

Trends & Outlook for Southern Utah's Economy

What's Up Down South
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Regional Economist

January 15, 2026

Labor Market Information Shop



P.O. Box 100127
Arlington, VA 22210

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

Defining Labor Market Information (LMI) and LMI Customers

Defining Labor Market Information.

Labor market information includes all quantitative or qualitative data and analysis related to employment and the workforce. The goal of LMI is to help customers make informed plans, choices, and decisions for a variety of purposes, including business investment decision making, career planning and preparation, education and training offerings, job search opportunities, hiring, and public or private workforce investments.¹

Economic and Labor Market Data

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

How is labor market information applied?

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

MAIN SOURCES OF DATA



IPUMS

United States
Census
Bureau





AGENDA

- 1 Labor Market Trends
- 2 Economic Pressures
- 3 Looking to the Future

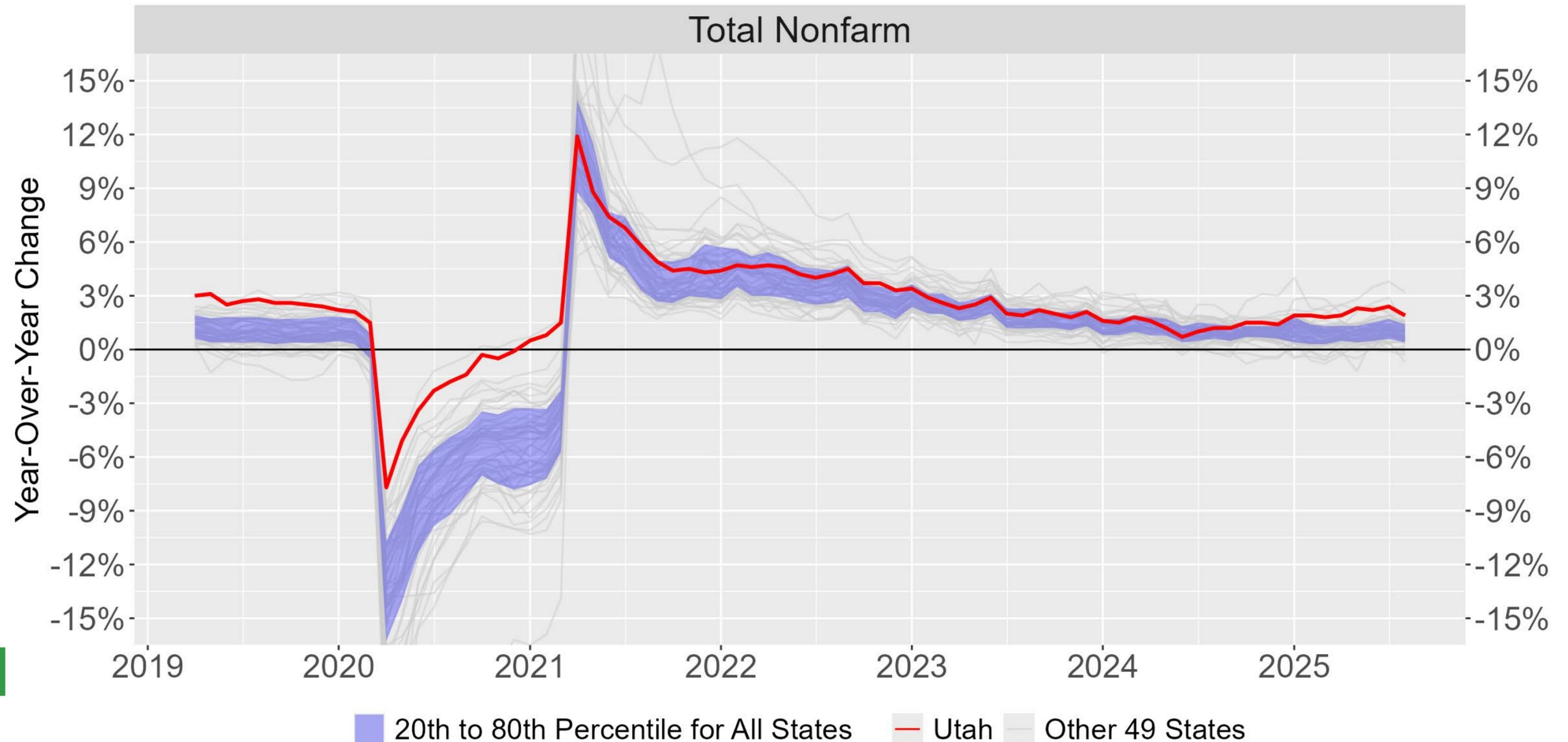
Labor Market Trends in Southern Utah

1. **JOB GROWTH**
2. **WHAT MAKES SOUTHERN UTAH STAND OUT**
3. **INDUSTRY CHANGES**

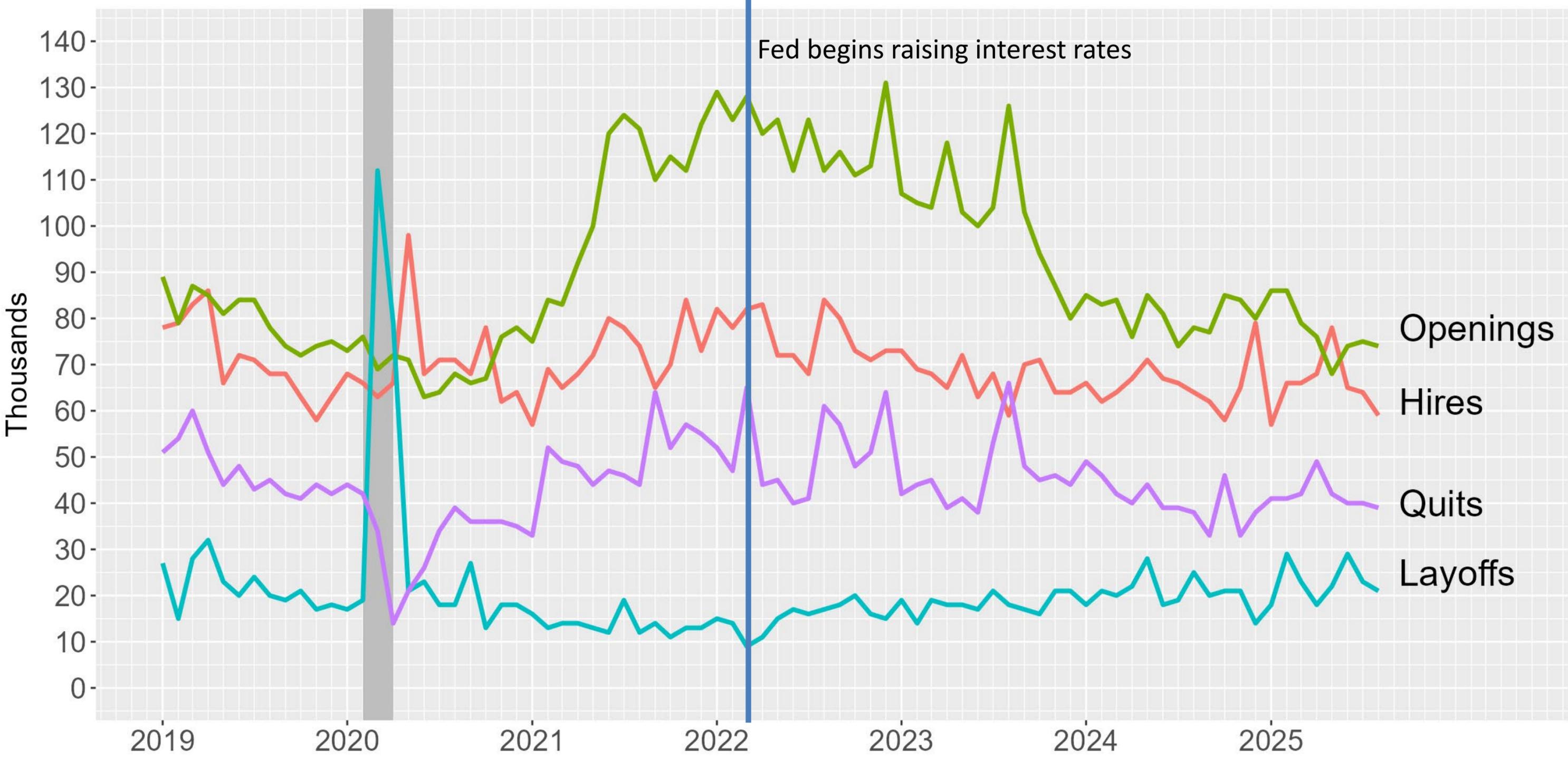


Photograph from Utah Office of Tourism

Job Growth All States



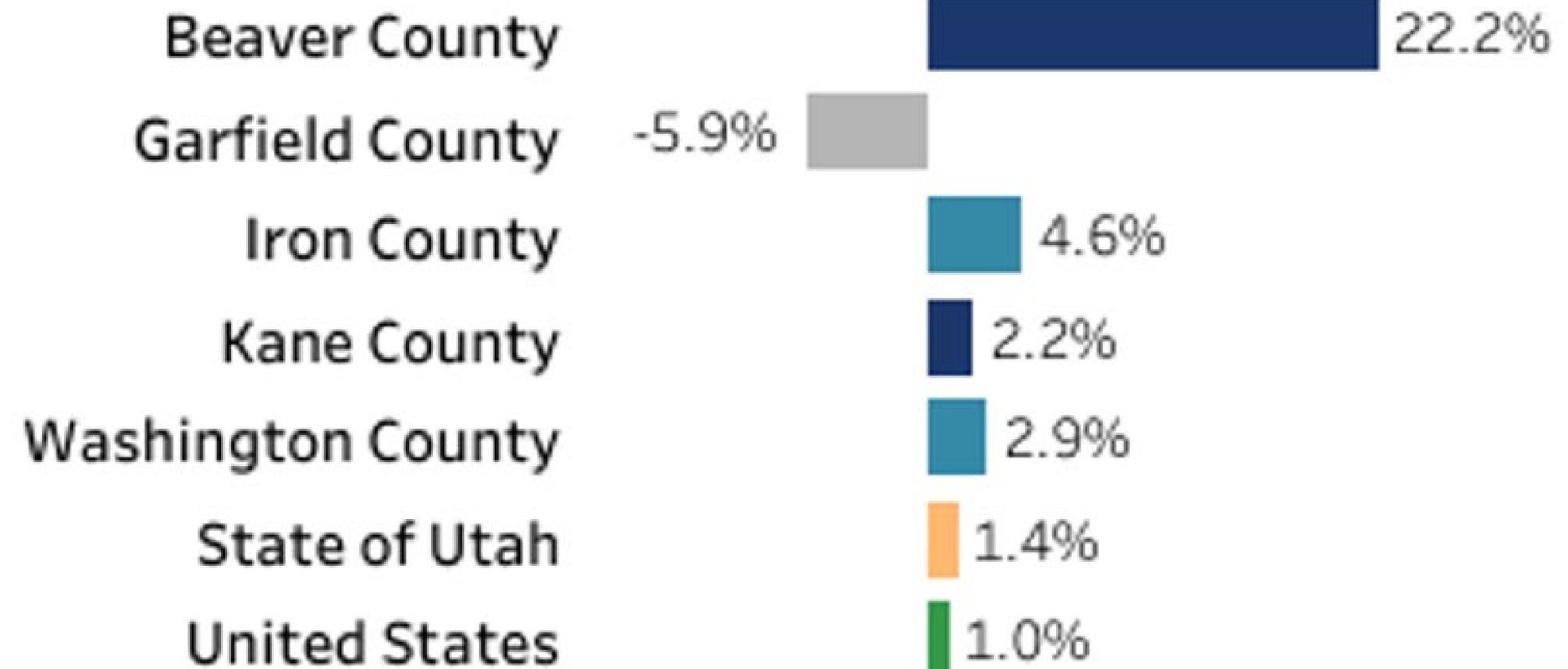
The Resilient Cooldown: Labor Demand Softens, but Overall Market Strength Holds



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Year-to-Year Change in Nonfarm Jobs June 2025

↑ 571
↓ -173
↑ 1,128
↑ 94
↑ 2,518



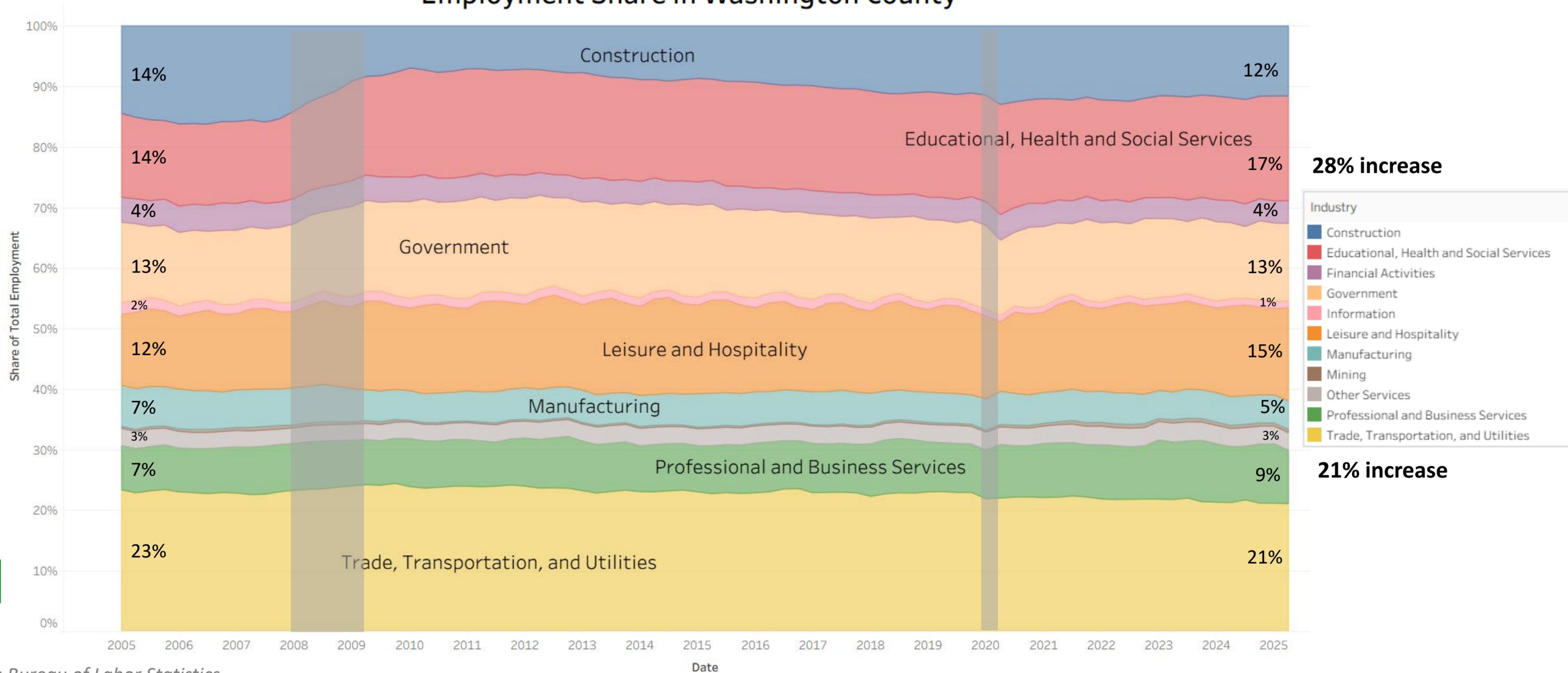
Unemployment

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate **September 2025**



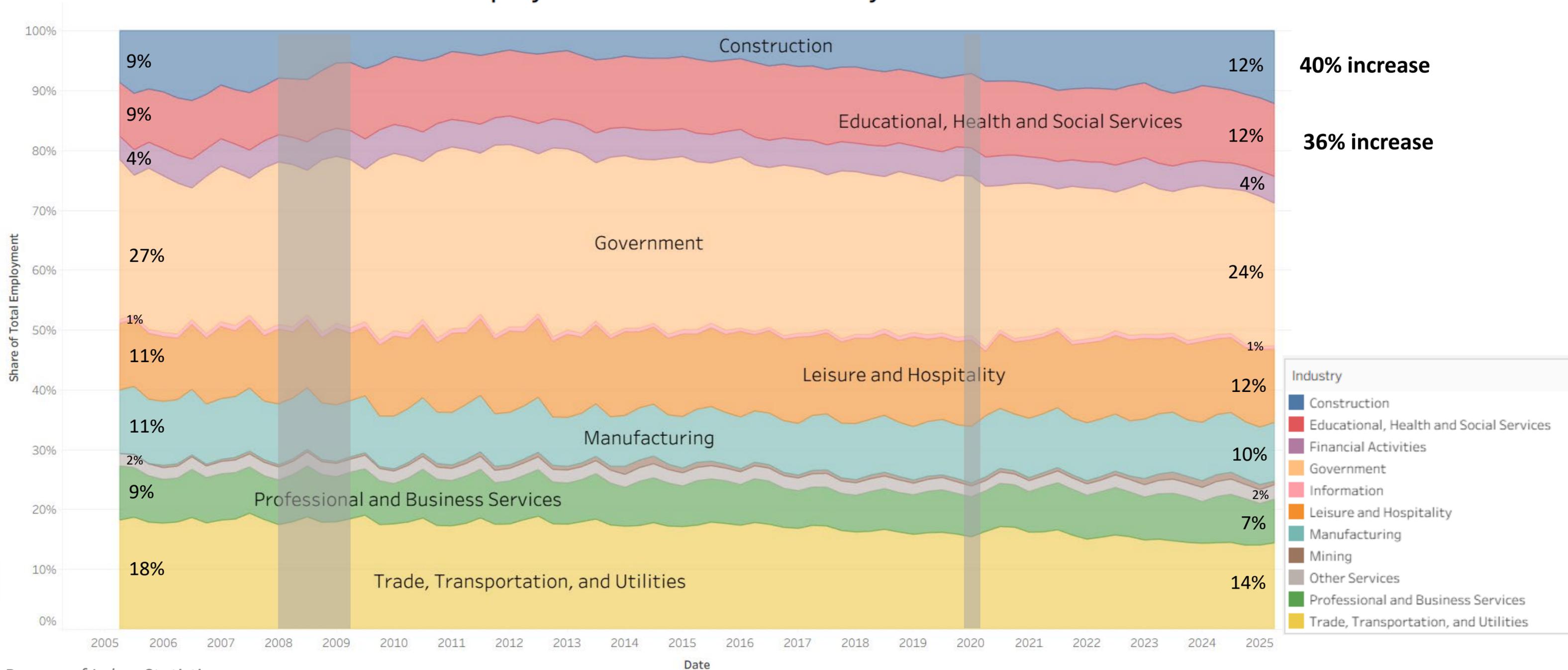
Industry Changes 2005 - 2025

Employment Share in Washington County



Industry Changes 2005 - 2025

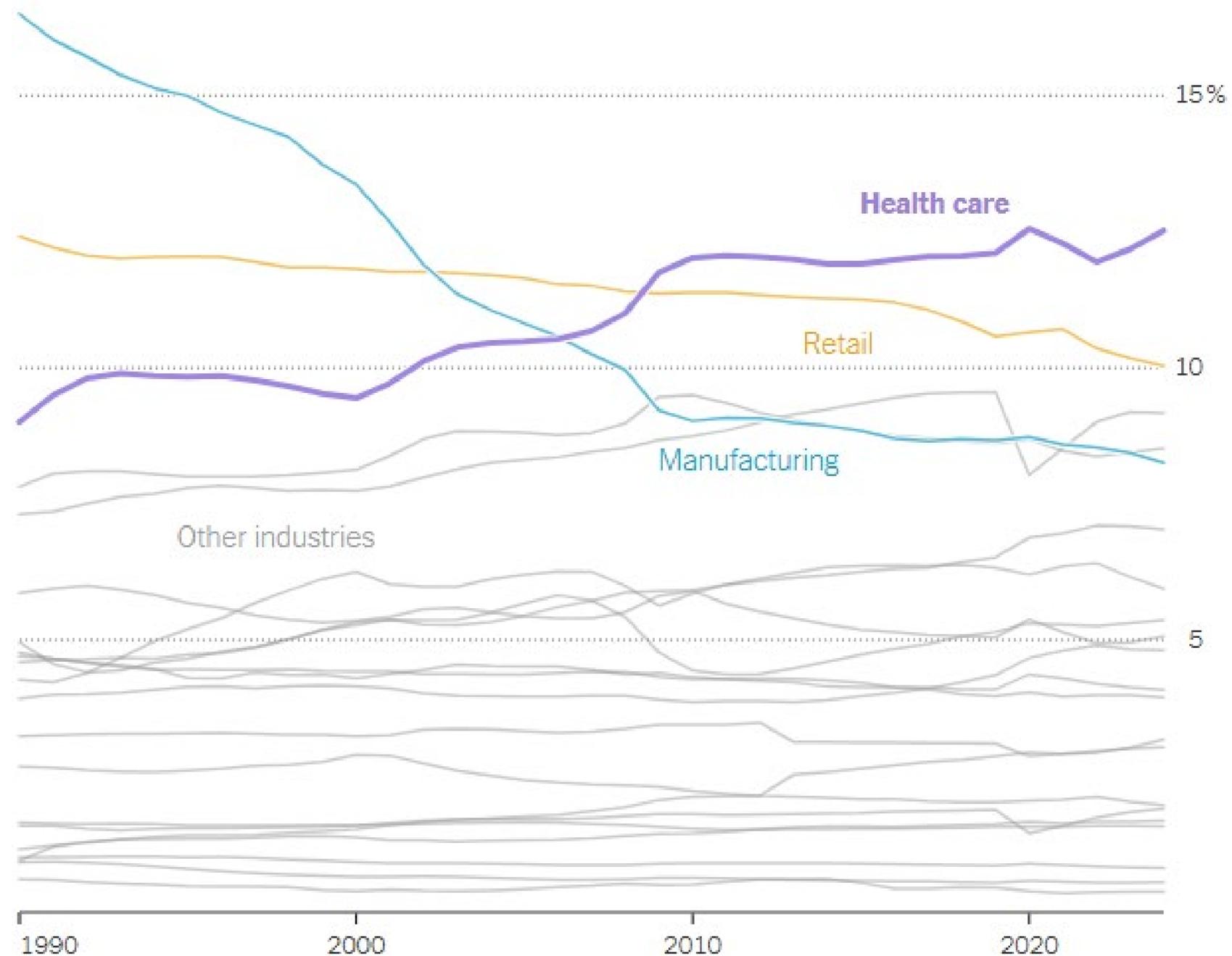
Employment Share in Iron County



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Health Care

Health care is the nation's top employer
Share of total U.S. employment, 1990-2024

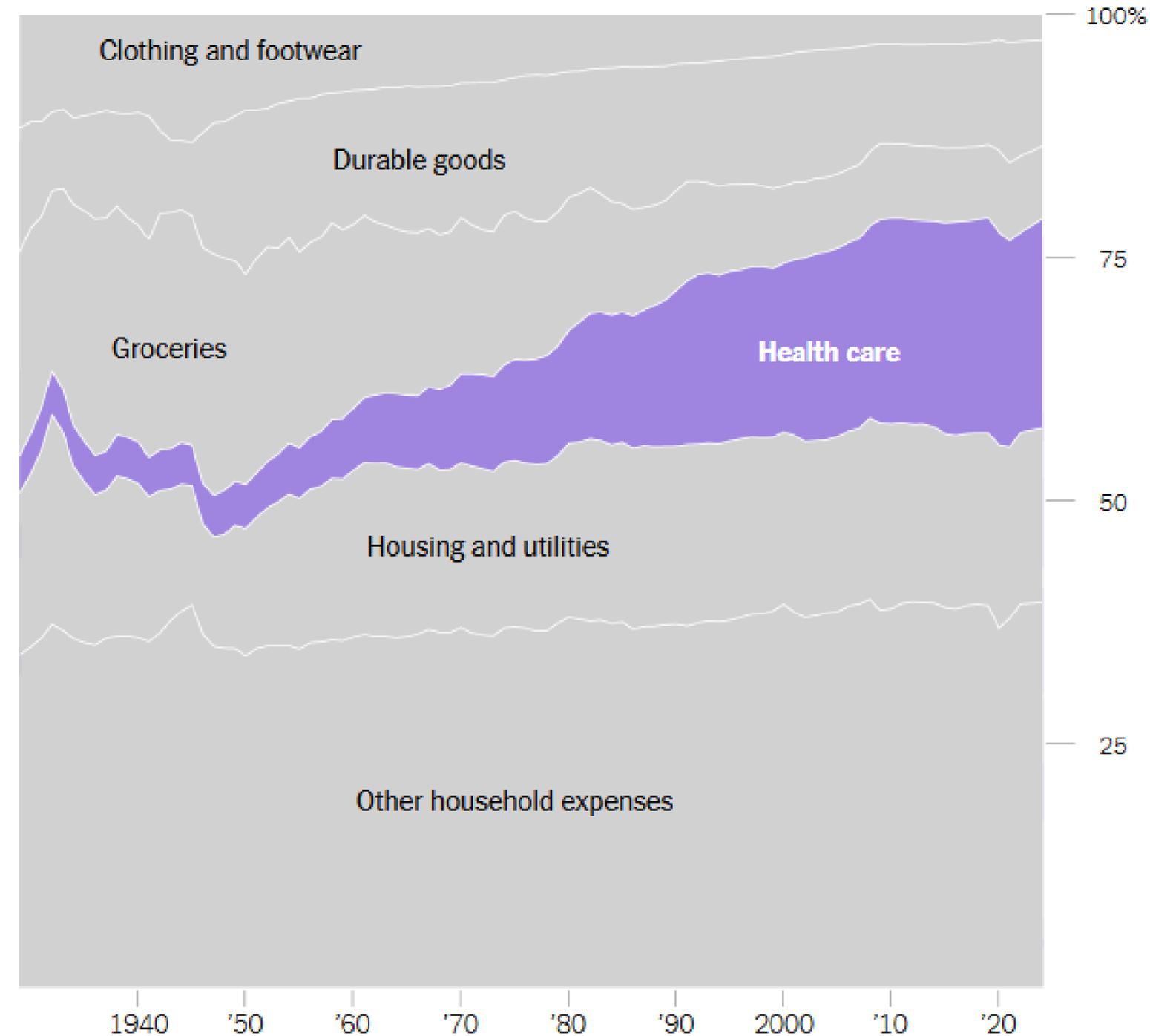


Largest
employer
nationally

Source: New York Times analysis of Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages - Note: Each industry category includes private sector and government jobs when applicable. - By The New York Times

Health Care

Americans now spend more on health care than groceries or housing
Share of U.S. household expenditures, 1929-2024



Second largest expenditure category nationally

Source: New York Times analysis of Bureau of Economic Analysis data - Note: The health care category includes spending on health insurance and pharmaceutical and other medical products. - By The New York Times

Economic Pressures

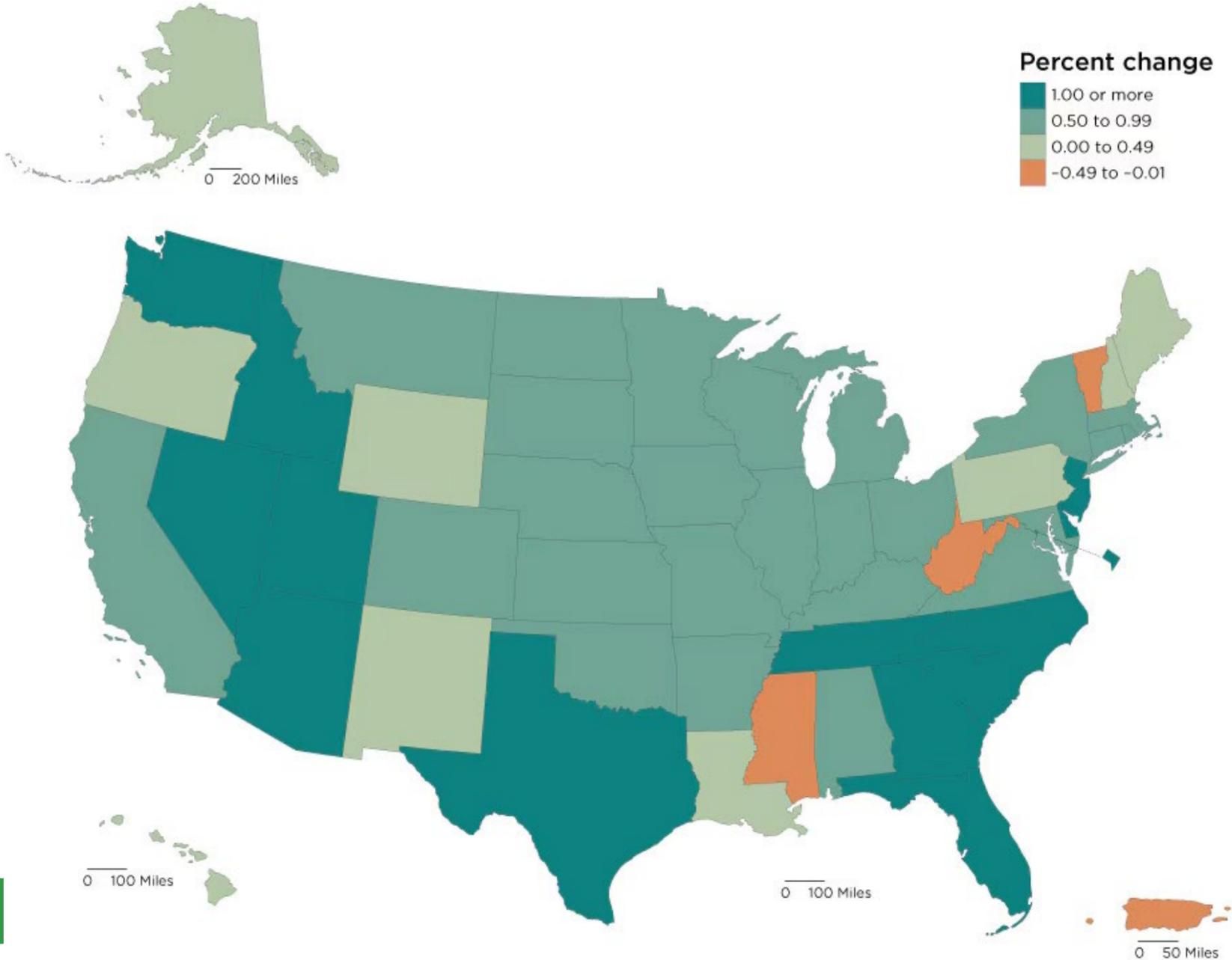
1. GROWING AND CHANGING
POPULATION
2. RISING COSTS



Photograph by David C Schultz

State Growth

2010-2020 U.S. Census



State/District	Population Growth Rate
DC	2.2
Florida	2.0
Texas	1.8
Utah	1.8
South Carolina	1.7
Nevada	1.7
Idaho	1.5
North Carolina	1.5
Delaware	1.5
Arizona	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

