

Background & Methods

RESEARCH SUMMARY

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BACKGROUND

During the fall of 2023, Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP) researchers conducted a statewide study to establish a baseline of public perceptions related to the awareness, understanding, and attitudes around challenges that Utah women and girls face. It focused on the following areas: education (finance, higher education attainment, and K-12 initiatives); community engagement (political representation, boards and commissions, and civic engagement/advocacy); safety and security (child sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty and homelessness, sexual assault, and sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination); health and wellbeing (health across the lifespan and home and family); and workplace (childcare/pre-K programs, entrepreneurship, gender pay gap, leadership development, organizational strategies and workplace culture, STEM fields, and workforce development).

QUESTIONS

The primary research questions for this research study included:

- What are the levels of awareness, understanding, and concern related to issues and challenges that Utah women and girls face?
- What are the attitudes of Utahns around various topics that influence the experiences of women and girls in the state?
- What are the differences among genders and other demographic variables related to attitudes, perceptions, and understandings of a variety of related topic areas?

SURVEY

An 80-item survey was created based on existing literature and survey instruments, guidance from experts, and the baseline data needed by [A Bolder Way Forward](#) (BWF) leaders in each of the 18 areas of focus.

In addition, 13 demographic questions were included (see Tables 1 and 2), along with two open-ended questions inviting responses regarding the greatest challenges and opportunities that women and girls face in the state. The survey took approximately 10–20 minutes for participants to complete. Approval from Utah State University's Institutional Review Board was secured before distribution.

DISTRIBUTION

Data were collected for this research study from October 24 to November 30, 2023, and all Utahns aged 18 or older were considered potential participants. The study was conducted with two samples. The online survey instrument was first administered to a non-probability (convenience) sample of Utah residents representing different settings, backgrounds, and situations (Sample 1). A call for participants was announced through the UWLP monthly newsletter, social media platforms, and website. In addition, UWLP staff, BWF leaders and coordinators, and volunteers around the state helped distribute it, along with nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, government agencies, municipalities and counties, women's networks and associations, multicultural groups, businesses, universities, churches, and volunteers. Additionally, targeted recruitment efforts were launched throughout the state to improve representation from individuals representing a broad range of demographics and geography; the survey was provided in both English and Spanish. Second, we also contracted Qualtrics to distribute and collect data separately to ensure we had a representative sample of Utahns (Sample 2), which we knew may not have occurred with the initial study.

PARTICIPANTS

For Sample 1, 2,855 Utahns completed the survey. The demographics for survey respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Again, this sample is not representative of the state in several respects. For example, when compared to overall state demographics, this study under-sampled people of color, individuals with less formal education, and residents in lower income ranges. For Sample 2 (representative), 650 Utahns completed the survey (see Table 2 for demographics).

CONCLUSION

As mentioned, this study was conducted to establish a baseline for public perceptions related to awareness, understanding, attitudes, and/or concerns around challenges that Utah women and girls face. This document has provided the background and general methods around why and how this research was conducted. A host of brief research summaries emerging from these two samples will be published to provide Utah leaders and residents with insights into Utahns' current perceptions of these 18 critical focus areas for 2023; the study will also provide the basis for assessing progress in future years.

The overarching goal of a BWF is to help more Utah girls, women, and families thrive. When we strengthen the impact of Utah girls and women, we strengthen everyone!

For questions and information:

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TABLE 1: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

(Sample 1)

