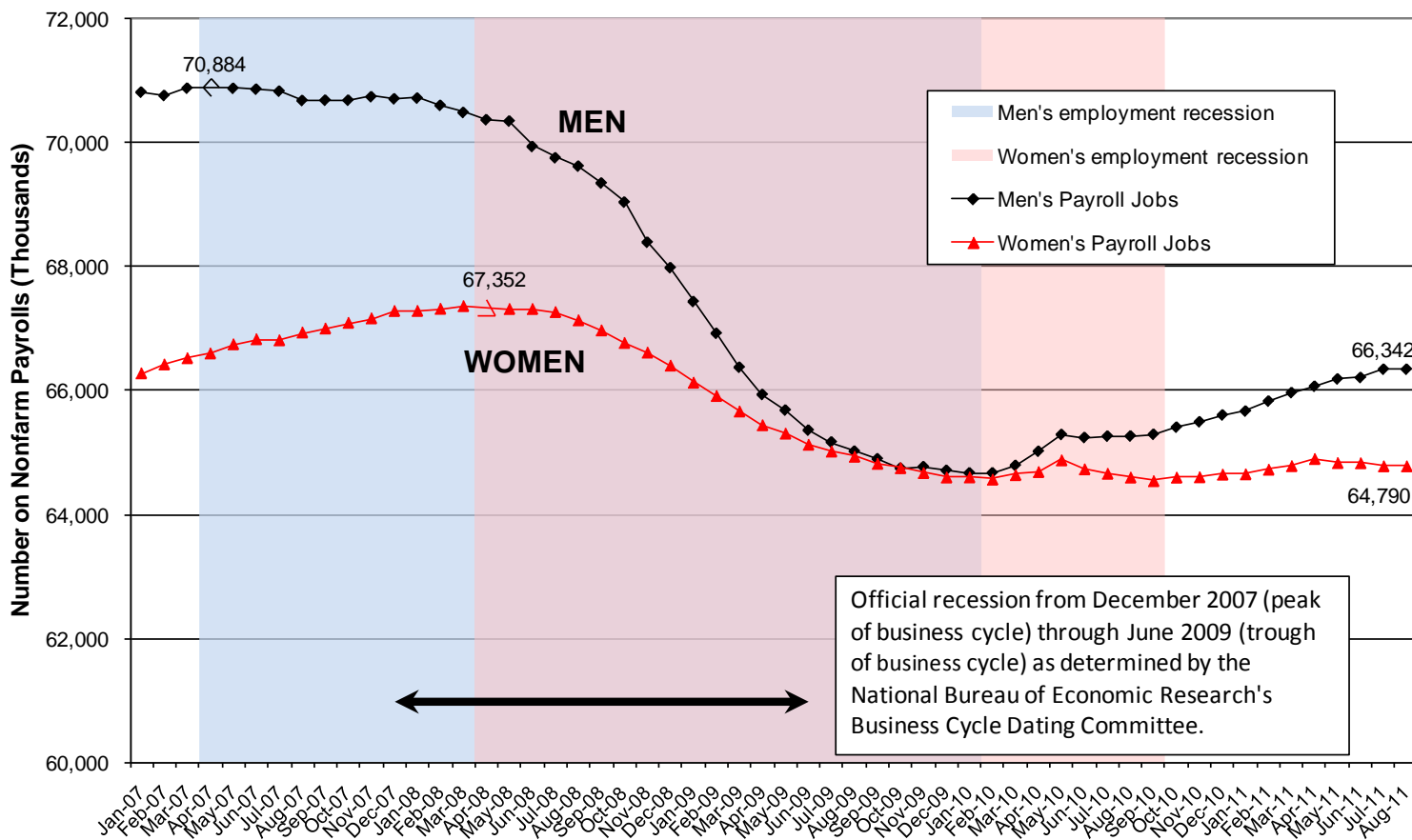


Job Gap Between Women and Men Persists in August

Monthly Number of Women and Men on Payrolls (Seasonally Adjusted), January 2007 – August 2011



Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (September 2, 2011)

The Great Recession has been characterized by massive job loss for both women and men. It is as if a giant tsunami wave washed across the American economy and wiped millions of jobs away. As the wave recedes, people are attempting to rebuild their lives. The Institute for Women's Policy Research's (IWPR's) updated graphic shows that the tsunami has been both larger and longer lasting for men than for women, but that the recovery for men has at least begun, while women's job growth has so far failed to take hold. In fact, the job gap between women and men has been growing, but stabilized in August. In August 2011, neither men nor women gained jobs.

As a result of the recession women's and men's payroll employment reached parity (in October 2009) as men lost many more jobs than did women. But in the recovery, men have gained many more jobs than

have women, and the employment gap between women and men reappeared and continues to grow because women's employment remains flat. Women are simply not getting their fair share of jobs in the recovery. In the September 2011 release, the BLS revised their estimates of the number of women and men on payrolls for the last three months and now show that women lost 65,000 jobs in May; 3,000 in June; and 49,000 in July.

For men, the tsunami wave is receding as they slowly regain some of the jobs they lost. For women however, the recovery has not yet begun in earnest; women have regained only 9.1 percent (237,000) of the total jobs they lost in the recession (2.6 million from November 2007 to the trough for women's employment in September 2010, which occurred more than one year after the recession officially ended). The picture looks somewhat better for men, especially if we count only from the beginning of the recession: men have gained 27.6 percent (1.7 million) of the jobs they lost since November 2007 (6.1 million). If we count all the job losses from the prior seven months, dating back to May of 2007, when men's job losses actually began, then men have regained 27.2 percent of the total 6.2 million jobs they lost. Men are recovering at about three times the speed of women, but the jobs recovery is slow for both men and women. Since October of 2009 when men's and women's total jobs numbers were virtually equal, women have failed to gain any jobs, whereas men have gained 1.6 million. The gap between women's and men's employment in August is currently 1.6 million.

In the Great Recession, men had 33 months of nearly consecutive job loss and women 'only' 23 months. The number of months of nearly consecutive job loss and the size of the job loss is, however, unprecedented for both men and women (with the exception of the Great Depression of the 1930s). As can be seen in the graphic, women's recession, as measured by their job loss, started later than men's and their recovery has also begun later and has been much more anemic than men's recovery. Indeed, women's job growth has been virtually flat for more than a year.

Why are men doing somewhat better than women at this point in the recession? Further research is needed to know all the reasons for this uneven growth. Since men and women tend to work in different sectors of the economy, it may be that men's areas are recovering faster than women's. For example, women are a disproportionate share of state and local government; those levels of government are shedding jobs now, and women are losing a disproportionate share of those jobs. For example, from August 2010 to August 2011 the number of government jobs at all levels fell by 450,000 and 304,000 (68 percent) of these had been held by women. Another possible factor could be increased discrimination against women or increased bias in favor of men. It is possible that, since this recession was widely trumpeted by the media as a 'mancession', employers are now favoring men in hiring. [An analysis by the Economic Policy Institute](#) of job loss during the recession showed that *in nearly every industry, higher shares of women than of men lost jobs*. The main reason the recession affected more men than women was that men were located in industries, like construction, that were harder hit by the economic downturn and women were located in less affected industries, like health care. But the higher female rates of job loss in many industries certainly suggest discrimination. The biases that may have affected job loss may now be affecting hiring.

[The Institute for Women's Policy Research \(IWPR\)](#) conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women and their families, promote public dialogue, and strengthen communities and societies. 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.