Who Are Millennials?

Homeownership Demographic Research

2021

Table of Contents

Introduction

Millennials, the generation born between Gen Xers and Gen Zers, began attracting the attention of market researchers at the start of the last decade as they gradually became the largest consumer group with ever-increasing buying power. Millennials adapted more quickly to new technology than older adults and were the first to prefer consuming content online. They also disrupted consumer behavior patterns by forming their own brand of life-stage priorities.

This generation will continue to shape our economy for decades to come. They now make up the largest share of new homebuying population and, as such, a critical borrower segment whose demands the housing industry must understand.

This research, which serves as a playbook for the housing industry, and beyond, captures the demographic, social and economic characteristics of millennials versus those of prior generations.

It also focuses on generational characteristics and how companies can build strategies that tap into these insights.

This playbook leverages an array of sources, including data derived from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC), 2019 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) reporting, Freddie Mac loan-level acquisition data, the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the American Community Survey (ACS).

Please note, this playbook was created prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore does not reflect its impact. For this reason, we will update this playbook as necessary to integrate the latest data and incorporate the effects of the pandemic on millennials and the housing market.

Silent 1928-1945	Baby Boomer 1946-1964	Gen X 1965-1980	Millennial 1981-1996	Gen Z 1997-2012
Ages 74-91				
	Ages 55-73			
		Ages 39-54		
			Ages 23-38	
				Ages 7-22

Ages as of 2019. Source: Pew Research

Key Findings

Millennials—born between 1981 and 1996—are arguably the most influential generation the nation has seen since the baby boomers. Their sheer size casts a shadow over their predecessors, Gen X, and they have overtaken the baby boomers to become the largest population cohort in 2019. Millennials have upended consumer expectations, shifted the timing of various life stages, represent the most racially and ethnically diverse adult age group, and earn more than prior generations.

All these factors prompted Freddie Mac to perform in-depth research in order to deconstruct this demographic segment. Our research confirms that millennials are a major force in the homebuying and mortgage business for years to come. This has led us to these key observations that will likely impact and shape U.S. homeownership:

→ While millennials are the most educated adult generation, they are less financially literate than older generations. As millennials are often called digital natives, they leverage fintech tools more than older working-age adults. Studies find that fintech tool usage is not a substitute for financial education and is often tied to poor money management. This, in part, explains the lower levels of millennial financial literacy.

→ While student debt is still a deterrent for many millennials looking to become homeowners, the economic benefit of attaining a degree outweighs the cost of student debt.

→ Millennials are more likely to live in urban centers than older generations, with the highest millennial homebuying activity observed in
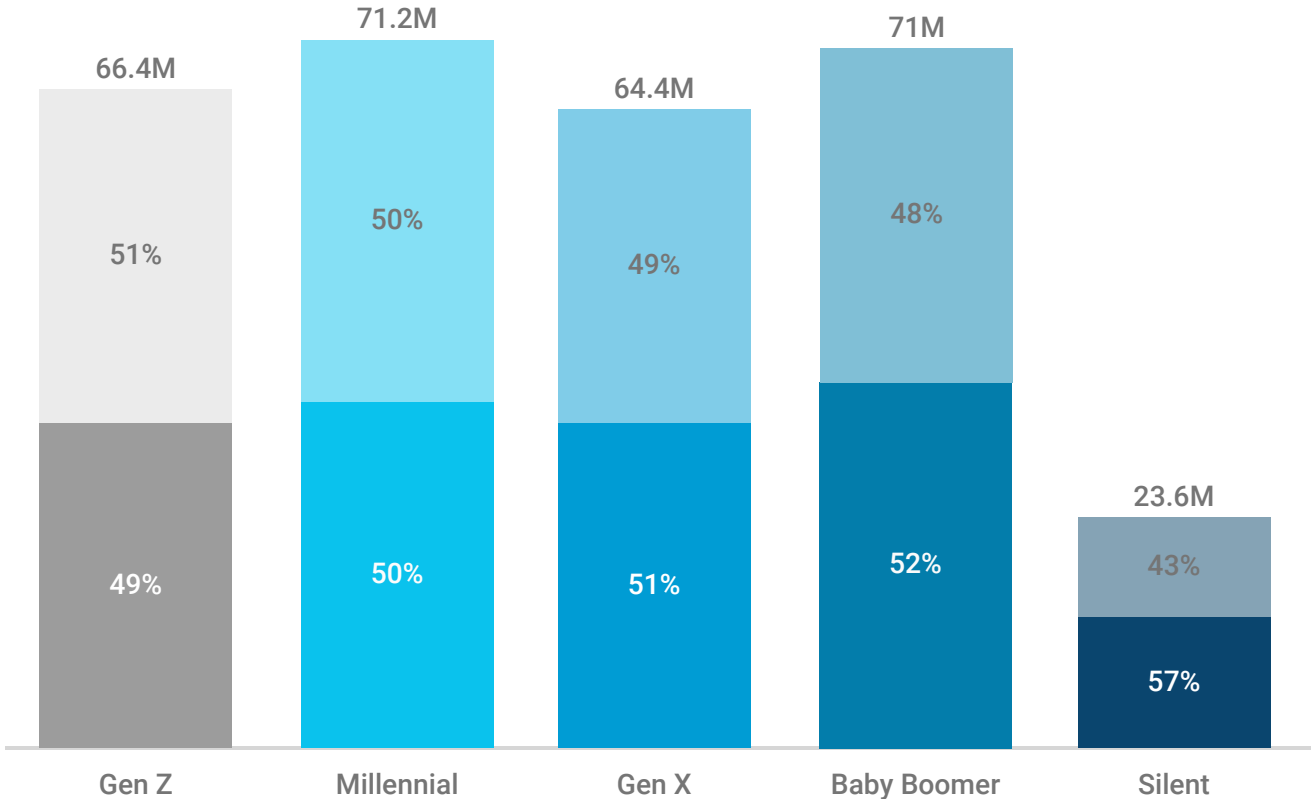
Population and Demographics

Millennial Population Overview

Nearly 22% of Americans fall into the millennial generation, based on Freddie Mac's analysis of the 2019 U.S. Census Current Population Survey data.

At 71.2 million, millennials surpassed baby boomers as the largest adult demographic in 2019, with many of them entering their peak homebuying years.

Key Population Statistics

22% of Americans are millennials.

In 2019, millennials accounted for 71.2 million Americans.

Millennials passed baby boomers as the largest adult demographic.

2019 U.S. Population Generation Distribution

	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomer	Silent
Total	66.4M	71.2M	64.4M	71M	23.6M
Male (lighter)	51%	50%	49%	48%	43%
Female (darker)	49%	50%	51%	52%	57%

**Darker bar color = Female
Lighter bar color = Male**

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS). 2019 U.S. total population stood at 329 million, not all generation groups are represented in this chart.
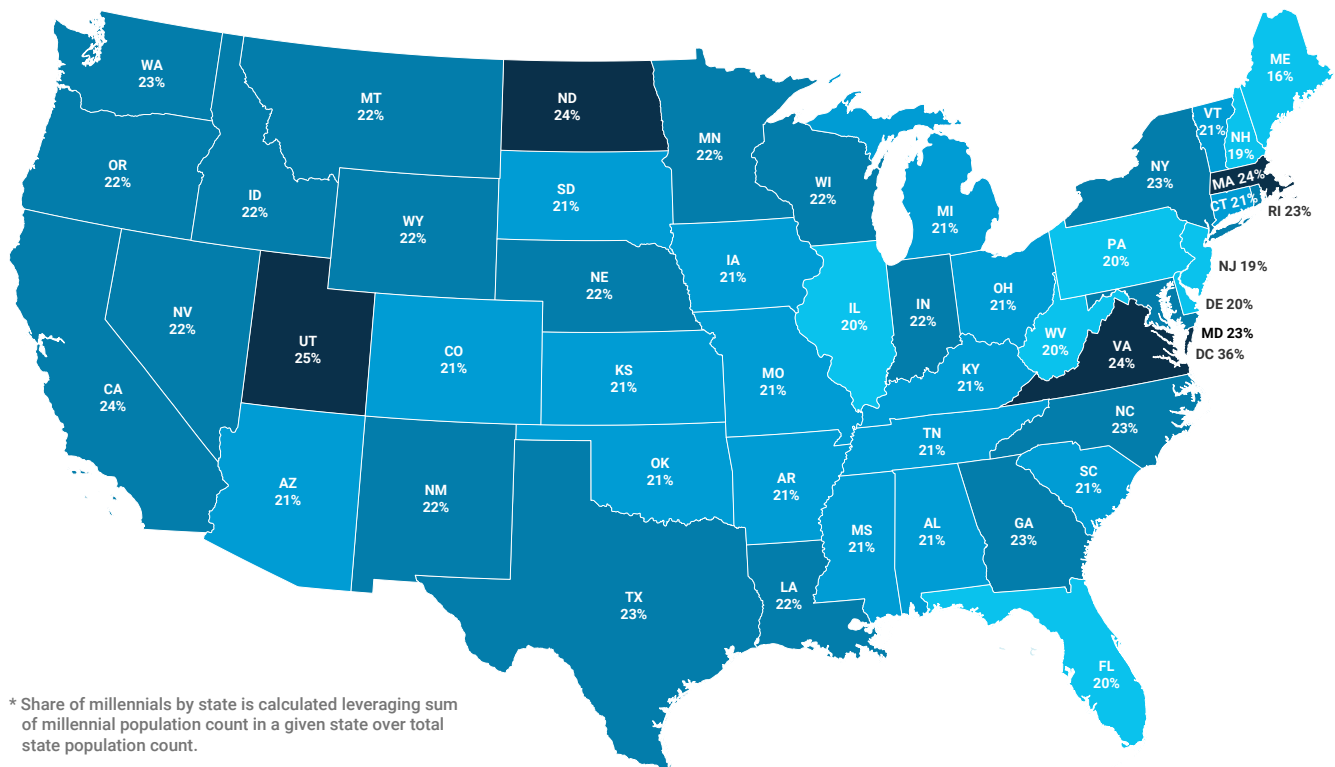
Percentage of Millennials by State

While millennials comprise 22% of the overall U.S. population, certain regions exhibit higher shares of millennials by state.

A variety of reasons might explain this trend, including job opportunities and lifestyle choices. Millennials might be drawn to the less populated Rocky Mountain states in search of more affordable housing. Utah, Nevada, Wyoming and Idaho stand out as such examples, as does Texas, which has attracted a larger tech company presence in the last couple of years.

The top states with the highest share of millennials include the District of Columbia and Utah, followed by North Dakota, Massachusetts, Virginia and California. With 36% share of millennial residents, Washington D.C. holds the top spot for attracting educated young adults with a wide array of employment opportunities, including government, technology and biotech sectors.

Washington D.C. holds the top spot for attracting educated young adults with a wide array of employment opportunities.

Percentage of Millennials by State*

WA 23%
MT 22%
ND 24%
MN 22%
ME 16%
OR 22%
ID 22%
WY 22%
SD 21%
WI 22%
VT 21%
NH 19%
NY 23%
MA 24%
CT 21%
RI 23%
NV 22%
UT 25%
CO 21%
NE 22%
IA 21%
IL 20%
IN 22%
OH 21%
MI 21%
PA 20%
NJ 19%
DE 20%
MD 23%
DC 36%
CA 24%
KS 21%
MO 21%
KY 21%
WV 20%
VA 24%
AZ 21%
NM 22%
OK 21%
AR 21%
TN 21%
NC 23%
SC 21%
MS 21%
AL 21%
GA 23%
TX 23%
LA 22%
FL 20%

* Share of millennials by state is calculated leveraging sum of millennial population count in a given state over total state population count.

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS).

Millennial Population

Across all states and regions, about 90% of millennials today live in metropolitan areas, surpassing Gen Xers (84%) and baby boomers (68%) when they were at the age of millennials (23-38). Additionally, more than four in ten millennials live in high-cost city centers.

In 2019, the largest concentrated populations of millennials were observed in New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas and Chicago, driven by the range and abundance of high-paying jobs and the "big city" lifestyle younger adults want.
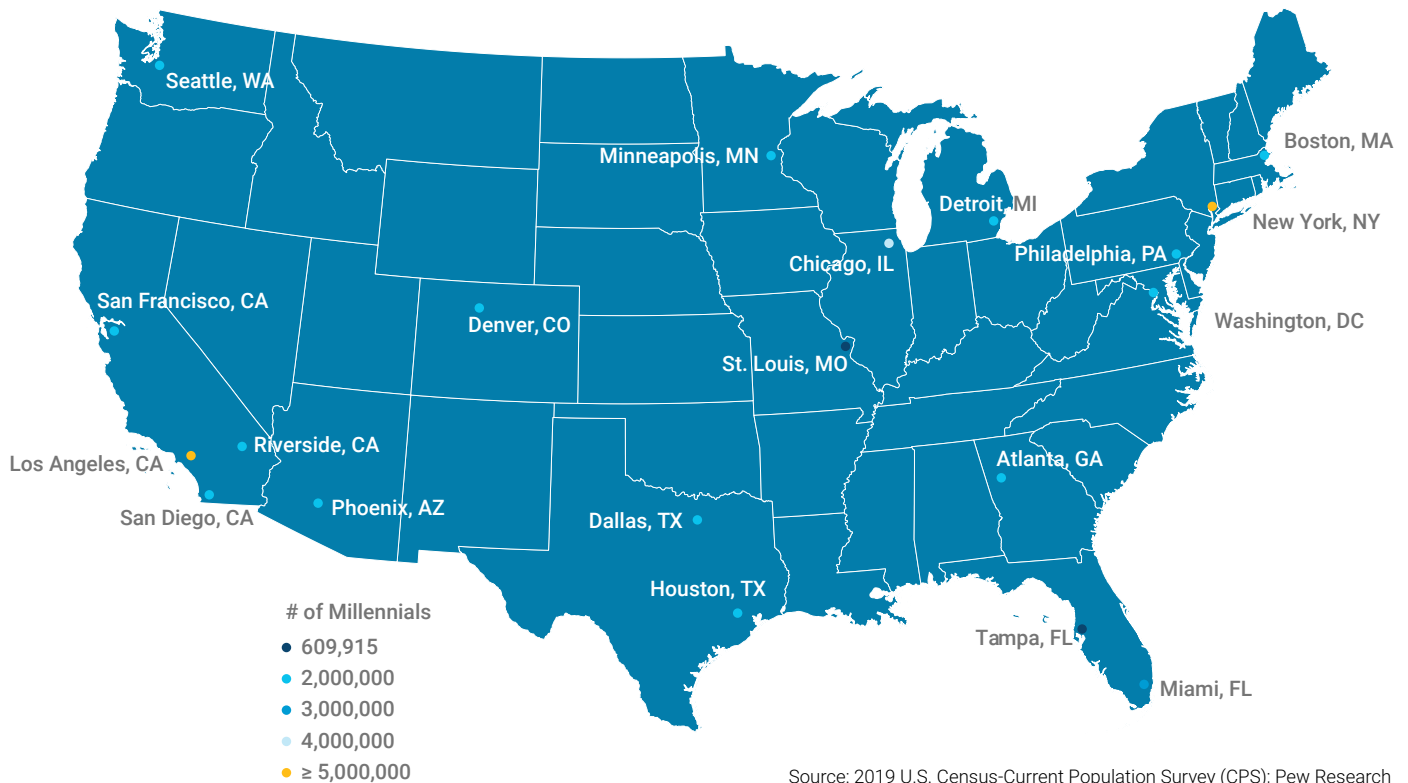
90% of millennials live in metropolitan areas.

More than four in ten millennials live in high-cost city centers.

Top 20 Cities with Highest Millennial Population Count

Seattle, WA
Minneapolis, MN
Boston, MA
Detroit, MI
New York, NY
Chicago, IL
Philadelphia, PA
San Francisco, CA
Washington, DC
Denver, CO
St. Louis, MO
Riverside, CA
Atlanta, GA
Los Angeles, CA
Phoenix, AZ
San Diego, CA
Dallas, TX
Houston, TX
Tampa, FL
Miami, FL

# of Millennials
- 609,915
- 2,000,000
- 3,000,000
- 4,000,000
- ≥ 5,000,000

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS); Pew Research

Millennial Race and Ethnicity

Millennials make up the most racially and ethnically diverse adult generation in U.S. history, comprising 45% of minorities in 2019. The share of Hispanic millennials (21%) is almost double the share of Hispanic baby boomers (11%). Millennials also hold the highest share of the Asian population at 8%. There is a view that diversity is the most defining characteristic of this generation and that it could impact housing trends.

Ethnicity

	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomer
Hispanic	25%	21%	19%	11%
Not Hispanic	75%	79%	81%	89%
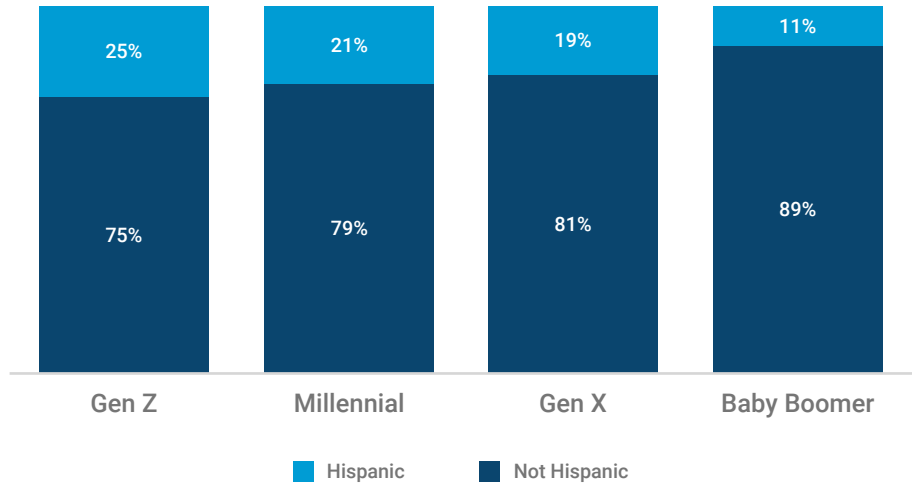
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

According to a Pew Research analysis of ACS Census data, both Hispanic (27%) and Asian (29%) populations are nearly twice as likely to live in multi-generational households than whites (16%). If this trend holds, and with the increased formation of new millennial households in the next decade, the share of multi-generational households nationwide would continue to increase.

Race

	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomer
Two Plus	5%			
Asian	6%	8%	7%	5%
Black	15%	15%	13%	11%
White	74%	75%	78%	82%
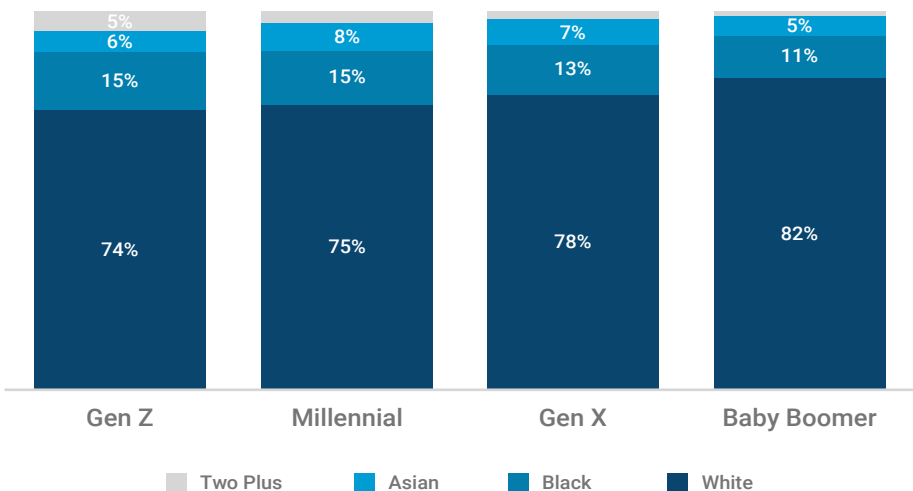
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

The share of Hispanic millennials is almost double the share of Hispanic baby boomers.

DEMOGRAPHICS: HOUSEHOLD BREAKOUT AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

According to the 2019 population survey, 56.4% of millennials are single, of which nearly 80% have no children. This indicates that a substantial share of the generation is yet to edge into the life stages that drive homeownership, such as marriage and having children.

The large share of single millennials can, in part, be explained by the fact that there are more younger millennials, ages 23 to 30, than there are older millennials, ages 31 to 38. Younger millennials, on average, are more likely to be single.

The breakout of millennials by age group shows that 62% of millennials in their mid-to-late 30s are married. If the trend persists, the next decade will see a significant increase in the share of married millennials.
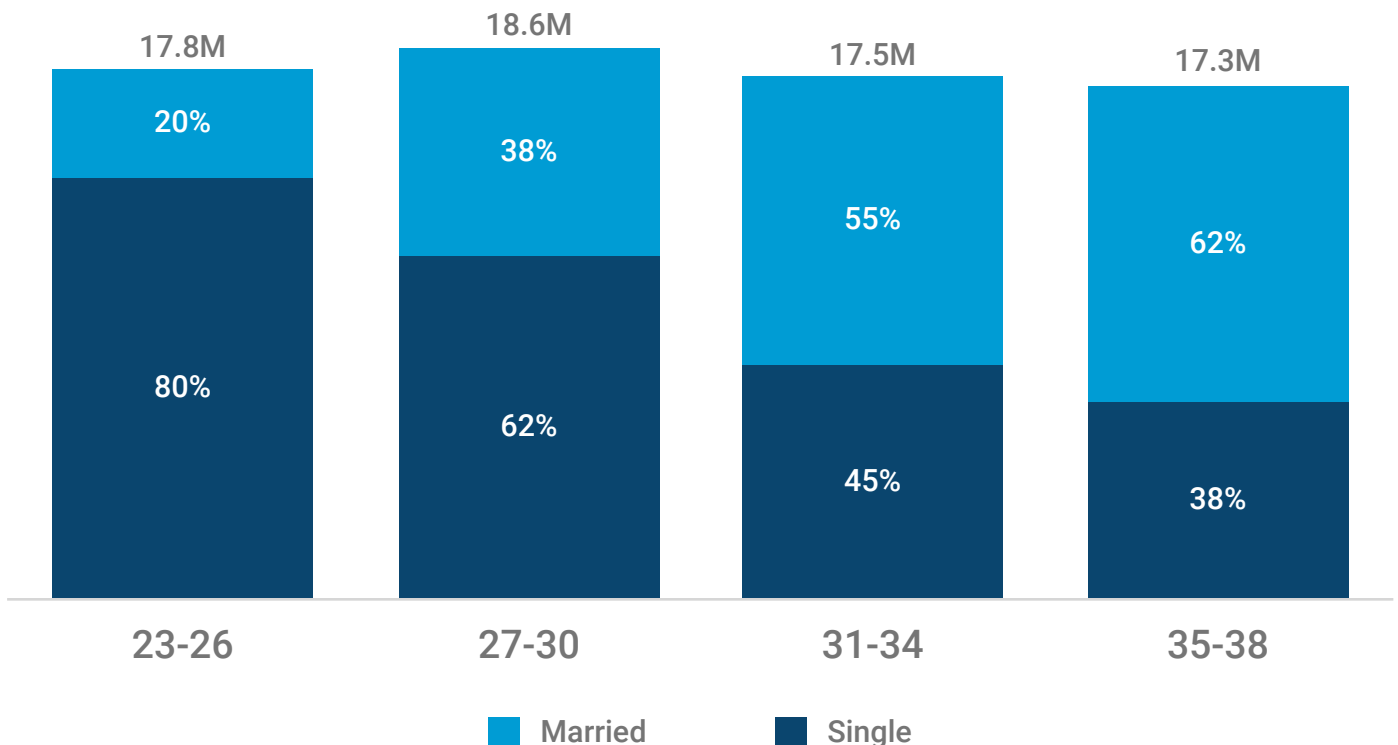
Millennial Household Breakout
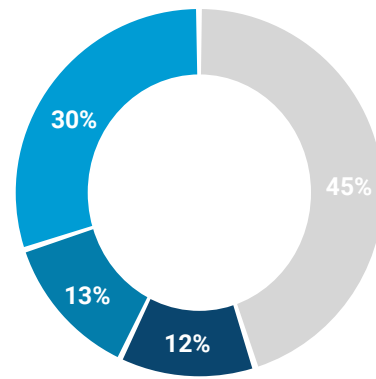
- Single/Divorced No Children — 45%
- Single/Divorced with Children — 12%
- Married No Children — 30%
- Married with Children — 13%

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

A substantial share of the generation is yet to edge into the life stages that drive homeownership.

Millennial Age Distribution

Age	23-26	27-30	31-34	35-38
Total	17.8M	18.6M	17.5M	17.3M
Married	20%	38%	55%	62%
Single	80%	62%	45%	38%

Married · Single

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

DEMOGRAPHICS: MARITAL STATUS

Forty-four percent of millennials gave their status as "married" in 2019. In order to understand whether millennials are making life stage decisions – such as getting married – differently than prior generations, we compared each generation's marriage rate at the same age range of 23 through 38. At a marriage rate of 44%, millennials are trailing behind both Gen Xers (53%) and baby boomers (61%).

Percentage of Population Married (Ages 23-38)

|	
Millennial	44%
Gen X	53%
Baby Boomers	61%

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

This difference across generations shows these young adults are staying single longer, which is tied to various socio-economic factors such as career paths, living arrangements, education goals and financial stability. Given that Gen-Xers stayed single longer than baby boomers, it can be conjectured that millennials are simply following the overall pattern of social change in society. Although these twenty- and thirty-something adults are single in greater numbers, forecasted marriage rates in the coming years indicates that by the time they reach age 35, 64% of millennials will be married, which is only two percentage points below Gen Xers at the same age. Overall, the gap in marriage rates across generations significantly narrows and flattens for adults over the age of 35.

Our analysis shows that delaying marriage or remaining single past the prime marriage age bracket has depressed the generation's homeownership rate. Married millennials made up a higher share of homeowners (51% absent of children and 65% with children vs. 28% and 29% for singles with and without children). With more millennials pushing age milestones, we anticipate the marriage rate to increase, and, as a result, the industry will observe a higher millennial homeownership rate.

Percentage of Married Population Age Trend (23-38)

Millennial
Gen X
Baby Boomers

73%
66%
64%

34%
21%
13%

24   26   28   30   32   34   36   38
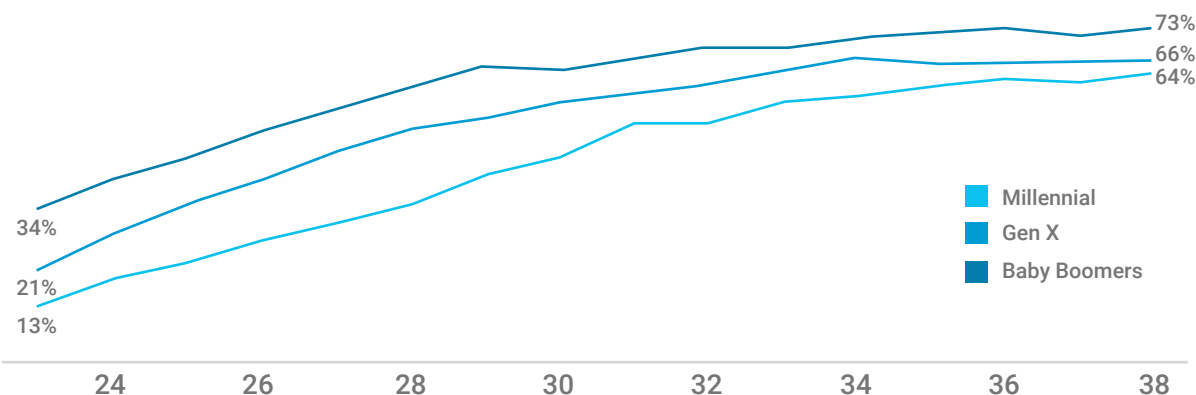
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

DEMOGRAPHICS: CHILDREN

Another life stage event that often leads to household creation and homeownership is having children. The share of millennials with children at 42% trails both Gen Xers (52%) and baby boomers (55%) when they were 23 to 38 years old. This is another indication that millennials have postponed starting families – generally the next major life stage event after marriage.

The share of millennials with children:

42%

Percentage of Population with Children (Ages 23-38)

Millennial	42%
Gen X	52%
Baby Boomers	55%

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

The annual trend of generational groups during the 23-38 age bracket shows that millennials lag about five years behind Gen Xer's and baby boomers on having children. This generational gap narrows the older they become. As millennials reach their late 30s, the ratio of people with children inches closer to that of prior generations.

Our analysis found that having children prompted married millennial couples into homebuying, but the homeownership rate for single-parent households with children was below that of single millennials with no children. Freddie Mac's prior research suggests that aside from other financial challenges faced by single parents, including single income constraint, childcare costs can be yet another deterrent to homeownership.

Legend: Millennial, Gen X, Baby Boomers
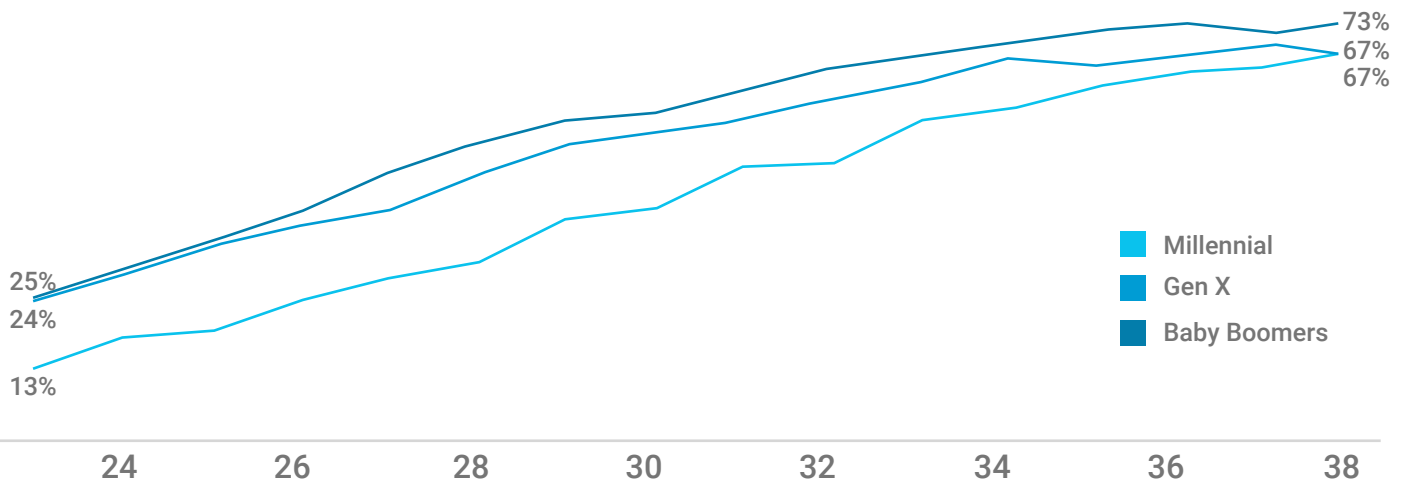
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)
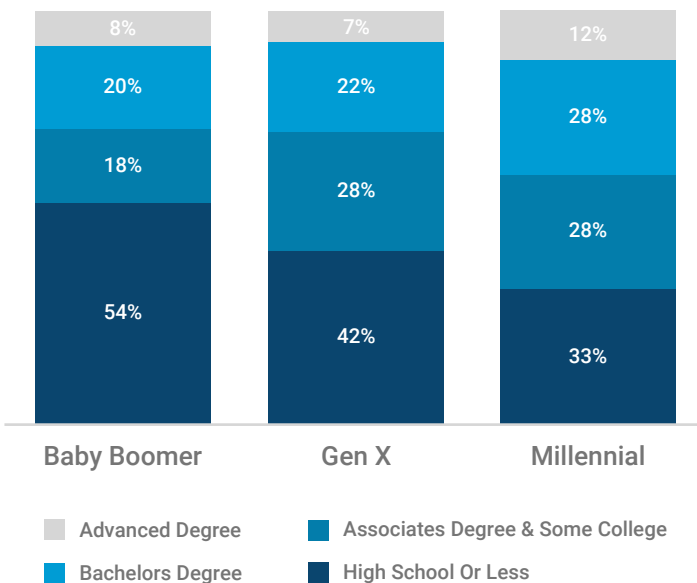
Education, Employment and Income

EDUCATION

Millennials are the most educated adult generation, according to the U.S. Census data from 2019. Forty percent of them hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with just 29% of Gen Xers and 28% of baby boomers when they were the same age.

The more than 10 percentage point jump in higher education for millennials can, in part, be explained by the timing of the Great Recession in 2007.

Millennials are the most educated adult generation, according to the U.S. Census data from 2019.

Educational Attainment (Ages 23-38)

	Baby Boomer	Gen X	Millennial
Advanced Degree	8%	7%	12%
Bachelors Degree	20%	22%	28%
Associates Degree & Some College	18%	28%	28%
High School Or Less	54%	42%	33%

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS)

Older millennials came of age when the recession began in 2007. As unemployment surged, many of them struggled to find jobs and decided to attend college, or they continued past undergraduate to pursue an advanced degree.

This increase in post-secondary schooling is certainly shaping the generation's consumer behavior and life choices. As discussed further, the investment in higher education put these young adults on a higher-earnings trajectory as they mature into their careers. This, in turn, may lead to greater access to homeownership.

EDUCATION AND GEOGRAPHY

While 40% of millennials have at least a bachelor's degree, their numbers vary by region. The breakout by state and metro area indicates that a higher proportion of millennials with bachelor's or advanced degrees tend to reside in the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic regions.

The region with the highest number of college-educated millennials is the Washington D.C. metro area, with 73% having a bachelor's or graduate school degree. In part, the geographical patterns are driven by the types of jobs in an area and whether the area is an education hub. In the case of the Washington D.C. metro area, biotech, technology firms and the federal government are dominant employers, and they mostly require workers with college or advanced degrees.

Moving north, we found that New York and New Jersey attracted a lot of professional talent due to their preponderance of large pharmaceuticals and life sciences, financial services and technology sectors. Massachusetts (specifically the Boston metro area) includes major industries such as finance, high-tech research and development, tourism and medicine, in addition to being a major college and graduate school hub.

Educational Attainment by State
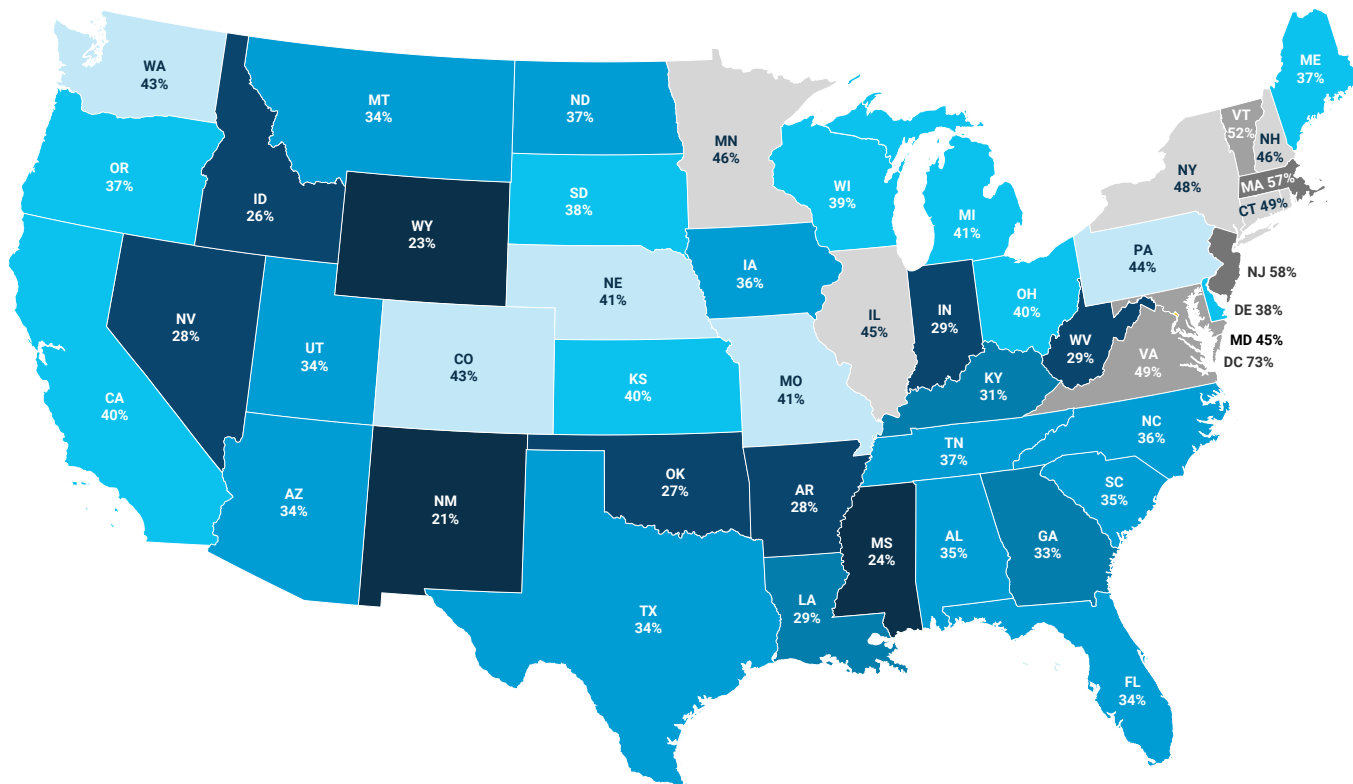
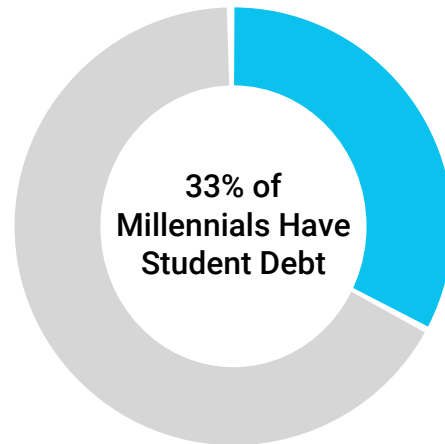Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS).

STUDENT DEBT

The rise in student debt compared to other debt (credit card/car debt) held by consumers has been a hot topic in the media and election campaigns, with much debate over proposals of debt forgiveness. The debt levels for the young adult population is tied to rising tuition costs and a greater percentage of them having attended college.

As of mid-2019, there were 15.1 million millennials between the ages of 25 to 34 with student debt, which amounts to roughly one-third of the millennial population within that age group.[1]

The total dollar value of outstanding student loan debt associated with millennials between ages 25-34 equated to $497.6 billion, which is about 34% of all student debt in the U.S.

This breaks down to some $33,000 for each borrower. This amount aligns with the overall average student loan debt of $33,000 (median $17,000) cited in the Federal Reserve publication sourcing the U.S. Department of Education. According to the report, the average student loan payment stands at $393 per month, while the median student loan payment is $222. Another study by JP Morgan Chase found that the typical family's median student loan payment is 5.5% of take-home income.

The studies noted above suggest that student debt, on average, though burdensome, is manageable

33% of Millennials Have Student Debt

Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS).

when it comes to payment amounts, especially for college graduates with a completed degree. According to research conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, students who earn a degree or certificate have a better chance of landing a well-paying job after graduation, which, in turn, increases the odds they will repay their college loans.

In the U.S., 63% of graduates of four-year institutions repay their loans within three years, according to College Scorecard data compiled by the Department of Education. That percentage was much lower for borrowers who attended college but didn't earn a degree (42%).

$497.6 billion

The total dollar value of outstanding student loan debt associated with millennials between ages 25-34.

---

[1]

Federal Student Aid.gov data on student debt captures age of the consumers in decade segments only, a snapshot view of the Federal Student Loan Portfolio by Borrower Age.

- *Forbes Student Loan Debt Statistics In 2020*
- *New America Millennials and Student Loans: Rising Debts and Disparities*
- *U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS) 2019*

Generally, people with graduate or professional degrees carry much higher loan balances, but they also tend to earn more. In 2018, the average yearly income for millennials with graduate and professional degrees was $60,000 and $71,000 respectively, versus $50,000 for those with bachelor's degrees. As millennials age, the income gap between education levels widens, supporting the notion that higher education leads to higher earnings.

Often, student debt is seen as a deterrent to homeownership for millennials. Urban Institute research found that a one percent increase in education loan debt decreases the likelihood of owning a home by 0.15 percentage points. For example, if a person's household student debt increases 100%, from $50,000 to $100,000 with all other factors constant, the likelihood of owning a home will decrease 15 percentage points.

It's important to realize that, given the lack of an alternative to student loans, many young Americans would not have been able to receive higher education to reach their career goals and higher earnings without taking out a student loan. Student debt might delay homeownership but is unlikely to derail it.

If a person's household student debt increases 100%, the likelihood of owning a home will decrease 15 percentage points.

Millennials' Median Income Across Educational Levels
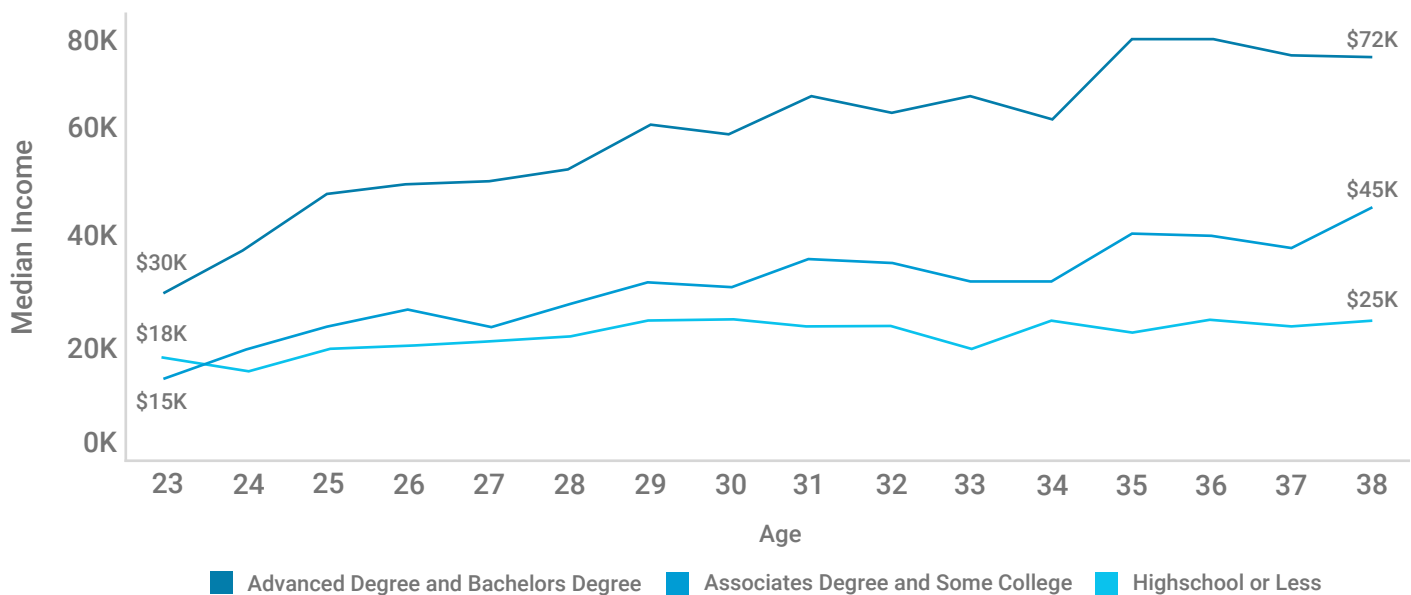
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS).

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

As we examined the country's biggest adult generation across various socio-economic factors, we looked at its household income levels compared to those of Gen Xers and baby boomers.

According to a 2019 CPS survey, millennials' median income surpassed those of prior generations when measured at the same age as today's millennials.[2] Millennials' average median income last year reached $68,000, which is higher than both Gen Xers ($63,000) and baby boomers ($53,000).

Research shows that the single most important determinant of a person's income is that person's level of education. It's no surprise that as the most educated generation in history, millennials would be earning more than previous generations when measured at the same age.

Another important factor driving increased income is that millennial women are working more hours and earning pay more equitable to men than women in prior generations.[3] Female income nearly doubled from baby boomers to millennials, going from $34,000 to $60,000 for the same age group. However, men's income only increased 24%, from $60,000 to $75,000. Although women are earning more than prior generations, the pay gap still exists between men and women working in the same field. For example, a male millennial financial manager earned an average of $118,000 compared to his female counterpart who earned $89,000.

Median Income when Aged 23-38 (Adjusted for 2018 Dollars)

	Male	Female	Avg.
Baby Boomers	$68K	$38K	$53K
Gen X	$70K	$56K	$63K
Millennial	$75K	$60K	$68K
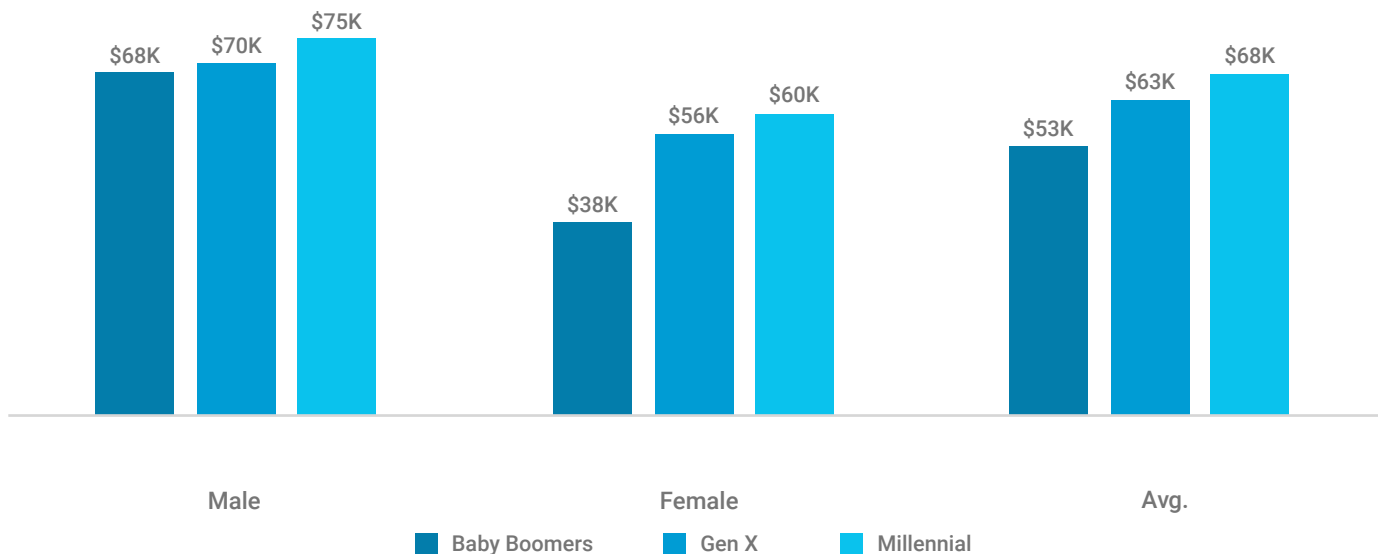
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS).

[2] *Household income is adjusted for 2018 dollars.*

[3] *Young adult households are earning more than most older Americans did at the same age. Pew Research, 2018.*

LABOR FORCE

More than one in three working Americans in 2019 were millennials (36%), making them the largest generation in the U.S. labor force, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. Fifty-nine million were working or looking for work in 2019, surpassing the 53 million Gen Xers and 36 million baby boomers during this same time period.

A large share of the millennial generation is still in the relatively early stages of their careers, which means their impact on the workforce and the economy will be formidable in future years. This is especially true because of their higher-education credentials.

Labor Force Participation Rate

Legend:
- Gen Z — 9%
- Millennial — 36%
- Gen X — 32%
- Baby Boomer — 22%
- Silent
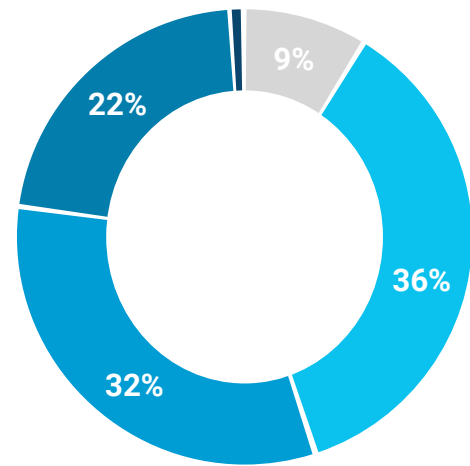
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS).
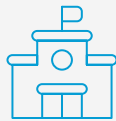
Top Employment Sectors

- Construction
- Restaurant
- Education
- Healthcare

Interestingly, when it came to the top four employment sectors, our research revealed that for workers ages 23-38, they have remained the same since 1970. These sectors include construction, the restaurant industry, education and healthcare. However, the number five spot changed from grocery stores for baby boomers to colleges and universities staff for Gen Xers, and to technology for millennials. This transition certainly makes sense, as millennials are known as digital natives.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND THE GIG ECONOMY

Six percent of millennials were self-employed in 2019, according to Census bureau data. Their share, although slightly below other generations when they were ages 23-38, did not vary significantly in comparison to Gen Xers at 7.0% or baby boomers at 6.4%.

Since 2010, there has been a steady rise in the "gig economy," or the non-salaried labor force. We define this sector as being made up of people who earn primary or supplemental income from freelance and other independent work arrangements. The total number of such independent workers in the nation varies, but the most quoted one is a McKinsey Global Institute estimate of 68 million people, reflecting a significant double-digit percentage of the civilian labor force of 160 million people. This represents a notable increase from 2011 reports of only 16 million people identifying as independent workers.

Demographic trends suggest that sharing-economy platforms will

accelerate the pace of change in the way people work. The "State of Independence" 2019 report by MBO Partners indicates that millennials make up 38% the gig economy workers, compared to 29% of Gen Xers and a third of baby boomers. Unquestionably, recent COVID-19 developments have put a damper on certain big gig economy sectors, such as independent drivers, as well as many other service-related segments. However, as the economy starts to recover, the continued growth of the gig economy is inevitable.

Industry experts predict multiple scenarios for the workforce of the future, including one that isn't dominated by full-time, salaried employees. Instead, the workforce will be one made up primarily of people earning a living from various income as independent contractors. The big question is how housing industry participants will prepare for this increasingly likely scenario.

Gig Economy Workers by Generation

- Baby Boomer
- Gen X
- Millennial

Male = 54%   Female = 46%
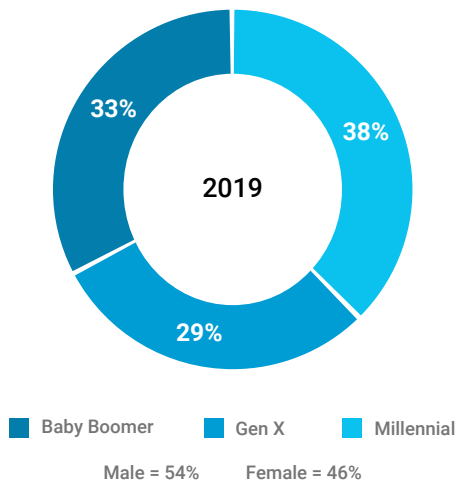
Source: MBO Partners.

MBO defines millennials as ages 19-39.

Demographic trends suggest that sharing-economy platforms will accelerate the pace of change in the way people work.

MIGRATION: STATISTICS AND NEW PATTERNS

In 2019, about four in ten people in the U.S. who migrated from one state to another were millennials. According to U.S. Census data, nearly 60% of them moved due to job-related reasons, and the second biggest reason was to establish a household, usually in more affordable locations. These figures are not much different from Gen Xers. Overall, millennials (40%) surpassed Gen Xers (38%), but lagged behind baby boomers (44%) in terms of interstate migration.

Interstate migration in the United States has declined noticeably in the past several decades. Part of this trend can be explained by the fact that people aren't anchored by their jobs to a specific region as much as they once were, given advancement in technology, demands for talent resulting in companies being more open to remote employees, and opening of regional offices across the country. Additionally, regions are less specialized. "Rust Belt" regions are diversifying and becoming finance and IT hubs as well.

With a wider range of industry sectors and employment available locally, there is less incentive for people to relocate.

Employers continue to look to move toward more affordable inland markets to save costs, driving many workers to follow the job opportunities. This shift could potentially increase job-related migration across states.

Furthermore, many mortgage industry participants and experts wonder if we might see a spike in migration as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular increased outmigration from more expensive, mega-metro areas to less urbanized regions. Recent developments suggest that remote work circumstances spawned by pandemic-related lockdowns might have intensified the migration to more affordable areas. According to a recent Redfin survey, 25% of newly-designated remote workers expect to continue working remotely once shutdowns end, and over half of respondents would move to more affordable areas if they could work remotely.

Interstate Migration Across Generational Groups (Ages 23-38)

Generation	Percentage
Millennial	40%
Gen X	38%
Baby Boomers	44%
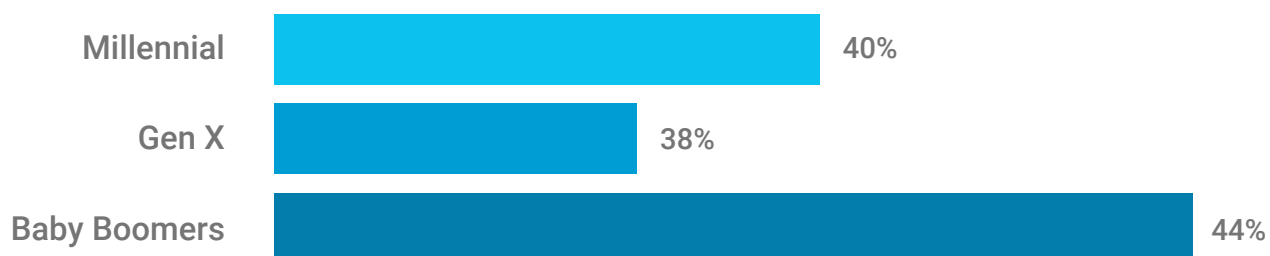
Source: 2019 U.S. Census-Current Population Survey (CPS).

Market Segmentation

CONSUMER SEGMENTATION

So far, this playbook has focused on millennials as a homogenous group. But as with any generational group, a span of 15 years of age means you'll encounter differences in consumer needs and priorities as people grow older, their opinions shift, and they experience new life-stage events. Further consumer segmentation helps to address the diverse needs of individual clusters of millennial customers and may improve audience targeting for lending institutions.

Consumer segmentation in financial services, including the mortgage industry, means building different messaging around client demographic characteristics, such as age, race/ethnicity, income and education levels. Adding psychographics into the mix may help to further diversify consumers based on their activities, interests and opinions.

To see how this can be valuable, consider the fact that two individuals who are similar in age and income don't necessarily share similar values, habits and interests.

These differences explain the layers that drive consumption needs as well as the disparate choices made by this generation. For instance, a Harris Poll survey found that getting a dog drove the decision to buy a home with a third of respondents interviewed. Another survey done by Realtor.com reported that some 80% of pet-owning homebuyers who closed on a property said they would pass up an otherwise perfect home if it didn't meet the needs of their pets.

For customer-focused lending institutions, building a successful strategy that attracts millennial customers requires peeling back the layers of demographic and psychographic insights and creating buyer personas that can then be leveraged in marketing and advertising plans within their target markets.

Lending institutions and real estate professionals' marketing efforts will be far more effective and customer-centered with a strong consumer segmentation strategy in place.

Millennial Consumer Segments / Buyer Personas

Mature Affluent Family with Kids (30+)

Mature Non-Affluent Socialite Singles (30+)

Newly Independent Young Singles (24-30)

Young Family (24-30)

Based on Freddie Mac consumer personas research

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources and Methods

This playbook leverages data from several sources: The Current Population Survey (CPS), The American Community Survey (ACS), Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data reporting, and Freddie Mac Acquisitions data. CPS is a monthly survey of about 60,000 U.S. households conducted by the United States Census Bureau. ACS is an annual survey by the U.S. Census Bureau sent to approximately 3.5 million addresses. HMDA is a federal law that requires certain financial institutions to provide mortgage data to the public, and it covers approximately 85-90% of the mortgage market. Freddie Mac loan-level acquisition data includes all mortgages securitized by the entity. Additionally, this playbook examines data from the New York Federal Reserve bank, American Housing Survey, Freddie Mac and third-party surveys.

Data Advantages and Limitations

While both U.S. Census Bureau surveys produce socioeconomic and demographic estimates for the U.S., there are key differences between them. The ACS sample consists of around 3.5 million housing units but is only updated annually. The CPS sample size is about 60,000 housing units but is updated monthly. Therefore, the ACS has a larger sample size, but the CPS is timelier. Most of this playbook uses CPS data to provide timely demographic and housing characteristic estimates.

Due to certain data inconsistencies, this playbook mainly focuses on three generations: millennials, baby boomers and Gen Xers, and excludes the Silent generation.

We found the Census Bureau and other federal agencies often publish data in 10-year age brackets and as a result many studies approximate millennials in the static age bracket of 25-34. One of the main data limitations to this study is the 10-year bracket we leveraged in our analysis of student debt share or market mortgage originations does not encompass all millennials (23-38 in 2019), and therefore direct comparisons to other publications are not always possible.

To learn more:

Visit sf.freddiemac.com

Freddie Mac
Single-Family