

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY  
COMMISSION FOR  
WOMEN



November 1, 2023  
November 30, 2024

 [aaccwomen@aacounty.org](mailto:aaccwomen@aacounty.org)

## *In Dedication*



***Dr. Benedicta Oyiana***  
***1983 – 2024***

As we celebrate the accomplishments of 2024, the Commission also mourned the loss of our dear member, Dr. Benedicta Oyiana. The 2024 Anne Arundel Commission for Women Annual Report is dedicated to Commissioner Benedicta, who passed away in September 2024. Benedicta was appointed to the Commission in October of the previous year. Her brief time on the Commission left a lasting impact on her fellow commissioners. With a bright smile and positive attitude, she brought great energy and thoughtful, practical proposals to accomplish the Commission's mission. She served on the Legislative Committee and faithfully attended the committee's meetings even during her illness.

Her passion, strength and determination serve as an inspiration for us to continue the important work of the Commission on efforts she held dear including legislation, policy, capability building and fostering gender mainstreaming.

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## Anne Arundel County Commission for Women Executive Committee



Carolyn Keaton Culp  
Chair  
District 1



Gina Worthey  
Vice Chair  
District 7



Samantha Nagy  
Secretary  
District 6

The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women was first 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. Recently signed by County Executive Stuart Pittman, Executive Order Number 64 expanded the Commission to a 19-member advisory board with the following duties:

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





## 2024 Commissioners



**Amy Barley**  
District 1  
*Retired December 2024*



**Karen Butler**  
District 4



**Christina Cornwell**  
District 2  
*Retired October 2024*



**Karen Francis**  
District 7  
*Retired June 2024*



**Aisha Hillard**  
District 1



**Amanda Horne**  
District 3



**Meghan Honesto**  
District 4



**Benedicta Oyiana**  
District 4  
*September 2024*



**Monet N. Proctor**  
District 6



**Briana Sampson**  
District 4



**Stacie Spragins**  
District 7



**Sari Wisch**  
District 4

# Message from Commission Chair

## Carolyn Keaton Culp



It has been an extraordinary privilege to chair the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women (AACCW). When appointed to the position in August 2023, the Commission was undergoing unprecedented change. With departure of previous Chair and Vice Chair and depleted membership, the Commission had failed to appoint an Executive Committee during the previous term. I stepped into role with a few remaining dedicated Commissioners and quickly set about rebuilding a viable Commission. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Commission had been meeting and conducting business virtually for the past three years. The December Christmas Party, the first in person gathering of the Commission since 2020, welcomed nine new Commissioners and allowed existing Commissioners to finally meet face-to-face.

With newly elected Vice Chair, Gina Worthey and Secretary, Karen Francis rounding out the Executive Committee, the Commission entered 2024 reinvigorated with a focus on increasing community awareness of and engagement with the Commission as an asset and resource for the County. The Commission held a Strategic Planning Session in January 2024 to outline how the Commission would accomplish its mission for the year. The Commission identified four focus areas for 2024: Legislative, Women's Health, Financial Literacy, and Domestic Violence/Combating Trafficking in Persons. The plan was codified in the Commission's first ever Strategic Action Plan and published on the Commission website as well as briefed to County Executive Stuart Pittman at the March Commission meeting.

This has been a year of accomplishments. The Commission continued and, in some cases, built upon previous commission initiatives which made a successful impact on the community. Through partnership with Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation Career Coaches, AACCW was able to expand the reach of its "Journey to Success" Career Panels to provide multiple middle schools throughout the County opportunities to explore career opportunities and learn life lessons through personal stories of challenges and successes. 2024 was an election year and the Commission developed new opportunities to ensure County residents were registered and informed on local candidates. The September Women Who Vote Forum hosted candidate panelists discussing topics of relevance to women and registered new voters. The Commission also tackled updating antiquated Bylaws and established a Planning Committee to plan a 50th Anniversary celebration for the Commission's establishment in 1975.

The Commission bid farewell to four members this past year and eagerly awaits the appointments of newly recommended Commissioners.

