

WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Annual Report 2025



West Virginia Women's Commission
Jill Upson, Acting Executive Director
2025

The West Virginia Women's Commission

The West Virginia Women's Commission was created by the West Virginia Legislature in 1977 to advocate for women and educate the public on issues relating to women. As an office of the West Virginia Department of Human Services (DoHS), the Commission seeks to improve the legal, social, economic, educational, and political status of women by working with businesses, government agencies, and non-profit groups. Eleven citizen members, appointed by the Governor, serve as Commissioners for three-year terms. They determine the Commission's goals and projects. Seven state department heads, or designated representatives, advise and support the Commission as ex officio members. Commission meetings are held quarterly and are open to the public.

Our Vision: West Virginia women and girls will prosper and have social, economic, and political equality.

Our Mission: Elevating the power and potential of West Virginia women and girls.

Jill Upson, Acting Executive Director

Governor-Appointed Commissioners

Kenyatta Grant, Chair (Kanawha County)
 Michelle Barnes-Russell (Berkeley County)
 Belinda Biafore (Fayette County)
 Elizabeth Critch (Monongalia County)
 Leah Glover (Kanawha County)
 Kameron Miller (Kanawha County)
 Beth Redden (Raleigh County)
 Sierra Sovine (Kanawha County)
 Samantha Willis (Kanawha County)
 Beth Wolfe (Putnam County)
 1 Vacant Position

Ex Officio Members

Vacant – West Virginia Department of Education
 Angela Sundstrom – West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
 Tia Welch – West Virginia Human Rights Commission
 Vacant – West Virginia Department of Human Services
 Callie Saunders (alt. Joan Webb) - WV Division of Labor
 Bobbie Wisniewski – West Virginia Division of Personnel
 Candace Kraus – Office of the Attorney General

Duties of the West Virginia Women’s Commission, per W. Va. Code §29-20-2:

- (a) To review and study the status of women in this state;
- (b) To recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women in public and private employment and in the exercise of their civil and political rights;
- (c) To promote more effective methods for enabling women to develop their skills, to continue their education, and to be retrained;
- (d) To strengthen home life by directing attention to critical problems confronting women as wives, mothers, homemakers, and workers;
- (e) To make surveys in the fields of, but not limited to, education, social services, labor laws and employment policies, law enforcement, health, new and expanded services of benefit to women, legal rights, family relations, and volunteer services;
- (f) To secure appropriate recognition of women's accomplishments and contributions to this state;
- (g) To disseminate information for the purpose of educating the public as to the existence and functions of the commission and as to matters of general beneficial interest to women; and
- (h) To advise, consult, and cooperate with other offices of the Department of Human Services and other agencies of state government, and to receive assistance therefrom, in the development of activities and programs of beneficial interest to women and on matters relating generally to women.

Operations

- **Quarterly Meetings** — The Commission holds four quarterly meetings to discuss the business of the Commission and promote issues of importance to women.
- **Planning Meeting** — Coinciding with one of the quarterly meetings, the planning meeting is a time for the Commissioners, ex officio members, and staff to evaluate the fiscal year and strategic plan.
- **Committee Meetings** — The Commissioners, ex officio members, members of the public, and staff meet to plan programs, publications, and make recommendations to the Commission for approval.
- **Executive Director** — Coordinates the activities of the Commission and the day-to-day operations of the Commission.

Key Activities and Accomplishments in 2025

- Hosted virtual community “Talk and Tea” events with guest subject matter experts who discussed topics such as “Socialization and Movement for a Healthy Life”, and “Stress Tolerance”.



- Held quarterly meetings, which allowed the members to examine strategic goals and priorities for the calendar year. Additionally, at each meeting, committee chairs briefed the full commission on their work and shared relevant news and information.

- Participated in the “Women of Distinction” luncheon held in Harrison County. Acting Executive Director Jill Upson was the keynote speaker at this annual event hosted by the Progressive Women’s Association (PWA). During her speech, she emphasized the importance of volunteering and the difference it makes to individuals within each community. In addition to honoring Black History Month, the event also recognized ten (10) West Virginia women who were chosen by the PWA Board of Directors for outstanding community service.



- Maintained social media presence and engagement by featuring issues affecting women. Some of these issues include heart health, cancer prevention, mental health, maternal health, sexual assault & domestic violence awareness, breastfeeding, and voting.
- Continued to provide administrative support for the State of West Virginia’s Suffragist Memorial Committee, which is charged with creating a memorial on the State Capitol grounds honoring West Virginians whose efforts helped guarantee a women’s right to vote in the United States.

Financial Summary

For the period ending December 31, 2025, the WVWC had a cash balance of \$8,051.62 and an operating balance of \$40,294.81.

WVWC CASH BALANCE REPORT					
	Budget Balance	Actual Cash Balance			Budget Balance
5450 Budget	\$3,510.00			0403 Budget	\$0.00
5450 Expenses	\$0.00			0403 Expenses	\$0.00
5450 Encumbr.	\$22.22			0403 Encumbr.	\$0.00
5450 Balances	\$3,487.78	\$8,051.62		0403 Balances	\$0.00

5065/5362 /0403-00201 balance		150,000.00
2021 Expense		\$ 39,853.98
2022 5362/5065 Expense		\$ 7,418.71
2022 0403-00201		\$ 37,264.30
2023 5362/5065 Expense to date		\$ 8,522.13
2023 0403-00201 Expense to date		\$ 12,688.40
2024 5362/5065 Expense to date		\$ 1,976.83
2025 5362/5450 Expense to date		\$834.80
2026 5362/5450 Expense to date		\$1,146.04
Remaining balance		\$ 40,294.81

West Virginia Women's Commission

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www.wvdhhr.org/wvwc/