



WORKFORCE2030

A Continued Call to Action

This report is part of the Missouri Chamber Foundation's overarching Missouri 2030 strategic plan, an employer-driven initiative to reposition our state as a global economic leader. Research for this report was provided by Economic Leadership, LLC.

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I. Introduction

The Missouri Chamber released the original Workforce2030 strategy in 2018. Since then, workforce has only risen in prominence as the business community's top competitiveness issue.

Since the first release, Missouri has weathered a global pandemic, geopolitical uncertainty and the ever-evolving workforce demands driven by economic change.

The Missouri Chamber Foundation commissioned Workforce2030: A Continued Call to Action to measure the progress we have made in workforce development, identify the greatest remaining challenges and lay out a strategy for Missouri to compete at a higher level in this critical arena.

In the process of producing this study, we collected quantitative labor market data. We also reached out to education and workforce leaders, policymakers and many of our state's employers to ask what we need to do. Education and workforce leaders talked about capacity, consistency, collaboration, better information and more private-sector engagement. Policymakers stressed alignment, return on investment and more

public awareness. Employers expressed concerns about the quantity and quality of the available workforce, the mismatch between what is being taught and the skills they need, the overall lack of soft skills among young workers and the rising costs of finding talent.

The task is daunting, but we can, and we must, do better.

II.

Executive Summary

In today's fierce competition for jobs, workforce has emerged as the most effective weapon. The countries, states and regions that recognize that fact and wisely invest in strategic workforce development and retention initiatives will win the jobs war. The rest likely will be left behind.

While predicting the economic future is difficult, one fact is certain: The most successful businesses that emerge over the coming decades will locate themselves where they have access to a top-quality workforce. We want to be sure Missouri is that place.

We have proven that having a strong strategy can impact change. Since the launch of the first Workforce2030 report in 2018, Missouri has made impressive strides in many areas of workforce development – greatly expanding apprenticeships,

operating robust worker training programs such as Missouri One Start and the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant, creating the Credential Training Program, integrating higher education and workforce development agencies, and improving career awareness among secondary students and their teachers.

What are the factors that continue to impact Missouri's workforce shortages? The greatest factor is slow population growth. Companies will not be able to grow if they can't find employees to fill open jobs. During the pandemic era, from 2019 to 2023, the state population increased by 1.1 percent. This rate was half the national average and eighth among nine adjoining states. Data provider Lightcast projects Missouri to grow its population by 2.9 percent

between 2023 and 2033. Among neighboring states, this is next to last in growth rate.

Missouri's job growth is also below the national average at 2.28 percent. Twenty-nine counties had job growth above five percent, while 36 counties lost jobs.

Another important factor in workforce availability is adult participation in the labor force. The labor participation rate in the U.S. has largely trended downward over the last 30 years, with the country's aging population likely the primary reason. Other sub-groups that impact this number include people with disabilities, people with substance use disorder, disconnected youth who are neither in school nor working, formerly incarcerated individuals who struggle finding work, and

workers who do not have access to child care, transportation or housing.

Missouri businesses are also concerned about the widening skills gap between available jobs and the abilities of workers needed to fill them. According to a 2023 survey of Missouri CEOs, less than one-third believe that Missouri high school graduates are well-prepared for the workplace. The lack of soft skills was cited by 62 percent as the greatest concern with the available workforce.

Other factors adding to Missouri's workforce shortages include low unemployment rate, low rate of employment of foreign-born workers, high turnover and the number of people leaving Missouri's workforce to take remote jobs in other states or start their own businesses.

Workforce2030: A Continued Call to Action identifies six emphasis areas on which to focus to improve Missouri's workforce:

1. Improve Workforce Readiness
2. Increase Labor Force Participation
3. Expand Career Awareness Efforts
4. Connect Youth and Underskilled Workers with Work Experience
5. Attract and Retain More Talent
6. Strengthen Missouri's Public Workforce System

III.

Factors Impacting Missouri's Workforce Shortages

SLOW POPULATION GROWTH

The single biggest threat to Missouri's economy is stagnant population growth. Companies will not be able to grow if they can't find employees to fill open jobs.

During the pandemic era, from 2019 to 2023, the state population increased by 1.1 percent. This rate was half the national average and eighth among nine adjoining states. Tennessee (gain of 4.3 percent) and Nebraska (gain of 2.8 percent) were the neighboring states that grew faster than the national average,

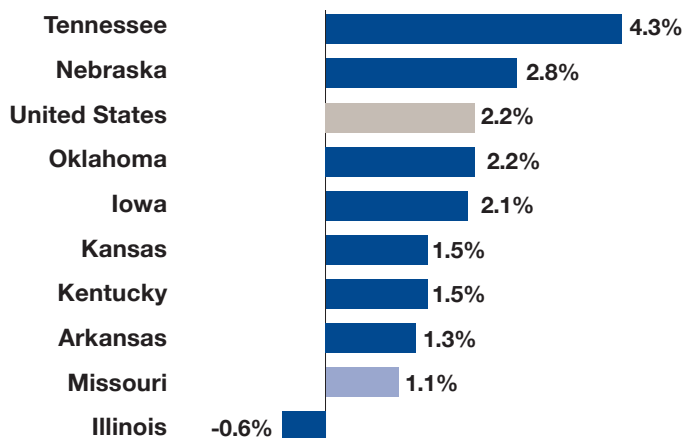
while Illinois was the only adjoining state to lose population.

Data provider Lightcast projects Missouri to grow its population by 2.9 percent between 2023 and 2033. Among neighboring states, this is next to last in growth rate.

Missouri's projected 10-year population gain of 2.9 percent will be distributed unevenly across the state. While 13 counties are projected to add population by greater than 10 percent, more than 50 counties are projected to lose population over the period.

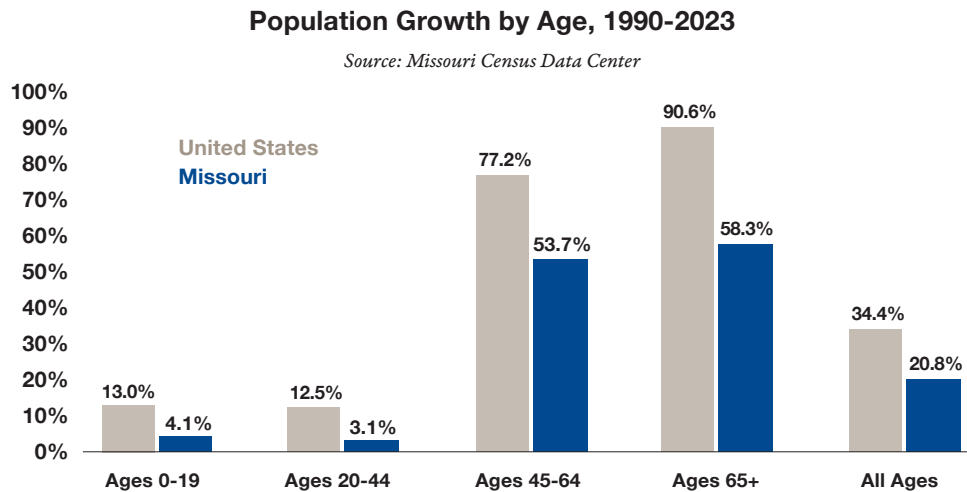
Percent Population Change by State, 2019–2023

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2



OLDER MISSOURIANS LEAVING THE WORKFORCE

The aging cohort of Missourians 65 and older is another major cause for concern. The impending retirement of experienced workers is particularly alarming in the skilled trades. Between 1990 and 2023, Missouri's population aged 65 and older grew by 58.3 percent. Over that same period, Missouri's population aged 20-44 grew by 3.1 percent. The chart illustrates this long-term disparity in growth between age groups.



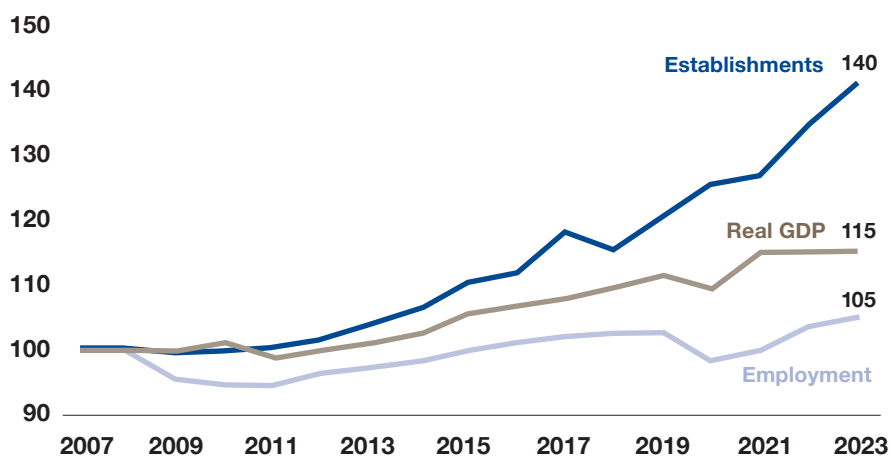
SLOW AND UNEVEN JOB GROWTH

Looking at broad economic indicators for Missouri, we see a strong rebound in total employment and the number of business establishments post-COVID. Real (inflation-adjusted) gross domestic product (GDP) change has been more muted since 2020 but still shows positive growth.

Despite this uptick, similar to population trends, the state's employment growth over the last 15 years has been lower than the U.S. average.

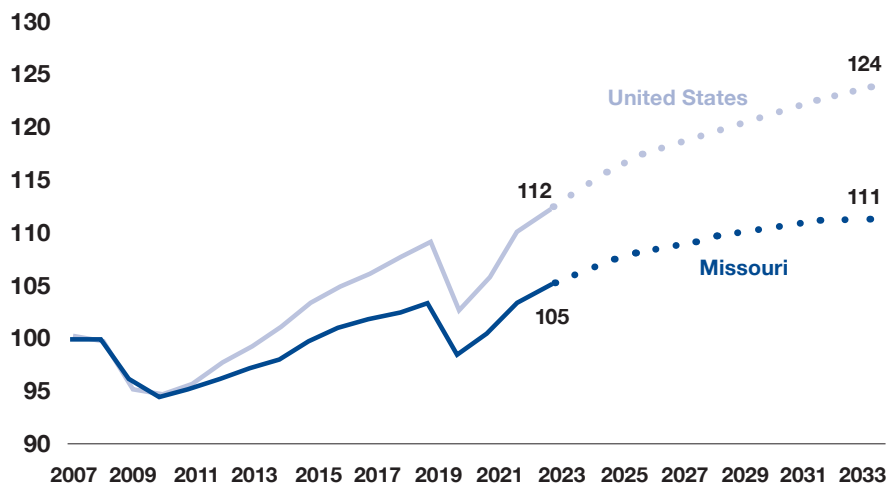
Missouri Economic Growth Metrics 100 = 2007 Levels

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2

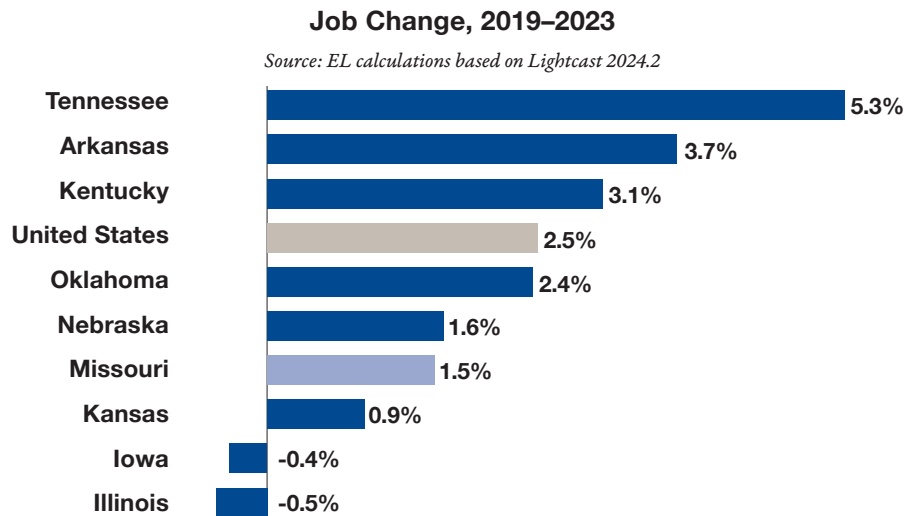


Historical and Predicted Employment Trends 100 = 2007 Employment Levels

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2

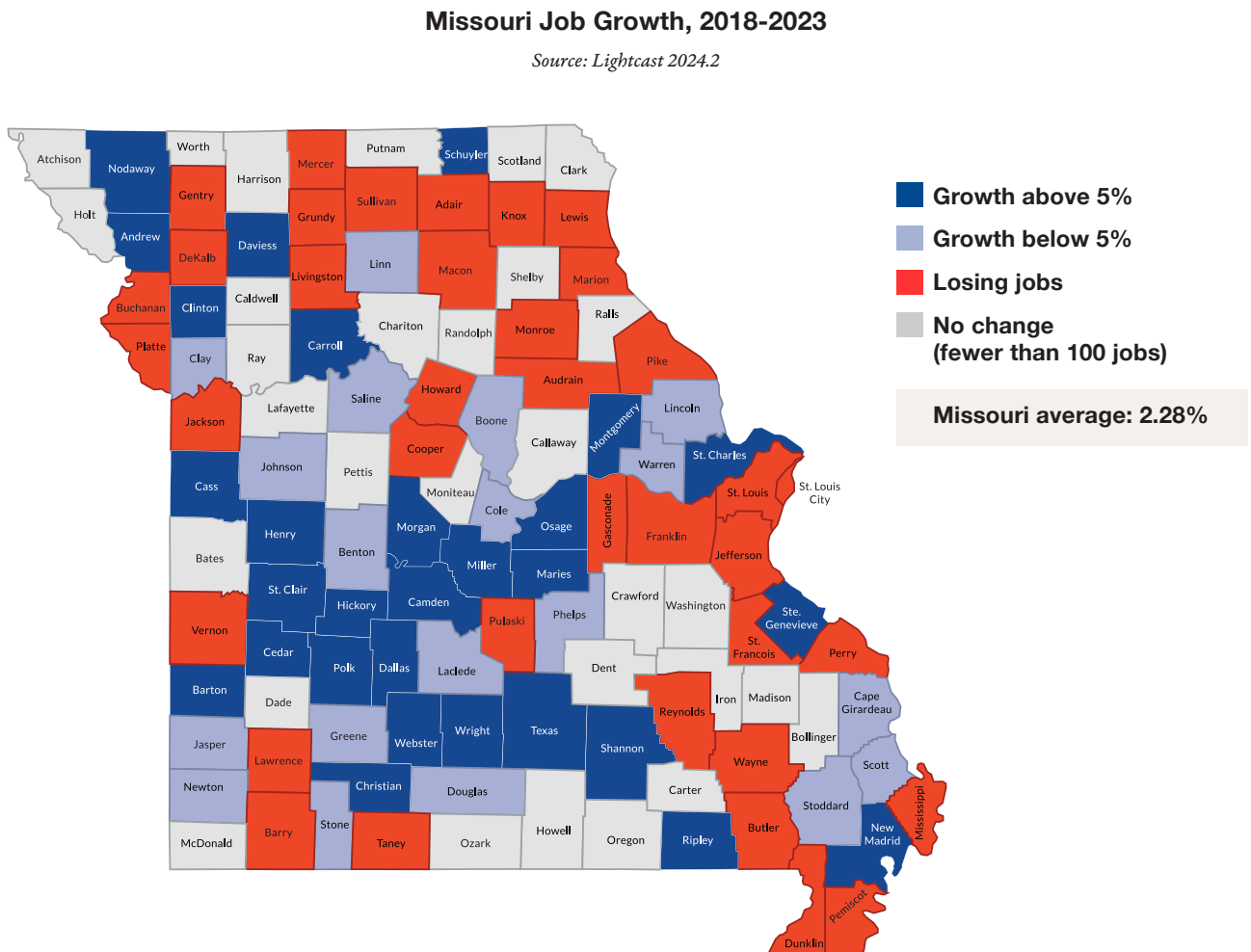


During the pandemic era, Missouri was able to increase total employment by 1.5 percent compared with a nationwide gain of 2.5 percent. Tennessee, Arkansas and Kentucky led among neighboring states, while Iowa and Illinois lost jobs.



Over the most recent five-year period, Missouri had a net employment gain of 2.28 percent but with wide variations across the state.

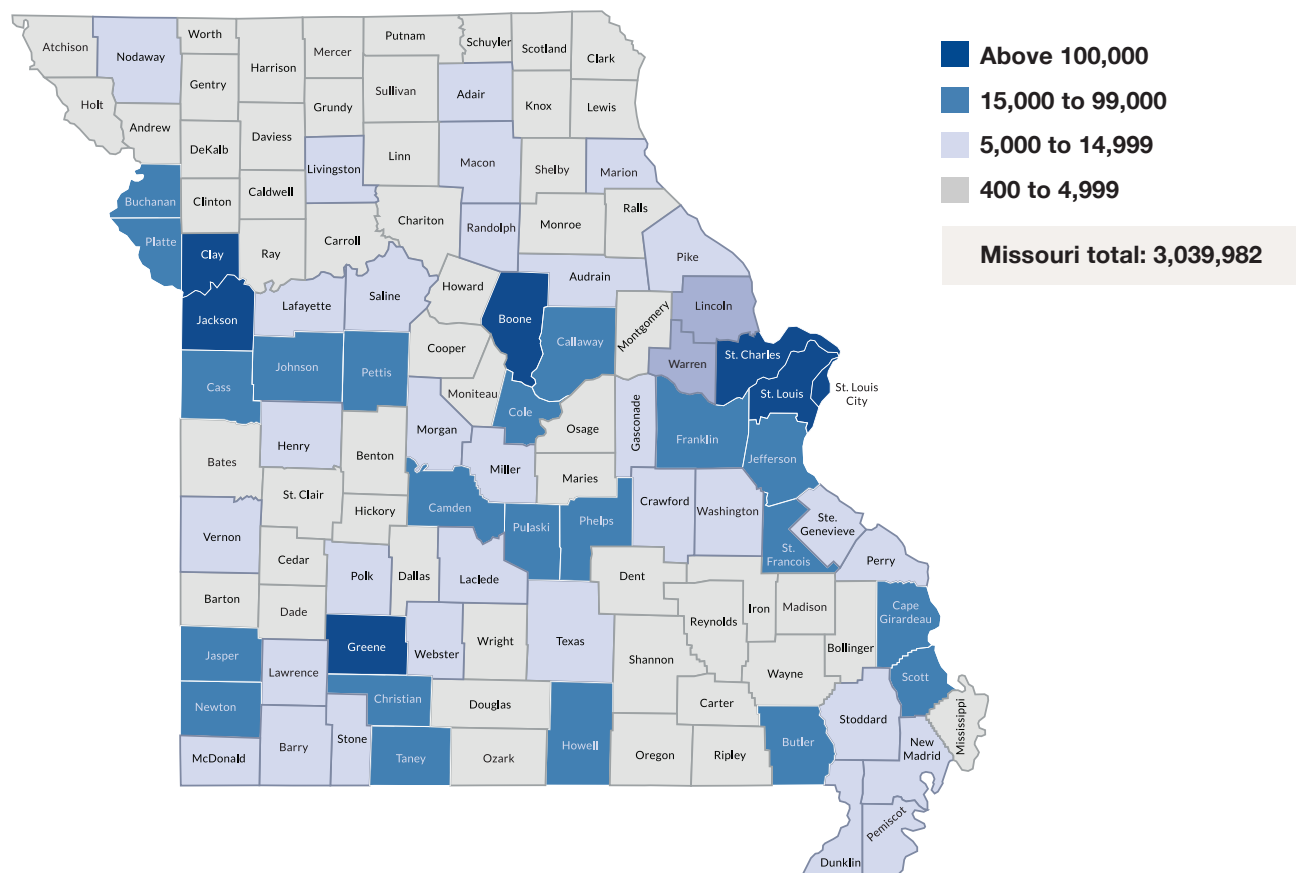
The county map below indicates that 29 counties had job growth above five percent while 36 counties lost jobs.



The map below shows the concentration of employment in Missouri, which is particularly concentrated across the central part of the state.

Missouri Jobs in Each County, 2023

Source: Lightcast 2024.2



RECORD LOW LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

A slow growing population leads to a very tight labor market in Missouri, with low unemployment rates across almost all indicators. The state unemployment rate has generally been lower than the United States average for the last seven years, and it remains lower in 2024.

As of April 2024, Missouri's unemployment rate of 3.4 percent is well below the national average, and in the middle of the pack among adjoining states. Nebraska has the area's lowest unemployment, while Kentucky and Illinois are above the national rate.

Unemployment is low among most groups. For young workers, the Missouri rate is far below the U.S. average. Prime age workers have a rate slightly below the national rate, while for older workers, unemployment is slightly higher.

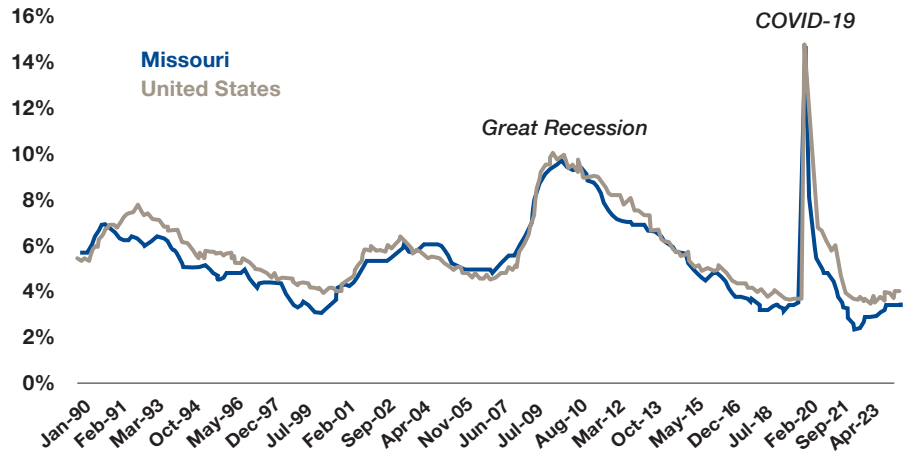
Unemployment rates for both men and women in Missouri are significantly below the national average.

People of color have higher rates of unemployment in Missouri. Among neighboring states, Missouri is tied with Arkansas for the third-highest unemployment rate among people of color.

Looking at the work backgrounds of Missouri adults who are unemployed, recent data shows six industry sectors with at least 10,000 unemployed workers having experience in that industry. This is

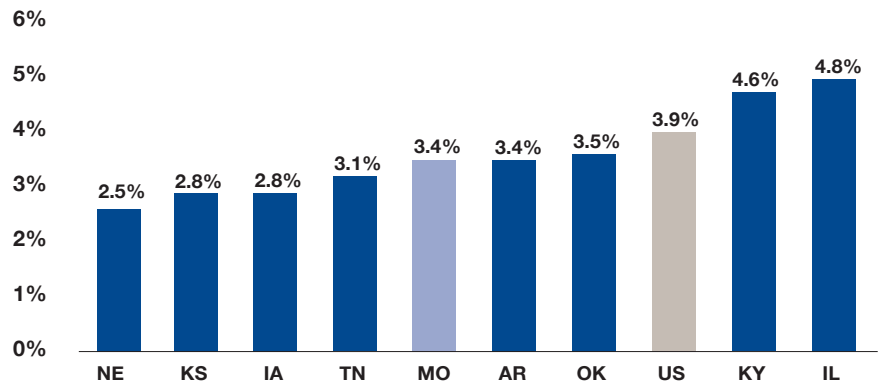
Unemployment Rates 100 = 2007 Employment Levels

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)



