



***Mecklenburg County
Board of County Commissioners***

***Women's
Advisory Board***

**2010 Annual Report to the Board
of County Commissioners**

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MISSION STATEMENT OF THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD

The mission of the Women's Advisory Board (WAB) is 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.

2010 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD

- Since the board was restructured, the WAB has consistently experienced a high rate of participation and has always exceeded the minimum requirements for a quorum. The board has an overall membership of 15 qualified, committed, and engaged women.
- The WAB continued the speaker series put in place in 2009, inviting community experts to brief the board on critical women's issues. Guest speakers included: Dr. John Chen and Dr. Nini Bautista with the Carolinas Asian-American Chamber of Commerce; Mike Sexton, a Domestic Violence Public Awareness Specialist with Mecklenburg County; Charles Brown, director of the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County; and Janet Singerman, Executive Director of Child Care Resources, Inc.
- A committee of the WAB revised the Advocates Directory (formerly titled the Blueprint Directory of Women's Organizations). This directory provides a list of women's organizations in Mecklenburg County that provide services in many areas that are of interest to women. The WAB is currently working with the County in an effort to get the directory included on the County website and has agreed to keep the directory updated.
- The WAB has made great strides in becoming more accessible to the community through the creation of the WAB website (<http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/CommunitySupportServices/WomensCommission/AboutUs/AdvisoryBoards/Pages/WAB.aspx>), a dedicated e-mail address (WomensAdBd@gmail.com), and a Facebook page titled Mecklenburg County Women's Advisory Board that is accessible to citizens that have a Facebook account. The WAB has also created stationary, business cards, and a brochure to increase public awareness of the board.
- The WAB's participation in the Carolina Chamber Business Expo in March 2010 helped increase awareness of the WAB's existence as well as informing the public that other county and city boards and commissions exist. The WAB was able to share its purpose and mission with the community. The exposure and presence of the WAB served to educate the public on civic duty and involvement and ignited a genuine interest in the community to learn more about the status of women in Mecklenburg County and how to get involved. The WAB's presence at the expo also served as a great networking opportunity in the business community.
- On August 23, 2010 the WAB hosted, Women's Equality Day: Past, Present and Future at the Levine Museum of the New South to an audience of 125. The event included a dessert reception, book signing and a panel discussion. Featured speakers were Jill Dinwiddie, Executive Director, North Carolina Council for Women, Dr. Sally McMillen, Babcock Professor for Davidson

College and Women's Advisory Board Member, Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, Co-Founder of the Harvey B. Gantt Center, and 20th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The event was moderated by Erica Bryant, TV personality. Pamela Hemphill served as Chairperson of the planning committee and she was assisted by Chia-Li (Jolly) Chien, Dr. Sally McMillen, Julie Owens, and Najeedah Stover.

- At the request of County Commission Chairperson, Jennifer Roberts, the WAB has initiated a study on sex trafficking of women and girls in North Carolina and we have formed a committee that will further investigate this timely and critical women's issue and will have an update in the 2011 Annual Report.
- The WAB participated in the county budget hearings and advocated to restore funding to The New Beginnings Program (formerly known as the Displaced Homemaker Program) and Mecklenburg County Library Services.
- The Women's Advisory Board partnered with the Mecklenburg County Women's Commission, The North Carolina Council for Women, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit and the Women's and Genders Studies Program at UNC Charlotte to host the 2010 Women's Agenda Assembly on November 16, 2010, which attracted more than 100 women to discuss and prioritize the issues impacting women in our community.

INTRODUCTION

The Women's Advisory Board is an appointed board under the Community Support Services Department. In keeping with the mission of the WAB, we bring this report on the impact on women in Mecklenburg County. The issues include: economic status; homelessness; domestic violence; elder care, childcare; women's health issues and gender representation on boards/commissions. Each topic is briefly presented with recommendations for action by the Board of County Commissioners.

The report also includes information on the Women's Equality Day celebration and the 2010 Women's Agenda Assembly. These are significant women-focused events that had WAB leadership and involvement.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

According to a study conducted by the National Committee on Pay Equity, the gap between median earnings of full-time, year-round workers widened last year, with women earning 77% of what men earned, up from 72% in 2009. The wage gap is most severe for women of color. African American women earn about \$0.72 for every dollar earned by men, while Latina women average about \$0.59 for every dollar earned by men. Over a working lifetime, this wage disparity costs the average American woman and her family \$700,000 to \$2 million in lost wages, impacting Social Security benefits, pensions and retirement.

Reports on the status of children and young men, show that children are not successful due to economic and educational resources. Training youth to work can bring up the 75% of failure to gangs and other negative contributions to our communities¹. A vast majority of households depend on wages of a working mother and working families are often just one paycheck away from hardship.

The chart below shows salary ranges for Mecklenburg County employees and where female employees fall within the salary ranges compared to male employees. There are more female employees than male employees in Mecklenburg County.

County Employee Representation by Salary Range and Gender

Salary Ranges	Total Employees	Female Employees	Male Employees
\$50,000 and above	1,481	780	701

Average salary in Mecklenburg County is \$46,000 a year. Average salary in the City of Charlotte is \$50,217 a year. The Mecklenburg County and National jobless rate held almost at 9.6% for 2010².

Recommendations:

- Continue and increase the financial support for the Women’s Displaced Homemakers Program, New Beginnings.
- Address the persistent problem of paying lower wages in fields dominated by women and people of color.
- Ensure that women have equal representation on appointed committees that impact the economic growth of Mecklenburg County.

References

¹ 2010 U.S. Census Report, <http://www.ncleg.net/fiscalresearch/>

² Mecklenburg County Human Resources Department.

STATUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN

The fastest growing population of homeless people in the United States is composed of single women with two or three children. The population of homeless people in Mecklenburg County exceeds 6,800, a conservative estimate. A count was performed in the summer of 2010 and the count provided us with this estimate. The count was 6,500 in July 2009, showing an estimated increase of 5% this past year. The combined community count of homeless persons, excluding Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) for the summer of 2010 is up 46% from summer 2007, a period of three years. This shows that the numbers and needs of homeless persons in Charlotte-Mecklenburg have continued to increase. According to Peter Safir, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services staff, the HUD count does not include children, therefore without counting children, in the summer of 2010; there were approximately 2,307 homeless men and 928 homeless women. The total count includes three categories: **HUD defined homeless** (2,713 this year, up from 2,397 in July 2009, 1 13% increase); **CMS McKinney Vento Federal definition homeless children** (4,437 this year). This is a much larger number than reported last year (2,989) but represents a full school year total which may include some duplicate counting as this is a cumulative number and not point in time; and **Community Other count** (1,003) which is slightly down from last year and includes jail inmates, hospital homeless, foreclosed and evicted, and agencies not counted in the other two categories.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) continues to report a significant number of street homeless who are in camps and other outdoor settings. The summer 2010 camp count is 737 compared to last summer it was 703, a 5% increase¹.

On any given night in Charlotte, some 6,800 people are on the streets or in emergency shelters. Many of these are women and children. The reasons women give for being homeless are family break-up, job loss, unemployment and underemployment, eviction and domestic violence². Other reasons cited are foster care, childhood sexual abuse, lack of affordable housing, no health insurance and high health care costs, mental illness, disabilities, substance abuse, and unexpected emergencies³.

In March 2010, the fight against homelessness in Mecklenburg County gained some help with the opening of My Sister's House on Beatties Ford Road. The Friendship Community Development Corporation opened the shelter for women without dependent children. When area Salvation Army shelters would run out of beds, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church would accept the overflow. The church decided that instead of just housing the homeless in the short term, there needed to be a larger effort to bring an end to the homeless crisis in the county. When the shelter opened in March, there were 17 women residing in My Sister's House, with more women being brought into the center. The shelter has the capacity to house 26 women on a permanent basis and 15 on a temporary basis. The center not only provides the women with a place to stay, it provides them the opportunity to build or rebuild their lives. When the women come on site, they are screened and assessed. The center offers onsite GED programs, adult basic education programs and job readiness programs. My Sister's House also works with community partners to place the women into job training once they have completed the education programs offered by the shelter. The center also has a full-time person who assists the women in finding internships and ultimately permanent positions. And although some of the women who come into My Sister's House need the education programs, there is a growing population of homeless women who have college educations but fell on hard times and found themselves without a home⁴.

