NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES

UNEMPLOYMENT

FACT SHEET

Modest Recovery Largely Leaves Women Behind

(Updated February 2012)[1]

The deep recession that began in December 2007 cost workers nearly 7.5 million jobs before it officially ended in June 2009. Overall job growth during the recovery has been weak; the economy added just over 1.9 million jobs between June 2009 and January 2012.[2] Although unemployment remains high and job growth unacceptably slow for both men and women, it is striking that women did not make any net gains until two and a half years into the recovery and their unemployment rate is higher than it was when the recovery began.

KEY FACTS

- **During the recovery, women gained just eight percent of the 1.9 million net jobs added to the economy.**
- **Over the course of the recovery, women's overall unemployment rate increased from 7.6 percent to 7.7 percent while men's dropped from 9.9 percent to 7.7 percent.**
- **Women's small net job gain in the recovery has been driven by the loss of public sector jobs – women lost 414,000 public sector jobs during the recovery.**

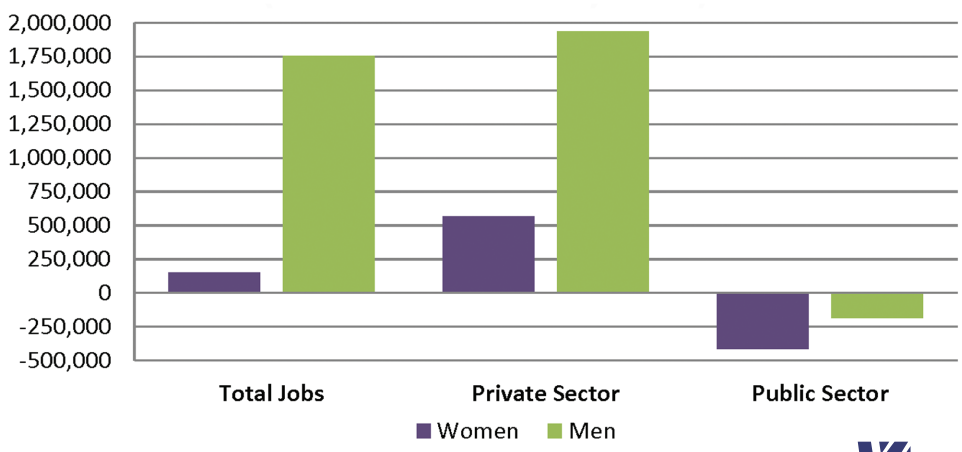
Women gained few jobs over the course of the recovery.

- Men fared worse in the recession (December 2007 – June 2009), suffering more than 70 percent of the job loss. However, the recovery has been tougher on women – between June 2009 and January 2012, women gained just eight percent of the jobs added.[3]
- Heavy job losses in public sector employment have disproportionately affected women and contributed to the dismal employment picture for women throughout the recovery. While women represented just over half (57.2 percent) of the public workforce at the end of the recession, they lost a disproportionate share (69.3 percent) of the 597,000 jobs cut in this sector between June 2009 and January 2012.[4]
- Women's job gains in the private sector were modest. While the private sector picked up over 2.5 million jobs over the course of the recovery, women gained 22.5 percent of those jobs (564,000).[5]

Women's unemployment rose during the course of the recovery while men's declined.

- Between June 2009 and January 2012, women's overall unemployment rate increased from 7.6 percent to 7.7 percent while men's overall unemployment rate dropped from 9.9 percent to 7.7 percent.[6]

Job change in the recovery (June 2009 - January 2012)



Source: Current Employment Statistics Survey, excludes farm jobs.

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Unemployment for many vulnerable groups remained high during the recovery.

- Between June 2009 and January 2012 unemployment rates increased for black women (11.6 percent to 12.6 percent) and single mothers (11.7 percent to 12.0 percent).[7]
- Unemployment rates declined during the recovery for black men (16.3 percent to 12.7 percent) and Hispanic women (11.5 percent to 11.3 percent). The unemployment rate for Hispanic men was unchanged since the start of the recovery (10.7 percent).[8]

Long-term unemployment has grown during the course of the recovery.

- The percent of jobless workers who were still looking for work after more than six months of unemployment increased substantially since the start of the recovery in June 2009, to 43.4 percent for women in January 2012, a 14.1 percentage point increase, and to 42.4 percent for men in January 2012, an 11.7 percentage point increase.[9]
- In January, almost 5.6 million Americans were still looking for work after more than six months.[10]

The continued grim jobs picture highlights the need for Congress to take action to extend federal emergency unemployment benefits through 2012 and invest in job creation for women and men – and to reject further cuts in funding for public services that would mean more jobs losses and increased hardship, especially for women and their families.

1 Revisions to the January version of this analysis reflect both the incorporation of new data each month, and revisions by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to previously reported data.
2 NWLC calculations from U.S. Dep't of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Employment Statistics Survey, Table B-5: Employment of women on nonfarm payrolls by industry sector, seasonally adjusted, *available at* http://bls.gov/ces/cesbtabs.htm (last visited Feb. 3, 2011).
3 *Ibid.*
4 *Ibid.*
5 *Ibid.*
6 NWLC calculations from U.S. Dep't of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, Table A-1: Employment status of the civilian population by sex and age, seasonally adjusted, *available at* http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm (last visited Feb.3, 2011). (BLS "Current Population Survey"). Figures are for women and men 20 and older.
7 NWLC calculations from BLS "Current Population Survey," Table A-2: Employment status of the civilian population by race, sex and age, seasonally adjusted, *available at* http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm (last visited Feb. 3, 2011) and Table A-10 Selected Unemployment Indicators, seasonally adjusted, *available at* http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm (last visited Feb. 3, 2011). Data on single mother unemployment are not seasonally adjusted.
8 NWLC calculations from BLS "Current Population Survey," Table A-2: Employment status of the civilian population by race, sex and age, seasonally adjusted and Table A-3: Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age, not seasonally adjusted, *available at* http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm (last visited Feb. 3, 2011).
9 NWLC calculations from BLS "Current Population Survey," Table A-36: Unemployed persons by age, sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and duration of unemployment, not seasonally adjusted, July 2009, *available at* http://www.bls.gov/opub/ee/ (last visited Feb. 3, 2011) and Table A-36: Unemployed persons by age, sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and duration of unemployment, not seasonally adjusted, *available at* http://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpseea36.htm (last visited Feb. 3, 2011).
10 *Ibid.* Includes all individuals 16 and over.