



## Work Plan for Fiscal Years 2009-10 and 2010-11

**Mission Statement:** The purpose of the Commission on the Status of Women is to promote equal rights and opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls and to address issues of discrimination and prejudice that negatively affect women in Sonoma County.

### Role of the Commission:

- Study, research and report on the needs of women and on conditions that demonstrate discrimination or prejudice that affect women and girls in Sonoma County
- Prepare and disseminate information regarding the needs and issues of women and girls.
- Advocate for women and girls.
- Identify potential gaps in services for women and girls that are the result of discrimination or prejudice.
- Consult, cooperate with, and recommend to the Board of Supervisors and other appropriate public agencies necessary procedures, programs or legislation to promote and ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and girls.
- Highlight the often unrecognized contributions of women and girls throughout all sectors in our community.
- Refer Sonoma County residents to appropriate resources for help and assistance with inquiries and issues involving negative discrimination or prejudice on account of gender.

**Background:** During the 2007-8 and 2008-9 biennium, the Commission built a work plan based on the research and information gathered by the Commission of 2005-6/2006-7. The research and information gathering of the 2005-6/2006-7 Commission resulted in a *Report on the Status of Women in Sonoma County* that was published in 2007. The *Report* gave root to a very aggressive work plan for the 2007-8/2008-9 Commission and resulted in a number of projects and liaison positions that fully engaged the Commission in the activities and issues of Sonoma County.

### Here is a brief summary of these projects:

- *Legislation Affecting Women (LAW) task force:* To create a systematic means for evaluation and advocacy affecting women and girls
- *Non-Traditional Career Exploration:* Working to educate students, parents, counselors and job seekers about career opportunities other than “pink collar” fields traditionally pursued by girls.
- *Older Women’s Task Force:* Focus on raising awareness of the needs and concerns of the elderly women.
- *Public Opportunities for Women’s Equal Representation (POWER) task force:* Dedicated to increasing participation by women in both appointed and elected public positions.



- *Self-Sufficiency Calculator*: Provide online access to budgetary tools that help women evaluate the steps needed to attain self-sufficiency.
- *Speaker Series*: To put the spotlight on the status of women's issues in Sonoma County.
- **Women's History Month**: To support teachers with hands on tools for teaching Women's History
- **Junior Commissioner Project**: CSW has sponsored the Junior Commissioner project since 1994. The Project covers the academic year with goals of:
  - **Giving youth the opportunity to take an active role in County government**
  - **Creating opportunities for youth to develop skills in communication, facilitation and presentations.**
  - **Empowering youth to make a positive impact in their communities**
  - **Empowering youth to develop leadership skills and strengthen their self esteem.**

## PLAN FOR THE 2009-10/2010-11 BIENNIUM

Approved by Commission September 10, 2009

Due to recent financial reductions, in the face of the Recession, the Commission has taken some bold steps to insure the quality and integrity of the Projects and Programs that are of great importance to the women and girls of Sonoma County. The Commissioners met in a recent Strategic Planning session to identify the work that is most vital in supporting women's concerns and issues going forward. Accordingly, the Commission has reviewed the projects and has established priorities for the coming two year period.

The discussion began with a review of all projects and a determination of the top three projects – thus identifying the priorities for making the biggest impact for the community. With the elimination of the Staff Analyst, the Commission felt that projects needed to be relatively self contained, not needing excessive support from the HR Department. For the coming year, the Commission will have the clerical support from staff for 10 hours per week. In view of that, the Commissioners determined which projects that could be handled by the members, who are all volunteers working other jobs.

The top priority projects, as determined by the Commissioners, are:

1. **Junior Commissioner Project**: Will engage more individual Commissioners in presentations to the Juniors, interviewing and teaching the Juniors. Commissioners will continue to ensure a safe field trip to Sacramento to meet with the Legislators representing Sonoma County.
2. **Women's History Project**: Several Commissioners will work on this project and will network with the Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma State University and the National Women's History Project to keep women's history alive and visible.

Other projects were converted to liaison focuses:

3. *Human Trafficking*: The Commission created a liaison position to maintain the linkage between the Commission and the vital work being performed across the County in the effort to eliminate Human Trafficking.

4. *Elder Women*: The Commission has appointed one Commissioner to be a liaison to the Area Agency on Aging, thus maintaining a focus on issues affecting elder women and the ability to affect public policy regarding such issues as indicated.
5. *Domestic Violence Prevention*: A commissioner will maintain a link to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and the Family Justice Center.
6. *Legislation*: A commissioner will continue her focus on legislation affecting women and will bring to the Commission, legislation that needs the attention and action of the Commission.
7. *Representation*: The Commission will continue to seek opportunities to train women for possible roles in the public sector.
8. *Juvenile Justice*: A Commissioner will act as liaison to the Juvenile Justice system.
9. *Technical Education and Non-traditional Careers*: a Commissioner will continue to be liaison to the County Office of Education.

To be eliminated as a separate focus are:

10. *Recruitment Task Force*: Recruitment will be the responsibility of every Commissioner as she performs other Commission work.
11. *Speaker Series*: Commissioners will continue to speak about Commission issues as opportunities present.

As you can see, the Commissioners are vested in the continuance of the vital work of the Commission on the Status of Women. As you review this work plan, the Commissioners would like to hear your input regarding the direction being presented. We would like to know if you agree with our priority list and if you have additional issues that the Commission should consider. We are also concerned about the ongoing commitment to CSW in light of budgetary concerns. What do you see as the future of the Commission? As we move forward through this changed Commission year, we want to ensure that the valuable work is not minimized or eliminated. The Women of Sonoma County count on us to provide a voice and a conscience for the issues that affect them every day.