



**OHIO'S
AGING WORKFORCE:
OPPORTUNITIES &
CHALLENGES
FOR
OHIO'S EMPLOYERS**

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Dr. Shahla Mehdizadeh is a Senior Research Scholar at Scripps Gerontology Center and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Gerontology, both at Miami University. Shahla, an economist by training, has studied retirement income and job mobility of aging workers with interrupted work history. Her research interests include examining the aging population as they reach traditional retirement age and whether they have adequate years of service and have accumulated a reasonable retirement income and/or savings. Shahla also explores whether individuals in this population have health care benefits before they become Medicare eligible at age 65.

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PURPOSE

This report focuses on anticipated age-related changes in Ohio's workforce and the effect these changes might have on employers, employees and society.

BACKGROUND

As the average life expectancy in this country increases, so does the proportion of older persons as a percentage of overall population. In 1900, the average life expectancy for Americans was 47 years. In 2005, the average U.S. life expectancy was 77 years. The percentage of older persons (those age 65 and over) in our country's general population has risen even more remarkably – from 4 percent in 1900 to 12.7 percent (He, et al. 2005). That figure - bolstered by baby boomers, a longer life expectancy and a declining fertility rate - is projected to be at 20 percent by the year 2030. A similar percentage is expected in Ohio.

The first wave of the baby boom generation (79 million born between 1946 and 1964) has already reached the front end of the ages associated with retirement (55 and older). This increased older

population will affect facets of society such as Social Security, healthcare and hospitalization utilization. But what are the implications of an aging society for the labor force and the companies that employ older workers?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that by 2016, the U.S. labor force is expected to be comprised of about 164.2 million people. The older participants in the labor force, those age 55 and older, will experience the largest growth, almost 47% between 2006 and 2016 (Toossi, 2007). The participation rate for men will continue to be higher than for women, although the gap is narrowing. Labor force participation rates vary by ethnic group, so as the working-age population ages and becomes more ethnically and racially diverse the size and mix of the labor force will be affected.

OHIO'S AGING POPULATION

Ohio has the 6th highest older population in the United States,

though Ohio is seventh among the 50 states in total state population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Over 22% of Ohio's population was age 55 or older in 2000. By 2020, that number is expected to increase to almost 30%. Ohio has had slower population growth than the nation as a result of net outmigration,

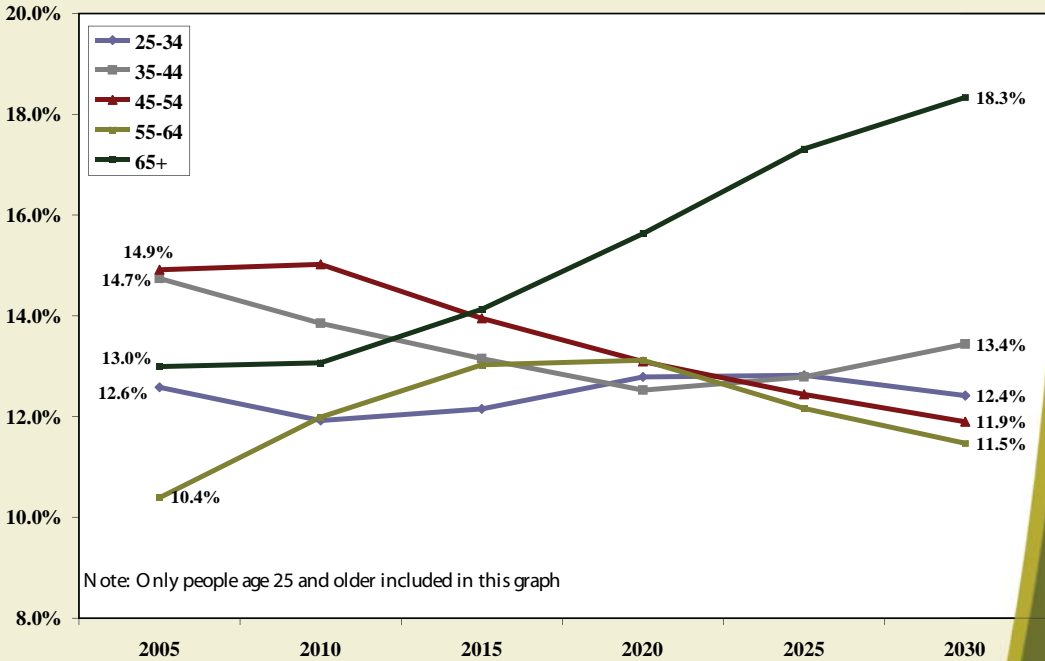
which is expected to continue over the next few years (Mehdizadeh, 2008).

This slow growth, along with the aging of its population, could have an impact on the ability of Ohio employers to attract and keep qualified workers.

Figure 1 displays the changes in the age composition of Ohio's population.

PROJECTED PROPORTION OF OHIO'S POPULATION BY AGE CATEGORY: 2005-2030

FIGURE 1



Source: Ohio Department of Development downloaded from <http://www.odod.state.oh.us/research/files/p200/Ohio.pdf>

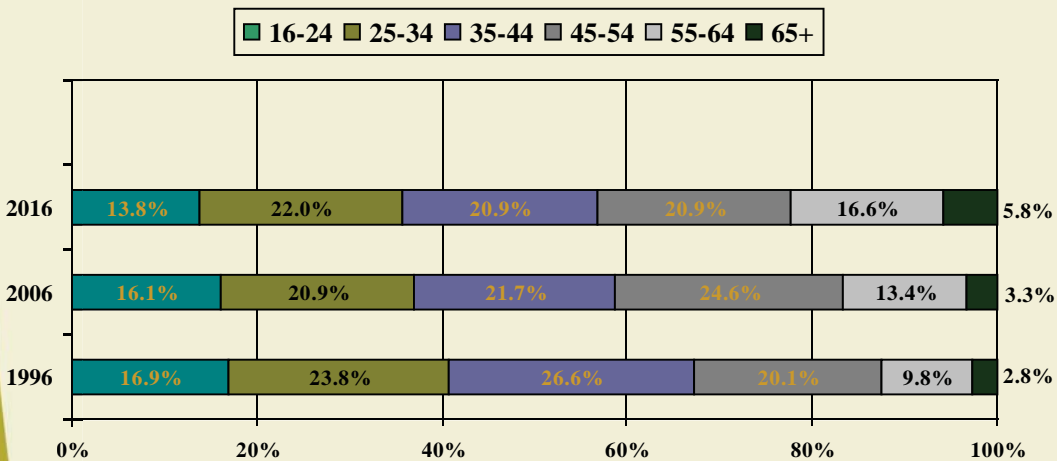
A recently released report by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), **Ohio's Graying Labor Force**

(2008), provides a look at the future of the labor force in Ohio.

- Between 2006 and 2016, Ohio's population age 25-34 will increase by almost 82,000 (5.6%), while those age 35-44 and 45-54 will decrease by 159,000 and 181,000, respectively. **With an increase of 269,000 in the 55-64 age category, the growth in this group alone will be greater than the decline in the number of people in the 35-44 and the 45-54 age categories.**
- By 2016, 22.4% of all labor force participants in Ohio will be age 55 and older. **Ohio is expected to experience a modest increase in its labor force**, in great part, because of the participation of older workers, (see Figure 2).

OHIO'S LABOR FORCE DISTRIBUTION BY AGE GROUP: 1996-2016

FIGURE 2



Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (2008). Ohio's Graying Labor Force: Aging through 2016.



Patricia Fleisch, Age 73

Patricia Fleisch is currently the Controller of Total Bookkeeping (a tax accounting and payroll services business) (<http://www.patriciabolin CPA.com/>). She began this partnership in 1990 when she was 55 years old and had managed other small family-owned businesses. She enjoys her current job because of the schedule flexibility, socialization opportunities, and mental stimulation and problem solving challenges that it brings. She has no plan to retire from this job unless she faces declining health.

- Even though the labor force participation rate in Ohio¹ (67%) is expected to remain almost the same between now and the year 2016, **the composition of the labor force will be different**. There will be more women and more people of both genders age 55 and older in the labor force.
- A considerable proportion of the population age 55 and older is (66.6% of 55-64 and almost 20% of 65 and older) expected to continue to work in 2016.
- By the year 2016, **two thirds of all job openings in Ohio** are expected to be for positions replacing retirees.

¹This population is comprised of those who are not institutionalized, are age 16 and older and are either employed or actively looking for a job.



Laurel Jones is a Staffing Specialist in Hourly Placement at General Electric Aviation (www.geae.com). She retired after 35 years of service and has been rehired as a part-time returning employee working now for 6 years. She enjoys the flexibility of her work schedule and the opportunity to do the work she loves.

Laurel Jones, Age 62

In spite of the fact that many people continue to work into their 60s, even 70s, there is general concern regarding the ability of the people age 55 years and older to continue to work and maintain the level of productivity of their younger days. Yet, a recent study by Scripps Gerontology Center (Mehdizadeh, 2008) found that only about 2% of people between the ages of 45 and 59, and less than 4% of those between 60 and 69, are severely² disabled. Further, less than 13% of the members of these two age groups have any³ disability at all. Accordingly, as shown in Figure 3, only a small proportion of older workers have physical, cognitive, or mental health deficiencies that could prevent them from working full- or part-time. Although some oc-

cupations require physical strength and stamina (such as construction, manufacturing and mining), studies have found that people employed in these types of work usually seek retirement at an earlier age (Filer & Petri, 1988; Hayward, Grady, Hardy, and Sommers, 1989) than those working in less strenuous jobs. Also, with Ohio's declining manufacturing sector, the growing service industry, and the computerization of the workplace, there is less need for physical strength and stamina. For example, between 1950 and 1996, the share of jobs in physically demanding employment, nationally, fell from 20.3 percent to 8 percent where "physically demanding jobs are defined as requiring frequent lifting or carrying objects weighing more than

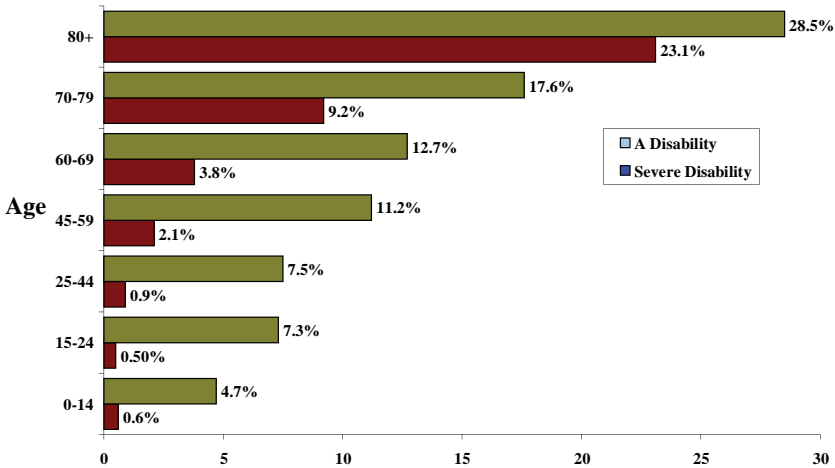
²In this study, a severely disabled person is one who needs help with two of the activities of daily living (i.e., bathing, dressing, transferring between surfaces, using the toilet, eating, and maintaining personal hygiene), or is cognitively impaired, has a severe mental illness, or a diagnosis of mental retardation or developmental disability and is unable to care for himself on a daily basis.

³Any disability encompasses those with moderate and severe disability. A moderately disabled person is one who is unable to perform one of the activities of daily living, needs the assistance of another person with taking medication, has a diagnosis of mental retardation or developmental disability, or has severe mental illness but is able to care for himself.

25 pounds” (Steuerle, Spiro & Johnson, 1999). In addition, the majority of employment growth between 2006 and 2016 is expected to come from the services-producing sector (Figueroa & Woods, 2007). Thus, given the new economy, the physical ability of older workers should not be the matter of concern it was in the past.

ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY BY AGE, OHIO: 2005

FIGURE 3



Source: Mehdizadeh, S. (2008). *Disability in Ohio: Current and Future Demand for Services*

Born in Bulgaria and educated in Czechoslovakia and Germany, Dr. Tabakoff came to the U.S. by invitation of the U.S. Army in 1957, and joined the Faculty of the University of Cincinnati in the Department of Aerospace Engineering and Engineering Mechanics (http://www.eng.uc.edu/dept_ase/faculty/positions.php3) a year later, while he continued his consultative role with the Army. When it was still mandatory to retire at age 70, he retired from University of Cincinnati, but was rehired shortly after. Dr. Tabakoff marvels at the opportunity to refine the techniques he developed, and after 51 years of employment at the department he continues to consult and travel internationally and has no plan to retire or slow down unless he faces health challenges.

