



FY 2026 Annual Report

June 2026



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Remarks from FY2026 Chair

The past year has been incredibly transformative for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) in so many ways. As Chairwoman, it is an honor to stand alongside each of you as we reflect on a year of tremendous growth, renewed purpose, and unshakable commitment.

As a Navy Veteran jet mechanic with more than 14 years of service in both active duty and reserves, service to our Commonwealth and to our country is a value I hold near and dear to my heart. I am also incredibly proud to have served as the Immediate Past President of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW). For more than 5 years, I served as an intermediary between the states and the national umbrella, cultivating best practices and developing relationships that enable leadership in turbulent times. It is an honor to represent Massachusetts, and the strong standards we set, both here in our Great Commonwealth—and on the national stage.



After more than 15 years in service as a State Commissioner with the MCSW, serving in various capacities, on various committees, and now proudly having served two terms as Chairwoman, I am nearing the end of my last term. I can't begin to describe how proud I am of the work we've accomplished and the bar we've set in serving the women and girls of Massachusetts. During my tenure, one of my proudest highlights was when MCSW Commissioners used their passion and talents to create 11 Regional Commissions. These local bodies act as an extension of the State Commission, listening to the issues local women and girls face in real time.

What makes the MCSW so unique—and so vital—is that we are a nonpartisan special state agency. With 19 volunteer Commissioners appointed jointly by the Executive and Legislative branches, all reflecting a shared belief across the aisle that gender equity is not a partisan issue—it's a human one. The Commissioners, passionate staff, and interns have dedicated themselves to promoting and protecting equality for women and girls in all areas of their lives. The MCSW's charge is clear—we exist to empower the women of the Commonwealth. We are the bridge between the issues they face and the decisionmakers who have the ability to alter or prioritize policy changes to make our lives easier.

I am so proud to serve as the Chairwoman of the MCSW at this pivotal moment in time. We hosted public hearings and listening sessions all across the state. We trained more than 300 young women as next-generation advocacy leaders at our 2026 Girls Empowerment Leadership (GELI) Summit and awarded more than 147 incredible local women as Commonwealth Heroines, our largest class yet, highlighting local women who don't always make the news, but who always make the difference in our communities.

These aren't just programs—they are platforms for power, visibility, and systemic change.

Furthermore, we couldn't be prouder to continue our work to advance the lives of women and girls through policy advocacy. Our policy work continues to be at the heart of everything we do. The Commission is laser-focused on legislation that addresses real-world inequalities—maternal health, economic security, safety, and access to opportunity—and we're committed to advancing that work through coalitions, testimony, and data-driven solutions.

I am filled with gratitude to see the many ways in which the MCSW team has grown. In a short time, the Commission and staff have overhauled the Commission's infrastructure. They rose to the challenge of rebuilding our regional bodies to full strength, welcomed new State and Regional Commissioners, and expanded our reach into underserved communities across the Commonwealth. As we look toward the future, we do so with a strong foundation, a broader bench of leadership, and a renewed sense of direction. We are more ready for the opportunities ahead in the coming year!

We express our deepest gratitude to our appointing authorities: the Governor, the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, and the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators for continually collaborating with us to move the needle on policy that can change all our lives for the better. We are thankful for their partnership, support, expertise, incredible energy, and passionate commitment to this work.

As the 194th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts begins to wind down, we're more committed than ever to working collaboratively to advance our lives for the better.

While there is still much uncertainty and inequity in the world, I draw hope from my Sister Commissioners, staff, partners, advocates, and our collective work as a community to improve the lives of women and girls in the Commonwealth. In today's climate, the crucial work we do to advance the rights and opportunities for all women and girls is all the more needed.

We are the line in the sand to say unequivocally—we won't go back.

In solidarity and gratitude,



Mary-dith Tuitt
Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) Chairwoman



Commissioners, Staff, and Interns



MCSW FY26 State and Regional Commissioners representing at the 2026 Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative (GELI) Summit

MCSW State Commissioners and Officers

Mary-dith Tuitt, Boston – *MCSW Chairwoman*

Christine Monska, Auburndale – *MCSW Vice-Chairwoman*

Audrey Hall, Framingham – *MCSW Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair*

Dr. Kimberly Shea, Winchendon – *MCSW Secretary and Program and Planning Committee Chair*

Tanisha Arena, Springfield – *Finance Committee Vice Chair*

Giselly Byrd, Boston – *Program and Planning Committee Vice-Chair*

Carol Campbell, Amherst**

Divya Chaturvedi, Pittsfield *Finance Committee Secretary*

Guimel DeCarvalho, Natick – *Legislative and Public Policy Committee Chair*

Whitney Dodds, Worcester

Melissa Ferretti, Buzzards Bay

Jean Fox, Freetown**

Natascha George, Boston

Allison Goldberg, Marblehead – *Legislative and Public Policy Committee Vice-Chair*

Shela Levante, Pittsfield

Leslie-Ann McGee, Falmouth**

Dr. Aisha Miller, Mattapan – *Program and Planning Committee Secretary*

Lise Olney, Wellesley – *Legislative and Public Policy Committee Secretary*

Heather Panahi, Wellesley

Dr. Candace E. Pérez, Lynn

Sonia Shah, Natick**

Dr. Emily Wilson, Plymouth

***We are especially grateful to these Commissioners, who graciously extended their term of service for longer than their appointed term until their successor was appointed.*



FY26 MCSW Staff & Interns at the 2026 Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative (GELI) Summit

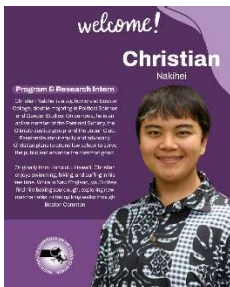
MCSW FY26 Staff

- Shaitia Spruell**, Lancaster – *Executive Director*
- Marjorie C. Bernadeau-Alexandre**, Roslindale – *Administration & Finance Director*
- Tina Games**, Harwich – *Regional Commissions Director*
- Ellen Moorhouse**, Springfield – *Communications and Marketing Director*
- Darlene Kelter**, Lynnfield – *Administrative Assistant*
- Raven Harris**, Springfield – *MCSW Clerk & Executive Assistant*
- Madeleine McCarthy**, Boston – *Regional Operations Coordinator*

MCSW FY26 Interns

The MCSW's internship program provides students with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in public policy, research, communications, and community outreach related to women's issues. Interns work closely with the Commission staff to support ongoing projects and initiatives, as well as to develop new projects and programs. We welcomed a slate of paid interns this year from a variety of educational institutions across the Commonwealth.

- **Renee Asafo-Adjei**, Communications Intern, Bentley University, Class of 2026
- **Olivia Honeycutt**, Legislative Intern, MA Institute of Technology (MIT), Class of 2026
- **Christian Nakihei**, Program and Research Intern, Boston College, Class of 2028



The Mission of the Commission

MCSW has 19 volunteer state commissioners, 11 regional bodies, dedicated staff members, and paid seasonal interns. MCSW state commissioners are appointed by one of four appointing authorities: the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Caucus of Women Legislators. Commissioners serve in a volunteer capacity, and meet monthly, September through June. In addition, each commissioner is a member of at least one standing committee that generally meets monthly.

The standing committees include:

- Legislative and Public Policy
- Program and Planning
- Finance Committee
- Executive Committee

For more than 28 years now, the Commission and our regionals have worked to advance the rights and opportunities of all women and girls across Massachusetts, and advance an inclusive environment for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, color, sex, age, disability (seen and unseen), genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, parental status, marital status, socioeconomic status or background.

Mission

The mission of the Commission is to advance women and girls toward full equality in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women and girls. The Commission exists to provide a permanent, effective voice for all women and girls across Massachusetts.

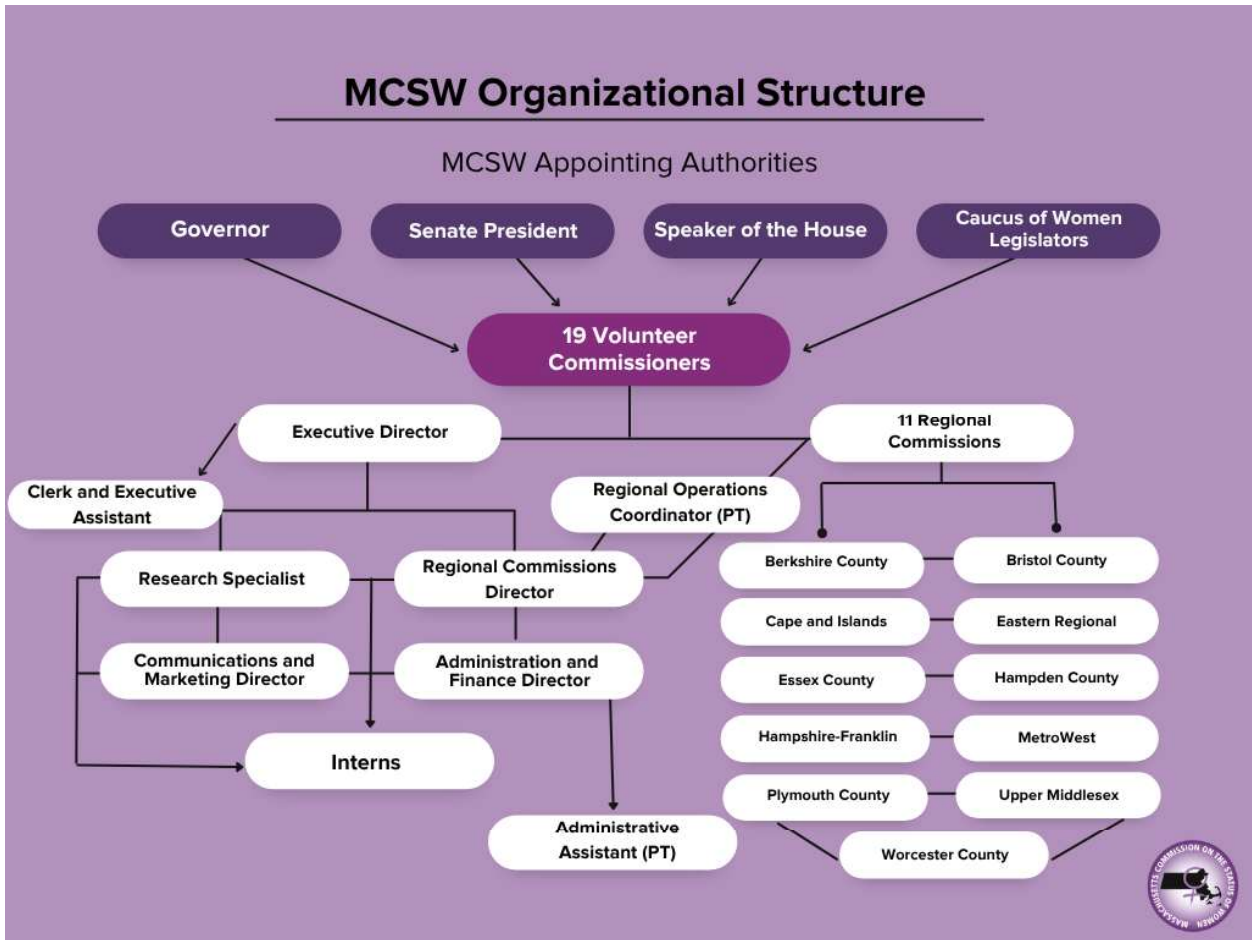
Charges and Purpose

The purpose of the Commission shall be to advance women and girls toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women and girls. According to the enabling language, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (the “Commission”) is established as an independent agency by Section 66 of Chapter 3 of the General Laws of Massachusetts ([the “Enabling Act”](#)). The Commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women and shall be guided by the tenets of the [Platform for Action of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in September 1995](#).

