



Workforce Readiness and Labor Market Trends Among Kentucky Youth

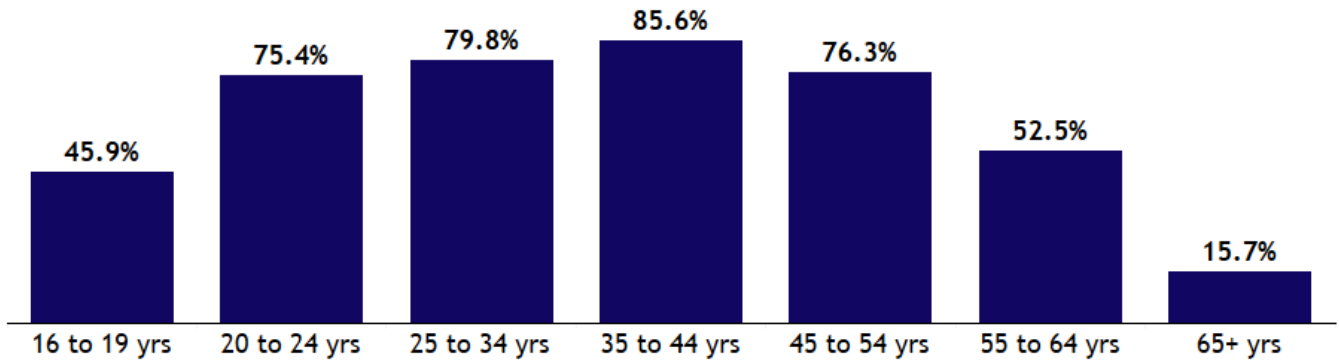
Commission on Race and Access to Opportunity
Prepared by the Kentucky Center for Statistics
September 2026



Labor Force Participation

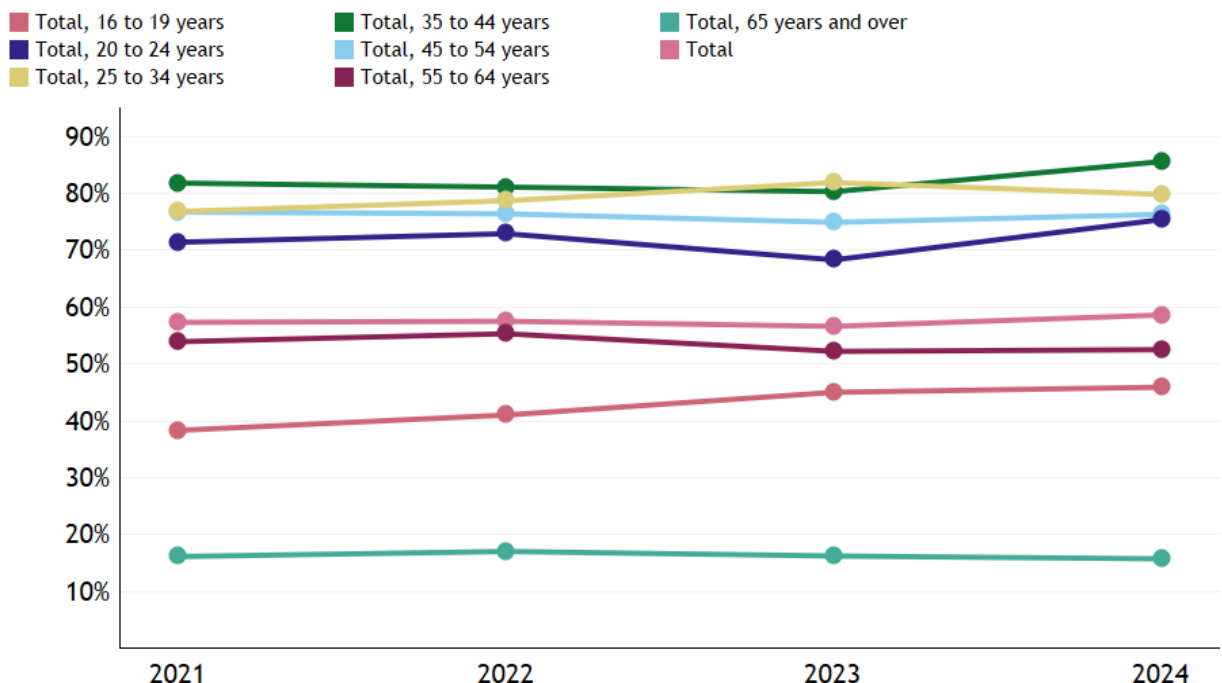
To be classified as belonging to the labor force, individuals must either be employed or seeking employment. The Labor Force Participation Rate, as published by the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), measures the percent of non-institutionalized individuals age 16 and up who belong to the labor force.

Labor Force Participation by Age Group, Kentucky, 2024 Annual Averages



Source: U.S. Census Bureau / U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data, 2024 Annual Averages. Data accessed 6/19/26.

Labor Force Participation by Age Group, Kentucky 2021-2024 Annual Averages



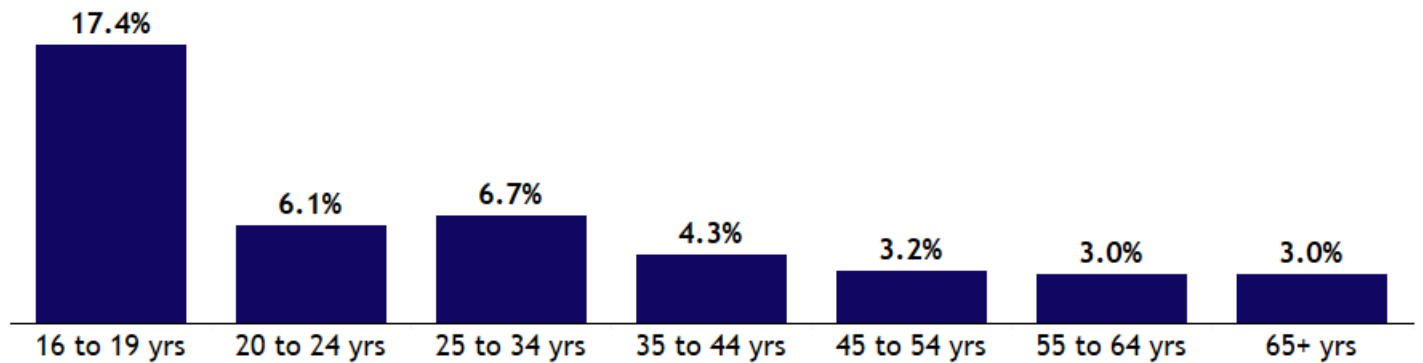
Source: U.S. Census Bureau / U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data, 2024 Annual Averages. Data accessed 6/19/26.



Unemployment Rate

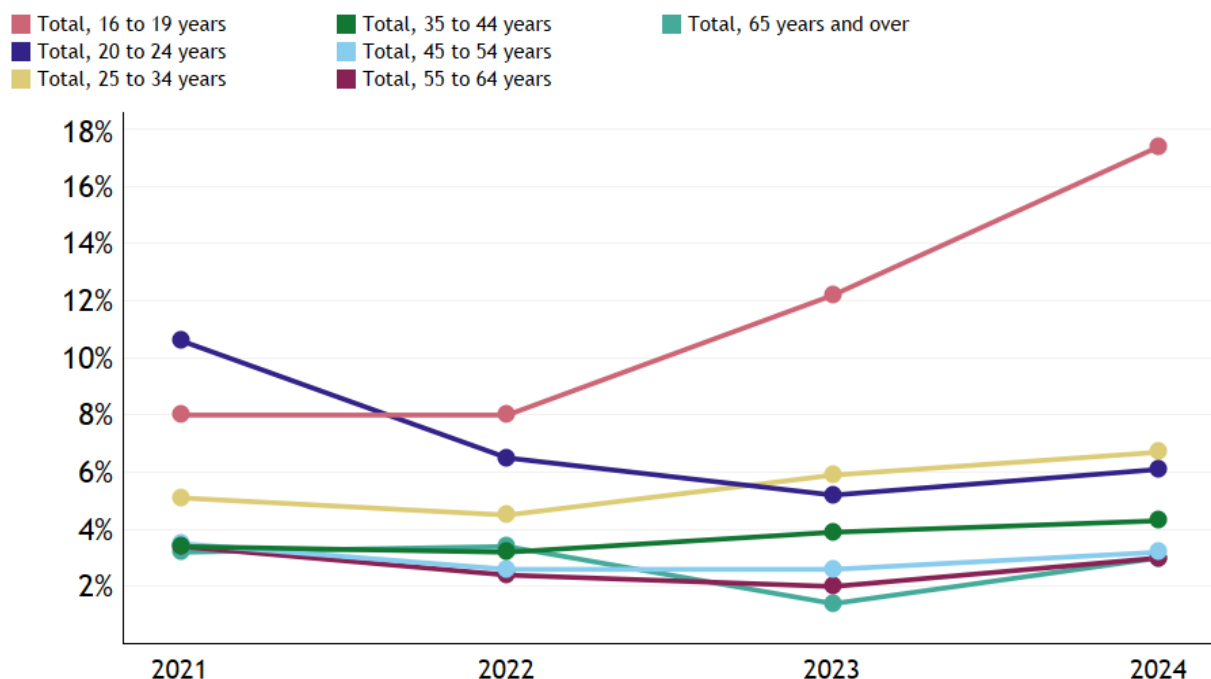
The unemployment rate, as published by the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), measures the percent of the labor force that is not currently employed, but who are seeking employment. Additionally, unemployment is a phenomenon that can also be expressed as a volume, rather than a percentage (shown on next page).

