



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



SAN DIEGO COUNTY
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN & GIRLS



San Diego County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and the Office of Equity and Racial Justice

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ABOUT

In 1970, the County of San Diego (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) declared that it is the policy of the County to take action to identify the needs and problems of women and girls in the County that are affected by public policy decisions; and furthermore, to eliminate the practice of discrimination and prejudice on the basis of sex within the County. In order to promote this policy and to provide an open forum for discussion and action, the San Diego County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (Commission) was established.

The Commission is mandated to study and advise the Board on areas of concern to women's lives and needs in San Diego County. The Commission's mission is to identify the unique challenges faced by women and girls in San Diego County and to work collaboratively towards solutions that promote gender equity.

The fifteen members of the Commission represent the County. Each of the Supervisors appoints two citizens to represent their district on the Commission. Each Commissioner serves a four-year term, concurrent with the Supervisor's term. The additional three positions on the Commission are filled as Members-at-Large, nominated by the Commission, and approved by the Board to serve two-year terms.



Chair Kristine Custodio Suero and Vice Chairs Kelly Jenkins-Pultz and Idara Ogunsaju joined state partners in Los Angeles to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the California Fair Pay Act and its lasting impact across California and beyond

AREAS OF IMPACT

- Employment opportunities,
- Education opportunities,
- Medical and health services,
- Legal services,
- Credit and loan policies and practices,
- Criminal justice policies and procedures,
- Housing and transportation facilities,
- Child care needs,
- Human care services, and
- Business and financial opportunities



REPORT OVERVIEW

In 2025, the San Diego County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls advanced its statutory mandate to promote gender equity, support implementation of the County's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Ordinance and elevate issues affecting women and girls across the region. The Commission engaged in policy oversight, community partnership development, and internal capacity-building while navigating structural challenges related to transparency, staffing, and resource limitations.



Commissioner Amy Nantkes with students at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama



Chair Kristine Custodio Suero and Vice Chairs Kelly Jenkins-Pultz and Idara Ogunsaju at The California Commission on the Status of Women Convening in Los Angeles

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1. CEDAW Implementation Support

The Commission dedicated significant effort to supporting and monitoring the County's first Baseline Intersectional Gender Analysis, led by the Office of Equity & Racial Justice (OERJ) and a contractor, HR&A Advisors, Inc.

Major Actions:

- Raised concerns regarding transparency, timelines, and access to draft materials.
- Identified issues related to data consistency, immigration related data collection, and departmental reporting gaps.
- Adopted a Resolution Urging Transparency in CEDAW Implementation, receiving strong community support.
- Inquired into possibility of a Closed Session with County Counsel and clarified confidentiality and review protocols.
- These actions reinforced the Commission's statutory supportive role and emphasized the need for clear, collaborative processes as the County moves toward CEDAW-aligned action planning.

2. Community Engagement & Public Education

The Commission expanded its visibility and partnerships through targeted outreach and educational initiatives.

Highlights:

- Supported Human Trafficking Awareness Month activities and staff training.
- Participated in community events such as San Diego County Office of Child Support's Super Saturday event and Women's History Month activities.
- Strengthened relationships with local organizations, including the City of San Diego Commission for Women, the Mid-City Community Action Network, the Kim Center for Social Balance, San Diego Workforce Partnership, and San Diego for Every Child.
- Engaged with statewide leaders at the California Commission for Women and Girls, Mount St. Mary's University, and the Association of California Commissions for Women.
- Commissioners gathered and shared information to further the interests of San Diego women and girls and participated in convenings as varied as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women's 69th session, San Diego and National Taskforces on Human Trafficking, the Lawyers Club of San Diego, the Tradeswomen Build Nations Conference, and the Anniversary of the Civil Rights March in Selma, Alabama.
- Outreached to students at San Diego State University, the University of San Diego, and Point Loma Nazarene University.

These efforts increased public awareness on the topics of gender-based violence and harassment, child-care, employment and training needs, immigration concerns, and broader gender equity issues. Commission meetings connected the Commission with community-based organizations and national leaders already advancing aligned work and showcased the strength of women leaders and organizations in San Diego County.



Director of OERJ, Taryell Simmons, poses with HHSA Equity Liaison, Elizabeth Bustos, and Vice-Chairs Idara Ogunsaju and Vernita Gutierrez at the Women of Color Roar Breakfast in San Diego

Everyone deserves the opportunity to succeed

We design and deliver workforce services, programs and special initiatives that help San Diegans do just that.

