

America's Changing Workforce

Recession Turns a Graying Office Grayer

FOR RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2009

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A Social & Demographic Trends Report

America's Changing Work Force

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The American work force is graying—and not just because the American population itself is graying. Older adults are staying in the labor force longer, and younger adults are staying out of it longer. Both trends took shape about two decades ago. Both have intensified during the current recession. And both are expected to continue after the economy recovers. According to one government estimate, 93% of the growth in the U.S. labor force from 2006 to 2016 will be among workers ages 55 and older.

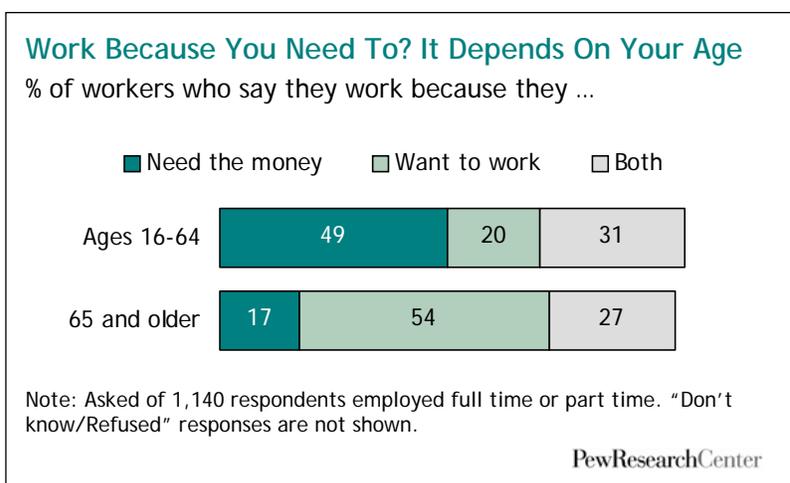
Demographic and economic factors explain some—but not all—of these changes. Attitudes about work also play an important role—in particular, the growing desire of an aging but healthy population to stay active well into the later years of life.

A new nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends project finds that a majority (54%) of workers ages 65 and older say the main reason they work is that they want to. Just 17% say the main reason is that they need the paycheck. An additional 27% say they're motivated by a mix of desire and need.

When asked to identify specific reasons for working, older workers emphasize psychological and social factors: “to feel useful”; “to give myself something to do”; “to be with other people.” Younger and middle-aged workers are much more inclined to cite classic pocketbook considerations: “to support myself and my family”; “to live independently”; “to qualify for retirement benefits”; “to receive health care benefits.”

To be sure, the current state of the economy has influenced nearly everyone's calculations about work to some extent. But the recession appears to be having a very different impact, depending on age—keeping older adults in the labor force and younger ones out of it.

According to the Pew Research survey, nearly four-in-ten adults who are working past the median retirement age of 62 say they have delayed their retirement because of the recession. Among workers ages 50 to 61, fully 63% say they might have to push back their expected retirement date because of current economic conditions.



All of these survey findings are consistent with a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data that show that the labor force participation rate¹ of older adults, which declined from 1950 until the middle of the 1980s, has been rising ever since. This trend has accelerated during this decade, especially in the current recession.

At the other end of the age spectrum, census data show that in the current decade, a rising share of Americans ages 16 to 24 are in school and a declining share are in the labor force—57% today versus 66% in 2000.

The Pew Research survey identifies two factors that help explain these changing patterns among the young. First, a growing share of the public says that a person needs a college education to get ahead in life; about three-quarters (73%) of the public feels this way now, up from about half (49%) in 1978. Second, younger adults (like all adults) are being hit hard by the recession, and some may have become discouraged and dropped out of the labor market.

Overall, more than four-in-ten nonworking people ages 16 to 24 say they've looked for work but can't find anything.

Reasons for Working, by Age

% who say this is a "big reason" they work

<u>65 or older</u>		<u>16-64</u>	
Feel useful/productive	68	Support myself/family	88
Live independently	59	Live independently	78
Give myself something to do	57	Feel useful/productive	69
To be with other people	56	Qualify for pension/Social Security	65
Support myself/family	53	Receive health benefits	57
Help improve society	40	Help improve society	48
Qualify for pension/Social Security	35	Give myself something to do	40
Receive health benefits	24	To be with other people	35

Note: Based on those who work full time or part time; n=1,140.

Recession and Retirement

% saying they may have to delay their retirement because of the recession



% who have delayed retirement due to the recession



Note: Based on adults ages 50-61 and not retired (n=242) and adults ages 62 and older and not retired (n=116).

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¹ The labor force participation rate refers to the share of people ages 16 and older who are either employed or actively seeking employment. It is different from the unemployment rate, which is the share of the labor force that is out of work but is actively looking for work. The unemployment rate typically rises during recessions and decreases during economic expansions. But, regardless of the business cycle, the unemployment rate can also rise if more people choose to participate in the labor force but cannot find work. In recent years, proportionally more older adults have chosen to remain in the labor force—and this may have boosted their unemployment rate above levels it might otherwise have reached during the current recession.

Gender Shifts

Age is not the only demographic characteristic of the work force that's changing. There are also new developments on the gender front—but here, the most compelling story of the decade is not the presence of change but the absence of change.

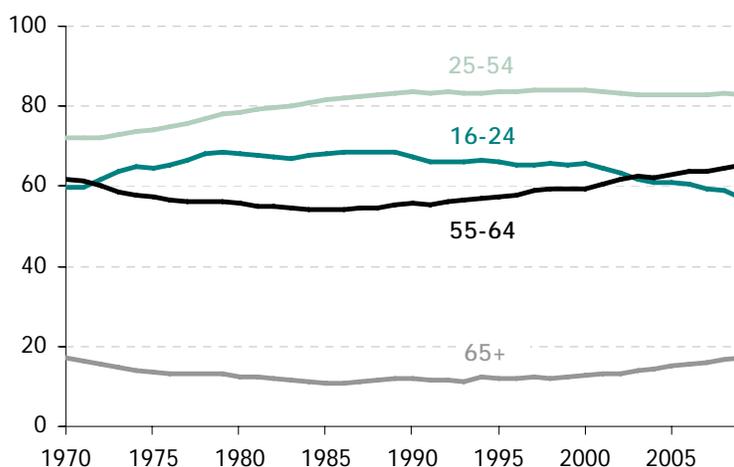
After marching steadily upward for five decades, the labor force participation rate of women has essentially flattened out. It now stands at 59%, slightly below the 60% peak it reached in 2000 at the end of a period of robust economic growth, and about 13 percentage points below the current rate for men.

Even in an era of growing gender parity in the workplace, the work/family trade-off continues to be much more complicated for women than for men. The Pew Research survey dramatizes these disparities; it finds that nonworking women are nine times as likely as nonworking men to cite the tug of family responsibility as a key reason for not having a job. The survey also finds that only a small share of the public—12%—thinks the ideal situation for a mother of young children is to work full time outside the home.

As for men, their labor force participation rate has declined in this decade—just as it has every

Labor Force Participation Rate, by Age: 1970-2009

% of people 16 and older either employed or actively looking for work



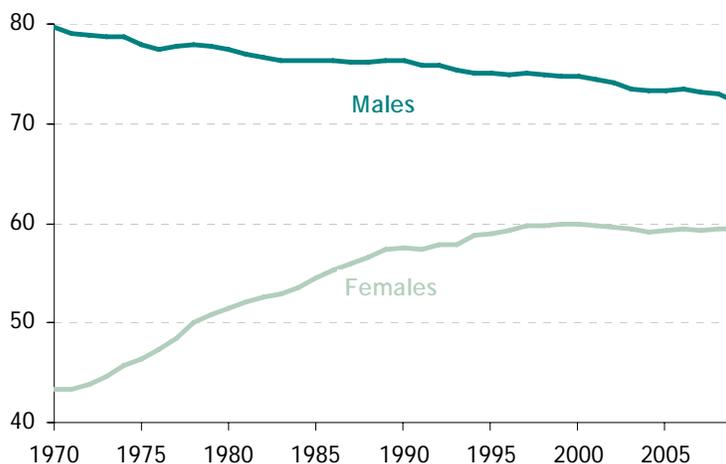
Note: Estimates reflect annual averages except for 2009, which is based on data for January through June.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (Current Population Survey data)

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Labor Force Participation Rate, by Gender: 1970-2009

% of people 16 and older either employed or actively looking for work



Note: Estimates reflect annual averages except for 2009, which is based on data for January through June.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (Current Population Survey data)

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decade since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began keeping such records in 1948. As of June 2009, it stood at 72%, the lowest level in modern history. The current economic downturn has hit men harder than women, with men suffering about two-thirds of all recession-related job losses. As often happens in a recession, a portion of these newly unemployed workers have become discouraged about finding jobs and have dropped out of the labor force altogether.

Other Findings

This report is based on a Pew Research Center analysis of long-term trends in survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as on the Center's own survey of a representative national sample of 1,815 people ages 16 and older conducted from July 20 to Aug. 2, 2009. Among its other key findings:

- *Security trumps salary.* By a ratio of nearly two-to-one, survey respondents say they would prefer a job that offers better security (59%) over one that offers higher pay (33%) but less stability. It's not the recession that drives this preference. A similar question asked by the General Social Survey in 1989 (when the economy was in the midst of an expansion) produced a similar result.
- *Despite tough times, job satisfaction remains high.* Even in the face of widespread layoffs, pay freezes and involuntary furloughs, nine-in-ten employed adults say they are either completely (30%) or mostly (60%) satisfied with their job. In recent decades, levels of job satisfaction have tended to remain stable through good times and bad.
- *Older workers are the happiest workers.* Some 54% of workers ages 65 and older say they are "completely satisfied" with their job, compared with just 29% of workers ages 16 to 64. The explanation lies in figures cited above—a high percentage of these workers are working because they want to, not because they need to.

About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,815 people ages 16 and older living in the continental United States. A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. A total of 1,164 interviews were completed with respondents contacted by landline telephone and 651 with those contacted on their cellular phone. The data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States.

- Interviews conducted July 20-Aug. 2, 2009
- 1,815 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.7 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level.
- The 16-24 age group was oversampled, and the margin of sampling error for this group is plus or minus 5.3 percentage points.
- Note on terminology: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. The terms "labor force" and "work force" are used interchangeably.
- Survey interviews were conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish.

- *Retirement is not always voluntary.* Only about half (51%) of all current retirees say they retired because they wanted to. About a third (32%) say they had to retire for health or other reasons, and about one-in-ten (9%) say their employer forced them to retire.
- *Even so, retirement gets high marks.* More than half of all retirees (57%) say their retirement has turned out to be very satisfying; an additional 23% say it has been fairly satisfying. Only about one-in-six describe retirement as not too (10%) or not at all (6%) satisfying.
- *The public is skeptical about full-time working moms.* Just 14% of men and 10% of women say that a full-time job is the “ideal” situation for a woman who has a young child. A plurality of the public (44%) say a part-time job is ideal for such a mother, while a sizable minority (38%) say the ideal situation is for her not to work outside the home at all.
- *Most working moms would rather have a part-time job.* Among mothers of young children who have a full-time job outside the home, six-in-ten (61%) say they would prefer to work part time. By contrast, just 19% of fathers who have a full-time job and a young child say they would prefer to work part time.

About this Report

The remainder of this report is in two sections. The first, starting on Page 6, looks at demographic trends related to work; it is based on Pew Research Center tabulations of survey data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau. The section was written by senior researcher Rakesh Kochhar; the research and analysis was conducted by Kochhar and Jennifer Medina, an intern; and charts were prepared by research assistant Daniel Dockterman. The second section, starting on Page 15, looks at attitudes toward work and is based on a Pew Research survey. It was written by senior editor Richard Morin, and research and analysis for this section was conducted by Morin and research associate Wendy Wang. Paul Taylor, director of Pew Research Center’s Social & Demographic Trends project, edited both sections and wrote the overview. Senior demographer Jeffrey Passel provided programming support. Dockterman and Medina did the number checking, and Marcia Kramer copy-edited the report.

I. The Demography of Work

Retirement? Not so fast! The nation's older adults are less inclined now than at any time since the 1960s to give up on the working life.² Meantime, the nation's young adults have grown more likely to hit the books than to fill out a time card. The result is a labor force that's been getting grayer and is poised to continue on that path into the foreseeable future.

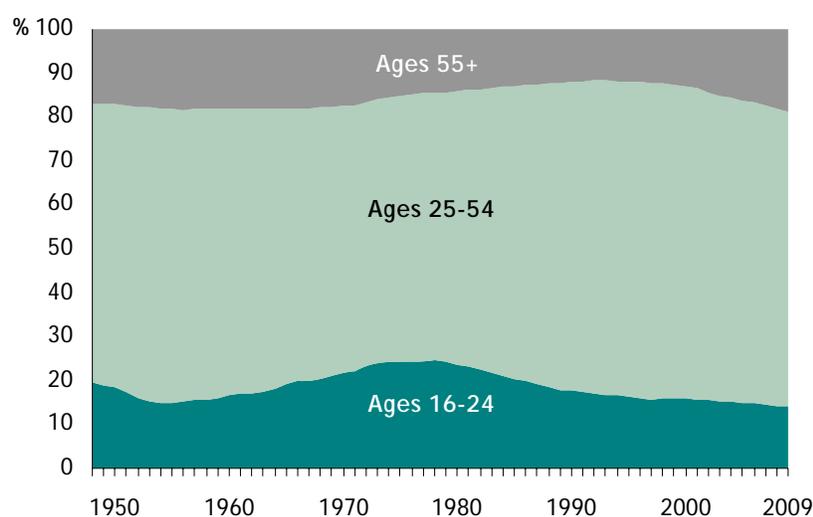
People ages 55 and older currently account for 18.7% of the U.S. labor force, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).³ That is the highest share held by this age group since the BLS started reporting labor force statistics in 1948. Conversely, younger workers, ages 16 to 24, currently account for only 14.0% of the labor force, their lowest share since 1948.

Moreover, projections by the BLS indicate that

virtually all (92.8%) of the growth in the U.S. labor force from 2006 to 2016 will be workers ages 55 and older.⁴ The share of the labor force that is 55 and older will increase to 22.7% in 2016. At the same time, the shares of other major age groups will decline.

The rising age of the American work force is the result of two trends. The first is strictly demographic—in particular, the passage of the outsized baby boom generation (adults now ages 45 to 63) into older age. The second is changes in work-related behaviors—a rising share of older adults are working or looking for work and, conversely, an increasing share of youth are staying in school and not looking for work. Those personal choices

Distribution of the U.S. Labor Force, by Age: 1948-2009



Note: Estimates reflect annual averages except for 2009, which is based on data for January through June.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (Current Population Survey data)

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² According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor force participation rate of people 55 and older averaged 40.0% for the first six months of 2009. That is the highest rate since 1961, when it stood at 40.8%.

³ Estimates for 2009 are six-month averages of monthly data from January to June.

⁴ The BLS projects the U.S. labor force will increase by 12.8 million workers from 2006 to 2016. The number of workers ages 16 to 24 will decrease by 1.5 million, the number ages 25 to 54 will increase by 2.5 million, and the number ages 55 and older will increase by 11.9 million. See Mitra Toossi, "Labor Force Projections to 2016: More Workers in Their Golden Years," Monthly Labor Review, November 2007.

are having a significant impact. The BLS projections show that one-third (32.7%) of the total growth in the labor force from 2006 to 2016 will derive from more older workers deciding to remain in the labor force.⁵

The nation is also witnessing what may be the end of an important era—the rapid growth in the presence of women in the U.S. labor market. In 1948, women accounted for only 28.6% of the U.S. labor force. By 2000, their share had increased to 46.5%. It has not increased much in this decade and currently stands at 46.8%.

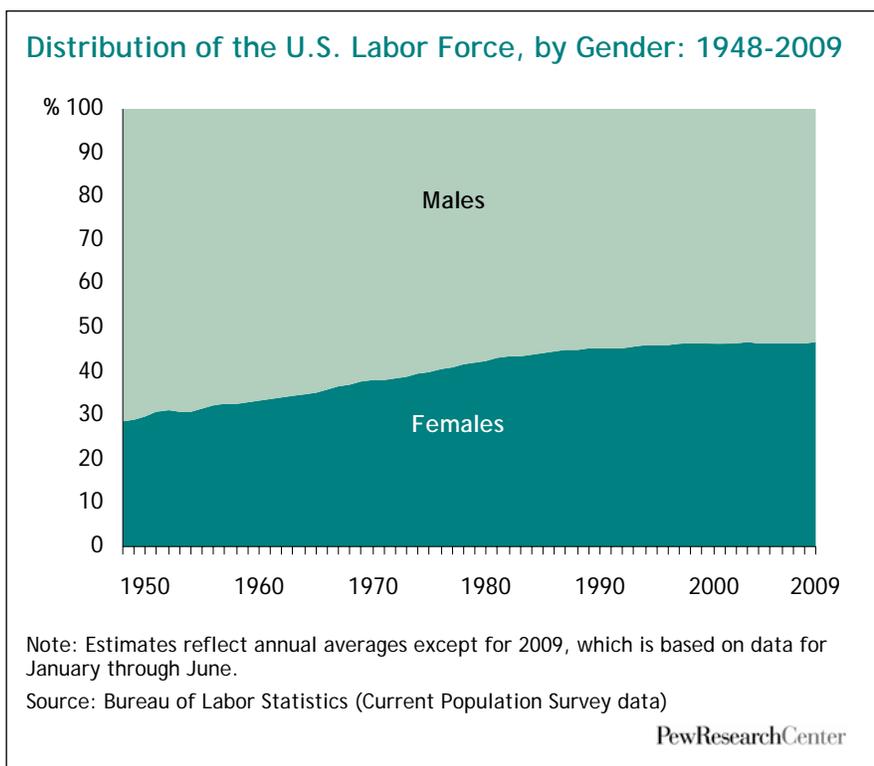
The most rapid flow of women into the labor force took place after 1970, pausing not even for the deep recessions in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1970, only 43.3% of women were active in the labor force, in other words, either employed or looking for employment. Women streamed into the labor force in large numbers for the next 30 years. By 1999, labor force participation among women had risen to 60.0%.

In this decade, however, the secular growth in labor force participation among women

appears to have come to a halt. Labor market activity among women dipped during the 2001 recession, and the slow recovery that followed did little to reverse the trend. The current recession appears to have kept the lid on any recovery in the labor force participation rate for women.⁶ Thus, the share of women in the labor force has moved little, either up or down, since 2000.

This chapter analyzes Census Bureau and BLS data to describe recent trends in labor force participation.⁷

Covering the period from 1995 through June 2009, it explores the latest developments among older workers, younger workers, and women. The focus is on labor force participants—those employed and those who are



⁵ According to BLS, the labor force participation rate of people ages 55 and older will increase from 38.0% in 2006 to 42.8% in 2016, adding more than 4 million workers to the labor force (Toossi, 2007).

⁶ Heather Boushey points to weaknesses in the labor market as the reason for declining labor force participation rates among women. See Heather Boushey, "Are Women Opting Out? Debunking the Myth," Center for Economic and Policy Research, Briefing Paper, November 2005.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, estimates of trends in labor force participation are derived from the Current Population Survey, a monthly survey of about 55,000 households conducted jointly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/cps/>). Data from monthly surveys were combined to create annual files retaining only observations from the outgoing rotation groups. Each annual file consists of approximately 350,000 observations. Estimates for 2009 are based on a six-month file, encompassing observations from January through June.

unemployed and looking for work. Workers who are unemployed and not currently looking for work, often described as marginally attached workers, are not counted as labor force participants.

In hard economic times, it is not uncommon for labor force participation to weaken as sluggish demand and long-term unemployment cause more workers to quit looking for work. In the 1990s expansion, the labor force participation rate in the U.S. rose from 66.5% in 1995 to 67.1% in 2000, an historic high. It fell during the 2001 recession and has fallen again in the current recession, averaging 65.5% in the first half of 2009.

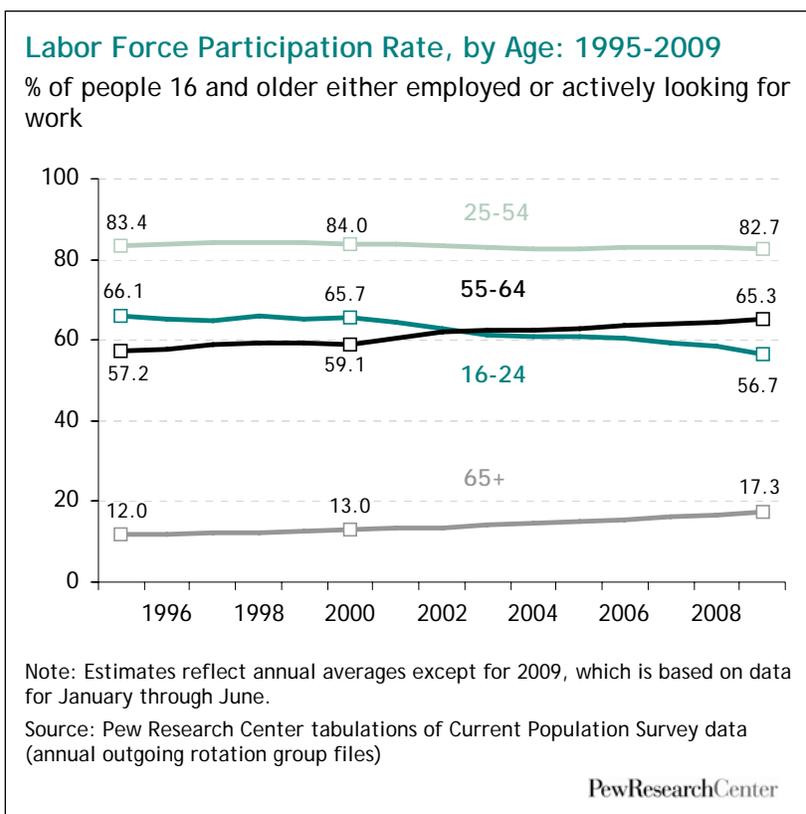
However, labor force activity among older adults has shown no such inclination. Both during the 2001 recession and the current recession, the labor force participation rate of workers ages 65 and older has risen in a secular fashion. Conversely, labor force participation among younger workers decreased steadily since 2000. The labor force participation rate for women has responded, as one might expect, to fluctuations in business conditions in this decade.

Age

Work harder, work longer—that appears to be the new motto for older Americans. Those who turned 55 in the current decade display a much greater inclination than their predecessors to remain active in the labor market. At the same time, younger Americans—ages 16 to 24—have maintained a clear, downward trajectory in labor market activity.

A discernible rise in labor force activity among older workers appears at the turn of the century. For people ages 55 to 64, the labor force participation rate increased modestly from 57.2% in 1995 to 59.1% in 2000. It subsequently rose at a much faster pace, to 65.3% in the first half of 2009. For

people ages 65 and older, the rate increased from 12.0% in 1995 to 13.0% in 2000 and then to 17.3% in 2009. It is notable that the increase in labor force activity in this decade has occurred in the midst of a recession in 2001, an anemic recovery, and a second, ongoing, recession.⁸



⁸ Researchers point to several possible reasons that older workers may be staying in the labor force longer. Those include changes in Social Security rules, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act, the move from defined benefit to defined contribution pension plans, the aging of female cohorts who entered the labor force in the post-1960s era and the improving health of older Americans. A summary of trends for older

Labor market activity among young people has diminished sharply in this decade. During the heart of the economic expansion in the 1990s, labor force participation among those ages 16 to 24 held steady, 66.1% in 1995 and 65.7% in 2000. But a precipitous drop has occurred in recent years, as only 56.7% of younger people participated in the labor market in 2009, nine percentage points less than in 2000. The drop was led by the youngest. Labor force participation for teens—ages 16 to 19—plunged from 52.0% in 2000 to 36.9% in 2009.⁹

The aging of the work force is due in part to greater activity on part of the “new” older generation. The charts below show the trends in labor force participation for people who turned 65 and older in 1995 and for those who entered that age cohort in 2000 and 2005. Only 12.0% of those who turned 65 and older in 1995 were active in the labor force at that time. As this cohort aged to 79 and older by 2009, the labor force participation rate decreased to 5.3%.¹⁰

People who turned 65 and older in 2000 show a clear tendency to work more than the preceding cohort. In 2000, 13.0% of those who turned 65 and older were still in the labor force. At each successive age, this cohort is more active in the labor force than were those who turned 65 and older in 1995. At ages 74 and older, 7.9% of the 2000 cohort was still active in the labor force, compared with 6.7% of the 1995 cohort.

The chart also shows that those who turned 65 and older in 2005 have an even greater tendency to remain in the labor force. The labor force participation rate for this cohort is notably higher at the same ages than for the other cohorts and shows no sign of converging in the near future.

