

M A R Y L A N D



COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

2003 Annual Report

Maryland Commission for Women
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Introduction

The 2002 fiscal year was one of great challenge and change for the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW). While there were many obstacles in our path, the MCW was able to rely on the strength of women throughout the state to create an environment that will allow us an even greater ability to serve our mission. Building on a strong history of Maryland women committed to supporting one another, we have reinforced our foundation and are now poised to move forward in many exciting ways.

During the year, the state's worsening fiscal situation impacted our staff. Due to resignations and the state's hiring freeze, the MCW lost two staff positions and was without an executive director for a majority of the year. Throughout this period, it became clear to the Commissioners that the MCW needed to return to its original standing within the Department of Human Resources (DHR). Under an agreement signed by Governor Glendening, the Executive Director of the MCW once again reports directly to the Secretary of DHR. This new organizational structure allows the MCW greater autonomy in conducting its work to advise the Governor and Legislature on issues of importance to the women of Maryland.

In spite of our staffing shortfalls, the MCW was able to accomplish a great deal. We hosted our first-ever, statewide conference focusing on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls. Attended by more than 250 women, this conference was hugely successful and brought forward a myriad of ideas to help the women of our state. Our work on legislative issues helped to pass five key pieces of legislation. Four outstanding women were inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. We continued building bridges to the 18 local women's commissions and more than 8,000 MCW publications providing vital information to women were distributed. The MCW was also the primary supporter of the Governor's Council on the Status of Girls and the Coalition to Appoint Women to Boards and Commissions.

The year has been challenging for all of us involved with the MCW. But with challenge comes opportunity. We are proud of the way this Commission had handled the challenges and the opportunities we have created. It is a pleasure to work with so many

talented women towards the betterment of all the women of Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful and valuable organization.

Kathleen E. Schafer
Chair

Sandra Long.
Vice Chair

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Throughout the year, MCW continued its advocacy on behalf of women and girls in Maryland. As in previous years, MCW coordinated the Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women (LAMW). The issue selection process for LAMW legislative priorities for 2002 began at a Forum in July 2001. The purpose of this forum was to have dialogue with advocates/lobbyists, legislative leaders of state-wide organizations, local commissions for women, state legislators, state agency legislative officers and interested citizens to determine which issues could be addressed by legislation in the 2002 session. From this information, the LAMW Steering Committee built its agenda for the Fall Conference.

The issues presented at the Forum were brought to the Fall Conference in September for discussion and a vote to determine the top six priority issues for the 2002 Agenda. Following the Conference, lead groups developed the initiatives and supporters were sought. A briefing and legislative reception was held at the beginning of the session in January to present the agenda to supporters and legislators.

MCW staff monitored the progress of the various bills included on the agenda. The LAMW Steering Committee met weekly during the legislative session to assess the status of current legislation. Through personal visits with legislators, calls, letters, e-mail, testimony (when requested by a lead group), participation in LAMW-sponsored events and providing supporters when needed in the hallways and committee rooms, many issues passed successfully.

Bills addressing the following issues were enacted:

- the ability to obtain civil interim peace orders in domestic abuse cases
- the rights of secondary school students aged 18 and older to child support
- funding mechanisms for public school kindergarten classes
- the establishment of a Commission to study campaign finance law
- access to state services for citizens with “limited English proficiency”

Bills addressing the following issues were not enacted:

- penalties for failing to report child abuse
- the rights of children and their kinship care providers
- safety requirements for school transport vehicles
- sexual abuse of minors by persons in a position of authority
- polygraph examinations for victims of sexual offenses
- unemployment benefits for workers who give birth or adopt a child
- the possession of firearms by those accused of domestic violence offenses
- access to community college resident enrollment for immigrants
- paid and unpaid family and medical leave for specified employees
- child abuse case management and reporting

Those bills that were not enacted are automatically included in the 2003 Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women.

In addition to coordinating the LAMW, the Commission also participated in a number of advocacy events and meetings, including the Women Legislators' Annual Advocate's Day in January and the Legislative Action Team meetings for the Attorney General's & Lt. Governor's Family Violence Council. Commissioners met throughout the legislative session with their Delegates and Senators, while MCW staff worked closely with the Women Legislators of Maryland to advance a number of bills.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

MCW continued its partnerships with the 18 County Commissions for Women. Commissioners attended various local commission meetings to gather information about women's issues at the community level. To strengthen its relationship with local commissions, MCW developed and disseminated a needs-assessment survey to all of the local Commissions in the Spring of 2002. The results were compiled in the next fiscal year.

