

When Women Rise, Nevada Rises

Changing the Story for Women. Changing the State for Nevadans.

For more than 40 years, Nevada Women's Fund (NWF) has proven that investing in women changes lives, uplifts families, transforms workplaces, and elevates communities across Nevada. Through sustained commitment to women's education, workforce advancement, leadership visibility, and employer engagement, NWF has helped thousands of women access opportunities once out of reach.

When Women Rise, Nevada Rises builds on this legacy by applying expanded, innovative narrative strategies to address long-standing challenges that continue to limit women's opportunities and constrain Nevada's economic potential. These challenges include persistent underrepresentation of women in higher-wage and core industries, entrenched wage inequities, limited visibility of women's leadership—particularly in rural communities—and outdated assumptions about who belongs in Nevada's workforce and how economic value is defined. Recognizing that sustainable progress requires more than effective programs and sound policies, this work focuses on the fundamental beliefs and narratives that shape opportunity, access, and advancement. It represents a bold evolution of NWF's impact, leveraging credibility earned over four decades to reshape belief systems that have suppressed women's economic participation and, in doing so, have limited Nevada's ability to fully compete, grow, and thrive.

For decades, a negative national narrative has taken hold about the Silver State. This perception labels Nevada as “at the bottom of everything.” Rooted in rankings that consistently place the state near the lowest nationally across measures of opportunity and well-being, this view has shaped how others value Nevada and its people. As a result, businesses, investors, and federal decision-makers are more likely to view Nevada as a lower economic priority, influencing where capital, opportunity, and federal resources flow. Nevada has consequently lagged behind other states in securing federal grant funding, ranking near the bottom nationally in federal grants per capita. The cycle of underinvestment reinforces the very conditions used to justify overlooking Nevada, while eroding confidence in Nevada's potential.

And yet, the data underscore the urgency of investment—not its absence:

- Nevada ranks **47th in educational attainment**
- **50th overall** in *Education Week's Chance-for-Success Index*, reflecting limited opportunity across a Nevadan's lifespan
- **46th in adult outcomes tied to workforce participation and postsecondary attainment.**
- **12.3%** of adult Nevadans **lack a high school diploma**

Nevada's challenges in health, economic security, and opportunity are also well documented:

- Nevada ranks **46th** for overall health system performance, reflecting poor access, outcomes, and equity.
- **47th** in economic conditions
- **38th overall** on composite socioeconomic measures assessing financial stability, income security, and economic power.

These structural challenges fall especially hard on women:

- Women in Nevada working full-time earn approximately **85 cents for every dollar men earn**. When part-time and low-wage work is included, women's earnings drop to roughly **73 cents on the dollar**.
- **42% of Hispanic women** and **34% of Black women** in Nevada earn less than **\$17 per hour**, reflecting deep and persistent racial wage gaps.
- Despite making up a significant share of the workforce, women remain **underrepresented in higher-wage roles** and **overrepresented in low-wage and unstable employment**.
- As a result, **16% of women in Nevada live in poverty**, a higher rate than men, signaling ongoing economic vulnerability tied directly to wage inequity and limited access to opportunity.

Over time, these data normalize underperformance and obscure the assets already present in Nevada's people, industries, and communities—particularly the unrealized economic potential of women and girls. The result is a self-perpetuating cycle in which low expectations limit opportunity, inequitable systems suppress women's advancement, and constrained opportunity reinforces the narrative that Nevada, and Nevada women, cannot do better.

This narrative must change, and our work at NWF demonstrates that such change is possible. Since our founding in 1982, NWF has advanced women's economic participation and leadership by pairing direct investment with public visibility, employer engagement, and cross-sector collaboration. We know that when women are recognized, invested in, and connected to opportunity, families stabilize, workplaces strengthen, and communities benefit.

Women are not a marginal workforce population in Nevada. We are central to families, community stability, and long-term economic growth. **When women rise, families rise. When families rise, communities rise. When communities rise, Nevada rises.**

NWF'S DEMONSTRATED IMPACT AND LEADERSHIP

NWF already functions as a narrative changemaker and institutional influencer across Nevada through integrated, measurable impact:

Education and Economic Mobility at Scale

NWF has awarded more than \$5.8 million to Nevada women pursuing post-secondary education, credentialing, and workforce training. More than **35% of recipients are from rural Nevada**, directly shifting economic trajectories in communities with limited access to opportunity. These investments consistently translate into workforce entry, career advancement, and increased family stability.

Employer Behavior and Culture Change

Through our **Best Places for Women to Work** and **International Women's Day** initiatives, we engage **120+ employers annually**, influencing how organizations assess pay equity, advancement pathways, leadership representation, and workplace culture. Employers actively use NWF data, benchmarks, and guidance to revise policies, recruitment practices, and internal messaging—demonstrating measurable change driven by our work.

Public Visibility of Women's Leadership Across Industries

Our **Salute to Women of Achievement** annual event elevates women leaders from healthcare, education, public service, business, trades, and rural industries before **1,300+ business and community leaders**. These platforms directly counter narrow narratives about who leads, whose work matters, and what economic contribution looks like.

Trusted Industry and Government Partnerships

NWF maintains long-standing, trusted relationships with leaders in top industries, as well as formal and informal partnerships with the Governor's Office, Department of Economic Development, Department of Education, Department of Labor, and Department of Agriculture. These partnerships position NWF as a credible bridge between women's lived experience and the institutions that shape workforce pipelines, training systems, and economic strategy.

Statewide and Rural Credibility

Through scholarships, employer engagement, convenings, and community partnerships, NWF operates across urban and rural Nevada, with a consistent presence in all 15 rural counties. This research ensures narrative accuracy and inclusion in a state where rural economies are central to long-term growth.

WHAT WE ARE AIMING TO CHANGE

Our strategy to shift Nevada's narrative about women in the workplace is intentionally grounded in the state's three dominant industries: mining, manufacturing, and agriculture. These sectors form the economic backbone of Nevada—particularly in rural communities—providing a significant share of the state's stable, well-paid jobs. Yet they are also historically male-dominated fields that influence who is seen as belonging, who is recruited, and whose work is recognized as

economically valuable. As a result, many women—especially young and rural women—do not see themselves as miners, manufacturers, or agricultural leaders. At the same time, these industries too often fail to recognize women as essential contributors to growth, innovation, and long-term workforce resilience. **This is not a lack of talent or interest. It is a narrative gap.**

By changing how women’s contributions and potential are understood within these foundational industries, we believe Nevada can trigger a ripple effect—reshaping perceptions across the broader economy and driving a lasting shift in how opportunity, investment, and leadership are defined statewide.

THREE REINFORCING PATHS FOR NARRATIVE CHANGE

To address this gap, **When Women Rise, Nevada Rises** integrates three reinforcing components:

1. Statewide Narrative & Public Information Campaign

Nevada Women’s Fund will partner directly with leaders across mining, manufacturing, and agriculture—supported by long-standing relationships with key state agencies—to lead a coordinated, multi-year narrative shift that repositions women as essential contributors to Nevada’s core industries and economic future. This work will engage employers, industry leaders, state agencies, educators, and media partners through high-visibility platforms, employer narrative toolkits, research-informed messaging, and public convenings. Together, these efforts will influence how industries recruit, retain, advance, and communicate about women’s contributions.

This approach is grounded in the understanding that changing outcomes at scale requires changing the story at scale. A statewide narrative shift cannot rely on a single channel or moment; it must be multi-platform, sustained, and credible—reaching women, employers, policymakers, educators, families, and communities simultaneously.

The **When Women Rise, Nevada Rises** campaign is designed as a public information and education initiative, not a traditional marketing effort. Its purpose is not to promote a brand, event, or organization, but to fundamentally shift how women’s value, contribution, and belonging are understood within Nevada’s workforce and economy.

At its core, the campaign will consistently reinforce three interconnected ideas:

- Women are essential contributors to Nevada’s economy.
- Women belong in every sector of Nevada’s workforce, including its core industries.
- Nevada’s economic future depends on fully valuing and activating women’s talent.

To reach diverse audiences effectively, the campaign will use a layered mix of platforms, including earned media and public storytelling; digital and social platforms; employer and industry channels; education and workforce systems; and community-based networks, ensuring both urban and rural reach.

The campaign will launch with clear framing and shared language, anchored in the tagline **When Women Rise, Nevada Rises**, and supported by data that illustrates current conditions for women and Nevada’s economy; stories that demonstrate women’s contributions across industries and communities; and messaging that connects women’s workforce participation to family stability, community resilience, and statewide prosperity.

Stories are not treated as testimonials or awareness tools. They function as narrative infrastructure—used as qualitative data, employer learning tools, public information, and research-informed messaging that reshapes how value, leadership, and opportunity are defined. By saturating workplaces, industry communications, public events, media, research, rural community channels, and government-aligned messaging simultaneously, this initiative ensures that narrative change is visible, credible, and durable.

Importantly, this campaign is designed to invite participation, not just consumption. Employers, educators, and community leaders will be encouraged to adopt and reinforce the narrative in their own communications, policies, and practices, ensuring that the story of women’s value in Nevada’s economy is not only heard but sustained.

2. Industry Partnership & Narrative Change Initiative

In parallel with the statewide narrative and public information campaign, Nevada Women's Fund will lead an industry-anchored effort to shift how women and Nevada's core industries—**mining, manufacturing, and agriculture**—see one another. While these sectors share common workforce challenges, each carries its own distinct narratives about who belongs, whose work is valued, and what leadership looks like. Addressing these differences is essential to changing participation and outcomes.

This initiative is designed as an iterative, relationship-driven process. Nevada Women's Fund will work with industry partners, employers, educators, community leaders, and women across urban and rural Nevada to define the specific narratives operating within each industry and to develop messaging that directly counters long-standing beliefs that limit women's inclusion.

Industry-Specific Narrative Focus

Working in partnership with industry leaders and communities, NWF will identify and address the unique narrative barriers within each sector, including:

- **Mining**
Narratives that frame mining as physically incompatible with women, unsafe, or culturally unwelcoming; limited visibility of women in technical, operational, and leadership roles; and assumptions that women are short-term or peripheral contributors rather than long-term workforce partners.
- **Manufacturing**
Narratives that position manufacturing as outdated, rigid, or inaccessible to women; misperceptions about required skills and advancement pathways; and limited recognition of women's roles in innovation, quality control, operations, and leadership.
- **Agriculture**
Narratives that narrowly define agricultural leadership as male, land-owning, or generational; underrecognition of women's roles in farm management, agribusiness, science, and support services; and rural norms that obscure women's economic contribution to agricultural systems.

Defining Narrative Barriers Through Partnership

Rather than presuming solutions, Nevada Women's Fund will work collaboratively with industry partners and women to surface:

- The beliefs—spoken and unspoken—that shape recruitment, advancement, and retention
- The signals sent through language, imagery, workplace norms, and community expectations
- Where perception diverges from lived experience and opportunity

This process ensures narrative change is grounded in reality, credibility, and shared ownership.

Developing Counter-Narratives and Messaging

From this work, NWF will co-develop industry-specific messaging and stories that:

- Reflect real women's experiences and contributions
- Highlight employers and workplaces where inclusion is already strengthening outcomes
- Position women as capable, ready, and essential economic partners

These stories function as narrative infrastructure—used across employer communications, education and workforce systems, community channels, and public platforms to reinforce new expectations consistently and visibly.

Changing Industry Narratives Within Communities

Narrative change will be reinforced where these industries live and operate—within workplaces, supply chains, training systems, and the rural and urban communities that depend on them. By aligning messaging across recruitment, internal communications, education pathways, and local media, this initiative ensures that women see viable opportunities and that industries see women as indispensable to workforce resilience and economic growth.

