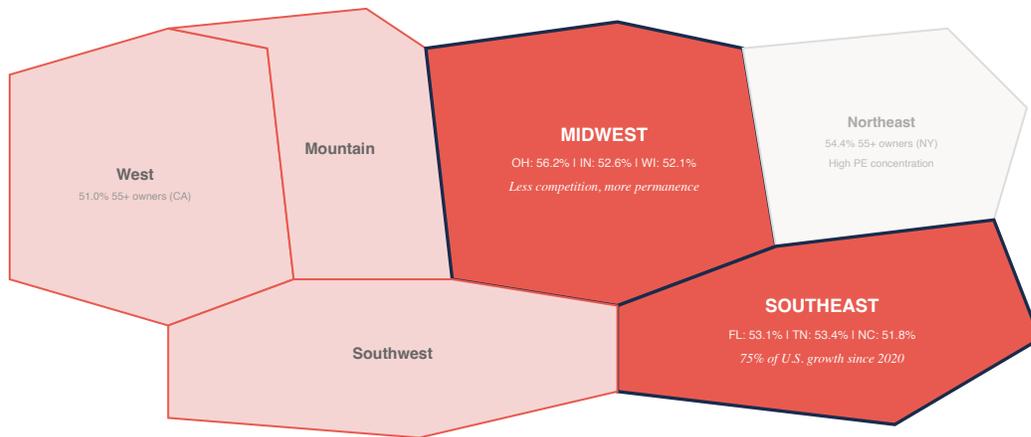


Where to search in 2026

Geographic arbitrage is real. Here's where buyer competition is lowest and Boomer ownership is highest.

<p>52.3%</p> <p>of U.S. businesses owned by people 55+</p>	<p>35%</p> <p>of search fund acquisitions in searcher's home state</p>	<p>149</p> <p>median days on market (fastest since 2017)</p>	<p>3.7x</p> <p>median EBITDA multiple (Q1 2025)</p>
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- **High opportunity** — high Boomer ownership, less buyer competition
- Medium opportunity
- Saturated — high PE concentration

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP BY PEOPLE 55+ (BY STATE)

STATE	% OWNED BY 55+	REGION	OPPORTUNITY
Ohio	56.2%	Midwest	High — above national avg, low PE activity
Tennessee	53.4%	Southeast	High — fast population growth
Florida	53.1%	Southeast	High — #1 in deal volume
New York	54.4%	Northeast	Low — PE hub, high competition
California	51.0%	West	Low — PE/VC hub, high valuations
National Average	52.3%	—	—

Source: LendingTree 2024 Boomer Entrepreneurs Report (U.S. Census Bureau 2022 Annual Business Survey)

"Traditional searchers often hail from the coasts, partially due to Stanford & Harvard being the two focal nodes of search funds. As a result, there tends to be more competition for deals in

major coastal hubs. Being willing to step out into regions less trafficked by acquirers can be a competitive advantage."

— SMEVentures, "The Geographically Restricted Search Fund"

The case for the Midwest & Southeast

Midwest

56.2% of Ohio businesses owned by 55+

\$3M–\$15M SBIC sweet spot in region

Ohio & Indiana dominate SBIC activity

- Concentration of industrials, manufacturing, food/ag
- Gap: too small for PE, too large for local banks
- Fewer coastal buyers competing for deals
- Booth-Kellogg ETA conference draws regional players
- Deals often don't go through brokers (less visibility)

Columbus Indianapolis Cincinnati Milwaukee
Des Moines

Southeast

75% of U.S. population growth since 2020

1.5% growth in SC (fastest in U.S., 2024-25)

Florida #1 in deal volume nationally

- South added more residents than all other regions combined
- Strong in services, home improvement, logistics
- Business-friendly tax and regulatory environment
- Less saturated than Northeast corridor
- SEETA conference builds regional network

Raleigh Charlotte Nashville Tampa Atlanta

"Less prestige, more permanence. Less pitch, more patience... Alpha is, invariably, in places unexpected."

— Cash & Carried, "Flyover Country, Operating Partners, and The Deal-by-Deal Play"

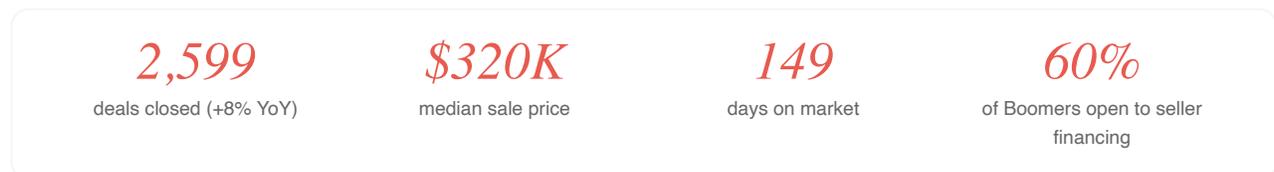
WHY LESS COMPETITION?

- Flyover Capital thesis: "lack of venture capital outside of three states — California, Massachusetts, and New York"
- Most search fund alumni stay near coastal MBA programs
- A lot of deals in smaller towns don't go through brokers
- Only 35% of acquisitions occur in the searcher's home state (Stanford 2024)

WHY HIGHER OPPORTUNITY?

- Midwest Business Brokers: "For buyers, this means less competition and often better negotiating positions"
- Higher Boomer ownership = more exits coming
- Relationship-driven markets favor patient buyers
- SBA 7(a) works everywhere (10% down)

Q3 2025 NATIONAL MARKET SNAPSHOT



Source: BizBuySell Q3 2025 Insight Report

THE SWEET SPOT: SECONDARY CITIES (100K–500K)

"A growing population raises demand for local businesses and makes states more attractive to relocating companies. As more people move to the Southeastern U.S., businesses will increasingly want to locate here."

Target markets like Louisville, Raleigh, Omaha, Birmingham—not Chicago, NYC, or LA.

— SC Dept. of Employment and Workforce, 2024

Ready to build proprietary deal flow in high-opportunity regions?

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Sources: Stanford GSB 2024 Search Fund Study • BizBuySell Q3 2025 Insight Report • LendingTree 2024 Boomer Entrepreneurs Report (U.S. Census Bureau ABS) • U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates 2024-2025 • SMEVentures "The Geographically Restricted Search Fund" • Cash & Carried "Flyover Country, Operating Partners" • Flyover Capital Investment Thesis • Midwest Business Brokers • SC Dept. of Employment & Workforce 2024