27 Times More Men Than Women Joined the Labor Force in January 2022

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The most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) monthly jobs report shows that just 39,000 women ages 20 and over joined the labor force in January 2022, meaning they are newly working or looking for work. Even with these modest gains, there were still nearly 1.1 million fewer women in the labor force in January 2022 compared to February 2020. Meanwhile men ages 20 and over joined the labor force last month in massive numbers, with over 1 million more men newly working or looking for work. This means men have now recouped all their labor force losses since February 2020.[1] The sharp contract between the number of men and women joining the labor force last month likely reflects the uneven caregiving responsibilities men and women have taken on in the wake of the Omicron variant which caused continued school and child care disruptions last month.

The economy gained 467,000 jobs in January 2022.[2] Women gained just 40.3% of these jobs, or 188,000, while men gained 279,000 jobs last month.[3] Despite these gains, it would take six months of growth at January's level to gain back the nearly 2.9 million jobs the economy has lost since February 2020 and it would take women nearly 10 months of growth at January's level to gain back the over 1.8 million jobs they have lost since February 2020.[4]

Women gained 188,000 jobs last month but are still short over 1.8 million jobs since February 2020.
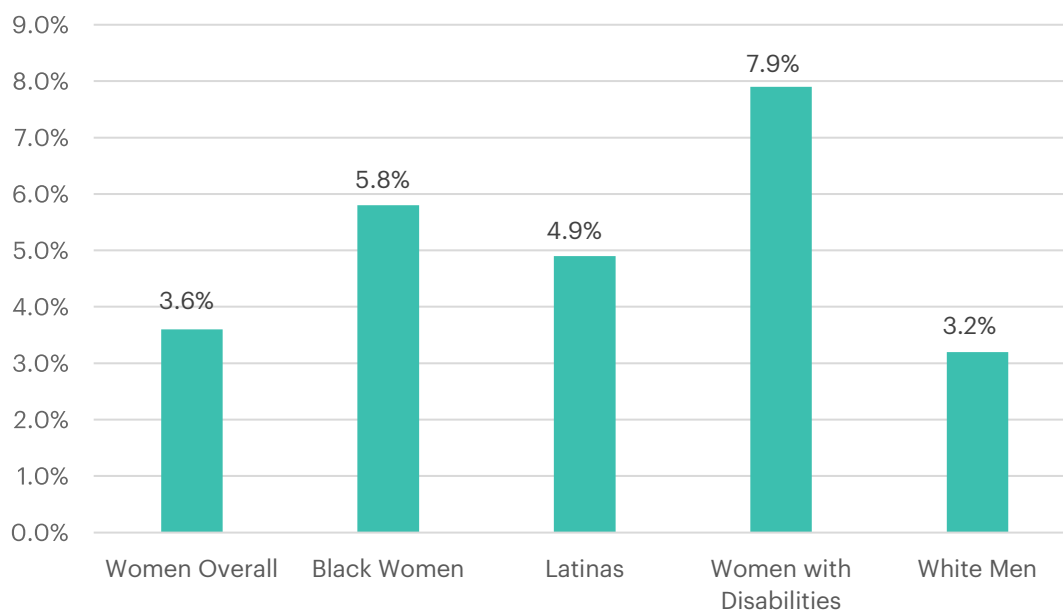
- Since February 2020, the economy has experienced a net loss of nearly 2.9 million jobs; women account for 63.3% of those losses.

- The leisure and hospitality sector gained 151,000 jobs in January 2022. Women gained 52,000 jobs in this sector, or 34.4% of the jobs added. Women make up 52.7% of the leisure and hospitality workforce.

- The retail trade sector gained 61,400 jobs in January. Women gained 45,000 jobs, or 73.3% of the jobs added. Women make up 48.8% of the retail trade workforce.

- The government sector gained 23,000 jobs in January. Women gained 26,000 jobs while men lost 3,000. Women make up 58.0% of the government workforce.

- The education and health services sector gained 29,000 jobs in January. Men made up 100% of these gains, while women lost 17,000 jobs. Women make up 76.7% of the education and health services workforce.

- The child care sector gained 5,600 jobs last month. The net number of child care jobs lost since February 2020 is 131,200. The child care sector has lost nearly 1 in 8 jobs (12.4%) since the start of the crisis.[5]

The overall unemployment rate masks higher rates for Black women, Latinas, and other demographic groups.

- The unemployment rate for women ages 20 and over remained unchanged at 3.6% last month. In comparison, the unemployment rate for men ages 20 and over increased from 3.6% in December to 3.8% in January.[6] This was driven largely by massive numbers of men entering the labor force last month.

