

# 152,000 Women Join the Labor Force in August

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The most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data showed 786,000 people ages 16 and over joined the labor force last month, meaning they are now working or looking for work. This included 152,000 women ages 20 and over and 301,000 men ages 20 and over. This brings women's labor force participation rate up to 58.4% in August compared to 58.3% in July. This is still nearly one percentage point below women's pre-pandemic labor force participation rate of 59.3%, with 427,000 fewer women in the labor force in August 2022 than in February 2020. Women make up 100% of net labor force leavers ages 20 and over since February 2020.<sup>2</sup> However, these gains mask losses for Black men and women. While white men, white women,<sup>3</sup> Latinos, Latinas,<sup>4</sup> Asian men, and Asian women<sup>5</sup> ages 20 and over all experienced increases in labor force size in August, 57,000 Black men ages 20 and over and 45,000 Black women ages 20 and over left the labor force last month.<sup>6</sup>

In August, 315,000 jobs were added to the economy—women gained 92,000 of these jobs, which is 29.2% of the total gains. This marks 20 consecutive months of job growth for women but still leaves them down a net 98,000 jobs since February 2020. Meanwhile men have recovered all their net job losses and now hold 338,000 more jobs in August 2022 than in February 2020.<sup>7</sup>

## Women gained 92,000 jobs last month but are still short a net 98,000 jobs since February 2020.

- Since February 2020, the economy has experienced a net gain of 240,000 jobs. Men held 338,000 more net jobs in August 2022 than in February 2020 while women held 98,000 fewer net jobs in August 2022 than in February 2020.
- The leisure and hospitality sector gained 31,000 jobs in August 2022. Women gained 17,000 jobs in this sector, or 54.8% of the jobs added<sup>8</sup> — but while leisure and hospitality jobs have been a key driver of the recovery for women, many of these jobs have low wages, unpredictable hours, and minimal benefits.<sup>9</sup> Women make up 52.9% of the leisure and hospitality workforce.
- The retail trade sector gained 44,000 jobs in August 2022. Women gained 17,100 jobs, or 38.9% of the jobs added. Women make up 49.0% of the retail trade workforce.

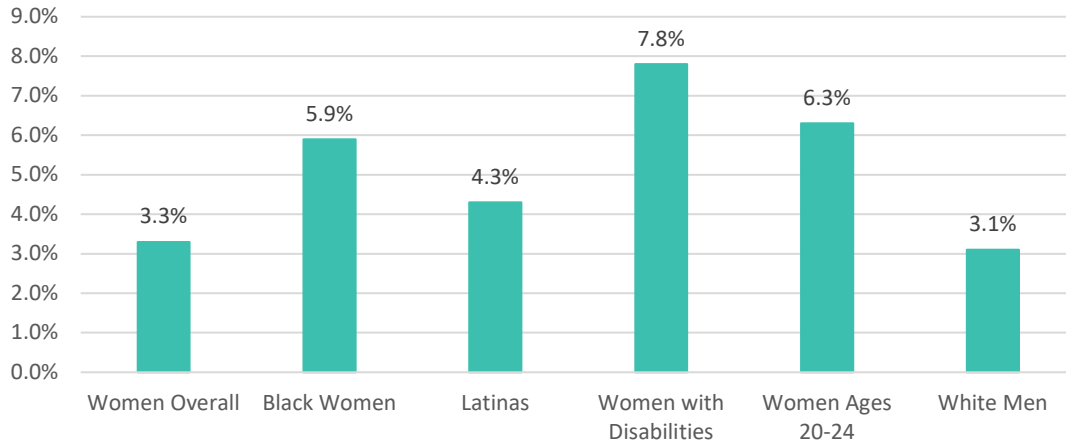
- The government sector gained 7,000 jobs in August 2022. Women lost 41,000 jobs while men gained 48,000 jobs. Women make up 58.0% of the government workforce.
- The education and health services sector gained 68,000 jobs in August 2022, going into a new school year. Women gained 48,000 jobs, or 70.6% of the jobs added. Women make up 77.1% of the education and health services workforce.
- The child care sector gained 2,800 jobs last month. A net 88,300 child care jobs have been lost since February 2020. The child care sector is still missing over 1 in 12 jobs (8.4%) since the start of the crisis<sup>10</sup> — and ongoing staffing shortages in this sector particularly impede an equitable recovery, as they also make it harder for parents to secure the child care they need to work. Women make up 92.8% of the child care workforce.<sup>11</sup>

## The overall unemployment rates masks higher rates for Black women, disabled women, and other groups.

Unemployment rates ticked up for most groups last month. Largely, this was because people joined the labor force in August, and many did so as unemployed workers.

- The unemployment rate for women ages 20 and over increased from 3.1% in July to 3.3% in August 2022. The unemployment rate for men ages 20 and over also increased from 3.2% in July to 3.5% in August 2022.<sup>12</sup>
- The unemployment rate for Black women ages 20 and over was 5.9% in August 2022, up from 5.3% in July. The unemployment rate for Black men ages 20 and over increased from 5.7% in July to 6.0% in August 2022.<sup>13</sup>
- The unemployment rate for Latinas ages 20 and over was 4.3% in August 2022, up from 3.2% in July.<sup>14</sup>
- The unemployment rate for Asian women ages 20 and over was 3.1% in August 2022, down from 3.4% in July.<sup>15</sup>
- The unemployment rate for women with disabilities ages 16-64 was 7.8% in August 2022, down slightly from 7.9% in July.<sup>16</sup>
- The unemployment rate for young women ages 20-24 was 6.3% in August 2022, unchanged from July. The unemployment rate for Black women ages 20-24 increased from 11.8% in July to 12.8% in August 2022. Similarly, the unemployment rate for Latinas ages 20-24 increased from 5.6% in July to 7.8% in August 2022.<sup>17</sup>
- By comparison, the unemployment rate for white men ages 20 and over was 3.1% in August 2022, up from 3.0% in July.<sup>18</sup>

## Unemployment Rates for Selected Demographics, August 2022



Source: BLS, Employment Situation Summary Tables A-1, A-2, A-3, A-6, and A-13. 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. The unemployment rate for women ages 20-24 is also not seasonally adjusted.