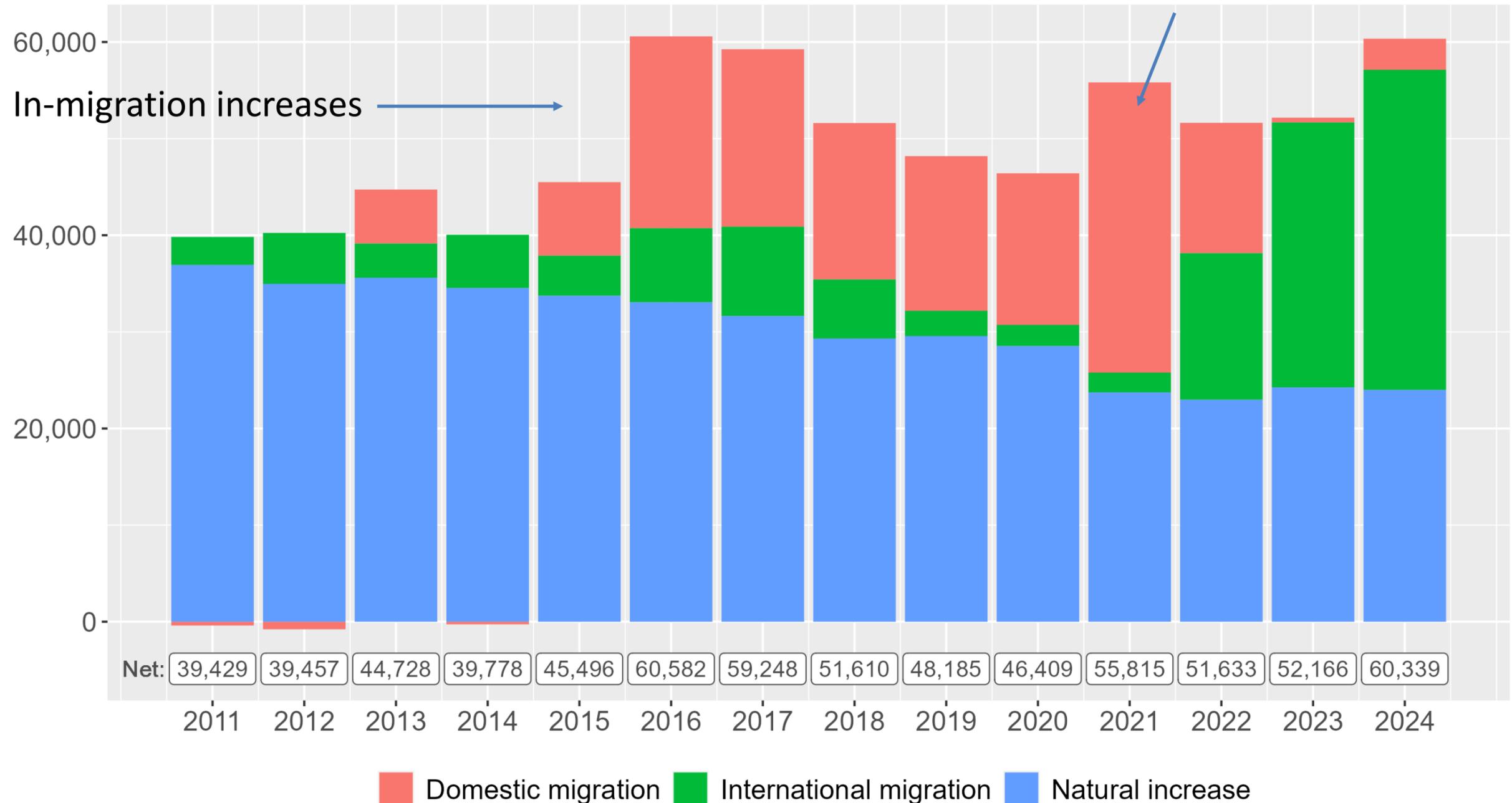
Utah Net Migration

2011-2024

Utah: Components of population change

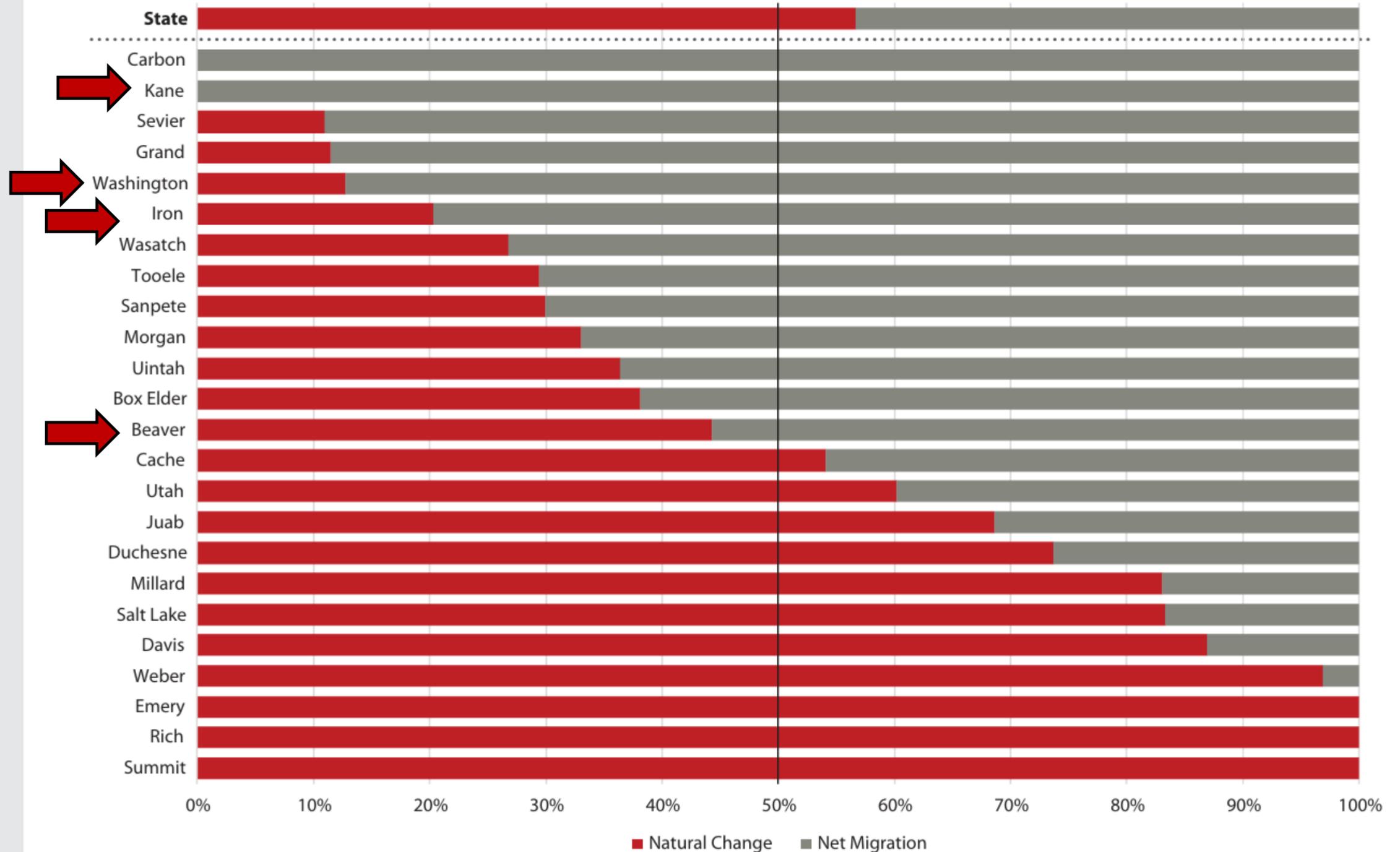
In-migration surpasses natural increase

- Natural increase is becoming a smaller portion of population growth.
- In-migration has been increasing while natural increase slows.



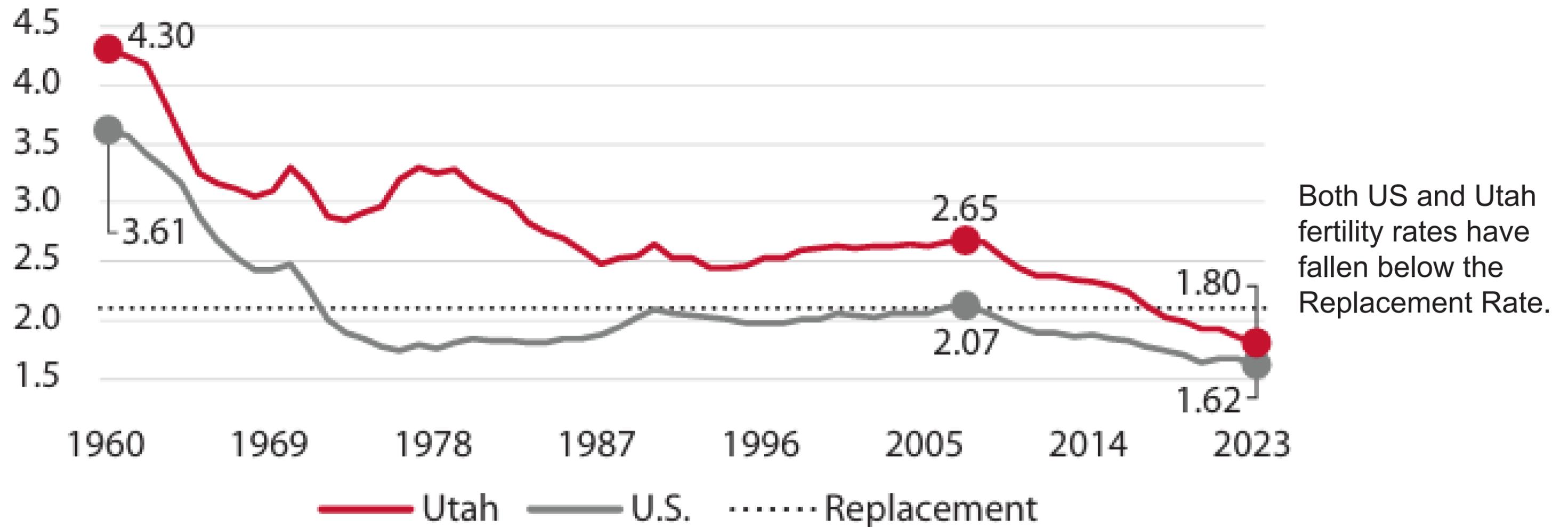
Countywide Components of Population Change 2024 - 2025

Figure 9: Share of Population Growth by Components of Change by County, 2024-2025

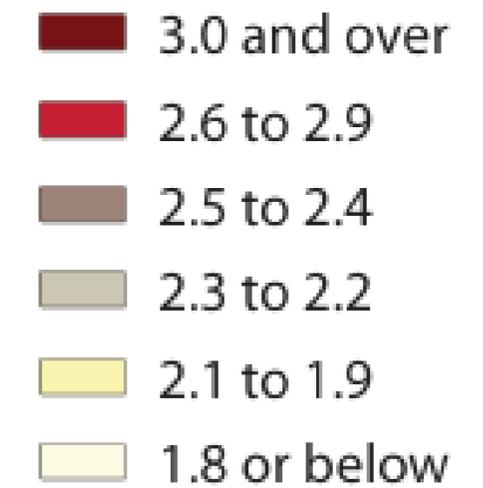
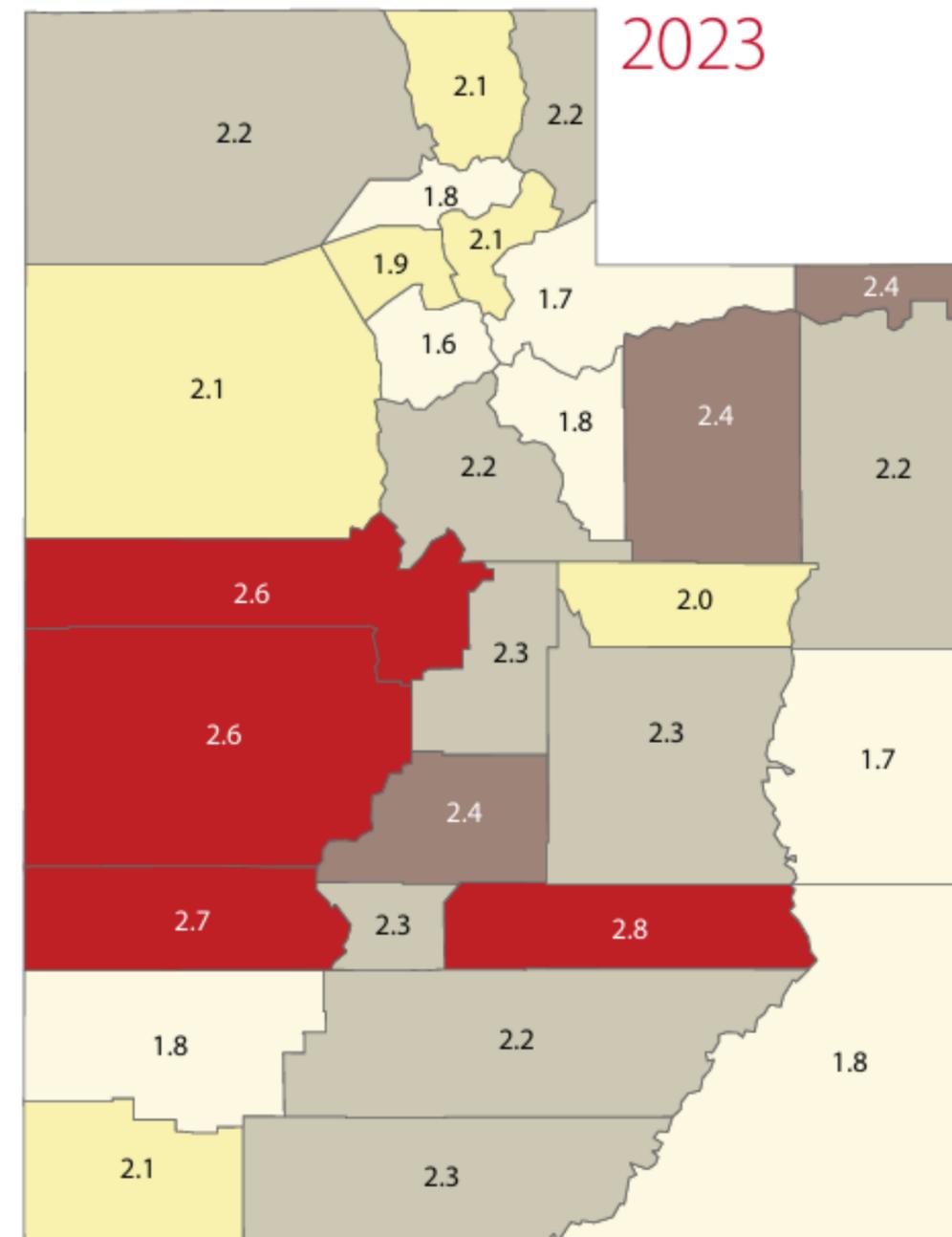
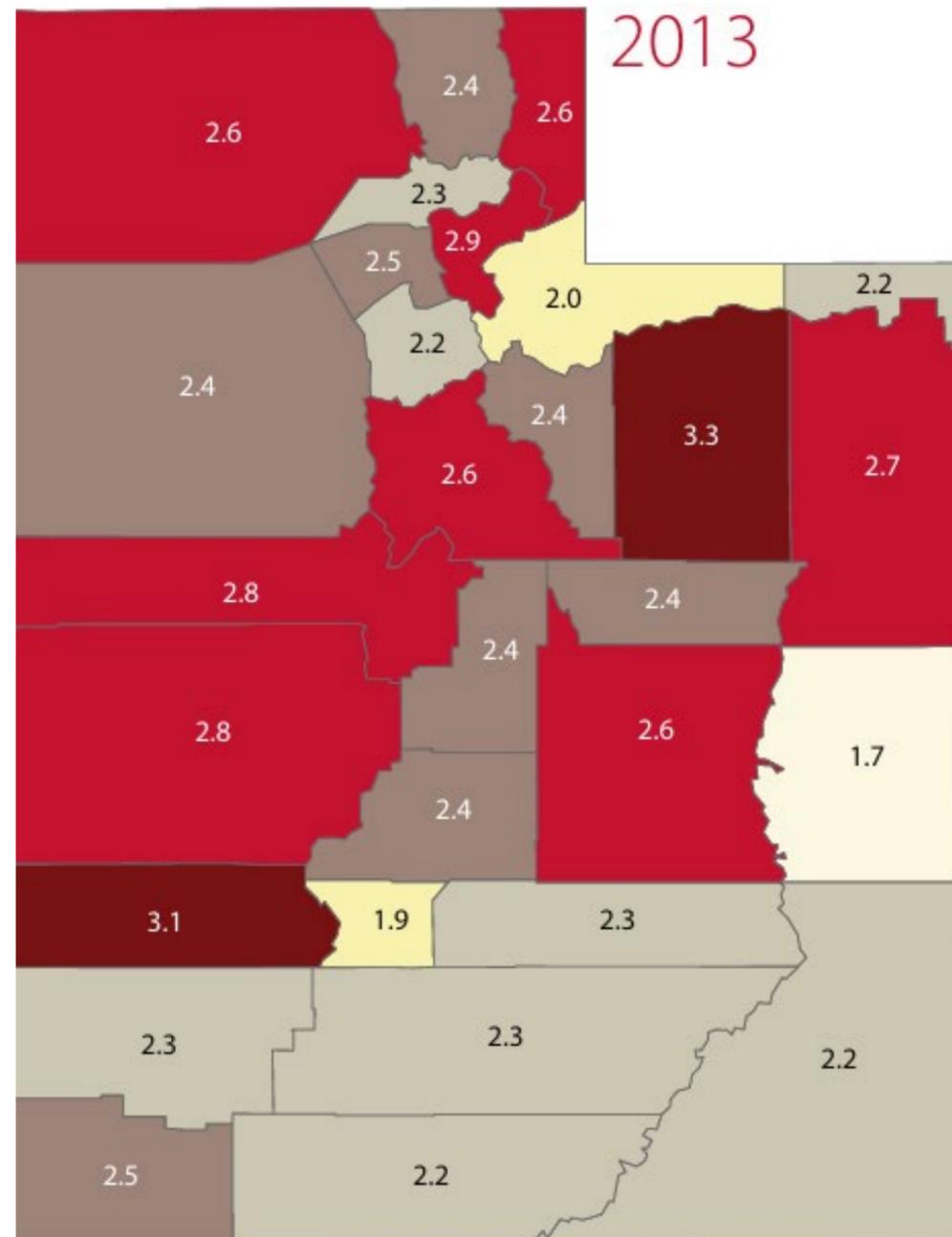


Note: Daggett, Garfield, Piute, San Juan, and Wayne counties are not included due to population declines
Source: Utah Population Committee, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

Total Fertility Rate 1960 - 2023



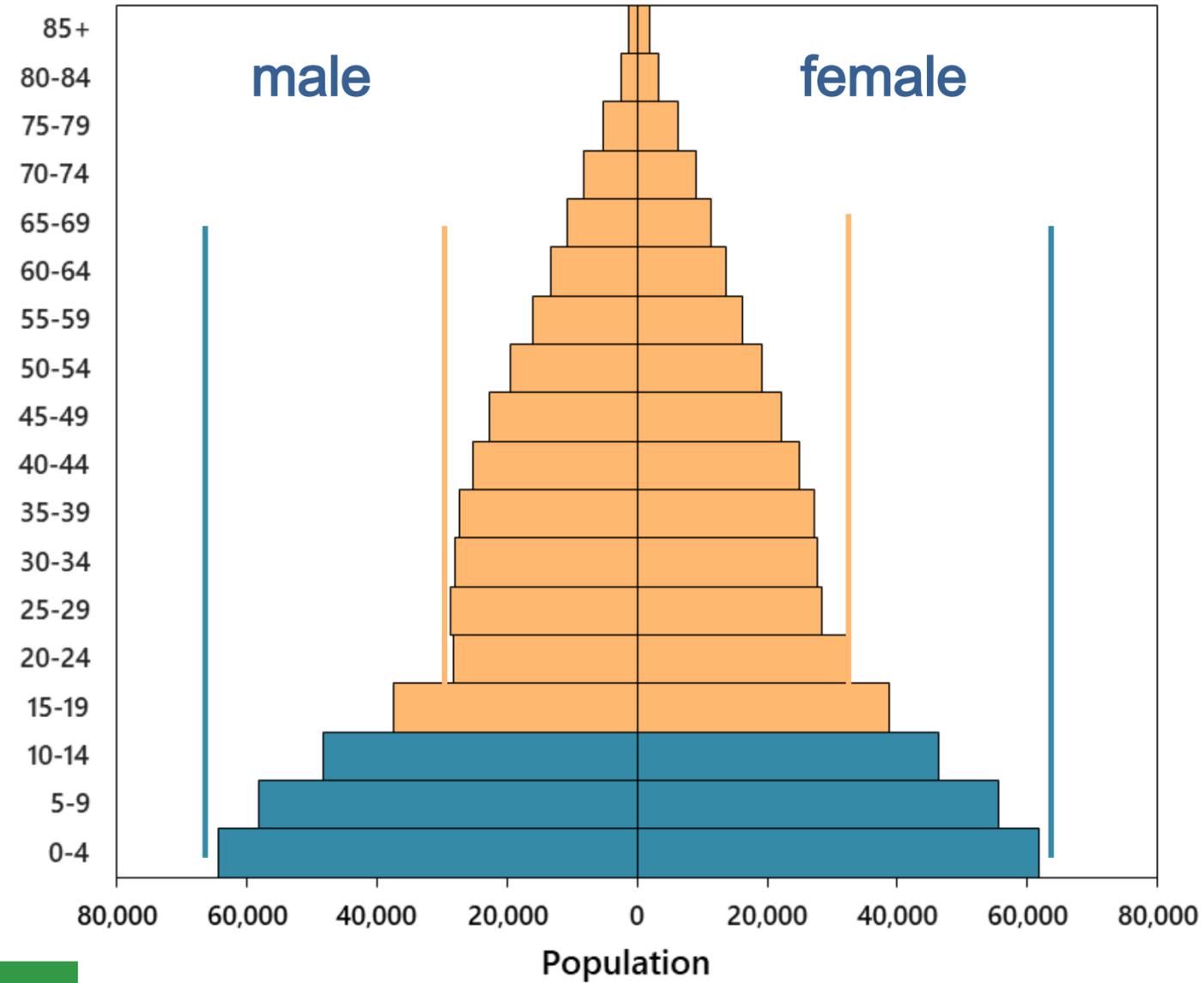
County Fertility Rates 2013 & 2023



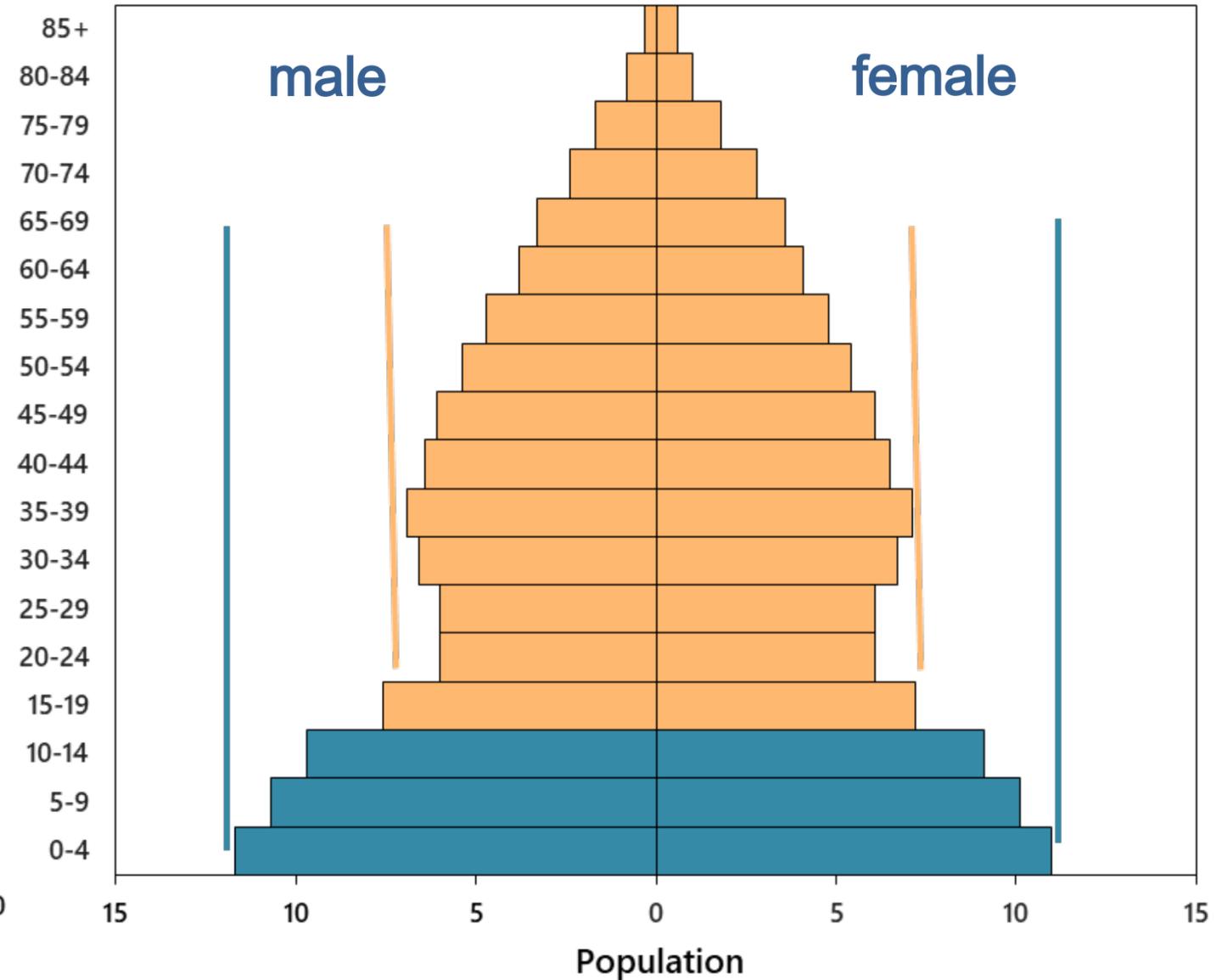
1960 Population

Utah

U.S.



 Baby Boom Generation



9%
65+

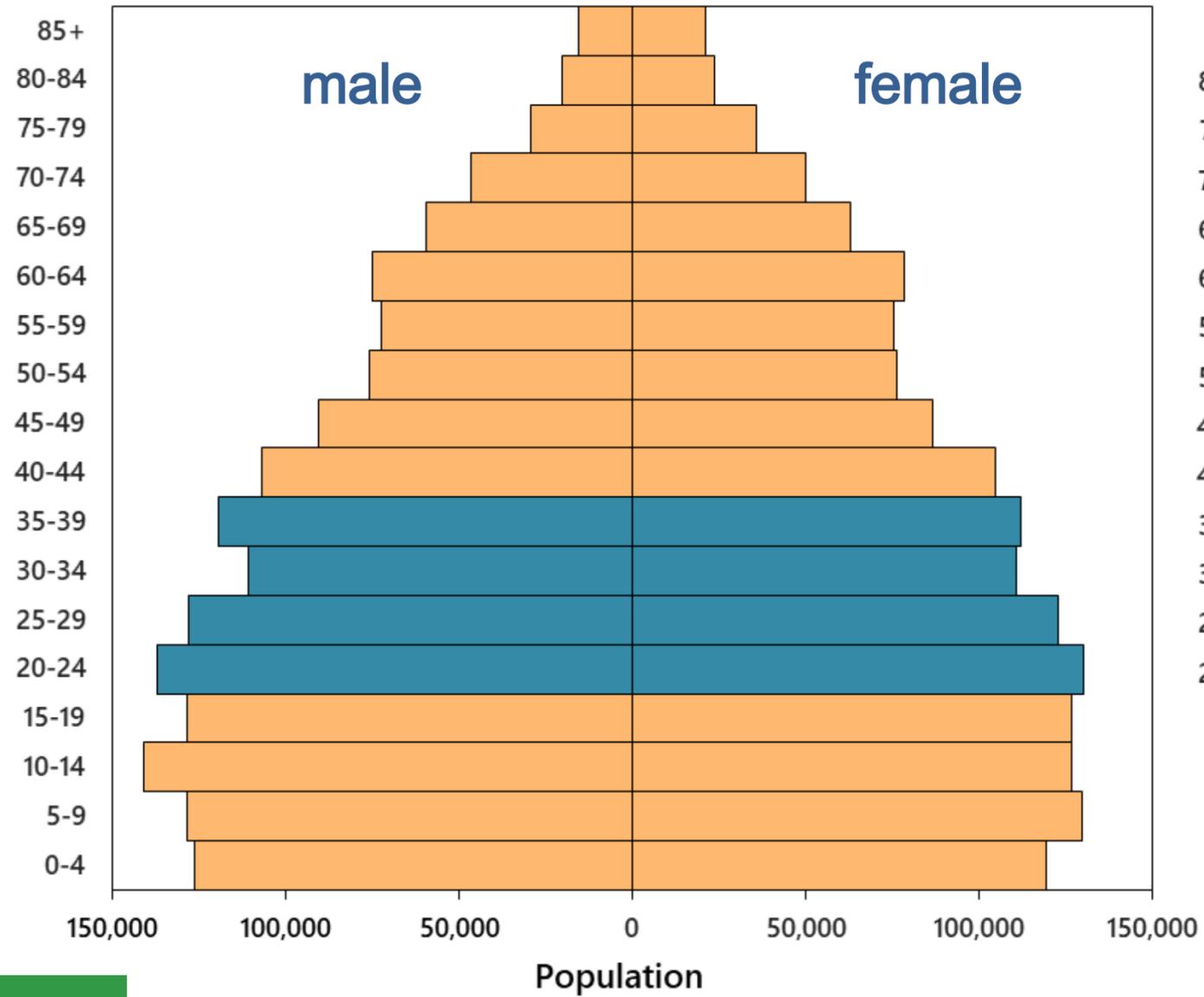
31%
0 - 14

 Baby Boom Generation

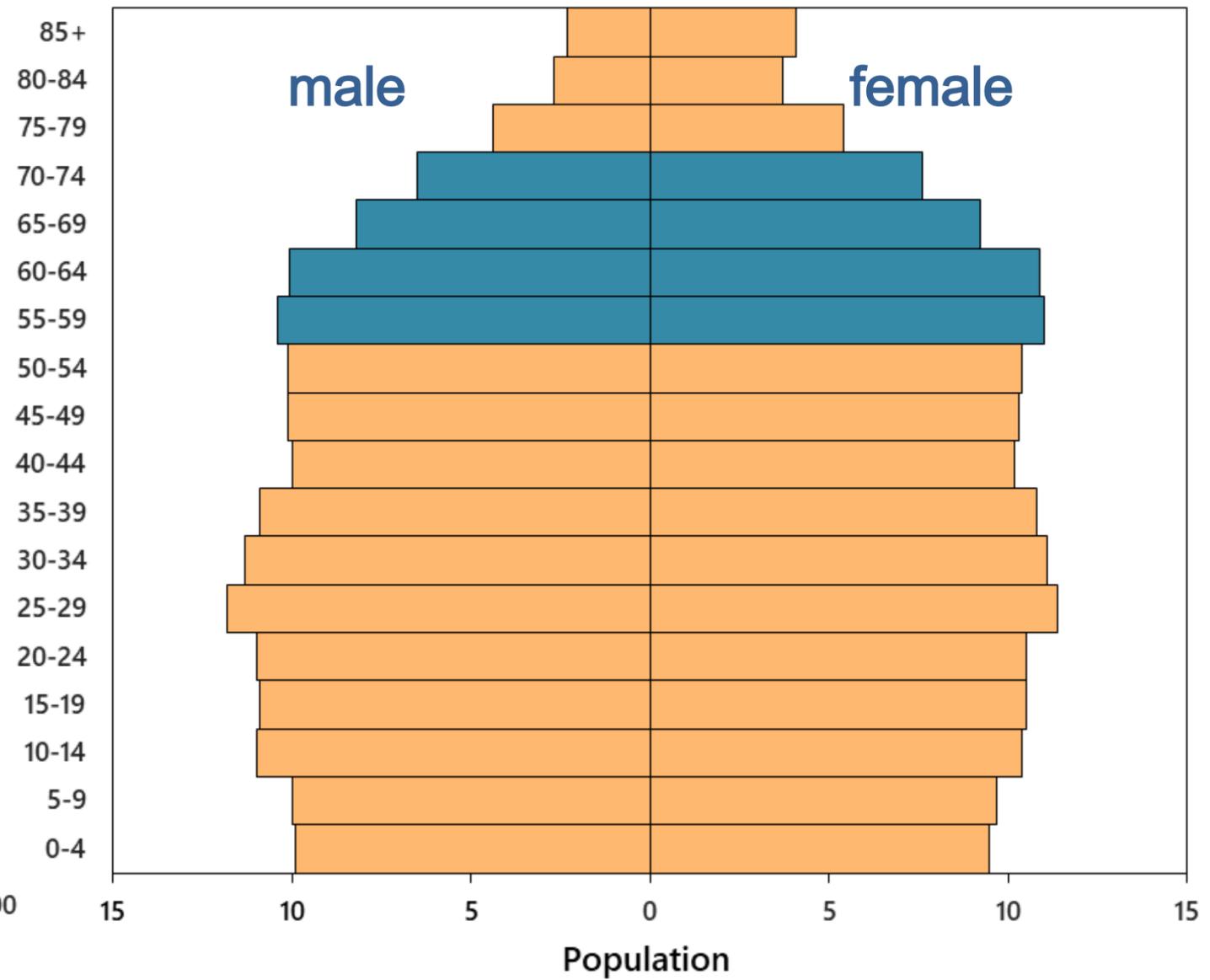
2020 Population

Utah

U.S.



