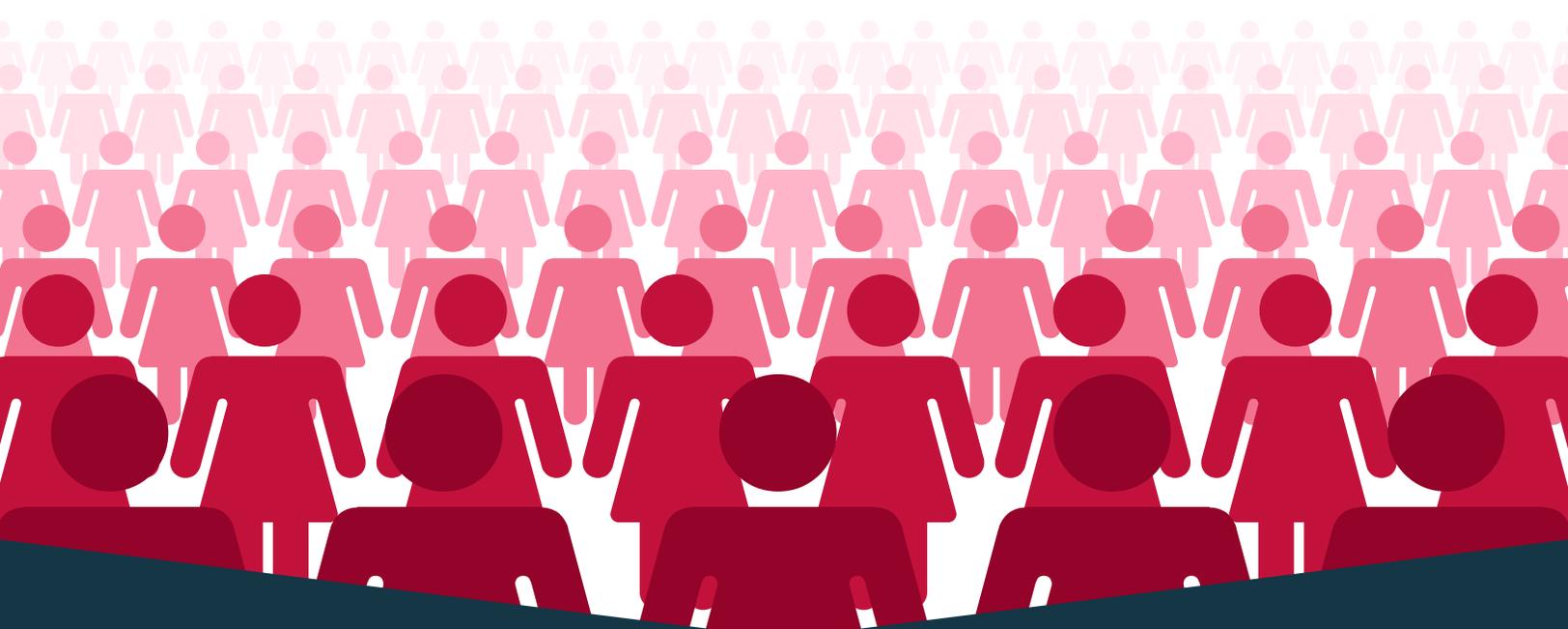


# Tech Workplace Survey Report

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A research summary of tech worker experiences and attitudes in Southwest Missouri prepared by Habitat Communication & Culture.

In combination with Springfield Women in Technology and the Springfield Tech Council.



# Thank You to Our Sponsors



Additional thanks to Mostly Serious, efactory, and AECI.

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# Executive Summary

**This research report explores the unique experiences of people in the Southwest Missouri region's tech industry.**

**300 participants and in-depth discussions with 20 women across seven focus groups**

As a follow-up to last year's partnership with Springfield Women in Tech, this work seeks to expand on and evaluate the key issues for women in a variety of roles working for tech-based employers of various sizes. As our regional tech sector grows, the experiences of its workforce— and particularly women— will be vital to identifying sustainable opportunities to provide quality jobs.

Our findings are based on survey responses from more than 300 participants and in-depth discussions with 20 women across seven focus groups.

The data collected paints a picture of both determination and frustration: women in Springfield's tech industry are deeply committed to their careers, yet they face persistent and systemic barriers that hinder their progress.

These challenges mirror broader trends seen across the national tech industry, highlighting a need for local employers to implement critical changes that promote gender equity, transparency, and career growth.



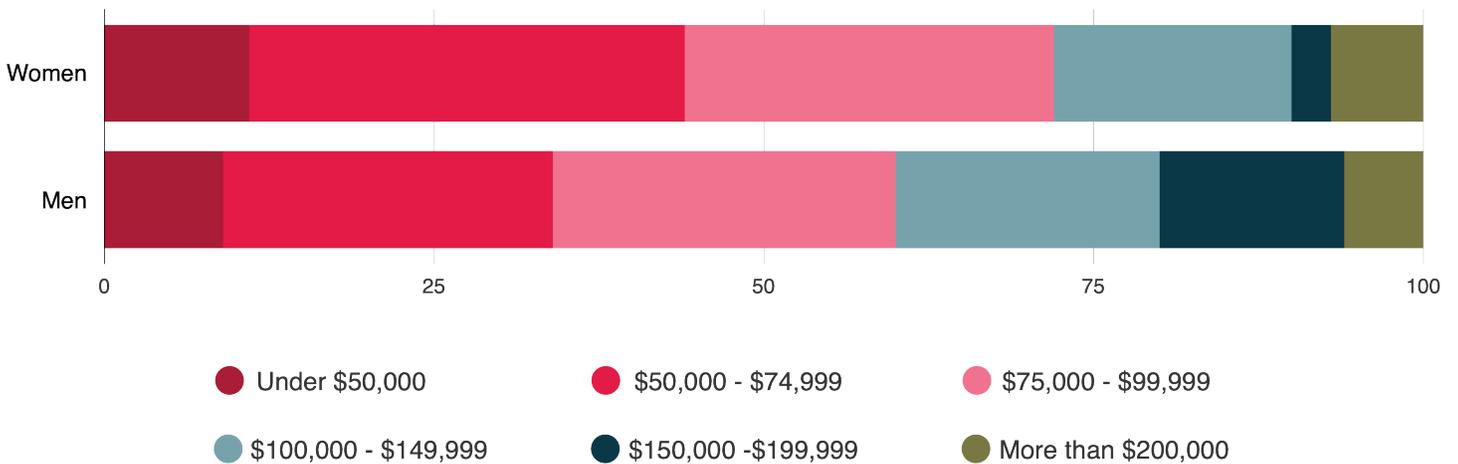
# Key Themes



## Compensation & Salary Negotiation

Like many regions in the U.S., Springfield’s tech industry suffers from a significant gender pay gap. Nationally, women in tech earn approximately 84 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts (TechRepublic<sup>1</sup>), and local survey data reflects similar disparities. A key factor contributing to this gap is the lack of salary transparency. Only 40.4% of tech firms nationwide track gender pay inequality (TechRepublic<sup>1</sup>), and in Springfield, many women expressed discomfort with negotiating pay or felt uninformed about appropriate salary ranges for their roles. Despite these challenges, salary was not the top concern for many women. Instead, they prioritized flexibility, benefits, and workplace culture, which played a more significant role in job satisfaction.

