

Nevada Commission for Women's

Workforce Development Survey 2017 Executive Summary

*“What do women need to
successfully join the
workforce and take care of
their families?”*

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The Nevada Commission for Women was established by Nevada Revised Statute 233I and provided the power and duty to study the changing and developing roles of women in society, including the socioeconomic factors that influence the status of women, and recommend proposed legislation. The Commission is a 10-member board appointed by the Governor and receives staff assistance from the Nevada Department of Administration.

Workforce development is one of Governor Sandoval's significant initiatives this session and so the Nevada Commission for Women decided to research the topic and developed a survey to study one specific aspect of workforce development – women in the workplace. The Commission narrowed its focus further to explore the challenges unique to women *with families* in the workforce, or those trying to get into the workforce. The study consists of information gathered from electronic surveys, two public meetings conducted on two separate days with video conference capabilities throughout the state, and submissions of written testimony.

The primary focus and purpose of the study was one open ended question that asked people to provide the answer in their own words to the question “What do women need to successfully join the workforce and take care of their families?”

On September 28, 2016, an electronic survey was sent by email to the Commission for Women members and an “Interested Party” email distribution group of about 30. The email invited people to attend a public meeting October 11, 2016, in either Las Vegas or Carson City, and provide public testimony about their experiences related to challenges women faced in the workplace. If they were not able to attend, they were encouraged to complete an electronic survey. A link to the survey was included in the Public Meeting email invitation. Distribution was a grassroots effort and Commission members took to forwarding the email to their personal contacts and professional colleagues. Some who received the email posted it to their social media accounts, and others continued to forward the email which grew the outreach even further.

The Commission wanted to ensure the perspective from rural communities was also captured and so organized a second public meeting. To help facilitate this outreach, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) generously offered the use of their high-tech videoconferencing capabilities. A second Public Meeting invitation was created with its own survey link and was distributed by email October 26, 2016, to invite people in the rural area of the state to provide their feedback and testimony. This invitation and survey was distributed via an informal network of contacts at Family Resource Centers, Commission members' associates, and NSHE points of contact. The rural public meeting was held November 4, 2016, at the following NSHE campuses: Carson City, Elko, Ely, Fallon, Gardnerville, Pahrump, and Winnemucca.

It's impossible to really know the extent of the public meeting invitation and survey link outreach, but both meetings culminated in more than 30 members from the public participating and 464 responses submitted to the electronic survey. The effort was considered a success!

Some demographic information was captured on the survey and of the 464 responses the Commission received, the ethnicity of respondents correlates with Nevada Census Bureau reports and reflects the majority Caucasian, followed by Latino and African-American. However, aside from ethnicity, the other demographic indicators are not representative of the general Nevada population.

Over 90 percent of the respondents are women with college or graduate degrees, nearly 60 percent are married, 68 percent work full-time, and the majority are 30 to 49 years old.

The Commission recognizes the respondents may not be as diverse as Nevada's population but also recognizes the feedback and testimony are from real Nevadans who have valid perspectives and experiences about the unique challenges facing women. Further, over 40 percent of respondents indicate they have firsthand knowledge of the struggles women with families face in the workplace; with 13 percent of respondents indicating they personally received Food Stamps and Medicaid assistance.

The Commission recognizes that analyzing open ended questions is not an exact science. To help quantify the results of the narrative-format, each response was read by staff and assigned a common theme/topic code. The Survey Monkey instrument used allows the creation of up to 9 common codes to help organize the information. This number was limiting but workable with the use of the broad category code "Other." If a response was a topic not assigned to the first 9 slots, such as "Transportation," or if there were nuisances described in a common theme the category code "Other" was used. An example of the latter might be the topic of Child Care which has many components. If the *cost* of child care was stressed, or the *location* of child care was stressed, or the *safety* of child care was stressed the code "Other" would be assigned in addition to "Child Care." If responses covered several themes, staff assigned all relevant code categories to the response.

Here are actual responses to describe what's needed...

"Childcare. Absolutely childcare. With the cost of childcare so high, for some mothers in two parent households it is cheaper for mom to stay home. For single mothers (like me), we can't work without childcare. That becomes problematic when we make just enough to not qualify for a subsidy, leaving less money for food, clothes, etc. ...those of us that make a little more (than minimum wage) are still unable to afford childcare."

"Women with children need reliable affordable childcare to be able to go to work. Once employed, they need flexibility and paid time off to care for their children if they get sick. They need training and skills to help them get good paying jobs."

"Flexibility in the workplace – policies that are pro-family for both parents so it doesn't always fall on Mom to be the care giver."

"Support from the community in the same way men and boys are supported and encouraged."

"More flexibility in the work force and to be able to make the same income as male employees. Single parents should not have to rely on government assistance to provide for their children."

"There needs to be one central website where women can go to see ALL programs/organizations offering services and what is needed to qualify for assistance."

"A path to re-entering the workforce. I have a bachelor's and a decade of experience and can't even get an interview for a low-level job. It's very frustrating!"

"(A young woman needs) job opportunities with potential growth, childcare services while she learns, and programs for fathers to become more engaged with raising a child. Strong relationships need to be built to build a web of support allowing the young woman to flourish. Referring a woman to one program, and another, and another and yet another without linking her to a strong compassionate mentor to guide her through her journey, can be exhausting and devastating."

“What do women need to successfully join the workforce and take care of their families?”	Result ranking of 373 responses
1. Child Care	52.2% 195
2. Equal Pay	28.15% 105
3. Cultural Support and Encouragement (i.e. change in social attitudes; more father involvement; employers that make family the top priority; equal value of a woman’s mind, self-confidence; improve family expectations of women; break the cycle to notice warning signs of unhealthy relationships; employers who treat their employees as valued partners; the mindset holds women back – the difference between a job and a career, etc.)	27.61% 103
4. Flexible Hours	22.7% 85
5. Family Leave (Includes Maternity Leave, Personal Sick Leave and Family Sick Leave)	22.22% 83
6. Education	18.28% 68
7. Skills Training	12.33% 46
8. Medical Benefits	7.77% 29
9. Other (The category code “Other” was used several ways which is why the percentage is so high. It was used to indicate when a response that was already coded with one of the allotted 8 category options, elaborated on an aspect of that topic. For instance, the topic of Child Care has various aspects such as cost, proximity to home or work, convenient hours, and/or quality of care. When a response provided more information than just the main topic, it was coded “Other” as a supplemental code. Responses were also coded “Other” to indicate when a completely different response was provided that didn’t “fall into” an already prescribed category heading; such as “Transportation.”)	53.35% 199

According to this survey, the number one issue facing women with families in the workplace is Child Care. The cost of child care is the biggest concern and has become an enormous barrier to a women’s success in the workplace. Working women often struggle to afford child care because the cost consumes most of their paycheck. Other top priorities are equal pay for equal work, flexible hours, family leave, and medical benefits. To view the full survey, written responses and public testimony, visit the Commission for Women’s website: <http://admin.nv.gov/CommissionForWomen/>