

Transformational Change for Women and Girls in Los Angeles County

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**WOMEN
+ GIRLS**
INITIATIVE



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GOVERNING COUNCIL MEMBERS & LEADERSHIP

The WGI is led by a Governing Council, comprising 15 experts from across the County appointed by the Board of Supervisors:

District 1

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis

Sandra Mendoza
Kathy Spillar
Bea Stotzer (Chair)
Jan Perry (February 2017–January 2019)

District 2

Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell

(formerly Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas)
Araceli Campos (Chair 2017–2019)
Anita DeFrantz
Sharon Shelton (Chair 2019–2020)

District 3

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

Kafi Blumenfeld
Wendy Greuel (Vice Chair)
R. Christine Hershey
Jai Lee Wong (February 2017–May 2019)

District 4

Supervisor Janice Hahn

Dr. Carmen Estrada-Schaye
Dr. Perla Hernandez Trumkul
Jane Templin
Leticia Mendoza (February 2017–January 2018)

District 5

Supervisor Kathryn Barger

Alice Petrossian
Jennifer Quan
Angela Underwood-Jacobs
Chanel Boutakidis (February 2017–May 2018)
Meghan Ginley (July 2018–February 2019)

Who Is Included in Our Definition of Women and Girls

When we reference women and girls in our work and throughout this report, we include and advocate for ALL women and girls, such as: older women, LGBTQ+, immigrants, women and girls of color, veterans, unhoused, foster youth, all religions, all ethnicities, all ability levels and in all stages of life, as well as gender-expansive individuals (cis women and girls, trans women and girls, nonbinary individuals, gender-nonconforming individuals, gender-queer individuals and any women and female-identified individuals).

OUR MISSION:

To establish Los Angeles County as a leader in creating opportunities and improving outcomes for all women and girls.

We apply a gender and age lens when the County acts as an employer, a service provider and a partner to:

- Enhance equity and justice
- Increase leadership opportunities and capacity
- Create innovative pathways and partnerships

OUR VISION: Los Angeles County is a place where all women and girls are empowered to reach their full potential.

When Women and Girls Thrive, So Do Societies

Welcome from the WGI Governing Council

Los Angeles County must be a place that provides its 5.2 million women and girls with the tools, resources and opportunities they need to grow and thrive. This belief lies behind the founding of the Women and Girls Initiative (WGI), and it continues to form the core of all we do.

The WGI, a five-year time-limited initiative created by the Board of Supervisors in 2016, was charged with examining the systemic issues that lead to inequitable gender outcomes and recommending and pursuing changes to improve the quality of life for all women and girls in the County.

Our work has been conducted in line with a Board mandate to apply a gender and age lens to County departments, programs and services, aiming to spotlight and address inequities and promote systemic change. Together, we have moved the needle toward gender equity through research, community engagement and evidence-based resources for decision making to improve conditions for women and girls.

This report identifies the opportunities to build upon the WGI's work to date and extend the impact to further support women and girls. It also includes a summary of the Council's work to date with a compendium of the resources we've created to support women and girls in LA County. The global COVID-19 pandemic further revealed the wide-ranging inequities uniquely impacting women and girls, validating the importance of this work and its dedicated focus to creating a better future for women and girls.

Our work and achievements have been shaped foremost by women and girls themselves. Through in-person and digital outreach, surveys and events, we have connected with thousands of women and girls across LA County over the past five years; hearing their hopes, goals and perspectives; identifying gaps in service in communities; and advancing change with locally led solutions.

Our goal is that LA County becomes a place where every girl and woman can live happy, productive and healthy lives with increased access to upward economic mobility. The work is just getting started.

— The WGI Governing Council

“The Los Angeles County Women and Girls Initiative worked across every County agency and department with a singular purpose: to improve the lives of the girls and women who call Los Angeles their home. The Initiative Staff and Council put in great work to thoughtfully recommend real, lasting change so that our communities and workplaces are, and will continue to become, a more equitable environment in which LA County's women and girls are able to thrive and reach their full potential.”

