



A GUIDE TO WOMEN'S COMMISSIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL FOR WOMEN &
YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

2021

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide to establishing and maintaining county level women's commissions in North Carolina was created in 2021 as an update to a similar report produced by the NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement in 2017. The guide attempts to provide more in-depth and specific guidance to establishing and maintaining women's commissions in NC. The guide relies heavily on the guidance from the *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions* by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women in 2012.

ABOUT THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL FOR WOMEN & YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

The NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement is an agency within the North Carolina Department of Administration. The Council's mission is to advise the Governor, the North Carolina legislature, and state departments on the issues impacting women in North Carolina by:

- Raising awareness of the impact of violence against women and directing available resources to serve victims in communities across the State.
- Collecting and distributing information about the status of women in North Carolina.
- Acting as a resource for local and regional councils and commissions for women.
- Collaborating with other groups and individuals working on behalf of women.
- Assuring that necessary services, policies, and programs are provided to those in need and strengthening existing programs.
- Reviewing applications, awarding grants, and monitoring programs providing self-sufficiency development for women and families in transition.

SPECIAL THANKS

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INTRODUCTION

"I wonder whether, in our society, women have the chance to use their powers, their full powers, intellectual powers, emotional powers, and all the rest, along the lines of excellence."

~John F. Kennedy, 1963

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy formed the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. He charged Chairwoman Eleanor Roosevelt the duty of evaluating the economic and social status of women in the United States. Through extensive research, a publication was developed titled *The Presidential Report on American Women*. This publication raised awareness about the inequalities between women and men. Some of these inequalities included discrimination and sexism amongst political, legal and civil involvement.

Following the dissolution of the Presidential Commission in 1963, The National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) was created to take its place. Although the NACW serves as a resource for roughly 220 state, county and city commissions throughout the United States, President Kennedy posed many questions that need to be answered before forming a commission. "How do women use their different powers to achieve excellence in the community? Are their structures which prevent women from exercising this power?" Being able to answer these questions will help determine where the commission is needed most and what role it will have in the community.

~ Excerpt from Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women: Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions¹

Why Women's Commissions?

Women's commissions are powerful institutions for ensuring the voices and leadership of women are recognized. Women's commissions can provide women a platform to raise issues that disproportionately affect women and make lasting change to improve the status of women in their community. Of North Carolina's 100 counties, there are seven counties/municipalities that have women's commissions or advisory boards. Expanding the existence of women's commissions to every county in North Carolina could greatly impact the status of women in North Carolina. According to the *Status of Women in North Carolina: Political Participation* (2020) report, expanding women's commissions throughout the state helps magnify the voices of women in government, increases² the fundraising power of women, and increases women's access to decision-makers.

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts.

2. Shaw, Elyse and Adiam Tesfaselassie. (2020). *The Status of Women in North Carolina: Political Participation*. Institute for Women's Policy Research.

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) also identifies women's commissions as key resources to amplifying the power and voices of women in state and local government. The NCSL also identifies states with state-level women's commissions.¹

In 1974, there was a statewide push for local women's councils in North Carolina. The purpose of county-level women's commissions "is to serve as a county resource center for women...to conduct studies and gather data and identify the status of women, furnish sources of assistance, and initiate and promote programs designed to serve the needs of women."²

In 1976, there were 25 county commissions and two city commissions across the state. By 1977, this number grew to 49 county councils. However, the number of women's commission has since decreased to only seven county or city women's commissions. These include: Buncombe County, Cleveland County, Durham County, Durham City, Greensboro City, Mecklenburg County, and New Hanover County.

Women's Commissions Success Stories: Durham and New Hanover Counties

While the number of women's commissions in North Carolina have decreased dramatically since the 1970s, our women's commissions still celebrate several notable successes. One particularly powerful institution in North Carolina is the Durham County Women's Commission, established in 1987. The commission has been active ever since, and focuses on key issues affecting women in Durham County such as Black maternal health, women's mental health, and women's economic empowerment.³ Durham County also achieved a milestone election in November 2020 when the county elected the first all women Board of County Commissioners in the state.

New Hanover County's first women's commission was created in 1978, but it disbanded in 2010. Fortunately, thanks to the tireless work of women in the county, New Hanover County has resurrected its women's commission as of 2020.

1. *Women's Caucuses, Commissions and Committees*. (2019). National Conference of State Legislatures: Women's Legislative Network.

2. *Forging Progress for Women*. North Carolina Council for Women. A Brief History of Three Decades of Service 1963-1993.

3. [Durham County Women's Commission website](#).

CREATING A WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Decide what level of government will be the most appropriate platform.

1

2 Select and educate your commissioners.

2

Create the structure of the commission.

3

4 Create a budget and secure funding.

4

Develop an annual calendar.

5

6 Promote the commission.

6

Evaluate the commission.

7

8 Maintain the commission!

8

CREATING A WOMEN'S COMMISSION

1. Level of Government ¹

Once you have identified that a women's commission would be a valuable asset to your community, the first step is to decide what level of government is the most appropriate level. In North Carolina, the Council for Women & Youth Involvement and the Council for Women Advisory Board serve the role as a statewide women's commission. However, only six counties in North Carolina have women's commissions. Therefore, a county or city level women's commission may be the best option in our state.

On the county level, the Board of County Commissioners creates boards and commissions. Commissions may be the result of State legislation, staff recommendation, public request, or Commissioner request. Depending on your role as a commissioner, staff member, or public resident, you can proceed with establishing a task force to create bylaws and introduce them to the Board of Commissioners and City Council for approval. ² City and county staff may be able to provide help in writing the bylaws.

