

DEMOGRAPHIC DROUGHT

# The Rising Storm

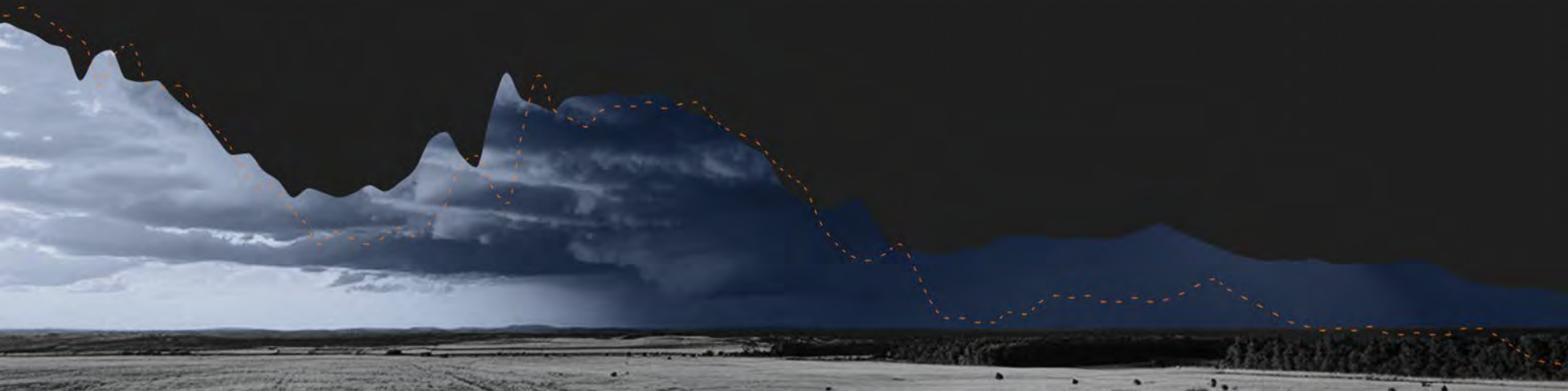
Building a Future-Ready Workforce to Withstand  
the Looming Labor Shortage



Future-Ready Workforce Collection

## AGENDA

1. **Conditions Forming** (past)
2. **The Outer Bands** (present)
3. **Where Yakima Stands**
4. **Where do we go from here?**



# About Lightcast



**Lightcast** is the world's leading authority on in-demand skills, labor market trends, and talent intelligence.

Lightcast insight and expertise, powered by our best-in-class data on jobs and skills, is used by companies across the globe to better understand their own workforce and find new talent, by education institutions helping prepare their students for the job market, and by community leaders to develop new solutions for growth in their regions.

WORKFORCE PAST

# *Conditions Forming:* **The Baby Boomers'** **Labor Market**

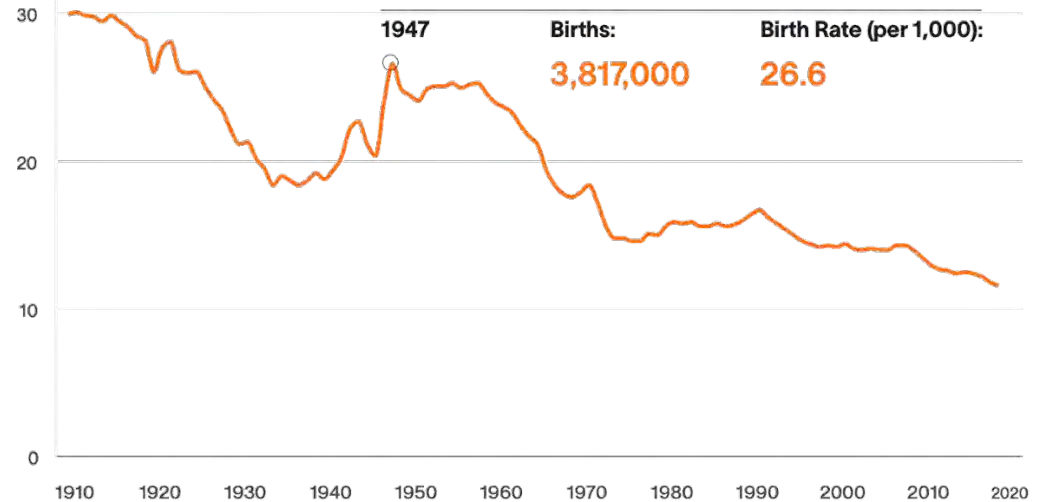


# The 1970-90s Workforce Grew Rapidly For Two Main Reasons:

- **Birth rate was extremely high**
- Women entered the workforce in droves

The US birthrate swung upwards after WWII and peaked in 1947.

US Birth Rates (per 1,000 Population)



Source: National Center for Health Statistics

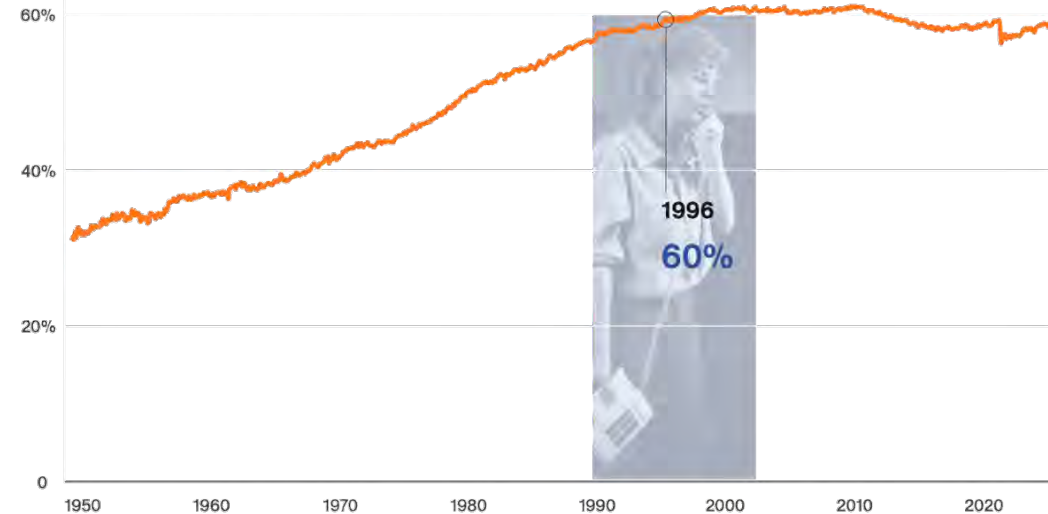


# The Workforce Grew Rapidly For Two Main Reasons:

- Birth rate was extremely high
- **Women** entered the workforce in droves

From 1950 through 2000, female labor force participation rose consistently; reaching over 60% by the mid-1990s.

Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate, Women 20 Years and Over

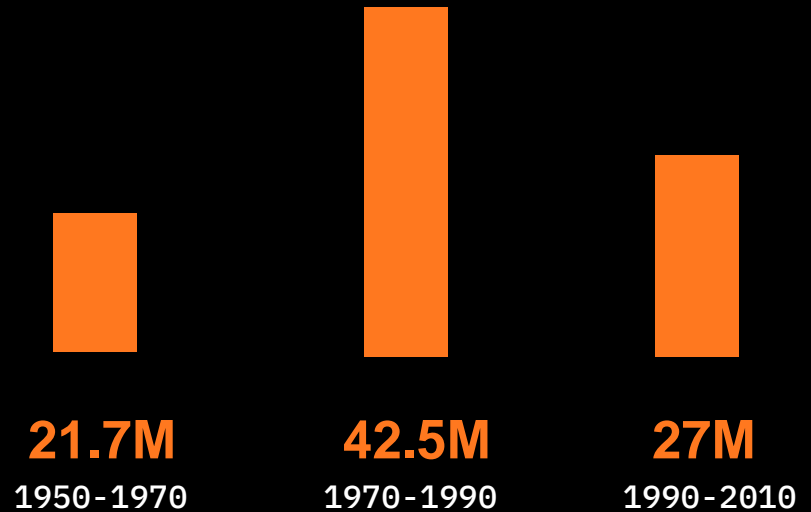


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



# Higher Birth Rates And Women Entering Doubled Our Workforce Growth

College Enrollment jumped 100%  
from 1965 to 1975 and continued to  
soar for women



Workforce increase by 20 year period

Source: Statista 2021



# The Silver Tsunami

The US Workforce soared as the Baby Boomer Generation began.

