

The June Review

The American Time Use Survey (ATUS) was developed to help researchers understand how people in the United States today are coping with the time demands of their jobs, childcare, their work commutes, their need to relax or exercise, and their religious, volunteer, and other commitments. If it is to accomplish these goals, ATUS must accurately classify peoples' daily activities. Kristina J. Shelley outlines the efforts that went into building a meaningful and easily understandable classification and coding system for the survey.

Janice Lent and Alan H. Dorfman report the results of their research on using actual-transactions-based data to construct a price index for air travel, rather than using prices listed in the SABRE reservation and ticketing system, the primary method used to calculate the Consumer Price Index for airfares. As it turns out, the two measures are similar in longer term trends, but have differing seasonal patterns.

Peter B. Meyer and Michael J. Harper announce the development of a procedure for making preliminary, but far more timely, estimates of multifactor productivity.

Solidelle F. Wasser and Michael L. Dolfman dig into the history of the Bureau of Labor Statistics to chronicle the technical assistance the Bureau gave Western European industry in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

Craig Davis contributes a report on the Iraqi Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs during the reconstruction period.

Women's data book released

A new book of data from the Current Population Survey on the condition of women in the labor force was released in May. As women have made substantial inroads into the higher paying occupations, women's earnings relative

to men's also have risen. In 2004, women made up half of all management, professional, and related workers. From 1979 through 2004, women's earnings as a percent of men's have risen from 62 percent to 80 percent.

The movement of women into higher paying occupations has gone hand in hand with their pursuit of higher education. In 1970, only 11 percent of women age 25 to 64 had finished four or more years of college. In 2004, nearly 33 percent held a college degree. In the latter year, female college graduates earned about 76 percent more than women with only a high school diploma. This difference in earnings by education has increased sharply since 1979, when female college graduates earned 43 percent more than female high school graduates.

In addition to higher weekly pay, women's annual earnings have been affected by spending more weeks per year in the work force. Nearly 60 percent of women who worked at some point in 2003 worked full-time year-round, compared with 41 percent in 1970. To learn more about the extensive data on women available from the Current Population Survey, see "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook," *BLS Report 985*.

Foreign-born workers

In 2004, there were 21.4 million foreign-born persons in the American labor force, 14.5 percent of the total. From 2002 to 2004, the number of foreign-born labor force participants grew by about 1.2 million and accounted for a little less than half of total labor force growth.

Foreign-born men were more likely to be labor force participants than their native-born counterparts. In contrast, foreign-born women were less likely to be labor force participants than were native-born women. Overall, a little more than two-thirds—67.5 percent—of foreign-born persons 16 years and older were in the labor force in 2004. The labor force participation rate for the native born was 65.7 percent.

In 2004, the largest group of foreign-born workers was employed in management, professional, and related occupations (26.5 percent). This was also the case for native-born workers, with 36.3 percent employed in this occupational category. An additional 22.8 percent of foreign-born workers were employed in service occupations and 18.4 percent were in sales and office occupations, as were 15.2 and 26.7 percent, respectively, of the native-born workers.

Reflecting the downward trend in manufacturing employment as a whole, the proportions both of foreign-born and native-born workers employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations has declined. In 2000, 20.4 percent of foreign-born and 13.8 percent of native-born workers were employed in these occupations. In 2004, the proportions were 17.5 percent for the foreign born and 12.1 percent for the native born. Find more information in "Labor Force Characteristics of Foreign-born Workers in 2004," News Release USDL 05-834.

Highest and lowest pay

Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations accounted for 13 out of the 15 highest paying occupations in May 2004. The average hourly wages for surgeons were \$87.31. Two other occupations, obstetricians and gynecologists and anesthesiologists, had average hourly wages greater than \$80.

The lowest paying occupation was fast food cooks, who earned \$7.33 per hour, on average. The next three lowest paying occupations: combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food; dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers; and dishwashers. In fact, seven of the ten occupations with average wages of \$8 per hour or less were related to food preparation and serving. More data are in "Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2004," News Release USDL 05-877. □