



On National Equal Pay Day, April 22, 150 people from the Michiana community attended a half-day forum at Saint Mary's College on the how women can achieve wage equity in Indiana. This community-wide collaboration was initiated by the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) and planned by 18 local organizations.

The goal is to replicate this program around the state and gather data to mobilize support for a statewide bipartisan effort. There were 29 presenters that covered five focus areas (see below) and a closing panel of decision makers who responded to the concerns and ideas brought forward from the breakout groups. The keynote, closing speakers, and closing panel included:

1. Patrick Bauer, Indiana Speaker of the House
2. Virginia Calvin, Chancellor, Ivy Tech Community College
3. Nancy Chen, Regional Administrator, Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor
4. Phil Damico, Director of Business Growth St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce
5. Sue Errington, Indiana State Senator (C-Muncie)
6. Jeff Gibney, Executive Director South Bend Dept Community & Economic Dev
7. Marnia Kennon, Vice Provost Academic Affairs, Ivy Tech Community College
8. Melissa Martin, Chair, Indiana Commission on Women
9. Carol Ann Mooney, President, Saint Mary's College

What follows are the key messages and recommendations from the five breakout sessions, which were:

1. Best Practices: How Businesses Can Help Women Bridge the Gap
2. Women in Poverty: What Our Communities Must Do
3. Opening the Doors: Education as a Pathway to Non-Traditional and Higher Paying Jobs
4. Listening to Our Future: Dialogue with Younger Women
5. A Closer Look at Pay Inequity: Why Diversity Matters

Best Practices:

How Businesses Can Help Women Bridge The Gap

Message #1: Women are one key aspect of diversity within the workplace that can aid in creating successful businesses.

Message #2: Business practices can help or hinder recruitment and retention of women.

Message #3: What is good for women is good for families.

Analysis:

Strengths/Opportunities:

- Professional women's series (Baker and Daniels)
- "pump room"; rest and relaxation
- Mentorship/encouragement
- Educational opportunities (numerous higher ed. Institutions in area)
- Flex-time
- Day care

Weaknesses/Barriers:

- Lack of educational opportunities
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Lack of networking & mentoring opportunities
- Good ole' boys network
- Need for unions
- Ageism
- Poverty
- No access to compare salaries within companies

Recommendations:

Business Policies:

- Reward and recognize businesses that create pay equity.
- Businesses should evaluate pay equity each year.
- Greater transparency about wage ranges for small and large companies.
- Promote from within – retention costs less than hiring.
- Reward management for developing the workforce under them.
- Evaluate senior men and women on talent development and nurturing – with an eye to equity issues.
- Leaders should provide leadership skills to those they lead.
- Provide networking and mentoring opportunities to women in the workplace as well as supporting outside.
- Educate your current workforce. Take 20% of profit towards education and retraining.

Women in Poverty:
What Our Communities Must Do

Message #1: Women are an asset to be developed, not a problem to be solved.

Message #2: We need to commit to our future.

Message #3: Ex-offenders need a door back into the community.

Recommendations:

- Living Wage campaign
- Better public transportation
- Allowing a **sunset on felony penalties** for nonviolent crimes.
- TANF reform

Opening the Doors:

Education as a Pathway to Non-Traditional And Higher Paying Jobs

Message #1: The world has changed – the workforce has changed – we have to change too!

Message #2: How's that job working for you?

Message #3: Getting women into non-traditional and higher paying jobs will take additional support from government, unions and the community.

Recommendations:

- Support the **Pathways Advancing Career Training Act** (H.R.5774). Known as the PACT Act, it would authorize a total of \$95 million annually to support programs that prepare women for employment in high-wage, high-skill fields where they are often underrepresented.
- Transportation, childcare, flexibility
- Increase math/science education
- Teach soft skills like communication
- Remove barriers to unionization
- Increase cultural competency in education
- Pass the Employee Free Choice Act
- Address age discrimination
- Keep jobs in Indiana
- Make prior convictions not permanent

Listening to Our Future:
A Dialogue with Younger Women

Message #1: Women are expected to fill more roles today than ever--worker, mother, citizen, and leader--with inadequate resources or an even playing field.

Message #2: When women come home after their 8 hour day, they start their Second Shift as the main care givers of their families.

Message #3: Ironically, education widens, not narrows, the wage gap.

Analysis:

Strengths/Opportunities:

- Increase public awareness
- Educate women to empower themselves
- Mentoring and woman-to woman education

Weaknesses/Barriers:

- Lack of childcare, eldercare and family friendly employers/ policies
- No liability to employers who practice discrimination
- Need effective ways to create education and awareness

Recommendations:

- Develop incentives for employers to adopt flexible work policies. One way to encourage employers is to use tax credits as an effective mechanism.
- Improving sick leave policies for working families. It is important to provide paid sick leave days for workers to be able to care for themselves and their families.
- It is necessary to provide adequate childcare for all working families. A key factor is to create access to quality, affordable early care, as well as educational services and after-school care.
- Create public awareness that it is acceptable for men to stay-at-home and be the caregivers of the family. Get rid of the stigma attached to men who spend more time with their family by taking leave or adjusting their hours. This will encourage men to reduce their hours on the job and to use their family leave time.
- Educate women on the newest updates in technology which will help increase their earnings in the workforce.
- Provide women and girls with information about careers and the competitive workforce so that they will be prepared to take on whichever career they choose.
- Provide women with resources for non-traditional skills training as well as for vocational training.

A Closer Look at Pay Inequity *Why Diversity Matters*

Message #1: Pay inequity affects women differently and we need to pay attention to the differences.

Message #2: We need workplace protection for sexual orientation or gender identity.

Message #3: Creating meaningful employment opportunities for women with disabilities strengthens Indiana's workforce and allows everyone to contribute.

Analysis:

Strengths/Opportunities:

- Numerous opportunities for increased training through local colleges and universities
- Networked organizations
- Strong AARP with resources

Weaknesses/Barriers:

- Homophobia
- Human Rights Commission only covers South Bend, not all of SJC
- Prejudice against immigrants & resistance to learning Spanish and other languages
- More encouragement for women to seek non-traditional high paying jobs.

Recommendations:

- Educate employers about benefits of hiring and retaining older workers
- A law legalizing the status of all employed non-citizen workers
- Pass the age discrimination bill, and then modify to a broader non-discrimination policy