

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 048 438

VT 011 993

TITLE Background Facts on Women Workers in the United States.

INSTITUTION Women's Bureau (DOL), Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 70

NOTE 24p.; 1970 Revision

AVAILABLE FROM Women's Bureau, Wage and Labor Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210 (no charge)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29

DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement, Age, Employment Experience, *Employment Statistics, *Labor Force, Marital Status, *Occupational Surveys, Occupations, Tables (Data), Unemployment, Wages, *Working Women

ABSTRACT

In 1969 there were 30.5 million women workers (38 percent of all workers) 16 years of age and over, which represented an increase of 1.3 million since 1968. About 58 percent of the women workers were married and living with their husbands. Labor force participation was highest among mothers with school-age children only (51 percent) and lowest among those with children under 3 years of age (26 percent). The largest occupational groups were: (1) clerical (10 million), (2) service workers (4.7 million), and (3) operatives (4.5 million). The median earnings of full-time year-round workers was \$4,457, or 58 percent of the year-round salary for men. About 20 percent of the women but only 8 percent of the men earned less than \$3,000 while only 3 percent of the women as compared with 28 percent of the men earned \$10,000 or more. These and other data concerning women workers are presented in tabular form. (SB)

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**BACKGROUND FACTS
ON WOMEN WORKERS
IN THE UNITED STATES**

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**WOMEN'S BUREAU
WAGE AND LABOR STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

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BACKGROUND FACTS ON WOMEN WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES



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1970

NOTE

The data are annual averages unless otherwise indicated. Data from special surveys are the latest available as of April 1970. Because of rounding, details in statistical tables do not necessarily add to totals.

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BACKGROUND FACTS ON WOMEN WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Number of Workers

There were 30.5 million women workers 16 years of age and over in the United States in 1969 (table 1). This was an increase of 1.3 million since 1968. Forty-three percent of women 16 years of age and over were in the civilian labor force in 1969; women were 38 percent of all workers.

Labor Force Reserve

Of the 40.9 million women who were not in the labor force in 1969, 32.5 million were not working because of home responsibilities, 3.5 million because of school attendance, and 2.3 million because of ill health. Women and girls accounted for about half of all persons out of the labor force because of school attendance or ill health.

While reasons for nonparticipation in the labor force in 1969 varied for women of different ages, home responsibilities were cited by the great majority of women 20 years of age and over (table 2). More than two-thirds of all girls 16 to 19 years and about one-sixth of women in their early twenties were not working because they were in school. Ill health was the reason for nonparticipation of 8 percent of women 60 years of age and over but was not a significant factor among younger women.

About 3.2 million, or 8 percent of all women who were not working or looking for work in 1969, reported that they wanted jobs. Of these, 39 percent were not looking for work because of home responsibilities, including women who reported inability to arrange child care. Seventeen percent were students and 12 percent did not seek work because they thought they would not be able to get jobs.

Age

The median (half above, half below) age of women workers in 1969 was 39 years (table 3). Almost 3 out of 5 women in the labor force were 35 years of age or over, and almost 2 out of 5 were 45 years of age or over.

Nearly half (49 percent) of all women 18 to 64 years of age were workers in 1969. Highest labor force participation was among women 20 to 24 (57 percent) and 45 to 54 years of age (54 percent). In contrast, only 10 percent of women 65 years of age and over and 34 percent of girls 16 and 17 years of age were in the labor force.

Marital and Family Status

Of the 29.9 million women workers 16 years of age and over in March 1969, nearly 3 out of 5 were married and living with their husbands (table 4). Twenty-two percent were single, 8 percent were widowed, 6 percent were divorced, and 5 percent were married but not living with their husbands.

Labor force participation was highest among divorced women (72 percent) and lowest among widows (26 percent). Forty percent of married women living with their husbands were workers.

In March 1969, 11.6 million women workers had children under 18 years of age (table 5). Almost 7.4 million had children 6 to 17 years of age (none under 6), 2.1 million had children 3 to 5 years of age (none under 3), and the other 2.1 million had children under 3 years of age. Labor force participation was highest among mothers with school-age children only (51 percent) and lowest among those with children under 3 years of age (26 percent).

Women Family Heads

There were 5.4 million families headed by women in March 1969. Many of these families were poor despite the fact that the women family heads were in the labor force. Among the 3.2 million families whose head had some work experience in 1968, about 772,000, or 24 percent, had incomes below the poverty level (table 6). Even among those whose heads worked the year round at full-time jobs, 213,000, or 12 percent, were poor in 1968. In contrast, 45 percent of the Negro ^{1/} women family heads who worked at some time in 1968 and 29 percent of those who worked year round full time had incomes below the poverty level.

Educational Attainment

Women in the labor force in March 1968 had slightly more education than did all women in the population (table 7). The median years of school completed by women 18 years of age and over in the labor force and in the population were 12.4 years and 12.2 years, respectively.

Fewer than 1 out of 10 women in the labor force had less than 8 years of schooling, about 7 out of 10 had graduated from high school, and about 1 out of 10 had 4 years or more of college.

The median years of school completed by women employed as professional and technical workers was 16.2 years (table 8). Among women nonfarm managers, officials, and proprietors; clerical workers; sales workers; and craftsmen and foremen, the medians were more than 12 years. Educational attainment of women workers was lowest among operatives (10.6 years) and private household workers (8.8 years).

^{1/} Negro and other races (except white).

Occupations

The largest major occupation group of employed women in 1969 was clerical workers (table 9). Of the nearly 10 million in clerical jobs, 3.4 million were working as stenographers, typists, and secretaries. The next two largest major occupation groups were service workers (except private household) and operatives--about 4.7 million and 4.5 million, respectively. Another 4 million were professional and technical workers. Of these, 1.6 million were teachers (except college), and 1 million were medical and other health workers. Only 339,000 were craftsmen and foremen, and 146,000 were nonfarm laborers.

Women constituted more than two-thirds of all clerical workers, private household workers, waitresses and cooks, and teachers (except college). They were only a small percentage of craftsmen and foremen, nonfarm laborers, and farmers and farm managers.

Industries

Of the 38.3 million women workers reporting the industry group of the job held longest in 1968, 15.9 million were in service industries (table 10). They accounted for more than 2 out of 5 of all women workers. Numerically the service industries were followed by retail trade (7.5 million) and manufacturing (7.1 million). Women's employment in the remaining industries totaled 7.8 million.

In 1968 the proportion that women were of all workers was highest in personal services (75 percent) and professional and related services (65 percent), and was lowest in construction (6 percent) and mining (10 percent).

The industries in which 250,000 or more women were employed in April 1969 are shown in table 11. Women were more than two-thirds of all employees in apparel and other textile products manufacturing, medical and other health services, and general merchandise stores.

Full-Time and Part-Time Job Status

About 3 out of 4 women workers in nonagricultural industries were on full-time schedules in 1969, as compared with 9 out of 10 men workers (table 12). Most of the women who worked part time did so voluntarily.

Work Experience

More than half of all women 16 years of age and over in the population worked at some time in 1968 (table 13). However, only 41 percent of these 36.9 million women worked full time year round. By marital status, the proportions who had work experience were 68 percent among single women, 50 percent among married women (husband present), and 46 percent among women who were divorced, widowed, or separated. But the last group were the most likely to work full time year round--more than half of them did so.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate of women in the civilian labor force was virtually unchanged at 4.7 percent in 1969 as compared with 4.8 percent in 1968 (table 14). But unemployment among teenage girls decreased from 14 to 13.3 percent.

Earnings 2/

The median earnings of year-round full-time women workers 14 years of age and over in 1968 were \$4,457 (table 15). This was only 58 percent of the \$7,664 median earnings of fully employed men workers. Twenty percent of the women but only 8 percent of the men earned less than \$3,000. At the upper end of the scale only 3 percent of women workers but 28 percent of the men earned \$10,000 or more in 1968.

Median income from wages or salary only among women year-round full-time workers ranged from a high of \$6,691 for professional and technical workers to a low of \$1,523 for private household workers (table 16). The gap between the wage or salary incomes of fully employed women and men was narrowest among professional and technical workers and clerical workers, where women's incomes were 66 and 65 percent, respectively, of those of men. The income gap was widest among sales workers, where women's incomes were only 41 percent of those of men.

2/ Includes income from wages or salary and from self-employment.

Table 1.--Employment Status of Women,
1968 and 1969

(Women 16 years of age and over)

Employment status	Number (in thousands)		Percent distribution		As percent of total	
	1969	1968	1969	1968	1969	1968
Population ^{1/}	<u>71,436</u>	<u>70,180</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	53.2	53.2
Civilian labor force	<u>30,512</u>	<u>29,204</u>	<u>42.7</u>	<u>41.6</u>	37.8	37.1
Employed	29,084	27,807	40.7	39.6	37.3	36.6
Unemployed	1,428	1,397	2.0	2.0	50.4	49.6
Not in the labor force	<u>40,924</u>	<u>40,976</u>	<u>57.3</u>	<u>58.4</u>	76.3	76.9
In school	3,498	3,504	4.9	5.0	49.4	50.0
Ill health	2,261	2,221	3.2	3.2	50.8	51.2
Home responsibilities	32,461	32,754	45.4	46.7	99.4	99.5
Retirement or old age	686	572	1.0	.8	11.8	10.3
Think cannot get job	391	454	.5	.6	68.1	68.1
All other reasons	1,628	1,468	2.3	2.1	53.4	52.4

^{1/} Excludes women in the Armed Forces, who numbered 39,000 in 1969 and 38,000 in 1968.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment and Earnings, December 1969 and January 1970, and Special Labor Force Report No. 110.

Table 2.--Reasons for Nonparticipation of Women in the Labor Force, by Age and Job Desire, 1969

(Women 16 years of age and over)

Reasons for nonparticipation	Age					Women who want job
	Total	16 to 19 years	20 to 24 years	25 to 59 years	60 years and over	
Number (in thousands)	40,924	4,068	3,512	20,916	12,429	3,203
Percent	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
In school	8.5	67.5	16.0	.9	.1	17.4
Ill health	5.5	1.1	2.6	5.4	8.0	11.7
Home responsibilities	79.3	18.1	74.0	88.9	84.8	38.5
Retirement or old age	1.7	--	--	--	5.5	--
Think cannot get job	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.0	.7	12.2
All other reasons	4.0	12.0	6.2	3.9	.9	20.8

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment and Earnings, December 1969 and January 1970.

Table 3.--Labor Force Status of Women, by Age, 1969

(Women 16 years of age and over)

Age	Population	Labor force		As percent of women in population
		Number	Percent distribution	
Total	<u>71,436,000</u>	<u>30,512,000</u>	<u>100.0</u>	42.7
16 and 17 years	3,682,000	1,240,000	4.1	33.7
18 and 19 years	3,486,000	1,860,000	6.1	53.4
20 to 24 years	8,109,000	4,597,000	15.1	56.7
25 to 34 years	12,337,000	5,395,000	17.7	43.7
35 to 44 years	11,819,000	5,901,000	19.3	49.9
45 to 54 years	11,872,000	6,387,000	20.9	53.8
55 to 64 years	9,466,000	4,077,000	13.4	43.1
65 years and over	10,661,000	1,056,000	3.5	9.9
Median age		39		

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics:
Employment and Earnings, January 1970.

Table 4.--Marital Status of Women in the Labor Force, March 1969

(Women 16 years of age and over)

Marital status	Number	Percent distribution	As percent of women in population
Total	<u>29,898,000</u>	<u>100.0</u>	41.6
Single	6,501,000	21.7	51.2
Married (husband present)	17,595,000	58.9	39.6
Married (husband absent)	<u>1/1,505,000</u>	5.0	54.0
Widowed	2,504,000	8.4	26.4
Divorced	1,793,000	6.0	71.6

1/ Includes 201,000 wives whose husbands were absent in the Armed Forces.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Monthly Labor Review, May 1970.

Table 5.--Labor Force Status of Ever-Married Women, by Presence
and Age of Children, March 1969

(Women 16 years of age and over)

Presence and age of children	Population	Labor force	
		Number	As percent of women in population
Total	<u>59,230,000</u>	<u>23,397,000</u>	39.5
Mothers with children under 18 years	<u>28,421,000</u>	<u>11,599,000</u>	40.8
With children 6 to 17 years only	14,538,000	7,376,000	50.7
With children under 6 years <u>1/</u>	13,883,000	4,223,000	30.4
With no children under 3 years <u>1/</u>	5,742,000	2,128,000	37.1
With children under 3 years <u>1/</u>	8,141,000	2,095,000	25.7
Women without children under 18 years	30,809,000	11,798,000	38.3

1/ May also have older children.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Monthly
Labor Review, May 1970.

1/ Status of Families Headed by a Woman,
 by Race and Work Experience of Head, 1968

Race	Total	Work experience of female head	
		Worked during year	Worked year round full time
<u>All families:</u>			
Number	5,439,000	3,236,000	1,752,000
White	4,053,000	2,386,000	1,380,000
Negro and others	1,386,000	850,000	372,000
<u>Families living in poverty:</u>			
Number	1,755,000	772,000	213,000
White	1,021,000	391,000	107,000
Negro and others	734,000	381,000	106,000
Percent	32.3	23.9	12.2
White	25.2	16.4	7.8
Negro and others	52.9	44.8	28.5

1/ The poverty level is based on the Social Security Administration's poverty threshold adjusted annually in accordance with changes in the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index. Classified as poor in 1968 were those nonfam households where total money income was less than \$1,748 for an unrelated individual, \$2,262 for a couple, and \$3,553 for a family of four.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, Nos. 66 and 68.

Table 7.--Educational Attainment of the Population
and Labor Force, by Sex, March 1968

(Persons 18 years of age and over)

Years of school completed	Population		Labor force	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Number	66,288,000	57,989,000	27,846,000	47,255,000
Percent	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
No school years completed	1.2	1.4	.4	.5
Elementary school:				
1 to 4 years	3.2	4.2	1.5	2.9
5 to 7 years	8.1	8.9	5.4	7.4
8 years	11.8	12.5	8.7	11.2
High school:				
1 to 3 years	18.6	17.9	17.6	18.6
4 years	38.2	30.6	43.7	33.8
College:				
1 to 3 years	11.3	12.4	12.3	12.2
4 years	5.7	6.9	7.4	7.7
5 years or more	1.9	5.3	3.1	5.9
Median years of school completed	12.2	12.2	12.4	12.3

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Special
Labor Force Report No. 103.

Table 8.--Educational Attainment of Employed Persons,
by Selected Major Occupation Group
and Sex, March 1968

(Persons 18 years of age and over)

Selected major occupation group	Median years of school completed	
	Women	Men
Total	12.4	12.3
Professional, technical, kindred workers	16.2	16.4
Managers, officials, proprietors (except farm)	12.5	12.8
Clerical, kindred workers	12.6	12.6
Sales workers	12.3	12.8
Craftsmen, foremen, kindred workers	12.1	12.0
Operatives, kindred workers	10.6	11.1
Service workers (except private household)	11.6	1/ (11.6)
Private household workers	8.8	

1/ Median not shown separately for these occupation groups.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Special Labor Force Report No. 103.