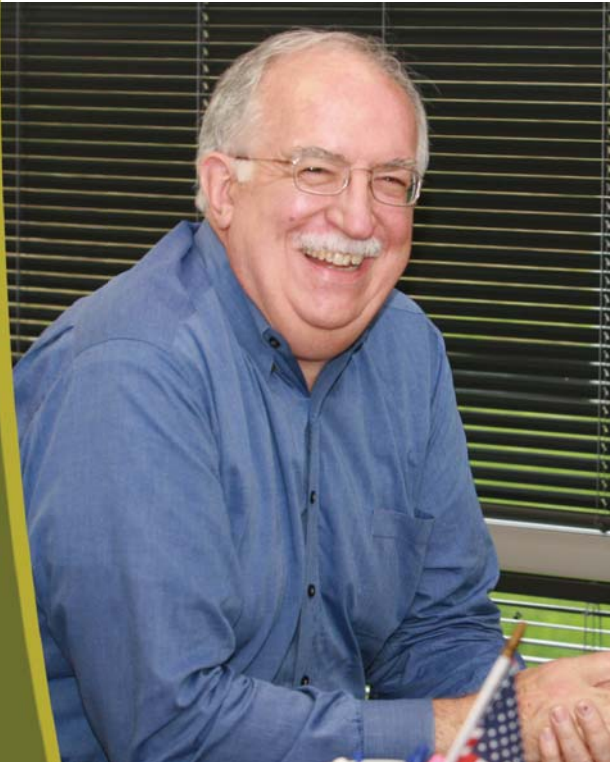


Widen Tabakoff, Age 88

OHIO'S AGING WORKFORCE

The majority of the baby boom cohort is expected to continue working over the next 10 years,

leading to an increase in the size of Ohio's workforce. Although the labor-force participation rates of men age 55 and older is not expected to change in the next 10 years, more women are expected to enter (or remain) in the labor market beyond the traditional retirement age - increasingly so over time (see Figure 4), (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2008).

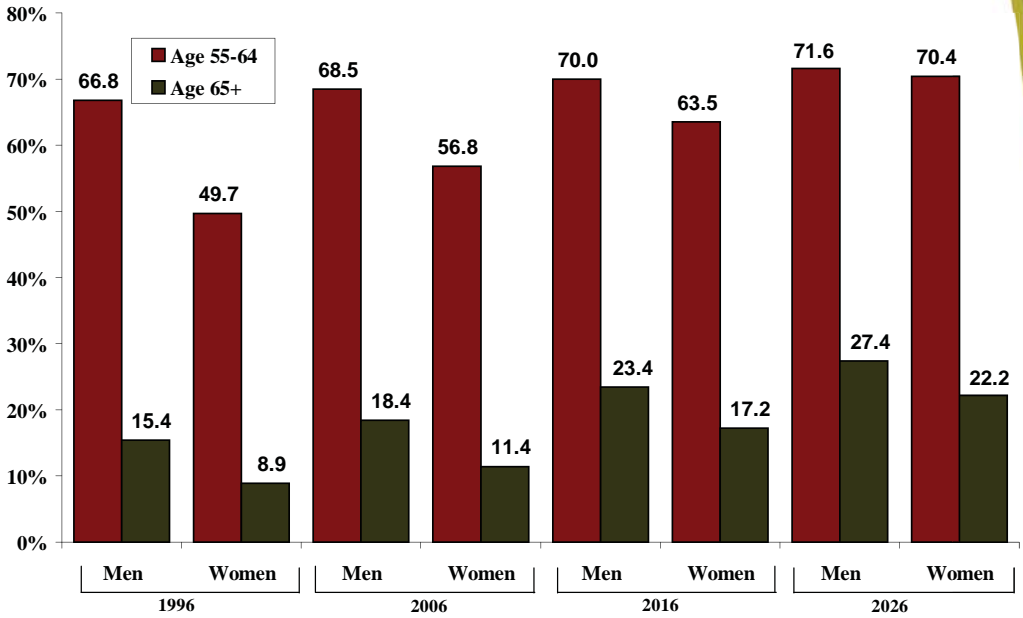


John Melvin, Age 64

John Melvin was recruited by the Clermont County Chamber of Commerce to be Executive Director of the Small Business Development Center (<http://www.clermont-chamber.com/Small-Business-Development-Center.34.0.html>), at age 56, after he had retired from the position of Chief Financial Officer in an insurance company. The attractions of the new position are the schedule flexibility, the opportunity to remain active, engaged, and up-to-date in the community, and being helpful to others. John plans to continue working until at least age 70, if he remains healthy.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE BY SEX: 1996 TO 2026

FIGURE 4



Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (2008). *Ohio's Graying Labor Force: Aging through 2016*, the data are extrapolated to 2026 by authors.

