



**OKLAHOMA**  
**Commission on the**  
**Status of Women**

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women  
**Annual Impact Report**

FY 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)

Submitted October 20, 2025, to:

Governor J. Kevin Stitt

Senate President Pro Tempore Lonnie Paxton

Speaker of the House Kyle Hilbert

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October 20, 2025



**OKLAHOMA**  
Commission on the  
Status of Women

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Governor of Oklahoma J. Kevin Stitt  
Senate President Pro Tempore Lonnie Paxton  
Speaker of the House Kyle Hilbert

Thank you for the opportunity to present findings by the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women on issues and challenges that impact women's quality of life and economic opportunities. This Annual Report is submitted to you under Oklahoma Statute Title 74, Section 666.

The Commission experienced another impactful year and is providing policy and legislative recommendations to the executive and legislative branches from our outreach efforts. These recommendations are based on the Commission meeting with several state agencies and non-profit organizations over the past three years.

In FY25, the Commission wrapped up a three-year strategic plan that began as a "Journey" to connect the Commission with state agencies, tribes, and non-profit groups to learn more about how quality of life issues impact economic opportunities, and how lack of economic opportunities and resources negatively impact quality of life for Oklahoma women. Our approach was simple: social and economic issues are not mutually exclusive.

Two of the most impactful initiatives led by the Commission on bridging the impact of societal and economic issues were the two-year educational campaign to stop human trafficking, called ***Not Me Not My Community Stop Human Trafficking***, and the Solutions, Initiatives and Strategies Summit on access to affordable childcare services, entitled ***Navigating the Oklahoma Childcare Crisis: A Barrier to Women's Economic Opportunity***.

Also, the Commission launched the first statewide survey to hear from Oklahomans on the top issues impacting women and plans to make this an annual survey to establish benchmarks. The survey results found healthcare and financial resources were the top concerns of women in Oklahoma. Due to the Commission's success in the past three years, Oklahoma was asked to host the national conference for the National Association of Commissions for Women so other states can learn from our accomplishments. Finally, discussions are underway with the Oklahoma Historical Society to identify a proper site for the permanent Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame exhibit.

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions about the Commission's Annual Report. Thank you for your continued support for the Commission and our work.

Sincerely,

*Brenda Jones Barwick*

Brenda Jones Barwick, APR  
State Chair (2022-2025)  
Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women  
Mobile: 405-831-5548

