City and County of San Francisco
Department on the Status of Women

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Gender Analysis of Nontraditional Occupations in the City and County of San Francisco Workforce
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Highlights: Information Technology

Background:

- Women were the pioneers of computer science in the 1950s and entered the profession in large numbers over the next three decades. This trend peaked when women made up 37% of all undergraduate computer science majors in 1985; by 2011, women accounted for just 18% of computer science undergraduate students.
- One explanation for the drop in women computer science majors is that the first personal computers were exclusively marketed to boys and culturally reinforced as a male toy, hobby, and skill.
- Additional barriers include patterns of discriminatory behavior that create an unsupportive classroom environment, gender differences in how students assess their own performance, a scarcity of role models, and the lack of a sufficient critical mass to sustain supportive peer communities.
- In interviews with female City employees, women referenced the "old boys' club," hostile work environments, and few opportunities to advance or develop as barriers for women in the field.

City Progress:

- Of the 683 technology positions in the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 21, roughly 1 in 4 positions are occupied by women.
    - Female information technology workforce utilization rate in the City is 133%. The number of women the City employs in these job categories exceeds the available labor pool in San Francisco by 33%.
    - In comparison to the private sector, the City workforce exceeds the private sector in the percent of women in technical positions.
- The Department of Technology has set an example of proactively removing barriers of entry for women applicants, such as removing gendered language from its job postings and hiring a talent acquisition human resources specialist.
- City initiatives to increase diversity early in the hiring process, including women on all interview panels, and creating a boot camp within the Department of Technology with Girls Who Code, have proven successful.
- The City technology workforce has a much smaller gender pay gap than the private workforce. Women in city technology occupations are paid 95% of what men earn.
- Female city employees interviewed for this report had mixed responses to questions about how culture affects retention. Some experienced or witnessed gender discrimination while others said they found the City to be the ideal workplace for women.
- While some interviewees felt they had flexibility to choose the field in which they were most interested, others described a lack of career advancement paths for any gender.

Recommendations:

- Work with local educators and organizations to promote STEM education among girls at an early age.
- Finalize the City Tech Bootcamp and continue connecting with regional women's coding networks to develop talent pipelines.
- Facilitate connections among women in technology roles, particularly in departments without a designated IT team.