



Massachusetts
Commission on the
Status of Women

JUNE 2, 2022

ANNUAL REPORT FY22



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REMARKS FROM THE 2021-2022 CHAIR

“Our mission is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts”

On behalf of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, it is my pleasure to present a brief summary of our FY22 Annual Report. We are incredibly grateful for your belief in our mission: with an operating budget doubled in size, our competent staff and team of Commissioners maintain the commitment to supporting women and girls in the Commonwealth. This increased budget allows for expanded programming, more in-depth research and outreach efforts, and the ability to compensate the dedicated interns who provide critical support to the staff. This funding enables MCSW to develop long-term initiatives that more richly report on the status of women and girls throughout the Commonwealth, acting as a central location for data gathering and analysis. Five new staff members and thirteen interns joined us this year to carry out our mission, which benefits from a deeper and more collaborative effort with our 11 Regional Commissions. This year, MCSW reported on the experiences of women in the workforce, the 4th in a series of Covid-19 reports that began in March 2020. Using various platforms, MCSW listened to the women of Massachusetts discussing their concerns about workplace treatment, unequal benefits, the difficulties of remote work, and mental health. From this came the Women in the Workforce Report, which offers policy recommendations and legislative actions to better aid the women of Massachusetts in the workforce. Other programmatic highlights included a celebration of MCSW Monumental Changemakers— the first for MCSW; our Girls Initiative which in 2021 hosted a series of listening sessions that brought forth our second Girls report; rebranded as the Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative (GELI); we conducted virtual regional discussions with each of the four appointing authorities and 11 regional chapters, and ended the year with a comprehensive Regional Commissions Conversation with the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators. We look forward to closing out the Fiscal year 2022 with our annual Commonwealth Heroines Celebration on June 22nd.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denella Clark', written in a cursive style.

Denella Clark
Chairwoman

LIST OF COMMISSIONERS, STAFF, INTERNS

COMMISSIONERS

Denella Clark, Chair, Hyde Park/ Boston
Audrey Hall, Vice-Chair, Framingham
Sarah Glenn-Smith, Treasurer, Holliston
Dr. Aisha Johnson Miller, Secretary, Mattapan/ Boston
Tanisha Arena, Springfield
Rebecca Bact, Auburndale
Guimel Devarvalho, Natick
Jean Fox, Freetown
Marianne Fleckner, Westford
Liz Friedman, Northampton
Allison Goldberg, Marblehead
Nina Liang, Quincy
Leslie-Ann McGee, Kingston
Christine Monska, Auburndale
Sonia Shah, Natick
Shaitia Spruell, Lancaster
Marydith Tuitt, Dorchester/Boston

STAFF

Yarice Hidalgo, Executive Director, Arlington (November 8, 2021-April 26, 2022)
Shaitia Spruell, Interim Executive Director, Lancaster (April 25, 2022- present)
Ellen Panarese Gibson, Interim Executive Director (August 2021-November 2021) Program and Research Director, Newton
Tina Games, Regional Commissions Director, Harwich
Melanie Soto, Communications and Events Coordinator, Boston
Darlene Kelter, Administrative Assistant, Lynnfield

INTERNS

Ana Ali, Mount Holyoke College, Bachelors Degree
Campbell Devlin, Tufts University, Bachelors Degree
Raie Gessesse, Harvard Kennedy School, Master in Public Policy
Emily Greer, Boston College, Masters of Social Work
Camier Hall, Boston College, Masters of Social Work
Anuka Manghwani, Lexington High School Junior
Agnes Nkansah, Brandeis Heller School for Social Policy & Management, Masters Degree
Amelia Oliver, Tufts university, Bachelors Degree
Megan Paul, Boston College, Bachelors Degree
Jaylene Tiscareno, Boston College, Masters of Social Work
Diego Torres, Bunker Hill Community College, Associates Degree
Tait Ziener, Suffolk University, Bachelors Degree

CHARGES OF THE COMMISSION

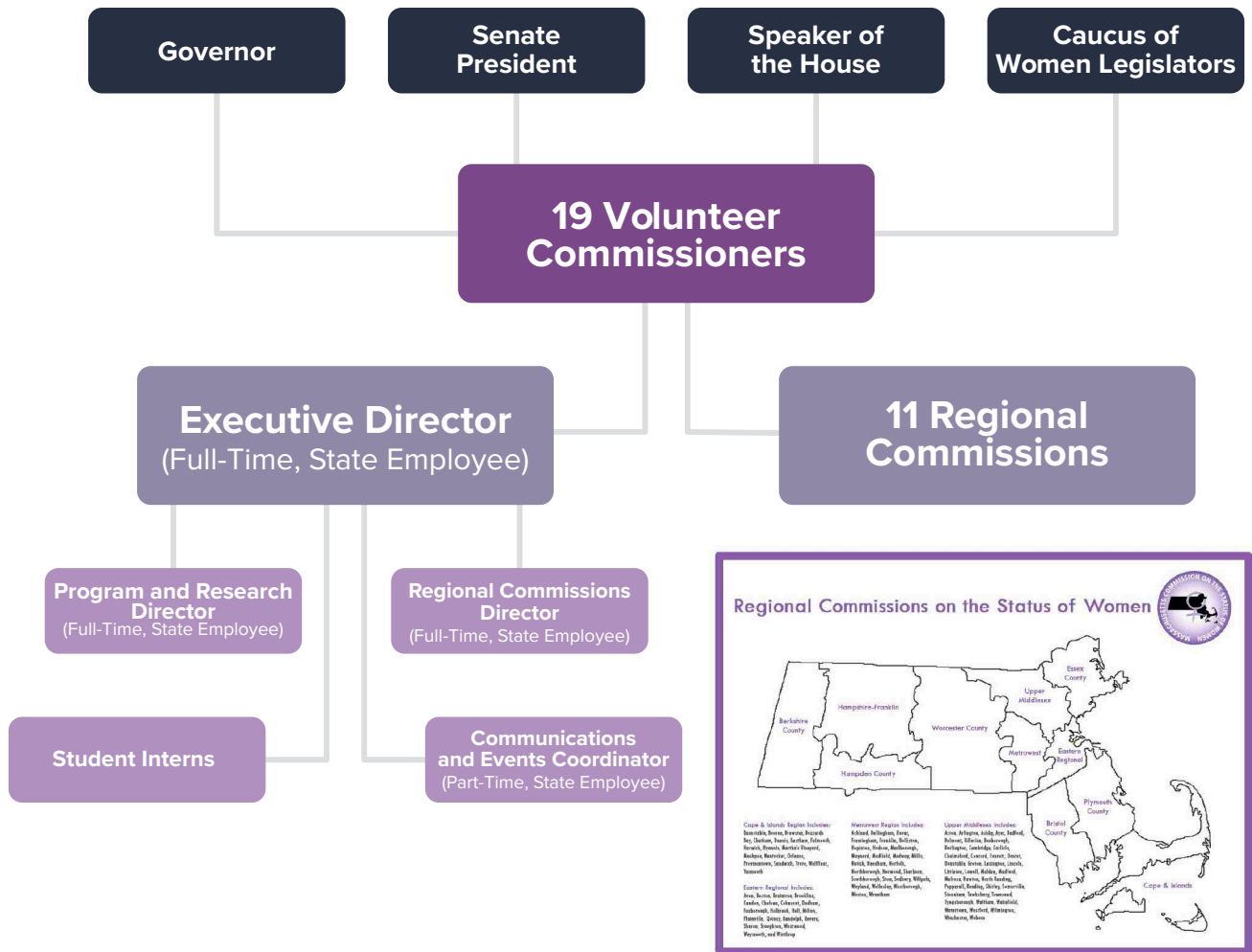
Charges under MA Chapter 3, Section 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws, The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is empowered to:

- Study, review, and report on the status of women in the Commonwealth
- Advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect of proposed legislation on women
- Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women
- Provide referrals and serve as a resource of information on issues pertaining to women
- Identify and recommend qualified women for positions at all levels of government
- Promote and facilitate collaboration among local women commissions and among women's organizations in the state
- Serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues affecting women

Organization:

The Commission is composed of **19 commissioners** who are appointed by one of **four appointing authorities**: the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators. Commissioners serve in a voluntary capacity, and the work of the Commission is facilitated by three full-time and one part-time staff member, who are assisted by interns year-round. The full Commission meets monthly, September through June, as does the MCSW Executive Committee with meetings in the months of July and August at the call of leadership. In addition, each Commissioner is a member of at least one standing committee that generally meets monthly. The standing committees include the Legislative and Public Policy Committee, Program and Planning Committee, and Finance Committee.

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women: Organizational Chart



MCSW BUDGET FY2022

We are extremely proud of receiving and appreciate the increase in funding which shows the trust and support of the elected officials. After years of being severely underfunded the women and girls of the Commonwealth can truly see that our legislature sees our work and are hearing our voices. Now we are positioned to do more in-depth research and advocacy. We will be bringing on two new directors to elevate our visibility and strengthen our partnerships with our appointing bodies, legislators, and the community.

Programmatic Year 2021-2022 Budget
 FY22 Budget: \$486,700.00
 Salaries: \$338,780.50
 Operational Expenses: \$147,919.50
 Supplemental Funding: \$500,000.00
 Total FY22: 986,700.00

PROGRAMS, ADVOCACY, AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES;

under the purview of Program & Planning Committee

Public Hearing November 2021

Each year, the MCSW holds hearings across the Commonwealth to hear testimony from citizens, government officials, and local organizations that provide assistance to women and girls about the issues they are facing in their communities. The testimony presented at hearings informs both our research and legislative work at the Commission. On November 18th, the Commission held the only public hearing of the year in collaboration with the Regional Commissions; this was due to a transition within the MCSW staff. The public hearing focused on the topic of women in the workforce and sought to elevate the voices of women in the workforce regarding financial, mental health, and in-person/remote work experience. The Commission used the testimony collected to inform the advocacy work in regards to legislation that can help women in the Commonwealth. We also used the online survey and community conversations to create a full and very informative report.

Community Conversations

This year the MCSW held community conversations with a diverse group of seven women-centered organizations around Massachusetts. Between January and February, the MCSW met with MomUp, South Shore Women's Business Network, Community Action Pioneer Valley, Brockton Workers Alliance Community, La Colaborativa in Chelsea, and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

Each conversation was structured with guiding questions. The community conversations were supplemental to the survey data and public hearing for the Women in the Workforce Report, emphasizing the value of storytelling. These conversations ensured that the voices of women who are historically underrepresented were included in a more focused manner in the report. Our community conversation with La Colaborativa was hosted in Chelsea at their headquarters the rest of the community conversations were held virtually.

Questions that guided our conversations were:

- *How much does your racial/ethnic identity affect your treatment in the workforce?*
- *Does your income support individuals other than yourself; if so, who of the following does your income support?*
- *How much has your work status affected your ability to prioritize health care appointments (doctor's visits, physical therapy, mental health appointments, dentist appointments, etc.)?*
- *How have your workplace experiences changed in the past year?*
- *How have your personal home life responsibilities changed in the past year? (i.e. work life, home life, child care, home care, social life, bill paying, etc.)?*

Monumental Changemakers

On January 20th, the MCSW honored former state Commissioners for their commitment and inspiring work during their tenure. Joined by Senate President Spilka, the full commission recognized 12 former Commissioners for their service to MCSW and the women and girls of the Commonwealth.

The event began with special remarks from Senate President Spilka where she discussed the progress women in the Commonwealth have made, but importantly the work that still has to be done. She touched on the need to improve childcare accessibility and affordability and referenced our Childcare report from 2020, how crucial it is to continue to support women and girls in the Commonwealth during the pandemic, and the importance of ensuring the MCSW has sufficient funding to continue to do their work. She thanked the MCSW and former commissioners for their efforts in providing a permanent voice for the women and girls of Massachusetts.

Former commissioners were honored with a monumental changemaker package delivered to their homes which included a citation from their legislator, a certificate, and an engraved vase. A slide show was presented by Chairwomen Clark that highlighted the work and roles of former Commissioners.

Full list of Past Commissioners (only the past 4 years):

- Lauren Scribi, Oct. 2014 - Oct. 2017
- Margot Parrot, Nov. 2012 - Oct. 2018
- Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, March 2014 - Oct. 2019
- Becca Glenn, Oct. 2015 - Oct. 2019
- Sarah La Cour, Oct. 2016 - Oct. 2019
- Maria Puppolo, Oct. 2014- Oct. 2020
- Nina Kimball, Dec. 2016 - Oct. 2020
- Sara Schnorr, Apr. 2016 - Oct. 2021
- Wendy Silver, Nov. 2018 - Oct. 2021
- Marlene Sallo, Nov. 2019 - Nov. 2021
- Ruth Bramson, Dec. 2006 - Nov. 2021
- Penny Blaisdell, Oct. 2013- Oct. 2021



24th Annual Boston-Area International Women's Day Brunch

Since 2001, the MCSW has served as a member of the multi-organization coalition responsible for planning the Boston-area International Women's Day Breakfast. Each year, the Breakfast addresses a different topic relevant to women's advancement and equity. On March 8th Commissioners from the MCSW attended the 24th Annual Boston-Area International Women's Day Brunch. The event was structured as a discussion on the topic of "**Unpacking the Shecession: Reimagining a New Workforce in a New World.**"

Regional AdHoc Committee

The Regional AdHoc Committee was created to alleviate some of the work from the Program and Planning Committee, staff, and interns after the moving on of our Program Director in April of 2021. The Regional AdHoc Committee held monthly meetings with the chairs and assisted in their operational needs. This committee also took on the responsibilities that were under the purview of the Program and Planning committee such as reviewing applications for those requesting a seat on any of the regional commissions, assisting each regional with onboarding, planning of regional convenings, and outreach coordination with MCSW events. The AdHoc committee was discontinued after the new Regional Director Tina Games was fully onboard.

Women in the Workforce Report

To read the full report, please visit: [Women in the Workforce Report](#)

On April 21st, the MCSW released a report titled Women in the Workforce During COVID-19 & Beyond: A Report on the Status of Women in Massachusetts and showcased Related Policy Recommendations. This report looks at the systematic inequalities and barriers women face in the workforce and addresses the challenges revealed in women's lived experiences across the Commonwealth. This report is specific to the workforce and looked to capture women's experiences across geographic, ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds. The MCSW offers findings and related policy recommendations which contribute to the conversation about the impact of COVID-19 and working women and serve as a resource to policymakers at the state and local levels.

Methodology

The MCSW conducted quantitative research in the fall of 2021 and winter of 2022, which included: a survey of Massachusetts women which garnered data on workplace benefits, flexibility and opportunities; a virtual hearing held in November 2021, and 7 Community Conversations across the Commonwealth. This report shares the feedback and voices of women who completed the surveys and participated in public forums.

MCSW released a google survey via email, direct contact, social media, and MCSW newsletter, which asked respondents about different variables in their work experience. The survey was open from November 5th, 2021 to February 28th, 2022. The survey was offered in six different languages including English, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole.

MCSW held a virtual public hearing on November 18th, 2021, with 83 stakeholders in attendance and 15 participants who provided oral and written testimony.

In order to highlight the voices of women who are traditionally underrepresented, MCSW piloted a series of 7 Community Conversations. The MCSW collaborated with its regional commissions to partner with community organizations to ensure that diverse groups of women not captured in the survey were able to share their unique perspectives. The Community Conversations were held from January 10th, 2022 through February 28th, 2022.

Research & Findings

From the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, four primary areas emerged: (mis) treatment in the workplace, gaps in workplace advancement and opportunities, The Second-Shift Effect, and prioritizing physical and mental health.

1. (Mis)treatment in the workplace
 - Data indicates that policy priorities should be focused on addressing the effects of discrimination in the workplace, both for women and people of color, but especially for women of color. The MCSW's survey showed that race affected treatment in the workplace, with women of color much more likely than white women to state their race significantly affected their treatment. Respondents reported myriad mistreatments in the workplace including being cut off in conversation, getting labeled as too assertive for expressing one's opinions, and worrying about or directly experiencing sexual harassment.
2. Gaps in workplace benefits and advancement opportunities
 - Data collected showed that the most prevalent workplace benefits offered to respondents were healthcare/insurance (80 percent), paid time off (79 percent), and pension or retirement funds (73.4 percent). Only 43 percent had access to mental health services benefits, while 31.4 percent had dependent care accounts, and only 7.38 percent received childcare benefits. About 20 percent of respondents indicated that they have no opportunities for advancement. Lack of opportunity for advancement is most prevalent for women earning less than \$50,000 per year, with two-thirds of respondents having no option of receiving salary raises, education advancements, or leadership opportunities.
3. The Second-Shift Effect: home and work-life responsibilities
 - The Second Shift effect refers to the household and caregiver obligations women encounter following their day's labor outside of the home. This effect exacerbates the detrimental impact of limited workplace benefits and advancement opportunities. Survey data showed a tendency for women to overextend themselves to satisfy professional and domestic needs. This second shift effect is even more burdensome for women by the inflexibility of employers to allow for hybrid work formats, limited childcare benefits, and having to provide for financially dependent others.
4. Prioritizing physical and mental health
 - Data showed that negative effects on mental health were consistent when disaggregated between income range and race/ethnic identity. However, when broken down across age groups, younger women reported negative effects on mental health at much higher rates than older women. Survey data additionally showed that only a small portion of women whose mental and physical health was significantly negatively affected by their work status had benefits related to mental health covered.

Recommendations

In partnership with the eleven regional commissions, MCSW makes the following recommendation to lawmakers and the private sector:

- Normalize affordable and accessible high-quality childcare as a public good
- Normalize gaps in employment
- Normalize innovations in work flexibility
- Normalize inclusive and dignified workplace cultures
- Normalize mental health and physical benefits
- Normalize an intersectional approach and disaggregated data in policy review

Legislative Actions

The MCSW has endorsed the following bills, each related to a major finding of this report:

- “Common Start” An Act providing affordable and accessible high-quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth. (H.605/S.362)
- “CFC: Campaign Funds for Childcare” An Act supporting parents running for public office. (S.475/H.760)
- An Act addressing barriers to care for mental health (S.2572)
- An act Requiring One Fair Wage (S.1213)

In addition, the MCSW urges consideration and support of the following proposed bills:

- An Act relative to work from home incentives (H.2900)
- An Act relative to helping residents work remotely (S.54)
- An Act relative to fair pay comparable work (H.237)
- An Act removing barriers to lifting people out of poverty (S.102)
- An Act providing a guaranteed minimum income to all Massachusetts families (S.1852)

Legislative Briefing

On April 21st the MCSW held a legislative briefing for the release of the Women in the Workforce report. The event began with a welcome and introduction from Chairwomen Denella Clark and was followed by remarks from Representative Patricia Haddad and Senator Joan Lovely (Co-chairs of the MCWL). The report team, composed of Commissioners and Staff members, introduced the report and thanked the appointing bodies for their continued support. Commissioner Jean Fox (Chair of Program and Planning Committee) then presented the findings of the report. A PowerPoint presentation reviewed the methodology, community partners, policy recommendations, legislative actions, and the four major findings. Statistics and testimony from respondents were shared with participants and legislators. Legislators were then able to make comments and ask questions after the presentation concluded. Closing remarks were made by Commissioner Guimel DeCarvalho.

Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative [formerly known as The Girls Initiative]



The Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative (GELI) seeks to empower young women and gender expansive youth, ages 14-22, across the Commonwealth to advocate for themselves and their community. This initiative focuses on developing leadership and civic engagement skills through educational workshops and skill-building opportunities.

On April 29, 2022 the Commission hosted a Girls Empowerment and Leadership Summit (GELI), built upon the 2020 and 2021 Girls Initiative listening sessions and online survey responses. Girls have reported diminished self-esteem and self-confidence, a decline in healthy personal relationships, and a general need for an increase in support groups, among other findings. The Summit was created to address those needs through 3 workshops: Leadership & Confidence Building, Mental Health & Success, and the Current STEM Culture. In addition to the workshops, the Commission created a short exit survey to give an opportunity to the participants to provide feedback and recommendations for what they want to see at the next GELI event.

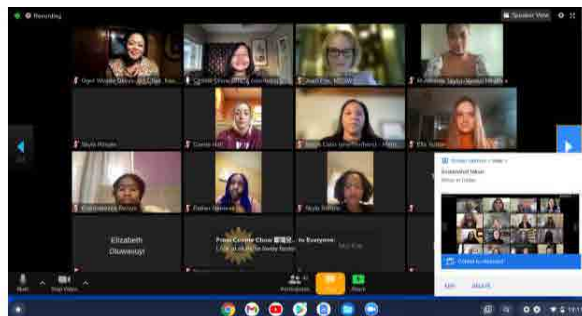


Demographics

The combined data from the exit survey and the Summit **included the voices of 54 girls. Nineteen voices were survey respondents, and 35 were Summit participants.** Collectively, the initiative reached all 14 counties in Massachusetts with a majority of participants coming from the following counties: Barnstable, Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk, and Worcester.

Findings

Through the exit survey and workshop data it was clear to see that many of these participants simply wanted the opportunity to network, learn, and build skills that are integral to them becoming a successful leader within their community and beyond. When asked what the Summit workshop has inspired them to pursue in the future one respondent said, “It has inspired me to put myself out there and speak up for myself. I did not know how much power my story could hold.”



Feedback and Next Steps

The Commission’s goal for the next Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative is to have an in person event in 2023. Numerous participants expressed strong interest in more frequent meetings, possibly biannually. The Commission intends to make the next initiative interactive and allow participants to attend more than one workshop. MCSW is committed to building on the foundation work of past Girls Initiatives, with the inclusion of the feedback we have received, as part of its 2023 priorities.

See “APPENDIX A - Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative Report” on page 39

MCWL Conversation with MCSW Regional Commissions



On May 16th, MCSW hosted Regional Commissions and the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, for a conversation about the biggest issues women and girls face in each region of the Commonwealth. The event began with welcoming remarks from Chairwoman Denella Clark, Interim Executive Director Shaitia Spruell, and the Caucus Co-Chairs, Representative Patricia Haddad and Senator Joan Lovely.

The event was structured with guiding questions that each Regional Commission addressed with responses and questions from Caucus Legislators. Tina Games, MCSW Regional Commissions Director, introduced the guiding questions for each region:

- What are the biggest concerns of women in your region?
- What are your current legislative priorities as a regional commission?
- What legislation would you like our legislators to consider for your region?

Each Regional Commission provided answers to the guiding questions and shared legislative events that were specific to their region. All Regional Commissions shared concerns about the lack of affordable child care and housing. Commissioners from the western region of Massachusetts expressed specialized concern about rising rates of violence and drug use. Domestic violence was also a topic of conversation for multiple regions and many shared their efforts in trying to combat this issue. Other issues included food insecurity, lack of job opportunities, lack of mental health providers, and unequal access to health care. Many Commissioners shared statements about their support for female reproductive rights and access to quality health care. Commissioners also addressed their dismay over the baby formula and diaper shortage affecting women across Massachusetts.

The conversation gave Regional Commissions a platform to discuss their legislative priorities with our female legislators. Though Regional Commissions can establish legislative priorities different from the State Commission's priorities, all regions shared their support for the bills that MCSW has endorsed. Bills related to child care received the most support. The Common Start bill and the campaign funds for childcare bill received unanimous support from regionals. In addition, Regional Commissioners expressed their support for the I AM bill (this bill is especially important to the Bristol County Regional Commission since they and Representative Haddad were strong advocates for free menstrual products and diapers before the bill was introduced). Regional Commissions also added their support for the one fair wage bill, the healthy youth act, and the parity on boards bill.

This event also gave Regional Commissions an opportunity to hear about the practices and initiatives of other regions. Commissioners from Essex County, Hampden County, Eastern Regional, and Plymouth County discussed their plans to increase the involvement of girls within their region as MetroWest has done with the creation of their Athena Council. The event ended with the sharing of upcoming legislative events for each region.

Regional Convening - Spring 2022

On June 7th, our 11 Regional Commissions will gather for their bi-annual training and development session. Our regional convenings are focused on education, support, and networking. This year's spring convening will act as a revitalization of the regionals coming through two years of struggles and uncertainty. We will be providing the opportunity to review the current Regional Commissioner handbook and policy book - and to address concerns and questions. We'll also be covering other topics, such as partnering with regional organizations and being more visible in our communities.

Commonwealth Heroines [formerly known as Unsung Heroines]



The annual Commonwealth Heroine Award honors women and girls across the state who are recognized as leaders and contributors to their community and the Commonwealth. Commonwealth Heroines are women and girls who don't always make the news but always make a difference through their time, talent, and enthusiasm to make the lives of others better. This year, 121 women received this honor. The celebration is scheduled to take place on June 22nd, in person for the first time since 2019. The heroines will be honored through remarks from the Commission, a live slideshow presentation, and the opportunity to meet and celebrate each other. This year there will be a special recognition given to Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito for her advocacy and work on improving the lives of the women and girls of the Commonwealth. Traditionally the Heroines receive a program book featuring photos and biographies of each heroine. They also receive a letter of notification of the award and a certificate to recognize their community work. This celebration is a time to honor great women and girls who enrich lives across the Commonwealth.

