

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

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

SECTION 1. Section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2002 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 60, the words "and (f)" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- (f) to appoint members to regional chapters of the commission; and (g).

SECTION 2. (a) There shall be a permanent commission on the status of women in Berkshire county, hereinafter referred to as "the commission", consisting of 9 persons who are to be appointed by the Massachusetts commission on the status of women. The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Berkshire county. The commission shall report their findings to the Massachusetts commission on the status of women annually, on or before June 2, and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Berkshire county. The Massachusetts commission on the status of women shall make such appointments to the Berkshire commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Berkshire county.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(i) The powers of the commission shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a) the use of voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed; b) recommendation of policies and recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government to effectuate the purposes of the commission; c) enactment of bylaws for its own governance; and d) the conduct of regular, public meetings and fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary.