

THE WHITE HOUSE  
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**FACT SHEET: THE EQUAL FUTURES PARTNERSHIP AND UNITED STATES COMMITMENTS TO EXPAND WOMEN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**

While the world has made significant strides in expanding opportunity for women and girls, continued inequalities remain, particularly in the areas of women's political participation and economic opportunity. Growing bodies of evidence show that women's political and economic empowerment are critical to fostering international peace and security, growing vibrant market economies, and supporting open and accountable governance. Recognizing these urgent concerns, President Obama issued a challenge at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2011 to address key barriers in these areas.

In response, the United States has come together with 12 other founding partner countries to launch the Equal Futures Partnership with the support of key multilateral partners including UN Women and the World Bank, as well as leading businesses and non-profit organizations. Building on existing priorities of the Administration, the United States and its private sector collaborators are announcing new initiatives in response to the President's call to action.

**OPENING DOORS TO QUALITY EDUCATION AND HIGH-PAYING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH**

Women employed in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields earn on average 33 percent more than their non-STEM counterparts, but they represent only one-quarter of all workers in these sectors. As one way to address this disparity, the Administration intends to take new steps to expand workplace flexibility policies at select science and technology (S&T) agencies. Additionally, the U.S., in collaboration with private and non-profit stakeholders, is announcing a number of new steps, including:

**Improving data collection and dissemination:** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) intend to compile data on women's participation in selected Federal S&T programs, including to identify any disparities.

**Building the skilled mentor pool:** The Department of Energy will expand women in STEM mentoring efforts to office sites across the country, the National Science Foundation (NSF) will connect its scientists with opportunities to mentor girls, and the Environmental Protection Agency will work with organizations to encourage STEM mentoring for college women.

Harvey Mudd College and Piazza who launch [WitsOn](#), a 6-week online program connecting students with leading female mentors from industry and academia. Additionally, Causecast, a technology firm offering online tools for corporate volunteering, will launch GIT Inspired!, a campaign supporting girls in technology.

**Encouraging research-based STEM teaching:** Discovery Education will announce the development of S ♀ EM POWER!, a program dedicated to tapping into girls' passions, interests, and capabilities, while empowering them with the tools to succeed in STEM fields.

**Broadening access to online/mobile STEM skills training:** Connect2Compete, a nonprofit launched by the Federal Communications Commission, will expand outreach efforts to include specific collaboration with women & girl-serving groups. NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey will each pursue new efforts to include natural disaster data in educational materials to highlight real world applications of STEM – an essential link for women and girls.

Finally, Creative Commons and the Open CourseWare Consortium will establish a task force to investigate the impact of STEM-related open educational resources on girls.

## **PROMOTING CIVIC EDUCATION AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP FOR GIRLS**

In the U.S., women are underrepresented at every level of government, from city halls to Congress. To inspire girls to serve as leaders in our democracy, the Administration and private and non-profit sector leaders are announcing the following:

**Promoting civic education and highlighting women in public leadership as role models:** The White House and the Department of Education, working with the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, will further the Obama Administration's efforts to support civic education opportunities for women and girls. CAWP will launch a new initiative featuring a speakers' bureau of women elected and appointed officials, as well as online educational resources to help

young people learn more about government and the roles women play as public leaders. As part of its broader efforts to expand civic learning opportunities, the Administration intends to host a conference on civic education highlighting efforts like CAWP's that promote civic engagement and will provide advice to CAWP as they establish this new project.

**Encouraging the development of digital tools that promote public leadership and civic education for girls:** The White House Council on Women and Girls is launching an app challenge to spur the development of web and mobile phone-based applications that inspire girls to serve as leaders in our democracy.

**Spurring research on girls and leadership:** Dove plans to launch a new study on girls' perceptions of leadership, building on its campaign to build girls' self-esteem.

