

# Managing Across Generations: Building Stronger Local Government Teams

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2025 | 11:30 AM – 1 PM**



# THANKS FOR JOINING US TODAY!

Moderator

**Jon Barilone**

*Senior Program Manager  
Institute for Local Government*



# WEBINAR OVERVIEW

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## About ILG & Setting the Stage

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## Presentation on Managing Across Generations

- ◉ **Jennifer Martinez** – HansonBridgett
- ◉ **Andrew Clough** – West County Wastewater

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## Audience Q&A

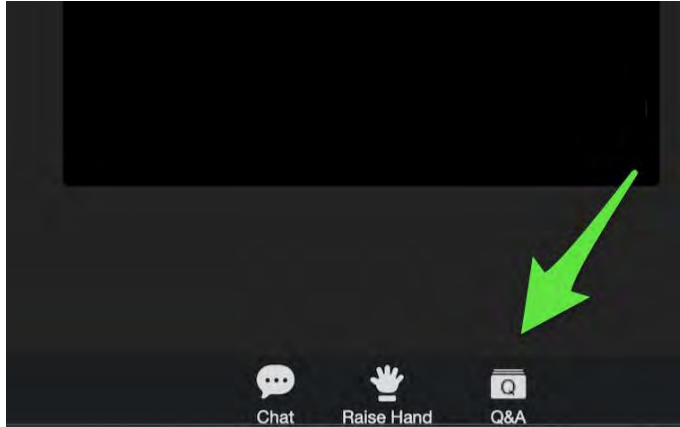
*Type your questions in Zoom's Q&A feature!*

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## Wrap Up & Adjourn

# TECH OVERVIEW & HOUSEKEEPING

- All webinar participants will be on **MUTE** for the duration of the event.
- Please type any questions into the **Q&A BOX** at any time during the session.



*NOTE: we will not be recording this webinar, but we will provide a copy of the slide deck on the ILG website afterward.*

# ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ILG)

# NON-PROFIT, NON-PARTISAN, AND COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING & IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- The Institute for Local Government is the non-profit training and education affiliate of The League of California Cities (Cal Cities).
- We were founded 70 years ago in 1955. Our mission is to serve and support California's 2,500+ local agencies – cities, towns, counties, and special districts.
- We provide practical and easy-to-use resources so local government agencies can effectively implement policies on the ground.



# ILG'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Our mission is to help local government leaders  
**navigate complexity, increase capacity & build trust**  
in their communities.

## Program Areas

Leadership &  
Governance

Workforce  
Development &  
Civics Education

Public  
Engagement

Sustainable &  
Resilient  
Communities



## Services

Education &  
Training

Technical  
Assistance

Capacity  
Building

Convening

# SETTING THE STAGE





# “THE 6-GENERATION WORKFORCE”



## Today's Unprecedented Six-Generation Workforce

There are more generations currently working than at any other time in U.S. history.  
What does this mean for employers and employees?

– *Bentley University, May 2025*

## ...BUT NOT FOREVER

*“By 2030, 74% of the workforce will be comprised of Millennial and Generation Z workers.”*

– Forrester Research, Inc., March 2021

Source: Mission Square Research  
Institute’s “State and Local  
Government Employment Trends”  
Survey Findings (2025)

Figure 31: **Largest Wave of  
Retirements, 2021-2025**



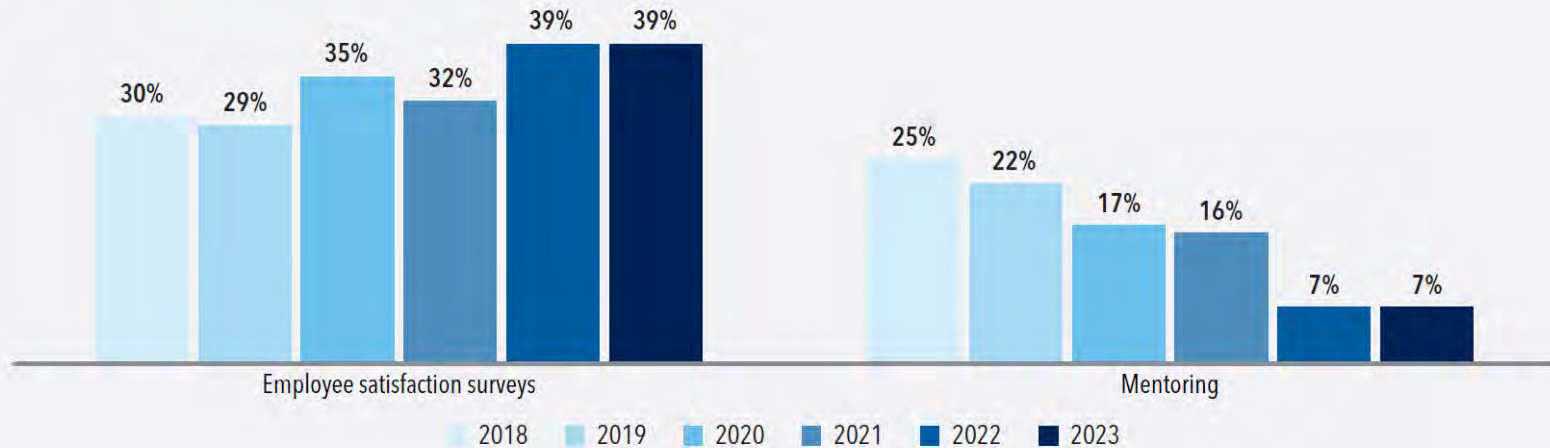
# MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

*“Until then, Baby Boomers and Generation X, which make up more than half of the current workforce, have a chance to act as Modern Elders to guide the younger generations and, at the same time, upgrade their skills to adapt to the post-pandemic work environment.”*

*– SHRM Business, Feb. 2023*

# MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Figure 25b **Retention program detail, 2018-2023**



**Source: Mission Square Research Institute's "State and Local Government Employment Trends" Survey Findings (2023)**

# TODAY'S PANELISTS



**Jennifer Martinez**

Partner and Chief Diversity, Equity,  
and Inclusion Officer with  
HansonBridgett



**Andrew Clough**

General Manager of West  
County Wastewater District



**HansonBridgett**

# **Managing Across Generations: Building Stronger Local Government Teams**

**JENNIFER M. MARTINEZ**

**PARTNER | CHIEF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION OFFICER**

**HANSON BRIDGETT LLP**

**ANDREW CLOUGH**

**GENERAL MANAGER**

**WEST COUNTY WASTEWATER**

# What We'll Cover

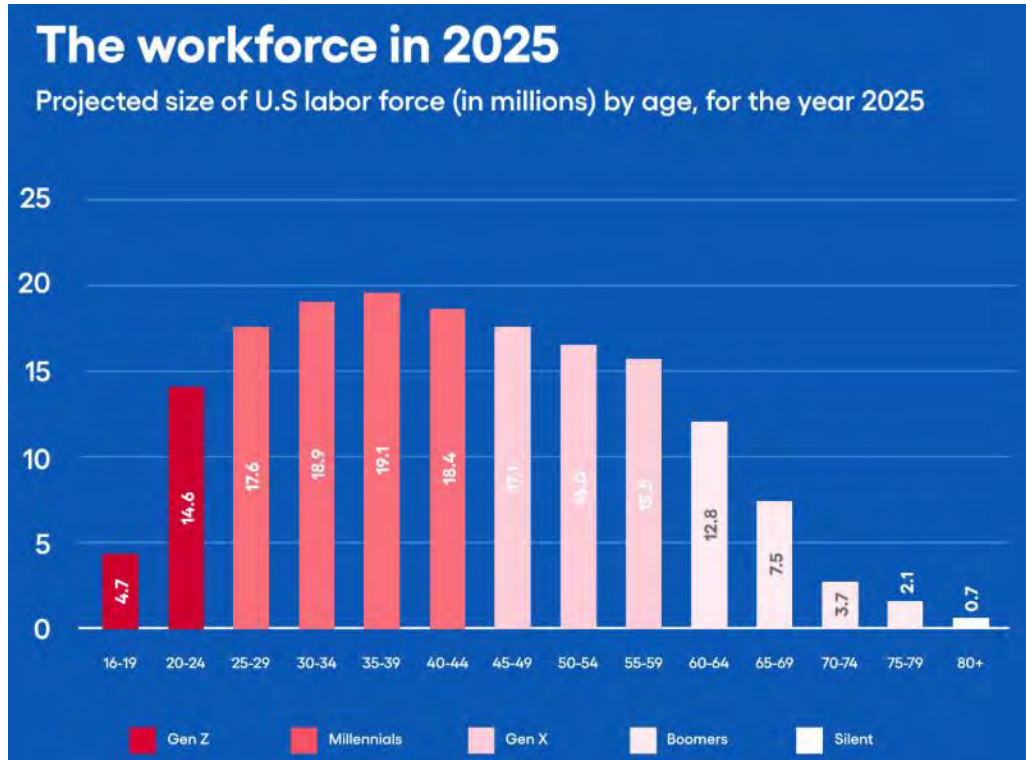
- Generation Overview
- Why This Is Important
- Generational Characteristics in the Workplace
- Strategies for Bridging the Gap
- Questions



