



Epi Data Brief

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

April 2015 No. 56

Employment Among Pregnant Women in New York City and Return to Work After Giving Birth

Pregnant women and mothers are an integral part of the New York City (NYC) work force. To understand employment patterns and decisions faced by mothers in the work place, this data brief describes mothers by their work status during pregnancy and their return to work following childbirth and explores factors that women consider when making decisions about when to return to work.

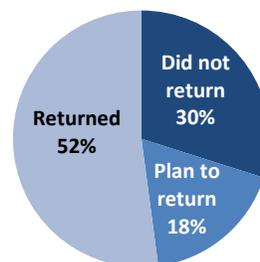
Over half of New York City mothers worked for pay during their pregnancy

- In 2012, 120,855 women gave birth to 123,231 children in NYC.
- More than half (57%) of New York City women who gave birth in 2012 reported that they had worked for pay during their most recent pregnancy.
 - Forty percent of women with a high school degree or less worked at some point during their pregnancy, compared with 64% of those with some college, and 75% of college graduates.
 - Employment rates during pregnancy were highest among women 35 years of age and older (63%), followed by women 25 to 34 years of age (58%), and women 24 or younger (51%).
 - Sixty-one percent of women having their first or second birth and almost half (47%) of women with two or more previous births reported working during their most recent pregnancy.
- Racial and ethnic disparities in employment among pregnant women are evident: White mothers were more likely to have worked for pay during their most recent pregnancy (72%) compared with 57% of Hispanic mothers, 52% of Black mothers, and 36% of Asian/Pacific Islander mothers.

Most New York City mothers return to work within four months of giving birth

- After birth, most mothers plan to return to the job they held during their pregnancy.
 - At the time they responded to the survey (an average of four months after the birth), 52% had already returned to work and another 18% planned to return.
 - Nearly one third (30%) of women who worked for pay during their pregnancy did not intend to return to the job they previously held.

Percent of mothers returning to the job held during the most recent pregnancy, New York City, 2012



Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey, 2012

Data Source: The **Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)** is an ongoing population-based survey of New York City resident mothers who give birth in New York City, designed to monitor maternal experiences and behaviors before, during, and after pregnancy; NYC data from the 2012 survey are presented here. Findings from PRAMS are used to enhance understanding of maternal behaviors, develop and evaluate programs to improve maternal and infant health, and to inform policy development in NYC. For more information on PRAMS, visit nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/ms/PRAMSintro.pdf.

Definitions: **Paid leave** may have been interpreted by respondents to include accrued vacation and sick time, time for which they received New York State Temporary Disability Insurance benefits, and/or paid maternity leave offered by an employer.

Food insecurity is defined as concern about having enough food to feed you or your family in the past 30 days.

Federal Poverty Line is defined based on household income and household size for 2012.

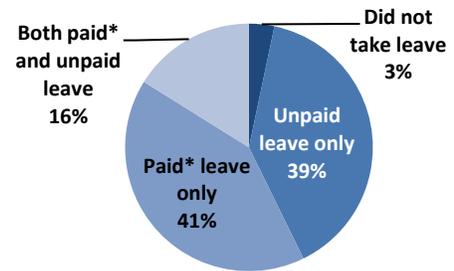
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Four in ten women do not have access to any paid leave or paid time off following the birth of their child

- Among the 70% of women returning to the job they held during pregnancy:
 - Thirty-nine percent of mothers received only unpaid leave or time off.
 - Forty-one percent reported only taking paid leave, which may include accrued vacation and sick time, New York State Temporary Disability Insurance benefits, and/or paid maternity leave offered by an employer.
 - Sixteen percent of mothers reported taking both paid and unpaid leave or time off following the birth of their child.
- Disparities were observed between those who received only unpaid leave or time off and those who received at least some paid leave.
 - Working mothers who were college graduates were more likely to have some paid leave time following the birth of their child (72%) than those who had completed some college (52%) or whose highest level of educational attainment was high school or less (40%).
 - Women with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) were more likely to take only unpaid time off following the birth of their child than those with higher incomes: (69% vs. 25% for those over 200% of FPL).