The Commission’s statutory responsibilities under the enabling act:

- a) study, review and report on the status of women in the Commonwealth;
- b) inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women;
- c) serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues affecting women;
- d) serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women;
- e) identify and recommend qualified women for appointive positions at all levels of government, including boards and commissions, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- f) assess programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect women, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- g) advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect on women of proposed legislation, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate; and
- h) promote and facilitate collaboration among local women’s commissions and among women’s organizations in the state, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate.

FY26 Organizational Chart



Financial Overview

During the fiscal year of 2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026), MCSW received a Massachusetts State General Appropriation budget of \$972,297. Additionally, MCSW's budget also operates using a statutory trust account, established and maintained in 2004 by the State Treasury. The fund retains donations and funds raised by the MCSW, supporting external community projects such as the [MCSW Scholarship Program](#) and others not funded by the General Appropriations Act (GAA).



In October 2025, the MCSW testified in front of the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight in support of [H.3433](#), a bill that would amend the MCSW's enabling language to allow the Commission to expand use of the trust fund and change the annual reporting deadline from June 2 to July 31. As of the completion of this report, the bill has been referred to the House Committee on Ways & Means.

The MCSW operational budget covers employee compensation, contracted services, administrative expenses, program operations, language accessibility, information technology, and other categories as needed for operational purposes. Specifically, the program operations budget line supports the costs associated with advocacy and community engagement that is essential to learning about the issues impacting women and girls across the Commonwealth through the 11 Regional Commissions under the MCSW Regional grant program, supporting operations of our regional bodies.

During the fiscal year of 2026, MCSW had a dedicated team of 7 permanent employees; five full-time staff members and two part-time staff members including an Executive Director, Administration & Finance Director, Regional Commissions Director, Communication & Marketing Director, Executive Assistant; Administrative Assistant, and Regional Operations Coordinator. The MCSW also continued its paid internship program throughout FY26, with three part-time interns from various educational institutions across the Commonwealth as part of our outreach strategy to reach a population that is vital to our continuum.

As stewards of public funding, the MCSW takes its fiduciary responsibility seriously and is dedicated to using its resources to empower women and girls across Massachusetts. The Commission is committed to financial transparency and using state funds to reinvest in the Commonwealth.

Operational Fees:	\$137,500.00
Administrative Operation:	\$607,297.00
Fringe Benefits	\$14,000.00
Paid Intern Program:	\$56,000.00
ADA and Language Accommodations:	\$17,000.00
Regional CSW Programs & Operations:	\$47,000.00
Advocacy & Community Engagements:	\$54,500.00
Information Technology:	\$39,000.00

Thank you to MCSW Chairwoman Mary-dith Tuitt and Executive Director Shaitia Spruell for representing the MCSW at the Ways and Means FY27 Budget Hearing on Economic Development, Housing, and Labor at the Barnstable Town Hall in Hyannis, Massachusetts, on March 9th, 2026. The Commission is grateful to the committee and members for their continued support of women and girls across the Commonwealth. [Watch the full hearing here.](#)

Programs and Impact

In FY26, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women ([MCSW](#)) continued its work to reach women and girls in every corner of the Commonwealth, understand the issues they face, and address barriers to success. The Commission expanded its statewide engagement through a robust series of programming and events for both youth and adults. At the beginning of the 194th Legislative Session, we introduced a robust legislative agenda informed by community voices.

After a year of testimony collection and data gathering, the Commission hosted two hybrid public hearings in different corners of the state and held two entirely virtual listening sessions to further gather testimony and data directly from our communities. Our hybrid public hearings were open format, where the public was invited writ large, and we heard about a wide range of issues that we compiled into summaries shared with appointing authorities, elected officials, and the general public.

We worked closely with our 11 Regional Commissions, who themselves held dozens of events across the state, including listening sessions, legislative breakfasts, and more. We're grateful for the lasting impact our regionals have not only on our annual programming, but to advance our overall mission. As a result, we narrowed our legislative agenda to four priority areas of focus to better advocate for direct solutions to the recurring issues reflected across a wide range of testimony and input: housing, education, safety, and economic opportunity and mobility.

Our events, attended by hundreds of individuals both in-person and virtually, serve as critical opportunities for the Commission to connect directly with women and girls across Massachusetts. Through testimony, dialogue, collaboration, data collection, and more, MCSW identifies the most pressing issues, builds coalitions for change, and strengthens local networks of women leaders working to improve their communities.

And finally, in alignment with its commitment to equity and access, MCSW is translating many of its publicly available materials into the ten most commonly spoken languages in Massachusetts, offering American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and other language interpretation services at all of our public events, and providing additional physical accommodations as needed to ensure full participation for all women and girls in our programming.

[Learn more about our events, read full summary recaps, and more.](#)

Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative (GELI) Summit 2026

The MCSW's Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative, also known as [GELI](#), seeks to empower young women ages 14-22 across Massachusetts to advocate for themselves and their communities. The MCSW GELI programming is an opportunity for girls to learn new leadership skills, develop new connections, build alliances for advocating for girls' issues and concerns, and promote their leadership throughout the Commonwealth.

The GELI program remains a cornerstone of the Commission's work to nurture the next generation of leaders. In 2026, more than 300 young women joined us for a day-long summit centered on youth leadership and civic advocacy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The program featured workshops designed for young people with the tools necessary for civic engagement, communication skills, philanthropy, emotional resilience, and more. The MCSW also held a scholarship ceremony recognizing the 5 recipients of the Commission's 2026-2027 academic scholarship for their education with support from the MCSW.

The day opened with breakfast and welcome remarks from Chairwoman Tuitt and an overview of the MCSW from Executive Director Shaitia Spruell. Participants then moved through two rounds of concurrent workshops spanning topics such as civic engagement, leadership, social media and mental health, yoga and movement, and professional skills. After a networking lunch plenary, the afternoon shifted intentionally from structured learning to structured listening, with four concurrent listening sessions on Open Topic Discussion, Menstrual Equity, Know Your Rights, and Healthy Relationships. The day closed with a full group share-out, a Call-to-Action advocacy plan presentation, and closing remarks from Commissioner Arena, ensuring that what young people shared in the listening sessions was carried forward into a broader advocacy agenda.

Several critical themes emerged from the listening sessions:

- **Menstrual Equity in Schools:** Students reported that they cannot concentrate on learning because they are worried about managing their menstrual cycle without supplies. Notably, approximately one-third of young people in one session reported having stayed home or left school early due to menstrual issues. There is a clear appetite for systemic advocacy—not just product donation, but policy change to ensure equitable access to hygiene products in bathrooms.
- **Institutional Barriers:** Participants indicated that menstrual products are often not readily available in schools, with vending machines frequently empty or broken and dispensers absent from bathrooms. Students are navigating a system that was not designed with their needs in mind. Some teachers use their own money to provide products to students, highlighting how much the burden of addressing this gap falls on individuals rather than institutions.
- **Privacy & Safety:** Participants highlighted a lack of physical privacy in school bathrooms, with some students reporting bathrooms that lack doors entirely. At the same time, participants described a relational safety gap: asking for permission to go to the nurse can become a public event that everyone in the class notices, and restrictive bathroom policies such as "no bathroom use in the first or last 10 minutes of class" create additional barriers. Participants showed a nuanced and sometimes distrustful view of the adults around them. Some teachers and nurses can be genuinely helpful, while others actively shame students who are unprepared. Many youth expressed that they were not comfortable asking authority figures for help, with at least half of participants in one session indicating this.
- **Education Gaps:** Participants are acutely aware of what they were not taught relating to sexual health, reproductive education, and healthy relationships. One student posed a striking question to the group, asking how many of them had learned more about condoms than about periods in their health classes. There is strong student demand for integrated, inclusive sex and menstrual health education, not as a separate add-on class, but woven into existing curriculum and inclusive of all genders. Beyond content gaps, participants identified a gap between what is taught and what is practiced. Programs that create space for girls to practice communication and boundary-setting skills in real scenarios are filling something that schools currently are not.
- **Shame, Stigma, and Culture of Silence:** This theme surfaced in every listening session, but most prominently in the Menstrual Equity and Healthy Relationships conversations. Sexuality and periods are often taboo even at home, leaving many young people unprepared for their first period and without a foundation for support later. Importantly, participants noted that stigma is not only imposed externally. Students themselves observed that women sometimes perpetuate it toward other women, suggesting that meaningful cultural change requires peer-level intervention alongside adult-level accountability. The Open Topic session linked period stigma and gender norms with the need for broader cultural shifts, including normalizing period and sex education in public schools and allowing women and girls to finish their sentences and be heard.
- **Role of Gender Dynamics and Power:** Conversations across sessions surfaced how gender power dynamics shape girls' experiences in schools and relationships. Themes included how women and girls are socialized to be nonconfrontational, how men and boys can struggle to accept women as leaders or equals, and how women in leadership positions often feel they have to work harder to prove themselves. These dynamics make it harder for girls to advocate for their own needs, whether asking for a menstrual product, setting a boundary with a peer, or speaking up in a classroom. These findings underscore why programs that explicitly build girls' self-advocacy, voice, and leadership are essential, not supplementary, to the broader work of gender equity.

Across the listening sessions, a common thread emerged: these are not isolated issues but interconnected barriers that shape whether girls feel safe, seen, and able to advocate for themselves in school and in their relationships. GELI's listening session model, which creates space for young people to name their experiences and connect them to broader systems, is itself a meaningful intervention. The themes surfaced here offer a clear roadmap for future programming and advocacy priorities. The findings above represent just a snapshot of what was learned at the 2026 GELI Summit. The MCSW is currently developing a full event report that will take a deeper look at workshop feedback, listening session takeaways, and overall program reflections gathered from attendees and volunteers across the day. That report is expected to be available Fall 2026.

GELI 2026 was made possible by our generous sponsors.

Role Model Sponsors:

- Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts
- Women's Fund SouthCoast
- Wayside Youth & Family Support Network
- Related Beal

Advocate Level Sponsors:

- WINC, or Women in Community
- UMass Pre-College Program
- Emerald Queen Productions
- Country Bank

And last but certainly not least, thank you to all of YOU, our GELI summit participants and supporters, for taking the time out of your spring vacation to be in community with us. We hope you experienced an amazing day filled with learning, growing, and connecting with your peers from across the state. We can't wait for next year's summit!



The Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative (GELI) 2026 Summit was held at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Commonwealth Heroines

On June 24, 2026, the MCSW will celebrate the [Commonwealth Heroines Class of 2026](#), an exceptional group of Massachusetts women, at its annual Commonwealth Heroines event held in the Gardner Auditorium at the Massachusetts Statehouse. Each year, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) partners with state legislators to identify women who make outstanding contributions to their organizations and in their communities.

Elected officials are encouraged to submit one woman from their constituency as a means of recognizing their invaluable efforts and extraordinary acts of service.

These women are making a big difference in their communities but are not always making the news. These women are leaders in industry, business, nonprofit, advocacy, and more, and their work truly makes a difference in our local communities all across the state.

This year, the Class of 2026 Commonwealth Heroines is comprised of a historic 147 women from across the state, the largest class awarded to date by the MCSW. [View the full Class of 2026 here.](#) Congratulations!



Public Hearings and Listening Sessions

Public Hearings are a crucial component to the MCSW's mission to study and report on the status of women and girls in the Commonwealth. Throughout FY26, the MCSW committed to offering programming that would not only engage constituents in person, but also model hybrid options that allowed all interested residents to participate remotely and share their stories about the challenges they face, regardless of their ability to join us in person. The MCSW is further committed not only to representative diversity, but also in terms of the towns, counties, and various locations we visit to conduct these public hearings and solicit as much public input as possible.

Throughout the year, the MCSW held two virtual listening sessions and two hybrid public hearings. The virtual listening sessions were issue-specific, and by invitation through partners working with the specific populations impacted to create a safe space for sharing and to protect the privacy of participants. with one focusing solely on the needs of girls and young women, and the other centering the issues and barriers of the trans women and girls or femme identifying individuals in Massachusetts.

Hybrid Public Hearing: North Adams (Berkshire County)

What: Hybrid Public Hearing in Berkshire County

When: October 28, 2025

Who: MCSW & Berkshire County CSW

Where: Berkshire Innovation Center, or BIC Works @ MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA

Why: Community members from Berkshire County and surrounding areas joined to share lived experiences and policy concerns directly with MCSW Commissioners, staff, and elected officials. Interpretation services were provided to enhance accessibility, and outreach materials were shared in multiple languages.



The Commission heard testimony regarding gender identity, access to healthcare, and differing public perspectives related to policies affecting transgender and gender-diverse individuals. Additionally, testimony was received regarding increases in adolescent mental health concerns that have been linked to increased social media use. Participants also raised concerns about the impact of social media and digital device use on adolescent mental health, school engagement, and overall wellbeing. [Read the full summary report on our website.](#)

28
OCTUBRE, 2025
BIC WORKS AT
MASSMOCA, 1040 MASS
MOCA WAY, NORTH
ADAMS, MA 01247

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE COUNTY
**AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA
HÍBRIDA DE MCSW**
BIC WORKS AT MASSMOCA

Las Audiencias Públicas representan una oportunidad para que las mujeres de todo el Commonwealth presenten su testimonio sobre los temas que más les afectan, lo cual incide directamente en la definición de las prioridades políticas de la MCSW. Invitamos a todas las personas interesadas en los asuntos que impactan a las mujeres, la niñez y las familias a brindar su testimonio y compartir sus experiencias, con el fin de enriquecer el aprendizaje colectivo.

Se ofrecerán opciones híbridas para participar de manera remota a quienes no puedan asistir en persona.

REGÍSTRESE ANTES DEL 17 DE OCTUBRE DE 2025.

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE COUNTY
**MCSW HYBRID
PUBLIC HEARING**
BIC WORKS AT MASSMOCA
October 28, 6:00 PM ET
040 Mass MoCA Way, North Adams, MA

The event is free and open to the public. Hybrid options to join remotely will be available for those unable to join in person. Berkshire county leaders and residents are invited to attend either virtually or in person, and testimony is open to any member of the public throughout the state. MCSW also encourages legislators and other community stakeholders to attend.

Hybrid options to join remotely available.
<https://bit.ly/Berkshire25>

REGISTER BY OCTOBER 17, 2025.

Hybrid Public Hearing: Brockton (Plymouth County)

What: Hybrid Public Hearing in Plymouth County

When: March 24, 2026

Who: MCSW, Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women, & City of Brockton Women's Commission


Where: Brockton Campus of Massasoit Community College

Why: This regional forum allowed community members from Plymouth County and surrounding areas to share lived experiences and policy concerns directly with MCSW Commissioners, staff, and elected officials. Interpretation services were provided to enhance accessibility, and outreach materials were shared in multiple languages.


The Commission heard powerful testimony on the need to fund rural schools, the need for in-person services in rural areas, the impacts of caregiving on women, important information on the PROTECT Act, and other issues facing women, children, and families. Additionally, we continue to hear testimony regarding gender identity, access to healthcare, and differing public perspectives related to policies affecting transgender and gender-diverse individuals. The full event summary will be available on our website in Summer 2026.

AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA DE LA MCSW EN PLYMOUTH

ONE MASSASOIT BLVD. BROCKTON, MA 02302
March 24, 6:00 PM ET




Se ofrecerán opciones híbridas para participar de manera remota a quienes no puedan asistir en persona.
<https://bit.ly/mcswplymouth>




El evento es gratuito y abierto al público. Se ofrecerán opciones híbridas para participar de manera remota a quienes no puedan asistir en persona. Se invita a los líderes y residentes del condado de Plymouth a participar, ya sea de forma virtual o presencial, y se permitirá el testimonio de cualquier miembro del público en todo el estado. Asimismo, la MCSW alienta la asistencia de legisladores y otros actores comunitarios interesados.

MCSW PLYMOUTH PUBLIC HEARING

ONE MASSASOIT BLVD. BROCKTON, MA 02302
March 24, 6:00 PM ET



Hybrid options to join remotely available.
<https://bit.ly/mcswplymouth>



The event is free and open to the public. Hybrid options to join remotely will be available for those unable to join in person. Berkshire county leaders and residents are invited to attend either virtually or in person, and testimony is open to any member of the public. The MCSW also encourages legislators and other community stakeholders to attend.

Virtual Listening Session: Girls and Young Women

GIRLS LISTENING SESSION




What: Virtual Listening Session: Girls and Young Women

When: November 18, 2025

Who: Hosted by the MCSW

Where: Online via zoom

Why: This fully virtual listening session focused on issues facing young women and girls across Massachusetts, and allowed community members from across the Commonwealth to share lived experiences and policy concerns directly with MCSW Commissioners, staff, and elected officials. Interpretation services were provided to enhance accessibility, and outreach materials were shared in multiple languages.

The listening session was guided with questions and polls given by staff members, allowing attendees to speak freely for 1-2 minutes, followed with a moderated discussion and receipt of written testimony. The MCSW was also joined by American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and a mental health specialist for the event.

The Commission heard concerns regarding youth mental health, digital safety, menstrual equity, cultural barriers, body image, and the need for supportive spaces for girls and young women. The Commission recognizes a growing call for legislation addressing social media usage and age-related protections. Testifiers noted the effectiveness of phone restriction in school. The participants of this hearing expressed their hope, rooted in community and shared effort and empowerment. The Commission acknowledges the importance of amplifying youth voices and will continue to create accessible ways for girls and women to use their voice and center these lived experiences in advocacy. [Read the full event summary on our website.](#)

Virtual Listening Session: Trans Women and Girls

TRANS GIRLS AND WOMEN VIRTUAL LISTENING SESSION

What: Virtual Listening Session: Trans Women and Girls

When: February 26, 2026

Who: Hosted by the MCSW

Where: Online via zoom

Why: This fully virtual listening session focused on issues facing trans women and girls across Massachusetts, and allowed community members from across the Commonwealth to share lived experiences and policy concerns directly with MCSW Commissioners, staff, and elected officials. Interpretation services were provided to enhance accessibility, and outreach materials were shared in multiple languages.

The listening session was guided with questions and polls given by staff members, allowing attendees to speak freely for 1-2 minutes, followed with a moderated discussion and receipt of written testimony. The MCSW was also joined by American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and a mental health specialist for the event.

The full event summary will be available on our website in Summer 2026.

Across counties and organizations, participants converged on a shared vision of liberation, one that extends far beyond survival to encompass abundance, safety, authenticity, and full participation in civic and community life. While each voice brought a distinct perspective, several urgent and overlapping themes emerged with clear implications for policy and investment, including the need for housing and food security, access to adequate healthcare, and more. These voices collectively make clear that the path forward requires not only compassion but structural investment, intersectional solidarity, and a willingness to prioritize those who have been systematically excluded, regardless of gender or identity.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the appointment of Commissioner Giselle Byrd, the first Black trans woman appointed to the MCSW. Commissioner Byrd guided the conversation during the listening session. When first appointed by Governor Maura Healey, it launched Commissioner Byrd and the MCSW into the national conversation regarding gender identity, biological sex, and the spectrum of gender expression. We think it important to note this occurrence, not to draw attention to the negativity, but to urge our appointing authorities to consider legal and legislative solutions to protecting our rights to freedom and liberty under law.

In November 2025, we caught the attention of the national conservative news media in full force, when a high-profile conservative commentator tweeted about the appointment of Commissioner Byrd. What followed was weeks of digital harassment, reported death threats, and many internal conversations about security and safety in the digital age, how to provide clear guidance around our values and mission as an organization, and how we live our values of protecting all women and girls in Massachusetts. As a result, the Commission released a statement standing in firm support of Governor Healey's appointment of Commissioner Byrd, condemning violence and threats against women and girls in all forms, and reaffirming our commitment to codifying anti-discrimination and other protections to laws and policies for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Transphobia, misogyny, and racism are components of hate speech that we universally condemn. Read our full statement: [MA Women's Commission Issues Statement Against Hate Speech](#).

