



# Chartbook: The Economic Impact on Women of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Brett Fischer, Jesse Rothstein, Till von Wachter and Evan White  
November 2022

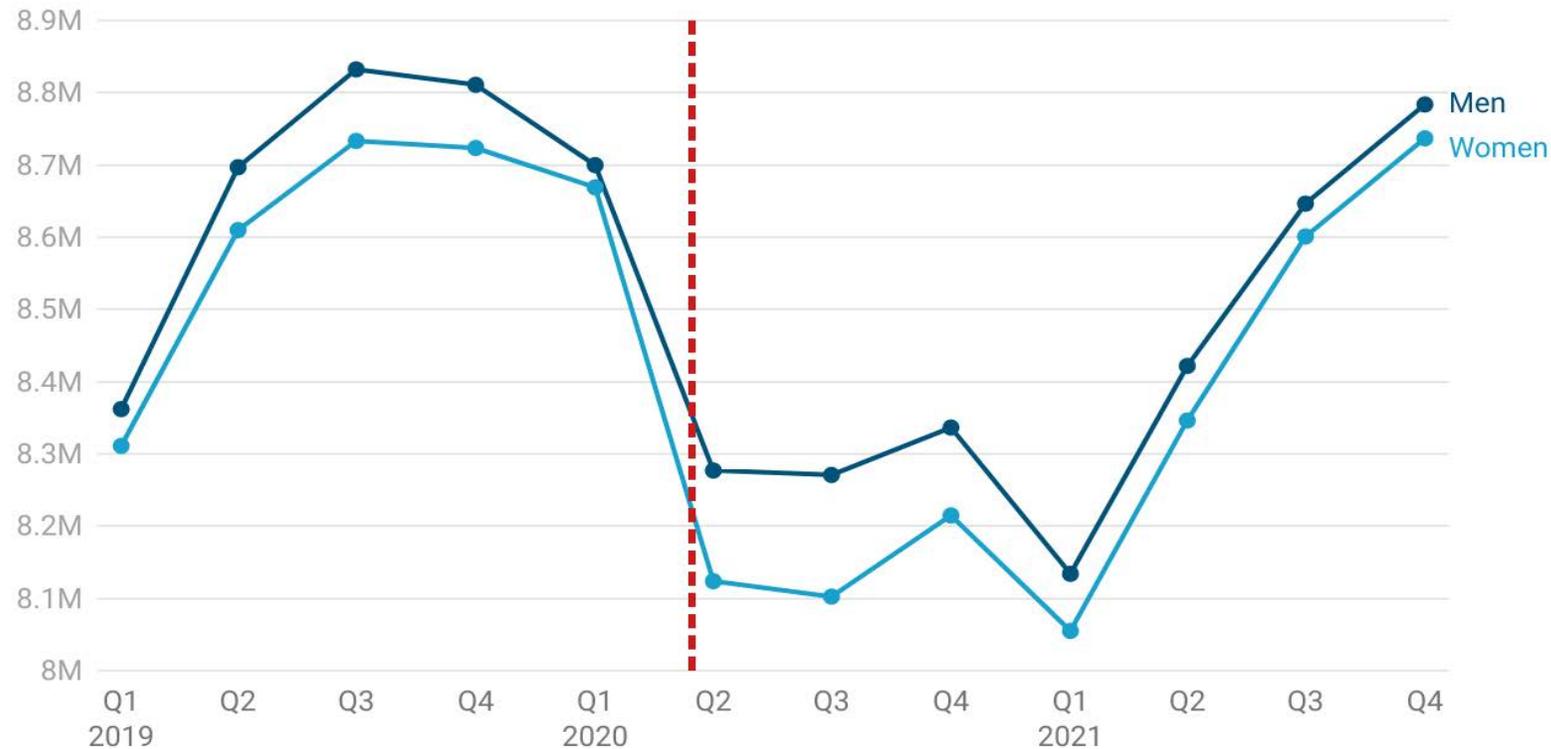
Research conducted for The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls' California Blueprint for Women's Pandemic Economic Recovery.



# SECTION 1. Employment

FIGURE 1. Employment declined steeply, followed by substantial growth

### Total employment by gender

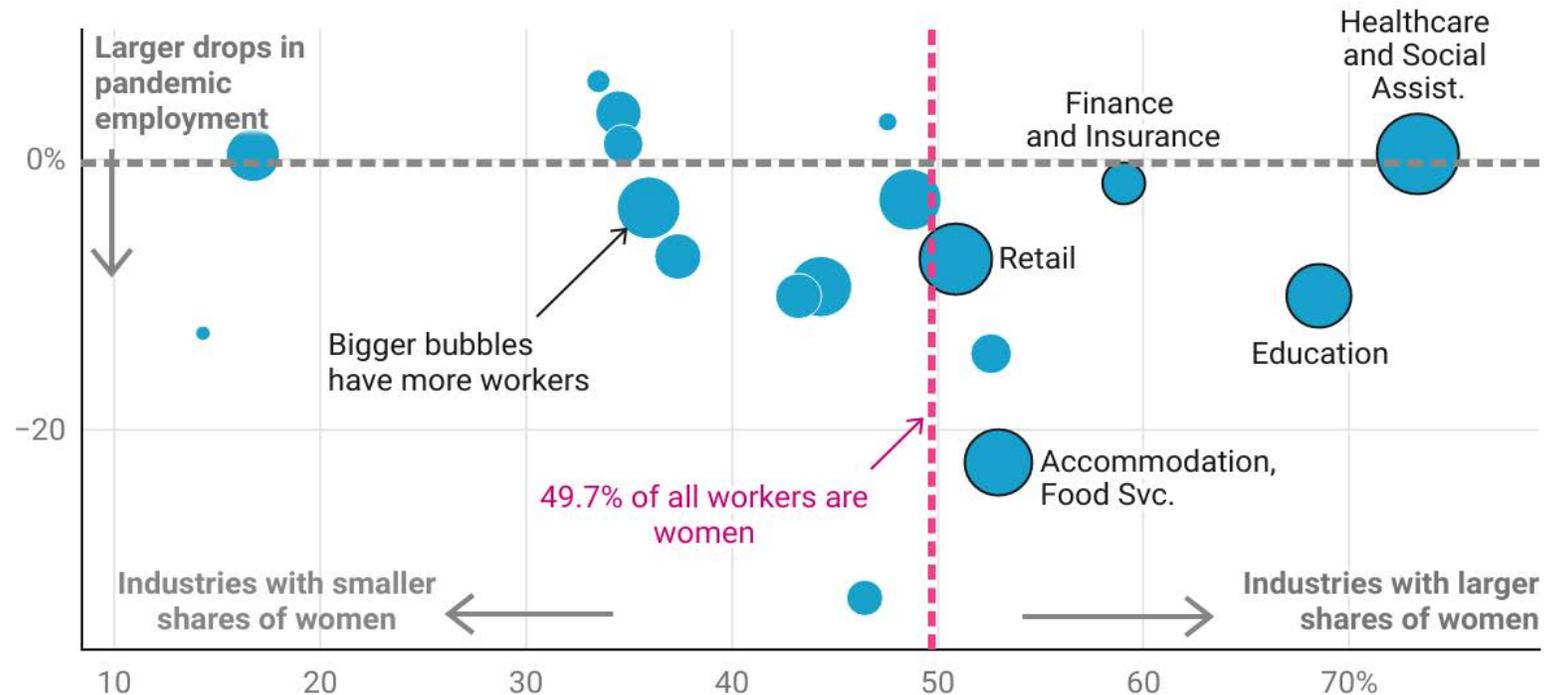


Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Sample includes workers who were (1) employed in the given quarter and (2) worked at least two quarters prior to 2020Q1 or at least one quarter after 2019Q4.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 2. Women-dominated sectors were hit hard by the pandemic

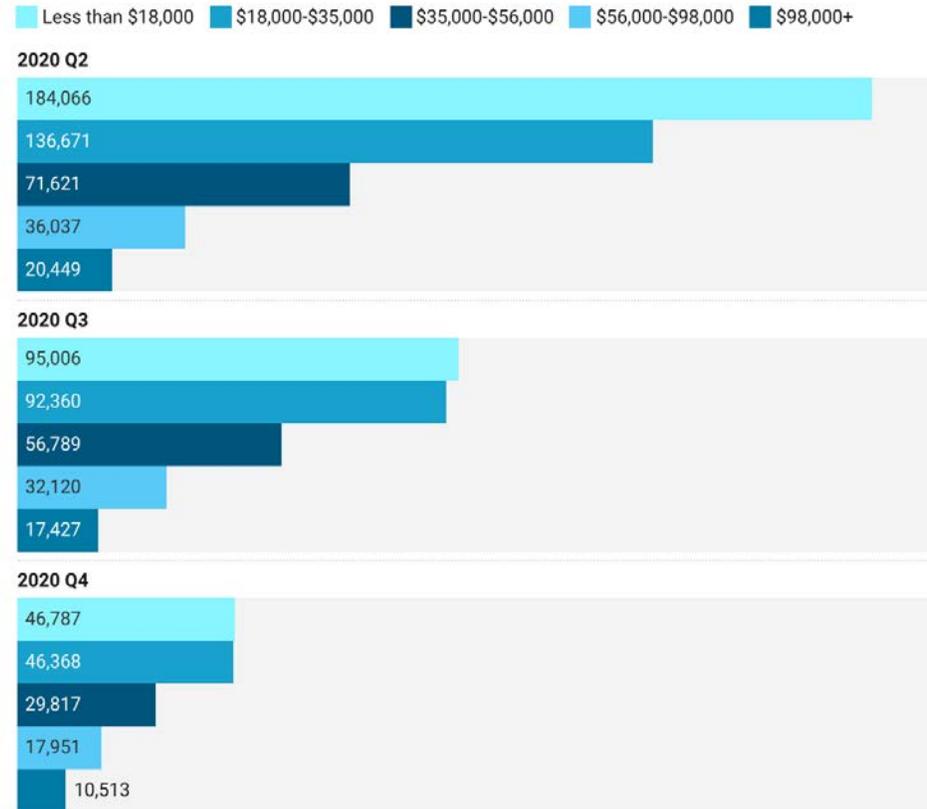
**Which sectors were most impacted by the pandemic?**



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: The figure plots a sector's percentage change in total employment between 2019Q4 and 2020Q3 by the share of women employees in that sector in 2019Q4. Larger circles indicate sectors with more workers in 2019Q4.

