

California's Aging Workforce Report



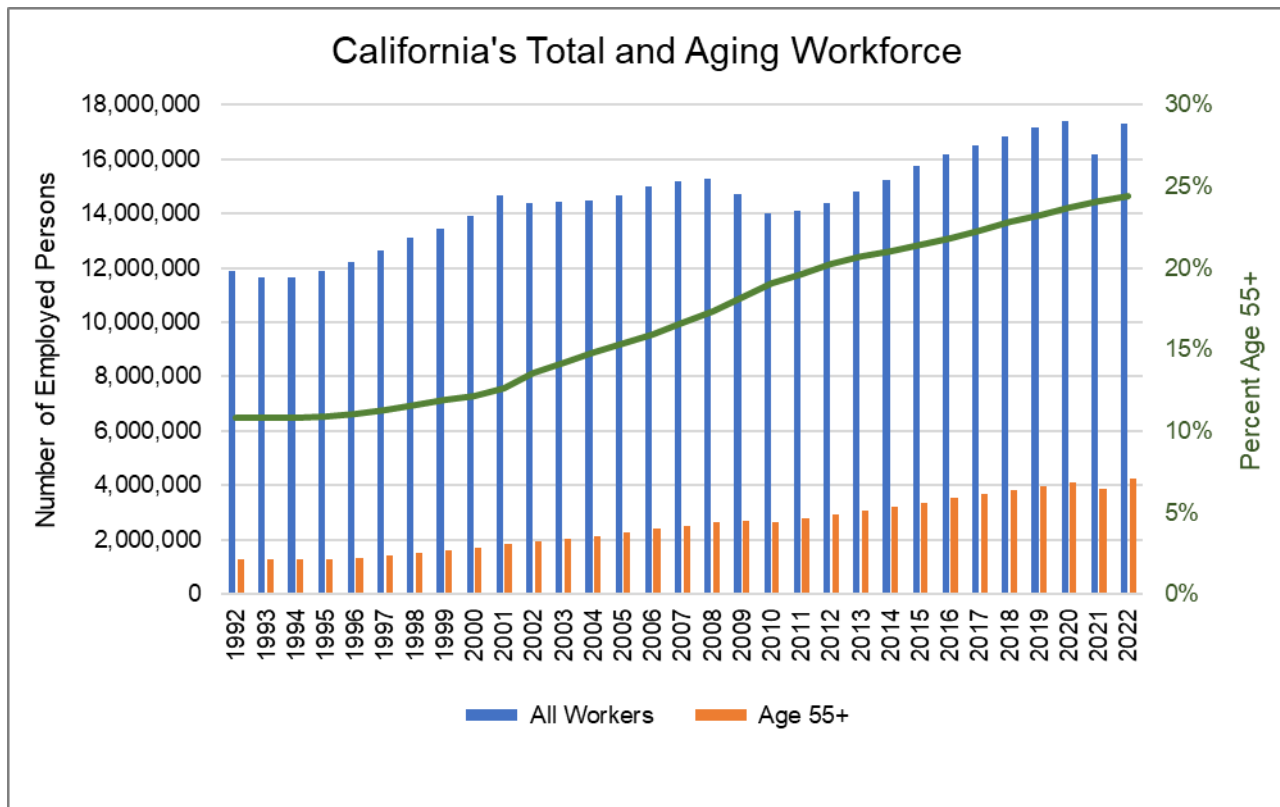
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America's population is aging, and so is California's workforce. Since 2010, there has been a 34 percent increase in the 65 and older population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹ The number of jobs in California held by workers ages 55 and over has more than tripled from 1992 to 2022, while total employment grew by less than 50 percent. Workers ages 55 and over held just 11 percent of the jobs in 1992 and by 2022 that share more than doubled, jumping up to 24 percent. By 2030, the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) will be at least age 65 or older. Thus, over the next several years, the labor force will experience the near total exit of this large cohort.

Why is this significant? According to U.S. Census Bureau research, the population age structure is changing; the growth of the dependent population, ages zero to 14 and 65 and older, has outpaced the growth of the working-age population.²

Figure 1 Historical data for California's aging workforce from 1992 to present



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

¹ Luke Rogers and Kristie Wilder, [Shift in Working-Age Population Relative to Older and Younger Americans](#). U.S. Census Bureau, June 25, 2020.

² Rogers and Wilder, [Shift in Working-Age Population](#).

Health Care Industry and Aging Workforce

Census Bureau data suggest that the percent share of older workers tended to vary by industry in 2022. The health care and social assistance industry sector had the highest number of workers ages 55 and over (709,100 workers) than any other industry sector. The accommodation and food services industry sector had the lowest percentage (19 percent) of older workers (291,231), employing 7 percent of the older workforce. The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry sector had the highest percentage of older workers (32 percent) but only 3 percent of the older workforce. In contrast, older workers in the health care and social assistance industry sector accounted for 17 percent of the older workforce.