# GENERATION OVERVIEW



# The Workforce in 2025



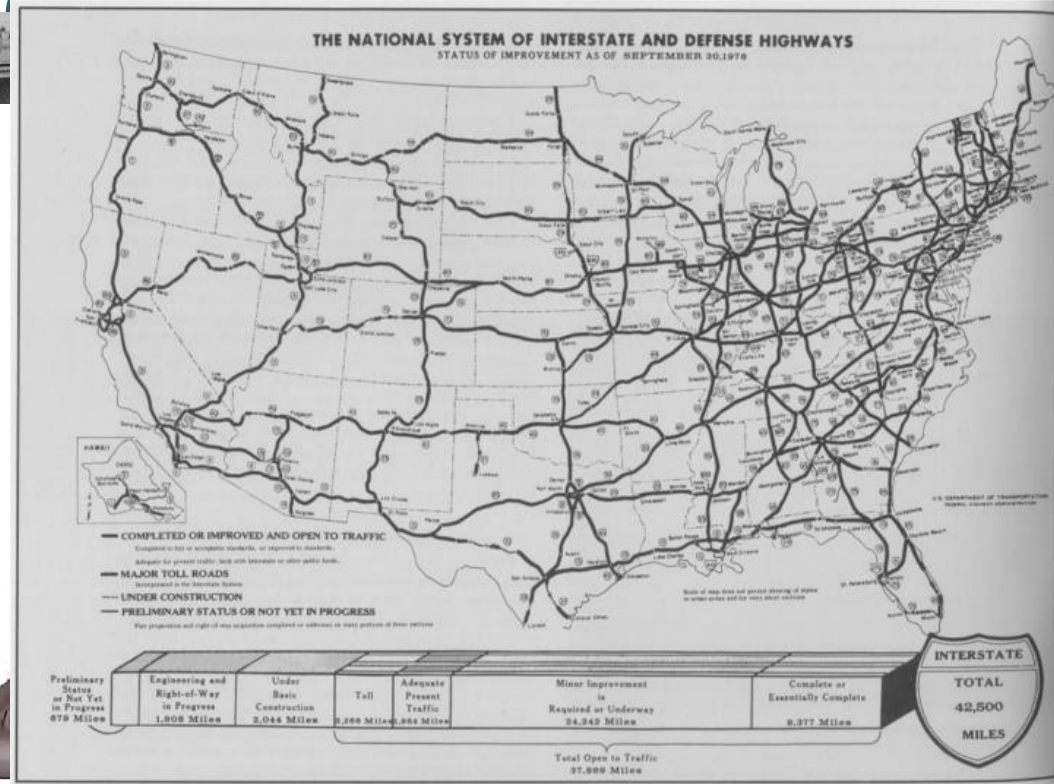
# Boomers (1945-1964)



