The Commonwealth Institute (TCI) is pleased to present the findings of the **first-ever statewide survey on women’s leadership development**. We want to express our sincere gratitude to our underwriting sponsors: American Tower, Dentaquest, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Bowditch & Dewey, and Cathy Minehan. This survey became a reality due to financial support from our sponsors, and also the ongoing efforts from our survey partners: Keystone Partners, Chadwick Martin Bailey, Boston Women’s Workforce Council, Castle Group, The Gloria Cordes Larson Center for Women and Business (CWB) at Bentley University, Hollister Institute, Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council, and MITX.

The overall goal of this research initiative was to better understand employers’ actions to **develop, retain, and advance women in Massachusetts**, and to establish a benchmark for reporting annually on women’s progress through the leadership pipeline. Specifically, we wanted to assess leadership program effectiveness across industry and company size (what is working, what is not working, gaps to be addressed), and to provide a baseline for measuring progress (what programs and activities actually contribute to women’s upward mobility).

While this initial survey was intended primarily to establish a baseline against which to measure future progress, one important substantive finding emerged nonetheless: **many employers offer external or internal programs that focus primarily on “development”, with much less effort focused on the retention and promotion of women**. Moreover, the programs reported on had varying degrees of success, and with little or no external evidence or objective measurement that women are advancing into equitable roles in leadership.

It is our intention that this first benchmark research study, along with an annual survey, will provide increased visibility about the importance of women’s leadership development, and enable organizations to understand ways to enhance and improve their current approaches. We believe that this report will (1) serve as a snapshot of women’s presence at various levels of management and leadership in Massachusetts; (2) provide an inventory of practices to advance women; and (3) provide a means to measure the systematic, sustained progress of women into leadership across our state.

For the past twenty years, TCI has focused its efforts on helping women achieve greater success, ranging from supporting the rising generation of women leaders, to corporate executives, entrepreneurs, and CEOs from for-profit companies and non-profit organizations. As we look to the next twenty years, The Commonwealth Institute’s mission is clear: to support women at each stage of leadership development and to accelerate women through the leadership pipeline!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Hailer
Executive Director
The Commonwealth Institute

Pamela D.A. Reeve
Chair, Board of Directors
The Commonwealth Institute
Introduction

Massachusetts’ women have long been leaders in the struggle for equality— from the suffrage movement to the ongoing fight for equal pay and access to healthcare. Despite this history of advocacy and a reputation as a progressive bastion, as in the rest of the United States, Massachusetts’ women remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions.¹

The impact of this inequity is significant—there is no shortage of evidence that the presence of women in senior leadership and on boards of directors out-perform those with that are less diverse.² While many organizations have implemented leadership programs devoted to the development, retention, and advancement of women leaders, until now there has been no state-wide examination of these programs and their effectiveness.

In accordance with its mission to advance women in leadership positions and close the representation gap, The Commonwealth Institute (TCI) commissioned a landmark study of women’s leadership development opportunities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The study is an exploration of the needs, gaps, barriers and opportunities facing women leaders—and provides an inventory of practices to advance women. The study can be the springboard to systematic, sustained progress for women into leadership in Massachusetts.

Methodology

TCI partnered with Boston-based market research firm CMB to conduct the research through an online survey. 129 men and women currently in senior leadership positions, within Massachusetts-based organizations, participated in this study. In our inaugural survey, a convenience sampling method was used. Respondents were drawn from a list developed by The Commonwealth Institute with the assistance of the partners and sponsors of this research. Results are representative of organizations operating in Massachusetts based on company side with an error range of +/- 10%.

The results reflect the perspective of those who responded to an invitation to participate in this study of women’s leadership development programs on behalf of their organizations with 20+ employees based in Massachusetts. The majority of respondents have responsibility for developing women leaders, from recruiting and/or hiring women, identifying leadership development opportunities for women, allocating internal resources and/or identifying external programming. Common respondent titles include President, CEO, Human Resources Leader, Talent Director, Operations, Development, Management, Director, and SVP.

Based on a census of organizations of this size in the Commonwealth, it is the professional opinion of our research partner that the sample responding to our survey is representative of the larger state of play.

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<th>TYPE OF ORGANIZATION</th>
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<td>500-999</td>
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<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$20M-$250M</td>
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Progress and the Road to Representation

The State of Women’s Leadership in Massachusetts

Anyone harboring illusions that the glass ceiling has been shattered need only look at the latest numbers. Among S&P 500 companies, women hold 44.7% of all professional-level jobs, yet only 26.5% of executive- and senior-level officials and managers and just 4.6% of CEOs are women. Despite these discouraging statistics, our state-wide examination provides evidence that Massachusetts organizations are making some progress in increasing representation at the top, particularly in women-led businesses.

And these numbers matter—not least because women-led businesses are significantly more likely to have women well-represented throughout the leadership pipeline, from entry to executive levels, and women in leadership positions serve as role models and increasing opportunities for other women.

![Share of leadership positions held by women](image)

In the five years since Sheryl Sandberg called for a generation to “Lean In”, a growing awareness of the negative impact of the dearth of women in leadership has spurred many organizations to set goals and develop programs focused on increasing women’s representation. As one respondent explained:

“We simply cannot get the best ideas, nor can we meet our customers’ global needs, if we aren’t including half the population.”

The following pages explore the prevalence and efficacy of these programs among Massachusetts-based companies.

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3 http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-sp-500-companies
Our pursuit of excellence begins with a passion for diversity and inclusion.

At Liberty Mutual, we foster an atmosphere of trust and respect, where our collective differences and similarities constantly inspire and empower us.

