



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

August 31, 2020

Honorable Ron Galperin, Controller
Honorable Mike Feuer, City Attorney
Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council

RE: Response to Controllers Report “Closing the Gap: Women’s Pay and Representation at the City of Los Angeles”

Los Angeles, at its best, is a place where everybody belongs -- where anyone can reach for their dreams and achieve them; where possibility is only limited by the height of our imaginations and the determination of our people; where opportunity, prosperity, and success are available to all, regardless of your race, gender, or zip code. Too often, our City, like so much of our society, comes up far short in pursuit of this aspiration. But our strength springs from our struggle, our perseverance, and our persistence in living up to this vision.

Gender equity is at the center of everything we do, and from the moment I took office, I made it clear that this work would no longer be a distant goal, but a core value across all facets of City life -- an expectation for each Department, each Board and Commission, each employee and office. It's a daily task demanding our active attention, our shared responsibility, and our collective accountability.

It's a long and winding road littered with systemic and historical obstacles. Yet it's a path we have to travel to make Los Angeles a city where women and girls never have to question whether they deserve a seat at the table -- because they will be seated squarely at the head of it.

We can get there, and doing so will only make us stronger as leaders and as a community. We simply have to be ready and willing to make this a focus and foundation of our public service. That starts in the halls of our City government, and I'm proud to say, in my administration, we are leading the way.

My office has received and reviewed your report entitled 'Closing the Gap: Women's Pay and Representation at the City of Los Angeles,' and I thank you for your leadership in completing this important evaluation of the City workforce.

I wholeheartedly agree that the wage gap women experience is unacceptable both here in the City of Los Angeles and everywhere across the world. I have been committed to righting this wrong for the entirety of my career and recognize the deep hardship this places not only on women but on families and our society.

Addressing Systemic Challenges

While your report underscores the need for a dedicated focus on changing the professional experience of women in Los Angeles, which I fully support, it does not offer information about the systemic issues that exist, nor does it offer context. It also makes no mention of the significant progress made over the last five years as a result of my office's work alongside every department in the City of Los Angeles and members of the City Council. Importantly, your report evaluates only the present situation and does not consider progress over time -- a vital component in evaluating the data that would have afforded a greater perspective on the changes of recent years. At the same time, it would have also afforded a point of view on how hard it is to do this work quickly, how deep these issues run in our history, government, and society, and how critical it is for leaders like us to perform analysis and collaborate to create solutions that we and others can act on.

Creating Strategic Plans and Impactful Results

We have seen what's possible when we are strategic and intentional about gender equity, and we have clear examples in the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) and the Information Technology Agency (ITA) -- two Departments where women have been historically underrepresented, not just in the City of Los Angeles but industry-wide. In each case, my office worked with the Departments and Personnel to target our recruitment from a broader field of qualified candidates by expanding interviewing options to on-campus hiring and enabling technologies like Skype. These changes, while seemingly small, paired with a strategic marketing approach, allowed the Departments to reach a broader range of potential hires, including women, from anywhere in the world. In both cases, we saw substantial gains: as many as 60% of new hires in some positions are women. I applaud both Departments' leadership and their gender equity liaisons for the dedication to recognizing the problem and changing the system to address it.

In Departments like the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), we have taken bold action to increase the number of women in the ranks. This has been among the most difficult challenges that we have undertaken but over the last five years, we have moved the needle. In 2013, slightly more than 1% of LAFD was made up of women. Today, that number is 3%. Additionally, LAFD and Personnel grew the percentage of female applicants to 9.4% as a result of focused recruitment efforts. This represents a more than 20% increase in female applicants as of 2018. While we agree this may feel like a small dent, we are talking about a significant jump in an arena where gains had been almost non-existent before. Through a partnership with Council President Martinez's office and my office, LAFD established Girls Fire Camp with the goal of actively recruiting and retaining more young women. This is a slow but important start, a foundation we can and will build upon with the dedication of leadership and the staff.

