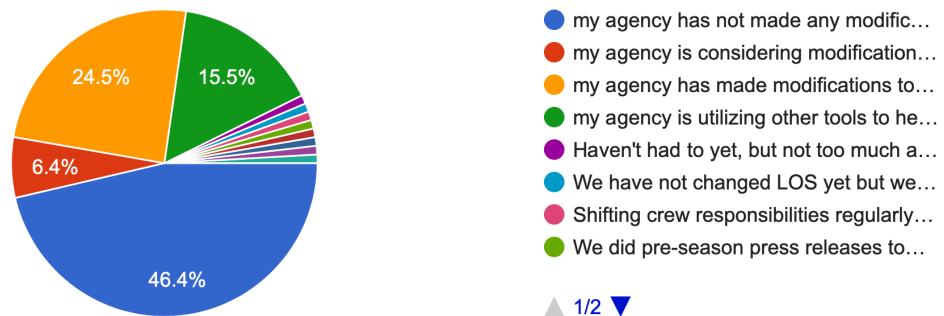
3d. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to staff availability due to the inability to meet employment requirements (completing online applications, pass drug screening, vaccination status, etc.)  
108 responses



3e. Shortages of snowplow operators at my agency are due to staff availability due to Covid-19 or variants illness or exposure.  
109 responses



4. Regarding managing public expectations and levels of service, which statement best describes the impacts of staffing levels on your winter service program level of service (LOS). Pick 1  
110 responses



<b>4. Regarding managing public expectations and levels of service, which statement best describes the impacts of staffing levels on your winter service program level of service (LOS). Pick 1</b>	
my agency has made modifications to LOS to reflect available staffing levels	24.5%
my agency has not made any modifications to LOS	46.4%
my agency is considering modifications to LOS to reflect available staffing levels	6.4%
my agency is utilizing other tools to help manage user expectations associated with available staffing levels	15.5%
<p>Shifting crew responsibilities regularly now. Having one station cover portions of others.            We attempt to perform the same level of service on the primary routes as we did in previous years, this means our secondary routes do get a lower level of service until the primary routes are completed            We did pre-season press releases to share our staffing issues and concern over a statewide, long duration storm event. We have not had one yet. Fingers crossed.            We have added TowPlows            We have contractual performance obligations and cannot decrease our LOS            We have not changed LOS yet, but we have let the public know that we are no longer exceeding LOS as we have over the last 20 years            Haven't had to yet, but not too much activity-yet.            money no one works for penny's anymore</p>	

<b>5. What steps is your agency taking to attract and or retain snowplow operators if any?</b>
new hires are making more money than some of my veteran employees/ doing nothing for retention.
2% Cost of Living pay increase this year and possibly 4% increase next fiscal year. Provisions in place for a one time retention bonus
In some locations that have experienced extreme challenges we have implemented "Mission Critical Incentive Pay" that provides additional compensation for the position- an excerpt from our online job posting is below. <b>ATTENTION STATE RESIDENTS ONLY!</b> <b>*** We are offering Mission Critical Incentive Pay that will be In addition to the base hourly wage and will be \$239.00, less deduction, paid on a biweekly bass. For specific question regarding this recruitment or the mission critical pay please contact the hiring manager for this position. ***</b>
Hiring at higher steps than in the past.
Stipend Pay for plow drivers @ \$9.00/hr for plowing activities
More money
Social media
Higher equipment rates with contractors
went up on rates and offer a signing bonus
Signing bonus and making it a fun place to work.
We've had to strongly suggest current employees fill open routes
Implementing a new wage scale started Jan 2022
Higher rates for private contractors
We increased wages
Outside of my authority
Offering positions as trainees without a CDL, willing to help get the CDL through internal training.
Performance (snow) bonus, increased starting wages, increased training pay, career fairs, rapid hiring process
Increased rates
Increased pay and benefits

