



CSW 69 Beijing +30 Shadow Report

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

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Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women are structured policies, programs, and initiatives designed by governments, organizations, or institutions to promote gender equality and empower women in different spheres of life. These mechanisms are intended to address disparities between genders, overcome barriers to women's participation and leadership, and foster an environment of equality. The Beijing Platform for Action, in Area of Concern H, sets forth three Strategic Objectives to strengthen institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women:

- H.1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies*
- H.2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects*
- H.3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.¹*

H.1. In the United States, a variety of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have been established, including **national machineries** such as councils, commissions, and offices, that address gender inequality and promote women's empowerment in various sectors, such as the following:

- White House gender equality commissions and councils
 - The President's Commission on the Status of Women, created by President Kennedy (1961)
 - The President's Interagency Council on Women, created by President Clinton (1995)
 - The White House Council on Women and Girls, created by President Obama (2009)
 - The White House Gender Policy Council, created by President Biden (2021)
- US government offices and commissions
 - US Department of Labor Women's Bureau (1920)
 - US Commission on Civil Rights (1957)
 - The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1964)
 - Small Business Administration Office of Women's Business Ownership (1979)
 - US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services (1984)
 - National Institutes of Health Office of Research on Women's Health (1990)
 - US Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health (1991)
 - Advisory Committee on Research on Women's Health (1993)
 - US State Department Office of Global Women's Issues (1994)
 - Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (1994)

H.2. In addition to these governmental bodies, the US has passed important **legislation** and instituted **policies and programs** aimed to advance gender equality, including the following:

- Federal legislative frameworks and laws
 - The Equal Pay Act of 1963
 - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Title X (Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970)
 - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
 - Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978
 - Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (1984)
 - Family and Medical Leave Act (1993)
 - The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and its subsequent reauthorizations
 - The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (2009)
 - The Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017
 - Pregnant Workers Fairness Act of 2023

- State legislation

13 US states and a federal district have mandatory paid family and medical leave programs including:

California (2002)	New Jersey (2008)	Rhode Island (2013)
New York (2016)	District of Columbia (2016)	Washington state (2017)
Massachusetts (2018)	Connecticut (2019)	Oregon (2019)
Colorado (2020)	Delaware (2022)	Maryland (2022)
Maine (2023)	Minnesota (2023)	

H.3. A number of governmental units collect **gender-disaggregated data** on women and girls, including the following:

- The US Census Bureau
- The Department of Labor Women’s Bureau
- The National Institutes of Health
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics
- The CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey
- The CDC National Violent Death Reporting System
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Program

In addition to US governmental structures, legislation aimed at gender equality, and data collection programs, the US has many **civil society organizations** that focus on advancing gender equality. Some prominent examples include the following:

Planned Parenthood	League of Women Voters
American Association of University Women	YWCA
National Organization for Women	Feminist Majority Foundation
Institute for Women’s Policy Research	Emily’s List
Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security	Rutgers Center for American Women in Politics

The United States does not have a dedicated, **high-level department focused on gender equality**, social justice, and the advancement of women’s rights. As mentioned above, the US government includes agencies, commissions, and programs with dedicated approaches to specific issues but there is no centralized agency that focuses on prioritizing strategy on the highest levels of governance. While the current White House Gender Policy Council has provided a high-level presence, a Congressionally-mandated department would be a stronger foundation for women’s advancement. As per the Beijing Platform for Action’s call for strong national machineries, this high-level department would be beneficial because it would:

1. Centralize governmental focus on gender equality
2. Coordinate policy, advocacy, and resource allocation
3. Address gender inequality in key priority areas
4. Improve women’s political participation at all levels of government
5. Combat gender-based violence and streamline data collection on femicide and other violations
6. Address intersectionality and diversity in governmental programs
7. Improve access to social services and support
8. Promote US global advocacy and international leadership
9. Elevate women’s voices, especially from marginalized communities
10. Address women’s underrepresentation in male-dominated sectors of the workforce

A high-level department dedicated to ensuring women’s advancement would drive long-term systemic change, improve the lives of women and girls, and contribute to a more equitable society.

¹ Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, *Beijing Platform for Action*.