Hoosier INsight: Listening Sessions and Capacity Building

Introduction

By definition, boards and commissions like the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) are designed to give citizens a voice in their government and provide a meaningful way for citizens to influence decisions that shape the quality of life for residents of a state. They are fundamental to encouraging citizen interest in the work of public servants, keeping government innovative and responsive, and improving the overall performance of state agencies and institutions. They educate their constituents on certain issues, connect them to the information that can help them to make informed decisions and explore alternative ways of inspiring them for social change. Government boards and commissions are particularly poised to achieve greater citizen input by connecting similar government agencies, by collaborating with external partners and by offering more participation by citizens.

The Indiana Commission for Women is currently engaged in such an initiative to identify key issues facing women and learn what is need to build capacity for women's progress in the hopes of establishing a plan of action that can be shared by public agencies and community organizations throughout Indiana. The first phase of this initiative, *Hoosier INsight,* is a series of regional listening sessions and online survey designed to facilitate conversations with Hoosiers across the state to categorize critical issues affecting women regionally and statewide. The dialogue is helping ICW to initiate discussion, prioritize challenges, and develop key partnerships with stakeholders to create a coordinated effort to move Indiana women forward.

This phase has been the first step in creating an environment where public deliberation on women's issues can occur. The information and results compiled from these listening sessions and accompanying survey can serve as a guide for next steps that will mobilize community stakeholders from all sectors to find positive, meaningful and lasting solutions to challenges that are uncovered. 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.

Functioning as a legislatively-mandated state government agency, the Indiana Commission for Women is committed to ***the full participation of women in all aspects of society*** in order to make Indiana a better place to live, work and raise a family by removing barriers that may hinder that participation. Its mission is to understand the needs of Indiana women and their families, and to work strategically both within government and in our communities to help bring about positive change. The agency is committed to ***moving Indiana women forward*** by amplifying women's voices in the public sector, by raising awareness of their needs and concerns, and by celebrating their contributions and successes.

The Commission is charged by statute to provide many services to Indiana women on a wide range of topics. Through its efforts, the agency encourages citizens to become more aware of the overall issues women face in Indiana and assists women in becoming better connected to the opportunities and resources available to them in their communities and throughout the State of Indiana and more engaged as leaders in resolving challenges that they face.

Particularly in the last several years, the Commission has focused efforts on women's economic security needs. In 2008, it sponsored a summit on *Bridging the Gap: Reaching Pay Equity in Indiana.* This event was structured to examine key components of the pay equity debate and provide recommendations in five key areas, including poverty, diversity, and intergenerational issues. That same year, the agency launched *Working Women in Transition*, a program designed to give women the forum to discover resources and options that could transform their lives as they prepare for their next career opportunity. Women learned about trends affecting them in the workforce, received training on key skills and learned about opportunities, programs and services available as they transition to a new career. The workshop series also focused on current issues important to women and addressed specific issues of older women in the workforce and women in green or non-traditional jobs as well as needed skills like networking, starting a business and negotiating a competitive wage.

National research continues to be published supporting the societal shift in the status of women occurring across the United States. These studies support that, even though women have made great strides in the past ninety years, there is still work to be done. They also show that women's progress in some areas has stagnated and, if attention is not focused on women's unique needs, will begin to regress. A December 2010 report[*] compiled by the Majority Staff of the Joint Economic Committee indicates that today's women make up half of the workforce; nearly two-thirds of all women are breadwinners; and women now obtain the majority of college degrees. However, it also underscores a persistent gender gap in several key areas, including pay equity and top-level leadership. The report states:

> …women face serious constraints to achieving their full potential. A persistent wage gap not only cheats women and their families out of the earnings they deserve, but artificially constrains the purchasing power of women, and therefore hampers the American economy as a whole. Women's continued under-representation in corporate leadership means that America's companies are missing out on the proven economic value to having women in the boardroom and the C-suite. A patchwork social support system – particularly in the work-family arena, where the United States offers virtually no institutionalized support for working families – means that America's economy suffers as women struggle to balance demands from work and demands from home. And a retirement system that disadvantages women means that too many hard-working women spend their elder years on the precipice of economic disaster.

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[*] *Invest in Women, Invest in America,* Majority Staff of the Joint Economic Committee, December 2010

A second report[†] published in March 2011 provides a statistical picture of women in America in five critical areas: demographic and family changes, education, employment, health, and crime and violence. By presenting a quantitative snapshot of the well-being of American women based on Federal data, the report greatly enhances our understanding both of how far American women have come and where there is still work to be done. The report shows that gains in education and labor force involvement have not yet translated into wage and income equity. At all levels of education, women earned about 75 percent of what their male counterparts earned in 2009. This wage and income gap exists in part because of lower earnings and because unmarried and divorced women are most likely to have responsibility for raising and supporting their children. Subsequently, women are more likely to be in poverty than men. In addition, women generally live longer than men but are more likely to face certain health problems, such as mobility impairments, arthritis, asthma, depression, and obesity. Even though women are less likely than in the past to be the target of violent crimes, including homicide, they are still victims of certain crimes, such as intimate partner violence and stalking, at higher rates than men.

No comparable comprehensive report is currently available on the status of women in Indiana, even though there have been issue-specific, city-level and regional reports done in various parts of Indiana. For example, the Women's Fund of Central Indiana publishes a report entitled, *Still on Shaky Ground*, which focuses on three of its key areas: caregiving, domestic violence, and insufficient income. Regardless, strong indicators suggest that Indiana follows the nation. A report[‡] done in 2007 on the economic status of women in Indiana shows that Indiana ranks 38th in the nation and 5th in the East North Central region (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI) in a composite employment and earnings ranking.

One of the Commission's goals is to work towards the compilation of such a comprehensive report on the status of women in Indiana. The agency is currently working on new research projects to be published in August and November, respectively. The first report, *Mothers in Transition,* will focus on women who are transitioning into single motherhood to ascertain how the transition impacts on three dimensions of their autonomy (economic stability, physical health and psychological well-being). The second report, *Hoosier Women Lead 2011,* will provide a benchmark of women's status in elected positions at all levels of government in Indiana.

In preparation of compiling the comprehensive report, the agency realized that there was a fundamental need to listen to the women of Indiana. The Commission needed to take the time to understand the perceived community needs in a collaborative and supportive way, to build trust with its constituents, and identify and link with regional partners. Similarly, individuals and communities had to recognize what their needs were through civic participation – without a government agency deciding for them.

As a government agency, the Commission functions in a diverse and fragmented collection of stakeholders and face the challenge of finding consensus. In order to realize more effective participation from its constituents, the agency worked to find innovative ways to reframe how that participation occurs. By creating opportunities for citizens to have greater input on a

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[†] *Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being*, White House Council on Women and Girls, March 2011

[‡] *The Economic Status of Women in Indiana: Highlights*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, November, 2007.

particular issue or situation, the process would empower them to recognize that their participation has the potential to have an impact.

Throughout the duration of the ***Hoosier INsight*** project, women have conveyed their desire to be part of the solution! They have demonstrated the ability to work together to find common ground on issues important to them and have produced innovative ideas and clear solutions on what is needed to move Indiana women forward.
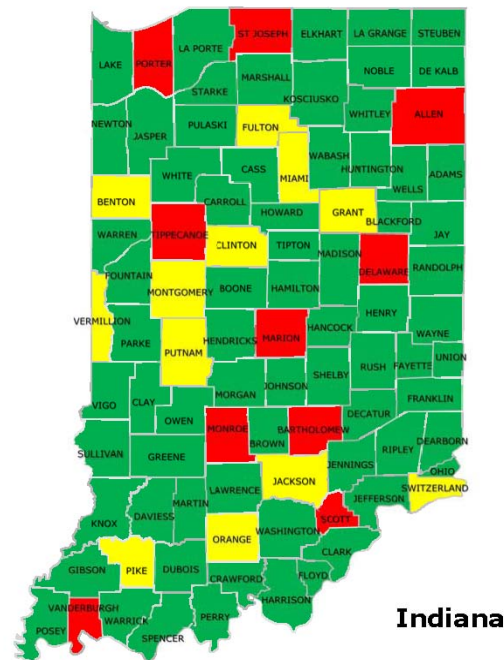
Project Process and Methodology

Beginning in February 2011, the Indiana Commission for Women held seventeen listening sessions in ten communities across Indiana. In all, 275 people participated. Three types of sessions were conducted and structured to engage women and men from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. In addition, a pilot listening session with ICW supporters was held in February to test the listening session format.

Eight (8) public sessions with participants from the general public were conducted in Allen, Bartholomew, Marion, Porter, St. Joseph, Tippecanoe, and Vanderburgh Counties. These sessions were generally held after 5:00 pm local time in order to accommodate participants' work schedule. Two (2) sessions were conducted on university campuses in order to include faculty and young women, ages 18-24. Those campuses were Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) and St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana. These sessions were held over the lunch hour and shortened to accommodate students' class schedule.

Red = Listening Session Locations
Green = Participants/Respondents
Yellow=No identifiable participation

Six (6) sessions were conducted with individuals associated with low-income programs. Four (4) of these sessions were coordinated by local organizers of Circles™ National Campaign, which works to transform communities by building relationships that inspire and equip people to end poverty. These sessions were held in the cities of Bloomington, Evansville, Muncie, and Scott County during each group's *Big View* meeting, which focuses on the problems of and solutions for barriers that hold people in poverty. The group generally meets once a month for dinner and community conversation on a specific issue, at which staff members from the agency were featured presenters.