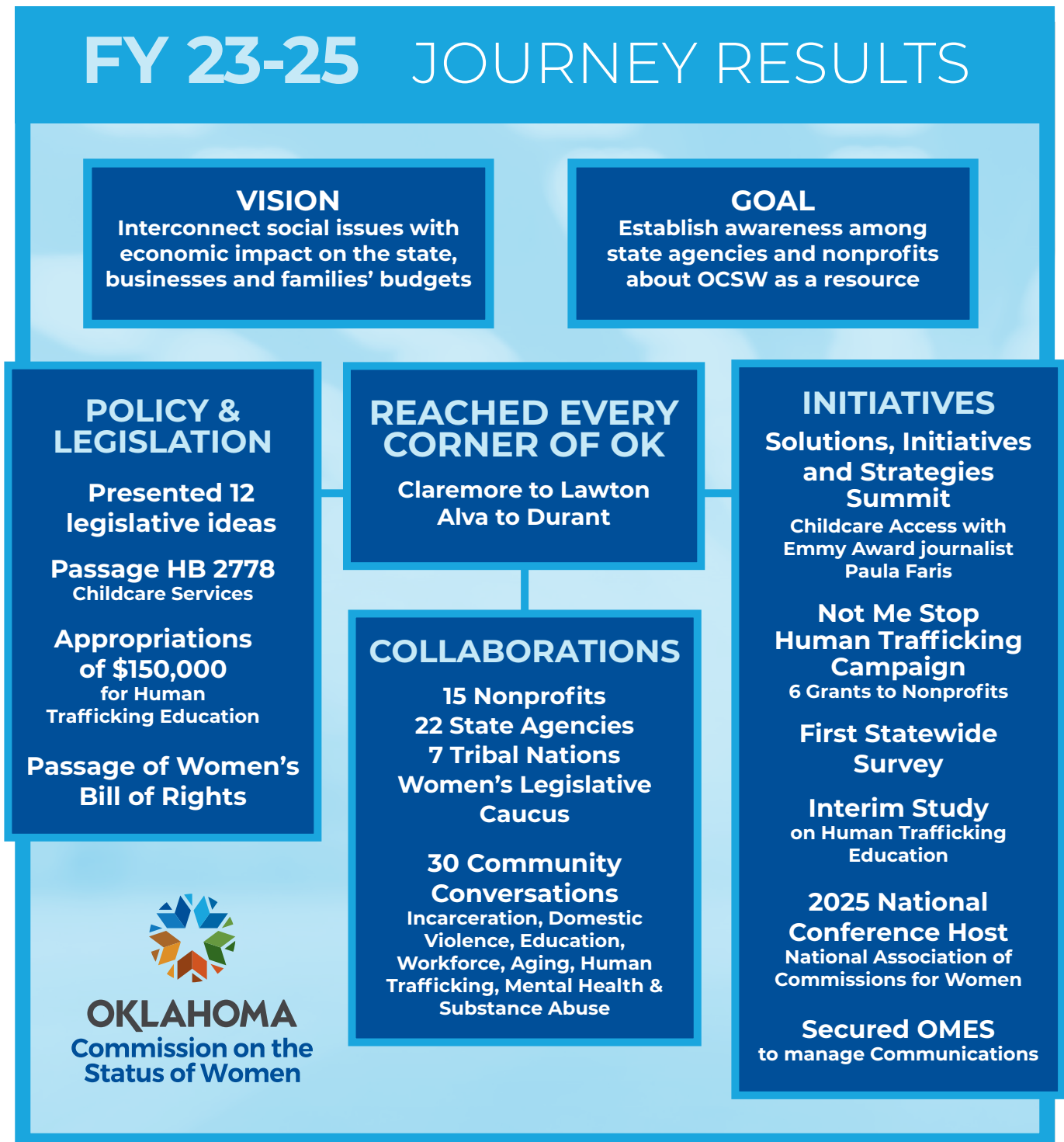


## FY25 Commission Impact Accomplishments

Per the 1994 Enabling Act and Oklahoma Statutes, the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women serves in an advisory role to the executive and legislative branches on economic, education, healthcare, pay equity, workforce, and societal issues that impact women. In fulfilling this advisory role, the Commission conducted a three-year strategic outreach plan from July 2022 to June 2025 that comprised of:

- ✓ Hosted a Solutions, Initiatives, Strategies, (SIS) Summit on ***Navigating the Oklahoma Childcare Crisis as a Barrier to Women's Economic Opportunities*** at Oklahoma City Community College with about 200 in attendance, presentations from several state legislators, state agencies and non-profits.
- ✓ Developed and implemented ***Not Me Not My Community Stop Human Trafficking*** educational initiative that reached 20,000 Oklahomans through rural colleges, universities, career technology centers and high schools on how to recognize the early signs of a potential trafficking situation. A portion of the \$150,000 appropriated to the Commission by the Oklahoma Senate to launch the educational initiative was provided as grants to six Oklahoma human trafficking non-profit groups to educate young women and girls about human trafficking. Each non-profit provided a report to the Commission on outcomes from the grants in November 2024.
- ✓ Hosted the 2025 National Conference in Oklahoma City for the National Association of Commissions for Women entitled ***Her State: Breaking Barriers and Building Futures by PAVING THE WAY***. Nearly 100 attendees from 11 states, stretching from Hawaii to Maine, heard presentations from many Oklahoma women leaders in the executive, judicial and legislative branches, plus non-profit and business women leaders.
- ✓ Collaborated with 22 state agencies, 7 tribal nations, and 15 non-profit organizations through 30 Community Conversations on education, workforce development, incarceration, diversionary programs, healthcare, mental health, substance abuse, aging, and human trafficking.
- ✓ Rural and urban outreach: Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Alva, Ardmore, Chickasha, Claremore, Durant, Enid, Lawton, Miami, Seminole, Wayne, Weatherford, and Wilburton.
- ✓ Developed a working relationship with the Women's Legislative Caucus and provided a briefing on the human trafficking educational initiative.
- ✓ Launched the Commission's first statewide survey to assess and evaluate the top issues concerning Oklahoma women, with the intent of the survey being conducted annually to establish benchmarks on issues and trends. Survey results will help guide the Commission on future topics for summits and other outreach and engagement efforts.
- ✓ Secured OMES communications staff to assist the Commission on distributing news releases, updating social media and website to help raise awareness of The Commission's work and accomplishments.

The graphic below illustrates the Commission's accomplishments during its three-year strategic plan to interconnect the impact of social and economic issues and to raise awareness among state agencies and non-profits about the Commission as a resource.



## Policy and Legislative Recommendations

Throughout the last three years, the Commission has made several policy and legislative recommendations, resulting from our Summit and Community Conversations with stakeholders statewide. The Commission is honored to have played a role in bringing together stakeholders that approach a specific issue from different perspectives that ultimately results in policies and legislation to help Oklahoma women have better quality of life and economic opportunities. Some of these new laws include:

- **HB 2778 to help address childcare workforce crisis.** Authored by Rep. Trey Caldwell and Sen. Chuck Hall, and co-authored by Rep. Suzanne Schreiber.
- **HB 1449 – “Women’s Bill of Rights” to protect women-only spaces for women and girls.** Authored by Sen. Jessica Garvin and Rep. Toni Hasenbeck.
- **HB 2298 to modernize Oklahoma’s nursing laws.** Authored by House Speaker Kyle Hilbert and Senate President Pro-Tem Lonnie Paxton, and Sen. Brenda Stanley led vote to override veto.
- **HB 1389 expands Oklahoman’s access to breast-cancer screening.** Authored by Sen. Brenda Stanley and Rep. Melissa Provenzano
- **SB 109 requires health insurance plans in Oklahoma to cover key cancer-prevention services starting Nov. 1, 2025.** Authored by Sen. Brenda Stanley and Rep. Nicole Miller.
- **SB 292 expands insurance coverage and testing requirements for sexually transmitted infections during pregnancy.** Authored by Sen. Brenda Stanley and Rep. Cynthia Roe.
- **HB 2546 Sexual Assault Victims’ Right to Information Act gives sexual assault victims the right to request and receive the results and status of the analysis of the sexual assault forensic evidence of the victim and the right to request a copy of the police report.** Authored by Rep. Cyndi Munson and Sen. Kay Floyd.
- **HB 1460 removes various court fees assessed to defendants.** Authored by Rep. Tammy West and Sen. Todd Gollihare
- **HB 1462 directs the court to prioritize payments for restitution to the victim when sentencing an offender.** Authored by Rep. Tammy West and Sen. Todd Gollihare
- **SB 53 replaces child pornography with child sexual abuse material throughout statute.** Authored by Sen. Dave Rader and Rep. Tammy West
- **SB 1046 making domestic violence against a pregnant woman a felony.** Authored by Sen. Darrell Weaver and Rep. Robert Manger.
- **HB 2753 established the Vulnerable Adult, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Registry.** Authored by Sen. Darrell Weaver and Rep. Nicole Miller.
- **HB 3450 changed the term “child prostitution” to “child sex trafficking.”** Authored by Sen. Darrell Weaver and Rep. Jeff Boatman.
- **HB 1566 established Neil’s Law: Elder Exploitation & Abuse Act.** Authored by Sen. Darrell Weaver and Rep. Collin Duel.

The recommendations below were compiled from the Commission’s three years of meeting and learning from a variety of stakeholders and what we heard would be helpful for women to increase their quality of life and economic opportunities.

1. Offer tax credit to employers who share costs with their employees for childcare and offer refundable tax credits to childcare providers up to \$1,500. These actions would create more seats at lower cost to families while increasing economic opportunities for women who desire to work full-time or more eligible for promotions. Presented by Rep. Suzanne Schreiber.

2. Create policies aimed at expanding licensed childcare facilities in census tracts.
3. Extend full utilization of subsidized childcare benefits.
4. Human Trafficking should be a non-bailable offense.
5. Extend foster care to age 21, which provides a better path for the children to transition into a more stable adulthood. Oklahoma is one of the few states without extended foster care.
6. When released from prison for a felony and completing a re-entry program or certain number of years of no parole violations, women should no longer have to check the “F-Felon” box on apartments, jobs, and loan applications. This would give them equity when compared to other applicants for apartments, loans, and jobs. The women have children, and she is attempting to establish a stable home life for her family and stop the cycle of incarceration. She should not have to carry the Scarlett Letter F for the remainder of her entire life.
7. Allow mothers to enter a “how to be a good mother” program or class before taking her children away. The current approach is feeding a generational cycle of incarceration, and Oklahoma may never see a decrease in female incarceration without a new approach.
8. Develop a partnership with Career Techs, community colleges and universities that will assist domestic violence survivors who are exploited economically by helping her earn a degree or learn a trade to strive for economic independence. Studies show that a pilot project can result in a 60% success rate.
9. The state would benefit by accepting accreditation by the National Association of Private Schools to help children put money into a College Savings 529 account and allow children with an incarcerated parent qualify for the Nicole Henry Scholarship.
10. Promote and give more funding to diversionary programs and transitional homes to give hope to young women, especially in rural areas that could help her get out of situations before escalating to prison. Many rural young women are not aware of diversionary programs and transitional homes due to lack of marketing and promoting of these programs in rural areas. A rural awareness initiative could be a “Get Out of Situation” card and save them from going to prison.
11. If a woman enters a post-incarceration work program, drop reinstatement fees for driver’s licenses and additional drug testing, which are needed to re-enter society and compounds her punishment.
12. The state needs to re-evaluate how to provide a path to success for women between the ages of 18-25 who were in foster care. Currently, there is a lack of resources and assistance for women who age out of foster care, which is feeding many women into the incarceration path.

Three pathway recommendations are:

- a. Partner with career techs, community colleges and universities to learn a wage- paying trade, profession, or skill, combined with a scholarship program
- b. Partner with companies for jobs so she can earn a salary with insurance and other benefits, not minimum wage jobs. By making a living wage, it discourages her from going back to old ways and old friends, and thus become a productive citizen.
- c. Partner with non-profits, hotels or apartment owners to provide her with safe, secure housing until she reaches age 25



## FY25 Monthly Impact Report

### July 2024

Participated in the Governor signing HB1449, the Women's Bill of Rights, a bill authored by Senator Jessica Garvin and Representative Toni Hasenbeck, after passage by the Oklahoma legislature. The Bill preserves biological sex as a distinct legal category and protects women-only spaces for women and girls.



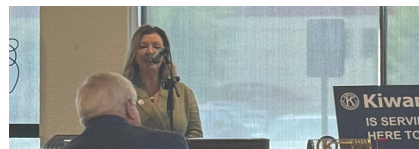
Gov. Stitt signs Women Bill of Rights with Rep. Cynthia Roe, OCSW Executive Director Kitti Asberry, and Sen. Jo Anna Dossett.

### August 2024

The Commission held its annual retreat at the Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma Camp Trivera. Former House Representative Dr. Laura Boyd provided a brief history of the Commission's formation in 1994, Senator Darrell Weaver was presented the Champion of Women Award, and the Demand Project CEO Kristin Weis provided an update on human trafficking.

Chair Brenda Barwick and Commissioner Leslie Clingenpeel made a presentation to the Tulsa Kiwanis Club on the *Not Me Not My Community Stop Human Trafficking* educational initiative.

Chair Barwick addresses Tulsa Kiwanis on the Commission's human trafficking educational initiative.



### September 2024

Hosted the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame Induction and Awards Ceremony. The inductees were:

**Dr. Nancy Anthony (Oklahoma City)**  
**Marilyn Mauer Hugon (Duncan)**  
**Edie Roodman (Oklahoma City)**  
**Jane Semple Umsted (Durant)**  
**Crystal Stovall (Tulsa)**  
**Molly Wehrenberg (Edmond)**



The Kate Barnard Award was presented to Oklahoma Public Safety Secretary Tricia Everest, and two Guardian Awards were presented to Senator Brenda Stanley and Representative Tammy West.

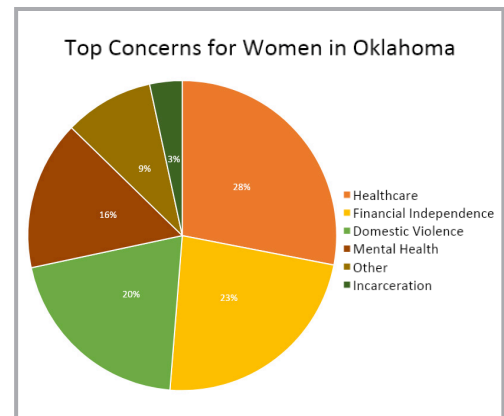


# FY25 Monthly Impact Report

## October 2024

Launched the Commission's first statewide survey in September/October 2024 to assess and evaluate top issues impacting Oklahoma women. The survey was distributed with the assistance of several non-profit women groups, and 353 responses were received. The intent is to distribute the survey annually to develop benchmarks on issues and watch top-of-mind trends as issues change over time.

Held a Community Conversation with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The Department is pushing to get more ODMHSA programs into rural Oklahoma through providers in all 77 counties. There is concern about high suicide rates among the aging population. ODMHSA has several programs with a family approach, including "Tough as a Mother," that helps keep families together if the mother is incarcerated or on drugs and the family care plan includes working with a counselor; specific family approach programs for tribes; and mental health services for babies as part of ODMHSA's full-family approach to providing care. Diversion program offers treatment as an option for those charged with a felony. "OK I'm Ready" program is distributing Naloxone and Fentanyl test strips by mail upon request and no longer through vending machines.



Chair Barwick presents Champion of Women certificate to ODMHSA Director of Partnerships Josh DeBartolo and Administrative Officer Gretchen Geis, and OCSW Executive Director Kittie Asberry.

## November 2024

Partnered with First Lady Sarah Stitt to host a Solutions, Initiatives and Strategies Summit on stopping human trafficking. Presentations were made by the six non-profit organizations that received grants from the Commission's appropriations for the *Not Me Not My Community Stop Human Trafficking* educational initiative on outcomes of the grants.

The six organizations that received grants were:

- Dragonfly Home (Oklahoma City)
- Domestic Violence Intervention Services (Tulsa)
- The Spring (Sand Springs)
- The Demand Project (Tulsa)
- Red Cord (Lawton)
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Anadarko)



Attorney General Gentner Drummond provided an update on its Human Trafficking Response Unit. Oklahoma House of Representatives Minority Leader Cyndi Munson provided an update on legislation impacting women.

## FY25 Monthly Impact Report

### December 2024

Met with the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs to identify a collaborative project to support women veterans in Oklahoma.



### January 2025

Held a Community Conversation at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to learn about initiatives to help women in business and advocacy and support for women in leadership. Presentations were made by Cathy Curtis, Business Development Coordinator for Women-Owned Business Certification, and by Heather Turner, Core Division Executive Director.

#### Key takeaways were:

- Importance of continued investment in women-owned businesses
- Biases in contract negotiations and the importance of mentorships
- Childcare is a significant barrier for women entering the workforce
- Encourage women to enter non-traditional female industries, such as construction



Thank you to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce for a Certificate signed by Governor Kevin Stitt, Lt. Governor Matt Pinnell and CORE Executive Director Heather Turner acknowledging the Commission's work and accomplishments.

### March 2025

Commissioners Jana Gridley, Joy Hammons and Erin Engelke served on a panel facilitated by Saidy Herrera, Multi-Cultural Officer for the Oklahoma History Center, during the Center's **Women Conference: Past, Present and Future**.



## FY25 Monthly Impact Report

### May 2025

The Commission met with the Oklahoma Department of Labor to learn about workplace safety, pay equity and licensing for high-risk professionals by Public Information Officer Liz Searock. She detailed the Department's services for wage claims mediation and workplace safety inspections, specifically boilers, elevators and amusement rides.



