



Anne Arundel County Commission for Women 2024 Strategic Action Plan

Submitted by Carolyn Keaton Culp, Chair
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Commissioners

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Feyella (Elle) Toney (District 6)

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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.

On April 19, 2016, County Executive Steve Schuh signed Executive Order 17 to create the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women. The duties and responsibilities are:

- a. Advise the County Executive on issues of significance to women;
- b. Cooperate with the County Executive, governmental agencies, and private industry in programs beneficial to women;
- c. Provide direction in solving problems of particular concerns to women through community outreach and education;
- d. Increase community awareness of women's opportunities and problems;
- e. Act as a resource and advocacy group to promote equal rights for women; and
- f. Promote political, economic, and social equality for women.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite losing over half its membership in 2023, AACCW enters 2024 poised to re-engage with the Community and Council leadership to make Anne Arundel County the Best Place for all women. With a vigorous recruitment effort, the AACCW ended 2023 with a full membership representing all areas of our County. The Commission enters 2024 reinvigorated with a focus on providing data-informed trusted advice to County leadership and increasing community awareness of the Commission as an asset and resource.

In January 2024, AACCW held its Annual Retreat. The two-hour event served as a team building opportunity to develop a Strategic Action Plan outlining how it plans to accomplish its mission in the upcoming year. With a theme of "Your Passion, Your Purpose, Your Place", the commission stepped through a series of exercises to translate each member's desired goal in joining the organization into defined focus areas, objectives, and methods of execution. Due to lack of budget, the commission will seek to cultivate a deep knowledge of county services, resources, and events, rather than creating or developing ourselves.

To that end, the Commission will develop a "State of Women in Anne Arundel County" Report to provide the County Executive and leadership with a comprehensive view of women constituents and the opportunities and challenges they face. Data will be collected in alignment with areas identified in County Executive's 2023 State of Anne Arundel County address including:

- Demographics/Diversity
- Housing
- Education
- Workforce

- Childcare
- Health and Wellbeing
- Safety and Justice
- Leadership and Political Participation

2024 FOCUS AREAS

The Commission identified four focus areas for 2024:

Legislative: The Commission will continue its involvement in advocacy for policy and legislation which impacts the lives of women in the County. In addition, to participation with the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women's annual identification of bills and Legislative Days for advocacy at the state level, AACCW will expand to include involvement in County level initiatives.

The Commission intends to fulfill this objective through consistent presence at County Council meetings, writing position papers, issuing statements, and providing oral/written testimony on issues of concern to women. Additionally, the Commission will seek to establish open and consistent lines of communication with relevant legislative and other county organizations to foster cross-functional advising and information sharing.

Since 2024 is a Presidential Election year, the Commission will also develop, partner, and/or amplify community outreach and education related nonpartisan education about elections and issues facing county voters. Potential activities include legislative panel discussions, voter registration drives, and highlighting women in political leadership.

Women's Health: The Commission seeks to establish partnerships related to Health/Wellness to amplify and build on expertise to benefit women in the county through enhanced mental health, maternal health, and other related spheres.

Financial Literacy: The Commission intends to connect community to training opportunities and resources (and create opportunities/resources where appropriate) related to Financial Literacy and management.

Domestic Violence/ Combating Trafficking in Persons: The Commission will continue its rich tradition as a leader within the community of ensure Anne Arundel County is a safe place for all. The Commission will seek to connect community to training opportunities and resources related to domestic violence prevention and intervention (ie. shelters and counseling services).

Through the efforts of a previous Commissioner, AACCW was at the forefront of identifying and developing resources within the County and State to end slavery, bring freedom and restore dignity to human trafficking survivors. The Commission will stay engaged with faith community, local organizations, non-profits, and others who share this mission.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

The Commission will continue and, in some cases, build upon previous commission initiatives which have made a successful impact on the community.

Career Development/Exploration: The Commission will expand upon success of “Journey to Success” Career Panels. The Commission is seeking to partner with Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation to expand pilot County wide. The Commission will also seek to establish relationships to benefit women in the county through enhanced reentry, job training, and leadership development opportunities.

50th Anniversary Celebration: The Commission was originally established in 1975. The world for women looked very different then. The Commission will plan a 50th Anniversary in 2025 to commemorate the efforts of the Commission toward the advancement of political, economic, and social equality for women in Anne Arundel County. The celebration will incorporate various activities to acknowledge previous Commissioners culminating with a celebration and/or awards ceremony on day of original inception, on International Women’s Day, Saturday, March 8, 2025 or Women’s Equality Day, Monday, August 26, 2025.