

Commission for Women and Girls Annual Report 2024-2025

Mission Statement

The Long Beach Commission for Women & Girls illuminates and addresses issues affecting women and girls in the City of Long Beach through research, advocacy, and outreach, as well as policy, programmatic, and practical recommendations to the Mayor and Long Beach City Council. The Commission advocates for improved and equitable safety, representation, opportunities, and quality of life for female-identified persons in all walks of life, with intentional inclusion of all ages, ethnicities, incomes, abilities, sexual orientations, religions, marital status, immigrant status, and classes. Through its work, the Commission aspires to create a more equitable City for all genders.

Membership

COMMISSIONER	COUNCIL DISTRICT	STATUS
Chair Samantha Mehlinger	3	Active
Vice Chair Irma Archuleta	7	Active
Wendy Ortiz	1	Onboarding Pending Appointed 06/17/2025
Alyce LaViolette	2	Active
Jennifer Allen Harper	4	Active
Vanessa Mosqueda	5	Active
Sopheha Chim	6	Onboarding Pending Appointed 02/18/2025
Dr. Stephanie Anckle	8	Active
Maria Gonzalez	9	Active
Helena Donato Sapp	At-Large	Active
<i>Vacant</i>	At-Large	<i>Vacant</i>
Maleka Lassiter	6	Inactive – Resigned 12/09/2024
Zoe Nicholson	1	Inactive – Resigned 03/27/2025
Sathya Chey	At-Large	Inactive – Resigned 5/20/2025

Commission Objectives and Functions

- A. To gather information and evaluate the needs and concerns of women and girls in Long Beach within the broader context of gender equity
- B. To inform and advise the City Council on issues and inequities affecting women and girls in Long Beach
- C. Recommend changes related to gender equality in existing City policies, programs and practices
- D. Recommend new policies, programs and practices that promote and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all genders
- E. Recommend protecting and promoting visibility for women who are mothers, caregivers or older adults
- F. Identify matters of discrimination, prejudice, health and safety
- G. Encourage the participation, visibility and leadership of all women and girls
- H. To recommend policy changes using an intersectional feminist lens, ensuring that women's overlapping identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, class, religion, and marital status, are considered in decision-making related to City policies, programs, practices and resource allocation
- I. To consult and coordinate with other public agencies, commissions, and organizations serving women and girls on matters related to the Commission
- J. To conduct studies and surveys on the status of women and girls related to gender equity, as requested by the Mayor and City Council, and provide a report back to the City Council thereafter
- K. To submit a report to the City Council annually that details the status and progress on activities and recommendations

Reports and Recommendations Presented to the City Council

On July 24, 2024, the Commission for Women and Girls (CWG) approved a recommendation to transmit a letter to the Mayor and City Council recommending the adoption of a proclamation to recognize August 26, as Women's Equality Day in the City of Long Beach.

Advocacy and Research

Since convening its first meeting, the CWG has been deeply committed to building a strong foundation rooted in knowledge, collaboration, and shared purpose. The Commission prioritized internal formation and capacity-building to clearly define its role as an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council. Early efforts focused on equipping Commissioners with essential tools for effective governance, including trainings on the Brown Act, Robert's Rules of Order, and the specific advisory responsibilities and limitations of City commissions. The CWG also engaged with other local and regional women's commissions to gain insight on approaches to advancing gender equity through policy advocacy, community engagement, and strategic partnerships.

Upon reviewing the Long Beach Women and Girls Community Survey Findings Report, the CWG participated in a reflective process to assess the Commission's collective strengths, interests, and lived experiences. This allowed members to identify priority areas where they could add the most value in supporting the implementation of recommendations from the Report.