MCSW Internship Program

Preparing the next generation of leaders remains a key constituent for the Commission. The MCSW's internship program aims to encourage young women and men from various backgrounds to become more involved in understanding and addressing women's issues. We welcome undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students. The MCSW interns are responsible, conscientious, and proactive individuals with a sincere interest in women's issues, social justice, and civic engagement. They are motivated, open-minded, and have a positive attitude around others. Interns are encouraged to work in an area of their interest but are not limited to a particular area as many of our tasks are collaborative in nature.

Internship roles:

- Legislative Specialist
- Program and Planning Specialist
- Research Specialist
- Graphic Design Specialist
- Outreach & Advocacy Specialist

Speaker's Bureau

The Commission is active in sharing information via public speaking at events and on panels organized through its speakers bureau. The goal is to raise awareness of issues facing women and families and educate and promote the resources of MCSW and our 11 regional Commissions. The program's aim is to encourage women to engage in advocacy to achieve positive change for women throughout the Commonwealth. Speaking engagement this year included:

- September, Dedication of Susie King Taylor Tombstone, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- October 5th, Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery Speakers Series, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- October 6th, IIGA state conference Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- October 27th, Pay Equity- Developing Equitable Compensation Strategies and Complying with MA Law with AIM HR Solutions Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Series, Chairwoman Denella Clark
- November 17th, LGBTQ+, COVID & Economic Impacts, 2021 EqualPayMA Roundtable Series with the Massachusetts State Treasurer's Office of Economic Empowerment Commissioner Rebecca Bact
- December 20th, The Future of Equal Pay and Beyond, 2021 EqualPayMA Roundtable Series with the Massachusetts State Treasurer's Office of Economic Empowerment, Chairwoman Denella Clark
- January 25th, WSAR Radio Interview with Representative Patricia Haddad, Commissioner Jean Fox
- February, Girls Leap Women of Color Series, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- February 26th, Racial Equity & Childcare Roundtable, Common Start Coalition, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- March 3, BCYF Girls Night Out at Gallivan Community Center, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- March 3, Domestic Worker Bill of Rights Bill, Interview, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- March 4th, Women in the Workplace, Gender Equity, and Child Care, Common Start Coalition, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- March 8th, The REAL Story—Where is MA Regarding Equity for Women, MassDOT Women's Employee resource Group International Women's Day, Chairwoman Denella Clark
- March 24, Building Connections: Women's Bureau and Women's Commissions, Marydith Tuitt; President of the National Association of Commissions for Women
- April 9th, Commonstart Spring into Action Rally, Commonstart Coalition, Commissioner Christine Monska

- May 4th, Commonstart Lobby Day Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- May 7th, Hats & Heels, Northshore Juneteenth Association, Chairwoman Denella Clark
- May 24th, BCCSW Swearing in Ceremony with US Attorney Rachel Rollins, Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- May 25th, John D O'Bryant High School JROTC Awards Ceremony, Commissioner Mary-dith Tuitt
- June 14th, Spring into Action, Jane Doe, Inc, Chairwoman Denella Clark

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES;

under the purview of Legislative & Public Policy Committee

Priority Legislation

As a part of its mission to provide an effective voice and advocate for the women and girls of Massachusetts, the MCSW identifies priority bills, the center of our legislative focus and action. In the 2020-2022 year, the Commission focused on addressing women's economic security, political participation, and childcare accessibility through the following legislation:

An Act Providing Affordable and Accessible High-Quality Early Education and Care to Promote Child Development and Well-Being and Support the Economy in the Commonwealth. (S.362/H.605)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Jason M. Lewis, Rep. Kenneth I. Gordon and Rep Adrian C. Madaro

This bill would establish a universal system of affordable, high-quality early education and child care for all Massachusetts families. The system would cover early education and care for children age birth through 5, after and out of school time for children age 5-12, and children with special needs through age 15.

[MCSW Testimony - Common Start Bill - 10.22.2021](#) (Testimony submitted 10/22/2021)

Status: *New draft, S2883 reported favorably and referred to Senate Ways and Means Committee May 19, 2022.*

An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions. (S.2077/H.3157)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Jason Lewis and Rep. Patricia Haddad

This bill would promote diversity in leadership and governance that broadly reflects the demographics of our Commonwealth. The composition of each appointed public board and commission in the Commonwealth shall broadly reflect that of the general public.

[MCSW Testimony H. 3157/S. 2077](#) (Testimony submitted 9/21/2021)

Status: *Senate version referred to Senate Committee on Ways and Means, house version referred to House Committee on Ways and Means.*

An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters, and Public Schools. (S.1445/H.2354)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Patricia Jehlen, Rep. Jay Livingstone and Rep. Christine Barber

Formerly; An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters and Public Schools: H.1959/S.1274. Often referred to as the I AM Bill, this bill would provide access to free menstrual products to all menstruating individuals in schools, shelters & prisons. The MCSW has been at the forefront of fighting menstrual inequality since the topic first arose in Bristol County. Commissioners Mary-dith Tuitt and Jean Fox were especially involved in advocating for the passage of this bill.

[H.2354/S.1445 Written Testimony](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/29/21)

Status: *March 3, 2022 passed to be engrossed.*

An Act Relative to Work and Family Mobility and Subsequent to the COVID-19 Emergency. (S.2289/H.3456)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Brendan P Crighton, Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier and Rep. Christine P. Barber

Formerly; An Act Relative to Work and Family Mobility H.3012/S.2061. This bill would enable all qualified state residents to apply for a standard Massachusetts driver's license or ID, regardless of immigrant status, while keeping our Commonwealth in full compliance with REAL ID requirements.

[Family Mobility Written Testimony](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/22/21)

Status: *Enacted and laid before Governor Baker on May 26th, 2022.*

An Act Supporting Parents Running for Public Office. (S.475/H.769)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Patricia Jehlen and Reps. Mike Connolly and Joan Meschino

Many working parents are discouraged from running for public office because of financial reasons. This bill would clarify that child care expenses for times while campaigning are not considered personal expenses.

Testimony was verbally given by Commissioner Tuitt in favor [Testimony Campaign Funds for Childcare Sept 2021](#)

Status: *Referred to Joint Committee on Election Laws, report out by June 10, 2022.*

An Act to require policies and training to prevent unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment (S.1171/H.1935)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Cynthia Creem and Rep. Christine Barber

This bill would require Massachusetts employers to provide workplace-specific sexual harassment training that is live and interactive, as well as conduct climate surveys to identify risk factors and gauge the program's effectiveness. This training will promote respect in the workplace and avoid unlawful harassment, rather than simply focusing on escaping liability.

[MCSW Testimony H1935 S1171 6-14-21.docx](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/22/21)

Status: *Referred to Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development, report out due June 3, 2022.*

Endorsed Legislation

An Act Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Natural and Protective Hairstyles (S.994/H.4554)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Sal DiDomenico, Rep. Steven Ultrino, and Rep. Chynah Tyler

This bill would protect against discrimination based on natural and protective hairstyles in the workplace and public schools. This bill seeks to eliminate discrimination that disproportionately affects black women and girls.

Testimony was verbally given on 11/23/2022 by Chairwoman Denella Clark in favor.

[Natural Hairstyles Bill Testimony](#)

Status: *New draft H.4554, senate passed to be engrossed, pending in the house clerk's office.*

An Act to End Child Marriage in Massachusetts (S.937 /H.1790)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Harriette Chandler and Rep. Kay Khan

This bill prevents anyone under the age of 18 to be married by a magistrate, minister, clerk or registrar and requires proof of age. By requiring a minimum age to consent to marriage will minimize the opportunity for coercion and exploitation.

[MSCW Ending Child Marriage Testimony 11 12 21](#) (final) (Testimony Submitted 11/12/21)

Status: *Referred to Joint Committee on the Judiciary, report out due June 30, 2022.*

An Act Relative to Wage Transparency (S.1208/ H.1950)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Patricia D. Jehlen and Rep. Josh S. Cutler

This bill would require employers to provide a general pay scale to applicants when requested.

[Revised MCSW testimony H1950-S1208 6-25-21.docx](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/22/21)

Status: *New draft S.2721, An Act relative to pay equity, is currently referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.*

An Act Relative to Wage Transparency (S.1208/ H.1950)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Patricia D. Jehlen and Rep. Josh S. Cutler

This bill would require employers to provide a general pay scale to applicants when requested.

