



2021 MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

# Annual Report

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021



*In 2021,  
Celebrating 50 years  
of Advocacy on Behalf  
of the Women and Girls  
of Maryland*



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## THE MARYLAND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN



Carole Jaar Sepe  
Second Vice Chair



Yun Jung Yang  
Chair



Tawanda Bailey  
First Vice Chair

The Maryland Commission for Women was first established in 1965 and set in state law in 1971. An office in the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose legislative mandate includes the following duties:

- 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
- Direct attention to critical problems confronting women

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

## JULY 2020 – JUNE 2021 COMMISSIONERS



Tammy Bresnahan  
Anne Arundel  
County



Deborah L. Cartee  
Anne Arundel  
County



Gloria Chang  
Montgomery  
County



Maureen G. Colburn  
Montgomery County



Amanda L. Costley  
Carroll County



Melissa Hough Curtin  
Howard County



Essita R. Duncan  
Prince George's  
County



Kristi S. Halford  
Harford County



Eugenia B. Henry  
Baltimore County



Lauren M. Lambert  
Prince George's  
County



Patricia McHugh Lambert  
Carroll County



Beth Anne Langrell  
Talbot County



Bonnie Nelson Luna  
Wicomico County



Brenda J. McChriston  
Howard County



Ishrat N. Memon  
Howard County



Roberta Pardo  
Anne Arundel  
County



Luanne Ruddell  
Garrett County



Corinna Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen  
Montgomery County



Maxine Griffin Somerville  
Charles County



Evelyne S. Steward  
Montgomery County



Tamara England Wilson  
Baltimore City



Marylou Yam  
Baltimore City

### Staff:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Tammy Wise, Management Associate

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Maryland Department of Human Services  
Lourdes R. Padilla



This past year was different for everyone. We all lost something, but in that loss, we gained a real appreciation for what the mission of the Department of Human Services stands for, what “*assisting people in need and protecting the vulnerable*” truly means.

Throughout this pandemic we all faced unprecedented challenges and learned to navigate uncharted terrain, while finding creative ways to serve our constituents. It is said that a person’s character is tested and revealed during challenging times, and the DHS family keeps passing that test with flying colors.

The Maryland Department of Human Services is the state’s primary social service provider, serving more than one million people annually. DHS, through its 24 local departments of social services, 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.

DHS is also home to the Maryland Commission for Women. The Commission’s role as an advocate for the women and girls of our state helps DHS fulfill its mission by serving as a valued advisor on issues including domestic violence and sexual assault, human trafficking, mothers and poverty, work and family, equal access to opportunity and much more.

We commend the Commission’s work not only to recognize women’s contribution to our state, but also to encourage young women to exceed expectations as they prepare for leadership in the future. Our congratulations to each of the five extraordinary women inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame, and each of the exceptional young ladies who were honored with Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards in 2021. Although these celebrations had to be virtual this year, their significance is not diminished.

The Commission’s publication of *Maryland Women: A Status Report* in June of this year not only presents valuable information we can use in making policy and program decisions, but is also testament to how hard the commissioners continued to work despite the restrictions of the pandemic.

DHS appreciates the hard work, expertise and time donated by the 25 volunteer members of the Commission for Women, helping make Maryland a place where all our residents may lead productive lives as respected members of our community. We take pride in the Commission as our partner as we pursue our vision of a Maryland where people independently support themselves and their families and where every person is safe from abuse and neglect.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lourdes R. Padilla". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lourdes R. Padilla  
Secretary, Maryland Department of Human Services

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

*Yun Jung Yang, Esq.*

It is my pleasure once again to present the annual report of the Maryland Commission for Women, covering our work from July 2020 through June 2021. This past year seemed like a never-ending battle, navigating the challenges faced by our state, our nation, and our world, due to the global pandemic. Throughout these trying times, Governor Hogan and DHS Secretary Lourdes Padilla have continuously offered their strong and compassionate leadership and support for the Maryland Commission for Women. We extend our sincere gratitude and admiration for the leadership they present as they guide our state—and the agency charged with serving Maryland’s most vulnerable residents—throughout the multiple crises.



Despite the onslaught of pandemic-related complications, the Commission for Women successfully adapted to circumstances and continued its work on the Status of Women in Maryland research project. In June 2021 we released Part II of the project, *Maryland Women: A Status Report*, which used existing empirical data to examine the gendered issues voiced by Maryland women during our Listening Tour. Our legislative advocacy endured despite pandemic restrictions, and we were in fact able to provide written testimony on more proposed House and Senate bills than in the prior year. We also created a website to recognize and congratulate the five inductees to the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and the five awardees to the Maryland Young Women Leaders Award (formerly, the Women of Tomorrow Awards), as in-person events were still not possible in March 2021.

Even on the personal level, the members of the Commission for Women had to adapt. As we endured another year of remote work, our Commissioners learned to navigate with ease the complexities of the digital world. They not only stepped up to wholeheartedly embrace their responsibilities, but also to go above and beyond in supporting one another’s efforts. It is through their collaborative service that the Commission for Women was able to continue our critical work, almost without interruption, in the face of what then seemed insurmountable difficulties.

And so, as we stand at the threshold of the post-pandemic era, I would like to reflect upon the tenacity of our community. I am amazed by how quickly and effectively our 25 commissioners and our staff adjusted to the new norm and I am overwhelmed with admiration and pride in the commitment, dedication, and talent showcased by my colleagues in these universally trying times. I am truly honored and privileged to work side by side with my sister commissioners and extend my sincerest gratitude for their hard work and devotion to our purpose. I look forward to seeing you all in-person once again at the end of this pandemic.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Judith Vaughan-Prather*



When this program year began on July 1, 2020, the nation was just beginning to realize the full scope of the COVID-19 pandemic and the length of time the economy and “life as we knew it” would be “shut down.” State government offices, including the Commission for Women, had been, for the most part, closed to the public and staff worked from home since March 13, 2020. Even by July of that year, few anticipated that those conditions would continue for the next twelve months.

In the middle of the health, social and economic crisis presented by the pandemic, civil unrest continued across the nation in response to reports of racially based police brutality, and the spread of anti-Asian racism and violence. In addition, the nation experienced an especially contentious national election in the fall of 2020, followed by still more violent unrest in Washington, D.C. in January 2021. Yet, the near-miraculous development and rapid distribution of effective vaccines, especially in Maryland, brings new hope for a successful transition to a “new normal” as the rate of infections and death declines dramatically, businesses, schools and society in general begin to reopen and re-connect.

The MCW held its annual planning meeting on September 17, 2020 as a virtual meeting, to review its work over the previous year and to set its agenda for FY 21. The Commissioners adopted a busy workplan that included:

- Pivoting its plans for commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women voting rights, on August 26, 2020, from an in-person conference to a virtual summit
- An active Policy and Legislation (PAL) committee that conducted the Commission’s legislative advocacy, virtually, in the 2021 session of the Maryland General Assembly
- The Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards program, culminating with the virtual induction and award presentation in March 2021
- The completion of Phase II of the Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) research project
- A virtual conference of all the Commissions for Women in Maryland

Each of the committees established to pursue these goals worked diligently over the year, despite the world-wide epidemic that forced many workers out of their jobs and others out of their offices, brought previously unimaginable infection and death, and the accompanying human suffering. All Commission meetings in FY 21 were held on the Google Meet virtual platform, and work proceeded online on the Commission’s projects.

The reports of each of the four committee’s activities will follow. Despite the multiple crises occurring nation- and world-wide, and in some cases in response to those crises, the Commission for Women carried on its work in other areas as well:

- The Commission’s Annual Planning meeting, typically held in June, was moved to September, because work was necessarily intense over the summer months preparing for the August 26 Summit.
- In October, a work group was established to review the Commission’s Bylaws and to propose any needed changes to enable virtual meetings. The changes, which included electronic balloting for elections and motions, changing the name of the “Women of Tomorrow Awards” to the “Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards,” and necessarily adapting attendance requirements to include virtual attendance, were proposed at the November meeting and approved at the January meeting.
- Throughout the year, Commissioners represented the Commission on 10 other community organizations, including:
  - Maryland Women’s Heritage Center – Chair Yang
  - Foundation for the MCW – Chair Yang, Commissioners Henry, Shen and Steward
  - Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) – Commissioner Curtin
  - Women’s Legislative Briefing Planning Committee – Commissioner Halford
  - Women Moving Forward Conference Planning Committee – First Vice Chair Bailey
  - 19th Amendment Commemoration Commission – Chair Yang and Commissioner Steward
  - Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group – Commissioner Langrell
  - Maryland SAFE Center – Commissioner Costley
  - Maryland Women’s History Museum – Commissioner Luna
  - National Association of Commissions for Women – Executive Director Vaughan-Prather
- The Commission sponsored the virtual MLAW Fall Conference at the “Platinum” (\$500) level and purchased 28 admissions for its own commissioners and representatives of eight county Commissions for Women. Commissioners from Garrett County in Maryland’s far western panhandle and Worcester County on the lower eastern shore, were able to attend the conference for the first time.
- The MCW was originally established by the Governor in 1965 and it was active, somewhat off and on during the following six years. It was finally set in state law in 1971 making this year the 50th anniversary of the MCW’s enabling legislation and of the Commission as we now know it. The semicentennial was commemorated throughout the second half of the program year by placing a special banner on the MCW’s website and redesigning the Commission’s brochure.
- The MCW’s website was re-organized to increase accessibility and visibility.
- March 2021 Women’s History Month activities included:
  - March 1: Distributed Women’s History Month announcement.
  - March 3: Sent message reminding readers that on this date in 1913, the first women’s suffrage march in Washington, DC was held.
  - March 8: Published International Women’s Day issue alert.

- March 11: MCW Second Vice Chair Sepe represented the MCW at the Frederick County Raving About Women (RAW) program.
  - March 15: Published issue alert commemorating the birthday of the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
  - March 26: Published issue alert commemorating the birthday of Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman Supreme Court Justice.
- On March 19, 2021, in response to the marked increase in violence against Asian Americans, the Commission issued a statement of solidarity with the Asian-American community. (See below.)
  - In April, in response to growing concerns for women's psychological and emotional well-being under the continuing stress of coping with work and family in the midst of a pandemic, the Commission developed a special series of four Women and Self-Care alerts and sent one each week to its distribution lists during National Mental Health Awareness Month. The special work group established to develop these alerts was led by Commissioner McChriston and the beautiful artwork for them was created by Commissioner Steward.
  - On April 17, Commission Chair Yang provided the keynote address at the Calvert County Women of the World virtual conference.
  - In May, the MCW wrote to the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services urging that the courses to be offered by George Washington University at the Patuxent Institution be made available to incarcerated women as well as men.
  - Throughout the year, the Commission issued a total of 72 communiques to its distribution lists of more than 1400 email subscribers and 1817 Facebook followers. These messages included:
    - 17 Health Alerts
    - 18 Issue Alerts
    - 3 "News" Announcements
    - 21 Event Announcements
    - 13 Facebook Posts
  - On June 17, 2021, as the state and the nation look forward to returning to something like normal, the Commission met for the final time of this extraordinary year, to set its priorities and initiatives, to establish its committees and appoint its liaisons for the coming year. It bid farewell to four commissioners whose terms were complete and welcomed newly appointed commissioners as we enter the year with renewed hope and plans for a very busy agenda.

**Statement of the Maryland Commission for Women  
In Solidarity with the Asian-American Community  
March 19, 2021**

*The Maryland Commission for Women opposes race- and gender-based discrimination, oppression, intimidation, harassment, and violence, in any form. Racist violence toward Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders across the country has increased dramatically since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is alarming, deeply saddening and must end.*

*The murders in Georgia this week of eight individuals, seven of them women and six of them Asian-American women, are more than abhorrent, more than just sexism or racism. No matter how these murders are described or defined, there is no doubt that the violent ideations that led to this atrocity were fed by the intersectionality of racism and misogyny.*

*The Commission for Women stands in solidarity with all women of every race and ethnicity, and with all who oppose racism and sexism. We stand in solidarity today with our Asian-American and Pacific Islander sisters and brothers. While our hearts break for the families, friends and colleagues of the victims of this horrendous crime, our determination to work against racism and sexism in all their forms is made stronger than ever. The Commission for Women urges all those who experience or witness such hatred, discrimination and violence to stand up and speak up.*



Evelyne S. Steward  
Montgomery County

## 2020 WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL SUMMIT

*From the Right to Vote to the Right to Lead*

**August 26, 2020**

**Committee Chair:** *Eugenia Henry*

**Committee Vice Chair:** *Evelyne Steward*

**Committee Members:** *Tawanda Bailey, Deborah Cartee, Gloria Chang, Kristi Halford, Patricia McHugh Lambert, Carole Jaar Sepe, Corinna Shen, Tamara Wilson, Marylou Yam, Yun Jung Yang*



Eugenia B. Henry  
Baltimore County

August 26, 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, finally - after decades of campaigning - guaranteeing American women the right to vote.

At its June 20, 2019 planning meeting, the Commission for Women decided to commemorate this historic occasion by recognizing and celebrating the leadership of women in the century since suffrage was won and acknowledging how much more progress is needed to achieve full equality for all women.

A planning committee was formed, with the MCW officers, the chair and co-chair of the planning committee acting as a steering committee for the project. The Steering Committee met several times over the summer of 2019 visiting potential venues for the event and meeting with The Foundation for the MCW to discuss partnership and sponsorship possibilities, with the goal of holding the conference on the actual anniversary date of Wednesday, August 26, and in Annapolis.

Meetings were held with the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) staff and the Chair of the Maryland Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (the 19th Amendment Commission). Both organizations agreed to collaborate with the MCW in organizing the Summit.

As originally planned, the Summit would have been a full-day event at the Maryland House of Delegates building followed by a reception at the Governor's mansion. The capacity of these buildings meant that the audience size would be limited to no more than 225.

After months of meetings and negotiations and planning, the full and long-term effects of the impending COVID-19 pandemic became apparent, and by April of 2020 plans for an in-person event in August had to change. The choice facing the Commission was to cancel the event altogether or find a way to commemorate the centennial anniversary virtually.

In the history of the struggle for women's equality, this date seemed too important to go unrecognized. The decision was to "pivot" the planning to a virtual Summit that would be an appropriate recognition of this historic occasion. The Maryland 19th Amendment Commission, also pivoting from now-cancelled plans, became the major "Heritage Sponsor" of the Summit. Significant support also came from the Global Federation of Chinese Businesswomen, the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, Westat, Cornerstone Mortgage, AAUW MD, the

International Leadership Foundation, the Caucus of Maryland Women Legislators, and others. The funds contributed by these organizations made it possible for the Foundation to contract with a technology production company to handle the technical aspects of producing the Summit.

Instead of a full-day, in-person conference with limited attendance, the Summit became a half-day virtual event with unlimited attendance. Maryland’s highest-ranking judge was invited to present the keynote address, followed by two panel discussions. A “Parade of 100 Sheroes,” scrolling during breaks, featured 100 Maryland women and girls who contributed significantly to the fight against the pandemic or the campaign for racial equality in our state. The Parade included medical personnel and first responders, teachers, students, clergy, and store clerks who made it possible for everyone to obtain groceries and medicines, individuals in the community who donated face masks or held food drives, and many more.

This was an enormous undertaking for the Commission and its tiny staff, with a huge learning curve. The Commission had never sponsored a virtual conference before, and with only four months to make this change, the meetings of the Steering Committee were frequent and intense. Commissioners Sepe and Steward designed and created a special website for the Summit with information about the Suffrage Movement, the speakers for the Summit, the program, the sponsors and more. Commissioner Steward also created the graphic design of each slide of the Parade of Sheroes. The Summit’s website received over 7000 pageviews and provided links to the video recording of the Summit and the Sheroes Parade posted on the MCW website.

Judge Mary Ellen Barbera, the first woman ever to serve as the Chief Judge on Maryland’s highest court, the Court of Appeals, presented the inspiring keynote address for the Summit. Speakers for an intriguing panel on the real history of the suffrage campaign included Dr. Ida Jones, Archivist at Morgan State University and Kacy Rohn, Historic Preservation Specialist, with Dr. Linda Singh, Chair of the state’s 19th Amendment Commission as moderator. A second panel of women thought leaders provided a discussion of “Women’s Leadership and the Intersectionality of Gender and Race in Times of Crisis.” The panel, moderated by WJZ TV news anchor Denise Koch, included Michelle Bernard, Founder and CEO of the Bernard Center for Women, Politics and Public Policy, Alejandra Y. Castillo, CEO of the YWCA USA, Kelly Schulz, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Commerce, and Dr. Leana Wen, M.D., M.Sc., Emergency Physician and University Professor.

More than 1000 individuals registered for the Summit, and more than 600 actually signed in online and attended the event on August 26, 2020. There were others who watched in groups, and almost 200 more viewed the video later posted on the MCW website.

The Summit closed with a reminder that the celebration of this historic centennial anniversary of women’s right to vote only makes sense if everyone actually exercises her right to vote, as guaranteed by the 19th Amendment. With the national elections of November 2020 approaching, women’s votes never mattered more.



Tammy Bresnahan

## POLICY AND LEGISLATION (PAL) COMMITTEE

**Chair:** *Tammy Bresnahan*

**Vice Chair:** *Kristi S. Halford*

**Members:** *Tawanda Bailey, Amanda Costley, Melissa Curtin, Essita Duncan, Patricia McHugh Lambert, Brenda McChriston, Carole Jaar Sepe, Yun Jung Yang*



Kristi S. Halford

The Maryland Commission for Women is charged by its enabling statute with the responsibility to “inform the executive and legislative branches of government on issues concerning women, including offering testimony on the issues before legislative and administrative bodies.” To carry out that mandate, the Commission prepared and submitted written testimony to the Maryland General Assembly in support of six legislative initiatives (11 bills total) under consideration in the 2021 session. Three of those initiatives passed.

**HB 359/SB 437 Maryland Longitudinal Data System - Student Data - Pregnant and Parenting Students** would have added data on pregnant and parenting students to the statistics collected, organized, managed, disaggregated, reported on, and analyzed by the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center.

**Testimony Developed By:** Commissioner Kristi S. Halford

**Final Status:** Died in committee.

**HB 581/SB 486 Labor and Employment - Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers’ Protection Act)** is an emergency bill that establishes numerous benefits and protections for essential workers, during an emergency, and related responsibilities for each employer of an essential worker. Among other things, the bill requires an employer to provide hazard pay and personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost to essential workers. The bill also requires the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) to provide a special enrollment period (SEP) during an emergency for an essential worker who is not insured under a group health benefit plan sponsored by the employer. The bill applies prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to require the payment of hazard pay for work performed in an emergency before the bill was enacted.

**Testimony Developed By:** Commissioner Carole Jaar Sepe

**Final Status:** HB 581 passed and is effective May 30, 2021

**HB 147/SB 250 Criminal Law – Sexual Crimes – Repeal of Spousal Defense (Love Is No Defense to Sexual Crimes)** would have repealed an exemption from prosecution for specified sexual crimes if, at the time of the alleged rape or sexual offense, the person was the victim’s legal spouse.

**Testimony Developed By:** Commissioner Amanda Costley

**Final Status:** Failed.

**HB 205/SB 427 Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement** requires each local board of education to ensure that each public school provide, at no charge to the students, menstrual hygiene products via dispensers in the restrooms at the schools. A public middle or high school must install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in at least two restrooms on or before October 1, 2021, and in specified restrooms on or before August 1, 2025. A public elementary school must install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in at least one restroom on or before October 1, 2021.

**Testimony Developed By:** Commissioner Brenda McChriston

**Final Status:** HB 205/SB 427 passed and are effective July 1, 2021

**HB 235 Correctional Services - Pregnant Incarcerated Individuals - Substance Abuse Assessment and Treatment** would have required correctional units to screen pregnant incarcerated individuals for substance use disorder (SUD) at intake using a validated screening tool, regardless of the jurisdiction of confinement or the length of time that the individual was expected to be at the correctional unit. The bill also would have established requirements for correctional units relating to the assessment, treatment, and release of pregnant incarcerated individuals with a SUD.

**Testimony Developed By:** Commissioner Essita Duncan

**Final Status:** Died in committee.

**HB 411/SB 43 Criminal Law - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Sexual Activity** expands the list of individuals with whom a law enforcement officer is statutorily prohibited from engaging in sexual contact, vaginal intercourse, or a sexual act to include (1) a victim, witness, or suspect in an investigation during the course of an investigation that the law enforcement officer is conducting, supervising, or assisting with and (2) a person requesting assistance from or responding to the law enforcement officer in the course of the law enforcement officer's official duties. These additional prohibitions do not apply if the officer had a prior existing legal sexual relationship with the individual, unless an interim, temporary, or final protective order between the parties is in effect at the time of the sexual contact, vaginal intercourse, or sexual act.

**Testimony Developed By:** Commissioner Patricia McHugh Lambert

**Final Status:** SB 43 Passed and is Effective October 1, 2021

In addition to submitting testimony on these bills, the Commission was a “Platinum Sponsor” of the **Annual Fall Conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)** and covered the registration costs of 27 representatives of Commissions for Women across the state. Of those, 18 were commissioners representing eight different county commissions, and nine were MCW representatives. Commissioner Curtin was the moderator for the November 14, 2020 conference which was held virtually and attended by more than 300 and was sponsored by 42 community organizations, including the MCW. Commissioners Bailey, Duncan, Halford, McChriston, Sepe, Somerville and Yang attended along with both MCW staff members. Commissioner Curtin also served as a liaison to MLAW on behalf of the MCW throughout the legislative season.

MCW also participated as a community sponsor of the January 21, 2021 **Women’s Legislative Briefing**, held virtually this year for the first time. Coordinated by the Montgomery County Commission for Women, it was attended by almost 600 women and men from across the state. Commissioner Halford represented the MCW on the planning committee for the Briefing. Commissioners Yang, Bailey, Bresnahan, Sepe, Halford, Somerville, Duncan, Steward, Memon and McChriston all participated, along with both staff members.



Deborah L. Cartee

## ACHIEVEMENT AND RECOGNITION COMMITTEE (ARC) MARYLAND WOMEN’S HALL OF FAME MARYLAND YOUNG WOMEN LEADERS AWARDS

**Chair:** *Deborah L. Cartee*

**Vice Chair for Hall of Fame:** *Roberta Pardo*

**Vice Chair for Young Women Leaders:** *Lauren M. Lambert*

**Members:** *Tawanda Bailey, Gloria Chang, Maureen Colburn, Eugenia Henry, Bonnie Nelson Luna, Ishrat Memon, Luanne Ruddell, Carole Jaar Sepe, Corinna Shen, Maxine Griffin Somerville, Evelyne Steward, Yun Jung Yang*

Among the duties assigned to the Maryland Commission for Women by its enabling legislation is the recognition of women’s accomplishments and contributions. The Commission’s Achievement and Recognition Committee is responsible for coordinating the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards every year.

Each year, the commissioners develop the program, issue the calls for nominations, establish and coordinate the selection committees and the selection process and plan the awards and induction for the honorees. It is a difficult, but gratifying task, as the goal is to memorialize women of extraordinary accomplishments and to recognize and encourage the development of future women leaders. This year’s theme, Valiant Women: Making History, Building Our Future, perfectly describes the women honored in 2021.

The Call for Nominations was issued October 22, 2020 with a closing date of November 22. The Call was sent to women’s and community organizations across the state. The Call for Nominations for the Maryland Young Women Leaders Award was additionally sent to public and private schools throughout Maryland.



Roberta Pardo

The [Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame](#) is a rich source of biographies of women who made significant and lasting contributions to the history and culture of our state and our nation. Established in 1985 as a partnership between the Maryland Commission for Women and the Women Legislators of Maryland, the Hall of Fame honors Maryland women whose lives and work are of historic significance to the economic, political, cultural and social life of the state.

Each year, the Maryland Commission for Women and the Women Legislators of Maryland call for nominations of women who have made history in fields such as the arts, athletics, business, community advocacy, education, government, the humanities, human rights, law, medicine, the military, philanthropy and science. This year, sixteen nominations of extraordinary women – both contemporary and posthumous – were received. An independent, all-volunteer committee representing leaders of state-wide women’s organizations reviewed the sixteen nominations and selected the five to be inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2021.

The 2021 inductees are:

- **Elizabeth “Liz” Bobo**, of Howard County, the first woman ever elected to the position of county executive in the history of the state;
- **Margaret Briggs Gregory Hawkins** (1887 - 1969), of Baltimore City, an ardent suffragist;
- **Ruby Reese Moone**, of Montgomery County, a renowned civil rights activist who marched with Martin Luther King in Selma, Alabama
- **Dr. Nancy K. Welker**, of Prince George’s County, a physicist and nationally recognized expert in superconducting electronics;
- **Celeste Revillon Winans** (1823 - 1861), of Baltimore City, recognized as Maryland’s first philanthropist and perhaps the nation’s first female philanthropist.

Biographies of each of these extraordinary women are posted on the website of the [Commission for Women](#), and – along with the more than 190 previous inductees – on the website of the [Maryland State Archives](#).



Lauren M. Lambert

The [Maryland Young Women Leaders Award](#) was first established as the Women of Tomorrow Award in 1997 to recognize extraordinary young women who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to leadership, community service and academic excellence. This year, the name of the award was changed to more accurately reflect its purpose of recognizing and encouraging future women leaders. With a generous donation received from the Pai Ping Foundation to the Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women, the honor included, for the first time, a \$500 scholastic award for each student. A selection committee, made up of representatives of state-wide women’s organizations, reviewed the seventeen nominations received from seven different counties in the state.

The 2021 Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards were presented to:

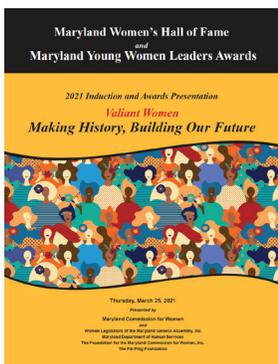
- **Esha Ahmad**, Northern High School, Calvert County
- **Georgia Hammond**, Hereford High School, Baltimore County
- **Elaine Huang**, Altholton High School, Howard County
- **Brina Ratangee**, Urbana High School, Frederick County
- **Ashley Thommana**, Montgomery Blair High School, Montgomery County

These honors have traditionally been presented each year at a ceremony in Annapolis in March – Women’s History Month. However, in March 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person gatherings were still prohibited. This year, a special website was created featuring the biography and video-recorded remarks from each honoree, with greetings from Maryland’s First Lady Yumi Hogan, U.S. Senators Cardin and Van Hollen, DHS Secretary Lourdes Padilla, Maryland State Delegate Krimm, chair of the Caucus of Maryland Women Legislators, and representatives of the Maryland Commission for Women.

The website (<https://dhs.maryland.gov/women-commission/>) was launched at 10 a.m. on March 25, 2021, and will remain accessible for at least a year. As of July 1, it had been viewed 731 times.

The Commission for Women very much appreciates the contribution of the Pai Ping Foundation. The beautiful website commemorating the honorees was designed and skillfully created by the DHS Communications Staff.

Much appreciation also goes to the representatives of state women’s organizations who volunteered their time and considerable expertise to the selection of the 2021 honorees:



**2021 Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame Selection Committee**  
**Margie Kotzalas**, Secretary, Business & Professional Women of Maryland (BPW/MD)  
**Rachel Mygatt**, Board of Directors, Maryland Women’s Heritage Center (MWHC)  
**Roberta Pardo**, Commissioner, Maryland Commission for Women  
**Susan Wierman**, Co-President, American Association of University Women (AAUW)

**2021 Maryland Young Women Leaders Award Selection Committee**  
**Susan Horst**, First Vice President, Business & Professional Women of Maryland (BPW/MD)  
**Lauren Lambert**, Commissioner, Maryland Commission for Women  
**Kate Campbell Stevenson**, Co-President, American Association of University Women (AAUW/MD)  
**Toni St. John**, Women’s Law Center of Maryland



Maxine Griffin Somerville

## COMMISSIONS FOR WOMEN VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE MEETING

June 10, 2021

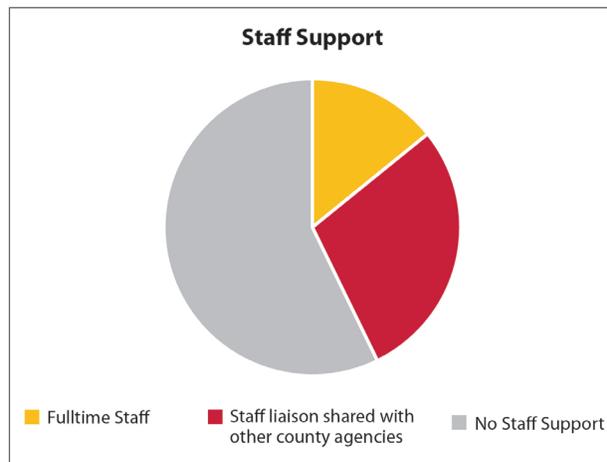
*Coordinator: Maxine Griffin Somerville*

For several years, the MCW has convened an annual meeting of the county and city Commissions for Women (CFWs) in the state. Due to the restrictions on in-person gatherings, the MCW had not convened the Commissions for Women Roundtable Meeting since November 2019. Finally, on June 10, 2021 the MCW conducted, for the first time, a virtual meeting of these organizations.

There are 14 active county CFWs in Maryland and one city CFW (Baltimore). They range geographically from the far-western panhandle in Garrett County to the southern eastern shore in Worcester County, the only currently active CFW east of the Chesapeake Bay. Historically, when the Roundtable Meeting was held in person, even when combined with another conference, nine or 10 CFWs would be able to participate, each sending one or two representatives.

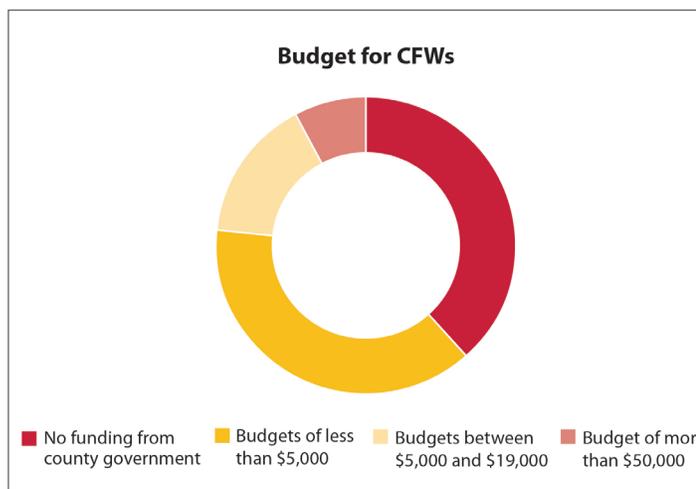
This year, with the meeting held virtually, all 14 county CFWs registered to attend, sending a total of 70 participants. After the meeting, all 14 CFWs were offered the opportunity to complete a survey. From the thirteen who submitted the questionnaire, we learned that:

- Two have at least one full-time staff support
- Four share a staff liaison with other county agencies
- Eight have no staff support at all



Not including employee salaries,

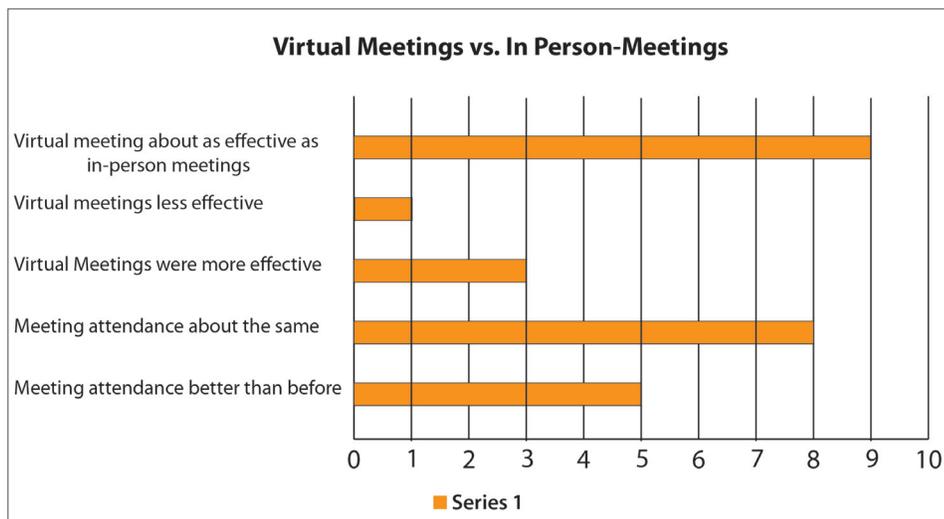
- Five have no funding from the county government
- Five have budgets of less than \$5000
- Two have budgets between \$5000 and \$19,000
- One has a budget of more than \$50,000



• Seven have no other source of funding
• Four obtain sponsorships to fund programs
• Three charge fees to support programs
• Three use private donations to support programs
• One has a non-profit foundation to support programs
• One receives donations from members
• One reported partnering with other organizations
• One uses only fees and sponsorships to support programs
• Seven report using none of these fund-raising vehicles

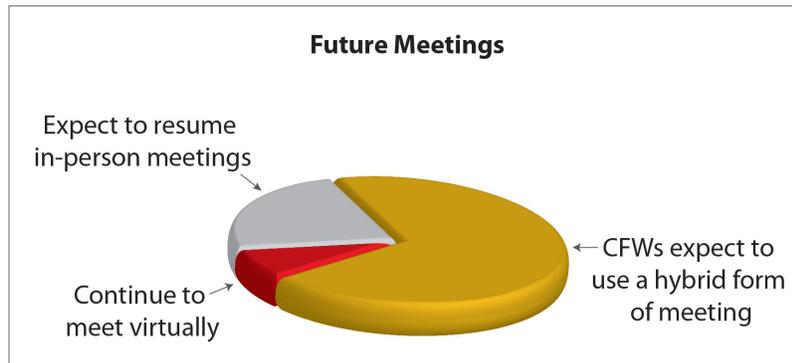
During the pandemic, all CFWs continued meeting regularly using virtual meeting platforms.

- Five reported that meeting attendance was better than before
- Eight reported that meeting attendance was about the same.
- Three found that the virtual meetings were more effective than in-person meetings had been
- One found virtual meetings to be less effective and
- Nine CFWs found virtual meetings to be about as effective as in-person meetings



Now that things are beginning to open up again and in-person meetings may be possible:

- Nine CFWs expect to use a hybrid form of meeting (in-person and virtual)
- One expects to continue meeting virtually, and
- Three expect to resume in-person meetings



With regard to programs and initiatives during the past 24 months:

• Eight of the CFWs sponsor an award program for young women or girls
• Eight sponsor an annual Women’s History Month event
• Three sponsor an annual Women’s Legislative Briefing or Women’s Summit
• Two sponsor a county Women’s Hall of Fame
• Seven have offered seminars
• Two have offered classes
• Two have offered mentoring for young women
• Four have conducted a survey on the needs of women in their county
• Three have conducted a listening tour

With regard to social media and other networking devices used during the past 24 months:

• Twelve of the CFWs maintain a Facebook Page
• Nine maintain a website
• Three use Twitter
• Three use Instagram
• One has used YouTube
• Seven publish an annual report of their activities
• And one publishes a quarterly newsletter

During the Roundtable Meeting, and in the survey, the attendees were invited to discuss how their Commissions had been impacted by the pandemic, and to discuss their most successful projects and activities of the past year along with their priorities for the coming year.

### **Allegany County CFW**

#### **Priorities:**

- Resume listening tour
- Develop and implement mentoring project
- Award funds to women to reach academic and employment goals

#### **Challenges:**

- No funding
- Political climate

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Awarding of funding to women with money solely raised by Commission

### **Anne Arundel County CFW**

#### **Priorities:**

- Expand social media reach
- Conduct teen girl career panel
- Enhance outreach to local women's shelters & support groups

#### **Challenges:**

- 50% member turnover
- Inability to serve mission in person
- Needed to realign mission based on changing priorities/needs affecting women due to COVID

#### **Accomplishments:**

- A fully remote (yet robust) recruitment effort
- 100% attendance at all virtual meetings
- Ability to pivot to focus on social media as primary outreach platform

### **Baltimore County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Holding a retreat in July to determine priorities for coming year

#### **Challenges:**

- Late start due to not receiving approval from the County Administration
- Not reaching intended goal of participants at virtual events

#### **Accomplishments:**

Voices of Baltimore Virtual tour

### **Calvert County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Continuing to increase social media presence for all ages
- Offering a hybrid of in-person and virtual programming
- Generating new approaches to ongoing programs and introducing several new programs

#### **Challenges:**

- Planning programs during the pandemic
- Improving abilities on Zoom
- Being more proactive on social media

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Holding several successful programs including four in-person programs in three county parks and outside the County Courthouse for the Red Sand Project to raise awareness about human trafficking in collaboration with the Dept of Parks and Recreation, County State's Attorney and Sheriff's offices and another community group
- Leading and coordinating the 18th Annual Women of the World Recognition Celebration held virtually for first time, with six community partner organizations

including Calvert's Historical Society, Mediation Center, NAACP, Concerned Black Women, Minority Business Alliance, and League of Women Voters, along with MCW Chair, Yun Jung Yang as Keynote Speaker

- Continuing leading effort to honor Harriet Elizabeth Brown by supporting the development of a public community center in Prince Frederick
- Increased visibility of the CCCW led to an increase in membership of the CCCW during this pandemic year

### **Charles County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Increase Social Media presence
- Fill vacant positions on the Commission
- Fundraising opportunities

#### **Challenges:**

- Losing members at the beginning of the pandemic
- Expanding social media presence beyond Facebook & Twitter

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Hosting first More than Enough Virtual Women's Summit
- Launching a Podcast
- 31 Women of the County - Women's History Month Event
- 100 Purses for a Purpose Campaign

### **Frederick County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Planning meeting scheduled for July 28 with discussion of priorities, which may include specific legislation at the county level
- Final updates to handbook and By-laws
- Earlier recruitment for SheLEADS Program for high school young women

#### **Challenges:**

- WebEx, not meeting in person, which was difficult

because there are many rural areas without great internet bandwidth

- Less organic conversations during meetings
- New initiatives put on hold until 2021-22 year

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Female-headed household initiative with Asian American Center of Frederick
- SheLeads Program with the girls creating a YouTube Channel with videos for other high school girls focused on Mindfulness and Art Therapy during the pandemic
- RAW Awards in March
- Legislative support for MLAW

### **Garrett County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Expanding women's voices in the community
- Increased participation by women in local politics
- Improved communication of women's issues/ concerns to the decision-makers

#### **Challenges:**

- Continuing with programs that required contact with other populations that were not accessible
- Members without access to adequate internet service

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Awarding the annual Hall of Fame
- Woman of Tomorrow and scholarships with multiple publicity platforms

### **Harford County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Results from the Benchmarking Study - produce the Best Practices Report and prioritize our goals based on the findings of the report
- Hold a successful Women of Tomorrow Awards Event, in person, in FY 2022
- Continue with timely and pertinent Community Conversations

**Challenges:**

- Unable to hold the 2021 Women of Tomorrow Awards in person
- Could not hold the 2020 Women of Tomorrow Awards in person, due to lockdown, but sent all the winners their cash prizes, honors and recognition from elected officials; posted about each nominee on the Women's Commission Facebook page
- Getting used to the virtual format - it took some members some time; however, some greatly improved their WebEx skills through training

**Accomplishments:**

- The Benchmarking Study/Best Practices project
- Two Community Conversations that we held virtually - Coping with COVID-19: A Woman's Perspective (December 2020) & Caregiving – Preparing to Care (February 2021)
- Posted quotes from powerful Harford County women throughout Women's History Month on the Commission's Facebook page
- Joined the National Association of Commissions for Women and members of the Commission are speaking at the national conference on July 19, 2021
- Became more active with the MCW, thanks to Commissioner Kristi Halford

**Howard County CFW:****Priorities:**

- Mitigating the effects of COVID on women
- Women 65+
- Political awareness of women

**Challenges:**

- Commissioners felt stretched thin; had too much on their plates
- County only permits a website and a Facebook page, cannot use other forms of social media to spread the word about events and services

**Accomplishments:**

- Maintaining the engagement of Commissioners during the pandemic

**Montgomery County CFW:****Priorities:**

- Women in Leadership
- Health, Safety and Security
- Economic Justice

**Challenges:**

- Moving to a virtual platform efficiently

**Accomplishments:**

- Moving to a virtual platform for legislative briefing and all seminars and classes
- Onboarded a fulltime staff person in December
- Published a weekly newsletter to over 17,000, changed the format of our newsletter to include COVID information, also included county social service resources and a health and wellness section so readers could find virtual things to do within the county and beyond

**Prince George's County CFW:****Priorities:**

- Enhance social media presence
- Establish Youth Ambassador/Young Leaders Program
- Mental Health Awareness

**Challenges:**

- Implementation of planned programs, events and activities due to COVID; limited visibility/access to the community; cumbersome administrative procedures create delays and inefficiencies.

**Accomplishments:**

- Women's Legislative Briefing
- The challenges and limitations imposed by the pandemic forced more creativity and the PGCCFW finds ways to fulfill its mission with webinars, zoom PSA's, virtual trainings and food distribution events. In all, 2021 was a very successful year!

### **St. Mary's County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Dating Violence Prevention
- Women's History and Volunteer Recognition
- Will meet in July to decide additional priorities

#### **Challenges:**

- Not being able to meet in person
- Not being allowed to meet by zoom
- Bureaucracy

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Developed, distributed and analyzed Interpersonal Relationships in Youth survey with St. Mary's County residents. It confirmed the rate of local incidents of dating violence mirrored national statistics.

