

We asked... You told us

Work Experience in 1989

The Census Bureau conducts a census of population and housing every 10 years. This bulletin is one of a series that shows the questions asked in the 1990 census and the answers that you, the American people, gave. Each bulletin focuses on a question or group of questions appearing on the 1990 census questionnaires.

In questions **31a**, **31b**, and **31c** on the 1990 census forms, we asked all working-age persons (16 years old and over) to report their work experience in 1989. Question **31a** asked persons whether they worked at all during the year. Question **31b** asked workers how many weeks they worked. Question **31c** asked them how many hours they usually worked during those weeks.

From what **you told us**, we learned that:

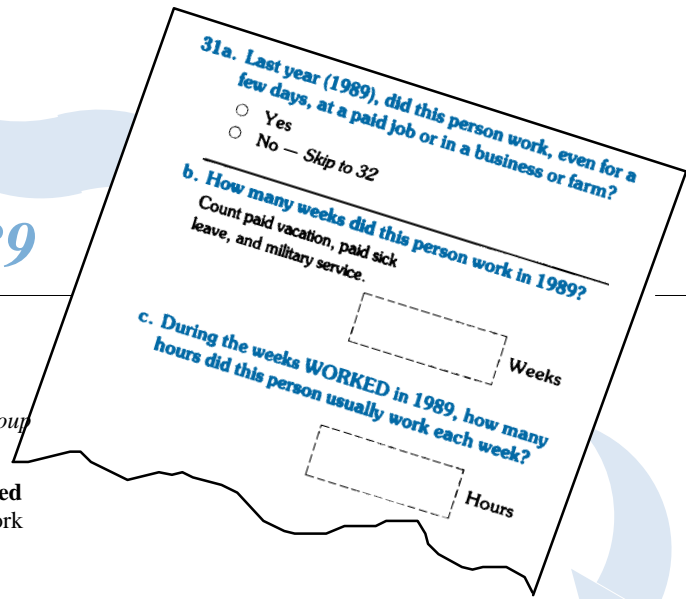
- For the Nation as a whole, 135 million Americans, or 70 percent of persons 16 years and older, worked one or more weeks in 1989 (see top chart). In the 1980s, the number of workers increased by about 21 million, or 18 percent.
- More men than women worked in 1989 (73 million men workers versus 62 million women workers). Men also were proportionally more likely to work than women. Nearly 79 percent of working-age men worked in 1989, compared with 62 percent of such women.
- The increased labor force participation of women since World War II is reflected in the dramatic gains in the female share of the workforce as reported in the last five censuses (see bottom chart). In 1949, women made up 31 percent of all workers; in 1969, 40 percent; and by 1989, 46 percent.

Year-Round Full-Time Workers

- A slight majority (55 percent) of American workers worked year round full time (50-52 weeks at 35 or more hours per week). The year-round full-time workforce numbered 75 million in 1989, up by 14 million since 1979.
- Between 1979 and 1989, the year-round full-time workforce grew faster than the workforce as a whole—23 percent versus 18 percent.
- Traditionally, men have been more likely than women to work year round full time, although the gap has narrowed as the workforce participation of women has increased. In 1989, 63 percent of men workers worked year round full time, compared with 46 percent of women workers. The corresponding figures reported a decade earlier were 62 percent for men workers and 41 percent for women workers.

Note: Data on work experience in 1989 are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.

Census Trivia: According to the 1990 census, which State had the highest proportion of women workers working year round full time? Which one had the lowest? (Answer on reverse.)

