

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

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Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2000

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women was established by legislation in 1998. It was charged with the following duties:

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

Administrative activities of the Commission during Fiscal Year 2000 included establishing our headquarters. Office space was secured at the Charles F. Hurley Building, 19 Staniford Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA. The Commission then began the process of developing agency procedures and policies, hiring staff and beginning the public participation process as mandated by our charter.

I. Vision Committee

From March 1999 until February 2000, the Vision Committee and the full Commission met to develop the following:

- Mission Statement

- Working Norms
- Principles to Guide Our Work
- Hoped for Outcomes
- Our Roles
- Process and Power
- Next Steps

The work of the Vision Committee is ongoing and will continue in Fiscal Year 2001. Consultant Erlene Belton, CEO of The Lyceum Group, facilitated the Retreat and Strategic Planning sessions. At the Strategic Planning session held February 23, 2000, issues relating to the roles and functions of the Commission were explored. These were determined to be (1) to establish policy; (2) determine our advocacy role(s); and (3) to determine operational functions such as budgeting, human resources and commission continuity. (Please see Attachments for the Vision Committee's Report and Recommendations.)

II. Outreach

The Commission established an internal database of public and private organizations who work on issues of concern to women and their families within the Commonwealth.

The Commissioners participated in the Annual Convention of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW), held in Boston in July 1999. The Commission was also represented at the meetings of the New England Women's Commissions. An agency email address was established, mcsw@state.ma.us.

III. Personnel

The hiring process for the Executive Director and the Program Coordinator began in August with advertisements in major newspapers across the state and on the Commonwealth Employment Opportunities (CEO). Interviews for the Executive Director began in November and finalists were picked in December 1999. Priscilla Golding was offered and accepted the position in January and entered employment on March 6, 2000. Interviews for the Program Coordinator began in March. Three finalists met with the Personnel Committee and Heidi Kruckenberg was offered and accepted the position.

She began employment on May 15, 2000. A student intern from Simmons College, Pam Mutascio, was hired in April and works eighteen hours a week. Two additional interns will be joining the Commission during the summer. The Administrative Assistant position was posted on the CEO and interviews will begin in June. The agency will be at full staff with three full-time and one or two intern positions.

IV. Monthly Meeting Summary

The Commission established a regular meeting date, the fourth Wednesday of every month from June 1999 through June 2000. The Executive Committee met on the second Tuesday of the month until April and then on the second Thursday. An interim administrator, Ann Rudy, was hired in June 1999 and worked until November 2000, assisting the Commissioners in all aspects of the administration of the agency. (Please see Attachments for full minutes from monthly meetings).

The following women served as Commissioners during Fiscal Year 2000:

Minosca Alcántara, Barbara Gomes Beach, Beth Boland, Sandra Jesse Carter, Donna Finneran, Marianne Fleckner, Mary Ann Glendon, Meiling Hazelton, Clare Higgins, Frances Hogan, Helen Jackson, Mary Reardon Johnson, Marilyn McGrath Lewis, Roseanna Means, Angela Menino, Susana Segat, Jo Anne Thompson, Gwendolyn Tyre, and Kateri Walsh.

On June 23, 1999 the Commission approved its Mission Statement and By-Laws. (See Attachments.) On July 28, 1999 Commissioners decided on a job description and salary range for the Executive Director and Program Coordinator positions. They also clarified that the Commission is an Independent Agency of the Commonwealth.

The Vision Subcommittee led a discussion in July on “Strengthening Our Community Ties;” “Strengthening Our Infrastructure;” and “Developing Our Policy Positions.”

In August 1999 and September 1999 the officers and committee descriptions were delineated. (See attached under By-Laws.) The Commission, in September, duly elected officers. Susana Segat of Cambridge was elected Chair; Beth Boland of Dover, Vice Chair; Minosca Alcántara of Cambridge, Treasurer; and Barbara Gomes Beach of Dorchester, Secretary.