FIGURE 3. Women with the lowest earnings were most likely to be laid off

**Number of women newly unemployed, by annual earnings in 2019Q4**

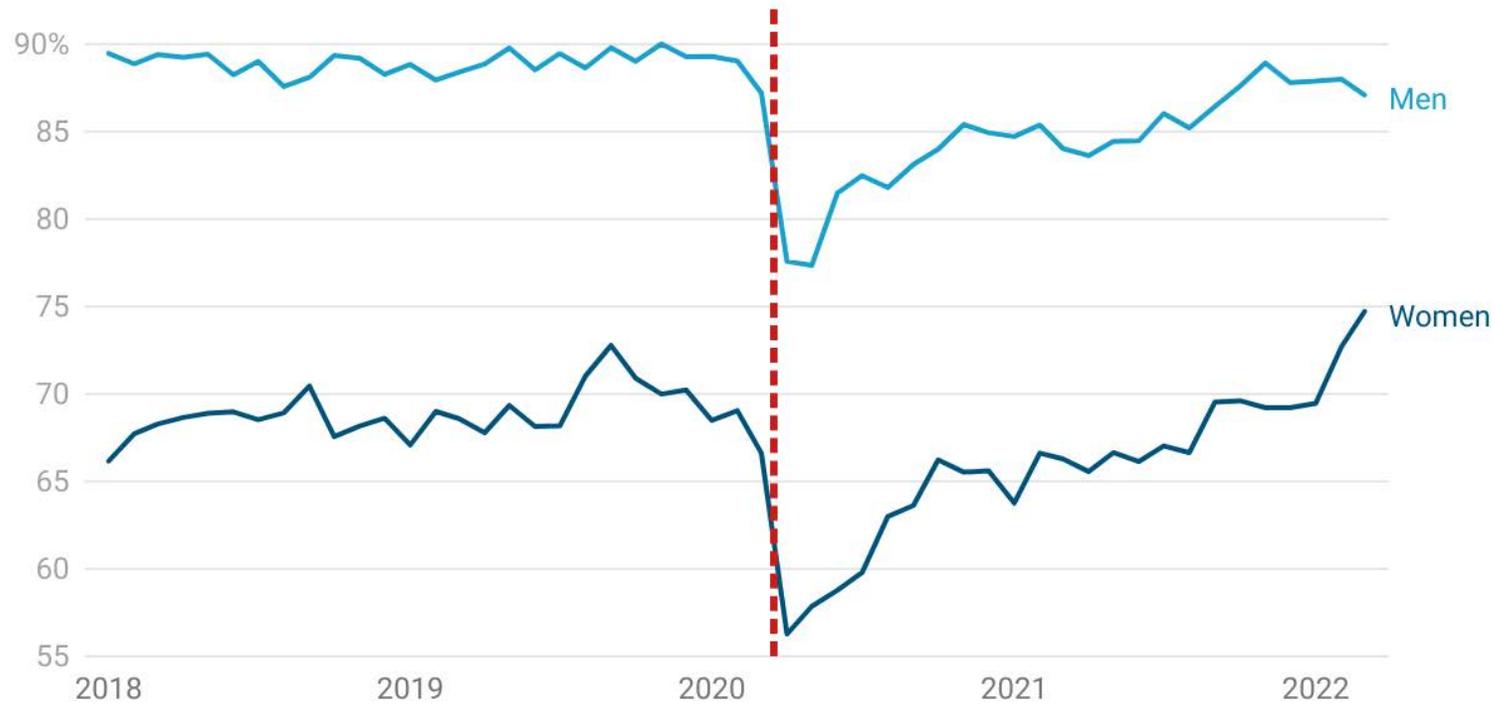


Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Sample includes women workers who were (1) employed in 2019Q4, and (2) employed at least one quarter prior to 2019Q4 or at least one quarter after 2019Q4. "Newly unemployed" refers to any employee who was employed in the previous quarter, but not in the given quarter. Earnings ranges for each quintile are extrapolations from quarterly earnings in 2019Q4, rounded to the nearest \$1,000.

FIGURE 4. Women remain underrepresented in the labor market



### Employment-population ratio, by gender



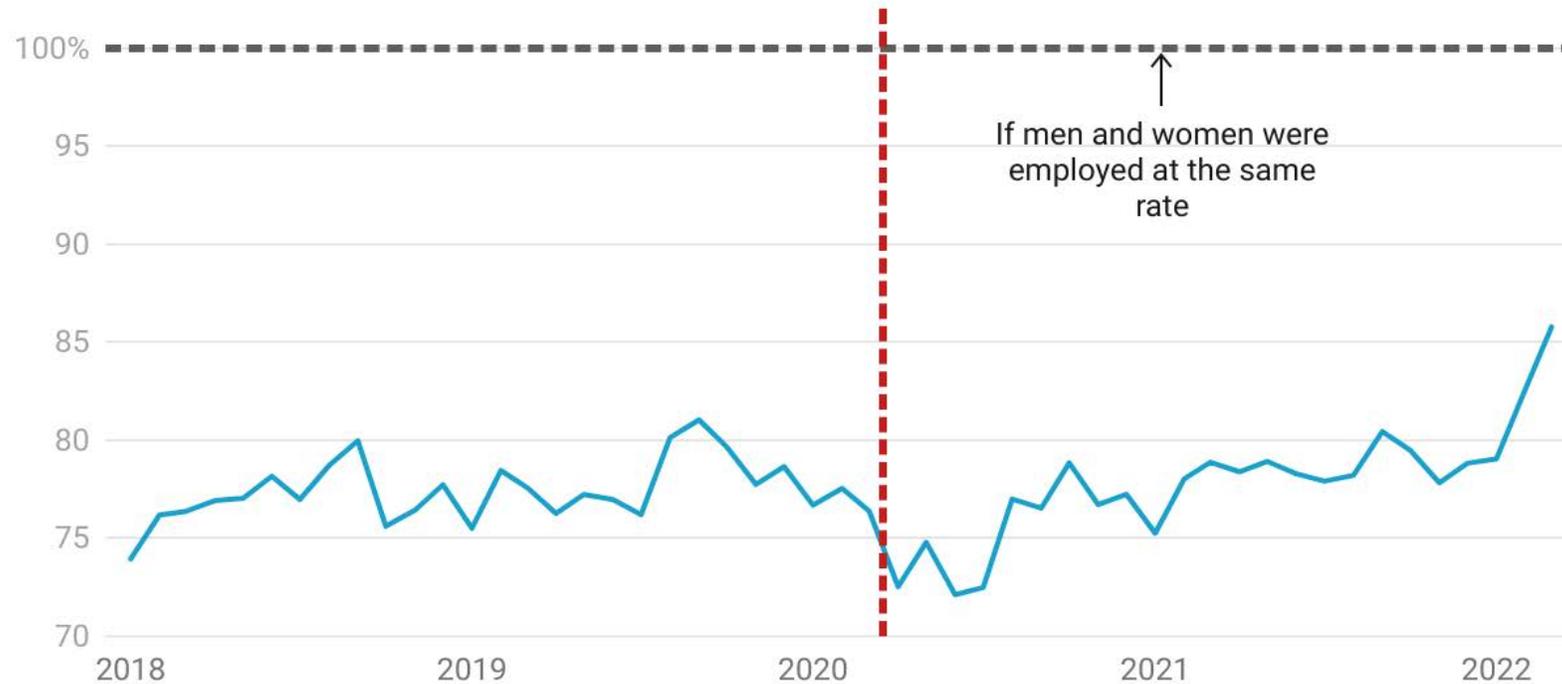
Source: California Policy Lab Analysis of Current Population Survey data. Note: Estimated employment-population ratios describe the share of women (men) household heads and spouses, age 25-54, who are employed in a given month.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 5. Women remain underrepresented in the labor market



### Women's employment-population ratio relative to men's

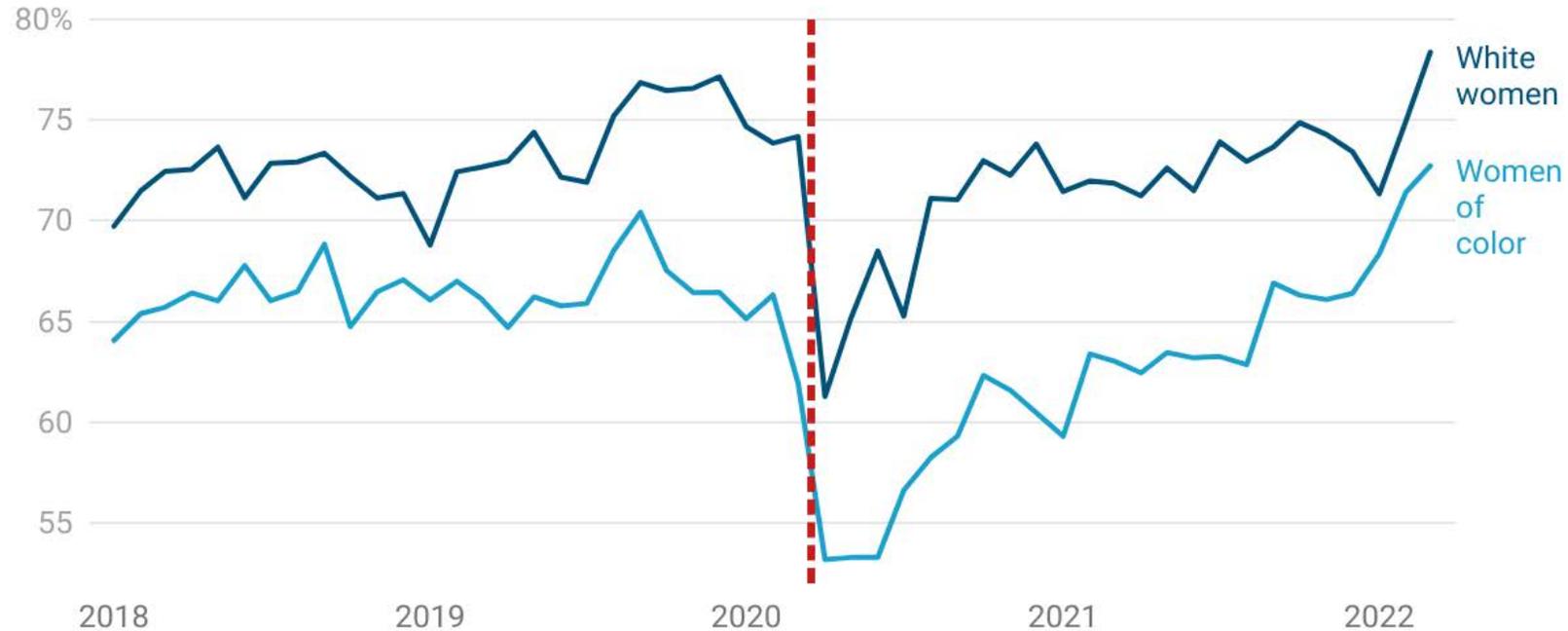


Source: California Policy Lab Analysis of Current Population Survey data. Notes: Sample includes women and men age 25-54. Each point takes the employment-population ratio among women and divides by the employment population ratio among men in the given month. Values less than 100% indicate that women are employed at a lower rate (as a share of the number of working-age women) than men.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 6. Racial disparities in women's employment persist

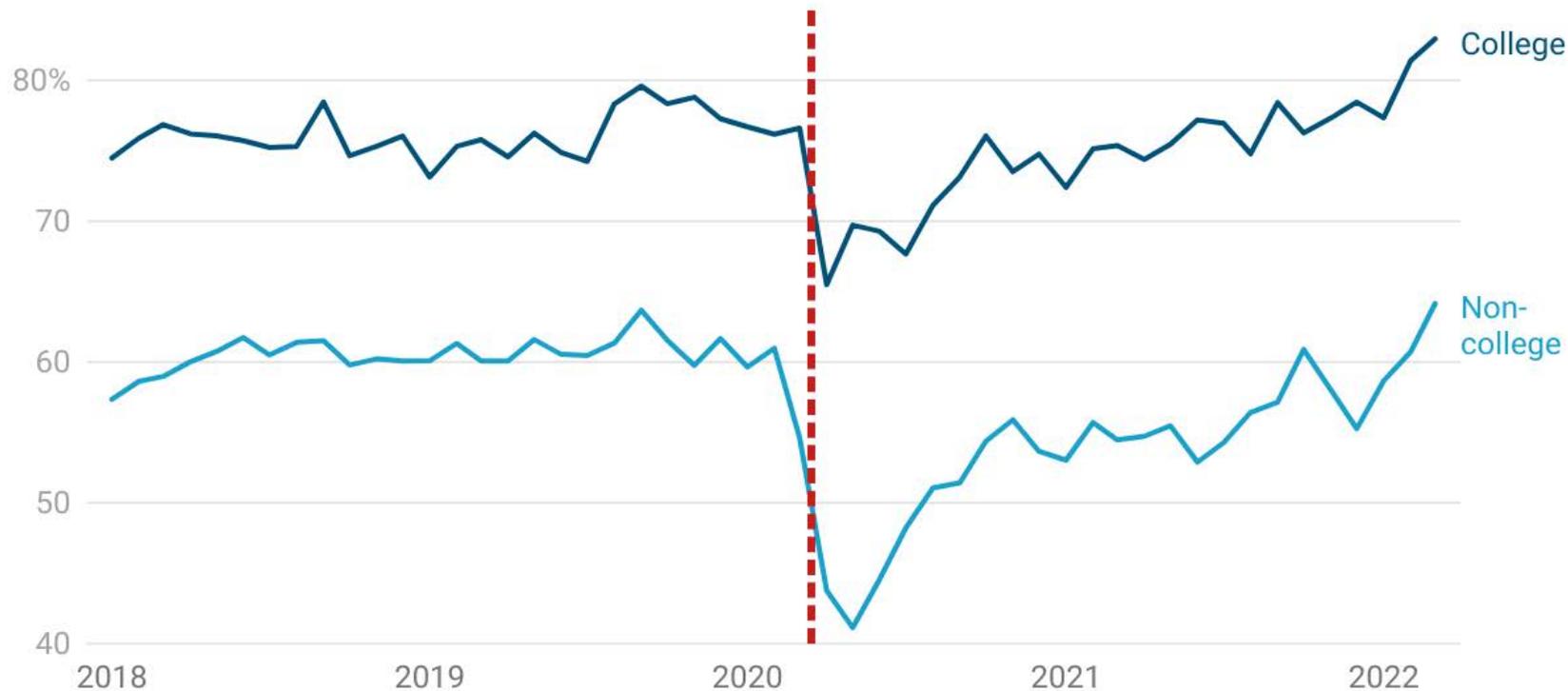
### Women's employment-population ratio among white women and women of color



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Current Population Survey data. Notes: Sample includes prime working-age women, 25-54 years old, who are identified as the household head or spouse in the CPS. Each point represents the estimated share of women who are employed in the given month, separately for those women who are identified as non-Hispanic White and those who are identified as women of color.

FIGURE 7. Educational disparities in women's employment persist

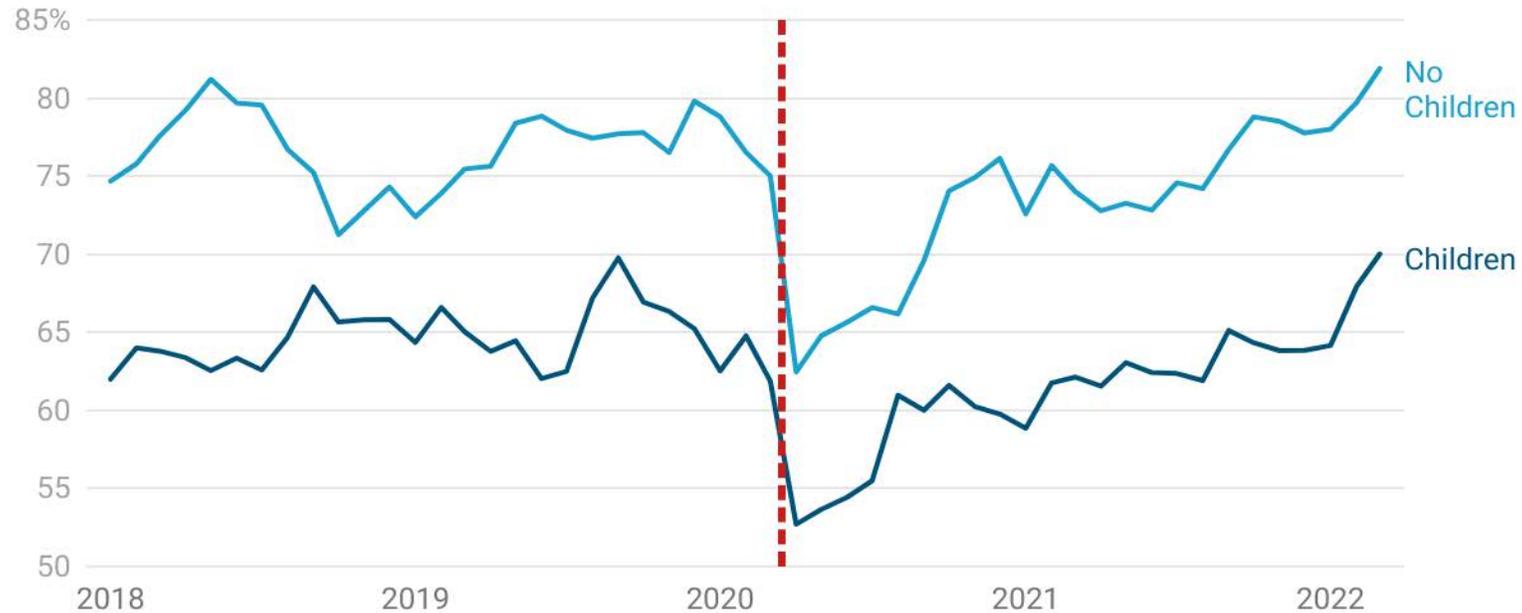
### Women's employment-population ratio, by college degree



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Current Population Survey data. Notes: Sample includes prime working-age women, 25-54 years old, who are identified as the household head or spouse in the CPS. Each point represents the share of women who are employed in the given month, separately for women who do and do not have an associate's or higher degree.

FIGURE 8. Childcare remains a barrier to women entering the workforce

### Women's employment-population ratio, by presence of children in household



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Current Population Survey data. Notes: Sample includes prime working-age women, 25-54 years old, who are identified as the household head or spouse in the CPS. Each point represents the share of women who are employed in the given month, separately for women who do and do not have a child present in their households.

FIGURE 9. Childcare remains a barrier to women entering the workforce



### Daily minutes spent providing care, by gender



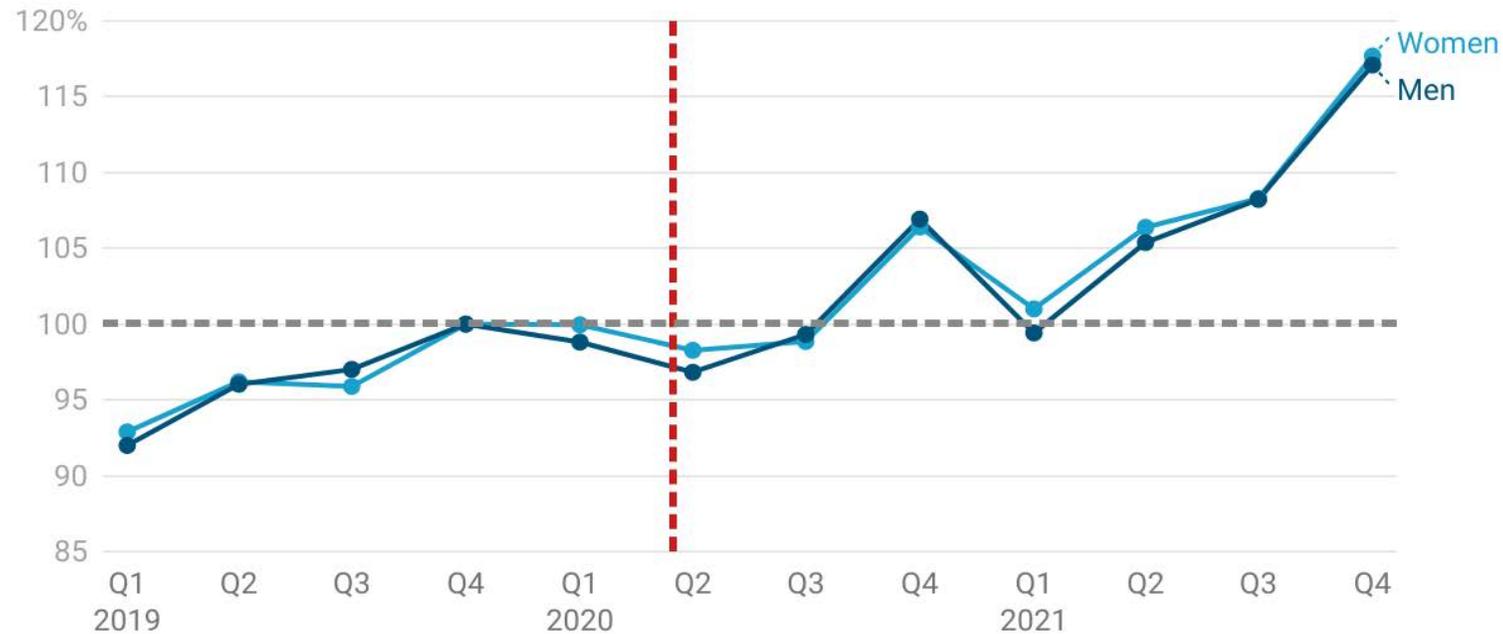
Source: California Policy Lab analysis of American Time Use Survey data. Notes: Data reflect the national sample of ATUS respondents in the given year. Each bar shows the average number of minutes per day that men and women reported spending on providing care for children or adults, either in their household or another household. Note that the survey was not administered in late March 2020 or April 2020.



## SECTION 2. Earnings

FIGURE 10. Robust earnings gains among women that stayed employed

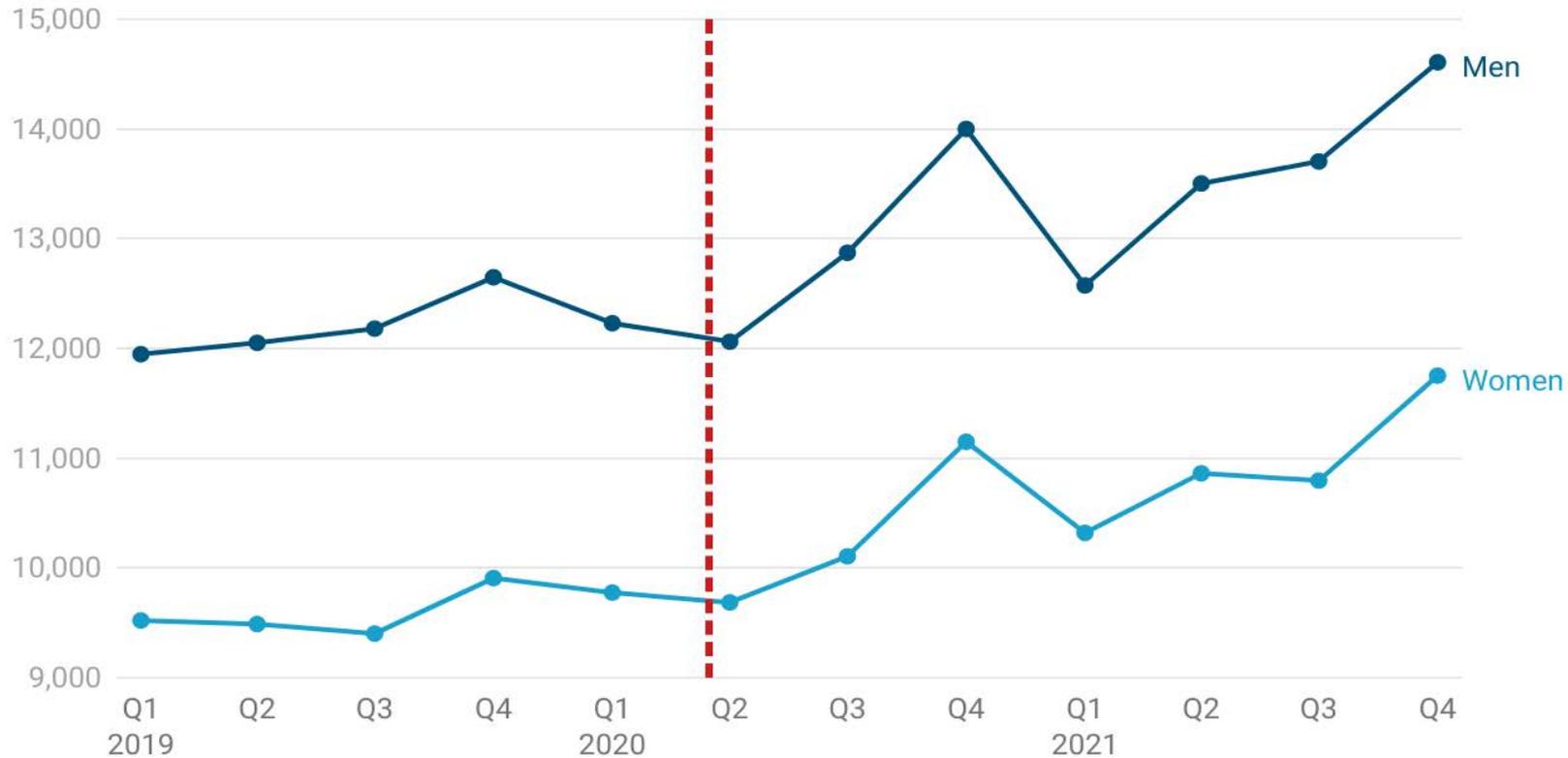
**Median change in earnings relative to 2019Q4, by gender**



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Sample includes workers who are (1) employed in the given quarter, (2) employed in 2019Q4, (3) worked at least one quarter prior to 2019Q4, or one quarter after 2019Q4, and (4) did not start or end an employment spell in 2019Q4. Each point calculates the median of the gap between a worker's earnings in the given quarter and their earnings in 2019Q4, across all workers within that group. Relative earnings are not adjusted for inflation.

