

Belize

| WBL 2.0 legal frameworks score | WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks score | WBL 2.0 expert opinions score |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 62.5 | 62.5 | 58.1 |

Women, Business and the Law 2024 (WBL 2024) identifies barriers for women’s economic empowerment in three areas: women’s legal rights, policy instruments designed to support the implementation of these rights, and how these rights are realized in practice. For that purpose, three new *Women, Business and the Law 2.0* indexes are presented for ten indicators: (1) legal frameworks, (2) supportive frameworks, and (3) expert opinions. For the WBL 2.0 legal frameworks index, 40 questions are scored across the ten indicators for 190 economies. For the WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks index, 30 questions are scored across the ten indicators for 190 economies. Overall economy level legal and supportive frameworks scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. The WBL 2.0 expert opinions index is created for a total of 164 economies. Expert opinion scores are not available for 26 economies due to an insufficient number of responses received from those economies during data collection. Individual responses at the economy level for 15 expert opinions questions across the ten indicators are scored by taking the median value of all responses per question. The economy level expert opinions index is equal to the simple unweighted average of the ten indicator scores.

For Belize, data refer to the legal frameworks, supportive frameworks, and expert opinions that are applicable to the main business city (Belize City). The scores for Belize are shown in the table below.

Women, Business and the Law 2024 2.0 indicator scores

| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WBL 2.0 | Safety | Mobility | Workplace | Pay | Marriage | Parenthood | Childcare | Entrepreneurship | Assets | Pension |
| Legal frameworks score | 25.0 | 100.0 | 25.0 | 50.0 | 100.0 | 75.0 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Supportive frameworks score | 50.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 33.3 | 25.0 | 100.0 | 66.7 | 50.0 |
| Expert opinions score | 12.5 | 100.0 | 25.0 | 37.5 | 75.0 | 56.3 | 12.5 | 87.5 | 100.0 | 75.0 |

In summary, the **WBL 2.0 legal frameworks score** for Belize (62.5 out of 100.0) is lower than the global average (64.2) and lower than the Latin America & Caribbean regional average (69.1). When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, constraints related to marriage, laws affecting women’s property and inheritance and laws affecting the size of a woman’s pension, Belize obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0). As an example, one of the lowest scores for Belize is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women’s safety. To improve on the Safety indicator, Belize may wish to consider putting in place legislation on domestic violence, introducing legislation on femicide and introducing legislation on child marriage.

The **WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks score** for Belize (62.5 out of 100.0) is higher than the global average (39.5) and higher than the Latin America & Caribbean regional average (38.6). When it comes to supportive frameworks affecting freedom of movement, supportive frameworks affecting women’s pay, supportive frameworks related to marriage and supportive frameworks related to women starting and running a business, Belize obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0).

As an example, one of the lowest scores for Belize is on the indicator measuring supportive frameworks affecting women's decisions to work. To improve on the Workplace indicator, Belize may wish to consider publishing guidelines on non-discrimination based on gender in recruitment, publishing guidelines on flexible work arrangements and establishing a specialized body that receives complaints about gender discrimination in employment.

The **WBL 2.0 expert opinions score** for Belize (58.1 out of 100.0) is lower than the global average (65.7) and lower than the Latin America & Caribbean regional average (61.8). When it comes to expert opinions on freedom of movement and expert opinions on women's property and inheritance, Belize obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0). As an example, one of the lowest scores for Belize is on the indicator measuring expert opinions on women's safety.

WBL 2.0 legal frameworks data

| QUESTION | ANSWER | LEGAL BASIS |
|---|--------|--|
| Safety | | |
| Does the law address child marriage? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law address sexual harassment? | Yes | Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act, Secs. 2, 3, 7-8, and 16(2)(e)(3)(4); Labour Act 2011, Secs. 42(1)(h) and (3), and 205(1)(c); Cybercrime Act, 2020, Secs. 15 and 32 |
| Does the law address domestic violence? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law address femicide? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Mobility | | |
| Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man? | Yes | No restrictions could be located |
| Can a woman travel internationally in the same way as a man? | Yes | Passport Act, Sec. 2; Passports Regulations 2022, Sec. 6(1) |
| Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man? | Yes | No restrictions could be located |
| Do a woman and a man have equal rights to confer citizenship on their spouses and their children? | Yes | Constitution, Arts. 24, 25 and 26(1); Belizean Nationality Act, Secs. 4(3), 5(2) and 11; Belizean Nationality (Amendment) Act 2022, Sec. 2 |
| Workplace | | |
| Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man? | Yes | No restrictions could be located |
| Does the law explicitly prohibit discrimination in recruitment based on marital status, parental status, and age? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law allow employees to request flexible work? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Pay | | |
| Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man? | Yes | No restrictions could be located |
| Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man? | Yes | No restrictions could be located |
| Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man? | No | Labor Act, Secs. 2 and 161 |
| Marriage | | |
| Is the law free of legal provisions that require a married woman to obey her husband? | Yes | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Can a woman be "head of household" or "head of family" in the same way as a man? | Yes | No restrictions could be located |
| Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man? | Yes | Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Art. 129A(1); Married Persons (Protection) (Amendment) Act 2022, Sec. 3 |
| Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man? | Yes | Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Art. 139(1) |
| Parenthood | | |
| Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers? | Yes | Social Security Act, Sec. 11; Labour Act, Sec. 177 |

| | | |
|--|-----|--|
| Are leave benefits for mothers paid solely by the government? | Yes | Social Security Act, Sec. 9; Social Security (Benefit) Regulations, Secs. 9 and 11 |
| Is paid leave available to fathers? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited? | Yes | Labor Amendment Act 2011, Sec. 42(1)(g) |
| Childcare | | |
| Does the law establish the provision of center-based childcare services? | Yes | Social Service Agencies Regulations of 1998, Art. 2 |
| Does the law establish any form of support for families for childcare services? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law establish any form of support for nonstate childcare providers? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law establish quality standards for the provision of center-based childcare services? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Entrepreneurship | | |
| Can a woman undertake entrepreneurial activities in the same way as a man? | Yes | Married Women's Property Act, Arts. 3 and 11; Business Names Act, Arts. 3 and 5 |
| Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law prescribe a gender quota for corporate boards? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Does the law include gender-sensitive procurement provisions for public procurement processes? | No | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Assets | | |
| Do a woman and a man have equal administrative power and ownership rights to immovable property, including land? | Yes | Law of Property Act of 1954, Arts. 12 and 39; Married Women's Property Act, Arts. 3 and 4; Registered Land Act, Art. 34(1) |
| Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets? | Yes | Administration of Estates Act, Art. 54 |
| Do male and female surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets? | Yes | Administration of Estates Act, Art. 54 |
| Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions? | Yes | Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Art. 148(A)(5)(b) |
| Pension | | |
| Are the ages at which a woman and a man can retire with full pension benefits the same? | Yes | Social Security Act, Art. 25 |
| Are the ages at which a woman and a man can retire with partial pension benefits the same? | Yes | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Is the mandatory retirement age for a woman and a man the same? | Yes | No applicable provisions could be located |
| Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits? | Yes | Social Security Act, Art. 61 |

WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks data

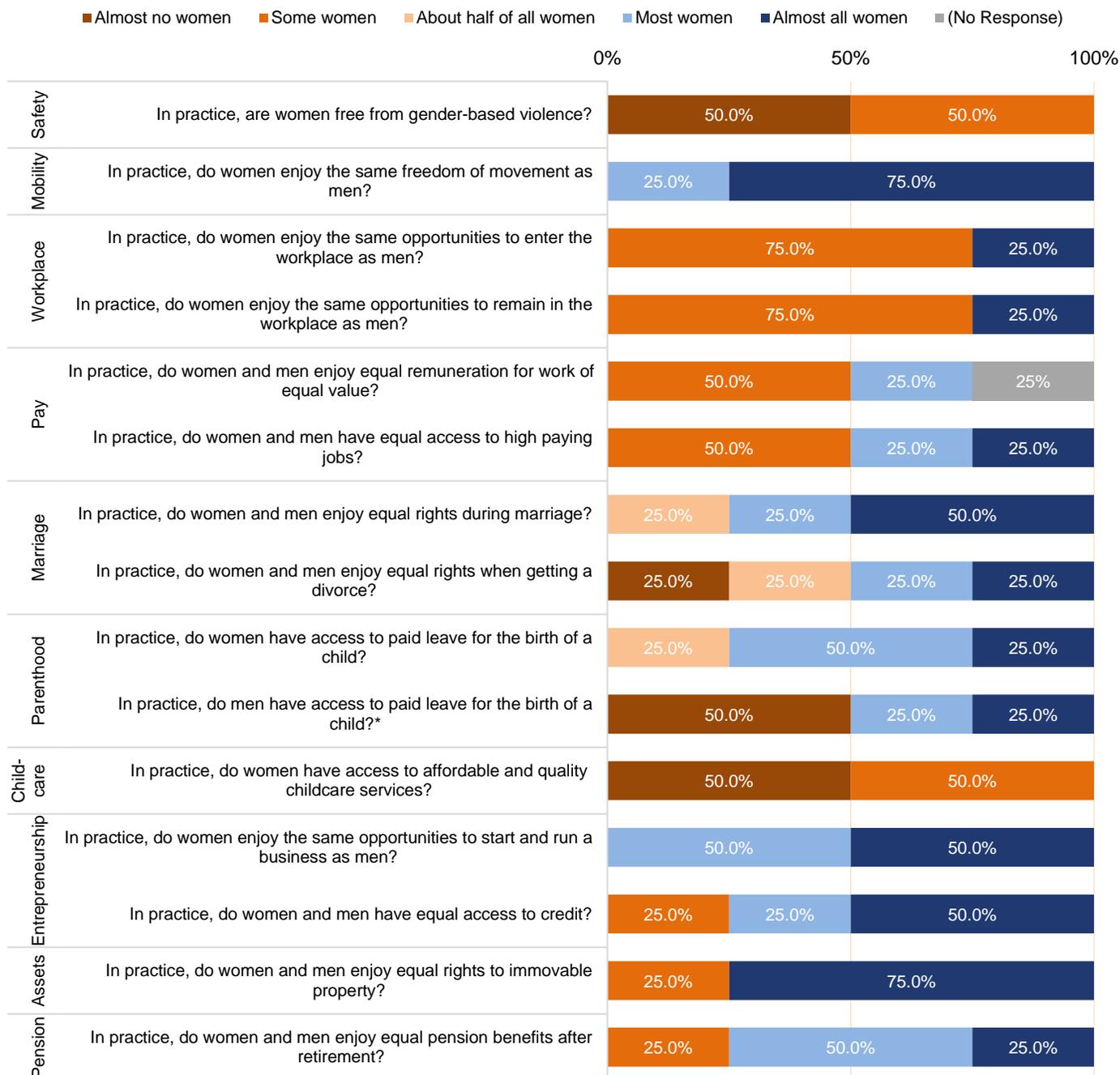
| QUESTION | ANSWER | SOURCE |
|---|--------|---|
| Safety | | |
| Has the government developed comprehensive mechanisms to address violence against women? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Are special procedures in place for cases of sexual harassment? | Yes | Protection against Sexual Harassment Act, Part III; Cybercrime Act, 2020, Part III |
| Is a government entity responsible for monitoring and implementing national services, plans and programs addressing violence against women? | Yes | Women and Family Support Department of the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs; National Women's Commission of Belize |
| Is an annual budgetary allocation devoted to violence against women risk mitigation, prevention, and response programs? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Mobility | | |

| | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Are passport application processes the same for a woman and a man? | Yes | Passport application form; Passport application procedures |
| Are the application processes for official identity documents the same for a woman and a man? | Yes | Social security registration; voter registration |
| Does a current policy or plan explicitly consider the specific mobility needs of women in public transportation? | Yes | Comprehensive National Transportation Master Plan |
| Workplace | | |
| Does a specialized body receive complaints about gender discrimination in employment? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Has the government published guidelines on nondiscrimination based on gender in recruitment? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Has the government published guidelines on flexible work arrangements? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Pay | | |
| Are pay transparency measures or enforcement mechanisms in place to address the pay gap? | Yes | Equal Pay Act, Secs. 8 and 9 |
| Have sex-disaggregated data on employment in different industries or sectors been published? | Yes | Statistical Institute of Belize: Labor Force Survey of the |
| Marriage | | |
| Is there a fast-track process or procedure for family law disputes? | Yes | Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Secs. 129, 152(3) and 153(1); Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Act 2018, Sec. 2 |
| Are there specialized family courts? | Yes | Family Court |
| Is legal aid available for family law disputes? | Yes | Legal Advice and Service Center |
| Parenthood | | |
| Is it possible to apply for maternity benefits through a single government application process? | Yes | Social Security Board: Salaries Record Form Maternity Benefit |
| Are incentives in place to encourage fathers to take paternity leave on the birth of a child? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Have sex-disaggregated data on unpaid care work been published? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Childcare | | |
| Is there a publicly available registry or database of childcare providers? | Yes | Official Website of the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs |
| Is there a clearly outlined application procedure to request financial support from the government for childcare services by parents? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Is there a clearly outlined application procedure to request financial support from the government for childcare services by nonstate childcare providers? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Has the government published any reports on the quality of childcare services? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Entrepreneurship | | |
| Have sex-disaggregated data on business activities, entrepreneurship, or women-owned businesses been published? | Yes | Statistical Institute of Belize |
| Are government-led programs supporting female entrepreneurs providing access to finance and training, coaching, or business development? | Yes | Recovery of MSMEs and Women's Empowerment in Belize; Women Economic Empowerment in the Adjacency Zone of Belize Project |
| Does a current national government plan or strategy focus on women's access to financial services? | Yes | National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2019-2022 |
| Assets | | |
| Are mechanisms or incentives in place to encourage women to register immovable property (including joint titling)? | Yes | Law of Property Act, Art. 39; Married Women's Property Act, Art. 7(1); Registered Land Act, Arts. 102-107 |
| Are awareness measures in place to improve women's access to information about marital and inheritance rights? | Yes | Women's Rights Handbook |
| Have anonymized sex-disaggregated data on property ownership been published? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Pension | | |



| | | |
|---|-----|---------------------------------|
| Are incentives in place to increase women's retirement benefits? | No | Insufficient evidence located |
| Is a procedure in place for pension beneficiaries to challenge the decisions of the competent authority regarding their benefits? | Yes | Social Security Appeal Tribunal |

WBL 2.0 distribution of expert opinion responses



*Note: The response options for the second Parenthood question above are formatted as almost no men, some men, about half of all men, most men, almost all men.