— LA COUNTY SUPERVISOR
SHEILA KUEHL

“

While I was homeless, I learned the importance of keeping up appearances. Being identified as a 'homeless person' has such a stigma attached to it that many of us (and I think women, especially) opt to remain isolated and invisible instead of pursuing help that may be available. At the meeting [with the WGI], it was such a relief to be able to speak freely about my experience after keeping so much to myself. The WGI's approach to the problem of homelessness is uniquely open-minded and quite refreshing, in my opinion.”

— JESSICA MORENO,
LA COUNTY RESIDENT

Created to Expand Opportunities for Women and Girls

Why did we need this initiative, and what do we need to do next?

Despite decades of improvement, significant gender disparities persist in LA County, and many women and girls continue to experience a disproportionate share of hardships. Women and girls in LA County experience poverty at higher rates than their counterparts across the country. Households headed by women often struggle with food insecurity, illness and, increasingly, homelessness. Median earnings for LA County women are lower than both the national median and the County median for men.

To further expand opportunities and improve economic conditions for women and girls, the County Board of Supervisors established the five-year Women and Girls Initiative (WGI) through a motion from Supervisors Sheila Kuehl and Hilda L. Solis in December 2016. The WGI is the County's first focused effort to examine the experiences, barriers and opportunities that impact well-being uniquely faced by women and girls.

In the last five years, the WGI has conducted Supervisorial District-specific town hall meetings and Countywide virtual town halls. The WGI has also engaged in rigorous studies, research and assessments, including:

An assessment of the County's abilities and deficits in ensuring gender equity in key areas such as economic resiliency, nontraditional employment, juvenile justice and homelessness.



The commissioning and issuing of a report with recruitment, hiring and retention recommendations for increasing women's representation in LA County Sheriff's Department.

Two Countywide Employee Climate surveys to assess employee satisfaction, perceptions of equity in the workforce, mentorship opportunities and knowledge/use of the County's family-friendly policies.

A thorough assessment of the County's recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion, testing, evaluation and other Human Resources policies to ascertain any disparate impacts they may have on women.

An inventory of the availability of data disaggregated by gender within County and State data management systems and recommendations for how to expand the collection of intersectional gendered variables across these systems.



Housed in the County's Chief Executive Office, the WGI has a comprehensive mandate that requires working with every County department. This wide-ranging scope demanded that we explore all efforts to educate, employ, house and provide health care and recreation for women and girls—including the specific needs of women and girls of color and older women. We seized opportunities to forge connections between work being done in parallel across the County and to promote shared learning.

Data is the key missing ingredient throughout all issues. We strongly support the creation of stronger and streamlined processes to collect, measure and use gender, race and socioeconomic data to identify and enact equity-based solutions. Access to data is key to identifying and building upon policies that can advance equity for all women and girls. And, most critically, accurate data will let us ensure that all County departments

The WGI was tasked to focus on the needs of women and girls who are:

- County employees, as well as contracted partners and vendors
- Recipients of County services
- Participants in County public-private and other partnerships

apply an intersectional gender and age lens to all aspects of their work. Data is a tool for effective leadership and provides a basis for accountability.

Our work and recommendations aim to build gender-based measures and processes into County procedures—from recruitment practices to data collection. These are investments with long-term benefits that can equip every County department to continually and proactively further the well-being of women and girls for years to come.



“ Los Angeles County is still a place where too many women and girls face disadvantages and inequities. This initiative is an opportunity for local women and girls to tell us how we can better support them—their physical and mental well-being, their economic strength and their career goals. I thank the Women and Girls Initiative for their work in empowering women and uplifting their well-being.”

— LA COUNTY SUPERVISOR
HILDA L. SOLIS

“Through elevating community voices, undertaking robust research and teaching departments how to apply a gender lens to their work, the Women and Girls Initiative has positioned LA County to be a leader in advancing equity for women and girls. The WGI’s work provides a strong foundation as we move forward into the next phase of our efforts to ensure women and girls have equal access and opportunities to reach their full potential.”

— FESIA DAVENPORT,
LA COUNTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Recommendations

We are motivated by the determination of County employees and our communities alike to forge a stronger, healthier future for girls and women at all stages of their lives. We also recognize there is much more to do. Our mandate was to learn, study and inform. The all-important next steps are focused on implementation.

Embed Women and Girls in All Aspects of the County Frameworks

The recommendations contained in this report aim to create structural changes in County policies, practices and tools to meet the diverse needs of women and girls and advance their well-being and leadership.

The full implementation of these recommendations will require robust data on gender, race, age and socioeconomic status along with investment and commitment from all County departments.

Structural changes needed include:

The introduction of a gender, age and race lens to each County department and all offices of Equity, Anti-Racism and Diversity. This can be supported by the application of new tools, such as the WGI’s forthcoming Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) tool.

A measurement of LA County women’s upward economic mobility alongside increased gender-focused programs and supportive services for residents. An independent third party must be used to assess, evaluate and report annually on progress for accountability.

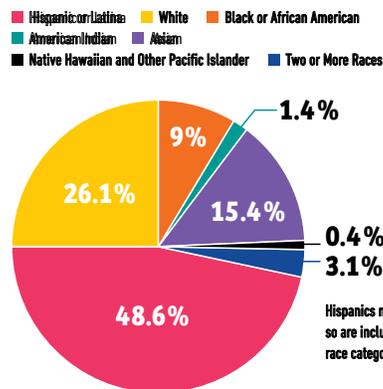
Collaboration and regular engagement with the community through surveys, in-person and virtual workshops, town halls and focus groups to ensure their needs are met.

The implementation of principles based on women and girls’ “bill of rights” and definitions of discrimination as outlined by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which were incorporated into the LA County Code in November 2021.

The implementation of gender-based budgeting to include a comprehensive gender and age lens, plus independent oversight for County budgets to better inform funding toward projects and positions that can further equity and ensure greater inclusion.

Development of more flexible, unrestricted funding so that County funds for services are flexible in how they can be spent, allowing service providers to adapt as needs emerge and mitigate various types of traumas.

Racial breakdown of women in Los Angeles County, 2021



Measuring Impact Equals Accountability: We Need Data

While gender disparities are undeniable, anecdotal or historical evidence can only take us so far. We also need to be able to measure progress annually to know whether the County is moving gender equity forward in ways that are truly meaningful. Therefore, the County will need to consistently collect, analyze and act on critical measures—a cultural and procedural shift in how departments approach both data collection and decision making. For example, gender and age measures must be incorporated into all County department head Management Appraisal and Performance Plan (MAPP) goals to reflect urgency and progress toward collecting gender data. Similarly, hiring and pay scale policies may need to be refined if gender or racial disparities are uncovered.

Currently, this work is unachievable, mostly due to a lack of consistent, quality data from within the County. Historically, data collection, measurement and analysis around gender equity has been conducted either differently across departments or not at all. Going forward, it will be imperative that LA County, under direction from leadership, commit to developing structures and systems for better, wide-ranging data collection in each area of work and use of qualitative measures to track women and girls' successes, needs and barriers.

The GIA, designed and tested by the WGI to allow every department to standardize the process of and prioritize comprehensive data collection, can serve as the foundation of this work—institutionalizing measurements around gender, age and race. Full implementation of the GIA across departments will require adequate resources to support an annual assessment of gender impact on both internal and external operations, as well as an independent audit to be completed every three years against WGI objectives.

WGI recommendations also include public dissemination of this work to raise awareness of gender issues and County actions, ideally via annual “report cards” that examine how the County is doing in terms of gender data collection, gender-based budgeting and key gender equality measures. Progress made each year toward achieving the objectives and implementing the WGI recommendations to impact residents and County employees must be measured and communicated to internal and external stakeholders in LA County. This work is not only essential for women

and girls here, but it can also play a significant role in advancing gender equality beyond the County. Hence, lessons from the WGI research and ongoing reporting should be incorporated into advocacy at the state and federal levels. LA County must prioritize state policy relationships and engage in lobbying activities to achieve legislative change at the state level to stratify gender data collection.

The disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic upon women and girls locally and nationwide demonstrates the need for quality data capture and analysis to inform policy decision making at every level.

These efforts can also distinguish LA County as a leader in advancing gender equity and a positive place for women and girls to live for decades to come.

