



City of Santa Monica

# Commission on the Status of Women



# Final Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Prepared by  
Commission on the Status of Women  
Approved April 2010

## HISTORY



The Commission on the Status of Women (COSW), established in 1981, was chartered to enhance the status of women and girls in Santa Monica. The COSW promotes this goal through investigation of, advocacy for, and policy development regarding issues relevant to women and girls in Santa Monica, and by identifying and publicizing leadership and career advancement opportunities for the women and girls of our community.

At the time of its founding twenty-eight years ago, the COSW was specifically charged by the Santa Monica City Council with the following additional responsibilities, jurisdictions, and authority to:

- (a) Prepare and disseminate educational and informational material relative to the role that tradition, prejudice and the deprivation of equal opportunities and access in areas such as education, employment and health care have played in keeping women of all races, creeds, ages and marital status from developing their full individual potentials and from contributing fully to the cultural and economic life of the community.
- (b) Hold public hearings on matters relevant to the general scope of the Commission.
- (c) Review national, state and local legislation which may have an impact on the status of women and recommend to the City Council positions on significant legislation affecting the status of women.
- (d) Develop and maintain a talent bank of women which can be used in a variety of ways, including but not limited to assisting the Personnel Department in recruiting qualified women candidates for employment opportunities and nominating qualified women for appointment by the City Council to vacancies on boards and commissions of the City.
- (e) Cooperate with and make recommendations to the Personnel Department and the Personnel Board in the development and implementation of programs and practices which have the purpose of furthering the objectives

of this chapter, including but not limited to recommendations regarding terminology used in job announcements, recruitment techniques, job qualifications, salary schedules, training and promotional practices.



- (f) Study job categories which traditionally are filled primarily by women or primarily by men to determine whether the rate of compensation in the traditionally female jobs compares reasonably and favorably with the rate of compensation in the traditionally male jobs, taking into consideration the training, experience, mental and physical effort and responsibility required and the working conditions involved, and make recommendations concerning necessary steps to implement equitable rates of compensation.
- (g) Study and make recommendations regarding the special employment problems of women stemming from the assignment to them of traditional roles such as responsibility for child rearing, including but not limited to the need for child care centers, on-the-job training and retraining for those who have been out of the employment market for extended periods and part-time employment opportunities.
- (h) Cooperate with and make recommendations to law enforcement agencies and officials concerning the enforcement of laws which have a particular impact on women.
- (i) Cooperate with and make recommendations to the Board of Education of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District on the development and implementation of programs and practices which have the purpose of furthering the objectives of this chapter, including but not limited to recommendations concerning in-service training and sex-role models for female students who may be interested in employment not traditionally filled by women.
- (j) Provide information, guidance and technical assistance to other public agencies and private persons, organizations and institutions engaged in activities and programs intended to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against women because of their status as women.

- (k) Cooperate with and make written recommendations to the City agencies, boards and commissions and City officials regarding the development and implementation of programs and practices for the purpose of furthering the objectives of this chapter.
- (l) Investigate and mediate, at the request of a party and within the limitations of staff time and resources, all incidents of discrimination against women because of their status as women which are not within the exclusive jurisdiction of some federal, state or City agency, and make specific recommendations to the involved parties as to the methods for eliminating discrimination against women.
- (m) Prepare, encourage and coordinate programs of voluntary action to reduce or eliminate existing inequalities and disadvantages in both the public and private sector resulting from prejudice, tradition and past discrimination.



The COSW has taken seriously its charter, and many of its key accomplishments responding to these thirteen responsibilities are appended at the end of this report.

With the passage of time, the urgency of some of these thirteen responsibilities has decreased, while other concerns have risen in prominence. The purpose of this strategic planning process is to sort through the various tasks assigned to the COSW and to identify and prioritize those matters about which the Commission should focus its attention during the next five years. Identification of strategic goals comes at the end of a year-long process that has included both analysis of priorities by individual Commissioners as well as community input collected through several formal and informal survey activities. Regarding the latter, we particularly want to acknowledge the valuable help received by the young women leaders of the Rosie's Girls Street Team who aided us in gathering input to inform the COSW's strategic direction with respect to Santa Monica girls.



The Commission has formulated and approved the following strategic framework for its work:

## MISSION

The mission of the Commission on the Status of Women is to enhance the status of women in our community. The Commission promotes these goals through investigation of, advocacy for, and policy development regarding issues relevant to women and girls, and by creating leadership and career advancement opportunities and girls in our community.

## VISION

Santa Monica is a place where women and girls can fully realize their potential and have a strong voice in all aspects of the community.

## VALUES

- ◆ Accountability
- ◆ Collaboration
- ◆ Diversity
- ◆ Empowerment
- ◆ Equality
- ◆ Humanity
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Knowledge

## STRATEGIC AIMS AND GOALS



Based on community input and our own evaluation, the following represent a prioritization of our key goals with respect to policy and program development for the five-year period 2010-2015:

### **1. Review and update “The Report on the Status of Women & Girls in Santa Monica 2004.”**

In late 2002, the COSW initiated a project to gather and analyze extant information on women and girls in Santa Monica. Data for the analyses included in the report derived primarily from the 2000 U.S. Census, with additional information from the 2003 Santa Monica Community Profile (RAND), Santa Monica Police Department, Los Angeles County Department of Public and Social Services, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research and other sources of data on local statistics. This report served as a baseline measurement of the status of women and girls in our community. Given the passage of more than five years, it is appropriate to review and update the observations and recommendations in the report in order to assess current need. This will be accomplished in part through continued request for and utilization of the gender-based statistical information that was approved at the time the report was adopted by City Council for collection from City departments and funded agencies, as well as by 2010 Census information as it becomes available. We will use this updated report to ground our work over the next five years.

### **2. Raise awareness of and seek solutions for domestic violence and other safety issues impacting Santa Monica women and girls.**

COSW is a stakeholder in the Westside Domestic Violence Network organization, which is comprised of domestic violence psychiatric counselors and social workers, shelters operators and other service providers, healthcare clinics, prosecutors, police representatives and legal aid attorneys. Its primary purpose is networking and education for many disciplines of professionals working in the field and to this end it sponsors an annual conference that COSW has supported financially for many years through its membership dues. Utilizing the resources of this relationship, COSW will work to raise awareness about the impact of domestic violence and other safety issues within the city borders. It will actively

support prevention efforts, such as through partnership opportunities with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in order to support an anti-violence curriculum in the district, and sponsorship of a community-wide dialog on preventing violence.



### **3. Identify, publicize and support mentoring and leadership opportunities that serve the young women and girls of Santa Monica.**

Throughout its existence, COSW has developed special relationships with several city or community-based programs that have particular focus on issues impacting women or girls. One of the most enduring of these has been its partnership with Rosie's Girls, a city-sponsored program designed to build leadership confidence in middle school girls through the exploration of non-traditional vocations. In addition to its financial support of Rosie's Girls, COSW has invited several youth leaders of Rosie's Girls to participate in its monthly meetings. COSW aims to further enhance the status of women and girls in Santa Monica by identifying, promoting and partnering with other organizations that provide mentoring and leadership opportunities for the girls and young women of Santa Monica. Examples of these new partnership possibilities include more intentional collaboration with:

- a) Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, in particular, its after-school enrichment activities that impact school-aged girls in Santa Monica,
- b) the Santa Monica Police Activities League (PAL), a community program for children, with the intent of identifying programs specifically aimed at girls and young women in Santa Monica,
- c) the Santa Monica YWCA, in particular those that support at-risk girls and young women in Santa Monica,
- d) the newly constructed branch of the Santa Monica Boys and Girls Club at the Johns Adams Middle School campus with the intent of supporting programs that enhance the mentoring and/or leadership advancement opportunities for middle-school girls in Santa Monica.

### **4. Gain a better understanding about how lack of affordable housing affects the women of Santa Monica, and determine what role the COSW should play to address this issue.**

Santa Monica women participating in our 2009 COSW survey of women's top priorities have identified lack of affordable housing as a key issue of concern. As



housing has not been an area of COSW expertise in the past, the COSW proposes to liaise with existing community housing agencies and commissions in order to gain a better understanding of local housing issues. Through knowledge gained from these agencies as well as the data gathered through its work in updating *The Report on the Status of Women & Girls in Santa Monica 2004*, COSW seeks to determine if and how the lack of affordable housing uniquely or disproportionately affects the women in our community. Among the issues that the COSW proposes to study are:

- a) any socioeconomic or demographic correlation between affordable housing issues and Santa Monica women,
- b) housing rental versus ownership percentages for women,
- c) the impact of rent control on women,
- d) the disproportionate effect, if any, that the economic downturn has had on Santa Monica women,
- e) the unique issues that lack of affordable housing have on senior women in Santa Monica.

#### **5. Foster career, political and volunteer advancement opportunities for Santa Monica women.**

Throughout its history, the COSW has promoted advancement opportunities for Santa Monica women. To reduce possible barriers to women running for office, the COSW has been in the forefront of efforts to introduce campaign finance reform and Santa Monica ranked voting. It has offered Santa Monica women the chance to attend a leadership seminar on how to be on a board or commission, and a round table discussion, "Tales from the Trail" involving five women who had run for local office. It has established a recruiting network with other boards and commissions to share the names of qualified women candidates among all such groups. It has studied the City of Santa Monica salary scale, job codes, and advancement process with the goal of making sure that women are well represented through every category of city employment, and that all receive equal pay for equal work.

During the next five years, the COSW seeks to further educate, support, train, and encourage the women of Santa Monica by offering additional leadership, mentoring, and advancement resources. Collaborating with local, state, and federal constituents and organizations, the COSW will:



- a) help potential women candidates for office learn from past and present elected officials about how to run for local office and get elected;
- b) train the public about how to get appointed to a board or commission;
- c) encourage volunteering as a means of leadership development and advancement;
- d) network with the advancement gatekeepers to help identify and promote up-coming women leaders;
- e) collaborate with City of Santa Monica businesses regarding career advancement and job opportunities.

#### **6. Identify and publicize resources in Santa Monica that support the needs of women and girls.**

Consistent with its value of *Collaboration*, the COSW is continuing to actively build alliances with community groups, organizations and other City boards and commissions which work to support women and their children within Santa Monica.

The Commission is a member of the National Association of Commissions on the Status of Women the Association of California Commissions on the Status of Women. A member of the Commission has traditionally participated in the Early Childhood Education Task Force and the Westside Domestic Violence Network in order to keep the COSW informed about the important issues for women raised by these organizations. As direct result of the *Report on the Status of Women & Girls in Santa Monica 2004*, COSW will continue to encourage the City of Santa Monica and its service providers to collect gender data for all of the reports conducted by themselves or outside consultants.

At our monthly meetings, the COSW invites community groups, organizations, and members of other City boards and commissions to present information and services offered to the community. COSW welcomes public input at each monthly meeting on issues relating to women and girls in Santa Monica.

It is a priority for the COSW to continually identify and publicize resources in Santa Monica that support the needs of women and girls.



## APPENDIX:

### Key Accomplishments and Partnerships 2000-2009

#### **OWL Awards (Outstanding Women Leaders) (2007, 2009)**

COSW has recognized local women leaders annually for their service to the community who were nominated by their peers

#### **Women's History Month (Years)**

In every February/March, the COSW held events to commemorate this historic month honoring the efforts of suffragist women in our past.

#### **Public/Campaign Finance Reform (2005)**

Given that women represent 51% of the city's population, it is important that they are equally represented among those who are elected to serve the needs of the Santa Monica community. It is also important that the ethnic diversity of our community be represented among its elected officials. Many believe that public financing reform levels the playing field for women and minorities running for office. In December 2005, the COSW asked City Council to support A.B. 583, the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act and direct staff to study the clean money campaign concept and other, related, legislative efforts to assess how a similar public financing system could be implemented in Santa Monica. This effort led Council to direct the City Clerk to investigate other communities that had implemented such measures with the outcome that the City Clerk purchased software to better represent the monies donated to candidates in a timelier manner. COSW continues to advocate for campaign financing reform.

#### **Work/Life Survey (1994 & 2004)**

In 1994, COSW surveyed the City of Santa Monica to quantify the work/life benefits being offered to the female city employees. In 2004, COSW expanded the survey to include not only all city workers but also local businesses and organizations.