2. Select Commissioners

"The specific number of commissioners and corresponding appointing authorities should be described in the commission's enabling legislation." ³ After the commission has been created, you should create an application and circulate it to individuals you think may be interested (*See Appendix A for application example*). Applications should be reviewed and selected based on the authority established in the enabling legislation. Once commissioners are selected, they can be sworn in at "an event which also presents an important opportunity to generate press about the new commission." ⁴

When identifying and requesting potential commissioners to request to apply, use personal and professional networks to reach individuals with potentially beneficial connections or relevant experience. Also ensure the application is available to the public.

Having a diverse commission is key to ensuring the commission represents the interests of women in the community. Consider age, sex, race, veteran status, and interests when establishing the commission. "Another factor to consider is the variety of the commissioners' professional skills. A wide range of skills will contribute positively to the organization especially if the commissioners are knowledgeable in areas such as budgeting and finance, education, legal rights, media, or politics." ⁵

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts.

2. De Los Santos, Tania. Durham County Board of Commissioners.

3. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

3. Create the Structure of the Commission¹

"One of the first tasks for a new commission is to draft a set of bylaws, which are the codes and regulations by which the commission will be governed....Be sure to consider the following things when discussing the bylaws with the commission:

- Authority and leadership positions,
- Definition and process of membership,
- Officers, staff and committees,
- Structure and frequency of meetings,
- Budget, and
- Processes to amend the bylaws."²

You may consider seeking legal counsel or communicating with other women's commissions before enacting your bylaws. Bylaws should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they stay current and consistent with the mission and values of the commission. (*See Appendix B for sample bylaws.*)

Another important early task for the commission will be to elect commission officers, such as chair, vice-chair, treasurer, and secretary. The term length of these offices should be pre-determined and included in the bylaws. Ensure that you have included processes for nominating, electing, and removing officers. Clearly outline the description of each role in the bylaws.

Consider working with local schools or youth organizations to get volunteers or interns. This will give young people excellent local government experience and will provide resources for the commission. Intern or volunteer tasks could include: event planning, social media management, research, community outreach, etc.

Consider creating sub-committees in your commission to work on specific projects and help the commission get more accomplished. Sub-committees may include: budget and finance, legislative, outreach, advocacy, events and planning, or a specific project the commission sees as important. Sub-committees should be established in the bylaws of the organization and should have on-going tasks. The goals and objectives of the sub-committees should be determined on an annual basis. Sub-committees should submit their recommendations or priorities to the full commission for approval and to be acted on. Consider the following policies regarding sub-committees:³

- Only commissioners may serve on sub-committees. Every commissioner shall serve on at least one sub-committee of their choice.

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts.

2. Ibid. pg 8.

3. Ibid. pg. 49.

- Chairs of sub-committees should be elected annually by members of the sub-committee.
- Sub-committees should meet monthly or bimonthly to ensure that work is being accomplished.
- Meeting minutes should be taken during sub-committee meetings to be shared with the full commission and the public.
- The Chair of the sub-committee should report on the activities and accomplishments of the sub-committee during full commission meetings.

A final important aspect of the structure of your commission is meeting times and dates. Find a regular meeting time and schedule meetings monthly, quarterly, or whatever works for commissioners. Pick a regular meeting place or plan to meet virtually. If meeting virtually, coordinate with the Board of County Commissioners to ensure you are using an approved platform. Ensure these meetings are accessible to the public.

4. Create a Budget and Secure Funding ¹

"If possible, commissions should secure funding through their establishing legislation because it guarantees the ability to finance new projects, host events, and hire staff with steady funds." ²

Consider the following expenses when creating a budget: travel requirements, office supplies, special events, internet and website services, printing services, postage, etc.

Funding can be obtained through a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- Direct mail or email campaigns
- Corporate funding
- Grants
- In-kind donations (such as food for an event)
- Special fundraising events
- Planned gifts

Consider what women-owned businesses, corporations, or foundations exist in your county that you could partner with to fundraise.

You may also consider filing for 501(c)3 status for your commission. Legal counsel may be able to provide further guidance on this possibility.

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts.

2. Ibid. pg 9.

5. Develop an Annual Calendar

Having an annual calendar can support the sustainability of your commission by providing structure to annual operations. This calendar should include a calendar of all of the commission's meetings and events for the next fiscal year. Preparing an annual calendar a year in advance will give the commission an adequate amount of time to budget for any event or meeting expenses. When preparing your calendar, consider the following meetings and events: full commission meetings, committee meetings, relevant awareness dates and months, planning sessions, commission events, public hearings, and new member trainings. ¹ Keep in mind the following awareness dates when developing your annual calendar:

- January: Human Trafficking Awareness Month
- February: Black History Month, Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, American Heart Month
 - First Friday of February: Go Red for Women Day
- March: Women's History Month
 - March 1-7: Women in Construction Week
 - March 8: International Women's Day
 - March 24: Women's Equal Pay Day
- April: Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- June: LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- August
 - August 1-7: World Breastfeeding Week
 - August 26: Women's Equality Day
- September:
 - September 11: Patriot Day, National Day of Service and Remembrance
- October: Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Minority Enterprise Development Month
 - October 12: Indigenous People's Day
 - Last full week in October: National Business Women's Week
- November: Domestic Violence Awareness Month, American Indian Heritage Month
 - November 19: Women's Entrepreneurship Day
 - November 20: Transgender Day of Remembrance
- December:
 - December 1: World AIDS Day

Monitor the news and social media for additional awareness dates that your commission may be interested in promoting. One way to promote these events is to encourage your commission to sign proclamations for these events to uplift the work being done by women in your county.

6. Promote the Commission ¹

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts. pg. 15.

