

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



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.



Santa Cruz County Women's Commission

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commissions@santacruzcountyca.gov
www.sccwc.org

March 26, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Women's Commission Recommendations to the Board on CEDAW Priorities

Dear Chair Hernandez and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the *Santa Cruz County Women's Commission*, we write in response to the Board's February 27, 2024, 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.

The urgency of this work has only increased in the wake of the new federal administration's recent executive orders that threaten residents based on their immigration status, access to reproductive healthcare and gender-affirming care for women and the LGBTQ+ community, and Federal funding for County programs and community partners with diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. These federal actions exacerbate existing disparities and create new barriers to equity making it imperative that the County take proactive steps to protect and support women and marginalized communities.

Therefore, the Women's Commission requests that you consider implementing the following recommendations that address critical issues affecting women in our community and propose actionable steps within your jurisdiction to effect lasting and meaningful change in these areas:

1. Gender Analysis of County Workforce Compensation (Article 11)

Recommendation: Direct the County Administrative Office to commission an independent consultant to conduct a comprehensive gender analysis of County workforce compensation to identify and address pay disparities.

2. Ob/Gyn Care Shortages in South County (Articles 12 and 14)

Recommendation: Establish a task force of County Health Services Agency staff and community partners to examine the root causes of the scarcity of OB/GYN providers in South County and propose solutions that address those systemic root causes (such as provider compensation, cost of living, and the lack of affordable housing).

3. Protecting Access to Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Health Care (Article 12)

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Protect Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Health Care Rights to:

- Establish a County Health Equity Fund to offset the impact of federal and state restrictions by supporting community-based organizations and providers that offer reproductive health services (e.g., elective abortion, contraception, etc.), gender-affirming care(e.g., hormone therapy, mental health services, etc.), as well as health education and direct services.
- Prioritize grants and contracts with health care providers who continue to offer comprehensive reproductive and gender-affirming care despite funding threats.

4. Addressing Prenatal Substance Use Disparities (Article 12)

Recommendation: Support legislation, policies, and programs that address Santa Cruz County's disproportionately high prenatal substance use affecting women and fetuses. Allocate additional funding to the Health Services Agency's behavioral health budget to address substance use and mental health issues in women and children.

5. Mitigating the Impact of Federal Funding Losses Due to DEI Policies (Articles 5, 10, 11, 13)

Recommendation: Direct the County Administrative Office to work with County departments to assess potential funding shortfalls resulting from federal withdrawal of funds from DEI-aligned programs and identify alternative sources of support. Establish a community task force to identify which community partner safety net services for women and children will be most impacted and identify alternative sources of support.

6. Gender-Specific, Trauma-Informed Support for Incarcerated Women (Article 15)

Recommendation: Direct the Sheriff's Office/Corrections to revisit the recommendations made in the 2017 report by Susan Greene, "*Gender Matters: A Profile of Women in Santa Cruz County Jail*", to determine if they have been implemented, assess the effectiveness of those that have been, and evaluate opportunities to implement outstanding recommendations. Additionally, ask the Sheriff's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Probation Department to implement and fortify gender-responsive, trauma-informed policies and reentry support programs for incarcerated women in Santa Cruz County.

7. Expanding Affordable Housing for Women and Women-Led Households (Article 13)

Recommendation: Direct the Housing for Health Division to conduct a comprehensive analysis of housing trends to identify any disparities disproportionately impacting women (particularly unhoused women) and women-led households, and implement housing programs that prioritize support for women and families.

8. Enhancing Affordable Childcare Access (Articles 11 and 13)

Recommendation: Work with the Human Services Department to expand funding for affordable childcare programs, particularly for single-income, women-led households, and explore additional state and federal grant-funding to expand such programs.

9. Support for Justice-Involved Women Affected by Immigration Policies (Articles 9 and 15)

Recommendation: Establish a task force to consider how best to support women and their families who have become justice-involved due to their immigration status. The task force should evaluate the feasibility of and monitor implementation of the following elements among others: Public Defender's Office intervention, County funding for legal representation, and County monitoring of the status of County residents who have been deported or removed due to immigration policies.

10. Collection and Use of Gender-Disaggregated Data

Recommendation: Require County departments to collect and report gender-disaggregated data in *all* submissions to the Board, ensuring Board awareness of any gender-based disparities when making funding and policy decisions.

11. Strengthen the 2024 CEDAW Resolution by establishing a CEDAW Ordinance (Article 7)

Recommendation: Draft and adopt a CEDAW ordinance to further formalize the County's commitment and enhance accountability, transparency, and alignment with community partners, to ensure ongoing commitment to gender equity goals.

