



*"Pray for the dead and fight like
hell for the living!"* *Mother Jones*



Extension
University of Missouri

2025 AgrAbility National Training Workshop

The Growing Worker Shortage, and Healthful Healing of Working with your Hands

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Introduction

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Objectives

- Understand the true nature of the growing shortage of workers in the U.S.
- Look at the last shortage worker
- Reexamine the nature of work
- Work and happiness



Goldsmiths
or just **Smiths**
from blacksmiths



Thatcher, roofer

Goldsmiths

or just **Smiths**

from blacksmiths

Copper

Wooden container, barrels, buckets etc., maker

Thatcher, roofers

Goldsmiths

or just **Smiths**

from blacksmiths

Thatcher, roofers

Cooper

Wooden container, barrels, buckets etc., maker

Goldsmiths
or just **Smiths**

from blacksmiths

Baker,

Cook

Thatcher, roofers

Cooper

Wooden container, barrels, buckets etc., maker

Goldsmiths

or just **Smiths**

from blacksmiths

Baker, Cook

Miller, Fisher

Thatcher, roofers

Cooper

Wooden container, barrels, buckets etc., maker

Goldsmiths

or just **Smiths**

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Baker Cook

Miller Fisher

Carpenter Clark

Brewer

Fletcher

Draper

Gardner

Farmer

THE CASE FOR WORKING WITH YOUR HANDS

'THE BEST BOOK I HAVE READ FOR AGES'
MATTHEW D'ANCONA, *DAILY TELEGRAPH*

'MASTERLY' *ECONOMIST*

OR WHY OFFICE
WORK IS BAD FOR US
AND FIXING THINGS
FEELS GOOD



MATTHEW CRAWFORD



"A rallying call to change our relationship to work, Sara Ross shows you how to rediscover your sense of aliveness." JEN FISHER, Chief Work-Being Officer, bestselling author, *Work Better Together*

Dear Work



SOMETHING
HAS TO
CHANGE!

SARA ROSS

HOW TO BE HAPPY AT WORK

*The Power of Purpose, Hope,
and Friendships*

Annie McKee



The Worker Shortage is Real

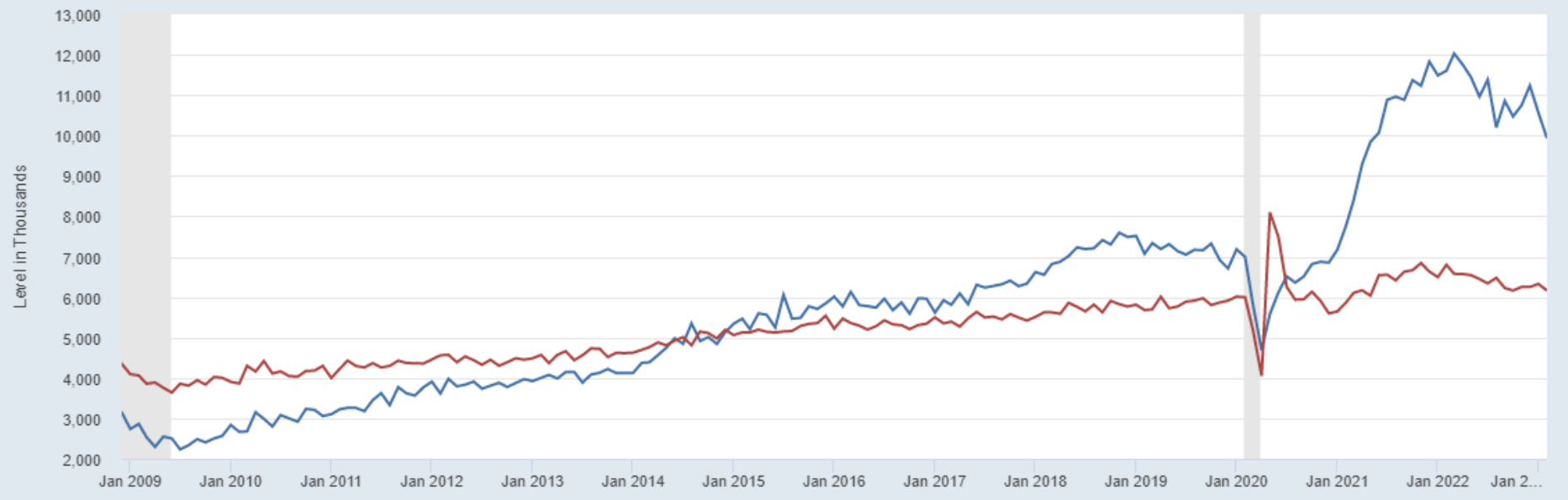
Despite what you may have heard,

Workforce Trends

- Missouri's Post-Pandemic Workforce has exceeded Pre-Pandemic levels
- KC Metro County's workforce has exceeded Pre-Pandemic levels

FRED

— Job Openings: Total Nonfarm
— Hires: Total Nonfarm



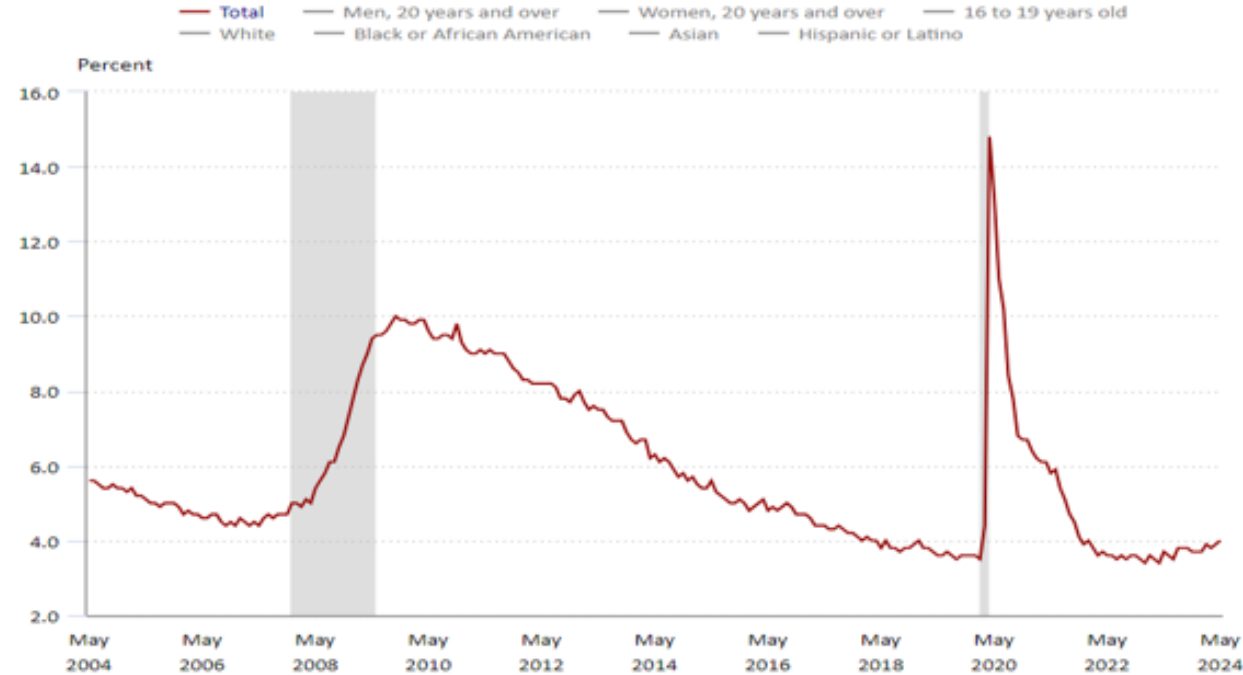
Shaded areas indicate U.S. recessions.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