Table 1 *California employment by industry sector for the total workforce and aging workforce for 2022*

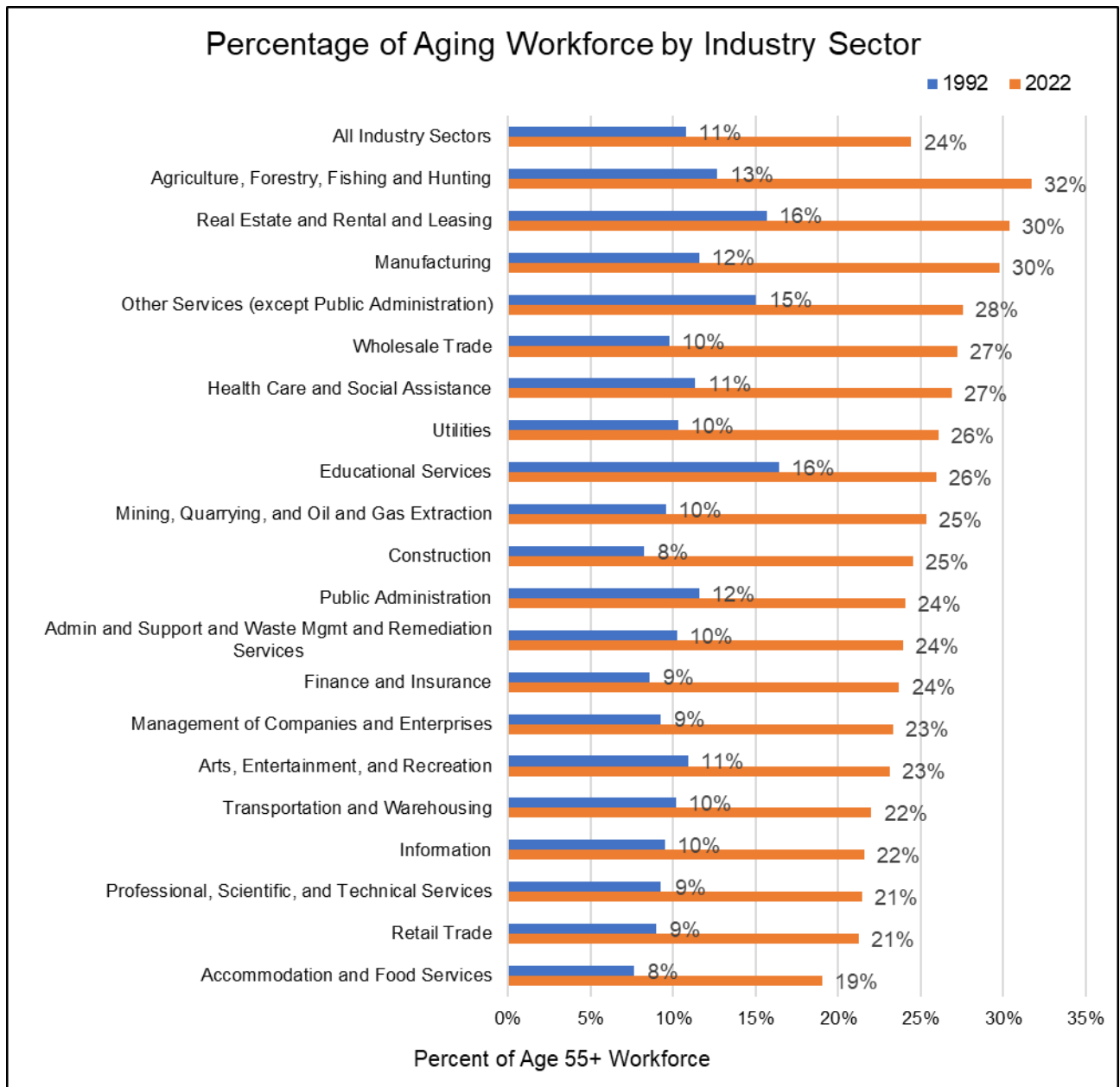
California Jobs by Industry Sector in 2022	All Workers	Age 55+	% Age 55+
All Sectors	17,319,115	4,230,238	24%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,636,802	709,100	27%
Manufacturing	1,290,239	383,775	30%
Educational Services	1,438,797	373,246	26%
Retail Trade	1,601,271	340,303	21%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,382,011	296,590	21%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,531,929	291,231	19%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,143,014	273,634	24%
Construction	918,214	225,406	25%
Transportation and Warehousing	826,244	181,881	22%
Wholesale Trade	646,753	175,904	27%
Information	783,146	168,999	22%
Public Administration	687,072	165,254	24%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	516,475	142,189	28%
Finance and Insurance	543,571	128,787	24%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	353,512	112,156	32%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	300,684	91,324	30%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	334,211	77,322	23%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	261,590	61,018	23%
Utilities	107,388	28,017	26%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	16,192	4,101	25%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

Note: Data may not add due to rounding or suppression due to confidentiality.