Unemployment Rate by Age Group, Kentucky, 2024 Annual Averages



Source: U.S. Census Bureau / U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data, 2024 Annual Averages. Data accessed 6/19/26.

Unemployment Rate by Age Group, Kentucky, 2021-2024 Annual Averages

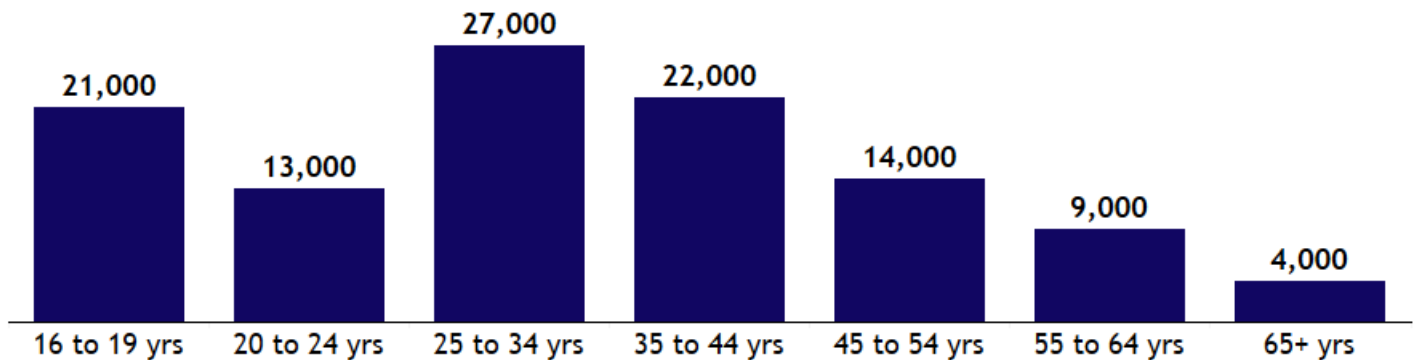


Source: U.S. Census Bureau / U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data, 2024 Annual Averages. Data accessed 6/19/26.