- Nearly 1 in 17 Black women ages 20 and over (5.8%) were unemployed in January 2022, down from 6.2% in December 2021. About 1 in 14 Black men ages 20 and over (7.1%) were unemployed in January 2022, up from 7.0% in December 2021.[7]

- Nearly 1 in 20 Latinas ages 20 and over (4.9%) were unemployed in January 2022, unchanged from December 2021.[8]

- About 1 in 31 Asian women ages 20 and over (3.2%) were unemployed in January 2022, down from 3.3% in December 2021.[9]

- By comparison, the unemployment rate for white men ages 20 and over was 3.2% in January 2022, up from 3.0% in December 2021.[10]

- Over 1 in 13 women with disabilities (7.9%) were unemployed in January 2022, down from 8.0% in December 2021.[11]

Unemployment Rates for Selected Demographics, January 2022

Source: BLS, Employment Situation Summary Tables A-1, A-2, A-3, and A-6. Unemployment rates for white men, women overall, Latinas, and Black women are seasonally adjusted and are for people ages 20 and over. The unemployment rate for women with disabilities is not seasonally adjusted and is for women ages 16-64.

Many unemployed women have been out of work for 6 months or longer.

In January 2022, over 1 in 4 unemployed women ages 20 and over (26.3%) had been out of work for six months or longer. Among unemployed women ages 16 and over, 24.1% had been out of work for six months or longer, including 29.4% of unemployed Asian women, 29.0% of unemployed Black women, and 22.1% of unemployed Latinas.[12]

Additionally, in January 2022, over 1 in 6 unemployed women ages 16 and over (17.1%) had been out of work for a year or longer.[13]

If the nearly 1.1 million women who have left the labor force since February 2020 were counted among the unemployed, women's unemployment would have been 5.0% last month.

Reported unemployment rates do not capture people who have left the labor force entirely and are no longer looking for work. If the nearly 1.1 million women ages 20 and over who have left the labor force since February 2020 were counted as unemployed in January 2022, women's unemployment rate would have been 5.0% in January 2022 instead of the reported 3.6%.[14]

Since February 2020, 168,000 Black women have left the labor force, along with 61,000 Latinas. If these women were counted as unemployed, the unemployment rate for Black women in January 2022 would have been 7.3% instead of 5.8%, and Latinas' unemployment rate would have been 5.4% instead of 4.9%.[15]

1   NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex and Age," Table A-1 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary* (Washington, DC: February 4, 2022), https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t01.htm. Historical data available at https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab1.htm. Figures are seasonally adjusted and capture women and men ages 20 and over.

2   National Women's Law Center (NWLC) calculations using Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), "Employees on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector and Selected Industry Detail," Table B-1 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary* (Washington, DC: February 4, 2022), https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t17.htm. Historical data available at https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cesbtab1.htm. Figures are seasonally adjusted.

3   NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary* and BLS, "Employment of Women on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector, Seasonally Adjusted," Table B-5 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary* (Washington, DC: February 4, 2022), https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t21.htm. Historical data available at https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cesbtab5.htm. Throughout this factsheet, changes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic use February 2020 as a reference point.

4   NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 and Table B-5 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary.*

5   NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary* and BLS, Table B-5 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary.* Figures are seasonally adjusted.

6   NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex and Age," Table A-1 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary* (Washington, DC: February 4, 2022), https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t01.htm. Historical data available at https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab1.htm. Figures are seasonally adjusted and capture women and men ages 20 and over.

7   BLS, Table A-2 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary.* Historical data available at https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab2.htm. Figures are seasonally adjusted.

8   NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age," Table A-3 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary.* (Washington, DC: February 4, 2022), https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t03.htm. Figures are seasonally adjusted.

9   NWLC calculations using BLS, "(Unadj) Unemployment Rate – Asian, Women," *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey* (Washington, DC: February 4, 2022), https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNU04032342. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.

10   NWLC calculations using BLS, Table A-2 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary,* https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t02.htm. Figure is seasonally adjusted.

11   NWLC calculations using BLS, "*Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex, Age, and Disability Status,* Not Seasonally Adjusted," Table A-6 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary,* https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t06.htm. Historical data available at https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab6.htm.

12   NWLC calculations based on BLS, *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary,* Household Data Table A-36: Unemployed persons by age, sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and duration of unemployment, available at https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpseea36.htm. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.

13   NWLC calculations using BLS, "(Unadj) Number Unemployed for 52 Weeks & Over, Women," *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey* (Washington, DC: February 4, 2022), https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNU03008735 and BLS, Table A-36 in *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey.* Figure is not seasonally adjusted.

14   NWLC calculations using BLS, Table A-1 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary.* To calculate these adjusted unemployment rates, NWLC added the 1,073,000 women who have dropped out of the labor force since February 2020 to the number of women in January 2022 who were in the labor force and to the number of women who were unemployed and recalculated the share of women in the labor force who were unemployed.

15   NWLC calculations using BLS, Table A-2 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary* and BLS, Table A-3 in *January 2022 Employment Situation Summary.* To calculate these adjusted unemployment rates, NWLC added the 168,000 Black women who have dropped out of the labor force since February 2020 to the number of Black women in January 2022 who were in the labor force and to the number of Black women who were unemployed and recalculated the share of women in the labor force who were unemployed. The same was done for Latinas.