

# A Handbook for MCSW Regional Commissions

**Edition 1, September 2018**



Written by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women  
A partner of the National Association of Commissions for Women



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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This handbook is based on an original document developed in 1983 by the Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women and the Lincoln-Lancaster (NE) Commission on the Status of Women specifically for the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW). NACW has granted permission for Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women to use the original guide as a basis for publication. This edition has been built upon by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, and now includes specific information pertaining to the development of their regional commissions.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) would like to acknowledge the many individuals who volunteered their time and effort to contribute to this project. Special thanks go to Tufts University student Alanna Tuller, who rewrote and edited the 2006 edition of this handbook. The 2018 edition was developed thanks to the dedication of MCSW commissioners on the Ad-Hoc Committee on Regional Commissions, Penny Blaisdell, Ruth Bramson, Jean Cotter Fox, Liz Friedman, Nina Kimball, Margot Parrot, and Marydith Tuitt, as well as MCSW Executive Director Jill Ashton, and Program Director Isabelle Greene, with the invaluable assistance of interns Alicia Espinosa of Boston University, Emilie Lewis of Simmons College, and Ashley Latta of UMass Boston. Finally, we thank the courageous individuals who have chosen to begin a women's commission, as well as those who are already part of a commission. Your efforts continue to have a positive impact on women throughout the United States.



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**Introduction**  
**A History of Women's Commissions**

*"I wonder whether, in our society, women have the chance to use their powers, their full powers, intellectual powers, emotional powers, and all the rest, along the lines of excellence."*  
-- John F. Kennedy, 1963

When John F. Kennedy established the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, he charged Chairwoman Eleanor Roosevelt with the responsibility of assessing the economic and social status of women in the United States at that time. Their research yielded *The Presidential Report on American Women*, a publication which raised awareness about the discrimination and sexism American women experienced in most areas of their lives. The report also brought to light the inequalities between women and men in the political, legal, and civil sectors, finally placing the plight of women at the forefront of the American psyche.

After the Presidential Commission dissolved in 1963 The National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) formed to take its place. Though the NACW still acts as a resource for over 50 state, county, and city commissions throughout the United States, President Kennedy's musings about women's powers still generate important questions to consider when forming a commission today. How do women use their different powers to achieve excellence in the community? Are there structures which prevent women from exercising this power? Identifying these obstacles will reveal where the commission is needed most and determine the role it will play in the community.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) was inspired by the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women held in September 1995 in Beijing, China. 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 we should have its own Women's Commission. Ultimately, with the help of many, particularly state legislators, a unique and model Commission was created – with appointing authority shared by the Executive and Legislative branches.

A commission has the potential to serve as a forum for political advocacy, to provide the opportunity to liaise with other women's organizations, to empower women who do not have the agency to advocate for themselves, and to recognize and promote the accomplishments of strong women in the community. Women's commissions have the potential to affect great social change and we hope you take full advantage of this opportunity.

On behalf of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, we wish you the best of luck with your commission and remind you that we are here as a resource should you have any questions, or need guidance or support.

Contact the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women at [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us) or (617) 626-6520.



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I.

The Creation of MCSW Regional Commissions:  
The Legislative Process



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## MCSW History

Legislatively created in May 1998, the MCSW was inspired by the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women held in September 1995 in Beijing, China. 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 we should have its own Women's Commission.

Ultimately, with the help of many, particularly state legislators, a unique and model Commission was created – with appointing authority shared by the Executive and Legislative branches. Ever since, our 19 volunteer commissioners, staff and interns have dedicated themselves to the promotion and protection of equality for women in all areas of their lives.

Since that time, MCSW has worked with legislators in various legislative sessions to create regional commissions via statute, to expand the reach of our mission **"to advance women toward full equality in all areas of life, and to promote rights and opportunities for all women throughout their lives"**, and to engage with community leaders in all areas of the Commonwealth.

## MCSW Regional Commissions

Modeled after the MCSW, the eleven unfunded MCSW regional commissions were legislatively created to study and report on the status of women in their geographical areas, and to provide permanent and effective voices for women. Each county and regional commission reports their findings annually to MCSW.

- Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members from Berkshire County, and was established in 2005 by An Act Establishing The Berkshire County Commission On The Status Of Women.
- Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members from Bristol County, and was established in 2008 by S.1172 An Act Establishing The Bristol County Commission On The Status Of Women.
- Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women has 13 total members from Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties, and was established in 2009 by S.2884 An Act Establishing The Cape Cod And Islands Commission On The Status Of Women.
- Essex County Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members from Essex County, and was established in 2010 by H.3410 An Act Establishing the Essex County Commission on the Status of Women.
- Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members from Worcester County, and was established in 2013 by S.927 An Act Establishing the Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women.



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- MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members, and was established in 2015 by S.1920 An Act Establishing The MetroWest Commission On The Status Of Women. MetroWest region includes 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.
- Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has 9 members from Hampden County, and was established in 2016 by S.1080 An Act establishing the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.
- Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members from Hampshire and Franklin Counties, and was established in 2016 by H.1867 An Act Establishing A Hampshire-Franklin Commission On The Status Of Women.
- Eastern Region Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members, and was established in 2018 by H.1110 An Act establishing Regional Commissions on the Status of Women. Eastern Regional includes the towns of Avon, Brookline, Canton, Cohasset, Dedham, Foxborough, Holbrook, Hull, Milton, Plainville, Sharon, Stoughton, and Westwood, and the cities of Boston, Braintree, Chelsea, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Weymouth, and Winthrop. I
- Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members from Plymouth County, and was established in 2018 by H.1110 An Act establishing Regional Commissions on the Status of Women.
- Upper Middlesex Commission on the Status of Women has 9 members, and was established in 2018 by H.1110 An Act establishing Regional Commissions on the Status of Women. Upper Middlesex 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.

➤ *See Appendix A for MCSW regional commission enabling legislations*

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## II.

### New Regional Commissions Once Legislatively Established, What's Next?



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### **New Commission Appointments**

The specific number of commissioners and corresponding appointing authorities is described in a regional commission's enabling legislation. MCSW is the appointing authority for all regional commissions. MCSW will promote a call-for-applications when applicable (either during the annual application period of August-October, or on an as-needed basis). Candidates must complete an e-form (available on the MCSW website year-round) and must also send a resume by email to the MCSW office. Once the applications have been received, it is the responsibility of MCSW's Program and Planning Committee to review the candidates and make a recommendation to MCSW's Full Commission to vote to appoint the appropriate number of commissioners.

In accordance with the mission of the MCSW to work towards the improvement of the status of all women in Massachusetts, the following attributes should be considered of potential appointees to regional commissions:

- The diversity of the applicant's background, especially as it pertains to race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, and socio-economic background;
- The experience of the applicant in working toward the improvement of the status of women in their region;
- The area of residence of the applicant, as it relates to the geographic diversity needs of the regional commission to which the applicant has applied.

Regional commissioners are issued initial terms staggered between one and three years. Commissioners are eligible to apply for reappointment to serve a second term, upon completion of their first term.

- *See Appendix B for MCSW regional commissioner application form questions*
  - *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 1b, for additional information on MCSW's regional commission first-time appointment procedure*
  - *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 1d, for additional information on term limits*
- 

### **First Steps as a Regional Commissioner**

The MCSW office will guide new regional commissions throughout the development of each of these steps.

Once regional commissioners have received official notice of their appointment, they must be sworn-in by a Public Officer for appointment to be official. The swearing-in process can be completed easily and quickly at the Secretary of State's Office in Boston; no appointment is necessary:



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Secretary of State, Public Records Division Office  
McCormack Building, 17th fl. Room 1719  
1 Ashburton Place,  
Boston, MA 02108

Regional commissioners may also be sworn in closer to home by enquiring with their town/city clerk's office if they offer swearing-in services for commissioners of regional public bodies. Additionally, commissioners may consult [this linked map](#) for other swearing-in options. Calling ahead is advised, to ensure a Public Officer is still available at that location, and to ensure you have the requisite documentation. If the information on the linked map becomes out of date, the Public Records Division of the Secretary of State can be reached at 617-727-2836 or by email at [comm@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:comm@sec.state.ma.us), and are able to give the most up to date information on commissioners to qualify public officers. Commissioners typically need to bring a proof of appointment, in the form of the appointment letter issued by MCSW. MCSW cannot cover the cost of any swearing-in fees.

Training newly appointed commissioners will also be an important part of the establishment process. Once sworn-in, commissioners are required to complete two sets of ethics trainings:

### 1. Open Meeting Law

A regional commissioner should complete Open Meeting Law training within two weeks of her initial appointment (and reappointment) to a regional commission. Documentation of completed training (in the form of the certificate received upon completion) should be submitted to MCSW. Training may be arranged by visiting: <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>

### 2. Conflict of Interest

A regional commissioner should complete conflict of interest training within 30 days of her initial appointment to a regional commission. Regional commissioners should complete conflict of interest training every two years thereafter. Documentation of completed training (in the form of the certificate received upon completion) should be submitted to MCSW. Training may be arranged by visiting: <https://www.mass.gov/online-conflict-of-interest-law-training>

➤ *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 6, for additional information on MCSW's ethics requirements*

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## Bylaws

One of the first tasks for a new commission is to draft a set of bylaws, which are the codes and regulations by which the commission will be governed. Researching examples of bylaws of existing MCSW regional commissions will help commissioners to begin thinking about how to draft



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a new set of bylaws. Be sure to consider the following themes when discussing the bylaws with the commission:

1. Authority and leadership positions
2. Definition and process of membership
3. Officers, staff, and committees
4. Structure and frequency of meetings
5. An outline of expected attendance/participation
6. Processes to amend the bylaws

If possible, receive the approval of all commissioners before officially accepting your bylaws. Furthermore, the bylaws are a living document and should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are still consistent with the commission's vision and goals.

➤ *See Appendix C for sample bylaws*

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### **Commission Structure**

Different leadership positions and committees exist within each commission to distribute responsibilities between commissioners.

#### **Officers**

One of the commission's first responsibilities as a new organization will be to elect commission officers. The positions typically created include chair/co-chairs, vice-chair, treasurer, and secretary, and the length of the term to be served should be predetermined by the commission. It is also important to consider the candidates' leadership qualities and commitment to the organization. Officers should also be willing to take on responsibilities, exercise authority, help with the long and short term planning of the commission, organize the efforts of others, and communicate effectively. Should an officer fail to fulfill these requirements, create a standard procedure for removing and replacing that officer. Clearly explaining the expectations and responsibilities of each position should prevent the need to dismiss any commissioners in a leadership position.

#### **Committees**

Creating committees to carry out specific projects may help the commission to run more smoothly and efficiently. Working in smaller groups also allows commissioners to cultivate their leadership skills, which can be useful for developing future officers and can make each member of the commission feel as if she is contributing directly to the organization. Commissioners should join committees based on the specific skills or interests they have to ensure that everyone in the committee is passionate about furthering the same cause. Sample committee titles include:

1. Legislative and Public Policy
2. Community Outreach
3. Advocacy and Special Issue Events
4. Program and Planning



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***Interns and Volunteers***

It is at the discretion of the regional commission to seek out interns or volunteers. Neither interns nor volunteers have voting rights but may serve to assist in a regional commission expanding its reach and output.

Interns and volunteers are an excellent resource and allow for connections to be created between the commissioners and other women in the community. Having interns work alongside commissioners will help to develop the interns' understanding of women's issues and provide a platform to address these issues directly. Volunteers are also an important part of a commission's workforce, particularly for their ability to contribute to the commission on an ad-hoc basis and act as liaisons between the commission and the women they serve. Even if volunteers have not been appointed as commissioners, include their perspective by inviting them to serve on a standing committee or special topic advisory council (without voting rights), or to help with the commission's events.

***MCSW Staff***

Although the regional commissions set their own agenda in terms of programs and events, the MCSW staff and interns seek to support regional commissions by:

- Managing the regional commissioners appointment process
- Facilitating a formal inaugural event with the establishment of each new regional commission, consisting of a swearing in ceremony and an opening session/orientation
- Coordinating the semi-annual regional commission convening meetings
- Providing outreach, training, research, resources and informational updates regarding legislative advocacy opportunities and events of the state commission - MCSW

***Regional Commission Liaison***

Each new regional commission is assigned a state commissioner from MCSW to act as their liaison. This liaison, typically a state commissioner who lives in the region, acts in complement to the MCSW office to provide support, advice and leadership to the regional commission. The relationship between liaison and regional commission has few parameters, and may be developed in accordance with the needs and desires of the regional commission. Some elements of the relationship may include (but are not limited to):

- Serving as a point of contact for the regional commission to the state commission (in addition to the MCSW office)
- Attending regional commission's meetings and events when liaison's schedule permits
- Providing updates from the MSCW regarding potential commissioner applicants to the regional commissions
- Working with regional commissions to ensure Open Meeting Law and code of ethics compliance
- Along with the MCSW staff, update regional commissions of MCSW and other regional commission latest highlights/activities



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- Review monthly meeting minutes and escalate any issues or suggestions the regional commission have regarding communications with the MCSW, other regional commissions or within their own commissions
- Working with regional commissions to cosponsor annual MCSW public hearings that are in their region
- Managing Advocacy Day visits so that legislators in specific regions are covered by regional commissioners and/or MCSW commissioners



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### III.

## Existing Regional Commissions Once Up and Running, What's Next?



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## New Commissioner Appointments

Over time, the need will arise to fill commissioner seats, be it from term expiration or commissioners stepping down. MCSW is the appointing authority for all regional commissions. MCSW will issue a call-for-applications when applicable (either during the annual application period of August-October, or on an as-needed basis). Candidates must complete an e-form (available on the MCSW website year-round) and must also send a resume by email to the MCSW office. Once the applications have been received, it is the responsibility of MCSW's Program and Planning Committee to review the candidates and make a recommendation to MCSW's Full Commission to vote to appoint the appropriate number of commissioners.

Before the Program and Planning Committee issue their recommendation to the Full Commission, they will share candidate application packets (résumé and application form) with existing commissioners of that region first, to invite their candidate feedback. All candidate feedback should be compiled on a single candidate rating sheet, and submitted to MCSW.

In accordance with the mission of the MCSW to work towards the improvement of the status of all women in Massachusetts, the following attributes should be considered of potential appointees to regional commissions:

- The diversity of the applicant's background, especially as it pertains to race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, and socio-economic background;
- The experience of the applicant in working toward the improvement of the status of women in their region;
- The area of residence of the applicant, as it relates to the geographic diversity needs of the regional commission to which the applicant has applied.

Regional commissioners are issued initial terms depending on the regional commission seat they are appointed to fill. Regional commissioners who are offered a full 3-year initial term, are eligible to apply for reappointment to a second, 3-year term, for a total of six years served. Thereafter, they are not eligible for reappointment. Regional commissioners who are offered a shorter initial term (based on whose seat they are filling), are eligible to apply for reappointment to a second term, which would be a 3-year term. Thereafter, they are eligible to apply to a third term, as they have not yet completed six years of service. Thereafter, they are not eligible for reappointment.

- *See Appendix B for MCSW regional commissioner application form questions*
  - *See Appendix D for a sample rating sheet*
  - *See Appendix E for a sample press release for new commissioners*
  - *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 1b, for additional information on MCSW's regional commission appointment procedure*
  - *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 1d, for additional information on term limits*
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## New Commissioner Orientation





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When welcoming a new commissioner aboard, remember to emphasize themes such as leadership skills, team building, communication, and the respectful and sensitive treatment of all members and issues addressed by the commission. Provide everyone with a new commissioner manual, which will also serve as a guide for the orientation. The manual could be an extension of this handbook, but with additional regional commission-specific information that could fall under the following headings: should cover, at a minimum, the following topics to ensure that all new commissioners understand their roles and responsibilities to the commission:

1. Overview of the MCSW and specific regional commission
2. Mission statement
3. History of regional commission
4. Legislation (establishing act and bylaws)
5. Regional commission structure
6. Regional commissioner and appointing authorities contact information
7. Swearing-in information
8. Calendar and meeting schedule
9. Registration and commitment forms
10. Office organization and procedures
11. Program and event planning

If it is not included in the establishing legislation, create a membership policy to discuss at the new commissioner orientation. Successful membership policies pay attention to the length of service, reappointment procedures, measures for the rotation of commissioners and committees, and commissioner evaluation. These policies will ensure that commissioners clearly understand their responsibilities to the organization and the weight carried by their appointments.

Orientation also presents a good opportunity to gather basic information for each commissioner's file. Ask the commissioners to bring a résumé or a curriculum vitae, or, if these are unavailable, create a form to get information about each commissioner's educational background, volunteer positions, civic involvement, professional experience, special interests and skills, and contact information.

### **Reappointment**

As a regional commissioner approaches the end of her term (October 1 of the relevant year) she needs to decide whether or not she would like to apply for reappointment to another term (if eligible). Please note: This is not an automatic process, MCSW reserves the right to deny reappointment request.

The chair must communicate reappointment requests to MCSW, the appointing authority, who will assess them in much the same way as first-time appointment. Once the reappointments requests have been received, it is the responsibility of MCSW's Program and Planning Committee to review the reappointment candidates and make a recommendation to MCSW's Full Commission to vote on whether or not to reappoint the commissioners.



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➤ *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 1c, for additional information on MCSW's regional commissioner reappointment process*

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### **Regional Commission Liaison**

Each new regional commission is assigned a state commissioner from MCSW to act as their liaison. This liaison, typically a state commissioner who lives in the region, acts in complement to the MCSW office to provide support, advice and leadership to the regional commission. The relationship between liaison and regional commission has few parameters, and may be developed in accordance with the needs and desires of the regional commission. Some elements of the relationship may include (but are not limited to):

- Serving as a point of contact for the regional commission to the state commission (in addition to the MCSW office)
- Attending regional commission's meetings and events when liaison's schedule permits
- Providing updates from the MCSW regarding potential commissioner applicants to the regional commissions
- Working with regional commissions to ensure Open Meeting Law and code of ethics compliance
- Along with the MCSW staff, update regional commissions of MCSW and other regional commission latest highlights/activities
- Review monthly meeting minutes and escalate any issues or suggestions the regional commission have regarding communications with the MCSW, other regional commissions or within their own commissions
- Working with regional commissions to cosponsor annual MCSW public hearings that are in their region
- Managing Advocacy Day visits so that legislators in specific regions are covered by regional commissioners and/or MCSW commissioners

Current regional commission liaisons (subject to change):

- Berkshire County  
Name: Tahirah Amatul-Wadud  
Email: [tahirahaw@gmail.com](mailto:tahirahaw@gmail.com)  
Phone: 413-474-6038
- Bristol County  
Name: Joanne Fitzgerald McCrea  
Email: [jfitzmc429@gmail.com](mailto:jfitzmc429@gmail.com)  
Phone: 978-317-5006
- Cape Cod and Islands



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Name: Nina Kimball  
Email: [nkimball@kbattorneys.com](mailto:nkimball@kbattorneys.com)  
Phone: 617-367-9449

- Eastern Regional  
Name: Denella Clark  
Email: [denellajclark@gmail.com](mailto:denellajclark@gmail.com)  
Phone: 617-756-2178
- Essex County  
Name: Penny Blaisdell  
Email: [pblaisdell@verizon.net](mailto:pblaisdell@verizon.net)  
Phone: 781-929-2602
- Hampden County  
Name: Maria Puppolo  
Email: [mariapup@yahoo.com](mailto:mariapup@yahoo.com)  
Phone: 413-244-9763
- Hampshire-Franklin Counties  
Name: Liz Friedman  
Email: [lizfriedm@gmail.com](mailto:lizfriedm@gmail.com)  
Phone: 413-658-8231
- MetroWest  
Name: Mary-dith Tuitt  
Email: [m.e.l.tuitt@gmail.com](mailto:m.e.l.tuitt@gmail.com)  
Phone: 617-722-2810
- Plymouth County  
Name: Nina Kimball  
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Phone: 978-844-4647
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Name: Mary-dith Tuitt  
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## IV.

# Organization and Operations



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### **Creating an Annual Calendar**

It is recommended that regional commissioners should compile a calendar of all the commission's meetings and events for the next fiscal year. Choosing a consistent meeting time for each meeting can be one of the most helpful decisions when creating the calendar. For example, the whole commission might meet the third Wednesday every month while a standing committee might meet the second Wednesday every month. Providing a consistent meeting day will guarantee a greater rate of attendance at meetings.

It is also helpful to consider including the following meetings and events when planning your calendar:

1. Full Commission Meetings
2. Committee Meetings
3. International and National Women's Events, such as Equal Pay Day, Women's History Month, and International Women's Day
4. Planning Sessions
5. Commission Events, such as advocacy days, legislative breakfasts, annual fundraisers
6. Public Hearings (MCSW's and regional commission's)
7. New Member Training
8. Semi-annual convenings with MCSW (2x)

When planning the calendar, consider any conflicts which might arise for predetermined meeting days. Take note of federal, state, and religious holidays and be mindful of any commissioners with children whose school calendars could create conflicts. Submit a draft of the calendar to the chair and seek her approval before distributing it to the rest of the commissioners.

### **Meetings**

Meetings are essential to the operation of any commission because they provide the opportunity for commissioners to work together and assess the status of the commission, brainstorm new ideas to address regional issues, and create solutions to any problems which might arise. Most commissions see a strong partnership develop as they work together to accomplish collective goals. Regular meetings allow members to establish a close working relationship and create a positive force for both the internal strength and public reputation of the organization. In addition to forging this partnership, perhaps the most important function of commission meetings is the opportunity to plan for future action.

A marker of any commission's success is certainly its ability to have positive, concrete effects on the lives of women in its area of jurisdiction, an act which can be accomplished by anything from advocating for pertinent legislation to honoring strong women in the community. Therefore, the most critical component of any meeting is that ideas are not left behind in the board room but are given life and brought to action to fulfill the commission's vision. To go one step further, consider combining meetings with actions or events such as public hearings or legislative breakfasts.



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A few days before a meeting is set to occur, the chair (or another designated representative) should remind commissioners of the date, time, and location of the upcoming meeting. Discuss the issues to be addressed and the decisions to be made at the meeting to emphasize why their attendance and participation is so important. Assigning tasks to each commissioner beforehand will also guarantee the efficiency of the meeting and make them feel directly involved in the planning process.

Creating a clear and informative agenda will also help your meeting to run as smoothly as possible. The agenda should be distributed to all attendees a week prior to the meeting and should be posted in a public location. Obtaining the agenda ahead of time will allow commissioners to be prepared for the discussions and decisions to be made at the meeting, as well as providing a time frame for how long each item will be discussed. On a technical note, the agenda should also include the date, time and location of the meeting and, if possible, the same information for the following meeting. When drafting an agenda, consider including the following items:

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
3. Chair's Report
4. Director / Staff Report
5. Committee Reports
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Reminder of Future Meetings and Events

During the meeting the chair will moderate discussion, keep the meeting within time constraints, and encourage the participation of all attendees. The chair should begin by calling the meeting to order and then introducing and welcoming guests and new members. Make sure everyone has an agenda and briefly review it before beginning to provide a foundation for participation. During discussion, the secretary (or another designated representative) record minutes of the conversation.

It is also useful to have a set of rules for the conduct of meetings which will help all members understand the most effective way to voice her or his opinion. Obtaining a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order* is a good place to start for learning how to make the most of commission meetings. The chair should adjourn the meeting after the entire agenda has been covered and all discussions have reached an appropriate conclusion in the context of the meeting. After the meeting, distribute the minutes as soon as possible to all commissioners and guests who attended the meeting, and submit them for the chair's approval. Keep all the commission's minutes on file for future reference.



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## Open Meeting Law

The democratic process depends on the public having knowledge about the considerations underlying governmental action. Therefore, Open Meeting Law requires that most meetings of public bodies be held in public.

As a local public body, regional commission meetings are governed by Open Meeting Law. Basic (non-exhaustive) requirements mandate:

1. Public bodies post notice of meetings at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays)
2. The meeting notice must be filed with the municipal clerk in each city and town within the district. As an alternative method of notice, a regional public body may post a meeting notice on the regional public body's website.
3. The meeting notice must include the date, time and location of the meeting, as well as a list of topics to be covered at the meeting (with enough specificity to give the public an understanding of each topic that will be discussed).
4. A quorum must be present at each commission meeting for deliberation to occur. A "quorum" is defined as "a simple majority of the members of the public body".
5. Any communication between or among a quorum of a public body on any matter within its jurisdiction must be conducted during a noticed meeting.
6. Public bodies must create and approve minutes of all meetings, including executive sessions, in a timely manner. Minutes must list the names of the members present or absent.

This law is subject to change, please refer to the website for the most recent requirements: <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>.

If you have questions about the Open Meeting Law, you may contact the Division of Open Government at (617) 963-2540 or [openmeeting@state.ma.us](mailto:openmeeting@state.ma.us).

A list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding to Open Meeting Law: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-open-meeting-law-meetings-meeting-notices-and>

➤ *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 6a, for additional information on Open Meeting Law requirements*

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V.

## Issue Identification and Advocacy





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## **MCSW Legislative Agenda**

Each legislative session (every two years beginning on odd numbered years, e.g. 2017, in Massachusetts), the state commission, 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, and address what we've discovered are some of Commonwealth women's greatest challenges at our four-annual regional public hearings. MCSW's Legislative and Public Policy Committee endorses and tracks legislation to achieve these goals. MCSW also meets with legislators and submits written and verbal testimony in support of priority legislation at state legislative hearings.

MCSW's current list of legislative priorities may be viewed on our website:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/2017-2018-legislative-priorities>

Regional commissions are encouraged to support and advocate for these legislative priorities, but are also encouraged to develop their own legislative priorities, as they relate to their region.