The percentage of workers ages 55 and older increased in every industry over the last 30 years. The educational services industry sector saw the smallest increase in workers ages 55 and older from 1992 (16 percent) to 2022 (26 percent). In 1992, the manufacturing industry sector had the largest number of workers in California (1,864,476), with 12 percent of the jobs held by workers ages 55 and older. In 2022, that percentage increased to 30 percent.

Figure 2 California's aging workforce by industry sector comparing 1992 to 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

Rural Counties and Aging Workforce

California has 58 counties that can be categorized into rural or urban. California has the lowest proportion of population living in rural areas at just under 6 percent, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. Rural counties tend to have a higher percentage of older workers than urban counties. Sierra County tops the list as having the highest percentage of older workers (38 percent); and in contrast, San Francisco County has the highest percentage of younger workers (79 percent). Mostly urban counties tend to be composed of younger workers.

Table 2 California county employment by total workers and ages 55 and over for 2022

California County Jobs in 2022							
County	All Workers	Age 55+	% Age 55+	County	All Workers	Age 55+	% Age 55+
Sierra	498	190	38%	Los Angeles	4,729,073	1,215,168	26%
Modoc	2,319	753	32%	San Luis Obispo	108,418	27,513	25%
Plumas	5,221	1,675	32%	Solano	135,571	34,354	25%
Alpine	287	85	30%	Sutter	30,337	7,646	25%
Trinity	2,304	675	29%	Del Norte	7,594	1,911	25%
Lake	14,751	4,286	29%	Alameda	801,107	200,841	25%
Calaveras	10,054	2,921	29%	Imperial	61,490	15,399	25%
Siskiyou	12,368	3,592	29%	Madera	51,686	12,874	25%
Inyo	6,804	1,976	29%	Merced	76,326	18,920	25%
Mariposa	4,480	1,295	29%	Orange	1,678,574	414,834	25%
Mendocino	28,533	8,241	29%	Humboldt	46,227	11,413	25%
Marin	106,462	30,495	29%	Yuba	16,995	4,150	24%
San Benito	16,263	4,517	28%	Lassen	6,553	1,555	24%
Amador	12,114	3,353	28%	Placer	180,139	42,683	24%
Colusa	7,943	2,180	27%	Sacramento	687,862	162,552	24%
Tuolumne	15,364	4,207	27%	Butte	73,069	17,253	24%
Tehama	17,593	4,738	27%	San Joaquin	271,568	63,581	23%
Nevada	30,603	8,241	27%	Tulare	161,417	37,731	23%
Glenn	8,754	2,355	27%	Santa Clara	1,108,577	258,770	23%
Monterey	164,021	44,043	27%	Stanislaus	192,581	44,926	23%
Napa	71,680	19,019	27%	Fresno	401,970	93,582	23%
Sonoma	211,669	55,967	26%	San Diego	1,443,361	336,000	23%
Santa Barbara	186,644	49,258	26%	San Mateo	415,545	95,976	23%
Ventura	304,328	80,104	26%	Yolo	102,813	23,660	23%
Contra Costa	378,843	99,170	26%	Riverside	787,942	180,659	23%
Santa Cruz	93,776	24,271	26%	Kern	301,351	68,500	23%
Shasta	62,620	16,160	26%	San Bernardino	824,246	184,639	22%
El Dorado	54,685	14,095	26%	Kings	46,565	10,283	22%
Mono	7,659	1,971	26%	San Francisco	731,515	153,028	21%

Rural/Urban Counties Legend:
 Completely Rural = Alpine, Mariposa, Modoc, Plumas, Trinity
 Mostly Rural = Amador, Calaveras, Lassen, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama
 Mostly Urban = Remaining Counties

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators and 2020 U.S. Census

Older workers make up a smaller share in urban counties. However, older workers account for more than four million workers throughout the state, which is almost a quarter of the workforce in California. That could impact the workforce as more and more older workers retire, affecting rural counties greater than urban counties. According to U.S. Census Bureau research, older adults are projected to outnumber children under age 18 for the first time in U.S. history by 2034.³

About This Report

This report is prepared by the California Employment Development Department, Policy Accountability and Compliance Branch, Labor Market Information Division (LMID). Listed below are the names and positions of the LMID authors of this report:

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³ America Counts Staff, [2020 Census Will Help Policymakers Prepare for the Incoming Wave of Aging Boomers](#). U.S. Census Bureau, December 10, 2019.