



ADVANCING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Evidence and Insights

AURORA
Women and Girls Foundation



Demographic
Perspectives

UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH
CONNECTICUT

USJ

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This research report catalogs the benefits associated with women in leadership roles for corporate and public sectors, presents effective strategies for building public and private leadership pipelines for women, and identifies education and training opportunities that can prepare women for leadership roles.

The research objective was twofold: to highlight the progress that women have made in management and leadership roles, and to pinpoint the areas where continued and accelerated change is needed.

The strategies to increase the percentage of women in leadership and senior management have made businesses more innovative and more attractive to prospective clients and investors.ⁱ Research has shown that balanced senior management teams in both the corporate and public sectors make better decisions, have broader perspectives, and have more informed discussions. Executive teams that increase gender diversity are more open to change but less comfortable with financial risk, and when there are more women in senior management, “firms are more profitable, more socially responsible, safer [less risk] and have higher quality customer experiences.”ⁱⁱⁱ Research also shows that women are more likely to challenge the status quo and become catalysts for internal change and innovation.

To improve business and corporate cultures, governance, and, ultimately, profits, how do we increase the number of women in leadership positions in corporations? How do we create a robust pipeline of women moving into corporate management? How do we finally move beyond opportunity and earnings towards true parity between men and women in the labor force? The supporting evidence of research on women in the labor force, education and earnings data in the U.S., and the consistent patterns found in Connecticut underscore the difficulty of both understanding and changing the progress of women working in public and private sectors in America.

The Aurora Women and Girls Foundation and the University of Saint Joseph collaborated with Demographic Perspectives to provide a framework to better understand how to more effectively prepare women for leadership roles. We synthesized data and research for the U.S. and Connecticut, and integrated leadership insights from interviews with senior executive women in Connecticut. The results provide recommendations to support and encourage women as they navigate complex organizational environments.

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NATIONAL RESEARCH ON WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

In the United States today, women make up close to half of the civilian labor force (47% in 2023), according to Bureau of Labor Statistics dataⁱⁱⁱ, and more than 75 million women ages 16 and older are currently working full- or part-time or looking for work. Among this population, approximately 48 million women fall within the prime working age range of 25 to 54 years old, and the participation rate for this group is 77%.^{iv}

Women's gains have been part of broader social trends that include greater access to higher education. According to the 2023 Current Population Survey, women outnumber men in the U.S. college-educated workforce, now making up 51% of those ages 25 and older. More bachelor's degrees have gone to women than to men each year since the early 1980s. Among people of prime working age in 2024, women hold 55% of associate's degrees, 53% of bachelor's degrees and 56% of advanced degrees.^v

Yet, despite significant increases in women's labor force participation and higher educational attainment, leadership in both the public and private sectors remains disproportionately white and male.

Over the last decade, women in corporate America have achieved notable leadership gains. According to research from McKinsey, higher level executive representation rose from 17% in 2015 to 29% in 2024 in the United States. However, in 2024, women of color hold just 7% of executive roles—showing almost no significant progress since 2017.

Compounding these hurdles, the gender wage gap for prime-age workers (25 to 54 years old) holds steady at 20%. Analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) data (2015–2019) confirms this figure has not changed since the 1960's and indicates a lack of economy-wide movement on pay equity.^{vi} The 20% gap compares wages for women and men without regard for differences in educational backgrounds, work experiences, or the nature of their jobs. After controlling for the factors that are captured in the U.S. CPS data, the analysis shows that most of the 20% gap – 18 percentage points – cannot be explained.^{vii}

While attaining postsecondary education offers economic mobility for Black and Hispanic women in the United States, and they continue to experience a steady increase in successfully earning college



degrees, they are significantly less likely to achieve management and professional positions than White women and White male counterparts.^{viii}

Apprenticeships provide an important opportunity and paid, structured on-the-job training for those entering the labor force to work in their field of choice and develop both qualifications and networks in high-demand, well-paying occupations. While these apprenticeships allow women to earn credentials while avoiding debt, women remain underrepresented (approximately 14% in 2023) and often face barriers like harassment, lack of childcare, and the need for mentorship in male-dominated industries. Over 60% of women in apprenticeships are concentrated in healthcare support, education, and personal services, which often offer lower pay.^{ix} Black and Hispanic women, specifically, have the lowest median hourly earnings of all of those in apprenticeships.^x More efforts are needed to improve women's access to and retention in apprenticeships that lead to high-paying careers.

Goldman Sachs GMI analyzed public disclosures on gender diversity made by U.S.-headquartered

firms included in the S&P 1500 Index. Although the companies of the Index change over time, and there are known data limitations, the general trends these firms display are representative of corporate America broadly. Research shows that across the firms that have disclosed gender-diversity metrics for 2018, women on average constituted about 40% of all employees and 33% of managers, but just 5% of CEOs and 21% of directors.

By Industry. An additional examination of these same data by industry shows that over the last five years, on average, in the healthcare, consumer services, and financial sectors, women have made up about 54% of all employees, but only 40% of managers (a 14-percentage point difference).^{xi} By contrast, the differential between the share of female employees and managers in the real estate, utilities, materials, industrials, and communication services sectors is only about 5-percentage points. (It is worth noting that women make up only one-third of employees and managers in utilities, materials, and industrials.)



THE DATA BEHIND WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT IN CONNECTICUT

Connecticut state data, with strong labor force participation and high education attainment for women in the state, provide a microcosm of what is happening with women in management nationally.

Progress Over Time. Over the past 15 years, women in Connecticut have made significant progress in holding a larger share of managerial positions. Figure 1 uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey^{xii} to show that, in 2010, women held 38% of the managerial positions in Connecticut, and this increased to 43% in 2024, a growth of 5 percentage points.

The right four columns of Figure 1 demonstrate the uneven progress of Connecticut women holding

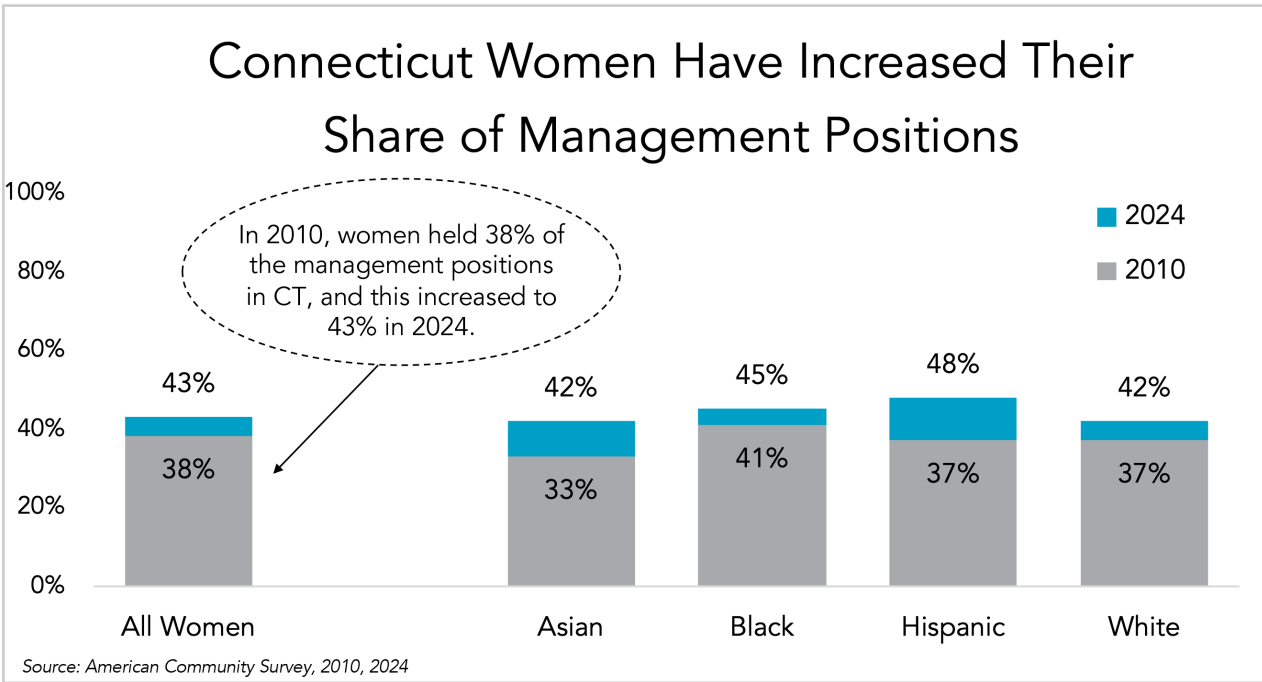


Figure 1

managerial positions within racial/ethnic categories. From 2010 to 2024, Asian and Hispanic women had stronger growth, Asian women improving by 9 percentage points, and Hispanic women by 11 percentage points, while Black and White women’s share grew closer to the overall 5 percentage points (Black: 4 percentage points; White: 5 percentage points).

In 2024, in comparison to the 43% of all women who hold managerial positions, Asian and White women hold about the same percentage (42%), while Black women and Hispanic women hold a higher share of managerial positions (Black: 45%; Hispanic: 48%).

Despite good, solid managerial growth over time, Figure 2 shows that while women comprise almost half of the total Connecticut workforce in 2024, their overall share of managerial positions lags (43% of managerial positions vs. 49% of total workforce). Only Hispanic women comprise 48% of both the total workforce and of managerial positions.

In 2024, Connecticut Women's Share of All Managers Still Lags Behind Their Share of the Total Labor Force					
	All Women	Asian Women	Black Women	Hispanic Women	White Women
% Managers	43%	42%	45%	48%	42%
% Labor Force	49%	48%	53%	48%	48%

Figure 2

Median Earnings. Women in management in Connecticut are nowhere near parity with men in terms of their median earnings. In 2024, women in full-time managerial positions had a median income of \$100,217 compared to \$131,190 for men; women managers' median income was 76% of that of men.

Women in Top Leadership. The Census Bureau's American Community Survey also tracks women and men in 'Top Executive' positions.¹ In 2010 women held 26% of Top Executive positions in Connecticut, and this increased to 31% in 2024, a growth of 5 percentage points. Another way to look at Connecticut women's progress is the actual number of women in Top Executive positions. That number grew from approximately 7,800 in 2010 to 12,000 in 2024, a 56% increase, and a significantly larger increase than the 25% increase that men experienced during that time.

Education. Women have taken the lead in Connecticut for college degrees, which should have an impact on the composition of the next generation of State leaders. Of the degrees offered by Connecticut colleges and universities in the 2023-24 academic year, 67% of associate's degrees, 58% of bachelor's degrees, 58% of master's degrees, and 60% of doctoral degrees were awarded to women. (See Figure 3.)^{xiii}

