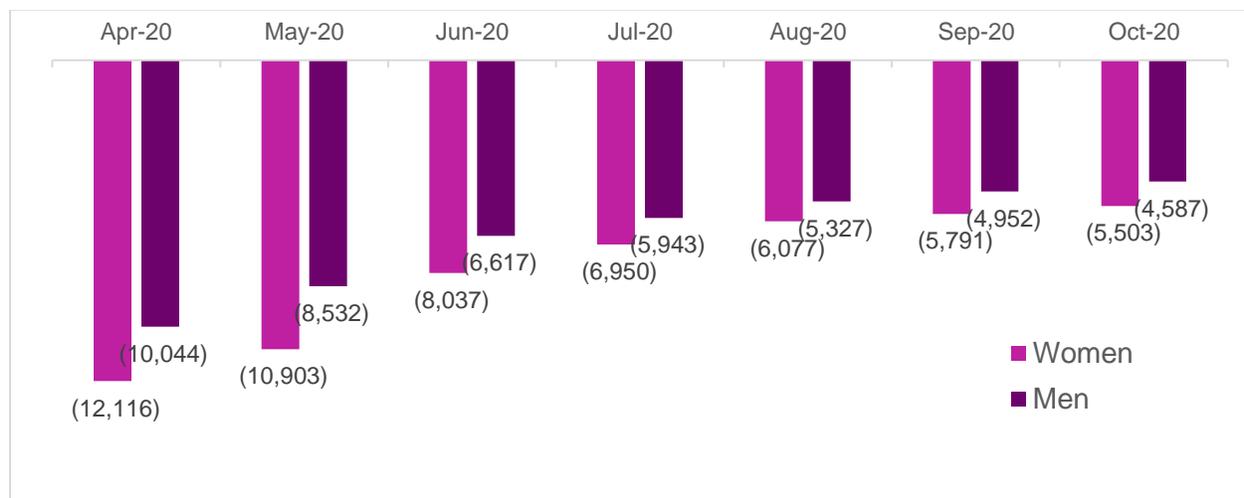


## Despite modest employment gains, women still 5.5 million jobs below pre-pandemic level, and more than twice as likely as men to have exited workforce since February

- Women gained 280,000 jobs on non-farm payrolls, just 43.9 percent of total job growth, and 5.5 million below February's non-farm payroll.
- While 480,000 adult women rejoined the workforce in October, there are still 2.2 million fewer adult women in the labor force than there were in February, a 66 percent higher attrition than of men in the workforce (1.4 million).
- Women saw the highest job growth in Leisure and Hospitality, sectors that are particularly vulnerable to the surge in COVID-19 cases, but faced substantial job losses in state and local government.

New October jobs data<sup>1</sup> show women gained 280,000 (43.9 percent) of 638,000 new non-farm payroll jobs since October. The pace of the recovery has slowed considerably, with jobs growth again smaller than in the previous month. The number of women on non-farm payrolls is still 5.5 million jobs below February's levels, compared with 4.6 million fewer jobs for men (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Slowing Progress in Getting Back to Pre-COVID Jobs Numbers. Women are Lagging behind Men in the Recovery.**

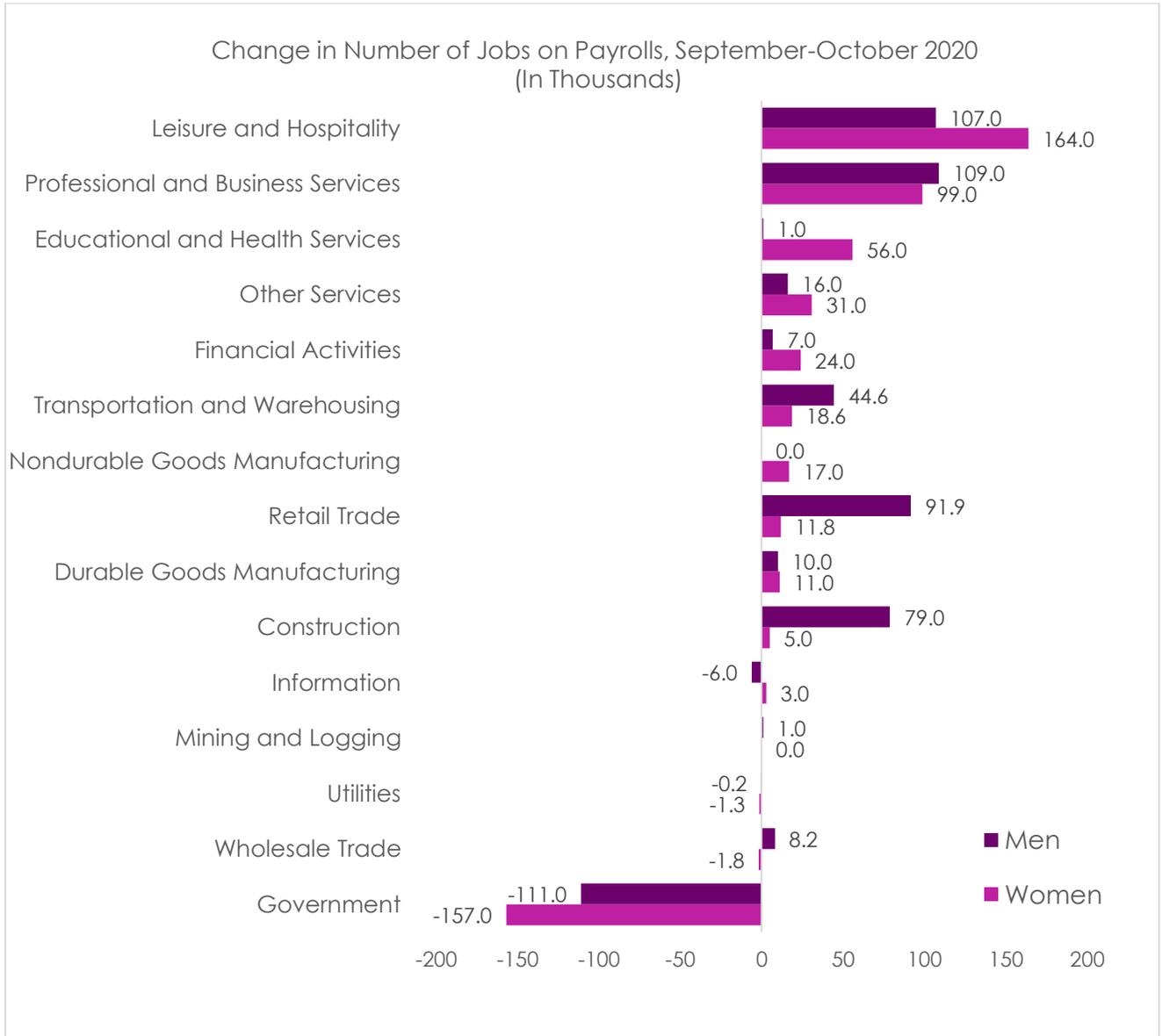


Notes: In February, there were 76,291,000 women and 76,172,000 men on non-farm payrolls.

Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment Statistics (November 6, 2020).

Job growth for women was strongest in Leisure and Hospitality, adding 161,000 jobs in October. Yet, overall employment in this sector is at just 77 percent of its pre-COVID levels. Leisure and hospitality jobs are particularly vulnerable to the renewed surge in COVID-19 cases. While the number of workers on payroll increased in most part of the economy, employment in state and local government declined sharply (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Women Gain Jobs in Most Sectors but Face Sharp Losses in Government Employment**

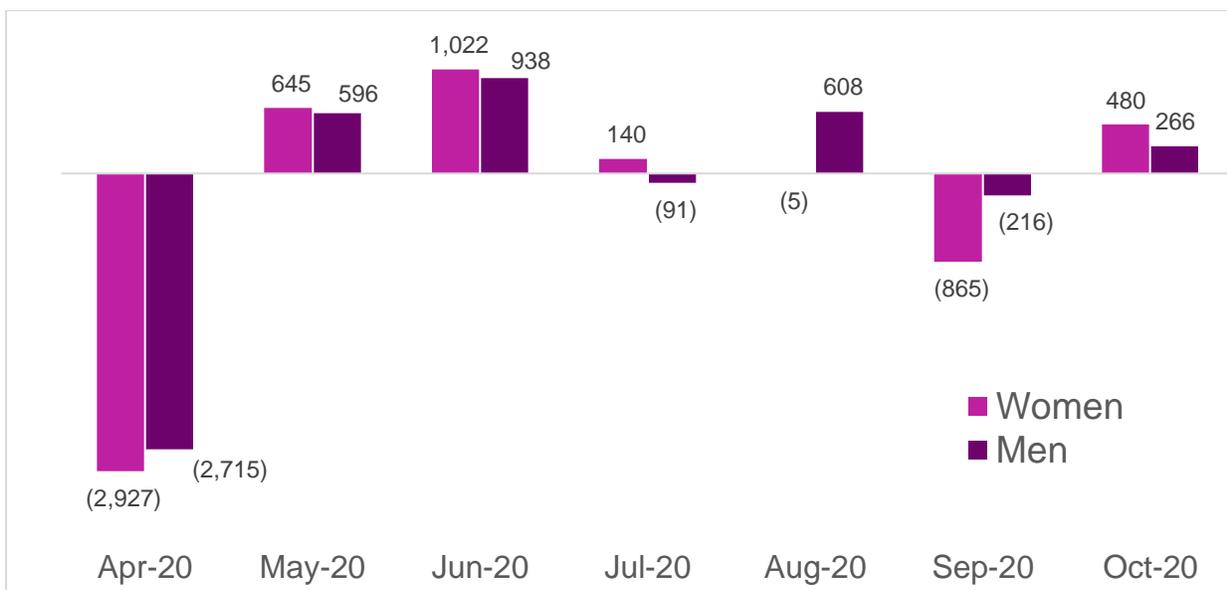


Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (November 6, 2020)

Job losses in the government sector were particularly pronounced in state and local education services.<sup>2</sup> Employment levels in the Childcare sector also continue far below pre-COVID levels. The Child Care sector added only 8,000 new jobs, and employment levels are still 17 percent below February levels.<sup>3</sup> Women are the majority of workers in childcare and in schools. Women are also those who have been most impacted as child care and schooling services have broken away.<sup>4</sup>

More women than men joined the workforce in October, but the change failed to make up for the large decline in women’s numbers in the workforce in September (Figure 3). Overall, there are 2.2 million fewer women in the civilian labor force than they were in February 2020, a much steeper drop than in the number of men (1.4 million).<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 3: More Women than Men (Re)Join the Workforce in October, but there are still 2.2 million fewer Women in the Workforce than there were in February, compared with 1.4 million fewer Men**

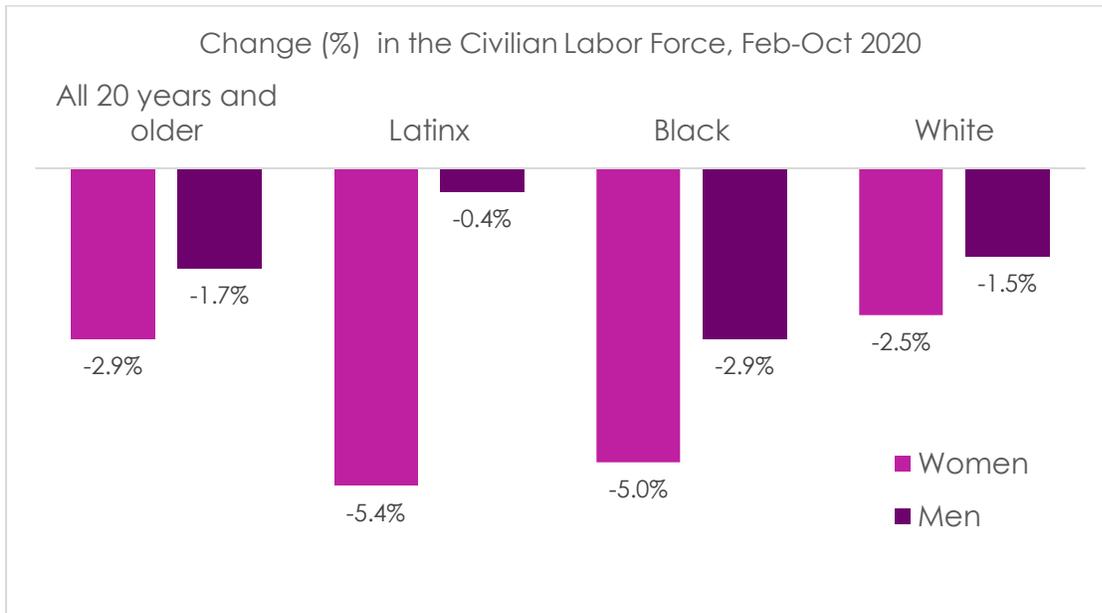


Notes: Month-on-month changes in the size of the Civilian Labor Force, by Gender, April – October 2020, in thousands.

Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey.

The extent of change in labor force participation differs sharply by race and ethnicity. The numbers of Black and Latina women in the civilian labor force have declined much more sharply than those of men, and of white women (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: The Numbers of Latina and Black Women in the Civilian Workforce have Fallen Much More Strongly since February than those of White Women, or Men**



