

### Employment outlook: 2002–12

# Labor force projections to 2012: the graying of the U.S. workforce

*The labor force will continue to age, with the annual growth rate of the 55-years-and-older group projected to be nearly 4 times that of the overall labor force; as the participation rates of older age groups increase, the older population's share of the workforce will rise*

Mitra Toossi

This article examines projected trends in the labor force over the 2002–12 period. By 2012, the number of persons working or looking for work is expected to reach 162.3 million. The labor force is anticipated to exhibit steady growth and increase by 17.4 million, or 12 percent, over the 2002 figure. The growth in the labor force during 2002–12 is projected to be larger than in the previous 10-year period, 1992–2002, when the labor force grew by 14.4 million, or 11.3 percent.

The annual rate of growth in the women's labor force is expected to remain the same as it was during the 1992–2002 period, namely, 1.3 percent, but it will still increase at a faster rate than that of men. (See table 1.) The men's labor force is expected to grow at an annual rate of 1.0 percent, more rapidly than the growth rate in the 1992–2002 period, even though the aggregate labor force participation rate for men is projected to continue to decline. Women's share of the labor force is expected to increase from 46.5 percent in 2002 to 47.5 percent in 2012. By contrast, men's share is projected to decline from 53.5 percent in 2002 to 52.5 percent in 2012.

The projected labor force growth will be affected by the aging of the baby-boom generation—persons born between 1946 and 1964. In 2012, the baby-boom cohort will be 48 to 66 years. This age group is expected to show sig-

nificant growth over the 2002–12 period. The labor force will continue to age, with the annual growth rate of the 55-and-older group projected to be 4.1 percent, nearly 4 times the rate of growth of the overall labor force. It is anticipated that, in 2012, youths will constitute 15 percent of the labor force, and prime-age workers—those between the ages of 25 and 54—will make up about 66 percent of the labor force. The share of the 55-and-older age group will increase from 14.3 percent to 19.1 percent of the labor force.

As a result of divergent rates of population growth in the past, racial and Hispanic-origin groups are projected to continue to show widely varied rates of growth. By 2012, due to faster population growth resulting from a younger population, higher fertility rates, and increased immigration levels, the Hispanic labor force is expected to reach 23.8 million. Despite slower-than-average growth, white non-Hispanics will continue to make up about 66 percent of the labor force.

Every 2 years, the Bureau of Labor Statistics produces medium-term, or 10-year, labor force projections. The present set of projections covers the 2002–12 period and estimates the future size and composition of the labor force.<sup>1</sup> The labor force projections are used as input in projecting the industrial and occu-

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**Table 1. Civilian labor force by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Level					Change			Percent change		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights							
Total, 16 years and older .....	110,204	128,105	142,534	144,863	162,269	17,901	14,429	17,406	16.2	11.3	12.0
16 to 24 .....	24,606	21,616	22,425	22,366	24,377	-2,990	809	2,011	-12.2	3.7	9.0
25 to 54 .....	70,506	91,429	99,865	101,720	106,866	20,923	8,436	5,146	29.7	9.2	5.1
55 and older .....	15,092	15,060	20,244	20,777	31,026	-32	5,184	10,249	-2	34.4	49.3
Men .....	62,450	69,964	76,052	77,500	85,252	7,514	6,088	7,751	12.0	8.7	10.0
Women .....	47,754	58,141	66,481	67,363	77,017	10,387	8,340	9,654	21.8	14.3	14.3
One race:											
White .....	96,143	108,837	118,569	120,150	130,358	12,694	9,732	10,208	13.2	8.9	8.5
Black .....	11,331	14,162	16,834	16,564	19,765	2,831	2,672	3,201	25.0	18.9	19.3
Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	2,730	5,106	7,130	5,949	8,971	2,376	2,024	3,022	87.0	39.6	50.8
All other groups <sup>2</sup> .....	...	...	...	2,200	3,175	...	...	975	...	...	44.3
Hispanic origin .....	6,734	11,338	16,200	17,942	23,785	4,604	4,862	5,843	68.4	42.9	32.6
Other than Hispanic origin .....	103,470	116,767	126,334	126,921	138,484	13,297	9,567	11,562	12.9	8.2	9.1
White non-Hispanic .....	89,630	98,724	103,360	103,348	106,237	9,094	4,636	2,889	10.1	4.7	2.8

See footnotes at end of table.

patational employment patterns of the U.S. economy.

The labor force projections are estimated by combining population projections calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau with the labor force participation rate projections developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the labor force is a reflection of changes in either the population trend or the labor force participation rate. Changes in the labor force are better understood if they are decomposed into these two components, each of which is therefore discussed separately in what follows.

### Population projections

The population projections provided to the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Census Bureau for this round of projections were based on the 2000 census of the U.S. population (hereafter referred to as Census 2000; see box on this page). The Census Bureau makes several alternative population projections based on different assumptions about future fertility, mortality, and migration. The Bureau of Labor Statistics selects the middle-series scenario of the population projections as a basis for its labor force projections. The main assumptions of the middle series are as follows:

- The level of childbearing among women is assumed to remain close to the present levels, with differences by race and Hispanic origin diminishing over time.

- Mortality is assumed to decline gradually, with less variation by race and Hispanic origin than at present.
- International migration is assumed to vary over

### Census 2000 and the U.S. population

Census 2000 counted 281.4 million people in the United States, a 13.2-percent increase over the 1990-census population of 248.7 million. Numerically, the increase was 32.7 million, the largest between two censuses. In April 1999, the Census Bureau had estimated that the U.S. population would reach 274.6 million in 2000. Although the difference between the estimates and the projections—the so-called error of closure—was a considerable 6.8 million, Census 2000 resulted in a more accurate count and higher population controls for all racial, sex, age, and ethnicity categories. According to Census 2000, the number of Hispanics had grown substantially from the previous census, making Hispanics the largest minority in the U.S. population. This higher population count was reflected most significantly among Hispanic men and in the younger age category of 18 to 29 years. (More information is available on the Census Bureau website, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/popproj.html>.)

**Table 1. Continued—Civilian labor force by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Percent distribution					Annual growth rate (percent)		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights				
Total, 16 years and older .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.5	1.1	1.1
16 to 24 .....	22.3	16.9	15.7	15.4	15.0	-1.3	.4	.9
25 to 54 .....	64.0	71.4	70.1	70.2	65.9	2.6	.9	.5
55 and older .....	13.7	11.8	14.2	14.3	19.1	.0	3.0	4.1
Men .....	56.7	54.6	53.4	53.5	52.5	1.1	.8	1.0
Women .....	43.3	45.4	46.6	46.5	47.5	2.0	1.3	1.3
One race:								
White .....	87.2	85.0	83.2	82.9	80.3	1.2	.9	.8
Black .....	10.3	11.1	11.8	11.4	12.2	2.3	1.7	1.8
Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	2.5	4.0	5.0	4.1	5.5	6.5	3.4	4.2
All other groups <sup>2</sup> .....	...	...	...	1.5	2.0	...	...	3.7
Hispanic origin .....	6.1	8.9	11.4	12.4	14.7	5.3	3.6	2.9
Other than Hispanic origin .....	93.9	91.1	88.6	87.6	85.3	1.2	.8	.9
White non-Hispanic .....	81.3	77.1	72.5	71.3	65.5	1.0	.5	.3

<sup>1</sup> Data for 1982 and 1992 represent the “Asian and other” category with 1990 census weights. Data for 2002 with 1990 census weights represent the “Asian and other” category. Data for 2002 with 2000 census weights represent the “Asian only” category. Data for 2012 represent the “Asian only” category with 2000 census weights.

<sup>2</sup> The “All other groups” category includes those reporting the racial categories of (1a) American Indian and Alaska Native or (1b) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders and those reporting (2) two or more races. The category was not defined prior to 2003. Data for 2002 were calculated by BLS.

time and decrease, in general, relative to the size of the population.<sup>3</sup>

## Race and ethnicity projections

To comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and other domestic laws, Federal agencies, including the Census Bureau, are required to collect data on race and ethnicity. The number of racial categories has gone through numerous changes between the censuses. The categories established by the Office of Management and Budget prior to Census 2000 were “white,” “black,” and “Asian and other.” American Indians/Alaska Natives and Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders constituted the “other” part of the “Asian and other” category.

The 2000 census allowed persons to choose more than one racial identity. Thus, the 2000 census uses the following racial categories: “white (only),” “black (only),” “Asian (only),” “American Indian or Alaska Native,” and “Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander.” The term “only” refers to those who selected one race. Anyone who indicated that he or she was of more than one race was categorized as belonging to a multiple racial group.<sup>4</sup> As a result of these changes, the 1990 and 2000 censuses are not directly comparable with regard to racial categories of population and the labor force. There are

no historical data for the new categories, causing breaks in the continuity of old categories. This situation has presented the Bureau of Labor Statistics with great challenges in the process of constructing labor force projections.

*Problem of historical comparability.* The Current Population Survey (CPS) is the source of historical data on the civilian noninstitutional population, labor force levels, and labor force participation rates used in BLS labor force projections.<sup>5</sup> Although the CPS totals have been adjusted for the 2000 census, the actual transition to 2000-based racial categories began with the January 2003 release of CPS data.

The new racial categories are not exactly the same as those used in the past, but they are close enough to allow the development of time series of labor force participation rates as a basis for projecting these rates over the 2002–12 period. On the basis of projections of both the population and labor force participation rates of the new racial and ethnicity categories, labor force levels are projected for the various groups. However, the levels calculated under the new categories will not be the same as under the old ones. For example, the “white only,” “black only,” and “Asian only” groups in 2000-based actual and projected data are not directly comparable to the white, black, and “Asian and other” groups, respectively, in the historical data. In particular, the

