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A Hot Job Market Is Causing Labor Pains for State Governments.

Peanut season is nearly upon South Carolina and, like governments across the country, the state has been scrambling to hire.

Its Department of Agriculture is lifting pay for crop inspectors to $13 to $16 an hour from the previous $9.50 to $11.50, and creating an “aide” version of the position that requires less education and experience. It is even tweaking the title to make it sound more appealing: what used to be “temporary inspector” is now a “peanut grading inspector.” All this in a bid to find the 125 people it needs to help ensure peanut safety during the September to November harvest.

It is an example of what’s happening nationwide. Public agencies that perform crucial functions are struggling to compete as unemployment hovers near its lowest level in a half-century. The public sector has been posting record job openings, and state governments have lost about 20,000 employees since mid-2018, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Continue reading.

The New York Times

By Jeanna Smialek

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