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

In August 2022, nearly 1 in 5 unemployed women ages 20 and over (19.6%) had been out of work for six months or longer. Among unemployed women ages 16 and over, 18.1% had been out of work for six months or longer, including 22.2% of unemployed Asian women, 27.7% of unemployed Black women, and 16.5% of unemployed Latinas.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, in August 2022, nearly 1 in 9 unemployed women ages 16 and over (10.7%) had been out of work for a year or longer.<sup>20</sup>

### Many women working part-time are doing so involuntarily.

Over 18.6 million women ages 16 and over were working part time in August. Nearly 1 in 9 (10.6%) were doing so for economic reasons, such as slack business conditions, meaning they wanted to be working more hours but were unable to do so. This includes 16.5% of Latinas ages 16 and over working part time, 16.2% of Black women ages 16 and over working part time, and 10.5% of Asian women ages 16 and over working part time.<sup>21</sup> In addition, many women work part time for reasons that BLS considers “voluntary” but may in fact reflect inadequate access to child care or other supports for working caregivers.<sup>22</sup> Women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities, disproportionately shifted from full-time to part-time work during the pandemic.<sup>23</sup>

1. Data factchecked by Sarah Javaid.
2. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex and Age," Table A-1 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.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. Throughout this factsheet, changes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic are measured using February 2020 as a reference point. Each year when January data is released, the Bureau of Labor Statistics adjusts its household survey data to incorporate new methodologies and population estimates from the most recent decennial Census and other sources. However, BLS does not revise past figures with these new estimates and therefore cautions the comparability of figures across years.
3. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Race, Sex, and Age" Table A-2 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t02.htm>.
4. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age," Table A-3 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary. (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t03.htm>.
5. NWLC calculations using BLS, "(Unadj) Civilian Labor Force Size - 20 yrs. & over, Asian Women," Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNU01032267> and BLS, "(Unadj) Civilian Labor Force Size - 20 yrs. & over, Asian Men," Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNU01032266>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted and for those ages 20 and over.
6. BLS, Table A-2 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary.
7. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary and BLS, "Employment of Women on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector, Seasonally Adjusted," Table B-5 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t21.htm>. Historical data available at <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cesbtb5.htm>.
8. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary and BLS, Table B-5 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figures are seasonally adjusted.
9. More information on women's job quality during COVID-19 economic recovery can be found at Brooke LePage, "Women's Jobs Are Being Added Back to the Economy—But Many Need Improving" (National Women's Law Center, May 2022), <https://nwlc.org/resource/womens-jobs-are-being-added-back-to-the-economy-but-many-need-improving/>.
10. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary and BLS, Table B-5 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figures are seasonally adjusted.
11. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary and BLS, "Women Employees, Thousands, Child Day Care Services" from the Current Employment Statistics Survey (National), <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/CE56562440010>. Figures are seasonally adjusted. Women's share of the child care workforce is for July 2022.
12. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex and Age," Table A-1 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary. 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.
13. BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Race, Sex, and Age" Table A-2 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022). Historical data available at <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab2.htm>. Figures are seasonally adjusted.
14. BLS, "Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age," Table A-3 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary. (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t03.htm>. Figures are seasonally adjusted.
15. NWLC calculations using BLS, "(Unadj) Unemployment Rate - Asian, Women," Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNU04032342>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
16. BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex, Age, and Disability Status, Not Seasonally Adjusted," Table A-6 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t06.htm>.
17. BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population by Age, Sex, and Race," Table A-13 in Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/web/empst/cpseea13.htm>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
18. BLS, Table A-2 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figure is seasonally adjusted.
19. NWLC calculations based on BLS, "Unemployed Persons by Age, Sex, Race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, Marital Status, and Duration of Unemployment," Table A-36 in Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/web/empst/cpseea36.htm>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
20. NWLC calculations using BLS, "(Unadj) Number Unemployed for 52 Weeks & Over, Women," Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNU03008735> and BLS, Table A-1 in August 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
21. NWLC calculations based on BLS, "Persons at Work in Nonagricultural Industries by Age, Sex, Race, Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Marital Status, and Usual Full- or Part-time Status," Table A-27 in Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey (Washington, DC: September 2, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/web/empst/cpseea27.htm>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
22. Brooke LePage. "Part-Time Workers Are Facing Heightened Uncertainty During COVID—and Most Are Women." (National Women's Law Center, February 2022), <https://nwlc.org/resource/part-time-workers-factsheet/>.
23. More information on how women shifted from full-time to part-time work can be found in Shengwei Sun. "Part-Time Working Caregivers Need Unemployment Insurance Reform" (National Women's Law Center, July 2022), <https://nwlc.org/resource/part-time-working-caregivers-need-unemployment-insurance-reform/>.