

# News Release



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## **New IWPR Briefing Paper Finds Women's Unemployment, Economic Insecurity, and Poverty at Historic Highs in the Recession**

The Institute for Women's Policy Research released a comprehensive, 67-page Briefing Paper, entitled *Women and Men's Employment and Unemployment in the Great Recession*. Based on analysis of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau, the Briefing Paper finds many families are relying on women's earnings when men are unemployed and that unemployed men and women are experiencing an average of 29 weeks of unemployment before finding a new job.

The Briefing Paper, authored by Heidi Hartmann, Ph.D., Ashley English, and Jeffrey Hayes, Ph.D., researchers at IWPR, is available on the IWPR website here: [www.iwpr.org/pdf/C373womeninrecession.pdf](http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/C373womeninrecession.pdf).

From the Executive Summary:

Since December 2007, the U.S. economy has been in the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Because much of the slowdown has occurred in traditionally male fields such as manufacturing and construction, while a few traditionally female fields such as health and education have shown job growth or minimal job loss, many reports have focused on the job losses among men in the labor force. At the same time the substantial job losses that have also occurred among women in such sectors as retail, hospitality, and personal and business services are rarely discussed. The number of unemployed women is now 6.3 million (as of December 2009), an increase of 2.8 million unemployed women since the recession began, a number larger than men's increased unemployment in most previous recessions. Once they lose their jobs, women and men spend a similar number of weeks unemployed; in December 2009, unemployed women and men had been out of work for an astounding 29 weeks, on average. Moreover, a smaller share of unemployed women collect unemployment insurance benefits compared with unemployed men. Between December 2007 and November 2009, 36.8 percent of unemployed women received unemployment benefits, on average, compared with 40.3 percent of unemployed men.

*The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. IWPR's work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. IWPR is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization that also works in affiliation with the women's studies and public policy programs at The George Washington University.*