strada

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Building Vermont's Talent Advantage

September 2025

Topics for Today

strada

- Labor Force Participation
- Interstate Migration of College Grad Talent
- Data: A Critical Building Block for Progress
- What If Vermont Gets This All Right?
- Q&A

Labor Force Participation

Nationally...

Lowest

Labor Force Participation in 48 Years*

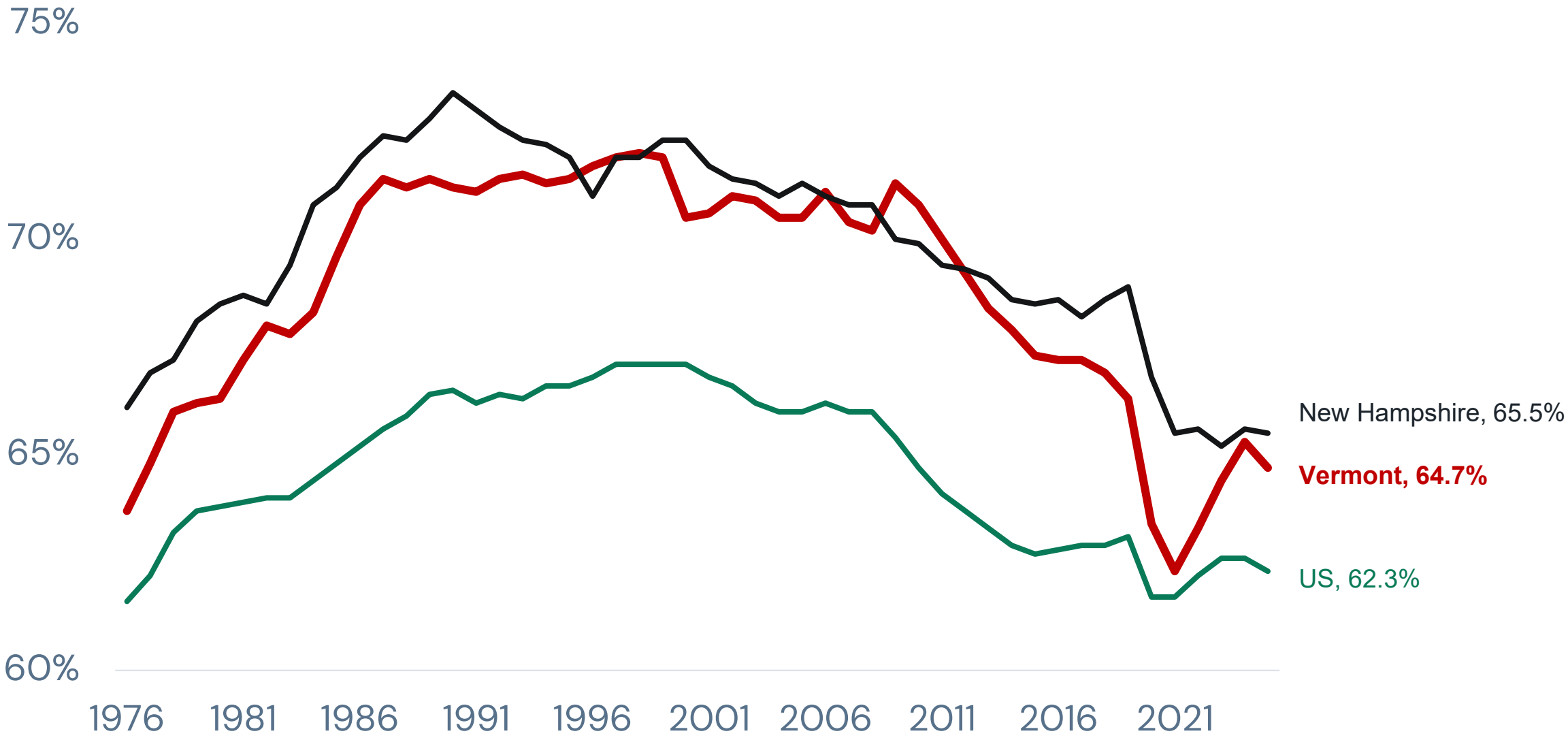
Male participation is driving the change

7M

Fewer Workers Than at Past Rates

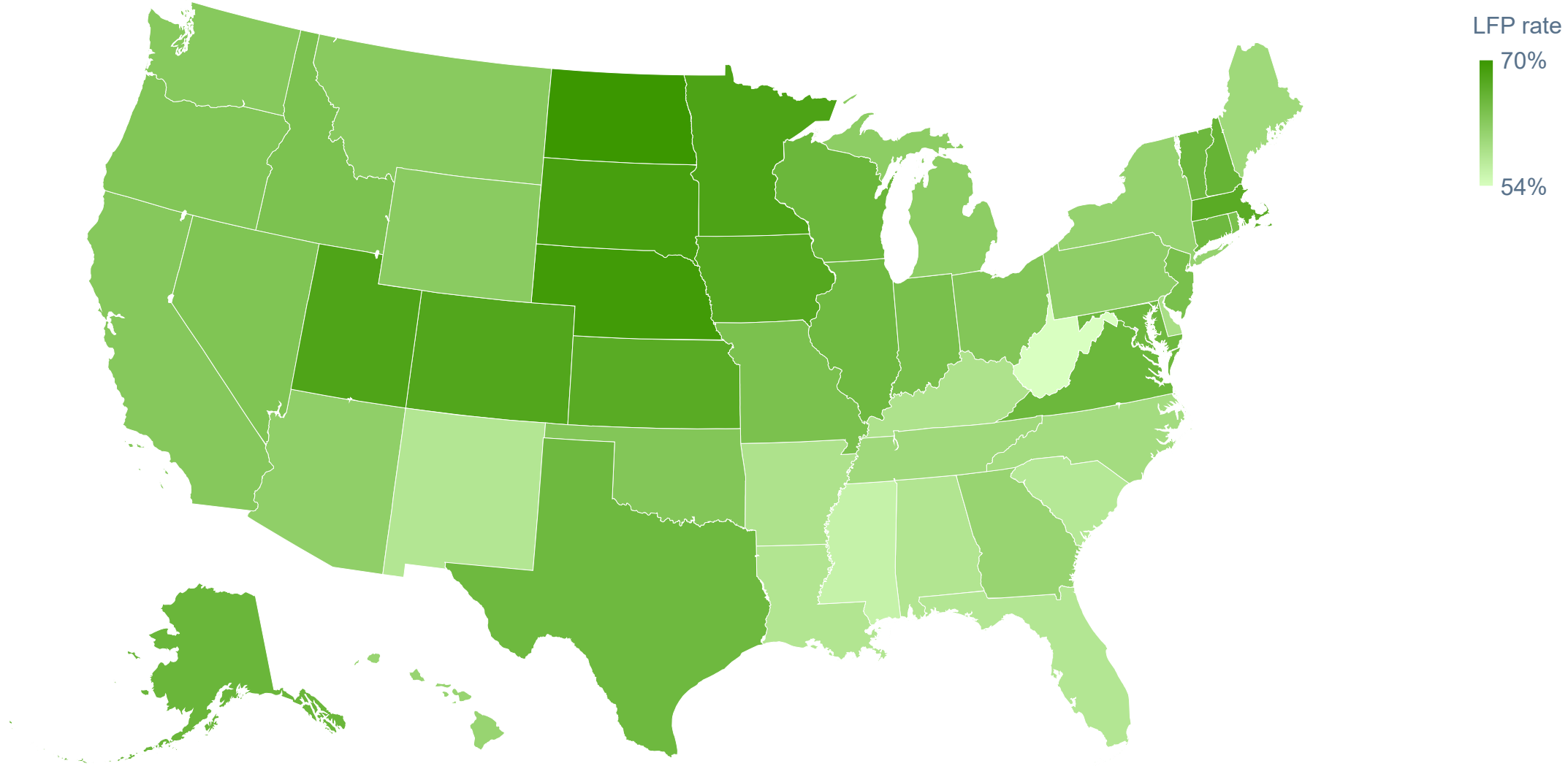
* Excluding Covid-19 lockdown

Labor Force Participation, 1976–2025



Source: Strada Institute for the Future of Work analysis of data from the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, 1976–2025..

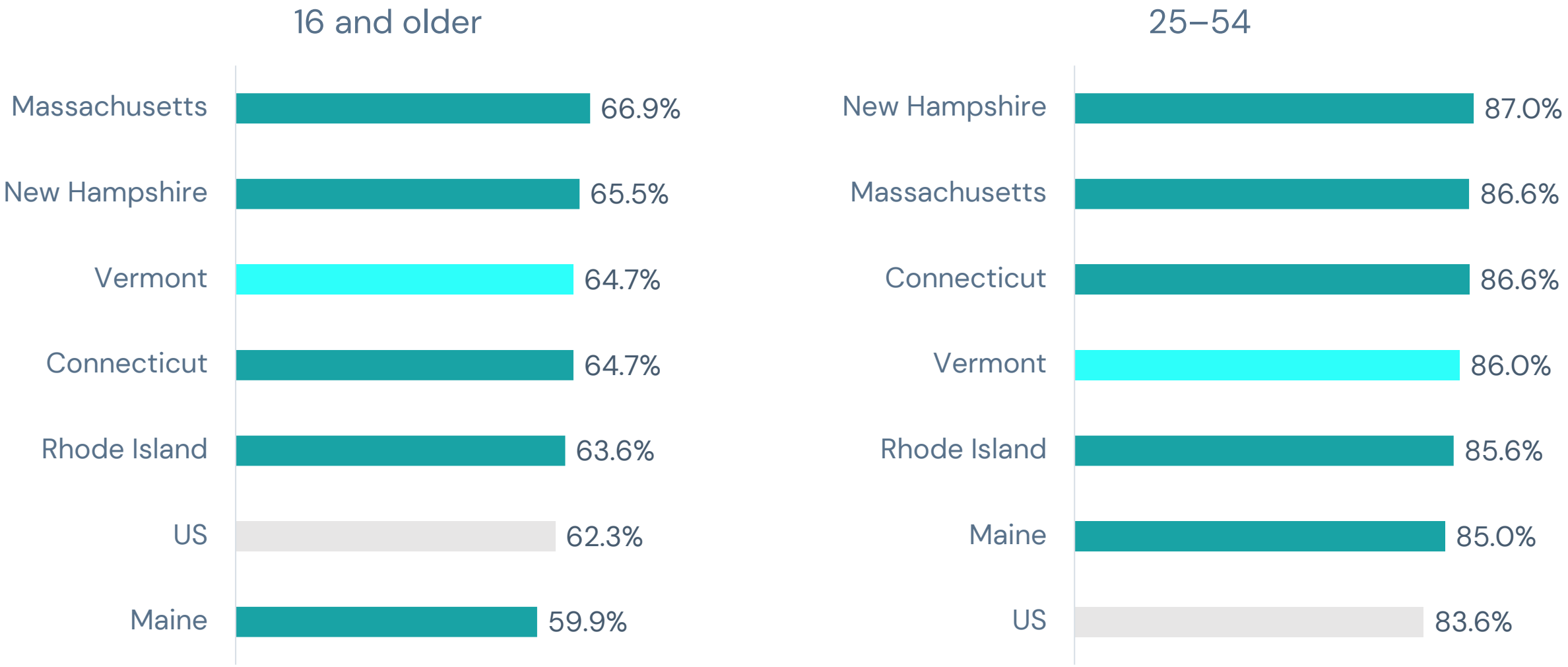
LFP ranges from 54% in West Virginia to 70% in North Dakota



Source: Strada Institute for the Future of Work analysis of data from the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, 2025..

strada

Labor Force Participation Rate (Current)



Source: Strada Institute for the Future of Work analysis of data from the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, 2025.

strada

Groups of Interest

(Age, Education, Sex, and Disabled Status)

Age

- Young: 16–24 years old
- Prime-age: 25–54 years old
- Older: 55 or older

Education

- College-educated (associate degree or higher)
- Non-college-educated (less than associate degree)

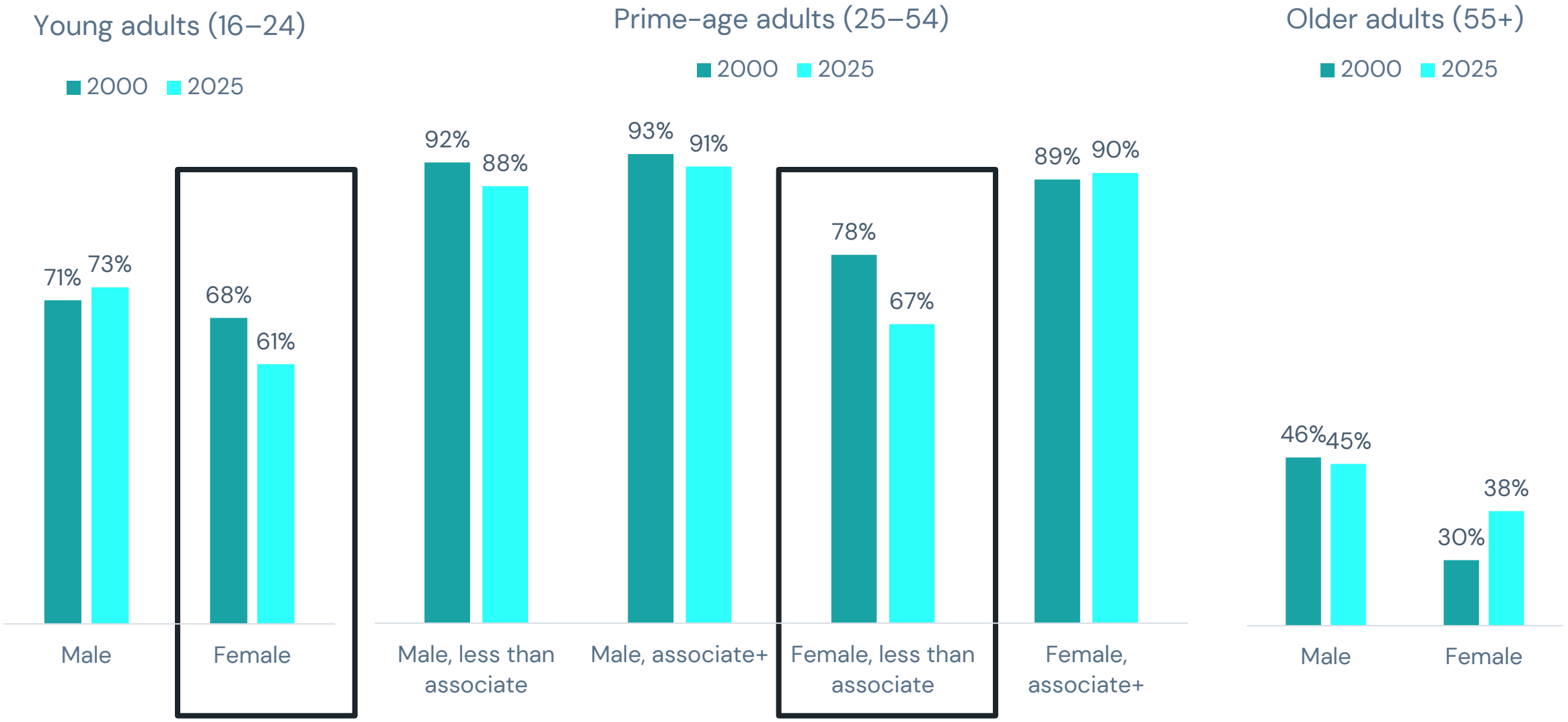
Sex

- Male
- Female

Disabled

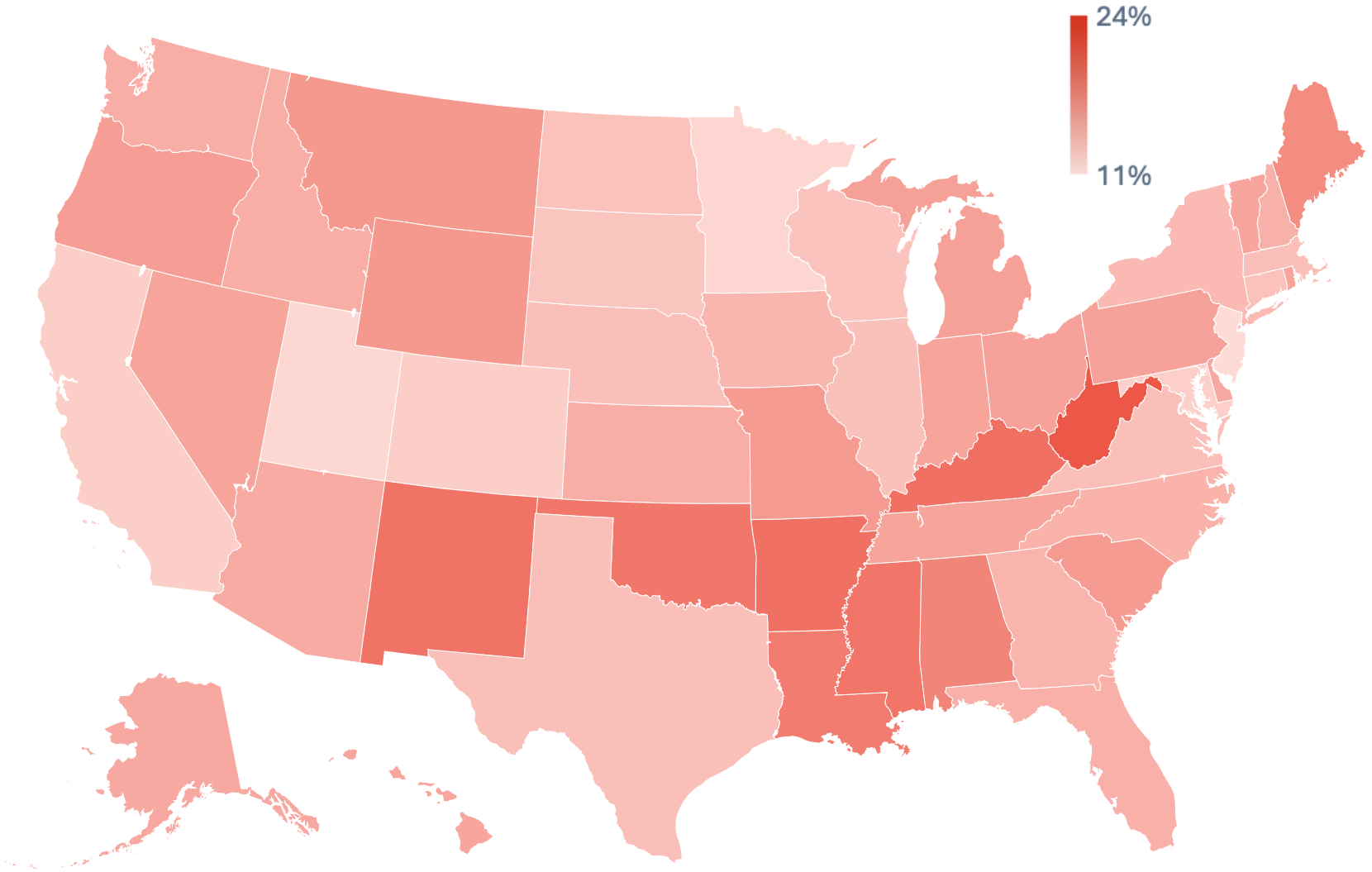
- Yes
- No

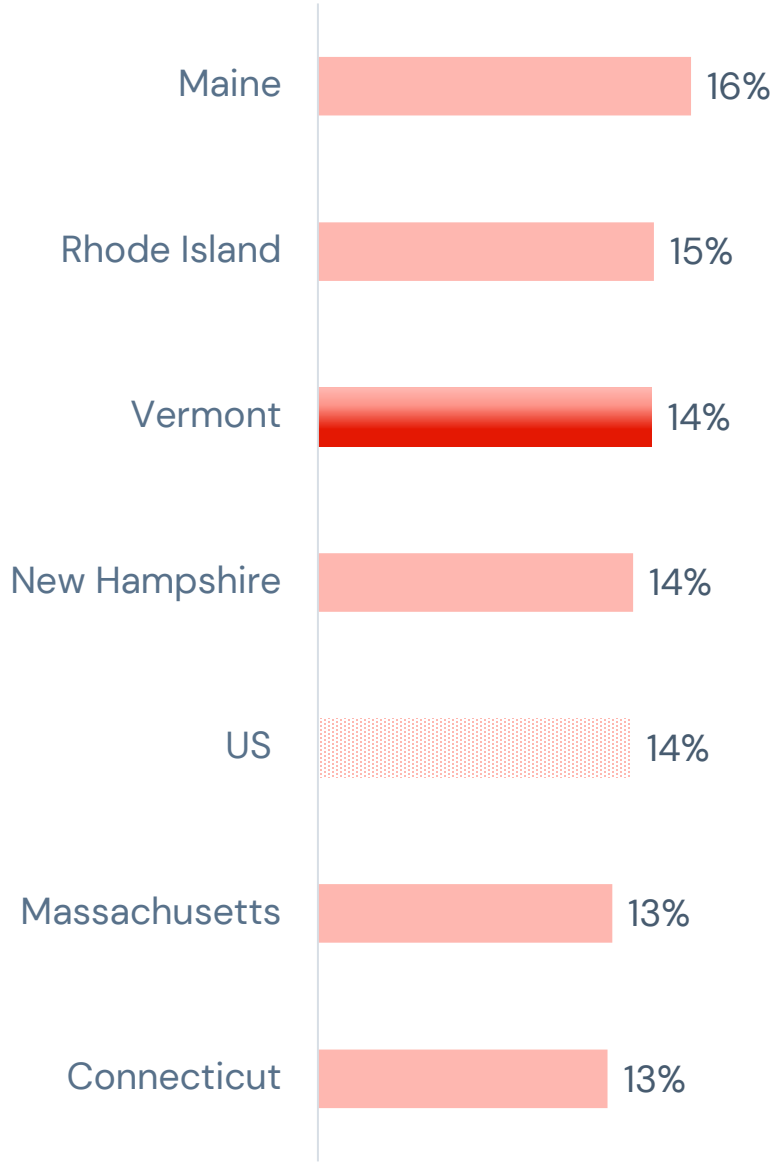
Labor Force Participation by Group: 2000 vs 2025



Source: Strada Institute for the Future of Work analysis of data from the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, 2000–2025.

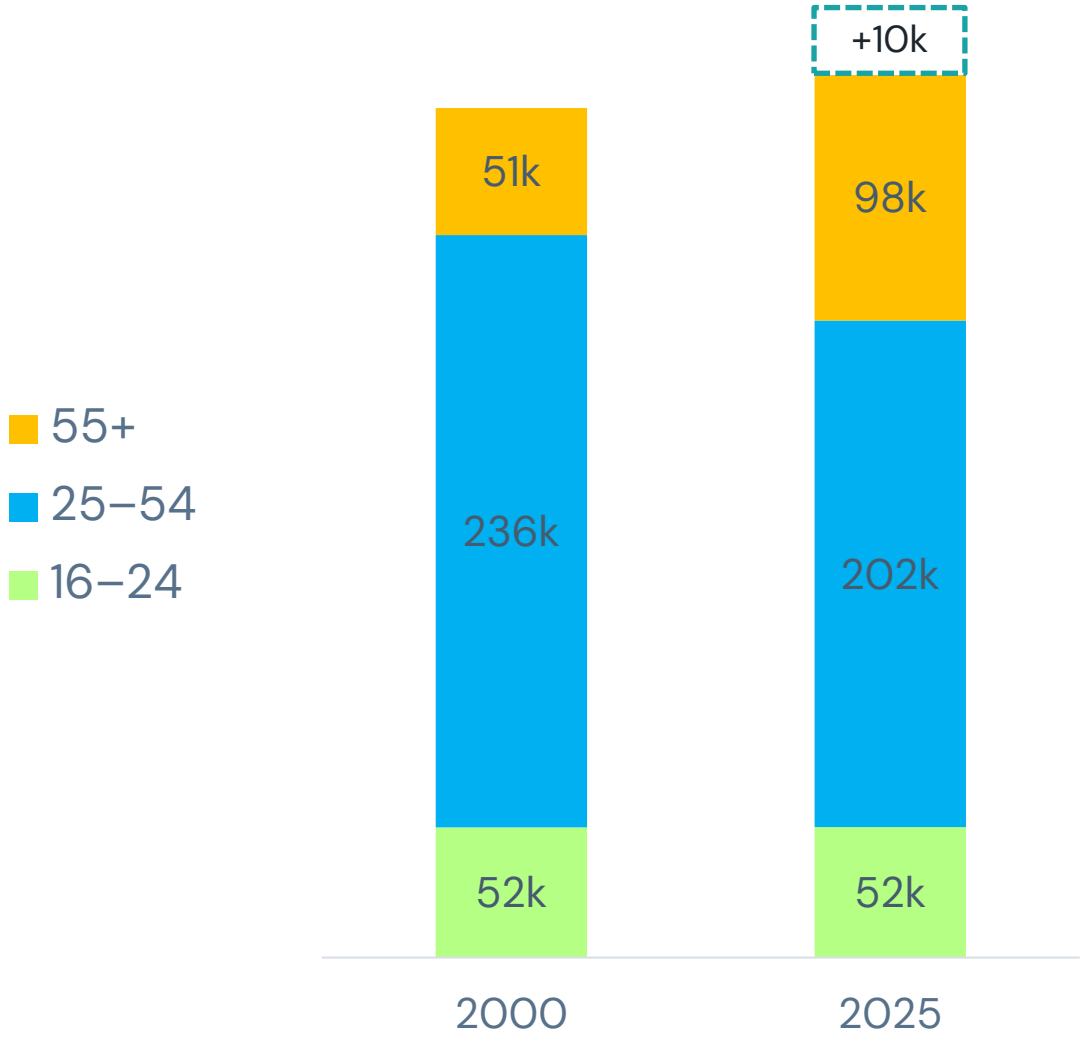
Disability Rate by State, 2023

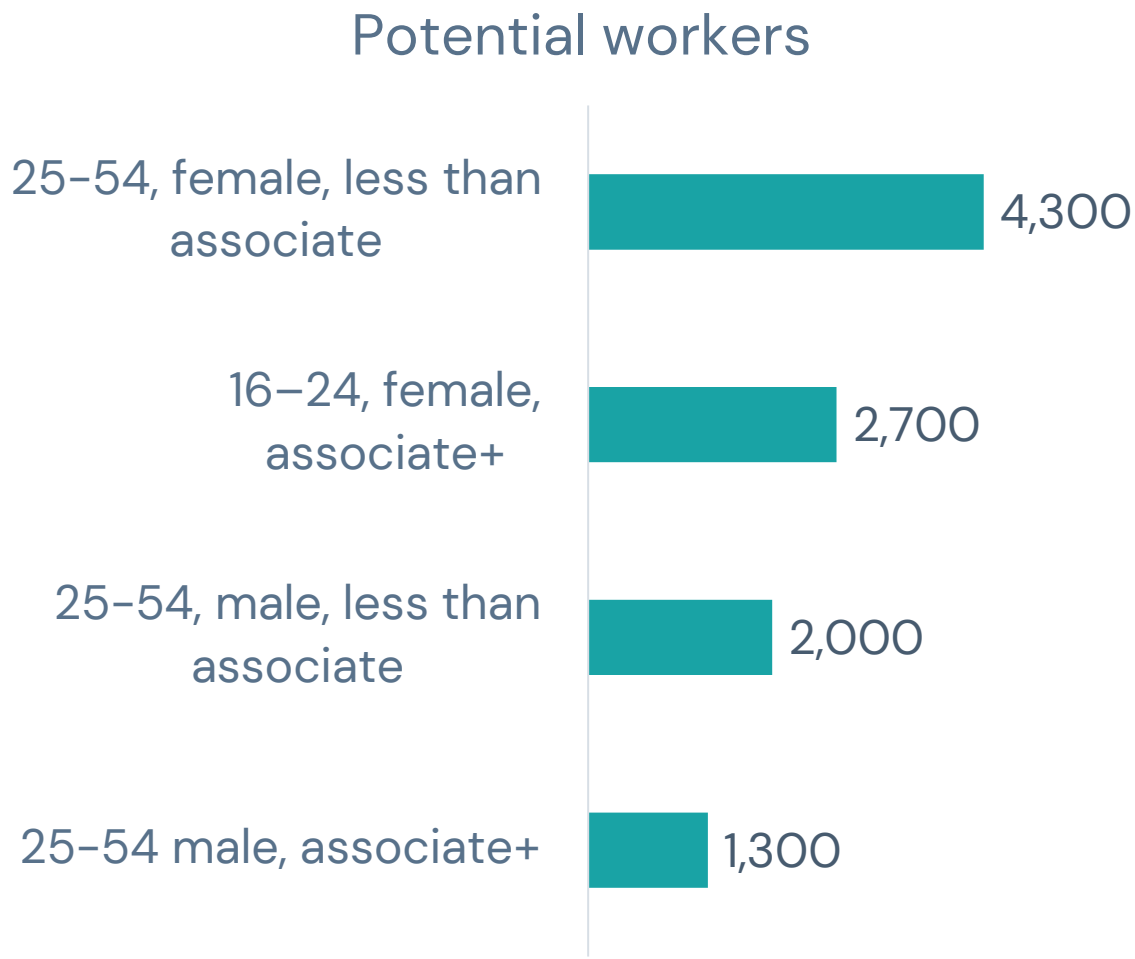




Source: Strada Institute for the Future of Work analysis of data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2023.

Vermont would add more than 10,000 workers if the LFP rates for young and prime-age adults were the same as in 2000





Source: Strada Institute for the Future of Work analysis of data from the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, 2000–2025.

strada

Recap: Labor Force Participation in Vermont

- VT is doing better than the U.S., but the gap has closed markedly since 2010
- VT is in the middle of the New England states, with a trajectory largely mirroring NH
- Aging of VT's population explains much of the decline (more than 21% of VT's population is over 65, which is fourth highest in the U.S.)
- Unlike the U.S., with declines most pronounced among men, VT has seen drops in participation among young women as well as prime-age women without a degree
- If VT's young and prime-age adults participated at the same rate they did in 2000, the state would have roughly 10,000 more workers today

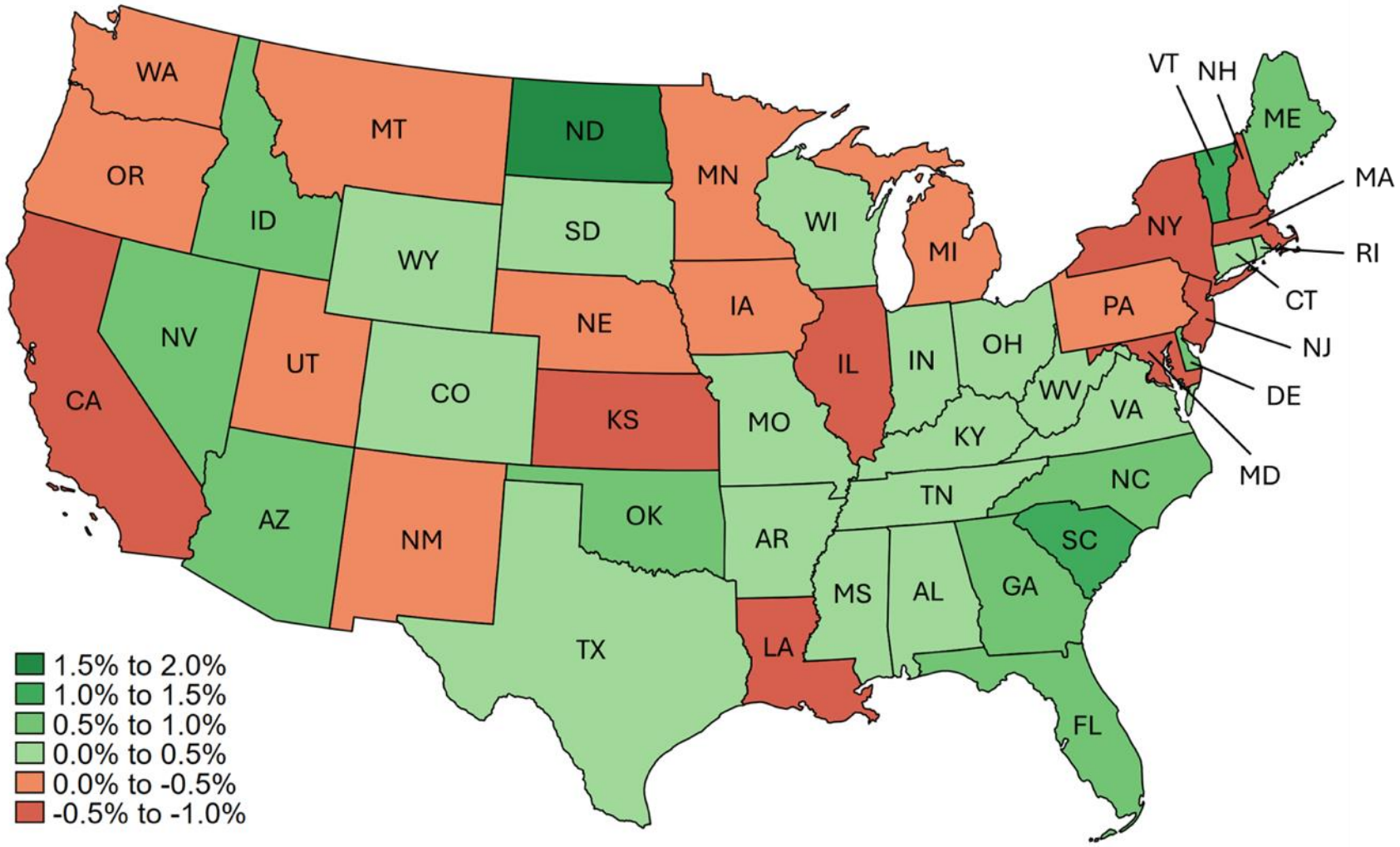
Labor Force Participation: Barriers and Solutions

	Barrier	Solutions
	**Skills Mismatch**: Lack of skills for today's in-demand jobs	PSET policy reforms that promote upskilling, e.g., expand high-demand, high-wage programs
	**Public Benefits Cliffs**: Increased earnings can trigger benefit losses, discouraging employment	Eligibility redesign or individual development accounts and supplemental cash payments
	**Caregiving Responsibilities**: Inaccessible child and elder care limits work, especially for women	Expanding affordable childcare and eldercare
	**Health Challenges**: Chronic illness, disability, and mental health issues reduce participation	Supports for people with disabilities (e.g., workplace accommodations)
	**Formerly Incarcerated**: Legal barriers and stigma block employment	Reducing employment barriers for formerly incarcerated people
	**Technology & Transportation Gaps**: Limited broadband and transit restrict job access	Expand broadband / transportation access

strada

Interstate Migration of College Grads

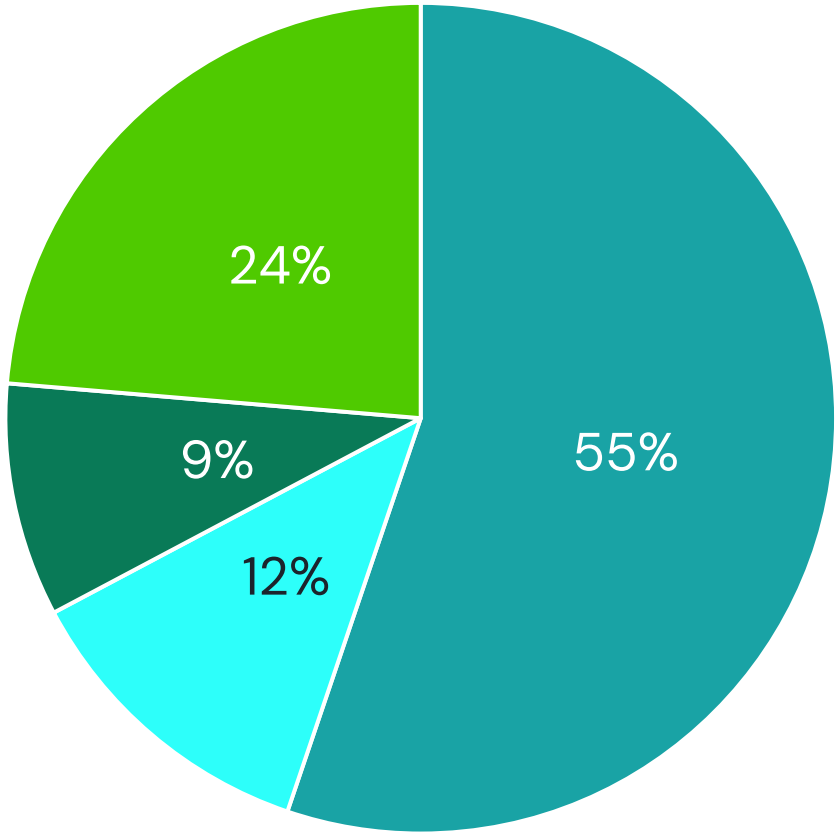
Net Interstate Population Migration Overall (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, State-to-State Migration Flows, 2023 (Calculated using American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, based on place-of-residence one year ago and current residence, aggregated for all 50 states). https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/geographic-mobility/state-to-state-migration.html. The net interstate migration rate is calculated by dividing a state's net migration in 2023 by the state's total population aged one year or older in 2023.

strada

Largest Sources of College-Educated Talent Nationwide: Homegrown (55%) and Migrated for Work (24%)

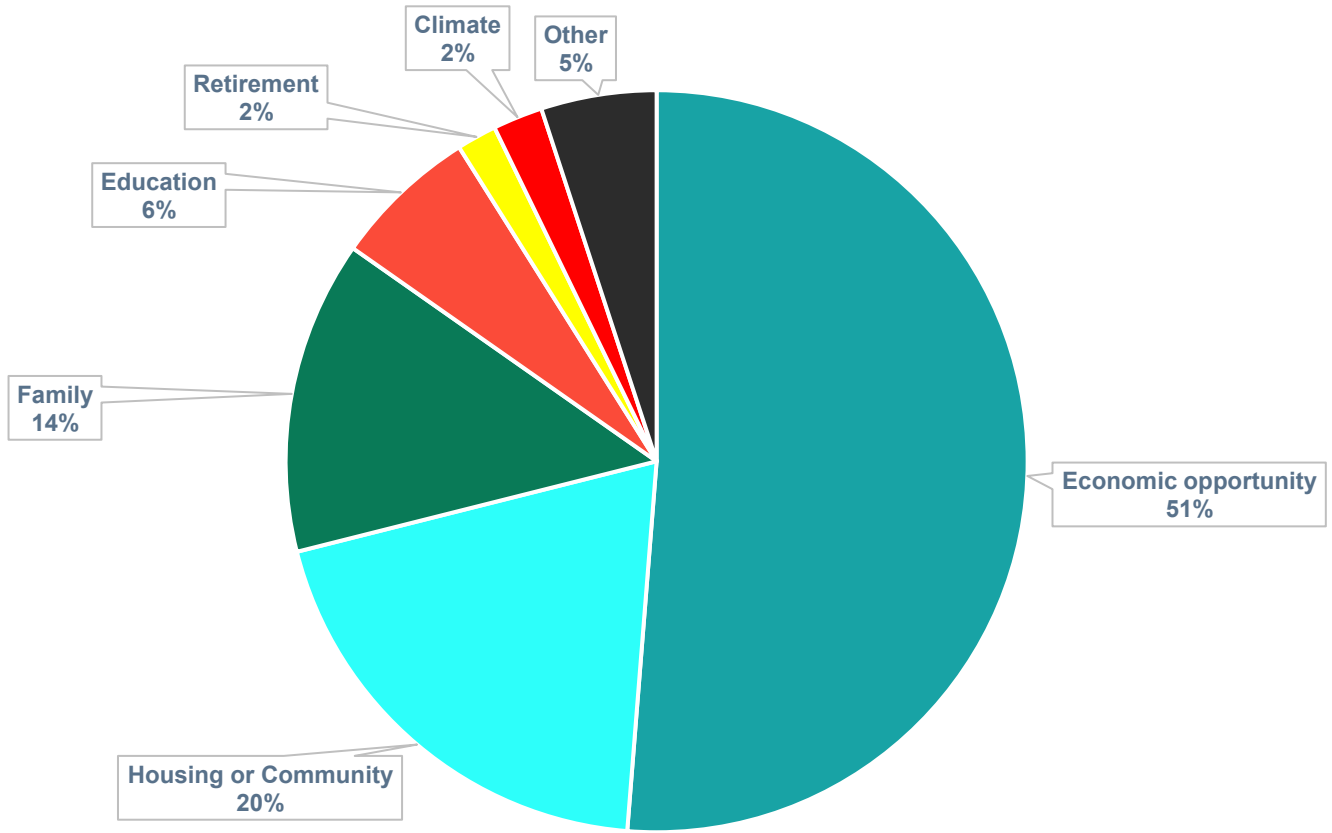


- Stayed home for college and now working in-state
- Completed college elsewhere and returned home to work
- Came for college and stayed for work
- Came for work after completing college elsewhere

Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 15,785 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree and are engaged in the labor force. The survey was conducted between October 2018 and April 2019.

strada

Most Common Motivations for Interstate Migration of College Grads Nationwide: Economic Opportunity (51%) and Housing/Community (20%)



Data Source: Current Population Survey collected by the US Census Bureau between 2015 and 2024 from 7,259 individuals ages 20-65 years with a bachelor's or graduate degree who had migrated across state lines in the past year.

strada

Composition of Categorical Reasons for Migration

Economic Opportunity (51%)

1. New job or job transfer
2. Look for work or lost job
3. Other job-related reason

Housing or Community (20%)

- Wanted new or better housing
- Wanted to own home, not rent
- To establish own household
- For cheaper housing
- For easier commute
- Wanted better neighborhood
- Other housing reason

Family (14%)

- Change in marital status
- Relationship with unmarried partner
- Other family reason

Education (6%)

- Attend/leave college

Retirement (2%)

