



MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Annual Report 2016

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Maryland Commission for Women

July 2015 – June 2016



OFFICERS:

Lee Bachu, Chair

A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair

Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary

COMMISSIONERS:

Homayara Haque Aziz

Tawanda A. Bailey

Marianne Hyang Nam Brackney

Tammy Bresnahan

Deborah L. Cartee

Gloria Chang

Patricia E. Cornish

Lorna P. Forde

Nicole S. Ingram

Velvet D. Johnson

Doris Hillian Ligon

Bonnie Nelson Luna

Marion C. Manski

April Nyman

Betsy H. Ramirez

Anita L. Riley

Carole Jaar Sepe

Corinna Yi-Yuan Shen

Ummu Bradley Thomas

Marylou Yam

Yun Jung Yang

STAFF:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Tammy Wise, Management Associate

Bev Thoms, Volunteer Program Specialist

Taylor Sullivan, Student Intern, Wootton High School

Semra Caglar, Professional Fellow, American Councils for International Education

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Maryland Commission for Women

The Maryland Commission for Women was first established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office in the Department of Human Resources, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include:

- Study the status of women in our state
- Recommend methods of overcoming discrimination
- Recognize women's accomplishments and contributions
- Provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state

Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to four-year terms, with confirmation by the Maryland State Senate, and serve without compensation.



At the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, June 16, 2016

*Seated, L-R: Marianne Brackney, Wandra Ashley-Williams, Lee Bachu, A. Diane Williams, Lorna Forde.
Standing, L-R: Corinna Shen, Gloria Chang, Deborah Cartee, April Nyman, Carole Jaar Sepe, Marion
Manski, Tammy Bresnahan, Betsy Ramirez, Homayara Aziz, Tawanda Bailey, Yun Jung Yang, Bonnie
Luna, Nicole Ingram, Marylou Yam, Ummu Bradley Thomas*

Message from the Secretary



The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) is the state's primary social service provider, serving over one million people annually. Through its 24 local departments of social services, DHR aggressively pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provide preventive services, and protect vulnerable children and adults in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City.

One way to pursue opportunities to assist our residents is through citizen advocacy. DHR is home to the Maryland Commission for Women, whose mission is to identify places where our social and economic systems present special challenges for women and girls, to recommend strategies for overcoming discrimination, and to help us recognize, celebrate, and encourage the extraordinary contributions made by women to our state.

DHR so very much appreciates all the care, time, talent, and expertise that the 25 volunteer commissioners have contributed to the work of this Department, nurturing emerging young leaders, and supporting the goals of the women of Maryland. Their dedication and generosity are reflected in this annual report.

Among their major successes of the past year, is their launch of an innovative program to connect with women across the state through a public listening tour. In all regions of Maryland, women and girls have been invited to share with the Commission their concerns, needs, and plans for their future. The information that they've gathered has been invaluable in shaping Maryland's vision to help women thrive.

It is my privilege to thank the members of the Maryland Commission for Women for their hard work, and for the advice and counsel they have provided on behalf of the women and girls of our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Malhotra". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Sam Malhotra
Secretary, Department of Human Resources

Message from the Chair

Mythili “Lee” Bachu



It has been my honor to lead the Commission for Women during the past year and to work with such an outstanding board of community advocates – each contributing her own experience and expertise to our work.

I thank Governor Hogan for reappointing me to a second term on the Commission, and especially for his support of our work. We also very much appreciate the support of the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources, Sam Malhotra and his Special Assistant Samantha Blizzard, who make sure we have the resources we need and who provide such very good advice as we carry out our legislative mandate.

I want to thank my sister officers: Diane Williams who served with me as Vice Chair and Wandra Ashley-Williams, the Commission’s Secretary over the past year. Together with the chairs of the Commission’s committees, they have led us in new directions while maintaining – yet improving – our traditions. Both have very justifiably been re-elected and will continue their leadership this coming year.

All 25 women who have served on the Commission during the past year have contributed enormously to its work, including past chair and retiring Commissioner Pat Cornish who laid the foundation for our newest project – the state-wide listening tour: Voices of Maryland Women. Even our newest appointees have worked hard on committees and quickly assumed leadership roles. These commissioners represent a true cross section of Maryland’s richly diverse population, including its varied geographic regions and demographic communities – from the Western Panhandle to the Eastern Shore. Some travel long distances just to get to our monthly meetings, and all contribute many hours per year on our work. They are due much appreciation.

To work with such extraordinary women is a privilege in itself, but to be re-elected Chair of this Commission is truly humbling, and brings with it a recommitment to serving the women and girls of Maryland.

Report of the Executive Director

Judith Vaughan-Prather



FY 2016 was another year of change for the Maryland Commission for Women and one of much accomplishment as well. Just before the start of the fiscal year, the Governor appointed five new commissioners, then in July 2015 he appointed six more, and in October he appointed three more, meaning that 14 of the 25 positions on the Commission were filled with new commissioners who brought with them a wealth of new expertise and interests.

On August 6, 2015 the Commission elected its officers for the coming year: Lee Bachu, Chair; A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair; and Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary. With new leadership in place, the commissioners set for themselves an ambitious agenda of study and advocacy on behalf of the women of our state.

On September 16, the Commission held its annual planning meeting. Three important program changes were discussed:

- Combine the ceremonies for the Hall of Fame (traditionally held in March) and the Women of Tomorrow (traditionally held in June) into a single event;
- Initiate a new project: a listening tour that would take the Commission out into communities across the state, asking the women of Maryland to “talk to us” in a series of public forums;
- Combine the Roundtable Meeting of county Commissions for Women with the annual Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women Fall Conference.

All three proposals aimed to both strengthen and streamline the Commission’s work, and the outcome of all three has been even better than anticipated. Throughout the year the Commission’s committees worked to advocate for women and girls:

- On November 14, the MCW brought 25 representatives of nine Commissions for Women around the state to the MLAW conference and to the Roundtable Meeting afterwards, where the Listening Tour was announced.
- The Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow Awards Ceremony on April 7, 2016 was magnificent, with six extraordinary women inducted into the Hall of Fame and five exceptional girls receiving awards for academic excellence, extraordinary leadership and outstanding community service.
- The Legislative and Public Policy Committee sent written testimony on 10 bills before the Maryland General Assembly, and led a vigorous participation in and sponsorship of the Women’s Legislative Briefing.

- The Communications and Public Relations Committee oversaw the redesign and reorganization of the MCW website, continued the development of the MCW Facebook page, oversaw the development of two new “fact sheets,” and issued over 70 issue alerts and informational messages to its distribution lists now totaling over 500 recipients.
- The Health and Wellness Committee created 18 of those issue alerts on important women’s health issues and enhanced the on-line Women’s Health Resources Directory on the MCW website.
- The Bylaws Review Committee reorganized the MCW’s committee structure to enable the changes listed above, with the MCW’s approval.

Reports of those projects, and each of the Commission’s six committees follow, but the Commission undertook a number of other important activities in its efforts to serve the women of Maryland:

- Commissioners and/or staff served on the Boards of Directors for the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center, the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW), the Maryland Working Matters Campaign, the Friends of the Commission for Women and the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women.
- A new MCW logo was created by the DHR Communications Office and was incorporated into all the Commission’s media and outreach activities.
- The Commission’s office hosted a professional fellow, Ms. Semra Caglar, brought to the United States for a month from Van, Turkey in a program funded by the U.S. Department of State and coordinated by the American Councils for International Education as part of the Citizens Exchange program.
- In January, 2016 the MCW’s Management Associate position, vacant since January of 2015, was finally filled as Tammy Wise joined the MCW team.
- The office finally acquired a postage meter!
- The Commission co-sponsored a March 6 Women’s History Month event at the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center, with Chair Lee Bachu as one of the speakers.
- Five Commissioners and staff represented the Commission at the MLAW legislative briefing and reception in Annapolis in February.
- The MCW offices were completely painted and carpeted, which required packing and moving every piece of equipment and furniture, but which also permitted re-organizing space to be much more efficient and expanding the work stations for volunteers.
- The MCW sponsored the annual conference of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence.
- The MCW provided a one-time \$1000 “founding mothers” sponsorship for the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.

- At the invitation of the Maryland Trucking Association, Commission Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams represented the MCW at a ceremony honoring the first woman ever to win the Maryland Trucker of the Year award, and then endorsed her candidacy for the national Trucker of the Year award.

- The MCW sponsored the Nigerian Women Society of Maryland's Inaugural Ceremony, with Chair Lee Bachu representing Maryland's First Lady, and Commission Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams speaking on behalf of the MCW.



- Commissioner Velvet Johnson represented the MCW on the planning committee for the 2016 Women Moving Forward Conference. This is a day-long program offered at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women for residents who are within six to nine months of return to their community. Commissioner Johnson, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather and Management Associate Tammy Wise helped staff the conference which was attended by almost 200 residents. The MCW contributed special conference bags for the women participating in this event.

- As required under the newly passed HB 740 establishing a Maryland Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Task Force, the MCW submitted a grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau to conduct research on the feasibility of establishing a family and medical leave insurance program in the state. The grant was not funded, but the collaboration and partnerships forged in the process of developing the proposal will be important to the MCW's work on this and related issues.

- MCW Vice Chair A. Diane Williams and Commissioner Marianne Brackney were invited as "change makers" to attend the June 14 White House Summit on Women, where they met with the President and Vice President, the First Lady and other leaders in the work for women's rights.



- The MCW was assisted in its work by two volunteers, in addition to the Professional Fellow:
 - ◆ Bev Thoms works in the office two afternoons per week throughout the year assisting with the issue alerts, the development of the new "Who We Represent" demographic fact sheet on the women of Maryland, managing the MCW's email distribution list, developing a summary of the history of the MCW's work, and assisting in many other ways.
 - ◆ Wootton High School student intern Taylor Sullivan worked in the office two afternoons per week for the entire 2015-16 school year, developing the recently published Girls and STEM resource directory, and helping to staff the Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow ceremony, and other tasks.

2015 Maryland Commissions for Women Roundtable Meeting

*Saturday, November 14, 2015
International Cultural Center
19605 Club House Road, Gaithersburg, MD*

For several years, the Maryland Commission for Women has convened an annual meeting of the county Commissions for Women in the state. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for commissioners to meet people doing the same work in other jurisdictions, to share information, ideas, resources and training in effective advocacy.



In the past, this meeting has been organized as a 4 – 6 hour mini conference. The MCW arranged for speakers on legislative issues from the Maryland General Assembly and from several of the statewide women’s advocacy organizations. For 2015, the MCW decided to combine the CFW Roundtable Meeting with the Fall Conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) – a nonprofit coalition of organizations across the state that meets to establish a unified platform of legislative proposals in the state legislature that will advance equity for Maryland’s women and their families.

The anticipated benefits of this combined conference were:

- Encourage more CFWs to send representatives to the MLAW conference where they will participate in important training on legislative issues and effective advocacy on behalf of Maryland’s women and families;
- Save time and effort for the planners and the attendees since many of the subjects addressed and speakers traditionally invited to the Roundtable Meeting are the same as those at the MLAW conference. A single venue, date and shared agenda works for both events;
- Improve the attendance at the Roundtable Meeting, for the two reasons cited above.

The arrangement proved a “win-win” for both MLAW and the MCW. The MCW sponsored the MLAW Conference with \$1000, which included recognition as a platinum sponsor, a full page ad in the program book and registration fee for 25 commissioners. As a result, the attendance for MLAW was increased by ten percent, as more representatives of CFWs participated in the training offered there.

The attendance at the annual Roundtable Meeting was also increased. In 2014, 22 commissioners representing nine of the 15 CFWs in Maryland attended. This year, 29 commissioners – a 32% increase - representing nine CFWs in Maryland attended.

MCW Chair Lee Bachu welcomed all in attendance and invited them to introduce themselves. MCW Vice Chair Diane Williams discussed the MCW priorities and activities, describing the 2016 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame and the 2016 Women of Tomorrow awards program and announcing the call for nominations for both programs.

