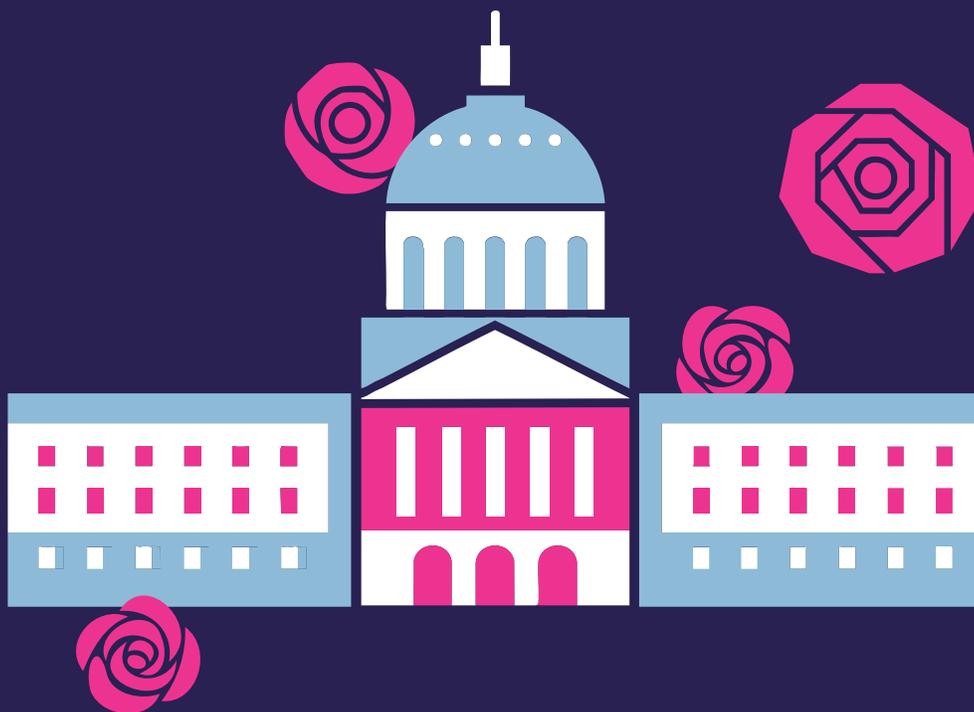


CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
DEPARTMENT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

# WOMEN'S AGENDA OVERVIEW



DEPARTMENT ON THE STATUS OF  
**WOMEN**

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## Introduction

The San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1975 during a period of growing advocacy to advance women's rights, gender equity, and equal access to opportunity. In 1994, the Department on the Status of Women (DOSW) was established as a permanent City department under the San Francisco Charter, strengthening the City's institutional commitment to advancing the well-being, safety, and opportunities of women, girls, and non-binary people.

Following participation in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, San Francisco became the first municipality in the United States to adopt a local **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** ordinance in 1998. This ordinance established a framework for integrating gender equity into City policies, programs, and services and has since served as a model for jurisdictions across the country.

Over the following decades, the Department leveraged its mandate to advance policies and programs addressing gender-based violence and strengthening support systems for survivors of intimate partner violence, family violence, human trafficking, and sexual violence. Through partnerships such as the Family Violence Council and the Human Trafficking Task Force, the Department helped improve coordination across government agencies and community organizations while advancing prevention efforts that support women, girls, and families.

Today, the Department builds on this legacy through the **Women's Agenda for San Francisco**, a multi-year framework focused on improving outcomes across four policy areas: health, safety, economic mobility and security, and civic leadership and community engagement. Grounded in community input and data, the Agenda reflects a collaborative approach to advancing gender equity while responding to the evolving needs of San Franciscans.

We invite you to learn more about the Department's initiatives, policy priorities, and goals—and to join us in advancing a more equitable future for all.

# Purpose Statement & Vision

Our Purpose and Vision statements ground and guide our work.

## *Purpose Statement*

The **purpose and mandate** of the San Francisco **Department on the Status of Women** is to **advance gender equity** by **shaping policy, collaborating to hold City and County systems accountable, and strengthening community-anchored pathways** that **support** the **safety, dignity, health, and economic security of women, girls, and non-binary people** in **San Francisco**.

## *Vision*

The San Francisco Department on the Status of Women **envisions** a City and County where women, girls, and non-binary people are **safe, supported, thrive,** and **where public systems are accountable** to those most impacted by **gender-based inequities**.