As a government entity which uses its resources for political advocacy, a women's commission has political influence but must use this power intelligently. In the simplest sense, women's commissions exist to give all women a permanent, effective voice and full equality in all areas of their lives. The causes or legislation the commission chooses to support should be non-partisan to ensure that publicly provided resources are being used to help as many women as possible.

➤ *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 4, for additional information on MCSW's regional commission issue identification and advocacy policy*

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## **Identifying Issues: Public Hearings**

To make the commission's advocacy work as effective as possible, identify issues which specifically affect women in the community. Holding a public hearing is an excellent way to gain a better understanding of the real obstacles currently confronted by women. These meetings are open to the public and provide individuals with the opportunity to share their concerns with the commission via testimony.

Begin planning a few months in advance by securing a location large enough to accommodate the anticipated audience. Find a space in which the hearing can be held free of charge, like a public library, town hall or community college. Confirm ahead of time if there is a microphone at the location.

Reach out to a variety of individuals and organizations who you would like to see attend the hearing by sharing a flyer via email. The flyer should be simply designed, easy to read, and contains all the necessary information about the date, time, location and theme of the hearing. Consider also contacting local legislators, your MCSW commission liaison and those who served as commissioners in the past. A flyer may be posted on regional commission social media pages, and may also be posted around the town or city in which the hearing will be held, as well as those



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nearby. Legislators should be contacted with a phone call a few weeks after any initial email invite to remind them about the hearing. Other potential attendees should be followed up with a week after the initial contact was made.

In addition to individual contacts, make the event known to a larger audience through local media such as newspapers, radio, and cable access stations. Alert these media outlets of the time, date and location of the hearing by writing a press release and/or media advisory and distributing it two weeks before the hearing.

Also consider that some cities or towns will have multilingual populations and it may be worthwhile to translate flyers into those different languages to reach as large of an audience as possible. If commissioners do not have translation capabilities, reach out to the contact person at the hearing location to find out more information about the different languages spoken in the region and to see if she or he has any suggestions for places to find translators.

When the day of the hearing arrives, set up a long table at the front of the room for the commissioners and a smaller table or desk facing the commissioners for those testifying, plus rows of chairs for the audience. Have a sign-in table at the location's entrance, and make sure to add the attendee's names to a contact list later, so they can be informed of future hearings or events in their area. A commission could also provide a printed one-pager at the sign-in table, describing a brief synopsis of the regional commission's goals and activities.

During the hearing, invite community members to testify before the commissioners and to share their issues or concerns about the status of women in their community, encouraging women from all backgrounds to share their stories to create a dialogue which includes the entire audience. The commission should designate a note-taker to transcribe the hearing for the hearing report. Before attendees leave the hearing, distribute a survey to get feedback about the meeting and to provide women with an opportunity to inform the commission of any issues about which they were not able to testify.

After the hearing has finished, combine the survey results and the transcript of the meeting in the hearing report. Additionally, look for any mention of the hearing in local media and contact newspapers which published stories about the hearing and share on commission social media pages.

Send thank you notes to the contact person at the hearing location, legislators and all who attended the event. Within a month of the hearing distribute a hearing report to all attendees, legislators, and other individuals who could benefit from the information learned during the hearing.

Public hearings can take a significant amount of planning, but done over the course of a few months it is a very manageable process. It is a deeply rewarding and informative event, when the commission can hear directly from its constituents about the most pertinent issues in their lives, and use this as a basis to inform their regional legislative priorities.



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- *See Appendix F for a sample public hearing flyer*
  - *See Appendix G for a sample press release for hearings*
  - *See Appendix H for a sample media advisory*
  - *See Appendix I for a sample regional commission one-pager*
- 

### **Advocacy Efforts**

Once a commission has identified the issue(s) they want to help improve in their region, advocacy comes into play. It is recommended that the commission arrange an advocacy training session for all commissioners, especially those interested in lobbying on behalf of the commission. Begin with a clear explanation of the overall structure of the legislature including the different leadership positions and current legislators of the region. Consider bringing in a speaker to advocacy training sessions who has lobbying experience (MCSW may be able to point regional commissions in the right direction for this resource).

In short, impactful lobbying comes from familiarity with the legislators and having a clear understanding of the issues at hand. Try to see legislators as allies and enter with the mindset that the commission will be working with, rather than against, her or him. Know her or his past stance on important issues and make sure to follow up with any legislators after a visit. When a legislator takes positive action on the commission's behalf, be sure to thank her or him for supporting the organization.

An Advocacy Guide can be found on the MCSW website: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/advocacy-day>

Another way to strengthen advocacy efforts is to bring together various women's groups to form a coalition which can advocate for women's issues addressed by the commission. Creating a directory of women's organizations to build a network of friends and advocates in the region increases the commission's ability to take action and will provide potential contacts for the caucus. Once a coalition has been established task forces can be created to plan specific actions for the issues on which the commission would like to focus, remembering that sometimes it is better to focus on a smaller, more manageable portion of a larger issue which should be addressed over the course of months or years.

### **Navigating the Political System**

It is important to understand the political system of the area your commission will be serving so it can be used as much to the commission's advantage as possible. Familiarize commissioners with the local lawmakers and attend events at which they will be speaking, such as candidate nights or forums, to learn about their stances on women's issues. Send legislators questions ahead of time so they can research the issues the commission feels are most pressing for women in the area.

Another method of staying up to date on the current state of important legislation is to hold a forum in which the commission can directly interact with legislators who support a relevant bill.



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When the legislature is in session, invite a legislator to speak with the commission and interested community members, allotting time for both discussion of the issue, as well as questions and answers. Direct contact with legislators will be essential in making progress on any legislation the commission would like to see passed.



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## VI.

### Programs and Events



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### **MCSW Programs and Events**

MCSW has developed an agenda of annual programming and events including Unsung Heroines (each June at the Massachusetts State house in Boston), Women's Advocacy Day (each May at the Massachusetts State house in Boston), and four regional public hearings. The regional commissions are an integral part of helping to make these events a success in a variety of ways.

MCSW holds four public hearings around the Commonwealth each year. The purpose of the regional public hearings is to give community stakeholders the opportunity to discuss issues and concerns important to women, as well as the gaps or barriers they have experienced in the provision of services available in the region. Regional commissions of each hearing location are invited to co-host the public hearing with MCSW, promote it on their social media pages, and do outreach in their region to increase attendance. The locations of MCSW hearings are reflected on the state website: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/public-hearings>.

Advocacy day is an annual event held by the MCSW to advocate for legislation that advances the rights and opportunities of women. The MCSW welcomes 250 community activists, including regional commissioners, to attend and participate in Advocacy Day, and stand in support of women throughout Massachusetts. Attendees hear from the MCSW Chair, Regional Commission Chairs, and State Legislators via a speaking program that discusses key findings from the previous year, and lays out MCSW legislative priorities for the coming session. The event includes time for commissioners and community activists to visit legislators to discuss priority legislation.

In addition to set programming, MCSW participates in other programs as they arise and are relevant to MCSW's mission. For example, as part of equal pay advocacy in 2018, MCSW has partnered with the Treasurer's Office of Economic Empowerment, the AAUW and MA Community Colleges to provide salary negotiation training and facilitation across the Commonwealth. See more at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/salary-negotiation-workshops-2018>. As appropriate, MCSW will share information regarding these additional programs to regional commissions.

### **Planning Events with a Purpose**

Other than participating in MCSW events, one of the best ways for regional commissions to connect with regional supporters and spread the word about the commission is to hold a public event. During the planning stages of any event, remember to ask the commission's efforts will benefit women in the community and if there is anything which can be done to welcome even more women and provide them with the opportunity to gain something from the event. The type of event should reflect the commission's goals and what is hoped to be accomplished by bringing together members of the community.

### **Types of Events**

Ceremonies honoring or celebrating individuals and groups in the community can be an important component of the commission's outreach efforts. Consider honoring successful women or girls in the



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community or celebrating a national event such as Women's History Month or Women's Equality Day. Awareness events are also very worthwhile to organize and will help to spread the word about important issues affecting women in the community, such as domestic violence or the wage gap between women and men. Swearing-in ceremonies for new regional commissioners are also a nice way to bring the commission together to welcome a new member and orient her to the commission.

If the commission is looking for a more structured event, conferences and symposia are also an effective method of facilitating discussion between individuals and organizations with regards to a specific regional topic. Conferences and symposia differ from awareness events in that they are often on a much larger scale and require more planning but bring together a greater number of attendees. Networking events are also a good way to gather large crowds, especially to establish professional connections, build coalitions, and to coordinate advocacy efforts. Events specifically coordinated for networking can vary greatly in size, ranging from a roundtable discussion to a larger conference-sized gathering.

It is important to connect some sort of public relations effort with any commission event because it not only raises further awareness about the issues at hand and likely increases attendance, but also establishes the commission as having a strong community presence.

### **Basic Event Planning Tips**

Depending on the scale of the event planning can begin anywhere from one year to a few months in advance, even if the initial stages are simply brainstorming about the purpose of the event, how many people will attend, creating a planning committee, and what sort of resources and skill-sets are necessary.

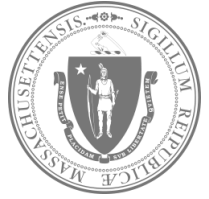
The next step will be to select a venue, keeping in mind the type of space which will be most conducive to the event. Public spaces, such as government buildings or community centers, typically provide space for the event free of charge. Some other important venue considerations are the size, location relative to public transportation, the date and time of the event, and if there will be audio and visual equipment available. At this stage, it will also be important to have a rough idea of how many guests will attend so the venue will be guaranteed to accommodate everyone.

Once the guest list is finalized begin to think about invitations for the event. Request that guests RSVP so the committee can plan for enough space to be available during the event. When inviting elected officials, seek out those who are most relevant to your event in terms of local, state, or national politics. Provide them with information about the event, and follow up as the event gets closer to remind them of their anticipated attendance.

Around the same time invitation flyers are emailed, begin to the public relations campaign for the event. Place ads in local newspapers, utilize social media, and create flyers to post in areas where potential attendees are likely to see them. (For more ideas about public relations, see the next chapter on "Communication and Outreach".)



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Finally, begin to search for volunteers early enough so there will be enough time to recruit sufficient help for the event. Contact anyone who has volunteered for the commission in the past and ask them to help recruit more volunteers. Make sure to train the volunteers before the event, providing them with all the information they will need to be as helpful to the attendees as possible. Every event is unique and will require its own specific timeline, but keeping these general planning stages in mind will facilitate a successful and well-coordinated event.





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## VII.

### Communication and Outreach: Promoting Your Commission



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### **Spearheading a Public Relations Campaign**

The key to a successful public relations campaign is to understand the audience. Targeting a specific demographic will elicit a larger and more positive response, resulting in greater support for the commission. Consider an approach which utilizes different kinds of media to reach the greatest number of people possible.

Major commission events, such as the induction of new commissioners, will make for the most newsworthy stories. The tone of the story should appropriately reflect the nature of the news source, and if a piece is intended as an exclusive, do not offer it to more than one news source. Alert the media early enough so they will time the release of your story to coincide with the event. Prepare a detailed fact sheet, media advisory, or press release to distribute to media personnel and agree to be quoted if appropriate.

- *See Appendices E and G for sample press releases*
  - *See Appendix H for a sample media advisory*
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### **Print Media**

It is very important to consider the audiences of different types of newspapers because the content of a newspaper usually depends on how widely the newspaper is circulated. Larger newspapers are more likely to report matters which reach a wider audience such as the election of officers, new programs, and notable policy actions. Conversely, smaller daily and weekly newspapers are more interested in local news such as the appointment of commissioners or meeting announcements.

Writing a weekly newspaper column is also worth considering especially because newspapers are accustomed to paying for syndicated feature columns and might welcome free articles. Opinion pieces, editorials, and letters to the editor are also useful methods of sharing information about women's issues or upcoming events. If the commission has chosen to work on an ongoing series of articles or editorials, consider meeting with the editorial board of a newspaper to discuss the project.

Remind reporters to attend important events by sending out a media advisory the day before the event, or send a press release to reporters who might not be able to attend. When writing a press release be sure to emphasize the most significant aspect of the story in the first paragraph. The rest of the press release or media advisory should include the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "why" of the event. Provide background information where appropriate but keep the story as concise as possible.

Newsletters are another form of print or electronic media which will benefit any public relations effort and are used to inform the public about the commission's most recent events and accomplishments. General information about the state of women in the city, county, or state served by the commission can also be included and will allow the newsletter to serve as a



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valuable resource for establishing connections with individuals and organizations which might want to support you in the future.

