



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN WOMEN'S COMMISSION  
DETROIT

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MARY L. ENGELMAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 1, 2019

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor, State of Michigan  
State Capitol  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

Pursuant to Public Act 1 of 1968, we are pleased to submit to you the 2018 Annual Report of the Michigan Women's Commission for the calendar year of January 1 – December 31, 2018.

Our initiatives were operationalized as follows:

**Initiative to partner with statewide organizations such as the Michigan Council of Women in Technology, Inforum, and various chambers of commerce to address the gaps in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for young and professional women, women on boards, leadership and entrepreneurial challenges for women.**

The Women in Business committee divided into two subcommittees, STEM and Women on Boards/C-Suites, to better focus on the initiatives set for in each area.

The Women on Boards/C-Suites subcommittee defined goals and initiatives for the year with a focus on increasing the number of Michigan women considered for corporate boards and executive level positions. As champions for the women in Michigan, the Michigan Women's Commission works to positively impact current and future business women of Michigan and encourage more businesses to diversify their executive suites and boards. The committee will operationalize these goals in two ways - create a program to recognize Michigan companies who are meeting inclusion standards with women on their boards and develop a statewide resolution to encourage Michigan businesses to pledge to increase the number of women on their boards and in C-Suite positions.

The STEM subcommittee defined goals and initiatives for the year with a focus on increasing the number of Michigan girls engaged in STEM learning in early childhood. Michigan's parents and childcare providers can have a significant impact on how girls engage in STEM learning through everyday activities. The Michigan Women's Commission will partner with organizations and existing programs with similar goals and vehicles to disseminate messages to reach parents and educators and collaborate with partners and programs to ensure that messaging is targeted at young girls. The subcommittee will identify organizations that are currently engaged in activities that support this goal on a statewide level.

In April, the Michigan Women's Commission showed support for girls in STEM at the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competition at Cobo Hall in Detroit. With thousands of attendees from around the world, the Michigan Women's Commission reached hundreds of women and girls at the event and achieved over 21,000 impressions on Twitter.

### **Millennial Advisory Committee**

In December, the Michigan Women's Commission interviewed and selected applicants for the Millennial Advisory Committee, an advisory body to the commission. The goal of the millennial advisory committee is to identify issues of concern, create solutions and implement plans surrounding issues that impact Michigan's young and future female leaders. Members are appointed by the Michigan Women's Commission and it gives members an opportunity to share their voice, build resumes, network and provide recommendations that make impactful change.

### **Initiative to Raise Awareness of Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault in Michigan through collaborative initiatives with numerous partners:**

Commissioner Cathy Knauf with the Southwest Human Trafficking Task Force made tremendous community outreach this year to raise awareness, including dozens of speaking engagements around the state and the launch of a Lunch and Learn program that will be held several times a year in different cities across Michigan. A member of the task force is the head of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program for Lakeland Hospital and has given Sexual Assault Awareness presentations using both state, national and regional information. The Southwest Human Trafficking Task Force also received two mini-grants to fund future work from Heart of Cook and the Exchange Club of Southwest Michigan.

Several events have been held across the state including Planting Hope, Blue Up the Town for human trafficking awareness month and Kidstrong. Kidstrong is a unique and fun non-competitive outdoor obstacle course for kids to raise awareness of healthy alternatives to electronic devices and remind kids and parents of the dangers of predators lurking on social media, games and other electronic platforms.

The task force assisted students with fundraising to purchase two human trafficking awareness billboards near South Haven and Benton Harbor on I-196 and I-94, and they will continue to monitor their Stop campaign, which places stickers in rest areas with information to help those being trafficked.

The Southwest Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force partnered with Warner Winery on a wine that a percentage of the proceeds will go towards the task force for human trafficking survivors, a first in the nation initiative. The wine is called SOS (Support our Survivors) and it launched in September.

The Human Trafficking/Sexual Assault committee has contacted the Title IX Coordinators at most major public universities and colleges to determine what their policies are regarding reporting sexual assault. The goal is to share this information with the public so that parents and future students understand their rights before selecting their college or university.

