
100 Companies Championing Women in 2024: Best Practices for Utah Companies

Setting the Stage

State leaders continue to boast that Utah is at the “forefront of innovative and awe-inspiring economic opportunity initiatives,”¹ with a “robust list of accolades [that] is impressive” (e.g., among top states for affordability, best economic outlook, best state for social mobility, best state to start a business). Yet, for the past nine consecutive years, Utah has been ranked as WalletHub’s worst state for women’s equality.² This includes being placed as 49th of 50 in “Workplace Environment,” based on metrics such as income disparity, higher-income disparity, and the disparity in share of executive positions. Although some continue to justify or even dismiss this persistent ranking as insignificant, the metrics that WalletHub uses align with extensive research that confirms that many Utah women are not thriving in their workplace environments.³ With the current talent shortage and the rising expectations of workers today—and for the state to continue to see economic success well into the future—Utah’s workplaces must create cultures that better support all Utahns.

Research on the importance of implementing flexible and family-friendly policies, programs, and practices in workplaces has been well documented.⁴ In fact, there is a clear, direct link between companies that implement these types of strategies and the retention and advancement of women.⁵ Fortunately, many Utah companies are taking the lead in offering initiatives and benefits that are making a positive difference in their employees’ lives. Highlighting the best practices of these leading organizations can help all of Utah’s employers better understand how to implement policies and create workplace cultures that support women and families.

To address the complex challenge, in 2022, the Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO), the Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP), and the Cox–Henderson Administration partnered on a one-year initiative titled 100 Companies Championing Women (100 CCW). Part of Inspire InUtah campaign’s mandate to support women in the workplace at all levels, the initiative was so successful that it has continued as a multi-year initiative. Specifically, the 100 CCW highlights businesses around the state that have incorporated family-friendly policies and practices and have implemented programs that improve recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing women employees and leaders, including entrepreneurs. The overarching goal is to provide resources for women (e.g., networking, training, funding, and employment) and companies (e.g., strategies, tools, and best practices) that facilitate success now and in the future. This research and policy brief provides a summary of the data collected during the second year of this public campaign.

Study Background

From August 2022 to April 2023, Inspire InUtah advertised the 100 CCW campaign through social media, billboards, and professional networks. The following year, from August 2023 to April 2024, the GOEO and UWLP continued to advertise primarily through newsletters, social media, and professional networks. Companies were instructed to go to the 100 CCW website and complete an online application. The application prompted the nominee to do the following:

- 1) Specify demographics of the company (i.e., number of employees, length of operation),
- 2) Select applicable flexible and family-friendly arrangements that the company currently offers male and female employees (e.g., childcare support, flexible work),
- 3) Select applicable women-focused initiatives or efforts that the company currently offers (e.g., women employee resource groups, women leadership development programs), and
- 4) Write summaries of five policies or programs (as identified in earlier responses) that are especially impactful and/or deserving of highlight.

The following scoring system was used to assess the companies that received nominations: first, the number of family-friendly arrangements and women-focused initiatives were summed, with 21 points possible; the top score was 17 points. Second, five written responses were rated for each company by four independent individuals, from 1 (weak benefit) to 5 (exceptional benefit), for a combined score of 25 possible points. After combining the scores, the researchers evaluated the companies against a threshold, with larger companies having a higher threshold than smaller companies. For the past year, the campaign ran until 100 nominated companies met the threshold for championing status, which happened in June of 2024 (see the Appendix for the list of 100 companies). This brief presents the results of the 2023–2024 100 CCW campaign and provides an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected through the nominations.

Company Demographics

The 100 companies represent a variety of sectors and industries, including finance, higher education, healthcare, insurance, law, manufacturing, marketing, nonprofit, technology, and retail. A count of the Utah home offices for each company indicates that 49.0% are based in Salt Lake County, 26.0% in Utah County, 7.0% in Weber County, 4.0% in both Davis and Summit counties, and 10.0% in other counties throughout Utah. Table 1 provides additional data about the companies.

Table 1: Company Demographics

Category	%
Total Employees	
10–24	31.0%
25–49	13.0%
50–99	13.0%
100–299	22.0%
300–999	11.0%
1,000 or more	10.0%
Length of Operation	
3 years or less	11.0%
4–8 years	16.0%
9–15 years	15.0%
16 years or more	58.0%

Results Overview

The first section provides an overall look at the companies’ reported policies and programs. The remaining results sections are organized by the following categories: 1) family-specific policies and benefits, 2) flexible work policies and benefits, 3) professional development and leadership, and 4) other. In each of these sections, relevant quantitative and qualitative findings are summarized. The qualitative findings were derived from a thematic analysis of the written comments.

Table 2 provides an overview of the percentage of companies offering family-friendly policies and women-focused initiatives; it also compares 2023 and 2024 data. Overall, the two most common policies were flexible work hours and remote work (98.0% and 91.0%, respectively). Other policies and initiatives include pay equity efforts (89.0%), work to diversify managers and leaders at mid to senior levels (84.0%), and paid family leave (69.0%). The least-selected policies and initiatives included formal job-sharing (8.0%), returnships/return to work programs (21.0%), part-time work with benefits (25.0%), and adoption and/or fertility benefits (27.0%).

Compared to the 2023 100 CCW cohort, 2024’s cohort reported similar rates of policies and initiatives, with a few notable shifts from last year. This year’s cohort reported more childcare-related benefits (13.0% increase) and tuition reimbursement programs (24.0% increase). However, 2024’s cohort also reported fewer opportunities for job sharing (13.0% decrease) and fewer employee resource groups (ERGs) for women (17.0% decrease). The declines may be attributable to the fact that larger companies tend to have more established ERGs, and there are fewer large companies with 300 or more employees in this year’s cohort (34.0% in 2023 compared with 21.0% in 2024). It is important to note that comparisons are offered more as a point of interest than as an indicator of trends; variations between company demographics in the two cohorts likely account for most of the differences. As noted previously, all companies met the threshold.

Table 2: Percentage of 100 CCW Offering Family-Friendly Policies and Women-Focused Initiatives From 2023 and 2024 Cohorts

Category	2023 %	2024 %
Family-Specific Policies and Benefits		
Paid Family Leave	76.0%	69.0%
Unpaid Family Leave	66.0%	64.0%
Back-to-Work Maternity Support	68.0%	58.0%
Childcare Support	21.0%	34.0%
Adoption and Fertility Benefits	34.0%	27.0%
Flexible Work Policies and Benefits		
Flexible Hours	90.0%	98.0%
Remote Work	87.0%	91.0%
Part-Time Professional Roles	52.0%	51.0%
Compressed Work Week	40.0%	43.0%
Part-Time Work Benefits	26.0%	25.0%
Job Sharing	21.0%	7.0%
Professional Development & Leadership		
Diversity at Mid to Senior Level	80.0%	84.0%
Strategies to Recruit Women	72.0%	64.0%
Women Board Members	54.0%	58.0%
Mentoring/Sponsorship for Women	65.0%	55.0%
Women Professional Development	56.0%	46.0%
Women Leadership Development	48.0%	38.0%
Women Employee Resource Group	51.0%	34.0%
Returnships	19.0%	21.0%
Other		
Pay Equity	84.0%	89.0%
Tuition Reimbursement	10.0%	34.0%

Table 3 provides an analysis of what percentage of the above 21 categories were covered by each company, averaged across company size. Not surprisingly, the largest companies offered the most benefits.

Table 3: Average Policy and Initiative Coverage by Company Size

Company Size by Total Employees	Average # of Policies & Initiatives	As % of 21 Categories
Fewer than 25	10.0	47.5%
25–49	9.6	45.8%
50–99	10.5	50.2%
100–299	11.3	53.7%
300–999	12.1	57.6%
1,000 or more	13.8	65.7%

Family-Specific Policies and Benefits

The most common family-specific policies and benefits offered by the 2024 100 CCW include paid family leave (69.0%), back-to-work maternity support (58.0%), unpaid family leave (64.0%), childcare support (34.0%), and adoption and fertility benefits (27.0%).

Paid family leave was offered by 69 companies, more than half of which shared additional details of the benefits by describing the importance they place on meeting the needs of employees' and their families. Companies offered new mothers anywhere from 3 to 26 weeks of paid leave, with 6 weeks being most common. In addition, companies noted they offered paid leave for secondary caregivers, ranging from 1 to 16 weeks. A positive and notable update for the 2024 cohort is the increasing use of "paid parental leave," to describe leave benefits, and at least 9 companies offered the same amount of parental leave to both mothers and fathers; two companies specifically mentioned that their parental leave policies were in place to encourage both male and female employees to participate in balanced caregiving and family life.

Of the 58 companies that offered benefits to accommodate new mothers returning to work, 19 shared information about offering reduced, flexible, or hybrid work schedules. Other strategies included providing educational support and resources to new parents, lactation rooms, and child-friendly work environments. One larger company even provided a stipend for expectant mothers to purchase a maternity wardrobe.

Of the 100 CCW, 64.0% offered unpaid leave. This leave was provided for several reasons, including when employees' needs go beyond the paid leave already offered, when positions are part-time and not covered by full-time benefits, or when a small company does not offer paid leave but will work with their employees as needed. Nearly all companies offering unpaid leave highlighted the importance of supporting employees' lives outside of work, using statements such as, "family comes first," "family before business," and "focus on what matters most."

In addition, 27 companies also offered adoption/fertility benefits. Most of the benefits mentioned were similar to those offered for birth parents (such as paid leave). A few larger companies stood out in terms of supporting employees trying to grow their families, with three companies providing up to \$40,000 to cover fertility treatments, and two companies providing between \$10,000 and \$30,000 to assist with the cost of adoption or surrogacy.

Childcare remains a top concern for Utah's working parents.⁶ One notable finding is that 34.0% mention some type of benefit support for childcare, with many offering flex spending accounts, childcare reimbursement, or cash bonuses for the birth of a child. Eight companies offered on-site childcare to employees, and in some cases even offered services to the surrounding community. Two companies also provided a back-up care benefit that employees could use to find alternative, temporary care for anyone who counted on the employee for their primary care—including adult children or elderly relatives. Finally, two organizations specifically mentioned having child-friendly workspaces and encouraging employees to bring their infants and children with them as needed. Many of the companies offering childcare benefits described wanting to support employees by helping them take care of their families. Employers posed a variety of childcare solutions, similar to those outlined in this UWLP [resource](#) for employers.

Flexible Work Policies and Benefits

The most common flexible work policies and benefits offered by the 100 CCW included flexible hours (98.0%), remote work (91.0%), and part-time professional roles (51.0%). Less commonly selected options included offering a compressed work week (43.0%), part-time employment with benefits (25.0%), and job sharing (7.0%).

For a second year, "flexible work hours" was one of the top three benefits selected during the nomination process. This flexibility for full- and part-time employees included choosing hours and shifts that allow employees to tend to the needs of their families (e.g., school schedules, medical appointments, sickness), working set core hours along with flex hours, providing autonomy for schedules and hours worked as long as tasks are completed, and/or holding virtual meetings at convenient times. Of the 98 companies with flex work hours, 56 expressed strong support for meeting the needs of women. Comments reflecting this support included, "We wanted to attract experienced professionals that have full lives outside of work," "We recognize the importance of fostering an inclusive environment where career ambitions can thrive alongside family commitments," "We love working moms," and "We prioritize women in the workforce through policies designed to accommodate their unique needs."

Most companies (91.0%) also offered remote work options for all or some of their employees' work hours. Many opted to maintain "COVID-era" work-from-home practices because of the benefits to their employees, including reduced commute time, decreased need for childcare, and overall improvements in "work-life balance." One company described their fondness for remote work with the following statement: "No one has to drive home in rush hour traffic. Saving [our employees'] sanity and the planet!"

Of the remaining selections, part-time professional positions were available in 51 of the 100 organizations, which included some of the most senior leaders in a few workplaces. Fifteen companies commented about prioritizing professional part-time positions specifically because of the quality and skillset of the available workforce. Interestingly, 25 companies offered full-time benefits to part-time employees. Compressed work week was an option in 43.0% of 100 CCW, with some offering 4/10-hour days and others 3/12-hour days. Finally, of the 7 companies offering formal job sharing, three highlighted the benefit of cross-training employees or having a network of prepared contractors as a way to nurture a culture of support for employees when they needed extra flexibility.

Professional Development and Leadership

The most common professional development and leadership practices offered by the 100 CCW include companies' efforts to have gender diversity at both mid and senior levels (84.0%), strategies to recruit women (64.0%), and efforts to increase the number of women serving on the board (58.0%), closely followed by mentoring and sponsorship programs for women (55.0%). Just under half of the organizations provided

professional development specifically focused on women (46.0%) and had ERGs for women (34.0%). Fewer had specific women leadership development programs or opportunities (38.0%), and only 21.0% offered return-to-work or returnship programs.

Regarding companies' efforts to have gender diversity at both mid and senior levels, 46 companies provided additional text on this topic. These comments focused on the importance of seeing women succeeding at every level of their organizations and highlighted the intentional creation of pathways for women's career progression, the benefit of stronger representation of the client base, and women's presence in C-Suite positions. According to some of the nominators, achieving greater levels of female leadership, especially in male-dominated industries, continued to be a concerted effort with positive results. As one application stated, "Diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences are essential for driving innovation and achieving business success." One submission read, "It is purposeful that we have equity among our senior management," and another stated that company leaders "strive to make our company a place for women to thrive as well as demonstrate our company's commitment to supporting women in their professional growth."

In terms of companies' strategies to recruit women, 40 companies provided additional details about their efforts. Several nominators mentioned the importance of using inclusive language in job postings, having diverse hiring panels, and recruiting through participation in women-centered job fairs, professional organizations, and even "Girl Scout troops." Nominators described intentionality as being critical to organizational success, with several mentioning the Parity-LEDGE, "Drive to 45 by 2025," and other internal goals and metrics. One company summarized their efforts as follows: "As we continue to grow, attracting a diverse workforce remains top priority. . . . We aim to build a more balanced and diverse team that reflects the rich tapestry of talents and perspectives in the broader community."

Of the 58 companies who had or were increasing presence of women on boards, 22 provided additional comments, with most explaining their current board composition. The gender composition of the board was a strategic and intentional decision for these companies, and those who reported increases of women on their board cited anywhere from 10.0% to 56.0% more female leadership. Interestingly, three of the companies were female owned and had all-female boards.

Among the 55.0% of companies selecting the option of offering mentorship and/or sponsorship programs, 35 commented on how these programs worked in their organizations. The programs included a mix of "flexible" to more "structured." Mentoring was varied, including one-on-one coaching; group or circle mentoring; monthly lunches for mentors/mentees to meet, sometimes combined with leadership workshops; and informal to formal mentee/mentor pairing. They also ranged from short-term (3 months) to longer-term (2 years) intervals.

In each case, mentoring and sponsorship programs for women aimed to create opportunities and growth, using phrases such as, "offer advice," "navigate career paths," "advocate," "provide visibility," "growth-oriented culture," and "gain confidence." Two applications described the positive result of ongoing mentoring efforts over years, including one that read, "I've had 9 employees start their *own* businesses," and the other described how a mentee went on to become a director and owner who had "mentored 3 other women returning to the workforce."

Many of the 100 CCW also stated that they provided women-specific professional development opportunities and had women ERGs. While only a handful of companies (38.0%) offered formal internal women's leadership programs aimed at advancing women to higher positions; nearly half (46.0%) supported women's development in a variety of ways, including sponsoring monthly speakers or workshops and hosting annual women's conferences. In the case of 34 companies, these opportunities were part of a formal ERG that focused on professional development, networking, recruitment, mentoring, and education for women.

