

June 2003



# LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

## ON THE

### ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940
1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
2000	<p>Women in Minnesota, 100 Years 1900-2000</p>			1900
1920				1910
1940				1930
1970				1950
2000				1960
1910				1980
1960				1990
1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
1970	1980	1990	2000	1900
1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
1960	1970	1980	1990	2000

# WOMEN IN MINNESOTA, 100 YEARS

## CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	3
Women and Marriage in Minnesota	
Marital Status of Women 1900 to 2000 . . . . .	4
Marriages and Divorces 1900 to 2000. . . . .	4
Women, Work, and Education in Minnesota	
Women in the Labor Force 1900 to 2000 . . . . .	5
Labor Force Participation by Age 1960 to 2000. . . . .	5
Education Levels for Women 1940 to 2000 . . . . .	6
Education and the Earnings Gap 1980 to 2000. . . . .	6
Women, Families, and Poverty in Minnesota	
Female-Headed Households 1940 to 2000. . . . .	7
Female-Headed Families 1960 to 2000 . . . . .	7
Family Income 1960 to 2000. . . . .	8
Poverty Levels 1970 to 2000 . . . . .	8
Women and Aging in Minnesota	
Median Age 1900 to 2000. . . . .	9
Life Expectancy 1950 to 2000 . . . . .	9
Population Growth 1960 to 2000. . . . .	10
Women Age 65 and Above 1900 to 2000 . . . . .	10

## CHARTS

1. Marital Status of Women Age 15 Years and Over 1900 to 2000 . . . . .	4
2. Registered Marriages and Divorces 1900 to 2000. . . . .	4
3. Labor Force Participation by Sex 1900 to 2000. . . . .	5
4. Women in the Labor Force as Percent of All Women 1900 to 2000. . . . .	5
5. Labor Force Participation of Women by Age 1900 to 2000. . . . .	6
6. Educational Attainment of Women 1940 to 2000 . . . . .	6
7. Education and the Earnings Gap 1980 to 2000. . . . .	7
8. Households by Type 1960 to 2000. . . . .	7
9. Families by Type 1960 to 2000 . . . . .	7
10. Families by Type and Presence of Related Children 1960 to 2000. . . . .	8
11. Median Incomes of Female-Headed and Male-Headed Families as Percent- age of Median Income of Married Couple Families 1960 to 2000. . . . .	8
12. Female-Headed Families in Poverty as Percentage of all Female Headed Households by Presence of Related Children 1970 to 2000. . . . .	8
13. Median Age of Women 1900 to 2000. . . . .	9
14. Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex 1950 to 2000 . . . . .	9
15. Women Age 65 and Above as Percentage of all Women 1900 to 2000 . . . . .	10

## DEFINITIONS

**Median earnings:** The amount that divides the earnings distribution into two equal groups, half having earnings above the median, half having earnings below the median.

**Full-time, year-round workers:** Persons working 35 and more hours a week for at least 50 weeks in a year.

**Households:** A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. *Households* are either family or non-family households and are classified as married-couple, female-headed, or male-headed.

**Families:** A group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoption and may or may not include children. Families are classified as husband-wife, female headed or male-headed.

## INTRODUCTION

This report provides a statistical overview of the status of women in Minnesota between 1900 and 2000. The data show some aspects of the changing role of women over the years. Included are data on marital and family status, educational attainment, labor force participation and other demographic topics.

Most information has been compiled from data provided by the United States Census Bureau. Other data have been compiled from the Minnesota Department of Health. Historical data are provided when available. There is less information for the early years of this century.

Notable findings of this report include the following:

- ♦ Current marital status patterns resemble those in the state in the first part of the century. The number of divorces tripled from 1960 to 1980, but the increase slowed between 1980 and 2000.
- ♦ At the start of the century women comprised less than one-fifth of the labor force. In 2000, women were just under half of the labor force. More than 70 percent of all women are in the paid labor force.
- ♦ The educational attainment of women increased during the 100 year time period. The percentage of women age 25 and over with at least a college degree was 6 times greater in 2000 than it was in 1940.
- ♦ Since 1960, the number of female-headed households and families has increaseds substantially.
- ♦ Since 1960, the income of female-headed families has declined compared to the income of married-couple families.
- ♦ The fastest growing age group is women age 65 and over, reflecting an increased life expectancy. Women continue to outlive men and the gap between them has increased over time.

The LCESW has developed statistical tables from the 2000 census on employment, poverty, education, marital status and other related trends.

## WOMEN AND MARRIAGE IN MINNESOTA

From 1900 to 2000, the percentages of married, never-married, widowed or divorced women have varied. There have also been changes in the numbers of marriages and divorces. Marriage remains the dominant marital status, and the percentage of never-married individuals is lower than it was in 1900. Meanwhile, the number of divorces has risen sharply.

### Marital Status of Women 1900 to 2000

As illustrated in Chart 1, the proportion of Minnesota women who were never-married, married, widowed or divorced changed during this 100 year period. In 1950 and 1960 there was a significant increase in married women and a decrease in single women. From 1940 to 1950 the percentage of married women increased by 11.9 percent and the percentage of never-married women decreased by 26.1 percent.

In 1900, one-third of the female population in Minnesota was never-married. By 2000, that figure was down to one-fourth. The percentage of single women reached its lowest levels in 1950 and 1960 when the percentage of married women was at its highest.

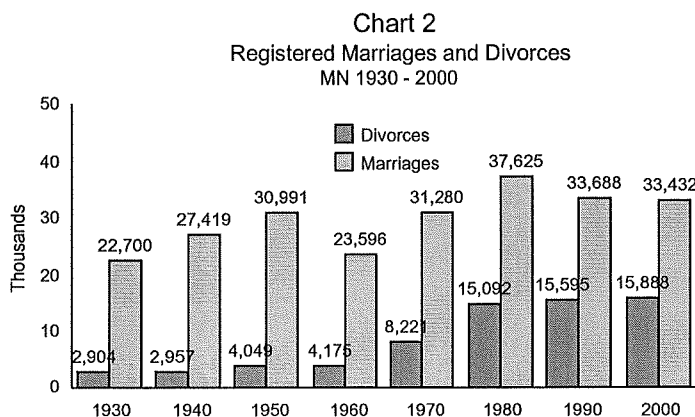
During this century the percentage of married women has remained at or just under three-fifths except for 1950 and 1960. In those years, the percentage of married women peaked at nearly two-thirds.

The percentage of women who are widowed increased gradually from 1900 to 1990, moving from eight percent to over 11 percent of all women. This is due in great part to the increased life expectancy of women, which has been consistently greater than that for men. Women are also more likely to lose a spouse through death than men. From 1990 to 2000, however, the percentage of women who are widowed declined to 8.4 percent, the lowest level since 1920.

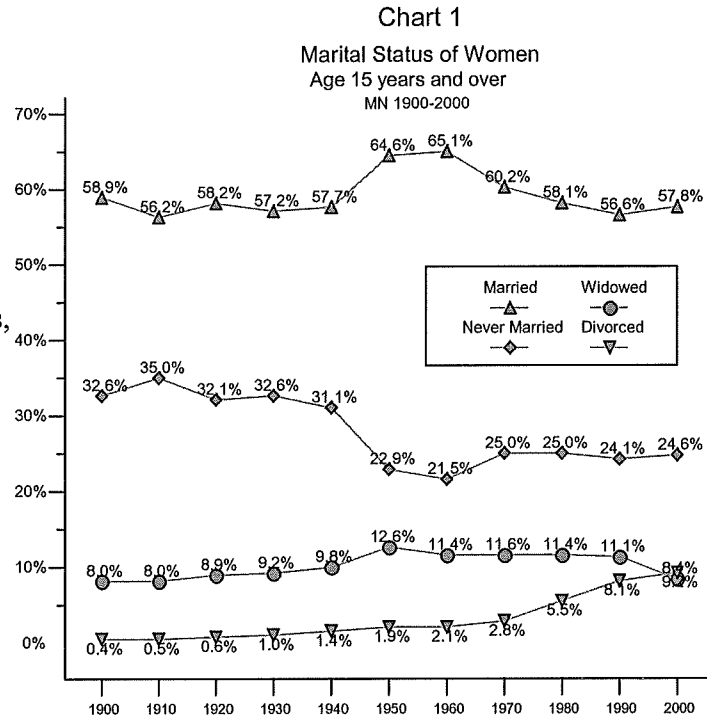
The percentage of women who are divorced also increased gradually during this century, from less than one percent at the beginning of the century to 9.2 percent in 2000. The percentage of women who are divorced increased most rapidly between 1970 to 1990, during which time it more than tripled.