Wilda Manning is employed at General Electric Aviation (www.geae.com) as a Payroll Specialist. Before retiring, she completed 37 years of service as the Manager of Payroll and Benefits at GE Aviation. She has been working for several months now as a rehired pensioner. Wilda returned to work in an effort to remain actively engaged and to keep busy. She enjoys her current job because of the flexibility, stress-free environment, opportunity to maintain skills, and social networking associated with her position.



Wilda Manning, Age 61

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR OLDER WORKERS

While the majority of older workers are remaining healthy and active members of the labor force, others are facing challenges of their own, with the needs of their aging parents, siblings, and other relatives pressing upon them. A factor that may add to and/or prolong these pressures is that many older workers may not be able to afford retirement. Galinsky (2007) reports that:

- **Almost one third (32%) of older workers have not saved for retirement.**
- **Just over one half (52%) of older workers expect to receive income from a defined-benefit pension plan.**
- **Only a little more than one third of older workers expect to have employer-based health insurance plans after retirement.**
- **Less than one quarter (24%) of older workers are confident they have enough money for retirement.**



Lisa Groger is a professor in the Department of Sociology and Gerontology at Miami University (<http://www.units.muohio.edu/sociology/>). She has been with the department since 1990. Dr. Groger explains her reasons for her continued employment with Miami University as: continued income, additional years of service that will lead to higher monthly retirement benefits, love of teaching, a pleasant and beautiful environment to work in, and supportive colleagues. Dr. Groger also is eager to witness the coming of age of the curriculum changes that she helped to create before assuming semi-retirement. She plans a phased-in retirement, during which she will continue to teach at a reduced load.

Lisa Groger, Age 68

Other reasons people remain in the workforce after retirement age,

as summarized by AARP (Montenegro, 2002) and The Conference Board (Morton, Foster, & Sedlar, 2004) are:

- **Need for money (61%);**
- **Desire to stay mentally active (54%);**
- **Need for health benefits (52%); and**
- **Finding their jobs fulfilling and interesting (55%).**

Generally older workers are remaining in the workforce for a variety of reasons: some want to continue doing the work that they enjoy; others remain because of economic reasons; still others indicate that they are continuing to work because of the physical and mental health benefits as well as the social support and engagement that they receive from the work environment (Morton, Foster, & Sedlar, 2004).

Work and family responsibilities intersect for workers of all ages. Yet, older workers seem to have a bigger challenge as they increasingly juggle the simultaneous demands of children, aging parents, and the work place. This issue is especially relevant for older women, as they are more likely to be family caregivers and are expected to represent a larger portion of the labor force. The combination of these work/family demands is an area of increasing importance for both employees and employers (Lockwood, 2005).

Russell Slone has been a care manager with the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio (<http://www.help4seniors.org/>) for the last 3 years. Previously, he worked for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Association of Cincinnati for 27 years. He sought transition to the Council on Aging for its more favorable income and health-care benefit package. He finds personal satisfaction in his new job helping older people with functional limitations.



Russell Slone, Age 64



Thelma Clabbers, Age 68

Thelma Clabbers has been working for Pro-Seniors (<http://www.proseniors.org/>) as an Ombudsman/Victim of Crime Assistant for the last six years. She always worked as a nurse, often part-time while raising a family. After working for years for the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio as a care manager, and retiring from there, she did not want to lose the connection with the population that she cared for over so many years. Her involvement with Pro-Seniors began with volunteer work and then turned to a combination of volunteer and paid employment. She uses her time, training and teaching to pass along what she has learned over the years.

HOW ARE EMPLOYERS RESPONDING?

Employers' response to the aging workforce varies. Some employers are well aware of, understand, and accommodate these changing demographics, recognizing the extent of their employees' personal responsibilities, such as their need to be caregivers to older family members. In addition, employers recognize the value of the older worker's

experiences. They understand that older workers have a history with their company and crystallized knowledge and skill sets, which adds to their efficiency. Some employers are aware of the work ethic and the values that older workers bring to their jobs and are actively building a workforce of older employees.

