



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

**BYLAWS OF THE
CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, SENIORS, EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY
AS ADOPTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY BOARD**

I. ARTICLE I. STATUTORY GOVERNING STRUCTURE

- A.** There is established a Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity which shall be part of the Legislative Department. The commission shall focus on issues affecting each of the following underrepresented and underserved populations: Women, children and the family, elderly persons, African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, and Latinos and Puerto Ricans. The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall constitute a successor to the Commission on Equity and Opportunity and the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b) to (d), inclusive, and subsection (f) of section 4-38d and section 4-38e. **§§ 105, 106, & 107 of Public Act No. 19-117, effective July 1, 2019**
- B.** The Commission on Women, Children, seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall consist of a 44-member advisory board, an executive committee and six sub-commissions appointed in accordance with **§ 105 of Public Act No. 19-117**. On and after July 1, 2019, the advisory board shall consist of the following members:
1. The term of any members appointed prior to July 1, 2019, to serve either on the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors or the Commission on Equity and Opportunity and whose term has not expired as of June 30, 2019, shall expire on June 30, 2019.
 2. With respect to members appointed on or after July 1, 2019, to serve on the Commission of Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, such members shall be appointed as follows:
 - a. Three members appointed by a joint appointment of the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom has experience in the field of African-American affairs, one of whom has experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and one of whom has experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided



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- at least one of such members shall also be from the central region of the state;
- b. Three members appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom has experience in the field of African-American affairs, one of whom has experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and one of whom has experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least two of such members shall also be from the northeastern region of the state;
 - c. Three members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom has experience in the field of African-American affairs, one of whom has experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and one of whom has experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the southeastern region of the state;
 - d. Three members appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom has experience in the field of African-American affairs, one of whom has experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and one of whom has experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs;
 - e. Three members appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom has experience in the field of African-American affairs, one of whom has experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and one of whom has experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs;
 - f. Three members appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom has experience in the field of African-American affairs, one of whom has experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and one of whom has experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the northwestern region of the state;
 - g. Three members appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom has experience in the field of African-American affairs, one of whom has experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and one of whom has experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the southwestern region of the state.



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- h. Three members appointed by a joint appointment of the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning women, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning children or the family and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning elderly persons, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the central region of the state;
- i. Three members appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning women, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning children or the family and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning elderly persons, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the northeastern region of the state;
- j. Three members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning women, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning children or the family and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning elderly persons, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the southeastern region of the state;
- k. Three members appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning women, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning children or the family and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning elderly persons;
- l. Three members appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning women, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning children or the family and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning elderly persons;
- m. Three members appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning women, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning children or the family and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning elderly persons, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the northwestern region of the state;
- n. Three members appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning women, one of whom has expertise in issues concerning children or the family and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning elderly persons, provided at least one of such members shall also be from the southwestern region of the state; and



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- o. Two members appointed by the Joint Committee on Legislative Management, who have experience in equity and culturally responsive leadership, who shall serve as chairpersons of the advisory board and executive committee, except that the former chairpersons of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors and the Commission on Equity and Opportunity serving on June 30, 2019, shall be deemed appointed to serve as the chairpersons of the board of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity until June 30, 2021.
- 3. All initial appointments to the board, other than appointments made pursuant to subdivision (15) of subsection (b) of this section, shall be made not later than July 31, 2019, and the term of such initial members shall terminate on June 30, 2021, regardless of when the initial appointment was made. The Co-Chairs of the board shall schedule the first meeting of the board.
- 4. Members of the advisory board appointed on or after July 1, 2019, shall serve for two-year terms. Members shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority. Any vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term except as provided in subdivision (15) of subsection (b) of this section. The members of the board shall serve without compensation, but shall, within the limits of available funds, be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.
- 5. A majority of the advisory board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business of the board. A majority of the membership of a subcommission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business of such subcommission. The advisory board shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the chairpersons or a majority of the board. Any appointed member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the board or of a subcommission or who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings of the board or its subcommissions held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from the board.
- 6. The commission shall have no authority over staffing or personnel matters. There shall be an executive director of the commission. The executive director and any necessary staff shall be employed by the Joint Committee on Legislative



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Management, which shall have authority over the hiring, termination and performance review of the executive director and any staff.

