The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated automation by 5 years, meaning 30% of work activities could be automated by 2025.

In the industries that employ the most people, automation potential is often greater:

- **46%** Food Preparation and Serving
- **28%** Sales and Related
- **58%** Production Occupations
- **43%** Office and Administrative
- **42%** Transportation and Material Moving

Adults with lower levels of education are more vulnerable to technology advancements.

64% of the SREB region’s workers have a high school diploma or less.

Workers most vulnerable to automation are also those with the greatest risk for work disruptions during the pandemic:

- Those with the lowest levels of education
- Women and people of color
- Workers ages 16-23 and 56-74

24.6 million workers — 47% of the workforce — are at risk for unemployment, reduced work hours or exiting the labor force due to economic impacts from the pandemic.

17% of workers are considered essential and are therefore highly unlikely to be out of work in the pandemic.

32% of workers can work from home based on employment in May 2019.

The percentage of vulnerable workers varies by industry:

- Food Preparation and Serving: 100%
- Sales and Related: 73%
- Production Occupations: 90%
- Installation and Maintenance: 99%
- Transportation and Material Moving: 52%

6.9 million workers were officially unemployed while 3.3 million more were likely out of work or left the labor force. Of these, 5.5 million are highly unlikely to be called back to work.

SREB analysis based on May 2019 employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Other sources: The Economic Policy Institute and the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis