

## 1. PRICE CONTROLS

During World War II, access to many items was rationed because America was trying to supply huge amounts of food and vital materials to the armed forces. So in order to keep inflation in check, President Roosevelt created the Office of Price Administration to try to keep prices low and provide access equal for all, not just the wealthy. Price limits or “ceiling prices” were set, limiting the price that stores could charge for items. Stores could not raise prices above what the price was in March of 1942. Ration books, coupons, and tokens were carefully distributed to each person or family by local boards. These coupons were turned in when a person wanted to buy rationed items such as sugar, butter, meat, oils, and frozen fruits or vegetables. These coupons did not take the place of money, but had to be used in addition to money.

## 2. CONSERVE/SALVAGE

Wartime cookbooks and pamphlets showed Americans how to substitute a rationed item for another non-rationed ingredient (like using honey in place of sugar), or how to make the most of any leftovers in other recipes. Americans even saved the fats and grease from the meats they cooked in order to 1) re-use in place of butter and oil when cooking, and 2) return to the butcher who would send it to a rendering plant to be processed into munitions.

## 3. VICTORY GARDEN

To supplement many of the food items that were in short supply, Victory Gardens were planted in backyards, vacant lots, parks, baseball fields, and school yards across America. Victory gardens began to replace commercial produce and provided 40% of the fresh produce consumed by civilians during the war. Women were encouraged to can vegetables to be used during the winter months when no produce could be harvested. The goal was to produce enough fresh vegetables in the summer and canned vegetables for the winter for one’s immediate family and neighbors.

## 4. WOMEN TO WORK PROPAGANDA

The government needed women to work in all kinds of jobs to fill the needs presented by the war, therefore many propaganda campaigns were launched to encourage women to join the work force. Some 125 million advertisements were produced, convincing about 20 million women to join the work force. These propaganda advertisements depicted women as competent and strong in their new jobs, while maintaining the feminine ideal of beauty. Traditionally, women had been discouraged from seeking jobs outside the home, especially once they were married. And, if they had to bring in money for their family, women were expected to do “women’s work” such as sewing, cooking, and maid’s work. Therefore, propaganda was also created to convince women and their husbands that this change was acceptable.

## 5. ROSIE THE RIVETER

“Rosie the Riveter” is the name of a fictional character who came to symbolize the millions of real women who filled America’s factories, munitions plants, and shipyards during WWII. Norman Rockwell created the first popular Rosie the Riveter image that appeared on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post magazine on May 29th, 1943. However, in 1942, artist J. Howard Miller had been hired by the Westinghouse Company’s War Production Coordinating Committee to create a series of posters for them to help recruit women to join the work force. One of these became the famous “We Can Do It!” poster. The public later applied Rockwell’s title of “Rosie the Riveter” to this woman worker image as well. Both images have become iconic symbols of women’s rights and their ability to roll up their sleeves, pull back their hair and do anything they choose to do.

## 6. SONS IN SERVICE

Called a “service banner/flag” or a “sons in service banner/flag” people during WWII would display these banners in the front windows of their homes to signify family members who are serving or have died in war. They traditionally show one star for each service member -- a blue star meant serving in war, and a gold star meant died in service. It is used in the background of these two posters to help persuade Americans to make personal changes on the home front to bring home the servicemen symbolized on the banners. This tradition was started in WWI, but became wide-spread in WWII.

## 7. UNION

As women realized that they were doing the same job as good as--or better than--their male peers, but getting paid half the salary, they began to organize into unions. One of the strongest was the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America. Unions allowed workers to bond together in protest and demand equal pay for equal work and child care facilities. These women and unions laid the foundation for later feminist movements that continued the fight against gender oppression (like girls getting the choice of enrolling in the same classes as boys, or being allowed to play the same sports as boys, they even had to fight for a woman’s right to continue working while pregnant).

## 8. CHILDCARE

For many of the American women to be able to enter the workforce during WWII, this meant figuring out how to meet childcare needs. This was also a problem for the factories needing to be able to employ more women. Therefore, many companies began to create on-site childcare centers. The government even recognized this problem and helped by providing some funding for these centers. After all, these women were needed to create the equipment for the government to fight the war. Childcare services were frowned upon by some in society who felt that women should stay at home with their children, but this was just one more step in a changing world for women’s rights and family dynamics.