



WORK-LIFE BALANCE, SCHEDULE
FLEXIBILITY, & BARRIERS TO ACCESS:
WHAT VERMONTERS ARE SAYING
& WHAT THE DATA SAYS

LISTENING PROJECT



In the spring of 2018, Vermont Commission on Women undertook a year-long qualitative data-gathering initiative, “the Listening Project”. The Project included various events during which VCW Commissioners and community members gathered to share and reflect on their experiences of living in Vermont, as well as a 16-question online survey. These efforts were designed to collect information and stories about challenges confronting Vermont women and their communities. With data from over 2,000 survey respondents and event participants, we are sharing the project’s results and stories to highlight the unique challenges and experiences Vermont women shared; these compelling anecdotes, combined with the recent data tell a powerful story. Here we highlight the stories respondents shared about their experiences related to work-life balance, schedule flexibility and access barriers in the state.

The survey asked Vermonters to respond to: “What do you think has the biggest effect on a woman’s ability to have enough money to take care of herself and her family in your community?”, here are some answers we received:

“Affordable childcare and a job with flexibility. These are 2 of the reasons I’ve decided not to pursue motherhood.”

-Addison county woman between 25 and 34

“Women in partnership with men are doing better than those not. For those not - flexible work schedule, employer understanding of family needs, so she can keep a decent-paying job for the long term.”

-Lamoille county woman between 35 and 44

“Being a mom is a full time job and then you add in a full-time job that does not pay enough to support your family and that can be flexible when there are school holidays, snow days or the children are sick.”

-Rutland county woman between 45 and 54

“Wanting a healthy balance of work and home life . Not being able to spend as much time with my kids as I would like but financially support them at the same time.”

-Windsor county woman between 35 and 44

“Cost of childcare. I could do certain self-care things (like go to therapy) if I had affordable childcare available. Since I don't have affordable childcare available, I have to find after hours therapy or my husband has to take off work so I can go. I have opted not to go because my husband has a demanding job and I haven't found a good therapist I can see later in the evenings.”

-Washington county woman between 25 and 34

What the data says about work-life balance and scheduling barriers in Vermont:

- 65% of all adult women in Vermont participate in the labor force. This is eight points higher than the national average for women.ⁱ
 - Nearly 80% of Vermont women who work, do so full-time.ⁱⁱ
- Women are at least four times more likely than men to reduce their hours or leave the workforce for a period of time to care for children or an aging family member.ⁱⁱⁱ



DATA

ⁱ Change the Story, “2019 Status Report: Women, Work, and Wages in Vermont,” 2019, <https://changethestoryvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/WomenWorkWages2019.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Change the Story.

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