



Anne Arundel County Commission for Women Annual Report 2023

Submitted by Carolyn Keaton Culp, Chair
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Commissioners

Carolyn Keaton Culp, Chair (District 1)

Gina Worthey, Vice Chair (District 7)

Karen Francis, Secretary (District 7)

Aisha Hilliard (District 2)

Amanda Horne (District 3)

Amy Barley (District 1)

Brianna Sampson (District 4)

Christina L. Cornwell (District 2)

Benedicta Oyiana (District 4)

Feyella (Elle) Toney (District 6)

Karen Butler (District 4)

Meghan Honesto (District 4)

Monet N. Proctor (District 6)

Samantha Nagy (District 6)

Sari Wisch (District 4)

Stacie Spragins (District 7)

The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women was created 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. The Commissioners, comprised of women with different backgrounds and occupations, represent various areas of the County, and bring a diversity of viewpoints and experience to the service of women, children, and families in the County.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2023 was a year of transition and growth for the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women. Due to attrition, the Commission experienced a loss of over half its membership. Continued reduction in community engagement and a moratorium on new appointments hampered planning efforts. As a result, the Commission consolidated from the tradition Committee and Working Group structure to maximum impact of our efforts. Career Exploration for High School girls was identified as the single defining event. The Commission partnered with North County High School guidance counselors to put on a series of career panels to provide career advice and exposure to successful women in the County.

With a vigorous recruitment effort, the AACCW ended the year with a full membership representing all areas of our County. The Commission enters 2024 reinvigorated with a focus on increasing community awareness of the Commission as an asset and resource. Several exciting new initiatives are planned for 2024 and the Commission will publish a 2024 Strategic Action Plan outlining how it plans to accomplish its mission in the upcoming year.

OUR MISSION

The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women is a non-partisan advisory board that serves to provide leadership on important issues that affect the quality of life of Anne Arundel County women and families. This is accomplished through development and implementation of community outreach, educational programs, and advocacy, often through collaborative action with partner organizations in the public and private sectors.

OUR VISION

The AACCW continues to focus on a four-part vision:

- To serve as a highly visible, respected voice on issues of importance to women in Anne Arundel County.
- To expand possibilities for all women and girls and to advocate for empowerment and equality.
- To establish the Commission for Women as a leading organization on important local issues through collaborative partnerships.
- To serve as a liaison to the County Executive and County Council regarding women's issues.

While 2023 challenged our ability to fulfill our vision, the small team identified new and creative ways to collaborate with partners and help serve the women in our County.

MEMBERSHIP

The Commission operated with limited membership for the majority of 2023. In addition to the anticipated attrition due to the term completion, the Commission experienced resignations due to relocation out of Anne Arundel County and inability to fulfill commitment because of other priorities. In the fall, new leadership was provided with applicants received from the new County Boards and Commission application process. Interviews were conducted the Commission subsequently welcomed several new energetic and passionate women. The Commission membership was filled to 17 members with guidance from County to recommend either increasing or removing members to change the total membership from 18, an even number. In November, Commission voted to recommend County Executive increase membership to 19.

LEGISLATIVE

Partnership with Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is one the foundational initiatives for AACCW to increase awareness and advocacy for potential state level legislative initiatives of concern or impactful to women in the County. The County pays for AACCW Chair membership in MLAW and participation in the annual MLAW Conference. Each year, voting MLAW members identify a Legislative Agenda of bills for awareness and advocacy. In 2022, three Commissioners attended the MLAW Conference. AACCW advocated for the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women's 2023 slate of bills, of which 4 out of the 8 were passed. In anticipation of the 2024 Maryland General Assembly (MGA) session, four AACCW members attended the Conference in November 2023 with plans to support and advocate its 2024 Legislative Agenda.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The AACCW currently has accounts on the following platforms, each of which speaks to a different audience and requires a different approach.]

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Pinterest

Throughout 2023, AACCW maintained our social media presence. We focused on strategic partnerships to share content on our platforms.

PARTNERSHIPS

Members of the Commission reached out to other women leaders in the County to learn what their organizations were doing and create opportunities to collaborate. These organizations included:

- Anne Arundel County Human Relations Commission
- Anne Arundel County Workforce Development Corporation

EDUCATION/CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Commission piloted “Journey to Success” Career Panel at North County High School providing career mentorship to over 100 girls. The panel brought together professional women from different disciplines within the County for a series of 40-minute discussion and Q & A format to discuss higher education, vocational training, and available career opportunities. The theme of the panel emphasized that career paths are individual and not everyone’s path to success looks the same.