

AAUW Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance

At-a-Glance



What is the program?

A Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance provides a forum that assembles local members of AAUW and your community to address the importance of policies that allow workers to balance the responsibilities of work and family, which is a crucial tool for equitable access and advancement in employment for women. This program provides advice, guidelines, and links to resources to help you set up a successful public event on a meaningful subject. The program provides the following instructions and advice:

- Statement of AAUW's position on balancing work and family responsibilities
- The goals for the summit
- A step-by-step planning guide
- A leader checklist
- A planning checklist

How will this program benefit your state or branch and community?

The Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance program in a box is designed to help AAUW branches or states plan and deliver programming and advocacy at the grassroots level and generate awareness of work/life issues in your community. Such programs provide benefits to your AAUW branch such as:

- Advocacy and education about an important AAUW issue
- Increased awareness and promotion of work/life balance issues and policies
- Visibility as a community leader and powerful advocate for women
- Membership recruitment opportunities
- Ability to establish new partnerships

How can you implement this program?

Use the Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance program in a box to conduct a successful presentation, discussion, and/or advocacy event in your community. Download the components of the box and follow the program guide and customize the setup for your own use. The program box contains:

- A program to provide instructions for organizing the event
- Links to AAUW's positions papers and research on work/life balance
- An evaluation form for the event

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Program Guide



Overview

Holding a Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance is a great way to engage and inform local members of AAUW and your community work/life balance policies and inspire them to take action. This program can be used to present a panel of speakers, an information and discussion session, or as an advocacy event. The event will accomplish the following.

- Educate others about the importance policies that allow employees to balance work and family responsibilities
- Share ways to most effectively advocate for work/life balance initiatives
- Build branch visibility and participation

Getting Started

Start in advance, we recommend about six weeks. Try to have a rough idea of how many people will attend before making any large commitments. Start with the following tasks:

- Assemble an organization team
- Appoint a chief planner
- Contact coalition partners about an event
- Consider your options for speakers and moderators

Program Resources

Resources available on the [AAUW website](#) include:

- [AAUW issues page and position paper on work/life balance](#)
- [Access to our Action Network to help you to contact your members of Congress](#)

Program Logistics

The logistics for the Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance will depend on how many people will be attending, how many sponsors for the event you can find, and what your budget may be. The Women's Summit on Work-Life Balance program in a box is flexible to allow you to work with large or small groups and on many different budgets.

Membership Recruitment

Incorporate membership recruitment in all your events

Membership Matters! Help strengthen our AAUW community by inviting non-members and members-at-large to your activities:

- During your Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance, use AAUW's *Shape the Future* membership campaign to encourage non-members to join AAUW on the spot – at a special half-price rate!
- Give a gift of membership through our *Give a Grad a Gift program* or to someone else who would benefit from being a member of our AAUW community.
- Share the value of membership via the *AAUW Keys to the Future: A Member-Get-a Member Campaign*.

Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance

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The Facts about Work/Life Balance

- ✓ **64 percent of women with children under the age of six are in the workforce.**¹
- ✓ **22.9 million families provide care for an adult family member or friend.**²
- ✓ **43 percent of private sector workers have no paid sick days.**³
- ✓ **Half of working mothers must miss work and often go without pay to care for a sick child.**⁴

Statement on Balancing Work and Life Responsibilities

AAUW believes that creating work environments that help employees balance the responsibilities of work and family is good public policy—good for workers, good for families, and good for business. Despite the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and a patchwork of state laws and employer-based benefits, family and personal sick leave remain elusive to many working Americans. In addition, despite the relative wealth of the United States, family oriented workplace policies in this country lag dramatically behind those in much of the rest of the world.

AAUW supports greater availability of and access to benefits and policies that will improve workplaces for employees with family responsibilities of all kinds. Such protections and improvements are critical for women to achieve equitable access and advancement in employment.

What is a Summit on Work/Life Balance?