### **Report on the Status of Women & Girls (2004)**

Beginning in late 2002, the COSW initiated a project to gather and analyze extant information on women and girls in Santa Monica. Data for the analyses included in the report derived primarily from the 2000 U.S. Census, with additional information from the 2003 Santa Monica Community Profile (RAND), Santa Monica Police Department, Los Angeles County Department of Public and Social Services, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research and other sources of data on local statistics. This report served as a baseline measurement of the status of women and girls in our community. The Report, presented to and unanimously accepted by Santa Monica City Council in December 2004, included COSW recommendations addressing issues such as, but not limited to: more accurate collection of local gender data by City departments and funded agencies; investigation of any barriers for women running for office; special needs of the elderly female population; gender balance among city employees, elected and appointed officials, and managers. The entire Report on the Status of Women & Girls, and the corresponding City Staff Report can be found on the COSW website at <http://www01.smgov.net/hsd/cosw/>

### **Westside Domestic Violence Network (WDVN) (Ongoing)**

The COSW was a charter member along with the Sojourn/OCEAN program to create an organization help domestic violence victims and changing how officers respond to domestic violence and report such activities. The WDVN is currently comprised of domestic violence psychiatric counselors and social workers, shelters operators and other service providers, healthcare clinics, prosecutors, police representatives and legal aid attorneys. Its primary purpose is networking and education for many disciplines of professionals working in the field and to this end it sponsors an annual conference that COSW has supported financially for many years through its membership dues. Since then, COSW serves as a liaison to the WDVN and supports the annual WDVN conference on important domestic violence issues.

### **Association of California Commissions for Women(ACCW)**

Santa Monica is one of about thirty communities in the state to recognize the need for and importance of independent women's commissions. The COSW has continuously participated on the board of the Association of California Commissions for Women. Involvement in this visionary networking organization has provided the COSW with numerous ideas for effective and

innovative programs that benefit Santa Monica's women and girls. ACCW is a division of NACW, National Associations of Commissions for Women.



### **Santa Monica Child Care & Early Education Task Force**

Due to the importance of and demand for quality of early childhood education, the City of Santa Monica and the Santa Monica Unified School District convened a task force in 1981 to consider childcare issues. A number of COSW commissioners were instrumental in the founding of this task force and continue to participate actively in order to advocate for accessible and affordable childcare as an important aspect to a well-balanced community.

### **Voter Registration**

During election years, the COSW encourages women to register to vote by distributing ballots, holding events, and reminding women of the importance of voting on Election Day.

### **Youth Leaders**

COSW believes in developing and challenging the minds of young women and encouraging them to become empowered community leaders. The Commission invites up to three young leaders to participate in COSW's meetings and activities by implementing their own projects to foster the goals of the commission. COSW also collaborates with Rosie's Girls, a successful local girls program which trains girls in non-traditional skills.

## **Other Important Activities of the COSW**

- Represented Santa Monica on a panel discussion "Campaign Finance Reform - CA Cities Take the Lead" at USC in conjunction with Commonwealth Club of California – Voices of Reform. The event was broadcasted on local T.V. channel LA35.
- Collaborated with other community leaders in holding public hearing and investigating the interest and benefits of public finance reform for those who run for office in Santa Monica.

- Planned panel discussion for Leadership workshop educating the community on becoming involved on a board or commission.
- Partnered with League of Women in screening “Iron Jawed Angels” at Santa Monica Community college along with speakers Midge Costanza and Susan Estridge.
- Coordinated with the Rape Crisis Center in training of local police to improve the manner in which they handle sexual abuse complaints and treat victims.
- Implemented ‘Bring Your Daughters to Work Day’ for all of the employees working for the city.
- Advocated for the lactation station for working mothers employed by Santa Monica.
- Provided financial sponsorship for the Latina Youth Conference and participated in panel discussions about career leadership and opportunities to inspire young Latinas.
- Advocated to City Council for endorsement of SB33 Circle of Trust which closed a loophole in the sentencing of pedophiles; City Council agreed to write a letter to Governor; the bill became law in 2005.
- Supported Living Wage legislation



# Santa Monica Commission on the Status of Women

(As of February 2010)



## Commissioners:

- Amy Bishop-Dunbar (Vice Chair 2008-2010)
- Ana Jara (Chair 2008-2010, Vice Chair 2006-2008)
- Anne Goeke
- Autumn Peebles
- Emily Arms
- Hannah Galloway
- Sarah Stegemoeller
- Tia Skulski (Chair 2004-2006; Vice Chair 2003-2004)
- Trish Moon

## Commissioner Emeritus:

- Darlene Evans

## Rosie's Girls Youth Leaders:

- Alexis Sanchez
- Elisa Aquino
- Nicole Daghighian

The COSW thanks all former members for their tireless and dedicated service to the Commission.