



# **Washington State Women's Commission Bylaws**

# Commission Bylaws

## Article I

### Name

The name of this agency shall be the Washington State Women's Commission (WSWC), henceforth referred to as "Commission."

## Article II

### Mission and Vision

**Mission:** The Women's Commission improves the life of every woman by ensuring equitable opportunities and removing systemic barriers through engagement, advocacy, and public policy, while being inclusive of our diverse populations.

**Vision:** Every woman is healthy, safe, prosperous, and empowered to achieve their full potential.

## ARTICLE III

### Membership and Responsibilities

**Terms:** All commission members shall serve by appointment of the Governor. All legislative advisory members shall serve for a two-year term and the position of any legislative advisory member shall be deemed vacated whenever such member ceases to be a member of the Chamber from which the member was appointed.

**Vacancies:** Any vacancies occurring in the membership of the commission shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointments.

**Travel Reimbursement:** Nonlegislative members shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW [43.03.050](#) and [43.03.060](#). Legislative members shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW [44.04.120](#).

**Meeting attendance and preparation:** Members are expected to consistently attend and prepare for Commission and Committee meetings, of which they are members, in order to be

effective and active participants. Members are further expected to stay current in their knowledge and understanding of the Commission's projects.

**Conflict of Interest:** No member of the Commission may cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Officer Terms and Voting**

**Designation:** The officers of the commission shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Director.

**Terms of Office:** Each Officer's term will last one calendar year. Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary shall be elected annually by the full Commission at the end of the last plenary meeting of the year and are limited to two consecutive one-year terms. Committee leads will be selected by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Committee.

**Elections:** Elections of officers will be held annually at the last meeting in a calendar year. The Executive Committee will facilitate the nomination and election process for officer roles by proposing a slate of candidates for the full Commission's consideration. During the election meeting, the full Commission will vote on the proposed slate, with the opportunity for additional nominations from the floor before the vote. This process aims to ensure a transparent and structured approach to leadership selection, promoting continuity and stability within the Commission.

**Quorum:** A quorum for conducting Commission meetings shall consist of a simple majority of the current appointed commissioners.

**Voting:** Each voting member of the Commission shall have one vote and must be present to cast their vote. No voting shall be conducted by secret ballot. Being present may be any alternative interactive participation such as conference call or other telecommunication device which has been arranged upon the member's request. Voting by mail and proxy is not permitted. Legislators do not vote; however, their input will be a part of the decision-making process for the Commission.

**Parliamentary Authority:** The Commission shall be governed by the law, the bylaws, and, as necessary, the newly revised Robert's Rules of Order.

## ARTICLE V

### Composition and Duties

**Commission Composition:** The Commission shall consist of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The Governor shall consider nominations for membership based upon maintaining a balanced and diverse distribution of ethnic, geographic, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and occupational representation, where practicable.

Two members of the senate, one from each of the two major political parties, appointed by the president of the senate, and two members of the house of representatives, one from each of the two major political parties, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, shall serve as advisory members.

**Commission Duties:** The Commission shall have the following duties and shall have the discretion to prioritize and consider available resources in fulfilling the duties:

- Provide a clearinghouse for information regarding both state and federal legislation as it relates to the purpose of this article;
- Identify and define specific needs of women of historically excluded demographics and provide recommendations for addressing those needs in the biennial report to the legislature and Governor;
- Consult with state agencies regarding the effect of agency policies, procedures, practices, laws, and administrative rules on the unique problems and needs of women. The Commission shall also advise such state agencies on the development and implementation of comprehensive and coordinated policies, plans, and programs focusing on those problems and needs;
- Provide resource and referral information to agencies and the public. The commission may gather data and disseminate information to the public in order to implement the purposes of this chapter;
- Hold public hearings to gather input on issues related to the unique problems and needs of women. The Commission must include in the biennial report, the input received and recommendations for addressing the problems and needs discussed at the public hearings;
- Advocate for removal of legal and social barriers for women;
- Ensure programs and initiatives are aligned with vision, goals, and strategic plan;
- Submit a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the Governor every two years detailing the Commission's activities. The report submitted must be in electronic format pursuant to RCW [43.01.036](#);

**Executive Committee Composition:** The Executive Committee is composed of the Chair, Past Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and the Director or Director's designee. The Executive Committee provides overall leadership and guidance and makes executive decisions necessary for the Commission to carry out its duties.

**Executive Committee Duties:**

- Advise and inform the Director as needed;
- Develop and approve quarterly meeting agendas with the Director;
- Work with the Commissioners and Director to meet the mission and objectives;
- Work with Governor's office, other commissioners, and Director to help recruit new commissioners;
- Ensure that Committee leads have access to information and support needed to advance the work of the commission;
- Establish new or additional standing and ad hoc committees as needed.

**Standing Committee Composition:** Each committee shall have a minimum of two commissioners and no more than four commissioners, staying below quorum. A commissioner will lead each committee. The committees may recruit volunteers to assist or serve on the committees.

**Standing Committee Duties:**

- Meet at regularly scheduled intervals;
- Identify goals and objectives for the committee;
- Determine how the committee will meet goals and objectives and a reasonable timeframe;

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Member Duties**

**Commission Chair Duties:**

- Preside at quarterly meetings of the Commission;
- Call Special Meetings in consultation with the Executive Committee;
- Assist committee leads as needed;
- Act on issues requiring immediate attention which arise between Commission meetings and report actions taken at next Commission meeting;
- In partnership with the Director and as authorized by the full Commission, be a spokesperson for the Commission;
- The Commission Chair shall be restricted from being a Committee Lead.

**Commission Vice-Chair Duties:**

- Preside at Commission meetings in the absence of the Chair;
- Serve on the Executive Committee;
- Assist the Chair to carry out Executive Committee responsibilities as needed or requested.

**Commission Secretary Duties:**

- Serve on the Executive Committee;
- Assist the Chair and Vice-Chair to carry out Executive Committee responsibilities as needed or requested.

**Committee Lead Duties:**

- Facilitate the development of committee objectives and priorities;
- Facilitate completion of committee activities and responsibilities needed to meet objectives;
- Establish a regular meeting schedule that meets the needs of all committee members;
- Create and facilitate agendas for committee meetings;
- Provide reports to the full commission regarding all meetings, activities, and progress of their committee at each plenary meeting in achieving their responsibilities in ;
- Make presentations and/or motions to the full Commission.
- Leads of the committee will report to the full commission at each plenary meeting.

**Commission Member Duties:**

- Operate within state and federal laws and Commission Bylaws;
- Consistently attend and prepare for Commission and committee meetings;
- Not make unilateral decisions or take action as a representative of the Commission without the consent of the Director, Commission, or Executive Committee;
- Commission members may not accept or solicit anything of economic value as a gift, gratuity or favor if it could be reasonably expected that the gift, gratuity, or favor would influence the vote, action, or judgment of the officer or employee;
- Shall participate in at least one committee;
- Make presentations and/or motions to the full Commission.

**Director & Commission Staff Duties:**

- The Executive Director is appointed by the Governor and thus has the following authority to include but not limited to:
  - Oversee Commission day-to-day operations.
  - Make staffing decisions.
  - Direct the path of the commission with the advisement of staff and commissioners.
  - Make budgetary decisions in consultation with the Office of Financial Management (OFM).

## ARTICLE VII

### Meetings

**Meeting frequency:** The Commission shall convene at least four meetings a year. A meeting notice shall be posted on the Commission's website: <http://wswc.wa.gov>. The Commission shall report the following year's meeting schedule to the Office of the Code Revisor by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Minutes:** Commission staff will record and maintain minutes of all meetings. Minutes will be distributed to all Commission members. The Chair will request formal approval of the Quarterly Meeting minutes at the next Commission meeting.

**Public Comment:** All interested persons shall be provided an opportunity to present public comment during any plenary meeting to the extent time allows.

### ADA Guidelines:

- Meetings are held in settings that adhere to accessibility standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- The Commission is responsive to requests for reasonable accommodation from staff, Commission members, and the public;
- The Commission staff works with Commission members to identify and provide disability-related supports necessary to facilitate a member's full participation;
- Commission events are fragrance-free: For the health and safety of participants, it is important that everyone come fragrance-free to all Commission events.

## Article VIII

### Process for supporting Legislation

**Determination:** In determining what legislative priorities the Commission will support, the Commission will seek input from legislator advisers, Office of the Governor, and others as the commission deems appropriate. The Commission will work on determining legislative priorities for the legislative session as early as practicable.

**Criteria:** The Commission will use the following criteria to determine what legislation and priorities to support:

- Alignment with the Commission's mission and statutory authority;
- Alignment of the Governor's priorities;
- Expertise and focus of the subject matter committees;
- Support of stakeholders; and
- The Commission's resources.

**Director's Designation:** The Director and/or their designee will work with the one lead of each committee and one Executive Committee member to advance legislative priorities of the Commission, in consultation with the Governor's Office.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Amendments to the Bylaws**

Amendments to the Bylaws may be recommended by any Commission member or committee. Recommended changes will be presented to the Executive Committee for inclusion on the next quarterly Commission meeting agenda or Special Meeting agenda. Amendments to the Bylaws must be distributed to all Commissioners for review in advance of the meeting. Any amendment to the Commission's bylaws requires the concurrence of at least six of the nine members.