

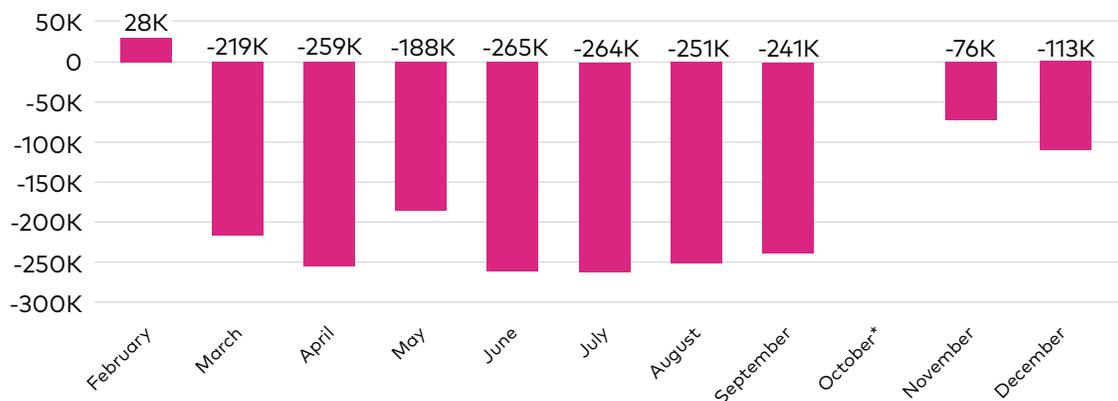
One Year Into Trump's Second Term, Black Women Face Disproportionate Job Losses

Year one of the second Trump administration was bad for Black women. Persistent inflation, which hurts Black households more,¹ increased the costs of basic necessities,² and job losses disproportionately pushed Black women—who tend to be the primary breadwinners for their families³—out of a worsening labor market.⁴ These economic conditions were further exacerbated by this administration's actions in the past year, including mass federal government layoffs, the dismantling of federal agencies such as the Department of Education, an erratic tariff schedule and rollout, and attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs.⁵

The most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, from January 2026, show that **Black women lost 251,000 jobs between January and August of 2025** (Figure 1).⁶ While this number reflects a downward revision from a higher estimate last year, it still represents a **large and unequal decrease in employment for Black women, whose job losses made up more than half (54.7 percent) of job losses for all women in that period.** Given that Black women only represented 14.1 percent of the female workforce at the start of 2025, this meant they overwhelmingly bore the brunt of job losses.⁷

Although Black women regained some ground in the second half of the year, it did not make up for the earlier job losses, with a net loss of 113,000 fewer Black women employed in the US economy in December 2025, compared to January 2025 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Cumulative Job Losses Since January 2025 for Black Women (February–December 2025)



Source: IWPR analysis of seasonally adjusted Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey Table A-3: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex and age, seasonally adjusted, found at <https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpseea03.htm>, and Table A-4: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, sex, and age, seasonally adjusted, found at <https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpseea04.htm>.

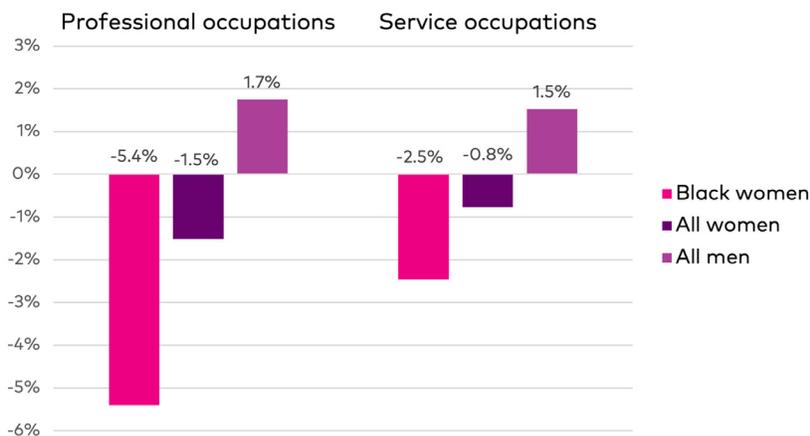
Notes: Estimates are based on the cumulative differences in employment since January 2025, seasonally adjusted, for Black women (including both Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black women), aged 20 years or older, February–December 2025.

*Data was not collected in October 2025 due to the US government shutdown.

In 2024, more than 40 percent of all Black women worked in either professional or service occupations, including health care workers and technicians, educators, social workers, and counselors.⁸ The occupations in which most Black women work are more vulnerable to a worsening economy, disruptions from increased artificial intelligence (AI) penetration, and targeted attacks by the Trump administration.⁹ Furthermore, even within occupation groups, Black women often work in lower-paid and less secure jobs, making them more susceptible to layoffs when the sector starts shrinking.¹⁰ Additionally, intersecting race- and gender-based discrimination, particularly in the face of attacks on DEI practices, places Black women at greater risk of worse labor market outcomes than other workers.¹¹

Therefore, it is unsurprising that even when all women lost jobs in professional and service occupations in 2025, **Black women lost disproportionately more jobs** (Figure 2). In fact, proportional to their employment in these jobs in January 2025, **Black women lost more than three times as many jobs as all women in professional and service occupations between February and December 2025**. In contrast, men gained jobs in both these sectors.

Figure 2. Proportional Losses (and Gains) in Professional and Service Occupations for Black Women, All Women, and All Men (2025)



Source: IWPR analysis of Current Population Survey Basic Monthly microdata, January–December 2025, as made available by Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Etienne Breton, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, David Van Riper, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS CPS: Version 13.0 [Current Population Survey Basic Monthly]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V13.0>.

Notes: Estimates are based on employment, not seasonally adjusted, for Black women (including both Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black women), all women, and all men (irrespective of race or ethnicity), aged 20 years or older, between January and December 2025. Losses (or gains) are measured as the difference in employment for each group between January and December 2025, divided by their employment in January 2025 in professional and service occupations, respectively. Professional and service occupation workers do not include those in federal or state/local government.¹²

Although Black women are overrepresented in federal government jobs, only a small proportion of all employed Black women—5.1 percent—work in these roles.¹³ Therefore, the federal government terminations likely play only a small part in explaining the overall scale of job losses experienced by Black women in 2025. However, Black women lost more than 30 percent of their employment in federal government jobs between January and December 2025, compared to smaller losses of 11.6 percent for all women and 8.1 percent for all men.¹⁴ **This highlights that even when sectors shrink across the board, Black women experience the biggest job losses.**

Black women's experiences in the US labor market provide a preview of what is to come for everyone. To help mitigate the disparate impact of labor market downturns on Black women, policymakers should support policies that empower workers, promote safe and equitable workplaces, and improve working conditions overall.

Stay tuned for more research on key topics affecting Black women in the workforce from IWPR's [Advancing Black Women in Leadership](#) initiative.

To learn more about IWPR's federal policy recommendations on [Equal Pay and Better Workplaces](#), go to iwpr.org/federalpolicyagenda/. For additional information on state policy solutions, visit statepolicyactionlab.org/.

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Endnotes

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2. Consumer Price Index Summary December 2025, Bureau of Labor Statistics, released on January 13, 2026, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>.
3. Andara Kennedy, Sara Estep, and Isabela Salas-Betsch, *Breadwinning Women Are a Lifeline for Their Families and the Economy*, report (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2025), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/breadwinning-women-are-a-lifeline-for-their-families-and-the-economy/>.
4. Katica Roy, "300,000 Black women have left the labor force in 3 months. It's not a coincidence." MS NOW, July 17, 2025, <https://www.ms.now/business-culture/300000-black-women-left-labor-force-3-months-s-not-coincidence-rcna219355>.
5. Katharine Gallagher Robbins and Areeba Haider, "The economy lurches towards disaster as Black women's unemployment skyrockets | Jobs Day November 2025," National Partnership for Women & Families blog, November 20, 2025, <https://nationalpartnership.org/economy-lurches-towards-disaster-black-womens-unemployment-skyrockets-jobsday-nov-2025/>.
6. The Employment Situation Report from September 5, 2025, placed the number of jobs lost for Black women between January and August 2025 at 274,000, adjusted for seasonal variation, but this number was revised downward since, due to added seasonal adjustment, to 251,000 in January 2026. The number without adjusting for seasonal variation is 343,074.
7. IWPR analysis of seasonally adjusted Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey Table A-3: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex and age, seasonally adjusted, found at <https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpseea03.htm>, and Table A-4: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, sex, and age, seasonally adjusted, found at <https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpseea04.htm>.
8. IWPR analysis of Current Population Survey Basic Monthly microdata, January 2024–December 2025, as made available by Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Etienne Breton, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, David Van Riper, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS CPS: Version 13.0 [Current Population Survey Basic Monthly]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V13.0>. Data was not reported for October 2025 due to the US government shutdown. Occupation groups are defined on the basis of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Manual: 2018 using the Census Occupation Classification in <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/methodology/occupation%20codes.pdf>, with the addition of government workers. "Federal government" and "state/local government" workers are classified based on "CLASS OF WORKER" reported in the Current Population Survey IPUMS microdata, rather than "OCCUPATION." In our classification, we report workers to be in "federal" or "state/local government" jobs instead of their originally reported occupation. In 2024, the largest proportion of government employees—more than 40 percent—report their occupation group to be "professional and related" occupations. If professional federal government workers were counted as working in "professional and related" occupations instead of "federal government" (or "state/local government"), the proportion of Black women working in professional and service occupations would be even higher (at 53.2 percent).
9. Valerie Wilson, "What's behind rising unemployment for Black workers?," Economic Policy Institute blog, September 19, 2025, <https://www.epi.org/blog/whats-behind-rising-unemployment-for-black-workers/>.
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11. Lydia DePillis, "Black Unemployment Is Surging Again. This Time Is Different.," *New York Times*, October 12, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/12/business/economy/black-unemployment-federal-layoffs-diversity-initiatives.html>.
12. See endnote 5 above. If professional federal government workers were counted as working in "professional and related" occupations instead of "federal government," Black women in professional occupations would experience even bigger disproportionate losses.
13. See endnote 5 above.
14. See endnotes 5 and 9 above.