# Boomers (1945-1964)

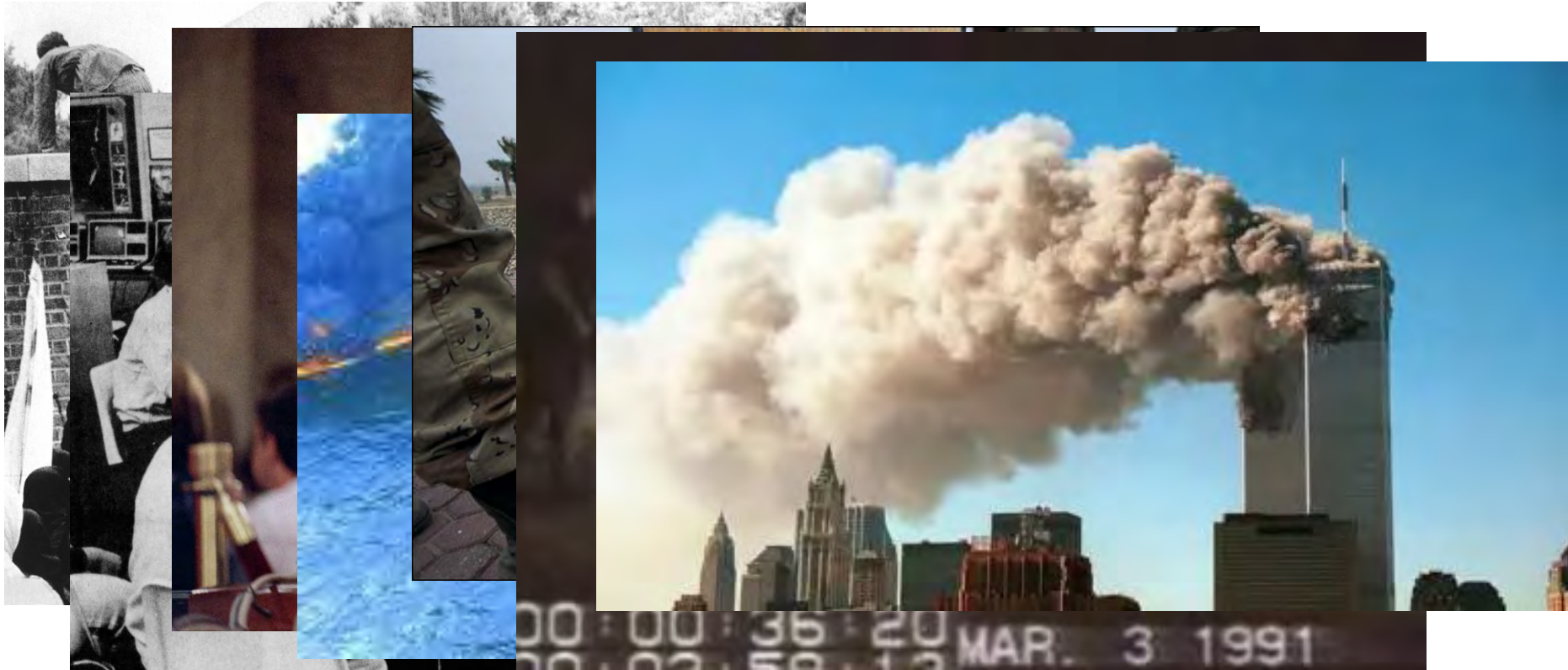


THIS IS THE FIRST PROJECT  
IN THE UNITED STATES





# Generation X (1965-1980)



# Generation X (1965-1980)





# Millennials (1981-1995)



## Millennials (1981-1995)



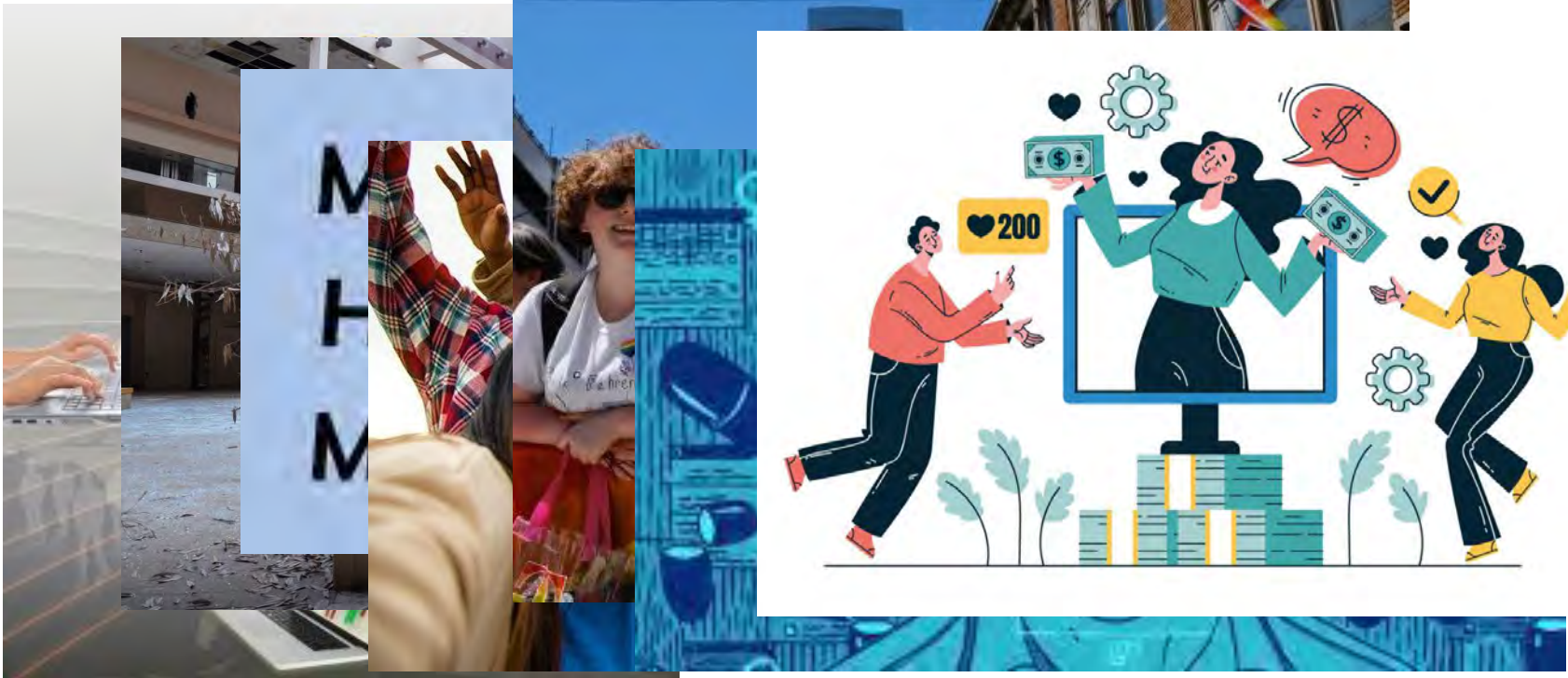


# Generation Z (1996-2012)





# Generation Z (1996-2012)



**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT**

# Benefits of All Diversity in the Workplace

- Diverse and inclusive companies are 2.1-2.4 times more likely to exceed financial targets and report positive customer experiences; 5.1 times more likely to retain talent.
  - *Source: Deloitte, 2021*
- Diverse teams are more likely to re-examine facts and remain objective, leading to better decision-making.
  - *Source: Harvard Business Review, 2016*
- Diverse and inclusive teams are more likely to innovate effectively and adapt well to change.