We appreciate the Board's leadership in reaffirming its commitment to gender equity through its recent resolution, and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate further on these priorities. We look forward to working together to implement these recommendations and make a lasting impact in Santa Cruz County.

Respectfully,

Signed by:

Suzanne Doty

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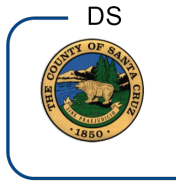
Suzanne Doty, *Commission Co-Chair*

Signed by:

Claire Protti

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Claire Protti, *Commission Co-Chair*



Adopted 02/27/2024
Board of Supervisors
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BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. 42-2024

On the motion of Supervisor: Hernandez
Duly seconded by Supervisor: Koenig

The following resolution is adopted:

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

WHEREAS, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is a United Nations treaty adopted in 1979 that requires countries to take appropriate measures to promote and protect the rights and fundamental freedoms of women, aiming to advance the dignity and rights of all people; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz is committed to fostering equitable outcomes for all by providing opportunities, access, and support, to individuals of every status, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, gender identity, transgender status, age, veteran status, pregnancy, or any other non-merit factor; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz recognizes that, though the County has made great strides to improve gender equity, opportunities exist to improve gender equity in areas such as access to affordable childcare, affordable housing, education, healthcare, gender-based violence, political participation, and employment; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, the Santa Cruz County Women's Commission successfully advocated for the passage of a CEDAW resolution by the Board of Supervisors and initiated the first-ever Status of Women and Girls (SOWAG) Report to address gender inequalities in the areas of economic justice, health care, education, criminal justice, violence against women, and political participation; and

WHEREAS, the California Budget and Policy Center's Women's Well-Being Index identified a notable difference in pay between men's and women's annual median earnings from 2014 - 2018, highlighting that

COB Rev. 8-1-22

Santa Cruz County women made 84 cents to the dollar compared to their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz acknowledges there is a continuing need for the County to protect the human rights of women and girls and to revisit the articles of CEDAW; and

WHEREAS, the 30 Articles of CEDAW provide a comprehensive framework to address issues relating to gender inequality and outline opportunities to strengthen local policies and practices to ensure they result in equitable outcomes for all; and

WHEREAS, several key areas have been identified from the CEDAW including but not limited to economic development, gender wage gap, housing and homelessness, affordable accessible childcare, gender-based violence, health care equity, and political and civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, numerous other cities and counties across the United States have adopted the principles of CEDAW as part of their local policies and initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the bi-annual Equal Employment Opportunity and Cultural Competency Plan has supported the County in its efforts to foster the advancement of women into leadership positions within County Government; and

WHEREAS, it is the Board of Supervisors' intent to ratify its support for the CEDAW treaty and take related actions to address any gender equity issues that may be identified within the County government's workforce, or, more broadly, throughout the Santa Cruz County community; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Santa Cruz County calls upon all elected representatives and stakeholders in Santa Cruz County cities and neighboring jurisdictions to collaborate in the advancement and swift implementation of relevant components of the CEDAW treaty;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors directs the Women's Commission to review the Articles of CEDAW, identify priorities, and formulate questions related to each priority area that can be addressed using departmental data.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Santa Cruz County Women's Commission is directed to develop recommendations from the articles the Board can prioritize to further advance gender equity throughout the Santa Cruz County community and within the County government's workforce and return to the Board with their recommendations by August 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer is directed to consider incorporating the County government workforce-related recommendations into the 2025-2027 Equal Employment Opportunity and Cultural Competency Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this 27th day of February, 2024, by the following vote:

AYES:	Supervisors: Koenig, Friend, Hernandez, McPherson and Cummings
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

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2/29/2024

Justin Cummings
Chair of the Board of Supervisors

DocuSigned by:



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ATTEST: 2/29/2024

Juliette Rezzato
Clerk of the Board

Approved as to Form:

DocuSigned by:

 2/21/2024

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Jason M. Heath (02/21/2024, 15774)
Office of the County Counsel



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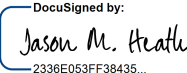
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Juliette.Rezzato@santacruzcountyca.gov

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- ii. send us an email to nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us and in the body of such request you must state your email, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We do not need any other information from you to withdraw consent.. The consequences of your withdrawing consent for online documents will be that transactions may take a longer time to process..

Required hardware and software

The minimum system requirements for using the DocuSign system may change over time. The current system requirements are found here: <https://support.docusign.com/guides/signer-guide-signing-system-requirements>.

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- Until or unless you notify County of Santa Cruz as described above, you consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you by County of Santa Cruz during the course of your relationship with County of Santa Cruz.