



UTAH

Labor Market Trends

Talent Acquisition Professional Summit 2026

Utah Valley University

August 5, 2026

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Utah Department of Workforce Services

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (LMI)

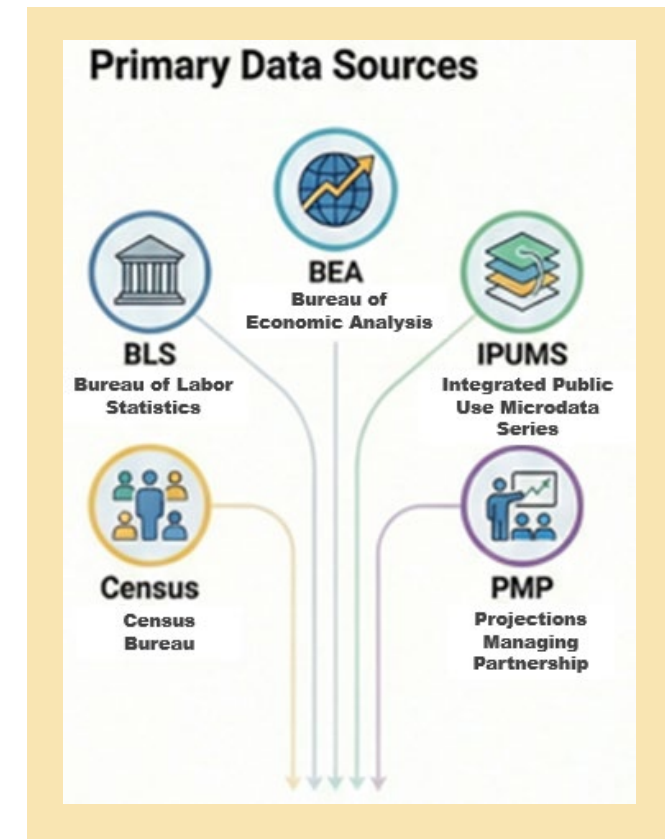
What is LMI?

Quantitative and qualitative data and analysis related to employment and the workforce



Examples

- Employment & Unemployment Statistics
- Job Forecasts
- Wages
- Demographic Characteristics



HOW IS LMI APPLIED?

Informed Decision Making

- Business Investment
- Career Preparation
- Education & Training
- Job Search
- Hiring
- Public & Private Workforce Investments

Applications

- Building Data Products
- Informing Policy
- Resource Allocation
- Strategic Planning
- Informing an Audience



- 1 Where are we now?
- 2 How did we get here and where are we going?
- 3 What is the value of an education?
- 4 What will the impact be of AI?

AGENDA





Photograph by frames by your heart

Where are we
NOW?



LABOR MARKETS

June 2026

State of Utah

1.5%

Job growth rate

3.6%

Unemployment rate

United States

0.3%

Job growth rate

4.2%

Unemployment rate

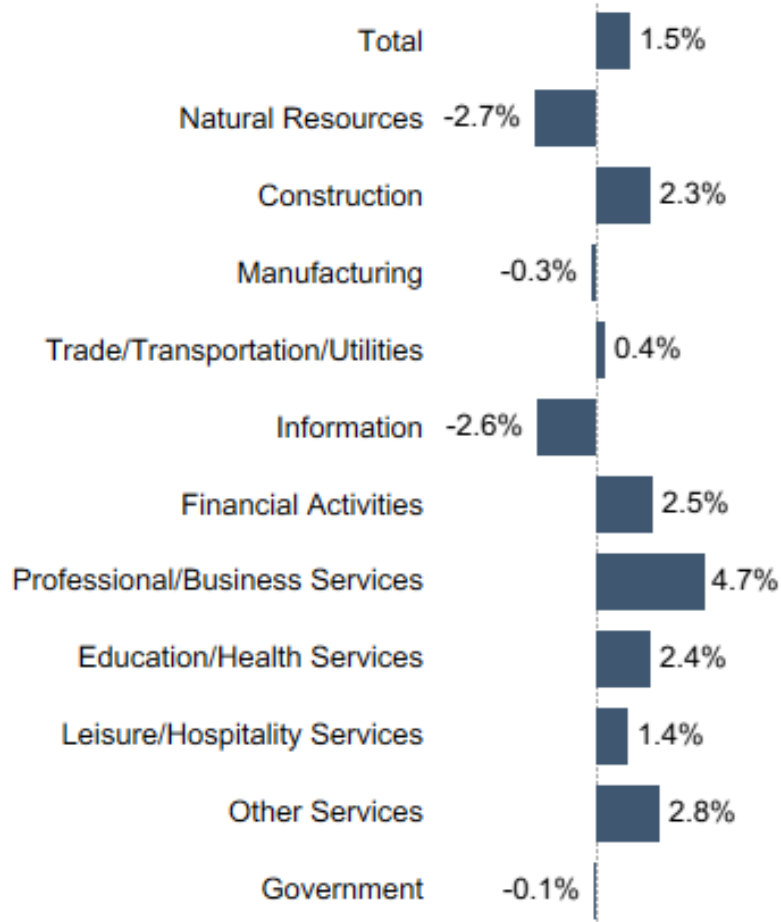
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



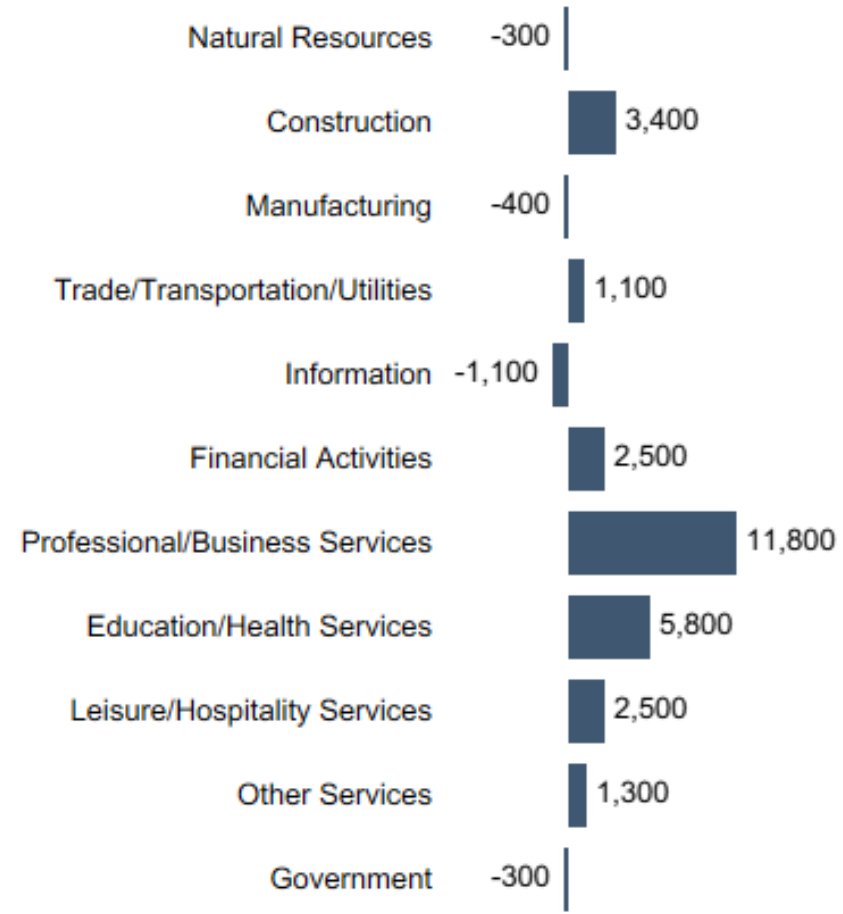
UTAH INDUSTRY PROFILES

June 2025 - 2026

Percentage Change



Numeric Change



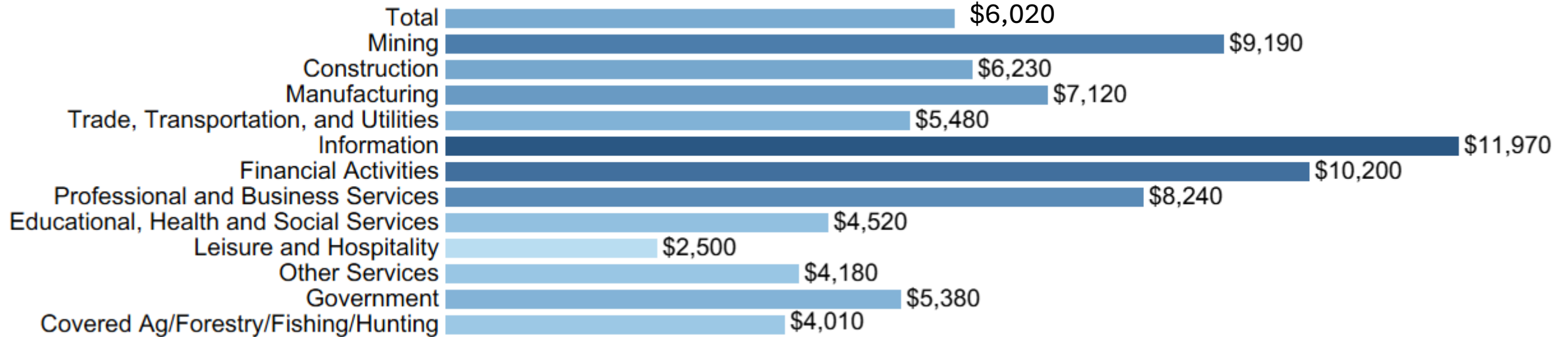
Source: Bureau of Labor
Statistics



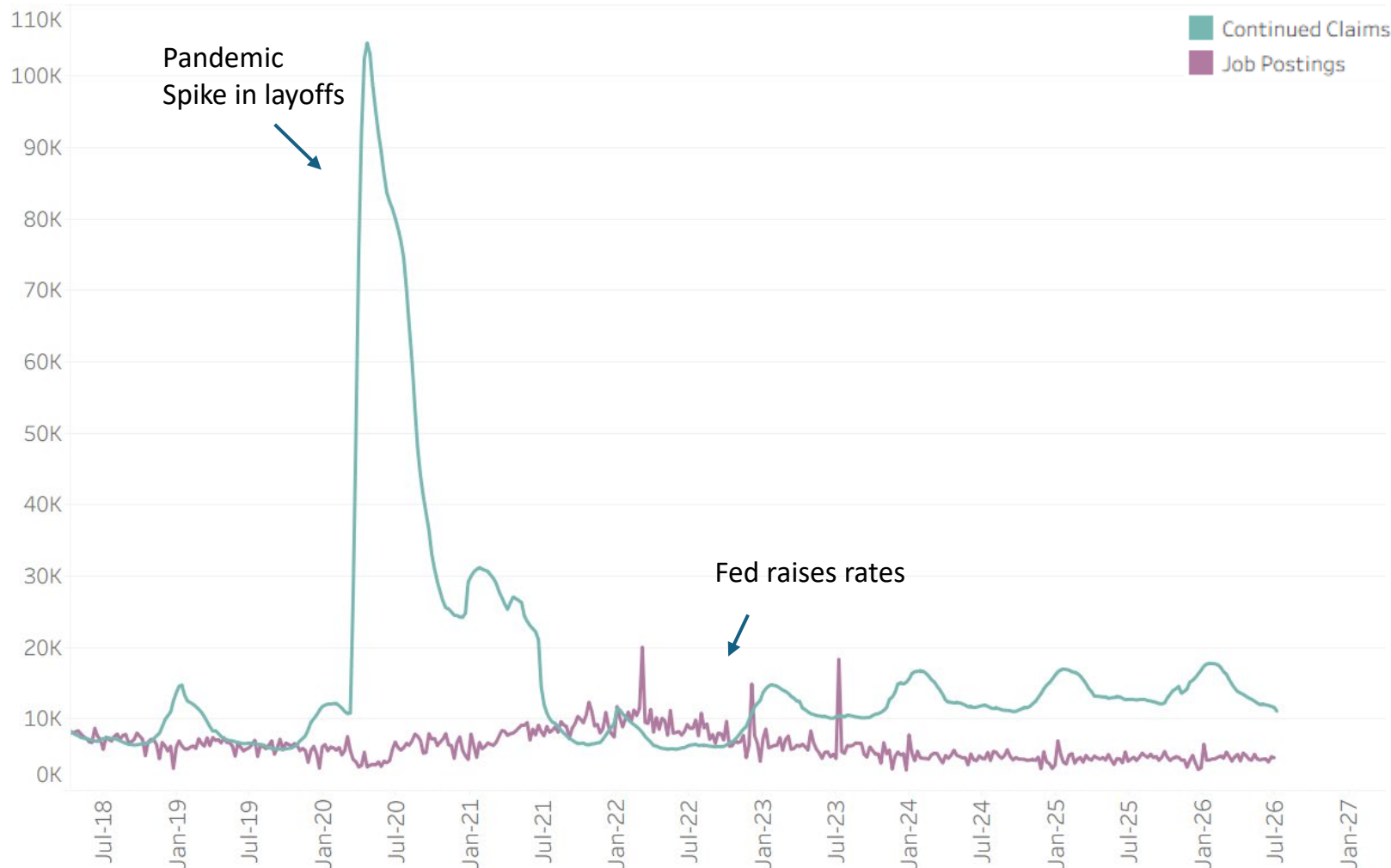
STATE OF UTAH

Industry Wages

Average Monthly Wage Q1 2026



Utah's Unemployment Insurance Claims & Job Postings



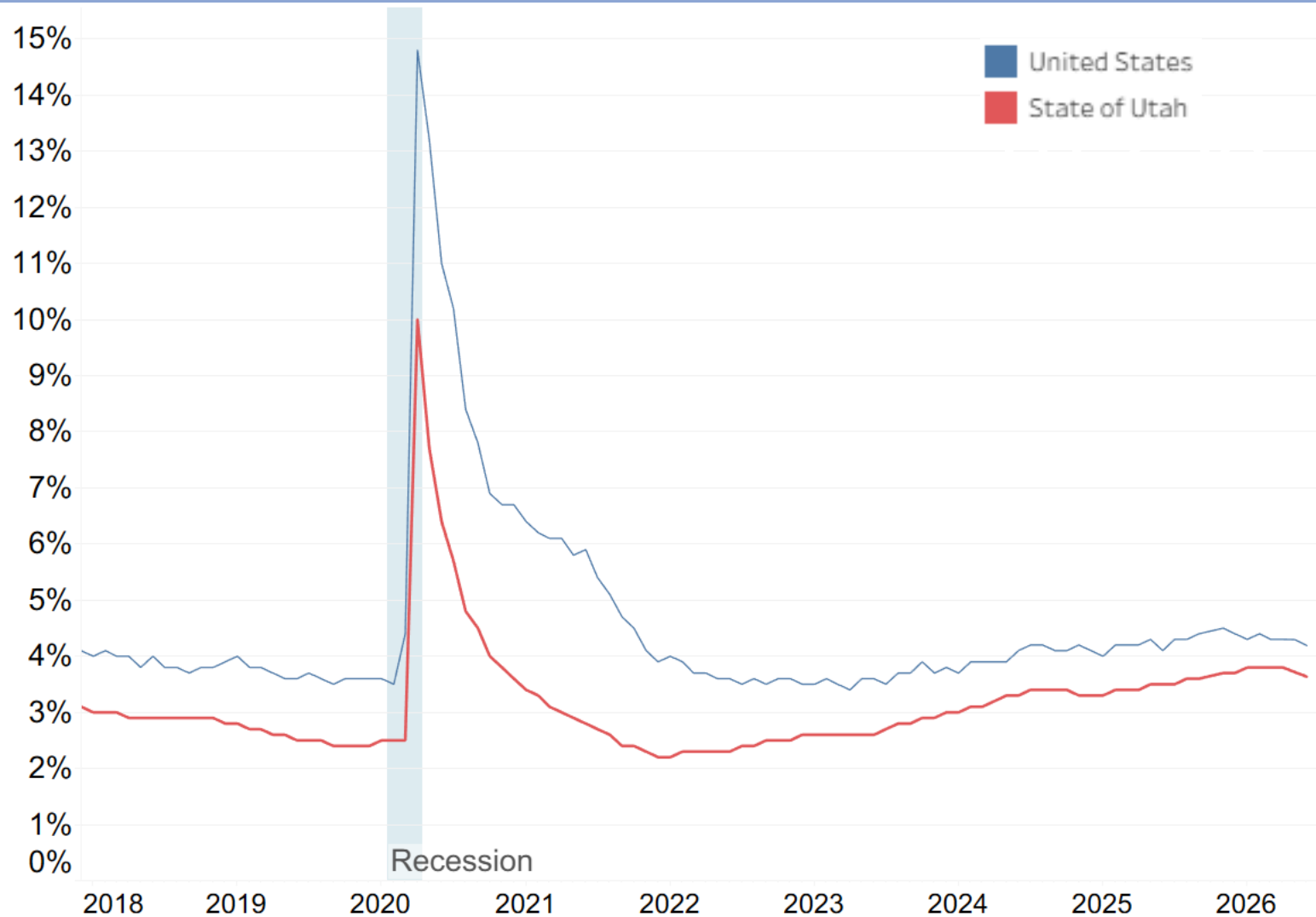
Low Hire, Low Fire

- Job openings decline as the labor market cools
- Unemployment claims are holding steady following post-pandemic labor shortages
- Job openings and hires begin to equalize in 2025
- Employers focus on retention over expansion

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

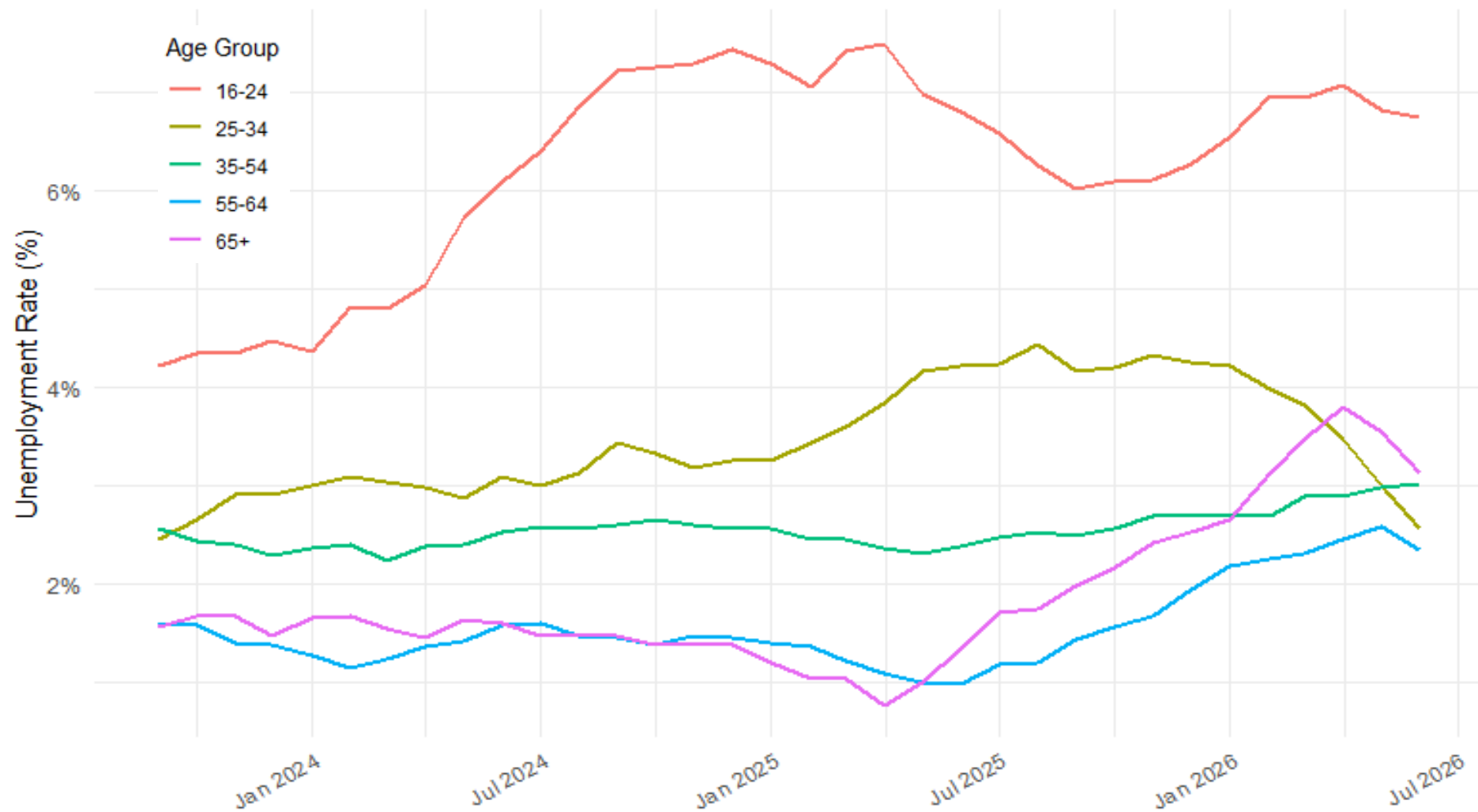


June 2026
United States 4.2%
State of Utah 3.6%



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE

12 month rolling average (Sep 2023 – Jun 2026)

