

### The February Review

This issue leads off with a detailed case study of a “community in which 80 percent of women are college educated, work in the professions, delay marriage and childbearing until their late twenties, and return to work within a few years of childbirth.” No, it is not the typical suburban, dual-income community of today, but an upper middle class Black group from Baltimore in the 1960s. Author Ruth B. McKay concludes by observing that by the later years of the 20th century, “white women achieved greater educational, occupational, and economic parity with men” and so came to resemble, in household roles, fertility patterns, and child-rearing practices, those African-American mothers of mid-century Baltimore.

One of the striking features of late-20th-century labor markets was the rise in labor force participation among mothers of young children. Sharon R. Cohany and Emy Sok report on the evidence that labor force participation rates for married mothers of infants edged down in the last few years of the last century, and have been basically flat since.

Ana Aizcorbe uses detailed data from the Consumer Price Index and Producer Price Index in a demand model for Japanese motor cars. Aizcorbe uses the model to assess the effectiveness of Japan’s automotive export restraints before and after the yen’s exchange value for the dollar increased sharply in the middle years of the 1980s.

Jessica R. Sincavage reviews some international comparisons of consumer price indexes that have been “harmonized” as to coverage and methodology.

### Telemarketing hot spots

The five U.S. counties with the greatest number of telemarketing employees supplied a little more than 11 percent of the total number of workers in the industry with a combined total of 38,620 in March 2006. With 10,175 telemar-

keters accounting for 1.8 percent of its total employment, Bexar County, Texas, which contains San Antonio, tops the list. Telemarketing employees there earn an average of \$653 per week—more than \$100 above the national average for the industry.

Maricopa County, Arizona employs 7,669 people in the telemarketing industry, which is 0.5 percent of its total employment. (Maricopa’s county seat is Phoenix.) Close behind Maricopa County are Miami-Dade County, Florida, and Salt Lake County, Utah, with 7,455 and 7,415 telemarketing employees, respectively. Rounding out the top five is Tarrant County, Texas, with a little more than half the number of telemarketing industry employees as Bexar. Tarrant County is an urban county located in the north central part of Texas; Fort Worth serves as the county seat. Find out more in “Telemarketing: Five Industry Centers,” Issues in Labor Statistics, BLS Summary 06-06.

### Ask for volunteers

About 43 percent of volunteers became involved with their organization after simply being asked to volunteer. Most often they were asked by someone in the organization; about 27 percent of volunteers became involved this way. About 14 percent of volunteers started after being asked by a relative, friend, or co-worker. About 41 percent of volunteers became involved on their own initiative; that is, they approached the organization. Find out more in “Volunteering in the United States, 2006,” news release USDL 07-0019.

### Union membership in 2006

In 2006, 12.0 percent of employed wage and salary workers were union members, down from 12.5 percent a year earlier. The union membership rate has steadily declined from 20.1 percent in 1983, the first year for which comparable data are available.

The union membership rate was higher for men (13.0 percent) than for women (10.9 percent) in 2006. The gap between their rates has narrowed considerably since 1983, when the rate for men was about 10 percentage points higher than the rate for women. This narrowing occurred because the union membership rate for men declined more rapidly than the rate for women over the period. Black workers were more likely to be union members (14.5 percent) than were whites (11.7 percent), Asians (10.4 percent), or Hispanics (9.8 percent). Find out more in “Union Members in 2006,” news release USDL 07-0113.

### Compensation costs rise in 2006

Compensation costs in private industry rose 3.2 percent in the year ended December 2006, compared with a 2.9-percent increase in December 2005. The components of compensation differed in their rates of change. While increases in wages and salaries became greater, the sharp increases in benefit costs seen over the past several years slowed to a more moderate pace.

Wages and salaries rose 3.2 percent in the year ended December 2006, greater than the gains of 2.5 percent in December 2005 and 2.6 percent in December 2004. Benefit costs gained 3.1 percent for the year ended December 2006, slowing from increases of 4.0 percent for the year ended December 2005 and 6.7 percent for the year ended December 2004. For more information, see “Employment Cost Index – December 2006,” news release USDL 07-0158. □

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