The men are finding work.

For the first time since 2006, the unemployment rate for men in the United States has fallen below the rate for women — 5.6 percent for men and 5.9 percent for women in October. In the depths of the financial crisis, the rate for men had climbed to as much as 2.6 percentage points above that for women.

October was also the month that the number of private sector jobs held by men, according to the survey of employers, finally reached the level of June 2007, when male employment had peaked. In October, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated, 61,304,000 men were employed by private sector companies, 4,000 more than at the previous high.

The accompanying charts show how the two sexes have fared since June 2007. Neither men nor women have as many government jobs as they did then, although women have come closer to a full recovery. The number of private sector jobs held by women, which had peaked in December 2007, rose above that level in June 2013.

Men suffered far more in the recession, in part because occupations that are dominated by men were hard hit. Construction jobs — only about an eighth of which are held by women — were devastated, falling nearly 30 percent from the peak and, even now, are still well below 2007 levels. The number of jobs in education and health services, on the other hand, dipped by just 4 percent. More than three-quarters of those jobs are held by women.
One area where the recovery has been much better for men than for women is financial services. Over all, women hold 57 percent of such jobs, but men have been more likely to find jobs recently. Compared with the June 2007 numbers, 1.5 percent more jobs are held by men, and 8.5 percent fewer jobs are held by women.

In fact, of the 12 areas of the private economy shown in the charts, women have added jobs at a slower rate than men in all but three — retail trade, mining and logging, and construction. Women have a small minority of jobs in each of those areas other than retail, though, so those gains do not reflect a lot of hiring.

As can be seen from the charts, the unemployment rate of prime-age men, 25 to 54 years of age, is now lower than that of women, and the rate of younger workers is the same for both sexes. Only in the over-55 age group do men have a higher unemployment rate than women.

The overall rate for men is now less than 1 percentage point above where it was in June 2007, and the rate for women is only 1.5 percentage points higher.

But appearances can be misleading. Unemployment rates do not include those who have chosen to leave the labor force, and a significant number of people under 55 have chosen to do so.

If most of them came back to the labor force over the next couple of years, the unemployment rate might stop falling, or even rise, but the labor market, for both men and women, would be healthier than it is now.