Some of the benefits of retaining older workers,

as summarized by the Conference Board (Morton, Foster, & Sedlar, 2004):

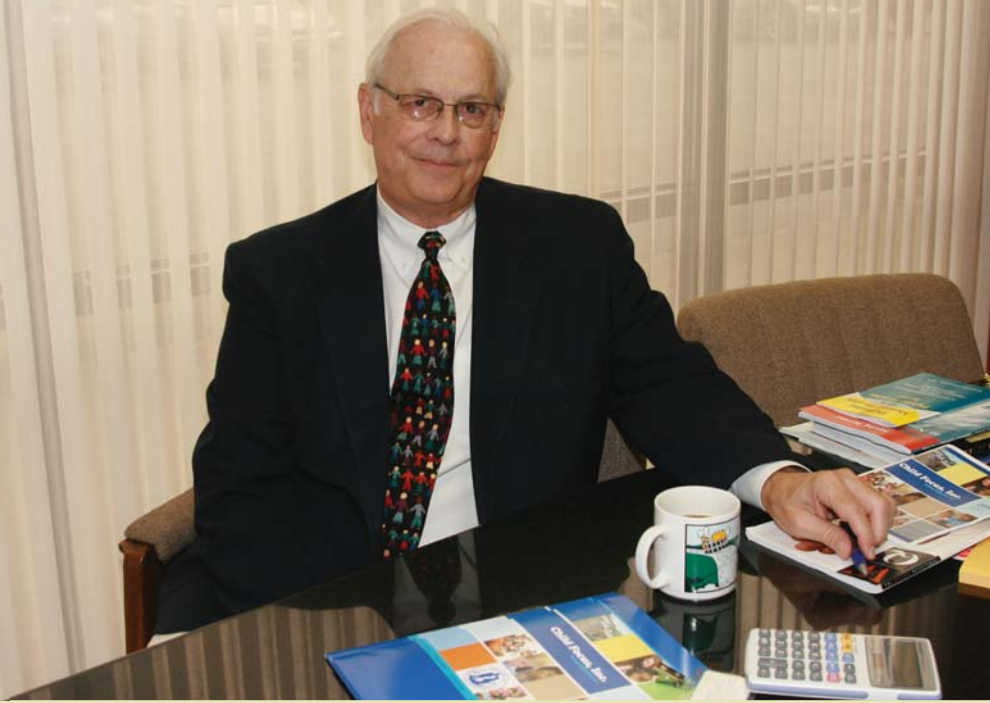
- Lower absenteeism
- Lower turnover
- Flexible schedules
- Fewer mistakes
- More experience
- Better work ethic
- Commitment to workplace
- Firm-specific skills

Some organizations and employers are preparing for and responding to the current and future demographic transitions that are both respon-

sible for, and affecting, our aging workforce, while others are failing to capitalize on the benefits of this phenomenon. However, regardless of employers' preparedness for an aging workforce, older workers are planning to remain in the workforce after traditional retirement age. They have a different attitude about work and retirement out of both personal preference and need. Some older employees will choose to remain in the workforce for a variety of personal reasons, but the majority of older workers plan to continue to work because of economic necessity, as well as for personal fulfillment (Morton, Foster, & Sedlar, 2004).

Rev. Grayson Atha has been a United Methodist minister for almost 50 years. He began the current appointment at William Street United Methodist Church in Delaware, following his mandatory retirement age of 70. Rev. Atha sees himself as effective now as when he was younger; the current appointment has been an opportunity for the church (with no obligation to pay pension or health care benefits) and for Rev. Atha to pursue less demanding employment. Although the additional income has allowed Rev. Atha to make some charitable donations and has helped with a few extra things, it was not the reason for his continued association with a church. He enjoys the work and plans to continue in the future.

Grayson Atha, Age 72



Jim Carter, Age 65

Jim Carter is the CEO of Child Focus, Inc. (<http://www.child-focus.org/default.asp?ID=2>). He has held this position for the last 29 years. During his tenure the organization has experienced a tremendous growth. At age 65 ½ he is not considering retirement, but, in a few years, he plans to reduce his hours and transition to another position. The organization, the community and the people they serve in Child Focus, Inc., are a major part of his life. Leaving the organization completely would not come easily.