FIGURE 11. The gender gap in earnings persists

### Median quarterly earnings by gender

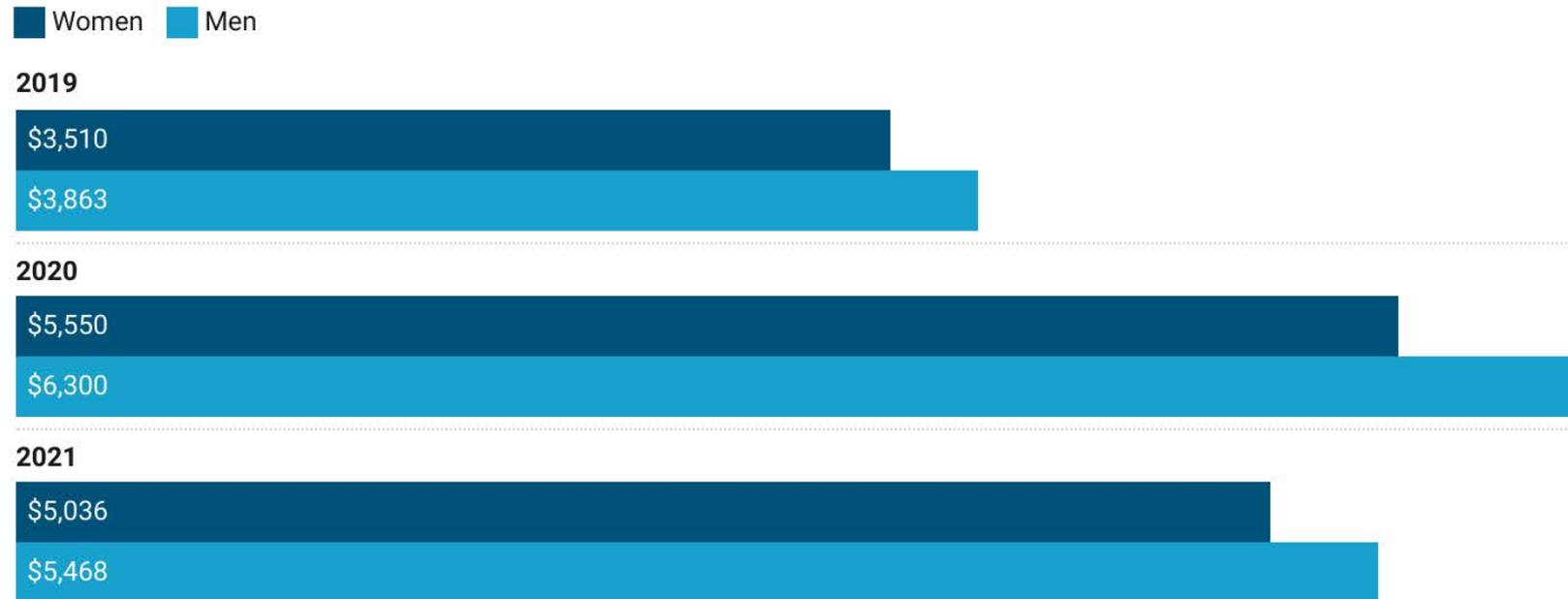


Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Sample includes workers who are (1) employed in the given quarter and (2) worked at least two quarters prior to 2019Q4. Each point captures the median of earnings across all workers within that group. Median earnings are not adjusted for inflation.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 12. Men received more unemployment payouts than women

### Median yearly UI payouts



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Each bar represents the median unemployment insurance claim paid to women (men) each year.

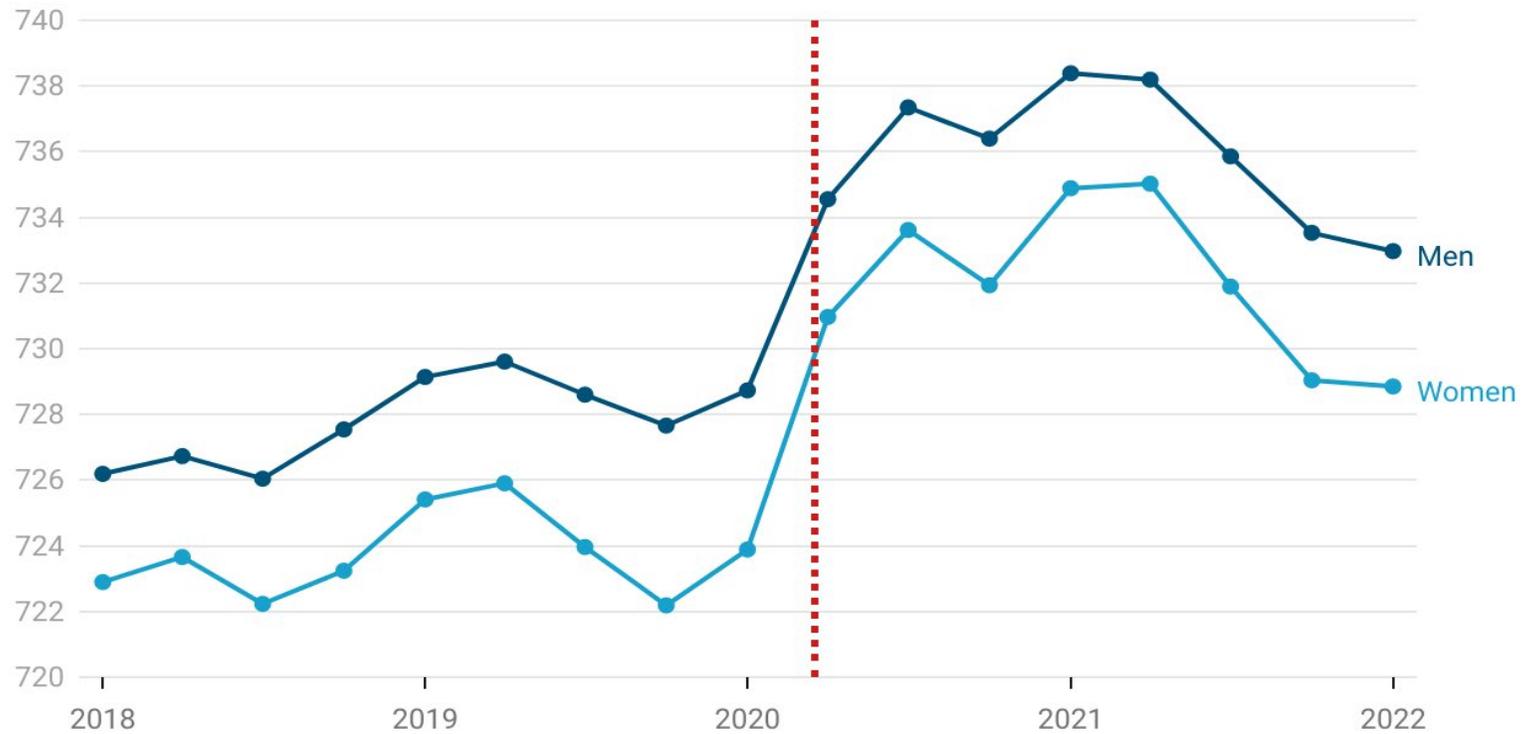
Created with Datawrapper



## SECTION 3. Consumer Finance

FIGURE 13. Creditworthiness improved during pandemic, followed by partial deterioration

**Credit scores, by gender**

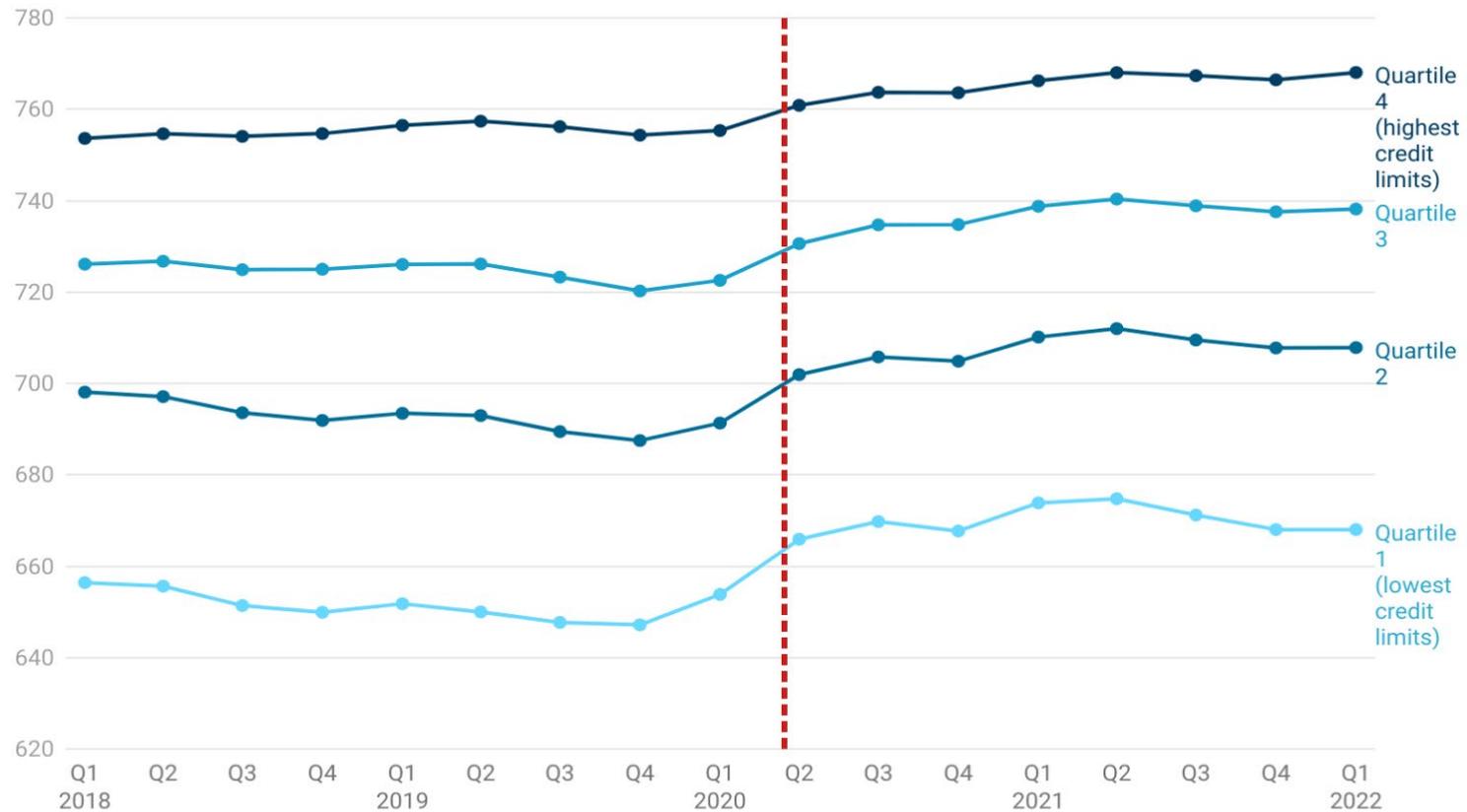


Source: California Policy Lab analysis of University of California Consumer Credit Panel (UC-CCP) data. Notes: Sample includes credit card holders living in California in the given quarter, drawn from a random 1% sample of statewide credit reports.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 14. Credit scores rose most among women with the lowest credit limits (often low-income)

**Credit scores among women, by initial credit-limit quartile**

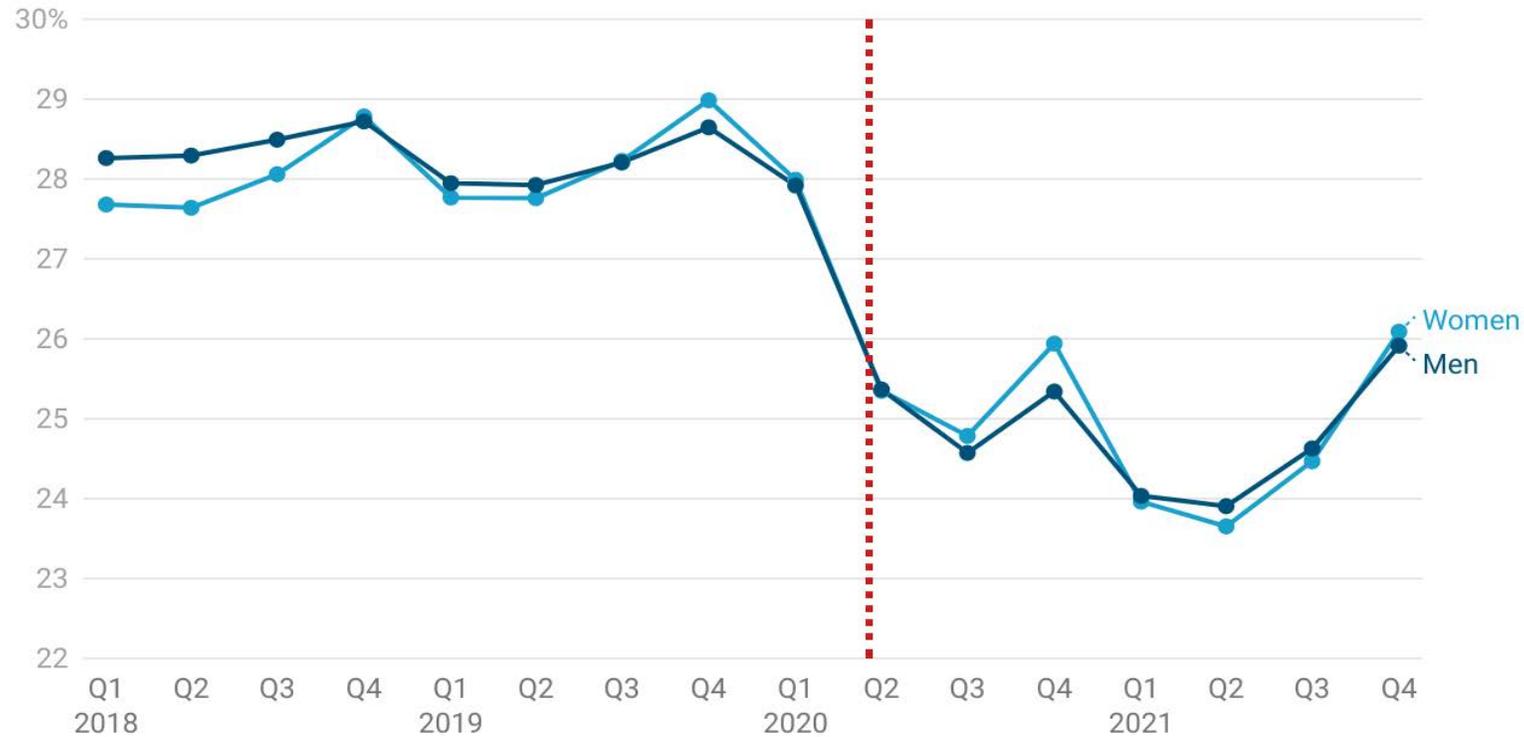


Source: California Policy Lab analysis of University of California Consumer Credit Panel (UC-CCP) data. Notes: Sample includes women living in California in the given quarter and in 2020Q1 who hold credit cards, drawn from a random 1% sample of statewide credit reports. Individuals are grouped into quartiles based on their 2020Q1 credit limit.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 15. Credit-card spending declined during pandemic, followed by a partial rebound

### Credit card utilization, by gender



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of University of California Consumer Credit Panel (UC-CCP) data. Notes: Sample includes credit card holders living in California in the given quarter, drawn from a random 1% sample of statewide credit reports. Utilization measures the total outstanding balance an individual has as a share of their total credit card limit.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 16. Women owe more student debt than men, and benefit more from the payment pause



## Who is affected by the student loan payment pause?



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of University of California Consumer Credit Panel data. Notes: Each bar represents the share of those borrowers affected by the student loan payment pause who are women (men), among those whose gender is identified. We cannot identify the gender of 22% of affected borrowers. In the overall Consumer Credit Panel dataset, 35% of individuals are women, 36% are men, and 28% do not have a gender listed.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 17. Women are more likely than men to struggle to repay their student loans



## Shares of borrowers likely to repay and at risk of not repaying student loans, by gender



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of University of California Consumer Credit Panel data. Notes: Each bar represents the share of women (men) who are predicted to repay or struggle to repay their student loans. We cannot predict the likelihood of repayment for 24% of women and 23% of men.

Created with Datawrapper

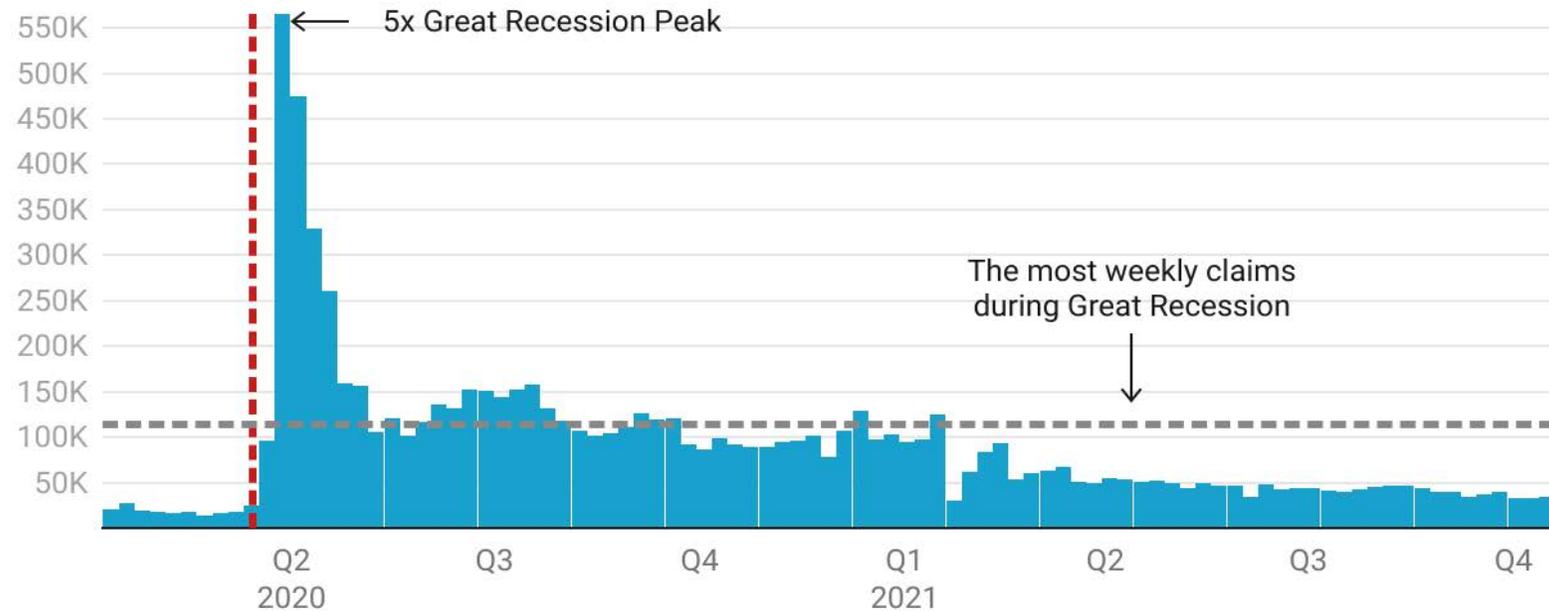


## SECTION 4. The Social Safety Net

FIGURE 18. Historic numbers of women claimed unemployment benefits



### Total weekly unemployment insurance claims filed by women

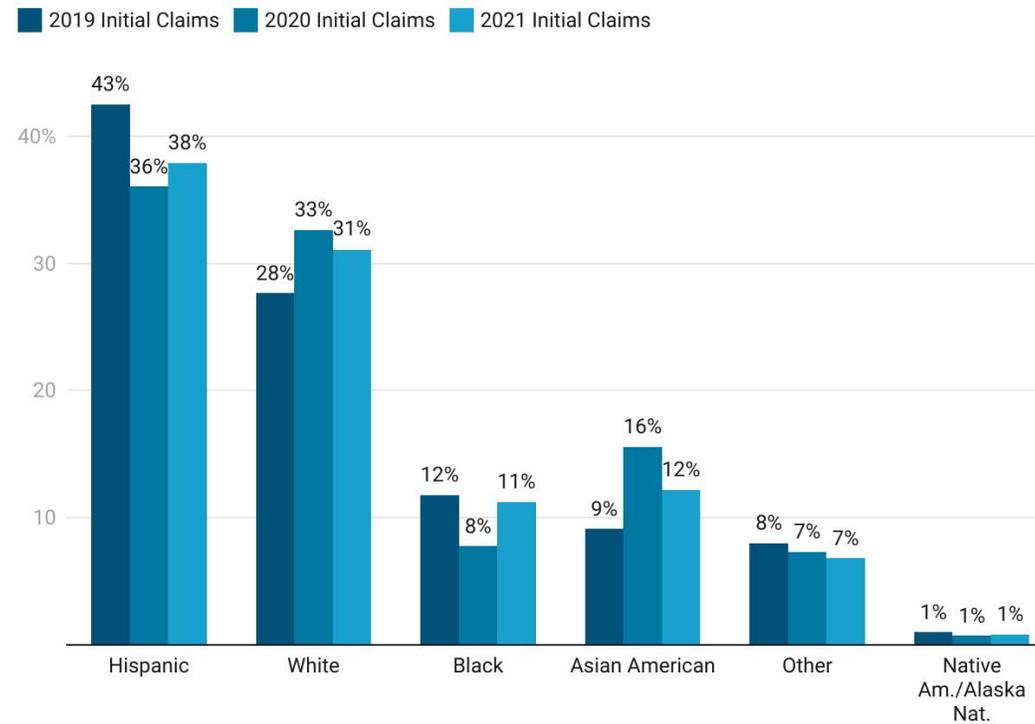


Source: California Policy Lab Analysis of Employment Development Department Data. Notes: Sample includes all women who filed regular unemployment insurance claims in the given week, both initial and additional claims. The data do not include Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 19. The share of unemployed women identifying as Asian-American surged