Together, these industry-specific narrative shifts strengthen the broader statewide story—ensuring that changes in belief translate into real inclusion, participation, and long-term opportunity across Nevada’s core industries.

3. Statewide Expansion and Scaling of Nevada Women’s Fund’s Women of Achievement Ecosystem

Nevada Women’s Fund will scale its proven Women of Achievement (WOA) ecosystem as a central driver of statewide narrative change. For more than 40 years, this interconnected set of programs—visibility and celebration, workforce and education support, leadership convenings, and data-driven research—has reshaped how women’s contributions are seen, valued, and invested in across Nevada. Together, they function as a durable narrative system that elevates women’s leadership, normalizes women’s economic participation, and demonstrates the return on investing in women.

A Proven Model with Measurable Impact

NWF’s impact provides a strong foundation for expansion:

- More than 2,000 women have received educational support
- Nearly 1,500 degrees conferred, translating into workforce entry, advancement, and increased economic stability
- New workforce-ready programming expands impact beyond degree pathways into credentials and industry-aligned training

WIN funds will not support scholarships directly. Instead, they will enable these proven programs to expand beyond Northwest Nevada and reach women, employers, and communities statewide.

What Scales—and Why It Matters

The WOA ecosystem shifts narrative through repeated, credible signals across multiple platforms:

- **Visibility & Leadership Redefined**
Women of Achievement events—including *Salute to Women of Achievement* and *Celebrating Achievement*—publicly redefine who leads and whose work matters. By honoring women across industries, geographies, and career paths, these events counter narrow definitions of leadership and normalize women’s presence in economic decision-making.
- **Workforce & Education as Narrative Signals**
NWF’s education, workforce development, and degree-seeking programs send a consistent message: women’s advancement is a smart investment in Nevada’s economy. Scaling these programs reinforces women as capable, prepared contributors while aligning talent development with industry and workforce needs.
- **Data, Story, and Public Understanding**
Platforms such as *She Shapes Nevada* and the *State of Women Report* connect individual women’s experiences to statewide data on education, workforce participation, health, and economic security. Together, they provide policymakers, employers, and educators with credible, Nevada-specific evidence that links women’s advancement to broader economic outcomes.

Scaling What Works—Statewide

Expanded together, these programs create a reinforcing cycle:

- Visibility fuels aspiration and belonging
- Opportunity pathways translate belief into action
- Data and research anchor progress in evidence
- Funding partnerships to keep education and workforce development dollars FROM communities and industries IN communities and industries.

WIN funding allows NWF to extend this integrated ecosystem into rural and underserved regions across the state, ensuring that narrative change is consistent, inclusive, and sustained, rather than episodic or regionally limited. By scaling what has already been proven, Nevada Women's Fund strengthens the connective tissue between visibility, opportunity, and economic participation. As women are seen, supported, and celebrated across Nevada, expectations shift—within industries, communities, and institutions—reinforcing the central truth of this initiative: when women rise, Nevada rises.

WHY THIS WORK, AND WHY NEVADA WOMEN'S FUND

Nevada Women's Fund is uniquely positioned to lead this work because we are not testing a theory—we are scaling a role we have already proven. For more than 40 years, NWF has demonstrated how sustained investment, public visibility, employer engagement, and cross-sector partnership can shift beliefs, expand opportunity, and produce measurable economic impact for women and communities across Nevada.

This initiative builds directly on NWF's established strengths: trusted relationships with industry and government, deep credibility in both urban and rural communities, and a track record of translating women's lived experience into systems-level influence. We understand that changing outcomes requires changing narratives—and that narrative change must be credible, inclusive, and reinforced across institutions, workplaces, and communities to endure.

If funded, *When Women Rise, Nevada Rises* will create a replicable model for how narrative change—rooted in industry partnership, cross-sector collaboration, and lived experience—can unlock women's economic participation at scale. By aligning belief, visibility, and opportunity, this work has the potential to strengthen families, increase workforce resilience, and reposition Nevada from a state defined by low rankings to one recognized for leadership, opportunity, and inclusive economic growth.