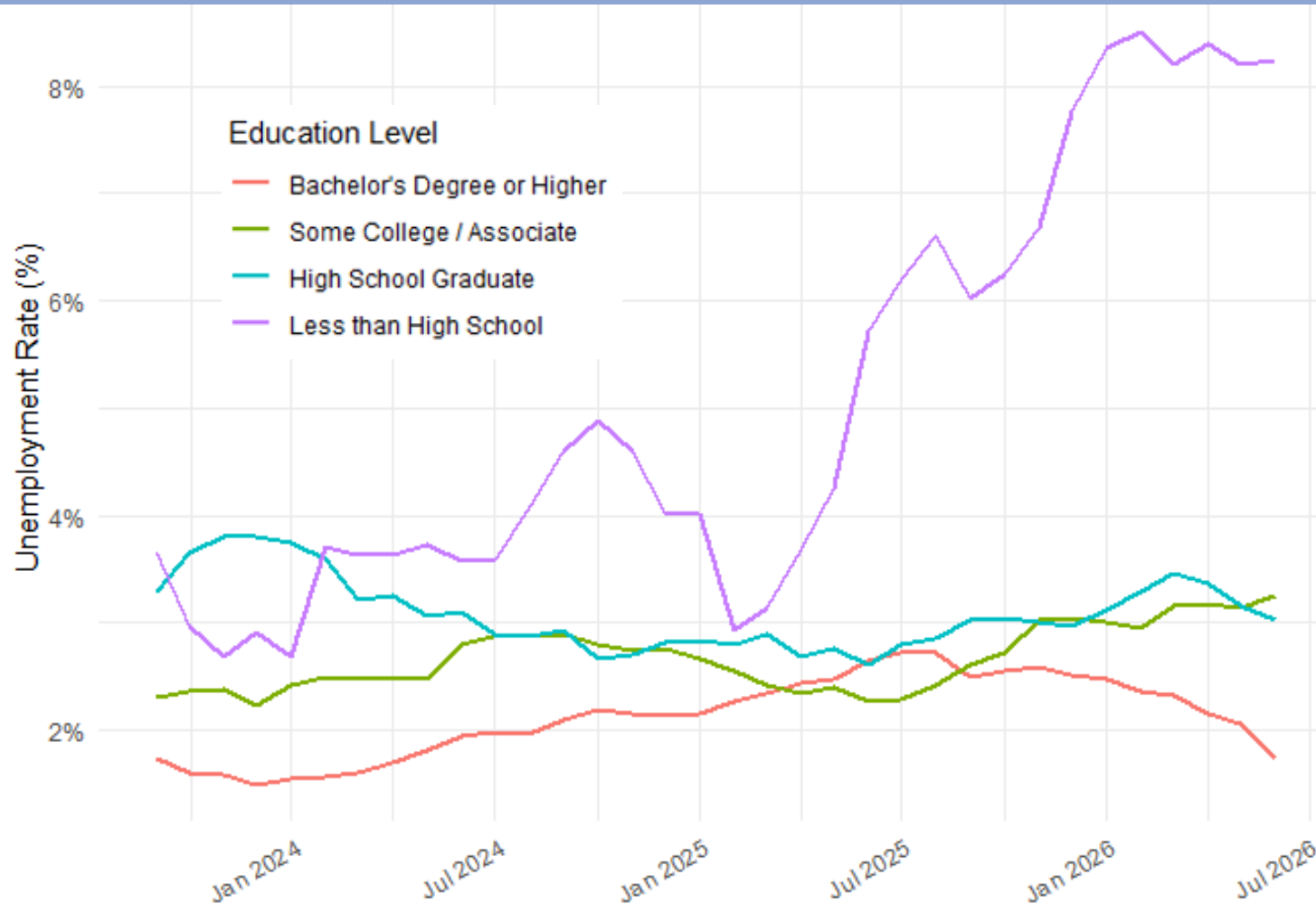


- Younger workers have higher unemployment rates
- Over the last year, unemployment rates for older workers have increased
- Unemployment rates for the 25-34 age group have recovered in the first part of 2026



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY EDUCATION

12 month rolling average (Sep 2023 – Jun 2026)



Less than High School

- Highest unemployment rates
- Unemployment rates have been increasing since 2025

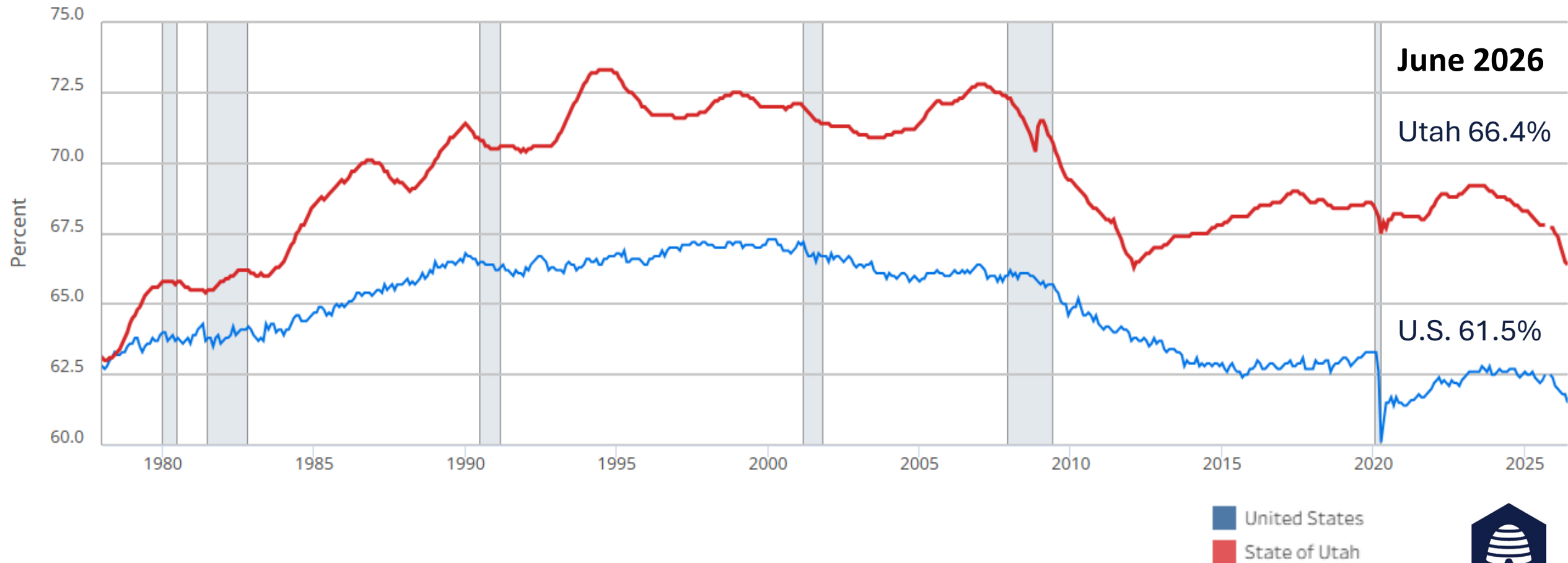
Bachelor's Degree or Higher

- Usually have lower unemployment rates
- Unemployment rates increased mid-2025, but have since recovered



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Utah vs. United States, 1978 – 2026



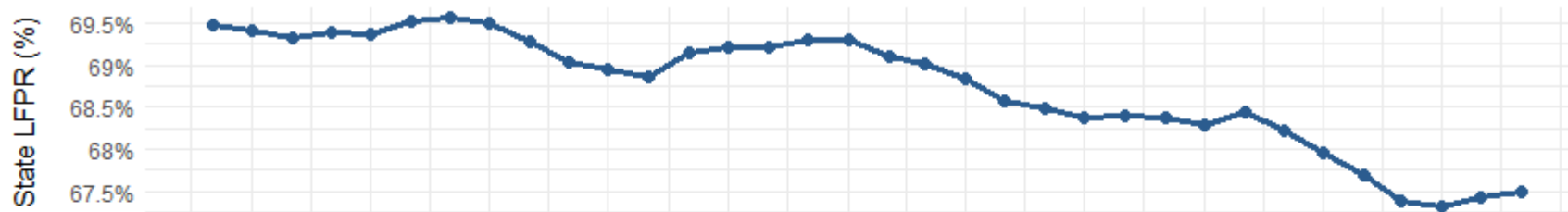
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics via FRED



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY AGE

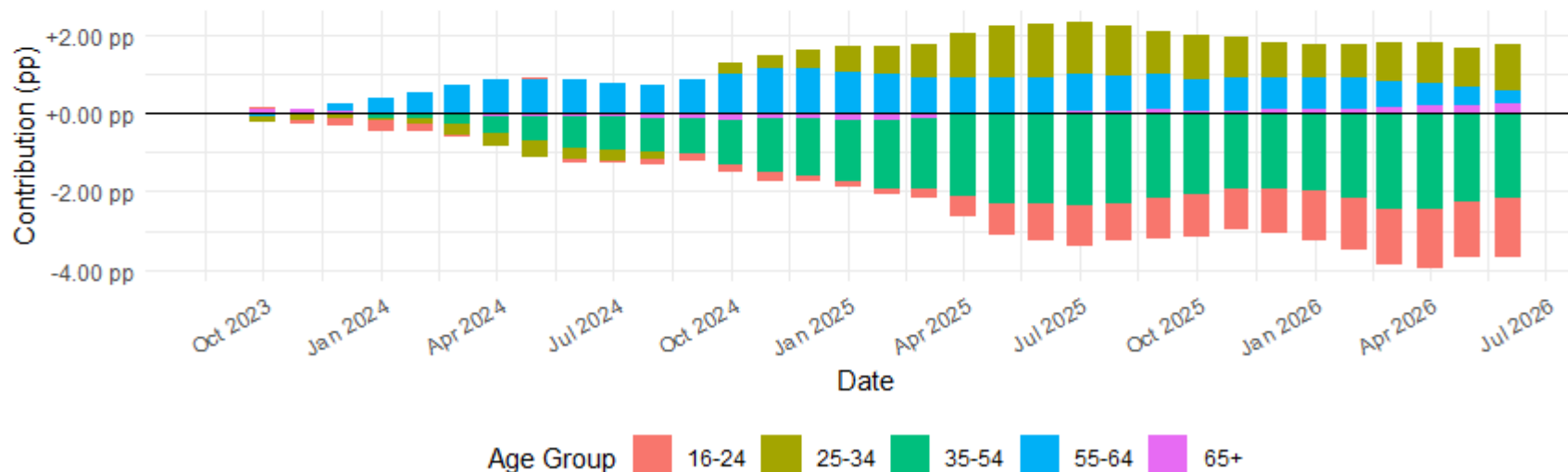
Utah Statewide 16+ Labor Force Participation Rate (Since Sep 2023)

12-Month Rolling Average Level



Weighted Demographic Impact Components

Cumulative Percentage Point Impact relative to Sep 2023



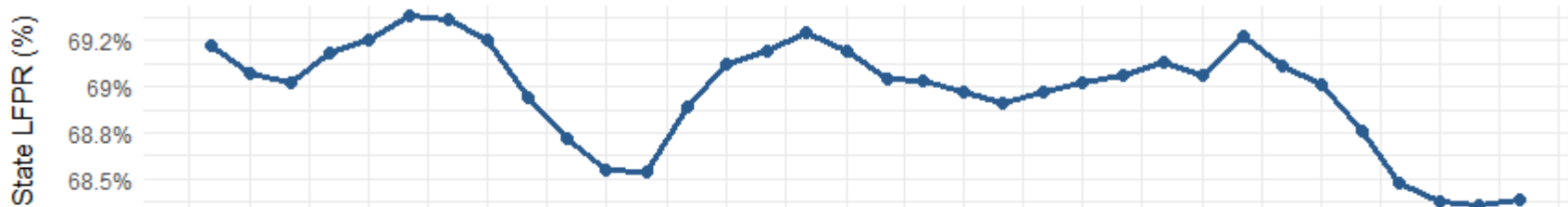
- Participation rates among youth (16-24) and prime age (35-54) workers fell
- Older workers (55+) increased participation rates
- Despite a temporary dip in mid-2024, participation rates among younger prime age workers (25-34) rebounded



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY EDUCATION LEVEL

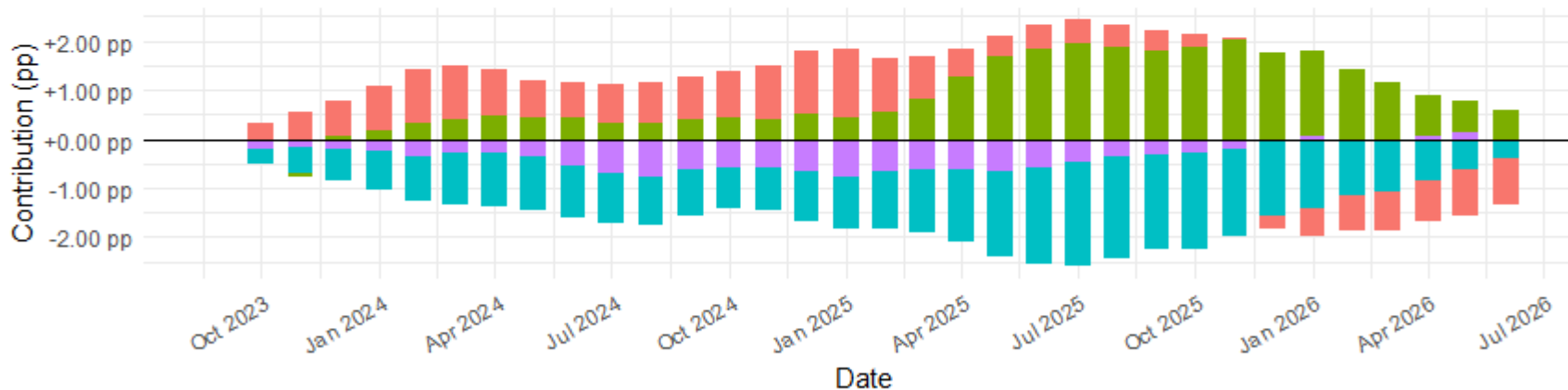
Utah Statewide 25+ Labor Force Participation Rate (Since Sep 2023)

12-Month Rolling Average Level



Weighted Demographic Impact Components

Cumulative Percentage Point Impact relative to Sep 2023



Education Level Bachelor's Degree or Higher Some College / Associate High School Graduate Less than High School

- High school graduates were the largest negative drag (this was largely a normalization following the high post-pandemic participation rates)
- Workers with some college or an associates degree were the primary buffer in 2025
- Bachelor's degree holders shifted from a positive to a negative overall impact (this group has the highest participation rates)



PERSISTENT INFLATION

***More money chasing fewer goods* → Inflation**

Multiple sources....

1. Response to the pandemic
 - Federal aid
 - High demand for goods
 - Supply chain disruption
 - Labor Shortage
2. War
3. Tariffs
4. Energy Prices
5. AI build-out

June 2026 inflation at 3.5% year-over-year

“I wouldn’t bet on these more modest inflation readings continuing for the remainder of the year.”

– Mike Reid, head of U.S. economics at RBC Capital Markets



COMPONENTS OF INFLATION

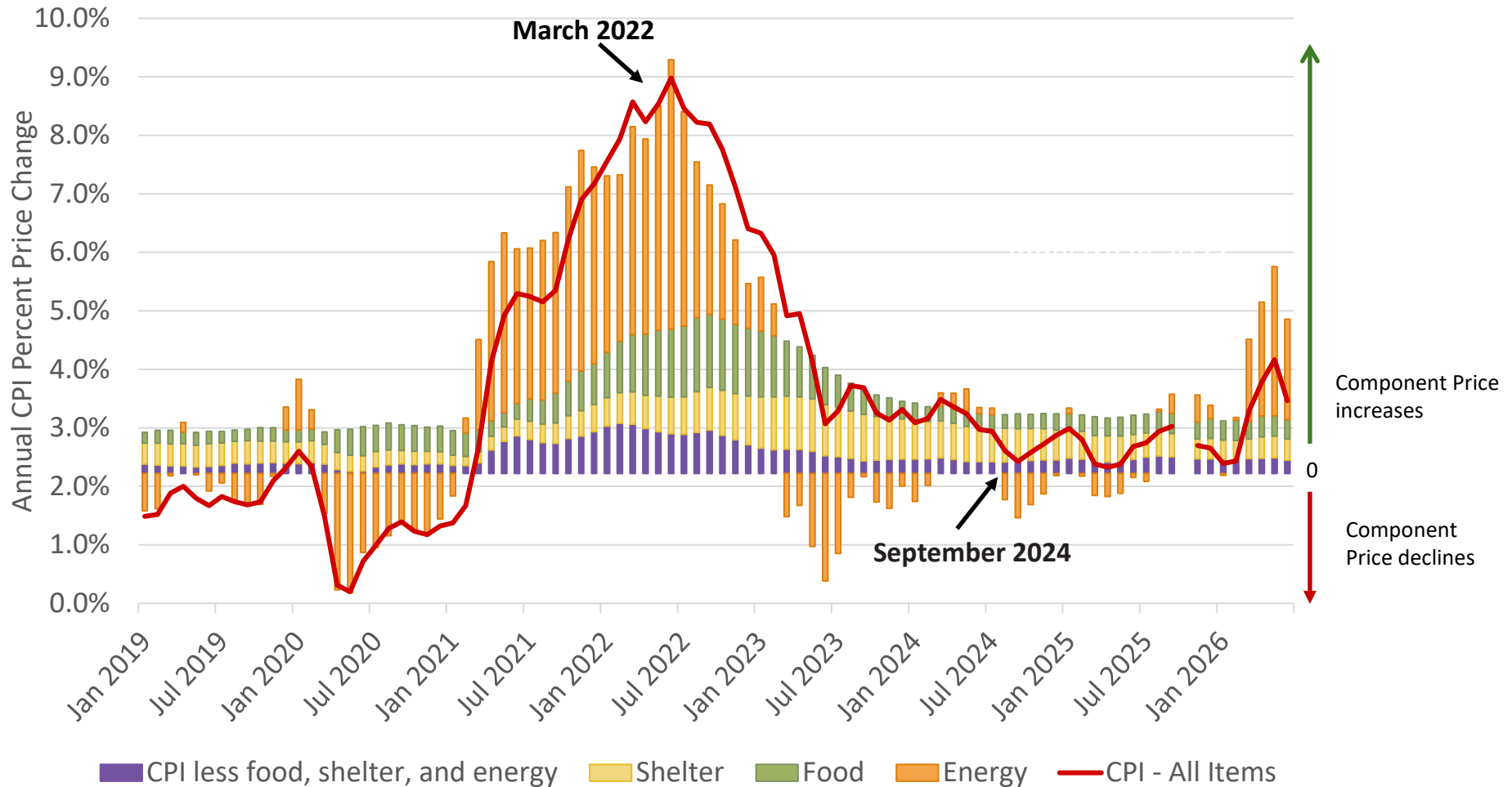
January 2019 – June 2026

March 2022

Federal Reserve
begins raising interest
rates

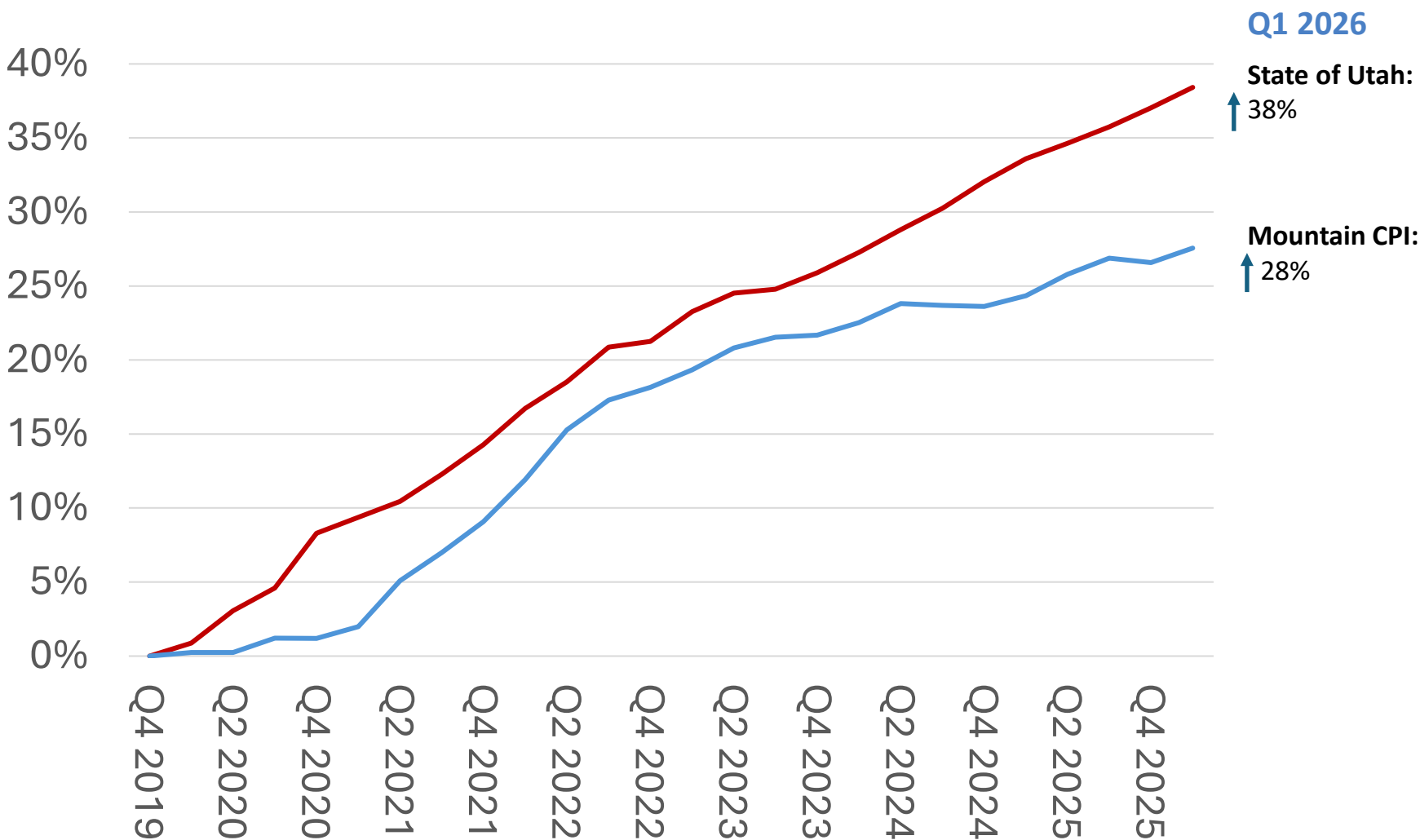
September 2024

Federal Reserve
begins cutting
interest rates



CUMULATIVE INFLATION VS EARNINGS

Percent Change in Prices and Annual Wages from Q4 2019

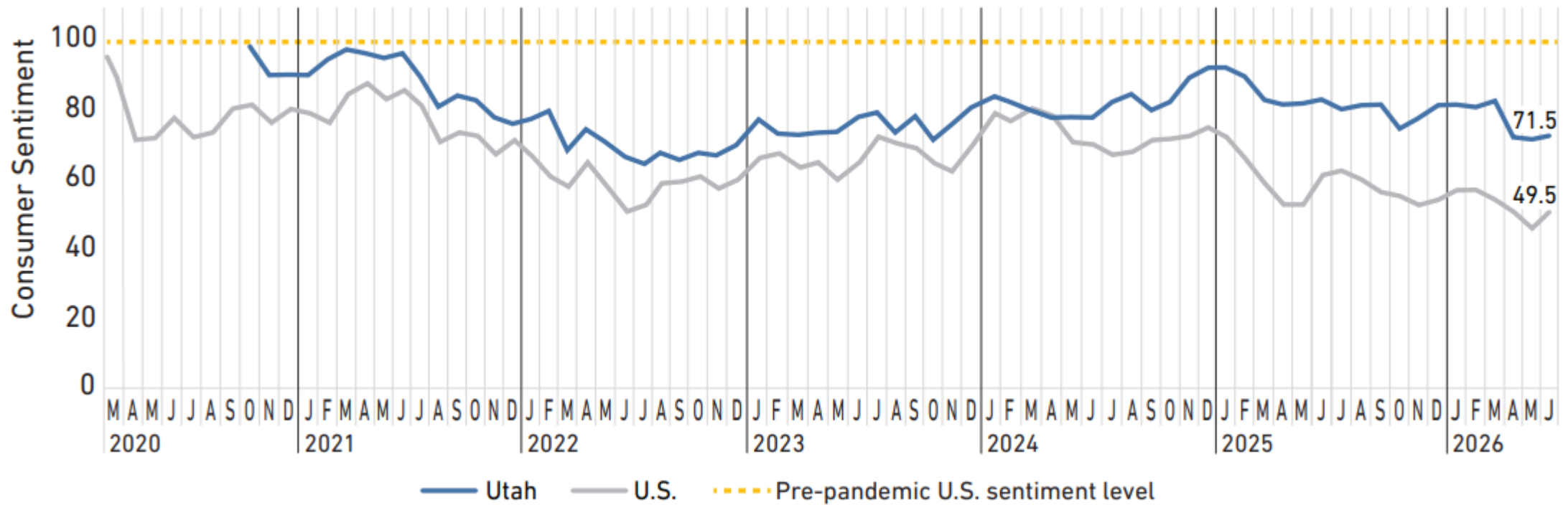


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Utah Department of Workforce Services



