

Women in the Workforce

Women have an enormous presence in the current workforce in the U.S.

- Women comprised 46 percent of the total U.S. labor force in 2006.¹
- In 2006, there were a record 67 million employed women in the U.S.²
- 70 million women were labor force participants—working or looking for work—in 2006³.
- The labor force participation rate for all women was 59.4 percent in 2006⁴.
- The labor force participation rate for mothers is 70.9 percent.⁵
- By race the rates are:
 - Black women 61.7%;
 - White women 59 %;
 - Asian women 58.3 %
 - Hispanic women 56.1%.⁶

Many women are full time wage earners.

- 43.6 percent of women were full-time wage earners in 2005.⁷
- Seventy five percent of employed women worked full time in 2006 while 25 percent worked on a part-time basis.⁸

The more education a woman has, the more likely she is to participate in the workforce.

- Labor force participation for women age 25 and over:
 - with less than a high school diploma, 33.2%
 - with high school diploma but no college was 53.8%.
 - with some college but no degree was 64%
 - with an associate degree, 71.2%
 - with a bachelor's degree or higher was 73.1%.⁹

Unemployment

- For women age 25 and over:
 - with less than a high school diploma: 7.9%
 - with high school diploma, no college, 4.3%
 - with some college, but no degree, 4.3%
 - with an associate degree, 3.1%
 - with a bachelor's degree or higher, 2.1%¹⁰.
- Unemployment varies based on race: Asian women, 3.1 percent; white women, 4 percent; Hispanic women, 5.9 percent; and black women, 8.4 percent¹¹.

Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment

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Women in the Workforce, cont.

The presence of women in the workforce has increased dramatically over the last 50 years.

- In 1960, about 36 percent of women participated in the labor force. By 1990 women's labor force participation had increased to 57 percent and grew to 58 percent in 2000. During this same period, the labor force participation of men declined from 80 percent to 71 percent.¹²

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1. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment and Earnings, 2006 Annual Averages*. Washington DC: 2006. Available at: <http://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-laborforce-06.htm>
 2. Ibid
 3. Ibid
 4. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment and Earnings, 2006 Annual Averages*. Washington DC: 2006. Available at: <http://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-laborforce-06.htm>
 5. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment Characteristics of Families in 2006*. Washington, DC: May 9, 2007.
 6. Ibid.
 7. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Women Still Underrepresented Among Highest Earners*. Washington, DC: March 2006.
 8. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment and Earnings, 2006 Annual Averages*. Washington DC: 2006. Available at: <http://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-laborforce-06.htm>
 9. Ibid
 10. Ibid
 11. Ibid
 12. U.S. Census Bureau. *Employment Status 2000*. Washington, DC: August 2003. Available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-18.pdf>

Visit womenwork.org for more information on women's economic justice and equality

Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advances economic justice and equality for women through education, advocacy and organizing. Since 1978, the Network has assisted more than 10 million women to successfully enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce. Through supporting, advocating and increasing women's economic self-sufficiency, Women Work! members strengthen families and communities.