



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Research Fact Sheet

Women in the Workforce and Leadership

Leadership creates and sustains change in every facet of society. Women have long been denied access to leadership roles. Steady change at the state, federal, and local level to engage more women leaders has spurred an influx of new ideas and perspectives. This fact sheet details the role of women in leadership, how they are perceived, barriers that they face in the workplace, and how women continue to be impactful in various professions.

What is the WNY Women's Foundation doing about it?

The WNY Women's Foundation launched ALL IN in April 2018 as an initiative to promote gender equity in the workplace and create a culture where women are encouraged to move into positions of leadership. The first ALL IN cohort of businesses and organizations have actively participated in learning collaboratives and data collection to promote gender equity in their workplaces. These companies – ranging from a small nonprofit to a large private company with more than 60,000 employees – are making a commitment to equitable workplaces. On an individual level, ALL IN aims to empower young women leaders through mentorship and opportunities to develop their leadership skills and overcome workplace barriers.

More information on the WNY Women's Foundation and the All IN program can be found at www.allinwny.org.

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Perception of Women as Leaders and Barriers to the Workplace

There are many barriers women face when moving into positions of leadership. This derives from how we, as a society, perceive leadership roles, and how that perception impacts women on an individual level. Many women face a toxic work culture, which puts their safety and well-being at risk due to gender-based harassment.

Views about women in leadership roles

- By age 6, girls think they are less talented than boys. Almost 50% of girls are afraid to speak up or to disagree with others for fear they'll be disliked (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Parker, 2018).
- Americans largely see men and women as equally capable when it comes to some key qualities and behaviors that are essential for leadership, even as a majority (57%) say men and women in top positions in business and politics tend to have different leadership styles (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Parker, 2018).
- A majority of Americans (59%) say there are too few women in top leadership positions in politics and in business today, with about 50% saying, ideally, there would be equal numbers of men and women (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Parker, 2018).
- 63% of women enter the workforce with the confidence that they can rise to senior management, compared with 75% of men. By mid-career, only 57% of women still feel that way, compared with 66% of men (Shellenbarger, 2018).
- Almost three-quarters (73%) of women and 81% of men not already in senior leadership positions aspire to reach them (Shook & Sweet, 2018).

Barriers to support and impact of support

- More than 75% of high-ranking women had strong ties to a female-dominated inner circle, or at least strong ties to two or three women whom they communicated with frequently (Yang et al., 2019).
- Women, especially women of color, receive less support from managers than men do (Horowitz et al., 2018).
- Many women beginning their careers are interested in learning from a mentor, however 63% of women have never had a formal mentor (Neal et al., n.d.).
- Employees with mentors are 1.4 times more likely to say they've had a meaningful interaction with a senior leader and 1.5 times more likely to aspire to be a top executive themselves—and this is especially true for women (McKinsey and Company, 2018).

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

- 35% of women in corporate America experience sexual harassment at some point in their careers, from hearing sexist jokes to being touched in an inappropriately sexual way (McKinsey and Company, 2018).
- 55% of women in senior leadership, 48% of lesbian women, and 45% of women in technical fields report they've been sexually harassed (McKinsey and Company, 2018).
- Only 32% of women think that disrespectful behavior toward women is often quickly addressed by their companies, compared to 50% of men. Women are far less confident that reporting sexual harassment will lead to a fair investigation. And they are twice as likely as men to say that it would be risky or pointless to report an incident (McKinsey and Company, 2018).
- One in five employees wants more information on their company's harassment policies, including what to do if they're harassed and how their company handles claims—and women are 50% more likely to want this information (Lean In, 2018).
- Common risk factors that are associated with sexual harassment in the workplace are working in an isolated context, working for tips, lacking legal immigration status, working in a male-dominated job, and working in settings with significant power differentials. In addition, these structural risk factors often intersect and are exacerbated by racism, discrimination, and harassment on the basis of age, disability, or national origin (Shaw et al. 2018).
- Sexual harassment and assault can affect individuals in a number of ways, including their mental and physical health, finances, and opportunities to advance in their careers (Shaw et al. 2018).

Women's Leadership and Participation in Particular Fields of Work

Several sectors of business have been closed off to women for years, and only recently have doors begun to open across certain disciplines. Participation and representation in positions of power and leadership ensure policies and practices that take into account the systemic issues women face. The WNY Women's Foundation is working diligently to continue this cultural shift through our advocacy work to convene and collaborate with local legislators to inform policies that impact women, and with the ALL IN initiative, which educates and empowers businesses to ensure their practices are conducive to empowering women.