LMI.co/Diversity
Goal-setting

If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it

Two-in-five Massachusetts-based organizations do not have established goals for developing women leaders—a critical gap considering the important role measurement plays in program success.

Two in three organizations do not measure:
- the number of women in leadership roles
- the extent to which women advance into more senior roles
- retention of women leaders

Organizations without formal goals provide a number of explanations—namely that current goals are tailored for overall development without a focus on gender or that the organization is predominantly female.

Of the 57% of organizations who do have set goals addressing women’s leadership, nearly all include stated goals geared toward developing high-potential women and increasing the number of women in leadership roles. The majority of these goal-setting organizations also have specific goals around increasing representation of women of color in leadership. A notable gap exists in stated goals around retention of existing senior women leaders.

**GOAL SETTING (% yes)**

- Further develop the talent of high potential women: 99%
- Increase the number of women in leadership roles: 91%
- Increase the number of women of color in leadership roles: 70%
- Publicly stated commitment to women’s leadership development: 61%
- Stated core value to grow women leaders: 53%
- Increase the number of LGBTQ women in leadership roles: 41%
- Other goal-setting activities: 21%
Leadership Programs

Prevalence and impact

The prevalence of programs aimed at increasing women’s representation in senior leadership is promising. Three-in-five participating businesses conduct leadership programs targeted to women. Unsurprisingly, larger organizations—those with annual revenue $20M or greater—are nearly twice as likely to have programs in place (68%) than those with lower annual revenue (36%).

Leadership programs vary in scale and approach. Companies report offering, on average, 5-6 programs dedicated to women’s development. Types of programming fall broadly into two categories—internal and external. Overall, the most common internal programming includes networking events/affinity groups, speakers/subject matter experts, and internal mentorship matching programs. The most common external programs include access to industry-specific conferences, women’s leadership conference participation, and individual leadership development programs.

MOST COMMON PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Category</th>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal networking events/affinity groups</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry-specific conferences/programs</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal speakers/subject matter experts</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s leadership conference participation</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term individual leadership development program</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering with external organizations</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External speakers/subject matter experts</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive coaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship program to match internal mentors to women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program calendar in place</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

“Bowditch & Dewey LLP focused its internal women’s initiative on business development and took a broad approach – the group created a business book club, developed networking events for female attorneys and clients, secured speaking engagements, submitted for and won awards, took advantage of strategic sponsorships, found high-visibility leadership roles in the community, and enrolled in external leadership programs. This has led to several new clients and fostered camaraderie among our female professionals who have developed referral relationships with each other. Perhaps one of the best outcomes was the role that the women’s initiative played in recruiting a new partner to the firm who was recently elected to equity partner.”

Robert D. Cox, Jr., Managing Partner
Bowditch & Dewey LLP

We believe in offering a mix of internal and external women’s development opportunities, which is one reason our women and male allies employee resource group, WE@Liberty, offers programming for women and men and invites both internal and external guest speakers throughout the year to discuss topics ranging from personal branding to confidence-building to expanding your professional network. Recognizing the importance of sponsors, last year we launched our first sponsorship program with plans to expand. Externally, we sponsor women’s conferences and development programs, including the Simmons Leadership Conference, the Texas and Massachusetts Conferences for Women, and the Multicultural Women’s National Conference. With our sponsorships, we receive a number of tickets that we share with our employees so they can attend. These conferences offer opportunities for our employees to learn, gain industry insights and make professional connections that can lead to mentoring opportunities and career advancement.

Dawn Frazier-Bohnert, Senior Vice President, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Liberty Mutual Insurance
By focusing on prevention and care, we are working to improve the oral health of all.

It takes all voices, opinions and perspectives to get the job done.
American Tower is proud to sponsor

The Women’s Leadership Development in Massachusetts 2018 Impact Study

We firmly believe what makes us different also makes us stronger. Striving to provide equal access to growth and advancement, we support The Commonwealth Institute’s initiative to better understand employers’ actions to develop, retain, and advance women employees in Massachusetts.
Programming

One size doesn’t fit all

The programs with the most demonstrated success in the development, retention, and advancement of women leaders combine both internal and external elements. Programming efficacy varies by goal, with most current programming focused on talent development. Development-specific programming tends to center around group-related activities while retention and advancement initiatives are geared toward individuals.

The results indicate a gap in programming specifically aimed at retention and advancement. Though less prevalent than other programming—senior management listening tours and internal sponsorship (internal career advocacy) programs are seen as impactful.

Organizations focused solely on development risk losing talented women leaders—and their investment in them—if they do not provide the effective resources and programming to encourage these leaders to stay and advance.

“There promising women leaders have different needs, and we need to create an environment of opportunity for all. My executives and I seek to engage with our talented women leaders to explore with them their aspirations and how to progress them. We also sponsor high-potential women leaders to participate in leadership and MBA programs open to all employees with the capabilities and drive.”

Steven Marshall, Executive Vice President & President
U.S. Tower, American Tower Corporation

“Promising women leaders need opportunities to lead projects critical to business success and show what they can accomplish. It is equally important that they have access to key leaders, male and female, at senior levels to use as a sounding board and resource.”

Meg Wing, Vice President Governance & Administration
Dentaquest
The Commonwealth Institute (TCI) is a non-profit organization that works with women CEOs, corporate executives, entrepreneurs, sole proprietors, and the rising generation of women leaders to help them build successful businesses, organizations, and careers.

In short, TCI helps women in business achieve greater success!

moving the pipeline of women leaders

learn more
www.commonwealthinstitute.org
Elizabeth L. Hailer, Executive Director
ehailer@commonwealthinstitute.org // 617-531-9080