



VITAL WORK FORCE STATISTICS

FACT SHEET 2002-2

The Changing World of Work

- Between 1900 and 2001, the percentage of the work force that is white collar grew from less than 18% of the work force to 60%.
- While manual workers comprised 41% of the work force in 1950, by 2001, their proportion had shrunk to only 24% of the work force.
- The work force is more equally comprised of men and women. In 2001, women accounted for almost 47% of the work force, up from 29% in 1950.
- Women are the majority of professional, technical and administrative support workers.

Unions Reflect Changes in the Work Force

- The labor movement is now almost 50% white collar.
- Professionals are joining/forming unions at a faster rate than any other occupational group.
- There are more union members among professionals than any other occupational group.
- Union representation among professionals was about 22% in 2001 while union representation was less than 15% among the total work force.
- Significant numbers of technical and administrative support workers are also in unions.
- Women comprised almost 42% of the labor movement in 2001.

Professional and Technical Employment is Exploding

- Almost 27 million Americans (19.2%) of the work force were employed in the professions and as highly skilled technicians in 2001. By 2010, almost 34 million (more than 20% of the work force) are expected to be employed in these occupations.
- Employment in professional and technician occupations is projected to grow faster and to add more workers (seven million) than any other major occupational group. This amounts to a 26% increase in employment for professional and technical workers between 2000 and 2010. (Total U.S. employment is projected to increase by 15% over this period.)

Professional Occupations with Very Rapid Growth

- Eight of the ten fastest growing occupations are computer-related, or information technology, occupations. These occupations are also expected to add the most jobs—some two million between 2000 and 2010.
- Health care practitioners and technical occupations are projected to add 1.6 million jobs between 2000 and 2010. Registered nurses will account for more than one-third of these jobs.
- Education, training and library occupations are expected to add 1.6 million jobs. Four out of five of these jobs are forecasted for public and private education services.

- Community and social services occupations are expected to add 529,000 jobs and have the second fastest growth among professional and related occupations.

The Service Sector: More Jobs and Degrees

- The service sector will continue to be the dominant employment generator in the economy, adding 20.5 million jobs by 2010. It will account for virtually all wage and salary employment growth.
- As employment in the service sector increases by 19%, manufacturing is expected to increase by only 3% between 2000 and 2010.
- Health, business and social services along with engineering, management and related services are expected to account for almost one of every two nonfarm wage and salary jobs added to the economy between 2000 and 2010. These sectors will account for seven of the ten fastest growing industries.
- The new economy requires a better educated work force. Occupations requiring a college degree or other postsecondary award which now account for 29% of all jobs in 2000, will increase to 42% of total job growth between 2000 and 2010.

The Rise of the Contingent Worker

- The contingent work force grew by 11.1 million workers, or 44.4% between 1980 and 1999. The contingent work force currently exceeds 36 million and is growing much faster than the work force as a whole.
- Professionals account for almost 25% of all contingent workers.
- While contingent workers can assume many forms, the common denominator for all such work is that there is no expectation of a long-term relationship between the employer and the worker. In addition to little job stability, these workers often have no health, pension and other benefits such as paid vacation or sick leave.
- In February 1999 (the most recent figures available) 59% of all temporary workers were not covered by any form of health insurance and those who were insured usually had obtained coverage outside the workplace, e.g., through a spouse. (Fifty-eight percent of the full-time core wage and salary work force had health insurance through their employer.)

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 22 AFL-CIO unions representing four million people working in professional, technical and administrative occupations. DPE-affiliated unions represent: journalists and writers, broadcast technicians and communication specialists; librarians, teachers, college professors, and school administrators; engineers, scientists and IT workers; nurses, doctors and other health care professionals; cinematographers, performing and visual artists; professional athletes, social workers, and many others. DPE was chartered by the AFL-CIO in 1977 in recognition of the fast-growing professional, technical and highly skilled white collar occupations.

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