

# THE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION & CHARACTERISTICS OF OLDER WORKERS IN ALABAMA

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## LOCAL EMPLOYMENT DYNAMICS

*2013 Data*



Updated April 21, 2015

## HIGHLIGHTS

The statistics about older workers in Alabama in 2013 increased. Changes in the size and composition of age groups may affect government program and policy choices and the options available to businesses. National projections indicate that the population 65 and older will increase from about 1 in 8 people to 1 in 5 people by 2030, so that older workers will likely compose an increasingly larger proportion of each state's workforce.<sup>1</sup> Whether, and in what industries, the large wave of workers born during the Baby Boom of 1946 to 1964 are currently working may influence their labor force behavior beyond traditional retirement ages. That is important information for firms planning for the eventual loss of experienced workers and the payout of pensions. In 2013, the Baby Boom cohort was aged 49 to 67.

This report uses data from the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) program to show the geographic distribution and the economic dynamics among private sector workers 55 and older (also including some statistics on those aged 45 to 54). It includes comparisons among the counties (and county equivalents) and between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas of Alabama.<sup>2</sup>

This document has been updated by the Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division. The original text as presented with 2004 data by the U.S. Census Bureau<sup>3</sup> has been maintained largely intact with the information refreshed using available 2013 data. For more information, please visit <http://lehd.did.census.gov>.

Industries are classified according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Because the Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) are updated every 3 months, the numbers in this report may differ from the

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2004. "U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin," <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/natprojtabo2a.xls>.

<sup>2</sup> The metropolitan and nonmetropolitan county classifications are based on Census 2000. For definitions of specific metropolitan statistical areas, see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metroarea.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Taeuber, Cynthia and Matthew R. Graham, 2009. The Geographic Distribution and Characteristics of Older Workers in Alabama: 2004. LED Older Workers Profile, LED-OW04- AL. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

most recent ones on the current LED Web site, <http://lehd.did.census.gov>.

This report defines "older workers" as those 55 and older. Information is displayed for all workers by age groups to facilitate comparisons among workers and provide information about the potential characteristics of future older workers. The characteristics and geographic distribution throughout Alabama of three groups of older workers are shown: those who may be receiving pension income but who are working (65 and older) and two pre-retirement groups of workers (those aged 45 to 54 and aged 55 to 64), who may start collecting pensions and social security over the next two decades.

With the LED information, state planners can monitor changes in the workforce and emerging trends. Detailed statistics about workers by age in counties and metropolitan areas and nonmetropolitan areas of Alabama are available on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site, <http://www.census.gov>.

Following are the highlights from the detailed statistics.

## CHARACTERISTICS AND EMPLOYMENT DYNAMICS OF OLDER WORKERS by Age Composition of the Workforce

•Of the 67 counties in Alabama, 20.0 percent or more of the total workforce in 50 counties was 55 and older.

•Statewide, 20.4 percent of workers were 55 and older. The five counties with the highest percentage of workers 55 and older were:

County	Percentage of Workforce
Washington	29.5
Coosa	29.2
Macon	28.2
Perry	28.0
Sumter	27.4

•Statewide, 5.1 percent of workers were 65 and older. The five counties with the highest percentage of workers 65 and older were:

County	Percentage of Workforce
Macon	8.3
Perry	7.9
Coosa	7.6
Henry	6.6
Pickens	6.3

- All counties in Alabama experienced an increase from 2005 to 2013 in percentage of workforce that was 55 and older. The largest increase was in Greene County with an increase over the period of 10.6% percent.

- Of the total workforce employed in metropolitan statistical areas, about 20.5 percent was 55 and older; and in nonmetropolitan area workplaces, the figure was 22.3 percent.

### Industry Sectors with the Highest Proportions of Older Workers in 2013

- Statewide, among industry sectors that employed 100 or more workers 55 and older, Educational Services (NAICS 61) had the highest proportion of workers in this age group. This sector had the highest percentage of workers 55 and older in 5 counties.

