



## Who Works in the Leisure & Hospitality Industry?

*Youth dominate food services employment—restaurants, fast food, etc.—the largest of the leisure and hospitality employment area.*

Even though it has been five years since its introduction of Utah-specific data, I am still excited about the Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics program that applies gender and age demographics to Utah's industrial employment. All prior employment data was blind to what industries females were concentrated in, or where teens were prevalent. With this Census Bureau data, we can more deeply profile the leisure and hospitality labor force in Utah.

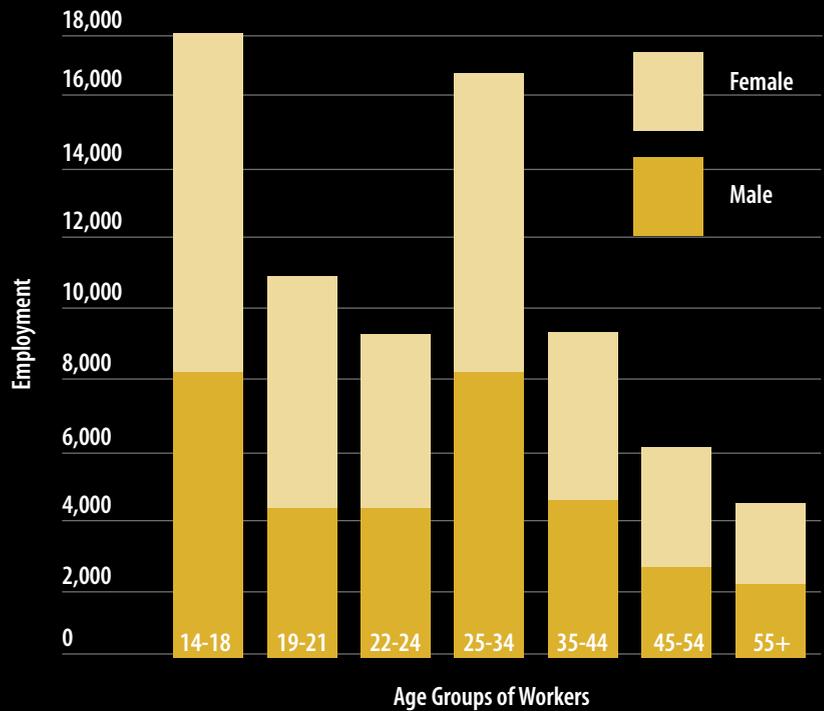
The largest leisure and hospitality employment area is food services (restaurants, fast food, etc.). Guess who makes up the bulk of the employment? You guessed it—youth. Almost 40 percent of all food service workers are 21 years of age or younger—and nearly 60 percent of them are female. That largely holds true across the entire industry. When evaluating all age groups, females make up 55 percent of the employment.

There are sizeable employment levels in the 25-to-44 year old group, largely representing that segment who has found a career position within this industry. In the restaurant industry, there is a dichotomy between the fast food restaurants and who they employ, and the more traditional restaurants that cater to a more exclusive clientele. In this 25-to-44 year age group, there are equal employment levels between males and females.

Accommodations (hotels and motels) are another important aspect within the hospitality industry. The employment levels are not nearly as large as in food services, but the tourism industry has no chance if there are not people who will do the work of hosting—so it is no less important. Again, another industry comprised of females by 55 percent. But the labor force is not nearly as young as with food service workers. The bulk of the workers here are in the 25-to-54 age group, with the majority being 25-to-34 year olds.



Food Services Employment in Utah • 2007



Then there is the recreation industry. With Utah having a vibrant ski industry, it would probably be best to profile recreation in two segments—winter activities and summer activities. The amount of employment is virtually the same in both periods. But the work crews are slightly different. There are a few more males in the winter months than the summer months. Not as many teens either, which is understandable, as they are in school then. Twenty-five-to-35 year-olds make up the largest employment group in winter, by far. They are also the largest employment group in the summer, but just barely ahead of the teens (14-to-18 year olds). This makes sense when one thinks of Lagoon as a major summer employer. Teens are a big part of Lagoon’s labor force.

This year’s data is not yet available, and won’t be until this time next year. But it will be interesting to see if this same teen participation can hold. One of the characteristics of the current sharp economic downturn is that it is much harder for teens to find a job this year, as laid-off older workers are falling back into the teen’s normal venues and taking whatever jobs they can find to tide them over. ①



*In Utah's recreation industry, employment in winter vs. summer activities is about the same.*