[Revised MCSW testimony H1950-S1208 6-25-21.docx](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/22/21)

Status: *New draft S.2721, An Act relative to pay equity, is currently referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.*

An Act Relative to Transparency in the Workplace (S.1196/H.2020)

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Elizabeth Malia, Rep. Liz Miranda, and Sen. Paul R. Freeney

This bill would require companies with over 100 employees to publicly report wage data by submitting wage data of their top 10 paid employees that would be broken down by gender, race, and age to the Attorney General. This bill seeks to allow organizations the opportunity to examine their own pay practices in hopes that they will improve pay for women and people of color. Providing this data also helps the state determine what steps need to be taken to achieve pay equity.

[Testimony MCSW Wage Transparency H2020.docx](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/22/21)

Status: *New draft, S.2721, reported favorably and referred to Senate Ways and Means.*

An Act Relative to Out-Of-Hospital Birth Access and Safety (S.1519/H2341)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Rebecca Rausch and Rep. Kay Khan

This bill intends to regulate and legitimize midwifery services in the Commonwealth. The bill will create a Board of Midwifery under the department of public health in order to oversee licensure.

[H.2341/S.1519 Written Testimony](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/29/21)

Status: *New draft, H4640 to be reported out of Joint Committee of Healthcare financing on June 1, 2022.*

An Act Relative to Healthy Youth (S.318/H.673)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Sal N. DiDomenico and Rep. James O'Day

This bill will require all Massachusetts schools to offer sexuality education that is age appropriate, medically accurate, and will discuss both abstinence and contraception, LGBTQ+ identities, STI prevention and examine healthy relationships and consent.

[H.673/S.318 Written Testimony](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/29/21)

Status: *New draft S2541, Senate passed to be engrossed, referred to House Ways and Means.*

An Act Relative to Medicaid Coverage for Doula Services (S.1475/H.2372)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Joan B. Lovely, Rep. Liz Miranda, and Rep. Lindsay N. Sabadosa

This bill would provide coverage for doula services throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for pregnant individuals, surrogates, foster parents, and adoptive parents.

[H.2372/S.1475 Written Testimony](#) (Testimony Submitted 6/29/21)

Status: *Committee recommended bill ought to pass and referred to the committee on House Ways and Means*

An Act Relative to the Scheduling of Employees (S.1236/ H.1974)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Marc R. Pacheo and Rep. Sean Garballey

This bill allows workers the chance to build stable lives for themselves and their families, because for many, erratic work schedules make stability almost impossible. This bill would ensure workers in restaurants, retail establishments, and the hospitality industry would have the right to: 14 days advance notice from the employer of scheduled hours, request specific hours without retaliation from the employer, minimum rest period of 11 hours between shifts, and other benefits.

[S.1236/H.1974 MCSW Testimony](#) (Testimony Submitted 7/20/21)

Status: *Referred to the Committee on House Steering, Policy and Scheduling*

An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health (S.1276)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Julian Cyr

This bill would reform the way mental health care is delivered in Massachusetts, with the goal of ensuring that people are able to get mental health care when they need it. This bill would introduce changes such as standardizing credentialing forms, requiring coverage for same day care, creating a mental health workforce pipeline, and others.

[S.1276 An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health](#) (Testimony Submitted 7/20/21)

Status: *New draft S2584, passed and engrossed in the Senate, referred to House ways and Means.*

An Act to Protect the Civil Rights and Safety of all Massachusetts Residents (S.1579/H.2418)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Jaime B. Eldridge, Rep. Ruth B. Balsler and Rep. Liz Miranda

This bill would prevent law officers from questioning any witness or victim of crime about their immigration status unless state or federal law requires they do so. Any formal or informal interview requires the signing of a consent form. It would also prevent officers from informing the US Department of Homeland Security of someone who is being released.

Status: *Referred to Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security*

An Act to Ensure Compliance with the Anti-Shackling Law for Pregnant Incarcerated Women (S.16535/ H.2481)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Rebecca L. Rausch and Rep. Kay Khan

This bill would ensure that pregnant incarcerated women would not be shackled while giving birth. This inhumane practice is still routine in many prisons and jails.

Status: *Bill was reported favorably Committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means*

An Act Relative to the Defense Against Abuse Waivers (S.1164)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Harriette Chandler

This bill would protect workers from waiving a substantive or procedural right or remedy relating to discrimination, nonpayment of wages or benefits, retaliation, harassment.

Status: *Bill was reported favorably Committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means*

“Girls Bill” Resolve providing an investigation and study by a special commission relative to gender-responsive programming for juvenile justice (H.1901)

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Chynah Tyler

This bill aims to create a commission with representatives from the senate, house of representatives, dept of health and human services, commissioner of elementary and secondary education, commissioner of probation, commissioner of youth services, commissioner of mental health, commissioner of public health, chief justice of the juvenile court department, and 8 others that offer services to high-risk girls. The commission will conduct comprehensive research on the prison system nationally and in the commonwealth as well as study the ways in which the system could be improved to create better programming for girls. The commission will offer a set of recommendations biennially to the legislature.

Status: *Reporting date extended to Thursday, June 30, 2022, pending concurrence.*

An Act Promoting Equality and Respect in the Legislature (S.2102)

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Rebecca L. Rausch

This bill will create a commission to address workplace and sexual harassment in the legislature. The Commission would investigate and report on claims of sexual assault. It will also conduct an annual anonymous survey to collect information. They must also publish an annual report. The Commission must also be made up of diverse members to ensure that those groups most often affected by sexual assault receive representation.

Status: *Discharged to the committee on Senate Rules*

An Act Requiring One Fair wage (S.1213)

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Patricia Jehlen

This bill aims to ameliorate the circumstances of all workers but specifically tipped workers, who despite minimum wage laws, may make a base wage of \$2.13 an hour or another subminimum wage. The restaurant industry has some of the lowest paying jobs in the workforce, workers are more likely to live in poverty and 70% of these workers are women.

Status: *Bill was reported favorably Committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means*

An Act Establishing a Diaper Benefits Pilot Program (S.125)

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Joan B. Lovely

This bill will create a fund in order to relieve diaper need across the commonwealth. The Department of Public Health will work with 12 organizations across the commonwealth for one year to distribute diapers to families who could otherwise not afford them.

Status: *Bill was reported favorably Committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means*

An Act to Establish the Dignity at Work Act (S.1185)

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Diana DiZoglio

This bill will ensure that neither interpersonal bullying nor organizational bullying occurs in the workplace without repercussions. Interpersonal bullying includes derogatory remarks, gaslighting, ostracizing, and threatening physical or sexual abuse. This bill intends to protect everyone, not just members of a protected class, however, it will help improve the working conditions of women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ people.

Status: *Accompanied a study order, S2816 discharged to the committee on Senate Rules.*

An Act Concerning Public Assistance for Working Families (S.119)

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Eric Lesser and Rep. Patricia Duffy

The bill will create a pilot program to run for three years involving 100 families who are receiving public services. The funding for this project will offset the impact of the Cliff Effect on families transitioning away from public assistance.

Status: *Bill was reported favorably Committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means*

2022 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTING AUTHORITIES

The MCSW gathered information from a diverse set of public stakeholders to determine its recommendations. It held one public hearing (instead of four because we felt that we needed to put all of our focus on healing women in the workforce, but we collaborated with our regionals on all of the local regional hearings), partnered with community organizations to host seven community conversations, connected and convened with its 11 regional commissions to understand local issues impacting wom-en, and drew from its 19 commissioners' perspectives and experiences as leaders in their communities.

In accordance with the responsibilities of the MCSW under MA Chapter 3, Section 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws, the MCSW respectfully submits the following recommendations for action to our appointing authorities:

Please refer to “Legislative Initiatives;” on page 18

We also ask the legislative body to take the resolution language that we have included in our Women of Color and Women in the Workforce report and file at your leisure. The MCSW can only be successful if we have a strong partnership with our elected officials across the Commonwealth. We also ask the legislative body to take the resolution language that we have included in our Women of Color and Women in the Workforce report and file at your leisure. The MCSW can only be successful if we have a strong partnership with our elected officials across the Commonwealth.

THANK YOU

The MCSW would like to formally recognize and give thanks to the various organizations and groups that partnered with us.

