

UNEMPLOYMENT

Fourth Anniversary of the Recovery Shows Job Gains for Women—But a Long Road to a Full Recovery

July 2013

This report analyzes the employment picture for women and men as of June 2013, the fourth anniversary of the recovery from the deep recession that began in December 2007. Although the pace of the recovery has picked up, especially for women, four years since the start of the recovery in June 2009, employment for women and men has yet to return to pre-recession levels.

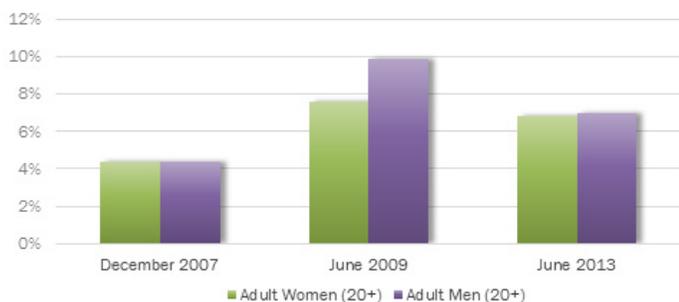
KEY FACTS

- Unemployment rates have declined for adult women and men since the start of the recovery: from 7.6 percent in June 2009 to 6.8 percent in June 2013 for adult women and from 9.9 percent in June 2009 to 7.0 percent in June 2013 for adult men.
- Unemployment rates for both adult women and men in June 2013 were more than one and a half times higher than in December 2007.
- Unemployment rates have declined for most subgroups of women since the start of the recovery, but not for adult African-American women.
- Long-term unemployment rates for adult women and men were higher in June 2013 than at the start of the recovery and twice as high as at the start of the recession.
- Women have added over 2.3 million net private sector jobs since June 2009, equal to the number of private sector jobs they lost during the recession. However, women have lost 444,000 public sector jobs, wiping out nearly 19 percent of their private sector job gains in the recovery.
- Men have added over 3.7 million net private sector jobs since June 2009, 69 percent of the private sector jobs they lost during the recession, but have lost 290,000 public sector jobs, wiping out nearly 8 percent of their private sector job gains during this period.
- Both women and men gained substantial numbers of jobs in education and health, professional and business services (particularly temporary help services), leisure and hospitality (including restaurants), and retail trade. In manufacturing and financial activities, women have lost substantial numbers of jobs while men have gained them.
- Job growth in three traditionally low-wage sectors (retail sector, leisure and hospitality, and temporary help services), has accounted for half of total net job growth since the start of the recovery.
- If job growth continued at the rate of 195,000 per month (the rate in June 2013), it would take until early 2021 to return to pre-recession employment levels while absorbing the number of people who enter the labor force each month, according to the Hamilton Project of the Brookings Institution.

Women’s and men’s unemployment rates have declined since the start of the recovery, men’s more dramatically.

- The unemployment rate for adult women (20 and older) dropped from 7.6 percent in June 2009 to 6.8 percent in June 2013, a decline of 0.8 percentage point.
- The unemployment rate for adult men declined from 9.9 percent in June 2009 to 7.0 percent in June 2013, a decline of 2.9 percentage points.

Unemployment Rates for Women and Men, Recession and Recovery



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But, four years into the recovery, unemployment rates for women and men were more than one and a half times higher than at the start of the recession.

- The unemployment rate for adult women in June 2013, 6.8 percent, was more than one and a half times higher than in December 2007 (4.4 percent). Before the start of the recession in December 2007, the last time the monthly unemployment rate for adult women was as high as 6.8 percent was in 1985.
- The unemployment rate for adult men in June 2013, 7.0 percent, was more than one and a half times higher than in December 2007 (4.4 percent). Before the start of the recession in December 2007, the last time the monthly unemployment rate for adult men was as high as 7.0 percent was in 1992.

Unemployment rates have declined for most but not all subgroups of women since the start of the recovery, and all rates remain higher than at the start of the recession.¹

- The June 2013 unemployment rate for adult African-American women (12.0 percent) was higher than their

rate at the beginning of the recovery in June 2009 (11.8 percent), and was nearly 1.7 times higher than their rate at the beginning of the recession in December 2007 (7.1 percent).

- The June 2013 unemployment rate for adult Hispanic women (8.6 percent) was lower than their rate in June 2009 (11.5 percent), but 1.4 times higher than their rate in December 2007 (6.1 percent).
- The June 2013 unemployment rate for adult Asian women (4.2 percent) was lower than their rate in June 2009 (7.6 percent), but nearly 1.2 times higher than their rate in December 2007 (3.6 percent).
- The June 2013 unemployment rate for adult white women (6.0 percent) was lower than their rate in June 2009 (6.9 percent), but more than 1.5 times larger than their rate in December 2007 (3.9 percent).
- The June 2013 unemployment rate for single mothers (10.7 percent) was lower than their rate in June 2009 (11.7 percent), but nearly 1.6 times higher than their rate in December 2007 (6.9 percent).
- The June 2013 unemployment rate for women 25 and older with less than a high school degree (12.9 percent) was lower than their rate in June 2009 (14.8 percent), but more than 1.4 times higher than their rate in December 2007 (9.1 percent).