Data Collection: WoC COVID-19 and Status Update Survey Launch

As a follow-up to our COVID-19 series research, we gathered key research in a qualitative study throughout FY26, with a full report scheduled to be available in June 2026. Between 2020 and 2022, the MCSW released a series of reports on the impact of COVID-19 and related recommendations to improve the status of all women in the Commonwealth.

Read the previous report here: [Impact of COVID-19 and Related Policy on Massachusetts Women and Girls](#).

The Commission was curious - what is the status of women and girls in the Commonwealth in the years since the pandemic? Reflecting on the five years since the onset of COVID-19, the Commission released an updated survey to take a snapshot of life for women and girls in the Commonwealth. We solicited public responses to inform the development of public policy that advances all women toward full equality in all areas of life and promotes their rights and opportunities throughout their lives. This survey was also available in Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, and Haitian Creole. To date, 875 participants have completed the survey across all five languages, including representation from all 14 counties of Massachusetts. The full survey is pending release in 2026, and preliminary data and trends are being prepared to share with appointing authorities, collaborating organizations, and the general public.

The MCSW's Scholarship Program

In honor of the Commission's 25th Anniversary, the MCSW first launched our inaugural scholarship program to invest in the education of women of the Commonwealth. We're thrilled to announce that, due to the program's success, and in line with our mission to build the next generation of women leaders here in the Commonwealth, we were able to bring back our scholarship program for FY26! This program aims to support emerging leaders of the Commonwealth in continuing their education journey to leadership and economic empowerment. Designed to support woman-identifying students already enrolled in a Massachusetts Public Higher Education Institution, scholarships were awarded to help women of the Commonwealth complete their degree and advance their economic and educational futures. The Class of 2026 - 2027 Scholarship recipients were selected amongst an incredibly competitive slate of applicants from across the Commonwealth. [Learn more about the mission of the MCSW or our scholarship program](#).

All selected recipients must be enrolled in or committed to an accredited degree or certificate program in a Massachusetts Public High Education Institution. The funds from this scholarship will contribute to tuition, fees, books and related supplies or equipment for study. All funds awarded are provided by the MCSW Trust Fund, supported by the generosity of donors all across the state who believe in investing in women.

The MCSW is awarding these [5 individuals with a scholarship of \\$5000 each for the 2026 - 2027 academic year](#). Join us in congratulating these five exceptional women! Join us in congratulating these five exceptional women!

- Nayeli Almanzar Lizardo: University of Massachusetts Lowell
 - Expected Date of Graduation: Spring 2027
- Aleigha Rivard: Salem State University
 - Expected Date of Graduation: August 2027
- Jacqueline Robles: Westfield State University & Holyoke Community College
 - Expected Date of Graduation: May 2028
- Bryana Siqueira: Framingham State University
 - Expected Date of Graduation: Spring 2028
- Sabrina Soltani: University of Massachusetts Boston
 - Expected Date of Graduation: June 2027



Speakers Bureau: Amplifying Our Impact

The MCSW Speakers Bureau amplifies the voices and expertise of our commissioners and staff to raise awareness and spark dialogue on the issues affecting women and girls across Massachusetts. Through presentations, panels, and community events, our Speakers Bureau educates the public about the work of the MCSW to encourage civic engagement, advocacy, and collaboration.

These events reflect MCSW's commitment to elevating diverse voices, building intergenerational networks, and strengthening advocacy efforts for all.

- August 2025: The MCSW was honored by the Springfield Creative City Collective at an event recognizing the 105th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Several organizations and more than 80 women were honored for their significant contributions to civic leadership and empowerment. Attendees wore suffragette white symbolizing hope, determination, and courage.
- October 2025: The MCSW collaborated to celebrate Senator Harriette L. “Harlee” Chandler, former President of the Massachusetts Senate, as the recipient of the 2025 Harvey Ball Smile Award. The celebration also closes the city-wide commemoration of the 175th anniversary of the first National Women’s Rights Convention held in Worcester, MA in 1850.
- November 2025: MCSW Chairwoman Mary-dith Tuitt was honored as Veteran of the Year by Military Friendly, representing Massachusetts. The Veteran of the Year program recognizes Veterans of strong character who have made a positive impact either while in uniform or after service. Having served fifteen years as a Navy jet mechanic on both active duty and reserve, Mary-dith exemplifies the discipline, dedication, and leadership that are hallmarks of military service.
- December 2025: Hampden County Commissioners Nicole Esposito, Vanessa Martinez, Rachele Hannoush, Magdalena Gomez, and Nicole Coakley welcomed community members to a Financial Education and Investing Workshop at the YWCA in Springfield, bringing people together to build confidence around financial wellness.
- January 2026: MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell and Commissioner Leslie-Ann McGee were the featured speakers at an event hosted by The Marine Technology Society: Women Leadership in Marine Science and Technology. The event centered on how to engage more young women in STEM/STEAM.
- March 2026: In honor of International Women's Day, feminist organizations from across Greater Boston came together for a morning of inspiration, connection, and action at the 28th Annual International Women’s Day Breakfast. This year's theme was Reigniting our Movements for Gender Equity. The breakfast included a resource fair with 20+ community organizations, a keynote speaker, and a panel. Pictured in the above group photos of IWD event co-facilitators and panel speakers, including Ayanna Polk, Karen Ward, Sasha Goodfriend, and Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. Enjoy this photo of MCSW Shaitia Spruell sharing a laugh with Cambridge Women's Commission Executive Director Shameka Gregory—we certainly did!



- April 2026: MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women Chair Odessa Sanchez celebrated International Women’s Day with Girl Scouts from the MetroWest region at Mass Bay Community College in Wellesley. The Girl Scouts proudly wore uniforms representing the last 75 years to honor decades of leadership, service, and empowerment.
- April 2026: MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell spoke on a panel about mothers in the workforce, a collaboration with YW Boston and Listen To Your Mothers, at an event titled Our Transformative Power: Supporting Mothers, Strengthening the Workforce.



Other notable events, press, and collaborations:

MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell and Regional Commissions Director Tina Games joined Plymouth County CSW Commissioners Daphne Remy Gomes, Jacqueline Jones, Tamara Dzialo, Michelle Davidson, Tess Washburn, and Maude Gorman, together with Bristol County CSW Chair Stephanie Taylor, for the PCCSW Girls in Trades event, highlighting ongoing efforts to advance opportunities for young women in the trades. (Photo Below)





Cityline IWD Segment: In March 2026, Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women Executive Director Shaitia Spruell and Chairwoman Mary-Dith Tuitt shared how the Commission is a crucial resource to advancing equity on this powerful WCVB CityLine segment. [Watch the full interview via Cityline to learn more about the status of women and girls in the Commonwealth.](#)



COMMUNITY VOICES

Women, power, and the future of democracy

Democracy endures when those historically excluded from power are resourced not just to participate, but to govern.

By [Christine Monska](#) / Executive director of the Women's Fund SouthCoast
March 2, 2026



MCSW Vice-Chair Christine Monska also serves as the Executive Director of the Women's Fund SouthCoast, and penned a powerful op-ed: Women, Power and the Future of Democracy. "If we understand women's leadership as democratic infrastructure—not a theme, not a panel, not a seasonal acknowledgment—then investing in that leadership becomes not aspirational, but strategic. The strength of our democracy—on the South Coast and across the country—will be determined by whether we make that investment deliberately, consistently, and at scale."

The MCSW's GELI program was selected to receive the Youth Empowerment Award by the Commonwealth Seminar. This award honors those who are creating opportunities, amplifying youth voices, and driving positive change for our next generation of leaders. The Commonwealth Seminar is a privately funded program with the mission of: "Opening the Doors of Government to Everyone". It is an intensive training program focused on teaching diverse leaders how the legislative process really works. Three times a year, the Seminar hosts an intensive training program in & around the MA State House that invites community leaders to learn to navigate the legislative and state budget process.



Through these programs and collaborations, the MCSW is not only gathering data and feedback, but also helping to shape policy, shift narratives, and build sustained civic engagement. The Commission's ongoing efforts to improve language access and provide disability accommodations have also expanded participation among immigrant communities, women of color, and women with disabilities, ensuring that equity remains at the heart of its mission. Together, these outcomes reflect a growing, statewide movement to center the experiences of women and girls in public discourse and policymaking. Additionally, our monthly newsletter includes featured guest pieces from our State Commissioners. These essays by individuals in leadership with a wide breadth of experience address pressing issues in real time and often include a call to action.

MCSW Monthly Featured Guest Pieces:

- July 2026: [2026 Commonwealth Heroine Celebrates the Class of 2025](#)
- Summer Edition: [Take Our Survey](#)
- September 2025: [Make Your Voice Heard](#)
- October 2025: [Invest in Women](#)
- November 2025: [Caring For Our Communities in Times of Uncertainty](#)
- December 2025: [May Your Holidays Be Merry and Bright](#)
- January 2026: [This New Year, Take Action with the MCSW](#)
- February: [Black History is American History](#)
- March: [Invest in the Women and Girls of Massachusetts](#)
- April: [Spring Into Action with the MCSW](#)
- May: [Building the Pipeline That Changes Who Gets to Lead](#)
- June 2026: Celebrating Our Strengths

MCSW Legislative Agenda and Recommendations

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) is committed to advancing policies that ensure women and girls are not only granted equal rights, but also empowered as equal participants in economic opportunity, healthcare access, civil rights, education, and business development. Through its Legislative and Public Policy Committee, the Commission endorses, tracks, and advocates for legislation aligned with these goals. MCSW Commissioners and staff meet regularly with lawmakers and provide both written and verbal testimony at state legislative hearings in support of priority legislation. As part of its statutory authority, MCSW holds regular public meetings, fact-finding hearings, and forums to collect firsthand accounts from women, girls, and their advocates. These engagements generate meaningful data centering lived experiences that shape our legislative agenda.

During FY26, the Commission held several pivotal sessions to guide the MCSW in reviewing its advocacy agenda:

- **Economic Stability and Caregiving:** Testimony highlighted the "Herculean task" of unpaid family caregiving, with residents calling for the passage of An Act Relative to Family Members Serving as Caregivers (S.886) to allow financial compensation for those caring for aging or ill loved ones.
- **Healthcare and Reproductive Equity:** Communities emphasized the urgency of Black maternal health, noting that Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women. This led to continued support for legislation promoting birth centers and the midwifery workforce.
- **Menstrual Equity:** A recurring concern across all age groups was the lack of access to menstrual products in public buildings and schools. The Commission prioritized the "I AM Bill" (H.2483/S.1549) to ensure free products in prisons, homeless shelters, and public schools.
- **Immigration and Safety:** The Commission heard about the "ripple effect" of ICE detentions on families, specifically women and children left without financial support. Advocacy efforts were directed toward the PROTECT Act (H.5158) to ban immigration arrests in courthouses.

Launching our Take Action Hub

In FY26, the MCSW also launched our Take Action Hub, where you can contact your legislators directly regarding several of our key pieces of priority legislation. By clicking the button of a bill that matters to you and adding your contact information, you can contact your legislator directly by email or phone.

- [Support H.2483/S.1549: The I AM Bill](#)
- [Support S.2205: Updating Open Meeting Laws/Remote Participation](#)
- [Support H.4831: Modernizing Participation in Public Meetings](#)
- [Support H.3398/S.2160: Parity on Boards](#)

Take Action
with the
MCSW



2025-2026 Legislative Priorities

For the 194th legislative session, the MCSW endorsed more than 30 total bills, including:

An Act to Increase Access to Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters, and Public Schools

Bill Numbers: [H.2483](#) / [S.1549](#)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Jay Livingstone and Christine Barber, and Senator Patricia Jehlen

Summary: Also known as the **I AM Bill**, this bill would ensure that menstrual products are freely available to menstruating individuals in public schools, homeless shelters, and correctional facilities, affirming menstrual equity and public health.

An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions

Bill Numbers: [H.3398](#) / [S.2160](#)

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Tram T. Nguyen and Dawne Shand & Senator Jason Lewis

Summary: Also known as Parity on Boards, this legislation would establish requirements for gender parity and racial and ethnic diversity across public boards and commissions. MCSW has served on the Parity on Boards Coalition since its inception and now leads the coalition alongside four Regional Commissions. This bill directs appointing authorities to strive for equitable representation by ensuring public boards and commissions are composed of at least 50% women and at least 30% individuals from underrepresented minority groups or the LGBTQ+ community. MCSW, in partnership with the Eastern and Essex County Regional Commissions, assumed leadership of the Parity on Boards (POB) Coalition during this session and continues coordination with legislative sponsors and coalition members.

An Act Updating the Open Meeting Law to Support Remote Participation

Bill Number: [S.2205](#)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Becca Rausch

Summary: This legislation strengthens the Open Meeting Law by making hybrid meeting options permanent. It mandates the advance release of relevant meeting documents and prohibits charging fees for remote participation, thereby expanding public access to government proceedings.

An Act to Modernize Participation in Public Meetings

Bill Number: [H.4831](#)

Lead Sponsors: Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier & Representative Mindy Domb

Summary: Expands remote participation for members appointed to public bodies. They're able to vote, count as quorum, and have the same privileges as their in-person counterparts. Mandates that members who participate remotely must be audible and able to connect with the public through telephone or other technical means.

An Act Relative to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Bill Number: [H.3433](#)

Lead Sponsors: Representative David T. Vieira and Representative Hadley Luddy

Summary: This technical amendment updates MCSW's enabling statute to allow its Trust Fund to accrue interest and adjusts the Commission's annual reporting deadline from June 2 to July 31, a crucial needed update to bring our annual reporting in line with traditional year-end reporting deadlines.

An Act Providing for Safe and Consensual Sensitive Examinations

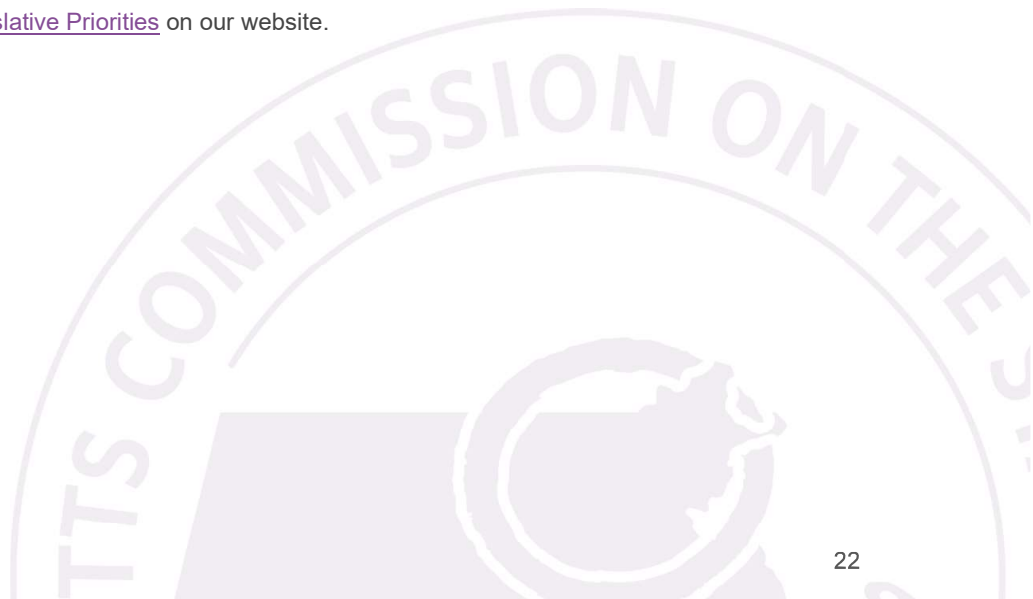
Bill Number: [H.2401](#) / [S.1485](#)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Jo Comerford

Summary: This bill prevents pelvic examinations on patients under anesthesia without written confirmation and allows a third-party witness to be present.

An Act establishing Medicare for all in Massachusetts**Bill Number:** [H.1405 / S.860](#)**Lead Sponsors:** Senator James B. Eldridge, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, Representative Denise C. Garlick**Summary:** Would create a single-payer health care system guaranteeing accessible, affordable, and quality coverage as a right while saving money for residents, businesses, and state and local government. The Act will provide continuous access to health care services, without the current need for repeated re-enrollments or changes when employers choose new plans and residents change jobs. Coverage shall be comprehensive and publicly financed, free of out-of-pocket cost at point-of-care, with no co-insurance, co-payments, deductibles.**An Act expanding access to family, friend, and neighbor-provided childcare****Bill Number:** [H.5282 / S.341](#)**Lead Sponsors:** Representative Marjorie Decker, Senator Sal DiDomenico**Summary:** This bill establishes an advisory committee to develop a payment structure for Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers, ensuring they earn at least minimum wage and conducting public hearings to assess community needs.**An Act to protect safety and privacy by stopping the sale of location data****Bill Number:** [S.197](#)**Lead Sponsor:** Senator Cynthia Stone Creem**Summary:** This bill prohibits the collection of user location data without consent, limits data sharing and usage, prevents retaliatory actions against non-consenting users, and ensures an easy opt-out process for targeted advertising, with exceptions for legal and emergency situations.**Menopause Awareness Act: 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****Bill Number:** [H.2499](#)**Lead Sponsor:** Representative Joan Meschino**Summary:** The goal of this bill is to increase awareness of menopause for patients, clinicians, and employers. Through the development of educational tools, using collaboration with the Commissioner of the DPH and various nonprofits and medical professionals. This board will also review the current Continuing Medical Education to assess if the menopause education is up to par. Additionally, a study will be conducted with the Executive Board to develop best practices and benefits for peri and post menopause employees.**An Act promoting and enhancing the sustainability of birth centers and the midwifery workforce****Bill Number:** [H.1117 / S.784](#)**Lead Sponsors:** Representatives Manny Cruz and Lindsay Sabadosa, Senator Joan Lovely**Summary:** This bill aims to enhance the sustainability of birth centers by establishing a midwifery workforce development fund, obtaining fair reimbursement for practitioners, improving regulations and fees, and creating a community birth data registry.

Learn more about our [2025 - 2026 Legislative Priorities](#) on our website.



MCSW Regional Commissions

The MCSW's 11 Regional Commissions expand the reach of its mission across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Modeled after the MCSW, the 11 Regional 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 Regional Commission reports its findings and activities annually.

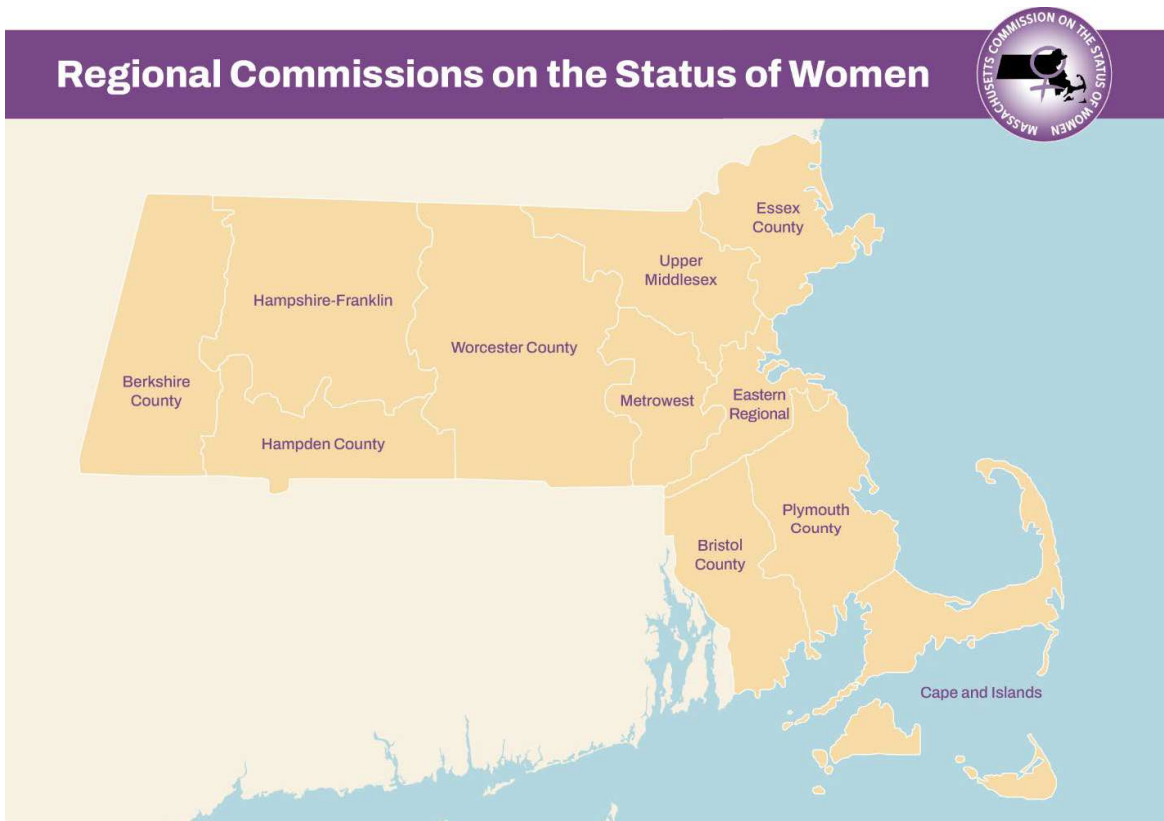
Regional Commissions are comprised of 9-13 volunteer members who have had prior experience working towards the improvement of the status of women and exist to provide a positive and effective voice for women and girls in their respective regions. Commissioners are drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, and socio-economic backgrounds throughout their respective regions.

Regional Commission's duties include:

- Studying, reviewing and reporting on the status of women,
- Promoting and facilitating collaboration among local organizations;
- Recommending policies that benefit women to agencies, officers of the state, and local government; and
- Holding fact-finding hearings and other public forums

MCSW's Regional Commissions:

- Berkshire County
- Bristol County
- Cape Cod and Islands
- Eastern Regional
- Essex County
- Hampden County
- Hampshire-Franklin
- MetroWest
- Plymouth County
- Upper Middlesex
- Worcester County



Regional Convenings

MCSW hosts two Regional Convenings per year, for the purpose of providing education, support, and networking opportunities for our 11 Regional Commissions. These spring and winter events are organized by the MCSW Regional Commissions Director Tina Games, in collaboration with the MCSW Program and Planning Committee. Due to holiday scheduling conflicts, our Winter Regional Convening was transformed this past year into two Regional Trainings, an Outreach & Recruitment Training and a Girls Initiatives & Youth Advisory Council Training. Both trainings were well attended by regional commissioners with a wonderful sharing of best practices and a presentation of tools and resources designed to support the regional work.

Our Spring Regional Convening, which was held on Wednesday, May 6th in Framingham brought regional and state commissioners together for an evening of networking and conversations on governance, advocacy, and regional best practices. A special thank you to Senate President Karen E. Spilka for joining us at our Spring 2026 Convening to share some proud accomplishments of the legislature in service to women and girls in the Commonwealth - and what it means to lead in turbulent times. We are grateful for her leadership and for our continued legislative partnership.



[Learn more about the 11 regional commissions of the MCSW here.](#)

Additionally, in November 2025, the MCSW convened a focus group on behalf of the Common Start Coalition to better understand how childcare access impacts Massachusetts families. Parents, grandparents, childcare professionals, and community members shared experiences navigating high childcare costs, long voucher waitlists, limited infant care and availability, and the ongoing challenge of balancing caregiving with work, education, and nontraditional schedules. Participants emphasized the importance of flexible, affordable, and culturally aware childcare systems that support women and their families. The session also explored potential funding approaches for universal childcare, with participants highlighting the need for equitable, sustainable solutions that do not further burden working women.

[Read the full summary report via our website.](#)





Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Divya Chaturvedi (Pittsfield), Shela Levante (Pittsfield)

Regional Commissioners: Meg Arvin, Chair (Pittsfield); Destiny Easler, Vice Chair (Richmond); Marissa Dubecky Meehan, Secretary (Richmond); Franci Gazzaniga, Legislative Liaison (Pittsfield); Hope Bussiere (Adams); Laura Cabrera (Pittsfield); Sarah Gillooly (Pittsfield); Maayan Nuri Hed (Pittsfield); Kristen Tool (Lanesborough)

Regional Area: The BCCSW represents all cities and towns in Berkshire County including Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, North Adams, Otis, Peru, Pittsfield, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, and Windsor.



Berkshire County CSW hosted a successful public hearing on Saturday, March 28th at the Berkshire Athenaeum Public Library in Pittsfield with more than 50 attendees and almost 20 women offering testimony. BCCSW Commissioners Meg Arvin, Destiny Easler, Marissa Dubecky Meehan, Kristen Tool, Franci Gazzaniga, Sarah Gillooly, Laura Cabrera, and Nuri Hed were joined by State Senator Paul Mark and State Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, along with MCSW State Commissioner Divya Chaturvedi.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **In November of 2025**, BCCSW hosted a Transwomen Listening Session with community members and local elected officials. Executive Director Nuri Hed of Seeing Rainbows and Ashley Shade of North Adams City Council were the guest speakers. Both spoke about navigating government work as transwomen and the personal weight of policies that directly affect trans and gender nonconforming people.
- **In February of 2026**, BCCSW hosted Flordaliza (Flo) Pimentel-Aggrey, Violence Prevention Coordinator at Williams College. She provides direct advocacy support to survivors of domestic violence, facilitates education and prevention programming, and works to build safe and inclusive communities.
- **In March of 2026**, BCCSW hosted a public hearing at the Berkshire Athenaeum to gather testimony from community members, advocates, students, and officials on issues affecting women and girls in Berkshire County. Over 50 people joined to listen, with 20 powerful testimonies voiced. Legislators in attendance included: State Representatives Leigh Davis, Tricia Farley-Bouvier, John Barrett, and State Senator Paul Mark. Topics included childcare-related issues, use of technology, sexual health and education, wage concerns, and more.
- **In April 2026**, BCCSW partnered with Girls Inc. to host a self-defense class taught by Abigail Allard from Berkshire Boxing Academy. The event was open to the public and over a dozen women attended.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Continuing to invite community partners to our public meetings as guest presenters
- Expanding our in-person community presence by tabling at community-based events
- Recognizing the importance of uplifting the voices of young women, BCCSW plans to deepen community engagement with regional youth leaders and youth-serving organizations with the intention of creating a Berkshire County CSW Athena Council.



Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Jean Fox (Freetown); Christine Monska (Auburndale)

Regional Commissioners: Makenzie Lennington, Chair (New Bedford); Santita Castellano, Vice Chair (Fall River); Sri Lakshmi Gandham, Treasurer (New Bedford); Nedjine Desruisseaux, Secretary (Fall River); Shavon Tolson (Taunton); Tanya Oliveira (Attleboro); Stephanie Taylor, Emerita (Taunton)

Regional Area: The Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women represents all towns in Bristol County including Easton, Raynham, Mansfield, Norton, Attleboro, North Attleborough, Seekonk, Rehoboth, Swansea, Somerset, Dighton, Fall River, Westport, Dartmouth, New Bedford, Acushnet, Fairhaven, Freetown, Berkley, and Taunton.



BCCSW Commissioners were out in the community in full force this year, tabling at several events and sharing their community needs assessment survey. BCCSW Commissioners Stephanie Taylor, Makenzie Lennington, Santita Castellano, Nedjine Desruisseaux, and Sri Lakshmi Gandham were joined by MCSW Regional Commissions Director Tina Games on December 12th in New Bedford for their annual strategic planning meeting.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Strategic Planning and Organizational Growth:** This year marked an important period of growth and intentional planning for the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission successfully completed a Strategic Action Plan, establishing priorities and a framework to guide our work over the coming years. This plan is focused on increasing visibility, expanding regional representation, strengthening partnerships, and better serving communities that have historically been underrepresented in countywide engagement. BCCSW also hired an intern to support advocacy and outreach.
- **Community Engagement and Outreach:** The Commission also prioritized increasing its visibility and accessibility through community engagement efforts. Commissioners tabled at several community events across New Bedford and Fall River.
- **Advocacy and Community Priorities:** To better understand the experiences, needs, and priorities of women throughout the region, the Commission developed and distributed a community needs survey. Findings from this survey will help shape programming, advocacy, partnerships, and outreach efforts moving forward.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Continuing implementation of the Strategic Action Plan
- Expand outreach efforts into underserved and underrepresented communities across Bristol County by increasing awareness of the Commission through community engagement, partnerships, and public events
- Utilize community needs survey findings to guide future priorities, advocacy, and programming
- Continue recruiting commissioners and partners to ensure broad representation across the county



Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Melissa Ferretti (Bourne)

Regional Commissioners: Lynne Barbee, Chair (Mashpee); Amy Peters, Vice Chair (Mashpee); Chinna Mapp, Secretary (Falmouth); Zaaifrah Robb, Treasurer (Falmouth); Meredith Biron (Wellfleet); Valerie Borden (Sagamore Beach); Sunny Daily (Nantucket); Natalia Frois (Hyannis); Inna Taylor (Hyannis); Mary Waygan, Emerita (Mashpee);

Regional Area: The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women represents towns in all of Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties including Bourne, Falmouth, Sandwich, Mashpee, Barnstable, Dennis, Yarmouth, Harwich, Chatham, Brewster, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, Provincetown, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard (Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Aquinnah, Chilmark, Vineyard Haven, West Tisbury).



Cape Cod and Islands CSW co-hosted their annual International Women's Day Breakfast in Hyannis on April 7th in partnership with several women-serving organizations across the Cape, including the Cape Cod League of Women Voters and WE CAN. Over 200 women attended the event, along with several state legislators and local elected officials. CCICSW Commissioners Natalia Frois, Chinna Mapp, Amy Peters, Zaaifrah Robb, and Inna Taylor joined MCSW Regional Commissions Director Tina Games and State Commissioner Melissa Ferretti for a morning of networking and community building.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **The I AM Bill – Intern Project:** We are proud to note that from September 2025 through June 2026, we have hosted intern Hamna Shakeel, a Mashpee High School senior. Working with Commissioner Amy Peters, Hamna surveyed public building bathroom facilities on Cape Cod and engaged department managers on access to menstrual products in town buildings, in connection with our advocacy on the I AM Bill.
- **International Women's Day Event:** On April 7, in partnership with other CCI organizations serving women and girls, the IWD event attracted more than 200 attendees. CCICSW Commissioners Inna Taylor, Amy Peters, Natalia Frois, Chinna Mapp, and Zaaifrah Robb were central to planning and delivery. MCSW grant funding supported audio-visual programming and interpretation services. Our CCICSW table focused on menstrual product access and served as a strong recruitment and visibility opportunity.
- **Community Events:** We continued our outreach at Honor the Earth Day at the Wampanoag Government Center in Mashpee, with CCICSW Commissioner Amy Peters, a Wampanoag Tribe member, facilitating. Other events include Mashpee's Friendship and Race Amity Day on June 14 and the Barnstable County Fair.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Work with MCSW to reduce the size of our commission from 13 to 9 to allow for consistent recruitment and to maintain a full-functioning commission that allows for geographical diversity.
- Multimedia outreach training at the Cape Media Center and a strategic planning/organizational retreat.
- We are in the initial planning for a fall community listening event in partnership with other women-serving organizations to deepen our engagement with women and girls across the region.



Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Mary-dith Tuitt (Dorchester), Aisha Miller (Mattapan)

Regional Commissioners: Wanjiku Gachugi, Chair (West Roxbury); Tia Washington, Vice Chair (Mattapan); Amanda Crabb, Secretary (Quincy); Camille Cramer, Treasurer (Dorchester); Rosa Hanks (Chelsea); Kashawna Harling (Malden); Connie Henderson (Boston); Donna Lubrano (Boston)

Regional Area: Eastern Regional Commission on the Status of Women includes the towns of Avon, Brookline, Canton, Cohasset, Dedham, Foxborough, Holbrook, Milton, Plainville, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, and Westwood, and the cities of Boston, Braintree, Chelsea, Quincy, Revere, Weymouth, and Winthrop.



Eastern Regional CSW hosted their annual Tea with Commissioners on May 2, 2025 in Quincy where they were joined by several community partners for a discussion of regional priorities. ERCSW Commissioners Wanjiku Gachugi, Tia Washington, Connie Henderson, Manya Chylinski, and Gabrielle Jackson greeted guests for an afternoon of networking and conversation about legislation and resources that serve the growing needs of women in their region.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Infrastructure:** To build a strong foundation, ERCSW updated bylaws, recruited new commissioners, and hired their first intern. While strategic organizing sessions solidify our direction, capacity constraints, limited funds, and financial inflexibility continue to challenge. Because budget is small and restricted to specific, anticipated projects, securing additional, unrestricted funding remains vital to maximizing our advocacy, ensuring ERCSW can respond to unexpected needs, and expanding our community impact.
- **Our collective impact** is evident in our successful hosting of the "Abusive Litigation Briefing" for over 50 participants. Together with four partner organizations, ERCSW put this event together in just two weeks. The briefing focused on legal gaps created by abusive litigation, a form of coercive control and post-separation abuse. Most importantly, survivors shared firsthand how these court proceedings damage lives. Their stories grounded our legal analysis in real-world experiences and showed why we urgently need systemic reform.
- Alongside these internal efforts, ERCSW lead the Parity on Boards Coalition, coordinating a network of 10 organizations to advocate for parity on public Massachusetts boards and commissions.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- **Institutional Sustainability and Capacity:** Prioritize building a strong foundation by maintaining a full commission of nine members. To ensure long-term stability and compliance, which includes refining our operational bylaws for open meeting law alignment and creating structured training for onboarding new commissioners as well as providing a refresher for current commissioners.
- **Community Outreach and Impact:** Drive meaningful community engagement by organizing collaborative events, tabling at a variety of regional gatherings, and hosting legislative events with elected officials. A central focus of this outreach will be advocating for gender parity on public boards.
- **Strategic Visibility:** We are actively expanding our presence by using social media to market events and highlight regional concerns, a primary focus for our intern. To broaden our collective impact, we are deepening our partnerships with the Chelsea, Boston, and Brookline Women's Commissions.



Essex County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Allison Goldberg (Marblehead)

Regional Commissioners: Geetha Rao Ramani, Chair (Andover); Brianna Sullivan, Vice Chair (Newburyport); Ivanna Solano, Secretary (Lynn); Ariana Contreras (Gloucester); Jennifer Anderson-Allport (Ipswich); Helen McDermott (Beverly); Brenda Pena (Lynn); Linnette Perez (Lawrence); Maeva Veillard (Methuen)

Regional Area: The ECCSW represents all towns in Essex County including Saugus, Lynnfield, Lynn, Peabody, Swampscott, Salem, Marblehead, Danvers, Beverly, Middleton, Topsfield, Wenham, Hamilton, Manchester-by-the-sea, Essex, Gloucester, Rockport, Ipswich, Rowley, Newbury, Newburyport, Salisbury, Amesbury, Merrimac, West Newbury, Haverhill, Groveland, Georgetown, North Andover, Andover, Methuen, and Lawrence.



Essex County CSW hosted their annual legislative luncheon on May 8th at Essex North Shore - Agricultural and Tech High School in Danvers where they presented the results of their year-long community survey. ECCSW Commissioners Geetha Ramani, Brianna Sullivan, Maeva Veillard, Ariana Contreras, Linette Perez, and Jennifer Allport-Anderson were joined by MSCW State Commissioner Allison Goldberg and state legislators for a rich discussion.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **The Ginsburg Initiative:** Now in its fourth year, the Ginsburg Initiative, a youth centered council, continues to inspire with its creativity and commitment. The highlight of 2025 was the publication of the [“We Are Here” Digital Magazine](#), created entirely by youth members and focused on issues affecting young women today. Over 300 copies were distributed to local schools, students, and at the Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative Summit (GELI) and the MassNOW Menstrual Equity Summit.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** ECCSW submitted testimony on the Parity on Boards and Virtual Public Meetings bills in December 2025 - and urged Senators in May 2026 to fund MassNOW’s Menstrual Equity Program. Commissioners also met with legislators during office hours and individual meetings to discuss regional priorities. ECCSW also held a Spring Legislative Luncheon on May 8, 2026. This event provided an opportunity to share the results from our ECCSW Community Survey, the input received from several Listening Sessions, our legislative priorities, and our youth work through the Ginsburg Initiative.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Advocating for childcare access, affordable housing, domestic violence support and support for senior women
- Increasing public participation in general through more outreach to partners
- Simplifying legislative calls to action for residents, including through promoting the MCSW Take Action Hub
- Creating a countywide resource guide to support women navigating work, caregiving, and financial responsibilities.

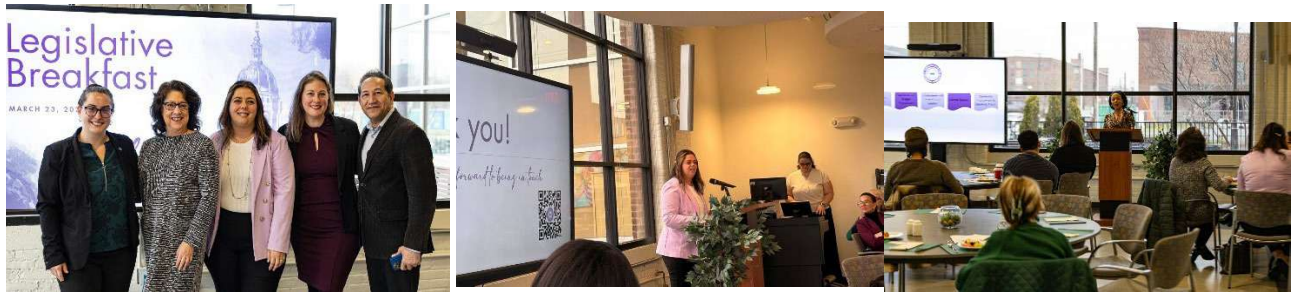


Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Tanisha Arena (Springfield)

Regional Commissioners: Vanessa Martinez, Chair (Holyoke); Nicole Esposito, Vice Chair (Longmeadow); Sasha Viands, Secretary (Holyoke); Magdalena Gomez (Springfield); Rachelle Hannoush (West Springfield); Lydia Malone (Holyoke); Cori Rolland (Southwick); Femi Stoltz (Springfield), Nicole Coakley (Springfield)

Regional Area: The Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women represents all cities and towns in Hampden County including Agawam, Blandford, Brimfield, Chester, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Granville, Hampden, Holland, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Monson, Montgomery, Palmer, Russell, Southwick, Springfield, Tolland, Wales, West Springfield, Westfield, and Wilbraham.



Hampden County Commissioners Magdalena Gomez, Rachelle Hannoush, Femi Stoltz, Vanessa Martinez, Nicole Esposito, and Lydia Malone were joined by State Representative Carlos Gonzalez, MCSW Marketing & Communications Director Ellen Moorhouse, and several community partners at their March 23rd legislative breakfast at Holyoke Community College.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Strategic Planning Workshop:** An in-person strategic planning workshop was held on December 8th at the West Springfield Public Library. During this meeting, HCCSWG identified three key pillars under Social Determinants of Health: physical and oral health, mental health, and financial health. Priorities target 3 areas focused on: (1) Maternal care; (2) Financial and educational freedom; (3) Life/professional transition planning.
- **Financial Investment Workshop:** HCCSWG held an in-person workshop at the YWCA in Springfield with a local financial planner. The financial planner was a woman with a local business and a commitment to helping other women learn to become financially independent. The event was held on December 1st from 6:00pm-8:00pm and topics included budgeting, investment strategies, and wealth management. This workshop was well-attended and served as a resource to women in Hampden County that has persisted after the event.
- **GELI Sessions:** HCCSWG was represented at the 2026 GELI Summit in two amazing ways: Commissioners Viands and Martinez led a workshop “Leading Through Conflict: Skills for Stronger Teams and Stronger Communities” – and our intern Shaquetta Batchelor co-led a session on the “I Am” Bill and Menstrual Equity.
- **Legislative Breakfast:** HCCSWG held our annual legislative breakfast at Holyoke Community where we presented our regional priorities and engaged in conversation with state legislators and community partners.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Strategic Engagement with Community Organizations supporting women and girls
- Develop stronger relationships with our State Legislators
- Gathering stories and data on women and girls in Hampden County



Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Carol Campbell (Amherst)

Regional Commissioners: Luzed Guzman Romano, Chair (Easthampton); Jo-Ann Konieczny, Vice Chair (Hadley); Victoria Edwards, Clerk (Greenfield); Olivia Laramie, Legislative Liaison (Easthampton); Colleen DelVecchio, (Easthampton); Mary Doherty (Williamsburg); Amanda Sanderson (Greenfield).

Regional Area: The Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women represents all cities and towns in Hampshire and Franklin Counties including Amherst, Ashfield, Belchertown, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Chesterfield, Colrain, Conway, Cummington, Deerfield, Easthampton, Erving, Gill, Goshen, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hatfield, Hawley, Heath, Huntington, Leverett, Leyden, Middlefield, Monroe, Montague, New Salem, Northampton, Northfield, Orange, Pelham, Plainfield, Rowe, Shelburne, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Sunderland, Ware, Warwick, Wendell, Westhampton, Whately, Williamsburg and Worthington.



