

While Overall Unemployment Rate Edges Down, Rates Increase for Black Women and Latinas

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The most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data showed that the overall unemployment rate declined from 3.6% to 3.5% and similarly decreased for many demographic groups. However, the rates for Black women, Latinas, and Latinos all increased slightly. There were gains across the board in labor force participation rates, and increased unemployment rates for these groups were likely due to Black women, Latinas, and Latinos joining the labor force as unemployed workers.²

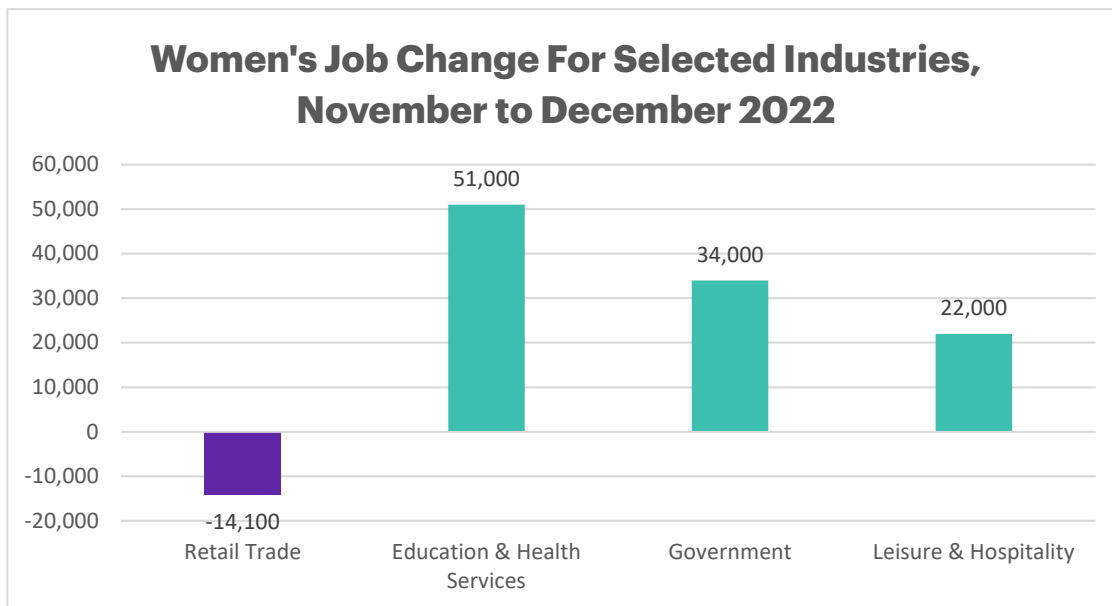
Women ages 20 and over joined the labor force in large numbers in December, with 398,000 more women now working or looking for work than the previous month. By comparison, 169,000 men ages 20 and over joined the labor force last month. Despite women's labor force participation gains in December, there continues to be a large gender gap in labor force participation compared to pre-pandemic. There are 666,000 fewer women in the labor force now than in February 2020, before the pandemic started. Meanwhile, 923,000 more men are in the labor force now than in February. Women make up 100% of net labor force leavers ages 20 and over since February 2020.³

The data also shows that 223,000 jobs were added in December, 117,000 of which (52.5%) were women's jobs. December's gains mark 24 months of consecutive job gains for women and means women now hold 518,000 more net jobs than in February 2020; by comparison, men hold 721,000 more net jobs now than in February 2020.⁴

Women gained 117,000 jobs last month and hold 518,000 more net jobs now than they did in February 2020.

- Since February 2020, the economy has experienced a net gain of over 1.2 million jobs. In December 2022, men held 721,000 more net jobs while women held 518,000 more net jobs compared to February 2020.
- The leisure and hospitality sector gained 67,000 jobs in December 2022. Women gained 22,000 jobs in this sector, or 32.8% of the jobs added⁵ — 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.⁶ Women make up 52.9% of the leisure and hospitality workforce.

- The retail trade sector gained 9,000 jobs in December 2022. Women lost 14,100 jobs, while men gained 23,100 jobs. Women make up 48.6% of the retail trade workforce.
- The government sector gained 3,000 jobs in December 2022. Women gained 34,000 jobs, while men lost 31,000. Women make up 58.3% of the government workforce.
- The education and health services sector gained 78,000 jobs in December 2022. Women gained 51,000 jobs, or 65.4% of the jobs added. Women make up 77.0% of the education and health services workforce.
- The child care sector gained 6,100 jobs last month. A net 79,600 child care jobs have been lost since February 2020. The child care sector is still missing nearly 1 in 13 jobs (7.6%) since the start of the crisis⁷ — 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 92.2% of the child care workforce.⁸



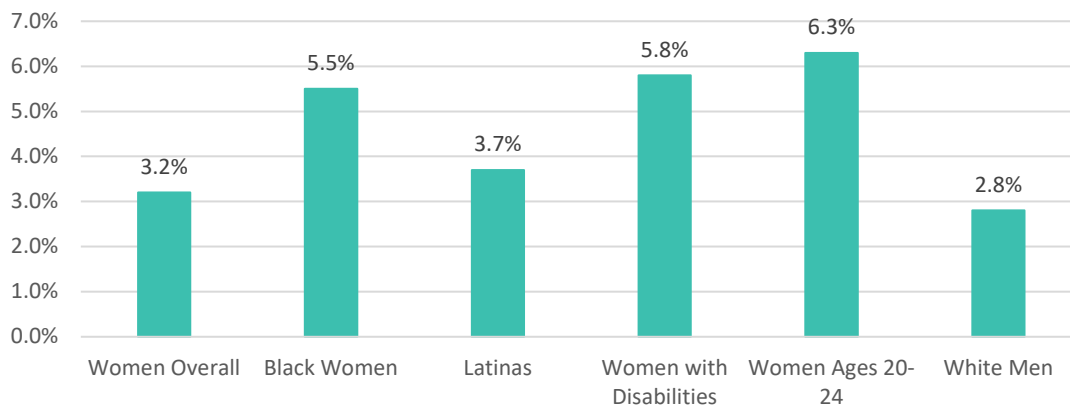
Source: BLS, Employment Situation Summary Table B-5. Figures are seasonally adjusted.

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

- The unemployment rate for women ages 20 and over decreased from 3.3% in November to 3.2% in December 2022. Similarly, the unemployment rate for men ages 20 and over decreased from 3.3% in November to 3.1% in December 2022.⁹
- The unemployment rate for Black women ages 20 and over was 5.5% in December 2022, up from 5.2% in November. The unemployment rate for Black men ages 20 and over decreased from 5.4% in November to 5.1% in December 2022.¹⁰
- The unemployment rate for Latinas ages 20 and over was 3.7% in December 2022, up slightly from 3.6% in November. The unemployment rate for Latinos ages 20 and over was 4.0% in December 2022, up from 3.6% in November 2022.¹¹
- The unemployment rate for Asian women ages 20 and over was 2.0% in December 2022, down from 2.2% in November.¹²
- The unemployment rate for women with disabilities ages 16-64 was 5.8% in December 2022, up from 5.5% in November.¹³

- The unemployment rate for young women ages 20-24 was 6.3% in December 2022, up from 5.4% in November. The unemployment rate for Black women ages 20-24 increased from 7.3% in November to 10.4% in December 2022. The unemployment rate for Latinas ages 20-24 increased from 5.0% in November to 7.0% in December 2022.¹⁴
- By comparison, the unemployment rate for white men ages 20 and over was 2.8% in December 2022, down from 3.0% from November.¹⁵

Unemployment Rates for Selected Demographics, December 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.

