

The background is a dark grey chalkboard with various white chalk sketches. On the left, there's a large drawing of a microscope. Above it, a globe is sketched. In the bottom right, there are sketches of a book, a percentage sign, and other geometric shapes.

The AACCC Plus-50 Initiative: The Ohio Story

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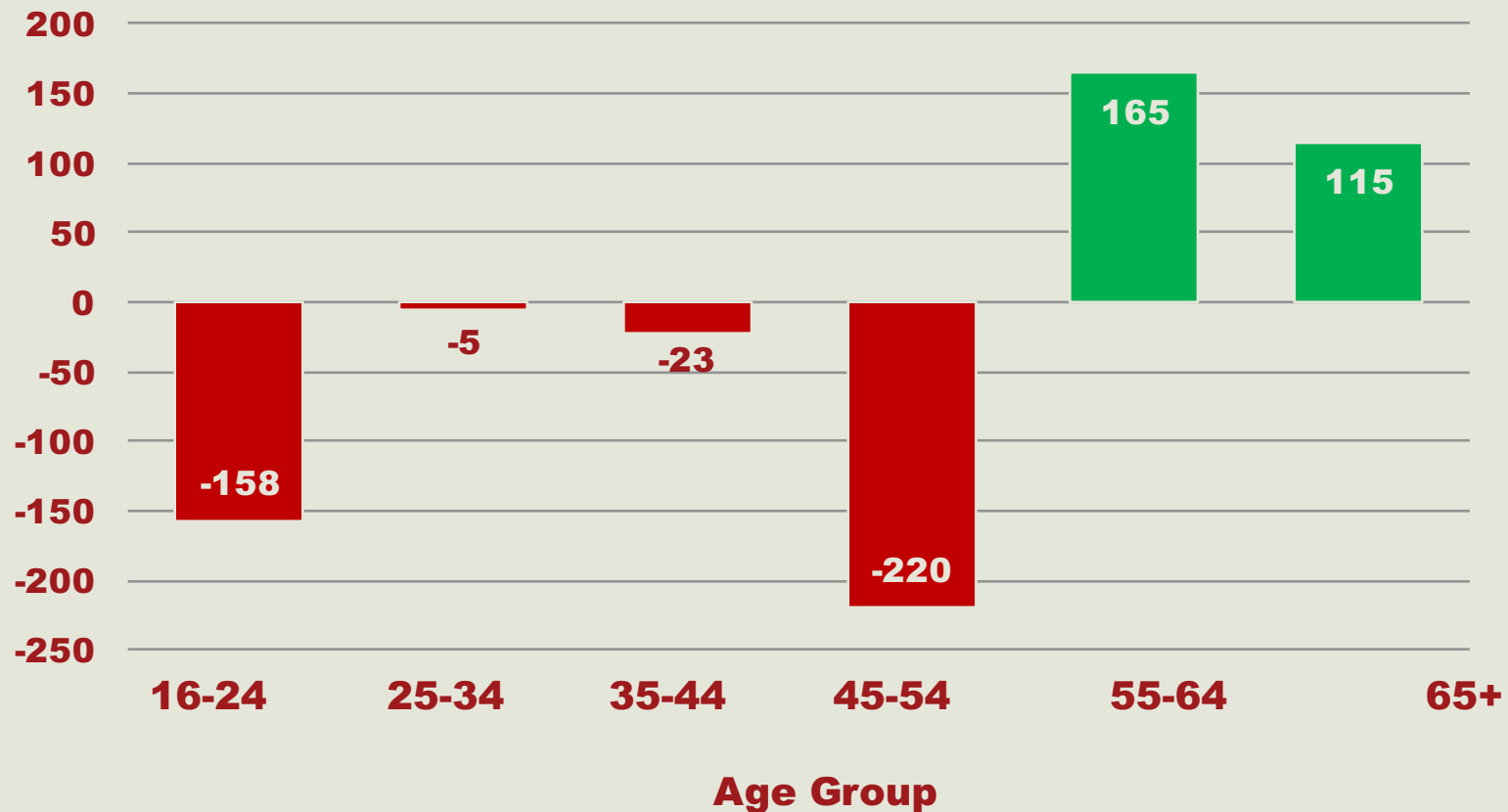
2017 American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Annual Conference

Memphis, TN

Presentation Overview

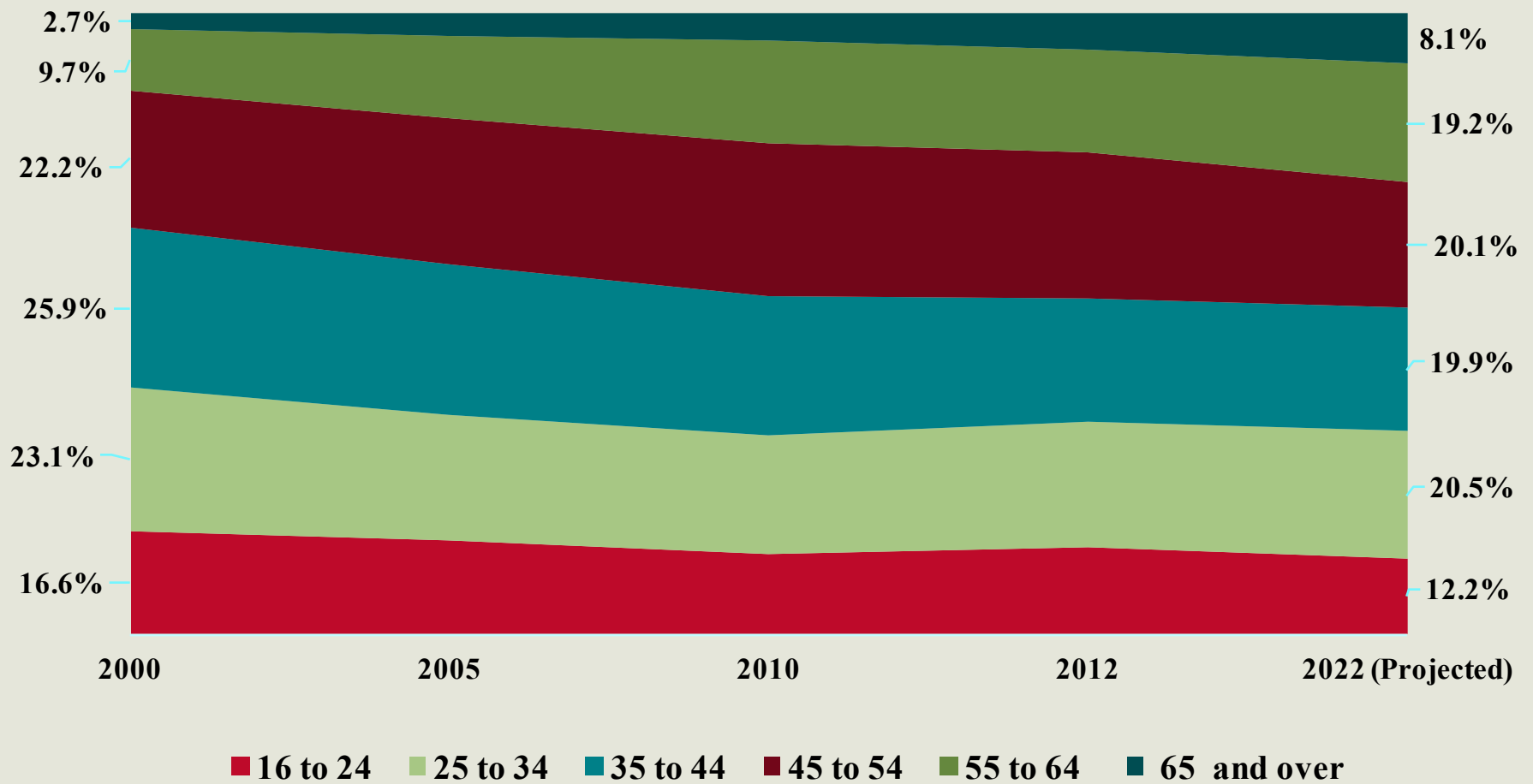
- Overview of Ohio's Labor Market
- Ohio's Attainment Goals
- Community College Enrollment Patterns in Ohio
- The AACC Plus-50 Initiative in Ohio and at Clark State
- Initial Findings of Research Project
- Lessons learned

Ohio's Projected Change in Labor Force by Age Group: 2012 – 2022 (in thousands)