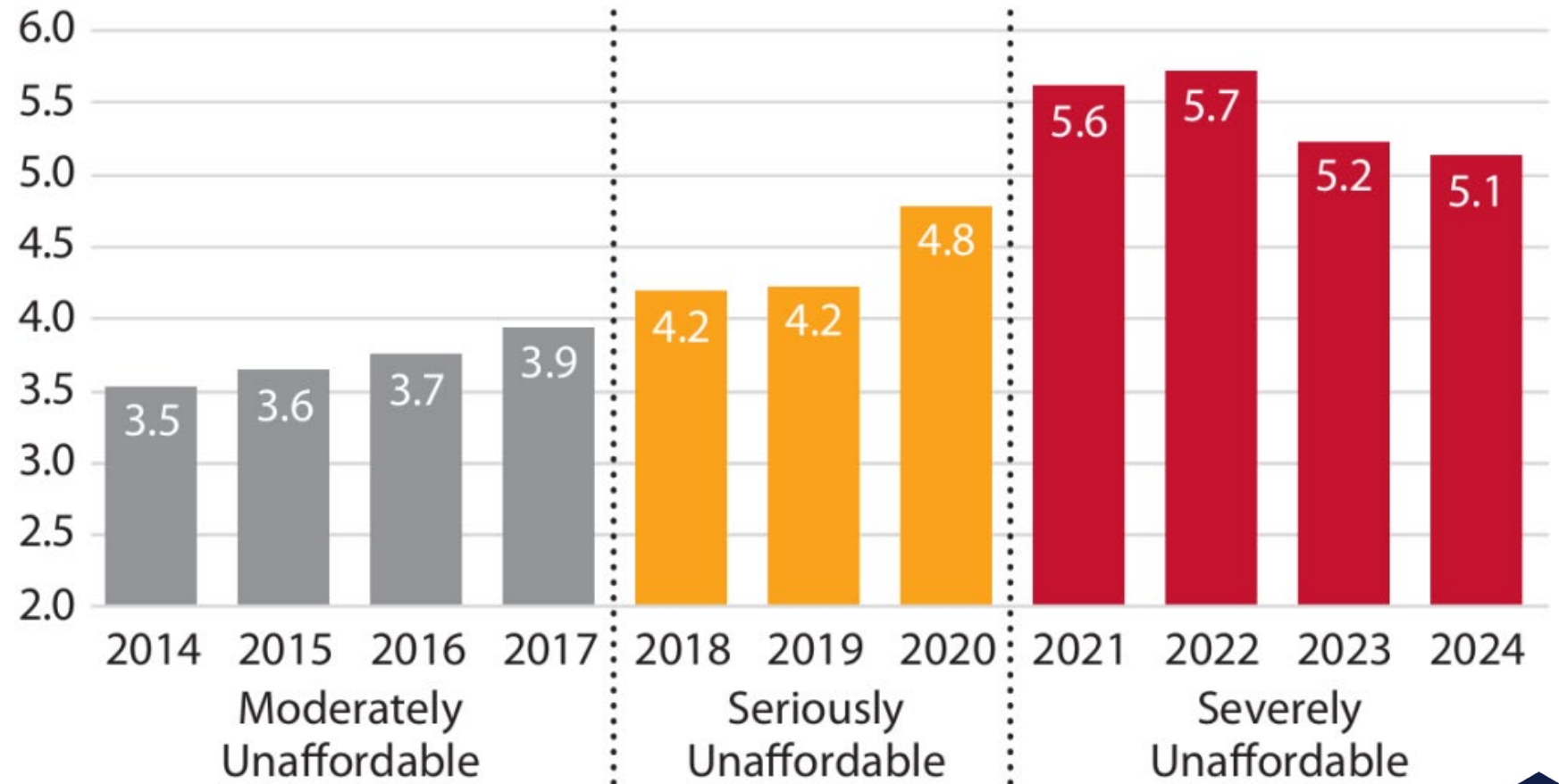
CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

Utah vs. United States



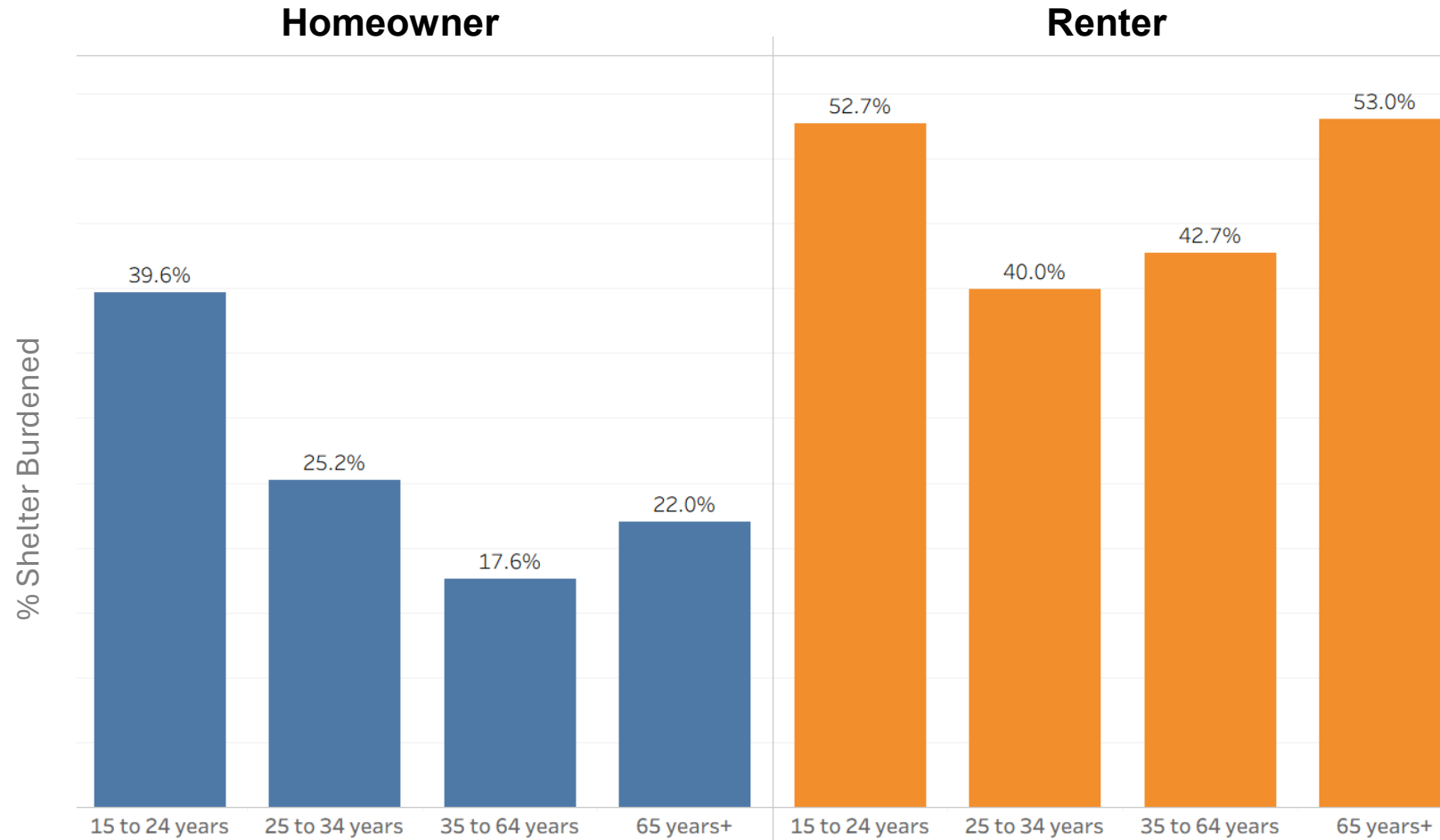
UTAH MORE UNAFFORDABLE FOR NEW BUYERS

- Ratio of median home price to median household income – metric for affordability
- Peaked in 2022 at 5.7



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Share of households with housing cost burden above 30% income



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year, 2024



The Conference Board US Economic Outlook, 2024-2027

	Annual			
	2024	2025	2026	2027
Real GDP	2.8	2.1	1.9	1.9
Real consumer spending	2.9	2.6	1.5	1.7
Residential investment	3.2	-2.2	-3.9	-0.4
Nonresidential investment	2.9	4.1	6.2	4.7
Unemployment rate (%)	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.4
Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	62.6	62.5	62.0	61.7
PCE Inflation (%Y/Y)	2.6	2.6	3.5	2.5
Core PCE Inflation (Y/Y)	2.9	2.8	3.2	2.7
Fed Funds (% , Midpoint, Period End)	4.375	3.625	3.625	3.625
Brent Oil Price, \$/bbl	80.0	68.0	90.0	60.0





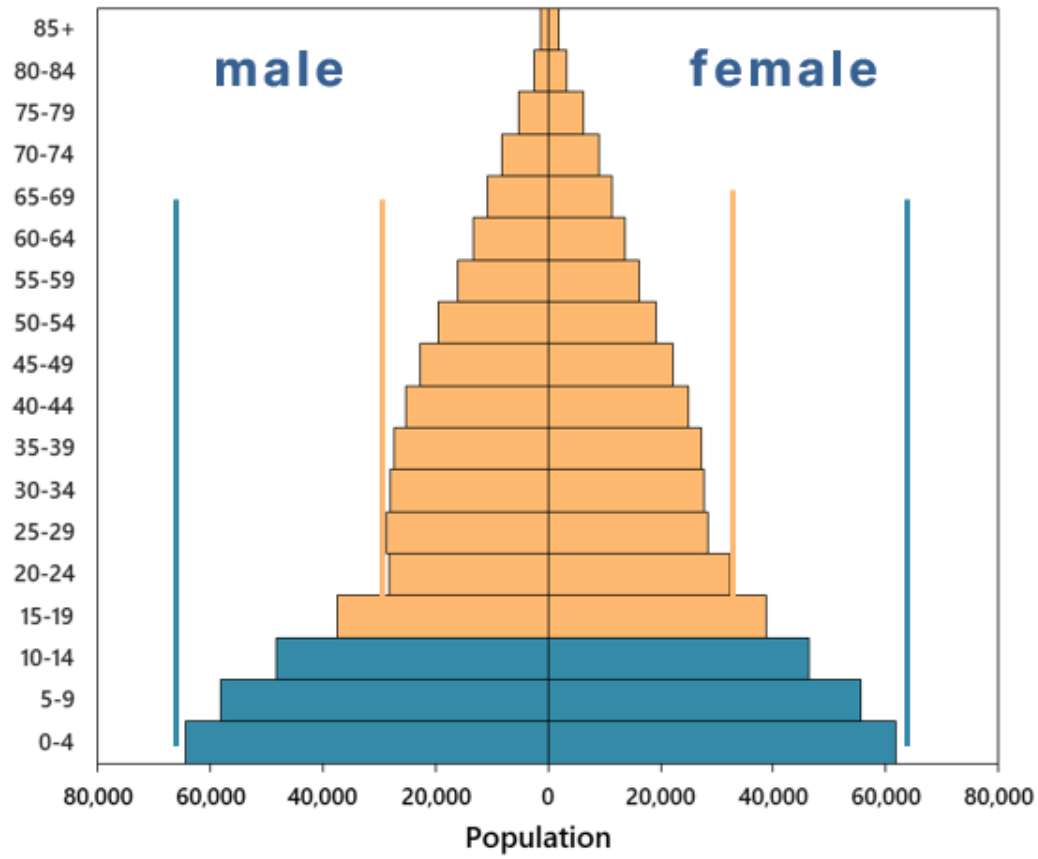
How did we get here
and where are we
GOING?



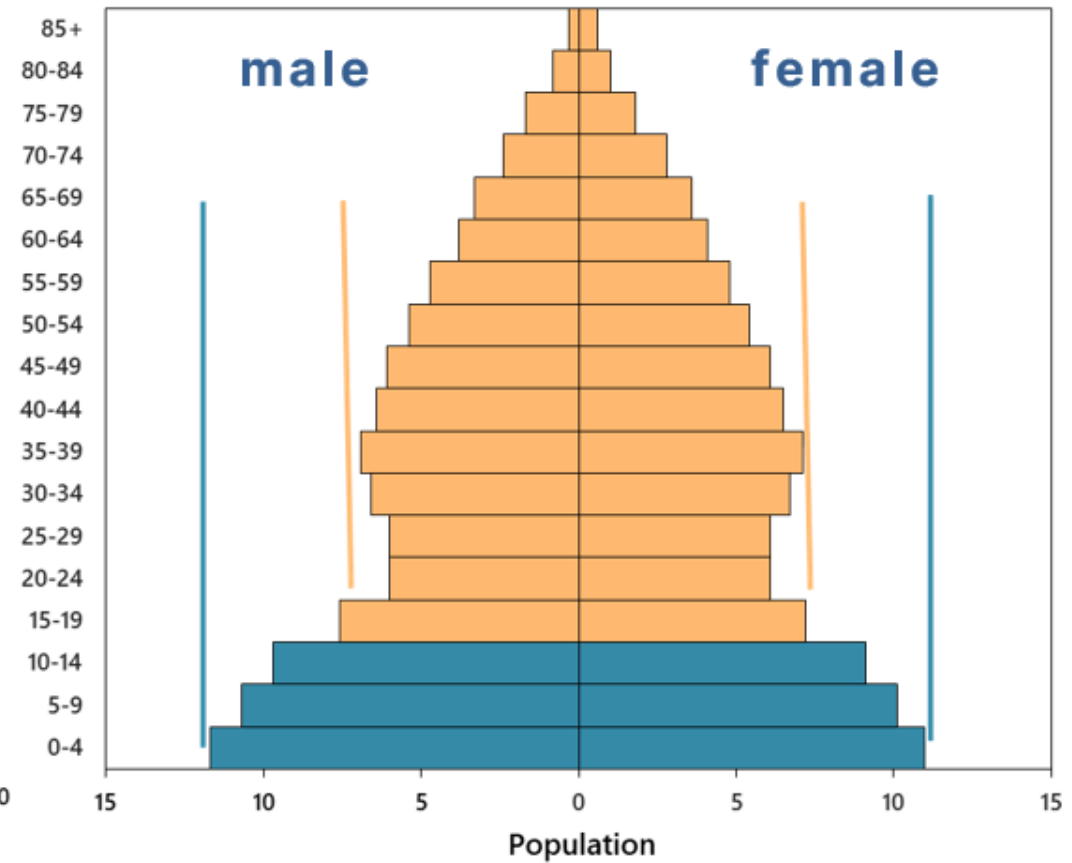
1960 POPULATION

UTAH

U.S.



Baby Boom Generation



Baby Boom Generation

9%
65+

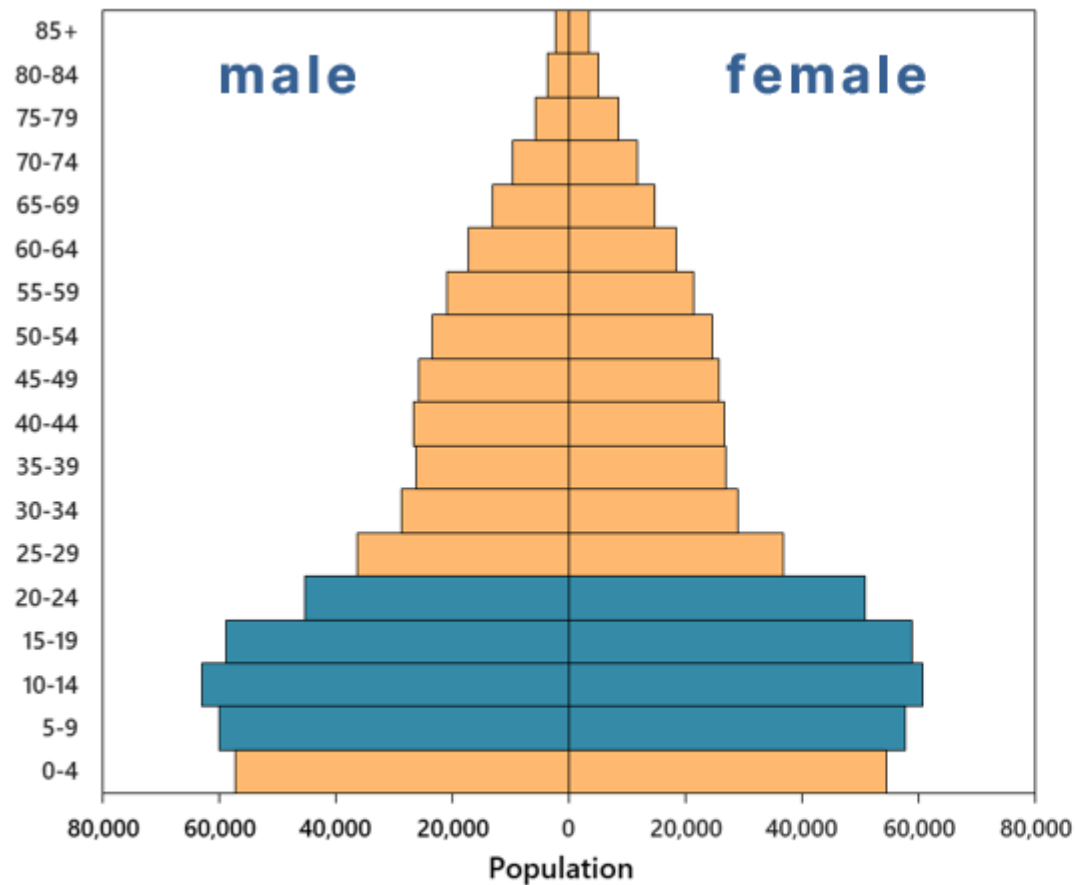
31%
0-14



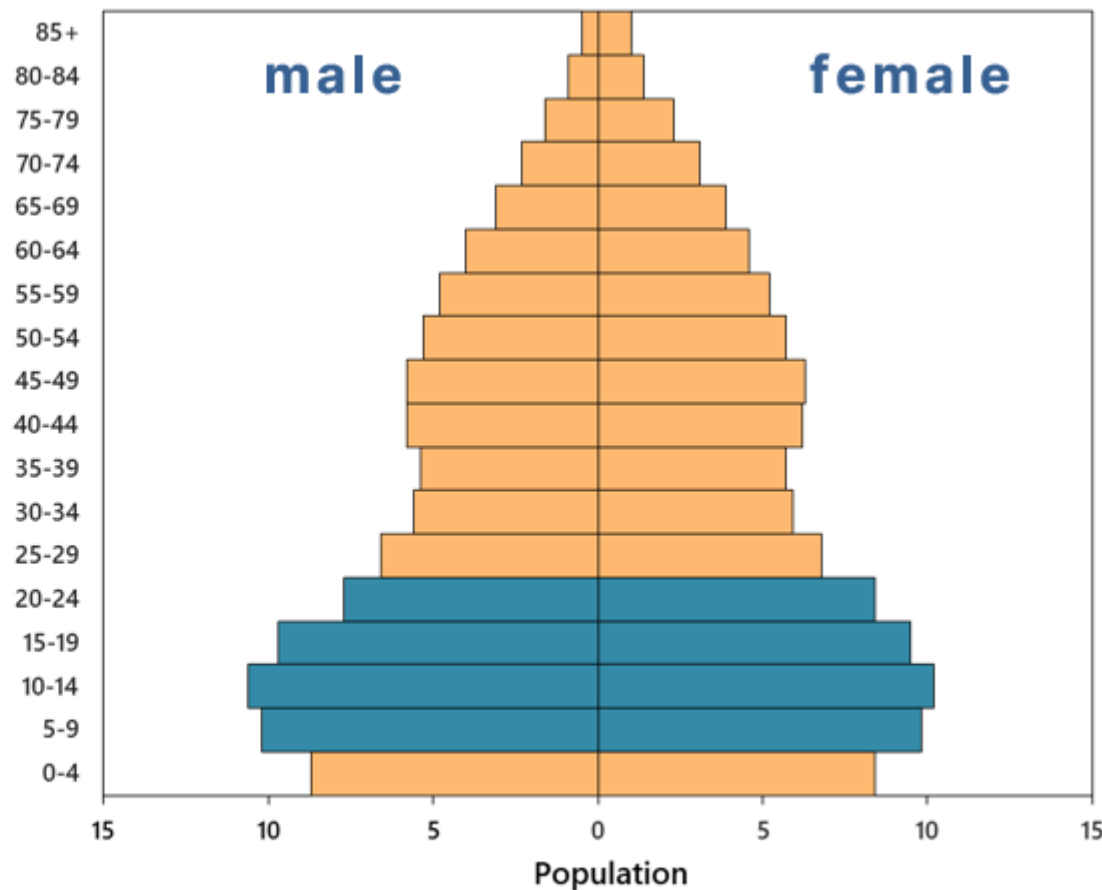
1970 POPULATION

UTAH

U.S.



