

USU UWLP Releases Study on Utah Women in the Workplace: Entrepreneurship, Workforce Development, STEM Fields, and Leadership Development

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The Utah State University [Utah Women & Leadership Project](#) (UWLP) released the second of five white papers sharing results of a study conducted in the fall – [Utah Women in the Workplace: Entrepreneurship, Workforce Development, STEM Fields, and Leadership Development](#). The study supports “[A Bolder Way Forward](#),” a statewide movement focused on ensuring that more Utah girls, women, and their families thrive.

The 83-item survey, administered from Oct. 1 to Nov. 19, 2025, included two samples (representative and convenience) totaling 5,212 Utah participants.

“For those who want to understand the perceptions and attitudes regarding the challenges Utah women and girls face, this 48-page report contains critical data that can help,” said lead researcher and author Susan Madsen, UWLP founder/director and USU Extension Professor of Leadership. “We invite the public to view the report in its entirety. This is our third year of data collection, so the report addresses any data changes compared to the 2023 and 2024 surveys.”

Entrepreneurship survey statements:

1. I would like to start a business if I had the opportunity and resources.
2. If I started a business, my family and friends would approve/support my decision.
3. If I started a business, it would grow big enough to employ others.
4. If I were to start a business, I would know how/where to access resources and support.

Some 80% of Utah women agree that their family and friends would approve and/or support their decision to start a business, compared to 77% of men.

“It is interesting to see women’s levels of agreement higher than men’s on this topic,” Madsen said. “Our past research indicates that many Utah women start businesses to accommodate the flexibility needed to manage home and family responsibilities. Perhaps the stronger agreement among women results from having a male partner who can provide a stable income, though more research would be needed to test that assumption.”

Workforce Development survey statements:

Utah women make up approximately 44.2% of the state’s workforce, so it is imperative that there are sufficient pathways for women to get better jobs.

1. I am aware of and know how to access resources and support to attain a quality job.
2. I believe I am currently employable or can become employable within the next 12 to 24 months.
3. My circumstances permit me to maintain successful employment over the next 5 years.
4. I believe I can find successful employment in Utah that works for my family and me.

Nearly 44% of women respondents disagreed or were neutral about accessing resources and support to attain a quality job.

“The survey data shows that a substantial number of women in Utah need help to understand how to access resources and support to ensure they can attain a quality job,” Madsen said. “Not surprisingly, women respondents who were 65 and older were least likely to know how to access resources.”

STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) Fields survey statements:

1. STEM fields are welcoming fields for women and girls in Utah.

2. More women are not needed in STEM fields in Utah.
3. STEM jobs are more complex than jobs in other industries in Utah.
4. Women can successfully advance their careers in STEM industries in Utah.

The majority of Utahns (54%) agree that STEM fields are welcoming for women and girls, with the highest agreement coming from those in Sevier and Millard counties and the lowest from respondents in Summit, Sanpete, Grand, Garfield, and Uintah counties. In addition, men believed STEM fields are more welcoming to women than women believed they are.

Leadership Development survey statements:

1. I aspire to be a leader.
2. Others consider me a leader.
3. I see myself as a leader.
4. There are opportunities and resources around me to help me develop leadership skills.

“It appears that women’s aspiration for leadership is as strong as men’s, which reflects a shift in recent years,” Madsen said. “Extensive research shows that when women and men lead together in equal numbers, benefits spread to families, communities, businesses, and society.”

Nearly 74% of women respondents agreed that they aspire to be leaders. Nearly three-fourths of respondents agree that there are opportunities and resources to develop leadership skills. However, women respondents living in the central and eastern rural county groupings were more likely to agree than women living in Summit and Wasatch counties. In addition, while there were no significant differences across various religious affiliations, women who identified as “very active” in their religions agreed the most, and those who selected “not at all active” agreed the least.

“As Utah decision-makers and residents join to find ways to strengthen the impact of girls and women more effectively, more Utah women and families will feel connected to our state’s well-known mantra: ‘This Is the Place,’” said Madsen. “And when more women can feel like ‘This is Her Place,’ too, we will know Utah is finally becoming a place where women are truly valued.”

April Townsend, research fellow, Utah Women & Leadership Project, is co-author of the report.

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