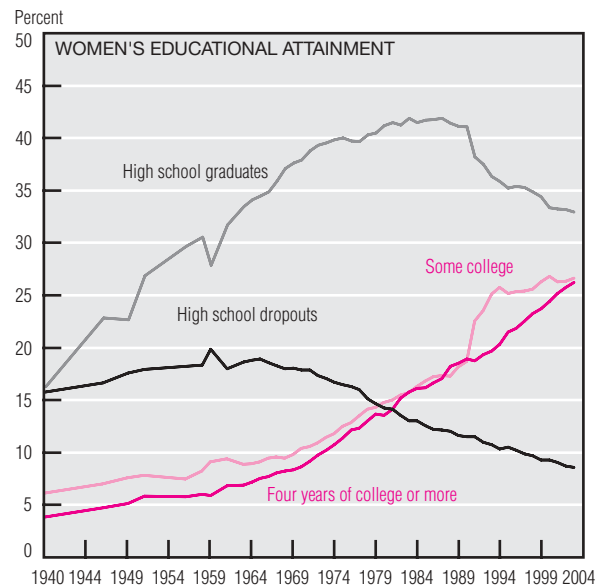
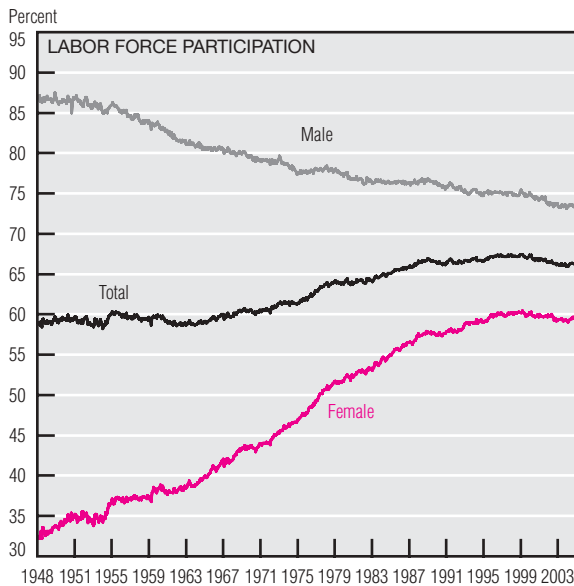
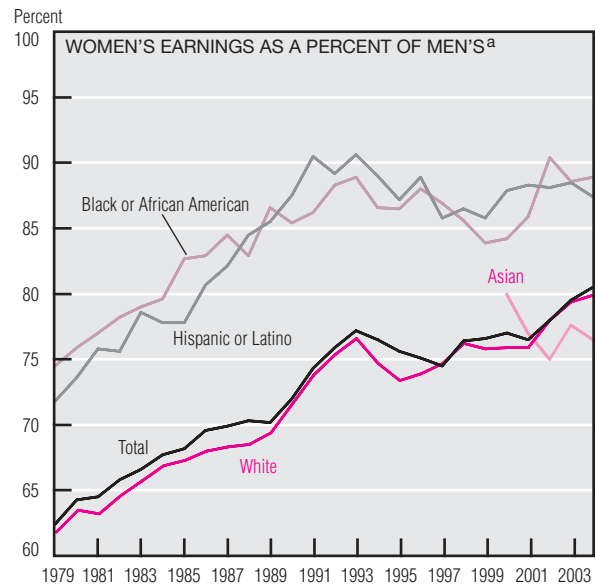


Women in the Workforce



Women's Occupations, 2005

	Total employed (thousands)	Percent women
Total, 16 years and over	141,730	46.4
Management, professional, and related occupations	49,245	50.6
Business and financial operations	14,685	37.2
Computer and mathematical	5,765	55.9
Architecture and engineering	3,246	27.0
Life, physical, and social services	2,793	13.8
Community and social services	1,406	42.5
Legal	2,138	61.3
Education, training, and library	1,614	49.4
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	8,114	73.8
Healthcare practitioner and technical	2,736	47.8
Service occupations	23,133	57.3
Healthcare support	3,092	89.0
Protective service	2,894	22.4
Food preparation and serving related	7,374	56.6
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	5,241	40.6
Personal care and service	4,531	78.3
Sales and office occupations	35,962	63.3
Sales and related occupations	16,433	49.1
Office and administrative support	19,529	75.3
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	15,348	4.6
Production, transportation, and material moving	18,041	22.9



a. Women's median usual weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary workers as a percent of men's.

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Women's labor force participation rose from about 43% in 1970 to roughly 59% in December 2005. In fact, their participation has been on the increase since the late 1940s. At the same time, women have obtained higher education levels because of greater returns to higher education: Women's high school dropout rate has fallen from nearly 18% in 1940 to about 7% in 2004, while the share pursuing a college degree or higher has climbed dramatically from about 4% in 1940 to nearly 31% in 2004.

Accordingly, women have been able to pursue better-paying occupations than before. By 2005, they held about half of all management, professional, and related occupations, up about 2 pp from 2000.

Women continue to have a majority share in business and financial operations; community and social services; education, training, and library; and healthcare practitioner and technical occupations.

Meanwhile, the income disparity between men and women has

narrowed considerably. In 1979, women's median earnings were 62% of men's; by 2004, this figure had climbed to nearly 80%. The lessening of gender inequality may result partly from women moving into higher-paying occupations. Interestingly, within some minority groups, earnings inequality is less than in the workforce as a whole. For example, African American women make nearly 89.0% as much as African American men.