



www.marylandwomen.org

2015 Maryland Commissions for Women Roundtable Meeting

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



Attending:

Jessica O’Kane
Bella Owens
Gloria Della
Maxine Somerville
Sandra Swinson
Evelyn Stephenson
Judy Carbone
Debra Bright-Harris
Daphnee Cherubin
Nicole Drew
Heather Reichardt
Jodi Finkelstein
Peggy Maclin
Amber Dieso
Mi Young Pak
Monique Davis
Shirley Schreffler
Lee Bachu
Diane Williams
Wandra Ashley-Williams
Marianne Brackney
Pat Cornish
Gloria Chang
Lorne Forde
Doris Ligon
Marion Manski
Carol Jaar Sepe
Corinna Shen
Judith Vaughan-Prather

Commission for Women:

Anne Arundel County
Baltimore County
Calvert County
Charles County
Charles County
Frederick
Garrett County
Montgomery County
Montgomery County
Montgomery County
Montgomery County
Montgomery County
Prince George’s County
Prince George’s County
Prince George’s County
Prince George’s County
Prince George’s County
Maryland
Maryland
Maryland
Maryland
Maryland
Maryland and Montgomery County
Maryland
Maryland
Maryland
Maryland
Maryland

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 will work 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 16 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 live 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

Garrett County Commission for Women

- 15 Commissioners, even though this is the smallest county 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, including 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 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 – induction and awards ceremony will be March 17, 2016. Call for nominations was issued November 12. Due date for nominations is December 15. Visit www.marylandwomen.org for more information and to access the nomination packets for both programs.
- 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.