### Marriages and Divorces 1900 to 2000

The number of marriages, the number of divorces, and the ratio between them has changed dramatically in Minnesota since 1900. Chart 2 shows the change in the number of marriages and divorces between 1930 and 2000. Data from 1900 are not included since data are not available for 1910 and 1920.



As the percentage of married women increased after World War II, the number of marriages also increased. However, the number of marriages declined in 1960, just as the percentage of married women was at its peak. The number of marriages increased again in 1970 and reached its highest level in 1980 before dropping again in both 1990 and 2000. The increases in 1970 and 1980 reflect an increase in the number of women of marriageable age, a result of the increased number of births in the years after World War II.



The actual marriage rate, the number of marriages per 1,000 people, has showed a marked variation in this century. It was at its highest in 1950 and at its lowest in 1960.

While the number of divorces increased each decade since 1900, the greatest increases were between 1960 and 1980. The number nearly doubled (increased 96.9%) from 1960 to 1970 and almost doubled (increased 83.6%) again between 1970 and 1980. There was only a small (5.2%) increase from 1980 to 2000, indicating that the trend has slowed dramatically in the last twenty years.

The ratio of divorces to marriages has increased substantially in Minnesota over the years. In 1950, there was one divorce for every 7.7 marriages. By 2000, the ratio was one divorce for every 2.1 marriages.

The actual divorce rate, the number of divorces per 1,000 people, increased very slowly in the first half of this century. Between 1960 and 1980 the rate more than tripled, from 1.1 to 3.7, before dropping slightly to 3.6 in 1990 and again to 3.2 in 2000.

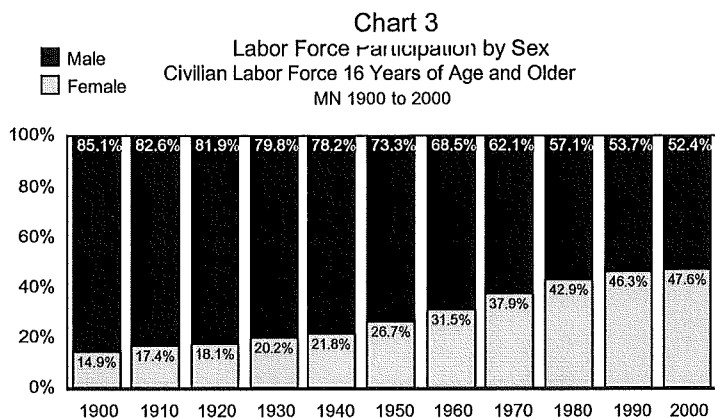
## WOMEN, WORK, AND EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

In this century there have been changes in the working patterns and educational levels of women. A greater percentage of women now participate in the labor force. Also, women are far better educated than in prior years. Despite these advances, women are still paid lower wages than their male counterparts.

### Marital Status of Women 1900 to 2000

One of the most significant social changes of this century occurred when women began to enter the labor force in large numbers. Women accounted for only 15 percent of the labor force in 1900. By 2000 that percentage had risen to nearly 48 percent. Chart 3 shows the representation of women in the labor force in this century.

At the turn of the century, under one-fifth of all women were in the paid workforce. In the next four decades the percentage rose slightly and by 1940 had increased to nearly 22 percent.



Women began entering the labor force in greater numbers when they replaced men entering military service during World War II. Increases in their participation in the labor force continued in the decades following that war.

Chart 4 shows the increase in the percentage of Minnesota women in the labor force between 1900 and 2000.

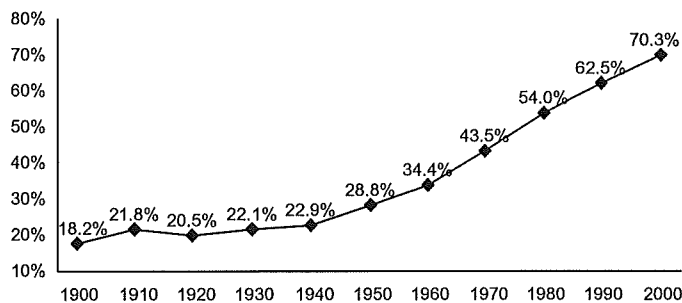
Large increases have occurred in every decade since 1960. During this time women's participation increased from just over one-third to just over three fifths of women in the state. Minnesota women participate in the labor force at a higher rate than the national average.

### Labor Force Participation by Age 1900 to 2000

Middle-aged women were largely responsible for the increase of women in the labor force prior to 1960. Since then the largest gains have been made by younger women.

Between 1960 and 2000, the percentage of women in the labor force increased for all age groups of women, except for those age 65 and older. For women of usual working age (16-64 years of age) participation rates rose from 34.4 percent to 70.3 percent. Chart 5 shows the change in the percentage of Minnesota women in the labor force by age between 1960 and 2000.

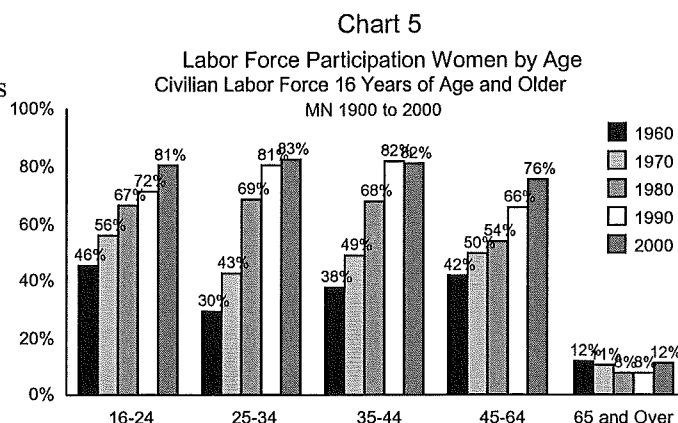
**Chart 4**  
Percent of Women in the Labor Force  
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years of Age and Over  
MN 1900 - 2000



The largest increase occurred for the group of women age 25 to 34. In the past, women in this age group participated in the workforce at lower rates than did other women of usual working age. Their rate has increased the greatest, rising from 3 out of 10 women in 1960 to more than 8 out of 10 in 2000.

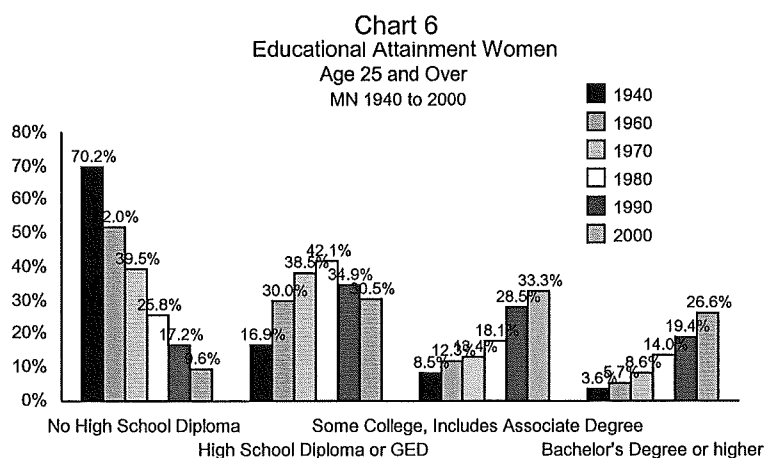
The change in the participation of younger women has contributed to another major social change. There has been an increase in the number of mothers of young children in the labor force.

Historical data are available for married women with children under age 6. In 1960 their labor force participation rate was just over 17 percent. Ten years later it had risen to just under 30 percent and by 1980 was at 50 percent. In 1990 the labor force participation of women with children under age 6 increased to 72 percent, where it remained in 2000.



### Education Levels for Women 1940 to 2000

Between 1940 and 2000, the education levels of Minnesota women increased steadily. A higher percentage of women age 25 and over had completed high school, attended college or earned college or advanced degrees in 2000 than in the prior years. Chart 6 shows the educational attainment of women age 25 and over from 1940 to 2000.



In 1940 nearly three-fourths of women 25 and over had less than a high school education. By 2000 this had fallen below one-fifth. Since 1940 the percentage of females whose highest educational level was the completion of high school rose from 17 percent to 42 percent before dropping to 30.5 percent in 2000.

Women's attendance at and graduation from college has also steadily increased since 1940. At that time, only 8.5 percent of women 25 and

over had attended college and only 3.6 percent completed a college degree. In 2000, the percentage of women who had attended college increased to 33.3 percent and the number who had graduated increased to 26.9 percent.

The level of education for women in Minnesota is higher than the national average. In 1940 Minnesota women had an average of 8.8 years of education. This rose to 12.3 in 1970. In 1980 U.S. women age 25 and over had an average of 12.4 years of education. State data are not available by sex for that year but women and men in Minnesota had a median educational attainment of 12.6 years. In 1990 U.S. women had an average of 12.7 years of education. In 2000, U.S. women had an average of xx years of education. This is a total increase from 1970 to 2000 of xx percent.

### Education and the Earnings Gap 1940 to 2000

Despite the increase in women's education levels, there is a gap between men's and women's earnings. Women in Minnesota working full-time, year-round earn between xx percent to xx percent of what men at comparable levels of education earn. However, from 1980 to 2000 the wage gap shrank between men and women of all education levels. Chart 7, on the following page, shows earnings by education level in 2000.

In 1980 women college graduates had earnings of only around 62 percent of those of their male counterparts. By 2000, this had risen to 69 percent. The average earnings of women with college degrees were roughly equivalent to those of men with a high school diploma.

The earnings gap for women with one to three years of college was similar to that of women who had completed college. In 2000, earnings for women with some college were at about xx percent of levels for similarly educated men.

Women with graduate degree had the smallest income gap, as they made xx percent of what men with graduate degrees earned in 2000.

In 1980, women with a high school education or less fared slightly worse than better-educated women. They earned just over 55 percent of the average salary of males with the same level of education. By 2000, women with some high school education earned xx percent of what their male counterparts earn.

INSERT CHART 7: Earnings by Educational Attainment by Sex for Minnesota in 2000 (Cheryl contacted state demographer's office for informatin)

## WOMEN, FAMILIES, AND POVERTY IN MINNESOTA

The percentage of female-headed households and families has increased in the past 50 years. However, husband-wife families continue to be the dominant family type. While women are paid less than men, an increasing number of women have sole financial responsibility for themselves or their families. Many female-headed households have incomes below the poverty line. In fact, people living in households headed by women are the poorest people in the state. Households with older women and families headed by younger women with children are most likely to live in poverty.

### Female-Headed Households 1940 to 2000

The percentage of female-headed households increased greatly between 1940 and 2000. Female-headed households were under 14 percent of all households in 1940. By 2000 they had increased to over 26 percent. Chart 8 shows the distribution of households over the last four decades.

Married-couple households declined from more than two-thirds of all households in 1960 to just over half of all households in 2000.

Chart 8  
Households in Minnesota by Type  
1960 to 2000

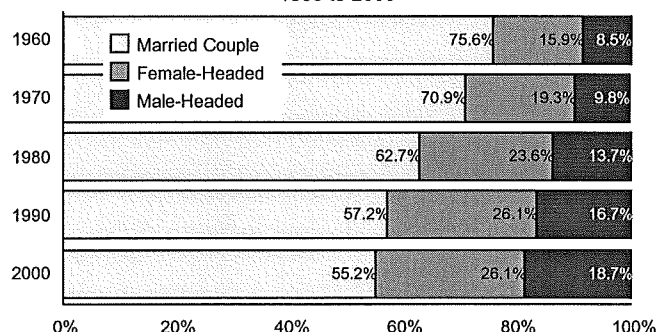
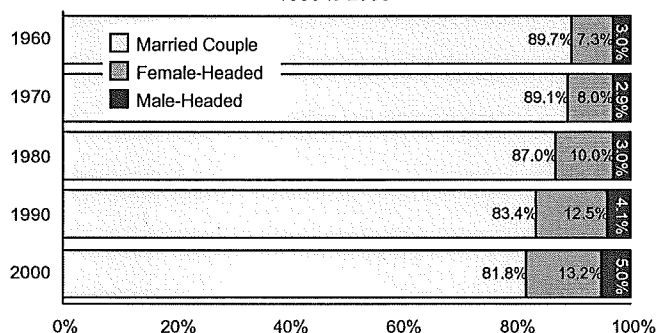


Chart 9  
Families in Minnesota by Type  
1960 to 2000



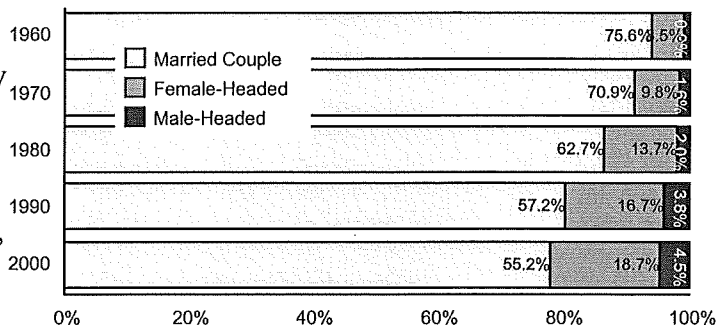
### Female-Headed Families 1960 to 2000

Female-headed families grew from over 7 to over 13 percent of all families between 1960 and 2000. The percentage of male-headed families remained at three percent of all families until 1990 when it rose to 4.1 percent. In 2000 the percentage of male-headed families again rose significantly to 5.0 percent. Chart 9 shows family composition over the last 40 years.

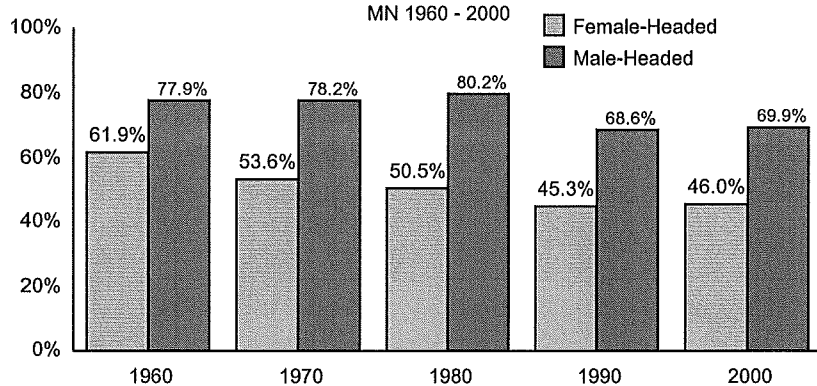
The percentage of female-headed families with children have more than tripled between 1960 and 2000. Female-headed families accounted for only 5.1 percent of families with children in 1960, but were almost 17.8 percent in 2000. Chart 10 shows the change in families with children by type of family during the past four decades.

Most single-parent families are still headed by women. A woman was the head of the family in about 85 percent of all single-parent families in 1960, 1970 and 1980, and 82 percent in 1990. In 2000 80 percent of all single-parent families were headed by women.

**Chart 10**  
Families by Type  
With Own Children Under 18 Years of Age  
MN 1960 to 2000



**Chart 11**  
Median Incomes of Female-Headed and Male-Headed Families  
As a Percentage of Median Income of Married Couple Families  
MN 1960 - 2000



Husband-wife families consistently have had the highest median income of the three family types. Chart 11 shows the changes in the incomes of male-headed and female-headed families compared to married-couple families. In 1960 male-headed families earned an average income that was 78 percent of that earned by husband-wife families. In the next 20 years that percentage rose slightly and reached 80 percent in 1980, before dropping to under 69 percent in 1990. In 2000 male-headed families earned 70 percent of the median earnings

earned by married-couple families, a 10.3 percent decline from the 1960 percentage.

Female-headed families have had the lowest median income and the income of these families declined steadily from 62 to 45 percent of the income of husband-wife families from 1960 to 2000, rising for the first time to 46 percent in 2000.

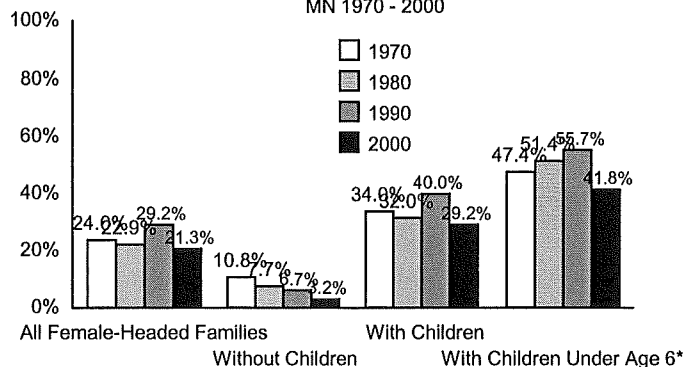
### Poverty Levels 1970 to 2000

In the decade between 1970 and 1980, the overall percentage of Minnesotans in poverty declined slightly from 10.7 to 9.5 percent, rising to 10.2 percent in 1990. In 2000 7.9 percent of Minnesotans lived in poverty.

The poverty rate for families in Minnesota remained the same from 1980 to 1990, at about 7 percent. In 2000, the poverty rate for families fell to 5.1 percent. The percentage of families in poverty without children declined slightly from just under 5 percent in 1980 to nearly 4 percent in 1990. In 2000, only 2.1 percent of families without children were in poverty.

Families headed by females have the highest poverty rates of the three family types. Chart 12 shows the poverty rates of female-headed families.

**Chart 12**  
Percentage of Female-Headed Families in Poverty  
by Presence of Related Children  
MN 1970 - 2000





The poverty rate of all female-headed families was 22.9 percent in 1980, down only one percentage point from 1970 (24.0 percent). By 1990 it had jumped to over 29.2 percent. In 2000 only 21.3 percent of all female-headed families were in poverty, the lowest percentage of the time period. This is an overall decline of 7.0 percent since 1970.

Female-headed families without children experienced a decrease in their poverty rate, from 10.8 percent in 1970 to just under 3.2 percent in 2000. This is an overall decline of 70.4 percent.

Female-headed families with children have the highest poverty rates. In 1980, 32 percent of these families were in poverty, down slightly from 34 percent in 1970. This jumped to 40 percent in 1990. In 2000 the percentage of female-headed families with children in poverty declined significantly to 29.2 percent. This is a decline of 27 percent since 1990 and 14 percent since 1970.

A greater percentage of female-headed families with children under the age of 6 were in poverty throughout the time period than all other categories of female-headed families. From 1970 to 1990, the percentage of female-headed families with young children rose from 47.4 percent to 55.7 percent. In 2000 only 41.8 percent of female-headed families with children under six lived in poverty. This is a decline of 24.9 percent since 1990 and 11.8 percent since 1970.

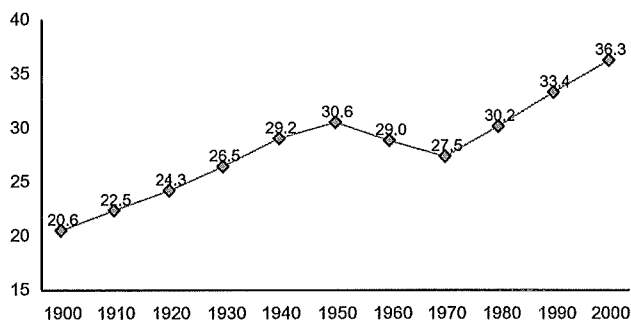
### WOMEN AND AGING IN MINNESOTA

The population of Minnesota, like the population of the United States as a whole, is growing older. The percentage of women age 65 and older is increasing as life expectancies increase and birth rates decrease. Life expectancies increased substantially between 1950 and 1980 for all groups of people. The median age of women has increased and surpassed that of men during this century. The age group with the highest percent increase in the number of women between 1990 and 2000 was women age 50 to 54 years, reflecting the aging of the baby boom generation, who were born between 1946 and 1964.

#### Median Age 1900 to 2000

The median age of women has risen since the turn of the century. Chart 13 shows this change. In 1900 the median age for women was 20.6 years. In 2000 it reached 36.3 years. Prior to 1990, the median age of women was at its highest in 1950 at 30.6 years. Median age of a population is affected by the number of people in each age group. Birth and death rates contribute to changes in the median age. Median age decreased after World War II as a result of the increase in the number of births.

Chart 13  
Median Age of Women  
MN 1900 to 2000



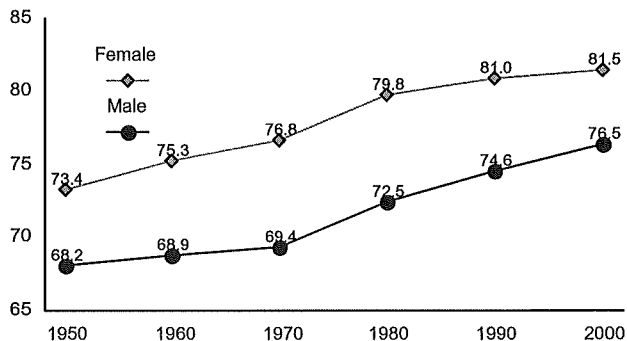
At the beginning of the century the median age of men was greater than that of women, 23.4 compared to 20.6. The median age of men continued to be higher than that of women until 1950. In that year the median ages of women and men were the same. Since then the median age of women has been greater than that of men. In 2000, the median age of men was 34.6 years, 5.0 percent lower than that for women.

#### Life Expectancy 1950 to 2000

Life expectancy for both women and men increased in Minnesota between 1950 and 2000. The increase was greater for women than for men.

Chart 14 shows the increase in life expectancies for Minnesota women and men from 1950 to 2000. Life expectancy at birth is derived from life tables which show what would happen if a constant number of people were born each year and mortality rates by age also remained constant at current levels.

Chart 14  
Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex  
MN 1950 to 2000



## Population Growth 1960 to 2000

The aging of the baby boom generation is reflected in population growth patterns. From 1960 to 1970, when the oldest baby boomers reached age 24, the number of women age 20 to 24 grew significantly. The number of women age 20 to 24 in 1970 was 49 percent higher than the number of 20- to 24-year-old women in 1960. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of women in the 30- to 34-year-old category grew by 51 percent. A decade later, between 1980 and 1990, the number of women age 40 to 44 grew by 50 percent. Predictably, between 1990 and 2000 the number of women in the 50- to 54-year-old category grew again by 50 percent.

## Women Age 65 and Above 1900 to 2000

The percentage of the female population age 65 and over has increased steadily in Minnesota from 1900 to 2000, almost doubling between 1940 and 1990. From 1990 to 2000 the percentage of the female population age 65 and over declined slightly for the first time in 100 years. Chart 15 illustrates this trend.

In 1900 women 65 and older made up slightly less than 4 percent of the total female population. By 1940 that figure was over 7 percent. In 2000, 14 percent of all women were in this age group, which is a total increase of 268.4 percent since 1900. This increase corresponds to increased life expectancies during these years (see chart 14). Men 65 and older accounted for 10.1 percent of all males in 2000.

At the beginning of this century women were less than half (46.3) of those 65 and over. By 2000 women were nearly three-fifths (58.5 percent) of that population, reflecting the increased life expectancy of women.