Baby Boomers born:

**1946-1964**

[Current Ages: 60-78]

US population, age 55+



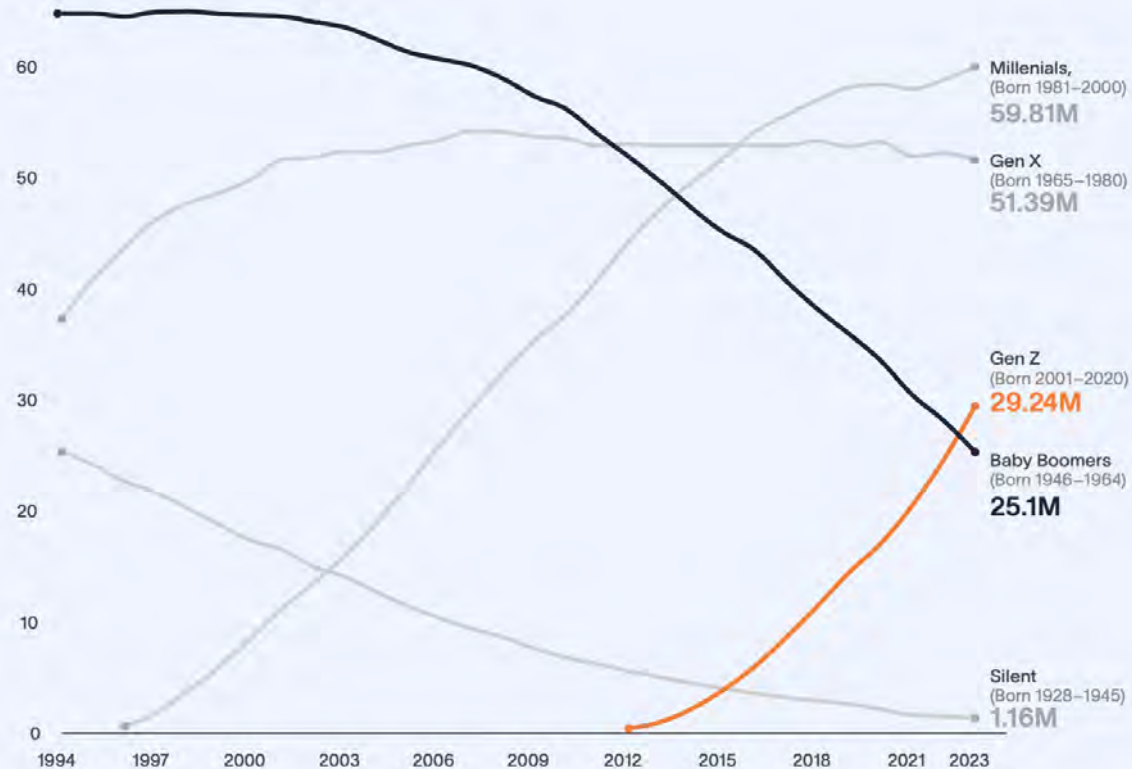


# The Silver Tsunami Has Hit Shore

With Boomers heading out of the labor force, they are no longer working, but growing into a huge dependent population.

## The Baby Boomers are now the second-smallest generation in the US labor force.

Annual US Labor Force, In Millions



Source: US Census Bureau Current Population Survey; Lightcast Analysis

WORKFORCE PRESENT

*The Outer Bands:*  
**Today's Labor  
Market**

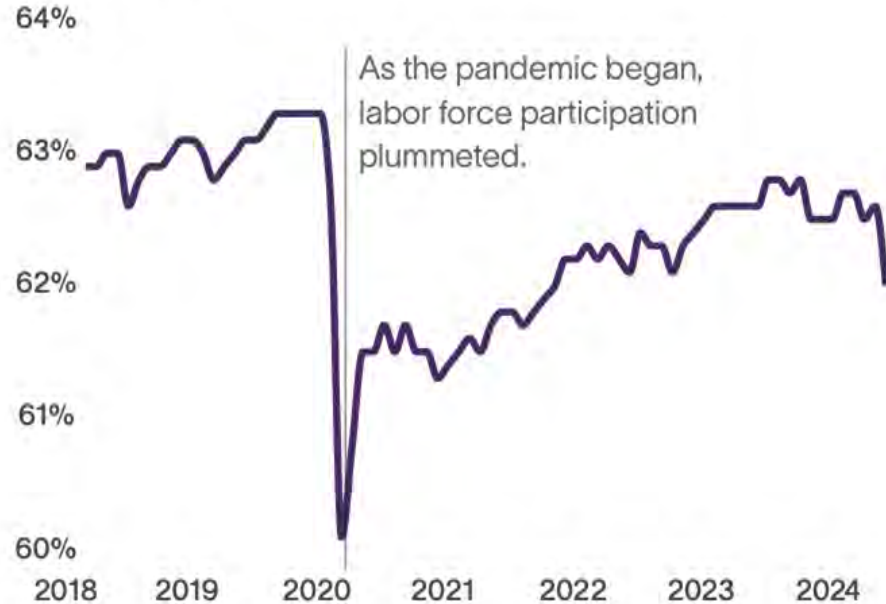


# The *First* Outer Band

The pandemic pushed an accelerator pedal down on trends that were already coming. People have left the labor force **faster than we thought**.

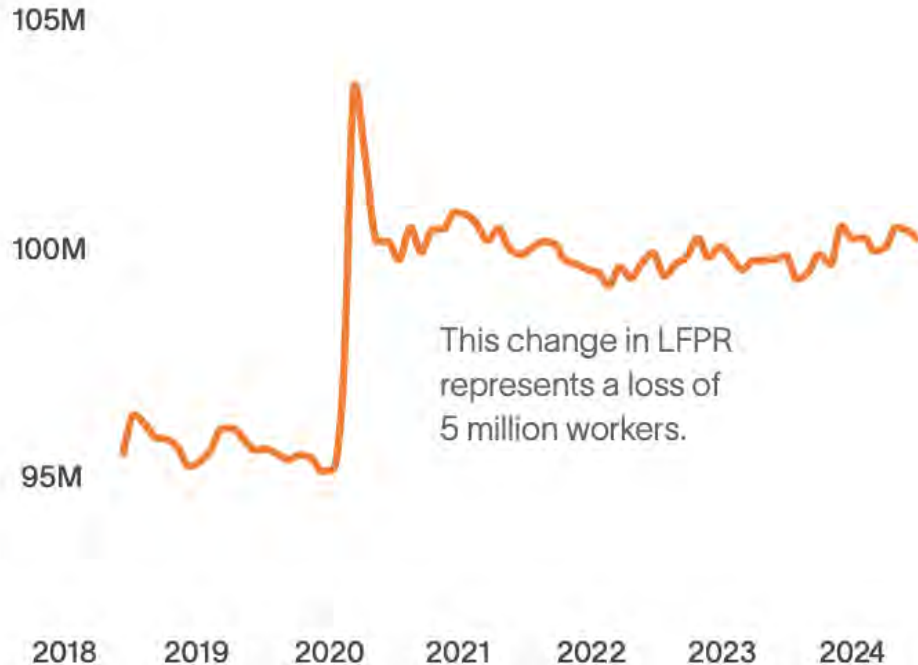
The LFPR took a serious hit in 2020 and has not recovered since.