Advisory Council Chair and Commissioner Jana Gridley presents the Commission's Champion for Women Certificate to Oklahoma Department of Labor Public Information Officer Liz Searock.

### Summer 2025

In lieu of the biennial Solutions, Initiatives and Strategies Summit and to respect all of the Commissioners' time as volunteers, the Oklahoma Commission hosted the 2025 National Conference for the National Association of Commissions for Women. The national organization selected Oklahoma as the host in 2023, which required two years of planning and a heavy lift of resources and volunteer time by the Commissioners and members of the Advisory Council.

The three-day national conference was attended by nearly 100 women from 11 states stretching from Hawaii to Maine. The Commission was very proud to showcase and feature so many Oklahoma women leaders in the executive, judicial, legislative, non-profit and business sectors as keynote speakers, moderators and panelists. One example is the presentation by the Oklahoma City Memorial and Museum President and CEO Kari Watkins who focused on the daily lives of the women who were killed or survived. Her presentation was so emotionally moving, several women in the audience were crying so much they could hardly speak to ask her questions.



Commissioner Representative Tammy West moderated a panel at the Oklahoma State Capitol with the Commissioner Senator Brenda Stanley, Senator Nikki Nice, Representative Suzanne Shreiber and Representative Aleitha Timmons.



# Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission comprises of 30 Commissioners who are appointed by either the Governor, Senate President Pro Tempore or Speaker of the House. Each appointing authority has ten appointments, who serve five-year terms.

## FY25 Executive Officers

Brenda Jones Barwick, Chair

Jill Shero-McDaniel, Finance Chair

Julie Dermody, Treasurer

Jana Gridley, Advisory Council Chair

Executive Director: Kitti Asberry

## FY25 Commissioners

Emmalee Barresi

Angela Beatty

Marci Bond

Pat Carr

Leslie Clingenpeel

Nancy Crosby

Emily Crouch

Lee Denney

Janie Dillard

Erin Engelke

Jana Gridley

Jessica Grogis

Joy Hammons

Linda Haneborg

Estela Hernandez

Arnella Karges

Kelsey Lee

Shiny Matthew

Shondra McCage

Rep. Cyndi Munson

Briana Ramos

Edie Roodman

Lacee Sartors

Sen. Brenda Stanley

Ollie Starr

Rep. Tammy West



## **Chronology** of Impact Achievements on Issues

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women advises the Governor and legislature on findings from research, focus groups, summits and community conversations conducted by the Commission. These findings are provided in an Annual Report as recommendations for legislation and policy to improve the quality of life and economic opportunities for women in Oklahoma. Below is a chronology of the research, summits and community conversations conducted by the Commission from FY04 to FY25.

### **2025 – Completed Three-Year Strategic Plan in Bridging Societal and Economic Issues**

- Commission’s Solutions, Initiatives, Strategies Summit on Navigating the Oklahoma Childcare Crisis resulted in HB2778, passed by the legislature, that could generate \$330.5 million in new annual wages while enabling care for 18,886 more children.
- Reached every corner of Oklahoma through 30 Community Conversations on a variety of issues.
- Raised awareness among 22 state agencies, 15 non-profits and 7 tribal nations on the Commission’s advisory role to them, according to Oklahoma Statute Title 74 Section 666 that established the Commission and passed the legislature in 1994.
- Hosted the National Association of Commissions for Women 2025 annual national conference in Oklahoma City with 100 attendees from 11 states stretching from Hawaii to Maine.

### **2024 – Focus on Childcare and Human Trafficking**

- Hosted *Solutions, Initiatives, Strategies Summit on Navigating Childcare Crisis as a Barrier to Women’s Economic Opportunities* with Emmy-Award winning journalist, Encourager/Advocate to Moms, and Author Paula Faris of “You Don’t Have To Carry It All” book.
- Facilitated 16 Community Conversations statewide on workforce development, incarceration, health, substance abuse, aging, and human trafficking
- Collaborated with 8 state agencies: Corrections, Career/Technology, Higher Education State Regents, Attorney General, Bureau of Narcotics, Health, Human Services and District Attorney Council.
- Wrapped up Not Me Not My Community Stop Human Trafficking educational initiative reaching more than 20,000 Oklahomans and provided 6 grants to non-profit organizations to continue education in schools and camps on how to detect early signs of human trafficking.

