

Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour
Washington County
Washington Technical High School, Hagerstown
July 13, 2016, 6 – 8 p.m.

Thirty individuals attended this first session of the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour, hosted by the Washington County Commission for Women in partnership with the Maryland Commission for Women. They identified a diverse and broad spectrum of issues and challenges for the women of Washington County, selected five they thought were most important, and discussed possible remedies.

The attendees listed a total of 21 challenges facing the women of Washington County. Each participant was given five “votes” to place beside the issues they thought were most important. From that process, five were selected as the top priorities. The group then identified actions that could be taken to address the issue.

1. Child Support Enforcement inconsistencies across jurisdictions, insensitive and unresponsive staff, lack of enforcement
 - a. Emphasize customer service, across the state, in all jurisdictions
 - b. Conduct a customer satisfaction survey at all Child Support Enforcement Offices to identify best practices
 - c. Enact legislation providing payment of penalties to custodial parents when non-custodial parents fail to make court-ordered payments on time.

2. Lack of resources to help low income single mothers advance
 - a. Provide free public pre-K programs, like public schools, for all children
 - b. Provide free on-line college courses and job training
 - c. Create “second tier” transitional programs for services with income eligibility requirements for people whose incomes are too high to qualify currently but are still not “a living wage.”

3. Lack of safe and affordable housing, especially for mature, single women
 - a. Create “set-asides” in safe housing communities for moderate income mature single adults

4. Need for greater diversity among the faculty and administration of the public schools and the community colleges
 - a. Report the statistics, hold the institutions accountable
 - b. Include this issue in the performance evaluations of administrators

5. Need to raise the minimum wage to a “living wage”
 - a. Advocate in the Maryland General Assembly for a more livable minimum wage
 - b. Urge economic development offices to focus on bringing employers that offer jobs with better wages. “We don’t need another _____ store.”

Among the issues considered by the participants at this forum were the following:

Number of Votes	Issue
16	Child Support Enforcement inconsistencies across jurisdictions, insensitive and unresponsive staff, lack of enforcement
15	Lack of resources for low income single mothers to advance (need for comprehensive support including affordable child care, education and job training)
8	Lack of safe, affordable housing especially for mature, single women
7	Diversifying the faculty & administration of public schools and community colleges
7	Need to raise the minimum wage
6	Non compliance with state and federal requirements for contracting with women and minority-owned businesses
6	Need for support and counseling for women and families directly affected by incarceration
5	Harassment of clients at abortion clinics
4	Prevention of gun possession for people charged with domestic violence
4	Sexual assault on college campus
4	Inadequate funding for programs serving victims of sexual assault and domestic violence
4	No transitional services and programs for families whose incomes are above eligibility requirements but not at the level of a living wage
3	Predatory (false advertising) crisis pregnancy centers
3	Female veterans – need for transitional housing that includes children, need for services for PTSD, survivors of sexual assault, addiction, disabilities and outreach to those reluctant to seek services from the VA
3	Addiction and substance abuse problems
2	Need to assess effectiveness of health and family planning education in the public schools
2	Financial literacy
1	Need for assessment of non-profit organizations performance
1	Human Trafficking
1	Need for mandatory career readiness courses at the community college
	Need to study best practices in service delivery, what works across jurisdictions
102	Total Votes - 21 Issues

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Washington County: Voices of Maryland Women
Photo Album



