

# Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Commission on the Status of Women Work Plan



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# Commission on the Status of Women 2026-2027 Work Plan

## **Introduction:**

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is planning to host a series of forums which will focus on three critical and interconnected areas affecting women and girls across different stages of life. These forums are designed to raise awareness, gather lived experience testimony, and develop informed recommendations that address systemic challenges and promote equity, safety, and opportunity.

The three areas are:

1. Human trafficking awareness and violence against women
2. Women Involved in the Criminal System
3. Career development and entrepreneurship for girls

In addition, the Commission will continue to support the Junior Commission Educational Program and host the CSW Spirit Award Ceremony. The CSW Spirit Award is given annually to five women leaders of Sonoma County whose work promotes equal rights and opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls, and addresses issues of discrimination and prejudice that may negatively affect women in Sonoma County.

## **2026-2027 Program Topics:**

### **Human Trafficking Awareness and Violence Against Women Forum**

This forum will explore the scope and impact of human trafficking and multiple forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and exploitation. It serves as a public forum to raise awareness and promote prevention of human trafficking and gender-based violence. The forum will bring together survivors, advocates, service providers, and community leaders to share testimony, examine systemic challenges, and highlight effective responses.

### **Women Involved in the Criminal System Forum**

This forum will explore the experiences, challenges, and needs of women in the criminal justice system. It will convene women formerly involved in the criminal system, advocates, legal experts, service providers, and community leaders to share testimony on issues including healthcare access, family separation, rehabilitation opportunities, and barriers to reentry. The forum seeks to highlight systemic inequities, center lived experiences, and identify strategies to improve conditions, support successful reintegration, and advance more equitable and effective policies for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women.

### **Career Development for Girls, Entrepreneurship, Workplace Entry, and Financial Literacy Forum**

The third forum will concentrate on empowering girls and young women through education, skill-building, and economic opportunity. The forum will explore career development pathways, entrepreneurship opportunities, barriers to workplace entry, and the importance of financial literacy. Discussion will include mentorship programs, workforce readiness, equitable hiring practices, and access to capital and resources that enable girls and women to build sustainable careers and long-term financial independence.

### **Junior Commission Educational Program**

The Junior Commission on the Status of Women is an educational program that provides mentorship to high school youth, preparing them for future leadership roles within our community. Students from across the county are invited to apply, with 15 - 30 selected each term to connect with mentors. Throughout the year, Junior Commissioners participate in a variety of activities, including roundtable discussions, career panels, community-based projects, and volunteer work. Participants are introduced to important issues impacting women and girls

through their ad hoc committees that they choose and direct. The Juniors will also host a career panel where professionals from a diverse range of fields bring their experience to the students. The student participates in field trip(s) and volunteer day(s). These fieldtrips help broaden the students' understanding of various career paths and social issues, while fostering commitment to leadership and advocacy.

## **Sonoma County Spirit Award**

Each year, the Commission selects five outstanding community members who exemplify qualities aligned with the annual Women's History Month theme. Through an open application process, Sonoma County residents are invited to nominate fellow community members. The awardees are announced at a Commission meeting in April, followed by a celebration held in their honor.

## **Community Engagement**

The Commission will take part in tabling events hosted by partner organizations. In addition, through an open application process, the Commission on the Status of Women will provide community assistance including resources, materials, products, and financial support to community-based organizations, programs, and events that align with its mission, policy priorities, and public service goals, and that serve the broader community.

## **Outreach and Training Expenses**

The Commission will table at community events throughout the year, including Sonoma County Pride, Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, Farmers Markets and other community festivals and events, to engage with community members, share information about its program and increase public awareness of its mission and vision.

The Commission will also provide opportunities for Commissioners to attend conferences and trainings offered by other Commissions and organizations across the state. These opportunities support professional development, encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing, and help Commissioners strengthen their leadership skills and capacity to effectively serve the community.

## **Budget:**

General expenses (storage unit, food, supplies, social media services, etc.) \$5,000-\$10,000  
Human Trafficking Awareness and Violence Against Women Forum - \$600-\$1,000

Incarcerated Women Forum-\$600-\$1,000

Career Development for Girls, Entrepreneurship, Workplace Entry, and Financial Literacy Forum-\$600-\$1,000

Junior Commission Educational Program-\$5,000-\$10,000

Sonoma County Spirit Award-\$1,500-\$2,000

Community Engagement- \$0-\$5,000

Outreach and Training Expenses- \$0-\$2,000

Total budget of \$20,000-\$30,000\*

\*The Commission will seek funding through the Community Investment Grant from the County of Sonoma to cover the remaining gap in their budget.

## **Conclusion:**

The Commission on the Status of Women's 2026–2027 Work Plan reflects a strong commitment to addressing the diverse and evolving needs of women and girls in Sonoma County. Through focused public forum, educational and leadership programs, and community recognition efforts, CSW aims to elevate critical issues, inform policy, and promote meaningful change. By supporting survivors, empowering youth, addressing the challenges of aging, and fostering economic opportunity, CSW will continue to advocate for equity, dignity, and improved quality of life for all women and girls.