## Individual Annual Income





## Work-Life Balance and Flexibility

National data shows that flexible work options are highly valued by women in tech, with 56% of employees in tech industries working remotely at least part-time (Codecademy<sup>2</sup>). In Springfield, this preference is equally strong, with many respondents citing workplace flexibility as a top priority. However, local women are less likely to have access to remote work than their national counterparts, a gap that needs to be addressed. Paid Time Off (PTO) also remains a concern, with many women feeling uncomfortable taking their full PTO, largely due to fears of being seen as less committed.



## Opportunities for Growth and Mentorship

Career advancement is a widespread issue, both locally and nationally. Nationally, only 18% of women in tech have access to formal mentorship programs (Women Tech Network<sup>3</sup>), and Springfield women echoed this concern. Many reported feeling “stuck” in their current roles, with limited opportunities for leadership development or structured mentorship. National leaders in tech, such as Microsoft and Google, have taken steps to address these gaps by investing in mentorship and development programs that support women’s career growth, providing a model for Springfield-area companies to follow.

# 56%

of women in tech  
work remotely at  
least part-time

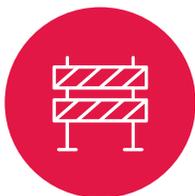


# Women are often hesitant to report discrimination



## Discrimination and Bias

Instances of gender-based discrimination and bias were common themes, with many participants reporting unequal treatment, especially in promotions and leadership opportunities. This aligns with national findings, where women are consistently underrepresented in leadership roles and face subtle forms of bias, such as microaggressions and dismissal in meetings. Women in the Springfield region, like their national counterparts, are often hesitant to report discrimination due to fears of retaliation or being labeled as difficult.



## Retention and Staying Power

Nationally, women in tech are 50% more likely than men to leave their positions due to lack of career progression, burnout, and poor work-life balance (TechRepublic<sup>4</sup>). Locally, women expressed similar frustrations, particularly around career stagnation and isolation in male-dominated environments. Despite these challenges, many women in Springfield remain committed to the tech industry. Their passion for innovation and problem-solving is a key motivator, but without significant changes to support their growth and well-being, retention rates may continue to suffer.



# Recommendations

<b>Increase Salary Transparency</b>	Employers should prioritize transparency around pay and provide clear guidelines for salary negotiations. This could empower women to advocate for fair compensation and help address the existing gender pay gap.
<b>Offer Flexible Work Options</b>	Springfield companies should expand access to remote and hybrid work arrangements, as well as flexible scheduling. This aligns with national trends and addresses the strong preference for dynamic scheduling among women in the tech industry.
<b>Invest in Mentorship and Development Programs</b>	Establishing formal mentorship programs and leadership development initiatives is critical for supporting women's career progression. Pairing women with experienced mentors, particularly female leaders, can provide the guidance and support necessary for growth.
<b>Foster Inclusive Workplace Cultures</b>	Companies must focus on creating more inclusive environments where all employees feel valued. This includes addressing implicit bias, providing training on discrimination and microaggressions, and promoting equal opportunities for advancement.
<b>Support Work-Life Balance and Mental Health</b>	To prevent burnout and improve retention, companies should offer robust PTO policies and mental health support. Encouraging employees to use their full PTO allotment and providing flexibility around work hours can improve overall job satisfaction and reduce burnout.

## Summary

The Springfield region's tech industry, like the broader national landscape, faces ongoing challenges in supporting the advancement and retention of women. This report highlights critical areas where local employers can take action to create more inclusive, equitable, and supportive environments for women in tech. By addressing the issues of pay transparency, flexible work, mentorship, and inclusive workplace cultures, the Springfield tech community has an opportunity to retain and empower its female workforce, ensuring long-term growth and innovation.



# Introduction

The technology sector is a cornerstone of innovation, economic growth, and progress, both nationally and locally. In Springfield, MO, the tech industry has seen considerable expansion in recent years. The experiences of women in the area's tech workforce tell a complex story—one typified by enthusiasm for the work and excitement for the opportunities, but also marked by the persistence of challenges, including pay inequity, limited access to leadership roles, and an undercurrent of gender bias that affects both day-to-day work and long-term career progression.

This report delves into the experiences of women in our region's tech industry, providing a comprehensive view of their professional realities through the lens of 301 survey respondents and discussions from 20 participants (via seven focus groups). The

findings highlight the dedication and resilience of women who remain committed to their roles, despite the barriers they face.

These findings present both a challenge and an opportunity for our tech community. On one hand, the data underscores the systemic issues that continue to hinder women's progress in the industry. On the other, it highlights areas where tangible improvements—such as greater transparency in pay, stronger mentorship programs, and more inclusive workplace cultures—could lead to significant gains in retaining and empowering women in tech.

Through this report, we aim to provide not only a clear picture of the experiences of women in our region's tech sector but also actionable insights and recommendations for fostering a more inclusive and equitable industry.



**This report explores the experiences of women in our region's tech industry, highlighting their resilience amid challenges and opportunities for a more inclusive future.**



# Methodology

To ensure that our insights are data-driven and reflect the lived experiences of women in our region, we developed and deployed a comprehensive research program.