Type of leave or time off from work taken after giving birth, among New York City mothers, 2012



*Paid leave may include employer provided leave, use of accrued vacation and sick leave, and Temporary Disability Insurance.
 Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey, 2012

Decisions about maternal leave-taking are affected by financial hardship

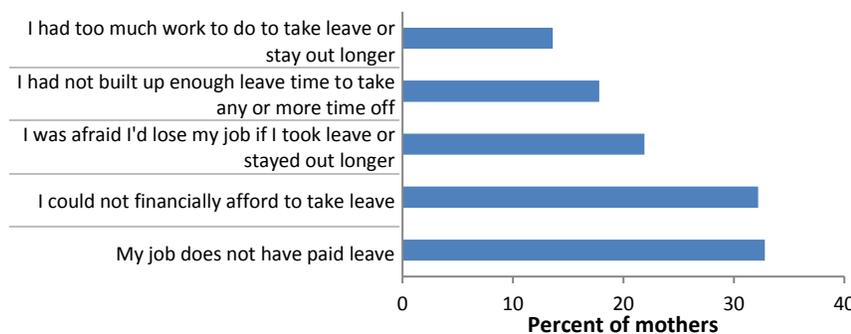
- Nearly one in four (23%) mothers reported being concerned that they did not have enough food to feed themselves and their family in the last 30 days.
- Women who only took unpaid time off were more likely to report concerns about having enough food for their family compared with those who had at least some paid leave (26% vs. 16%).

Type of leave or time off taken after giving birth among New York City mothers by food insecurity, 2012

	Food Secure	Food Insecure
Unpaid time off or leave only	74%	26%
At least some paid leave	84%	16%
Total	77%	23%

Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey, 2012

Reasons that affected women’s return to work after giving birth, New York City, 2012



Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey, 2012

- One third of women who returned to work reported that their decision was affected by their job not having paid leave (33%) and/or that they could not financially afford to take leave (32%).
- Nearly one in five (18%) reported that they had not built up enough leave time to take any or more time off.
- Fear of job loss was reported by 22% of new mothers who returned to work.

Suggested citation: Slopen M, Mulready-Ward C, Yager A, Kaplan D. Employment Among Pregnant Women in New York City and Return to Work After Giving Birth. Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Epi Data Brief (56); April 2015.

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Epi Data Tables

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Data Source

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is an ongoing population-based survey of New York City (NYC) resident mothers who give birth in NYC, designed to monitor maternal experiences and behaviors before, during, and after pregnancy; NYC data from the 2012 survey are presented here. Findings from PRAMS are used to enhance understanding of maternal behaviors, develop and evaluate programs to improve maternal and infant health, and to inform policy development in NYC. For more information on PRAMS, visit <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/ms/PRAMSintro.pdf>

Table 1: Characteristics of New York City mothers by paid work status during pregnancy, 2012

Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2012

	Worked for pay at any time during pregnancy		Did not work for pay at any time during pregnancy	
	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Total	57.5 ^D	(54.3-60.6)	42.5	(39.4-45.7)
Race/Ethnicity*				
Hispanic	57.2	(51.6 - 62.6)	42.8	(37.4 - 48.4)
White [^]	72.2	(66.8 - 76.9)	27.8	(23.1 - 33.2)
Black [^]	51.7	(44.4 - 59.0)	48.3	(41.0 - 55.6)
Asian/Pacific Islander [^]	35.9	(28.9 - 43.5)	64.1	(56.5 - 71.2)
Age (years)*				
<=24	50.8	(44.3-57.3)	49.2	(42.7-55.7)
25-34	57.9	(53.6-62.2)	42.1	(37.8-46.5)
35+	63.4	(56.9-69.5)	36.6	(30.5-43.1)
Education*				
<=High school graduate	40.0	(35.3-44.9)	60.0	(55.1-64.8)
Some college	63.7	(57.0-69.9)	36.3	(30.1-43.0)
College Graduate	75.3	(70.5-79.5)	24.8	(20.5-29.5)
Number of Previous Live Births*				
0	60.3	(55.8-64.7)	39.7	(35.3-44.2)
1	61.2	(55.4-66.7)	38.8	(33.3-44.6)
2+	46.7	(40.0-53.5)	53.3	(46.5-60.0)
Household Income (% Federal Poverty Line)*				
0-100%	42.8	(37.5-48.2)	57.2	(51.8-62.5)
101-200%	60.0	(52.0-67.5)	40.0	(32.5-48.0)
201+%	79.4	(74.8-83.4)	20.6	(16.6-25.3)

*Chi-square test for trend: p<0.05 (significant)

95% confidence intervals are a measure of estimate precision. The wider the interval the more imprecise the estimate.