As a leading women's organization addressing gender equity in the workplace, AAUW is perfectly positioned to organize women's summits on work/life balance policies. AAUW led the advocacy charge from 1983 to 1992 that resulted in finally passing FMLA, which was signed into law in 1993. Despite the law's clear success, in the years since the law's passage some clear areas for improvement have emerged. AAUW holds women's summits to accomplish the following:

Generate Public Awareness

Women's summits are opportunities to generate public awareness and discussion on issues. A summit will provide a forum for women to hear key individuals talk about balancing work and life responsibilities, give participants an opportunity to discuss existing obstacles and assess the situation of employees in the local area, as well as broader government efforts to assure the physical and emotional well-being of workers and their families.

Facilitate Activism

A women's summit on work/life balance will educate your members and inspire them to put their knowledge into action. They may choose to write letters to members of Congress or push for additional measures to increase protections for working people in difficult times, or encourage local companies to better allow for family and health interests. Targeting the issue both nationally and locally will have the biggest impact for creating a more equitable relationship between workers and employers.

Increase AAUW's Visibility

AAUW federal priority issues impact local communities. This connection makes public policy activities easier to publicize. Women's summits draw local attention to AAUW's national priority issues, which enables women to better understand how actions in Congress affect their lives, families, and communities on a day-to-day basis. Sparking a conversation in your community will gain visibility for AAUW and energize women to work on AAUW's priority issues.

Develop AAUW Leaders and Reach Out to New Partners

Providing a service like the Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance to your community can also benefit AAUW. Women's summits develop the leadership skills of current members, recruit new members, and reach out to diverse groups in your community.

Making it happen...

A Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance can be anything from a statewide, highly publicized forum, to a discussion group with guest experts at a branch meeting. It's up to you!

**Contact the AAUW Public Policy and Government Relations Department
202/785-7793 or
VoterEd@aauw.org for help identifying what kind of summit you want to plan.**

A Plan of Attack

The goal of any Women's Summit is to draw attention to the issue. Work/life balance is an issue that involves economic, political, and moral factors, and many other components. Despite the success of FMLA, there is still much room for improvement to make our workplaces more family friendly. While you can cover a fair number of the implications of workplace policies, the most rewarding part of a women's summit is opening up a continuing conversation in your community. Your women's summit should provide your members with information about the current state of work/life balance policies and inspire women in your community to learn more about this issue. Contact AAUW's Public Policy and Government Relations staff for help identifying experts in your community; for reliable and up-to-date information on FMLA or other work/life topics; and steps you can take to ensure that women are not punished for looking after their own health and the health of their family and friends.

Planning Step-by-Step

Getting Started

- **Appoint a summit organizer and planning team.** Put together a team of interested AAUW members and coalition partners to help make decisions on details and share workload. The summit organizer will be the key motivator and strategist behind your event. Delegate pieces of the process to the planning team to keep the project manageable for everyone involved.
- **Recruit Coalition Partners.** Invite diverse groups in your community to co-sponsor the event. Be sure to include not only your own organization, but also new organizations that share similar concerns.
- **Decide on an audience.** Everything about the forum, including the issues, co-sponsoring organizations, speakers, location, date, and time, should be designed with the audience in mind. Examples of audiences you might consider: women of all ages, young women, elected officials, unions, coalition partners like minority, disability or other women's advocacy groups.
- **Set a budget.** While forums can be held for very little money, you may have expenses for location or speakers' fees, handouts, refreshments, advertising and postage for visibility, postage for follow-up letters, etc. In-kind contributions and donations from co-sponsors and other organizations are good ways to stretch your resources.
- **Choose a location.** Choose an accessible site that will attract a wide range of women from your community, preferably a well-known site such as a school or community center.
- **Schedule the event at a convenient time.** Avoid business hours, religious or government holidays, or dates when other community events are scheduled.
- **Decide on a format.** Will your event be a briefing? A panel discussion? A moderated debate? Regardless of the format, forums should not last more than two hours.

Sample Timeline

6 Weeks Before Event

Appoint organizer and team. Contact coalition partners. Decide on an audience.

5 Weeks Before Event

Plan Budget. Decide on location and format. Invite moderator and speakers.

4 Weeks Before Event

Finalize date and location.
Finalize panel speakers.

3 Weeks Before Event

Begin advertising event.
Compile list of media contacts. Add to AAUW [Member Showcase](#).
Order supplies from AAUW such as public policy programs brochures and AAUW posters.

2 Weeks Before Event.

Re-confirm speakers. Increase audience recruitment.
Prepare on-site handouts and media packet.
Choose spokesperson.

5 Days Before Event

Fax or e-mail media advisory.
Finalize media packets.
Call coalition partners to assess attendance.

2 Days Before Event

Make media reminder calls.

Day of Event

Fax or e-mail news release.
Be prepared to answer media questions before and after the event.

After Event

Follow up with media.
Thank participants.

Leader Checklist

As the leader of a Women's Summit on Work/life Balance, you are the key motivator and strategist behind the event. Delegating pieces of the process will keep the project manageable for you and everyone else involved. Refer to the AAUW Manual for State Public Policy Chairs or contact the AAUW Public Policy and Government Relations Department at 202/785-7793 or VoterEd@aauw.org for additional resources. The following are steps to organize your event:

Delegate work to a planning team

Appoint a planning team to divide and oversee the following responsibilities:

- Programming
- Coalition Outreach
- Community Promotion and Media Visibility

Keep in mind the best ways to include elements of AAUW's program, membership, diversity, and leadership development goals. Public policy is part of AAUW's programming in action and can develop leaders and attract new members, including those from groups underrepresented in AAUW.

Share the timeline and checklists.

Give each member of your planning team a copy of the appropriate timeline and checklist.

Develop a budget.

Work with your team to develop a budget. You may have expenses for location or speakers' fees, handouts, refreshments, advertising and postage for visibility, postage for follow-up and thank you letters, etc. Always consider in-kind contributions and donations from co-sponsors and other organizations; these are good ways to stretch your resources.

Find strategies for saving money.

Trade ads for copies. Create relationships with local copy shops and discuss the possibility of getting free copies in return for advertising their name on the back of your brochures or flyers. There are many creative ways to save money; often these strategies depend on whom you may know and what opportunities are available in your community. Be innovative; never underestimate the effectiveness of creativity!

Ask co-sponsors to help.

Ask local businesses and coalition partners to donate meeting locations, use of phone lines, copy privileges, and advertising expenses in exchange for a listing as an event co-sponsor.

Use the media for public service announcements.

Get free news coverage and public service announcements for a forum by asking a local radio or television station personality to moderate the event.

Choose a location.

Work with your planning team to determine a location that will attract a range of women from the community and accommodate the number of people you are expecting. If possible, choose a well-known site such as a senior center, local school, public library, or community center. If

possible, find a location with access to public transportation. Ask the site manager about the following:

- podiums
- sound systems
- bringing your own refreshments
- electrical outlets for television and radio crews
- literature tables
- janitorial services
- extra chairs
- WiFi, TV, DVD player access, if needed

Get materials from AAUW.

Contact the Public Policy and Government Relations Dept. (202/785-7793 or VoterEd@aauw.org) for comprehensive materials and the latest information on work/life balance.

After the event, follow up on action strategies.

Work with your committee to follow up on any action strategies that result from the event.

Follow up with potential AAUW members.

Use the registration list as a mailing list for future meetings and to contact potential AAUW members.

Encourage all attendants to take action.

Instruct those attending the summit on how to contact members of Congress to promote AAUW policies and work/life balance initiatives.

Summit Planning Checklist

Tailor your women's summit program to the following goals: generating public awareness and discussion on issues; providing a forum for women to hear key individuals talk about the challenges of balancing work and family commitments; giving participants an opportunity to discuss threats and opportunities for progress; enabling women to strategize with others about actions to be taken and empowering them to take that action.

Decide on an audience.

Determine the audience you would like to reach, for example women of all ages, students, elected officials, worker rights activists, coalition partners and other local women's groups.

Develop a format and agenda.

Choose the most appropriate format to achieve your goals and accommodate the people you want to attract. You may want a briefing, a panel presentation, or discussion groups. The summit should last no longer than two hours. If you choose to host a panel of speakers follow with a discussion, you might choose something like this sample agenda:

- AAUW leader introduces moderator, key coalition partners, and sponsors (5 minutes).
- Moderator introduces panelists (5 minutes).
- Three panelists each speak for 10 minutes (30 minutes).
- Moderator leads discussion session with audience (40 minutes). Have a question or two prepared in case the audience is slow to warm up.
- AAUW leader wraps up with AAUW position, key messages, a call to action, info on how to stay connected to AAUW, and thanks all for participating (10 minutes).

Select panelists or discussion leaders.

Choose credible individuals who will bring media attention to the event. Speakers should represent a variety of ages, backgrounds, and experiences, and be able to relate to the importance of a balancing work and family responsibilities. This could include a coalition partner, legislators, an expert on workplace policies or someone with a personal story about the challenges with current laws aimed at assisting workers find a balance between family and the workplace (e.g. someone who has dealt with financial troubles due to a personal illness or an illness in the family).

Always remember that AAUW is nonpartisan. An unbalanced program is not credible. Invite speakers with contrasting points of view, or affiliated with both major political parties.

Invite a familiar face to be a moderator.

The moderator could be a media personality, AAUW member, or coalition partner. A well-known, nonpartisan moderator who is respected in your community will add credibility and generate interest in the event.

Videotape the Event.

Recording the event on video will allow you to reach a larger audience by enabling rebroadcast on public access television or the Internet

Provide Materials.

Work with the panelists, coalition partners, and the Summit leader to make relevant materials available, including:

- Sign-in list
- *Action Network* sign-up flyers
- AAUW position papers/fact sheets on work/life balance
- AAUW public policy brochures
- AAUW membership brochures

Attend to Speakers.

Meet, brief, and escort all speakers on the day of the event. Have water available for them during the event.

Thank Participants.

After the event, thank the panelists, moderator, sponsors and coalition partners in writing.

Coalition Outreach Checklist

To build a strong coalition, it is best to involve other groups as soon as possible. This may lengthen the planning process and could require more negotiation, but it will build better long-term relationships among organizations and bring more people to the event. Ask coalition partners to set a goal for the number of people they will bring.

Following are suggested types of organizations to contact:

- women's organizations
- local university or college women's studies classes or political science departments
- teacher's organizations
- labor organizations, like teachers' unions
- Business organizations
- Working moms/parents organizations
- political organizations (that do not endorse candidates)
- student organizations
- local women's commissions
- unions

After the event, thank and debrief coalition partners.

Follow up to discuss ways to work together in the future on common issues of interest. Provide them with information about how to join AAUW.

Event Promotion and Media Visibility Checklist

Event promotion can be a lot of fun. Your goals are to inform the public of the event to increase attendance and to utilize the media to heighten awareness of AAUW's position on work/life balance legislation.

Inform the public.

- Determine whose phone number and e-mail to use on all public information materials.
- Inform local AAUW members and neighboring branches of your event, recruit them to attend and to bring friends who are interested in workplace policies regarding work and family balance
- Add event details to the [AAUW Member Showcase](#).
- Work with the coalition outreach chair to send invitations to coalition partners and other important guests.
- Invite the public using newspaper ads, fliers, radio and television meeting announcements, Twitter, Facebook, e-advertising community bulletin boards etc.
- Encourage the moderator and other speakers to promote the forum.
- On the day of the event, place a sign outside the location displaying a phrase such as "Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance Tonight from 7:30-9 p.m., Sponsored by AAUW".

Inform the media.

Compile a list of media contacts. Learn which editors and departments cover women's issues and education issues in your city.

