

2024 Annual Report: DEEPENING THE DIALOGUE



FLORIDA COMMISSION
on the STATUS of WOMEN

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



On behalf of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, I am honored to present our 2024 Annual Report: Deepening the Dialogue. This year's report reflects our unwavering commitment to fostering a state where women and families are empowered, equipped with opportunities to thrive, and contribute to a more prosperous Florida.

Established under Section 14.24, Florida Statutes, the Commission is charged with studying the evolving roles of women in society, addressing the socioeconomic factors that shape their status, nurturing individual potential, and encouraging women to lead boldly. Guided by this mandate, our mission remains clear: to enable Florida's women and girls to achieve their fullest potential through education, collaboration, and celebration.

In 2024, the Commission prioritized building bridges with local community organizations to advance meaningful conversations and resource education on issues vital to women and families across Florida. Through our roundtable discussions in Jacksonville, Miami, Fort Myers, and Tallahassee, we partnered with area experts to shine a light on positive strides in healthcare, economic security, leadership development, and housing, which are the top issues cited in our most recent statewide survey. These discussions not only identified challenges but also showcased actionable solutions already making a difference in these critical areas.

This report encapsulates the highlights of our work, including:

- Insights from our educational campaigns and roundtable discussions, enriched by the perspectives of esteemed panelists;
- Collaborative initiatives that amplify our impact through strong partnerships; and
- Celebrations of individuals across Florida whose efforts are driving progress for women and families

While the report will be shared with top officials as required, our ambition extends beyond statutory obligations. We aim to reach a diverse audience of policymakers, government agencies, community organizations, and individuals. Most importantly, we hope its message inspires action that enhances the lives of all women and families across our great state.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to create a brighter future for Florida's women and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Day". The script is fluid and elegant, with a large, stylized 'L' and 'D'.

Lori Day
Chair, Florida Commission on the Status of Women
Director, CGI Technology

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"Taking on the role of Executive Director at the Florida Commission on the Status of Women is truly a dream job for me," said Diana. "I am honored to work alongside the incredible team at FCSW and our community partners as we continue to make meaningful progress on behalf of women and families across Florida. Together, we will strive for the changes we need to create a brighter, more prosperous future for all."



WELCOME TO OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) is excited to announce Diana Roman as its new Executive Director. With over 28 years of dedicated service in Hispanic/Latinx outreach and social work, Diana brings a wealth of experience, compassion, and commitment to her new role. Her previous role at the Hispanic Outreach Center in Pinellas County, where she spearheaded community programs, provided critical services, and organized initiatives to address a wide range of social issues, has been one of the cornerstones of her career.

One of Diana's key accomplishments includes organizing and leading the committee for the "Embracing Our Changing Community" conference, a landmark event that brought together thought leaders, community members, and advocates to address the challenges and opportunities facing Florida's changing demographic. She has also been instrumental in the development and implementation of educational programs that focus on critical issues, such as access to healthcare, economic empowerment, racial and gender equity, and violence prevention. These programs have had a profound impact on individuals, families, and communities, particularly those who have been historically underrepresented or overlooked.

As Executive Director of the FCSW, Diana is poised to build on the Commission's long-standing mission of empowering women and girls across Florida. She is deeply committed to fostering a more equitable and supportive environment for all women in the state, and her vision for the future of the Commission includes expanding outreach efforts, strengthening community partnerships, and addressing the critical needs of women facing barriers to success.

Please join us in welcoming Diana Roman to the Florida Commission on the Status of Women! We look forward to working together to achieve meaningful change, empower women, and create lasting impact for future generations.

2024 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) had a successful and impactful 2024, continuing its mission to advance the rights, opportunities, and recognition of women across the state. This year's initiatives focused on collaboration, education, celebration, and organizational growth, demonstrating the Commission's commitment to empowering women and fostering a more equitable Florida.

Collaboration

In 2024, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) significantly strengthened its collaborative efforts across local, state, and national levels, building impactful partnerships to enhance opportunities for women and families throughout Florida.

The Commission sponsored several key events and initiatives that aimed to elevate the status of women in the state. FCSW supported the **Gen W Leadership Conference**, where it shared its *Voices of Florida Women* study and its 2024 events calendar, while also providing three college-aged women with free attendance. Additionally, FCSW sponsored the **Oasis Center's Annual Celebration of Women & Girls** in October, a fundraiser that supports programs addressing youth crisis intervention and community engagement. In partnership with **Elevate Women of North Florida**, FCSW co-hosted the Jacksonville Roundtable Discussion, facilitating a workshop on women's career advancement strategies. The Commission also participated in a panel discussion organized by **See Her Run**, encouraging women to pursue public office in an effort to increase female representation in government. Furthermore, FCSW presented a talk at the **General Federation of Women's Clubs**, highlighting the importance of collaboration to achieve common goals.

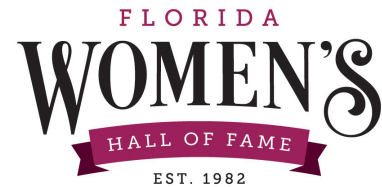
On the national stage, FCSW deepened its engagement with influential organizations such as the **National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW)** and the **Association of Women Business Centers**, exchanging best practices, innovative solutions, and research insights that furthered the Commission's ability to serve Florida's women and families. Our commission chair served on the NACW board, amplifying Florida's voice on women's issues at a national level.

The Commission also became an active member of the **Servicemembers and Veterans Working Group**, a national initiative focused on addressing the legal needs of Servicemembers, Veterans, and Military Survivors. This collaboration resulted in the creation of a comprehensive manual, launched on Veterans Day, which provides essential information on relevant laws and available resources. It can be accessed at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdfl/servicemembers-and-veterans-working-group>. FCSW currently serves on two subcommittees within this initiative: the **Mental Health Subcommittee**, which focuses on mental health resources, and the **Yellow Ribbon Subcommittee**, dedicated to outreach initiatives.

Through these efforts, FCSW made significant strides in enhancing the lives of women and families across Florida, fostering collaboration, sharing valuable resources, and tackling key issues at both the state and national levels.

Celebration

In June, Governor Ron DeSantis chose three outstanding women as 2023 inductees into the **Florida Women's Hall of Fame**.



May Mann Jennings
(formerly of Jacksonville)
– wife of former Governor William Sherman Jennings and a founding member of the League of Women Voters



Graci McGillicuddy
(Sarasota) – advocate of children's rights and an established philanthropist



Penny Thompson
(formerly of Miami)
– leader in women's aviation in the 1940s and 1950s

These women will be inducted during a special ceremony on January 15, 2025 at the Senate Building in Tallahassee. The Hall of Fame Committee has chosen another slate of ten phenomenal women as finalists for consideration for the 2024 class, and those names have been submitted to the Governor for his selection. More detailed information regarding our Florida Women's Hall of Fame members and upcoming induction ceremony can be found on our website at www.flwomenshalloffame.org.



A standout event in 2024 was the **Spirit of Community Awards Luncheon**, held on November 22 at Pasco Hernando State College. The luncheon honored 14 individuals for their exceptional contributions to Florida's communities, with over 100 attendees, including elected officials and community leaders. Each recipient was presented with personalized recognition letters from local and state elected officials.



The notable honorees included:

Zach Abel (Clearwater), who facilitates over 400 annual philanthropic events.

Belinthia Berry (Tampa), helps to place low-income disadvantaged residents in career programs to self-sufficiency.

Aadya Chaudhary (Weston), cofounder of the nonprofit organization, uEmpower.

April Cobb (Tampa), CEO of Blueprint for Girls, mentoring middle school girls.

Vangie Felix (Tallahassee), volunteer creator of Florida Women's Hall of Fame plaques.

Mitzi Henley (Ft. Walton Beach), founder of the Okaloosa County Women's LEAD Summits on human trafficking and mental health.

Ananis Makar (Plant City), migrant advocate and Vice President of Tampa Hispanic Heritage Inc.

Susan MiguelToreña (Tampa), champion for survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual abuse.

Lila Star Morgan (Lithia), youth empowerment leader and founder of Operation Dandelion.

Debbie Murray (Zephyrhills), youth counselor and community volunteer.

Earlishia Oates (Tampa), founder of I-Supplies Foundation, improving living conditions for low-income families.

Cathye Onur (Jacksonville), volunteer assisting uninsured adults through Volunteers in Medicine.

