

# Quick Figure

IWPR #Q092

December 2, 2020

## Women's Share of Unemployment Insurance Claimants varies Strongly Across States

- In 42 of 50 states and DC, women were the majority of unemployment insurance claimants.
- A third of all unemployed women, and four in ten Latinas, have been out of work for more than 26 weeks.
- The receipt of unemployment benefits, including those provided under the CARES Act, substantially reduces but do not eliminate the odds of hunger or foreclosure threats for women and their families.

Women outnumbered men among state unemployment insurance claimants both nationally and in the large majority of the states in September (the most recent gender breakdowns available), and women were the majority of claimants in 42 states and DC (Table 1). Yet, women's share of unemployment insurance claimants ranged widely, from two thirds (66.7 percent) of claimants in Vermont to just one third (33.4 percent) in Wyoming.

**Table 1. Women Outnumber Men Among Unemployment Insurance Claimants in the Large Majority of States**

Women's Share of State Unemployment Insurance Claimants, September 2020

State	Women's Share of State UI Claims	State	Women's Share of State UI Claims	State	Women's Share of State UI Claims
VT	66.7%	LA	53.9%	NY	50.9%
RI	58.9%	TN	53.9%	NE	50.7%
MS	57.8%	NC	53.9%	AK	50.5%
AL	57.1%	IL	53.7%	SD	50.4%
CT	57.0%	VI	53.6%	AZ	50.4%
MD	57.0%	MI	53.5%	WA	50.2%
NH	55.9%	MN	53.4%	NM	49.9%
NJ	55.8%	KY	53.1%	CO	49.8%
VA	55.5%	GA	53.0%	OH	49.6%
ME	55.2%	FL	52.8%	KS	48.8%
MT	55.1%	CA	52.7%	NV	47.9%
PA	54.5%	AR	52.6%	WV	47.7%
DE	54.4%	IA	52.6%	UT	47.4%
HI	54.3%	IN	51.9%	TX	47.3%
SC	54.3%	WI	51.6%	OK	46.7%

DC	54.1%	OR	51.6%	ND	39.1%
MA	54.1%	ID	51.4%	WY	33.4%
MO	54.0%	PR	50.9%	<b>US Total</b>	<b>51.7%</b>

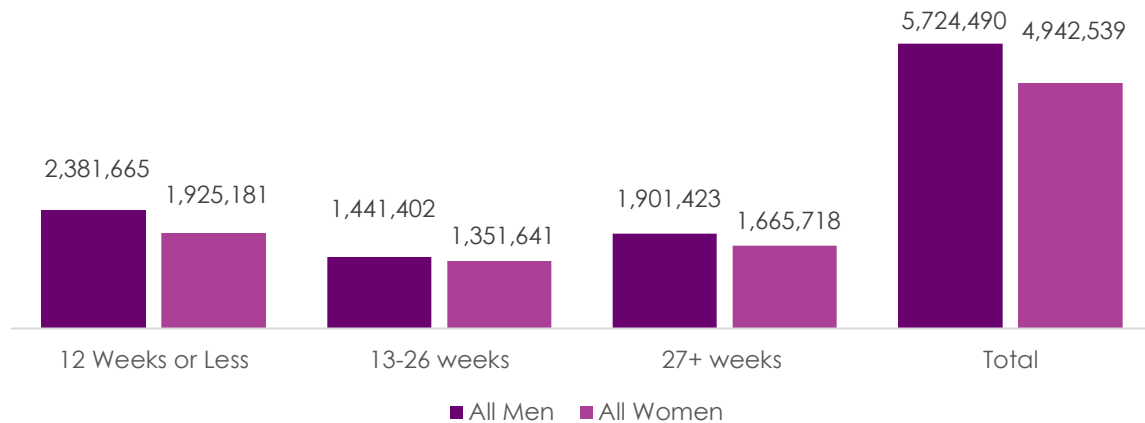
Source: IWPR compilation based on U.S Department of Labor.<sup>1</sup>