Gaining public and legislative attention will be crucial to the success of your commission. When first forming your commission, consider hosting a swearing in ceremony for new commissioners and invite local press. Consider the following tactics to gain attention for your commission:

- Sending weekly or monthly newsletters
- Notifying the press of any events you may be hosting
- Request a web page located within the County Board of Commissioners website to post updates, public meetings, and your legislative agenda
- Create and maintain social media pages (including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn Twitter, and Instagram)
- Partner with local organizations, colleges and universities, or businesses with a similar mission on their events in order to gain name recognition

7. Evaluate the Commission¹

"Once the commission has established a presence it is important to take a step back and evaluate how effectively the commission is addressing the needs of women in the community. Yearly evaluations are a good measure of the commission's progress as well as the improvements which need to be made in the future. Furthermore, keeping records of the commission's yearly progress will allow future commissioners to understand the organization's history and how it can be strengthened to serve even more women."²

Creating an annual report can be a good way to summarize the yearly accomplishments of the commission and goals for the future. Consider including the following in an annual report: programs and activities, research, priority legislation, and budget.³

You may also consider reporting to the County Board of Commissioners on an annual basis to review your work and discuss your legislative agenda with the commissioners. This is also a good way to maintain your relationship with the County Board.⁴

Consider holding an annual planning meeting to discuss the annual report and plan for the next year's priorities.

8. Maintain the Commission

The next chapter of this report will cover how to maintain a successful women's commission.

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts. 21-24.

2. Ibid. pg. 28-30.

3. Ibid. pg 29.

4. Ibid. pg 29.

MAINTAINING A WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Once the women's commission is established there are several things you'll need to know to maintain the commission and ensure it is successful. Maintaining the commission - keeping it active and effective - may be even more difficult than establishing it in the first place. Successful women's commissions will hold regular and productive meetings. They will engage in regular strategic planning meetings to ensure that the commission is forward-looking and goal-driven. They will create, maintain, and advocate for a specific legislative agenda. In order to advance the legislative agenda, the women's commission will host events and work to create and maintain relationships with the County Board of Commissioners, the North Carolina Council for Women & Youth Involvement, other county-level women's commissions, and other organizations with similar goals and missions. Outlined below are a few qualities of a successful women's commission to get you started.

Running a Successful Commission Meeting ¹

A crucial characteristic of maintaining a successful women's commission is holding regular meetings. These meetings should be held at regular intervals and in the same place to minimize scheduling complications. The annual calendar should include these regular meetings.

"Meetings are essential to the operation of any commission because they provide the opportunity for commissioners and staff members to work together and assess the status of the commission, brainstorm new ideas, and create solutions to any problems which might arise...Regular meetings, either in person or via conference call, allow members to establish a close working relationship and create a positive force for both the internal strength and public reputation of the organization. In addition to forging this partnership, perhaps the most important function of commission meetings is the opportunity to plan for future action." ²

As mentioned before, commission meetings should be scheduled up to a year in advance so that commissioners can plan around them. Around one week before each meeting, remind commissioners about the details of the meeting including date, time, location, and agenda. The agenda should also be posted in a public location such as the women's commission website.

When creating an agenda, consider the following items: roll call, approval of previous meeting minutes, Chair's report, staff reports, committee reports, old business, new business, reminder of future meetings and events. ³ (See Appendix C for meeting agenda example.)

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts. pg 15-16.

2. Ibid. pg 15.

3. Ibid. pg 16.

During the meeting, the Chair should serve as the moderator for the meeting - ensuring that all agenda items are touched on and keeping time. The Chair will begin the meeting by calling the meeting to order, welcoming all members and guests, and then proceed to call the roll. The secretary of the commission should keep notes and record minutes of the conversation. (See Appendix D & E for example meeting minutes). At the end of the meeting, the Chair should adjourn the meeting. The secretary should distribute the minute meetings to all commissioners and guests who were present at the meeting. The minutes should also be submitted for Chair's approval and then for approval by the whole commission at the next meeting. ¹

It may also be helpful to have a set of rules for conducting meetings. *Robert's Rules of Order* ² is a resource that most parliamentary bodies in the United States use for meeting rules. Consider obtaining a copy or browsing the website for ideas. You may also consider adding specific rules pertaining to virtual meetings - for example, how will the roll call and voting procedures work during virtual meetings to ensure you have an accurate record of responses?

Strategic Planning

Successful women's commissions embark on the collaborative process of strategic planning. Strategic planning can ensure that the commission is forward-looking and productive. Strategic plans can be made for any length of time, although five or ten years are typical. You may also consider creating a strategic plan for the length of a commissioner term, or to plan for a longer amount of time to give future commissioners a road map. This decision should be made collaboratively by the whole commission or a sub-committee assigned to strategic planning.

There are three main steps to strategic planning, according to the Corporate Finance Institute: ³

1. Strategy Formulation
2. Strategy Implementation
3. Strategy Evaluation

Strategy Formulation involves analyzing the commission's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. After this analysis, commissioners can decide what to focus on based on the strengths and opportunities of the commission.

After the strategy formulation process, the company should establish a plan of action to accomplish those goals. Consider using the SMART goal process to set goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based. Ensure that the whole commission is included in this step, and that everyone understands their responsibilities.

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts. pg 16.

2. Robert, Henry M. III, Daniel H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch, Daniel E. Seabold, and Shmuel Gerber. (2020). *Robert's Rules of Order: The Rules You Need in a Meeting Made Simple and Easy*.

3. [Strategic Planning](#). Corporate Finance Institute. Web. Accessed March 22, 2021.

Once the strategy has been implemented and actions have been taken towards goals, the commission can move on to strategy evaluation. This includes examining the actions taken towards the set goals, measuring performance, and making any adjustments necessary to the action items or goals set by the commission. The evaluation step is crucial in the strategic planning process as it will ensure that the commission is staying on task and accomplishing the goals they set. A time line for evaluation should be set in order to regularly evaluate the activity of the commission.

Creating a Legislative Agenda

Having a legislative agenda can help women's commissions stay focused and consistent in their goals. Creating a legislative agenda may be part of the strategic implementation step of the strategic planning process. There are several ways you can get ideas for creating a legislative agenda: through collaboration and communication with other agencies or commissions, through particular interests of the commissioners, or through public hearing sessions. Each of these avenues can give your commission priorities to work with. (See *Appendix F for a legislative agenda example.*)

A great place to start when creating your legislative agenda is through collaboration with other commissions. The statewide North Carolina Council for Women & Youth Involvement has sponsored the publication of annual Status of Women in North Carolina reports on Health and Wellness, Employment and Earnings, and Political Participation - each with a detailed set of policy recommendations. Women's commissions should start creating their legislative agenda by reviewing these reports. Commissions may also consider communicating with other women's commissions in North Carolina or local or statewide advocacy organizations to identify key issues affecting women.

Commissioners may also have certain issues that they are particularly interested in prioritizing. These issues may serve as good starting points for a legislative agenda. Consider reviewing in the Status of Women in North Carolina reports to see if there are existing policy recommendations that address the selected issues.

Another great way to identify issues affecting women in North Carolina is through public hearing sessions where members of the public can express their opinions.

Hosting Events ¹

Once you have created a legislative agenda for the women's commission, you can begin to take action steps towards your legislative goals. One method of raising awareness about your agenda is by hosting events on particular topic areas.

There are several important steps to hosting an event:

1. Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions*. Boston, Massachusetts. pg 26-27.

1. Brainstorming the purpose of the event. Consider your legislative agenda and pick a key priority. Consider what may be the most effective method of furthering this agenda item. Do you need to connect with legislators? Do you need to raise awareness?
2. Budget for the event. Ensure that you have considered food, venue, and printing costs for the event. Hosting a virtual event will make it more affordable.
3. Select a date, time, and venue. Consider the size of your audience and accessibility for guests. You may also consider hosting a virtual event.
4. Ask speakers, panelists, or esteemed guests to be a part of your event. This should take place at least one month before the event to give time for planning and logistics.
5. Consider asking other organizations to sponsor your event. They may be able to provide funds to support or help publicize the event.
6. Create an agenda for the event. How will the event open and close, and who will play what roles during the event?
7. Create promotional materials for the event and begin publicizing! (*See Appendix G for event invitation example*)
8. Maintain communication with any speakers and partners you are working with up to the date of the event.

Connecting with the County Board of Commissioners

Another great way to advance the legislative agenda of the women's commission is by maintaining a working relationship with the County Board of Commissioners. Each county in North Carolina has a County Board of Commissioners - working with this board can bring the priorities of the women's commission to county legislators. Consider having a standing annual meeting with the County Board to discuss the accomplishments and priorities of the women's commission. The women's commission may also consider inviting the County Board members to relevant events or commission meetings.

Connecting with the State Council and other Partners

Partnerships between commissions and other organizations is crucial to the sustainability of the women's commission. Women's commissions should maintain regular communication with the North Carolina Council for Women & Youth Involvement for guidance and to stay updated on statewide priorities. The NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement may also be able to foster connection and collaboration between county-level women's commissions across the state.

Consider working with other women-focused organizations and businesses in your community and around the state in hosting events and drafting your legislative agenda. Using connections of commissioners may be a good way to build relationships.

You may also consider connecting with women's commissions in other states. (*See Appendix H for a list of women's commissions in other states.*)

WOMEN'S COMMISSIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA

This section highlights all existing women's commissions in North Carolina as of March 2021, including commission's chair, mission, history, and contact information.

Buncombe County Women's Commission

Chair: Libby Kyles



Mission Statement

To advise the Board of Commissioners on key issues relating to social and economic conditions of women in Buncombe County; educate the community regarding these issues; and advocate for policies that would improve the lives of women in Buncombe County, specifically: develop a biennial work plan which is responsive to current community needs and forward thinking on trending issues; identify and prioritize key focus areas; determine strategic approaches to address these areas; exercise leadership on their implementation (including, but not limited to, developing information systems, conducting research, hosting educational programming and convening community outreach); and provide regular updates to the Board of Commissioners.

History

The Buncombe County Women's Commission was started by the Buncombe County Commissioners when it was chaired by Curtis Ratcliff in 1984. It was originally called Buncombe County Women's Involvement Council, but the name was changed to the Women's Commission in 1999. Many familiar influential women have served on the Women's Commission – several who later became Buncombe County judges (such as Sharon Barrett, Patricia Young, and Susan Dotson-Smith) or became a County Commissioner (such as Doris Giezentanner) or became active on a state-wide basis (such as Betty Budd, who became the statewide Director of NC Council of Women) or became a leader in national women's organizations (such as Dorothea Alderfer who was the southeast regional District Governor of Altrusa International).

Contact Information

Email: buncombecountywomenscommission@gmail.com

Website: www.buncombecounty.org/transparency/boards-commissions/default.aspx

Facebook: www.facebook.com/buncombeCountyWomensCommission/

Cleveland County Commission for Women

Chair: Betsy Wells



Mission Statement

To Increase public awareness and understanding of the problems, needs and abilities of women in Cleveland County.

History

The Cleveland County Council on the Status of Women was established in 1978. The name was changed to the Commission for Women in the 1980s. In the early 1980s, the Commission formally established the Abuse Prevention Council for victims of domestic violence. The organization later became independent of the Commission. Also, in the 1980s, the Commission members asked for and received funding from the County Commissioners. In 1992, the Commission conducted a county-wide survey of the needs of Cleveland County women. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Commission established a Women's Resource Center to be a source of information and help to women throughout Cleveland County.