### **2023 – Focus on Collaboration with State Agencies**

- Collaborated with 7 state agencies: Corrections, Career & Technology Education, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Attorney General, Bureau of Narcotics, Seminole State College, OKC Community College
- Conducted 15 Community Conversations on incarceration, diversionary programs, domestic violence, education, substance abuse, trauma and human trafficking, reaching urban and rural: OKC, Tulsa, Seminole, Okemah, Durant, Weatherford and Lawton
- Collaborated with 9 non-profits statewide and heard from 10 survivors of different situations
- Collaborated with 6 nations: Apache, Choctaw, Cheyenne-Arapaho, Chickasaw, Cherokee and Comanche
- Launched the state’s first-ever educational effort, Not Me, to focus on early signs of human trafficking

### **2022-2021 – Focus on Human Trafficking**

- Conducted focus group research on human trafficking in Weatherford at Southwestern Oklahoma State University
- Held a Stop Human Trafficking Summit with First Lady Sarah Stitt and brought in the world's foremost expert researcher on human trafficking from London – at no cost to the state
- Partnered with 3 non-profits statewide and an internationally acclaimed Subject Matter Expert throughout 2019-2020; published The White Paper, Growing Epidemic of Human Trafficking in Oklahoma in 2021 that is memorialized in the Oklahoma Department of Human Services publication, "A Snapshot Report on Efforts to Fight Human Trafficking in Oklahoma" and detailed in HB 4210 that established the Human Trafficking Response Unit in the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office, which was provided funding in 2023.
- Held statewide Facebook Live Community Conversations on the growing epidemic of human trafficking

### **2020 – Focus on Census (In-person events limited due to pandemic)**

- Held Community Conversation on Facebook Live "Stand Up and Be Counted: Shape Your Future, 2020 Census"
- Held Proclamation presentation event at the State Capitol celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment
- Women's Right to Vote

### **2019-2017 – Focus on Mental Health and Substance Abuse**

- Held first statewide Facebook Live Webinar with Subject Matter Experts on underlying mental health and substance abuse issues leading to the high incarceration of women; the National Commission on the Status of Women shared the webinar nationwide and to state and local commissions
- Held several Regional Community Conversations on Mental Health and Substance Abuse in Ada, Oklahoma City, Woodward and with Hispanic community partners, while conducting survey research
- Formed partnership with Girls Scouts of Western Oklahoma to provide role models in many professions for young girls, and participated in Girls Day of Discovery event

### **2016-2015 – Focus on Domestic Violence**

- Held Regional Community Conversations on Domestic Violence in Tulsa, Weatherford and Stillwater; conducted survey research at each event
- Held a statewide Summit on Domestic Violence; partnered with YWCA and other non-profits
- Developed and distributed fact sheets to the legislature on the Status of Women in the U.S. and Oklahoma with focus on underlying causes of incarceration: Domestic Violence of Women, Behavioral Health and Mental Health and Substance Abuse, and Women's Health
- Held Community Conversations on women's health, reducing incarceration, improving educational and economic status in Ardmore and Tulsa, partnering with the Oklahoma Women's Coalition
- OU's Carl Albert Research Center transferred The Appointment Project (get more women appointed to boards and commissions) and LINKS (registry of state organizations focused on advancement of women) to Commission for implementation

### **2014 – Focus on Human Trafficking**

- Held a statewide Summit on Human Trafficking and partnered with Survivors for Solutions, plus many women's groups
- Collaborated with the Justice System partners in Norman on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking that led to the Commission's focus on human trafficking.



### 2013 -2011: Focus on Health

- Held statewide Summit on Wise Choices: Solutions to Obesity and Diabetes in Women and partnered with Harold Hamm Diabetes Center. Summit was funded by U.S. Public Health Service grant and partners.
- Co-hosted a legislative interim study on the growing human trafficking issue and partnered with Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and several law enforcement entities.
- Statewide collaboration on Gestational Diabetes for women and their children to prevent obesity. Partners included Harold Hamm Diabetes Center, OUHSC Gestational Diabetes Clinic, OSU Diabetes Clinic, Choctaw Nation Gestational Diabetes Clinic of Excellence, Chickasaw Nation Gestational Diabetes Clinic of Excellence, and Oklahoma Department of Health County network of maternity clinics.

### 2010-2009 – Focus on Incarceration

- Published Oklahoma Women’s Baseline Statistical Report and distributed statewide. Partnered with Oklahoma State University’s Women Archives.
- Held Blue Ribbon Panel to address reducing the incarceration rate of women; partnered with the George Kaiser Foundation and Oklahoma Department of Corrections
- Held statewide Summit to develop the Public Agenda Action Plan by 2020 to reduce the rate of incarceration of women with increased community services in prevention, intervention and diversion, recidivism, and reentry, which stimulated policy and community service changes
- Established the Guardian Award as an annual recognition to elected officials contributing to guarding, protecting and preserving the rights of women, after presenting the first Guardian Award to Rep. Ron Peters for legislation passed supporting women.

### 2008-2007 – Focus on Health

- Statewide Summit featuring U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health Wanda Jones to discuss health, also incarceration of women.
- Regional Summits on Osteoporosis and Heart Health held in Stillwater, Muskogee, Seminole and Woodward.

### 2006-2004 – Focus on Health, Incarceration

- Published Oklahoma Women’s Almanac; partnered with OSU Women’s Archives
- Statewide Summit on drugs and mental health courts as an approach to reduce women incarceration
- Implemented 2004 Task Force recommendations to reduce women incarceration
- Commissioner legislators introduced bill to develop Oklahoma’s Breast and Cervical Cancer Program.
- Published Special Task Force Report on Incarcerated Women

### Prior to 2004:

From the inception of the Oklahoma Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women (1960s) to the legislated Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women (1994), the Commission selects one to three topical focus areas and spends two to four years researching the topic, conducting community conversations to gain local input, and finally, convening a Summit for the purpose of making recommendations to the legislature and the Governor.

