

BEYOND THE HEADLINES

At a Glance: Jobs, Workers & the Economy

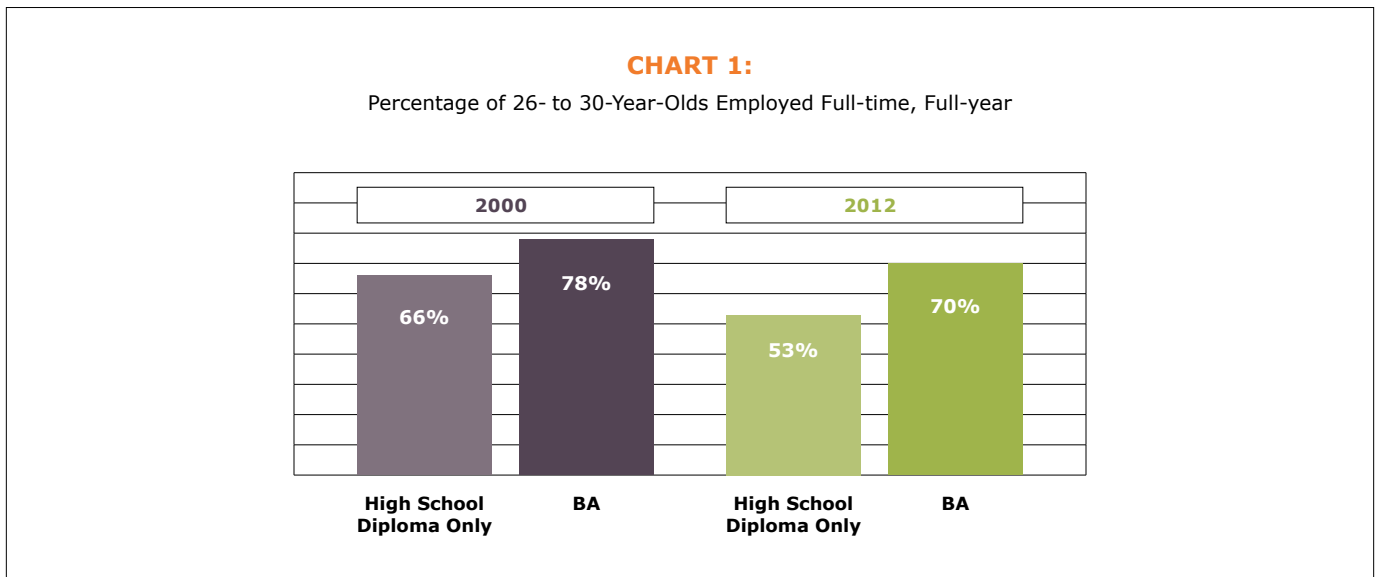
NOVEMBER 2013 | FOCUS: UNITED STATES & KING COUNTY

The Millennial Generation: Missing Labor Market Opportunity

Millennials Are Facing Tough Challenges in the U.S. Labor Market...

Those among the Millennial generation (born between 1978 and 2000) who have already entered the labor market (18- to 34-year-olds) have been struggling. Americans under age 25 presently face a 14.8 percent rate of unemployment, more than double the overall U.S. rate of 7.2 percent. Those aged 25 to 34 are faring better with a 7.4 percent rate, yet because a large number among this group have given up looking for work (and are thus not included in the unemployment rate), it is estimated that just 75 percent of these older millennials are employed – unimproved from a year ago.ⁱ

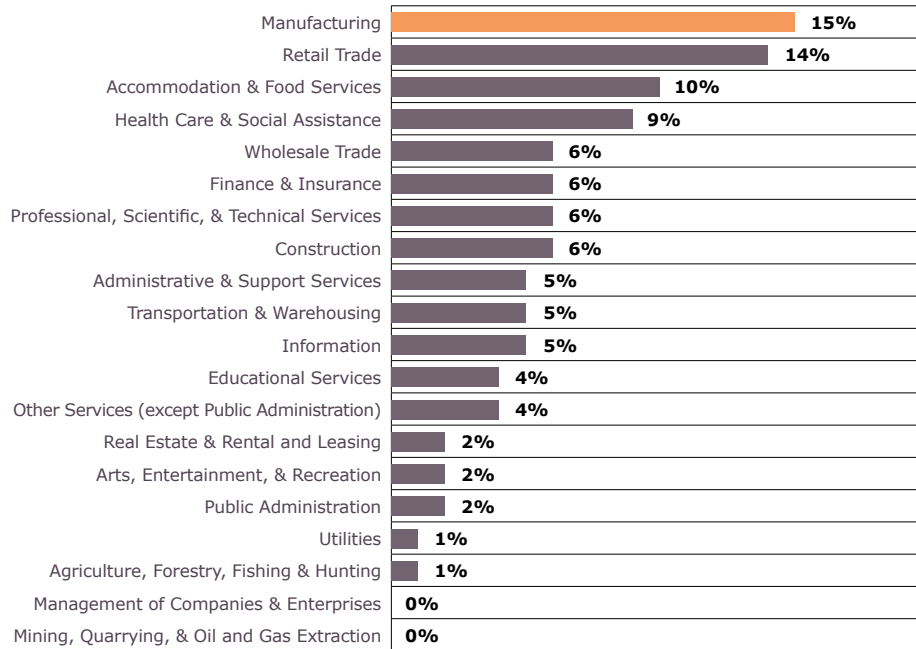
Not surprisingly, accordingly to a recently-released report by the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, millennials with fewer skills are faring worse than their more highly-skilled counterparts (though millennials of all education levels are employed at significantly lower rates than they were just over a decade ago).ⁱⁱ



