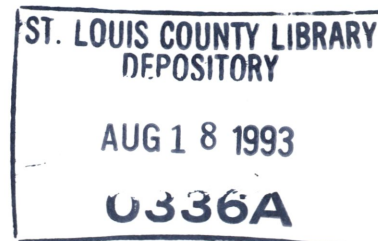


# *Facts on* Working Women

U.S. Department of Labor  
Women's Bureau



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## 20 FACTS ON WOMEN WORKERS

1. Of the 100 million women 16 and older in the United States, 58 million were labor force participants (working or looking for work) during 1992. Women experienced their highest labor force participation rate of all time in 1992--57.8 percent. They also accounted for 60 percent of total labor force growth between 1982 and 1992.
2. Women represented 45 percent of all persons (men and women) in the civilian labor force in 1992. Women are projected to account for nearly three-fifths of the labor force entrants between 1990 and 2005 and will comprise 47 percent of the labor force by the year 2005.
3. Labor force participation for women continues to be highest among those in the 35-44 age group: 77 percent of women in this age group were in the labor force in 1992; 74 percent, for those 25-34 years old; 73 percent, for those 45-54 years old; and 47 percent, for those between the ages of 55-64.
4. Teenage women (16-19 years old) are not as active in the labor force as adult women (20 years of age and over). Only 49 percent were in the labor force, compared with 58 percent of adult women. In addition, teenage women's unemployment rate was three times as high as adult women--18.5 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively.
5. The unemployment rate for all women in the labor force was 6.9 percent in 1992; for women 20 years of age and over, it was 6.3 percent. Teenage women, especially black and Hispanic, continued to experience very high unemployment rates--37.2 percent and 26.4 percent, respectively.
6. In March 1992, 74 percent of divorced women were labor force participants; likewise for 65 percent of single, never-married women; 62 percent of separated women; 59 percent of married women with spouses present; but only 18 percent of widowed women.
7. Of the 54 million employed women in the United States in 1992, 40 million worked full time (35 or more hours per week); nearly 14 million, or 25 percent of all women workers, held part-time jobs (less than 35 hours per week). Two-thirds (66 percent) of all part-time workers were women.

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR WOMEN, BY RACE  
1982, 1987, and 1992**

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1992</u>
All women	9.4	6.2	6.9
White	8.3	5.2	6.0
Black	17.6	13.2	13.0
Hispanic	14.1	8.9	11.3
Adult women (20 years and over)	8.3	5.4	6.3
White	7.3	4.6	5.4
Black	15.4	11.6	11.7
Hispanic	12.5	7.7	10.1
Teenage women (16-19 years)	21.9	15.9	18.5
White	19.0	13.4	15.7
Black	47.1	34.9	37.2
Hispanic	28.2	22.4	26.4

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Handbook of Labor Statistics*, August 1989, and *Employment and Earnings*, January 1993.

8. Between 1983 and 1992, women increased their employment in four out of the six major occupational groups--**managerial and professional specialties**, by 5.1 million; **technical, sales, and administrative support**, by 3.3 million; **service occupations**, by 1.3 million; and **precision production, craft, and repair**, by 129,000.
9. Women have made substantial progress in obtaining jobs in virtually all managerial and professional specialty occupations. In 1983 they held 40 percent (9.7 million) of these high paying jobs and 47 percent (14.7 million) in 1992. Women employed in managerial and professional specialty occupations had 1992 median weekly earnings between \$357 and \$917.
10. Women are still over represented in low-paying jobs. Almost half (44 percent) of employed women work in technical, sales, and administrative support jobs--23.5 million women. Even though the earnings gap between men and women is slowly closing, women earn only 75 cents for every dollar earned by men when comparing 1992 median weekly earnings of full-time workers (\$381 for women and \$505 for men). The five most lucrative occupations for women are: lawyers; physicians; pharmacists; engineers; computer systems analysts and scientists.<sup>1</sup>
11. Women are less likely than men to be self-employed. Of the 8.6 million self-employed workers in nonagricultural industries in 1992, 3.0 million were women. Most self-employed women worked in the services industry, such as business, health, and legal services (1.9 million); or in the wholesale and retail trade industry (692,000). Self-employment has led many women to become entrepreneurs--owning 4.1 sole proprietorships, partnerships, and Subchapter S corporations<sup>2</sup> in 1987.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes any occupation where the female base is less than 50,000.

