

WOMEN AND WORK PROJECT SUMMARY

Local and national news outlets report stories of women who have left the workforce.

In March 2022, on behalf of the **Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio**, we conducted focus groups with women in Franklin County -- specifically women who were employed in February 2020 and whose employment has been impacted during or due to the pandemic. We wanted to learn what they need from **workforce agencies** and **employers** to help them obtain and maintain employment.

"Dear Women of Franklin County"

We conducted
18 FOCUS GROUPS
to obtain qualitative data
N = 66



We conducted
AN ONLINE SURVEY
for comparative quantitative data
N = 131

We wanted to know ...



CHALLENGES THEY FACED

- 22 - COVID-specific
- 20 - Emotional Well-Being/
Mental Health
- 17 - Management & Workplace
Conditions
- 15 - Childcare
- 12 - Personal Illness/Injury
- 12 - General Financial Stress
- 10 - Discrimination
- 9 - Single Parenting
- 8 - Housing
- 7 - Schools/Daycare Closed
- 7 - Pregnancy/Had a Baby

REASONS FOR JOB CHANGE

- Kids home because schools and daycare closed - **QUIT/FIRED**
- Couldn't handle stress - **QUIT**
- COVID fears (self, family) - **QUIT**
- **Job Eliminated/Furloughed**
- Opportunity for new approach to life - **QUIT**
- Unvaccinated - **QUIT/FIRED/NOT HIRED**
- Criminal background - **FIRED/NOT HIRED**

MAKING DIFFERENT CHOICES

- New attitude re: W-2 jobs*
- Self-selected out (for now)**
- Already made a change
- Looking for remote work***
- Self-employed
- Working, but will quit
- Retired early

* NEW ATTITUDE RE: W-2

Traditional W-2 employment is viewed as:

- **too difficult**
- **too expensive**
- **too risky**

"Working is just not worth it."

CODING EXPLAINED

When a focus group participant mentioned an issue, a tick mark was added next to the item. If that item was mentioned more than once by that person, it was not ticked again. One person can mention many items, but items are only marked once.



FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE	RELATIONSHIP
30 - under 40	19 - married or similar
30 - 40s and 50s	47 - not married or similar
6 - 60+	EDUCATION
RACE/ETHNICITY	10 - high school or less
49 - women of color	56 - some college or more

**WHY THEY SELF-SELECTED OUT

- 16 - Childcare
- 15 - Self-employed or seeking self-employment
- 10 - Family responsibilities
- 7 - Transportation
- 6 - Discouraged over job prospects
- 4 - In school or training

***WHAT DOES "REMOTE WORK" MEAN?

Remote work means flexibility. Employees need the **flexibility to be able to** accommodate everything that is **expected of them at work** and everything that is **required of them at home**.

WHAT THEY NEED TO RETURN / THEIR PREFERRED JOB QUALITIES

- 41 - Personal and family needs are accommodated
- 30 - **Fair and empathetic management and workplace conditions**[^]
- 27 - Compensation & benefits; higher/fair pay
- 20 - Career advancement
- 19 - **Compassion; leaders who empathize with me beyond work**[^]
- 13 - Better childcare
- 13 - Mental health/well-being
- 11 - **Belief I am treated fairly and valued**[^]
- 8 - Follow COVID protocols
- 7 - Ability to be part of problem-solving + Accurate, reliable information about jobs + Transportation
- 4 - Small business/entrepreneur support
- 3 - Overcoming criminal history + Consistent, high-quality ESL
- 2 - COVID vaccination not required

^HUMANITY FACTOR

Many focus group participants used words like "humanity" and "human being" -- and phrases like "understand I have a life beyond work" and "treat me like a human being" -- when discussing how they experience being treated at work. They experience a lack of humanity in the rules and policies at work as well as in the behaviors and attitudes of their managers.

What You Can Do...

5 WAYS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES & ASSURE THEIR WELL-BEING

- Accommodate their work and home responsibilities
- Provide empathetic leaders and safe workplace conditions
- Pay fair wages
- Articulate career growth
- Offer autonomy

Scan QR code to download full report

