



Amplifier Toolkit

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The Chicago Network Equity Principles Campaign Overview

WHAT

The Chicago Network Equity Principles Campaign aims to achieve 50% representation of women in leadership positions across organizations throughout Chicago organizations by 2030.

WHY

With a purpose of empowering women to lead, The Chicago Network is uniquely positioned to lead a citywide campaign for gender equity in the workplace. The influence of our members—the 500+ women leaders at the forefront of our city's business, professional, cultural, nonprofit and educational communities—reaches across all sectors and levels of Chicago.

HOW

In collaboration with Chicago's business and civic decision-makers, we have developed The Chicago Network Equity Principles and are inviting campaign partners to commit to taking the necessary actions in their organizations to produce measurable workplace improvements by 2030. Signatories of The Chicago Network Equity Principles agree that, to meet this goal, they will:

REMOVE BARRIERS: Evaluate the aspects of the employment life cycle – from the hiring process to performance reviews – to identify and remove conscious and unconscious biases within the organizational structure.

DEFINE SUCCESS: Develop and uphold performance benchmarks to ensure an understanding of what it takes to master skills and attributes for promotion and growth opportunities.

EVOLVE CULTURE: Establish open communication channels and provide routine access to leadership to foster a more open, inclusive and empathetic work culture.

ENHANCE COMMUNITY: Provide and promote human and capital resources to support networking opportunities, professional development, sponsorship, and mutual support across industries, sectors and levels.

MAINTAIN ACCOUNTABILITY: Benchmark progress at all levels of the organization based upon goals for building a diverse talent pipeline. Report progress to The Chicago Network every two years for trend analysis over time. Recognize and celebrate meaningful advances and address shortfalls.

WHO

There are 70+ early signatories, including:

Aon	Discover	Mercer
Art Institute of Chicago	EasterSeals	NextLevel Health
Association for Supply Chain Management	Grainger	Robinson Hill
BPI Group	IDEX Corporation	United Airlines
Cook County	Isobar	University of Illinois at Chicago
Dentons	JBMK Pritzker Foundation	Univision Chicago
	Kellogg Company	Zeno Group

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PRESS RELEASE

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THE CHICAGO NETWORK LAUNCHES EQUITY PRINCIPLES CAMPAIGN TO REACH GENDER EQUITY BY 2030

*More than 70 Chicago Organizations Sign The Chicago Network Equity Principles Pledge –
Committed to Working Toward Achieving Gender Equity in Leadership*

CHICAGO, IL. (June 10, 2019) – [The Chicago Network](http://www.thechicagonetwork.org), Chicago's foremost organization of leading professional women, today is launching The Chicago Network Equity Principles Campaign. By signing the Equity Pledge, the cornerstone of which is *The Chicago Network Equity Principles*, companies and organizations commit to working toward achieving gender equity in leadership roles by 2030.

More than 70 prominent Chicago-area organizations - including Aon, Discover, United Airlines, Easterseals, YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago, and the American Medical Association – representing sectors spanning nonprofits, higher education and public companies have already pledged their support of *The Equity Principles*; Kellogg Company in Battle Creek, MI, also has signed. By adopting *The Equity Principles*, Chicago organizations can be at the forefront of providing equal opportunities for women to pursue leadership positions, empowering women to define their own professional success, and promoting more productive and profitable workplaces. From developing a pipeline of talent and promoting diversity, to creating flexible career paths and tracking progress, leaders signing *The Equity Principles* are committing to taking necessary, measurable actions to create workplaces that more closely reflect the gender distribution of the world we live in. More information about *The Chicago Network Equity Principles*, including the full list of pledge partners, can be found here: <https://www.thechicagonetwork.org/equity-principles>.

The Chicago Network is uniquely positioned to lead the citywide campaign for gender equity. The influence of The Network's members – 500+ women leaders at the forefront of our city's business, professional, cultural, nonprofit and educational communities – reaches across all sectors and levels of Chicago. "We know that when women take their seats at the table, businesses are more likely to reach their full potential – and that's why we have established *The Equity Principles*," says Kate Bensen, President and CEO of The Chicago Network. "Across the country, momentum is building. Movements like #MeToo, Time's Up, and the Women's March have emboldened a generation of women. The time is right for Chicago's business and civic communities to build on that and truly lead the way in fostering equitable workplaces for women."

"*The Equity Principles* create a significant opportunity for Chicago organizations to improve pathways for women's advancement. Signing the equity pledge showcases the commitment being made by Discover and other organizations to continue working toward equity in the workplace and to create an environment in which everyone's value is felt and recognized," says Roger Hochschild, CEO and president of Discover.