more \$\$ to contractors
Nothing that I have control over but trying to pay more.
Try to get them more money and minimum hrs. for small storms
Starting salary pay scale was raised last year.
We have raised wages for snow plow operators just recently. We are one of the highest paying DOTs for operators. This has only kept our vacancy rate level though. It has neither increased or decreased with the ongoing COVID/staffing issues everyone else is facing.
increase in starting pay, but may not have been enough.
Exploring ways to adjust wages.
Making wage rates more competitive
Nothing, it is out of our control
MDOT SHA has restructured the Maintenance Shop career ladder, in an effort to make it more advantageous to remain a state employee. We have been increasing our presence at job fairs to attract new employees.
We recruited and hired 30+ seasonal drivers and we are making new equipment operator permanent hires
Advertising via social media and traditional media
Social media outreach. Use of Changeable Message Sign boards at our Truck stations, Launched and effort in our operation division to revisit and adjust our hiring/development activities (outreach, interview process, selection, mentoring, position description, developing employees that may have have a lower base level of knowledge upon hire)
recruiting at career fairs
We have offered recruitment and retention benefits in some cities in Montana
Nothing at this time, but We have had recruitment bonus, Oil field add on, etc in the past.
1) Hiring people with out a CDL and getting them the CDL within the first 60 days. 2) Walkin in intrviewing events that elimiante the need to apply 1st.
performance bonus, increase hourly amount by 10%
Unfortunately, we have not yet identified a successful solution. Things are in the works, but nothing is yet in place to be able to measure effectiveness.
hourly rate increases and snow bonuses
hiring "unqualified" candidates and training them
Explaining the benefits of working at ODOT.
Easier promotional path without the requirement to manage someone, increase salary
increased pay
When in need of filling a vacancy, we do our best to have competitive wages, and benefit packages for a town of our size. We are also in the process of try to pass a longevity bonus to show our current staff that their years of service are appreciated. When we receive complements from residents throughout the town, we make certain the crew is aware of said compliments, and we send them along to the select board so they are aware of the accolades that the crews are receiving, and the select board then speaks of it at their televised meetings.
Reduced our hiring requirements, more open house where an applicant can apply and be tested for proficiency immediately (no longer sending them home to apply electronically, processing the application, reviewing credentials, setting up a time for driving test, performing the test then waiting for background checks)
We are looking at increasing our internal pay scales for Maintenance Workers. This is a long process and most likely will not happen any time soon
looking at incentives for next seasons contractors
Being more creative with recruitment strategies through communication (TV, newspaper, and social media) and referrals by current or past employees
have ad out on indeed
Increased bonus for Contractors if plowed all storms
\$10/hour price increase for 21/22 season.

We are working on an organization wide reorganization to allow more promotional opportunities and higher pay.
We have a robust recruiting section in our Human Resources Division. They are leveraging all tools available to get applicants. Our main loss is through the normal issue of retirements of older employees. The challenge is getting new applicants due to the nationwide labor shortage. Once hired, we work with them to get their CDL. <i>My DOT</i> has done well retaining them outside of energy sector spikes.
Bonus, increase rates
Increase in contractor plowing rates and incentives
Revamped and raised contractor rates
The town is not doing anything to retain nor attract
Public outreach, presentations to City Council and social media
Raising hourly rates adding commitment bonus.
Have raised our rates, but not this year.
Consistent advertising
raised plow rates
Money /more hours/
Raises to all plow employees this past year and on call pay during winter months.
Tuition reimbursement, 12% raise across the board
We have reclassified our operators, which provided them with additional pay. Also added a sign on bonus to help attract applicants.
Continued efforts have been made to attempt to make salary more acceptable
Mainly call contractors in more often instead of just heavy snow
We are training approximately 50 people in order to help them gain their CDL. Continuous recruitment, considering salary increases but need legislature support.
More ads to highlight the benefits package to compliment what salary they do get.
Nothing yet, but hopefully in the near future.
Nothing more than a little advertising.
At this time, we have not done anything new to help out in this regard.
Nothing! Make suggestions and never follow through.
Not Much / Hands are tied.
pride and commitment to agency for retention
Not aware of any at this time.
Nothing more than the routine advertisement of open vacancies.
None other than talk about wage increases which will only increase our insurance a month later as usual

<b>6. Any other observations you would like to share?</b>
pay your hwd better wages most jobs with a cdl around us start with no experience \$25-30 per hr with class A or B, HWD pay 17-24 with terrible benny's
We have also had a major pr campaign explaining our staffing issues and level of service will be lower to the public and to our partners that respond to roadway incidents like police
Seems that contractor commitment has been decreasing every year.
High demand for CDL operators in the private sector for moving goods and services limits those seeking employment in Public Works performing manual labor along with maintaining a CDL license at a lower rate of pay.

