

60 Years of Progress for Women

1965 Maryland Commission on the Status of Women established by Governor J. Millard Tawes at the urging of the Maryland Division of the American Association of University Women and Maryland Federation of Business and Professional Women.

1966 The Commission envisioned and supported Maryland's first Equal Pay for Equal Work law sponsored by the Commission's legislative members, including Senator Verda Welcome.

1967 Commission report includes 200 recommendations to the Governor, including universal kindergarten, expanded child care, improved access to family planning services, and repeal of Maryland's anti-miscegenation law.

1968 A second Commission established by Governor Spiro Agnew with a focus on employment, equal opportunity, and human relations.

1969 The Commission convened the first in a series of statewide conferences for Maryland's women's organizations.

1971 Senator Rosalie Abrams passed legislation making the Commission permanent. On initial vote, the legislation was defeated due to the Commission's support for liberalizing abortion laws.

1972 Maryland Commission for Women organized the referendum campaign to approve the Maryland Equal Rights Amendment. Upon approval from voters, the Commission partnered with the Attorney General's Office to develop a report on what Maryland laws were in conflict with the ERA.

1972 The Commission for Women internship program developed.

1973 The Commission developed legislation to ensure household workers were covered under minimum wage laws.

1973 A Commission project, *New Directions for Displaced Homemakers*, would eventually grow to become Maryland New Directions, now a 50-year-old nonprofit providing job placement and career training.

1973 The Commission investigated sex-segregated job ads in newspapers. Findings were presented to the EEOC and the Maryland Commission on Human Relations. This report and a Supreme Court decision forced *The Sunpapers* to end their discriminatory practices on July 28, 1973.

60 Years of Progress for Women

1976 The Commission supported the Fair Share Credit Law to ensure women access to credit in their own names. This drew national media attention, with Commission Chair Shoshana Cardin appearing on *The Today Show*. The Commission also developed and distributed multiple publications on access to credit for women.

1979 *Beyond the Bake Sale: A Fundraising Workshop for Women* was jointly presented by the Commission, YWCA, League of Women Voters, House of Ruth, and then-Representative (later Senator) Barbara Mikulski.

1981 The Commission organized the first celebration of Maryland Women's History Week.

1981 In partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, the Commission developed and distributed *Women's History Display Kits* for schools across the state annually through 2001.

1982 A Needs Assessment of Programs Providing Services to Women was conducted and presented to state officials, alongside a request for increased funding.

1984 *Pregnancy Rights of Working Women* published.

1984 The Commission established a Task Force on Family-Oriented Personnel Policies, and in partnership with the Department of Personnel, surveyed state employees. This resulted in 1988's Family Leave Act establishing 12 weeks of unpaid leave for state employees welcoming a new child.

1984 *Women Work Worth: A Comparable Worth Primer* published.

1985 In partnership with the Women Legislators of Maryland, the Commission established the *Maryland Women's Hall of Fame*.

1991 Commission's legislative testimony and recommendations helped pass the *Battered Spouse Syndrome* bill and the *Omnibus Abortion* bill.

1994 Commission released *The Gender Composition of Maryland Boards and Commissions 1963-1993*, synthesizing research from 1965, 1976, 1983, and 1993.

1994 Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women established as a collective voice for legislative priorities. Staffed for ten years by the Commission.

1996 Commission published and distributed *Sexual Harassment in Schools: It's Not a Joke*.

60 Years of Progress for Women

1997 Commission established *Young Women Leaders Awards*.

2000 *Battered: What Can I Do? A Survival Manual* published in partnership with Maryland Women's Law Center.

2000 The Commission published *Girls to Women: Setting the Agenda for the 21st Century* in collaboration with the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the Maryland Chapter of the American Association of University Women.

2002 *Legal Rights in Marriage and Divorce, Second Edition* published in partnership with Maryland Women's Law Center.

2003 The *Maryland Women's Heritage Trail* was developed in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education. This document identified and researched more than 150 sites across the state that reflect the accomplishments of diverse historical and contemporary women in all areas of society.

2004 The *Maryland Women's Heritage Center* began as a project of the Commission for Women, devoted to telling and preserving women's stories.

2004 The Commission's Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women became an independently formed 501(c)(3) as the *Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women*. The Commission continues to sponsor their annual conference and legislative initiatives.

2008 Commission held the first annual *Maryland Women Moving Forward* conference in partnership with the National Association of Women Judges to assist women with reentry after incarceration.

2010 The *Maryland Women's Heritage Center*, now an independent nonprofit, opened to the public.

2014 To coincide with implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the Commission organized *A Year of Women's Health and Wellness Resources*. A general online women's health information and resource directory was also created.

2015 Commission supported and served on a two-year Task Force to Study Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance in Maryland, which eventually became the *Time to Care Act of 2022*.

2016 *Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour* conducted 19 listening sessions across the state, reaching 1,400 Maryland women.

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2021 *Maryland Women: A Status Report* issued.

2022 *At the Heart of the Pandemic: Maryland Women and the COVID-19 Crisis*.

2024 Commission for Women internship program re-established.

2024 *Maryland Women in Elected Office* report published.

2025 *Over-the-Counter Contraception Collaborative* launched through legislation and in partnership with Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Insurance Administration.

2025 *EC Access on Community Colleges* initiative launched in partnership with Maryland Higher Education Commission, American Society for Emergency Contraception, and the Straus Foundation.