The CWG has since shifted to active information-gathering to ensure a responsive and data-informed approach to making recommendations. Throughout the year, the CWG has hosted presentations and received public testimony from advocates, nonprofit service providers, City staff, and subject-matter experts on a wide range of issues impacting women and girls. Topics explored include, but are not limited to:

- Domestic and intimate partner violence
- Sexual assault and survivor support services
- Human trafficking prevention and response
- Mental health and trauma-informed care
- Early childhood education and family support systems
- Economic equity and workplace conditions for women
- Housing instability and homelessness among women and families

Through these sessions, Commissioners have built a deeper understanding of the complex, intersecting factors affecting gender equity in Long Beach. This learning has informed the development of strategic areas of focus and action.

To operationalize its work and deepen its engagement, the CWG has established several ad hoc committees designed to explore specific topics, draft recommendations, and propose strategies to the full Commission for further consideration. These committees reflect the CWG's commitment

to collaborative leadership and community-informed advocacy. To date, the following ad hoc committees have been formed:

- The **Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee** is responsible for drafting, reviewing, and recommending governing procedures to guide the operations and decision-making of the Commission.

Created October 19, 2024, Dissolved April 23, 2025

Members: Anckle, Archuleta, Gonzalez

- The **Communications and Outreach Ad Hoc Committee** is responsible for developing strategies and tools to support community engagement, public awareness, and consistent messaging on behalf of the Commission.

Created October 19, 2024

Members: Anckle, LaViolette, Mehlinger, Mosqueda

- The **Mentorship and Education Ad Hoc Committee** is responsible for identifying, organizing, and promoting programs and resources that support the growth, well-being, and empowerment of women and girls in Long Beach through the creation of a comprehensive resource guide. The Ad Hoc is focused on creating a mentorship resource for women and girls, either in the form of a fair, a guide, or both.

Created October 19, 2024

Members: Mehlinger, Mosqueda

- The **Safety Ad Hoc Committee** is responsible for advancing community dialogue and awareness around issues impacting the safety of women and girls in Long Beach, including planning a public conference to elevate local concerns, resources, and solutions.

Created October 19, 2024

Members: Archuleta, Donato-Sapp, LaViolette, Mehlinger

- The **Gender Equitable Facilities Ad Hoc Committee** is responsible for advocating for inclusive and equitable infrastructure at the Long Beach Fire Regional Training Center, including drafting a letter to the Mayor and City Council urging timely investment in gender-equitable facilities during the current financial planning period.

Created May 28, 2025

Members: Anckle, Gonzalez, Mehlinger, Mosqueda

Looking ahead, the CWG will continue to deepen its engagement with community stakeholders, sharpen its policy focus, and elevate the voices and needs of women and girls across Long Beach through strategic advising, partnership, and advocacy.

Number of Meetings Held

The CWG held 12 meetings during the period of June 2024-June 2025, including two special meetings: October 19 and December 18, 2024.

Attendance Record

Commissioner	Jun. 26	Jul. 24	Aug. 28	Sept. 25	Oct. 19	Oct. 23	Dec. 18	Jan. 22	Mar. 26	Apr. 23	May 28	Jun. 25
Chair Samantha Mehlinger	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Exc.	X	X	X	
Vice Chair Irma Archuleta	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Alyce LaViolette	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Exc.	X	X	X	
Jennifer Allen Harper	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Vanessa Mosqueda	X	X	X	X	X	X	Exc.	X	X	X	X	
Dr. Stephanie Anckle	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Exc.	Exc.	X	
Maria Gonzalez	X	Exc.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Helena Donato Sapp	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Exc.	X	X	X	
Maleka Lassiter	X	X	Exc.	Exc.	X	X						
Zoe Nicholson	X	X	X	X	Exc.	X	X	X	Exc.			
Sathya Chey	Exc.	X	X	X	X	Exc.	Exc.	X	X			

Number of Public Hearings Conducted

0 public hearings

Amount of Money Expended

Each year, the CWG receives \$26,786 in structural funding to support its outreach, engagement, research, and other mission-aligned activities. On May 28, 2025, the CWG approved a \$200.00 allocation to establish its membership in the National Association of Commissions for Women. This affiliation offers valuable opportunities for resource-sharing, national advocacy alignment, and capacity-building through a broader network of gender equity leaders.

