



Women's Safety & Security

Utahns' Awareness, Understanding, and Attitudes

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Introduction

During the fall of 2023, Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP) researchers conducted a statewide study to establish a baseline for public perceptions related to the awareness, understanding, and attitudes about challenges that Utah women and girls face. In early 2024, we published 20 short research summaries that shared the results of this comprehensive study. Then, in the fall of 2024, we administered the survey, with slight refinements, around the state of Utah. We now share the results of the 2024 data by releasing six white papers; this is the third in the series.

Overall, this comprehensive study was designed to support the efforts of A Bolder Way Forward (BWF), which is a statewide initiative focused on ensuring that more Utah girls, women, and their families thrive. Each area of focus (spoke) has bold goals with data-driven metrics to measure progress. This research focuses on collecting and analyzing data to help track this progress for those goals based on potential shifts in public awareness, understanding, and/or attitudes related to each spoke. The shifts are critical for Utahns to make progress in the topic areas.

The following lists the five overarching categories within BWF as a whole, and the 18 spokes (areas of focus) included in this research:

1. **Education:** Finance, Higher Education Attainment, and K–12 Initiatives
2. **Community Engagement:** Political Representation, Boards and Commissions, and Civic Engagement/Advocacy
3. **Safety and Security:** Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, Poverty and Homelessness, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Discrimination
4. **Health and Wellbeing:** Health across the Lifespan and Home and Family
5. **Workplace:** Childcare/Pre-K Programs, Entrepreneurship, Gender Pay Gap, Leadership Development, Organizational Strategies and Workplace Culture, STEM Fields, and Workforce Development

This report covers elements of four spokes in the Safety & Security category (i.e., Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Poverty/Homelessness). One additional spoke from the Safety & Security spoke (i.e., Sexual Harassment & Gender-Based Discrimination) was included in the first white paper in this 2025 series titled “Women’s Workplace Challenges: Part 1 – Utahns’ Awareness, Understanding, and Attitudes.” After highlighting foundational research methods for the study as a whole, this report shares the findings of these four areas of focus and includes both the applicable quantitative and qualitative results.

Research Methods

The primary research questions for the full research study are as follows:

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

An 82-item survey was created based on existing literature and survey instruments, guidance from experts, and the baseline data needed by BWF leaders in each of the 18 areas of focus. In addition, 13

demographic questions were included, along with one open-ended question inviting responses regarding any thoughts, insights, or ideas respondents may have related to the challenges that Utah women and girls face. Participants responded to each item using a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neither disagree nor agree, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, 7=strongly agree). The survey took approximately 10–20 minutes for participants to complete. Approval from Utah State University’s Institutional Review Board was secured before distribution.

Data were collected for this research study from October 1 to November 20, 2024, and all Utahns aged 18 or older were considered potential participants. The data were collected using two samples: first, we also contracted with Qualtrics to distribute and collect data to ensure we had a *representative sample* of Utahns, which we knew may not have occurred with our convenience sample. Second, the online survey instrument was also administered to a *convenience sample* (non-probability) of Utah residents representing different settings, backgrounds, and situations. A call for participants was announced through the UWLP monthly newsletter, social media platforms, and website. In addition, UWLP staff, BWF leaders and coordinators, county coalition leaders and members, and advocates/volunteers around the state helped distribute it, as did nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, government agencies, municipalities and counties, women’s networks and associations, multicultural groups, businesses, universities, churches, and volunteers. In addition, 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.

The representative sample was fully completed by 1,920 Utahns (see Appendix A for a demographic overview). The convenience sample had 2,801 respondents, but not all completed the entire instrument (see Appendix B for a demographic overview). As is common with a convenience sample, it is not fully 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. With the samples combined, 4,721 Utahns participated in the research study.

In terms of data analysis, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to run statistics. These statistical tests included descriptives, frequencies, one-way ANOVAs, T tests, bivariate correlations, crosstabs, and other tests as needed. A p-value helps determine the significance of a result in relation to the null hypothesis. In this research, as is typical, the p-value ≤ 0.05 was used to consider statistical significance. In the sections below, an asterisk (*) was used for the demographic variables to identify those connections that reached this level of significance. It is important to note that this white paper reports statistical means (i.e., a single number that represents the center point or typical value of the dataset) and shifts through the years, which we report with standard deviations (SD). A SD is a measure of dispersment (i.e., how much the data is spread out around the mean or average) in statistics.¹ Smaller SD values indicate that the data points cluster closer to the statistical mean, which signifies that the values in the dataset are relatively consistent. On the other hand, higher values mean that the values spread out further from the mean.

The study findings in this white paper are described in the following four sections:

1. Child Sexual Abuse
2. Domestic Violence
3. Sexual Assault
4. Poverty/Homelessness

¹ Martínez-Mesa, J., González-Chica, D. A., Bastos, J. L., Bonamigo, R. R., & Duguia, R. P. (2014). Sample size: How many participants do I need in my research? *Epidemiology and Biostatistics Applied To Dermatology*, 89(4), 609–615. <https://doi.org/10.1590/abd1806-4841.20143705>

Child Sexual Abuse

According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data,² the “prevalence of sexual child abuse in Utah is higher than nationally (13.9% or ~1 in 7 vs 11.6% or ~1 in 9).” Several other sources also allude to findings that child sexual abuse is indeed a serious and troubling concern in Utah.³ However, it has been difficult to track the status and progress in Utah with the available data. The four child sexual abuse survey items presented in this year’s study provide additional insight that can guide families, communities, and leaders to act in ways that will increase safety for more Utah children. The items focus on Utahns’ understanding and perceptions, insights that are critical for driving social change. Although child sexual abuse is more common with girls—hence, the inclusion of this spoke with BWF—it is prevalent with boys as well. There were 1,920 participants who responded to at least one of the four questions in this section, and 2,516 in the convenience sample, for a combined total of 4,436 participants.

1. Problem

The first survey item in this section was “*In your immediate community (e.g., neighborhood, family, faith, club, business), child sexual abuse is a problem.*” The statistical mean was 4.01 (SD 1.89) for respondents in the representative sample and 4.49 (SD 1.72) for participants in the convenience sample. Despite the statistically significant differences between samples, the means hovered around neutral, with the convenience sample leaning slightly toward somewhat agree (see Table 1 for additional details). It is striking that in the combined samples, 2,358 participants (53.1%) either disagreed at some level or selected neither agree nor disagree, while the research is clear there is a serious and urgent problem in all Utah communities. Only 11.6% of participants strongly agreed, with 19.0% agreeing and 16.3% somewhat agreeing with the statement. The particularly high standard deviation for this item in both samples shows a wide variety of perspectives on the topic. There is significant work to do in Utah to raise awareness that child sexual abuse is a problem in our own communities.

Table 1. Problem –Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M</i>=4.01; <i>SD</i>=1.89	Convenience <i>M</i>=4.49; <i>SD</i>=1.72	Combined <i>M</i>=4.28; <i>SD</i>=1.81
Strongly disagree	248 (12.9%)	129 (5.1%)	377 (8.5%)
Disagree	283 (14.7%)	321 (12.8%)	604 (13.6%)
Somewhat disagree	177 (9.2%)	174 (6.9%)	351 (7.9%)
Neither agree nor disagree	407 (21.2%)	619 (24.6%)	1026 (23.1%)
Somewhat agree	309 (16.1%)	413 (16.4%)	722 (16.3%)
Agree	290 (15.1%)	553 (22.0%)	843 (19.0%)
Strongly agree	206 (10.7%)	307 (12.2%)	513 (11.6%)
Total Participants	1920	2516	4436

In the 2023 survey results,⁴ the statistical mean for all study participants was 3.80 (SD 1.37) for the representative sample and 4.45 (SD 1.73) for the convenience sample. In the combined 2023 sampling, the agreement levels of women were significantly higher than those of men (4.41 and 3.92, resp.). The large standard deviations last year told us that the values in the data set range further from the mean. In the representative sample specifically, 24.6% were neutral, while 40.8% disagreed that child sexual abuse is a problem in Utah. The statistical mean for 2024 for the representative sample is slightly higher but could be due to the larger sample size that included residents of more counties; the convenience sample mean was nearly the same.

² Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). *Health indicator report of child sexual abuse, self-reported.* <https://ibis.utah.gov/ibisph-view/indicator/view/ChildAbuseSxl.Sex.html>

³ Utah Women & Leadership Project. (n.d.). *Child sexual abuse statistics.* <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/child-sexual-abuse-statistics.pdf>

⁴ Madsen, S. R. (2024, January 17). *Child sexual abuse: Research summary.* Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/child-sexual-abuse-research-summary.pdf>

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples. The statistical means are based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=neither agree nor disagree, and 7=strongly agree). The “*” refers to demographic variables that met the statistical significance p-value threshold of ≤ 0.05 .

Age*: Respondents who were 70 and older (3.75), 65–69 (4.01), and 18–24 (4.03) had the lowest agreement levels, while those with the highest agreement were within the following age ranges: 50–54 (4.69) and 45–49 (4.64).

Children*: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (4.40) and nonparents (4.05), with parents having higher agreement, and there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

Counties/Regions*: Respondents in the following counties had the highest agreement: Duchesne (5.00), Carbon (4.82), Iron (4.77), Sanpete (4.74), and Wasatch (4.70). The lowest agreement came from residents in Piute (3.53), Millard (3.59), Beaver (3.61), Morgan (3.63), Box Elder (3.71), Summit (3.72), Garfield (3.85), and Sevier (3.93) counties. Residents of all other counties had statistical means ranging from 4.10 to 4.58. Significant differences also emerged among the multi-county district (MCD)⁵ categories: residents with the lowest agreement were in the Central (4.11), Southwestern (4.14), and Bear River (4.14) MCDs, while those with the highest agreement lived in the Uintah Basin (4.63) and Southwestern MCDs (4.50).

Education*: Respondents who had graduate degrees (4.65) were more likely to agree with the statement, followed by those with bachelor’s degrees (4.26) and associate degrees (4.22). Those whose highest educational attainment was some high school (3.91), high school graduate or equivalent (3.94), or some college but degree not received or is in progress (4.02) selected lower levels of agreement.

Employment*: Respondents who selected retired (3.84) and unemployed (looking for work) (3.96) as their employment status were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than full-time employees (4.46).

Gender*: There was a significant difference between men (3.99) and women (4.38) in terms of agreements levels; non-binary participants had a statistical mean of 5.26.

Income*: Participants with household incomes of less than \$75,000 were less likely to agree (3.90 to 4.04) than those with incomes over \$75,000 (4.37 to 4.64).

Marital Status*: Respondents who selected widowed (3.83) or living with partner/cohabiting (3.96) were significantly less likely to agree with the statement compared to those who selected married (4.42) and married but separated (4.38).

Race/Ethnicity: There were no statistically significant differences among the race/ethnicity categories.

Religion*: The highest levels of agreement came from women who selected Islam (4.98), Judaism (4.64), and Latter-day Saint (4.48), while those who selected Jehovah Witness (3.58), Protestant (3.71), Other/General Christians (4.01), and Hinduism (4.08) had the least agreement. Religious activity levels were ranked on a 5-point scale (1=lowest to 5=highest), and respondents who selected 2 (3.99), 3 (4.12), and 1 (4.17) as their religious activity level had the lowest agreement, while those who selected 5 (4.42) and 4 (4.38) had the highest.

Residency*: Respondents who had lived in Utah for fewer than 2 years (3.72) had significantly lower agreement than all others, particularly those who had lived in Utah more than 21 years (4.54).

⁵ Multi-county districts (MCDs) include Bear River (Box Elder, Cache, and Rich counties), Central (Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, and Wayne counties), Mountainland (Summit, Utah, and Wasatch counties), Southeastern (Carbon, Emery, Grand, and San Juan counties) Southwestern (Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington counties), Uintah Basin (Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah counties), and Wasatch Front (Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake, Tooele, and Weber counties).

Despite the differences, the means still hovered around neither agree nor disagree, with one leaning toward strongly disagree and the other leaning toward somewhat agree.

2. Preventable

The second survey item in this section was “*Child sexual abuse is preventable.*” The statistical mean was 5.56 (SD 1.48) for the representative sample, 5.98 (SD 1.06) for the convenience sample, and 5.80 (SD 1.27) for the combined samples (see Table 2 for additional details). Although 598 Utahns (13.4%) disagreed at some level or selected neither agree nor disagree, 3,836 (86.5%) agreed that child sexual abuse can be prevented. Although a substantial number do agree, the percentage of Utah adults who do not agree, are unsure, or even somewhat agree demonstrates a need for additional work to raise awareness on this issue. Child sexual abuse can be prevented,⁶ and when people believe this, they are more likely to take steps to prevent it with children in their homes and within their broader circles of influence.

Table 2. Preventable –Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative M=5.56; SD=1.48	Convenience M=5.98; SD=1.06	Combined M=5.80; SD=1.27
Strongly disagree	43 (2.2%)	3 (0.1%)	46 (1.0%)
Disagree	61 (3.2%)	16 (0.6%)	77 (1.7%)
Somewhat disagree	87 (4.5%)	56 (2.2%)	143 (3.2%)
Neither agree nor disagree	192 (10.0%)	140 (5.6%)	332 (7.5%)
Somewhat agree	361 (18.8%)	451 (17.9%)	812 (18.3%)
Agree	556 (29.0%)	918 (36.5%)	1474 (33.2%)
Strongly agree	620 (32.3%)	930 (37.0%)	1550 (35.0%)
Total Participants	1920	2514	4434

In the 2023 survey results, the statistical mean was 5.60 (SD 1.37) for the representative sample and 6.01 (SD 1.07) for the convenience sample. When both samples were combined, 46.8% agreed at some level with the statement, while 24.5% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 28.7% disagreed. The convenience study participants were more hopeful in terms of agreeing that child sexual abuse is preventable. Although the statistical mean was similar in both 2023 and 2024, there are some meaningful shifts within the agreement categories.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below summarize findings for the combined samples.

Age*: Respondents who were 55 and older (5.56 to 5.71) had the lowest agreement levels, while those with the highest agreement fell within the following age ranges: 18–24 (6.00), 25–29 (5.93), and 30–34 (5.89).

Children: There was no significant difference in agreement between parents and nonparents, and there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

Counties/Regions*: Respondents who had the strongest agreement lived in the following counties: Cache (6.09), Daggett (6.08), Iron (6.05), Box Elder (6.02), Garfield (5.99), Duchesne (5.96), Tooele (5.93), and Davis (5.90) counties. Those with the least agreement resided in Rich (5.20), Wayne (5.31), Juab (5.32), Piute (5.53), Morgan (5.54), and Beaver (5.56) counties. Among the MCD categories, respondents had significant differences: areas with the lowest agreement were in the Central (5.55) and Southwestern MCDs (5.75), while those with the highest agreement lived in the Bear River MCD (5.94).

Education*: Respondents who had graduate degrees (5.97); bachelor’s degrees (5.88) some college but degree not received or is in progress (5.80) and associate degree (5.78) were more likely to agree with this statement than those with less than high school (4.95), some high school (5.33), and high school graduate or equivalent (5.40).