<sup>2</sup> A Subchapter S corporation is a special Internal Revenue Service designation for legally incorporated businesses with 35 or fewer shareholders, who, for tax advantages, elect to be taxed as individual shareholders rather than as a corporation.

12. The military has also provided women with a source of employment. The number of women in the military has increased steadily over the past two decades--from 44,498 in 1972 to slightly over 211,000 in March 1992. Women represented 11.2 percent of the active-duty military as of March 31, 1992. Of the 1.2 million women veterans, 45 percent served in peacetime, 26 percent during World War II, 21 percent in the Vietnam era, and 8 percent during World War I and the Korean conflict.
13. In the November 1992 elections, women broke new ground when four newly elected women gained seats in the Senate and 24 in the House of Representatives. This brings the total to 6 women senators and 47 representatives who now make up about 10 percent of the voting members of the U.S. Congress--a first.
14. The more education a woman has, the greater the likelihood she will seek employment. Among women 25 to 54 years of age with less than 4 years of high school, only 51 percent were labor force participants. For female high school graduates with no college, 74 percent were in the labor force. Among women of the same age group with 4 or more years of college in 1991, 84 percent were in the labor force.
15. The proportions of college degrees awarded to women have increased at all levels. Women have earned at least half of all bachelor's and master's degrees since the 1980-81 school year. In engineering, women earned 14 percent of bachelor's, 13 percent of master's, and 9 percent of doctorates in 1988-89. In mathematics, women earned 46 percent of bachelor's, 40 percent of master's, and 19 percent of doctorates. Over an 8-year period--from 1980-81 to 1988-89--women's share of degrees rose from 14 to 26 percent in dentistry, 25 to 33 percent in medicine, and 32 to 41 percent in law.
16. Median earnings for female high school graduates (with no college) working year round, full time in 1991 were less than those of fully employed men who were high school dropouts--\$18,042 and \$20,944, respectively. In addition, men with an associate's degree working year-round, full time earned nearly the same as similarly employed women with a master's degree--\$32,221 and \$33,122, respectively.

**1991 MEDIAN EARNINGS  
YEAR-ROUND, FULL-TIME WORKERS**

All women	\$20,553	All men	\$29,421
White women	20,794	White men	30,266
Black women	18,720	Black men	22,075
Hispanic women	16,244	Hispanic men	19,771

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1991*.

17. Working wives contribute substantially to family income. In March 1992, 59 percent of wives in married-couple families were labor force participants. In 1991, the median income of married-couple families with the wife in the paid labor force was \$48,169, compared with \$30,075 for those without the wife in the paid labor force. Women who maintain families had the lowest median family income (\$16,692).
18. The 34 million women with children under age 18 had a labor force participation rate of 67 percent in March 1992. Fifty-eight percent (9.6 million) of mothers with preschoolers (children under age 6) and 55 percent (5.3 million) of mothers with children under age 3 were labor force participants in March 1992.

19. Of the approximately 67 million families in the United States in 1992, 12 million (18 percent) were maintained by women. In black families, women maintained 47 percent; in Hispanic families, women maintained 24 percent; and in white families, women maintained 14 percent. The median weekly earnings of families maintained by women in 1992 was \$385 compared with \$779 for married-couple families and \$519 for families maintained by men.

**FAMILIES MAINTAINED BY WOMEN, 1992**

	Number of <u>Families</u>	Percent of <u>Families</u>	Median Weekly <u>Earnings</u>
<u>Total</u> <sup>1</sup>	11,726,000	17.6	\$ 385
White	7,773,000	13.7	409
Black	3,577,000	46.9	328
Hispanic	1,244,000	24.1	341

<sup>1</sup> Components will not total because data for the "other races" groups are not presented separately and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, January 1993.

20. In 1991 women represented 63 percent of all persons 18 years old and over who were living below the poverty level. The poverty rate for families maintained by women with no husband present was six times as high as for married-couple families--35.6 percent and 6.0 percent, respectively. Women maintained 54 percent of all poor families in 1991. Women maintained 78 percent of poor black families, about 46 percent of poor Hispanic origin families, and 44 percent of poor white families.

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