



Hampshire Franklin County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls:

2023-2024 Annual Report



Current Commissioners (as pictured above):

Victoria Cliche (Vice-President), Sarah Dunton, Luzed Guzman Romano (Clerk), Colleen DelVecchio, Laura Sylvester (President), Nicole Fonsh, and Bonnie MacCracken

Mission:

The purpose of the Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (HFCSWG) shall be to advance women and girls toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote the rights and opportunities for all women and girls. The mission of the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is to amplify the voices of women and girls (being all those who self-identify as such, regardless of the gender they were designated at birth) across Hampshire-Franklin Counties that facilitates and fosters community, inclusiveness and well-being for women and girls. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights, and the full enjoyment of life for all women and girls across all lifespans.

Standing Committees:

Legislative- Chair: Nicole Fonsh, Technology- Chair: Sarah Dunton,
Outreach/Planning- Co-Chairs: Bonnie MacCracken and Colleen DelVecchio

Summary of Accomplishments during 2023-2024:

After an active online recruitment campaign, the HFCSW invited four new Commissioners to join: Colleen DelVecchio, Luzed Guzman Romano, Nicole Fonsh, and Sarah Dunton. The Commission has primarily focused on integrating new Commissioners, establishing our legislative priorities, and exploring team dynamics. This has required us to review our current state, complete diagnostics, and assess the various talents and interests of the group. We held a retreat that was conducted by a professional facilitator, Jonencia Wood, which allowed us to share what brings us to the work of the Commission and identify areas of need in our community. Upon finishing our retreat we established community agreements, began to select which legislative priorities we'd like to focus on, and what some of our goals would be entering into the next term.

In addition to conducting a retreat, the Commission established individual committees to complete targeted work. The Technology Committee was established to assist with our internal and external communication and support the Commission's infrastructure. The Legislative Committee was created to monitor the status of selected legislation and provide updates to the group. Lastly, the Outreach and Planning Committee will be tasked with planning events and maintaining community relations.

As a part of our "vamping up" process, the Commission took inventory of current supplies and merchandise and filled any areas of need which will aid in growing visibility for the work of the Commission. An order for t-shirts, business cards, name badges, and stickers was placed with a local, woman-owned print shop and will be utilized during community events.

Summary of Goals Entering the 2024-2025 Term:

In the coming year the Commission hopes to gain a closer understanding of how best to support the passing of selected legislation. Staying up to date on the status of targeted priorities and hearing from legislators and constituents will help to inform our action plan for each bill. Examples of activity to grow awareness and support include holding legislative listening sessions, phone banking, writing Op'ed's, direct advocacy with influential figures, and providing recommendations for future priorities to be considered.

An additional goal of the Commission is to establish relationships within our county and ensure that our community knows who we are. Our hope is to be considered a resource and voice for the concerns women and girls in our community have, so creating a line of communication and accessibility will be essential. We also would like to create partnerships with local organizations who are working to service the same demographic and have begun discussions with the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts to share more about our respective work.

Creating a plan for recording our activity and monitoring our progress will ensure that we are always acting in alignment with our stated priorities. This is a plan that will likely take time to create and ensure that we are always utilizing our time to make the greatest impact.

Lastly, although have had success in the area of recruitment, we aim to obtain at least two more commissioners to ensure that we are adequately sourced to achieve our goals.

Final Thoughts:

After weathering the impact that COVID-19 has had on our community and our commissioners as individuals, we are excited to enter this new chapter for the Commission. We are fortunate to have a diverse and skilled group of women working in collaboration together and look forward the year ahead.

Completed by: Luzed Guzman Romano-Clerk
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