Corporate

- Women make up the majority of accountants and auditors in the United States, but very few are CFOs (Catalyst, 2020).
- Among S&P 500 companies, just 25 (5%) have women CEOs, leaving women largely out of the conversation (Catalyst, 2020).
- Women run 37 Fortune 500 companies, a record high at 7.4% (Hinchliffe, 2020).

- Women are dramatically outnumbered in senior leadership. Only about 1 in 5 C-suite leaders is a woman, and only 1 in 25 is a woman of color (McKinsey and Company, 2018).
- Women of color hold 4.6% of board seats at Fortune 500 companies, yet they represent approximately 18% of the population (Catalyst, 2020).
- Employees at female-led organizations more strongly believe in their companies and their strategies. Research also shows gender diversity translates to employee retention and satisfaction, greater productivity and innovation, and improved decision making (Mullen, 2019).

Government

- As of 2022, women occupy 145 (27.1%) of the 535 seats (106 Democratic, 39 Republican) in the United States Congress (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- There are 24 women (24%) serving in the U.S. Senate and 121 women (27.8%) serving in the U.S. House of Representatives (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- Of the 145 women currently serving in Congress: 26 identify as Black, 14 identify as Latina, 10 identify as Asian American/Pacific Islander, 1 identifies as Middle Eastern/North African, and 1 identifies as Native American/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- 390 women (255 Democrats, 135 Republicans) have served in the U.S. Congress to date. (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- Of all the women who have served in the U.S. Congress to date: 49 have identified as Black, 21 as Latina, 15 as Asian American/Pacific Islander, 3 as Middle Eastern/North African, and 2 as Native American/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- Women hold 95 (30.6%) statewide elective executive offices around the country (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- Women hold 561 (28.4%) of state senate seats and 1,736 (32.1%) of state house or assembly seats (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- There are more than five times as many women serving in state legislatures now than in 1971 (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).
- 25.1% of all U.S. cities with more than 30,000 residents had a female mayor (Center for American Women and Politics, 2021).
- There are currently 31 women serving as mayors among the 100 largest cities in the U.S.. Within this group: 7 women identify as Black, 3 as Latina, and 4 as Asian American/Pacific Islander (Center for American Women and Politics, 2022).

Nonprofits/Management

- The likelihood of a woman being hired as a nonprofit CEO decreases by 0.2 percentage points with each million-dollar increase in its revenue (Fulton & VanHuss, 2020).
- Nonprofit organizations are 17% more likely to have a female CEO when between a third and half of the board's voting members are women (Fulton & VanHuss, 2020).
- Few retail managers are women, and even fewer—less than 10%—make it to CEO positions (Hanleybrown, Hawkins, & Medrano, 2019).
- For every 100 men promoted to manager, only 72 women receive those promotions (McKinsey and Company, 2019).
- Women are 21% less likely to be promoted than their male peers (Bayern, 2018).
- Women in entry-level positions make 20% less money than their male peers, decreasing their lifetime earnings (Bayern, 2018).
- Women are 21% less likely than their male counterparts to reach the first level of management (Bayern, 2018).

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)

- Women STEM professionals are concentrated in different fields than men. There are relatively high shares of women in social sciences (65%) and life sciences (48%) (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2022).
- In contrast, there are relatively low shares of women in computer and mathematical sciences (26%) and engineering (16%) (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2022).
- Women make up roughly 48% of the total U.S. workforce, however, women constitute only 34% of the STEM workforce (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2022).
- As of 2022, women identifying as Black, Indigenous, and Latina represent less than 10% of the STEM workforce (National Girls Collaborative Project, 2022).

Impact on the Community and the Economy

With more women in leadership positions, women have a greater ability to influence change and explore new roles. Leadership roles can provide women the opportunity to have greater power to create change and more access to resources. Without this leadership, there will not be the same representation of ideas and understanding of issues that would otherwise exist.

Current Local WNY Women leaders

- The 21 public companies headquartered in Western New York all have CEOs who are men. The same is true of the 66 companies included last year in Business First's Top Private Companies list (Kline, 2019).
- In 2020, there were 44 (17.6%) women on the Buffalo Business First Power 250 List; 51 (18.9%) women when including 20 additional legislators to the 250 total. (Buffalo Business First, 2020).

Women on boards and influencing the economy

- An analysis of roughly 1,800 publicly traded companies found women now account for 15% of all board seats, up from 11% five years prior (Douglas & Rizvic, 2019).
- The share of women sitting on the boards of Fortune 500 companies has more than doubled, from 9.6% in 1995 to 22.2% in 2017 (Pew Research Center, 2018).
- 38.6% of the Fortune 100's board seats—34% of the Fortune 500's board seats—are held by women and minorities, both increases since 2016 (Deloitte, 2018).
- Women are found to outperform men at investing by 1.8% (Stewart, 2018).

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