... In Part Because They Are Missing Existing Job Opportunities

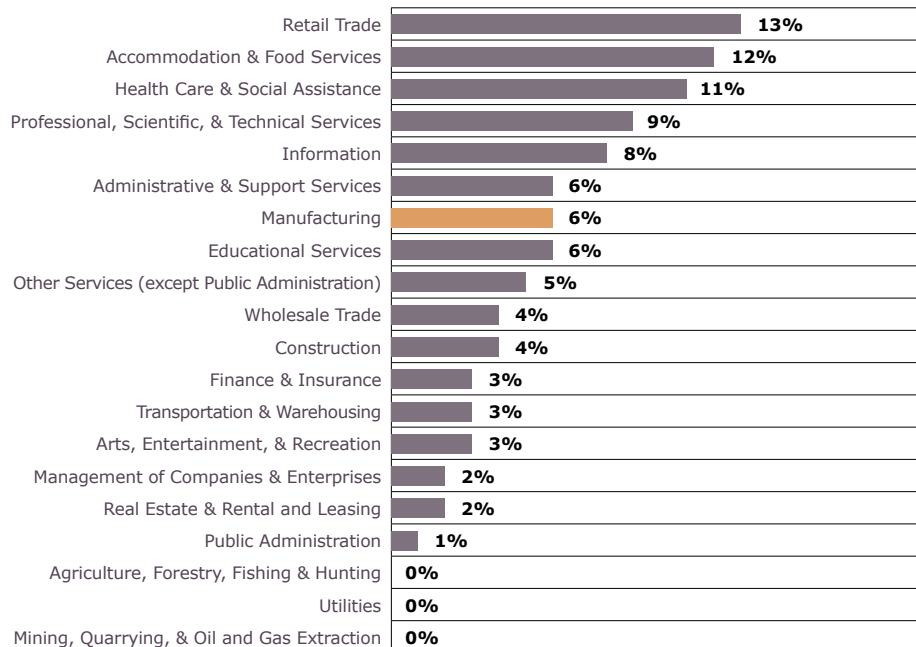
The industries in which young adults are employed have changed significantly over the past twenty years, showing that many millennials have shied away from some well-paying sectors. Take a look at the employment of young adults by industry sector in King County in 1992 (Figure 1) compared to 2012 (Figure 2).

Figure 1:
Industry Employment: Share of Millennial Workers – King County
1992



SOURCE: Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

Figure 2:
Industry Employment: Share of Millennial Workers – King County
2012



SOURCE: Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

What is most striking is the decreased share of King County’s young adults working in “blue collar” industry sectors – *particularly manufacturing* – today compared to 1992. This echoes a national shift that is partly the result of the overall decline in these jobs, but also a consequence of waning interest among millennials in these frequently well-paying occupations.ⁱⁱⁱ

Industry sectors such as manufacturing are often viewed as dying by young adults, parents and secondary schools, when in fact employers in these industries can’t find enough skilled workers, particularly as a large share of incumbent workers are older and beginning to retire.^{iv} Encouraging youth and young adults to consider these occupations as viable career options is one strategy to improve the employment prospects for the millennial generation.

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- i. See <http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/oct/23/young-people-unemployment-jobs-report-answers>
 - ii. *Failure to Launch: Structural Shift and the New Lost Generation*. Carnevale, Hanson and Gulish. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. September 2013.
 - iii. See www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Research/Public-Perception-of-Manufacturing/~media/5856BC6196764320A6BEFA0D9962BE80.ashx
 - iv. See <http://www.techedmagazine.com/node/2600>. Recent research by the Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte found that **67 percent** of manufacturing employers surveyed reported a moderate to severe shortage of qualified workers, and **56 percent** of those surveyed expected this shortage to get worse in the forthcoming years. See <http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Research/Skills-Gap-in-Manufacturing/2011-Skills-Gap-Report/2011-Skills-Gap-Report.aspx>

BEYOND THE HEADLINES: Policy & Labor Market Updates for Those Working to Help Low-Income and Low-Skill Individuals Advance through Education, Training & Living-Wage Jobs

About Seattle Jobs Initiative

Seattle Jobs Initiative creates opportunities for students, workers and business to succeed by helping education and job training programs meet the demands of a new economy. We find and apply solutions for people to gain the skills they need for good jobs that create prosperity for all in today’s marketplace.

Supported by the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

Contact Information

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