

# Barbados

*Women, Business and the Law 2023* (WBL2023) 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 (Bridgetown). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **Barbados scores 80 out of 100**. The overall score for Barbados is lower than the regional average observed across Latin America and the Caribbean (80.9). Within the Latin America and the Caribbean region, the maximum score observed is 95 (Peru).

## Barbados - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2023



### Relative Strengths

When it comes to laws affecting women’s decisions to work, constraints related to marriage, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman’s pension, Barbados gets a perfect score.

### Areas for Improvement

However, when it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, laws affecting women's pay, laws affecting women's work after having children, and constraints on women starting and running a business, Barbados could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for Barbados is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women’s work after having children (the WBL2023 Parenthood indicator). To improve on the Parenthood indicator, Barbados may wish to consider making paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers, making paid leave available to fathers, and making paid parental leave available.

### Recent Reforms

No reforms were observed during the past year (October 2nd, 2021 – October 1st, 2022).



Further data details for Barbados are available at:  
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/barbados/2023>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	Domicile Reform Act, Art. 5
	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?	No	Passport application form; Passport application procedures
	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?	Yes	Employment (Prevention of Discrimination) Act 2020, Secs. 3-5
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act
	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> Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, Sec. 21(2)(a)
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	Safety and Health at Work Act 2005, Sec. 73
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 (Protection Orders) Act; Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) (Amendment) Act
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	Family Law Act, Art. 27
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	Family Law Act, Art. 36(3)
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	No	Employment of Women (Maternity Leave) Act, Sec. 4
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	Yes	National Insurance and Social Security Act, Secs. 15 and 21
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Employment of Women (Maternity Leave) Act, Sec. 6
Entrepreneurship	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 Woman's Act, Arts. 14 and 15
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	Registration of Business Act, Sec. 5
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Assets	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Property Act, Arts. 186-187
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	Succession Act, Arts. 49(3)-(6)
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Succession Act, Art. 49(1)-(2)
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Family Law Act, Arts. 56 and 57
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Family Law (Amendment) Act 2014, Art. 8(b)
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	National Insurance and Social Security Act, Schedule II
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	National Insurance and Social Security Act (Voluntary Pensionable Age) Order, 2007, Sec. 2
	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	National Insurance and Social Security (Benefit) Regulations 1967, Sec. 57