

Quick Figure #Q098

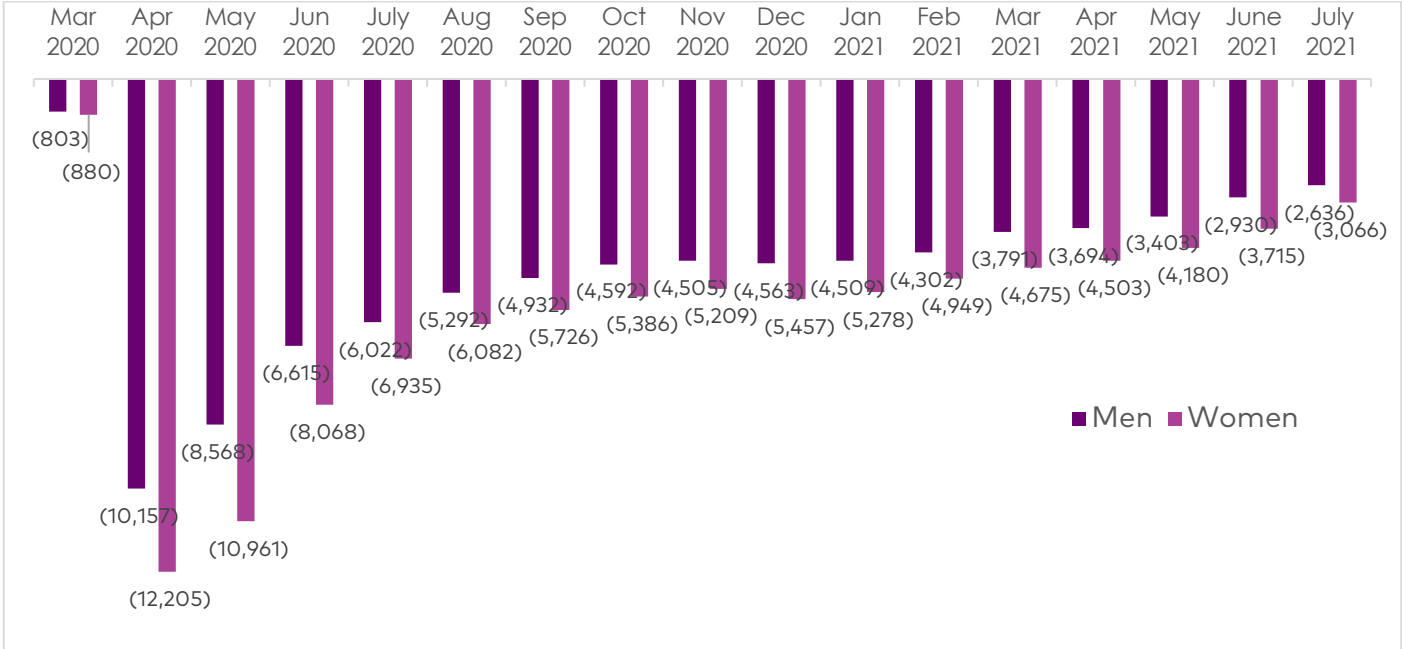
August 2021

STRONG JOBS GROWTH FOR WOMEN, BUT A TROUBLING LACK OF RECOVERY OF CHILD CARE JOBS

- Women's jobs on payroll increased by 649,000 in July 2021, the largest job growth since August 2020.
- Women's job recovery continues to lag behind men's. Women still need 3.1 million more jobs on payroll, men 2.6 million, to get back to pre-COVID-19 levels.
- Child care centers are recovering much more slowly than the economy overall, pointing to difficulties for mothers wanting or needing to return to work as over half of all states have phased out pandemic unemployment assistance.
- Unemployment rates improved for women across all the largest racial and ethnic groups—Black women's rate of unemployment is still 1.7 times, and Hispanic/Latina women's 1.5 times higher, than White women's.