## **BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AND ENSURING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE**

Domestic violence has been estimated to cost our nation \$8 billion a year in lost productivity and health care costs alone, and some studies have suggested that the full economic impact is much higher. Domestic violence and other forms of abuse can also stand in the way of women achieving economic independence. To address these challenges, the Administration announces the following efforts:

**Ensuring fair workplaces for victims of abuse:** As many as one-third of domestic violence survivors report losing their jobs as a result of domestic violence. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) will coordinate with its field offices to provide training to state and territorial domestic violence coalitions on the application of federal employment discrimination laws to victims of domestic violence.

**Increasing financial capability for victims of abuse:** The Departments of Treasury, HHS and Justice are working on collaborative efforts to assist victims with credit counseling, consumer rights, asset building and financial education.

**New data on domestic violence and economic dependence:** The Departments of Treasury and Justice will collaborate on a research agenda to examine the economic effects of violence in women's lives and improve data collection in this area.

**Breaking the cycle of violence by reaching young women:** Bringing the public and private sectors together to intervene early in domestic violence can help young women secure a better future. To that end, we applaud the work of Mary

Kay Inc., which will contribute 1 million dollars as the lead sponsor of [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)'s "text for help" service – the nation's first such program, designed to help young people with healthy dating and relationships. Since September 2011, [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) has responded to more than 30,000 texts and online requests for help.

## **EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Investing in women entrepreneurs is an essential part of the President's plan to create an economy built to last. Between 1997 and 2007, women-owned companies in the U.S grew at nearly twice the rate of all privately held U.S. firms, adding roughly 500,000 jobs. Yet, many women entrepreneurs have difficulty accessing the tools, financing, and networks they need to start and grow their own businesses. The Administration is announcing new steps to further support women entrepreneurs, including:

**Expanding entrepreneurship training opportunities for women veterans, youth, and women aged 50+:** In 2013, the Small Business Administration (SBA) intends to expand [Operation Boots to Business](#) to offer over 40,000 transitioning women service members the opportunity to access knowledge, tools, and resources needed to evaluate and succeed in entrepreneurship as they transition back into the civilian workforce. Additionally, **Start Young** ~ a partnership between SBA and the Department of Labor, will provide young adults with fundamental knowledge about small business opportunities and resources available to promote economic self-sufficiency ~ will expand the number of cities in which it operates in. Finally, the [Encore Entrepreneurship](#) partnership between the SBA and AARP will give women the tools to start new ventures in midlife and beyond through targeted training materials that take into account their different financial needs and opportunities.

**Promoting women in innovation:** The Small Business Innovation and Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs at SBA represent approximately \$2.5 billion in federal funding of R&D specifically targeted to small businesses. Following a convening of key stakeholders later this year, Federal agencies will set goals to meaningfully increase the participation of women-owned small businesses and women principal investigators in these programs.

## **ADDITIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITMENTS:**

To advance the goals of the Equal Futures Partnership, we are collaborating with multilateral stakeholders and the private sector to help countries strengthen and implement their efforts. In addition to the non-governmental initiatives described above, new private sector efforts also include:

**Bringing together women and technology:** Intel Corporation and Ashoka are partnering to inspire entrepreneurship and promote solutions that equip girls and women around the globe with innovative technologies. This partnership includes Intel's sponsorship of Ashoka fellows and a Changemakers competition focused on women and girls in technology.

Intel Corporation is also partnering with the State Department and UN Women to launch a new study focused on the gender and technology divide. The report is the first of its kind focused on assessing the gap in technology use, particularly the Internet, between women and men.

**Closing the girls' education gap abroad:** Working to close the girls' education gap in some of the world's most under-resourced communities, Discovery Communications is creating educational video content with, for and about girls, as well as innovative teacher training.

**Helping women entrepreneurs access new markets:** Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* and WEConnect International are collaborating to ensure that successful women entrepreneurs are able to access new markets for sustained business growth. Over the coming year, Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* and WEConnect will collaborate in India to develop and implement an online access to markets training designed for graduates of the *10,000 Women* program.

**Expanding Private Sector Efforts:** The Clinton Global Initiative will work with CGI America participants to further the Equal Futures U.S. domestic priority areas of entrepreneurship and STEM education through CGI's Commitment to Action model.

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