In October of 1999 the Commissioners scheduled the Executive Director interviews, and began the discussion for the structure of public hearings planned for early 2000. A strategic retreat was planned for January 2000.

At the November 1999 meeting, candidates for Executive Director were picked and a letter was sent regarding the Program Coordinator position to determine continued interest by applicants. The Personnel Committee was established as a standing committee of the Commission.

In December 1999 the final two candidates for Executive Director were chosen and reference checks were initiated.

The Commission held a regular meeting in January 2000 and a retreat to continue the Vision activities. Priscilla Golding was selected as the Executive Director.

In February 2000 the Commission met in regular session and an additional Strategic Planning session was held. Planning for the Public Hearings continued.

At the March 2000 meeting, dates and sites for the Commission's Public Hearings were confirmed. The hiring process for the Program Coordinator position was outlined and approved.

During the April 2000 meeting, Heidi Kruckenberg was confirmed as the final candidate for the Program Coordinator position. The Legislative Committee was reconstituted and a date was set to meet with the Steering Committee of the Caucus of Women Legislators.

V. Public Hearings

During the winter of 1999 and spring of 2000, the Commission's Hearings Subcommittee met regularly and reported to the full Commission on the planning of a series of public hearings. The first hearing will be held on June 5, 2000 at the Meline Kasparian Development Center in Springfield, MA. The second will be held in Pittsfield, MA, on June 28, 2000 at the office of Girls Incorporated. An invitational letter, flier, and a survey were sent to a large mailing list. The list included individual women, organizations, and local and state elected officials. (Examples of the mailing are attached.) The goal of the hearings is for the Commissioners to listen directly to the concerns of women

and organizations that work with women. The survey will assist the Commission in prioritizing issues of concern.

In Fiscal Year 2001, four more hearings will be held at various statewide sites.

VI. Conclusion

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is committed to helping Commission members become a knowledgeable, cohesive, high functioning organization building on their commitment to fundamental freedom and quality of life for all women.

The Commission is committed to prioritizing our work focus utilizing the Beijing Platform and our charter as our guide; we will take the time to engage in philosophical discussions that articulate clearly the different perspectives that we each represent to help increase understanding and create a positive, inclusive learning environment as we go about our work.

VII. Financial Expenditure Summary

Expenditures Fiscal Year 2000 as of May 19, 2000

Salaries and Benefits	\$ 20,726.23
Office Management and ITD services	\$ 8,328.11
Consultant	\$ 2,500.00
Fees/Dues	\$ 250.00
Travel	\$ 180.41
National Conference Expenses	\$ 676.00
Total Expenditures	<hr/> \$ 36,559.41

In addition to our current expenditures specified above, the Commission has encumbered approximately \$33,000 to cover salaries, insurance, Medicare withholdings and unemployment as well as to cover printing, copying and office supplies for the months of May 2000 and June 2000.

The breakdown of our budget consists of 68% for salaries, 9% for office maintenance, 9% for travel, consultant fees and dues and 12% for media/database expenses. Since our biggest operating expense is associated with salaries of our personnel, and during the Fiscal Year 2000, the Commission was not fully staffed, our forecasted expenditure for the year will be approximately \$125,000 under budget. The Commission had a temporary staff person during the months of June through November 1999, and Executive Director and Program Coordinator, who started work March 6, 2000 and May 15, 2000 respectively and an intern who works 18 hours/week.

By the beginning of Fiscal Year 2001 the Commission will be fully staffed including an Administrative Assistant. It is our expectation that the Fiscal Year end will appropriately expend our current resource appropriation of \$195,000.

VIII. Attachments

- By-Laws
- Vision Committee Report and Recommendations
- Strategic Planning Session Report
- The Lyceum Group Letter
- Monthly Meeting Minutes
- Hearings Flier/Invitation
- Survey
- Western Massachusetts Survey Results
- Commission Information Sheet