**Table 2. Civilian noninstitutional population by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Level				Change			Annual growth rate			Percent distribution					
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12	1982	1992	2002		2012
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights										1990 census weights	2000 census weights	
Total, 16 years and older .....	172,271	192,805	213,976	217,570	241,604	20,534	21,171	24,034	1.1	1.0	1.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
16 to 24 .....	36,608	32,687	35,458	35,343	37,833	-3,921	2,771	2,490	-1.1	.8	.7	21.3	17.0	16.6	16.2	15.7
16 to 19 .....	15,763	13,840	16,223	15,995	16,433	-1,923	2,383	438	-1.3	1.6	.3	9.2	7.2	7.6	7.4	6.8
20 to 24 .....	20,845	18,846	19,235	19,348	21,400	-1,999	389	2,052	-1.0	.2	1.0	12.1	9.8	9.0	8.9	8.9
25 to 54 .....	88,367	109,336	119,849	122,076	125,594	20,969	10,513	3,518	2.2	.9	.3	51.3	56.7	56.0	56.1	52.0
25 to 34 .....	38,492	42,278	36,857	38,471	41,510	3,786	-5,421	3,039	.9	-1.4	.8	22.3	21.9	17.2	17.7	17.2
35 to 44 .....	27,611	39,852	43,954	43,894	40,043	12,241	4,102	-3,851	3.7	1.0	-0.9	16.0	20.7	20.5	20.2	16.6
45 to 54 .....	22,264	27,206	39,038	39,711	44,040	4,942	11,832	4,329	2.0	3.7	1.0	12.9	14.1	18.2	18.3	18.2
55 and older .....	47,297	50,783	58,669	60,151	78,178	3,486	7,886	18,027	.7	1.5	2.7	27.5	26.3	27.4	27.6	32.4
55 to 64 .....	21,909	20,604	25,662	26,343	37,829	-1,305	5,058	11,486	-6	2.2	3.7	12.7	10.7	12.0	12.1	15.7
65 and older .....	25,387	30,179	33,007	33,808	40,349	4,792	2,828	6,541	1.7	.9	1.8	14.7	15.7	15.4	15.5	16.7
65 to 74 .....	15,856	18,012	17,635	17,999	22,924	2,156	-378	4,925	1.3	-2	2.4	9.2	9.3	8.2	8.3	9.5
75 and older .....	9,556	12,167	15,373	15,809	17,426	2,611	3,206	1,617	2.4	2.4	1.0	5.5	6.3	7.2	7.3	7.2
Men, 16 years and older .....	81,523	92,270	102,925	104,585	116,634	10,747	10,655	12,049	1.2	1.1	1.1	47.3	47.9	48.1	48.1	48.3
16 to 24 .....	18,015	16,349	17,798	17,773	18,973	-1,666	1,449	1,200	-1.0	.9	.7	10.5	8.5	8.3	8.2	7.9
16 to 19 .....	7,879	7,023	8,250	8,146	8,319	-856	1,227	173	-1.1	1.6	.2	4.6	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.4
20 to 24 .....	10,136	9,326	9,548	9,627	10,654	-810	222	1,027	-8	.2	1.0	5.9	4.8	4.5	4.4	4.4
25 to 54 .....	42,923	53,648	58,736	59,939	61,988	10,725	5,088	2,049	2.3	.9	.3	24.9	27.8	27.4	27.5	25.7
25 to 34 .....	18,787	20,792	18,013	19,036	20,620	2,005	-2,779	1,584	1.0	-4	.8	10.9	10.8	8.4	8.7	8.5
35 to 44 .....	13,410	19,585	21,665	21,524	19,775	6,175	2,080	-1,749	3.9	1.0	-8	7.8	10.2	10.1	9.9	8.2
45 to 54 .....	10,726	13,271	19,058	19,379	21,594	2,545	5,787	2,215	2.2	3.7	1.1	6.2	6.9	8.9	8.9	8.9
55 and older .....	20,586	22,273	26,392	26,873	35,673	1,687	4,119	8,800	.8	1.7	2.9	11.9	11.6	12.3	12.4	14.8
55 to 64 .....	10,215	9,776	12,267	12,640	18,184	-439	2,491	5,544	-4	2.3	3.7	5.9	5.1	5.7	5.8	7.5
65 and older .....	10,371	12,496	14,124	14,233	17,489	2,125	1,628	3,256	1.9	1.2	2.1	6.0	6.5	6.6	6.5	7.2
65 to 74 .....	6,867	7,969	8,045	8,160	10,583	1,102	76	2,423	1.5	.1	2.6	4.0	4.1	3.8	3.8	4.4
75 and older .....	3,504	4,527	6,079	6,073	6,906	1,023	1,552	833	2.6	3.0	1.3	2.0	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.9
Women, 16 years and older .....	90,748	100,535	111,051	112,985	124,971	9,787	10,516	11,986	1.0	1.0	1.0	52.7	52.1	51.9	51.9	51.7
16 to 24 .....	18,593	16,338	17,660	17,570	18,860	-2,255	1,322	1,290	-1.3	.8	.7	10.8	8.5	8.3	8.1	7.8
16 to 19 .....	7,884	6,818	7,973	7,849	8,114	-1,066	1,155	265	-1.4	1.6	.3	4.6	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.4
20 to 24 .....	10,709	9,520	9,688	9,721	10,746	-1,189	168	1,025	-1.2	.2	1.0	6.2	4.9	4.5	4.5	4.4
25 to 54 .....	45,444	55,688	61,113	62,137	63,606	10,244	5,425	1,469	2.1	.9	.2	26.4	28.9	28.6	28.6	26.3
25 to 34 .....	19,705	21,486	18,844	19,435	20,891	1,781	-2,642	1,456	.9	-1.3	.7	11.4	11.1	8.8	8.9	8.6
35 to 44 .....	14,201	20,267	22,289	22,370	20,269	6,066	2,022	-2,101	3.6	1.0	-1.0	8.2	10.5	10.4	10.3	8.4
45 to 54 .....	11,538	13,935	19,980	20,332	22,446	2,397	6,045	2,114	1.9	3.7	1.0	6.7	7.2	9.3	9.3	9.3
55 and older .....	26,711	28,510	32,277	33,278	42,505	1,799	3,767	9,227	.7	1.2	2.5	15.5	14.8	15.1	15.3	17.6
55 to 64 .....	11,694	10,828	13,395	13,703	19,645	-866	2,567	5,942	-8	2.1	3.7	6.8	5.6	6.3	6.3	8.1
65 and older .....	15,017	17,682	18,883	19,575	22,861	2,665	1,201	3,286	1.6	.7	1.6	8.7	9.2	8.8	9.0	9.5
65 to 74 .....	8,989	10,043	9,589	9,839	12,341	1,054	-454	2,502	1.1	-5	2.3	5.2	5.2	4.5	4.5	5.1
75 and older .....	6,052	7,640	9,293	9,736	10,519	1,588	1,653	783	2.4	2.0	.8	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.5	4.4

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Continued—Civilian noninstitutional population by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Level					Change			Annual growth rate			Percent distribution				
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12	1982	1992	2002		2012
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights										1990 census weights	2000 census weights	
White, 16 years and older .....	149,441	162,972	177,313	179,783	193,831	13,531	14,341	14,048	0.9	0.8	0.8	86.7	84.5	82.9	82.6	80.2
Men .....	71,211	78,651	86,160	87,361	94,647	7,440	7,509	7,286	1.0	1.0	.8	41.3	40.8	40.3	40.2	39.2
Women .....	78,230	84,321	91,152	92,422	99,184	6,091	6,831	6,762	.8	.8	.7	45.4	43.7	42.6	42.5	41.1
Black, 16 years and older .....	18,584	22,147	25,956	25,578	29,800	3,563	3,809	4,222	1.8	1.6	1.5	10.8	11.5	12.1	11.8	12.3
Men .....	8,283	9,896	11,657	11,391	13,486	1,613	1,761	2,095	1.8	1.7	1.7	4.8	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.6
Women .....	10,300	12,251	14,299	14,187	16,314	1,951	2,048	2,127	1.7	1.6	1.4	6.0	6.4	6.7	6.5	6.8
Asian, 16 years and older .....	4,211	7,685	10,707	8,971	11,877	3,474	3,022	2,906	6.2	3.4	2.8	2.4	4.0	5.0	4.1	4.9
Men .....	1,991	3,721	5,108	4,252	5,507	1,730	1,387	1,255	6.5	3.2	2.6	1.2	1.9	2.4	2.0	2.3
Women .....	2,220	3,964	5,599	4,719	6,370	1,744	1,635	1,651	6.0	3.5	3.0	1.3	2.1	2.6	2.2	2.6
All other groups, 16 years and older <sup>2</sup> .....	...	...	...	4,728	6,097	...	...	1,369	...	...	2.6	...	...	...	2.2	2.5
Men .....	...	...	...	2,309	2,994	...	...	685	...	...	2.6	...	...	...	1.1	1.2
Women .....	...	...	...	2,419	3,103	...	...	684	...	...	2.5	...	...	...	1.1	1.3
Hispanic origin, 16 years and older .....	10,580	16,961	23,899	25,965	34,561	6,381	6,938	8,596	4.8	3.5	2.9	6.1	8.8	11.2	11.9	14.3
Men .....	5,203	8,553	11,767	13,221	17,298	3,350	3,214	4,077	5.1	3.2	2.7	3.0	4.4	5.5	6.1	7.2
Women .....	5,360	8,408	12,131	12,742	17,263	3,048	3,723	4,521	4.6	3.7	3.1	3.1	4.4	5.7	5.9	7.1
Other than Hispanic origin, 16 years and older .....	161,691	175,844	190,077	191,605	207,043	14,153	14,233	15,438	.8	.8	.8	93.9	91.2	88.8	88.1	85.7
Men .....	76,320	83,717	91,158	91,364	99,335	7,397	7,441	7,971	.9	.9	.8	44.3	43.4	42.6	42.0	41.1
Women .....	85,388	92,127	98,919	100,243	107,708	6,739	6,792	7,465	.8	.7	.7	49.6	47.8	46.2	46.1	44.6
White non-Hispanic, 16 and older .....	139,201	148,029	154,818	155,458	161,729	8,828	6,790	6,271	.6	.4	.4	80.8	76.8	72.4	71.5	66.9
Men .....	66,177	71,076	75,070	74,956	78,542	4,898	3,995	3,586	.7	.5	.5	38.4	36.9	35.1	34.5	32.5
Women .....	73,024	76,953	79,748	80,502	83,187	3,929	2,795	2,685	.5	.4	.3	42.4	39.9	37.3	37.0	34.4
Age of baby boomers .....	18 to 36	28 to 46	38 to 56	38 to 56	48 to 66	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

<sup>1</sup> Data for 1982 and 1992 represent the “Asian and other” category with 1990 census weights. Data for 2002 with 1990 census weights represent the “Asian and other” category. Data for 2002 with 2000 census weights represent the “Asian only” category. Data for 2012 represent the “Asian only” category with 2000 census weights.

<sup>2</sup> The “All other groups” category includes those reporting the racial categories of (1a) American Indian and Alaska Native or (1b) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders and those reporting (2) two or more races. The category was not defined prior to 2003. Data for 2002 were calculated by BLS.

sum of the three new one-race groups will not add to the total, because there is a residual comprising “all other racial groups,” a category that includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, as well as those reporting that they belong to multiple racial groups.

### Trends in Population

Table 2 provides a snapshot of the U.S. population at 10-year intervals over the 1982–2012 period. The civilian noninstitutional population is expected to continue to grow at 1.1 percent

annually during the 2002–12 projection period, reaching 241.6 million in 2012.

Beginning with the 20th century, several demographic events have had significant impacts on the size, composition, and growth of the population:

- High rates of reproduction for the population born prior to the 1920s, plus high immigration from Europe (chiefly from Italy, Ireland, and Poland) that occurred in the first two decades of the 20th century.
- The “birth dearth” of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The effect of the birth dearth is reflected in the declining number of persons aged 55 to 64 years from 1982 to 1992 and the drop in the number of those aged 65 to 74 years from 1992 to 2002. In 2002–12, the birth dearth is manifested in the slow growth of the 75-and-older age group.
- The “baby boom” starting in 1946 and lasting until 1964—a period of 18 years. The impact of this surge in the population level can be traced by following the movements of the baby-boom generation through age groups with the greatest increase in each period. For example, the 35- to 44-year age group increased most significantly (almost 12.2 million) over the 1982–92 period, and the 45- to 54-year age group had its greatest increase (nearly 11.8 million) over the 1992–2002 period. For the 2002–12 projection period, persons aged 55 to 64 years include the boomers and are expected to have the greatest growth in population, 11.5 million.
- The “baby bust,” reflecting the drop in birthrates after 1965 and through the 1970s. The population in the age group following the baby boomers, including those aged 16 to 24 years in 1982–92, 25 to 34 years from 1992 to 2002, and 35 to 44 years in the 2002–12 projection period, show declining numbers. From 2002 to 2012, the number of persons aged 35 to 44 years is expected to decline by 3.8 million. This same age group increased by 12.2 million during 1982–92, when it contained a high concentration of baby boomers.
- The “baby-boom echo,” reflecting a modest increase in births from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. The baby-boom echo is traceable to the increase in births of the women of the baby-boom generation and is reflected in the growth of the population aged 16 to 24 years during 2002–12.
- The massive migration to the United States that started in the 1970s and is continuing today. The dramatic increase in the immigrant population has resulted

in higher growth rates for the U.S. population. In addition, because all children born to immigrants in the United States are, by definition, natives, immigration has resulted in increased fertility rates for specific groups, again adding to the growth of the population.

The estimated future trends in the civilian noninstitutional population are based on the Census Bureau’s middle population projection assumptions and reflect all of the foregoing demographic events. The Census Bureau provides the Bureau of Labor Statistics with an estimate of the future resident population. The Bureau of Labor Statistics then transforms the projections for the resident population to a projection of the civilian noninstitutional population by making several adjustments to the data. First, the Bureau estimates trends in the Armed Forces, to produce an estimate of the civilian population. Then, on the basis of another set of assumptions about the institutionalization of the different categories of population, the civilian population is transformed to the civilian noninstitutional population for the years covered by the BLS projections.

Table 2 shows the two estimates of the 2002 civilian noninstitutional population, one with the 1990 census weights and one with the 2000 census weights. In accordance with the 2000 weights, the civilian noninstitutional population was 217.6 million in 2002 and is projected to reach nearly 242 million, in 2012. The share of youths—persons aged 16 to 24 years—was 16.2 percent in 2002 and is projected to decrease to 15.7 percent in 2012. The working-age population (those aged 25 to 54 years) also will decrease in share, from 56 percent in 2002 to 52 percent in 2012. The older age segment of the civilian noninstitutional population, those aged 55 years and older, will increase its relative share, from 27.6 percent to more than 32 percent. The fastest-growing age category is the 55-to-64 age group, with 3.7 percent annual growth, followed by the 65-to-74 age group, with 2.4 percent growth.

As regards the sex categories, the civilian noninstitutional population of men stood at 104.6 million in 2002 and is projected to be 116.6 million in 2012, 48 percent of the total civilian noninstitutional population that year. The women’s civilian noninstitutional population was around 113 million in 2002 and is projected to be nearly 125 million in 2012, 52 percent of the total civilian noninstitutional population that year. In 2012, the civilian noninstitutional population of women will thus be nearly 8 million more than men.

Census 2000 resulted in higher numbers than previous estimates for the total population and for some segments of the population. The group most affected was Hispanics, especially the younger age groups, which showed much higher population numbers. The Hispanic population was nearly 26 million in 2002 and is projected to increase to nearly 35 million in 2012, a growth rate of 2.9 percent, much faster than the

white non-Hispanic growth rate of 0.4 percent, over the 2002–12 period.

The youth population, aged 16 to 24 years, is expected to grow 0.7 percent annually. The population of the 55-and-older age group is projected to increase by 18 million over the projection period, or 2.7 percent per year. Those aged 55 to 64 are estimated to increase by 11.5 million over the period, or 3.7 percent annually, a rate higher than that of all other age groups. As a result of the birth dearth that followed the baby boom, the 35-to-44 age group will be the only group to decrease in numbers.

## The impact of migration

Among the three major components of national population change—births, deaths, and international migration—the last is hardest to project, in large part because international migration is affected by many factors, some of which are difficult to predict. The Census Bureau uses age- and sex-specific rates from the 1980s to project net migration as a basis for its population projections. However, overall net migration still would account for a sizable proportion of the net population growth over the projected 2002–12 period.

Migration affects the demographic composition of the population in several ways. (See table 2.) The first is reflected in the rapid growth rate of some of the racial and ethnic categories, such as the Hispanic population. The projected growth rates for some of these racial groups are expected to be greater than they were the previous decade, increasing the groups' shares of the labor force.

The second way migration affects the composition of the population is by age distribution. For example, persons aged 25 to 34 years numbered 38.5 million in 1982. Ten years later, this same cohort was even larger, nearly 40 million. Similarly, the number of persons aged 20 to 24 years grew from almost 21 million to slightly more than 42 million 10 years later. Because everyone in these age groups has already been born, an increase in births does not affect the size of the groups. The only way these cohorts could increase their numbers is through net migration. Thus, the population at these relatively young age cohorts is significantly affected by migration.<sup>6</sup> The increase in immigration levels since the mid-1980s was at least partially the result of the provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. As the immigrants admitted into the country under the Act became citizens, they could sponsor the legal immigration of immediate relatives without being subject to numerical limits.

## Labor force participation rates

The labor force participation rates—the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population in the labor force—by age,

sex, race, and Hispanic origin are shown in table 3. The Census 2000 changes in the racial categories affected both population and labor force data in a comparable fashion. Therefore, it did not generally affect the observed trends in the labor force participation rates in any considerable way.

*Participation rates by age.* The youth labor force, consisting of persons aged 16 to 24 years, had a participation rate of 63.3 percent in 2002. The participation rate of this age group is expected to rise slightly, to 64.4 percent, in 2012. School attendance has been the main reason for the group's relatively low participation rate. Within the group, the participation rate for those aged 20 to 24 years is expected to rise from 76.4 percent to 78.2 percent.

The participation rate is highest among 25- to 54-year-olds; the group's rate has been higher than 80 percent for the last several decades. The participation rate of this group is projected to rise to 85.1 percent in 2012, from 83.3 percent in 2002.

Labor force participation rates generally decline dramatically for the 55-and-older age group relative to other age groups. The participation rate for these older persons historically had been declining until 1985. Since then, the 55-to-64 age group increased its participation rate from 55.1 percent in 1982 to 56.2 percent in 1992. The rate rose to 61.9 percent in 2002 and is expected to reach 65.1 percent by 2012. The 65-to-74 age group had a participation rate of 16.2 percent in 1982. The rate increased to 20.4 percent in 2000 and is projected to rise to 23.6 percent by 2012.

*Participation rates by sex and age.* The labor force participation rates of men always have been higher than those of women, both at the aggregate level and for the various age groups. As table 3 illustrates, the gap between the labor force participation rates of men and women has been shrinking for decades, reflected in the two groups' different trends in participation rates. In general, except for those 55 years and older, the rates for men have been declining. The overall labor force participation rate of men stood at 76.6 in 1982 and fell to 75.8 in 1992. In 2002, the participation rate of men declined further, to 74.1. The men's participation rate is expected to continue to decrease and reach 73.1 in 2012. In contrast, the rates for women have been increasing over these periods. The overall labor force participation rate of women was 52.6 percent in 1982, increasing to 57.8 percent in 1992 and 59.6 percent in 2002. The labor force participation rate of women is projected to be 61.6 percent in 2012. The labor force participation rate of women 55 years and older is expected to be 34.5 percent in 2012. Included in this age group are women 55 to 64 years, whose participation rate has the highest percentage-point change between 2002 and 2012. These women are projected to have a 60.6-percent participation rate in 2012.

The age-specific participation rates of men have been decreasing across many age groups; as a result, the aggregate

**Table 3. Civilian labor force participation rates by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

Group	Participation rate					Percentage-point change			Annual growth rate		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights							
Total, 16 years and older .....	64.0	66.4	66.6	66.6	67.2	2.5	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.1
16 to 24 .....	67.2	66.1	63.2	63.3	64.4	-1.1	-2.9	1.2	-2	-4	.2
16 to 19 .....	54.1	51.3	47.6	47.4	46.5	-2.8	-3.7	-1.0	-5	-7	-2
20 to 24 .....	77.2	77.1	76.4	76.4	78.2	-.1	-.6	1.8	.0	-.1	.2
25 to 54 .....	79.8	83.6	83.3	83.3	85.1	3.8	-.3	1.8	.5	.0	.2
25 to 34 .....	81.0	83.7	83.6	83.7	85.3	2.6	.0	1.6	.3	.0	.2
35 to 44 .....	81.2	85.1	84.2	84.1	86.0	3.8	-.9	1.9	.5	-.1	.2
45 to 54 .....	75.9	81.5	82.1	82.1	84.1	5.6	.6	2.0	.7	.1	.2
55 and older .....	31.9	29.7	34.5	34.5	39.7	-2.3	4.9	5.1	-.7	1.5	1.4
55 to 64 .....	55.1	56.2	61.8	61.9	65.1	1.2	5.6	3.2	.2	1.0	.5
65 and older .....	11.9	11.5	13.3	13.2	15.9	-.4	1.8	2.7	-.4	1.4	1.9
65 to 74 .....	16.2	16.3	20.4	20.4	23.6	.1	4.1	3.2	.1	2.3	1.5
75 and older .....	4.9	4.5	5.1	5.1	5.7	-.4	.7	.7	-.9	1.4	1.2
Men, 16 years and older .....	76.6	75.8	73.9	74.1	73.1	-.8	-1.9	-1.0	-.1	-.3	-.1
16 to 24 .....	72.6	70.5	65.3	65.5	65.7	-2.1	-5.2	.2	-.3	-.8	.0
16 to 19 .....	56.7	53.4	47.6	47.5	45.6	-3.3	-5.8	-1.9	-.6	-1.1	-.4
20 to 24 .....	84.9	83.3	80.6	80.7	81.4	-1.6	-2.7	.7	-.2	-.3	.1
25 to 54 .....	94.0	93.0	91.0	91.0	91.0	-1.0	-2.0	.0	-.1	-.2	.0
25 to 34 .....	94.7	93.8	92.4	92.4	92.5	-.9	-1.4	.0	-.1	-.2	.0
35 to 44 .....	95.3	93.7	92.1	92.1	92.3	-1.6	-1.6	.1	-.2	-.2	.0
45 to 54 .....	91.2	90.7	88.5	88.5	88.6	-.5	-2.3	.1	-.1	-.3	.0
55 and older .....	43.8	38.4	41.7	42.0	45.8	-5.4	3.2	3.8	-1.3	.8	.9
55 to 64 .....	70.2	67.0	69.2	69.2	69.9	-3.2	2.2	.7	-.5	.3	.1
65 and older .....	17.8	16.1	17.8	17.9	20.8	-1.7	1.7	3.0	-1.0	1.1	1.5
65 to 74 .....	22.5	21.1	25.4	25.5	29.1	-1.4	4.3	3.6	-.7	1.9	1.3
75 and older .....	8.5	7.3	7.6	7.6	8.2	-1.2	.4	.5	-1.5	.5	.7
Women, 16 years and older .....	52.6	57.8	59.9	59.6	61.6	5.2	2.0	2.0	.9	.3	.3
16 to 24 .....	62.0	61.8	61.2	61.1	63.2	-.2	-.6	2.1	.0	-.1	.3
16 to 19 .....	51.4	49.1	47.6	47.3	47.4	-2.4	-1.4	.1	-.5	-.3	.0
20 to 24 .....	69.8	70.9	72.3	72.1	75.1	1.1	1.4	3.0	.2	.2	.4
25 to 54 .....	66.3	74.6	76.0	75.9	79.3	8.3	1.4	3.4	1.2	.2	.4
25 to 34 .....	68.0	73.9	75.3	75.1	78.2	5.9	1.4	3.1	.8	.2	.4
35 to 44 .....	68.0	76.7	76.5	76.4	79.9	8.8	-.2	3.4	1.2	.0	.4
45 to 54 .....	61.6	72.6	76.0	76.0	79.8	11.0	3.3	3.8	1.7	.5	.5
55 and older .....	22.7	22.8	28.7	28.5	34.5	.1	5.9	6.0	.0	2.3	1.9
55 to 64 .....	41.8	46.5	55.1	55.2	60.6	4.7	8.6	5.4	1.1	1.7	.9
65 and older .....	7.9	8.3	9.9	9.8	12.1	.4	1.6	2.3	.5	1.8	2.1
65 to 74 .....	11.3	12.5	16.1	16.1	18.9	1.1	3.7	2.8	1.0	2.6	1.6
75 and older .....	2.8	2.8	3.5	3.5	4.1	.0	.7	.6	.1	2.3	1.7

See footnote at end of table.



**Table 3. Continued—Civilian labor force participation rates by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

Group	Participation rate					Percentage-point change			Annual growth rate		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights							
White, 16 years and older .....	64.3	66.8	66.9	66.8	66.2	2.4	0.1	-0.6	0.4	0.0	-0.1
Men .....	77.4	76.5	74.6	74.8	73.5	-.9	-1.9	-1.2	-.1	-.3	-.2
Women .....	52.4	57.7	59.6	59.3	59.2	5.3	1.9	-.1	1.0	.3	.0
Black, 16 years and older .....	61.0	63.9	64.9	64.8	66.3	3.0	.9	1.6	.5	.1	.2
Men .....	70.1	70.7	66.4	68.4	69.1	.6	-4.3	.7	.1	-.6	.1
Women .....	53.7	58.5	62.0	61.8	64.0	4.8	3.5	2.2	.9	.6	.4
Asian, 16 years and older .....	64.8	66.5	66.6	66.3	68.7	1.7	.1	2.4	.3	.0	.4
Men .....	76.0	75.2	75.2	75.6	77.3	-.7	-.1	1.7	-.1	.0	.2
Women .....	54.8	58.2	58.8	57.9	61.3	3.5	.5	3.4	.6	.1	.6
Hispanic origin, 16 years and older ..	63.6	66.8	67.8	69.1	68.8	3.2	.9	-.3	.5	.1	.0
Men .....	79.5	80.7	78.8	80.2	79.0	1.2	-1.9	-1.2	.1	-.2	-.1
Women .....	48.2	52.8	57.1	57.5	58.6	4.5	4.3	1.0	.9	.8	.2
Other than Hispanic origin, 16 years and older .....	64.0	66.4	66.5	72.3	66.9	2.4	.1	-5.4	0.4	.0	-.8
Men .....	76.4	75.3	73.3	78.3	72.1	-1.1	-2.1	-6.3	-.1	-.3	-.8
Women .....	52.9	58.3	60.2	66.7	62.1	5.4	1.9	-4.6	1.0	.3	-.7
White non-Hispanic, 16 years and older ..	64.4	66.7	66.8	66.5	65.7	2.3	.1	-.8	0.4	.0	-.1
Men .....	77.2	76.0	73.9	73.8	72.4	-1.3	-2.0	-1.4	-.2	-.3	-.2
Women .....	52.7	58.1	60.0	59.6	59.4	5.5	1.9	-.3	1.0	.3	.0

<sup>1</sup> Data for 1982 and 1992 represent the “Asian and other” category with 1990 census weights. Data for 2002 with 1990 census weights represent the “Asian and other” category. Data for 2002 with 2000 census weights represent the “Asian only” category. Data for 2012 represent the “Asian only” category with 2000 census weights.

NOTE: Because the transition to 2000-based racial categories began with the January 2003 cps data, the labor force participation rate of the “All other groups” category was not calculated.

labor force participation rates of men have consistently moved downward. The labor force participation rate for men 65 years and older began to increase in the 1980s. The labor force participation rate for men 65 to 74 years increased by 4.3 percentage points from 1992 to 2002, reversing a trend dating back to 1890. This group’s labor force participation rate is projected to be 29.1 percent in 2012, up 3.6 percentage points from the 2002 figure.

The overall expansion of the U.S. economy over the past several decades, the provision of inflation-adjusted Social Security and Medicare benefits, and the growth of pensions and nonpension assets has provided more people with an adequate standard of living in retirement. All these factors may explain the declining labor force participation of men, particularly aged 65 years and older. However, since 1985, the decrease in the labor force participation rate has stabilized.

A number of reasons explain why the overall labor force participation rate of men had been decreasing up until the

mid-1980s and why the labor force participation rate of men aged 55 years and older has started an upward trend.

First, during the 1950–80 period, defined benefit pension coverage became more widespread. Under this plan, workers realized a higher return on pension benefits by retiring as soon as they became eligible. During most of the 1980s, employment downsizing plans frequently included early pensions and lump-sum payments to older workers. By contrast, since the end of the 1980s, the conversion of pension plans from a defined benefit to a defined contribution approach has discouraged early retirements and reversed the declining trends of participation rates for men aged 55 years and older. The share of defined contribution plans increased from about 20 percent in 1981 to nearly 60 percent in 2000.<sup>7</sup>

Research has shown that labor force participation rates drop significantly at ages 62 and 65, which are, respectively, the earliest age at which one can retire and receive Social Security benefits and the “normal” age at which one can retire and receive full Social Security benefits.<sup>8</sup>

Second, beginning with the year 2000, the normal retirement age for receiving Social Security benefits increased, and it will continue to do so gradually on a prescheduled basis.<sup>9</sup> According to the new schedule, the size of the benefit is lowered for each month a recipient retires younger than the normal retirement age. The new provision will encourage workers to continue working later in life. Under this plan, starting in the year 2000, the age of retirement increased by 2 months for those born in 1938, 4 months for those born in 1939, 6 months for those born in 1940, and so on. All those who were born in 1937 or earlier are exempted from the law. People born between 1943 and 1954 (a large portion of the baby boomers) will be eligible for retirement when they reach 66. For people born in 1960 and later, the normal retirement age will be 67 years. The reduced benefits will encourage the large number in the labor force who are dependent on Social Security benefits for their entire income to work longer, or else they will end up with lower benefits during their retirement years.

The removal of the “earnings limit” law, better known as the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act, in 2000 has eliminated work disincentives for seniors. Prior to 2000, the earnings penalty, in the form of reduced benefits for those workers aged 65 to 70 years who earned wages, was a major disincentive to working and resulted in lower participation rates.

*Participation rates by sex.* Men aged 25 to 54 years are strongly attached to the labor force, and their labor force participation rates are mostly in the low- to mid-90-percent range. For most age groups of men under 55 years, the drop in participation was greater in the 1992–2002 period than in the 1982–92 period.

Unlike men’s rates, the labor force participation rates of women have been increasing across all age groups over the past several decades. Women aged 45 to 54 years increased their participation by 11 percentage points during 1982–92, the highest among all age groups. The same cohort displayed the greatest increase in participation, 8.6 percent, in the 1992–2002 period, when they reached ages 55 to 64. However, for the 2002–12 period, when this cohort will be 65 to 74 years, they will yield their number-one ranking to a group of younger women: those aged 55 to 64 years, whose labor force participation rate will increase by 5.4 percent. Interestingly, men aged 65 to 74 years are expected to increase their participation more than women in that age range.

As table 3 indicates, the labor force participation rates of women and men have been converging. The gap in aggregate rates is expected to shrink by 12.5 percentage points over the 1982–2012 period, from more than 24 percentage points in 1982 to 11.5 points in 2012. In 1982, each group of women aged 25 to 54 years had labor force participation rates 28 percentage points lower than men the same age. By 2002, these differences had dropped by 15 percentage points; by 2012, they will be less than 11.5 percentage points. For workers aged 16 to 24 years, the difference in 2002 was relatively small and is expected to get even smaller. For older men and women, the difference in participation rates, measured by percentage points, was even smaller, reflecting a significantly lower participation at older ages.

*Participation rate by race and Hispanic origin.* Differences in labor force participation by race and Hispanic origin are usually not as great as those observed by age and sex.

**Table 4. Comparison of labor force participation rates and age composition of Hispanic and white non-Hispanic men, 2002**

[In percent]

Age	Labor force participation rate			Composition of population by age		
	Hispanic	White non-Hispanic	Difference (white non-Hispanic less Hispanic)	Hispanic	White non-Hispanic	Difference (white non-Hispanic less Hispanic)
16 and 17 .....	29.8	39.0	9.3	4.7	3.6	-1.1
18 and 19 .....	66.2	63.0	-3.2	5.1	3.4	-1.7
20 and 21 .....	79.8	76.0	-3.8	5.7	3.3	-2.4
22 to 24 .....	90.2	86.7	-3.5	8.6	4.7	-3.9
25 to 29 .....	92.8	93.1	.2	13.3	7.6	-5.8
30 to 34 .....	94.1	94.3	.3	14.9	8.4	-6.4
35 to 39 .....	92.5	93.8	1.3	10.5	9.7	-.8
40 to 44 .....	91.7	93.0	1.3	11.3	10.4	-.8
45 to 49 .....	87.6	91.5	3.9	6.9	10.4	3.5
50 to 54 .....	84.4	88.2	3.7	6.1	9.2	3.1
55 to 59 .....	75.9	79.4	3.5	3.9	7.6	3.8
60 and 61 .....	65.5	68.5	3.0	1.3	2.5	1.2
62 to 64 .....	48.9	51.2	2.2	1.7	3.3	1.6
65 to 69 .....	29.8	32.7	2.8	1.9	4.8	2.9
70 to 74 .....	16.4	18.0	1.6	1.6	4.2	2.6
75 and older .....	7.1	7.8	.7	2.7	6.9	4.2

However, changes in labor force rates over time differ among the various groups. When changes in participation rates are combined with different patterns of population growth, substantial differences in the future labor force result.

The following tabulation ranks the various racial and ethnic categories in terms of their labor force participation rates in 2002, with 1 indicating the highest rate and 4 the lowest:

<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Hispanic	Hispanic	Black	1
White non-Hispanic	Asian	White non-Hispanic	2
Asian	White non-Hispanic	Asian	3
Black	Black	Hispanic	4

Note that the rankings by race differ by sex. Hispanic men have the highest overall labor force participation rate. Hispanic women, by contrast, have the lowest participation in the workforce relative to other racial and ethnic categories. For blacks, the situation is reversed, with men having the lowest participation rate and women the highest.

The high labor force participation rate for Hispanic men reflects, in part, their age structure. Hispanics have a younger population, with a greater proportion at the ages of higher labor force participation. As table 4 shows, the labor force participation rates for Hispanic men are higher at ages 18 and 19, 20 and 21, and 22 to 24. The table also shows that Hispanic men have proportionally more young men than the white non-Hispanic population has. The aggregate labor force participation rate for a given racial or ethnic group can be expressed as the weighted sum of the age-specific rates, in which the weight for each age group is its share of the total population. If, on the one hand, Hispanic men had the age distribution of white non-Hispanic men in 2002, while retaining their own labor force participation rates, their aggregate labor force participation rate would have been 72.2 percent, significantly lower than their actual rate (80.2 percent) and only slightly lower than the rate for white non-Hispanic men (73.8 percent). (See table 4.) If, on the other hand, white non-Hispanic men had the population distribution of Hispanic men in 2002, their overall participation rate would have been 81.1 percent, higher than their actual rate and above the 80.2-percent rate for Hispanic men. Thus, the aggregate labor force participation rate is a result of the age distribution of the population, as well as the labor force participation rates of the different age categories.

The preceding examples indicate that age, sex, and race are important in describing the variations in labor force participation rates. The ranking of the overall participation rates

in 2012 is projected to change the rankings of the different racial and ethnic categories that year:

<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Hispanic	Hispanic	Black	1
Asian	Asian	Asian	2
Black	White non-Hispanic	White non-Hispanic	3
White non-Hispanic	Black	Hispanic	4

For the total labor force participation rates by racial groups, compared with 2002, Hispanics retained their place in the ranking and Asians achieved second place, followed by blacks and white non-Hispanics. The rankings for men did not change from 2002. Asians are projected to have the greatest increase, with a 2.4-percentage-point rise in their overall rate over the 2002–12 period. This increase reflects a 3.4-percentage-point gain in participation rate by Asian women. Overall labor force participation rates for blacks are expected to increase during the 2002–12 timeframe as well. The labor force participation of white non-Hispanics is expected to decrease slightly, reflecting decreasing trends for both women and men.

### Projected labor force participation rates

The overall labor force participation rate is projected to rise by 0.6 percentage point between 2002 and 2012. Increases in the rate are expected to be greatest for the 55-to-64 and 65-to-74 age groups. The age range of peak labor force participation in both 2002 and 2012 is still 25 to 54 years, with a participation rate in the mid-80-percent range. Thus, the baby-boom generation's aging by itself will act to slow overall participation growth, because baby boomers will be older than the age of highest participation.

The labor force participation rate of men is projected to decrease by 1.0 percentage point, slightly less than the 1.9-point decline registered over the last decade. The overall men's rate is a summary of the changes in the age composition of the population and changes in labor force participation for each age, as well as of the increased racial and ethnic diversity of the male population. For men in the peak ages of labor force participation, 25 to 54 years, the rates show no growth. Older men are expected to continue to have increasing participation.

The increase in the women's labor force participation rate over the past two decades has displayed a pattern of slower growth in each successive period. The Bureau projects that this pattern will continue for the 2002–12 period. For most age groups, labor force participation growth is projected to be greater during that period than during the previous 10 years. With the aging of the population, however, the increase in the aggregate women's labor force participation rate is anticipated

**Table 5. Civilian labor force by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Level					Change			Percent change		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12	1982-92	1992-2002	2002-12
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights							
Total, 16 years and older .....	110,204	128,105	142,534	144,863	162,269	17,901	14,429	17,406	16.2	11.3	12.0
16 to 24 .....	24,608	21,617	22,425	22,366	24,377	-2,991	808	2,011	-12.2	3.7	9.0
16 to 19 .....	8,526	7,096	7,723	7,586	7,636	-1,430	627	50	-16.8	8.8	0.7
20 to 24 .....	16,082	14,521	14,702	14,780	16,740	-1,561	181	1,960	-9.7	1.2	13.3
25 to 54 .....	70,506	91,429	99,865	101,720	106,866	20,923	8,436	5,146	29.7	9.2	5.1
25 to 34 .....	31,186	35,369	30,831	32,196	35,406	4,183	-4,538	3,210	13.4	-12.8	10.0
35 to 44 .....	22,431	33,899	36,998	36,927	34,434	11,468	3,099	-2,493	51.1	9.1	-6.8
45 to 54 .....	16,889	22,160	32,036	32,597	37,026	5,271	9,876	4,429	31.2	44.6	13.6
55 and older .....	15,092	15,060	20,244	20,777	31,026	-32	5,184	10,249	-2	34.4	49.3
55 to 64 .....	12,062	11,587	15,863	16,308	24,616	-475	4,276	8,308	-3.9	36.9	50.9
65 and older .....	3,030	3,473	4,381	4,469	6,410	443	908	1,941	14.6	26.2	43.4
65 to 74 .....	2,566	2,932	3,593	3,665	5,411	366	661	1,746	14.3	22.5	47.6
75 and older .....	464	542	789	804	1,000	78	247	196	16.8	45.5	24.3
Men, 16 years and older .....	62,450	69,964	76,052	77,500	85,252	7,514	6,088	7,751	12.0	8.7	10.0
16 to 24 .....	13,074	11,521	11,619	11,639	12,461	-1,553	98	822	-11.9	.8	7.1
16 to 19 .....	4,470	3,751	3,926	3,870	3,791	-719	175	-79	-16.1	4.7	-2.0
20 to 24 .....	8,604	7,770	7,693	7,769	8,670	-834	-77	901	-9.7	-1.0	11.6
25 to 54 .....	40,357	49,882	53,439	54,568	56,435	9,525	3,557	1,866	23.6	7.1	3.4
25 to 34 .....	17,793	19,495	16,635	17,596	19,069	1,702	-2,860	1,473	9.6	-14.7	8.4
35 to 44 .....	12,781	18,347	19,946	19,829	18,244	5,566	1,599	-1,585	43.5	8.7	-8.0
45 to 54 .....	9,784	12,040	16,858	17,143	19,122	2,256	4,818	1,978	23.1	40.0	11.5
55 and older .....	9,019	8,561	10,995	11,293	16,356	-458	2,434	5,063	-5.1	28.4	44.8
55 to 64 .....	7,174	6,551	8,486	8,750	12,714	-623	1,935	3,964	-8.7	29.5	45.3
65 and older .....	1,845	2,010	2,509	2,543	3,641	165	499	1,098	8.9	24.8	43.2
65 to 74 .....	1,548	1,681	2,045	2,079	3,077	133	364	998	8.6	21.6	48.0
75 and older .....	297	329	464	464	564	32	135	100	10.8	41.1	21.6
Women, 16 years and older .....	47,755	58,141	66,481	67,363	77,017	10,386	8,340	9,654	21.7	14.3	14.3
16 to 24 .....	11,533	10,096	10,806	10,727	11,916	-1,437	710	1,189	-12.5	7.0	11.1
16 to 19 .....	4,056	3,345	3,797	3,716	3,845	-711	452	129	-17.5	13.5	3.5
20 to 24 .....	7,477	6,750	7,009	7,011	8,070	-727	259	1,059	-9.7	3.8	15.1
25 to 54 .....	30,149	41,547	46,426	47,152	50,431	11,398	4,879	3,279	37.8	11.7	7.0
25 to 34 .....	13,393	15,875	14,196	14,600	16,337	2,482	-1,679	1,737	18.5	-10.6	11.9
35 to 44 .....	9,651	15,552	17,052	17,098	16,189	5,901	1,500	-909	61.1	9.6	-5.3
45 to 54 .....	7,105	10,120	15,178	15,454	17,905	3,015	5,058	2,451	42.4	50.0	15.9
55 and older .....	6,073	6,499	9,250	9,485	14,671	426	2,751	5,186	7.0	42.3	54.7
55 to 64 .....	4,888	5,035	7,377	7,558	11,902	147	2,342	4,344	3.0	46.5	57.5
65 and older .....	1,185	1,464	1,873	1,927	2,769	279	409	842	23.5	27.9	43.7
65 to 74 .....	1,018	1,251	1,548	1,586	2,333	233	297	747	22.9	23.7	47.1
75 and older .....	167	213	325	340	436	46	112	96	27.5	52.4	28.1
White, 16 years and older .....	96,143	108,837	118,569	120,150	130,358	12,694	9,732	10,208	13.2	8.9	8.5
Men .....	55,133	60,168	64,241	65,308	70,592	5,035	5,284	6,291	9.1	6.8	8.1
Women .....	41,010	48,669	54,328	54,842	59,766	7,659	4,924	5,924	18.7	11.6	9.0

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 5. Continued—Civilian labor force by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Percent distribution					Annual growth rate (percent)		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12
			1900 census weights	2000 census weights				
Total, 16 years and older .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.5	1.1	1.1
16 to 24 .....	22.3	16.9	15.7	15.4	15.0	-1.3	.4	.9
16 to 19 .....	7.7	5.5	5.4	5.2	4.7	-1.8	.9	.1
20 to 24 .....	14.6	11.3	10.3	10.2	10.3	-1.0	.1	1.3
25 to 54 .....	64.0	71.4	70.1	70.2	65.9	2.6	.9	.5
25 to 34 .....	28.3	27.6	21.6	22.2	21.8	1.3	-1.4	1.0
35 to 44 .....	20.4	26.5	26.0	25.5	21.2	4.2	.9	-7
45 to 54 .....	15.3	17.3	22.5	22.5	22.8	2.8	3.8	1.3
55 and older .....	13.7	11.8	14.2	14.3	19.1	.0	3.0	4.1
55 to 64 .....	10.9	9.0	11.1	11.3	15.2	-4	3.2	4.2
65 and older .....	2.7	2.7	3.1	3.1	4.0	1.4	2.4	3.7
65 to 74 .....	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5	3.3	1.3	2.1	4.0
75 and older .....	.4	.4	.6	.6	.6	1.6	3.8	2.2
Men, 16 years and older .....	56.7	54.6	53.4	53.5	52.5	1.1	.8	1.0
16 to 24 .....	11.9	9.0	8.2	8.0	7.7	-1.3	.1	.7
16 to 19 .....	4.1	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.3	-1.7	.5	-2
20 to 24 .....	7.8	6.1	5.4	5.4	5.3	-1.0	-.1	1.1
25 to 54 .....	36.6	38.9	37.5	37.7	34.8	2.1	.7	.3
25 to 34 .....	16.1	15.2	11.7	12.1	11.8	.9	-1.6	.8
35 to 44 .....	11.6	14.3	14.0	13.7	11.2	3.7	.8	-8
45 to 54 .....	8.9	9.4	11.8	11.8	11.8	2.1	3.4	1.1
55 and older .....	8.2	6.7	7.7	7.8	10.1	-5	2.5	3.8
55 to 64 .....	6.5	5.1	6.0	6.0	7.8	-9	2.6	3.8
65 and older .....	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.8	2.2	.9	2.2	3.7
65 to 74 .....	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.9	.8	2.0	4.0
75 and older .....	.3	.3	.3	.3	.3	1.0	3.5	2.0
Women, 16 years and older ....	43.3	45.4	46.6	46.5	47.5	2.0	1.3	1.3
16 to 24 .....	10.5	7.9	7.6	7.4	7.3	-1.3	.7	1.1
16 to 19 .....	3.7	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.4	-1.9	1.3	.3
20 to 24 .....	6.8	5.3	4.9	4.8	5.0	-1.0	.4	1.4
25 to 54 .....	27.4	32.4	32.6	32.5	31.1	3.3	1.1	.7
25 to 34 .....	12.2	12.4	10.0	10.1	10.1	1.7	-1.1	1.1
35 to 44 .....	8.8	12.1	12.0	11.8	10.0	4.9	.9	-5
45 to 54 .....	6.4	7.9	10.6	10.7	11.0	3.6	4.1	1.5
55 and older .....	5.5	5.1	6.5	6.5	9.0	.7	3.6	4.5
55 to 64 .....	4.4	3.9	5.2	5.2	7.3	.3	3.9	4.6
65 and older .....	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.7	2.1	2.5	3.7
65 to 74 .....	.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.4	2.1	2.2	3.9
75 and older .....	.2	.2	.2	.2	.3	2.5	4.3	2.5
White, 16 years and older .....	87.2	85.0	83.2	82.9	80.3	1.2	.9	.8
Men .....	50.0	47.0	45.1	45.1	43.5	.9	.7	.8
Women .....	37.2	38.0	38.1	37.9	36.8	1.7	1.1	.9

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 5. Continued—Civilian labor force by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Level					Change			Percent change		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights							
Black, 16 years and older .....	11,331	14,162	16,834	16,564	19,765	2,831	2,672	3,201	25.0	18.9	19.3
Men .....	5,804	6,997	7,745	7,793	9,318	1,193	748	1,525	20.6	10.7	19.6
Women .....	5,527	7,166	9,089	8,771	10,447	1,639	1,923	1,676	29.7	26.8	19.1
Asian, 16 years and older .....	2,770	5,109	7,130	5,949	8,971	2,339	2,021	3,022	84.4	39.6	50.8
Men .....	1,513	2,800	3,839	3,215	4,941	1,287	1,039	1,726	85.1	37.1	53.7
Women .....	1,257	2,309	3,291	2,734	4,030	1,052	982	1,296	83.7	42.5	47.4
All other groups, 16 years and older .....	...	...	...	2,200	3,175	...	...	975	...	...	44.3
Men .....	...	...	...	1,189	1,732	...	...	543	...	...	45.7
Women .....	...	...	...	1,011	1,443	...	...	432	...	...	42.7
Hispanic origin, 16 years and older .....	6,734	11,338	16,200	17,942	23,785	4,604	4,862	5,843	68.4	42.9	32.6
Men .....	4,148	6,900	9,273	10,609	13,674	2,752	2,373	3,065	66.3	34.4	28.9
Women .....	2,586	4,439	6,927	7,332	10,111	1,853	2,488	2,779	71.7	56.0	37.9
Other than Hispanic origin, 16 years and older .....	103,470	116,767	126,334	126,921	138,484	13,297	9,567	11,562	12.9	8.2	9.1
Men .....	58,302	63,064	66,779	66,891	71,577	4,762	3,715	4,686	8.2	5.9	7.0
Women .....	45,169	53,702	59,555	60,031	66,906	8,533	5,853	6,875	18.9	10.9	11.5
White non-Hispanic, 16 years and older .....	89,630	98,724	103,360	103,348	106,237	9,094	4,636	2,889	10.1	4.7	2.8
Men .....	51,121	53,984	55,489	55,340	56,849	2,862	1,505	1,509	5.6	2.8	2.7
Women .....	38,508	44,740	47,871	48,008	49,388	6,232	3,130	1,380	16.2	7.0	2.9
Age of baby boomers .....	18 to 36	28 to 46	38 to 56	38 to 56	48 to 66	...	...	...	...	...	...

See footnotes at end of table.

to be the same as it was during the previous 10 years. Each of the major age groups—16 to 24 years, 25 to 54 years, and 65 years and older—is expected to maintain or modestly increase its participation rate. The participation rate of 20-to-24-year-old women continues to increase and is expected to reach 75.1 percent in 2012. It is projected that the labor force participation rates of women 25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years, and, in particular, 45 to 54 years also will increase over the projection period.

The 55-to-64 age group, consisting of members of the baby-boom generation, is projected to have the next-greatest increase of a 5.4-percentage-point change in its labor force participation rate.

### Historical changes in the labor force size

This section examines changes in the size of the labor force

over two periods: 1982–92 and 1992–2002. Over the 1982–92 period, larger numbers of the younger baby-boom generation entering the labor force resulted in a high annual labor force growth rate of 1.5 percent. At 1.1 percent, annual labor force growth over the 1992–2002 period was much slower. The labor force grew by nearly 18 million between 1982 and 1992 and by 14.4 million between 1992 and 2002. (See table 5.) The men’s labor force grew by 12 percent over the 1982–92 period and then by 8.7 percent between 1992 and 2002. Women increased their numbers in the labor force by 21.7 percent over the 1982–92 period. This growth rate was reduced to 14.3 percent over the 1992–2002 period.

*Age.* Labor force changes by age over the 1982–92 period were influenced by the baby boomers and the birth-death group born in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The labor force

**Table 5. Continued—Civilian labor force by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	Percent distribution					Annual growth rate (percent)		
	1982	1992	2002		2012	1982–92	1992–2002	2002–12
			1990 census weights	2000 census weights				
Black, 16 years and older .....	10.3	11.1	11.8	11.4	12.2	2.3	1.7	1.8
Men .....	5.3	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.7	1.9	1.0	1.8
Women .....	5.0	5.6	6.4	6.1	6.4	2.6	2.4	1.8
Asian, 16 years and older <sup>1</sup> .....	2.5	4.0	5.0	4.1	5.5	6.3	3.4	4.2
Men .....	1.4	2.2	2.7	2.2	3.0	6.3	3.2	4.4
Women .....	1.1	1.8	2.3	1.9	2.5	6.3	3.6	4.0
All other groups, 16 years and older <sup>2</sup> .....	...	...	...	1.5	2.0	...	...	3.7
Men .....	...	...	...	.8	1.1	...	...	3.8
Women .....	...	...	...	.7	.9	...	...	3.6
Hispanic origin, 16 years and older .....	6.1	8.9	11.4	12.4	14.7	5.3	3.6	2.9
Men .....	3.8	5.4	6.5	7.3	8.4	5.2	3.0	2.6
Women .....	2.3	3.5	4.9	5.1	6.2	5.6	4.5	3.3
Other than Hispanic origin, 16 years and older .....	93.9	91.1	88.6	87.6	85.3	1.2	.8	.9
Men .....	52.9	49.2	46.9	46.2	44.1	.8	.6	.7
Women .....	41.0	41.9	41.8	41.4	41.2	1.7	1.0	1.1
White non-Hispanic, 16 years and older .....	81.3	77.1	72.5	71.3	65.5	1.0	.5	.3
Men .....	46.4	42.1	38.9	38.2	35.0	.5	.3	.3
Women .....	34.9	34.9	33.6	33.1	30.4	1.5	.7	.3

<sup>1</sup> Data for 1982 and 1992 represent the “Asian and other” category with 1990 census weights. Data for 2002 with 1990 census weights represent the “Asian and other” category. Data for 2002 with 2000 census weights represent the “Asian only” category. Data for 2012 represent the “Asian only” category with 2000 census weights.

<sup>2</sup> The “All other groups” category includes those reporting the racial categories of (1a) American Indian and Alaska Native or (1b) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders and those reporting (2) two or more races. The category was not defined prior to 2003. Data for 2002 were calculated by BLS.

growth of the baby boomers during 1982–92 was affected by both population growth and the rapid increases in women’s labor force participation rates.

Between 1982 and 1992, the 25-to-54 age group grew by more than 20.9 million. Those aged 25 to 34 increased by 4 million, those 35 to 44 by more than 11.5 million, and those 45 to 54 by more than 5 million. Over the 1992–2002 period, the age group with the greatest change was those 45 to 54 years, with 9.9 million workers.

The baby bust that followed the baby boom caused a drop in the labor force of those aged 16 to 24 during the 1982–92 period and also of those aged 25 to 34 in 1992–2002. It is projected that this segment of the labor force will again decrease (by 2.5 million) in the 2002–12 labor force.

*Sex.* Although population growth was similar for both sexes during the 1982–92 and 1992–2002 periods, men’s labor force

participation rates declined while women’s increased. As a result, the labor force growth of men was slower than that of women in both the 1982–92 and 1992–2002 periods, whether measured by numbers of persons or rates of change. The population and labor force of post-baby-boom cohorts aged 16 to 24 years decreased for both men and women in the 1982–92 period. The labor force of young women aged 16 to 24 years dropped more than that for young men (12.5 percent, compared with 11.9 percent).

In 1992, the baby-boom generation was in the 25-to-54-year-old age group. The labor force of men in this age group soared by 23.6 percent over the 1982 figure. Meanwhile, the labor force of women in the same age group expanded even more rapidly, by 37.8 percent. Overall, however, the labor force growth of baby boomers during 1992 to 2002 was markedly lower than in the 1982–92 period.

From 1982 to 1992, both the population and the labor force

participation of men between the ages of 55 and 64 years decreased. Consequently, the labor force of men aged 55 to 64 dropped by 8.7 percent. During the same period, the population of women in the same age group dropped by 0.8 percent, but because their participation rates increased by 4.7 percent, their labor force population increased by 3.0 percent.

During 1992–2002, the men’s population grew nearly as much as in the previous decade. Men’s participation rates declined across all age groups, except those aged 55 and older; as a result, the labor force of men continued to shrink. Women continued to experience rising labor force participation for all age groups, and as a result, their labor force still exhibited considerable growth.

*Race and Hispanic origin.* White non-Hispanics were the largest group in the labor force in 1982 and 1992, accounting for 81 percent and 77 percent of the total, respectively. This group accounted for 71 percent of the total labor force in 2002. Hispanics increased their share from 8.9 percent in 1992 to 12.4 percent in 2002. Blacks’ share of the labor force increased from 10.3 percent in 1982 to 11.1 percent in 2002. In 1982 and 1992, the category of “Asians and others” had the smallest share of the civilian noninstitutional population, but also had the fastest labor force growth rate. As noted before, in Census 2000, the Asians in “Asians and others” became a separate group named “Asian only.” As a result, the new “All other” racial group now includes Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and those identifying themselves as having a multiple racial heritage. The category of “Asians and others” was the fastest-growing racial group in the past, and that of “Asian only” is expected to be in the future.

## Projected changes in the labor force

During 2002–12, the various age, sex, racial, and ethnic groups will experience different rates of change in their populations, leading to significant changes in the composition of the labor force. The total labor force is projected to grow by 1.1 percent annually and reach 162.3 million in 2012.

*Age.* The youth labor force stood at 22.4 million in 2002 and is projected to grow by 2 million, to 24.4 million, by 2012. The increase is significantly more than that posted in the previous decade. For the labor force aged 25 to 54 years, the projected increase is 5.1 million, significantly less than the increase over the 1992–2002 period. The labor force size of those aged 25 to 34 dropped by 4.5 million over the 1992–2002 period, but is expected to increase by 3.2 million in the 2002–12 period. The 35-to-44-year age group, which increased by 3.0 million during the 1992–2002 period, is projected to drop by 2.5 million from 2002 to 2012, an effect of the baby bust following the baby-boom expansion. The 45-to-54-year age group, made up

of the younger members of the baby-boom generation, is expected to increase at a slower rate than earlier.

The labor force of workers 55 and older is anticipated to grow by more than 10.2 million by 2012, the fastest growth among all age groups. Within that group, the 55-to-64-year-olds are expected to add 8.3 million to the labor force.

*Sex.* The men’s labor force is projected to grow by 1.0 percent annually during 2002–12, while that of women is expected to grow by 1.3 percent per year. Because of the differential growth rates, women’s *share* of the labor force is projected to increase from 46.5 percent to 47.5 percent.

*Race and Hispanic origin.* Hispanics are projected to grow 2.9 percent annually over the 2002–12 period and total about 24 million, or 14.7 percent of the labor force, in 2012.

The new “Asian only” racial group is not directly comparable to the “Asian and other” group in terms of historical data. The category of “Asians only” is expected to be the fastest-growing segment of the labor force. As was noted earlier, the data for 1982 and 1992 represent the “Asian and other” racial category with 1990 census weights. The data for 2002 and 2012, by contrast, represent the “Asian only” racial category with 2000 census weights.

The black labor force is projected to have an annual growth rate of 1.8 percent from 2002 to 2012 and is expected to reach 19.8 million the latter year.

The white non-Hispanic group will grow at a meager 0.3 percent, but will still remain the most populous group in 2012. The group’s labor force is anticipated to grow by 2.8 million between 2002 and 2012, while its share is expected to drop from 71.3 percent to 65.5 percent over the period.

## Dynamics

From 2002 through 2012, the dynamics of labor force change emerge from three distinct groups: entrants—those who will be in the labor force in 2012, but who were not in it in 2002; leavers—those who will exit the labor force after 2002 and before 2012; and stayers—those who were in the labor force in 2002 and will remain through 2012.<sup>10</sup> To the extent that the demographic composition of labor force entrants between 2002 and 2012 is different from the composition of those now in the labor force, the 2012 labor force will be different from today’s labor force. The labor force also will be affected by the demographic composition of those leaving it. Thus, the labor force of 2012 may be regarded as consisting of the labor force of 2002, plus the entrants, less the leavers.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that, between 2002 and 2012, 40.5 million workers will enter the labor force and 23 million will leave. (See table 6.) These figures compare with 33.5 million entrants and 19 million leavers over the 1992–2002



**Table 6. Civilian labor force, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012, and entrants and leavers, 1992–2002 and projected 2002–12**

[Numbers in thousands]

Group	1992	1992–2002			2002		2002–2012			2012
		Entrants	Leavers	Stayers	1990 census weights	2000 census weights	Entrants	Leavers	Stayers	
<b>Number, 16 years and older</b>										
Total .....	128,105	33,527	19,098	109,007	142,534	144,863	40,461	23,055	121,808	162,269
Men .....	69,964	17,183	11,095	58,869	76,052	77,500	20,539	12,788	64,712	85,252
Women .....	58,141	16,344	8,003	50,139	66,481	67,363	19,922	10,267	57,096	77,017
White .....	108,837	26,250	16,516	92,321	118,569	120,150	31,019	20,811	99,339	130,358
Men .....	60,168	13,826	9,753	50,415	64,241	65,308	16,691	11,407	53,901	70,592
Women .....	48,669	12,423	6,763	41,906	54,328	54,842	14,327	9,403	45,439	59,766
Black .....	14,162	4,782	2,111	12,051	16,834	16,564	5,538	2,338	14,226	19,765
Men .....	6,997	2,078	1,103	5,894	7,745	7,793	2,671	1,146	6,647	9,318
Women .....	7,165	2,704	1,008	6,157	9,089	8,771	2,868	1,192	7,579	10,447
Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	5,106	2,538	516	4,593	7,130	5,949	1,783	1,771	4,178	8,971
Men .....	2,800	1,291	252	2,548	3,839	3,215	853	997	2,218	4,941
Women .....	2,306	1,247	264	2,045	3,291	2,734	928	775	1,959	4,030
All other groups <sup>2</sup> .....	...	...	...	...	...	2,200	...	...	...	3,175
Men .....	...	...	...	...	...	1,189	...	...	...	1,732
Women .....	...	...	...	...	...	1,011	...	...	...	1,443
Hispanic origin .....	11,338	6,029	1,170	10,168	16,200	17,941	7,866	2,022	15,919	23,785
Men .....	6,900	3,214	843	6,057	9,273	10,609	4,335	1,270	9,339	13,674
Women .....	4,438	2,815	327	4,111	6,927	7,332	3,531	751	6,581	10,111
Other than Hispanic ...	116,767	27,499	17,928	98,839	126,334	126,922	32,595	21,034	105,889	138,484
Men .....	63,064	13,970	10,252	52,812	66,779	66,891	16,204	11,518	55,374	71,577
Women .....	53,703	13,529	7,675	46,028	59,555	60,031	16,391	9,516	50,515	66,906
<b>Share (percent), 16 years and older</b>										
Total .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Men .....	54.6	51.3	58.1	54.0	53.4	53.5	50.8	55.5	53.1	52.5
Women .....	45.4	48.7	41.9	46.0	46.6	46.5	49.2	44.5	46.9	47.5
White .....	85.0	78.3	86.5	84.7	83.2	82.9	76.7	90.3	81.6	80.3
Men .....	47.0	41.2	51.1	46.2	45.1	45.1	41.3	49.5	44.3	43.5
Women .....	38.0	37.1	35.4	38.4	38.1	37.9	35.4	40.8	37.3	36.8
Black .....	11.1	14.3	11.1	11.1	11.8	11.4	13.7	10.1	11.7	12.2
Men .....	5.5	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.4	5.4	6.6	5.0	5.5	5.7
Women .....	5.6	8.1	5.3	5.6	6.4	6.1	7.1	5.2	6.2	6.4
Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	4.0	7.6	2.7	4.2	5.0	4.1	4.4	7.7	3.4	5.5
Men .....	2.2	3.9	1.3	2.3	2.7	2.2	2.1	4.3	1.8	3.0
Women .....	1.8	3.7	1.4	1.9	2.3	1.9	2.3	3.4	1.6	2.5
All other groups <sup>2</sup> .....	...	...	...	...	...	1.5	...	...	...	2.0
Men .....	...	...	...	...	...	.8	...	...	...	1.1
Women .....	...	...	...	...	...	.7	...	...	...	.9
Hispanic origin .....	8.9	18.0	6.1	9.3	11.4	12.4	19.4	8.8	13.1	14.7
Men .....	5.4	9.6	4.4	5.6	6.5	7.3	10.7	5.5	7.7	8.4
Women .....	3.5	8.4	1.7	3.8	4.9	5.1	8.7	3.3	5.4	6.2
Other than Hispanic ...	91.1	82.0	93.9	90.7	88.6	87.6	80.6	91.2	86.9	85.3
Men .....	49.2	41.7	53.7	48.4	46.9	46.2	40.0	50.0	45.5	44.1
Women .....	41.9	40.4	40.2	42.2	41.8	41.4	40.5	41.3	41.5	41.2

<sup>1</sup> Data for 1982 and 1992 represent the "Asian and other" category with 1990 census weights. Data for 2002 with 1990 census weights represent the "Asian and other" category. Data for 2002 with 2000 census weights represent the "Asian only" category. Data for 2012 represent the "Asian only" category with 2000 census weights.

<sup>2</sup> The "All other groups" category includes those reporting the racial categories of (1a) American Indian and Alaska Native or (1b) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders and those reporting (2) two or more races. The category was not defined prior to 2003. Data for 2002 were calculated by BLS.

period. Between 1992 and 2002, entrants were more likely to be men. Leavers also were more likely to be men, because the men's labor force was, and is, older than the women's. However, the difference in share exhibited for the 1992–2002 period is projected to narrow somewhat, resulting in an almost equal share of women and men entering the labor force.

According to the BLS projections, by 2012, 20.5 million men will have joined the 2002 men's labor force of 77.5 million, and 12.8 million men will have left the labor force, resulting in a labor force of 85 million men in 2012. Similarly, nearly 20 million women are expected to enter the labor force over the 2002–12 period, while 10 million women are projected to leave. The relatively smaller number of women leaving the labor force will raise their share from 46.5 percent in 2002 to 47.5 percent in 2012.

The largest share of the 2002 labor force—83 percent—was made up of whites. More than 76 percent of the population expected to enter the labor force between 2002 and 2012 are projected to be whites, smaller than their 78.3-percent share of entrants over the 1992–2002 period. These proportions also are smaller than whites' share of the workforce, reflecting the group's lower population growth. As a result of the 31 million whites entering the labor force and the 20.8 million leaving over the 2002–12 period, the share of whites in the labor force is projected to be 80 percent in 2012—a drop of 4.7 percentage points from 1992. In the 1992–2002 period, white men supplied the most entrants—41 percent. However, they also supplied most of those leaving—50 percent.

The white labor force is projected to have an annual growth rate of 0.8 percent, less than that of the overall labor force. The slower growth reflects little migration of this demographic group to the United States and lower birthrates in the past, compared with other population groups. This combination results in relatively fewer labor force entrants

and relatively more labor force leavers—a reflection of the aging white male labor force. White women are projected to increase their participation more than any other group, but this faster growth rate will not be enough to offset the slow growth of their labor force of only 0.9 percent per year.

Blacks are projected to make up 12.2 percent of the labor force, or a total of 19.8 million, in 2012. Blacks are expected to add 5.5 million entrants to the labor force between 2002 and 2012—13.7 percent of all new entrants during the period and less than the 14.3 percent that entered between 1992 and 2002. With the 2.3 million blacks projected to leave the labor force over the period, the group will increase in number, and by 2012, the black share of the labor force is expected to be 12.2 percent, up 1.1 percentage point from the 2002 figure. The black labor force is anticipated to grow faster than the overall labor force because of the higher-than-average population growth of blacks resulting primarily from higher-than-average birthrates.

In 2002, Hispanics represented 12.4 percent of the labor force, with nearly 18 million workers. Because of their higher levels of migration, nearly 8 million Hispanics are projected to enter the labor force during the 2002–12 period. Reflecting their relatively young age composition, only 2 million Hispanics are expected to leave the labor force, so the number of Hispanics in the labor force is projected to grow by more than 5.8 million. By 2012, the Hispanic labor force is anticipated to reach 23.8 million, 4 million more than the black labor force. The Hispanic share of the labor force is expected to grow both because of overall population growth—from higher birth levels and increased migration—and because of increases in the participation rate of Hispanic women.

In 2002, the Asian labor force totaled 6 million. About 1.8 million members of this group are expected to enter the labor force during the 2002–12 period, and a similar number are

**Table 7. Median ages of the labor force, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

Group	1982	1992	2002	2012
Total, 16 years and older .....	34.6	36.6	40.0	41.4
Men .....	35.1	36.7	39.9	41.2
Women .....	33.9	36.4	40.1	41.5
White .....	34.8	36.8	40.4	42.2
Black .....	33.3	34.9	38.0	39.1
Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	33.8	36.5	38.4	40.9
Hispanic origin .....	30.7	33.2	34.2	36.6
White non-Hispanic .....	35.2	37.7	41.4	43.2

<sup>1</sup> The "Asian" racial group corresponds to the "Asian and other" racial group prior to Census 2000.

**Table 8. Distribution of the population and labor force by age and sex, 1982, 1992, 2002, and projected 2012**

[In percent]

Group	Population				Labor force			
	1982	1992	2002	2012	1982	1992	2002	2012
Total, 16 years and older .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
16 to 24 .....	21.3	17.0	16.2	15.7	22.3	16.9	15.7	15.0
25 to 39 .....	31.2	32.8	27.5	25.1	39.5	41.5	34.6	31.8
40 and older .....	47.6	50.2	56.3	59.2	38.1	41.6	50.0	52.9
65 and older .....	14.7	15.7	15.4	16.7	2.3	2.3	2.5	3.3
75 and older .....	5.5	6.3	7.2	7.2	.4	.4	.6	.6
Men, 16 years and older .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
16 to 24 .....	22.1	17.7	17.0	16.3	20.9	16.5	15.0	14.6
25 to 39 .....	32.1	33.7	28.2	25.8	39.9	41.8	35.2	32.7
40 and older .....	45.8	48.6	54.8	57.9	39.2	41.8	49.8	52.7
65 and older .....	12.7	13.5	13.6	15.0	3.0	2.9	3.3	4.3
75 and older .....	4.3	4.9	5.8	5.9	.5	.5	.6	.7
Women, 16 years and older .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
16 to 24 .....	20.5	16.3	15.6	15.1	24.2	17.4	15.9	15.5
25 to 39 .....	30.4	32.0	26.8	24.5	39.1	41.2	36.1	31.2
40 and older .....	49.2	51.8	57.6	60.4	36.7	41.5	50.3	53.4
65 and older .....	16.5	17.6	17.3	18.3	2.5	2.5	2.9	3.6
75 and older .....	6.7	7.6	8.6	8.4	.3	.4	.5	.6

projected to leave, so the group is expected to number nearly 9 million by 2012.

### The aging labor force

*Median age.* Median age is one of the various ways by which the age of the labor force can be measured. The median age of the labor force was at a peak level in 1962 at 40.5 years. As the baby-boom generation entered the labor force, the median age of the labor force decreased steadily until 1980; since then, as the baby boomers have aged, so has the labor force. With both the population and the labor force aging, the median age of the labor force in 2012 is projected to exceed the level reached in 1962. (See table 7.) The following tabulation gives median ages for the civilian noninstitutional population and labor force aged 16 years and older:

	1992	2002	2012
Population .....	40.1	40.3	45.3
Labor force .....	36.6	40.0	41.4
Difference .....	3.5	.3	3.9

The median age of both groups is increasing, but the median age of the population was increasing more than that of the labor force between 1992 and 2002. Over the 2002–12 period, the median age of the population is expected to rise by 5.0 years, while the median age of the labor force is projected to increase by 1.4 years. The median age of the labor force is less than that of the population because the labor force participation rates of

older persons are much lower than the rates of young workers. The growth of the older population, combined with the increase in the group's participation rates, resulted in the projected increase by 1.4 years in the median age of the 2012 labor force, exceeding the highest level ever recorded, in 1962.

Historically, white non-Hispanic labor force participants have been older than the rest of the labor force. This disparity is projected to continue and reach 1.8 years in 2012. Compared with whites, the black and Hispanic segments of the labor force both are younger and have higher fertility rates. As a result, young black and Hispanic workers—those between 16 and 24 years—are expected to increase the shares of their respective labor forces. Black participants in the labor force have been about 1.5 to 3.1 years younger than the overall labor force—a gap that is projected to continue through 2012. In 2002, the median age of Asian labor force participants was 1.6 years less than that of the overall labor force; the difference is expected to decrease to 0.5 year by 2012. Hispanic participants generally have been younger, due to their higher fertility rate. Hispanics are projected to continue having a lower median age than that of the overall labor force, but to age from a median of 34.2 years in 2002 to 36.6 years in 2012, reflecting the aging of earlier immigrants. The median ages of all racial and Hispanic groups are expected to increase during the 2002–12 period.

*Age composition.* Another way to measure the age of the labor force is by looking into its age structure. The labor force is getting older if the proportion of the 55-and-older or the 65-and-older

age group in it is increasing or if the share of those under 25 is decreasing. Table 8 presents such information for the population and labor force aged 16 and older, by sex and age groups.

From 1982 to 2002, the proportion of those 65 and older in the population increased. This proportion is expected to rise to 16.7 percent by 2012. The proportion of persons 16 to 24 years in the labor force decreased over the 1982–2002 period and is expected to decline further, to 15.7 percent by 2012. Accordingly, on the basis of both the median age and the age structure of the labor force, the population is getting older. Since 1992, the proportion of 25-to-39-year-olds has decreased, and it is expected to continue decreasing through 2012.

Looking at the composition of the population by sex, one sees that the same general patterns hold. However, the male population has proportionately more youths than the female population, reflecting men’s higher proportion of births, slightly higher current migration, and higher mortality. Relatively more women are in the older ages.

*Economic dependency.* The economic dependency ratio is the number of persons in the total population (including the Armed Forces overseas and children) who are not in the labor force per 100 of those who are in the labor force. The following tabulation shows the economic dependency ratio by age for selected years from 1975 to 2002 and for 2012 (projected):

Year	Total population	Under 16 years	16 to 64 years	65 years and older
1975 .....	126.3	61.4	44.2	20.7
1980 .....	108.9	50.7	37.4	20.8
1985 .....	103.3	47.3	34.2	21.8
1990 .....	98.3	45.8	30.5	22.1
1995 .....	96.6	48.6	25.7	22.3
2000 .....	95.4	45.3	25.9	21.9
2002 .....	91.7	43.6	26.9	21.2
2012 .....	85.0	38.9	25.9	20.1

For every 100 persons in the 2002 labor force, about 92 were not. Of the 92, 44 were children, 27 were 16 to 64 years of age, and 21 were 65 years and older.

In 1987, for the first time ever, more Americans were in the

labor force than were not. This trend is expected to continue throughout the entire projection period, with the estimated number of persons not working falling to 85 per 100 workers in 2012.

Over the last three decades, as the number of births diminished and the baby boomers moved to ages older than 16, the economic dependency ratio dropped. Most of the 34-percent-age-point drop for the total population between 1975 and 2002 stemmed from the decline in the number of births. The portion of the ratio attributed to children is projected to continue dropping, despite somewhat higher fertility. The remainder of the historical drop is attributable to higher labor force participation among women aged 16 to 64 years. The ratio for this group dropped 17.3 points, from 44.2 in 1975 to 26.9 in 2002. The ratio is projected to continue decreasing and reach 25.9 in 2012.

The part of the dependency ratio that had been steadily increasing is the portion attributable to older persons (those 65 years and older). In 1975, this was by far the smallest part of the dependency ratio, and it is expected to still be the smallest proportion by 2012. However, between 1975 and 1990, the older persons’ dependency ratio grew 1.4 percentage points. It fell again in 2002, to 21.2 per 100, representing the entry of the birth dearth of the 1930s into the 65-and-older group. The dependency of this group is expected to decline further, to 20.1 in 2012.

THE LABOR FORCE IN 2012 IS EXPECTED TO BE OLDER AND TO BECOME MORE DIVERSE. With the aging of the baby-boom generation, the workforce is projected to grow older. The median age of the labor force is expected to rise; the projected age of 41.4 for 2012 would exceed the highest level ever recorded. Hispanics are anticipated to become the largest minority group in the labor force, and women will likely continue to participate more. The dependency ratio is projected to continue to decline and is expected to reach 85 people not working per 100 people working. Between 2002 and 2012, nearly 122 million workers are expected to remain in the labor force, 40 million workers to enter, and 23 million to leave. As a result, the labor force of 2012 would be 162.3 million—up 17.4 million from the 2000 level. The increase represents a continuation of the 1992–2002 growth rate. □

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The civilian labor force consists of employed and unemployed persons actively seeking work, but does not include any Armed Forces personnel. Historical data for this series are from the Current Population Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Projections of labor force participation rates for 136 age, sex, race, and Hispanic-origin groups are developed by first estimating a trend rate of change, usually based on participation rate behavior during the previous 8-year period. Then the rate is modified whenever

the time-series projections for a given group appear inconsistent with the results of cross-sectional and cohort analyses. This second step ensures consistency in the projections across the various demographic groups. For further information, see *Handbook of Methods* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1999), Chapter 13, “Employment Projection”; on the Internet at [http://stats.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch13\\_a.htm](http://stats.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch13_a.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Frederick W. Hollmann, Tammany J. Mulder, and Jeffrey E. Kallan, “Population Projections of the United States: 1999 to 2100: Methodology and Assumptions,” working paper no. 38 (U.S. Depart-

ment of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> More information on the change in racial categories is available on the Census Bureau website, <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/raceqandas.html>.

<sup>5</sup> The cps is a monthly survey conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The survey provides statistics on the labor force status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and older and is collected from a probability sample of approximately 60,000 households.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of theories of migration, see Douglass S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor, "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review*, September 1993, pp. 431–66.

<sup>7</sup> See Alicia Munnell, Kevin E. Cahill, and Natalia A. Jivan, *How Has the Shift to 401ks Affected the Retirement Age?* no. 13 (Boston, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, September 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas P. Burke, "Social Security earnings limit removed" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Compensation and Working Conditions, summer 2001).

<sup>9</sup> *Normal Retirement Age* (Social Security Administration, Dec. 4, 2000); on the Internet at <http://www.ssa.gov/retirement/nra.html> (last visited Feb. 4, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> The numbers of entrants and leavers are computed by comparing the labor force numbers for a given birth cohort at two points in time. If the numbers at the second point are larger, the difference is termed the entrants; if the numbers at the second point are smaller, the difference is the leavers. These concepts understate the numbers likely to enter and leave the labor force over the period covered by the two points in time, but are still a valid comparison. As with measures of geographic mobility, which also do not measure all the changes over a period, we do not call the two groups *net* entrants and leavers. For a further discussion of the methods involved, see Howard N Fullerton, Jr., "Measuring Rates of Labor Force Dynamics," *Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section*, American Statistical Association, 1993.