Change in unemployment rates during the recovery (June 2009 to June 2013)

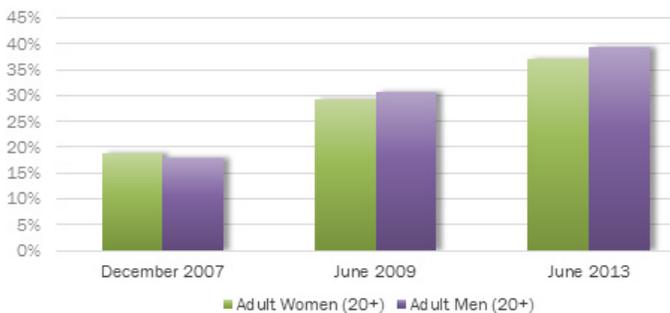
	June 2009	June 2013	Percentage point change over the recovery	Ratio of June 2013 to December 2007
Adult women	7.6%	6.8%	-0.8	1.5
Adult African-American women	11.8%	12.0%	+0.2	1.7
Adult Hispanic women	11.5%	8.6%	-2.9	1.4
Adult Asian women	7.6%	4.2%	-3.4	1.2
Adult white women	6.9%	6.0%	-0.9	1.5
Single mothers (16+)	11.7%	10.7%	-1.0	1.6
Women with less than a high school degree (25+)	14.8%	12.9%	-1.9	1.4

Source: Current Population Survey. Data for Hispanic women, single mothers, Asian women, and women (25+) with less than a high school degree are not seasonally adjusted. Adult women are 20+.

Long-term unemployment rates for women and men have risen since the start of the recovery.

- The long-term unemployment rate – the percentage of jobless workers who were still looking for work after more than six months of unemployment – was 37.2 percent for adult women in June 2013, compared to 29.3 percent in June 2009 and 18.8 percent in December 2007. The long-term unemployment rate for adult men in June 2013 was 39.5 percent, compared to 30.7 percent in June 2009 and 18.1 percent in December 2007.
- Overall, 36.7 percent of jobless workers had been unemployed for more than six months in June 2013. Before the start of the recession in December 2007, overall long-term unemployment had never been this high since the data began to be collected in 1948.²

Share of Jobless Adult Workers Unemployed for More Than Six Months, Recession and Recovery



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Older workers experienced the longest spells of unemployment.

- Older workers, both female and male, experienced longer spells of unemployment than younger age groups. Jobless workers 65 and older had the longest average durations of unemployment in June 2013: 46.1 weeks for women and 60.2 weeks for men. In comparison, the average duration for workers 20 to 24 was 22.7 weeks for women and 27.4 weeks for men.
- African-American jobless workers, both women and men, had the longest median durations of unemployment by race: 37.9 weeks for women and 36.6 weeks for men.³

Public sector job losses have offset private sector job gains for women and increasingly for men.

- Women have added over 1.9 million net jobs since June 2009, nearly 90 percent of the more than 2.1 million jobs they lost from December 2007 to June 2009. Women have gained over 2.3 million net private sector jobs since the start of the recovery, equal to the number of the private sector jobs they lost during the recession. However, women have lost 444,000 public sector jobs, wiping out nearly 19 percent of their private sector job gains in the recovery.
- Men have added over 3.4 million net jobs since June 2009, 64 percent of the more than 5.3 million jobs they lost during the recession. Men have gained over 3.7 million net private sector jobs since the start of the recovery, 69 percent of the private sector jobs they lost during the recession. However, men have lost 290,000 public sector jobs since the start of the recovery, wiping out nearly 8 percent of their private sector job gains during this period.
- Public sector job losses are having an increasing impact on men. Since the start of the recovery, women have accounted for over 60 percent of all public sector job losses, but men account for all of the public job losses between June 2012 and June 2013, losing 67,000 jobs while women added 3,000 jobs.

Women and men both have gained significant numbers of jobs in some sectors since the start of the recovery, but much of the new growth has been in low-wage sectors.

- Women made their greatest job gains since the start of the recovery in four sectors: education and health; professional and business services (including temporary help); leisure and hospitality (including restaurants); and retail trade. These sectors accounted for over 2.6 million of the over 1.9 million net jobs gained by women during the recovery, offsetting substantial job losses in other sectors.
- These sectors represented four of the five sectors with the largest growth for men,⁴ accounting for over 2.7 million of the more than 3.4 million net jobs gained by men during the recovery.

- The growth for women and men in professional and business services was driven in large part by a growth in temporary help services. Between June 2009 and May 2013 (the latest data available for women's and men's temporary employment) women gained 420,000 jobs in temporary help services, which represented 53 percent of their gains in professional and business services and men gained 500,800 jobs in temporary help service, which represented 40 percent of their gains in professional and business services. These large gains are despite the fact that temporary employees comprised less than 15 percent of the professional and business sector in June 2013.⁵
- Since the start of the recovery, job growth in three traditionally low-wage sectors (retail trade, leisure and hospitality, and temporary help services), account for half of total net job growth, although they account for less than one-quarter of the jobs in the economy.⁶
- Other sectors in which both women and men gained jobs include:
 - Mining and logging, where women gained 19,000 and men gained 163,000.
 - Wholesale trade, where women gained 37,900 and men gained 146,200.
 - Transportation and warehousing, where women gained 20,500 and men gained 209,400.
 - Other services (including laundry and repair services), where women gained 40,000 and men gained 69,000.

In a few sectors, including manufacturing and financial activities, women have lost jobs while men have gained since the start of the recovery.

- In manufacturing, women lost 121,000 jobs while men gained 364,000 jobs.
- In financial activities, women lost 93,000 jobs while men gained 169,000 jobs.
- In utilities, the disparity was smaller: women lost 4,200 jobs while men gained 3,000 jobs.

Job change by sector for women and men during the recovery (June 2009 to June 2013)

Sectors	Job change for women	Job change for men
TOTAL NONFARM	1,902,000	3,422,000
TOTAL PRIVATE	2,346,000	3,712,000
Goods-producing	-159,000	388,000
Mining and logging	19,000	163,000
Construction	-57,000	-139,000
Manufacturing	-121,000	364,000
Durable goods	-58,000	388,000
Nondurable goods	-63,000	-24,000
Private service-providing	2,505,000	3,324,000
Trade, transportation, and utilities	291,000	728,000
Wholesale trade	37,900	146,200
Retail trade	266,500	339,700
Transportation and warehousing	20,500	209,400
Utilities	-4,200	3,000
Information	-102,000	-5,000
Financial activities	-93,000	169,000
Professional and business services	819,000	1,276,000
Education and health services	1,018,000	469,000
Leisure and hospitality	532,000	618,000
Other Services	40,000	69,000
TOTAL PUBLIC	-444,000	-290,000

In a few sectors, both women and men have lost jobs since the start of the recovery.

- The public sector accounted for the most job losses for both women (-444,000) and men (-290,000).
- In construction, both women and men have experienced substantial losses (-57,000 and -139,000, respectively).
- In information, women have suffered nearly all of the job loss (-102,000 jobs for women compared to -5,000 for men).

Conclusion

Four years into the recovery, the economy has improved for women and men—but is far from where it needs to be. Unemployment rates for adult women and men are more than one and a half times higher than at the start of the recession. Long-term unemployment is still at historic highs and support for workers still struggling to find work has been cut deeply by the automatic budget cuts known as sequestration.⁷ Overall, just over 71 percent of the jobs lost during the recession have been regained during the recovery—and even restoring 100 percent of the jobs lost during the recession would not be sufficient to close the jobs gap. The Hamilton Project of the Brookings Institution estimates that if we gained jobs at the rate of 195,000 per month (the job growth in June 2013), it would take until early 2021 to return to pre-recession employment levels while absorbing the number of people who enter the labor force each month.⁸

Moreover, much of the new job growth has been concentrated in lower-wage sectors, which may not offer the same wages, benefits, and opportunities as the jobs that have been lost.

This analysis of the employment picture for women and men highlights the need for lawmakers to speed up this recovery: to stop sequestration and austerity policies that are slowing the economy and increasing hardship, and to start investing in the creation of good jobs, now and for the future.

Source note: NWLC calculations from the U.S. Dep't of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Employment Statistics survey (<http://bls.gov/ces>) and Current Population Survey (<http://bls.gov/cps>) (last visited Jul. 8, 2013). Statistics for long term unemployment by age and gender are not seasonally adjusted. Other statistics are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise noted.

Unemployment rates for adults are for individuals 20 and older.

- 1 The unemployment rates for Hispanic adult women, single mothers, Asian adult women, and women with less than a high school education are not seasonally adjusted. Rates for single mothers (women who maintain families) are for women 16 and older, rates for women without a high school education are for women 25 and older.
- 2 Overall long-term unemployment figures are for individuals 16 and older and are seasonally adjusted.
- 3 Figures are not seasonally adjusted, are for unemployed workers 16 and older.
- 4 The fifth sector is manufacturing.
- 5 Though gender data are not available for the temporary employment sector for June 2013, overall there was little change between May 2013 and June 2013 with temporary help services adding only 9,500 jobs.
- 6 See Dean Baker, Center for Economic and Policy Research, Economy Added 195,000 Jobs in June, Employment-to-Population Ratio Edges Up (July 5, 2013), available at <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/data-bytes/jobs-bytes/economy-added-195000-jobs-in-june-employment-to-population-ratio-edges-up> and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Characteristics of Minimum Wage Workers: 2011 (Feb. 26, 2013), available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2012.htm>.
- 7 National Employment Law Project (NELP) The Sequester's Devastating Impact on Families of Unemployed Workers and the Struggling Unemployment Insurance System (updated May 2013) available at: http://nelp.3cdn.net/6320ece2f3fe1f26f3_9em6bhlqt.pdf.
- 8 The Hamilton Project, Closing the Jobs Gap, calculator available at: http://www.hamiltonproject.org/jobs_gap/.