

# Labor force

**T**he labor force, or the number of workers available to fill jobs in the economy, comprises all civilians 16 years of age or older who are either working or looking for work. The labor force does not include institutionalized workers, such as prison inmates.

Factors affecting the size of the labor force include birth rates from 16 years ago, the immigration rate, and the death rate. A major determinant of the size of the labor force is the labor force participation rate, the proportion of the total population working or actively seeking employment. These rates vary significantly by age, sex, and racial and ethnic group.

The charts include the following age groups:

- ◆ 65-year-olds and older
- ◆ 55- to 64-year-olds
- ◆ 45- to 54-year-olds
- ◆ 35- to 44-year-olds
- ◆ 25- to 34-year-olds
- ◆ 16- to 24-year-olds

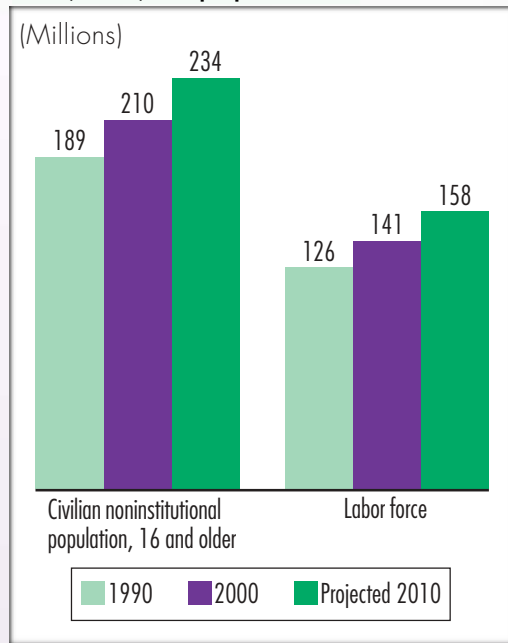
The charts show the following racial and Hispanic origin groups:

- ◆ White, non-Hispanic
- ◆ Black, non-Hispanic
- ◆ Hispanic origin of any race
- ◆ Asian and other, non-Hispanic, including American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Pacific Islanders.

The racial and ethnic composition of the labor force may change because groups have different age distributions, birth and immigration rates, and labor force participation rates.

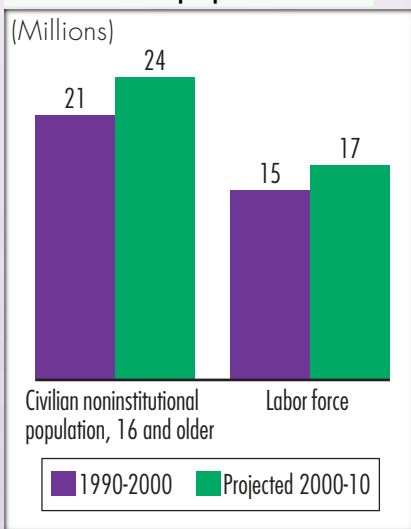


**Population and labor force,  
1990, 2000, and projected 2010**



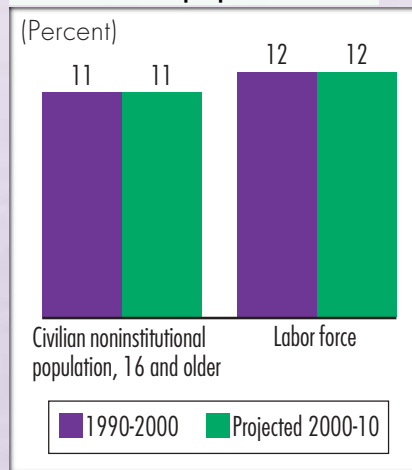
**B**oth the population and the labor force will continue to grow. By 2010, 158 million people will be working or looking for work, excluding those who are in the U.S. Armed Forces, are institutionalized, or are under 16 years of age.

**Population and labor force growth,  
1990-2000 and projected 2000-10**



**F**rom 2000 to 2010, the population and the labor force will grow slightly more—by 3 and 2 million, respectively—than they did during the previous decade.

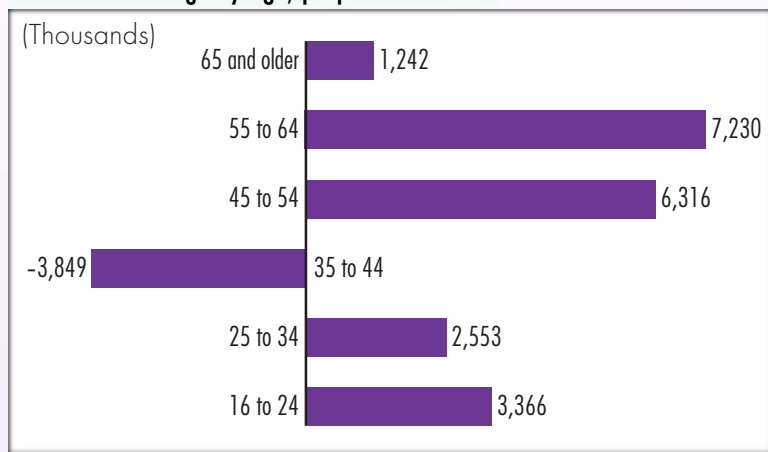
**Population and labor force growth,  
1990-2000 and projected 2000-10**



**B**etween 2000 and 2010, the population and labor force are expected to grow about as fast as they did during the previous decade. An increasing labor participation rate will cause the labor force to grow about 1 percent faster than the population.

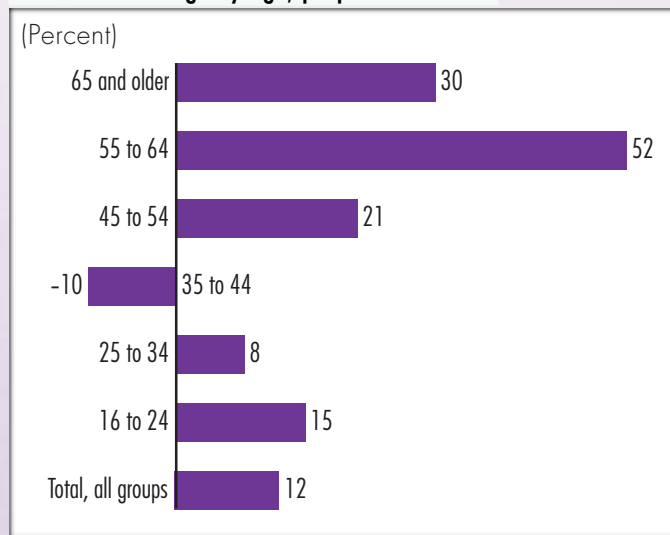
## Age

### Labor force change by age, projected 2000-10



**A**t the start of the millennium, the 55- to 64-year-olds group will have the most labor force growth. This reflects baby boomers' shift into that group. At the same time, baby boomers are leaving the 35- to 44-year-olds group, causing that one to shrink.

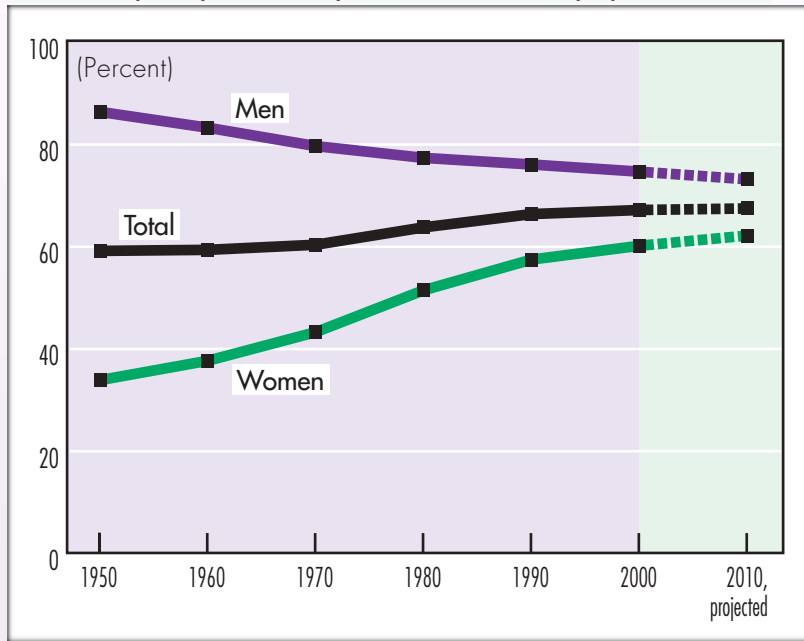
### Labor force change by age, projected 2000-10



**T**he number of labor force participants aged 65 and older is expected to increase more than twice as fast as the total labor force. The 55- to 64-year-olds group will grow even faster as the baby boomers age, and the 35- to 44-year-olds group will decline.

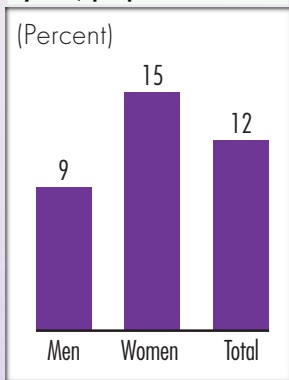
## Sex

Labor force participation rate by sex, 1950-2000 and projected 2000-10



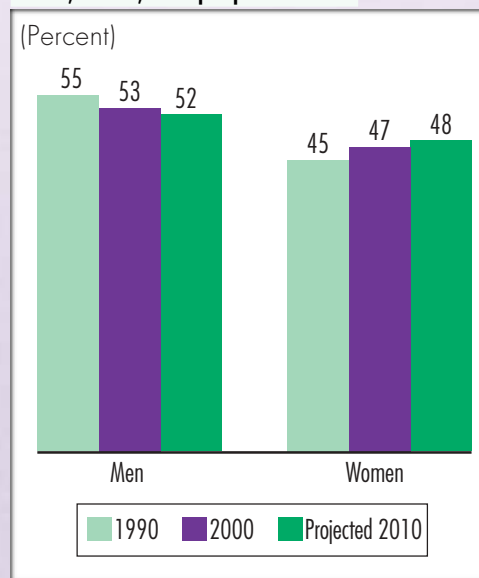
**C**ontinuing a historical trend, the labor force participation rate for men will decline as the rate for women increases.

Labor force growth by sex, projected 2000-10



**T**he number of women in the labor force is expected to grow at a significantly higher rate than that for men...

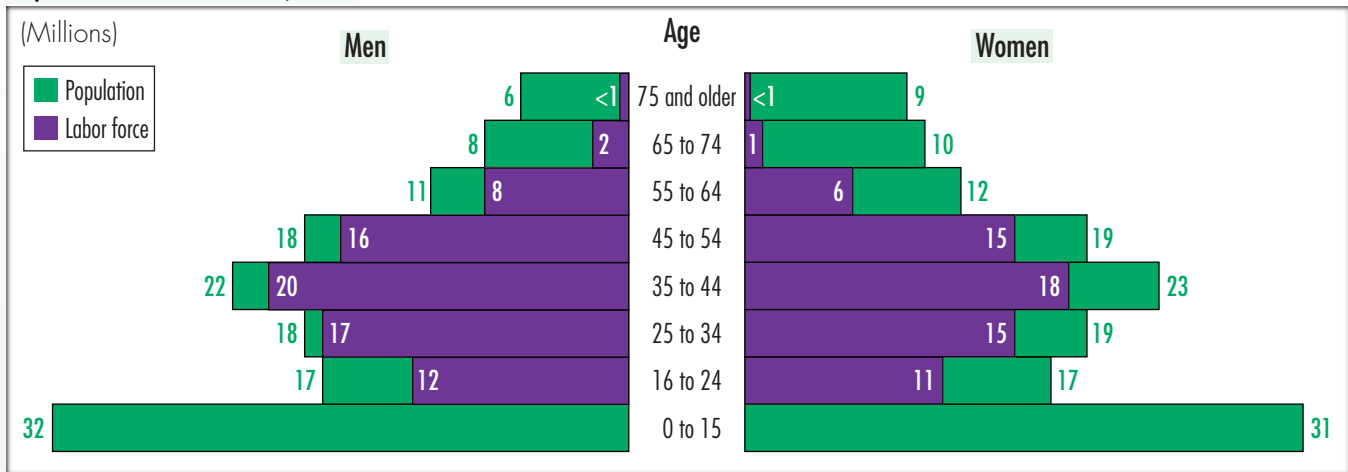
Labor force share by sex, 1990, 2000, and projected 2010



...resulting in women increasing their share of the labor force to 48 percent by 2010.

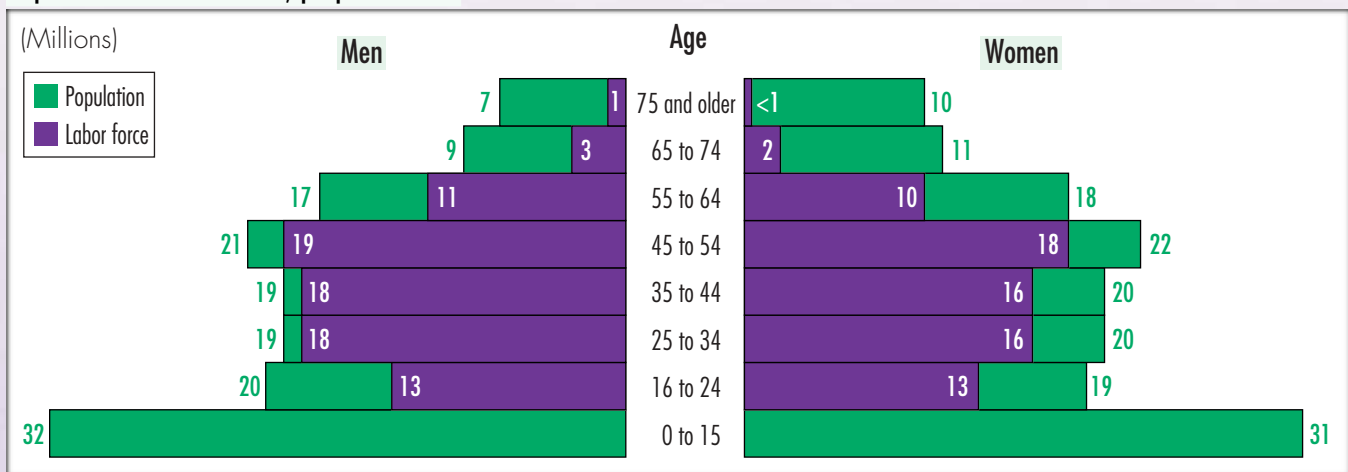
## Age, sex

### Population and labor force, 2000



**I**n 2000, most of the labor force was between the ages of 25 and 54. In contrast, the majority of the population that year was in the younger and older groups: 0 to 24 years old and 55 years old and older. Men in the 35- to 44-year-old group had a higher labor force participation rate than women in the same group—20 of 22 million men compared with 18 of 23 million women.

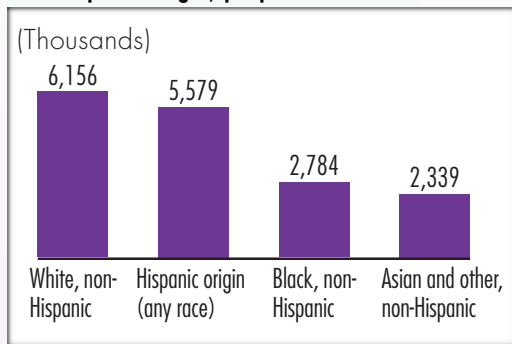
### Population and labor force, projected 2010



**B**y 2010, the population and, therefore, the labor force will be older as the baby-boom generation ages. There will be increased numbers of people and workers, both women and men, in the 55- to 64-year-old group, employing 11 of 17 million and 10 of 18 million, respectively. Although men will continue to have higher participation rates, women in all age groups will have rates that are higher than in the previous decade.

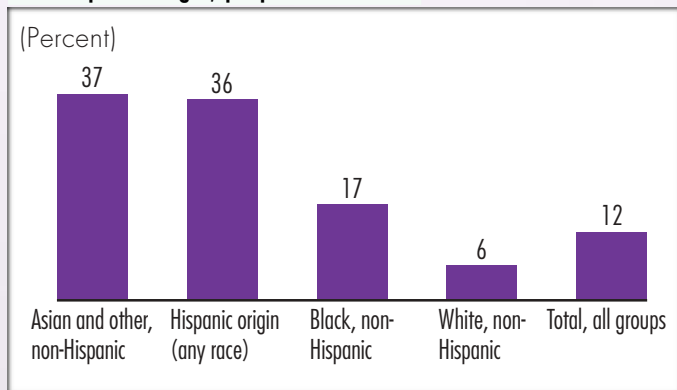
## Race and Hispanic origin

Labor force growth by race and Hispanic origin, projected 2000-10



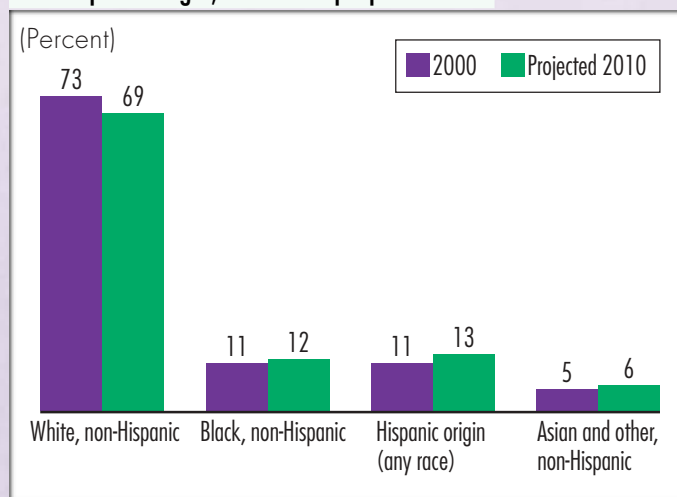
**T**he Hispanic origin and white, non-Hispanic origin groups will account for more than two-thirds of all labor force growth for the 2000-10 decade. The black, non-Hispanic and Asian and other groups will account for the remaining growth.

Labor force growth by race and Hispanic origin, projected 2000-10



**A**lthough it will account for fewer than 2.5 million new members of the labor force, the Asian and other group will increase its presence in the labor force faster than any other group. Workers of Hispanic origin will increase nearly as fast, while those of black, non-Hispanic origin will increase less quickly. The white, non-Hispanic group, which makes up the largest share of the labor force, is expected to have the slowest growth rate.

Labor force share by race and Hispanic origin, 2000 and projected 2010



**W**hite, non-Hispanic workers will have the slowest labor force growth rate, but they will still account for nearly 70 percent of all workers.