### **Washington County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Improving internal organization
- Small business financial empowerment
- Health and wellness
- Outreach to surrounding communities

#### **Challenges:**

- Maintaining connections

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Pivoting to social media
- Improving website

### **Worcester County CFW:**

#### **Priorities:**

- Support women entrepreneurs in our county
- Make our presence stronger in the community
- Mentor more young ladies in the community

#### **Challenges:**

- Not being able to hold Women's Annual Luncheon
- Not being able to give scholarships to high school graduates and college students
- Not being able to be hands on in the community last year

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Starting a new initiative, Warriors for Domestic Violence: collected over 2,000 items to donate to Life Crisis Center



Evelyne S. Steward

## STATUS OF WOMEN IN MARYLAND (SWIM) COMMITTEE

**Chair:** *Marylou Yam, Ph.D.*

**Vice Chair:** *Evelyne Steward*

**Members:** *Tawanda Bailey, Deborah Cartee, Kristi Halford, Patricia McHugh Lambert, Beth Anne Langrell, Ishrat Memon, Carole Jaar Sepe, Tamara Wilson, Yun Jung Yang*



Marylou Yam

In 2016, the Maryland Commission for Women launched the first phase of its Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) initiative with its *Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour*, traveling more than 3,000 miles across the state over a two-year period to conduct 19 public forums. Maryland women talked to us about the challenges they face in their everyday lives. In addition, a survey that was available in four languages gathered further information from women who may not have been able to attend these in-person forums. **In Their Own Words: The Voices of Maryland Women**, published in August 2018, identified the top five issues presented by the women who participated in the Listening Tour and survey: domestic violence and sexual assault, paid time off for parental and medical leave, drug abuse and addiction, women in leadership positions, and affordable, quality childcare.



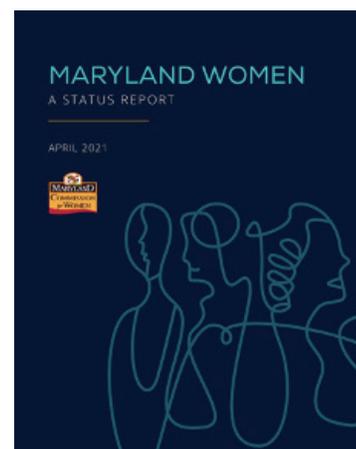
To further illuminate the areas of concern, the Commission undertook Phase II of the Status of Women (SWIM) initiative: extracting and compiling information about women from statistics published by a range of federal and state agencies as well as private research and policy firms. Using existing data with a focus on gender allowed the Commission to gather information efficiently and cost-effectively on topics of importance to women in Maryland. The data is presented in six sections:

- Demographics and Diversity
- Work and the Economy
- Education and Educators
- Health and Wellbeing
- Safety and Justice
- Leadership and Political Participation

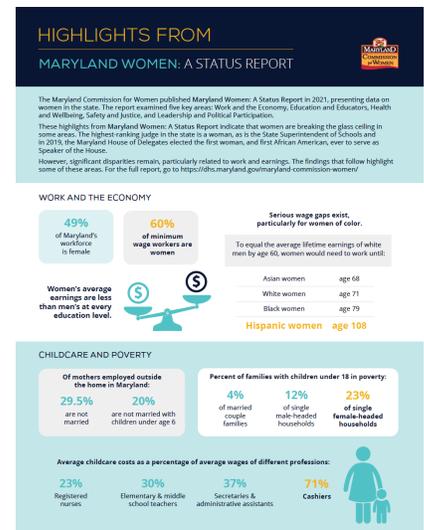
Phase II of the Commission’s Status of Women in Maryland research project is complete with the publication of the 44-page **Maryland Women: A Status Report**, released on Thursday, June 10, when it was presented to the Roundtable Meeting of Commissions for Women in the state, and posted on the MCW website.

Highlights from the report note that, although several “glass ceilings” for women have been shattered in our state, many disparities remain, including:

- A gender-based wage gap persists and is especially significant for women of color.



- Sixty percent (60%) of all minimum wage earners in Maryland are female.
- Almost 1/3 of all employed women in Maryland work in health care or education.
- Childcare costs represent a huge, and for many, unsustainable percent of working mother's incomes.
- More than half of all community college presidents but only 27% of the presidents of four-year colleges and universities in the state are women.
- In both public and private colleges and universities, as the faculty rank increases, the percentage of women decreases.
- Women make up more than half the faculty of community colleges, and men are more than half the faculty at four-year colleges and universities.
- Among those incarcerated in the state's prisons, men far outnumber women.
- In 2019, there were 36,499 reported cases of domestic violence in the state and 19 women were killed in domestic violence incidents that year.
- More women than men have been diagnosed with COVID, more men have died of the disease.
- There is a significant disparity in infant mortality in the state, with infants born to African American mothers dying at a rate of 10.4 per 1000 births in the state, while for both white and Hispanic newborns, the rate is less than 4 per 1000 births.
- Only three of Maryland's 24 major jurisdictions are headed by women.
- Only 76 of the 188 seats in the Maryland General Assembly are filled by women.
- There are no women among the 10 legislators representing Maryland in the U.S. Congress and Senate.



Even as this research was being conducted, beginning in March 2020 and continuing well into 2021, the state, the nation and the world experienced unprecedented challenges as schools, businesses and organizations were forced, on very short notice, to close their doors to in-person contact. Many people were forced suddenly to work from home. Essential workers found themselves in jobs where they could not work from home even as schools reverted to on-line education and childcare centers closed. Many jobs were lost, and others changed dramatically.

Much has been written about the pandemic's unbalanced impact on women, especially working women with dependent children. The MCW launched Phase III of the SWIM research project in June 2021. This phase will examine how Maryland women have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past 14 months and seeks to understand the challenges women face as society recovers.

This third and final phase of the SWIM research project will be carried out in three steps:

- An environment scan to determine what is already known about these issues, completed in June 2020
- An online survey to be conducted in five languages, August – September 2021
- A series of virtual focus groups to be conducted in the early Fall of 2021 with the goal of publication of a final report of this project early in 2022





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Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Lourdes R. Padilla, Secretary

