



Michigan Women's Commission Public Meeting Minutes
Grand Rapids, MI
Tuesday, April 18, 2023
1:00 PM-3:00 PM

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
 - Commissioners Present: Vice Chair Dr. Geneva Williams, Danielle Atkinson, Lisa Cawley, Tamara Faber, Karin Hopman, Dr. Tracy Joshua, Faye Nelson, Vivian Pickard, Kelli Saunders, D. Sue Townsel
 - Commissioners Absent: Charity Dean, Katie Horvath, Muna Jondy, Chair Dr. Sabala Mandava, Misti Rice
 - Guests Present: John Cauchi of Disability Advocates of Kent County, Chana Edmond-Verley of Vibrant Futures
 - Staff Present: Chief Executive Officer Cheryl Bergman, Chief Strategy Officer Shannon Garrett, AmeriCorps VISTA Anna Rose Benson.

- II. Approval of Agenda
 - Commissioner Pickard moved; Commissioner Saunders seconded. Minutes were approved by consent.

- III. Guest Speaker:
 - Commissioner Hopman welcomed John Cauchi, Community Education Specialist for Disability Advocates of Kent County. Cauchi presented on disability awareness, inclusion, and equity, as well as general statistics about people with disabilities.

- IV. Chief Executive Officer's Report: CEO Bergman
 - Bergman announced that Commissioner Williams has been appointed Vice Chair of the Commission by Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Bergman shared the intention that Williams be named Chair and Commissioner Townsel be named Vice Chair in the next round of appointments to the Commission.
 - Bergman reported that immediately before the public meeting, Commissioners volunteered in a mock job interview event held by Disability Advocates of Kent County for local high school students. Bergman also reported that Milinda Ysasi, Grand Rapids City Commissioner and CEO of Grow, welcomed Commissioners to a dinner the previous night, where Senator Majority Leader Winnie Brinks and Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Welch shared their insights about women in government leadership.

- Bergman reported that MI Tri-Share Child Care was made a permanent ongoing program with the state's Fiscal Year 23 (FY23) budget. Tri-Share is currently operating in 59 of Michigan's 83 counties, with 13 facilitator hubs, 150 participating employers, and serving 400 children and over 300 families. Per the Governor's office, Bergman is working with stakeholders to develop a five-year implementation plan for MI Tri-Share, with a goal of announcing the plan this summer. The planning process is intended to address how many children can be served by MI Tri-Share and what the cost and administration of the program would need to look like to be successful.
- Bergman introduced guest speaker Chana Edmond-Verley, CEO of Vibrant Futures, the Tri-Share Facilitator Hub for Kent County.
 - Edmond-Verley discussed the progress of MI Tri-Share Child Care in the region and shared several stories of local mothers and employers who are benefitting from the Tri-Share program.

V. Chief Strategy Officer's Report: CSO Garrett

- Garrett disclosed that the meeting is being audio-recorded in compliance with Michigan's Open Meetings Act.
- Garrett reported that the Commission has completed the MI FARE project, funded by a Fostering Access, Rights and Equity (FARE) grant from U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau. In the fall of 2022, the Commission received a \$350,000 FARE grant to talk with women in low-wage-paying jobs about workplace rights, public benefits, and other opportunities. The Commission's goal was to reach 50,000 women by March 2023. The MI FARE project ended up reaching approximately 108,500 women. Garrett thanked community partners Detroit Disability Power, Mothering Justice, and United Way for Southeastern MI. These partners were responsible for doubling the intended reach of this program. The goal was also met by a series of public webinars that were recorded and remain available on the Commission's YouTube Channel and on the Commission's MI FARE webpage at www.michigan.gov/fare. Garrett indicated the next step is to secure additional funding to continue and expand the FARE project.
- Garrett shared that the MI FARE project contributed to the State of Michigan's goal of enrolling 40,000 children in Child Development and Care, the state's child care subsidy program. As of February, the state has 32,227 children served, representing 19,226 families. The state is now moving into the next phase of its outreach campaign with targeted paid media through the work of the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
- Garrett reported that May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) will host several informative webinars, in addition to its monthly Mental Health in the Workplace series. The Commission is partnering with LEO on two of the May webinars: one on menopause in the workplace and one on domestic violence in the workplace.
- Garrett shared that 365 people have participated in the Commission's 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge since its inception. The Commission will run two 21-Day cohorts in May, hosted by Commissioner Jondy and Commissioner Townsel. Garrett asked for Commissioner volunteers to host cohorts in September and November.

