

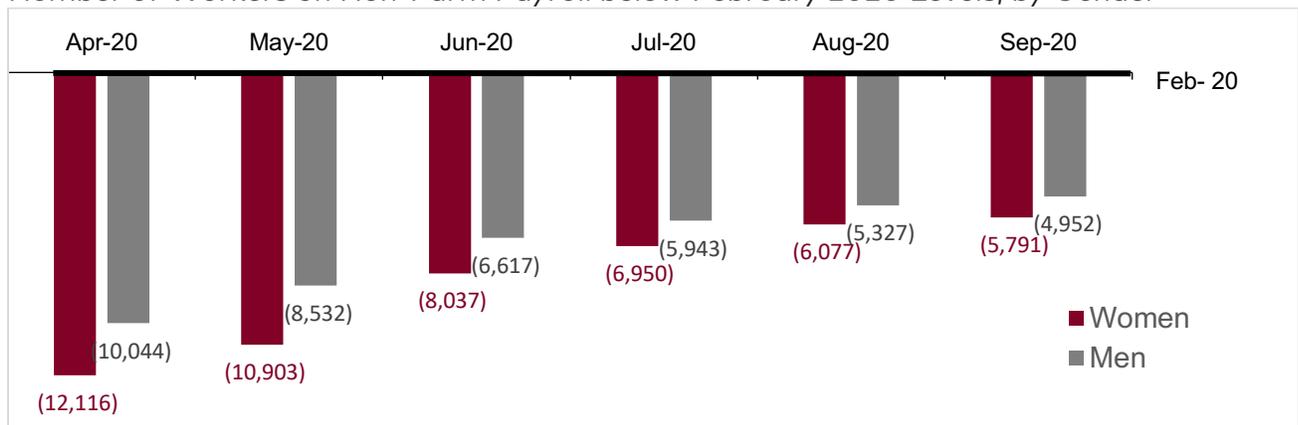
Women are Falling Further Behind Men in the Recovery and are 5.8 Million Jobs below pre-COVID Employment Levels, Compared with 5.0 million fewer Jobs for Men

New jobs figures from September show much less job growth than in the previous month, particularly for women, according to the U.S. Bureau for Labor Statistics latest Employment Situation release. Women's official rates unemployment fell, while the number of women who are no longer actively looking for work increased. Unemployment fell between August and September for all major groups with the exception of Hispanic workers, who saw increased unemployment.

The number of women workers on non-farm payrolls increased by just 286,000 between August and September, substantially less than in the previous month (873,000), and just 43.7 percent of total growth of payroll employment. Men also saw reduced growth in payroll employment compared to the previous month (375,000 and 616,000), but face a lower jobs deficit than women compared to pre-COVID employment levels. Women's payroll employment is still 5.79 million below February, men's 4.95 million (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 1: The Recovery is Slowing, and Leaving Women even further behind than Men