QUALITY OF CRITICAL MEASURES ACROSS LA COUNTY DEPARTMENTS							
	Dept 1	Dept 2	Dept 3	Dept 4	Dept 5	Dept 6	Dept 7
Gender	△	×	×	○	○	△	×
Age	△	○	△	○	×	○	○
Race	○	○	△	△	○	○	×
Abilities	×	△	○	×	△	×	△

× Data unavailable ○ Data incomplete △ Data available

This chart is an example for illustration purposes only



“The Women and Girls Initiative was integral to the creation of the Women’s Fire Alliance. From the beginning, WGI helped provide the framework so that women firefighters could not just be assisted but could be empowered to take care of themselves.”

— MELISSA HILLIS, ASSISTANT PROJECT DIRECTOR & TREASURER, WOMEN’S FIRE ALLIANCE

Five Priority Areas

Through research and community conversations, the WGI has identified critical gaps for realizing equal opportunities and support for all women and girls in LA County. Below are five key recommendations, including priority next-step actions.

Economic Mobility

Support upward economic mobility:

Establish “actionable” policies to improve the economic mobility of all women as they relate to their financial stability and mental and physical health. When developing future policies, acknowledge and address the different cultural and economic realities that impact women of color, including pay inequities.



Ensure gender, age and racial equality in all workforce development and training efforts inclusive of workforce staff and leadership.

Roll out equity-based career development efforts that include supports for training, recruiting, maintaining employment and advancing in careers.

Increase outreach to women-owned businesses to enhance their awareness and support them in applying for opportunities to bid and win County contracts, including those run by LGBTQ+ and women of color.

Gender-Specific County Services



Enact data collection practices for County services:

Task all departments with creating a gender-related data inventory of their programs and services with the goal of increasing gendered data collection capacity.

Support uptake of interim proxy measures for data analysis by gender and other pertinent demographics until greater data management capacity can be built within the County.

Prioritize the creation and implementation of a County-led baseline economic census of residents to be fielded every 5 to 10 years, with results disaggregated by gender, race and age and by Supervisorial District. This should begin by refining and fielding the “Countywide Women and Girls Economic Census” proposed by the WGI and mandating improved data collection practices throughout departments.

Pursue legislative advocacy at the state and federal levels to include gender in data collection policies.

Initiate data collection at the onset of a new program or during policy changes that includes gender and age. This direction should come from the County’s Chief Executive Office.



Equitable Workplace

Apply a gender, age and equity lens to create equitable workplaces:

Support family care needs. LA County must increase access to affordable and quality childcare resources for everyone, including essential workers, teenage parents and young women, to support upward economic mobility. This should include childcare and eldercare infrastructure in regional land use economic development planning, particularly in County-led development activities.

Increase recruitment and retention of women in LA County Sheriff's and Fire Departments. These departments are critical to ongoing engagement in communities and provide excellent career and economic mobility opportunities for women. The WGI has led productive efforts to boost recruitment and retention of women and recommends a continued, evidence-based focus on these objectives.

Focus career development strategies on occupations where women are underrepresented. This includes a focus on industries where women are underrepresented, including IT/tech, construction and the trades. Strategies for including marginalized women inclusive of ages 55+ are also needed to increase employment and economic security.

Work with County Counsel to develop legal guidelines and/or trainings for County departments about their legal abilities to incorporate a gender and age lens into their work.

Embed an ongoing and regularly updated, comprehensive staff development program to train all staff on race-, age- and gender-related implicit bias and gender equity.

“The WGI was launched out of a need to tackle the deeply rooted inequities and barriers that women and girls in LA County continue to face. They deserve to live healthy, productive, vibrant lives, no matter their race, age, gender identity and socioeconomic status. Now, five years in, we've created systems and made recommendations to ensure that the County delivers the resources and services women and girls need.”

— ABBE LAND, WGI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



RECOMMENDATIONS

Women & Girls in LA County vs Other U.S. Metro Areas

5.2 million girls and women live in Los Angeles County

16% of women in LA County live in poverty

Nationally: 12.9% (2018)

NYC: 20% (2018)

Dallas: 15% (2017 projection)

Denver: 13% (2019)

Miami-Dade County: nearly 19% (2019)

17% of LA women ages 74+ live in poverty

Nationally: 13% (ages 75+)

NYC: 23% (ages 65 and up)

33% of single mothers live in poverty

Nationally: 24% (2019)

NYC: 32% (2018)

Atlanta Metro/Fulton County: 38% (2017)

31% of unhoused population in LA are women

Austin: 38% (2017)

31% of LA County women hold a college or postgraduate degree

Nationally: 35%

Atlanta Metro Area: 48% (2017)

Austin/Travis County: 46% (2017)

Use Partnerships to Accelerate Impact



Strengthen internal and external County partnerships:

Apply a gender and age lens to girl-focused programs and partnerships. Examine public and private grantmaking practices in the County, working with the Center for Strategic Partnerships, to guide funding decisions aimed at services for older women and girls. Work with the Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) to design and provide women over 55 with career services, job training, entry and career ladder programs for economic mobility and career advancement.

punitive measures that disproportionately punish girls of color and increase opportunities for positive intervention.

Prioritize affordable and higher-density housing. Potential policies like enacting more rent control ordinances, inclusionary and/or density bonus zoning, incentives for accessory dwelling units and support of nonprofit housing developers may be part of the solution with attention to women at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The County can assess property it already owns to be used for permanent or transitional housing.

Partner with youth justice organizations to divert girls from the school-to-prison pipeline. Ensure that a gender and race lens is incorporated in Office of Education and youth partner policies and practices to reduce



Build Tomorrow's Leaders

Empower the next generation of leaders:

Expand access to programming for school-aged children and teenagers to include sports, STEAM, leadership development and literacy programs.

can also serve to facilitate this leadership skill-building opportunity.

Boost investment in youth development and engagement programming, including girl-focused programs. Through the Care First Community Investment Funds, the Board of Supervisors has allocated funding toward creating effective youth development and engagement programs. Future funding distribution should invest in programs specifically aimed at girls.

Support outreach efforts like the Women in Tech Hiring Initiative to create a County-wide career pipeline program for girls and young women that includes training, mentorship and skills development.

Task appropriate County departments to create programming related to leadership and engagement for girls and young women. The 2019 Girls Empowerment Summit held by the Department of Parks and Recreation serves as one model for such initiatives. Sports

Focus on the first 18 years. The development of education programming in partnership with the LA County Office of Education is needed to support girls and young women in economic skill building and leadership training. Access to mentorship and other opportunities including sports is also needed so they are prepared to succeed and lead in all areas. To be fully inclusive, educational and leadership programs must connect with the needs of girls of color, immigrant girls and girls with disabilities.

The WGI’s Impact to Date

Our accomplishments to date have been informed by collaborations with County departments, its employees and women and girls in our communities.

The activities and recommendations all flow from our five Strategic Framework Priorities. These areas of focus were set by the WGI Governing Council in October 2018. Based on existing data and community feedback, they guide our work addressing women and girls’ inequities and unmet needs.

Economic Mobility

The WGI defined “economic mobility” as the ability to move up the economic ladder during one’s lifetime by having the financial freedom to meet basic needs and personal achievements:



Across this work the WGI was able to inventory the extent to which existing economic data could be disaggregated by gender and made recommendations on how to use proxy measures and build capacity for the increased collection of this critical data by gender.

We built into the GIA tool rates of management promotion by gender. The GIA will collect qualitative and quantitative data on gender and develop strategies for serving diverse populations. We also included recommendations to enhance mentorship opportunities for women and girls—a proven strategy to drive career advancement.

We collaborated with the Economic Development Division to incorporate gender data in the 2020 Economic Scorecard—a snapshot of LA County’s workforce and its development that informs policy makers as they establish public-private partnerships to boost economic growth and opportunity.

The WGI examined how the County applies a gender lens to COVID-19 economic recovery efforts, including County-led loans, grants and investments; childcare infrastructure; employment; and the application of flexible post-pandemic work arrangements. A report summarizing the findings and recommendations to increase economic resiliency of County women was submitted in November 2021.

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The Board enshrined the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) into the County ordinance. The Board acknowledged that there is a continuing need for the County to protect the human rights of women and therefore to support locally the principles of the CEDAW. Adoption of the CEDAW principles at the County level will help promote gender equity and address discrimination against women and girls within the County, including in the areas of economic development, education, housing and homelessness, gender-based violence and harassment, health care, justice-impacted women, voting rights and civic engagement. This action makes Los Angeles County the largest jurisdiction in all of the US to have adopted CEDAW principles.

