



FY 2024 Annual Report

June 1, 2024



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Remarks from FY2024 Chair

In so many ways, the past year has been incredibly transformative for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW).

As the Chairwoman of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, it brings me great joy to celebrate such a momentous year alongside all of you. This past year, we proudly celebrated our 25th anniversary. Formed in 1998 with a mission to advance women toward full equality in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women, **the Commission exists to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts.**



The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women was inspired by the [United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women](#) held in Beijing, China in September 1995. The conference directed state governments to “form and adequately fund Women’s Commissions in all states and territories where they do not already exist.” Massachusetts’ delegates at the Beijing Conference, including then Massachusetts First Lady Susan Roosevelt Weld, returned determined that the women of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts deserved their own Women’s Commission.

With the help of many, including state legislators, a unique and model Commission was born, with appointing authority shared by the Executive and Legislative Branches. Since conception, our 19 volunteer State Commissioners, 11 Regional Commissions, and passionate staff and interns, have dedicated themselves to the promotion and protection of equality for women in all areas of their lives.

I am filled with gratitude to see the many ways in which the MCSW Team has grown. In a short period of time, Shaitia has overhauled the Commission’s infrastructure, rising to meet the challenge of rebuilding and re-seating our state and regional bodies to full strength after the effects we all felt post-pandemic, and empowering a new generation of leaders with the professional and business skills required to catapult the Commission into the next 25 years. Fully staffed and fully seated, with 19 State Commissioners for the first time since the pandemic began – we are ready for the opportunities that lay ahead in the coming year!

I am so proud to be the Chairwoman of the MCSW at this pivotal moment in time. We hosted public hearings all across the state, trained more than 200 young women as next generation advocacy leaders at our 2024 [Girls Empowerment Leadership Summit](#), and awarded more than 125 incredible local women as Commonwealth Heroines, our signature program that highlights local women who don’t always make the news, but who always make the difference in our communities.

This growth has enabled us to reach deeper into our communities, host additional events, launch exciting programming to further elevate women and girls through real impact, and much, much more. To celebrate our 25th anniversary, we launched the first-ever [MCSW Scholarship](#), where we awarded five, \$5,000 scholarships to adult women who are nontraditional students (going back to school later in life) to complete their degrees. We are excited to introduce our Scholarship recipients at our [2024 Commonwealth Heroines](#) Celebration and look forward to sharing the good news with all of you.

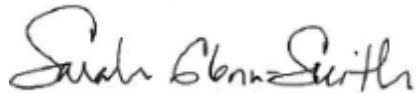
Furthermore, we couldn’t be more proud to continue our work to advance the lives of women and girls through policy advocacy, especially given the historic nature of representation now in the corner office of our state. The executive and legislative branches of Massachusetts are now majority women. Governor Maura Healey, Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, Andrea Campbell elected as the first Black Attorney General in the Commonwealth, Treasurer Goldberg, Auditor DiZoglio, Senate President Spilka, and so many others make Massachusetts the leading state in the nation in

the number of women holding high-level leadership positions. We are thankful for their partnership, support, incredible energy and expertise.

This strong leadership enabled our recent budget approval, underscoring the Commonwealth's commitment to prioritizing and elevating the voices of women at historic levels. Our policy work continues to be at the heart of everything we do, and we express our deepest gratitude to our appointing authorities: the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the Caucus of Women Legislators for continually collaborating with us to move the needle on policy that can change all our lives for the better. As the 193rd General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts draws to a close, we commit to working alongside all of you to usher in the 194th and beyond.

While there is still much uncertainty, inequity, and discrimination in the world, I draw hope from my Sister Commissioners and our collective work as a community to change the lives of women and girls in the Commonwealth for the better.

In solidarity and gratitude,



Dr. Sarah Glenn-Smith
Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) Chairwoman



Commissioners, Staff, and Interns



MCSW Commissioners celebrating at the organization's 25th Anniversary Gala

MCSW State Commissioners and Officers

Dr. Sarah Glenn-Smith, Holliston – *MCSW Chairwoman*

Mary-dith Tuitt, Boston – *MCSW Vice-Chairwoman*

Tanisha Arena, Springfield – *MCSW Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair*

Christine Monska, Auburndale – *MCSW Secretary and Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative (GELI) Chair*

Denella Clark, Hyde Park – *MCSW Scholarship Committee Chair and Immediate Past Chair*

Rebecca Bact, Auburndale

Carol Campbell, Amherst

Divya Chaturvedi, Wilmington – *Finance Committee Vice Chair*

Guimel DeCarvalho, Natick – *Legislative and Public Policy Committee Vice-Chair*

Marianne Fleckner, Westford

Jean Fox, Freetown – *Program and Planning Committee Vice-Chair*

Liz Friedman, Northampton

Allison Goldberg, Marblehead

Audrey Hall, Framingham – *Finance Committee Secretary*

Nina Liang, Quincy

Leslie-Ann McGee, Falmouth – *Program and Planning Committee Secretary*

Dr. Aisha Miller, Mattapan – *Program and Planning Committee Chair*

Dr. Sonia Shah, Natick

Dr. Kimberly Shea, Winchendon – *Legislative and Public Policy Committee Secretary*



FY24 MCSW Staff

MCSW Staff

Shaitia Spruell, Lancaster – *Executive Director*

Marjorie C. Bernadeau-Alexandre, Roslindale – *Administration & Finance Director*

Tina Games, Harwich – *Regional Commissions Director*

Ellen Moorhouse, Springfield – *Communications and Marketing Director*

Shalaya West, MPP, Boston – *Program and Research Director*

Darlene Kelter, Lynnfield – *Administrative Assistant*

Raven Harris, Springfield – *MCSW Clerk & Executive Assistant*

MCSW Interns

The MCSW's internship program provides students with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in public policy, research, communications, and community outreach related to women's issues. Interns work closely with the commission staff to support ongoing projects and initiatives, as well as to develop new projects and programs. We welcomed a slate of paid interns this year from a variety of educational institutions across the Commonwealth.

Lauren Batiste, Boston University

Dafne Burgos, Emmanuel College

Marzieh Darling-Donnelly, Simmons University

Kelechi Ezeema, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Sophia Guziewicz, Mount Holyoke College

Riyad Noufal, Salem State University

Natalie Rubin, Boston University

Jessica Sizing, Boston College

Julia Steiner, Tufts University

Lilly Taglieri, Simmons University

Our Mission and Charges of the Commission

MCSW is comprised of 19 volunteer state commissioners, 11 regional bodies, dedicated staff members, and seasonal interns. MCSW state commissioners are appointed by one of four appointing authorities: the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Caucus of Women Legislators. Commissioners serve in a volunteer capacity, and meet monthly, September through June. In addition, each commissioner is a member of at least one standing committee that generally meets monthly.

The standing committees include:

- Legislative and Public Policy
- Program and Planning
- Finance Committee
- Executive Committee

For more than 25 years now, the Commission and our regional bodies have worked to advance the rights and opportunities of all women and girls across Massachusetts, and advance an inclusive environment for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, color, sex (with or without sexual conduct and including pregnancy and sexual orientation involving transgender status/gender identity, and sex-stereotyping), age, disability (physical or mental), genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, parental status, marital status, and political affiliation as well as gender expression, mental illness, socioeconomic status or background, neuro(a)typicality, physical appearance, body size, or clothing.

Mission

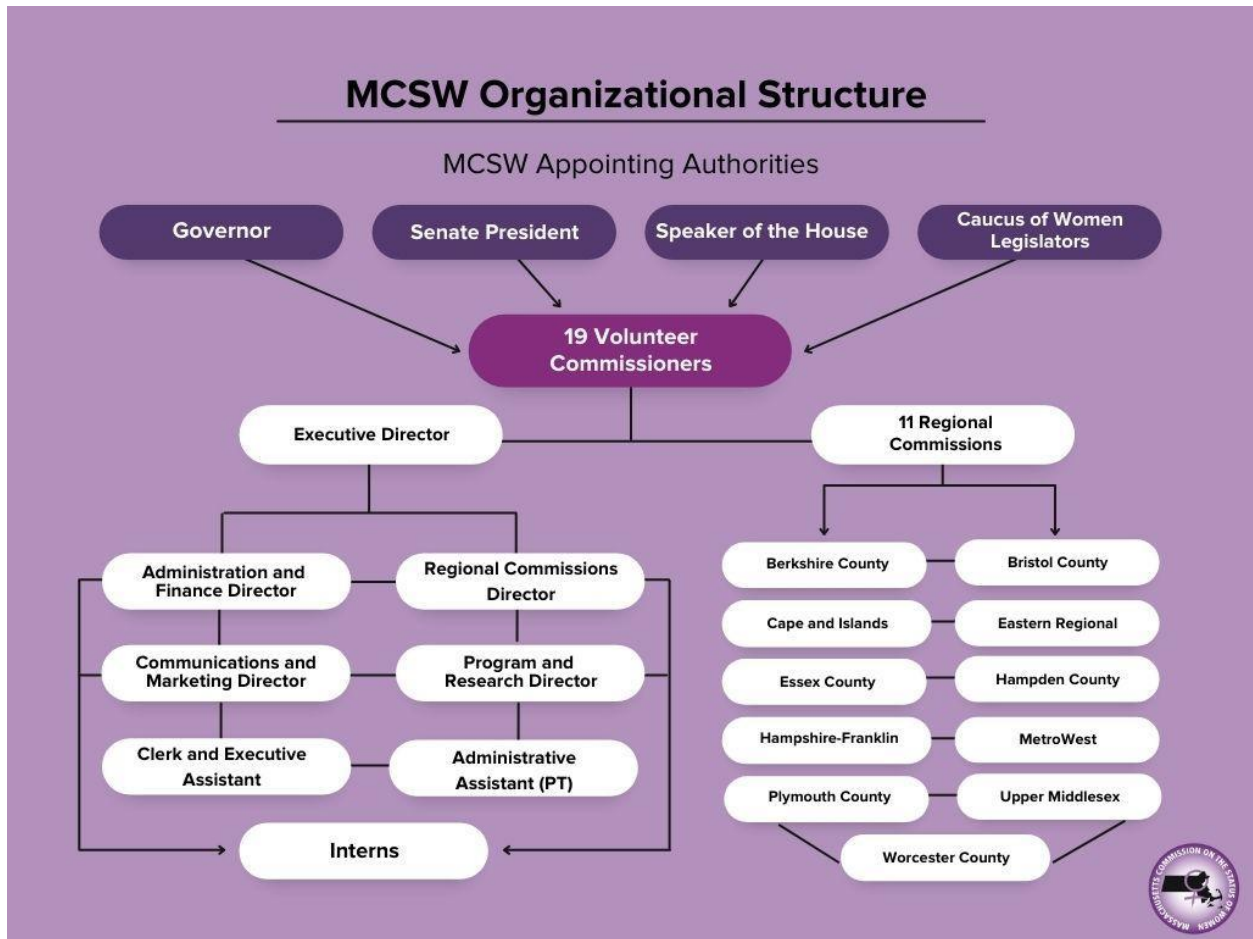
The mission of the Commission is to advance women toward full equality in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women and girls. The Commission exists to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts.

Charges and Purpose

MCSW is Empowered to:

- a) study, review and report on the status of women in the Commonwealth;
- b) inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women;
- c) serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues affecting women;
- d) serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women;
- e) identify and recommend qualified women for appointive positions at all levels of government, including boards and commissions, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- f) assess programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect women, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- g) advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect on women of proposed legislation, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate; and
- h) promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's commissions and among women's organizations in the state, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate.

Organizational Chart



Financial Overview

During the fiscal year of 2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024) MCSW received a Massachusetts State General Appropriation budget of \$949,292. Additionally, we maintain a statutory trust fund of money raised by the agency to support external community projects, such as our MCSW Scholarship launched in 2024 in celebration of our 25th anniversary, which is awarding \$25,000 this year.

MCSW operational expenses include salary & fringe, consultant services, operational technology needs, language accessibility, programs cost, as well as support for advocacy and engagement through the Regional Grant for the operation of our 11 regional commissions.



MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell (L) and MCSW Treasurer Tanisha Arena (right) representing the MCSW at the Ways and Means FY24 Budget Hearing in March of 2024

The MCSW Regional Grant is provided to the regionals for the cost associated with training for advocacy and community engagement to gather information on the issues impacting the various regions of the Commonwealth. We recognize that each region may face its own unique challenges as highlighted in our public hearings. To reach a state of equity we must address their unique challenges.

Throughout the year, we had a dedicated team of 6.5 full-time staff members, each with their own role in the organization. We also had up to ten paid interns at different times, all putting in at least 10 hours per week to contribute to our mission.

As stewards of public funding, we take our responsibility seriously and are dedicated to using these resources to empower women and girls across Massachusetts. For FY2024, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women state allocation totaled \$949,292.00. We're committed to financial transparency and using our funds to re-invest into the Commonwealth. Our major financial commitments include:

State Allocation:	\$949,292.00
Operational Fees:	\$19,000.00
Administrative Operation:	\$752,292.00
Paid Intern Program:.....	\$45,000.00
ADA and Language Accommodations:.....	\$20,000.00
Regional CSW Programs & Operations:.....	\$55,000.00
Advocacy & Community Engagements:	\$58,000.00

Thank you to MCSW Treasurer Tanisha Arena and Executive Director Shaitia Spruell (pictured above) for representing the MCSW at the Ways and Means FY24 Budget Hearing on Economic Development, Housing, and Labor in Gloucester, Massachusetts held on International Women's Day in March of 2024. We're grateful to the committee and members for their continued support of women and girls across the Commonwealth.

Programs and Impact

This year, the MCSW held 3 public hearings across the state and introduced Commissioner meet and greets, and convened our regional bodies all across the state as a way to better network with our commissioners in their home regions. Attended by hundreds of people both in person and online, our programming is just one of the many ways we connect with real women and girls across the Commonwealth. We learn what issues matter most, how we can work together collaboratively to solve problems, and build local networks of amazing local women leaders dedicated to making change in their communities.

We're committed to translating our materials into the top 10 languages of the Commonwealth, providing ASL and incorporating whatever language accommodations that may be needed to ensure women and children can participate fully in our events and programming.

Public Hearings

Public Hearings are key to the MCSW's mandate to study and report on the status of women and girls in the Commonwealth. The Commission holds several public hearings every year.

Throughout FY24 the MCSW committed to offering programming that could not only engage constituents in-person, but also to model hybrid options that would allow all interested residents to share their stories and the challenges women face. We further underscore our commitment to accessibility by providing additional language interpretation, often in Spanish and Portuguese, as well as ASL translation at all of our events. In FY24, the MCSW held hybrid hearings in both Dartmouth and Gardner at local community colleges to reach different areas of the state. The virtual public hearing was issue-specific, centering housing needs in Massachusetts. We ended our program year with a virtual legislative briefing that reported out on all of the data and feedback we received throughout the year.

