



DATE: October 15, 2018

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Carla Collins, Office of Women's Policy

SUBJECT: Women's Equality 2020 Leadership Council: Community Engagement Strategies

Under advisement from the Board of Supervisors meeting of May 5, 2018, the Board of Supervisors requested that the Administration provide an off-agenda report relating to possible engagement opportunities for individuals not appointed to the Women's Equality 2020 Leadership Council, including strategies to engage women of all ages.

On June 19, 2018, the Board passed the resolution establishing its largest to date body, the Women's Equality 2020 Leadership Council (LC). This 46-member body includes 34 voting members and 12 non-voting ex-officio members. The LC will meet approximately ten (10) times between 2018 and December 2020 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote, undertake efforts to ensure that all individuals are counted in the 2020 Census, and increase voter registration and participation in the 2020 election. The first meeting of the LC is on Wednesday, November 14, 2018. Most members have already been appointed.

This memo highlights opportunities for involvement in this monumental initiative by individuals not appointed to the LC.

Strategies for Community Engagement

The County received many applications from the community for appointment to the LC. Additionally, the community connected with the county expressing an interest in ways to get involved apart from serving on the LC, including but not limited to, whether they would be able to participate in the activities of the LC, engaging with the LC, and sharing in the work of the LC outside of the LC's meetings.

For community members not appointed to the LC, there is still much work to be done and many ways to participate in the initiative, including the following:

- **Work Groups and Committees.** The LC has ten planned meetings. Much of the background work that will need to happen to commemorate the 100th anniversary and engage community will happen outside the ten meetings and all community will be encouraged to participate in work groups and committees. While the focus will have to

be further defined by the LC, staff anticipates the need for at least eight different efforts for community engagement:

- South County Efforts including community engagement in collaboration with LC
- North County Efforts including community engagements in collaboration with LC
- Census & Voter Engagement Efforts including conducting surveys, outreach efforts, and publicity
- Engaging Youth including school resource engagement, research, and dialogue
- Engaging Justice Involved Women & Girls including engagement with local inmates and probationers
- Major Event Planning (March 2020, August 2020) including development, participation, and resource gathering
- Mini-Grants for Community Engagement including management, application, and outreach
- Herstory Buffs (including the California initiative & NWHP) including managing the storytelling efforts, curating, and publicizing

The engagement mechanism could range from creating sub-committees, support committees, or expert committees. The LC will have to decide the actual structures and staff will coordinate all work of these committees. Individuals not appointed to the LC but committed to this initiative can contribute by participating in one or more of the work groups.

Additionally, there are some specific areas that are ongoing where the community can participate and assist with their expertise, including the following:

- **Online outreach.** Staff continues to work with counsel to explore effective use of online strategies that do not cross any Brown Act lines. These include:
 - Online feedback options to poll the general community: All updates will be posted online at www.sccgov.org/WomensEquality2020 and a dedicated email is being created by the county's technical support department. Online polling will allow the public with internet access to give immediate feedback.
 - SCC Women's Equality 2020 mobile application: Staff is currently exploring the creation of possible apps to consolidate all countywide efforts for Women's Equality 2020. The aspirational goal is to create one app that the public can access to find important dates, links to events, research, and ways to get involved.
 - Social media and communications plan: Staff are working on a social media and communications plan for the at-large public as well as targeted audiences, such as youth.

Community not appointed to the LC can engage in on-going or one-time efforts with these options.

Diversity is our Strength

The resolution establishing the LC (BOS-2018-70) makes evident our County leaders' dedication to supporting both women's suffrage and equality. Moreover, there is deep commitment from the Board and the Administration to ensure that the diversity of our County is not only acknowledged, it is celebrated and recognized as a strength that will help us reach our goals. This commitment further reflects ways for those not appointed to the LC to engage in the process.

- **Increasing access to participation at LC meetings.** Conscious efforts are being made by staff to increase non-appointed community participation at the Leadership Council meetings, including:
 - Consistent scheduling of LC meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:30 in the evening with the hope that those who cannot attend meetings during the day due to work will be able to participate.
 - Staff is exploring how to provide childcare for community who wish to attend but may need childcare at the site during the meetings.
 - The locations of the meetings will rotate around the County so that we take the meetings to the people: there will be two meetings in each district at sites where we can accommodate a large group, are ADA compliant, and are located with access to public transportation and public parking.
 - Staff has in its workplan for interpretation to be available at each meeting.

While it is critical for all members of the LC to attend the ten general meetings, efforts to incorporate voices from the community will be an important part of each meeting, as well.

Engaging Today's "Shop Girls"

There is much to be learned from the U.S. suffrage movement. What started in the mid 1800's took nearly seven decades to accomplish. Before the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920, some efforts focused on statewide suffrage initiatives and California's history is rich. After a devastating loss in 1896, suffrage activists took nearly five years off to recover and regroup. In doing so, they also identified a better, more inclusive path to success.

The Bay Area was a hub of suffrage activism and the 1896 election reported huge losses in San Francisco and Alameda counties, which translated into statewide defeat. To find success in 1911, activists changed strategy and diversified their audience. Selina Solomons, a key leader in the Bay Area effort, was a Jewish woman from a middle-class family that had hit hard times. Her biography didn't match with the wealthy, white profile of the leadership in the movement at both the state and national levels. Solomons was critical of the elitism that she observed and she intentionally formed spaces for others to join the movement. She specifically reached out to shop girls – the young, poor, single women who worked in the businesses around Union Square. Soon, the shop girls were canvassing their own working-class neighborhoods and rallying for the right to vote. Also, instead of focusing on just the major cities in California, every town in the state became an important target for outreach and education. These changes made all the difference and in 1911 with about two percent of the vote – less than one vote per precinct – California women won the right to vote.

The question now is who are today's shop girls? Who are those impacted by voter registration and participation, but who aren't participating, much less at the decision-making tables? And

how do we engage them in our efforts? Answering these questions will be part of every effort of the Women’s Equality 2020 Leadership Council and the work that comes out of this initiative.

For the County, with diversity as our strength, this includes engaging youth, engaging first time voters, engaging individuals with histories of incarceration as well as those currently incarcerated, as well as engaging all geographic parts of our county, engaging the under-employed and those working two and three jobs to survive, and engaging those who are house-bound and those that are unhoused. The list is long, and the paths are many.

Summary and Next Steps

Today Santa Clara County leads our region, state and nation in efforts to effectively commemorate a watershed moment in US history with the 100th anniversary of women’s right to vote. Our Board has established the Women’s Equality 2020 Leadership Council and the Administration has stepped up to spearhead these efforts over the next two years. By December 2020 we expect not only a spectacular celebration(s) of our history, but meaningful outcomes in areas of civic engagement from the Census to voter participation. These efforts strengthen democracy and will improve the way our government serves our residents.

The Women’s Equality 2020 Leadership Council is scheduled to have its inaugural meeting on November 14, 2018 and work groups will begin shortly thereafter. Periodic reports to the Board of Supervisors are scheduled with a first update to the Children, Seniors, and Family Committee proposed for Spring 2019. These status reports will include updates on efforts to engage the community in the efforts of the LC.



Please direct any questions you may have to me at Carla.Collins@ceo.sccgov.org or 408-299-5152.

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