Baby Boom Generation



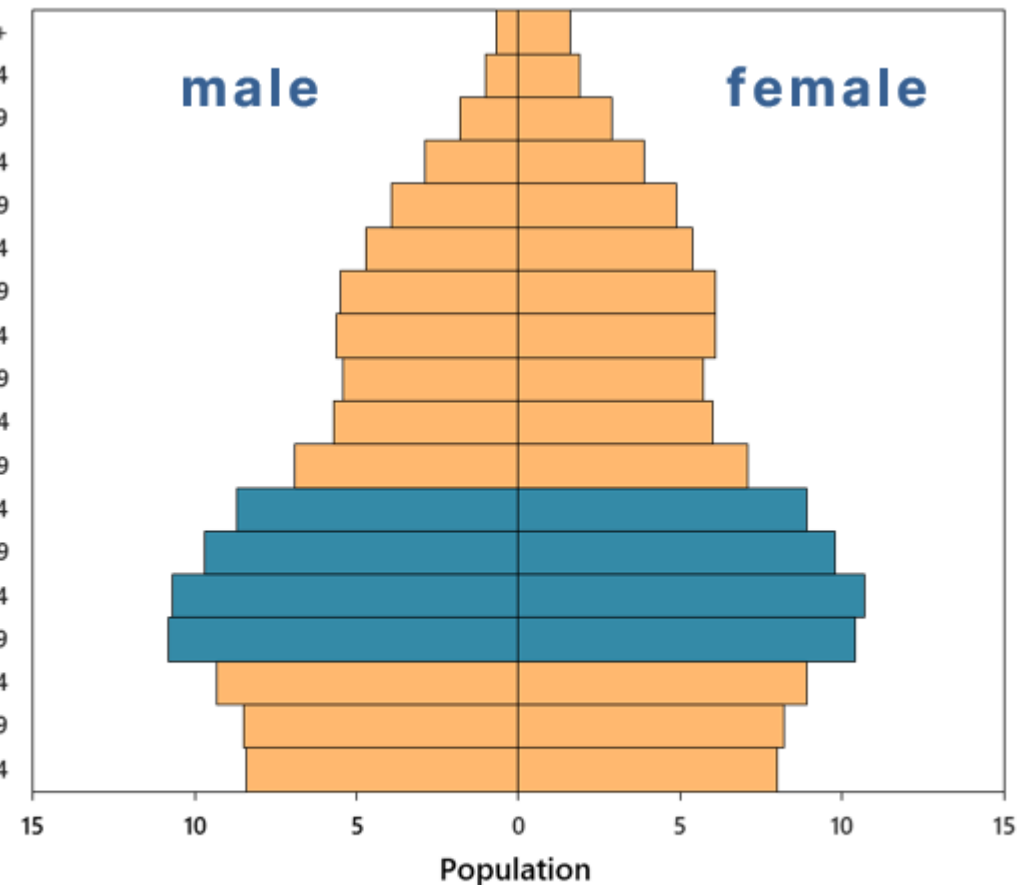
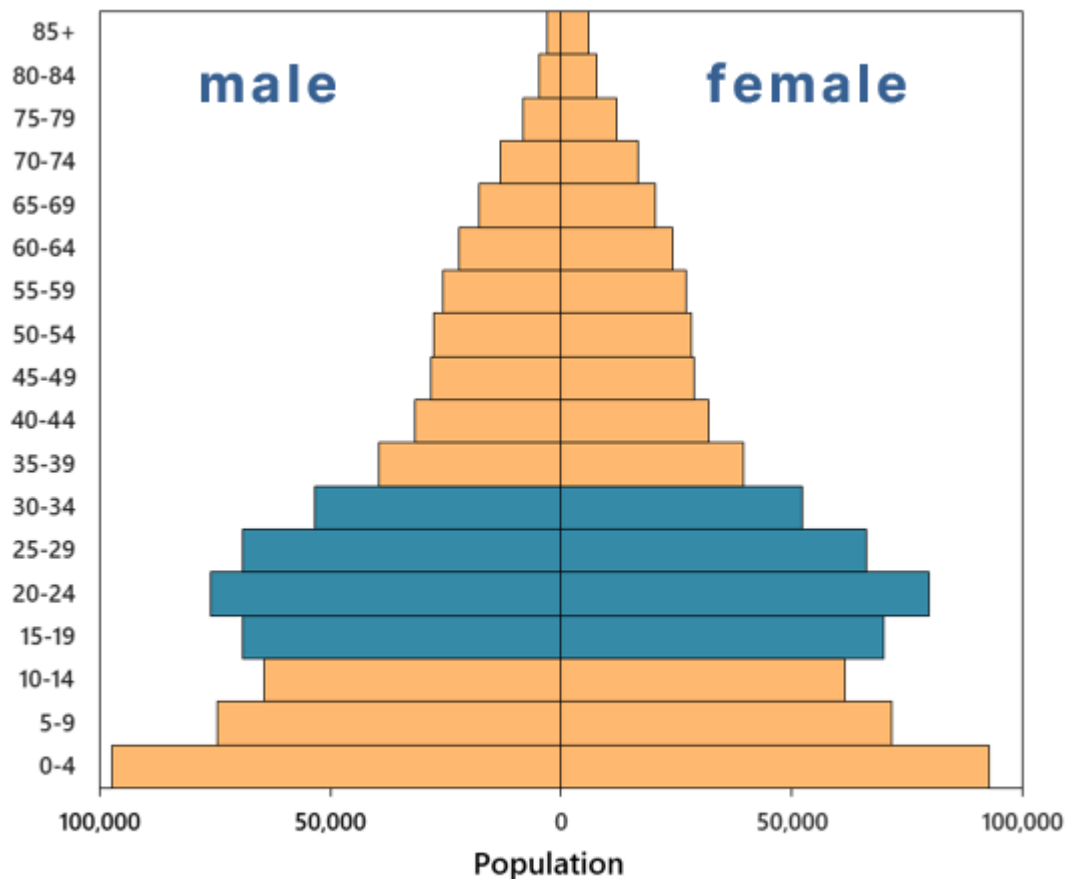
Baby Boom Generation



1980 POPULATION

UTAH

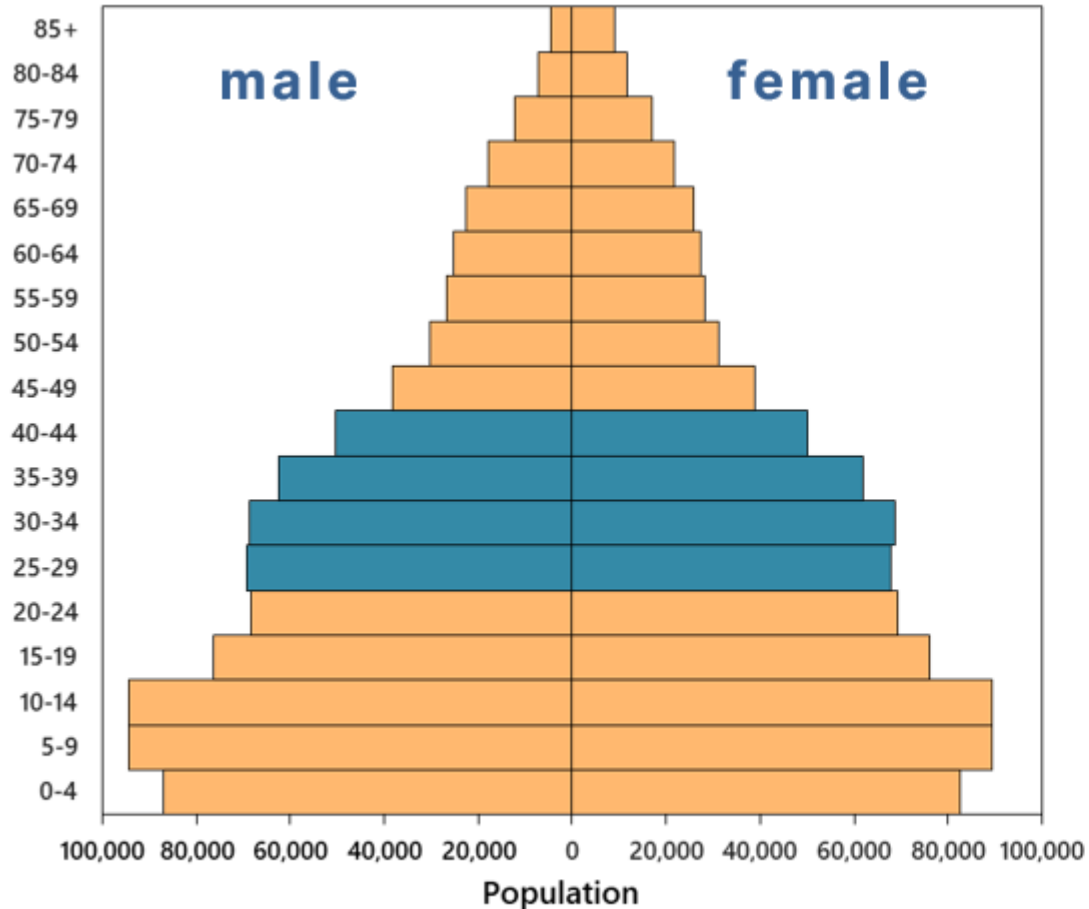
U.S.



1990 POPULATION

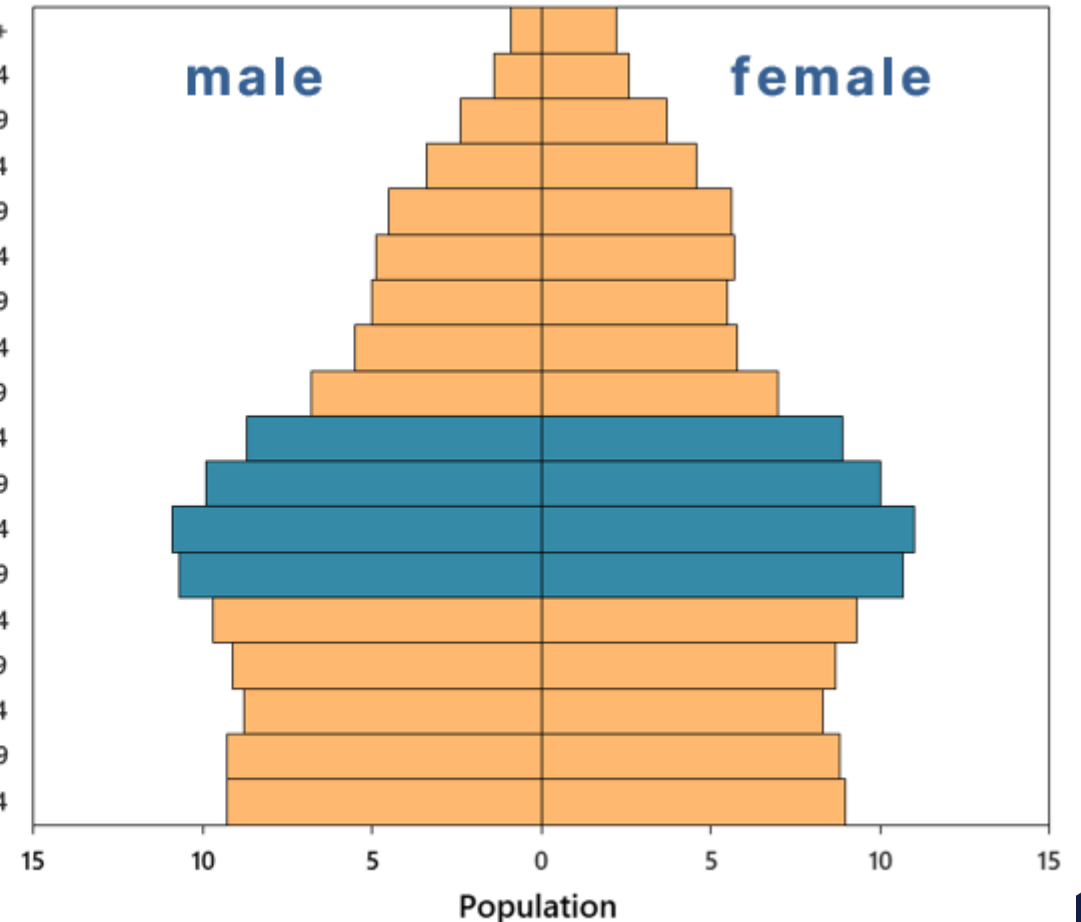
UTAH

U.S.



 Baby Boom Generation

Source: United States Census Bureau



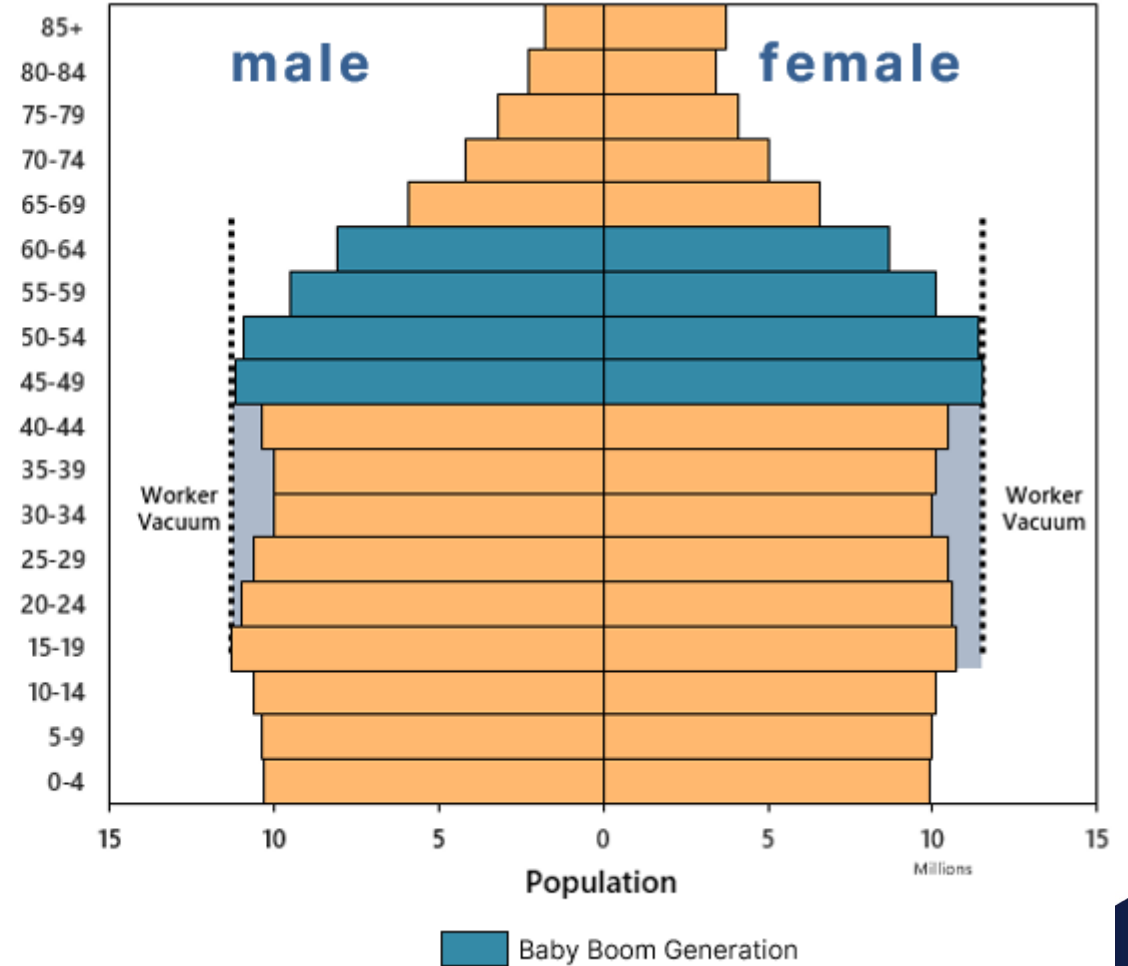
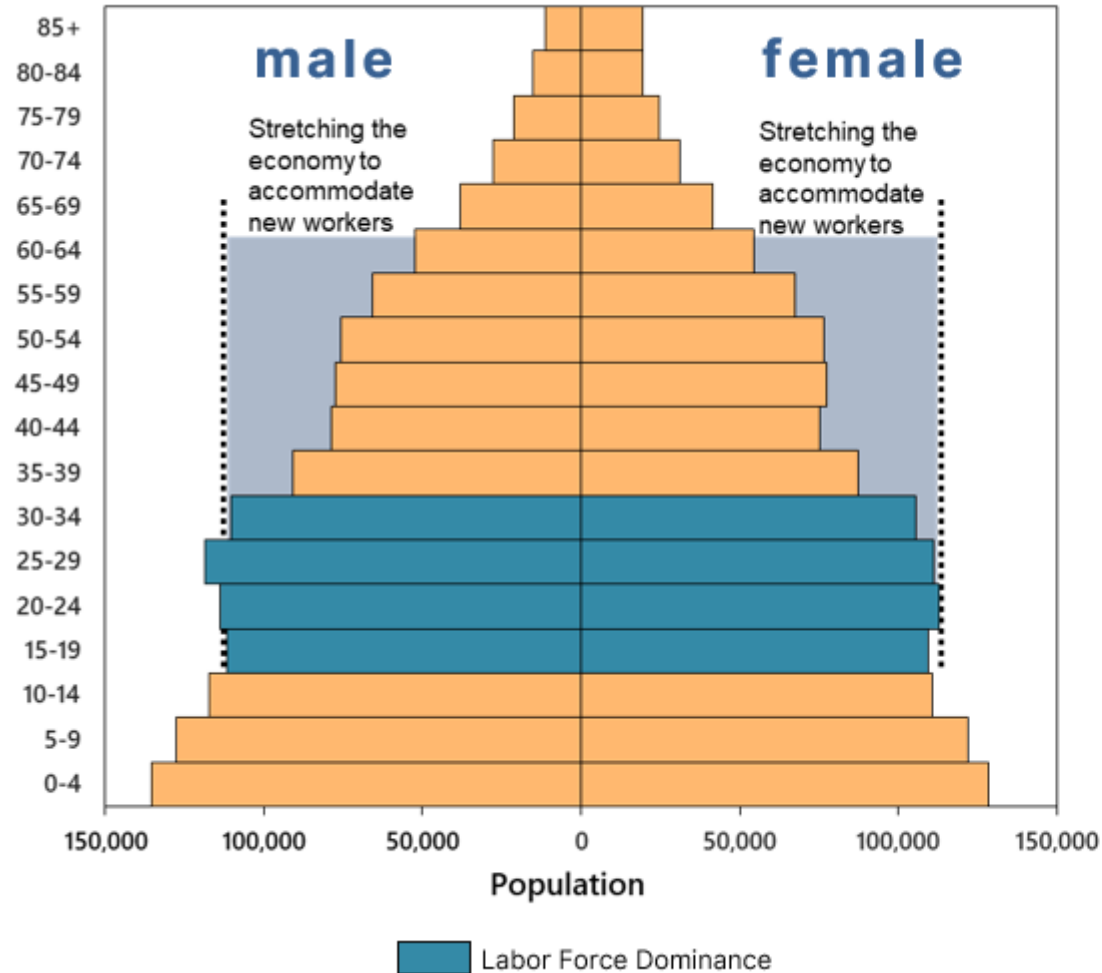
 Baby Boom Generation



2010 POPULATION

UTAH

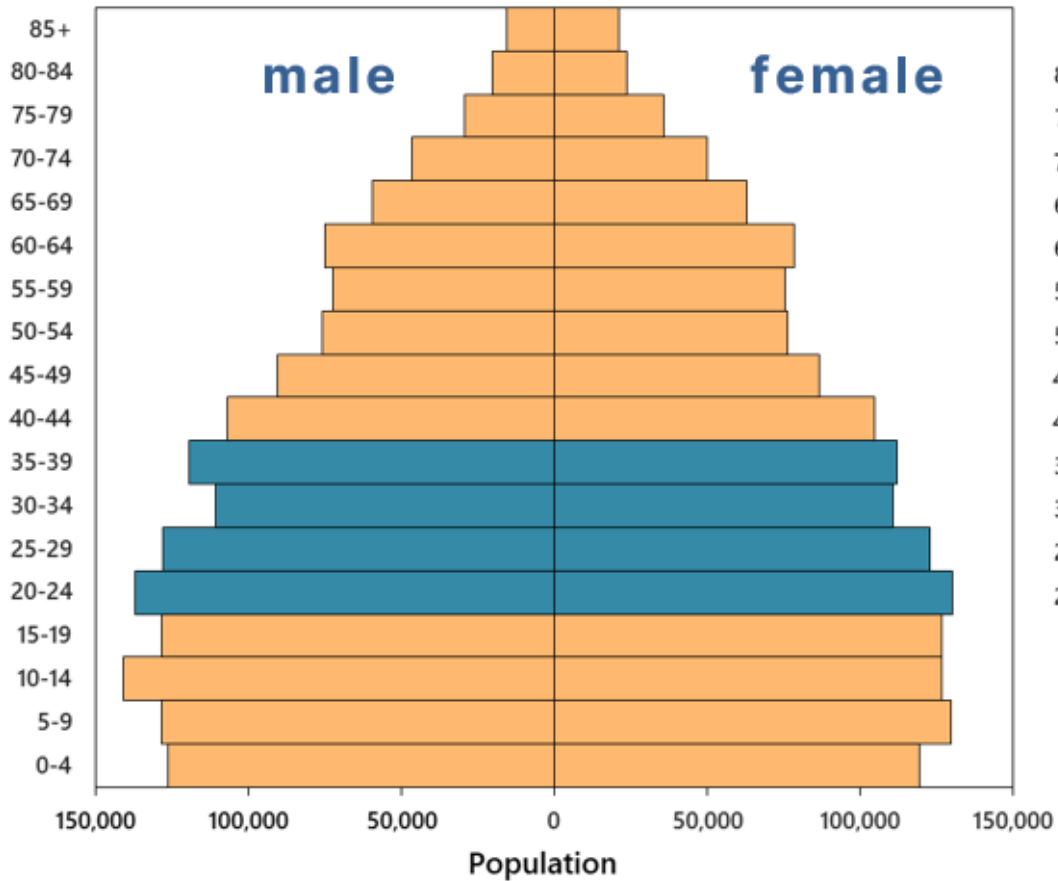
U.S.



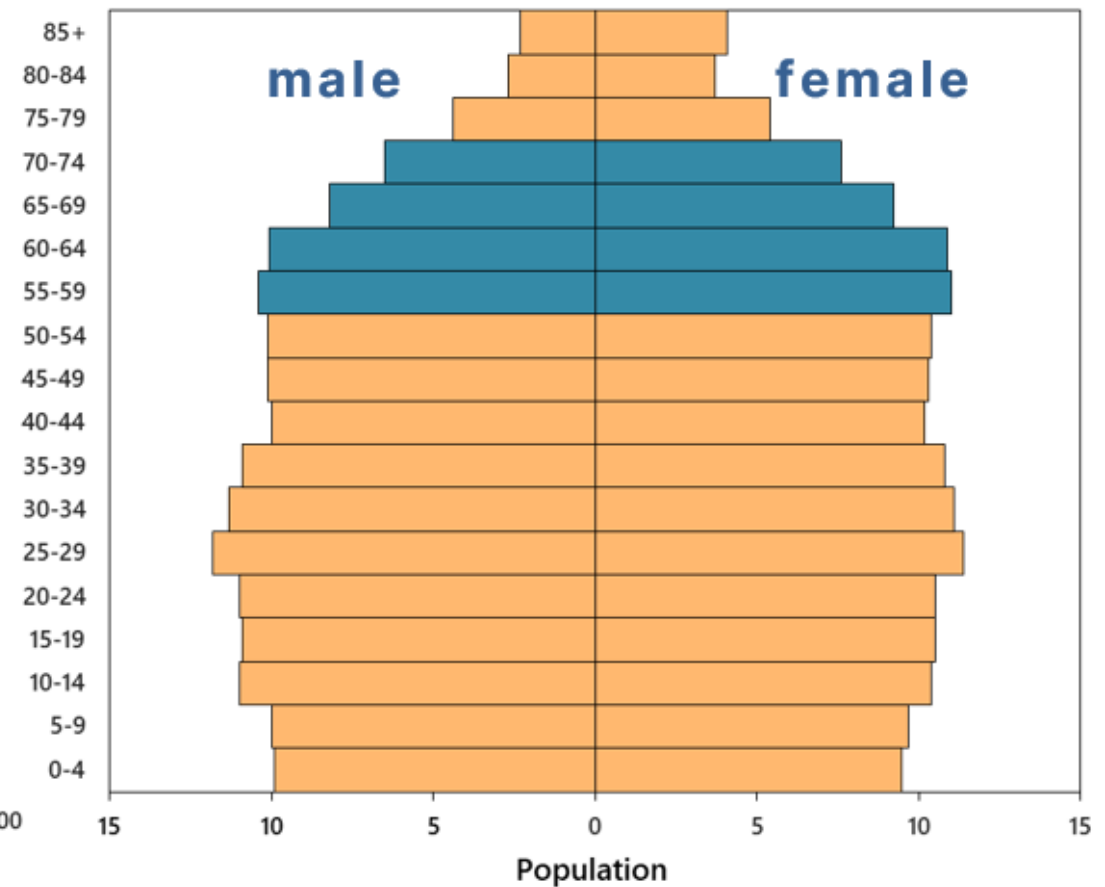
2020 POPULATION

UTAH

U.S.