■ Labor Force Dominance



■ Baby Boom Generation

16.6%
65+

18.4%
0 - 14

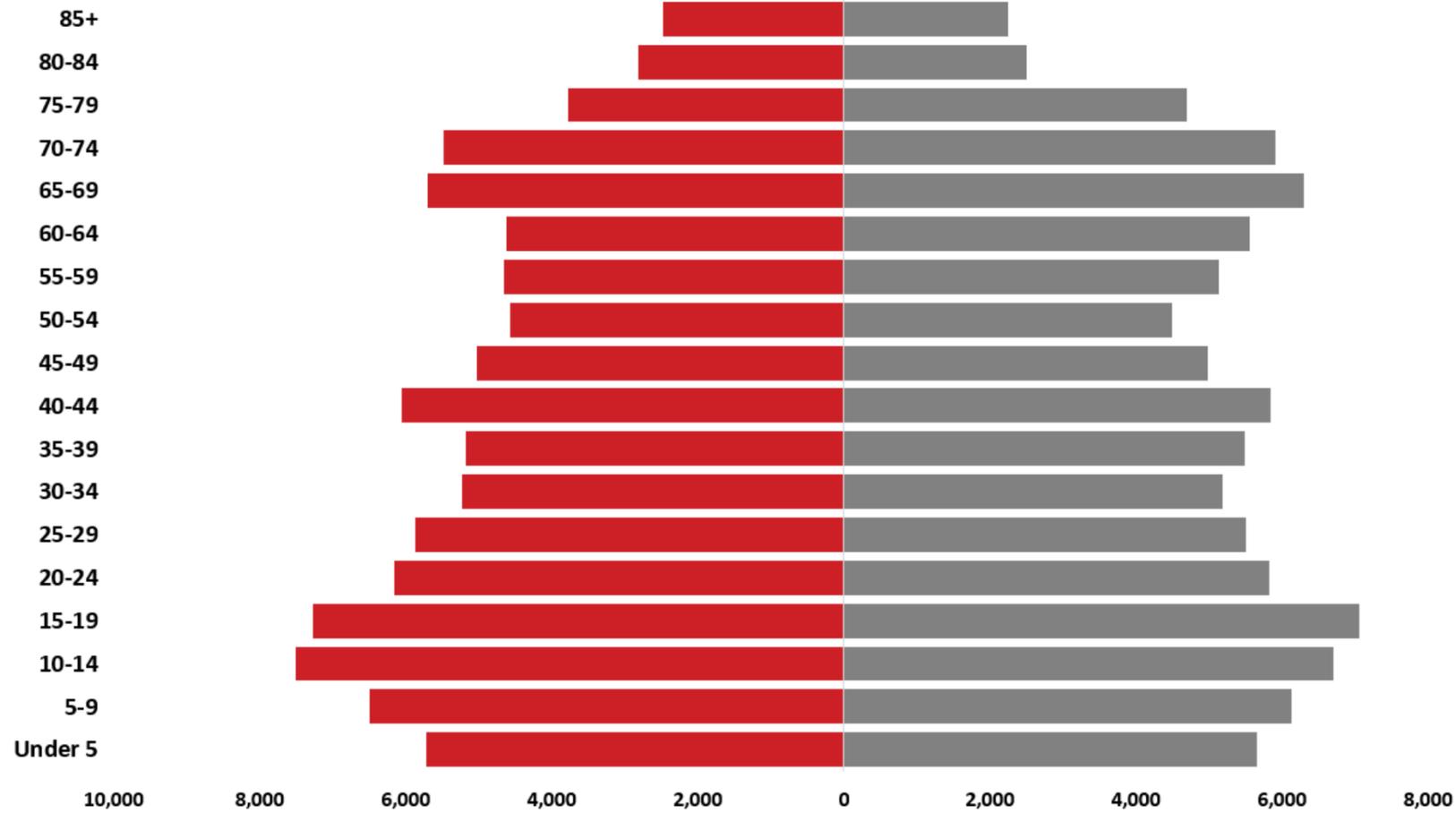
2023 Population

Washington County

Iron County

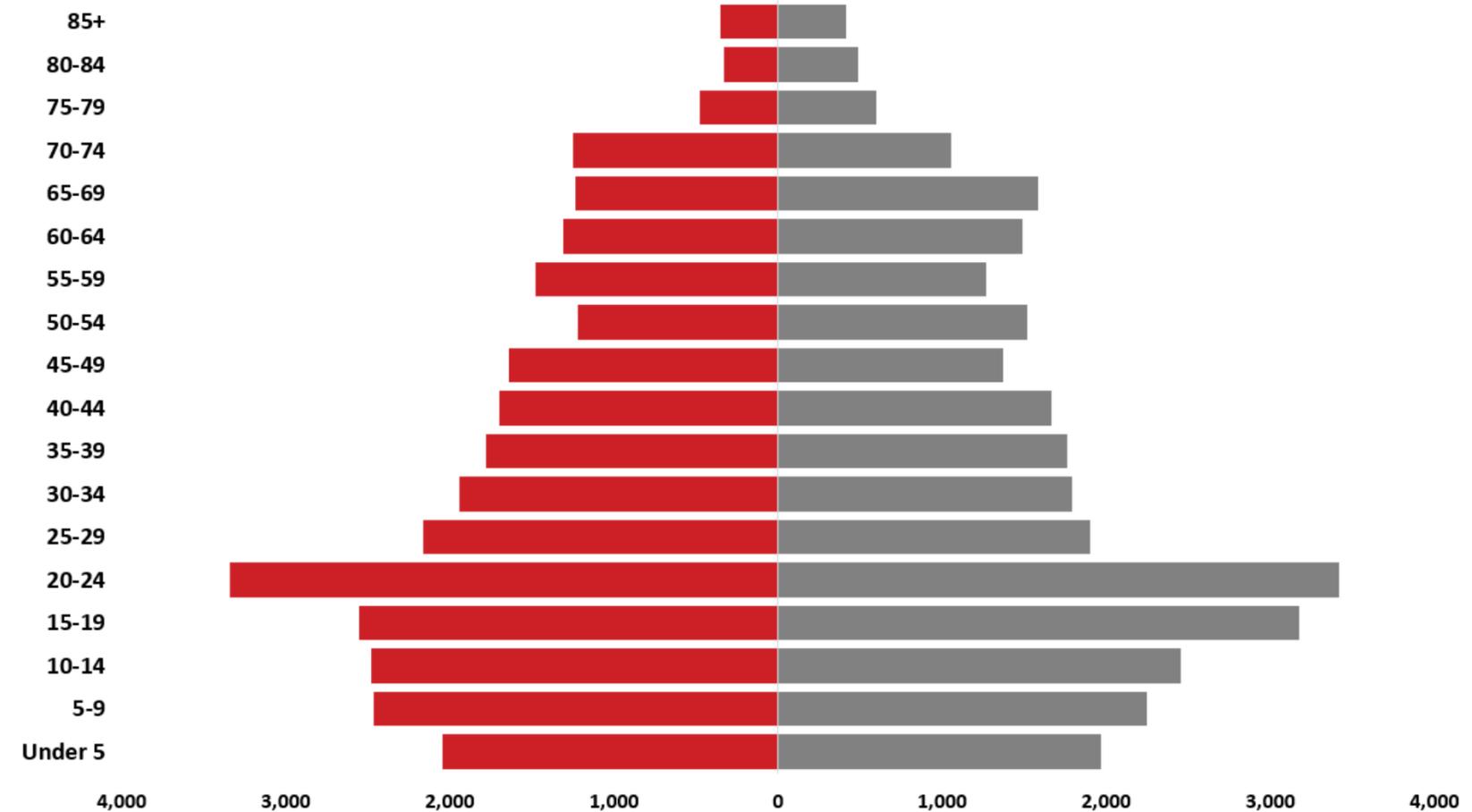
Washington County Population Pyramid, 2023

Male Female



Iron County Population Pyramid, 2023

Male Female

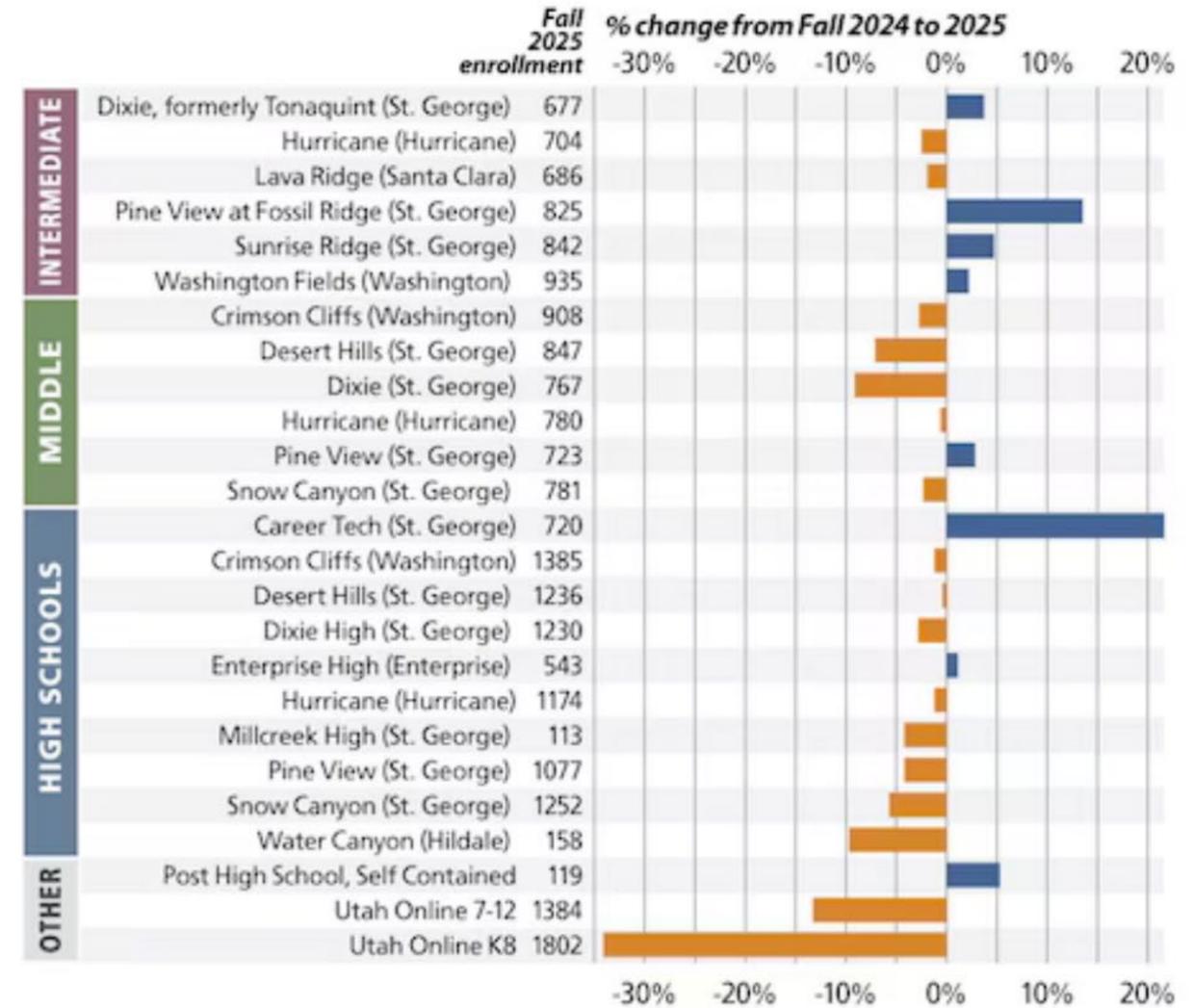
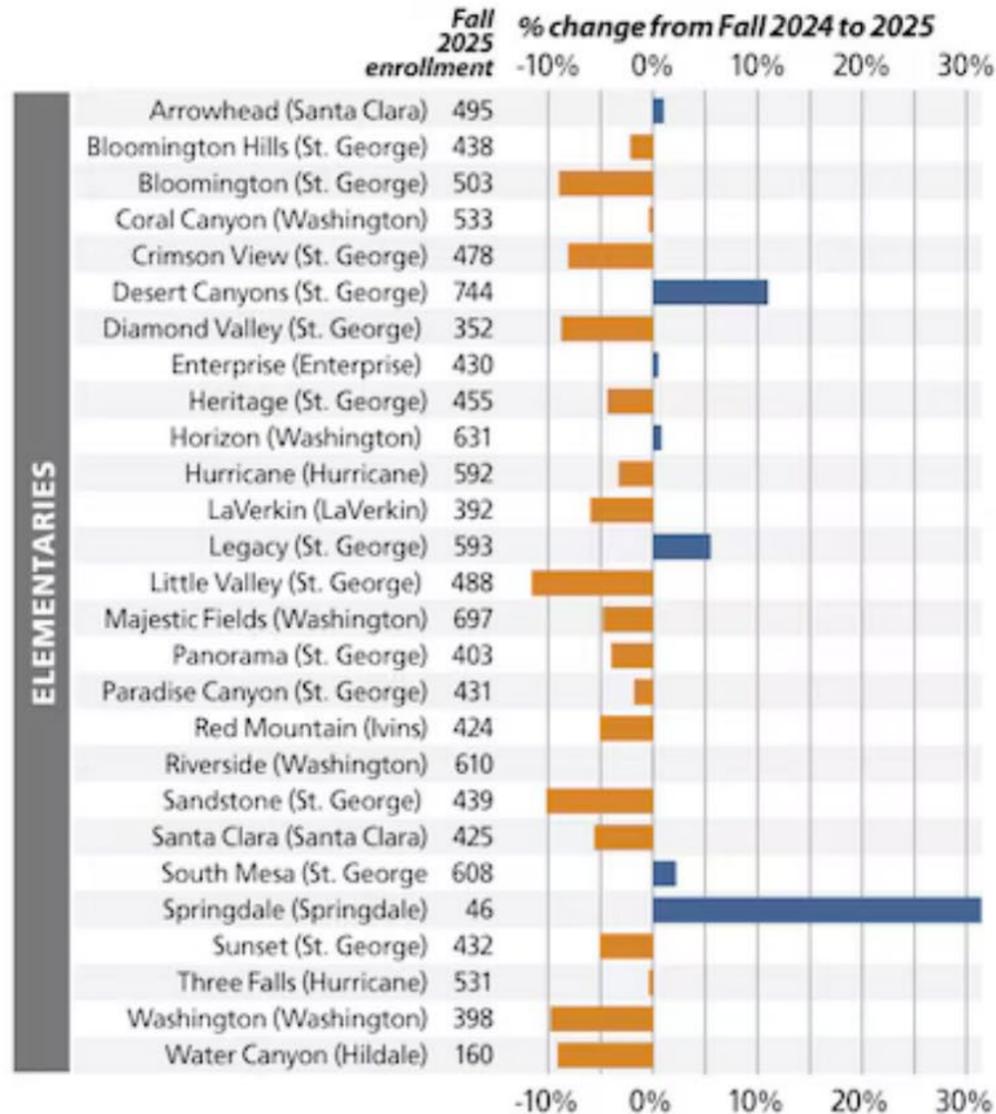


Early Impacts of Changing Demographics

Washington County School District K-12 enrollment, fall 2025 vs. 2024

The Washington County School District lost 1,610 students from last school year to this one, according to the state, a drop of 4.5%. The following is a list of each school in the district and their enrollment changes over the past year.

4.5% decline in K-12 enrollment in Washington County School District.



Source: Utah State Board of Education

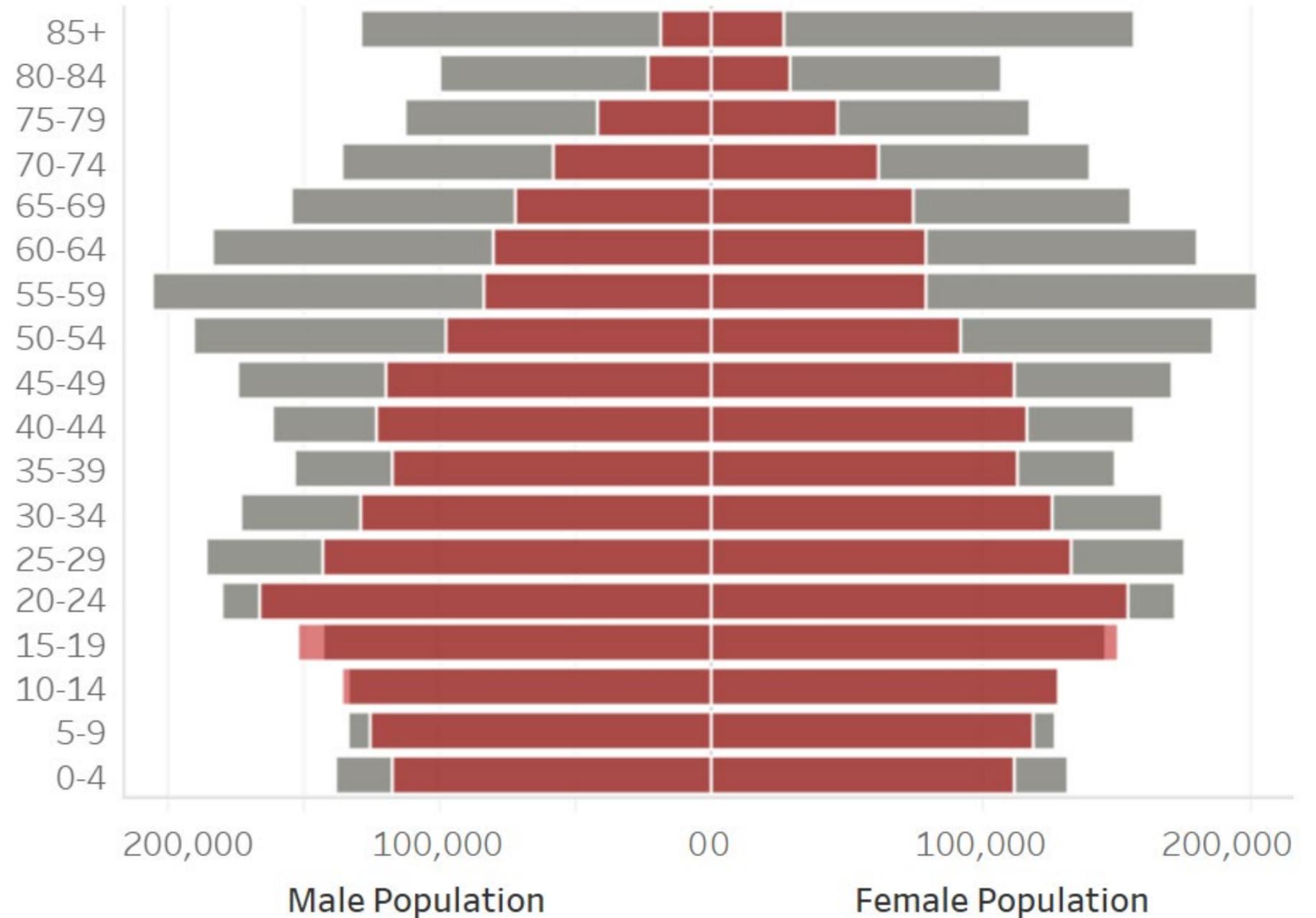
GRAPHIC BY CHRISTOPHER CHERRINGTON | The Salt Lake Tribune

Washington County

Population Projections

2025 - 2065

Population Pyramid: 2025 and 2065 ■ 2025 ■ 2065



Utah's Aging Population

- Labor markets will remain tight 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 .
- Adds to inflation as there's more consumption but a smaller workforce to produce goods and services .

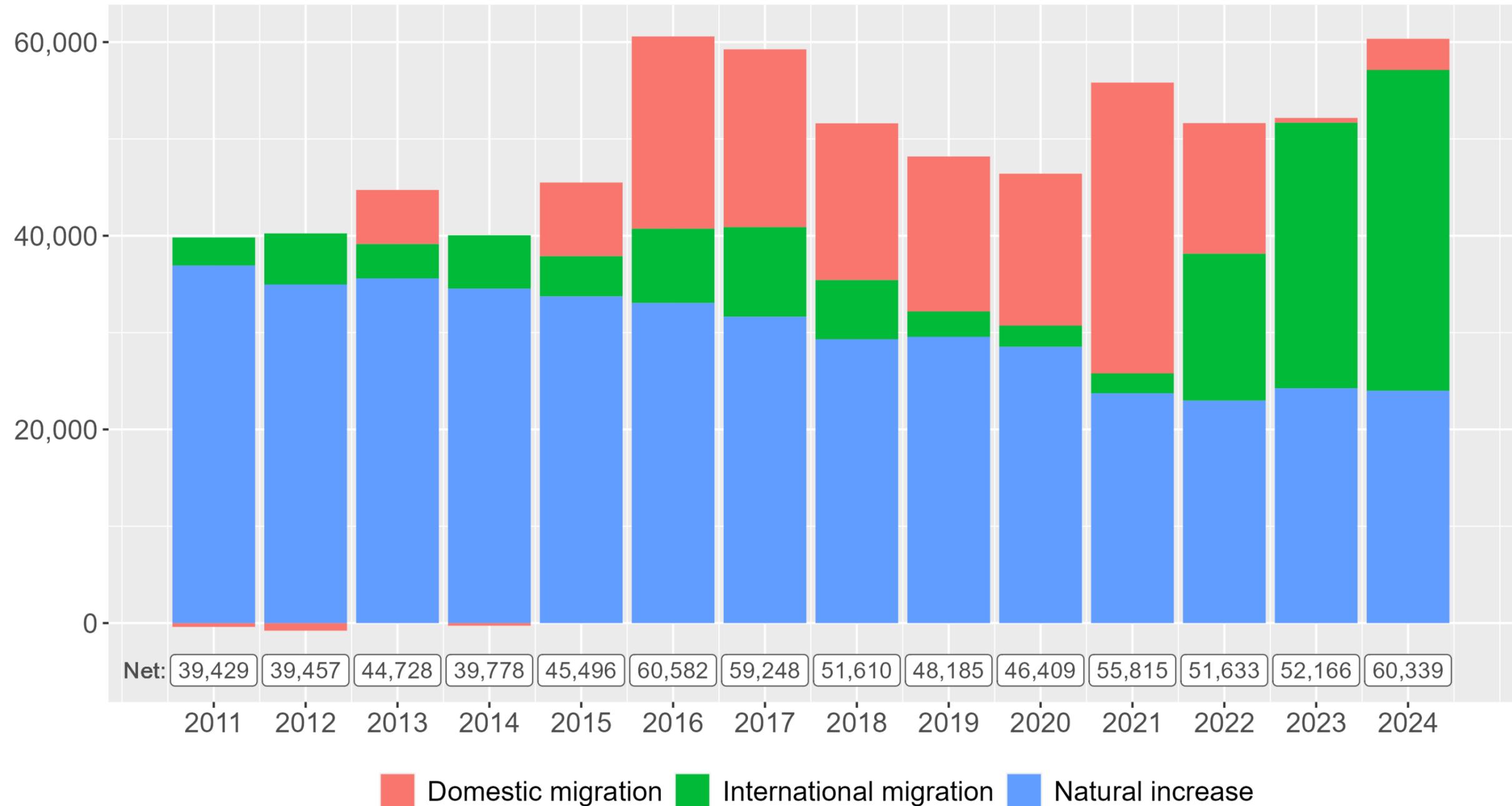


Utah Net Migration

2011-2024

Utah: Components of population change

In-migration increases pressure on housing market, decreases pressure on labor market.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

Under Pressure Historic Inflation

More money chasing fewer goods → Inflation

September 2025 inflation at 3.0% year-over-year

“The disinflation process during the last mile will be more uncertain, slower, and bumpier.”

– Isabel Schnabel, European Central Bank

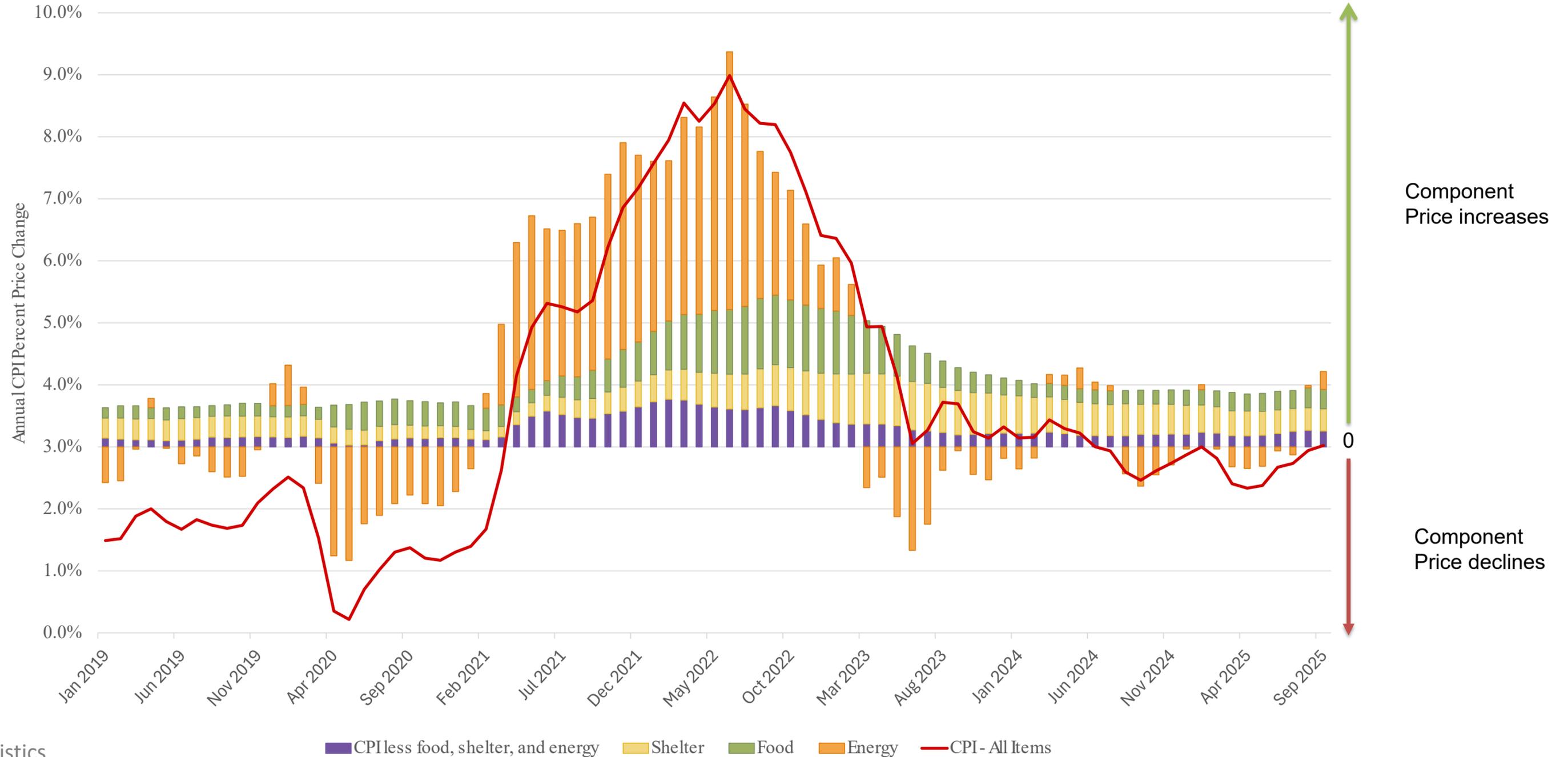


Components of Inflation

Impact of Shelter, Food and Energy on Inflation
January 2019 - September 2025

March 2022
Federal Reserve
begins raising
interest rates

September 2024
Federal Reserve
begins cutting
interest rates

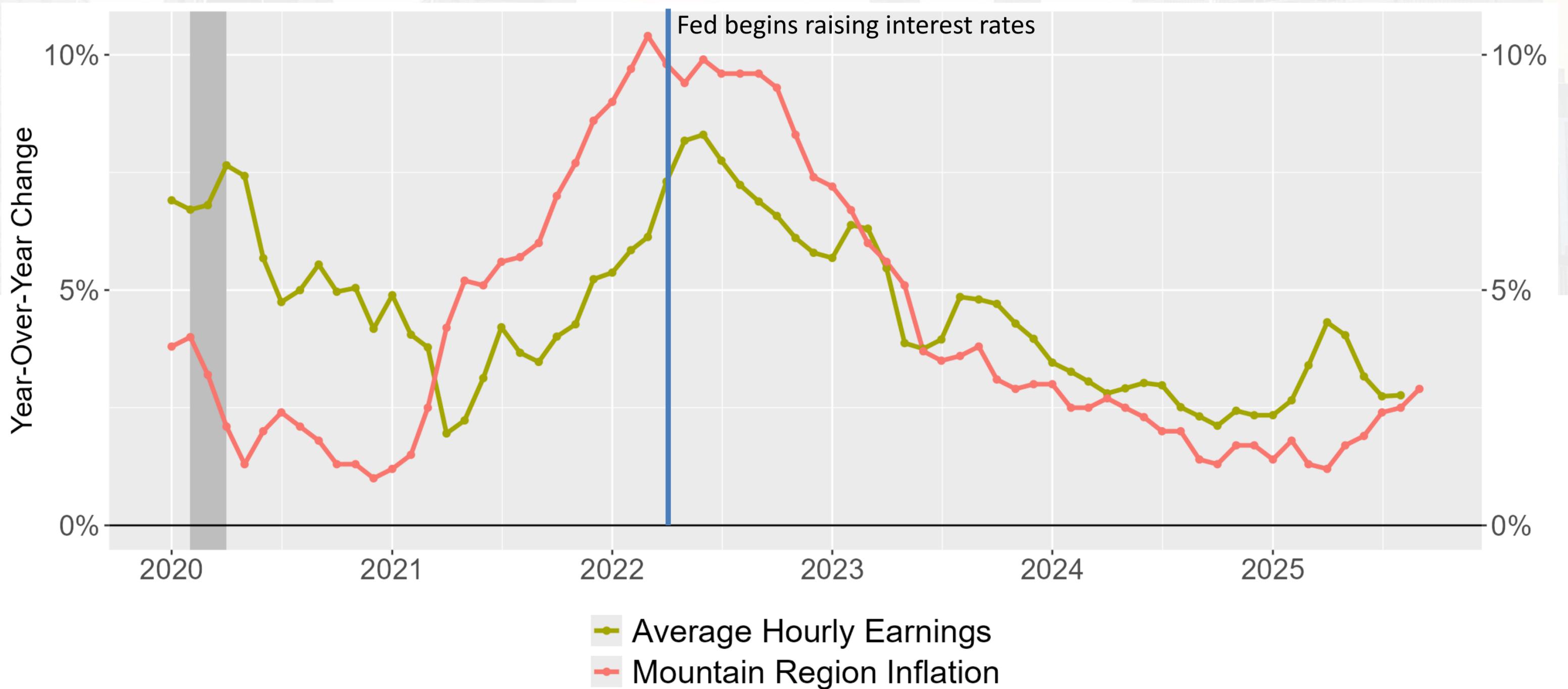


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Federal Reserve's Dual Mandate: Balancing Maximum Employment and Stable Prices



