Hoosier Women Speak

RICHMOND, INDIANA
PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION REPORT

JULY 18, 2012
9:00 AM – 12:00 NOON

INDIANA
COMMISSION
for women

Moving Indiana Women Forward
www.in.gov/icw

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OVERVIEW

Between February 2011 and June 2012, the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) developed and initiated a process[1] to identify issues facing women, understand the critical needs communities perceive as important, build trust with its constituents, and build relationships with regional partners. ICW conducted a series of regional listening sessions and online survey, which were designed to facilitate conversations with citizens across Indiana to categorize critical issues affecting women regionally and statewide. Topics of discussion during these sessions included:

- Recognition of the primary issues affecting women in communities across Indiana
- Consensus on the critical issues in most need of immediate attention
- Identification of key stakeholders and current efforts addressing the issues
- Creation, improvement or expansion of current and potential programs and services that address these issues.

Information and results compiled from these listening sessions and accompanying survey can serve as a guide for stakeholders to find positive, meaningful and lasting solutions to challenges specific to their community and for the State of Indiana.

During the original *2011-2012 Hoosier Women Speak*, issues unique to specific populations[2] were suggested, but were not explicitly addressed. Additionally, issues unique to geographic regions, such as Vigo and Wayne Counties, were not included in the scope of the original project. However, both demographic and geographic populations provide target areas for consideration in subsequent *Hoosier Women Speak* outreach.

Therefore, in January 2012, ICW staff presented their findings to a luncheon in Richmond, Indiana sponsored by the Wayne County Foundation. At that luncheon, participants asked ICW to return to conduct a listening session and glean information unique to their community. On July 18, 2012, Kristin Garvey, ICW executive director, conducted this listening session at the Innovation Center from 9:00 – 12:00 noon.

As a group, the participants identified sixteen (16) issues facing women in Wayne County, Indiana. By consensus, the group voted and determined the top three issues facing women to be addressed during the listening session were: 1) generational poverty, 2) the need for support and mentorship, and 3) the loss of household income. A discussion of these three priorities was conducted with the participants. During the session, the group was asked to answer specific questions and to start developing community actions for Wayne County, Indiana. The results of the discussions are detailed later in this report.

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[1] The theory behind this process is to reframe public participation by moving constituents closer to issues directly affecting them so that they can have direct input on identifying solutions to the challenges they face. For more information, refer to Simrell King, Cheryl, Felty, Kathryn M. and O'Neill Susel, Bridget (July-August, 1998), "The Question of Participation: Toward Authentic Public Participation in Public Administration," Published in *Public Administration Review* (Vol. 58, No. 4), pp. 317-326 (http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0033-3352%28199807%2F08%2958%3A4%3C317%3ATQOPTA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-L).

[2] Specific populations discussed during the listening sessions included, but not limited to, ex-offenders, girls, immigrant women, individuals with disabilities, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender) groups, minority women, rural women, senior women, single women, and veterans.

PARTICIPANTS

The Wayne County public listening session was sponsored by the Wayne County Foundation. Support from the Foundation was provided by publicizing the event to their Women's Networking Listserv, getting information out to the general community and providing refreshments for participants.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS, CHALLENGES AND NEW CONDITIONS

As an icebreaker, participants were asked to complete an *Aspiration Triangle*, which was developed by the Harwood Institute (www.theharwoodinstitute.org). This exercise is designed to help participants focus conversation on positive dialogue by asking them the following questions:

- What are their aspirations for the community?
- What are the challenges the community faces in reaching these aspirations?
- What is needed to change the community to reach these aspirations?

A full listing of all responses gleaned from this activity can be found in Appendix 1. Several themes reoccurred throughout the responses. With regards to overarching aspirational themes, participants indicated that they wanted to see pride in the community restored. To do this, they felt the community needed to:

- Establish a renewed economic vibrancy
- Build strong educational foundations
- Encourage healthy communities
- Create a community in which a vibrant arts and culture sector can thrive
- Provide the required support and mentorship for women to achieve educational, familial and economic success.

Just as participants wanted to feel a renewed pride in the community, they recognized that Wayne County residents had lost the connection to the "Front Porch" tradition, one in which the porch symbolizes an intersection between people's public and private lives and represents the ideal of community and neighborliness.[3] Participants recognized pervasive challenges facing the Richmond/Wayne County community. Those challenges included:

- Entrenched generational poverty
- A slowed economy and lack of jobs
- Bureaucracy with too many guidelines, rules, policies, and procedures that inhibit people from seeking assistance
- "Brain Drain" as college students leave the community after studying at local colleges and universities
- Lack of celebration of what Richmond has to offer.

To reach their aspirations and overcome the identified challenges, participants expressed what needed to change to create these new conditions. They agreed that a positive vision for the community was needed. This vision would need to focus on the "spirit of the community" and be

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[3] [3] *The Cultural Significance of the American Front Porch,* University of Virginia (http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CLASS/am483_97/projects/cook/cultur.htm).

inclusive of the various new communities that have settled in Wayne County. Other new conditions include:

- Shift the conversation to the "good stuff" rather than focus on the negative aspects
- Encourage organizations to collaborate and share information
- Engage community leaders so they can take these ideas to the action level
- Improve communication amongst organizations, residents and community leaders
- Create an environment that attracts new jobs, that encourages new businesses and an entrepreneurial spirit and that enhances the "physical space" of the community (outdoor/green space)

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

The participants of the listening session identified sixteen (16) issues they believed were barriers to women's full participation in society through a brainstorming activity. Additional comments from the conversation have been captured and are indicated by [brackets]. These issues were then voted on to determine the top three issues facing women in Wayne County. Each participant was given three (3) votes which she could use to help prioritize the issues. The numbers next to the issue represent the number of votes that issue received from the participants.

- No homeless shelter for women (2)
- Access to childcare (1)
- Transportation (1)
- *Loss of household income (7) ["It is acceptable for employers to move from full-time with benefits to hourly rates without benefits, which especially affects women and their ability to provide for their families"]*
- *Generational poverty (7) [attitude/not just about money] (7)*
- Poverty (2) [Generational and new working poor]
- Addiction
- Diversity and incoming cultures that impact services and how they relate to the community
- Psychological "off-balance" throughout education
- Teen/Single moms [understanding the difference between successful and unsuccessful parents and supported and unsupported parents]
- Undereducated populations (4) [83% of incoming college students have only an 8th grade reading level and 30% of high school students are not graduating]
- No representation of those affected "at the table" (2) [the underserved are not being included in issues discussion]
- *Support/Mentorship (8)*
- Limited choices women have in the community
- Inclusion [how do service providers "meet people where they are" rather than expect them to be either willing or interested in moving out of their current situation]
- Health (5) [e.g. stress, healthy lifestyles, connection to poverty]

TOP ISSUES & DISCUSSION

The top issues identified by the participants were: 1) generational poverty, 2) the need for support and mentorship, and 3) the loss of household income. The participants were asked to separate into three smaller groups to discuss one of the three top issues. Once these issues were

identified and the participants broke out into smaller groups, they were asked to consider a series of questions regarding these issues in order to start developing a plan of action for how we should work to overcome these challenges in Indiana. The questions were divided into five categories and are listed below.

Frame It
1. What are the critical components of this issue?
2. What should be addressed first?

What's in Place Now?
3. Are there any existing programs in place to help solve this issue?
4. Are there any agencies or organizations who currently deal with this issue?

Who should be involved?
5. Who are the people/organizations that should be involved in this issue?
6. Who should be responsible for strategizing ideas and implementing solutions for this issue?

Community/State Actions
7. How can the community work on solving this issue?
8. Is this an issue that should be addressed statewide? How?

Next Steps
9. What resources are needed to work on this issue?
10. What are the next steps that should be taken to address this issue?

ISSUE: GENERATIONAL POVERTY

Generational poverty was seen as a priority for participants with seven (7) votes. It should be noted that poverty as an issue was listed twice. The second listing with two (2) votes revolved around both those in generational poverty and those classified as the new working poor. By combining both into one category, poverty as an issue received a total of nine (9) votes. In clarifying the discussion, one participant described the concept as being not just about money but about the attitude surrounding poverty. In addition, another participant commented that to offer resources to women and families in poverty situations, service providers should "meet people where they are," rather than expect them to be willing or interested in moving out of their current situation. Key points to the discussion are below:

Frame It
The participants identified the following main components of this issue:
- Education
  ~ Lack of value, respect, understanding the importance
- Values
  ~ Different; perpetuate conditions
- Initiatives
  ~ Lack of drive and desire
- Role Models/modeling behavior
- Society enables/perpetuates – lack of sense of reality ("I don't need to go to college. I'm gonna [sic] be on American Idol").

What's in place now?
The participants identified the following programs/organizations currently in existence providing some form of services:
- Communities in Schools (www.ciswayneco.org)
- Parents as Leaders
- America Reads
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters (Not here) – lost Target/United Way changed funding focus
- Study Buddies (http://www.rcs.k12.in.us/volunteer/study-buddies)
- 21st Century Scholars (http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2345.htm)
- Boys & Girls Club (http://www.bgcrichmond.org/).
- Girls, Inc. (http://www.girlsincwayne.org/)
- Birth-to-Five (www.mybirthtofive.org)

Who should be involved?
The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation:
- Successful women from all areas to mentor/model behavior
- Richmond Economic Development Commission (EDC) (http://richmondindiana.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&sectionid=10&id=72&Itemid=106)
- School representation
- Assistance programs

Community / State Action
The participants determined that the following actions would help address the challenges surrounding this issue:
- Improve business/employment opportunities to offer alternatives
- Attract opportunities to make it more productive to be employed than to get assistance
- Identify the "family member" who has broken the cycle to "testify" to the benefits of moving out of poverty
- Conditions for obtaining assistance that will motivate/require recipients to do something to help improve their situation, experience, networking, etc.

Next steps
The participants determined next steps needed to be taken to begin making progress on this issue are:
- People
- Facility/location
- Buy-in from organizations

ISSUE: SUPPORT/MENTORSHIP

Support for and mentorship of women was a priority for participants of this listening session with eight (8) votes. Key points to the discussion are below:

Frame It
The participants identified the following main components of this issue:
- Education (lack of educational aspiration) – need information on how to go back to school or to college, get GED
- Professional (lack of professional knowledge) – need basic career information on how to interview, how to dress, etc.
- Health (need for healthy lifestyle awareness)
- Financial (need for financial literacy education) – how to prepare a budget, how to manage money, etc.
- Career pathways (need for connection between case managers/career counselors and individuals to do career assessments and help map out a career path)
- Need basic life skills and computer skills
- Need to know where and what resources are, e.g. 211.
- Groups to address: single mothers, people in poverty with no computer, no paper (diplomas)

What's in place now?
The participants identified the following programs/organizations currently in existence providing some form of services:
- Communities in School – parents as leaders (www.ciswayneco.org)
- Birth to Five (www.mybirthtofive.org)
- Library – list of resources, computer skills (www.mrl.lib.in.us)
- WorkOne – computer skills (www.work-one.org)
- www.waynet.com (a nonprofit organization working for the benefit of members to promote Wayne County on the internet)
- DIPLOMAS In-School Childcare Program of Wayne County (RHS program for teen moms)
- Amigos Latino Center (www.amigoslatinocenter.org)
- 211 Call Center
- Birthright (www.birthright.org)
- Dress for Success (www.indydfs.org)
- Local churches – clothes closet, food pantry
- Urban Enterprise Association

Who should be involved?
The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation:
- Wayne Township Trustee (Susan Isaacs) (susan@waynetownshiptrustee.com)
- Churches – help them understand the needs
- Engage university/college counselors to help keep graduates in the area
  ~ IU East (www.iue.edu)

- ~ Ivy Tech (www.ivytech.edu/richmond)
- ~ Earlham (www.earlham.edu)
- ~ Purdue (www.tech.purdue.edu/richmond)
- ~ Local high schools
- County and City Councils
  - ~ www.co.wayne.in.us/council
  - ~ www.waynet.org/government/default.htm#wc-reps/)

Community / State Action
The participants determined that the following actions would help address the challenges surrounding this issue:
- Engage human resource directors at businesses
- Create mentoring programs for women – find mentors and match up with mentees
- Reach out to women and give them an "invitation to the table"
- Get Dress for Success involved

Next steps
The participants determined next steps needed to be taken to begin making progress on this issue are:
- Open communication between committee members and schools/organizations so that committee members can take to higher ups within businesses
- Community Foundation – provide table and guidance
- Provide transportation (student fees/city council)
- Public communication strategy (news media, libraries, county/city councils, web, Laundromats

ISSUE: LOSS OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Loss of household income was also seen as a priority for participants with seven (7) votes for this issue. As one participant stated, "It is acceptable for employers to move (employees) from full-time with benefits to hourly rates without benefits, which especially affects women and their ability to provide for their families." Key points to the discussion are below:

Frame It
The participants identified the following main components of this issue:
- Main Components
  - ~ Loss of jobs
  - ~ Reduction in wages (people not making living wages)
  - ~ Loss of benefits
- Most important aspects
  - ~ Skilled/Educated people leaving the area
  - ~ Quality of life – individuals/families and community

What's in place now?
The participants identified the following programs/organizations currently in existence providing some form of services:
- Existing programs, agencies, organizations
  - ~ Center City (bringing in entrepreneurs)
  - ~ Richmond, IN, Economic Development Commission (http://richmondindiana.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&sectionid=10&id=72&Itemid=106)
  - ~ EEOC (http://www.eeoc.gov/field/indianapolis/)
  - ~ WorkOne (www.work-one.org)
  - ~ East Central ISBDC (http://www.isbdc.org/locations/east-central-isbdc/)
- Improvements needed
  - ~ Solving issues at home (childcare, transportation) that limit access
  - ~ Helping people see benefits of self improvement activities
  - ~ Link unemployed, especially seniors, with jobs in need areas

Who should be involved?
The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation:
- People/organizations need to be involved
  - ~ Leadership, government
  - ~ Small business owners & entrepreneurs

Community / State Action
The participants determined that the following actions would help address the challenges surrounding this issue:
- Community actions
  - ~ Make connections between organizations so that there is communication and resource sharing

      ~ Create and participate in social media campaigns initiated by the city
- ~ Create Jobs Taskforce
- ~ Create Community Resource Center to provide information on resources available in the community
- ~ Recognize resource silos and work to shift public policy so that these silos are linked into a more networked web.
    - State actions
        - ~ Commitment to providing resources and support
        - ~ Outreach for state resources – make them available to smaller communities
    - Both
        - ~ Reduction in bureaucratic hang-ups

Next steps

The participants determined next steps needed to be taken to begin making progress on this issue are:
- Resources needed
    - ~ "Hard" money for nonprofits (not just grants)
    - ~ Money, people, time
    - ~ Centralized clearinghouse – interactive
- Next steps
    - ~ Centralize information on website

CONCLUSIONS

There are many barriers that create challenges to women throughout Indiana. With *Hoosier Women Speak*, the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) developed a process to identify issues critical to women, understand important perceived needs, build trust with constituents, and build relationships with regional and local partners. The project provided communities opportunity to discover challenges facing women, brainstorm solutions and take action.

After ICW presented the results of the *2011-2012 Hoosier Women Speak* in Richmond, the Wayne County Foundation asked staff to return to conduct a listening session for the women of Wayne County to identify issues participants perceive as important to the women in their community and offer solutions. Interestingly, many of the solutions discussed among the Richmond participants were also identified as components of any issue discussed during all listening sessions, which include:
- Encouraging agencies, organizations and individuals to communicate and coordinate individual efforts through collaboration and partnership
- Identifying, promoting and enhancing resources already in existence so that people can find them easily and quickly
- Inviting women directly affected by the issues to the table to be engaged in the process of identifying solutions.

Significantly distinct themes expressed during this listening session included their desire to see a revitalization of pride in Richmond by recapturing a "Front Porch" ideal of community and neighborliness. They also identified the need to break down "resource silos" that exist in the community, which prevent women from knowing about or seeking assistance.

