

San Francisco Department on the Status of Women

Table 1. Community Listening Sessions Summary: Department Principles/Roles

Purpose & Vision

Community members offered suggestions across both statements, such as:

- Replacing **Mission to Purpose Statement** was suggested to align the language with indigenous perspectives and solidarity.
- Replace vague phrases (e.g., “**advancement of women**,” “**across all measures**”) with specific language that articulates the metrics and mechanisms by which advancement would be identified and quantified.
- Emphasize **survival before advancement** and clarify how the Department prioritizes those most vulnerable (women, girls, and non-binary people).
- Make the Department’s **core policy areas** visible and integrated into Purpose/Vision language (graphic or short list).

Accountability

- Participants recognized the shift away from “Watchdog” and felt that the new term best aligned with the urgency reflected in the current political climate.
- Accountability concerns included **safety and dignity in custody** and ensuring oversight mechanisms remain effective.
- Participants flagged that **governance changes (post-Prop E)** may weaken enforcement power, making accountability a central strategic priority.
- Strong call for **clear authority pathways** (how DOSW/COSW holds systems accountable, and what tools exist).

Advocate

- Participants agreed that the Advocate title and role were important for the Department to continue, and no additional feedback was provided.
- Participants called for **policy advocacy that centers women’s needs**, especially amid federal shifts impacting families and safety.
- Advocacy priorities included: **continued legal funding**, **prevention investments**, and protections tied to immigration-related fear that reduces service access.
- Participants emphasized advocating for **women’s safety, dignity, and rights in institutional settings** (custody and related systems).
- Need to elevate policies beyond general equity language to **women- and gender-responsive policy outcomes**.

Convener

- Participants agreed that the Convener title and role were important for the Department to continue, and no additional feedback was provided.
- Participants emphasized DOSW’s role in **coordinating and aligning City departments** around a “full family dynamic” lens.
- Convening needs included cross-system alignment on: **health services, benefits access, housing stability, childcare, safety, and service navigation**, especially for mixed-status households.
- Participants lifted the value of convening **community partners** and trusted intermediaries to improve access and trust.
- Strong call for **visible coordination** so community sees follow-through (not fragmented efforts).

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Table 2. Community Listening Sessions Summary: Department Core Policy Areas

Health	Safety	Civic Advancement & Community Engagement	Economic Mobility & Security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members consistently defined health as a holistic condition shaped by physical health, mental and emotional well-being, reproductive autonomy, caregiving responsibilities, and access to supportive environments. Participants reported immigration-related fear leading some to avoid health services they are legally entitled to. Equity concerns included birth equity (maternal outcomes, subsidy changes/replacements) and access barriers for caregivers, immigrants, and Black women. Participants emphasized expanding safe, well-supported sports and activity programs for girls and non-binary youth to improve physical and mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety emerged as one of the most urgent concerns, encompassing harassment on public transit, nightlife safety, institutional harm, digital violence, and the ability to move freely without fear. Participants emphasized the need to move beyond reactive responses toward prevention, accountability, and culturally grounded safety strategies. Participants described barriers to reporting harm: lack of faith in the justice system and fear tied to immigration/Visa status, contributing to DV underreporting. Institutional safety priorities included safety and dignity in custody and clearer accountability mechanisms. Youth safety concerns included violence between students and safety issues connected to school transfers/Title IX. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants emphasized that the desire for more robust civic participation is constrained by limited access to childcare, language, and culturally relevant pathways into leadership. Participants emphasized that governance and accountability structures matter: concerns that Prop E-era changes may reduce COSW/DOSW leverage (“losing teeth without authority”). Specific civic structure ideas surfaced: reserved seats on commissions, strengthening “champions,” and protecting oversight and advisory bodies (e.g., immigrant rights, family violence, sheriff oversight). Participants asked: “What is the status of women in SF?” and stressed the need for shared metrics and public-facing accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic insecurity was identified as a root driver of vulnerability across health, safety, and civic engagement, especially as benefits/resources shrink while needs increase. Wage inequities, childcare access, housing instability, and workforce barriers disproportionately affect caregivers, justice-impacted individuals, immigrants, and workers in care-dominated sectors. Participants tied federal shifts and immigration impacts to household destabilization, loss of eligibility, and increased basic needs pressure. Workforce priorities included paid training and pathways, including for those without work authorization, and addressing certification barriers that block justice-impacted people. Major stressors included housing costs, childcare/subsidies, and flexible funding needs, with emphasis on strengthening supports that stabilize family systems.