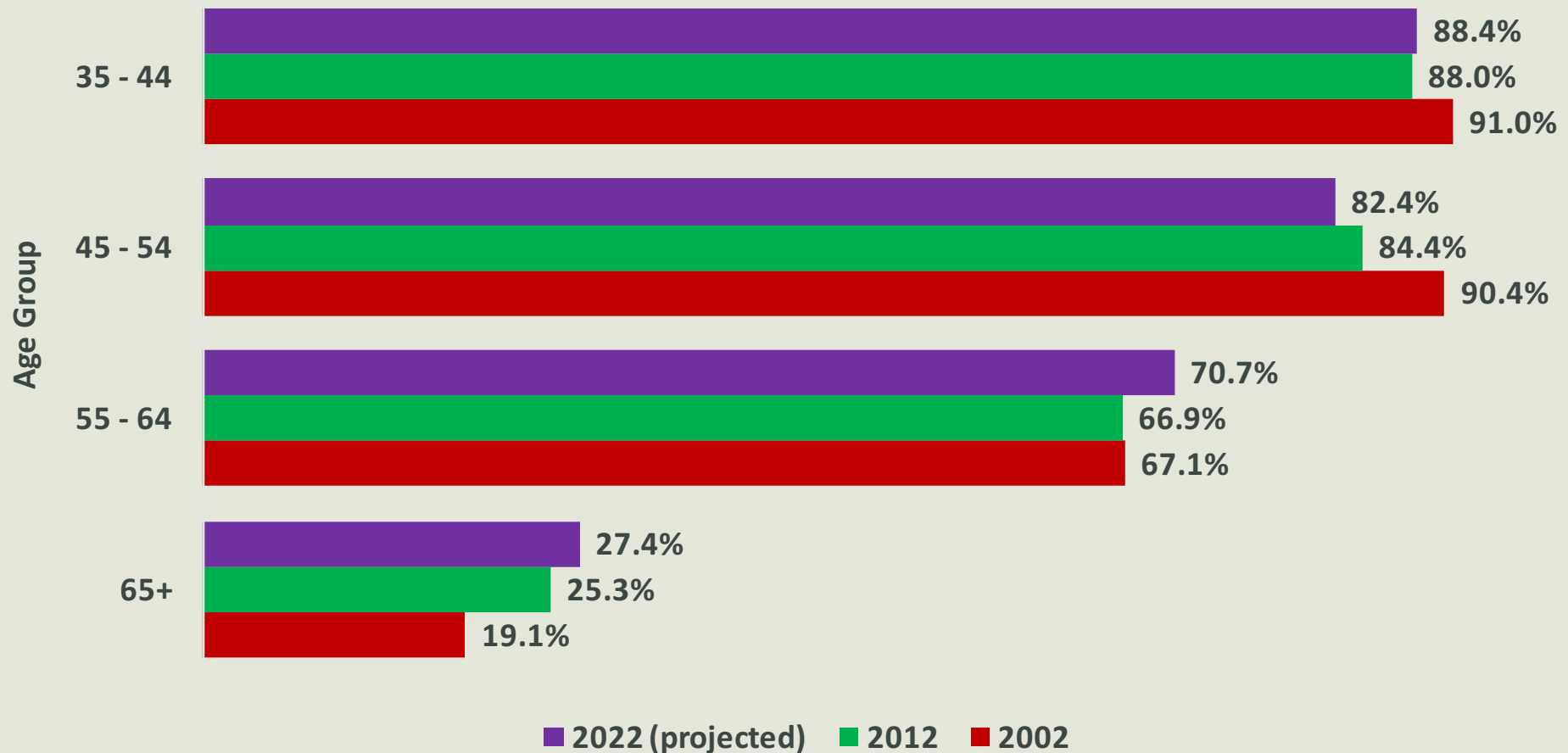
Source: *2022 Ohio Job Outlook: Employment Projections*. (2014).

Ohio's Labor Force Distribution by Age Group – 2000 – 2022



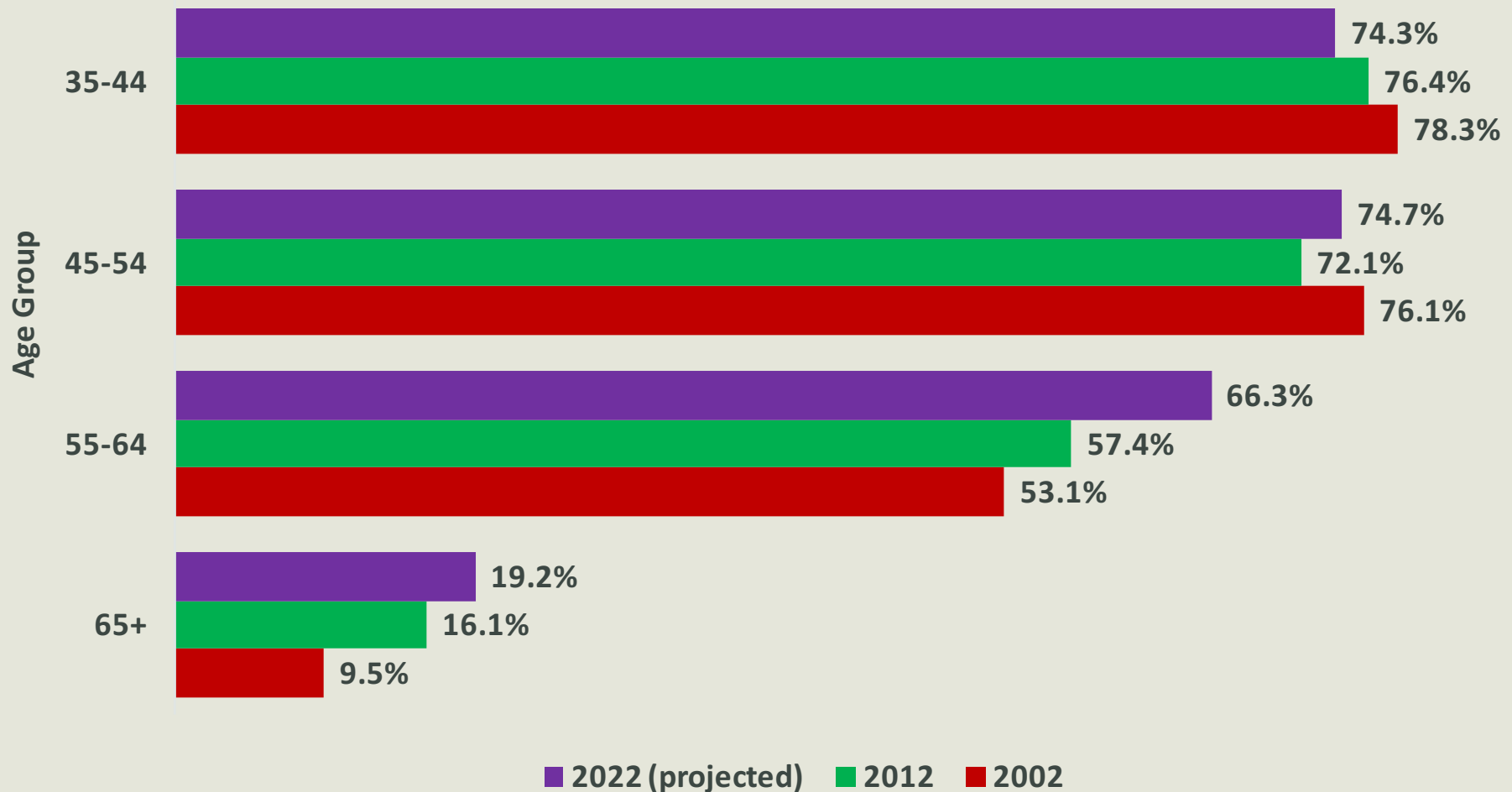
Source: 2022 Ohio Job Outlook: Employment Projections. (2014).

Ohio's Labor Force Participation Rates for Males by Age Group: 2002 – 2022 (projected)



Source: *2022 Ohio Job Outlook: Employment Projections*. (2014).

Ohio's Labor Force Participation Rates for Females by Age Group: 2002 – 2022 (projected)

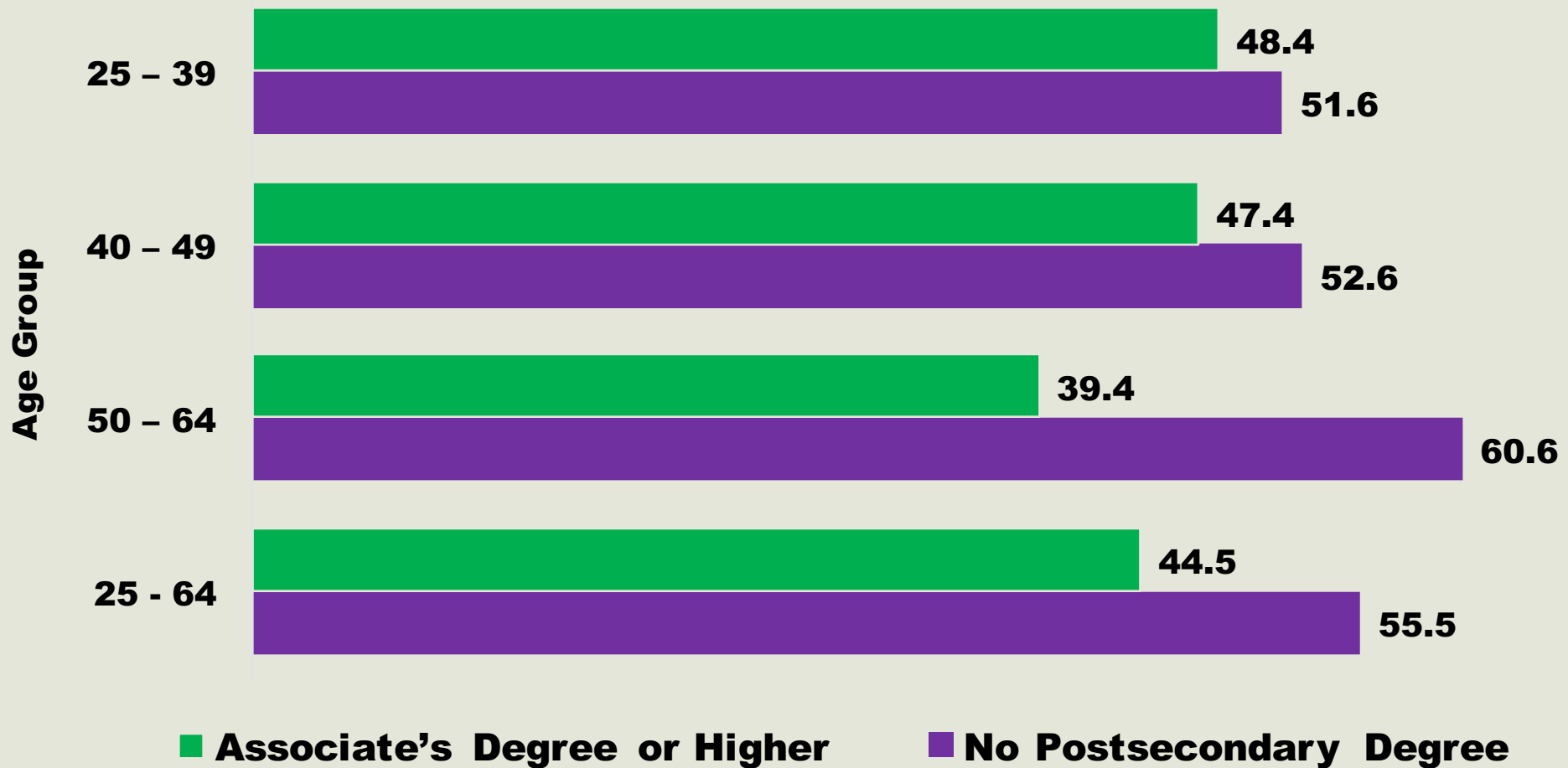


Source: *2022 Ohio Job Outlook: Employment Projections*. (2014).

Ohio's Attainment Goals

- Knowledgeable, highly skilled, globally competitive workers are necessary to sustain Ohio's economic growth
- By 2020, an estimated 64% of jobs will require a postsecondary certificate or associate's degree
- Ohio has a shortage of workers ages 25 – 64 with the postsecondary-level credentials required to fill and succeed in current, evolving and future jobs
- Ohio will need to produce, by 2025, an estimated 1.7 million more adults with high-quality postsecondary certificates or degrees
- Ohio is not alone establishing attainment goals!

