

ADVANCE WOMEN LEADERS

WOMEN LEAD CHANGE
2024 ANNUAL REPORT





What a year! What a mission. 2024 wasn't just another year. It was a defining moment. A year that reminded us why we do this work and how much still needs to be done.

More than 145 corporate partners stood beside us. Over 5,300 attendees showed up—ready to learn, lead, and change the game. Together, we made 2024 remarkable.

But beneath the momentum lies a sobering truth: for the first time in more than two decades, the gender pay gap widened. In 2024. That fact alone should stop us in our tracks. It certainly did for me.

This is why Women Lead Change exists. It's why we've been here since 2007. And it's why we're not going anywhere.

Our mission—to advance women at all levels—has never felt more urgent. We're building the pipeline. We're preparing women to step into every room they deserve. And we're not slowing down.

Here's what we built together in 2024:

- **We honored a powerhouse.** Mary Kay McGrath was recognized at our 2nd Annual Changemakers Fundraiser—an evening dedicated to trailblazers who make space for others to rise.
- **We made history.** Our Cedar Rapids Conference sold out two months early. Record attendance. Record energy. Real proof that women are hungry for leadership development—and ready to act.
- **EPIC surged.** With 738 individual allies and 116 companies strong, EPIC is now a force of collective will, shifting culture one commitment at a time.
- **We connected across cities.** Our Women Connect cohorts thrived across the Corridor, Cedar Valley, Des Moines, and the Quad Cities—proving that strong networks build stronger leaders.

WLC is for everyone who wants to grow as leaders in their companies, communities, and careers.

WLC is for those that want to meet, learn from, network with, and be mentored by leaders who understand women's unique challenges, gifts, and perspectives.

WLC is for all who want to succeed, surpass, and have fun in the process.

WLC is for employers who want to invest in their current talent and develop their future leaders.

Your success is our mission.

And in 2025? We go further.

WLC will double down on advancement, development, and promotion—not just of women, but of the organizations that see their value. Because when women rise, so does our economy, our companies, and our communities.

To our team: your grit and heart are unmatched.

To our partners: thank you for betting on women.

And to everyone reading this: stay with us. The work is far from over—but the path is clear.

Let's make 2025 the year we stop talking about potential and start realizing it.

Take charge. Lead Change!

Tiffany O'Donnell, CEO Women Lead Change

5,322+
ATTENDEES AT EVENTS AND PROGRAMS



Hosted annual conferences in
**CEDAR RAPIDS,
DES MOINES, AND
QUAD CITIES**

Cedar Rapids hosted a
sold-out crowd of over
**1,400 TOTAL
ATTENDEES**



All-Access virtual series
hosted participants from
10 STATES,
with twelve thought leaders
from across the country.



EPIC Ally Challenge
grew to
738 MEMBERS
committed to advocating for
women in the workplace



**24 CURRENT AND
EMERGING LEADERS**
participated in the
Elevate Program





CONFERENCES

CEDAR RAPIDS CONFERENCE

April 24-25, 2024

- Presenting Sponsor: BAE Systems
- **1,412 total attendees**

DES MOINES CONFERENCE

Oct. 15-16, 2024

- Presenting Sponsor: F&G
- **1,087 total attendees**

QUAD CITIES CONFERENCE

Nov. 7, 2024

- Presenting Sponsor: Bank of America
- **620 attendees**

OVER 30 SPEAK TANK APPLICANTS

- 6 finalists appeared at the Cedar Rapids Conferences
- **Charlie Saffro is the 2024 Speak Tank winner**

IOWA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS LUNCHEON AT THE DES MOINES CONFERENCE

Oct. 16, 2024

- Honored Teree Caldwell-Johnson, Joan Liffing-Zug Bourret, and Martha-Ellen Tye



WORKSHOPS & OTHER EVENTS

CRACKING THE CULTURE CODE WITH KELLY MERBLER

Jan. 11, 2024

- **471 virtual attendees**

YES AND LEADERSHIP WITH TINA BAKEHOUSE

March 6, May 15 and 16, 2024

- **342 total attendees**

2ND ANNUAL CHANGEMAKERS FUNDRAISER HONORING MARY KAY MCGRATH

Sept. 25, 2024

- **104 attendees**

BUILDING AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS AND BEYOND HR WITH DR. CLAIRE MUSELMAN

Sept. 10 and 11, 2024

- **222 attendees**

LEAD AND WORK ACROSS GENERATIONS WITH RYAN JENKINS

July 11, 2024

- **385 virtual attendees**



LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

- Three, regional conferences: Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, and Quad Cities
- Nationally-known keynote speakers and breakout sessions led by local talent
- Speakers included: Kelly Merbler, Selena Rezvani, Ryan Jenkins, Brandi Spurling, Tina Bakehouse, Dr. Claire Muselman, Ann Sheu, Courtney Misener, Tiffany O'Donnell, Elatia Abate, Mitch Matthews, Tara Renze, Vivian Tue, Paula Faris, Christiana Smith Shi, Grace Puma, Lauren Graham, Selena Rezvani, Ally Love, James Clear, Candace Doby, Charlie Saffro, Mallory Weggemann, and Nia Vardalos.
- **3,119 total attendees (in-person and virtual)**



WOMEN CONNECT

- Regional membership groups that engage women through sharing best practices, peer-to-peer networking, and providing professional/personal development opportunities for their organizations.
- Women Connect Regions:
 - Cedar Valley Women Connect: **13 members**
 - Corridor Women Connect: **21 members**
 - Metro Women Connect: **43 members**
 - Quad Cities Women Connect: **27 members**



EPIC CORPORATE CHALLENGE

- EPIC partners commit to set voluntary measurable goals in at least one of the following areas:
- Increase the percentage of women of color in current and emerging leadership positions, including boards of directors
- Actively recruit and retain women at all levels of the organization, in order to increase the percentage of women in company's workforce, including women in non-traditional roles
- Increase the percentage of women among the top 10% of the company's senior positions
- Increase the number of women on the board of directors
- Monitor pay by gender and address such gaps as are discovered
- Sponsors: Delta Dental of Iowa and Transamerica
- **116 member companies**



EPIC ALLY CHALLENGE

- Individuals that commit to the EPIC Ally Challenge pledge to:
- Help women move into greater leadership roles
- Invite others to join the challenge
- Identify opportunities
- Eliminate gender bias
- Make own actions serve as a model for others to follow
- **738 individual members**

2024 AT A GLANCE



ALL ACCESS

- Once a month, 45 minute virtual learning sessions that span across many differing topics.
- Two virtual live workshops took place in January and July
- 87 Annual Pass holders**



ELEVATE

- Women’s leadership development program for emerging leaders in the Cedar Rapids region.
- Meets for six months, with five half-day learning sessions, and a capstone project
- 24 participants**



IOWA WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT BRIDGE & AWARDS

- Recognizes contributions of historical Iowa women who made outstanding & lasting contributions or have advanced the well-being of others throughout the world.
- 23 award plaques are featured on the Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge in downtown Des Moines to date
- 2024 honorees: Teree Caldwell-Johnson, Joan Liffing-Zug Bourret, and Martha-Ellen Tye**



GIRLS WITH GOALS FUND

- Supports Iowa non-profit organizations that:
 - Inspire girls to recognize their inner strength, Celebrate the characteristics that make each girl one of a kind, Spark the interest in girls to pursue studies and careers in male-dominated fields, Empower girls of all ages through mentorship



6 grants awarded in 2024 to:

- Eastern Iowa Arts Academy
- NewBoCo
- Junior League of Cedar Rapids
- Girls on the Run of Eastern Iowa
- Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa
- Courage League Sports dba CAN PLAY
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cedar Rapids & East Central Iowa
- Girls with Goals Fundraiser Pickleball Tournament hosted in support of women & girls in sports



OWN IT! FROM WOMEN LEAD CHANGE PODCAST

- Our podcast features thought leaders, industry experts, CEOs, and senior leaders who recognize the imperative to advance women leaders at all levels with topics ranging from personal stories of perseverance to tactical development insights.

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