MEDIAN INCOME FOR FULL-TIME MANAGERS IN 2024

WOMEN: \$100,217

MEN: \$131,190

WOMEN/MEN=76%

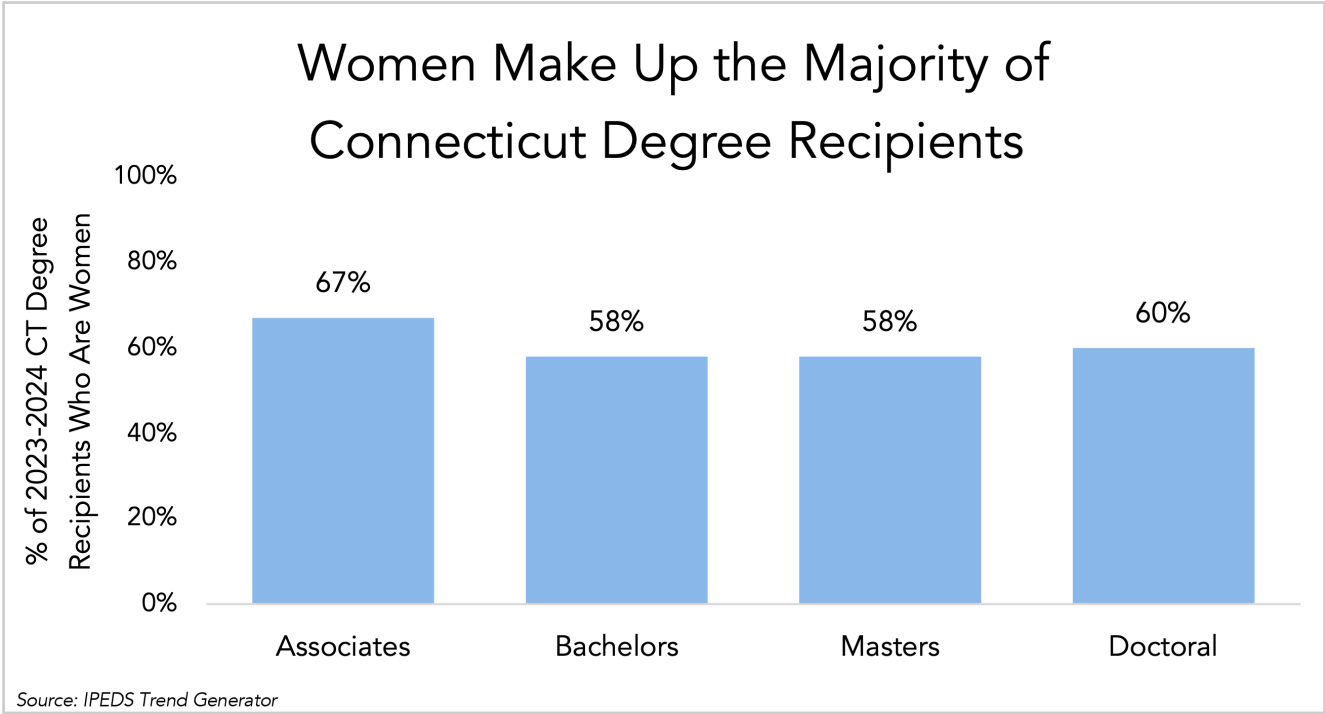


Figure 3

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau and the associated Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system define "Top Executive Positions" (SOC 11-1011) as "individuals who determine and formulate policies and provide overall direction of companies or public/private sector organizations."

IN SUMMARY

The analysis of national U.S. data, along with similar patterns seen in Connecticut, highlights a clear but challenging reality: advancing women in corporate America is both difficult to fully understand and slow to meaningfully change. Women have made great strides over time in leadership in corporate America, but there are still significant issues. While data show ongoing gaps in representation, pay, and leadership, it does not always capture the less visible factors—such as workplace culture, access to mentorship and sponsorship, and unspoken expectations—that shape women’s career paths.

The fact that these patterns appear consistently at both the national and state level suggests that the barriers are systemic, not isolated. As a result, progress has been uneven and often slower than intended, hindered by fragmented strategies and insufficient sustained accountability. Together, these findings point to the need for more coordinated, data-informed approaches that address both the measurable outcomes and a better understanding/ coordinated approach to changing the underlying workplace dynamics influencing women’s advancement.

The following insights from women leaders in Connecticut represent the qualitative data that is so often missing from the analysis of the labor force progress of women in corporate America.

CONNECTICUT WOMEN LEADERS

Leadership success is driven less by linear career planning and more by continuous learning, deep preparation, confidence grounded in competence, and support networks.



Angela Kahrman

Retired, former Head of TIAA Wealth Business Enablement & President & CEO TC Services, TIAA Financial Services



Andrea Barton Reeves

Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Social Services

INSIGHTS FROM CONNECTICUT WOMEN LEADERS

We conducted interviews with five women in senior leadership roles in Connecticut and distilled their leadership insights into actionable recommendations. The interviews provided understanding of how they see the trajectory of their careers and the opportunities and pathways they would suggest for early- and mid-career women who are striving for leadership roles. This applied research effort was designed to turn lived leadership experiences into clear, practical insights that can inform action. By drawing directly from the real-world experiences of leaders, the study moves beyond data to identify what works in practice -- highlighting specific strategies, challenges, and decision-making approaches that can guide organizations and individuals seeking to strengthen leadership pathways. The interviews were future-facing to inform workforce development and leadership preparation for the next generation of women in CT.

We asked each leader, based on their industry and experience, to identify key skills for leadership, how career paths evolve, the role of mentors and networks, and recommendations for future generations of women. Though each of the interviewees was in a different field, and some worked in the public sector and some in the private sector, consistent insights, observations and themes resonated throughout the interviews. The bottom line is that women's leadership success is driven less by linear career planning and more by continuous learning, deep preparation, confidence grounded in competence, support networks which provide honest feedback, and institutional cultures that reward agency and excellence.



Charlene Russell-Tucker
Commissioner, Connecticut
Department of Education



Felicia Spencer
Executive Director,
Career Management Center,
School of Public Health,
Yale University



Valerie Powell Stafford
Former Hartford Market
President for Trinity Health
of New England, led Saint
Francis Hospital

LEADERSHIP IS A DEVELOPMENTAL JOURNEY

Confidence is a key component of successful women leaders. We asked the interviewees to consider their own journeys and provide advice. They all noted that leadership begins with the self, before formal authority (a position or responsibility) is given. Individuals entering the workforce who aim for leadership must personally commit to excellence and view challenges as opportunities. Regardless of whether they enter the public or private sector, women should be trained for and adopt a 'private sector mindset of agility and innovation'.^{xiv} They reiterated that becoming a leader is 'a choice, not a title'.^{xv} Experiences are accumulated over time as individuals develop in their careers which helps them to make more informed decisions. Confidence and self-advocacy are central for women to move upward in their careers.



"Leadership does not begin with a fixed end goal (e.g., "I want to be commissioner") but evolves through accumulated experiences."

Charlene Russell-Tucker,
Commissioner, Connecticut
Department of Education

"In order to be successful, you need to be adaptable and flexible because your vision of how something might unfold very rarely matches the way in which it unfolds."

Andrea Barton Reeves,
Commissioner, Connecticut
Department of Social Services



NETWORKS, MENTORSHIP AND SPONSORSHIPS ARE CATALYSTS AND THE PRIMARY DRIVERS OF ADVANCEMENT

Value of Supportive Networks. The interviews all underscored the significance of building a supportive network of leaders to gain honest feedback, foster solidarity and collective advocacy against bias. This was particularly true for women in general and for women of color.^{xvi} Some mentioned the value of affinity groups in providing support and connection among individuals with similar backgrounds.^{xvii}

Intentional Career Strategy. Networks should be seen as an intentional career strategy, especially the collective power of women's networks. Women should be encouraged by career programming to seek mentorship and leadership opportunities, and several noted that their career advancements have largely stemmed from networking rather than traditional job applications. Cross-sector mentorships broaden perspective and prevent institutional stagnation.^{xviii} The conversations underscored the critical role of connections and confidence in achieving success as female leaders.^{xix}

Sponsors and Mentors. Sponsors and mentors play distinct roles. Mentors advise, while sponsors advocate. Mentors speak with someone, providing guidance and wisdom to build skills, whereas sponsors speak about you to others, using their influence to secure opportunities, promotions, and visibility. Advancement often depends on sponsors who actively advocate on one's behalf, not just mentors who offer guidance on navigating challenges. Mentorship, especially when grounded in recognized competence, remains critical to growth.

Effective mentorship requires deep trust. Women should seek mentors beyond the organization or sector where they work, people who can offer candid, unbiased feedback, and prioritize authentic relationships over transactional exchanges.

Navigating workplace dynamics and developing leadership skills is a particular issue for women who come from other countries or cultures. Role models and mentorship can help in overcoming these challenges.^{xx}

Networking Style and Dynamics. There are many ways to network, and it is important to find a networking style that is comfortable for an individual. Finding a style of engagement that feels authentic is key to building lasting professional relationships. Not every method of networking will fit every personality, so women are encouraged to experiment and identify approaches that align with their values and comfort zones, for example, some people are comfortable networking at conferences and large meetings while some would prefer to connect via a platform such as LinkedIn. Approaching networking with sincerity and a genuine interest in others helps foster meaningful connections that support career growth.



“Build your network once you join a firm. That network stays with you as you continue to grow. Maintain those connections even when you move on to new jobs.”

*Angela Kahrman,
retired Head of TIAA Wealth
Business Enablement &
President & CEO TC
Services,
TIAA Financial Services*



“Career progression for women is strongly linked to relationships rather than formal job pathways. Networking functions as the primary mechanism for accessing opportunities, and informal connections through your networks often matter more than traditional application processes.”

*Valerie Powell-Stafford,
former Hartford Market
President for Trinity
Health Of New England,
led St. Francis Hospital*

Widen Your Networks. Entry-level employees should begin to build relationships across many disciplines when they join a firm, not just in their area. That network stays with them as they continue to grow, and they should try to maintain their connections even when they move on to new jobs. The insights the connections will provide will broaden the understanding they have of the industry.^{xxi}



UNDERSTAND THE CULTURE OF THE WORKPLACE

Political Landscape. Women must understand the political landscape of their workplaces to navigate challenges effectively, and there needs to be a culture of support among women in the workforce, advocating for the empowerment of newcomers rather than perpetuating a cycle of exclusion.^{xxii}

Some interviewees stressed the importance of connecting with a variety of leaders within an organization.^{xxiii}

Interviewees noted a shift in leadership dynamics, with today's leaders navigating increasingly diverse perspectives and the growing influence of social media.^{xxiv}

Breaking Out of Comfort Zones. They emphasized the importance of women breaking out of comfort zones, building networks, and not lingering too long in roles to demonstrate their broader capabilities. People need to understand who women are and what they bring to the table.

Often, people coming into a leadership role think they must have a heavy hand to prove themselves, more controlling than collaborative, and they alienate people around them. It is usually better to first spend the time to understand the team dynamic. In that way, a person can demonstrate leadership and still have an empathy factor.^{xxv}

Collaboration. To thrive in today's work environment, professionals must master collaboration. Career workshops could help early- to mid-career women build the team-oriented skills necessary for long-term success. By shifting the focus from simply finding a first job to cultivating lasting professional connections, women can better navigate and advance their careers over the long term.

