

COVID-19 and Wyoming Women & Families

2020 - 2021



Nationally, women lost a net of 5.4 million jobs during the recession¹—nearly 1 million more job losses than men.² In December 2020, Bureau of Labor Statistics data showed that all of the jobs lost that month were women’s jobs.³ Women were especially likely to lose jobs in leisure and hospitality, closely tied to Wyoming’s second largest economic sector, tourism.⁴ Men were more likely to lose jobs in the sectors that employed a smaller proportion of women, such as mining, manufacturing, and construction.⁵ Comparing unemployment insurance (UI) claims by women in 2019 to claims in 2020 shows that UI claims by Wyoming women were up 11 percentage points in 2020 (from 31% in 2019 to 42% in 2020).⁶ In Wyoming, women make up 40% of the workforce, slightly lower than the national rate of 43%.⁷

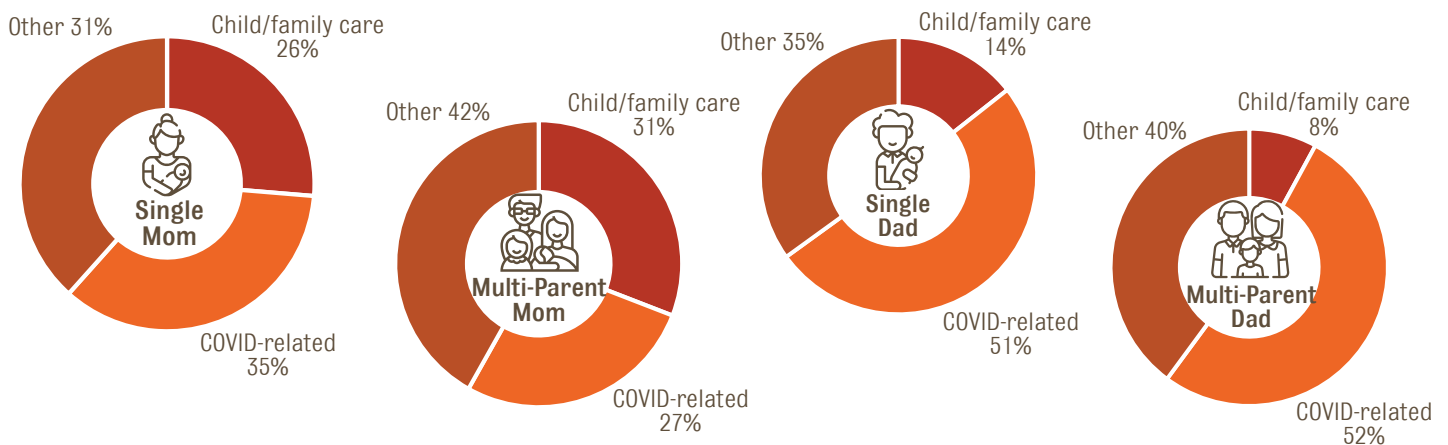
Women Filed

42%

of Initial Unemployment Claims in 2020, Compared to 31% in 2019.

Source: Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

The Reasons for Not Working During the Pandemic Varied by Family Structure



Note: Weekly results are combined. Other options included “did not want to work,” “sick or disabled not COVID,” and “other.” COVID-related options included “did not have work due to pandemic related reduction in business including furlough,” “am/was laid off due to the pandemic,” “employment closed temporarily due to the pandemic,” “employment went out of business due to the pandemic,” and “am/was sick with coronavirus symptoms.” Respondents reporting “retired” were not included. Percents are only of those who reported not working at the time of the survey.