Sunny Royal-Boyd (Tampa), founder of Leading Ladies, supporting women overcoming domestic violence.

Kendra Smith (Jacksonville), Self-Love and Confidence Coach empowering women.

The luncheon was made possible by 11 generous sponsors and our Awards and Recognition Committee Members: Rosie Paulsen, Committee Chair; Sharon Hanlon; Candace Falsetto; Leda Kelly; Jenny Pereira; and Lori Day, Commission Chair. It was a memorable celebration of community-driven impact and unity.

Education

A key focus for the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) in 2024 was the **Voter Education Campaign**, aimed at encouraging voter participation and civic engagement among women. Through a combination of community outreach, social media efforts, and partnerships with local organizations and the Florida Department of State, the campaign successfully assisted thousands of women in navigating voter registration, early voting, understanding amendments, who their representatives were by location, and the election process. Additionally, the Commission continued its educational initiatives through social media, highlighting the achievements of Florida Women's Hall of Fame members of Hispanic descent in celebration of **Hispanic Heritage Month**.

The **Women in Public Service History Contest** celebrated Florida's amazing women such as police officers, doctors, nurses, firefighters, and teachers (among many others) who work hard every day to help their communities be healthier, safer, and smarter. The art contest for elementary school students, the essay contest for middle school students, and the video contest for high school students present the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the many ways that women's history has become woven into the fabric of our state and national

story. Sharing the narratives of women's lives encourages girls and young women to think larger and bolder, and gives boys and men a fuller understanding of what women can accomplish. There is real power in hearing women's stories, as it inspires today's generations and opens the way to the future.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women successfully completed a **series of roundtable discussions** hosted by the Public Policy Committee across Florida in 2024, engaging community members, local leaders, and stakeholders to discuss key issues impacting women and families in the state. These roundtables focused on a range of critical topics such as healthcare, economic security, mental health, financial literacy, and workforce development. A special Veterans Roundtable was held in December, focusing on mental health resources and career development for veterans. This event addressed the unique challenges veterans face in transitioning to civilian life, providing valuable insights and connecting them with necessary resources for mental health support and career advancement. These discussions helped reinforce the Commission's initiatives while fostering stronger connections among local organizations and community leaders.

Organizational Developments

In 2024, the FCSW selected and hired a new Executive Director after a thorough search. The new director is focused on expanding the Commission's mission, strengthening partnerships, and advancing initiatives that uplift Florida's women.

The *Listening to the Voices of Florida Women* survey was addressed through roundtable discussions, allowing the Commission to gather crucial feedback from women across the state. The survey helps shape the FCSW's priorities, ensuring that its initiatives reflect the needs and concerns of Florida's diverse female population.

In June 2024, the FCSW Executive Committee met in Sanford to review and update the Commission's strategic plan for 2024–2027. The new plan focuses on addressing key issues affecting Florida women and families, emphasizing data-driven insights, recognition of women's contributions, and strengthening the Commission's statewide presence. The committee also worked on updating the mission and vision statements for the Commission, which were approved by the full commission at the second quarterly meeting. The 2024–2027 strategic plan ensures that the FCSW continues to lead efforts that empower Florida women and families, with a focus on data, recognition, and statewide engagement.

Key Priorities for 2024–2027

1. **Data Collection & Dissemination:** Conduct statewide surveys and create an online data repository to inform stakeholders on issues affecting women.
2. **Recognition of Women's Contributions:** Expand the Florida Women's Hall of Fame engagement and highlight grassroots contributions.
3. **Establish FCSW as the Premier Statewide Organization:** Strengthen partnerships, increase media presence, and launch *Florida Women's Quarterly Newsletter*.

Strategic Actions

- Conduct surveys and strengthen research partnerships.
- Increase Hall of Fame Inductees visibility and recognition through social media education campaigns, and engage past Hall of Fame, Spirit of Community, and History Contest Honorees in future FCSW events and nominations.
- Expand outreach through media and partnerships, with regular updates in *Florida Women's Quarterly*.

Thank you to everyone who supported and contributed to the Commission's efforts in 2024. We look forward to another year of progress and celebration.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION



JACKSONVILLE ROUNDTABLE

Commissioners Lori Day and Jennifer Guy-Hudson hosted the Jacksonville Roundtable event to bring resourceful information about positive change happening in North Florida. The Jacksonville Roundtable Panel Discussion, led by Commissioner Guy Hudson, centered on crucial topics such as healthcare and economic security, both top issues cited by women in the community in the 2022 Voices of Florida Women's survey. With women representing the majority of the uninsured or underinsured in Duval County, the discussion highlighted the ongoing struggles to secure financial and economic security. Prominent local leaders participated in the panel or breakout sessions, including Demika Jackson, Chair of the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women; Dr. April Murdaugh, CEO of Woman to Woman Financial; Wendy Norfleet, Ph.D., CEO of Norfleet Integrated Solutions; Jackie Perrault, Director of the Association of Women Business Centers; Heather Quick, CEO & Owner of Florida Women's Law Group; Jennifer Ryan, MPH, CEO of Volunteers in Medicine; Lynn Sherman, MHA, CCHL, Executive Director of Health Programs for the Office of Mayor Donna Deegan; and Angela Timberlake, President of Elevate Women and Founder of Brilliant Leadership Group.

Lynn Sherman highlighted Mayor Donna Deegan's health initiatives, which prioritize improving healthcare access in Jacksonville through programs that address primary care needs and reduce unnecessary emergency room visits, including the use of telehealth for ER diversion. A triage nurse assists individuals calling through a city-wide hotline, coordinating with an ER doctor when needed, and referring uninsured individuals to JaxCare Connect for follow-up care through safety-net clinics. Other initiatives include expanding community health workers to improve maternal and child health, particularly in reducing infant mortality rates, and addressing mental health by collaborating with the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. The addition of two new crisis centers in Duval County aims to expand local resources for mental health support. These efforts are part of a broader plan to address healthcare disparities and improve access for underserved populations.

Jennifer Ryan, MPH, discussed the work of Volunteers in Medicine, a free clinic that serves the working-uninsured, focusing on providing preventative care to avoid costly medical issues later. Ryan emphasized the need to address healthcare early, as medical costs are a leading cause of bankruptcy in the U.S. By prioritizing early intervention, the clinic seeks to alleviate financial burdens and improve long-term health outcomes. Jackie Perrault shared the efforts of the Association of Women Business Centers, which provides free resources, business coaching, and mentorship to women entrepreneurs.

She discussed how the pandemic led to a rise in solopreneurs and highlighted the advocacy that led to \$420,000 in funding for 150 Women's Business Centers nationwide, helping support women in business. Perrault also shared how Florida's Women's Business Centers were successful in securing state funding for the first time, aiming to further support women entrepreneurs across the state.

Angela Timberlake highlighted Jacksonville's growing recognition as a top city for business and job seekers, with the city ranked #1 in the U.S. for job opportunities and #5 for international business. However, she emphasized the need for greater diversity in executive leadership in the city, particularly to ensure that leadership reflects Jacksonville's diverse population.

Participants had the opportunity to engage in more focused and intimate conversations during a series of breakout sessions. Each session was designed to dive deeper into specific topics, offering expert guidance and actionable strategies for personal and professional growth. The breakout sessions included **Obstacles to Opportunities: Conquering the Professional Rock Wall** with Angela Timberlake and Dr. Wendy Norfleet; **Creating Wealth with What You Have** with Dr. April Murdaugh; **The New Happily Ever After** with Heather Quick; and **She Thrives, She Leads: Bridging the Gap in Women's Health and Business** with Jackie Perrault and Jennifer Ryan. These sessions provided opportunities for deeper engagement on topics that empower women to thrive in both their personal and professional lives.

The panel and breakout discussions provided a platform for women and families in Northeast Florida to learn more about what is being done within their community to address pressing challenges, gain access to empowering knowledge and resources, and emphasized the importance of collaboration and innovative solutions to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in the region. The event demonstrated the determination of local leaders to improve healthcare access, economic opportunities, and representation for women in business.



MIAMI ROUNDTABLE

On August 26, 2024, Commissioners Maria D. Garcia and Candace Falsetto hosted the Florida Commission on the Status of Women's "Financial Literacy Roundtable" at Kozyak Tropin and Throckmorton in Miami, Florida. This impactful event attracted over 40 women from diverse industries and backgrounds for an in-person

luncheon, designed to empower and educate women on key financial topics. The event also provided a virtual streaming option, ensuring broader participation and engagement.



The Roundtable focused on essential topics in financial literacy, with a panel of distinguished women leaders from the financial and banking sectors. Panelists included Fidelma Leonor Farinas-Cobas, Senior Vice President (PNC Private Bank), Tiffany C. Gonzalez, CPA, CEO (Accounting To Scale), Jeannie Marmol, MBA (VIM Wealth Management), and Gretel Perez, CPA, Partner (PAAST Accounting Firm), each sharing their expertise in various aspects of personal and business finance. The discussion covered foundational banking principles, investment strategies, and insights into understanding both personal and business tax processes. Attendees gained valuable tools to manage and grow their personal and professional finances with confidence.

In addition to the informative panel discussion, the event provided ample networking opportunities. Attendees connected with each other and built relationships with other women leaders in business, finance, and entrepreneurship. The environment fostered meaningful conversations, allowing participants to exchange experiences and advice while gaining insights into navigating financial challenges and opportunities.

Commissioner Maria D. Garcia shared her reflections on the event, saying, "It was an honor to host the Financial Literacy Roundtable and have the opportunity to connect with women in the business world, while having a robust discussion regarding issues such as investing and banking that are important to women throughout the state of Florida."

The Financial Literacy Roundtable was an essential part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to address the financial needs and challenges facing women throughout the state, supporting their empowerment in both personal and business financial matters.



FORT MYERS ROUNDTABLE



State Representative Jenna Persons-Mulicka hosted a Voices of Florida Women Roundtable on September 18, 2024, at the Collaboratory in Fort Myers, where more than 100 community leaders from Southwest Florida gathered to discuss critical issues affecting women in the region. Among the attendees were Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, local city and county officials, constitutional officers, school board members, and leaders from a variety of local organizations providing housing, healthcare, services for individuals with special needs, and educational and professional development.

The discussion was led by Tessa LaSage, Chief Impact Officer at Collaboratory, a regional community foundation founded in 1976. Collaboratory has taken on a leadership role in coordinating cross-sector coalitions aimed at solving significant social issues in the SWFL community by 2040. Three of the coalitions have been launched, including the FutureMakers Coalition (focused on education and workforce development), the Health & Wellness Coalition, and the Home Coalition (focused on stable and attainable housing).

Workforce Development

A significant part of the conversation was focused on workforce development and the challenges women face in the workforce. Mrs. LaSage shared data showing that out of the 608,000 women in the SWFL region, only 176,500 have a high school diploma, 119,000 have some college education, 66,204 have an associate's degree, and 120,000 have a bachelor's degree. Additionally, 14,000 women are currently unemployed, compared to 10,000 men.

The group discussed the importance of micro-credentialing programs, which allow individuals to acquire specialized skills in a relatively short time. These programs have seen success in the region, but a concern raised was ensuring that employers recognize and value these credentials when hiring or promoting.



Mrs. LaSage emphasized that 62% of those benefiting from the FutureMakers Coalition's efforts to reconnect adults with the training they need to re-enter the workforce are women. This data illustrates how programs like FutureMakers are particularly impactful for women seeking to gain new skills and career opportunities.

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability was another key topic of discussion. The group highlighted the connection between housing, transportation, and other issues such as educational outcomes for children. Mrs. LaSage shared that in an ideal community, 80% of people should spend less than 45% of their income on housing and transportation. However, in SWFL, only 26.6% of people meet this benchmark. The situation is even more pronounced for women, especially single mothers. The high cost of housing and transportation in the region creates significant barriers, making it difficult for many families to achieve financial stability.