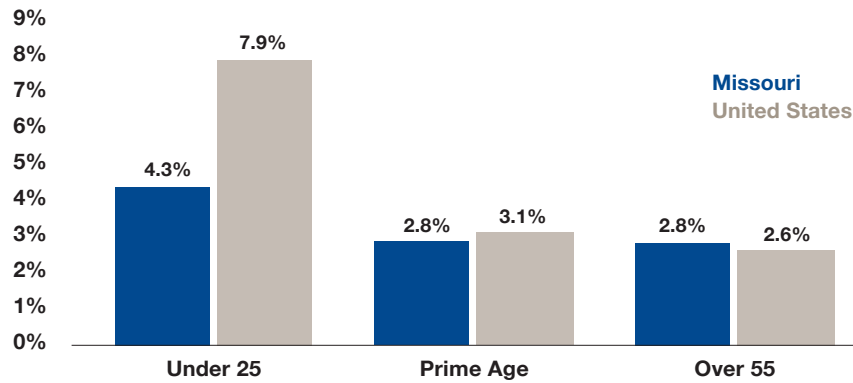
Unemployment Rate, April 2024

Source: BLS



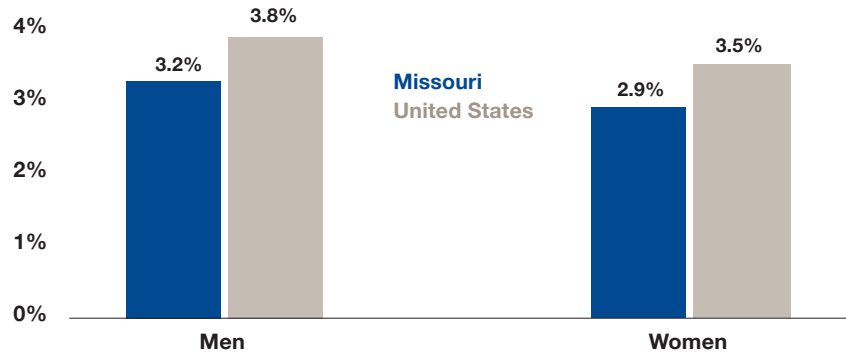
Unemployment Rates by Age, 2023

Source: EL calculations based on BLS



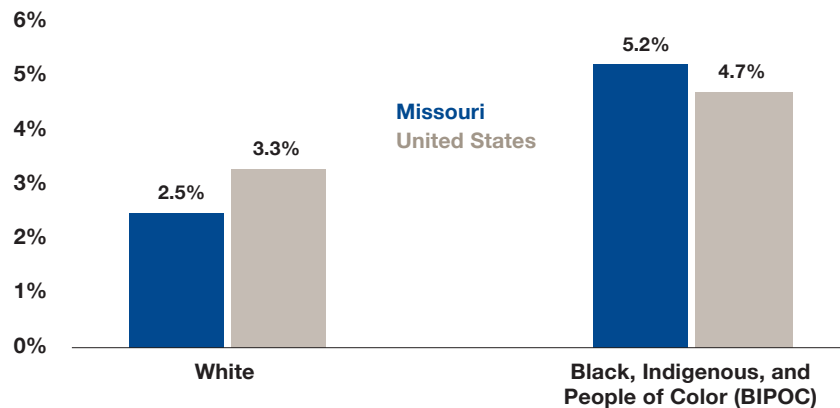
Unemployment Rates by Gender, 2023

Source: EL calculations based on BLS



Unemployment Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Source: EL calculations based on BLS



led by unemployed workers with experience in construction and office jobs (both over 16,000 people), followed by those with backgrounds in transportation, management, production and food service.

DECLINING LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Another important factor in workforce availability is adult participation in the labor force. The participation rate in the U.S. has largely trended down over the last 25 years, with the country's aging population likely the primary reason. Other sub-groups that impact this number include people with disabilities, disconnected youth who are neither in school nor working, ex-offenders who struggle

finding work, and workers who do not have access to child care, transportation or housing.

Missouri's labor participation rate has trended alongside the U.S. rate for the past five years.

Among adjacent states, Missouri's labor force participation ranks sixth. Nebraska and Iowa have the region's highest participation, while Kentucky, Arkansas and Tennessee are well below the national average in labor force participation.

Looking at labor force participation among various groups, we see that prime-age workers in Missouri (ages 25 to 54) show average or above-average participation across the board. Among prime-age workers, men in Missouri have the same

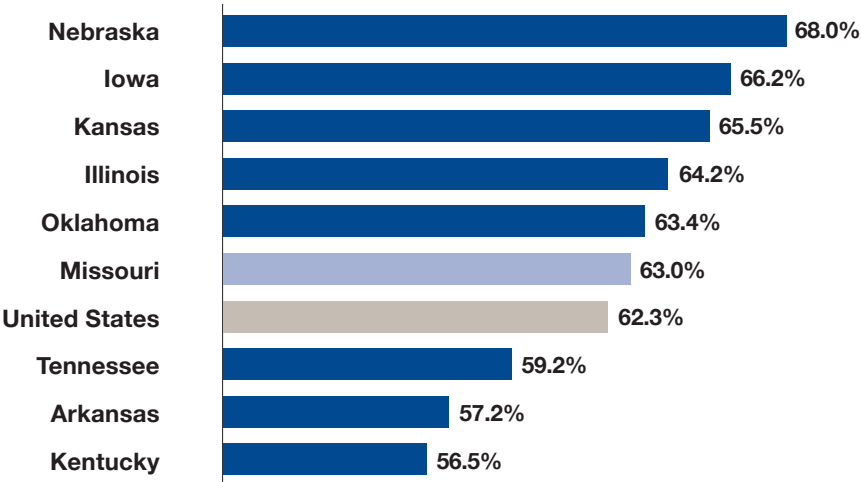
labor force participation rate as the U.S. average, while women in the state have a higher-than-average rate.

Among racial groups, white adults match the U.S. participation rate, while for people of color in Missouri, the labor force participation is slightly higher than the national average.

Among older adults, however, Missouri's participation rate is lower than the U.S. average. Given the large number of people in this cohort and the low participation rate, engaging more of this group (whether in full-time work, part-time work or serving as mentors and trainers) would be an important opportunity to improve the quantity and quality of the state's workforce.

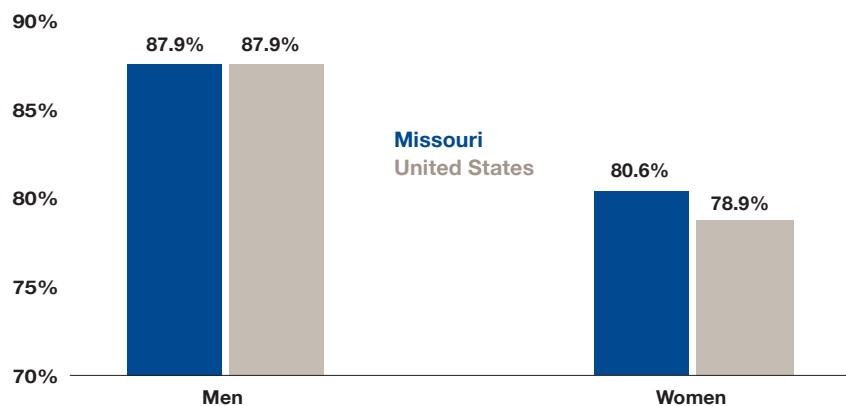
Labor Force Participation Rate by State, February 2024

Source: Lightcast 2024.2



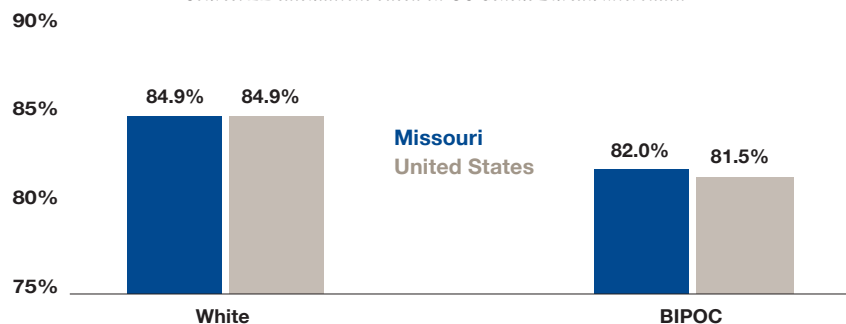
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rates by Gender, 2022

Source: EL calculations based on US Census Bureau microdata



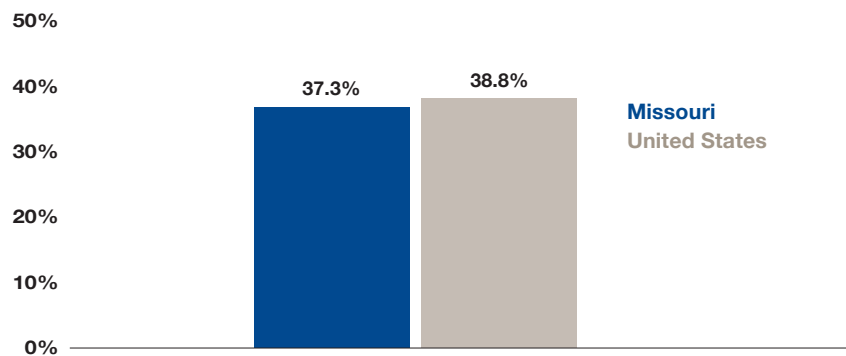
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rates by Race, 2022

Source: EL calculations based on US Census Bureau microdata



Age 55 and Older Labor Force Participation Rates, 2022

Source: EL calculations based on US Census Bureau microdata



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND ALIGNMENT

Although there is an ongoing shift to focus less on educational degrees and more on the specific skill sets needed for jobs, educational attainment remains important for workers to be hired in many positions. Recent data shows that the share of adults in Missouri with at least a bachelor's degree is the fourth highest in the region and below the national average. Illinois and Kansas have the highest attainment of college degrees, while Arkansas is lowest.

The same holds true when looking at education by gender, with Missouri also ranking fourth in the region for women and for men. Adult women in Missouri are slightly more likely than men to have a four-year

degree, 33 percent to 31 percent. Considering attainment by race or ethnicity, Missouri has the area's second-smallest gap between white adults and adult people of color. In Missouri, 33 percent of white adults and 27 percent of people of color have a bachelor's degree or higher.

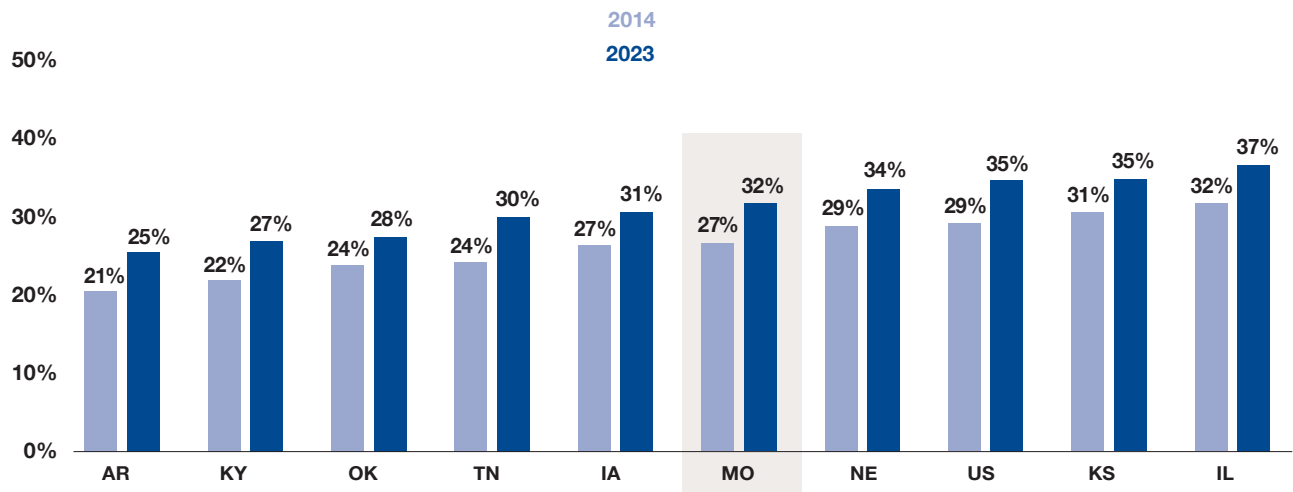
The discussion of educational attainment leads to consideration of what quality jobs are available for those without a bachelor's degree. For Missouri, we used the following criteria to filter for quality jobs that typically have no four-year degree requirement:

- Occupations paying more than \$45,000 annually;
- Occupations that have been adding jobs in Missouri;
- Jobs with a lower risk of automation (and thus possible elimination) in the future.

The list on the following page highlights good-paying, high-demand jobs in Missouri that do not require a bachelor's degree. They feature annual earnings ranging from \$45,760 to more than \$80,000 and annual openings of at least 1,100 positions and as many as 6,800 positions. This high-demand list covers a wide range of job types, from skilled trades (electrical, HVAC, maintenance and repair) to sales, truck drivers and dental assistants. The state's technical colleges, community colleges and secondary school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs should ensure that these occupations are well-represented in school curricula.