I am extremely proud of the work we have accomplished this year on behalf of women and girls and look forward as we ensure Anne Arundel County is the "Best Place for All".

# Legislative Committee

Chair: Stacie Spragins & Samantha Nagy

Article VI, Section 1 of the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women Bylaws establishes the Legislative Committee, tasked with monitoring and reporting on actions by state and local governmental entities. This includes, but is not limited to, the Maryland General Assembly and the Anne Arundel County Council. The committee is also responsible for developing and reviewing legislative policies and procedures.

In November 2023, four Commissioners attended the 2024 Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) Conference. Participation in MLAW serves as a key avenue for AACCW to increase awareness and advocacy for state-level legislative initiatives that impact women in the county. The County funds the AACCW Chair's MLAW membership and participation in the annual MLAW Conference. Additionally, several Commissioners hold individual memberships in MLAW, granting them voting rights to help shape the organization's Legislative Agenda and advocacy efforts.

For the 2024 legislative session, the Legislative Committee identified and supported the following bill from the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) for AACCW advocacy:

- **HB0933 / SB679 – Nursing Homes: Direct Care Wages and Benefits and Cost Reports (Nursing Home Care Crisis Transparency Act).**

Looking ahead to the 2025 Maryland General Assembly (MGA) session, four AACCW members attended the MLAW Conference in November 2024 to prepare for the upcoming legislative agenda. During the conference, Commissioners engaged with elected officials and women's organizations from across the state, including **Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller** and Maryland Commission for Women Executive Director Ariana Kelly.

## Women Who Vote Event

Beyond legislative advocacy, the AACCW Legislative Committee, in partnership with the Women's Health Committee, organized the Women Who Vote event on Saturday, September 16, 2024. This event provided a platform for school board and judicial candidates from across the county to share their positions and answer questions from the audience.

Timed ahead of National Voter Registration Day on September 17, the event also served as an opportunity to encourage civic engagement by providing voter registration services in preparation for the upcoming election.





# Women's Health Committee

Chair: Amanda Horne

In March, the Women's Health Committee launched a *Women's History Month Trailblazer Series* on social media to promote the contributions of women from Maryland and shared stories about legendary women, like Henrietta Lacks and Sandra Day O'Connor. We supported the National Women's History Alliance theme "Women who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" and highlighted the achievements of women from various backgrounds, ethnicities, and time periods.

In September, the committee organized and planned a "Women Who Vote" event in collaboration with the Legislative Committee. This hybrid event was hosted at the Riviera Beach Library in Pasadena, MD, ahead of Election Day. It was featured in *BizMonthly.com*, an online publication, found here: [bizmonthly.com/news/local/2024/09/anne-arundel-county-commission-for-women-to-host-voter-event-sept-14/](https://bizmonthly.com/news/local/2024/09/anne-arundel-county-commission-for-women-to-host-voter-event-sept-14/). This non-partisan event brought together Board of Education and Judicial candidates from all over the county. Commissioners were trained by the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections ahead of this inaugural event.

In October, Sari Wisch, Commissioner, worked with the Anne Arundel County Public Library Baby Pantry and delivered baby pantry items from the Odenton and Crofton Libraries to the baby pantry at the Discoveries Library at the mall. This effort helped the pantry prepare packages for women in the community who needed assistance in obtaining supplies.

To bring awareness to mental illness in the county, the committee planned a Mental Health First Aid Training in November with MarylandROPTA and University of Maryland Extension. This training is provided to identify signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use disorders, assess risk factors and warning signs of mental health and substance use disorders, and provide a 5-step action plan to help those in crisis or developing a mental health problem. Mental health training was scheduled but postponed due to low enrollment. Efforts are underway to identify a new date to ensure broader participation.

To close out the year, in December, AACCW combined our annual Christmas party fellowship with a service activity. This year the Commission partnered with Anne Arundel County Food Bank whose mission is to alleviate food insecurity in Anne Arundel County. The Commission collected almost 247 lbs of food as part of our holiday food drive. This represents a drop in the bucket of the over 4 millions pounds of food the Food Bank collects annually but we are grateful to partner with organizations such as this which amplify our contributions to serve Anne Arundel families.





# Financial Literacy Committee

Chair: Karen Francis

The Commission's *Journey to Success* Career Panels empower teens preparing to enter the workforce by providing career development and exploration opportunities. These panels bring together professional women from diverse industries across Anne Arundel County, offering school-aged girls a platform to engage in a question-and-answer session focused on higher education, vocational training, and career pathways. A key theme of the panel is that career journeys are unique, and success looks different for everyone.

This year, the Commission expanded the *Journey to Success* program through a partnership with the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC). AAWDC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, delivers innovative, high-quality workforce development services to Anne Arundel County businesses and residents. The organization also provides in-school Career Coaches at every middle and high school in the county. Through this partnership, the Commission collaborates with individual Career Coaches to support career fairs and career exploration opportunities at their respective schools.

As a result of this collaboration, the *Journey to Success* program reached over 500 students across three middle schools in Anne Arundel County this year. The panels offer students the opportunity to explore potential career paths and gain valuable life lessons through personal stories of challenges and successes shared by panelists.

Looking ahead, the Commission is excited to continue this partnership and expand its outreach to non-traditional and at-risk youth in the coming year.



## Domestic Violence/Combating Trafficking In Persons Committee

The Commission has a rich history as a leader within the community to ensure Anne Arundel County is a safe place for all. In April, the Commission partnered with former Commissioner, Althea Whieldon, who now serves as Director of Rapha (anti-human exploitation and trafficking) at City of Refuge Baltimore to participate in the Dash for Dignity. Dash for Dignity is a local charity 5K walk/1K run to promote awareness of domestic human trafficking.

The Commission also launched a social media campaign to raise awareness of human trafficking in coordination with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) #WearBlueDay. The Commission encouraged individuals to post a photo on social media wearing blue with hashtag #wearblueday and share why they were wearing blue. The commission whose monthly meeting fell on that day wore blue and posted a screenshot of the virtual meeting on social media accounts to show support.



# Commission in Action

AACCW actively engages with diverse audiences across multiple social media platforms, each requiring a tailored approach.

Throughout 2024, AACCW maintained a strong social media presence, leveraging strategic partnerships to expand its reach. During Women's History Month, the Commission launched a dedicated social media campaign celebrating women's achievements and amplifying its mission. The campaign highlighted a historically significant woman every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in March, increasing visibility and engagement. Additionally, AACCW was honored with an Executive Proclamation from the County Executive in recognition of its contributions during Women's History Month.

Beyond digital engagement, the Commission actively participated in community events to share its mission, foster connections, and collaborate with like-minded organizations.

Capping off a successful year, three Commissioners were recognized at the County Executive's Civic Engagement Awards in December, further showcasing AACCW's commitment to community impact.





# Partnerships

## **Office of Community Engagement and Constituent Services**

- Met with Director Vince Moulden and Assistant Director, Kristy Alvarez
- Community Engagement Officer Tiyana Parker assigned to support Commission

## **Office Anne Arundel County Human Relations Commission**

- Commissioners attended Second Annual Unity Day

## **Office of Equity and Human Rights**

- Lunch with Director, Asha Smith
- Advocacy for Civil Rights Bill
- Invited guest speaker at Women's

## **Anne Arundel County Workforce Development Corporation**

- Met with In-School Programs Director, Elizabeth Savage
- Invited to present at Career Coaches Planning Session

## **Maryland Commission for Women Roundtable**

- Attended which was held virtually Fall 2024

## **Office of the County Executive**

- Met with Director of County Events, Colleen Joseph
- 50th anniversary planning support

# Looking Forward

The Commission is planning an event to commemorate the first creation of the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women in 1975. The 50th Anniversary Planning Committee is chaired by Monet Proctor and Amanda Horne.

In 2025, the Commission will have dedicated 50 years 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.