fred.stlouisfed.org

Civilian unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted

Click and drag within the chart to zoom in on time periods

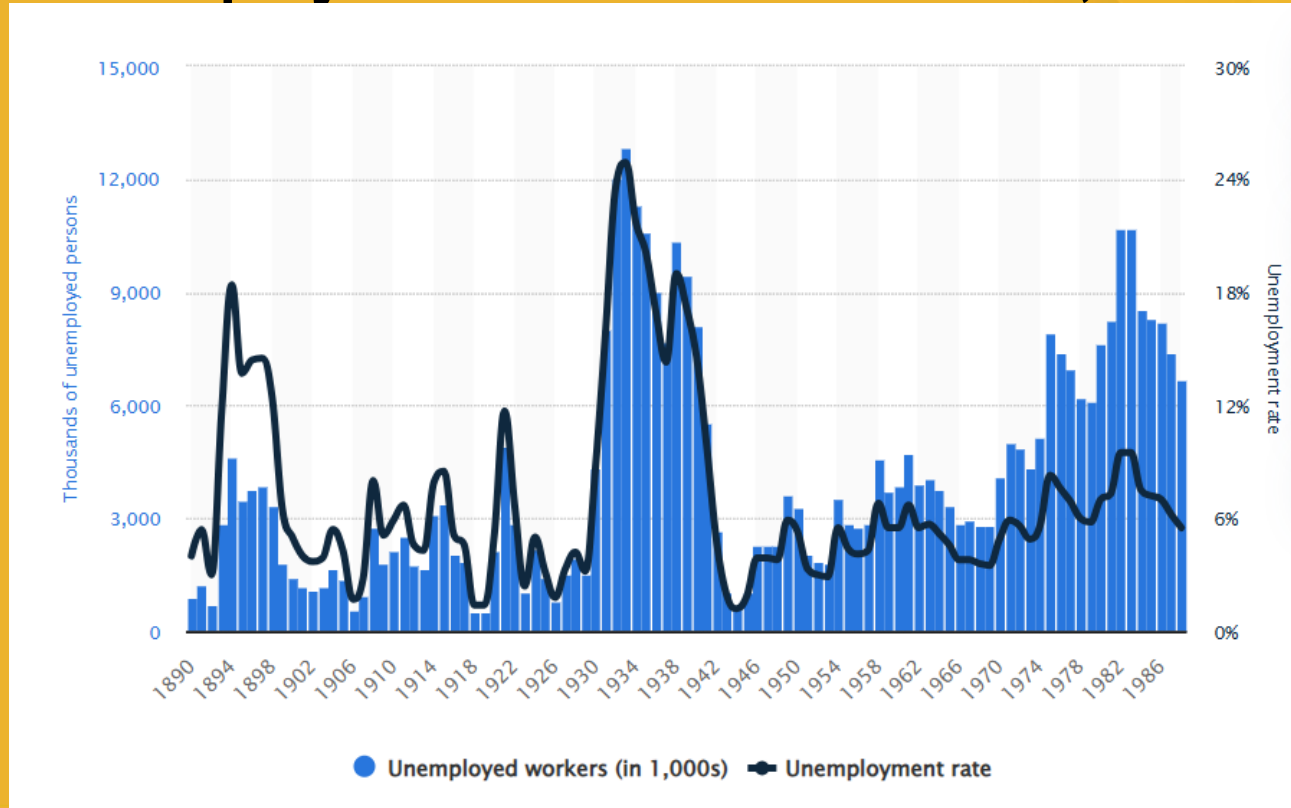


Hover over chart to view data.

Note: Shaded area represents recession, as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

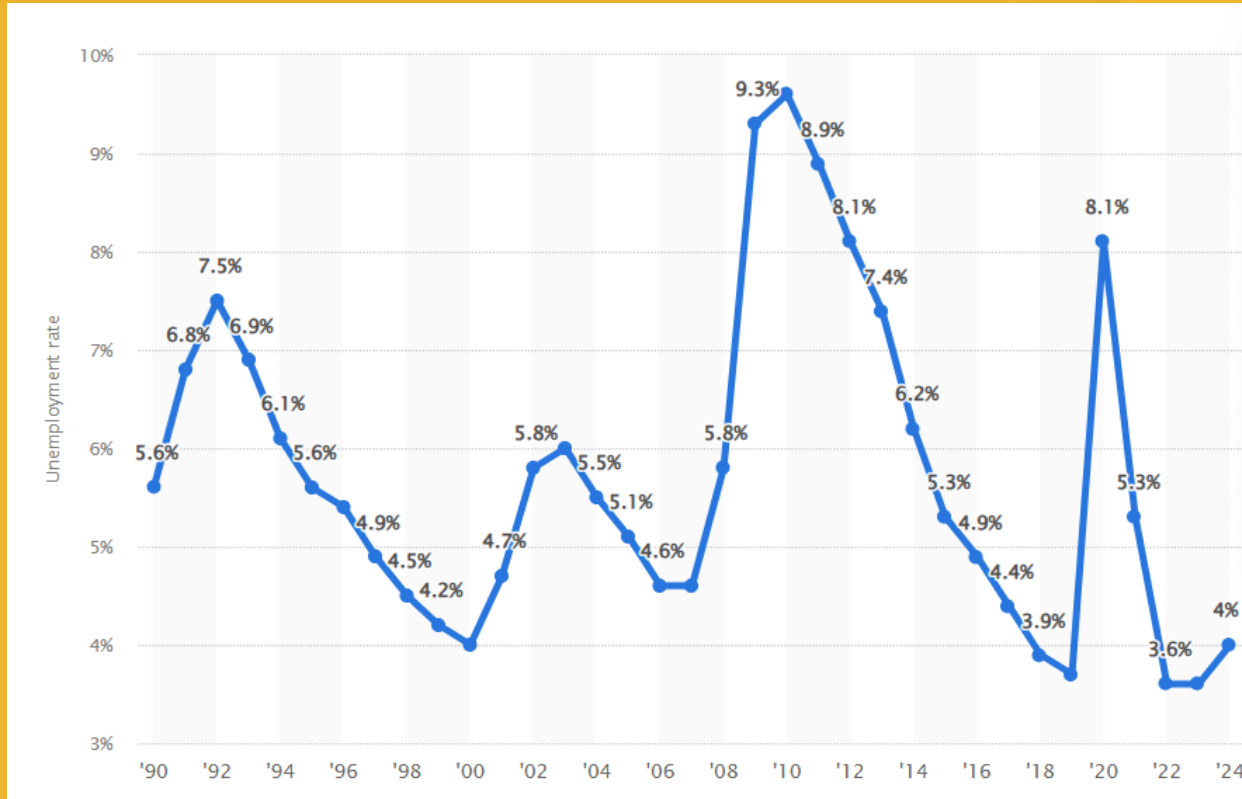
Economist have long considered 96% employment, or unemployment of 4%, full employment.