Recommendations:

- Take a leadership role and collaborative efforts to provide transitional housing with intensive supportive services.
- Increase funding for more shelter beds and medical services.
- Provide homeless women with life skills training, job training and childcare opportunities.

References

¹ Mecklenburg County Homeless Point in Time Count, Summer 2010.

² The Women's Summit Action Book, 2008.

³ "Making a Home for Homeless Women", Means, November, 2001,
<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/408310>

⁴ "My Sister's House joins the fight against homelessness in Charlotte", Creative Loafing Charlotte, March, 2010.

DOMESTIC/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Domestic violence continued to be a major contributor to family unrest and crime (both misdemeanor and felony) in Mecklenburg County this year. The number of calls to police and the requests for shelter and services has not diminished, although service agencies struggle with dwindling financial resources and increasing challenges to serve the ever-growing numbers of victims and children requesting assistance.

Crime Data:

32,888 CMPD DV-related calls responded

3,506 CMPD DV arrests

8 DV homicides

Assistance Provided to Victims

United Family Service (UFS)

- 10,711 hotline calls
- 332 women and children were sheltered/counseled at the battered women's shelter
- 230 women and children were sheltered in hotel rooms (281 victims placed elsewhere)
- 921 women and children were turned away for lack of shelter
- 4,263 victims were accompanied to court by UFS
- 281 women/children were represented by new UFS P/T attorney

Mecklenburg County Women's Commission

- 1,132 adult victims received individual in-person counseling
- 477 children & teens served in counseling or support groups

New DV Initiatives in Mecklenburg

- 8 million of the 10 million dollars needed to begin building the new shelter for battered women was raised by United Family Services. Ground was broken for the new shelter.
- The new Domestic Violence Fatality Prevention and Protection Review Team began to review domestic violence-related deaths and facilitate communication among agencies.
- NC's 10 Year Plan to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) was launched. NC is one of 14 states funded by the CDC to engage in a data-driven planning effort to develop a state plan to prevent IPV. This is spearheaded by NCCADV.
- DVAC (Domestic Violence Advocacy Council) continued DV homicide marches, monthly Lunch & Learn events and the CMPD holiday tree lighting homicide memorial event. DVAC also held a District Court Judge forum and a District Attorney forum, to learn of candidates' positions on DV.

Recommendations:

- Continue support for larger shelter and hotel rooms when the UFS shelter is full.
- Look for funding opportunities for a supervised visitation/child exchange center.

ELDER CARE

A key issue facing women in our community is the impact of caring for the elderly. Care giving responsibilities fall disproportionately on women. In Mecklenburg County, more than 8 out of 10 caregivers within a family are women. Care giving often severely curtails both women's work and personal lives, limiting or precluding employment, reducing productivity and work advancement, and creating stressful and unbalanced lives¹.

The need for elder care is great especially among low-to-moderate income families. Most adult care centers in Mecklenburg County are nonprofits that charge \$40 to \$60 per day. They draw from public funding such as Medicaid, state block grants and veterans benefits. Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) provides funding for In-Home Aid Services, Adult Day Care/Day Health and Caregivers Support Services to keep seniors and adults with disabilities in their own homes¹.

DSS has a Caregiver Support program that provides information about resources, provides assistance to access services, provides counseling and supplemental services that might include home modifications, yard work, incontinence supplies, etc. Also, Project CARE is a program administered with an Alzheimer's grant to provide respite. Through 2010 fiscal year, 115 women were served with respite services through Caregiver support and 34 women with respite services through Project CARE. DSS serves many older women through the Adult Protective Services Program and the guardianship program. Women are also served through the CAP program which is administered through the Health Department. Additional services are provided to women through DSS partnerships with the Alzheimer's Association, Hospice, and Love, Inc.²

Recommendations:

- Provide additional adult daycare sites.
- Increase funding to help with programs for the elderly.
- Begin to increase awareness of the elderly care responsibilities of women especially those with low-to-moderate income.

References

¹ The Women's Summit 2008 Action Book.

² Marsha S. McElroy, Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services.

CHILD CARE

The number of children living in poverty in Mecklenburg County has increased by 6% just in the last year. That's an additional 14,000 children¹. More women need to work to provide for their families basic needs. More parents than ever need help with the cost of child care in order to work. In Mecklenburg County, Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI) is a public/private non-profit organization that for nearly 30 years has administered all federal, state, and county funds for child care subsidies; worked to improve early care and education quality, gives parents information on quality early childhood education; and compiles data on cost, supply, utilization and quality. According to CCRI, in 2010, the average annual cost of center-based child care in Mecklenburg County for an infant is \$9,828 and for a four year old is \$8736². Child care costs for the average family of four can easily be the second largest budget item after shelter. For a single parent earning minimum wage the costs of child care can be prohibitive.

There are government funds that can assist a working parent or a parent in training leading to employment. In FY2010, CCRI administered a total allocation of \$51.1 million in funds from federal, state, and local sources which enabled it to provide a monthly average of 8,148 children with child care subsidies. However, in FY 2010, the monthly average number of children waiting to receive child care subsidy was an additional 6,400 children³. In FY 2010 and the first few months of 2011, Mecklenburg County received \$5,825 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds⁴. These funds are no longer available. At the same time, funding at the state level for both Smart Start and More At Four is being threatened. While at the local level, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' economic constraints have led to its consideration of reducing or eliminating its successful Bright Beginnings pre-kindergarten program. All of these pre-school programs help to form part of the child care arrangements for the working poor as well as providing the early education experiences that have proven to help low-income children succeed in school and life. Low-income working parents who are not able to access child care subsidies struggle daily with having to leave their children in a variety of inappropriate, frequently unsafe, make-shift arrangements or losing their job. No parents should have to make such a choice.

A recent U.S. Chamber of Commerce Report stated, "Early childhood education has a tremendous impact on the national economic security and the viability of the American Dream. While all children benefit from high-quality care, research has proven conclusively that among low-income children, two to three years of high quality child care can prevent those children from needing to repeat grades; prevent high-school drop-outs; teen pregnancies; and juvenile delinquency."⁵

Recommendations:

- Advocate at state and federal levels for increased funds for preschool and school-age child care programs.
- Allocate county funds to supplement funding received from the state and federal government for child care subsidies.
- Support and adequately fund Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools pre-kindergarten and after-school programs which are so desperately needed.

- Continue the County’s historic, successful partnership with Child Care Resources, Inc. to administer the county’s child care subsidy program and build and sustain a high quality early care and education and school-age child care system for all Mecklenburg families who rely on it and for the productivity of the region’s workforce and employers.

References

¹ Latest census data, quoted in The Charlotte Observer article by Mark Price on October 17, 2010.

² Child Care Resources Inc. Report, “Then And Now”, October 25, 2010.

³ Child Care Resources Inc. Report, “Then And Now”, October 25, 2010.

⁴ Child Care Resources Inc. Report, “Then And Now”, October 25, 2010.

⁵ “Ready, Set ,Go! Why Business Should Support Early Childhood Education”. U.S. Chamber OF Commerce Report Quoted by Harold Sellars in Op Ed in The Raleigh News and Observer, October 21, 2010.

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES

Much of what appeared in last year's annual report on the status of women's health in Mecklenburg County remains true today. The Mecklenburg County Health Department continues to promote activities and efforts to create a "healthy county." Its message that everyone—men, women, and children—be "physically, mentally, and emotionally happy" is having a positive impact in some areas. For instance, the enactment of a ban on smoking in public spaces will have long-term, positive repercussions on the health of everyone in our county and perhaps make smokers more aware of the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. The Health Department is also addressing obesity, a message that resonates from the White House down to the local level. The Department's childhood obesity campaign urges everyone in the family to become more physically active by creating more public green spaces where people can exercise and by encouraging more physical activity among school children. It wants everyone to make healthier food choices and to ensure that the food they eat is safe. The Department is giving more attention to fostering "workplace wellness." It is trying to address the issue of making affordable healthful food available in areas where no full-service market exists. It is encouraging CMS schools to serve healthy breakfasts and lunches. The Department is excited about its new program with Johnson and Wales to teach daycare center cooks how to prepare healthier meals and find ways to encourage centers to send their employees to these training classes so they can make changes in on-site facilities. All these programs, however, require funding from public and private sources.

