We all deserve an environment free of gender-based violence and discrimination, comprehensive healthcare and access to clean air, water, and energy. With lives powered by clean energy, women and girls at home and around the world are better able to cope with extreme weather events, protect their children from the harmful impacts of polluted water and air, feed their families, and live the lives of their choosing.

No matter one’s gender, everyone has the right to live in a safe and clean environment. And every mother should be able to plan their families on their terms without fear that the water they drink or the air they breathe might contain toxic chemicals harmful during pregnancy. No family should have to worry about asthma attacks and other health issues from dirty air or polluted water from the dirty fuels industry which contributes to climate change.

The Sierra Club’s Gender Equity and Environment Program advocates for gender equity so that women and girls can become healthier, stronger, and more resilient. With comprehensive health, climate resilience and clean energy access, communities that are most impacted by and that often contribute the least to environmental challenges can best prepare and respond to their immediate effects. Furthermore, the Gender Equity program advocates for inclusive leadership within the environment and clean energy sectors.

**HOW WE ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS**

**Gender Equity and Health**

Everyone should be able to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live in a safe and healthy community and protected from our changing climate. And every mother should be able to plan their families on their terms without fear that the water they drink might contain toxic chemicals harmful during pregnancy. We work to make sure everyone can lead healthy lives, which includes affordable access to voluntary family planning and comprehensive healthcare for all.

- **Gender-based violence:** For women, transgender and gender nonconforming people, gender-based violence is a real concern, particularly in the face of energy poverty and natural disasters. As a result of energy poverty and gender inequality, women and girls are more susceptible to increased violence. When climate disasters like floods and droughts happen, women are at greater risk of being displaced and exposed.
to gender-based violence, including rape, sexual exploitation, and assault. Around the world, women and girls generally bear the burden of household chores like collecting water or firewood, and as a result can be exposed to various forms of violence. In the United States, male-dominated fields such as oil and gas extractive sites see a sharp increase in human trafficking and gender-based violence. Greater gender equity and access to energy may lead to decreases in violence against women and other gender minorities. The Sierra Club works to prevent these risks for vulnerable populations.

- **Sexual and reproductive health and rights:** We need to make sure everyone can lead healthy lives, which includes affordable access to voluntary family planning and health services. The Sierra Club stands to protect the Affordable Care Act, access to Planned Parenthood, permanently repeal the Global Gag Rule, and promote comprehensive sexuality education.

- **Toxics and Health:** There is strong evidence that links dangerous pesticides and toxics exposure in personal care products to serious developmental and health concerns for women and children’s health. The Sierra Club has been supporting efforts to ban a pesticide called chlorpyrifos, which the EPA has proven to be unsafe, and fights for stronger ingredient disclosure policy of chemicals in feminine hygiene products (such as pads and tampons), perfume, and cosmetics.

**GENDER EQUITY AND CLIMATE**

The communities most impacted by climate disruption are often the ones that contribute the least to the problem. We advocate for domestic and international policies that take into account the impact climate disaster has on marginalized populations—especially gendered impacts—and listen to the needs and solutions offered by those most impacted.

- **Adaptation, loss and damage:** Reducing our emissions and building resilience (or adaptation) against climate disruption can only take us so far. Some negative impacts and damages are now unavoidable. The now inevitable consequences of human-induced climate change have collectively come to be known as “loss and damage.” Furthermore, the greatest impacts are being felt largely by those least able to adapt. The Sierra Club fights to ensure the UNFCCC process includes women’s rights in both policy decisions and in representation from negotiators.

- **Natural Disasters and Displacement:** Women represent 70 percent of the world’s one billion poorest people. Poverty amplifies the direct negative impacts of climate change, including food scarcity, increased risk of natural disasters, and sanitation threats. According to the Women’s Environmental Network, women constitute up to 80 percent of global refugee and displaced populations, and represent 70 to 80 percent of those needing emergency assistance. Women and children face unique vulnerability during extreme weather due to caretaking, lack of resources, and risks of violence—both in the United States and globally. The Gender Equity Program works with partners and communities to tell their own story of impacts and promote dignity and justice in the aftermath of natural disasters and forced migration.

**GENDER EQUITY AND CLEAN ENERGY**

Women, transgender and gender nonconforming play an important role when it comes to clean energy access and innovation. Decentralized clean energy systems—such as off-grid renewables—allow women to create or choose the technologies that work for them and are key tools for climate change resilience. Furthermore, the Sierra Club believes it is critical for the growing renewable energy industry to be an inclusive workplace for underrepresented populations, such as women. We are working to increase access to affordable, sustainable energy sources globally, and making sure the clean energy companies are inclusive and equitable.
Energy Access: More than a billion people live without access to electricity, and 70 percent are women. This limits opportunities for education and income generation, and is associated with various health risks. Decentralized clean energy access is key to fighting energy poverty. Off-grid renewable energy technologies, such as solar, are already helping women become more resilient in the face of limited or no electricity grids, cook in safer environments, study and work for longer, and protect themselves from increasing natural disasters.

Women’s Leadership in Clean Energy Sector: We believe that affordable access to 100% clean energy is not only possible, it is necessary. But with growing investment in the technology, it is critical to invest in the people fueling the industry. The clean energy sector must be inclusive in its culture and policy to hire, retain, and promote women, LGBTQ, people of color and other marginalized populations. We know that with diversity comes higher performance and financial benefits. That is why the Sierra Club is working for a just transition to family-sustaining jobs that include paid family leave, anti-discrimination and harassment policies, and a commitment to seeing a thriving and inclusive workspace.

We also work with domestic and international partners to educate policymakers, inform international processes, and influence key leaders to connect gender equity with climate initiatives. We encourage decision-makers to break down silos and promote integrated development solutions that help women, communities, and the planet.

JOIN US!

• Plug in: Contact gender@sierraclub.org to find more ways to get involved.
• Speak up: Send a letter to a decision-maker in your community or state. Tell them that as an environmentalist, you support gender equity.
• Spread the word: Talk to your friends, family, and community, or write a letter to your local newspaper. Education is the first step toward long-term change!

HOW WE DO OUR WORK

From classrooms to conferences, our program educates and activates diverse audiences nationwide. Each year, we connect with hundreds of people through presentations and events, and thousands more through social and electronic media. Many of these individuals continue to engage with their communities by intersecting gender equity with climate adaptation, health and clean energy access. Our work is dependent on the invaluable support and leadership of our volunteers and fellows around the country. Volunteers organize film screenings, participate in community fairs, write newsletters, and work with grassroots reproductive health and environmental groups. Our youth fellows have organized TEDx events, speaking tours, art shows, Twitter chats, water walks, and more to educate and mobilize their peers.