# Workplace Gender Equality

## How the pandemic has affected women workers and professionals

1. Pandemic has made pre-existing gender disparities worse

- Women make up 46% of the labor force before pandemic, but account for 54% of job [losses](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace)

- Women quit their jobs or cut down on their hours in order to provide childcare

- McKinsey report indicates that women who have children <10 AND are part of families where both parents work, these women 2x more likely than their male counterparts to spend five additional hours each day on household responsibilities than pre-pandemic

- Women of color, particularly Black, Latina, and Native American, are disproportionately affected due to their work in industries that do not allow for the flexibility of work from home—like caretaker work

- More of these women tend to be single moms so they have to quit their jobs to help take care of family

2. Even for women who do telework, challenges remain:

- Research shows that women are managing most of the home schooling efforts -- Difficult to juggle with work demands

- In ABA report from last year, 54% of women surveyed indicated that arranging childcare was their full responsibility, whereas 1% of men surveyed reported same

- Yet law firms’ billable hour requirements have stayed the same

- McKinsey report shows that less than 1/3 of companies have changed their performance review criteria.

- While performance requirements haven’t changed, it’s become harder to meet them

- Women get less face time with their team manager or head partners, and with clients, which in turn means more layoffs and less women in positions of power to help promote and sponsor other women

3. While pandemic is unprecedented event, the negative economic impact on women is not new. We know that recessions in the legal industry tend to harm women more than men

- According to a 2019 research paper by the American Bar Association, women make up 45% of entering law firm classes at top 200 law firms, yet women represent 25% of all AmLaw 200 equity [partners](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/walkoutdoor\_online\_042320.pdf)

- In 2017, only 28% of lateral partners hired were women (ABA)

- Women make up less than 25% of management committee members, practice group leaders, and office heads

- Same article indicates that there will be no gender parity in equity partnership until 2181

- And women attorneys—whether a partner or associate—tend to be staffed on lower billing cases, not be chosen as trial first chairs and not be lead attorney on corporate deals.

4. How do we keep the pandemic from reversing the progress made toward gender equality?

- Asking husbands, partners to help out with childcare and other home-related efforts

- Asking your firm for flexible work schedule

- Seek out cases that have high hourly billing rates—like antitrust matters, MDL, corporate MA, and private equity type cases