  - *Source: NeuroLeadership Institute, 2016*

# Benefits of Age Diversity at Work

- Institutional knowledge
- New perspectives and innovation
- Adaptation to change
- Client relationship continuance
- Stronger mentorship



# Benefits of Age Diversity at Work

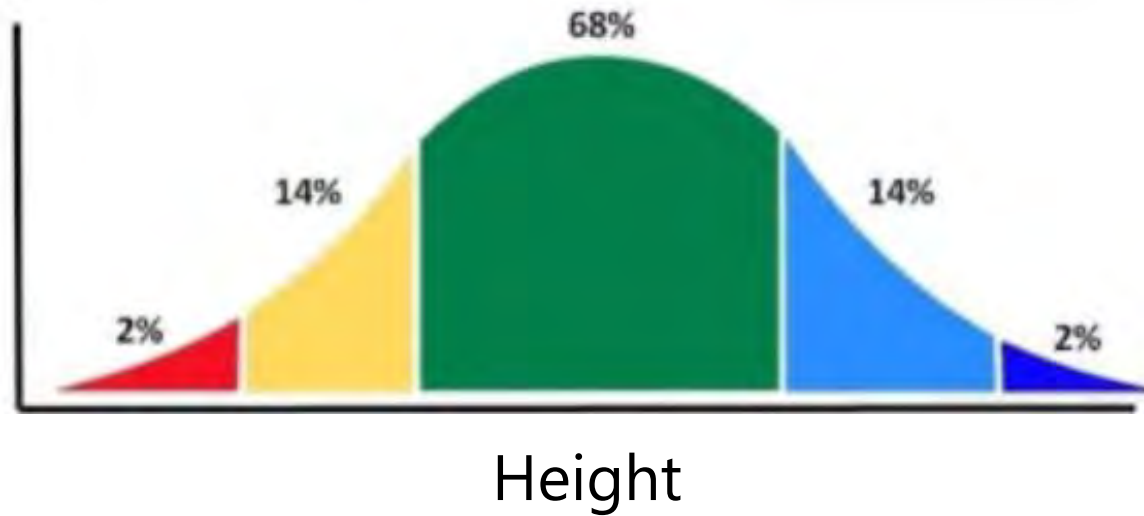


# Generational Awareness

- Generational awareness = understanding how significant political, economic, social, and technological events, during a certain era, lead to common traits within an age cohort
- Theory – there are traits and preferences that occur in high frequency within a given time-bounded group
- These traits and preferences include things related to work styles, communication, job expectations, and career trajectory → better team dynamics if we are aware of these things about coworkers

