

Fact Sheet 2010



VITAL WORKFORCE STATISTICS

The Changing World of Work

- Between 1900 and 2009, the percentage of white collar workers in the work force grew from less than 18% of the work force to 61.5%.¹
- While manual workers comprised 41% of the work force in 1950, by 2009 their proportion had shrunk to only 20.9% of the work force.²
- The work force is more equally comprised of men and women. In 2009, women accounted for 47.3% of the work force, up from 29% in 1950.³
- Women are the majority of professional and related workers (57.5%) and the majority of office and administrative support workers (74.5%). 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 4.1 million jobs by 2018. More than half of all new jobs created in the U.S. between 2008 and 2018 are expected to be in the service and professional and related occupations.⁵
- Between 2008 and 2018, employment is expected to increase in the service sector by almost 13.8%, while employment in manufacturing is expected to *decrease* by 3.5%.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

- White collar workers accounted for 53.9% of all union members in 2009.⁸
- There are more union members among professionals than any other occupational group.⁹
- In 2009, over 5.2 million professional and related workers were union members; over 5.8 million were represented by unions.¹⁰
- Union representation among professionals and related workers was about 18.7% in 2009, while union representation was just 12.3% among the total work force.¹¹
- Significant numbers of administrative support workers are represented by unions: nearly 2 million, or 10.3% of all such workers.¹²
- Women comprised 44.8% of the labor movement in 2009, 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

- The economic recession is having a large impact on the ability to find sustaining work. The number of non-agricultural workers not working a full work week for economic reasons, which include slack work or unfavorable business conditions, furloughs, inability to find full-time work, or seasonal declines in demand rose between March 2009 and March 2010.¹⁵

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 (5.2 million) than any other major occupational group, with the service sector a close second (4.1 million). This amounts to a 16.8% increase in employment for professional and technical workers between 2008 and 2018. (Total U.S. employment is projected to increase by less than 10.1% over this period.)¹⁶
- Almost 60% of the job growth will come from three groups of professional occupations—computer and mathematical occupations, healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, and education, training, and library occupations—which together will add 3.7 million jobs.¹⁷
- 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 58% of the job growth in this category.¹⁸
- Self-employment is projected to grow 5.5% between 2008 and 2018.¹⁹
- Health care practitioners and technical occupations are projected to add more than 1.6 million jobs between 2008 and 2018. Registered nurses will account for more than one-third of these jobs. Registered nurse is the occupation projected to experience the largest job growth between 2008 and 2018, with roughly 581,500 new jobs projected for this period.²⁰
- Education, training and library occupations are projected to increase by 14.4% (versus 10.1% for all occupations), adding nearly 1.3 million jobs.²¹
- Five 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 2018.
- In the 2004–14 Bureau of Labor Statistics’ projection period, three of the fastest-growing occupations were computer-related, or information technology (IT), occupations. In the 2006–16 projections there were five computer or IT occupations among the fastest-growing occupations, which together are expected to add nearly 645,000 jobs.²² In the 2008–18 projections, there were only three computer-related or IT occupations in the thirty fastest-growing occupations. These occupations are expected to add 451,000 new jobs.²³
- Almost 29.8 million Americans (20.6% of the work force) were employed in professional and related occupations in 2008. By 2018, nearly 36.3 million (21.8% of the work force) are expected to be employed in these occupations.²⁴

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 2008 and 2018, it is predicted that in 2018, 35.3% will require only short-term on-the-job training, and 32.4% will require a post-secondary vocational award or higher.²⁵

Of the 30 fastest-growing occupations between 2008–18, 21 require a post-secondary award or higher. This proportion is down from the previous 2004–14 and 2006–16 projections, in which 24 and 22 out of the top 30 fastest-growing occupations, respectively, required such credentials.²⁶

- Seven of the 10 fastest-growing occupations require postsecondary schooling: these include biomedical engineers; network systems and data communications analysts; financial examiners; medical scientists; physician assistants; biochemists and biophysicists; and athletic trainers.²⁷
- The occupations expected to add the first- and tenth-largest number of new jobs by 2018 are registered nurses and postsecondary teachers, respectively, both of which require degrees. Together, these occupations are expected to add 838,000 new jobs.²⁸
- The number of jobs for biomedical engineers and biochemists and biophysicists—both occupations requiring at least a bachelor’s degree—are expected to increase by 72% and 37.4% respectively. Computer software engineers (both applications and systems software) are projected to add 175,100 jobs by 2018, growing at a rate more than three times that of jobs overall.²⁹
- Employment for physician assistants and physical therapists, both of which require a master’s degree, is expected to increase by 39% and 30.3%, respectively, both approximately three times the rate of all jobs.³⁰

Sustained Presence of the Baby-Boom Workforce

Older age cohorts are expected to make up a much larger share of the labor force between 2008 and 2018. In 2008, the baby-boom cohort was 44 to 62 years of age. By 2018, almost all the baby boomers will be in the 55-years-and-older age group.³¹ Between 2000 and 2005, the labor force participation rate of people age 55 years and older steadily rose, with the rate for women increasing by 5.3% and men followed closely at 4.1%.³² This trend is likely to continue as the workforce ages and economic recession keeps people working longer. This trend runs counter to the overall labor force participation rate, which has decreased by over a percentage point between that same 2000 to 2005 period. 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.³³
- 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.³⁴
- 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 65.³⁵ 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 2008–09, 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.³⁶

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 2009, women working in professional and related occupations earned less than 74% of their male counterparts’ earnings; women in office and administrative support occupations

earned 8% less than their male counterparts, despite constituting nearly 73% of these workers. Women in sales and related occupations earned 66% of similarly employed men's earnings, while women in service occupations earned 80% of men's earnings in service occupations.³⁷

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”.³⁸

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.³⁹
- 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.⁴⁰
- 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.⁴¹
- According to former 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.”⁴²
- According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), the NLRB's decisions could strip eight 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%) of airline pilots and navigators, 24,100 (12%) of media editors and reporters, 397,000 (25.5%) of computer systems analysts and scientists, and 125,800 (24.5%) of 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”.⁴³
- Unions, DPE, and the AFL-CIO are continuing to fight the Kentucky River ruling and its consequences, including recruiting co-sponsors for the RESPECT Act (HR 1644, S 969) which seeks a return to the intent of Congress in defining who is a “supervisor” under the National Labor Relations Act.⁴⁴

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www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf

² *Ibid.*

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Perspectives on Working Women*, Bulletin 2008; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 2009. www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 2009. www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf

- ⁵ Lacey, T. Alan and Benjamin Wright. “Occupational Employment Projections to 2018”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2009.
- 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, *Current Population Survey, 2009*.
<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat42.pdf>
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- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
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- 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.
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- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
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- ³² 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.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2007*.
- ³⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey, 2010*.
<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.pdf>
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- ³⁹ Letter to the House of Representatives in support of RESPECT Act 2007, AFL-CIO, Department for Professional Employees, July 13, 2007.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² “Crossing the Kentucky River: Next Steps for Professional and Technical Employees”, AFL-CIO, Department for Professional Employees, *NewsLine*, January 2007.
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For further information on professional workers, check out DPE's Web site: www.dpeaflcio.org

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 23 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.

Source: DPE Research Department
815 16th Street, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20006

Contact: Alexis Spencer Notabartolo
(202) 683-0320, extension 119
anotabartolo@dpeaflcio.org

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