■ Labor Force Dominance



■ Baby Boom Generation

16.6%

65+

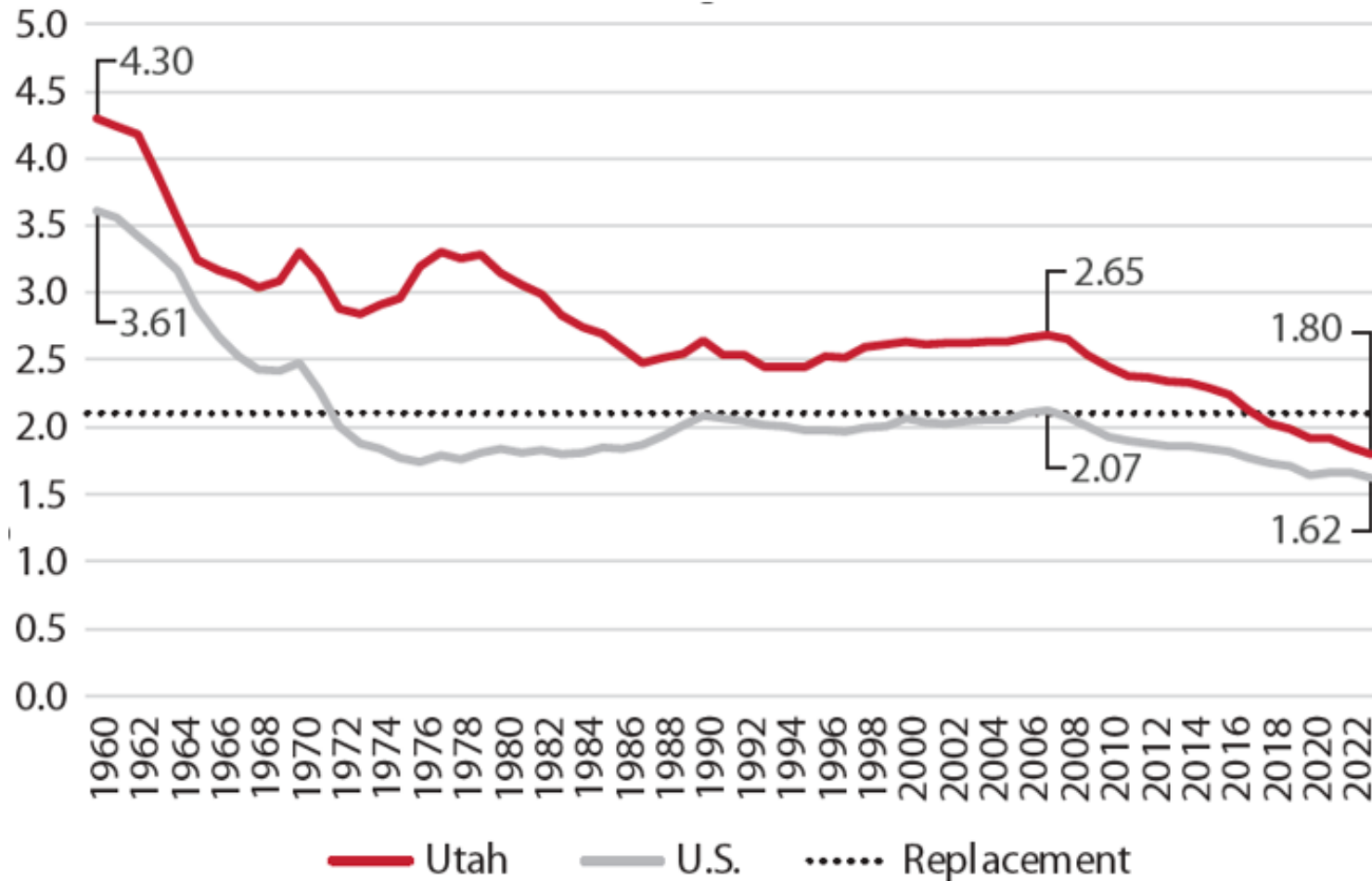
18.4%

0-14



TOTAL FERTILITY RATE

1960-2022



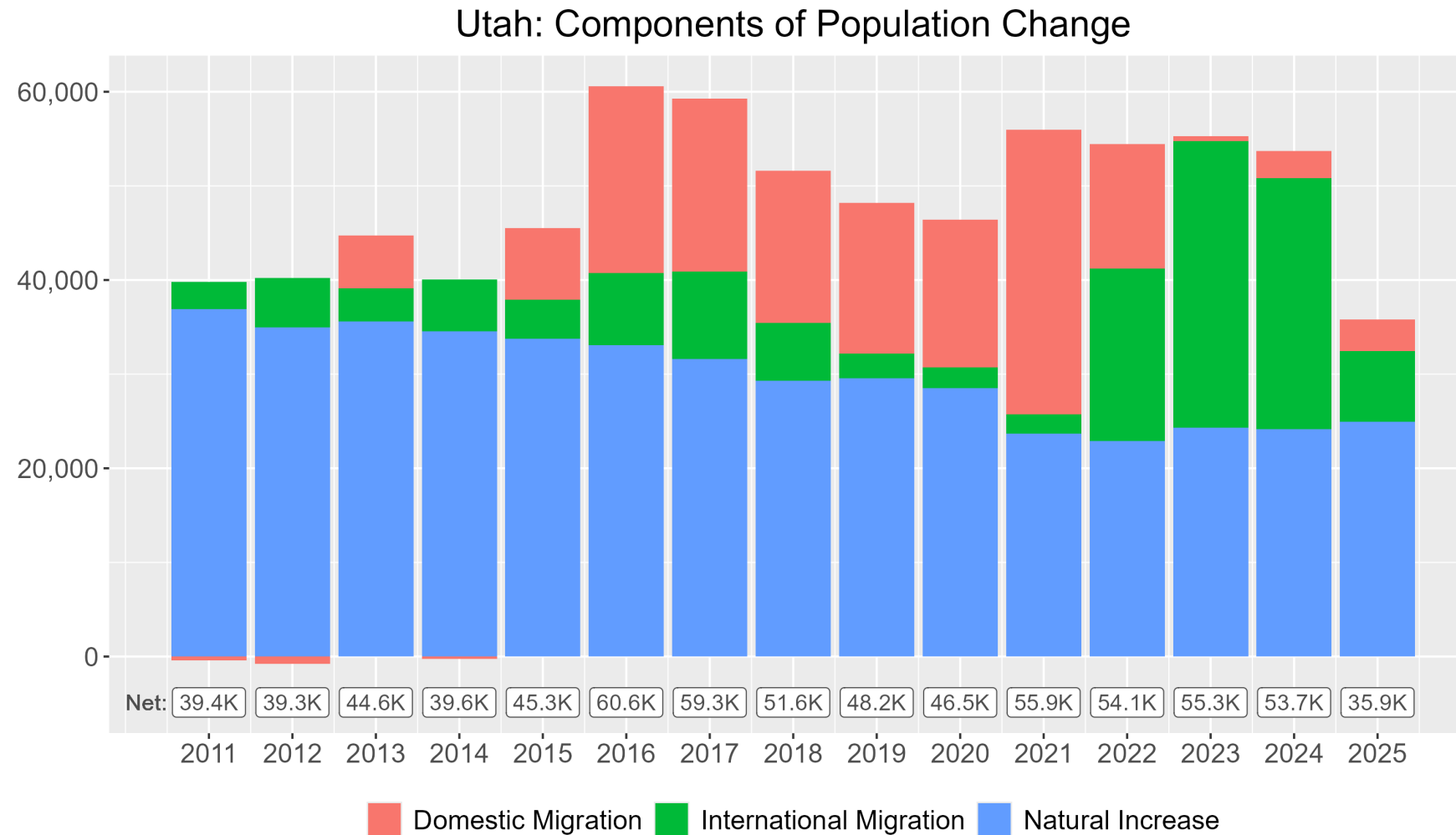
**Replacement Rate
2.1**

Note: A replacement rate of 2.1 is the theoretical fertility level at which the current population is replaced

Source: Kem C. Gardner, National Center for Health Statistics

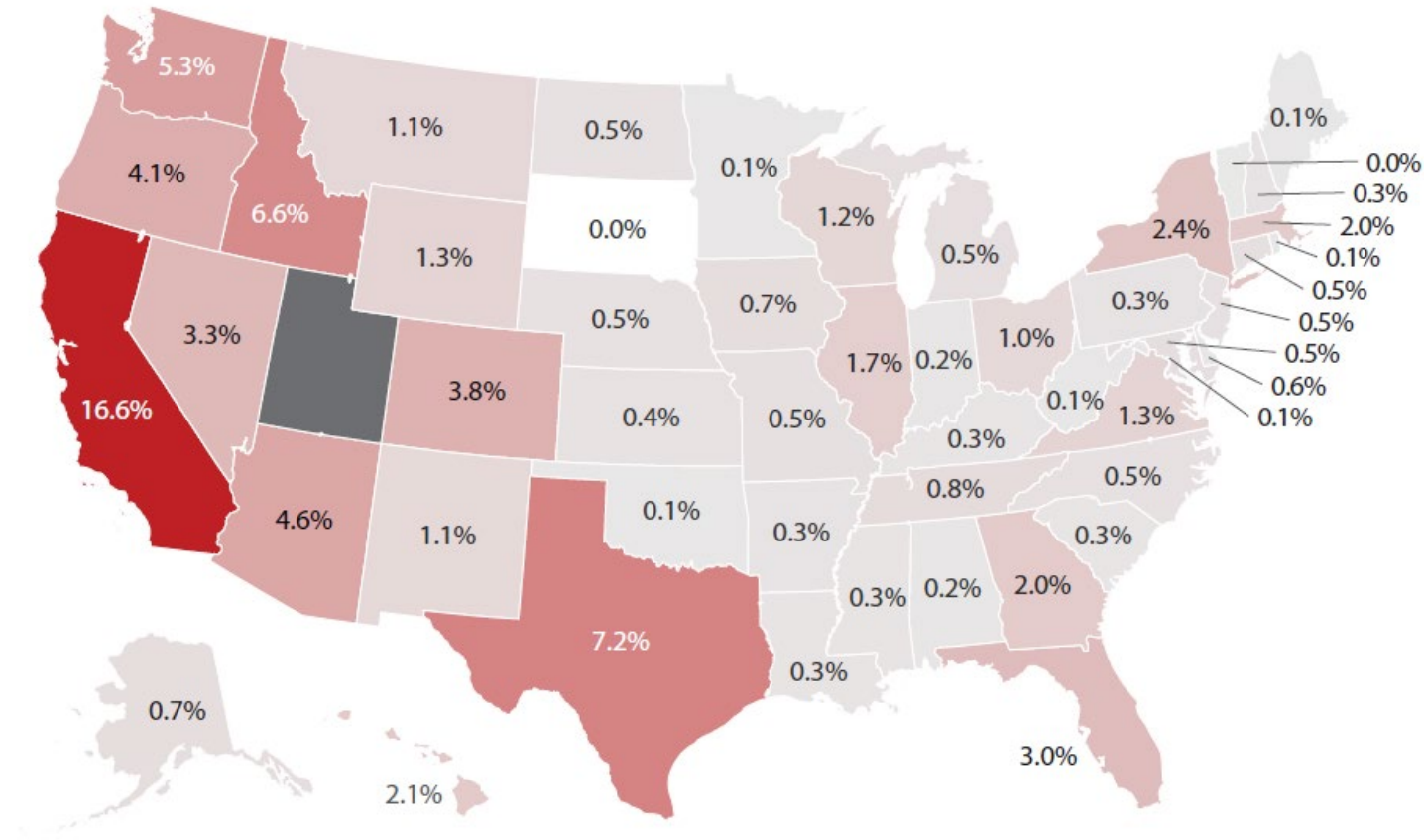


STATE POPULATION GROWTH



UTAH IN-MIGRANT DOMESTIC ORIGINS, 2021

- The largest share of Utah's in-migration comes from California (16.6%), followed by Texas (7.2%) and Idaho (6.6%)
- In-migrants are an asset in a tight labor market
- Utah's growing economy will continue to encourage employment-related migration

