

## What Does Their Income Mean to Their Families?

Many of these women have children depending upon them; some have husbands whom they must support; others have mothers, fathers, or other relatives whom they regularly help with living expenses. Whether or not they live with their families, the majority of them make regular contributions to family living.

**98 out of every 100  
who live in family households  
contribute regularly  
to household expenses.**

Of these  
2 out of 3  
share expenses  
with ONE other family member.

A majority of these families with two wage earners have three or more members.

**About  
1 out of every 4  
who live apart from their families  
supports or helps to support  
at least one relative.**

More of the widowed and divorced than of the single women support relatives not living with them. Their dependents are usually their own children.

Single women more often have mothers than other relatives as dependents.

### THE ONE BIG REASON

why women now work  
outside the home is

### THE SAME BIG REASON

that their mothers and grandmothers had for the daily round of tasks that they performed at home.

Then, as now, women worked:

TO HELP PROVIDE

THE THINGS THAT ARE NEEDED

FOR DAILY LIVING

In pioneer days:

Women helped to grow and preserve the food for the family; they wove cloth and sewed by hand the garments worn by themselves and their families; and performed the necessary and laborious housekeeping tasks.

Now women work:

To help earn the money needed to purchase food processed outside the home; to buy clothing made in factories from machine-made materials; and to procure the labor-saving devices which remove drudgery from the upkeep of their homes.

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WHY DO  
WOMEN WORK?

JAN 19 '52

HOW DO THEY USE  
THE MONEY THEY EARN?

THE ANSWERS . . .

AS GIVEN BY  
8,300 WOMEN WORKERS  
IN 100 TRADE UNION LOCALS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Maurice J. Tobin, Secretary

WOMEN'S BUREAU  
Frieda S. Miller, Director

Washington: 1951

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## Why Do Women Work?

The answer comes from the women themselves—8,300 working women, holding down jobs of many types and in various places.

More than 8 out of 10 of them say  
**THEY WORK TO MAKE A LIVING**

In most cases there are others, too, who depend upon these women for financial help.



**Practically all (98%) of the women without husbands (single, widowed, separated, divorced) work to support themselves or themselves and others.**



**The vast majority of the married women (60 to 80 percent in six unions) work to contribute to living expenses.**



Some have the added purpose of **helping to build or buy a home or of helping to pay for the education of their children.**

**ONLY A FEW work "to keep in practice" or for the "satisfaction of having a job."**



These were some of the questions for which a reliable answer was sought in a 1950 study made by the Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor with the cooperation of six trade unions. In 100 local trade union groups 8,300 working women contributed to the study by answering a questionnaire designed to show the extent to which women workers support dependents and the part of women's earnings that must be spent for daily living.

## How Do They Use Their Earnings?

Most of these working women have little choice as to where their money goes. It is spent as fast as it is earned, to provide food, clothing, and shelter for themselves, and often for others, too.

**Daily living takes all or nearly all they earn, say most of those replying to the questionnaire.**

**Well over half of them use every dollar of their wages for daily living.**

**About 75 percent use 75¢ or more out of every dollar for daily living.**

"Daily living" means immediate needs; it does not take care of the future.

## What Responsibilities Do They Carry?

For the majority of these women, their wages must cover not only their own expenses but the whole or partial support of at least one other person.

**6 out of every 10 support or partly support dependents in addition to supporting themselves.**



**1 out of every 7 is the sole support of her family**

In most cases these are two-person families, but some of the women are paying all the expenses for three persons, and a few for four or more.

**Unions cooperating in the study—**

Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, AFL  
Communications Workers of America, CIO  
Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, AFL

International Association of Machinists, AFL  
International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, AFL  
Textile Workers Union of America, CIO