While these county programs are not confined to women, they have enormous repercussions on women's daily lives, especially those in low-income households. These women and their families tend to eat food high in fat, because it is less expensive than healthier alternatives, but leads to obesity. Nearly half of all women claim they get no exercise beyond their regular job. Women tend to get less exercise than men. Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity-related cancers occur more often in people who are obese.

The Health Department continues to offer clinics in programs and services such as STD/HV prevention and treatment, family planning, childhood immunizations, school health programs, and outreach efforts to pregnant women to encourage them to get prenatal care. The Department does what it can to link women to pre-existing services for health care needs.

Income disparity continues to be a major concern for women's health; not surprisingly, low income households, often headed by single women of color, suffer the most. As noted in last year's report, a significant number of women have no health insurance and many never see a physician because of cost. What impact the new federal insurance program will have on county residents is unknown¹.

Recommendations:

- Fund and promote the Health Department's "Healthy County" programs.
- Ensure accessibility to county Health Department clinics and health services.

References

¹Information from the Mecklenburg County Health Department web site and Dr. Susan Long-Marin, DVM, MPH, Epidemiology Manager, Mecklenburg County Health Department.

GENDER REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

In our 2009 Annual Report¹, the Women's Advisory Board reported on the gender disparity in appointments to Boards and Commissions in Mecklenburg County. Since our last report, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit at UNC Charlotte has received a grant from Z. Smith Reynolds, which will support a review of current application and appointment processes for Boards and Commissions in the City and County. This funding also will support internships, mentoring and experiential learning opportunities for women who are interested in becoming more civically engaged.

This project does not rely on County or City funding in order to proceed; however, having the support of County and City employees responsible for the application and appointment process will enable the review to be conducted in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

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.
- Develop a mentoring program for women who are currently serving on boards and commissions to encourage other women to become more actively involved.
- Provide in-kind support (data and information on the application and appointment processes for county-appointed boards and commissions) to the Women's Summit to enable their continued work to address disparity in the appointment of women to boards and commissions in Mecklenburg County.

References

¹ Charlotte Mecklenburg Women's Advisory Board 2009 Annual Report, January, 2009.

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The Women's Advisory Board has a tradition of bringing women together to celebrate Women's Equality Day. After a year's break, the Women's Advisory Board resumed the tradition and hosted "Women's Equality Day: Past, Present and Future. The event was held on August 23, 2010 at the Levine Museum of the New South. This was a celebration of the Women's Rights Movement from its inception in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 to modern day Mecklenburg County.

More than 125 community members gathered to network and learn more about the Women's Rights Movements. Erica Bryant, WSOC-TV anchor moderated a panel discussion featuring Women's Advisory Board Member, Dr. Sally McMillen, NC Council for Women Executive Director, Jill Dinwiddie and Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey, Co-Founder of the Harvey B. Gant Center. The program also included book signings by authors and WAB members Dr. Sally McMillen and Chia-Li Chien and a lively question and answer session.

All costs associated with this event were met through sponsorships or individual Women's Advisory Board members' contributions. The event budget is provided in Figure 1 below. A key role of the Mecklenburg County Women's Advisory Board is to provide community leadership opportunities by initiating and promoting programs designed to meet the needs of women in our community. Events such as the Women's Equality Day event play an important role in our community; however, the ongoing financial support by individual members of the Women's Advisory Board is outside of expectations of members of County or City Advisory Boards and Commissions and the Women's Advisory Board respectfully requests the financial support of the Women's Equality Day event by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners. A proposed budget for 2011 is provided in Figure 2 below.

A survey was conducted after the event and the WAB had 65 out of 125 attendees who responded to the survey. Out of the 65 that responded to the survey, 44 attendees also provided comments and a few of those are listed below. Two charts are also provided from the survey:

- "Excellent event, well organized, interesting panel discussion and passionate participation by audience. BRAVO!"
- "The men who attended appeared to be enlightened. Welcoming their attendance has the potential to facilitate the understanding of women's concerns as well as voicing of those concerns to individuals empowered and/or in position to activate change regarding them."
- "Thank you for a very informative and delightful evening."
- "Keep up the good work. Thanks for having this type of event for women, it was very educational and interesting."
- "I was impressed with how diverse your organization is. Thank you for your good work."

Fig. 1 2010 Women's Equality Day Celebration Summary of Income and Expenditures

Income

Sponsorship raised	345.00
Women's Advisory Board member contributions	686.00
Total Income	\$1,031.00

Costs

Venue (security guard)	150.00
Refreshments	145.00
Supplies	176.00
Floral	100.00
Print (programs and name badges)	85.00
Communications (PR, press releases and the like)	375.00
Total costs	\$1,031.00

Net

Fig. 2 Proposed 2011 Women's Equality Day Celebration Budget

Income

Mecklenburg Board of County Commissions budget item	1,031.00
Total Income	\$1,031.00

Costs

Venue	145.00
Refreshments	150.00
Supplies	176.00
Floral	100.00
Print (programs and name badges)	85.00
Communications (PR, press releases and the like)	375.00
Total costs	\$1,031.00

What is your level of satisfaction with the event?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Very satisfied			39	60.0 %
Somewhat satisfied			21	32.3 %
Neutral			2	3.0 %
Somewhat dissatisfied			2	3.0 %
Very dissatisfied			0	0.0 %
No Response(s)			1	1.5 %
Totals			65	100%

How likely are you to attend this event again?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Very likely			53	81.5 %
Somewhat likely			8	12.3 %
Neutral			2	3.0 %
Somewhat unlikely			0	0.0 %
Very unlikely			1	1.5 %
No Response(s)			1	1.5 %
Totals			65	100%

Recommendation:

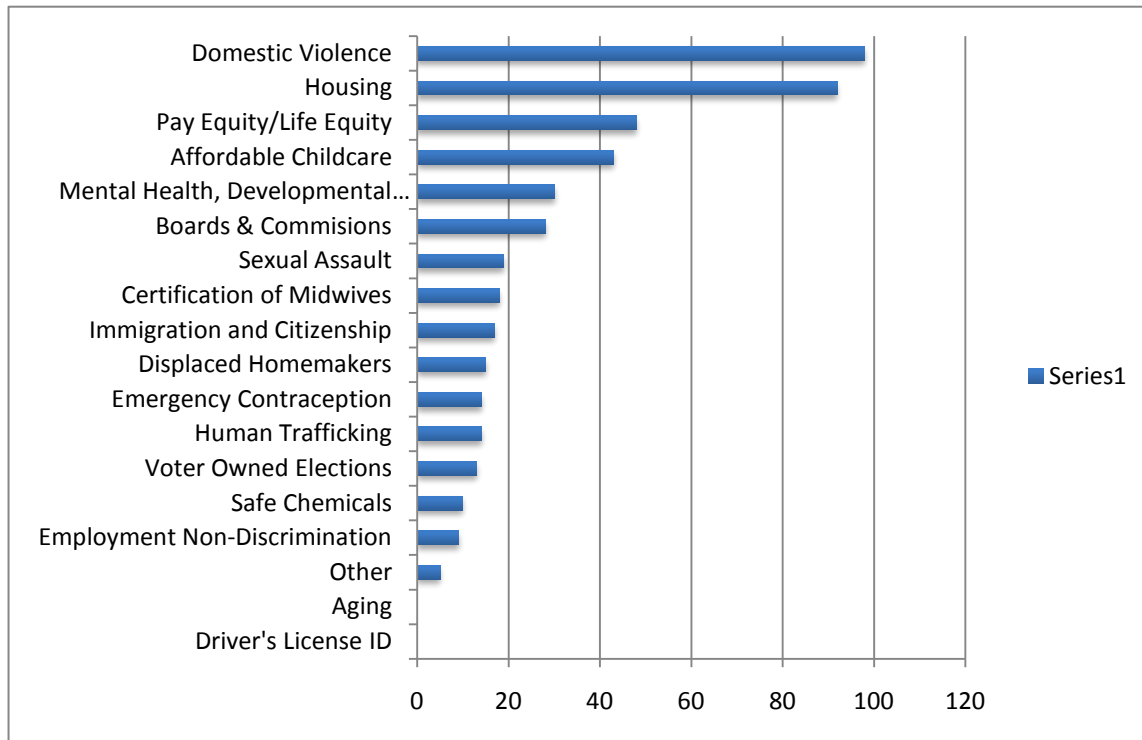
- Provide funding for the Women's Equality Day Celebration for 2011 in the amount of \$1,050.00.

