



VITAL WORKFORCE STATISTICS

The Changing World of Work

- Between 1900 and 2008, the percentage of professional and technical workers in the workforce grew from less than 18% of the workforce to 60.7%.¹
- While manual workers comprised 41% of the workforce in 1950, by 2008, their proportion had shrunk to only 22.4% of the workforce.²
- The workforce is more equally comprised of men and women. In 2008, women accounted for 48% of the workforce, up from 29% in 1950.³
- Women are the majority of professional and related workers (56.7 %) and the majority of office and administrative support workers (74.8%). They are also the majority of those who work in service occupations (57.2%).⁴
- The service sector is and will continue to be the dominant employment generator in the economy, adding 12.2 million jobs by 2016. More than 45% of all new jobs created in the U.S. between 2006 and 2016 are expected to be in the service and professional and related occupations.⁵
- Between 2006 and 2016, employment is expected to increase in the service sector by almost 17%, while employment in manufacturing is expected to *decrease* by nearly 5% .⁶
- The number of new jobs varies based on education level; with bachelor's degrees projected to increase by 13.2%, 1.6% for master's degrees, 1.6% for doctorate degrees and 1.3% for first professional degrees.⁷

Changes for Workers

- Professional and technical workers accounted for 52.8% of all union members in 2008.⁸
- There are more union members among professionals than any other occupational group.⁹
- In 2008, over 5.2 million professional and related workers were union members; nearly 5.9 million were represented by unions.¹⁰
- Union representation among professionals and related workers was about 18.6% in 2008, while union representation was just 12.4% among the total workforce.¹¹
- Significant numbers of administrative support workers are represented by unions: nearly 2 million, or 10.4% of all such workers.¹²
- Women comprised 44.5% of the labor movement in 2008, up from 19% in 1962.¹³

- Women, and especially women of color, are forming and joining unions at a faster rate than men. Many of the unions organizing in industries dominated by women, such as education and government, have consistently shown much higher win rates than those unions organizing in industries with fewer women members.¹⁴

Rapid Growth in Professional and Related Occupations Will Continue

- Employment in professional and related occupations is projected to grow faster and to add more workers (4.9 million) than any other major occupational group, with the service sector a close second (4.8 million). This amounts to a 16.7% increase in employment for professional and technical workers between 2006 and 2016. (Total U.S. employment is projected to increase by less than 10.4% over this period.)¹⁵
- Of the eight subgroups in the professional and related occupations category, three subgroups—education, training and library occupations; health care practitioners and technicians; and computer and mathematical occupations—will account for 70.6% of the job growth in this category.¹⁶
- Self-employment is expected to increase among several professional and related occupations. Self-employment among self-enrichment education teachers (such as dance instructors, church-based religion teachers, etc.) is expected to grow 27%. A 19% increase in self-employment is expected for computer and mathematical workers, and 20% of all new jobs in arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations are expected to be self-employed.¹⁷
- Health care practitioners and technical occupations are projected to add more than 1.4 million jobs between 2006 and 2016. Registered nurses will account for more than 40% of these jobs. Registered nursing is the occupation projected to experience the largest job growth between 2006 and 2016, increasing from 2.4 million–3.1 million.¹⁸
- Education, training and library occupations are projected to increase by 14% (versus 10.4% for all occupations), adding 1.3 million jobs.¹⁹
- Four out of the 10 fastest-growing occupations are health care support occupations, such as physician’s assistants. These occupations are expected to add almost 1 million jobs by 2016.
- In the 2004–2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics’ projection period, three of the fastest-growing occupations were computer-related, or information technology (IT), occupations. In the most recent projections there are five computer or IT occupations on the list, which together are expected to add nearly 645,000 jobs between 2006 and 2016.²⁰
- Almost 29.8 million Americans (19.8% of the workforce) were employed in professional and related occupations in 2006. By 2016, more than 34.8 million (20.9% of the workforce) are expected to be employed in these occupations.²¹

Growing Disparities in Educational Requirements for New Jobs

New jobs are being created disproportionately at the two ends of the educational spectrum: of all new employment openings projected between 2006 and 2016, it is predicted that in 2016 68.8%

of jobs will require only on-the-job training or experience, and 22.6% will require a degree up to a bachelor's. At the high end, just 8.7% of new jobs will require a postgraduate degree.²²

