



Women and Nontraditional Work

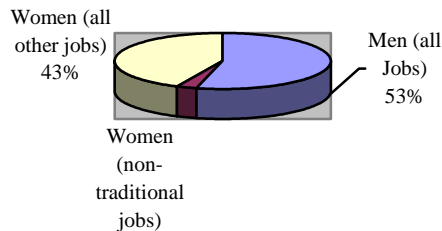
The U.S. Department of Labor defines nontraditional occupations for women as those jobs in which women make up less than 25% of the total number of workers.

In 2004, 68 million women were employed; 3.8 million women (5.6% of all working women) were employed in nontraditional occupations.

Occupational Categories	Total # of Workers (in thousands)	# of Women in Nontrad. Jobs (in thousands)	Examples
Managerial, Professional	48,532	1,386	engineer dentists
Sale, Service Occupations	35,464	62	couriers salesperson
Service	22,720	600	police, barber
Natural Resources			carpenters
Construction	14,582	660	auto mechanic
Production			pilots
Transportation	17,954	1,084	machinists
Total	139,252	3,792	

Between 1988 and 2004, the number of women in nontraditional jobs remained relatively unchanged at around 3% of the total number of employed workers.

Total Workforce, 2004



Equal proportions of working Black, White and Hispanic women are employed in nontraditional jobs.

Who works in Nontraditional Jobs?

- 8% of Employed Black Women
- 8% of Employed White Women
- 1% of Employed Hispanic Women*

Who works in traditionally Female+ Jobs?

- 53% of Employed Black Women
- 48% of Employed White Women
- 50% of Employed Hispanic Women*

Women in Traditional jobs typically earn 20-30% more than women in traditional occupations.

Women in Traditionally Female+ Jobs	Women's Median Weekly Pay	Women in Traditionally Male Jobs
License Prac. Nurse	\$629	\$841
Receptionist	\$463	\$558
Child Care Worker	\$334	\$476
Textile Sewing Machine Operator	\$319	\$369
		Police/Detective Mechanic Truck Driver Butcher

Even when women work in the same occupations as men, they still do not earn equal pay.

Occupation	Women's Wages	Men's Wages	Women's Earnings as a % of men's
Truck Driver	\$476	\$613	77.7%
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Repairer	\$397	\$515	77.1%
Correctional Institution Officer	\$558	\$654	85.3%
Filling Machine Operator	\$341	\$410	83.2%

Women in nontraditional jobs "look" like women in traditionally female jobs. Overall, differences in race, ethnicity, and age are minimal.

Characteristic	% of all Women	% of all
Black	15%	13%
White	93%	77%
Hispanic Origin*	16%	10%
Under 35 Years	35%	32%
35 years or older	65%	50%

* "Hispanic origin" is a separate category from race. The Hispanic category includes people of any race; the White and Black categories may include people who self-identify as Hispanic.

+ Traditionally female jobs have over 75% female workers.

Women and Nontraditional Work

In the past decade, women have made progress in professional, male-dominated jobs, but have made very few gains in nontraditional blue-collar occupations.

Over the past decade, the greatest increase in the number of women working in nontraditional jobs has been in the managerial and professional occupations.

Most working women (68%) work in jobs that are not in the management or professional category. Yet, gains in those jobs are nonprofessional and nontraditional have been minimal over the past decade.

Managerial/ Professional Occupation	Percent Female		
	1988	1992	2004
Engineer	7.3%	8.5%	11.7%
Lawyer	19.3%	21.4%	33.5%
Physician	19.9%	20.5%	31.2%
Physicist	7.1%	11.1%	- - %

Nonprofessional Occupation	Percent Female		
	1988	1992	2004
Electrician	1.4%	1.2%	2.1%
Truck Driver	4.3%	4.6%	4.5%
Telephone Installer	12.1%	10.5%	13.6%
Automobile Mechanic	0.7%	0.8%	1.3%
Police Officer/ Detective	10.1%	10.6%	13.6%

Why Would a Woman Want a Nontraditional Job?

Nontraditional Jobs pay more- 20 to 30 percent more- than traditionally female jobs.

A women printing machine operator (a nontraditional occupation) earns \$5,876 more per year than a women sewing machine operator (a traditionally female occupation).

Nontraditional jobs can give women greater satisfaction by expanding career opportunities.

Just like men, women's interest and abilities are diverse. By expanding the number of jobs women enter, women are likely to find closer "occupational fit" with their skills and personalities.

Nontraditional jobs tend to have established career ladders- so women can work their way up to higher wages and better benefits.

A telecommunications-installer starts out earning \$10.45 per hour, but advance over the course of a three year apprenticeship to \$19 per hour plus paid benefits when she achieves journey level status.

Nontraditional jobs offer better benefits than traditionally female jobs. Many are unionized.

Nontraditional jobs in the trades and technical fields often come with better health benefits, sick leave and paid vacation than do traditionally female jobs.

How Should a Woman Get Started?

- ◆ Consider the three areas in nontraditional work:
 - a) Professional workers at supervisory or planning level which requires a high level of education. Examples include engineers and architects.
 - b) Technician or Site Supervision including building, surveying, maintenance, etc.
 - c) Construction trades including bricklaying, carpentry, plastering, and plumbing.

- ◆ It is crucial to find the right course. Women can attend a one-day job fair at a college and meet with different trainers and try new skills. Women-only courses are available for those who feel more comfortable. Mixed- classes are also available for those who want to prepare for the work environment.
- ◆ There is time and money available for training. A woman has the option of part-time classes, obtaining full-time grants and loans, and unemployment benefits while training.

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Barriers

Barriers inhibiting entry of women into nontraditional training and employment are complex and interrelated.

SOCIAL / CULTURAL

- ◆ Socialization to traditional female roles
- ◆ Unsupportive family and friends
- ◆ Negative attitudes of classmates and co-workers
- ◆ Lack of self-confidence and assertiveness
- ◆ Lack of female role models
- ◆ Limited experience with tools and mechanical operations

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- ◆ Limited information provided about nontraditional occupations
- ◆ Women and girls too often directed toward traditional classes
- ◆ Lack of support for sex equity efforts by instructors and other personnel
- ◆ Lack of prerequisite classes such as math and science
- ◆ Limited access to on-the-job training and apprenticeships
- ◆ Lack of support services—child care, transportation, etc.
- ◆ Isolation and sexual harassment in classrooms

ON-THE-JOB

- ◆ Discrimination in hiring, firing or promotion on basis of sex, race, age, physical build, ability
- ◆ Isolation and sexual harassment on the worksite
- ◆ Lack of support from some unions
- ◆ Lack of support services

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Women in nontraditional jobs or training are at greater risk of sexual harassment.

- ◆ Unwelcome behaviors can include teasing, jokes, remarks and questions; deliberate touching; letters, telephone calls or material of a sexual nature; pressure for sexual favors; sexual assault.

Sexual harassment is against the law.

- ◆ Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act has been interpreted through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines of 1980 as prohibiting sexual harassment.

Employers can be held liable for sexual harassment.

- ◆ 1986 Supreme Court case established the right to seek legal remedy under Title VII (*Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*).
- ◆ 1991 Supreme Court ruling stated that the display of sexually explicit materials in the workplace can constitute sexual harassment (*Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards*).
- ◆ 1998 Supreme Court cases found employers liable for Supervisors who sexually harass their coworkers (*Burlington Industries Inc. v. Ellerth* and *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*.)

Women can take specific steps when faced with sexual harassment.

- ◆ Tell the harasser to stop the offensive behavior.
- ◆ Document all incidents of harassment.
- ◆ Notify your supervisor, union representative or other appropriate person of the harassment.
- ◆ Know your company or school policy on sexual harassment and follow its procedures.
- ◆ Consider filing a formal grievance of complaint if the above steps do not remedy the situation.
- ◆ Stay on the job.
- ◆ Find support from family, friends or other groups to help you through the situation.

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Strategies

Strategies to overcome barriers must focus on changing institutions and providing individual support to women.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

- ◆ Train teachers, counselors, and program administrators to support access of women and girls to high-wage training and employment.
- ◆ Build the program elements necessary to increase the number of women recruited, trained and placed in nontraditional jobs into all public training programs.
- ◆ Support incentives for training programs and employers that meet or exceed their goals for training and placing women and girls in nontraditional jobs.
- ◆ Promote collaboration among WIA, vocational education, welfare, apprenticeship and training, unions, and sex equity programs, and between employers and enforcement personnel.
- ◆ Monitor local and state expenditures and policies for job training and vocational education to see that adequate support exists for training women and girls in nontraditional careers.
- ◆ Establish new and protect existing legislation at the federal and state level designed to increase women's participation in high-wage, high-demand jobs.
- ◆ Assure effective implementation of the NTO training provision under TEA-21 and the National Affordable Housing Reauthorization Act

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- ◆ Provide career counseling that includes career and wage information and role models.
- ◆ Include pre-vocational training, such as tool identification and physical conditioning, in program curriculum.
- ◆ Train women and girls in the "survival skills" necessary to work in male-dominated jobs, including how to handle sexual harassment.
- ◆ Organize support groups and mentoring programs for women and girls in nontraditional jobs or training programs.
- ◆ Work with employers and unions to prepare the workplace to successfully receive and retain women in nontraditional jobs.
- ◆ Educate girls about the wages necessary to be self-sufficient and how nontraditional jobs can provide income to help meet their needs as adults.