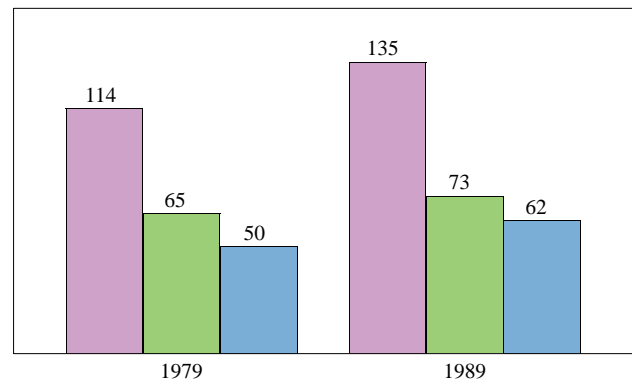


Number of Workers Has Increased About 21 Million Since 1979

Persons 16 Years and Over With Work Experience, by Sex: 1979 and 1989

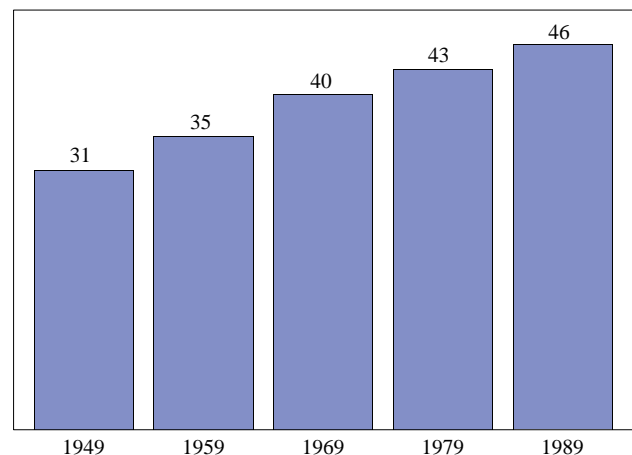
■ All persons
■ Male
■ Female

(In millions)



Women's Share of the Workforce Has Climbed Steadily

Women as Percent of Workforce: 1949 to 1989

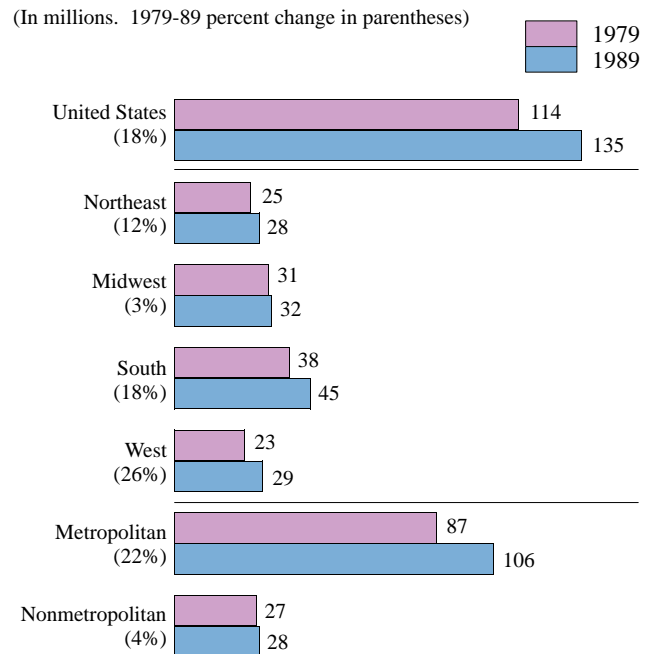


Geographic Variations in Work Experience

- The size of the workforce in each region largely reflected the regional distribution of the working-age population. The South had the largest workforce in 1989, 45 million, followed by the Midwest, with 32 million (see chart). The Northeast had about the same number of working-age residents as the West but had a slightly smaller workforce (28 million) than the West (29 million).
- Between 1979 and 1989, the number of workers increased five times faster in metropolitan areas¹ than in nonmetropolitan areas. By 1989, there were more than 106 million workers in metropolitan areas, accounting for nearly 80 percent of all workers (see chart).
- All four regions experienced gains in their workforce between 1979 and 1989. The West's workforce posted the largest increase (26 percent). The slowest growth, 3 percent, occurred in the Midwest.
- From 1979 to 1989, the number of year-round full-time workers grew by 13 million in metropolitan areas but by only 1 million in nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, the year-round full-time workforce in metropolitan areas grew faster than the metropolitan workforce as a whole (27 percent versus 22 percent) during this same period.
- As the map shows, the percentage of workers working year round full time differed for the States in 1989. Maryland and Virginia had the highest rates: 61 and 60 percent, respectively. The lowest percentages were for Alaska, 47 percent; and Idaho, 48 percent.

Workforce Grew in All Four Regions

Persons 16 Years and Over With Work Experience, by Region and Metropolitan Residence: 1979 and 1989



Who Uses This Information?

Just a few examples:

- Private business and industry to select office/plant sites
- Researchers interested in earnings differences between men and women or among various race groups for persons working the same amount of time

Want to Know More?

Consult the series of 1990 census reports, CP-2, *Social and Economic Characteristics*; CPH-3, *Census Tracts*; and CPH-5, *Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics*, at a large public or university library. Also for sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). Call:

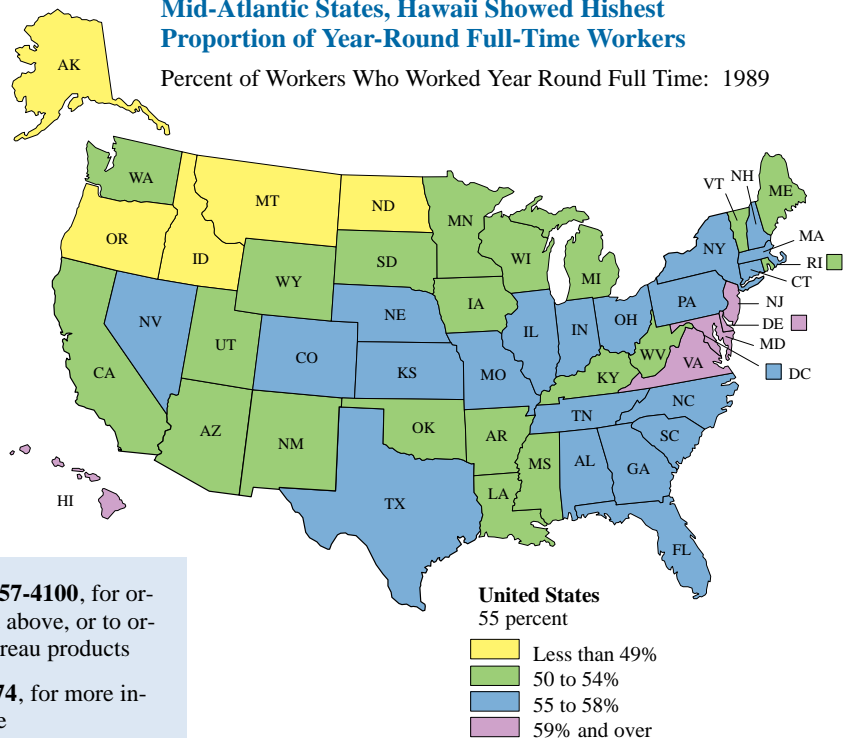
- Customer Services at the Census Bureau, **301-457-4100**, for ordering information about the GPO reports listed above, or to order copies of CQC bulletins or other Census Bureau products
- Thomas Palumbo or Peter Sepielli, **301-763-8574**, for more information on this bulletin or on work experience
- Karen Mills, **301-457-4008**, for general information on CQC bulletins

¹ Generally, a **metropolitan area** consists of a sizable central city (or cities) and the surrounding suburbs, with a total population of at least 100,000. Metropolitan areas are defined in terms of counties (cities and towns in New England).

Trivia Answer: Pennsylvania had the highest proportion of women workers working year round full time, 54 percent, in 1990. Idaho had the lowest proportion, 36 percent.

Mid-Atlantic States, Hawaii Showed Highest Proportion of Year-Round Full-Time Workers

Percent of Workers Who Worked Year Round Full Time: 1989



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