⁶ Prevent Child Abuse America. (n.d.). *Child sexual abuse prevention*. <https://preventchildabuse.org/what-we-do/child-sexual-abuse-prevention/>

*Employment**: Respondents who selected retired (5.61) and unemployed (looking for work) (5.61) as their employment status were significantly less likely to agree than full-time students (6.02) and full-time employees (5.87).

*Gender**: The agreement levels of men (5.73) and women (5.82) were similar, with non-binary participants agreeing significantly more strongly (6.26).

*Income**: Participants reporting their household incomes at less than \$50,000 were less likely to agree (5.50 to 5.62) than those with incomes over \$150,000 (5.90 to 5.95).

*Marital Status**: Respondents who selected widowed (5.46) and married but separated (5.63) were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than those who selected married (5.76) and single (5.76).

*Race/Ethnicity**: Respondents who selected White (5.84), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (5.81), American Indian or Alaska Native (5.75), and Hispanic/Latino (5.75) had significantly higher agreement than those who selected Black or African American (5.44).

*Religion**: The highest levels of agreement came from respondents who selected Hinduism (6.05), Latter-day Saint (5.95), Atheist (5.95), Agnostic (5.87), and Spiritual but Not Religious (5.82). The lowest agreement levels included respondents who selected Jehovah Witness (5.21), Protestant (5.52), and Other/General Christians (5.59). Activity levels were ranked on a 5-point scale (1=lowest to 5=highest), and respondents who selected 4 (5.67) and 3 (5.69) as their religious activity level had the lowest agreement, while those who selected 5 (5.89) had the highest.

*Residency**: Utah residents of fewer than 2 years (5.56) had significantly lower agreement than all others, particularly those who had lived in Utah 11–20 years (6.03) and more than 21 years (5.90).

3. Prevalence

The third survey item in this section was “*Child sexual abuse is more prevalent in Utah than the national average.*” The statistical mean was 4.33 (SD 1.44) for the representative sample, 4.95 (1.32) for the convenience sample, and 4.68 (SD 1.41) for the combined samples. The most striking result was that 44.7% in the representative sample and 41.4% in the convenience sample selected neither agree nor disagree as their response to this survey item. Along with the 11.9% of participants who disagreed, this shows that a significant proportion of respondents are unsure about and most likely do not understand the high prevalence of child sexual abuse in Utah. Fortunately, 45.3% of Utahns in the samples agreed at some level (though only 12.2% strongly agreed). See Table 3 for additional details.

Table 3. Prevalence – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M</i>=4.33; <i>SD</i>=1.44	Convenience <i>M</i>=4.95; <i>SD</i>=1.32	Combined <i>M</i>=4.68; <i>SD</i>=1.41
Strongly disagree	77 (4.0%)	13 (0.5%)	90 (2.0%)
Disagree	144 (7.5%)	75 (3.0%)	219 (4.9%)
Somewhat disagree	139 (7.2%)	81 (3.2%)	220 (5.0%)
Neither agree nor disagree	858 (44.7%)	1041 (41.4%)	1899 (42.8%)
Somewhat agree	269 (14.0%)	323 (12.9%)	592 (13.4%)
Agree	279 (14.5%)	593 (23.6%)	872 (19.7%)
Strongly agree	154 (8.0%)	386 (15.4%)	540 (12.2%)
Total Participants	1920	2512	4432

In the 2023 survey results, the statistical mean was 4.29 (SD 1.34) for the representative sample and 4.96 (SD 1.36) for the convenience sample. For this question, 42.4% (1,346) of participants in the combined analysis selected neither agree nor disagree, which matches the results of the 2024 study. Again, the numbers reflect a lack of knowledge or understanding of state and national data. While only 9.4% responded with any level of disagreement in the 2023 study, 48.1% agreed that Utah’s prevalence may be higher than national levels. Again, the 2024 results are similar to the 2023 findings.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below summarize findings for the combined samples.

*Age**: Respondents who were 70 and older (4.27), 65–69 (4.36), 60–64 (4.52), and 55–59 (4.53) had the lowest agreement levels, while those with the highest agreement fell within the following age ranges: 45–49 (4.88), 30–34 (4.87), 18–24 (4.83), and 25–29 (4.82). Statistically significant differences appeared between the two oldest categories and all others.

*Children**: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (4.75) and nonparents (4.55), with parents having higher agreement, but there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

*Counties/Regions**: There were significant differences among counties and MCDs, with respondents in the following areas having the lowest agreement: the Tooele, Morgan, & Rich grouping, the central rural county grouping (4.36), and Box Elder County (4.40). Respondents in Iron (5.00) and Cache (4.85) counties had the highest agreement. Among MCD categories, respondents with the lowest agreement lived in the Central (4.29) and Southwestern MCDs (4.58), while those with the highest agreement lived in the Uintah Basin MCD (4.80).

*Education**: Respondents who had graduate degrees (5.00), bachelor’s degrees (4.73), and associate degrees (4.61) were significantly more likely to agree with this statement than those who selected their highest educational attainment as less than high school (4.05), some high school (4.19), and high school graduate or equivalent (4.24).

*Employment**: Respondents who selected retired (4.27) and unemployed (looking for work) (4.40) as their employment status were significantly less likely to agree with the statement compared to employed full time (4.86) and full-time student (4.73).

*Gender**: There was a significant difference in agreement levels between men (4.35) and women (4.79); non-binary participants had a statistical mean of 5.26.

*Income**: Participants with household incomes that were less than \$50,000 were less likely to agree (4.23 to 4.39) than those with incomes over \$50,000 (4.62 to 4.99).

*Marital Status**: Respondents who selected widowed (4.36), married but separated (4.50), single (4.51), or divorced (4.53) were significantly less likely to agree with the statement compared to those who selected married (4.78) or living with partner/cohabiting (4.72).

*Race/Ethnicity**: Respondents who selected White (4.74), Asian (4.60), and Black or African American (4.58) had significantly higher agreement than those who selected Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (4.38).

*Religion**: The highest levels of agreement came from respondents who selected Atheist (5.13), Agnostic (4.99), Islam (4.88), Spiritual but Not Religious (4.84), and Judaism (4.83), while the lowest agreement came from respondents who selected Jehovah Witness (3.68), Protestant (4.30), and Other/General Christian (4.50). There were no differences in religious activity levels and agreement with this survey item.

*Residency**: Respondents who had lived in Utah for fewer than 2 years (4.15) had significantly lower agreement than all others, particularly those who had lived in Utah 11–20 years (5.01), 6–10 years (5.00), and more than 21 years (4.87).

4. Finding Resources

The final survey item in this section was “*I know where to find resources to help prevent child sexual abuse.*” This is a new item, so we do not have a comparison with the 2023 study. The statistical mean was 4.94 (SD 1.53) for the representative sample, 4.78 (1.61) for the convenience sample, and 4.85 (SD 1.58) for the combined samples. It is interesting that the representative sample had a slightly higher statistical mean than the convenience sample. For future research, it would be interesting to understand what resources the study participants were thinking about when they responded to this survey item. While the statistical means for all the samples are close to somewhat agree, 20.6% of respondents disagreed, and 15.9% selected neither agree nor disagree. See Table 4 for additional details.

Table 4. Finding Resources –Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=4.94; SD=1.53</i>	Convenience <i>M=4.78; SD=1.61</i>	Combined <i>M=4.85; SD=1.58</i>
Strongly disagree	63 (3.3%)	52 (2.1%)	115 (2.6%)
Disagree	97 (5.1%)	230 (9.1%)	327 (7.4%)
Somewhat disagree	140 (7.3%)	330 (13.1%)	470 (10.6%)
Neither agree nor disagree	387 (20.2%)	317 (12.6%)	704 (15.9%)
Somewhat agree	435 (22.7%)	638 (25.3%)	1073 (24.2%)
Agree	501 (26.1%)	577 (22.9%)	1078 (24.3%)
Strongly agree	297 (15.5%)	373 (14.8%)	670 (15.1%)
Total Participants	1920	2517	4437

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below summarize findings for the combined samples.

*Age**: Respondents who were in some of the youngest categories—25–29 (4.61) and 18–24 (4.66)—were significantly less likely to agree with this statement than those in the following age ranges: 50–54 (5.04), 60–64 (5.03), and 65–69 (4.96).

*Children**: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (4.94) and nonparents (4.68), with parents having higher agreement, but there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

*Counties/Regions**: There were no significant differences among counties, but there were among MCDs; respondents with the lowest agreement resided in the Wasatch (4.78) and Central (4.80) MCDs, while those with the highest agreement lived in the Uintah Basin MCD (5.25).

*Education**: Interestingly, respondents who had a graduate degree (4.65), associate degree (4.85), or some high school (4.81) were more likely to agree with this statement. Those who selected their highest educational attainment as less than high school (4.43) or high school graduate or equivalent (4.68) had the lowest agreement levels.

*Employment**: Respondents who selected full-time student (4.52) and full-time homemaker (4.64) were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than full-time employees (4.93).

*Gender**: There was a significant difference between men (4.99) and women (4.80) in agreement levels, with men being more confident that they knew where to find resources; non-binary participants had a statistical mean of 4.61.

*Income**: Participants who selected household incomes of less than \$25,000 were less likely to agree (4.69) than those with incomes over \$150,000 (4.92 to 5.03).

Marital Status: There were no statistically significant differences among marital status categories.

*Race/Ethnicity**: The strongest agreement came from those who selected Black or African American (5.18) and American Indian or Alaska Native (5.12), and the lowest came from respondents who selected Hispanic/Latino (4.82) and White (4.82).

*Religion**: Although the statistics did not find a significant difference between statistical means, those who selected Islam (5.10), Judaism (5.09), Hinduism (5.05), Protestant (4.97), and Catholic (4.95) had the highest agreement levels, while those who selected Jehovah Witness (4.24), Agnostic (4.63), and Atheist (4.71) had the lowest agreement. Selecting activity levels (1=lowest to 5=highest), respondents who chose 1 (4.60) and 2 (4.78) as their religious activity level had the lowest agreement, while those who reported 5 (5.04) had the highest.

Residency: Respondents' years of residency produced no statistically significant differences.

5. Qualitative Findings

As mentioned, we offered one open-ended question inviting responses regarding any thoughts, insights, or ideas respondents may have related to the challenges that Utah women and girls face. Overall, 2,248 study participants provided qualitative responses to this prompt, with 49 mentioning something that fell within the “Child Sexual Abuse” category. Table 5 lists the extrapolated theme categories, followed by several characteristic quotations that highlight elements of those themes. Note that some comments were included in several categories, as individual statements were often related to a variety of themes and topics. Others simply identified the general category as an issue of concern but did not provide additional commentary. Consequently, the theme percentages exceed 100.0%.

Table 5. Qualitative Themes – Child Sexual Abuse

Theme Categories	#	%
A. Improving Response	17	35.4%
B. Prevalence	16	33.3%
C. Education & Resources	14	29.2%
D. General Concerns	11	22.9%
E. Cultural Influences	9	18.8%

- A. *Improving Response*: The theme that surfaced most frequently among respondents (35.4%) was the lack of response, or the need to improve the response, to reports of child sexual abuse. Quotations included,

“Sexual abuse of women and girls seems to be viewed, still, as a female problem. *No*: most abusers are male, and it’s *their* problem (that they visit upon others).”

“I was molested at 4 by some older boys in the neighborhood. My dad thought it was best to ignore what happened because he was afraid of what would happen to *the boys!*”

“I divorced my ex-husband after our 8-year-old daughter disclosed his sexual abuse of her for two years. The Salt Lake County DA office decided not to charge him with a crime unless another victim came forward.”

“Strengthen legal protections and adopt legislation and policies to protect the rights and interests of women and prevent sexual, domestic, and other forms of abuse.”

- B. *Prevalence*: A significant number of respondents lamented the high incidence of child sexual abuse. Of the 16 respondents (33.3%) who mentioned this theme, several also noted that the tendency to disregard the issue actually contributes to its frequency. For instance,

“We need to be honest with ourselves that we have a sexual abuse problem for women and children in this state. We need to devote more resources to facing and fixing the sexual abuse problems than we do to covering them up and denying them.”

“I worked in the sex offender treatment halfway house program for the Utah Department of Corrections and learned that 1/3 of the Utah State Prison is filled with child predators, a whole unit of which are a very old/medically vulnerable and expensive population to serve. One-third of the men’s population is unheard of in the US prison system; we are so far above the national average, to say we are not talking enough about child sexual abuse is absurd!”

“Why does such inequality between men and women persist so strongly in Utah? There are multiple reasons I am sure, but I personally believe that the leading cause is the underground plague of sexual abuse in this state, with women and children being the main victims.”

- C. *Education and Resources*: The need for solutions was mentioned frequently (29.2%), and suggestions ranged from offering prevention education to providing support resources after abuse has occurred. For example,

“Sex education is essentially nonexistent in this state, which leads to higher rates of sexual abuse for girls and women.”

“I know people who have experienced high levels of trauma in childhood but are able to find healing resources in Moab.”

D. *General Concerns and E. Cultural Influences*: While a significant number of responses (22.9%), mentioned concerns regarding child sexual abuse more generally, nearly as many believe cultural factors in Utah contribute to the issue. Comments expressing these themes included

“There is a cultural norm that women and girls are responsible for men’s thoughts and actions by the way they act and dress. This must stop! It is more than religion. It is the cultural norm, while simultaneously assault and abuse rates in Utah are higher than the national average.”

“After surviving childhood sexual abuse and an abusive marriage, I realized I am much stronger than I ever could have imagined.”

“Sexual abuse is harmful to women and girls.”

“The only way to address the root cause of these issues is to elect leaders that do not undermine our wellbeing, and this starts with both local and state elections. Until this happens in Utah, there will never be meaningful change, and we will continue to see this epidemic of abuse reports that go nowhere.”

Additional comments invited lawmakers to pass legislation requiring religious leaders to be mandated reporters; others noted the importance of believing survivors who disclose sexual abuse, while others underscored the necessity of safe social support for children and families.

Domestic Violence

On March 1, 2023, the UWLP released a research snapshot titled “Domestic Violence Among Utah Women: A 2023 Update.”⁷ This report captured the limited available data on domestic violence from various sources. We know that one in three Utah women will experience some form of contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in her lifetime. However, it has been difficult to track the status and progress in Utah with the available data. The four domestic violence survey items included in this study—the same ones that were asked in 2023—provide additional insight that can guide changes to improve support and safety for more Utah women, children, and families. There were 1,920 participants in the representative sample who responded to the four survey items in this section and 2,510 in the convenience sample who responded to at least one item. In total, 4,430 Utahns participated in this portion of the study.

1. Problem

The first survey item in this section was “*Domestic violence is a problem in my community*.” The statistical mean was 4.44 (SD 1.68) for respondents in the representative sample, 5.13 (SD 1.49) for participants in the convenience sample, and 4.83 (SD 1.61) for the combined samples. There was a statistically significant difference between samples, with the convenience sample having a mean over somewhat agree and the representative sample between neither agree nor disagree and somewhat agree. Overall, 40.2% either disagreed or were unsure that domestic violence was a problem in their community. Significantly more respondents (67.4%) in the convenience sample agreed at some level with the statement, while 50.1% did the same in the representative sample. See Table 6 on the next page for additional details.

In the 2023 survey results,⁸ the statistical mean for the combined samples was 4.36 (SD 1.59) for the representative sample and 5.10 (SD 1.49) for the convenience sample. In the representative sample, 25.5% of respondents disagreed that domestic violence was a problem, while another 26.2% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 22.8% somewhat agreed. Only 25.6% of participants firmly agreed domestic violence is a problem in Utah. These results are similar to the 2024 study findings, with some levels of agreement and disagreement shifting slightly.

⁷ Wagstaff, C., Leroy, T., Hill, J. C., Hopkin, C., & Darowski, E. S. (2023, March 1). *Domestic violence among Utah women: A 2023 update*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/snapshot/46.pdf>

⁸ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Domestic violence: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/domestic-violence-research-summary.pdf>

Table 6. Problem – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=4.44; SD=1.68</i>	Convenience <i>M=5.13; SD=1.49</i>	Combined <i>M=4.83; SD=1.61</i>
Strongly disagree	124 (6.5%)	39 (1.6%)	163 (3.7%)
Disagree	183 (9.5%)	148 (5.9%)	331 (7.5%)
Somewhat disagree	164 (8.5%)	131 (5.2%)	295 (6.7%)
Neither agree nor disagree	487 (25.4%)	501 (20.0%)	988 (22.3%)
Somewhat agree	396 (20.6%)	497 (19.8%)	893 (20.2%)
Agree	338 (17.6%)	707 (28.2%)	1045 (23.6%)
Strongly agree	228 (11.9%)	487 (19.4%)	715 (16.1%)
Total Participants	1920	2510	4430

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples. The statistical means are based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=neither agree nor disagree, and 7=strongly agree). The “*” refers to demographic variables that met the statistical significance p-value threshold of ≤ 0.05 .

Age*: Respondents who were 70 and older (4.37), 18–24 (4.43), and 65–69 (4.55) had significantly lower agreement levels than respondents who were in the following age ranges: 45–49 (5.11), 50–54 (5.11), 30–34 (4.91), 60–64 (4.90), 35–39 (4.89), 40–44 (4.85), 25–29 (4.81), and 55–59 (4.81).

Children*: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (4.95) and nonparents (4.60), with parents having higher agreement, but there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

Counties/Regions: There were no statistically significant differences among counties, MCDs, or rural versus urban county comparisons.

Education*: Respondents who had graduate degrees (5.19), bachelor’s degrees (4.83), and associate degrees (4.70) were more likely to agree with this statement. Those who selected less than high school (3.95) and high school graduate or equivalent (4.46) were more likely to select significantly lower agreement levels.

Employment*: Respondents who selected retired (4.37), full-time homemaker (4.42), and full-time student (4.47) as their employment status were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than full-time (5.00) and part-time employees (4.89).

Gender*: There was a significant difference in agreement levels between men (4.38) and women (4.98); non-binary participants had a statistical mean of 5.65.

Income*: Participants who selected household incomes that were less than \$50,000 were significantly less likely to agree (4.49 to 4.61) than those with incomes over \$150,000 (4.98 to 5.16).

Marital Status: There were no statistically significant differences among marital status categories.

Race/Ethnicity*: There was a significant difference among respondents who selected Asian (4.40) and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (4.59) when compared to White (4.89) and Black or African American (4.71).

Religion*: The highest levels of agreement came from respondents who selected Judaism (5.09), Atheist (5.07), Agnostic (5.05), and Islam (5.00), while those who selected Protestant (4.36), Jehovah Witness (4.37), Other/General Christian (4.55), Catholic (4.58), and Hinduism (4.59) had the least agreement. Activity levels were ranked on a 5-point scale (1=lowest to 5=highest), and, interestingly, respondents who selected 2 (4.63) and 3 (4.69) had the lowest agreement, while those who selected 5 (4.89) and 1 (4.76) had the highest.

Residency*: Respondents who had lived in Utah for fewer than 2 years (4.24) had significantly lower agreement than all others, particularly residents of more than 21 years (5.18).

2. Emotional Abuse

The second survey item in this section was “*When considering domestic violence, emotional abuse is just as serious as physical abuse.*” The statistical mean was 5.82 (SD 1.30) for the representative sample, 6.37 (SD 0.94) for the convenience sample, and 6.13 (SD 1.14) for the combined samples (see Table 7 for additional details). There was substantial agreement in both samples—with the convenience sample being significantly higher—that emotional abuse is just as serious as physical abuse. Although 37.0% of respondents in the representative sample strongly agreed, it was striking that 57.3% in the convenience sample strongly agreed as well. In fact, in the convenience sample only 4.4% had any level of disagreement or selected neither agree nor disagree.

Table 7. Emotional Abuse – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=5.82; SD=1.30</i>	Convenience <i>M=6.37; SD=0.94</i>	Combined <i>M=6.13; SD=1.14</i>
Strongly disagree	27 (1.4%)	4 (0.2%)	31 (0.7%)
Disagree	36 (1.9%)	12 (0.5%)	48 (1.1%)
Somewhat disagree	47 (2.4%)	45 (1.8%)	92 (2.1%)
Neither agree nor disagree	143 (7.4%)	47 (1.9%)	190 (4.3%)
Somewhat agree	343 (17.9%)	218 (8.7%)	561 (12.6%)
Agree	613 (31.9%)	750 (29.8%)	1363 (30.7%)
Strongly agree	711 (37.0%)	1441 (57.3%)	2152 (48.5%)
Total Participants	1920	2517	4437

In the 2023 survey results,⁹ the statistical mean was 5.95 (SD 1.27) for the representative sample and 6.33 (SD 0.95) for the convenience sample. In combining the results of both samples in 2023, 1,983 Utahns (62.4%) agreed with this statement at some level. Yet, in the representative sample, 51.7% of respondents either disagreed or selected neutral, which indicates that expanding awareness and education on this topic was critically important in 2023 and continues to be so in 2024.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples.

Age*: Respondents who were 18–25 (5.96), 30–34 (5.99), and 25–29 (6.05) had the lowest agreement levels, while those with the highest agreement fell within the following age ranges: 50–54 (6.33), 45–49 (6.26), and 60–64 (6.21).

Children*: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (6.18) and nonparents (6.03), and in terms of parents with various ages and numbers of children, the only significant difference was among parents of teenage children: parents who had more than three teenagers (5.27–5.70) had lower agreement than those with one or two (6.12 and 6.28).

Counties/Regions*: Respondents in the following counties had the strongest agreement: Carbon (6.43), Duchesne (6.42), Davis (6.34), Iron (6.31), Cache (6.29), Tooele (6.25), Salt Lake (6.24), and Emery (6.23). Residents of Rich (5.39), Daggett (5.77), Millard (6.81), Morgan (5.84), and Beaver (5.87) counties had significantly less agreement. Significant differences arose in MCD categories; participants with the lowest agreement resided in the Central (6.00) and Southwestern MCDs (6.00), while those with the highest agreement lived in the Southeastern (6.24) and Wasatch MCDs (6.23).

Education*: Respondents who had graduate degrees (6.30), bachelor’s degrees (6.16), some college but degree not received or is in progress (6.11), and associate degrees (6.09) were more likely to agree with this statement than those with less than high school (4.57), some high school (5.42), or high school graduate or equivalent (5.95).

⁹ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Domestic violence: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/domestic-violence-research-summary.pdf>

*Employment**: Respondents who selected unemployed (looking for work) (5.81) and full-time homemaker (5.99) as their employment status were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than part-time employees (6.24), full-time students (6.18) and full-time employees (6.17).

*Gender**: The agreement levels of women (6.27) were significantly higher than those of men (5.70), with non-binary participants at 6.09.

*Income**: Participants who selected household incomes that were less than \$50,000 were less likely to agree (5.85 to 6.07) than those with incomes over \$150,000 (6.24 to 6.29).

*Marital Status**: Respondents who selected single (6.04) were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than those who selected widowed (6.22) and divorced (6.21).

*Race/Ethnicity**: Respondents who selected Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (6.22) and White (6.21) had significantly higher agreement than those who selected American Indian or Alaska Native (5.82), Black or African American (5.83), and Asian (5.83).

Religion: There were no significant differences between levels of agreement and religious affiliation, and there were also no significant differences between agreement and religious activity.

*Residency**: Respondents who had lived in Utah for fewer than 2 years (5.85) had significantly lower agreement than those who had lived in Utah more than 21 years (6.36) and 11–20 years (6.21).

3. Resources and Support

The third survey item in this section was “*I know where to find domestic violence resources and support in my community.*” The statistical mean was 5.21 (SD 1.44) for the representative sample, 5.19 (1.56) for the convenience sample, and 5.20 (SD 1.51) for the combined samples. There was not a statistically significant difference with the mean among samples, although there were interesting differences that can be seen by studying Table 8. It is encouraging to see that many Utahns in both samples agreed at some level that they could find resources and support in their own communities. Although future research would be needed, it would be interesting to ascertain whether most respondents are simply assuming they can do an internet search and find what they need or whether they are actually aware of the organizations that are available to provide support.

Table 8. Resources and Support – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M</i> =5.21; <i>SD</i> =1.44	Convenience <i>M</i> =5.19; <i>SD</i> =1.56	Combined <i>M</i> =5.20; <i>SD</i> =1.51
Strongly disagree	41 (2.1%)	46 (1.8%)	87 (2.0%)
Disagree	74 (3.9%)	140 (5.6%)	214 (4.8%)
Somewhat disagree	111 (5.8%)	251 (10.0%)	362 (8.2%)
Neither agree nor disagree	291 (15.2%)	232 (9.2%)	523 (11.8%)
Somewhat agree	448 (23.3%)	598 (23.7%)	1046 (23.6%)
Agree	602 (31.4%)	683 (27.1%)	1285 (29.0%)
Strongly agree	353 (18.4%)	568 (22.6%)	921 (20.8%)
Total Participants	1920	2518	4438

In the 2023 survey results,¹⁰ the statistical mean was 4.92 (SD 1.63) for the representative sample and 5.23 (SD 1.66) for the convenience sample. There was a slight shift upward with the statistical mean for the representative sample in 2024. For this survey item in 2023, about one-third (34.2%) of participants within the representative sample selected a choice that was either neutral or disagreed at some level, while about two-thirds (64.8%) agreed. The agreement was slightly higher in the convenience sample, and in 2024 they are even more similar.

¹⁰ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Domestic violence: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/domestic-violence-research-summary.pdf>

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below summarize findings for the combined samples.

Age*: Respondents who were 60–64 (5.53), 50–54 (5.43), and 65–69 (5.37) had the highest agreement levels, while those with the lowest agreement included respondents in the 25–29 (4.91) and 18–24 (4.97) age ranges.

Children*: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (5.28) and nonparents (5.04), with parents having higher agreement with the statement. There were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

Counties/Regions*: There were significant differences among counties or county groupings, with respondents in the following areas having the lowest agreement: the central rural county grouping (5.06), Salt Lake County (5.08), and Utah County (5.09). The highest agreement came from respondents who lived in Cache (5.91) and Iron (5.90) counties. Among MCD categories, respondents with the lowest agreement lived in the Wasatch Front (5.11) and Mountainland MCDs (5.15), while those with the highest agreement lived in the Bear River (5.72), Uintah Basin (5.54), and Southeastern MCDs (5.46).

Education*: Respondents who had graduate degrees (5.43), associate degrees (5.17), bachelor’s degrees (5.13), and some college but degree not received or is in progress (5.13) were significantly more likely to agree with this statement than those with less than high school (4.71), some high school (5.03), and high school graduate or equivalent (5.05). The significant difference was between those with graduate degrees and those in the two lowest educational attainment categories.

Employment*: Respondents who selected full-time homemaker (4.80) as their employment status were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than those who selected employed full time (5.29) and retired (5.19).

Gender: There were no statistically significant differences in agreement levels among genders.

Income*: Participants who selected household incomes that were less than \$25,000 (4.99) and \$25,000–\$34,999 (5.09) were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than those who selected \$150,000–\$199,999 (5.35) and \$100,000–149,999 (5.27).

Marital Status: There were no statistically significant differences among marital status categories.

Race/Ethnicity: There were no statistically significant differences among race/ethnicity categories.

Religion*: The highest agreement came from those who selected Islam (5.67), Judaism (5.44), Protestant (5.37), and Other/General Christian (5.30), while the least agreement came from respondents who selected Jehovah Witness (4.95), Agnostic (5.06), and Atheist (5.14). There were significant differences in religious activity levels (1=lowest to 5=highest), but not in a linear pattern: the lowest agreement came from respondents who selected 1 (5.01), followed by 4 (5.13), 2 (5.13), 3 (5.29), and 5 (5.34) having the highest agreement.

Residency: Respondents’ years of residency produced no statistically significant differences.

4. Concrete Steps

The final survey item in this section was “*I know how to take concrete steps to help address domestic violence in my community.*” The statistical mean was 5.02 (SD 1.46) for the representative sample, 4.31 (1.67) for the convenience sample, and 4.62 (SD 1.62) for the combined samples. It is interesting that the representative sample has a significantly higher mean than the convenience sample. Significantly more respondents in the representative sample agreed and strongly agreed, and fewer individuals selected a level of disagreement. In the combined samples, 56.6% agreed that they knew how to take concrete steps to help address domestic violence in their communities, while 43.4% disagreed or were unsure. The demographic findings will add some insight that could clarify these results in more detail. See Table 9 for additional details.

Table 9. Concrete Steps – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=5.02; SD=1.46</i>	Convenience <i>M=4.31; SD=1.67</i>	Combined <i>M=4.62; SD=1.62</i>
Strongly disagree	45 (2.3%)	114 (4.5%)	159 (3.6%)
Disagree	86 (4.5%)	306 (12.2%)	392 (8.8%)
Somewhat disagree	130 (6.8%)	426 (16.9%)	556 (12.5%)
Neither agree nor disagree	386 (20.1%)	434 (17.3%)	820 (18.5%)
Somewhat agree	446 (23.2%)	575 (22.9%)	1021 (23.0%)
Agree	536 (27.9%)	389 (15.5%)	925 (20.9%)
Strongly agree	291 (15.2%)	271 (10.8%)	562 (12.7%)
Total Participants	1920	2515	4435

In the 2023 survey results,¹¹ the statistical mean was 4.48 (SD 1.64) for the representative sample and 4.27 (SD 1.72) for the convenience sample. As with 2024, this was the only question where the representative sample had higher agreement, although it was still closer to the neither agree nor disagree selection. About half (48.9%) of this sample chose neutral or disagree. For either sample, about half of the respondents selected agree at some level. Although the 2024 results are similar in many respects, the statistical mean of the representative sample is significantly higher than the 2023 statistical mean.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples.

*Age**: Respondents who were in some of the youngest categories—18–24 (4.41) and 25–29 (4.43)—were significantly less likely to agree with this statement than those in the following age ranges: 60–64 (4.90), 65–69 (4.84), 50–54 (4.80), and 70 and older (4.75).

*Children**: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (4.67) and nonparents (4.52), with parents having higher agreement with the statement.

*Counties/Regions**: There was a significant difference between respondents who selected Davis (4.36) and Salt Lake (4.43) counties—with the lowest agreement—and those who selected Iron (5.14) and Box Elder (5.04), who had the highest agreement. Among MCD categories, respondents with the lowest agreement lived in the Wasatch (4.46) and Mountainland MCDs (4.67), compared with those who lived in the Uintah Basin MCD (5.14).

*Education**: Interestingly, respondents who had some high school (4.97), high school graduate or equivalent (4.79), and some college but degree not received or is in progress (4.71) were more likely to agree with this statement. Those who selected their highest educational attainment as less than high school (4.45) or bachelor’s degree (4.48) had the lowest agreement levels.

Employment: There were no significant differences among the employment categories and levels of agreement with this statement.

*Gender**: There was a significant difference between women (4.52) and men (4.91), with men having more confidence that they knew what steps to take; the combined non-binary participants had a lower statistical mean (3.87).

*Income**: Although there was statistical significance among income ranges, it was not linear. For example, participants with household incomes that were \$25,000–\$34,999 (4.74), \$50,000–74,999 (4.73), and \$150,000–\$199,999 (4.70) had the highest agreement with the statement, while respondents with incomes \$200,000 and above (4.46) had the lowest agreement.

Marital Status: There were no statistically significant differences among marital status categories.

¹¹ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Domestic violence: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/domestic-violence-research-summary.pdf>

*Race/Ethnicity**: The strongest agreement came from those who selected Black or African American (5.11) and American Indian or Alaska Native (4.93), and the lowest agreement came from respondents who selected White (4.54).

*Religion**: The highest agreement came from respondents who selected Hinduism/Islam (5.32) and Judaism (5.18), and the lowest came from those who selected Agnostic (4.29), Latter-day Saint (4.35), and Atheist (4.42). In terms of activity levels (1=lowest to 5=highest), respondents who selected 1 (4.45) and 2 (4.66) had the lowest agreement, while those who selected 3 (4.86) had the highest.

*Residency**: There were statistically significant differences among agreement levels when comparing respondents who selected 11–20 years (4.37) and more than 21 years (4.42)—having the lowest agreement—with those who selected fewer than 2 years (4.96) having the highest.

5. Qualitative Findings

As mentioned, we offered one open-ended question inviting responses regarding any thoughts, insights, or ideas participants may have related to the challenges that Utah women and girls face. Overall, 2,248 study participants provided qualitative responses to this prompt, with 133 mentioning something that fell within the “Domestic Violence” category. Table 10 lists the extrapolated theme categories, followed by several characteristic quotations that underscore elements of those themes. Note that some comments were included in several categories, as individual statements were often related to a variety of themes and topics. Others simply identified the general category as an issue of concern but did not provide additional commentary. As such, the theme percentages exceed 100.0%.

Table 10. Qualitative Themes – Domestic Violence

Theme Categories	#	%
A. Victim Resources and Support Networks	47	35.3%
B. Religious, Cultural Influences	33	24.8%
C. Prevalence of Domestic Violence	29	21.8%
D. Types of Abuse	27	20.3%

- A. *Victim Resources and Support Networks*: The most frequent theme that surfaced among 35.3% of the respondents who mentioned domestic violence concerned the importance of having resources and support networks for victims and children, and some discussed the consequences of the lack of such supports. Responses included

“Addressing domestic violence remains crucial. Increased support services and awareness can help protect vulnerable individuals and provide resources for those in need.”

“I do think education on identifying and knowing how to report abuse would be helpful, especially in these little towns where it seems like nothing ever happens (but does).”

“I am a survivor of domestic violence and feel it is important to share that I am keenly aware of the ‘resources’ available, but these resources were not at all helpful in helping me escape. For example, there was a point where I needed to find immediate housing. I called *all* the housing resources available in Salt Lake County and found that there were *no* beds available for my daughters and me.”

- B. *Religious, Cultural Influences*: The second-most prevalent theme among 24.8% of respondents who discussed domestic violence was the influence of cultural factors, including the practices of various members and leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For instance,

“I want a world where we don’t have to negotiate our safety for the patriarchy’s comfort.”

“I think that the LDS church protects the entity of the church before it considers protecting women, children, and others who are receiving abuse in various different forms.”

“I see too many people making the assumption that women who report sexual assault or domestic violence are trying to destroy the life of a man.”

“Many women who experience domestic abuse are not taken seriously. The emphasis appears to

“I work at a domestic violence shelter. Domestic violence is a significant issue in Utah, and I believe that religious affiliations play a strong role in the ongoing abuse that women and children face daily.”

be on upholding the status quo (keeping families together) over helping women who are in vulnerable situations.”

- C. *Prevalence of Domestic Violence*: Among the responses were 29 comments (21.8%) that lamented the frequency of intimate partner violence in Utah. For example,

“I cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for Utahns to recognize, accept, and do everything in our power to end emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, and sexual violence. It is so pervasive and debilitating.”

“Child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence are *huge* problems here!”

“Intimate partner violence (either physical or emotional) is a big issue.”

- D. *Types of Abuse*: Unlike other topics in the survey, respondents mentioned the challenge of having so many Utahns who do not understand the various ways that women and children may be victimized. Responses included the following:

“Our justice system is failing Utah mothers and women. When expressing my experiences with mental, physical, and emotional abuse, I am silenced and made to sound jealous and exaggerating.”

“It gets worse when a man knows that as long as he doesn’t hit you with his hands, he can hurt you in all the other ways—insulting you, humiliating you, committing economic violence, infidelity, etc. I truly believe that laws should be enacted to protect against psychological abuse.”

“My ex-husband dumped the children and me in Utah, where his family confiscated all our belongings, drained our bank account, hid car keys, and kept the children and myself in his parents’ basement for over a year.”

“Utah divorce court systems and lawmakers need to do a lot of work learn about abuse, especially emotional abuse and its effects.”

Additional comments (20.3%) mentioned domestic violence more generally, while 19 respondents (14.3%) mentioned barriers victims face in trying escape abusive situations and another 19 (14.3%) called for stronger legal protections for victims. While fewer in number, there were some especially poignant comments in these categories, and one in particular read, “From what I have seen, there are more consequences for the woman than for the man when she speaks up.”

Sexual Assault

In 2022, the UWLP released a research snapshot titled “[Sexual Assault Among Utah Women: A 2022 Update](#).”¹² This report captured the available data on sexual assault from various sources. We know that sexual assault is a significant social, criminal justice, and healthcare issue in Utah. In fact, a seminal study in 2007 reported that one in three Utah women experienced sexual assault in their lifetimes, and one in six experienced rape. Sadly, Utah is ranked 7th of 50 states for the number of forcible rapes per capita.¹³ Yet, it has been difficult to track the current status and progress in Utah with the available data. The four sexual assault survey items asked in this study provide additional insight that will guide changes to improve support for more Utah women, children, and families. The 2023 items were identical. There were 1,920 participants in the representative sample, and 2,515 responded to at least one of the four questions in the convenience sample, with a combined total of 4,435 participants.

1. Problem

The first survey item in this section was “*I don’t think sexual assault is a big problem in Utah.*” The statistical mean was 3.41 (SD 1.74) for the representative sample, 1.89 (SD 1.14) for the convenience

¹² Valentine, J. L., & Miles, L. W. (2022, August 3). *Sexual assault among Utah women: A 2022 update*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/snapshot/42.pdf>

¹³ Statista. (2023). *Forcible rape rate per 100,000 inhabitants in the United States in 2023, by state*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/232563/forcible-rape-rate-in-the-us-by-state/>

sample, and 2.55 (SD 1.62) for the combined samples. There is a statistically significant difference among samples, with the convenience sample having much stronger disagreement with the statement. Overall, 3,183 Utahns (71.7%) in the combined samples disagreed at some level with the statement, with 1,252 (28.3%) either disagreeing or selecting neither agree nor disagree. However, the difference between the representative and convenience samples was vast: 47.9% of respondents in the convenience sample strongly disagreed, compared with only 17.6% in the representative sample. See Table 11 for additional details.

Table 11. Problem – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=3.41; SD=1.74</i>	Convenience <i>M=1.89; SD=1.14</i>	Combined <i>M=2.55; SD=1.62</i>
Strongly disagree	338 (17.6%)	1205 (47.9%)	1543 (34.8%)
Disagree	334 (17.4%)	772 (30.7%)	1106 (24.9%)
Somewhat disagree	268 (14.0%)	266 (10.6%)	534 (12.0%)
Neither agree nor disagree	537 (28.0%)	213 (8.5%)	750 (16.9%)
Somewhat agree	177 (9.2%)	22 (0.9%)	199 (4.5%)
Agree	154 (8.0%)	17 (0.7%)	171 (3.9%)
Strongly agree	112 (5.8%)	20 (0.8%)	132 (3.0%)
Total Participants	1920	2515	4435

In the 2023 survey results,¹⁴ the statistical mean for the representative sample was 2.60 (SD 1.49) and 1.88 (SD 1.11) for the convenience sample. Although there was a significant difference between samples, 85.2% of respondents disagreed at some level, with 48.9% strongly disagreeing in the convenience sample and 30.0% in the representative sample. We concluded last year that many Utahns are aware of this disturbing trend. With the larger representative sample in 2024, the statistical mean was significantly higher, meaning that the respondents in that sample were more likely to agree that they did not think sexual assault was a big problem in Utah.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples. The statistical means are based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=neither agree nor disagree, and 7=strongly agree). The “*” refers to demographic variables that met the statistical significance p-value threshold of ≤ 0.05 .

Age:* Respondents who selected the age range categories of 50–54 (2.27), 60–64 (2.28), 55–59 (2.25), and 45–49 (2.42) had significantly stronger disagreement levels than respondents who were in the following age ranges: 65–69 (2.78), 70 and older (2.76), 35–39 (2.75), and 30–34 (2.73). There was not a linear pattern, but the most significant difference was between the age ranges on either end.

Children: There was not a statistically significant difference between parents and nonparents, and there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

Counties/Regions:* There were statistically significant differences among counties, with the strongest disagreement coming from respondents in Cache (1.95), Iron (2.14), Davis (2.14), and Salt Lake (2.23) counties. The least disagreement came from respondents in the following counties: the Tooele, Morgan, & Rich grouping (3.09), Washington (2.91), the central rural county grouping (2.89), and Utah County (2.85). In terms of MCDs, the Wasatch Front (2.28) and Bear River MCDs (2.29) had significantly stronger disagreement than did respondents in all other MCDs: Central (2.91), Mountainland (2.83), Southwestern (2.80), Uintah Basin (2.79), and Southeastern (2.64).

Education:* Respondents who had graduate degrees (2.07), bachelor’s degrees (2.50), and some college but degree not received or is in progress (2.72) were more likely to disagree with this statement.

¹⁴ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Sexual assault: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/sexual-assault-research-summary.pdf>

Those who selected their highest educational attainment as some high school (3.46), less than high school (3.12), and high school graduate or equivalent (3.12) were likely to have weaker disagreement with this statement.

*Employment**: Respondents with the strongest disagreement reported their employment status as employed part time (2.32), full-time homemaker (2.43), and employed full time. Study participants with significantly less disagreement were unemployed (looking for work) (2.87) and retired (2.78).

*Gender**: There was a significant difference in agreement levels between men (3.29) and women (2.30); non-binary participants had a statistical mean of 1.74.

*Income**: The higher the household income level, the stronger the disagreement with this survey item. Participants with incomes \$200,000 and above had a mean of 2.19, and those who reported incomes of \$25,000–\$34,999 (2.98) and less than \$25,000 (2.94) disagreed the least.

Marital Status: There were no significant differences among marital status categories.

*Race/Ethnicity**: There was a significant difference among respondents who selected White (2.37), compared to those who selected Black or African American (3.60)—with the former having stronger disagreement than the latter. The disagreement levels of the four mid-range groups were as follows: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (2.92), Hispanic/Latino (2.92), American Indian or Alaska Native (3.01), and Asian (3.21).

*Religion**: The strongest disagreement (2.07) came from respondents who self-identified as Latter-day Saint, followed by Spiritual but Not Religious (2.12), Atheist (2.21), and Agnostic (2.24). There were no statistical differences among religious activity levels with this statement.

*Residency**: Respondents who had lived in Utah for fewer than 2 years (4.24) had significantly less disagreement (3.23) than residents of more than 21 years (1.98) and 11–20 years (2.33).

2. Unwanted Behavior

The second survey item in this section was “*Any unwanted sexual contact or behavior is sexual assault.*” The statistical mean was 5.75 (SD 1.44) for the representative sample, 5.99 (SD 1.50) for the convenience sample, and 5.88 (SD 1.48) for the combined samples (see Table 12 for additional details). Strikingly, 51.0% of respondents in the convenience sample and 45.6% in the combined samples strongly agreed that any unwanted sexual contact or behavior is sexual assault. Still, 659 respondents disagreed or were unsure, with another 495 only selecting somewhat agree, so there is still work to do in raising awareness of pertinent information.

Table 12. Unwanted Behavior – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M</i> =5.75; <i>SD</i> =1.44	Convenience <i>M</i> =5.99; <i>SD</i> =1.50	Combined <i>M</i> =5.88; <i>SD</i> =1.48
Strongly disagree	36 (1.9%)	78 (3.1%)	114 (2.6%)
Disagree	51 (2.7%)	61 (2.4%)	112 (2.5%)
Somewhat disagree	71 (3.7%)	95 (3.8%)	166 (3.7%)
Neither agree nor disagree	176 (9.2%)	91 (3.6%)	267 (6.0%)
Somewhat agree	279 (14.5%)	216 (8.6%)	495 (11.2%)
Agree	568 (29.6%)	689 (27.4%)	1257 (28.4%)
Strongly agree	739 (38.5%)	1281 (51.0%)	2020 (45.6%)
Total Participants	1920	2511	4431

In the 2023 survey results,¹⁵ the statistical mean was 5.86 (SD 1.43) for the representative sample and 5.88 (SD 1.53) for the convenience sample. There was strong agreement with this statement in 2023. In

¹⁵ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Sexual assault: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/sexual-assault-research-summary.pdf>

combining the results of both samples, 2,699 Utahns (85.0%) in 2023 responded that they agreed with this statement at some level, while 4.5% selected neither agree nor disagree and 10.6% disagreed. The results were similar in 2024.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples.

*Age**: Respondents who selected an age range of 18–24 years (6.19) had significantly higher agreement with the statement than those over 50 (5.62 to 5.81).

*Children**: There was a significant difference between parents (5.92) and nonparents (5.80), but no differences emerged among parents of varying numbers of children in the three age range categories.