# The Women's Agenda

The San Francisco Women's Agenda is a citywide framework designed to advance gender equity and improve outcomes for women, girls, and non-binary people across the City and County of San Francisco. Grounded in community input, data, and collaboration across public systems, the Agenda outlines a coordinated approach to addressing the structural conditions that shape gender equity outcomes.

The Department on the Status of Women developed this Agenda through community listening sessions, consultations with City departments, engagement with community-based organizations, and insights from the Department's

**2024 Gender Equity Needs Assessment.** These efforts highlighted persistent challenges affecting women and families, including economic instability, health disparities, safety concerns, and barriers to civic participation.

To address these challenges, the Department fulfills its chartered mandate through three core roles. First, the Department serves as the **Women's Advancement Steward**, ensuring that gender equity remains central to City policies, programs, and systems. Second, the Department acts as an **Advocate** for policies and investments that improve outcomes for women, girls, and non-binary people, including equitable service delivery, employment opportunities, leadership development, and resource allocation. Third, the Department acts as a **Convener**, bringing together City agencies, community organizations, and partners to share best practices, strengthen collaboration, and advance coordinated strategies for gender equity.

The Women's Agenda is organized around four core policy areas identified through community engagement and data analysis:

- **Health** – advancing holistic health equity, including reproductive and maternal health and mental well-being.
- **Safety** – strengthening prevention and response to gender-based violence and improving safety in public spaces, workplaces, and communities.
- **Economic Mobility and Security** – expanding pathways that support financial stability, employment opportunities, and long-term economic resilience.
- **Civic Leadership and Community Engagement** – increasing representation and leadership opportunities for women, girls, and non-binary people in civic life.

Through this Agenda, the Department builds on San Francisco's long-standing leadership in gender equity and advances a coordinated framework to strengthen safety, opportunity, and well-being for women, girls, and non-binary people across the City and County.

## Core Roles

The Department's roles reflect community expectations that DOSW center holistic well-being, safety, dignity, and equity in governance, moving beyond symbolic oversight and actively coordinating systems to prevent harm and foster opportunities. Together, they define how the Department operationalizes its mandate and responds to the lived realities documented through data and community voice.

## Women's Advancement Steward

The City and County of San Francisco has frameworks to advance gender equity and ensure compliance with human rights obligations, including the requirements set forth in the local CEDAW Ordinance. Within this framework, the Department on the Status of Women is tasked with supporting City and County agencies to ensure equitable implementation of these commitments across City and County policies, programs, and systems, focusing on four core policy areas outlined below.

## Advocate

As an advocate for gender-responsive policy at the local level, the Department strives to ensure policies and programs include support for women, girls and non-binary people. This includes measuring outcomes and impacts as they relate to women, girls and non-binary people. Additionally, the Department elevates San Francisco's priorities in state and federal policy discussions when proposed actions or legislation would affect local gender equity outcomes, including by advocating for funding to support local efforts. As such, the Department strives to ensure that policy development and resource allocation are informed by lived experience, data, and equity principles—particularly in a shifting policy environment that can exacerbate harm to women, girls, and non-binary people.

## Convener

The Department leverages relationships both inside and outside of government to align efforts, resources, and outcomes to address gender inequities. This role responds directly to community and stakeholder feedback, highlighting fragmentation across systems as a barrier to access, trust, and effectiveness. Convenings are outcome-oriented, emphasizing coordination and follow-through.

## Core Policy Areas

The Women's Agenda set outlines four policy focuses for the Department and City and County as a whole: Health, Safety, Economic Mobility and Security, and Civic Leadership and Community Engagement. Community members, advocates, and City and County partners consistently identified these policy areas as central to addressing the conditions shaping gender equity outcomes in San Francisco. Organizing the Women's Agenda around these four policy areas will enable the Department to address needs and opportunities in policymaking, advocacy, and service delivery through coordinated, equity-centered approaches.

## Health

The Department recognizes its responsibility to take a more holistic approach to supporting San Francisco's women, girls, and non-binary people with the information, tools, and resources they need to live healthy, safe, and self-determined lives.

In order to advance holistic health equity for women, girls, and non-binary people, the Department analyzes structural barriers to physical, mental, and reproductive well-being and promotes policies, programs and environments that support healing, autonomy, and dignity.

## *Reproductive Justice and Health*

A core focus of the Department's work has been, and will continue to be, defending the right to abortion care and reproductive freedoms for all people. Looking ahead, the Department will partner with city agencies, such as the Department of Public Health, and community organizations to focus on strengthening infrastructure, expanding partnerships, and increasing service availability.

