

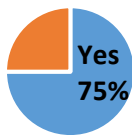


NORTHEAST WISCONSIN MANUFACTURING ALLIANCE 2025 AGING WORKFORCE STUDY

The NEW Manufacturing Alliance surveyed its members in February and March 2025 to understand the impact of the aging workforce in northeast Wisconsin. This study was like one done in 2017. The survey explored manufacturers' concerns about the impact of the retiring workforce; average age and tenure of its production and engineering workforce; ages in key occupational fields; and best practices to address the issue of knowledge loss. There were 65 companies that completed the survey; they employ 14,961 people or 10 percent of the entire manufacturing workforce in the region. The findings highlight their concern and demonstrate the need to develop a strategy to address this issue. An Alliance taskforce is currently dedicated to finding and sharing best practices, and communicating about the key occupations that will be in high demand due to significant retirements.

COMPANIES CONCERNED ABOUT RETIREMENTS & EMPLOYERS PRO-ACTIVELY ADDRESSING ISSUE

Concerned



■ Yes ■ No ■

Addressing Issue



■ Yes ■ No

- The survey respondents were overwhelmingly concerned with losing skills/knowledge due to retirements.
- Although 75% are concerned, only 35% had any programs in place to address knowledge loss due to retirements.

AVERAGE TENURE & AGE FOR NE WI PRODUCTION & ENGINEERING EMPLOYEES



Production

Average Age: 38
Average Tenure: 9 years



Engineering

Average Age: 42
Average Tenure: 10 years

- The production workforce of Alliance members is younger than the national average of 44 years of age¹ and 43 years of age for engineers.
- The tenure for production workers is 9 years, higher than the national average of 4.9 years. In addition, the Alliance engineering workforce's tenure, 10 years, is higher than the national average (4.9 years).²

PRODUCTION OCCUPATIONS WITH THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES 56 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER

1. Engineers – 45%
2. Machinists – 44%
3. Plant/Operations Managers – 40%
4. Welders – 38%
5. Service Technicians/Ind. Maintenance – 34%

Talent Leaving the Workforce:

- Most positions require more than a high school education.
- The general labor workforce was significantly younger with 78% being under the age of 56.
- Degrees that will be in high demand include Electro-Mech Associate Degree, CNC Machinist Associate Degree, Industrial Maintenance Mechanic technical diploma, Business Management Bachelor of Science degree and Registered Apprenticeships.

2017 STUDY VS 2025 STUDY

There were a few key findings in comparing the 2017 study to the 2025 study:

- There is still strong concern regarding the aging workforce, although lower than the 85% that reported concern in 2017. Over 60% reported in each year of the study that they did not have a plan.
- The average age of a production worker is younger than the 2017 study, the previous study had the age being 43 years of old. The efforts of the NEW Manufacturing Alliance have made a difference in promoting manufacturing careers to youth.
- Tenure for both production workers and engineers is similar to the 2017 study.
- The percentage of employees ages 56 and older has changed from the 2017 study in a few key occupations such as 33% of Machinist were in this metric in 2017 and now 44%. In addition, 32% of engineers were 56 and older compared to the recent study of 45 years old.

¹ [Employed persons by detailed industry and age : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/tenure.pdf>

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