

**Indiana Commission for Women
Hoosier INsight
Columbus Public Listening Session Report
Donner Center, Columbus, Indiana
Tuesday, April 19, 2011
5:00-7:00 pm**

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Overview

The Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) held a public listening session on Tuesday, April 19, 2011, at the Donner Center in Columbus, Indiana. The time of the session was 5:00pm – 7:00pm in order to better accommodate individuals work schedules. The session started a few minutes late to allow for people who were coming from work and other prior commitments.

As a group, the participants identified nineteen (19) issues facing women in Indiana. By consensus, the group voted and determined that the top issues facing women that should be addressed during the listening session were: 1) Quality and affordable child care beyond regular hours; and 2) Health care threats. An in-depth discussion of these 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 later in this report.

Participants

The Columbus public listening session was sponsored by the Women's Giving Circle of Bartholomew County and the Heritage Fund-the Community Foundation of Bartholomew County. They provided support by publicizing the session, getting information out to the community and providing refreshments for the participants. The session was promoted in a variety of ways. The sponsoring groups sent out notices to their members and also contacted many groups and individuals in the community. A press release for the session was sent out and resulted in being picked up by multiple local news outlets. It was sent out on the ICW listserv and previous Torchbearers and ICW Advisory Board Members were invited.

ICW utilized EventBrite to register participants. Sixteen (16) participants took advantage of the online service, with ten (10) of those registrants attending. A total of fourteen (14) women attended the listening session.

Issues Identified

The participants of the listening session identified issues they believed were barriers to women's full participation in society. These issues were then voted on to determine the top two issues facing women in Indiana. Each participant was given three (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.

Child Care quality and affordability – beyond 8-5 (6)

Health care threat specifically PPIN (8)

Work schedules / work-life balance

Support for single mothers (1)

Poverty –low and inadequate income (3)

Pay equity

Gender expectations in workforce

Gender equality

Education of mother (1)

~ continuing education

~ support mother in child's education

~ parent/teacher conferences

Education of children (1)
Breaking cycle of abuse/neglect (1)
Financial literacy (5)
Intergenerational gap/conflict / generational relationships (1)
 ~ mother/daughter
 ~ mentoring
 ~ women supporting women
Access to mental health resources (1)
Diversity and equality
Breakdown of the family
Healthy relations (2)
Balance between multiple gender roles (“superwoman” complex) (6)
Unrealistic body image/self-esteem

Top Issues & Discussion

The top issues that were identified by the participants were:

1. Child Care quality and affordability – beyond 8-5 (6)
2. Health care threat specifically PPIN (8)

Once these issues were identified, the participants broke up into two groups of 6-8 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 start developing a plan of action for how we should work to overcome these challenges in Indiana. The questions were divided into five categories and are listed below.

Frame It

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

What’s in Place Now?

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

Who should be involved?

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

Community/State Actions

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

Next Steps

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

Issue #1: Child care quality and affordability beyond regular hours

Child care quality and affordability was one of the top priorities for the participants of this listening session. There were six (6) votes for this issue. The discussion of this topic is below.

Frame It

The participants identified the following main components of this issue:

- Can't go to school or get a job without child care
- Quality child care options
 - ~ often not affordable
 - ~ Different types of homes not comfortable
 - ~ Location, types of facility, homes/not home, etc.
 - ~ Capacity and number available
 - ~ Safety, activities, not TV, healthy
- Affordability
 - ~ Vouchers – cut back until stimulus
 - ~ No budget line item for childcare
 - ~ 1/6th of states with no childcare
- Beyond regular 6:00-6:30 schedule
 - ~ Available 6:00-6:30
 - ~ Little weekend care options
 - ~ No second shift options
 - ~ No sick care

What's in place now?

The participants identified the following programs/organizations that currently exist that provide some form of services that address this issue.

- 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.
- Private church programs – afternoon
- Pre-school, Ministries Private/Parents programs
- Busy Bees Academy (4 years old)
- Head Start – Early childcare
- Route 21 – young women, pregnant girls/ladies
- Childhood Connections – share information on quality child care.

Who should be involved?

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation for this issue.

- Who should be involved
 - ~ Cross-section of community
 - ~ Government/funders/businesses
 - ~ Cummins Childcare – other time frames
 - ~ Subsidized by business

- ~ Churches
- Who should be responsible
 - ~ Customers
 - ~ Parents
 - ~ Businesses
 - ~ Leaders
 - ~ United Way
 - ~ Providers (cross-section-Children's Inc, Home Providers, Private Centers, Churches)
 - ~ Schools
- Quality of education could be supported by quality of children

Community / State Action

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address the issues surrounding this issue.

- Community
 - ~ 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
- Statewide
 - ~ Budget line item for childcare
 - ~ Help people who go to school/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

Next steps

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

- Resources
 - ~ 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
- Next Steps
 - ~ Begin to put puzzle pieces together to develop O-8 childcare solutions
 - ~ Identify leaders

Issue #2: Health care threats

Health care threats especially those against Planned Parenthood were identified as a top priority during this listening session. There were eight (8) votes for this issue. The discussion of this topic is below.

Frame It

The participants identified the following main components of this issue:

- All agencies who deliver reproductive health care to poor, low-income, working poor available and affordable are suffering shrinking funds

What's in place now?

The participants identified the following programs/organizations that currently exist that provide some form of services that address this issue.

- Women, Infants and Children (WIA) – groceries, etc. (all Medicaid people have access)
- Route 21 – assumed Y-Med program for teen parent education funded through United Way
- Volunteers in medicine – very uneven care and funded through United Way
- Planned Parenthood
- Emergency Rooms – Medicaid
- WindRose County Line office (Greenwood)
- Federally funded clinics

Who should be involved?

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve the situation for this issue.

- Many women
- Physicians
- Families
- Faith leaders
- 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
- Educate electorate

Community / State Action

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address the issues surrounding this issue.

- Elect a woman as governor
- Seek bi-partisan support
- Remove stigma of women's care
- Educate – local and statewide school corporations - age appropriate, medically accurate program
- Community-wide women's health fair of existing service providers – money too

Next steps

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

- Money

- Public support – media
- Education – adult and youth
- Referral source / volunteers in medicine
- Include reproductive health – can it tag team to Healthy Communities for reproductive/women’s health care needs?

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 conversations to help to address the challenges that women still face in our state. The results of all of the sessions held around the state will contribute to a report that will help to identify the top 3-5 issues that present major barriers 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 statewide event will occur once the results of the listening sessions, as well as the supplemental online women’s issue survey, are compiled. ICW will facilitate a statewide debriefing effort that will guide key community partners and stakeholder to synthesize the results into a shared statewide action plan. It will be ICW’s opportunity to inform the community on the primary issues affecting women regionally and statewide that were identified during the listening sessions; to expand coalitions and build capacity to work across networks and to improve outreach efforts on multiple issues.

* Summary Report Disclaimer

This summary report was prepared as an account of key issues, challenges, and suggested solutions described during a public discussion 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 summary report is provided as a courtesy and 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 not necessarily those of the Indiana Commission for Women, of the State of Indiana or of its partners and supporters. Recommendations from this meeting, together with inputs received from other sources, may inform the creation of a final report and potential plan of action to address the issues and challenges discussed as well as potential future 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.