Rate of unemployment in the United States, 1890 - 1988



Source: statista.com

Rate of unemployment in the United States, 1990 -2024



Source: statista.com

The Great Migration off the Mississippi Delta

During the early 1900's (driven by WWI and II manufacturing needs) brought over 6,000,000 workers from that region to other parts of the country to work in other industries.





During those war years, with demand for manufactured goods high and the short supply of available workers, women were finally made a part of the workforce in large numbers and in jobs that had previously been denied to them.



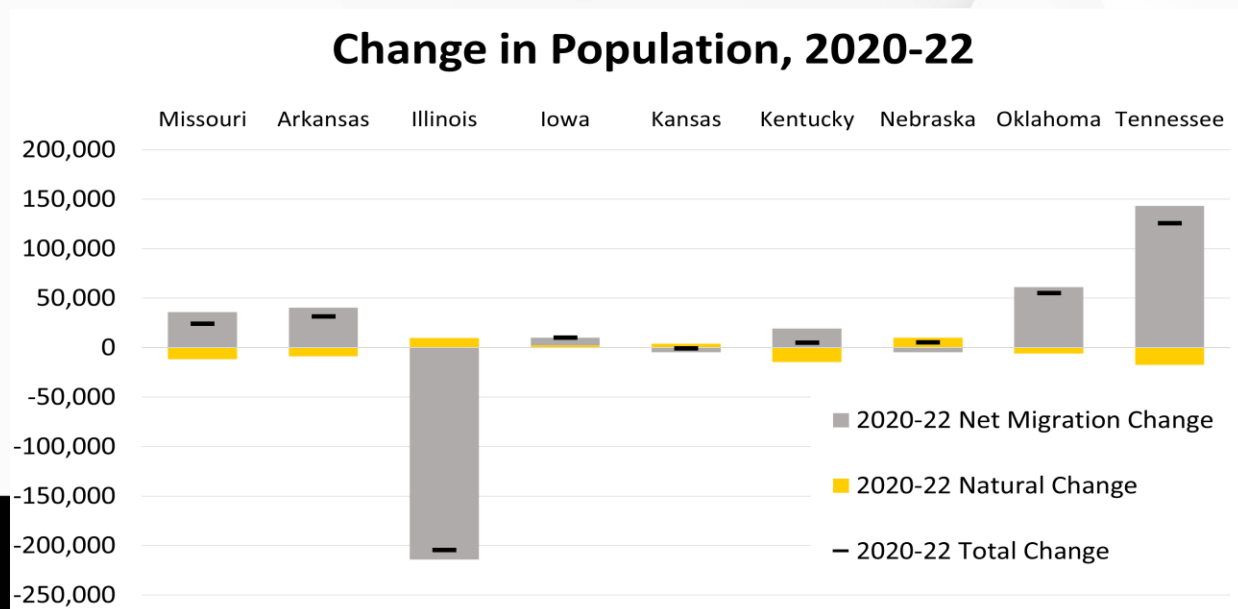
Where have all the workers gone?

Natural Change and Net Migration

Missouri was the **18th largest** state as of 2022, having an overall increase in population, despite a negative natural change. Missouri ranked **41st** in natural change as there were **12,915** more deaths than births. However, ranked **17th** in net migration with increase of **34,423** new residents. Iowa was the only state, out of Missouri and its border states to have a positive net migration and natural change.

From 2020 to 2022, **half** of all U.S. States had a natural decrease in population.

Source: MU Extension graphic using 2020-22 U.S. Census Population Estimates



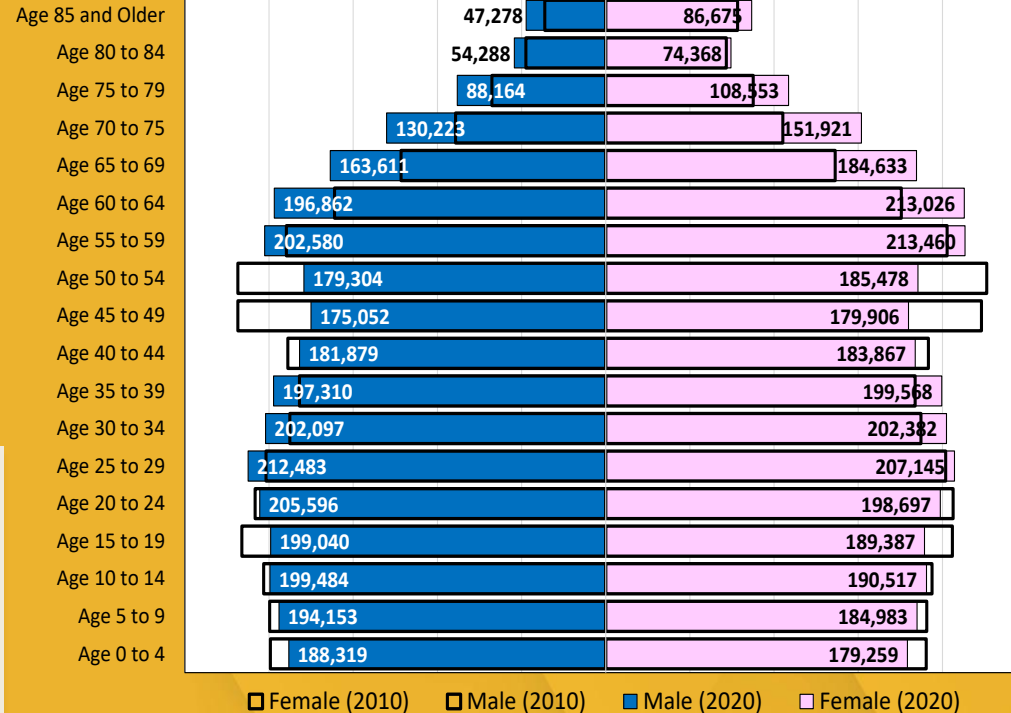
In 2010, workers between the ages of 25 and 54 made up 40.2% of the population.

In 2020, Millennials made up 37.5% of the workforce.

Of all those aged 15 to 64, one-third are between the ages of 25 to 39.

- In the next decade, there will be 50,000 more Missourians who turn 65 years old than graduate high school.

Missouri Age Distribution (2020)



Source: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates V2020

By Dec 31st , 2029, 79 million Baby Boomers will be eligible to leave or will have left the workforce since Jan 1st, 2010.

