



## THE WOMEN AND GIRLS INITIATIVE

The Women and Girls Initiative (WGI) was established in 2016, by motion of the Board of Supervisors to examine systemic issues that lead to inequitable gender outcomes. The charge of the WGI is to implement policies and make recommendations for the transformations necessary to position Los Angeles County (County) as a leader in creating opportunities and improving the quality of life for all people, including women and girls in the County of Los Angeles. The County works to accomplish these objectives through the application of a gender lens as an employer, a service provider, and a partner.

## WHAT IS THE GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT (GIA)

The GIA is a methodology that helps the County improve its understanding of people’s different needs, experiences, and opportunities – which vary based on gender, race/ethnicity, age, and other social-demographic variables. The GIA is a tool the County uses to question the assumption that policies, programs, and services affect or benefit everyone in the same way. The GIA helps the County to estimate the effects – positive, negative, or neutral – of a policy, program, or service, on different groups.



In recognition of Women's History Month, WGI hosted 5 Town Hall meetings in March 2018. Held within each Supervisorial District, participants were called upon to share their thoughts on meaningful change.

## HOW THE COUNTY EMPLOYS THE GIA

The County analyzes data using a gender lens to assess external services, County workforce and leadership. The goal is to identify gender imbalances and determine why these imbalances exist. To address these imbalances, goals and strategies are developed along with metrics to capture changes over time. The WGI GIA Team works with a cluster or cohort of departments that have each compiled a team comprised of IT, HR, program experts, data professionals, and management, who meet bi-weekly to assess data, programs, and the services they provide to the community. Each department commits to a multi-year plan aimed at addressing gender imbalances and improving access for all genders.

## LONG TERM GOALS FOR GIA

WGI’s implementation of GIA has resulted in policy changes and best practices that are shared among all departments. Ongoing communication among departments promotes lessons learned, solutions to common challenges, and WGI can troubleshoot with additional support. Over time, as more outcomes are achieved, the WGI will share these findings more broadly.

LA County adopted into County Code the principles of the Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The GIA is the implementation tool used to ensure CEDAW principles are embedded in County operations as an employer, service provider & partner.

During the GIA process, department are assessed on their Family Friendly practices. The assessment is based on the ease of access to information and training on federally protected leaves for County staff. The longer-term goal is to develop a shared understanding of a “family friendly” work environment with an aspiration to broaden family friendly policies.



## NOTABLE DISCOVERIES AND CHANGES

One department appeared to have no gender imbalances when looking at a particular job classification. When applying the GIA tool, the department separated part-time employees from full-time employees and this segmentation, by gender, generated the eye-opening outcome that there were in fact gender imbalances between part-time and full-time employees. This discovery was confounding since the process for on-boarding is the same for all genders, however in this case, women were not remaining on or transitioning into full-time employment resulting in women, in this job category, potentially having less economic stability. This alerted the department to explore more ways to recruit and retain women for full-time employment.



Copyright: Andrea Price @ Sac State, 2022.

## GENDER LENS SOLUTIONS

In the social services application of a gender lens, discoveries were made that a more balanced workforce comprised of a larger number of men may be beneficial for male clients and thereby create better personal and societal outcomes. In the case of foster youth, having a male social worker may be more relatable for male youth and similarly, for the collection of child support, a male caseworker may be more effective when dealing with male clients. The strategies for how to recruit more men into these fields through marketing and outreach, revamping job bulletins, reframing the gender expectations for these roles, and more have been another outgrowth of the GIA movement.



In addition to GIA, WGI is working to increase the recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional roles across the County such as firefighting, transportation, health care and more. WGI is actively building a mentorship program for women in the County in partnership with HR department.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR GIA

The County's workforce will be fully trained in GIA by the end of 2024. With this investment, the County aims to be an example of a gender balanced municipality. By sharing best practices and outcomes with other jurisdictions, the County provides a model for leading others towards creating more opportunities and improving the quality of life for all genders.