MCW Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams presented statistics describing the status of women in Maryland, noting that women are 52% of the population and 49% of the state's workforce. Eleven percent (11%) of Maryland women lives with incomes below the federal poverty guidelines.

While less than 8% of all Maryland families have incomes below poverty level, 24% of Maryland's single-parent families struggle with poverty and 36% of Maryland's children live in single-parent families, placing them at far greater risk of poverty. (<http://pmef.org/reports/2014/StateofWorkingMaryland2013.pdf> and <http://www.spotlightonpoverty.org/map-detail.aspx?state=maryland>)

Each Commission represented was asked to share its Commission's structure, priorities, activities and challenges.

Prince George's County Commission for Women

- Nine Commissioners, one from each district
- Priorities include human trafficking, domestic violence, mental health and education funding
- Beginning the development of a strategic plan

Frederick County Commission for Women

- 16 Commissioners
- Working to establish a task force on human trafficking
- Leadership program (She Leads) for 11th and 12th grade students

Calvert County Commission for Women

- 15 Commissioners
- Priorities include supporting the Harriett Elizabeth Brown Commission, financial literacy for women
- Activities include seminars on financial literacy for women, a domestic violence candlelight ceremony, a women's health expo, the Women of the World annual event and supporting the Dress for Success for Women Clothes Closet

Charles County Commission for Women

- 15 Commissioners
- Developing a strategic plan
- Priorities include advocacy, homelessness and youth
- Activities include supporting Rosemary's Closet which provides clothing for domestic violence victims when they are leaving the hospital, and a regular television show, Women's Empowerment matters



Commissioner Pat Cornish addresses the roundtable. Seated are (L-R) MCW Vice Chair A. Diane Williams, MCW Chair Lee Bachu and MCW Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams

Garrett County Commission for Women

- 15 Commissioners, even though this county has the smallest population in the state
- Priorities and activities include studying the impact of “fracking” on women and children’s health, along with social and economic effects; mentoring for girls, scholarships to the community college, and recognition of extraordinary women in the community

Anne Arundel County Commission for Women

- 18 Commissioners and up to 15 associate members
- Priorities include domestic violence, teen dating violence and human trafficking
- Activities include the Women’s Empowerment Fair co-sponsored with the Anne Arundel County Community College

Baltimore County Commission for Women

- 21 Commissioners (14 appointed by the County Executive and one from each of the seven districts)
- Priorities include domestic violence and human trafficking, women’s health and infant mortality
- Activities include an annual Women’s Hall of Fame, a Women’s Empowerment Expo, and partnering with the Samaritan Women organization to provide transitional housing for victims of human trafficking

Montgomery County Commission for Women

- 15 Commissioners
- Priorities include policy and legislative advocacy, human trafficking (a commissioner chairs the human trafficking task force) including support of the “John Bill” to address the issues surrounding purchasers of prostitution
- Activities include the annual Women’s Legislative Briefing with its Emerging Leaders program for teen girls, domestic violence education seminars, financial literacy seminars, separation and divorce seminars and initiating a listening tour in the county
- The CFW has a budget of \$35,000 with which it hopes to initiate counseling through the county’s Department of Corrections for re-entry women

The Maryland Commission for Women

- 25 members appointed by the Governor with consent of the Senate
- Priorities are economic equity and security for women and safety, health and wellness for women
- Activities include the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow awards program. Call for nominations was issued November 12
- A statewide Listening Tour was announced and the county commissions are invited to partner with the MCW in organizing a series of public forums around the state, engaging individuals, organizations and service providers in the presentation of testimony on the needs of women in their region



Legislation and Public Policy Committee

Chair: Commissioner Velvet Johnson

Members: Commissioners Tammy Bresnahan, Marion Manski, Anita Riley, Carole Jaar Sepe

The Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) had an active legislative role this year, including supporting other advocates for women and setting its own legislative agenda.