City Personnel Who Regularly Assist the CWG

Anita Lakhani, Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney

Ashleigh Stone, Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney

Tamela Austin, City Clerk Analyst, City Clerk

James Allen, Business Systems Specialist - VI, Technology and Innovation

Sery Moth, Systems Support Specialist I, Technology & Innovation

Jessica Ramos-Guerra, Equity Administrative Assistant, City Manager

Alanah Grant, Equity Officer, City Manager

Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager, City Manager

Letter from the Chair and Vice Chair

In June 2024, The Long Beach Commission for Women & Girls convened for the first time after five decades of advocacy by women activists and community leaders – individuals who were never flagging in their insistent pursuit for the creation of a commission that would create a more equitable City of Long Beach for its citizens, no matter their gender.

As a new civic advisory body for Long Beach, the Commission quickly set about the work of learning from others in the space – for example, the Los Angeles County for Women & Girls, which just celebrated its 50th year in service, presented at the Commission’s first convening – as well as gaining a better understanding of the most pressing issues and needs facing women and girls in the City of Long Beach.

In addition to assessing community priorities and needs, much of the work of the Long Beach Commission for Women & Girls’ inaugural year has been focused on creating groundwork to ensure a lasting legacy for the Commission as a valuable resource for residents of Long Beach. This work has included: electing officers, creating bylaws, adopting community agreements and a mission statement, creating short-term goals, and establishing Ad Hoc Committees.

Goals adopted at the first annual Vision Mapping Session in October included:

- **To create a mentorship program that empowers women and girls in Long Beach with access to its economic opportunities.**
- **To create and develop a conference that focuses on building healthy families and empowers women and girls.**

Two Ad Hoc Committees were established to achieve these goals, and both have been working in earnest since. The Ad Hoc Committee on Safety is working on the conference programming and logistics, as well as potential partnerships. The Ad Hoc Committee on Mentorship is conducting research into existing mentorship programs benefitting women and girls in the City, with the intention of perhaps convening a fair and related programming as part of the Conference. An Ad Hoc Committee on Communications was established to identify methods to grow awareness of the Commission itself, and an Ad Hoc Committee on Bylaws was established to create bylaws (and subsequently dissolved after achieving its purpose).

In early 2025, the Commission received letters from the Long Beach Fire Association that documented a lack of equitable facilities for women at the Long Beach Fire Department's Fire Regional Training Center. In May, the Commission received a presentation on the status of planned improvements to facilities at the training center, as well as at other Fire Department facilities. In response, the Commission created an Ad Hoc Committee tasked with crafting a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council advocating for funding to be allocated toward improved and equitable facilities for women at the Fire Regional Training Center.

The Commission spent much of its first year receiving and assessing presentations from agencies associated advocacy for women and girls in Long Beach, as well as those tasked with serving their needs. One fact-finding initiative of the commission has been around the topic of safety, a key area of concern as identified in the Long Beach Community Survey of Women & Girls. Meetings early on in the existence of the commission tackled this topic by inviting survivor advocacy organizations and city entities tasked with addressing issues such as human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault to present on key trends, data, and existing programming.

In September, for example, the Commission received a presentation from the Long Beach Human Trafficking Task Force, with members expressing a need for further programming and

infrastructure to address the issue of human trafficking in the city ahead of major forthcoming global events taking place in and around Long Beach. As a response to concerns expressed in that meeting and in subsequent meetings with presentations from other advocacy groups and enforcement agencies, the Commission is voting in June on a proposal to partner with the Task Force on a report examining the Status of Human Trafficking in the City of Long Beach, with the intent of potentially informing future recommendations to the Long Beach City Council.

In summary, the first year of the Long Beach Commission for Women & Girls resulted in the creation of a framework that will ensure the Commission's usefulness and fruitfulness for years to come, as well as potential new programs and research designed to create better access to economic opportunity, key resources, and future policy recommendations to benefit women and girls in the community.

Samantha Mehlinger
2024-25 Commission for Women & Girls Chair

Irma Archuleta
2024-25 Commission for Women & Girls Vice Chair