

# FACTS

# on Women Workers

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## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN MAY 1949

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The increase in women's employment from April to May 1949 (shown below) was chiefly in agricultural work according to the Census monthly report. Such work is seasonal, but the increase is greater than usual.

The woman labor force, compared with May 1948, has increased by 973,000. More of the girls under 20 are in the labor force and fewer in school than in May 1948. Greatest increase in women's labor force participation has been among these young workers, next greatest among those aged 35 to 54.

	May 1949			
	Number of women	Change since April 1949	Total persons	
			Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	55,659,000	+ 50,000	109,458,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	18,097,000	+ 930,000	61,983,000	29.2
Employed	17,173,000	+ 817,000	58,694,000	29.3
Unemployed	923,000	+ 112,000	3,289,000	28.1
Armed forces	18,000	+ 1,000	1,469,000	1.2
Nonworkers	37,545,000	- 880,000	46,006,000	81.6

(U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

## MINIMUM WAGE

Massachusetts recently issued three directory orders establishing minimum wages for the laundry, the dry cleaning, and the building service occupations. The laundry order, effective June 1, establishes a minimum wage of 57 cents per hour with broad application to all types of retail and wholesale laundry establishments, including "Help Yourself" laundries, and to other establishments performing laundry services. The dry cleaning order, effective May 2, establishes a minimum wage of 65 cents per hour after 320 hours of employment in a particular establishment, and 60 cents per hour for 320 hours or less in the establishment. Both the laundry and the dry cleaning orders require the employer to clear and maintain employees' uniforms free of charge and prohibit deductions from the minimum wage for their purchase.

The building service order, effective May 2, establishes a minimum wage of 55 cents per hour, a guaranteed weekly wage for residential property employees working 28 hours or more; \$22 where living quarters are furnished, and \$28 where such quarters are not furnished. The revised order establishes greatly increased coverage by including, in addition to the building cleaning occupations formerly covered, all work "concerned with servicing, maintenance, protection and upkeep of buildings."



## COST OF LIVING

The U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics has recently made a study of family income, expenditures, and savings in 1947 in Washington, D.C.; Richmond, Va.; and Manchester, N.H. relating to families with net incomes under \$10,000 in Washington and Richmond, and under \$7,500 in Manchester. The average total annual expenditures, including taxes, private insurance, savings, and outlays for gifts and contributions were:

	<u>Families</u>	<u>Single consumers</u>
Washington, D. C.	\$5,271	\$2,808
Richmond, Va.	4,043	2,778
Manchester, N. H.	3,973	1,312

Washington and Richmond families reported, on the average, net surpluses (that is an increase in savings or a decrease in liabilities) of \$36 and \$50, respectively, for the year. Manchester families reported an average deficit (increased indebtedness or use of previous savings) of \$148. Single consumers in Washington and Richmond reported average net surpluses of \$56 and \$5 respectively; in Manchester, an average deficit of \$119. The increase in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' "all items" consumers' price index for each of these communities since 1947 indicates that the average annual income of the family groups would have to be around \$173 to \$192 higher in order to maintain the same relative expenditure patterns at current price levels; the average annual income of the single consumers would have to be around \$58 to \$105 higher.

(Surplus figures for Richmond represent a revision of the average net surplus given in the April Monthly Labor Review. The revised figures appear in a reprint of the article.)

## SINGLE MEN AND WOMEN IN 1948

In April 1948, there were more single men than women 14 years and over, although among all persons (14 and over) women outnumbered men, according to the reports of the U. S. Census. (These data exclude armed forces personnel not living on posts or with families — men "predominantly single.")

Of all persons 14 years old and over there were 104 women for every 100 men. Among single persons there were 79 women for every 100 men, the same ratio as in 1940.

The numbers of single men and single women were more nearly equal in urban areas, while there was a decided preponderance of single men in rural areas. In urban areas the ratio was 90 women to every 100 men, in rural farm areas, 59 women to every 100 men.

In 1948, single men exceeded single women to a greater extent among persons under 35 than in older groups. There were 76 single women under 35 for every 100 single men in the same age span. Over three-fourths of all single men and women were under 35.