COVID-19 Response

The WGI COVID-19 response centered on ensuring that LA County women and girls could access the resources they needed to stay accurately informed, economically secure and mentally well. Given the disparate impact on women of color, older women, essential workers and the Latina community, it was vital we stay connected.

The WGI’s website and social media became a hub for addressing issues women and girls were experiencing during lockdown. This included available support for those experiencing domestic violence and child abuse, mental health resources, up-to date guidance on State and County mask policies, senior specific resources and food assistance maps.



Centennial of 19th Amendment

The WGI spearheaded the planning of the County's centennial recognition of women's suffrage. When the pandemic halted the hosting of public-facing events, the WGI, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Commission for Women, worked to re-envision the centennial in a virtual environment.

The virtual celebration engaged County employees, families and communities throughout the County around women's right to vote, the leadership of women of color to end voter disenfranchisement and the importance of Census participation. The WGI's website was transformed to host interactive centennial celebration elements including a heat map and toolkit to target registration of women voters throughout the County, downloadable materials promoting the Census and a timeline of 100 influential women who helped shape LA County.

Notably, every County department was able to take part in the celebration. For example, Child Support Services created a women-focused book club, LA County Library developed a women's suffrage reading list for youth, the Auditor Controller created a virtual museum showcasing women's suffrage history and employee stories and Parks and Recreation hosted a month-long Girls Empowerment Summit. Arts and Culture sponsored an art competition, selecting six artists whose work celebrating women's suffrage was installed in the LA County Board of Supervisors and the Arts and Culture offices and made available as downloadable posters.



Gender-Specific County Services

Ensure economic mobility for women and design all County services for women and girls with a gender and age lens to ensure accessibility, be responsive to needs and provide for well-being throughout their lifetime:

We ensured that every County department met their Management Appraisal Performance Plan goal to implement at least one strategy strengthening their capacity to collect and track data outcomes by gender. This milestone enables efforts to increase women representation in nontraditional careers and management-level roles, ensure equitable distribution of contracts awarded and reduce disparities in health and mental health care. It also sets the groundwork for future implementation of the GIA.

We supported the Youth Justice Work Group in integrating a gender lens into work examining the juvenile justice system in Los Angeles County. A WGI representative, alongside partners at the Commission for Children and Families, participated in several subgroups created by the workgroup to analyze and provide feedback to proposed policy recommendations. This input helped to shape the Youth Justice Workgroup's final report and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

The WGI participated on two interdepartmental workgroups to shape the County's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative principles, raising the importance to reflect a gender and age lens and prioritize the needs of girls and women of color and older women.



Equitable Workplace



Create equitable workplaces where all people, regardless of gender and age, have equal opportunities for employment, advancement and leadership within the LA County workforce:

The WGI collaborated in producing the second annual Equity Summit for nearly 900 County employees in 2019. With the theme “Achieving Equity Today,” the event explored best practices for eliminating implicit bias in the workplace and increasing cultural competency. The WGI hosted two breakout sessions for more than 500 attendees on how to recognize and act on implicit bias.

We conducted two Countywide, anonymous Employee Climate Surveys in 2019 and 2021, respectively, measuring employee satisfaction with key work-life and equity-based policies. The 2021 survey incorporated the voices of 42 percent of the County’s employees with a total of 43,101 responses.

We partnered with the LA City and LA County Fire Departments to establish The Women’s Fire Alliance in 2020, a nonprofit providing support and equity-building resources to women throughout the region working in all

aspects of fire services. As of July 2021, 25 women participated in their inaugural mentorship program.

The WGI engaged 77 women and men through focus groups examining family-friendly workplace, childcare and employee mentorship needs and experiences. Their voices, augmented by the data and responses from the 2019 Employee Climate Survey, informed the “A Closer Look” report, submitted to the Board in March 2021.

We worked with Justice & Securities Strategies, Inc. to conduct and issue a report with recruitment, hiring and retention recommendations for increasing women’s representation in the LA County Sheriff’s Department.

We partnered with the LA County Fire Department to incorporate community outreach, best hiring practices and mentorship, resulting in a 30 percent increase in women graduating

Policy & Advocacy Milestones

A vital component of realizing gender equality is ensuring that government at all levels creates and enacts laws and policies to safeguard and promote the rights of women and girls of all ages. Policy and advocacy have become a part of the WGI’s work—developing a powerful voice at the local, state and national levels for the County’s women and girls. Actions have included:

March 2021: Executive Director Abbe Land penned a letter to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. In the letter, she outlined how proposed restrictions to safety-net facilities and the types of reproductive counseling options provided under the Title X Family Planning Program would negatively impact low-income women.

