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## Labour Force Statistics ♦ May 2000

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### HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C. seasonally adjusted employment increased by 16,100 (0.8 per cent) in May from April.** This more than offsets the declines seen in March and April. B.C. overall employment is up by 57,800 (3.0 per cent) since May 1999.
- **Seasonally adjusted labour force levels for B.C. youth (aged 15-24) increased by 8,600 (2.7 per cent) in May from April, and youth employment increased by 5,100 (1.8 per cent).** This stronger growth in the labour force pushed up the youth unemployment rate to 13.3 per cent in May from 12.6 per cent a month earlier.
- **Full-time employment in May rose by 5,200 for men and 3,800 for women, while part-time work rose by 6,000 for men and 1,100 for women.** All of the employment rise in May was in private sector employee positions, as both self-employment and public sector employment declined.
- **The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in May was down or unchanged in all provinces but Saskatchewan.** Unemployment rates in Canada for May ranged from 4.6 per cent in Manitoba to 16.1 per cent in Newfoundland.

Selected Statistics (SA)*	May 2000	Apr. 2000	May 1999
B.C. Unemployment Rate	6.8%	6.9%	8.3%
Canada Unemployment Rate	6.6%	6.8%	7.9%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	145.0	145.0	121.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	0.8%	-0.5%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	0.7%	-0.6%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	64.8%	64.5%	64.9%

\* Unless otherwise indicated, all labour force variables are seasonally adjusted.

*Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations and the Research, Evaluation and Accountability Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or R,E&A (250) 952-6776.*

## Labour Force Participation Rates of B.C. Women, 1976 to 1999

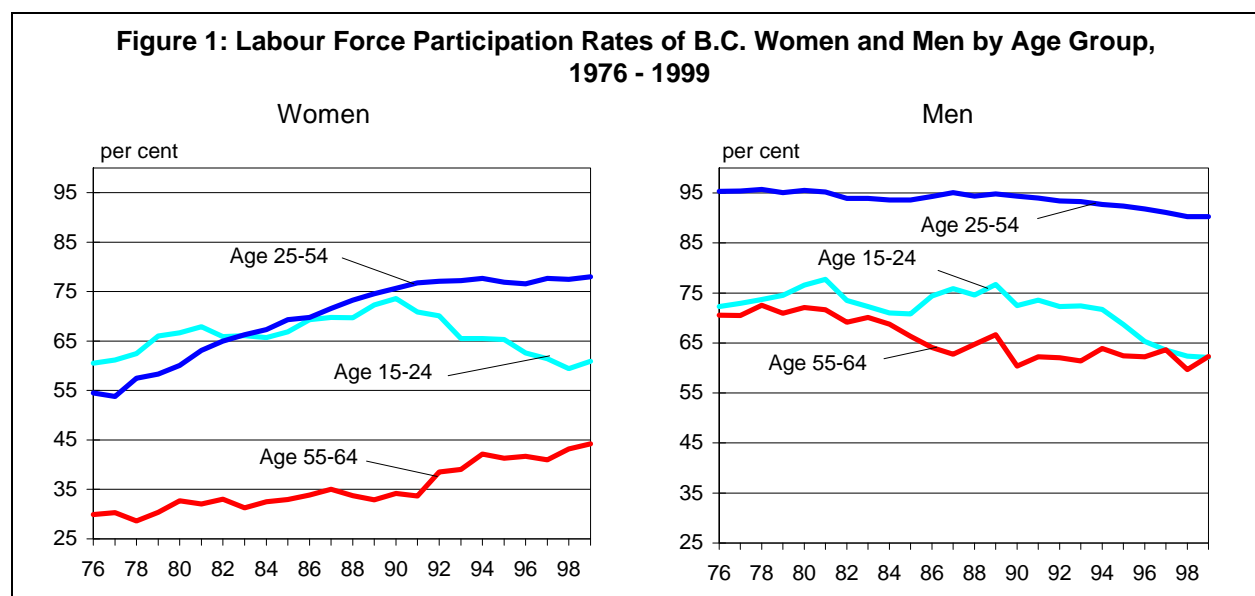
**Summary . . .** Labour force participation (the proportion of working aged persons either employed or unemployed) of B.C. women saw substantial gains during the late-1970s and through the 1980s. During the 1990s the aggregate women's labour force participation rate held relatively constant. Declines among female youth (due to their increased participation in schooling, particularly post-secondary education and training), have offset continued increases among women aged 25 to 64 during the 1990s. Women in the core working age group of 25 to 54 with higher levels of educational attainment continued to see much higher labour force participation rates during the 1990s. The gap between men and women's labour force participation is notably smaller for those with higher levels of educational attainment. Much of the gain in aggregate women's labour force participation since 1976 was paced by women with spouses who have either school-aged or preschool-aged children. In fact, the latter group is one of the only groups of B.C. women during the 1990s whose labour force participation rate continued to rise.

**Labour Force Participation Rates of Women and Men by Age . . .** During the 1970s and 1980s women aged 15 to 64 saw strong growth in labour force participation, which then held

relatively constant during the 1990s. For women in the core age group of 25 to 54, labour force participation increased by over 21 percentage points between 1976 and 1990, but then rose only a further 2 percentage points between 1990 and 1999.

Labour force participation among men in the core age group of 25 to 54 has historically always been higher than for like-aged women. Core-aged men saw little change during the 1970s and 1980s, but during the 1990s their labour force participation rate declined from 94 per cent to 90 per cent.

Labour force participation among women aged 15 to 24 also rose in the 1970s and 1980s although less sharply than for core aged women. Female youth labour force participation rose by 13 percentage points between 1976 and 1990, but by 1999 it had fallen back to the same level as in 1976. During the 1990s the fall in labour force participation among female youth (and male youth) was due in large part to increases in their schooling participation, especially post-secondary participation. Students, particularly full-time students, are less likely to be in the labour force than non-students.



By 1999, labour force participation rates between young women and men were virtually the same. However it should also be noted that by 1999, female youth in B.C. had a higher schooling participation rate than male youth.

Women aged 55 to 64 have historically had relatively low labour force participation rates. Many women in this age cohort at present and in the past had very different life experiences in terms of paid work opportunities, educational opportunities and societal expectations than young women today. Given the changes that have occurred on a number of these factors, the labour force participation rate among women 55 to 64 will continue to climb in the future, especially as baby boom women begin to enter this cohort in the next several years.

By contrast, men aged 55 to 64 saw their labour force participation generally fall during the 1970s and 1980s, much of this due to voluntary early retirement. During the 1990s, their participation rate held fairly steady, suggesting any ongoing increases in early retirement have stopped.

**Labour Force Participation of Core-Aged Women 25-54 by Educational Attainment . . .**

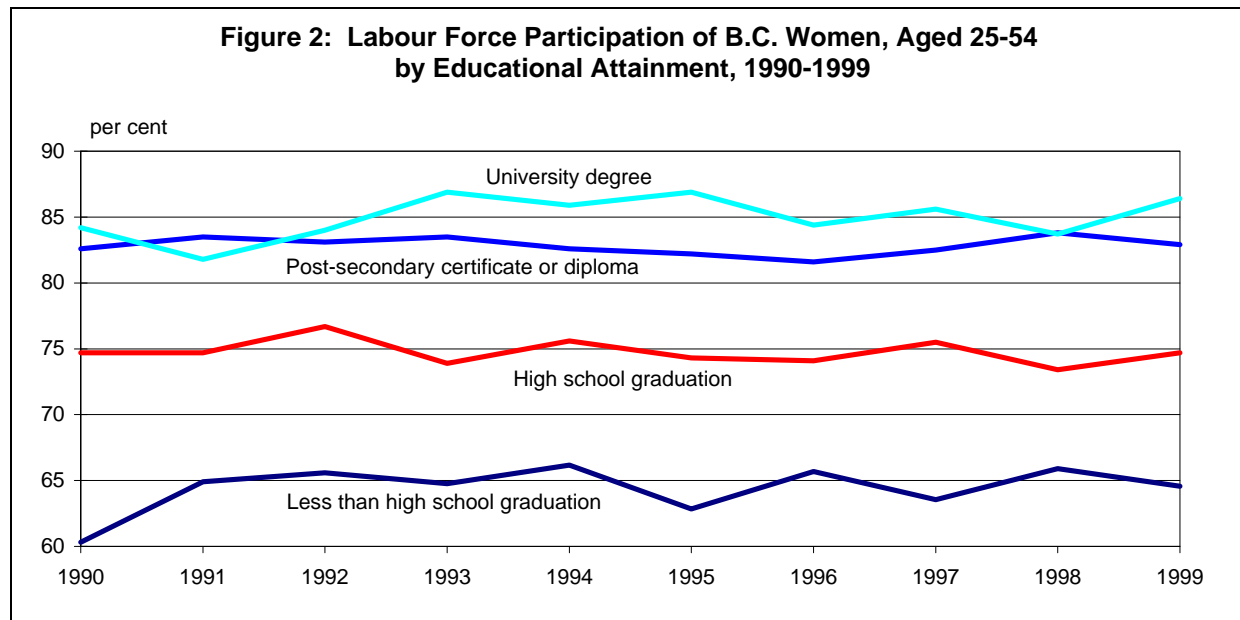
Figure 2 shows that in the 1990s B.C. women who completed post-secondary education continued to be more likely to be participating

in the labour force than those with less education. Participation rates remained almost flat during the 1990s among core aged women in all educational attainment categories. Men saw a similar pattern except for a notable decline in labour force participation for men with less than high school completion. Core-aged female participation rates in the labour force in 1999 ranged from about 65 per cent for those with less than a high school diploma, to 85 per cent for those with a university degree.

Various explanations for these ongoing trends relate to higher earnings for those with more education and possibly stronger career aspirations which provide an incentive to participate in the labour force. For those with children, higher earnings posed against child care costs is also an explanatory factor.

As to why the participation rates of the least educated women have remained steady, it may be the pool of jobs available to lesser educated workers is shrinking at about the same rate as the decline in the number of lesser educated core aged persons.

Finally, it should be noted the gap between men's and women's labour force participation rates is notably smaller for those with higher levels of educational attainment.



### Participation of Women by Family Status . . .

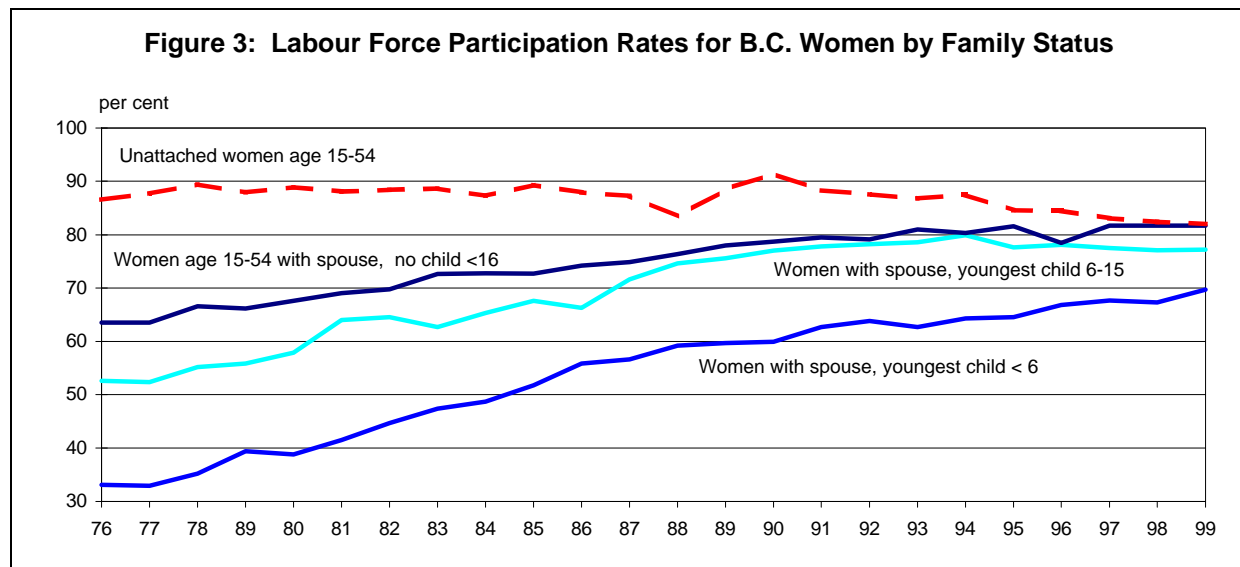
Figure 3 shows the labour force participation rates of women by selected family status. For women who are married or have a common-law spouse and whose youngest child is between the ages of 6 and 15, labour force participation has risen 25 percentage points between 1976 and 1990, but remained little changed in the 1990s.

An even more dramatic increase in labour force participation is seen among women (with spouses) whose youngest child is less than 6 years old. In 1976 only one woman in three with preschool-aged children was participating in the labour force. By 1990, 59.9 per cent were participating and this rate has continued to climb throughout the 1990s to 68.7 per cent in 1999.

Women with spouses who had no children under the age of 16 have historically had higher participation rates than women with children under age 16. Their participation rates have risen from 63.5 per cent in 1976 and leveled off at about 81 per cent throughout the 1990s.

Women who have no spouse, but do have children or someone else in the household to care for are a relatively small group (not shown). On average, participation rates among this group were considerably higher than their counterparts with spouses in 1976, but remained relatively flat throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Participation rates among women with spouses who have children had by 1999 caught up with, or in some cases surpassed, the group with no spouses. Women with spouses with preschool or school-age children have been a major contributing factor to the overall increase in women's labour force participation in the last twenty years.

The highest participation rates among women continue to be unattached individuals under the age of 55. These women have historically had participation rates similar to those of unattached men, and during the 1990s their rates (like those of unattached men) have started to decline from a high of 91.4 per cent in 1990 to 82.0 per cent in 1999. This was due in large part to young unattached women increasing their participation in education and training.



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<b>September 1999</b>	The British Columbia labour Market - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 1999	<b>March 2000</b>	The British Columbia labour market - 1st Quarter 2000
<b>October 1999</b>	B.C. Full-time and Part-time Employment in the 1990's	<b>April 2000</b>	B.C. Labour Market Update for Youth Aged 15 to 24