Adults in Ohio with an Associate's Degree or Higher by Age Group (percent)

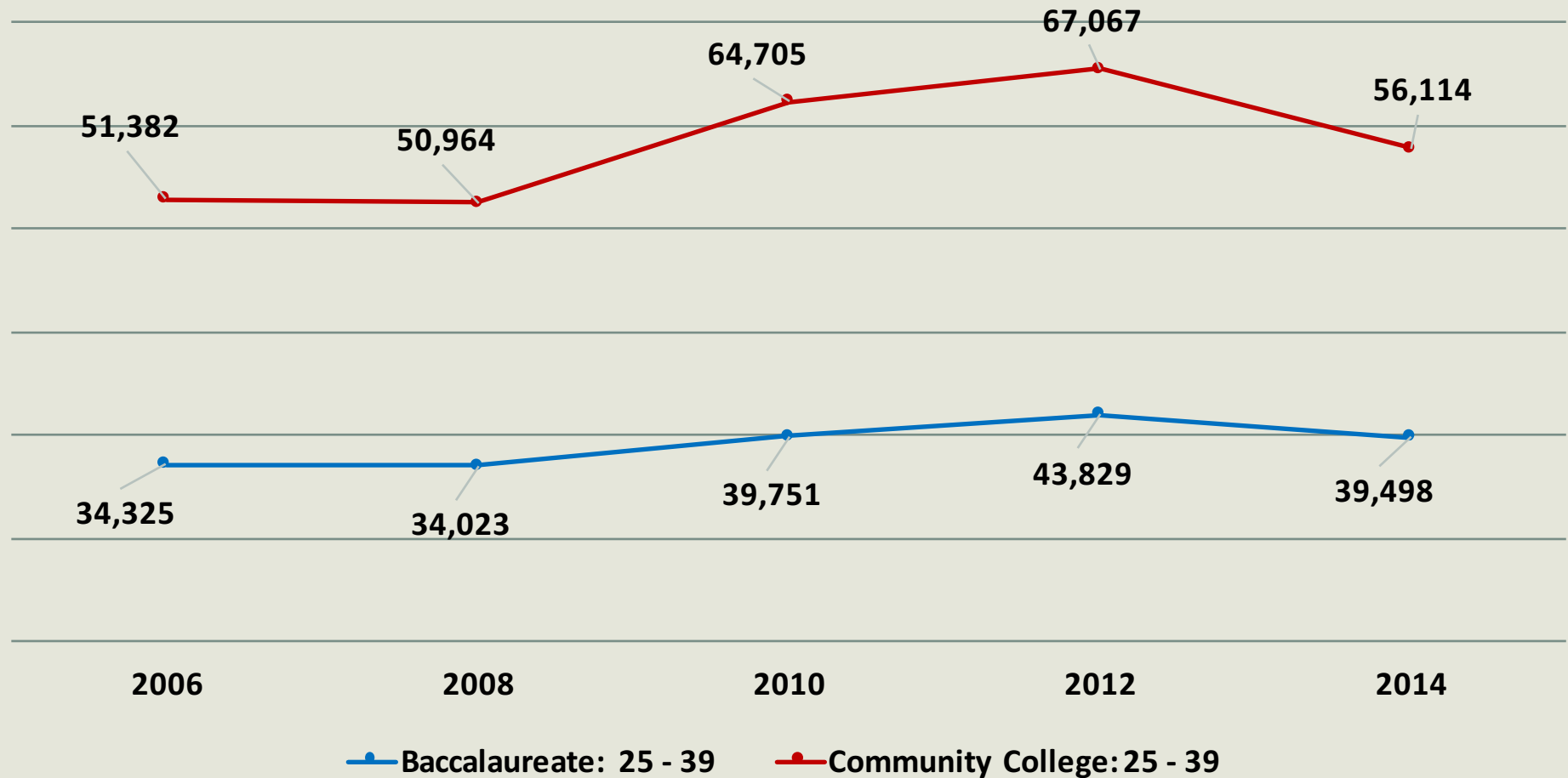


Source: Current Population Survey, 2017

How can Ohio Achieve It's Attainment Goal for the 25 – 64 Age Group?

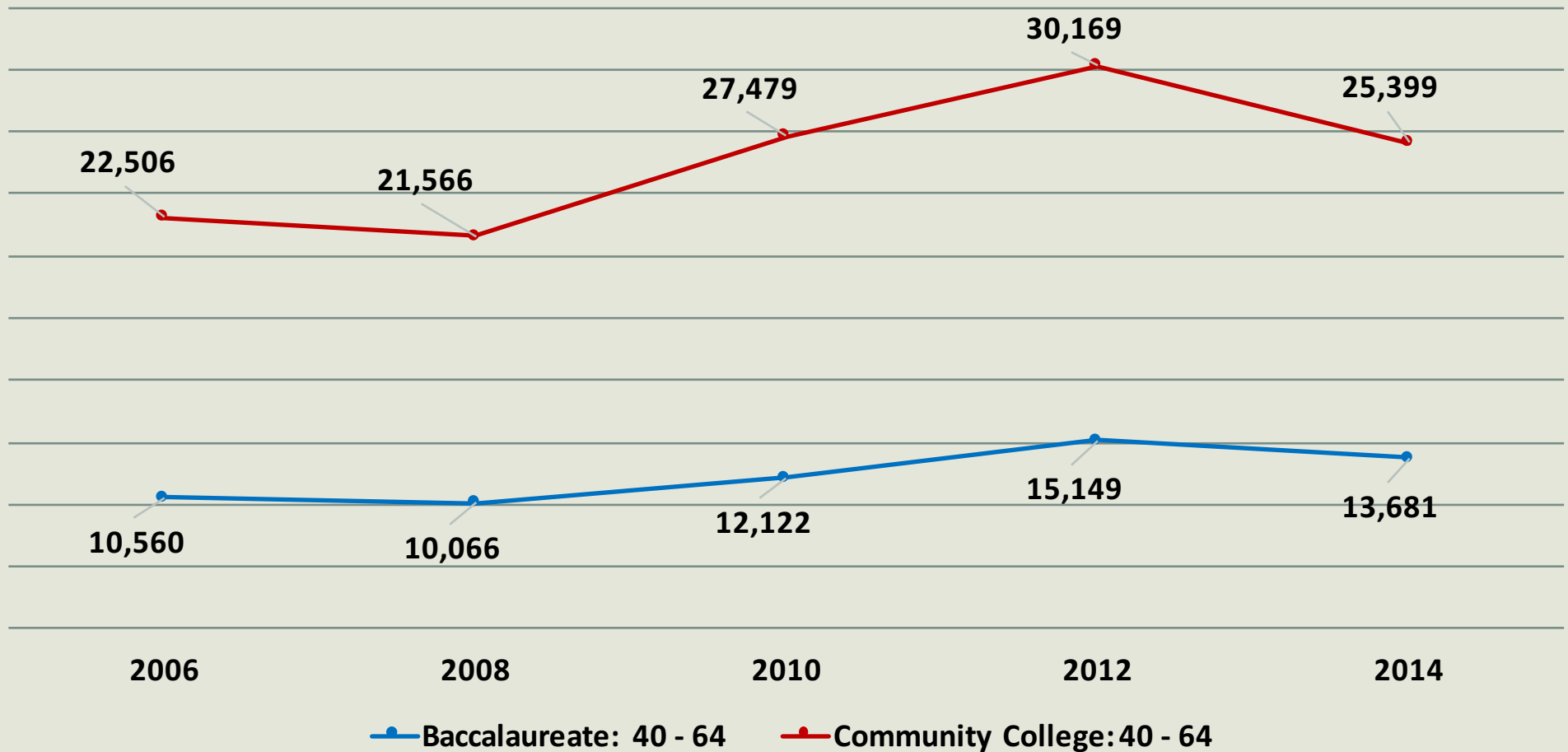
- Increase enrollment at Ohio's community colleges
- Academic counseling and advising to encourage credential attainment
- Provide supportive services that facilitate program completion
- Monitor progress and made adjustments to recruiting, counseling, and supportive services as needed

Enrollment Trends at Ohio's Public Colleges, Ages 25 - 39: 2005 - 2014



Source: IPEDS (2005–2014).

Enrollment Trends at Ohio's Public Colleges, Ages 40 – 64: 2005 - 2014



Source: IPEDS (2005–2014).

The AACCC Plus-50 Initiative: A Program to Engage Post-Traditional Age Students

- Started in 2008 and concluded in late 2015
- Small grants were awarded to 138 community colleges
- Funders included The Atlantic Philanthropies, Lumina Foundation, and Deerbrook Charitable Trust
- Purpose was to create or expand campus programs that engage the Plus-50 student population
- Focused on workforce training and preparing older adults for new careers
- Seven of Ohio's 23 community colleges participated and each received \$10,000 - \$15,000 over three year period

Ohio's Plus-50 Colleges

-  1. Terra State Community College
-  2. Rhodes State College
-  3. Clark State Community College
-  4. Belmont College
-  5. Owens State Community College
-  6. Zane State College
-  7. Cuyahoga Community College



Why Did Clark State Become a Plus-50 College?