Although only 21 of the 100 companies offered return-to-work (returnship) programs, this emerging topic generated ongoing interest and discussion. Four companies provided additional information about their programs, which included elements of training, part-time work, support systems, and mentoring with options to move into full-time work. One company representative wrote of their company's program for returning workers as follows: "Many of them worried that their skills wouldn't be as sharp having been out of the professional world for several years, and we've made sure our quality manager was available to mentor and support them in getting back up to speed and developing professionally. Most of the time, their fears are unwarranted, and they are able to dive right back in."

Other

This final category of "Other" included three subcategories. The most common was pay equity and attendant practices and policies (89.0%), with tuition reimbursement (34.0%) and other (2.0%), being discussed as well.

First, pay equity efforts were a priority to 89 of the 100 CCW, and 53 of these organizations highlighted their efforts in the qualitative portion of the nomination. Many nominators discussed increasing transparency, while others talked about ensuring that wages and benefits be based on market data with an eye to internal equity by gender and race. In many cases, the senior leadership team evaluated pay equity during every annual review to ensure consistency, but some organizations described conducting an analysis or evaluation twice a year or even quarterly. Comprehensive salary evaluations, surveys, or audits have become a common practice for most of the 100 CCW. Considering compensation across roles was also noted as important since market rates for some roles were

higher than others. “Paying what a job is worth” or “skill-based compensation” were terms used in several submissions. Consistency across departments and pay scales was mentioned several times. One nominator explained, “We invest in analysis and transparency to demonstrate our commitment to fair compensation.”

Second, tuition reimbursement was offered by 34 companies, 16 of which provided comments. There were organizations with very robust reimbursement benefits (up to \$15,000 per year), while others mentioned tuition reimbursement with added flexibility (part-time positions, for example), or provisions for an “Education Stipend” to “support professional development and foster a culture of curiosity.”

Other comments included the importance of companies supporting the overall wellbeing of employees, as well as providing a welcoming and supportive environment. Commonly used words to describe the goals, cultures, and environments of the 100 CCW are supportive, fulfilling, caring, welcoming, inclusive, committed, flexible, equitable, diverse, encouraging, and nurturing.

Summary & Recommendations

Analyzing the benefits, policies, and practices of the organizations recognized in the 2024 100 CCW provides a sampling of what cutting-edge Utah businesses of all sizes are doing to support employees and their families. By highlighting Utah businesses that have incorporated family-friendly policies for all employees, as well as those that have implemented developmental programs to advance women, the 2024 100 CCW initiative provides information about best practices that companies—large or small—can consider. As mentioned previously, national and international research continues to find that these types of organizational strategies are linked to improved recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing of women employees at all levels.⁷ The present research highlights the importance of family-friendly practices for men as well.

¹ Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity. (n.d.). *Accolades & rankings*. <https://business.utah.gov/accolades/>

² McCann, A. (2023, August 21). *Best & worst states for women’s equality*. WalletHub. <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-women-equality/5835>

³ Scribner, R. T., Madsen, S. R., & Townsend, A. (2021, November 4). *Sexist comments & responses: Study introduction and overview*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/blog/2021/sexist-comments-and-responses-intro-and-overview>

⁴ Lean In & McKinsey & Company. (2022). *Women in the workplace: 2022*. https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured_insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women_in_the_workplace_2022/women-in-the-workplace-2022.pdf

⁵ Bohnet, I. (2016). *What works: Gender equity by design*. Belknap Press.

⁶ Madsen, S. R. (2024, January 17). *Childcare & Pre-K programs research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project.