- Designate a spokesperson to be available to the media. Put her or his name and phone number on all news releases and mailings.
- Fax or e-mail an advisory to your media list five to seven days before your event. An advisory is a concise notice listing the event's purpose, content, location, and participants. Fax or e-mail the advisory again a day or two before the event as a reminder.
- Call reporters the day after you send the advisory. Explain that you are following up on your written materials. If they haven't seen the materials, offer to send them again.
- Send a news release the day of the event and make a final round of reminder calls.
- Prepare a table with a sign-in list and media kits for all members of the news media. Fill your kits with the following items:
 - Women's Summit agenda
 - statements from the speakers and their bios
 - press release
 - background information on AAUW and other co-sponsors
 - AAUW position papers and fact sheets on work/life balance policies
 - AAUW membership brochures
- During the event, offer reporters a quick interview before or after the program.
- Follow-up by calling reporters who did not attend the event and offer additional information including the media kit so they can publish an article on your event. Also, contact reporters who attended to ask if they need additional information or quotes to complete their stories.
- Look for press clips in the newspaper and on television.

- Share your success with the AAUW Public Policy and Government Relations Department and your state AAUW leaders.

¹ Lowell, Vicky. (May 2004). No Time to be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers When Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/B242.pdf>.

² National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. (April 2004). Executive Summary. Caregiving in the U.S.: Findings From the National Caregiver Survey. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from <http://www.caregiving.org/data/04execsumm.pdf>.

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (August 2007). National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in Private Industry in the United States, March 2007, Table 19. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/sp/ebsm0006.pdf>.

⁴ Kaiser Family Foundation. (April 2003). Women, Work and Family Health: A Balancing Act. Retrieved January 15, 2008, from <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/loader.cfm?url=commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=14293>.

N E W S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Insert Date) _____

Contact: _____

000/555-7856

AAUW Holds Community Forum on Work/Life Balance

The headline should grab a reader's attention and anticipate the first paragraph

The first paragraph should contain all relevant information (who, what, when, where, why, and how)

Town, State – In an effort to insure that employees receive more support through individual health problems or family hardships, AAUW of _____ will sponsor a community forum on work/life balance. The forum, which will be held at _____, will include speakers from _____ and is co-sponsored by _____.

“In workplaces today, there are very few securities protecting American workers from an unforeseen accident or illness that may be just around the corner,” said Jane Doe, Branch President of AAUW of _____. “The burden of caring for elderly parents or taking care of a child falls much higher on women than on men, but ensuring that people can take care of their loved ones without added financial pressures is a social problem, not just a women’s problem.”

Quotes should include a sound bite or visual image.

Put the details starting in the third paragraph

Speakers will discuss the effectiveness of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the measures that would help to allow more flexibility to workers dealing with hardships at little or no cost to most employers. FMLA only covers two-thirds of employed American workers. AAUW hopes to apply FMLA’s rules to more companies and to expand the benefits of the program. Members and supporters are encouraged to urge Rep. _____ and Sens. _____ and _____ to promote measures to support policies that provide a better work/life balance, like the Healthy Families Act and the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

“An unforeseen hardship may strike anyone at any time,” said Doe. “Both men and women may face severe financial stress if they must sacrifice their income to care for family, friends, or relatives. Given FMLA’s minimal impact on businesses, there is little reason to fear expanding its programs.”

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-30- or the symbol ### signifies the end of the release.

AAUW, has a nationwide network of nearly 100,000 members, 1,000 branches and 500 college and university partners.” Please visit our web site at www.aauw.org for more information.



Breaking through Barriers

Women's Summit on Work/Life Balance Evaluation Form

Rate the overall quality of the information presented.

(on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best quality)

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Rate the overall quality of the speakers.

(on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best quality)

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Rate the overall quality of the venue.

(on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best quality)

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

How did you find out about today's event?

What was your favorite aspect of the event?

What would make this event better?

Are you a member of AAUW? Yes No

Would you like to receive information on AAUW? Yes No

Please include your contact information:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Email address _____