- **Survey Data Collection**
- **Data Analysis**
- **Focus Groups**

**301 survey responses**

**53 survey questions in 10 different categories**



# Survey Data Collection

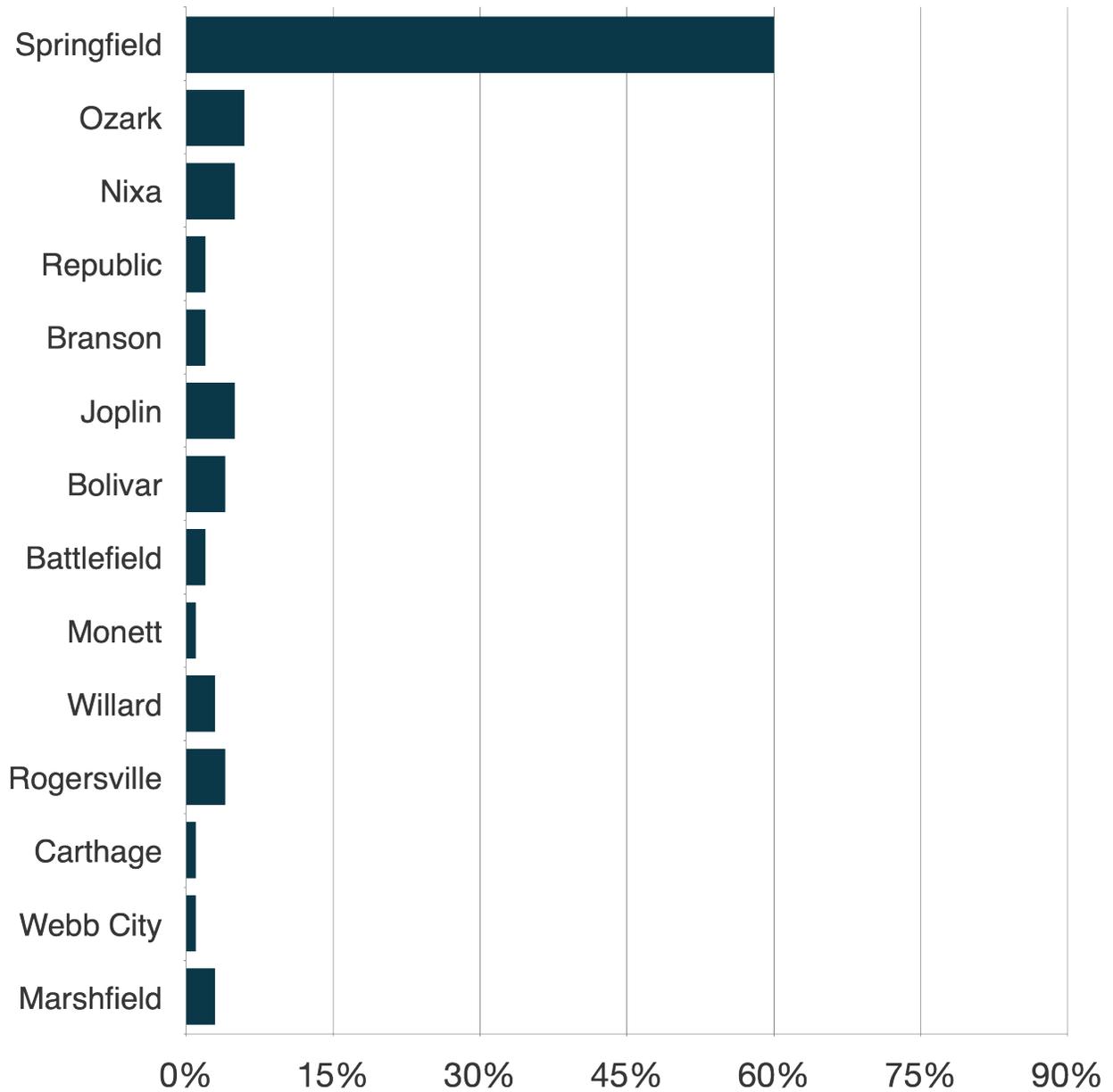
**To gather insights into the experiences of women in the tech industry in Springfield, MO, we conducted an electronic survey (via SurveyMonkey) that was distributed to a wide range of professionals and organizations in the region. The survey was open for responses over a period of two months.**

The survey garnered 301 responses and included a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions. Participants provided answers to multiple-choice questions, Likert scale-based responses, and open-ended text entries, allowing us to capture both numerical data and deeper personal reflections.

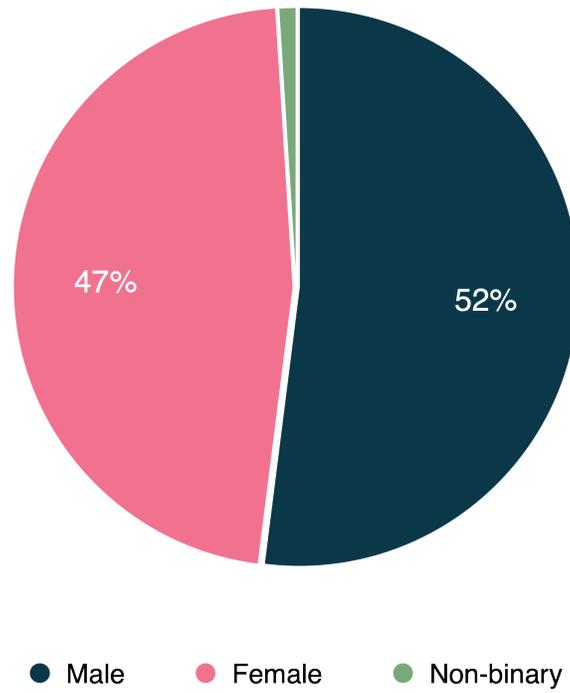
In addition to industry-specific questions, we also collected demographic data, including gender, age, relationship and parental status, education, and socio-economic status, to better understand the diversity of the respondents in terms of gender, years of experience, and their roles in the tech sector. This data helped us to stratify responses and identify patterns within different segments of the tech community.



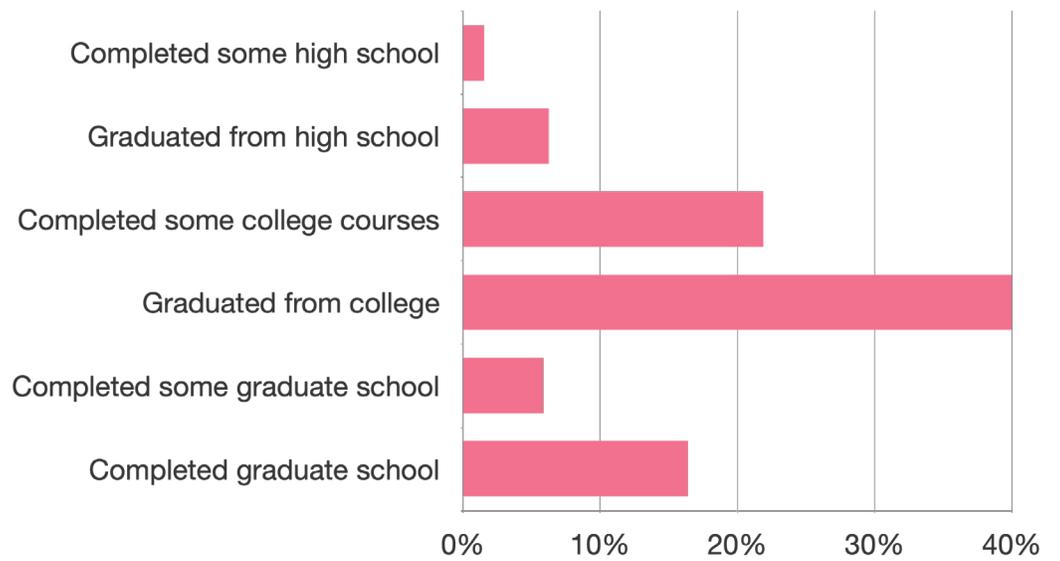
## Location



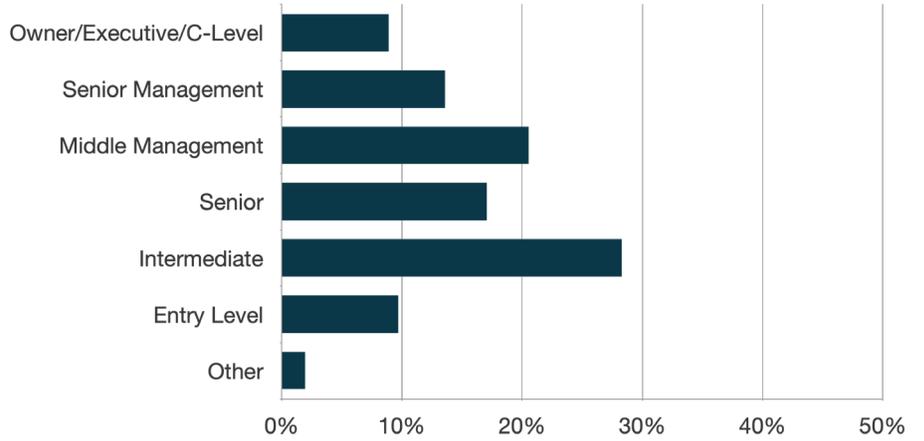
## Gender



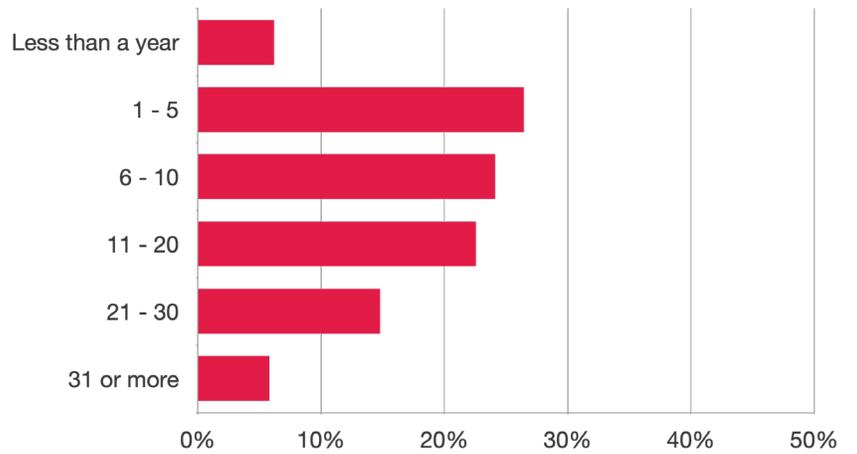
## Education



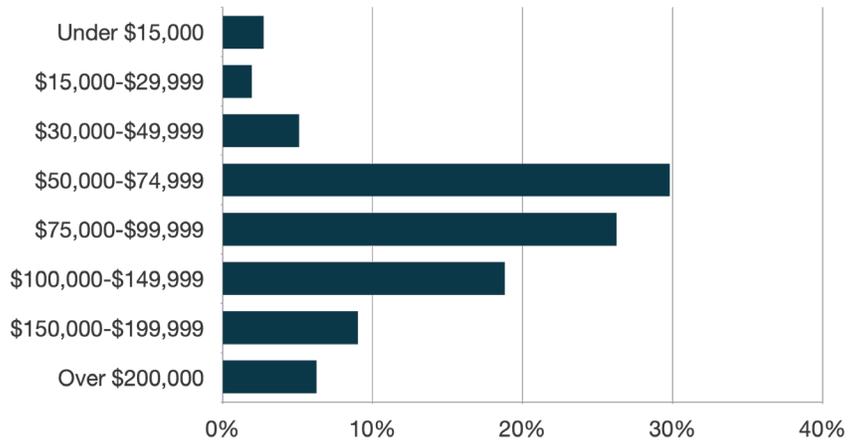
## Job Level



## Total Time in Tech Industry



## Individual Annual Income



# Focus Groups

We conducted

**7 focus groups with 20 participants**  
**45 and 90 minute sessions**

To complement the survey, we conducted seven focus groups with a diverse group of 20 participants (total). Each focus group session lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was facilitated by a member of our team to ensure structured discussions and consistency across groups.

The focus groups explored more nuanced, qualitative aspects of women's experiences in the tech industry, including discussions on workplace culture, career progression, and personal challenges. Participants were encouraged to share their stories and perspectives openly, contributing to a rich qualitative dataset.



# Data Analysis

The data from the survey was analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Quantitative data, such as responses to Likert-scale questions, was analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and statistically significant insights. The qualitative data from open-ended survey responses and focus groups was analyzed using thematic coding, where responses were grouped based on recurring themes and patterns.

This dual approach of combining quantitative data with qualitative insights allowed us to explore the experiences of women in tech from multiple perspectives and build a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face.

## Descriptive Statistics

Summarizes data with basic measures like averages, percentages, or counts.

## Thematic Analysis

Identifies patterns or themes within qualitative data.

## Thematic Coding

The process of categorizing qualitative data by assigning codes to recurring topics or themes.



# Key Themes

In this section, we'll dive deeper into the key themes that emerged from our research. These themes highlight the most pressing issues affecting women in the Springfield area's tech industry. We'll explore the challenges and opportunities surrounding compensation, work-life balance, growth and mentorship, discrimination and bias, and the overall impact these factors have on retention. By examining these themes, we hope to shed light on the experiences of women in tech and inspire positive change within our community.



## Compensation, Salary, and Negotiations



## Work-Life Balance, Flexibility, and PTO



## Opportunities for Growth and Mentorship



## Discrimination and Bias



## The Effects on Retention



# Compensation, Salary, and Negotiations

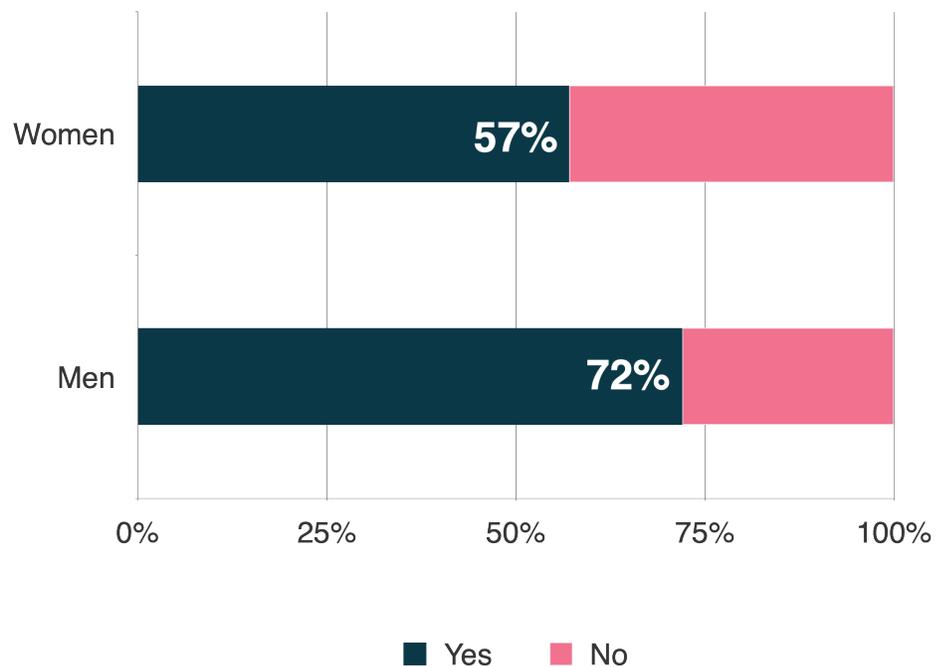
Salary negotiations are a key area where women in the tech industry face significant challenges, with many expressing discomfort and uncertainty about the process. Across both survey results and focus group discussions, a recurring theme was the lack of transparency around salaries and the difficulty women experience when advocating for better pay.