April 2021: The WGI shared its support for Assembly Bill 71 with the California State Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee. The bill, which remains on hold, would develop a statewide approach and significant investment to ending homelessness.

June 2021: Abbe Land joined County Supervisors Kuehl and Mitchell in a virtual meeting with the Biden Administration Gender Policy Council to discuss the WGI’s work and the needs of parents and caregivers, LGBTQ+ women and military women and families.

Girls Empowerment with Metro

In March 2019, the WGI partnered with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority to hold a Girls Summit for more than 250 girls in the seventh through twelfth grades. The summit highlighted opportunities in areas of the transportation industry where women are traditionally underrepresented.



Promoting Gender Equity in Recruitment & Hiring

To date, the WGI has published two reports supporting equitable recruitment and hiring practices in LA County.

The first, "Equity for Women in the LA County Workplace," was submitted in collaboration with the Department of Human Resources to the Board in June 2018 and examined how the County's current policies, practices and programs impact working women.

The following October, the WGI released the "Guide to Promoting Gender Equity in Recruitment and Hiring," outlining recommendations to counter gender bias in creating job descriptions, advertising job opportunities and evaluating and interviewing candidates. Best practices from the report were then presented to 80 department leads responsible for assisting managers and candidates going through the hiring process.

Barriers to Gender Parity at LASD

The LA County Sheriff's Department (LASD) employs 18,000 people, yet only 18 percent of the LASD are women. The WGI has analyzed and shared a report with the Board on evidence-based practices for recruitment and hiring of women in the LASD. Produced with Justice and Security Strategies, Inc., the report identified a goal of reaching 45 to 50 percent female sworn personnel over 15 years. Recommendations include increasing women rank officers in recruitment efforts, addressing outdated test requirements, developing mentorship programs and including bias training and diversity and inclusion activities.

Use Partnerships to Accelerate Impact



Design County internal and external partnerships to increase opportunities and improve outcomes for women and girls throughout Los Angeles County:

We convened an ad hoc committee dedicated to prioritizing gender justice within public and private grantmaking in LA County in 2018. Findings directed the Center for Strategic Partnerships to continue this work by advancing conversations focusing on matching women and girls with funders, contractors and community organizations and led to the development of the GIA.

The WGI helped shape the Women in Trades Advisory Council, dedicated to growing the number of women on County construction jobs and providing women in or entering the sector with training and placement services. By the end of 2021, the number of women craft workers on Community Workforce Agreement public works projects had doubled.

We created the At-Promise Girls Ad Hoc Committee to create and open pathways that provide future-building opportunities for girls vulnerable to juvenile justice system involvement. In collaboration with several youth justice partners, the Committee began identifying intervention points and solutions to act on before a girl enters the juvenile justice

system. Partnering with the UCLA Luskin School of Public Policy, the Ad Hoc Committee commissioned a report, "Diverting Black Girls in Los Angeles County from the School-to-Prison Pipeline through Intersectional Policy Solutions." The report's recommendations are shaped around the goal of eliminating punitive measures in schools that harm and punish girls of color and often lead to further justice involvement. It was submitted to the Board in March 2022.

We held a virtual town hall dedicated to the increase in homelessness among women and girls during the pandemic, particularly the role of intimate partner violence and the importance of violence prevention. Coming out of the conversation, the WGI led creation of the Homeless Women Ad Hoc Committee to develop recommendations addressing gender-specific issues around homelessness. Those recommendations were submitted to the County's Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness.

Build Tomorrow's Leaders

Empower the next generation of leadership by preparing women and girls for success in their careers and communities:



The WGI helped the Department of Parks and Recreation plan the Girls Empowerment Summit held in March 2019 and participated in the virtual empowerment summit in October 2020, where County and community-based experts and speakers engaged 1,000 girls on several topics, including teen dating violence, financial literacy and the power of civic participation.

