



# WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION FACT SHEET



## WOMENS VIEW ON LEADERSHIP

Compiled in June 2019

### Politics

- While three-quarters of women (75%) say it's essential that political leaders maintain a tone of civility and respect in politics, men are 14 percentage points less likely to say this (61%).<sup>1</sup>
- While around seven-in-ten women say it's essential that politicians in high offices be compassionate and empathetic (72%) and serve as a role model for children (71%), the shares of men who see these qualities as essential are lower (60% and 59%, respectively).<sup>1</sup>
- Women are also more likely than men to see a willingness to take risks as an essential quality for those in high political offices (50% vs. 40%).<sup>1</sup>
- Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, two-thirds of women (67%) say it's essential that those in high political offices maintain a tone of civility and respect, compared with half of men (50%).<sup>1</sup>
- While 64% of GOP women say it's essential that political leaders be compassionate and empathetic, 46% of Republican men share that view.<sup>1</sup>
- Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, men are more likely than women to say it's essential that political leaders be able to work out compromises (86% vs. 76%).<sup>1</sup>
- Democratic women are more likely than Democratic men to see a willingness to take risks as an essential quality for political leaders to have (49% vs. 34%).<sup>1</sup>

### Business

- About nine-in-ten women (91%) say it's essential that those in top executive business positions provide fair pay and good benefits, a view shared by 77% of men.<sup>1</sup>
- Women are also 14 points more likely than men to say it's essential that business leaders consider the impact of business decisions on society (72% vs. 58%).<sup>1</sup>
- There are also gender gaps on whether it's essential that business leaders stand up for what they believe in, negotiate profitable deals, value people from different backgrounds and be compassionate and empathetic. Women are more likely than men to see all but one of these four qualities as essential for business leaders to have. The exception is negotiating profitable deals: Men are 10 points more likely than women to see this as essential (73% vs. 63%).<sup>1</sup>
- Around eight-in-ten Democratic women (81%) say it's essential that top executives consider the impact of business decisions on society. That view is shared by a smaller share of Democratic men (63%).<sup>1</sup>
- Democratic women are 17 points more likely than Democratic men to see an ability to work well under pressure as essential for business leaders (76% vs. 59%).<sup>1</sup>
- Among Republicans, women are 20 points more likely than men to say it's essential that business leaders be compassionate and empathetic (62% vs. 42%).<sup>1</sup>
- Women are more likely than GOP men to say it's essential that business leaders provide fair pay and good benefits (89% vs. 71%), value people from different backgrounds (64% vs. 46%) and stand up for what they believe in, despite pressure to make a profit (70% vs. 53%).<sup>1</sup>

### Women's Confidence in Leadership Roles

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<sup>1</sup> Men, women differ over some qualities they see as essential for political and business leadership



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- 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.<sup>2</sup>
- Women's lack of self-assurance is often especially visible in meetings where they're outnumbered by men. They speak up less and are interrupted more often by others who criticize or disagree with them, according to a 2016 study of 470 small-group participants.<sup>2</sup>

## **Stigma about Women in Leadership Roles**

- 50% of men think women are well represented when one in 10 leaders is a woman. 30% of women feel the same way<sup>3</sup>
- At 6, girls think they are less talented than boys. Almost 46, almost 50% of girls are afraid to speak up and to disagree with others for fear they'll be disliked. And one in three girls are afraid to lead<sup>3</sup>
- Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are more than twice as likely as Republicans and those who lean Republican to say there are too few women in high political offices (79% vs. 33%). And while 64% of Democrats say gender discrimination is a major reason why women are underrepresented in these positions, only 30% of Republicans agree.<sup>3</sup>
- About seven-in-ten women say there are too few women in high political offices and in top executive business positions; about half of men say the same.<sup>3</sup>
- While about six-in-ten women say gender discrimination is a major obstacle to female leadership in each of these realms, smaller shares of men say this is the case in the corporate world (44%) or in politics (36%).<sup>3</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>
- About three-quarters of women ages 18 to 49 (74%) say there are too few women in top political offices, compared with 63% of women ages 50 and older.<sup>3</sup>
- A majority of Americans (59%) say there are too few women in top leadership positions in politics and in business today, with about half saying, ideally, there would be equal numbers of men and women.<sup>3</sup>

## **Support systems**

- 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.<sup>4</sup>
- Women, especially women of color, receive less support from managers than men do.<sup>5</sup>
- Women get less access to senior leaders than men do. Black women get the least access to senior leaders. Women are more likely than men to report they never have substantive interactions with

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<sup>2</sup> New Strategies Help Women Build Career Confidence

<sup>3</sup> Women and Leadership 2018

<sup>4</sup> Women need other women to get ahead in the workplace, says science

<sup>5</sup> Women in the workplace 2018



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senior leaders about their work. They are also more likely to say they never have informal interactions with senior leaders, such as casual conversations or lunch meetings.<sup>5</sup>

- Employees with sponsors 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.<sup>5</sup>

## **Desire to be leaders**

- Almost three-quarters (73 percent) of women and 81 percent of men not already in senior leadership positions aspire to reach them.<sup>6</sup>

## **Characteristics of a leader**

- Whereas men are socialized to be confident, assertive, and self-promoting, cultural attitudes toward women as leaders continue to suggest to women that it is often inappropriate or undesirable to possess those characteristics<sup>7</sup>
- Women's tendency to diminish and undervalue their professional skills and achievements is in place by adolescence. At the same time, male students overestimate their skills and female students underestimate theirs relative to objective indicators of competence<sup>7</sup>

## **Obstacles**

- Women cited obstacles to advancement as the main source of slow progress, followed by retention. But fewer than 25% of male senior leaders agreed. Instead, male leaders typically cited recruiting as the biggest challenge, with 35% saying that it was an obstacle<sup>8</sup>
- Entry-level women are 18% less likely to get promoted than their male counterparts.<sup>9</sup>
- More than 70 percent of companies say they are committed to diversity, but less than a third of their workers see senior leaders held accountable for improving gender outcomes.<sup>9</sup>

## **Benefits of women leaders**

- Fortune 500 firms that aggressively promote women realize 34% higher profits than those who do not.<sup>9</sup>
- Inclusive organizations have 2.3 times higher cash flow per employee over a three-year period than their non-inclusive counterparts.<sup>9</sup>
- Inclusive teams outperform their peers by 80% in team-based assessments<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> When she rises, we all rise

<sup>7</sup> Barriers and Bias

<sup>8</sup> Leveraging the power of we

<sup>9</sup> Modern guide to equality