

United States Census Bureau

How Do We Know?

America's Changing Labor Force

The Equal Opportunity (EEO) Tabulation, based on the American Community Survey (ACS), provides statistics on the demographics of the workforce by occupation. The U.S. Census Bureau has produced this tabulation after every Census since the 1970s. However, for the first time this tabulation uses five years of statistics from the American Community Survey (2006-2010). They serve as the primary benchmark for assessing the diversity of the labor force and monitoring compliance with civil rights laws. This infographic focuses on men and women in the civilian labor force and what we can learn from the EEO tabulations over the past five decades.

Composition of the Labor Force by Sex

Total civilian labor force

Civilian labor force: men and women ages 16 and over who are employed or unemployed and not in the Armed Forces.

49.5 million Men

30.3 million Women

79.8 million workers

1970

81.3 million Men

72.7 million Women

154.0 million workers

2006-2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau , 1970 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation based on the decennial census and 2006 – 2010 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation based on the American Community Survey.

Women's representation in the labor force has increased

1970

Men 62.0 %

Women 38.0 %

1980

57.4 % Men

42.6 % Women

1990

54.3 % Men

45.7 % Women

2000

53.2 % Men

46.8 % Women

2006-2010

52.8 % Men

47.2 % Women

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulations based on the decennial census and 2006-2010 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation based on the American Community Survey.

Women's share of the labor force has increased since the first Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation. The largest increase was between 1970 and 1980, increasing by 4.6 percentage points. Between 1980 and 1990, women's share of the labor force increased by 3.1 percentage points. The pace of growth slowed to 1.1 percentage points between 1990 and 2000 and 0.4 percentage points between 2000 and 2006-2010.

Occupations

Change in Women's Representations in Selected Occupations Since 1970

Dental Assistants

96.3 % 2006-2010

97.9 % 1970

Secretaries

95.9 % 2006-2010

97.8 % 1970

Registered nurses

91.2 % 2006-2010

97.3 % 1970

Cashiers

74.7 % 2006-2010

84.2 % 1970

Elementary and middle school teachers

79.3 % 2006-2010

83.9 % 1970

Bus drivers

47.5 % 2006-2010

28.3 % 1970

Accountants

60.0 % 2006-2010

24.6 % 1970

Computer programmers

24.4 % 2006-2010

24.2 % 1970

Pharmacists

52.6 % 2006-2010

12.1 % 1970

Physicians and surgeons

32.4 % 2006-2010

9.7 % 1970

Lawyers and judges

33.4 % 2006-2010

4.9 % 1970

Police officers

14.8 % 2006-2010

3.7 % 1970

Electricians

2.1 % 2006-2010

2.1 % 1970

Automobile mechanics

1.5 % 2006-2010

1.4 % 1970

Civil engineers

12.7 % 2006-2010

1.3 % 1970

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation based on the decennial census and 2006-2010 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation based on the American Community Survey.

Leading Occupations

2006-2010

Men

Truck Drivers 3.2 M

Miscellaneous managers 2.1 M

Freight, stock, and material movers 1.9 M

Women

Secretaries and administrative assistants 3.8 M

Cashiers 2.8 M

Elementary and middle school teachers 2.7 M

1970

Men

Miscellaneous managers 1.9 M

Truck Drivers 1.5 M

Production supervisors 1.4 M

Women

Secretaries 2.8 M

Bookeepers 1.4 M

Elementary school teachers 1.3 M

Occupational Growth Since 2000

Men's representation grew among tellers, loan interviewers and clerks, and insurance claims and policy processing clerks.

Some of the occupations with the largest increases in women's representation were dentists, veterinarians, and physicians and surgeons.

Leading Industries

Manufacturing employed the largest number of men: 10.8 M

Education services, health care, and social assistance employed the largest number of women: 22.4 M

Regional Focus

State and metro areas with high percentage of men or women in the civilian labor force

Among the states with the highest percentage of

Male Workers

Utah 55.9 %

Wyoming 54.7 %

Nevada 54.7 %

Idaho 54.6 %

Texas 54.4 %

Female Workers

Washington, D.C. 51.3 %

Maryland 49.2 %

Rhode Island 49.0 %

Deleware 48.8 %

Massachusetts 48.8 %

Men

Hanford-Concoran, CA 60.0 %

Madera-Chowchilla, CA 57.9 %

Provo-Orem, UT 57.2 %

Women

Fayetteville, NC 53.4 %

Columbus, GA-AL 53.0 %

Jacksonville, NC 52.2 %

You can explore the characteristics of the labor force in your community (more than 6,500 areas) by accessing the Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation on American Factfinder, the Census Bureau's online statistics tool.

United States Census Bureau

Census.gov

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