The wide range in women’s share of state unemployment claimants reflects the gender and race segregation in employment that underlies the COVID-19 induced she-cession.<sup>2</sup> Women have been particularly likely to lose jobs in Leisure and Hospitality; men lost more jobs in Construction, Mining, and Manufacturing, sectors that employ a much smaller proportion of women.<sup>3</sup> In Vermont and Rhode Island, the states with the highest proportion of state unemployment claims made by women, layoffs in the Accommodation and Food Services sector have been particularly high; in Wyoming and North Dakota, the states with the lowest share of women claimants, Mining and Construction workers made up a particularly high share of all claimants.<sup>4</sup>

### Though Women Lost More Jobs Than Men, They Are Less Likely to Be Officially Unemployed

In October, though women lost more jobs than men during this recession<sup>5</sup>, men outnumbered women among those who officially counted as unemployed (Figure 1). Only those who actively looked for work during the last four weeks are counted among the unemployed; anyone who lost hope finding a job but would take one if a job (and/or child care) was available, is not included. In September alone, 865,000 women were forced out of the labor force, and between October and the beginning of the she-cession, 2.2 million women compared with 1.4 million men have left the workforce.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1. Unemployment Duration by Gender, October 2020**



Source: IWPR analysis of Current Population Survey data from Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles and J. Robert Warren. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 8.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020.

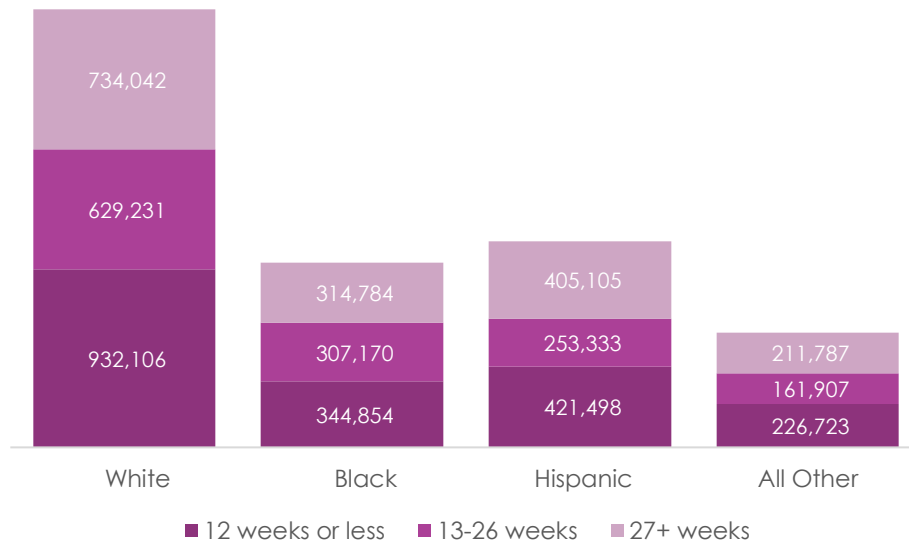
### Unemployment, Including Long-Term Unemployment, Remains Heavily Skewed by Race and Ethnicity

Unemployment remains heavily skewed by race. Unemployment rates for Black and Hispanic women (9.2 percent and 9.0 percent respectively) are significantly higher than for White women and White men (6.5 percent and 7.4 percent).

Long-term unemployed (lasting for 27 or more weeks) shot up sharply in October, from fewer than a fifth to almost a third of the unemployed.<sup>7</sup>

Altogether one in three unemployed women in October had been unemployed for more than 26 weeks—over half a year. Among unemployed Latinas, long-term unemployment accounts for almost four in ten (38 percent). Almost one in four (24.3 percent) of long-term unemployed women are Latinas, and almost one in five (18.9 percent) are Black women, much higher than their share of all women in the workforce.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 2. Women's Unemployment Duration by Race, October 2020**



Source: See Figure 1.

### The Expiration of the CARES Act on December 26 will have Devastating Effect on Unemployed Women and their Families

Long-term unemployment is particularly disconcerting because the longer someone has been out of work the harder it typically is to find a new job, apart from the impact on family finances and economic security. The CARES Act, passed in March 2020, proved to be a lifeline for many unemployed women and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The extended benefits provided by the CARES Act are set to expire on December 26<sup>9</sup>. According to one estimate, 12 million workers stand to lose their benefits<sup>10</sup>.

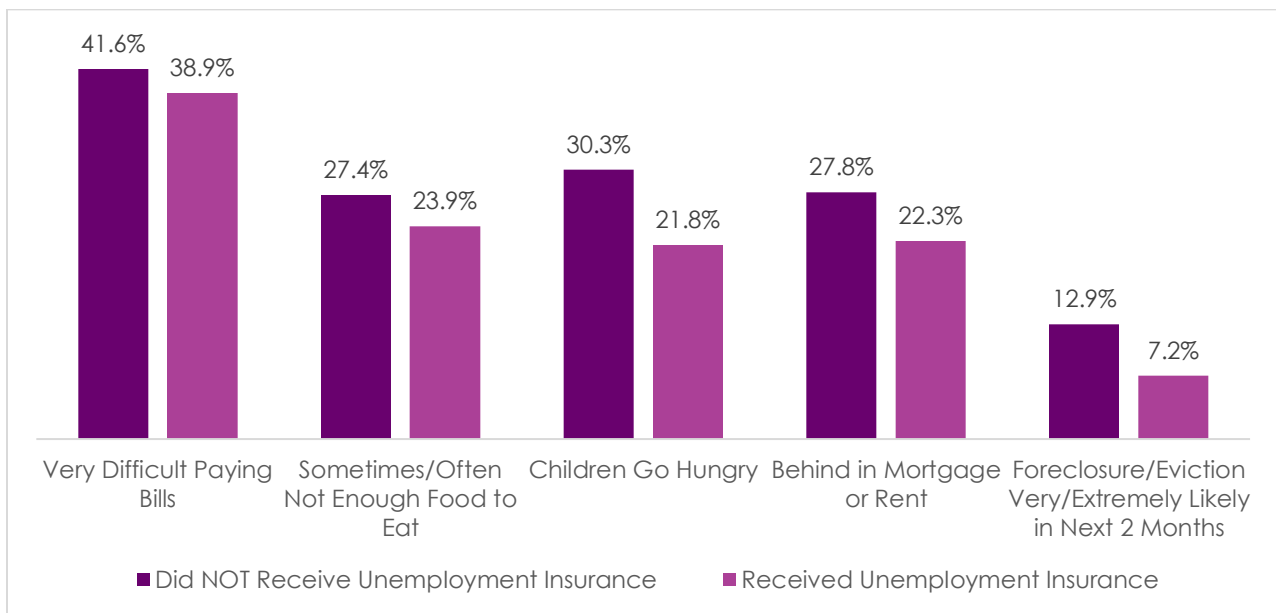
The benefits introduced by the CARES Act, including the \$600 weekly federal unemployment benefit, lifted more than 18 million individuals out of poverty in April, a majority of whom were women.<sup>11</sup> By September, after the weekly federal benefit ended, the poverty-reducing impact of the CARES Act had fallen to just 2 million.<sup>12</sup> This underscores the risk to women and families of falling back into poverty after CARES Act benefits expire December 26 as the pandemic and economic crisis continue with no end in sight.

It has also supported the rapidly rising number of long-term unemployed women and men by providing benefits once state-level unemployment insurance is no longer available (in most states, unemployment benefits are available for 26 weeks).<sup>13</sup> These benefits are critical to supporting BIPOC women and families through the economic crisis as they have been disproportionately impacted by short- and long-term unemployment.

Receipt of benefits does not prevent economic insecurity or prevent hunger. Yet, as can be seen from Figure 3, women who experienced loss of work and did not receive benefits are substantially more likely to report that their children went hungry, that they have fallen behind on their mortgage, or that they fear eviction in the near future.

**Figure 3. Unemployment Benefits do not Eliminate Poverty, but they Substantially Reduce the Risks of Hunger and Foreclosure for Women**

Economic Insecurity Among Women Who Lost Work in the Past Month Due to COVID-19 by Receipt of Unemployment Benefits since March 2020



Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Census Household Pulse surveys, Weeks 16 and 17 (collected September 30-October 26, 2020).

Indeed, women in families who lost employment income in the COVID-19 pandemic and who had not received any unemployment benefits since the end of March were almost 40 percent more likely to report that their children had gone hungry in the last month, and almost 80 percent more likely to report that foreclose or eviction is extremely likely in the next two months.<sup>14</sup> It is unconscionable to let families suffer from homelessness and hunger, especially during a public health crisis. Congress must act rapidly to reinstate supports for families.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Office of Unemployment Insurance. 2020. "Characteristics of Unemployment Insurance Claimants." <[https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/chariu2020/2020Sep.html#United\\_States\\_Characteristics](https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/chariu2020/2020Sep.html#United_States_Characteristics)> (Accessed November 23, 2020).

---

<sup>2</sup> See Mason, C. Nicole, Andrea Flynn and Shengwei Sun. 2020. *Build(ing) the Future: Bold Policies for a Gender Equitable Recovery*. IWPR Report #C491. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research <<https://iwpr.org/building-the-future/>>.

<sup>3</sup> See Figures 5 and 6 in Ariane Hegewisch. 2020. "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." IWPR #Q089 October. Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research <<https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/QF-Jobs-Day-October-dft-HM-Fact-Checked.pdf>>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Office of Unemployment Insurance. 2020. "Characteristics of Unemployment Insurance Claimants." <[https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/chariu2020/2020Sep.html#United\\_States\\_Characteristics](https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/chariu2020/2020Sep.html#United_States_Characteristics)> (Accessed November 23, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> See Ariane Hegewisch and Eve Mefferd. 2020. "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." Quick Figure IWPR #Q091. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research. <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/employment-and-earnings/despite-modest-employment-gains-women-still-5-5-million-jobs-below-pre-pandemic-level/>>

<sup>6</sup> See Ariane Hegewisch and Eve Mefferd. 2020. "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." Quick Figure IWPR #Q091. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/employment-and-earnings/despite-modest-employment-gains-women-still-5-5-million-jobs-below-pre-pandemic-level/>>

<sup>7</sup> United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2020. "Table A-12. Unemployed persons by duration of unemployment." <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t12.htm>> (Accessed November 23, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> In October 2020, Black women were 14.1%, and Latinas 16.3% of the female workforce ages 20 and older; IWPR calculations of Tables A1, A2, and A3 of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) "Employment Situation Summary." Economic News Release, November 6 <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>> (accessed November 9, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> See Nelson D Schwartz. 2020. "A cutoff of federal unemployment benefits looms for 12 million workers." *New York Times*. <<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/19/business/us-economy-coronavirus?type=style-live-updates&label=economy&index=0&action=click&module=Spotlight&pgtype=Homepage#a-cutoff-of-federal-unemployment-benefits-looms-for-12-million-workers>> (Accessed November 23, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> See Andrew Stettner and Elizabeth Pancotti. 2020. 12 Million Workers Facing Jobless Benefit Cliff on December 26. Washington, DC: The Century Foundation. <<https://tcf.org/content/report/12-million-workers-facing-jobless-benefit-cliff-december-26/>> (Accessed November 23, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> See Zachary Parolin et al. 2020. *Monthly Poverty Rates in the United States during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. New York, NY: Columbia University Center on Poverty & Social Policy, School of Social Work. <<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5743308460b5e922a25a6dc7/t/5f87c59e4cd0011fabd38973/1602733471158/COVID-Projecting-Poverty-Monthly-CPSP-2020.pdf>> (Accessed November 23, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> As above.

<sup>13</sup> Sttner and Pancotti (2020), note 9 above.

<sup>14</sup> IWPR calculations based on data in Figure 3.