



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Expanding the powers and responsibilities of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) by amending the Glendale Municipal Code.

- 1) Motion to provide direction regarding expanding the powers and responsibilities of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) by amending the Glendale Municipal Code, to include regular programming, fundraising, and the frequency of regular meetings from four to twelve times per year, beginning July 2025, to accommodate the commission's expanded scope of work

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action Item

Approved for March 18, 2025 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview The City Clerk's staff recommends expanding the powers and responsibilities of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) by amending the Glendale Municipal Code. This initiative seeks to implement programming, fundraising, and increasing regular meetings from four to twelve per year starting in July 2025.

Key Proposals

1. **Expanded Role & Responsibilities**
 - Ability to conduct programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts.
 - Strengthen policy advisory functions to promote gender equity and women's welfare in Glendale.
 - Collaborations with organizations supporting women's empowerment and safety.
2. **Increased Funding & Staffing**
 - Provide direction on including an allocation of an additional **\$157,808 annually** (beginning FY 2025-2026) for staffing and operational expenses as part of the budget review process which will allow for the adjustment of staffing to include a **full-time Executive Analyst** dedicated to CSW.

- Provide direction on including an allocation of **\$75,000 for programming in FY 2025-26**, increasing to **\$150,000 annually from FY 2026-27 onwards** as part of the next year's budget review process.

3. Meetings & Public Engagement

- Increase the frequency of meetings to twelve per year to **increase the capacity** of the commission and ensure **greater transparency and public engagement**.

Rationale & Background

- Established in 2003, CSW initially played a significant role in **policy recommendations, community outreach, and programming** but was later scaled back due to administrative changes.
- Prior successful initiatives included **financial literacy workshops, self-defense training, and advocacy programs like Camp Rosie** which are no longer run by the commission.
- The **2022-2023 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Glendale** identified **persisting gender equity gaps**, particularly among Latina and Armenian women, who experience **higher poverty and unemployment rates**.
- **The City Council's commitment** to gender equity, including taking the **California Equal Pay Pledge**, supports the need for an expanded CSW.

Strategic Goals & Best Practices CSW's expansion aligns with successful models and focuses on:

- **Health & Safety** (domestic violence prevention, sexual assault awareness).
- **Economic Security** (financial literacy, employment support).
- **Civic Engagement** (mentorship programs, leadership training).
- **Gender-Based Violence Prevention** (survivor support, grant funding for victim services).
- **Community Support** (affordable childcare advocacy, parental education).

Fiscal Impact & Implementation

- Proposed staffing adjustments and program funding are designed to be **cost-effective while restoring and expanding CSW's original capacity**.
- Additional funding sources may include **grants and private partnerships** which will support future programming.

Conclusion: The CSW's full **advisory, advocacy, and programming functions** will enhance Glendale's commitment to gender equity and position Glendale as a leader in

municipal gender equity initiatives while ensuring the needs of women and girls in the community are effectively addressed.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff seeks direction from the City Council regarding the preferred scope of expansion and any additional considerations for implementation that will subsequently require staff to prepare an ordinance expanding the powers and responsibilities of the CSW, including amending the Glendale Municipal Code to include regular programming, fundraising, and increasing the frequency of regular meetings from four to twelve times per year, beginning July 2025, to accommodate the commission's expanded scope of work.

ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was originally established in 2003 to serve as an advisory body to the City Council, providing recommendations on policies, programs, and services that address the needs of women in Glendale.

Per Glendale Municipal Code Section 2.38.140, the powers and duties of the Commission were established as follows:

"The powers and duties of the Commission on the Status of Women shall be to assess and evaluate the needs and issues of women in the City in order to inform and advise the City Council, City departments and divisions, and other community agencies and organizations of those needs and issues; recommend programs or legislation to the City Council to promote and ensure equal rights and opportunities to and for women in the City; to promote education on issues regarding matters involving the needs of women and to prepare and disseminate such information; provide outreach information and education that empowers women to achieve self-sufficiency and self-esteem; maintain an active liaison with groups, organizations, agencies and individuals in regard to issues related to women; perform other duties as may be imposed upon the Commission by the City Council by ordinance or resolution."

In the initial proposal for collaboration with organizations to offer programming, the following partners were included: the YWCA Battered Women's Shelters and women's health programs; the Armenian Relief Society, which provides various services to new immigrant families; New Horizons Family Center, which teaches Latina women English as a second language; and Soroptimist, which raises money for many programs within the city, including the Battered Women's Shelter. The draft budget included funds for contractual services that could be used by the commission to study a particular issue, award funds to an outside organization doing the work, or establish collaborations with other organizations.

Some of the initial accomplishments of the CSW included securing a \$150,000 HUD grant through CDBG, which funded *Rosie Goes to Wall Street*, a three-week intensive day camp where girls learned about the operations of different city departments. Participants

also attended workshops on self-care, healthy relationships, financial literacy, and non-traditional careers. Additionally, they took part in the *All About YOU* boot camp, where they learned about physical fitness and exercise. The CSW also partnered with Shield Women’s Self-Defense to provide training for women in the city on self-defense against sexual assault during April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. On November 25, 2008, with the recommendation of CSW, council adopted a resolution in support of the United Nations’ Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The commission worked with a consultant to develop its first strategic plan for 2009–2014. This plan was revised for the years 2019–2022. Additionally, the commission published its first *Report on the Status of Women* for 2004–2006. A second report was published for 2015–2016.

