

MAJOR TRENDS

- **WORK FORCE PARTICIPATION.** Increased participation of women in the workforce so that women are now half of all earners.
- **WAGE GAP.** Dramatic improvement for women without families but persistent and worsening for married women, particularly for mothers and most of all for single mothers.
- **FAMILY STRUCTURE.** Women are marrying later and having fewer children; the family with a stay at home mom is a thing of the past; 70% of all children are in homes with one parent or both parents working.
- **PART-TIME WORK.** A quarter of the women in the workforce work part-time.
- **POVERTY.** Persistent and growing poverty especially among single parent female headed households.

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE: THE NEW NORMAL

- Last 25 years – increased labor force participation by women – 53.6 to 59.2 % of all women are in the labor force.
- ALL of the increase was prior to 2000. Since 2000, growth has been flat. Men’s labor force participation during this entire period has declined.
- Number of women in the workforce has grown dramatically as well – 46 million in 1984 to 66 million in 2009 BUT job distribution has remained relatively constant – 25% work part-time and remain concentrated in industries that are predominantly female.
- Women now comprise half of all workers on U.S. payrolls.

MOTHERS IN THE LABOR FORCE

- Growth of labor force participation by mothers is the most dramatic trend of the last 25 years.
- In 1984, 52% of mothers with children under age 6 were in the labor force; in 2009 64% of mothers with children under age 6 were in the labor force.
- In 1984, 64% of moms with kids 6-18 were in the labor force; in 2009 78% of moms with kids were in the labor force.
- Nearly 4 in 10 mothers (39.3% of all mothers) are the primary breadwinners for their families.

THE PAY GAP – THE GOOD NEWS

- Women's earnings have increased sharply over the past 30 years – inflation adjusted earnings show a 32% growth for white women, 25% for black women and 18% for Hispanic women (compared to 3% for white men, even for black men and 6% drop for Hispanic men).
- There has been a sharp decrease in the overall wage gap in the last 25 years– in 1985, women earned on average 68% of men's full-time wage; now women earn on average 80% of what men earn.
- Geographically New York state is among the best states with respect to the overall wage gap – women earn 83% of what men do in New York.
- Wives' earnings were 29% of family income in 1983 but were 36% in 2009 and 38% of working wives earned as much or more than their husbands.
- Especially good progress for college educated women who show wage growth of 33% since 1979 compared to college educated men whose wages grew 22%.
- Both men and women with less than a high school education have experienced wage drops but women have dropped less (9% as opposed to 28%).

THE PAY GAP – THE BAD NEWS

The Motherhood Penalty

- Women earning 80 cents on the dollar compared to men is still unacceptably high.
- All of the progress in closing the wage gap occurred before 2005.
- A married woman with children working full time earns only 69 cents for every \$1 earned by her male counterpart and a single mother working full time earns 58 cents on every \$1 earned by a married man with children.
- In one study, mothers were offered starting salaries that were 7.4% lower than those offered to otherwise equally qualified childless women, and mothers were rated significantly less promotable and less likely to be recommended for management positions.
- The long-term consequences of this motherhood penalty are devastating: an average woman loses \$434,000 over a 40-year career due to the wage gap.

Sources: Ann O'Leary, *Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act Won't Close Wage Gap Between Men & Women*, San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 4, 2009; Shelly J. Correll, Stephen Benard & In Paik, *Getting a Job: Is there a Motherhood Penalty?*, *Am. J. of Sociology* 1297 (2007).; JESSICA ARON, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS, *LIFETIME LOSSES: THE CAREER WAGE GAP*, 1 (Dec. 2008).

