

Bureau of the Census Statistical Brief

Women in the United States: A Profile

Women outnumber men.

On April 1, 1995, the United States had 134 million women and 128 million men. At the youngest ages (under 15 years), boys outnumbered girls by a ratio of 1.05 to 1. The male lead continued until about age 30, when the situation reversed. The female edge then kept getting larger with age. Among the oldest old (85 years and over), there were only 39 men for every 100 women. Overall, women had a median age of 35.4; men, 33.1.

Women have almost achieved parity in educational attainment

In 1993, 19 percent of women aged 25 and over had at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 25 percent of men this age, meaning the bachelor's degree gap between women and men has almost been closed. Among the youngest group of post-college-age adults (25- to 29-year-olds), the gap already has been closed. In 1970, 13 percent of women and 20 percent of men this age were college graduates. Over the next 23 years, the rate inched up 3 percentage points for men (to 23 percent), but jumped 11 points for women (to 24 percent). Not coincidentally, more than half (55 percent) of college students in 1993 were

women, up from 44 percent two decades earlier.

.... but not earnings equality.

Women aged 15 and over who worked year-round, full-time in 1993 earned a median of \$21,747 that year, 72 percent of their male counterparts' earnings (\$30,407). For year-round, full-time workers aged 25 and over, this pattern held among all education levels:

- Women without a high school diploma earned a median of \$14,700, while comparably educated men made \$21,402.
- Women with a high school diploma only made \$19,168, men \$26,820.

- Women with a bachelor's degree earned \$32,291, men \$45,987.

Women are racially and ethnically diverse.

Of the 134 million women —

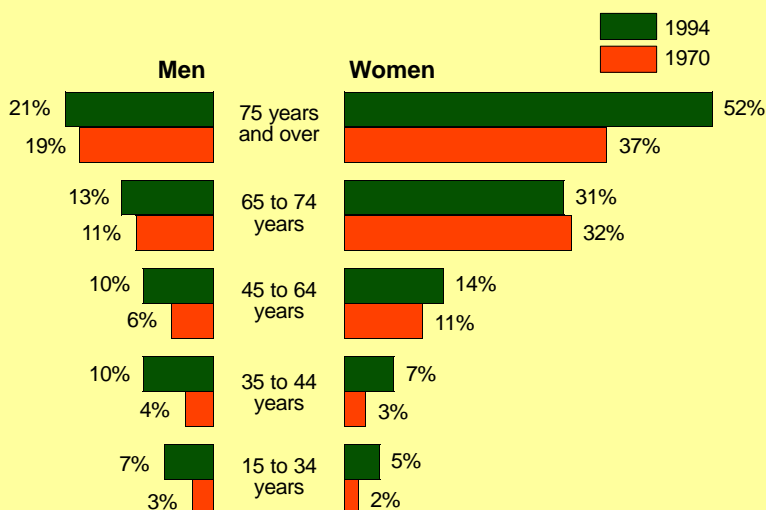
- 83 percent were White
- 13 percent were Black
- 4 percent were Asian and Pacific Islander
- 1 percent were American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut
- 10 percent were Hispanic (of any race)

Women are marrying later

In 1994, the median age at which women married for the first time was 24.5. Just a generation ago, in 1970,

More Women These Days Live Alone

Percent of persons living alone, by age and sex: 1970 and 1994



SB/95-19RV
Issued July 1995

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

they were only 20.8 years of age when they first married. The corresponding ages for men were higher: 26.7 years and 23.2 years, respectively.

... or not at all.

Between 1970 and 1994, the proportion of persons aged 30 to 34 who had never married tripled from 6 to 20 percent for women and from 9 to 30 percent for men. For those aged 35 to 39, the corresponding increases were 5 to 13 percent and 7 to 19 percent.

These changes have contributed to ...

■ *More and more women living alone:* Over this period, the number doubled from 7 to 14 million. And, for almost every age group, the percentage of women who lived alone also rose. The exception was the 65 to 74 age group, where the percentage remained statistically unchanged. (See graph on front.)

■ *More families being maintained by women without a husband:* The proportion rose from 11 percent of all families in 1970 to 18 percent in 1994. They constituted 48 percent of Black families and 14 percent of White families in the latter year.

■ *A large proportion of births out-of-wedlock:* About 26 percent of babies born in 1994 were born out-of-wedlock. Of Black women who gave birth in 1994, 66 percent were unmarried, compared with 19 percent of White women and 28 percent of Hispanic women.

Most single female custodial parents had child support awards.

In spring 1992, over half (56 percent) of such women were awarded child support, compared with 41 percent of their male counterparts. Seventy-six percent of mothers due payments in 1991 actually received them, getting an average of \$3,011 that year. The corresponding figures for fathers were lower — 63 percent and \$2,292, respectively. Nonetheless, 35 percent of custodial mothers — but only 13 percent of custodial fathers — were poor.

Many women of childbearing ages don't have kids ...

Of the 60 million women aged 15 to 44 in June 1994, 25 million were childless.

... while some have a newborn.

Another 4 million, however, had given birth in the past year; slightly over half of these women (53 percent) were in the labor force. And if they had a bachelor's degree, the labor force participation rate was even higher (70 percent).

Since 1950, women have poured into the labor force ...

Between 1950 and 1990, the proportion of working-age women who were in the labor force nearly doubled (from 30 to 57 percent). Over the same period, the rate for men declined from 82 to 74 percent.

... making child care costs more of a concern.

In fall 1991, about 19 million employed women had children under age 15 living with them. About

a third of these women made cash payments for child care services. These payments, on average, consumed 7 percent of their monthly family income. But if they were poor, the proportion was much higher (27 percent).

Contacts:

Status of U.S. women —
Dianne Schmidley
301-457-2378

Statistical Briefs —
Robert Bernstein
301-457-2794

This Brief is one of a series that presents information of current policy interest. All statistics are subject to sampling variability, as well as survey design flaws, respondent classification errors, and data processing mistakes. The Census Bureau has taken steps to minimize errors, and analytical statements have been tested and meet statistical standards. However, because of methodological differences, use caution when comparing these data with data from other sources.

Financially, Women-Headed Households Are Worst Off

	Married couple	Male householder (no wife present)	Female householder (no husband present)
Median household income, by household type: 1993	\$43,129	\$29,849	\$18,545
Poverty rate, by family type: 1993			
All families	7%	17%	36%
With children	9%	23%	46%
Percent of persons in a major means-tested assistance program*, by family type: average month, 1990	6%	(NA)	37%

* Includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), General Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, Medicaid, Federal or State rent assistance, and public housing.

NA Not available