



By The Office of Equal Opportunity

We want to embrace the differences that help make us better together. The OEO believes diversity and inclusion are everyone’s responsibility and we hope all State employees carry such responsibility with honor, courage, and passion. Check us out [here!](#)

Generational Differences in the Workforce

Age is one element of diversity that is sometimes overlooked. We need to acknowledge and understand those differences so that we can effectively communicate and work better together. There are five generations actively in the workforce today, making this the most age-diverse workforce yet!

The five generations in the workforce today are:

TRADITIONALISTS Pre-1945	BOOMERS 1946-1965	GEN X 1966-1977	MILLENNIAL 1978-1995	GEN 2020 After 1995
Experienced: Great Depression, WWI and II, GI Bill Work is: An obligation Aspiration: Home ownership Changing Jobs: Stay for life Career Paths: Slow and steady	Experienced: Television, Moon Landing, Watergate, Vietnam War Work is: Expected Aspiration: Job security Changing Jobs: Loyal to employer; connecting to values Career Paths: Upward mobility	Experienced: MTV, Nintendo, PC's Work is: A difficult challenge Aspiration: Work-life balance; independence Changing Jobs: If necessary for compensation Career Paths: Need to know options now	Experienced: Natural disasters, diversity, mobile technology Work is: A means to an end Aspiration: Freedom and flexibility Changing Jobs: Is expected Career Paths: Switch frequently and fast	Experienced: Economic downturn, Global Warming Work is: Consistently evolving Aspiration: Structure and stability Changing Jobs: Constantly Career Paths: Career “multitaskers”

Engaging members of all generations in conversation about ideas and solutions increases inclusion and improved decision-making. A highly inclusive workforce can improve team performance up to 30% higher. Managers/supervisors can build strategies to increase effectiveness when interacting with different generations. Seeking to better understand different communication styles will encourage employees to stop and think before making assumptions. It also provides the ability to harness multiple levels of experience, skill, and expertise to build more efficient and cohesive work teams.



Retaining multiple generations in the workforce is important to organizational success. Older generations increase the diversity of organizations and can improve operational efficiency, enhance innovation, and grow the bottom line. However, with an increasing proportion of employees taking early retirement, the importance of attracting, engaging, and retaining younger generations is also important. According to the World Economic Forum, GEN 2020 will represent 27% of the workforce by 2025. When it comes to the workplace, GEN 2020 seeks flexibility, opportunities for professional development and advancement, diversity and inclusion, a healthy work-life balance, and a more straightforward, modern hiring process.

As you look to grow and expand your team, consider the value that all generations bring to the workforce. At the same time, be sure to use different communication styles when engaging with different generations. Studies have shown that when people feel included, they are more productive at work. Help strengthen our OA team by embracing the differences that help make us better together.