

USU UWLP Releases Research on Best Practices Among Utah Companies Championing Women in 2025

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State leaders frequently emphasize Utah's reputation as a hub of innovation and economic opportunity. Yet, for the 11th consecutive year, WalletHub ranked Utah as the worst state for women's equality, placing it last in "workplace environment," including income disparities and representation in leadership roles. Extensive research continues to confirm that many Utah women are not fully thriving in their workplaces.

Recognizing this long-standing challenge, the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, the [Utah Women & Leadership Project \(UWLP\)](#), and the Cox–Henderson administration launched [100 Companies Championing Women](#) (100 CCW) in 2022. Originally part of the Inspire InUtah campaign, the initiative aimed to highlight Utah businesses that are implementing strategies to recruit better, hire, retain, and advance women at all levels, including entrepreneurs. Due to its success, the program expanded into a three-year effort. A new brief, titled ["100 Companies Championing Women in 2025: Best Practices for Utah Companies,"](#) summarizes data from the third and final year of the campaign.

"Fortunately, many Utah companies are taking the lead in offering initiatives and benefits that make a meaningful difference," said Susan Madsen, founding director of the Utah Women & Leadership Project and report co-author, along with Corinne Clarkson, UWLP research associate.

"Documenting the best practices of these organizations helps employers better understand how to implement policies and cultivate workplace cultures that support women and families."

The 2025 cohort represents a broad range of industries, including finance, healthcare, higher education, manufacturing, nonprofit, marketing, law, technology, and retail. More than half (56%) are headquartered in Salt Lake County, followed by Utah County (22%) with other counties statewide. Companies varied widely in size: 38% employed 10–24 workers, while 11% employed more than 1,000, and 60% have been in operation for over 16 years.

Across the 21 policies and practices evaluated, the most frequently implemented were flexible hours (94%), remote work options (83%), pay equity efforts (82%), diversifying mid-to-senior leadership (72%), and unpaid family leave (71%). Less common, but still notable, were part-time roles with benefits (25%), childcare support (25%), adoption and fertility benefits (20%), and formal job-sharing (5%).

Family-specific support remains a critical area of interest for both employees and employers. Among 2025 companies, 63% offer paid family leave and 71% provide unpaid family leave, with many highlighting policies that include all parents, not just birthing mothers. Over half offer back-to-work maternity supports, including phased returns, flexible schedules, lactation accommodations, or, in some cases, the option to bring infants to work. Childcare support (25%) typically included flexible spending accounts, reimbursement programs, or bonuses; and eight companies offered discounted or on-site childcare.

Flexible work remains a powerful recruiting and retention tool. In addition to flexible hours and remote work, 35% offer compressed work weeks, and nearly half (47%) offer part-time professional roles, some even at senior levels. Companies emphasized that these arrangements strengthen productivity, morale, and retention by allowing employees to manage both work and family responsibilities.

Professional development and leadership initiatives were also key themes – 72% of companies reported intentional efforts to diversify mid- and senior-level leadership, 67% reported having women on their boards, and 58% reported having strategies to recruit women. Additional tools companies used to support women's advancement included mentorship and sponsorship programs (57%), women's employee resource groups (37%), and leadership development programs (35%).

In the “other” category, 82% of companies highlighted pay equity efforts, often involving structured pay scales, regular audits, or third-party compensation studies, and 34% offered tuition reimbursement, reflecting strong employer interest in continued education and skill development.

As the three-year initiative concludes, the findings illustrate how forward-thinking Utah organizations, large and small, are improving workplace cultures, expanding career pathways, and implementing policies that support women and families. The report encourages all employers, including public entities, to compare their current offerings to the practices highlighted by 100 CCW and to consider adopting policies that better support flexibility and long-term advancement.

“We urge all Utah businesses and organizations to consider organizational-level strategies, including family-friendly practices, that help all employees thrive,” Madsen concluded. “Increasing the representation and success of women strengthens Utah’s families, workforce, and economic future.”

The “[A Bolder Way Forward](#)” initiative provides opportunities for Utahns to learn and contribute to meaningful change across 18 areas of focus. For more information, visit the [UWLP website](#). The UWLP is affiliated with the [Jon M. Huntsman School of Business](#) and [USU Extension](#).

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