"We are at an inflection point in our society that presents an opportunity for us as leaders to work together to create a gender-balanced workforce," says Cary Grace, chief executive officer of Global Retirement & Investment, Aon and incoming vice chair for The Chicago Network. "We are thrilled to partner with The Chicago Network and pledge our support of *The Equity Principles* because it provides a broader framework to help signatories accelerate their trajectory around diversity and inclusion."

The Chicago Network recognizes that achieving gender equity in the workplace is not only a social good, but also a business imperative. Years of research underscore the powerful economic impact of gender equity. In a [city](#) that is more than half female, Chicago can gain economic opportunity by engaging more future women leaders. A recent [McKinsey Global Institute](#) report shows that gender equity worldwide can lead to a \$12 trillion increase in global GDP; and that by narrowing the gender gap in the workplace could increase the Chicago metro area GDP by \$58 billion.

The Equity Principles were developed by The Chicago Network in collaboration with area business and civic leaders across sectors in Chicago. By targeting gender equity by 2030, The Chicago Network is aligning with the globally recognized benchmark set by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, as well as a growing number of government, public, private, and international organizations.

www.thechicagonetwork.org

Social: @TCNChicago

Email: comm@thechicagonetwork.org

As it celebrates its 40th anniversary, The Chicago Network believes that by working together toward gender equity within our workplaces, industries, and broader business community, we will create meaningful opportunities for women in Chicago and beyond.

###

ABOUT THE CHICAGO NETWORK

We are an organization of Chicago's most influential women leaders. Our 500+ members are leaders at the forefront of our city's business, professional, cultural, nonprofit and educational communities. The Chicago Network's purpose is to empower women to lead. Our mission is to connect with each other for personal and professional growth, advance our civic, business & philanthropic communities, and inspire and support the next generation. Our vision is Gender Equity. At all Levels. Everywhere.

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Key Messaging

- **Gender Equity is a Business Imperative:** The Chicago Network believes that achieving gender equity in the workplace is not only a social good but a business imperative. When women can take their seats at the table, businesses are more likely to reach their full potential.
 - Gender equity worldwide can lead to a \$12-trillion increase in global GDP. ([McKinsey Global Institute](#))
 - Narrowing the gender gap in the workplace could increase the Chicago metro area GDP by \$58 billion. ([McKinsey Global Institute](#))
 - While Chicago's economy has expanded by an estimated 18,225 jobs year-over-year, there has not been a corresponding increase of women rising to the upper ranks of leadership and managerial roles. ([McKinsey Global Institute](#))
 - In a city that is more than half female ([2017 census puts Chicago's female population at 51.1%](#)) we cannot lose the economic opportunity in engaging future women leaders.
- **We Can Do Better:** Estimates suggest that gender equity in North America will only become a reality in the next 168 years. We can do better. ([World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report](#))
- **The Goal:** The Chicago Network Equity Principles Campaign seeks 50% representation of women serving at leadership levels of organizations, including the C-suite, by 2030.
- **How We'll Reach the Goal:** It is our view that employers should provide a clear trajectory from entry-level positions to the C-suite, reducing road blocks, eliminating bias, and empowering employees to reach their full potential.
- **The Equity Principles as a Road Map:** To provide a road map for workplace equity for women, we've created The Chicago Network Equity Principles in close collaboration with business and civic leaders throughout Chicago.
- **The Chicago Network Equity Principles have five key areas of focus:**
 1. Removing barriers
 2. Defining success
 3. Evolving culture
 4. Enhancing community
 5. Maintaining accountability
- **The Pledge:** As a way of demonstrating support for our 2030 goal, organizations are invited to sign The Chicago Network Equity Principles Pledge, committing to take actions that will produce measurable workplace improvements while also sharing what's already working in their organizations to broaden access to a pool of helpful resources for all campaign partners.
- **Measuring Success:** We encourage our partner organizations to set clear objectives, monitor change and report back internally as well as to The Chicago Network every two years¹. By 2030, those who join us in

¹ TCN will be working with a third-party data gathering partner to ensure accuracy and relevance that translates in a relevant way across all of our industry partners on the campaign. Successes will be celebrated and additional data points will be reported on an aggregate basis to help benchmark progress.



committing to The Chicago Network Equity Principles will strive to have workplaces that are not only 50% female on average over time, but also where women have moved up the ranks so that at least 50% of employees in key management roles are women.

- **Pulling Chicago into the National Movement:** We are enlisting campaign partners who understand that it is time to do more. Across the country, momentum is building (#MeToo, Time's Up, Women's March). The time is right for Chicago's business and civic communities to build on that and truly lead the way as a that fosters equitable workplaces for women.
- **Why TCN?** The Chicago Network (TCN) is uniquely positioned to lead this citywide campaign for gender equity. The influence of TCN members—500+ women leaders at the forefront of our city's business, professional, cultural, nonprofit and educational communities—reaches across all sectors of Chicago.
- **What's Different About This Campaign?** There are other organizations and coalitions in the U.S. and around the world, including Ellevest, Paradigm for Parity, and Catalyst, doing great work in this field. But, we recognize the importance of having a campaign specific to Chicago-based companies and organizations—and no one knows them better than our members leading this campaign with TCN.
- **Progress in Chicago But Still a Long Way to Go:** In Chicago, we have seen some steps in the right direction, but the pipeline for future women leaders in the executive suite has room for growth.
 - Women claimed 44 percent of new directorships since 2017, the highest levels ever recorded at Chicago's 25 largest publicly traded companies. Among those companies, 23 percent of board seats were held by women in 2018, compared with less than 18 percent at those same companies in 2013. ([The Chicago Tribune](#))

About The Chicago Network

- Since our founding in 1979, The Chicago Network has been empowering women to lead so they can contribute to transforming businesses and organizations into higher performing workplaces.
- Our more than 500 members are recognized women leaders who demonstrate an ability to cultivate meaningful connections with each other to encourage personal and professional growth; advance our civic, business and philanthropic communities; and, inspire and support the next generation.
- We're more than a network of powerful professional women; we're a diverse community working to empower the current generation of women—and the next—to lead and to thrive at every stage in their professional careers.

www.thechicagonetwork.org

Social: @TCNChicago

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Background

The Chicago Network empowers women to lead. Chicago can and should be one of the best cities in the country for women to thrive and advance at work. It is time to do more for Chicago by helping women achieve their career goals in an equitable manner.

Our **Equity Principles Campaign** has a goal to achieve 50% representation of women in leadership positions across the organization, throughout Chicago organizations by 2030. Collaborating with business and civic decision-makers, we have developed *The Chicago Network Equity Principles*. Now, we are enlisting campaign partners among Chicago's business and civic leaders who understand that it is time to do more.

By supporting the Equity Principles, our campaign partners commit to producing measurable workplace improvements by 2030, a target date for achieving gender equity that is becoming a common standard.

The Chicago Network is uniquely positioned to lead the campaign. The influence of our members—500+ women leaders at the forefront of our city's business, professional, cultural, nonprofit and educational communities—reaches across all sectors of our city. Our members include:

- Nine CEOs of public companies with a total market cap of \$130B
- 120 CEOs in small, middle market and entrepreneurial companies
- 35 Fortune 500 C-Suite executives
- 80% of Crain's Most Powerful Women in Chicago Business
- Presidents of six universities
- CEOs of nearly all of the most significant foundations, cultural institutions and nonprofit organizations in the Chicago area

By adopting *The Chicago Network Equity Principles*, leaders will create a truly equitable workplace with equal opportunities for women to pursue leadership positions, empower women to define their own professional success, and ultimately promote a more productive and profitable workplace.

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Social Media Toolkit

For signatories to the TCN Equity Principles Pledge, we've put together a social media toolkit to help you share your commitment with your followers.

Graphic Identity

[Download the Equity Principles logos here.](#)

Share Your Commitment with Your Own Followers

Let your followers know that you are committed to gender equity by announcing your TCN Equity Principles signature on your social media channels.

Samples:

We believe in gender equity. That's why we signed the TCN Equity Principles Pledge. #whatittakes

We're proud to partner with @TCNChicago on their Equity Principles Campaign. #whatittakes

Create Video Collateral for Sharing Your Commitment

Leverage a video asset(s) that highlights your organization's commitment to the Equity Principles, your best practices, and what you're doing about your commitment. Potential formats include:

- Fireside chat between senior leadership representative and entry-mid level woman with the organization
- One-on-one with a C-Suite executive on the organization's best practices and what's working
- Further background on the company's overall commitment to gender equity

Follow Us on Our TCN Social Media Channels

Our social media channels target young women who are not members, but are our future leaders. Help us empower women by following us on our channels and sharing relevant posts:



- [@tcnchicago](#)



- <https://www.facebook.com/TheChicagoNetwork/>



- [@TCNChicago](#)

www.thechicagonetwork.org

Social: @TCNChicago

Email: comm@thechicagonetwork.org



Follow Us on LinkedIn

Our LinkedIn messages target our members and professionals. We share news related to empowering women, gender equity, TCN Equity Principles and TCN Member announcements.

- [TCN CEO Kate Bensen](#)
- [TCN Organization Page](#)

Mention #whatittakes & @TCNChicago in Your Posts & Comments About Gender Equity & Empowering Women to Lead

Your Posts

If you post about empowering women to lead or gender equity, please include #whatittakes and @TCNChicago.

Comments on Related Articles

When articles you read on social media and LinkedIn are related to empowering women to lead and to gender equity, and you feel inclined to comment, please use #whatittakes and tag @TCNChicago.

Tips on When to Use #whatittakes

#whatittakes is our official hashtag when sharing information about gender equity and empowering women to lead.

Below are types of news coverage that we'd appreciate you including our hashtag if you are sharing:

- News articles related to gender equity
- Women's achievements and promotions
- Gender equity
- Information on your own women's initiatives
- Best practices related to gender equity in your workplace

If you have questions, please contact Elizabeth Stigler at estigler@thechicagonetwork.org.

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THE CHICAGO NETWORK



EQUITY PRINCIPLES

As the chief executive officer of _____, a business or organization headquartered in or doing substantial business in the Chicago area (Campaign Partner), I commit my company/organization to work toward achieving gender equity in leadership roles throughout the company/organization by 2030.

To reach our goal, we will:



REMOVE BARRIERS

Evaluate the aspects of the employment cycle—from the hiring process to performance reviews—to identify and remove conscious and unconscious biases within the organizational structure.



DEFINE SUCCESS

Develop and uphold performance benchmarks to ensure an understanding of what it takes to master skills and attributes for promotion and growth opportunities.



EVOLVE CULTURE

Establish open communication channels and provide routine access to leadership to foster a more open, inclusive and empathetic work culture.



ENHANCE COMMUNITY

Provide and promote human and capital resources to support networking opportunities, professional development, sponsorship, and mutual support across industries, sectors and levels.



MAINTAIN ACCOUNTABILITY

Benchmark progress against all levels of organization against goal for building a rich, diverse talent pipeline. Recognize and celebrate meaningful advances and address shortfalls.

As a Campaign Partner, we further commit to respond to biennial requests from The Chicago Network to provide the number and percentage of women in leadership roles and on the board of our organization.

We understand such data will be kept confidential and responses will be reported on an aggregate basis to measure progress in companies and nonprofit organizations. Campaign Partners are encouraged to send us their success stories and best practices so we can share them with the broader Chicago civic and business communities.

We believe that by working together toward gender equity within our workplaces, industries, and broader business community, we will create meaningful opportunity for women in Chicago and beyond.

Company

Name & Signature

Date



THE CHICAGO NETWORK | EQUITY PRINCIPLES CAMPAIGN

www.thechicagonetwork.org

Social: @TCNChicago

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THE EQUITY PRINCIPLES TOOLKIT

We recognize that gender equity is a multi-faceted issue, and that *The Chicago Network Equity Principles* should be addressed both practically and holistically. Here, we provide ideas for organizations looking for ways to further their commitment to the Equity Principles. While there is no single formula for success that can be applied to every company or industry, consider practicing and promoting these steps toward fostering equitable workplaces with a formula for success that reflects your organization's unique culture. To discuss these and other activation ideas, please feel free to contact us at comm@thechicagonetwork.org.

IDENTIFY:

- **Acknowledge Biases:** *Audit existing processes to address blind spots – screening resumes, conducting interviews, pay/compensation transparency, onboarding, staffing projects, mentoring programs, performance evaluations, promotion and termination. C-suite officers can also consider offering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) trainings or hidden bias trainings company-wide, disclosing gender pay gaps and retention rates, and linking compensation with equity results.*
- **Understand Core Concerns:** *Create and maintain environments, forums and direct feedback loops where employees feel comfortable reaching out to colleagues and senior leadership to gain a better understanding of each other's experiences and perspectives. Conduct anonymous employee surveys company-wide to understand what specific issues might exist at your workplace. Each department or location may have different concerns. Also keep in mind, that what drives men to succeed might not drive women. Health and wellness programs for instance, have been shown to be a strong determinant of where women work.*
- **Build Your Case:** *Establish the business rationale for gender equity among colleagues, leadership, and corporate partners/allies to share and embed a common understanding within the wider business landscape. Also consider including a diversity and equity consideration in supply chain partners during business procurement processes. Diversity drives innovation, improves financial performance and helps close the gender pay gap.*

INVEST:

- **Empower Employees:** *Identify best practices to help employees improve performance at their current level and beyond. Clearly illustrate what is possible at the highest level of performance for a particular function within an organization.*
- **Champion Employee Growth:** *Companies should be well equipped to help employees build the skills required to meet benchmark standards. While goal-setting encourages employees to push beyond their current performance level, it may also require additional resources to meet performance goals. For example – leveraging social media platforms, hosting lunch and learns, and conducting internal/external trainings and workshops.*
- **Evolve Performance Reviews:** *In assessing employee performances, provide honest evaluations of failures and praise for successes. Performance monitoring should include milestones that allow employees time to take corrective actions before the end of the period set for reaching performance goals. Managers up and down the organization should also be measured against benchmarks.*

EVALUATE:

- **Set Objectives:** *Use data to assess the current status of gender equity in your organization and then outline your company goals in quantifiable terms. Set specific, measurable and attainable objectives and assign*

responsibility for driving these targets to leadership. For example – closing the gender pay gap, increasing the number of women in leadership roles, and ensuring women are equitably represented among new hires.

- **Monitor Change:** *Track progress against the goals you outlined and communicate current figures and targets internally to leadership.*
- **Report Back:** *Exercise transparency and share results and figures against each company goal with all staff members. Consider sharing and celebrating the company's efforts in promoting gender equity to set an example for the wider business community.*

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why Now?

Across the country, momentum is building - movements like #MeToo, Time's Up, and the Women's March have emboldened a generation of women to speak up and the time is right for Chicago's business and civic leaders to build on that momentum and truly lead the way in fostering equitable workplaces for women. There have been signs of progress for women seeking leadership positions over many years and powerful research that ties greater gender diversity to stronger performance. But, the pipeline for future women leaders in the executive suite remains slow and the number of top women earners has slipped back. The persistent inequities across Chicago's business landscape underscore our urgent need to tackle this issue head on.

2. Why is The Chicago Network in a position to lead the charge?

Since its founding in 1979, The Chicago Network (TCN) has been empowering women to lead so they can contribute to transforming businesses and organizations into more equitable, higher performing workplaces. As an organization made up of 500+ women leaders at the forefront of Chicago's business, professional, cultural, nonprofit and educational communities, TCN is uniquely equipped to tackle Chicago's business ecosystem and create real change for women. Their members include:

- Nine CEOs of public companies with a total market cap of \$130B
- 35 Fortune 500 C-Suite executives
- 80% of Crain's Most Powerful Women in Chicago Business
- Presidents of six universities
- CEOs of nearly all of the most significant foundations, cultural institutions and nonprofit organizations in the Chicago area

3. What makes this campaign different from similar initiatives out there?

This is the only campaign that has been created and championed by Chicago's most influential women leaders. The Chicago Network's focus for this campaign is to galvanize a movement at the local level to create meaningful opportunity for women within our communities. Studies show that Chicago's economy has expanded year-over-year, speaking to a fertile business environment. But, there has not been a corresponding increase of women rising to the upper ranks of leadership and managerial roles.

4. How do you expect to achieve full gender equity in workplaces by 2030?

By supporting the Equity Principles, campaign partners commit to taking the necessary actions to produce measurable workplace improvements by 2030, a target date for achieving gender equity that is becoming a common standard galvanizing growing numbers of government, public, private, and international organizations. By 2030, those who join us in committing to The Chicago Network Equity Principles will strive to have workplaces that are not only 50% female on average over time, but also



where women have moved up the ranks so that at least 50% of employees in key management roles are women.

5. Why is this valuable for your partner organizations?

By supporting the campaign and committing to the Equity Principles, we will not only be contributing to greater, much needed diversity in the workforce, but also attracting top talent and improved business results.

6. How will you be benchmarking progress?

Through the Equity Principles pledge, campaign partners to commit to responding to The Chicago Network's biennial requests to provide the number and percentage of women in leadership roles of their company/organization. Such data will be kept confidential and responses will be reported on an aggregate basis to measure progress.

Campaign Partners send The Chicago Network their success stories and best practices so they can be shared with the broader Chicago business and civic communities. It is difficult to achieve goals of any sort without deadlines and benchmarking progress.

7. Are there resources for public use?

There is a resource bank and equity toolkit available to the public via The Chicago Network's website, which will provide companies in all industries and sectors, the guidelines and steps to create equitable opportunities for women in the workplace.