



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Personnel

Subject: Women's Commission Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Recommended Priorities

Meeting Date: June 24, 2025

Formal Title: Accept notice of and consider the Women's Commission's Recommended Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Priorities

Recommended Actions

Accept notice of and consider the Women's Commission's recommended Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) priorities, as submitted by the Personnel Director on behalf of the Women's Commission.

Executive Summary

On February 27, 2024, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution reaffirming Santa Cruz County's status as a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) County and directing the Women's Commission to develop recommendations to the Board on CEDAW priorities to further gender equity throughout both the community and the County government workforce.

As a Board-appointed advisory body, the Women's Commission's developed its recommended priorities independently of the Personnel Department and County Executive Office. While staff of the Personnel Department provided support and assisted in preparing the Commission's submission, the report's recommendations do not represent the positions or endorsements of the Personnel Department, County Executive Office, or any other County department.

Discussion

The Women's Commission crafted their recommended CEDAW priorities through a high-level approach by leveraging existing data, current or recent reports, engaging with representatives from relevant County agencies and departments, and relying upon the Commission's deep familiarity with the specific issues affecting women in Santa Cruz County. Research into specific priority areas was delegated to Commissioners with the most relevant professional expertise and community-partner connections.

Despite these efforts, the Commission has been operating with a reduced capacity, having contended with multiple vacancies and significant membership turnover throughout this project.

Given these challenges, the Commission did not have the resources or capacity to conduct the kind of in-depth analysis that these priorities deserve and, in many cases, suggests that the Board direct staff in the relevant agencies to explore the identified priorities further and determine the most effective strategies for implementation.

Financial Impact

If implemented, the Commission's recommendations will likely require significant

financial investment from the County, primarily for research, program development, staff

time, and resource allocation. Key recommendations, such as commissioning a gender analysis of County workforce compensation (Recommendation 1), establishing a County Health Equity Fund (Recommendation 3), and expanding affordable childcare programs (Recommendation 8), will necessitate funding for new initiatives and ongoing support. Additionally, addressing the OB/GYN care shortages (Recommendation 2), supporting justice-involved women (Recommendation 9), and expanding affordable housing (Recommendation 7) will require both staff time and financial resources for task forces, program development, and infrastructure. Efforts to mitigate the impact of federal funding losses (Recommendation 5) could potentially involve reallocating resources if alternative funding streams have not been found. While these recommendations will likely require upfront investment, they have the potential to have a significant long-term impact on gender equity in Santa Cruz County.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Plans, Policies & Budgets, Workplace & Workforce, Communications & Education, Community Voices & Partnership
Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Attainable Housing, Dynamic Economy

Submitted By:

Ajita Patel, Personnel Director

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

ChatGPT 4, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) large language model tool, significantly contributed to the development of this agenda item, including Staff Report and Attachments, in compliance with the County of Santa Cruz AI Appropriate Use Policy.