Amplify Latinx
Big Sister Association of Greater Boston
Boston Centers for Youth and Families
Boston Glow (Girls' Leadership Organized Women)
Boston's Mayor's Office for Women's Advancement
Boston Women's Fund
Boys and Girls Club/ Boston
Boys and Girls Club /Dorchester
Boys and Girls Club of Springfield
Brookline Commission for Women
Brockton's Women's Group
Brockton Mayor's Commission on Women's Issues
Brazilian Women's Group
Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women
Chica Project
Community Action Pioneer Valley
Flying Cloud Institute
Girls Inc. of Lynn
Girls Inc. of the Berkshires
Girls Inc. of Lowell
Girls Inc. of Taunton
Girls Inc. of the Valley
Girls Inc. of Worcester
Girls LEAP
Girls Rock Campaign Boston
Girl Scouts of Central and Western Mass
Girl Scouts of Eastern MA
GRLZ Radio
Investing in Girls Alliance of Central MA
La Colaborativa in Chelsea
MassNOW
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
MAWOCC
Melrose Commission on Women
Middlesex District Attorney's Office
MomUp

NAACP of Brockton
Newton Commission on the Status of Women
Northshore Juneteenth Association
Quincy Mayor's Commission on Women
R.O.P.E of the Berkshires
Science Club for Girls
Somerville Commission for Women
South Shore Women's Business Network
Springfield Women's Commission
Strong Women, Strong Girls
The Care Center, Holyoke
The Office of Economic Empowerment, Office of the State Treasurer & Receiver General
The Western MA Women's Fund
Title IX Girls Running Club
Women's Fund South Coast
Worcester City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women
Youth Options Unlimited Boston
YWCA Boston
YWCA of Central MA
YWCA Northeastern MA
YWCA Southcoast
YWCA Western MA

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

Annual Summaries 2022





Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Christine Monska

Regional Commissioners: Currently Recruiting

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- Reestablished contact with regional legislators.
- Contacted former Berkshire County Commissioners to expand our knowledge of issues concerning women in Berkshire County.
- Contacted community partners with our intentions to grow the Berkshire County Commission and to ask for recommendations for Commissioner candidates.
- Reported on regional issues concerning women in Berkshire County at the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators Conversation with MCSW Regional Commissions.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Fill all open commission seats and choose a new Chair and Vice Chair.
- Hold a series of community conversations/listening circles across Berkshire County.
- Establish regional legislative priorities.
- Plan an event with local and regional legislators to discuss our regional priorities.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/berkshire-county-commission-on-the-status-of-women)



Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Jean Fox

Regional Commissioners: Stephanie Taylor (Chair), Taunton; Holly McNamara, Somerset; Iva Brito, New Bedford; Werlaine Badio (Treasurer), Fall River; Tanya Lobo, Taunton; Esther Rogers, Taunton.

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

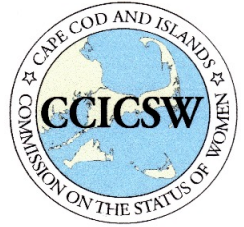
We actively participated in both MCSW initiatives - Women in the Workforce Public Hearing and the spring GELI Summit (planning and co-hosting) We have been aligning with the SEMA Women's Alliance partnering and collaborating with other area agencies that focus on women's issues, including the upcoming Community Conversations with Leadership South Coast in June. We also partnered with the National Parks Association and hosted an outreach info table in the late fall of 2021 at their annual Walk for Health event. We are co-sponsoring the upcoming Community Conversations with Leadership South Coast in June. We also partnered with the National Parks Association and hosted an outreach info in partnership with Martha's Vineyard Vegan Society with a table in the late fall of 2021 at the annual Walk for Health event. We just appointed three new commissioners who are women of color making Bristol County the only women's commission in the state with a majority of women of color.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Fill all open commission seats (three).
- Strengthen outreach and branding.
- Advocate and support commissioner stipends.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/bristol-county-commission-on-the-status-of-women)



Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Mary-dith Tuitt

Regional Commissioners: Linda Cebula (Chair), Harwich; Sue Mynttinen (Vice-Chair), Nantucket; Donna Rivers (Secretary), Dennis; Kate Parache (Treasurer), Hyannis; Helen Bresnahan (Emerita), Bourne; Terry Alves-Hunter, Falmouth; Lynne Barbee, Mashpee; Katia Dacunha, Hyannis; Rachel Devine, Nantucket; Anna Dunphy, Falmouth; Natalia Frois, Hyannis; Amy Peters, Mashpee; Lynda wan'n'Tani, Harwich; Mary Waygan, Mashpee.

Regional Area: The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women represents towns in all of Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties including Bourne, Falmouth, Sandwich, Mashpee, Barnstable, Dennis, Yarmouth, Harwich, Chatham, Brewster, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, Provincetown, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard (Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Aquinnah, Chilmark, Vineyard Haven, West Tisbury).

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- Followed regional and state legislative priorities and emphasized social media presence.
- Held a listening circle on Nantucket in October 2021 - meeting with members of the community and writing a full report which was sent to all of our elected legislators.
- Held a virtual legislative breakfast on June 10, 2022 to discuss legislative priorities.
- Had guest speakers at our monthly meetings, including Margaret Drew of the MA Coalition to End Child Marriage – and Diane Reno and Leimary Llopiz from YMCA of Southern Massachusetts for the “I AM” bill.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- We plan to hold a fall listening circle on the lower Cape, focusing on the women who live in those towns – with a guest speaker on a relevant topic in that region followed by a hearing. Strengthen outreach and branding.
- We'll be starting our own monthly newsletter and expanding our social media presence.
- To expand awareness of the Commission, we'll be attending meetings of other municipal and community organizations and presenting what we are, what we do, and our focus on current issues – and taking questions and concerns back to our full commission meetings.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Cape and Islands Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/cape-and-islands-commission-on-the-status-of-women)



Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Denella Clark

Regional Commissioners: Margaret Adams, Dedham; Kerry Akashian, North End (Vice-Chair); Soumia Aitelhaj, Revere; Linda Champion, Milton; Manya Chylinski, Back Bay; Amanda Crabb, Quincy (Chair); Schuyler Daum, Jamaica Plain; Tamisha Lucien Civil, Stoughton; Toby Kamens Rodman, Brookline.

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- Focused on relaunching our commission and reestablishing ourselves in the community.
- Reported on regional issues concerning women in the Eastern Region at the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators Conversation with MCSW Regional Commissions. We brought forward concerns of mental health and reproductive health and access.
- Hosted a legislative breakfast on May 21, 2022 in Dorchester where we honored the work of school nurses, educators, advocates, and legislators with a discussion on the impacts of Covid and how it affected women and girls in the Eastern Region.
- Welcomed three new commissioners which brings our commission to capacity.
- Determined our regional priorities which include education and healthcare.
- Virtual meetings allowed us to continue commission business with a quorum during Covid.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- We plan to have a summer commission retreat where we will discuss our by-laws and goals for FY23.
- We're working on a plan to reintroduce ourselves to our regional communities now that we have a full commission.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/eastern-regional-commission-on-the-status-of-women)



Essex County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Penny Blaisdell

Regional Commissioners: Ogor Okoye, Chair (Saugus); Sandy Almonte, Vice Chair (Methuen); Geetha Rao Ramani, Secretary (Andover); Brianna Sullivan, Treasurer (Newburyport); Katrina Jagroop-Gomes, Operations Coordinator (Haverhill); Nicole McClain, Social Media Coordinator (Lynn); Sara Stanley, Social Media Coordinator (Rowley); Amy Smith, Commissioner (Salem); Sefatia Romero Theken, Commissioner (Gloucester).

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- *Beyond Band-aids: Legislation that Fosters Survivor Independence and Safety* - This was a cosponsored program with the Women's Bar Association and HAWC (Healing Abuse, Working for Change), facilitated by our chairwoman, Ogor Okoye. The panel led a virtual discussion of three then-pending bills: "Protected at Work", "Common Start" and "Safe Communities" and how they would have a positive impact on survivors of domestic abuse seeking to increase their financial independence and safety.
- *Creating Balance, Harmony, and Joy in an Uncertain World* - This was hosted on January 31, 2022 and focused on self-care as many women and girls in the county were still reeling from the challenges of the pandemic and its effect on mental health.
- On February 17, 2022, we hosted another virtual event titled, "What is Juneteenth? This program, presented in recognition of Black History Month, was led by Commissioner Nicole McClain who shared the history of the holiday and its present-day significance.
- *Investing in Your Financial Health: A Virtual Conversation with Budget Buddies* - April 14, 2022. This presentation focused on helping women on a limited income learn to budget to improve their financial stability.
- *Amplifying the Asian Voice* - May 31, 2022. A virtual conversation with local Asian America & Pacific Islander leaders about their work on advancing the AAPI voice in our communities and inspiring the next generation of AAPI women to "represent."