Both the MCW chair Lee Bachu and the MCW Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams served on the board of directors for the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). The MCW contributed as a sponsor of the MLAW Fall Conference on November 14, 2015, and supported the participation of representatives from county commissions for women from across the state, bringing a total of 25 commissioners to the conference in Gaithersburg. There the commissioners received training in effective legislative advocacy as well as briefings on specific legislative proposals. The MCW signed onto the eight-item MLAW 2016 Agenda, and sent representatives to the February 16, 2016 MLAW briefing in Annapolis.



Commissioner Wandra Ashley-Williams represented the MCW on the board of the Working Matters Campaign, a coalition of community organizations advocating legislation that would provide paid sick leave for all workers in the state.

The MCW was a sponsor of the 2016 Women’s Legislative Briefing as well and played a robust role in this annual event. An audience of over 500 attended the opening session and ten seminars that comprised the conference. MCW Chair Lee Bachu participated in the Presidents’ Networking Session preceding the opening of the conference. Four Commissioners - Yun Jung Yang, Tammy Bresnahan, Pat Cornish and Homayara Aziz - participated as panelists in the seminars. The MCW created a beautiful display of its work for the Briefing and staffed it all day long with help from Commissioners Yun Yang and Corinna Shen. Commissioner Carole Jaar Sepe also attended representing the MCW. Commissioner Lorna Forde, in her role as First Vice President of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, chaired the planning committee for the Briefing. MCW Executive Director represented the MCW at the meetings of the event’s planning committee.

During the Maryland General Assembly’s 2016 Session, the MCW took action on a platform of 10 bills. Letters were sent to the appropriate committees of the House of Delegates and Senate on the following legislation:

HB155/SB278 – Criminal Law Stalking – Misuse of Electronic Communication

Repeals the requirement that the crime of stalking, harassment and misuse of electronic communications or interactive computer services be “malicious” and adds language that prohibits a person from engaging in this behavior if the person “intends to cause or knows or reasonably

should have known that the conduct would cause serious emotional distress to another,” which will help prosecutors hold perpetrators criminally accountable.

Final Status: Passed

HB314/SB346 – Peace Orders – Grounds for Relief

Adds the following offenses to the list of those for which a petitioner may file for a Peace Order: misuse of telephone facilities and equipment; misuse of electronic communication or interactive computer service; revenge porn, and/or visual surveillance. These additional offenses expand the list of harassing and stalking behaviors currently defined in the law.

Final Status: Passed

HB623/SB866 – Human Trafficking, Vacating Convictions

Would expand Maryland’s “vacating convictions” law to include survivors of labor trafficking and increases the number of convictions eligible for vacatur. Victims of human trafficking are often arrested and convicted for crimes they were forced to commit by their traffickers. The victims then acquire a criminal record as a result of having been trafficked.

Final Status: Failed

HB646/SB593 – Child Conceived Without Consent

Would provide rape victims a process for seeking to terminate the parental rights of their rapist when a child is conceived as a result of the assault.

Final Status: Failed

HB1277/SB336 – Hospitals – Designation of Lay Caregivers

Requires hospitals to permit patients to designate a lay caregiver upon admission; notify the caregiver of changes regarding the patient, and provide training to the lay caregiver for the patient’s after-care needs.

Final Status: Passed

2016 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame

MCW Vice Chair A. Diane Williams

2016 Maryland Women of Tomorrow

MCW Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams and Commissioner Lorna Forde, Co-chairs



Generations of Excellence, a Legacy of Leadership

On April 7, 2016, a crowd of well over 200 attended the culminating ceremony celebrating the accomplishments of Maryland women and girls. The Maryland Commission for Women along with the Women Legislators of the Maryland General Assembly inducted six women into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame at a program in the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis. The ceremony included the introduction of five middle and high school students who were presented the Women of Tomorrow award. Annapolis Alderwoman Sheila Finlayson served as Mistress of Ceremonies at the awards ceremony.



Lee Bachu, MCW Chair

The Maryland Women's Hall of Fame was established in 1985 as a joint initiative of the Commission for Women and the Women Legislators to recognize and honor Maryland women whose accomplishments are of historic significance to the state and to provide an archive of their biographies. Since 1985, more than 165 Maryland women have been inducted into the Hall of Fame including Rachel Carson, Harriet Tubman, Clara Barton, Billie Holiday, Henrietta Lacks and Former Congresswoman and Ambassador Connie Morella.

