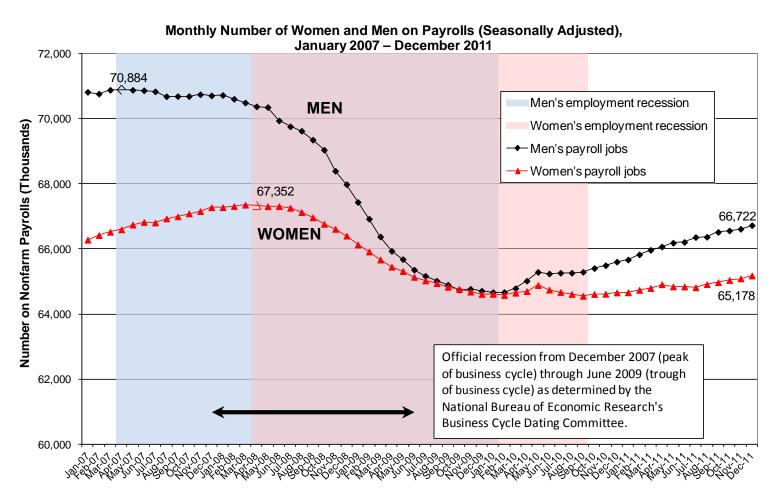


Quick Figures

IWPR # Q008 Updated January 2012

Equal Job Growth for Women and Men in Last Quarter of 2011 Women Continue to Leave the Labor Force



Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (January 6, 2012)

According to IWPR analysis of the January employment report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, job growth was moderate in December with 200,000 jobs added to nonfarm payrolls. This is up from 100,000 new jobs in November, but down slightly from 210,000 added in September. (September's gains included more than 40,000 Verizon workers returning after a strike. October and November's totals were revised by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in January). Women's employment now appears to be rising. In December, women gained 89,000 jobs, while men gained 111,000. The

revised numbers for October and November show 117,000 new jobs for women since September compared with 95,000 for men. The equality in job growth in the past three months for men and women (206,000 for each) is good news for women, since their job growth has substantially lagged behind men's for most of the recovery.

In the last year, from December 2010 to December 2011, of the 1.6 million jobs added to payrolls, only 521,000 or 32 percent were filled by women whereas 1,119,000 or 68 percent were filled by men. Despite progress in the last quarter, the gap between women's and men's employment in December remains at 1.5 million.

Women have regained about one out of four (23 percent) of the total jobs they lost in the recession while men have gained more than one out of three (34 percent). (IWPR calculates job loss in the recession from December 2007 to the trough for each gender. Men's employment trough was in January 2010 while women's was in September 2010.) Men are recovering more quickly than women, but the jobs recovery is slow for both men and women.

The unemployment rate remained steady from November to December for women aged 16 and older (8.3 percent), but fell for men (from 8.9 percent to 8.7 percent). Some of the apparent improvement is due to workers ending their job search and no longer being counted among the unemployed. Overall, the civilian labor force (those employed or unemployed and actively seeking work) shrank by 50,000 between November and December. However, this figure represents the net change of a loss of 82,000 female labor force participants and a gain of 32,000 male labor force participants. Fewer women left the labor force in December compared with November. For those unemployed, the average duration of unemployment has been 40.8 weeks (mean); half of those unemployed have been so for 21.0 weeks or longer (median).

Why are men doing somewhat better than women at this point in the recession? One reason is that women are a disproportionate share of state and local government workers; those levels of government are still shedding jobs though their job loss has slowed. In December, the private sector added 212,000 jobs, while government employment fell by 12,000 jobs. Job growth was strong in retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and healthcare and social assistance. While private sector employment grew by 1.9 million workers from December 2010 to December 2011, 280,000 government jobs were lost. This difference in job growth across sectors disproportionately affects women who represent 57 percent of workers in the public sector compared with 48 percent in the private sector.