^Destimate rounds down[^]non-Hispanic

Table 2: Return to work by new mothers who worked during their pregnancy, New York City, 2012*Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2012*

	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Returned to the job held during pregnancy		
Did not return	29.9	(26.3 - 33.8)
Plan to return	18.0	(15.1 - 21.3)
Returned	52.1	(48.0 - 56.2)

95% confidence intervals are a measure of estimate precision. The wider the interval the more imprecise the estimate.

Table 3: Type of post-partum leave taken by women who worked for pay during pregnancy and have either already returned or plan to return to that job, New York City, 2012

Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2012

	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Did not take leave	3.3	(2.0 - 5.6)
Unpaid leave only	39.4	(34.7 - 44.4)
Paid* leave only	41.1	(36.3 - 46.1)
Both paid* and unpaid leave	16.1	(12.8 - 20.0)

*Paid leave may include employer provided leave, use of accrued vacation and sick leave, and Temporary Disability Insurance

95% confidence intervals are a measure of estimate precision. The wider the interval the more imprecise the estimate.

Table 4: Characteristics of New York City mothers who worked during pregnancy by type of post-partum leave taken, 2012

Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2012

	Mother took only unpaid leave from work following birth		Mother took at least some paid leave following birth	
	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Total	40.8	(35.9-45.8)	59.2	(54.2-64.1)
Race/ethnicity				
Hispanic	43.1	(33.4-53.5)	56.9	(46.5-66.6)
White [^]	35.5	(28.6-43.1)	64.5	(56.9-71.4)
Black [^]	43.6	(32.0-56.0)	56.4	(56.9-71.4)
Asian/Pacific Islander [^]	43.8	(30.3-58.3)	56.2	(41.7-69.7)
Age group (years)*				
<=24	60.6	(47.2-72.6)	39.4	(27.4-52.8)
25-34	38.9	(32.5-45.7)	61.1	54.3, 67.5
35+	33.5	(25.4-42.7)	66.5	57.3, 74.6
Education*				
<=Highschool graduate	59.8	(49.0-69.7)	40.2	(30.4-51.0)
Some college	48.4	(38.3-58.6)	51.7	(41.4-61.8)
College Graduate	28.0	(22.3-34.5)	72.0	(65.5-77.7)
Number of Previous Live Births				
0	38.2	(31.5-45.3)	61.8	(54.7-68.5)
1	37.3	(29.3-46.0)	62.7	(54.0-70.7)
2+	55.4	(42.7-67.3)	44.6	(32.7-57.3)
Household Income (% Federal Poverty Line)*				
0-100%	69.4	(57.9-78.9)	30.6	(21.1-42.2)
101-200%	46.1	(34.0-58.8)	53.9	(41.2-66.0)
201+%	25.5	(20.0-31.8)	74.5	(68.2-80.0)

*Chi-square test for trend: p<0.05 (significant)

95% confidence intervals are a measure of estimate precision. The wider the interval the more imprecise the estimate.

[^]non-Hispanic

Table 5: Factors considered regarding taking leave by women who worked for pay during pregnancy and have either already returned or plan to return to that job, New York City, 2012

Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2012

Reason impacting decision	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval
My job does not have paid leave	32.8	(28.2-37.8)
I could not financially afford to take leave	32.2	(27.7-37.1)
I was afraid I'd lose my job if I took leave or stayed out longer	21.9	(18.0-26.4)
I had not built up enough leave time to take any or more time off	17.8	(14.2-22.0)
I had too much work to do to take leave or stay out longer	13.6	(10.5-17.5)

95% confidence intervals are a measure of estimate precision. The wider the interval the more imprecise the estimate.

Table 6: Food insecurity by work status and type of leave taken following birth, New York City, 2012

Source: NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2012

	Food Secure		Food Insecure	
	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval	Percent (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Worked for Pay During Pregnancy				
No	75.6	(71.0-79.7)	22.3	(20.3-29.0)
Yes	77.7	(74.0-81.0)	24.4	(19.0-26.0)
Type of leave taken post-partum*				
Unpaid only	73.6	(65.9-80.1)	26.4	(19.9-34.1)
Any paid	84.4	(79.0-88.8)	15.5 ^u	(11.2-21.1)
Total	76.7	(73.9-79.3)	23.3	(20.7-26.1)

*Chi-square test for trend: p<0.05 (significant)

95% confidence intervals are a measure of estimate precision. The wider the interval the more imprecise the estimate.

^u estimate rounds up