The biographies of all the inductees are posted on the website of the Maryland State Archives: <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/educ/exhibits/womenshall/html/whflist.html>. An exhibit of the Hall of Fame is on display at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center: www.mdwomensheritage-center.org.

The Calls for Nominations for both the Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow Awards were issued in November, 2015. For the Hall of Fame, the Commission received 20 nominations of extraordinary women from all walks of life and from all across the state. An all-volunteer selection committee was formed to review the submissions and make the difficult decision of whom to induct into the Hall of Fame in 2016.

In addition to the committee chair, A. Diane Williams, the Selection Committee members included:

- Linda Fihelly, Business and Professional Women of Maryland
- Catherine Gira, Maryland Women's Heritage Center
- Dr. Debra Bright Harris, Montgomery County Commission for Women
- Delegate Trent Kittleman, Maryland General Assembly, Howard County
- Linda Mahoney, Maryland National Organization for Women (MDNOW), and
- Linda Johnson Thomas, Prince George's County Commission for Women



Wandra Ashley-Williams, MCW Secretary



A. Diane Williams, MCW Vice Chair

The individuals inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 2016 are:

- Dr. Sophia Arabatzis Balis, Pediatric Dentistry Pioneer
- Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms, Educator and Trailblazer
- Mary C. Goodwillie, Community Activist and Founder of the Junior League of Baltimore Posthumous
- Elaine Danforth Harmon, WWI Pilot, WASP Posthumous
- Joanne Katz, Sc.D., Epidemiologist
- Lizette Woodworth Reese, World Renowned Poet, Maryland's Poet Laureate 1931 Posthumous

The Women of Tomorrow Award was established by the Commission for Women in 1997 to recognize and honor extraordinary young women who have demonstrated a commitment to leadership, community service and academic excellence. Nominations are received from educators, civic, community and religious leaders across the state.

This year, 67 students representing 19 Maryland counties and 57 different schools were nominated. An all-volunteer selection committee reviewed every one of the nominations, and met in Annapolis to make the final decision.



Commissioner Lorna Forde

The members of the 2016 Women of Tomorrow Selection Committee were:

- Dr. Barbara Dezmon, Maryland State Conference of NAACP
- Dr. Charlene Dukes, President, Prince George's Community College
- Carole Jaar Sepe, Maryland Commission for Women
- Delegate Karen Young, Maryland General Assembly, Frederick County

From that large pool of outstanding students, the five honorees selected were:

- Sofia Corona, 8th Grade, Oklahoma Road Middle School, Carroll County
- Simone Gaines, 7th Grade, George Fox Middle School, Anne Arundel County
- Megan Hannegan, 11th Grade, North Caroline High School, Caroline County
- Bela Pandya, 12th Grade, Northeast High School, Anne Arundel County
- Hanna Taylor, 12th Grade, Tuscarora High School, Frederick County

The Commission for Women deeply appreciates the support of the sponsors for this event. Their donations, plus a number of donations from attendees, all deposited to the Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women, made this program possible.

Gold Sponsors:

Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women
PNC Bank
AARP Maryland

Bronze Sponsors:

Women Legislators of Maryland
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
Maryland State Conference of the NAACP



M.C., Honorees and Commissioners at the 2016 Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow Awards Ceremony

Health and Wellness Committee

Chair: Commissioner Dr. Homayara Aziz

Members: Commissioners Gloria Chang and Marion Manski

The Health and Wellness Committee created an on-line Maryland Women's Health Resources Directory in FY 15, and posted it on the MCW website, providing information and resources for 21 different health issues of special concern to women. The committee's goal in FY 16 was to enhance access to the directory and to send monthly fact sheets and issue alerts out to the MCW's distribution lists regarding the health issues and resources in the directory.



Working in partnership with the MCW Public Relations and Communications Committee, as the MCW website was re-designed, the committee moved the access to the resource directory from its much less accessible position to a "button" on the MCW website's homepage.

New resources were added to the directory as they became known, enhancing several of the subject areas with improved and expanded information. There are now links to 88 on-line resources for information on women's health.

The MCW distributed a total of 18 (about one and a half per month) Women's Health Issue Alerts to its more than 500 person and organization distribution lists, on such issues as:

Breast Cancer

Domestic Violence

Women's Heart Health

Sexual Assault

Zika Virus

National Women's Health Week

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Skin Cancer Prevention

Women and Stroke Prevention

Osteoporosis

Public Relations and Communications Committee

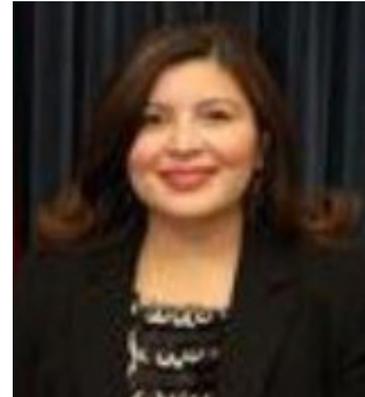
Chair: Commissioner Betsy Ramirez

Members: Commissioners Anita Riley, Velvet Johnson, Carole Jaar Sepe

For FY 16, the Public Relations and Communications Committee set as its goal modernization and expansion of MCW's outreach across the state, improving its visibility and credibility, making use of social media and traditional forms of communication.

The committee undertook a vigorous redevelopment of the Commission's outreach to the public, both through social media and through more traditional methods, including:

- Redesign and continued update of the MCW website, in partnership with DHR's Communications Office. This year, there were 6580 individual visits to the MCW's website, and 62% of them were people who typed in the MCW address, rather than coming to the site from another page on the DHR website, which means they were specifically looking for the MCW.
- Development of content-rich publications for both the website and to distribute at public events:
 - ◆ STEM4Girls resource directory: listing of 49 on-line resources for young women and girls considering education and careers in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) was developed by the MCW high school student intern. The directory is available on the MCW website with active links, and in print with the website addresses for each of the resources listed.
 - ◆ Who We Represent: a two-page fact sheet with demographic data on the women of Maryland, including economic and other information. In addition, a link to a new resource for socio economic statistics on women in the state was added.
- Development of a new print brochure describing the MCW and its work, for distribution at public events.
- Increased use of the MCW Facebook Page: the committee worked hard to make the MCW Facebook page a vital resource and communication tool for the Commission and its constituents. As of July 1, 2016, the MCW's Facebook presence had over 1000 "likes," and more than 2550 "friends."
- Issuing communiqués (issue alerts) to our growing distribution lists: In this fiscal year, a total of 71 issue alerts and announcements were sent to a total distribution list of almost 500 individuals, local and state organizations. Most of these communiqués are also posted on the MCW Facebook page where they are generating lots of interest.



Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour

Co-Chairs: Commissioners Pat Cornish and Yun Jung Yang

Committee: Commissioners Tawanda Bailey, Tammy Bresnahan, Deborah Cartee, Nicole Ingram, Doris Ligon, Bonnie Luna, Betsy Ramirez, Carole Jaar Sepe, Corinna Shen, Ummu Thomas, Marylou Yam

At its October 15, 2015 meeting, the Commission for Women decided to launch a new initiative – a listening tour. The purpose of the initiative is to gather information directly from the women of Maryland across the entire state, asking them to “talk to us” about the needs and concerns they confront in their daily lives.



The Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour will involve a series of public forums inviting the women of each region of the state to present testimony. County Commissions for Women in each region will be invited to participate as partners, helping to secure the venue, and outreach to local women’s organizations, service providers, advocates and individuals. The report developed from the information generated by these forums will be used to shape the MCW agenda and its advocacy work. In addition, the initiative is designed to create partnerships and lasting networks with women’s advocacy organizations across the state, and to position the MCW as a leader and a resource among these groups.

