



**Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Juliana Stratton**

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**Lt. Governor Stratton Launches New Statewide Initiative to Advance the
Financial Health and Well-Being of Women in Illinois**

*We Thrive is an Effort to Empower Illinois Women and Expand Equitable Access to
Resources and Financial Education*

CHICAGO – Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton is launching a new initiative dedicated to advancing women’s financial wholeness: We Thrive. We Thrive is focused on fostering financial health, freedom and resilience for all women in Illinois. As both a woman leader and Chair of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, Lt. Governor Stratton understands women have a huge role to play in our state’s financial success, but systemic barriers continue to prevent women from wholly engaging in the economy. We Thrive is a major step towards financially empowering women across Illinois—half of our state’s population—to engage in the economy with confidence.

“From day one, our administration has been focused on making Illinois the best state in the nation for women and girls. The wage gap gets a lot of attention, but the root of the issue goes deeper. As a working mother and caregiver, I have been directly impacted by some of the systemic hurdles that continue this cycle of inequity,” **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton.** “We Thrive is a commitment to help Illinois’ women through all phases of financial decision-making, whether it’s accessing childcare, negotiating salaries, getting out of debt or planning for retirement. When women thrive, we all thrive.”

The We Thrive initiative kicks off with a roundtable discussion with women leaders hosted by Lt. Governor Stratton convening to discuss both the obstacles to and opportunities for Illinois’ women to advance in our economy. Subsequently, Lt. Governor Stratton will host *We Chats*, listening sessions to engage women from diverse backgrounds in every corner of our state.

“A key component for women’s financial well-being is fair and equal pay. The Illinois Department of Labor works to ensure pay equity through enforcement of the state’s Equal Pay Act,” **said Illinois Department of Labor Director Jane Flanagan.** “IDOL is also working with community partners across the state to empower women through outreach and education programs.”

“As an organization dedicated to creating economic power for women across Illinois, we are tremendously proud to be joining Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton for the We Thrive launch,” **said Cherita Ellens, President and CEO of Women Employed.** “I applaud the attention that Lieutenant Governor Stratton is placing on the gaps for women in the workplace, and I hope that this new initiative puts a spotlight on the issues working women face, but also finds solutions to make sure every woman in Illinois can thrive.”

The goal of We Thrive is to interrupt a cycle that undercuts women and devalues their efforts to succeed. The initiative will serve as a bridge for women to better prepare for the key financial decisions they make throughout their lifetimes.

“Today’s We Thrive launch is a demonstration of how deep our collective efforts can truly go when we work to uplift women,” **said Nicole Robinson, CEO of YWCA Metropolitan Chicago.** “Our mission to eliminate racism and empower women is a goal that we share with Lieutenant Governor Stratton’s vision. We are confident that this new initiative will address the challenges Illinois women experience across the state and beyond.”

“Through the Office of Minority Economic Empowerment, DCEO provides support, resources and funding opportunities to communities that have historically faced barriers to entry, including women,” **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards.** “In partnership with Lt. Governor Stratton and her We Thrive initiative, the State of Illinois will continue to work toward a more equitable business environment while ensuring Illinois remains the best place to live, work and do business – for all.”

“We are proud to be joining Lieutenant Governor Stratton in a step toward women empowerment,” **said Abigayil Joseph, Chief Executive Officer of Bolhaus Foundation for Women and Girls.** “As leaders, we must remove the barriers women experience, and equip young girls with the necessary tools to be the leaders of tomorrow. I applaud Lieutenant Governor Stratton for her commitment to create spaces for women to share their experience and create solutions that will better all our communities.”

“Our team is proud to join the Lt. Governor as she launches her new initiative, We Thrive, which aims to create spaces for women empowerment in every corner of our state,” **said Raven DeVahn, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services.** “We are eager to promote this outstanding work to help ensure Illinois women can receive access to the information they need to make informative decisions regarding their financial well-being.”

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