## HOURS OF WORK UNDER UNION AGREEMENTS

Most union agreements provide a basic 40-hour workweek with overtime pay after 40 hours. Currently some agreements provide for a shorter work schedule. Agreements which provide for overtime pay based on shorter workweeks — which range from 30 to 37½ hours — are found in such industries as men's clothing, women's apparel, telephone and telegraph, commercial printing, newspaper printing and lumber.

## EARNINGS IN MANUFACTURE OF FOOTWEAR

In the manufacture of men's footwear (except house slippers and rubber footwear) in October 1948, women, as a group, earned considerably less than men, the respective average earnings on a Nation-wide basis being 95 cents and \$1.25 an hour, according to studies of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. About 9 percent of the women earned less than 65 cents an hour as compared with 3 percent of the men. At the other end of the earnings scale, over a fourth of the men were paid at least \$1.50 an hour, while slightly more than 3 percent of the women fell into this category.

Differences in average earnings of men and women reflect a composite of factors and not necessarily differences in rates of pay. Although men and women are employed in equal proportions in the industry as a whole, women are more predominant in the less skilled jobs, and are also more numerous than men among the learners.

## EMPLOYEE-BENEFIT PLANS UNDER COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

In the post-war years there has been a rapidly growing trend toward insurance, health, welfare, and retirement plans in agreements between employers and unions, according to reports and bulletins which have been issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Over 3 million workers were reported covered by such plans by mid-1948 — over twice the number reported in early 1947 — and during the current year it is indicated that the number of workers covered is increasing and benefits are being liberalized.

This trend represents a determined effort by unions to cope with the problem of insecurity of workers and their families due to loss of earnings and to medical expense from illness and injury not covered by workmen's compensation laws. Some of the plans include maternity benefits for women workers.

A pamphlet "Union and Union-Management Health Insurance Plans in New York State, January 1949," recently issued by the New York State Department of Labor summarizes the benefit features of 163 union and union-management health insurance plans. Some maternity benefit programs allow 6 weeks of cash disability payments, a hospital benefit and a surgical payment. Other plans contain only one or two of these features. Some union-administered plans allow \$25 to \$50 for maternity benefit payment.



## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

About four times as many boys and girls of high school age are working outside of school hours today as before the war. At the beginning of the school year October 1948, there were 1.3 million students from 14 to 17 years old who also held jobs compared with only 300,000 in 1940, approximately 19 percent of this group in 1948, as compared to only 4 percent in 1940. Most of these young students were engaged in part-time work. In 1948 more boys than girls were attending school and holding jobs — 24 percent of the male students and 14 percent of the female students in this age group. The Bureau of the Census attributes the increase in employment among students to a readier market for their services, and to the encouragement given them during the war period to engage in part-time work rather than drop out of school.

Of all women students enrolled in school those in the age group 20-24 years had the highest proportion employed — more than one-fifth; one-fourth of the men in this age group were employed.

<u>Age groups</u>	<u>Percent employed</u>			
	<u>Persons enrolled</u>		<u>Persons not enrolled</u>	
	<u>in school</u>		<u>in school</u>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Total 14-24 years	<u>24.3</u>	<u>14.2</u>	<u>90.4</u>	<u>47.4</u>
14 to 17 years	23.7	13.8	82.7	51.7
18 and 19 years	26.7	13.5	88.4	56.1
20 to 24 years	24.8	22.3	92.2	44.2

(U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

## OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN BY SCHOOLING

Years of school completed by women 18 to 64 years old employed in October 1948 are presented below by major occupation groups. The great majority of women in professional and semiprofessional occupations had had some college training. Only a very small proportion of women agricultural, manual, and service workers had progressed beyond high school.

<u>Major occupation groups</u>	<u>Percent of women reporting</u>		
	<u>Elementary school only</u>	<u>Some high school study</u>	<u>Some college study</u>
All occupations	34	50	15
Professional and semiprofessional	2	22	75
Clerical, sales, and kindred workers	10	74	15
Manual workers			
(Craftsmen and foremen, operatives, laborers except farm)	48	48	2
Service workers	57	37	4
Farmers and farm workers	76	21	3
Proprietors, managers and officials (except farm)	28	56	16

(U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

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