

## THE SAN FRANCISCO GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES INITIATIVE

*Optimize the gender advantage to improve your company's bottom line*

*[www.genderprinciples.org](http://www.genderprinciples.org)*

The **Gender Equality Principles Initiative (GEP)**, a partnership between the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, Calvert Investments, and Verité, is a groundbreaking project undertaken to help businesses achieve greater gender equality and build more productive workplaces. The Initiative provides organizations with a self-assessment tool, a comprehensive resource library, and in-person educational opportunities designed to improve equity from the factory floor to the boardroom. Based on 7 fundamental workplace issues, the GEP is the go-to resource for organizations seeking to attract and retain top talent. For the comprehensive, web-based assessment and toolkit see <http://genderprinciples.org>.

### 1. EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION

Organizations will take concrete steps to attain gender equality by adopting and implementing employment policies and practices that eliminate gender discrimination in areas such as recruitment, hiring, pay, and promotion.

Areas covered:

- a. Pay the legal minimum wage and strive to pay a living wage.
- b. Ensure fair and comparable wages, hours, and benefits for comparable work for all employees.
- c. Undertake concrete, verifiable actions to recruit women candidates and retain women employees from traditionally underrepresented groups and for non-traditional positions.
- d. Eliminate all forms of discrimination based on attributes such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or cultural stereotypes in all work-related activities or privileges, including wages, hours, benefits, job access, and working conditions.
- e. Prohibit discrimination based on marital, parental, reproductive, or health status (including HIV/AIDS) in all employment or promotion decisions.
- f. Ensure job security by allowing for interruptions in work for maternity leave, parental leave, and family-related responsibilities.
- g. Implement equitable policies for non-salaried employees conducting temporary and/or temporary work.

- h. Ensure equitable layoffs that do not disproportionately affect women.

## **2. WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Organizations will take concrete steps to attain gender equality by adopting, implementing, and promoting policies and practices that enable work-life balance and support educational, career, and vocational development.

Areas covered:

- a. Undertake concrete, verifiable actions to make professional and private life more balanced by implementing and promoting a variety of flexible work options, including workforce exit and re-entry opportunities, and support women returning to positions of equal pay and status.
- b. Promote the use of family leave, dependent care, and wellness programs. Allow time-off from work for employees seeking medical care or treatment, for themselves or their dependents, including family planning and reproductive health care.
- c. Support access to childcare either by providing childcare services, preferably on-site, or referrals.
- d. Provide equal opportunities and access for women to education, including literacy, vocational, and information technology training.
- e. Provide professional development opportunities that include formal or informal networking, client development activities, and mentoring programs for women at all levels, including women working in non-traditional fields.

## **3. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE**

Organizations will take concrete steps to attain gender equality by adopting and implementing policies to secure the health, safety, and well-being of female workers.

Areas covered:

- a. Prohibit and prevent all forms of violence in the workplace, including verbal, physical, or sexual harassment.
- b. Ensure the safety of female employees and vendors in the workplace, including travel to and from the workplace and on company-related business, and ensure the safety of vendors in the workplace.
- c. Provide and promote policies and programs addressing domestic violence.
- d. Work to eliminate and disclose unsafe working conditions by providing protection from exposure to hazardous or toxic chemicals in the workplace, particularly when those substances have known or suspected adverse effects on the health of women, including reproductive health.

- e. Provide gender equitable health services and insurance.

#### **4. MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

Organizations will take concrete steps to attain gender equality by adopting and implementing policies to ensure equitable participation in management and governance.

Areas covered:

- a. Establish policies and undertake proactive efforts to recruit and appoint women to managerial positions and to the corporate board of directors.
- b. Establish policies and undertake proactive efforts to assure participation by women in decision-making and governance at all levels and in all areas of the business, including budgetary decision-making.
- c. Include improving gender equality as a factor in performance measures and provide resources to support gender initiatives.

#### **5. BUSINESS, SUPPLY CHAIN, AND MARKETING PRACTICES**

Organizations will take concrete steps to attain gender equality by adopting and implementing non-discriminatory business, supply chain, contracting, and marketing policies and practices.

Areas covered:

- a. Maintain ethical marketing standards by respecting the dignity of women in all sales, promotional, and advertising materials. Minimize or eliminate any form of gender or sexual exploitation in marketing and advertising campaigns.
- b. Encourage and support women's entrepreneurship. Seek business relationships with women-owned businesses and vendors, including micro-enterprises, and work with them to arrange fair credit and lending terms.
- c. Clearly forbid business-related activities that condone, support, or otherwise participate in trafficking, including labor or sexual exploitation.
- d. Ensure that these Principles are observed not only with respect to employees, but also business partners such as independent contractors, sub-contractors, home-based workers, vendors, and suppliers.
- e. Take these Principles into consideration in product and service development and major business decisions, such as mergers, acquisitions, joint venture partnerships, and financing.

## **6. CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Organizations will take concrete steps to attain gender equality by adopting and implementing policies to promote equitable participation in civic life and eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation.

Areas covered:

- a. Encourage philanthropic foundations associated with the organization to promote gender equality through their grant-making, programmatic initiatives, and investments.
- b. Encourage women and girls to enter non-traditional fields by providing accessible career information and training programs designed specifically for them.
- c. Respect female employees' rights to participate in legal, civic, and political affairs — including time off to vote—without interference or repercussions in the workplace.
- d. Respect freedom of association among all employees.
- e. Work with governments and communities where the organization does business to eliminate gender-based discrimination and improve educational and other opportunities for women and girls in those communities, including support for women's community groups working for the advancement of women.
- f. Exercise proactive leadership to protect women from sexual harassment, violence, mutilation, intimidation, retaliation, or other denial of their basic human rights by host governments or non-governmental actors and refuse to tolerate situations where cultural differences or customs are used to deny the basic human rights of women and girls.

## **7. LEADERSHIP, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Organizations will take concrete steps to attain gender equality in operations and in business and stakeholder relationships through active commitment from top leadership, and by adopting and implementing policies that are publicly disclosed, monitored, and enforced.

Areas covered:

- a. Commit to gender equality through a CEO statement or comparably prominent means and prominently display the commitment in the workplace and/or make it available to all employees in a readily accessible form.
- b. Establish benchmarks to measure and monitor progress toward gender equality and report results publicly.

- c. Develop and implement company policies, training, and internal reporting processes to ensure implementation of gender equality throughout the organization and conduct periodic self-evaluations through data collection and analysis, audits, public disclosure, and reporting.
- d. Establish a clear, unbiased, non-retaliatory grievance policy allowing employees to comment or complain about their treatment in the workplace.
- e. Engage in constructive dialogue with stakeholder groups, including employees, non-governmental organizations, business associations, investors, customers, and the media on progress in implementing the organization's commitment to gender equality.
- f. Be transparent in the implementation of this commitment and promote endorsement and implementation by affiliates, vendors, suppliers, customers, and others with whom the organization does business.
- g. Ensure that government relations and corporate political spending policies and practices incorporate the commitment to gender equality.

City and County of San Francisco  
Department on the Status of Women  
25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 240  
San Francisco, CA 94102-6061  
Phone: 415-252-2570  
Fax: 415-252-2575  
Email: [dosw@sfgov.org](mailto:dosw@sfgov.org)