### Websites and Social Media

The state commission website can be found at: [www.mass.gov/women](http://www.mass.gov/women). It hosts all pertinent programs and advocacy information relating to MCSW. On it, MCSW host a simple webpage for each regional commission. These web pages can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/regional-commissions>. Each web page features:

- An image of the area of regional commission coverage
- A list of current regional commissioners
- Contact information for the commission (either the chair's email or, if available, a general email address)
- Links to regional commission website (if applicable) and social media pages
- Link to apply to the regional commission (when applicable)
- Regional commission annual reports

A regional commission may also create a website of their own, but are currently responsible for the costs associated with developing it. Creating an informational, easy-to-navigate website is one of the most important resources for those trying to learn about the work performed by the commission. The ubiquity of the internet means a well-planned website is now more important than ever and will create connections with a far wider audience than any newspaper or television show possibly could. The website should include basic information about the commission, links to other local women's commissions, basic facts about the legislation supported by the commission, a calendar with information about upcoming events and recent publications, especially annual reports.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are also an effective way to connect with potential supporters. A Facebook page or profile will help the commission to establish a more permanent internet presence and provides the opportunity to record the organization's mission, post pictures, create links to events, and provide updates to other users who view the page. Twitter is more effective for the dissemination of brief announcements or reminders for upcoming events. LinkedIn is similar to Facebook in that it allows the commission to connect with other users, but these interactions emphasize networking and professional interactions rather than the more informal information usually posted on Facebook.

Maintaining a blog is another method of promoting the commission but with greater freedom than the rigid templates of social media platforms. The ability to self-publish in the format of a blog allows for contributions from various commissioners, in addition to providing the flexibility to write posts ranging from summaries of commission events to op-ed style pieces about the status of women in the community.

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➤ *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 3a, for additional information on MCSW's*

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*regional commission website and social media policy*

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**Social Media Ethics Guidelines**

As MCSW and all regional commissions are non-partisan organizations governed by Ethics law, there are strict rules regarding partisanship, and representation as a commissioner on social media and in commissioner correspondence.

In short, regional commissioners must not participate in any kind of political endorsement (for or against), fundraising activity (meaning collecting the money), or unethical conduct. This policy covers all parts of regional commission operations, from meetings, to events, to social media postings from official accounts – all communications under the commission name (or a commissioner using their title) are subject to state Ethics policy.

This does not mean that a commissioner cannot be a member or even a leader of a partisan organization, just that she has to keep the two activities completely separate from her role as commissioner. Also, this is not to say that a regional commission is unable to work alongside organizations that uphold a partisan agenda; however, a role as a commission/commissioner in cooperation with any partisan group should be for a strictly non-partisan matter and that needs to be made clear.

Further, commissioners may not use their individual title as a commissioner to post online, send correspondence through email, or any other communication in a partisan manner. Personal emails should not include the title of commissioner in the signature unless being used at that time for official commission duties. If the title of commissioner is being used in an email signature, no other titles should be used additionally.

Please refer to the State Ethics Commission's Advisory on Public Employee Political Activity and use it as a resource in governing regional commission posts and activities:

<http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/educationalmaterials/advisories/advisory-11-1.html>

If regional commissions are unsure about any communication or public posting, please feel free to reach out to the MCSW office for guidance and clarification at [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us)

- *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 6b, for additional information on MCSW's conflict of interest and partisanship policy*
  - *See Appendix J for a letter from MCSW to regional commissioners on social media ethics*
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### Radio and Television

Cable television and certain radio shows are also an effective means of reaching a wider audience. Public access programming on cable television is specifically designed to serve the local community and provides an opportunity to reach an audience which has a vested interest in local events. Public service programs offer a more personal approach to media outreach when commissioners are interviewed about the commission's work or a particular piece of legislation. Another consideration should be public service announcements, which would allow the commission to inform listeners and viewers about a variety of women's issues without having to purchase airtime.

### Speakers Bureau

If there are commissioners who enjoy public speaking and would like to donate their time outside of commission meetings, the state-level MCSW Speakers Bureau is an excellent way to utilize their talents. Speakers should be well-versed in a few predetermined topics, such as the history of the commission and the most current women's issues, and should be prepared to provide informational talks about these topics when requested to do so. If you have a speaking opportunity as a commissioner, or are interested in participating in the MCSW Speakers Bureau, please contact MCSW at [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us)

➤ *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 3f, for additional information on MCSW's Speakers Bureau policy*

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## VIII.

### Fundraising and Finances



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### **Funding to Support Programming**

The majority of the regional commission's charge may be supported by partnerships and in-kind donations. And yet there are some instances where funding will be necessary or required.

The regional commissions may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any state and/or federal funds for the purpose of advancing its mission. These funds will be deposited in an account housed by the State Comptroller and managed by the MCSW staff.

Presently Berkshire, Cape and Islands, Eastern Regional, Hampshire-Franklin, MetroWest, Plymouth, and Upper Middlesex Commissions have enabling language that permits separate state managed accounts to be established. In contrast, the enabling language for the Bristol, Essex, Worcester, Hampden Commissions is silent on this question. This conflict has no bearing on directions laid out in the Handbook or Policies. Regardless of the inconsistencies in enabling legislation language, MCSW has developed procedures so all regional commissions will be able to raise, receive, and expend funds to support the effort of advancing the mission.

### **Funding from the MCSW**

The MCSW may provide funding in the form of annual stipends and project grants. On an annual basis the MCSW, with guidance from the Budget and Personnel Committee, will determine the amount of funds to be allocated and how funds will be distributed. This will be communicated to the regional commission, and application directions will be provided.

Reasonable operating expenses covered by any stipend may include, but are not limited to banner, table cloth, business cards, name tags, table tents, promotional materials, flyers, brochures.

MCSW encourages regional commissions to use environmentally friendly, digital solutions (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) for marketing/programmatic efforts and community outreach development.

The MCSW has in the past and will continue to provide to each of the regional commissions a membership to the National Association of Commissions for Women and commissioner specific nametags. Additional items may be added to this list of resources provided uniformly to the regional commission.

### **Funding from third parties**

In addition, funds may be solicited from third party donors. Donors and grantees should be vetted by regional commissions to ensure that there is no conflict of interest or organizational objective.

### **Developing budgets and fundraising goals**



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Regional commission should prioritize their legislative charge – to study all matters concerning women and recommending policy changes – and consider how partnerships may effectively advance the mission. Partners may include a sister women’s commission as well as community non-

profits, government entities, and business with a shared mission. When supplemental funding is necessary, budgets should be developed to effectively and most efficiently support desired and well defined programming. The MCSW takes into consideration the above when reviewing grant proposals.

### Reporting

A complete and accurate reporting of budgets and expenses should be included in the commission’s annual report submitted to the MCSW each May 1. There should be information regarding the impact of the funding on the specific project and overall goals of the regional commission.

- *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 5, for additional information on the fundraising and finance policy for regional commissions*
  - *See Appendix K for the notice regarding FY19 MCSW grant applications*
  - *See MCSW Policy Document, Section 6, for additional information on ethics considerations relating to regional commission funding opportunities*
  - *See Appendix L for sample grant proposal application questions*
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## IX.

### Commission Evaluation



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## Evaluating the Commission

Once the commission has established a presence, it is important to take a step back and evaluate how effectively the commission is addressing the needs of women in the community. Yearly evaluations are a good measure of the commission's progress as well as the improvements which need to be made in the future. Furthermore, keeping records of the commission's yearly progress will allow future commissioners to understand the organization's history and how it can be strengthened to serve even more women. The following two sections describe important methods of evaluation which every commission should undertake for a comprehensive review of its work.

### **Annual Reports**

Regional commissions are required to submit an annual report to MCSW on May 1 each year, summarizing the commission's accomplishments during the year and its goals for the future.

A good place to begin is by assessing the previous year's annual report (if applicable) and deciding which aspects were successful and in which ways the next report can be improved. Additionally, discussing major objectives for the report before beginning to write will allow contributors to understand the big picture. Consider focusing on a specific theme to ensure the report's continuity by emphasizing certain aspects of the commission's work during the year, such as community involvement or new programs initiated by the commission. At a minimum the report should a comprehensive picture of the commission's accomplishments to-date and goals.

When the report is complete distribute it to MCSW, fellow regional commissioners, and local women's organizations. Additionally, send copies to the National Association for Commissions on Women (NACW) and the Department of Labor Women's Bureau. Finally, upload the report to the commission's website (if applicable) to share with an even larger audience.

➤ *See Appendix M for a sample regional commission annual report*

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### **Annual Planning Sessions**

Once the annual report has been completed the entire commission should come together to discuss the report and, more generally, to assess the previous year and brainstorm ways to improve the commission during the upcoming year. Because many of the materials presented at the planning session will be long term projects such as the annual report and the yearly calendar, plan enough time to have these projects completed in time for the session. The planning session also presents an opportunity to hold commission elections, so be sure to include a ballot in the materials. Also consider including next year's commissioner commitment forms, and commission evaluations if it is necessary to gather concrete feedback from the commissioners regarding the current state of the commission. A standard planning session agenda should include the following:

1. Introduction and Welcome
2. Elections
3. Old Business
4. Review and Planning (discuss events, programs, and hearings)



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5. Planning for Next Year (brainstorming, goal setting)
6. Individual Committee Meetings
7. Review of Goals for Next Year
8. Closing Remarks

Holding an annual planning session will allow the commission to evaluate its progress and what still needs to be done for the future. Taking a step back and assessing whether or not the commission is truly meeting its goals and fulfilling its mission statement will allow the organization to work with a clearer focus in the coming year, remembering why they do the work they do and ensuring that their work benefits as many women from as many backgrounds as possible.



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X.

## Appendices



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**APPENDIX A**

Regional Commission Enabling Legislations

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BERKSHIRE COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2000 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word "necessary", in line 61, the following words:- (g) to appoint members to regional chapters of the commission.

SECTION 2. There is established a permanent commission on the status of women in Berkshire county consisting of 9 persons who are to be appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Berkshire county. The commission shall report their findings to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women annually, on or before June 2, and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Berkshire county. The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women shall make such appointments to the Berkshire commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Berkshire county. (1) Members shall serve a term of 3 years and until their successors are appointed. Commissioners may be reappointed for 2 consecutive terms. After the completion of 2 consecutive terms, former commissioners may reapply to serve on the commission after a year has passed since their last term. The initial members of the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women shall be appointed for the following terms: 3 members for a term of one year, 3 members for a term of two years, and 3 members for a term of 3 years. (2) Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women for the balance of the unexpired term. (3) Appointments by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women to the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 of each year through an open application that is widely distributed



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throughout Berkshire county. Members of the commission should be diverse and represent different towns and municipalities in Berkshire county. (4) Members shall serve on the commission as volunteers and will not be compensated. (5) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other officers it deems necessary. (6) The commission shall meet at least 6 times a year, at the members' discretion. Members of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women may attend the meetings of the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women. (7) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of this section. Such funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission. (8) The powers of the commission shall include but not be limited to the following: a) to use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed; b) to recommend policies and make recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government to effectuate the purposes of the commission; c) to enact bylaws for its own governance; and d) to hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary.

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BRISTOL COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

(a) There shall be a permanent commission on the status of women in Bristol county consisting of 9 members to be appointed by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women. The Bristol commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Bristol county. The Bristol commission shall report its findings to the Massachusetts commission on the status of women annually, on or before June 2, and recommend solutions to problems facing the women of Bristol county. The Massachusetts commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the Bristol commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Bristol county.



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( b) Bristol commission members shall serve a term of 3 years and until their successors are appointed. Members may be reappointed for 2 consecutive terms. After the completion of 2 consecutive terms, members may reapply to serve on the commission after a year has passed since their last term. The initial members of the Bristol county commission on the status of women shall be appointed for the following terms: 3 members for a term of 1 year ; 3 members for a term of 2 years ; and 3 members for a term of 3 years.

( c) Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

( d) Appointments by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women to the Bristol county commission on the status of women shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 of each year through an open application that is widely distributed throughout Bristol county. Members of the Bristol commission may be diverse and represent different towns and municipalities in Bristol county.

( e) Members shall serve on the commission as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

( f) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other officers it considers necessary.

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CAPE COD AND ISLANDS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:



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- (a) There is hereby established a permanent commission on the status of women in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket counties called the Cape Cod and Islands commission on the status of women, herein referred to as the commission, which shall consist of 13 persons to be appointed by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women. The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women on Cape Cod and the Islands. The commission shall report its findings to the Massachusetts commission on the status of women annually and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Cape Cod and the Islands.
- (b) The Massachusetts commission on the status of women shall make such appointments to the commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket counties.
- (c) Members of the commission shall serve a term of 3 years and until their successors are appointed. Members may be reappointed for 2 consecutive terms. After the completion of 2 consecutive terms, former members may reapply to serve on the commission after 1 year has passed since their last term. The initial members of the commission shall be appointed for the following terms: 4 members for a term of 1 year, 4 members for a term of 2 years and 5 members for a term of 3 years.
- (d) Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.
- (e) Appointments by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women to the commission shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited each year through an open application that is widely distributed throughout Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket counties. Members of the commission should be diverse and represent different towns and municipalities in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket counties.
- (f) Members shall serve on the commission as volunteers and shall not be compensated.
- (g) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer, a secretary and any other officers it deems necessary.





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(h) The commission shall meet at least 6 times a year, at the members' discretion. Members of the Massachusetts commission on the status of women may attend the meetings of the commission.

(i) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests or any federal funds for the purposes of this section. Such funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission.

(j) The powers of the commission shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (i) to use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed; (ii) to recommend policies and make recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government to effectuate the purposes of the commission; (iii) to enact by-laws for its own governance; and (iv) to hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary.

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

There shall be a commission on the status of women in Essex county consisting of 9 persons to be appointed by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women. The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Essex county. The commission shall report their findings to the Massachusetts commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Essex county. The Massachusetts commission on the status of women shall make such appointments to the Essex commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Essex county. Members shall serve for a term of 3 years and until



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their successors are appointed and may be reappointed for 2 consecutive terms. After the completion of 2 consecutive terms, former members may reapply to serve on the commission after a year has passed since their last term. The initial members of the Essex county commission on the status of women shall be appointed for the following terms: 3 members for a term of 1 year, 3 members for a term of 2 years and 3 members for a term of 3 years. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term. Appointments by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women to the Essex county commission on the status of women shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that is widely distributed throughout Essex county. Members of the commission shall represent diverse backgrounds and reside in different municipalities in Essex county. Members shall serve on the commission as volunteers and shall not be compensated. The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other officers it deems necessary to effectuate the purposes of the commission.

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE WORCESTER COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

(a) There shall be a permanent commission on the status of women in Worcester county consisting of 9 members to be appointed by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women. The Worcester commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Worcester county. The Worcester commission shall report its findings to the Massachusetts commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Worcester county. The Massachusetts commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the Worcester commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Worcester county.

(b) Members shall serve for a term of 3 years and until their successors are appointed. Members may be reappointed for 2 consecutive terms. After the completion of 2 consecutive terms, former members may reapply to serve on the commission after a year has passed since their last term.



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The initial members of the Worcester commission shall be appointed for the following terms: 3 members for a term of 1 year, 3 members for a term of 2 years, and 3 members for a term of 3 years.

(c) Vacancies in the membership of the Worcester commission shall be filled by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

(d) Appointments by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women to the Worcester commission shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that is widely distributed throughout Worcester county. Members of the Worcester commission shall be diverse and represent different towns and municipalities in Worcester county.

(e) Members shall serve on the Worcester commission as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

(f) The Worcester commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other officers it deems necessary.

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE METROWEST COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

(a) There shall be a MetroWest commission on the status of women which shall consist of 9 persons to be appointed by the commission on the status of women established in section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws. The MetroWest commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in MetroWest communities. The MetroWest commission shall report its findings to the commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and shall recommend solutions to the problems facing women in MetroWest communities. The commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the MetroWest commission from a pool of applicants who reside in MetroWest communities. For the purpose of this act, MetroWest communities shall include: 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.

(b) Members shall serve for 3-year terms and shall continue in office until their successors are appointed. Members shall not be reappointed for more than 2 consecutive terms; provided, however, that former members may reapply to serve on the commission after 1 year has passed



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since their last term. Of the initial members appointed to the MetroWest commission on the status of women, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years and 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(c) Vacancies in the membership of the MetroWest commission on the status of women shall be filled by the commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

(d) In making appointments to the MetroWest commission on the status of women, the commission on the status of women shall consult with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that is widely distributed throughout the MetroWest communities. Members of the commission shall be diverse and represent different MetroWest communities.

(e) Members shall serve on the MetroWest commission on the status of women as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

(f) The MetroWest commission on the status of women shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other officers as it deems necessary.

(g) The MetroWest commission on the status of women shall meet at least 4 times a year, at the members' discretion. Members of the commission on the status of women may attend the meetings of the MetroWest commission on the status of women.

(h) The MetroWest commission on the status of women may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests and federal funds for any of the purposes of this act. The funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission.

(i) The MetroWest commission on the status of women may: (i) use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered or required; (ii) recommend policies and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purposes of the commission; (iii) enact by-laws for its own governance; (iv) hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and (v) take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purposes.



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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE HAMPDEN COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

(a) There shall be a Hampden county commission on the status of women and girls, referred to in this act as the Hampden commission, which shall consist of 9 persons to be appointed by the commission on the status of women established in section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, referred to in this act as the commission on the status of women. The Hampden commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Hampden county. The Hampden commission shall report its findings to the commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Hampden county. The commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the Hampden commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Hampden county.

(b) Members shall serve 3-year terms and shall remain in office until a successor is appointed. Members shall not be reappointed for more than 2 consecutive terms. Former members may reapply to serve on the Hampden commission after 1 year has passed since their last term. Of the initial members appointed to the Hampden commission, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years and 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(c) Vacancies in the membership of the Hampden commission shall be filled by the commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

(d) In making appointments to the Hampden commission, the commission on the status of women shall consult with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that shall be widely distributed throughout Hampden county. Members of the Hampden commission shall be diverse and represent a variety of the municipalities in Hampden county.

(e) Members shall serve on the Hampden commission as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

(f) The Hampden commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice-chair and other officers as it deems necessary.

(g) The Hampden commission shall meet not less than 4 times a year, at the members' discretion.

(h) The Hampden commission may: (i) use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may be offered or required; (ii) recommend policies



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and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purpose of the commission; (iii) enact by-laws for its own governance; (iv) hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and (v) take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purpose.

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE HAMPSHIRE-FRANKLIN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

(a) There shall be a Hampshire-Franklin commission on the status of women, hereinafter referred to in this act as the Hampshire-Franklin commission, which shall consist of 9 persons to be appointed by the commission on the status of women established in section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws , hereinafter referred to in this act as the commission on the status of women. The Hampshire-Franklin commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Hampshire and Franklin counties. The Hampshire-Franklin commission shall report its findings to the commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Hampshire and Franklin counties. The commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the Hampshire-Franklin commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Hampshire and Franklin counties.

(b) Members shall serve 3-year terms and shall remain in office until their successors are appointed. Members shall not be reappointed for more than 2 consecutive terms; provided, however, that former commissioners may reapply to serve on the commission after 1 year has passed since the expiration of their last term. Of the initial members appointed to the Hampshire-Franklin commission, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years and 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(c) Vacancies in the membership of the Hampshire-Franklin commission shall be filled by the commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

(d) In making appointments to the Hampshire-Franklin commission, the commission on the status of women shall consult with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that shall be widely distributed throughout Hampshire and Franklin counties. Members of the Hampshire-Franklin commission shall be diverse and represent a variety of the towns and municipalities in both Hampshire and Franklin counties.



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(e) Members shall serve on the Hampshire-Franklin commission as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

(f) The Hampshire-Franklin commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other officers it deems necessary.

(g) The Hampshire-Franklin commission shall meet at least 4 times each year, at the members' discretion. Members of the commission on the status of women may attend the meetings of the Hampshire-Franklin commission.

(h) The Hampshire-Franklin commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests and federal funds for any of the purposes of this act. The funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission.

(i) The Hampshire-Franklin commission may: (i) use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered or required; (ii) recommend policies and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purposes of the commission; (iii) enact by-laws for its own governance; (iv) hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and (v) take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purposes.

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING NEW COMMISSIONS ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

SECTION 1. (a) There shall be an Eastern Regional commission on the status of women which shall consist of 9 persons to be appointed by the commission on the status of women established in section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws. The Eastern Regional commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Eastern Regional communities. The Eastern Regional commission shall report its findings to the commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and shall recommend solutions to the problems facing women in Eastern Regional communities. The commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the Eastern Regional commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Eastern Regional communities. For the purpose of this act, "Eastern Regional communities" shall include: the towns of Avon, Brookline, Canton, Cohasset, Dedham, Foxborough, Holbrook, Hull, Milton, Plainville, Sharon, Stoughton, and Westwood, and the cities of Boston, Braintree, Chelsea, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Weymouth, and Winthrop.

(b) Members shall serve for 3-year terms and shall continue in office until their successors are appointed. Members shall not be reappointed for more than 2 consecutive terms; provided, however, that former members may reapply to serve on the commission after 1 year has passed since their last term. Of the initial members appointed to the Eastern Regional commission on the





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status of women, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years, and 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(c) Vacancies in the membership of the Eastern Regional commission on the status of women shall be filled by the commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

(d) In making appointments to the Eastern Regional commission on the status of women, the commission on the status of women shall consult with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that is widely distributed throughout the Eastern Regional communities. Members of the commission shall be diverse and represent different Eastern Regional communities.

(e) Members shall serve on the Eastern Regional commission on the status of women as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

(f) The Eastern Regional commission on the status of women shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer, and any other officers as it deems necessary.

(g) The Eastern Regional commission on the status of women shall meet at least 4 times a year, at the members' discretion. Members of the commission on the status of women may attend the meetings of the Eastern Regional commission on the status of women.

(h) The Eastern Regional commission on the status of women may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests and federal funds for any of the purposes of this act. The funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission.

(i) The Eastern Regional commission on the status of women may: (i) use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered or required; (ii) recommend policies and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purposes of the commission; (iii) enact by-laws for its own governance; (iv) hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and (v) take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purposes.

SECTION 2. (a) There shall be an Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women which shall consist of 9 persons to be appointed by the commission on the status of women established in section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws. The Upper Middlesex commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Upper Middlesex communities. The Upper Middlesex commission shall report its findings to the commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and shall recommend solutions to the problems facing women in Upper Middlesex communities. The commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the Upper Middlesex commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Upper Middlesex communities. For the purpose of this act, "Upper Middlesex communities" shall include: 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.





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(b) Members shall serve for 3-year terms and shall continue in office until their successors are appointed. Members shall not be reappointed for more than 2 consecutive terms; provided, however, that former members may reapply to serve on the commission after 1 year has passed since their last term. Of the initial members appointed to the Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years, and 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(c) Vacancies in the membership of the Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women shall be filled by the commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

(d) In making appointments to the Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women, the commission on the status of women shall consult with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that is widely distributed throughout the Upper Middlesex communities. Members of the commission shall be diverse and represent different Upper Middlesex communities.

(e) Members shall serve on the Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

(f) The Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer, and any other officers as it deems necessary.

(g) The Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women shall meet at least 4 times a year, at the members' discretion. Members of the commission on the status of women may attend the meetings of the Eastern Regional commission on the status of women.

(h) The Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests and federal funds for any of the purposes of this act. The funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission.

(i) The Upper Middlesex commission on the status of women may: (i) use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered or required; (ii) recommend policies and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purposes of the commission; (iii) enact by-laws for its own governance; (iv) hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and (v) take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purposes.

SECTION 3. (a) There shall be a Plymouth County commission on the status of women which shall consist of 9 persons to be appointed by the commission on the status of women established in section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws. The Plymouth County commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Plymouth County communities. The Plymouth County commission shall report its findings to the commission on the status of women annually, not later than June 2, and shall recommend solutions to the problems facing women in Plymouth County communities. The commission on the status of women shall make appointments to the Plymouth County commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Plymouth County communities. For the purpose of this act, "Plymouth County communities" shall include all municipalities located in Plymouth County.



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(b) Members shall serve for 3-year terms and shall continue in office until their successors are appointed. Members shall not be reappointed for more than 2 consecutive terms; provided, however, that former members may reapply to serve on the commission after 1 year has passed since their last term. Of the initial members appointed to the Plymouth County commission on the status of women, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years, and 3 members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(c) Vacancies in the membership of the Plymouth County commission on the status of women shall be filled by the commission on the status of women for the balance of the unexpired term.

(d) In making appointments to the Plymouth County commission on the status of women, the commission on the status of women shall consult with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 annually through an open application that is widely distributed throughout the Plymouth County communities. Members of the commission shall be diverse and represent different Plymouth County communities.

(e) Members shall serve on the Plymouth County commission on the status of women as volunteers and shall not be compensated.

(f) The Plymouth County commission on the status of women shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer, and any other officers as it deems necessary.

(g) The Plymouth County commission on the status of women shall meet at least 4 times a year, at the members' discretion. Members of the commission on the status of women may attend the meetings of the Plymouth County commission on the status of women.

(h) The Plymouth County commission on the status of women may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests and federal funds for any of the purposes of this act. The funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission.

(i) The Plymouth County commission on the status of women may: (i) use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered or required; (ii) recommend policies and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purposes of the commission; (iii) enact by-laws for its own governance; (iv) hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and (v) take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purposes.



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**APPENDIX B**

Regional Commissioner Application Form Questions (Subject to change)

Q: Select the commission to which you are applying:

Berkshire County  
Bristol County  
Cape Cod & Islands  
Essex County  
Hampden County  
Hampshire-Franklin Counties  
MetroWest  
Worcester County

Q: Please confirm that you accept that your application will be reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the following 12 months, only as/when seats become available in your region?

