



City and County of San Francisco

Commission on the Status of Women

Mayor London N. Breed
Acting Director Carol Sacco

A city government that works for women

A new strategic plan for the Commission and Department on the Status of Women, created in partnership with Dalberg Advisors

San Francisco is distinctive in the fight for gender equality. Since 1975, our city has been home to the strongest Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) in the entire nation. The Commission -- a Mayor-appointed team of seven feminists and community leaders -- oversees the Department on the Status of Women (DOSW), a city agency dedicated to gender equality, with a \$10 million annual budget.

The Commission and the Department work alongside other city agencies to advance and enforce women's rights in San Francisco. For example, following a high-profile domestic violence case in 2000, the Commission created the *Justice and Courage* initiative, which convenes city agencies such as the Police Department, District Attorney's Office, and Department of Emergency Management. For over ten years, we have collaboratively identified transformative actions to fill critical gaps in how city government responds to survivors of domestic violence. With our support, agencies implemented over 120 specific changes, after which domestic violence homicides plunged 80% from 10 homicides per year to 2-3 in recent years.

These collaborative efforts go hand in hand with the Commission and Department's other key focus - direct grant-making. We fund critical life-saving services for those battling domestic violence in San Francisco. We distributed over \$8M in grants in 2018-19 to Partner Agencies that served over 18,000 individuals and provided more than 20,000 transitional housing bed nights. These services support survivors and prevent homelessness.

Today, the Commission and the Department have laid out a new strategic vision, to transform San Francisco into a gender equitable city. Over the next three years, we will dedicate ourselves to further strengthening how city government serves women and girls. We will serve as a convener, advocate, researcher, and technical assistance provider to other city agencies, with a particular focus on addressing gender-based violence and increasing women's economic empowerment. Simultaneously, we will continue to fund life-saving direct services to prevent and reduce gender-based violence in San Francisco.

Our strategy was designed under the leadership of the Commission and Department, particularly President Breanna Zwart, Vice President Shokooh Miry, and Director Emily Murase, who is now concluding a 15-year legacy of important policy reforms, programs, and momentum to achieve even greater gender equity in San Francisco. The strategy was developed in partnership with Dalberg Advisors, a strategy consulting firm that tackles issues of social justice, equity, and mobility, in the United States and beyond.

Our new strategy comes at a critical moment in San Francisco. We are battling a global pandemic, and the importance of a coordinated response that leaves no one behind is paramount. Even beyond COVID-19, our city's high income inequality and scarcity of affordable housing has left a gendered toll. Recent analysis by the Department has found, for example, that 13% of women in San Francisco, compared to 11% of men, lived in poverty in 2017. Fair market rent is now as high as two-thirds of a single mother's median income, an increase from 50% in 2008. Notwithstanding notable progress, gender-based violence remains a key concern, particularly for the LGBTQQI community. Lesbian, gay, and bi-sexual high school students, for example, are 3.5 times more likely to experience sexual dating violence than their heterosexual peers.

Our work will support efforts to advance equity within the city government, including, as appropriate, the response to COVID-19. Mayor London Breed has defined strategic priorities such as affordable housing, reducing homelessness, and improving public safety. Gender-based violence, including domestic violence and human trafficking are major causes of homelessness. Under our new strategy, the San Francisco Family Violence Council and the Mayor's Task Force on Anti-Human Trafficking will accelerate its collaborative work.

While the focus or "North Star" of the new strategy will be the city government, success will depend on collaboration with the private sector and the voices of those in our local communities. To create lasting change, gender considerations need to be a part of everyone's agenda - from the city's private sector suppliers and partners to the diverse voices of the Commission's community partners. Our expertise also gives us the benefit of being at the center of national, regional, and global conversations on gender, and we will integrate and engage with the perspectives of these actors as well.

As we implement our strategy, the Commission and Department call on the broader community to partner, advise, and amplify our work in this critical moment for women, girls, and LGBTQQI persons across our city. **We cannot do this alone. Join us in building a city government that works for women.**

Please direct questions to Breanna Zwart (breanna.zwart@sfgov.org) and Shruthi Jayaram (shruthi.jayaram@dalberg.com). Breanna is President of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women. Shruthi is an Associate Partner at Dalberg Advisors, a strategy consulting firm that works on issues of social justice, equity, and mobility in the United States and globally.