Table 9.--Occupations of Employed Women, 1969
(Women 16 years of age and over)

Type of worker and occupation	Number	Percent distribution	As percent of total employed
Total	<u>29,084,000</u>	<u>100.0</u>	37.3
White-collar workers:			
Professional, technical workers	4,018,000	13.8	37.3
Medical, other health workers	1,022,000	3.5	60.4
Teachers (except college)	1,597,000	5.5	69.1
Other professional, technical workers	1,399,000	4.8	20.7
Managers, officials, proprietors (except farm)	1,260,000	4.3	15.8
Salaried workers	859,000	3.0	15.1
Self-employed workers (retail trade)	250,000	.9	22.9
Self-employed workers (except retail trade)	152,000	.5	12.7
Clerical workers	<u>9,975,000</u>	<u>34.3</u>	74.5
Stenographers, typists, secretaries	3,397,000	11.7	98.5
Other clerical workers	6,577,000	22.6	66.1
Sales workers	2,017,000	6.9	43.0
Blue-collar workers:			
Craftsmen, foremen	339,000	1.2	3.3
Operatives	4,489,000	15.4	31.2
Nonfarm laborers	146,000	.5	4.0
Service workers:			
Private household workers	1,592,000	5.5	97.6
Service workers (except private household)	4,679,000	16.1	59.3
Waitresses, cooks, bartenders	1,578,000	5.4	74.8
Other service workers	3,101,000	10.7	53.6
Farm workers:			
Farmers, farm managers	79,000	.3	4.3
Farm laborers, foremen	489,000	1.7	33.8

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment and Earnings, January 1970.

Table 10.--Industry of Job Held Longest by Women Workers in 1968
(Women 14 years of age and over as of March 1969)

Industry	Number	Percent distribution	As percent of total employed
Total	<u>38,279,000</u>	<u>100.0</u>	41.0
Services	<u>15,891,000</u>	<u>41.5</u>	62.9
Professional and related	9,440,000	24.7	64.9
Personal	5,123,000	13.4	75.1
Business and repair	864,000	2.3	31.5
Entertainment and recreation	464,000	1.2	39.9
Retail trade	7,545,000	19.7	49.7
Manufacturing	7,075,000	18.5	29.9
Finance, insurance, real estate	2,074,000	5.4	51.4
Public administration	1,738,000	4.5	35.0
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	1,542,000	4.0	26.4
Transportation, communication, and other public utilities	1,262,000	3.3	22.8
Wholesale trade	752,000	2.0	26.3
Construction	344,000	.9	6.3
Mining	56,000	.1	9.7

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 66.

Table 11.--Industries Employing 250,000 or More Women, April 1969

Industry	Employed women	
	Number	As percent of total employed
Finance, insurance, and real estate:		
Banking	603,400	63
Insurance carriers	512,000	51
Government:		
Local	3,496,000	50
State	1,054,300	41
Federal	727,000	26
Manufacturing:		
Apparel and other textile products	1,136,100	81
Women's and misses' outerwear	362,200	85
Men's and boys' furnishings	314,100	84
Electrical equipment and supplies	816,600	40
Fabricated metal products	268,200	19
Food and kindred products	424,100	25
Textile mill products	454,500	46
Printing and publishing	343,000	32
Machinery (except electrical)	295,700	16
Retail trade:		
General merchandise stores	1,505,400	69
Department stores	987,400	69
Variety stores	249,800	78
Eating and drinking places	1,350,900	56
Food stores	580,000	35
Grocery, meat, and vegetable stores	483,000	32
Apparel and accessories stores	462,600	66
Drug stores and proprietary stores	258,600	60
Services (miscellaneous):		
Medical and other health	2,270,200	81
Hospitals	1,418,000	81
Personal	631,000	62
Laundries and drycleaning plants	353,100	66
Educational	559,800	48
Colleges, universities	277,200	41
Miscellaneous business	494,600	34
Hotels, tourist courts, and motels	328,800	50
Transportation and public utilities:		
Communication	519,400	50
Telephone	475,600	55
Wholesale trade	842,000	23

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment and Earnings, August 1969.