<https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/childcare-research-summary.pdf>; Blackburn, R. C. & Darowski, E. S. (2023, November 1). *Childcare—*

We recommend that all employers compare their current offerings to see how they align with the list of family-friendly policies and women-focused initiatives found in Table 2. Of course, it is important to remember that this study includes only 100 of the tens of thousands of companies operating in the state of Utah. Although each entity is unique in terms of challenges, opportunities, and resources, there are options for all Utah companies to create more inclusive workplaces for women by being thoughtful about ways to support all employees and their families most effectively. Since workplaces also include public entities (e.g., local and state governments, schools, and universities), we also encourage these entities to do the same. Additionally, state legislators have the opportunity to consider and support research-based public policies that will help Utahns have more family-friendly workplace environments.

There are several important resources and tools for companies in Utah to learn more. The UWLP has an “[Organizational Strategies Toolkit](#)” that brings together related resources. In addition, the “[Organizational Strategies & Workplace Culture](#)” area of focus for [Utah’s Bolder Way Forward](#) has established statewide goals that offer next steps for organizations interested in implementing strategic policies and practices to improve the experience of women in the labor force. Finally, WLI’s [ElevateHER Challenge](#) features ways to help companies start and continue powerful conversations.

Conclusion

When businesses consider organizational-level strategies, initiatives, and programs, including family-friendly practices and policies that support all employees and help them thrive, Utah can increase the representation of women in businesses around the state, which is important to ensure more women and their families can thrive. Strengthening the impact of women will strengthen Utah’s economy and communities.

What Utahns need to know now: A 2023 update. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/snapshot/51.pdf>;

⁷ Lean In & McKinsey & Company. (2022); UNICEF. (n.d.). *Redesigning the workplace to be family-friendly: What governments and businesses can do*. <https://www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development/family-friendly-policies>

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APPENDIX

100 Utah Companies Championing Women - 2024

Adobe	Dough Mama	Powerhouse Events
AGS Law	Especially For You	Qualtrics
Alpine Distilling	ExpertVoice	Salt & Honey Market
Ancestry®	Familia America, LLC	Saprea
Angel Advocates, PLLC	FilterBuy	Savage
Angel Studios	Foley & Lardner LLP	Seekhaven Family Crisis & Resource Center
Bennett Communications	Food and Meat Co-op	Serenity Recovery & Wellness
Best Friends Animal Society	Gabb	Solo Solutions LLC
Better City	Gathre	Space Dynamics Laboratory at Utah State University
Big-D Construction	GoEngineer	Staker Parson Companies
Black Desert Resort	Hale Center Theater Orem	Suazo Business Center
Black Diamond Gymnastics and Sports Center	iMPact Utah	Suzy's Senior Companionship Services
Bunny James Boxes	Jen Weaver Catering	Tanner LLC
Capita Financial Network	Jones & DeMille Engineering	Texas Instruments
Catholic Community Services of Utah	JP Morgan Chase & Co.	The Children's Center Utah
CBRE	Just Ingredients	The City Journals
Cedar Bear Naturales, Inc.	Kaddas Enterprises, Inc.	The Mom Pod Company
Christopherson Business Travel	Kiln	The Refuge Utah
Citrus Pear	Kirton McConkie	The Synergy Company
City of Orem	Larson & Company CPAs	TriTel Networks
Clean Simple Eats	Life Balance Recovery	Uintah Special Service District 1
Clearlink	LSI	Universal Synaptics
Community Development Corporation of Utah	Maple Lake Academy	Utah Community Action
Compass Minerals	McKinnon-Mulherin	Utah Innovation Fund
Culinary Crafts	Mixhers	Utah State University
Davis Technical College	Momentous	VASA Fitness
Declarative Labs, LLC	Moog	Vasion
Denali Therapeutics Inc	MX Technologies	VLCM
Dentons Durham Jones Pinegar	My Utah Agents	Weber State University
Discovery Gateway Children's Museum	Nani Swimwear	Westminster University
Domo	Neighborhood House	Women of the World
Dorai Home	Nellie's Custom Draperies	Women's Global Alliance
	Pack Tax	YCC Family Crisis Center
	Paramount Machine	
	Peace House	