

ACTION PLAN FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The County of San Mateo is committed to advancing equity and addressing systemic barriers that disproportionately affect women, especially women of color and low-income residents. This Action Plan is a holistic approach to policies and support systems in four core interconnected areas: bridging the wealth gap, increasing access to quality childcare, preventing domestic violence, and expanding reproductive healthcare and healthcare freedom. Through this Action Plan for Women and Children and a full-time dedicated staff member (“Officer”) to lead its implementation, the County aims to create the most supportive and equitable community where all women and children can thrive.

WEALTH GAP

Women in San Mateo County, especially single mothers and women of color, are disproportionately affected by low wages, career interruptions due to caregiving, and a lack of financial literacy, among other systemic barriers that contribute to a struggle to build wealth and a substantial wealth gap. The County has taken significant steps to implement policies and practices to close the gender pay gap, including signing and implementing the California Equal Pay Pledge and publishing an interactive dashboard. The County commits to expanding efforts to close the wealth gap for women, as permitted under law, which will drive economic prosperity for the whole county.

To help close the wealth gap, the Officer will work with County departments and community partners to:

- **Expand housing options** to identify more affordable living conditions for low-income residents, teachers, childcare providers, survivors of domestic violence, single parents, and other vulnerable populations.
- **Expand guaranteed basic income** programs to reach specific vulnerable groups.
- **Support efforts toward achieving pay equity** at the County of San Mateo and across businesses and nonprofits, as permitted by law.
- **Increase awareness of savings programs** such as CalSavers and CalKIDS, to help residents, especially women, build wealth and save for future education.
- **Support financial literacy efforts and career pathways** to provide women with the tools to achieve long-term economic stability.
- **Recommend policies** deemed necessary to close the wealth gap for women.

CHILDCARE

The childcare crisis is driven by economic injustice, with poverty wages for the workforce and pay penalties for women and caregivers. Racism and sexism perpetuate systemic injustice through inequitable infrastructure resulting from chronic underfunding and insufficient systems that widen care gaps, and deep-rooted bias and power imbalances. Every family in San Mateo County should have access to childcare opportunities that meet their geographic, scheduling, cultural, language, and economic needs. The childcare workforce should be highly valued and fairly compensated, and all types of care settings should foster children’s healthy development.

To address the need for more quality childcare, the Officer will work with County departments and community partners to:

- **Declare childcare as an essential safety net.** Affirm that every child deserves the opportunity to grow in an environment that nurtures their physical, emotional, and educational development and every family is worthy of systems and support that facilitate wellbeing.
- **Implement the San Mateo County Childcare Blueprint**, a coordinated, multi-sector approach launched in December 2024 and supported by Measure K funds and other philanthropic resources.
 - The Blueprint seeks to improve access, equity, and quality of the San Mateo County childcare system and supply while ensuring that local resources, policies, and programs are well coordinated across different departments and agencies.
 - The Blueprint will generate a clear, actionable path forward, enabling the efficient and effective deployment of public and private resources, while prioritizing sustainable, system-wide changes that improve long-term outcomes for children, families, and communities.
 - The Blueprint will detail plans for facilities, workforce development, and improved access to high quality and comprehensive childcare within a mixed-delivery system, including cost modeling and fiscal mapping of childcare funding within the County.
 - Working with the stakeholders in the local childcare system (e.g., the San Mateo County Child Care Partnership Council, the San Mateo County Children’s Collective, Build Up SMC, and others) and informed by the goals and plans identified in the Blueprint, the Officer will work with partners to plan for and initiate implementation of the Blueprint, as permitted by law.
 - The Officer will work with partners to translate the Blueprint into specific, measurable steps with timelines, responsibilities, and details necessary to achieve the goals outlined in the Blueprint.
 - Recommend policies deemed necessary to build childcare infrastructure, including evaluating permit fees, developer impacts, and universal childcare.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION

San Mateo County recognizes that domestic violence is a pervasive issue affecting individuals of all genders, races, and socioeconomic statuses, with women and children disproportionately impacted. By coordinating programs, launching education campaigns, and collaborating with community partners, the County aims to break cycles of abuse and promote long-term safety and well-being. Central to these efforts is the establishment of the San Mateo County Family Justice Center, a transformative hub that will provide survivors and their families with comprehensive services under one roof. Through these initiatives, the County seeks to build a community where everyone can live free from violence and fear, supported by systems that prioritize safety, dignity, and empowerment.

To make the county safer, where people can live free from domestic violence, the Officer will work with County departments and community partners to:

- **Coordinate programs and initiatives in the county**, including education campaigns, to prevent domestic violence and support survivors through funding shelters and services.
- **Collaborate with the County's Domestic Violence Death Review Team** as permitted by law to identify gaps in response and services that could have prevented deaths related to domestic violence and recommend programs and solutions to prevent harm.
- **Serve as liaison to the soon-to-be-established San Mateo County Family Justice Center**, which will provide domestic violence survivors and their children access to the services they need in one place.
- **Advocate for domestic violence prevention and survivor advocacy policies**, including identifying key state and federal legislation that the County can support and federal and state grants that address domestic violence.
- **Support the County's Gun Violence Prevention Program**, which aims to take guns out of the hands of individuals who are legally prohibited from possessing them, as it relates to domestic violence.
- **Recommend policies** deemed necessary to make the county safer, where people can live free from domestic violence.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE FREEDOM

The County of San Mateo, through its healthcare delivery system and the public health programs it administers, provides healthcare services and outreach to build trust with women, particularly women of color and low-income women. These healthcare services have resulted in a significant reduction in teen pregnancy, as well as reduced disparities in reproductive health care based on race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, and therefore represent a critical part of the County's healthcare ecosystem. With changes anticipated in federal or other states' policies regarding abortion, the County could see an influx of women seeking reproductive or abortion care. Similarly, with changes anticipated in the availability of healthcare for transgender and gender-expansive women and youth, there could be an increase in such individuals seeking gender-affirming healthcare.

To strengthen the County's commitment to reproductive health, the Officer will work with County departments and community partners to:

- **Identify gaps in funding for reproductive healthcare, abortion, and gender-affirming providers** to ensure county residents can access appropriate care.
- **Maintain a strong advocacy agenda**, including identifying key state and federal legislation that the County can support that supports women and transgender reproductive rights and healthcare freedom.
- **Represent the County of San Mateo in the Bay Area Abortion Rights Coalition** and other regional bodies.
- **Launch an information campaign** to ensure the public is familiar with reproductive services and gender-affirming care offered by the San Mateo County Health System.
- **Recommend policies** deemed necessary to strengthen the County's commitment to reproductive health and healthcare freedom (e.g., buffer zones).