Labor Force Participation Rate



# We lost 5 Million People Overnight

Total Adult Population Not in Labor Force



# Boomers Are *Exiting* The Labor Force En Masse.

Out of the 5 million people  
who have left the  
labor force since 2020,

**80%** are over the  
age of 55.

**Actual retirements are much more frequent than  
were projected.**

Percentage of 16+ Population That Is Retired



Source: St. Louis Fed *On the Economy*



18M



US Population  
Growth, 2024–32

2.3M



US Labor Force  
Change, 2024–32

From 2024 to 2032,  
US Population Growth  
Will *Outpace* Labor  
Force Growth by Nearly  
**8 to 1.**





18M



US Population  
Growth, 2024–32

## Increase in *Consumers*

2.3M



US Labor Force  
Change, 2024–32

## Increase in *Producers*





# What's Happening?



# Prime-Age Male Workforce Participation Has Plummeted.

LFPR, Men Ages 25–54



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



# The Labor Market Toll of Addiction and Incarceration

## Substance abuse:

Deaths:  
**100,000+**  
overdose deaths per year.

**70%**  
of overdose deaths are from opioids.

**1 in 4**  
overdose deaths were in construction and  
extraction occupations, which are 96%  
male and almost 70% prime-age.

## Addiction and abuse:

**2.7 M**  
people are out of the labor force due to  
addiction.

**1.2 M**  
of these are due to opioids.

**232 M**  
missed work days due to alcohol alone—  
the equivalent of 112,000 full-time workers  
missing for an entire year.

The majority of drug-related deaths and  
addictions occur among prime-age men  
without a college degree.

## Incarceration:

**1.9 M**  
people are behind bars in the US.

**1 in 5**  
people behind bars are  
there for a drug offense.

**9%**  
of all men in the US will serve time  
behind bars in their lifetime.

**1.4 M**  
are prime-age men (25 to 54).

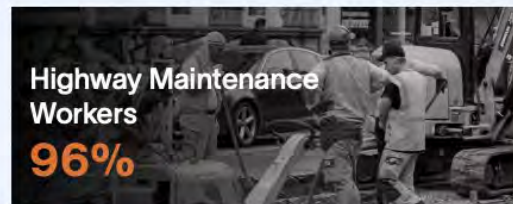
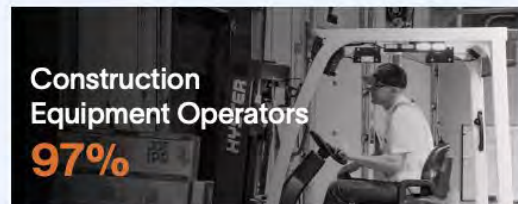
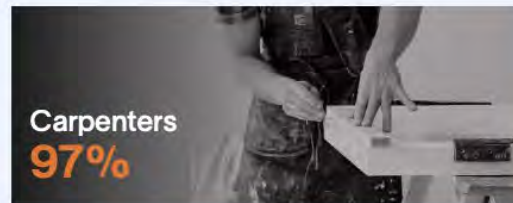
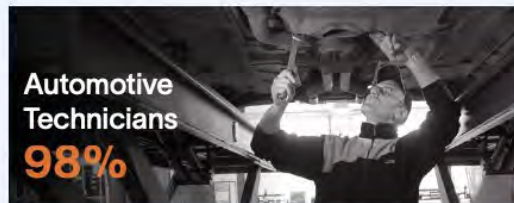
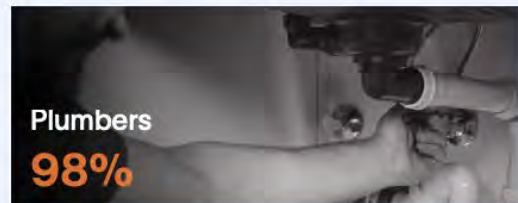
The number of prime-age men  
behind bars roughly equals the city  
populations of Atlanta, Miami, and  
Minneapolis combined.

Between substance addiction and current incarceration, a total of **4.6 million Americans** are out of the labor force. The majority of these are prime-age men—the demographic that many of the occupations facing critical labor shortages rely on.

Among those that have served time behind bars, **60% are still without a job** a year after their release. And the overall unemployment rate for those formerly incarcerated sits at a whopping **27%**-- almost **7 times higher** than that of the general population

## Many occupations in the skilled trades rely on a workforce that is over 90% male.

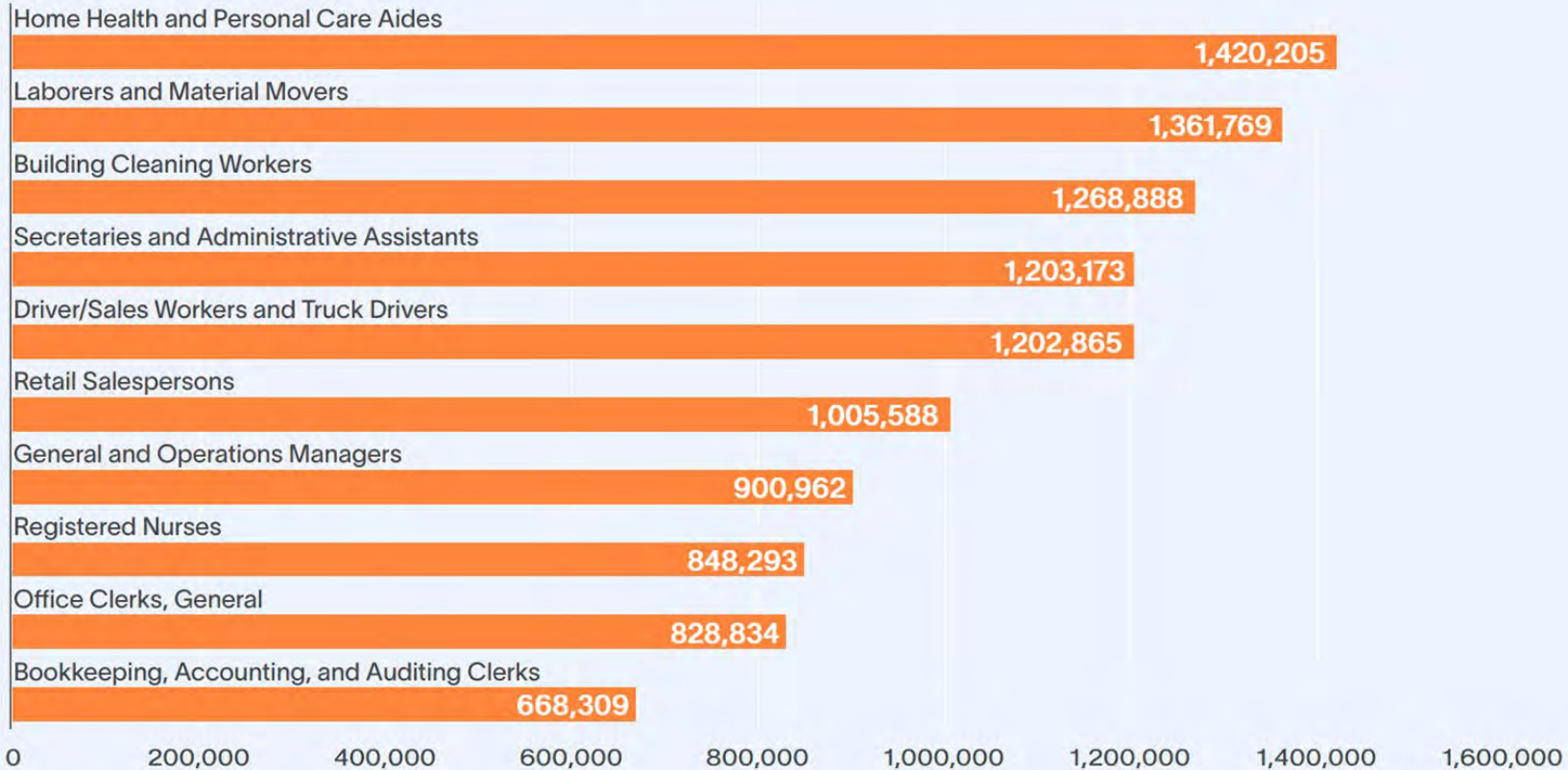
% Male by Occupation (4-digit SOC), 2024