Unemployed Persons

Unemployed Persons by Age Group, Kentucky, 2024 Annual Averages



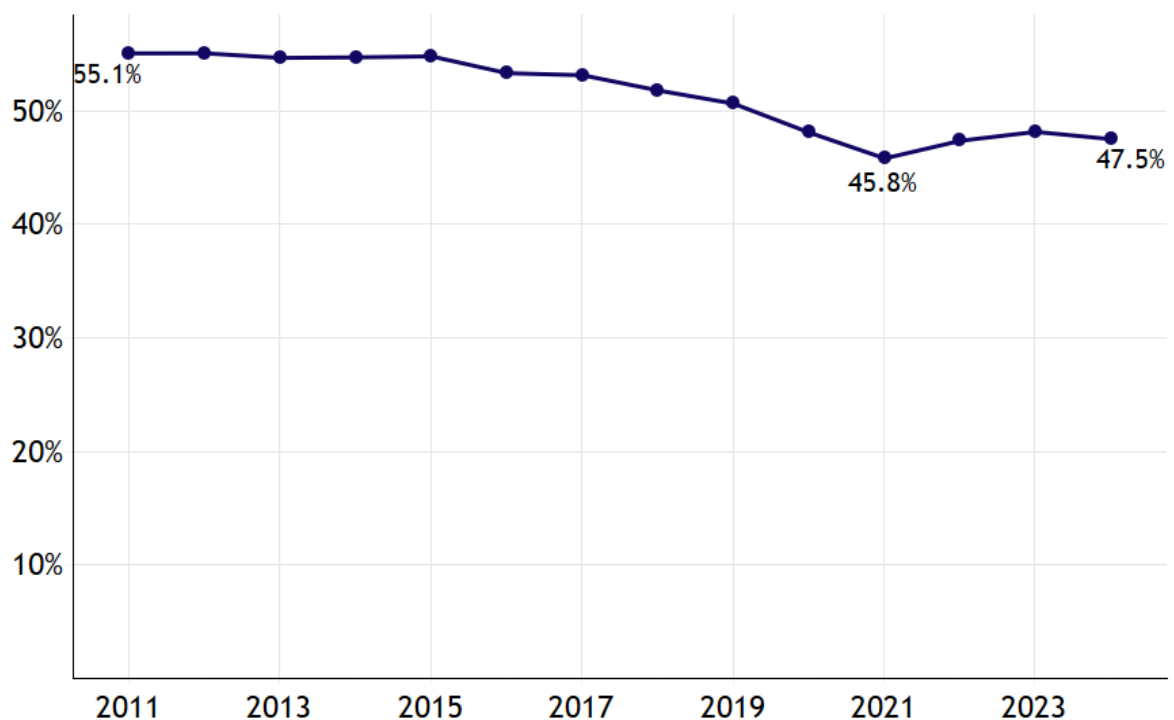
Source: U.S. Census Bureau / U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data, 2024 Annual Averages. Data accessed 6/19/26.



Postsecondary Enrollment

The College-Going Rate represents the percentage of public high school graduates who enrolled at any public or independent college or university at any point during the following Academic Year. Graduates enrolling at more than one postsecondary institution are counted only once.

In-State College-Going Rate, Academic Years 2010 - 2024



Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), High School Feedback Report. Data accessed 9/7/26.
<https://kystats.ky.gov/Latest/HSFR>



Education and Wage Outcomes

Additional education typically leads to improved wage outcomes in the Commonwealth. The chart above illustrates the volumes of individuals who graduated High School in 2018 and went on to attain various levels of education, along with their in-state median annual wage outcomes as of 2025.