- Statewide, industry sectors with more than 20 percent of workers 55 and older that employed at least 100 or more workers from that age group were:

Industry	Percentage of Workforce
61 Educational Services	27.6%
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	26.6%
21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	25.6%
22 Utilities	25.6%
92 Public Administration	25.6%
53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	25.4%
81 Other Services	24.6%
48-49 Transportation & Warehousing	23.7%
42 Wholesale Trade	23.5%
54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22.3%
55 Management of Companies and Enterprises	20.9%
62 Healthcare and Social Assistance	20.7%
31-33 Manufacturing	20.4%

- In metropolitan statistical areas of the state, the industry sector that employed the largest percentage of workers 55 and older was Educational Services (NAICS 61), with 27.5 percent; the industry sector with the highest proportion of workers 65 and older was Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (NAICS 53), with 8.0 percent.

- In nonmetropolitan area work-places in Alabama, the industry sector that employed the largest percentage of workers 55 and older was Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (NAICS 53), with 30.2 percent. Other Services (NAICS 81) had the highest proportion of workers 65 and older, with 9.9 percent.

### Industry Sectors Most Likely to Employ Older Workers in 2013

- Of the workers in the state 55 and older, 14.2 percent were employed in Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33), the highest proportion for that age group of any industry sector in the state. This industry was ranked number one in 39 of 67 counties.

- Of the workers 55 and older in the state’s metropolitan statistical areas, 13.9 percent were employed in Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62). The highest proportion for that age group in the metropolitan areas among industrial sectors.

- Of the workers 55 and older in the state’s nonmetropolitan area workplaces, 23.8 percent were employed in Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33), by far the highest proportion for that age group in nonmetropolitan area’s among industrial sectors.

### Quarterly Job Gains and Losses in 2013

- On average, for workers 55 to 64 years old, 8,297 jobs were created quarterly and 12,195 jobs were lost quarterly. For workers 65 and older, the numbers were 3,371 and 5,976, respectively.

- The county with the largest share of job gains for workers 55 to 64 years old was Greene County, with 20.6 percent. The largest share of job losses for such workers was in Washington County, with 27.0 percent.

- The county with the largest share of job gains for workers 65 and older was Pickens County, with 9.2 percent. The largest share of job losses for such workers was in Randolph County, with 15.1 percent.

- The industry sector with the largest gain in jobs for workers 55 to 64 years old was Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45), with an average of 1,038 jobs gained per quarter at the state level. The most jobs lost by that age group were in Healthcare and Social Assistance (NAICS 62), with an average of 1,412 jobs lost per quarter at the state level.

- The industry sector with the largest gain in jobs for workers 65 and older was Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45), with 431 jobs gained per quarter at the state level. The most jobs lost by that age group was in Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45), with 757 jobs lost per quarter at the state level.

### Average Earnings of Older Workers in 2013

- Statewide, on average, workers 55 to 64 earned \$4,161 a month; workers 65 to 99, on average, earned \$3,140.

- Of industry sectors employing at least 100 workers 55 and older, the highest paying was Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (NAICS 21). Workers in that sector earned, on average, \$6,804 per month. The lowest paying was Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72). Workers in this sector earned, on average, \$1,764 per month. The following table shows statewide average monthly earnings in 2013 for full-quarter, private-sector wage and salary workers 55 to 64 and 65 to 99 by NAICS sector.

Industry	Earnings (\$)	
	55-64	65-99
All NAICS Sectors	4,161	3,140
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3,393	2,639
21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extract	6,933	5,998

Industry	Earnings (\$)	
	55-64	65-99
22 Utilities	6,860	4,837
23 Construction	4,350	3,788
31-33 Manufacturing	4,885	4,223
42 Wholesale Trade	5,181	3,784
44-45 Retail Trade	2,753	2,025
48-49 Transportation and Warehousing	3,864	2,889
51 Information	5,478	3,298
52 Finance and Insurance	5,900	4,931
53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,550	2,604
54 Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	6,603	5,585
55 Management of Companies and Enterprises	5,942	4,690
56 Administrative and Support and Waste Mgt	2,763	2,161
61 Educational Services	3,581	2,894
62 Health Care and Social Assistance	4,028	3,488
71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,429	1,426
72 Accommodation and Food Services	1,889	1,463
81 Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,195	2,152
92 Public Administration	3,554	2,520

## Older Workers in Metropolitan Statistical Areas and in Nonmetropolitan Area Workplaces in 2013

•In metropolitan statistical areas, the five industry sectors with the largest percentage of workers 55 and older were:

Industry	Percentage of workers
61 Educational Services	27.5
21 Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	26.1
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	26.0
92 Public Administration	25.1
22 Utilities	25.1

•In nonmetropolitan area work-places, the five industry sectors with the largest percentage of workers 55 and older were:

Industry	Percentage of workers
53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	30.2
51 Information	28.9
61 Educational Services	28.6
92 Public Administration	28.6
81 Other Services (except Public Administration)	28.6

•In metropolitan area work-places, of industry sectors employing at least 100 workers that were aged 55 to 64, the highest paying sector for those workers was Utilities (NAICS 22). On average, this sector paid \$7,140 a month. The lowest paying was Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72), which paid an average \$1,900 a month.

•In metropolitan area work-places, of industry sectors employing at least 100 workers ages 65 to 99, the highest paying for this age group was Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (NAICS 21), which paid on average, \$5,872 a month. The lowest paying was Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (NAICS 71), which paid on average, \$1,381 a month.

•In nonmetropolitan statistical areas, of industry sectors employing at least 100 workers ages 55 to 64, the highest paying for workers in this age range was Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction (NAICS 21) which paid an average \$6,027 a month. The lowest paying was Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72), which paid \$1,783 on average a month.

•In nonmetropolitan statistical areas, of industry sectors employing at least 100 workers ages 65 to 99, the highest paying for workers in this age range was Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction (NAICS 21) which paid an average \$4,660 a month. The lowest paying was Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72), which paid \$1,388 on average a month.

**Table 1—Percentage of Workers by Age in Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Nonmetropolitan Area Workplaces in Alabama: 2013**

Area of Workplace	45 - 54 years	55 - 64 years	65 - 99 years	55 - 99 years
<b>Alabama</b>	22.6	15.7	4.7	20.4
<i>Metropolitan Areas</i>				
<b>Anniston-Oxford, AL</b>	21.5	15.5	5.0	20.5
<b>Auburn-Opelika, AL</b>	19.2	13.0	4.0	16.9
<b>Birmingham-Hoover, AL</b>	22.2	15.7	4.6	20.4
<b>Columbus, GA-AL (AL part)</b>	23.2	15.3	4.5	19.8
<b>Daphne-Fairhope-Foley, AL</b>	21.2	14.6	5.3	19.9
<b>Decatur, AL</b>	24.7	15.7	4.3	20.1
<b>Dothan, AL</b>	22.5	16.0	5.0	21.0
<b>Florence-Muscle Shoals, AL</b>	22.4	15.5	4.7	20.2
<b>Gadsden, AL</b>	20.6	15.4	4.8	20.2
<b>Huntsville, AL</b>	24.1	15.1	4.4	19.5
<b>Mobile, AL</b>	22.4	16.2	4.7	20.9
<b>Montgomery, AL</b>	22.4	15.7	4.7	20.4
<b>Tuscaloosa, AL</b>	21.4	14.6	4.2	18.8
<i>Micropolitan Areas</i>				
<b>Albertville, AL</b>	22.1	14.4	4.6	18.9
<b>Cullman, AL</b>	22.1	15.4	5.0	20.4
<b>Enterprise-Ozark, AL</b>	21.5	15.0	4.8	19.8
<b>Ozark</b>	26.4	18.42	5.9	24.32
<b>Scottsboro, AL</b>	22.4	16.8	4.9	21.6
<b>Selma, AL</b>	25.4	19.4	5.3	24.7
<b>Talladega-Sylacauga, AL</b>	24.9	15.8	4.2	20.0
<b>Troy, AL</b>	21.9	16.3	5.6	21.8
<b>Valley, AL</b>	23.4	16.1	5.3	21.4
<b>All metropolitan areas</b>	22.5	15.5	4.6	20.2
<b>Nonmetropolitan, nonmicropolitan areas</b>	23.8	17.1	5.2	22.3

## The Local Employment Dynamics Program

The LED program is a partnership between the Census Bureau and Alabama, along with every other state in the nation. LED produces QWI for each partner state as well as each partner state's metropolitan areas, combined nonmetropolitan areas,

counties, and Workforce Development Board areas. Quarterly and annual averages are available at <<http://lehd.did.census.gov>>.

## Overview

The QWI are measures of economic characteristics and change selected jointly by the Census Bureau and Alabama and the other partner states. Each component of the QWI provides a critical measure of an area's economy and can be used as a tool to better understand changes in the core performance of local economies.

Listed in this report are figures and data tables that show selected QWI statistics on older workers. Comprehensive summary data that cover geographic areas and include age and gender composition by industry, total employment, net job flows, job gains and job losses, separations, new hires, skill level (quarters of employment), and average monthly earnings are available on the web site.

Nine months after a quarter ends, the Census Bureau and its partners update the workforce indicators for that quarter. This provides current and historical information about the characteristics of America's workers and a tool to monitor economic change.<sup>4</sup> The statistics are comparable across time, making it possible to identify emerging workforce trends and turning points and to compare geographic areas and demographic groups working in specific industries. Industries are classified according to the NAICS.

The QWI come from a mixture of data sources, the base of which is a census of jobs. The LED database includes all jobs a worker holds and allows multiple definitions of "employment" in order to respond to a wide variety of questions about the workforce (see "Sources and Accuracy of the Estimates" in the following section). The definition of "employment" in this report, unless stated otherwise, is "beginning of quarter" employment – that is, the total number of workers who were employed by the same employer in the *reference* quarter and the *previous* quarter.

As job-based statistics, the QWI are not directly comparable with statistics from worker-based surveys, such as the decennial and economic censuses, the American Community Survey, or the Current Population Survey. Neither are the QWI exactly comparable with data from establishment surveys, such as those from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, which capture employment data at establishments on the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Throughout the report, "*earnings*" refer only to the earnings of workers who were employed for a *full quarter* – that is, those who were employed by the same employer in the reference,

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<sup>4</sup> Because the QWI are updated quarterly, the numbers in this report may differ from the most recent ones, which are shown on the current LED Web site.

previous, and subsequent quarters. This earnings measure reflects the earnings of "*attached*" employees, generally workers who worked for the same employer for the whole quarter. The measures of earnings from the QWI are not directly comparable with measures of earnings from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Sources and Accuracy of the Estimates

Because the QWI are job-based statistics, not the worker-based statistics familiar to many researchers, the LED database allows multiple definitions of "employment" and can respond to a wide variety of questions about the workforce.<sup>5</sup>

### Sources

Enhanced unemployment insurance (UI) wage records and the QCEW are the basic data sources for the QWI. These are administrative data provided to the Census Bureau by Alabama and other partner states. The QWI's coverage, timing of data collection, and concept definitions differ from those in worker-based surveys, such as the decennial and economic censuses, the American Community Survey, and the Current Population Survey. Also, QWI data are not exactly comparable with Bureau of Labor Statistics information, due to timing differences.

Administrative data from these sources almost certainly contain nonsampling errors. The extent of the nonsampling errors is unknown. Sources of nonsampling errors include errors made in data collection, such as recording and coding errors, errors made in processing the data, errors made in estimating values for missing data, and errors from failing to represent all units within a target population (undercoverage).

The LED program undertakes a process of continuous monitoring to attempt to control the nonsampling errors in the integrated data that underlie the LED database. In particular, identifiers on both the UI wage records and the QCEW records are subjected to longitudinal editing every quarter. A set of quality assurance tests is applied to the integrated data. These tests detect problems known to cause nonsampling errors – primarily, tests for missing records of various types (based on estimates of the number of expected records from alternative sources), tests for incomplete wage or earnings information, and tests for changes in the structure of identifiers or entities. Problems detected by these quality assurance tests are investigated and corrected before data integration and production of the QWI are allowed to continue.<sup>6</sup>

Industries are based upon the NAICS.

### Coverage

This report covers civilian noninstitutionalized workers in the private sector only. While this report does not include federal government workers, the complete QWI database does include

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<sup>5</sup> For the QWI, a "job" is defined as an employer-employee pair among administrative datasets.

<sup>6</sup> Technical documentation is available at <<http://lehd.did.census.gov>>.

most state and local government employees. The QWI database covers about 98 percent of nonagricultural, private wage, salaried employment. The remaining 2 percent of the nonagricultural, private wage, salaried workers are railroad workers and workers for some nonprofit organizations. Self-employed workers and independent contractors are not in the covered universe.<sup>7</sup>

## Definitions

The LED database includes all jobs held:

- *In a quarter*, regardless of the length of time the job is held.
- *At the beginning of a quarter* – the measure used in this report (workers employed by the same employer in the reference quarter and the previous quarter).
- *At the end of a quarter*.
- *For a full quarter* (total number of workers who were employed by the same employer in the reference, previous, and subsequent quarters). This measure is used in this report for average earnings because it reflects the earnings of employees in more stable jobs.

The measure that is closest to the QCEW definition of employment is jobs “held at the *beginning* of a quarter.” This measure has the additional advantage of capturing trends similar to those shown by worker-based surveys, such as the decennial census.

Annual figures are simple averages with each quarter weighted equally. There is no differential weighting of averages for seasonal industries, for example.

Earnings are measured differently among the various datasets. According to the *BLS Handbook of Methods* (1997), UI wage records measure “gross wages and salaries, bonuses, stock options, tips, and other gratuities, and the value of meals and lodging, where supplied.” They do not include amounts paid for Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI), health insurance, private pensions, and welfare funds. The LED database does not include the number of hours or weeks an employee worked. Thus, low average earnings in a given year or quarter in an industry sector may reflect relatively low hourly wages, or many part-time jobs, or both, as often this occurs in the retail trade sector.

Some large companies have multiple work sites but may report all their workers at the company’s main address. This creates a problem for the correct geographic distribution of the workers. LED uses an imputation process to allocate workers to geographic areas in order to maintain appropriate distributions within the QWI dataset.

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<sup>7</sup> See David W. Stevens. Employment That Is Not Covered by State Unemployment. LEHD Technical Paper, TP-2002-16. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC. Available at <<http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/library/techpapers/tp-2002-16.pdf>>.

## Confidentiality of Information about Individuals and Firms is protected.

The Census Bureau and the state partners, including Alabama, are committed to protecting the confidentiality of the data used to create the LED estimates. One technical approach used to conceal individual information involves combining cell suppression methodology and statistical noise, thereby controlling key measures to county employment levels as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In other words, the Census Bureau uses statistical techniques in which the actual statistics are not shown if the numbers in a cell are small. In addition, the statistics that are shown are “fuzzy,” meaning close to the actual information but not exact.

Only Census Bureau employees and individuals who have Special Sworn Status are permitted to work with the input data. Everyone who has access to data protected by Title 13 of the U.S. code must have an official security clearance based on a background check, including fingerprinting.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, these individuals are subject to a fine of up to \$250,000, up to 5 years in prison, or both, if confidential information is disclosed. The Census Bureau and the state data custodians review all products before release to avoid disclosure of confidential information.

The LED program undertakes a process of continuous monitoring to attempt to control the nonsampling errors in the integrated data that underlie the LED database. In particular, identifiers on both the UI wage records and the QCEW records are subjected to longitudinal editing every quarter. A set of

More Detailed information about the confidentiality protection system is available under the “Confidentiality” menu at <<http://lehd.did.census.gov>>.

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<sup>8</sup> The Census Bureau’s Data Protection and Privacy Policy, including information on Title 13, is available at <<http://www.census.gov/privacy>>.

Figure 1—Percentage of Workers 45 to 54 Years Old by County of Workplace in Alabama: 2013

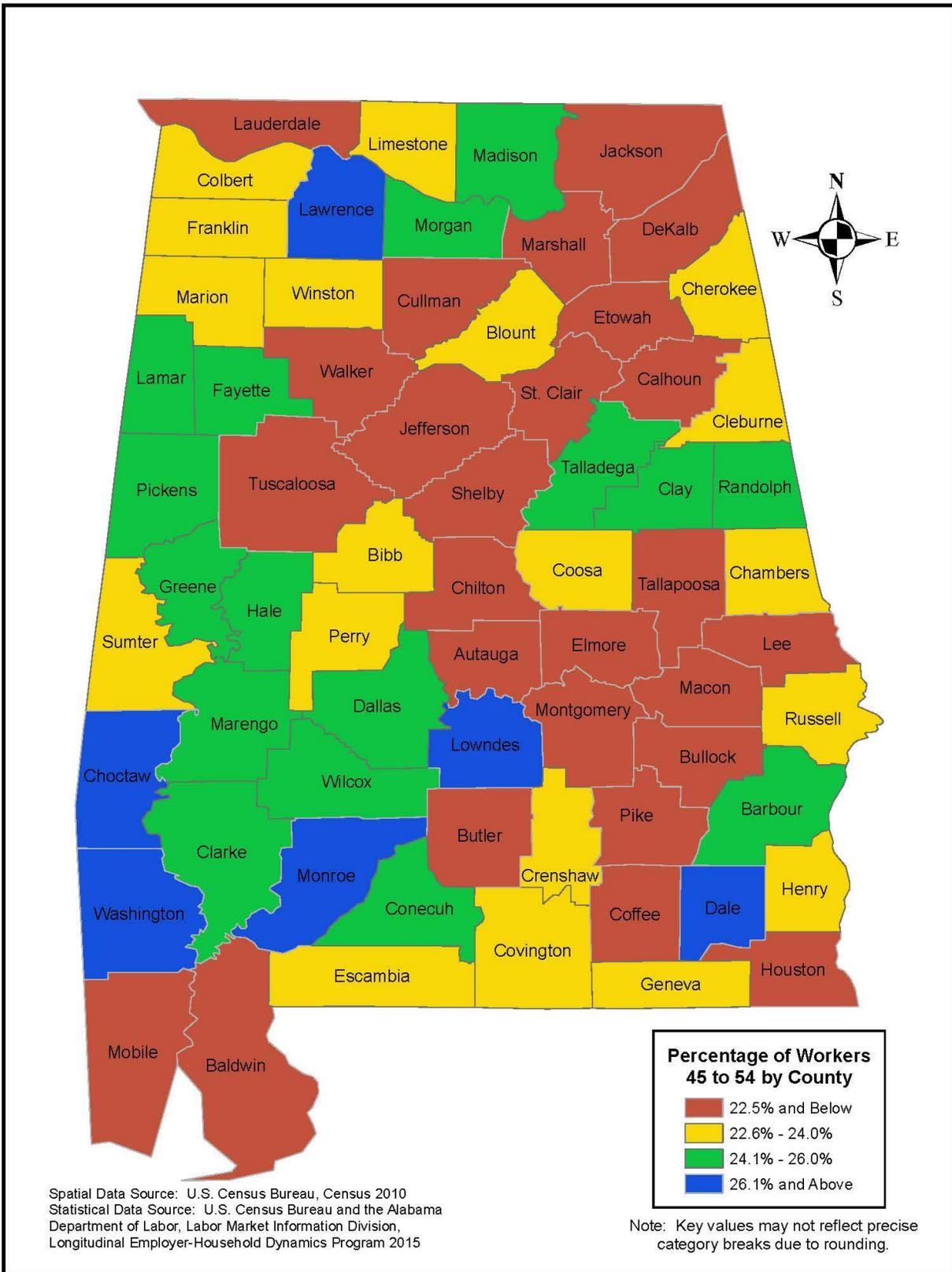


Figure 2—Percentage of Workers 55 to 64 Years Old by County of Workplace in Alabama: 2013

