

INFORMATION CALENDAR

March 19, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Commission on the Status of Women (COSOW)

Submitted by: Kera Binns, Chair, COSOW

Subject: Commission on the Status of Women 2025 Work Plan

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Commission on the Status of Women (COSOW) exists to advocate for gender equity and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women. Its purpose includes identifying and addressing systemic barriers in areas such as employment, education, housing, healthcare, and public policy. The Commission evaluates city policies affecting women, makes recommendations to City Council, and promotes initiatives that advance equal opportunities and safety for all women in Berkeley. By engaging with the community, monitoring local issues, and advising on policies, COSOW works to foster an inclusive and just environment where women can thrive free from oppression and inequality.

This document serves as a guide to the work the COSOW plans to take on in 2025. As additional items or issues arise, or are referred to the Commission from Council, the COSOW will adjust this plan accordingly.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The COSOW has a broad scope and a responsibility to support and investigate. To organize our work, we propose to establish three subcommittees, each with at least two focus areas, as indicated in the table below.

Our 2025 subcommittees and projects include:

Subcommittee: Student Safety <i>Najuna, Mercy, Peggy</i>		
Focus Area	Description	Lead
Digital and School Safety for	Expand education on women's safety, with a focus on online and school settings. Assess the	Najuna

Young Women	availability and effectiveness of safety education programs, and make recommendations to Council on strategies to ensure young women receive comprehensive and accessible safety information.	
Gender-Based Violence in BUSD Schools	Assess the ability of BUSD female, transgender, and gender-expansive students to report gender-based violence and receive support, identify gaps in reporting mechanisms and response systems, and make recommendations to Council on strengthening protections and resources.	Mercy
Addressing Sexual Misconduct by Adults on Children in Berkeley	Investigate the current city policies and programs related to sexual misconduct directed at children and youth by adults in Berkeley. Identify opportunities to compel investigation and resolution in every instance.	Peggy

Subcommittee: Equity & Opportunity Subcommittee

Kera, Kameka, and Dianna

Focus Area	Description	Lead
The State of Childcare in Berkeley: Addressing Barriers for Women and Families	Investigate the availability, affordability, and quality of childcare for children aged 0-12 in Berkeley, with a focus on how gaps in the system disproportionately impact women as both caregivers and childcare providers. Assess the economic and social consequences of limited childcare access, identify key constraints such as staffing, funding, and space, and develop policy recommendations to enhance support for working families. Provide insights to the City Council and relevant stakeholders to drive strategic action toward a more equitable childcare system.	Kera
Addressing Barriers to Consistent	To increase school attendance by identifying and addressing systemic barriers that disproportionately impact women and families.	Dianna

School Attendance	This initiative will begin with a needs assessment (Phase I) to collect data and inform city-level policy recommendations (Phase II), leading to targeted, data-driven interventions that ensure equitable access to education for all children.	
Supporting the African-American Holistic Resource Center to Meet the Needs of Black Women	Monitor the development and implementation of the African-American Holistic Resource Center (AARC) to ensure it effectively serves the needs of Black women in Berkeley. Assess progress following the Commission's letter of support for full funding, which was approved on 5/17/23, and incorporate insights from past presentations by AARC. Identify any gaps in services and recommend policy or funding adjustments to enhance the center's impact.	Kameka
Supporting Women Small Business Owners	Research women-owned businesses and micro-enterprises (including self-employed women and gig workers) to gain an understanding of how women-owned enterprises are faring in Berkeley and develop recommendations to City Council as needed.	Kameka
Proposed Subcommittee: Women's Safety & Justice <i>Mercy and Shirley</i>		
Focus Area	Description	Lead
Human Trafficking Response	Conduct a comprehensive analysis of human trafficking identification and response in Berkeley, evaluate current policies and services, and recommend improvements to Council to enhance victim support and prevention efforts.	Mercy
Protecting Elderly Women from Crime	Advocating for increased police involvement to enhance public safety downtown. Continue to advocate to the City Council to increase the prioritization of the existing budget line item 55 on this topic towards funding and	Shirley

	implementation.	
--	-----------------	--

At the March 19, 2025 meeting the COSOW approved the work plan to send to the City Council as follows: Scott/Mullins to approve the 2025 Work Plan.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Future action items that the COSOW may send to City Council could require staff time to develop, finalize, and/or implement. The COSOW strives to ensure proposals provide significant net triple bottom line benefits to the City when evaluating total costs and benefits across areas of impact.

CONTACT PERSON

Okeya Vance-Dozier, Secretary, COSOW, ovance-dozier@berkeleyca.gov