

## Older Workers in Maine

Maine's labor force is aging. The maturing of the post-war baby boomers means a significant segment of the labor force is approaching the typical retirement age. By 2011 the oldest of the boomers will be 65 years of age; by 2029 the youngest of the boomers will be 65.

A combination of longer life spans and desire to stay engaged with meaningful and productive activities may cause this group to extend their participation in the labor force, seeking out part-time employment arrangements and more volunteer opportunities. A recent survey of 1,000 workers and retirees age 50 to 70 conducted by Watson Wyatt Worldwide reported significant numbers of individuals hoped to work part-time in retirement (63 percent). Others (48 percent) hoped to work more flexible hours, while a sizeable number (63 percent) want to pursue a new career in retirement. To keep older workers engaged in the labor force, employers may have to adjust their policies and practices accordingly.

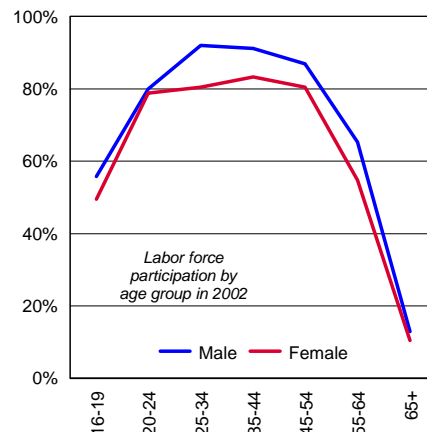
Characteristics of recent in-migrants to Maine indicate that a significant portion is made up of highly-educated and skilled retirees who offer more potential by adding to the senior workforce. Maine's senior workforce, often held up as an emerging liability for economic development, may actually offer significant potential as a talent bank and mentor pool.

### Fast Facts:

- Between 2000 and 2004 the population age 55 and over increased 12 percent (37,800), while the number under 55 increased only 0.5 percent (4,500). The median age increased from 38.6 to 40.6.
- In 2004 those age 55 and over totaled 344,400, accounting for 26 percent Maine's population; those age 55 to 74 accounted for 19 percent of the population.
- According to State Planning Office projections, Maine's population is expected to rise nearly eight percent (96,600) between 2002 and 2012. The fastest growth is expected among those age 55 to 64 (51 percent or 70,700). The number age 65 to 69 is expected to rise 43 percent (21,900). During the same period the population under age 20 is expected to decline by nine percent (30,200).
- The labor force participation rate—the share of the population employed or actively seeking employment—varies with age (graph 1). Participation begins to decline at an accelerating rate with age around age 50.
- Although participation declines with age, the population age 55 and over is expected to grow by 114,600. As a result, the Maine Department of Labor forecasts that 83 percent of labor force growth between 2002 and 2012 will be among those age 55 and over (graph 2).

*Prepared by Maine Dept. of Labor, Labor Market Information Services.*

The labor force participation rate declines at an accelerating rate with age after age 50



The most significant labor force growth between 2002 and 2012 is expected to be among those age 55 to 64

