

Belize

Women, Business and the Law 2024 (WBL2024) presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Belize City). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **Belize scores 82.5 out of 100.0**. The overall score for Belize is higher than the regional average observed across Latin America and the Caribbean (81.2). Within the Latin America and the Caribbean region, the maximum score observed is 95 (Peru).

Belize - Scores for *Women, Business and the Law 2024*

								
Mobility	Workplace	Pay	Marriage	Parenthood	Entrepreneurship	Assets	Pension	WBL 2024 Index Score
100	75	50	100	60	75	100	100	82.5

Relative Strengths

When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, constraints related to marriage, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, Belize gets a perfect score.

Areas for Improvement

When it comes to laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, laws affecting women's work after having children, and constraints on women starting and running a business, Belize could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for Belize is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women's pay (the WBL2024 Pay indicator). To improve on the Pay indicator, Belize may wish to consider mandating equal remuneration for work of equal value, and allowing women to work in an industrial job in the same way as men.

Recent Reforms

During the past year (October 2nd, 2022 to October 1st, 2023), Belize enacted legislation allowing a woman to apply for a passport in the same way as a man.



Further data details for Belize are available at:
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreeconomies/belize/2024>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
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 outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	Passport Act, Sec. 2; Passports Regulations 2022, Sec. 6(1); Passports (Amendment) Regulations 2023, Secs. 2 and 3; ePassport Application form
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act, Sec. 3; Labour Act 2011, Secs. 42(1)(h) and (3), and 205(1)(c)
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	<i>Criminal:</i> No applicable provisions could be located <i>Civil:</i> Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act, Sec. 16(2)(e), (3) and (4); Labour Act, Secs. 42(1)(h) and (3), and 205(1)(c)
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 in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Domestic Violence Act
	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
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Art. 139(1)
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	Yes	Social Security Act, Sec. 11; Labour Act, Sec. 177
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	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
Entrepreneurship	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Labor Amendment Act 2011, Sec. 42(1)(g)
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	Married Women's Property Act, Arts. 3 and 11
Assets	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	Business Names Act, Arts. 3 and 5
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Married Women's Property Act, Arts. 3 and 4
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	Administration of Estates Act, Art. 54
Pension	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Administration of Estates Act, Art. 54
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Law of Property Act of 1954, Art. 39
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Art. 148(A)(5)(b)
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Social Security Act, Art. 25
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women 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