The other two (2) sessions in this category were held at similar organizations. In Indianapolis, staff members presented at Dress for Success, an organization focused on economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. All but one of the participants in this session were ex-offenders who spoke to issues faced by incarcerated women. In South Bend, staff members also presented at St. Margaret's House, which is a day center that works to improve the lives of women and children by providing individual attention to their

immediate needs, breaking the bonds of isolation and helping them acquire skills to better their lives. Women who use the services of St. Margaret's House are generally homeless and/or transient. The session immediately followed the Center's lunch hour to accommodate the program schedule for its clients.

During the listening sessions, participants were asked to identify multiple issues facing women in Indiana. After those issues were listed, the group was asked to determine the top one to four issues facing women in order to explore those topics more thoroughly. Once these issues were chosen, the participants either stayed together as a single group or broke up into two to four groups of 8-10 people to continue the discussion on the components of each issue. Participants were asked to consider a series of questions regarding these issues in order to brainstorm a plan of action that could be taken to address the issue 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?

An online survey was developed to supplement the work of the statewide listening sessions by providing additional feedback from individuals who were not able to attend any of the sessions in person or from individuals who may wish to comment on additional issues not discussed during the listening sessions. Results from the survey detail the list of issues identified as well as highlight the top three to five recurring issues.

Survey questions were designed with open-ended questions in order to mirror the listening session process. Respondents were given the option to select general issue themes that they felt were a serious problem for women in their communities. They were then allowed to comment on up to three issues in more depth by identifying the most important issues. Questions regarding each issue included:
1. Where can women find support in the community for this issue?
2. What are the major challenges women in the community face because of this issue?
3. What programs in the community (or state) effectively address this issue?
4. How can existing programs be expanded or improved to better address this issue?
5. What else should be done to help address this issue?
6. What organizations or government agencies should be involved in addressing this issue in the community and/or State of Indiana

Initially, the survey was not expected to receive the number of responses it did; however, 825 respondents began and 422 respondents or 51.2 percent completed the survey. Given the response, a subsequent goal of receiving at least one response from each of the 92 counties in Indiana was established. To make the survey as anonymous as possible, the only demographic questions asked were gender, city, zip code and county; however, these questions were not required. The final tally of counties disclosed from responses received was 80 counties or 86 percent. However, because over half of the respondents did not answer the question regarding county of residence, we are confident that we received responses from every county.

Neither the listening sessions nor the survey were intended to be either a statistically significant analysis of the current issues facing women or an academically based qualitative research study. The objectives of the project were to:
- Assess perceived community needs of women in a collaborative and supportive way
- Identify current programs addressing women's needs already in place at local, regional or state levels
- Identify and link with local, regional and state partners
- Be community driven by encouraging communities to recognize what the needs are of the women in their communities so that they could understand their capacity in the community to address those women
- Initiate public deliberation on what course of action could be taken to address issues

Both mechanisms were designed to provide individuals with the opportunity to comment openly and freely on the issues important to women. Results in this report are presented as a compilation of the findings from both mechanisms.

Determining the Issues

Because the conversation during the listening sessions and the responses from the survey were structured to be open-ended and free-flowing, topics of discussion were first grouped within overarching categories (See Appendix 1). To determine the top five issues, the following criteria were used to review the data (See Table 1):

Top 5 Issues:

Health-related issues
Work-based issues
Care Giving
Violence against Women
Leadership

- Number of times an issue was listed and number of "votes" it received during the listening session (Vote)
- Number of times the issue was chosen as a topic during the discussion portion of the listening sessions (Group)
- Frequency of occurrence the issue was mentioned in the survey (Survey)

Table 1: List of Issues

Category	Vote	Group	Survey	TOTAL
Health-Related Issues	185	11	520	716
Work-Based Issues	174	9	656	839
Caregiving	122	5	470	597
Leadership	47	4	190	241
Specific Population[§]	42	1	6	49
Violence Against Women	34	3	377	414
Government	27	2	2	31
Education	25	0	88	113
Housing	22	2	220	244
Mobility Issues	13	1	201	215
Legal	13	0	0	13
Gender Issues	11	0	3	14
Resources	10	0	1	11
Racial/Cultural Issues	9	0	0	9
Consumer Knowledge	7	0	0	7
Financial	7	0	0	7
General	3	0	0	3
Environment	0	0	3	3
History	0	0	0	0
Religious	0	0	0	0

In all three criteria, the top three issues were: health-related issues; work-based issues, and care giving. The next two issues were determined to be: leadership and violence against women. By taking into account survey responses, housing issues had three more "votes" than leadership issues. However, because leadership issues were listed as an issue and discussed more often at the listening sessions, it was determined that leadership would be considered in the top five issues.

Several underlying themes that are fundamental components of all issues were mentioned and should be considered as this process moves forward. In order to make any lasting systemic shift, participants and respondents indicated that societal attitudes and cultural mindsets need to be changed. Agencies, organizations and individuals committed to moving women's issues forward need to create a movement that empowers all women to make the change happen. Participants and respondents called for a collaborative and coordinated effort to address these issues. Organizations supporting women must be networking and communicating with each other so that they can find common ground and support women more effectively and efficiently.

Participants and respondents remarked that there was a real need for more resources because there was a lack of information women receive and a general lack of knowledge about where to find resources. As one participant said, "People don't know what they don't know." Creating a

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[§] Specific population included: ex-offenders, girls, immigrant women, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender) groups, minority women, rural women, senior women, single women, and veterans. Because of the wide range of responses, this category was not considered in determining the five top issues. However, it did provide a list of target areas to consider for supplemental reports that could expand understanding of issues important to women.

centralized and comprehensive center so that women have access to all types of information, resources and referrals became a general suggestion for action in all discussions.

Other comments expressed a need for women directly affected by these issues to participate and be heard in the debate on women's issues. Many participants and respondents recognized that women had a **responsibility** to be engaged in the process; however, they needed the tools, resources and information to make informed decisions and be effective in advocating for their own needs. Finally, there was a general sense that these issues were not necessarily gender-specific and that men needed to join the conversation because as one participant stated, "If there a lasting change was to happen, men have to be involved."

Compilation Report Disclaimer

This compilation report was prepared as an account of key issues, challenges, and suggested solutions described during public discussions and an online survey sponsored by the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) and supported by local partnering organizations in conjunction with its *Hoosier INsight: Women's Issues Listening Sessions* initiative. The compilation of this report should not be considered in any way as an endorsement or promotion by the Indiana Commission for Women, by the State of Indiana or by ICW's partners and supporters. Opinions expressed are strictly those of session participants and respondents and not necessarily those of the Indiana Commission for Women, of the State of Indiana or of its partners and supporters. Recommendations from this report, together with input received from other sources, may inform the creation of a plan of action to address the issues and challenges discussed as well as potential ICW initiatives, programs and services. Furthermore, ICW may use information obtained from this meeting and from the results of this initiative to offer suggestions to other agencies, organizations or entities better suited to address particular issues and/or challenges uncovered during this initiative in order to facilitate maximum cooperation and collaboration between ICW and other entities. The Indiana Commission for Women and those associated with the agency do not assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of any comment made or of any third party's use or results of such use of any information contained in this summary report.

Summary of *Hoosier INsight Initiative*

Health-Related Issues

> *Those without health care coverage do not find any support –*
> *they simply go without appropriate care. –St. Joseph County*

With regards to health-related issues, the following topics of discussion were areas of consideration.

Access to Quality Affordable Health care	Health Insurance	Self-Care
	Mental Health	Sex education
Body Image and self-esteem	Obesity	Smoking and Substance Abuse
Dental	Prescriptions	Support for Menopausal Women
General Health Education	Preventative Health	Support for terminally ill
Health Care System	Rehabilitation	Women's Health
Education on Healthy relationships	Reproductive Health	

However, the two primary health-related themes discussed throughout the project were: access to quality affordable health care and reproductive health issues, including the lack of funding and/or threats to women's ability to access reproductive health services. Health-related issues were ranked first as discussion topics during the listening sessions and ranked second as responses in the survey. (See Appendix 2 for Health-Related Issues Listening Sessions Summaries)

Access to Affordable Quality Healthcare
Framing the Issue
Access to affordable quality healthcare was a primary concern of many listening session participants. Many commented that there was so much responsibility placed on women that the stress caused by it can be a detriment to their own health. They emphasized the importance of finding ways to address this issue. Several contributing factors were discussed on various components of this issue that make it complex. The overall cost and availability of health care options were seen as prohibitive factors that overwhelmed and prevented women from being healthy contributing members of their community.
A corollary was the perceived lack of availability of health insurance and public benefits for those individuals in low-income situations. Physicians only accepted certain health care and denied treatment based on either pre-existing conditions or past credit history.

Prohibitive costs of health insurance policies, expensive medicine, high deductibles and high co-payments contributed to a feeling of little options. Doctors were not given adequate incentives to treat patients who were on Medicare or who had no insurance. A participant remarked that women were actually "de-incentivized" to work because they would lose their public benefits while not being able to afford the cost of private insurance. Contributing to this fact was that women often had to take unpaid time off from work to get care for themselves or for their family which demonstrated the real implications of health care on the workforce, e.g. lost productivity, society's financial burdens, etc.

Another factor of this issue is the lack of clinics providing free or low-cost care for women. In addition, a participant commented that finding female-friendly doctors can be difficult. The lack

of transportation and convenient locations providing health care services can affect a large majority people; however, low-income women and women in rural areas can be disproportionately affected.

Participants also remarked that there is a lack of attention made to wellness and preventive care and is seen as being more expensive. There was no benefit to having a healthy life and one participant commented that sometimes the option of living with an ailment outweighed the cost of preventing or treating it. A corollary to this factor is a lack of resources for women to make informed decision about their own and their family's health care. There is a lack of understanding of health insurance coverage and explanations and a lack of knowledge about available resources in their communities or regions. Finally, there was a lack of transportation options to help them get to health care facilities and a lack of childcare options to take care of their children while they took care of their health.

Specific population groups were also addressed during the listening sessions. Issues faced by individuals with disabilities, single women with no children, and immigrants should be reviewed to understand their specific needs and concerns. Likewise, specific health concerns were mentioned, including mental health, substance abuse, smoking cessation, diabetes, obesity and women's heart health. Finally, the principal concern that was identified by session participants was women's reproductive health, which is discussed more fully in the following section. However, it is important to note here that women's reproductive health was seen as more than pregnancy-related. Breast and uterine health were discussed, including cancer screenings and support for women going through menopause.

Understanding who is and who should be included in the discussion
Participants at each listening session were asked to identify programs and/or organizations that currently exist that are working to provide health care or improve access to affordable quality healthcare.

Federal	▪ Medicaid/Medicare
General	▪ Churches
	▪ Various support groups
	▪ Emergency Rooms
	▪ Employer sponsored health insurance programs
	▪ Health fairs
	▪ Incentives for healthy behaviors
	▪ Meijer Pharmacy (provides free antibiotics)
	▪ Mobile care
	▪ Mobile Mammograms
	▪ Neighborhood health clinics
	▪ Pharmacy minute clinics and discounts on prescriptions (Wal-Mart, Target, etc.)
	▪ Social service organization that receive individuals who are turned away from other points in the health care system (hospitals, ER, Urgent care) when they don't know what to do with them.
	▪ Urgent Care facilities (expensive)
	▪ Visiting nurse and hospice
	▪ Women's cancer program

Local	▪ Bowen Center, a comprehensive community mental health center
	▪ Chamber of Commerce (focusing on small business)
	▪ Focus on Health
	▪ HealthLinc – seems to be currently overwhelmed in the area
	▪ Hope Alive
	▪ Lafayette Medical Center: Title X
	▪ Matthew 25
	▪ Monon Health Clinic (treats low income women)
	▪ Park Center
	▪ Riggs Community Health Center (needs more resources)
	▪ SCAN, Inc. (Stop Child Abuse & Neglect)
	▪ St. Patrick's Clinic
Statewide	▪ Indiana University School of Medicine Rural Medical Track in Terre Haute (helps to encourage medical students to pursue medical careers in rural areas of the state and has incentives to help students pay off their school loans.)
	▪ Planned Parenthood
State Government	▪ Indiana State Department of Health
	▪ Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) - 48 clinics throughout Indiana
	▪ Healthy Indiana Plan (however, it is currently closed for new enrollments)
	▪ Indiana drug card, which gives discounts on drugs
	▪ State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP) – this is for children's health, 250,000 currently enrolled 18% in poverty

Once participants had identified the groups currently involved, they brainstormed who should be involved to help improve the situation that exists around access to affordable quality healthcare. First and foremost, women need to be involved in addressing these issues. Women's groups and women business owners can help as can more representation in policy-making offices. One participant noted that we need "people with the money" (banks and foundations) who can provide funding to look more deeply at this issue. Another participant commented that we needed everyone who was already listed as currently involved and anyone who was passionate about the issue.

Other responses included:
- Citizens (including families, neighborhoods, single parents, etc.) who need to be more engaged in finding newer ways of having their voices heard and who are healthcare consumers
- Current or future coalitions e.g. the Indiana Minority Health Coalition.
- A mix of small, medium and large corporations that represented employers' perspective and other appropriate for-profit groups, e.g. drug companies, insurance companies
- County level health departments to address infrastructure
- State level legislators who are informed and educated on the issue and who need to evaluate effectiveness of various programs and question whether costs are affordable to Hoosiers
- Media professionals to help communicate the story to the general public
- Medical community, including doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other service providers and/or related organizations

- Social service, faith-based and/or community organizations who are addressing related issues
- State Government agencies, e.g. Indiana Department of health, and Attorney General
- Statewide associations, e.g. Indiana State Medical Association or Indiana State Nurses Association
- Universities, e.g. IU Medical School, Ivy Tech and Purdue Nursing/Health Programs

Offering Community Actions at the Local and State Levels
Participants indicated that societal attitudes and cultural mindsets needed to shift in order to make systemic changes that could make a difference in areas of healthcare. Participants of the listening sessions determined the following suggestions for action in order to help address the issues surrounding access to healthcare.

- Make the business case that affordable quality healthcare is good business
- Educate legislators with unbiased information on key components of this issue so that they can make informed decisions
- Educate citizens (healthcare "consumers") with unbiased information on key components of this issue so that they can become advocates for their own health care
- Identify entities that can be advocates for resources and services to deal with this issue.
- Create a nonpartisan healthcare advocacy coalition that brings together hospitals social service providers and consumers and is intergenerational and multicultural in scope
- Inform people that healthcare services cost money and that choices have to be made about how money will be spent
- Create an awareness campaign that makes people understand the needs of women, especially those living in poverty
- Provide professional development in women's health for providers
- Find and/or create foundations that will support efforts to provide access to affordable quality healthcare, including community healthcare facilities
- Make preventative health, wellness and early detection priorities and invest funding in these areas
- Investigate low-cost solutions so that people have choices
- Create a service at local hospitals to ask simple questions ("Ask-A-Nurse" or "Doc in the Box") about when to seek medical attention
- Create/enhance services with healthcare advocates or social workers for maternal health after a mother leaves the hospital that provides healthcare advocates
- Create a program that requires doctors to perform pro-bono service quotas each year (similar to what lawyers do)
- Create more locally-organized healthcare options, such as free clinics staffed with volunteers
- Create regional commissions on women's health status
- Compile a comprehensive resource guide that provides the information needed to make informed decisions

Survey Suggestions for Action
- Make state insurance more available and affordable
- Increase reproductive health services throughout the state and reproductive education for students founded on scientific principals
- Elect more women into state legislature to ensure that women have a voice on health issues
- Increase number of community health centers throughout the state with sliding fee scale
- Research and promote substance abuse prevention programs for adults and teens
- Advocate for incentives for doctors and health professionals who treat low-income and working poor individuals
- Support mothers who choose to breastfeed and urge workplaces to provide proper support
- Promote free preventive health workshops and fairs

Providing Next Steps
Participants at each listening sessions were then asked to identify next steps in the process of implementing community actions. The following list is a summary of those suggested next steps:

- Create state-level "Preventative Services Taskforce" coalition in order to start addressing the challenges of access to healthcare.
  - Criteria for membership on this coalition includes being non-partisan and rotating membership
  - Purpose would be advocacy and education
  - Potential leadership sources for the coalition could be:
    - IU School of Medicine
    - Indiana State Department of Health
    - Local hospitals, health systems (Indiana Hospital Association)
  - Potential partners could be:
    - Indiana State Nurses Association
    - Visiting Nurses Association
    - Healthcare law
    - Purdue, Notre Dame, Life Sciences Initiatives
    - Consumers
- Create similar coalitions based on ISDH regions to discuss region-specific issues
- Hold regional Health Care Summits that brings all parties involved into a committed dialogue and creates action items
- Create a medical 211 for simple answers
- Educate citizens and help them become involved politically (vote, meet with legislators)
- Understand where legislators stand on the issues in order to educate them on the issues from the perspective of the most vulnerable in our society
- Educate public about the issues including issues that affect women in poverty as well as the language of healthcare and health insurance.
- Help the public develop a broader financial literacy on costs of insurance by engaging retired insurance agents or professional associations to be informed and impartial advocates and help counsel individuals

- During legislative session, find groups to focus on issues and generate email blasts to educate on issues
- Find grant opportunities and other funding
- Recruit doctors who are willing to work in impoverished areas by providing incentives, such as debt forgiveness
- Study other communities, states or countries for new perspectives on solutions
- Conduct extensive research in order quantify the issue, determine where the weaknesses are, identify specific needs and prioritize those needs.
- Provide health education at a younger age

Reproductive Healthcare

Framing the Issue

In the context of the listening sessions, reproductive healthcare was a significant sub-category of access affordable quality healthcare with participants becoming extremely passionate about the debate in the Indiana General Assembly happening at the same time. Comments were made suggesting that all agencies who deliver free or low-cost reproductive healthcare to low-income and working poor were suffering from shrinking funds. One participant expressed concern about the lack of reproductive healthcare options in rural communities. The only clinic in the area was being threatened with closure because of the ramification of the proposed legislation.

Overall, participants identified many components of reproductive healthcare and stressed that they perceived the debate and subsequent laws as threats to women's decision-making ability. One participant stated, "There is a dissemination of inaccurate information that complicates the issue." Participants believed there was a lack of awareness of current events and commented that recent laws were taking women backwards. One participant remarked, "Women are viewed as incapable of making their own decisions about their healthcare."

Participants believed that the current environment was based on men's dominance in controlling the outcomes and disempowered women by taking away their confidence. Proposed changes being considered in the legislature was not always based on fact or science; instead, they were based on individual ideology.