**A significant portion of women reported that they had never engaged in salary negotiations.**



Participants consistently highlighted that they do not always feel empowered or equipped to negotiate their salaries. In many cases, participants described salary discussions as uncomfortable. This discomfort was reflected in the survey data, where a significant portion of women reported that they had never engaged in salary negotiations, and were generally far less likely to do so as compared to their male counterparts. Focus group participants echoed this sentiment, describing negotiations as awkward and sometimes feeling like a “taboo” topic, particularly among older generations. One participant mentioned that salary transparency often feels like a generational issue, noting that younger women seem more open to the idea of discussing pay, whereas older professionals were taught not to discuss it.

## During your time in tech, have you ever engaged in salary negotiations?



## One of the most significant barriers to salary negotiation was the lack of clear information about what others in similar roles are earning.

Both survey respondents and focus group participants pointed to the absence of salary transparency as a major obstacle. Without benchmarks or internal salary guidelines, many women felt disadvantaged during salary discussions, unsure of what a “fair” salary would be for their role.

Another major challenge, which emerged in our focus groups, was the lack of confidence in the negotiation process. Women admitted that they often did not feel confident enough to ask for a raise, especially if they were unsure whether their performance justified it.

In corporate settings, one woman mentioned that her company’s salary reviews were non-negotiable, leading her to feel powerless in advocating for better pay. Many other women described similar experiences where salary increases were tied to performance reviews, leaving little room for negotiation or individual advocacy.

Nationally, the gender pay gap persists, with women in tech earning around 84 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts, according to a 2023 study from [Codecademy](#)<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, our survey revealed that women

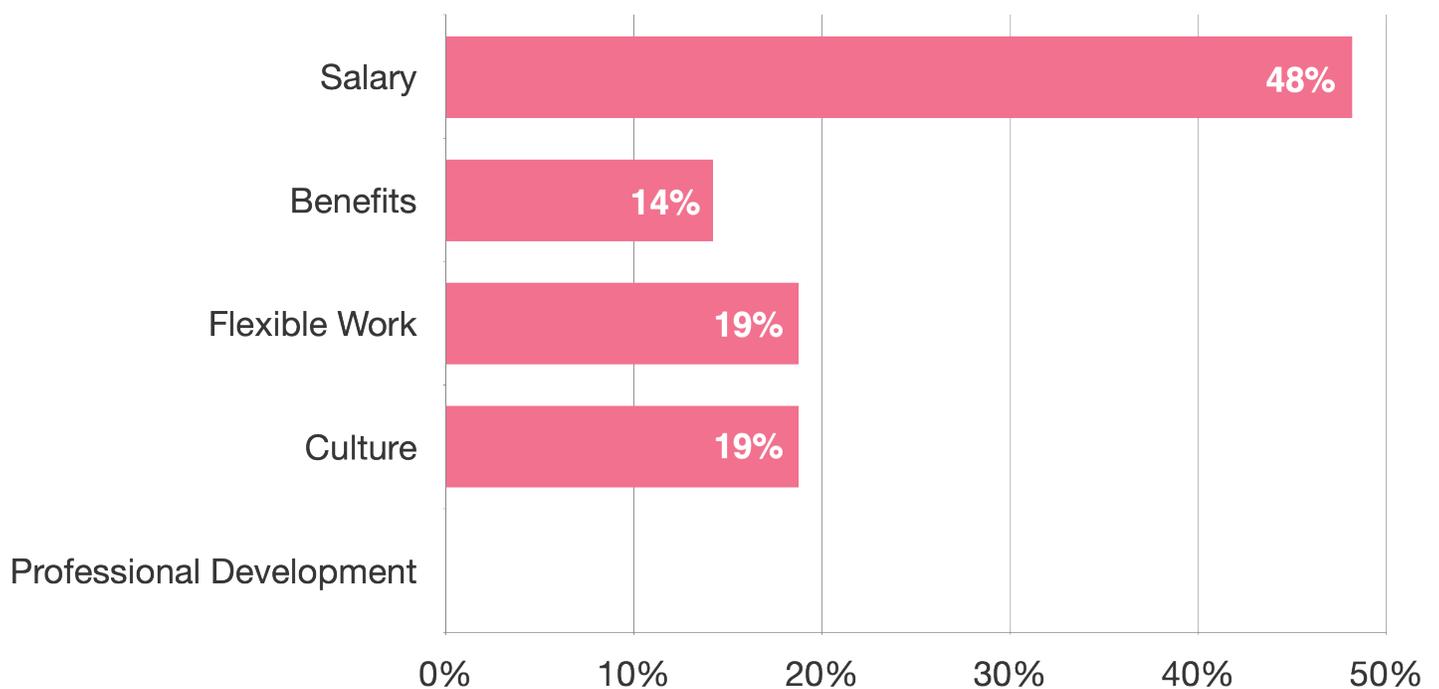
consistently reported lower salaries than their male colleagues (although accounting for differences based on role is difficult given the various ways organizations structure their positions), indicating that this national trend is mirrored locally. Our research identified a key barrier to closing this gap, salary transparency, which remains a national issue, as well. A [report from Grant Thornton](#)<sup>6</sup> showed that only about 40.4% of tech firms measure gender pay inequality, suggesting a widespread need for more rigorous pay equity audits across the industry.

Interestingly, salary was not the primary concern for most women in the tech industry in our region. While fair compensation is important, many participants—both in the pool of survey respondents and focus groups—prioritized flexibility, benefits, and workplace culture over salary when considering their job satisfaction. Women in our focus groups frequently mentioned that they valued control over where and when they worked, as well as health benefits, more than a higher paycheck. This aligns with survey data indicating that flexibility and work-life balance are very important to women in tech.



**When asked what was the most important element when making a decision about a new job in the tech industry, ~52% of respondents suggested that something other than salary was the most significant factor.**

**In this question, respondents were asked to rank the following characteristics of a job by their desirability if they were evaluating new job opportunities in the tech industry.**



# Recommendations

To address these barriers, both survey respondents and focus group participants suggested several actionable steps that could improve salary negotiations and compensation practices in our region's tech community:

## Increase Salary Transparency

Many women emphasized the need for clearer salary guidelines or benchmarks within their companies. Transparent salary ranges could provide employees with a better understanding of what is appropriate to ask for during negotiations and would reduce the anxiety associated with these discussions.