*Counties/Regions**: Respondents with the strongest agreement lived in Cache (6.17) and Salt Lake (6.00) counties; residents with the lowest agreement came from the Tooele, Morgan, & Rich grouping (5.71), the central rural county grouping (5.74), Summit & Wasatch counties (5.76), and Iron County (5.79).

Education: There were no statistically significant differences among educational attainment levels and agreement or disagreement with the statement.

*Employment**: Respondents who selected full-time student (6.26) had significantly higher agreement with the statement than those who selected unemployed (looking for work) (5.66) and retired (5.69).

*Gender**: The agreement levels of women (5.97) were significantly higher than those of men (5.59), with non-binary participants at 6.52.

Income: There were no significant differences among levels of agreement and household income categories.

Marital Status: There were no significant differences among levels of agreement and marital status categories.

Race/Ethnicity: There were no significant differences among race/ethnicity categories.

*Religion**: Respondents who identified as Latter-day Saint (5.99), Agnostic (5.96), Atheist (5.91), and Spiritual but Not Religious (5.89) had the highest agreement, while those who selected Islam (5.26) had the lowest. There were no significant differences among respondents' agreement levels and their religious activity selections.

*Residency**: Respondents who had lived in Utah for fewer than 2 years (5.77) had significantly lower agreement than residents of more than 21 years (5.95) and 11–20 years (5.95).

3. Taking Action

The third survey item in this section was “*I don’t think there is much I can do about sexual assault in my community.*” The statistical mean was 3.68 (SD 1.70) for the representative sample, 3.09 (1.42) for the convenience sample, and 3.35 (SD 1.58) for the combined samples. There is a statistically significant difference among samples, with the respondents in the convenience sample disagreeing at higher rates (see Table 13 for more details). For positive societal change to occur, residents need to believe that their own actions—and those taken by people and entities in their community—can help decrease sexual assault. Although 34.6% (1,523) of respondents for both samples selected strongly disagree and disagree, 20.1% (890) only somewhat disagreed, 22.2% selected neither agree nor disagree (984), and 23.1% (1,024) agreed with the statement. This means that 2,898 Utahns (65.4%) were not committed to the statement that they can do something in their community to reduce sexual assault.

In the 2023 survey results,¹⁶ the statistical mean was 3.49 (SD 1.51) for the representative sample and 3.09 (SD 1.44) for the convenience sample. Both hovered around somewhat disagree. For the samples

¹⁶ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Sexual assault: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/sexual-assault-research-summary.pdf>

combined, 58.9% disagreed at some level, while 21.3% were not sure. Sadly, 627 respondents (19.7%) felt they could do nothing to help change the situation in their communities. The larger 2024 representative sample could have had influence on the rise in the statistical mean, but in general the 2023 findings were similar to those of 2024. Hopefully, in the next few years we will see shifts.

Table 13. Taking Action – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=3.68; SD=1.70</i>	Convenience <i>M=3.09; SD=1.42</i>	Combined <i>M=3.35; SD=1.58</i>
Strongly disagree	226 (11.8%)	321 (12.8%)	547 (12.3%)
Disagree	313 (16.3%)	674 (26.8%)	987 (22.3%)
Somewhat disagree	315 (16.4%)	575 (22.9%)	890 (20.1%)
Neither agree nor disagree	507 (26.4%)	477 (19.0%)	984 (22.2%)
Somewhat agree	229 (11.9%)	347 (13.8%)	576 (13.0%)
Agree	207 (10.8%)	89 (3.5%)	296 (6.7%)
Strongly agree	123 (6.4%)	29 (1.2%)	152 (3.4%)
Total Participants	1920	2512	4432

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples.

Age:* Respondents with the strongest disagreement were in the older age groups, including 60–64 (2.99), 55–59 (3.12), 50–54 (3.17), and 65–59 (3.26). Significantly less disagreement came from respondents who selected the 18–24 (3.70), 30–34 (3.57), and 25–29 (3.54) age ranges.

Children: There was not a statistically significant difference between parents and nonparents, and there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

Counties/Regions:* Residents of the following counties had the strongest disagreement: Iron (3.05), Weber (3.06), Cache (3.09), Box Elder (3.17), Davis (3.18), San Juan (3.18), Morgan (3.19), Emery (3.19), and Salt Lake (3.20). Respondents who had the least disagreement lived in Duchesne (3.96), Piute (3.94), Millard (3.93), Rich (3.88), and Wayne (3.85) counties, and although these counties had less disagreement, it is important to note that the means landed between neutral and somewhat disagree. Among MCD categories, respondents with the strongest disagreement lived in the Wasatch Front (3.19) and Bear River MCDs (3.22), while those with the least disagreement lived in the Central MCD (3.74).

Education:* Respondents with the strongest disagreement had graduate degrees (3.07), some college but degree not received or is in progress (3.33), and bachelor’s degrees (3.45). Those with the least disagreement had less than high school (3.98) and some high school (3.73).

Employment: There were no significant differences among levels of agreement and employment status.

Gender:* There was a statistically significant difference in agreement levels between men (3.59) and women (3.27), with women disagreeing more strongly. The mean of non-binary respondents was 2.52.

Income:* The higher the household income level, the stronger the disagreement with this survey item. Participants selecting incomes of \$200,000 and above (3.12) had significantly stronger disagreement than all others, particularly those who reported incomes of less than \$25,000 (3.51) and \$25,000–\$34,999 (3.49).

Marital Status:* Respondents who selected married but separated (3.22) had significantly more disagreement than those who selected single (3.43) and married (3.36).

Race/Ethnicity:* Respondents who selected Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (2.89) had significantly stronger disagreement than all others, with Black or African American (3.79), American Indian or Alaska Native (3.65), and Asian (3.62) having significantly less disagreement.

*Religion**: The strongest disagreement came from respondents who selected Latter-day Saint (3.10), Spiritual but Not Religious (3.11), Jehovah Witness (3.32), and Other/General Christian (3.36). Those with the least disagreement were those who selected Islam (4.38), Judaism (4.03), Hinduism (3.92), and Catholic (3.83). There were significant differences in religious activity (1=lowest to 5=highest), but not in a linear pattern: those who disagreed most selected 5 (3.22), followed by 2 (3.27), and 1 (3.43).

*Residency**: Residents of more than 21 years (3.13) had significantly stronger disagreement with the statement than those who selected 6–10 years (3.73), 2–5 years (3.72), fewer than 2 years (3.49), and 11–20 years (3.37).

4. Resources

The final survey item in this section was “*I know where to find sexual assault resources in my community.*” The statistical mean was 4.89 (SD 1.49) for the representative sample, 4.74 (1.64) for the convenience sample, and 4.81 (SD 1.58) for the combined samples. Although the statistical mean of the two samples was more similar than in the other survey items, the difference between the two was still statistically significant, with the representative sample having a slightly higher mean than the convenience sample, which is unusual. 62.5% of the respondents in the combined samples had some level of agreement, with the means being slightly below somewhat agree in both samples. Still, a significant percentage of respondents either disagreed or were unsure when it came to knowing where to find sexual assault resources in their community. See Table 14 for additional details.

Table 14. Resources– Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M</i> =4.89; <i>SD</i> =1.49	Convenience <i>M</i> =4.74; <i>SD</i> =1.64	Combined <i>M</i> =4.81; <i>SD</i> =1.58
Strongly disagree	50 (2.6%)	60 (2.4%)	110 (2.5%)
Disagree	107 (5.6%)	256 (10.2%)	363 (8.2%)
Somewhat disagree	147 (7.7%)	324 (12.9%)	471 (10.6%)
Neither agree nor disagree	414 (21.6%)	308 (12.3%)	722 (16.3%)
Somewhat agree	436 (22.7%)	614 (24.4%)	1050 (23.7%)
Agree	510 (26.6%)	584 (23.2)	1094 (24.7%)
Strongly agree	256 (13.3%)	367 (14.6%)	623 (14.1%)
Total Participants	1920	2513	4433

In the 2023 survey results,¹⁷ the statistical mean was 4.48 (SD 1.69) for the representative sample and 4.73 (SD 1.74) for the convenience sample. Although the mean was between neutral and somewhat agree, 60.0% of study participants selected some level of agreement, with only 15.3% strongly agreeing. When compared to 2024, the means are similar, but the mean of the representative shifted from mid-point between neither agree nor disagree to closer to somewhat agree. Only 14.1% strongly agreed, which was similar to the 2023 results of 15.3%, as mentioned.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples.

*Age**: Respondents in some of the younger categories—25–29 (4.60), 18–24 (4.68), and 30–34 (4.73)—were significantly less likely to agree with this statement than those in the following age ranges: 60–64 (5.17), 50–54 (4.98), 65–69 (4.94), and 55–59 (4.85).

*Children**: There was a slight statistically significant difference between parents (4.85) and nonparents (4.72), with parents having higher agreement. There was not a significant difference among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

¹⁷ Madsen, S. R. (2024, February 1). *Sexual assault: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/sexual-assault-research-summary.pdf>

*Counties/Regions**: Respondents who selected the highest agreement levels were residents of Cache (5.45), Iron (5.37), and Box Elder (5.29) counties. Those who had the lowest agreement were residents of Davis (4.65), Salt Lake (4.70), the central rural county grouping (4.71), the Tooele, Morgan, & Rich grouping (4.73), Weber (4.73), and Utah counties (4.78). Among MCD categories, respondents with the highest agreement were residents of counties within the Bear River MCD (5.33), while those with the lowest agreement lived within the Wasatch Front (4.70) and Mountainland MCDs (4.79).

*Education**: Respondents who selected less than high school (4.55), bachelor’s degree (4.68), and high school graduate or equivalent (4.70) as their highest educational attainment level were more likely to disagree with this statement. Those who selected graduate degree (4.98) had significantly higher agreement than all others.

*Employment**: Respondents who selected employed full time (4.90) were significantly more likely to agree with the statement compared to those who selected full-time homemaker (4.34) and unemployed (looking for work) (4.53).

Gender: There were no significant differences in agreement levels among genders.

Income: There were no significant differences when comparing household income categories with levels of agreement or disagreement.

Marital Status: There were no statistically significant differences among marital status categories.

*Race/Ethnicity**: Respondents with the highest agreement selected Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (5.22) and Black or African American (5.07), compared with those who were more likely to select the lowest agreement options: Asian (4.74), and White (4.78).

*Religion**: There was not a significant difference between religious affiliation and agreement level with this statement. In terms of activity levels (1=lowest to 5=highest), respondents who selected 1 (4.62) and 2 (4.66) had the lowest agreement, while those who selected 3 (4.93) and 5 (4.91) had the highest.

Residency: Respondents’ years of residency in Utah produced no statistically significant differences.

5. Qualitative Findings

As mentioned, we offered one open-ended question inviting responses regarding any thoughts, insights, or ideas respondents may have related to the challenges that Utah women and girls face. Overall, 2,248 study participants provided qualitative responses to this prompt, with 94 mentioning something that fell within the “Sexual Assault” category. Table 15 lists the extrapolated theme categories, followed by several respondent quotations that illuminate elements of those themes. Note that some comments were included in several categories, as individual statements were often related to a variety of themes and topics. Others simply identified the general category as an issue of concern, but did not provide additional commentary. Therefore, the theme percentages exceed 100.0%.

Table 15. Qualitative Themes – Sexual Assault

Theme Categories	#	%
A. Systems, Support, and Resources	42	44.7%
B. Education	30	31.9%
C. Severity	28	29.8%
D. Indifference and Victim Blaming	18	19.2%
E. Examples	15	16.0%

A. *Systems, Support, and Resources*: The most frequent theme that surfaced, commented on by 44.7% of respondents, was statements about existing or needed systems, support, or resources, including the government, legal system, and religious leaders. Responses included the following:

“The legal system does a poor job of addressing sexual assault and supporting victims. Through personal experience, all medical, legal, Title IX, human resources, and religious systems favor the perpetrators and devastate the victim.”

“The systems we have in society don’t recognize how violence affects women and don’t have the right structures in place to fully protect us or provide justice. The lack of concern over sexual assault is demonstrated by how often and how severely perpetrators are punished for it.”

“The dominant religion in Utah doesn’t listen to or care about the needs of women, are not trauma informed, and don’t handle abuse well. As a school counselor who works with teens in crisis every day, I see the impact of this . . . ”

“We need to be honest with ourselves that we have a sexual abuse problem for women and children in this state. We need to devote more resources . . . to actually facing and fixing the sexual abuse problems than we do to covering them up and denying them.”

- B. *Education*: The second most frequently mentioned issue was related to education, mentioned by 31.9% of participants, regarding sexual assault, consent, sex education, and the importance of talking openly. For example,

“I recently graduated from college in Utah, and one thing I’m in favor of to help young women is education about consent in dating relationships. . . . Many young men aren’t aware that consent is important, and so they don’t ask even though they have no ill intentions. This should be taught in high schools and college orientations.”

“Sex education is essentially nonexistent, which leads to higher rates of sexual abuse for girls and women.”

“Increasing awareness and education around sexual assault and harassment can create a safer environment for women and girls.”

- C. *Severity*: The frequency and serious nature of sexual assault was the next most frequently mentioned theme, cited by 29.8% of respondents. Comments included

“My biggest concern is sexual abuse for my teenage daughter because I know how prevalent it is in society in general, including Utah. . . . I actively teach my daughter strategies to prevent rape, but I also understand it could still happen.”

“I cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for Utahns to recognize, accept, and do everything in our power to end emotional, physical, spiritual, and sexual violence. It is so pervasive and debilitating.”

“Domestic violence and sexual assault . . . not only have a serious impact on the physical and mental health of the victims but may also have a long-term negative impact on family and social relationships.”

“The prevalence of sexual assault, domestic abuse, and stalking is alarmingly high.”

- D. *Indifference and Victim Blaming*: The fourth most common theme—not taking sexual assault seriously and/or blaming the victim—was mentioned by 19.2% of participants. For example,

“Police do not take sexual assault seriously and believe men over the victim and guilt trip them. . . . They are being judged for reporting it.”

“There continues to be a pattern of shaming victims and protecting perpetrators of sexual assault or violence.”

“Consent is made fun of by men, and women/girls are cowed by this.”

“I am a survivor of multiple sexual assault acts, but when I reached out, no one would believe me.”

“A woman gets raped at [a Utah university] and it’s *her* fault for enticing the man.”

- E. *Examples*: Sharing examples of sexual assault was the fifth most common theme, shared by 16% of respondents.

“As a teen/young adult, I was sexually harassed and assaulted multiple times by men/boys in the dominant religion here, and I knew nothing about resources or where to go or what to do. I thought I was the only one this was happening to and was ashamed.”

“I work with women frequently who have a history of sexual abuse and am a survivor of sexual abuse. I did not feel safe to share my own experience until the #metoo movement (45 years after the abuse) and after hearing so many stories of my clients. We, as a community, need to provide more safe

“I had a boss who was a member of the predominant religion tell me if I didn’t provide sexual favors I would be fired. I hated myself and him the whole time, but I needed the job.”

places for girls and women to share their stories and get the help they need. They need to know they are a victim, and they are worthy of receiving help, and they don’t need to suffer alone.”

