

The she-covary project: Confronting the gendered economic impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

News release ^[2]

Access full report [PDF] ^[3]

Excerpts from executive summary

The COVID-19 crisis is having a disproportionate economic impact on women. There are several reasons for this. First, temporary business shutdowns and layoffs during the state of emergency most severely affected occupations and sectors that predominantly employ women. Second, these sectors are those in which women entrepreneurs are more likely to operate, and their businesses tend to be newer, smaller, and less well-financed than those owned by men. Third, restrictions on schools and paid child care facilities have shifted additional hours of unpaid family care onto parents, and this work has largely been taken up by mothers. Fourth, while women are dominating the frontline responses to the COVID pandemic, they have not been included in the planning for recovery.

The pandemic has also exacerbated existing inequality and has been especially challenging for certain groups of women, including racialized women, Indigenous women, single mothers, low-income women, immigrant women, women with disabilities, and those living in rural areas.

The long-term impacts of COVID-19 on women in the workforce remains unknown. However, with women's labour force participation at a record low, decades of progress towards gender equality are at stake. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) strongly believes this is not only a watershed moment for women but for Ontario's economy and society more broadly, as women's participation in the labour market is a precondition to its fulsome economic recovery and prosperity.

This brief lays out a path to Ontario's "she-covary" by examining data on the gendered labour market impacts of the pandemic and offering policy solutions to confront both immediate and longer-term challenges. Throughout this, an intersectional lens is essential to ensure no women are left behind.

Region: Ontario ^[4]

Tags: economic recovery ^[5]

female labour force participation ^[6]

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