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Launch intern program, continue building community connections, continue fostering close relationships with Essex County legislators.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Essex County Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/essex-county-commission-on-the-status-of-women)



Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Shaitia Spruell

Regional Commissioners: Gabrielle Jackson (Chair), Springfield; Jacqueline Velez (Vice Chair), Springfield; Tara Marshall (Secretary), Agawam; Kimberley Lee, Wilbraham; Alina Carcea, Longmeadow; Daisy Pereria-Tosado, Agawam; Shanique Spaulding, Springfield; Lizzy Ortiz, Springfield; Nicole Coakley, Springfield.

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- Coffee Chat Series – in which Commissioners would host virtual spaces to speak with constituents across the county regarding issues that matter the most to them. Most Coffee Chats were centered around a particular issue. In addition, the Commission identified various community partners to attend as guest speakers leading to increased awareness and understanding of issues and challenges of women and girls in Hampden County as well as local solutions and ideas for partnership.
- Women Breaking Barriers – featured powerful women across various industries in Hampden County who were able to break barriers in their area of expertise.
- Public Meetings featuring community resources – HCCSW has featured community power players and leaders as guest speakers at our public meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of each month. While we're excited about the work we've done thus far, we look forward to the many opportunities in the future to support, provide resources, and push for legislation on important issues that impact women and girls in Hampden County.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- We plan to implement a public hearing, community survey and legislative breakfast next year, as well as continue with our featured speaker series and coffee chats. We also plan to encourage our community members to attend monthly meetings and to participate in our advocacy and community engagement efforts in partnership with our Commissioners.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls | Mass.gov](#)



Hampshire-Franklin County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Liz Friedman

Regional Commissioners: Marcia Plant Jackson (Chair), Leverett; Laura Sylvester (Vice Chair), Shutesbury; Victoria Cliche (Clerk), Leverett; Bonnie MacCracken (Treasurer), Amherst; Marie McCourt, Granby; Jennifer Ortiz, South Hadley.

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

Social Change & Community Engagement – An Exchange with Smithies

In June 2022, we held a virtual public hearing with Smith College Students from the Jandon Center for Community Engagement on the topic of Social Change and Community engagement. Critical to the success of the hearing was participation by Mindy Domb, Representative 3rd Hampshire. The hearing served three purposes:

1. To expand the Commissions understanding of a broader set of community issues, especially those of interest to younger adults in the area – whether local residents or students from outside the local area.
2. To expose students to the power of working with their state legislators.
3. To create a meaningful experience for our intern which was to take a learn role in organizing and conducting a hearing.

We also updated our resource guide and are making it available online and in print to distribute at appropriate public gatherings and locations that will reach those who may need it most.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

We intend to keep our resource guide updated and accessible, while continuing to build strong local partnerships and work closer with our legislators. With the help of a student intern, we'll be increasing our social media presence and expanding on the relationship we've built with Smith College.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/hampshire-franklin-commission-on-the-status-of-women)



MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Audrey Hall

Regional Commissioners: Jean Bertschmann, Hopkinton; Stephanie Deeley (Co-Chair), Framingham; Heather Panahi (Co-Chair), Wellesley; Rachel Niemiec, Ashland; Leslie Smart (Vice Chair), Framingham; Lindsey Galvao, Natick; Julie Watt Faqir, Holliston; Lisa MacDonald (Secretary), Natick; Nasiba Mannan, Hopkinton.

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- Hidden in Plain Sight: Human Trafficking in Massachusetts - On September 9, 2021, we partnered with the Northborough Women's Club for a virtual panel discussion on human trafficking in Massachusetts. Moderated by Commissioner Rachel Niemiec, our panelists included: Senator Harriet Chandler, Northborough Police Chief William B. Lyver, Rachel Matos (Voices Against Violence), Nicolle Bell (LIFT - Living in Freedom Together).
- Purple Passion Walk - On September 18, 2021, Commissioners, along with our Athena Council, fielded a team to raise money and support the work done by Voices Against Violence. Our Co-Chair, Stephanie Deeley, was the keynote speaker for this year's event.
- During October 2021, we held four virtual forums for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
- Conversation with Legislators - was held in March to discuss legislative priorities with an ice cream social (hosted by our Athena Council) in June to discuss climate change and mental health.
- 50th Anniversary of Title IX - Hosted a panel of experts to talk about Title IX on June 22, 2022.
- Women's History Month - In March, Commissioners Stephanie Deeley and Lisa MacDonald were invited to be panelists for events in Framingham and Ashland about women's history.
- Teen Listening Circle - Our Athena Council surveyed teens in MetroWest to gather data regarding mental health to help identify areas where the Commission and legislators can better support teens in MetroWest. The data was shared on March 27th at a teen listening circle.
- Prison Moratorium Event - in April 2022, we partnered with others involved in supporting the prison moratorium bill to hold a rally in Framingham on the Common.
- MW Commission Book Club - We have launched a new virtual DEI book club: MetroWest READ (Reading for Equity, Accountability and Diversity) – which is open to the community.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

To continue to boost the commission's visibility and social media presence; focus on legislation and issues that address our legislative priorities (elder care, interpersonal relationship violence, outreach to immigrant communities); work with legislators to build a plan for a standardized curriculum for educating students about healthy relationships and the importance of consent; work with our Athena Council to plan at least one public event; to continue to grow our book club.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/metrowest-commission-on-the-status-of-women)



Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Nina Kimball

Regional Commissioners: Elisabeth Arruda (Co-Secretary), Marion; Laura Buckley (Treasurer), Plymouth; Phyllis Ellis, Karis North (Chair), Hull; Janice Johnson Plumer (Co-Vice Chair), Brockton; Carolyn Riley (Co-Vice Chair), Plymouth; Dawn Sibor (Co-Secretary), Kristina Whiton-O'Brien, Kingston.

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- Resource Guide – With the assistance of two interns, Olivia Fiore and Lianis Ojeda, the Commission prepared a resource guide for its constituents and community partners.
- Commission Website – We have been working on establishing our own website which provides a more effective means of sharing information about our meetings, events, legislative priorities, goals, and hosting our resource guide.
- Hearing/Public Forum: On Saturday December 11, 2021, we held a public meeting with Plymouth County legislators, Plymouth County Treasurer O'Brien, and Brockton Mayor Sullivan. All Plymouth County State Representatives and Senators, and Plymouth County Commissioners and other officials were invited. The meeting was the second in a series of annual legislative coffees with the Plymouth County delegation and officials and is a useful forum for discussing legislative priorities and goals.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Hold our annual legislative event.
- Continue to refine our resource guide - and consider hosting a resource fair.
- Provide education and training related to jobs and salary negotiation.
- Continue to explore grant opportunities to support our public events.
- Continue to provide internship opportunities for young women in Plymouth County.
- Improve our marketing, outreach, and social media presence.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/plymouth-county-commission-on-the-status-of-women-and-girls)



Upper Middlesex Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Rebecca Bact

Regional Commissioners: Connie Chow (Chair), Newton; Corrinne Corso, Ayer; Jennifer Roecklein-Canfield, Littleton; Christina Li (Secretary), Lexington; Rebecca Neale, Bedford; Michelle Mullet, North Reading (term starting 3/2022); Kristina Racek-Pachulis, Melrose; Linda Rossetti, Winchester; Anna Tse, Malden; Mary Delorse Coleman, Cambridge (term ended 12/2021).

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

- **Legislative Action Speakers Series** - To continue to inform ourselves on the commission's legislative priorities, to understand community-based programs already in place that address issues of concern, and to build relationships with the community and assess how the commission might leverage our role to advance their work, we continue to invite speakers from community organizations to our public meetings for presentations.
- **Virtual Townhall:** What is the future of women in the workforce? - An evening for learning and hearing. Co-sponsored by YW Malden and others - and held on June 15th. Testimony and input from this townhall and related survey will be compiled into a report to inform priorities and advocacy for the next legislative session.
- **April 2022 GELI Summit** - Co-designed and supported young women of color leaders in facilitating a workshop on Confidence and Leadership.
- **COVID19 on Career Aspirations** - Provided advice and helped disseminate the survey, initiated by Simmons University and one of our commissioners.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Continue to expand our community and network in the region.
- Create and enact a succession plan that also promotes civic participation.
- Revisit Equity Audit in collaboration with UMass Boston.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Upper Middlesex Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/upper-middlesex-commission-on-the-status-of-women-and-girls)



Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Mary-dith Tuitt

Regional Commissioners: Chantel Bethea (Chair), Worcester; Jacqueline Martino (Co-Chair), Shrewsbury; Jill Kasten, Worcester; Michelle Miller, Westminster.

