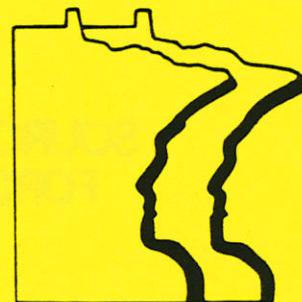


MINNESOTA STATE PLANNING AGENCY
Office of State Demographer

POPULATION NOTES



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LABOR FORCE BECOMES YOUNGER, MORE FEMALE IN THE 1970s

The Minnesota labor force grew from 1,533,925 in 1970 to 1,996,428 in 1980, an increase of 30 percent. This was more than four times the rate of growth in population. The entrance of the baby boom generation into the work force and increased labor force participation by women account for this increase. As a result of these trends, the composition of the labor force has become younger and more female. The highest rates of labor force participation are found in Olmsted County, the Twin Cities area, and southern Minnesota.

Labor Force Is Defined

Everyone 16 years or older who is either employed or looking for work is considered to be in the labor force. Military personnel are included in the labor force count. There are several approaches to measuring the rate of labor force participation. The most common procedure is a snapshot approach based on whether a person is in the labor force at a particular point in time, for example, at the time of the census. This snapshot measure is the basis for most of the figures in this report. Another measure reflects whether a person was in the labor force at any time during an entire year. Since many people move in and out of the labor force, this second approach tends to show higher levels of labor force participation.

Labor Force Becomes Younger, More Female

During the 1970s, members of the baby boom generation began to enter the labor force in large numbers. The number of working women also increased. As a result of these two factors,

females and young workers made up a greater share of the 1980 labor force than of the 1970 labor force. In 1980, 53 percent of the labor force was under 35 years of age, compared with 44 percent in 1970. The proportion of the labor force composed of women increased from 38 percent in 1970 to 43 percent in 1980.

Overall, the increase in the working age population accounted for more of the total labor force growth than did the increased participation rates of women, though both were important. The relative weight of these two factors can be determined by comparing the actual 1980 labor force figures with what would have occurred if labor force participation rates remained constant (Figure 1). Of the total increase of 462,503 in the size of the labor force, 62 percent occurred simply because there were more people of working age in 1980 than in 1970. The remaining 38 percent is attributable to higher labor force participation rates among women.

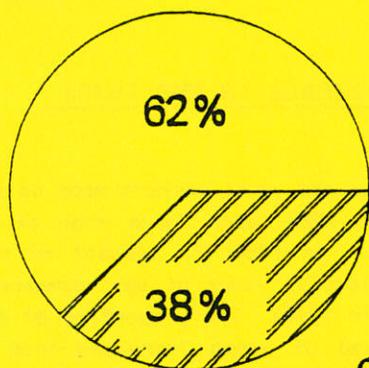
Female Labor Force Participation Increases

The changes in labor force participation rates during the 1970s differed for men and women (Table 1). Male rates increased for those under 25 but decreased for all older age groups. Decreases were very slight among men 25-54, but were substantial for those 55 and over. Rates of labor force participation increased among all women except those 65 and over. The declines in labor force participation among older men and women reflect the trend toward early retirement. Many workers are retiring at age 62 or even earlier, rather than waiting until the traditional retirement age of 65.

FIGURE 1.

SOURCES OF LABOR FORCE GROWTH

Increase in Working Age Population



Growth in Female Labor Force Participation

The overall increase in female labor force participation was paralleled by especially sharp increases among married women and women with children under 6 (Figure 2). By 1980, 54 percent of married women were working or looking for work, and half of the women with children under 6 were in the labor force. Rates for married women and those with small children are now near or above the overall level for females. This does not mean, however, that marriage and children do not lower rates of labor force participation. Controlling for age, unmarried women have substantially higher rates of labor force participation than married women, and childless women are more likely to be in the labor force than women with children. These relationships are obscured in the overall figures because unmarried women are often young students or older widows, both groups with low levels of labor force participation.

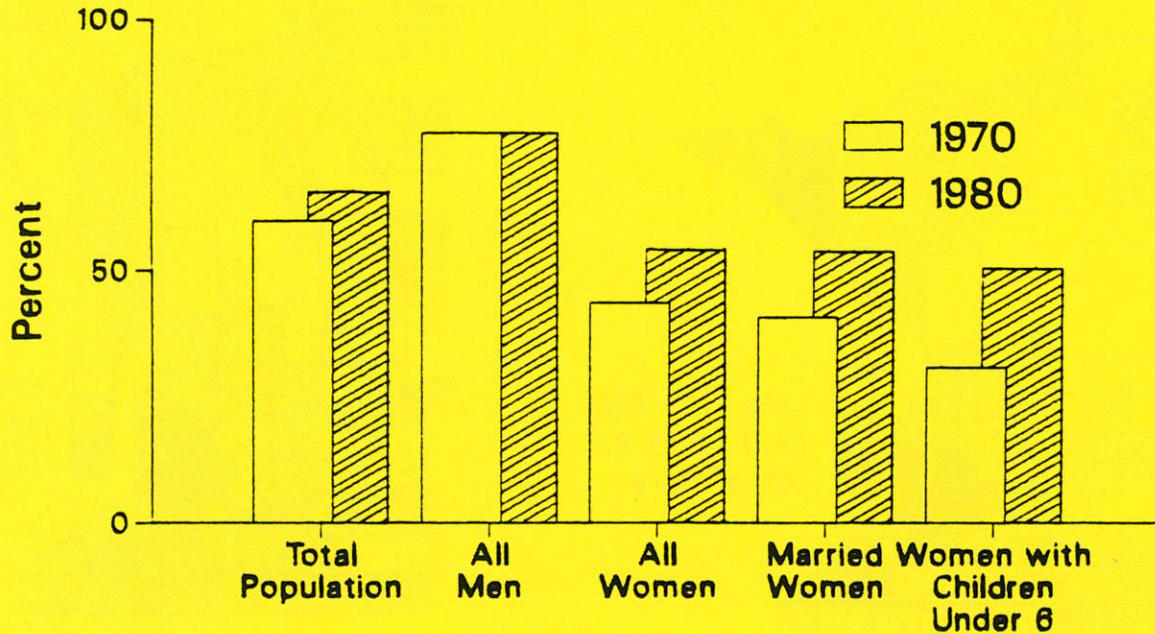
Education and occupation are strongly related to the probability that a woman will be in the labor force. Among women 16-64, 76 percent of the college graduates were in the labor force, compared with 65 percent of high school graduates and 47 percent of those who did not finish high school. Education provides access to the more desirable, higher-paying jobs. Women whose current or most recent occupation was a white collar job, especially professional or managerial, tend to be more committed to the labor force. They are more likely to remain in the labor force consistently rather than drift in and out.

TABLE 1. RATES OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION, BY AGE AND SEX,
MINNESOTA: 1970 AND 1980

Age	Males		Females	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
16-19	53.8	59.7	48.8	57.2
20-24	81.5	85.4	62.8	75.0
25-34	95.3	94.6	43.3	69.2
35-44	96.6	95.9	49.4	67.8
45-54	94.2	93.2	54.2	62.2
55-64	83.2	75.6	46.0	46.1
65+	24.4	18.0	10.8	8.2
All Ages	77.1	77.1	43.5	54.0

FIGURE 2.

**PERCENT OF POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER
IN LABOR FORCE 1970 AND 1980**



Although women have been entering the labor force in large numbers, many have done so on a temporary or part time basis. Of women who worked at any time in 1979, 50 percent worked 50 weeks or more and 60 percent usually worked 35 or more hours per week. Comparable figures for males were 67 percent and 85 percent. The proportion of women working full time has increased since 1970, when only 41 percent worked 50 or more weeks in a year.

White Males, Black Females Have Highest Participation Rates

White men have higher rates of labor force participation than men in other racial groups. Of men 16 and over, 77 percent of white men were in the labor force, compared with 71 percent of black men, 70 percent of Asian men and 65 percent of American Indian men. The racial order was different among women. Black women were most likely to be in the labor force (58%) followed by white and Asian women (54%) and American Indian women (49%). Among persons of Spanish ethnicity, 76 percent of the men and 56 percent of the women were in the labor force.

The difference between black and white labor force patterns go back many years. Black women have traditionally entered the labor force to a greater extent than white women, although there was some convergence between 1970 and 1980. Because so many black women work, black married couples are the most likely to be dual-worker couples (65%). Half of white married couples had both partners in the work force, as did 49 percent of American Indian and 48 percent of Asian couples.

Minnesota Labor Force Participation Rates Are Above Average

Minnesota ranks well above the national average in the proportion of adults in the work force. Provisional census figures showed that Minnesota ranked seventh in total labor force participation and tied for seventh in female labor force participation rates. Among Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) with populations of one million or more, Minneapolis-St. Paul was second, following Washington, D.C., in both total and female participation rates.

FIGURE 3.

1980 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
MALES 16 AND OVER

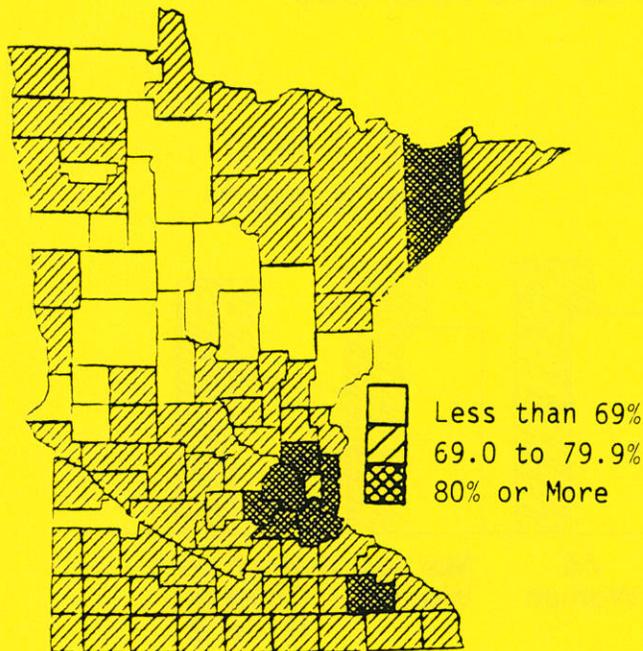


FIGURE 4.

1980 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
FEMALES 16 AND OVER

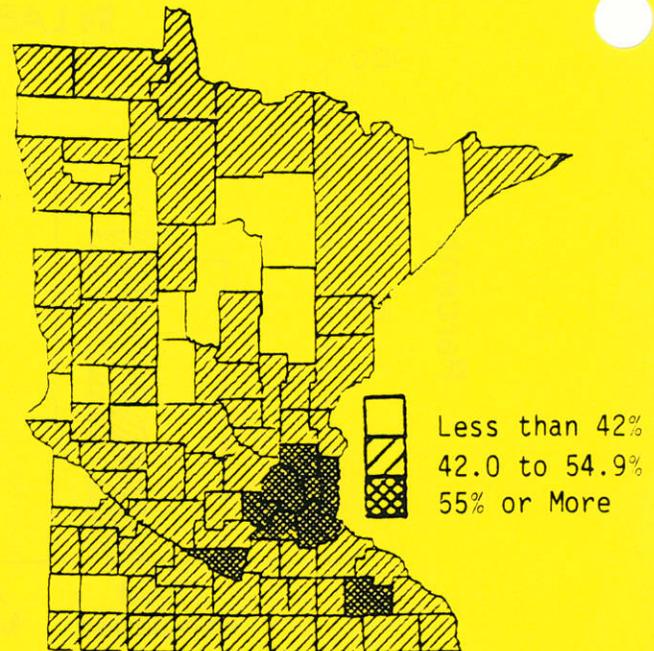


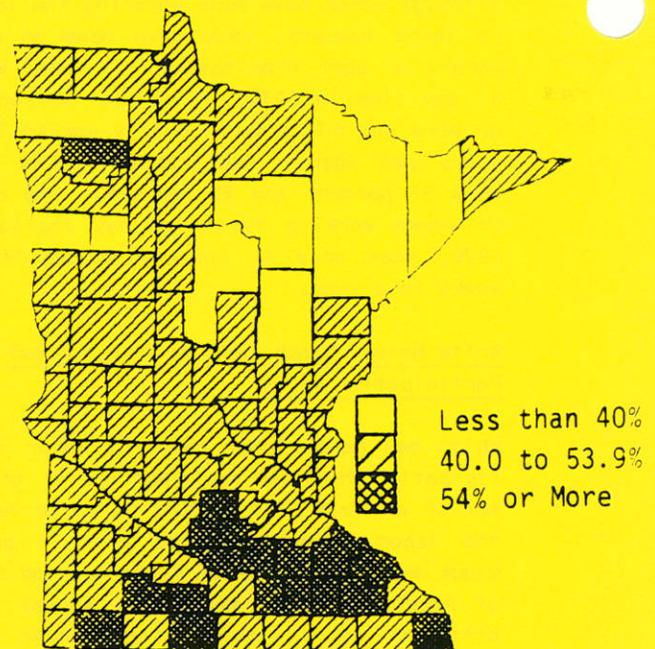
FIGURE 5.

Labor Force Participation Is Highest in Olmsted County, Twin Cities

Overall labor force participation rates in 1980 were highest in Olmsted County and in the Twin Cities area (Figures 3, 4). Men in Lake County also had a high proportion in the work force. While the lowest overall participation rates were found in Cass and Aitkin Counties, other counties in northern and western Minnesota also had low rates. South central and southeastern Minnesota counties generally had intermediate rates.

Many, though not all, of the differences among counties can be attributed to age differences, at least for males. Places with relatively large proportions of elderly people will generally have a lower rate of labor force participation. Average age is generally lower in the Twin Cities, especially in the suburban counties, than in nonmetropolitan areas. The significance of age composition can be illustrated by an examination of the labor force figures for individual cities (Table 2). The highest levels of work force participation in 1980 were found in young, rapidly growing suburbs such as Apple Valley, Maple Grove, and Eden Prairie. The central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, with larger concentrations of elderly people, did not have especially high rates of labor force participation.

1980 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
WOMEN WITH CHILDREN UNDER 6



The presence of a college, prison, or other institution can also have an effect on the labor force participation rate, particularly in relatively small communities. Some of the lowest rates of labor force participation for males were observed in Bayport, St. Peter, and Morris, all communities with large institutions (Table 3).

**TABLE 2. MINNESOTA CITIES 2,500 AND OVER WITH HIGHEST RATES OF
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN 1980**

Men 16 and Over	Rate	Women 16 and Over	Rate	Women with Children Under 6	Rate
* Apple Valley	95.0	* Spring Lake Park	73.9	Caledonia	76.2
* Maple Grove	93.8	* Vadnais Heights	73.2	Morris	74.4
* Eden Prairie	93.3	* Shoreview	71.7	Jackson	73.9
* Andover	92.8	* Mounds View	71.0	Long Prairie	72.4
* Ramsey	92.6	* Brooklyn Park	70.9	Waite Park	71.9
* Burnsville	92.1	* Eagan	70.1	Windom	70.5
* Eagan	92.4	* Burnsville	69.8	Le Sueur	69.2
* Lakeville	92.0	* Eden Prairie	69.0	St. Joseph	69.0
* Blaine	91.7	* Maple Grove	68.6	Worthington	67.9
* Dayton	90.8	* Apple Valley	68.3	Ortonville	67.0

* In Minneapolis-St. Paul SMSA

Controlling for age reduces but does not eliminate the differences among counties in rates of labor force participation. If only participation rates for 25-54 year olds are considered, there is a sharp convergence between rates in the Twin Cities area and those in south central and southeastern Minnesota. Rates in northern Minnesota remain lower, especially for women. While not every case fits the pattern, the differences between northern and southern Minnesota appear to be real, not an artifact of age. These differences may reflect variations in available employment opportunities. The persistently above-average unemployment levels in some northern counties may lead more people to become discouraged and stop looking for a job. Another factor is that there may be more seasonal employment in northern Minnesota, for example, in tourism and recreation. The census is taken in April, at a time when many seasonal workers are not yet employed or looking for work.

Women with Small Children Are Most Likely To Work
In Southern Minnesota, Least Likely To Work on
Iron Range

Examination of the work habits of women with children under 6 reveals a slightly different

geographical pattern (Figure 5, Tables 2, 3). Participation in the work force is again lowest in northern Minnesota, particularly on the Iron Range. Most of the communities with the smallest proportions of working mothers are in St. Louis or Lake Counties. The highest rates of labor force participation for women with young children are found not in the Twin Cities but in the cities and counties of south central and southeastern Minnesota.

It is not surprising that women with children are less likely to be in the labor force in northern Minnesota than in the southern part. This parallels the finding for the female population as a whole. What is surprising is that mothers of young children are more likely to be in the labor force in southern Minnesota than in the Twin Cities metropolitan area where overall rates for women are higher. Several possible interpretations of this finding arise. One possibility is that economic pressures are greater outside the metro area. Since average family income is lower, mothers may have more of an economic incentive to go to work. A second possibility is that it is easier to make informal childcare arrangements in less heavily urbanized areas.

TABLE 3. MINNESOTA CITIES 2,500 AND OVER WITH LOWEST RATES OF
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN 1980

Men 16 and Over	Rate	Women 16 and Over	Rate	Women with Children Under 6	Rate
# Bayport	29.9	* Ely	31.5	* Hoyt Lakes	27.2
Staples	57.4	* Eveleth	35.2	* Gilbert	27.9
Park Rapids	59.3	* Two Harbors	36.2	* Eveleth	32.4
# St. Peter	59.9	Staples	36.9	* Silver Bay	32.6
Glenwood	61.5	Glenwood	38.6	* Mountain Iron	32.8
# Bemidji	62.3	Wadena	39.5	Princeton	33.5
# Morris	63.2	Pipestone	39.5	* Aurora	35.6
# Cambridge	64.5	* Aurora	40.0	* Hibbing	36.2
Fergus Falls	64.7	* Gilbert	40.2	Falcon Heights	36.6
# Northfield	64.9	Wells	40.8	South International Falls	37.3

Institution (Prison, college, etc.)
* St. Louis or Lake Counties

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