



HAMPSHIRE-FRANKLIN

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



HAMPSHIRE-FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

2024-2025 Annual Report

COMMISSIONERS:

Luzed Guzman Romano (Easthampton), Chairwoman
Jo-Ann Konieczny (South Hadley), Vice-Chairwoman
Colleen DelVecchio (Easthampton), Treasurer
Olivia Laramie (Easthampton), Legislative Coordinator
Victoria Edwards (Greenfield), Secretary

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.

ADVOCACY:

Leadership and Strategic Alignment

The Commission began the year by establishing a new leadership team and committee structure, laying a strong foundation for coordinated and sustained advocacy.

Legislative Advocacy

The Commission refined its legislative agenda by identifying key policy priorities and engaging in dialogue with local advocates. These conversations helped clarify the implications of pending legislation and informed the Commission's positions.

Another accomplishment in this area was the creation and publication of an op-ed in support of Bill H.2499, "An Act pertaining to women's health at midlife and public, medical and workplace awareness of the transitional stage of menopause and related chronic conditions." This advocacy contributed to increased visibility and public discourse on women's health.



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Media and Public Awareness

To strengthen its advocacy reach, the Commission expanded its media presence by building relationships with press and communication outlets. This enhanced visibility positioned the Commission to inform the public, influence policy conversations, and advocate more effectively on behalf of women and girls in Hampshire and Franklin counties.

PROGRAMMING:

Visibility at Pride Events

Commissioners participated in regional Pride celebrations across Hampshire and Franklin counties, affirming the intersectionality of gender and LGBTQIA+ equity. These events served as a platform for raising awareness about the Commission's work and demonstrating solidarity with communities historically marginalized in policy and representation.

Community Listening and Engagement

To facilitate direct dialogue with the public, the Commission hosted open hours, including a community coffee chat at The Sphere in Northampton. These informal gatherings invited constituents to share their experiences, raise concerns, and learn more about the Commission's mission and ongoing initiatives.

These community-based programs not only increased the Commission's visibility but also provided vital input that informs its advocacy and strategic planning. By listening closely to the lived experiences and local priorities of residents, the Commission continues to shape its programming to reflect and respond to the evolving needs of women and girls throughout the region.

GOALS FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR:

Goal 1: Expand Community-Centered Engagement

The Commission will deepen its connection to local communities by hosting inclusive, community-centered events across Hampshire and Franklin Counties. Special emphasis will be placed on outreach to area community colleges and organizing a regional fall event with community partners. These engagements are designed to elevate local voices, build stronger relationships, and surface issues most affecting women and girls in the region.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationships with Local Legislators

To support more effective advocacy, the Commission will invest in sustained communication and collaboration with local lawmakers. These partnerships aim to ensure that the lived experiences and concerns of constituents are reflected in policy discussions at both the state and local levels.



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Goal 3: Advance Strategic Planning

The Commission will build on the momentum of its current planning work to further develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan. This plan will align advocacy, programming, and internal development around shared priorities and measurable goals, providing a roadmap for impact and accountability.

Goal 4: Invest in Capacity, Representation, and Sustainability

The Commission will pursue strategic growth by bringing on new members and staff, with a focus on enhancing the Commission's reach, responsiveness, and long-term sustainability as it works to fulfill its mission.

Submitted by Victoria Edwards on May 19, 2025