2025 Education and Wage Outcomes (2018 KY High School Graduates)

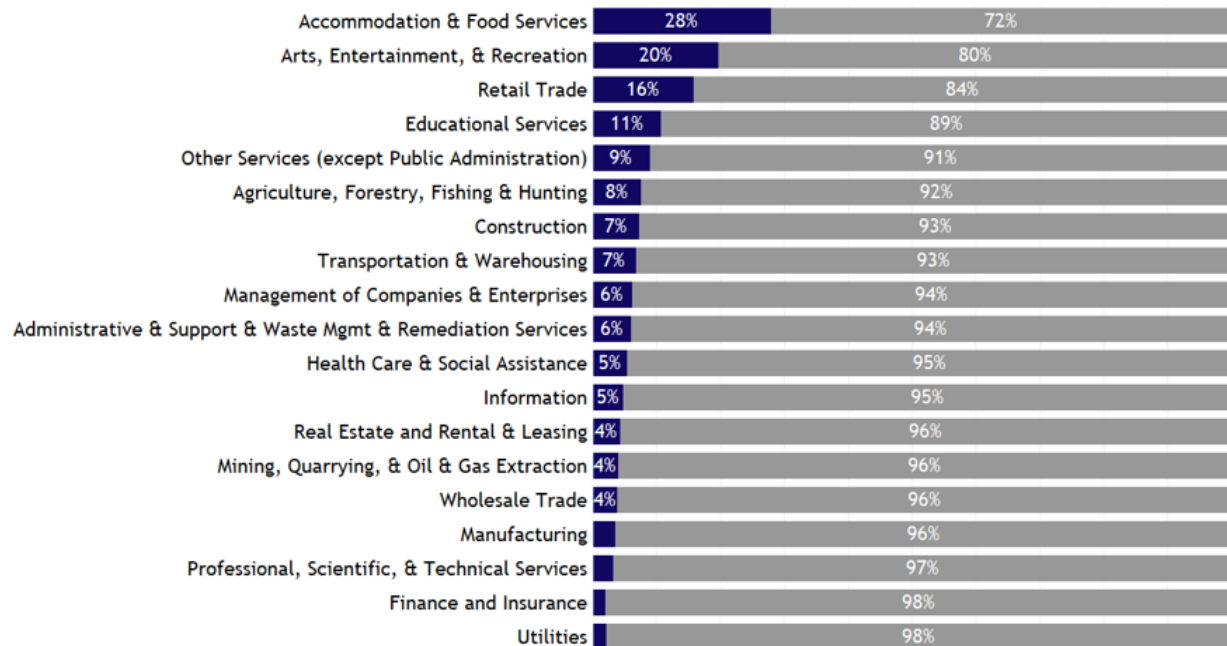




Industry Employment

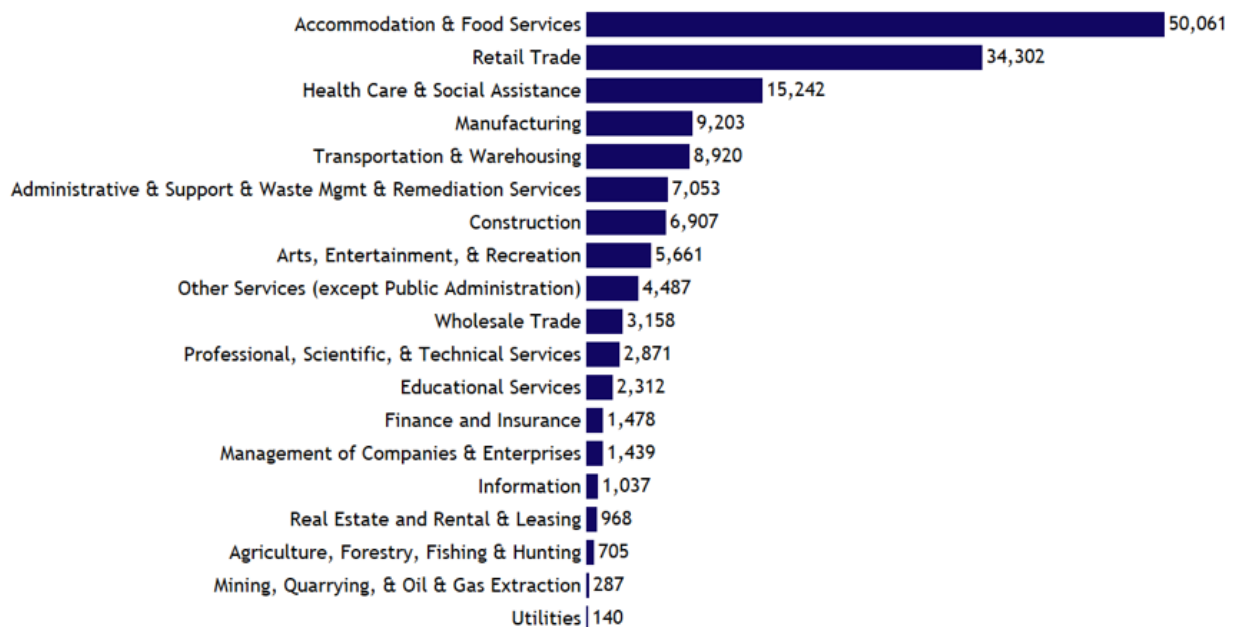
The U.S. Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program produces estimates of industry employment by age group, shown below.

Industry Employment Percentage, Kentucky, 2024 Q4 Workers 21 and Under vs. Older Workers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, QWI Explorer. Custom aggregations performed by KYSTATS. Data accessed 6/19/24.

Industry Employment, Workers 21 and Under, Kentucky, 2024 Q4



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, QWI Explorer. Custom aggregations performed by KYSTATS. Data accessed 6/19/24.