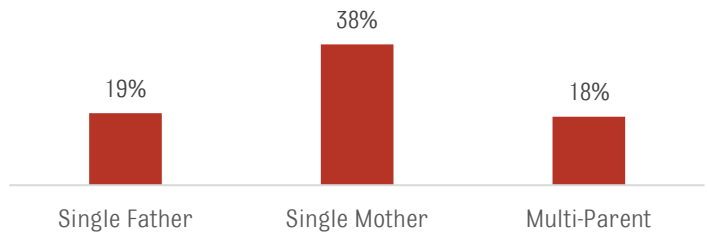
Source: Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey Data

Research from the Institute for Women's Policy Research demonstrated, "Women who experienced loss of work and did not receive [UI] benefits are substantially more likely to report that their children went hungry, that they have fallen behind on their mortgage, or that they fear eviction in the near future."⁸ While survey data isn't available in Wyoming specifically for women who did not receive UI benefits, COVID Pulse data shows a correlation between status as a single mom and housing and food insecurity. Not all out-of-work workers qualify for UI benefits, "including undocumented workers and people entering the workforce for the first time, such as new high school and college graduates."⁹

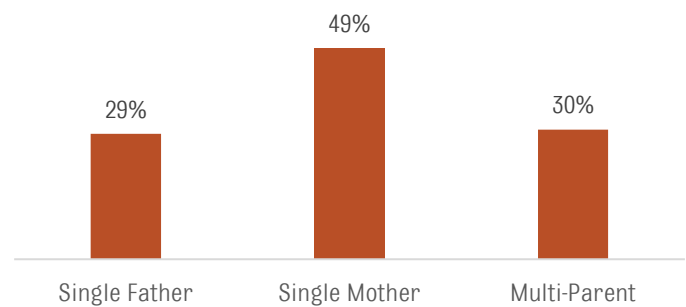
According to a new report from Catalyst, "Women with childcare responsibilities who have remote-work access are 32% less likely to report intending to leave their job."¹⁰ Remote work is not possible where job losses for women in leisure and hospitality have been high, but in sectors where remote work is possible, such flexible work policies—and investment in broadband infrastructure—can help keep women at work.

Single Mother Families Reported Struggling with Food and Rent at Higher Rates During COVID-19 Pandemic

No or Slight Confidence in Ability to Pay Mortgage or Rent Next Month



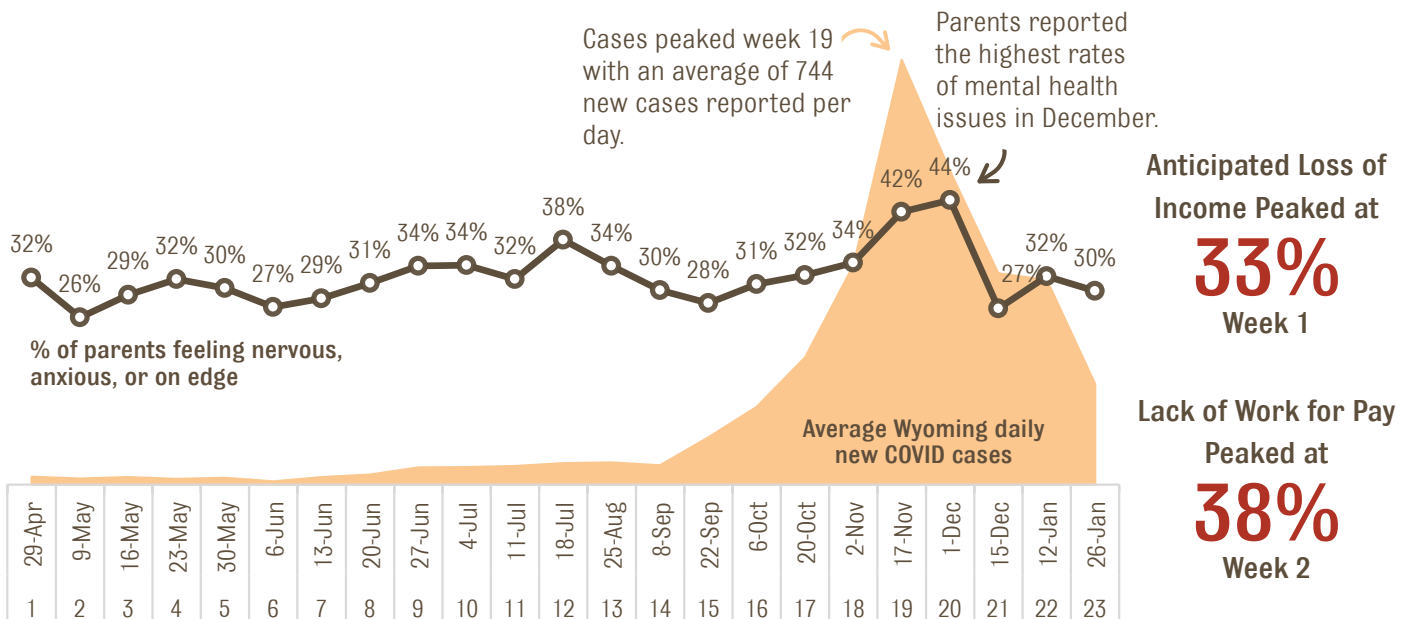
Somewhat or Not Confident that Household Can Afford Food for Next Four Weeks