## Offer Negotiation Training

Both survey and focus group participants noted that negotiation is a skill, and many women in tech feel they lack the training or confidence to advocate for themselves effectively. Companies or professional associations could offer workshops or training sessions to help employees—particularly women—develop these skills and feel more comfortable entering salary negotiations.

## Benchmark Compensation

Participants suggested that companies regularly benchmark their compensation packages against industry and national standards to ensure competitiveness and fairness. Providing this information to employees would help them understand where they stand and what they should expect in terms of pay, and this might be uniquely important in our region as wages are typically not reflective of national trends.

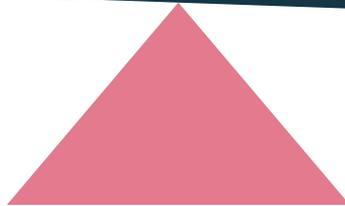


# Work-Life Balance, Flexibility, and PTO

**Work-life balance and flexibility emerged as critical factors for women in the Springfield tech industry.**

Across both the survey data and focus group discussions, participants consistently identified the ability to control their work schedules and environments as essential to their overall job satisfaction. In fact, many women in tech prioritized flexibility and benefits over salary when evaluating their job satisfaction and long-term career decisions.

**Women in tech highly value flexibility and PTO for work-life balance, yet face limited access to remote options and cultural pressures that discourage fully using time off—issues especially evident in Springfield, where flexible work lags behind national levels.**



## Workplace Flexibility

Flexibility—in terms of where, when, and how work gets done—was cited as a top priority for the women who participated in both our surveys and focus groups.

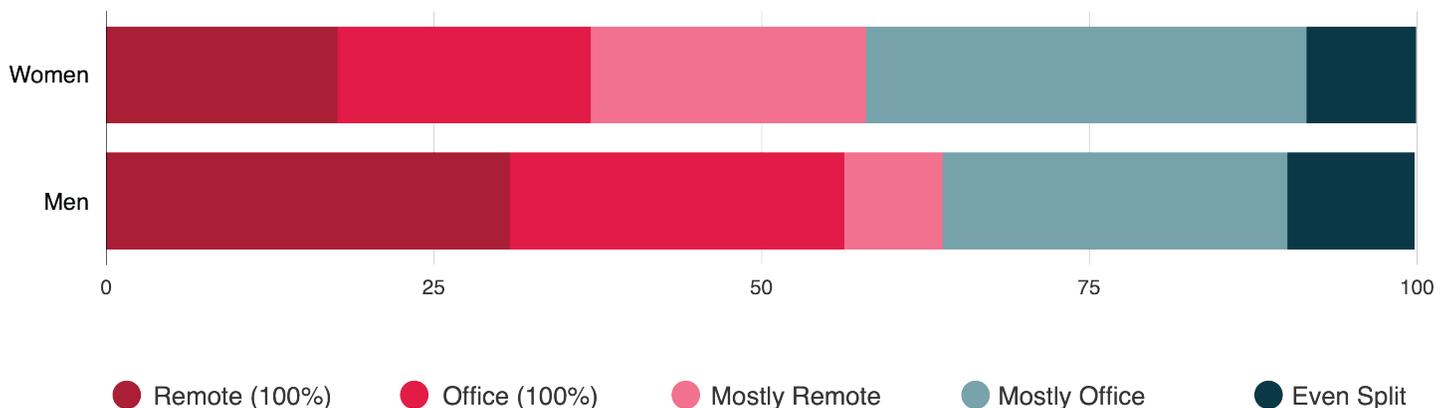
Many women expressed that the ability to work remotely or adjust their hours around personal commitments had a significant impact on their productivity and overall well-being. This was particularly important for women with caregiving responsibilities, who felt that flexible work environments allowed them to maintain both career and family responsibilities more effectively.

However, the survey data also revealed that women are less likely to work remotely than their male counterparts, despite remote work options being highly valued by women. This discrepancy suggests that while women in tech greatly value flexibility, they may not always have access to the same

opportunities for remote work or flexible hours as their male colleagues. Focus group discussions reinforced this point, with some women expressing frustration over limited remote work options, especially in companies that had yet to fully embrace hybrid work models after the pandemic.

Our research found that women in Springfield are less likely to have access to remote work compared to national averages. Nationally, about 56% of tech employees work remotely at least part-time, according to [Owl Labs’ 2023 State of Remote Work Report](#)<sup>7</sup>, which outpaces local adoption (and maintenance) of flexible work policies. This gap highlights a clear area for improvement, as providing more flexible work arrangements could significantly boost job satisfaction and retention for women in Springfield.

### Survey Respondents Current Working Arrangements



## Paid Time Off (PTO)

The topic of Paid Time Off (PTO) also surfaced as a critical aspect of compensation and work-life balance for women. Interestingly, many women in the focus groups admitted that they felt uncomfortable taking PTO, particularly when it came to extended leave. This discomfort stemmed from concerns about being perceived as less committed to their work or falling behind on important projects. Some participants shared that while they had access to ample PTO, they rarely used it in full, citing guilt or fear of letting down their teams, and concerns around returning to excessive amounts of work.

One participant noted that the culture around PTO in her company was improving, with management encouraging employees to take breaks and avoid burnout, but that there was still a gap in creating an environment where taking time off was fully normalized. The survey results mirrored this, with many respondents indicating that they had access to generous PTO policies, but not all felt comfortable using that time off due to workplace pressures or concerns about career advancement.

This discomfort around PTO use seemed to split along lines of seniority and age. Younger women, particularly those early in their careers, were more likely to report feeling uneasy about using their PTO. Meanwhile, more experienced professionals expressed that while they still felt some pressure, they had grown more confident in taking time off as they advanced

**Many women in the focus groups admitted that they felt uncomfortable taking PTO, particularly when it came to extended leave.**

in their careers. Despite this, even longer tenured women noted that there remained an underlying culture in some tech environments where “working through” exhaustion or personal time was seen as a badge of honor.

Many women expressed that they felt an unspoken expectation to be constantly available, especially in fast-paced tech environments where deadlines and workloads are intense. This pressure, combined with a lack of clear policies or support for remote work, made it difficult for women to fully embrace the flexibility they desired.

Additionally, some participants pointed out that their companies did not offer consistent remote work policies across departments or teams, leading to unequal access to flexibility. While some women enjoyed the ability to work from home, others in the same organization were required to be in the office more frequently, leading to frustration over inconsistent work-life balance opportunities.



# Recommendations

Both survey and focus group participants suggested several ways to improve work-life balance for women in our tech industry:

## Normalize PTO Usage

Companies should actively encourage employees to take their full PTO and lead by example, with senior leaders openly discussing their own use of time off to reduce the stigma around taking breaks. In fact, when our focus group participants were asked why they liked their place(s) of employment, many of them said that being encouraged to take PTO was a crucial part of their positive relationships with their employer(s).