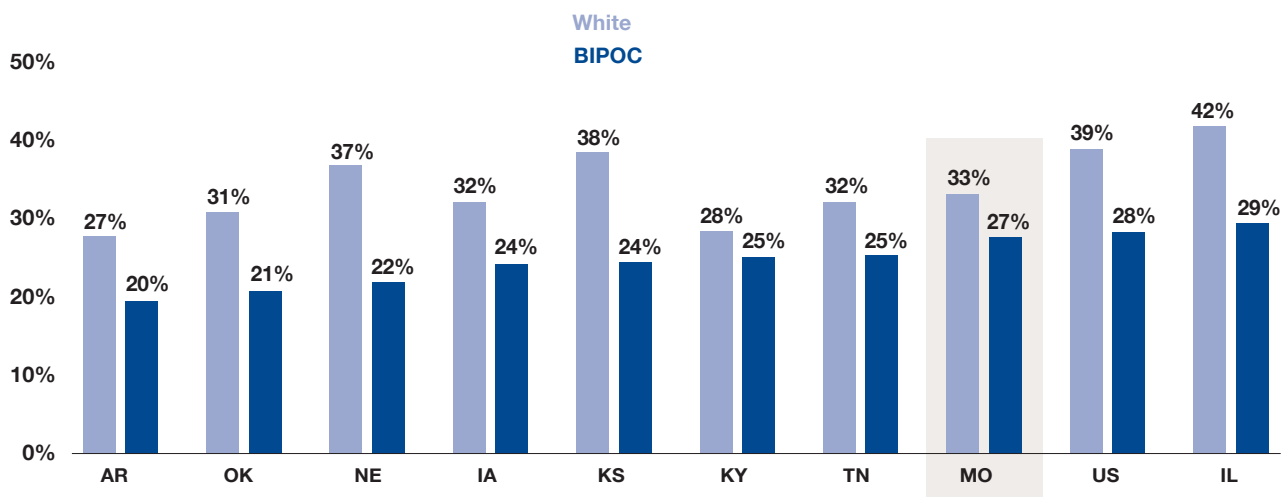
Percentage of Adult Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2



Percentage of Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Race/Ethnicity, 2023

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2



Missouri's High-Demand Jobs Requiring Less than a Bachelor's Degree

Occupation	Avg Annual Openings	Avg Annual Earnings
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	6,828	\$49,525
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	4,015	\$45,968
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	2,948	\$60,861
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,974	\$45,448
Insurance Sales Agents	1,819	\$54,766
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	1,580	\$47,216
Electricians	1,480	\$62,629
Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	1,354	\$57,866
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	1,269	\$80,309
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation & Material Moving Workers	1,207	\$60,466
Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	1,206	\$61,984
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, & Repairers	1,190	\$71,115
Dental Assistants	1,123	\$45,760

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2 | Note: Occupations with earnings less than \$45,000, an automation index higher than 122, and those experiencing net job loss from 2019-2023 were filtered out from the list.

ABOVE AVERAGE JOB TURNOVER

When calculating employment needs, Missouri businesses must take the regular turnover of employees in many jobs into account, as well as potential employment growth. Similar to national trends, service-based jobs in the state have the highest average annual turnover (recently at 97 percent), followed by trade-based occupations at 76 percent. Management positions (51 percent) and knowledge-based occupations (41 percent) have significantly lower average turnover rates.

Missouri's overall job turnover rate is 74 percent, above the U.S. average of 70 percent. Turnover in the state is the third highest among neighboring states.

Looking at turnover by occupation category in Missouri, there are three common occupations with annual turnover rates above 100 percent: food service, personal care and building and grounds maintenance. Occupations with turnover rates greater than 50 percent are shown in the appendix.

Turnover Rates by State, 2023

Source: Lightcast 2024.2



BELOW AVERAGE RATE OF FOREIGN WORKERS

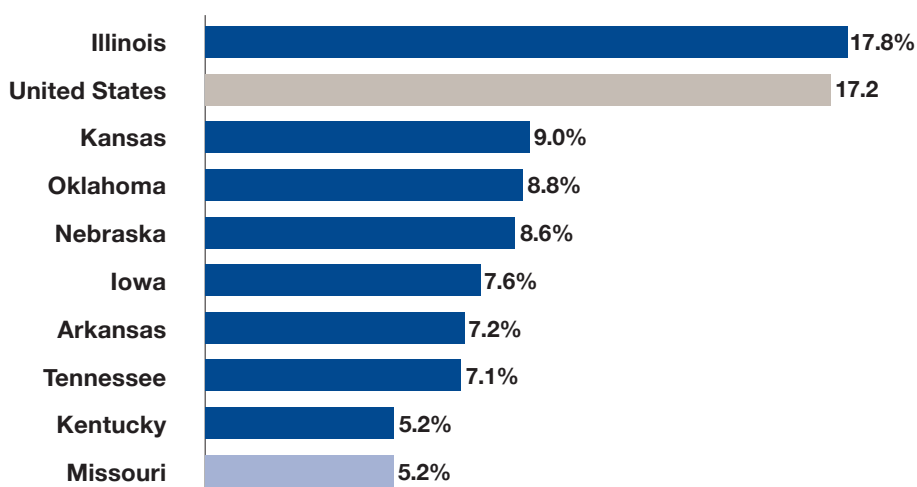
In a country where the birthrate has been below the “replacement rate” needed to maintain population levels for most of the past 50 years, the ability to attract foreign-born individuals of all skill levels is increasingly important for having an adequate workforce. Over the last 25 years, U.S. birthrates have fallen further, adding emphasis on the need for foreign-born residents who are in this country legally.

In Missouri, foreign-born people make up 4.1 percent of the population and 5.2 percent of the total workforce. Among adjoining states, Missouri's share of foreign-born workers is tied with Kentucky for the region's smallest. The United States overall and neighboring Illinois have more than three times Missouri's percentage of foreign-born workers.

In many occupations in Missouri, legal, foreign-born workers comprise a critical portion or even a majority of all employees. These occupations with a high percentage of foreign-born workers run the gamut across all skill levels – from mail clerks to physicists, engineers and life scientists. A chart showing those occupations with high shares of foreign-born workers is in the appendix.

Foreign Born Workers as a Percentage of Total Employment, 2022

Source: EL calculations based on US Census Bureau microdata



INCREASE IN REMOTE WORKERS AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Two other workforce considerations for Missouri employers are the share of adults working from home and the percentage who are self-employed. While remote work levels may be on the decline, they will likely remain well above pre-pandemic levels. Summer 2024 data from Placer.ai on office building foot traffic in major U.S. metro areas showed average office attendance about 30 percent below usage in summer 2019. This represents the highest post-COVID office traffic, but obviously well below trends before the pandemic. In a spring 2024 survey by Resume Builder, 40 percent of employees preferred to work in person full-time, 32 percent preferred a hybrid schedule and 28 percent preferred to be fully remote. Some employers find it difficult to develop corporate culture, co-worker communication and an environment of innovation without in-person attendance.

Missouri's work-from-home share of all workers is slightly below the national average. Compared with the nine adjacent states, Missouri's share is the third highest after Illinois and Tennessee.

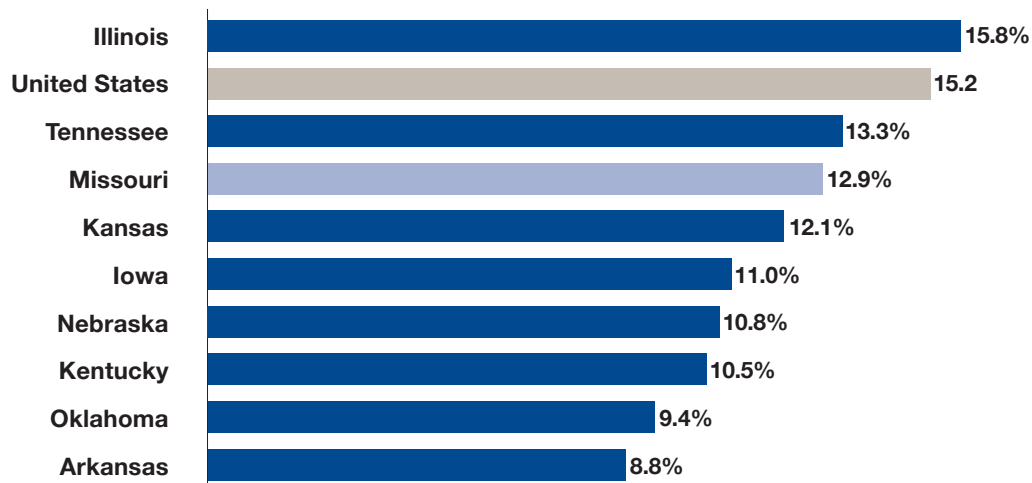
By occupation group, those with the biggest work-from-home shares in Missouri are computer and mathematical jobs (45 percent of all workers) and business and finance operations (33 percent).

Another trend since the COVID era is an increasing share of the adult labor force that decides to go into business for themselves. Nationally, business starts hit new highs during the pandemic and remain at elevated levels. If adults leave the traditional labor force and enter self-employment, this will reduce applicant pools for Missouri employers.

Recent data shows that 26 percent of adult workers in the United States and 24 percent in Missouri are self-employed. Among neighboring states, Missouri's self-employment share is tied for fifth. Oklahoma and Tennessee have the region's largest percentage of self-employed, both above the national average. Certain industry sectors in Missouri have much larger than average shares of self-employment. The industries with the highest levels are agriculture and forestry (84 percent of all workers) and real estate (80 percent).

Percentage of People Working from Home, 2022

Source: US Census Bureau



Self-Employment as a Percentage of Total Employment, 2023

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2



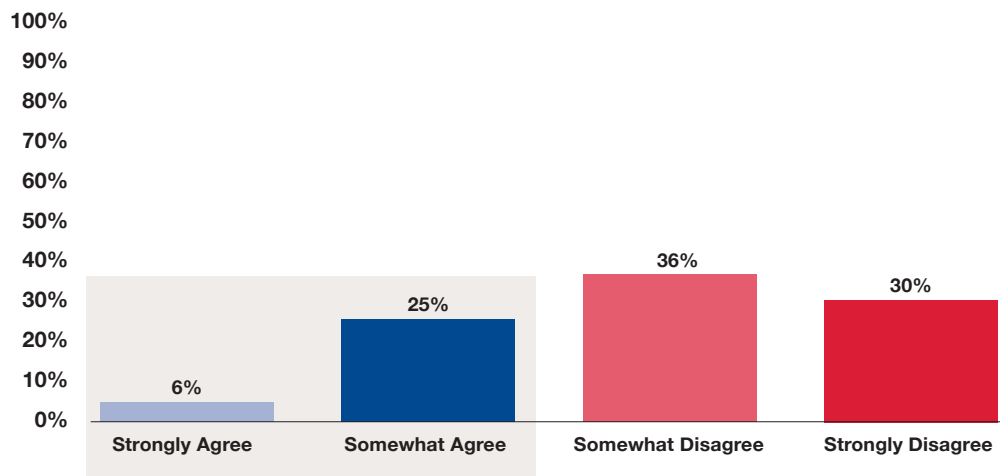
WIDENING SKILLS GAP

Like most employers in America, Missouri businesses are concerned about the widening skills gap between the available jobs and the abilities of workers needed to fill them. During our employer interviews, a common sentiment was “unless Missouri changes the way we are preparing people for the jobs of the future, the current mismatch between employer skill needs and the talents of the workforce will widen.”

According to a 2023 survey of Missouri CEOs, less than one-third believe that Missouri high school graduates are well-prepared for the workplace. The lack of soft skills was cited by 62 percent as the greatest concern with the available workforce.