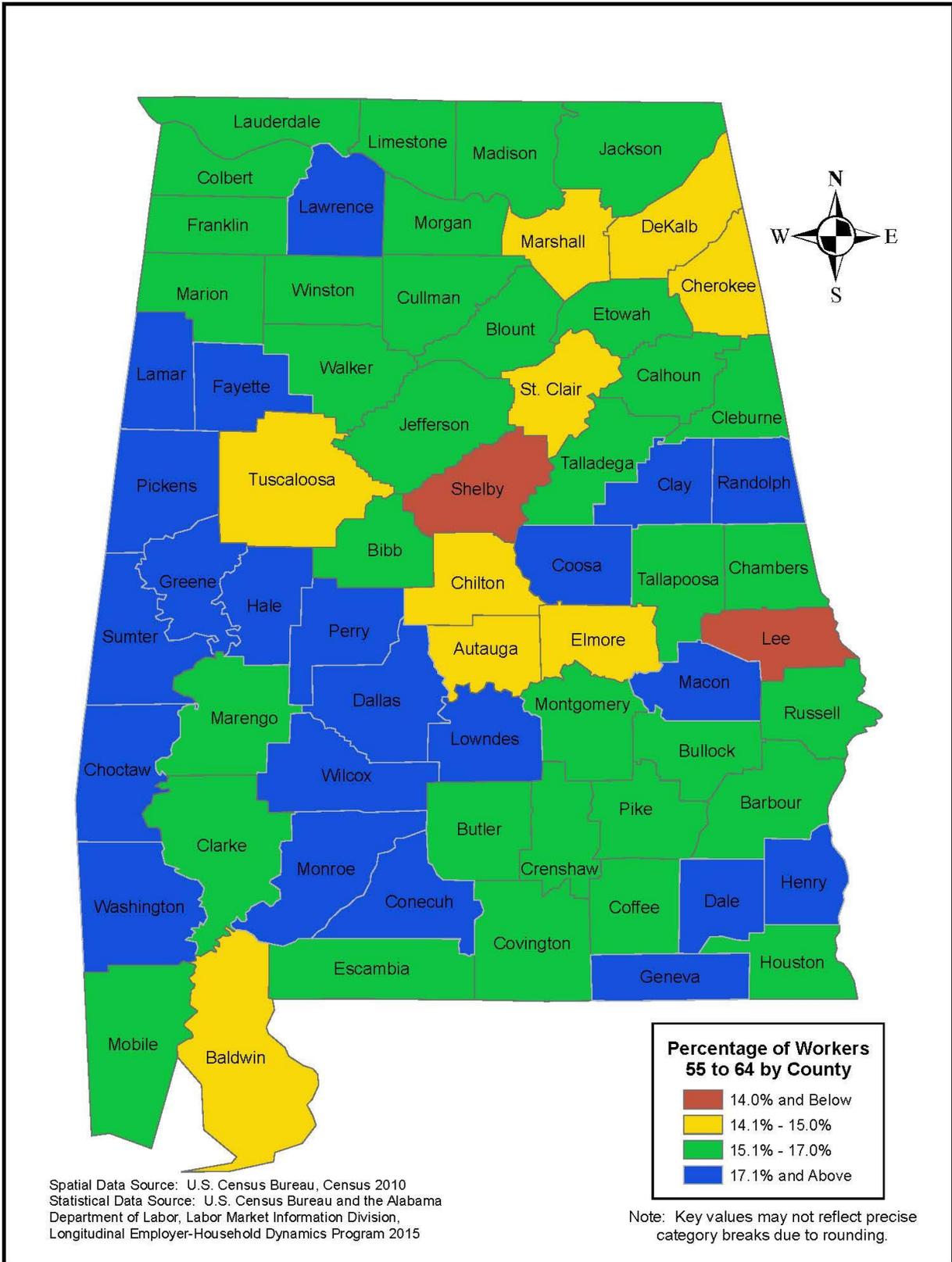
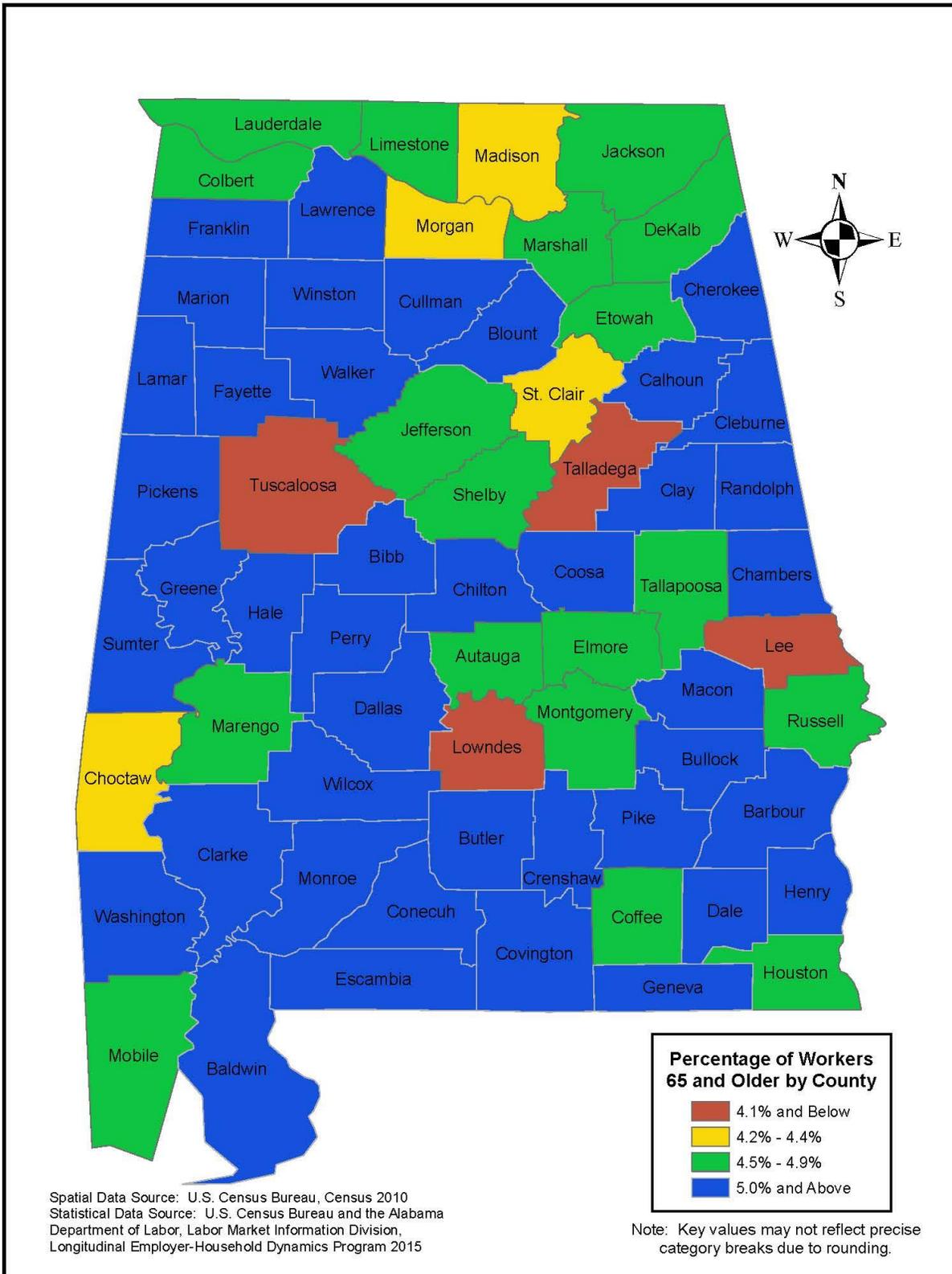


Figure 3—Percentage of Workers 65 and Older by County of Workplace in Alabama: 2013



**Figure 4—Percentage Change in Number of Workers 55 and Older by County of Workplace in Alabama:  
2005 to 2013**

