

GET THE JOB

Understanding Age Discrimination

As Americans live longer, more productive lives, the topic of age discrimination has moved to the fore. It shouldn't stand in the way of getting hired.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

Nearly half a million workers filed an age-discrimination claim between 1997 and 2020, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In fact, this workplace issue led to some 22 percent of all EEOC claims in 2020 alone. As many as one-third of those surveyed by the AARP said they or someone among friends and family had suffered age discrimination over the previous four-year period. Those numbers are only going to grow. Nearly 20% of the older population was employed or looking for work in 2020, after having made up just 10% of the workforce in 1985. Older workers are expected to increase some 52% by 2030, according to Senior Living.

IT'S THE LAW

More than a third of the



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American workforce was 50 and older in 2020, the AARP reports. That amounts

to more than 16 million people. Almost 15% of those employed, or 6.4 million

workers, were 60 and older. They earned protection under the Age Discrimination in

Employment Act in 1967, which states that hiring decisions may not be made solely on the basis of age. The law applies to workers who are 40 and older at any company with 20 or more employees, and also covers decisions relating to being fired, promotions or demotions and layoffs.

GETTING HELP

An AARP survey found that two-thirds of older workers were willing to learn new skills if that helped them rejoin the job market. Yet they're often overlooked for younger applicants. That led the U.S. House of Representatives to pass the Protect Older Job Applicants Act in 2021, a bill that was more specifically aimed at age discrimination against those who are looking to enter the workforce or make a change in their career. If you've applied for a job and feel you were overlooked simply because of your age, contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at 800-669-4000.

The National Employment Lawyers Association website also includes a search function, found at <https://exchange.nela.org/member-directory/findalawyer>, that can help find nearby professional help with your discrimination case.