



Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners

Women's Advisory Board

2009 Annual Report to
the Board of County Commissioners

AGNEDA

- WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD (WAB)
MEMBERSHIP 2009
- MISSION STATEMENT OF WAB
- 2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WAB
- INTRODUCTION
- ISSUES
- SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Women's Advisory Board MEMBERSHIP 2009

- Dr. Angelia Fryer: Chairperson
 - Marjorie Tate: Vice Chairperson
 - Nancy Plummer: Secretary
 - Donna Hughes: Parliamentarian
 - Brenda Adams
 - Chia-Li Chien
 - Beverly Hunt
 - Sally McMillen
 - Najeedah Stover
 - Peter Safir, Community Support Services staff
- Beverly Hunt
Pamela Hemphill
Natheley McElrath
Julie Owens
Lisa Yarrow

MISSION STATEMENT OF WAB

- To identify periodically the status of women in Mecklenburg County
- To recommend ways to work toward the betterment of the status of women in education, employment, family, community, health, law, finance and social services
- To work collaboratively with other organizations, and to provide community leadership opportunities by initiating and promoting programs designed to serve the needs of women.

2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WAB

- BOCC reformed the Women's Commission Advisory Board in Jan. 2009
- After an ongoing loss of membership and a one year period of inactivity for the previous Women's Commission Advisory Board and a Board of County Commissioners restructuring plan for several advisory boards, the Women's Advisory Board was reborn in the spring of 2009. One of the first tasks the board completed was to redefine its mission and come to consensus with a new mission statement and vision aligned with the focus of the new board.
- The Commissioners had a large field of highly qualified applicants to consider and initially appointed six new members with six others continuing in their current term or being reappointed. During 2009, there has been some additional turnover in membership resulting in a committed, energized, and enthusiastic WAB.
- The BOCC increased overall membership from 12 to 15 members partly due to the large number of qualified citizens applying to serve on this board.
- The new WAB elected its officers who then scheduled a series of presentations and briefings by community experts on critical women's issues. Guest speakers such as the Director of Community Support Services, Director of Crisis Assistance Ministry, the Director of the Salvation Army Shelter, the Director of the Urban Ministry Center, and the President of the Adult Day Care Association provided much of the baseline information presented in this Annual Report.
- A subcommittee of the WAB agreed to update the Advocates Directory (Blueprint Directory of Women's organizations) and with the help of County staff, place this on the County's website and commit the WAB to keeping information current.
- The new WAB began working in earnest this summer to develop the 2009 Annual Report to the Board of County Commissioners, the first since 2005.

INTRODUCTION

- The Women's Advisory Board has been charged by the Board of County Commissioners to identify periodically the status of women in Mecklenburg County. In that capacity we bring this report on the impact on women in Mecklenburg due to the economic downturn.
- The issues include: ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN, STATUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN, DOMESTIC/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, ELDER CARE, CHILD CARE, WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUEE, GENDER REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS/COMMISSIONS.
- Each topic is briefly presented with recommendations for action by the Board of County Commissioners.

Issues

- ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN
- STATUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN
- DOMESTIC/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE
- ELDER CARE
- CHILD CARE
- WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUEE
- GENDER REPRESENTATION ON
BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

The Issue

- Women made 77 cents on average for every dollar earned by men
- The wage disparity costs the average American woman and her family \$700,000 to \$2 million in lost wages

Recommendations

- Continue and Increase the financial support the Women's Displaced Homemakers Program.
- Enforce Pay Equity and Jobs for Women in Mecklenburg County.
- 3. Ensure remedies for wage discrimination and issues of gender and racial inequities by eliminating the wage gap
- Within County Government and encouraging private and public affiliates.
- Address the persistent problem of paying lower wages in fields dominated by women and people of color.
- Ensure that appointed committees be represented by women that impact our Economic Growth of the County.
- Support youth job programs for a safer and economical stable Mecklenburg County.

STATUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN

The Issue

- The fastest growing population of homeless people in the United States is composed of single women with two or three children

Recommendations –

- Provide permanent housing with intensive supportive services.
- Provide more shelter beds.
- Provide shelter for women that they will not be moved out of.
- Educate the community on the status of the homeless women in our community and on what they can do to help.
- Educate businesses in Mecklenburg County on what they can do to assist with the situation of homeless women in our county.
- Provide homeless women with substance abuse treatment and counseling.
- Provide homeless women with a means to communicate with the outside world. Few have access to a phone to receive calls, get voice messages, or to send or receive e-mail. This is critical in order for them to make medical appointments and to conduct job and services searches.
- Provide better medical care for those women who are homeless.
- Provide better education programs for those women who are homeless to make them aware of what is currently available for them.
- Provide education and training opportunities for homeless women that will assist them in getting themselves out of poverty and back to a self-sustaining lifestyle.
- Provide the homeless women with life skills training.
- Develop a comprehensive database to collect information about statistics, services, agencies, etc.

DOMESTIC/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

The Issue

- the Mecklenburg County Sheriff office served approximately 30% more protective orders in 2009 than were served in 2008 (2,743 vs. 2142)

Recommendations

- Create a City/County Domestic Violence Coordinator Position to develop and oversee implementation of a strategic plan and to coordinate DV services to meet the needs of the city/county.
- Continue to support planning for a new DV emergency shelter(s) and DV transitional housing

ELDER CARE

The Issue

- Available resources do not meet the needs of adults and the elderly in the county.

Recommendations

- The county needs additional adult daycare sites and additional funding to help with programs for the elderly.

CHILD CARE

The Issue

- Because women are primary caregivers in American Society, both of the young and the elderly, they are affected disproportionately during a downturn in the economy.

Recommendations –

- The success of children from working families (and even more so, for children from low-income families) and
- The employment of their parents, and given the thousands of children ages birth to twelve that languish for years on the waiting list for child care subsidy in Mecklenburg County due to insufficient funding levels, elected officials should:
- Actively advocate at state and federal levels for increased funds for pre-school and school-age child care subsidies and out-of-school-time programs.

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUE

The Issue

- The greatest issue in women's health is "income disparity": high rates of disease and poor health correlate with low income households, often headed by single women of color

Recommendations

- Promote the idea of healthy living for all residents by creating more parks and bike paths
- Encouraging more exercise through self-motivational campaigns, holding more public events to encourage exercise
- County-wide public health Awareness
- Outlawing phoning and text messaging while driving
- Urging that food served in all CMS schools be healthful and that all school children get more exercise.

GENDER REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

The Issue

- Women comprises of 45% of County Commission appointments. Less than one-third of mayoral appointments are women.
- 28% of Boards and Commissions have equal or greater female membership
- 19% of Boards and Commissions have no women members.

Recommendations

- Evaluate the number of women applying to boards and commissions;
- Undertake reviews of application and appointment processes;
- Revise application and appointment processes to ensure gender parity is built into the systems; and
- Develop a mentoring program for women who are currently serving on boards and commissions to encourage other women to become more actively involved.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

- SUMMARY

- Women continue to earn less than men for the same work, manage the majority of child and elder care needs, are elected or appointed to government positions in fewer numbers and continue to experience increased rates of domestic violence and homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

- Support a campaign to raise awareness of pay inequity for women in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.
- Sponsor negotiation skills workshops for women.
- Continue and increase the financial support for the Women's Displaced Homemakers Program

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

STATUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN

- Raise awareness in the community of the epidemic of homeless women and children in our community. Educate on what can be done to help.
- Provide long-term housing with support services to facilitate independent living. Support services that have proven effective in facilitating a return to self-sufficiency include: education, training opportunities and support services for drug and alcohol dependency and counseling services for domestic violence.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

DOMESTIC/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

- Create a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Domestic Violence Coordinator position to develop and oversee implementation of a strategic plan and to coordinate domestic violence services to meet the needs of Charlotte-Mecklenburg.
- Continue to support new domestic violence emergency shelter(s) and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

ELDER CARE

- Continue to use the ½ cent sales tax revenue to support the Elderly General Purpose Transportation Program
- Investigate opportunities to secure funding to raise the level of funding for elder care support services to adequately meet the needs of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg.
- Support the development of adult daycare sites adequate to meet the needs of Charlotte-Mecklenburg

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

CHILD CARE

- Actively advocate at state and federal levels for increased funds for pre-school and school-age childcare subsidies and out-of-school time programs.
- Allocate county funds to supplement funding received from the state and federal government for childcare subsidies.
- Encourage County Government to work collaboratively with Child Care Resources Inc. to promote public and private sector awareness of the essential importance of high quality child care on the economic well-being of the region and of the need for increased funding levels for child care and out-of-school-time services.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUE

- The increased use of public transportation has demonstrated the need for additional public transportation offerings. As Charlotte-Mecklenburg continues to work on its transportation plan, consideration should be given to expansion of bus and light rail service to increase accessibility to County Health Department Clinics and other essential services.
- Undertake a campaign to designate Mecklenburg County a “Healthy County” by creating more parks and bike paths, making citizens aware of public health facilities, promoting more healthful eating, outlawing cell phoning and text messaging on city streets, and engaging in campaigns to encourage everyone to get more exercise.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

GENDER REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

- Evaluate the number of women applying to boards and commissions
- Undertake reviews of application and appointment processes
- Revise application and appointment processes to ensure gender parity is built into the systems
- Develop a mentoring program for women who are currently serving on boards and commissions to encourage other women to become more actively involved.