# Millions of critical jobs are filled by people at or near retirement age.

Top 10 Occupations (4-Digit SOC) With the Highest Number of Workers Age 55+

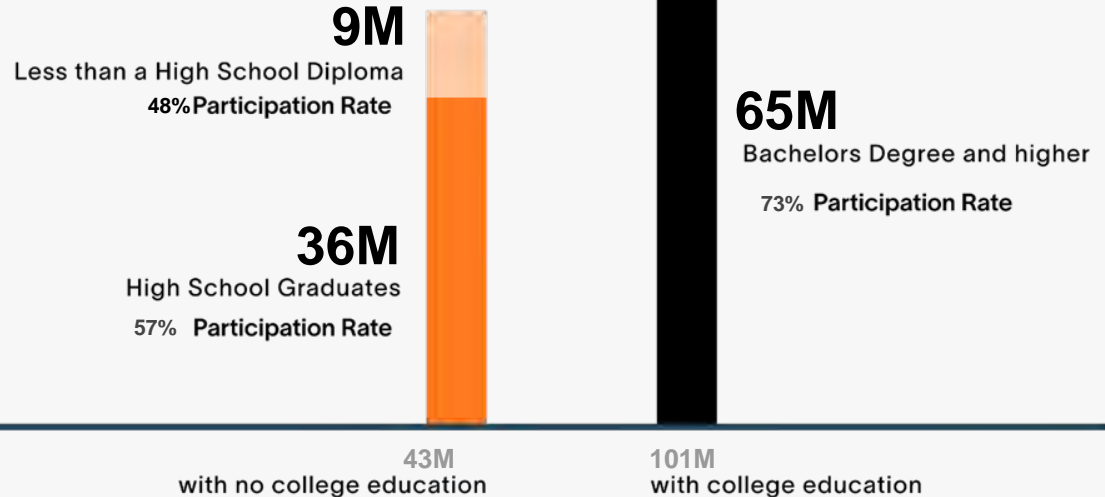


Source: Lightcast



# The U.S. is Already Highly Educated

And more highly educated people have a greater labor force participation rate



But...

Roughly **60%** of All Open  
Jobs do ***Not*** Require a  
**College Degree.**





## The labor force is growing in ways misaligned with demand.

Growth of US Labor Force Over the Age of 25, 2019–2024



Source: Lightcast analysis



# Where Yakima Stands



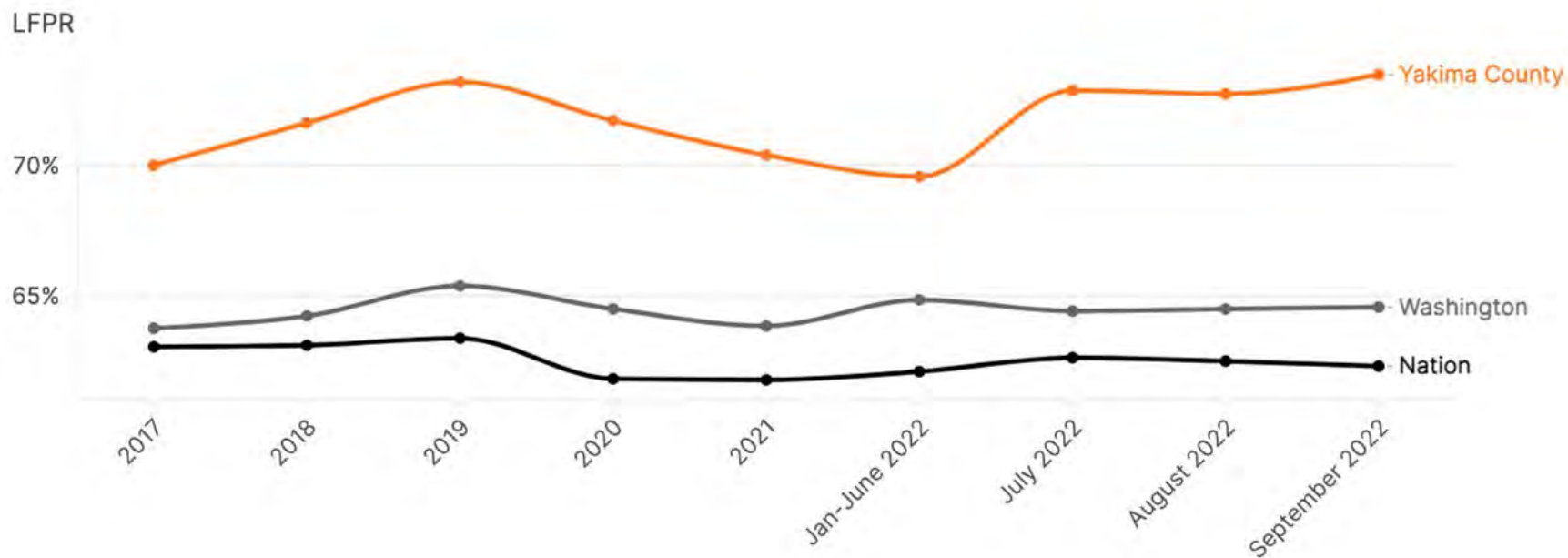
THE RISING STORM



# Labor Force Participation Rate

2023

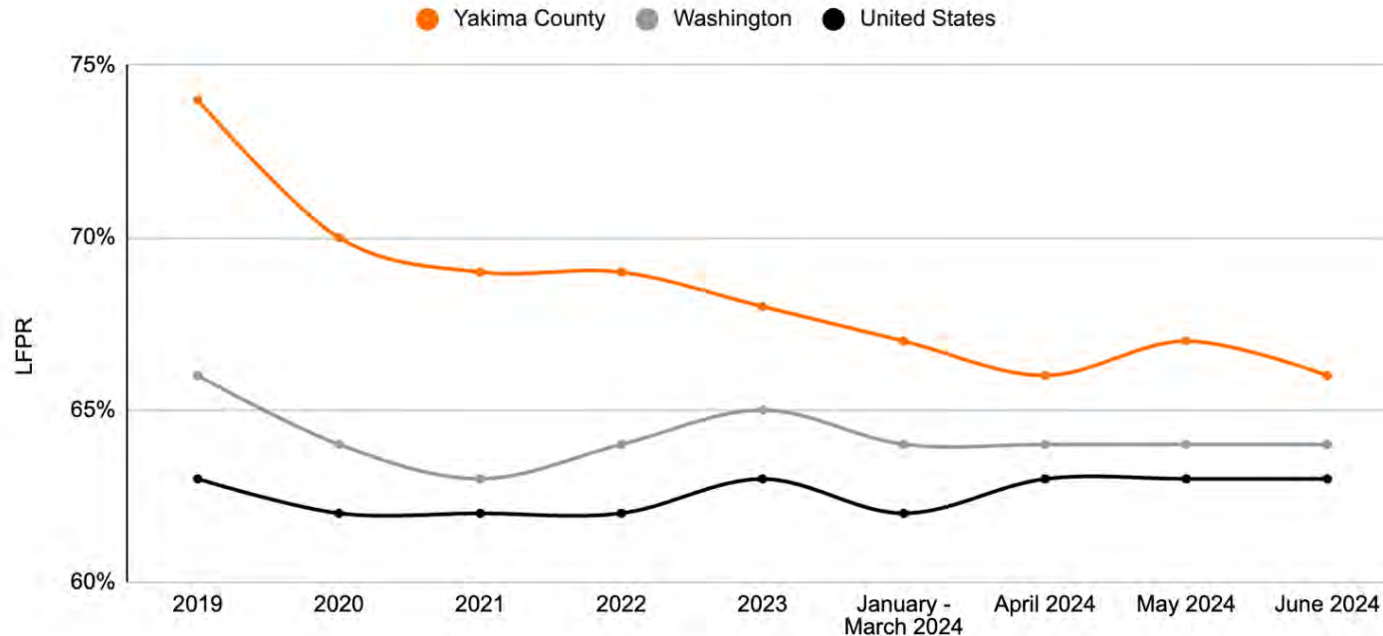
Yakima County • Washington • United States



