



Gender inequality in the women's presence and job promotion in the U.S. labor market

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The Institute for Protection of Women's Rights (IPWR) established in 2015. The Institute is a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 2019. Main Goals of the Institute:

- Helping women getting to know their rights and assisting them.*
- Empowering women and obtaining gender justice.*
- Combating discrimination and violence against women.*
- Formulating useful suggestions and proposals to achieve women's rights in order to offer Government authorities.*

Gender inequality in the workplace is an important issue in the U.S. labor market, particularly when it comes to women's presence and career advancement.

Despite progress over the decades, women continue to face barriers such as the lack of presence and limited access to leadership roles in the United States. Studies show that women, especially women of color, are underrepresented in senior positions across industries. This disparity is often attributed to systemic challenges, including a lack of mentorship, unequal opportunities for professional development, and societal expectations around caregiving responsibilities. Additionally, women are more likely to experience workplace discrimination and harassment, further hindering their career progression.

Addressing these dimensions is crucial to creating a truly inclusive and equitable work environment for all. In the following, it will be first tried to explain some of the most important federal laws in the presence and job promotion of people in the labor market in the United States, and then present facts and figures related to some of the most important gender inequalities in the presence and job promotion of people in the United States labor market.

U.S. laws on preventing gender inequality in the workplace and promoting job promotion for people in the labor market

In the United States legal system, there are many laws at both federal and State levels to prevent gender inequality in the presence and job promotion of people in the labor market. Here, the most important Federal laws in this regard will be briefly presented.

1. The Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the primary law against discrimination in the workplace. This Act prohibits discrimination based on classes such as race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. According to the SEC. 703. ø42 U.S.C. 2000e-2; of Civil Rights Act 1964, it shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer -(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or (2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (U.S. Government Information, 2019: 13-14).

2. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA)

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals who are at least 40 years of age, or by other means (U.S. Department of Labor, 2025b).

3. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance (U.S. Department of

Labor, 2025a).

4. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1964

This Act prohibits discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, public services and transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunication services (U.S. Office of Justice Programs, 2025: 1).

5. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)

Section 188 of this Act prohibits discrimination against applicants, employees, and participants in WIA Title I-financially assisted programs and activities on the grounds of age. In addition, WIA prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in a WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity (U.S. Department of Labor, 2025a).

In addition to these federal laws in the United States, a wide array of laws and regulations can also be added to prevent gender inequality in the presence and job promotion of people in the labor market at the state level, which are implemented at the state level across the United States. These state-specific laws further complement federal legislation, creating a more comprehensive legal framework aimed at protecting the workforce and combating gender inequality in workplaces.

Facts and figures on the women's presence and job promotion in the U.S. labor market

Despite significant progress over the decades, gender inequality in the U.S. workforce remains a persistent issue. Of all the evidence of gender inequality in women's presence and job promotion in the U.S. labor market, the following will briefly outline some of the most important.

1. Gender-related imbalances in career advancement and leadership roles

Women's representation in the workplace in U.S. has increased at every level including entry level, manager, director, vice president of company (VP), Senior vice president of company (SVP), and C-suite (C-suite is the term that describes an organization's senior executives), from 2015 to 2024. Most notably, women today make up 29 percent of C-suite positions, compared to just 17 percent in 2015. But progress has been much slower earlier in the pipeline, at the entry and manager levels (WWP, 2024: 5).

Despite existing laws and regulations, Women continue to see their gender and race as barriers to advancement in US workplaces. The data shows that 36% of the women employees in US feels their gender has played a role in missing out on a raise, promotion, or chance to get ahead (WWP, 2024: 16). Also, women are more likely to have their competence undermined at work (WWP, 2024: 37).

According to National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) report, there are gender-related imbalances in career advancement and leadership roles, as well as an unwelcoming environment for women (United States Government Accountability Office, 2023: 14). Also, as of 2021, NIST reported there were 441

women in scientific and technical (S&T) positions and 1,379 men in S&T positions. The number of National Research Council (NRC) Postdoctoral Program applications from women decreased from 60 in February 2015 to 40 in February 2021 (United States Government Accountability Office, 2023: 10).

On the other hand, in 2024, women of color have held just 7 percent of C-suite roles, compared to white women's 22 percent. The same scenario is also seen for manager (13% Vs 27%), director (10% Vs 28%), VP (8% Vs 26%), and SVP (6% Vs 22%) levels in the year 2024 (WWP, 2024: 5). At the start of 2024, the comparison between white and black women in U.S. workplaces shows that the representation of black women falls off relative to white women employees at every level, leaving them severely underrepresented at the top. The data reveals that black women hold 3 percent of C-suite roles, compared to white women's 22 percent. There is more or less the same difference in other levels, for example in SVP level (2% Vs 22%), director level (2% Vs 28%), and manager level (3% Vs 27%) (WWP, 2024: 6). Another interesting point is that the presence of black women at the entry level is more compared to other levels (6% in entry level as compared to 2- 3% in higher levels). It shows that it is easier for black American women to enter the workplace than to advance their careers.

Such discrimination is also observed between white women and white men. For example, at the beginning of 2004, while 56, 58 and 31 percent of the jobs at the levels of C-Suite, SVP, and manager levels are held by white men, the share of white women in these jobs are only 22, 22, and 20 percent in the same levels, respectively (WWP, 2024: 6).

2. Lack of women's presence in the high-tech workforce

The high-tech workforce is defined as workers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) occupations (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2024: 9). The shares of women working in high-paying engineering fields have increased by smaller margins since 1980: Women make up less than 10% of sales engineers and petroleum, mining and geological engineers (PEW Research Center, 2024).

Also, while women are nearly half of the total U.S. workforce (47.4%), they were just 22.6% of the high-tech workforce in all industries, and only 19.4% of the high-tech workforce in the high-tech sector in 2022. Also, only 23.6% of high-tech managers in the U.S. were women in 2022, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from 2014 (24.5%) (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2024: 23).

3. Lack of presence in the ten highest-paying occupations

In the United States, workers in the 10 highest-paying occupations typically earn more than \$100,000 a year, over twice the national average of \$41,000. Women remain the minority in nine of the 10 highest-paying occupations. The exception is pharmacists, 61% of whom are women. More broadly, the share of women across all 10 of these occupations (35%) remains well below their share of the overall

U.S. workforce (47%) (PEW Research Center, 2024).

Policy recommendations

1. While laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 provide a legal framework to combat workplace discrimination in the United States, enforcement remains inconsistent. It is recommended that the U.S. government allocate more resources to agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate and penalize companies that violate these laws. Also, regular audits and transparency in reporting workplace diversity metrics could also hold employers accountable for gender disparities in hiring, promotions, and pay.
2. The data highlights significant underrepresentation of women, particularly women of color, in leadership roles and high-paying occupations. It is recommended that the U.S. government fund and support mentorship programs, leadership training, and career development initiatives targeted at women in underrepresented fields like STEM and high-tech industries. At the same time, public-private partnerships could help women advance into senior roles and leadership. Additionally, incentivizing companies to adopt equitable promotion practices and transparent criteria for career advancement could help reduce biases that hinder women's progress in the workplace.

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