Of the 30 fastest-growing occupations between 2006–2016, 22 require a post-secondary award or higher. This proportion is down from the previous 2004–2014 projections, in which 24 out of the top 30 fastest-growing occupations required such credentials.²³

- Seven of the 10 fastest-growing occupations require postsecondary schooling: three of these are medical and technician occupations, and two are computer science occupations.²⁴
- The occupations expected to add the first- and eighth-largest number of new jobs by 2016 are registered nurses and postsecondary teachers, respectively, both of which require degrees. Together, these occupations are expected to add nearly one million new jobs.²⁵
- The number of jobs for biomedical and environmental engineers—both occupations requiring at least a bachelor's degree—are expected to increase by 21.4% and 25.4% respectively, more than twice as fast as overall employment growth. Computer software engineers (both applications and systems software) are projected to add 325,000 jobs by 2016, growing at a rate more than three times that of jobs overall.²⁶
- Employment for occupational and physical therapists, both of which require a master's degree, is expected to increase by 23.1% and 27.1%, respectively, both more than twice the rate of all jobs.²⁷

The Situation Faced by the Baby-Boom Workforce

From 2000 to 2005, the labor force participation rate of people age 55 years and older steadily rose. The rate of participation for women increased by 5.3% and men followed closely at 4.1%.²⁸ Between 2006 and 2016, it is projected that the labor force participation rate for those 55 and older will jump from 38% to 42.8%, even with retirement rates taken into account.²⁹ This trend dwarfs the projections of a .8% increase in overall labor force participation between 2006 and 2016.³⁰ Several factors could account for this differing trend:

- Population change is the most obvious explanation. The baby-boom generation—those born between 1946 and 1964—has steadily influenced age cohorts over time. The first of the baby boomers reached age 55 in 2001, and differences in the workforce might relate to greater participation by these people.³¹
- Changes to Social Security could influence the labor rate. As part of the 1983 reform legislation, the normal retirement age increases gradually for those born after 1937. Soon, it will be 67 for those born in 1960 or later. Such changes encourage a greater number of older people to keep working.³²
- More seniors lose access to benefits if they retire early. Currently, only 13% of employers offer retiree health benefits to individuals who retire prior to age 65.³³ While seniors are eligible for Medicare at 65, they may prefer private plans and want to work longer.

Women: More Degrees, More Roles, and Still Unequal Pay

Women have been earning more bachelor's degrees than men since 1982, and more master's degrees than men since 1981. In 2008–2009, women were expected to earn 58.6% of all bachelor's degrees, 61.3% of all master's, and 51.2% of all doctorates and first professional degrees. These trends are expected to continue and the gap between men and women earning professional and doctoral degrees will narrow.³⁴

Women are the majority of both service occupation and professional and related workers. Equal pay remains a problem in every occupational category, despite the number of degrees earned by women. In 2008, women working in professional and related occupations earned 74% of their male counterparts' earnings; women in office and administrative support occupations earned 9% less than their male counterparts, despite constituting nearly 74% of these workers. Women in sales and related occupations earned 65% of similarly employed men's earnings, while women in service occupations earned 78% of men's earnings.³⁵

Women put in extra hours in caring for parents and children. According to the Department of Labor, 15.6% of women between 43 and 54 share a residence with a parent, give their parents \$1,000 or more annually, or spend over 500 hours to help them with routine and personal care. Over 55% of women from the same age group give their children an annual average of \$5,410 in financial support and 268 hours of assistance in personal care, errands, childcare, or household chores. Nine percent of women ages 45 to 56—roughly two million women—provide care for parents and simultaneously support children and are known as the “sandwich generation”.³⁶

Recent National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Decisions Hinder Worker's Rights

