

Are Older Workers Displacing Younger Workers?

The percentage of older workers in the U.S. labor force has increased steadily over the past decade and a half, but are they crowding out younger workers?

While it's not clear whether older workers are filling a work force gap, or closing off opportunities for younger workers, older workers are more plentiful in the labor force today, according to a recent analysis by the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI).

The EBRI report notes that the percentage of older workers increased steadily from 1997 to 2012, while the percentage of younger workers declined during this period.

In 1997, workers ages 25–54 accounted for 83.9 percent of all workers ages 25 or older, while those ages 55–64 accounted for 12.0 percent, and those ages 65 or older, 4.1 percent. However, by 2012, those ages 55–64 represented 19.2 percent of the work force and those 65 or older 7.0 percent, while the percentage of workers 25 or older (ages 25–54) had slipped to 73.8 percent.

The EBRI analysis also notes that while the labor-force participation rates of younger workers increased when that of older workers declined or remained low during the late 1970s to the early 1990s, as the labor-force participation rates of younger workers began to decline in the late 1990s, the rates for the older workers continuously increased.

More information can be found in the April *EBRI Notes* article, “Labor-force Participation Rates of the Population Ages 55 and Older, 2013,” [online here](#).

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