FY 16 was primarily a planning period of the project. It was officially launched at the November 14, 2015 roundtable meeting of Commissions for Women – who were all invited to partner with the MCW on this project. The objectives of the Listening Tour will include:

- Assess needs of women across Maryland’s diverse regions
- Identify and define challenges facing the women of our state
- Strengthen collaboration with and among local women’s groups, service providers and county Commissions for Women
- Develop action plan to address identified issues



The design of the two-hour public forums was developed to permit time for presentations from the participants on issues affecting women in each community; prioritizing the issues identified, selecting the top five issues and brainstorming action plans for each one.

The original proposal was to hold at least four sessions of the Listening Tour – one each in the Western Panhandle of the state, the Eastern Shore, Central Maryland and Southern Maryland. As the year and the plan progressed, it became clear that a session in each jurisdiction where

there is a Commission for Women (CFW) would be necessary, plus some sessions to reach out to populations that are not likely to be reached at traditional public forums. Maryland has 23 counties, plus the city of Baltimore. There are county CFWs in 14 of those counties. All 14 will be invited to work with the MCW to bring the Listening Tour to their community.

In addition, it was decided to develop an on-line survey to permit more women to lend their voices to the project. By the end of the fiscal year, the survey had been developed, tested and posted on the MCW's website using Survey Monkey. Plans were in place for translating the questionnaire into Spanish, Korean and possibly other languages as well.

The schedule of public forums was in development, including the first session to be held on July 13 in Hagerstown, Washington County.

Although a great deal of work lies ahead for this project, it is already clear that it will produce the following outcomes:

- Expansion of the MCW's state-wide email distribution list which enables the MCW to send targeted messages – regionally and statewide – to address issues
- A report identifying key community-level issues related to the status of women in Maryland, and recommending remedies, to be published and presented to the DHR Secretary, the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly
- A data-driven base for developing the MCW agenda for advocacy
- Stronger and more extensive networks with advocates for women and girls across the state that facilitate continuing communication and partnerships.

By the time this annual report was written, the following dates for the Listening Tour had been scheduled, with at least several more still in the planning stages:

July 13, 2016	Washington County
July 23	Korean American Women's Society, Salisbury
August 29	Baltimore County
September 20	Garrett County
October 7	Women of the World Festival, Baltimore City
October 8	Howard County
October 27	Prince George's County
November 17	Calvert County
April 3, 2017	Montgomery County

Bylaws Review Committee

MCW Vice Chair: A. Dianne Williams

Member: Commissioner Marion Manski

The goals of the Bylaws Review Committee for 2015 - 2016 were to review the current Bylaws for compliance with state law and state policy and to ensure Commission business and meetings are conducted effectively and efficiently.

To accomplish this, the Committee launched a careful and thorough review of the current Bylaws as they relate to the:

- Designation of committees
- Designation of committee chairs
- Number required for a quorum at MCW meetings
- Process of election of MCW officers
- Associate and ex officio members, and
- Any other items warranting discussion



At the request of the Commission, the Committee successfully proposed two major changes to the MCW operating rules. The changes established the Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow as separate standing committees of the MCW, rather than as subcommittees of the Education and Outreach Committee, because these two committees represent the MCW's two annual, signature programs. The changes, approved at the MCW's January 2016 meeting, spelled out the responsibilities of those two committees and the Education and Outreach Committee, eliminated the provision for a committee related to the Maryland Women's Heritage Center and established a liaison for that purpose. At its March meeting, the commission ratified approval of a proposal to amend the Bylaws to permit MCW meetings held entirely via conference call under certain circumstances, including weather emergencies and other conditions beyond the control of the MCW.



At the April 7, 2016 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow Ceremony in the Miller Senate Office Building. Front Row, L-R: Management Associate Tammy Wise, Commissioners Anita Riley, Tammy Bresnahan, Carole Jaar Sepe, Betsy Ramirez, Marion Manski, Homayara Aziz, Tawanda Bailey, MCW Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams, MCW Chair Lee Bachu, MCW Vice Chair A. Diane Williams, Commissioners Lorna Forde, Pat Cornish, Yun Jung Yang, Deborah Cartee, Nicole Ingram; Back Row, L-R: Commissioner Gloria Chang, Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather, Commissioners Velvet Johnson, Corinna Shen.



MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

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**AN OFFICE OF THE MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Sam Malhotra, Secretary

