

# What Can I Do?

A SERIES TO HELP UTAHNS ENGAGE



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## What Juab County Leaders and Residents Can Do To Strengthen the Impact of Girls and Women in Their Area

**UTAH** WOMEN & LEADERSHIP Project

Juab County is full of engaged, passionate individuals who frequently ask the question, “What can I do to strengthen the impact of girls and women in this area?” To provide specific answers to that question, the **Utah Women & Leadership Project** (UWLP), in conjunction with the Utah State University - Nephi Campus, hosted a think tank to collect ideas for individuals, groups, and organizations interested in supporting and empowering girls and women in their area.

This idea sheet is based on a 2024 gathering of leaders in Juab County, with input from 20 individuals. Girls and women face challenges unique to the area in which they live, and the goal of this gathering was to identify those barriers and determine strategies and initiatives that local leaders and residents can implement to address them. This document includes recommendations in the following areas: home and family, education, business and economics, community, and culture.

### HOME & FAMILY

In Juab County, parents are recognized as the most powerful influences on the lives of their daughters. Recommendations include:

- Boost the self-confidence of girls and women. Develop strong, independent daughters at home.
- Empower girls and young women and recognize the power of parents to do so.
- Encourage girls and young women to engage in activities outside of the stereotypical norms.
- Equip girls to be brave, not perfect.
- Inspire girls to advocate for themselves and have self-awareness.
- Make education a priority. Support and encourage higher education.
- Model equal gender roles and expectations in the home.
- Normalize resources and options to ease housework and childrearing in dual-earner households. Be aware of options such as housecleaning services, mother’s helpers, and shared parental childrearing and responsibilities that aid successful, healthy families.

### EDUCATION

Leaders in Juab County emphasized the essential role schools play in developing leadership, confidence, and competence in girls and young women. Ensuring that women complete high school and obtain college certificates and degrees is critically important to continue a woman’s development. Recommendations for educators and the community include:

- Advance young women by prioritizing higher education and instilling confidence.
- Encourage STEM opportunities. Pursue the stem-cyber security leadership group training so young women know they are capable and have a space for leadership.
- Establish business competitions in the schools to promote careers in business.
- Facilitate the convocation series with My Story which is in the works.
- Foster a wider variety of extracurricular activities so students experience success in different fields.
- Give youth exposure to all types of careers, opportunities, and different areas of success including education, culture, leadership, and politics. Have them shadow different individuals for a day, including mayors, city council members, commissioners, women in STEM, school board members, and nontraditional professions.
- Highlight the benefits of higher education, including that it aids in better parenting and communities as well as the ability to be employed and contribute to society throughout life.
- Increase education on support services and opportunities for applying to college. Emphasize how to find and apply for financial resources and the overall process of obtaining advanced college degrees. Familiarize women with overall educational resources.
- Support and encourage women to improve their circumstances, have long-term advanced educational goals, and prioritize family with life balance and career success as their personal paradigm.

## BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

In the business sector, Juab County women struggle with limited opportunities as well as economic challenges. Recommendations for business and community leaders include:

- Address the shortage of childcare. Provide additional government and local assistance.
- Have the chamber get businesses involved in creating councils made up of teens and women.
- Help employers understand the importance of family and work-life balance, including best practices and family-friendly options.
- Partner girls and women with women leaders in education, government, and public partners to be mentored.
- Provide paid internships for college students with quality opportunities to learn and succeed.
- Revisit the challenge of single mothers who are disincentivized from earning a middle-class income because they will lose needed community services and resources.

## COMMUNITY

Participants recognize the challenges facing women in Juab County, including the need to develop women leaders. Recommendations for the government and community leaders include:

- Boost children's participation in extracurricular activities. Create more meaningful educational youth activities (e.g., church groups, school clubs).
- Build leadership in activities and identify leadership roles to develop youth. Contact the recreation center about having sports team captains to start developing leadership at a young age due to the heavy sports culture. Start where they are.
- Develop a community program to have women in leadership roles mentor youth. Show successful women in business and management roles in the community as role models. Lead by example for the younger generation.
- Emphasize women networking and have women mentor other women. Strong powerful women doing great things is inspiring.
- Engage with and communicate about the issues facing girls and women and the dismal statistics. Have a community conference for Juab focusing on these problems. Spread awareness through a networking event to come together.
- Establish clear ways of reporting abuse, including how and where, and make that information easily available to all.
- Expose the reality of child and domestic abuse. Discuss and offer help, and support victims emotionally.
- Facilitate the necessary cultural shift to remove the stigma from many of the issues.
- Get the information out there. Use churches and schools as sources for information.
- Have wrap-around services in education and family services.

- Incentivize community volunteering.
- Increase fundraising for existing programs for high-risk youth.
- Make a resource list that is accurate and current with services that are available. Get that information to those who need it.
- Prioritize maternal mental health both before and after giving birth. Provide this through the hospital and as part of prenatal care with a maternal mental health class. We need healthy moms to be good examples to boys and girls.
- Spotlight wins and the positive things happening in the community for girls and women.

## CULTURE

The think tank attendees acknowledged that the culture (why and how we do what we do) in Juab County has a significant impact. Leaders are concerned about the limitations and decreased value culture has placed on women and girls. Recommendations include:

- Educate the younger generation on the issues confronting girls and women.
- Examine what you can control and contribute.
- Focus on individual strengths of girls and women.
- Help girls understand life's realities and emphasize the need to prepare for future life circumstances, including providing income due to increasing overall economic costs, possible death or disability of spouse, divorce, or never marrying.
- Normalize that the younger generation may not have to choose between a family or career.
- Recognize the value of motherhood and raising and educating young children.
- Respect others' choices and don't judge or discriminate against other women's decisions or lifestyles.
- Urge awareness of the issues among church leaders by inviting church councils to an awareness; then expand to civics and schools. Awareness will start conversations.

## CONCLUSION

When we listen and respond to concerns regarding the needs of girls and women in Juab County, we will be better able to change harmful or ineffective policies and programs, continue effective action, support effective leaders, identify and solve local problems, and create responsive initiatives. The UWLP encourages leaders and residents to use this document to affect change.

Thank you to the Utah State University - Nephi Campus and to the many collaborators and partners in Juab County who supported the community conversation. Report authors: Deborah Lin & Dr. Susan R. Madsen.