



---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 26, 2019

Contact:  
Laurel Anderson/Quan Vu  
Office of Public Affairs  
408-299-5119

**County of Santa Clara Establishes New Office to Address Sexual Assault,  
Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking**

*The Office is one of a few across the nation to address the full spectrum of gender-based violence on a county level*

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF.—** The County of Santa Clara this week established the Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention, a move that will amplify local efforts to address sexual assault, domestic violence and human trafficking. The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the creation of this office at its Sept. 24 meeting, followed by today's announcement that Carla Collins has been appointed to lead the new efforts.

"The new Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention will show Santa Clara County residents we're making services and support for survivors of gender-based violence a major priority," said County of Santa Clara Supervisor and Board Vice President Cindy Chavez. "The support and services are vital as we reform how we go about prosecuting and preventing these terrible crimes."

As Manager of OGBVP, Collins will develop an implementation plan for the County and guide policy to effectively address the full spectrum of gender-based violence and abuse. She brings more than a decade of experience on survivor-centered, trauma-informed policy and evaluation to increase victim safety and batterer accountability.

"I'm incredibly honored and humbled to work in a county that prioritizes survivors of violence," Collins said.

The County of Santa Clara has long led efforts to understand, address and prevent intimate partner violence (IPV), but recently began recognizing its intersections with other forms of violence, such as sexual assault and human trafficking. The newly created office will help develop policies that can effectively and efficiently address all three areas of gender-based violence.

"The Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention will provide the Board of Supervisors with the input and data to implement policies to better serve survivors who are often impacted by multiple crimes," said County of Santa Clara Supervisor Dave Cortese.

Annually, local domestic violence programs in Santa Clara County provide essential, lifesaving services to over 6,000 domestic violence victims and children, including more than 23,000 bed nights, and receive more than 20,000 calls to the local domestic violence crisis hotlines. In fiscal year 2019, 161 survivors of human trafficking and/or workplace crimes were provided with basic needs services, while 135 survivors were provided with legal services.

In 2018, seven domestic violence related deaths were reported in Santa Clara County. The County District Attorney's Office also received 5,519 domestic violence case referrals, and 44% of filed cases resulted in felony charges. In the last two years, the Office of the District Attorney and the Valley Medical Center's Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) program both reported that they experienced a 20 percent increase in sexual assault cases reviewed.

As part of the County of Santa Clara Division of Equity and Social Justice, the Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention is dedicated to connecting survivors of violence to the services they need to heal and thrive. In addition to providing policy analysis, the Office will administer a \$12 million budget that focuses on prevention, direct services, research and training in partnership with a number of county departments and community-based organizations.

"The creation of this office establishes the Division of Equity and Social Justice as the center for both innovation and collaboration to address the most pressing issues impacting vulnerable residents," said County of Santa Clara Deputy Director David Campos, who oversees this Division.

For more information about the Office of Gender-Based Violence, contact [gbv@ceo.sccgov.org](mailto:gbv@ceo.sccgov.org).

### **ABOUT CARLA COLLINS**

Collins has more than a decade of experience on survivor-centered, trauma-informed policy, practice and evaluation to increase victim safety and batterer accountability. She started her County career 17 years ago coordinating the Network for a Hate-Free Community, growing a network of over 100 county agencies, local organizations, and community leaders to identify and implement initiatives to interrupt prejudice. She also worked in the County's Office of Women's Policy (OWP) on issues related to domestic violence, equal pay, work-life balance and leadership development. As Assistant Director for OWP, she informed and developed policies that focused on the needs of women and girls, particularly from marginalized communities, and earned state and national recognition for her work in leadership, economics, and justice reform.

In January 2019, Carla was honored to be appointed as Trustee 3 with the San Jose Unified School Board. She also proudly serves as First Vice President of her union, CEMA. Carla earned a degree in Philosophy with an emphasis in Ethnic Studies from Santa Clara University.

### **ABOUT THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA**

The County of Santa Clara government serves a diverse, multi-cultural population of 1.9 million residents in Santa Clara County, the sixth largest county in California. With a \$8.17 billion budget, more than 70 agencies/departments and nearly 22,000 employees, the County of Santa Clara plans for the needs of a dynamic community, offers quality services, and promotes a healthy, safe and prosperous community for all. The County provides essential services including public health and environmental protection; behavioral health and medical services through the County of Santa Clara Health System,

including Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (Hospital and Clinics), O'Connor Hospital and Saint Louise Regional Hospital; child and adult protection services; homelessness prevention and solutions; roads, parks and libraries; emergency response to disasters; protection of minority communities and those under threat; access to a fair criminal justice system; and scores of other services, particularly for those members of our community in the greatest need.

Visit the County of Santa Clara at: <http://www.sccgov.org>

Like us on **Facebook**: <http://Facebook.com/County.of.Santa.Clara/>

Follow us on **Twitter**: <http://twitter.com/sccgov>

# # #