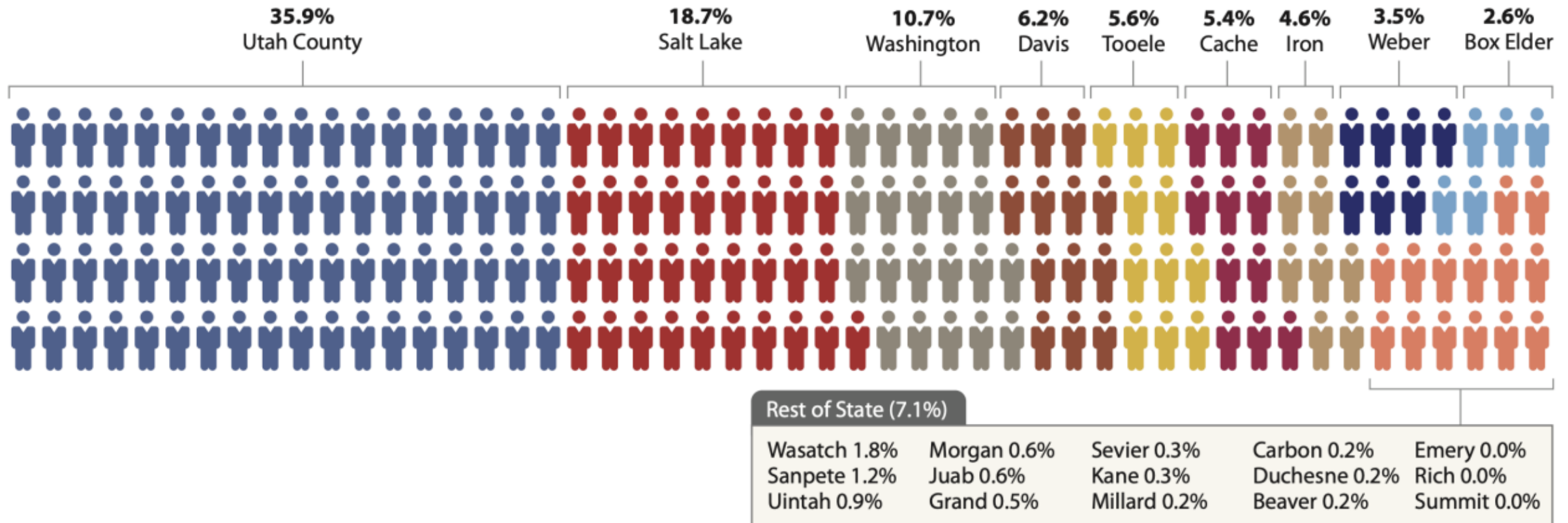


Source: Kem C. Gardner, U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



COUNTY SHARE OF STATE POPULATION GROWTH

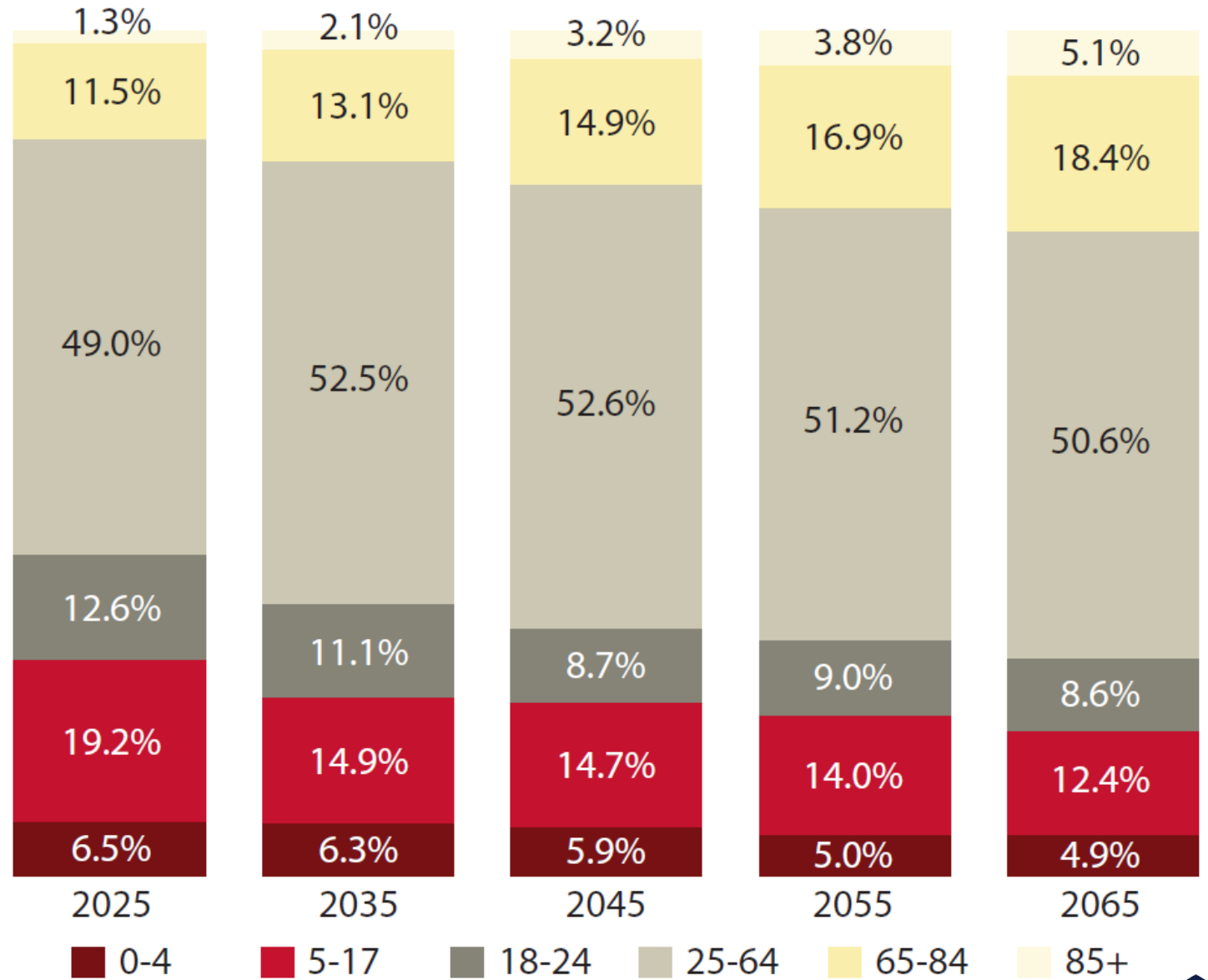
2024-2025



UTAH

Projected Population by Age

2025-2065

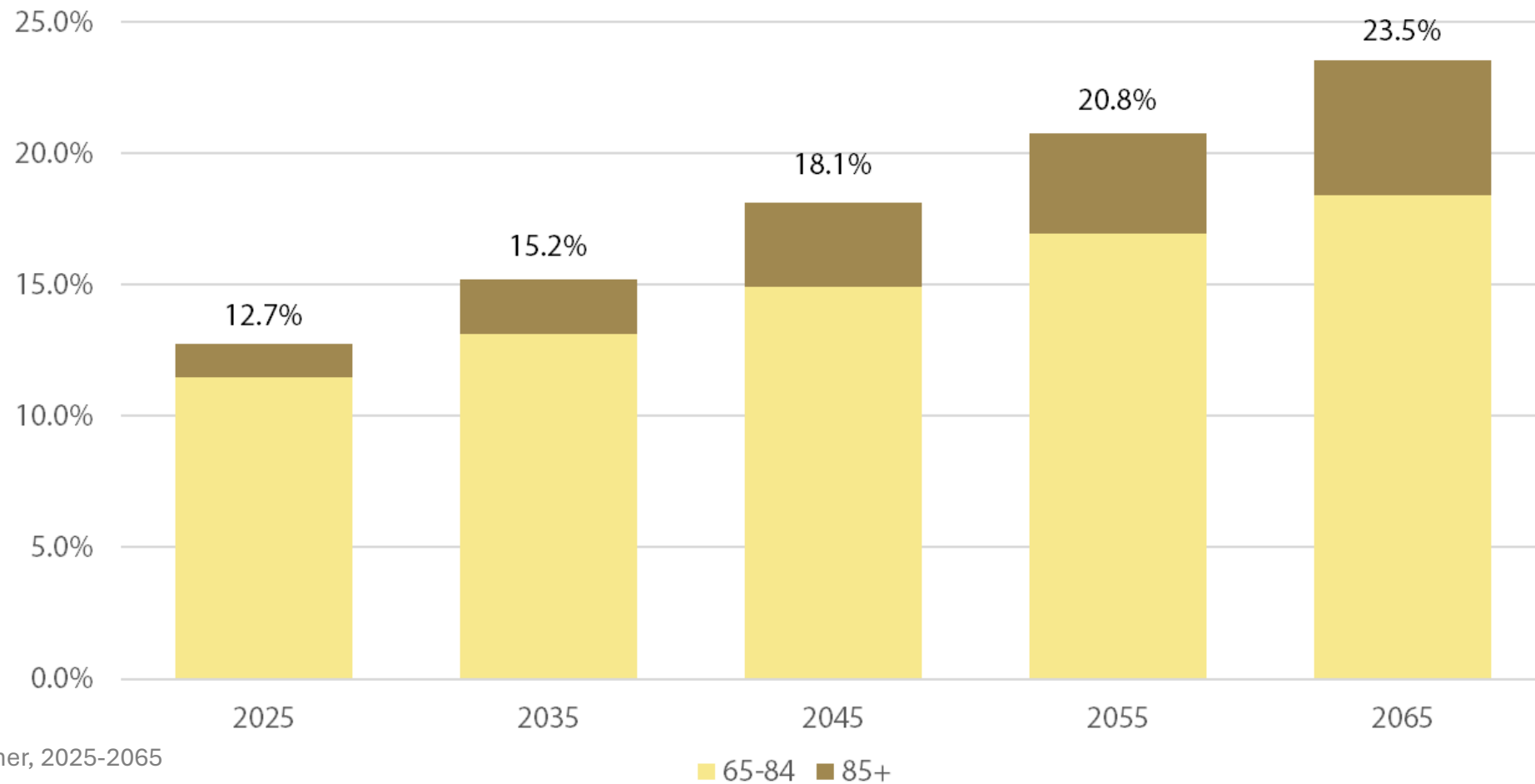


Source: Kem C. Gardner, 2025-2065
Projections



UTAH

Projected Population Aged 65+



Source: Kem C. Gardner, 2025-2065
Projections

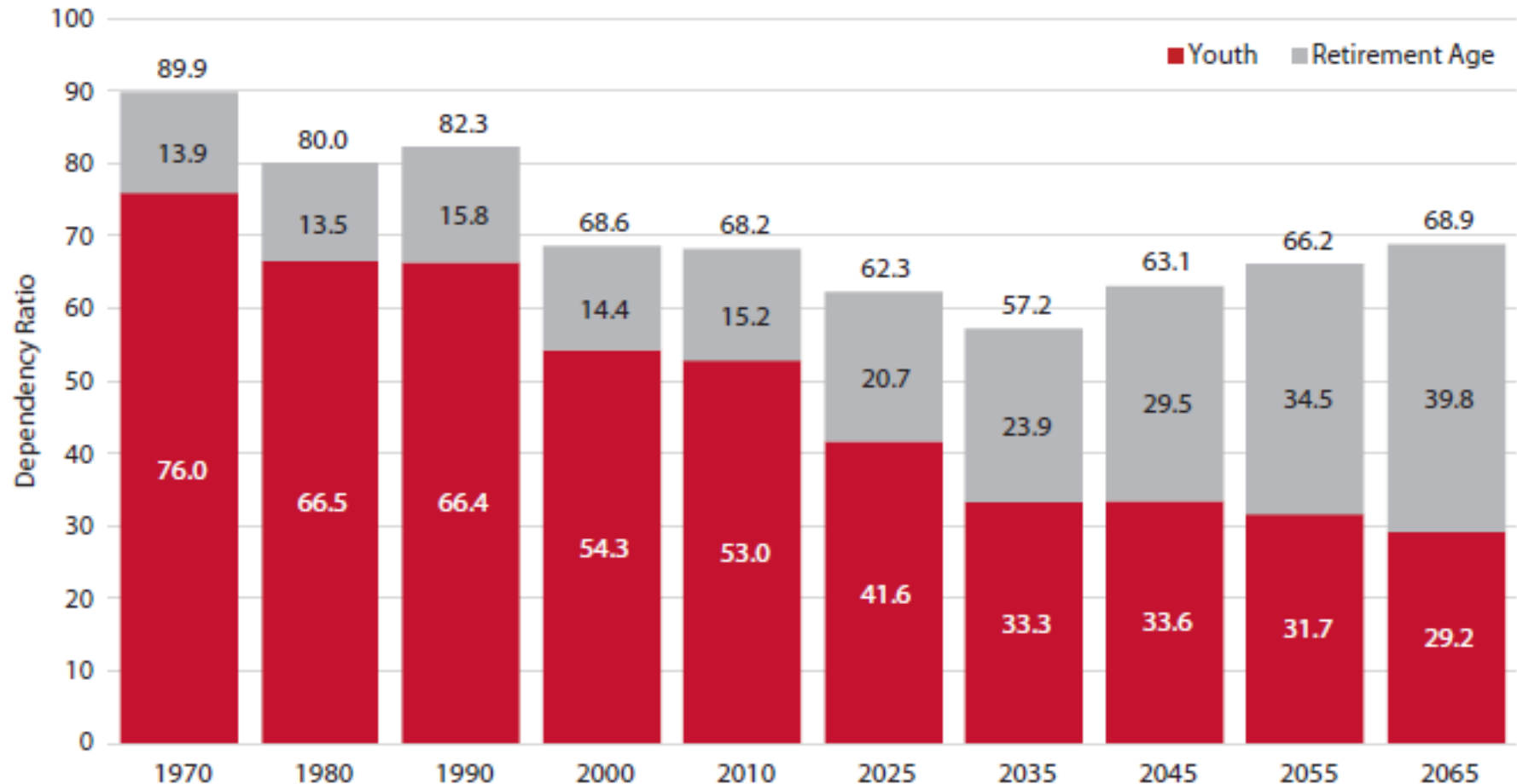


UTAH

Dependency Ratios, 1970-2065

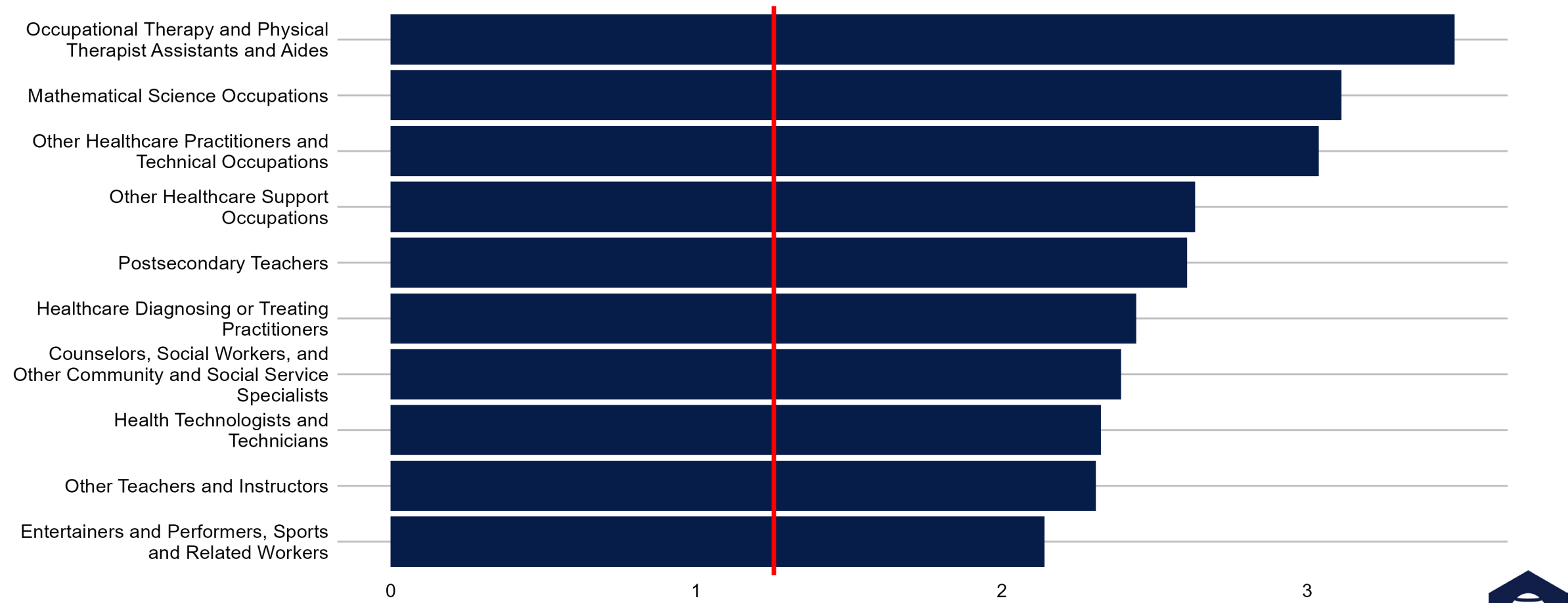
The elderly become an increasingly large share of dependents

- Growth in healthcare
- Increasing inflationary pressures



Utah Long Term Occupational Projections, 2024 - 2034

Fastest Growing Occupations

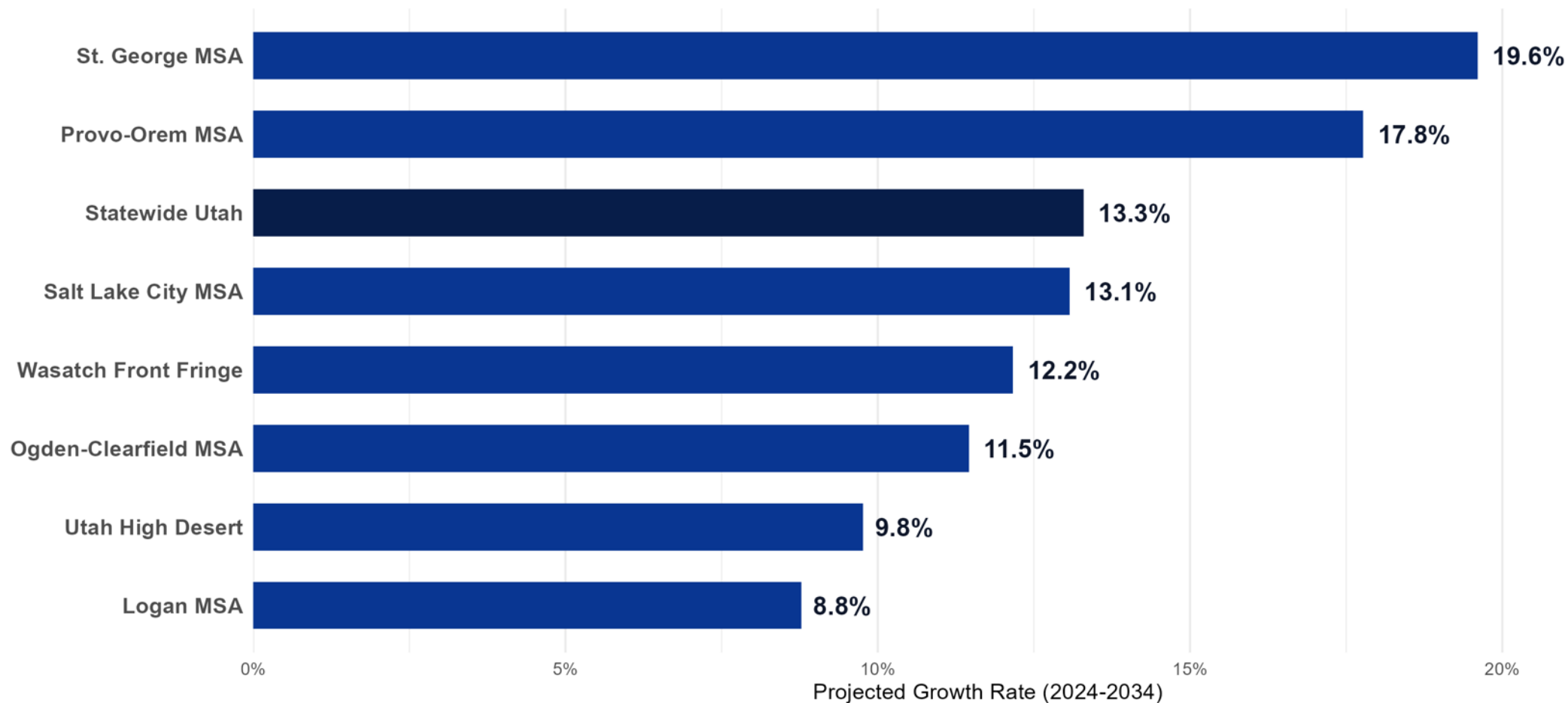


Source: Department of Workforce Services 2024 - 2034 Occupational Projections
*Red line represents average compound annual growth across all occupations



Utah Long Term Occupational Projections, 2024 - 2034

10-Year Projected Job Growth by Region

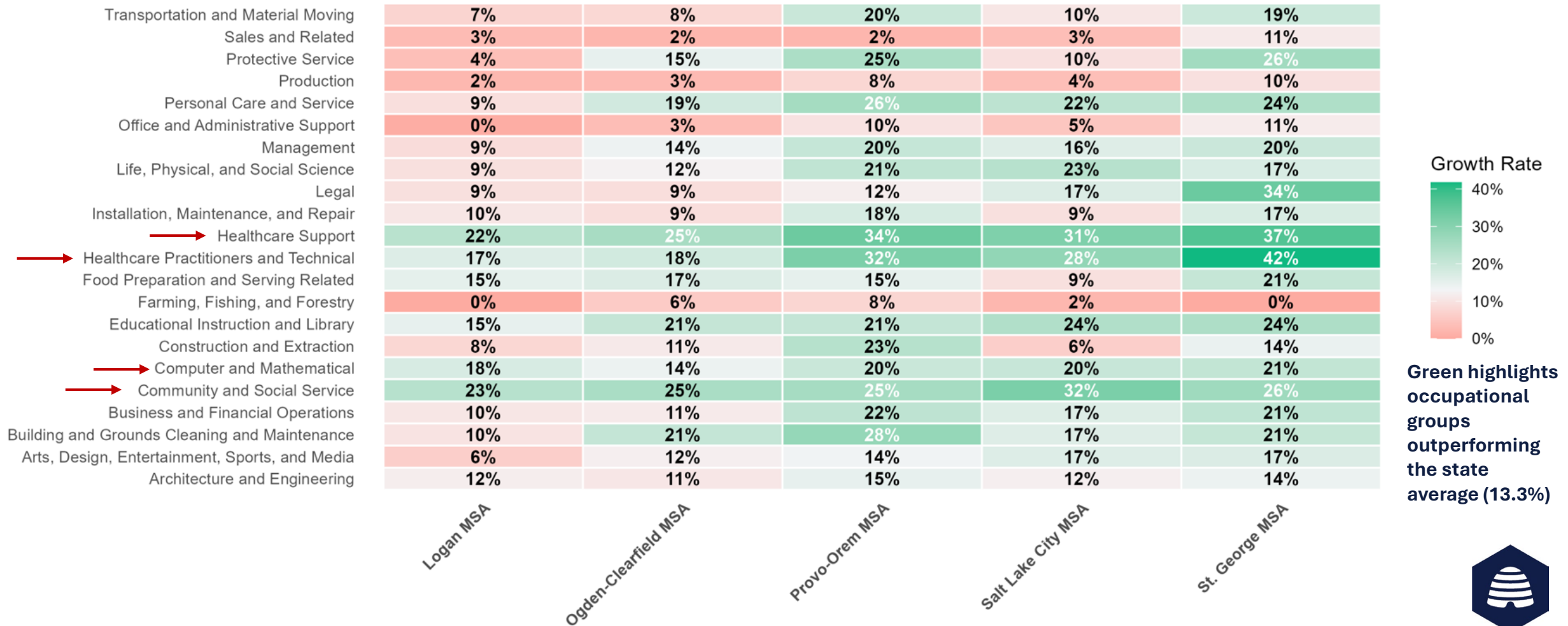


Source: Department of Workforce Services 2024-2034 projections



Utah Long Term Occupational Projections, 2024 - 2034

Regional Heatmap: Major Group Growth Rates



Source: Department of Workforce Services 2024-2034 projections



UTAH'S AGING POPULATION

- Labor markets will remain under pressure as Utah's older population ages out of the workforce
- Health care sector will continue to grow to support the aging population
- Industries that support elderly consumers (home delivery, landscaping, home care services, etc.) will grow to support a larger customer base



Photograph by Bruno Aguirre

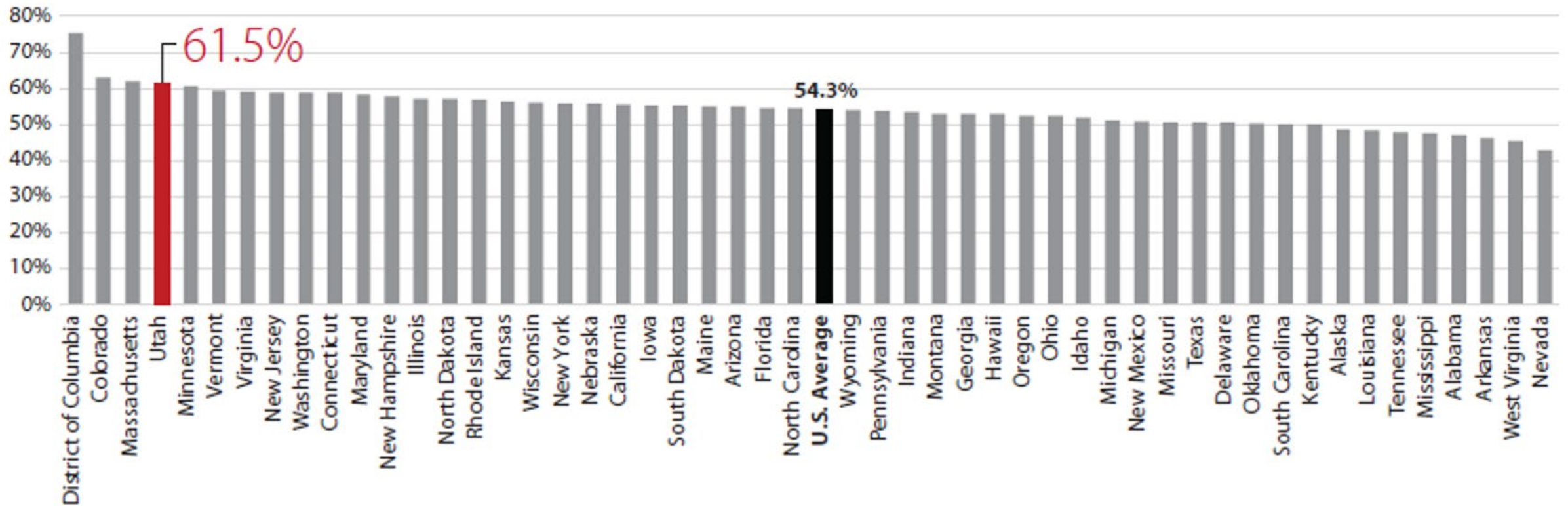




What is the Value of an **EDUCATION?**



Percent of Adults with a Post Secondary Education



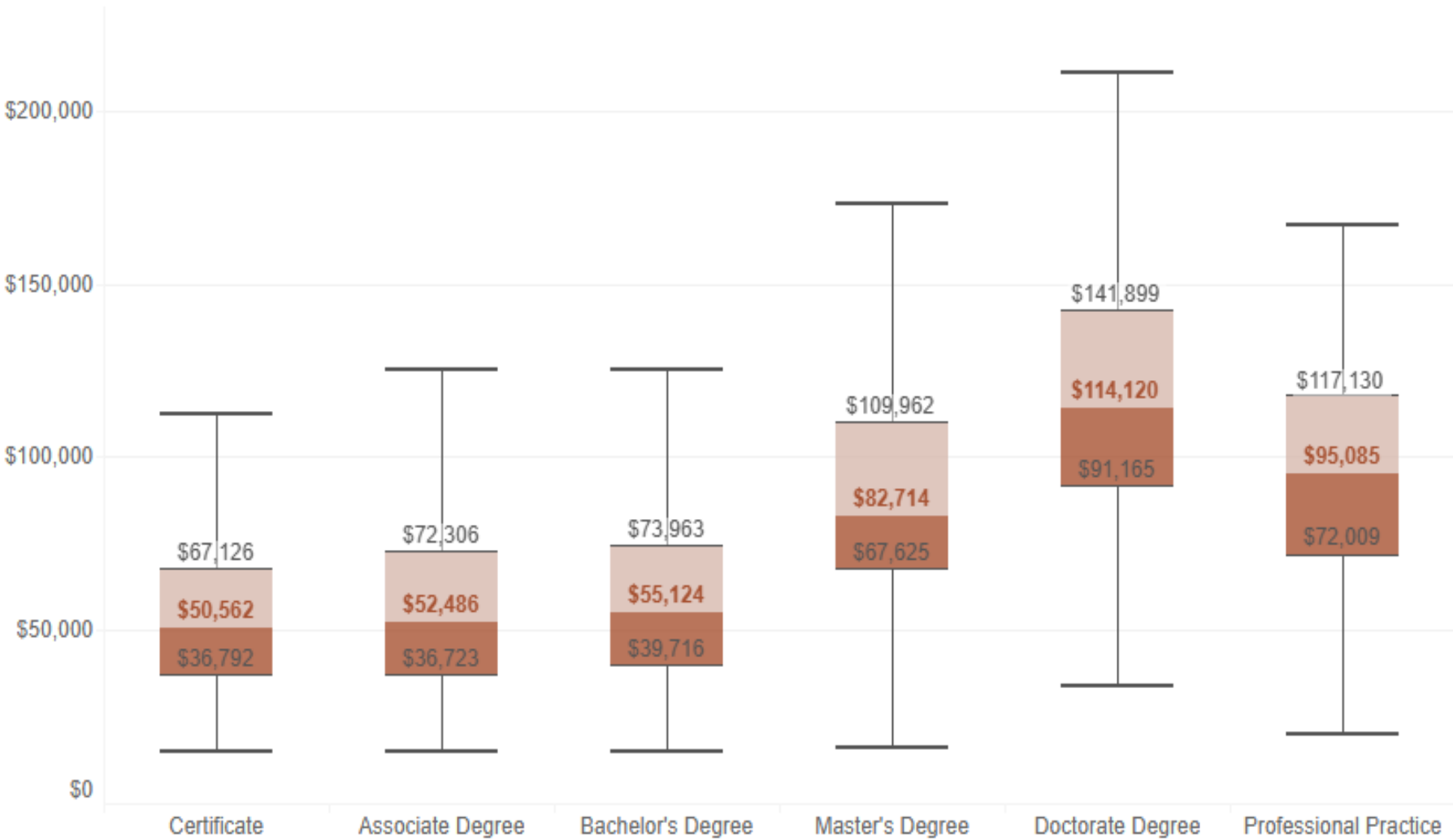
Source: Kem C. Gardner Institute, Lumina Foundation analysis of U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, One-year PUMS, 2022 (includes short-term credentials), age 25-64



Higher Education Leads to Higher Wages

- Associates degrees and shorter certificate programs have a higher NPV initially (10 years)
- Bachelor's and higher-level degrees are more likely to pay off in the longer run (40 years)

Salaries for 2022-23 Graduates, One Year After Graduation



Source: Utah System of Higher Education (USHE)
Note: Values represent the 25th, 50th (median), and 75th percentiles within the groups

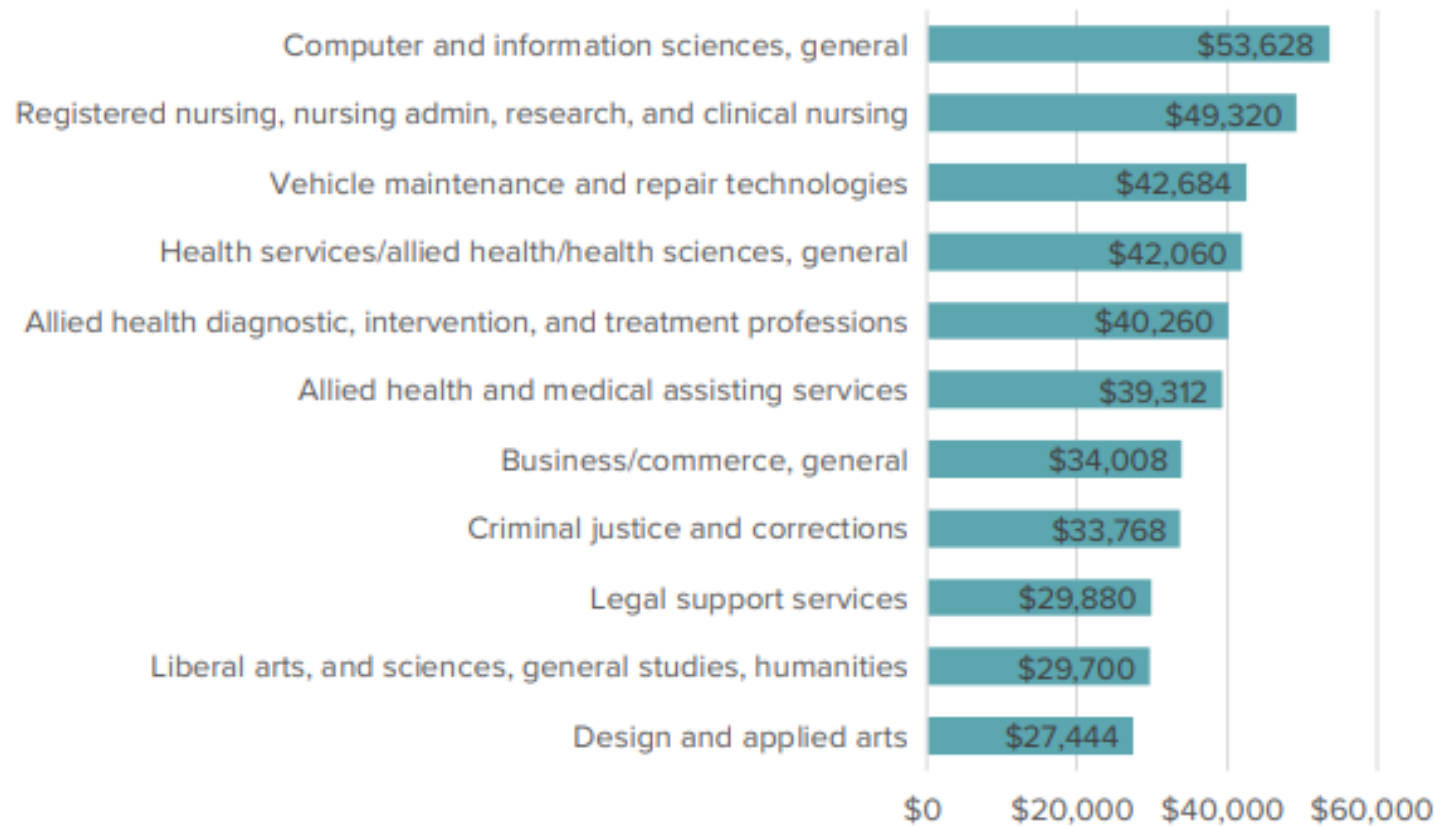


Higher Education Leads to Higher Wages

Degree Choice Matters

First-year returns for Salt Lake Community College shows variation by subject.

Figure 9: ROI of Associates Degrees from Salt Lake Community College, First Year, Median, 2020



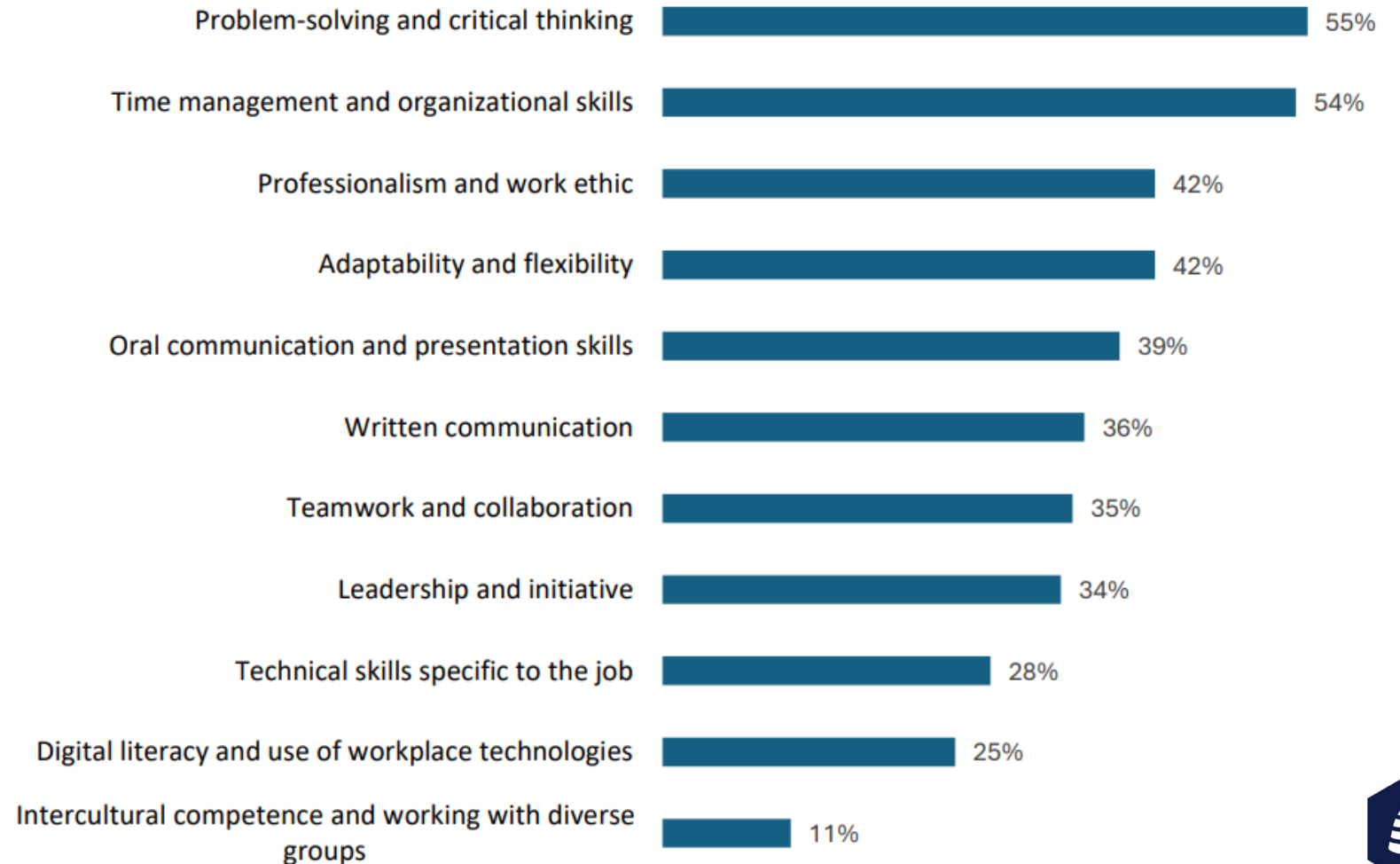
Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. Utah Foundation calculations.



Areas of Employees' Underperformance According to Employers

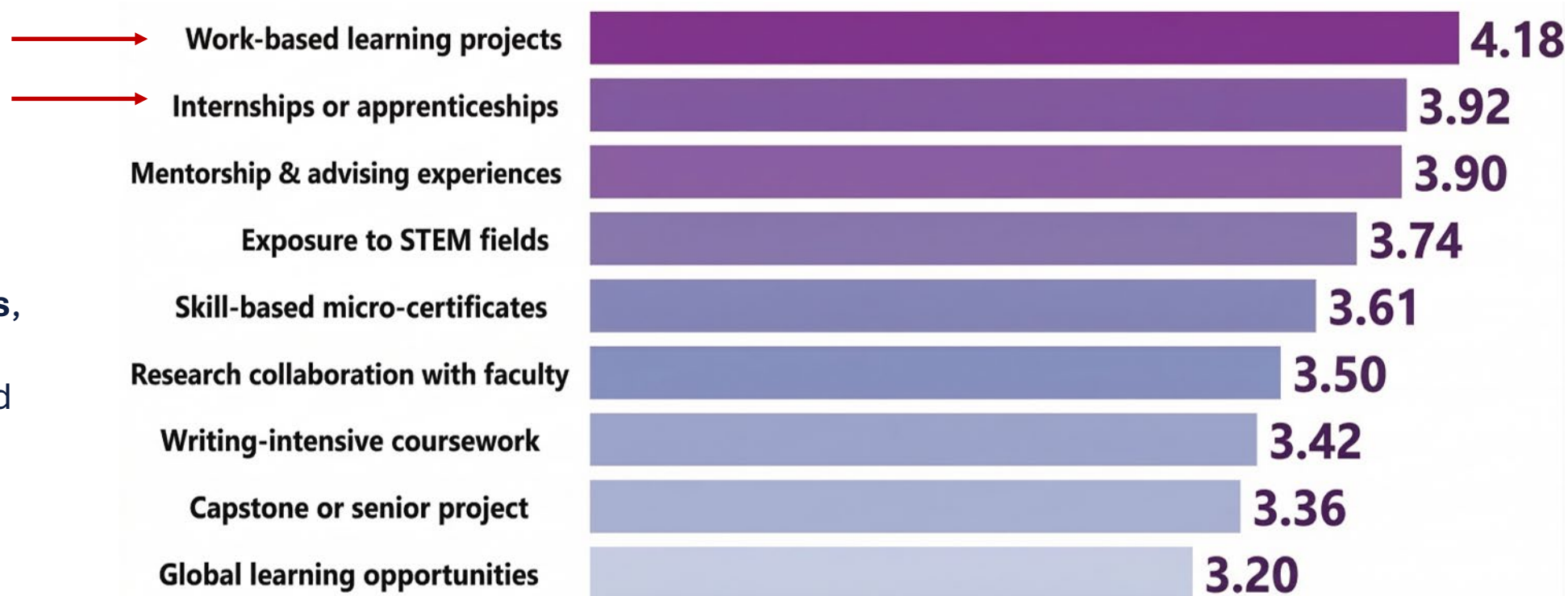
Higher-order cognitive and interpersonal skills, rather than technical ability alone, pose the greatest challenge for workforce readiness in Utah

Communication skills are expected to become more valuable



Value of Academic Experiences

Applied problem-solving, experiential learning, and collaborative projects, can help reduce underperformance and enhance long-term employability



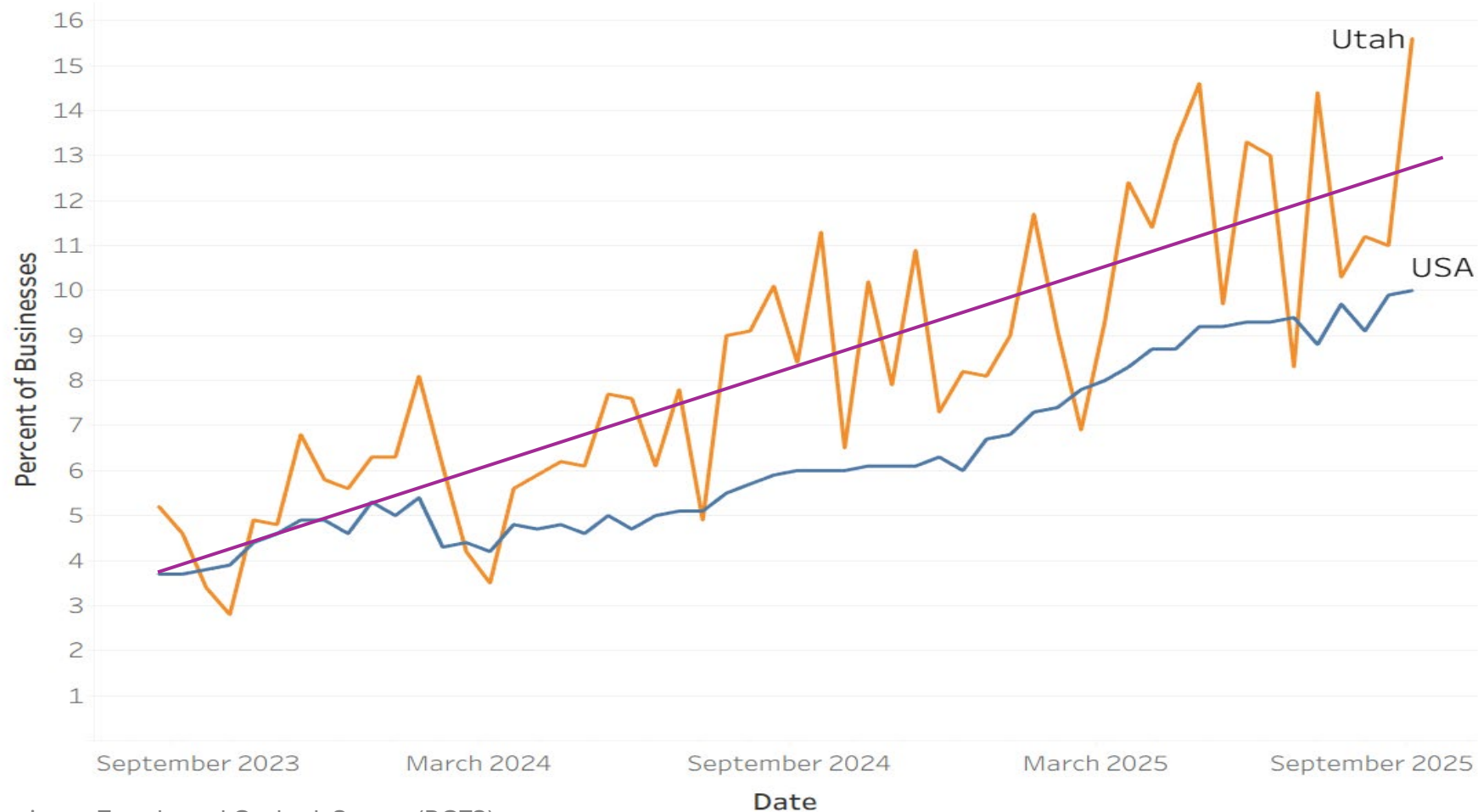


What will be the
impact of
AI & Automation?



The Share of Businesses Utilizing AI is Higher in Utah

Percent of Businesses that Used AI in the Previous 2 Weeks



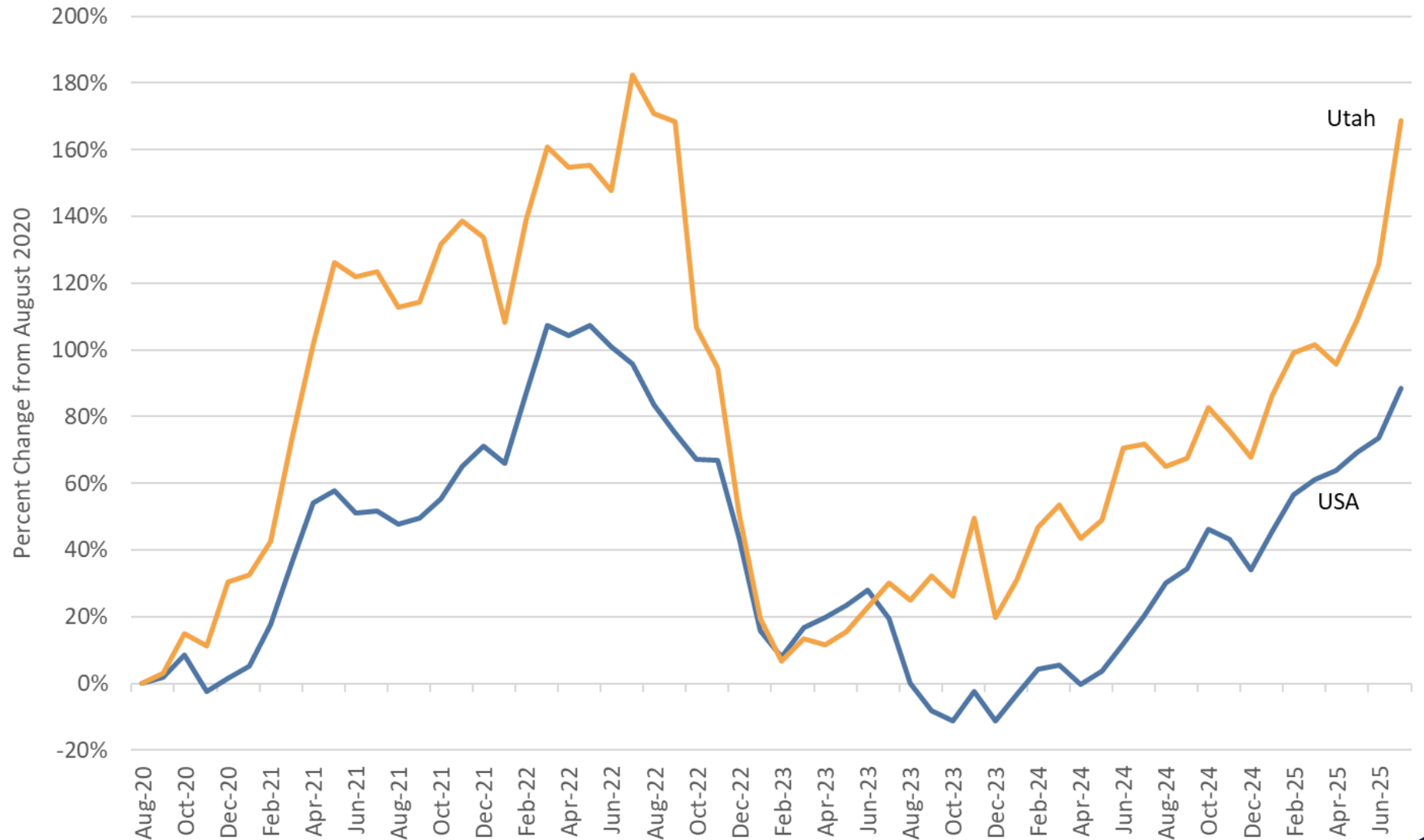
Source: US Census Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BOTS)



- **More than half** of the job postings requesting AI skills were **not in IT or computer science** occupations
- Job postings that saw **significant growth in the share of job postings mentioning AI skills**
 - marketing
 - public relations
 - design
 - media
 - writing
 - human resources
 - education
- **Communication** tops the list of required skills in AI job postings, **indicating soft skills become more important** in roles utilizing AI
- **Skills in AI stand to make employees more productive** and employers are willing to pay more for them. Wages for job postings mentioning **AI skills are 28% higher** than those that do not

Job Postings Including Artificial Intelligence Skills, State and National

Percent Change from August 2020



Source: Lightcast

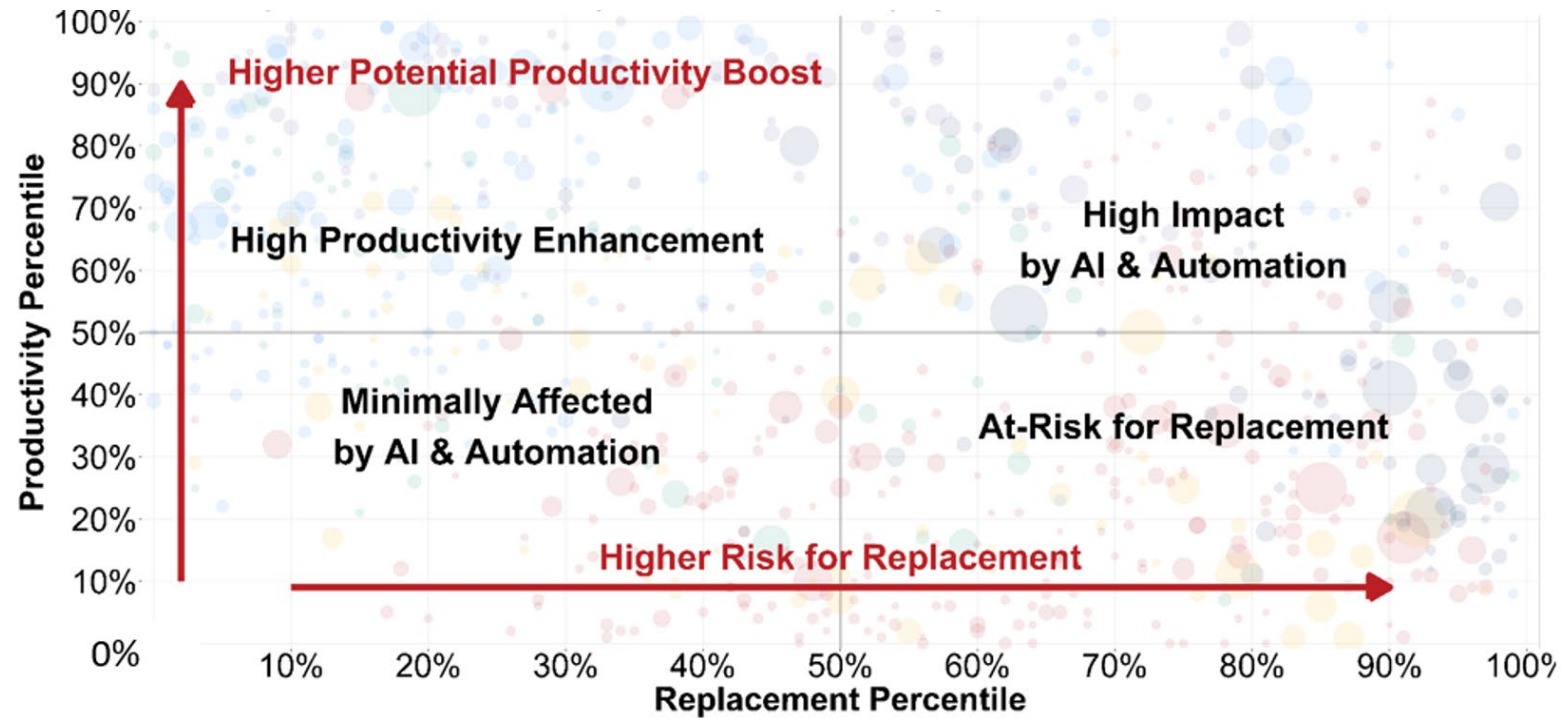


How Will Jobs be Affected?

