

About 60 percent of all women are in the labor force, compared with nearly 75 percent of all men. (The participation rate is the share of the population 16 years and older working or seeking work.)

The long-term increase in the female labor force largely reflects the greater frequency of paid work among mothers.

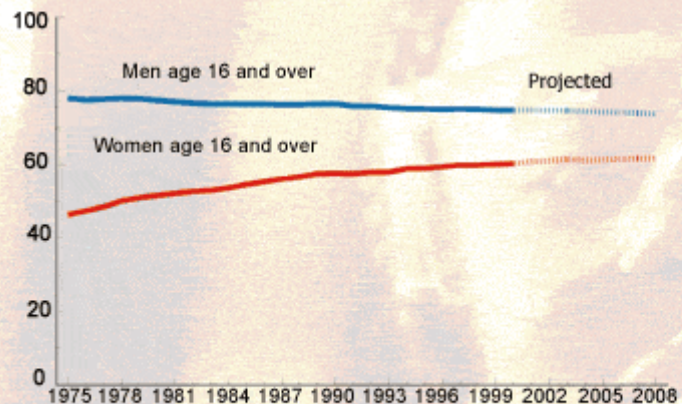
The slow long-term decline in work activity among men reflects, in part, the trend to earlier retirement.

Women now account for 47 percent of the labor force, up from 40 percent in 1975.

DID YOU KNOW?

Among married-couple families where both the wife and the husband work, about one-fifth of the wives earn more than their husbands.

Labor force participation rates, 1975-2008



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. In percent.