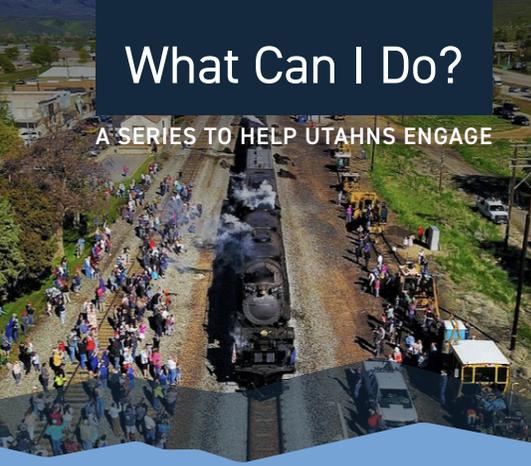


# What Can I Do?

A SERIES TO HELP UTAHNS ENGAGE



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

**UTAH** WOMEN &  
**LEADERSHIP**  
Project

Morgan 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) and the USU Morgan County Extension 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 20 leaders in Morgan County. 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, health and wellbeing, business and economics, and culture and community engagement.

### HOME & FAMILY

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

- Build confidence and self-esteem in girls by helping them recognize their aptitudes, set goals, and make good choices.
- Communicate with children using appropriate terminology when referring to their bodies. Hold check-ins with them and know what steps and interventions to take if a child is abused or assaulted.
- Create an environment where being uncomfortable is okay when discussing hard topics with teens.
- Emphasize quality family time and strengthen family relationships by consistently incorporating technology-free activities.
- Ensure daughters and sons have equal opportunities.
- Make certain girls know they are valued and are strong, smart, and capable.
- Model healthy relationships and teach children and youth how to establish them.
- Put an end to gender stereotyping of professions and household chores.
- Recognize and empower women with the “Power of AND.” They can have a variety of roles in life without having to choose between being a mother, spouse, student, volunteer, business leader, politician, etc. Women can be amazing wives and mothers AND can impact the community for good.

### EDUCATION

Leaders in Morgan County emphasized the essential role schools play in developing leadership, confidence, and competence in girls and young women. They recognize the essential role graduating from college plays in a woman's life. Recommendations include:

- Address the discrepancy at early ages between boys and girls enrolling in and excelling at STEM -- doing so will reduce greater discrepancies later. Ensure elementary educators and parents alike are aware and involved.
- Advance intergenerational opportunities for students through programs such as adopt-a-grandparent.
- Bring in local speakers to discuss topics such as self-defense, sexual assault, and the dangers of drunk driving. Collaborate with community leaders.
- Develop robust curriculum regarding healthy relationships for both boys and girls. Include prevention lessons on sexual abuse and trafficking.
- Empower girls by providing leadership training and opportunities at school.
- Encourage and recognize young women's talents publicly.
- Enlist mentors. Make a comprehensive list of mentors who are local, regional, or otherwise available to support students in their fields of interest.
- Partner with libraries, churches, and other organizations to create activities geared toward introducing students to careers in STEM. Highlight professions in STEM during school hours.
- Promote the diversity of career options and encourage young women to consider traditionally male-dominated fields. Expose them to the variety of different careers available to them, including careers in technology and trades.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

Concern over the physical wellbeing of girls and women in Morgan County emerged as a primary theme. Recommendations include:

- Advocate for youth to create code words with a trusted adult so they have an easy and safe way out of uncomfortable or dangerous situations.
- Combat suicidal ideation by sharing information and resources from mental health experts with people in all sectors of society.
- Eliminate secrets about abuse of any kind. Break the silence.
- Inform and educate the community about consent, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and assault. Address the sexualization and objectification of girls and women.
- Invest in gathering data about sexual abuse and trafficking. Raise awareness and fund prevention efforts.
- Make sure girls and women know where and how to turn for help with sexual assault and domestic violence (e.g., support, housing, resources) for themselves and others so they can recover and eventually thrive.
- Place signage in bathrooms with information on hotlines, helplines, and other emergency resources.
- Underscore common tactics abusers use to control girls and women and the role that destroying self-esteem plays. Emphasize that if abuse happens once, it is a problem.

## BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

In the business sector, Morgan County women struggle with limited opportunities for internal advancement and leadership, as well as with conscious and unconscious bias. Recommendations include:

- Develop a "Women in Business" career day in conjunction with the high school. Involve elected officials.
- Eliminate gender-based assumptions about women's professional capabilities.
- Increase access to high-quality, affordable, and available childcare.
- Invite employers generally to provide childcare as a benefit similar to insurance benefits, potentially subsidizing childcare costs. Lobby specific employers to do so.
- Neutralize the conflicting ideals, fears, and myths around childcare from both society and parents.
- Promote a mindset change with no restrictions on the career options available to young women and women. Don't label things as a "man's job" or a "woman's job."

## CULTURE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

- Create a County Youth Commission to empower youth to affect change. Give youth opportunities to plan and carry out activities at home, school, and in the community.
- Discuss opportunities for young women to build leadership skills.
- Encourage partnering with school, city, county, and church leaders to create service initiatives for youth.
- Expand funding for sports and events for girls.
- Explore programs such as "Girls on the Run" and events focused on ways to empower young girls and provide information on hard topics such as sexual abuse.
- Normalize and destigmatize feminism. Change the perception that it is radical or extreme. Focus on the promotion of and advocacy for women's rights, recognizing the basic equality of all people.
- Prioritize girls and women sharing the breadth and depth of their skills, particularly those outside of traditional female roles.
- Promote the importance of women voting. Help women become educated voters.
- Reinforce developing leadership in girls and women.
- Respect women's abilities and qualifications for leadership – especially as they seek public office.
- Seek out, encourage, mentor, and support women willing and able to run for political office.
- Spotlight women leaders and male allies in the community.
- Teach women to recognize their value.
- Validate and celebrate differences. Bring in all voices.
- Value social collaboration over competition.

## CONCLUSION

When we listen and respond to concerns regarding the needs of girls and women in Morgan 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.

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