Yes  
No

Q: If no, what term limit would you like to apply to your application?

3 months  
6 months  
9 months

**General Information**

Q: Name:

Q: Home Address:

Q: Cell Phone:

Q: E-Mail:

Q: Position & Organization:

Q: Work Address:

Q: Email your resume/curriculum vitae to [isabelle.greene@massmail.state.MA.US](mailto:isabelle.greene@massmail.state.MA.US). Include your name and the regional commission to which you are applying in the subject line. Check Yes to confirm this action. (Note: your application is not complete until MCSW has received your resume)

Yes



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No

**Commissioner Criteria**

Q: How did you hear about the Commission? (Please limit your response to less than 250 words)

Q: Why are you interested in being appointed to the applicable regional Commission on the Status of Women? (Please limit your response to less than 250 words)

Q: How have you worked in the past to advance the status of women? Please describe any jobs and/or roles you have had related to women's issues and women's rights, your experience level, and the types of populations you have worked with. (Please limit your response to less than 250 words)

Q: List three issues concerning the status of women in your designated region that you most passionate about and why? (Please limit your response to less than 250 words)

Q: How do you feel you can contribute to the Commission and its mission? (Please limit your response to less than 250 words)

Q: The members of regional commissions should be drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout their respective areas. How do you feel your appointment would contribute to this goal? (Please limit your response to less than 250 words)

Q: Would you be able to:

Have some flexibility in your schedule for meetings?

Spend time preparing for meetings?

Participate in events and activities outside of regularly scheduled meeting times?

Yes

No

Q: How do you handle conflict or disagreement in a group setting? Have you experienced conflict with a senior leader or colleague and if so, how did you handle this? (Please limit your response to less than 250 words)

**Background Information**

Q: Have you ever been employed by the federal, state, or local government? If yes, please list positions and periods of employment:

Q: Have you ever been elected or appointed to public office (including other Boards and/or Commissions) in Massachusetts? If yes, please list and include dates:



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Q: Please list any association memberships:

Q: Have you been or are you now a registered lobbyist? If yes, please list the principals you represent(ed) and dates:

Q: If you are appointed, is there anything not covered by your previous responses that might reflect poorly on the state of Massachusetts or on the Commission if it became known publicly? If yes, please explain:

Q: Have you ever been arrested, charged, or indicted for violation of any federal, state, county, or municipal law, regulation, or ordinance (exclude traffic violations for which a fine or civil penalty of \$200 or less was paid)? If yes, please give details:

Q: Please provide contact information for three individuals unrelated to you that would support your appointment (name, organization, title, phone, email):



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**APPENDIX C**

Sample By-Laws

**MCSW By-Laws (Amended May 17, 2017)**

**PREAMBLE**

Pursuant to Clause E of Subsection 4 of Section 66 of Chapter 3 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, the organization and rules of procedure of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women shall be as follows:

**ARTICLE I—NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.

**ARTICLE II—PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Commission shall be to advance women toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women. The mission of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives. The Commission shall have the following responsibilities:

- 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.

**ARTICLE III—REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Commission shall annually, on or before June 2, report the results of its findings and activities of the preceding year and its recommendations to the Governor and to the clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives.

**ARTICLE IV—POWERS OF THE COMMISSION**



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The powers of the Commission shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) To advise and submit recommendations and policies to the governor, legislature, agencies, and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government on issues relating to women
- b) To collaborate with concerned organizations, groups and state departments on issues of common concern using such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, as may be needed;
- c) To select an Executive Director and to acquire adequate staff to perform its duties, subject to appropriation;
- d) To establish and maintain such offices as it may deem necessary, subject to appropriation;
- e) To enact bylaws for its own governance;
- f) To hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary; and
- g) To actively pursue outside funding opportunities in support of the MCSW's mission.

The Commission may request from all state agencies such information and assistance as the Commission may require.

**ARTICLE V—MEMBERS**

**SECTION 1. FOUNDING MEMBERS**

The initial members of the Commission on the Status of Women shall be appointed for the following terms:

- a) The Governor shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, two members for a term of one year, two members for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years;
- b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, two members for a term of one year, one member for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years;
- c) The President of the Senate shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, two members for a term of one year, one member for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years;
- d) The Caucus of Women Legislators or its successor organization shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, one member for a term of one year, two members for a term of two years, and three members for a term of three years.

**SECTION 2. MEMBERS**

The Commission shall consist of nineteen persons as follows:

- a) Five persons appointed by the Governor;
- b) Four persons appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;
- c) Four persons appointed by the president of the Senate; and
- d) Six persons appointed by the Caucus of Women Legislators or its successor organization.

**SECTION 3. DIVERSITY**



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Members of the Commission shall be drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout the Commonwealth and shall have had experience working toward the improvement of the status of women in society.

#### SECTION 4. MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS

Members shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 268A of the General Laws as they apply to special state employees.

#### SECTION 5. TERMS OF OFFICE

A Member shall serve a term of three years duration and until her successor is appointed.

#### SECTION 6. VACANCIES

Any Commissioner may resign by delivering her written resignation to the Commission at its principal office or to the Chair of the Board. The original appointing authority will be notified and requested to fill the vacancy with a new Commissioner for the balance of the unexpired term.

#### SECTION 7. APPOINTMENTS

Appointments shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 of each year through an open application process using a uniform application that is widely distributed throughout the state.

### ARTICLE VI—FINANCES

#### SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Commission shall be July 1 through June 30.

#### SECTION 2. FUNDING

The Commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of the enabling legislation.

#### SECTION 3. ACCOUNTS

Such funds shall be deposited in a separate account with the state Treasurer, be received by said Treasurer on behalf of the Commonwealth, and expended by the Commission in accordance with the law and the donor or grantors intent.

### ARTICLE VII—COMPENSATION AND LIABILITY

#### SECTION 1. COMPENSATION

The members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

#### SECTION 2. LIABILITY





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No person who is now or who later becomes a member of this Commission shall be personally liable to its creditors for any indebtedness or liability, and any and all creditors of this Commission shall look to the assets of this Commission for payment.

ARTICLE VIII—OFFICERS

SECTION 1. OFFICERS

The Commission shall elect from among its members a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary. Only members of the Commission shall be eligible for nomination and election as officers of the Commission. If an officer of this Commission

shall, during her term of office, no longer be a member of the Commission, she shall automatically cease to be an officer of the Commission.

SECTION 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Officers shall be elected annually, at the last meeting of the fiscal year.

SECTION 3. OFFICERS' TERM OF OFFICE

*The elected officers shall serve for a term of one year. The elected officers shall not serve more than two successive terms in any particular office. However, through a majority vote of the currently appointed Commissioners, the Commission's Chair may serve additional one-year terms until a successor Chair is elected and qualified, or until the existing Chair sooner dies, resigns, is removed or becomes disqualified.*

SECTION 4. OFFICER VACANCIES

A vacancy in the Chair's office shall be filled until the next annual election by the Vice-Chair. All other vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the Commission.

In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are both unable to preside, a quorum of the Commission shall elect a temporary Chair.

ARTICLE IX—DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

The duties of the officers are as follows:

SECTION 1. CHAIR

The Chair shall be entrusted to act and carry out policies and decisions of the Commission between meetings of the Commission and the Executive Committee. The Chair shall present actions to the full Commission for ratification. The Chair shall assure that the legislative mandates of the Commission are carried out as prescribed by the Legislature and as formulated in these by-laws to:

- a) Call and preside at all meetings of the Commission and of the Executive Board and conduct these in accordance with parliamentary rules;



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- b) Be an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the nominating committee;
- c) Call special meetings when deemed necessary or desirable;
- d) Set the agenda for Commission and Executive Committee meetings;
- e) Supervise the work of the Director
- f) Serve as spokesperson for the Commission or direct such representation before the public and governmental bodies. Oversee all recommendations and reports to the Executive and Legislative branches
- g) Perform such other duties as the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

The Chair may appoint a parliamentarian.

#### SECTION 2. VICE-CHAIR

The Vice-Chair shall perform all duties of the Chair in the event of the Chair's absence or inability to serve, or in the event of a vacancy in that office until it is filled and shall perform other duties as are designated by the Commission.

#### SECTION 3. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall:

- a) Be responsible for reviewing the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Commission and of the Executive Board;
- b) Assure that the Commission staff furnish copies of the minutes and of the Treasurer's financial statement to all members within a reasonable length of time prior to the next meeting;
- c) Assure that an attendance roster is maintained for each Commission meeting and committee meeting;
- d) Act as historian to the Commission by assuring that all general correspondence, records of meetings and committees, and business before the Commission is maintained;
- e) Sign such instruments as shall be authorized by the Commission;
- f) Perform all other duties necessary for the maintenance of adequate records, files and communications of the Commission.

#### SECTION 4. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall:

- a) Ensure that all financial records are maintained and shall oversee budget preparation and reporting.
- b) Monitor the budget and financial records on an ongoing basis and in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the law and state agencies.
- c) Present the Treasurer's report at regular commission meetings
- d) Strategize with the Executive Director and Commission in how to apply for and receive state, local, private and/or individual grants, appropriations and/or gifts in compliance with applicable state laws and regulations in order to further the purposes of the commission
- e) Present an annual financial report to the Commission
- f) Perform all of the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned.

#### ARTICLE X—EXECUTIVE BOARD



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**SECTION 1. COMPOSITION**

The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers, elected Chairs of the standing committees and the immediate past Chair.

**SECTION 2. EXECUTIVE BOARD QUORUM**

Between Commission meetings and whenever deemed necessary and immediate, the Executive Board shall act as the governing body on behalf of the full Commission. A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum. The decisions of the Executive Board shall be decided by a majority vote of those members present. All business shall be presented to the full Commission for ratification at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

**SECTION 3. MEETINGS**

The Executive Board shall meet once every month, except for the months of July and August at the members discretion. Special meetings may be scheduled at the call of the Chair or of two members of the Executive Board for transaction of necessary business, and act in emergencies reporting in writing all business transacted to the Commission.

“Emergencies” as stated above should be defined as business that may arise between meetings, and which, by reason of action delayed until the regular meeting of the Commission, may cause the loss of an opportunity to promote the best interest of the Commission.

**SECTION 4. POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Executive Board shall, subject to ratification of the Commission, decide such matters as may come before it between meetings. The Executive Board is empowered to approve expenditures to defray necessary expenses that are incurred between the regular meetings of the membership. All such expenditures shall be subject to the approval of the Commissioners at the next meeting of the Commission. It shall also deal with all matters referred to it by the Commission, including monitoring the MSCW finances and the annual evaluation of the Executive Director.

A written record of all of the business transacted by the Executive Board shall be distributed to the Commissioners at the next Commission meeting.

The Executive Board shall not reverse a previous action of the Commission nor take any action pertaining to the membership or to the duties of the Executive Board or the officers.

**ARTICLE XI—COMMITTEES**

**SECTION 1. ORGANIZATION**

The Commission may create such committees, as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Commission.

**SECTION 2. STANDING COMMITTEES**



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The Standing Committees shall be established by the Commission with permanent on-going tasks. The work of the Standing Committees shall be determined by goals and objectives established annually. All committees shall submit their recommendations to the full Commission for approval for such recommendations to be acted upon.

The standing committees shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) Budget and Personnel Committee
- b) Legislative and Public Policy Committee
- c) Program and Planning Committee

Only Commissioners may be members of Standing Committees. Every Commissioner shall serve on at least one committee. Commission members may volunteer to serve on the committee of their choice.

Chairs of standing committees shall be elected annually, at the last meeting of the fiscal year.

There will be co-chairs of the Budget and Personnel Committee, one to chair budget matters, the other to chair personnel matters.

Chairs of standing committees shall be voting members of the Executive Board.

### SECTION 3. SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The Commission is empowered to appoint committees, taskforces, councils, or other appropriate bodies, to study specialized areas of concern and report their findings to the Commission; disseminate information on issues relating to women; develop and promote programs and services to women; and advocate for women's equity.

Membership on such committees shall not be limited to Commissioners. Special representatives other than Commission members may be appointed by the Chair to serve on task forces for the period of time designated by the Commission and would submit interim reports on their special assignments as the Commission requests.

Only Commissioners may vote to elect special committee Chairs, and only Commissioners may be Chairs of special committees.

## ARTICLE XII—MEETINGS

### SECTION 1. SCHEDULE

The Commission shall meet once every month, except for the months of July and August at the members' discretion. A calendar of dates shall be set at the first meeting of the fiscal year. This calendar of dates shall be mailed to all Commissioners and can be amended by a majority vote of the Commission. The Chair shall designate the time and place of the meetings.



