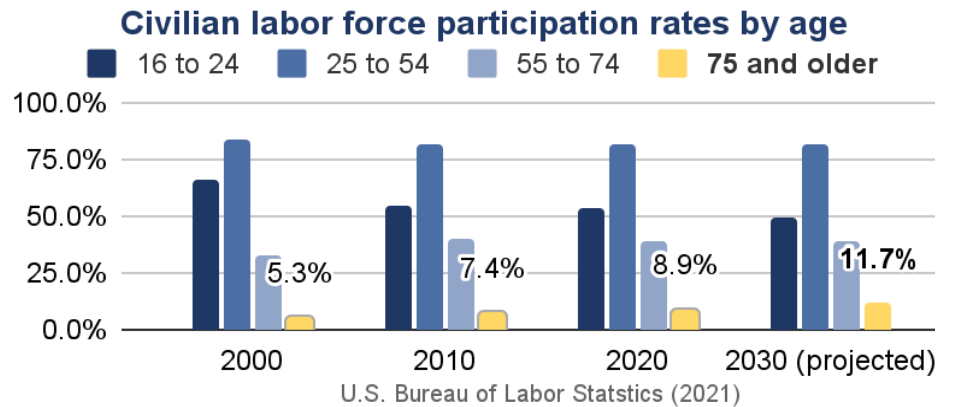


Workforce Development Research Project

Aging and Increased Participation in the Workforce

Current research reveals useful insights into aging, workforce issues, and changing workforce dynamics with significant implications for employers, policymakers, and older workers.

Participation rate of older adults in the workforce has been steadily increasing over time, challenging conventional notions of retirement.

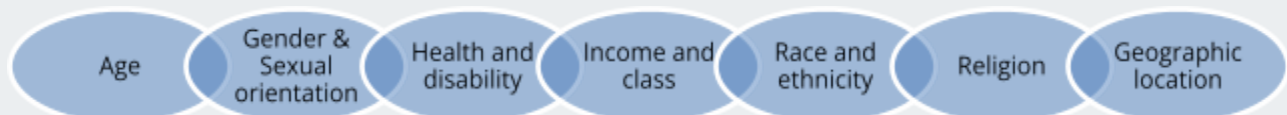


Drivers of increased older adult participation in the workforce

Financial/Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic necessity and financial insecurity are key factors driving older adults to join the workforce ❖ Insufficient retirement savings and longer life expectancies prompt many older adults to remain employed or re-enter the workforce
Policy and Pension "reforms"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Active aging policies intended to reduce the financial strain on public pension systems encourage older adults' workforce participation
Health and Longevity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Advances in healthcare enable seniors to maintain physical and mental fitness for work ❖ The desire for active and engaged aging serves as a motivating factor for older adults to remain in the workforce
Technological Advancements & Workplace Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Technological advancements and the rise of flexible work arrangements have created new opportunities for older workers ❖ Telecommuting and part-time options increasing work accessibility

Ageism and special populations

Many studies emphasize the significance of diversity and inclusion policies in mitigating ageism. These policies promote a more inclusive work environment that values contributions from individuals of all age demographics



Challenges faced by older adults in the workplace

Ageism	❖ Biases in hiring, promotions, and training opportunities
Workplace culture	❖ Potential isolation or feeling out of sync with younger colleagues
Work life balance	❖ Juggling work responsibilities with caregiving or retirement planning
Career advancement	❖ Limited opportunities for career progression or being passed over for younger colleagues
Health concerns	❖ Managing health issues that may arise with age while maintaining job performance
Physical demands	❖ Challenges with maintaining physically demanding roles
Adapting to Technological Changes	❖ Some older adults may need support learning new technologies essential for job roles; assess individual capacity and motivation

Best practices for supporting older workers in the workforce

Encouraging Continuous Learning and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Encourage learning by providing support for training programs and professional growth opportunities ❖ Budget for skill development tailored to the needs of employees
Supporting Flexible Work Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Establish policies that allow for work schedules including part time roles, remote work options and adaptable hours ❖ Use human resources technology to oversee and manage work arrangements effectively
Introducing Health and Wellness Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop wellness initiatives targeting health concerns, among staff ❖ Use wellness platforms and encourage employee engagement in wellness programs

Resources

- [Cummins, P., Harootyan, B., & Kunkel, S. \(2015\). Workforce Development in the United States: Facilitating opportunities to work at older ages. Public Policy & Aging Report, 25\(4\), 150-154.](#)
- [Harris, K., Krygsman, S., Waschenko, J., & Laliberte Rudman, D. \(2018\). Ageism and the older worker: A scoping review. The Gerontologist, 58\(2\), e1-e14.](#)
- [Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Holcombe Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. \(2011\). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. Journal of management, 37\(4\), 1262-1289.](#)
- [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2021.Number of people 75 and older in the labor force is expected to grow 96.5 percent by 2030. \(2021, November 4\). U.S. Bureau OF Labor Statistics. Retrieved July 19, 2024.](#)

UMaine EO statement: The University of Maine is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

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