



Commission on the
Status of Women

INFORMATION CALENDAR

June 11, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Commission on the Status of Women

Submitted by: Juliet Leftwich, Chairperson, Commission on the Status of Women

Subject: FY 2019-20 Commission on the Status of Women Work Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on the Status of Women seeks to improve the conditions of all women and advocates to the City Council on policies affecting women. At its March 20, 2019 meeting, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted its FY 2019-20 Work Plan (Attachment 1).

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Commission will be working on developing policies to send to the City Council on a variety of women's issues, including paid family leave, equal pay, conditions for female inmates at Santa Rita Jail, and homelessness.

M/S/C: Shanoski/Campbell

Ayes: Campbell, Shanoski, Leftwich, Lu, Verma

Absent: Howard

Excused: Freedman

BACKGROUND

In 2016, the Council adopted direction to Commissions to submit a work plan annually.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no environmental sustainability impacts directly associated with the adoption of the work plan.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The Commission has appointed subcommittees to work on areas of the work plan and will return to Council with recommendations as appropriate.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Fiscal impacts will depend on the actions recommended and the Council's decisions.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachment 1: FY 2019-20 Commission on the Status of Women Work Plan

2019 Commission Work Plan

1. Mission Statement

The Commission on the Status of Women seeks to improve the conditions of all women and advocates to the City Council on policies affecting women.

2. Commission's goals

In 2019, the Commission will continue to work on developing innovative policies to recommend to the City Council on a variety of women's issues, including paid family leave, equal pay, conditions for female inmates at Santa Rita jail, and homelessness.

The Commission's Paid Family Leave Subcommittee worked closely with the City Council's ad-hoc subcommittee in 2018 to develop a paid family leave ordinance for Berkeley. That work has continued into 2019 and we expect the full City Council to vote on the ordinance by year's end.

The Commission's Equal Pay subcommittee will continue to work to ensure the implementation of the Commission's Gender Pay Equity Recommendation, which passed the City Council on April 4, 2017. Since April 4, 2017, despite the Commission's repeated inquiries, no work has been done by the City on any of the three recommendations, which were passed unanimously by Council and highly prioritized during the annual prioritization process. On January 22, 2019, the Commission recommended that Council hire Dr. Martha Burk, an independent auditor and nationally recognized gender pay equity expert, to help facilitate completion of the work. The Labor Commission co-sponsored the recommendation. Our Equal Pay Subcommittee will continue to monitor implementation efforts and we're hopeful that progress will be made this year.

In 2018, the Commission established a Santa Rita Jail Subcommittee in response to a prior City Council referral asking that the Commission look into alleged abuses of female prisoners at the facility. Our Subcommittee has researched jail conditions, hosted an expert guest speaker and tracked relevant state legislation. The Subcommittee is continuing its investigation and the Commission expects to provide a report to Council by the end of 2019.

In March 2019, the Commission formed a Homelessness Subcommittee to examine existing services for homeless women and identify the ways in which those services could be improved. We began our investigation into this topic in late 2018, and have already heard compelling and informative presentations from homeless women, nonprofit leaders and city staff.

Resources:

The Commission has no budget and uses no City materials or equipment. The Commission does rely on staff time in several ways: through our Commission secretary, and through the advice of expert staff who we consult about specific policy questions. We expect to meet with a number of city staffers this year to ask for their input on existing city programs and how to best implement any new recommendations that we develop for the City Council.

Program Activities:

Our ultimate goal in 2019 is to submit at least one policy recommendation to the City Council. To accomplish this goal, our subcommittees will follow an established process. First, the subcommittee chair will prepare a research packet for members of the subcommittee so they may familiarize themselves with the research on the issue. The subcommittee will next meet with relevant city staff to learn about related existing Berkeley policies. The subcommittee will then speak with experts about initiatives that have been developed in other jurisdictions. At this point, the subcommittee will meet to formulate a draft of a recommendation.

The subcommittee will present the draft recommendation to key stakeholders for feedback. This may include other Commissions, community or business organizations, or others with a particular interest or expertise in the topic.

Finally, the subcommittee will draft a recommendation to present to the full Commission for a vote. If approved, the recommendation will be sent to the City Council.

Outputs:

We hope to present at least one major substantive policy recommendation to City Council this year. We will hold 8-10 full Commission meetings, and as many subcommittee meetings as needed. We may also present to key stakeholders.

Outcomes:

The Commission's policy recommendations will be developed over the course of 2019. We hope to suggest useful changes to city policies and ordinances that will positively impact the women in our community, as well as our community as a whole, for many years to come.