

**Indiana Commission for Women
Hoosier INsight
Indianapolis Listening Session Report
College Avenue Branch Library
Tuesday, March 22, 2011
5:00p.m. – 7:00pm.**

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Overview

The Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) held their first public listening session on Tuesday, March 22 in the evening. The time of the session was 5:00pm – 7:00pm in order to better accommodate individuals work schedules. We started a few minutes late to allow for people who were coming from work and other prior commitments and running late.

As a group, the participants identified (26) issues facing women in Indiana. By consensus, the group voted and determined that the top three issues facing women that should be addressed first were: access to reproductive healthcare, violence against women, and early childhood/family education. An in-depth discussion of these top three priorities was completed in small groups. Each group was asked to answer specific questions regarding their issue and to start developing a plan of action for addressing the issue in Indiana. The results of the discussions are detailed in later in this report.

Participants

The Indianapolis listening session was sponsored by the Indianapolis League of Women Voters (LWV). The session was promoted in a variety of ways. The LWV sent it out to their members and also to the AAUW and other women's organizations that are friends of LWV. A press release for the session was also sent out and resulted in being picked up by multiple local news outlets. It was sent out on the ICW listserv; previous Torchbearer's and ICW Advisory Board Members were also invited. The United Way of Central Indiana helped to distribute the information and there were several individuals who helped to promote the session through their personal social media outlets. We also reached out to the Urban League and worked with the Indiana Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs to send information out to their supporters. A total of 22 women attended the listening session.

Issues Identified

The participants of the listening session identified the issues that they believed were barriers to women's full participation in society. These issues were then voted on to determine the top three issues facing women in Indiana. Each woman was given 3 votes that she could use to help prioritize the issues. The numbers next to the issue represent the number of votes that issue received from the participants.

Access/cost of healthcare – 6
 Access/cost of childcare
 Preventative healthcare
 Unemployment – 2
 Comprehensive healthcare coverage for minorities
 Pay equity – 6
 Violence against women – 8
 Early childhood/family education – 8
 Self esteem/peer pressure
 Comprehensive sexuality education – 2
 Access to reproductive healthcare – 8
 Transportation (rural, urban)
 Racial discrimination
 Gender discrimination – 4
 Lack of knowledge of legislative impact – 3
 Women as low legislative priorities
 Obesity
 Lack of political representation (including lobbyist) – 4
 Lack of appropriate legislative priorities (too much time spent on unimportant issues)
 Lack of communication regarding minorities – 1
 Health disparities
 Workplace flexibility
 Training for political leadership
 Substance abuse – 1
 Human trafficking – 1
 Immigration

Top Three Issues & Discussion

The top three issues that were identified by the participants were: 1) Access to reproductive healthcare, 2) Violence against women, and 3) Early childhood/family education. Once these issues were identified, the participants broke up into small groups of 7-8 people to further discuss the components of each issue. Participants were asked to consider a series of questions regarding these issues in order to start developing a plan of action for how we should work to overcome these challenges in Indiana. The questions were divided into five categories and are listed below.

Frame It

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

What's in Place Now?

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

Who should be involved?

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

Community/State Actions

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

Next Steps

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

Access to Reproductive Healthcare

Access to reproductive healthcare was one of the top priorities for the participants of this listening session. All three issues that made the top three received the same amount of votes. There were eight votes for this issue. The discussion of this topic is below.

Frame It

The participants identified the following critical components:

- Transportation, ability to get there
- Time (i.e. flexible clinic hours)
- Cost
- Information that is medically accurate
- Culturally sensitive services

They also identified two important aspects that they felt must be considered in the scope of this conversation.

- Creating a balance between religion and policy
 - Need sound educational information in a safe environment
 - Defining what reproductive healthcare means
- Education is key
 - Both about reproductive healthcare and also about what that means

What's In Place Now?

The participants identified the following programs/organizations that currently exist to help improve access to reproductive healthcare.

- Planned Parenthood (they researched that they receive \$3 million in Title X funding)
- Wishard Clinic
- Local health centers
 - Raphael Center
 - Boner Center
- Community Health Department - clinics

Who Should Be Involved?

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help improve access to reproductive healthcare. They felt that any of these organizations could be leaders for this issue.

- Schools
 - Educate educators on what is allowed and what is accurate
- Chamber of Commerce
 - Can help get information to major employers
- Indiana Health Department
- Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA)
- Churches

Community/State Action

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address the issues surrounding access to reproductive healthcare.

