

# Monroe County Women's Commission

Monroe County, Indiana

## 2016 Annual Report

The Monroe County Women's Commission (MCWC) was established in 2011 (Ordinance 2011-06) to serve in an advisory role to assist residents, businesses, and the government of Monroe County, Indiana, in addressing issues of gender equity in all aspects of society.

The Commission consists of community members appointed by the Monroe County Board of Commissioners and the Monroe County Council, an appointee from Indiana University, and an appointee from the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women.



*Back row: Leslie Fasone (volunteer), Ann Birch (volunteer), Liz Feitl, Monica Dignam (volunteer), Joshua Coker, Iris Kiesling. Front row: Nancy White, Shirley Fitzgibbons, Debby Herbenick. Not pictured: Amanda Barge, Lara Weaver, Carol McCord*

## 2016 Commissioners and Volunteers

Commissioners	Appointed By
Shirley Fitzgibbons	Monroe County Council
Joshua Coker	Monroe County Council
Nancy White (2016 chair)	Monroe County Council
Position Open	Monroe County Council
Amanda Barge	Monroe County Board of Commissioners
Liz Feitl (2016 vice-chair)	Monroe County Board of Commissioners
Debby Herbenick	Monroe County Board of Commissioners
Lara Weaver	Monroe County Board of Commissioners
Iris Kiesling	Monroe County Board of Commissioners
Carol McCord	Indiana University
Position Open	City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women

The Commissioners listed above served throughout 2016. During 2016, two volunteers assisted with Commission tasks: Ann Birch for clerical tasks and Monica Dignam for research projects.

### MCWC Website:

<http://www.co.monroe.in.us/tsd/Government/Commissioners/MonroeCountyBoardsandCommissions/WomensCommission.aspx>

## 2016 Research and Projects

Brainstorming sessions were conducted early in 2015, not only to explore areas of need where the Commission could gather information and have an impact, but also to begin to establish a long-term focus. The Commission decided upon the needs of rural women as a long-term focus. Although this long-term focus helps direct the Commission's efforts, it does not limit those efforts. During 2016, several areas were explored that are of general interest to women regardless of where they live. These topics are briefly discussed below.



*Nancy White and Debby Herbenick at the 2016 Women's History Month luncheon.*

### ***Collaboration for Women's Health***

Representatives of the MCWC are participating in the community-wide, long-term planning activity of the Monroe County Department of Health. Areas covered in this project are Basic Needs, Substance Abuse and Mental Health, and Chronic Diseases. When complete in 2018, this report will contain a blueprint for attainable goals in each area.

### ***Indiana Office of Women's Health***

The current Director of the Office of Women's Health, Terri Lee, met with the Commission and shared areas where the state is focusing its activities. Staffing at the state level has been drastically reduced, and the MCWC is committed to supporting the addition of staff members when funding is adequate. The MCWC also supports Ms. Lee in her emphasis on rural women's health initiatives.

### ***Violence Toward Women and Children***

Members of the MCWC met with the Monroe County Community Schools (MCCSC) administrative staff to discuss the issues of sexual violence and sexual health education in the MCCSC current curriculum. Topics discussed were barriers to additional grade-level activities, adequate funding for current and proposed sexual health staffing and materials, and ways in which the community can support meaningful sexual health curricula in grades K-12.

### ***Collaboration with Other Women's Organizations***

The MCWC met with the Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women and continues to identify areas where there can be future collaboration. Several activities are planned for 2017, including state-level support for increased staffing in the Indiana Office of Women's Health, a joint community program planned for April in conjunction with Pay Equity Day, and a future activity to request increased administrative action in response to hate speech in the MCCSC.

### ***Support for Families***

Commission support for 2-1-1 and for Bloomington's Fair Labor Initiative continues as does concern for health care for rural women. In discussions with Monroe County legislators and with a staff member from Senator Joe Donnelly's office, Commissioners sought answers to critical questions facing women and families regarding health, housing, transportation, and employment. The Commission continues to monitor legislative action.

2016 Commission Chair: Nancy White, [nwhite38@hotmail.com](mailto:nwhite38@hotmail.com), 812-824-4426

2017 Commission Co-Chairs: Amanda Barge, [abarge@co.monroe.in.us](mailto:abarge@co.monroe.in.us), 812-606-6540

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