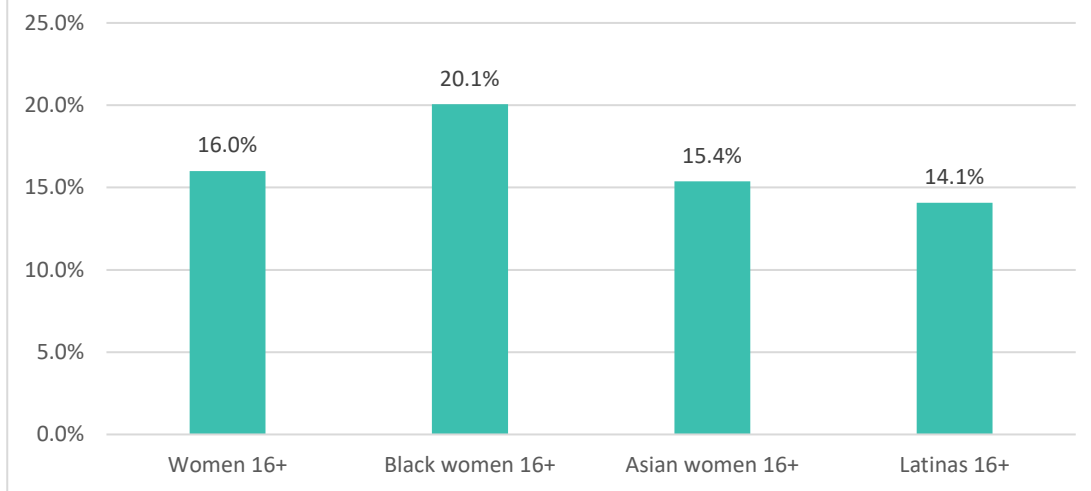
Many unemployed women have been out of work for 6 months or longer.

In December 2022, more than 1 in 6 unemployed women ages 20 and over (16.8%) had been out of work for six months or longer. Among unemployed women ages 16 and over, 16.0% had been out of work for six months or longer, including 20.1% of unemployed Black women, 15.4% of unemployed Asian women, and 14.1% of unemployed Latinas.¹⁶ Additionally, in December 2022, nearly 1 in 10 unemployed women ages 16 and over (9.6%) had been out of work for a year or longer.¹⁷

Many women working part-time are doing so involuntarily.

Nearly 20 million women ages 16 and over were working part time in December. 8.3% of these women 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 14.4% of Latinas ages 16 and over working part time, 12.4% of Black women ages 16 and over working part time, and 7.9% of Asian women ages 16 and over working part time.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ Women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities, disproportionately shifted from full-time to part-time work during the pandemic.²⁰

Rate of Unemployed Who Are Unemployed for 6 Months or More For Selected Demographics, December 2022



Source: BLS, *Employment Situation Summary Table A-27*.

1. Data factchecked by Sarah Javid.
2. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex and Age," Table A-1 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t01.htm>, BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Race, Sex, and Age" Table A-2 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t02.htm>, BLS, "Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age," Table A-3 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary. (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t03.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. At the end of each year, BLS also updates the seasonal adjustment factors and revises some historical, seasonally adjusted data to improve comparability. This impacts seasonally adjusted data from January 2018 through November 2022.
3. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex and Age," Table A-1 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t01.htm>. Historical data available at <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab1.htm>.
4. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary and BLS, "Employment of Women on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector, Seasonally Adjusted," Table B-5 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t21.htm>. Historical data available at <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab5.htm>.
5. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary and BLS, Table B-5 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figures are seasonally adjusted.
6. 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/>.
7. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary and BLS, Table B-5 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figures are seasonally adjusted. Historical data for Table B-1 is available at <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab1.htm>.
8. NWLC calculations using BLS, Table B-1 in December 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/CE6562440010>. Figures are seasonally adjusted. Women's share of the child care workforce is for November 2022.
9. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex and Age," Table A-1 in December 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.
10. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Race, Sex, and Age" Table A-2 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t02.htm>.
11. NWLC calculations using BLS, "Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age," Table A-3 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary. (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t03.htm>.
12. 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.
13. BLS, "Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Sex, Age, and Disability Status, Not Seasonally Adjusted," Table A-6 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary (Washington, DC: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t06.htm>.
14. 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: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/web/empstat/cpseea13.htm>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
15. BLS, Table A-2 in December 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figure is seasonally adjusted.
16. 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: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/web/empstat/cpseea36.htm>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
17. 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 December 2022 Employment Situation Summary. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
18. NWLC calculations using 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: January 6, 2022), <https://www.bls.gov/web/empstat/cpseea27.htm>. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
19. 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/>.
20. 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, October 2022), <https://nwlc.org/resource/part-time-working-caregivers-need-unemployment-insurance-reform/>.