Modest Recovery Largely Leaves Women Behind
(updated March 2011)

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 only 322,000 jobs between July 2009 and February 2011. Although unemployment remains high and job growth unacceptably slow for both men and women, it is striking that women have actually lost ground during the recovery.

Lowlights

- During the recovery, women lost 300,000 jobs, while men gained 622,000, a gap of 922,000 jobs.
- Over the course of the recovery, women’s overall unemployment rate increased from 7.7 percent to 8.0 percent while men’s dropped from 9.8 percent to 8.7 percent.
- While women lost nearly 3 out of every 10 jobs lost during the recession, they filled fewer than 1 in 10 jobs in the recovery.

- Between July 2009 and February 2011, women lost 300,000 jobs while men gained 622,000, a difference of 922,000 jobs.\(^3\)
- The first six months of the recovery (July – December 2009) saw continued job loss for both men and women, but since the pace of the recovery began to quicken in early 2010, women largely have been left behind. Of the 1.234 million jobs added to the economy between January 2010 and February 2011, only 113,000—just 9.2 percent—went to women.\(^4\)
- While women lost nearly three in every ten jobs cut over the course of the recession (December 2007 – June 2009), they have filled fewer than one in every ten since job growth picked up in 2010.\(^5\)


- 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 (57.0 percent) of the public workforce at the end of the recession, they lost the vast majority (78.9 percent) of the 327,000 jobs cut in this sector between July 2009 and February 2011.\(^6\)
o Women lost heavily in the private sector as well. Though women comprised half (48.4 percent) of private sector employees at the end of the recession, they lost 42,000 jobs in this sector between July 2009 and February 2011—a period during which the sector gained 649,000 jobs.  

➢ **Women’s unemployment rose during the course of the recovery while men’s declined.**

o Between July 2009 and February 2011, women’s overall unemployment rate increased from 7.7 percent to 8.0 percent while men’s overall unemployment rate dropped from 9.8 percent to 8.7 percent.  

➢ **Unemployment for many vulnerable groups increased during the recovery.**

o Between July 2009 and February 2011 unemployment rates increased for single mothers (from 12.6 percent to 13.0 percent), African-American women (11.8 percent to 13.0 percent), and Hispanic men (11.2 percent to 12.2 percent).  

o African American men’s unemployment has returned to the same rate it was at the beginning of the recovery (16.2 percent) and Hispanic women’s unemployment rate improved during the recovery from 11.8 percent to 11.1 percent, but neither approached the dramatic drop that white men experienced (from 9.1 percent to 7.8 percent).  

➢ **Long-term unemployment worsened for women during the recovery.**

o Between July 2009 and February 2011 the percentage of jobless workers out of work and seeking employment for 27 weeks or more increased from 32.3 percent to 44.8 percent for women (12.5 percentage points), more than twice as much as the increase for men (5.5 percentage points from 36.9 percent to 42.4 percent).  

Deep cuts in federal and state spending could lead to further job losses, especially for women, and cuts in vital services, as well as jeopardize the fragile recovery.

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1. Revisions to the January & February versions of this analysis reflect changes in the employment picture between December 2010 & January 2011 as well as revisions by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to employment statistics affecting data from January 2006 forward.


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.


10. Ibid.