

UNEMPLOYMENT

Still No Recovery for Women in the Manufacturing Sector: Manufacturing Employment Trends for Women and Men, 2008-2013

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After decades of job losses, U.S. manufacturing has started to make a comeback. However, women are not sharing in the manufacturing job gains of the past few years. As policymakers focus on promoting manufacturing employment, they should ensure that women share in this growth.

Since January 2010 women have lost manufacturing jobs while men have gained 535,000.

- Manufacturing added 517,000 net jobs from January 2010 to February 2013. Men gained 535,000 jobs, while women actually lost 18,000 jobs.

Manufacturing Employment Changes January 2010 - February 2013



Source: Current Employment Statistics survey

www.nwlc.org



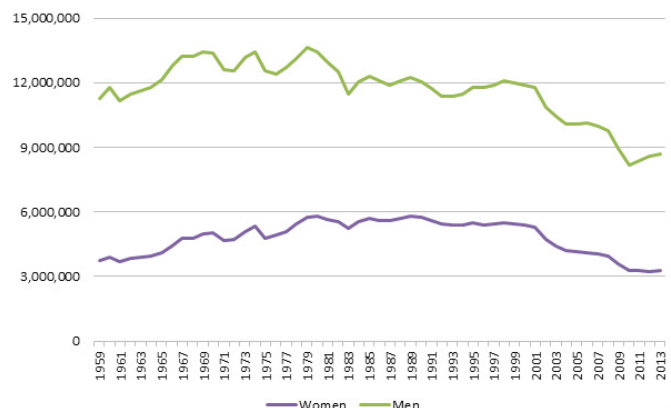
The recent gains for men are not just a correction for men's recession losses.

- The divergence in men's and women's employment during the manufacturing recovery is a change from the trend during the recession. From January 2008 to January 2010, almost 2.3 million manufacturing jobs were lost, but the losses were borne proportionately by women and men. Women's employment in manufacturing decreased by 17 percent, while men's decreased by 16 percent.

Women—long under-represented in the manufacturing sector—are losing ground.

- The divergence in women's and men's employment since 2010 means that women's employment in manufacturing dropped by 18 percent between January 2008 and February 2013, while men's dropped by only 11 percent.
- This means that more than one in every six women working in manufacturing lost their jobs since January 2008, compared to fewer than one in every nine men working in manufacturing.
- Women's share of the manufacturing sector peaked in the early 1990s at just over 32 percent and, with the exception of one year, has been unchanged or falling gradually every year since with steeper drops during the recession. The share is currently just over 27 percent.

Manufacturing Employment (January 1959 - January 2013)



Source: Current Employment Statistics survey

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In the highest-growth manufacturing sectors, which also pay good wages, women are falling behind.

- The vast majority of job gains over the last three years (between January 2010 and January 2013*) have come from three sectors: fabricated metal products (such as nuts and bolts, boilers, shipping containers) (+171,200 jobs), transportation equipment (including cars and trucks) (+153,200 jobs) and machinery (+127,300 jobs). Together these sectors have added 451,700 jobs, accounting for nearly 90 percent of net growth.
- In addition to high growth in these sectors, these sectors are also fairly well paying. Transportation equipment was one of the top-paying manufacturing sectors in February 2013. Machinery workers had average weekly wages well above manufacturing wages on the whole, while fabricated metal products workers ranked in the middle of manufacturing sectors.
- During the recovery, gains have gone disproportionately to men in all three of these sectors. This was especially true for fabricated metal products and machinery:

Increases in Manufacturing Employment for Select Sectors by Gender, January 2010-January 2013		
	Women	Men
Fabricated metal products	+2.5%	+16.3%
Machinery	+5.2%	+15.0%
Transportation equipment	+8.0%	+12.6%

This divergence followed proportionate losses in these manufacturing sectors from January 2008 to January 2010.

- The three sectors which lost the largest number of manufacturing jobs from January 2008-January 2010 were the same ones that saw stronger growth in the recovery: fabricated metal products (-301,500 jobs), transportation equipment (-356,900 jobs) and machinery (-213,400 jobs). Together these sectors shed 871,800 jobs, accounting for over 38 percent of net loss of manufacturing jobs during this period.
- Losses in these areas were fairly proportionate for men and women between January 2008-January 2010 in fabricated metal products and machinery. Women suffered disproportionate losses in transportation equipment, even in this early period.

Declines in Manufacturing Employment for Select Sectors by Gender, January 2008-January 2010		
	Women	Men
Fabricated metal products	-19.3%	-19.4%
Machinery	-17.6%	-18.0%
Transportation equipment	-26.0%	-19.7%

- Over the whole period between January 2008 and January 2013 women’s employment in these sectors has declined more than twice as much as men’s.

Declines in Manufacturing Employment for Select Sectors by Gender, January 2008-January 2013		
	Women	Men
Fabricated metal products	-17.3%	-6.2%
Machinery	-13.3%	-5.7%
Transportation equipment	-20.1%	-9.6%

For women’s employment in manufacturing to grow, they need equal access to training and employment opportunities.

The government, community-based organizations, community colleges, employers, and unions must work together to ensure that women have equal employment opportunities in manufacturing occupations. The government should increase its enforcement of nondiscrimination mandates to help combat the barriers that women face in nontraditional fields (gender stereotypes, discriminatory employment practices and sexual harassment, for example), and continue to hold federally funded vocational training programs accountable for serving women in nontraditional fields. In addition, it should provide more funding to help women in manufacturing occupations through the Workforce Investment Act and invest in outreach and retention programs to increase the numbers of women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. Community-based organizations, educational institutions, unions and employers should work together to recruit women and improve women’s training for manufacturing positions, such as through the Manufacturing Skills Certification System, and to address barriers to women’s participation and retention in the field.

*Data for February 2013 are not yet available for these subsectors. Overall manufacturing and durable manufacturing changed little between January 2013 and February 2013.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey database available at <http://data.bls.gov/pdq/querytool.jsp?survey=ce>.