Participants stressed that women must be provided with accurate and fact-based information that allows them to make informed decision about their own healthcare. They felt that there was a lack of community education on what reproductive healthcare really means and that it was **not** just about abortion. Parenting education, access to family-planning and contraceptives, routine care of a woman's reproductive system and support during each phase of a woman's reproductive life – from puberty to menopause - were also regarded as important aspects of reproductive healthcare. Women who use other services at clinics should not feel intimidated. Instead, they should feel safe about the services they are receiving and secure in knowing that confidentiality was being maintained. At several listening sessions, participants commented that *if* a strong comprehensive and consistent sex education program that began at an early age and a comprehensive prevention strategy existed then abortion would ***not*** be necessary.

Regarding practical matters, participants believed that there was a lack of insurance options for preventative care and treatment, such as regular exams and birth control. Transportation, cost and inability get to a clinic for healthcare during regular business hours were also issues contributing to the inaccessibility of reproductive healthcare. Participants felt flexible clinic hours that

accommodated women's work schedules would be an opportunity for improvement. In addition, participants recognized that services needed to be culturally sensitive for their patients. Service providers needed to build cultural awareness about individual perceptions of sexual issues. In all, participants believed that education was key to both reproductive healthcare and to creating a balance between religion and public policy.

Understanding who is and who should be included in the discussion
The participants at each listening session were asked to identify programs and/or organizations that currently exist that are working to provide and/or improve access to quality reproductive healthcare:

Outside Indiana	▪ Michigan health department offers sex education/birth control/preventive visits at a very low cost.
Statewide	▪ Planned Parenthood ▪ Emergency Rooms ▪ Federally funded clinics
State Government	▪ Women, Infants and Children (WIC) – groceries, etc. (all Medicaid people have access) ▪ Hoosier Healthwise (for pregnant/single moms) ▪ Indiana State Department of Health (has limited services, e.g. parenting classes)
Local/Specific	▪ Route 21 – assumed Y-Med program for teen parent education funded through United Way ▪ Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) ▪ WindRose County Line office (Greenwood) ▪ Wishard Clinic ▪ Raphael Center ▪ Boner Center ▪ Community Health Department clinics ▪ Ruth Lilly Educational Center (provides comprehensive sex education) ▪ Promising Futures (provides classes for teen moms) ▪ Local clinics and health centers (help with prenatal care, mammograms, have limited information and access, backlogs) ▪ Futures Family Clinic
General	▪ Sex education programs (limited educational resources, most are based on abstinence only, parents can opt-out)

Once participants identified the groups that were currently involved, they brainstormed who should be involved to help improve the situation around reproductive healthcare. As with access to healthcare in general, women need to be involved in addressing this particular issue. In addition, participants felt that men needed to be equally involved. Other suggestions for collaboration included:

- Any nonprofit involved in family planning
- Churches and other faith-based communities and their leaders
- Citizens
- Collaboration between medical professionals (doctors) and schools
- Community leaders – those with connections to minority groups
- Doctors nurses, nurse practitioners, and other medical and healthcare practitioners
- Educators

- Families
- Indiana Department of Health
- Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA)
- Legislators ("double edged sword – on one hand, they ought not be involved in lives; but they are involved so we must somehow engage, inform and educate")
- Media
- National organization for legal support (NARAL, etc.)
- Parents
- Pharmacies
- Physicians
- Planned Parenthood
- Researchers (women's issues/women's health)
- School systems, espcially female superintendents in Indiana
- Schools - Educate educators on what is allowed and what is accurate
- Should stand up for medically accurate information
- State government
- State superintendent

Offering Community Action at the Local and State Levels

The participants indicated that there was a need for honest conversations amongst women on what reproductive healthcare and access means to them. Shifts in societal and cultural attitudes were required to make any progress on this issue. There also needed to be evidence-based data that documented how comprehensive reproductive healthcare translated to Medicaid savings and improvements in low birth weight and infant mortality. Partner organizations were encouraged to help share accurate messaging that needs to be addressed statewide and nationally and that needs to take into consideration issues unique to urban and to rural communities where access can be even more challenging.

Participants of listening sessions that focused on this issues offered the following suggestions for action in order to help address the issues surrounding reproductive healthcare:

- Engage in, share research and educate the wider community about the benefits of access to family planning
- Try to bring in people from both sides of the liberal/conservative spectrum in order to have meaningful public deliberation on this issue.
- Investigate funding opportunities for educational outreach and public service efforts
- Include and work with religious organizations
- Organize women throughout state to demand equal respect for education and access to reproductive healthcare
- Encourage agencies like the Indiana Commission for Women to take a leadership role by connecting people to information, legislative summaries of issues affecting women that
  - Put the issue in layman terms (what does the legislation actually say?)
  - Take position on issues with unbiased reasoning to back it
  - Send out weekly updates on legislation during the legislative session
  - Maintain a non-partisan stance on the issue that provides fact-based evidence to support position

- Provide more policy research on women's issue that is more fact-based and based on information for Indiana
- Create a public relations campaign that is fact-based, widely dispersed and uses local commissions (Monroe County and Bloomington)
- Remove the stigma about women's reproductive healthcare that exists
- Educate local and statewide school corporations with age appropriate, medically accurate information
- Hold a community-wide women's health fair with existing service providers

Providing Next Steps

The participants at each listening session that discussed reproductive healthcare identified potential next steps in the process of implementing community action. Participants suggested that a neutral group like the Indiana Commission for Women should take the lead on this issue. The following list is a summary of those suggested steps::

- Convene a group of partner organization in order to discuss reproductive healthcare and rights by convening a meeting that brings organizations together in order to discuss the issue, "get everyone on the same page" and create a list of priorities so that the discussion is reframed.
- Frame the messaging that this issue is not about abortion; it is about women's health and to address such components as contraception, comprehensive sexuality education, STD prevention and detection, Cancer (especially cervical and breast) prevention and detection, and healthy pregnancy
- Create a public relations campaign to disseminate information to segments of the population by building credibility for the information's source
- Find data on the value of access to family planning and fund research on this topic
  - Need more research that is fact-based
  - Current information is hard for average person to follow because current environment and legislative proposals are complicated and difficult to understand how they affect me
  - Break down data based on such demographic groups as young women, families, single moms, etc.
- Create directory/website listing of family planning services available in their area
- Provide education to students in schools by revamping to make it more comprehensive
- Identify disparities along income/racial/other demographic lines
- Research current teen mothers to gather information about antecedents of situation and identify "at risk" youth (low income, children of teen parents, etc.)
- Explore income limits and include middle income women as well for prorated services
- Educate the general public on the facts, focus on prevention and identify what is available in local communities
- Engage the medical community in this discussion
- Address the legal issues about what the law does allow today and what it should allow
- Get other community organizations involved that are not currently under scrutiny

Work-Based Issues

The expectation is to work like a man but be home like a mother. –Spencer County

Work-based issues were ranked first as responses from the survey and ranked second during the listening sessions and discussions. A large majority of survey participants selected economy security as the most important issue that they believe needs attention within their own community. From the range of answers received it appeared that there was not a single definition for economic security, but rather several explanations depending on the individual's background. For some it was a matter of employment, for others it was the availability of social services, accessibility of childcare, job training, or finding balance between their work-life and family-life. After reading through survey responses a theme became clear, the feeling of being economically secure was connected with a much larger concern of work-based issues.

Women in Indiana continue to face workplace discrimination in advancement opportunities and pay equity. These issues affect a woman's lifestyle now as well as if she is able to afford to retire in the future.

Survey participants also expressed the added pressure of being a good mother and a good employee. Mothers who work need a trusted affordable childcare facility, and even then can be easily faced with a dilemma when a child becomes sick. This is a particular problem for single mothers who must work second and third shift.

Everyone can provide all types of justifications, but the bottom line is that women are financially disadvantaged. And when life gets complex, women have fewer resources available to lean on - and the social services may favor women, but they also are designed to support subsistence level improvement without impacting the inequities that are built into the system. –Marion County

It should be noted that discussions during the listening sessions on work-based issues also varied widely between groups due to the many facets of issues that exist in the workplace. Discrimination, gender and pay equity, job-related training and work/life flexibility were all important work-based issues. However, the two primary work-based themes discussed during the listening sessions were: high-paying and high-skilled jobs and gender equality and pay equity. (See Appendix 3 for Work-based issues Summaries) Discussion on work-based issues during the listening sessions centered on themes of economic security and employment with topics of discussion including such topics as:

Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Employment	Non-traditional jobs
	Pay Equity
	Poverty
Gender Equity/Discrimination	Unemployment
Job-related training	Women Business Owners
Loss of public benefits when an individual finds a low-paying job	Work/life flexibility

Additional Quotes from Survey Respondents

- *Because there are almost always multiple issues linked together but many services will help with only some aspects of the problem, the women must be very proactive about seeking assistance from multiple sources. And they must somehow find that energy and determination at a time when their life is overwhelming and issues like depression and poverty are most acute. Simply moving forward is a major challenge; but our conflicting systems and policies make it even harder.—Marion Co*

- *Women are the caretakers of most of our society. When women feel helpless and powerless to keep their families together and healthy, many turn to activities that can keep their minds off that failure.—Starke Co.*

- *Many single mom's or women, in general, need to gain employment where they can make enough to support themselves, children and a lifestyle...and there are little options in our community.—Franklin Co.*

- *Women continue to be discriminated against in employment in various areas (advancement opportunities and pay). Economic insecurity is the basis of many issues for women, often influencing their decisions to tolerate abusive relationships. –Vigo Co*

- *I work for a domestic violence program and I have much difficulty helping women leave violent relationships because housing and jobs are so limited in our area. –Fountain Co*

- *I find myself with a smaller retirement, a less secure future if my husband dies and recognize the difficulty faced by my daughter as she tries to make those same choices with different results for herself. It just seems that women do more with less and always finish second in the services areas. We live longer, live poorer, exhaust our resources, because we never got equal recognition of our contributions because they didn't have a pay stub to show every week what we put in to the economy and the society. –Monroe Co*

Survey Suggestions for Action to Address Economic Security

- Create an educational campaign to inform women what services and organizations are available to assist them.
- Ensure that each county has an organization to provide employment services to its residents (government or nonprofit agency) and that women know of the services that are available.
- Assist women with financial literacy and retirement planning
- Support women candidates in local elections, allowing for women's economic standing to be an important issue at the local and community level.
- Create community networks aimed at women supporting women
- Advocate for job training programs that offer free childcare services
- Educate and encourage women to become entrepreneurs and hire employees locally
- Advocate for better childcare services to allow parents to have more employment opportunities
- Encourage women to pursue nontraditional jobs
- Increase access to computer education classes by holding them in public spaces (such as county libraries or public schools) and having schedules that accommodate work schedules

- Nonprofit groups need to offer lifestyle training for parents
- Urge employers to allow for flex schedules and explain the benefits for the business and its employees
- Research and advocate to change business practices to allow for more balance in parents schedules
- Require companies to offer maternity and paternity leave
- Encourage women's groups to invite speakers to address this issue
- Promote community events that focus on stress management, organization and financial issues

Good Paying Jobs
Framing the Issue
Finding high paying jobs in critical industries was viewed as a primary concern at several listening session. During discussions, some groups focused on jobs in general while others focused on specific industries, such as non-traditional jobs, e.g. manufacturing or STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) careers. Participants believed that manufacturing jobs were going overseas; however, they also commented that there was a misconception of what a manufacturing job was.

Participants commented that there was a need for economic development policies that supported sustaining manufacturing jobs locally and educational policies to support women in these careers or forgive their college debt if they stay in those careers. Participants also recognized many challenges in creating and accessing good paying jobs. There was a need for awareness of job availability at a variety of skills and education levels. There was a need to address and overcome gender stereotyping on what each gender could or could not do. Finally, there was a need for better jobs and equal pay for those jobs.

Regarding STEM careers, participants identified components that could help to address this aspect of employment. They commented that girls did not think they were capable of pursuing STEM careers. There was a need for more awareness and education on what a STEM career was. Like comments made about other types of male-dominated employment, participants believed that there was a stereotyping of women in engineering and other technology related careers and that there was gender discrimination in hiring practices. They felt that raising awareness, providing internships at the college level and continuing educational training could be a way to encourage more girls to pursue STEM careers.

Understanding who is and who should be involved in the discussion
Participants at each listening session were asked to identify programs and/or organizations that currently exist that are working on issues of employment or that are working to improve women's opportunities in non-traditional careers. Some participants commented that they were not aware of any organizations that were working in specific areas, such as STEM careers.

General	
	▪ Labor Unions
	▪ Business Groups
	▪ Economic Development groups
	▪ School systems
	▪ Small Business Development Center
	▪ Vocational Rehabilitation

State Government	▪ WorkOne Centers
Statewide	▪ Project Lead the Way in some high schools
	▪ Hoosier College Promise (Higher education for less tuition)
Local/Specific	▪ The Innovation Center
	▪ The Alliance
	▪ Raising Incomes Committee (Commission on Homelessness)
	▪ Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville (GAGE)
	▪ Urban League
	▪ Evansville Minority/Women Business Enterprise Utilization Board(WMBE)
	▪ Evansville Bar Association

Once participants had identified the groups currently involved, they brainstormed about who should be involved to help women obtain better paying jobs or to improve women's opportunities in non-traditional careers. As with other issues, women who are facing employment need to be engaged in the process of addressing this issue as do women in specific industries who can help mentor girls and other women. Efforts must also recruit men who can serve as champions for women. Other responses included:

- ▪ A bi-partisan statewide commission for women as a coalition established to address women's issues
- ▪ Higher Education Institutions
- ▪ High school and middle school guidance counselors
- ▪ Business, economic and labor leaders
- ▪ Local and state government, such as Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Partners
- ▪ Educators in specific areas of need, such as finance, mathematics, etc.
- ▪ Environmental agencies
- ▪ Nonprofit agencies advocates and other local nonprofit organizations, such as:
  - League of Women Voters
  - Department of Labor
  - YWCA
  - Albion Fellows Bacon Center
  - Circles
  - ICW
  - Ft. Wayne Women's Bureau helps women in poverty
  - AAUW
- ▪ Major corporations
- ▪ Chambers of Commerce
- ▪ Community leaders (both formal and informal)
- ▪ Local women's associations or sororities
- ▪ Churches
- ▪ Female Veterans

Offering Community Actions at the Local and State Levels
Participants of the listening sessions determined the following suggestions for action in order to help women obtain better paying jobs or to improve women's opportunities in non-traditional careers:

- Develop a coalition of partnerships from many groups of women's organizations
- Create community roundtables with diverse memberships to discuss the issue in more depth
- Engage chambers of commerce and other organization to achieve exposure
- Create an educational awareness campaign to reach out to communities regarding women and jobs.
- Create a women's employment report card (complete through USI & the state)
- Hold women's career events that expose women and/or girls to a variety of jobs
- Provide training for women on such topics as how to interview for jobs, how to network, how to advance in their careers, how to become entrepreneurs or how to negotiate a better salary
- Attract more employers who provide good paying, gender equitable job opportunities to Indiana without raising taxes
- Encourage employers to be more women friendly by creating best practices

Providing Next Steps
Participants at each listening sessions were then asked to identify next steps in the process of implementing community actions. The following list is a summary of those suggested next steps:

- Enhance and support state coalitions that are established to address women's issues by providing them with a budget
- Create local commissions for women that have long-term funding and have quarterly meetings
- Do more research on the status of women in the workplace, which includes the impact on women and children as well as other demographics such as elderly women, widows, and single women
- Create an effective childcare system to support working women including before and after school
- Have equal representation from all economic classes and ethnic groups in all community actions
- Create best practices that demonstrate flexible employer policies that can support employees with children, e.g. job matching with social situation
- Review existing efforts to enhance and/or modify as needed
- Create a movement that empowers women to make change happen
- Establish a state Board of Regents or other state commission appointed by the political party in power that would have jurisdiction over all public universities in order to address promoting women in STEM careers

Gender and Pay Equity in the Workplace

Framing the Issue

When addressing employment and economic security issues, primary topics of discussion focused on gender equality in the workplace and pay equity. Participants felt that there was a general inability in workplaces to take women's needs into consideration. Recognizing that there were societal norms that placed women in the primary parenting role, they commented that there was a lack of support for primary caregivers as well as a lack of adequately paid maternity/paternity practices. There are organizations and companies that do not provide paid time off for their workers. Women especially were penalized for taking time to care for others.

Participants also commented that women sometimes had to sacrifice their careers for their children. There was a lack of recognition or tangible "credit" for parenting. Instead, women are often penalized and experience the "glass ceiling" in their careers. In addition, participants felt that it was difficult to get hired as a woman and once women are in the company, there is no mobility for them. Some participants identified the following additional challenges affecting of employment discrimination.

- Age discrimination often means pay discrimination
- Workplaces don't reward typically feminine communication methods
- More women are getting degrees than men
- Male dominated fields (construction, etc.) are disproportionately affected

Session participants commented that the current economic climate should not be an excuse to pay women less then men and recognized that women need to be comfortable in being aggressive and negotiating a fair wage. Gender stereotypes played a large role in limiting women's confidence in pursuing certain fields of interest as well as women's roles within a company. Women needed effective career planning that starts early. They need to be educated about pay equity in their fields of choice, about negotiation methods for both their salaries and benefits, about how to do the homework to increase their salaries and wages and about financial literacy and retirement planning. Participants also commented that there needs to be a transparent process for pay raises as well as an effective grievance process if women believe they have been discriminated against.

Understanding who is and who is not involved in the discussion

Participants at each listening session that discussed work-based issues were asked to identify programs and/or organizations that currently exist that are working on issues of gender equality and pay equity. They identified the following groups and/or programs that are currently involved:

General	- Companies with best practices, e.g. WellPoint, Amazon.com, Emmis - Employers with onsite daycare, e.g. Eli Lilly - Companies that provide balanced expectations for parents (FMLA) - Support groups for mothers (La Leche League) - Women-specific mentoring programs - Women's studies courses
Government	- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – however, time off is not paid - Laws (not enforceable)

Specific Organizations	▪ WAGE (Women Are Getting Even) Project ($tart $mart) ▪ AAUW
Statewide	▪ Organizations and agencies like the Indiana Commission for Women or IUPUI Office for Women

Once participants had identified groups currently involved, they brainstormed about who should be involved to help women deal with issues related to gender discrimination in the workplace. As with other issues, both women and men need to be engaged in the process of addressing this issue. Women leaders especially need to be involved in order to serve as role models. One participant commented that, "Men needed to be involved if a lasting change was to happen." Other responses included:

- Employers, including CEOs and management at all levels
- Representatives of unions
- Policy makers
- Human Resource professionals
- Women business organizations
- Universities
- Organizations focused on women and/or girls and other community organizations
- Public relations groups (make the issue part of platform)
- Investment companies
- Boards
- Early education professionals in order to start young
- Career placement counselors, e.g. National Career Development Association (NCDA)

Offering Community Actions at the Local and State Levels
A participant commented that, "The State tends to mess this up" while another stated that there needs to be actual involvement. "Don't just say and think it – DO IT!" Participants of the listening sessions that discussed this issue suggested the following actions to could help address gender and pay equity in the workforce.