Real Wage Gains: Hourly Earnings Outpace Inflation



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Looking to the Future

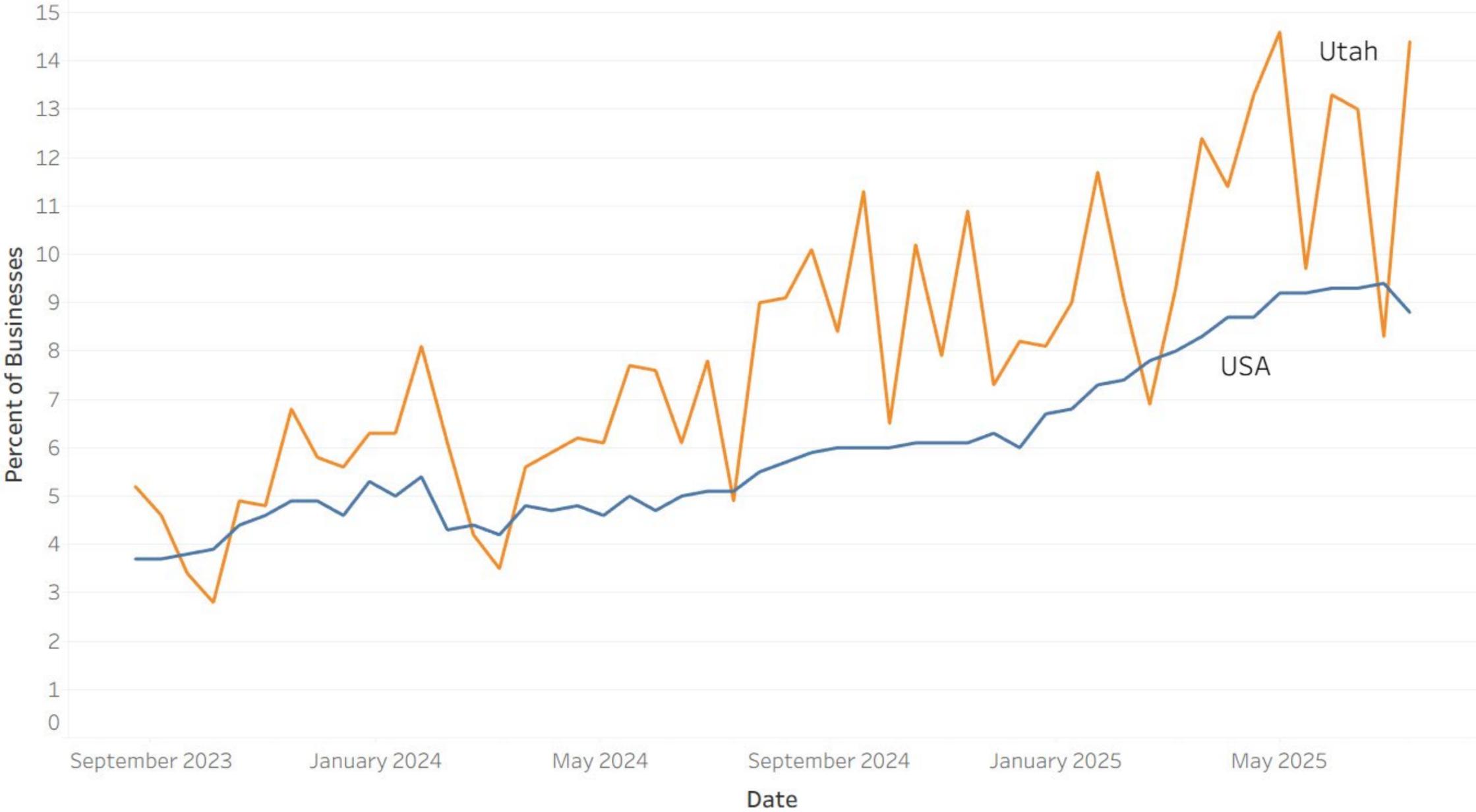
1. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
2. NATIONAL UNCERTAINTY
3. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Photograph by St George Inn & Suites

Artificial Intelligence

Percent of Businesses who Used AI in the Previous Two Weeks

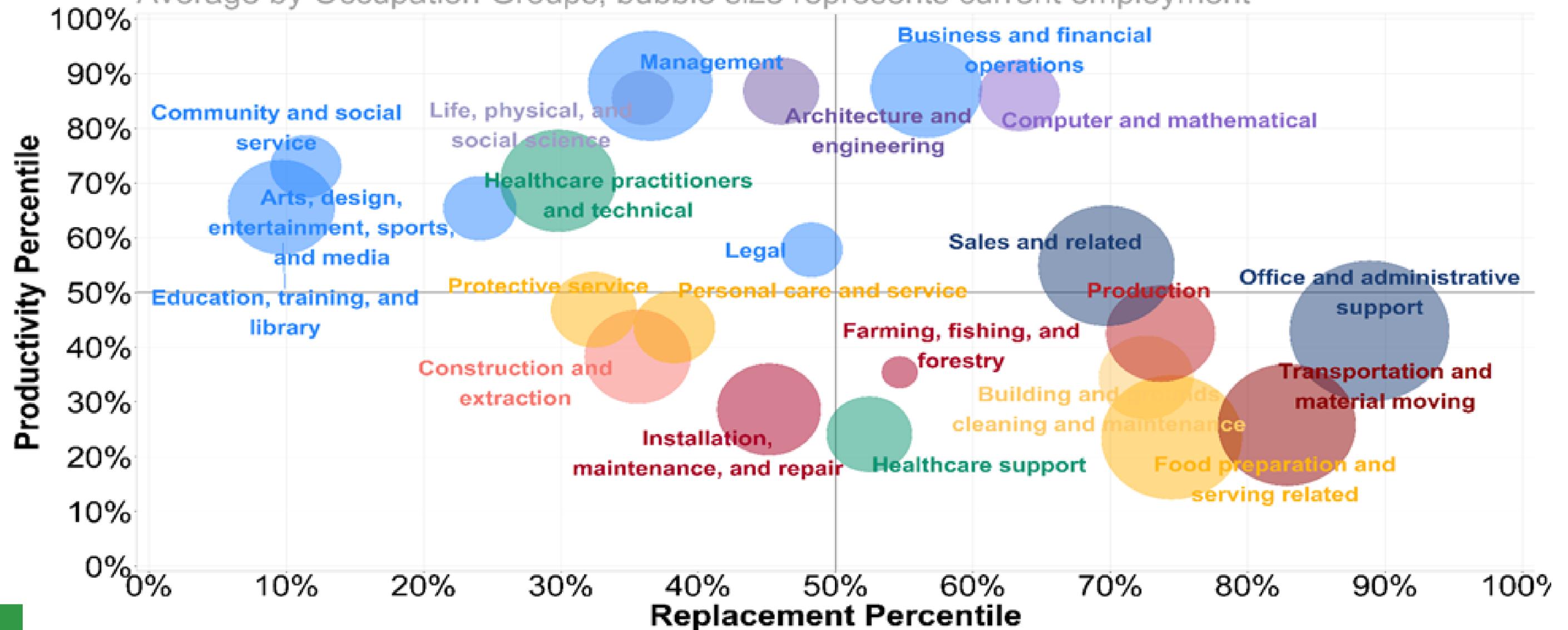


Source: U.S. Census Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS)

Some occupations are more likely to be impacted

AI & Automation Risk Index - Aggregated Groups

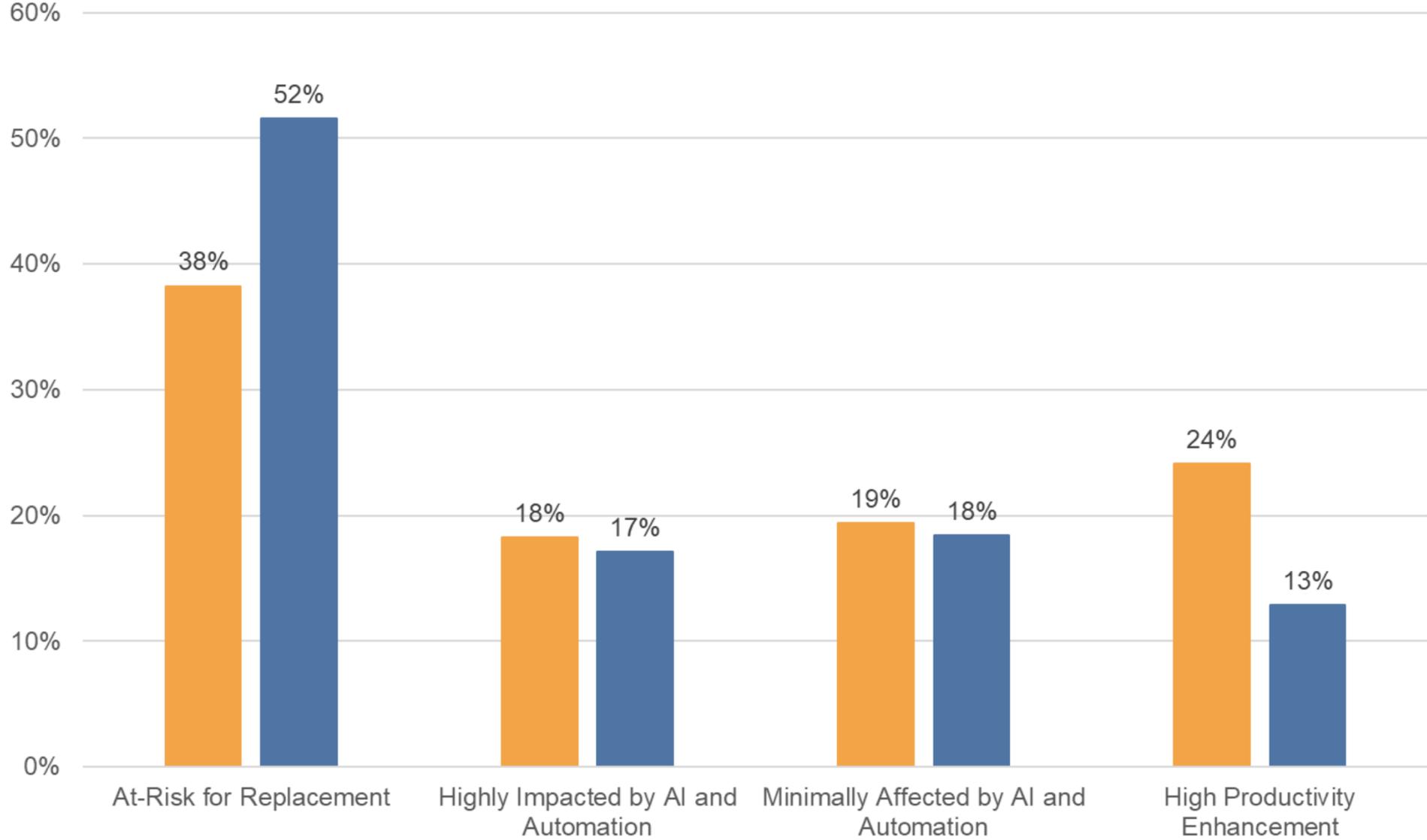
Average by Occupation Groups, bubble size represents current employment



Source: AI & Automation Risk Index from The Conference Board.

Utah has fewer At-Risk occupations

Impact of AI & Automation, State and National
Share of 2024 Employment

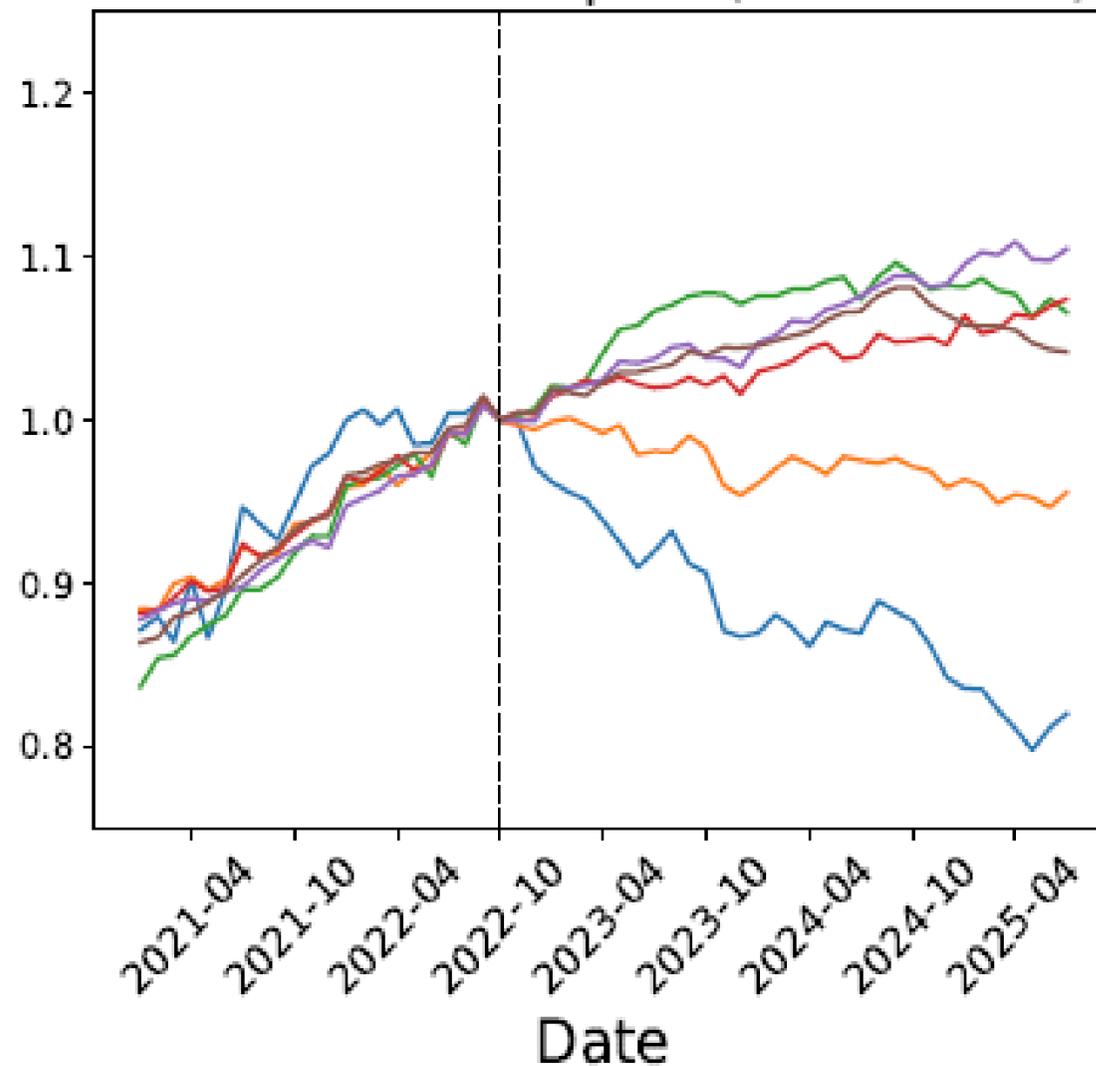


Source: BLS, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS); Conference Board AI and Automation Index

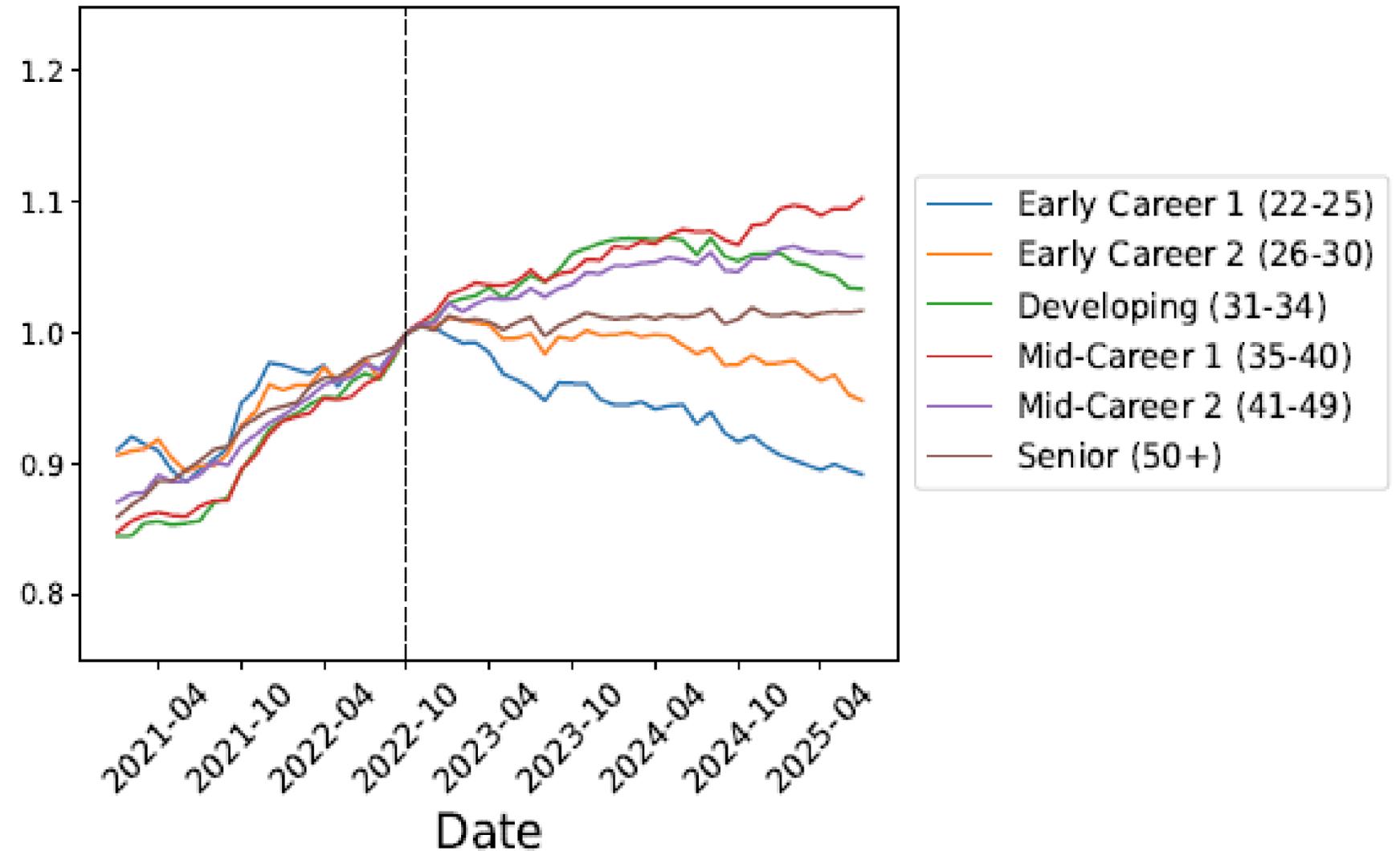
Utah U.S.

Employment of young workers has declined nationally in AI-exposed occupations

Headcount Over Time by Age Group
Software Developers (Normalized)

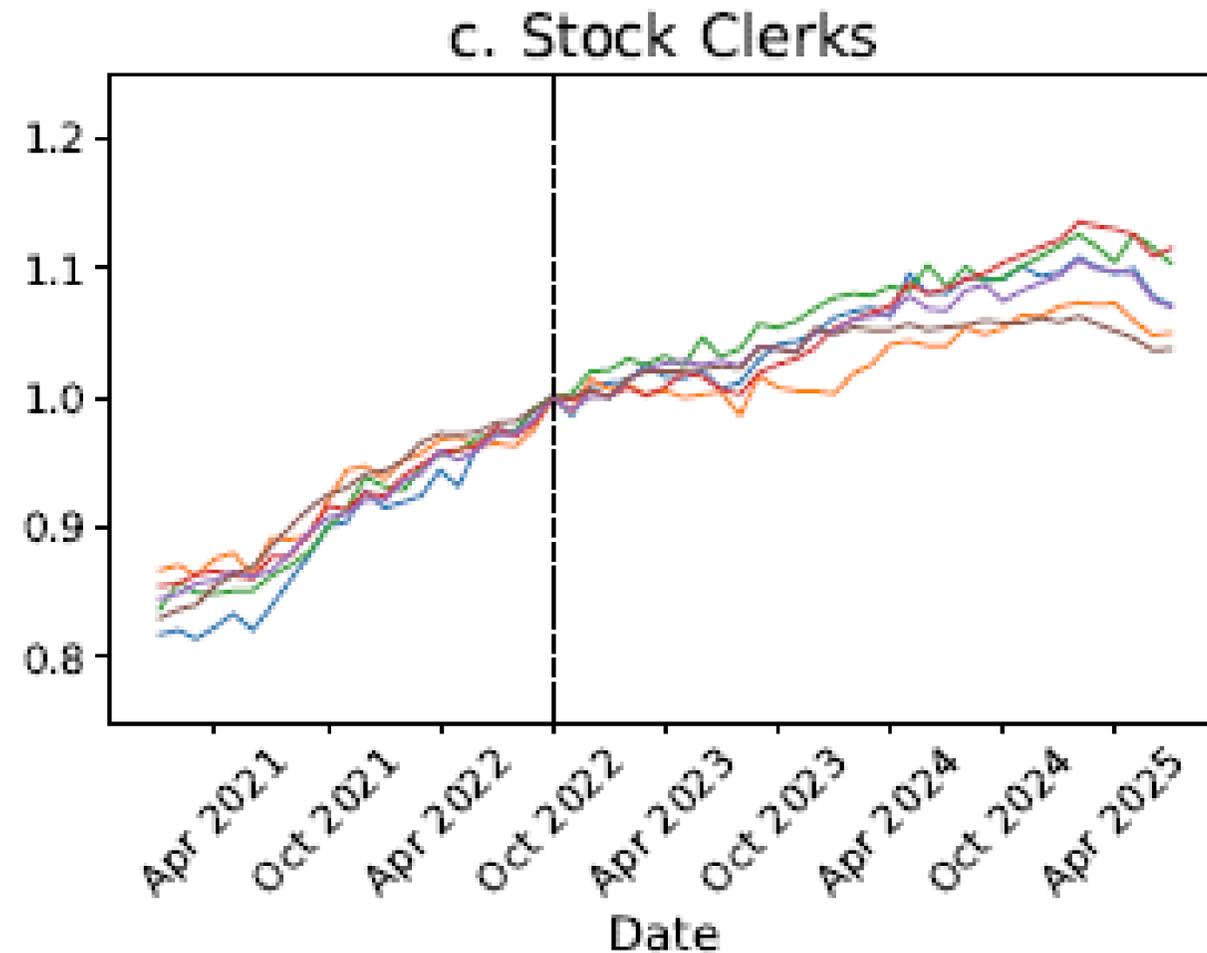


Headcount Over Time by Age Group
Customer Service (Normalized)



Note: Normalized to 1 in October 2022. Dashed line indicates when ChatGPT was released.

That was not the case for occupations less exposed to automation



Note: Normalized to 1 in October 2022. Dashed line indicates when ChatGPT was released.

Artificial Intelligence



“Over the last century, disruptive innovation has generally favored the young and the well-educated, because they can adapt to new ways of doing things. AI could be different, but I doubt it.”

David Dering

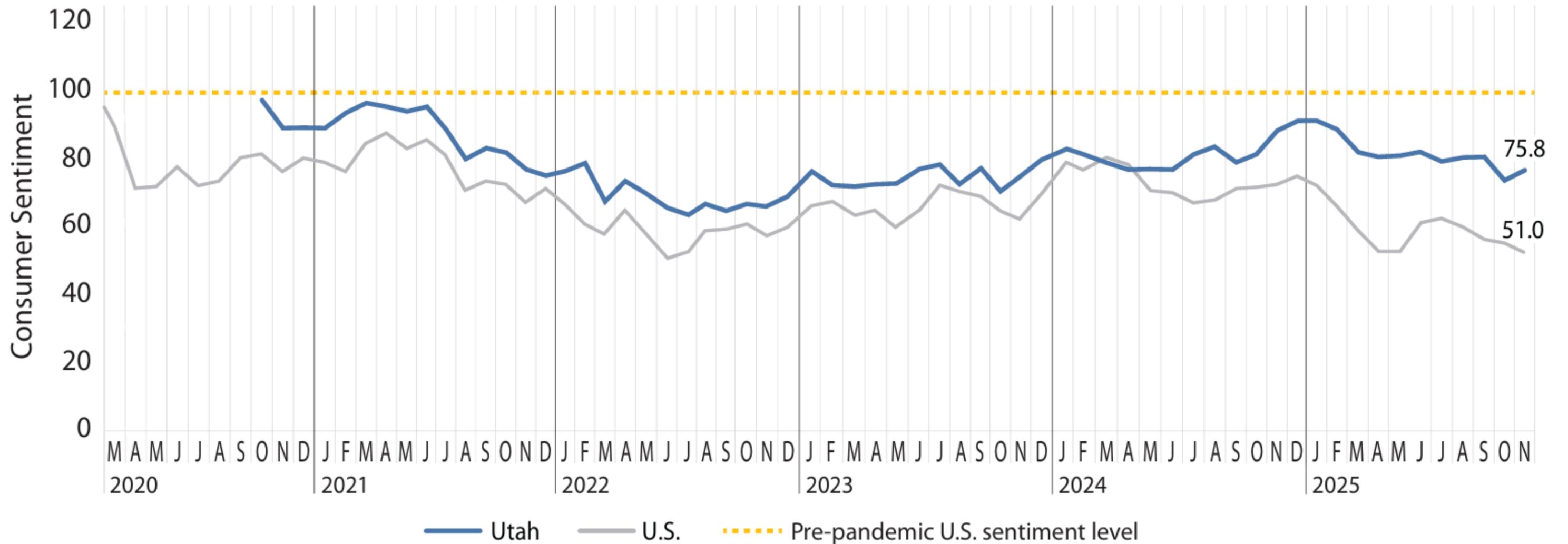
Economic Uncertainty

- Uncertainty slows growth as businesses and consumers reduce spending amid unclear economic outlook
 - Reduces consumer spending
 - Delays business investment
 - Disrupts financial markets
- Short-run phenomenon



Economic Uncertainty

Consumer Sentiment Index: Utah and U.S.



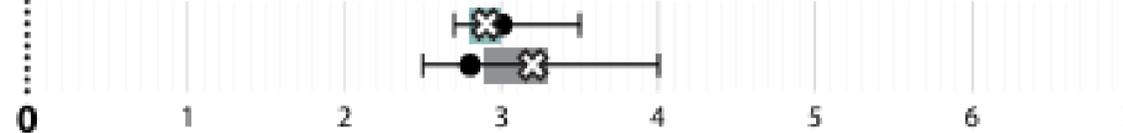
Utah Economic Outlook

2025 - 2026

U.S.

U.S. CPI Inflation Rate

2025: 2.9%
2026: 3.2%



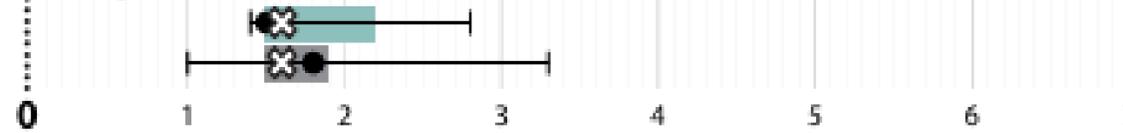
U.S. Unemployment Rate

2025: 4.4%
2026: 4.5%



U.S. Real GDP (% Change)

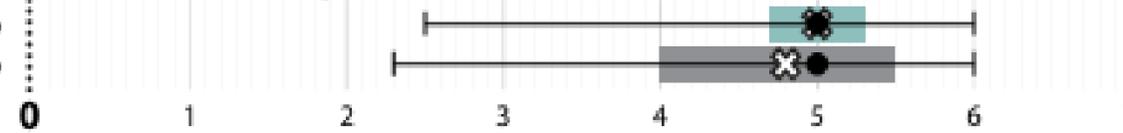
2025: 1.6%
2026: 1.6%



Utah

Utah Total Personal Income (% Change)

2025: 5.0%
2026: 4.8%



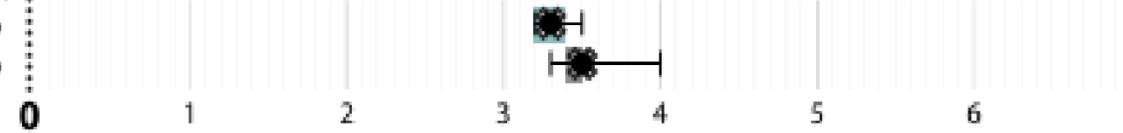
Utah Population (% Change)

2025: 1.3%
2026: 1.3%



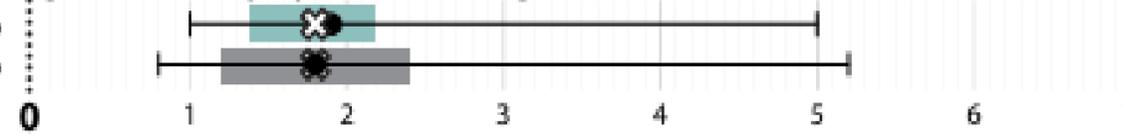
Utah Unemployment Rate

2025: 3.3%
2026: 3.5%



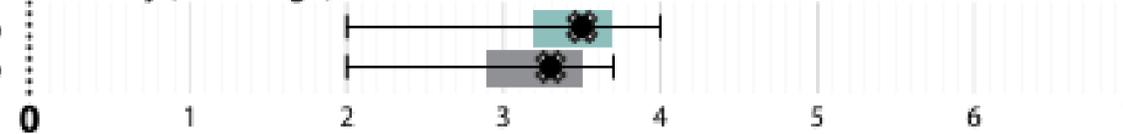
Utah Total Non-Agricultural Employment (% Change)

2025: 1.8%
2026: 1.8%



Utah Average Annual Pay (% Change)

2025: 3.5%
2026: 3.3%



Central Tendency (Middle 50% of Projections)

X Council Point Forecast

—|— Range of Point Projections

● June 2025 Point Forecast



THANK
YOU

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