

## **Utah Women’s Equality Report Breakfast—Discussion Summary**

*December 2, 2021*

This document summarizes the table discussions during the Women’s Equality in Utah report release event with Zions Bank. Thirteen tables of thought leaders had 25 minutes to discuss ways we can improve Utah’s women’s equality scores in the following areas: education, business, and government. Thus, those areas guide the organization for this document. However, an overall question emerged that might help these efforts move forward:

***How do we leverage our influence and dollars towards programs and organizations already addressing these issues?***

### **GOVERNMENT**

1. **Role of men:** Men should take ownership for understanding the need for a diverse political body, and their role in encouraging women to run for office. Consider who you are ‘tapping.’ It is not a zero-sum game; a rise in tide lifts all boats. Be a gateway rather than a gatekeeper.
2. **Listen to women:** Government and elected leaders need to listen to the one woman in the room, and not discount her perspective as not being the ‘norm.’ If the issue affects women more, ask for their ideas (e.g., childcare policy). However, listen to women in all situations.
3. **Fund women candidates:** Women’s campaigns need funding support. Fundraising opportunities tend to be segregated via social circles.
4. **Women of color need role models:** If they see it, they can dream it.
5. **Implications of women policymakers:** More women in office (and party leadership) will mean women’s needs being better met (e.g., teacher pay, childcare, family-friendly policy, healthcare). Additionally, more women in municipal offices mean more women in higher levels down the road (pipeline).
6. **Shift mindsets regarding raising money and their inherent value:** It is not about raising money to support the person; it’s about raising money for a person who wants to do good for the community and solve problems. That will make it easier to ask “Can you support my campaign?” Women are already serving their community in so many ways; you can do this!
7. **Challenge assumptions:** Women tend to think raising money is difficult and uncomfortable, they aren’t qualified (men are), or they need established financial support. Women need guidance, support, and encouragement. Pool together resources to support those programs that exist to help women into office (e.g., Real Women Run, WLI, the PAC Utah Women & Politics).
8. **Start young:** Engage the young generation in leadership opportunities, campaigns, civic engagement opportunities (including boards and commissions, municipal seats, etc.).
9. **Strategies for getting women into politics:** guest speaking opportunities, sharing known possibilities, male allies encouraging women to run, current elected officials encouraging women to be their predecessors.
10. **Barriers to involvement:** Consider everyone in structural decisions. For example, board and commission meetings at 7pm aren’t ideal for mothers.

## EDUCATION

1. **Education impacts all aspects of life:** health, earnings, flexibility/control, and opportunities. Education is a huge lever that impacts business and government.
2. **Address barriers and home insecurities:** A hungry, unhoused, abused, or traumatized child cannot learn effectively.
3. **Fund our values and invest in teachers:** This women-dominated profession isn't valued commensurate to the benefits to society, although we tend to proclaim how much we value education. Take politics out of it, and fund our values.
4. **Reimagine training:** Custom-fit programs, returnship, and apprenticeship programs to increase pathways into higher-paid roles, acknowledging skill development for non-paid responsibilities (e.g., home, volunteer work). That acknowledgement could be in the form of credits or certificates. Encourage technical skills schools and programs. Offer paid internship and apprenticeships.
5. **Start young:** Young girls need to understand that more education means more flexibility, not certain careers that perpetuate occupational segregation. Early childhood education (full day kindergarten) has long term effects on life outcomes. Education creates competency and capacity at a younger age.
6. **Realize implications:** Educated women are not staying here (nor moving here) due to realized or imagined lack of opportunity and state reputation.
7. **Educate men:** Women being left out of the 'norm' has meant menstruation products haven't been provided in schools, thought if affects half the population. Men/partners should learn the importance of egalitarian relationships to women's equality, and their role in childcare and home responsibilities. UWLP could provide training materials or resources guiding Utah men.
8. **Strategies of higher 8<sup>th</sup> grade math scores:** Better quality of math teachers than can teach to diverse ways of learning. Offer after-school tutoring, and ensure lower scores are not a case of limited in thinking

## BUSINESS

1. **Eliminate painful workforce re-entry points:** Women who have stepped away after spending any number of months/years caring for their family are intimidated and tend to disengage from labor force. Fund and promote [Lt. Governor's Returnship Program](#), and other programs like [TechMoms](#). Incorporate these programs into chambers of commerce.
2. **Develop inclusive recruiting practices and environments:** Promote equitable opportunities for open positions by including women in the pool of candidates. Create [Employee Resource Groups](#) and encourage women to participate. If on a board or at the executive/management level, invite everyone to participate, including the women who are often overlooked. When businesses are equal, no need for a separate focus on women. Everyone should have a chance to speak, or asked to speak. Then they need to be listened to.
3. **Address the culture:** A culture/paradigm shift is needed regarding occupational segregation, or what positions are meant for women. Evaluate teacher/nursing pay vs. business/tech and the

systems that can and do enable women to succeed and those that don't. Acknowledge that women don't need to work more, instead, their unpaid labor needs to be valued appropriately.

4. **Increase awareness of perceptions of women and girls from a young age:** Mentors, business leaders, and ecclesiastical leaders need to show girls they can do whatever they want, and show boys that women can do whatever they want.
5. **Institute training on unconscious bias:** Some sexist comments are heard from a place of curiosity; training is needed to eliminate blinders. There are microaggressions caused by unconscious bias that training could address situations such as a lack of interest, lack of (or minimal) respect and trust, and blind assumptions. This needs to be a continual conversation, not a one and done training. Effective unconscious bias training much be designed rigorously and based on the latest research and pedagogical practices.
6. **Address pay and benefits that help women:** Increase minimum wage, institute or increase paid parental leave for both mothers and fathers, offer childcare support, and consider how to scale existing childcare programs and businesses.
7. **Reimagine training and job creation:** Increase trade and tech programs for women and fund and promote the Custom Fit program. Job fairs need to take a targeted look at what is promoted for women and improve the offerings. Flexible programs, returnship and apprenticeship programs to increase pathways into higher-paid roles, acknowledging skill development for non-paid responsibilities (home, volunteer work). That acknowledgement could be in the form of credits or certificates. Encourage technical skills schools and programs. Offer paid internship and apprenticeships.
8. **Fund women:** Women entrepreneurs need access to funding. Business ambassadors are needed to seed business ideas by women and youth.
9. **Institute mentorship and allyship programs:** We need examples of men in leadership who support women. Male allies and industry leaders are needed to mentor women.
10. **Ask for what you want:** Women should think about what they want, strive towards that path, and set appropriate boundaries. Participate in self-empowerment and confidence training.

## ADDITIONAL

1. **Address domestic and sexual violence:** Women not feeling safe at home or in their community results in barriers generally not felt by men. Need policies, programs, and support for survivors.
2. **Assess the role of University of Utah, Intermountain Healthcare, and other organizations regarding healthcare affordability:** Leverage healthcare provider and academic roles in the community to study doctor visit affordability, and educate women on access.

### Link to Full Report:

[Women's Equality in Utah: Why Utah Is Ranked as the Worst State, and What Can Be Done](#)