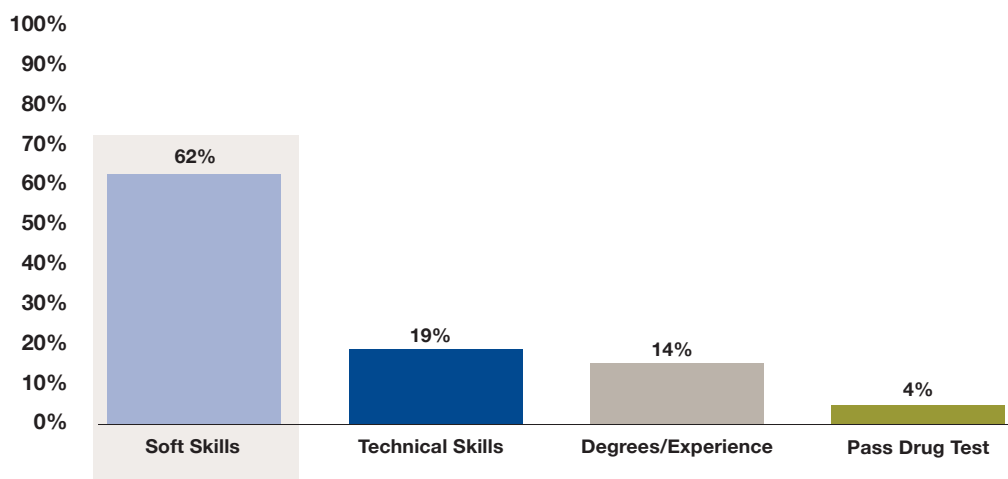
Do You Believe Graduating High School Students Are Well-Prepared?

Source: Missouri Chamber CEO Survey, 2023



What is Your Greatest Concern with Available Workforce?

Source: Missouri Chamber CEO Survey, 2023



Securing change in Missouri's education system is a slow process. One employer interviewed described it as "trying to turn the Titanic away from an iceberg." Systemic education reform is needed but will take years. Therefore, initiatives that work with – or around – the current system must also be made available to help employers in the short term. A demand-driven approach is needed, one that responds to employers' needs for skilled workers today while anticipating employment needs of the future.

CHANGING JOB LANDSCAPE

Whether workers are employed at Hallmark in Kansas City or a small manufacturer in Osceola, the skills they need today are different from what was needed just a few years ago. Children who entered kindergarten in 2017 will begin their careers or start their first year of post-secondary education in 2030. They must be prepared for jobs that are yet to be imagined.

Missouri's manufacturing, professional and technical services and financial sectors are growing faster than the national average. Missouri is also growing jobs for the future. We have had significant growth in many of the advanced industries, including computer systems design, architecture and engineering and aerospace. Technological advances, changing consumer preferences, efficiencies, intense corporate competition and demographics have combined to change the state's demand for specific occupations. Thousands of new jobs have been created for personal care aides, food prep workers, registered nurses, nursing assistants and home health aides. At the same time, Missouri is experiencing job losses among accountants and retail salespeople. Each of the following charts demonstrates the impact of the changing jobs landscape. In the economy, change is inevitable, but these days, change is happening at an ever-increasing rate, putting a strain on the ability of workforce development efforts to keep pace.

Top 10 Missouri Advanced Industries by Number of Jobs, 2023

Industry	2013 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change 2013-23	Percentage Change 2013-23
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	33,782	42,215	8,433	25.0%
Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	21,144	25,430	4,285	20.3%
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	12,109	24,065	11,956	98.7%
Aerospace Product and Parts Manufacturing	17,689	18,111	422	2.4%
Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	10,841	14,647	3,806	35.1%
Wired and Wireless Telecommunications (except Satellite)	20,147	14,154	(5,993)	(29.7%)
Motor Vehicle Manufacturing	5,602	12,981	7,379	131.7%
Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing	8,153	10,631	2,478	30.4%
Semiconductor and Other Electronic Component Manufacturing	3,347	8,956	5,609	167.6%
Scientific Research and Development Services	6,817	8,909	2,092	30.7%

Top 10 Missouri Advanced Industries by Gross Regional Product, 2023

Industry	2023 GRP	GRP % Change 2022-2023
Aerospace Product and Parts Manufacturing	\$6,546,905,276	19.1%
Wired and Wireless Telecommunications (except Satellite)	\$6,504,662,757	-7.4%
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	\$6,352,116,448	-3.9%
Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution	\$5,991,519,814	7.2%
Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	\$5,352,297,249	10.1%
Motor Vehicle Manufacturing	\$4,124,570,088	24.6%
Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	\$4,031,138,892	10.1%
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	\$3,922,196,561	7.2%
Pharmaceutical and Medicine Manufacturing	\$3,277,751,451	5.9%
Software Publishers	\$2,271,562,500	17.1%

Source for both tables: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.3

Top 25 Growing Occupations 2013-2023

Occupation	2013 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change 2013-23	Percentage Change 2013-23
General and Operations Managers	48,199	97,667	49,468	102.6%
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	54,165	88,538	34,373	63.5%
Cooks, Fast Food	11,484	44,415	32,931	286.8%
Stockers and Order Fillers	30,705	63,013	32,308	105.2%
Cooks, Restaurant	21,519	33,022	11,504	53.5%
Customer Service Representatives	41,696	53,016	11,320	27.1%
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	6,727	17,720	10,994	163.4%
Project Management Specialists	9,309	19,407	10,098	108.5%
Human Resources Specialists	9,025	18,741	9,716	107.7%
Office Clerks, General	54,737	64,265	9,528	17.4%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	39,812	49,236	9,424	23.7%
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	23,443	32,242	8,799	37.5%
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	27,419	35,974	8,555	31.2%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	39,431	47,951	8,520	21.6%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	6,983	14,531	7,549	108.1%
Bartenders	9,906	16,752	6,845	69.1%
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	16,944	22,530	5,586	33.0%
Production Workers, All Other	4,032	9,427	5,396	133.8%
Food Preparation Workers	11,942	17,175	5,233	43.8%
Registered Nurses	69,538	74,673	5,135	7.4%
Driver/Sales Workers	9,414	14,018	4,604	48.9%
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	4,384	8,947	4,563	104.1%
Nurse Practitioners	3,136	7,502	4,365	139.2%
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	6,248	10,360	4,112	65.8%
Managers, All Other	5,542	9,618	4,077	73.6%

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.3

Top 25 Shrinking Occupations 2013-2023

Occupation	2013 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change 2013-23	Percentage Change 2013-23
Fast Food and Counter Workers	76,736	31,370	(45,366)	-59.1%
Retail Salespersons	84,825	60,427	(24,398)	-28.8%
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	70,395	46,212	(24,183)	-34.4%
Nursing Assistants	42,674	30,378	(12,296)	-28.8%
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	33,480	24,125	(9,355)	-27.9%
Waiters and Waitresses	48,893	42,648	(6,245)	-12.8%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	24,480	18,674	(5,806)	-23.7%
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	23,247	18,287	(4,960)	-21.3%
Childcare Workers	20,022	15,065	(4,957)	-24.8%
Helpers--Production Workers	8,012	3,381	(4,631)	-57.8%
Bill and Account Collectors	8,364	3,881	(4,483)	-53.6%
Computer Programmers	6,984	2,849	(4,135)	-59.2%
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	15,191	11,358	(3,833)	-25.2%
Military-only occupations	20,254	16,535	(3,719)	-18.4%
Tellers	11,819	8,344	(3,474)	-29.4%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	16,409	13,163	(3,246)	-19.8%
Telemarketers	5,787	2,663	(3,124)	-54.0%
Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	13,137	10,201	(2,935)	-22.3%
Bus Drivers, School	11,520	8,650	(2,870)	-24.9%
Billing and Posting Clerks	9,948	7,132	(2,816)	-28.3%
Correctional Officers and Jailers	8,417	5,617	(2,800)	-33.3%
Family Medicine Physicians	6,277	3,525	(2,752)	-43.8%
File Clerks	3,621	932	(2,689)	-74.3%
Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	5,666	3,162	(2,504)	-44.2%
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan	6,789	4,326	(2,464)	-36.3%

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.3

IV.

The Path Forward: A Continued Call to Action

We know there is no “silver bullet” that can easily solve all of Missouri’s workforce challenges, but certain actions can improve our competitive position, better meet the needs of our state’s employers and create more opportunities.

1. IMPROVE WORKFORCE READINESS

Current situation/challenges:

A significant gap between occupational demands and workers’ skill sets is nearly universal in Missouri and throughout the United States. The problem exists on many fronts, impacting workers in every level of our workplaces.

Employers are also concerned about the lack of employee soft skills, meaning employees fail to understand or meet workplace expectations regarding dependability, honesty, professional behavior and communication.

In recent years, especially since the pandemic, there has been significantly greater focus on short-term (usually one year or less) and non-credit training at community colleges. According to research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, student enrollment at two-year schools with a high share of vocational enrollment as opposed to college transfer enrollment has grown much faster from 2022 to 2024. While enrollment at schools with more students focused on transfer to a four-year college is

still well below 2019 levels, schools with more vocational students have seen student traffic grow by nearly five percent above pre-pandemic numbers. However, community colleges are still funded primarily for the number of full-time students in for-credit courses.

The skills gap is particularly noticeable in mid-skill jobs requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree. Data from the National Skills Association shows that 53 percent of Missouri jobs fall into the mid-skill category, but only 46 percent of Missouri workers possess the needed skills. Many mid-skill positions are available in fast-growing, high-demand fields. One of the key reasons for this shortage is the fact that these positions are not promoted to students, teachers or parents.

Recommendations:

1. Provide K-12 students with work readiness content and appropriate measurements to certify work readiness by graduation.
2. Provide more opportunities for stackable credentials, using shorter-term training models and making education and skill attainment programs more accessible and affordable for adult workers, especially in high-demand fields.
3. Change the process for funding and rewarding two-year schools that increase short-term and non-credit workforce training.

4. Review Missouri's financial aid delivery system and apply job-driven aid policies where possible.
5. Integrate education and workforce readiness training by addressing basic skill needs (verbal and written communication).

Best Practices:

- More states are including work readiness in K-12 school curricula and measurements of student readiness for the workplace. Since 2018, the Ohio Department of Education has used the OhioMeansJobs – Readiness Seal as part of its high school graduation requirements. The OhioMeansJobs - Readiness Seal demonstrates proficiency in a set of 15 professional skills chosen by Ohio employers. These skills cover essential workplace issues such as reliability, work ethic, punctuality, teamwork, critical thinking, communication and digital technology. To earn the seal, students must interact with at least three adult mentors from school, workplaces and the community.
- The Utah Education Network features Workplace Skills as part of the K-12 schools' core competencies. The Workplace Skills core course is a classroom complement to student internships or other work-based learning experiences. The course covers everything from resume development and interview skills to workplace safety, from professional character traits to effective communication.
- Some states are addressing short-term workforce training in innovative ways. In 2023, Iowa expanded its Gap Tuition Assistance Program for community colleges to assist those in short-term and non-credit courses. In a pilot financing effort called GEER II Gap Expansion, students completing courses under the program increased their wages by an average of 13.7 percent. Texas' House Bill 8, adopted in 2023, transforms the state's community college system funding by focusing on "credentials of value" whether they are degrees or industry-recognized certificates. It emphasizes obtaining credentials of value for high-demand fields in Texas and also provides for all Texas community colleges to offer dual credit courses for high school students at no additional cost. Finally, the bill transfers oversight of adult career education to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- Another way to account for and reward community colleges for providing short-term and non-credit courses is to convert quality, non-credit courses into for-credit courses, giving students the opportunity to earn an associate degree. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System and Salt Lake Community College in Utah are two institutions that have transferred non-credit work into credit-bearing courses. Salt Lake

Community College also adopted a competency-based education (CBE) model that awards credits for skill competencies rather than courses completed.

2. INCREASE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Current situation/challenges:

Labor force participation is hovering at its lowest point in the last 30 years. The problem is multi-faceted, impacted by numerous groups who are disconnected from the workforce: people with disabilities, people with substance misuse disorder, veterans, disconnected youth who are neither in school nor working, formerly incarcerated individuals who struggle finding work, and people who do not have access to child care, transportation or housing.

The large percentage of the workforce aged 55 and older is a huge concern for businesses in terms of imminent retirements, but also a major opportunity if employers can keep their older workforce engaged through continued full-time work, part-time work or mentoring of younger employees.

Helping service members and their families transition to civilian employment upon separating from the military is a talent retention strategy and a labor force participation strategy. Veterans often assemble an impressive array

of skills during their tenure in the armed forces but find it difficult to translate those into the skill sets needed in the private sector and civilian public sector.

Another way Missouri can narrow the labor force participation gap is by re-engaging formerly incarcerated individuals. In 2023, Missouri became the first state to join the national Reentry 2030 coalition, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Justice and the Council of State Governments Justice Center. The state Department of Corrections has established ambitious goals for Reentry 2030, such as 85 percent of ex-offenders being employed within 30 days of release and 80 percent maintaining employment for at least nine months after release. State agencies and partners should make it a priority for the Reentry 2030 effort to have the resources and support services needed for success.