## Media Coverage Samples

Oklahoma City FRIDAY, Friday, October 4, 2024, Page 10

**Editorial Page**

### OPINION OUR STAND

"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."  
John 8:32 (quoting Jesus)

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."  
— Edmund Burke (speeches, 1767)

If you want it in the paper, it's advertising. If you don't want it in the paper, it's news."  
— Ancient Chinese Proverb

"Without, or with, offense to friends or foes, We sketch your world exactly as it goes."  
— Byron, 1818

"Every violation of truth is a stab at the health of human society."  
— Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1878

"We must always stand — alone if necessary — as the conscience of this community."  
— J. LeDand Gourley, 1959


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EMAIL YOUR OPINION to: [vicki@okcfriday.com](mailto:vicki@okcfriday.com)



## Status of Women names officers, conducts survey

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women (OCSW), a state government commission established in 1994, has re-elected officers and elected a new Advisory Council Chair for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The officers were nominated by a committee comprised of OCSW commissioners, and then elected by the full commission.

The 2024-2025 elected officers, who form the OCSW executive committee, include:

- **Chairman: Brenda Jones Barwick, APR**, president and CEO of Jones PR, of Edmond.
- **Vice Chairman: Carol Hefner**, vice president of Cedars Commercial Development, of Edmond
- **Financial Officer: Jill Shero-McDaniel**, co-founder and chief operating officer of Indigenous Class, of Oklahoma City.
- **Secretary: Julie Dermody**, Rogers County Election Board secretary, of Oologah.



by leaders in health-care, education, legislative, non-profit groups, and state agencies that demonstrated the connection between economic costs and life quality, which spurred the commission to conduct a statewide survey to further study and gauge interest in jointly addressing these issues.

The statewide survey was released in late August and will remain open for public input until Oct. 15.

State Chairman Barwick stated, "The commission has hosted several summits on important topics impacting Oklahoma women and the next summit topic will be based on results from this statewide survey." Results of the OCSW statewide survey on issues impacting women identify the economic impact of social issues as a major concern will be issued in October.

OCSW works closely with the Governor, and the Oklahoma legislative and executive branches to provide expertise and offer recommendations to assist in facilitating solutions through legislation or policies for women through community conversations, summits, and research.

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**Stillwater News Press**

Commission works to educate about human trafficking

By Suzie Byrd

CNNI Oklahoma

ENID – Experts discussed efforts to combat human trafficking during a community conversation Wednesday at Northern Oklahoma College-Enid.

The discussion was led by Dr. Nyla Ali Khan, chair of the human trafficking subcommittee of the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women.

The commission and NOC Enid partnered to host the event at the Gantz Center.

Each year, several thousand Oklahomans seek help from human trafficking situations.

"The commission for over a decade has worked to provide Oklahomans with information on human trafficking by hosting summits, expert panels and webinars," Kahn said.

The group has made recommendations to the state Legislature that have resulted in the establishment of an office to fight human trafficking through the state Attorney General's Office.

"The definition of human trafficking is the use of force, fraud or coercion in the exploitation of someone to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act," said Matt Varney, agent in charge of professional standards of the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control.

The panel agreed most human trafficking in Oklahoma is not happening by people passing through on highways, but by people in their circles of trust – such as family members, friends or acquaintances – who entrap them into involuntary servitude through labor, sex or drugs.

"People especially vulnerable to this are people pleasers, especially female adolescents or women," said Mike Hoskins, a national consultant on the subject. "They will try to become the boyfriend, groom them by spending time, attention and money on them until they fall into the trap."

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**Village library is staying put**

Updated lease approval expected in September

By Eric Ouch  
Staff Writer

Metropolitan Library System (MLS)

"We are both very different operations and terminology has different meanings, so clarifying language is critical," said Shockey. Shockey says the MLS does not pay a lease fee, and the agreement with them is not a traditional tenant-landlord lease. The city subsidizes a lease payment in return for the benefits residents receive from the programs the library offers.

The Village Library first opened in 1966 inside a retail Candy Square storefront where the current Walnut Neighborhood Market is found.

See VILLAGE, Page 3

**Fridayland teams kick off football season**

By Rose Lane  
Editor

Administration hosted an interagency exercise in August to better understand heat, heat risk and the populations most at risk when a heat wave occurs in OKC.

"We have seen how a prolonged heat wave can negatively impact

See HEAT, Page 3

**Heat hot topic of summit**

By Rose Lane  
Editor

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"We have seen how a prolonged heat wave can negatively impact

See HEAT, Page 3

**Women's Hall of Fame to induct six**

By Rose Lane  
Editor

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women (OCSW) has selected six women to be inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame (OWHF).

The women are to be honored at the induction ceremony on Friday, Sept. 27, at the Chert Hall and

See WOMEN, Page 3

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## Local News

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### Government

## Oklahoma Commission on Status of Women to honor Sec.

## Everest, Sen. Stanley and Rep. West at Women's Hall of Fame

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women (OCSW) will present Secretary of Public Safety Tricia Everest with the 2024 Kate Barnard Award, and Senator Brenda Stanley and Rep. Tammy West with the 2024 Guardian Awards at the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony on Friday, September 27 at the Omni Hotel in Oklahoma City.