- Engage the public through a public relations campaign to build awareness of the issue, e.g. promote Pay Equity Day as a campaign to educate the public on the issue
- Build awareness of issues that specifically affect those in poverty so that they are on the radar for middle and upper class individuals
- Improve women's educational opportunities
- Help women to better identify what skills they have that bring value to their employer and to better market themselves to potential employers
- Promote pay equity education and increase training opportunities for women to learn how to negotiate salaries and benefits, e.g. $tart $mart Program
- Bring the conversation to existing leadership initiatives and programs within the city or county in order to build awareness
- Make sure that efforts reach high schools and universities to inform young women of pay equity challenges
- Hold town hall meetings, workshops and/or issue forums to build confidence, to build awareness and to address this issue, e.g. *Bridging the Gap*, a past ICW program held in partnership with other organizations to raise awareness of pay equity issues

- Identify champions for equality as well as ways to raise funds for programming and other efforts
- Increase resources that incentivize and reward employers to promote female-friendly policies
- Create a law that imposes some sort of salary transparency

Providing Next Steps

Participants at each listening sessions were then asked to identify next steps in the process of implementing community actions. One participant commented, "Start at home! Raise leaders, not followers!" The following list is a summary of those suggested next steps:

- Identify key advocates from universities, companies and policy makers to get their buy-in on pay equity practices in order to help address the issue
- Conduct research specific to Indiana and that promotes awareness of pay equity by highlighting why gender and pay equity are good for business
- Encourage policies and procedures that promote equality
- Help educate men to better understand the needs of women; however, avoiding stereotypes on both sides (against women *and* men)
- Encourage more men to take paternity leave and to step up to help with care giving responsibilities
- Identify ways to support continuing education for women
- Empower and educate women to demand more
  - Workshops and other training programs (e.g. building resumes, negotiations, interviews, presentation skills, etc.)
  - Mentoring
  - Web sites with information and resources
  - High school level education for career planning
  - College level education for career planning
- Conduct town halls focusing specific to this issue
- Raise awareness of salary expectations in ALL career areas
- Champion and sponsor women to help increase women's roles at work by creating mentoring opportunities
- Educate women to advocate for themselves in the workplace
- Create panels to help determine ways to increase equality practices
  - Promote value of women
  - Dual sex panels (involve men)
- Promote the value and health of families
- Create public services announcements that ignite the issue

Care Giving

Given that early childhood development is proven to be critically important in the social and educational development of a child, let's focus our funds on our youngest citizens to prevent having to focus on their remediation issues in school or their unemployment later. –Vigo County

We have to stop looking at child care as a woman's issue. It is a family issue. It is an economic issue. It is a community issue. –Allen County

Care giving issues were equally important to both listening session participants and survey respondents. The central theme for participants and respondents was access to affordable quality child care, including care for second and third shifts and after-school supervision for older children. Early childhood education options were a significant sub-category of this issue so information is provided about discussions. Comments tended to focus on the concern that this issue was a fundamental concern because if individuals cannot find quality childcare for their children, they could not do anything else such as find a good paying job, receive education or training to help them advance in their careers or maintain their households. Other related topics of discussions included education on appropriate parenting, especially for teenage mothers, care of elderly parents and sandwich generation issues. (See Appendix 4 for Care Giving Listening Sessions Summaries)

Childcare
Framing the Issue
Participants identified several critical challenges regarding childcare. Low-income parents were particularly vulnerable to these challenges. Participants commented that parents could not go to school or get a job without childcare so having access to affordable quality childcare affected whether an individual could be employed.

Overall, the cost of childcare can be prohibitive and participants commented that low-income parents needed a second job just to pay for childcare. Single mothers were especially vulnerable because of Indiana's policies on child support from non-custodial parents. Participants commented that cut-backs in funding and waiting lists for low-income parents contribute to policies that prevented them from receiving affordable quality childcare. An example that was used indicated that if an individual received a $10 per week raise, he/she could be disqualified from receiving assistance and expected to pay at the full rate, which can be a more than $100 per week increase. Another example demonstrated that because of Indiana's at-will employment policies, parents have lost their jobs because of childcare issues. Participants also recognized that children could not achieve emotional stability if parents were constantly changing caregivers; however, there was a lack of understanding about child care provider licensing to ensure safe quality childcare.

One of the primary components of child care issues is its availability. There is a lack of adequate hours that accommodate parents' work schedules. Parents who work second or third shifts or weekends are especially affected by the lack of childcare options. Other facets of availability affecting parents who have to be at work regardless of the situation include how to care for sick children and what to do when the school closes. Participants were especially cognizant of school issues. They asked what do parents between school and work when older children and teenagers are unsupervised. A corollary concern was school times. With elementary schools starting and

ending earlier than secondary schools, many participants felt that older children would not be available to care for their younger siblings.

Participants also expressed concern about finding quality care for children with disabilities or special needs as well as for infants. They also expressed concern about educating teen mothers on the appropriate ways to care for their own children. One participant commented that young mothers were not receiving the informal education from their own mothers.

Understanding who is and who is not involved in the discussion
Participants at each listening session that discussed work-based issues were asked to identify programs and/or organizations that currently exist that are working on child care issues. At one session, participants noted that that when the economy is bad additional barriers are created because childcare providers are not highly valued by society for their work. They identified the following groups and/or programs that are currently involved:

General	▪ Many private sector centers ▪ Some employer-provided care ▪ Afterschool programs (ex. Motivate Our Minds) ▪ Private church programs – afternoon ▪ Pre-school, Ministries Private/Parents programs ▪
Statewide	▪ Boys and Girls Club ▪ Easter Seals programs ▪ Head Start – Early childcare
Location specific	▪ Latch Key Program ▪ Childcare Development Fund (CCDF); however, they have a long waitlist ▪ United Daycare ▪ Hufford ▪ Ball Memorial Hospital (for employees only) ▪ Paths to Quality (rating system through state, slowly becoming more effective, more inquiries for quality ▪ Children's, Inc, 77 Youth, and Beacon After school – in elementary schools, before and after. ▪ Busy Bees Academy (four years old) ▪ Childhood Connections (share information on quality child care) ▪ Community Kids ▪ Homeless Prevention Coalition Child Care Committee

In addition, participants that discussed childcare issues suggested other organizations that work with young women and pregnant girls (Route 21). They commented that in various places in the state, there is a resource that provides free child care referrals and child development information. However, they felt that there were not many options to help teenagers. When pressed, they did list public libraries with "teen zones," YMCA organizations, and specific locations like the Wired Café and Dream Center for elementary and older kids.

Once participants had identified groups currently involved, they brainstormed about who should be involved to help address childcare issues. They emphasized that there needs to be a real cross-section of the community. The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation for this issue:

- Funders
- Parents
- Actual users of service (people facing needs should be involved)
- Churches and other faith based organizations
- Business
  - Employers with childcare options for their employees, e.g. Cummins Childcare
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Employers ("employee-based child care that can be affordable")
  - Child Care Entrepreneurs
- Educators
  - School administrators
  - Schools (when kids get out of schools; need All-Day Kindergartens
  - Universities with early childhood programs, e.g. Ball State Early Childhood Department
- Neighborhood associations
- Nonprofit organizations
  - Community Centers
  - YMCA
- Policy makers and Government at all levels
  - WorkOne ("to tell people how many are on the list")
  - Head Start (has long waiting lists)
  - First Steps
- Special needs providers

Offering Community Actions at the Local and State Levels
As with other issues, participants believed that there needed to be a change in the cultural mindset that would provide appropriate compensation reflective of the importance of high quality childcare that is also accessible by all regardless of income level. Participants of the listening sessions that discussed this issue suggested the following actions to could help improve childcare options.

- Develop a community action plan that rethinks the value of childcare in order to build awareness of the issue
- Funnel more funding to child care
- Provide studies about issues from economic perspectives and challenges of what is happening to the community as a whole if there is no childcare/jobs
- Look at the system and build a better infrastructure ("scrap the current system and fix!")
- Understand what are the numbers ("Just like what's been done for breast cancer")
- Find ways to find trusting childcare providers
- Find ways to understand and help "latch-key" kids
- Do focus groups with service users and service providers in order to develop a better way of doing things.

- "Do something like 'Secret Millionaire' that goes in and rewards the service providers that are doing it right"
- Create social networks between moms to create childcare co-ops so that they can develop connections and build trust
- Acknowledge the issues around certification and safety and utilize expert volunteers to train childcare providers on all aspects of skills, e.g. CPR, child development, etc.
- Organize groups to discuss
  - 0-8 Consortium
  - Doctors/Pediatric/Psychologists
  - Chamber of Commerce economic development
  - United Way / Funders
  - Community Education Coalition
  - Businesses (Cummins, CRH and Others)
- Make a plan
  - Answer funding questions
  - Communicate
- Advocate for and a budget line item for childcare and ways to help people who want to go to school or work
- Demonstrate cost savings and return on investment
- Access and use *Indiana Association for Childcare Resource and Referral* as a tool (Look to *Paths to Quality* as example)

Survey Suggestions for Action
- Increase the number of facilities that provide childcare on weekends or evenings
- Review childcare assistance qualifications (is it based predominately on income level instead of need?)
- Educate public on how to find information on where quality childcare facilities are located.
- Create business incentives to have childcare benefits or facilities/allowing infants to come to work with their mothers
- Increase the availability of public pre-school centers and all day kindergarten
- Explore businesses with successful childcare policies and create best practices
- Find/create nonprofit childcare centers for underprivileged children
- Promote the "Paths to Quality" program to childcare providers so they can be voluntarily evaluated and to communities so more parents know of the programs existence
- Increase awareness of childcare referral networks, like Child Care Resource and Referral and Early Childhood Alliance

Providing Next Steps
Participants at each listening session were then asked to identify next steps in the process of implementing community actions. The following list is a summary of those suggested next steps:
- Look at the big view (not just an issue for parents, but for ALL community members)
  - What is the cost of inadequate childcare to society?
- Begin to put puzzle pieces together to develop 0-8 childcare solutions
- Provide more data & statistics about childcare

- Research companies who offer support and programs for childcare (onsite, vouchers, etc.)
- Put a face on the issue (make it more personal)
- Publicity & Media
- Educate the community
- Promote the value for businesses to support childcare policies ("It's good for business")
- Show the reality of what it costs to pay for childcare
- Show the costs to the community if childcare is not provided, e.g. teen pregnancy rates, Violence, Unsupervised accidents, etc.
- Support women as the primary caregiver and support nontraditional care giving roles, such as having more men take on care giving roles by supporting and encouraging more participation by fathers as caregivers
- Identify the leaders and resources needed to address this issue
  - Experts (for people to hear)
  - Leaders (galvanize, someone/group to take the charge)
  - Outcomes (measure % of children are ready for kindergarten)
  - Funding
  - Convincing argument/case statement
  - Needs assessment (validate need, data mapping)
  - Identify gaps for parents, employers, providers
  - Identify leaders
- Make government aware of the complexity of the issue and it's importance
- Build awareness of how to become a provider and provide training to people who would like to be child care providers
- Develop system to base fees on hourly basis, not daily
- Fundraising and advice from philanthropists to help on this issue and what to do with the money

Early Childhood Education

Framing the issue

A major component of childcare focused on early childhood education. Participants who looked at this aspect of the larger childcare discussion identified specific challenges that prevented everyone from having access to quality early childhood education options. Participants commented that the role of poverty and single-parent homes contributed to some children falling behind in school as well as experiencing detrimental effects years later, including violence, crime and dropping out of school. They recognized that there are misleading statistics that did not give emphasis to the importance of development and early childhood education. All participants agreed that mandatory kindergarten needed to be reviewed and pursued as well as preschool opportunities for disadvantaged populations.

Understanding who is and who is not involved in the discussion

Participants who discussed early childhood education were asked to identify programs and/or organizations that currently exist that are working on this issue. One group of participant also pointed out that there was a public "pilot" program in the Chicago area that should be reviewed as a potential example. They identified the following groups and/or programs that are currently involved:

- Preschool
- Head Start
- United Way Agencies
- Private pre-schools & daycare (quality varies)
- Kindergarten (not mandatory in Indiana)
- Summer & After-school (not geared to pre-school)
- Scouting

Once participants had identified groups currently involved, they brainstormed about who should be involved to address early childhood education. Responses included:
- Parents
- Legislators
- Media
- Early childhood educators
- Faith-based and community organizations
- Employers (small and large)
- Chamber of commerce
- Women's groups
- Educators
- Researchers
- Community leaders
- Children as examples of success
- Youth mentors

Offering Community Actions at the Local and State Levels
Participants who discussed early childhood education issues suggested the following actions to could help address this issue.
- Encourage a statewide agency like the Indiana Commission for Women to unite efforts around this issue and make the conversation a statewide effort
- Work with and educate newly elected officials and leadership so that they understand the topics around this issue
- Assist women in becoming more organized
- Utilize new media opportunities to connect and disseminate information.
- Connect commonalities within the larger childcare issues
- Prioritize action over differences
- Compile information on preschool needs and current services in our communities
- Push for mandatory full-day kindergarten as soon as possible

Providing Next steps
Participants were then asked to identify next steps in the process of implementing community actions. One participant commented, "Start at home! Raise leaders, not followers!" The following list is a summary of those suggested next steps:
- Educate the community
- Create a broad-based coalition to advocate and educate for mandatory full-day kindergarten and pre-school opportunities
- Start with the data and statistics by engaging colleges, universities, United Ways, children's fund

- Gather information on the problem by using models from other states or cities with success stories (example: Evansville, IN)
- Identify funding opportunities and resources
- Push the agenda to policy making leaders
- Meet with POWER women's caucus
- Publicize the efforts

Leadership

When did the state legislature become so anti women? I have daughters and work with youth; I can't in good conscience encourage any of them to remain living in this state!!
—Warren County

It is important to work on getting women involved in the decision making opportunities/leadership positions that are available in our state. Do what you are able to do to get them in positions of authority as women understand the issues facing us.
—Monroe County

Women are suffering in Indiana...I feel like there is a band of women who have a voice, and those whose voices are never heard...—Franklin County

Even though housing issues outpaced leadership issues by three votes, it was determined that issues of women's leadership were more important to listening session participants during discussion than housing issues because having women in leadership positions cut across all issues. The central theme for participants and respondents was promoting more opportunities for and encouraging more women to step forward as leaders in public policy areas. An important underlying theme of conversations was the perceived lack of women supporting women. Other related topics of discussions included attracting more women into elected and other policy making positions, highlighting women as role models, mentoring, and opportunities for leadership development. (See Appendix 5 for Leadership Listening Sessions Summaries)

Framing the issue
Participants who focused on this topic of discussion believed identified challenges in getting more women into policy-making careers. They recognized that women needed the knowledge and education about policy making careers in order to have the confidence to pursue positions. They indicated that women had a lack of preparation and support to pursue political office. Participants identified key skills that women needed, including leadership and networking skills, campaign funding and building a foundation of support for their efforts. Likewise, they needed resources and information about available positions as well as recruitment efforts and networking opportunities to encourage them to seek office.

However, participants commented that women may be intimidated by the process. Women do not think they are prepared so they need to have "comprehensive understanding with all the details filled in." Women also may feel devalued as leaders or discouraged from entering into political arenas because the standards and leadership expectations for women were higher than for men. Women are judged differently than men in such ways as how they dress or how feminine or masculine they appear. Women also have additional responsibilities at home that keep them from stepping forward as leaders and contribute to an unwillingness to take a visible leadership role and to a sensitivity of "being ignored." They see themselves as being incapable of "doing it all." Participants thought that women were less likely to take risks and lacked supportive mentors.

Participants also commented that policy making leadership roles were generally held by men and that they were likely to give power to other men who were similar to them. When women do seek political leadership, participants felt that men tried to control women candidates by such

tactics as encouraging them to appear "softer" rather than more forceful. One participant commented that women are not encouraged by the political parties to run for office and are looked at last and often for the hardest races to win.

Participants also felt that there was a lack of women supporting women and that if we as a society could tackle this issue first, many other problems could be solved. They felt that there were women who discouraged other women from becoming leaders because "women shouldn't be making decisions; they should leave it to men." They lack role models as well as acceptance as a leader. Participants believed that there was a certain level of jealousy among groups of women that contributed to the lack of support. By promoting an acceptance of the variety of roles that women have, participants hoped that women could encourage each other rather than competing with each other.

Understanding who is and who is not involved in the discussion
Participants who focused on issues around women's leadership identified the following programs/organizations currently exist that are addressing this issue.

General	▪ Different student organizations (to promote success)
	▪ Interest-based groups, e.g. Women's Caucus, IU Center for Excellence in Women's Health
	▪ Mentoring programs
	▪ Professional organizations
	▪ Sororities
	▪ University groups
	▪ Women in leadership
	▪ Youth organizations for girls (Girls Inc.)
National	▪ Emily's List
	▪ Girl Scouts, with programs on women's equity day
	▪ League of Women Voters
	▪ National women's leadership centers
	▪ The White House Project
	▪ American Association of University Women (AAUW)
Regional	▪ Athena Awards (Chamber of Commerce)
	▪ Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women
	▪ IUPUI Office for Women and Office of Student Involvement
	▪ Lacy Leadership Association
	▪ United Way of Central Indiana & the Central Indiana Community Foundation (women focused training programs)
Statewide	▪ AAUW Indiana
	▪ Boys and Girls Club
	▪ Democratic Women's Caucus (several around the State of Indiana)
	▪ Democratic/Republican female legislators
	▪ Hoosier Girls State
	▪ Indiana Commission for Women
	▪ Lugar Series
	▪ National Association of Business Women
	▪ Republican women's groups
	▪ Women's Bar Association
	▪ YWCA – Live Y'ers

Local or Specific	▪ Albion Fellows Bacon Center
	▪ Spirit of Women
	▪ The Dream Center
	▪ YMCA – DIAMONDS (Determined, Intelligent, Active, Mature, Outstanding, New, Dedicated, Sisters)
	▪ YMCA Community Action Program (Y-CAP)

During this discussion, participants also identified concerns with some of these programs. They felt that some women may not have access or ability to be accepted into the programs. They also expressed hope that organizations could be more inter-connected and support each other in the work they are doing

Once participants had identified groups currently involved, they brainstormed about who should be involved to help address issues related to women in leadership and identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation for this issue:
- Indiana Commission for Women (ICW)
- YWCA (empowerment of women)
- College-aged women through sororities and women focused organizations
- Women in the media
- Young girls
- Current women elected officials, such as Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman and Sen. Vi Simpson as the top women leaders in the General Assembly
- POWER – women's caucus
- Political Parties
- Educators from public schools and other educational institutions
- Corporations
- College State Government Association representation i.e. Hoosier Girls State, Hoosier Boys State
- Organizations with youth training, e.g. Girl Scouts, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, etc.
- Men