- Honest conversations between women on what reproductive healthcare and access means to them
- Evidence-based data needed
 - Medicaid savings
 - Low birth weight & infant mortality
- Partner organizations to help share accurate messaging
- Needs to be addressed statewide (and nationally)
- Need to consider rural versus urban issues
 - Access even more challenging

Next Steps

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- ICW and partner organizations need to discuss reproductive healthcare and rights
 - Need a neutral group to convene the discussion (ICW, Women's Fund, etc.)
 - Bring organizations together and get them on the same page
 - Make a priority list
 - Health Access & Privacy Alliance (HAPA)
- Frame the messaging
 - Not abortion – women's health in totality needs discussed
 - Address:
 - Contraception
 - Comprehensive sexuality education
 - STD prevention and detection
 - Cancer (especially cervical and breast) prevention and detection
 - Healthy pregnancy
- Meet and re-frame the discussion

Violence against Women

Violence against women was identified as another of the top priorities issues by the participants of the Indianapolis listening session. This issue received eight votes. The discussion of this topic is below.

Frame It

The participants of this discussion identified the following challenges in violence against women.

- Prevention
 - Need to start early
- Education
 - At home
 - In the community
 - In school
 - In the media
- Media
 - Music, television, magazines – glorify violence against women & perpetuate negative messaging
- Self image
 - Self esteem, self acceptance
- Lack of funding
 - Need more political lobbying to gain support

What's In Place Now?

The participants identified the following programs that help address the issue of violence against women.

- Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV)
- Domestic Violence Network (DVN)
- Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault (INCASA)
- Latino Coalition (DV & SA)
- Family services
- Churches
- Centers of Hope
- Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council (SVPPC)
- Legacy House
- Julian Center and other Shelters

Who Should Be Involved?

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that they believe should be involved in helping to address violence against women.

- Victim's family
- Legislators and other government entities
- Funders
- Media
- Agencies (Chart 2)

- Men
- Churches and spiritual leaders
- Law enforcement
- Medical and mental health organizations

Community/State Action

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address violence against women.

- Resources (web, brochures, media)
- Collaboration (organizations/agencies)
 - MUST communicate
- Job sharing
- Education & awareness

Next Steps

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Media outreach
- Obtain funding
- Promote education
 - Should be multilingual
 - Create policy briefings
- Increase female representation (including minority groups)
- Identify male allies
- Create judicial awareness

Early Childhood/Family Education

Early childhood/family education was identified as one of the top priority issues for women in Indiana during this session. The issue received eight votes. The discussion of the topic is below.

Frame It

The participants of this discussion identified the following challenges within the issues of early childhood/family education

- Role of poverty, single-parent homes
- Need positive role models
- Effects years later
 - Violence
 - Crime
 - Drop out rates
- Definition of “family values”
- Starting too late
- Misleading stats from the top (not giving emphasis on importance of development and early childhood education)

What’s In Place Now?

The participants identified the following programs and organizations that are currently working to address early childhood/family education.

- Preschool
- Head Start
- United Way Agencies

Who Should Be Involved?

The participants identified the following organizations and people that they believe should be involved in helping to address early childhood/family education.

- Early childhood educators
- Parents
- Out of state resources (used as examples)
- Legislature
- Religious institutions
- Employers – small and large
- Chamber of commerce
- Media
- Women’s groups

Community/State Action

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address early childhood/family education.

- Newly elected officials/leadership
- Women – need to be organized
- Internet connections – new media
- Connect commonalities – prioritize action over differences

- ICW unite us all
- Make it a statewide effort

Next Steps

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Start with the data & statistics
 - Colleges, universities, United Ways, children's fund
 - Information on the problem – use models from other states/cities with success stories (example: Evansville, IN)
 - Follow the money
- Resources
 - M.W. Edelman
 - Ask the next questions
 - Colleges, universities, United Ways, children's fund
- Pushing agenda – lobbying
- Coalition of Women's Groups
- Meet with POWER women's caucus
- Publicity

Conclusions

There are many barriers that create challenges to women in Indiana. The Hoosier INsight: Women's Issues Listening Sessions project is the first step in starting the conversations to help to address the inequalities that women still face in our state. The results of this session and the future sessions that will be held around the state will contribute to a report that will help to identify the top 3-5 issues that present major challenges to women in Indiana. These discussions are the beginning of a process to help move women in Indiana forward by engaging Indiana residents in public deliberation.

The Hoosier INsight project will help ICW continue to voice the needs, concerns, challenges, and viewpoints of women in Indiana. By better understanding the specific needs and desires of women, the commission will be able to better identify the ways in which they can help to remove barriers that hinder their participation in all areas of society. A larger de-briefing event will occur once the results of the listening sessions, as well as the supplemental online women's issue survey, are compiled and will help promote the outcomes of the project. This will help to raise awareness for the issues and to aid in the development of a statewide action plan to deal with the top priority issues across the state.