"Secretary Everest exemplifies Kate Barnard's passion to make real changes for the incarcerated population and especially women to help them become productive citizens and to learn good parenting skills after their terms are served," said OCSW Chair Brenda Barwick. "Senator Stanley and Representative West have been true champions for women in the



Oklahoma Legislature in the areas of education, rural healthcare, women veterans, caregivers and restorative justice."

In 1998, the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women created the Kate Barnard Award to continue recognition of the women who have made a difference in Oklahoma by becoming public servants. These women are elected or appointed salaried public officials in



Oklahoma. Kate Barnard became the first woman to win a statewide elected office in the United States in 1907. She held the office of Commissioner of Charities and Corrections for two terms where she had 30 statutory laws passed to continue recognition of the women who have made a difference in Oklahoma by becoming public servants. These women are elected or appointed salaried public officials in



land Security.

Everest stated, "Kate Barnard and juvenile justice is where I started my journey in Oklahoma as a lawyer and is the heart of everything that guides me. I am honored to receive the award." As the founding Chair of Palomar: Oklahoma City's Family Justice Center and founding chair of ReMerge, a non-profit that diverts mothers from prison and empowers women to build healthy foundations for themselves and their children.

Sen. Stanley and Rep. West will receive the

Visit Guardian Award for a list of former recipients of this public service award.

Sen. Stanley demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the health and well-being of women through several legislative bills that include patients receive mammography report summaries, improve mid-wifery care to improve maternal and child health, and sales tax exemption for women's veterans organizations. Prior to being elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in 2018, she served 40 years as a school teacher and principal.

Rep. West authored the Caring for Caregivers Bill giving a tax credit for expenses incurred by a family caregiver and led several legislative bills to provide for victim-centered, restorative justice deferred prosecution programs, while still

en who have completed the program are licensed and ready to work immediately.

The evening will conclude with the induction of six outstanding women into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame (OWHF). The 2024 class of inductees are Dr. Nancy Anthony, Marilyn Maurer Hugen, Edie Roodman, Crystal Stovall, Jane Semple Umsted, and Molly Wehrenberg. For information on sponsorship and tickets, please visit Oklahoma Women Hall of Fame or [www.oklahoma.gov/owhf](http://www.oklahoma.gov/owhf).

This year's Presenting Sponsor is the Choctaw Nation.

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women is the official state commission representing the voice of women in state government. OCSW advises the Legislature and Executive branches about issues to improve oppor-

**INTERNATIONAL WIGS**

Everest was appointed by Governor Kevin Stitt in 2021 to oversee 55

West will receive the

**DEVELOPING NEWS**

**COMMISSION WORKS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING**



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Home > Law > Oklahoma House bill providing free childcare to industry workers set to become law



The Oklahoma Capitol is seen at dusk. (Photo by Heather Warwick, The Journal Record)

## Oklahoma House bill providing free childcare to industry workers set to become law

By : Jeff Elkins // The Journal Record // June 4, 2025 // 3 Minute Read

Key Summary:

- HB 2778 provides no-cost childcare for early childhood educators in Oklahoma.
- The law aims to reduce childcare shortages by improving recruitment and retention.
- The program will be managed by Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness.
- Estimated fiscal impact is around \$10 million annually, starting Nov. 1.


OKLAHOMA CITY – A new law passed by the legislature this session will allow early childhood educators to receive no-cost childcare.

House Bill 2778, written by state Rep. [Suzanne Schreiber](#), D-Tulsa, is an effort to bolster the childcare workforce by offering [free childcare](#) for those in the industry. Language for the measure was taken from House Bill 1849 and transferred to the bill reserved for the budget process.

**Enid BUZZ**

HOME NEWS CALENDAR BUSINESS EATS OBITS JOBS CLASSIFIED

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## NORTHERN Oklahoma College

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### COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ENID BLOG, NEWS / OCTOBER 28, 2024 / BY SHAGGYDUCK

ENID, OK - The Commission on the Status of Women is partnering with Northern College Enid to host a Community Conversation on Stop Human Trafficking.

The event is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 30, at 9:30 a.m. in the Gantz Center, located at 2200 East Maine Street, in Enid. The event is free and open to the public.

Each year, an estimated several thousand Oklahomans seek help from human trafficking situations. The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women is partnering with local communities to provide an educational initiative on stopping human trafficking – a series of Community Conversations to Stop Human Trafficking at schools.



ABC affiliate in Oklahoma City, KOCO-TV News Anchor Kylie Walker interviews Commissioner Erin Engelke and Chair Brenda Barwick.

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## Commission statement applauds passage of House Bill 2778 addressing affordable childcare

Thu, 06/05/2025 - 06:37 By News Staff Posted in: NEWS

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women applauds the Oklahoma Legislature on passage of House Bill 2778, which helps address the childcare workforce crisis in Oklahoma. The bill includes sev...



**OKLAHOMA**  
Commission on the  
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