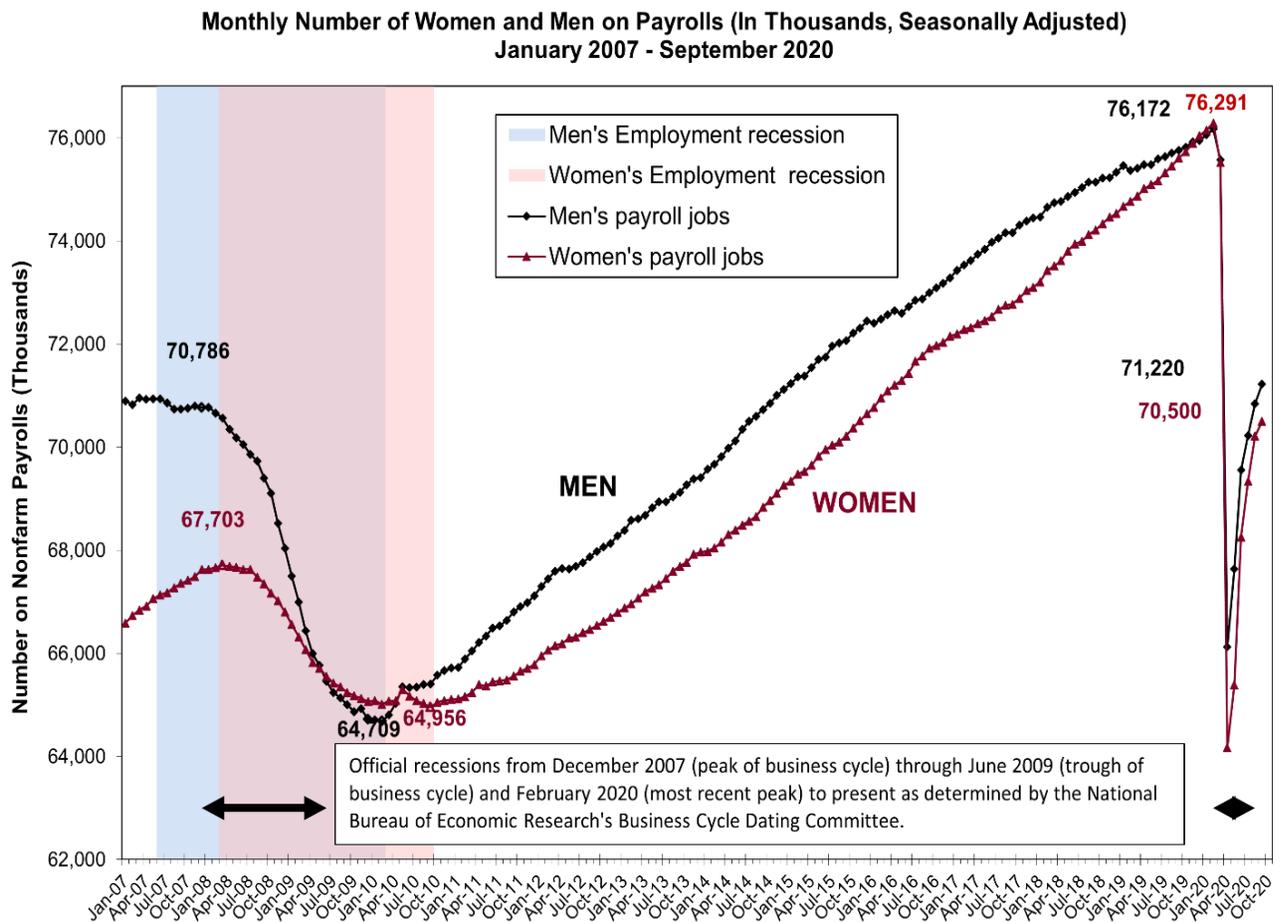
Number of Workers on Non-Farm Payroll below February 2020 Levels, by Gender



Notes: In February 2020, there were 76,291,000 women and 76,172,000 men workers on non-farm payrolls.

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

Figure 2: Women Fall Further Behind Men in Recovery

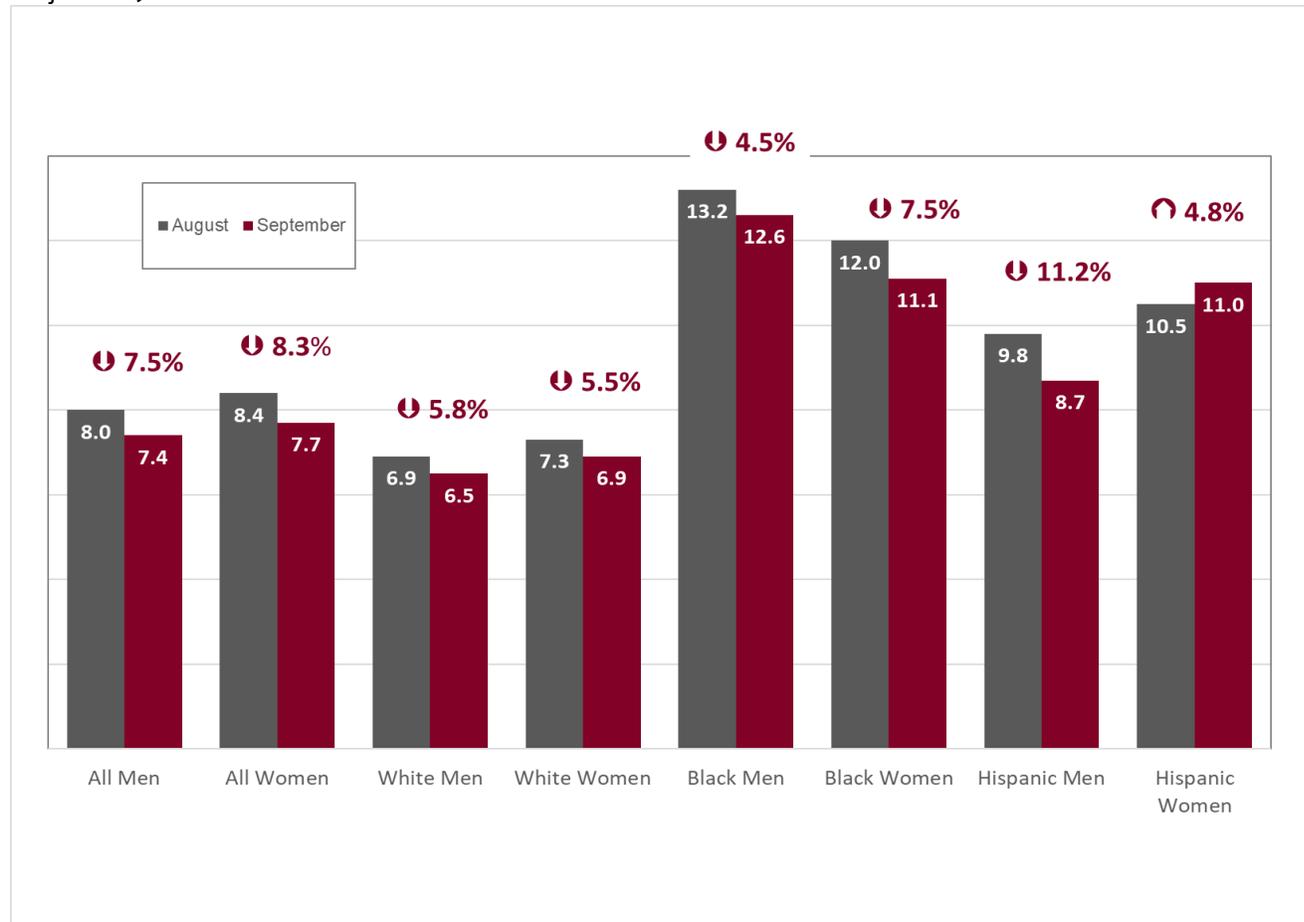


Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (October 2, 2020)

Unemployment Falls for Women and Men of Major Racial/Ethnic Groups with Exception of Hispanic Women

Rates of unemployment differ sharply by race and ethnicity and continue to be in double digits for Black and Hispanic women and Black men. Hispanic women ages 20 and older saw a rate increase from 10.5 to 11.0 percent between August and September; for other groups of adult workers (age 20 and older) the rates fell (Figure 3). The rate of unemployment for all adult women workers (7.7 percent) is higher than for all adult men (7.4 percent), for adult White women (6.9 percent) than White men (6.5 percent), and for Hispanic women (11.0) than Hispanic men (8.7 percent). Black women's rate (11.1 percent) is lower than Black men's (12.6 percent). The rate of unemployment for all Asian workers (data not published by gender or age) fell to 8.9 percent, the biggest monthly rate of decline of 16.8 percent (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Rates of Unemployment Declined for all but Hispanic Women Workers
 Unemployment Rates for Women and Men Aged 20 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity, August-September 2020, and Change since Previous Month (Seasonally Adjusted)



Notes: Unemployment data for Asian workers or workers of other ethnic and racial backgrounds are not published by gender. The rate of unemployment for all Asian workers fell from 10.7 percent in August to 8.9 percent in September (a decline of 16.8 percent).

Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (October 2, 2020)

Women Outnumber Men among those who have not Looked for Work because of the COVID Pandemic

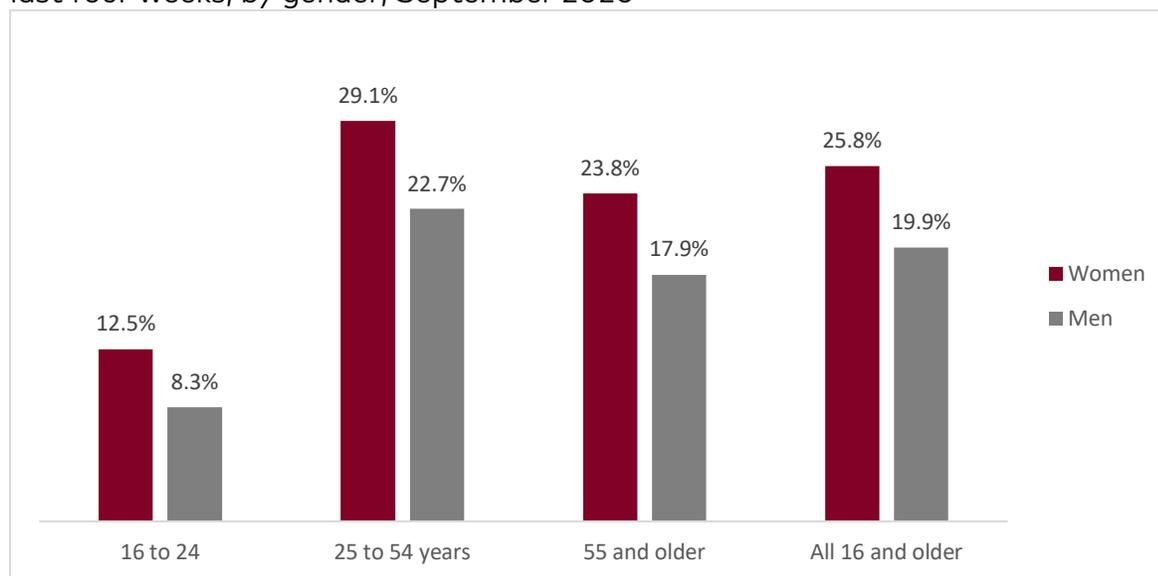
The official rate of unemployment includes only those who actively looked for work within the past four weeks. It does not include 4.5 million workers who report not having looked for work in the last four weeks because of the COVID pandemic; women are the majority of these workers (2.6 million, or 58 percent) and women outnumber men even more among prime-age workers (ages 25-54) where they make up 63 percent of those who were not employed and did not look for work during the last four weeks because of the pandemic.¹

Only a Minority of Women and Men Work Remotely

In May 2020, over a third of all workers (35.2 percent), including four in ten women (40.9 percent) and three in ten men (30.8 percent) spent at least some of their paid time working remotely. The proportion of remote workers has fallen substantially since then, to slightly less than a quarter of all workers (22.7 percent), a quarter (25.8 percent) of women and a fifth (19.9 percent) of men workers.² Women are more likely to work from home than men, in all major age groups (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Women are more likely than Men to do Remote Work because of COVID

The proportion of all employed workers who teleworked or worked from home during last four weeks, by gender, September 2020



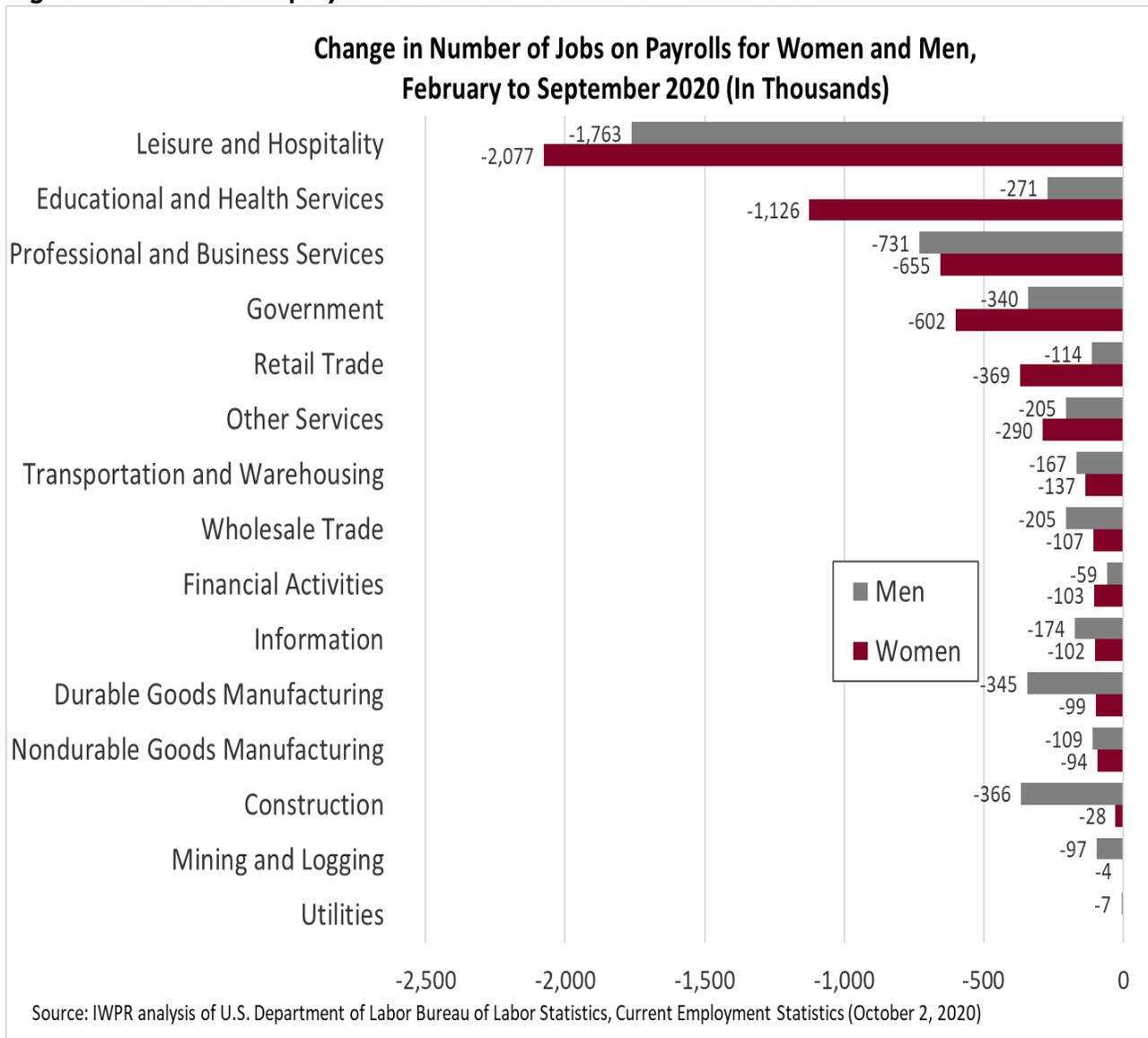
Source: see endnote 2.

Job Losses in the Government Sector Hit Women Particularly Hard

While employment increased in most major sectors of the economy, jobs in Government (federal, state, and local levels) declined by 216,000, likely reflecting cutbacks in support workers as schools and colleges have reduced in-person instruction. Almost two thirds of Government job losses were born by women (157,000 or 72.7 percent of total job losses Figure 5), far exceeding their share of jobs in this sector prior to the pandemic (Table 1).

As in previous months, employment in Leisure and Hospitality added the largest number of jobs, for both women and even more so for men, but this is also the sector where employment levels are still furthest below their February levels. Women's employment is still 2.1 million below what it was in February, at just 76.9 percent of its level in February.³ Other sectors where women's employment is still substantially below pre-COVID levels are Education and Health Services (still down 1.1 million jobs for women), Professional and Business Services (down by 665,000 jobs for women), and Retail (down by 369,000 jobs; Figure 6).

Figure 6. Women’s Employment still far below Pre-COVID levels



The slow recovery of child care services, a sector that very largely employs women, highlights the difficulties for many parents, and particularly mothers, in returning to employment as the economy reopens. Child Day Care Services added just 17,700 jobs in September, and are still at only 82.1 percent of the number of employment levels in February, almost a fifth fewer workers to support parents.⁴

Six months into the COVID pandemic, data continue to show that women are impacted more strongly than men by the COVID recession; without concerted public policy efforts, these trends threaten to further worsen racial and gender inequity.

¹ IWPR calculation based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey: “Supplemental data measuring the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the labor market: Tables 9 and 10 (September).” October 2, 2020 <<https://www.bls.gov/cps/effects-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic.htm#table1>> (accessed October 2020).

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey: “Supplemental data measuring the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the labor market: Table 1. Employed persons who teleworked or worked at home for pay at any time in the last 4 weeks because of the coronavirus pandemic by selected characteristics.” October 2, 2020 <<https://www.bls.gov/cps/effects-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic.htm#table1>> (accessed October 2020).

³ IWPR analysis based on BLS Current Employment Statistics, not shown elsewhere.

⁴ IWPR analysis based on Table B1. Employees on nonfarm payrolls by industry sector and selected industry detail, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Economic News Release (October 2, 2020) <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t17.htm>>.