- Over 400 students ages 50 and over were enrolled at Clark State during the 2012-2013 academic year
- While the college offered a number of support services for diverse student populations, little had been done to specifically target services for them and track their success rates
- A desire to provide customized services and advising to adult learners.

The AACC Plus-50 Initiative: Clark State Needs Assessment

- The AACC provided a needs assessment toolkit
- Most respondents were female and about 60% were in the 50 to 54 age group
- A large majority of respondents had at least one year of college.
- About 60% want to pursue an associates degree
- Flexible class times are important
 - About 44% prefer evening classes
 - About 20% prefer weekend classes
- A variety of deliver modes are of interest to the 50+ population, but the most common is classroom instruction
 - Classroom – 57%
 - Hybrid – 52%
 - Fully online – 48%

The AACC Plus-50 Initiative: Clark State Needs Assessment

- The most common goals are to pursue a career in a new field and/or to upgrade skills for career advancement
- Fields of study that were especially of interest are health and business management
- Perceived obstacles include:
 - Classes at a time that does not fit their schedule
 - Concern about returning to the classroom after many years out of school
 - Math skills
 - Cost of classes and books
- Services that are important
 - Career coaching and resources to find employment (job fairs, workshops)
 - Assistance with computer skills

A Mixed Methods Project to Better Understand Post-Traditional Age Students

- Mixed methods research project funded by the U.S. Department of Education
- Qualitative research focuses on three case study colleges and key informant interviews at other community colleges
- Insights were gained by focusing specifically on the AACC Plus-50 Initiative
- Focus groups of age 50-plus students and interviews with program administrators

Findings: Program Administrators

- Grant energized colleges to focus on older students
- Support from top administrators important
- Colleges were provided with resources to better serve age 50+ students
- Advisory Committees guided program to focus on employer relationships and existing services that could be made more friendly to the 50+ population
 - Employers/industry participants
 - College staff providing support services
 - Representatives of Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
 - Student representatives

Findings: Program Administrators

College specific programs:

- Leveraged AACCC grant to obtain an additional \$90,000 in funding
 - Funds used for computer classes and short term training
- Targeted recently unemployed by obtaining names from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
- Tuition free enrollment for one credit class per semester for age 50+ group
- Pedagogy training for faculty so they could better serve older students provided
- Quick Start program

Findings: Program Administrators

Program Concerns:

- AACC reporting requirements considered by some to be onerous for a small grant
- Funds were not available for scholarships
- Lack of clarity on program objectives
 - Short-term training vs degree completion
- Sustainability

Findings: Student Focus Groups

- Two focus groups each at two Plus 50 colleges
- N=24 students ages 50-73
 - Variety of prior education: high school through master's degrees
- Little awareness of Plus 50 initiative
- Minimal awareness of other age-targeted efforts
- Social and health events that precipitate enrollment often persist during enrollment and are major challenges
- Gap years have significant effect on academic preparedness
 - Math in particular emerges as a deal-breaker in academic options
- Gap years (since last schooling) somewhat compensated for by maturity and adaptive strategies

Findings: Student Focus Groups

- Issues of career fit with life stage and health status are reflected in a struggle to find solid academic pathways
- Sense of urgency impacts selection of academic programs
- Although many barriers to success are universal (cross age groups), functional age and life-stage challenges require age-related accommodations
 - Faculty and staff can be trained to respond to challenges
 - Age-specific programs (e.g. Plus 50) have important place
- Student-identified challenges call for student-centered programming
 - Advising services
 - Student success course vs one-time orientation

Initiatives Undertaken at Clark State

- Implementation and analysis of a needs assessment of the 50 plus population
- Design, production and dissemination of targeted career information and services to this population
- Collection and analysis of success data on this population
- Follow up focus groups with students in this population to better understand the unique characteristics and needs of this population

Lessons Learned from Plus-50: Clark State

- Importance of the college controlling the dissemination of information and follow up with students in multiple modalities for consistency
- Communication has worked as a means to recruit students ages 50 and over by providing career information and support services to all students in this population regardless of whether they solicit it or not
- While 400 students ages 50 and over is not a small number, it only represented 5% of the Clark State student population. Without the support of the college's president and senior staff, this population of students would not have been targeted for specific attention, and its unique needs and concerns addressed through the overall umbrella of the college's support services.

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