Autumn 2021

Ashley Dees, Research and Instruction Librarian
Photograph of Women Rivet Heaters at Puget Sound Navy Yard, 1919

Women weighing wire coils and recording weights, to establish wage rates, 1919

1. Records of the Women's Bureau, 1892–1995; National Archives Identifier: 522877
https://catalog.archives.gov/id/522877

2. Records of the Women’s Bureau, 1892–1995; National Archives Identifier: 522865
https://catalog.archives.gov/id/522865
3. Riveter at Lockheed Aircraft Corp., Burbank, CA, 1940-1945
Records of the Women's Bureau, 1892 – 1995; National Archives Identifier: 522880
https://catalog.archives.gov/id/522880

4. Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company. View of row of operators, 1927
Records of the Women's Bureau, 1892 – 1995; National Archives Identifier: 522875
https://catalog.archives.gov/id/522875
A selection of historical publications from the Women’s Bureau found in UM Libraries Federal Documents Collection

From top left:

- The Family Status of Breadwinning Women, 1926
- Negro Women in Industry, 1922
- Women in Mississippi Industries: A Study of Hours, Wages, and Working Conditions, 1926
- The Immigrant Woman and Her Job by Caroline Manning, 1930
About the Women’s Bureau

Mission

The Women’s Bureau develops policies and standards and conducts inquiries to safeguard the interests of working women, to advocate for their equality and economic security for themselves and their families, and to promote quality work environments.
About the Women’s Bureau

Established on June 5, 1920, the Women’s Bureau is the only federal agency tasked with focusing exclusively on working women and the issues they care about most.

For 100 years, the Women’s Bureau has served as a trusted source for research, data and statistics, advocacy, and innovation for working women and the issues they care most about.

WB approach:

- Research and policy analysis
- Grant-making
- Education and outreach
Women in the Labor Force Then and Now

► Women now have fully 50% of all nonfarm payroll jobs in the U.S (Data as of January 10, 2020). ¹

► The total number of women 16 and older in the labor force has risen almost tenfold from about 8 million in 1920 to more than 78 million today. ²

► Today, about three-fourths (77%) of prime-working age women (25-54) are in the labor force compared with about 21% when the Women’s Bureau first opened its doors in 1920. ³

► During 2019, the adult women’s unemployment rate was the lowest since 1953 and remains near historic lows at 3.2%. ⁴

► Mothers are now equal, primary or sole earners in 40% of all U.S. households with children under the age of 18. In comparison, this figure was just 11% in 1960. ⁵


Civilian labor force by sex
1948-2016 annual averages

Notes: Includes persons in the civilian non-institutional population that are employed or actively looking for work. Based on persons 16 years of age and older. The comparability of historical data has been affected at various times by methodological and other changes in the Current Population Survey.


Graph by the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor
Notes: Earnings are based on median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers, 15 years old and over beginning in March, 1980, and age 14 years old and over as of March of the following year for previous years. Before 1989 earnings are for civilian workers only. The comparability of historical data has been affected at various times by methodological and other changes in the Current Population Survey. The 2014 CPS ASEC included redesigned questions for income and health insurance coverage for a subsample of the 98,000 addresses using a probability split panel design. Approximately 68,000 addresses were eligible to receive a set of income questions similar to those used in the 2013 CPS ASEC and the remaining 30,000 addresses were eligible to receive the redesigned income questions, resulting in two estimates for 2013. Estimates based on the portion of the sample that received the redesigned income questions are the most appropriate for comparing estimates from ASEC 2014 with ASEC 2015 and beyond. Earnings are in 2017 CPI-U-RS adjusted dollars.


Graph by the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor.
Notes: Represents the percentage of persons in the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and older that are employed or actively looking for work. Estimates for the race groups will not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Data for the individual race groups do not include people of two or more races. Hispanics can be of any race. The comparability of historical data has been affected at various times by methodological and other changes in the Current...
Works Cited

U.S. Department of Labor, “100 Years: Women’s Bureau, Our Purpose. Your Work.”

Women’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb