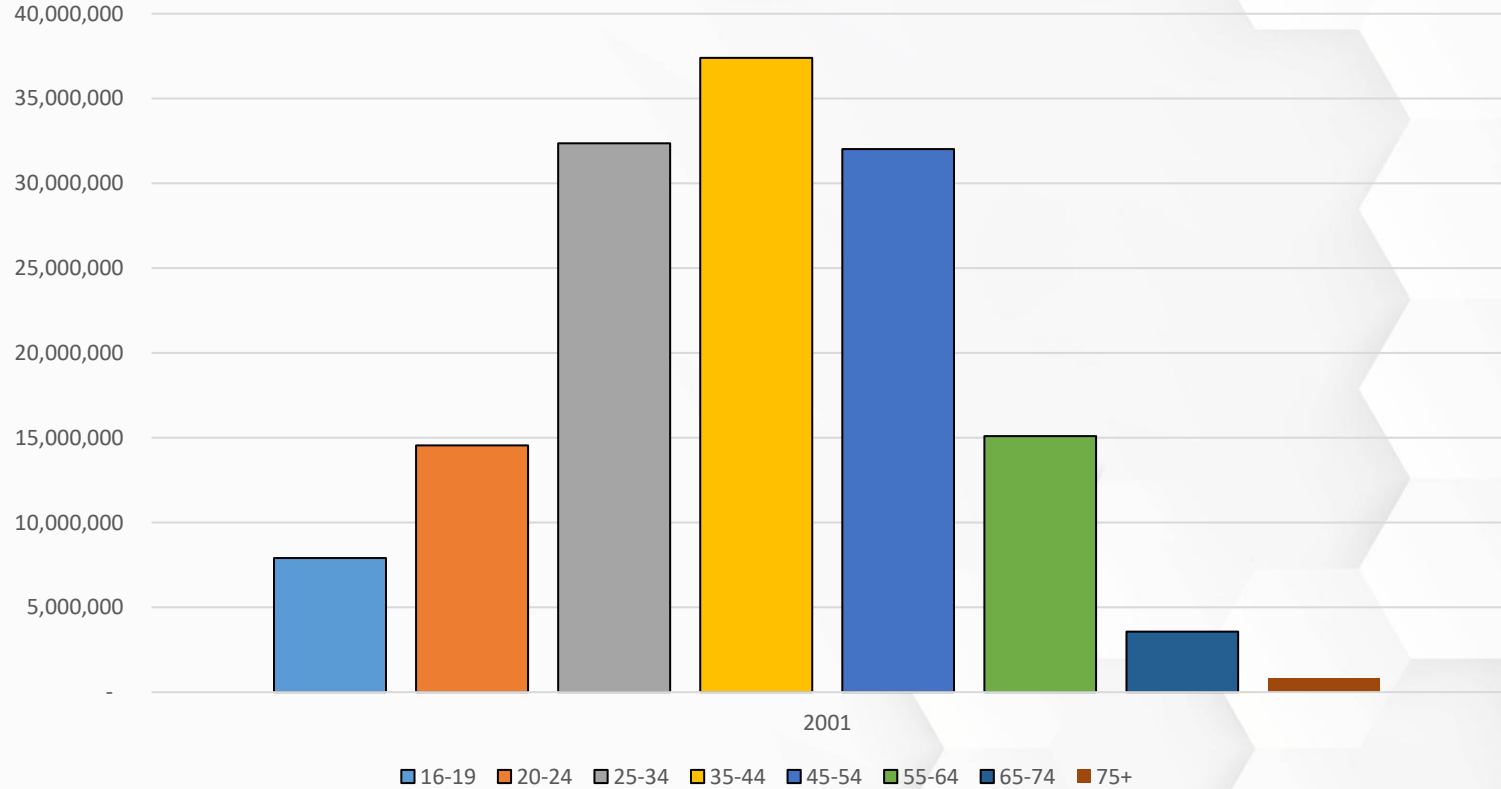
That is = 26% of the population

that is

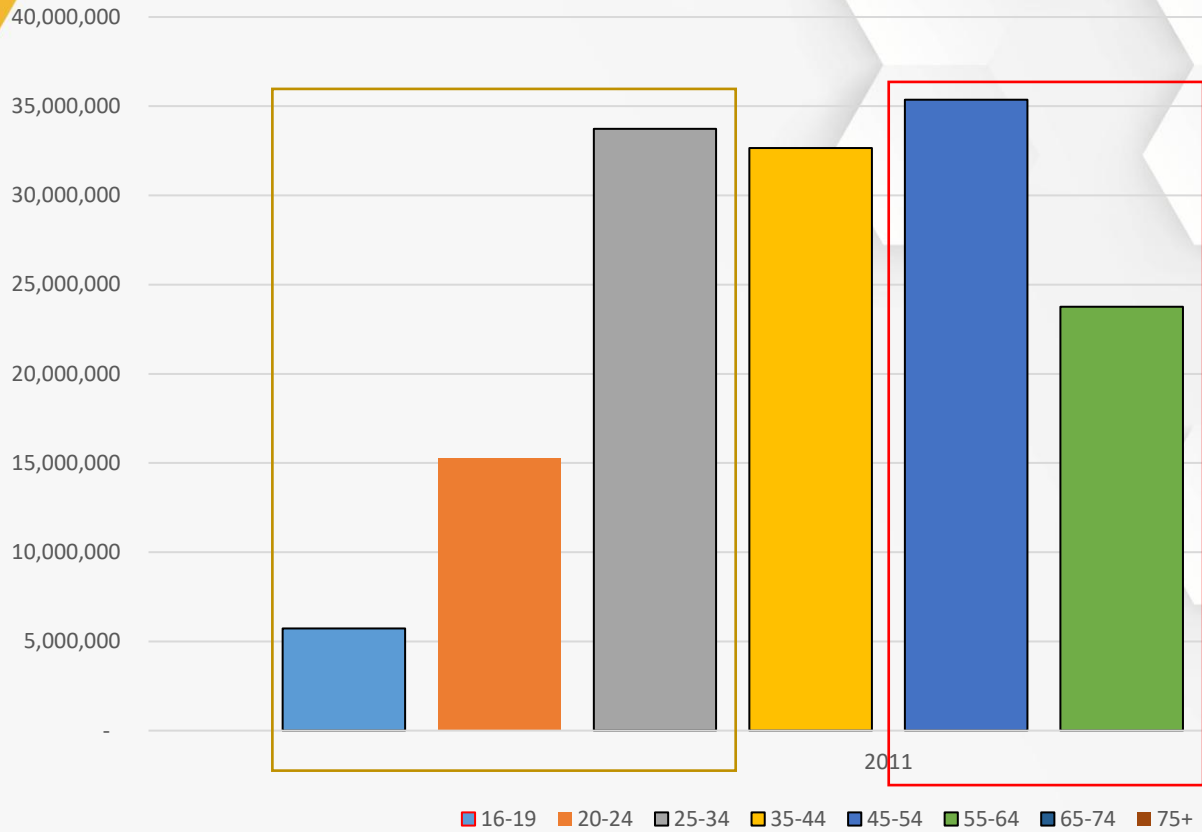
**1 out of every 4 people who were working in 2010
will have left the workforce by 2030**

Source: Cohn, D'Vera and Paul Taylor. *Baby Boomers Approach 65 - Glumly*. Pew Research Center. December 29, 2010.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2010/12/20/baby-boomers-approach-65-glumly/>

