

Older Workers and the Direct Care Workforce

The direct care sector will need millions of new workers to meet the growing demand for long-term care, which makes recruiting new populations essential. One answer to this recruitment challenge is older workers—namely those aged 55 and over. For some, starting a new job or career in later life is a financial necessity; for others, it’s a chance to experience a new field, develop new skills, and/or contribute to society in a different way. This fact sheet provides a snapshot of older workers in direct care and in the overall labor force. Drawing from broader employment research, we also offer a few tips on how to attract older workers to direct care jobs.

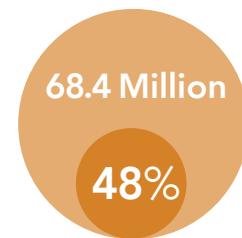
Understanding Older Workers in Direct Care

Workers aged 55 and over currently make up 23 percent of the direct care workforce, numbering nearly 848,000 workers. Here are some other statistics to consider.

What % of Direct Care Workers are...	55 years old and above	18 to 54 years old
Women	88%	86%
People of Color	52%	56%
Immigrants	30%	22%
Part Time/Part Year	61%	59%
Receiving Retirement Income	10%	1%
Living Below the Poverty Line	9%	21%

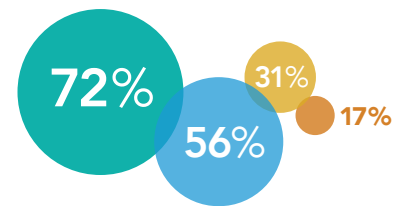
Expanding the View on Older Workers

WORKFORCE SIZE



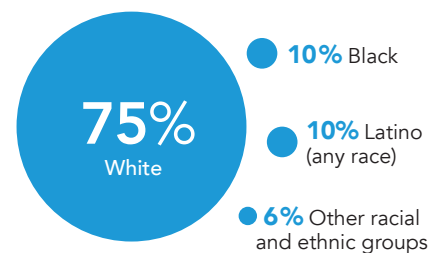
- Workers aged 55 to 74 in the U.S.
- Participating in the labor force

PERCENT OF OLDER WORKERS IN THE LABOR FORCE, BY AGE GROUP



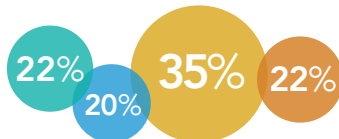
- 55 to 59 years old
- 60 to 64 years old
- 65 to 69 years old
- 70 to 74 years old

DIVERSITY IN THE LABOR FORCE



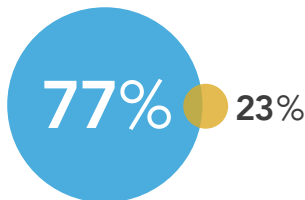
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REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION



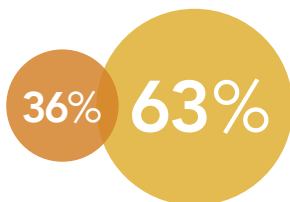
- Older workers in the Midwest
- Older workers in the Northeast
- Older workers in the South
- Older workers in the West

RETIREMENT INCOME OTHER THAN SOCIAL SECURITY



- No retirement income
- With retirement income

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT



- 55- to 64-year-olds working part-time
- 65+ year-olds working part-time

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2016. *American Community Survey (ACS), 2015 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/pums.html>; analysis by PHI (February 15, 2018). Analysis of older workers in the labor force limited to those aged 55 to 74.

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Recruiting Older Workers to Direct Care

1. Promote flexible schedules

While full-time hours are critical for younger workers with extensive financial responsibilities, workers pursuing a second career may prefer flexible, part-time work. Promote direct care as an opportunity to find a new balance between work and other priorities, such as caring for parents, children, or grandchildren.

2. Emphasize altruism

For many experienced workers, starting a new career is an important opportunity to give back to the community in a different way. When describing the realities of the role, be sure to highlight the many ways that direct care workers make a positive difference in individuals' lives.

3. Capitalize on existing skills

Older workers offer decades of professional and personal experience. Tailor recruitment, orientation, and training methods to explicitly build on this foundation of knowledge and skill.

4. Integrate learning opportunities

Ensure that direct care jobs are attractive to experienced workers—and to their younger peers—by integrating ongoing opportunities to learn, grow, and develop new skills.

Need assistance with recruitment and retention?

PHI helps long-term care employers find and keep the best candidates for direct care jobs. Contact us at **718.402.7766** or info@PHInational.org to learn more.

PHI works to transform eldercare and disability services. We foster dignity, respect, and independence—for all who receive care, and all who provide it. As the nation's leading authority on the direct care workforce, PHI promotes quality direct care jobs as the foundation for quality care.