- Garrett reported that student assistants Rachael Bailey, Olivia Howard, and Modupe Olatunji transitioned out at the end of January 2023, and the Commission welcomed Anna Rose Benson as a new AmeriCorps VISTA, who will be helping with stakeholder outreach until early 2024.
- Garrett announced that the Commission published a special edition of its stakeholder email update (or Enewsletter) in March for Women’s History Month and published its regular quarterly stakeholder update in April.
- Garrett thanked Commissioners for representing the Commission in a number of speaking engagements throughout the state for Women’s History Month.
- Garrett reported that the Commission had several opinion articles placed since the last public meeting, including an op-ed on domestic violence in the workplace co-authored by Chair Mandava and Holly Jasinski of Resilience: Advocates for Ending Violence, one about Latina Equal Pay Day co-authored by Chair Mandava and Michigan Hispanic-Latino Commission Vice Chair Sonya Hernandez, a celebration of the historic number of women sworn into the Michigan Legislature by Vice Chair Williams, an op-ed marking the historic expansion of Michigan’s civil rights to include the LGBTQ+ community by Commissioners Cawley and Rice, and a piece about how Michigan’s recent tax relief boosts women’s economic security by Chair Mandava.
- Garrett ended by asking Commissioners for updates to bios on the Commission’s website and noting that the Commission may host an event related to Women’s Equality Day on August 26.

VI. Report on Unlocking Opportunities Committee: Commissioner Saunders

- Saunders reminded Commissioners that the Unlocking Opportunities Committee focuses on removing barriers to work for women and has previously concentrated most of its attention on child care.
- Saunders reported that the committee is continuing to conduct research on the roles and needs of women in other forms of caregiving, including elder care and caring for family members with disabilities. The committee received a presentation from a Wayne State University professor researching these issues, as well as a presentation from the AARP about recent findings related to caring for people in their older age.

VII. Report on Visible Authentic Leadership Committee: Commissioner Williams

- Williams reminded Commissioners that the Visible Authentic Leadership Committee focuses on increasing the number of women serving in publicly visible leadership roles.
- Williams shared that the Commission announced the new quad co-chairs of the Bipartisan Legislative Council – referred to as “Women’s Council” – at the Governor’s February Galentine’s Day event. The new co-chairs are Representatives Julie Brixie and Sarah Lightner and Senators Michele Hoyenga and Kristen McDonald Rivet. The first Women’s Council meeting of the new legislative session will be held on May 9, 2023.
- Williams reported that the appointments database project – with a goal of matching interested women to open positions on local boards and commissions around the state – is currently on hold for lack of staffing capacity.

- Williams announced that Commissioner Pickard will become Chair of the Visible Authentic Leadership Committee in July.

VIII. Report on Financial Freedom Committee: Commissioner Nelson

- Nelson reminded Commissioners that the Financial Freedom Committee concentrates on actions to close wage gaps and increase access to income for more Michigan women.
- Nelson announced that the Financial Freedom Committee met on April 3 and addressed three topics: women and apprenticeship programs, the MI FARE project, and the upcoming International Women's Forum convention in Detroit.
- Nelson reported that of the 22,000 Michiganders currently participating in registered apprenticeship programs, only 2,000 are women, and those women are mainly in low-wage-earning careers, such as child care and hospitality. The Commission's goal is to figure out how to direct women to the higher paying job opportunities through apprenticeships.
- Nelson asked Commissioner Cawley to share about the apprenticeship program at her employer, Accenture. Cawley reported Accenture developed its own apprenticeship programs with an "earn while you learn" model where the person is paid to participate in the program for 12 months. Cawley shared that 95% of Accenture's apprentices graduate and find salaries for entry-level positions ranging from \$50k-\$60k per year.
- Nelson remarked that to bring awareness to opportunities like Accenture and the state's Registered Apprenticeships, it is vital to leverage a program that is already in place – the MI FARE project. Nelson also shared that further research is needed around reliable transportation and housing to see how those factors play a role in apprenticeship registration and retention.
- Nelson echoed CSO Garrett's goals for future funding for the MI FARE work and what that will mean for the women who benefit from the project because it helps connect members of the community with resources that are available to women.
- Nelson announced that the International Women's Forum will hold a Global Leadership Conference in Detroit from October 4-6. Details will be shared with the Commission when available, as well as at the next public meeting.

IX. Report on Committee on Implicit Bias Awareness: CSO Garrett for Chair Mandava

- Garrett reminded Commissioners that the Committee on Implicit Bias Awareness is an internal oversight committee to ensure that the Commission prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in its work.
- Garrett reported that the Commission is planning a DEI workshop specifically for Commissioners to be held in conjunction with an upcoming public meeting.

X. Old Business

- Location for September 19, 2023 Meeting will be Detroit, MI.

XI. Approval of Minutes of October 18, 2022 Meeting

- Commissioner Faber noted a correction that she was in attendance for the previous public meeting.

- Commissioner Joshua moved; Commissioner Cawley seconded. Minutes were approved by consent.

XII. New Business

- None

XIII. Next Meeting

- Next public meeting Tuesday, September 19, in Detroit.

XIV. Ex Officio and Liaison Reports

- Emily Laidlaw, Director of the Child Care Licensing Bureau (CCLB) at the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), announced that since the Governor announced a goal of 1,000 new or expanded child care providers by the end of 2024, LARA has seen 683 new licenses, 528 expanded centers, with family expanded capacity at 543 and group expanded capacity at 578 – for a total of 2,332 at the latest total. CCLB’s Our Strong Start (OSS) started in-person Grant Workshops in various cities. OSS has over 2,300 inquiries and the team has provided over 928 technical assistances to providers. OSS is scheduling Tutorial Grant Workshops across Michigan and also has in-person Access Fairs scheduled through June 2023 and added Virtual Access Fairs in communities that have low capacity and may be hard to reach. LARA created and continues to lead the MI Trades Partnership, representing a historic partnership of 11 state agencies collaborating to recruit and retain skilled and professional trades candidates for opportunities that exist in State government and across the private sector. LARA is also partnering with the Department of Corrections and Department of State to work with returning citizens. In particular, LARA is working with the licensing exam vendor to explore opportunities for licensure exams for returning citizens pre-release.
- Erica Hoover, from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, announced that June 12 is Women Veterans Day, celebrating women who have served in the military. Details will be forthcoming about a women veterans conference.
- Jaclyn Merchant, from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), announced that EGLE is hosting the first Environmental Justice Conference on June 21 and 22 at University of Detroit Mercy. Details on EGLE’s website at www.michigan.gov/egle.

XV. Public Comment

- State Representative Carol Glanville introduced herself to the Commission. Rep. Glanville reported that she is the Chair of the House Higher Education Committee, focused on higher education and post-secondary education options, and also serves on the House Education Committee, the Families, Children and Seniors Committee, the Health Policy Committee, and the Health Policy Subcommittee on Behavioral Health. Rep. Glanville stressed that she is willing to connect whenever needed.

XVI. Meeting Adjourned

- Meeting adjourned by consent.