WOMEN'S WORK – Much the same

- Women are more likely than men to work part-time – 26% of women as opposed to 13% of men work less than 35 hours per week; this has been steady throughout the last 25 years.
- Women continue to be concentrated in certain sectors. In 1984, women made up 50% or more of the workforce in three industries – government, education and health services, finance; today they are 50% or more in these industries as well in leisure and hospitality.
- There has been little progress in representation of women workers in construction, production and transportation jobs and there has been a decline of women in information technology as that industry has changed dramatically in the intervening years.
- Women are more heavily represented in professional occupations but are not heavily represented in the highest paying jobs within those categories.
- More women own their own businesses – women owned businesses doubled between 1979 and 2003.
- Number of women owned businesses growing faster than men's – 23% rate of growth nearly double that of men.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

- Women are marrying later and having fewer children. The average age of marriage for American women has risen from 22 in 1980 to 26 in 2007.
- A greater proportion of women and men never marry and women are having children later.
- The divorce rate has fallen since the peak in 1979 when the rate was 22.8 per thousand married couples to 2005 when it fell to 16.7 per thousand married couples.
- But the snapshot of the marital status of women in the population in 2010 indicates that although a majority of women are in marriages, the percentage has fallen from 58% to 53% and among those who are not married, a larger percentage have never married (57.5% in 2010 as opposed to 54.7% in 1980) and a much larger percentage are divorced (23% in 2010 as opposed to 16% in 1980).
- Only 20.4% of families in the U.S. are the traditional breadwinner/homemaker families today as opposed to 44.7% in the late '70's.
- Women continue to outlive and outnumber men at older ages.

FAMILY STRUCTURE: THE GROWTH OF SINGLE FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

- Female headed households have grown dramatically in the last 25 years:
 - Female headed households with children under 18 are 25% of all families with children in 2009 (9.8 million) as opposed to 20% in 1983 (6.6 million).
 - Most of that growth was in the second half of the 1980's and early 2000's.

THE POVERTY GENDER GAP

- Women have been poorer than men in every census with the poverty gap the highest in the 1980's.
- Good news: The gender gap is improving with poverty being more and more evenly distributed between men and women BUT
- Bad news: In 2009, an adult woman was still 32 percent more likely to be poor than an adult man, with a poverty rate of 13.9% compared to a 10.5% rate for adult men. There were 16.4 million poor adult women compared to 11.7 million poor adult men.

Women and Poverty cont

- The recession has aggravated women's poverty especially for single mother headed households.
- Median annual income for single mother families fell from \$27,296 in 2000 to \$25,809 in 2007 to \$25,172 in 2009 and official poverty rate climbed from 33% to 37% to 38.5% in 2009 for single mother families.
- Too many single mother headed families are in extreme poverty (less than half of poverty level) 14% to 18% to 19%.

Social Policy Needs to Adapt to the New Reality

Our policies need to change to support families the way they are now and support women in both their roles as caregivers and as workers

- Many of the persistent problems that women face – the wage gap, persistent poverty, constriction of opportunity – they face because they have moved into the workforce but are still primarily responsible for caring for their families.

Paid sick leave policies

- 1.3 million workers in New York lack even a single day of paid sick time they can use for themselves or their children.
- San Francisco, Washington D.C. and Milwaukee, Wisconsin have all passed paid sick days laws and proposals are pending in 22 states and localities.
- We need to make these laws a reality including the one proposed in New York City co-sponsored by a majority of the City Council but currently being blocked by the Speaker.

Paid family leave

- The only guaranteed support for workers with family responsibilities is the Family and Medical Leave Act, a Federal law that applies to businesses with over 50 employees and offers job protected but unpaid leave of 12 weeks for the care of a new baby or sick family member.
- Low income workers in particular need paid leave in order to be able to take time off. Paid family leave insurance programs have been enacted in California and New Jersey. Studies of the California program show it to be a great success especially for low wage workers. A paid family leave insurance bill has been proposed every year for the past 10 years in New York state but has yet to pass.

Additional supports

- Greater job flexibility
- Part-time parity
- Better and more affordable child care options
- End to discrimination against those with family responsibilities
- Greater recognition of caregiving responsibilities in support programs such as TANF