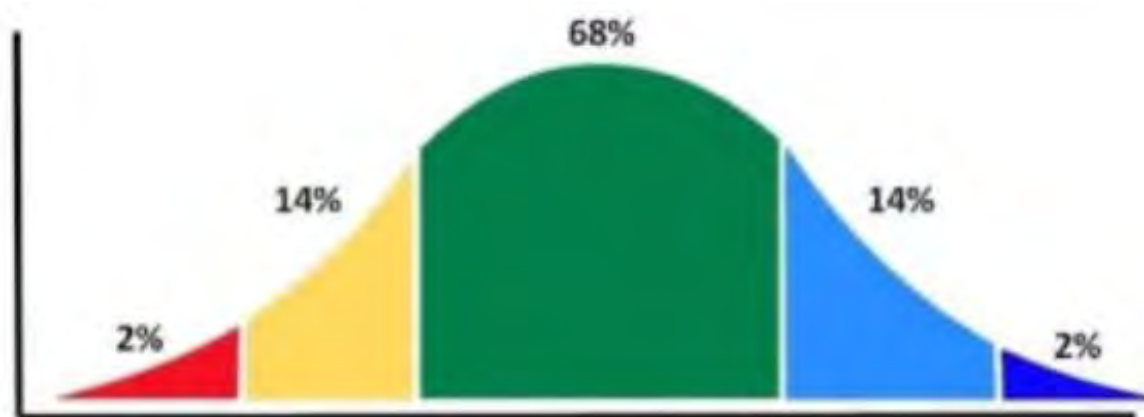


# Generational Awareness



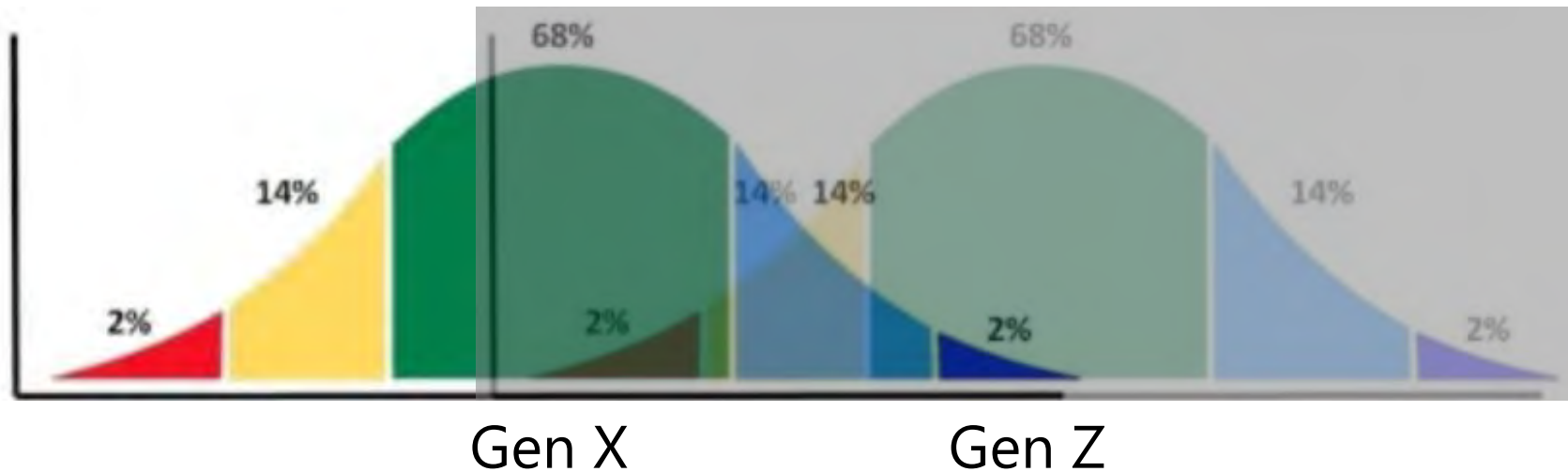


# Generational Awareness

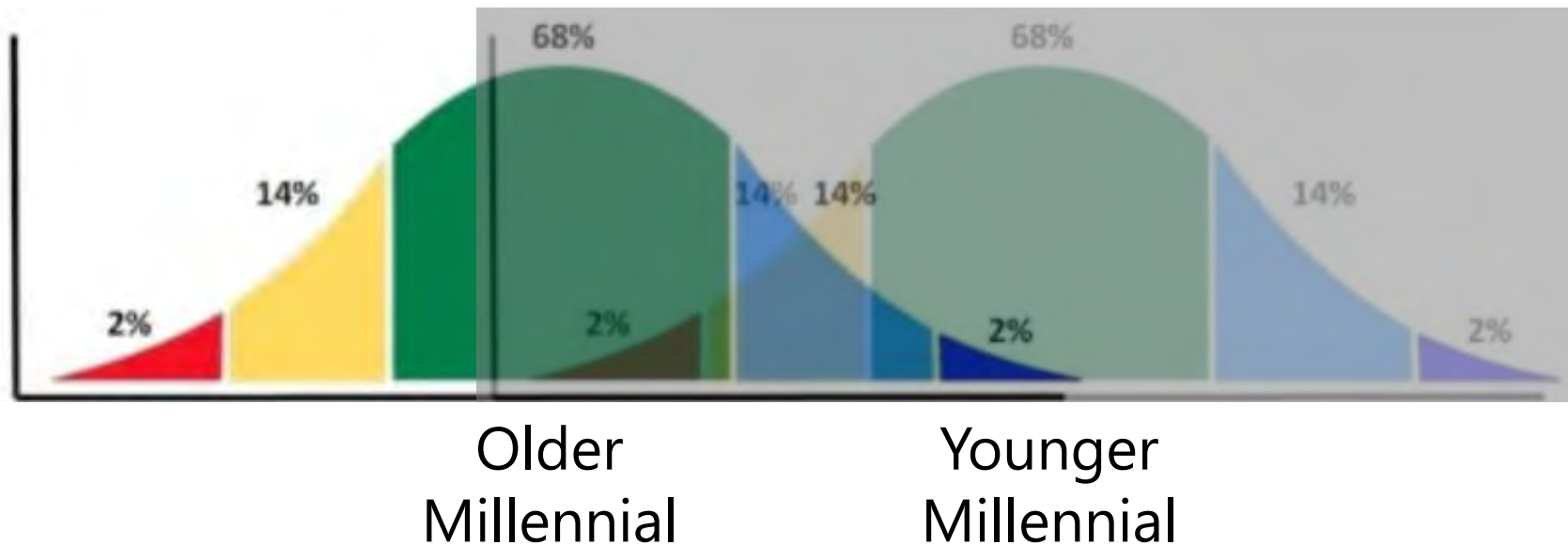


Remote vs. In-Person  
Work

# Generational Awareness



# Generational Awareness



# And We Can't Forget the Law!

- **Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)** – prohibits harassment and discrimination based on age
  - Key point – protection *only* exists for employees age 40 and older; *no* protection based on age under 40
- **Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (OWBPA)** – mandates specific employer actions to ensure older employees are treated fairly in terms of benefit plans and severance agreements

# **GENERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE WORKPLACE**

# Career Trajectory

- **Boomers**
  - Change is something to be planned and managed
  - Want to be valued and recognized for their accomplishments – this will keep them loyal
  - Training/learning – want learning to be led or facilitated... but keep training to a minimum
  - More concerned with financial safety than competitive compensation
- **Gen X**
  - Change is something to be expected; it's just the reality
  - Want to be treated fairly and want the system of promotion and compensation to make sense – this will keep them loyal...but they swear they'll leave anytime
  - Training/learning – mandatory, considered a benefit... but want to approach learning independently, even externally
  - Very invested in competitive compensation... but might value different parts of the compensation package than Millennials

# Career Trajectory

- **Millennials**

- Change is something that should be fluid; an ebb and flow
- Want predictability and transparency in their advancement; this will keep them loyal...for a time
- Training/learning – continuous and expected...but make sure it's collaborative, focused on soft skills too
- Very invested in competitive compensation... but might value different parts of the compensation package than Gen X

- **Gen Z**

- Change is something to be encouraged; sameness is boring
- Want values-alignment, purpose-driven work; this might keep them loyal...maybe
- Training/learning – on demand as needed...and they want to do it when/how/with whoever they want
- Still somewhat concerned with competitive compensation, but more likely to look to intangible benefits (e.g., remote work, values alignment, time off) and are invested in other benefits with monetary value (e.g., tuition reimbursement programs, egg freezing benefits, free meals)

