

GENDER AND JUSTICE COMMISSION



ABOUT

The Gender and Justice Commission is co-chaired by Washington State Supreme Court Justice Sheryl Gordon McCloud and Court of Appeals Judge Rebecca Glasgow.

The Commission is comprised of 23 members who serve an initial three-year term, with the potential to renew. In addition, the Commission maintains liaison relationships with other organizations working toward the shared goal of gender equality.

Through its diverse multidisciplinary membership, the Commission exercises strong statewide leadership in promoting gender equity in the legal and judicial community and the justice system.

HISTORY

In 1987, the Washington State Legislature tasked the Office of the Administrator for the Courts to take steps to prevent gender bias in the state court system. After two years of research, public hearings, and surveys, the Gender and Justice Task Force concluded that gender bias did exist in the Washington State court system and described the extent of that bias in its final report, *Gender and Justice in the Courts, Washington State, 1989*.

The Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission was established by the Washington State Supreme Court in 1994. The Court renewed the Commission every five years thereafter until March 5, 2025, when the Court signed an order recognizing the Gender and Justice Commission to be a permanent standing commission of the Court. In 2021, the Commission published an extensive update to the 1989 report, *How Gender and Race Affect Justice Now*, which included specific recommendations for eliminating bias in Washington's justice system.

MISSION

The mission of the Gender and Justice Commission is to identify concerns and make recommendations regarding the equal treatment of all parties, attorneys, and court employees in the State courts, and to promote gender equality through researching, recommending, and supporting the implementation of best practices; providing educational programs that enhance equal treatment of all parties; and serving as a liaison between the courts and other organizations in working toward communities free of bias.

COMMITTEES

The Gender and Justice Commission's committees focus on these key areas:

Communications

The Communications Committee promotes the work of the Gender and Justice Commission through publications and outreach events.

Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Committee oversees the Gender and Justice Commission's work on the court system response to gender-based violence.

Education

The Education Committee develops and sponsors education programs for judicial officers, court staff, and justice system partners. Our programs are focused on gender issues, and the intersection of gender with race, poverty, and other identities.

Family Law

The Family Law Committee, formed in 2024, works to eliminate gender-based bias and disparities within the family law system.

Incarceration, Gender and Justice

The Incarceration, Gender and Justice Committee works to address issues facing justice-involved women and girls, including court access for incarcerated parents.

Legislative

The Legislative Committee, formed in 2022, reviews and tracks proposed legislation, and determines whether the Commission will take a position.

Tribal State Consortium

The Tribal State Court Consortium (TSCC) works in conjunction with the Gender and Justice Commission to build relationships with tribal courts and partners in addressing issues of domestic and sexual violence.



I encourage anyone who is interested in ensuring gender equality in the court system to reach out to the Commission and be involved in these efforts.

JUSTICE SHERYL GORDON MCCLOUD, GENDER AND JUSTICE COMMISSION, CO-CHAIR

WORK OF THE COMMISSION



Key Accomplishments

2021: How Gender And Race Affect Justice Now

In order to gain a better understanding of gender bias in the courts today, the Commission conducted the 2021 Gender Justice Study, a multi-year project working to determine the impact of gender bias on access to justice, focusing on the intersection of gender and race, poverty, and other identities. The recommendations made have laid out a road map for future Commission work, in conjunction with justice system partners. The Commission is also diligently tracking progress made on the 2021 recommendations and developing strategies for ongoing progress.

Workplace Harassment Study

The Workplace Harassment Survey was a pilot project that resulted from the 2021 study. The survey was conducted in partnership with the Washington State Center for Court Research. It was distributed to court leaders and their staff, the Commission on Judicial Conduct, the Washington State Association of County Clerks, Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Office of Civil Legal Aid. The project represented the first time that such information was collected at the state level and paved the way for formation of the Board of Judicial Administration's (BJA) Workplace Antiharassment Task Force. This Task Force will be jointly chaired by the Commission and the BJA.

Education

The Commission sponsors in-person education sessions at conferences for judicial officers and court staff, as well as short (1–2 hour) webinars on a variety of gender-related topics. This format enables the information to reach people across the state, be responsive to current issues, and to be recorded and shared on its [website](#) for future access.

Legislative Work Groups

From 2017–2024, the Gender and Justice Commission was directed by the legislature to convene several work groups, and submitted reports to the legislature on a variety of topics, including domestic violence perpetrator treatment, domestic violence risk assessment, civil protection orders, and crime victim services.

Resource Development

The Commission ensures that judicial officers have access to timely and updated resources on issues of critical importance, such as domestic violence and sexual harassment. These include: The gender justice study and recommendations ([by chapter](#)), [bench guides](#), the [Gender-Based Violence Training and Resource Library](#), and the [monthly newsletter](#) that was started in 2023.

Grant Management

The Commission manages Washington's STOP Violence Against Women grant allocation for courts, a funding source that supports the Commission's education and resource development to improve the court response to domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and dating violence.