- A September 2006 set of decisions by the NLRB radically redefined the employees entitled to legal protection for organizing and collective bargaining.³⁷
- The NLRB redefined the role of a “supervisor” as someone with the authority to “assign” other employees or authority to give “responsible direction” to other employees. Under this new definition, employees who perform a supervisory role for as little as 10 to 15% of their time are considered supervisors.³⁸
- Supervisors do not have protection to form or join unions under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and can be fired for union activity. The broadened interpretation of “supervisor” leaves many professionals at risk of having no legal protection for collective action.³⁹
- According to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, the NLRB's decisions could, “create a new class of workers... who have neither the genuine prerogatives of management, nor the statutory rights of ordinary employees”.⁴⁰
- According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), the NLRB's decisions could strip 8 million more workers of their right to participate in a union and bargain collectively. EPI estimates that 35% of registered nurses, about 843,000 people, as well as 123, 800 (18%) of licensed practical nurses would be defined as supervisors. Other professionals such as 59,500 (46%) airline pilots and navigators, 24,100 (12%) media editors and reporters, 397,000 (25.5%) computer systems analysts and scientists, and 125,800 (24.5%) engineers would be redefined

as supervisors. Even workers not thought of as supervisory, such as teachers and social workers, would see 49,500 (19%) kindergarten teachers, 16,200 (8.5%) elementary school teachers and 36,000 (23%) social workers deemed “supervisors”.⁴¹

- Unions, DPE, and the AFL-CIO are presently at work to fight the Kentucky River ruling and its consequences, including continuing support and recruiting co-sponsors for the RESPECT Act (H.R. 1644, S. 969) which seeks a return to the intent of Congress in defining who is a “supervisor” under the National Labor Relations Act.⁴²

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the U.S., Colonial Times to 1970*, 1975; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 2008, www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf

² *Ibid.*

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Perspectives on Working Women*, Bulletin 2080; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Union Members Summary*, 2008, January 28, 2009.

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 2008.

⁵ *Ibid.* Dohm, Arlene and Lynn Shniper. “Occupational Employment Projections to 2016”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2007.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2005*, Table 246.

⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Union Members Summary”, 2008.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Union Members Summary, 2008”, January 28, 2009.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Bronfenbrenner, Kate and Robert Hickey, “Changing to Organize: A National Assessment of Union Organizing Strategies”, in *Organize or Die: Labor’s Prospects in Neoliberal America*, edited by Ruth Milkmen and Kim Voss, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2004; Bronfenbrenner, Kate, “Organizing Women: The Nature and Process of Union Organizing Efforts Among U.S. Women Workers Since Around the Mid-1990s”, *Work and Occupations*, Volume 32, No. 4, November 2005.

¹⁵ Dohm, Arlene and Lynn Shniper. “Occupational Employment Projections to 2016”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2007.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Mosisa, Abraham and Steven Hippiie. “Trends in labor force participation in the United States”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, Volume 129, No. 10, October 2006.

²⁹ Dohm, Arlene and Lynn Shniper. “Occupational Employment Projections to 2016”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2007.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Mosisa, Abraham and Steven Hippiie. “Trends in labor force participation in the United States”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, Volume 129, No. 10, October 2006.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2007*.

³⁵ *Current Population Survey*, op. cit.

³⁶ Pierret, Charles R. "The 'sandwich generation': women caring for parents and children", U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, Volume 129, No. 9, September 2006.

³⁷ Letter to the House of Representatives in support of RESPECT Act 2007, AFL-CIO, Department for Professional Employees, July 13, 2007.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ "Crossing the Kentucky River: Next Steps for Professional and Technical Employees", AFL-CIO, Department for Professional Employees, *NewsLine*, January 2007.

⁴¹ Eisenbrey, Ross and Lawrence Mishel. "Supervisor in Name Only", Economic Policy Institute, EPI Issue Brief #225, July 12, 2006.

⁴² "Nurses: Vital Signs 2008", Department for Professional Employees.

For more information on professional workers, check out DPE's Web site: www.dpeaflcio.org

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 24 AFL-CIO unions representing over four million people working in professional, technical and administrative support occupations. DPE-affiliated unions represent: teachers, college professors, and school administrators; library workers; nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals; engineers, scientists, and IT workers; journalists and writers, broadcast technicians, and communications specialists; performing and visual artists; professional athletes; professional firefighters; psychologists, social workers and many others. DPE was chartered by the AFL-CIO in 1977 in recognition of the rapidly-growing professional and technical occupations.

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