Policy Recommendations – Advocating for Women Entrepreneurs

Women are critical to our economy, starting businesses at exponential rates. While these businesses contribute greatly to the economy and society, their ultimate potential for impact can be limited due to the financial, cultural and political barriers women often face as they scale their businesses.

Through the Dell Women's Entrepreneur Network (DWEN), Dell Small Business and Entrepreneur programs, Dell is helping women-owned businesses get access to the right technology, networks and resources to grow.

Since 2010, Dell has invested in annual research to better understand the obstacles standing in women's way of not just starting a business, but growing it. The 2019 Women Entrepreneur Cities Index (WE Cities) is designed to arm city leaders and policymakers with actionable, data-driven research on the landscape for women.

These key learnings, if supported by local governments, can add up to big changes for women-owned businesses globally.

Based on the findings from the WE Cities Index, Dell has developed a set of global policy recommendations. We call on both the private and public sector to take action on the following.

- **First, we believe that access to and development of financial and human capital is essential to fostering women's entrepreneurship; this can be supported through:**

  - o Incentives for individuals and organizations to invest in women-owned companies through venture funds, corporate venture, private equity and social capital.
  - o Modernization of existing government certification, grant and loan programs that help women-owned businesses compete to reflect changing investment models.
  - o Promotion and marketing of existing government programs to encourage broader awareness and use.
  - o Continuing to or start to foster small-business lending programs.
  - o Creating new sources of capital such as crowdfunding and impact investments.
  - o Encouraging enterprise corporations, federal departments and state/local contracts to increase supplier diversity with a percentage of contracts being awarded to women-owned businesses.
  - o Considering a shortening of government payment cycles from 90 days to 30 days for small women-owned suppliers.
  - o Incentivize the adoption of family-friendly policies including access to affordable child care, elder care and paid family leave policies.

- **Second, as women entrepreneurs and business owners turn to each other for help, we believe that the government and business leaders can help facilitate connections by increasing access to local and global networks and markets, by:**

  - o Supporting trade agreements that further liberalize trade and open new markets for businesses of all sizes.
  - o Promoting global and open standards, and reliable mechanisms for cross-border data transfers and business support services and networks, while providing sufficient protections for privacy and information security.
  - o Supporting mentorship efforts through financial support and encouragement of multiplier platforms such as accelerators, continuing education and training programs, and facilitated networking events.

- Encouraging conscious placement of women on boards, in venture partnerships and on executive teams.
- Promoting positive success stories of female founders and business owners through the media, conferences and leadership movements.

- **Finally, we see technology-driven implications for both government and business. Government and business leaders can help women entrepreneurs thrive in the changing-face of technology, through:**

  - Streamlining the process of partnering and applying for government resources,
  - Emphasizing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and digital literacy in education and early training programs.
  - Working with business leaders and educators to encourage technology training programs to end unconscious biases in the STEM fields, government, corporations and institutions.
  - Enabling access to broadband globally.
  - Increasing awareness of options women have to the hardware, software and digital resources they need to scale their companies.