



FAST FACTS

Women in the Workplace

Christina King, April 2019

How many women are in the workforce?

- **Fact 1:** “The labor force participation rate has risen for women, fallen for men,” including 57% of women ages 16+, making up 57% of the overall labor force (Pew Research, 2018).
- **Fact 2:** In 2016, 55.5% of eligible Asian women, 55.8% of eligible Hispanic women, 56.3% of eligible white women, and 59.4% of eligible Black women were working” (US Department of Labor, 2016).
- **Fact 3:** “In 2010, women made up almost half of the labor force (46.7%). In 1997, women made up 46.2% of the labor force, and back in 1970 women made up only 38.1% of the labor force” (Patten & Parker, 2012).

Where are women working?

- **Fact 1:** 97.2% of kindergarten and secondary school teachers, 94.1% of secretaries and administrative assistants, and 93.9% of childcare workers identified as women, while 1.9% of carpenters, 2.0% of automotive service technicians and mechanics, and 2.0% of electricians did (US Department of Labor, 2017).
- **Fact 2:** “The occupations with the highest concentrations of women are in the health care, teaching or caregiving fields, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Some examples are preschool or kindergarten teachers (where 98% of the workers are female), child care workers (96% female) and registered nurses (90% female). The jobs with the highest concentrations of men tend to involve traditionally blue-collar fields such as heavy equipment operation and repair or construction, as well as computer and engineering occupations.” (Parker, 2018).
- **Fact 3:** “A plurality of women (48%) say they work in places where there are more women than men, while 18% say there are more men than women, according to a Pew Research Center survey. Similarly, 44% of men say their workplace is majority-male, and 19% say women outnumber men” (Parker, 2018).

What is the impact of women in leadership positions?

- **Fact 1:** “While a majority of men (52%) see themselves as having opportunities to advance to leadership positions in their jobs, just 38% of women feel the same way” (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016).
- **Fact 2:** “ Specifically, among women who had mentors in the workplace, nearly two-thirds (63%) say that their mentor was another woman, rising to 72% among millennial women who have had mentors, while just 37% had male mentors” (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016).

- **Fact 3:** “Sizable majorities think that having more women in leadership positions would have significant positive impacts in the workplace, including: helping to reduce the pay gap between men and women doing the same work (76%), changing workplace policies in ways that benefit both men and women (74%), and attracting a more diverse workforce (71%)” (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016).
- **Fact 4:** “The presence of women in leadership positions is an important consideration to Americans in choosing where to work—two-thirds (67%) say it’s at least somewhat important to them, rising to 76% among women, suggesting that businesses’ efforts would help recruit and retain the talent that is crucial to the success of their organizations” (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016).

Do women want jobs with more responsibility?

- **Fact 1:** “For the first time, young women and young men don’t differ in their desire for jobs with more responsibility” (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2011).
- **Fact 2:** “Two-thirds (66%) of young women ages 18 to 34 rate career high on their list of life priorities, compared with 59% of young men. The past 15 years have also seen an increase in the share of middle-aged and older women who say being successful in a high-paying career or profession is “one of the most important things” or “very important” in their lives” (Patten & Parker, 2012).

How do women’s education levels compare to men’s?

- **Fact 1:** “On the education front, women have made substantial strides in recent decades and now surpass men in both college enrollment and completion. Some 44% of women ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in college or graduate programs as of October 2010, compared with just 38% of men in the same age group” (Patten & Parker, 2012).
- **Fact 2:** “36% of women ages 25 to 29 had a bachelor’s degree, compared with only 28% of men in the same age group—a record-high divergence. Women first surpassed men in these realms in the early 1990s, and the gap has been growing wider ever since” (Patten & Parker, 2012).

How does the income of women compare with the income of men?