**Women's initial regular unemployment insurance claims by race/ethnicity, as a share of yearly total**



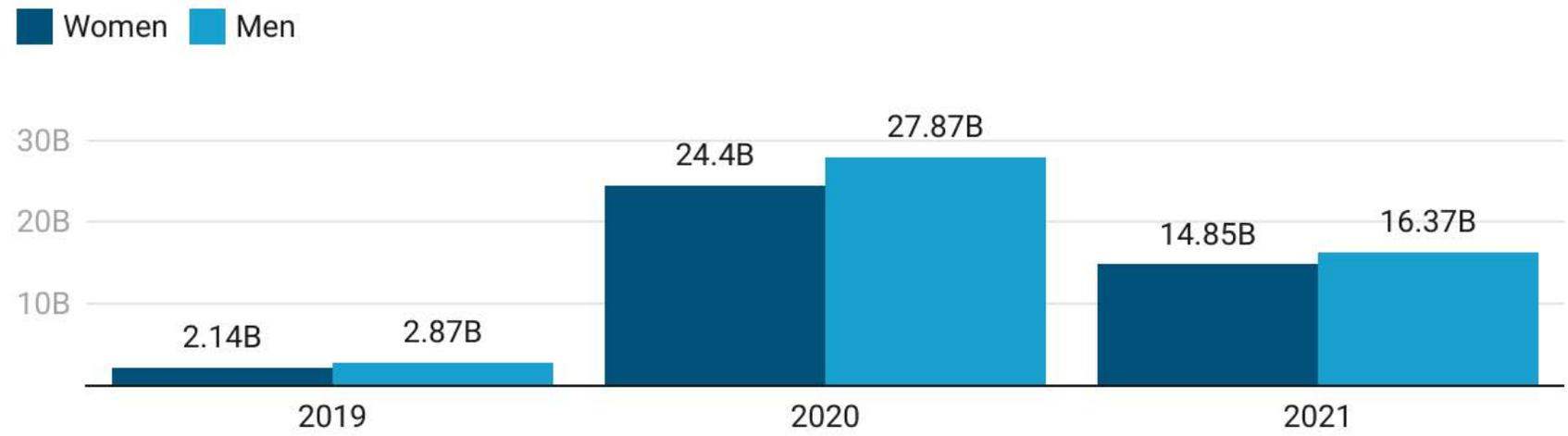
Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Sample includes all women who filed new initial regular unemployment insurance claims in the given year. The data do not include Pandemic Unemployment Assistance claims. There were 528,551 initial claims filed by women in 2019, 3,267,756 in 2020, and 686,474 in 2021. Race/ethnicity are combined into a single concept in the unemployment insurance data. The "Hispanic" category includes all Hispanics, regardless of race, while the other categories include only non-Hispanics.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 20. Women in aggregate received 10x of normal unemployment benefits in 2020



### Total unemployment insurance payments, by gender



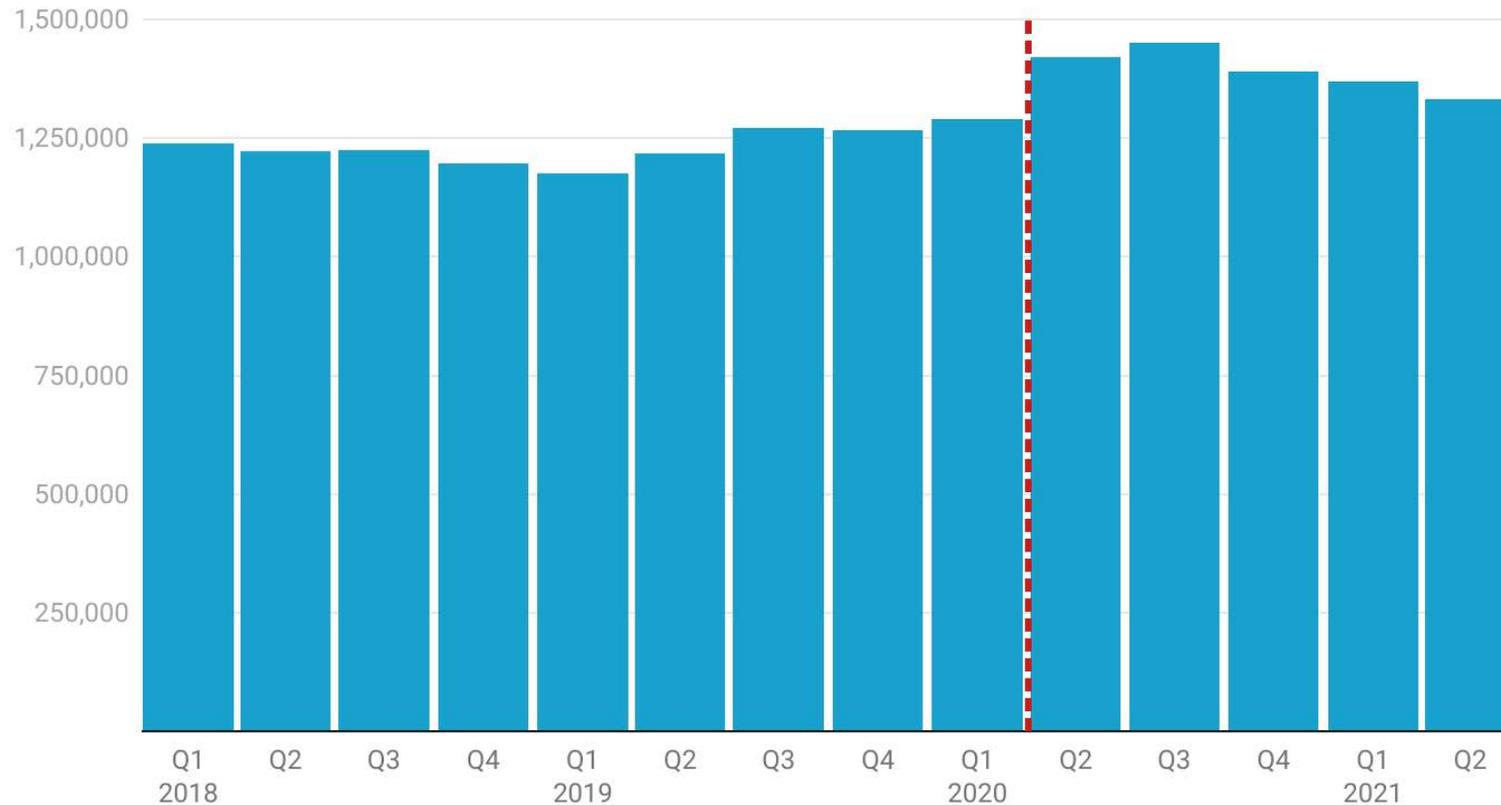
Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Each bar represents the total amount of unemployment insurance claims paid to women (men) each year, in billions of dollars.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 21. Over 180,000 additional women relied on food assistance in the early pandemic



### Women receiving CalFresh benefits

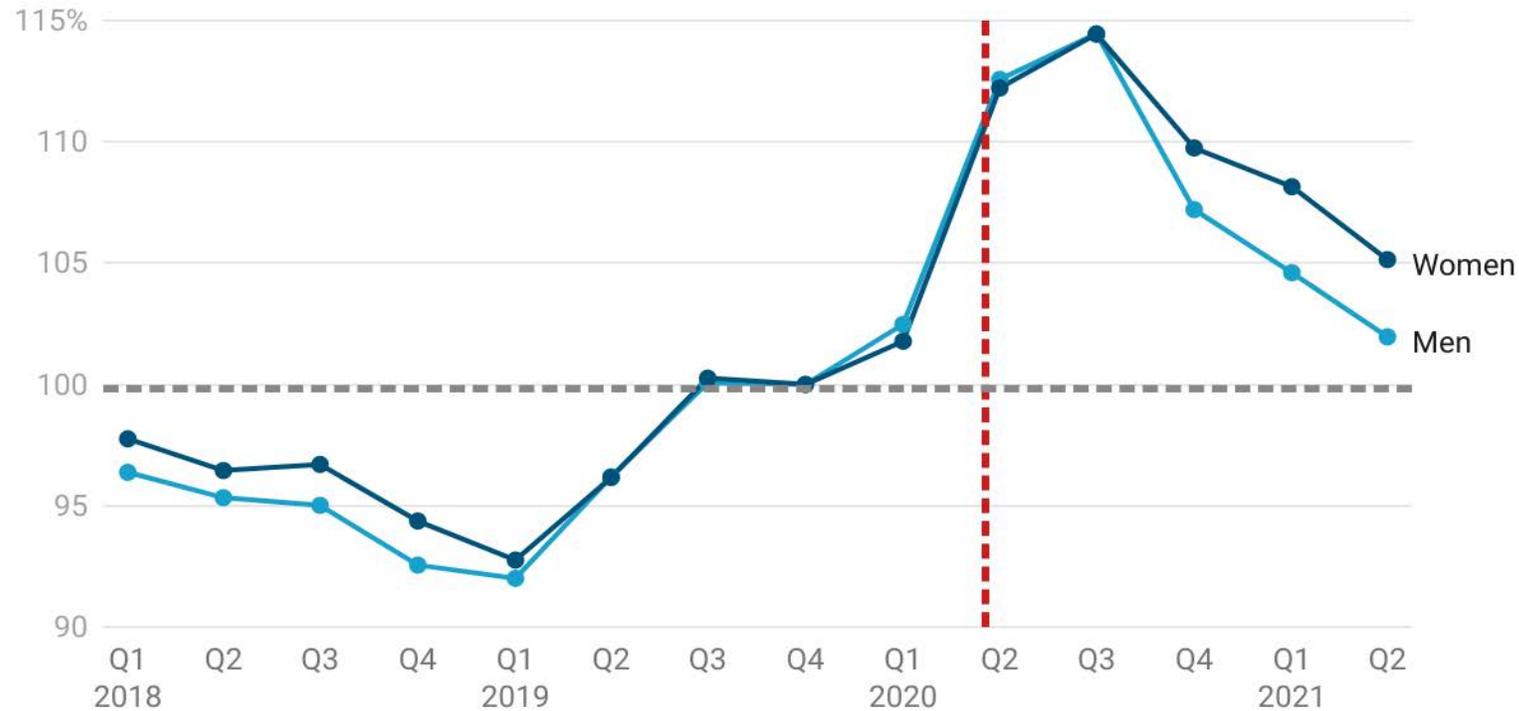


Source: California Policy Lab Analysis of California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data. Notes: Sample includes all women age 18+ receiving CalFresh benefits in the given quarter.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 22. Women’s enrollment in food aid during the pandemic persisted longer than men’s

**CalFresh enrollment by gender, relative to 2019Q4**



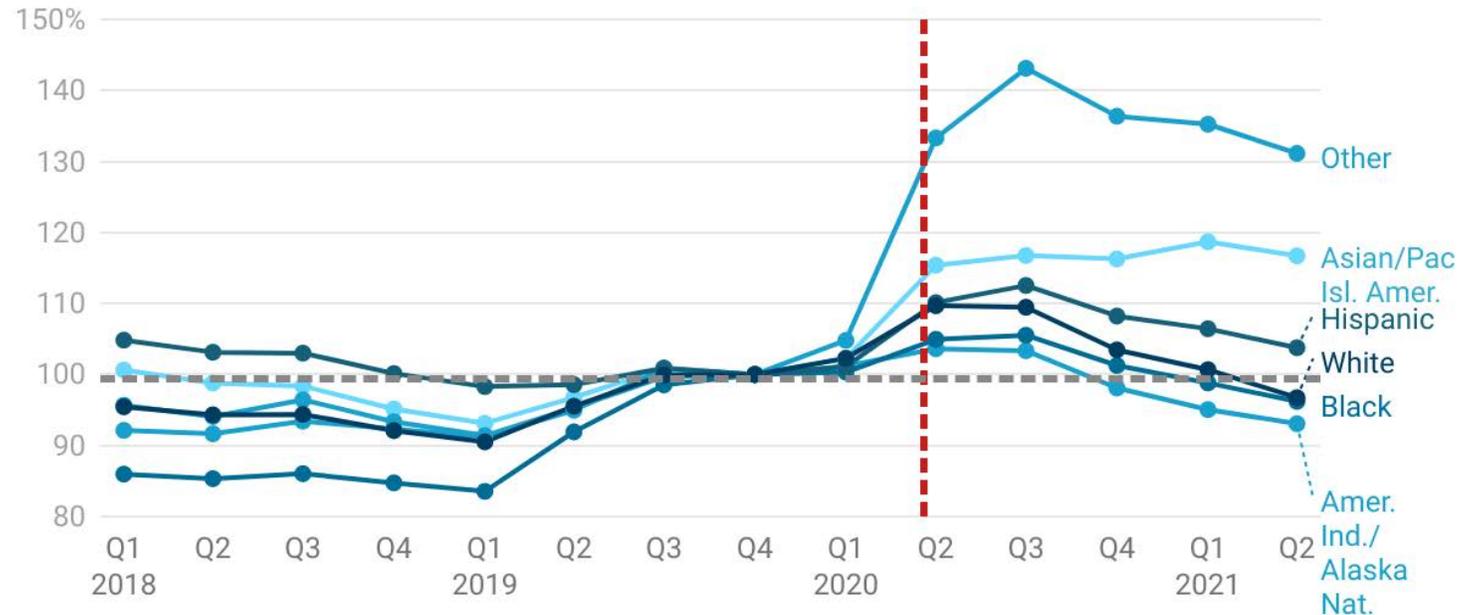
Source: California Policy Lab Analysis of California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data. Notes: Sample includes all men and women age 18+ who received CalFresh benefits in the given quarter. Within-group quarterly enrollment is normalized by enrollment in 2019Q4.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 23. Hispanic and Asian-American women saw large jumps in food-aid receipt



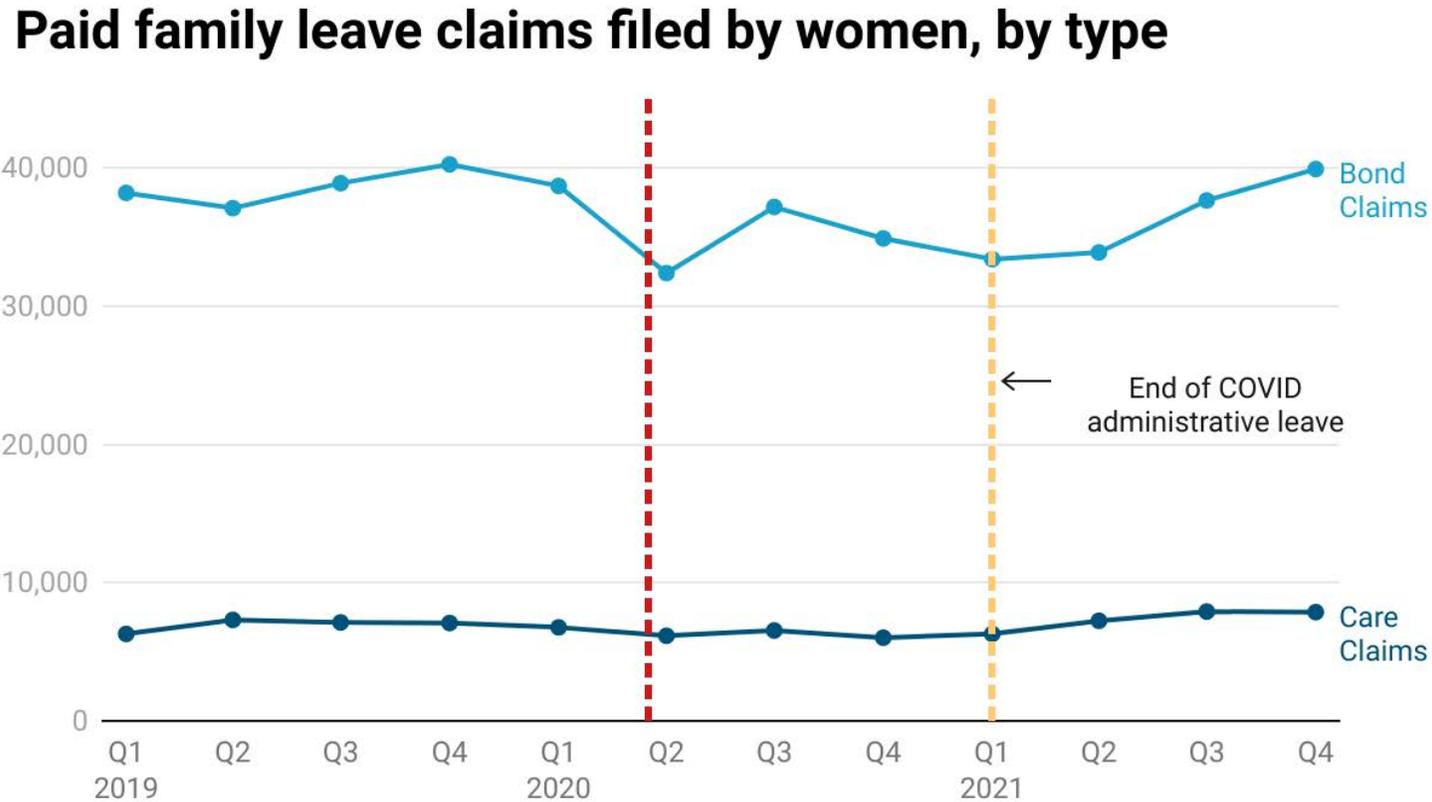
### Women enrolled in CalFresh by race/ethnicity, relative to 2019Q4



Source: California Policy Lab Analysis of California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data. Notes: Sample includes all women age 18+ who received CalFresh benefits in the given quarter. Within-group enrollment is normalized by enrollment in 2020Q1. Race and ethnicity are combined into a single concept in the CalFresh data. The "Hispanic" category includes all Hispanics, regardless of race.

Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 24. Paid family leave claims rose as COVID administrative leave expired



Source: California Policy Lab analysis of Employment Development Department data. Notes: Sample includes new bond and care PFL claims filed by women in a given quarter.

Created with Datawrapper