

# Choose Your Career

## Don't Let it Choose You!



### Facts about Utah women:

- Most women who work are married.
- A higher percentage of Utah women work outside the home than the national average.
- Utah has a higher divorce rate than the national average.
- A young woman today can expect to spend more than 30 years in the labor force.
- Most women at one time or another will need to support themselves and/or their families.
- The majority of mothers of preschool children in Utah work outside the home.
- Choosing a career with a high wage will make it easier to combine home and family.
- Almost one-third of female-headed households are in poverty.

DESPITE THE EVIDENCE THAT MOST women work in today's economy, many still fail to plan for a career. And, in the end it hurts us—and our children—economically.

### "Until" Jobs

I once heard it put this way: "Many women have 'until' jobs." What does that mean? They plan on working "until" they get married and have children. Then, they plan on working "until" they put their husband through school. Then, they plan on working "until" they pay for a new car. Then, they plan on working "until" they save enough for a down payment for a new house. You get my drift?

Pretty soon, these women have 30 years of "until" jobs that didn't pay very well, had few benefits, lacked retirement plans, or provided little satisfaction. They haven't chosen something that is fulfilling and most likely they let the job choose them . . . they just took whatever job they could easily find.

***Because most women see motherhood as their prime career, they fail to plan adequately for a career in the workforce.*** This failure to plan places many women and their children at a disadvantage when it comes to income and life satisfaction.

### Choosing the "Wrong" Career

People are in the wrong careers due to a number of factors, says Richard Nelson Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, the best-selling job-hunting book in the world:

- Nobody taught us how to choose a career.
- Many of us prefer to live securely as opposed to taking risks. (Especially women!)
- We're heavily influenced by suggestions from friends who know even less than we do.
- We simply don't want to take time to figure it out.

For women, these factors are compounded because:

- We limit ourselves to a small number of female-dominated career options.
- We don't get enough education.
- We fail to recognize that we will spend a significant portion of our lives working for pay.
- We forget to consider wages in making a career plan.

### **Choose a Career**

Thirty years (or more) is a long time. Take the time and make the effort to choose a career that offers good wages (you can work less that way), good benefits, and lets you combine work and family. And, you should also choose a career that provides you with personal satisfaction and a chance for growth.

**Remember you'll be spending a lot of time on the job.** Wages are important, but so is job satisfaction. Studies show that if mom is happy with her work situation, so is her family.

**Know thyself.** There are plenty of great free assessment tools on the Internet to help you relate what you're good at and like to do to the working world. See [careers.utah.gov](http://careers.utah.gov) (Investigate Careers and [utahfutures.org](http://utahfutures.org)), the Careerlink Inventory (<http://www.mpcfaculty.net/CL/cl.htm>), and the Princeton Review Career Quiz ([www.princetonreview.com/cte/quiz/default.asp](http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/quiz/default.asp)) for just a few examples.

**Get information.** The web site [www.utahfutures.org](http://www.utahfutures.org) can direct you to

numerous sources of career and educational information—job descriptions, outlook, wages, working conditions, etc.

**Experiment.** If you can, experiment in different workplaces before investing a lot of time in training or education. If you want to be a nurse, try working or even volunteering in a hospital to see what the job is like. This can save you time and money in the long run. It's kind of like dating. . . job experimentation can allow you to try on different careers before you commit to just one.

**Ask around.** Talk to people who already have a job in the career you are considering. (Most people love to talk about themselves.) What do they like? What do they hate? How do those factors fit with your aptitudes and values?

**Be willing to change and adapt.** You may find after working in a particular occupation for a while, that it doesn't meet your needs. Don't get stuck working in the "wrong" career or at the "wrong" company for you. ☞

**Plan your options carefully so that you get good pay, benefits, and a retirement plan, in addition to job satisfaction and fulfillment.**



**Make your career a choice,  
not a chore. . .**