In December of 2022, the Commission’s work was moved to the City Clerk’s office with a 50% admin analyst position, which was previously housed in the City Manager’s office. Since then, a revised strategic plan was put in place for 2023–2026 streamlining the functions of the commission (see Exhibit 1). Also, a more recent report was released on the Status of Women and Girls in Glendale for 2022–2023. With a commitment to data-driven policy and community engagement, the City Clerk’s Office played a pivotal role in ensuring the latest *Report on the Status of Women* not only reflected the diverse experiences of women in Glendale but also, for the first time, disaggregated the data on Armenian women from the “White” category. This effort led to the publication of an addendum specifically highlighting the experiences of Armenian women in Glendale, further strengthening the city’s commitment to inclusivity and representation.

Since its inception, the commission has undergone multiple modifications, including changes to its composition, meeting frequency, and overall function (see Exhibit 2).

Key amendments include:

- **2003:** Ordinance No. 5358 established the CSW, defining its purpose and duties.
- **2009:** Amendments to the terms of office and composition of the commission, including a reduction in size from seven to five members and making the appointments coterminous with the nominating councilmembers.
- **2015:** Changes in the operational scope eliminating programming, fundraising activity, and a reduction in meeting frequency from 12 to 4 meetings per year as a result of reduction in capacity and staffing.

Prior to this council action the CSW was heavily involved in fundraising and the creation of unique programming in addition to sponsorships, policy, advocacy, education, outreach and raising awareness for women’s issues. As a result, programs such as the Jewel City Luncheon, Camp Rosie and the Panel on Human Trafficking were transitioned to other groups, such as the YWCA, and the scope of the commission was reduced. Also, as a result of the reduction in the number of meetings, the commission was not provided adequate time to accomplish its set goals, including educating, raising awareness on women’s issues, programming and recommending policy to council.

- **2021:** Gives the commission authority to “adopt, from time to time, such rules of

procedure and operation as it may deem necessary to properly exercise its powers and duties.” This action was to correct a typographical error in the code pertaining to the commission.

Although the Commission no longer has the ability to fundraise or offer ongoing programming for the community, it continues to host and co-host several events each year. One of these signature events is the annual *Purple Tie Awards*, organized in collaboration with the YWCA of Glendale. Held in October, the event brings together community partners and advocates to amplify the voices of survivors, honor those who have lost their lives, and recognize men in the community who are actively working to end domestic and gender-based violence.

From 2023 to the present, the Commission has supported small programs and initiatives such as the *Purple Hands Pledge* and the *Hands & Words Are Not for Hurting* program within the Glendale Unified School District. Additionally, the Commission has hosted events such as *Glendale Women Today 2023* and *Women Supporting Women 2024*, celebrating International Women’s Day. Most recently, it co-sponsored a *2025 Film Screening and Panel Discussion* with the Armenian Bar Association, focusing on domestic violence survivors and their struggles within the legal system.

RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation is made per the council’s commitment to addressing gender equity through taking the California Equal Pay Pledge on February 7, 2024, and in response to persisting gender equity gaps within certain subpopulations of the city—outlined in the *2022–23 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Glendale* (see Exhibit 3).

Findings from the *2022–2023 Report on the Status of Women* and its addendum, *The Armenian Women of Glendale*, reveal that Latina and Armenian women experience significantly higher rates of poverty compared to other groups of women in Glendale (see Table 1 below). Additionally, the data indicates that Armenian women face higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than all women in Glendale (see Table 2 below). According to data from this report and other data on women, there is a critical need to restore and expand the Commission’s advocacy and programming role. Strengthening its capacity will help ensure that women’s equity gaps continue to be addressed effectively within the City of Glendale.

Table 1.

Employment and Earnings: 2017-2021

All Glendale Women: 20-64 Years		Armenian Women: 20-64 Years	
Employment	2017-2021	Employment	2017-2021
Women in labor force	72%	Women in labor force	64%
Percent employed	66%	Percent employed	58%
Unemployment rate	7%	Unemployment rate	9%
Median earnings (16+ yrs)		Median earnings (16+ yrs)	
• All workers	\$39,022	• All workers	\$33,753
• Full-time workers	\$60,372	• Full-time workers	\$53,367

Note: When earnings are broken out by race/ethnicity, Armenian working women as a group earn less than African American (\$54,000) and Asian American women (\$51,000) in Glendale, as well as white women as a whole (\$40,000). Latinas have a median earning of \$27,000, the lowest of the groups.



Table 2.