Newly released payroll data for July 2021 show another month of substantial growth for women, with 649,000 new jobs on payroll added, the highest monthly number of additional jobs for women since August 2020.¹ Women gained two thirds (68.8 percent) of 943,000 additional payroll jobs, yet women's jobs on payroll still have to recover further than men's to return to pre-COVID levels and are still 3.1 million below February 2020 levels, compared with 2.6 million fewer jobs for men (Figure 1).

Figure 1. In July 2021, Women's Jobs on Payroll Were Still 3.1 Million Below Their Pre-Pandemic Level, Men's Were 2.6 Million Below Deficit in Non-Farm Jobs on Payroll Compared to February 2020, by Gender (Thousands)

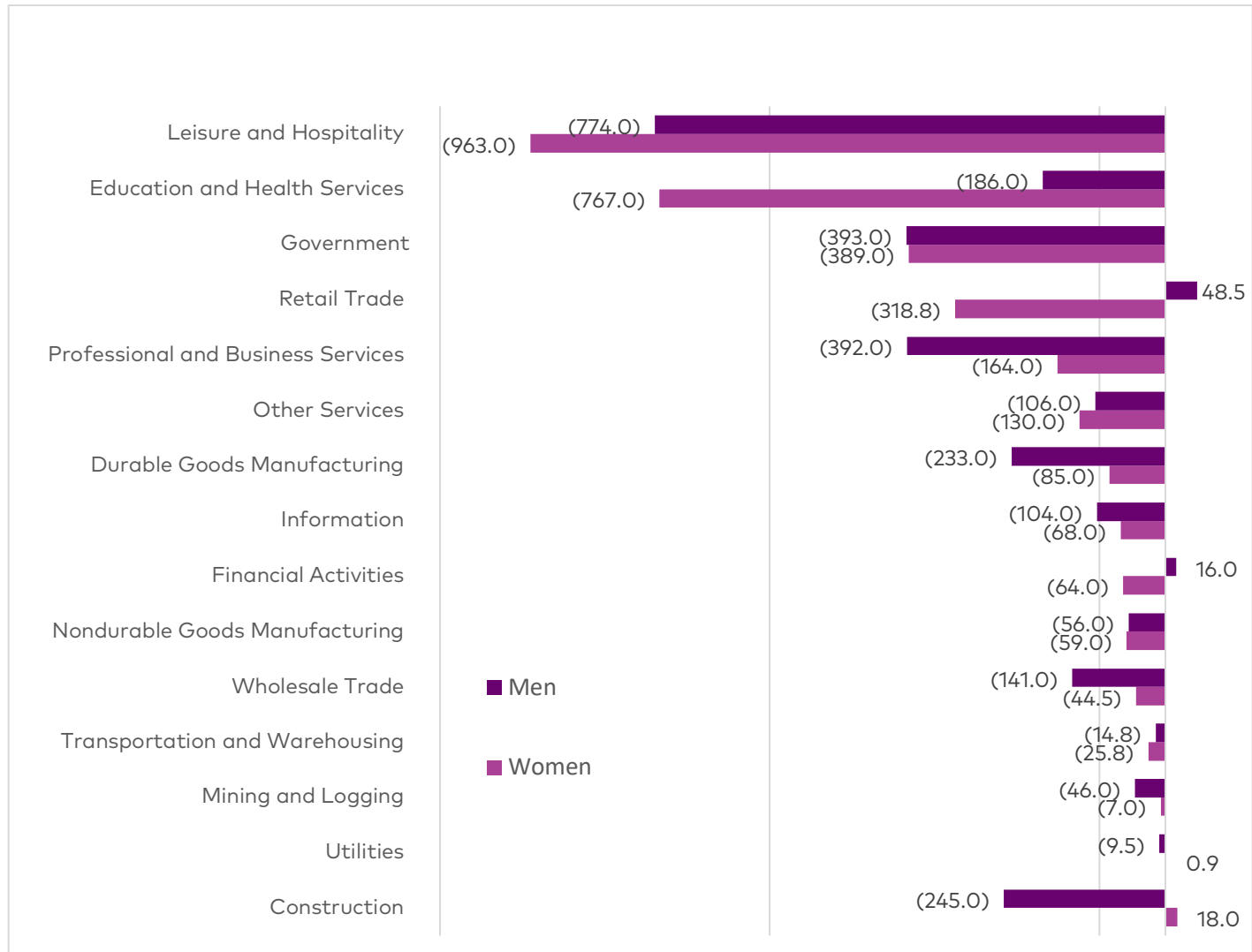


Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (August 6, 2021).

Payroll job growth for women was strongest in Government with 219,000 additional jobs for women, and 21,000 for men since June; Leisure and Hospitality, with 205,000 additional jobs for women, and 175,000 for men; and Education and Health Services, with 87,000 additional jobs for women, and none for men.² While these three sectors added most jobs, they are also the sectors where women's employment still lags furthest behind pre-COVID employment levels (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Despite Growth, Payroll Jobs Continue to Lag Substantially Behind Pre-COVID Levels, Especially in Leisure and Hospitality, Education and Health Services, and Government

Change in Number of Jobs on Payrolls for Women and Men, February 2020–July 2021 (in Thousands)



Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (August 6, 2021).

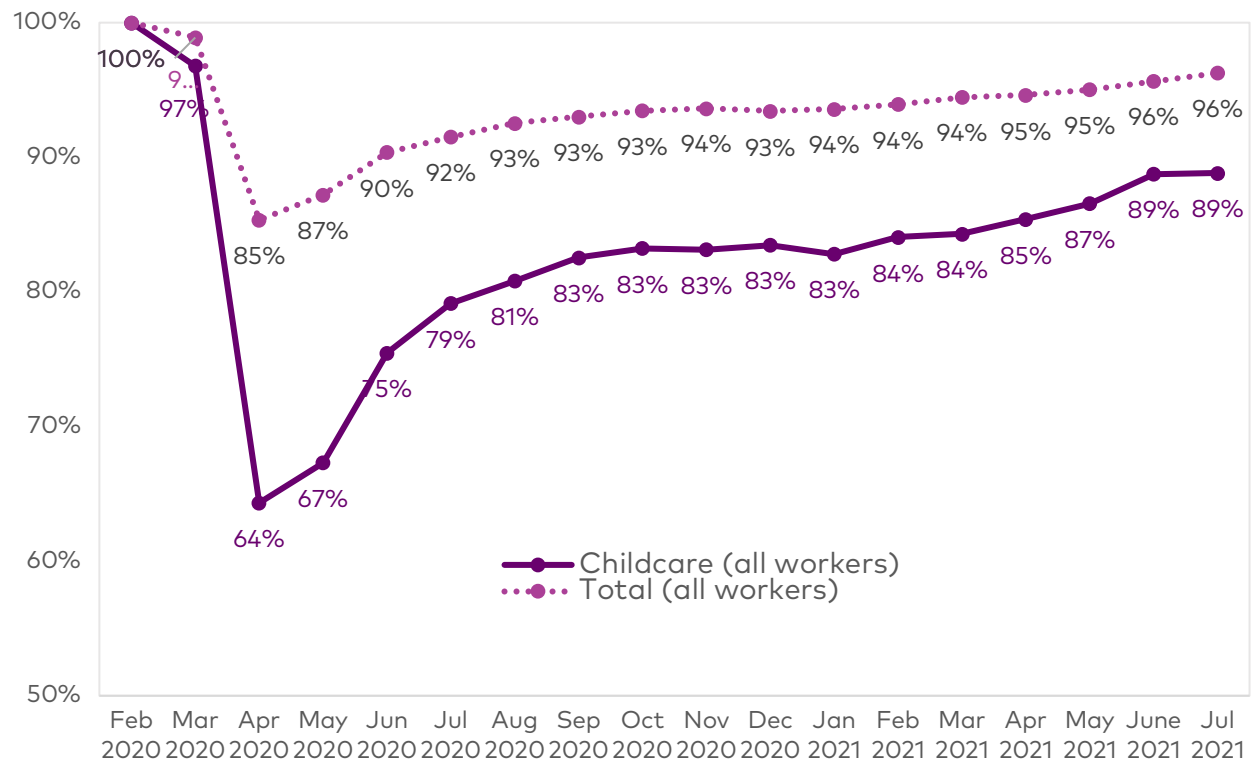
CHILD CARE JOB RECOVERY LAGS BEHIND GENERAL RECOVERY

Strong employment growth did not include Child Day Care Services (a subsector of Education and Health Services). Jobs on payroll in Child Care Centers grew by less than a thousand during July, a growth rate of just 0.1 percent.³ While total non-farm payrolls are 3.7 percent below their pre-COVID levels, the number of jobs on payroll in Child Care Centers are still 11.2 percent

lower, with the child care recovery lagging behind the general recovery by a factor of three (calculated based on Figure 3). The slow recovery of the child care sector is poignant for women because they are much more likely than men to be the primary caregiver in their household and are also much more likely to work as child care workers.

Figure 3. Recovery of Child Care Center Jobs Lags Behind the General Recovery

Recovery (Jobs on Payroll per Month as Percent of Jobs on Payroll in February 2020), February 2020 to July 2021



Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (August 6, 2021).

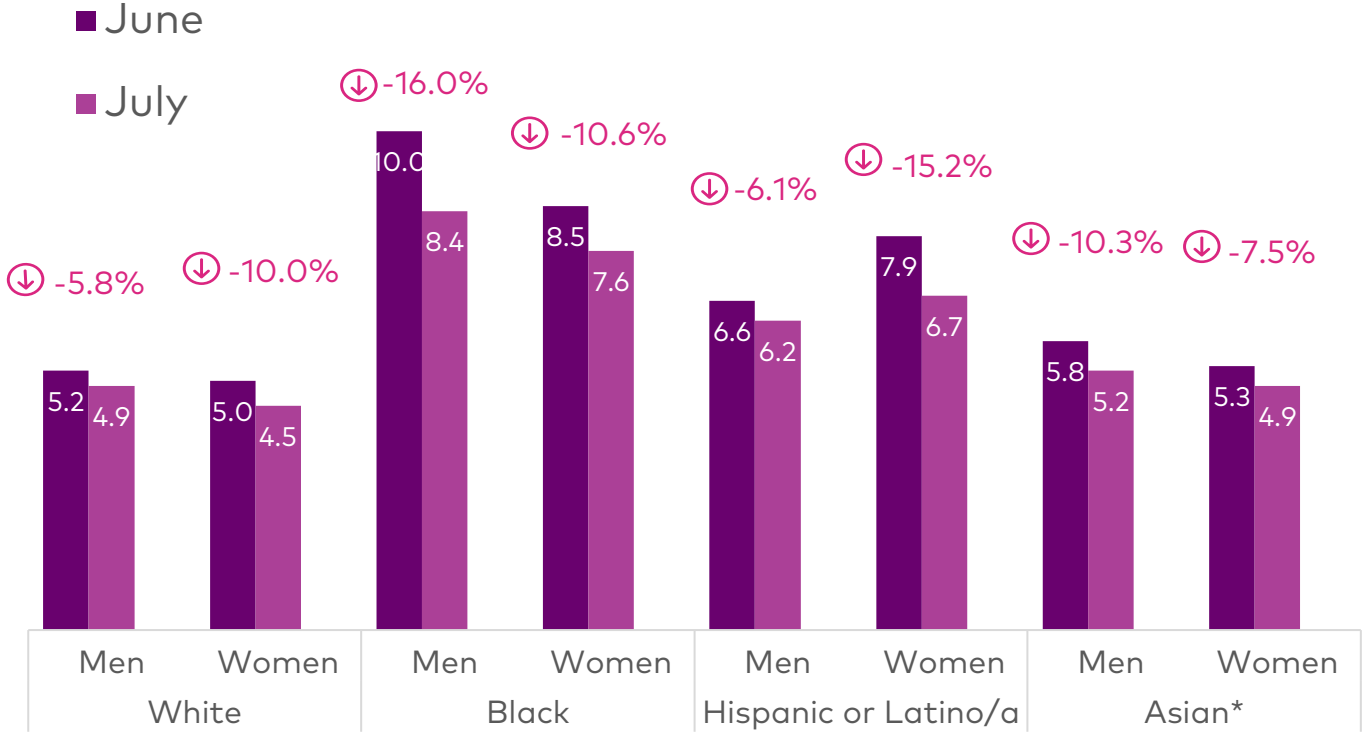
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IMPROVED FOR WOMEN ACROSS ALL THE LARGEST RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS

The rate of unemployment decreased substantially for adult women across racial and ethnic groups. The rate of unemployment for adult women fell from 5.5 to 5.0 percent (a decline of 9.1 percent); for men, it fell from 5.9 to 5.4 percent.⁴ Black women's unemployment fell from 8.5 to 7.6 percent; Latinas from 7.9 to 6.7 percent, White women from 5.0 to 4.5 percent, and Asian women (seasonally unadjusted) from 5.3 to 4.9 percent (Figure 4).

The risk of unemployment continues to vary strongly by race and ethnicity. Black adult women's unemployment is 1.7 times higher than White women's, and Hispanic/Latina women's unemployment is 1.5 times higher.⁵

Figure 5. Unemployment Rates Fall for Adult Women of All Racial and Ethnic Groups but Remain Particularly High for Black and Hispanic/Latina Women, at 7.6 and 6.7 Percent Respectively

Unemployment Rates for Women and Men Aged 20 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity, June to July 2021 (Seasonally Adjusted*), actual rates and percent change since previous month



* Data for Asian workers ages 20 and older are not seasonally adjusted; seasonally adjusted unemployment data for Asians by gender are not published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
 Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (August 6, 2021).

The rate of unemployment counts only workers who are actively looking for work. A drop in the number of those unemployed can indicate one of two things: (1) a worker is no longer counted as "unemployed" because they have found a job, or (2) a worker is no longer counted because they have given up looking for

work. Household data from the Current Population Survey suggests that, particularly for Black and Hispanic/Latina women, the fall in unemployment at least partly reflects the latter: adult Black women's labor force participation fell by 65,000 and Hispanic/Latina women's by 51,000, while White and Asian women's increased, by 193,00 and 114,000 respectively.⁶

These data suggest a more limited reach of the economic recovery than suggested by the overall job growth. Continuing difficulties with accessing child care, combined with the discontinuation of pandemic unemployment benefits in several states, may be pushing some women out of the labor force altogether. Twenty-five states have already or will shortly end their participation in federal unemployment programs, reducing the number of workers eligible for benefits as well as the level of benefits that are available.⁷ Instead of punitive measures like the roll-back of critical benefits, women need investment in the care infrastructure—so that the lack of availability of quality, affordable child and elder care no longer prevents them from fully participating in training, education, and employment.

ENDNOTES

¹ IWPR analysis based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics data (accessed August 6, 2021).

² As above.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table B1. Employees on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector and Selected Industry Detail," Current Employment Statistics, *Economic News Release: Employment Situation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2021) <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t17.htm>> (accessed August 6, 2021).

⁴ In July 2021, the rate of unemployment for all women workers, including those ages 16 to 19, was 5.4%, marking an 8.5% decrease from June 2021. The rate of unemployment for all men workers was 5.0%, a decrease of 9.1% (IWPR analysis based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics data).

⁵ IWPR calculations based on data in Figure 3.

⁶ IWR analysis of Tables A1, A2, A3 of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, *Economic News Release: Employment Situation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2021) <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>> (accessed August 6, 2021).

⁷ Greg Iacurci, "States Will Start Cutting Off Federal Unemployment Benefits This Week," *CNBC*, June 7, 2021, <<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/07/states-will-be-ending-federal-unemployment-benefits-this-week.html>> (accessed July 2, 2021). See also Sarah Damaske, "The U.S. Spends Less Than Nearly Every Country on Unemployment. That's Why People Can't Get Jobs," *Time*, July 7, 2021, <<https://time.com/6078388/myth-generous-unemployment-benefits/>> (accessed July 12, 2021).

This Quick Figure was prepared by Ariane Hegewisch and Eve Mefferd. It was made possible with the support of the Ford Foundation, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, and Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company created by Melinda French Gates.