### **Initiative to identify the needs of Michigan women veterans through a Michigan-specific survey to help advocacy efforts and support efforts using social media:**

The Women Veterans Subcommittee is identifying the needs of Michigan women veterans through a Michigan-specific survey to help advocacy efforts, supporting efforts using social media to help identify and become a resource for veterans and initiating conversations for financial support across Michigan for the veterans' survey.

The subcommittee worked with Moxie Wild, a woman-run company that encourages women to enjoy the outdoors, to create events solely for our state's female veterans. The two events, kayaking the Pere Marquette River in June and a foraging day hike in Manistee County in September, filled up quickly.

Commissioner Renee Haley was instrumental in the passing of House Bill 5394 that amended the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate Business Route 127 in Clare County as the "SPC Robert Friese Memorial Highway." Commissioner Haley also provided testimony in support of House Resolution 0336, which declared June 15, 2018 as Women Veterans Recognition Day in the state of Michigan.

In June, Commissioner Renee Haley was voted in to the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers as the Women Veterans Representative, making her the third person from Michigan on the executive committee.

Commissioner Renee Haley was nominated and elected to the National Association of Women Veterans. She also participated in the Inforum Next4Vets leadership training, which is a great program that helps develop a veteran's leadership skills.

Executive Director Engelman, along with Erika Hoover from the Department of Military Veterans Affairs (DMVA) are in preliminary planning stages for a 5k Run/Walk event in June 2020 in Lansing to support Women Veterans Recognition Month.

## **Meetings:**

We held four quarterly meetings of the Michigan Women's Commission:

- 1) January 23 in Lansing where subcommittees focused on initiatives and goals.
- 2) April 10 in Holland where Jodi Owczarski, Director of Sales and Member Engagement of the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce and Sally Laukitis, Executive Director of the Holland Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, spoke to the commission about Tulip Time in Holland and how the chamber provides several women-specific programs, such as affinity groups for women, a leadership program and certifications to learn more about serving on a corporate board.
- 3) August 21 in Bay Harbor where Congressman Jack Bergman from District 1 spoke about his efforts in trying to increase women's participation in the labor force through two bills that would establish a national paid parental leave program within the social security administration. Regina Gasco Bentley, Tribal Chairwoman, Eric Hemenway, Archives and Records Director, and Shiloh Slomsky, SEEDS Project Director of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians also spoke to the commission to share the history of the Odawa in the Bay Harbor area and discuss their Sustainable Employment and Economic Strategies (SEED) program, an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Grant that provides CNC (computerized numeric coding) to the public of northern Michigan.

4) October 23 in Battle Creek.

Other Activities:

Executive Director Engelman spoke at the Connecting Cultures to Business Luncheon in Livonia on a panel where they discussed diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias in the workplace.

Executive Director Engelman spoke at the Council of Michigan Foundations 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Grand Rapids in October. She was a speaker for the break out session “If Women Led the World: A Vision for a Women’s Policy Agenda”. The session explored creating an agenda in support of women’s and girls’ issues that could be supported and funded.

Executive Director Engelman was a member of First Lady Sue Snyder’s Campus Sexual Assault Workgroup that aimed to prevent sexual assault on Michigan campuses through the “Let’s End Campus Sexual Assault” initiative. Department Specialist Jackie Debusschere designed the layout of the first handbook, “Campus Sexual Assault Rights and Options Booklet”, which was made available online and distributed to all Michigan college campuses.

We maintained an active social media presence to communicate with all Michiganders with our website, Twitter and Facebook postings, with focus on supporting our initiatives. Through social media efforts, we have increased our Facebook followers from 959 to 1,041 (9% increase) and our Twitter followers from 1,620 to 1,705 (5% increase) over last year. The Michigan Women Veterans Forum also saw a 4% increase in members.

Executive Director Engelman was able to generate media interest regarding the early destruction of rape kits which included Lapeer County based on an CNN report in November. Interviews and/or statements were published in November and December by CNN, WNEM TV5 and Radio WILS.

As has been the practice of the Michigan Women’s Commission to report all out-of-state travel, we can report that we did not attend any events or activities out of the State of Michigan on behalf of the Michigan Women’s Commission.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Engelman  
Executive Director  
Michigan Women’s Commission