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The all-day planning session shall be the last meeting of the fiscal year (June) and shall be devoted to the goals and direction for the next year's workplan and to the annual election of Officers and standing committee chairs

The first meeting of the fiscal year (Sept) shall be devoted to approving the workplan for the year.

At each full commission meeting, there shall be reports from the Chairs of each Standing Committee, report of the Executive Director, reports from any temporary task forces, approval of Executive Board actions, as well as financial reports and any other relevant matters.

#### SECTION 2. QUORUM

A majority of Commissioners currently holding office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Commission business.

#### SECTION 3. OPEN MEETING LAW

All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions, as per the law, may be conducted.

#### SECTION 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS

A special meeting of the Commission can be called by:

- a) The Chair; or
- b) A majority vote of the Executive Board; or
- c) A majority vote of the Commission.

The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. No business can be transacted at the meeting except that stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least three days notice must be given to the membership.

A special meeting can be conducted if a quorum of the Commissioners is present.

#### SECTION 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Observers may attend meetings of the Commission and may be granted the privilege of the floor by vote of the Commission members.

Normally, fifteen minutes will be set-aside at the beginning of the meetings for this purpose. In addition, visitors may speak to specific issues as they arise during the meeting at the discretion of the Chair and the Commissioners.

The Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate and designated members of the Caucus of Legislators shall be invited to attend the monthly meeting on a rotating basis.

#### SECTION 7. ATTENDANCE



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All Commissioners are expected to maintain regular attendance at meetings of the full Commission, and to participate fully and effectively in such committees or task forces as are necessary and appropriate to conduct the business of the Commission. The Secretary of the Commission shall maintain a record of attendance at each Commission meeting. After a commissioner's fourth unexcused absence from regularly scheduled meetings of the full Commission the chair will notify the appropriate appointing authority. The Commission's policy on attendance expectations shall be distributed to each new Commissioner upon appointment.

**ARTICLE XIII—VOTING PRIVILEGES**

At any Commission meeting or committee meeting, each member of the Commission shall be entitled to one vote. The Chair shall not vote except in the event of a tie. There shall be no proxy voting.

**ARTICLE XIV—EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The executive director, who shall not be a member of the Commission, shall be hired and may be discharged by the Commission.

The director shall be responsible to the commission and shall be supervised by the chair.

**ARTICLE XV—AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the Commissioners present and voting provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted at the previous meeting.

**ARTICLE XVI—POLICY ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

The Commission, as needed, shall adopt policies. Policies may be adopted, amended, or repealed by a majority of all votes cast by the Commissioners present and voting, provided that the proposed material has been submitted at the previous meeting.

**ARTICLE XVII—PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

When not in conflict with these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the actions of the Commission.

**ARTICLE XVIII – COMMISSIONER EMERITA**

Any Commissioner who serves out three years is eligible to become a Commissioner Emerita. To become a Commissioner Emerita, such Commissioners whose terms have expired may request such title from the Commission's Executive Board, which shall be approved at the Board's discretion.



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The purpose of a Commissioner Emerita is to remain connected to the work of the Commission and to continue to participate and have a voice. Commissioner Emeritae may participate in all meetings of the Commission but shall have no voting privileges.



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**APPENDIX D**

Regional Commission Candidate Rating Sheet

Name of Applicant	Town	Overall rating from 0-5 (Be specific, decimal use is encouraged, e.g. 4.2, 3.8, etc)	Specific reasons why this candidate would be a good fit or specific reasons why this candidate would NOT be a good fit	If you are not recommending a candidate at this time, would you like to consider them again at a later review, or prefer their application be archived permanently?
Name 1	Town X	4.2		
Name 2	Town X	3.8		
Name 3	Town X	4.7		
Name 4	Town X	2.4		
Name 5	Town X	2.6		
Name 6	Town X	4.8		





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**APPENDIX E**

Sample Press Release for New Commissioner Appointment

**April 5, 2017**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**CONTACT: JILL ASHTON, DIRECTOR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**617-626-6520, [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us)**

**COMMISSIONERS TO BE APPOINTED TO THE HAMPSHIRE-FRANKLIN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**BOSTON, MA** – The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is pleased to announce the appointments of nine commissioners to the Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. The Commissioners are as follows: Denise Brown of Northampton, Ginetta Candelario of Northampton, Chelsea Kline of Northampton, Bonnie MacCracken of Amherst, Linda-Jeanne Mack of Easthampton, Keleigh Pereira of Turner Falls, Marcia Plant Jackson of Leverett, Anais Surkin of Greenfield, and Francia Wisniewski of Montague.

The Commissioners will be sworn in at the Inauguration of the Hampden County and Hampshire-Franklin Commissions on the Status of Women and Girls at the South Hadley Public Library on April 25, 2017. The event will begin at 6:00 pm. We welcome reporters and photographers. This event is open to the general public.

Per its enabling legislation, the Hampshire-Franklin Commission is charged with conducting an ongoing study of matters concerning women within Hampshire and Franklin counties. The Commission is mandated to report its findings to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women annually and to recommend solutions to the challenges facing the women and girls of the Hampshire-Franklin area.

The appointees were selected from a large number of highly qualified and impressive candidates representing strength and diversity in terms of geography, age, professional background and personal experiences. They share a common commitment to the improvement of the status of women in the Hampshire-Franklin region.

For additional information, please contact the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women at 617-626-6520 or online at [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us).

###



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APPENDIX F

Sample Hearing Flyer

(Editable version available upon request to [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us))



We want to  
hear from YOU

Please join the Massachusetts  
Commission on the Status of Women  
and the Cape Cod & Islands  
Commission on the Status of Women  
for a

Regional Public  
Hearing on  
Women's Issues

We want to know about the issues  
that affect you, your children, your  
family, and your community.

Community leaders and local  
residents are invited to testify.

Oral and written testimony will be  
accepted.

Open to the public.

When

Tuesday, March 27, 2018

4:30 pm — 6:30 pm

Where

Cape Cod Community College  
Science Building, Lecture Hall C  
2240 Iyannough Rd, West Barnstable, MA 02668

Who Are We?

The MA Commission on the Status of Women is  
responsible for studying, reviewing, and reporting on  
the status of women in the Commonwealth, and is  
charged with advising executive and legislative bodies  
on the effect of proposed legislation on women.

Regional public hearings allow the commission to collect  
testimony and opinions on women's issues and concerns.

Contact  
Us

Please call or email for **more information** or to **RSVP**:

[mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us) • 617-626-6520

To arrange **reasonable accommodation** and/or interpretation  
services, contact Jill Ashton at:

[jill.ashton@state.ma.us](mailto:jill.ashton@state.ma.us)



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**APPENDIX G**

Sample Press Release for Hearings

**PRESS RELEASE**

**CONTACT: ISABELLE GREENE, PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**617-626-6520, [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us)**

**Barnstable Public Hearing on Women's Issues**

*A public forum for the region's stakeholders to discuss issues and concerns important to women.*

**February 27, 2018** - The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and the Cape Cod and Islands Commissions on the Status of Women will co-host a public hearing on Tuesday, March 27, from 4:30PM to 6:30PM. The hearing will be held in Lecture Hall C in the Science Building of Cape Cod Community College located at 2240 Iyannough Road, West Barnstable, MA 02668.

The purpose of the hearing is to give stakeholders in Barnstable and the surrounding communities the opportunity to discuss issues and concerns important to women, as well as the gaps or barriers they have experienced in the provision of services. Citizens, government officials, and organizations that advocate for women and families in the region are invited to attend, and encouraged to participate in the open public hearing by providing testimony and/or recommendations.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women serves to advance women toward full equality in all areas of life and to provide a permanent, effective voice for women in the Commonwealth. The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women is one of 11 women's regional commissions across Massachusetts that greatly expand the reach of the Commission's work. The March 27 public hearing is one way the Massachusetts and Cape Cod and Islands Commissions fulfill their mandates to survey, review and report on the status of women in the Cape Cod and Islands area, and across the state.

The testimonies provided will be recorded and discussed by the commissioners to consider the impact of policy on women and families in the region. The findings will be cited in the MCSW Annual Report to the Massachusetts Commission's appointing authorities and to state and local officials. The Commissions will accept both written and oral testimony at the Barnstable hearing. Those interested in testifying should sign in upon arriving at the event and will be called upon in order of entry. Oral statements should be limited to three minutes per speaker and should include recommendations to the Commissions.

The hearing is a public event, and media and press outlets are invited to cover the event. For more information, please contact Isabelle Greene, at [isabelle.greene@state.ma.us](mailto:isabelle.greene@state.ma.us) or 617-626-6520.

###



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**APPENDIX H**

Sample Media Advisory

**WHAT:** PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

**WHY:** Inaugural Event of Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women (CCICSW) and Swearing In of Commissioners

**WHEN:** Monday, June 12, 2017, 5-6 p.m.

**WHERE:** Barnstable Superior Courthouse (3195 Main Street, Barnstable)

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:**

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Swearing-In of Commissioners
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	First Meeting of the Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women

**WHO:** *Commissioners to be sworn in are:*

Jan Barton of Barnstable  
Helen Bresnahan of Centerville  
Emily Gold of Falmouth  
Barbara Gookin of Nantucket  
Janet Joakim of Barnstable  
Susan Kadar of Truro  
Catherine King of South Dennis  
Cheryl Osimo of Barnstable  
Pam Pollock of Bourne  
Deborah Thompson of South Dennis  
Janet Ulhar-Tinney of Eastham  
Elaine Cawley Weintraub of West Tisbury  
Evelyn Young of Cotuit

The CCICSW was legislatively established by at the end of the last legislative session and calls for the board of thirteen Commissioners to hear input, collect data, and propose solutions for concerns of the women. The appointees were selected by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) from a large number of highly qualified and impressive candidates representing strength and diversity in terms of geography, age, professional background and personal experiences. They share a common commitment to the improvement of the status of women on the Cape and Islands.

**For more information contact:** Jill Ashton, MCSW Executive Director, 617-626-6520



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## APPENDIX I

### Sample Regional Commission One-Pager



### Essex County Commission on the Status of Women

#### WHO WE ARE

The ECCSW is a legislatively established executive body comprised of a group of female volunteers. Commissioners are appointed to serve three-year terms and come from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds. The common bond that unites us together is our steadfast dedication to work toward equality and opportunity for the women in our community.

#### OUR MISSION

The mission of the ECCSW is to understand and improve the status and quality of women and girls in Essex County and to provide an effective voice for women in our community that fosters inclusiveness and advancement toward equity in all areas of life.

#### WHAT WE DO

The ECCSW attempts to create a framework of equality in areas such as healthcare, education, housing, childcare and employment. We also seek to advance the economic opportunity of women and girls in our community through various means, including understanding and reporting on the status of women in the county; consulting with executive and legislative bodies on the effect on women of proposed legislation and advocating for those legislative proposals that will improve opportunities for women and girls; informing leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women; serving as a liaison between government and community groups; and addressing programs and practices in state and local agencies that impact women.

#### HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

The ECCSW was established to improve the status of women and girls in Essex County. If your agency shares a similar mission, please allow us to help promote your cause and facilitate your collaboration among other local women's organizations in Essex County and the Commonwealth at large!



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**APPENDIX J**

Letter to Regional Commission Charis Regarding Social Media Ethics

July 20, 2017

Hello Regional Chairs and Co-Chairs:

We are delighted to see the growth and progress of our Regional Commissions. Alongside this growth comes the use of social media and other applications to spread information. Unfortunately, we have discovered that we need to discuss ethics and blurred lines with all of the Regional Commissions on the usage of social media platform pages and how each Commissioner represents themselves while using the Commissioner title.

Each and every one of our commissions is a non-partisan body, meaning a commission (or a commissioner in her official capacity) cannot and should not participate in any kind of political endorsement, fundraising activity (meaning collecting the money), or unethical conduct. This policy is true of all parts of your commission's operations, from meetings, to events, to social media postings. Because your official websites, Facebook pages, Twitters, and all other accounts are associated with the commission name, you are subject to compliance with relevant state policies, including harassment and discrimination, confidentiality, ethics rules, code of conduct, state Ethics Law, Federal Copyright law, and other applicable laws and regulations.

Two types of issues have been brought to our attention recently. The first has to do with the prohibition against endorsement of any candidate for political office, ballot question, or political party. This also means commissions (and commissioners in their official capacity) cannot oppose any candidate, ballot question or political party. As an example, if any elected official introduces a bill which might be detrimental to women, it is permissible for a commission to voice opposition to the bill (within the limits of appropriate behavior and language, of course); but it is not permissible to advocate against said elected official's re-election because of that bill. Another problem is created when a commission (or a commissioner acting in her official role) associates with a partisan organization in such a manner as to blur the lines between the two groups – giving the impression that the commission supports the other organization's partisan agenda. An example would be a commissioner signing a letter to a legislator in support or opposition of a bill and signing both as a commissioner and as a member of the partisan organization – or even co-signing any letter or email with a partisan organization. When using email, commissioners should only include their title as a commissioner when the email is used for an official communication. This means that personal emails should not include the title of commissioner in the signature unless being used at that time for official commission duties. One final activity which may be approaching the line is when a commission's official Facebook page or Twitter account shares a post from a partisan organization, even when the post itself is not partisan, because many people seeing the post will follow it back to the original partisan web site and possibly assume



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commission support for that partisan agenda. If there is a question, it is best to err on the side of caution.