## Offer Flexible Work Hours

In addition to remote work, flexible hours were cited as a critical need for women. Companies that allow employees to adjust their schedules to accommodate personal commitments, such as caregiving or health concerns, will likely see higher job satisfaction and retention among their female workforce.

## Enhance Remote Work Options

As women place high value on the ability to work remotely, companies could ensure that remote work opportunities are accessible to all employees, rather than limiting them to certain roles or departments. Clear, transparent policies on hybrid and remote work can help bridge the gap between male and female employees' access to flexibility.

## Encourage Mental Health Breaks

Many women emphasized the need for employers to prioritize mental health and burnout prevention. Offering additional wellness days, mental health support services, or encouraging shorter workweeks during slower periods could help women feel more supported in maintaining a healthy work-life balance.



# Opportunities for Growth & Mentorship

Survey and focus group data show that many women feel they've "peaked" in their careers and want more mentorship and development options. While committed to tech, they often feel stuck without clear advancement paths. Interestingly, some, though aware of plateauing, are content and not actively seeking change.

**Opportunities for career growth and access to mentorship programs were consistently highlighted as areas of opportunity for women in the Springfield tech industry, which is a persistent theme between this and last year's research.**



## Stagnation and Career Advancement

A common theme that emerged from the focus group discussions was the feeling of stagnation. Several participants shared that they felt they had reached a ceiling in their current roles, with limited opportunities for further advancement. One participant mentioned that despite having been in her position for several years, she had seen little movement in terms of promotions or new challenges. She attributed this stagnation to a lack of support from leadership and the

absence of clear professional development programs within her organization. This sense of “career peaking” was mirrored in the survey responses, where a significant portion of women reported feeling that their opportunities for growth were limited. Many women noted that while they had the skills and ambition to take on leadership roles, they were not being offered the same opportunities for advancement as their male counterparts.

## Access to Mentorship

Survey respondents indicated that their companies did not have formal mentorship programs in place. This is consistent with national data, which shows that formal mentorship programs are lacking across the tech industry, with only 18% of women reporting access to such programs according to the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT). Those who did have access to mentorship opportunities often found that they were informal or poorly structured, making it difficult to establish meaningful, long-term relationships with mentors. Women emphasized that having mentors who understand the unique

challenges they face as women in tech is crucial to their career progression.

Additionally, mentorship gaps were seen not only as a hindrance to individual advancement but also as a barrier to retaining women in the tech industry overall. Without strong mentorship networks, many women felt they lacked the support necessary to continue growing within their roles. This aligns with [national trends](#)<sup>8</sup>, which show that women in tech are more likely to leave the industry when they do not have access to mentorship or professional development opportunities.



## Opportunities for Continued Learning

In addition to mentorship and leadership development, women also expressed a desire for more opportunities to continue learning and expanding their technical skills. In both the focus group and survey responses, women highlighted the importance of staying current with new technologies and tools in the rapidly evolving tech industry. However, many felt that they were not given enough time or resources to pursue this continued learning, either due to heavy workloads or the lack of company-sponsored training programs.

Several focus group participants mentioned that they were interested in attending conferences and workshops to expand their knowledge, network with peers, and travel to new (or other) locations, but that they were rarely given the opportunity to do so. Survey respondents similarly expressed that they wished their companies would invest more in professional development, particularly in the form of conferences, technical certifications, or industry events.

**Women seek more opportunities to grow their technical skills, with many expressing interest in conferences and workshops for learning, networking, and travel.**



# Recommendations

Both survey respondents and focus group participants suggested several actionable steps that companies could take to improve growth and mentorship opportunities for women in the tech industry

## Establish Formal Mentorship Programs

Companies should develop formal mentorship programs that pair women with mentors, ideally with women in leadership positions, who can provide guidance and support as they navigate their careers.

## Promote Leadership Development for Women

Employers should ensure that leadership training and professional development opportunities are equally accessible to women. This includes offering programs specifically designed to help women prepare for leadership roles and creating pathways for advancement.

## Encourage Continued Learning

Companies should invest in the ongoing development of their female employees by offering access to conferences, workshops, and certifications that allow women to expand their technical skills and stay current with industry trends.

## Reduce Barriers to Growth

It is critical for companies to actively identify and address barriers to career advancement for women, such as implicit bias in promotion decisions or the lack of access to high-visibility projects that can help propel women into leadership roles.



# Discrimination and Bias

Discrimination and bias, which was a central topic of last year's research, remained as recurring themes in both the survey responses and focus group discussions. Women in our region's tech industry consistently reported feeling that they were treated differently because of their gender, with some experiencing outright discrimination and others describing more subtle forms of bias in their workplaces. The data points to a significant gender gap in how women and men perceive and experience bias, particularly when it comes to opportunities for advancement, workplace treatment, and compensation.

A stylized illustration of a woman in a red silhouette, holding up a large, light pink 'X' mark. The background is a dark teal color.

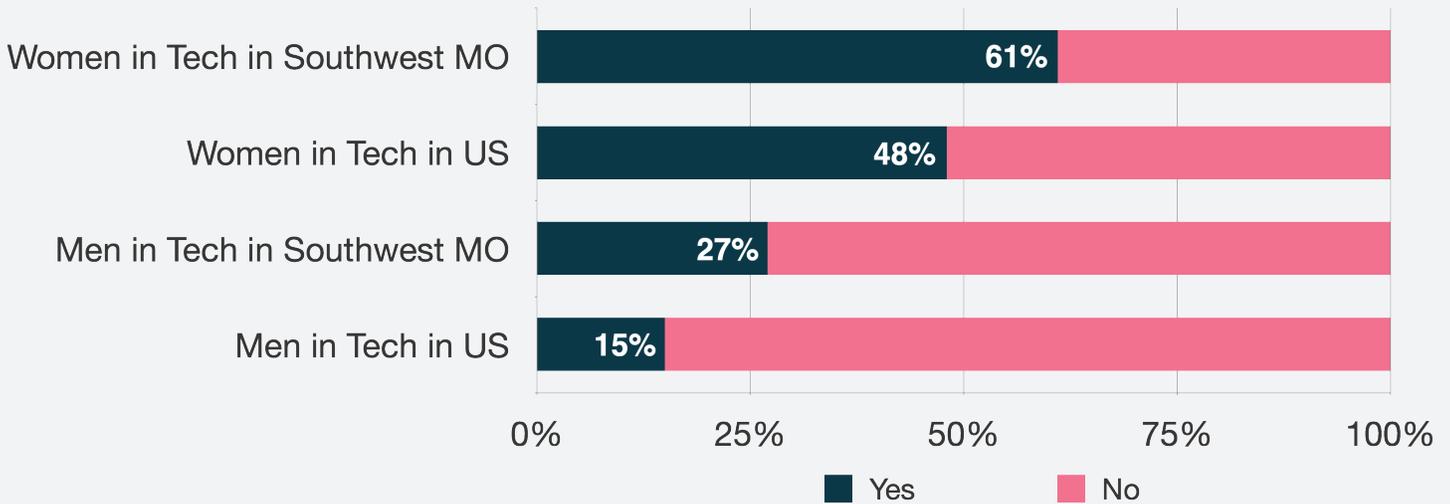
**Survey data showed that women were significantly more likely than men to experience discrimination in the workplace. And, more respondents reported experiencing instances of workplace discrimination in this year's survey than they did in our 2023 survey.**

## Gender-Based Discrimination

Both the survey and focus groups revealed that gender-based discrimination remains a persistent issue for women in our region’s tech industry. Survey data showed that women were significantly more likely than men to **experience** instances of discrimination in the workplace. This ranged from overt acts of discrimination, such as being passed over for promotions or raises, to more subtle forms, like being excluded from decision-making processes or important meetings.

### Discrimination in Tech

Southwest MO vs. U.S.



## Subtle Forms of Bias

While overt discrimination was certainly a concern, many women also discussed more subtle forms of bias that they encountered regularly in their workplaces. These often took the form of microaggressions—small, everyday slights or dismissals that, over time, contributed to a hostile or unsupportive work environment.

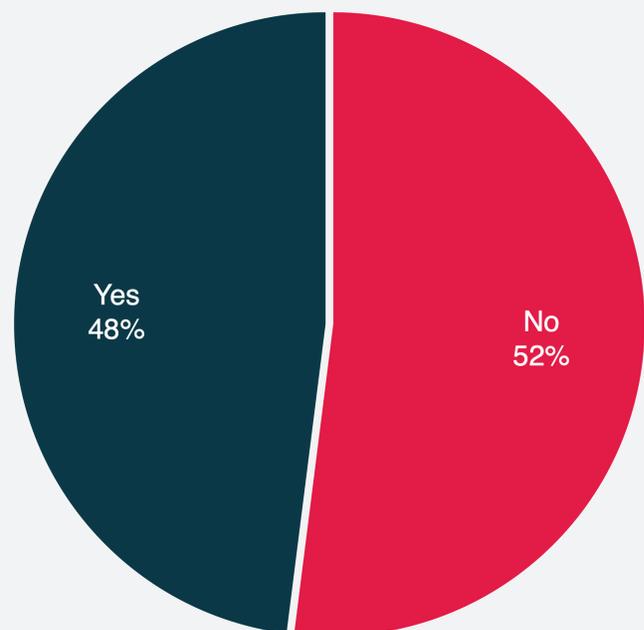
One participant explained that while she hadn't experienced overt sexism, she frequently encountered situations where her ideas were dismissed or ignored, only to be validated when repeated by a male colleague. Another woman described feeling that she was

constantly questioned about her technical abilities, with male coworkers or supervisors often assuming that she lacked the same level of expertise as her male peers.

These microaggressions, though often subtle, were seen as particularly damaging because they reinforced the idea that women do not “belong” in certain roles or that they are inherently less competent in technical fields. Many research participants noted that they had experienced similar patterns of being talked over, dismissed, or underestimated in the workplace.

## Discrimination in Tech

48% of women in tech in the U.S. report having experienced some form of gender discrimination at work.



# Recommendations

Both survey respondents and focus group participants offered several recommendations for addressing discrimination and bias in the workplace:

## Implement Clear Reporting Structures

Companies should ensure that they have clear, transparent processes in place for reporting and addressing discrimination. These structures should be communicated regularly to all employees, and efforts should be made to protect those who report from retaliation.

## Increase Awareness and Training

Employers should invest in bias and discrimination training programs that address both overt discrimination and more subtle forms of bias, such as microaggressions. Training should focus on creating an inclusive workplace culture where women feel supported and valued.

## Promote Transparency in Promotions

Transparency in promotion decisions can help reduce perceptions of bias. By making the criteria for advancement clear and accessible, companies can help ensure that all employees, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities for leadership roles.

## Foster an Inclusive Culture

Companies should actively work to create a culture where all employees feel seen, heard, and valued. This includes recognizing the contributions of women in meetings, ensuring equal speaking time, and addressing any behaviors that contribute to a hostile or exclusionary environment.



# The Effects on Retention

Survey results and focus group discussions revealed that, while women are committed to their roles, many feel that the industry isn't doing enough to support them for the long term. Several factors, including lack of growth opportunities, workplace culture, and gender bias, play significant roles in women's decisions to stay or leave their positions.

Contrary to the common belief that women are more likely to leave tech roles early, both survey and focus group data suggest that women are eager to stay in the tech industry. In fact, many women expressed a deep commitment to their work and the tech field, with participants in the focus groups stating that they enjoy the problem-solving aspects of their jobs

and are passionate about making an impact in their communities through technology.

The sense of community and support that area women have found in tech groups or professional organizations outside of their immediate workplace is a net positive in terms of retention. Several focus group participants mentioned the importance of women's networking groups and mentorship programs that provided them with the support and encouragement they didn't always receive from their employers. These external networks helped women feel connected to a broader community, which in turn supported their decision to stay in the industry.



# Conclusion

The findings from this report underscore both the challenges and opportunities that exist within Springfield's tech industry when it comes to supporting and advancing women. The data, derived from surveys and focus groups, reveals systemic barriers that hinder women's progress, such as the gender pay gap, limited access to leadership roles, and the persistence of discrimination and bias. These issues are not unique to Springfield but reflect broader national trends in the tech industry, where women continue to face similar obstacles to their professional development and job satisfaction.

Despite these challenges, the commitment and passion demonstrated by the women in our region's tech community are clear. They value their work and the contributions they can make to the industry, yet without changes in workplace policies, mentorship opportunities, and support systems, their retention remains at risk. Women prioritize flexibility, mentorship, and inclusive workplace cultures over salary alone, and companies

that address these priorities are more likely to attract and retain female talent.

The report provides actionable recommendations for Springfield's tech employers, including increasing salary transparency, expanding remote work options, investing in formal mentorship and leadership development programs, and creating more inclusive workplace cultures. By addressing these areas, Springfield's tech companies have the opportunity to set themselves apart, ensuring long-term growth and innovation by fostering a diverse and empowered workforce.

Ultimately, the future success of Springfield's tech industry depends on its ability to support all of its professionals, particularly women, by dismantling barriers and building environments where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. With targeted efforts and a commitment to change, Springfield can become a leader in promoting gender equity in tech, creating a more inclusive and dynamic industry for years to come.

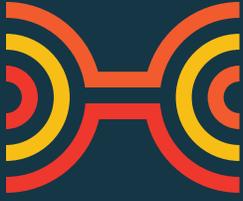
**The future success of Springfield's tech industry depends on its ability to support all of its professionals, particularly women.**



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