

Commission on the Status of Women  
1685 Main Street  
PO Box 2200  
Santa Monica, California 90407-2200

City of  
**Santa Monica**<sup>SM</sup>

January 11, 2009

Honorable Ken Genser, Mayor  
Members of the City Council  
P. Lamont Ewell, City Manager  
City of Santa Monica  
1685 Main Street  
Santa Monica CA 90401

RE: 2009-2010 Budget for the City of Santa Monica

Dear Mayor Genser, City Council Members and City Manager Ewell:

The Commission on the Status of Women would like to thank the City Council and City Manager's Office for the opportunity to comment on budget priorities for the City's Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

In December 2004, Council accepted the Commission's findings in the Report on the Status of Women and Girls and directed City Staff to collect gender data from City-funded services. It was anticipated that the collection of this data would enable the Commission to better evaluate the impact of City-funded services on the lives of women and girls in Santa Monica and, thereby, better serve the Council as an advisor on this matter. Several years into the data collection process, the Commission has not yet been able to achieve the goal of fully understanding the impact budget allocations have on the lives of women and girls due to inconsistent reporting of gender data. Further, the Commission has learned that the manner in which City Staff views City-funded programs prevents the development of a Women's Programs budget similar to the existing Youth, Elderly and Homeless services budgets.

Despite the challenge this lack of information poses, the Commission would like to offer the following budget observations, recommendations and comments.

- Involve and inform COSW on any future Budget meetings.
- Consider the possible impact of the two Fair Pay bills (Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act - H.R. 2831 and the Paycheck Fairness Act - H.R. 1338) which, if passed, may affect future city budgets. The Senate is to consider both bills soon.

- Continue Council support for services which are important to the health and welfare of women and girls in our community especially those facing hardships from the downturn in the economy, such as Sojourn Services, Westside Domestic Violence Network, Rosie's Girls, Teen Mother Counseling at SAMOHI, Pico Youth and Family Center, Virginia Avenue Park and PAL.
- Increase public safety activities during the day and evening for seniors and youth.
- The COSW is currently working on a Strategic Plan to guide its work over the next three to five years. Commissioners are working with the Rosie's Girls Street Team to gather input about issues relevant to middle and high school aged girls in Santa Monica and will be surveying women in the community to learn more about their needs. We will keep you updated on upcoming events and our outreach efforts. Once finalized, the Commission will transmit the plan to you for your acceptance.

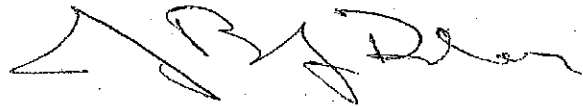
The Commission appreciates your serious consideration of these recommendations, and we understand that the City faces potential budget shortfalls resulting from the nation-wide economic slowdown. The Commission asks Council to consider carefully how efforts to address these shortfalls might affect at-risk female populations such as single working mothers and elderly women.

In closing, the Commission would also like to reiterate its commitment to stay involved in the Common Work Objectives and Department Objectives, which impacts the welfare of women and girls in Santa Monica. Thank you, again for the opportunity to comment on the planning for the FY 2009-2010 budget priorities. If you need any additional information, please feel free to contact the Commission or its staff liaison, Julie Taren.

Sincerely,



Ana Jara, Chair



Amy Dunbar, Vice-Chair