Another large pool of disconnected workers are those with disabilities. Finding more ways to connect disabled workers to quality jobs would be a win-win for the state.

Substance misuse disorder is a prevalent problem for Missouri employers. It leads to absenteeism, decreased productivity and increased accidents in the workplace. The problem also takes many workers out of the workplace entirely. Strategies to identify substance misuse and assist in recovery could be a valuable resource to employers.

Child care shortages are a serious concern for Missouri employers, and they are keeping many parents out of the workforce. Approximately half of all states now offer tax credits or other incentives to employers that help to address their employees' child care needs. The tax credits and incentives are for businesses that provide on-site child care, reserve slots for their employees elsewhere, or otherwise subsidize the cost or add to the supply of child care in their area. Bills recently introduced in the Missouri House and Senate would represent important progress in building partnerships between child care providers, employers and government to improve affordability and access to quality child care; however, this legislation has not yet been successful.

The national housing shortage, estimated at four million homes or more, has tremendous impacts on availability and affordability, especially for younger workers and their families. Evidence of this in Missouri includes cost pressures in metropolitan areas and the sheer lack of housing options in small towns and rural counties. Younger Americans often want newer homes and a range of low-maintenance choices like townhomes, condominiums and apartments. To address this key workforce issue, many states are taking steps to encourage housing development.

Transportation has been cited as another barrier to employment for

underserved populations. Cost has proven to be the biggest hurdle with public on-demand and microtransit efforts. No city-operated program has yet broken even. Using third-party transportation providers can greatly lower costs for vehicle fleets and government staffing. For government-operated programs, the best solution may be to work on three-party or four-party sharing agreements with riders, the government and employers (and also major destinations like medical facilities and shopping malls) sharing the cost.

Recommendations:

1. Invest in ways to better convert military talent into the private sector.
2. Establish an Older Worker Retention initiative, starting by disseminating information to employers about keeping older workers engaged. Successful practices, such as offering schedule flexibility, planning services for financial security and retraining, are available from sources like the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and AARP.
3. Work to connect employers with fair chance employment and support the Missouri Department of Corrections' Reentry 2030 initiative.
4. Work with the Missouri Department of Vocational

Rehabilitation to connect disabled people with quality jobs.

5. Develop tools and resources to identify substance use disorder in the workplace and support employee recovery.
6. Create a child care business liaison position within the Missouri Department of Economic Development.
7. Adopt child care business incentive legislation that helps employers recruit and retain employees by offering child care benefits like securing slots with child care community providers, on-site child care, and dependant care spending accounts to offset the cost of child care.
8. Develop a state-level microtransit pilot grant program to assist communities in creating small-scale and/or on-demand transit initiatives that feature cost sharing among government, riders and employers.
9. Convene a one-year panel of housing builders and land development experts, local and state governments, and non-profit housing advocates to recommend a slate of actions that will spur more housing construction of all types (especially workforce-attainable housing) by addressing infrastructure, financing, land use and building code regulations.

Best Practices:

- Two leading examples of employment services to veterans come from Colorado and Kansas. The Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center in Colorado has twice won national awards for its workforce programming for veterans. During COVID, A/D Works! quickly adopted virtual platforms to reach clients, organizing 13 virtual events for veterans to learn about specific industry opportunities in the area, talk with employers and share resumes. It also partnered with aerospace companies, chambers of commerce and military bases to develop apprenticeship programs for vets. Arapahoe/Douglas Works!, state agencies and local agencies have been able to creatively “blend and braid funding” to provide a wide range of services for veterans.

In Kansas, the state’s Local Area II West workforce agency won a national award for veteran services focused on Fort Riley. The agency’s relationship with Fort Riley has “led to thousands of veterans continuing to live and work in Kansas,” said the state’s Lieutenant Governor. Local Area II West developed internships for transitioning service members with numerous regional employers and creatively used social media to keep veterans informed during the pandemic. The sharing of these practices to interact with

other military installations has “increase[ed] overall state retention rates” of veterans in Kansas.

- States are placing much more emphasis on preparing incarcerated people for employment and community reentry. One good model for assisting offenders to be ready for employment upon release is Indiana’s Hoosier Initiative for Re-Entry, or HIRE. HIRE provides education and training services for offender clients, works with businesses in nine regions across Indiana to match clients with employers, and coordinates with community organizations to help individuals deal with the barriers they face when returning to work and community life. Since 2012, HIRE and 3,000 participating companies have placed over 15,000 returning citizens in jobs. The state Department of Correction notes that the recidivism rate of HIRE completers is 14 percent, less than half that of the overall prison population.
- Tennessee won a national award in 2023 for its Project R.E.A.P. (Reentry, Employment, Adult Education Program), also aimed at reducing recidivism and improving the workforce pipeline. Project R.E.A.P. features custom-designed computer tablets distributed through county jails across the state. Incarcerated people can use them for high school equivalency

exam coursework, career readiness training, resume building, mental health and substance abuse wellness content and other approved uses.

Tennessee has an Office of Reentry housed in the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development (rather than in a corrections agency), said to be the first of its kind in the nation.

- Substance abuse can be a major impediment for workforce participation. The Kentucky Chamber's Workforce Center developed a Workforce Recovery Program to help employers navigate substance abuse and recovery issues. The Kentucky Transformational Employment Program or KTEP is a joint effort of the Chamber and multiple state agencies. It is focused on getting workers the treatment they need and keeping them engaged in productive employment. Under state law enacted in 2020, employers who participate in KTEP will not be liable for civil actions relating to negligence because of an employee's substance use disorder. Also, the Kentucky Chamber Foundation provides regional Fair Chance Academies to help companies successfully interact with individuals in recovery, including those returning from incarceration.
- To improve career paths for underemployed and unemployed

residents of one of Florida's largest counties, Broward College created the Broward UP initiative in 2018. Broward UP (standing for "Unlimited Potential") brings workforce education, career readiness and support resources to 11 community ZIP codes across Broward County. Broward UP addresses the workforce needs of local employers with free, non-credit training courses leading to certifications in high-demand sectors such as IT and health care. Training is provided directly in each community by partnering with YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, the Urban League and others. Support includes help with child care and transportation needs. Residents served since 2018 have higher lifetime income estimated at \$475 million.

- CW STEP in Colorado aims for sustained employment among low-income residents with barriers to success, including chronically underemployed or unemployed people. The Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program (CW STEP) is a collaboration among multiple state agencies and community organizations. It offers low-income residents a variety of training paths, including subsidized employment in which the program pays wages for up to six months while the individual works at the site of a private employer. It also partners

with businesses for other on-the-job training, internships and apprenticeships. A complementary goal of CW STEP is addressing worker shortages in key Colorado industries. In winning a national award, the program was praised for providing "many supportive services that help individuals gain and maintain employment."

- In April 2024, the North Carolina Department of Commerce announced the hiring of its first-ever Child Care Business Liaison. This new position was established in the state's economic development plan to address the crucial role that high-quality, available and affordable child care plays in "set[ting] the next generation up for success while allowing parents to fully participate in the workforce." The first individual in this role came with lengthy workforce development experience in economic development organizations.
- In adjoining Kentucky, the Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership matches up to 100 percent of employer expenditures that subsidize child care for their workforce. For companies that provide on-site child care in Kansas, the state tax credit is equal to 50 percent of the annual operating expenses, up to \$3 million per year. Iowa offers a Business Incentive Grant in

addition to a tax credit. Since 2022, the Iowa Child Care Business Incentive program has made more than \$75 million in grants to spur construction of on-site child care and provide thousands of new slots in other facilities.

- Small-scale transit is increasingly popular in cities large and small – from Los Angeles and Tucson to Flint, Michigan, and Wilson, North Carolina (population 47,600). Since the City of Wilson launched its RIDE on-demand, microtransit program in 2020, ridership has increased from 3,500 per month on traditional bus routes to 4,000 riders per week. About half of all trips in Wilson are employment-related. Cities like Altamonte Springs, Florida (population 46,000), and Innisfil, Ontario, in Canada (population 37,000) are subsidizing trips taken via Uber.
- In 2024, the Utah state legislature passed several housing measures, including a) tax increment financing for new First Home Investment Zones, and b) authorizing the state treasurer to offer low-interest loans to housing developers through a new Utah Homes Investment Program. A majority of homes built under the latter program must be “attainable,” currently defined as costing less than \$450,000. Utah also made it easier to create multifamily housing near public

transit in 2022.

- Colorado expanded the available amount of Affordable Housing Tax Credits that developers can take advantage of through 2031. In 2024, it also created a Middle-Income Housing Tax Credit aimed at creating rental housing for those making 80 to 120 percent of median income.
- Florida’s Live Local Act from 2023 mandates that local governments allow multifamily and mixed-use housing in commercial, industrial and mixed-use zones as long as 40 percent of the units are affordable.
- Vermont (2020) and Maine (2023) are among the states encouraging the building of accessible dwelling units (ADUs), smaller residences on the same parcel as a primary residence. Several states have also required that two, three and four-unit residential buildings be allowed in single-family zones.
- New housing in rural areas is often thwarted by limited infrastructure. South Dakota created a \$200 million Housing Infrastructure Fund in 2023 to make grants and loans for infrastructure extensions (water and sewer, streets, sidewalks and more) for new housing projects.

Other recent state measures have focused on streamlining project permitting and providing flexibility on parking and building code requirements.

3. EXPAND CAREER AWARENESS EFFORTS

Current situation/challenges:

Students and parents have limited awareness of career opportunities within their region — particularly in manufacturing and technology career paths requiring less than a four-year college degree. Educators and counselors also have little exposure to or knowledge of career opportunities outside of those requiring a four-year degree. This leaves significant shortages in areas of advanced manufacturing, health care and many technology positions.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a goal of having a career counselor serving every Missouri public high school within five years. This can be accomplished within the public school system or by partnering with a non-profit provider, such as rootEd.
2. Improve career counseling and career support for students at Missouri community colleges and universities.
3. Provide better and more accessible career data—occupational demand, wages and education requirements—for use by students and parents.
4. Continue to support awareness initiatives promoting manufacturing, technical and health care careers targeted at

middle school and high school students and parents and accompanied by straightforward content for teachers and counselors to use.

5. Continue increasing workplace exposure opportunities for high school and middle school counselors and teachers through programs like the Missouri Chamber's Show-Me Careers Educator Experience.

Best Practices:

- Three important career awareness initiatives supported by the Missouri Chamber include Show-Me Careers, rootEd career counselors and Manufacturing/Health Care Career Days. Show-Me Careers is a professional development opportunity for teachers, counselors and school administrators to visit employers in their region and learn about career paths in a variety of high-demand industries. Businesses host groups and provide facility tours, panel discussions, hands-on activities and other ways for educators to understand the opportunities available and workplace skills required. A relatively new career and college coaching effort in Missouri is from the non-profit rootEd Alliance. Started in Missouri in 2019, rootEd has trained and placed counselors in 135 mostly rural high schools across the state. An appropriate state goal would be to bring this kind of career

coaching to every high school in Missouri. The virtual, interactive Manufacturing Career Day and Health Care Career Day provide a multi-hour, livestream event for Missouri students featuring manufacturing and health care workers who provide insight into their professions. Each year, more than 10,000 Missouri students tune into these programs.

- Since it debuted in Arkansas in 2016, the successful Be Pro Be Proud program has highlighted the strong job demand and high earnings in the skilled professions. Career awareness for these occupations is literally driven home through custom built, tractor trailer Mobile Workshops with hands-on, virtual reality and augmented reality tools on board. After starting in Arkansas, Be Pro Be Proud has now spread to Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee and New Mexico.
- Nevada's state employment department developed a Demographic Reporting Enhancement Tool – using free software and existing data resources – to more accurately target the most underserved communities and at-risk individuals in Nevada. This more refined data was used in the state's Project 354 which delivered customized workforce education, work readiness training and barrier removal to targeted

ZIP codes throughout Nevada. The focused nature of data from the Demographic Reporting Enhancement Tool enabled distribution of useful information to partners in each community. The use of free software and existing labor market information means that other states can adopt this tool with minimal modifications.