7. The advisory board shall be organized into an executive committee and six subcommissions with members to be designated by the chairpersons of the advisory board: (A) One subcommission to advise on policies affecting members of the African-American population, (B) one subcommission to advise on policies affecting members of the Asian Pacific-American population, (C) one subcommission to advise on policies affecting members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population, (D) one subcommission to advise on policies affecting women, (E) one subcommission to advise on policies affecting children and family, and (F) one subcommission to advise on policies affecting elderly persons. Each subcommission shall select a chairperson from among its members. (2) The executive committee shall be comprised of the chairpersons of the advisory board and the chairpersons of each of the six subcommissions. The chairpersons of the advisory board shall serve as the chairpersons of the executive committee and the chairpersons of the subcommissions shall serve as vice-chairpersons of the executive committee. The executive committee shall meet no less than bimonthly, and at special meetings called by one or both of the chairpersons. The chairpersons of the executive committee shall establish standing committees and designate the chairperson of each standing committee, which shall include, but not be limited to, committees on equity, opportunity, communications, civic engagement and programs.

II. ARTICLE II. DUTIES

A. The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, & Opportunity shall:

1. Focus its efforts on the following quality of life desired results for women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state: That all such persons are:
 - a) healthy, safe and achieve educational success;
 - b) free from poverty; and
 - c) free from discrimination;



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2. With the advice of the executive committee of the commission, make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor for new or enhanced policies, programs and services that will foster progress in achieving the desired results described in subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such recommendations shall, when applicable, include, but need not be limited to:
 - a) Systems innovations, model policies and practices which embed two-generational practice in program, policy and systems change on the state and local levels, in accordance with section 17b-112l;
 - b) strategies for reducing family poverty, promoting parent leadership and family civics;
 - c) the promotion of youth leadership opportunities that keep youth engaged in the community; and
 - d) strategies and programs that address equitable access, impede bias, and narrow the opportunity gap for women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state. Such recommendations may include other state and national best practices, and recommendations on federal funding maximization;
3. With the advice of the executive committee of the commission, review and comment, as necessary, on any specific proposed state legislation or recommendations that may affect women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state and provide copies of any such comments to members of the General Assembly;
4. With the advice of the executive committee of the commission, advise the General Assembly concerning the coordination and administration of state programs that affect women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state;
5. Gather and maintain, as necessary, current information regarding women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state that can be used to



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- better understand the status, condition, and contributions of such groups. Such information, as appropriate and pertinent to the desired results delineated in subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall be included in the annual report submitted in accordance with subsection (b) of this section and shall be made available to legislators and other interested parties upon request;
6. Maintain liaisons between women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state and government agencies, including the General Assembly; and
 7. Conduct educational and outreach activities intended to raise awareness of and address critical issues for women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state.
- B. Not later than January first, annually, the executive director of the commission shall submit a status report, organized by subcommission, concerning its efforts in promoting the desired results listed above to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies.
- C. The Commission on Equity and Opportunity may: (1) Request, and shall receive, from any state agency such information and assistance as the commission may require; (2) use such funds as may be available from federal, state or other sources and may enter into contracts to carry out the purposes of the commission; (3) utilize voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, state or federal agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered and needed; (4) recommend policies to federal agencies and political subdivisions of the state relative to women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state; (5) accept any gift, donation or bequest for the purpose of performing the duties of the commission; (6) hold public hearings; (7) establish task forces or standing committees, as necessary, to perform the duties of the commission; (8) adopt regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, as it may deem necessary to carry out the duties of the commission; and (9) inform leaders of business, education, state and local governments and the communications



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media of the nature and scope of the problems faced by women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state.

- D. The executive director of the commission may enter into any agreement with a state agency for the purpose of maximizing the receipt of federal funds by such state agency, provided such state agency shall utilize any federal funds received as a result of such agreement to perform those statutory duties of such agency that relate to the commission's duties. The commission may accept that portion of federal funds received by any such state agency as a result of any such agreement which federal law otherwise permits to be received by the commission.

III. **ARTICLE III. BYLAWS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION**

A. Officers and their duties:

1. The Commission shall have the following officers: Two Co-Chairs of the Advisory Board and all six chairpersons of the subcommissions shall serve as vice-chairpersons of the executive committee.
2. Duties of the Co-Chairs of the Advisory Board. The Co-Chairs shall:
 - a) Preside at meetings of the Commission;
 - b) Be responsible, in collaboration with the Executive Director, for the preparation of the agenda for Commission meetings;
 - c) Assist with the selection process for all six subcommissions chairs and designate advisory board members to any subcommissions and standing committees;
 - d) Have the power to call special meetings of the advisory board;
 - e) Serve, ex-officio and without a vote, on all six sub-commissions and standing committees;
 - f) Work in collaboration with the Executive Director on the planning and implementation of advisory board action; and
 - g) Assist the Executive Director interpreting and disseminating decisions of the advisory board.



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3. The Advisory Board may create standing committees which, from time to time, may be designated by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee to address specific areas of focus over a specified period of time, including Committees on equity, opportunity, communications, civic engagement and programs, Procedures and Bylaws.

B. Standing Committee Membership:

1. The Co-Chairs of the Advisory Board shall designate the chairs of each standing committee from among voting advisory board members.
2. The Co-Chairs of the Advisory Board shall designate the maximum size of each standing committee.
3. Any member of the Advisory Board who is interested in serving on any standing committee shall notify the Co-Chairs of the Executive Board and the Executive Director concerning their interest. Any member of the Advisory Board who is interested in attending any standing committee meeting may do so and may participate in discussion.
4. Standing Committee Chairs and members on standing committees shall serve for the duration of the standing committee's operation.
5. In the event of a vacancy on a standing committee, the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee shall designate new members as needed.
6. Standing Committees shall keep minutes of business conducted at standing committee official meetings.

C. Advisory Board and Subcommission Responsibilities:

1. Each subcommission shall select a chairperson from among its members.
2. Each subcommission shall be prepared to provide advice to Executive Board on policies affecting African-American, Asian Pacific-American,



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Latino/Puerto Rican, Women, children/family, & elderly populations each.

3. Participate in standing committees and subcommission meetings as designated by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee.
4. Participate in hearings, forums or other meetings as called by the Advisory Board Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee.
5. Represent the Advisory Board as requested by the Executive Committee and Executive Director.

D. Meetings of the Advisory Board & Subcommissions:

1. The Advisory Board and subcommissions shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee. If a regular meeting is rescheduled, notice of the new meeting shall be given to all members at least two weeks before the rescheduled meeting is to be held.
2. Special meetings may be called by both of the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee in an emergency which, in the judgment of the Co-Chairs, cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

E. Advisory Board Notice of meeting – Agenda:

1. Regular meetings. The Co-Chairs shall, at least seven (7) calendar days before a scheduled meeting, notify each member of the Advisory Board by regular or electronic mail (“e-mail”) of the time and place of the meeting and of the proposed agenda.
2. Special meetings. Notice of intent to call a special meeting, and of the meeting’s designated agenda, shall be given to each member of the Advisory Board without undue delay. In addition to a mailed or e-mailed notice, each member shall be personally contacted, if possible, by telephone or otherwise. No special meeting shall be held any sooner



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than one week after the notice has been mailed or e-mailed. The agenda for a special meeting shall be limited to the agenda items stated in the notice.

F. Attendance and transparency at Advisory Board and Subcommittee meetings:

1. Any appointed member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Advisory Board or of a subcommittee or who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings of the Advisory Board or its subcommittees held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from the Advisory Board.
2. An Advisory Board member or of a subcommittee may attend a meeting by electronic device, such as a speakerphone, provided that: (1) the member is able to hear and participate in the meeting; (2) all members present are able to hear and speak to the member; (3) the Co-Chairs announce their participation by electronic device at the meeting; and (4) such electronic devices are available. Members attending a meeting by electronic device shall be considered present at the meeting.
3. Voting members of the Advisory Board or of a subcommittee may not be represented by designees.
4. All meetings of the Advisory Board or of a subcommittee are open to the public, unless the members of the Advisory Board or of a subcommittee, in conformance with the Freedom of Information Act and, by a vote of two-thirds of the voting members of the Advisory Board then present, decide that a particular matter should be discussed or voted upon, in an executive session.

