



Montgomery County *Commission for Women*

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

Chronology of Projects, Initiatives and Accomplishments 1972 - 2014

June 7, 1972: County Law enacted creating the Montgomery County Commission for Women

1974: *Montgomery County Employment Patterns: The Case for Affirmative Action*

Report analyzed Montgomery County employment patterns by race, national origin, and gender, and determined that the County's current affirmative action program needed to be expanded, developed, and enforced because women were poorly represented in the three largest departments. The report was used by the County as an information baseline to open up all jobs to women and minorities.

1974 – Present: Women's Counseling and Resource Center

First opened as A Woman's Place on January 12, 1974, later joined by a second center – the New Phase Career Center on November 14, 1976, and then combined as one Counseling and Career Center in 1991, the program serves thousands of women each year experiencing serious life crises and transitions, providing personal, career and couples counseling, classes and seminars on a wide range of issues, professional training for counselors and social workers, information and referral, psychometric and career aptitude testing and much more.

1980: Sexual Harassment Survey

Surveyed 8000 county employees and recommended an executive order prohibiting sexual harassment and developed guidelines for handling and preventing sexual harassment, training for department heads and resources for victims; published a brochure describing the law, prohibited conduct and appropriate responses and resources for victims and employers.

1980 – Present: Women's Legislative Briefings

The Commission for Women (CFW) convenes an annual public Women's Legislative Briefing to discuss legislation under consideration by the Maryland General Assembly. The Briefing has reached attendance records of over 700 people.

1980 - 1981: Family Law Project

In June 1981 the CFW published a study examining the handling of family-related cases in the Montgomery County judicial system and the economic consequences of divorce for women. From the study, the CFW produced two publications: a fact sheet on Maryland's Rehabilitative Alimony Law of 1980 and a workbook based on that law to help people seeking alimony.

1982 - 1989: Pay Equity Project

In a groundbreaking project spanning seven years, the CFW advocated a study to determine if the County Government's job classification and compensation system discriminated against occupations held primarily by women and people of color. The County was eventually persuaded to undertake the and later to implement the recommendations stemming from that study. Many occupations traditionally held by women and minorities received upward reclassifications and the employees receive increased salaries. The recommendations took effect in March of 1989 and Montgomery County became the first county in the country to institute such a plan without a lawsuit first being filed.

1986 - 1987: Employed Parent Families Project

The CFW conducted a two-part study examining the accessibility of Montgomery County Government agencies and services to employed parents, and exploring personnel policies of the five publicly funded agencies (County Government, MCPS, WSSC, Montgomery College, and M-NCPPC). The reports recommended establishment of a parental leave policy (instituted in Montgomery County Government in 1986) and other "family-friendly" policies including offering services at other than normal business hours.

1987 and 1990: *You Be the Judge* Conferences

The CFW, in cooperation with the Women Judges Fund for Justice and the Maryland's Women's Bar Association, organized a "first of its kind" conference on April 2, 1987, training women attorneys about the process of attaining appointment to the bench, and educating women's organizations about their potential role in that process. By 1990, the number of women judges in Maryland had increased by 2% to 10% (23) of the 227 appellate and trial judges in the state. Several of the new women judges had attended the conference. In 1990 the seminar expanded to a two-day program. Since the conferences the number of women judges in Maryland has increased 18%. In 2006, 81 (28%) of the 285 judges were women.

1989: *Report of the Coalition for Family Equity in the Courts*

The result of many years of work and study, this report examined the economic and social costs to families undergoing divorce and made numerous recommendations to alleviate gender imbalance in the process of divorce, and led to the establishment of the State-wide Task Force on Family Law.

1992 and 1994: Hearings on Gender Equity in the Schools

On May 13, 1992 the CFW held a public hearing on Educational Equity in the County's system of public education. In response, MCPS instituted policies requiring equity in distribution of equipment, uniforms, playing time and facilities, coaches' pay, and even assignment of cheerleader and pom squads to both girls and boys games. A second hearing was held, before the same distinguished panel, on April 26, 1994, this time focusing specifically on sexual harassment. One result of this hearing was the development of a comprehensive policy describing prohibited conduct, outlining sanctions, appropriate responses and resources in MCPS. Comprehensive reports on both hearings were published.

1995: *Easing the Financial and Emotional Costs of Divorce*

A handbook was developed and published, edited by The Honorable Rosalyn B. Bell, explaining the legal, financial and some of the emotional processes of divorce, helping readers to handle highly charged emotional situation intelligently, sensitively and constructively.

1996 - 2002: Take Our Daughters to Work Day

In conjunction with the Office of the County Executive, the Office of Public Information and the Department of Recreation, the CFW organized a Take Our Daughters to Work Day program for the children of Montgomery County Government employees each year from 1996 - 2002. Developed for girls aged 9 and 15, the event was an opportunity to provide first-hand exposure to the workforce, and to help create awareness in both girls and their parents that girls' participation in the workforce is both expected and welcome.

1997: Report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County

The Commission published a comprehensive analysis of health, education, employment, economic, legal and population data, providing extensive information on the needs of Montgomery county women.

1999: Employers Toolkit Website

The Commission developed an online resource for employers providing sample family-friendly employment policies. This project won a 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

2000 - 2010: Girls in Technology

In 1999, the CFW worked with Montgomery College to establish "GURL Power Computer Camp" for middle school girls. In 2000, the CFW published a brochure about preparing girls for education and careers in technology (*Will Your Daughter Be a Driver on the Information Highway?*) and established a camp scholarship program for girls from families of low income families or where English is a second language. A total of 286 girls have received scholarships to attend the summer computer camps. In 2002 the CFW developed a *GURL Power Curriculum Guide* for the camps so that communities all over the country may replicate the program. Discovery Communications, Inc. developed two 5-minute video documentaries describing the project. The National Association of Counties named the Girls in Technology initiative a 2000 Achievement Award Winner. On March 31, 2004, the Commission conducted a symposium for educators from all across the state providing training on gender equity in the information technology classroom. In 2005, at the Commission's recommendation, MCPS established a system-wide Task Force on Girls and Technology.

2001: Women as Victims of Violent Crime

A woman's greatest risk of being victimized violently - whether by sexual assault, rape, or murder - lurks not among strangers and street crime, but among people with whom she has a relationship. Close to 80 % of all such attacks on women are carried out by people the victim knows. The commission published in English and Spanish a brochure for parents and other adults entitled *Talk to Your Daughter about Violence: What She Doesn't Know Can Hurt Her*, with coordinating posters for teens, distributed to County middle and high schools, recreation centers, libraries, government service centers, the police, sheriff, and service providers.

2002: Women's History On-Line Archives and Quilt

An on-line archive of the biographies of 30 women of historical significance to Montgomery County was created and posted on the Commission's website (www.montgomerycountymd.gov) and a beautiful quilt was hand made by fiber artist and commissioner Anne Sanderoff-Walker, memorializing the contributions of each. The quilt is on permanent display in the Commission's Counseling and Career Center.

2002 – 2010: Immigrant Women in Montgomery County

The Commission established the issues confronting immigrant women as a priority area of concern in July 2002. The CFW first sought input from experts, service providers and advocates through a series of four forums entitled *A Brave New World*, conducted in 2003. This project was selected by the National Association of Counties for a 2004 Achievement Award. The Commission then focused its work on the issue of immigrant women in the workplace, especially those in low wage “sticky floor” occupations where employees, particularly those for whom English is a second language, may be most vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and abuse. The CFW produced three brochures on workplace issues: *Sexual Harassment – It’s Against the Law*, the *Employment Rights of Pregnant Women* and the *Employment Guide for Domestic Workers*. The brochures were translated and published in a number of languages including English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, French and Vietnamese, and widely distributed to advocacy organizations, service providers, public agencies and community groups. The *Employment Guide for Domestic Workers* was selected by the National Association of Counties for a 2008 Achievement Award.

2005 – 2010: NACW National Office

The Commission staffed the national office of the National Association of Commissions for Women, conducting its membership campaigns each year, staffing its board meetings, maintaining its records and its website.

2007: Status of Women in Montgomery County

The result of two years of research, the report analyzes and presents comprehensive data on county women in six domains (economic, health, education, immigration, law and politics), with key findings and recommendations intended to serve as both an educational and a social action tool for the public and for policy makers. This report was released at the Commission’s 35th Anniversary celebration on June 7, 2007, and was distributed to pertinent policy makers and legislators, as well as advocacy organizations and service providers.

2008-2009: Mothers and Poverty: Agenda for Action

The Commission for Women established the issue of single mothers and poverty as a priority concern and created its Mothers and Poverty (MAP) Committee. In Spring 2008 CFW held a series of public forums bringing together policy makers, program administrators, service providers and consumers of those services, advocates and issue experts as a first step in developing more effective strategies and policies to alleviate the disproportionate and unacceptable rates of poverty among single mothers. The *Single Mothers and Poverty: Agenda for Action* was published on June 10, 2009.

2010: National Conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women

Over 170 people from across the nation traveled to Montgomery County to participate in the 40th annual conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW): *Capital Opportunities for America’s Women and Girls*, coordinated and hosted by the Montgomery County Commission for Women. The conference was held July 22 – 25 at the beautiful Rockville/DC Hilton Hotel and Business Center in Rockville. The conference offered a three-day content-rich curriculum of professional development, strategy building and leadership training for these advocates of America’s women and families. Forty Commissions for Women from 29 different states were represented. Over the course of the conference, there were four plenary sessions with keynote speakers, nine seminars featuring 24 panelists representing some of the nation’s most prominent women’s and human rights organizations; as well as briefings at the White House and the Capitol.

2011: National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility Regional Conference

On March 31, 2011, under a contract from the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, the Commission for Women sponsored a conference for employers, employees and their advocates in the hospitality, restaurant and tourism industry in Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Washington D.C. and West Virginia. The conference was part of the *National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility*, and presented the business case and best practices for implementing workplace policies that are responsive to the needs of the changing American workforce. The event was held at the Silver Spring Civic Building and attended by 100 people from across the six-state region.

2012: 40th Anniversary and Women's History Archive Expansion

June 7, 2012 was the 40th anniversary of the date of enactment of the CFW's enabling legislation. On July 11, 2012, the CFW celebrated its 40 years of service and advocacy with a commemoration event at the Rockville Hilton Hotel and Conference Center. The County Executive welcomed the crowd of over 200. The highlight of the event was the introduction of 10 women of historical significance to be included in the CFW's [Montgomery County Women's History Archives](#) (bringing the total to 40), and the presentation of a new quilt created by former CFW president and fiber artist Anne Sanderoff Walker, commemorating their accomplishments. See: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw/mcwh/archives.html>

2013: Counseling Services

In FY 2013, the County Executive and the County Council appropriated funds for the CFW to begin offering counseling services again. The short-term, solution-focused counseling will be available to clients of moderate to low income confronting difficult and serious life transitions. Three temporary, part time social work positions were established, and counseling services initiated in April 2013, in three languages, expanding to five languages in July of that year.

2014: Human Trafficking

At the urging of the Commission for Women, the County Executive established a Human Trafficking Task Force to examine the issue in Montgomery County, to develop protocols and increased interagency collaboration, and enhanced services to victims. The task force will be chaired by the CFW, and will include representatives of the departments of police, sheriff, social services, corrections, county council, permitting, state's attorney, county attorney, human rights and community partnerships, along with representatives of non-profit advocacy and service organizations.