The Longevity Economy is the sum of all economic activity in Illinois that is supported by the consumer spending of households headed by someone age 50 or older—both in Illinois, as well as spending on exports from Illinois to other states. This includes the direct, indirect (supply chain), and induced economic effects of this spending. (The induced impact involves the ripple effects from the spending of those employed either directly or indirectly.)

People over 50 contribute to the economy in a positive, outsize proportion to their share of the population. Despite being 33% of Illinois’s population in 2013 (expected to grow to 34% by 2040), the total economic contribution of the Longevity Economy accounted for 45% of Illinois’s GDP ($323 billion). This supported 50% of Illinois’s jobs (3.8 million), 44% of employee compensation ($176 billion), and 47% of state taxes ($29 billion). The greatest number of jobs supported by the Longevity Economy were in health care (684,000), retail trade (530,000), and accommodation & food services (321,000).

This $323 billion impact of the Longevity Economy was driven by $206 billion in consumer spending by over-50 households in Illinois, or 53% of total comparable consumer spending. The categories where Longevity Economy spending accounted for the largest share of total consumer spending were health care (66%), other nondurables (59%), and financial services (57%).

People over 50 also make a significant contribution to Illinois’s workforce, with 66% of people 50-64 employed, compared to 77% of people 25-49. Overall, people over 50 represent 32% of Illinois’s workforce. Among employed people, 12% of those 50-64 are self-employed entrepreneurs, compared with 7% of those 25-49. Additionally, 42% of those 50-64 work in professional occupations, compared to 44% 25-49.