The discussion in Richmond can be the beginning of a process to move women in Wayne County forward by engaging community stakeholders in public deliberation and in identification of positive solutions to challenges. These results can contribute to a better understanding of women's specific needs, to better communication of those needs and to better recognition of ways to remove barriers. These results can also assist in informing leaders at the local, county and state levels of important issues affecting women both regionally and statewide, in expanding coalitions and in building capacity to work across networks to improve outreach efforts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Indiana Commission for Women expresses its appreciation to the Wayne County women who participated in the July 18th listening sessions, for the support and guidance of the Indiana Commission for Women's Board of Commissioners and the support, guidance and assistance from the staff of the Wayne County Foundation.

APPENDIX 1: ASPIRATIONS, CHALLENGES AND NEW CONDITIONS

Aspirations	Challenges	New Conditions
▪ Richmond Pride/Pride in the community ▪ Have support groups for women; mentorship; study groups for schools; single parent groups to assist them with education, management of money/funds; how to be dependable/options for them ▪ Economic improvement ▪ Better town/gown atmosphere ▪ Financial literacy ▪ Connection ▪ A lessening of the numbers of chemically dependent ▪ More job opportunities and people who are wanting to work and who are prepared to work ▪ Increased value of family/marriage and skills (including financial/budgeting skills) to help families function well ▪ Economically vibrant ▪ Improving health of community ▪ Improving level of education ▪ Mentorship ▪ Equal access to resources ▪ LGBTQ acceptance and safety ▪ Quality public education ▪ We have opportunities for high school and college graduates allowing them to stay here ▪ Maintaining current arts ▪ Fill the empty housing in areas; Promoting others to live here; Making it easier to own home	▪ How do we choose these women? ▪ Guidelines, rules, policies, procedures ▪ Networking, communication ▪ Generational poverty ▪ Slow economy ▪ Changing economic base ▪ Entrenched poverty ▪ Addiction ▪ Need connection ▪ Access to childcare ▪ Transportation for students ▪ Single and teen moms have no support system and over 30% of them have no high school education ▪ 83% of incoming students at Ivy Tech cannot read past 8th grade level ▪ Mindset/heart change of individuals who have to want these changes and how to reach/teach entrenched poverty/generational (how to access it?) ▪ Addiction ▪ People don't connect with "Front Porch" anymore ▪ We don't celebrate what various communities within Richmond have ▪ Poverty/income disparity ▪ "Brain Drain" ▪ Bureaucracy in accessing resources\ ▪ Fundraising for arts programs ▪ Limited job opportunities, companies not growing, limited housing, hart to find socialization	▪ Outreach to women where they are able to find the information that is needed for them ▪ Positive vision ▪ Community spirit ▪ Improvement in health ▪ Inclusion ▪ Micro-loans (Make it easy to start new businesses) ▪ Sharing ideas about starting business with outreach to women such as using computers ▪ Shift in conversation to the "good stuff" ▪ There are lots of places where Wi-Fi is available in our town ▪ Banks are teaching financial literacy in the schools ▪ Need people at top level to take these ideas to action level (Columbus, IN, is great at this!). ▪ Education reform ▪ Skilled/Low-skill jobs ▪ Improved communication channels for poor ▪ Use www.waynet.org to communicate calendar of events ▪ Creating job opportunities within the community ▪ New creative businesses ▪ Opportunity for business loans and connections ▪ Sharing info on steps to start a business

Aspirations	Challenges	New Conditions
- Employment with livable wages and benefits - Creative industries (arts and culture) - Healthy Community (physically, mentally, emotionally) - Environmentally savvy - Economic growth and stability - Available education opportunities for everyone regardless of income - Reverse the trend of negative perceptions - Healthy, educated and quality jobs - Access for all to education, health care, employment, cultural enrichment and recreation	- Available jobs - Available home loans - Jobs - Finances - Time/Access - Awareness/Education - National recession/global economy "Spreading the word" re: assistance, combating long-time residents who remember the "good ole days" - Health - Education – working w/high school students - Getting jobs/economy - Cultural barriers - Economic barriers - Generational poverty	- with little funding, grants, etc. available - Easy access for new business or existing to grow - How to obtain support - Same people making the decisions - Access employers - Create outdoor space/green space - New industry - Better communications - Health - Education – work with parents, schools - Quality jobs – EDC - Collaboration - Thinking - Self-esteem - Outreach

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