



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**



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CONTACT: Jill Ashton, Executive Director
Jill.Ashton@mass.gov

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Releases a Report on the “Status of Girls in the Commonwealth and Related Recommendations”

BOSTON - The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women has released a report that evaluates the status of girls in the Commonwealth from the start and throughout the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report addresses the methods by which information was gathered, along with key findings from the MCSW’s Girls Initiative, in a continued effort to center the voices of girls in the Commonwealth. This information will inform public policy that will better support the girls of today while advancing the status and conditions of the women of tomorrow.

For this report, information was gathered from listening sessions over the Zoom platform from April 20, 2021, to April 21, 2021, which was essential to gain deeper insights and testimony about key themes identified as areas of interest. To supplement the data gathered from attendees at listening sessions, the Girls Initiative Survey was launched on Monday, April 5, 2021, and remained open through May 7, 2021. Altogether the Girls Initiative included the voices of 98 girls from 40 different communities across the Commonwealth.

While many issues were exacerbated by the pandemic, the findings demonstrate that those which were longstanding and insufficiently addressed prior to COVID-19, are those in which girls expressed heightened concerns amidst the pandemic and into the period of recovery. The following has been identified by girls as issues of high impact, and are subsequently desired areas of improvement starting with diminished self-esteem and self-confidence with 72.6% of survey respondents indicating this. Additionally, 32% of survey respondents reported barriers in accessing mental health services, while also noting a decline in healthy personal relationships. Finally, girls reported several concerns regarding school curricula and programming that would foster better communities, mentorships, and opportunities to inherit in the future.

To view the Girls Initiative Report, please go to: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/mcsw-announcements-and-media>. For more information, please contact us at mcsw@mass.gov, or visit www.mass.gov/women.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is an independent state agency that was legislatively created in 1998 to advance women of the Commonwealth to full equality in all areas of life and to promote their rights and opportunities. The MCSW provides a permanent, effective voice for the women of Massachusetts.