The sixth most frequently mentioned topic included the ramifications and long-term impact on a woman’s life of being sexually assaulted. Additional comments included the sexualization of women, pornography, human trafficking, polygamist communities, voyeurism, and sexual assault of homeless women.

Poverty & Homelessness

In the last few years, the UWLP has released research snapshots on Poverty Among Utah Women: A 2022 Update¹⁸ and Homelessness Among Utah Women¹⁹ that share the latest available data on these critical areas of focus. Although Utah fares better than many other states, both poverty and homelessness are daily realities for thousands of Utah women and their families. Helping Utahns better understand these challenges can help generate positive change, and tracking changes is vital in measuring actual change. The four related survey items provide insight that can guide changes and improve Utah women’s experiences and thereby enhance the lives of Utah’s children. The same items were asked in 2023. There were 1,920 participants in the representative sample and 2,516 who responded to at least one of the four questions in the convenience sample, with a combined total of 4,436 participants.

1. Poverty Is a Choice

The first survey item in this section was “*If one is experiencing poverty in Utah, it is the result of their own choices.*” The statistical mean was 3.71 (SD 1.80) for the representative sample, 2.44 (SD 1.36) for the convenience sample, and 2.99 (SD 1.69) for the combined samples. There is a statistically significant difference between samples, with the convenience sample having much stronger disagreement with the statement. Overall, 20.1% of respondents agreed with the statement—33.1% from the representative sample and only 10.2% from the convenience sample. In addition, 22.5% of study participants in the representative sample selected neither agree nor disagree compared to significantly fewer (11.3%) in the convenience sample. In terms of disagreement, 44.4% of respondents in the representative sample disagreed at some level, while 78.5% of the convenience sample disagreed. See Table 16 for additional details.

Table 16. Poverty is a Choice – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M</i> =3.71; <i>SD</i> =1.80	Convenience <i>M</i> =2.44; <i>SD</i> =1.36	Combined <i>M</i> =2.99; <i>SD</i> =1.69
Strongly disagree	265 (13.8%)	747 (29.7%)	1012 (22.8%)
Disagree	318 (16.6%)	778 (31.0%)	1096 (24.7%)
Somewhat disagree	269 (14.0%)	448 (17.8%)	717 (16.2%)
Neither agree nor disagree	432 (22.5%)	283 (11.3%)	715 (16.1%)
Somewhat agree	279 (14.5%)	201 (8.0%)	480 (10.8%)
Agree	212 (11.0%)	37 (1.5%)	249 (5.6%)
Strongly agree	145 (7.6%)	17 (0.7%)	162 (3.7%)
Total Participants	1920	2511	4431

¹⁸ Wood, D-M. G., Darowski, E. S., Madsen, S. R., & Knapp, G. C. (2022, January 19). *Poverty among Utah women: A 2022 update*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/snapshot/33.pdf>

¹⁹ Pierucci, C. B., Darowski, E. S., & Madsen, S. R. (2022, December 7). *Homelessness among Utah women*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/snapshot/44.pdf>

In the 2023 survey results,²⁰ the statistical mean for the representative sample was 3.11 (SD 1.62) and 2.47 (SD 1.37) for the convenience sample. With the combined samples in 2023, 2,355 (74.2%) respondents disagreed at some level, and only 12.4% agreed. In 2024, 62.9% disagreed at some level, and 21.1% agreed. Since much of the statistical change may be attributable to the larger representative sample in 2024, this year's results may provide a more accurate reflection of Utah's general population. In the representative sample for 2023, 58.6% of respondents disagreed at some level, and 22.6% selected neither agree nor disagree.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples. The statistical means are based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=neither agree nor disagree, and 7=strongly agree). The “*” refers to demographic variables that met the statistical significance p-value threshold of ≤ 0.05 .

Age*: Respondents who fell within the age ranges of 60–64 (2.69) and 55–59 (2.74) had significantly stronger disagreement than those who were in the age ranges of 30–34 (3.29), 35–39 (3.18), 25–29 (3.17), and 18–24 (3.12).

Children*: There was not a statistically significant difference between parents and nonparents. Although there was a significant difference among the number of children a parent had between the ages of 0 and 5 years of age, there was not a linear relationship. For example, respondents who said they had 3 and 6 or more children in that age group disagreed the strongest (2.96 and 3.08, resp.). Parents with 4 or 5 children in that age group had the least disagreement (3.79 and 3.42, resp.). The same is true for parents with children in the 6–11 age range.

Counties/Regions*: There were statistically significant differences among county residents, with the strongest disagreement coming from respondents in Salt Lake (2.50), Wasatch (2.60), Iron (2.64), Davis (2.69), Cache (2.74), Summit (2.78), and Sanpete (2.81). The least disagreement came from respondents in Duchesne, Rich, and Millard (4.21 to 3.93). In terms of MCDs, Wasatch Front (2.63) and Bear River (3.04) residents had significantly stronger disagreement than did respondents in the Uintah Basin MCD (3.58).

Education*: Respondents who had graduate degrees (2.53), bachelor's degrees (2.96), some college but degree not received or is in progress (3.13) were more likely to disagree with this statement. Those with some high school (3.85), less than high school (3.79), and high school graduate or equivalent (3.50) were less likely to disagree. It is important to note, however, that all statistical means were on the *disagree* side of the scale.

Employment: There were no significant differences among levels of agreement and employment status.

Gender*: There was a significant difference between men (3.77) and women (2.74) in agreement levels; non-binary participants had a statistical mean of 1.74.

Income*: Participants with higher household incomes were significantly more likely to disagree with the statement (e.g., \$200,000 and above, 2.57) than were those who reported lower incomes (\$25,000–\$34,999 and less than \$25,000, 3.35 and 3.32, resp.).

Marital Status*: Respondents who selected widowed (2.65) and divorced (2.82) were significantly more likely to strongly disagree with the statement, compared to those who were married but separated (3.27) and single (3.12).

Race/Ethnicity*: There was a significant difference in the race/ethnicity category among respondents who selected White (2.82), compared to those who selected Black or African American (3.91)—with the former having stronger disagreement than the latter. The disagreement levels of the four mid-range groups were as follows: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (3.38), Hispanic/Latino (3.38), Asian (3.60), and American Indian or Alaska Native (3.64).

²⁰ Madsen, S. R. (2024, March 5). *Poverty & homelessness: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/poverty-homelessness-research-summary.pdf>

*Religion**: The strongest disagreement came from respondents who selected Atheist (2.26), Agnostic (2.46), Spiritual but Not Religious (2.62), and Latter-day Saint (2.76). Those with significantly less disagreement included Islam (5.17), Hinduism (4.03), Catholic (3.81), and Judaism (3.65). The strongest disagreement came from respondents who selected 1 (2.79) and 2 (2.93) as their religious activity level (1=lowest to 5=highest).

*Residency**: Respondents who had lived in Utah for more than 21 years (2.55) and 11–20 years (2.76) had significantly stronger disagreement than those who had been Utah residents fewer than 10 years.

2. Homelessness Is a Choice

The second item in this section was “*If one is experiencing homelessness in Utah, it is the result of their own choices.*” The statistical mean was 3.67 (SD 1.81) for the representative sample, 2.57 (SD 1.40) for the convenience sample, and 3.05 (SD 1.68) for the combined samples (see Table 17 for additional details). There was a significant difference between the two samples, with respondents in the convenience sample disagreeing more strongly. In fact, 75.8% of respondents in the convenience sample disagreed at some level, while another 12.1% selected neither agree nor disagree. This compared with 46.0% in the representative sample who disagreed at some level, with another 20.9% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. In the convenience sample, only 12.2% agreed at any level, compared to 33.1% in the representative sample.

Table 17. Homelessness is a Choice – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=3.67; SD=1.81</i>	Convenience <i>M=2.57; SD=1.40</i>	Combined <i>M=3.05; SD=1.68</i>
Strongly disagree	273 (14.2%)	668 (26.6%)	941 (21.2%)
Disagree	345 (18.0%)	729 (29.0%)	1074 (24.2%)
Somewhat disagree	265 (13.8%)	506 (20.1%)	771 (17.4%)
Neither agree nor disagree	402 (20.9%)	303 (12.1%)	705 (15.9%)
Somewhat agree	269 (14.0%)	238 (9.5%)	507 (11.4%)
Agree	236 (12.3%)	54 (2.1%)	290 (6.5%)
Strongly agree	130 (6.8%)	14 (0.6%)	144 (3.2%)
Total Participants	1920	2512	4432

In the 2023 survey results,²¹ the statistical mean was 3.17 (SD 1.61) for the representative sample and 2.60 (SD 1.41) for the convenience sample. In combining the results of both samples, 82.3% (2,289) of the convenience sample respondents disagreed at some level (75.8%), as did 58.2% of the representative sample. Significantly more representative sample respondents (21.7%) than convenience sample respondents (10.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. When comparing the results for 2024, there have been some shifts in the representative sample, including a much higher mean, which indicates that more individuals believe that homelessness in Utah is the result of individuals’ own choices. However, the statistical means for the representative sample fell between neutral and somewhat disagree.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples.

*Age**: Respondents who were 60–64 (2.81) and 55–59 (2.85) had significantly stronger disagreement levels than respondents who were in the age ranges of 30–34 (3.31), 35–39 (3.23), 25–29 (3.18), and 18–24 (3.13).

*Children**: There was not a statistically significant difference between parents and nonparents. Although there was a significant difference in agreement levels among the number of children in both the 0–5 and 6–11 age categories, there was not a linear pattern.

²¹ Madsen, S. R. (2024, March 5). *Poverty & homelessness: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/poverty-homelessness-research-summary.pdf>

*Counties/Regions**: There were statistically significant differences among counties, with the strongest disagreement coming from respondents in Salt Lake (2.64), Summit (2.65), Iron (2.68), Wasatch (2.81), Davis (2.83), and Garfield (2.86). The least disagreement came from respondents in Duchesne, Millard, Daggett, and Rich (4.13 to 3.88) counties. Among MCDs, Wasatch Front (2.75) and Bear River (3.12) residents had significantly stronger disagreement than those in the Uintah Basin MCD (3.56).

*Education**: Respondents who had graduate degrees (2.62), bachelor's degrees (3.08), and some college but degree not received or is in progress (3.12) were more likely to disagree with this statement. Those with some high school (3.73), less than high school (3.52), and high school graduate or equivalent (3.48) were less likely to disagree. It is important to note, however, that all statistical means were on the disagreement side of the 7-point Likert scale.

Employment: There were no significant differences among levels of agreement and employment status.

*Gender**: There was a significant difference in agreement levels between men (3.74) and women (2.83); non-binary participants had a statistical mean of 1.78.

*Income**: Participants with higher household incomes were significantly more likely to disagree with the statement (e.g., \$200,000 and above, 2.72) than those who reported lower incomes (\$25,000–\$34,999 and less than \$25,000, 3.36 and 3.24, resp.).

*Marital Status**: Respondents who selected widowed (2.69) and divorced (2.93) were significantly more likely to strongly disagree with the statement, compared to those who were married but separated (3.23) and single (3.10).

*Race/Ethnicity**: The strongest disagreement came from respondents who selected White (2.91), while the least disagreement came from Black or African American (3.78). The four others included Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (3.16), Hispanic/Latino (3.43), American Indian or Alaska Native (3.48), and Asian (3.57).

*Religion**: The strongest disagreement came from respondents who selected Atheist (2.37), Agnostic (2.52), Spiritual but Not Religious (2.70), and Latter-day Saint (2.91) as their religious affiliation. Those with significantly less disagreement selected Islam (4.95), Catholic (3.75), Hinduism (3.73), and Judaism (3.71). In terms of religious activity level (1=lowest to 5=highest), the strongest disagreement came from respondents who selected 1 (2.83) and 2 (2.93).

*Residency**: Respondents who had lived in Utah for more than 21 years (2.68) and 11–20 years (2.81) had significantly stronger disagreement than Utah residents of fewer than 10 years.

3. Involvement

The third item in this section was “*I don't think there is much I can do about poverty and homelessness in my community.*” The statistical mean was 3.85 (SD 1.70) for the representative sample, 3.21 (SD 1.48) for the convenience sample, and 3.49 (SD 1.61) for the combined samples. There is a statistically significant difference among samples, with the convenience sample respondents disagreeing at higher rates (see Table 18 for more details). For societal change to occur in terms of reducing poverty and homelessness, more residents need to believe that their own actions can make a difference. Those who disagreed with this survey item believe that their actions can make a difference. There is substantial work to be done in this area. Yet, it is a good start that a substantial percentage of respondents believe something can be done.

In the 2023 survey results,²² the statistical mean was 3.66 (SD 1.51) for the representative sample and 3.23 (SD 1.53) for the convenience sample. Both hovered around neither agree nor disagree to somewhat disagree. Although most respondents in 2023 agreed (from somewhat agree to strongly agree), in the representative sample, 28.6% believed there was nothing they could do. In 2024, 34.4%

²² Madsen, S. R. (2024, March 5). *Poverty & homelessness: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/poverty-homelessness-research-summary.pdf>

had this same belief. In addition, in the 2023 study, 24.8% of that sample neither agreed nor disagreed. This finding suggests that more than half of Utahns believe that their involvement would not or may not change things for those experiencing poverty and homelessness. We see the same patterns in the 2024 data.

Table 18. Involvement – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M=3.85; SD=1.70</i>	Convenience <i>M=3.21; SD=1.48</i>	Combined <i>M=3.49; SD=1.61</i>
Strongly disagree	184 (9.6%)	292 (11.6%)	476 (10.7%)
Disagree	295 (15.4%)	640 (25.4%)	935 (21.1%)
Somewhat disagree	308 (16.0%)	621 (24.7%)	929 (20.9%)
Neither agree nor disagree	473 (24.6%)	388 (15.4%)	861 (19.4%)
Somewhat agree	302 (15.7%)	399 (15.9%)	701 (15.8%)
Agree	220 (11.5%)	137 (5.4%)	357 (8.0%)
Strongly agree	138 (7.2%)	39 (1.6%)	177 (4.0%)
Total Participants	1920	2516	4436

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below summarize findings for respondents in the combined samples.

Age:* Respondents with the strongest disagreement were in the older age groups: 60–64 (3.05), 65–69 (3.11), 70 and older (3.14), 55–59 (3.28), and 50–54 (3.28). Respondents with significantly less disagreement were 18–24 (4.00), 25–29 (3.84), and 30–34 (3.83).

Children: There was no statistically significant difference between parents and nonparents, and there were no differences among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

Counties/Regions:* There were significant differences among counties, with respondents in the following having the strongest disagreement: Iron (3.10), Davis (3.30), Summit & Wasatch (3.31), Salt Lake (3.31), and Cache (3.37). Counties with respondents who had the least disagreement included Washington (3.70), Utah (3.69), central rural county grouping (3.65), the Tooele, Morgan, & Rich grouping (3.59), and the eastern rural county grouping (3.58). Among MCD categories, the respondents with the strongest disagreement lived in the Wasatch Front (3.33) and Bear River (3.47), while those with the least disagreement lived in the Uintah Basin (3.85).

Education:* Respondents with the strongest disagreement had graduate degrees (3.18), some college but degree not received or is in progress (3.46), and bachelor’s degrees (3.55). Those with the least disagreement had some high school (3.90) and high school graduate or equivalent (3.84).

Employment:* Respondents who selected retired (3.26), employed part time (3.45), and full-time homemaker (3.48) had the strongest disagreement, while those who selected full-time student (3.81) had significantly less disagreement.

Gender:* There was a significant difference in agreement levels between men (3.82) and women (3.38), with women disagreeing more strongly. The mean of the non-binary respondents was 3.13.

Income:* The higher the household income level, the stronger the agreement. Participants with household incomes of \$200,000 and above (3.13) had significantly stronger disagreement than all others, particularly those who reported incomes of less than \$25,000 (3.77) and \$25,000–\$34,999 (3.80).

Marital Status:* Respondents who selected widowed (3.12) had significantly more disagreement than all other categories, with those who selected single (3.66) and married but separated (3.56) having the least disagreement.

Race/Ethnicity:* Respondents who selected Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (3.39) and White (3.40) had significantly stronger disagreement than all others, with Asian (3.93), Black or

African American (3.87), and American Indian or Alaska Native (3.87) having significantly less disagreement.

*Religion**: There were no significant differences between religious affiliation and agreement level. There were significant differences within the five-point religious activity scale, but they were not in a linear pattern: the strongest disagreement came from respondents who selected 2 (3.34), followed by 5 (3.35), 1 (3.62), 3 (3.62), and 4 (3.71).

*Residency**: Residents of more than 21 years (3.27) had significantly stronger disagreement than those who selected 2–5 years (3.78) and 6–10 years (3.71).

4. Home Is the First Step

The final item in this section was “*Home is the first step toward positioning children and families for the opportunity to thrive and to plan for the future.*” The statistical mean was 5.66 (SD 1.27) for the representative sample, 6.21 (0.98) for the convenience sample, and 5.97 (SD 1.14) for the combined samples. There is a significant difference between samples on this survey item, with respondents in the convenience sample having substantially stronger agreement—between agree and strongly agree. Although 3,264 (73.7%) of respondents in the combined samples agreed or strongly agreed, there were still many who did not. See Table 19 for additional details.

Table 19. Home is the First Step – Agreement Levels

Levels of Agreement	Representative <i>M</i> =5.66; <i>SD</i> =1.27	Convenience <i>M</i> =6.21; <i>SD</i> =0.98	Combined <i>M</i> =5.97; <i>SD</i> =1.14
Strongly disagree	24 (1.3%)	6 (0.2%)	30 (0.7%)
Disagree	35 (1.8%)	10 (0.4%)	45 (1.0%)
Somewhat disagree	48 (2.5%)	33 (1.3%)	81 (1.8%)
Neither agree nor disagree	192 (10.0%)	104 (4.1%)	296 (6.7%)
Somewhat agree	417 (21.7%)	300 (11.9%)	717 (16.2%)
Agree	659 (34.3%)	864 (34.4%)	1523 (34.4%)
Strongly agree	545 (28.4%)	1196 (47.6%)	1741 (39.3%)
Total Participants	1920	2513	4433

In the 2023 survey results,²³ the statistical mean was 5.76 (SD 1.32) for the representative sample and 6.22 (SD 0.99) for the convenience sample. In combining the two samples, 2,916 of 3,176 (91.9%) agreed with the statement, with 46.6% selecting strongly agree. It was clear to Utahns that children’s experiences in the home are the most important influence for their future lives. That theme continues with the 2024 data, with similar results.

Demographic Findings: The brief statements below share findings for the combined samples.

*Age**: Respondents who had the highest agreement with this statement were in the following age ranges: 50–54 (6.11), 45–49 (6.09), 60–64 (6.06), and 55–59 (6.01). Participants with the lowest agreement were 18–24 (5.76) and 30–34 (5.81).

*Children**: There was a statistically significant difference between parents (6.07) and nonparents (5.76), with parents having higher agreement with the statement. There was not a significant difference among parents who had different numbers of children in various age ranges.

*Counties/Regions**: Respondents who selected the highest agreement levels were residents of Cache (6.31), Emery (6.23), Carbon (6.18), Davis (6.17), Iron (6.10), Uintah (6.06), Salt Lake (6.03), Tooele (6.00), and Duchesne (6.00) counties. Respondents in the following counties had the lowest agreement: Rich (5.32), Summit (5.60), Morgan (5.60), Wayne (5.60), and Beaver (5.64). However, all were on the agree side of the Likert scale.

²³ Madsen, S. R. (2024, March 5). *Poverty & homelessness: Research summary*. Utah Women & Leadership Project. <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/poverty-homelessness-research-summary.pdf>

*Education**: Respondents who selected graduate degree (6.13), bachelor’s degree (6.08), and associate degree (6.01) had the highest agreement, while those who selected less than high school (4.57), some high school (5.53), and high school graduate or equivalent (5.59) had the least agreement. There was a linear relationship between level of educational attainment and agreement.

*Employment**: Respondents who selected full-time homemaker (6.17) and employed part time (6.01) had the strongest agreement with the statement, compared to those who selected unemployed (looking for work) (5.65) and full-time student (5.81).

*Gender**: There were significant statistical differences between men (5.69) and women (6.06), when comparing levels of agreement; the mean for non-binary participants was 5.52.

*Income**: The higher the household income, the stronger agreement with this survey item. Respondents who reported incomes of \$200,000 and above (6.21), \$150,000–\$199,999 (6.17), and \$100,000–\$149,999 (6.03) had significantly higher statistical means than those who selected less than \$25,000 (5.57), \$25,000–34,999 (5.72), and \$35,000–49,999 (5.78).

Marital Status: There were no statistically significant differences among marital status categories.

*Race/Ethnicity**: Respondents with the highest agreement selected White (6.05), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (5.89), and Hispanic/Latino (5.86). Respondents with the lowest agreement selected American Indian or Alaska Native (5.55) and Black or African American (5.67).

*Religion**: Latter-day Saint respondents were significantly more likely to agree (6.30) than all other religious affiliation categories. Agreement levels rose as religious activity levels increased.

*Residency**: Respondents who selected more than 21 years (6.23) and 11–20 years (6.02) had the strongest agreement, while those who selected fewer than 2 years (5.65) had the lowest agreement.

5. Qualitative Findings

As mentioned, we offered one open-ended question inviting responses regarding any thoughts, insights, or ideas participants may have related to the challenges that Utah women and girls face. Overall, 2,248 study participants provided qualitative responses to this prompt, with 52 mentioning something that fell within the “Poverty and Homelessness” category. Table 20 lists the extrapolated theme categories, followed by several respondent quotations that highlight aspects of those themes. Note that some comments were included in several categories, as individual statements were often related to a variety of themes and topics. Others simply identified the general category as an issue of concern but did not provide additional commentary. Therefore, the percentages exceed 100.0%.

Table 20. Qualitative Themes – Poverty & Homelessness

Theme Categories	#	%
A. Affordable Housing, Cost of Living, and Low Pay	25	48.1%
B. Single Women and/or Mothers	23	44.2%
C. General Concerns	19	36.5%
D. Intersection with Domestic Violence	11	21.2%
E. Safety and Homelessness	5	9.6%

A. *Affordable Housing, Cost of Living, and Low Pay*: The most frequent theme that surfaced among respondents (48.1%) concerned the gap between the cost of living, affordable housing, and low rates of pay. Responses included the following:

“It is impossible for a woman to afford to buy a home in the Salt Lake Valley, as well as other parts of Utah, because a woman can’t make enough money to pay a mortgage. As a sidenote, it is ridiculous that teachers can’t make enough money to support their families.”

“Instead of only focusing on fixing the childcare situation, it would be more beneficial to address inflation and the cost of living so people have more options and don’t feel pressured to do things out of sheer desperation.”

- B. *Single Women and/or Mothers*: Respondents (44.2%) made it clear that single women and mothers are disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable housing, the high cost of living (including childcare), and low pay. An additional consideration here is the added barrier of the competing priorities of unpaid caregiving and work. For instance,

“I have friends who are over 55 and face severe financial difficulties because of divorce. I don’t know what I can do for them except give/loan small amounts of money.”

“We say we value what women do in the home, but if a woman needs financial help to spend time at home taking care of her children, we tend to think she is lazy or doesn’t want to work. Being a mother *is* work. Our community should provide resources for single mothers to help them stay at home and raise children, or to provide adequate childcare options so their children are safe if they choose to work outside the home. So many women don’t have choices and are penalized/criticized for trying to do what is best for their families.”

“Many of us *chose* to have and raise families, but then too many of us were abandoned or abused by the partner that we made this choice with. Divorce court systems and lawmakers need to keep/create laws that respect the choices the partnership made together and work hard to keep the woman/mother financially secure after divorce. Too often we support the man in launching and building a strong career only to be left in the wind to live in poverty. I don’t think our lawmakers realize that what we have created is a climate where it is now 100% an irresponsible thing to do to choose to be a stay-at-home mother to raise children.”

- C. *General Concerns*: Among the responses were 19 comments (36.5%) that reiterated that economic insecurity is a challenge for Utah women. For example,

“My husband had cancer and couldn’t work for a few years. As a working mom, I was paid next to nothing and treated like I was a sinner for working outside of the home. Utah doesn’t help with food, shelter, childcare, or transportation because a man should earn enough to provide for everyone.”

“I believe our social service agencies, schools, and other institutions in Utah give lip service to lifting people out of poverty. But they don’t do the practical, hands-on, one-on-one work, required to get the task done.”

- D. *Intersection with Domestic Violence* and E. *Safety and Homelessness*: Several comments highlighted the intersection between poverty and domestic violence, as well homelessness and its impact on safety. While these themes are further explored in their respective qualitative summaries, the prevalence of these topics merited mention here:

“When divorce would leave a woman with no education, no work experience, holding no cards, she most often feels stuck, and she will stay in an abusive situation as she feels there are no options for her.”

“I was homeless for five years, while working a steady job and the only security I had was relying on the men I dated to at the very least shelter me. I am a survivor of multiple sexual assault acts, but when I reached out no one would believe me.”

“Poverty is at the root of so many of the issues on this survey—including domestic violence and feeling trapped.”

“Homeless women in Utah are being raped on a nightly basis, and I have seen them being dominated to the point of slavery. They are sometimes used like pack mules for the men who rape and dominate them. The alternative is being alone on the streets and facing stranger rape danger.”

Additional comments noted the challenge of the “benefits cliff,” the expense of working with attorneys in divorce proceedings and the need for additional resources to help in those cases; others reflected a sentiment of feeling invisible and hopeless.

Conclusion

This white paper highlights key findings related to data collected on four key areas (spokes) in the BWF initiative: Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Poverty/Homelessness. Respondents from across the state participated in this 2024 comprehensive study, which focused on

understanding the perceptions and attitudes of Utahns on a variety of topics. Both quantitative and qualitative findings were shared in this report. This is the third of six white papers that share the findings of the full study.

Instead of highlighting recommendations for changes in this conclusion, we have included Appendix C, which provides details of each of the four spokes addressed in this report and includes the spoke's description, vision, goals, and thriving statement. The goals—linked to metrics that are updated each year—state our recommendations regarding what needs to be done to improve Utah in each area so that more women can thrive in of life settings.

Utah must do better to ensure everyone thrives. As Melinda Gates once stated, “If you want to lift up humanity, empower women. It is the most comprehensive, pervasive, high-leverage investment you can make in human beings.”²⁴ The vision of BWF is not to lift girls and women at the expense of boys and men—that is a fallacious scarcity mentality. Instead, we believe in the abundance mentality: there is enough for everyone through cooperation and collaboration. As Utah decision makers and residents join to find ways to strengthen the impact of girls and women more effectively, more Utah women and families will feel connected to our state's well-known mantra: “This Is the Place.” And, in fact, when more women can feel like “This is Her Place,” too, we will know Utah is finally becoming a place where women are truly valued.

Author: Dr. Susan R. Madsen is considered one of the top global scholars and thought leaders on the topic of women's leadership, has authored or edited nine books, and has published hundreds of articles, chapters, and reports. Her research has been cited in the *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *Parenting Magazine*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *The Washington Post*. She is also a regular contributor to *Forbes* and other local and state newspapers. Professor Madsen is the Karen Haight Huntsman Endowed Professor of Leadership in the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business at Utah State University and serves on many nonprofit and community boards. She is also the Founding Director of the Utah Women & Leadership Project, the visionary behind Utah's A Bolder Way Forward, and her passion is to strengthen the impact of girls and women in Utah and worldwide.

Author: Kolene Anderson joined the UWLP as the Associate Director in the fall of 2023. Before joining the UWLP, Kolene managed a team of researchers, writers, and educators at Saprea. She also served as a program director at Utah Valley University, where she enjoyed interacting with and mentoring students. Kolene earned a master's degree in English/Rhetoric from Northern Arizona University, and a bachelor's degree from Utah Valley University in English & Literature. She spent many years in the classroom as an adjunct faculty member and received the Alumni Outstanding Educator of the Year award in 2018 from Utah Valley University. She has presented at numerous international conferences and earned a Learning Center Leader Certification from the National College Learning Center Association.

Organization: The Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP) is housed in the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business at Utah State University (USU) and works in partnership with USU Extension. UWLP's mission is to strengthen the impact of Utah girls and women. The UWLP serves Utah and its residents by, first, producing relevant, trustworthy, and applicable research; second, creating and gathering valuable resources; and third, convening trainings and events that inform, inspire, and ignite growth and change for all Utahns. The UWLP is also the backbone organization for A Bolder Way Forward (www.abolderwayforward.org).

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²⁴ Gates, M. (2021). *The moment of lift: How empowering women changes the world*. Flatiron Books.