# Labor Force Participation Rate

Yakima County • Washington • United States

Today

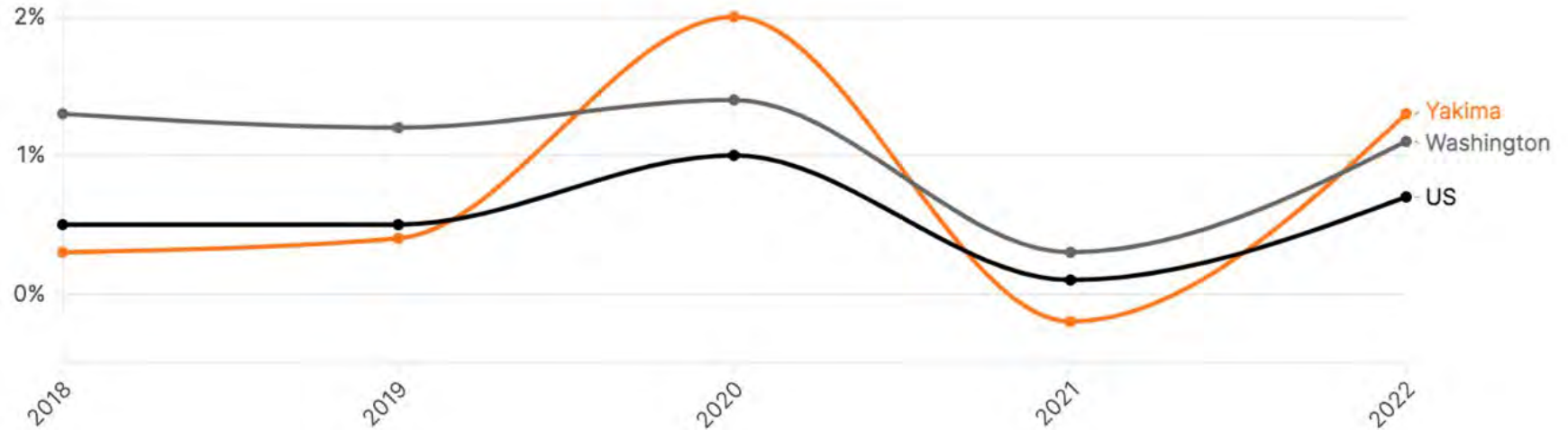


# YoY % Population Growth

2023

Yakima County • Washington • United States

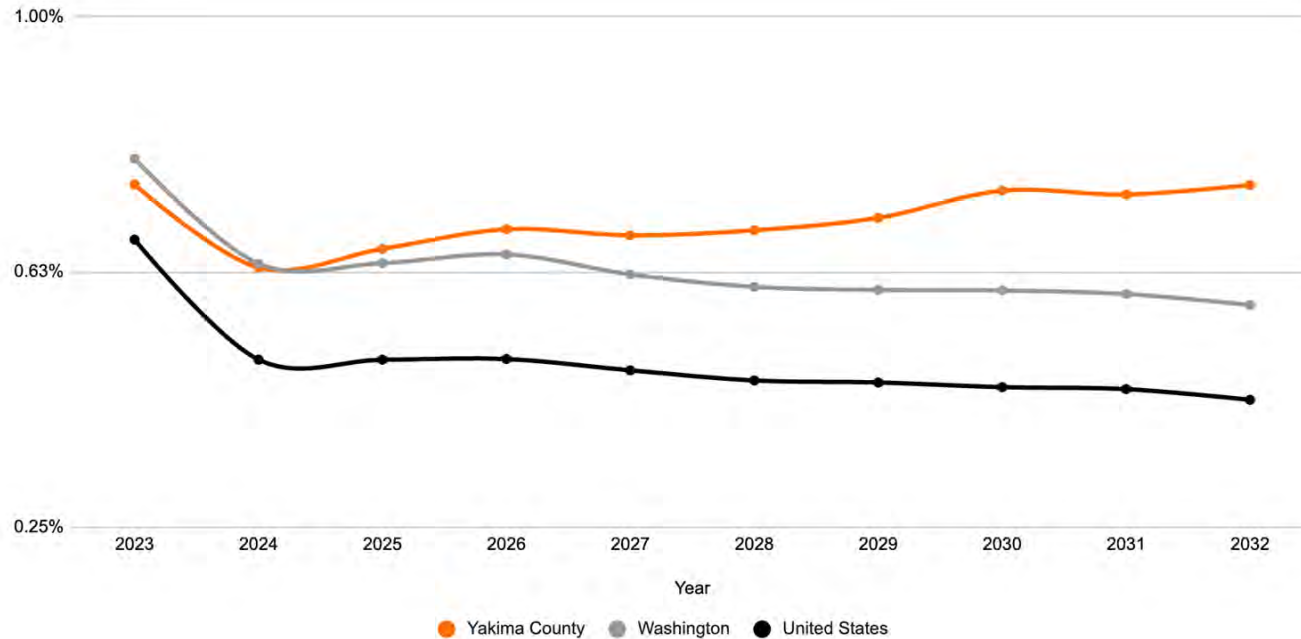
% Growth



# YoY % Population Growth

Yakima County • Washington • United States

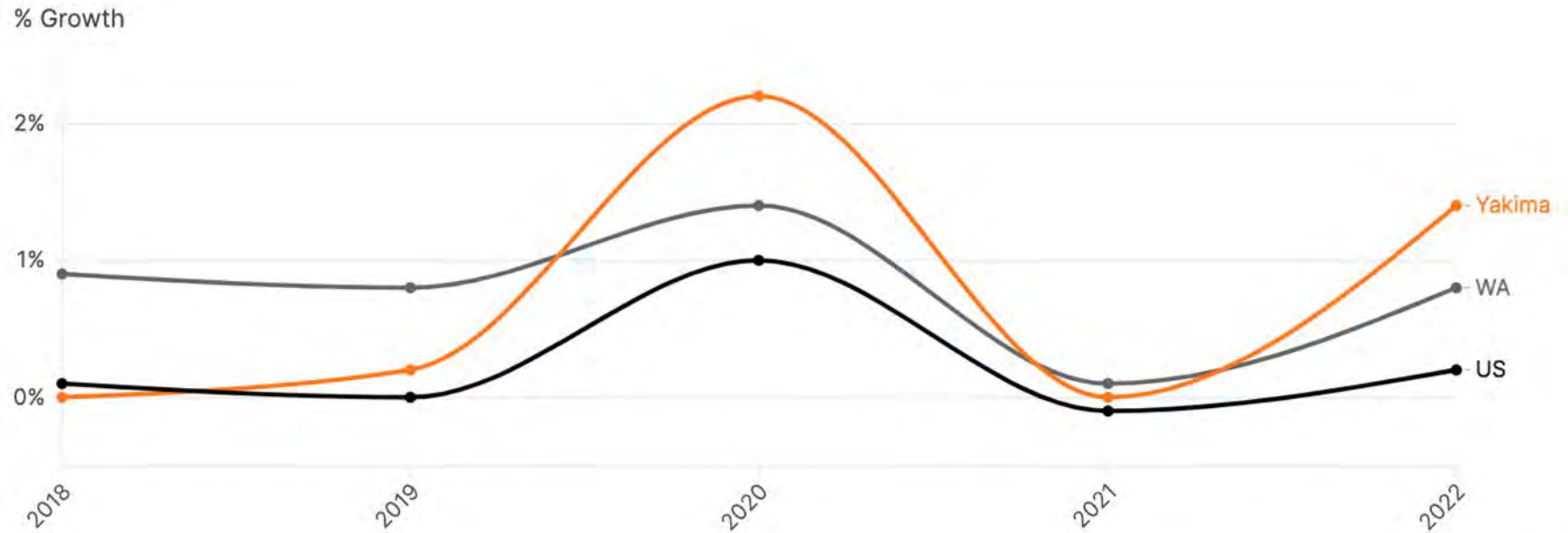
Today



# YoY % Working Age (15–64) Population Growth

2023

Yakima County • Washington • United States

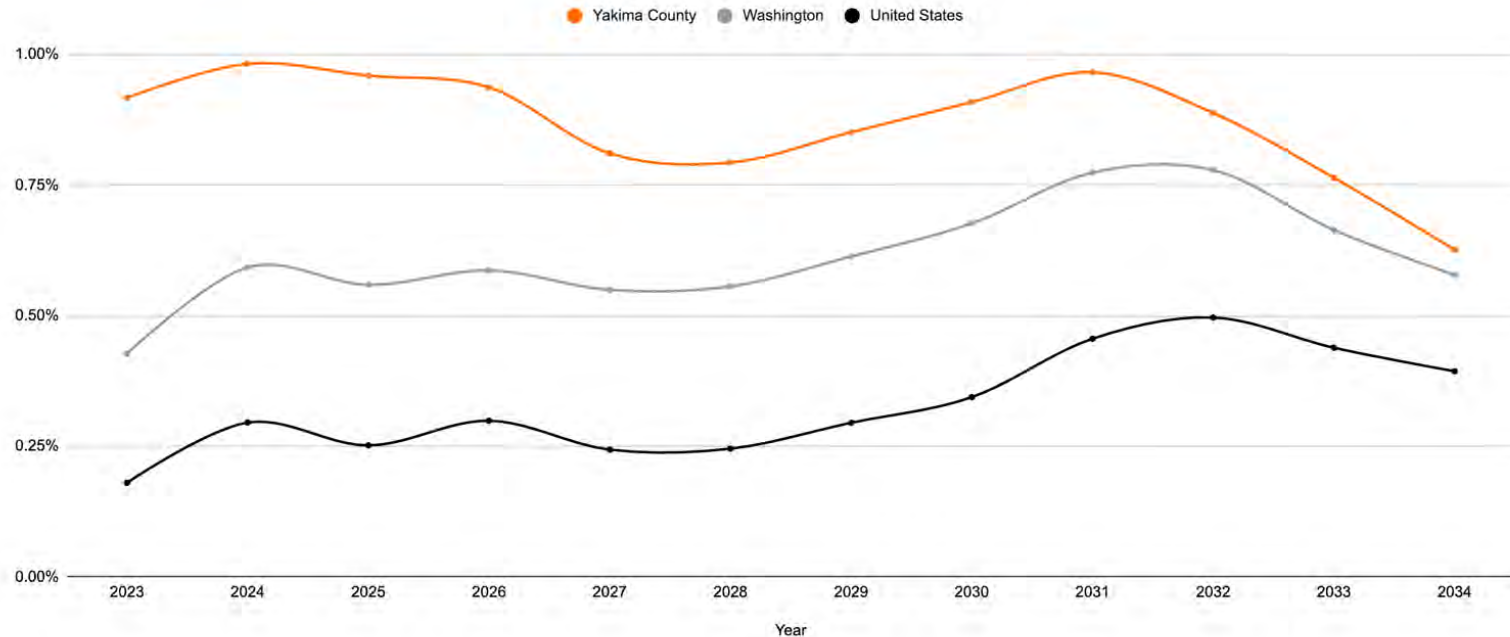




# YoY % Working Age (15–64) Population Growth

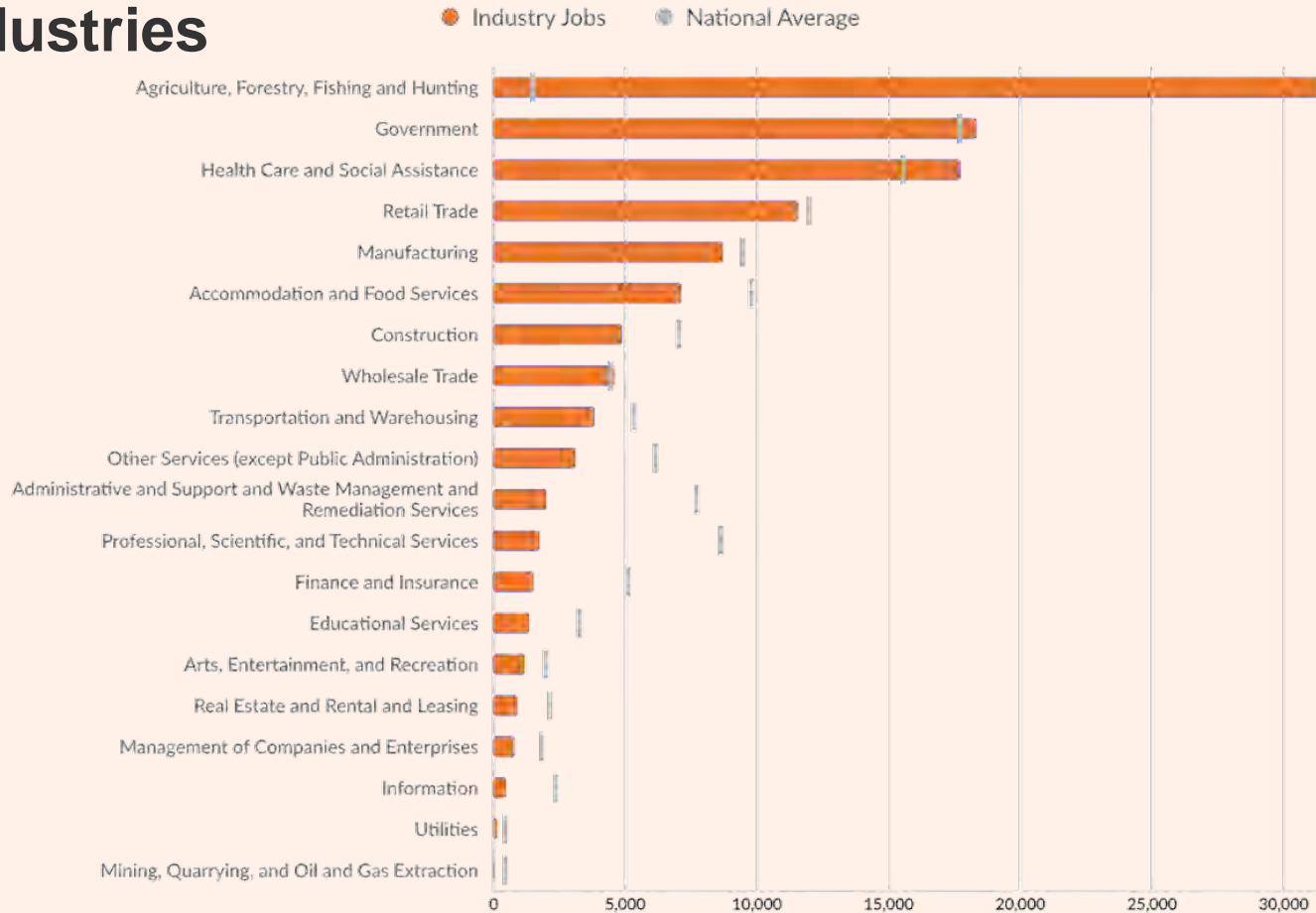
Today

Yakima County • Washington • United States



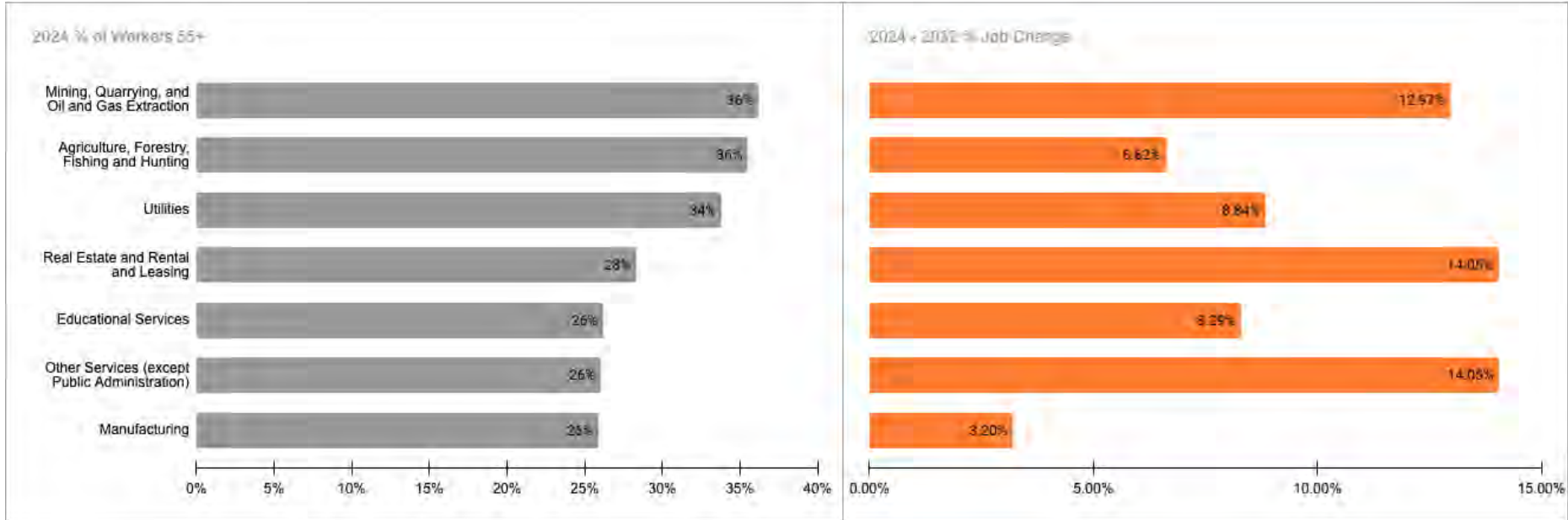
# Large Industries

Yakima, WA



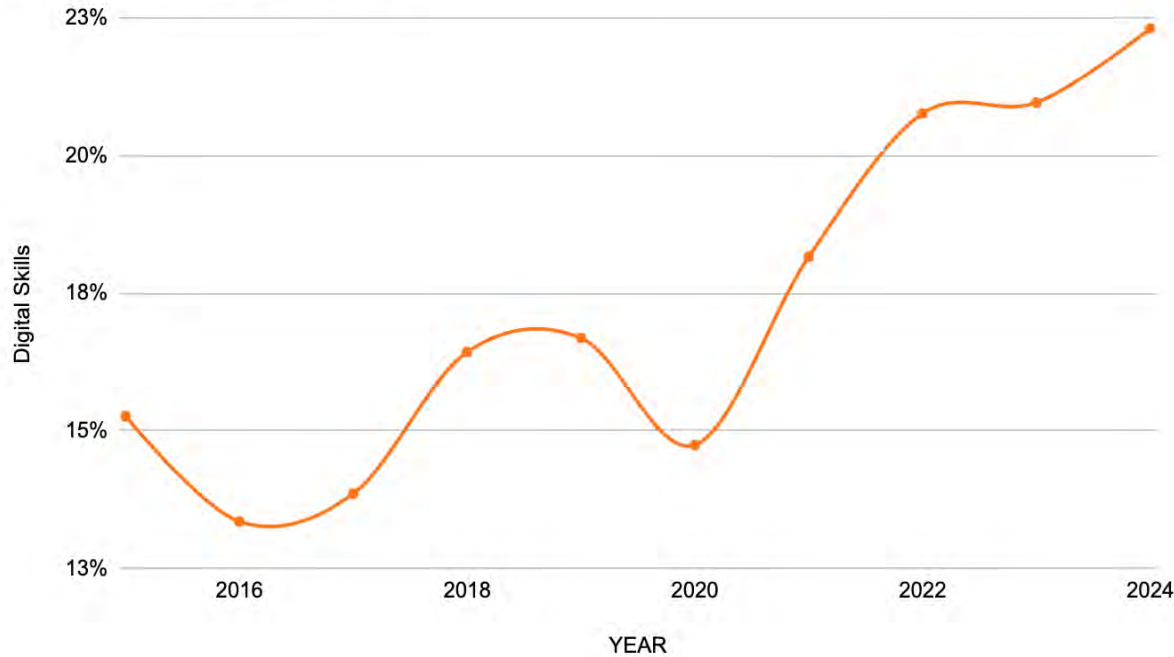
# Yakima Industries with High Retirement Risk

Several industries have more than 1 in 4 workers who are 55+