"I need to stress the importance of connecting with both formal and informal leaders within an organization. Informal leaders may not have a high-level position or title, but they know the organization well, they know how things get done, and they know the culture. They can help in many ways."

*Valerie Powell-Stafford,
former Hartford Market
President for Trinity
Health Of New England,
led St. Francis Hospital*



COMMUNICATION AND PREPARATION ARE STRATEGIC SURVIVAL SKILLS

Skillsets. The interview protocol focused on a variety of skillsets including hard skills (like technical skills and financial tools), strategic skills (like communication, developing pitches and presentations, strategic and critical thinking), and soft skills (such as empathy, respect, positive mindset, and relationship-building). While technical skills are often learned through education and experience, effective leaders must focus on building their own soft skills like empathy and communication.^{xxvi} Leadership requires an integrated skillset, and all the skills noted above are required to move ahead in the work world. New employees must be well prepared to present themselves as leaders -- anticipating questions, communicating clearly, and asserting their ideas in meetings.^{xxvii}

Credibility is non-negotiable. Women, especially women of color, must know their material deeply because they are often not afforded the same grace as others.

Strategic preparation. Women should be taught and learn to anticipate challenges (e.g., co-opted ideas, others dominating conversation) and prepare specific language and tactics to navigate them effectively, plan for interruptions or idea co-option. Courage, confidence and content mastery are foundational.^{xxviii}

To ensure long-term career flexibility, entry-level professionals must avoid early stereotyping. These biases often take root in the classroom, such as when girls in STEM are encouraged toward specific traditional roles rather than the full range of technical and industrial opportunities. Broadening this exposure early on is key to breaking down professional barriers.^{xxix}

Communication. Both virtual and in-person communication may be particularly difficult if there are cultural barriers. Research shows that women and leaders from underrepresented groups are evaluated more harshly for mistakes and must demonstrate higher competence thresholds to advance.^{xxx} Job seekers should highlight their skills rather than focusing solely on degrees when applying for jobs, as hiring processes have become more skill based.^{xxxi}



“Women must be very careful how they demonstrate those soft skills. I can make a decision, I can lead a team, but I must do it with a level of empathy and compassion and connect with people one to one.”

Angela Kahrmann,
retired Head of TIAA
Wealth Business
Enablement & President
& CEO TC Services, TIAA
Financial Services

“The ability to communicate well has been decreasing over time. There is a discomfort with formal communication. Communication skills are the key to success as a leader.”

Felicia Spencer,
Executive Director,
Career Center,
Yale School of Public Health

CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ARE CRITICAL TO ADVANCING A CAREER

Leadership Competence. Leadership competence requires ongoing professional learning, not just completed credentials. Formal education is foundational but self-directed learning is essential. Young leaders should be encouraged to develop their expertise as well as their confidence, advocating for ongoing professional development and mentorship as critical components for success in leadership roles.^{xxxii} Early leadership exposure builds long-term capacity in the workplace.

Continuous Learning. New employees should seek out opportunities to shadow leaders and volunteer for opportunities.^{xxxiii} For advanced leaders, executive coaching is a necessity, not a luxury. Professional development, like training classes and attending conferences, provides value-added benefits for careers, and women at all levels should participate in them.^{xxxiv}

Practical experience and continuous learning are crucial for developing leadership skills.^{xxxv} Emphasis should be placed on the importance of combining formal training with on-the-job experiences.

"I've built trust with my team by always showing up prepared and staying calm under pressure. So, when I challenge an idea or offer a different perspective, people listen - and that's where real leadership happens."

Andrea Barton Reeves,
Commissioner, Connecticut
Department of Social Services

"Work and life are becoming more inseparable; availability is often continuous. Leaders must model boundaries and explicitly support staff well-being by asking 'what can I do to make your job easier?'"

Charlene Russell-Tucker,
Commissioner, Connecticut
Department of Education

WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION REQUIRES PERSONAL AGENCY

Work-Life Balance. The traditional boundaries of work-life balance have blurred, making it essential for individuals to establish clear boundaries early in their careers.^{xxxvi} Sustainable leadership requires clarity of personal priorities and deliberate career choices that align with those priorities. Non-linear and adaptive career pathways are not as uncommon as one might think. People switch careers, switch jobs, and drop out of the labor force for periods of time more frequently than in the past.

Nontraditional family arrangements (e.g. stay at home partners) can enable a woman's leadership but remain culturally atypical.^{xxxvii}

New hires are increasingly interested in work-life balance and company culture, with companies actively addressing these concerns in their recruitment materials. Work-life balance is a critical, high-ranking priority for many employees, often outweighing pay, as employees seek flexibility, mental health support, and clear boundaries.^{xxxviii}

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the interviews concluded with specific suggestions and recommendations for those who would follow in their footsteps effectively. What follows are actionable, researched recommendations grounded in the themes that we saw in the interviews.

1. Leadership readiness requires over-preparation and organizational literacy. Each of the leaders told stories of how they had to be exceptionally well-prepared for meetings or conversations -- technically, politically and culturally -- to be perceived as credible and influential in their organization.

Recommendation: Applied leadership preparation should be embedded into training with scenario-based decision-making as well as navigation of organizational cultures. Applied learning is a critical tool and leadership capacity develops through exposure, reflection and practice.^{xxxix}

2. Leadership begins with self-confidence. Career planning programs must reinforce that leadership begins with management of self, work, and influence. Individuals should be more patient with themselves as they learn to utilize all their gifts. Interviewees emphasized that employees must give themselves grace.^{xl}

Recommendation: Career planning should include self-assessment and reflection exercises and projects emphasizing initiative and accountability. Women need to learn to take risks and opportunities that are offered.

3. Informal power, sponsorship, and networks drive advancement. Career progression is strongly influenced by access to informal networks and senior-level sponsors, not just the formal performance metrics.

Recommendation: Mentorship and sponsorship models should be stressed for early- and mid-career professionals. Sponsored employees, where the sponsors actively advocate on behalf of an employee, are significantly more likely to be promoted than peers without sponsors.^{xli} Mentorship models should prioritize relationship-building and personal development rather than transactions.

4. Explicitly teach preparation for power and organizational politics. Early- and mid-career professionals need to learn how to navigate organizational power dynamics. Women are often expected to intuit these skills rather than being taught them, which puts them at a disadvantage in the work environment.

Recommendation: Case studies in training programs might focus on idea appropriation, interruption, and credibility challenges. There should be role-playing exercises on managing meetings, asserting authority, anticipating questions, and preparing strategic responses.

5. Emphasize deep content mastery of material alongside confidence building. Confidence is most durable when grounded in competence, particularly for women who are afforded less institutional grace.

6. Continuous Learning is critical for leadership. Advancement and leadership require a lifelong learning commitment. Women must evaluate approaches, learn from failures and successes, and adapt themselves across different sectors.

Recommendation for 5 and 6: Research-based projects which require presentations and defense of ideas, and assignments analyzing failures and discussions of various approaches would help to build confidence in early- and mid-career professionals.

7. Expand exposure to diverse leaders and career pathways.

Recommendation: As part of career planning, early- and mid-career professionals should be exposed to leaders across race, gender, sector and career trajectories. The exposure builds confidence, combats self-exclusion, and opens non-linear career paths. It can be done with a speaker series, site visits, conversations with networks and/or shadowing opportunities.

8. Practice work-life balance. Work-life balance is a necessity for mental health, often ranked higher in importance than salary by employees. Early- and mid-career professionals must understand that regularly taking time off is crucial for recharging.

Recommendation: Early- and mid-career professionals should learn to speak with managers about workload capacity and request flexible arrangements, and they should consider actively disconnecting from work devices to separate professional and personal life.

CONCLUSION

The recommendations above are based on the experiences of select leaders in Connecticut. The patterns may not be obvious when we look at an individual leader in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors. However, analyzing the data on the United States and Connecticut and scrutinizing the interviews for insights allow us to refocus the conversation from the impressive achievements of particular women in leadership to the broader impact of women in the C-suite.

As noted, leadership development for women is most effective when it combines and focuses on rigorous preparation, continuous learning, strategic awareness, confidence grounded in competence, and institutional cultures that reinforce agency rather than self-exclusion. Investing in career management with these criteria best positions organizations to develop the next generation of women leaders.



ENDNOTES

ⁱ Grant Thornton: Women in Business 2025.

ⁱⁱ Harvard Business Review: Research – Adding Women to the C-Suite Changes How Companies Think, 2021.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pew Research Center, For Women’s History Month, a look at gender gains and gaps in the U.S, 2024.

^{iv} BLS.gov. [https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womensdatabook/2023/#:~:text=Historical%20trends%20in%20women’s%20labor,\(-See%20chart%201.\)](https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womensdatabook/2023/#:~:text=Historical%20trends%20in%20women’s%20labor,(-See%20chart%201.))

^v Lean In / McKinsey: Women in the Workplace 2024 (Data Source: 2024 LinkedIn Membership Data).

^{vi} Lean In / McKinsey: Women in the Workplace 2024 (Data Source: 2024 LinkedIn Membership Data).

^{vii} Goldman Sachs: Global Market Institute, Closing the Gender Gaps 2.0, 2019.

^{viii} Institute for Women’s Policy Research, IWPR.org/Black-women-need-better-access-to-leadership-positions-and-equal-pay-when-they-get-there, Robyn Watson Ellerbe, 2024.

^{ix} Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Women Need Better Access to High-Paying Apprenticeships, 2024.

^x Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Analysis of US Bureau of Labor Statistics Office of Apprenticeships data from 2024.

^{xi} Goldman Sachs: Global Market Institute, Closing the Gender Gaps 2.0, 2019.

^{xii} All Connecticut employment and earnings data derive from the 2010 and 2024 American Community Survey.

Table B24010, Sex by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. Table B24022, Sex by Occupation and Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over.

^{xiii} IPEDS Trend Generator, <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trendgenerator/app/build-table/4/210?ty=2024&rid=225&cid=228&sideid=225--%7C1%7C2&f=6%3D9>.

^{xiv} CRT Interview

^{xv} CRT Interview

^{xvi} ABR interview

^{xvii} CRT interview

^{xviii} CRT Interview

^{xix} VPS Interview

^{xx} VPS Interview

^{xx} FS Interview

^{xxi} AK Interview

^{xxii} ABR Interview

^{xxiii} VPS Interview

^{xxiv} VPS Interview



^{xxxv} AK Interview

^{xxxvi} VPS Interview

^{xxxvii} CRT Interview

^{xxxviii} CRT Interview

^{xxxix} AK Interview

^{xxx} HBR article above; Lean In, The State of Latinas in Corporate America, 2021 (Data source: 2021 LinkedIn Membership Data).

^{xxx} FS interview

^{xxxii} CRT Interview

^{xxxiii} CRT Interview

^{xxxiv} ABR Interview

^{xxxv} AK Interview

^{xxxvi} CRT Interview

^{xxxvii} AK Interview

^{xxxviii} FS Interview

^{xxxix} Chronicle of Higher Education, 'Moving Forward as an Early Career Professional', 2025.

^{xl} Chronicle of Higher Education, 'Moving Forward as an Early Career Professional', 2025.

^{xli} COQUAL, Hewlett, Sylvia Ann; Rashid, Ripa and Sherbin, Laura, 'Diversity's Positive Impact on Innovation and Outcomes', 2018.

Photos in this report were provided by Aurora and the University of Saint Joseph from public events focused on women's leadership. Aurora photographs by LMG Photography.



The Aurora Women and Girls Foundation galvanizes resources to increase economic security, educational attainment, and leadership for women and girls in the Greater Hartford region. We envision strong, equitable communities in which all women and girls realize their potential and are full, valued, and sought-after participants -- economically, politically, and socially. Aurora has a strong track record of strategic investment in economic and educational opportunities. Using a focused gender and racial equity lens, Aurora looks to engage individuals and institutions in philanthropy, develop and share cutting-edge research, direct grant-making and capacity-building resources to nonprofits and convene and mobilize community partners for action. Our mission, vision, values, and strategies support all women and girls inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Demographic Perspectives, LLC helps clients make data-driven decisions. We provide tailored demographic, survey and market research services for nonprofit and higher education clients, for public agencies, and for architects and real estate professionals. As planning consultants, our strategic approach is based on identifying the needs and preferences of each organization's communities.

University of Saint Joseph. Steeped in nearly a century of tradition and excellence, the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) blends professional education with the sciences and humanities to prepare students for lives and careers that meet social and workforce needs. Minutes from Connecticut's capital city and surrounded by corporate, medical, and cultural resources, USJ students live and learn on a quintessential New England campus, meld classroom learning with pre-professional experience, and compete on NCAA Division III conference championship teams. Students seeking an undergraduate, master's, or doctoral degree will find a place to shine at our small university with big outcomes.

Women's Leadership Center. Founded in 2016, the Women's Leadership Center (WLC) at the University of Saint Joseph is committed to increasing the number of women in senior leadership roles within community, government, and business entities in Connecticut and across our region. The Center was formed to explore opportunities to use scholarly research, provide strategic programming, and create professional networks to help develop forward-thinking leaders. With guidance from a Steering Council and strategic partner organizations, the WLC is a resource for generations of women – from recent college graduates to seasoned professionals – as they become transformative leaders in their communities, organizations, and workplaces.

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