US Civilian Labor Force by Age, 2001



US Civilian Labor Force by Age, 2011



US Civilian Labor Force by Age, 2021

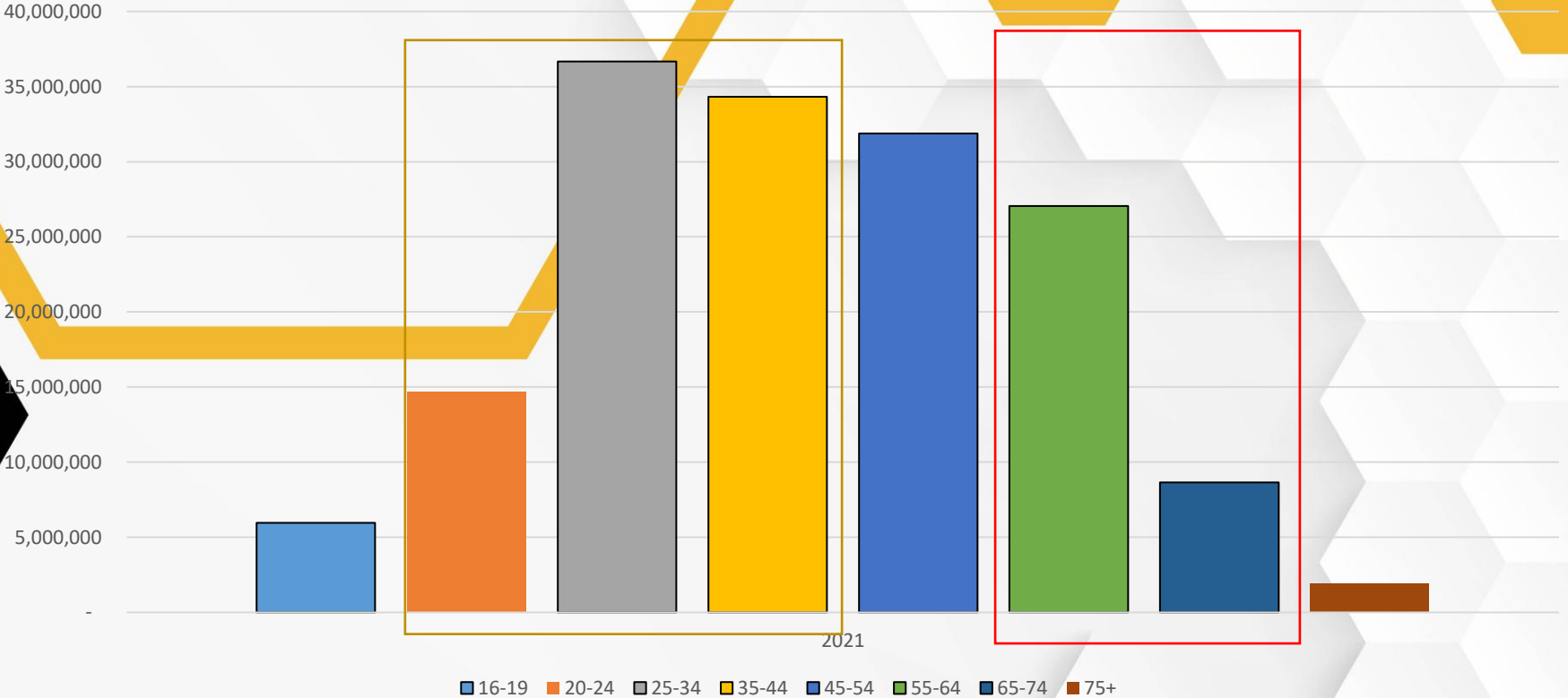
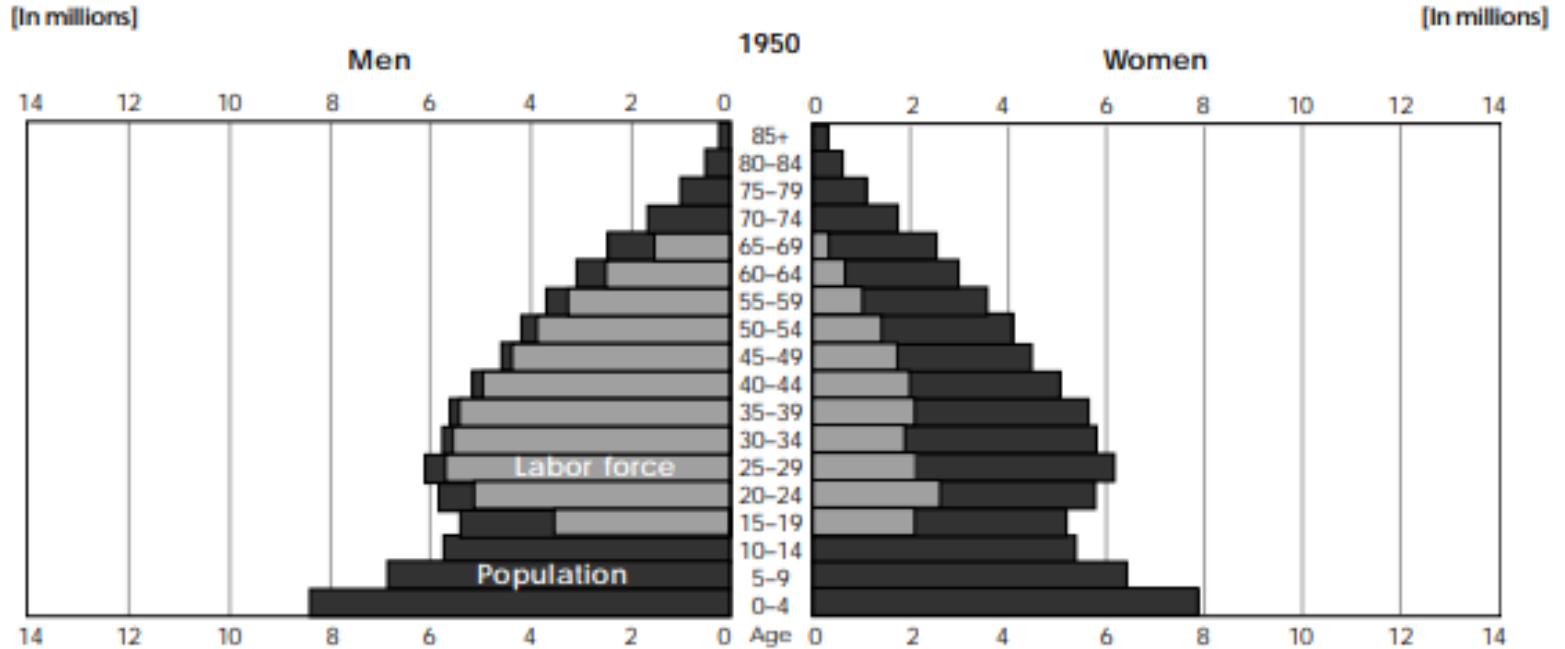
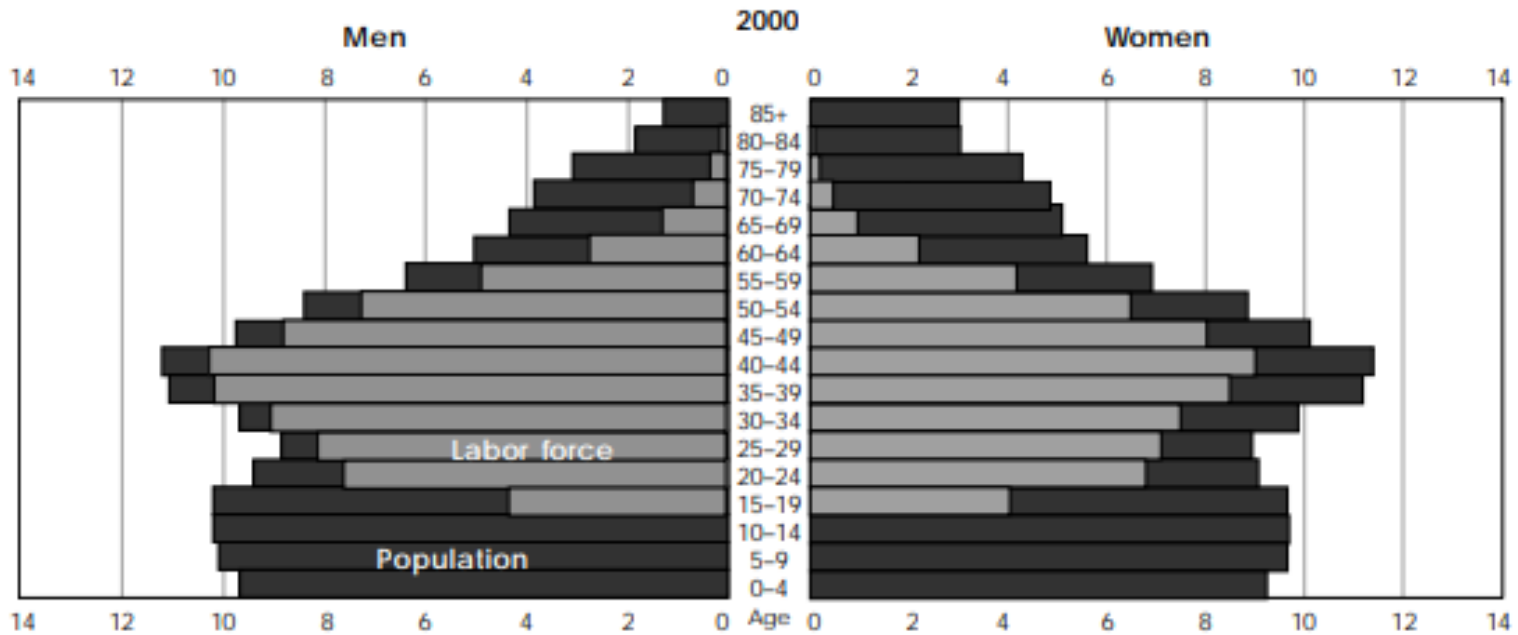