# Yakima In Demand Skills and Rise of Digital Skills

Digital Skills as % of Total Postings



According to [research](#) from National Skills Coalition and Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, in the state of Washington:

- 95% of Healthcare Postings
- 90% of Arts, entertainment, and recreation Postings
- 86% of Agriculture, forestry, hunting



# Yakima In Demand Skills and Rise of Digital Skills

Specialized Skills		Human Skills		Digital Skills	
Skills	Postings	Skills	Postings	Skills	Postings
Bilingual (Spanish/English)	2,060	Communication	6,508	Microsoft Outlook	1,546
Merchandising	1,768	Customer Service	5,834	Microsoft Excel	1,430
Nursing	1,707	Management	4,258	Microsoft Office	1,290
Auditing	1,093	Sales	3,209	Microsoft PowerPoint	702
Selling Techniques	849	Operations	2,927	Microsoft Word	487
Accounting	839	Leadership	2,845	Epic EMR	436
Billing	764	Multilingualism	2,250	Spreadsheets	362
Registration	729	Detail Oriented	1,822	Microsoft Access	236
Project Management	726	Problem Solving	1,764	Operating Systems	132
Cash Register	704	Planning	1,681	SQL (Programming Language)	122



A dark blue, monochromatic background featuring a dense field of white, fluffy clouds. The clouds are scattered across the frame, with some appearing more prominent and detailed than others, creating a textured, atmospheric effect.

**So, Where do we go  
from here?**

Who's Gonna Do This Work?

# IMMIGRANTS?





# Immigration is The One Source of Talent That is Keeping The US Labor Market Afloat.

Since late 2019...

**102%**

of the 3.7M increase in the US labor force was **foreign-born**.

