

Economy Adds More Jobs for Women Than Men, But Women Still 8 Million Jobs-on-Payroll Below February and Majority of All Who Lost Jobs

The economy added 4.8 million to non-farm payroll employment, according to the latest [U.S. Bureau Employment Situation Release](#). Yet, while women gained the majority of new job, they continue to lag further behind men in terms of getting back to pre-COVID 19 employment levels. The rate of unemployment for all women ages 20 and older remains higher than that for all men, and is still in double digits for women and men of all major racial and ethnic groups with the exception of White men.

Women held six in ten (59.9 percent) jobs added to non-farm payrolls between mid-May and mid-June 2020, yet they continue to lag further behind men in getting back to pre-COVID 19 employment levels. Women's non-farm payroll employment is still 8 million below its February 2020 levels, while men's is still 6.6 million lower (Table 1). Women's payroll employment is still 10.5 percent below February levels, and men's 8.7 percent.ⁱ

Women's payroll employment grew in all major sectors of the economy, particularly in Leisure and Hospitality (Figure 1), but continues to be substantially below pre-COVID 19 levels in February (Figure 2). Women's employment in Leisure and Hospitality is still only at 71 percent of what it was pre-COVID; Education and Health Services, the sector that employs the largest number of women, has seen much less of a collapse of employment and has recovered 92 percent of February job levels.ⁱⁱ Yet, notably, employment levels in Child Care Services are still a quarter below their pre COVID levels, highlighting the patchy recovery and the difficulties for many parents, and particularly mothers, in returning to employment as the economy reopens.ⁱⁱⁱ

For men, employment also grew in the larger sectors, but declined in four sectors: Government, Information, Utilities, and Mining (Figure 1). Sector segregation—the fact that women and men are concentrated in different parts of the economy—accounts for much of the job changes.

With the exception of Retail, Wholesale, and Other Services, women's job losses in each major sector have been broadly proportional to the share of jobs they held before the lockdown (see Table 1). The exception are Retail (where women's share of job losses, at 65.2 percent, is substantially higher than their pre-Covid share of Retail employment, at 49.8%), and women also bore disproportional job losses in Wholesale and Other Services. Women's employment fell less than would be expected from pre-Covid employment levels in Mining, Construction, and Utilities (Table 1); these sectors overall employ only a small proportion of women who tend to be more concentrated in back office jobs less likely to be immediately impacted by operational cut-backs.

Figure 1. Women Gained Jobs in all Major Sectors of the Economy but...

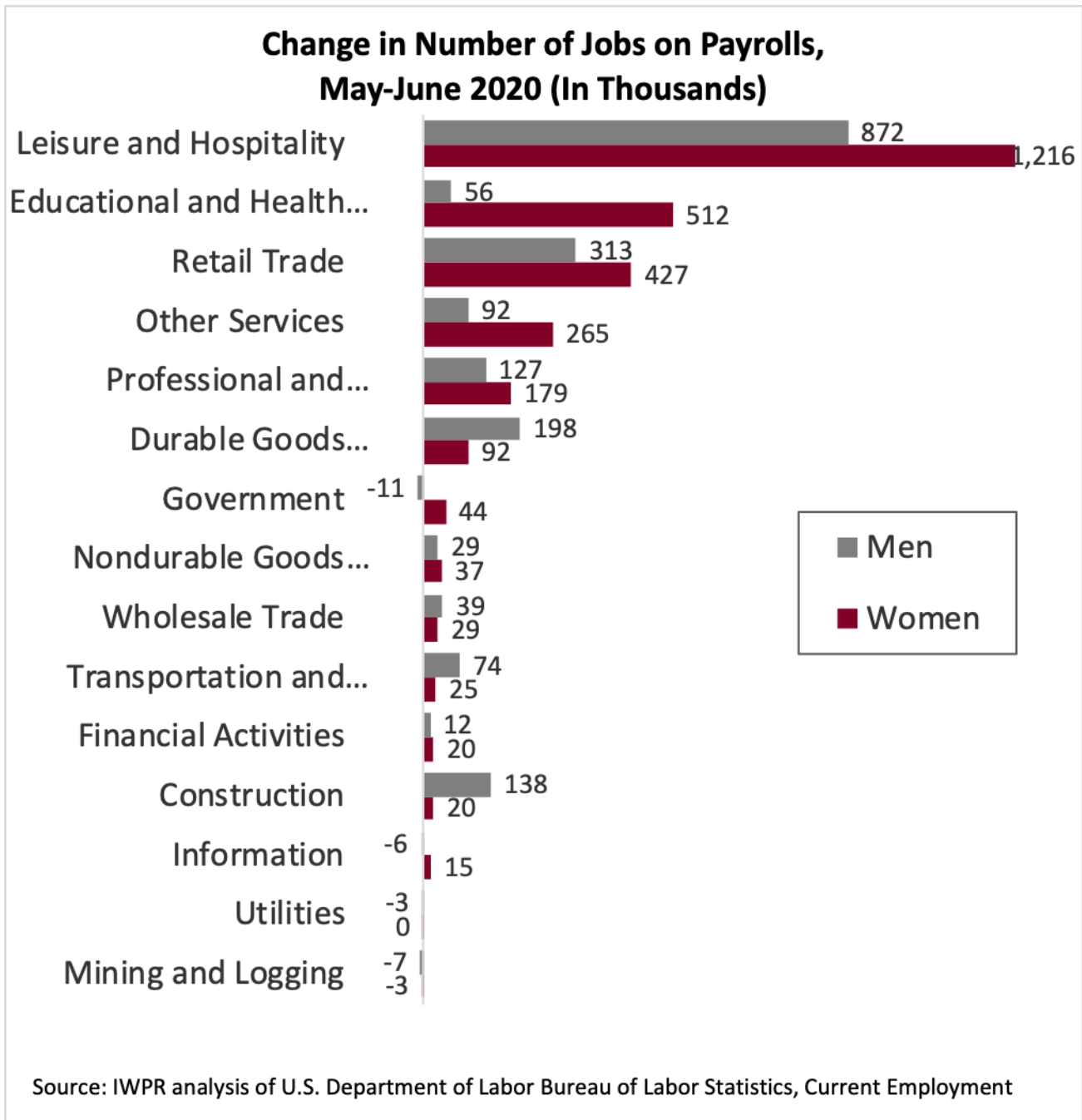


Figure 2. Women’s Employment still far below Pre-COVID levels, in spite of Strong Jobs Gains since May

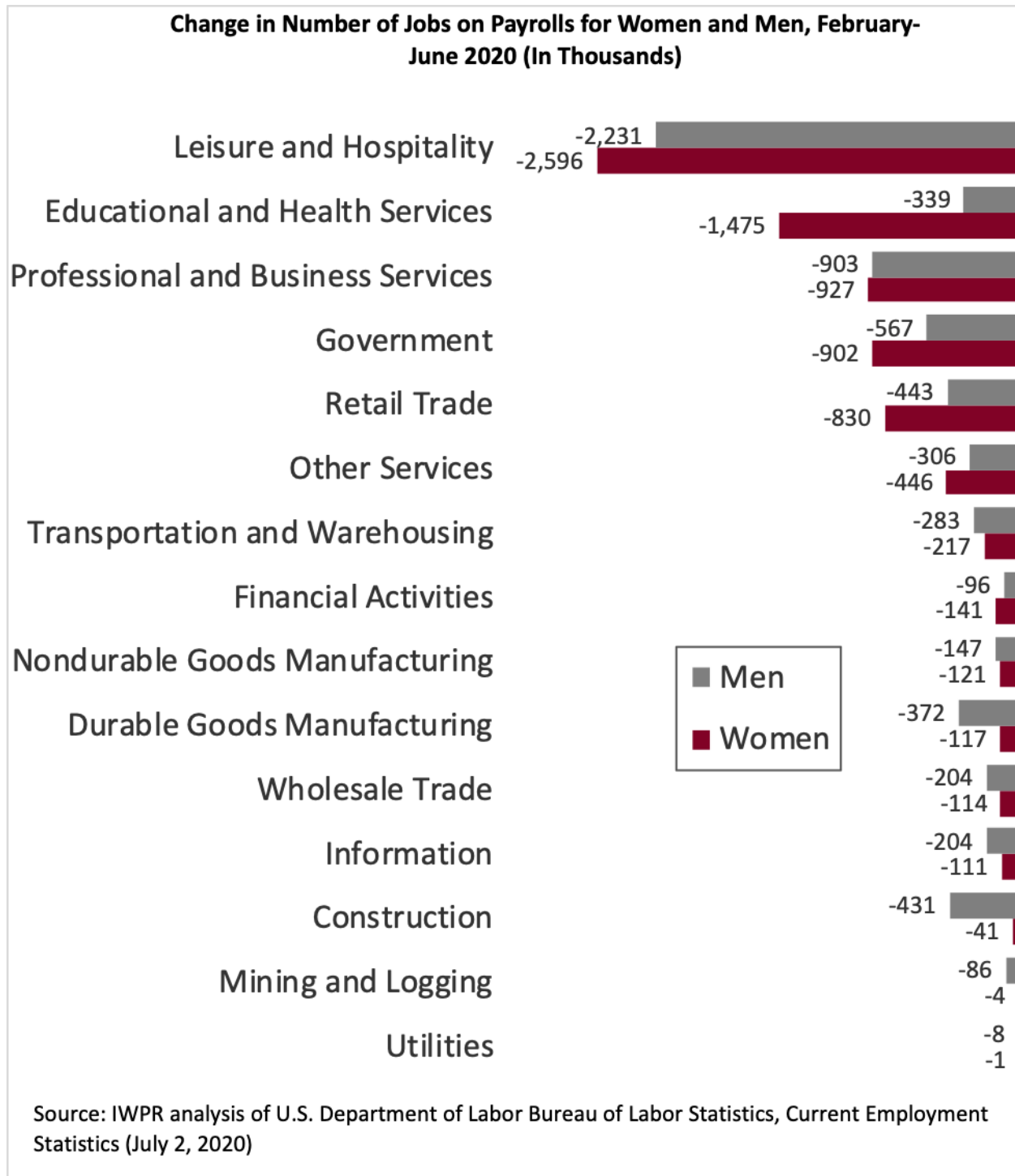


Table 1: Women and Men on Payroll by Sector of Industry since February 2020: Total Employment in Sector, Women’s Share of Employment, Women’s Share of Job Losses and Job Growth

	Pre-COVID Lockdown						Change Since COVID Lockdown		
	Number of workers on Pay Roll February, 2020 ('000)			Number of workers on Non-Farm Pay Roll June, 2020 ('000)			Change February to June 2020 ('000)		
	Women	Men	Women (%)	Women	Men	Women (%)	Women	Men	Women (%)
Mining and Logging	95	619	13.3%	91	533	14.6%	(4)	(86)	4.4%
Construction	994	6,645	13.0%	953	6,214	13.3%	(41)	(431)	8.7%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	1,957	6,101	24.3%	1840	5,729	24.3%	(117)	(372)	23.9%
Nondurable Goods Manufacturing	1,723	3,071	35.9%	1602	2,924	35.4%	(121)	(147)	45.1%
Wholesale Trade	1,787	4,147	30.1%	1673.6	3,943	29.8%	(114)	(204)	35.8%
Retail Trade	7,767	7,905	49.6%	6937.2	7,462	48.2%	(830)	(443)	65.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,469	4,210	25.9%	1251.8	3,927	24.2%	(217)	(283)	43.4%
Utilities	132.8	413.3	24.3%	132	406	24.6%	(1)	(8)	9.3%
Information	1,149	1,745	39.7%	1038	1,541	40.2%	(111)	(204)	35.2%
Financial Activities	5,000	3,845	56.5%	4859	3,749	56.4%	(141)	(96)	59.5%
Professional and Business Services	9,897	11,653	45.9%	8970	10,750	45.5%	(927)	(903)	50.7%
Educational and Health Services	19,027	5,559	77.4%	17552	5,220	77.1%	(1,475)	(339)	81.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	8,995	7,872	53.3%	6399	5,641	53.1%	(2,596)	(2,231)	53.8%
Other Services	3,155	2,786	53.1%	2709	2,480	52.2%	(446)	(306)	59.3%
Government	13,143	9,602	57.8%	12241	9,035	57.5%	(902)	(567)	61.4%
Total on Payroll	76,291	76,173	50.2%	68,249	69,554	49.5%	(8,042)	(6,619)	54.9%

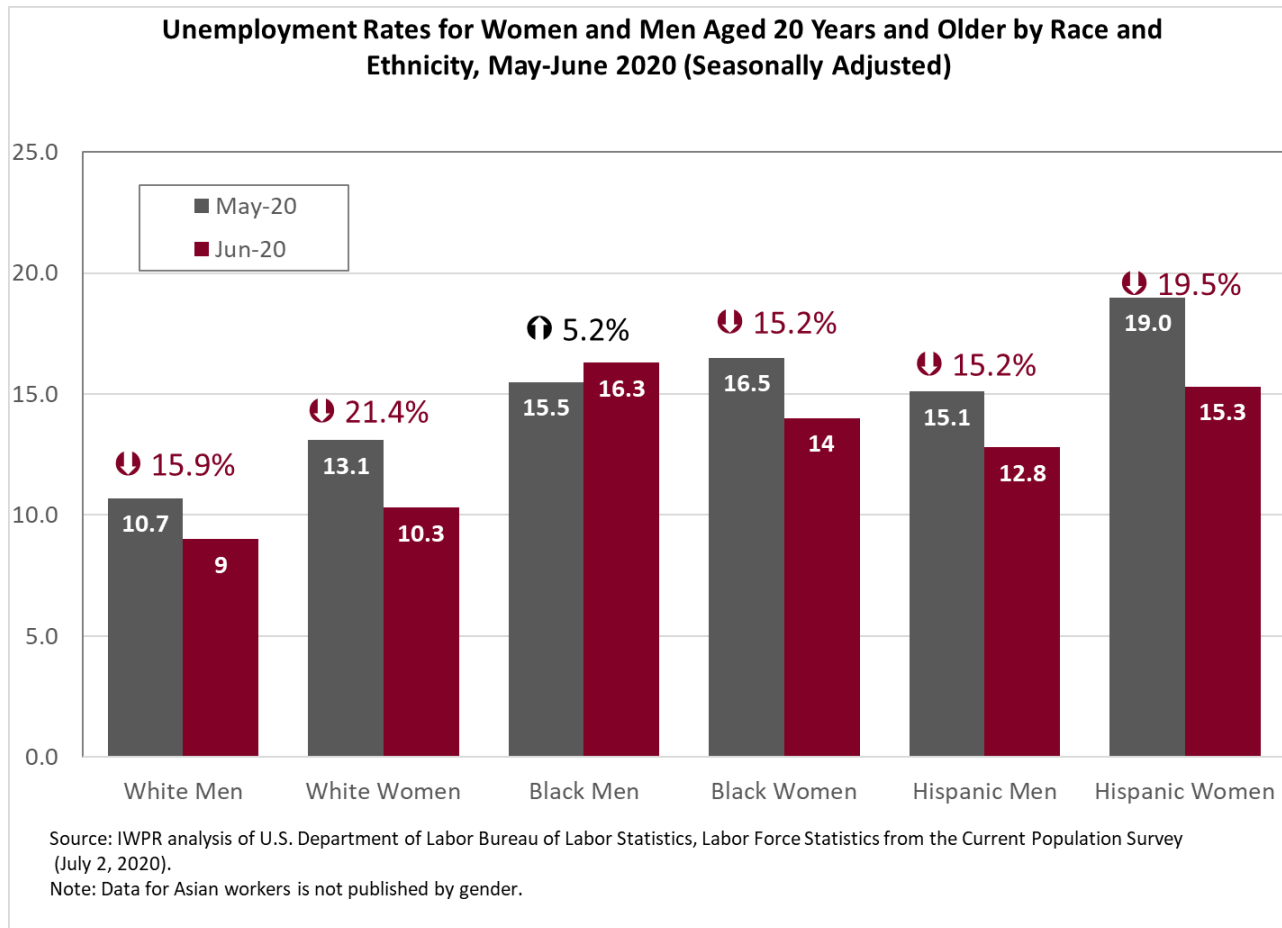
Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (July 2, 2020)

Double-Digit Rates of Unemployment Continue for Women of All Major Racial and Ethnic Groups

The rate of unemployment declined for both women and men since mid-May but remains at historically high levels. More than one in ten women (11.2 percent) and one in ten men (10.2 percent) ages 20 and older were unemployed and actively looked for work during the last four weeks. The rate of unemployment is higher for White women compared to White men (10.3 and 9.0 percent respectively) and Hispanic women to Hispanic

men (15.3 and 12.8 percent respectively). Black women’s rate is 14.0 percent, and Black men’s 16.3 percent; Black men are the only group who saw a rise in unemployment since May, and have the highest rate among women and men of the largest racial and ethnic groups (Figure 3). The rate of unemployment for Asian workers age 20 and older fell to 13.8 percent (data not published by gender).

Figure 3: Unemployment has Fallen, but still at Double-Digit Levels for all but White Men



Notes: Racial groups are exclusive; Hispanics may be of any race. Unemployment data for Asian workers or workers of other ethnic and racial backgrounds are not published by gender. Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (June 5, 2020).

The rate of unemployment does not capture anyone who has given up looking for work, and hence may undercount true levels of unemployment. The rate of labor force participation rate counts anyone who is employed or actively looking for work; for both women (and men it is still substantially lower than it was in February, suggesting that a substantial number of people may have given up looking for work.)

Unemployment for Young Women ages 20 to 24 is Four-Times as High as it was a Year ago

Unemployment is particularly high for young women and men. The severity of the crisis can be seen when comparing the rate of unemployment for young women ages 20-24 between June this year and June 2019. This an age group which includes many recent college graduates or students looking for summer jobs to fund themselves through college. In June 2019, the rate of unemployment for women in this age group was 5 percent; this June it was four times as high, at 20.6 percent. For young men in this age group, the rates were 7.4 and 19.0 percent respectively.^{iv}

Unemployment among teens is also particularly high as many traditional summer jobs are in sectors that are particularly severely impacted by COVID, and as they are competing for jobs with more experienced workers returning to work as the economy reopens. The rate of unemployment for young women ages 16-19 in June was 22.8 percent, and for young men even higher at 23.6 percent.^v

ⁱ IWPR analysis based on BLS Current Employment Statistics, not shown elsewhere Series


ⁱⁱ IWPR analysis based on BLS Current Employment Statistics,. not shown elsewhere.

ⁱⁱⁱ IWPR analysis based on BLS Current Employment Statistics,. not shown elsewhere.

^{iv} U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) Table A 10: Table A-10. Selected unemployment indicators, seasonally adjusted
<<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t10.htm>>

^v As above.

This IWPR Quick Figure was prepared by Ariane Hegewisch and Zohal Barsi.



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