

# Santa Cruz County Women's Commission

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## Santa Cruz County Women's Commission 2022 - 2023 Biennial Report

### 1. The Role of the Commission

The Women's Commission is an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on issues affecting women and girls in Santa Cruz County. The Commission was established to:

- a. Advise the Board of Supervisors on matters affecting any current inequalities suffered by citizens of this County
- b. Make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to rectify any such inequalities;
- c. Make available to the public information and resources concerning equal rights and opportunities. The Commission shall also maintain a current file of services and resources useful to the community;
- d. Review Santa Cruz County's equal employment opportunity plan and policies and recommend to the Board of Supervisors and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission any revisions which may be necessary to eliminate employment discrimination against women;
- e. Review Santa Cruz County's rules and job descriptions and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and to the Civil Service Commission, as necessary, to assure that any unnecessary barriers to the employment of women are removed;
- f. Study the present and projected needs of women. Develop comprehensive goals to achieve present solutions and effective future planning;
- g. Review pending Federal and State legislation which would impact upon women and, where appropriate, advise the Board of Supervisors of its recommendations;
- h. Exercise any other responsibilities related to the needs and concerns of women and as set forth in the Commission's bylaws as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

### 2. Meetings Dates, Time, and Location

Women's Commission regular meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of every month except July and December, from 6:30 until 8:00 PM. During the reporting period, the Commission met remotely or at the County Government Building (701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060).

- During 2022, two regularly scheduled meetings were canceled for lack of quorum. All other meetings were held remotely.
- During 2023, five regularly scheduled meetings were canceled for lack of quorum. One regularly scheduled meeting was held remotely, and 4 regularly scheduled meetings were held in-person after the California State of Emergency had been lifted.

### 3. Commission Structure

The Women's Commission is composed of ten voting members; two appointed by each of the five County Supervisors. New officers are elected each year during the April regular meeting.

On December 31, 2023, the Women's Commission membership was as follows:

District	Commissioners
1 <sup>st</sup> District	Amanda Crowder <b>Jennifer Martin (Co-Chair)</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> District	Samantha Farren Heather Lenhardt
3 <sup>rd</sup> District	<b>Jennifer Smith (Co-Chair)</b> Seat Vacant
4 <sup>th</sup> District	Karina Moreno Alicia Danna
5 <sup>th</sup> District	Sheila De Lany Seat Vacant

The Commissioners who were appointed during the reporting period were Amanda Crowder, Conra Frazier, Jennifer Smith, Karina Moreno, Samantha Farren, Alicia Dann, Heather Lenhardt and Jennifer Martin. The Commissioner(s) who completed their terms, resigned, or were replaced during the reporting period were Jillian Ritter, Laurel Schonfield, Maria Boutell, Maryanne Campbell, Theresa Cariño, Conra Frazier, Jennifer Murray, Rachel Wells, and Vanessa Quiroz-Carter. Commissioners Smith and Moreno were reappointed during the reporting period.

In April 2022, Quiroz-Carter and Bickert were elected to serve as Co-Chairs. In June 2023, Wells (née Bickert) and Smith were elected to serve as Co-Chairs. After Wells resigned her seat, Martin was elected to complete the term in September 2023.

### 4. Commission Staff

Kaite McGrew (*Commissions Manager*) staffed the Commission for the entirety of the reporting period.

Between Commissions meetings, County Staff was available by phone, email, or in person for information and referrals. The County EEO Commissions Office is located in the County Government Center (701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060).

### 5. Attendance

Please see attached *Santa Cruz County Women's Commission 2022-2023 Attendance Report*.

### 6. Commission Activities and Accomplishments

The Commission's priorities and subsequent activities are determined by the Commission's mandate and emerging needs as expressed by the community and identified by the Commissioners.

**During the reporting period, Commissioners conducted the following business:**

- Held thirteen regularly scheduled meetings
- Continued Commission social media outreach via Facebook and Instagram

- Maintained a current, informative Commission website to support Commission outreach and advocacy efforts
- Reviewed new County position descriptions as they became available
- Received reports and reviewed correspondence from members of the public about issues of interest to women in Santa Cruz County
- Provided a platform for County and community partner speakers to present on information of interest to women and girls in Santa Cruz County

**During the reporting period, Commissioners monitored the following emerging issues:**

- California's May 2022 budget revise including a \$97.5B surplus and Governor Newsom's "Pro-Life" agenda redefining the term to mean support for quality-of-life legislation including funding for initiatives such as universal preschool and afterschool care, universal school meals, reproductive health care access, Black infant Health, youth mental health and suicide prevention, violence prevention, gun buybacks and targeting fentanyl misuse.
- Opportunities for advocacy and education about access to women's reproductive health care in Santa Cruz County in response to the Supreme Court's having overturned Roe v. Wade in June of 2022. The Commission is in the process of developing an event or a series of events to bring community partners together to provide information to the public on this topic.
- Reported safety issues for unhoused women in the "benchlands" encampment
- Storm damage and disaster recovery efforts in the wake of the 2022-2023 winter storms and subsequent flooding
- Health and safety issues reported by the Mental Health Advisory Board to the Board of Supervisors regarding an incident that was alleged to have occurred in a County warming shelter

**During the reporting period, the Commission heard reports on the following community agencies, County programs, and other organizations of interest to women:**

- David Brody (*Executive Director*) and Alicia Fernandez (*Health Outreach and Enrollment Manager*) on First 5 Santa Cruz's CCSW Women's Recovery Response Grant Proposal
- Dorian Seamster and Christina Cuevas on *Women in Leadership for Diverse Representation* (WILDR)'s partnership opportunity promoting attendance at forums promoting diverse and underrepresented women's candidacy for elected and appointed roles
- Lana Martinez-Davis (*Senior Administrative Analyst*) on two CAO's office initiatives including the "A Santa Cruz County Like Me" project to achieve government advisory bodies that reflect the diversity of the community they represent
- Mitsuno Baurmeister (*Equal Employment Opportunity Officer*) summarizing the results of the County's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Employee Survey including key findings, opportunities for improvement and next steps.
- Doreen O'Donovan (*President*) on the American Association of University Women in Santa Cruz County
- Shane McKeithen (District 1 Analyst) and Jacqueline Power (District 1 Legislative Intern) on Supervisor Koenig's effort to establish Santa Cruz County as a *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) community

## 7. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

**During the reporting period, Commissioners served on or were affiliated with the following commissions or organizations:**

- 100 Women Who Care
- Bonny Doon Neighbors
- Boulder Creek Business Association
- Coalition Against Human Trafficking
- Democratic Women's Club of Santa Cruz County
- Highlands Park Senior and Community Center
- Model United Nations of the Far West, Inc.
- Salud y Carino
- San Lorenzo Rotary Club
- Santa Cruz County Community Coalition to Overcome Racism (SCCCOR)
- Santa Cruz Mountains Art Center
- Valley Women's Club
- Women in Leadership for Diverse Representation (WILDR)

## 8. COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEES

**During the reporting period, the Commission authorized the following ad hoc subcommittees to complete specific projects their subject matter jurisdiction within finite periods of time:**

### **Ad Hoc Community Outreach Subcommittees**

Subcommittees tasked with raising the Commission's public profile in the Community and sharing information to advance the interests of women in Santa Cruz County

#### **Social Media Subcommittee**

Authorized to develop community engagement on social media. As of December 31, 2023, Danna was the only subcommittee member.

#### **Trailblazer Awards Subcommittee**

Authorized to plan and implement the Commission's 2022 semi-annual Trailblazer Awards Ceremony, including recommending awardees to the Commission and planning the presentation of awards. As of December 31, 2023, the subcommittee had been dissolved pending the next project.

### **Ad Hoc Advocacy Subcommittees**

Subcommittees tasked with advocating for the advancement of women and girl's interests in Santa Cruz County

#### **Political Participation and Civic Engagement Subcommittee**

Established as needed to advocate for and promote the political participation and civic engagement of Santa Cruz County women and girls as specific projects arose. Subcommittee membership varied depending upon the needs of the project and, as of December 31, 2023, the subcommittee had been dissolved pending the next project.

**Policy and Legislation Subcommittee**

Established as needed to review policies and legislation and bring advocacy opportunities to the Commission for consideration. As of December 31, 2023, the subcommittee had been dissolved pending the next legislative season.

**Black Lives Matter/Anti-Racism Subcommittee**

Established as needed to monitor County anti-racism efforts and bring advocacy projects related to race/ethnicity to the Commission for consideration. As of December 31, 2023, the subcommittee had been dissolved pending the next project.

**Ad Hoc Status of Women and Girls Subcommittees (SOWAG)**

Ad Hoc Subcommittees established as needed for specific projects related to the broad categories established by the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and only As of December 31, 2023, the subcommittee had been dissolved pending the next project.

**Ad Hoc CEDAW Resolution Review Subcommittee**

Established to review the Board memo and resolution language related to the effort to achieve CEDAW community status and provide recommended language aligned with the Commission's mandate to advance the interests of Santa Cruz County women and girls. As of December 31, 2023, the subcommittee had been dissolved pending the next project.

**9. COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS****During the reporting period, Commissioners took the following actions to address emerging issues:**

- Advocated with the Board in support of five pieces of State legislation and two State budget requests that would advance California women's interests in the areas of eliminating gender-based price differences, increasing the availability/affordability of sexual assault exams, establishing goals to end homelessness among survivors of domestic violence, permitting video or telephone certification under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), expanding funding for childcare, and funding targeted job training for women including re-training and job placement services.
- Promoted women's civic engagement and attendance to WILDER forums and hosting the recordings and materials as a resource on the Commission website
- Continued to monitor development and implementation of the County's Equal Employment Opportunity and Cultural Competence Plans
- Monitored the development, implementation and key findings from the County's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Employee Survey
- Continued to expand the community partner database for outreach and collaboration efforts
- Monitored the County's development and implementation of menstrual equity policy in County facilities
- Joined the Association of California Commissions for Women (ACCW)
- Advocated for the County's use of gender-neutral imagery and updated titles for positions traditionally held by women (e.g., "Executive Secretary")

**During the reporting period, the Commission participated in the following special projects:**

- Presentation of the 2021-2022 Trailblazers Awards including several new categories and two lifetime achievement awards presented posthumously.

- Promotion of and participation in a series of WILDR-hosted forums and published recordings of the events on the Commission's website

## 10. FUTURE GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **In the coming year, the Women's Commission will endeavor to accomplish the following:**

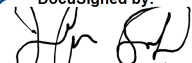
- Continue advocacy for the County's achieving CEDAW community status and, if approved and adopted by the Board, develop actionable recommendations for the Board toward that goal.
- Prioritize and promote political participation and civic engagement for women in Santa Cruz County through advocacy and engagement with community partners.
- Engage with community partners to recognize local women and organizations who are advancing the interests of women and girls in Santa Cruz County.
- Update Commission Bylaws to incorporate changes to Brown Act notice requirements and add language related to fundraising for special projects. Standardize language as appropriate.
- Continue to monitor implementation of the County Equal Employment Opportunity and Cultural Competence Plan including offering feedback for the 2025-2027 plan.
- Further develop the community partner outreach database and develop an easily accessible library of resources for women and girls in Santa Cruz County.

### **In the coming year, the Women's Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:**

- Actively recruit to fill Commission vacancies in Districts Three and Five.
- Provide policy leadership requiring that all County data and data provided by County-funded organizations (as a condition of grant-funding) be disaggregated by gender, and within each gender category, further disaggregated by other protected characteristics such as race/ethnicity, age, etc. so that disparities in services and outcomes across and within gender groups can be identified and addressed.
- Approve and adopt a resolution stating the County's intention to achieve CEDAW community status and provide policy leadership and funding to implement subsequent Women's Commission recommendations toward that goal.
- Provide policy leadership and prioritize policies, programs and legislation designed to address racial/ethnic disparities and inequities impacting women in Santa Cruz County.
- Ensure that the Women's Commission continues to exist as a distinct advisory body specifically focused on addressing inequities and advancing the interests of women and girls in Santa Cruz County.

Approved by the Women's Commission on February 15, 2024 at their regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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 Jennifer Smith

*Co-Chair, Women's Commission*

February 15, 2024

Date

DocuSigned by:  
  
 EBC40125628D46F...  
 Jennifer Martin

*Co-Chair, Women's Commission*

February 15, 2024

Date

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WOMEN'S COMMISSION													
2022-2023 ATTENDANCE REPORT													
District/ Supervisor	Commissioner	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Aug 2022	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022
1 <sup>st</sup> District Supervisor Manu Koenig	Theresa Cariño	P	P	P	P	A	MEETING CANCELED - LACK OF QUORUM	NO MEETING SCHEDULED	E	P	P	MEETING CANCELED - LACK OF QUORUM	NO MEETING SCHEDULED
	Jillian Ritter Co-Chair	P	P	E	P	E			-	-	-		
	Amanda Crowder	-	-	-	-	-			P	E	E		
2 <sup>nd</sup> District Supervisor Zach Friend	Laurel Schonfield	P	E	E	E	-			-	-	-		
	Jennifer Murray	P	P	P	E	P			A	P	P		
	Samantha Hart Farren	-	-	-	-	P			P	P	P		
3 <sup>rd</sup> District Supervisor Ryan Coonerty	Jennifer Smith	-	P	P	P	P			P	P	A		
	Conra Frazier	-	-	-	P	P			P	E	P		
4 <sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Greg Caput	Vanessa Quiroz-Carter - Co-Chair	P	P	P	P	P			P	A	P		
	Karina Moreno	P	P	P	E	P			P	P	P		
5 <sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Bruce McPherson	Sheila De Lany	P	P	P	P	P			P	P	E		
	Rachel Wells	P	P	P	P	P			E	P	P		
Attendance:      P=Present      A=Absent      E=Excused      ( - ) = Not Seated													
District/ Supervisor	Commissioner	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	April 2023	May 2022	June 2023	July 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023
1 <sup>st</sup> District Supervisor Manu Koenig	Amanda Crowder	MEETING CANCELED - LACK OF QUORUM	P	P	MEETING CANCELED - LACK OF QUORUM	MEETING CANCELED - LACK OF QUORUM	P	NO MEETING SCHEDULED	MEETING CANCELED - LACK OF QUORUM	P	MEETING CANCELED - LACK OF QUORUM	P	NO MEETING SCHEDULED
	Jennifer Martin Co-Chair		E	P			E			P		P	
2 <sup>nd</sup> District Supervisor Zach Friend	Jennifer Murray		P	E			-			-		-	
	Samantha Hart Farren		E	P			P			E		P	
	Heather Lenhardt		-	-			E			P		P	
3 <sup>rd</sup> District Supervisor Justin Cummings	Jennifer Smith Co-Chair		P	P			P			P		P	
	Conra Frazier		A	A			-			-		-	
4 <sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Felipe Hernandez	Vanessa Quiroz-Carter		P	E			-			-		-	
	Karina Moreno		A	P			A			P		A	
	Alicia Danna		-	-			P			P		P	
5 <sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Bruce McPherson	Sheila De Lany		P	P			P			A		P	
	Rachel Wells		P	P			P			-		-	

Submitted by:



 Kaite McGrew  
 Commissions Manager

December 31, 2023

Date