

# Women, Wealth and COVID-19

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*These views are my own and not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, the Federal Reserve System or the Board of Governors.*



# Baseline Snapshot, 2019

- Half of civilian non-farm workforce
- Earning advanced degrees and starting business at a higher rate than men
- About 29% of women in dual-income marriages were breadwinners

# Gender Wealth Gap



55 \$\$\$\$

Overall gap; female median wealth per \$100 of male survey respondent wealth, regardless of marital status.

Note: Unit of analysis is families; characteristics are taken from the survey respondent, generally considered to be the most financially knowledgeable person.

# Gender Wealth Gap



7% of women-headed families are millionaires (17% of men)

55 \$\$\$\$

Overall gap; female median wealth per \$100 of male survey respondent wealth, regardless of marital status.



14% of women-headed families have no wealth or are in debt (8% of men)

Note: Unit of analysis is families; characteristics are taken from the survey respondent, generally considered to be the most financially knowledgeable person.



# Asset Shares for Female-Headed Families

62% 

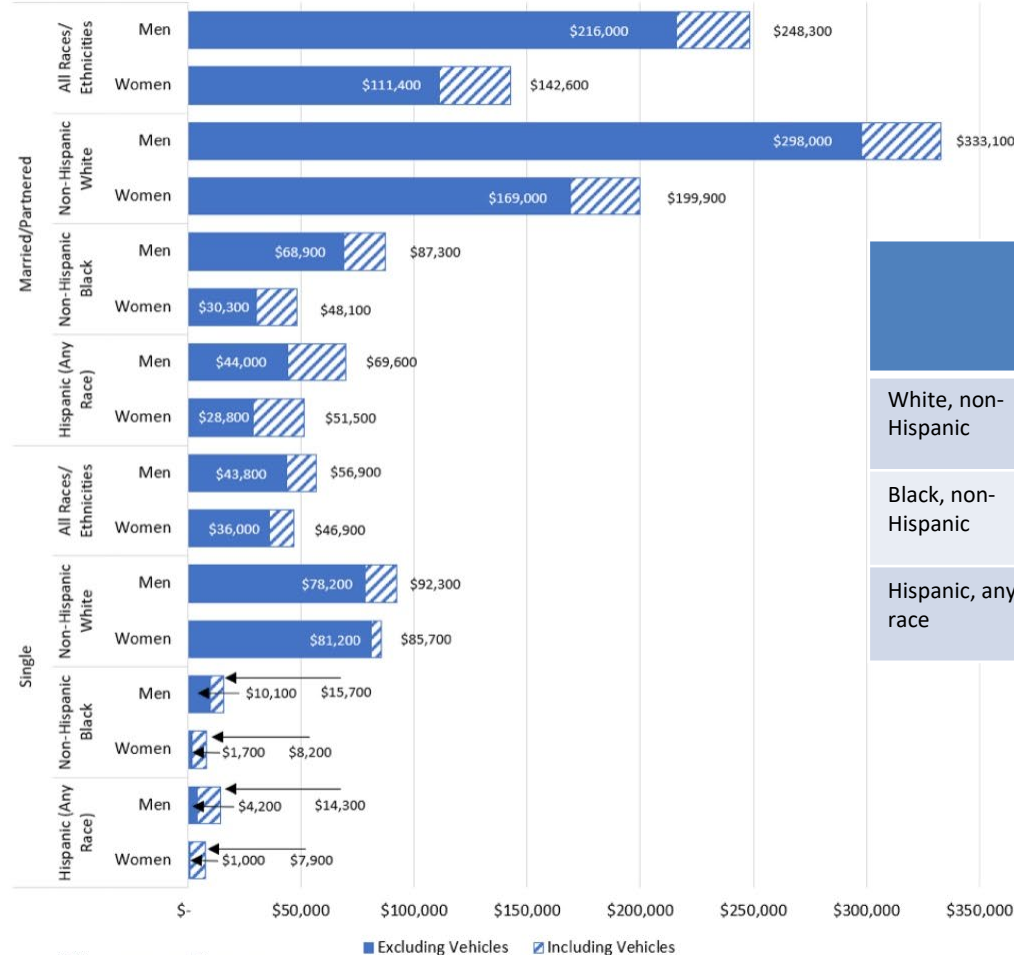
46% 

8% 

Source: Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances (2019) and Kent's calculations.

Icons represent home ownership, retirement savings in defined contribution accounts and business ownership. Men's values are 68%, 55%, and 15%, respectively.

Median Family Wealth by Race/Ethnicity and Household Type, 2019



	Female Wealth as % of Male Wealth (Same group)	Female Wealth as % of White Male Wealth
White, non-Hispanic	55.9%	55.9%
Black, non-Hispanic	26.9%	5.2%
Hispanic, any race	45.5%	10.0%

Note: Unit of analysis is families; characteristics are taken from the survey respondent, generally considered to be the most financially knowledgeable person.

## Myth-Busting

# Common “Explanations”

- 1 Career Choice  
Women-dominated careers are less valued than those dominated by men
- 2 Salary Negotiation  
Assertive negotiation can backfire on women
- 3 Parenthood Penalty  
Mothers have lower salaries than childless women; the opposite is true for fathers
- 4 Shorter hours/years of experience  
Controlling for these and other factors, the wage gap remains
- 5 Less Representation at Executive-Level  
The pay gap is actually larger in high-level roles



## Coronavirus Recession

### Precarious Position

Many women, particularly BIPOC women, continue to face daily challenges.

Lower Wealth/Wages

Hard-Hit Industries

Lack of Benefits

Care Responsibility

Lack  
Stability

?





“  
I wish I had the energy to scream. All my energy just goes into getting through every day, until I can go to sleep. I have three kids, all in virtual schools since March, and work full time. And it just feels like failing, every day, at everything I do. And I just want to change, want to be by myself for one minute. I don't know how to keep doing this. But there isn't really another option.”

“  
I'm going to [bleep] lose my mind if something doesn't happen soon.”

“  
God, every day I think I can't do this again, but then I do. I get it, I get up and I do it. Because that's just what parents do, right?”

# Employment Situation February 2021 vs 2020

2.38M+

WOMEN DROPPED FROM LABOR  
FORCE

6.1%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

1.9M+

MORE WOMEN UNEMPLOYED



Invest in Care Infrastructure



Enhance women and family-friendly  
work policies and benefits



Look beyond the “average” American



Encourage better data collection and  
data sharing

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- Pictures from Unsplash and Beautiful.ai.