Note: Weekly results are combined.

Source: Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey Data

Employment Concerns Peaked Early in the Pandemic, While Mental Health Concerns Peaked Later



Note: Scales of COVID cases and % of parents reporting having mental health concerns are not the same.

Source: Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey Data

What's Next?

COVID-era unemployment insurance policies were discontinued in Wyoming on June 19, 2021, including supplemental unemployment benefits, extension of benefits from 26 to 53 weeks and benefits for self-employed workers, among others.¹¹ New programs designed to fill job vacancies and get Wyomingites back to work include a new UI program allowing employers to reduce hours and workers to partially recoup that lost wage through UI, rental assistance, training for teens, and investment in public works employment.¹² The Department of Workforce Services is also offering the following programs at no cost:¹³

- Training assistance for occupational certificates or licenses
- On-the-job training from employers
- Apprenticeships for paid hands-on experience in the field
- Tuition assistance to help complete a GED certificate or college degree
- Assistance with job searches, resume writing, mock interviews and more

About the Household Pulse Data

The Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC) analyzed data from the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey to understand the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Weekly, the Census Bureau selected addresses designed to be representative of the entire population. Selected participants were notified via email or text message with a link to the survey. WYSAC used data collected between April 23, 2020 and February, 2021 from Wyoming households that had at least one child under the age of 18. WYSAC used summaries of question responses separated by week, gender, and by family structure to gain insights on how experiences changed throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Endnotes

- 1 Ewing-Nelson, C. (2021). All of the Jobs Lost in December Were Women's Jobs. National Women's Law Center. <https://bit.ly/3gXxyMJ>
- 2 Boesch, D., & Phadke, S. (2021). When Women Lose All the Jobs: Essential Actions for a Gender-Equitable Recovery. Center for American Progress. <https://ampr.gs/2Uw1ecl>
- 3 Ewing-Nelson, C. (2021). All of the Jobs Lost in December Were Women's Jobs. National Women's Law Center. <https://bit.ly/3gXxyMJ>
- 4 Wyoming Office of Tourism. (2021). Tourism Matters. <https://bit.ly/2TYXrnG>
- 5 Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2020). Quick Figure: Women's Share of Unemployment Insurance Claimants Varies Strongly Across States. IWPR #Q092. <https://bit.ly/3zSuGJx>
- 6 Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. (2021). Initial and Continued Claims for Wyoming by Gender and Age. <http://doe.state.wy.us/>
- 7 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. Work Status in the Past 12 Months (2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S2303).
- 8 Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2020). Quick Figure: Women's Share of Unemployment Insurance Claimants Varies Strongly Across States. IWPR #Q092. <https://bit.ly/3zSuGJx>
- 9 Kovalski, A., & Sheiner, L. (2020). How Does Unemployment Insurance work? And How is it Changing During the Coronavirus Pandemic? Brookings. <https://brook.gs/2TYd5iS>
- 10 Van Bommel, T. (2021). Remote-Work Options can Boost Productivity and Curb Burnout. Catalyst. <https://bit.ly/3gX6xZY>
- 11 Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. (2021). Governor Gordon Withdraws Wyoming from COVID-era Unemployment Programs. <https://bit.ly/3qmub6m>
- 12 Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. (2021). Wyoming Workforce Services to Implement Short-Time Compensation and Other New Programs. <https://bit.ly/3d4grYE>
- 13 Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. (2021). Workforce services launches reemployment campaign to help Wyomingites find high-wage jobs, assistance with upskilling. <https://bit.ly/2T83LsH>

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