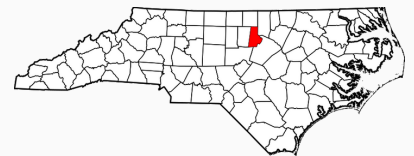
Contact Information

Website: http://www.clevelandcounty.com/nav/boards_and_committees.htm

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Cleveland-County-Commission-for-Women-100615478365530/

Durham County Women's Commission

Chair: Vivian Slade



Mission Statement

To educate the community and advise the Durham County Board of Commissioners as necessary on issues relating to the changing social and economic conditions of women in the county.

History

The Durham County Women's Commission was established on February 2, 1987.

Contact Information

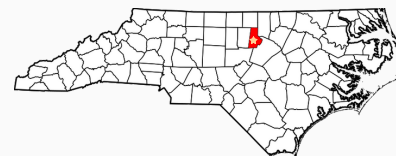
Email: durhamcountywomenscommission@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-a-e/board-of-commissioners/boards-and-commissions-minutes/women-s-commission>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DurhamWomensCommission/>

Durham City Mayor's Council for Women

Chair: Vivian Slade



Mission Statement

To improve the opportunities and quality of life of women in the City of Durham through civic engagement by promoting the interests and needs of the community at-large; and to serve as a liaison and consultative body between women and the city government officials in order to further promote and protect equal opportunities for all.

History

The Durham Mayor's Council for Women was created in 2018.

Contact Information

Website: <https://durhamnc.gov/238/Boards-Committees-Commissions-Task-Force>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DMCFW>

Greensboro City Commission on the Status of Women

Chair: Katredia Martin



Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life for women in Greensboro.

History

The Commission on the Status of Women was organized by the League of Women Voters of the Triad, the Greensboro Business and Professional Women, the Greensboro YWCA, Guilford County Republican Women and Guilford County Democratic Women. A steering committee of Jeannie Parker, Dr. Margaret Hunt, Eula Hudgens, Robert Barringer, Jr., Phillip Coe and Jean Eason met and on April 27, 1972, City Council member Mary Seymour introduced a resolution to the City Council on the committee's behalf. In 1973, the Greensboro Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established. The CSW celebrated 40 years of work towards its mission to improve the quality of life for women in Greensboro in 2010.

Contact Information

Phone: 336-549-7992

Website: <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/human-rights/boards-and-commissions/commission-on-the-status-of-women>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CSW.Greensboro/>

Mecklenburg County Women's Advisory Board

Chair: Dr. Yolonda Holmes



Mission Statement

To promote the critical and emerging needs of women in Mecklenburg County through education and service.

History

The Mecklenburg County Women's Advisory Board was created in 2009 after an advisory Committee reorganization was approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The Women's Advisory Board replaced the former Women's Commission Advisory Board. It is the official citizen's advisory commission on women's issues. The members are appointed by and report to the Board of County Commissioners. The Women's Advisory Board is housed at and receives staff support from the Mecklenburg County Community Support Services.

Contact Information

Website:

<https://www.mecknc.gov/CommunitySupportServices/PreventionIntervention/About-Us/Advisory-Board/Pages/WAB.aspx>

New Hanover County Commission for Women

Chair: Bridget Tarrant



Mission Statement

To act as an advocate for women and as a resource on information on the status of women in New Hanover County for the County Commissioners and City Council members

History

Wilmington City Council adopted a Resolution supporting the reestablishment of the New Hanover County Commission for Women on November 19, 2019.

Contact Information

Website: <https://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/departments/city-clerk/boards-commissions/new-hanover-county-commission-for-women>

GETTING INVOLVED IN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

If you are interested in getting involved in women's commissions and your county already has a commission or you are unable to start one, this section will address how to connect with either your county or state-level women's commission.

If you live in Buncombe, Cleveland, Durham, Mecklenburg, or New Hanover County or Greensboro city, follow the contact information listed in the section above to learn more about your local women's commission. Many of the women's commission websites have commissioner applications listed if you are interested in serving on the women's commission. If not, you may still be able to get involved in another capacity. Consider offering any services or skills you may have to the commission - for example, social media management, fundraising, event planning, etc. Or, you can reach out to the local women's commission to express your thoughts and opinions on their work.

If you live in a county without a women's commission, and you are unable to create one, consider getting involved at the state level or applying to serve on another local board or commission. There are many boards and commissions in every county throughout North Carolina, and they are always looking for new commissioners. Even if they are not specifically focused on women's issues, you can bring that perspective to the work the commission is doing to promote the status of women. Visit your local County Board of Commissioners website to see what boards and commissions are operating near you and to find commissioner vacancies.

Serving on local boards and commissions can be an incredibly rewarding experience and an opportunity to make a real impact within your community.

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL FOR WOMEN & YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Follow us on Social Media



Instagram

www.instagram.com/nccfwyi



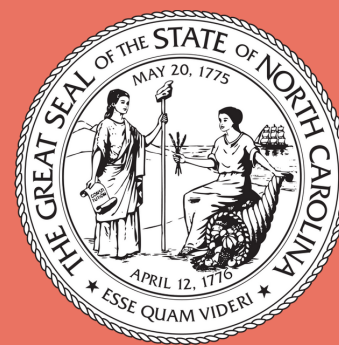
Twitter

www.twitter.com/councilnc



Facebook

www.facebook.com/cfwyi



Contact Us

Physical Address

Administration Building
116 West Jones Street
Suite G102
Raleigh, NC

Office Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm

Mailing Address

1320 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1320

Visit our website and sign up to receive our monthly newsletter:

www.councilforwomen.nc.gov



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Commissioner Application Example

XX County Board of Commissioners

Chair of the Board

Application for Appointment to:

(Board or Commission name)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Home Address: _____

Employer/Business Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

List any County Board, Committee or Commission on which you currently serve:

Why are you interested in serving on this Board? _____

List any special qualifications you have for service on this Board _____

What would you like to achieve if appointed to this Board? _____

For the purpose of diversity and balance, please complete the following:

Race: _____ Gender: _____

Residency of XX County is required for appointment to any board or commission.