Hampshire-Franklin CSW Commissioners Jo-Ann Konieczny, Victoria Edwards, Olivia Laramie, and Luzed Guzman Romano facilitated a community conversation with constituents in Franklin County at Greenfield Community College in November 2025. This conversation helped shape HFCSW's regional priorities in service to women and girls in Franklin and Hampshire Counties.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Community Listening and Engagement:** To facilitate direct dialogue with the public, the Commission hosted a community conversation with constituents in Franklin County. The event was held at Greenfield Community College on November 5th, identifying issues including childcare, education, housing, and economic opportunity.
- **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. HFCSW Chair Luzed Guzman Romano and MCSW Regional Commissions Director Tina Games were interviewed on WHMP's Feminist Futures Radio Show with local radio personality and Smith College professor Carrie Baker where they discussed the work of the commission and its endorsement of key legislative bills.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** 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.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Recruit new commissioners, strengthen relationships in the community and with academic partners, build even stronger partnerships with state legislators, continue to expand media presence.



MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Audrey Hall (Framingham), Heather Panahi (Wellesley)

Regional Commissioners: Odessa Sanchez, Chair (Wellesley); Jennifer Wuelfing, Vice Chair (Hopkinton); Lisa MacDonald, Chair (Natick); Kathleen Marchi (Millis); Anne Mattina (Hopkinton); Amie Rotondi (Medway); Sophia Rousseau (Natick); Alexandra Todorov (Framingham)

Regional Area: The MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women represents the towns of Ashland, Bellingham, Dover, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, Northborough, Norwood, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Walpole, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough, Weston and Wrentham, and the city of Marlborough.



MetroWest CSW Commissioners Odessa Sanchez, Lisa MacDonald, Alexandra Todorov, and Jennifer Wuelfing joined members of their Athena Council for the annual Purple Passion Walk held in Framingham on September 27th. This has become a signature weekend event for MWCSW Commissioners and their Athena Council members, coming together for a shared community experience that supports a good cause.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Voices Against Violence Walk:** MWCSW Commissioners and Athena Council members participated in this annual community event in Framingham
- **Human Trafficking Prevention Breakfast:** As part of January being Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the Metro West Commission co- sponsored the 2nd annual Human Trafficking Prevention Breakfast in January 2026. This was postponed due to weather and moved to zoom format. It was a joint collaboration with the EMMA Coalition, RIA, My Life My Choice, Safe Exit Initiative, and Amirah. Guest speakers included Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, DA Kevin Hayden, and DA Joe Early. The event also featured a panel of experts with lived experiences and offered insights surrounding the myths, challenges, and solutions to end the commercial sex trade.
- **International Women's Day:** MWCSW held its 3rd Annual International Women's Day celebration, "Giving to Gain," taking place on Sunday, March 8, 2026. This inspiring, free community event honored the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and girls while advancing advocacy, unity, and gender equality. The event featured keynote speaker Diana DiZoglio, Massachusetts State Auditor, along with artistic performances by Comedian Vi, The Girl Scouts of Natick fashion show, wearing a timeline of GS uniforms of the past years.
- **SUFFS Show:** MWCSW members joined the Women's History Center to see the Musical SUFFS together. It was at the Boston Emerson Theater and watching SUFFS reminded us why our work with the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women matters so deeply.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Listening sessions to determine next year's legislative priorities
- Strengthening our Athena Council
- Hosting a Film Screening and Discussion



Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Emily Wilson (Plymouth)

Regional Commissioners: Michelle Davidson, Chair (Hanover); Tamara Dzialo, Vice Chair (Bridgewater); Danielle Kempe, Treasurer (Marshfield); Denise Carrington (Middleborough); Darcie Edwards (Hanover); Gina Formichelli (Scituate); Kasey Bellegarde-Armstrong (Plymouth); Daphne Remy Gomes (Middleborough); Maude Gorman (Hingham); Jacqueline Jones (Brockton).

Regional Area: The Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women represents all the towns and cities in Plymouth County including Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, Carver, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Rockland, Scituate, Wareham, West Bridgewater, and Whitman.



The Plymouth County Commission hosted a well-attended legislative breakfast on Saturday, April 18th at Bridgewater State University where they presented their legislative priorities to state legislators, local elected officials, and community members – and engaged in thoughtful and productive conversations regarding next steps. PCCSW Commissioners Michelle Davidson, Tamara Dzialo, Daphne Remy Gomes and MCSW State Commissioner Emily Wilson facilitated a morning of roundtable discussions that highlighted several key issues affecting women and girls in Plymouth County.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Women in the Trades: Breaking Barriers and Building Futures:** This event was held on October 22, 2025, at the South Shore Technical Vocational High School in Hanover. The purpose was to connect young women considering working in the trades with women who work in a variety of trades. The event was set up as a mini expo, with participating women and organizations each having a table and attendees able to mingle and have one-on-one conversations with the participants. During that segment, the young women were given a Bingo card to encourage them to have conversations. After the expo segment, the Commission had a Town Hall-like discussion where participants explored both the challenges and rewards of working in the trades as a woman.
- **Plymouth County Legislative Breakfast:** This event was held on April 18, 2026, at Bridgewater State University. Eight state legislators attended with over 20 Plymouth County residents. Discussions highlighted growing gaps in healthcare, caregiving, economic opportunity, and access to resources. A report was compiled and shared with all legislative offices serving Plymouth County. We also distributed our PCCSW resource guide.
- **Unity in Action: PCCSW at Plymouth Pride:** For the fourth year, PCCSW participated in Plymouth Pride at Nelson Park in Plymouth as an exhibitor. Through its advocacy booth, PCCSW shared information about the Commission's work advancing equity through legislation, policy, and community engagement – and also provided resources on voter registration and how residents can check their voter status.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- To increase awareness about the high rate of human trafficking in Plymouth County and encourage Plymouth County legislators to submit legislation to help victims.
- Gather more data and stories from older women in Plymouth County to inform the Commission's event planning and improve our communications with elected officials when advocating for bills.
- Launch a youth council for Plymouth County girls and young women.



Upper Middlesex Commission on the Status of Women

Regional Commissioners: Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Chair (Somerville); Jessica Kallin, Vice Chair (Ashby); Diane Randolph Jones, Secretary (Acton); Doreen Wade, Treasurer (Dracut); Brianna Savage, Legislative Chair (North Reading); Zainab Aderinwale (Malden); Anna Holt (Lowell); Amanda McMahan (Waltham); Saima Siddiqi (Medford).

Regional Area: The Upper Middlesex Commission on the Status of Women includes the towns of Acton, Arlington, Ashby, Ayer, Bedford, Belmont, Billerica, Boxborough, Burlington, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Dracut, Dunstable, Groton, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, North Reading, Pepperell, Reading, Shirley, Stoneham, Tewksbury, Townsend, Tyngsborough, Wakefield, Westford, Wilmington, Winchester, and the cities of Cambridge, Everett, Lowell, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Newton, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, and Woburn.



Upper Middlesex CSW Commissioners Jenna Canfield, Diane Randolph Jones, Jessica Kallin & Julie Laflamme met with community members and state legislators, including Senator Jamie Eldridge, to discuss regional priorities and other issues important to women and girls in Upper Middlesex.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Community Coffee Conversations:** UMCSW hosted two community conversations, one in Ashby and one in Somerville, and invited state legislators, local elected leaders, and community partners to join for impromptu listening sessions. These conversations are helping to inform the next set of regional priorities.
- **Rebuilding the Commission:** UMCSW had a major transitional year with several founding members finishing their terms, leaving gaps as it relates to institutional knowledge. UMCSW was very intentional about their recruitment process and successfully brought on four new commissioners this year with varied lived and professional experiences that contribute greatly to UMCSW's mission and continued work. They are committed to reorganizing and reestablishing our committee structure with committed leadership – and will be working on a new strategic plan to help guide us into the next great phase.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** UMCSW has had great representation in partnership with MCSW's legislative committee and has supported the Parity on Boards Coalition. The regional commission also has UMCSW members who visit the State House regularly to advocate for our legislative priorities.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Rebuild the infrastructure and culture of UMCSW to ensure full capacity for regional commission work
- Identify new regional legislative priorities for the 2027 fiscal year, develop programming, and legislative engagement
- Build out and grow our communications and outreach capacity to both share our work across our region and hear from/learn from women and girls across our region.



Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women

State Liaison: Kim Shea (Winchendon)

Regional Commissioners: Amanda Molina Dumas, Chair (Millbury); Amber Vayo, Vice Chair (Berlin); Cathleen Liberty, Clerk (Worcester); Chantel Brown (Worcester); Mary Delaney (Gardner); Carlee Mills (Gardner); Mariame Sano (Worcester); Emanuelle Zeni (Northborough); Sue Lewandowski, Emerita (North Brookfield)

Regional Area: The Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women represents all towns and cities in Worcester County including: Ashburnham, Athol, Auburn, Barre, Berlin, Blackstone, Bolton, Boylston, Brookfield, Charlton, Clinton, Dana, Douglas, Dudley, Fitchburg, Gardner, Grafton, Greenwich, Hardwick, Harvard, Holden, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leicester, Leominster, Lunenburg, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, New Braintree, Northboro, Northbridge, North Brookfield, Oakham, Oxford, Paxton, Petersham, Phillipston, Prescott, Princeton, Shrewsbury, Southboro, Southbridge, Spencer, Sterling, Sturbridge, Sutton, Templeton, Upton, Uxbridge, Warren, Webster, Westboro, West Boylston, West Brookfield, Westminster, Winchendon, Worcester.



MCSW Executive Director Shaitia Spruell and MCSW State Commissioner Kim Shea joined Worcester County CSW Chair Amanda Molina Dumas for WCCSW's annual legislative breakfast in Worcester on September 15th, where they engaged in discussion with state legislators and community partners regarding regional legislative priorities and more.

Highlights and Accomplishments for FY26

- **Advocacy:** WCCSW held its annual Legislative Breakfast on September 15th at the YWCA of Central Massachusetts. We were joined by local representatives and members of their legislative staffs, as well as community members and advocates, all committed to discussing issues facing women and girls in Central Massachusetts. Topics included the challenges of advertising and getting constituents to attend public hearings and recognizing that Worcester has different needs from the communities that surround it, with the outlying communities being deeply affected by lack of access to hospitals which create maternal health care deserts. Other topics included the challenges of transportation services throughout Worcester County.
- **Programming:** WCCSW formed an ad-hoc committee for the purpose of creating and launching a community survey. The committee reviewed potential questions and discussed distribution on social media and among community partners. The survey will be open over the summer with the results being used to help guide the discussion with state legislators at our annual legislative breakfast in September 2026.

Goals for Next Fiscal Year

- Conduct annual legislative breakfast in September 2026
- Have more community input sessions to see what affects women and girls in Worcester County
- Maintain regular contact with our legislators and local elected officials on issues that concern women and girls that have been identified as our priority areas of focus.
- Attend community events and share information about WCCSW to promote awareness and to increase involvement in our commission activities.