Labor Force Participation Rate, Ages 16-19 and 20-24: 1995-2009

% of people 16 and older either employed or actively looking for work



Note: Estimates reflect annual averages except for 2009, which is based on data for January through June.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data (annual outgoing rotation group files)

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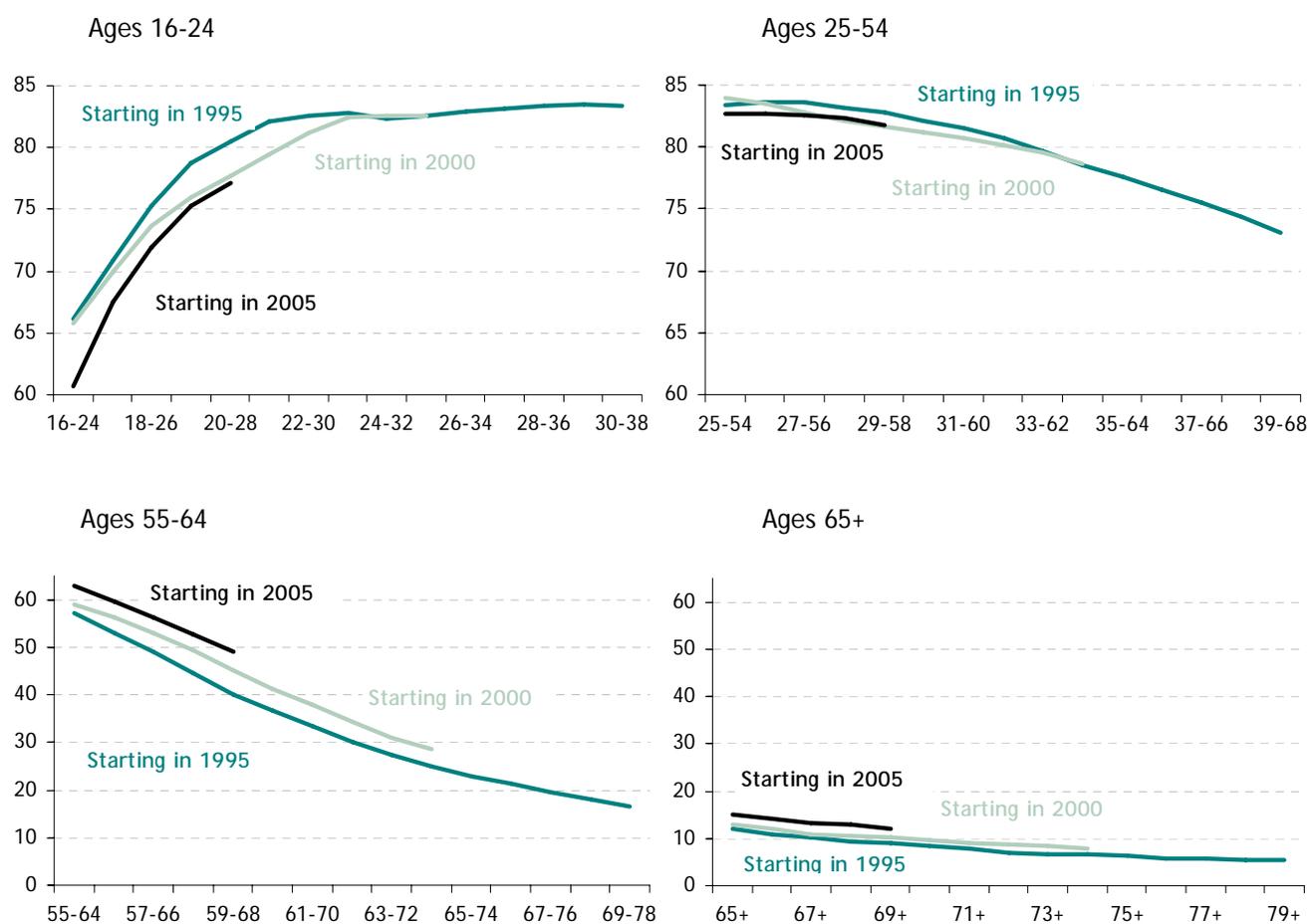
workers and other populations is contained in Abraham Mosisa and Steven Hipple, “Trends in Labor Force Participation in the United States,” *Monthly Labor Review*, October 2006.

⁹ Rising school enrollment is possibly one reason for the decline in labor force activity among youth. Pew Research Center tabulation of the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey data shows that school enrollment, full time and part time, among teenagers 16 to 19 increased from 65.7% in 1995 to 79.4% in 2009 (January through June). Similarly, school enrollment among adults 20 to 24 increased from 27.2% in 1995 to 34.4% in 2009. Mosisa and Hipple (2006) suggest that personal choice, rising family incomes and rising jobs competition may have played a role.

¹⁰ The analysis does not follow the same people over time. Rather, it compares the labor force participation rate of people ages 65 and older in 1995 with people ages 66 and older in 1996, and so on. The same principle is applied to the analysis for other age cohorts.

Labor Force Participation Rate, by Age Cohorts: 1995-2009

% of people 16 and older either employed or actively looking for work



Note: Estimates reflect annual averages except for 2009, which is based on data for January through June.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data (annual outgoing rotation group files)

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The patterns for adults ages 65 and older are also evident for adults ages 55 to 64. As shown in the charts, those who turned 55 to 64 in 2005 are more likely to participate in the labor force compared with earlier cohorts at comparable ages.

Conversely, newer cohorts of youth—those turning 16 to 24 in 2005—are less likely than preceding cohorts to be in the labor force. For example, the labor force participation rate for the cohort that turned 16 to 24 in 2005 was 60.7%, compared with a rate of 65.7% for the cohort that turned 16 to 24 in 2000. However, as schooling is completed, and the cohorts age to 20 to 28, the gap between them disappears.

Men and Women

The great convergence in labor force activity among men and women over the past half century has slowed dramatically in the past 15 years. In 1948, the earliest year for which BLS reports labor market data, men were

more than two and a half times as likely as women to participate in the labor market—86.6% compared with 32.7%. The divide narrowed steadily for the next 50 years as the rate for women rose sharply and the rate for men slipped continuously.¹¹

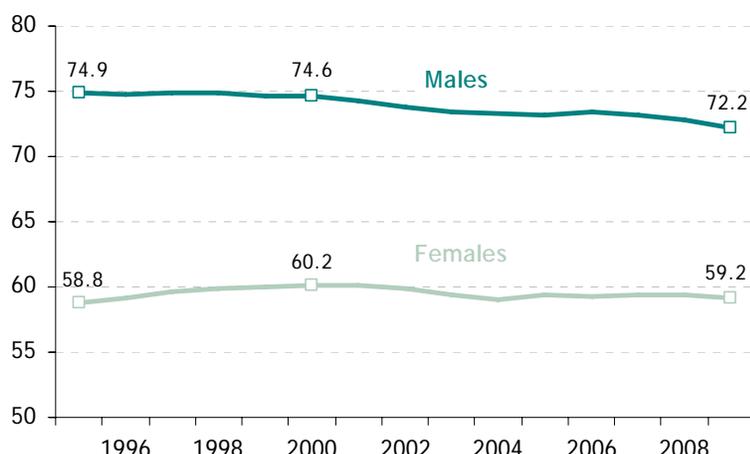
For women, labor force participation increased the most in the 1970s and 1980s, from 43.3% in 1970 to 57.4% in 1989. Increases in the labor force participation rate for women slowed in the 1990s, and the rate peaked at 60.0% in 1999, according to BLS.¹²

In light of the historic trends, it is a notable development that labor force activity among men and women has proceeded on parallel tracks for the past 15 years—generally flat or increasing modestly from 1995 to 2000 and decreasing since then. The principal difference is that the decrease in labor force participation among men has been sharper in recent years, especially in the current recession. For men, the labor force participation rate dropped from 73.1% in 2007 to 72.2% in 2009. For women, the rate fell only from 59.4% in 2007 to 59.2% in 2009.

The more dramatic fall in labor force activity among men most likely reflects the nature of the current recession. Job losses in male-dominated sectors such as construction and manufacturing have been severe, while education and health services have continued to grow.¹³ Thus, the rise in unemployment has tilted male. From December 2007 to July 2009, the unemployment rate for men rose from 5.0% to 10.5% on a seasonally adjusted basis, according to BLS. Over the same time, the rate for women rose much less, from 4.8% to 8.1%.¹⁴ Facing more daunting job prospects, men are currently more likely than women to drop out of the labor force and join the ranks of marginally attached workers.

Labor Force Participation Rate, by Gender: 1995-2009

% of people 16 and older either employed or actively looking for work



Note: Estimates reflect annual averages except for 2009, which is based on data for January through June.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data (annual outgoing rotation group files)

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¹¹ Researchers have not pinpointed explanations for the slow but steady decline in labor force participation among men. Increased access to Social Security disability benefits could be a factor. The diminishing opportunities for less educated workers may also have caused some of those workers to exit the labor force (Mosisa and Hipple, 2006).

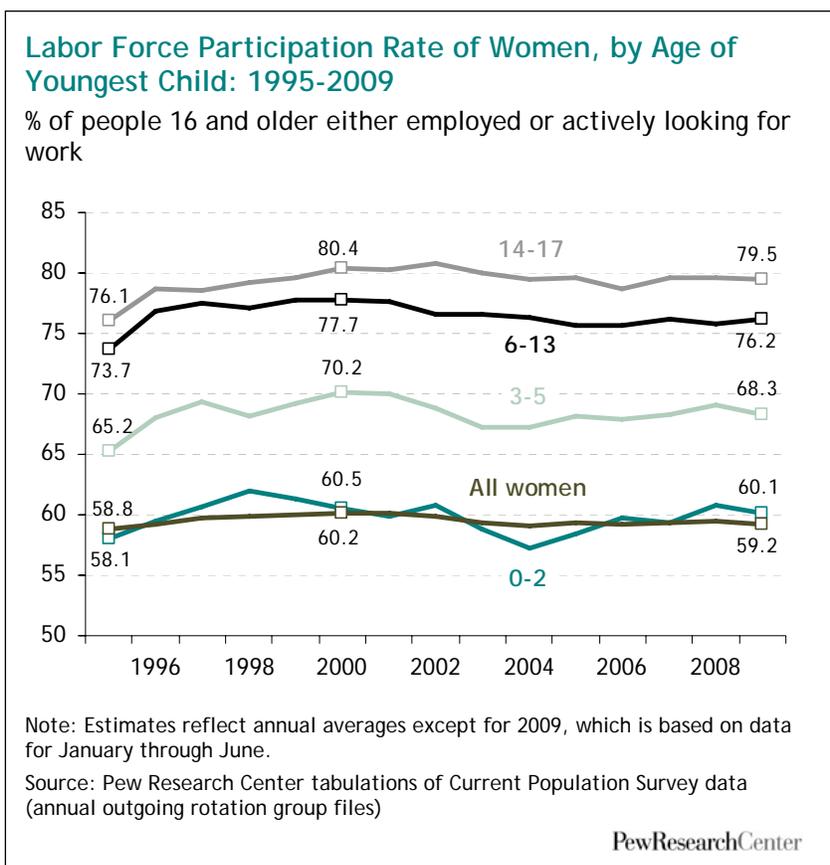
¹² Estimates shown in the chart differ slightly from BLS estimates. That is because they are derived using the outgoing rotation group sample from the Current Population Survey whereas the BLS estimates are based on the entire sample.

¹³ Payroll data from the BLS show that 1.3 million construction sector jobs and 2.1 million manufacturing jobs were lost between December 2007 and July 2009. During that same period, education and health services added 701,000 jobs.

¹⁴ BLS data show that total unemployment in the U.S. increased by 6.9 million workers from December 2007 to July 2009, on a seasonally adjusted basis. Men accounted for 4.5 million, or 65%, of the total increase in the number unemployed. That is much higher than the 53% share of the labor force in July 2009 that was male.

Women with Children Younger than 18

The sharp increase in the labor force participation among women in the 1970s and 1980s was driven in large part by the movement into the job market by married women with children at home.¹⁵ In the 1990s, there were also sharp increases in labor force participation among single mothers, increases that appear to have been driven by a combination of the 1996 welfare reform act and a tight labor market. The current decade is largely one of no change for women who have one or more children younger than 18. A slight dip in labor force participation after the 2001 recession has been followed by a modest increase in the past few years.



Generally speaking, women with one or more children younger than 18 are more likely than other women to be in the labor force. That is because women with young children are more likely than other women to be in the prime of their working years (ages 25 to 54).¹⁶

The age of a child has a clear impact on a woman's decision to enter the labor market. About 60% of women whose youngest child is less than 2 years old are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate of these women closely parallels the participation rate for all women. As the age of the youngest child increases, women become more likely to enter the labor force. About 80% of women with children of high school age (ages 14 to 17) are active in the labor force.

Regardless of the age of a woman's youngest child, labor force activity among women moved up and down along similar paths from 1995 to 2009. Labor force participation rates peaked around 2000, decreased in the 2001

¹⁵ See Chinhui Juhn and Simon Potter, "Changes in Labor Force Participation in the United States," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Summer 2006. For a related analysis, see Sharon R. Cohany and Emy Sok, "Trends in Labor Force Participation of Married Mothers of Infants," *Monthly Labor Review*, February 2007.

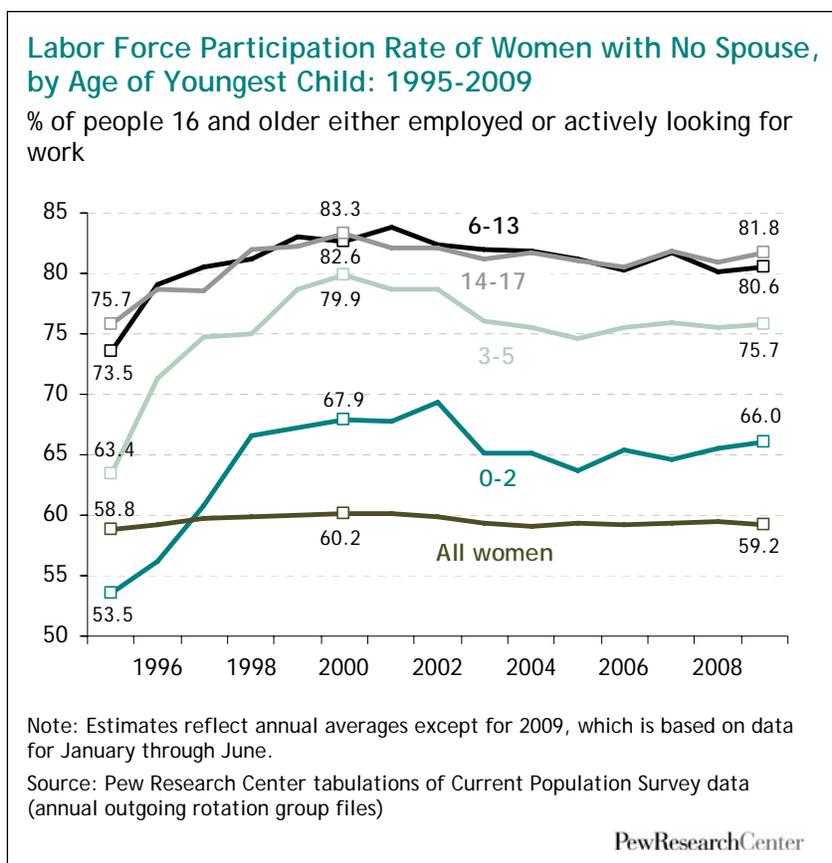
¹⁶ Pew Research Center tabulations of 2009 Current Population Survey data show that 90% of women with at least one child younger than 18 were ages 25 to 54. By comparison, only 36% of other women were ages 25 to 54 (sample restricted to women 16 and older).

recession and recovered modestly after 2005. That is generally true whether a woman was raising a child with or without a spouse present.

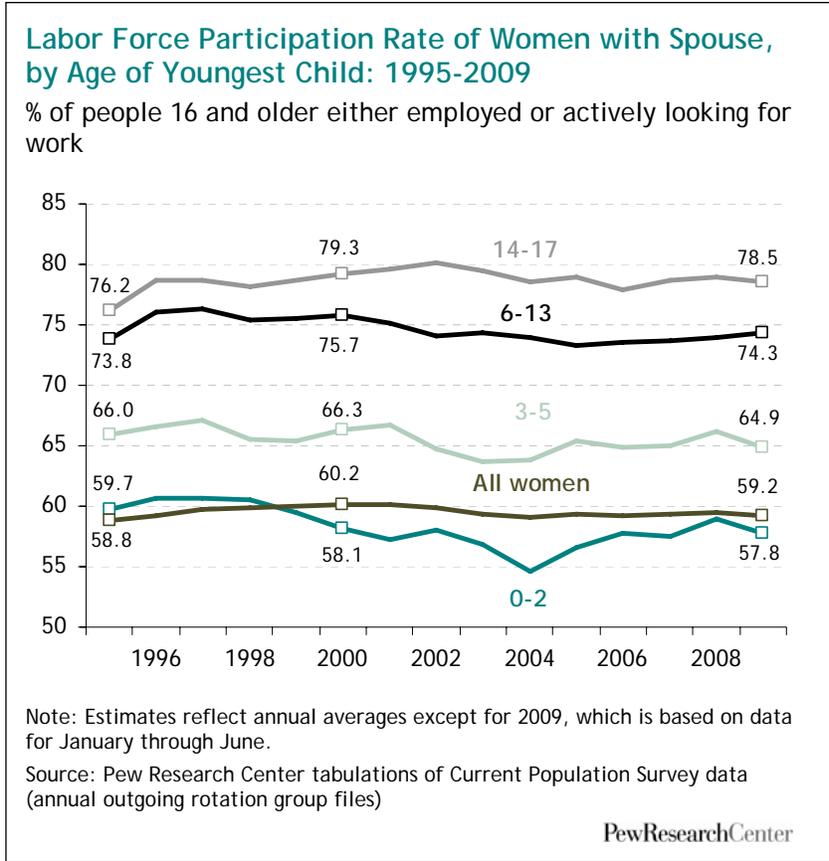
However, a woman raising a child without a spouse present is more likely to be in the labor force, regardless of the age of her youngest child. In 2000, for example, women with no spouse present and a child younger than 2 had a labor force participation rate of 67.9%. That compared with a rate of 58.1% for women with a child younger than 2 but with a spouse present. The gap—9.8 percentage points—had narrowed only slightly by 2009. The reason for the gap appears to be the welfare reform

act of 1996, which substantially raised the labor force participation rate among women raising a child without a spouse present.

There is one additional difference between women raising at least one child with or without a spouse present. The labor market activity of those without a spouse present has been slightly boosted in spite of, or perhaps because of, the ongoing recession. That is true regardless of the age of the youngest child. Overall, the labor force participation rate for all women with a child and no spouse present increased from 75.8% in 2008 to 76.2% in 2009.



Meanwhile, women with at least one child and a spouse present have generally lowered their labor market activity in the current recession. The sole exception is women with a spouse present and a youngest child ages 6 to 13. But overall, the labor force participation rate for women with a child and a spouse present decreased from 69.4% in 2008 to 68.9% in 2009.



II. Attitudes Toward Work

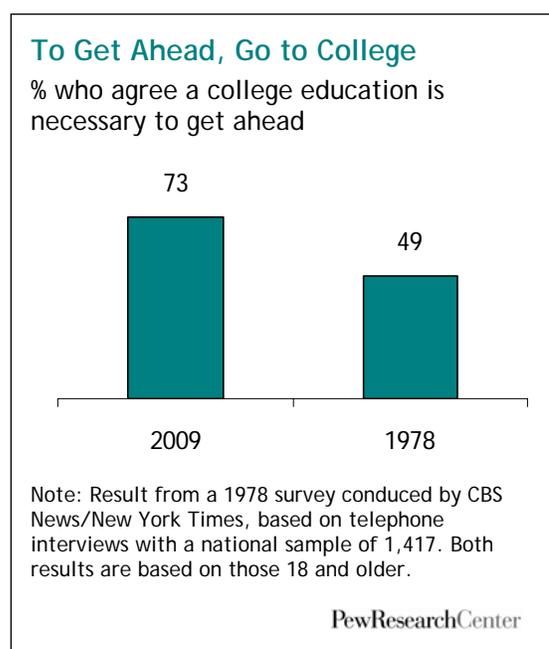
Changing attitudes toward work help explain the changing demographic profile of the American work force. With a college degree increasingly seen as a necessity for the good life, many young people ages 16 to 24 report they are staying out of the labor force to concentrate full time on their education. At the other end of the work life cycle, older adults are healthier, living longer¹⁷ and more inclined than any time in recent decades to work past the traditional retirement age of 65. A majority of those who do so say they keep working mainly for the intangible rather than the economic rewards, according to the Pew Research Center survey.

However, the survey also finds that the recession appears to be accelerating both of these trends. As the sour economy dries up employment prospects, more than four-in-ten nonworking young people say they have tried without success to find a job. At the same time, nearly four-in-ten employed adults ages 62 and older¹⁸ say the bad economy has forced them to delay their retirement plans. And a majority of adults between the ages of 50 and 61 think the recession might cause them to do the same.

The survey also has some compelling findings about gender, family and work. It finds that nonworking women are nine times as likely as nonworking men to cite child care or family responsibilities as a big reason they don't have a job.

The differential tug of family responsibility on men and women is underscored when employed parents are asked about the kind of work schedule they would prefer. Fully six-in-ten working women with children 16 and younger say they would trade their full-time jobs for part-time employment. But among fathers with younger children, an even larger majority (81%) prefers to keep working full time.

To measure the attitudes behind the changing demographics of the American workplace, a representative national sample of 1,815 adults 16 and older was interviewed by telephone July 20 to Aug. 2. For analysis purposes, interviews were conducted with oversamples of young people 16 to 24 as well as employed adults aged 65 or older who have not yet retired. The wide-ranging survey also measures what people value most about working, and the reasons people who are not working do not have jobs. Other questions measure how Americans feel about their jobs and work life in general.



¹⁷ For a summary of trends in health status and life expectancy of older adults, see "Older Americans 2008: Key Indicators of Well-Being," Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 2008.

¹⁸ Age 62 was selected as the lower threshold for this group because the median retirement age for retirees in this survey was 62. The results do not change when the analysis is limited to those ages 65 or older.

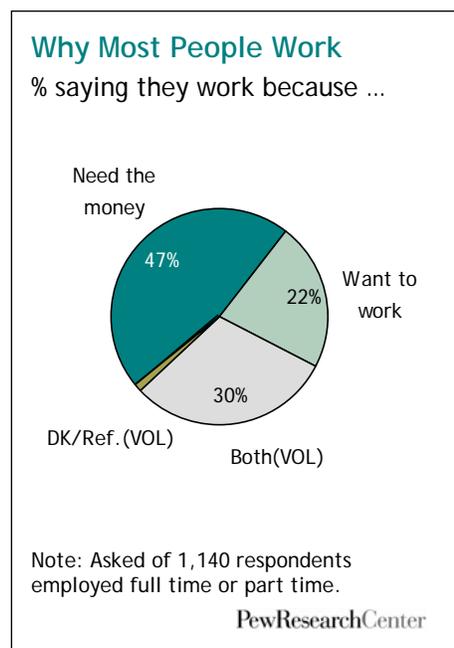
Reasons People Work

The survey finds that people work for a variety of reasons—some of them economic, some of them social and psychological. Nearly nine-in-ten working Americans say that a big reason they hold a job is to earn a living and provide for their families. About three-quarters report that one of the reasons they are working is to live independently. Nearly two-thirds say that a big reason they work is to build up a retirement nest egg, earn a pension or qualify for Social Security. More than half cite health care benefits as a major reason for working.

But more than pocketbook concerns compel people to work. Nearly seven-in-ten say they work to “feel like a useful person” while nearly half work “to help improve society.” About four-in-ten say they work to “give myself something to do” while slightly fewer say they work to be with other people—a view most frequently expressed by older adults of both genders.

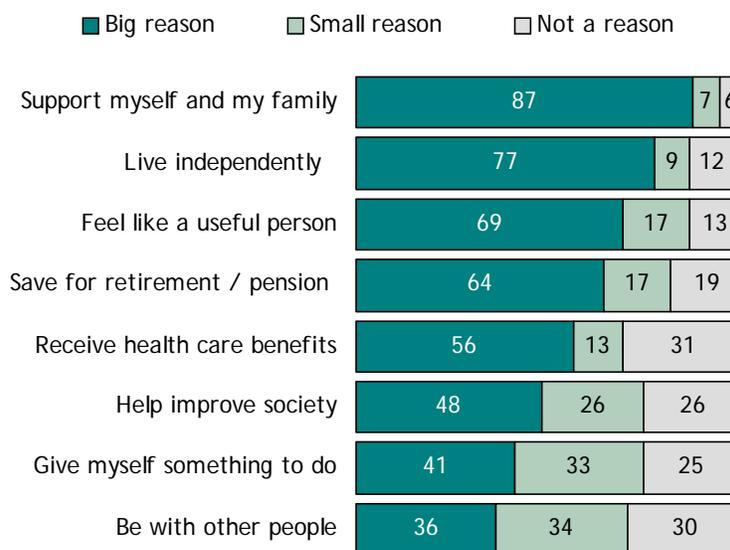
Another survey question that measures the motivation to work in a slightly different way produces a similar result. When employed Americans are asked directly if they work because they need the paycheck or because they want to work, slightly fewer than half say they work only because they need the money (47%). Slightly more than half either report that they want to work (22%) or say both factors are equally important to them (30%).

What are Americans looking for in a job? A good paycheck, of course. But money is only one of many factors that people find desirable, and it’s far from the most important. By a considerable margin, survey respondents say they value a job that offers better job security (59%) over a job with a good salary but less stability (33%). And it’s not the recession that has made Americans willing to sacrifice money for security. In 1989 the General Social Survey asked adults how they valued 10 different aspects of a job,



Why People Work

% saying this is a ...



Note: “Don’t Know/Refused” responses are not shown.

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including job security, high pay, flexible hours and the opportunity to do interesting work. Job security topped the list back then as well, with 54% saying it was “very important” to them—more than double the proportion who said they most valued a high income (25%).

Reasons People Do Not Work

Americans who aren’t employed and have yet to retire have a wide range of reasons for not working.

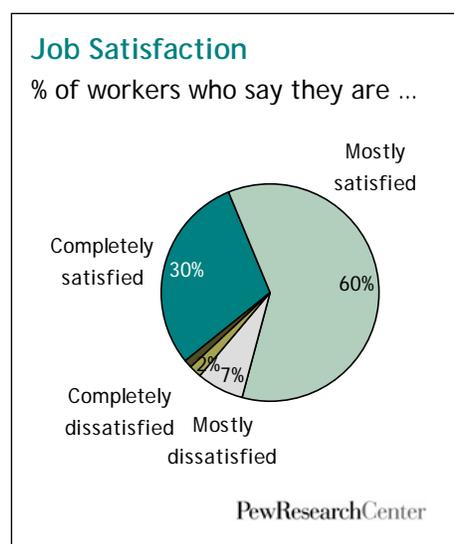
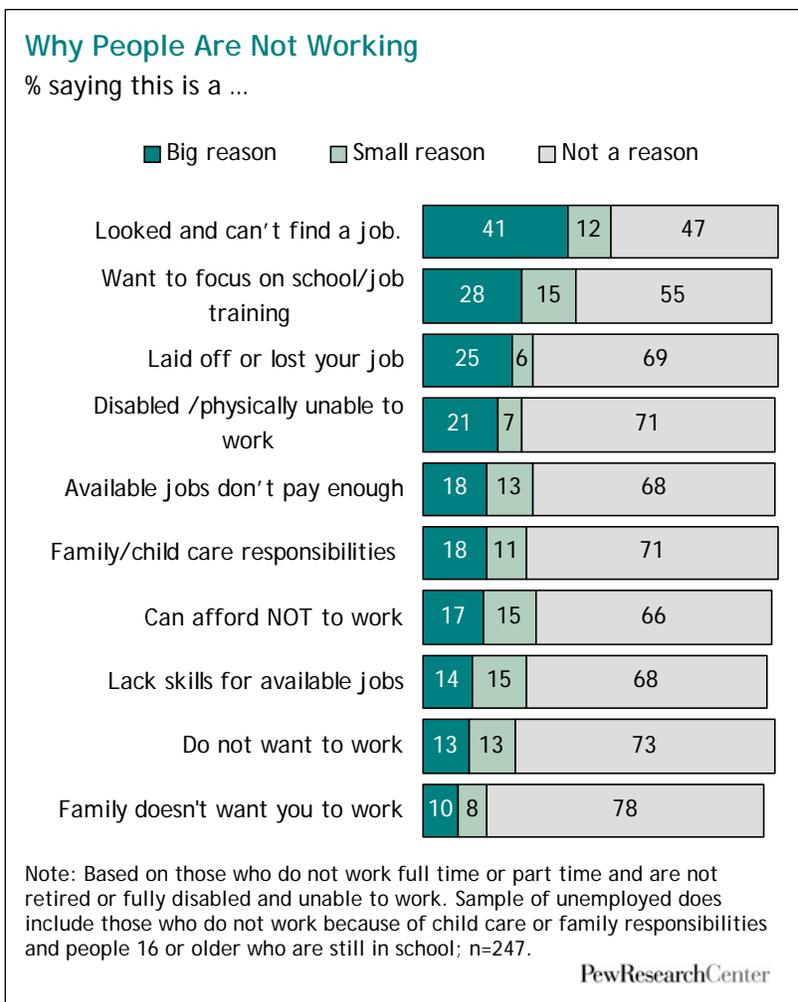
About four-in-ten say a big reason is that they’ve looked in vain for a job that simply isn’t there. Nearly three-in-ten say they’re not working in order to concentrate on their education or job training.

Smaller proportions say they are disabled (21%) or have child care or other family responsibilities (18%) that keep them out of the labor force. And about one-in-eight (13%) say a big reason they don’t have a job is that they simply don’t want to work.

Job Satisfaction

The survey finds that nine-in-ten employed adults are either “completely satisfied” (30%) or “mostly satisfied” (60%) with their jobs. Older working adults are the most content: 54% say they are completely satisfied with their jobs.

In June 2006, before the onset of the current recession, a virtually identical share of all workers (89%) reported they were satisfied with their job. In fact, overall job satisfaction levels appear to have little relationship to the business cycle; they have been stable since at least 1989, when the Gallup Organization first asked this question and found that 89 percent of all workers were satisfied with their jobs. It could be that, in bad economic times, the



negative impact on workers (in terms of salary freezes, involuntary furloughs and the like) are balanced by a greater appreciation that workers feel simply to still have a job.

The remaining three parts of this section examine how these attitudes toward work interact with recent demographic changes in the workplace—and how the recession may be affecting both. The first part examines the reasons young people are a diminishing presence in the work force and how the increasing value of higher education is influencing decisions to go to work or go to college.

The second part looks at the growing presence of older adults in the work force and explores in more detail the impact of the recession on decisions to retire or continue working. The final part explores how attitudes toward work, family and gender roles affect the working lives of men and women in different ways.

Young People and Work

In 1978, a New York Times survey found that only about half of all adults agreed with the proposition, “In order to get ahead in life these days, it’s necessary to get a college education.” Today, almost three-quarters see the need for a college degree—including 84% of young people between the ages of 16 and 24.

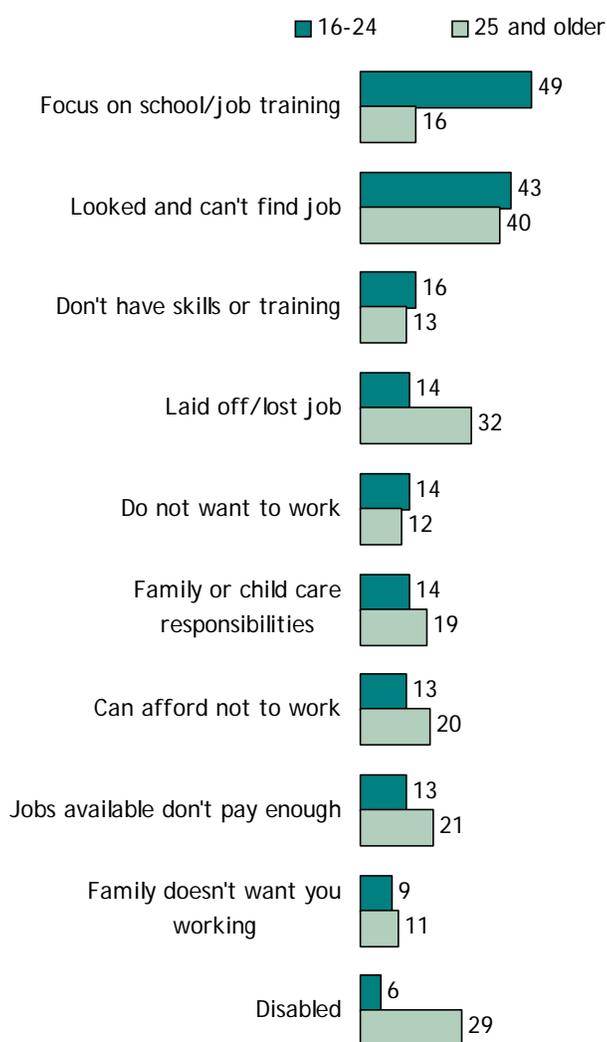
Other survey findings underscore the value that today’s young people place on education—and suggest why they appear to be increasingly inclined to forgo the benefits of working part time or full time in order to concentrate on their studies.

Among young people ages 16 to 24 who do not work, nearly half (49%) say they are not working because they want to “focus on school or job training,” the single biggest reason that young people say they’re not employed.

At the same time, a growing proportion of younger people are entering college directly after high school, a trend that

Reasons Not to Work, by Age

% of each age group who say ... is a “big reason” they do not currently work



Note: Based on those who do not work full or part time and are not retired; n=244.

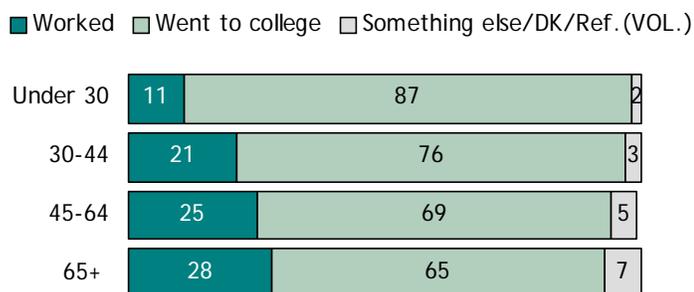
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directly reduces the number of adults in the labor force at any one time.

According to the survey, only about two-thirds (65%) of all those 65 or older who continued their education after high school went directly to college. But among those high school graduates younger than 30, nearly nine-in-ten (87%) say they went straight to college. Conversely, only about 11% of this younger group took at least a year off to work between high school and college. That's less than half the proportion of older adults who took a work break before resuming their education.

More Young People Enter College Immediately after High School

% saying that after high school they ...



Note: Based on those who continued education after high school; n=1,052. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

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But changing attitudes about the value of a college degree aren't the only reason fewer young people are in the labor force. The recession appears to have had an impact as well.

When asked the main reasons that they were not working, slightly more than four-in-ten (43%) nonworking young people say they have looked but failed to find a job—virtually identical to the 40% of older unemployed workers who say they have been unsuccessful in their attempts to find employment. An additional 16% say they lack the skills to qualify for available jobs, while 13% say the jobs available to them simply don't pay enough to lure them away from their books or other interests.

Minorities, Women More Likely to Value a College Degree

The survey finds that women are more likely than men to place a high value on a college education: 78% of women say it is necessary to have one to get ahead in life, compared with 69% of men. Blacks (83%) and Hispanics (85%) also are more likely than whites (69%) to say a college degree is a necessity. And while the sample sizes are too small to say with certainty, black women in particular are more likely than black men to consider a college degree a necessity.

Growing Older, Working Longer

Americans are working to an older age now than they were just a few years ago, a reflection of a long-term trend toward later retirement and the short-term impact of the recession on retirement nest eggs. If anything, the bad economy seems likely to accelerate this trend in the near future: The survey finds that a majority of working adults ages 50 to 61 report they may have to delay their retirement because of the economic downturn.¹⁹

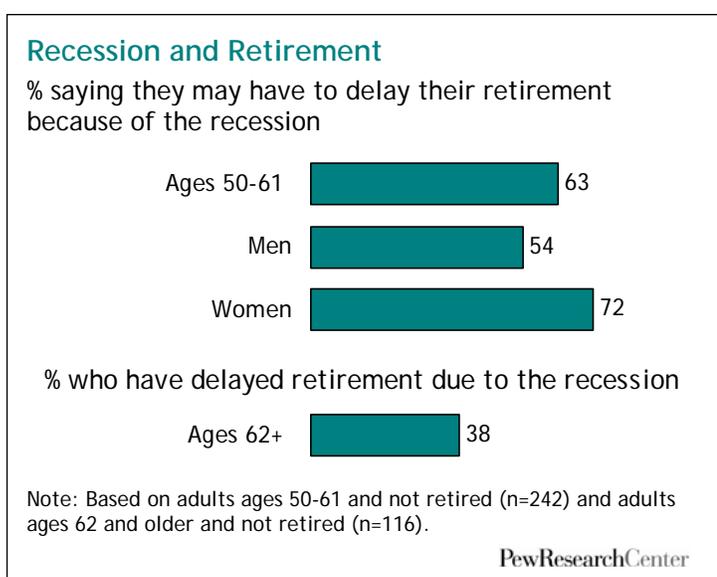
Older workers tend to be content workers: They are about twice as likely as their younger and middle-aged colleagues to report being very satisfied with their jobs. The survey points to a clear explanation: For workers ages 65 and older, the decision to stay on the job is more likely to be discretionary and less likely to be motivated by the need for a paycheck. They are comparatively more likely to be attracted to work by intangible benefits, such as a desire to connect with other people and to have something to do.

The Recession and the Decision to Retire

In the past decade, the proportion of older adults in the labor force has been growing steadily. The Pew Research survey suggests the recession may have accelerated this trend. Many older adults, their retirement nest eggs battered by the bad economy, have already opted to hold on to their jobs. And even more on the threshold of retirement are reconsidering plans to stop working.

According to the survey, nearly four-in-ten adults who have reached the median retirement age of 62 but have not yet stopped working say they had to delay their retirement “because of current economic conditions.” Among those nearing retirement age—ages 50 to 61—a 63% majority think they might have to delay retirement because of the recession.

Women in this retirement “threshold generation” have been most affected by the ailing economy. Fully 72% fear they will have to postpone their retirement plans, compared with 54% of men in this age group. (Among those 65 and older who have not yet retired, the pattern is the same. Women are more than twice as likely to say they have had to delay retirement plans, though the subsamples of men and women are too small to draw firm conclusions.)



¹⁹ For an earlier analysis of recession effects on retirement decisions, see [“The Threshold Generation: Most Middle-Aged Adults Are Rethinking Retirement Plans,”](#) by Richard Morin, Pew Research Center, May 28, 2009.

Job Satisfaction Highest among Older Workers

Compared with younger workers, employed adults 65 and older are far more satisfied with their jobs. Fully 54% of working adults 65 and older report they are “completely satisfied” with their current job, nearly double the 29% of workers younger than 65 who are similarly pleased with their job.

There is another big difference between older workers and their younger colleagues: They are far more likely to hold part-time jobs. Could older workers’ more relaxed work schedules explain why they are so content?

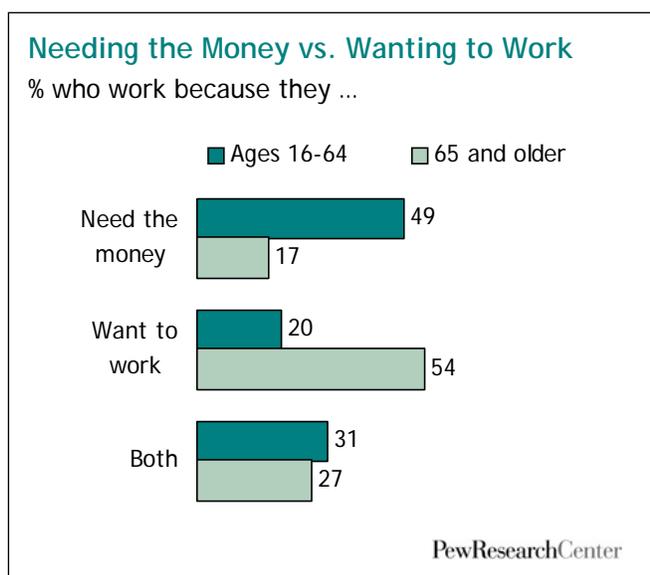
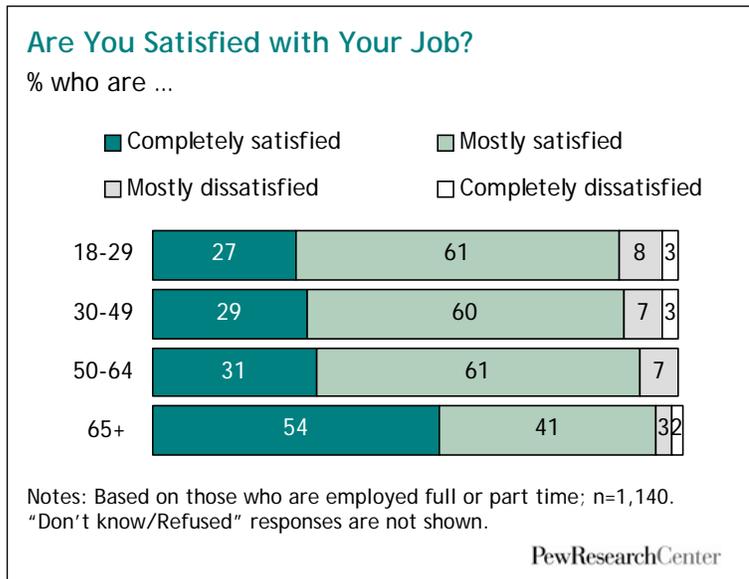
The survey suggests the answer is no. Older adults who work full time are more content than their younger colleagues: 66% say they are completely satisfied with their jobs, compared with 29% of other full-time workers. Among part-time workers, older adults are twice as likely as their younger part-time colleagues to be completely satisfied with their jobs (49% vs. 28%).

The reason for these differences is partially explained by the fact that the overwhelming majority of older workers prefer to be working part time while younger part-time workers disproportionately long for full-time employment.

According to the survey, nearly four-in-ten (37%) of all part-time employees younger than 65 would prefer to be working full time, compared with 13% of part-timers 65 and older. (Still, fully 61% of younger people and 87% of older people find part-time work preferable.)

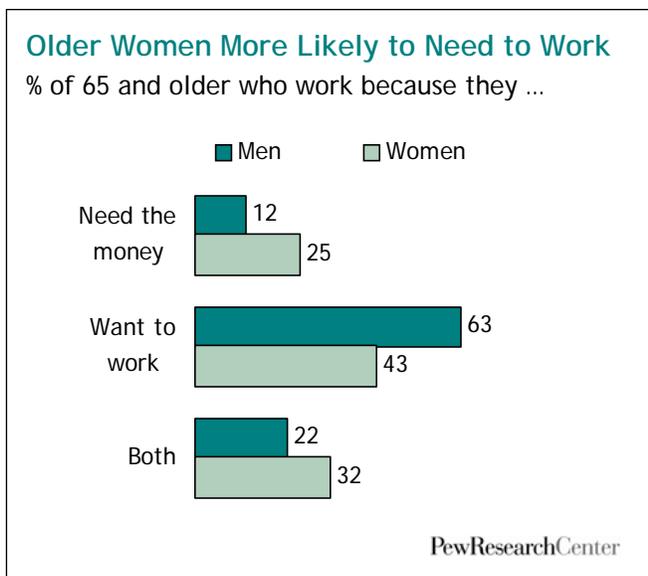
Needing vs. Wanting to Work

Other results underscore the discretionary nature of employment for many adults 65 and older. Older workers are significantly less likely than other employed adults to say a big reason they work is to “support myself and my family” (53% vs. 89%). When set against the seven other reasons tested in the survey, earning a living topped the list among all employed adults but



ranked only in the middle of the pack among workers 65 and older.

Moreover, older workers are far more likely than their younger colleagues to say they work because they want to, not because they have to. Workers younger than 65 are nearly three times as likely as their older colleagues to say they work because they need the money (49% vs. 17%). Conversely, older workers are more than two and a half times as likely as younger workers to say they are employed because they want to work (54% vs. 20%), while about equal shares of both age groups say both reasons are equally important to them.

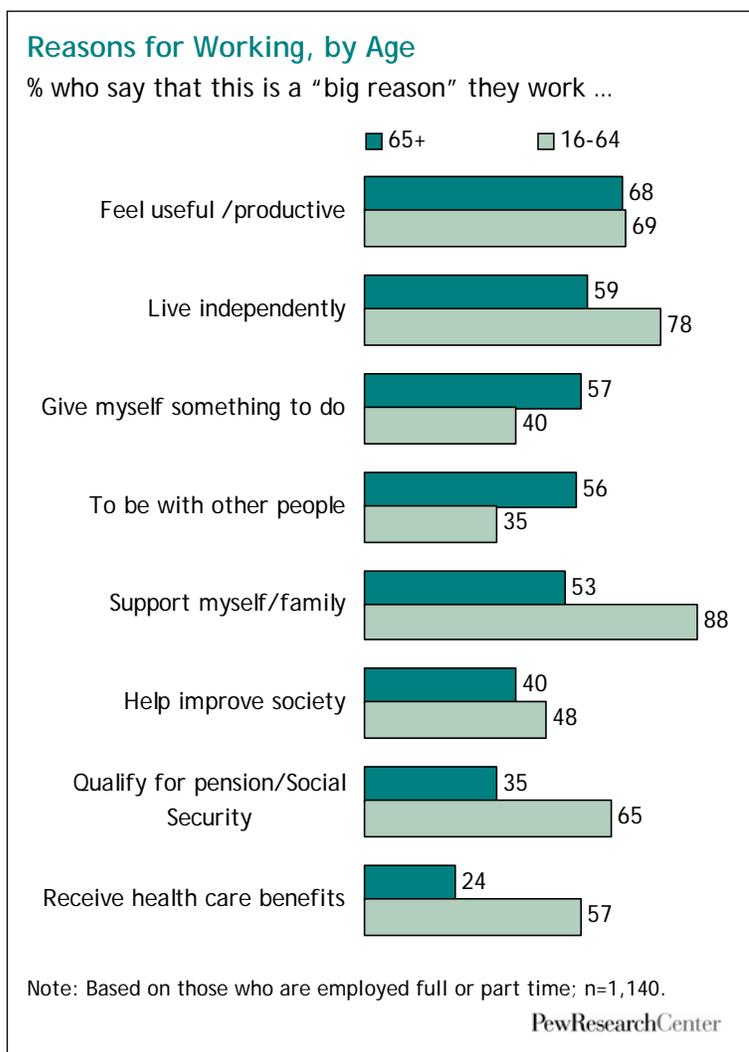


Overall, about 12% of older women and 25% of older men do some kind of work for pay. As a group, working older women are significantly more likely than older men to say they are working because they need a paycheck (25% vs. 12%) and significantly less likely to say they are working because they want to (43% vs. 63%).

Reasons Older Adults Work

If money doesn't explain why so many older adults work, what does? Again, the survey results offer a clear answer: For older workers, a job is far more than merely a paycheck.

In fact, older people and younger workers tested significantly differently on seven of the eight reasons for working tested in the survey. The exception: Nearly seven-in-ten older workers (68%) say the desire "to feel like a useful and productive person" is a big reason they work. It is the single most frequently mentioned factor



among the eight and the only one in which a similar proportion of younger workers (70%) share this view.

Older workers are less likely than those younger than 65 to say that the desire to live independently is a big reason they work (59% vs. 79%). But they are significantly more likely than their younger colleagues to say they work to give themselves “something to do” (57% vs. 41%) and “to be with other people” (56% vs. 35%)—findings that suggest that a job is viewed as a social outlet more by older adults than by younger workers.

Older workers are less likely than their younger colleagues to be working to “help improve society” (40% vs. 49%). Nor are they as likely to say they are working to build up their retirement nest egg or qualify for pensions, reasons that have far less relevance to workers 65 and older who are eligible for Medicare and may already be receiving Social Security and pension checks.

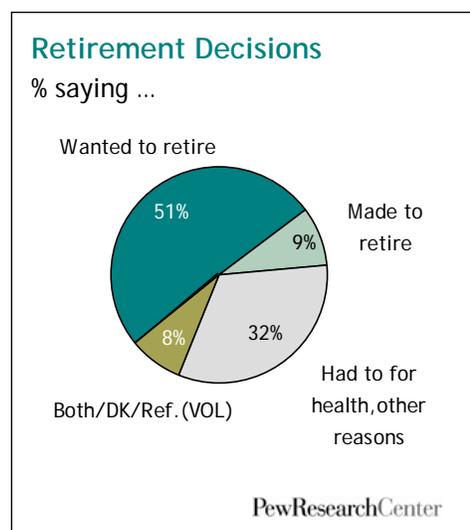
Taken together, the survey results suggest that older people value a job for many reasons, not the least of which are the intangible psychological benefits that flow from working. As the population continues to age—and a growing share of older Americans remain in vigorous good health well past their 65th birthdays—these findings suggest that a job will be an increasingly attractive alternative to full-time retirement for many Americans in their later years.

Having to Retire vs. Wanting to Retire

For many retirees, the decision to retire is not fully voluntary. Some older adults are forced out by mandatory retirement rules or a boss who wanted them out, while others leave reluctantly because of health or other reasons.

Overall, the survey finds that barely half (51%) of all current retirees say they wanted to retire. About a third say they left for health or other reasons, while 9% report they were forced out

But involuntary retirement doesn’t necessarily mean the end of one’s working life. In fact, nearly one-in-six self-described retirees continue to do some form of part- or full-time work, and this is equally true of “reluctant retirees” (17% of whom continue to work) and those who chose to retire (18%).



What is different, however, is the way these retirees view their retirement years. Those who voluntarily retired are twice as likely as reluctant retirees to report that their retirement has turned out to be “very satisfying” (75% vs. 37%). At the same time, fully 30% of reluctant retirees say they were “not satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with their retirement, compared with just 4% of those who wanted to retire.

Men, Women and Work

More than two-thirds of all men and about six-in-ten women do some kind of work for pay. The employment trends for men and women, once very different, are now nearly parallel. For men, the past 10 years have been a continuation of a long, slow decline in work force participation. For women, the past decade has been a leveling off after five decades of steady rise.

Underlying these trends are many shared attitudes toward work. Men and women generally say they work for the same reason: to provide for their families; to feel useful; to build a retirement nest egg; to qualify for health care; and to live independently.

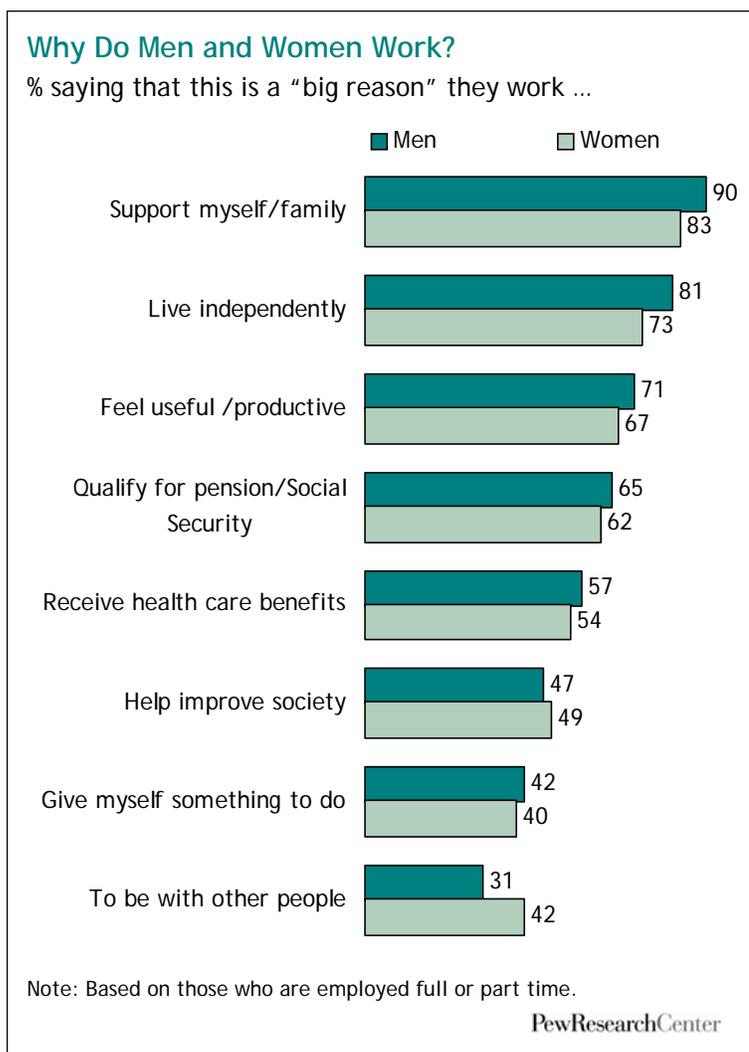
At the same time, differences do emerge, and these disparities appear critical to understanding the overall employment trends of men and women. Many of these differences arise from gender relations in the home.

Women are still more likely to shoulder the larger share of responsibility for family care and maintaining the household. According to the survey, men and women overwhelmingly agree that it would be better if mothers of young children did not have full-time jobs but instead worked part time or did not work outside the home at all.

Together, these facts of contemporary domestic life play out in the work force in two important ways.

Women who do not work for pay are nine times as likely as men to cite child care or other family responsibilities as a big reason they don't have a job (27% vs. 3%).

At the same time, women—particularly those with children 16 and younger—are far more likely than men to hold a part-time job. Working women—particularly mothers with children still at home—also are more likely than men to prefer part-time work over full-time employment. Nearly all men, meanwhile, want a full-time job. Women also are slightly more likely than men to say they work because they have to, not because they want to.



Despite these differences, virtually identical majorities of working men (89%) and women (90%) say they are satisfied with their job.

Why Men and Women Work

Overwhelming majorities of men and women agree: The single biggest reason they work is to support themselves and their families. Men, however, are somewhat more likely than women to cite this factor as a big reason (90% vs. 83%) they hold a job.

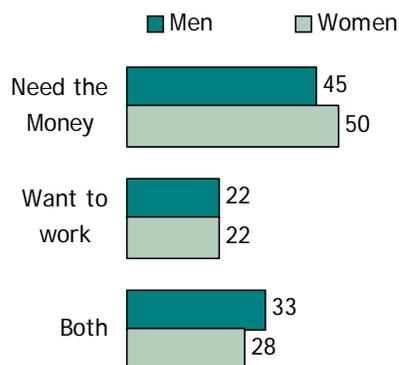
Men also are more likely than women to say they work to live independently, though again large majorities of both men (81%) and women (73%) cite this as a big reason they are employed. Married men are somewhat more likely than married women to say they work in order live independently (78% vs. 68%).

Women, meanwhile, are more likely to see work as a social outlet. Slightly more than four-in-ten women (42%) say a big reason they work is “to be with other people,” a view shared by 31% of men. In particular, middle-aged and slightly younger women are inclined to say the social aspect of life at work is important to them. Among women ages 30 to 49, nearly half say a big reason they work is to be with others.

On other benefits of working life, roughly equal proportions of men and women agree. Similar-sized majorities say work is important to them because it makes them feel like a useful person (71% of men, 67% of women). Men and women also are equally like to say an important reason they work is to save for retirement or qualify for a pension, receive health benefits, improve society or to “give myself something to do.”

Needing the Money vs. Wanting to Work

% who work because they ...

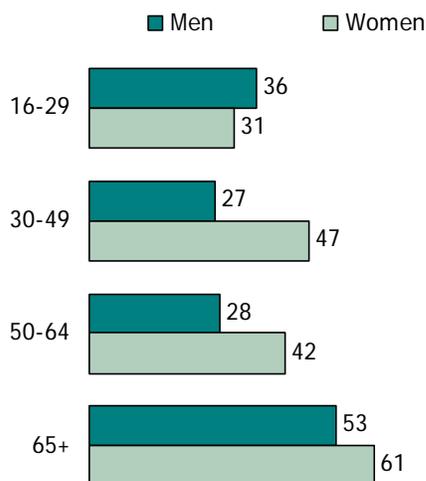


Note: Based on those who are employed full or part time

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Work as a Social Outlet

% saying “to be with other people” is a big reason they work



Note: Based on those who are employed full or part time

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Why Men and Women Don't Work

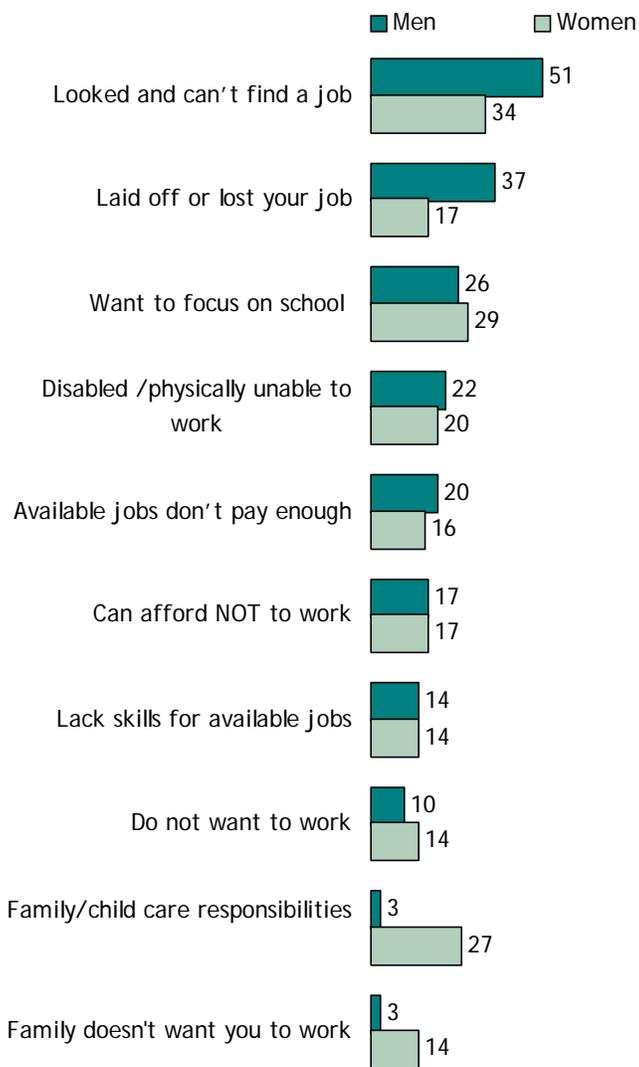
While the sexes share the same motivations for working, men and women who don't have a job (either because they're unemployed or out of the work force) offer very different reasons for not working.

Men are far more likely to blame labor market conditions: 51% of men versus just 34% of women say they aren't working because they looked for a job but couldn't find one. And by a ratio of more than two-to-one, more men (37%) than women (17%) report they aren't working because they were recently laid off or lost their jobs—a finding consistent with government unemployment data suggesting that men are far more likely to have been laid off or fired during the current recession.

At the same time, women are significantly more likely to cite family reasons to explain why they are not working. Fully 27% of all women who are not currently employed say family or child care responsibilities are big reasons for that, versus just 3% of men. In addition, women are more than four times as likely as men to say they are not working because their spouse or family doesn't want them to work.²⁰

Reasons for Not Working

% saying this is a "big reason" that they are not employed



Note: Based on those who are not working and not retired; n=247.

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²⁰ Could the overall findings be skewed by the fact that women are more likely to stay home full time with children? The answer is no. When the analysis is run excluding those who cited child care or family responsibilities as a big reason they were not working, the substantial gender differences on experience with layoffs and inability to find work do not shrink.

Attitudes toward Women’s Role Influence Job Preferences

Despite dramatic changes over the years in attitudes about the role of women, large majorities of Americans still believe the ideal situation for a mother with one or more young children is not to hold a full-time job. And these preferences are mirrored in the workplace, where a majority of women with younger children who work full time say they would prefer to have a part-time job.

Men and women agree: Ideally, a mother’s place is *not* holding down a full-time job. Overall, only 12% of all adults believe working at a full-time job is the “ideal” situation for a woman with younger children, a view shared by 14% of men and 10% of women. More than four-in-ten (44%) say a part-time job is preferable, while a somewhat smaller percentage (38%) say the ideal situation is for the mother not to work outside the home at all.

Men and women differ over whether a part-time job or full-time motherhood is best for moms and their children. Nearly half of all women (48%) but a smaller proportion of men (40%) says working part time is ideal for the mother of small children. Men are more likely to say it is best if the mother does not work outside the home (41% vs. 35%).

The gender differences on what is best for younger children are similar: women are more likely than men to say it is best if the mother works part time (44% vs. 36%); men are more likely to favor moms staying at home (48% vs. 36%). However, the sexes agree that full-time work isn’t ideal for young children or their mothers: only 11% of men and 12% of women consider this the best option.

These overall preferences are emphatically echoed in the results of a survey question that asked parents who work full time if they would prefer a part-time job.

Among mothers with children 16 and younger, the verdict is clear: Fully 61% say they would rather be working part-time. But when fathers of younger children are asked the same question, their answer is even more unequivocal: More than eight-in-ten prefer to keep their full-time job.

Moms, Kids and Jobs—What’s Ideal?

... for mothers with young children

	Total %	Men %	Women %
Mother works full time	12	14	10
Mother works part time	44	40	48
Mother doesn’t work outside the home	38	41	35

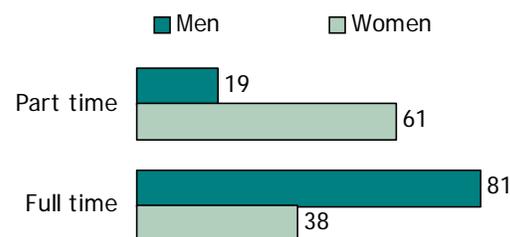
... for young children

	Total %	Men %	Women %
Mother works full time	12	11	12
Mother works part time	40	36	44
Mother doesn’t work outside the home	42	48	36

Note: Asked of full sample.

Moms and Dads on the Job

% of parents working full time who say they would prefer to work ...



Note: Based on full time working parents with children ages 16 or younger; n=242.

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**PEW SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
WORK/WOODSTOCK/GENERATION GAP SURVEY
TOPLINE FOR SELECTED QUESTIONS
July 20-Aug. 2, 2009
N=1,815 U.S. residents, ages 16+ (1,164 landline and 651 cell RDD)²¹**

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES GREATER THAN ZERO BUT LESS THAN 0.5 % ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Now I have some questions about work and family ...

Q.20 In your opinion, what is the ideal situation for young CHILDREN—mothers working full time, mothers working part time, or mothers not working at all outside the home?

12	Full time
40	Part time
42	Not at all
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.21 In your opinion, what is the ideal situation for WOMEN with young children—working full time, working part time, or not working at all outside the home?

12	Full time
44	Part time
38	Not at all
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTIONS 22-23

E1 Are you currently retired?

20	Yes
2	Yes, semi-retired or "still do some type of work" (VOL.)
75	No
2	Disabled (VOL.)
1	Fully disabled and cannot work (VOL.) - GO TO EDUC
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF NOT RETIRED (E1=3) AND AGE 62 OR OLDER [N=429]

Q.24 Have you had to delay your retirement because of current economic conditions, or not?

38	Yes
61	No
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

²¹ The sample design included oversamples of persons ages 16-24 and working adults 65 or older as well as a dual frame sample of respondents reached via landline (1,164) or cell (651) phone. The data are weighted to produce results from a representative sample of the population.

ASK IF NOT RETIRED (E1=3) AND AGE 50-61 [N=242]

Q.24a Do you think you might have to delay your retirement because of current economic conditions, or not?

63 Yes
31 No
5 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL

E2 Are you now enrolled in school, either full or part time, or not? [PST 2-09]

12 Yes, full-time student
6 Yes, part-time
82 No
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL (EXCLUDING FULLY DISABLED AND CANNOT WORK E1=5) [N=1,804]

E3 (IF E1=1,2: Some people who have retired do some type of work for pay.../IF E2=1,2 & E1=3,9: Some students also do some type of work for pay/IF E1=4: Some people who are disabled do some type of work for pay...) Are you now employed full time, part time or not employed?

48 Full time
16 Part time
36 Not employed [IF E1=4 AND E3=3—GO TO EDUC]
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

IF WORKING PART TIME (E3=2) [N=398]

E3a. Would you prefer to be working full-time, or not? [P&P 2-09]

<u>July 2009</u>	<u>July 2009</u> (ages 18+)		<u>Feb 2009</u>	<u>May 2005</u>	<u>Late Feb 2004</u>	<u>Early Feb 2004</u>
35	34	Yes, prefer full time	47	45	35	29
64	64	No	51	55	64	71
1	2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2	*	*	*
	n=356		n=164	n=175	n=108	n=190

IF WORKING FULL TIME (E3=1) [N=742]

E3b. Would you prefer to be working part time, or not?

30 Yes, prefer part time
69 No
1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL WORKING (E3=1,2) [N=1,140]

E3c. Are you self-employed, or not? [INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF R MENTIONS MORE THAN ONE JOB/EMPLOYER ASK ABOUT THEIR "main job"]

20 Yes, self-employed (includes independent contractor, freelance worker)
80 No, not self-employed
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF NOT EMPLOYED (E3=3) [N=633]

Q.25 You said you are not employed. Just to be sure, in the last week did you do any work for pay?

6 Yes
94 No
0 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF NOT RETIRED (E1=3) AND NOT EMPLOYED (E3=3) [N=247]

Q.25a How long ago did you last work full time or part time for pay? [READ]

10	Within the past month
12	One to three months ago
10	Three to six months
62	Or has it been six months or longer since you last worked?
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF EMPLOYED (E3=1,2) [N=1,140]

Q.26 Overall, how satisfied are you with your job? Are you (READ):

July 2009	<u>July 2009</u> (ages 18+)		Jan 2008	June 2006	PSRA ²² July 1997	Gallup July 1989
90	90	Satisfied (NET)	87	89	86	89
30	30	Completely satisfied	31	28	24	28
60	60	Mostly satisfied	56	61	62	61
9	9	Dissatisfied (NET)	12	10	13	11
7	7	Mostly dissatisfied	10	8	10	8
2	2	Completely dissatisfied	3	2	3	3
1	1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.--DO NOT READ)	*	1	1	*

ASK IF NOT EMPLOYED (E3=3) [EXCLUDING FULLY DISABLED AND CANNOT WORK E1=5], ASK: [N=633]

E4 Are you currently looking for work, or not?

July 2009		Feb 2009
27	Yes, looking for work	27
73	No, not looking for work	72
0	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1

ASK IF UNEMPLOYED AND NOT LOOKING FOR WORK (E4=2) [N=484]

Q.27 When the economy improves, will you start looking for work, or not?

16	Yes
81	No
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF EMPLOYED OR LOOKING FOR WORK AND NEVER RETIRED [E1=3 AND (E3=1,2 OR E4=1 OR Q.27=1)] [N=1,173]

E5 At what age do you expect to retire and not work?

July 2009	<u>July 2009</u> (ages 18+)		<u>Feb 2009</u>
19	18	Before age 60	20
18	18	60-64	18
29	29	65-69	25
15	14	70 or older	18
9	9	Never plan to retire	11
11	11	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	8
63	63	Mean age	63

²² The July 1997 PSRA question was worded "Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your current job? Are you...[READ RESPONSES]"

TREND FOR COMPARISON:²³

	<i>Gallup</i>							
	<u>April</u>							
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>1989</u>
Mean age	64	64	65	64	64	63	63	62

**ASK IF RETIRED AND NOT WORKING AND NOT LOOKING FOR WORK (E1=1 AND E4=2 AND Q.27=2)
[N=335]**

E6 At what age did you retire?

12	Before age 50
22	50-59
32	60-64
16	65-69
9	70 or older
9	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
59	Mean age

ASK IF RETIRED AND WORKING OR RETIRED AND LOOKING FOR WORK ((E1=1,2 AND E3=1,2) OR [E1=1,2 AND E3= 3 AND (E4=1 OR Q.27=1)]) [N=183]

E7 At what age do you expect to stop working completely?

2	Before age 50
2	50-59
4	60-64
16	65-69
31	70 or older
27	Never plan (VOL.)
20	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
69	Mean age

ASK ALL WORKING (E3=1,2) [N=1,140]

E8 Are you currently working because you need the money or because you want to work?

47	Need the money
22	Want to work
30	Both (VOL.)
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF RETIRED OR SEMI-RETIRED (E1=1, 2) [N=534]

Q.28 Thinking back to the time you retired, did you WANT to retire, did your employer MAKE you retire, or did you have to retire for health or other reasons?

51	Wanted to
9	Made to do
32	Had to do for health, other reasons
2	Both/part wanted to, part had to (VOL.)
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

²³ Trend numbers are from the Gallup Poll. The question wording was "At what age do you expect to retire?" The question was asked of all non-retired respondents through telephone interviews with a national adult sample. The 1989 Gallup Poll was based on a mail survey.

ASK IF RETIRED OR SEMI-RETIRED (E1=1,2) [N=534]

Q.29 All in all, would you say that your retirement has turned out to be very satisfying, fairly satisfying, not-too-satisfying or not at all satisfying?

57 Very satisfying
 23 Fairly satisfying
 10 Not too satisfying
 6 Not at all satisfying
 5 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF NOT WORKING FULL TIME OR PART TIME AND NOT RETIRED (E1=3 & E3=3) [N=247]

Q. 30 You mentioned earlier that you are not employed. Here are reasons why some people say they are not working. For each, tell me if this is a big reason, a small reason or not a reason why you are not employed. (First/Next), (INSERT - ALWAYS ASK A FIRST, RANDOMIZE B-J).

READ FOR FIRST THEN AS NECESSARY: Is this a big reason, a small reason or not a reason why you are not working?

	<u>Big reason</u>	<u>Small reason</u>	<u>Not a reason</u>	<u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u>
a. You were laid off or lost your job	25	6	69	1
b. You've looked and can't find a job	41	12	47	1
c. You do not want to work	13	13	73	1
d. You can afford NOT to work	17	15	66	2
e. Your spouse or family doesn't want you to work	10	8	78	4
f. You have a disability or otherwise aren't able to work	21	7	71	1
g. You want to focus on school or job training	28	15	55	2
h. You don't have the skills or training for the jobs that are available	14	15	68	3
i. You have family or child care responsibilities that keep you from working	18	11	71	1
j. The jobs available to you don't pay enough	18	13	68	1

ASK IF NOT WORKING FULL TIME OR PART TIME AND NOT RETIRED (E1=3 & E3=3) [N=247]

Q30k. Is there another big reason that you don't have a job that I haven't already mentioned? IF YES, ASK: What is that?

24 Yes (SPECIFY)
 76 No
 1 Don't know/Refused [VOL.]

ASK IF RETIRED AND NOT WORKING FULL TIME OR PART TIME (E1=1 & E3=3) [N=370]

Q. 31 You mentioned earlier that you are retired and not employed full or part time. Are you not working because (of your age or are physically unable to work), because (you prefer not to work), because (you cannot find a job), or for some other reason? [RANDOMIZE RESPONSES IN PARENS]

38 Because of age or physically unable to work
 46 Prefer not to work
 4 Cannot find a job
 10 Other reason (SPECIFY)
 2 Don't know/Refused [VOL.]

ASK IF WORKING FULL OR PART TIME (E3=1,2) [N=1,140]

Q.32 I am going to read reasons why some people work. For each, tell me if it is a big reason, a small reason or not a reason why you personally work. (First/Next)... (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE).

READ FOR FIRST ITEM THEN AS NECESSARY: Is this a big reason, a small reason or not a reason why you work?

	<u>Big reason</u>	<u>Small reason</u>	<u>Not a reason</u>	<u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u>
a. To support myself and my family	87	7	6	*
b. To feel like a useful and productive person	69	17	13	1
c. To receive health care benefits	56	13	31	1
d. To save for my retirement or qualify for a pension or Social Security	64	17	19	*
e. To be with other people	36	34	30	*
f. To give myself something to do	41	33	25	*
g. To help improve society	48	26	26	*
h. To live independently	77	9	12	1

ASK IF WORKING FULL OR PART-TIME (E3=1,2) [N=1,140]

Q.32i Is there another big reason why you work that I haven't already mentioned? IF YES, ASK: What is that?

25 Yes (SPECIFY)

75 No

* Don't know/Refused [VOL.]

ASK ALL

EDUC What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? [DO NOT READ]

4	None, or grade 1-8
12	High school incomplete (Grades 9-11)
30	High school graduate (Grade 12 or GED certificate)
4	Technical, trade, or vocational school AFTER high school
23	Some college, no 4-year degree (including associate degree)
16	College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other 4-year degree)
11	Postgraduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a master's degree or Ph.D.; law or medical school)
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF CONTINUED EDUCATION PAST HIGH SCHOOL (EDUC = 4-7) [N=1,052]

Q.33 Now I'd like you to think about what you did immediately after you graduated from high school. Did you work at a job for at least a year, did you go on to college or into a training program, or did you do both at the same time?

23	Worked (includes armed forces/military service)
40	Went to college or got additional training
33	Did both at the same time
3	Did something else (VOL.)
1	Obtained GED/did not graduate from high school—GO TO Q.37
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF WORKED (Q.33=1) [N=238]

Q.34 Was this job in the armed forces, or not?

18	Yes
82	No

1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF CONTINUED SCHOOLING/TRAINING (Q.33=2) [N=441]

Q.35 Is that because you wanted to immediately continue your education or training, or was it because you could not find a job?

93 Wanted to continue education or training
 1 Couldn't find a job
 * Both [VOL.]
 5 Neither [VOL.]
 1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF DID SOMETHING ELSE (Q.33=4) [N=40; SAMPLE SIZE TOO SMALL TO REPORT RESULTS]

Q.36 Were you looking for a job during that time, or not?

Q.37 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In order to get ahead in life these days, it's necessary to get a college education.

74 Agree
 24 Disagree
 2 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

<u>July 2009</u>	<u>July 2009</u> (ages 18+)		<i>CBS News</i> <u>Aug 1997</u>	<i>CBS News/New York Times</i> <u>April 1978</u>
74	73	Agree	75	49
24	25	Disagree	24	47
2	3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	4

Q.38 All other things being equal, which would you prefer: a higher-paying job, or a job that offers better job security? INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT SAYS THEY ARE RETIRED/DISABLED AND QUESTION DOES NOT APPLY, PROMPT WITH "Generally speaking, which do you think is more important?"

33 High-paying job
 59 Job security
 5 Both equally (VOL.)
 4 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)