



# Office on the Economic Status of Women

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Women Business Ownership in Minnesota
- Spotlight issues of the month: Human Trafficking Prevention, Cervical Cancer Awareness
- Women in Corporate Leadership
- Reading List

# WOMEN'S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

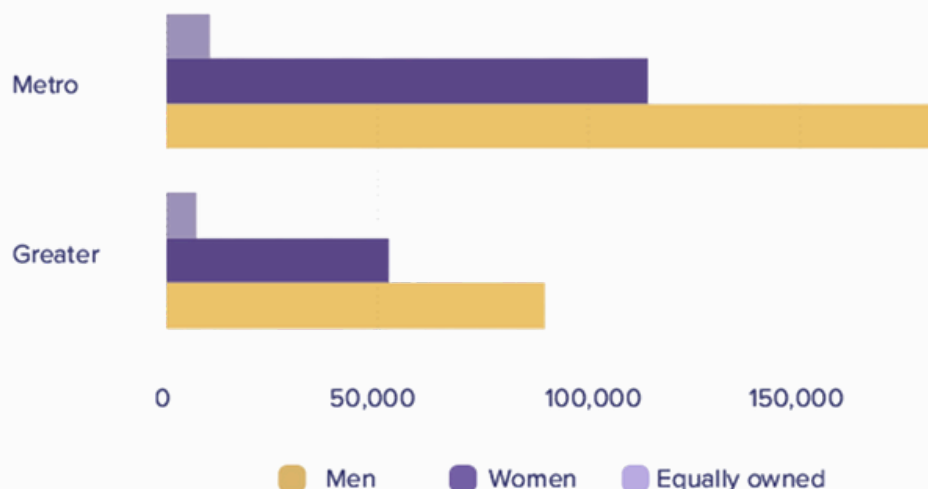
We've just released our latest report: Women's Business Ownership in Minnesota, updating data from our 2006 fact sheet as well as adding a variety of new data on specific industries where women owned businesses are thriving. Check out the full report [here](#), or read below for some highlights.

**37%** percent of employer and non-employer businesses in Minnesota are owned by women, compared to **40%** owned by women in the greater United States. Minnesota ranks **41<sup>st</sup>** in the number of women-owned businesses per capita, but **28<sup>th</sup>** in sales and revenue of women-owned businesses per capita. Overall, women owned businesses in Minnesota contribute **\$43 billion** in sales, value of shipments or revenue to Minnesota's economy.

Greater and Metro Minnesota have similar rates of women's business ownership when compared to their respective totals, at **37%** women-owned for metro Minnesota, and **35%** for greater Minnesota.

Dominant industries for women's business ownership tend to be professional, scientific and technical services (NAICS 54), health care and social assistance (NAICS 62), and in the category of "other services," (NAICS 81) which includes laundromats and beauty salons, with these industries being the top three for both employer businesses and non-employer business. Industries like real estate (NAICS 53) and educational services (NAICS 61) make up a significant amount of women-owned non-employer businesses, but very few employer businesses. In contrast, finance and insurance (NAICS 52) and wholesale trade (NAICS 42) make up a significant chunk of women-owned employer businesses, but are much less common among non-employer businesses.

Read the [full report](#) for a more in-depth breakdown of women's business ownership across industries, and how these concentrations vary across race.



## SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

### Human Trafficking Prevention

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Human trafficking is defined as the exploitation of a person for the purpose of compelled labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. This can include recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining through the use of force, physical threats, psychological coercion, abuse of the legal process, a scheme, plan or pattern intended to hold a person in fear of serious harm. Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking, but young people living in poverty, with a disability, chemical or substance dependency, history of abuse, and lack of support or unstable home environments are particularly vulnerable. Human trafficking can occur in any city or community of any size.

Minnesota has comprehensive and specific legislation to prevent sex trafficking. [Safe Harbor Minnesota](#) ensures that youth who engage in prostitution cannot be considered criminals under the law. [No Wrong Door](#) provides resources and education across state agencies to provide youth with victim centered trauma-informed services and safe housing. While these specific initiatives focus on youth because of their unique vulnerability to trafficking, labor and sex trafficking are illegal for everyone ([Sec. 609.218](#), [Sec. 609.284](#)) and age nor consent are valid defenses. If you or someone you know is at risk of or experiencing trafficking, help is available at the National Human Trafficking Hotline at [1-888-373-7888](tel:1-888-373-7888).

### Cervical Cancer Awareness

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Cervical cancer is most often diagnosed in people with cervixes aged 40-54, but regular screenings are important at all ages. Between 2018 and 2022, 797 Minnesotans were diagnosed with cervical cancer.

Learn more about cervical cancer in Minnesota at the Department of Health's factsheet [here](#).



The American College of Gynecologists [recommends](#) that women ages 21-29 have a pap test every 3 years, women age 30-65 have either a pap test and an HPV test every 5 years, a pap test alone every 3 years, or a HPV test alone every 5 years. Women over 65 can stop having cervical cancer screenings if they have never had abnormal cervical cells or cervical cancer, and they've had 2-3 negative screening tests in a row. While the guidelines have changed in recent years to be less frequent, the ACOG still encourages yearly ob-gyn visits.

Due for a pap test but struggling to pay? The Sage Program can help pay for routine cervical cancer screenings for eligible people between 30-64. Call 1-888-643-2584 or visit their [website](#) for more information.

## WOMEN IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

50/50 Women on Boards has come out with their 2025 key findings [report](#) summarizing the state of gender parity in corporate boards. Their analysis found that women continue to hold **30.1%** of board seats, which is **0.03%** lower than the beginning of the year's peak of **30.4%**. Women of color hold **7.6%** of board seats, which also decreased from **7.7%** from Q1 2025. Minnesota leads the nation just behind Washington in board seat gender equity, with **33.3%** of women on boards, a number that did not change from the previous quarter.

A new article in [Fortune](#) also touches on the recent stall in representation of women among Fortune 500 CEOs. In 2023, the number of women CEOs in the Fortune 500 reached a milestone of **10%**, and it peaked even further in June 2025 at **11%** with 55 of 500.

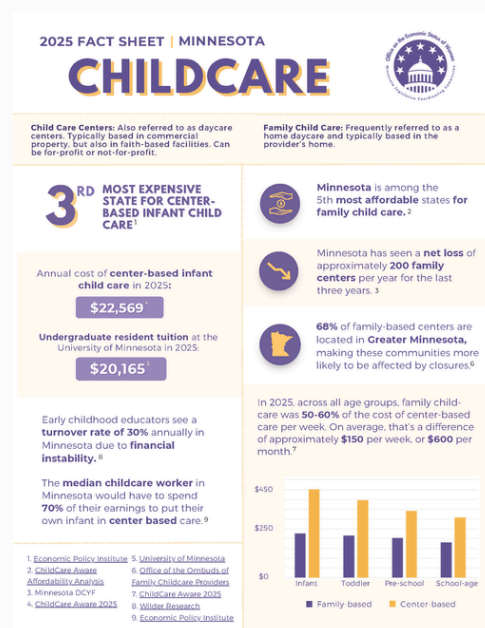
As of December 2025, that number fell to 52, though it is expected to increase again in 2026. Despite the small gains, the number of women CEO's has plateaued in the past few years, not seeing the significant yearly gains that marked the 2000's to 2022. Jane Edison Stevenson, global vice chair of board and CEO services at an organizational consulting firm, speculates to Fortune that many companies have dismantled "formal, centralized leadership development programs" that once helped women ascend to the top of the ladder due to "cost and delayed pay-off and because talent job-hops more than it used to". As the current generation of women executives age out and retire, there may be less avenues for younger generations of women in corporate to take their place.

## CHILDCARE COST UPDATE 2025

As 2025 came to a close, we updated childcare costs and data for our Childcare factsheet.

In 2025, Minnesota became the 3<sup>rd</sup> most expensive state for center-based childcare in the United States. However, it remains the 5<sup>th</sup> most affordable state for family childcare.

Learn more about how center-based and family based costs compare across Minnesota with the new fact sheet [on our website](#).



# CHILDCARE LICENSING GUIDELINES

The Department of Children, Youth and Families 2026 report to the legislature on Child Care Regulation Modernization has been released, addressing revised licensing standards, a new Weighted Risk System, and the requirements for implementations of these new suggestions.

According to the report, "the proposed licensing standards modernize Minnesota's regulatory framework for childcare centers and family child care by consolidating the existing rules and statutes and aligning them with current health, safety, and best practice requirements. While many foundational protections remain, the proposal introduces several key changes intended to strengthen safeguards, improve clarity, and simplify compliance."

[Read the full report.](#)

## READING LIST

[50/50 Women on Boards Gender Diversity Index 2025](#)

[Women made up nearly all of the job losses this month. Here's why.](#)

[Strength training is crucial after menopause. How to make the most of your workouts](#)

[Women's Economic Security Act Annual Report 2025](#)

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