2-24-2014

The Status of Women Leaders in Utah Nonprofits

Susan R. Madsen
Utah State University, susan.madsen@usu.edu

D. Candice Backus
Utah Valley University

Glaucia Jones
Utah Valley University

Brian Fischer
Utah Valley University

Recommended Citation

Madsen, S. R., Backus, D. C., Jones, G., & Fischer, B. (2014, February 24). The status of women leaders in Utah nonprofits. Research and Policy Brief. https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/briefs/7-status-of-women-leaders-in-utah-nonprofits.pdf

UtahState University
MERRILL-CAZIER LIBRARY

UTAH WOMEN & LEADERSHIP Project

The Status of Women Leaders in Utah Nonprofits

In September 2013, the *Center for American Progress* released a report titled "The State of Women in America: A 50-State Analysis of How Women Are Faring Across the Nation."[1] This report ranks Utah last of all 50 states in terms of women being in positions of decision making and leadership. Although the focus is solely on the percentage of women in elected office and private sector management positions, we feel that a more detailed look on the status of women in leadership in various sectors within the state would be useful. This is the second of four 2014 briefs, each of which compares national data with Utah data and provides a pertinent literature review. The first provides data on women in Utah politics; subsequent ones will focus on women leaders in education and business. This brief focuses on the status of women leaders in Utah nonprofit organizations.

The nonprofit sector "consists of entities or organizations that are neither part of government nor generate a profit."[2] Nonprofits typically encompass voluntary, charitable, independent, third, or nongovernmental agencies, associations, and foundations.[3] According to the IRS, the U.S. nonprofit sector is the third-largest employing industry after retail trade and manufacturing. This brief provides data regarding the gender of nonprofit chief executives (e.g., CEO, president, executive director) and board members. But first, we outline details about the Utah study we conducted.

Study Background

The study was based on a list of 890 organizations provided by the Utah Nonprofits Association (UNA). Although the list did not include all of the nonprofits in the state, it did provide a helpful sample from which to conduct this research. After contacting organizations on the list via websites, email, and phone, it was found that of the original 890 organizations, 24 either were no longer functioning or did not consider themselves to be a nonprofit. In addition, 10 were government entities, 15 were entities of a university whose governing body was the institution's board of trustees (excluded from this study), and six had no local governing board. After these 55 organizations were removed from the list, the final number of potential nonprofits to study was 835. Researchers then attempted to find the needed data on the entities' websites. If this information was not available, the agency was contacted via email and/or phone. Researchers were able to collect data on 85% (717 of 835) of these organizations.

Nonprofit Chief Executives

National
The *BoardSource Nonprofit Governance Index 2012*[4] provides demographic characteristics for the chief executive or

equivalent (e.g., president, CEO, executive director) of their member nonprofits across the country. They found that 62% of chief executives in the organizations that responded were female.

The *2013 GuideStar Nonprofit Compensation Report* looked specifically at the gender of CEOs and sorted them according to their agency budgets. Researchers found that, in organizations with budgets of $250,000 or less, 57% of CEOs were women.[5] However, as the agencies' budget size increased, the proportion of female CEOs declined precipitously. At the $2.5 to $5 million budget level, only 38% were women, and nonprofits with budgets over $50 million had only 16% female CEOs at their helms.[6]

Finally, the *2010 Human Capital Study of United Way* reported data similar to that of the first study: 62% of their CEOs were female, but only 36% of their largest agencies were headed by women.[7] They concurred that women were more likely to hold a CEO position in smaller United Way agencies. This report also noted that 79% of all United Way staff are female.

National reports also continue to confirm that there is a substantial gender gap in terms of salary between male and female CEOs (females receiving, on average, 80% of their male counterparts' salaries).[8]

Utah
Of the 717 Utah agencies in this study, 663 provided information about the gender of their chief executives. Currently, 383 (57.8%) of these nonprofits have female chief executives. This is only slightly below the national data, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Nonprofit Chief Executives by Gender (Utah vs. Nation)
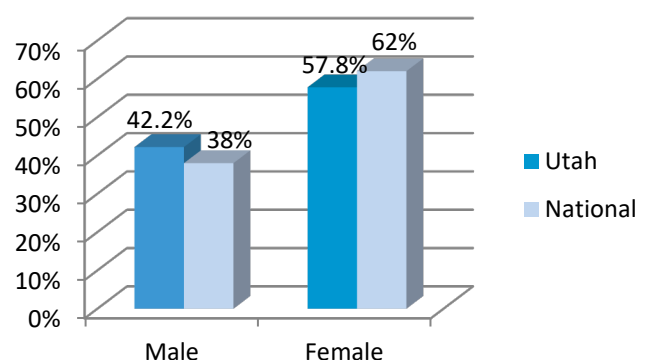
To better understand the presence of female chief officers in Utah, we provide descriptive data related to organizational budgets (see Table 1), regions (see Table 2), and nonprofit classification (see Table 3).