In that time, the **US-born** labor force dropped by

**73K**



# But What if it *Can't*?

Birth rates have been falling and **labor shortages growing around the globe**— including in countries the US relies on for its workforce.

**Mexico** has a much lower unemployment rate than the U.S.

**Study: 75% of Mexico businesses say they struggle to find workers**

 Cat Rainsford July 14, 2023

## Registered Nurses

Country	#	% of all immigrants	% of RNs
Philippines	142,800	29.3%	4.5%
India	32,400	6.7%	1.0%
Nigeria	21,200	4.4%	0.7%

**The Philippines** currently has a shortage of 100,000 nurses. Starting in 2021, they started placing strict limits on those who want to emigrate.

Who's Gonna Do This Work?

# Hiring Requirements?



# Revisiting Hiring Requirements

- Educational Requirements:
  - 73% of the Yakima population doesn't have a college degree.
  - 47% of Washington Postings and 45% of Yakima Postings since January require college degree
- Justice Involved:
  - 4,000 job postings since January implicitly or explicitly felon friendly in State of Washington
  - Estimated over 250,000 openings this year for the same occupations - State of Washington

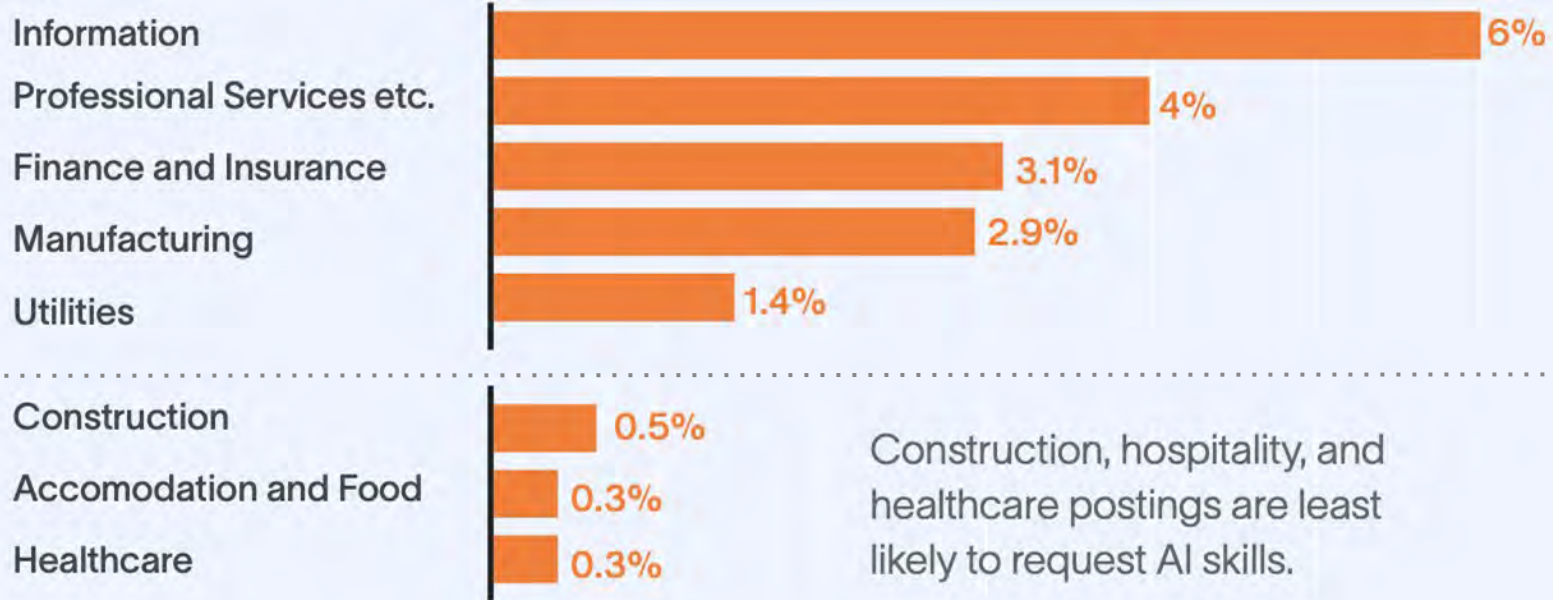


Who's Gonna Do This Work?

# Artificial Intelligence and Digital Skills?



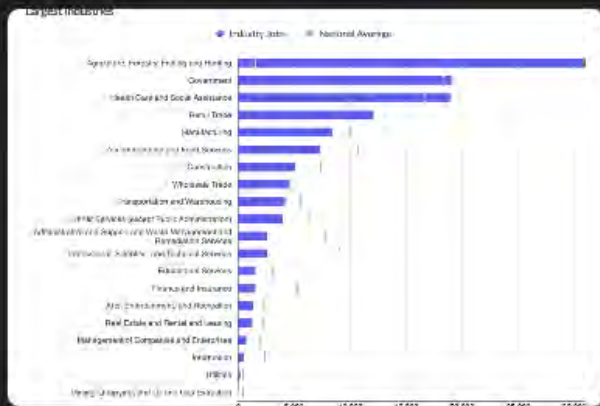
# AI skills are in *highest* demand in industries with *low* danger of talent shortages.



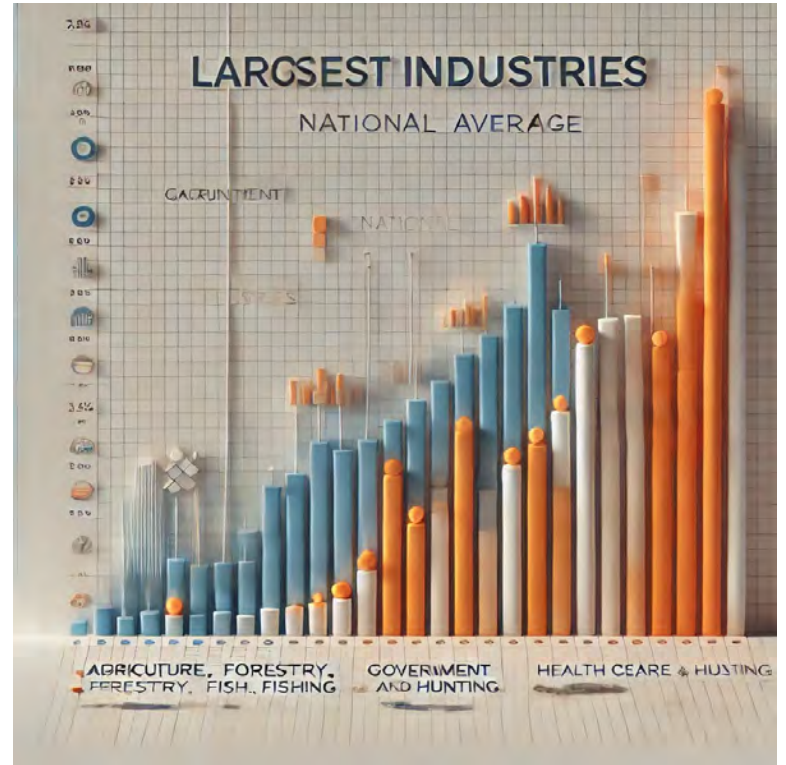
Construction, hospitality, and healthcare postings are least likely to request AI skills.







Can you make those blue bars orange?







# Joshua LaFon

[joshua.lafon@lightcast.io](mailto:joshua.lafon@lightcast.io)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshualafon/>

SCAN



To Download  
The Rising Storm

The background of the image is a dark, monochromatic blue. It features a pattern of soft, white, billowing clouds that appear to be rising or drifting from the bottom right towards the top left. The clouds are rendered with subtle gradients, giving them a three-dimensional, ethereal quality. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

**Thank you.**