



URGE WOMEN TO RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE AND GIVE FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

BEST PRACTICES
TOOLKIT

WLI

WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE

175 East 400 South, Suite 600
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
801-328-5084
WLIUT.com

WHY IT MATTERS

URGE WOMEN TO RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE AND GIVE FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

Historically, Utah led the way for political representation for women. Utah women were the first women to vote in the modern United States and Utah is home to the first female state senator. However in the last four decades, Utah has fallen behind.

In 2019, Utah ranked 36th among all US States for female representation in our state legislature with only 24% of our state senators and representatives being women.¹ It is crucial that women are in office, because they bring their own perspective to the issues that uniquely impact them. **Women are more invested in issues like affordable child care, paid family leave, and equal pay for equal work, because they are more affected by these issues.**

When women run for office, they are just as likely as men to be elected.² So then why do we see the lack of representation in office? Women are just not running. We need more women running for office because we need women's voices and perspectives represented in our law-making process.

As part of the ElevateHER™ Challenge, the Women's Leadership Institute presents a toolkit of best practices to urge women to run for public office and give follow-up support them.

Some of these can be implemented in a relatively short time period while others may be practices to adapt over time.

For a complete collection of best practices in all areas of the ElevateHER™ Challenge, visit: WLIUT.com/toolkit

Utah Can Do Better

In 2019, **Utah ranked 36th among all US States** for female representation in our state legislature with only 24% of our state senators and representatives being women.¹

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT AWAY

☐ **Encourage women to run for office.**

Studies show, women need to be encouraged to run for political office and supported along the way. Encouragement is one of the main predictors of political ambition in both men and women, but according to a study done by American University, only 35% of women receive any type of political encouragement from any source, compared to 49% of men.³

Identify the ambitious, engaged and capable women in your company and encourage them to run for various political offices. There are many women who would make excellent political candidates, but they have never thought of themselves as qualified. Urging them to run for office plants a seed that might eventually turn into a candidacy.



"As part of his commitment to the ElevateHER Challenge, Dr. Rick Nielsen, President of Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions, has encouraged my growth and service in running for political office. In fact, he has personally donated to my campaign! I appreciate having a workplace sponsor who values my contribution both internally and externally to the organization. My leadership service to the community has elevated my capabilities at RMUoHP."

Jessica Egbert,
Candidate for Mapleton City Council and
Executive Vice President of Strategy & Engagement,
Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions



WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE

WLIUT.com

☐ **Connect women with female role models in politics.**

Often women find it difficult to see themselves in politics because they don't have any female role models to look to in that area. Studies show that women are more politically involved during times when female politicians are more visible.⁴ **When women see other women in office, they begin to see themselves in office as well. Increasing the visibility of female politicians increases the likelihood that women and girls run for those positions.**

You can increase political visibility for women in your company by finding ways to connect and introduce them to female politicians. **Consider bringing current or former local female politicians into your office to present to your employees.** Meeting and connecting with women in politics might inspire some of your employees to run themselves.

☐ **Encourage women to participate in the public policy making process.**

Attending various public, political forums and meetings and getting involved with local issues is a great introduction to the public policy making process. This involvement encourages interactions with local politicians and can offer valuable insight into the duties of a politician. Women who participate with local meetings will also be able to voice their opinions on issues and become a part of the public policy making process.

Encourage the women within your company to interact with local officials and advocate for the issues they care about. If there are individuals who are interested in this but don't quite know where to start, refer them to some of the organizations that are aimed at helping people get politically involved, like Action Utah: www.ActionUtah.org

PRACTICES TO ADAPT OVER TIME

☐ Give women more leadership opportunities.

Statistically, women don't run because they do not feel that they are qualified to be in office. You can help women gain the qualifications they need by elevating women to leadership roles within your company. **Providing women with leadership experiences and leadership training gives them more confidence in their professional capability, which can translate into feeling qualified enough to run for office.**

☐ Provide opportunities for a flexible schedule for those running for or holding office.

If any women from your company do decide to run for office, continue to offer encouragement and support as they go through the election process. Running for office can be time consuming, and there are specific events a political candidate would need to be able to attend. Consider giving female employees flexibility during party caucus nights, party conventions and/or filing periods and encourage them to participate.

A flexible work schedule could be the key to a candidate or elected official's success. Ensure women who are considering running that they would have a flexible schedule to accommodate their candidacy and elected position if they win.



"There are no losers when women run for office."

Patricia Jones,
CEO, Women's Leadership Institute
Senator Jones served in the Utah Legislature for 14 years



WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE

WLIUT.com

☐ **Encourage women to take a political training course.**

There are many courses aimed at helping women run for office. Encouraging your employees to take such courses will prepare them to run for office. These courses can give potential candidates the confidence they need to run and the tools they need to win.

The Women's Leadership Institute conducts an annual in-depth training, the Political Development Series (PDS), for cohorts of women who are interested in running for political office. WLI's 6-month-long PDS focuses on the need for female political influence and decision making and utilizes skilled presenters with political knowledge to teach the cohort the intricacies of running and serving in office. The PDS has proven highly effective in motivating women to run and is also delivering results, since a number of graduates now serve in various political offices on local and state-wide levels.

The PDS provides women with a network of other women that are also considering running for office. The connection these women make in this training course can open up countless opportunities for them in the future.

There are other courses both in and out of Utah that have different focuses. Some courses are tailored for participants based on political party, issues, and goals. Some of these organizations offering courses or support are:

- Emily's List
- National Federation of Republican Women
- Real Women Run
- She Should Run

Encourage interested women to research which of the organizations/courses will be the right fit for them.

RESOURCES:

1. https://cawp.rutgers.edu/state_fact_sheets/ut
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/25/upshot/the-problem-for-women-is-not-winning-its-deciding-to-run.html>
3. https://www.american.edu/spa/wpi/upload/girls-just-wanna-not-run_policy-report.pdf
4. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00402.x?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=women&searchText=role&searchText=models&searchText=politics&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dwomen%2Brole%2Bmodels%2Bpolitics%26amp%3Bfilter%3D&ab_segments=0%2Fdefault-2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=search%3A31676076f3b6cb044e4a543337c15ae6&seq=6#metadata_info_tab_contents

For more resources
and blog posts on all
six ElevateHER™ Challenge
topics, visit:
wliut.com/elevateher-resource-center/



WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE

WLIUT.com

This publication was made by the Women's Leadership Institute. The policies and ideas suggested here were researched by WLI. For more information and resources for your company visit WLIUT.com

ADVICE FOR A FUTURE POLITICAL LEADER

☐ **You are qualified.**

For most political offices, there is no specific set of qualifications that a candidate has to meet. In fact, the diversity of backgrounds is what makes our political system function. Candidates representing a broad spectrum of backgrounds are needed so that multiple perspectives can be represented in our law-making process.

☐ **Participate in a political training course.**

No one expects you to be an expert on running for office. Taking a political training course will provide you with the knowledge, confidence and tools to help you run a successful campaign. Learn more about the Women's Leadership Institute's bi-partisan Political Development Series at www.WLIUT.com/PDS

☐ **Build a team/support system you can rely on.**

Running for office requires a lot of hard work. Making sure you have a strong campaign team that can help lighten the load is crucial. It is also important to have friends or family that will have your back throughout your campaign. The election process can be very overwhelming if you do not have a support system to help you.

☐ **Recognize that even if you lose, there are benefits to running.**

Knowing that a victorious campaign is not guaranteed might make politics intimidating. But simply having the courage to enter the race and working hard automatically opens doors and elevates political candidates to a new level of leadership. Whether you win or lose, you will gain valuable connections and raise issues of importance, both of which are critical to democracy.

RESOURCES:

- **Women's Leadership Institute Political Development Series**
www.wliut.com/PDS/
- www.sheshouldrun.org/
- www.offthesidelines.org/
- www.realwomenrundotorg.wordpress.com/
- www.cawp.rutgers.edu/home
- www.ignitenational.org (focus is on young women)



WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE

WLIUT.com