In addition to its work with local commissions, MCW collaborated with a number of other agencies and organizations on a wide variety of projects:

National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) -- Seven Commissioners and two MCW staff represented the Commission at the 32nd Annual NACW National Convention & First Issues Institute, "A Women's Summit for the 21st Century—To Honor, To Educate, To Implement, To Achieve," held in Washington, D.C. MCW staff served on the planning committee for this successful event. MCW staff also participated in the NACW Legislative Briefing, which was held at the U.S. Capitol.

Maryland Work-Life Alliance Advisory Council – MCW staff served on this Council, which is charged with developing, supporting, and enhancing valuable work-life relationships across the state of Maryland. The council supported the State of Maryland's objective in becoming a state of choice for quality of life and work.

Governor's Council on Women's Health Promotion – MCW staff served on this Council, which is charged with identifying and cataloguing the health needs and issues facing women at each stage of their life span.

Maryland Commission on Aging – MCW Commissioners and staff served on this Commission, attending its quarterly meetings.

MCW also participated in numerous events throughout the year, hosting information booths and disseminating materials:

- Native American Month Luncheon
- Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence Annual Meeting

- Honoring the Past, Challenging the Present, Changing the Future (a conference on domestic violence and sexual assault)
- Women's Action Coalition of Prince George's County
- Empowering Women Conference
- Speaking Of Women's Health Conference
- Institute for Women's Policy Research Annual Meeting
- Winning Choices Conference
- Human Rights Day

EDUCATION

The Economic Empowerment Conference was one of the highlights of the MCW's work in 2001. Held Friday, November 16th on the campus of the University of Maryland-College Park, the conference brought together more than 250 women from throughout Maryland to discuss a variety of economic issues facing the women of our state. The focus of the conference centered on efforts to assist women and girls in overcoming the significant barriers facing them in their on-going quest for financial opportunities and economic self-sufficiency.

The conference featured four key areas affecting the economic empowerment of women: health; education; economic independence; and politics, policy and advocacy. Each of these tracks included separate sessions on how these issues relate to girls. More than 100 women leaders spoke on various panels, and in small and large group sessions on these vital issues. Included in the speakers were four prominent women leaders in our state.

First Lady Frances Hughes Glendening and Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend served as honorary co-chairs of the conference and addressed the conference with inspiring comments before the two keynote speakers. During the morning plenary session, the Founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund, Marion Wright Edelman, gave a moving talk about the need to ensure that women have access to economic opportunities for themselves and as the main caregivers of the nation's children. During lunch, Judith McHale, the President and Chief Operating Officer of Discovery Communications, Inc., spoke eloquently about the need to encourage women to pursue business careers not only to increase the number of women in its ranks, but also to ensure that businesses develop family-friendly policies.

Financially the conference was also a success. Twenty-three organizations provided sponsorships from \$500 to \$10,000. In addition, 21 organizations exhibited their goods and services to the conference attendees.

Overall, the MCW was extremely pleased with its first statewide conference on economic issues. Participants' comments overwhelmingly supported a continuation of this effort on an annual or biennial basis. Our goal is to follow-up on many of the ideas and concepts

discussed at the conference so that the work becomes the basis of future MCW pursuits.

As in previous years, MCW worked with the State Department of Education to observe Women's History Month in March. In 2002, members of the Maryland Women's History Project convened to develop a packet of curriculum materials for use in Maryland schools. Entitled "Choice and Challenges: Maryland Girls and Young Women Shaping the Future," the packet included profiles of girls and young women in Maryland who have been active in their communities and schools. Approximately 3,000 packets were distributed throughout the state. To promote the packet, MCW co-hosted a special kick-off event for Women's History Month at the Department of Education in Baltimore.

In 2002, MCW continued to administer the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was first established through the efforts of the Maryland Commission for Women and the Women Legislators of Maryland in 1985. Its purpose is to honor Maryland women, who have made unique and lasting contributions to the economic, political, cultural and social life of the State, and to provide role models of achievement for tomorrow's female leaders.

Up to five historical and contemporary women are inducted each year. They represent women who have shaped Maryland, the United States and the world. Their induction into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame is sponsored by MCW and enhances the visibility of their contributions to their communities and to the status of women.

The Maryland Commission for Women sent out hundreds of invitations to organizations and individuals seeking nominations in the Fall of 2001. MCW convened an independent selection committee representing a cross section of citizens of the State, which reviewed the nominations and made the final selections. In March 2002, these individuals were inducted into the Hall of Fame at a special ceremony held in the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis. The Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend hosted the event and introduced the Hall of Fame inductees. This event was co-sponsored by the Friends of MCW. A news release announcing the Hall of Fame selections for 2002 was disseminated to major media organizations throughout the state. The Maryland Women's Hall of Fame is located in the Maryland Law Library in Annapolis, where a plaque and information about the honorees can be found. Efforts continue to secure a larger space where a permanent exhibition for the Hall of Fame can be housed.

The 2002 Class of Inductees included:

The Honorable Mable Houze Hubbard: was a teacher, supervisor, administrator, and the first African-American female appointed to any judicial bench in Maryland. She earned a reputation for both fairness and empathy.

Florence Peterson Kendall, PT: is a physical therapist who helped to draft the law which established the practice of physical therapy in Maryland. She was the Secretary to

the Maryland State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners. She is a nationally acclaimed lecturer on physical therapy, as well as an author, filmmaker and researcher.

Mary Young Pickersgill: was a successful Baltimore businesswoman and humanitarian. Her greatest contribution to Maryland and the nation was the flag she made that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the national anthem. She actively addressed social issues and was President of the Impartial Female Humane Society; today it is known as the Pickersgill Retirement Community.

Lorraine Sheehan: is a former Secretary of State, and former member of the Maryland General Assembly. She is Maryland's leading advocate for individuals with disabilities, and is Vice President of The Arc of the United States, Commissioner to the Anne Arundel County Housing Authority and Public Policy Director for the Maryland Disability Law Center.

Information about all of the Hall of Fame inductees is available through the MCW website, with a link to the Maryland State Archives' website.

In conjunction with the Maryland Women's History Project, MCW assisted Carolyn B. Stegman, the author of a major new book on Maryland Women of Achievement, by providing biographical data and archival information on many of the Hall of Fame inductees. In addition, MCW served on the planning committee for the establishment of a Maryland Women's Heritage Trail.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission's public communications program continued to expand in 2002. The major components of this program include the website, publications and telephone information hotline. More than 100,000 people visited the MCW website in 2002, where they were able to obtain up-to-the-minute information on legislation, events, programs and services for women and girls. This represented a 27 percent increase in website hits over 2001. More than 5,000 people requested copies of MCW publications and resource materials, while an additional 3,000 copies were distributed at conferences, exhibitions and workshops. In keeping with its goal of serving all Maryland women and girls, three MCW publications were translated into Spanish in 2002: *Legal Rights in Marriage and Divorce*; *Sex Discrimination in Employment*, and *Getting Your Seat at the Table*. The MCW telephone hotline logged more than 2,700 requests for information and/or referrals. To fill these requests, MCW relied on its database of more than 1,800 programs and services for women and girls throughout the state, which is updated regularly to ensure its accuracy.

The Commission maintained its outreach efforts to the news media in Maryland throughout the year. MCW disseminated news releases promoting Advocacy Day in January 2002, and also in March for the Women's Hall of Fame and the Women of

Tomorrow Awards program. MCW staff participated in the WNAV Talk Show with Julia Hockenberry to discuss the Legislative Agenda Initiatives for LAMW in February 2002.

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF GIRLS

MCW continued to provide oversight and support for the work of the Council, which was established in 2001. MCW assisted the Council with sponsorship of the Women of Tomorrow Awards program and also worked closely with the Council to incorporate policy issues affecting girls into the LAMW process. For a full report on the Council's activities in 2002, a separate Annual Report is available from MCW upon request.

FUTURE PLANS

The Commissioners met early in 2002 to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. MCW's 2002-2004 Strategic Plan (Appendix A) outlines an ambitious set of goals and objectives for the future, including research projects relating to the 2000 Census, the status of women's health, and women's access to public transportation services. The plan also calls on MCW to work with other agencies and organizations to help implement policy recommendations outlined in its report on *Women in Prison*. The Commission looks forward to reporting on the implementation of this strategic plan in its next annual report.

Maryland Commission for Women

July 2002- June 2003

Randa Fahmy Hudome, Chair, *Montgomery County*
Brenda Dandy, Vice-Chair, *Baltimore City*

Deborah Avens, *Prince George's County*
Naomi Benzil, *Carroll County*
Roseann Bridgman, *Worcester County*
Kim Bright, *Baltimore County*
Mary A. Burkholder, *Anne Arundel County*
Linda Busick, *Worcester County*
Ikeita Cantu-Hinojosa, *Montgomery County*
Juana Clark, *Howard County*
Ossie Clay, *Howard County*
Darcy Carroll, *Baltimore County*
Kathleen Frampton, *Howard County*
Carey Goryl, *Queen Anne County*
Luisa Heredia-Sauseda, *Montgomery County*
Barbara L. Heyman, *Montgomery County*
Patricia Kirby, *Baltimore County*
Cynthia Leppert, *Baltimore City*
Sandra Long, *Baltimore City*
Kristin Morton, *Allegany County*
Lucia Nazarian, *Montgomery County*
Dorothy Roller, *Harford County*
Kathleen Schafer, *Montgomery County*
Theodora (Teddi) Schulman, *Anne Arundel County*
Nancy Slepicka, Esq., *Prince George's County*
Sharon M. Wong, *Anne Arundel County*

Staff

Dory Stacks, *Executive Director*
Alyson Reed, *Executive Director (through March)*
Lori Askinazi, *Community Outreach Coordinator*
Alexis Turrentine, *Policy Analyst*
Stella Anderson, *Office Secretary*

APPENDIX A

Maryland Commission for Women Strategic Plan: 2002-2004**I. Goal:** Improve clearinghouse function to Maryland women**Objective 1: Build a statewide resource**

- A. Develop a comprehensive statewide database of women's organizations
Responsible Committee: Community Partnerships
- B. Make the database useable and accessible through the MCW website
Responsible Committee: Community Partnerships & Clearinghouse Coordinator
- C. Inform Maryland women about the resources available through the MCW and its database
Responsible Committee: Marketing & Communications
- D. Develop other ways for reaching women who cannot access the database through the web site
Responsible Committee: Marketing & Communications

Objective 2: White Paper on 2000 Census

- A. Research the 2000 census data as it relates to women in Maryland
Responsible Committee: Education
- B. Write report on 2000 census data and its policy implications for Maryland women
Responsible Committee: Education and Public Policy & Legislation
- C. Write section on census data as it relates to girls
Responsible Committee: Girls Council

Objective 3: Strengthen Relationship with County Women Commissions

- A. Develop a comprehensive directory of local Commissions for Women
Responsible Committee: Community Partnerships
- B. Survey local commissions to discern their needs from the MCW
Responsible Committee: Community Partnerships
- C. Develop a regular communications tool to local commissions

Responsible Committee: Community Partnerships and Marketing & Communications

- D. Host outreach events to local commissions as determined by the survey
Responsible Committee: Community Partnerships

II. Goal: Take Action on the Women in Prison Report

Objective 1: Determine key policy objectives

- A. Review report to determine key policy objectives of follow-up activity
Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation
- B. Work with government agencies and legislators to develop a policy agenda
Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation

Objective 2: Enact Strategic Plan

- A. Develop a strategic plan for achieving policy objectives
Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation
- B. Do outreach to targeted communities regarding our policy objectives
Responsible Committee: Marketing & Communications
- C. Through legislative process act on policy recommendations
Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation

III. Goal: Follow-up on the Health Forums

Objective 1: Determine key outcomes from the policy forums

- A. Review data from the health forums
Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation
- B. Determine what additional information is needed to issue a report
Responsible Committees: Public Policy & Legislation, Community Partnerships, Education

Objective 2: Write a Report on the Status of Women's Health in Maryland

- A. Conduct additional research as necessary
Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation, Community Partnerships, Education
- B. Write Report

Responsible Committee: Education

C. Distribute and publicize report to target audiences

Responsible Committee: Marketing & Communications

IV. Goal: Advise Government on Economic Empowerment Issues for Women

Objective 1: Follow-up on Transportation Issues (as they relate to economic empowerment)

A. Review data from the transportation research

Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation

B. Determine what additional information is needed to issue a report

Responsible Committees: Public Policy & Legislation, Community Partnerships, Education

Objective 2: Write a Report on the Status of Transportation

D. Conduct additional research as necessary

Responsible Committee: Public Policy & Legislation, Community Partnerships, Education

E. Write Report

Responsible Committee: Education

V. Goal: Excellence in On-going Committee Work

Committee: Legislation & Public Policy

A. Review and revise the LAMW process to become more pro-active and engaging

B. Take a more pro-active role in supporting women's issues during the 2003 Legislative session

C. Work with the Women's Legislative Caucus to increase the synergy on issues between our organizations

D. Increase the attendance and reach of the LAMW briefing

Committee: Education

- A. Review Women's Hall of Fame Event to become a showcase event for the MCW
- B. Work with Department of Education to improve Women's History Month
- C. Develop ways of continually educating target audiences about the issues facing women

Committee: Community Partnerships

- A. Identify counties that need new Women's Commissions and work toward having a Commission in every county
- B. Identify opportunities to partner with various communities to strengthen and support the work of the MCW

Committee: Marketing and Communications

- A. Identify the MCW's target audiences
- B. Develop a compelling message about the MCW's work for these audiences
- C. Develop tools to deliver this message
- D. Deliver the message

Committee: Girls Council

- A. Refer to Girls Council strategic plan

Committee: Coalition to Appoint Women to Boards and Commissions

- A. Target communities to do trainings
- B. Work with the Maryland Chamber and other groups to expand our reach

Committee: Friends of the MCW

- A. Work with each standing committee to access needs from Friends group