



Welcome **NEW COMMISSIONERS**



We are thrilled to welcome the newest Commissioners to the Maryland Commission for Women! These accomplished individuals bring diverse perspectives, exceptional expertise, and a shared commitment to advancing the Commission's mission of promoting the social, political, and economic equality of women in Maryland.

Tazeen Ahmad, M.A. - Montgomery County

Sharon Blugis, M.S. - Anne Arundel County

Judy A. Carbone, M.Ed. - Garrett County

Tekisha Dwan Everette, Ph.D., MPA, MPH, CPH - Prince George's County

Jodi Kelber, Ph.D. - Baltimore County

Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, Ph.D. - Howard County

Stacey A. Rebbert, M.A. - Harford County

Learn more about the impressive backgrounds and dedication of all 23 of our Commissioners by exploring their biographies [here](#). Together, we look forward to continuing the important work of empowering women and girls across the state.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Free artist reception- Maryland Women's Heritage Center - Thursday, January 16 at 6:00 p.m. in Baltimore. Celebrating the artist Rowan Bathurst's Vessel of Belonging exhibition.

Friday Night with the Women's Law Center - Friday, January 17 at 7:00 p.m. in Baltimore. Enjoy a night out with delicious food and fund legal aid for survivors. No tickets needed - meet the WLC upstairs and a portion of all food and drink will be donated.



Montgomery County Commission for Women 2025 Women's Legislative Briefing - Saturday, January 25 at 11:30 a.m. in Rockville.

This year's theme is Empow(her): Breaking Barriers to Success. Celebrate the 45th anniversary of this annual event which unites advocates, policymakers, and emerging leaders to address issues affecting women and girls and preview the 2025 legislative session. Early bird tickets are \$45 through January 22. Students and Emerging Leaders are \$10.

Moms Demand Action Maryland Chapter Advocacy Day - Thursday, January 30 at 9:00 a.m. in Annapolis. Rally with fellow advocates and meet with legislators to promote common sense gun laws.



MNADV's 37th Annual Memorial Service - Tuesday, February 11 at 4:00 p.m. online. Join survivors and advocates as they come together to honor the lives lost to domestic violence in Maryland in the past year.

Are you hosting a public event addressing women's rights in Maryland? We'd love to hear about it! Please use this form to send us details or email us at C4.Women@maryland.gov.



2025 Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards Applications are Open!

Applications are due by Noon on Wednesday, February 12.

We are looking for extraordinary young leaders who work on issues important to women and girls. The Commission for Women will be recognizing and celebrating outstanding young people ages 11-20 who have demonstrated exceptional leadership in their work to advance the rights of women and girls in Maryland.

If you know or work with an emerging leader of a women's/girls' rights club, a community advocate for gender equity, reproductive health or violence prevention, or a fierce campaigner for electing women to public office, please share our online application with them.

Four awardees will be selected as 2025 Maryland Young Women Leaders and will receive a citation from Governor Moore and a \$2,000 award to advance their work or education sponsored by the Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women. For more information and to apply, [go to this application page](#). Questions? Please email C4.Women@maryland.gov

2025 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame Update

The Commission for Women is rebuilding our nomination and selection process for the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. Public nominations will be warmly welcomed in October 2025 for the 2026 Hall of Fame.

In the meantime, please honor a special Maryland woman in your life by submitting her story to our [Maryland Women Story Bank](#) linked here.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY



2025 Policy Agenda

After receiving input from women and organizations from across the state, the Maryland Commission for Women has identified the following issue-areas for our focus in 2025:

Women in the Workforce

Pay Equity & Gender Based Occupational Segregation
Justice Impacted Women and Re-Entry
Workplace Discrimination
Women in Elected Office

The Care Economy

Caregiving
Paid Family and Medical Leave
Child Care

Women's Health

Health Equity
Mental Health
Reproductive Health
Intimate Partner Violence
Sexual Violence

We will be partnering with a wide range of community groups, state agencies, and local Commissions for Women to advance policy initiatives in these areas. Thank you for your partnership and advocacy!



2025 Legislative Session

The Maryland Commission for Women advocates in support of legislation that advances women's rights and creates opportunity for women's economic empowerment. Our final legislative agenda will be available in February. If you or your organization are working on legislation that fits within our policy agenda, and you would like the Commission to consider supporting your work, please email our Executive Director at Ariana.Kelly@maryland.gov

In addition to supporting select legislation, we will be tracking the progress of all legislation related to women's rights, and reporting on this at the end of Maryland's legislative session.

The Maryland Commission for Women also works in coalition with established women's rights organizations working on policy in Maryland, including the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNDV), the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), and the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW).

[MCASA has released their 2025 legislative agenda](#). Key priorities include ensuring funding for rape crisis centers, expanding legal protections, and promoting education to prevent sexual violence.

MLAW has released their [2025 agenda](#), and will present it at an [online event on Wednesday, February 5 at 5:00 p.m.](#) The agenda includes supporting the Abortion Care Access Fund Act of 2025 and the Universal Newborn Nurse Visiting Services bill.

New Report Highlights Financial Challenges Facing Older Women

The U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau has released a groundbreaking report, "Older Women's Wealth: The Impact of Work, Family, and Policy in the United States". This comprehensive study sheds light on the economic disparities older women face due to lifelong caregiving responsibilities, workforce interruptions, and systemic inequalities. It highlights critical policy recommendations to address retirement security, caregiving support, and workplace equity. [To learn more, access the full report here.](#)

MARYLAND WOMEN



Women in Tribal Leadership

Meet the first female chief of a Maryland tribe, whose inspiring leadership is driving efforts to preserve her community's heritage while advocating for identity and equality. [Read about her groundbreaking journey and mission here.](#)



Women in the Military

A new movie celebrates a poignant tribute to the women of the historic 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, an all-Black, all-female unit from World War II, known as the "Six Triple Eight." These remarkable women, including several with ties to Maryland, played a pivotal role in clearing an overwhelming backlog of wartime mail, ensuring

communication between soldiers and their loved ones. The piece highlights the efforts of Maryland families in honoring these trailblazers, whose resilience and contributions advanced both the war effort and the fight for racial and gender equality. Read more at [Maryland Matters](#).

Pete Hegseth, President-elect Donald Trump's appointee to head the Pentagon, has questioned the value of women in combat, and criticized feminism and diversity. Read more about the perspectives of Maryland women veterans on this appointment in this recent [Maryland Matters](#) article. This conversation is unfolding as groundbreaking legislation addressing military mothers' mental health was included in the final National Defense Bill. Learn more about this important step forward in supporting military families in [this Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance](#) article.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT



Anne Arundel Commission for Women Celebrates 50 Years of Service

The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women (AACCW) celebrates 50 years of service to Anne Arundel County in 2025. Initially established in 1975 to serve as a resource and advocacy group for women of the County and to advise the County Executive on issues of significance to women.

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After conducting meetings and business virtually the previous three years, the Commission prioritized increasing awareness and engagement with the community by partnering with key County Offices and non-profits. Through partnership with Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation Career Coaches, AACCW expanded the reach of its "Journey to Success" Career Panels to reach over 500 middle school students in the County. The Career Panels bring together successful women from the community with middle and high school girls to provide career exploration and life lessons through personal stories of challenges and successes. To inform County residents during the election year, AACCW hosted "Women Who Vote" Forum featuring a panel of local candidates discussing topics of relevance to women as well as registered new voters.

The Commissioners were recognized at County Executive Civic Engagement Awards in December. Chair, Carolyn Keaton Culp, received the County Executive's Outstanding Steward Award which recognizes a Board/Commission Chair who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and consistent stewardship of public resources while advocating for community needs. Two other Commissioners, Amanda Horne and Samantha Nagy were nominated for Outstanding Volunteer Award which recognizes individuals who strengthened the board/commission's ability to fulfill its mission or planned an initiative that resulted in a tangible positive impact on County residents.

In July 2024, Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman signed a new Executive Order re-affirming the County's commitment to this significant mission and increasing the commission to 19 members. In addition to formulating a budget proposal, the AACCW will publish the 2025 Strategic Action Plan which builds upon previous commission initiatives which made a successful impact on the community last year.

IN THE NEWS



The all male Baltimore County Council selected longtime Senator Kathy Klausmier to serve as Baltimore County's first woman County Executive. This leaves Montgomery County as Maryland's only jurisdiction with a County Executive to never have a woman in the role.

DC increased wages for childcare workers through a tax on high-earners back in 2022. Read about the impact today in this [NPR article](#)



CBS is launching a new multigenerational drama "*Behind the Gates*" about an affluent Black family in Prince George's County, centered on a retired US Senator— highlighting Maryland as home to one of the nation's wealthiest majority Black communities. Learn about CBS's new series [here](#).

Will the legislature exonerate Marylanders convicted of "witchcraft" in the 17th century? [Learn more here](#).

Montgomery County legislators and abortion access advocates are preparing for policy shifts under a Trump presidency. Learn about their efforts in this [MoCo360 article](#) where the Commission's Executive Director Ariana Kelly is quoted.

In Washington State, pharmacists are now prescribing abortion medication. Other progressive states may follow.

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