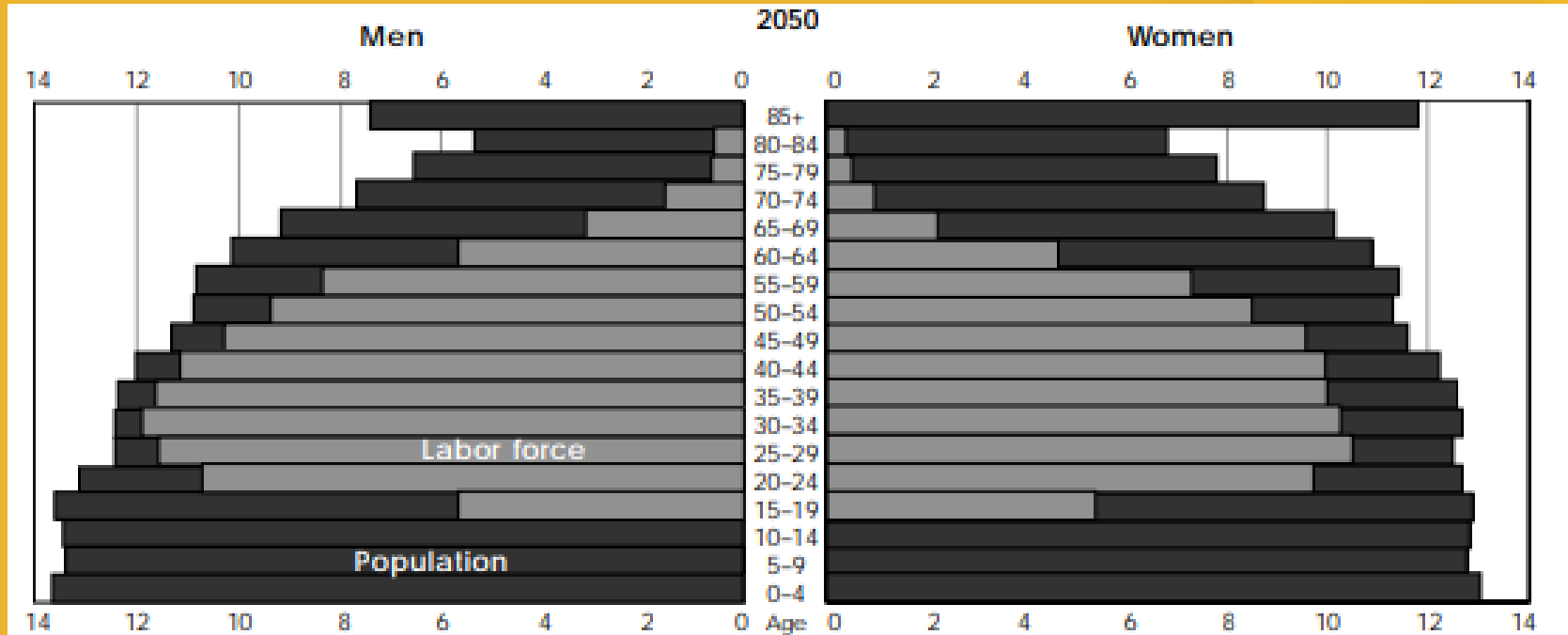
Chart 1. U.S. population and labor force, 1950, 2000, and projected, 2050



Source: U.S. Bureau of labor Statistics: A century of change: the U.S. labor force, 1950-2050



Source: U.S. Bureau of labor Statistics: A century of change: the U.S. labor force, 1950-2050



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.



What can be done??



What can be done??

We Have to Change Our Way of Thinking!



What can be done??

We Have to Change Our Way of Thinking!

Restore Hope



What can be done??

We Have to Change Our Way of Thinking!

Restore Hope Renewing Productivity

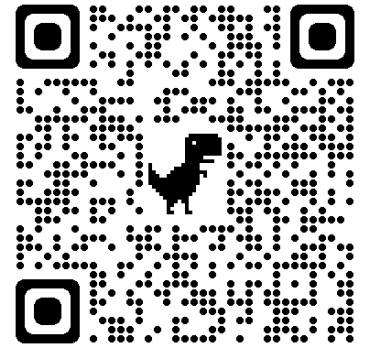
From 1999 to 2018 mental health care utilization increased from 7.0% to 11.3%

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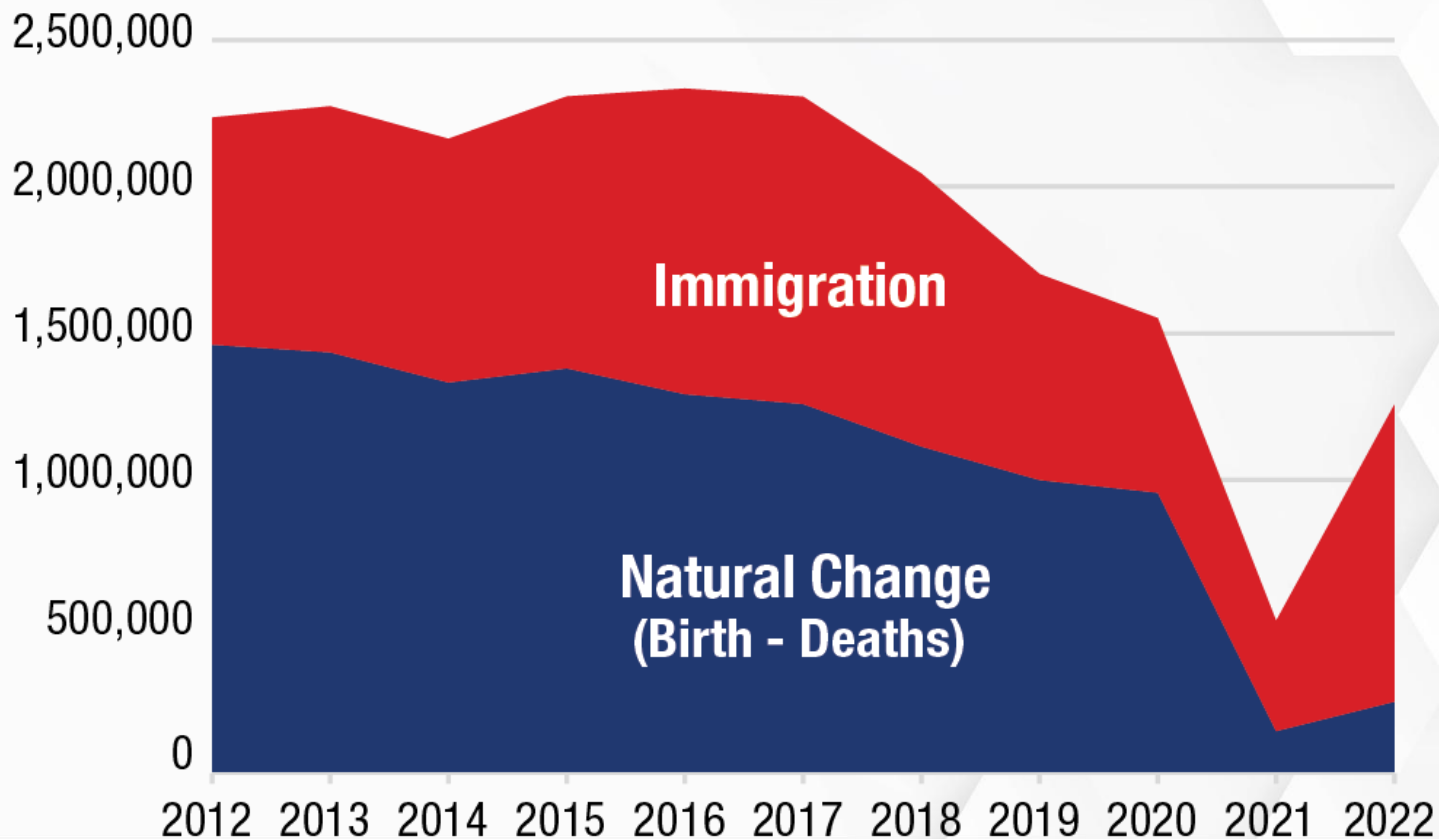
SAMHSA reports that 1 in 5 adults, adolescents and youth experience a behavioral health issue in 2019 - 2020

Limiting Factors Suicide

- 1,174 people Died from Suicide in Missouri in 2021
- 50+ years of work speed up had left us with a community that is overworked, exhausted, with high blood pressure and diabetes. To many people at not getting the mental health care that they may need, and we leave more earned vacation time on the table (Unused) than any industrial nation on the planet.
- What we have is, to small of a workforce for the number of jobs that we have, and the workforce is warn out.
- 2016: Suicide in Missouri: Where We Stand: Report



Annual US Population Growth 2012-2022



Source: Matt Pezold, University of Missouri

From U.S. Census Population Estimates. Analysis: K.M. Johnson, Carsey School, University of New Hampshire

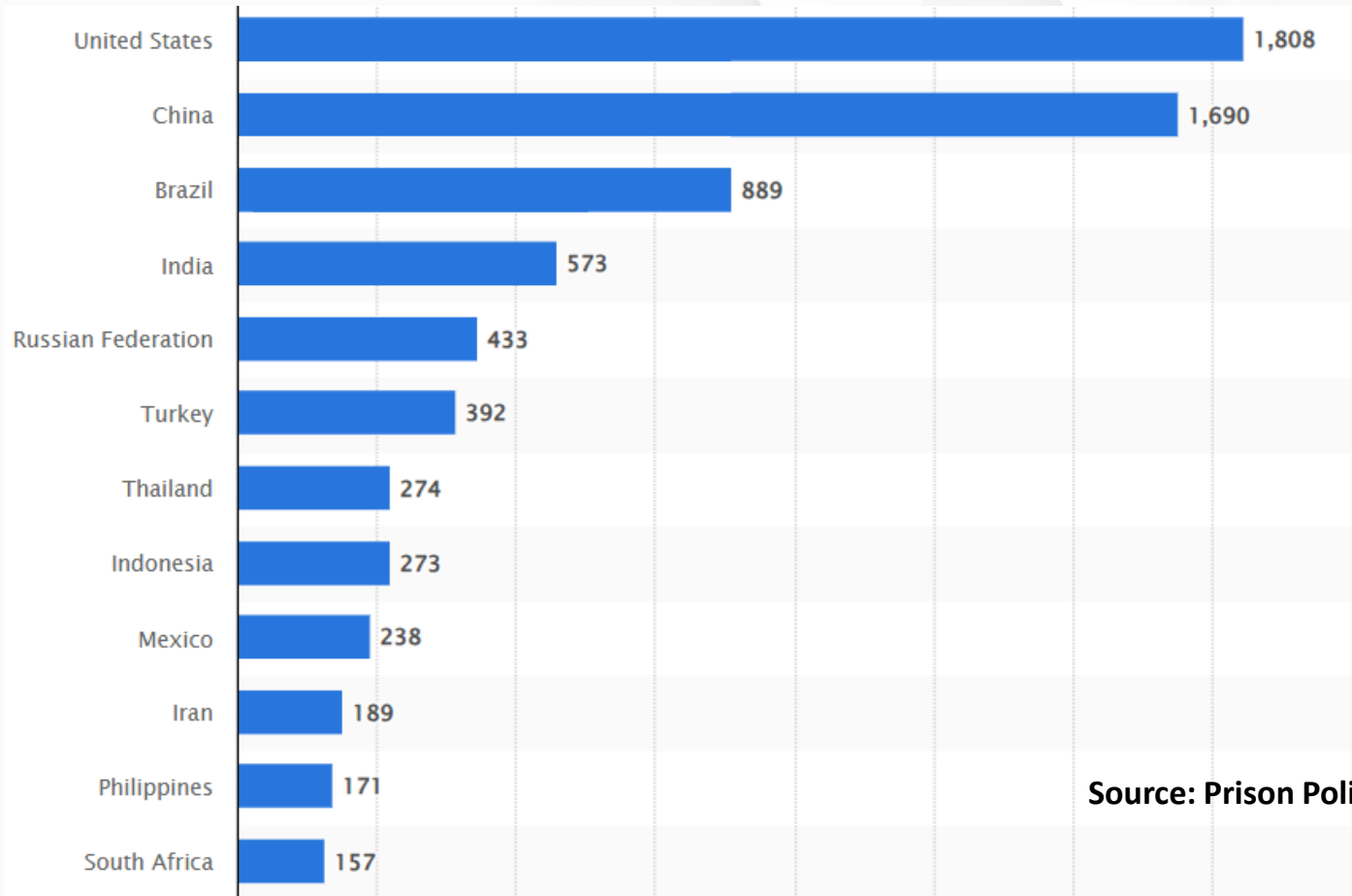


SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
—
TRANSFORMATIVE WORKFORCE ACADEMY

JUST TALENT

playbook ▶

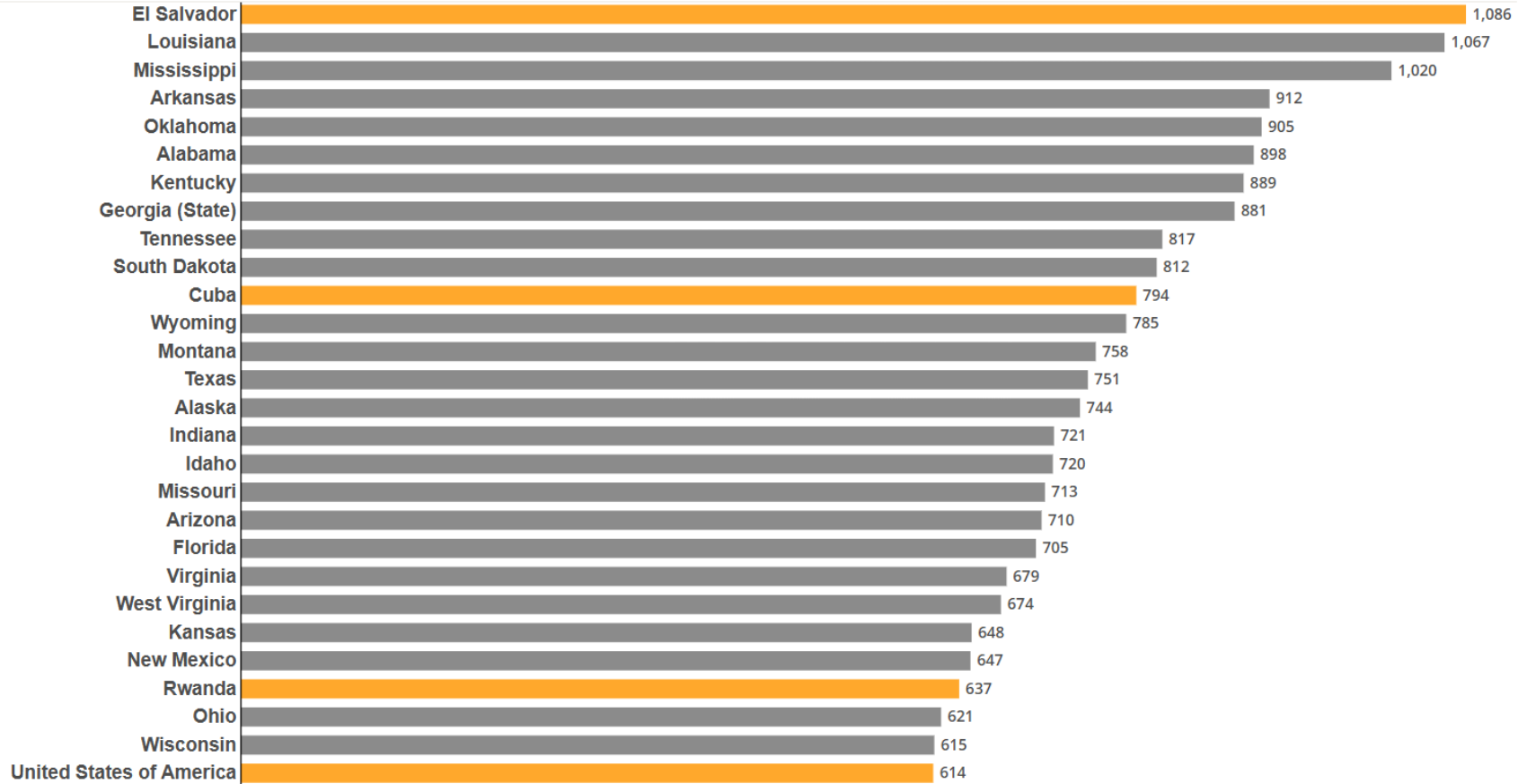
SLU -
Transformative
Workforce
Academy
(second-chance-
slu.web.app)



Source: Prison Policy Initiative

Countries with the largest number of prisoners, Feb 2025

World Incarceration Rates If Every U.S. State Were A Country



Source: Prison Policy Initiative

In 2016 the Federal Bureau of Prisons Hiring and Staffing report put the staff to inmate ratio at 4 staff needed per inmate, in local jails.

Source: 2016 BJS Bulletin

In 2021 the Federal Bureau of Prisons Hiring and Staffing report put the staff to inmate ratio at 9 staff needed per inmate, at larger (state and federal) institutions.

Source: 2021 BJS Bulletin

**It is estimated that opioid use
disorder
(OUD) costs employers
approximately \$10 billion in
absenteeism and presentism
losses**

Source: American Society of Addiction Medicine
(ASAM). Workforce. "Pain Points."
[http://www.workforce.com/articles/21855-
pain-points](http://www.workforce.com/articles/21855-pain-points).

- **11.4% of men between the ages of 25 and 54 are not in the workforce, because they are either not employed or not seeking work. Of the 11.4%, approximately 7,000,000 of them are not working.**
- **The survey found that 47% of those individuals had taken pain medication within the last 24 hours.**

Source: Krueger, Alan. October 4, 2016. Where Have All the Workers Gone? <https://www.bostonfed.org/-/media/documents/economic/conf/great-recovery-2016/alan-b-krueger.pdf>

Impact of the Opioids Crisis on Missouri's Labor Force

Between 1999-2015, the volume of prescription opioids per capita in Missouri rose by 1,030 percent.

- Accounts for a **3 percent decline** in labor force participation amongst prime age workers.
- 2.7 percent decline for prime-age men, 3.4

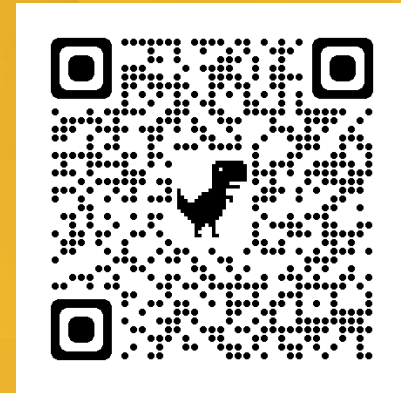
Source: Gitis, Ben. September 12, 2018. "State-by-State: The Labor Force and Economic Effects of the Opioids Crisis." American Action Forum. Found online at <https://www.americanactionforum.org/project/opioid-state-summary/>

Between 2000 and 2016, the U.S. lost an estimated \$37.8 billion in state and federal taxes due to eligible workers not in the workforce.

Source: Penn State University Study in Journal of Medical Care, 2019

Limiting Factors Substance Misuse

- In 2016, Missouri's total economic cost of the opioid epidemic was **\$12.6 billion**
- Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and overdose deaths cost the state \$34.5 million a day; or **\$1.4 million an hour**
- That's 4.2% of the nearly \$300 billion of the MO GDP



Substance Use Disorder in Trade Industries

- 15% of construction workers reported heavy alcohol use
- 18% of skilled trades worker report illicit drug use
- 14% of trades workers struggle with pain reliever misuse

Source: OSHA

Change is Coming

- The Workforce of the Future is Going to Look Different
- The Power Dynamic is (has) Shifted From Hiring, to Retaining
- No One Solutions is Going to Fix All the Problems
- We Need to Change, or Go Out of Business



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Thank You