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

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY22

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

- Mobilize Community Health Services.
- Organize community health information campaign.
- Implement trainings on patient-centered care and communication.
- Develop workforce strategies for health and human service sector.
- Work on Worcester Sex Education.
- Zero Fare for Worcester County Residents.
- Food Security.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Get to full capacity of the commission and regain our advisory members as well.
- Conduct our Legislative Breakfast for September 2022.
- Have more community input sessions to see how the women and girls in Worcester County have maintained during this pandemic.

To read the full annual report, please visit:

[Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women | Mass.gov](#)

APPENDIX

Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative Report

On April 29, 2022 the Commission hosted a Girls Empowerment and Leadership Summit (GELI), built upon the 2020 and 2021 Girls Initiative listening sessions and online survey responses. Girls have reported diminished self-esteem and self-confidence, a decline in healthy personal relationships, and a general need for an increase in support groups, among other findings. The Summit was created to address those needs through 3 workshops: Leadership & Confidence Building, Mental Health & Success, and The Current STEM Culture.

The Current STEM Culture

Using data and research findings and actual experiences by young professional women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields, this workshop facilitated a discussion on the perspectives and experiences of girls and young women to explore some of the barriers they may face as they pursue STEM education and training. Participants in this session had an opportunity to learn about what the data revealed, share stories about obstacles and opportunities, and worked together to create a vision for girls and women in STEM.

Leadership and Confidence Building

This youth-led workshop focused on leadership skills, storytelling, and community organizing. Participants learned more about how to “step into” their power, be an advocate for themselves and others and effect real change in their school, community, and state.

Mental Health and Success

This workshop’s goal was to spread the message that prioritizing your mental health will benefit you at home, school, and work. Participants learned how to be more mindful of mental health challenges in their day-to-day life. The expected outcome is to end the stigma of mental health in the professional space.

Quantitative Data

During the Summit, live polling was conducted to receive additional data from the present participants. This live polling consisted of 5 questions:

1. What does Civic Engagement mean to you?
 - a. 22 Respondents
2. Do you think the sisters’ circles put on by the Women’s Commissions are helpful? If so, in what way?
 - a. 19 Respondents
3. What causes/topics are currently impacting you or your community?
 - a. 27 Respondents
4. What does self-care mean to you, can you share your self-care practices?
 - a. 25 Respondents
5. Are you involved in any extracurricular activities? If so, please list which ones (ex: drama club, choir, band, sports, leadership, volunteering, jobs)
 - a. 27 Respondents

Survey - 19 Respondents

Qualitative Data

The Current STEM Culture

In the current STEM culture workshop, participants were able to take a deep dive into the data that measures success, particularly looking at STEM courses, degrees, and careers. Facilitators addressed the difference between interest, confidence, and sense of belonging that girls/young women have when starting out in STEM courses. There was definitive acknowledgment that gender disparities begin to emerge in higher education. These disparities continue and expand, leaving women underrepresented in STEM careers. Participants were able to learn about the contributing factors that are in play when analyzing the gaps of girls and women in STEM. Youth facilitators were able to share their stories as young women working in STEM. As a group, the discussion was centered around these disparities and experiences that some may have confronted in their STEM journey.

“Growing up I thought I didn’t like STEM because I didn’t like math, but I have taken a lot of engineering classes while in high school. I think STEM is a lot broader than it gets credit for.”

- Participant

Another participant recalled a situation where a substitute teacher had asked the students what they wanted to be. When a boy in her class said he wanted to be a rocket scientist, the substitute teacher said “good for you!” When she said she wanted to be a brain surgeon, the sub said “you’re going to have to do a lot of work!”

Leadership and Confidence Building

In the leadership and confidence-building workshop, participants were able to compile keywords that came to mind when being asked what comes to mind when thinking about traditional leadership.

What or who comes to mind when you think about traditional leadership?



As a group, they discussed what are important qualities to have as a leader and discussed people that they admire and what makes that person admirable.

What are some qualities of the person you admire?



Participants were given the opportunity to draft their own leadership story, writing about an issue they cared about and what story they can tell to help others understand why they want to see that change. Participants shared their stories and discussed what resonated with them.

“One issue that I’ve thought about recently is the lack of queer female Asian media/movies. In my LGBT Politics class, we learned that any type of exposure is a big factor in reducing homophobia. On Google I think there’s [sic] only 2 female queer Asian movies that pop up when you do a search”

- Participant

Mental Health and Success

In the mental health and success workshop, participants learned what taking care of an individual’s mental health really looks like. “Mental health is a buzzword, but what does it really mean?” A person’s mental health status cannot be based solely on appearance. People often appear to have everything together, but they may be suffering internally. The workshop facilitator explained the importance of seeking professional help instead of relying on friends or family. While friends and family can be a support system, seeking assistance from a skilled professional may be far more beneficial. Part of the workshop showcased public figures who have been outspoken about their own mental health journey. It is important for public figures (such as Simone Biles, Beyonce, and Billie Eilish among others) to use their platforms to talk about mental health, decreasing the persistent stigma in American society.

Outreach

The Commission reached out and invited the many Girl Serving Organizations that were included in the 2021 Girls Initiative. State and Regional Commissioners conducted their own networking with an established outreach letter. Each workshop’s facilitators conducted additional outreach for their respective workshops. School districts were also contacted by numerous regional commissioners, including Taunton Public Schools, Franklin Public Schools, Monomoy Regional School District, and Freetown-Lakeville, among others. All superintendents were notified and encouraged to share the Summit information with their networks.

Girls Empowerment & Leadership Findings

Demographics

The combined data from the survey and the Summit **included the voices of 54 girls. Nineteen voices were survey respondents, and 35 were Summit participants.** Collectively, the initiative reached all 14 counties in Massachusetts with a majority of participants coming from the following counties: Barnstable, Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk, and Worcester.

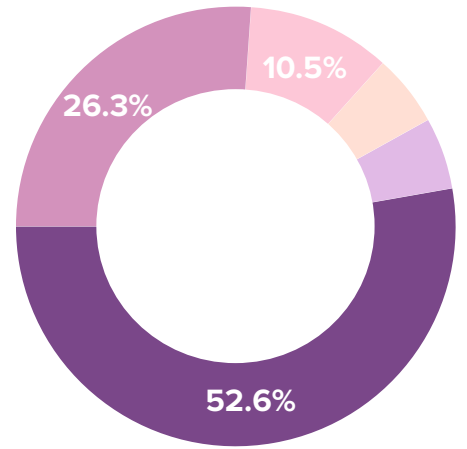
Topics of Concern (Survey Data)

- Affordable Housing
- Affordable Healthcare
- Access to Public Transportation
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Availability of Jobs
- Quality of K-13 Public Schools
- Lack of mental health support
- Domestic violence
- Maternity leave length
- Lack of diversity; mentions of racial bias
- LGBTQIA+ rights “lack of community LGBTQIA+ centers within the city”
- Need for addressing Asian Hate in communities

Through the exit survey and workshop data it was clear to see that many of these participants simply wanted the opportunity to network, learn, and build skills that are integral to them becoming a successful leader within their community and beyond. When asked what the Summit workshop has inspired them to pursue in the future one respondent said, “It has inspired me to put myself out there and speak up for myself. I did not know how much power my story could hold.”

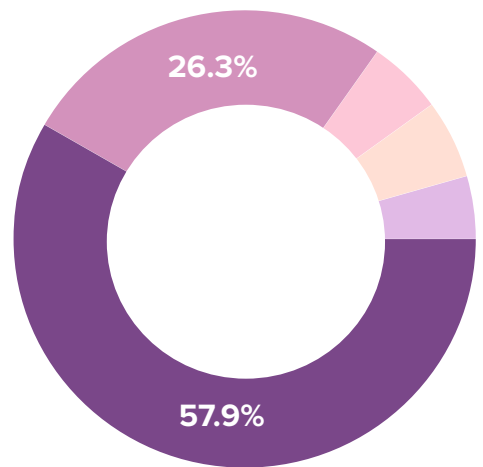
Feedback and Next Steps

The Commission’s goal for the next Girls Empowerment and Leadership Initiative is to have an in-person event in 2023. Numerous participants expressed strong interest in more frequent meetings, possibly biannually. The Commission intends to make the next initiative interactive and allow participants to attend more than one workshop. MCSW is committed to building on the foundation work of past Girls Initiatives, with the inclusion of the feedback we have received, as part of its 2023 priorities.



Racial + Ethnicity Identity

- White/Caucasian
- Black/African-American
- Latinx
- Asian/Asian-American
- Indigenous/Frist Nation/ Native American
- Native Hawaiian/Native Pacific Islander
- Biracial
- Native, African American



LGBTQ+ Community

- Straight
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Asexua
- unlabeled/bi-curious
- pansexual



Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

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