**Table 1: Utah Chief Executives
by Gender and Budget**

Budget	Female	Male	Total	% Female
$49,000 and less	131	89	220	59.5
$50,000–$199,999	80	49	129	62.0
$200,000–$499,999	53	45	98	54.1
$500,000–$999,999	51	31	82	62.0
$1,000,000–4,999,999	53	42	95	55.8
$5,000,000 plus	14	23	37	37.8
Total[9]	382	279	661	57.8

As previously mentioned, national data do note that there are fewer female CEOs in agencies as budget size increases. Although this trend cannot be statistically confirmed in this sample, there is a notable decrease of female leadership in the largest nonprofit category ($5 million plus). Hence, there is, at minimum, a similar trend in Utah.

**Table 2: Utah Chief Executives
by Gender and Region**

Counties	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Cache, Box Elder	18	11	29	62.1
Davis, Weber	36	33	69	52.2
Salt Lake	247	185	432	57.2
Summit, Wasatch	21	20	41	51.2
Utah	29	16	45	64.4
Tooele, Sanpete, Carbon	6	4	10	60.0
Iron, Sevier, Grand, Garfield, and Wayne	8	3	11	72.7
Washington, San Juan, and Kane	14	6	20	70.0
Total[10]	379	278	657	57.7

The percentage of female chief officers ranges from 51.2% in Summit/Wasatch counties to 72.7% in the region that includes Iron, Sevier, Grand, Garfield, and Wayne counties. However, there appears to be no statistical link between the budgets of nonprofits and specific counties and regions within the state. The 136 highest budget entities were actually spread around the state, with 99 being in Salt Lake County, 15 within the Davis–Weber area, and eight in Utah County. The 250 smallest were also widespread, with 162 in Salt Lake county, 23 in Davis and Weber counties, 22 in Utah county, and 15 in the Washington, San Juan, and Kane county area.

There are more female chief executives than males in all classification areas, with Health having the largest percentage of female chief executives (64.9%) and Human Services having the least (53.0%).

**Table 3: Utah Chief Executives
by Gender and Classification**

Focus	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Arts, Culture, and Humanities	67	42	109	61.5
Children's Services	28	18	46	60.9
Education	49	33	82	59.8
Environment/Animals	29	25	54	53.7
Health	48	26	74	64.9
Human Services	71	63	134	53.0
Other	85	70	155	54.8
Total[11]	377	277	654	57.6

Nonprofit Boards

National

The *BoardSource Nonprofit Governance Index 2012* stated that gender distribution on nonprofit boards has remained fairly stable over time. The board composition, has for the most part, remained the same since 1994, with about 10% more men (55%) on boards than women (45%). This study found that larger nonprofits (more than $10 million annually) average lower female board representation (37%); there is a higher percentage of women on boards of smaller nonprofits with annual budgets less than $1 million (51%). Interestingly, nonprofits with female chief officers tend to average 50% female representation on their boards, while those headed by males had 37% female board members. This study found that organizations of any size that are headed by males will have more men in board positions as well. This report also noted that women are more likely to serve on nonprofit boards of smaller arts, cultural, heath, human services, environmental, or educational organizations.

The 2007 Urban Institute's *Nonprofit Governance in the United States* study[12] surveyed over 5,100 nonprofit organizations of various sizes, types, and locations. Researchers reported that, on average, boards were composed of 46% women. They also found that gender is inversely related to organizational size—meaning that nonprofits with budgets under $100,000 have approximately 50% female board members, while the percentage of women on boards of nonprofits with over $40 million budgets dropped to 29%. The report stated, that "these findings are consistent with the contention that women are less likely to serve on boards of large and prestigious nonprofits." The report also provided insight into additional factors that were positively associated with a higher percentage of women on nonprofits boards:

- There is a higher percentage of female clientele served by the nonprofit;

Authors: Dr. Susan R. Madsen (Orin R. Woodbury Professor of Leadership & Ethics, Utah Valley University), D. Candice Backus, Glaucia Jones, and Brian Fischer (Research Assistants, Utah Valley University).
For questions and information: uwlp@usu.edu or www.utwomen.org

- Funding sources for the nonprofit are more likely to be from government and foundations, instead of reliance on endowment funding;
- The nonprofit board has term limits and has a local or regional geographical focus;
- The organization places importance for board members on their willingness to give time and their knowledge of the organization's mission area;
- The nonprofit uses racial and ethnic diversity as a recruitment criterion for board members; and
- The organization is not located in a metropolitan statistical area.[13]

