



Nominee Biographies - Current Board Members 2026

Wandra Ashley-Williams

Wandra Ashley-Williams is a distinguished senior executive, community advocate, and elected official with broad experience in both the public and private sectors. She currently serves as Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Baltimore County and Treasurer of the MLAW Board. She held leadership roles in several community and civil rights organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Board of Directors and the Clean Energy Jobs Initiative Board of Directors, where she helped advance the Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Act. Her recent legislative efforts include advocating for the passage of the Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act (CCEJ) and creating the Rebuild Maryland Coalition. In recognition of her service, she has received numerous awards and honors, including the Courageous Leadership Award presented by Health Care for All at the Annual MLK Awards Banquet and the Dr. William Montague Cobb State Advocacy Award for achievements in social justice, health justice, health education and promotion, presented at the NAACP National Convention in Baltimore, Maryland.

Lee Bachu

Lee Bachu is a minority business owner, current Chair of Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington, DC, and Past Chair of Maryland Commission for Women.

Sandy Bell

Sandy Bell has been a women's rights activist for almost 40 years. During that time, she has served on the board of Maryland NOW as President for 3 years, Action VP for about 20 years, Executive VP for 2 years, and currently as Legislative Director. Legislation has always been Sandy's priority because laws are what actually bring about change. She is on the board of Progressive Maryland, and has worked with many coalitions to get bills passed to help women, their families, and other marginalized groups. Sandy hopes for a day when all humans have equality and everything they need to live a fulfilled, happy life.

Michaele Cohen

Michaele Cohen has been an advocate for women's and family issues in Maryland for 50 years. She is one of the founders and is the long-time president of MLAW. She served for 18 1/2 years as the executive director of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) and served on the MNADV board for 18 1/2 years before becoming the ED. She previously served as the director of the YWCA Woman's Center in Anne Arundel County for 15 1/2 years and as the YWCA director of communications for 4 years.

Tonia Ferguson

Tonia Ferguson is the Vice President of the League of Women Voters Baltimore County. She brings over 20 years of policy and legislative experience both at the local, state, and federal level. She is involved in numerous community organizations, including those representing people with disabilities and women of color. She believes in strengthening community through informed engagement, accessible resources, and collaborative leadership.

Sheena Foster

Sheena Foster is a New Orleans native residing in Montgomery County, Maryland. She serves as President and CEO of Crittenton Services of Greater Washington, a 137-year-old organization dedicated to supporting girls and young women across Washington, DC and Maryland through evidence-based, trauma-informed social and emotional learning programming. She also serves as Chair of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, where she advocates for equity, leadership development, and opportunities for women and girls. With nearly 20 years of experience in the nonprofit and business sectors, Sheena is a detail-oriented strategist, sustainability consultant, and community leader with expertise in project management, entrepreneurial thinking, relationship management, and equitable community development. Her work is grounded in a passion for empowering communities, advancing sustainability, and strengthening pathways for youth and families. Sheena holds a Bachelor's degree in Urban Sustainability, a Master's degree in Public Administration, and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Theological Studies at Hampton University.

Cassandra Freeman

Cassandra R. Freeman has been a staunch advocate for women both in her professional life and personal life. She served as the DoD chairperson for the small business committee where she led the passage of regulations that bought relief and equity to women owned small businesses. She continued to do this as both the deputy director and director of small business at EPA and at the National Guard respectively. Her advocacy has extended further in her personal life as a member of the Status of Women committee with the Top Ladies of Distinction and as the co-founder and charter 1st Vice President of the national Coalition of 100 Black Women of Southern Maryland. This organization spearheaded the passage of SB35 this past legislative year which proclaims October 1 annually as Purple Light Night to recognize the scourge of domestic violence in our community.

Tahira Mussarat Hussain

Tahira Mussarat Hussain has over 25 years of diverse experience as a human rights activist in South Asia and the United States, achieving significant success in raising awareness about human rights and community issues. She is a self-directed professional with excellent communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills, and has extensive experience assisting underprivileged individuals.

Andrea Johnson

Andrea Johnson is Senior Director of State Policy and Strategy and Senior Counsel at the National Women's Law Center. In that role, she works with teams across the Center to build out an overarching vision and strategic framework for the Center's state policy and advocacy efforts and directs the State Gender Policy Collective, a network of state legislators and advocates across all states. Previously, Andrea served as NWLC's Director of State Policy on the Workplace Justice team where she regularly provided expert legislative testimony on pay discrimination, sexual harassment, and pregnancy discrimination legislation and, alongside state advocates, played a lead role in the passage of such legislation in over a dozen states. Prior to joining the Center, Andrea was a law clerk for the Honorable Colleen Kollar-Kotelly on the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and the Honorable Eric T. Washington, Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and as a Legislative Aide for Congresswoman Betty McCollum from Minnesota. She received a law degree from Columbia Law School and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and French from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Elizabeth Joyce

Liz Joyce is a longtime MLAW Board member, former MLAW vice president, and currently a Vice President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation. She has served for six years, and as President, on the Montgomery County Commission for Women, two years as Communications Vice President of the Woman's National Democratic Club, and 2 years as President (and 10 on the Board) of Montgomery County NOW.

Angela McDaniel

Angela McDaniel has over 34 years of Workforce Development & Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) experience. She has received various awards for her passionate diversity work. Ms. McDaniel is a graduate of Women's Executive Leadership and Emerging Leaders Programs. She is a member of the NCNW, NAACP, National Association of University Women, Inc., and Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc.

Stephanie McGencey

Dr. Stephanie McGencey is a seasoned nonprofit and policy leader with over 26 years of experience advancing equity through cross-sector collaboration, public policy, and systems change. She currently leads the Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN), mobilizing women of color to drive policy and practice change. Her expertise spans youth development, public health, mental health, and coalition building.

Shuchi Sharma

Shuchi Sharma has a background in science, public health policy, healthcare systems management at the board level, and over 20+ years' experience leading global organizations focused on diversity, equity and inclusion, digital transformation, consulting services, sales and marketing and working in over 14 different countries. Shuchi has been named one of the Diversity Consortium's Top 50 Chief Diversity Officers, Financial Times 50 Future Leaders and Diversity MBA Journal's Top 100 Executive Leaders, and Top 100 Women of Influence. She has over 17 years' experience advancing women within the technology and health care industry.

Nicole Smith

Nicole Smith is a Human Resources professional with 30+ years of experience in partnerships, policy, and leadership. A member of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., she serves on the Eastern Regional Legislative Committee, developing initiatives that advance legislative advocacy and civic education, and as Legislative Chair for her Western Maryland chapter, helping mothers support bills benefiting women and children.

Aubrey Jackson Soller

Dr. Aubrey Jackson Soller is Associate Director of the Center for Social Science Scholarship and Associate Professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). She has worked in higher education for 20 years as a sociologist and criminologist whose research centers on the social conditions, laws, and politics that impact the lives of women and girls, and marginalized communities. She has published widely in top academic journals and has provided testimony to the Maryland General Assembly on immigration enforcement and has engaged with media on reproductive rights. Through her work at UMBC and her professional affiliations, she connects scholars and students with journalists, policymakers, and applied researchers to advance evidence-based policy solutions. As both an academic and a mother of three, Dr. Jackson Soller is committed to promoting progressive legislation that helps women, girls, and families in Maryland.