Table 12.--Full-Time and Part-Time Job Status of Workers in
Nonagricultural Industries, by Sex, 1969

(Persons 16 years of age and over)

Job status	Women	Men
Number	26,631,000	43,387,000
Percent	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
On full-time schedule <u>1/</u>	73.8	91.1
On part-time schedule <u>2/</u>	<u>26.2</u>	<u>8.8</u>
For economic reasons <u>3/</u>	3.5	2.0
Voluntary	22.8	6.8

1/ Worked 35 hours or more a week.

2/ Worked less than 35 hours a week.

3/ Slack work, job changing during the week, material shortages, inability to find full-time work, etc.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment and Earnings, January 1970.

Table 13.--Work Experience of Women in 1968, by Marital Status
(Women 16 years of age and over)

Work experience	Total	Marital status		
		Single	Married (husband present)	Other ^{1/}
Number	36,918,000	8,318,000	22,169,000	6,431,000
Percent with work experience	52.0	68.0	49.7	45.7
<u>Percent distribution</u>				
Total with work experience	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Worked at full-time jobs: ^{2/}				
50 to 52 weeks	41.4	36.2	40.2	52.3
27 to 49 weeks	13.6	9.8	14.5	15.2
1 to 26 weeks	15.4	19.3	15.2	10.8
Worked at part-time jobs ^{3/}				
	29.7	34.7	30.1	21.7

- ^{1/} Widowed, divorced, or separated or husband absent for other reasons.
^{2/} Worked 35 hours or more a week.
^{3/} Worked less than 35 hours a week.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Monthly Labor Review, February 1970.

Table 14.--Unemployment Rates, by Sex and Age,
1968 and 1969

(Persons 16 years of age and over)

Age	1969	1968
Women		
Total	4.7	4.8
16 to 19 years	13.3	14.0
20 years and over	3.7	3.8
Men		
Total	2.8	2.9
16 to 19 years	11.4	11.6
20 years and over	2.1	2.2

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment and Earnings, January 1970

Table 15.--Total Money Earnings of Workers in 1968, by Sex
(Persons 14 years of age and over)

	All workers		Year-round full-time workers	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Number	35,695,000	54,026,000	15,013,000	37,068,000
Percent of population	47.7	81.1	20.0	55.7
Median earnings	\$2,512	\$6,442	\$4,457	\$7,664
<u>Percent distribution</u>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under \$1,000	28.5	12.6	4.7	2.5
\$1,000 to \$1,999	14.3	6.5	5.7	2.2
\$2,000 to \$2,999	11.9	4.9	9.6	2.8
\$3,000 to \$3,999	14.3	6.1	21.3	5.4
\$4,000 to \$4,999	10.7	7.0	18.7	7.2
\$5,000 to \$5,999	8.1	8.7	15.5	9.9
\$6,000 to \$6,999	5.3	9.5	10.5	11.4
\$7,000 to \$7,999	3.0	10.3	6.1	13.0
\$8,000 to \$9,999	2.4	13.8	4.8	17.9
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1.3	14.6	2.5	19.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	.2	4.6	.3	6.3
\$25,000 and over	(1/)	1.4	.1	1.9
Women's median earnings as percent of men's		39.0		58.2

1/ Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 66.

Table 16.--Median Wage or Salary Income of Workers in 1968,
by Selected Major Occupation Group and Sex

(Persons 14 years of age and over)

Selected major occupation group	All workers		Year-round full-time workers	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Professional, technical, kindred workers	\$5,564	\$9,368	\$6,691	\$10,151
Managers, officials, proprietors (except farm)	4,840	9,904	5,635	10,340
Clerical, kindred workers	3,882	6,755	4,789	7,351
Sales workers	2,073	7,245	3,461	8,549
Craftsmen, foremen, kindred workers	4,040	7,581	4,625	7,978
Operatives, kindred workers	3,383	6,066	3,991	6,738
Service workers (except private household)	2,029	4,462	3,332	6,058
Private household workers	546	(1/)	1,523	(1/)

1/ Median not shown for occupation group with fewer than 75,000 workers.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Current Population Reports, P-60, No. 66.