Over the past 5 years, there has been a shift with contractors who would normally provide snow services leaving the industry, all together. The building industry is willing to pay for "winter conditions" that allows contractors to work through the winter, on projects. So, since they are working through the winter, in their area of expertise, there isn't a need to supplement revenue with snow plowing since they are working 11-12 months out of the year instead of 8-9. This has hit the northeast part of the country the worst, due to the especially temperate winters, we have experienced, lately.
With the wages being controlled by the legislature and A&I having their fingers in the pot. I believe we have many challenges yet to face. A&I is hiring new less experienced employees at higher wages than our older employees. This will cause moral to go down amongst them, and I expect them to start leaving because of it. I do not see the wages being fixed within the next 5 to 10 years. New CDL requirements make our expenses extremely higher with new employees that don't have a CDL, they have to be sent to school with no requirement to stay, and at our wages they will be scooped up by trucking companies that recruit from those schools and pay better. (It will cost <i>My dot</i> close to \$10,000 to send a new hire with no CDL to school for 4 weeks. We train them and others get them).
This problem is going to get worse with the new FMCSA CDL requirements.
Wages need to come up so we can keep people and hire new ones.
I believe that there is lack of interest anymore.
Need compensation for CDL holders and emergency work activities. <i>My dot</i> is not keeping up with competitive market of Counties and City government.
Contractors also left due to I G not allowing plow operators to haul snow. Towns have to put out a separate contract for snow hauling
CDL holders are at an all-time low in state (WA) private sector and municipalities are far more agile in addressing compensation than we are at <i>My dot</i> . As such we are unable to attract or keep employees.
Thank you for the survey
No interest in the trade, younger generations don't want to work laborious jobs. older want more pay. Others are retiring take the knowledge with them.
Overall challenge attracting labor-based staffing
Contractors comprise the majority of our snowplowing forces, especially in the metropolitan region. State forces directly manage contract trucks on all state roadways.
MORE MONEY
1)Being open to adjusting past hiring practices can really open up opportunities for improvement. 2) Due to potential covid and hiring difficulties we are focus very heavily on "our bench" - where can we pull back up drivers from most of the focus in on internal staff but we have extended it out to other state agencies, local agencies and the private sector.
The new Federal CDL requirements starting on Feb. 7, 2022 is going to make things even worse.
new operators more complaints
<i>My dot</i> is taking a lot of contract operators
Lack of people with licenses is a big factor
Aside from question 5, the responses are more dealing with staffing issues for hiring and retaining full-time employees, all of which also perform snow plowing amongst their daily duties. The response to question 5 was in regard to a pay increase for hired snow plow contractors.
I think part of the problem is the retirement of long-term staff coupled with fewer younger folks wanting to get into skill trades
They need to raise the starting rate of a Trans Tech by at least 5 dollars to compete with even just Cities or Counties. Raise it by 10 dollars an hour to compete with the private sector.
There is no interest in plowing snow especially with younger workers.
We communicate more and attempt to schedule events/responses when we can everyone seems to appreciate it. We take interest in their equipment and calibrate their spreaders as a requirement
Tighter regulations for CDL for the state can be challenging
No raises for 11 years. Wages don't support the cost of a \$600,000 house. Cost of living is outrageous. Why risk your life being a snowplow operator at \$17-\$18 HR, when you can go almost anywhere and get a job at \$21-\$25 HR. Most trucking companies are advertising starting out at \$80,000 year. The legislature and state officials do not value the snowplow operators.
We're certainly seeing a lot more younger folks applying for these jobs whom do not have the experience and know how of current, or recently retired staff. This means more training is needed is proper safety procedures. I also see that the younger

generation joining the work force tend to be harder on the equipment, therefor we're seeing more repairs needed, and equipment being down when needed. This also goes back to more training needed.
20 years ago this was a great career. Now competition and low wages, high insurance and generational laziness has caught up with the government agencies.
The main concern for <i>My dot</i> is to keep the public safe on our highways and interstates. That is very true but us employees out there doing that do not feel that our upper-level people really care about us even though they say they do. And I am not saying more money would keep us safer but it would give us more incentive to do what we have to do. I feel like being used just to make them look better.
its not an easy job, focus on hiring people that understand this and want to work.
Need to have competitive wages
We need to raise wages to increase retention
Our vacancy rate is one issue, but it is compounded by the fact than many staff members we do have are limited in their experience as recent promotions etc. Efficiency in our system, i.e. getting and keeping roads clear, is suffering because of it. We have activated a public awareness campaign to try and set reasonable expectations from the public, with some measure of success. Complaints still develop regardless.
Maintenance operators have been underpaid at the state for the past 10 years, waist money on Hays Group studies only to sweep the results under the rug because employees keep showing up for work.
There is still an existing issue with folks using our agency to obtain their CDL and immediately departing for higher paying jobs at the county and local level.
The best way to help with retaining the employee's we have and attracting new employees would be to pay better. Most people with a cdl will make better money through other means of employment. SA: Other states, municipalities or in the private sector.
Our trainers are over-extended as well, trying to train all the new drivers
Just need to get the pay scale back up where it belongs
LOS has been impacted, but our defined LOS has not changed. In other words, the Highway closures may be more frequent or last longer.
Very tough market for finding employees in all industry, let alone someone that is asked to work outside, regardless of the weather, work long hours, weekends, and nights.
I anticipate the new CDL rules to affect our ability to hire as we have made the decision to require the license before hiring.
People either don't want to work or the want way more money than is prevalent
lack of applicants due to low wages offered
My veteran employees are training new hires that make much more money. I hired an employee that did not have a cdl license that made more money than my crew that each have a cdl. My new hire has since attained his cdl.



# Snowplow Operator Staffing Survey

## January 2022

During the past few months there has been increasing interest in the apparent high vacancy rates for snowplow operators. Several newspaper articles have been written that talk about shortages in the labor pool for persons with commercial driver licenses and snowplow operators. To take a snapshot of the current situation we are asking for your help get a better picture of this situation.

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### 1. Is your agency experiencing higher than normal vacancies regarding snowplow operators?

- Yes  
 No

### 2. If you are experiencing higher than normal vacancies, are they occurring with: (pick all that apply)

- Full time employees  
 Seasonal / Temporary employees  
 Contract employees / contractor services

### 3. Do you have any estimates of your current vacancy rates?

*Please rank the following statements regarding higher than normal vacancy rates or shortage of snowplow operators your agency is experiencing on a scale of 1 to 5.*

### 4. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to the inability of attract applicants with CDL.

not an issue      1      2      3      4      5      primary issue  
                       

### 5. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to the inability to retain operators with a CDL.

not an issue      1      2      3      4      5      primary issue  
                       

### 6. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to the inability to provide competitive salaries of benefits.

not an issue      1      2      3      4      5      primary issue  
                       

### 7. Higher than normal vacancy rates at my agency are due to staff availability due to the inability to meet employment requirements (completing online applications, pass drug screening, vaccination status, etc.)

not an issue      1      2      3      4      5      primary issue

**8. Shortages of snowplow operators at my agency are due to staff availability due to Covid-19 or variants illness or exposure.**

not an issue    1    2    3    4    5    primary issue  
               

**9. Higher than normal vacancy rates or shortages of snowplow operators at my agency are due to these other factors.**

Please type your answer here:

**10. Regarding managing public expectations and levels of service, which statement best describes the impacts of staffing levels on your winter service program level of service (LOS). Pick 1**

- my agency has not made any modifications to LOS
- my agency is considering modifications to LOS to reflect available staffing levels
- my agency has made modifications to LOS to reflect available staffing levels
- my agency is utilizing other tools to help manage user expectations associated with available staffing levels

Other:

Please type your answer here:

**11. What steps is your agency taking to attract and or retain snowplow operators if any?**

Please type your answer here:

**12. Any other observations you would like to share?**

Please type your answer here:

**13. What agency do you work for?**

Please type your answer here:

**14. Leave you name and email so we may contact you in the future (optional)**

Please type your answer here: