Pulled Out or Pushed Out?
Why So Many Men No Longer Work

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Prime-age men labor force non-participation

General trend

5 million
Life cycle non-participation rate for prime-age men by generation
Pull and *Push* factors

**Pull factors:**
- Additional years of schooling
- Caretaking and family obligations

**Push factors:**
- Disability
- Skill mismatch
Pull factors: Additional years of schooling/Caretaking

Difference in non-participation rate between Millennial and Baby Boomer prime-age men by reason
Push factors: Disability

Percent of prime-age men out of the labor force due to disability by generation
Push factors: Skill mismatch

Life cycle non-participation rate for prime-age men by generation and education

High school or less  College or more

Proxies for mismatch:

• Employment share in goods producing industries
• Minimum wage gap
Conclusions

• Both pull and push factors contribute to increasing non-participation rates among prime-age men

• Higher non-participation rates resulted in a labor force shortage of 1.6 million 25–42-year-old Millennial men relative to Baby Boomers
  • ~ 50% (~ 790,000) of this due to disability, illness, or other reasons (push factor)
  • ~ 20% (~ 320,000) due to schooling (pull factor)
  • ~ 30% (~ 530,000) due to caretaking (pull factor)

• Non-participation rates are most sensitive to changes in skill mismatch and caretaking needs and not the generosity of disability insurance.

Thank you!