We partnered with the Women in Tech Hiring Initiative to create a career pipeline program for youth and particularly young women ages 14 to 24 that included training, mentorship, skills development workshops and on-the-job experience. The program was placed on hold during the pandemic and relaunched in fall 2021. As of December 2021, 25 girls have interned with County departments.



Looking Forward

Girls and women are inherently strong, intelligent, driven, and capable. They deserve communities, workplaces, health care, schools and government that respect their dignity and invest in their talents and well-being. Their successes belong to us all. To truly move the needle toward gender equity through research, community engagement, and evidence-based resources for decision making, the work has just begun. While the WGI has both a list of significant accomplishments and an even more robust list of recommendations, true success will be measured by whether this work is embraced and institutionalized at the County.

This will require a sea change in how the County operates across every department and at every level. By prioritizing the identification of inequities, particularly through enhanced data gathering and measurement, and resourcing of opportunities, the County can develop solutions that speak to women and girls' unmet needs and the challenges they face. The WGI is prepared to lead these critical and worthy endeavors. Together, we can make LA County a model for promoting and sustaining gender equity.

“Wherever inequality and suffering lives, there stands a girl or woman able to turn the tide of hardship into a tidal wave of progress. Our hope is that progress be measured by data that will bring strategic clarity and accountability. We, the Governing Council, walk boldly side by side with the LA County Board of Supervisors adamant that we must improve outcomes for all women and girls. So, now the work really begins.”

— WGI CHAIR BEA STOZER

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 Transformational Change for Women and Girls
 in Los Angeles County

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WGI REPORT	DATE	PURPOSE
Findings from the March 2018 Community Convenings	June 2018	Describe community feedback and recommendations from the series of WGI Community Convenings held in March 2018
Equity for Women in the Workplace	June 2018	Provide insight and recommendations on policies and programs for the County workforce
Guide to Promoting Gender Equity in Recruitment & Hiring	October 2018	Provide specific guidance for departments on how to structure hiring processes to facilitate gender equity
First Annual Report	February 2019	Summarize the implementation of the Women and Girls Initiative Goals in 2017 & 2018
2019 Employee Climate Survey Analysis	November 2019	Document findings and recommendations from first Countywide employee climate survey
Women's History in Los Angeles Timeline	February 2020	Provide education on important figures of the Women's Rights movement in Los Angeles to commemorate the centennial anniversary of 19th Amendment
Second Annual Report	February 2020	Summarize the implementation of the Women and Girls Initiative Goals in 2019
Women's Voices Count: A Toolkit to Increase Voter Registration	March 2020	Provide background statistics on current registration status of women in LA County and guidance for hosting
Let's Speak Up! Increasing Women's Participation in Community Engagement Spaces	March 2020	Provide a toolkit for organizers of community engagement events
Documenting Departments' Centennial Celebration	August 2020	Provide overview of WGI and County departmental actions around the centennial anniversary of 19th Amendment
A Closer Look: Los Angeles County Employee Climate Survey (LACECS)	November 2020	Provide additional findings and recommendations from the March 2019 LACECS based on focus groups with County employees
Third Annual Report	March 2021	Summarize the implementation of the Women and Girls Initiative Goals in 2020
Recommendations for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Women in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department	July 2021	Report back on the study and recommendations relevant to recruiting and retaining women in the Sheriff's Department
Diverting Black Girls in Los Angeles County from the School-to Prison Pipeline through Intersectional Policy Solutions	September 2021	Present recommendations aimed at eliminating the unjust criminalization of girls of color in LA County schools
Applying a Gender Lens to Economic Resiliency in LA County	November 2021	Present recommendations and findings relevant to improving the economic position of women in LA County
WGI Virtual Townhalls Report	November 2021	Provide an overview of the 2020 virtual townhalls and describe important policy and program recommendations
Recommendations to Blue Ribbon Commission on Ending Homelessness for Women	November 2021	Advance a series of recommendations from the WGI Homeless Women Ad Hoc Committee to address the needs of women experiencing homelessness
2021 Employee Climate Survey Analysis	January 2022	Provide findings and recommendations from 2021 employee climate survey
A Closer Look: Applying a Gender Lens to Economic Resiliency in LA County	January 2022	Provide a closer look at how the County can enhance the use of gendered data in its internal and external decision making through spearheading the collection of baseline gendered data in an economic census