Conference Board AI & Automation Index

Gauges the approximate labor market impact of current AI capabilities

- Compares 734 occupations across two factors
 1. Labor displacement
 2. Productivity Enhancement
- These factors are used to categorize each occupation into four categories
 - At-Risk for Replacement
 - Minimally Affected
 - High Impact by AI & Automation
 - High Productivity Enhancement



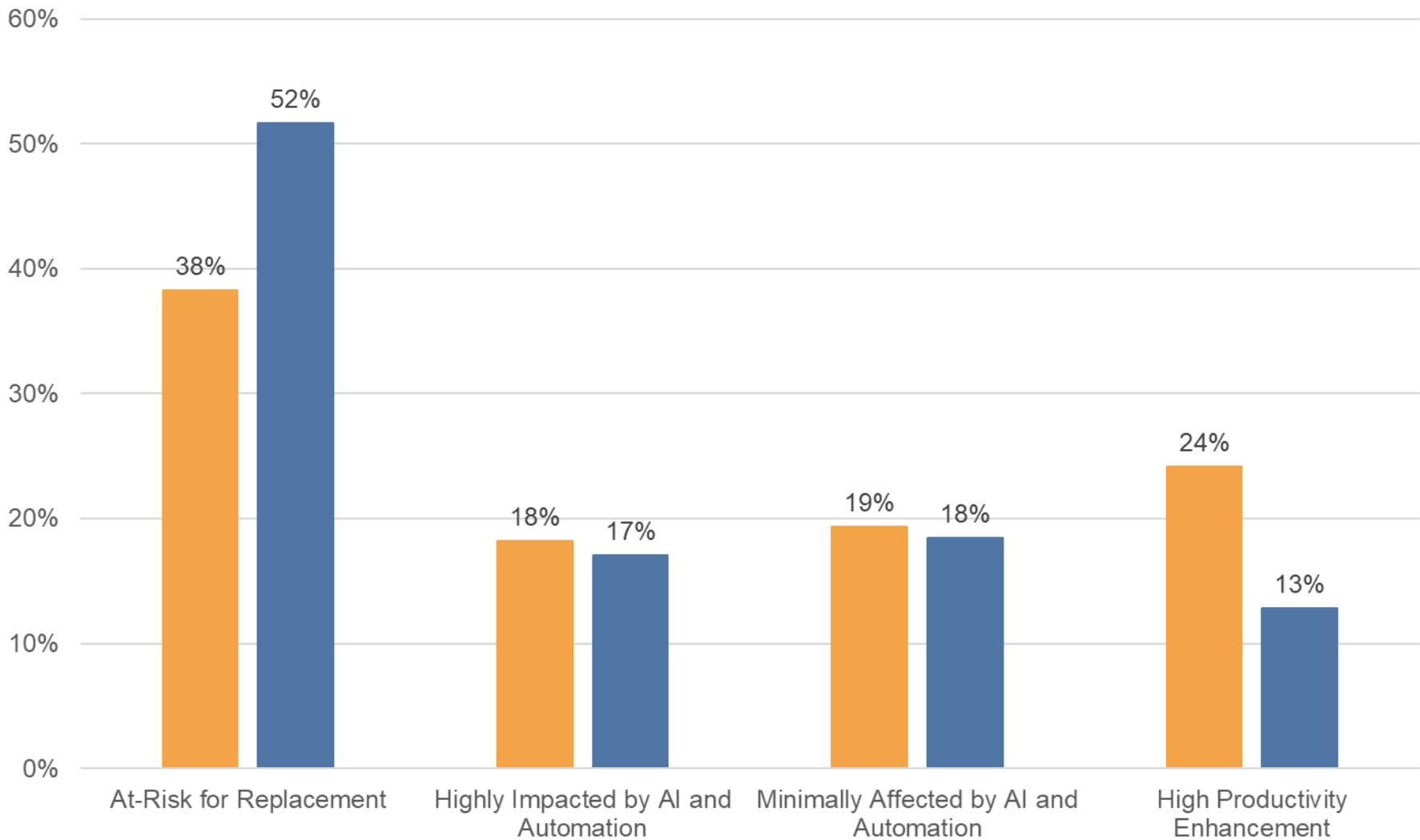
Source: AI & Automation Index, Conference Board



- Utah has a **smaller portion of employment in the at-risk** bucket and a **higher portion in the productivity-benefiting**
- **Utah has a lower proportion of people working in many of the at-risk occupations, including**
 - cashiers
 - waiters
 - retail salespeople
- **Utah has a larger share of occupations that are expected to benefit from AI and automation**
 - middle school teachers
 - computer and information research scientists
 - electrical engineers

Impact of AI & Automation, State and National

Share of 2024 Employment



Source: BLS, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS); Conference Board AI and Automation Index



- **Manual labor** occupations at the **highest risk** for employment loss

- Packers
- Laborers
- Material movers
- Slaughterhouse meat packers

- **Manual labor** jobs **minimally impacted** tend to involve non-routine tasks, high manual dexterity, complex problem-solving, and adaptability

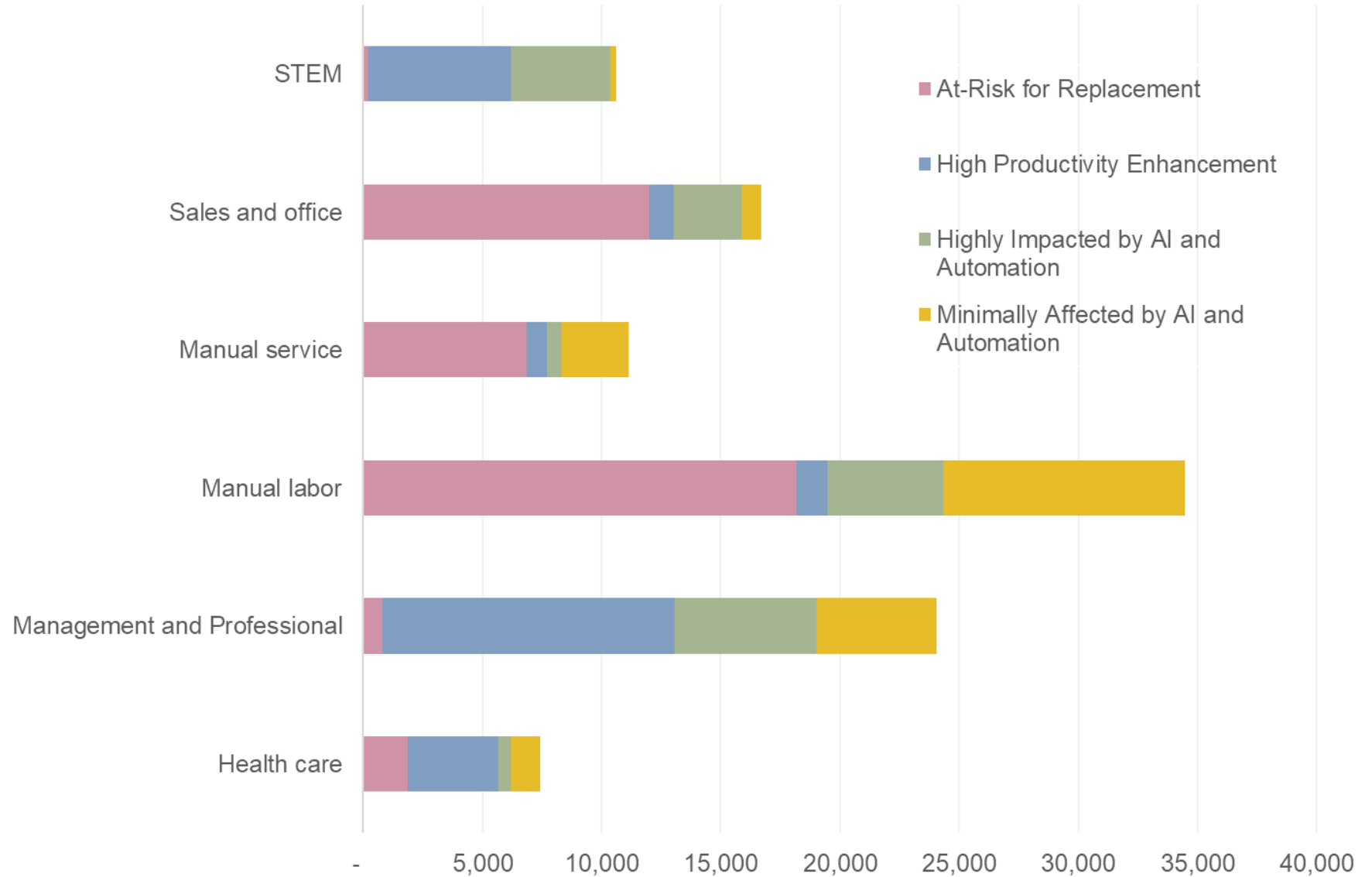
- Oil and gas service operators
- Aircraft mechanics

- **Management and professional** jobs make up the largest portion of **productivity-benefitting jobs**

- Teachers
- Managers
- Personal finance advisors
- Market analysts

Impact of AI & Automation

2024 Utah Employment by Occupation Group



Source: BLS, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS); Conference Board AI and Automation Index



Manual Labor

- At Risk**
- Stockers & Order Fillers
 - Truck Drivers
 - Laborers and Material Movers

- Minimally Affected**
- Electricians
 - Carpenters

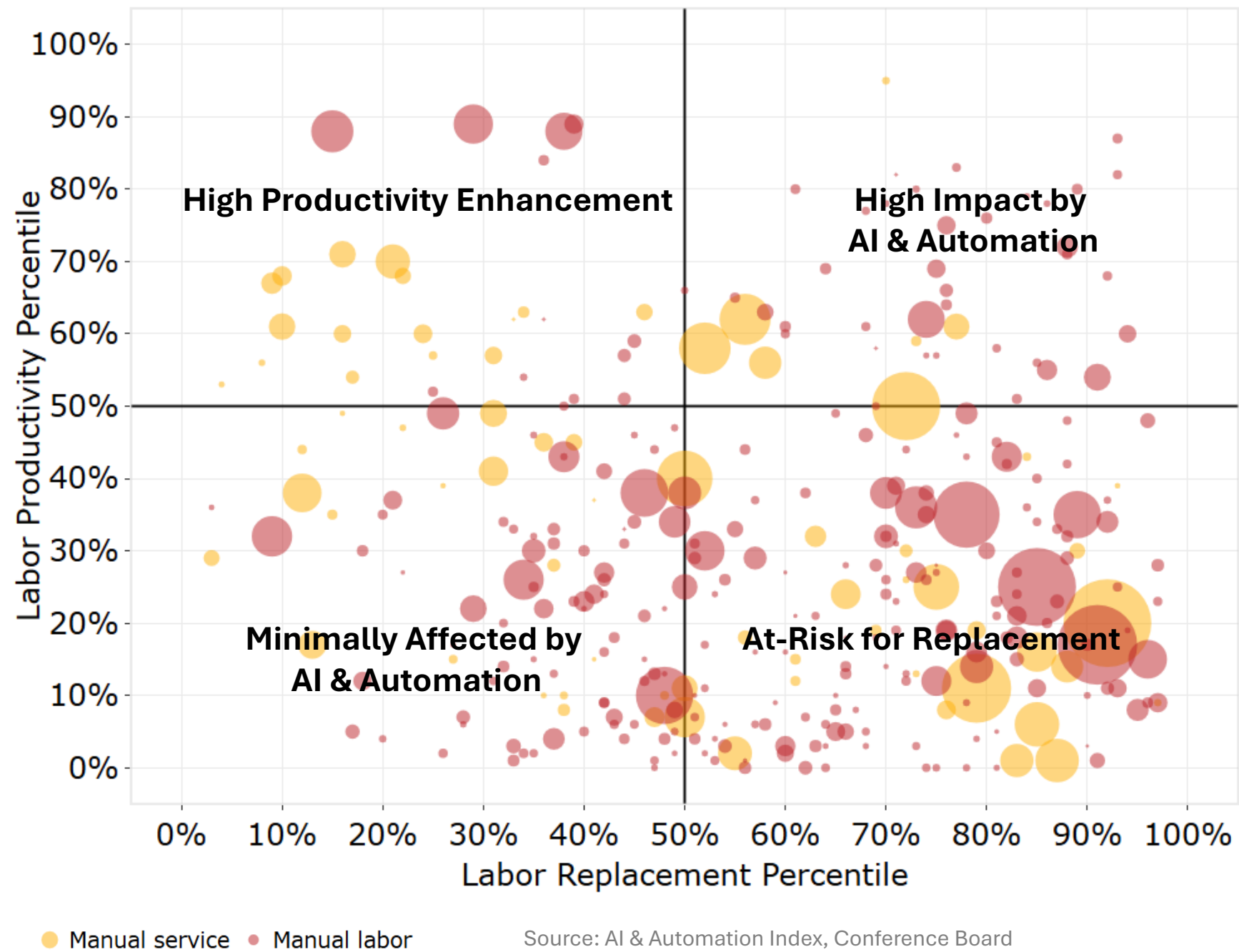
- Productivity-Enhancing**
- Supervisors & Inspectors

Manual Service

- At Risk**
- Fast Food Counter Workes
 - Waiters
 - Landscapers

- Minimally Affected**
- Police Officers
 - Firefighters

- Productivity-Enhancing**
- Childcare Workers
 - Recreation Workers



Health Care

- At Risk**
- Transcriptionists
 - Orderlies

- Minimally Affected**
- Nursing Assistants

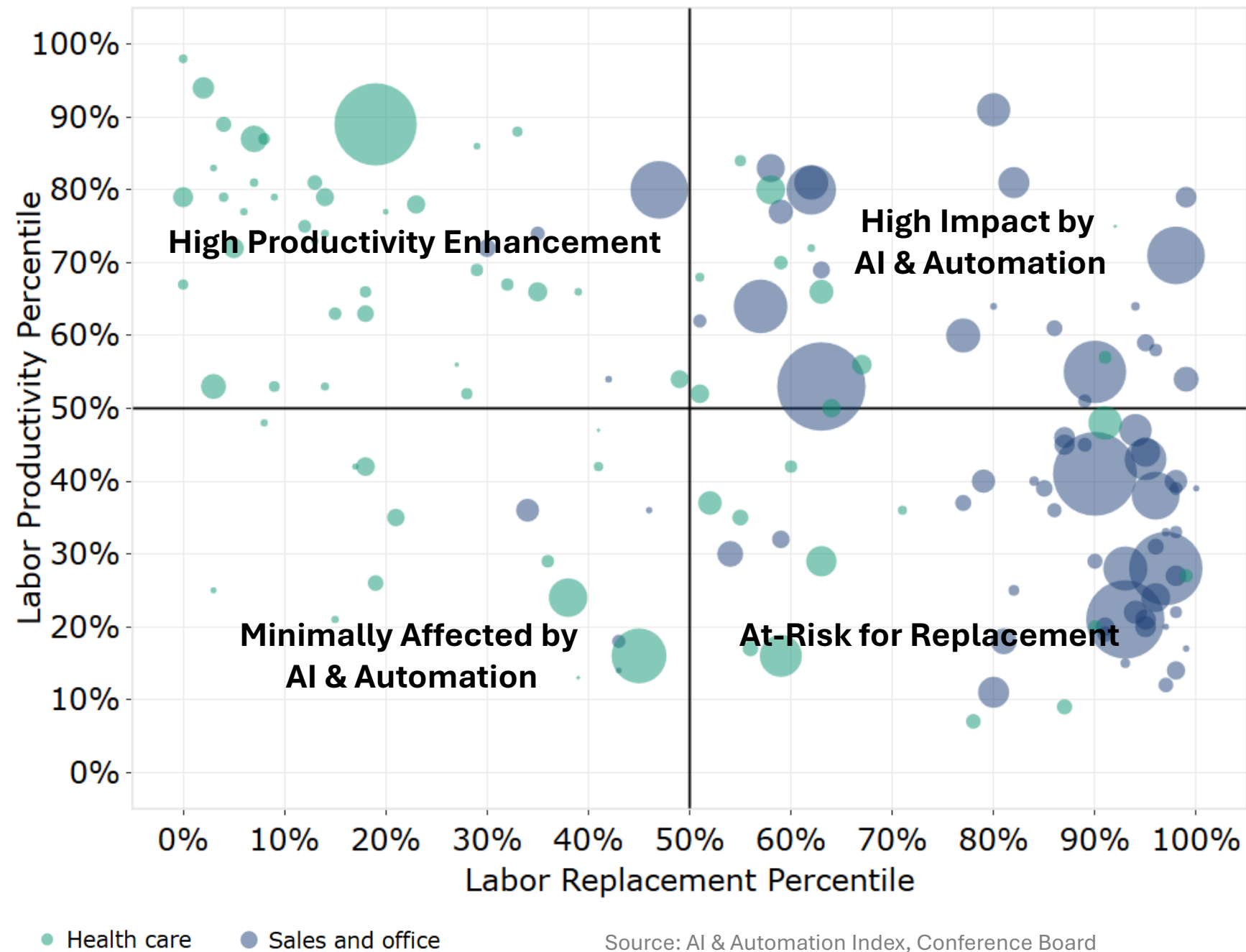
- Productivity-Enhancing**
- Registered Nurses
 - Physicians
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Physical Therapists

Sales & Office

- At Risk**
- Customer Service Representatives
 - Office Clerks
 - Cashiers
 - Receptionists

- Highly Impacted**
- Bookkeepers
 - Secretaries
 - Sales Representatives

- Productivity-Enhancing**
- Supervisors



Source: AI & Automation Index, Conference Board



STEM

Productivity-Enhancing

- Architects
- Psychologists
- Research Analysts
- Industrial Engineers

Highly Impacted

- Computer Support
- Computer Systems Administrators
- Computer Systems Analysts

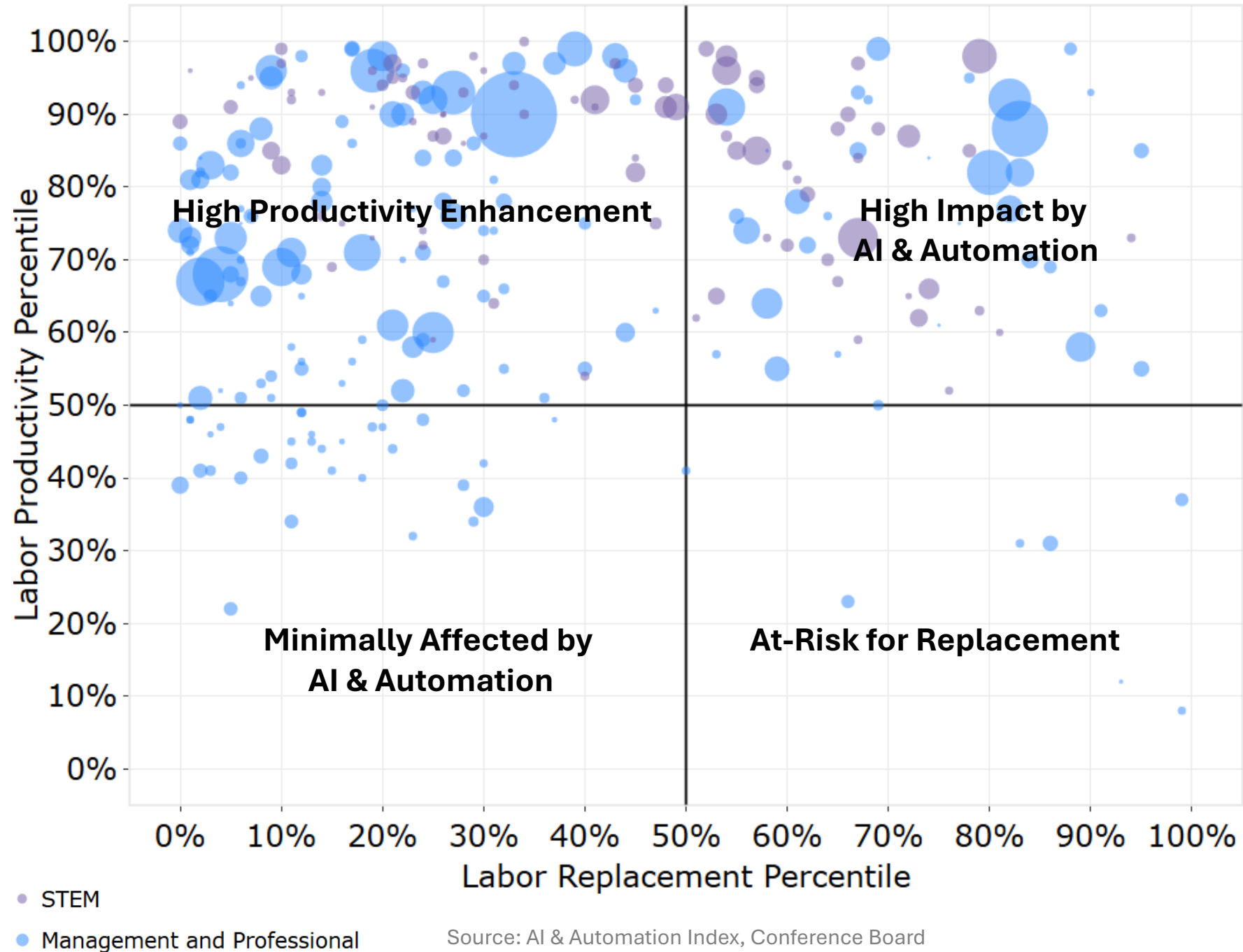
Management & Professional

Productivity-Enhancing

- K-12 Teachers
- Market Research Analysts
- Management Analysts
- Lawyers

Highly Impacted

- Accountants
- Human Resources Specialists



The Wall Street Journal,

July 26, 2026

Big Companies Are Starting to Hire Again, Defying Predictions of AI Wipeout

After a year of holding back on new hires, companies from tech and transportation to defense now say they need more people to work alongside AI

By [Chip Cutter](#)

July 26, 2026 9:00 pm ET

- Alphabet plans to hire in key areas like AI and cloud computing, while CSX expects a modest head count increase to meet higher demand.
- Booz Allen Hamilton plans to accelerate hiring to meet healthy demand for its services, including in national security.
- Part of the change reflects a recalibration among employers about what AI can do.

Sarah Franklin, CEO of the human-resources platform Lattice

“Just because you have coding agents doesn’t mean you’re not hiring engineers,” she said, adding that companies with AI sales agents also need salespeople.

“There’s a big thirst for that,” Franklin said. “What you have now is a realization that you need the AI-native skills. You need this [entry-level] workforce, which is innovative, not calcified in thought. They’re also more affordable because they are newer to the workforce.”



Expansion of the RELATIONAL ECONOMY?

In the Relational Economy...

- The "human element" becomes increasingly scarce and valuable
- Exclusivity becomes more valuable
- Relational intelligence becomes increasingly important

Relational Intelligence: the ability to build trust, navigate tensions, repair ruptures, and create shared meaning

OCCUPATIONS

High-Touch & Care

- Early childhood educators
- Eldercare coordinators
- Mental health practitioners
- Physical therapists
- Personal coaches

Redefined Professional Services

- Relational physicians
- Financial advisors
- Executive mentors

Human-Provenance & Experiential Artisans

- Craftspeople
- Live performers
- High-end hospitality hosts
- Artisanal food/beverage creators



Expansion of the RELATIONAL ECONOMY?

The Guardian,

April 30, 2025

**Starbucks says cutting shop staff
in favor of automation has failed**

The company found that handwritten notes on cups, the return of great seats and ceramic cups led to a better customer experience.

“Small details and hospitality drive satisfaction”



THE IMPACT OF AI & AUTOMATION

- The percentage of businesses using AI is growing.
- AI skills are increasingly in demand across industries, and they pay more.
- AI is expected to reshape occupations rather than eliminating them outright, although this depends on the occupation.
- Utah has a smaller percentage of workers in jobs considered high-risk for automation than the nation, and more employees in roles benefiting from AI.



Additional Online Resources

- **County Snapshots:**
 - Job growth, unemployment rates & claims, wages, taxable sales, construction permitting
 - County Snapshots: <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/insights/county/index.html>
- **Utah Economic Data Viewer (UEDV):**
 - Employment and Wages by Industry: <https://jobs.utah.gov/utwid/industry/current>
 - Labor Force, including unemployment rates: <https://jobs.utah.gov/utwid/labor-force>
 - Wage and Occupational Openings Data: <https://jobs.utah.gov/utwid/almiswage-home>
 - Occupational Explorer: <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/library/>
 - Firm Find (employer search tool): <https://jobs.utah.gov/utwid/firmfind-home>
- **Occupational Projections**
 - **Short-Term:** <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/library/employment/shorttermoccproj.html>
 - **Long-Term:** <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/library/employment/occprojections.html>
- **Latest Employment Press Release:** <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/update/index.html>
- **Additional Resources and Dashboards:** <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/library/>

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**THANK
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