- **Fact 1:** The 2014 wage gap between men and women include 12.3% for Hispanic women, 17.6% for Black women, 18.6% for Asian women, and 24.6% for white women” (US Department of Labor, 2014).
- **Fact 2:** Overtime, men, median, make \$50,383 per year, and women, median, make \$39,621 per year. This is a 21.4% wage gap overall (US Department of Labor, 2014).
- **Fact 3:** Even controlling for educational attainment, women with less than a high school diploma make 79.1% of what their male counterparts make, and women with advanced degrees make 72.7% of what their male counterparts make. (US Department of Labor, 2014).

How many women report sexual harassment/assault in the workplace?

- **Fact 1:** “Women employed in majority-male workplaces are more likely to say their gender has made it harder for them to get ahead at work, they are less likely to say women are treated fairly in personnel matters, and they report experiencing gender discrimination at significantly higher rates” (Parker, 2018).
- **Fact 2:** “In addition, while about half of women who say their workplace is mostly male (49%) say sexual harassment is a problem where they work, a far smaller share of women who work in mostly female workplaces (32%) say the same” (Parker, 2018).
- **Fact 3:** “There are modest differences along these lines in the shares of women who say they have been sexually harassed at work. Roughly one-in-five women who say their workplace is

balanced in terms of men and women (21%) say they have been sexually harassed at work. And a similar share who work in female-dominated workplaces (20%) say the same. The share is higher among women who say they work mainly with men - 28% say they have been sexually harassed at work” (Parker, 2018).

What are current family leave policies?

- **Fact 1:** “Among organizations that offer caregiving leave, 58% provide replacement pay for maternity leave, compared with 14% that provide replacement pay for paternity leave” (Sakai, 2014).
- **Fact 2:** “ However, despite the existence of these laws in several states, both awareness and usage – especially among workers in low-paid jobs and members of minority communities – have been low. Paid family leave went into effect in California in 2004, in New Jersey in 2008 and in Rhode Island in 2014” In California, “this was especially true of low-wage workers, workers without a college degree, black or Hispanic workers, and those for whom English is not the language spoken at home” (Appelbaum & Gatta, 2019).
- **Fact 3:** “ Many who needed a leave and knew about the [family leave] program still did not take it, however, citing the low pay replacement rate which made taking the leave unaffordable; the outmoded definition of “family” that did not encompass their family situation; fear of retaliation by their employers; and – among those working for a small employer not covered by the job protection provisions of the federal family and medical leave act – concern that they might not have a job to come back to” (Appelbaum & Gatta, 2019).

Does having children affect the rate at which women participate in the labor force?

- **Fact 1:** “The share of young women who rate parenting as a top priority has increased dramatically in recent years: up 17 percentage points. Today, nearly six-in-ten (59%) women ages 18 to 34 say being a good parent is one of the most important things in their life. The share of young men who feel this way is 47% now, up from 39% in 1997” (Pew Research, 2012).
- **Fact 2:** In dual-earning couples, 60% of employed men had children under the age of 18, compared with 47% of women (Aumann, Galinsky, & Matos, 2011).
- **Fact 3:** 69.9% of mothers with children under the age of 18 are working, compared with 92.8% of fathers, and compared with 57.2% of women in general (US Department of Labor, 2013).
- **Fact 4:** “But women in today’s workforce who do marry and have children are not necessarily leaving their careers to do so...Today more than seven-in-ten mothers with children at home are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate of mothers with children younger than 18 has risen from 47% in 1975 to 71% in 2010, a 24-percentage-point increase” (Patten & Parker, 2012).

What are people’s opinions about the impact of working mothers on families and society?

- **Fact 1:** “Generally, the public is supportive of more active roles for women in the workplace. A September 2011 Pew Research poll found that 73% of Americans feel that the trend toward more women in the workforce has been a change for the better in our society” (Patten & Parker, 2012).
- **Fact 2:** “However, the public remains conflicted about the impact these changes have had on young children. When asked whether the trend toward more mothers of young children working outside the home is a good thing or a bad thing for society, only 21% of Americans said it is a good thing. Some 37% said this is a bad thing for society, and roughly the same share (38%) said it hasn’t made a difference” (Pew Research, 2012).

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About the Author

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