4. CONNECT YOUTH AND UNDERSKILLED WORKERS WITH WORK EXPERIENCE

Current situation/challenges:

In addition to employees acquiring the right skills, more opportunities for work-based learning are needed. One employer interviewed expressed his opinion that the “best way to learn about work is by working,” and that sentiment underscores a nationwide push to implement more experiential learning opportunities for our emerging workforce, such as internships, apprenticeships and educator externships.

The startup costs and time associated with apprenticeship programs can be intimidating for employers, especially smaller ones. Missouri's new Intern and Apprentice Recruitment Act tax credit is a notable start but is limited by the size of the credit, the small cap on the total credits an employer can claim, and other requirements.

Recommendations:

1. Significantly expand paid internship and apprenticeship programs by educating employers about the benefits and providing resources to employers to develop strong internship and apprenticeship programs.
2. Continue to secure federal, state and corporate funding to expand apprenticeship opportunities in Missouri.
3. Establish regional work experience coordinators to assist employers in their interactions with K-12 school systems to develop internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, job shadowing, teacher externships and other work exposure opportunities. These coordinators could be housed with local and regional chambers of commerce, industry sector organizations or workforce non-profits.

Best Practices:

- About 10 years ago, Kentucky began its TRACK (Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky) youth apprenticeship program, an initiative of the Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky's Office of Apprenticeship. TRACK starts with high school juniors taking CTE courses selected by employers while also receiving on-the-job training. In addition to paid work experience, completing students receive a nationally recognized,

portable credential. TRACK pre-apprenticeships are available in any of the state's 16 career clusters, including agriculture, architecture, health science, IT, manufacturing and logistics. Graduates will often begin full-time work or enter an adult Registered Apprenticeship.

In 2017, Kentucky TRACK was named the best youth apprenticeship model in America by the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, participants are paid during the program and usually graduate with no debt.

- Missouri's new Intern and Apprentice Recruitment Act offers a state tax credit for employers of \$1,500 per apprentice, up to a company limit of six apprentices per year. Across the nation, states are offering more robust tax credits that incentivize businesses to develop apprenticeship programs. Among neighboring states, Illinois offers a credit up to \$3,500 per apprentice per year. Kansas has a \$2,500 per apprentice credit for up to 20 employees at a company, while Tennessee and Arkansas offer \$2,000 annual tax credits for each apprentice. Iowa operates two apprenticeship development grant programs for employers; grants made from those funds totaled \$3.6 million in 2024.
- For many businesses (especially smaller employers), building an apprenticeship program can be a complicated and difficult

undertaking. The Keystone Development Partnership and the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship and Training Office created a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Navigator program to train people to help companies, unions and workforce boards work through the apprenticeship process. Since it began in 2018, more than 100 people have enrolled in the one-year training program to become RA Navigators, joining the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance. Navigators now cover 78 percent of Pennsylvania counties.

5. ATTRACT AND RETAIN MORE TALENT

Current situation/challenges:

Talent attraction is an important component of meeting employer needs. Job growth and population are increasingly concentrated in a small number of major metropolitan areas in the United States. Other parts of the country are struggling as a result. Nations, states, metro areas and cities are increasingly competing to attract talented individuals, particularly young professionals, to fill high-skill, high-demand jobs. Even if Missouri develops the best education and training models in America, we will still need to attract more people, especially skilled young professionals, to fill high-demand jobs. Missouri's population growth in recent years has not been among the national leaders, and as the map in Section III showed,

many parts of the state are projected to experience workforce losses in the next decade.

Much talent attraction and retention is dependent on the basics of community quality of life: housing, child care, transportation, broadband internet access and public safety. Beyond this, states can conduct targeted campaigns to attract needed workers of various skill levels.

Recommendations:

1. Explore a multi-pronged talent attraction campaign that targets skilled workers from key markets around the United States, as well as appealing to former residents and Missouri college students.
2. Develop and provide useful, honest quality-of-life and community amenities information for employers to use when communicating with prospective employees.
3. Develop a statewide campaign to encourage our U.S. Armed Forces veterans to locate in Missouri – providing services including skills certification, retraining and job matching. With approximately 8,000 Missouri residents departing from the military each year, a campaign for them to reenter civilian life in their home state would increase the pool of

experienced, skilled workers.

Best Practices:

- Several states have initiated incentive programs for individual remote workers and others to relocate – giving them direct payments, relocation assistance and/or other perks. Kansas has long had a Rural Opportunity Zone tax incentive. Some of these can boast a modest degree of success, but many detractors question whether the number of people attracted will move the needle.
- An example of a state with a broader talent attraction effort is Michigan. The state's \$20 million You Can in Michigan marketing campaign airs ads in 10 states and Washington, D.C., places with plentiful tech workers and others in high-demand industries. Six regions around Michigan also carry out the low-key Back to Michigan networking campaign with annual fall events around college homecomings and Thanksgiving. Back to Michigan features in-person and virtual networking and meetings with employers. It is aimed at former residents and current college students. Back to Michigan won an award from the International Economic Development Council in 2021.

6. STRENGTHEN MISSOURI'S PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Current situation/challenges:

Missouri supports a vast array of public sector efforts related to workforce education and training. From training programs like One Start and Fast Track, to regional workforce boards and Job Centers throughout the state, to the 12 community colleges and other higher education institutions, there are many offerings to serve individuals and employers. However, this complex system – operating on multiple levels with federal WIOA and other funding streams, state dollars and programs, often under regional or local control – is often too confusing for users to easily understand. For this project, we spoke with leaders inside and outside the public workforce system, receiving blunt assessments of the ways in which it works well and where it falls short.

Over the past five years, most stakeholders see positive workforce development trends in Missouri. They perceive a system that is more responsive to business needs with more emphasis on upskilling and retraining. There is improved collaboration across agencies, especially to address workforce-

related barriers in areas like child care and transportation. COVID pushed providers to adopt better use of technology to deliver training remotely.

Workforce leaders also believe there are continuing weaknesses in the system, though – mainly that it is “disjointed,” poorly coordinated and lacking continuity across the state. Highly localized workforce development boards (WDBs) have governance frameworks that are “behind the times.” The “laissez faire” nature of Missouri’s system often makes it seem that “no one is in charge.”

Looking further at organization and funding, the combination of workforce development and higher education in the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development is viewed as a good start, though some have noticed little change so far. Stakeholders urge continued integration so that agencies will provide market-driven services and avoid the silos that occur due to the various funding sources and regulatory requirements that come with each. They would like to see higher funding levels from the state, funds that can be more flexible than those from rigid federal programs.

Considering the related issues of governance and accountability,

Missouri has made better use of data and dashboards for greater accountability. However, workforce professionals think that the state still lacks the robust infrastructure (especially IT capacity) to properly track, organize and account for education and training activities across the state. Others see a governance structure that is out of date, not geared to providing the workforce solutions that are best for individual and business clients, but overwhelmed by federal and state regulations. They note that Missouri relaxed some regulations during the pandemic, and it was a positive development. Rather than retreating into old silos, they hope that flexibility can be maintained while still ensuring accountability.

Recommendations:

1. Revamp state-level boards, providing them with the authority needed to establish a statewide vision and ensure local and regional alignment for Missouri’s universities, community colleges and workforce development boards (WDBs).
2. Account for the growing share of short-term and non-credit students at Missouri community colleges, properly rewarding community colleges for their responsiveness to evolving workforce training needs.
3. Improve the affordability of higher education for Missouri residents, increasing the flexibility of scholarships and other financial aid for part-time and short-term students.

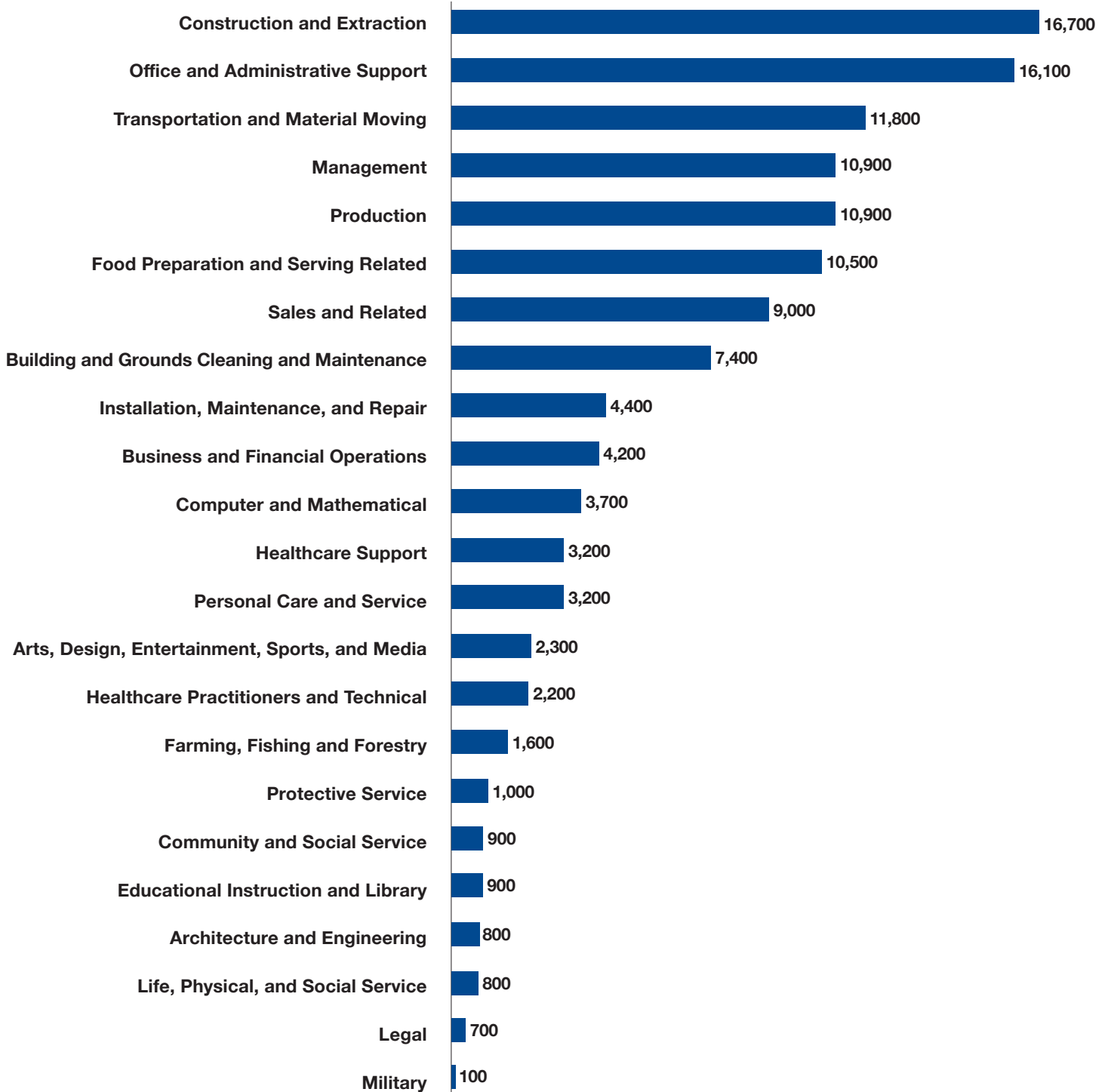
Best Practices

- Nevada’s EmployNV Business Hubs are specifically designed for employers, among the nation’s first employer-focused job centers. The first Business Hub was located within the Vegas Chamber of Commerce, and five others have been created in city halls and libraries. In addition to helping companies reach potential workers, EmployNV Business Hubs feature a range of co-located business services and are staffed by state workforce personnel, Small Business Administration staff and local financial institutions. Nevada’s Business Hub concept won national workforce awards in 2022 and 2023.

V. Appendix

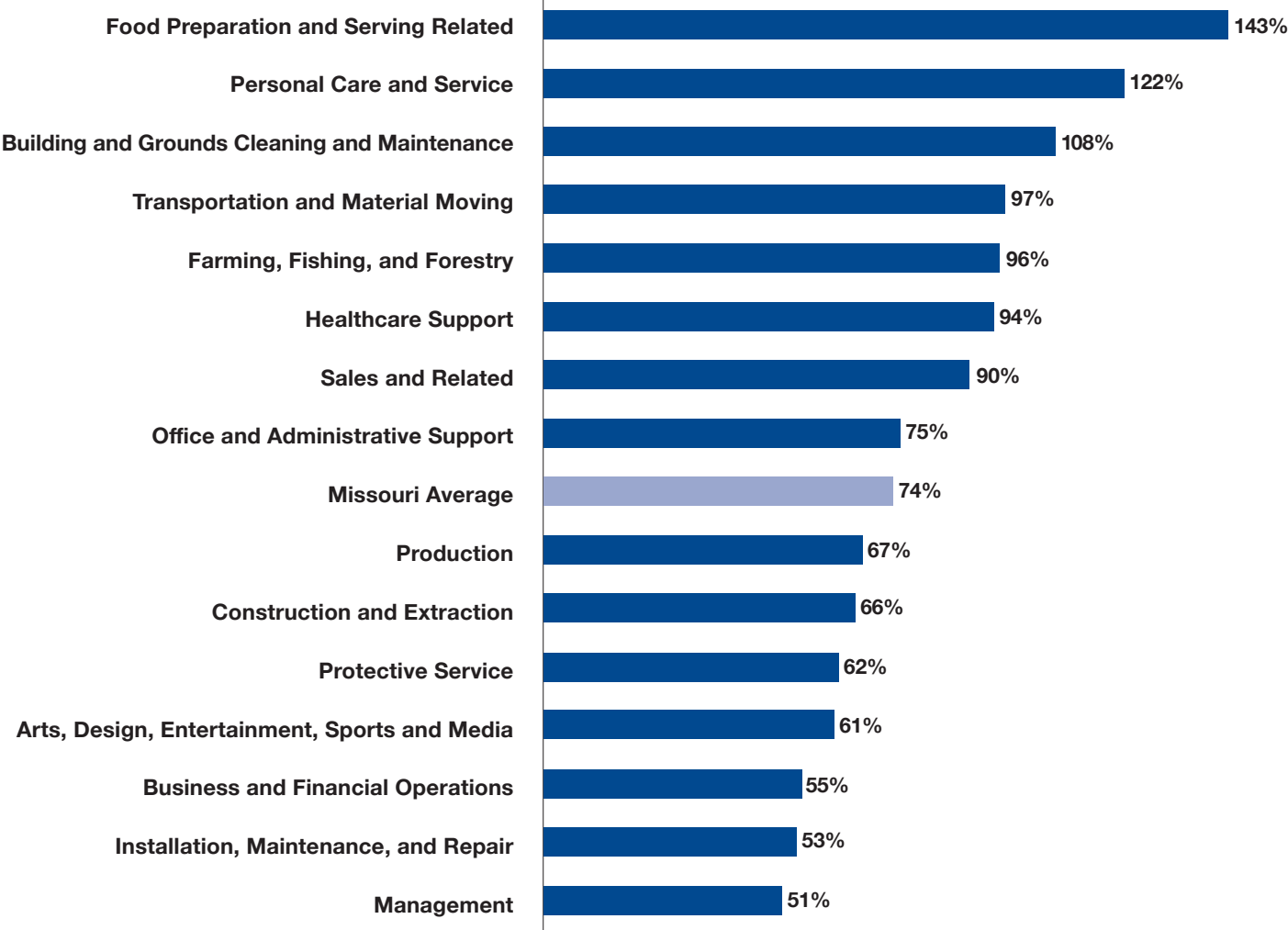
Missouri Unemployed Workers by Previous Occupation, Feb 2024

Source: Lightcast 2024.2



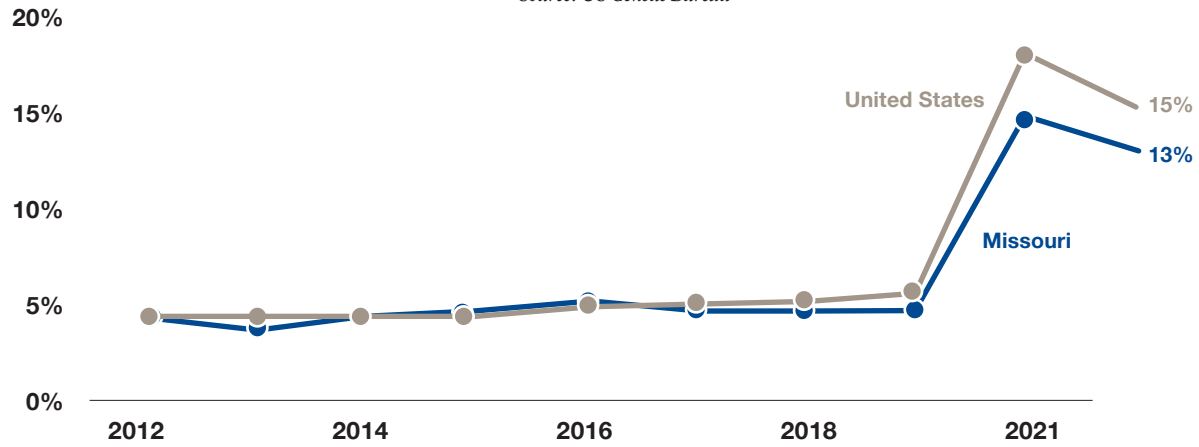
Missouri Occupations with Highest Turnover Rates, 2023

Source: Lightcast 2024.2



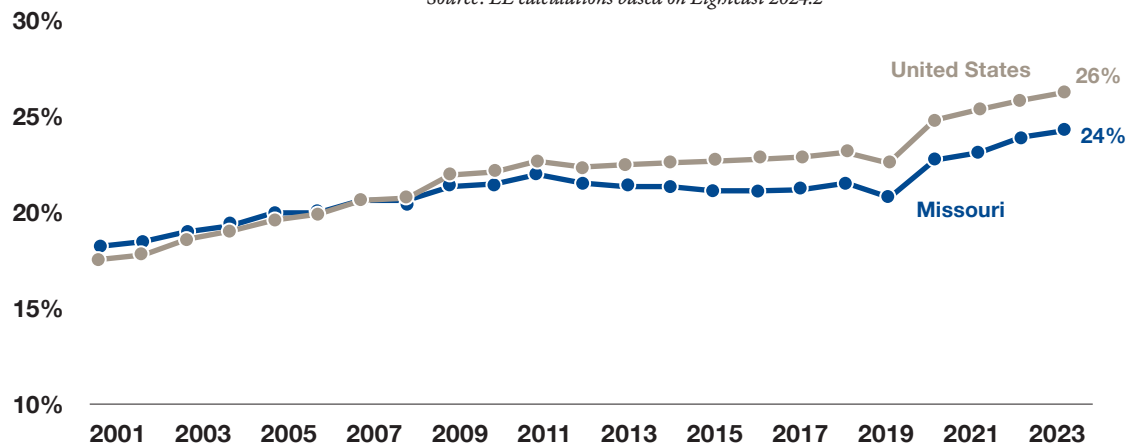
Percentage of People Working from Home

Source: US Census Bureau



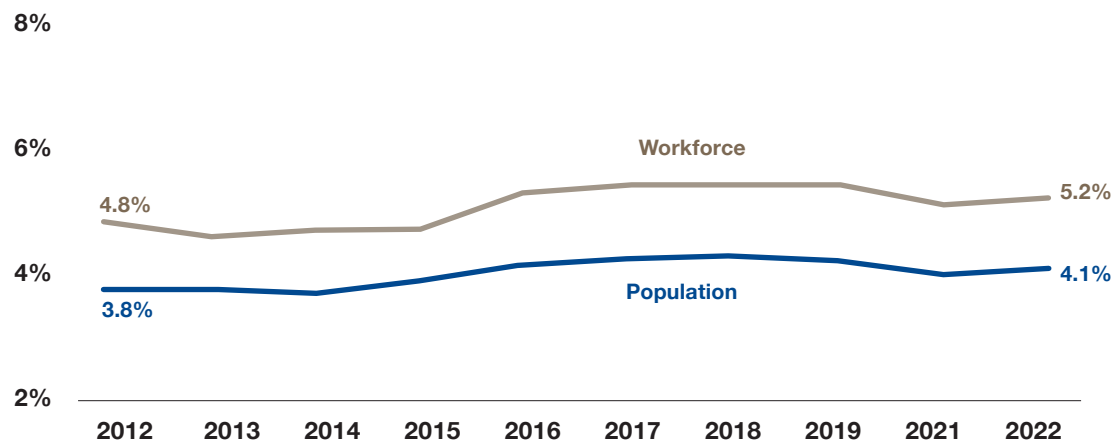
Self-Employment as a Percentage of Total Employment

Source: EL calculations based on Lightcast 2024.2



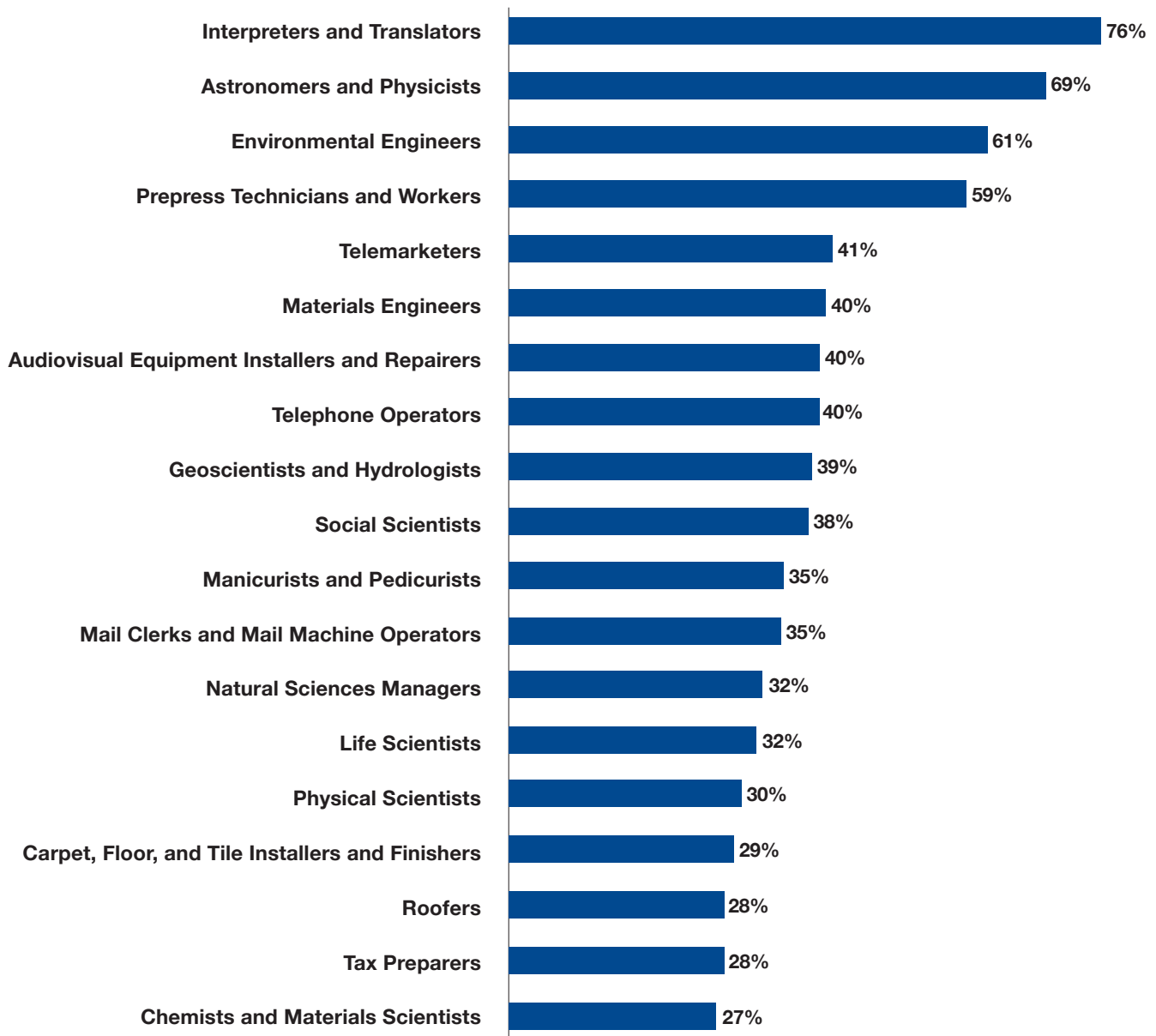
Missouri Foreign Born as a Percentage of Total Population and Workforce

Source: EL calculations based on US Census Bureau microdata



Missouri Top Occupations by Share of Foreign Born Workers, 2022

Source: EL calculations based on US Census Bureau microdata





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A Continued Call to Action

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