



# Facts on Women Workers

WOMEN'S BUREAU  
U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF LABOR

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## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN OCTOBER 1947

Women's employment in nonagricultural industries in October 1947 was considerably above that in September, according to Census Bureau estimates, while women in agriculture remained at about the same level. The number of women in the labor force was appreciably above that of October 1946.

	October 1947			
	Number of women	Change since September 1947	Total persons Number	Percent Women
Population (14 years and over)	54,710,000	+ 49,000	107,755,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	17,449,000	+ 216,000	60,892,000	28.7
Employed	16,944,000	+ 230,000	59,204,000	28.6
Unemployed	504,000	- 15,000	1,687,000	29.9
Armed forces	16,000	None	1,327,000	1.2
Nonworkers	37,245,000	- 167,000	45,535,000	81.8

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

## MINIMUM WAGE

The District of Columbia Minimum Wage Board has begun to hold meetings of its minimum wage conference for the beauty shop occupations to revise rates and standards for women and minor workers in beauty shops in the District.

Massachusetts held a public hearing Nov. 7 on the recommendations of the Public Housekeeping wage board for minimum wage rates and standards for restaurant occupations.

New York - The revised laundry order, effective Oct. 19, sets a guaranteed minimum wage of \$23 for Zone I and \$21 for Zone II, for a workweek of over 30 but not more than 40 hours. Basic minimum hourly rates may not be less than 57½ cents (Zone I) and 52½ cents (Zone II). Overtime to begin after the 41st hour, instead of the 45th as formerly, must be paid for at not less than 1½ times these basic hourly rates. The new order contains a provision requiring that a worker called to work on any day be paid for at least 4 hours.

Pennsylvania - The 1943 directory order for restaurants became mandatory Oct. 1.

Utah - A revised restaurant order, effective Nov. 20, increased minimum weekly wages for a week of 48 hours to \$21 in the two large-sized cities and to \$17 in the small towns. Wage rates in the revised public housekeeping order, effective Dec. 1, were not increased, but coverage was extended to include building space rented to business, manufacturing, commercial enterprises, and other public service.

Vermont's Commissioner of Industrial Relations is making a survey of hours and wages of women and minors in 5 of the principal trade and service industries: stores, laundries, hotels, restaurants, and theatres. The survey will form the basis of a report to the Governor and the legislature concerning the need for a minimum wage law for women and minors in intrastate businesses.

## COST OF LIVING

The State of Washington has released preliminary figures on a cost-of-living survey for an employed woman. Prices were obtained in 16 cities in May 1947. The cost of the commodities and services necessary at that time for a minimum adequate standard of living was \$1,721.64. The total cost of the budget, which includes an allowance for private insurance and for Federal income, social security, and sales taxes is \$2,048.49.

## WHITE AND NONWHITE WOMEN WORKERS

U. S. Census Bureau estimates for September 1947 show that about half (50.3 percent) of all nonwhite women 14 years or over were in the labor force compared with 29.6 percent of white women. The percent of nonwhite women at work was at a high point because of activity in the cotton fields, though even at other periods of the year relatively more of the nonwhite women in the labor force were in agriculture or were unemployed than of the white; a smaller proportion of nonwhite than of white women workers were in nonagricultural industries.

	<u>White</u>	<u>Nonwhite</u>
Women in the labor force 14 years and over	100.0	100.0
Employed in nonagricultural industries	90.1	67.8
Employed in agriculture	7.1	28.3
Unemployed	2.8	4.0

## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN FACTORY JOBS

Women held in May 1947 about one-fourth of all factory production jobs, the same proportion as in 1939, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In actual numbers, however, over 3.1 million women were working in factories in 1947 compared with about 2.3 million in 1939. While the number of women employed was 38 percent above the prewar year, the employment of men increased by nearly 40 percent during the same period.

The gain in women's employment was about equally divided between the durable goods or "heavy" industries and the nondurable goods industries. The addition of 460,000 women in the hard-goods industries indicates that many of the gains made by women during the war have been retained, says the BLS. In radio and phonograph manufacturing, over half of the factory production jobs in May 1947 were held by women.

## JOB OUTLOOK AROUND THE COUNTRY

In many cities included in a recent United States Employment Service report, there were job openings for women stenographers, clerk-typists, waitresses, household employees, salespersons, and some types of factory workers. In Muskegon, Mich., women workers continued to increase in proportion to the total number of industrial workers, probably as a result of the shortages of male labor, says the USES. In Lincoln, Nebr., a severe shortage of women workers was expected by mid-November, but in the Philadelphia area the overall supply of women workers was in excess of demand. In some sections of the area this was true for the first time since 1940.

## EARNINGS OF WOMEN WORKERS

Hotels — Women room clerks in hotels in Chicago averaged 80 cents an hour in June 1947, compared with an average of 97 cents an hour for men room clerks in the same city, according to a recent survey by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Also in Chicago, women employed as clerk-typists averaged 78 cents an hour; as general clerks, 74 cents; as passenger elevator operators, 69 cents; and as chambermaids, 60 cents.

In Seattle, San Francisco, and Portland, all west coast cities, women chambermaids received average hourly earnings of 70 cents or over, but in 6 of the 31 cities covered by this study, chambermaids received an average of less than 30 cents per hour.

Women operating passenger elevators received 27 cents an hour in Memphis, compared with 36 cents paid to men. However, in Minneapolis-St. Paul, men passenger elevator operators received only 57 cents, while women received 71 cents. Variations in earnings between men and women operators were also found elsewhere. Although the variations were usually not large, in only two of the 31 cities covered were average hourly earnings of men and women passenger elevator operators the same. These cities were Indianapolis, with 43 cents for both, and San Francisco, with 75 cents for both.

In summarizing these figures, the BLS considered straight-time earnings only. Tips and premium pay for overtime and night work were excluded, and no allowance was made for room or meals provided.

Clerical Workers in Manufacturing Industries — Analysis of average weekly earnings of 26,500 women clerical workers employed in 1946 shows that the most common average weekly earnings of women for the bulk of the occupations ranged between \$30 and \$35. Included in this group were clerk-typists, pay roll clerks, general clerks, stenographers, billing, bookkeeping, calculating machine operators, and switchboard operators. It was found that the majority of women file clerks, office girls, and typists were earning between \$25 and \$30; the accounting clerks, the more skilled stenographers, and calculating machine operators between \$35 and \$40. Earnings of hand bookkeepers and the more expert bookkeeping machine operators fell in the wage level \$40-\$45. All these earnings were for a 40-hour week. Data were taken from reports received by the BLS from 2,350 manufacturing plants representing 12 industries located throughout the United States.

## WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Throughout the 48 States and the District of Columbia there are 13 women presidents of State Education Associations. They are serving in the District of Columbia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

## WOMEN IN UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO UNESCO

The second session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's general conference opened November 6 in Mexico City. Dr. Helen White of the University of Wisconsin was one of the United States representatives, and Louise Wright of the State Department was an alternate U. S. representative. Advisers to the U. S. delegation included Dr. Esther Brunauer and Dorothy Fosdick of the State Department.

## NEW PRESIDENTS FOR WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

In Hangchow, China, last month the World's YWCA held its first meeting since before the war. Miss Lilace R. Barnes of Lake Forest, Ill., was elected president. At elections of U. S. organizations in recent months Mrs. J. L. Blair Buck was named president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and Dean Althea Kratz Hottel president of the American Association of University Women.

## FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM SET UP

For reconstruction of community facilities in war-torn Europe, the National Council of Jewish Women has established a scholarship program in social service work. Grants are made to European Jewish women for training in this country, with the understanding that they will return to Europe to help rebuild their communities. Training is offered in subjects such as social work, nursery school education, nutrition, and public health nursing.

## WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Australia - The first conference of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs met in Melbourne during October and adopted a three-point program urging women to know their town, endeavor to get women elected to all policy making boards, take a greater interest in international relations.

Ceylon - A letter received recently in the Women's Bureau from a woman in Ceylon indicates that an attempt is being made there to arouse the interest of women of the leisure class in improving the working conditions and status of Ceylon's women workers. According to the letter, a woman's expectation of life in Ceylon is barely 40 years. There are about ten or fifteen percent who enjoy a fairly high standard of living, and labor problems as they are understood in the West can be applied only to workers of this class. The term "gainfully employed," says the letter, could not be applied to even half the balance; women of the villages are unpaid agricultural and domestic workers.

France - There were nearly 7½ million women workers in France on July 1, 1946, reports a recent issue of the International Labour Review. At that time, women were 37.7 percent of all employed persons in France. This was a slight increase over the percent (36.1) women formed of all workers in France about ten years ago. The number of women in public administrative services rose in this period from 238,000 to 600,000; in 1946 women were about 40 percent of the total in this service. Other industry or service groups in which women formed 40 or more percent were agriculture, forestry, and fishing; commerce and banking; domestic service; professional work. On the average, wage differentials applied to French women wage-earners in April 1946 amounted to about 15 percent but, according to the International Labour Review, considerable progress has been made since the liberation toward realizing the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Philippines - The only woman member of Congress in the Philippines, Remedios O. Fortich, is reported recently to have filed her first bill. The measure seeks to restrain a husband from encumbering or alienating the community property without the consent of his wife.