

# OVERCOMING WORKPLACE OBSTACLES

By **Symone C. Skrzycki**

The Indiana Chamber’s inaugural Indiana Women’s Summit, held last summer, offered a forum for females to empower each other, network and learn best practices that translate to enhanced work-life fulfillment. (The 2025 event takes place August 28.)

One of the sessions explored obstacles in the workplace and strategies to help employers build benefits to support women. It was led by the Wellness Council of Indiana (WCI), a subsidiary of the Indiana Chamber that partners with workplaces and communities throughout the state to develop, maintain and evolve their strategic well-being strategies.

“Indiana is struggling with a workforce shortage across the state and across industries – men and women,” emphasizes WCI Executive Director Jennifer Pferrer. “Despite a growing number of women in the workforce, some are leaving for a variety of reasons. It’s more important than ever to be adaptable as companies with attraction and retention efforts. If employers can be more flexible and more accommodating to women’s unique needs, women will stay in the workforce and help fill the workforce gap.”

According to a 2023 Women in the Workplace survey by McKinsey & Company and Lean In, the top four benefits most important to women are the following:

1. Healthcare benefits (tailoring benefits to meet the needs of women across different life stages to address issues such as comprehensive parental leave policies, childcare support and eldercare assistance)
2. Opportunity to work remotely
3. Control over where they work
4. Mental health benefits (promoting awareness with education and training opportunities ranging from employee assistance plans

and therapy to counseling and treatments for conditions affecting women)

“We want employers to be flexible,” Pferrer notes. “We want them to accommodate prenatal visits. We want them to accommodate time off after delivery – not just for the mother, but for the family. I think it’s about looking at it holistically in supporting women across their lifespan so they can show up and be productive employees.”

“We have to address the infant mortality rate in the state of Indiana, for instance. It’s the 10th highest in the United States at 6.75%. If we can take care of our moms, we can take care of our babies.”

From an employer standpoint, prioritizing benefits that meet women’s needs can cut

healthcare costs, lower turnover rates, elevate performance and productivity, decrease absenteeism and promote a healthier workplace culture.

“It’s important for employers to offer gender-sensitive care: things like breastfeeding, menopause and reproductive health. Women are twice as likely as men to experience major depression and anxiety.

“If we can have a supportive environment that allows women to manage their life at the same time as being a loyal employee, it can have a huge impact,” Pferrer continues. “Individuals who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person – and not just as an employee – are more productive and more satisfied. Their well-being is heightened.”

Learn more about the 2025 Indiana Women’s Collaborative: [www.indianachamber.com/women](http://www.indianachamber.com/women)





The Inaugural Indiana Women’s Summit explored empowerment and best practices.

**RESOURCE:** Jennifer Pferrer, Wellness Council of Indiana, at [www.wellnessindiana.org](http://www.wellnessindiana.org)

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