Dartmouth Public Hearing Summary

This hearing aimed to gather testimony from Bristol County residents on various topics concerning the well-being of women, children, and families. A diverse array of attendees and testifiers, including commissioners, staff, and regional representatives, addressed critical issues such as support for single mothers, childcare accessibility, workforce opportunities, and healthcare access. Testimony from both in-person and virtual participants underscored the importance of legislative action on various fronts, including early education, menstrual product accessibility, diversity in public boards, birthing justice, and Medicaid coverage for doula services.

The hearing highlighted widespread concerns regarding economic stability, housing insecurity, gender-based discrimination and violence, and access to healthcare and education, calling for comprehensive policy measures to address these challenges and promote the well-being and empowerment of all residents in the region. Key legislative recommendations emerged from the hearing, highlighting the need for policies addressing early education, menstrual product accessibility, diversity in public boards, birthing justice, Medicaid coverage for doula services, and initiatives promoting economic security and housing stability.

78 people registered for the hearing with 39 attending on zoom. 13 people were registered to testify, with 5 people testifying virtually and people 8 testified in-person. We hosted two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and provided closed captioning for Zoom. Our Facebook Live stream reached 1,735 people with full views totaling 650.

Virtual Housing Hearing Summary

The MCSW sought out testimony from the residents from all regions of the Commonwealth on the growing housing crisis. This hearing was hosted as a solely virtual event, participants were invited to join via Zoom. Each testifier was allotted 3-4 minutes to present to the commission. 88 people registered for the event with 15 people testifying virtually.

The key issues highlighted cover a range of concerns. First, the Rent Control Act (H.1304/S.872) aims to lift the statewide ban on rent control and allow cities and towns flexible options for implementing rent stabilization and eviction protections. Affordable housing remains a significant challenge, with rising rent prices impacting residents across all counties. Addressing the homelessness crisis requires various resources for housing stability. There is also a need for increased support for women veterans, particularly in navigating credit, finding affordable housing, and accessing disability benefits. Domestic violence intersects with housing stability, which requires a more comprehensive support system. Rural communities in Western Mass, face unique challenges as their varying property values are often overlooked in legislation such as the Affordable Housing Act and the Bond Bill. Lastly, ensuring housing affordability and stability is paramount for seniors and the fixed-income population because they are extremely vulnerable to exclusion in legislation.

Gardner Public Hearing Summary

The MCSW conducted a hybrid hearing in Gardner, Mass, to hear from the residents in Worcester County. The event took place at Wachusett Community College as a hybrid event with over 60 total attendees. There were 311 individuals who viewed the livestream during or after the hearing, and 19 views on YouTube. The in-person event began with networking and registration, followed by welcomes and introductions from the Chair. Majority of the hearing was focused on public testimonies, and it concluded with an exit survey and a closing.

Testimony from both in-person and virtual participants highlighted the importance of legislative action on various issues, including predatory lending and discrimination against black women, comprehensive sexual health & education, nursing/birthing justice, housing discrimination and non-disclosure agreements/No re-hire provision.

Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative (GELI) Summit 2024

The MCSW's Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative (GELI) organizes girls to engage in civic engagement training and confidence building activities that prepare them to advocate for issues in their communities. The workshops offered facilitate an interactive environment for firsthand learning and growth opportunities. A holistic approach is implemented through a variety of different activities, aiming to address the different needs of girls and other youth in their communities. GELI is an event dedicated to making girls feel seen and heard in local and state government.

This year's Summit took place on Saturday, April 20th, 2024, at Simmons University. Participants aged 14-22 registered for a full day of activities that taught skills in confidence building, mindfulness, leadership, advocacy, and more. The day's program featured a welcoming breakfast, tabling from community resource groups, break-out sessions led by state and regional commissioners, and workshops focusing on yoga, journaling, civics, and financial literacy – just to name a few. The day concluded with a youth-led town hall, with opportunities provided for feedback through evaluation surveys. MCSW prioritizes the empowerment of women and girls, aiming to diversify representation in leadership and amplify voices for social change. By engaging with communities and fostering relationships among youth in the Commonwealth, we strive to equip participants with skills essential for personal growth and readiness in their daily lives and the future. GELI is an opportunity to prepare girls interested in MCSW Advocacy Day in May, to better understand how to fight for the issues they care about the most.



The Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative (GELI) 2024 Summit

GELI Youth-Led Town Hall

The GELI Town Hall is a platform for girls to voice their concerns, share experiences, and advocate for change in their communities. Facilitated by three of our Regional Commission Youth Council leaders, attendees engaged in meaningful dialogue surrounding issues affecting their everyday lives. Participants are encouraged to join the regional youth advisory councils.



Q: What do you think is the most pressing issue facing girls today?

85 responses





Q: Who do you look up to? Who is your She-Ro? And Why?

55 responses



The 2024 GELI Event was the second in-person summit that has continued the mission of fostering empowerment, skill development, and community engagement among girls within the Commonwealth. The feedback received underscores the significance of initiatives like GELI in equipping participants with essential life skills, fostering socio-emotional learning, and encouraging advocacy. Based on the findings and recommendations, there is a continued need to prioritize socio-emotional learning and community engagement initiatives for girls, ensuring their access and sustainability. Moving forward, the insights gained from GELI will inform future programming, legislative priorities, and outreach efforts aimed at addressing the needs and aspirations of youth across the Commonwealth. MCSW remains committed to creating inclusive spaces, amplifying voices, and empowering the next generation of leaders.

Commonwealth Heroines

Commonwealth Heroines are women who don't make the news but make the difference. Every day, women perform acts that make our homes, neighborhoods, cities, and towns better places to live. Commonwealth Heroines use their time, talent, spirit, and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others in their community. They are mentors, volunteers, and innovators who strive to protect and represent the interests of seniors, victims of violence, children, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations. They are the glue that keeps a community together.

Each year the Commission partners with state legislators to identify women who make outstanding contributions to their organizations and communities. This year, we anticipate honoring more than 125 Commonwealth Heroines as a part of the Class of 2024 at a celebration taking place on June 14, 2024 at the Massachusetts Statehouse. For the first time, we received a nomination from a Congressional member of Congress, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren. Congratulations to the Class of 2024!



Pictured above: Commonwealth Heroines Class of 2023

Speakers Bureau

This year, our Speaker's Bureau kicked into high gear as more organizations begin to meet in person and host various events. The MCSW Speakers Bureau lends the collective knowledge of our Commission Experts to speak about various issues that impact women and girls throughout the Commonwealth. The goal of the Speakers Bureau is to raise awareness of issues women, girls, and family experience within the Commonwealth by educating and promoting the resources of the MCSW and our 11 regional Commissions. We aim to encourage women and girls to engage in advocacy to achieve positive change throughout the Commonwealth.

MCSW Staff and Commissioners collaborated with dozens of organizations across the Commonwealth, attending informational sessions and various events that support and advance women, including:

1. Brockton Women's Commission Meet & Greet with MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell
2. October Whole Women Conference Shaitia Spruell
3. American Association of University Women (AAUW) Annual Meeting with Commissioner Christine Monska
4. Commissioner Meet & Greet with Commissioner Kimberly Shea
5. Commissioner Meet & Greet with Commissioner Aisha Miller
6. Bristol County Regional Commission's TV show, TRUE Conversations with Commissioner Christine Monska
7. My Love Affair with Marriage Film Screening & Panel with Commissioner Divya Chaturvedi
8. Parents Running for Office Press Conference with Commissioner Marydith Tuitt
9. IAM Press Conference with MCSW Staff and Coalition Partners
10. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Lunch & Learn with Commissioner Leslie-Ann McGee
11. Asian American & Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Commission and YW Boston Empowering Voices event with Commissioner Divya Chaturvedi
12. Women in Power Conference with Commissioner Denella Clark
13. Greater Boston Area International Women's Day Breakfast with many State and Regional Commissioners
 - [Greater Boston International Women's Day Simmons | Flickr](#)
14. Conferences and Trainings:
 - BayPath Women's Conference
 - Whole Women's Conference with Dr. Leslie Saulsberry
 - Boston Massachusetts Conference for Women

LGBTQ+ Report

Over the past two years, the MCSW has been collaborating with people and organizations across the Commonwealth to gather research and data on issues impacting LGBTQ+ women on topics, including but not limited to parentage, economic justice and forms of violence. We developed a report to share our findings that was released in October 2023. Learn more about the history behind this report, the crucial data we uncovered, and the policy recommendations we suggest ensuring that Massachusetts remains a safe haven for the LGBTQ community.

Watch the recording of our Webinar:

[MCSW LGBTQ+ Women Report Briefing on YouTube](#)

Read the report on our website:

[2023 Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals and Families in Massachusetts & Related Policy Implications](#)



MCSW Scholarship

In honor of our 25th Anniversary the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is proud to launch the [MCSW Scholarship Program](#), funded by the MCSW Trust Fund. This program aims to support emerging leaders of the Commonwealth in continuing their education journey to leadership and economic empowerment. Designed to support woman-identifying students already enrolled in a Massachusetts Public Higher Education Institution, scholarships will be available to help an individual complete their degree.

Applicants must currently be enrolled in an accredited degree or certificate program at a Massachusetts Public Higher Education Institution and have completed at least one year towards their degree. The funds from this scholarship will go towards tuition, fees, books and related supplies or equipment for study. The MCSW awarded 5 individuals with a scholarship of \$5000 each for the 2024-2025 academic year. [Read the program announcement](#) on our new website.

This year, the scholarship awardees will be announced at our 2024 Commonwealth Heroines Celebration – we look forward to sharing the great news about these incredible scholars we are proud to invest in.

MCSW Legislative Agenda and Recommendations

The Commission recognizes the need for women to gain not only an equal share, but become equal participants in the areas of economics, healthcare, civil rights, education and business development. MCSW's Legislative and Public Policy Committee endorses and tracks legislation to achieve these goals. In addition, the commission meets with legislators and submits written and verbal testimony in support of priority legislation at state legislative hearings.

The legislative session occurs every two years beginning on odd numbered years (ex. 2023 in Massachusetts). MCSW selects a number of priority bills to advocate for on their journey through the State House. These bills speak to our mission and purpose, while also addressing what we've discovered are some of the Commonwealth's greatest challenges at our public hearings and events. Based on input from residents, commissioners, and stakeholders, we've amended our legislative priorities list to be even more robust and include additional policy recommendations to tackle our most pressing issues. Listed below are the status updates for each MCSW endorsed priority for the 2023-2024 legislative session.

1) Resolutions recognizing the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, especially women of color in the Commonwealth (H.3544)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley

Status: On 2/16/2023 Senate concurred, and the House referred the bill to the committee on House Rules.

This resolution urges the Governor to (1) uphold the rights of crisis-affected and forcibly displaced populations further affected by COVID-19 (2) to place mental healthcare as a priority in the Commonwealth, (3) to ask all of the 351 cities and towns to also support this resolution. All in all, this bill will advance women and girls towards full equity and promote equal opportunity.

2) An Act relative to rehabilitation, re-entry, and human rights for incarcerated persons (H.2325/S.1493)

Lead Sponsors: Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley and Senator Cynthia Stone Creem

Status: On 4/04/2024 the House concurred. On 4/16/2024 the Senate extended the reporting date to 5/08/2024.

This bill will establish universal baseline standards for every person incarcerated in Massachusetts state prisons, county jails, and the house of Corrections. Instead of focusing on a culture of punishment, this bill seeks to shift correctional priorities to rehabilitation and re-entry.

3) An Act relative to birthing justice in the Commonwealth (S.1415)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Liz Miranda

Status: On 4/18/2024 the House concurred. On 4/22/2024 the Senate accompanied a new draft (S.2734). On 4/22/2024 the new bill ([S.2734](#)) has been reported out favorably by committee and referred to Senate Ways & Means.

This bill introduces a framework to improve maternal health outcomes and advance recommendations from the Special Commission on Racial Inequities in Maternal Health, including better integrating midwifery care into our maternal health care system to improve access to out-of-hospital birthing options and reducing financial and administrative barriers to the creation of free-standing birth centers.

4) An Act providing reproductive health care to incarcerated individuals (H.2371)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Jay Livingstone and Kay Khan

Status: On 5/22/24 the House reported the bill out favorably and referred to the committee on Health Care Financing.

This bill would require access to contraceptive services, counseling, and abortion care for incarcerated people.

5) An Act to ensure legal parentage equality (H.1713/S.947)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Sarah K. Peake and Hannah Kane and Senator Julian Cyr

Status: For Bill S.947, on 3/28/2024 the Senate extended the reporting date to 4/30/2024, pending concurrence and on 4/16/2024 the House concurred. For Bill H.1713, on 2/05/2024 the House extended the reporting date to 4/30/2024. On 5/28/2024 a new draft ([H.4672](#)) was reported out favorably and referred to the House Committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling.

This bill would ensure that all children can access the security of legal parentage, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, helping to protect diverse forms of families.

6) An Act providing for climate change adaptation infrastructure and affordable housing investments in the Commonwealth (H. 2894/S.1799)

Lead Sponsors: Representative Samantha Montañó and Senator Jaime Eldridge

Status: On 5/2/2024 reporting date was extended to Wednesday July 31, 2024, pending concurrence.

This bill seeks to increase the amount of funding for Governor Bakers initial proposal. The new funding would be implemented in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program and the MA Climate Clearinghouse.

7) An Act establishing Medicare for all in Massachusetts (H.1239/S.744)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Lindsay Sabadosa and Denise C. Garlick and Senator James B. Eldridge

Status: On 5/9/2024 the bill accompanied a study order, [H.4634](#).

This bill would guarantee health care access to all residents without regard to citizenship status, incarceration, financial or employment status, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, previous health problems, or geographic location.

8) Resolutions to study women veterans and long-term effects of combat on motherhood (H.3710)

Lead Sponsors: Representative Shirley Arriaga

Status: On 3/04/2024 the House reported the resolve favorably and referred it to the Committee on Rules of the two branches.

This resolve would establish a special legislative commission to examine female veterans who have experienced combat and whether that experience has either short or long-term impacts on motherhood.

9) An Act Providing Affordable and Accessible High-Quality Early Education and Care to Promote Child Development and Well-being and Support the Economy in the Commonwealth (H.489/S.301)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Adrian Madaro and Kenneth Gordon and Senators Jason Lewis and Susan Moran

Status: On 2/07/2024 the Senate accompanied a new draft ([S.2619](#)). On 3/14/2024 new draft [S.2707](#) and was referred to the committee on House Ways & Means.

Known as the Common Start Bill, this bill would provide the specific structure that is needed to deliver affordable care options for families; significantly better pay and benefits for early educators; a new stable source of funding for providers; high-quality programs and services for children; and substantial relief for businesses and the MA economy.

