



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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PRESS RELEASE: Friends of the Commission on the Status of Women and the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women Restructure to Maximize Impact for Women, Girls and Non-Binary People

San Francisco, CALIF. (November 8, 2021): The Friends of the Commission on the Status of Women (FCOSW) and the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women are excited to share the restructuring of their relationship to maximize impact for women, girls, and non-binary people in San Francisco and beyond. After 46 years of successful partnership, FCOSW will be converting from an entity that is dedicated to funding and supporting the work of the Commission and the Department to one that provides support to a wider array of organizations through general grant making, fiscal sponsorship and other programmatic work that ensures equity for all women, girls and non-binary people.

“We’re incredibly proud of the extensive body of work we have done together over the past 46 years and will continue to work alongside the Commission and the Department in a new format that will better serve women and girls by expanding to whom and how we disperse the funds we raise,” said Verna Liza Antonio-Caba, Executive Director of FCOSW. “In this moment, especially in the women’s community, the need is for economic resources to go where they are needed the most, directly to the community-based organizations on the ground doing the work, and we are absolutely able and willing to help meet the needs of the broad coalition of organizations we built together over the four decades of partnering,” said FCOSW Board President Linda Calhoun.

Throughout that time, FCOSW focused on supporting the San Francisco Commission and Department on the Status of Women and its policies and demonstrated their support with annual grants to the Department over the past 15 years totaling more than \$260,000. These grants were for specific purposes based on budgets and forecasts from the Department. Some of these grants funded the Department’s fellowship program, including one full-time fellow focused on women’s economic security.

Founded in 1975, FCOSW is an advocacy group that focuses on stopping violence against women, eliminating human trafficking and promoting gender equity and women’s economic empowerment. FCOSW was established to support the Commission on the Status of Women and became the outside vehicle used to raise private dollars to support the Commission’s initiatives. In 1994, San Francisco voters enacted Prop. E, creating a permanent City department to carry out policies of the Commission. Over the past 18 years, the Department has steadily grown and now itself disperses more than \$8.5 million dollars to local organizations. Moving forward, the Department will work with a local foundation designed more specifically to assist with the processing of charitable donations directly given for the Department.

“We owe the Friends such a debt of gratitude for their steadfast support, and we congratulate them as they move in this new direction when their leadership is needed the most. They have played a critical role in our local women’s movement here in San Francisco, especially during an era when there wasn’t the public/private infrastructure to support the policy efforts of the Commission,” said Kimberly Ellis, Director of the Department on the Status of Women. “This moment calls for innovation, investment and ingenuity, and with the Friends’ focus expanding to more of our community-based organizations when they have been hit so hard by COVID, we know that we are moving in the right direction; the Department and Commission look forward to seeing and supporting FCOSW as it grows into its next level of greatness.”

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