



# **Bylaws of the Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

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**PREAMBLE**

The Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, also known as, ERCSW, was established by House Bill 1110 and signed into law on March 15, 2018, as Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2018.

The organization and rules of procedure of the ERCSW shall be as follows:

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The purpose of the ERCSW shall be to assess and advance the women and girls of the Eastern Region of Massachusetts toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote the rights and opportunities for all women and girls. The mission of the ERCSW is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women and girls in the Eastern Region of Massachusetts.

**ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF COMMISSIONERS**

Members of the ERCSW shall be referred to as “Commissioners.”

Section 1. MEMBERS

The ERCSW shall consist of nine (9) persons, to be appointed by the MCSW, with the input of the ERCSW. The MCSW shall make appointments from a pool of applicants who reside in Suffolk and parts of Norfolk County communities, which for purposes of this bylaw shall mean Cities and Towns within Suffolk County and some Cities and Towns within Norfolk County.

Applications shall be solicited on a rolling basis throughout the year for appointment consideration during the annual appointment period which occurs in September of every year or during any time in which the Commission has a vacancy. The Commission will send its appointment recommendations to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, which is the appointing authority. The appointments will be made with staggering terms that match the needs of the Commission.

Commissioners of the ERCSW shall be diverse and represent different communities in the Eastern Region of Massachusetts.

**SECTION 2. TERM**

Commissioners shall serve a term of three years or the term that was assigned to them based on the seat they filled - and until their successor is appointed. Each Commissioner is eligible to serve two consecutive three-year terms.

### **SECTION 3. VACANCIES**

Any Commissioner may resign by delivering their written resignation to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and copying their Chair. The Massachusetts Commission will have the authority to fill the vacancy with a new Commissioner for the balance of the unexpired term.

### **SECTION 4. DIVERSITY**

The Commission is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action. Individuals who identify as female, those from culturally diverse backgrounds, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Commissioners must reside in Suffolk County or parts of Norfolk County and have experience working toward the improvement of the status of women and girls in society.

The Commonwealth is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. Research shows that qualified women, Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) may self-select out of opportunities if they do not meet 100% of the requirements.

## **ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS**

SECTION 1. Annually, after re-appointment, and no later than the first meeting of the new fiscal year, the ERCSW shall elect from its Commissioners the following officers whose term shall be one year:

1. Chair, provided, however, that should the currently appointed Commissioners elect in any given year to install Co-Chairs, then the Commission shall make a motion and vote to do so.
2. Vice-Chair
3. Clerk
4. Treasurer, as needed. Each year the Commission shall determine the need for a Treasurer.

Only members of the Commission shall be eligible for nomination and election as officers of the Commission. If an officer of this Commission shall, during their term of office, no longer be a member of the Commission, they shall automatically cease to be an officer of the Commission.

### **SECTION 2. OFFICERS' TERM OF OFFICE**

The elected officers shall serve for a term of one year. The elected officers shall not serve more than two successive terms in any particular office. However, through a majority vote of the currently appointed Commissioners, any ERCSW officer may serve an additional one-year term until a successor is elected and qualified, or until the existing officer resigns, is removed, becomes disqualified, or is deceased.

### SECTION 3. OFFICER VACANCIES

A vacancy in the Chair's office shall be filled until the next annual election by the Vice-Chair. All other vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of ERCSW. In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are both unable to preside, a quorum of the Commission shall elect a temporary Chair.

## **ARTICLE V: DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

The duties of the officers are as follows:

### SECTION 1. CHAIR

The Chair, or Co-Chairs, shall be entrusted to act and carry out policies and decisions of the ERCSW between meetings of the ERCSW.

The Chair, or Co-Chairs, shall:

- a) Call and preside at all meetings of the ERCSW and conduct these in accordance with parliamentary rules;
- b) Call special meetings when deemed necessary or desirable;
- c) Set the agenda for ERCSW meetings;
- d) Serve as spokesperson for the ERCSW or direct such representation before the public and governmental bodies;
- e) Act as liaison, or designate such liaison, with the MCSW;
- f) Oversee all recommendations and reports to the MCSW; and
- g) Perform such other duties as the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

### SECTION 2. VICE-CHAIR

The Vice-Chair shall perform all duties of the Chair in the event of the Chair's absence or inability to serve, or in the event of a vacancy in that office until it is filled and shall perform other duties as are designated by the Commission.

The regular role of Vice-Chair includes these responsibilities:

- a) Manage the pipeline of prospective Commissioners and oversee the interview and selection process.
- b) Oversee orientation of new commissioners, ensuring that all commissioners are properly sworn in and maintain required training and certifications;

- c) Propose and facilitate new training for commissioners when appropriate, including bringing them up to speed on matters pertaining to the work and business of ERCSW;
- d) Serve as the Chair of an ad-hoc Bylaws Committee when amendments to the bylaws are being discussed and proposed for approval by the full commission.
- e) Provide guidance to the regional intern while collaborating closely with committee chairs.

### SECTION 3. CLERK

The Clerk shall:

- a) Responsible for distributing the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the ERCSW prepared by herself;
- b) Assure that an attendance roster is maintained for each ERCSW meeting;
- c) Act as historian to the ERCSW by ensuring that all general correspondence, records of meetings, and business before the ERCSW is maintained;
- d) Sign such instruments as shall be authorized by the ERCSW;
- e) Perform all other duties necessary for the maintenance of adequate records, files and communications of the ERCSW.

### SECTION 4. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall perform the following duties and all other duties as are designated by the Commission.

- a) Ensure that all financial records are maintained and shall oversee budget preparation and reporting.
- b) Submit the commission's application for fall and spring grant funding as provided by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and manage all expenses related to the grant.
- c) Ensure that any commissioner seeking reimbursement for expenses has the proper paperwork completed and submitted to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women for processing.

## **ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES**

### SECTION 1. ORGANIZATION

The Commission may create such committees, as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Commission.

### SECTION 2. STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees shall be established by the Commission with permanent on-going tasks. The work of the Standing Committees shall be determined by goals and objectives established annually. All committees shall submit their recommendations to the full Eastern Regional Commission for approval to be acted upon.

The Standing Committees shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) Legislative & Public Policy Committee
- b) Program & Planning Committee
- c) Communications Committee
- d) Youth Group

All Committee Chairs shall be active Commissioners and the standing committees shall be composed of members of the Commission. Every Commissioner shall serve on at least one committee. Commission members may volunteer to serve on the committee of their choice. Chairs of standing committees shall be selected by members of that committee and will act as the point of contact, delivering committee reports at full commission meetings.

### SECTION 3. SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The Commission is empowered to appoint committees, task forces, councils, or other appropriate bodies, to study specialized areas of concern and report their findings to the Commission; disseminate information on issues relating to women and girls; develop and promote programs and services to women and girls; and advocate for women's equity. Membership on such committees shall not be limited to Commissioners. Special representatives other than Commission members may be appointed by the Chair to serve on task forces for the period of time designated by the Commission and would submit interim reports on their special assignments as the Commission requests.

Only Commissioners may vote to elect special committee Chairs, and only Commissioners may be Chairs of special committees.

## **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

### SECTION 1. FREQUENCY

The entire Commission shall meet at least six times during the calendar year. Meeting locations will rotate or be held remotely and shall be accessible in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Members of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, also known as MCSW, may attend the meetings of the ERCSW.

## SECTION 2. QUORUM

A majority of Commissioners currently holding office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Commission business. A quorum can also include two Commissioners who are Executive Officers and two Commissioners.

A majority of Commissioners currently holding office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Commission business, unless it conflicts with the Open Meeting Law. In the absence of a quorum, the executive committee can act on behalf of the Commission, provided that a quorum of the executive committee and two additional Commissioners are present.

## SECTION 3. OPEN MEETING LAW

All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions may be conducted, as per the law.

## SECTION 4. ATTENDANCE

All Commissioners are expected to maintain regular attendance at meetings of the full Commission, and to participate fully and effectively in such committees or task forces as are necessary and appropriate to conduct the business of the Commission. It's an expectation of the commission that if a commissioner is unable to attend that a notification will be sent to the Chair prior to the meeting. The Clerk shall maintain a record of attendance at each Commission meeting.

After a Commissioner's third unexcused absence from regularly scheduled meetings of the full Commission, the Chair shall notify the MCSW of the failure of that Commissioner to comply with the Commission's attendance requirements; provided, however, that such Commissioner may attach their own explanation for the reasons for her absences.

All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions, as per the law, may be conducted.

## **ARTICLE VIII: VOTING PRIVILEGES**

At any Commission meeting or committee meeting, each member of the Commission shall be entitled to one vote. Only members who attend a meeting in person shall count toward a quorum for voting purposes. There shall be no proxy voting.

## **ARTICLE IX: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The ERCSW shall annually, by the first week of June, report the results of its findings and activities of the preceding year to the MCSW.

## **ARTICLE X: POWERS OF THE ERCSW**

The powers of ERCSW shall include but not be limited to the following:

To accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests and federal funds for any of the purposes of this act. The funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the Commission.

(i) The ERCSW may: (i) use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered or required; (ii) recommend policies and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purposes of the commission; (iii) enact by-laws for its own governance; (iv) hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and (v) take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purposes.

## **ARTICLE XI: FINANCES**

### **SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the ERCSW shall be July 1 through June 30.

### **SECTION 2. FUNDING**

The ERCSW may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of the enabling legislation.

### **SECTION 3. ACCOUNTS**

Such funds shall be deposited in a separate account with the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women on behalf of the Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women and expended as directed by and in accordance with the law and the donor or grantor's intent.

## **ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the ERCSW by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commissioners present and voting provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted to the ERCSW in writing, by no later than the regular monthly meeting prior to the regular monthly meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be discussed, considered, and voted.

## **ARTICLE XIII: POLICY ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

The ERCSW, as needed, shall adopt policies. Policies may be adopted, amended, or repealed by a majority of all votes cast by the ERCSW present and voting, provided that the proposed material has been submitted in writing by no later than the regular monthly

meeting prior to the regular monthly meeting at which the proposed policy is to be discussed, considered, and voted.

#### **ARTICLE XIV: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

When not in conflict with these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the actions of the Commission.

#### **ARTICLE XV: COMMISSIONER EMERITA**

Any Commissioner who serves two full three-year terms is eligible to become a Commissioner Emerita. To become a Commissioner Emerita, such Commissioners whose terms have expired may request such a title from the Eastern Regional, which shall be approved at the ERCSW's discretion. The purpose of Commissioner Emerita is to remain connected to the work of ERCSW and to continue to participate and have a voice. Commissioner Emeritus may participate in all meetings of ERCSW but shall have no voting privileges.

#### **ARTICLE XVI: ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The ERCSW may establish an Advisory Council to provide discussion and informal guidance on issues of interest to the Commission. Membership on the Advisory Council must be approved by the ERCSW, and members of the Advisory Council shall not have voting privileges.