



Women's Power and Influence National Survey, Pivotal, 2024

Pivotal analyzed data and trends over the last 5 years and saw that removing barriers for women in the workplace would have an immediate and systemic shift for women's power and influence. As a part of Melinda's second [\\$1 billion commitment](#), \$150M will focus on accelerating progress and removing gender bias for women in the workplace.

A summary of the funding includes support to organizations who are:

- Seeding and scaling innovations (\$75M)
 - Informing public policy changes (\$30M)
 - Doubling down on women's representation in AI (\$45M)
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Research Overview

- Over the years, we've seen a number of reports that provide data around women in the workplace. We saw an opportunity to shift the focus on solutions that exist, rather than focusing on what women need to do to succeed. The data showcases what systemic barriers need to be addressed – to benefit women, and all workers.
- Pivotal commissioned a survey to understand if, and how, we have progressed on gender equality over the last 5 years, where barriers persist, and where women have made progress.
- The survey is complimentary to analysis of external trends and public reporting, to understand macro trends in women's power and influence and women's representation
- Through the research we learned that the workplace is a significant factor affecting WPI – and there are specific systemic barriers that are holding women back:
 - Lack of caregiving supports
 - Inflexible jobs and advancement goals
 - The broken rung and supports needed for career prioritization and advancement
 - Toxic workplaces: growing threats of violence and harassment
 - Toxic workplaces: biased attitudes against women
- The respondents made it clear: if we want to expand women's power and influence in this country, then we must tackle the unfinished business of inequality at work.

Survey Methodology

- **A nationally representative survey, commissioned in Spring 2024**, to assess the perceptions, attitudes, and actions of people living in the U.S. pertaining to women's power and influence.
- **Demographics:** A survey of 4,500 people—2,000 nationally representative and 2,500 over-sample of women, including transgender women and non-binary individuals.
- **Nationally representative sample:** The 2,000-person panel is Census-representative on income, gender, age, ethnicity, region, political affiliation, sexual identity, and religion.
- **Oversampling** (via quota sampling) was conducted for sub-populations of interest where we anticipated not capturing the minimum number of respondents (n=100) needed for intersectional analysis—for example, racial groups such as Native American/Indigenous populations. This was achieved by including targeted demographic questions.



Survey Results and Themes

People feel like there has been progress on women's power and influence and are supportive of it, but barriers remain, especially in the workplace

- 2/3 of respondents believe that women's power and influence has increased over the past five years.
- 85% think that we'll see more improvement over the next decade than we did the last
- 75% agree that increased women's representation could enhance the quality of life for Americans.
- Americans also perceive women's power and influence to be higher than it actually is – for instance:
 - Respondents overestimate the number of women CEOs of F500 companies by 52% and the number of women of color CEOs by 92%

Workplace Barrier #1: Lack of Caregiving Supports

- In 2024, women view caregiving as greater impediment to their professional growth, compared to seeing discrimination and sexual harassment as the biggest impediments in 2019.
- Since 2019, there has been a 16% increase in women reporting caregiving as a factor that holds them back professionally (26% of women surveyed).
- 24% of women are likely to give up their job so families do not have to pay for childcare (vs 10% of men).

Workplace Barrier #2: Inflexible Jobs and Advancement goals

- 13% of men aspire to be C-suite or top leadership, vs 8% of women.
- Black and Asian Women 2x more likely to prioritize their careers over the next 5 years, compared to white women.
- Career priorities diverge by gender in the mid-twenties; men tend to prioritize their careers more, women less.
- As we see workers age, the gap widens for those with C-suite aspirations: For ages 18-24, 9% of women aspire to be C-suite compared to 12% men. For ages 35-64, 32% of men aspire to be C-suite vs 22% of women
- One of the drivers is flexibility: 29% of women say that the hours required of higher position(s) would conflict with other priorities in life (7% more than men).

Workplace Barrier #3: The Broken Rung & supports needed for career prioritization and advancement

- The vast majority of workers under the age of 30 report wanting to be promoted – women and men equally.
- Within a few years of workforce entry, things shift. Young women start out as more likely to report prioritizing their career than their male counterparts. Among those aged 18-24, 51% of women compared to just 41% of men name career as one of their top five priorities
- When we look just one age group older, by age 25-34, women's career prioritization decreases just as men's increases. In that age group, only 37% of women say they are highly prioritizing career, compared to 53% of men.



- It's not that women don't want promotion or career success – it's just that they begin prioritizing other things in life to a greater extent than they do career as they get older. Women often need to make tradeoffs more than men are around this life stage as they have greater caregiving responsibilities (e.g., children or parents) because of workplace barriers.

Workplace Barrier #4: Toxic workplaces: Growing threats of violence and harassment

- When asked about professional barriers, women in low-income household are 4x more likely to report violence against women compared to women in high income households
- Nearly 25% of Native Women see sexual harassment as a career barrier (nearly 2x the rate of White Women)
- 18% of women agree that one of the factors make it harder to attain top business positions is that they face more trolling/doxing (e.g., threats/harassment online, unwanted disclosure of personal details such as home address). Only 8% of men see this as a factor.
- Younger women are more likely to see sexual harassment and gender-based violence as potential career barriers: 20% of women 18-24, and 16% of women 25-34 said sexual harassment has the greatest negative impact on a woman's career.
- 10% of women believe the workplace is not safe for women (e.g., more likely to face harassment)

Workplace Barrier #5: Toxic workplaces: Biased attitudes against women

- 27% of men believe that men are suited to be senior business leaders than women. Similarly, 23% of men believe men are better suited make hard decisions as political leaders than women.
- Nearly half of men (49%) and women (46%) believe women are naturally better suited for childcare than men
- A quarter of men (26%) believe that people make too big a deal about sexual harassment and punish men unfairly
- About half of men (49%) and more than half of women (52%) believe bias against women is a major force in America that significantly interferes with many women's ability to thrive
- Respondents agree that men excel at risk-taking, negotiating deals, and being a strong leader – where women are seen as more honest, willing to compromise, and work to improve the quality of life of others.
- Women are 12% more likely than men to believe "Women are seen as "aggressive" or "abrasive" and develop a negative reputation for the same leadership patterns that would be seen positively in a man"

About Pivotal

Founded by Melinda French Gates in 2015, Pivotal works to advance social progress and expand women's power and influence in the U.S. and around the world. Through high-impact investments, philanthropy, partnerships, and advocacy, Pivotal seeks to remove the barriers that hold women -- and all people -- back. Pivotal is comprised of Pivotal Ventures, LLC and Pivotal Philanthropies Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit organization launched in 2022. Learn more at pivotalventures.org