

HOUSTON WOMEN'S COMMISSION FACT SHEET

CREATED ON AUGUST 25, 2021 BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF HOUSTON CITY COUNCIL

What is the purpose of the Houston Women's Commission?

The commission will advance equality and equity for women in the City of Houston by identifying and addressing disparities in healthcare, employment, safety and security across communities and industries, both in Houston's public and private sector. The commission will develop and propose recommendations, identify gaps in information that need further study, and advise City leaders on how to improve the quality of life for women throughout Houston.

This inaugural year's charge is to address the disparities that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated for women in the region in areas including job loss, health care and leave coverage, child-care needs, and wage disparities.

How did this initiative come about?

Council Member Abbie Kamin led the effort and worked with Mayor Turner to bring the proposal to City Council. This permanent commission was created through ordinance to keep women's issues at the forefront.

Who serves on the Houston Women's Commission?

The twenty-five members represent a diverse cross-section of Houston and are broadly representative of the community at large with regard to race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, LGBT+ status, and industry sectors including leaders from energy, tech, healthcare, service industry, education, both public and private sectors, to address women's issues holistically.

How will the Women's Commission function?

The Houston Women's Commission will serve as a permanent advisory board to the Mayor and City Council as they make decisions related to the well-being and advancement of women and their families. The commission will meet quarterly, with subcommittees meeting more frequently, and work closely with City departments that focus on healthcare, wage inequality and employment, and safety and security.

The commission will advise and produce recommendations annually to the Mayor and Council to address disparities, as well as identify gaps in information that need further study.

They will also provide feedback regarding prospective policy to the mayor and city council and

will generate policy proposals bringing attention of the mayor and city council issues impacting women in Houston. Commission members will also help publicize City-led opportunities and programs benefiting women and their families in their communities.

ABOUT THE HOUSTON WOMEN'S COMMISSION

"I congratulate Council Member Kamin for proposing the Houston Women's Commission. As an attorney, wife, and mother, she brings a unique perspective to public service. Women play a vital role in my administration and are leaders who are making significant contributions in all aspects of our diverse community. I look forward to seeing the Commission's recommendations and working to enhance the quality of life for all women" – Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner

"After over a year of planning, to see this effort come to fruition is very special. This is the first time we will have a board specifically looking at women's equity in our city; something we must have if we want to address the substantial disparities women continue to face day-to-day. It is important to the success of government and industry alike that women are represented at every level of leadership and decision-making. With the help of our diverse business and non-profit sectors, we can empower women in our community and ensure equal playing fields of opportunity." – Council Member Abbie Kamin, District C

"Addressing major gender inequity in Houston is as daunting as it is urgent, particularly in light of the injustices made more acute by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the invaluable support of Mayor Turner and Council Member Kamin, our commission stands ready to work at the nexus of research, public policy, and lived experience to make a positive difference in the lives of women and their families in Houston." – Beth Matusoff Merfish, Chair, Houston Women's Commission

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.houstontx.gov/womenscommission