

House Republican Press Release

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Resources for women who want to start a business



I am often asked how a woman can start her own business. From cooking school to gardening, more women are feeling the entrepreneurial spirit and looking for ways to break into the business world.

Fortunately, Connecticut has an active and accessible Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). This commission was established by the Legislature in 1973. Seventeen appointed volunteer Commissioners join staff and volunteers to work to eliminate sex discrimination in Connecticut. The commission is charged by the Governor to inform leaders about the nature and scope of discrimination, to serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with services for women, to promote consideration of women for governmental positions, and to work with state agencies to access programs and practices as they affect women.

The commission offers useful information for women who want to start a business, among other topics. The PCSW maintains a database of women business owners in the state. Through the PCSW Web site, subscribers can choose to receive e-mail updates during the legislative session regarding bills that affect women business owners. Participating in a mailing list also ensures subscribers will receive invitations to PCSW sponsored events, including Connecticut Women Entrepreneurs' Day.

The commission partners with other groups to advocate for opportunities for women in business. The PCSW works with the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO-CT) to advocate for business issues that affect women. The PCSW is also a supporting organization of the Microenterprise Resource Group (MERG). MERG's mission is to strengthen resources for microenterprise in Connecticut through cooperation, advocacy, and education. A microenterprise is a locally owned business with fewer than 10 employees that was started with less than \$50K.

According to the commission's Web site, the PCSW also provides opportunities for the general public to learn about women's issues and to become active in their communities around matters that concern women in our state. These efforts include a speakers' bureau, sexual harassment prevention trainings, and affirmative action investigation training.

Through the commission's public information program, PCSW commissioners and staff may be available to speak to a group on a variety of issues. Some include:

- Body Image
- Legislative Issues Affecting Women
- The Wage Gap
- Trafficking of Women and Girls
- Welfare Reform
- Women in Business
- Women in the Trades and Nontraditional Occupations
- Young Women and Leadership

The PCSW also provides sexual harassment prevention training. If you are interested in sexual harassment prevention training but are not a state agency, the PCSW maintains a list of trainers throughout the state. The PCSW compiles and maintains this list as a public service but the PCSW does not endorse the trainers listed or certify the services provided as appropriate. However this list may be helpful in locating a trainer to meet your needs.

For women interested in starting a business, the PCSW can be a useful resource. If you have been considering starting a business, get in the game and contact the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women to find out what you need to know. Log on to the PCSW Web site at www.ct.gov/pcsw for more information, or call the commission's office at (860) 240-8300.

As always, if you have any questions or would like more information about this topic, you can call my office at (860) 240-8700, or e-mail me at penny.bacchiochi@cga.ct.gov.