

# Home-Based Work Is Rising

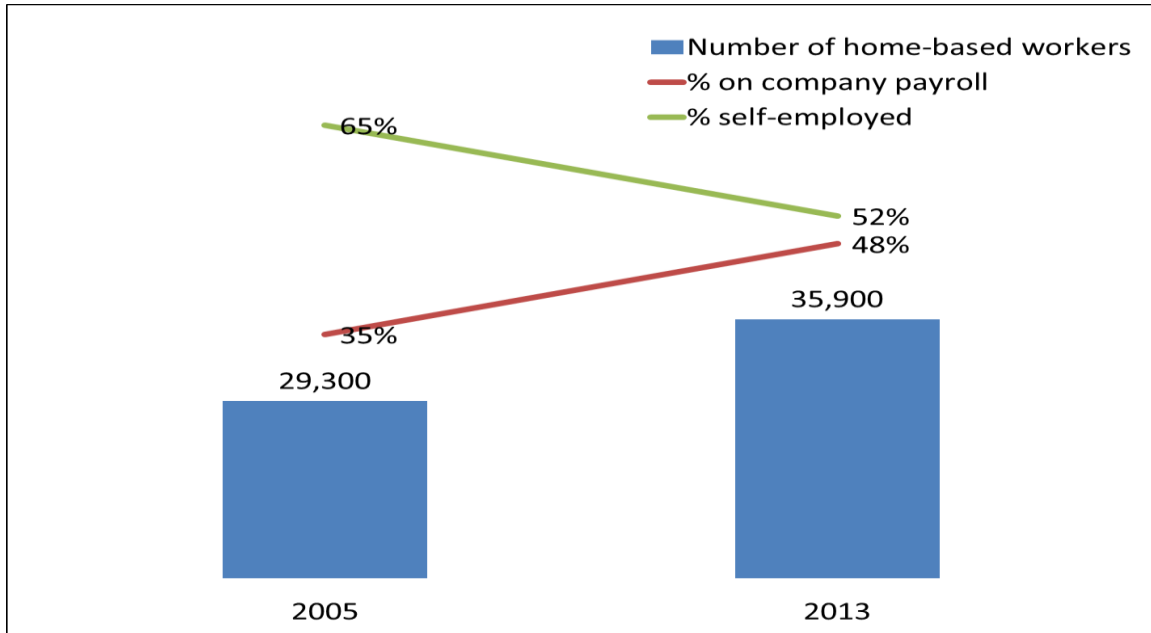
Technology is making it easier for many work functions to be performed in a variety of locations, contributing to a rising number of home-based workers. A January 2015 article in MaineBiz highlighted the efforts companies in the Greater Portland area are making to attract workers, noting that Unum employs 140 people “who work from home throughout Maine.” Home-based work provides a means for linking companies with workers living elsewhere; it also provides a means for linking workers in rural areas to jobs in more densely populated areas.

Data on home-based workers comes from the U.S. Census Bureau’s annual American Community Survey. The ACS definition of home-based workers includes those who work a majority of time at home; it does not include those who work additional hours at home or who sometimes telework from home for less than the majority of a workweek.

An average of 35,900 Maine residents worked a majority of time from home in 2013, up 22 percent from 2005. During the same period, total employment was down slightly as the economy continued to recover from the recession. Home-based workers now comprise 5 percent of employment in the state.

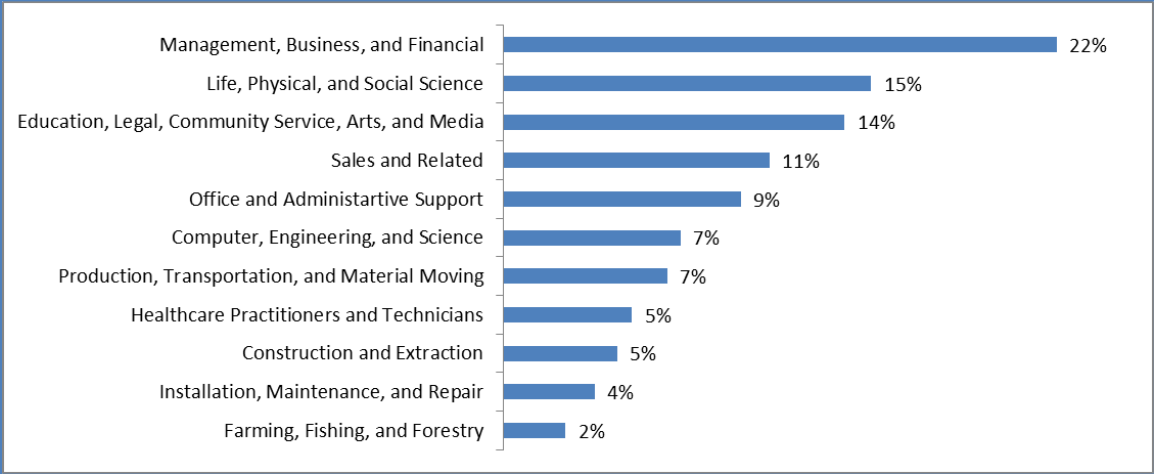
About 52 percent of home-based workers in Maine were self-employed in 2013, with the remainder wage and salary workers on the payroll of a company. The increase of more than 6,000 home-based workers since 2005 has been entirely among wage and salary workers, with little change in the number who are self-employed, a trend also reflected nationally.

## The rise in home-based workers has been entirely among wage and salary workers on a company payroll



Home-based workers span a wide spectrum of occupations, ranging from sales assistants and realtors to managers and software engineers. In Maine, half are in management, business, and financial; life, physical, and social science; and education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations.

**Home-based work is found in a wide range of occupations**  
*(Share by occupational group, 2008 to 2012 averages)*



A recent study of call-center workers published in the Harvard Business Review found that “in comparison with the employees who came into the office, the at-home workers were not only happier and less likely to quit but also more productive.” The study also found that people most likely to prefer the work-from-home option were older, married, and parents.