



CSW 69 Beijing +30 Shadow Report

Women and the Economy

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The Beijing Platform for Action recognizes women's persistent economic marginality as one of its key areas of concern. Particularly pertinent to the US is the **intersectional focus** of the Beijing Platform for Action, that expects governments and non-governmental enterprises to remove inequality and discrimination at all levels on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, national origin, age, and disability (para 46). **Migrant women** experience more economic vulnerability than male migrants and non-migrant workers in the host country (para 154), significant for the US as the largest global recipient of immigrants. **Indigenous women's** right to education and access to capital (para 167c), and the need to recognize their traditional knowledge about economic development (para 175f) all are especially relevant for the US.

Three issues require urgent policy attention to alleviate US women's economic inequality:

1) Gender discrimination in hiring leads to occupational segregation and the gender wage gap.

The Beijing Platform for Action reported that gender discrimination in hiring would lead to occupational gender segregation, excluding women from high-end, high-paying, decision-making, and managerial roles. They would end up disproportionately in informal jobs without wage and welfare protection. While occupational gender segregation has decreased in the US over the last 30 years, women in the US continue to be hired in low-income and service-based work. Even in relatively high-income occupations, such as jobs in tech companies, women find it harder to rise to managerial roles. Women of color and foreign-born women experience higher barriers in this regard.

- Only 86 women are promoted to manager positions for every 100 men in tech jobs in the US, and the number drops to 52 women when they are considered for technical manager roles.¹
- Women working full-time and year-round earn an average of 84 cents for every dollar a man earns in the US, and in over 90% of occupations, women earn less than men.²
- Women of color and women with disabilities experience wider gaps. Black women, for instance, earn 66 cents³ and Indigenous women earn 59 cents compared to non-Hispanic white men.⁴
- Immigrant women make up 16% of the US female labor force but earn less (\$59,900) than US-born women (\$64,300). Immigrant women from the Dominican Republic had the lowest median household income (\$40,000). Immigrant men had higher income than both groups (\$79,000).⁵

2) Limited access to capital, skills, and technology keep women underemployed.

Women's access to capital has shown some progress in the US in recent years. The Obama administration increased the availability of Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, which were three to five times more likely to be accessed by minority and women-owned businesses than commercial loans. Yet the number of women-owned firms and women's access to skills and technology remain limited.

- Between January 2009 and December 2013, the SBA issued 57,831 loans worth US \$17.2 billion to women business owners—\$3.8 billion in 2013 alone, a 31% increase since 2009.⁶
- Women-employer firms grew 6% between 2014 and 2016—twice the growth rate of men-owned firms. Much of the growth was driven by businesses owned by minority women that grew by 14%.⁷
- Despite that vigorous growth, leading to 1.1 million women-owned businesses, women business owners accounted for only 20% of all employer firms in 2019.

- In 2023, women received just 18% of degrees in computer science, and the number of women pursuing STEM fields in higher education is declining.⁸
- Women are under-represented in technology-based jobs—with just 27% of computing roles held by women, and a mere 3% held by Black women and 2% by Hispanic women.⁹

3) Inflexible work settings and lack of childcare support force women out of the labor market.

The US government’s report on Beijing+20 showed that it had adopted various effective measures to help working women—including increased access to childcare, paid leave, and overtime protections for home and personal care workers.¹⁰ These measures were meant to help women balance care and paid work responsibilities so that they could retain their jobs. But the inadequacy of these measures and the need for more robust family support came to light with the COVID-19 pandemic. Women’s rate of unemployment was much higher than men’s during the pandemic, and persistent inaccessibility to child care continues to affect women’s sustainable participation in employment and economic growth.

- One out of four women who were unemployed during the pandemic reported that their job loss was due to lack of childcare—twice the rate of men.¹¹
- Between February and August 2020, mothers of children aged between 0 to 12 years lost 2.2 million jobs compared to 870,000 jobs that fathers lost.¹²
- Child care remains unaffordable for most families. About 2.7 million parents across the US reported job changes due to poor child care support.¹³
- Only 14.5% of qualifying children from low-income families receive child care subsidies. In 2022, public preschool enrollment remained below pre-pandemic levels at 125.9 million.¹⁴

Recommendations for Better Gender Data

US government data for Beijing+20 shows some progress and positive impact of measures taken to reverse gender inequality in the US economy. However, the data mostly elaborates issues of child care and access to capital. Insights into the persistence of gender inequality in hiring and wages remain insufficient. Reports released by independent think tanks, such as the Center for American Progress and the Brookings Institute, present a closer look at all three issues discussed above. These reports highlight the effects of recent crises like COVID-19. While such reports present details on the status of Black, Latino, and Indigenous women, more focused assessment of the impact of race and ethnicity is necessary. Disaggregated gender data focusing on age, dis/ability,¹⁵ migration status, religion, and location in the US can provide useful policy directions for women’s greater inclusion in the economy.

¹ McKinsey and Company March 1, 2022. [Repairing the Broken Rung on the Career Ladder for Women in Technical Roles.](#)

² President Joe Biden March 11, 2024. [National Equal Pay Day Proclamation 2024.](#)

³ Equal Pay Today July 9, 2024. [Black Women's Equal Pay Day 2024.](#)

⁴ National Women’s Law Center March 5, 2024. [The Wage Gap by State for Native American Women.](#)

⁵ American Immigration Council. [A Snapshot of Immigrant Women in the United States.](#)

⁶ United States 2015. [Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, pg. 32.](#)

⁷ US Small Business Administration December 23, 2021. [A Year of Historic Achievements for Women-Owned Businesses.](#)

⁸ Susan Laborde 2024. [The Latest Women in Tech Statistics to Know in 2023.](#)

⁹ Sarah K. White March 8, 2024. [Women in Tech Statistics: The Hard Truths of an Uphill Battle.](#)

¹⁰ United States 2015. [Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.](#)

¹¹ Nicole Bateman and Martha Ross October 2020. [Why Has COVID-19 Been Especially Harmful for Working Women?](#)

¹² Bateman and Ross 2020.

¹³ Allie Schneider and Hailey Gibbs December 14, 2023. [Data Dashboard: An Overview of Child Care and Early Learning in the United States.](#)

¹⁴ Schneider and Gibbs 2023.

¹⁵ Shorthand for ability/disability status.