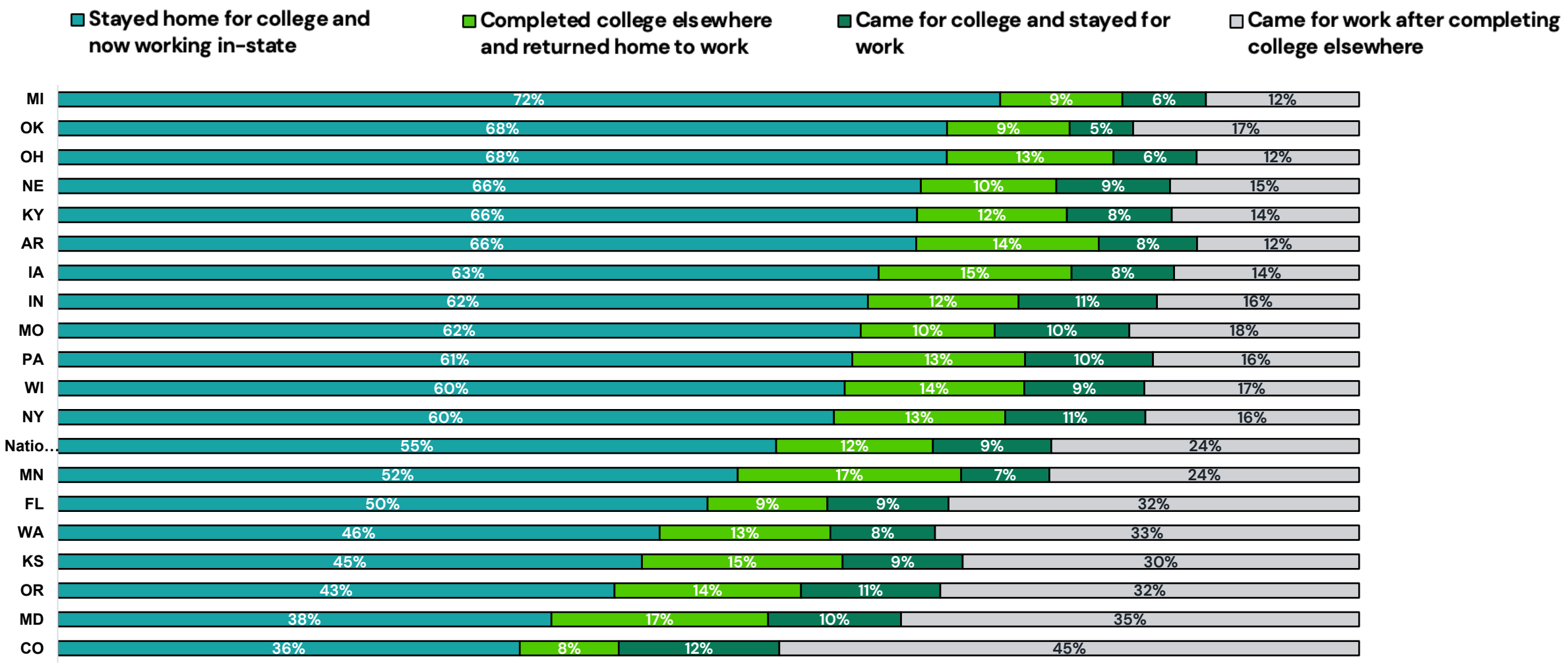
- Retired

Climate (5%)

- Change of climate
- Natural disaster

States Source College Grad Talent in Very Different Ways

Selected states represented at NASC Annual Meeting with at least 110 survey respondents



Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 15,785 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree and are engaged in the labor force. The survey was conducted between October 2018 and April 2019.

strada

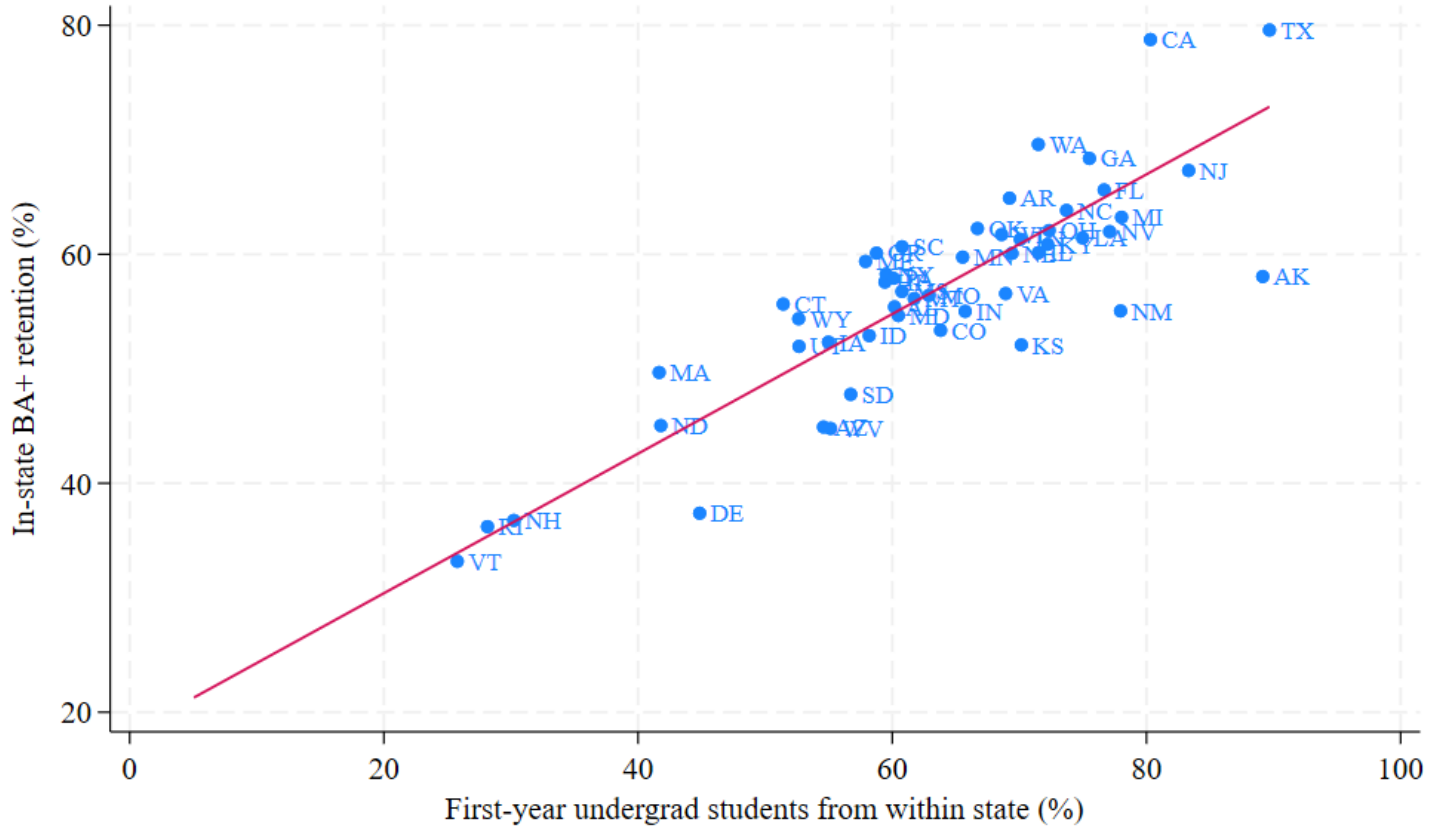
Top and Bottom States in Each Migration Category

	Stayed home for college and now working in-state	Completed college elsewhere and returned home for work	Came for college and stayed for work	Came for work after college
National Avg.	**55%**	**12%**	**9%**	**24%**
Top	Michigan (72%)	New Jersey (26%)	Utah (22%)	Colorado (45%)
	Alabama, Ohio, and Oklahoma (68%)	Connecticut (18%)	Arizona (16%)	Virginia (38%)
	California and Louisiana (67%)	Illinois (17%)	Massachusetts (15%)	Georgia (35%)
	Arkansas, Nebraska, and Kentucky (66%)	Maryland (17%)		Maryland (35%)
		Minnesota (17%)		Arizona and South Carolina (34%)
Bottom	Maryland (38%)	Alabama and Utah (6%)	New Jersey (4%)	Michigan (12%)
	Colorado (36%)	Arizona (7%)	Connecticut (5%)	Ohio (12%)
	Arizona (43%)	Tennessee (7%)	Oklahoma (5%)	Arkansas (12%)
	Oregon (43%)	Colorado (8%)		Iowa (14%)
	Kansas (45%)	North Carolina (8%)		Kentucky (14%)

Table is based on the 35 states that had at least 110 respondents each. Top and bottom states for each migration category differ by at least one standard deviation from the average of the 35 states.

strada

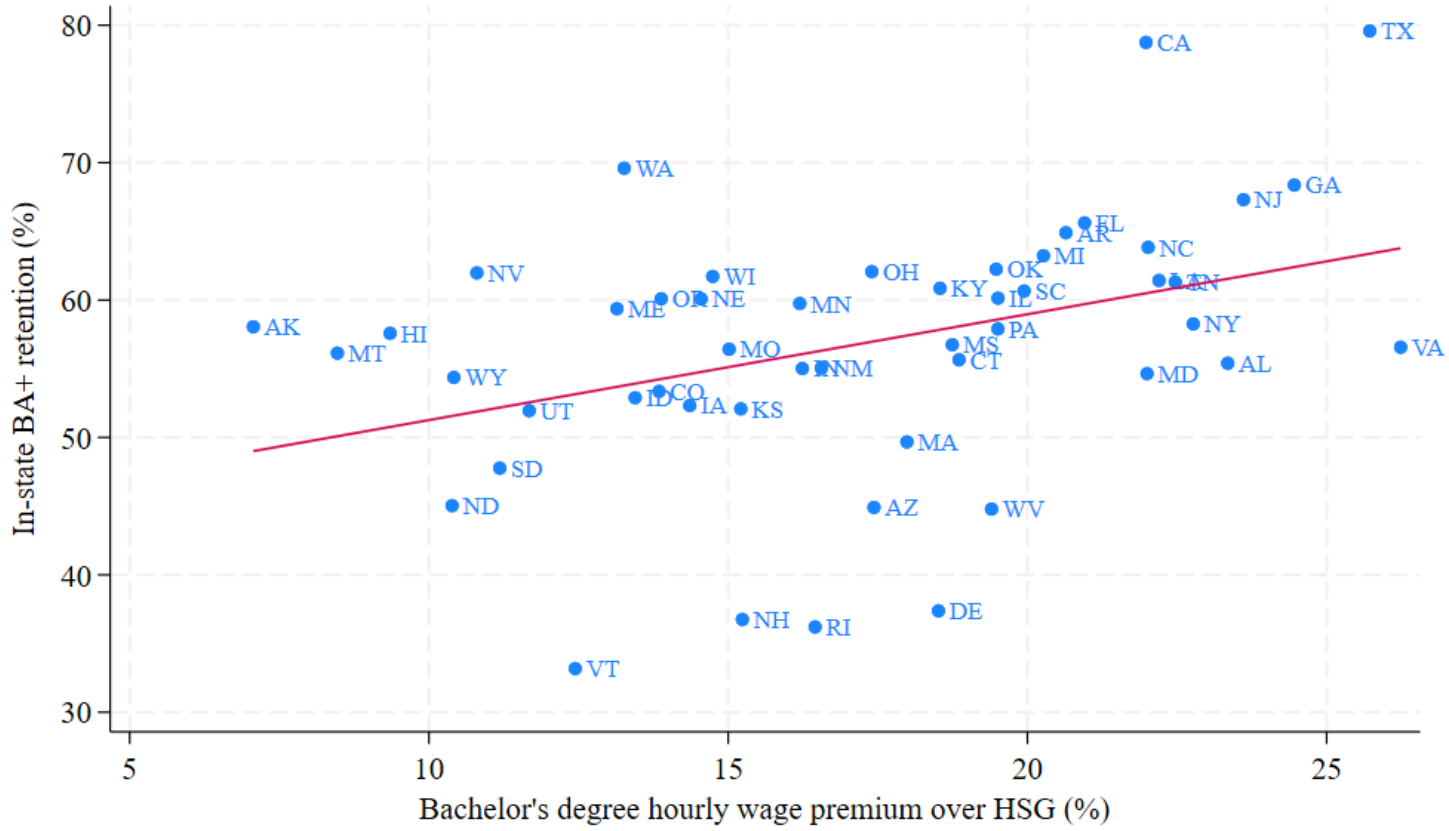
States that Enroll a Higher Percentage of In-State First-Year Undergraduates Tend to Have Higher In-State Retention Rates



Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 97,724 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree, combined with publicly available state-level data. The survey was conducted between June 2016 and April 2019.

strada

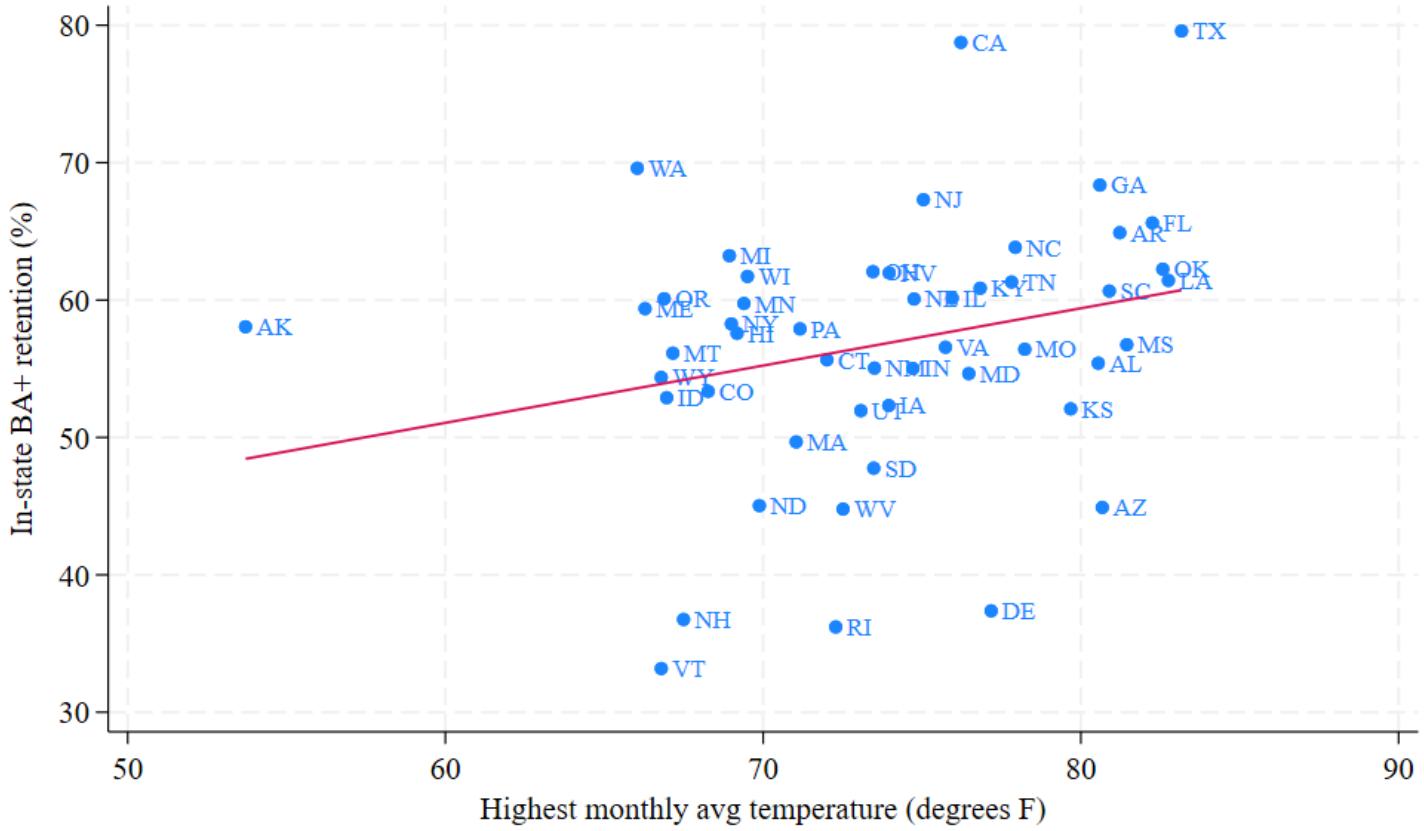
States with a Higher College Wage Premium Tend to Have Higher In-State Retention Rates



Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 97,724 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree, combined with publicly available state-level data. The survey was conducted between June 2016 and April 2019.

strada

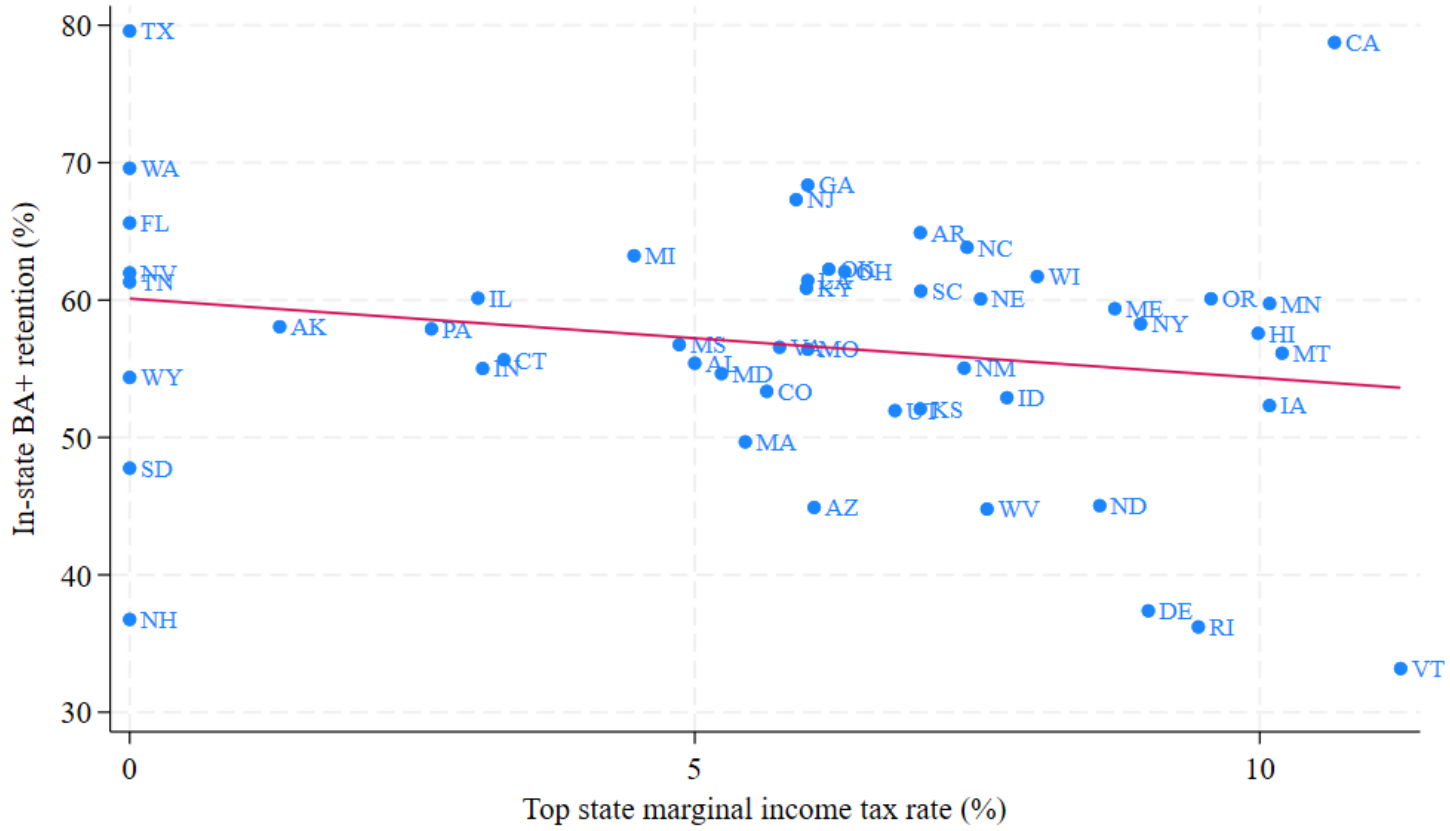
States with Warmer Weather Tend to Have Somewhat Higher In-State Retention Rates



Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 97,724 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree, combined with publicly available state-level data. The survey was conducted between June 2016 and April 2019.

strada

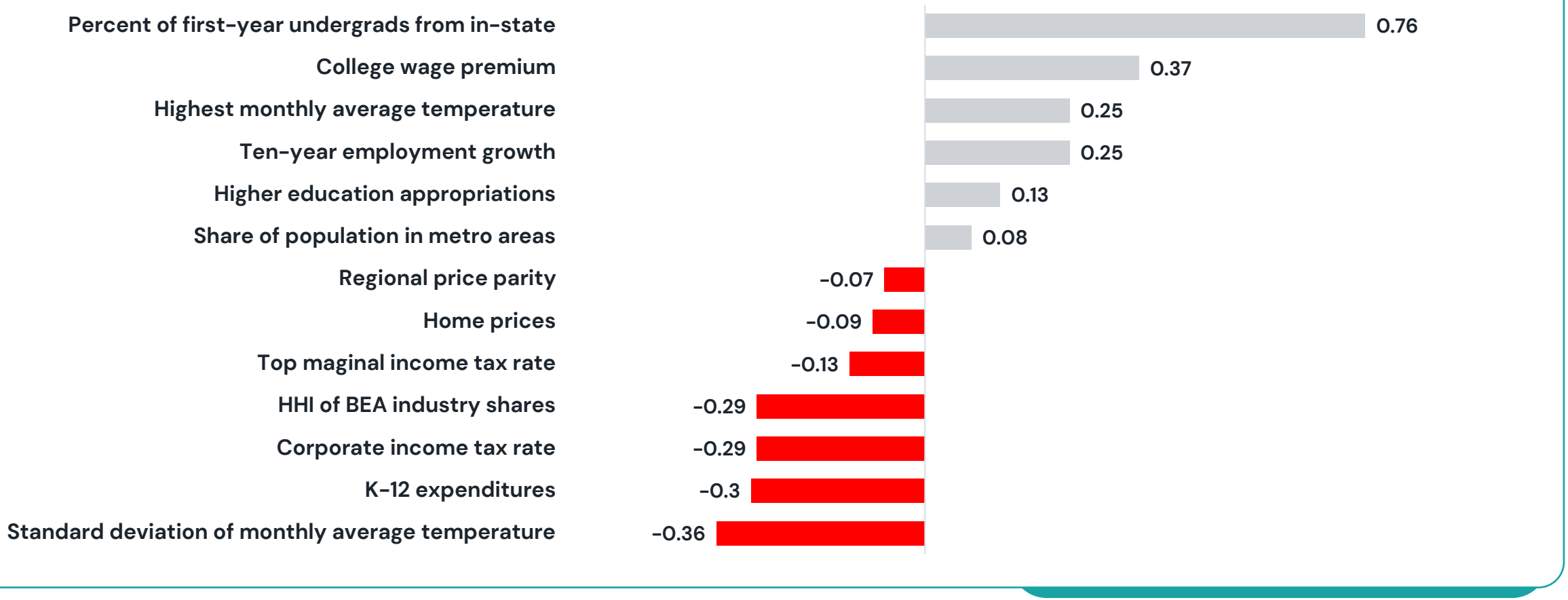
States with Lower Income Tax Rates Tend to Somewhat Have Higher In-State Retention Rates



Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 97,724 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree, combined with publicly available state-level data. The survey was conducted between June 2016 and April 2019.

strada

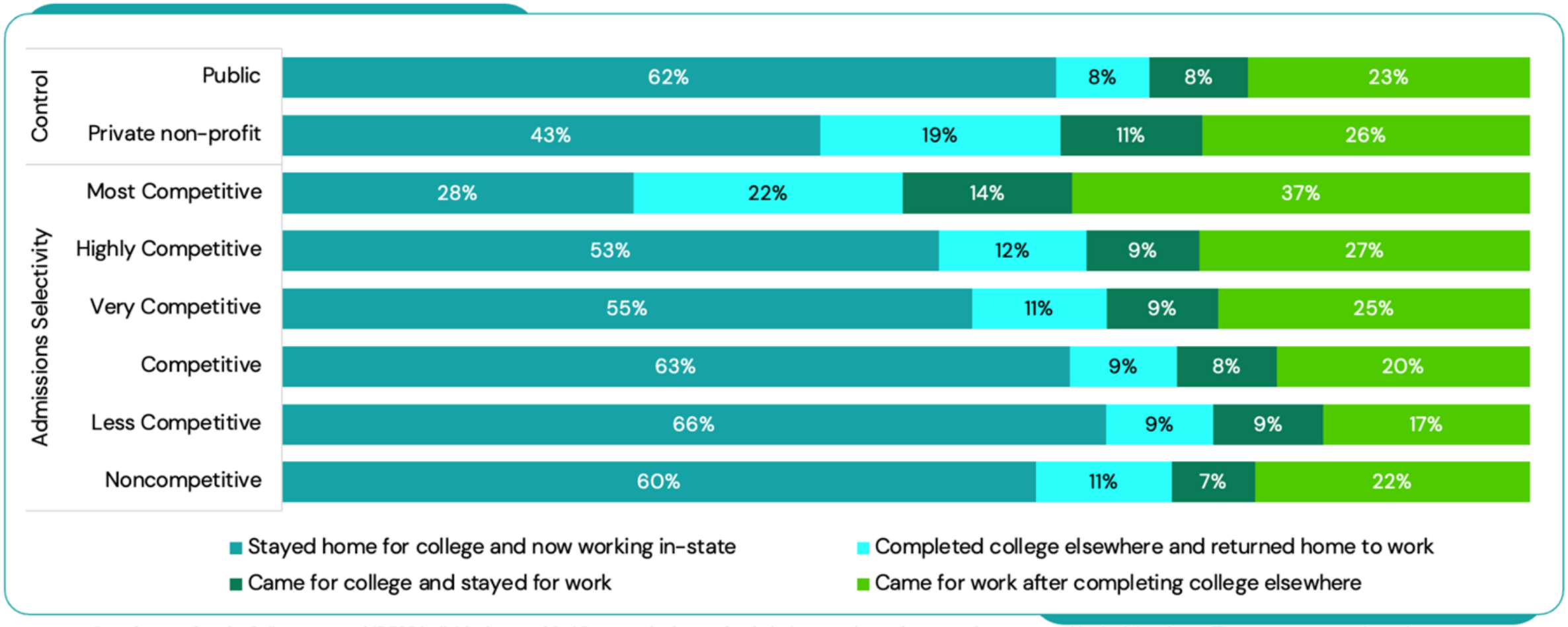
The Big Picture of Correlated Factors



Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 97,724 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree, combined with publicly available state-level data. The survey was conducted between June 2016 and April 2019.

strada

Public Colleges and Colleges with Less Competitive Admissions Are Strong Sources of Homegrown Talent



Data Source: Strada-Gallup survey of 15,785 individuals ages 20-65 years who have a bachelor's or graduate degree and are engaged in the labor force. The survey was conducted between October 2018 and April 2019.

strada

How to Retain Vermont's College Grad Talent

1. Keep more high school graduates in-state for their postsecondary education
2. Ensure ready access to programs leading to high-wage, in-demand occupations
3. Implement measures to support strong job growth

What Do We Know Works?

Strong alignment with Vermont Economic Action Plan

- Clear, accurate, up-to-date, major-specific information for students and families on the earnings and career trajectories of graduates
- Quality education-to-career coaching that maps education pathways to local or regional labor market opportunities
- Work-based learning opportunities, especially paid internships and apprenticeships, with local employers
- Coordination of state investments in workforce development and higher ed to ensure programs meet current and emerging workforce needs

Data: A Critical Building Block for Progress

The Data Gap Holds Everyone Back

Without high-quality outcomes data...

Credential Issuers

Can't prove program effectiveness, making it harder to attract students and funding

Employers

Struggle to differentiate between high-quality credentials and weak ones

Funders and Policymakers

Lack reliable data to direct workforce funding effectively

Learners

Invest in credentials without clear insight into economic returns

What If Vermont Get This All This Right?

Q&A