## *Strong Starts: Improving Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes*

Strong Starts is a cross-sector maternal health equity initiative designed to address disparities in birth outcomes in communities of color, with special attention to Black, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander families by aligning public health, economic mobility, housing stability, and community safety systems.

## **Safety**

Safety must be understood through a multidimensional approach that shapes how women, girls, and non-binary people move through the City and County and participate in daily activities. Individuals who live, work, and attend school in San Francisco should be able to navigate the City and County's geography with confidence and dignity at all times of day. Safety and perceptions of safety directly affect mental well-being, travel, mobility, and how people engage (or don't) in social activities, making this policy area foundational to gender equity and quality of life.

Available data and community input underscore the urgency of safety. San Francisco ranks near the bottom (56<sup>th</sup> of 58) among California counties in the percentage of women who feel safe in their neighborhoods all or most of the time. Research shows that women, girls, and non-binary individuals face unique patterns of victimization, often in everyday settings such as public transit, workplaces, and online spaces, which can significantly hinder their mobility and participation in public life.

## Civic Leadership and Community Engagement

A healthy democracy depends on residents who are informed, engaged, and equipped to participate meaningfully in civic life. Key opportunities highlighted in this area include voting, serving on boards and commissions, community organizing, effectively navigating City and County systems, and participating in public discourse. These pathways are foundational to gender equity. The Department seeks to improve and expand engagement among women, girls, and non-binary people to support their involvement in community and civic life and to address areas where these communities are underrepresented and/or lack access to leadership roles.

## Economic Mobility and Security

Economic mobility and financial security are foundational to gender equity and influence outcomes across health, safety, and civic participation. The Department recognizes that the ability to meet basic needs and build economic stability is essential to individual well-being and family resilience. Women and their families are disproportionately impacted by economic barriers: women are overrepresented in low-wage sectors; gender wage gaps have grown, especially for women of color and transwomen; and much of women's work remains unpaid. The Department is working with internal and external partners on programs to improve access to entrepreneurship opportunities, financial literacy, internships, and other career pathways to achieve economic mobility and security for women, girls, and non-binary people. City departments will continue supporting existing services such as housing stabilization, tenant education, high-quality early care, compensation investments, community leadership, health and wellness, and economic mobility.

# Policy Environment: Local, State, and Federal Legislative Landscape

Advancing gender equity requires engagement with policy environments beyond City government. While the Department on the Status of Women operates within the municipal framework of the City and County of San Francisco, legislative decisions at the state and federal levels significantly influence the health, safety, economic security, and civic participation of women, girls, and non-binary people.

Federal and state policies shape critical areas of daily life, including reproductive health access, workplace protections, immigration enforcement, healthcare coverage, childcare access, housing stability, and violence prevention. Because these policy environments directly affect local systems and communities, the Department monitors legislative developments and works with City leadership to assess potential impacts on San Franciscans.

At the **local level**, the Department supports the development and analysis of policies that advance gender equity across City systems, including initiatives related to reproductive health access, gender-based violence prevention, workplace equity, transit safety, language access, and economic opportunity.

At the **state level**, the Department tracks legislation affecting reproductive health protections, pay equity, family and medical leave, childcare and caregiving supports, human trafficking prevention, digital safety, and workforce development.

At the **federal level**, policy decisions related to healthcare access, Medicaid funding, reproductive rights, immigration enforcement, workforce protections, and violence prevention programs can significantly affect communities in San Francisco.

Through collaboration with the Mayor's Office, the Board of Supervisors, City departments, and community partners, the Department helps ensure that gender equity considerations inform policy discussions and that San Francisco's priorities are reflected in broader legislative frameworks.

# San Francisco City and County Partners

*Mayor Daniel Lurie and the Department on the Status of Women would like to thank City and County partners for their collaboration on the Women's Agenda.*

Adult Probation Department

Board of Supervisors

City Administrator's Office

Department of Early Childhood

Department of Elections

Department of Human Resources

Department of Police Accountability

Department of Public Health

District Attorney's Office

Human Rights Commission

Human Services Agency

Mayor's Office for Victims' Rights

Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development

Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs

Office of Economic and Workforce Development

Office of Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention

Office of Transgender Initiatives

Recreation and Park Department

San Francisco Arts Commission

San Francisco Police Department

Sheriff's Department



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