

Job Displacement

American workers and immigrant workers compete for the same jobs.

- Out of 472 civilian occupations tracked by the government, all but six have a majority U.S.-born workforce.¹

There is a giant pool of potential workers in America.

- If the labor force participation rate was back to where it was as recently as 2000, there would be 6.5 million more Americans in the workforce.²

Not everyone who is displaced by immigration policy "skills up" to find better work. Some simply drop out of the labor force.

- From 1960-2023: the number of U.S.-born men (16 to 64) *not in* the labor force increased by 13.8 million from 1960 to 2023. At the same time the number of working-age immigrant men *in* the labor force increased by 13.7 million.³
- Since 1990 - when Congress increased immigration to the current more-than-one-million per year - labor force participation first stagnated and then declined among men (2nd-worst decline among OECD countries) and women (3rd-worst decline).⁴
- Since 2000, labor force participation among men without a high school degree stagnated for the foreign-born and declined for those born in the U.S.⁵
- In 2024, 59 million working-age Americans were not working, and all of the net job growth of the previous five years had gone to immigrants.⁶
- Economic models have trouble measuring job displacement due to the displaced leaving the local labor market or dropping out of the labor force.

¹ Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler, 2013. Are There Really Jobs Americans Won't Do? Center for Immigration Studies. <https://cis.org/Report/Are-There-Really-Jobs-Americans-Wont-Do>

² Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler, 2022. Immigrant Workers in November 2022 Up 1.9 Million Over 2019. Center for Immigration Studies. <https://cis.org/Report/Immigrant-Workers-November-2022-19-Million-Over-2019>

³ Camarota, Steven A. and Zeigler, Karen., 2023. Working-age, but not Working. Center for Immigration Studies. <https://cis.org/Report/WorkingAge-Not-Working>

⁴ Eleanor Krause and Isabel Sawhill, 2017. What We Know and Don't Know About Declining Labor Force Participation: A Review. The Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ccf_20170517_declining_labor_force_participation_sawhill1.pdf

⁵ Krause and Sawhill. Figure 8, pp. 17-18.

⁶ Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler, 2024. The Employment Situation of Immigrants and the U.S.-born in the Fourth Quarter of 2023. Center for Immigration Studies. <https://cis.org/Report/Employment-Situation-Immigrants-and-USborn-Fourth-Quarter-2023>

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Declining labor force participation impacts society.

- Work rates have an outsized impact on poverty, especially for the bottom third of U.S. families.⁷
- Declining employment and earnings is a significant factor in declining marriage rates, especially for Black men (all education levels) and less-educated white men.⁸
- American men outside the labor force are overrepresented in “deaths of despair” and are the most stressed compared to their counterparts around the world.⁹

There are numerous case studies of industries using an increase in foreign workers to displace Black American workers:

- Frank Main and Dan Mihalopoulos, 2018. [At major Northwest Side bakery, labor issues pit blacks vs. Hispanics](#). *Chicago Sun-Times*.
- Liam Stack, 2016. [Black Workers' Suit Accuses Job Agency of Favoring Hispanic Applicants](#). *The New York Times*.
- Cynthia Cranford, 2015. [Networks of Exploitation: Immigrant Labor and the Restructuring of the Los Angeles Janitorial Industry](#). *Social Problems*, vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 379-397.
- "Mississippi's Howard Industries Faces Lawsuit Alleging Discrimination Against U.S. Citizens after Pleading Guilty to Hiring Undocumented Workers" [Fox News Latino](#)
- Steven Malanga, 2008. [The Rainbow Coalition Evaporates](#). *City Journal*.
- Steven Greenhouse, 2008. [After 15 Years, North Carolina Plant Unionizes](#). *New York Times*. (workforce went from 20 percent Black to 60 percent)
- Evan Perez and Corey Dade, 2007. [An immigration raid aids blacks for a time](#). *Wall Street Journal*.

With mass immigration, employers have little incentive to recruit sidelined workers back into the labor force. But tight labor markets drive innovative, inclusive recruitment, especially for vulnerable Americans. See:

- Michael Goldberg, 2022. [Dire US labor shortage provides opportunity for ex-prisoners](#). *The Associated Press*.
- Jason Blevins, 2020. [Trump's ban on visa workers breathes new life into college-age ski bumming in Colorado's resort towns](#). *The Colorado Sun*.
- Josh Barro, 2018. [The coming 'labor shortage' in America is great news for workers](#). *Business Insider*.

⁷ Isabel Sawhill, Edward Rodrigue, and Nathan Joo, “One third of a nation: Strategies for helping working families” (Washington: The Brookings Institution, May 2016), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/one-third-of-a-nation.pdf>.

⁸ Isabel Sawhill and Joanna Venator, “Is there a shortage of marriageable men?” CCF Brief #56 (Washington: The Brookings Institution, September 2015), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/56-Shortage-of-Marriageable-Men.pdf>

⁹ Graham, C., Pinto, S. (2021). The Well-being Implications of Being Out of the Labor Force. In: Zimmermann, K.F. (eds) Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57365-6_176-1

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- Danielle Paquette, 2018. [She cleaned for \\$3.49 an hour. A gas station just offered her \\$11.25.](#) *The Washington Post*.
- Associated General Contractors, 2018. [Construction Employers Add Jobs, Raise Salaries in Tight Labor Pool, Says AGC.](#)
- Danielle Paquette, 2018. [The rise of the blue-collar signing bonus - now up to \\$25,000.](#) *The Washington Post*.
- Melissa Castro, 2018. [Charlottesville-area employers get creative in tight job market.](#) *The Daily Progress*.
- Jennifer Levitz and Eric Morath, 2018. [Facing Historic Labor Shortages, Companies Snap Up Teenagers.](#) *The Wall Street Journal*.
- Jessie Knadler, 2018. [Trump's Policy Sharply Reduces Refugee Flow to Harrisonburg.](#) WMRA Radio.
- John Reinan, 2018. [From a box of radio parts, Digi-Key grew into a \\$2.3 billion anchor of northwest Minnesota.](#) *Star Tribune*.
- Yueqi Yang and Dimitrios Pogkas, 2018. [Big Banks in U.S. Forced to Reevaluate Hiring Foreign Workers.](#) *Bloomberg*.
- Tracy Jan, 2018. [Trump isn't pushing hard for this one popular way to curb illegal immigration.](#) *The Washington Post*.
- Frank Main and Dan Mihalopoulos, 2018. [At major Northwest Side bakery, labor issues pit blacks vs. Hispanics.](#) *The Chicago Sun-Times*.
- Lauren Weber and Rachel Feintzeig, 2018. [To Fill Jobs in a Tight Labor Market, Employers May Need to Get Creative.](#) *The Wall Street Journal*.
- Heather Long, 2018. [His best employee is an inmate from a prison he didn't want built.](#) *The Washington Post*.
- Ben Casselman, 2018. [As Labor Pool Shrinks, Prison Time Is Less of a Hiring Hurdle.](#) *The New York Times*.
- A.J. Higgins. Amid foreign worker shortage, Bar Harbor businesses turn to local labor. [Bangor Daily News](#).
- Mark Krikorian, 2012. Willing Workers, Willing Employer in Minot, N.D. [National Review](#),