San Diego Workforce Partnership presented during the October Commission Meeting

3. Policy Exploration & Committee Work

Committees advanced several policy and governance priorities.

Policy Committee:

- Explored issues including paid family leave, caregiving infrastructure, and immigration-related concerns.
- Fostered connections with organizations involved in areas of focus, including San Diego for Every Child, Children First Collective, Child Development Associates, and YMCA Childcare Resources Center.
- Reviewed the CEDAW ordinance and identified areas for future policy recommendations.

Governance Committee:

- Developed Standard Operating Procedures to support consistent internal processes.
- Monitored the long pending bylaws revision, which remained under County review throughout 2025.

Civic Engagement Committee:

- Led commissioner recruitment reviews.
- Advanced outreach and public education initiatives.



Chair Kristine Custodio Suero and Vice Chair Kelly Jenkins-Pultz at
The California Commission on the Status of Women Convening in Los Angeles

4. Strengthening Commission Capacity

The Commission worked to stabilize membership and leadership amid ongoing vacancies.

Key Developments:

- Worked collaboratively with the OERJ, established positive rapport and communication regarding equity initiatives in the County.
- Appointment of Kimberly Keen by Supervisor Terra Lawson-Reemer in District 3.
- Appointment of Kelly Jenkins-Pultz by the Board of Supervisors as an At-Large Commissioner.
- Recommendation of Amelia Tsering for an At-Large Commissioner appointment in early 2026.
- Unanimous reelection of Chair Kristine Custodio Suero and approval of a three Vice Chair leadership structure to increase capacity.
- Continued efforts to fill vacancies in Districts 1, 2, and 4.

These steps positioned the Commission for stronger operational continuity in 2026.

5. Regional & Statewide Leadership

The Commission maintained active engagement with statewide and national partners.

Notable Activities:

- Participation by Commissioner Monica Martinez in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women delegation.
- Support for the merger of the San Diego Women's History Museum into the San Diego History Museum's Center for Women's History.
- Participation in the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls' Convening of Commissions and celebration of the 10th anniversary of the California Fair Pay Act.
- Engagement with the Association of California Commissions for Women and National Association of Commissions for Women.

These relationships expanded the Commission's understanding of aligned local, regional, and national efforts for broader gender equity initiatives.

Women's History



Commissioners attended Celebrate San Diego! A New Era for Women's History, hosted by the San Diego History Center, to honor Women's Hall of Fame inductees and celebrate the next chapter of women's history in San Diego

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

1. Transparency & Communication

The CEDAW report process revealed gaps in communication, document access, and clarity around confidentiality requirements.

2. Resource Constraints

The Commission continued to operate without a dedicated budget and with limited staff support, affecting its ability to host public forums throughout the County and attend conferences and meetings throughout the country.

3. Quorum & Attendance

With several vacancies on the Commission, quorum for a full Commission meeting reached as low as five Commissioners, which inhibited multiple Commissioners from participating in outside meetings without triggering a full convening of a Commission meeting. Also, in-person meeting requirements impacted Committee-level quorum and limited the Commission's ability to advance policy recommendations.

4. Administrative Delays

Several changes in administrative staffing for the Commission resulted in prolonged delays in moving forward needed updates to bylaws and standard operating procedures.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026

1. Strengthen CEDAW Implementation

- Ensure timely access to the Baseline Analysis.
 - Support development of the County's CEDAW Action Plan.
 - Establish clear communication and review protocols with OERJ and County Counsel.
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2. Expand Community Partnerships

- Increase collaboration with organizations serving women and girls, particularly those focused on youth leadership and gender-based violence and harassment.
 - Enhance public education on gender equity issues.
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3. Improve Internal Capacity

- Finalize bylaws revisions.
 - Fill remaining vacancies.
 - Implement Standard Operating Procedures.
 - Strengthen committee structures to ensure quorum.
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4. Increase Visibility & Impact

- Expand presence at Board of Supervisors meetings.
- Develop clear processes for statements, recommendations, and public engagement.

CONCLUSION

In 2025, the Commission advanced critical gender equity work while navigating complex structural and operational challenges. The foundation laid this year—particularly in CEDAW support, community engagement, and internal capacity building—positions the Commission to play a more strategic and impactful role in 2026 as the County moves toward implementing its first gender equity action plan.



Kristine Custodio Suero

Kristine Custodio Suero,
Chair