As is apparent from the examples cited, **there is a desire by some employers to keep qualified older workers in the face of a shrinking pool of younger, qualified workers**. Some international employers are seeking ways to retain talent through recruitment and retention of older workers (Sheaks, 2007). The Conference Board, a global, independent business membership and research organization that provides information about management and the marketplace to its members, in a report titled *Managing a Mature Workforce* (Morton, Foster & Sedlar, 2004), states that

some companies are creatively addressing the needs of their aging workforce through a variety of action steps and programs as listed below:

- Special age diversity training
- Employee discounts (drug benefits)
- Phased retirement benefits
- Developing 'Casual Worker Programs' to hire or re-employ workers with few benefits and no pension
- Paid time-off bank (a number of paid days off employees can use for any reason)
- Post-retirement employment
- Flextime
- Mentoring
- Knowledge transfer programs
- Internship programs for older workers
- Eldercare benefit programs
- Vocational planning for older workers
- Partnerships with Institutes for Learning in Retirement (ILR)
- Family/generational planning services to help employees prepare for later life
- "Retiree Pools" of recently retired workers with skill sets and training to consult or fill in on short-term projects
- Renaissance programs which provide peer and professional counseling for older workers
- Pension contribution plans
- Employee focus groups/surveys regarding older workers' needs and wants
- Intergenerational programs (grandchildren on site)

After retiring, Linda Ross returned to General Electric Aviation (www.geae.com) and has been working as a Human Resources Staffing Specialist for seven years. Previously she had worked for G.E. for 35 years. Linda returned to work seeking a way to keep busy, remain actively engaged, and maintain skills, and to keep in touch with friends and peers. Linda has no immediate plans to permanently retire.



Linda Ross, Age 64

Older workers are often looking for flexible work schedules.

Given a choice, they often choose part-time employment in order to balance work, leisure and family responsibilities. In addition, older workers are looking for work opportunities that involve social interaction, often preferring jobs involving contact with co-workers and the public they serve.

It is evident that in order to compete successfully in the market place, employers will do well to adjust their personnel practices to attract, recruit, and retain older workers, paying special attention to the needs and preferences - as well as the valuable experience - of an increasingly aging workforce.

Janet Zurface is a certified nurse aid with Black Stone Home Care Company (<http://www.blackstonehc.com/page/1940531.htm>). She had worked as a nurse aide for a nursing home and a home-care agency before taking a part-time position with this company at age 66. The job keeps her physically active and emotionally rewarded because it involves helping individuals with disability to remain independent at home. Janet has no plans to quit anytime soon.



Janet Zurface, Age 69

OHIO COMPANIES PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE AGING LABOR FORCE

Understanding that it is in their best interest to attract and retain older workers – as well as smooth transfer of knowledge between senior and younger workers – many Ohio companies have developed programs and policies that should prove beneficial in this regard. For example:

Procter & Gamble (P&G) and Eli Lilly initiated establishing a contracting agency (YourEncore.com) with the intention of attracting retired research scientists, engineers and product developers who are interested in working on a project-by-project basis. <http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/pdf/ge510-4017-aging-workforce.pdf>

AEP Ohio, a unit of American Electric Power, in 2004 recognized the aging of its work force and realized that it might be facing the loss of its knowledge base. A solution that AEP believes will lead to a smoother transition between worker cohorts is the establishment of a mentorship program between senior and junior staff so there will be a gradual transfer of knowledge and shared history. http://uaelp.pennnet.com/display_article/256346/34/ARTCL/none/none/1/the-aging-workforce-challenge/

Lanny Hargraves is an employee of the Miami University Physical Facilities Department (<http://www.pfd.muohio.edu/index.jsp>) assigned to special facilities. Previously, he was employed with the Square D plant in Oxford and was laid off at the age of 55. Mr. Hargraves, who had no plans to retire that early, began looking for a job with two criteria in mind: no commuting and good health and retirement benefits. Miami University offered him the current position at age 56. Although the pay was considerably lower than his previous job, the generous benefits from Miami University and public employees' retirement system was a major attraction. Even though the current position at times requires physical strength, he has been able to meet the challenges of his position.



Langford Hargraves, Age 62

Fairfield Medical Center is a hospital and health care provider in Lancaster, Ohio, with 27% of its employees age 50 and older. It practices innovative and supportive policies to encourage older employees to remain on the job and to attract retirees from other organizations to seek employment at the center. The center has flexible work hours, training opportunities for all employees, and health care benefits - even for those employees who work only a few hours a week. http://www.aarp.org/money/careers/employerresourcecenter/bestemployers/winners/fairfield_medical_center.html.

The Jennings Center for Older Adults, a Catholic-based continuum of care center in northeast Ohio, provides flexibility, opportunity, recognition, security, support, and talent retention to its employees. <http://www.jenningscenter.org/fullnews.php?storyID=10079>

The Ohio State Medical Center, one of central Ohio's largest employers, is recognized by AARP as one of the best places in the country for older workers. Of the 6,800 employees at OSU Medical Center, more than 1,500 are age 50 or older. One of the features of OSU Medical Center is its outstanding effort to give older employees greater schedule flexibility and to provide the opportunity for older employees to upgrade their skills. <http://www.medicalcenter.osu.edu/mediaroom/press/article.cfm?ID=1457&ci=90>

Among companies that are not headquartered in Ohio, but have branches nationwide - including in Ohio - are CVS/pharmacy and Borders, Inc. These companies deliberately established policies and practices that invite older workers to seek employment in their organization and encourage their mature employees to remain in the organization. <http://www.csrwire.com/News/4707.html>, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/23/business/23older.html?pagewanted=print&position=>

Donald Frodge is a Staffing Specialist at General Electric Aviation (www.geae.com). He worked at GE Aviation for 35 years before returning to work seven years ago shortly after he retired. Don enjoys the stress-free component of part-time work in addition to the reduced responsibility. Work for him is now fun, providing opportunities for choice and social networking.



Donald Frodge, Age 63

THE STATE OF OHIO AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO STUDY AND ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO AN AGING WORKFORCE

Ohio Department of Aging under the direction of Governor Ted Strickland has established:

1) The Senior Civic Engagement Council (SCEC)

The Senior Civic Engagement Council (SCEC) was formally created May 20, 2008, by Ohio Governor Ted Strickland through an executive order. The council has three major focal points, one of which is senior employment. The SCEC is charged with collecting and analyzing data on the participation of older adults in the job market. The council also promotes policies and legislation that will favorably impact the continued employment or re-employment of older adults.

2) The Third Age Sub-Committee of the State Workforce Policy Advisory Board.

The purpose of the Third Age Subcommittee is to provide the Recruitment, Retention and Placement Committee with information on policy and strategy recommendations regarding:

- Needs of employers in relation to mature workers (defined as 50 years or older) entering or re-entering the workforce;
- Training gaps;
- Skills mismatch between mature workers and emerging industries;
- Needs of hard-to-employ aging populations;
- Education of business leaders and employers on the value of an aging workforce;
- Education and lifelong learning as it relates to entering and advancing in a career; and
- Other issues relating to mature workers.



Barbara E. Riley, Age 60

Barbara Riley is the director of Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) (<http://www.goldenbuckeye.com>). She was appointed by Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, effective Feb. 1, 2007. Director Riley has more than 35 years of combined public and private-sector experience. Her state government service in Ohio began in 1990. She finds her ODA appointment most attractive because of the opportunity it provides to influence public policy on issues of concern to aging Ohioans and those who care for them. Riley believes ODA is, in certain ways, on the cutting edge in dealing with interests and concerns of older people, and finds her position as their advocate enjoyable and invigorating. She plans to continue working as long as she can make a difference in the lives of those she serves. At some point in the future, Riley might consider a position with less intensity. But, in the absence of any unanticipated factors, she has no plans to retire.

In addition, the federal government provides funding for:

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a federally funded program designed to provide those age 55 and over with opportunities to contribute to their communities through paid service. This program is administered by the U. S. Department of Labor. It has a second, equally important, role as the only workforce-development program designed specifically for older adults. While working in a non-profit or government organization, participants are provided with a work-based learning agreement to gain marketable skills for the purpose of obtaining unsubsidized employment.

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Nancy Withers is a self-employed 71-year-old dress maker. After she retired from work, and after her husband passed away, she searched for an employment opportunity that would bring her personal joy and satisfaction, as well as supplement her retirement income. While she was examining her options she went to college and earned a degree and decided to do what she had always enjoyed. Her business is thriving, and her new customers hear about her by word of mouth. She enjoys the creativity, independence, and flexibility of her current job.



Nancy Withers, Age 71