	Women Overall	Men Overall	Women of Color	Women White, non-Hispanic
Cost Burden (>30% Income on Housing)				
United States	65.7%	56.4%	68.3%	63.9%
Florida	77.4%	66.1%	78.3%	76.1%
Several Cost Burdened (>50% Income on Housing)				
United State	41.0%	34.1%	43.2%	39.6%
Florida	50.2%	39.2%	50.2%	50.9%

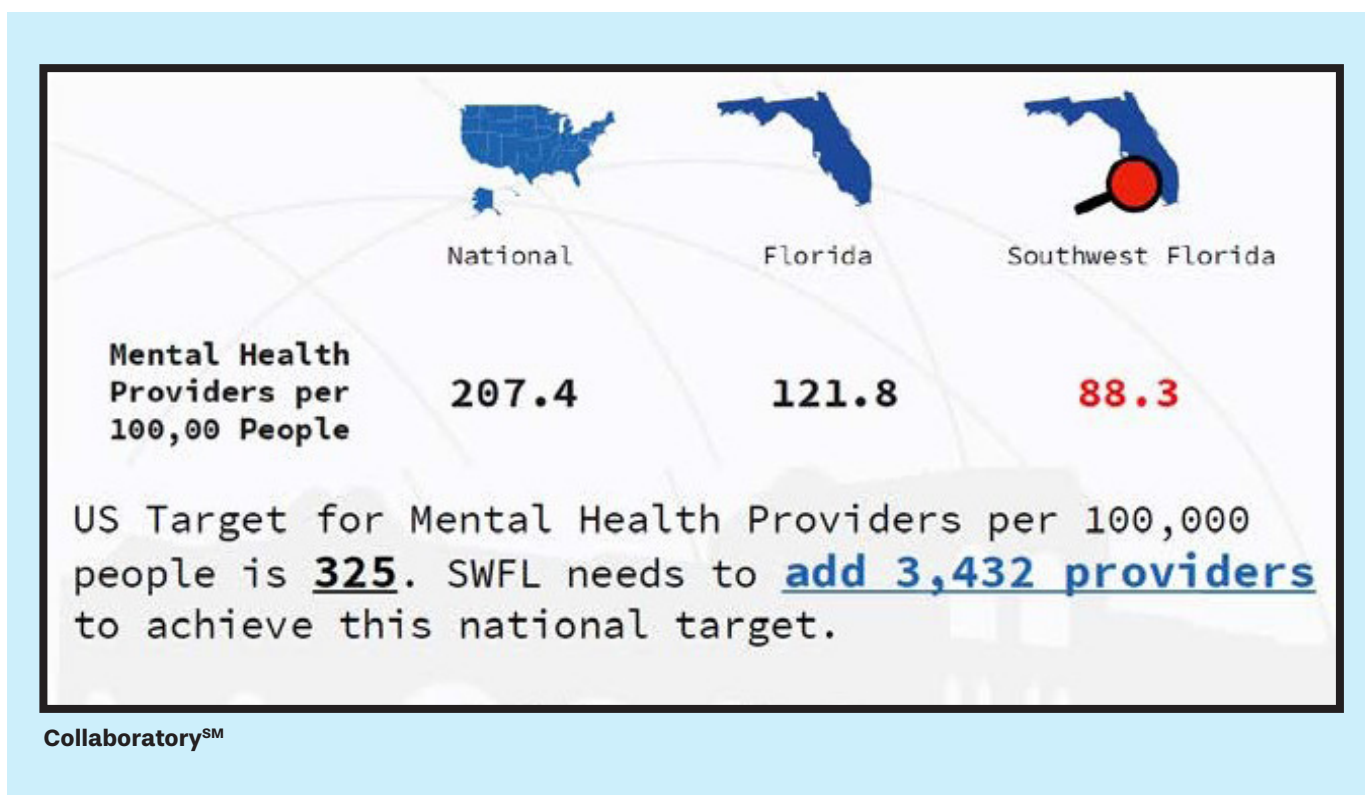
CollaboratorySM



Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

The group also discussed the barriers and challenges related to mental health and substance abuse services in SWFL, particularly the shortage of mental health providers. Mrs. LaSage shared that SWFL has only 88.3 mental health providers per 100,000 people, compared to the state average of 121.8 and the national average of 207.4 per 100,000 people. This gap in mental health care availability is exacerbated by the high demand for services in the region.

Additionally, Mrs. LaSage presented troubling data from 2022, revealing that 80% of female high school students in Lee County have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE), and 68.4% of male students have experienced similar trauma. These ACEs are linked to a variety of long-term mental health challenges, making it essential to expand access to both mental health and substance abuse services for the community.



Moving Forward

The roundtable concluded with a strong commitment to continuing the conversation and staying connected. Attendees expressed a shared eagerness to remain engaged in addressing these challenges facing women in Southwest Florida, underscoring the importance of collaboration and collective action. The event highlighted the need for ongoing conversations among community leaders to find solutions for critical issues, such as workforce development, affordable housing, and mental health care.

Overall, the roundtable served as a platform for discussing data, sharing insights, and collectively identifying ways to tackle the pressing issues affecting women in the SWFL region. The collaboration demonstrated the determination of community leaders to make meaningful progress toward solving these social problems for the future of the region.

VETERANS ROUNDTABLE

To complete the year's Roundtable events, the Commission held a roundtable discussion on December 18, focused on veterans' issues, at the Knott Building of the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee. This event will kick start what will be a series of Veteran's focused events.

Commissioner Belinda Keiser, Chair of the Public Policy Committee, Florida Cabinet Members **Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Núñez** and **Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis**, along with esteemed panel members addressed key transitional services for veterans, including mental health support, financial resilience and career development. The panel featured a diverse group of veteran leaders who shared their personal journeys and expertise. Those panelists included:

Florida Senator Jay Collins –
U.S. Army veteran and Green Beret

Layla Collins –
U.S. Army Special Operations veteran

James Hartsell –
Executive Director of the Florida
Department of Veterans Affairs,
USMC veteran

Kat Gates-Skipper –
USMC veteran and Veterans Hall of
Fame inductee

Deloris Quaranta –
President of Northeast Florida
Women Veterans, USAF veteran,
and Veterans Hall of Fame member

Jan Del Signore –
Associate Vice Chancellor of Military
Affairs at Keiser University,
USAF veteran

Diana Roman – Executive Director
of the Florida Commission on the
Status of Women

The discussion highlighted critical issues affecting veterans, with a particular focus on female veterans, the fastest-growing demographic in the veteran population. Key topics included:

- Mental health and fiscal stability
- Successful transitioning to civilian life
- Career and workforce development pathways
- Impact of service to the entire family unit and the opportunities available to them
- State and federal resources for veterans and their families

Florida's robust resources for veterans were celebrated, often cited as a model for other states. However, panelists emphasized the need for continued advocacy and expanded services to meet evolving challenges. One significant discussion point was the gender disparity in recognition, with several panelists underscoring the need to honor women veterans not only for their supportive roles but also for their service and leadership.

The event was well attended and was also broadcast live on The Florida Channel to maximize accessibility. Both panelists and attendees expressed strong support for continuing these discussions, reinforcing the importance of showcasing Florida's extensive resources for veterans, particularly women veterans.



SUMMARY

As we look ahead to 2025, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) remains deeply committed to advancing its core mission of promoting equality, education, and opportunity for women and families across the state. Building on the momentum and successes of 2024, the Commission will continue to expand its outreach and foster collaborative partnerships with local, state, and national organizations. In the coming year, FCSW will focus on tackling new challenges, addressing the evolving needs of women, and ensuring that the voices of women and families in Florida are heard and valued.

One of the Commission's primary initiatives for 2025 will be the development and implementation of a new statewide survey. This survey will gather up-to-date, comprehensive information on the most pressing issues facing women and families in Florida, from economic security and healthcare to education and public safety. The data collected will provide valuable insights that will guide future policies and initiatives, helping to shape a better, more inclusive future for all Floridians.

Additionally, FCSW plans to continue its educational efforts, with a focus on increasing awareness of women's issues and empowering women to take active roles in their communities. This will include expanding educational programs, supporting leadership development programs, and highlighting the achievements of women from diverse backgrounds. The Commission will also remain dedicated to celebrating the achievements of Florida women, amplifying their voices, and honoring their contributions to society.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who supported and contributed to the Commission's efforts in 2024. Your dedication, engagement, and passion have been crucial in advancing our mission. As we move into 2025, we look forward to another year of progress, collaboration, and celebration. Together, we will continue working toward a stronger, more prosperous future for all Floridians, ensuring that women and families thrive in every community across the state.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

For more than 30 years, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women has served as a resource and champion for women throughout Florida. Established in 1991 by the Florida Legislature, the Commission is a non-partisan board of 22 appointed members. The Commission serves as an important resource for state and local leaders, so they have a better understanding of the needs, concerns, and challenges facing women in Florida. The Commission also serves as a resource for connecting women to the tools and resources necessary to live healthier, more prosperous lives.



