

GENERATION WEST VIRGINIA

From X & Y to the Boomers and Beyond

A look at the differences and similarities between generations

West Virginia's Young Population is shrinking.

- It is estimated that the population of people between the ages of 18-44 will have decreased by 55,796 from 2000-2010
- During that same time period the population of people over 45 will have increased by 55,274

We need to find ways to retain and attract young talent to West Virginia. The survey that was conducted will help identify areas that will enhance this effort and it will also highlight areas where Gen X and Y'ers differ from Baby Boomers and Beyond.

The survey was conducted in the Fall of 2008 and we received 1,100 responses. While this survey is not a scientifically conducted analysis; the responses do give insight into key differences and similarities between various generations. These points will allow us to better develop action plans to address the "brain drain" on our West Virginia community and economy to create a better future.

Our goal is to:

Retain • Attract • Advance

A New Way to Look at Economic Development

Quality of Space

Education

Diversity

Technology

Innovation

Generation West Virginia Survey Results

Quality of Space:

Young People overwhelmingly indicated that they want to work and play where they live.

77% of the respondents between the ages of 21-44 indicate that distance from work is a major determining factor in choosing where to live. 73% of respondents 45 and over said the same; however when ages are broken out even more the difference is greater. 80% of 21-26 year olds felt this was important, while 71% of those over 51 felt this was important.

Distance from leisure activities as a determination of where to live had an even greater dichotomy. 61% of 21-26 year olds found this important, while only 35% of those 51 and over found this important. The age groups in between had a steady decline as the age group increased.

All age groups agree that arts and culture are important, but more young people don't believe that their community offers enough in this area.

Education:

All age groups agree that quality of schools is important when deciding where to live. However, the younger generation finds private schools more important as a factor than the later generations.

Generally, all age groups rated education (public and private) highly, but the younger generations on average rated public education the highest in their community.

Private schools were rated lower than public schools by all age groups. On average 54% of respondents felt that public schools performed very well, while 44% of respondents felt that private schools performed very well. Only 18% of respondents felt that public schools performed poorly, while 34% of respondents felt that private schools performed poorly.

Technology:

Nearly all respondents felt that technology played an important role in their life, however as the age group increased the importance decreased from a high of 94% to a low of 84%.

A greater portion of respondents between the ages of 21-44 indicated that they work in the tech field as compared to respondents over 45.

61% of respondents between the ages of 21-44 felt that technology was sufficiently available in their community, while only 51% of those 45 and greater felt it was sufficient.

Innovation (Entrepreneurship):

34% of the respondents over 45 indicated that they own a business. Only 20% of the respondents between the ages of 21-44 own a business.

Nearly 40% of the respondents between the ages of 21-44 consider that they are likely to start a business, while less than 30% of the respondents over 45 are likely to start a new business.

Younger respondents indicate finding a job with upward potential is difficult, so a larger portion than other age groups are planning to leave the state.

Diversity:

Diversity isn't based solely on cultural differences, but also on socioeconomic status, job sector, education, etc. Interestingly, social diversity is not as important to those between the ages of 21-50 as it is to those over 50. Nearly 80% of respondents over 51 placed some degree of importance in social diversity, while only 60% of respondents between the ages 21-50 found this important.

Respondents indicated that they believe schools do the best job increasing diversity, while government influences diversity the least. Most people felt that private business was neutral on the influence of diversity.