Utah

Of the 717 nonprofit agencies in this study, 663 provided information on the gender of their board members. Within these organizations, there were 4,017 males (54.2%) and 3,394 females (45.8%), totaling 7,411 nonprofit board member seats. This puts the percentage of women on Utah nonprofit boards right on target with the national average. As mentioned, the *BoardSource Nonprofit Governance Index 2012* reported that there are about 10% more men (55%) on boards than women (45%) nationally, and Utah numbers are nearly identical (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Nonprofit Board Members
(Utah vs. Nation)**
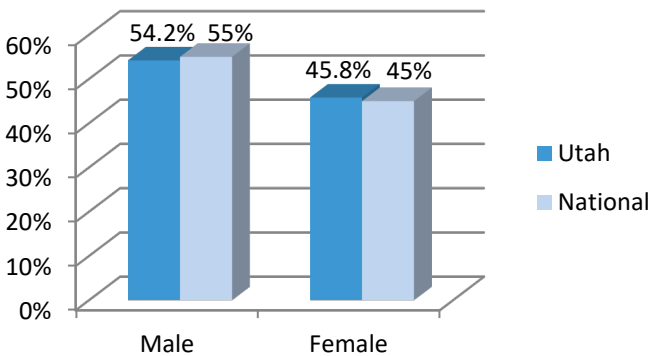
Consistent with the national data, statistics show that Utah nonprofits that have female chief executives are significantly more likely to have a higher percentage of women serving on their boards, while those headed by males have fewer. To demonstrate the presence of nonprofit female board members in Utah, we present descriptive data related to organizational budgets (see Table 4), regions (see Table 5), and nonprofit classification (see Table 6).

Although not statistically significant, there are more female board members in Utah agencies with the smallest budgets (54.2% women) compared with those with mid-sized (42.7–46.0%) and larger budgets (36.0–42.0%). Figure 3 illustrates the percentages highlighted in Table 4 by budget category.

Hence, Utah may follow, at least somewhat, the national trend that shows gender is inversely related to organizational size—the larger the agency budget, the lower the percentage of female board members.

**Table 4: Utah Nonprofit Board Members
by Gender and Budget**

Budget	Female	Male	Total	% Female
$49,000 and less	1037	876	1913	54.2
$50,000-$199,999	568	714	1282	44.3
$200,000-$499,999	490	563	1053	46.5
$500,000-$999,999	418	560	978	42.7
$1,000,000-4,999,999	626	863	1489	42.0
$5,000,000 plus	240	427	667	36.0
Missing	15	14	29	51.7
Total	**3395**	**4017**	**7411**	**45.8**

**Figure 3: Percentage of Utah Female Board Members
Compared with Nonprofit Budgets**
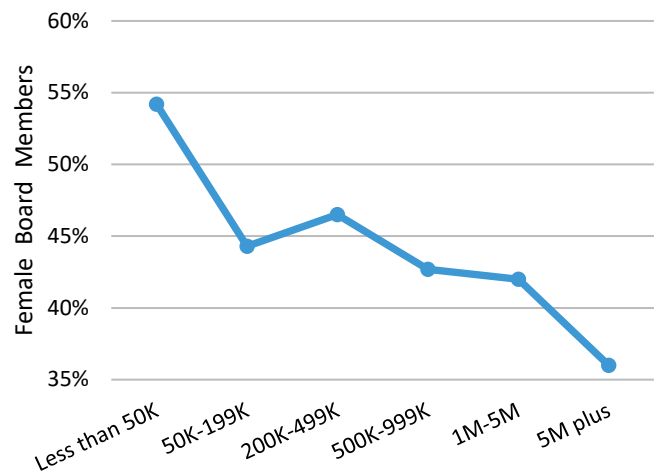
**Table 5: Utah Nonprofit Board Members
by Gender and Region**

Counties	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Cache, Box Elder	121	181	302	40.1
Davis, Weber	342	401	743	46.0
Salt Lake	2243	2716	4959	45.2
Summit, Wasatch	237	254	491	48.3
Utah	191	257	448	42.6
Tooele, Sanpete, Carbon	29	31	60	48.3
Iron, Sevier, Grand, Garfield, and Wayne	69	52	121	57.0
Washington, San Juan, and Kane	113	100	213	53.1
Missing	49	25	74	66.2
Total	**3394**	**4017**	**7411**	**45.8**

Table 5 shows that Cache and Box Elder counties combined have with the lowest percentage of female board members in nonprofit agencies at 40%, while nonprofits in Iron, Sevier, Grant, Garfield, and Wayne counties top the list with a 57% average representation of female board members. Although the percentages are grouped together in the table, there are no significant statistical differences between these counties and regions.

Table 6: Utah Nonprofit Board Members Gender and Classification

Classification	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Arts, Culture, and Humanities	641	750	1391	46.1
Children's Services	253	252	505	50.1
Education	458	560	1018	45.0
Environment and Animals	236	299	535	44.1
Health	389	481	870	44.7
Human Services	731	830	1561	46.8
Other	670	836	1506	44.5
Missing	16	9	25	64.0
Total	**3394**	**4017**	**7411**	**45.8**

As previously mentioned, national reports note that women are more likely to serve on nonprofit boards of smaller arts, cultural, health, human services, environmental, or educational organizations. In the Utah data, however, there was not a statistically significant difference in the presence of female board members among the classifications analyzed (see Table 6). Interestingly, the majority of the nonprofits analyzed in Utah *were* the types of organizations mentioned as having boards with a higher female presence nationally.

Conclusion

In summary, this study finds that Utah is close to national averages in terms of the presence of women as chief executives (4.2% lower than nation) and board members of nonprofit organizations (0.8% higher than nation). It is also clear that Utah agencies led by women also have more female board members. Utah also mirrors national data in terms of having higher percentages of female leaders (chief executives and board members) in nonprofit organizations that have smaller budgets. Clearly, there is a significantly higher percentage of women in formal leadership roles within nonprofits than other sectors within the state (e.g., politics, higher education, public education, business).

Why are Utah women drawn to leadership within nonprofit organizations? Although there are many reasons, this brief will address two. First, research has shown that women often have different motivations to lead than men. Among a host of other motives for leadership roles,[14] women are more often draw to opportunities where they can envision themselves or their organizations helping people in need, giving a voice to those who are not being heard, serving the community more broadly, and overall making a difference in people's lives. Of course, individuals can do this in many ways and for many types of organizations or groups, but the nonprofit sector is often the most direct *fit* with the leadership motives of many Utah women. Second, another emerging area of leadership research now focuses on "leadership calling." Initial findings show that women are more likely to step forward to lead if they feel called to do so. *Calling* may or may not be related to

spirituality, but either way it tends to include a feeling that leading in a particular organization or for a specific effort or initiative is something they have been *made to* or *prepared to* do. Women are more likely to step forward to lead when they feel that it is their responsibility to do so—that their gifts and talents can be useful for important purposes. Some initial studies on calling have found that this sense of vocation is a particularly strong motivator for women.[15]

There are many rewards for those who choose to work, volunteer, and lead within Utah nonprofit organizations today. Often these may not relate to financial gains, but rather focus on the internal satisfaction of knowing their voices and efforts have helped to make a difference in people's lives. Women continue to play an important role in doing nonprofit leadership throughout the state of Utah.

1 Chu, A., & Pasner, C. (2013). *The state of women in America: A 50-state analysis of how women are faring across the nation*. Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/StateOfWomen-4.pdf
2 Lennon, T. (2013). Benchmarking women's leadership in the United States. University of Denver—Colorado Women's College. Retrieved from http://www.womenscollege.du.edu/bwl/
3 O'Neill, M. (2002). Nonprofit nation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
4 BoardSource (2012, September). Nonprofit Governance Index 2012: Data Report 1—CEO Survey of BoardSource Members. Washington, DC.
5 GuideStar (2013). *2013 GuideStar Nonprofit Compensation Report*. Retrieved from https://www.guidestar.org/downloadable-files/2013CompReport-sample.pdf
6 McCambridge, R. (2013, September 17). GuideStart compensation report: Gender gap in nonprofit pay persists. Retrieved from http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/policysocial-context/22913-guidestar-compensation-report-gender-gap-in-nonprofit-pay-persists.html
7 United Way (2011). *2010 human capital study results* [Webinar held in December 2011].
8 Lemon T. (2013)
9 These numbers and percentage slightly vary because of missing county data from some nonprofits in the sample.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ostrower, F. (2007). Nonprofit governance in the United States: Findings on performance and accountability from the first national representative study. The Urban Institute: Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy. Retrieved from https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/46516/411479-Nonprofit-Governance-in-the-United-States.PDF
13 Ibid. (p. 19).
14 Madsen, S. R. (2007). *On becoming a woman leaders: Learning from the experiences of university presidents*. Jossey Bass.
15 Longman, K., Dahlvig, J., Wikkerink, R., Cunningham, D., & O'Conner, C. M. (2011). Conceptualization of calling: A grounded theory exploration of CCCU women leaders. *Christian Higher Education, 10*(3-4), 254-275.

Authors: Dr. Susan R. Madsen (Orin R. Woodbury Professor of Leadership & Ethics, Utah Valley University), D. Candice Backus, Glaucia Jones, and Brian Fischer (Research Assistants, Utah Valley University).
For questions and information: uwlp@usu.edu or www.utwomen.org