This does not mean that a commissioner cannot be a member or even a leader of a partisan organization, just that she has to keep the two activities completely separate. And this is not to say that a commission is unable to work alongside organizations that uphold a partisan agenda; however, your role as a Commissioner in cooperation with any partisan group should be for a strictly non-partisan matter and that needs to be made clear. You may not post on your commission Facebook page in support of a single candidate for office, but rather may post in support of all women running for office. You may not use your individual title as a commissioner to post online, send correspondence through email, or any other communication in a partisan manner. All of your communications under the commission's name are subject to this state Ethics policy.

Please take a look at the State Ethics Commission's Advisory on Public Employee Political Activity <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/educationalmaterials/advisories/advisory-11-1.html> and use it as a resource in governing any future posts and activities. If you are unsure about any communication or public posting you may want to publish in the future, please feel free to reach out to the MCSW office for guidance and clarification.

We continue to be grateful for the wonderful and substantial work you are doing in your regions and look forward to the future for women and girls in the Commonwealth.

Yours sincerely,

Margot N. Parrot, Chair

Mary-dith Tuitt, Vice Chair and Program & Planning Co-Chair

Tahira Amatul-Wadud, Program & Planning Co-Chair



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**APPENDIX K**

**FY19 Notice Regarding MCSW Grant Proposals  
September 2018**

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women will make available grants in the range of \$200 to \$1,000 to regional women's commissions in Massachusetts to support county level programs and initiatives. Regional women's commissions are legislatively charged with the responsibility of engaging in a study of all matters concerning women in the region for the purpose of informing policy solutions to advance the status of women. Grant funding is intended to support and amplify this charge.

**Principals:**

Allocation decisions will be made with a consideration of maximizing the collective impact by the network of state and regional women's commission.

Potential grantees should engage in effective and essential partnerships to advance the project, including sister women's commission as well as community non-profits, government entities, and business with a shared mission. Coalition – in composition and leadership – should represent the diversity of the community and be non-partisan.

Funds that are publicly provided must be effectively and ethically expended, and strategically utilized to best achieve the goals of the project and commission mission.

**Grant cycle:**

For the 2018-2019 programmatic year, the MCSW will accept a first round of applications on or before October 29, 2018 and then again in January 4, 2019. Allocations will be made in November and February respectively.

**How to apply:**

Applications must include a narrative, detailing the scope, timeline, anticipated impact, and goals of the program, as well as a detailed budget and vendors. [Refer to the current MCSW grant application material](#) and [preferred government vendor list](#).

**Reporting:**





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Regional commissions awarded funding will be required to report on the impact of the grants in their annual report submitted to MCSW each May.

For additional information please contact both Jill Ashton and Isabelle Greene,  
[Jill.Ashton@mass.gov](mailto:Jill.Ashton@mass.gov), [Isabelle.Greene@mass.gov](mailto:Isabelle.Greene@mass.gov).



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**APPENDIX L**

Sample Grant Proposal Application Questions

September 2018

**Section 1 - Grant Requester Information and Confirmation**

**Section 1 of 2**

Q: Select the regional commission submitting this grant application.

Berkshire County CSW

Bristol County CSW

Cape Cod & Islands CSW

Eastern Regional CSW

Essex County CSW

Hampden County CSW

Hampshire-Franklin CSW

MetroWest CSW

Plymouth County CSW

Upper Middlesex CSW

Worcester County CSW

Q: Please select the term for which you would like your grant application considered?

\*

October 2018

January 2019



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Q: Please confirm that you acknowledge that grant applications submitted for October 2018 will be given priority over grant applications submitted in January 2019, and only remaining funds, if any, from the October 2018 allotment will be available for allocation in January 2019.

\*

Yes

No

Q: Please enter a contact name to represent your commission if any questions arise

\*

Q: Please enter a contact email

\*

**Section 2 of 2**

**Program Grant Criteria**

Grant \$ amount your commission is requesting.

\*

Q: Detailed description of the scope of the program(s) to which this grant may fund.

\*

Q: Detailed description of the goals of the program(s) to which this grant may fund.

\*

Q: Summary of the anticipated impact of the program(s) to which this grant may fund.

\*

Q: Please upload an itemized budget that corresponds to the grant request total for the projected expenses of your commission's activities.

\*

Q: Please confirm that you accept that program grants will be provided to each regional commission under the condition that the state commission has adequate funds to allocate.

\*



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Yes

No

Q: Please confirm that you accept that regional commission program grant requests will be evaluated as they align with the mission of the MCSW in a cost effective manner, as explained in the Regional Commission Handbook.

\*

Yes

No

Q: Please confirm that you accept that regional commission program grant requests can be denied by MCSW for any reason.

\*

Yes

No



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**APPENDIX M**

Sample Regional Commission Annual Report

**Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women Annual Report**

**May 2017**

**Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women ~ Members**

Chantel Bethea ~ Worcester

Cathleen Liberty ~ Worcester

Suzanne Lewandowski ~ North Brookfield

Irene Rodriguez- Hernandez ~Gardner

Amy Ebbeson ~ Rutland

Judith Ockene ~ Harvard

Randi Zanca ~Northbridge

Sheila Simon-Aleman ~ Fitchburg

Joann Stemmermann ~ Bolton

**The following were nominated and elected as officers:**

*Chantel Bethea ~ Chair*

*Amy Ebbeson ~ Vice Chair*

*Cathleen Liberty ~ Secretary (note taker)*

**Advisory Board Members**

Robin Currie ~ Worcester

Courtney Ross Esobar ~ Worcester

Talia Gallagher ~ Worcester



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Jacqueline McLean ~ Shrewsbury

Fiona LaRosa-Waters ~ Cambridge

*Purpose:*

The purpose of the Commission shall be to advance women toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women. The mission of the Worcester County Commission on that Status of Women is to act as a permanent centralizing force and effective voice in the County of Worcester to ensure the equal status of women of every race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, ability, age and sexual orientation in educational, economic, political, health, legal, and social spheres including the provision of information, referrals, and guidance. The commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights, and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives.

*Membership:*

We had one member step down due to work and commitment level of the commission. We have now filled that position with Joann Stemmermann of Bolton, MA. She comes with a background in Adolescent Development, Gender Identity and Agency, Curriculum Design, Strategic Gendering, Critical Pedagogy, Qualitative Research and Feminist Analysis.

*Hearings/Public Forums:*

The Worcester County CSW and the Mass Commission on the Status of Women held a public hearing on “Women’s Issues” in Leominster, Ma on January 24<sup>th</sup> at the Leominster Public Library. The theme: “Citizens, government officials and organizations that advocate for women and families in the region are invited to attend and encouraged to participate. Let us know about issues that are important to you, your children, your family and your community. “

The event was attended by about 50 people. Issues raised were access to transportation in rural areas, services for homeless women and families, the need for comprehensive sexuality education to decrease the amount of teen pregnancy in high schools. The need for more supports for women living in poverty was highlighted. A few citizens testified about the over-prescription of damaging psychoactive medications with little medical oversight and follow through.

*Additional Activities:*

**Worcester County CSW participated in the CHIP (community health improvement plan)**

*Vision:*

Greater Worcester is a great place to be born, grow up, learn, live, work, raise a family, grow and participate in community life.



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**Mission:**

- To promote the shared learning, reflection and broad engagement that improves community decision-making and quality of life for residents of Healthy Greater Worcester.
- To further its mission, Healthy Greater Worcester, CHNA 8 will work together to:
- Build and maintain the CHNA participation, ensuring that it is universally inclusive and representative of the diverse organizations, agencies, and CHNA 8 residents;
- Create opportunities for networking between people and organizations within the CHNA; Educate, raise awareness, and find solutions to health issues that affect quality of life; Provide guidance to CHNA towns in their efforts to assess gaps and assets;
- Develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives, events, projects and policies that address areas of common interest to the CHNA 8 members; and
- Mobilize the community to advocate for health in all policies and ensure implementation through effective program models and best practices.
- The commission continues to use the CHIP as a touchstone and a basis for interagency collaboration.

**Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women held their First Legislative Breakfast September 16<sup>th</sup> 2016**



The

meeting included breakfast, networking, and a panel discussion among local elected officials and experts on policy issues impacting women's issues.

**Worcester County CSW partnered with Emerge MA for a "WOW Women Organizing to Win Event December 5<sup>th</sup> at the YWCA.**

The panel made it clear that women have the power to make a difference in their communities.

Learn from the women who have, build the skills to tell your story, and grow your network to get involved!

The workshop included a panel of powerful women leaders, training on skills you need to be civically active, and a discussion about opportunities that exist to change the world. It was attended by about 25 women from across the state, with participants coming from as far away as the Berkshires.



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**Worcester County CSW partnered with Worcester State University on a presentation on Human Trafficking on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017**

Robin Currie founded the Central Massachusetts Coalition to End Human Trafficking and also works with "Not for Sale," an agency addressing the problem nationally. She recently embarked on a 500-mile "Walk Free" trek of the streets and backyards of New England to raise awareness that human trafficking is a local problem. She spoke to a standing room only crowd of community members, representatives of nonprofits and WSU students, staff and faculty.

**Worcester County CSW partnered with the Racial Justice Task Force of the YWCA for International Women's Day on March 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 with keynote Speaker Maura Healey Attorney General of Massachusetts.**

Keynote Address

Maura Healey, Massachusetts Attorney General

International Women's Day is a worldwide event celebrating the achievements of women while calling for greater equality.

We had an inspiring evening as we honored women's experiences, addressed challenging issues, and celebrated who we are. This year, Be Bold for Change! Advocate and take actions that truly drive change for women.

**Worcester County CSW will be participating in the Fifth Annual Statewide Gathering with Investing in Girls May 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Sturbridge, MA.**

The Investing in Girls Alliance (IIGA) was created in 2007 at the behest of the Worcester Mayor's Task Force on Youth at Risk due to concerns about the rise of violence among girls and young women in greater Worcester. The Alliance is made up of representatives from local and state government agencies, public schools and colleges in the Greater Worcester area, non-profit and private organizations.

The Investing in Girls Alliance (IIGA) is an unprecedented collaboration to address the challenges girls face in the crucial middle-school transition years. IIGA's mission is to improve services for middle school girls in central Massachusetts through research, education, advocacy, and collaboration. The ultimate vision of the Investing in Girls Alliance is that all girls grow up to be happy, healthy, and productive women. In order to achieve our mission we focus on three priority areas. Physical, Mental and Sexual Health are core to girls' well-being and good health provides the foundation for achievements throughout her lifetime. Education and Economic Empowerment gives girls the tools and opportunities they need to be in charge of their lives and actively engage in their families and communities. Addressing issues of Violence and Safety is fundamental to girls' success; we must ensure the safety of girls where they grow, learn, work and play. The work of IIGA centers around four key strategies; Data and Research to effectively measure the well being of local girls and understand their current and emerging needs, Public Education to raise community awareness of the unique needs, assets and challenges of middle school aged girls, Promoting Best Practices through networked training and peer sharing and Advocacy to secure gender equitable policies and





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sufficient resources for girls by aligning with like partners across the state including the MA Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

*Conclusion:*

This year's findings demonstrated that the women of Worcester County have a lot of work to do to achieve the potential and full equality of all women. The most pressing issue is the war on drugs for women. The lack of services, and beds for those trying to become better in their communities.

*Priority Issues identified:*

- Mental health
- Health care navigation, available services, transportation to services, appeal process when service is denied
- Substance abuse
- Eating disorders
- Culturally Competent/ Appropriate Services
- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse/ Rape
- Economics for women- Jobs, Financial literacy
- Childcare , Child hunger – WIC
- Immigrant women
- Education (pre-k through college)
  - Stem pipeline
  - Head-start
  - Teen pregnancy
- Seniors
- Veterans

*Goals for 2017 - 2018*

1. Collaborate with the Mass CSW and Regional Commissions to hold more public hearings in order to raise awareness of critical issues facing women in Massachusetts and to grow the participation and involvement of individual and organizational allies in the work of advancing equity for women of Massachusetts.
2. Maintain regular contact with our legislators and officials on issues that concern women that have been identified as our priority areas of focus.
3. Continue to collaborate with other organizations, and public officials, in order to support women and girls through public awareness.
4. Work closely with our sister commissions on implementing and developing best practices for the betterment of each commission.



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5. Work on writing and proposing new state level legislative policies for women.
6. Attend community events and share literature about the commission to promote awareness of our role and work to increase involvement in our activities.

Submitted by: Chantel Bethea, Chair of the Worcester County CSW



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APPENDIX N

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