FLORIDA COMMISSION
on the STATUS of WOMEN

Mission

Our mission is to enable Florida women and girls to reach their fullest potential through Collaboration, Education, and Celebration.

Vision

A State where women and families are empowered, have opportunities to thrive, and contribute to building a more prosperous Florida.

Enabling Legislation

FL Stat 14.24 (2020) Florida Commission on the Status of Women. —

(1) There is established in the Office of the Attorney General the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, consisting of 22 members. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, the Attorney General, and the Governor shall each appoint four members, and the Chief Financial Officer and the Commissioner of Agriculture shall each appoint three members, for a term of 4 years. The members appointed shall include persons who represent rural and urban interests and the ethnic and cultural diversity of the state's population. No member shall serve more than 8 consecutive years on the commission. A vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

(2) The commission shall meet once in the first, second, and fourth quarters of each year and upon the call of the chairperson or two other officers. Annually, at the meeting in the first quarter, officers consisting of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer shall be elected. Each officer shall serve until a successor is elected and qualified. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

(3) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses in accordance with s. 112.061.

(4) It shall be the duty of the commission to study the changing and developing roles of women in American society. The study shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

(a) The socioeconomic factors that influence the status of women.

(b) The development of individual potential.

(c) The encouragement of women to utilize their capabilities and assume leadership roles.

(d) The coordination of efforts of numerous women's organizations interested in the welfare of women.

(e) The identification and recognition of contributions made by women to the community, state, and nation.

(f) The implementation of paragraphs (a)–(e) where working conditions, financial security, and legal status of both sexes are improved.

(5) The commission may apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from the state, the government of the United States or any of its agencies, or any other public or private source for the purpose of defraying clerical and administrative costs as may be necessary in carrying out its duties under this section.

(6) Beginning January 1, 1993, the commission shall report annually on January 1 to the Governor, the Attorney General, the Cabinet, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the minority leaders of the House and Senate on the study carried out under the provisions of this section.

FL Stat 265.001 Florida Women's Hall of Fame.—

(1) It is the intent of the Legislature to recognize and honor those women who, through their works and lives, have made significant contributions to the improvement of life for women and for all citizens of Florida.

(2)(a) There is hereby established the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. The Department of Management Services shall set aside an area on the Plaza Level of the Capitol Building and shall consult with the Florida Commission on the Status of Women regarding the design and theme of such area.

(b) Each person who is selected as a member shall have a designation placed in the Florida Women's Hall of Fame, which designation shall provide information regarding the member's particular discipline or contribution and any vital information relating to the member.

(3)(a) Every year, the commission shall accept nominations for persons to be recommended as members of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. The commission shall recommend to the Governor 10 persons from which up to three members shall be selected.

(b) In making recommendations pursuant to this subsection, the commission shall recommend women who were born in Florida or adopted Florida as their home state and base of operation and who have made a significant contribution to the enhancement of women in this state.

(4) The Florida Commission on the Status of Women may set specific time periods for acceptance of nominations and the selection of members to coincide with the appropriate activities of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Annual Report Committee, which played a crucial role in overseeing the report's completion, was led by Candace Falsetto as the committee chair. Other members of the committee included Katherine English, Maria Garcia, Stephanie Goforth, Rosie Paulsen, Rep. Jenna Persons–Mulicka, and Lori Day, who serves as the Commission chair.

The Public Policy Committee was responsible for the creation, organization, and hosting of the roundtable discussions identified by the 2022 Voices of Florida Women Survey. These discussions took place throughout the state in 2023 and 2024. The committee was chaired by Belinda Keiser, and its members included Sophia Eccleston, Candace Falsetto, Maria Garcia, Jennifer Pereira, Rep. Jenna Persons–Mulicka, Melissa Stone, and Maria Wells. The Commission appreciates the committee's dedication to ensuring the continued success of roundtable discussions across the state.



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**A Special Thank You to The Hall Of Fame Committee for
All of Their Hard Work on this Upcoming Event.**

Maria Wells, Committee Chair

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Stephanie Goforth

Jennifer Guy-Hudson

Sharon Hanlon

Leda Kelly

Claudia Medina Thomas

Lori Day, FCSW Commission Chair

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