Poverty Rates: Glendale Women and Girls 2017-2021

Poverty Rates	
Women and Girls	2017-2021
All women and girls	15%
African American	11%
Asian American	5%
Latina	26%
White	17%
Armenian	23%



DISCUSSION

Expanding on the CSW's powers would allow the Commission to:

- **Assess and Advise:** Conduct ongoing studies and assessments regarding issues affecting women to provide policy recommendations to the City Council.
- **Advocate for Policy Changes:** Recommend legislative measures and develop programming that promotes equal opportunities for women.
- **Increase Public Engagement:** Strengthen outreach efforts through workshops, partnerships, and public events to educate and empower women in the community.
- **Enhance Collaboration:** Foster relationships with nonprofits, advocacy groups, and public agencies working toward gender equity.
- **Ensure Transparency and Accountability:** Resume monthly meetings (12 per year) with televised proceedings to enhance community engagement.
- **Provide Ongoing Programming:** In addition to an advisory role, provide education, awareness campaigns, and empowerment programs in collaboration with community partners. Examples of past programming include, self-defense workshops, veteran's empowerment workshops and Camp Rosie.

MODELS FOR PROGRAMMING AND STRUCTURE

On June 25, 2024, the City Council directed staff to explore various models and present not only the best option, but one that would position Glendale as a model commission for others across the state.

In evaluating the most effective path forward for Glendale, the California Commission on the Status of Women recommended studying successful programs such as the **Los Angeles County Commission for Women** and the **San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women**. These models exemplify effective approaches to advisory roles, public engagement, and programming (see Exhibit 4).

Key focus areas that align with Glendale's needs include:

1. Health & Safety
 - Strengthening advocacy and resources for domestic violence prevention, sexual assault support, and human trafficking awareness.
 - Collaborating with nonprofits, shelters, and healthcare providers to ensure accessible services.
 - Hosting educational campaigns on gender-based violence and mental health.
2. Economic Security & Workforce Development
 - Offering financial literacy workshops and employment support services.
 - Advocating for pay equity policies and career development programs.
 - Supporting entrepreneurship and leadership training for women.
3. Civic Engagement & Political Empowerment
 - Encouraging greater representation of women in government, boards, and commissions.
 - Organizing mentorship programs for young women in leadership.
 - Partnering with schools and universities to promote youth civic engagement.
4. Gender-Based Violence Prevention & Intervention
 - Establishing grant opportunities for organizations focused on domestic violence prevention.
 - Collaborating with law enforcement and victim advocacy groups to improve survivor resources.
 - Expanding crisis support services and community outreach initiatives.
5. Family & Community Support
 - Advocating for affordable childcare and family leave policies.
 - Providing parenting resources and educational workshops for working mothers.
 - Strengthening community partnerships to support single mothers and underserved families.

These program areas reflect best practices observed in two model commissions in California, adapted to Glendale's specific needs and scale.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure efficiency and impact, the Commission balances policy advisory functions with direct community programming. The proposed structure, based on the strategic goals of the commission, includes:

1. Advisory & Policy Role
 - Conduct regular assessments on gender equity issues.
 - Present policy recommendations to the City Council.
 - Advocate for legislative and regulatory changes.
2. Public Engagement & Programming
 - Organize educational workshops, conferences, and outreach events.
 - Maintain active partnerships with advocacy groups and community organizations.
 - Continue hosting and co-hosting events and marking annual observances related to the work of the commission
 - Develop initiatives that empower women and girls in Glendale.
3. Transparency & Accountability
 - Resume monthly televised meetings to ensure public engagement.
 - Publish annual reports detailing policy impacts and programming outcomes.
 - Improve access to resources for women and girls.

If Council directs the implantation of the above noted initiatives, the City Clerk will propose the consideration of a reallocation of an existing salaried position and the addition of a new salaried position, as part of the FY 2025-26 budget review process.

CONCLUSION

Expanding the CSW's full advisory and advocacy functions will strengthen Glendale's commitment to gender equity and ensure that the voices and concerns of women in the community continue to be addressed. The proposed model, based on best practices observed in other municipal programs, is tailored to Glendale's scale and budget while maximizing its impact on local women and girls. Staff seeks direction from the City Council regarding the preferred scope of expansion and any additional considerations for implementation.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

N/A.

FISCAL IMPACT

If Council provide direction to expand the powers and responsibilities of the Commission on the Status of Women, the proposed staffing changes will cost approximately \$36,900 which will be considered as part of the upcoming FY 2025-26 budget review process. To support the expanded scope, the City Clerk will request \$75,000 to support additional and ongoing programming for FY 2025-26, and \$150,000 annually beginning FY 2026-27 and for future years.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

The action of providing direction regarding changes to the CSW is exempt from further environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations ("CEQA Guidelines") for all of the following reasons: 1) the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2); 2) the activity is not a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(4) because it constitutes the creation of government funding mechanisms or other governmental fiscal activity that does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment; and 3) the activity is covered by the common sense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment, and here, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment per CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Note and file the report, keeping the Commission's current framework with no additional changes.
2. Any other alternatives not recommended by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

Suzie Abajian, City Clerk

Prepared by:

Suzie Abajian, City Clerk

Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

- Exhibit 1: 2023-2026 CSW Strategic Plan
Exhibit 2: Past Council Ordinances/Resolutions
Exhibit 3: 2022-2023 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Glendale and the addendum on Glendale's Armenian Women
Exhibit 4: Summary of Model Programs