



Office on the Economic Status of Women

Monthly Newsletter
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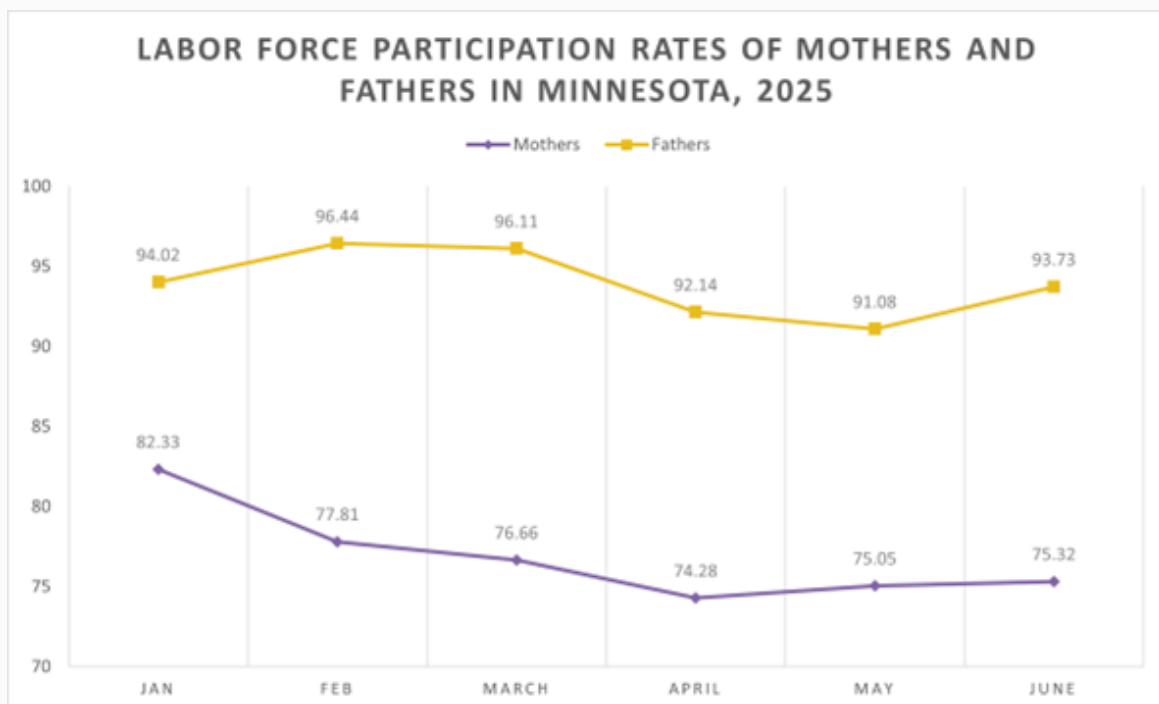
MOTHER'S LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION ON THE DECLINE

With the release of the Bureau of Labor Statistics [September 2025 report](#) on employment, analysts and economists across the country noticed something; mothers are leaving the workforce. It's a decline significant enough to make it into both [Time](#) and [The Washington Post](#), as well as our local [Star Tribune](#). And the numbers are stark; 212,000 women over 20 across the nation are no longer working or applying for jobs in just the six months since the start of 2025.

We wanted to know if Minnesota was following this trend, so we looked at data from the [Kansas Population Center's Care Board](#). Our findings show that Minnesota is indeed seeing the same decline in mother's labor force participation that the nation was seeing overall. According to this Care Lab data, the labor force participation rate of mothers in Minnesota fell from **82.33%** in **January 2025**, to **75.32%** in **June 2025**, for a decrease of 7.01 percentage points.

To compare, father's labor force participation rates were more variable across the past few months, rising slightly in the first half of the year before falling in April, but the overall change from January to June is a decrease of only 0.29 percentage points. In whole numbers, the number of mothers in the labor force in Minnesota dropped from **442,916** in January, to **390,029** in June. This indicates that **over 52,000 mothers** left the labor force in these past six months, **compared to 13,834 fathers**.

While father's labor force participation rates always sit about **10-20 points higher** and has for decades, they usually follow similar trends over time. For example, during the 2020 pandemic and the 2008 Recession, mothers and fathers both experienced a similar decrease in labor force participation. In 2025 however, fathers are not experiencing a decline to the same extent.





What could be causing this? A variety of factors, but childcare costs are potentially one of the major culprits. Read more about how childcare access has been shown to impact mother's labor force participation [our commentary for the Star Tribune](#).

"If we want to increase women's labor force participation, access to child care must be part of the equation. It is infrastructure that benefits everyone. It's essential to the functioning of the economy and quality of life for all Americans."

DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

At the beginning of the month, the **Minnesota Department of Human Rights** announced two cases involving sex discrimination in violation with Minnesota's civil rights law.

A concrete truck driver in Bemidji was fired after being told that driving a concrete truck was not "women's work" and that she should find a job more fitting for a woman.

A flight services operator in Thief River Falls refused to hire a man for the position of flight attendant despite his qualifications. During the investigation by the Department of Human Rights, the company stated that it had a practice of only hiring women as flight attendants because they believed women were "a better fit for the position".

Through the combined efforts of many activists and policymakers throughout the past several decades, sex and gender discrimination has become far less widespread. However, cases such as these serve as a reminder of the importance of discrimination protections and the pervasiveness of discrimination in the workplace. According to the Department of Human Rights, **22% of charges filed with their office allege sex discrimination**.

If you believe you have experienced discrimination in your workplace, contact the Department of Human rights using [this form](#).

SPOTLIGHT ISSUES OF THE MONTH

Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness:

October 13 was Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day, and all of October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Metastatic breast cancer specifically refers to stage IV breast cancer. Approximately 20-30% of those diagnosed with early stage breast cancer will progress into metastatic breast cancer, where cancer spreads beyond the breast into other parts of the body. In the United States, 168,000 women are living with metastatic breast cancer, and 43,000 lose their lives to the disease annually.

The American Cancer Society recommends that women at an average risk of breast cancer, between ages 45-54, should get mammograms every year. Women 55 and older should receive mammograms every other year. Women at high risk of breast cancer (with a strong family history, BRCA gene, and other factors) should receive breast MRI's yearly starting at age 30. Regular breast self-exams are also an important part of early detection. Learn how to do a self exam with this [guide from Mayo Clinic](#).



Menopause Awareness:

October is World Menopause Month! Menopause affects 50% of the population but continues to be a taboo subject in workplaces. Recently, more employers are recognizing the need to talk about and accommodate menopause due to the debilitating effect it can have on an individual's work life and general well-being.

The Women's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Labor identified a variety of policies that can help support those experiencing menopause at work, including:

- Access to temperature controls or ventilation, such as windows and fans
- Uniforms made of breathable fabrics with options in light colors
- Flexibility in dress code allowing for layering
- Access to bathrooms at increased frequency
- Access to waste disposal in or near toilet facilities
- Training workers and managers about menopause
- Including support for menopause in Employee Assistance Programs
- Ensuring coverage for menopause management and treatments in job-based health insurance



Domestic Violence Awareness:

October is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and we'd like to bring awareness to an often less-discussed aspect of intimate partner violence: financial abuse. Financial or economic abuse is defined as behaviors that control a survivor's ability to acquire, use and maintain resources, thus threatening their economic security and potential for self-sufficiency". Financial abuse may appear benevolent, as abusers can frame taking complete financial control as a good thing that allows victims to relax and not worry about financial stress. Examples include forbidding a victim from working, sabotaging employment opportunities, withholding funds or providing an "allowance", running up large debts on joint accounts, identity theft, and much more. Research has shown that **75 to 99%** of domestic violence survivors report experiencing economic abuse. In Minnesota, **67%** of unhoused women reported that they had at some point stayed in an abusive situation due to having no other housing options.

Individual economic independence, freedom, and stability separate from a partner or family member is an important part of preventing financial abuse. Minnesota law does not specifically identify economic abuse as a form of domestic abuse under its [Domestic Abuse Act](#). However, Minnesota does define economic abuse in [statute 332.71](#). This law allows for victims of debt coercion to [request collection activity be stopped](#), and [places civil responsibility for the incurred debt on the individual who committed the coercion](#). Many other forms of financial abuse are also illegal under different laws; such as identity theft, stalking, harassment, evasion of child support obligations, and more.

If you or someone you care about may be experiencing any form of domestic abuse, call the free and confidential [Minnesota Day One Crisis Line](#) at **1-866-223-1111**, or text **612-399-9995** for further resources, information, and support.

Disability Employment Awareness:

This month, we also want to bring attention to the important contributions of people with disabilities for the 80th anniversary of **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**. In Minnesota, people with disabilities make up **11.5%** of the population and about **50%** of those with disabilities are in the labor force. Minnesota is committed to supporting and encouraging the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce. Employers are required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities, under both the Americans with Disabilities Act and state law. Disability status is also a protected characteristic in the hiring process that cannot be discriminated against. Minnesota also offers job training programs for state positions, [Connect 700](#) and the [Supported Worker Program](#).

For more information, resources, and support, check out [Minnesota's Disability entry point webpage](#).

IN THE NEWS

Articles related to our spotlight issues are in **bold**.

[Making plans for the new Paid Leave Law](#)

[In-office mandates and child care costs are driving women out of the workforce](#)

[St. Paul incubator will help Latinas overcome barriers to launching child care businesses](#)

[This Minnesota County is on the verge of losing its only child care center](#)

[Child care has long been a vexing problem in rural Minnesota. One county may have cracked the code](#)

[Commentary: My role in advocating for menstrual equity](#)

[Domestic Violence Awareness Ecosystem in Minnesota](#)

[How a Rosemount woman turned a hat-making hobby into philanthropy](#)

[Hot Mess Express Minnesota Chapters clean up your hot messes for free](#)

[Minneapolis is the nation's leader in women's sports](#)

[Minnesota woman on a quest to preserve stories of disappearing towns](#)

[91-year-old Minnesota knitter keeping countless people warm this winter](#)

[Gopher's Women's Hockey vs. Boston University](#)

[A Latina-led nonprofit finds hope in nature](#)

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

In need of some caffeine as the days get shorter? **Mi'aawaa Bakery and Coffee Cart** offers a rotating menu featuring unique and creative treats like carrot cake lattes and vanilla chai cookies. Check out their [Instagram](#) to learn more.



NOVEMBER 4TH IS ELECTION DAY!

Local elections for city officers, school board members, township officers, and local ballot questions will be held across the state on November 4th, 2025.

Not sure when/where/how to vote? Get specific information for your address at the [Secretary of State's voting information webpage](#), including polling locations, what will be on your ballot, and more.

Your voice matters!



MINNEAPOLIS IS #1 IN WOMEN'S SPORTS



When ranked according to the number of **women's sports events hosted since 1980**, Minneapolis comes out at **#1**, followed by Indianapolis and Los Angeles. Minneapolis also ranks **#2 for championships won by women's teams**, with 11 championships won since 1980 thanks to the Frost, Lynx, Whitecaps, and the Twin Cities Amazons. Finally, Minneapolis ranks **2nd in number of women's professional teams**, behind New York City in 1st, and tied with Atlanta, Houston, Seattle, and Washington D.C.

Learn more about how to support women's sports in Minneapolis at [MeetMinneapolis](#).

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