I have been a resident of XX County for ____ years.

Signature of Applicant

This application will be kept on file for one year.

Appendix B: Bylaws Example

NEW HANOVER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND WILMINGTON CITY COUNCIL

BYLAWS REESTABLISHING THE NEW HANOVER COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Article I – Name and Commission Reestablished.

The name of this organization shall be the New Hanover County Commission for Women (Commission).

The commission shall be considered established and effective once the Board of County Commissioners and the Wilmington City Council have made the appointments.

Article II – Purpose

The Commission shall be organized for the purpose of acting as an advocate for women and a resource of information on the status of women in New Hanover County for the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners (Board) and Wilmington City Council (Council):

- To identify the status of women and assess the needs of women in New Hanover County (County) and the City of Wilmington (City);
- To provide a status of women in New Hanover County report on an annual basis to the Board and Council;
- To provide information and recommendations to the Board and Council on the needs and issues important to women as it deems necessary in improving and upholding the opportunities in employment, education and community services for all people, regardless of sex;
- To work toward the betterment of the status of women with respect to employment and educational opportunities, health services, child care services, welfare services, financial services, and community leadership opportunities;
- To serve as an umbrella to coordinate and support all women's initiatives, organizations, and networks in the County and the City including coordinating and cooperating with the YWCA and other organizations involved in activities on the status of women; and
- To conduct educational seminars in collaboration with other organizations for residents and businesses in the County and the City.

Article III – Membership

The commission shall be comprised of eleven (11) members. The Board and Council shall serve as the Appointing Authorities. Members shall be appointed by the Board and Council consistent with County and City policies governing appointments to the County and City governmental commissions, committees, and boards. The members shall be appointed as follows:

- Ten members serving at-large (Five appointed by the Board of County Commissioners; Five appointed by the Wilmington City Council)
- One member being the YWCA Lower Cape Fear CEO or designee

A representative of the North Carolina Council for Women shall serve as an Ex Officio non-voting member.

Each member of the Commission shall be appointed to serve a term of three (3) years, or until a successor is appointed; provided however, that on the initial Commission, three (3) of the members shall serve a term of one (1) year; three (3) of the members shall serve a term of two (2) years; four (4) of the members, including the YWCA Lower Cape Fear CEO, or designee, shall serve a term of three (3) years.

Members shall serve no more than two (2) full successive terms, unless there is a break of at least one (1) full term between appointments.

In the event that any member of the Commission resigns or terminates service for any cause, the Board, if the member was a County appointee, or the Council, if the member was a City appointee, shall appoint a qualified successor for the unexpired term.

Members appointed by the Board shall be a resident of the County and members appointed by the Council shall be a resident of the City.

Persons appointed to the commission shall have displayed genuine commitment to progressive and positive intergroup relations.

The appointees shall serve at the pleasure of their respective Appointing Authority and can be removed by their Appointing Authority without cause.

Members shall serve without compensation.

Article IV – Officers

The commission shall elect for one (1) year terms, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and such other officers as it shall deem necessary. Those elected to these positions may be reappointed to these positions.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary shall be elected at its inception and then thereafter at the commission's meeting in July.

The Chairman shall have the following duties:

1. Preside at meetings of the Commission.
2. Appoint all standing chairmen.
3. Release statements to the media regarding the Commission activities, serve as the principal spokesperson of the Commission on policy matters, or designate another member to serve in that capacity.

The Vice-Chairman shall act for the Chairman in the Chairman's absence.

The Secretary shall record and distributes the minutes of all regular and special meetings.

Article V – Function, Powers and Duties

The Commission shall have the following duties:

1. Identify and document by assembling existing information, conducting original research, and other appropriate actions to determine the status of women in New Hanover County.
2. Educate and inform the general public about the importance of the status of women in New Hanover County.
3. Facilitate, collaborate, and promote events and activities that advocate the status of women. Facilitate efforts to identify sources of funds to support events, activities and programs.

The Commission shall have the following standing subcommittees:

1. Programming which will coordinate project events and activities.
2. Public Education which will research, design, and distribute the annual Status of Women in New Hanover County report.

3. Directory which will research and identify appropriate all women's initiatives, organizations, and networks that will be included in the annual Status of Women in New Hanover County report.
4. Legislative which will inform the Commission of federal, state, and local legislation that may be important to women and shall recommend appropriate action to be taken by the Commission.

Article VI – Meetings

At a minimum, the Commission shall meet quarterly. The time, day and place of these meetings will be set at its inception and then thereafter each year by the Commission at their meeting in July.

The County shall make space available for the Commission's meetings.

Special or emergency meetings may be called by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman in the Chairman's absence, or by a petition of seven (7) commission members.

Agendas and minutes of each regular and special meeting shall be kept and shall become a part of the official records of the commission. A copy of the minutes shall be sent to all members of the Commission and to the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners and the Clerk to the City Council.

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the current membership. Ex-officio members will not be considered in determining a quorum. A quorum is required in order for the Commission to take official action.

Robert's Rules of Order shall provide guidance for all proceedings not otherwise provided for in these bylaws.

North Carolina Open Meetings law shall govern the commission meetings. A notice of all meetings will be posted on the County's website.

