

The CRE Women Speak Survey series, conducted by CREW Network, delves into the perspectives and experiences of women in the commercial real estate industry. This report provides an exploratory analysis of prevailing sentiments within the industry at the close of 2023. Below is a summary of the results, capturing the valuable insights shared by women professionals in the field.

RECENT + RELEVANT

GLOBAL ECONOMIC SENTIMENT

The survey reveals economic concerns among most respondents, with 19% “Very concerned” about a potential downturn and 68% “Somewhat concerned” about a short/mild recession. In contrast, 13% express optimism, stating they are “Not at all concerned.” Overall, these responses highlight a prevailing sense of caution and anticipation among women participants regarding the economic outlook. Across different industries, a clear consensus emerges, with the majority expressing moderate concerns about a potential short or mild recession.



13%

NOT AT ALL CONCERNED

13% believe the economy is heading toward better days



68%

SOMEWHAT CONCERNED

68% believe a short/mild recession will take place



19%

VERY CONCERNED

19% think the economy is heading toward an impactful downturn



OFFICE SPACE OUTLOOK

Survey findings reveal a significant consensus among women respondents on the office market forecast, aligning with a prominent real estate economist’s grim projection and characterization of the market as a ‘train wreck in slow motion.’ A combined 76% express agreement with the idea of a prolonged recovery. Conversely, 14% anticipate swifter improvements, while the remaining 10% remain neutral. This collective sentiment indicates a cautious perspective among participants regarding the future of the office market.

Characterizing the Office Market as a “Train Wreck in Slow Motion”



STRONGLY AGREE



SOMEWHAT AGREE



NEUTRAL



SOMEWHAT DISAGREE

Factors' Contributing to Rising Costs Commercial Real Estate Projects/Deals:

Interest rates stand out as the primary concern significantly impacting the escalating costs of commercial real estate projects and deals. When asked about their top three concerns, almost two-thirds of survey respondents place rising interest rates at the top of their list, far surpassing other economic factors like wage inflation and the availability of materials/supplies.



INTEREST RATES



ECONOMIC, INFLATION OVERALL



MATERIALS/SUPPLIES



LABOR



INSURANCE RATES

*Survey participants were asked to prioritize the three most impactful factors, chosen from a predefined list, believed to contribute significantly to the increasing costs of commercial real estate projects and deals. The visualization illustrates the frequency with which a specific factor was chosen as the top reason for the overall increase in costs.

When asked about other factors that are impacting rising costs, the impact of taxes, both at the property and federal levels, emerges as a recurring concern, with respondents mentioning property taxes, tax increases, and the broader economic implications of federal spending. Other noteworthy factors include challenges related to property valuations, unrealistic listing prices set by sellers, and the tightening of small business operations. The influence of market dynamics, such as supply-demand imbalances, over-saturation of available office space, and a lack of Class A and industrial spaces, also stands out.

RETAIL PERFORMANCE

Nearly a quarter of respondents experienced improvements in the performance of retail space in their market or portfolio in 2023, while a significant proportion (46%) reported that retail stayed about the same. Conversely, 29% noted a decrease in retail performance. These findings highlight the dynamic and varied landscape of the retail sector in 2023, with a notable segment maintaining stability amidst recent challenges.

Overall Retail Performance in Markets or Portfolios during 2023

26%

Increased

46%

Stayed about the same

29%

Decreased

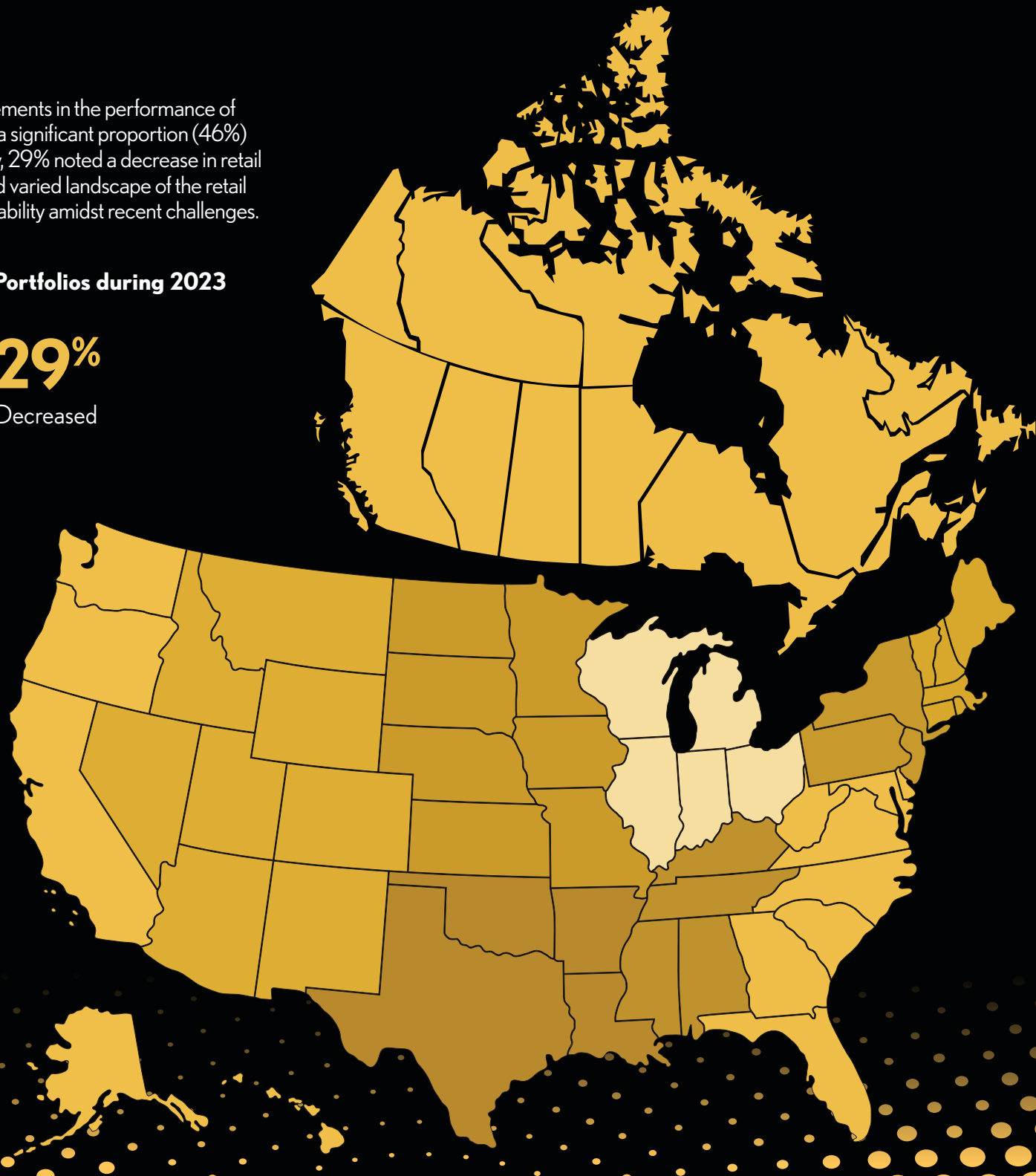


Overall Retail Performance by Geography

Average Response by Census Division

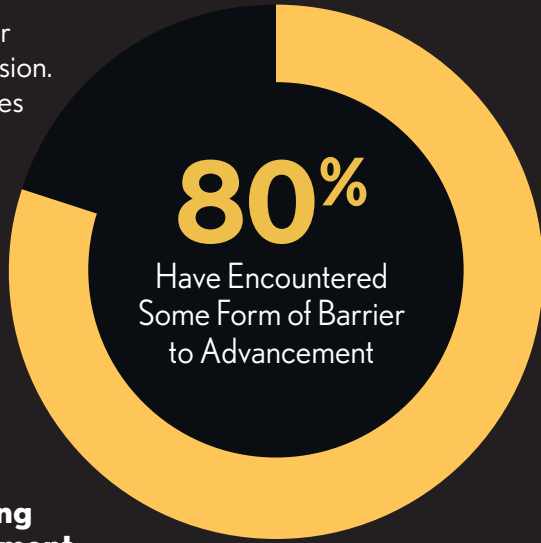


The heat map shows the average result of a 3-point scale (1 = Decrease, 2 = Same, 3 = Increase) by U.S. Census Division. A darker shade indicates a higher average, or better performance rating.



BARRIERS TO ADVANCEMENT

The survey findings highlight substantial challenges faced by women in the commercial real estate industry. Among the 80% of women encountering or having encountered obstacles to career advancement, 44% of women acknowledge the 'Broken Rung,' citing early-career barriers, while 52% perceive a 'Glass Ceiling,' limiting higher-level progression. Additionally, 25% reported facing other barriers to career progression. These nuanced experiences underscore a perceived need for industry-wide initiatives to foster inclusivity and equity.



Of those Encountering Barriers to Advancement...

44%

"Broken Rung"

52%

"Glass Ceiling"

26%

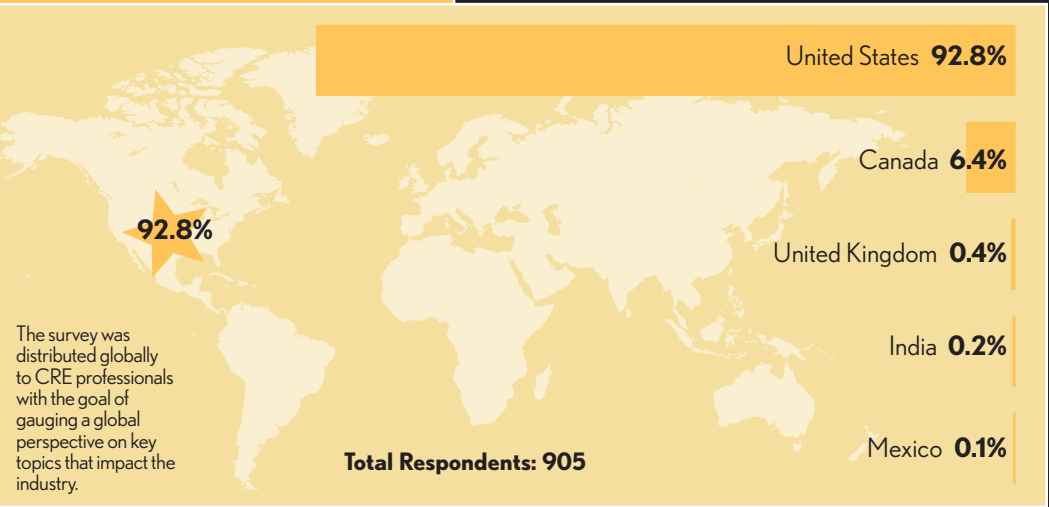
Other Barriers

What Other Challenges are Hindering the Advancement of Women in the Industry?

When asked to share other hindrances to career advancement for women, the survey responses unveiled several predominant challenges. Among these challenges is the persistent issue of visibility and networking disparities. Many women lamented the unequal distribution of networking opportunities, with male counterparts benefiting from informal connections and information sharing, contributing to their career growth. A prevalent issue is the persistence of a "boys club" culture, limiting networking and opportunities. Slow career progression, often requiring executives to retire for advancement opportunities, is a common concern. The gender pay gap and biased perceptions in third-party relationships further underscore the industry's gender disparities. Addressing these systemic challenges will be crucial to promoting inclusivity and eliminating obstacles for women in CRE.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Location of Respondents



Respondents by Industry Sector

	Multifamily	24%
	Office	23%
	Industrial/Manufacturing	16%
	Mixed-use	13%
	Retail	12%
	Health care	5%
	Public Sector	4%
	Education	2%
	Hotel/Motel/Hospitality	1%

Respondents by Career Level

	SVP/Vice-President/ Managing Director/Partner	31%
	Senior Level	29%
	Mid-Level Associate	17%
	C-Suite (President/CEO/CFO/COO)	15%
	Self-Employed/ Independent Contractor	5%
	Entry Level	2%