In my own office, I've taken great care in ensuring the City's senior team is gender balanced. As of today, five of the City's eight Deputy Mayors are women and four out of seven of my Executive Team members are women. Among the General Managers I've appointed during my tenure, 15 out of 34 in 28 Departments have been women. And within six months of becoming Mayor, I ensured there were no more all-male Boards or Commissions -- a major decision-making force in our City -- and appointed a representative group of Commissioners, with 50% or more now women.

Crafting Long-Term Solutions

This work is an ongoing effort, and we are always seeking out new avenues to advance gender equity.

To that end, my office led an 18-month effort with your team, the CAO, the City Council, the Personnel Department, and experts in the family benefits arena to deeply research and present a Paid Parental Leave package to make working for the City more equitable and attractive to the best people. The City's lack of a dedicated Paid Parental Leave policy forces employees to either use their sick and vacation time or take unpaid time, leaving less paid time available for childcare emergencies, the disproportionate burden of which still falls on women. Likewise, using vacation and sick time leaves women in the workforce with less accrued time at the point they leave City employment.

For new employees -- precisely the segment of the workforce that we need to diversify to make significant strides in gender representation in our workforce -- the situation is even less equitable. As probationary rules prohibit sick-time within the first six months of a job and vacation time within the first year, people who welcome a new child must rely on Short-Term Disability Insurance (SDI) that is only available to the birthing mother at a fraction (50-66%) of her salary for up to six weeks. As this stopgap leaves out any woman (or man) who is not a birthing parent, it sends an unwelcoming message to prospective employees, especially female employees, who can turn to the private sector to take advantage of more generous leave policies.

Even beyond brand new hires, it affects any employee who has not accrued enough paid leave time to cover their entire leave, sending a message that one will need to wait roughly two years to have a child if they expect full pay during parental leave. In a major victory for women, earlier this year, just prior to COVID-19 arriving in our City, together with the City Council, we passed a monumental act to offer all parents paid parental leave in the City of Los Angeles. Due to COVID-19, this remains paused in the stage of final negotiations, but it is my expectation that the next step after bargaining concludes will be for your office to update all systems to reflect this benefit change. I urge us to move forward quickly knowing that, now more than ever, all parents need support from their employers.

My office also led the effort to create [MyVoiceLA](#) in 2017, the City's first online system where any employee or contractor can report acts of harassment and discrimination. We did this through Executive Directive #23 which has also allowed us to transform the system for evaluation of these claims to make it more transparent and just. Again, these systemic changes are critical to retaining a diverse workforce that not only attracts women to the City of Los Angeles but retains them and offers them a place to build a lifelong career.

Finally, I want to note that we look forward to and are preparing for the potential repeal of Proposition 209, which was already approved by the California State Assembly and Senate as Assembly Constitutional Amendment No. 5 and is headed to voters this November (through 2020's Proposition 16). Proposition 209 limits affirmative action and our ability to set employment goals for any group of people based on their race, ethnicity, or gender. According to data from the State Personnel Board (SPB) and outlined in the National Association of Scholars' 2020 report, "The Effects of Proposition 209 on California," female representation in larger departments throughout California has fallen over 4% since Proposition 209's passage in 1996. While we have no way to measure this, we know the effects are equally true in our City workforce; until Proposition 209 is repealed, it will continue to make it difficult for any Department to set and meet explicit goals around hiring at any level.

Partnering for an Equitable Los Angeles

I recognize my office was not asked for any information as you prepared this report, but my team would be delighted to take you and your office through the individual gender equity plans that are drafted by each Department annually as well as the outcomes they have produced. We would also be happy to have you attend one of the gender equity liaison meetings to hear from Department gender equity leaders themselves. These and many other tools have allowed us to change systems. Yet no system changes quickly and certainly not without leaders like yourself participating in the process, so we applaud you stepping up and look forward to working with you to continue to make life what it should be, not just marginally better, for women and girls in Los Angeles.

Given the combined interest of both offices, I propose creating an official partnership with you and your team to avoid duplicating efforts and rather double our impact. Each of us must use the power given to us to address this matter with action. Working together will enable and empower us to avoid duplicating efforts and build on the work of the last five years to make real and lasting change. To this end, please see the attached response to your report with the hopes that this is the beginning of a City-changing partnership.

Respectfully -

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Garcetti", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

ERIC GARCETTI
Mayor

In response to your report, we offer an overview of the Gender Equity Initiative in place, for additional context so that we may find ways to add to the program in place based on your recommendations.

Overview of Gender Equity Program:

- **Executive Directive #11** - Executive Directive #11 set forth a system for establishing Gender Equity Plans for each Department and creating a system by which we measure the impact of these plans on women. It also called for the creation of Department Gender Equity Liaisons and a Gender Equity Coalition.
- **Department Gender Equity Plans** - Departments were required to submit their first Gender Equity Plans to my office in February 2016. These plans require the Department to baseline their progress each year and set new goals and provide an update on the outcomes they have achieved. These goals are generally oriented toward three key areas: recruiting women in City leadership, recruiting women into under-represented jobs and expanding equity in city services and programs we offer. Departments are required to submit regular status reports on progress and re-draft the plans and re-establish goals annually.
- **Annual Reviews** - Each year, I complete a performance review for each General Manager. One area they are evaluated in is their ability to meet the goals they set out in their Gender Equity Plans. This enables us to hold each other accountable and measure Department accomplishments and areas where additional support are required. In terms of outcomes, you can learn more about just some of the outcomes achieved [here](#).
- **Gender Equity Liaisons** - Each Department is required to have at least one Gender Equity Liaison. These individuals work collaboratively with the Department General Manager and staff to create annual goals for the Department in the areas of hiring in under-represented fields, hiring in leadership and city services. They are also required to submit status reports on an annual basis and re-draft plans when requested.
- **Gender Equity Coalition** - The purpose of the Gender Equity Coalition is to bring Gender Equity Liaisons together quarterly to review progress on plans and share important lessons learned. For example, in late 2019, the Bureau of Engineering leadership presented to other Departments on the strategies and tactics they used to attract more women to some of the roles that women are most underrepresented in. Other Departments were able to take those lessons learned and work to institute these in their own Departments.

Response to Controller's Recommendations:

Recommendation #1

Develop a strategic plan with goals and strategies to attract, develop, and retain diverse talent pools and heighten the cultural competencies of City leadership and its workforce.

Mayor's Office Response: *We think this would be a great opportunity for Department leadership to prepare for the repeal of Proposition 209 and continue to develop strategic plans for attracting, developing and retaining diverse talent pools. These plans exist within annual Gender Equity plans but a Citywide strategy would be well received and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Controller and Personnel to expand upon the work already completed and prepare for the opportunity for the City to be bold.*

Recommendation #2

Require annual reports to be submitted by the Personnel Department, in conjunction with Police, Fire, Public Works, LADWP, Airports, Transportation, General Services, and Building & Safety, that formally document the City's efforts to attract greater representation of women to entry level job classifications that have traditionally been male dominated.

Mayor's Office Response: *Each Department drafts and submits a Gender Equity plan. The 2020 plans are underway and due to the Mayor's Office in late August. We would be happy to work with the Controller and Personnel to publish these plans once completed and would welcome the help in working with Departments to ensure they set bold goals and reach those goals.*

Recommendation #3

Create a Working Group tasked with creating a pathway for women to better participate in all job classifications, promotions, the opportunity to earn overtime, and the ability to occupy the highest paying jobs. The Working Group would include members from the Community, Labor, CAO, and Personnel.

Mayor's Office Response: *My office convenes the Gender Equity Coalition on a regular basis. We would be happy to work with the Controller to include an appointed representative to join the Gender Equity Coalition and support additional development of personnel focused goals with each Department. Some areas of focus we would recommend partnership on are preparing for a repeal of Prop 209, establishing additional internship, fellowship and apprenticeship programs and expanding upon already existing mentorship programs. Labor and CAO would be welcomed additions to the group to help accelerate progress.*