G. Submission of information, reports and proposals for Advisory Board action:

1. Submissions by the Advisory Board, its standing Committees, Executive Director, or staff shall ordinarily be distributed to Advisory Board members, in writing, prior to official presentation whenever possible.



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2. In the absence of direction by the Advisory Board as to the form of presentation, the Co-Chairs of the Advisory Board, or its Executive Director in his or her executive capacity, shall prescribe the form of the presentation.

H. Decision-making of the Advisory Board:

1. The Advisory Board acts through recorded votes of voting members of the Advisory Board upon duly called meetings. Binding Advisory Board action can be taken only when, at the time of the contemplated action, a quorum of the Advisory Board is present.
2. A quorum is defined as a majority of the voting members of the Advisory Board excluding vacancies.
3. In the event of an emergency, the Co-Chairs and Executive Director may make interim commitments on behalf of the Advisory Board, but such commitments shall be informed to the Advisory Board at the next duly called meeting of the Advisory Board for FYI purposes only.
4. Except for the emergency powers of the Co-Chairs and Executive Director, no individual member of the Advisory Board or their six subcommissions, and no standing committee of the Advisory Board, shall take binding Advisory Board action.

I. Public statements by Advisory Board Members:

1. Individual Advisory Board Members may make personal statements on public matters but may not speak for the Advisory Board unless authorized by the Co-Chairs or the Executive Director.

J. Voting:



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1. Voting members of the Advisory Board shall indicate their votes on business before the Commission by voice or a show of hands unless a majority of voting members present requests a secret ballot.
2. Whenever any member of the Advisory Board so requests, votes shall be recorded in the minutes by a count of the number of affirmatives, negatives and abstentions of those present and voting.
3. Absent voting members of the Advisory Board may submit written statements to be read or provided in writing, at the discretion of the Co-Chairs, at the meeting.
4. Voting members of the Advisory Board may not vote unless present, in accordance with these bylaws, at the time when a vote for Advisory Board action is taken. Absent voting members may not vote by proxy.

K. Records of Advisory Board meetings:

1. Official minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Advisory Board. Such minutes shall record the presence or absence of all members of the Advisory Board. The minutes shall record all actions taken by the Advisory Board.
2. Draft minutes shall be mailed or e-mailed to all members of the Advisory Board five (5) calendar days in advance of the next regular Advisory Board Meeting.
3. Signing of minutes: Minutes approved by the full Advisory Board shall be signed by at least one Co-Chair or, in her or his absence, by the alternate Co-Chair.
4. Distribution of Advisory Board information, reports and proposals:
5. Information, reports and proposals which come before the Advisory Board for action shall be designated as drafts, working papers, or in a manner otherwise indicating their tentative status.



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6. Appropriately designated drafts or working papers shall be made available to all Advisory Board members.
7. At the discretion of the Co-Chairs, appropriately designated drafts or working papers may be made available to other groups or agencies concerned with the subject matter of the drafts or working papers.

L. Executive Director:

1. The Executive Director shall be the chief executive and operating officer of the Advisory Board, Executive Committee & Six Subcommissions, be responsible for all the day-to-day management functions, and manage and direct all activities of the Advisory Board in accordance with policies established by the Committee on Legislative Management, or in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Advisory Board. Within his or her authority, and in the course of his or her duties, the Executive Director shall define the duties of the staff, subcommissions, supervise their performance, and establish titles, and delegate those responsibilities of management as shall, in his or her best judgment, be in the best interest of the Advisory Board. Within his or her authority, and in the course of his or her duties, the Executive Director shall be involved in any matters requiring contact with the office of Legislative Management.
2. The Executive Director shall attend all meetings of the Advisory Board, the Executive Committee and all other standing committees as necessary including but not limited to, committees on equity, opportunity, communications, civic engagement and programs, serving as an ex-officio member, without a vote.

M. Receipt of private contributions:

1. The Advisory Board may accept any gifts, donations or bequests for any purposes set forth in its enabling legislation.



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N. Suspension and amendment of bylaws:

1. The Advisory Board may temporarily suspend the operation of any bylaw not in statute for a particular meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the voting members then present.
2. The Advisory Board may remove or amend any bylaw not in statute upon a written proposal postmarked 25 calendar days prior to the following meeting and approved by a $2/3$ vote of the voting members present at that meeting, provided there is a quorum.