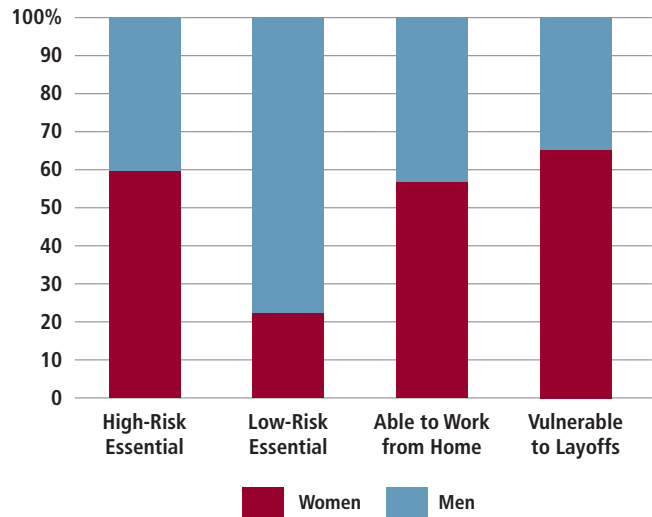


# COVID-19's Unequal Impacts on Minnesota Workers: A Race and Gender Lens

## Key Findings

- Women workers, particularly women of color, face a dual vulnerability during COVID-19, with a higher risk of exposure to the virus at work and of being laid off.
- Asian women, Native American women, and Black women are disproportionately employed in high-risk essential jobs. Men dominate the low-risk essential worker category, especially Asian and white men.
- Pandemic-related layoffs have disproportionately affected women, Native Americans, and Blacks, and differences in industry and occupation explain only a fraction of these job losses.
- While roughly equal numbers of women and men are able to work from home, Asians and whites are more likely than other groups to do so.
- Stimulus checks and unemployment insurance provided critical economic aid in the early months of the pandemic—but many who needed these supports, including undocumented workers and people experiencing homelessness, could not access them.

Work Categories By Gender



Source: CWGPP Analysis of American Community Survey Data 2014-2018, five-year estimates.

- Workers have had to improvise solutions to major structural issues during the pandemic, including inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and a lack of safe, affordable child care.
- The workers most adversely impacted by COVID-19 are also statistically most likely to receive low wages and few benefits, such as employer-provided health care.

## Policy Recommendations

### SHORT-TERM RESPONSES

- Establish and maintain a state stock pile of PPE and provide all essential workers the PPE necessary to do their jobs safely.
- Provide clear and up-to-date public health information, properly translated and culturally relevant to specific Minnesota communities.
- Provide additional funding for social service organizations, which have been instrumental to the continued care and emergency support of Minnesota communities.
- Include undocumented workers who have individual tax identification numbers in future pandemic relief legislation.

### LONG-TERM REFORMS

- Establish universal health coverage that decouples health insurance from employment.
- Implement a universal basic income to replace our current patchwork of economic and social supports.
- Expand unemployment insurance to cover previously excluded workers.
- Make COVID-19 paid sick leave and paid family leave provisions permanent.
- Prioritize child care and education in future emergency planning.