10) An Act Supporting Parents Running for Public Office (H.669/S.422)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Patricia Jehlen and Representatives Mike Connolly and Joan Meschino

Status: On 2/29/2024 the Senate extended the reporting date to 05/28/2024.

This bill would allow candidates running for public office can use their campaign funds for their childcare needs, regardless of gender or family status.

11) An Act to increase access to disposable menstrual products (H.534/S.1381)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Jay Livingstone and Christine Barber and Senator Patricia Jehlen

Status: New bill S.2491 was referred to House Ways and Means

Also known as the I AM Bill, this bill would provide access to free menstrual products to all menstruating individuals in schools, shelters & prisons.

12) An Act relative to Healthy Youth (H.544/S.268)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Jim O'Day and Vanna Howard and Senator Sal DiDomenico,

Status: On 3/6/2024 new bill, [S.2694](#) was referred to the committee on House Ways & Means.

This bill will ensure that only sex and relationship education this is high-quality and inclusive is taught in MA Public Schools.

13) An Act to Promote Diversity on Public boards and Commissions (H.3095/S2029)

Lead Sponsors: Representative Tram Nguyen and Dawne Shand

Status: On 07/31/2023, the Senate reported the bill favorably to the committee on Senate Ways and Means.

This bill provides that appointing authorities for public boards and commissions shall strive to appoint at least 50% female and at least 30% of an underrepresented minority or LGBTQ+ identifying people as members.

14) An Act relative to Salary Range Transparency (H.1849/S.1191)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Josh Cutler and Brandy Fluker Oakley and Senator Patricia Jehlen

Status: New bill on 09/25/2023 ([H4100](#)).

This bill requires employers with 15+ employees to post the salary range of a position in the job posting and provide the salary range to an employee upon promotion or request.

MCSW Regional Commissions

The MCSW's 11 Regional Commissions expand the reach of its mission across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Modeled after the MCSW, the 11 county and regional women's commissions were legislatively created to study and report on the status of women and girls in their geographical areas, and to provide permanent and effective voices for women and girls. Each county and regional commission reports its findings and activities annually to MCSW.

Regional Commissions are comprised of 9-13 volunteer members who have had prior experience working towards the improvement of the status of women and exist to provide a positive and effective voice for women and girls in their respective regions. Commissioners are drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, and socio-economic backgrounds throughout the state.

Regional Commission's duties include studying, reviewing and reporting on the status of women in the county; promoting and facilitating collaboration among local women's organizations; recommending policies that benefit women to agencies, officers of the state, and local government; and holding fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary.

MCSW's Regional Commissions:

- Berkshire County
- Bristol County
- Cape and Islands
- Eastern Regional
- Essex County
- Hampden County
- Hampshire-Franklin
- MetroWest
- Plymouth County
- Upper Middlesex
- Worcester County

Regional Commissions on the Status of Women



Regional Convenings

MCSW hosts two Regional Convenings per year for the purpose of providing education, support, and networking opportunities for our 11 regional commissions. These events are organized by our Regional Commissions Director, Tina Games, in collaboration with the MCSW Program and Planning Committee.

This year's convenings were held on December 6th in Wellesley at the Mass Bay Community College – and on May 1st in Springfield at the Springfield Technical Community College, giving visibility to different parts of the state. Both events were hybrid which gave regional and state commissioners from across the Commonwealth an opportunity to participate in person or virtually, where distance was a factor.

The December 6th convening focused on marketing support where new regional logos were unveiled and best practices for marketing and outreach were shared. This segment was led by State Commissioner Allison Goldberg and MCSW Marketing and Communications Director Ellen Moorhouse. There was also discussion regarding legislative advocacy which highlighted testimonials, both verbal and written, and why they were important. This conversation was facilitated by State Commissioner and Legislative and Public Policy Chair Mary-dith Tuitt. Each regional commission had an opportunity to report on their successes, challenges, and legislative work during the first half of the fiscal year.

The May 1st convening featured a legislative training, taking regional commissioners through the advocacy process, beginning with establishing regional priorities – and how to research, track, and advocate on selected bills that support these priorities. This segment was led by State Commissioner and Legislative and Public Policy Chair Mary-dith Tuitt. There was also a presentation on youth advisory councils – how to establish, recruit, and support regional



Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women

councils – which was led by commissioners and youth leaders representing our MetroWest, Essex County, and Upper Middlesex Regional Commissions. All three of these commissions have successfully established their youth advisory councils and shared their best practices. Each regional commission had an opportunity to report on their successes, challenges, and legislative work during the last half of the fiscal year – which always presents opportunities for regional collaborations.

Our Regional Convenings continue to be well-received by our regional and state commissioners – and we always look forward to hearing from our regional commissions on what topics they would like to learn more about and what networking opportunities they would like to experience with each other.



MCSW hosted two successful Regional Convenings, the first on December 6th at Mass Bay Community College in Wellesley, and the second on May 1st at Springfield Technical Community College in Springfield - where Regional and State Commissioners gathered for an evening of learning and networking.

Regional Commissioners: Shela Levante, Chair (Pittsfield); Sarah Gillooly, Vice Chair (Pittsfield); Halli Stewart, Secretary (Pittsfield); Andrea Wadsworth, Legislative Liaison (Lee); Dawn Brooks (Richmond); Laura Cabrera (Pittsfield); Carly Garofano (Pittsfield); Marissa Dubecky Meehan (Richmond); Rhonda Serre (Pittsfield).

Regional Area: The Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women represents all cities and towns in Berkshire County including Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, North Adams, Otis, Peru, Pittsfield, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, and Windsor.



Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women



The Berkshire County Commission met with their state legislators on January 17th in Pittsfield where they highlighted their legislative priorities and discussed ways to collaborate on two key bills, the Healthy Youth Act and the Act Relative to Language Access and Inclusion.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY23

- The Commission identified the Act Relative to Language Access and Inclusion (H.3084/ S.1990) as its most important priority given that the county's population has increased due to the estimated 10,000 immigrants now calling the region home, contributing to the region's job creation and economic growth. The Healthy Youth Act, (SD. 2199, HD. 3874) was also identified as a legislative priority. These bills and others were discussed with our state legislators at our Delegate Meet and Greet event in January 2024.
- BCCSW facilitated a series of conversations with community partners during our FY24 public meetings to learn more about initiatives that advance the needs of women and girls in Berkshire County and discussed opportunities to collaborate.
- Three new commissioners were appointed in December 2023 with a BCCSW leadership change in January 2024. This provided an opportunity for the Commission to plan a retreat that focused on the FY25 strategic plan, updating regional priorities, program planning, and expanding our online presence to raise visibility of the Commission.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Host a legislative event to meet with our state delegation to discuss ongoing issues and concerns.
- Continue to invite community partners for monthly conversations and community collaborations.
- Re-establish an online presence to expand awareness and share information and resources.

Regional Commissioners: Tanya Lobo, Taunton (Chair); Maria Gonzalez, Taunton (Vice Chair); Esther Rogers, Taunton (Co-Secretary); Rose Costa, Fall River (Co-Secretary), Werlaine Badio, Fall River (Treasurer); Vivian Smith-Barnes, Fall River; Millie Sanchez, Taunton

Regional Area: The Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women represents all towns in Bristol County including Easton, Raynham, Mansfield, Norton, Attleboro, North Attleborough, Seekonk, Rehoboth, Swansea, Somerset, Dighton, Fall River, Westport, Dartmouth, New Bedford, Acushnet, Fairhaven, Freetown, Berkley, and Taunton.



Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women



The Bristol County Commission held their annual planning retreat on January 29th in Foxborough, settling on maternal health as their primary legislative focus. They mapped out plans for a spring public hearing and discussed their intention to launch a girls' advisory council.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- We hosted two listening sessions, one in New Bedford and the other in Fall River. Our findings are guiding our regional priorities and what resources to advocate for on their behalf.
- After a lot of discussion and planning, we will be launching our youth advisory council and will be seeking applications over the summer.
- BCCSW supported and attended MSCW's public hearing in Dartmouth at the UMass-Dartmouth campus to hear from 50+ Bristol County residents.
- We co-hosted a community event on the topic of black maternal health which has become our main legislative priority.
- We welcomed three new commissioners in May 2024 and look forward to working with them in FY25.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Host a retreat for team-building and strategic planning
- Strengthen outreach and branding
- Launch and support our new youth advisory council
- Focus on legislative priorities that support black maternal health

Regional Commissioners: Lynne Barbee (Chair), Mashpee; Mary Kate Gallagher (Vice Chair), Chinna Mapp (Secretary), Falmouth; Mary Waygan (Treasurer), Mashpee; Linda Cebula, Harwich; Sunny Daily, Nantucket; Rachel Devine, Nantucket; Natalia Frois, Hyannis; Janell Burley Hoffman, Sandwich; Joanna McCarthy, Martha's Vineyard; Amy Peters, Mashpee.

Regional Area: The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women represents towns in all of Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties including Bourne, Falmouth, Sandwich, Mashpee, Barnstable, Dennis,

Yarmouth, Harwich, Chatham, Brewster, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, Provincetown, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard (Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Aquinnah, Chilmark, Vineyard Haven, West Tisbury).



Cape Cod and Islands Commissioner Natalia Frois joins State Representative Kip Diggs at a community event sponsored by the Barnstable Human Rights Commission, recognizing important work on behalf of women and families in Barnstable County.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- **Outreach** - We continue to emphasize our social media presence, share information and resources with our communities, and have ordered CCICSW branded items for promotional use. We worked with the League of Women Voters of Cape Cod to co-sponsor voter forums on issues of importance to women in our region. Our outreach/education work includes the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Event Honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, (May 5, Mashpee); the Open Streets of Hyannis (May 19, Hyannis); the Public Health Community Outreach (June 6, Mashpee); Racial Amity Day (June 9, Mashpee).
- **Legislative Advocacy** - We continued our legislative work, inviting our state delegation to attend and speak at our monthly meetings. We focused on five legislative bills where our commissioners have been asked to speak as experts at various events in their roles as commissioners.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Additional recruitment to attain a full 13 members, with the widest possible geographic, racial, ethnic and age representation. This will include promotional/advertising work in new outlets.
- Development of a young women/girls listening circle and the circulation of the survey on period poverty. This will include establishing contacts with schools and community groups. We will be hiring a high school intern to help organize and lead this effort.
- Continue strengthening and expanding relations with other Cape & Island organizations, including the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, women's health groups (e.g. doulas), youth, student, and immigrant groups.



Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Amanda Crabb, Quincy (Chair); Linda Champion, Milton (Vice Chair); Tamisha Lucien Civil, Stoughton (Secretary); Manya Chylinski, Boston; Wanjiku Gachugi, West Roxbury; Connie Henderson, Boston; Gabrielle Jackson, Braintree; Toby Kamens Rodman, Brookline; Alexandra Weber, Jamaica Plain.

Regional Area: Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women includes the towns of Avon, Brookline, Canton, Cohasset, Dedham, Foxborough, Holbrook, Milton, Plainville, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, and Westwood, and the cities of Boston, Braintree, Chelsea, Quincy, Revere, Weymouth, and Winthrop.



The Eastern Regional Commission held a new commissioner orientation on January 28th and welcomed four new commissioners - Wanjiku Gachugi, Connie Henderson, Gabrielle Jackson, Alexandra Weber - and discussed plans for a series of community coffees and a spring event focused on their legislative priorities.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- Our programming efforts were focused on legislation that is related to: An Act Supporting Parents Running for Public Office (S.422/H.669) and Resolve to Study Women Veterans and the Long-term Effects of Combat on Motherhood (H.3710).
- ERCSW held a Tea with Commissioners event in June 2024 at the Junior League in Boston and invited other Commissioners in our area: Boston Mayor's Advancement, Brookline Women's Commission, Chelsea Women's Commission, Massachusetts State Commission. This event is to create bonds between the different commissions and hear what the major concerns are that commissions see.
- We increased our social media presence and welcomed four new commissioners while saying goodbye to three long-serving commissioners.

- Partnered with the Upper Middlesex Regional Commission to co-hosting a public viewing of At Your Cervix at Simmons University with a community discussion afterwards.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- We plan to have another commission retreat where we will discuss revisions to our bylaws and goals for FY25.
- We are working on a visibility plan to reintroduce ourselves to our regional communities and to gather information regarding the needs and concerns of women in our region.



Essex County Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Brianna Sullivan, Chair (Newburyport); Kirsten Alexander, Vice Chair (Wenham); Geetha Rao Ramani, Treasurer (Andover); Chelsea Kamuene, Secretary (North Andover); Ogor Okoye (Saugus); Nicole McClain (Lynn); Sara Stanley (Rowley); Amy Smith (Lynn); Sefatia Romeo Theken, (Gloucester).

Regional Area: The Essex County Commission on the Status of Women represents all towns in Essex County including Saugus, Lynnfield, Lynn, Peabody, Swampscott, Salem, Marblehead, Danvers, Beverly, Middleton, Topsfield, Wenham, Hamilton, Manchester-by-the-sea, Essex, Gloucester, Rockport, Ipswich, Rowley, Newbury, Newburyport, Salisbury, Amesbury, Merrimac, West Newbury, Haverhill, Groveland, Georgetown, North Andover, Andover, Methuen, and Lawrence.



Essex County Commissioners Brianna Sullivan, Amy Smith, Geetha Rao Ramani, and Sara Stanley join members of the Haverhill community for their October 26th listening session to discuss several issues of importance to women and girls.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY23

- **The Ginsburg Initiative** - ECCSW continued our programming for young women through the Ginsburg Initiative, our regional youth council, created to give voice to young women in Essex County. Led by intern Sierra Dearnis in its second year, our participants, ages 14 - 21, represent diverse Essex County municipalities. They continued working on last year's theme - mental health support for youth - and are working on presenting the results of a survey on this topic to school administrators.
- **Women's Health Advocacy** - In April 2024, Commissioner Veillard hosted a discussion for Black Maternal Health Week and gave a detailed presentation on the data regarding troubling health disparities among women of color compared to white women. She also shared initiatives underway to try to combat these inequities.
- **Parents Running for Office** - ECCSW Chair Brianna Sullivan wrote testimony and spoke at the MCSW Legislative Briefing in support of the Parents Running for Office Bill.
- **Listening Circle in Haverhill, MA** - In October 2023, ECCSW hosted a hybrid listening circle at the UMass Lowell iHub. Participants asked for more opportunities to collaborate and share resources.
- **Women's History Month** – In March 2024, Commissioners Sara Stanley and Nicole McClain were featured in the Leading Ladies event, “HerStory: How Far Have We Come?” This community conversation hosted at the historic Cabot Theater in Beverly discussed recent accomplishments, current threats to women's rights, and ways to get involved in women's advocacy.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Continue strengthening and expanding our Ginsburg Initiative and build a more robust mentoring program between ECCSW Commissioners and Ginsburg members.
- Continue building community connections and inviting monthly guest speakers.
- More focused outreach to elected officials and supporting our Legislative Advocacy Committee.
- Revise our bylaws to reflect current and best practices.



Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Nicole Coakley (Chair), Springfield; Jazmine Cotto (Vice Chair), Springfield; Sasha Viands (Secretary), Holyoke; Nicole Esposito, Longmeadow; Magdalena Gomez, Springfield; Jennifer McNeill, West Springfield; Ariana Nunez, Springfield; Cori Rolland, Southwick; Jacqueline Velez, Springfield.

Regional Area: The Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women represents all cities and towns in Hampden County including Agawam, Blandford, Brimfield, Chester, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Granville, Hampden, Holland, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Monson, Montgomery, Palmer, Russell, Southwick, Springfield, Tolland, Wales, West Springfield, Westfield, and Wilbraham.



Hampden County Commissioners Nicole Coakley and Ariana Nunez greet community participants at their recent "Mothers and Daughters Movie & Discussion" event in West Springfield where they focused on the importance of empowering women and girls.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- We welcomed three new commissioners in January at a group orientation and hosted a team planning retreat in February.
- **Homeless Prevention Month** (November 2023) – We co-hosted a community forum where the increasing issue of homelessness was discussed and initiatives were presented.
- **Legislative Advocacy** (January 2024) – Chair Nicole Coakley spoke at the Parents Running for Office Coalition Briefing in Boston on the importance of passing the bill.
- **GELI Conference** (April 2024) – Emerita Commissioner Shanique Spaulding facilitated a workshop that focused on civic engagement for young leaders and activists.
- **Legislative Breakfast** (June 2024) – Hosted a conversation with our state legislators and regional community leaders on topics of importance to women and girls in our region.
- **Community Events** – HCCSWG Commissioners participated in several community events that support women and families in Hampden County and were able to provide resources.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Host a commissioner retreat for the purpose of team-building and strategic planning.
- Continue to advocate on our regional priorities.
- Continue to engage and collaborate with our state legislators and community partners.
- Host events that highlight and support the needs of women in our communities.



Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Laura Sylvester (Chair), Shutesbury; Victoria Cliche (Vice Chair), Leverett; Luzed Guzman Romano (Secretary), Easthampton; Colleen DeIVecchio, Easthampton; Sarah Dunton, Florence; Nicole Fonsh, Northampton; Marie McCourt, Granby; Bonnie MacCracken, Amherst; Sarah Mulvehill, Westhampton.

Regional Area: The Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women represents all cities and towns in Hampshire and Franklin Counties including Amherst, Ashfield, Belchertown, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Chesterfield, Colrain, Conway, Cummington, Deerfield, Easthampton, Erving, Gill, Goshen, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hatfield, Hawley, Heath, Huntington, Leverett, Leyden, Middlefield, Monroe, Montague, New Salem, Northampton, Northfield, Orange, Pelham, Plainfield, Rowe, Shelburne, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Sunderland, Ware, Warwick, Wendell, Westhampton, Whately, Williamsburg and Worthington.



Hampshire-Franklin Regional Commissioners held their annual planning retreat in Easthampton in March. They engaged in thoughtful and productive conversation as they discussed their 2024 strategic plan and proudly display new HFCSWG tote bags purchased for community events: Nicole Fonsh, Laura Sylvester, Victoria Cliche, Colleen DelVecchio, Luzed Guzman Romano, Sarah Dunton, Bonnie MacCracken.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- HFCSW welcomed four new commissioners and held a retreat conducted by an outside facilitator, which allowed us to share what brings us to the work and identified areas of need in our community. We established community agreements, began to select which legislative priorities we'd like to focus on, and what some of our goals would be entering into the next term.
- The Commission established individual committees to complete targeted work: the technology committee to assist with our internal and external communication and support our infrastructure, the legislative committee to monitor the status of selected legislation and provide updates to the group, and the outreach and planning committee to plan events and maintain community relations.
- We took inventory of current supplies and merchandise and filled any areas of need which will aid in growing visibility for the work of the commission. An order for t-shirts, business cards, name badges, and stickers was placed with a local, woman-owned print shop and will be utilized during community events.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Recruit new commissioners, increase our social media presence by establishing a social media internship, continue to build relationships in the community and with our academic partners, build even stronger partnerships with state legislators and educate ourselves on how best to pass legislation related to our regional priorities.



MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Lisa MacDonald, Chair (Natick); Jennifer Wuelfing, Vice Chair (Hopkinton); Odessa Sanchez, Legislative Chair (Wellesley); Stacy Wilbur, Communications (Needham); Christi Apicella (Franklin), Lyndsey Brown (Hudson), Amie Rotondi (Medway); Sophia Rousseau (Natick); Alexandra Todorov (Framingham)

Regional Area: The MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women represents the towns of Ashland, Bellingham, Dover, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, Northborough, Norwood, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Walpole, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough, Weston and Wrentham, and the city of Marlborough.



The MetroWest Commission co-hosted a banner event with community partners in Wellesley in January: Jennifer Wuelfing, Lisa MacDonald, Odessa Sanchez, Actress/Advocate Ashley Judd, State Commissioner Audrey Hall, and MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- **Purple Passion Walk** – In September 2023, MWCSW participated in the annual Purple Passion Walk, hosted by Voices Against Violence in Framingham which is a sexual assault and domestic violence support organization and caters to a majority of communities MWCSW represents. Each year the event highlights the need to combat sexual violence and allows our regional commissioners to represent our organization as well as network with others in the region.
- **Human Trafficking Prevention Breakfast** – In January 2024, we co-sponsored an in-person event at MassBay Community College in Wellesley, titled Human Trafficking Prevention Breakfast. As part of January being Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the event featured three keynote speakers—actress and activist Ashley Judd, District Attorney Kevin Hayden, and District Attorney Joe Early. The event also featured a panel of experts with lived experiences and offer insights surrounding the myths, challenges, and solutions to ending the commercial sex trade. The event attracted over 100 attendees.

- **International Women’s Day** – In March 2024, more than 100 people attended an in-person celebration for International Women’s Day that included local vendors, artists, activists, two dance performances, and a period palooza event by Fihri with MetroWest intern Mia Remington emceeing.
- **Athena Council Menstrual Equity** – In April 2024, Athena Council members hosted an event that focused on education and advocacy for menstruation equity. Approximately 30 people were in attendance for the event that included a staff member from Senate President Karen Spilka’s office and Representative Priscilla Sousa.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Listening sessions to determine next session’s legislative priorities
- Organizing an in-person strategic planning retreat
- Hiring a new intern and strengthening our Athena Council



Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Elisabeth Arruda, Chair (Marion); Michelle Davidson, Vice Chair of Publicity (Hanover); Lisa Westgate, Vice-Chair of Program and Planning (Marshfield); Phyllis Ellis (Brockton); Maude Gorman (Hingham); Jacqueline Jones (Brockton); Danielle Kempe (Marshfield); Donna Pursel (Hull); Carolyn M. Riley (Plymouth)

Regional Area: The Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women represents all the towns and cities in Plymouth County including Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, Carver, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Rockland, Scituate, Wareham, West Bridgewater, and Whitman.



