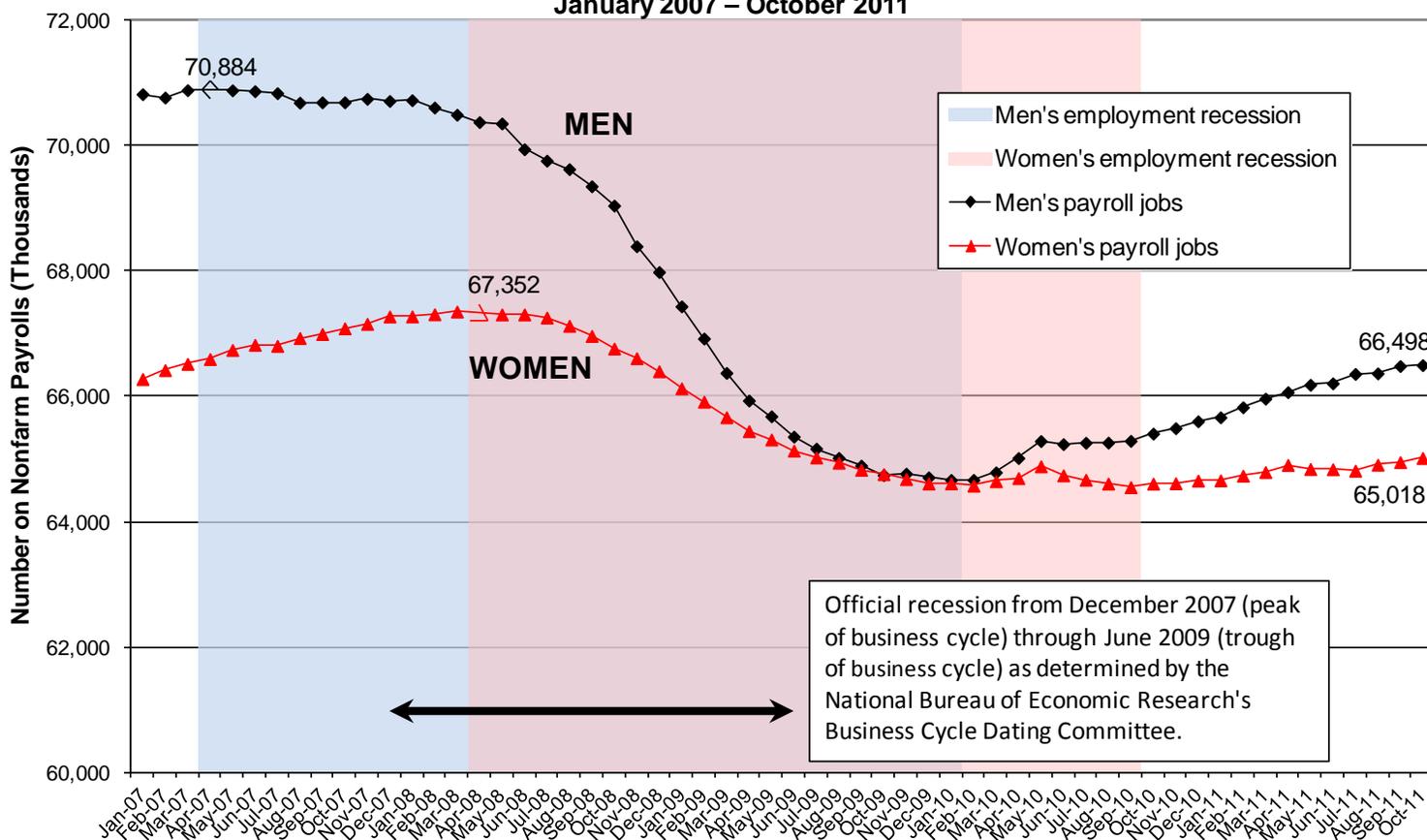


Is the Recovery Starting for Women? Slow Job Growth in October for Both Women and Men.

Monthly Number of Women and Men on Payrolls (Seasonally Adjusted),
January 2007 – October 2011



Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (November 4, 2011)

Job growth slowed in October with 80,000 jobs added to nonfarm payrolls. This is down from 104,000 new jobs in August and 158,000 in September. (September's gains included more than 40,000 Verizon workers returning after a strike. August and September's totals were revised by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in November). Women's employment now appears to be rising. In October women gained 66,000 jobs, but men gained only 14,000. The revised numbers for August and September show 136,000 new jobs for women compared with 126,000 for men.

In the last year, from October 2010 to October 2011, of the 1.5 million jobs added to payrolls, 409,000 or 27 percent were filled by women and 1,092,000 or 73 percent were filled by men. Since October of 2009 when men's and women's total jobs numbers were virtually equal, women have gained 258,000 jobs, whereas men have gained 1,753,000. The gap between women's and men's employment in October is 1.5 million.

Women have regained only 17 percent (465,000) of the total jobs they lost in the recession (2.7 million from December 2007 to the trough for women's employment in September 2010, which occurred more than one year after the recession officially ended). The picture looks somewhat better for men, especially if we count only from the beginning of the recession: men have gained 30 percent (1.8 million) of the jobs they lost since December 2007 (6.0 million). If we count all the job losses from the prior seven months, dating back to May of 2007, when men's job losses actually began, then men have regained 29 percent of the total 6.2 million jobs they lost. Men are recovering more quickly than women, but the jobs recovery is slow for both men and women.

In the Great Recession, men had 33 months of nearly consecutive job loss and women 'only' 23 months. The number of months of nearly consecutive job loss and the size of the job loss is, however, unprecedented for both men and women (with the exception of the Great Depression of the 1930s).

Why are men doing somewhat better than women at this point in the recession? One reason is that women are a disproportionate share of state and local government workers; those levels of government are shedding jobs now. For example, from October 2010 to October 2011, the number of government jobs at all levels fell by 323,000 and 132,000 of these had been held by women. For the past year employment has been growing in the private sector in nearly all industries and growing more for men than women in most.

The proposed American Jobs Act (AJA) would help to spur economic growth. It includes important provisions for women and a deficit reduction proposal that requires higher income people to pay more taxes. By calling for the extension of unemployment insurance benefits, the prevention of up to 280,000 teacher layoffs, the renovation of 35,000 schools, investment in transportation infrastructure, and the creation of subsidized employment programs and job training opportunities that could connect many low-income women to work, the AJA would create jobs and alleviate economic hardship. One prominent economic analyst, Mark Zandi of Moody's Analytics, has estimated that the American Jobs Act "would add 2 percentage points to GDP growth next year, add 1.9 million jobs, and cut the unemployment rate by a percentage point."¹

¹ Zandi, Mark. 2011. "An Analysis of the Obama Jobs Plan." Dismal Scientist. <http://www.economy.com/dismal/article_free.asp?cid=224641&tid=F0851CC1-F571-48DE-A136-B2F622EF6FA4&src=MZ> (accessed on October 7, 2011.)