Appendix A. Study Demographics – Representative Sample (N=1,920)

<p>Gender Man (46.7%) Woman (52.8%) Non-binary (0.5%) Prefer not to say (0.1%)</p> <p>Age 18–24 (5.6%) 25–29 (9.5%) 30–34 (14.2%) 35–39 (9.4%) 40–44 (8.6%) 45–49 (7.5%) 50–54 (7.0%) 55–59 (9.9%) 60–64 (7.4%) 65–69 (8.6%) 70 and older (12.3%)</p> <p>Education Less than high school (1.6%) Some high school (3.7%) High school grad/eq. (26.7%) Some college (21.5%) Associate (12.0%) Bachelor’s (24.2%) Graduate (10.3%)</p> <p>Marital Status Single (24.9%) Married (45.7%) Living with partner (8.6%) Married but separated (2.5%) Widowed (5.4%) Divorced (12.5%) Other (0.3%)</p> <p>Years in Utah Fewer than 2 years (64.2%) 2–5 years (8.8%) 6–10 years (9.2%) 11–20 years (6.4%) More than 21 years (11.4%)</p> <p>Employment Status Employed full time (47.6%) Employed part time (10.8%) Full-time student (1.7%) Full-time homemaker (4.6%) Unemployed, looking (8.5%) Retired (22.9%) Other (3.8%)</p>	<p>Children Yes (57.6%) No (42.4%)</p> <p>Children’s Ages 0–5 (0=74.4%, 1=16.3%, 2=5.8%, 3+=3.0%) 6–11 (0=75.8%, 1=17.7%, 2=3.3%, 3+=1.6%) 12–17 (0=77.4%, 1=15.0%, 2=4.6%, 3+=1.4%)</p> <p>Income Less than \$25,000 (20.1%) \$25,000–\$34,999 (12.5%) \$35,000–\$49,999 (12.8%) \$50,000–\$74,999 (17.8%) \$75,000–\$99,999 (13.2%) \$100,000–\$149,999 (12.2%) \$150,000–\$199,999 (7.3%) \$200,000 and above (4.1%)</p> <p>Race/Ethnicity American Indian or Alaska Native (4.8%) Asian (5.1%) Black or African American (11.9%) Hispanic/Latina (15.5%) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.8%) White (60.9%) Other (0.8%)</p> <p>Religion Agnostic (6.5%) Atheist (4.8%) Catholic (26.7%) Latter-day Saint (8.2%) Hinduism (1.6%) Islam (2.1%) Jehovah Witness (0.9%) Judaism (2.4%) Protestant (16.1%) Other/General Christian (17.3%) Spiritual/Not Religious (11.8%) Other (0.8%)</p>	<p>Religious Activity 1=Not at all (24.4%) 2=A little (13.7%) 3=Somewhat (22.2%) 4=Active (19.0%) 5=Very active (20.7%)</p> <p>County Beaver (6.3%) Box Elder (1.1%) Cache (1.3%) Carbon (1.0%) Daggett (0.7%) Davis (3.6%) Duchesne (0.8%) Emery (0.6%) Garfield (1.8%) Grand (1.7%) Iron (0.9%) Juab (0.4%) Kane (1.2%) Millard (0.9%) Morgan (3.4%) Piute (0.5%) Rich (1.9%) Salt Lake (20.9%) San Juan (1.7%) Sanpete (0.6%) Sevier (1.1%) Summit (2.9%) Tooele (1.2%) Uintah (0.6%) Utah (25.8%) Wasatch (0.8%) Washington (9.2%) Wayne (2.9%) Weber (4.1%)</p> <p>Region Bear River (4.3%) Central (6.5%) Mountainland (29.5%) Southeastern (5.0%) Southwestern (19.4%) Uintah Basin (2.0%) Wasatch Front (33.2%)</p>
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Appendix B. Study Demographics – Convenience Sample (N=2,801)

<p>Gender Man (8.1%) Woman (91.2%) Non-binary (0.6%) Prefer not to say (0.1%)</p> <p>Age 18–24 (5.5%) 25–29 (8.2%) 30–34 (11.1%) 35–39 (11.1%) 40–44 (12.9%) 45–49 (14.0%) 50–54 (12.2%) 55–59 (7.7%) 60–64 (7.1%) 65–69 (4.4%) 70 and older (5.7%)</p> <p>Education Less than high school (0.4%) Some high school (0.4%) High school grad/eq. (3.7%) Some college (11.6%) Associate (6.3%) Bachelor’s (35.3%) Graduate (42.2%)</p> <p>Marital Status Single (13.6%) Married (71.4%) Living with partner (3.7%) Married but separated (1.4%) Widowed (2.3%) Divorced (7.5%) Other (0.3%)</p> <p>Years in Utah Fewer than 2 years (1.6%) 2–5 years (6.1%) 6–10 years (7.4%) 11–20 years (16.3%) More than 21 years (68.6%)</p> <p>Employment Status Employed full time (65.5%) Employed part time (15.8%) Full-time student (2.2%) Full-time homemaker (5.7%) Unemployed, looking (1.9%) Retired (8.8%) Other (0.1%)</p>	<p>Children Yes (57.6%) No (42.4%)</p> <p>Children’s Ages 0–5 (0=74.4%, 1=16.3%, 2=5.8%, 3+=3.0%) 6–11 (0=75.8%, 1=17.7%, 2=3.3%, 3+=1.6%) 12–17 (0=77.4%, 1=15.0%, 2=4.6%, 3+=1.4%)</p> <p>Income Less than \$25,000 (3.9%) \$25,000–\$34,999 (2.5%) \$35,000–\$49,999 (5.3%) \$50,000–\$74,999 (10.6%) \$75,000–\$99,999 (14.4%) \$100,000–\$149,999 (24.3%) \$150,000–\$199,999 (16.9%) \$200,000 and above (22.1%)</p> <p>Race/Ethnicity American Indian or Alaska Native (1.5%) Asian (2.1%) Black or African American (1.0%) Hispanic/Latina (4.6%) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.8%) White (89.8%) Other (0.1%)</p> <p>Religion Agnostic (12.5%) Atheist (7.3%) Catholic (3.5%) Hinduism (0.3%) Islam (0.0%) Jehovah Witness (0.1%) Judaism (1.3%) Latter-day Saint (50.2%) Protestant (2.9%) Other/General Christian (5.0%) Spiritual/Not Religious (16.9%)</p> <p>Religious Activity 1=Not at all (19.9%) 2=A little (11.6%) 3=Somewhat (12.0%) 4=Active (14.8%) 5=Very active (41.8%)</p>	<p>County Beaver (0.5%) Box Elder (1.0%) Cache (6.2%) Carbon (1.6%) Daggett (0.0%) Davis (11.5%) Duchesne (0.3%) Emery (0.9%) Garfield (1.8%) Grand (1.1%) Iron (2.5%) Juab (0.4%) Kane (1.1%) Millard (0.4%) Morgan (0.2%) Piute (0.3%) Rich (0.2%) Salt Lake (31.8%) San Juan (1.4%) Sanpete (0.6%) Sevier (0.8%) Summit (1.7%) Tooele (1.5%) Uintah (0.9%) Utah (18.5%) Wasatch (1.1%) Washington (5.3%) Wayne (0.4%) Weber (6.1%)</p> <p>Region Bear River (7.4%) Central (2.8%) Mountainland (21.2%) Southeastern (4.9%) Southwestern (11.1%) Uintah Basin (1.2%) Wasatch Front (50.8%)</p>
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Appendix C. A Bolder Way Forward Spoke Details

I. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Child Sexual Abuse Spoke is focused on dramatically decreasing the incidents of child sexual abuse in Utah, as well as supporting those who have survived such abuse no matter their current age. The statistics tell us that thousands of Utah children—approximately 1 in 7—are sexually abused each year. Freeing individuals and society from child sexual abuse and its lasting impacts is one of the most important efforts that Utahns need to embrace to ensure residents experience safety and security—a basic human right. This spoke is part of the SAFE Coalition, which seeks to change Utahns’ perceptions of child sexual abuse and move them to act. Spoke leaders and affiliates believe that by working together, we can protect Utah’s most valuable resource—its children.

Vision: To significantly reduce child sexual abuse in the state of Utah.

Goals:

1. Change Utahns’ agreement (understanding and perceptions) in the following areas: [Metric Dashboard]
 - a. In your immediate community (e.g., neighborhood, family, faith, club, business), child sexual abuse is a problem. [Increase agreement by 15% by 2026 and 30% by 2030]
 - b. Child sexual abuse is preventable. [Increase agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
 - c. Child sexual abuse is more prevalent in Utah than the national average. [Increase agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
 - d. I know where to find resources to help prevent child sexual abuse. [Increase agreement based on forthcoming metrics].
2. Pass public policies aligned with best practices and research shown to prevent and reduce child sexual abuse. [Metric Dashboard]
3. Conduct at least two academic comprehensive studies about child sexual abuse in Utah by 2030, to include (but not limited to): [Metric Dashboard]
 - a. The percentage of Utahns who understand that healthy relationships can mitigate the negative impacts of child sexual abuse.
 - b. The percentage of Utahns who understand the potential long-term negative effects of child sexual abuse.
4. Expand child sexual abuse prevention education in Utah by connecting individual schools to providers/curriculum options, reaching 50% of elementary schools by 2026 and 100% by 2030. [Metric Dashboard]

Thriving Statement: Women and girls thrive when they have autonomy over their bodies and do not experience any type of child sexual abuse.

II. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Domestic Violence Spoke is led by the Utah Domestic Violence Coalition (UDVC) and Fight Against Domestic Violence (FADV), and it focuses on creating a world where all individuals and families in Utah live free from violence and feel safe, empowered, and hopeful. In addition to ensuring that both survivors and those who perpetrate domestic and intimate partner violence get the help they need, the partners, affiliates, and participants in the Domestic Violence spoke are exploring how to move forward with meaningful programs, initiatives, and resources that prevent violence. Spoke leaders bring together service providers, community nonprofit, government, business, education, healthcare, public policy, and dedicated individual partners to collaborate and engage in local and statewide efforts to achieve this vision.

Vision: Ensure that all Utahns live free from violence and feel safe, empowered, and hopeful.

Goals:

1. Reduce domestic violence against women from 33.6% in 2023 to 28% in 2030. [Metric Dashboard]
2. Reduce the number of unmet requests for services from domestic violence victims in Utah because of capacity limitations by 10% by 2026 and 21.5% by 2030. [Metric Dashboard]
3. Increase funding for comprehensive, statewide domestic violence response by 30% by 2030: a state-sponsored strategic plan should be created and then implemented by 2026 through the Utah Victim Services Commission. [Metric Dashboard]
4. Increase domestic violence focus at the Utah Violence and Injury Prevention Program by 100% through establishment and full-state funding of staff positions and the program. [Metric Dashboard]
5. Increase state-level domestic violence data collection, coordination, and reporting by 100% through establishment and full state funding of a staff position and program. [Metric Dashboard]
6. Change Utahns' agreement (understanding and perceptions) in the following areas: [Metric Dashboard]
 - a. Domestic violence is a problem in my community. [Increase agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
 - b. When considering domestic violence, emotional abuse is just as serious as physical abuse. [Increase agreement by 5% by 2026 and 10% by 2030]
 - c. I know where to find domestic violence resources and support in my community. [Increase agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
 - d. I know how to take concrete steps to help address domestic violence in my community. [Increase agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
7. Support the goals and efforts in collaborating spokes: Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment & Gender-Based Discrimination.

Thriving Statement: Women and girls thrive when they are free from violence in intimate partner and other close relationships and feel safe, empowered, and hopeful.

III. SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Sexual Assault Spoke seeks to significantly reduce sexual violence in our state by uniting individuals and organizations to educate, empower, and activate Utahns in this cause. Sexual assault and rape result in significant individual societal costs, including negative short- and long-term physical, psychological, and emotional effects. Research reports that Utah ranks poorly (43 of 51) in terms of the prevalence of rape victimization among women, and that we are 9th of the 50 states for the number of rapes per capita. Further, only 11.8% of individuals who have experienced rape or sexual assault in Utah reported the crime to law enforcement. Things need to change in Utah!

Vision: Significantly decrease the prevalence of sexual assault in Utah and substantially increase the resources and support for survivors.

Goals:

1. Decrease Utahns' high rate of rape from 59.5 per 100,000 inhabitants (6th worst in nation) in 2022 to 50.0 by 2026 and to 40.0 per 100,000 by 2030. (Note: Most rapes in Utah are not reported, but as Utah's culture changes so women feel they will be believed and that action will be taken, there will most likely be a temporary increase in reporting.) [Metric Dashboard]
2. Increase the number of programs that are meeting the "minimum standard of care" to have 100% compliance by 2026. [Metric Dashboard]
3. Increase the number of ongoing victim service activities by direct providers in Utah by 10% in 2026 and by 25% in 2030. (Note: This may seem counterintuitive as we are seeking to decrease sexual assault; however, an increase in services provided will reflect increased awareness and understanding of what sexual assault is and knowledge of the services programs offer.) [Metric Dashboard]
4. Increase ongoing state funding for sexual assault prevention to \$2.0 million by 2026 and \$3.5 million by 2030. [Metric Dashboard]
5. Change Utahns' agreement (understanding and perceptions) in the following areas [Metric Dashboard]:
 - a. I don't think sexual assault is a big problem in Utah. [Decrease agreement by 5% by 2026 and 15% by 2030]
 - b. Any unwanted sexual contact or behavior is sexual assault. [Increase agreement by 5% by 2026 and 10% by 2030]
 - c. I don't think there is much I can do about sexual assault in my community. [Decrease agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
 - d. I know where to find sexual assault resources in my community. [Increase by 10% by 2026 and 30% by 2030]
6. Support the goals and efforts in collaborating spokes: Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Harassment & Gender-Based Discrimination.

Thriving Statement: Women and girls thrive when they are free from sexual violence.

IV. POVERTY/HOMELESSNESS

The Poverty & Homelessness Spoke connects the current efforts around the state to work on initiatives, programs, policies, and strategies that focus on poverty, homelessness, and related challenges, with an eye toward the impacts on girls and women. This spoke focuses on working together in our communities to solve poverty by providing resources, helping people rebuild their lives, and assisting women to stabilize the crises in their lives. In terms of homelessness, the goal is to ensure that it is rare, brief, and non-recurring. The hope is that everyone has access to safe, decent, affordable housing with the needed resources and supports for self-sufficiency and well-being. Although spoke leaders, partners, affiliates, and participants work on these challenges for all genders, they will be initiating more conversations, gathering data, and considering solutions by gender.

Vision: To significantly reduce poverty and homelessness for girls and women in Utah.

Goals:

1. Reduce the number of Utahns living in poverty by 5% in 2026 and 10% by 2030. [[Metric Dashboard](#)]
2. Reduce the number of Utah women accessing homeless services by 5% by 2026 and 10% by 2030. [[Metric Dashboard](#)]
3. Decrease the number of cost-burdened renters and homeowners in Utah by 5% in 2026 and 10% by 2030. [[Metric Dashboard](#)]
4. Decrease the shortage of affordable and deeply affordable housing for low-income families in Utah by 5% in 2026 and 10% by 2030. [[Metric Dashboard](#)]
5. Introduce two legislative policies that work to mitigate the “benefits cliff” by 2030. [[Metric Dashboard](#)]
6. Change Utahns’ agreement (understanding and perceptions) in the following areas: [[Metric Dashboard](#)]
 - a. If one is experiencing poverty in Utah, it is the result of their own choices. [Decrease agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
 - b. If one is experiencing homelessness in Utah, it is the result of their own choices. [Decrease agreement by 10% by 2026 and 20% by 2030]
 - c. I don’t think there is much I can do about poverty and homelessness in my community. [Decrease agreement by 10% by 2026 and 25% by 2030]
 - d. Home is the first step toward positioning children and families for the opportunity to thrive and to plan for the future. [Increase agreement by 5% by 2026 and 10% by 2030]

Thriving Statement: Women and girls thrive when their families have access to safe, decent, affordable housing with the needed resources and supports for self-sufficiency and well-being.