2010 WOMEN'S AGENDA ASSEMBLY

In 2010, the Women's Advisory Board partnered with the Mecklenburg County Women's Commission, the North Carolina Council for Women, the UNC Charlotte Women's and Gender Studies Program, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit at UNC Charlotte and North Carolina Women United to host the 2010 Women's Agenda Assembly (2010 WAA). This biennial, non-partisan meeting attracted more than 100 community members to discuss and prioritize the issues most important to women. The event was held at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center on Tuesday, November 16, 2010.

During the Women's Agenda Assembly local experts provided insights on eighteen issues that impact women and families. Topics included women's civic and political engagement, violence against women and equal pay for women. Following the expert presentations, Assembly participants voted to prioritize the issues. The issues as prioritized are presented in Figure 1. It should be noted that the top three issues facing women in Charlotte-Mecklenburg are: 1) Domestic Violence, 2) Affordable Housing/homelessness and 3) Equal pay for women and flexible working arrangements for families.

Fig. 1



The 2010 WAA Organizing Committee is preparing a full report of the Women's Agenda Assembly. Copies will be provided to each Mecklenburg County Commissioner and City Council member in early January.

Recommendation:

- Continue to support the issues facing women in Mecklenburg County that were prioritized by the Women's Agenda Assembly participants.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, we find that 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 Mecklenburg County. The top three issues facing women in Mecklenburg County are domestic violence, affordable housing/homelessness, and equal pay for women and flexible working arrangements for families.

Progress has been made on several of the recommendations provided by the WAB in the 2009 Annual Report; however, this year's report indicates continued challenges.

We recognize the significant efforts of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners and appreciate the challenges faced in ensuring that the ever-expanding needs of our community are met. Based on our review of the status of women in our community, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

- Continue and increase the financial support for the Women's Displaced Homemakers Program, New Beginnings.
- Address the persistent problem of paying lower wages in fields dominated by women and people of color.
- Ensure that women have equal representation on appointed committees that impact the economic growth of Mecklenburg County.
- Take a leadership role and collaborative efforts to provide transitional housing with intensive supportive services.
- Increase funding for more shelter beds and medical services.
- Provide homeless women with life skills training, job training and childcare opportunities.
- Continue support for larger shelter and hotel rooms when the UFS shelter is full.
- Look for funding opportunities for a supervised visitation/child exchange center.
- Provide additional adult daycare sites.
- Increase funding to help with programs for the elderly.
- Begin to increase awareness of the elderly care responsibilities of women especially those with low-to-moderate income.
- Advocate at state and federal levels for increased funds for preschool and school-age child care programs.
- Allocate county funds to supplement funding received from the state and federal government for child care subsidies.
- Support and adequately fund Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools pre-kindergarten and after-school programs which are so desperately needed.
- Continue the County's historic, successful partnership with Child Care Resources, Inc. to administer the county's child care subsidy program and build and sustain a high quality early care and education and school-age child care system for all Mecklenburg families who rely on it and for the productivity of the region's workforce and employers.
- Fund and promote the Health Department's "Healthy County" programs.
- Ensure accessibility to county Health Department clinics and health services.
- 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.
- Provide in-kind support (data and information on the application and appointment processes for county-appointed boards and commissions) to the Women's Summit to enable their continued work to address disparity in the appointment of women to boards and commissions in Mecklenburg County.
- Provide funding for the Women's Equality Day Celebration for 2011 in the amount of \$1,050.00.
- Continue to support the issues facing women in Mecklenburg County that were prioritized by the Women's Agenda Assembly participants.

THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP 2010

1. Dr. Angelia Fryer: Chairperson
2. Marjorie Tate: Vice Chairperson
3. Nancy Plummer: Secretary
4. Donna Hughes: Parliamentarian
5. Brenda Adams
6. Chia-Li (Jolly) Chien
7. Laura Everett
8. Pamela Hemphill
9. Beverly Hunt
10. Natheley McElrath
11. Dr. Sally McMillen
12. Mariana Nunez
13. Julie Owens
14. Najeedah Stover
15. Lisa Yarrow

Peter Safir, Community Support Services Staff