Plymouth County Regional Commissioners join guest speaker and author Lovern Gordon for their March 19th community forum on domestic violence: Jacqueline Jones, Carolyn Riley, Donna Pursel, Lisa Westgate, Lovern Gordon (guest speaker), Elisabeth Arruda, Michelle Davidson

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- **Listening Session October 18, 2023, at the Plymouth Center for Active Living.** We hosted an informal gathering to listen to the concerns of women in Plymouth County. Those who attended shared their concerns with PFAS in the water, English language training, vocational training, and the MA state of emergency with migration.
- **Strategic Planning Retreat. January 29, 2024, Alden Park restaurant in Plymouth.** The group reflected on accomplishments and challenges of the PCCSW from 2018-Present. We discussed community partnerships, developing a girls council, and setting standards around emerita status. We discussed potential priorities of financial security, domestic violence, housing, maternal health, collaboration with other commissions, and more.
- **Women's History Month Event, March 19, 2024. Marshfield Library - Defining My Place: A Tribute to the Strength and Resilience of Women.** Lovern Gordon, president and founder of Love Life Now Foundation Inc. and author of the award-winning memoir *The Legacy He Left Me*, led a powerful conversation about domestic violence and how to advocate for and support survivors. The event was well-attended and widely considered a success by the commissioners. attendance. After the presentation, we had an engaging and informative discussion about domestic violence in Plymouth County.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Reach and maintain an active nine-body membership in our commission.
- Update our legislative priorities for this upcoming legislative cycle and continue to develop relationships with our legislators.
- Build and expand partnerships with local organizations and co-sponsor events.
- Gather testimony to support our legislative priorities.



Upper Middlesex Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Connie Chow (Chair), Newton; Jennifer Roecklein-Canfield (Vice Chair), Littleton; Christina Li (Secretary), Lexington; Shannon Butler-Mokoro, Lowell; Corrinne Corso, Ayer; Diane Randolph Jones, Acton; Shreya Kesarwani, Lexington; Kristina Racek-Pachulis, Melrose; Anna Tse, Malden.

Regional Area: The Upper Middlesex Commission on the Status of Women includes the towns of Acton, Arlington, Ashby, Ayer, Bedford, Belmont, Billerica, Boxborough, Burlington, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Dracut, Dunstable, Groton, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, North Reading, Pepperell, Reading, Shirley, Stoneham, Tewksbury, Townsend, Tyngsborough, Wakefield, Westford, Wilmington, Winchester, and the cities of Cambridge, Everett, Lowell, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Newton, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, and Woburn.



The Upper Middlesex Regional Commission held their annual planning retreat on January 17th: MCSW ED Shaitia Spruell, UMCSW Chair Connie Chow - and Commissioners Christina Li, Shannon Butler-Mokoro, Jenna Canfield, Anna Tse, Diane Randolph Jones, Shreya Kesarwani.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

- **Screening of At Your Cervix**, a documentary about nonconsensual cervical exams with a panel discussion on reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. The event was attended by over 60 people, with 80+registrants. The event was co-sponsored by a broad coalition, including our Eastern Regional Commission, that will continue to work together in the new fiscal year.
- **Continuation of the Athena (youth) Council**. We work together in two subcommittees, a policy/nonprofit one and a hearing one. Menstrual Product Drive: the members of the Athena Council identified the issue of menstrual equity as an issue that they believe are most important to teen girls in their own communities. They are in the process of soliciting donations through their school events, secured funding from the commission, and contacted area nonprofits to provide period hygiene products. Participation in GELI: Along with the other regional youth councils, we led the town hall portion of the programming and were able to hear from the GELI participants on what issues are most important to them.
- **Survey on eldercare preparedness**. At the end of last year, we collaborated with Dr. Norstrand to modify and disseminate a survey on eldercare to better understand related needs. Because of limited response, we worked with an intern to modify the questionnaire and analyze the results.
- **Community Support** - Commissioners were special guests and attended the unveiling of the statue "Make Women Visible" in Lexington, MA. From their website, "Lexington tells a more inclusive story about women in every era. Women who had been forgotten, invisible, and erased, will now be seen and celebrated." Several state representatives and senators were also present.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Create and enact a robust orientation and onboarding plan that spans the full year to promote leadership and support commissioners, Athena Council members, and volunteers - and to increase our efficacy and capacity.
- Continue to expand our community and network in the region, working in collaboration.
- Advocate for a more robust informed consent policy for intimate exams.



Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Chantel Bethea (Chair), Worcester; Michelle Quinones (Vice Chair), Worcester; Carlee Mills (Clerk), Gardner; Marcia Chong Rosado, Milford; Kyanna James, Worcester; Amanda Molina Dumas, Millbury; Jacqueline Martino, Shrewsbury; Taylor Rich, Worcester; Stephanie Teixeira, Grafton.

Regional Area: The Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women represents all towns and cities in Worcester County including: Ashburnham, Athol, Auburn, Barre, Blackstone, Bolton, Boylston, Brookfield, Charlton, Clinton, Dana, Douglas, Dudley, Fitchburg, Gardner, Grafton, Greenwich, Hardwick, Harvard, Holden, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leicester, Leominster, Lunenburg, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, New Braintree, Northboro, Northbridge, North Brookfield, Oakham, Oxford, Paxton, Petersham, Phillipston, Prescott, Princeton, Shrewsbury, Southboro, Southbridge, Spencer, Sterling, Sturbridge, Sutton, Templeton, Upton, Uxbridge, Warren, Webster, Westboro, West Boylston, West Brookfield, Westminster, Winchendon, Worcester.



MCSW Commissioners met with legislators and community partners at their September 18th Legislative Breakfast at the YWCA in Worcester where they presented and discussed their regional priorities. Left to right: Commissioner Kim Shea, Worcester County; Commissioner Michelle Quinones; Commissioner Amanda Molina Dumas; WCCSW Emerita Sue Lewandowski; Commissioner Marcia Chong Rosado; Commissioner Chantel Bethea; and MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY24

We continue to explore opportunities and host events that contribute to the following areas of concern which have been identified as critical by the women in Worcester County:

- Mobilize community health services
- Organize community health information campaign
- Implement trainings on patient-centered care and communication
- Develop workforce strategies for health and human service sector
- Reform sex education in Worcester County Schools
- Zero Fare for Worcester County residents
- Support programs and initiatives that decrease food insecurity
- Support legislative bills and initiatives that increase availability of affordable quality childcare

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Conduct our annual legislative breakfast
- Host a public hearing on our regional priorities
- Have more community input sessions to see what affects women and girls in Worcester County

Community Partner Thank Yous

Thank you to our many community partners who remain committed to supporting the advancement of women and girls across the Commonwealth.

1. Asian American & Pacific Islander Commission
2. Boston Public Library
3. Brockton Women's Commission
4. Chelsea Women's Commission
5. Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth
6. Common Start Coalition
7. Girls Inc of the Berkshires
8. Girls Inc of Worcester
9. Girls Inc of the Valley
10. IGNITE National
11. Latinas413
12. Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus (MWPC)
13. MA Girls in Trade
14. MA Menstrual Equity Coalition
15. MassNow
16. Mount Wachusett Community College
17. Parents Running for Office (PRO) Coalition
18. Rites of Passage and Empowerment (ROPE) Program
19. Springfield Technical Community College
20. Simmons University
21. VoteMama Foundation
22. Women's Fund SouthCoast
23. Women's Fund of Western MA

Thank you. We could not do this work without all of you.



Pictured top left to bottom right: Governor Maura Healy with MCSW Chair Dr. Sarah Glenn-Smith; MCSW Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt and Simmons University President Lynn Perry Wooten; Celebrating International Women's Day; MCSW Commissioner Kim Shea and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll

Stay connected: mcsw@mass.gov

Visit our website: masscsw.org