# Communication

- **Boomers**
  - Mode: face to face, more formal emails
  - May be more guarded with their true thoughts; give more weight to roles (who has the right to say what)
- **Gen X**
  - Mode: emails, short phone conversations
  - Approach communications with a “hub and spoke” style



# Communication

- **Millennials**
  - Mode: electronic communication, but more instant messaging than email
  - Want communication to be direct and open
- **Gen Z**
  - Mode: whatever is fastest, more use of images and external links
  - May prefer virtual/digital for tough conversations

# Feedback

- **Boomers**

- Want feedback to be in a formalized, annual process
- Can tend to see no feedback as a positive

- **Gen X**

- Want feedback to be periodic and predictable; more than just an annual review, and still relatively structured
- Understand no feedback as positive... but they don't like it

# Feedback

- **Millennials**

- Want feedback to be on-demand; more informal and project-related, rather than a large annual recap
- Feedback should include positives and negatives

- **Gen Z**

- Want feedback to be instantaneous and in the moment
- Feedback should be meaningful/substantive; not surface level

# **STRATEGIES FOR BRIDGING THE GAP**

# Differences as Strengths

- **Boomers**
  - Historical and institutional knowledge
  - Experience with what works and what does not
  - Loyalty – to company, initiative, project, etc.
  - Successorship/maintaining relationships
- **Gen X**
  - Independent and entrepreneurial tasks
  - Very adaptive to almost any environment
  - Great at “chopping the wood in front of them”

# Differences as Strengths

- **Millennials**
  - Multicultural lens
  - Straddling the technology gap
  - Will keep the focus on a big picture or end goal
- **Gen Z**
  - Very savvy with new media
  - Innovation and creativity
  - Will remind the team of values

# Real World Lessons

- Work location
  - Boomers: Value in-person interaction and team structure
  - Gen X: Lean toward more in-person work... but likes a remote day
  - Millennials: Lean toward a hybrid in-person/remote model; clear expectations and predictability matter a lot
  - Gen Z: Wants total flexibility and autonomy over in-person/remote
- How can an employer craft a work policy that serves its workforce and contributes to retention?
- Are there confounding variables here?

# Real World Lessons

- Teams and Leaders
  - Boomers: As leaders, tend towards more authoritative style; on decisionmaking, prefer team-informed (but not necessarily team-decided) approach
  - Gen X: As leaders, tend towards more of a coaching or mentorly style; on decisionmaking, prefer active team inclusion in decisionmaking, even if team doesn't decide together
  - Millennials: As leaders, tend towards more of a partner or team-player style; on decisionmaking, prefer team-based decisions
  - Gen Z: Approach leadership as a decentralized process; on decisionmaking, want to ensure values and fairness play a part
- How can an employer encourage effective leadership that is still authentic?
- Does that answer change where a supervisor is younger than their subordinates?



# Real World Lessons

- “Going the extra mile”
  - Boomers: extra parts of the job *are still* the job
  - Gen X: will buy into extra parts of the job where there is an apparent personal career benefit
  - Millennials: similar to Gen X, but will start to push back on work/life balance
  - Gen Z: resistant to the idea of extra work; if it’s part of the job, it should be included in the description...and compensated accordingly
- How can public agency employers balance these values and expectations?  
And how does this relate to the idea of “public service” more broadly?
- Is this particular generational difference especially difficult for public employers who may not have headcount flexibility that private employers do?

# The Bottom Line: Start with Empathy

- Assume good intentions
- Your goal is understanding, not necessarily “solving”
  - It is ultimately a person—a coworker—in front of you, not an obstacle/problem
  - Understanding doesn’t mean agreeing or condoning
- Guarding against attribution or actor/observer bias

# Gut Check Questions to Ensure Empathy

- Is my own generational experience affecting my actions/decisions/communication here?
- What similarities do I share with this person across generations?
- What differences in generational influence might be coming up in this interaction?
- Am I making assumptions about this person's preferences, communication, etc. because of their age?

**QUESTIONS?**

# AUDIENCE Q&A

What questions  
do you have  
for us?



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# RESOURCES AVAILABLE SOON ON CA-ILG.ORG



Resources will be shared  
via email with all  
registrants a few days  
after the webinar.





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