



Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women

Annual Report 2025-2026

Commissioners Lynne Barbee, Chair, Mashpee; Amy Peters, Vice-Chair, Mashpee; Zaafirah Robb, Treasurer, Falmouth; Chinna Mapp, Secretary, Falmouth; Natalia Frois, Falmouth; Sunny Daily, Nantucket; Inna Taylor, Hyannis; Meredith Biron, Wellfleet; Valerie Borden, Sagamore Beach.

Emerita as of December 31, 2025: Mary Waygan, Mashpee

Mission

The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women provides a permanent, effective voice for women across the region, advancing full equity in all areas of life and promoting rights and opportunities for all women. The Commission studies and reports on the status of women and girls in Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties; informs leaders across business, education, health care, and government; and serves as a liaison between regional and statewide commissions and organizations. The Commission convenes monthly and through three working groups: Legislative, Hearing More Voices, and Publicity.

Chair Report

This year we welcomed three new commissioners: Inna Taylor, Meredith Biron, and Valerie Borden, each bringing fresh energy and expertise to our work. We are focused on integrating them into our working groups while passing along our institutional history. We also honored the dedicated service of Mary Waygan, our long-term Legislative Chair, who timed out of her term. Mary is staying connected to share her knowledge of the Legislature with our new Working Group Chair, Valerie Borden, who brings years of federal government experience.

Scheduling consistent meeting times has been challenging, as several commissioners balance teaching and coursework. We are committed to finding structures that work for everyone, including our Nantucket commissioner, Sunny Daily, whose schedule as a birthing doula and community organizer is particularly demanding.

We are proud to note that from September 2025 to the present, we have hosted intern Hamna Shakeel, a Mashpee High School senior. Working with Commissioner Amy Peters, Hamna surveyed public building bathroom facilities and engaged department managers on access to menstrual products in town buildings, in connection with our advocacy on the I AM Bill. Her final project report will be presented to the Commission.

Advocacy

2026 is the second year of the current two-year legislative session. Our priorities:

1. The I AM Bill: An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products, which would provide menstrual products in schools, shelters, and prisons. The Bill passed the Massachusetts Senate and awaits action in the House. A new Senate bill, S2156, would extend coverage to additional public buildings including libraries. We continue our advocacy in close collaboration with MassNOW.

2. Common Start: An Act providing affordable, high-quality early education and care. While the full bill did not pass, the Legislature voted to increase funding for Early Childhood Education, an outcome we supported in collaboration with the Common Start Coalition.

3. Doula Services: An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services. This bill passed, and doula services are now covered by many insurers, a meaningful win for maternal health equity across the Commonwealth.

Programming

Our most significant program effort this year was the International Women's Day Breakfast in Hyannis on April 7, which drew more than 200 attendees. Commissioners Inna Taylor, Amy Peters, Natalia Frois, and Zaaifrah Robb were central to planning and delivery. Grant funding supported audio-visual programming and interpretation services. Our table focused on menstrual product access and served as a strong recruitment and visibility opportunity. We expect to participate again next year.

Commissioner Natalia Frois created a Latino Business Network Expo in February at Mashpee Cape Space. Vice Chair Amy Peters staffed our table, making new connections with the community.

On April 18, we continued our outreach at Honor the Earth Day at the Wampanoag Government Center in Mashpee, with Commissioner Amy Peters, a Wampanoag Tribe member, facilitating our participation. Upcoming outreach includes Mashpee's Friendship and Race Amity Day on June 14 and the [Barnstable County Fair July 20-26, 2026](#)

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

1. Legislative relationships. We will strengthen direct connections with our state legislators, leveraging our commissioners' geographic diversity to engage representatives from multiple districts through events, personal meetings, and monthly Zoom sessions.

2. Multimedia outreach. Commissioner Inna Taylor's media experience, combined with training at the Cape Media Center for Inna, Valerie, and Meredith, will allow us to expand our public reach. We are also actively recruiting to fill remaining vacancies, with particular focus on the Outer Cape.

3. Hearing More Voices. We are in initial planning for a fall community listening event to deepen our engagement with women and girls across the region. We will have a table at the Mashpee Wampanoag Pow Wow July 3-5, 2026.

4. An Commissioner Retreat for strategic planning and organizational enhancement is in the works for later this year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynne Barbee, Chair

Date: May 20, 2026