

# Seeking better wage offers

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## New jobs aplenty, but many only offer up to RM2,000 salary

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**PETALING JAYA:** The number of new jobs recorded in Malaysia's official employment services portal went up last year as economic activity gathered pace after the Covid-19 lockdowns, but the biggest growth in new openings was for jobs that only offered salaries of RM2,000 or less.

According to the Social Security Organisation's (Socso) Employment Insurance System (EIS) report, job vacancies recorded in the MyFutureJobs portal grew by 232.8% to 2,480,577 openings in 2021 compared to 745,304 in 2020.

The figures show that the biggest growth in 2021 was for jobs in the RM1,200-RM2,000 salary range, which made up 57.6% of the 2.48 million vacancies offered on the job portal.

In comparison, only 31% of the openings MyFutureJobs in 2020 offered the same salary range. The bulk or 60% of new jobs in 2020 fell within a higher salary range of RM2,001 to RM3,000.

Online employment company JobStreet Malaysia is tracking a somewhat similar trend.

It said that last year saw an increase in the number of job vacancies with salaries of less than RM2,500.

"There were more than one-and-a-half times job vacancies advertised offering a salary range of RM1,000 to RM2,499 compared to the year before, with the top industries being food and beverage, catering, restaurants, manufactur-

### Vacancies and salary range advertised on MYFutureJobs in 2020 and 2021

Year	2020	2021	Percentage increase
Total job seekers	468,102	879,601	87.9%
Total vacancies	745,304	2,480,577	232.8%

  

Salary range	Share of vacancies (2020)	Share of vacancies (2021)
<1200	7%	10.8%
RM1,200-RM2,000	31%	57.6%
RM2,001-RM3,000	60%	16%
RM3,001-RM4000	2%	8.5%
RM4,001-RM5,000	0.4%	1.4%
>RM5,000	0.8%	5.8%

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% because some figures were rounded up.

Source: Socso's Employment Insurance System report



ing, production, retail and merchandise," said JobStreet Malaysia managing director Vic Sithasanan.

He said many of the lower paying jobs once filled by foreign workers are now vacant because foreign workers who returned to their countries face challenges getting back to Malaysia.

As a result, their employers are now offering the work to locals.

Sithasanan said companies and industries affected by this trend need to be prepared to hire temporary workers, deal with a high turnover rate, or automate.

He said Malaysian workers in the RM2,000 per month wage bracket can now earn just as much – if not

more – by working as ride share drivers transporting people or delivering food orders.

More Malaysians are now also opting to work online to earn additional income or as freelancers.

"What's appealing to them is that they can work anywhere, anytime for an agreed payment, and can choose jobs that suit their skills and expertise," he said.

He said many Malaysians have also taken the self-employed or entrepreneurship route, such as starting a small business selling food or an e-commerce venture, while others are offering services such as baby-sitting, house-cleaning and even hairdressing.

Sithasanan said employers need to consider flexible work arrangements to attract and retain local talent.

"Flexible work is one of the most coveted employee benefits an employer can now offer. It allows workers to better integrate their home and work lives and gives them the opportunity to meet their personal needs, family obligations, and other responsibilities," he said.

Flexible work schedules, competitive wages, prioritising workers' mental and physical health, a positive company culture and access to reskilling and upskilling programmes could also help attract local talents, he added.

Centre for Market Education CEO Dr Carmelo Ferlito said increased unemployment caused by the Covid-19 lockdowns have reduced the demand for labour and has contributed to a drop in wages for many jobs.

Ferlito said mass tertiary education has affected the value of graduates when they enter the job market as they possess little to no experience.

To create a competitive job market, he said education reform is needed where secondary school leavers should join the job market at an early age and tertiary education should be left for those who choose to acquire qualifications that require a high level of skills.

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