The County will provide operational support to the commission.

Article VII – Amendments

Any amendments to these bylaws shall be approved by the Board of County Commissioners and Wilmington City Council.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners hereby approves Articles I thru VII, which comprises the bylaws for the reestablishment of the New Hanover County Commission for Women.

ADOPTED, this the 12th day of August, 2019.



ATTEST:
Kimberleigh G. Crowell
 Kimberleigh G. Crowell, Clerk to the Board

NEW HANOVER COUNTY
 By: *[Signature]*
 Jonathan Barfield, Jr., Chairman

Appendix C: Commission Meeting Agenda Example

NEW HANOVER COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE



NEW HANOVER COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
 Online via Microsoft Teams
 March 24, 2021 – 4:00 PM

Estimated Minutes		
5	I. Call to Order	Kathryn Wandling, Chair
	• Welcome & Roll Call	
5	II. Approve Agenda	
5	III. Approve Minutes from February Meeting	
10	IV. Guest Speaker - Jordyn Appel-Hughes, Northside Food Co-Op	
15	VI. Old Business	Kathryn Wandling, Chair
	A. Committee Reports	
	a. Advocacy	
	i. Update on Diane Jinwright	Meaghan Lewis
	b. Empowerment	
	c. Health Care	
15	VI. New Business	Kathryn Wandling, Chair
	A. Cape Fear Collective	Meaghan Lewis
	B. AAUW Updates/Ideas	Jane Bimbach
	C. April Speaker Idea	Bridget Tarrant
	D. Any other New Business	
15	VII. Public Comments	
	VII. Adjourn	Kathryn Wandling, Chair

Appendix D: Meeting Minutes Example (Durham)

Durham County Women's Commission Meeting Minutes January 27, 2020

Commissioners Present: K.D. Ann Welsh, Vivian Slade, Brianna Van Stekelenburg, Ruebe Holmes, Joy Spencer, Jenny Gomez, Olivia Horton, Tamika McRae, Milicia Tedder, Patti Black, Cynthia Bland

Commissioners Absent: Michelle Laws, Elizabeth Sweezey, Jessica Slice, Kim Cameron, Sara Bausch

Meeting called to order at 6:03 pm

Chair Report - Vivian

Welcome Jenny Gomez

Vacancy - Zion Tankard has resigned.

Social Media Presence Update - Jenny Gomez and Ruebe Holmes will form a subcommittee.

Newsletter - Ruebe Holmes and Milicia Tedder will form a subcommittee. This newsletter would be a tool to do some public outreach; a suggestion was made to highlight community members.

UNC Collaboration - Dr. Shauna Cooper and students from UNC (MPOWER) provided details of how we will collaborate throughout the spring semester.

Vice Chair Report - Ruebe

Durham City-County Comprehensive Plan - Ruebe Holmes will serve as a DCWC representative.

Resolutions Update

Patti Black and Joy Spencer - potential of being added to the April Commissioners meeting

Patti provided a draft and the committee moved to approved.

Joy will continue to work on the resolution related to black maternal health.

CEDAW - Olivia mentioned that the interns would like to present to the Commissioners; future meeting scheduled.

Treasurer Report - Patti

Balance of approximately \$345

Upcoming Events

Durham City-County Comprehensive Plan at City Hall - February 4th at 6pm

DCWC Brunch at Tru Flavors on Lakewood - February 8th at 12pm

Bull City Fresh Start at Athletic Park - March 25th from 9am-2pm

Women's Health Fair at NCCU - April 4th

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm

Appendix E: Meeting Minutes Example (New Hanover)

NEW HANOVER COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE



NEW HANOVER COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
Online via Microsoft Teams
February 24, 2021 – 4:00 PM

Members present: Bhairavi Jengathan, Bridget Tarrant, Jane Birnbach, Kathryn Wandling, Sheila Evans, Meaghan Lewis, Velva Jenkins, April Scott, Kimberly Spader

Members absent: Natosha Tew, Kathryn Kirby

NHC Staff: Tomeka Jarreau, Linda Thompson

Guests: Jane D'Addario, American Association of University Women (AAUW) and AAUW of NC

I. Call to Order - Kathryn Wandling, Chair

- Welcome & Roll Call

II. Approve Agenda - Kathryn Wandling made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded Jane Birnbach. All approved the Agenda.

III. Approve Minutes – Kathryn Wandling made a motion to approve January Minutes, seconded by Jane Birnbach. All approved the Minutes.

IV. Guest Speaker- Jane D'Addario – AAUW

The purpose of the group is to advance equity for women. AAUW has National, state and local units. Previously known as Wilmington AAUW but, now referred to as Cape Fear AAUW. The group is celebrating a 140th Anniversary nationwide. It is a Non-partisan organization. Advocacy includes research – STEM research and women in debt with Student loans. Recruiting and retaining women in the manufacturing sector is key to future growth. The group does a lot of skills building. The Cape Fear AAUW works closely with UNCW. AAUW funds programs such as Smart Start. UNCW was among the first 10 colleges in the country to get grant to assist getting women interested in student government. AAUW feels that salary negotiation is important area for women. The group is currently focusing on Work Smart for women going back to the work place or looking for a raise, etc. Another focus is Title IX collaboration. State level AAUW as well as the national level provides mini grants.

Locally, the group raises money for two scholarships for college students. Vision screening program was a prior focus of the local group.

Monthly meetings and have guest speakers. Jane shared that she feels there is a lack of diversity in her group therefore, speakers have helped make connections.

Education issues the group has covered include early gender bias, sexual misconduct.

Jane mentioned that our committee parallels their functions and asked how our two groups might work together. Further, she recognizes that our groups could work together to make an impact. Jane was distressed that the local school board removed the word 'systemic' from systemic racism.

VI. Old Business - Kathryn Wandling, Chair

A. Committee Reports

a. **Advocacy** – Meghan reported that one issue of concern is at gender equity. Perhaps there could be partnership between Cape Fear Collective and our commission. Localizing the report and making it available for download were mentioned. Follow up on Dianne Jinwright's request for Kevin Maurer – he is prepared to file the Freedom of Information Act to get this data. The request has been made without that formality.

Well Place, Dianne Jinwright's group - Contest on childcare details – the survey is on Survey Monkey on childcare providers, costs, etc. Meghan will ensure that the committee gets the link when it is live on March 1st.

b. **Empowerment** – It was agreed that the same information to be shared was shared during the Advocacy Committee report.

c. **Health Care** – Bridget reported. Kathryn will open the meeting, Velva will be the moderator. Linda Thompson has been very helpful with coordination. Not just Facebook live – Zoom platform. Medicaid expansion will be a focus.

i. **Health Care March Town Hall** – March 4th from 6:30 – 8 p.m. Is this be presented as a NHCCFW as a host with League of Women Voters. It is being promoted through a press release from the County, social media, the YWCA, the Status of Women Newsletter and the League of Women Voters to name a few.

VII. New Business - Kathryn Wandling, Chair

A. **Subcommittee Requirements** – Sheila Evans, Secretary – we need to be prepared for an annual report to the New Hanover County Commissioners. We need to ensure that we are aligning our tasks/committees to meet our by-laws.

B. **International Women's Day** – Kathryn shared an opportunity to work with UNCW's Department of Education to celebrate International Women's Day – speaker series – critical topics throughout the week of March 8th. Linda Thompson will check into (\$500) funding for a sponsorship for this event. Kathryn made motion, Bhairavi Jengathan seconded the motion. All approved of requesting this funding to support the sponsorship.

C. **Any Other Business** – Bridget Tarrant shared that League of Women Voters will be doing a project recognizing International Women's Day.

Velva Jenkins shared that the Women of Achievement Awards will be held on March 11th at 6 p.m. as a Virtual event. 68 nominees will be recognized. Velva asked everyone to tune in. Sheila Boles – Lifetime Achievement award. Go to the YWCA website to register for the program.

Bhairavi Jengathan arranged for guest speaker for our March, 2021 meeting and will get information to Kathryn.

Marissa Bryant was a suggested guest speaker – Velva will reach out her. Planned Parenthood was also a topic discussed for a future guest speaker.

VIII. Public Comments – none present

IX. Meeting adjourned at 4:49p.m.

NEXT MEETING – MARCH 24TH 2021

Appendix F: Legislative Agenda Example¹

PART OF [Legislative Agenda](#)

OFFERED BY [Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women](#)

2020-2021 Legislative Priorities

Our Legislative and Public Policy Committee, led by our mission and public hearing testimony, are in the process of finalizing a brand new slate of bills to advocate for the 2020-2021 session. Some of those bills include:

- **An Act to Ensure Gender Parity on Public Boards and Commissions** ([SD.521](#) / [HD.2082](#))
Presenters: Senator Lewis, Representative Haddad
- **An Act supporting parents running for public office** ([SD.994](#) / [HD.1418](#))
Presenters: Senator Jehlen, Representative Connely, Representative Meschino
- **An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth** (also referenced as the *Common Start bill*) ([HD 1960](#) / [SD 1307](#))
Representative Gordon, Representative Madaro, Senator Lewis
- **An Act Relative to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters and Public Schools** (also referenced as the *I AM bill*) ([HD651](#) / [SD.748](#))
Representative Livingstone, Senator Jehlen
- **An Act to require policies and training to prevent unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment** ([HD1000](#) / [SD995](#)) Representative Barber, Senator Creem

Due to current COVID-19 regulations and guidelines, this year's Women's Advocacy Day will be held virtually on Wednesday, May 19, 2021. More details to follow.

Click on the link to see the [2019-2020 Legislative Priorities](#) that the MCSW continues to advocate for.

1. Screenshot taken from Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women website.
[2020-2021 Legislative Priorities | Mass.gov](#)

Appendix G: Event Invitation Example



Nida Allam
Durham County
Board of
Commissioners



Nana Asante-Smith
Durham Mayor's
Council for Women



Jenny Black
Chair, NC Council
for Women Advisory
Board



Brenda Howerton
Chair, Durham
County Board of
Commissioners



Elaine Marshall
NC Secretary of State



Vivian Slade
Chair, Durham
County Women's
Commission



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

YouTube Livestream

MARCH 31, 2021 | 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

VALIANT WOMEN: LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE BULL CITY

HOW YOU CAN EMPOWER WOMEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Join us for a panel discussion to celebrate Women's History Month. Women leaders from Durham will share success stories from the Bull City and ways to implement their learnings in your community. You will leave with resources and an understanding of how to empower women in your community and engage the power of boards and commissions.

[Register Now.](#)

Appendix H: State Women's Commissions Directory

White House Commission on Women and Girls

National Association of Commissions for Women

California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

Connecticut Governor's Council on Women and Girls

Delaware Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy

Florida Commission on the Status of Women

Georgia Commission on Women

Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Illinois Council on Women and Girls

Kentucky Commission on Women

Maine Council for Women

Maryland Commission for Women

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Michigan's Women's Commission

Minnesota Young Women's Initiative

Missouri Women's Council

New York State Council on Women and Girls

North Carolina Council for Women & Youth Involvement

Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women

Oregon Commission for Women

Pennsylvania Commission for Women

Texas Governor's Commission for Women

Vermont Commission for Women

Virginia Council on Women

Washington State Women's Council

Wisconsin Women's Council

Wyoming Council for Women