Offering Community Actions at the Local and State Levels
Participants believed that there needed to be a change in the cultural mindset that would provide opportunities for women to become leaders. Participants who discussed this issue suggested the following actions to could help address opportunities for women in leadership.
- Continue the dialogue on ways to encourage women to become leaders by bringing organizations and community leaders together
- Challenge stereotypes and other internal unconscious bias that exist towards women as leaders
- Change image of women in the media
- Educate employers on the importance of women as leaders
- State supported leadership training
- Host a women's expo that addresses all of these issues
- Provide training and mentoring for university women to get them interested in political leadership
- Create program based on national programs at the state level
- Educate and provide leadership training to younger girls (elementary to high school) about the possibility of holding these positions

- Promote opportunities through Girls, Inc., Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs
- Distribute information about opportunities and need for more women in field
- Develop a coordinating group to focus on the needs and identify opportunities
- Train women to speak publicly
- Men watch kids – women have event
- Get involved in existing organizations

Survey Suggestions for Action
- Offer trainings for women who want to run for office: campaigning, fundraising, voting and lobbying
- Distribute information about registering to vote and how each elected official's position affects women's lives
- Educational workshops for girls and teens on politics and leadership
- Hold public meetings about issues that specifically affect women
- Support programs that help advance young professionals
- Advocate for governing bodies to set representation goals to better provide for equal representation for women

Providing Next Steps
Participants were then asked to identify next steps in the process of implementing community actions. The following list is a summary of those suggested next steps:
- Encourage a statewide organization like the Indiana Commission for Women to lead a statewide campaign
- Find a leader or champion who will lead the efforts
- Create taskforce to address issues and challenges to better identify barriers to overcome and best practices
- Don't try to reinvent the wheel; find programs that already exist to emulate
- Ask existing organizations if they want to get involved
- Make it every woman's personal responsibility to support other women
- Create local commissions for women to work at the grassroots level
- Needed resources for
    - Media support
    - Point organization with multiple organizations involved
    - Rally around this theme
    - Location for women's resource center with paid staff to support
- Ask women to be involved in taking a leadership role to encourage women to run
- Develop programs for girls and women to demonstrate what it is like to be an elected official, e.g. mock legislative programs, Women in Government, Girl Scouts in government
- Find funding for research and development of a comprehensive program
- Identify organization or group to be accountable and responsible for launching and coordinating a campaign to get more women in policy-making roles at all levels
- Regular reporting of outcomes
- Gather information on why having women in policy-making positions is good for Indiana
- Establish accountability measures for employers (disseminate current models that work – ex. New York City, Association Committee on Women)
- Assemble a planning committee (need financial resources)

- Young women leaders
- Community leaders
- Plan encouraging programs for women
- Stakeholders
- Influential people
- Highlight women leaders as role models
- Increase availability of leadership development opportunities
- Work on raising the next generation of women leaders

Violence against Women

> More of a network within each & every community between law enforcement, health providers, schools, and domestic violence service providers is needed. More men need to be involved to address the issue.—Hendricks County

During the listening sessions, violence against women included all types of violence. Specific topics were abuse, dating violence, domestic violence, human trafficking, neglect, rape prevention, sex offenders, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking and other general violence against women. (See Appendix 6 for Violence against Women Listening Sessions Summaries)

Framing the Issue
The participants identified many components of violence against women, including:

- Domestic violence
- Sexual assault
- Trafficking
- Physical harm
- Child abuse/elder abuse
- Homelessness

- Poverty
- Substance abuse
- Lack of education / knowledge
- Societal norms
- Gender roles
- Lack of employment

- Cost of abuse
- Embarrassment
- Self esteem
- Mental illness
- Neglect
- Verbal abuse
- Psychological abuse

Participants suggested that the roots of the issue were based on a patriarchal society based on power and control and on a violent society in general. They asked how we as a society can raise the male consciousness of this issue because it is as much an issue for men as it is for women. They agreed that there needed to be a shift in societal attitude away from an acceptance of violence and saw a critical need for funding and political lobbying in addressing this issue because it was pervasive across all income levels.

Prevention measures need to start early and in the community and education needs to start at home, in the schools and in the media. Media was targeted as a critical piece in addressing this issue. Music, television, magazines and the internet glorify violence against women and perpetuate negative messaging, which affects women and girls' self-image, self-esteem and self-acceptance.

Understanding who is and who is not involved in the discussion
Participants who focused on issues around violence against women identified the following programs/organizations currently exist that are addressing this issue.

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
- Anti-bullying education
- BAVO - Belles against Violence Office on Saint Mary's campus
- Centers of Hope
- Churches and other faith-based organizations
- Domestic Violence Network (DVN)
- Family Justice Center / Family Children's Center
- Family services and support groups
- Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV)
- Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault (INCASA)
- Institute for Social Concern (Notre Dame)

- Julian Center and other Shelters
- Latino Coalition (DV & SA)
- Law enforcement and legal system who deal with the consequences
- Legacy House
- Men Against Violence (MAV)
- Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council (SVPPC)
- SOS Rape Crisis Center
- St. Margaret's house
- Student organizations/universities
- Take 10
- YWCA

Once participants had identified groups currently involved, they brainstormed about who should be involved to help address issues related to violence against women and identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation for this issue:
- Women AND men
- YWCA
- Institutions of higher learning
- Legal systems
- Legislators and other government entities
- Funders
- Media
- Clergy and other spiritual leaders
- Law enforcement
- Medical and mental health organizations
- Victims' family
- Parents and teachers

Offering suggestions for community action
Participants believed that there needed to be a change in the societal attitudes that make violence against women completely unacceptable and that recognizes that the violence is not the victim's fault. They also suggested the following actions that could help address this issue.

- Provide proper trainings to everyone who might come into contact with violence
- Encourage local implementation of statewide concepts and resources
- Review how other states are doing to find creative inspiration
- Research the status of women and girls in Indiana
- Work with key elected officials, including women elected to offices, mayors, and Governor
- Make sure that it is a coordinated effort because organizations and agencies must communicate with each other
- Get media involved by using multimedia approach and social media channels effectively to get the message out
- Develop informational resources such as web, brochures, media that will educate and build awareness in the community
- Create collaborations between higher education and NGOs
- Find census data and synthesize (not limited to normal channels) and investigate ways to expand census questions

- Communicate and coordinate community response
- Start education earlier by adding it to state curriculum

Survey Suggestions for Action
- Promote mentorship programs to help women in transition period after being in an abusive relationship
- Increase awareness of services offered at women's shelters
- Support employment and job training programs for women
- Assist women with legal representation
- Educate legal and justice system about the needs of individuals and families with domestic violence issues
- Public education campaigns in rural Indiana
- Healthy relationship workshops for young girls and boys, including anger management curriculum
- Research how to help women become self sufficient and move out of the shelters quicker to assist with overcrowding
- Advocate that offenders complete abuse/domestic violence programs
- Advocate for expedited divorce proceedings in abusive marriages

Providing next steps
Participants were then asked to identify next steps in the process of implementing community actions. The following list is a summary of those suggested next steps:

- Identify metrics, vision, goals (exactly what we want to accomplish)
- Tap into current resources, e.g. Women studies at IUSB
- Create more formal relationships with higher education
- Look at what other communities are doing
- Identify one group to take lead in moving forward (State point person to coordinate, develop, circulate)
- Create judicial awareness to look at current prosecution and punishment methods and ways to educate on prevention
- Provide parenting training to teenage parents because child abuse is a learned behavior
- Provide training on healthy relationships
- Develop a media campaign to increase public awareness and promote education on the issue
- Eliminate pornography (violence against women)
- Find ways to fund efforts
- All efforts should be multilingual and multicultural
- Create policy briefings on the subject
- Increase female representation including minority groups
- Identify male allies

Next Steps

The information and results compiled from these listening sessions and accompanying survey highlights current issues and concerns of women in Indiana. The initial results assessment presents many of the same issues that have been discussed in national reports; however, it is critical to have information pertaining specifically to women in Indiana. The primary topics (health-related concerns, work-based concerns, care giving, leadership and violence against women) outlined in this report can serve as a guide for next steps that can help our communities better address critical issues and to mobilize community stakeholders from all sectors to find positive, meaningful, and lasting solutions that can help move Indiana women forward.

In order to continue this dialogue and follow up on suggestions presented in this report, the Indiana Commission for Women will facilitate a statewide debriefing effort that allows key community partners, leaders and key stakeholders to react to the project's results. Its format will provide a public forum so that the results can be synthesized into a cohesive statewide plan of action that can be shared with community organizations, public agencies and citizens across the state willing to promote the findings in their communities, disseminate information on how citizens can be involved in the solutions and collaborate on implementing the community actions.

It is evident that Hoosier citizens want to work with the Indiana Commission for Women and with each other to frame the dialogue on how to make lasting changes so that women can live, work and raise a family. There is a need for more effective and efficient communication and collaboration between organizations committed to moving Indiana women forward. There is a need for gender-specific data and data on specific demographic populations to be compiled by agencies, departments and organizations for an effective basis for quantitative reports on the status of women and girls in Indiana. There is a need for a centralized and comprehensive informational hub that is staffed so that women can be connected with the services, resources, referrals and opportunities that already exist in Indiana. Participants believe that both women and men have a responsibility to be engaged in the process and that community organizations and public agencies have the responsibility to provide the needed tools, resources and information for citizens to make informed decisions and be effective in advocating for their own needs.

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