N=2,855 – Non-Probability (Convenience) Sample

Gender: female (85.3%), male (13.8%); non-binary (0.7%), prefer not to say (0.2%)**Age:** 18–24 (6.2%), 25–29, (10.6%), 30–34 (12.3%), 35–39 (12.2%), 40–44 (14.0%), 45–49 (13.1%), 50–54 (12.7%), 55–59 (6.9%), 60–64 (6.0%), 65–69 (3.3%), 70+ (2.8%)**Education:** less than high school diploma (0.3%), high school (2.6%), some college (12.0%), associate degree (4.9%), bachelor’s degree (36.7%), graduate degree (43.6%)**Marital Status:** single (14.3%), married (71.7%), living with partner (4.1%), separated (1.4%); widowed (1.2%), divorced (7.1%), other (0.2%)**Years in Utah:** fewer than 2 (2.5%), 2–5 years (6.3%), 6–10 years (9.3%), 11–20 years (16.0%), more than 20 years (66.0%)**Ethnicity:** White (90.7%), Hispanic/Latina (7.8%), Asian (3.0%), Pacific Islander (1.0%), Black (1.0%), American Indian (1.0%)**Income:** less than \$25,000 (4.0%), \$25,000–\$34,999 (2.9%), \$35,000–\$49,999 (4.4%), \$50,000–\$74,999 (11.4%), \$75,000–\$99,999 (14.4%), \$100,000–\$149,999 (24.1%), \$150,000–\$199,999 (16.3%), \$200,000 and above (22.5%)**Children:** no (31.1%), yes (68.9%); children 0–5 (0=70.8%, 1=15.4%, 2=8.5%, 3+=5.4%); children 6–11 (0=73.0%, 1=16.5%, 2=8.4%, 3+=2.5%); children 12–17 (0=68.5%, 1=16.1%, 2=11.1%, 3+=4.2%)**Employment Status:** employed full-time (75.7%), employed part-time (11.5%), full-time student (2.4%), full-time homemaker (5.1%), unemployed (looking for work), (1.6%), retired (3.6%)**County:** Beaver (0.1%), Box Elder (3.6%), Cache (7.8%), Carbon (0.9%), Davis (11.7%), Duchesne (0.2%), Emery (0.4%), Garfield (0.1%), Grand (1.3%), Iron (2.9%), Juab (0.2%), Kane (0.1%), Millard (1.7%), Morgan (0.5%), Piute (0.1%), Rich (0.1%), Salt Lake (33.0%), San Juan (0.6%), Sanpete (0.6%), Sevier (0.6%), Summit (1.9%), Tooele (1.2%), Uintah (0.5%), Utah (19.6%), Wasatch (1.1%), Washington (3.6%), Wayne (0.1%), Weber (6.1%)**Religion:** agnostic (13.8%), atheist (7.2%), Catholic (3.9%), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (49.3%), Hinduism (0.2%), Islam (0.2%), Jehovah Witness (0.0%), Judaism (0.7%), Protestant (3.4%), other Christian (4.1%), spiritual but not religious affiliation (16.4%), other (0.6%)**Religious Activity:** 1=not at all (20.8%), 2 (10.6%), 3 (14.0%), 4 (14.2%), 5=very active (40.4%)**Note:** For both tables, percentages in some categories do not equal 100% due to decimal rounding or individuals indicating more than one ethnic or race identity.**TABLE 2: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS**

(Sample 2)

N=650 – Representative Sample

Gender: female (58.9%), male (39.8%); non-binary (0.5%), prefer not to say (0.8%)**Age:** 18–24 (15.1%), 25–29, (11.2%), 30–34 (12.2%), 35–39 (10.8%), 40–44 (11.1%), 45–49 (9.7%), 50–54 (6.2%), 55–59 (3.8%), 60–64 (5.4%), 65–69 (6.5%), 70+ (8.2%)**Education:** less than high school diploma (4.2%), high school (26.9%), some college (24.9%), associate degree (12.0%), bachelor’s degree (22.2%), graduate degree (9.8%)**Marital Status:** single (28.8%), married (45.8%), living with partner (10.2%), separated (2.0%); widowed (4.3%), divorced (8.8%), other (0.2%)**Years in Utah:** fewer than 2 (4.3%), 2–5 years (7.8%), 6–10 years (9.4%), 11–20 years (15.4%), more than 20 years (63.1%)**Ethnicity:** White (80.9%), Hispanic/Latina (11.8%), Asian (3.4%), American Indian (3.2%), Black (3.2%), Pacific Islander (2.0%)**Income:** less than \$25,000 (19.4%), \$25,000–\$34,999 (13.3%), \$35,000–\$49,999 (12.8%), \$50,000–\$74,999 (18.8%), \$75,000–\$99,999 (18.1%), \$100,000–\$149,999 (12.7%), \$150,000–\$199,999 (2.9%), \$200,000 and above (2.0%)**Children:** no (40.5%), yes (59.5%); children 0–5 (0=72.0%, 1=14.8%, 2=8.4%, 3+=4.7%); children 6–11 (0=77.5%, 1=15.1%, 5.9%, 3+=1.4%); children 12–17 (0=73.1%, 1=16.9%, 2=8.1%, 3+=1.9%)**Employment Status:** employed full-time (46.4%), employed part-time (14.1%), full-time student (3.4%), full-time homemaker (11.3%), unemployed (looking for work) (12.6%), retired (12.6%)**County:** Beaver (0.3%), Box Elder (1.8%), Cache (4.3%), Carbon (1.1%), Davis (11.1%), Duchesne (0.3%), Emery (0.2%), Garfield (0.2%), Grand (0.2%), Iron (2.6%), Juab (0.5%), Kane (0.2%), Millard (0.0%), Morgan (0.3%), Piute (0.0%), Rich (0.0%), Salt Lake (37.9%), San Juan (0.3%), Sanpete (0.3%), Sevier (0.9%), Summit (0.5%), Tooele (1.8%), Uintah (0.5%), Utah (20.2%), Wasatch (0.5%), Washington (4.8%), Wayne (0.0%), Weber (9.6%)**Religion:** agnostic (7.6%), atheist (6.5%), Catholic (9.3%), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (36.7%), Hinduism (0.5%), Islam (0.9%), Jehovah Witness (0.0%), Judaism (0.3%), Protestant (4.0%), other Christian (12.0%), spiritual but not religious affiliation (22.1%), other (0.1%)**Religious Activity:** 1=Not at all (34.7%), 2 (13.6%), 3 (17.7%), 4 (10.6%), 5=Very active (23.4%)