

## Addressing the Aging Workforce

Many people may think of older adults as retirees, but the truth is that millions of Americans 55 and older work full- or part-time jobs every day. According to the American Society on Aging, 1 out of 4 workers — about 25% of the working population — in the U.S. will qualify as part of the aging workforce, defined as age 55 and older, as early as 2020. There are several reasons why people are continuing to work as they get older:

- Financial need: Many older adults don't have enough in retirement savings or a traditional pension plan. In addition, many people continue working to keep their health insurance.
- Increased longevity and function: Americans' life expectancy has increased. People are living longer and are healthier than in the past.
- Talent shortage: As Baby Boomers age, they're followed by a substantially smaller younger generation. Many older workers are being asked to stay on the job to fill skill gaps or mentor younger workers.
- Enjoyed work and productivity: Many people enjoy the social benefits of work and the feeling of being productive.

Older workers can be an asset for many employers. Here are some ways you can attract and retain mature employees:

- Acknowledge work contributions.
- Offer flexible work arrangements.
- Offer bridge employment.
- Support health and wellness.
- Provide caregiver support.
- Offer skills training.
- Address age discrimination.



An aging workforce may have different health and safety needs. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommends the following ways to help aging workers remain safe and healthy:

- Prioritize workplace flexibility.
- Match tasks to abilities.
- Avoid prolonged sedentary work.
- Manage noise, trip hazards and other physical hazards.
- Provide and design ergonomic work environments.
- Provide health promotion and lifestyle interventions.
- Proactively manage accommodations for employees returning to work after an illness or injury.
- Require aging workforce management skills training for supervisors.

Sources: [shrm.org](https://www.shrm.org)\*, [aarp.org](https://www.aarp.org)\*, [tint.com](https://www.tint.com)\*

\*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control these websites.