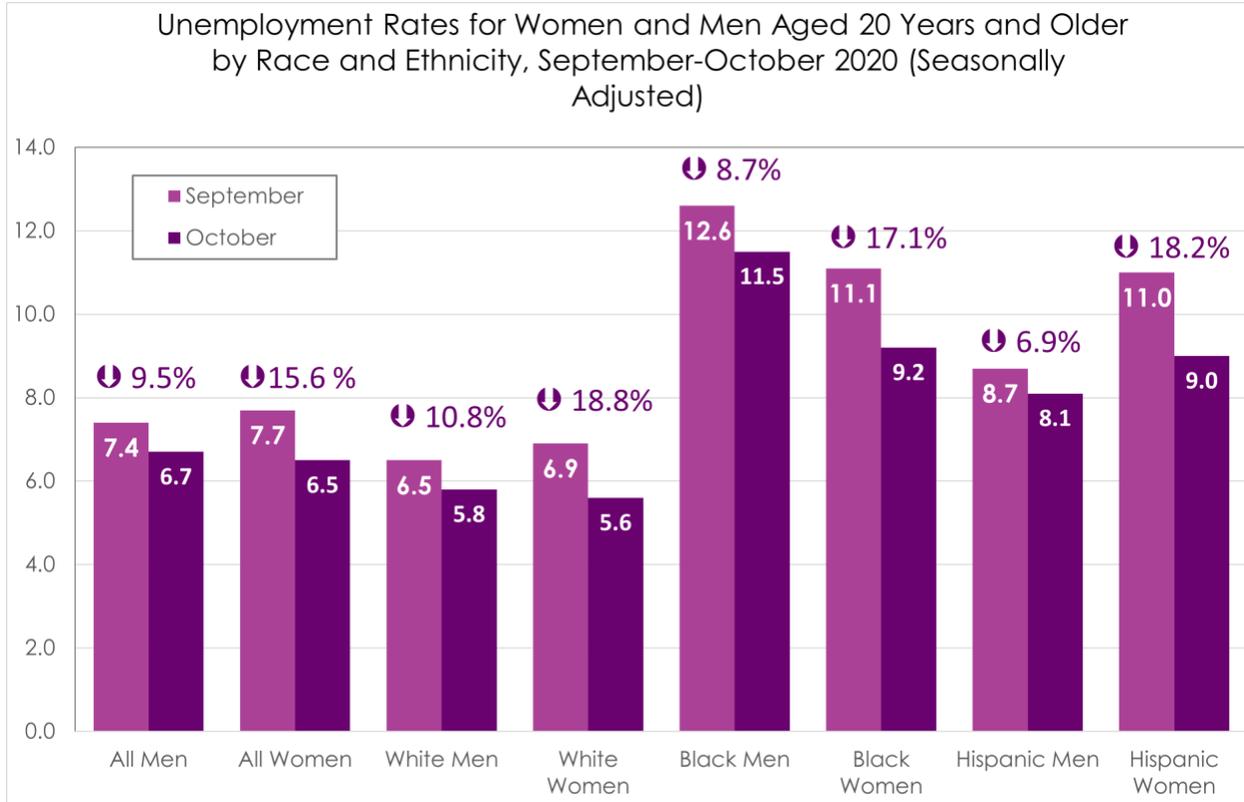
Notes: Women and men ages 20 and older.

Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey.

In October, for the first time since April, women’s rate of unemployment was lower than men’s among adult workers. Women’s rate of unemployment was 6.5 percent, a decline of 15.6 percent since September, and men’s was 6.7 percent, a decline of 9.5 percent. The rate of unemployment only captures those women and men who actively looked for work during the last four weeks; someone who has given up looking for work is not counted in this measure.

While unemployment fell for all major groups, rates continue to differ sharply between women and men of different racial and ethnic groups. White women (at 5.6 percent) have the lowest rate, substantially lower than the rate of unemployment for Hispanic women (9.0 percent) and Black women (9.2 percent). Unemployment is highest for Black men (11.5 percent). While the rate of unemployment is not published by gender, Asians ages 20 and older also saw a substantial decline in unemployment to 7.6 percent, a 14.6% decrease from September (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: As the Rates of Unemployment Fall for all Major Groups, Black and Latina Women Continue to Face much Higher Rates than White Women**



Note: Data for Asian workers not published by gender. In October, the rate of unemployment for all Asian workers was 7.6%, a 14.6% decrease from September.

Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey.

<sup>1</sup> See U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) "Employment Situation Summary." Economic News Release, November 6 <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.nr0.htm>>.

<sup>2</sup> See U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) "Table B-1. Employees on nonfarm payrolls by industry sector and selected industry detail." Employment Situation; Economic News Report, November 6 <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.toc.htm>>.

<sup>3</sup> As above.

<sup>4</sup> See C. Nicole Mason (2020) *Build(ing) the Future: Bold Policies for a Gender-Equitable Recovery* Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research <<https://iwpr.org/building-the-future/>>.

<sup>5</sup> IWPR analysis based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), Table A1 Employment Situation; Economic News Reports, November 6 and June 4 <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.toc.htm>>.