



Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

ANNUAL REPORT

May 2022

Gabrielle Jackson
Jacqueline Velez
Shanique Spalding

Alina Carcea
Daisy Pereria-Tosado
Izzy Ortiz

Tara Marshall
Kimberley Lee
Nicole Coakley

Members:

Gabrielle Jackson - Springfield
Tara Marshall - Agawam
Kimberley Lee—Wilbraham
Alina Carcea—Longmeadow
Jacqueline Velez - Springfield
Daisy Pereria-Tosado - Agawam
Shanique Spaulding—Springfield
Izzy Ortiz - Springfield
Nicole Coakley - Springfield

Elected Officers:

Gabrielle Jackson—Chair
Jaqueline Velez—Vice Chair
Tara Marshall —Secretary

Purpose

On April 25, 2017, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women inaugurated nine new commissioners to a newly formed regional commission created to study and report on the status of women and girls in the twenty-three towns and cities that make up Hampden County, Western Massachusetts. “The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is a state-established body charged with reviewing the status of women in Massachusetts and offering recommendations regarding policy that would improve access to opportunities and equality.” Taking from the brief provided, the Regional Commissions: “Modeled after the MCSW, the...unfunded county and regional women’s commissions were legislatively created to study and report on the status of women and girls in their geographical areas, and to provide permanent and effective voices for women and girls. Each county and regional commission reports their findings annually to MCSW.”

Membership

At the June 14, 2018 meeting, the HCCSWG voted for three (3) elected officers at which time the following assignments were accepted - Dawn Forbes DiStefano, Chair; Shanique Spalding, Vice Chair;

Michelle Goncalves, Secretary. In January 2019, the Commission inaugurated three new officers including; Gabrielle Jackson; Tara Marshall and Lizzy Ortiz. In June 2020, the Commission elected new leadership, including Gabrielle Jackson as Chair and Tara Marshall as Secretary. In January 2021, the Commission welcomed their newest sister Commissioner Jacqueline Velez of Springfield. Most recently in 2022, the Commission accepted four new Commissioners, Nicole Coakley of Springfield, Kimberley Lee of Wilbraham, Daisy Perira-Tosada of Agawam and Alina Carcea of Longmeadow.

Accomplishments

The HCCSWG Commission has successfully completed a diverse and meaningful list of accomplishments between January 2021 and May 2022, against all odds and during unprecedented circumstances. We met our goal of increasing a social media presence through the promotion of community events and sharing of information important to women and girls in our community. We accomplished this task through mindful planning of Facebook posts that generated increased interest and engagement with Hampden County residents. One of the most promising events we launched were our reoccurring "Coffee Chats," 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. During Women's History Month in March 2022, the Commission hosted a "Women Breaking the Bias" event, which featured powerful women across various industries in Hampden County who were able to break barriers in their area of expertise. In addition, the Commission has featured community power-players and leaders to speak at our Public Meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of each month. While we're excited for 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 about important issues that impact women and girls in Hampden County and beyond.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Coffee Chat Series (2020-2022)

Women Breaking Barriers (2022)

Public Meetings featuring Community Resources (2021 - 2022)

HCCSWG Commissioners also invited a series of women who lead in our community to serve as featured guests and present important information to our constituents during our monthly Public Meetings.

HCCSWG GRANT REQUEST

The HCCSWG submitted a request for grant funding from the MA Commission in 2022. We plan to use the funding to purchase a web domain and site, create our own marketing materials and use the funding to provide appetizers for future in-person guests once COVID regulations lift. Our topics for consideration and advocacy include Healthcare, Education, Workplace Challenges and Sexual Assault - a reflection of our public meetings and events with Elected Leaders.

Conclusion

The Hampden County Commission is quite proud of our work during the past year. We have worked diligently to engage with our community, participate in local initiatives, coordinate opportunities for public hearings and collect information to guide our efforts. We plan to build on our success this year

and will 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 volunteer to engage in advocacy and community engagement efforts in partnership with Commissioners.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabrielle Jackson

Chair

The Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls