



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

***Women's
Advisory Board***

**2011 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.

2011 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: Cheryl S. Emanuel, Community Health Administrator, Mecklenburg County Health Department; Philip Maung, CEO, Hisho Sushi (hosted WAB Meeting); Christine John-Fuller, President & CEO, The Lupus Foundation of America, Inc., Piedmont Chapter; and Dr. Vilma Leake, Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners.
- 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 2011 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 22, 2011 the WAB hosted, Women's Equality Day: Inspire, Lead, Celebrate at the Levine Museum of the New South to an audience of 215. The event included a dinner reception, book signing and a panel discussion. Featured speakers were Betty Chafin Rash, Former Charlotte City Council Member; Chia-Li (Jolly) Chien, Chief Strategist Officer, Value Growth Institute and Women's Advisory Board Member; Cheryl S. Emanuel, Community Health Administrator, Mecklenburg County Health Department; Elizabeth J. Caviness, Attorney, Caviness Law Firm, PLLC. 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, Mariana Nunez, Nancy Plummer, and Najeedah Stover.

- 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 advocated for funds for the Women's Equality Day Annual Celebration.
- Participated in the Affordable Health Care Act Town Hall Meeting which was held at Johnson C. Smith University on October 3, 2011.
- Supported women's programs throughout the county to determine what is impacting women and children in Mecklenburg County.
- Participated in the North Carolina Governor's Conference for Women which was held at the Charlotte Convention Center on November 2, 2011.
- Attended the Women's Summit Feminism program which discussed, "What is Feminism Today". The program was held at UNC Charlotte Center City on October 20, 2011.
- Completed a study on sex trafficking of women and girls in North Carolina that was commissioned by County Commission Chairperson, Jennifer Roberts.

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, trafficking, 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 2011 Women's Equality Day celebration. This is a significant women-focused event that had WAB leadership and involvement.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

According to a recent study conducted by Women's Summit "Women, Wages and Work", women in Mecklenburg County earn more than their counterparts at the state and national level. However, the gap between median earnings of full-time, year-round workers widened last year, with women earning 78%¹ of what men earned. The wage gap is most severe for women of color. In Mecklenburg County African American women earn about \$0.76² for every dollar earned by white women, while Latina women average about \$0.44³ for every dollar earned by white women.

Although Mecklenburg County overall, women achieved more education than their counterpart at the state and national level. Women with graduate degree made about 62⁴ cents for every dollar men made with similar background. Despite the higher education in the county, job creation for women only increased 4.2⁵ percent between 2009 and 2010 compares to 9.2 percent increase in men. In contrary, men experienced 3.1⁶ percent more job loss compares to women.

In the effort of encouraging job creation in small business; out of the 100⁷ existing women's business centers, there are 3 in NC, not one in Mecklenburg County. Although SBA SCORE Charlotte office has resources for women entrepreneurs, it is not enough to support new women businesses creation that potentially leads to job creation in the county.

There are 5,209⁸ or 9.6%⁹ of female veterans in NC and 66%¹⁰ of them are at prime earning age (less than 65 year old). Due to the lack of education to the community, there is minimum support for our female veterans in various stages of their life. There is need to protect, enhance and advocate for women warriors and connect them to resource and services that may or may not be military specific.

Recommendations:

- Continue and increase the financial support for the Women's Displaced Homemakers Program, New Beginnings.
- Continue to support Equal pay in women and people of color in Mecklenburg County.
- Ensure that women have equal representation on appointed committees that impact the economic growth of Mecklenburg County.
- County to encourage organization(s) to apply for special SBA Women centers grant to support new women businesses creation.
- To advocate, support or develop "Trust in Transition for Women Warriors" on the specific needs of female veterans.

References

^{1,2,3,4} Women, Wages and Work. A report prepared for the Women's Summit by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. April 11, 2011.

^{5,6} Working Women and the Great Recession for the Women's Summit by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. June, 2011.

^{5,6,7} Jobs and Economic Security for America's Women by National Economic Council, The White House. Oct. 2010

^{8,9,10} 2010 US Census data: information gathered by Carol Morris

STATUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN

Women and children represent 1/3 of Mecklenburg County's homeless and is the fastest growing group. Children represent 34% of the shelters populations, with 40% of them 0-4 years. 74% of the shelter population is African American. Annually 75% of women and children stay at the Salvation Army Center of Hope shelter which is the largest women's shelter in the County¹.

The population of homeless people in Mecklenburg County is estimated at 6,500 which includes homeless children in CMS but may include some duplicate counts for persons served by more than one agency. The HUD count of homeless adults for July, 2011 is 894 women and 1855 men, but that does not include many homeless families counted in the CMS McKinney Vento count.

The number of CMS/McKinney Vento Federal definition homeless children counted was 4711 compared to 4,437 last year, an increase of 6%. This represents a full school year total which may include some duplicate counting as this is a cumulative number compared to the HUD one day point in time count.

The Salvation Army Women's Shelter has been in overflow status for several months and collaborated with the County to open additional shelter beds at Caldwell Memorial Church. The Men's Shelter also increased capacity when merging with the Emergency Winter Shelter and going year round.

There have been some successes moving women and families out of the shelters and into permanent or transitional housing. But homelessness continues to impact women and children and more so in the down economy.

Enabling self-sufficiency (finding and keeping a job) affordable housing and normalcy in quality of life will effectively address homelessness Health issue can become significant barriers to self-sufficiency and can cause or prolong homelessness. 81% of the adults and 44% of the children do not have Medicaid. Lacking Medicaid and money, without the free clinic in the Salvation Army, they would truly lack any access to healthcare other than calling 911 and going to the ER.

The key to economic development lies in unleashing women's potential and investing in women's capabilities. Women bear a disproportionate weight of the world's poverty, representing 70% of the world's poor. At the same time, it has been widely recognized that women have the potential to be the engine of economic and development progress. Addressing gender inequalities are crucial factors in enabling women to transform their lives and the lives of their families and communities².

Women's roles as the primary caretakers of children, providers of household fuel and water, and in many areas of the world, producers of food, can only begin to illustrate their importance in the economies and societies of developing countries. However, it is a stunning fact that while women perform 66% of the world's work and produce 50% of the food, they only earn 10% of the income and own 1% of the land.

The fastest-growing group of homeless people in the United States is composed of single women with two or three children. Before the 1980s the homeless population was mostly composed of men³.

Within the last two decades, US society has begun to acknowledge the growing numbers of homeless women and children. Homeless women are rarely seen because they often find shelter with relatives, friends, or other homeless women. The majority of homeless women are on the streets because of divorce or escaping domestic abuse. Abandonment is also a key contributor to homelessness in women.

Homeless Women Veterans

A community is only as strong as the sum of its parts. The number of homeless female veterans with or without children is not reflected in this report. Homeless female veterans have honorably served this country and the community. Yet there is little accountability for researching their needs or numbers once they separate from active duty and return home to Charlotte, North Carolina (Mecklenburg County).

Homeless female veterans are unsung “she-ros” who face many barriers to seeking services, including not knowing where to turn for help, lack of awareness that help is available, mistrust of authority, shame, pride, and a resistance to self-identify as veterans. Post traumatic stress disorder sufferers with a military history often experience symptoms differently than civilians. Therefore, it is imperative that a stronger focus should be placed on recognizing inconsistencies in efforts to represent all women⁴.

Recommendations:

- Provide the homeless women with life skills training.
- Provide better medical care for women who are homeless.
- Provide better education programs for those women who are homeless to make them aware of what is currently available to them.
- Acknowledge that women represent the fastest growing number of recently discharged veterans in the U.S. military in order to better anticipate what their needs.⁴
- Examine the issue of female homelessness with the understanding that the needs of female veterans frequently differ from those of the civilian female population.
- Track the number of homeless female veterans that live in Mecklenburg County separately from the number of homeless male veterans.
- Create an advisory board to focus on the specific needs of female veterans.

References

¹Shelter Health Services; info@shsclinic.org

²Trickle Up - New York, NY

³Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

⁴ <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2227>

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence continues to be a major contributor to family unrest and crime 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. Below is information from January 1, 2011 through October 31, 2011*:

Crime Data¹:

30,431 CMPD DV-related calls for service
3,228 CMPD DV arrests (Men=2439; Women=789)
5 DV Homicides

Assistance Provided to Victims²:

United Family Service (UFS)

- 3,383 hotline calls
- 432 women and children were sheltered/counseled at the battered women's shelter
- 243 women and children were sheltered in hotel rooms
- 351 women and children were turned away for lack of shelter
- 3,507 victims were accompanied to court by UFS (**Jan 1, 2011 through Sept 11, 2011*)

Mecklenburg County Women's Commission³ (**fiscal year July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011*)

- 1,116 adult victims received domestic violence services
- 4,419 information and referral contacts provided
- 493 children services (HERO, Teen Dating Violence, and Reach) provided

DV Initiatives in Mecklenburg:

- The Domestic Violence Fatality Prevention and Protection Review Team finished its first set of reviews and issued its first report on June 15, 2011 entitled "If You Leave Me I Will Kill You". The complete report can be found at <http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/CommunitySupportServices/WomensCommission/AboutUs/Outreach/Pages/DVFRT.aspx>
- DVAC (Domestic Violence Advocacy Council) continued DV homicide marches, quarterly Lunch & Learn events, and the annual Candlelight Vigil event.

Recommendations:

- Follow the recommendations of the DVAB.
- Support funding opportunities for a supervised visitation/child exchange center.
- Continue support for larger shelter and hotel rooms when the United Family Services shelter is full.
- Support funding opportunities for United Family Services to provide comprehensive victim services throughout the protective order process.

References

¹CMPD

² Mecklenburg United Family Service

³ Mecklenburg DVAC

ELDER CARE

Caring for the elderly remains a key issue for women within our community. The responsibility of caregiving falls disproportionately on women. In Mecklenburg County, more than 8 out of 10 caregivers within a family are women. Elder care is greatly needed among low-to-moderate income families. Adult care centers in Mecklenburg County may charge up to \$40-\$50 per day. To assist with funding families seek public funds to include Medicaid, state block grants and veterans' benefits¹.

To address the needs of Elder care recipients, the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services provides the following services: **In Home Aide** - a program that provides personal care (bathing, dressing, grooming, and toileting) and home management (laundry, changing and washing linens) services to older adults and adults with disabilities who are unable to perform these tasks. The adult is served by a Certified Nursing assistant employed by a licensed home health agency and has a DSS Social Worker who makes home visits to assess, monitor and provide support to the client and family. These services support the mission of the agency to maintain adults in their own homes and reduce the need for adults to be placed in facilities. **In FY11 this program had 121 women waiting for services that were not served. Currently (FY12) there are 222 women waiting for services.** **Adult Day Care** –a program that provides a supervised and structured weekday program to adults that are not safe remaining alone during the day. Services are provided by Certified Adult Day Care Centers in Mecklenburg County and the client is assigned a DSS Social Worker who makes home visits and Center visits to assess and provide support to the client and family. This service promotes safety of the adult, and often times the ability of the caregiver to remain employed and reduced the likelihood that the adult will have to be placed in a facility. **In FY11 90 women were waiting for services that were not served. Currently (FY12) 75 women are waiting for services.** **Placement services**- a program that provides for the needs of older adults, that have reached a point at which their needs have exceeded, what can be done to safely maintain the adult at home. This service helps to further the mission of the agency by attempting to keep the older adult in the least restrictive environment but the appropriate level of care and supervision. The social worker also considers facility placement within their community or outside of the community, but closer to family, when appropriate. **There currently is not a waiting list for Placement services.** Although the services (IHA, ADC, Respite) DSS provides is often restricted by the availability for funding, they are always available to do home visits to women and their families to discuss other formal and informal services, look for additional community support services to explore . DSS will also conduct family meetings to explore short term and long term planning² .

DSS has two specific 2 specific programs that provide services to caregivers. **Family Caregiver support program** is a federal program, funded by the Older Americans Act. This grant was intended to be short term, temporary. The goal is to relieve caregiver burden/reduce caregiver stress .The most requested service is for respite – a break! Services can be provided in home services or attendance at an Adult Day Center or institutional respite. **Currently (FY 12) approximately 57 women are waiting for services.** **Project CARE** is specific to Alzheimer's or other dementias. This program as a demonstration grant and has gone thru many changes in the past 4 or 5 years. The program was funded with only a little more than half of what was received in 2012. Currently (FY12) there are 56 female caregivers being served and 59 female care recipients involved in the program, 56 female caregivers are on the waiting list. In FY2011 we served 203 caregivers who were women, this is for both (Family Caregiver support program & Project CARE) combined³.

Recommendations:

- Increase funding to ensure all citizens in Mecklenburg county seeking elder care and caregiver support services are served.
- Increase awareness of the elderly care and caregiver support programs offered by Mecklenburg county that are available to assist women of low –to-moderate income
- Explore the possibility of providing/funding a resource center (walls or virtual) to assist adults charged with the care of their elders navigate and access resources easily.

References

¹ The Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book

² Renee Dutcher, Mecklenburg County, DSS

³ Marsha S. McElroy, Mecklenburg County, DSS

CHILD CARE

The number of children living in poverty in Mecklenburg County has increased by 4.75% just in the last year. That's an additional 2,207 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 \$10,088 and for a four year old is \$8,996². 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.

Number of children waiting for child care subsidy as of Nov 28, 2011 is 6278. All American Recovery child care subsidy dollars available were expended by August 2010. Not aware of any other funds available. Smart Start funds could be at risk again this year (and even the existence of Smart Start Local Partnerships); this funding comes directly from State dollars allocated by the General Assembly of NC. More at Four was changed from the Dept of Public Instruction to the Division of Child Development Early Care and Education and is now called NC Pre-K. Currently this program is underfunded (cannot serve all the four year olds who qualify). There are several lawsuits pending from the Attorney General's office, the Governor and the General Assembly.

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 U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey

² Child Care Resources Inc., October 31, 2011

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 a long-term, positive effect 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 also encouraging more physical activity among school children. The Department is giving more attention to fostering "workplace wellness" by making affordable healthy foods available in areas where no full-service market exists. Another effort is encouraging CMS schools to serve healthy breakfasts and lunches and through their program with Johnson and Wales, they are teaching daycare center cooks how to prepare healthier meals and encourage centers to send their employees to their training classes so they can make changes in on-site facilities¹.

The National Institute of Health defines health disparities as differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality and burden of disease and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the United States. Addressing and eliminating these and other health disparities must remain a priority in order for the nation to maintain the continued improvements in overall health status. Mecklenburg county programs are bringing great changes to our population among not only women but entire families. Nearly half of all women claim they get no exercise beyond their regular jobs. The disparity in income of women and their families tend to force them into eating foods that are high in fat. More programs are needed to expand the health department's efforts to teach healthier alternatives. Income disparity continues to be a major concern for women's health. A significant number of women have no health insurance and many never see a physician because of cost. Access to quality healthcare is an important step in improving overall health and reducing health disparities. Low-income populations experience serious disparities in rates of insurance and access to health care².

Another health issue affecting women at a high rate is Lupus. Christine John-Fuller, President and CEO of Charlotte Lupus Foundation of America, Piedmont Chapter, Inc., visited WAB this year and created awareness of the impact Lupus has on women worldwide. She explained how the foundation as a nonprofit voluntary health organization through its Chapter Board members in coordination with its passionate volunteer leadership strives in finding the Lupus causes and cure while providing opportune emotional support, educational resources and a variety of services to all people affected by this devastating disease. The Chapter embraces 14,000 individuals with Lupus and seeks an aggressive air exposure in our media for its' frightful impact mostly in women, as Lupus is not soundly researched, funded or recognized.

Facts about Lupus

- Lupus is not contagious.
- Lupus is not like or related to cancer.
- Lupus is not like or related to HIV (Human Immune Deficiency Virus) or AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
- In the United States alone it is believed that at least 1.5 million people—women, men, teens, and children—have lupus. More than 16,000 new cases are reported across the county each year.
- Lupus strikes mostly women of childbearing age (15-44). However, men, children and teenagers develop lupus, too.
- Women of color are 2-3 times more likely to develop lupus.
- People of all races and ethnic groups can develop lupus.

Because lupus can affect so many different organs, a wide range of symptoms can occur. The most common symptoms of lupus are:

- Extreme fatigue (tiredness), headaches, painful or swollen joints, fever, anemia (caused by low numbers of red blood cells or hemoglobin, or low total blood volume), swelling (edema) in feet, legs, or around the eyes.
- Pain in the chest on deep breathing (pleurisy), butterfly-shaped rash across the cheeks and nose, sun or light sensitivity (photosensitivity), hair loss, blood clotting problems, fingers turning white and/or blue in the cold (Reynaud’s phenomenon), ulcers in mouth or nose³.

Health disparities are a top priority for the nation and Mecklenburg County and have resulted in the formation of several initiatives and research efforts to identify solutions to this problem.

Recommendations:

- Continue to fund programs to promote healthy lifestyles throughout the county.
- Increase accessibility to county health department clinics and other services.
- Promote healthy eating and living habits and encourage everyone to get more exercise.

References

¹ Mecklenburg County Health Department

² National Institute of Health

³ Charlotte Lupus Foundation of America, Piedmont Chapter, Inc.

GENDER REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

In 2011, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit conducted research on gender representation on boards and commissions in the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County ¹. The project was graciously sponsored by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The purpose of the study was to examine factors that might prevent women from participating on boards or commissions. These factors include networking, personal connections, insider information, and family obligations. A survey was developed to identify potential obstacles to participation, and sent out to applicants, current members of boards and commissions, and past members. The study also recorded gender participation across boards and commissions for the year 2011.

Important Findings:

While the study inquired about the application process, networking, personal connections, and other potential obstacles to women's participation on boards and commissions, the findings did not show significant differences between male and female networking and appointment processes. Women respondents indicated similar networking and personal connection processes in getting appointed. Respondents frequently cited personal connections as important in the appointment process. This raises the concern that gender differences in personal networks could be a factor in the gender representation gaps found across the majority of boards and commissions in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Survey respondents indicated the existence of a hierarchy of boards and commissions based on the amount of influence a board/commission is perceived to have on the City Council and County Commission. This informal hierarchy has significant implications with regard to gender representation in local government. It is especially important to evaluate and improve gender representation on these influential boards/commissions viewed by respondents as "political stepping stones". Future studies should include a ranking of boards/commissions based on political/governmental influence in order to more accurately evaluate gender representation across boards/commissions.

Women in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County make up 40% of the application pool for positions on boards and commissions and are also appointed at a rate of approximately 40%. However, there are significant gender participation gaps observed across boards and commissions. In 2011, 58 boards and commissions were examined. Of those boards and commissions several boards and commissions have very little women participation, while others are made up almost exclusively of women members. Currently, women are in the minority on 72% of the boards and commissions in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

While some improvements have been made over the past few years, there is still much work to be done to increase gender representation on boards and commissions. The 2009 Women's Summit Report on gender disparity in appointments to the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County boards and

commissions observed that 19% of boards and commissions had no women representation at all ². This number has decreased drastically to 8.6% in 2011 with only 5 boards and commissions lacking any female representation. While in 2011 we have an increased number boards and commissions with female representation, gender distribution across boards and commissions alarmingly stagnates. In 2009, 28% (out of an observed 67) of boards and commission in the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg had equal or greater female membership (Reference 2). In 2011, while there are now fewer boards and commissions (58 observed), this percentage has decreased to 27.5%.

Five boards/commissions have no women members:

- Fire Relief Fund Board Members (City)
- Privatization/Competition Advisory Committee (City)
- Lake Wylie Marine Commissioners (County)
- Mecklenburg County Fire Commission (County)
- Motor Vehicle Valuation and Review Board (County)

33 boards/commissions have less than 40% women representation:

Fire Relief Fund (City)	0%	Charlotte Mecklenburg Library (County)	20%
Privatization/Competition Advisory Committee (City)	0%	Housing Appeals Board (City)	20%
Lake Wylie Marine Commissioners (County)	0%	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Development Corp (Both)	20%
Mecklenburg County Fire Commission (County)	0%	Bicycle Advisory (Both)	25%
Motor Vehicle Valuation and Review Board (County)	0%	Passenger Vehicles for Hire Board (City)	27%
Building Development Commission (County)	8%	Storm Water Advisory (Both)	27%
Charlotte Douglas International Airport Advisory (City)	9%	Civil Service Board (City)	29%
Air Quality Commission (County)	10%	Charlotte Business Advisory (City)	30%
NASCAR Hall of Fame Advisory Board (City)	10%	Criminal Justice Citizens' Advisory (County)	30%
Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control (County)	11%	Information Services & Technology (County)	30%
Citizens Review Board (City)	14%	Board of Equalization and Review (County)	33%
Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee (County)	17%	Public Broadcasting Authority (County)	33%
Citizens Transit Advisory Group (Both)	17%	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Coalition (County)	36%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department (Both)	17%	Charlotte Housing Authority (City)	38%
Groundwater Advisory Committee (County)	17%	Zoning Board of Adjustment (Both)	38%
Transit Services Advisory Committee (Both)	18%	Park and Recreation Commission (Both)	38%
Alcoholic Beverages Control Board (County)	20%		

Only five boards/commissions have equal Gender Representation:

- Andreas H. Bechtler Arts Foundation (City)
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission (Both)
- Residential Rental Property Review Board (City)
- Charlotte Historic District Commission (City)
- The Mint Museum Board of Trustees (City)

11 boards/commissions have a majority of women members including three that are exclusively women-members:

Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (City)	52%
Community Relations Committee (Both)	58%
Charlotte Area Fund (Both)	59%
Tree Advisory Committee (City)	60%
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (County)	63%
Neighborhood Matching Grants (City)	69%
Domestic Violence Advisory Board (Both)	83%
Nursing Home Community Advisory (County)	84%
Adult Care Home Advisory Committee (County)	100%
Region F Aging Advisory Committee (County)	100%
Women's Advisory Board (County)	100%

Recommendations:

- In order to more accurately represent the community of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, efforts should be made to ensure equal gender representation across boards and commissions.
- To diversify the applicant pool, a formal statement should be included on the board/commission application and city/county website that encourages equal gender representation.
- A formal hierarchy of boards and commissions should be created to evaluate gender disparity on more prestigious boards/commissions viewed as political stepping stones.
- Increased transparency in the appointment process.
- Annual reports should be conducted to monitor the status of female representation on boards and commissions in the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.
- Inquiries should be made into which boards and commissions have the most influence on policy-makers and local governance. Is there equal gender representation on these boards and commissions?
- Develop a mentoring program for women who are currently serving on boards and commissions to encourage other women to become more actively involved.

References

¹Gender and Political Representation on Appointed Local Government Boards and Commissions. A report prepared for the Women's Summit by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. In Press.

²Charlotte-Mecklenburg Boards and Commissions: A Report on Gender Disparity in Appointments. A report prepared for the Women's Summit by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. December, 2009.

SEX TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Human sex trafficking is the most common form of modern-day slavery. Estimates place the number of its domestic and international victims in the millions, mostly females and children enslaved in the commercial sex industry for little or no money¹. The terms human trafficking and sex slavery usually conjure up images of young girls beaten and abused in faraway places, like Eastern Europe, Asia, or Africa. Actually, human sex trafficking and sex slavery happen locally in cities and towns, both large and small, throughout the United States, right in citizens' backyards.

Sex trafficking is commercial sex induced by force, fraud or coercion, OR any sex in which a person performing the act is under the age of 18. (Minors do NOT have the ability to give consent. Receiving any type of benefit (money, alcohol, drugs, discounts on rent, etc.) in exchange for arranging a sex act with a minor constitutes Minor Sex Trafficking)².

Human traffickers target those who are society's most vulnerable, have the quietest voices and find it hard to fight back. Often, victims are women and children. Immigrants are also at risk. Sexually trafficked adults can be found in brothels, night clubs, massage parlors, strip clubs, escort services, online advertising for escorts and/or massage. The crime of trafficking occurs with the exploitation of the victim. The physical movement of the victim is NOT a requisite. Children who are loners or runaways are a popular target of cyber-sex traffickers. Cyber traffickers often use a) online ads- offering great jobs at high pay in big cities. Often they hide behind ads for modeling, singing, or acting. Sometimes they will offer to fly the person to the other city for the "interview"; b) online Auctions - Craigslist is considered a magnet for international sex trade of children via the adult services section, c) Photo Sharing websites that allow operations to disseminate photos online for viewing by prospective buyers and d) Social Media - chat rooms, social sites such as Facebook and MySpace are used to recruit or trick kids into joining trafficking schemes³.

Sex trafficking does not have to involve international citizens, although approximately 12 million victims are annually trafficked across international borders worldwide for forced labor and/or the sex trade. Between 18,000 and 20,000 victims are trafficked into United States annually. It's estimated that there are 100,000 children involved in sex trafficking every year in the United States alone. There are cases of both sex trafficking and labor trafficking being investigated in every state in the United States right now³.

North Carolina

North Carolina has been ranked in the top 8 most common sites for human trafficking. One of the reasons NC is so popular are the I-85 and I-95 thoroughfares. Human traffickers use interstate highways to move their slaves from location to location². The number of incidents of human sex trafficking across North Carolina is up 600 percent over the past 18 months, according to local World Relief Inc. Director Tony Williams⁴.

North Carolina – like most of the U.S. – is failing the grade against human trafficking, according to a study. The state scored 61 – a D – on a survey commissioned by the advocacy group Shared Hope International, which found the state lacks basic victim protections, especially for children forced or coerced into the sex trade. It also found North Carolina doesn't effectively punish adults who seek their services or promote law enforcement assets, such as mandating training on domestic minor sex trafficking. More than half the states examined earned D or F on the survey.

"I was absolutely shocked when we started sending people into states (posing) as sex tourists, and they would go in, and they would come into the city maybe from another country, maybe another state, and they could buy kids so easily," Linda Smith, SHI's founder and a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives, told National Public Radio earlier this month.

The Protected Innocence Initiative study found that North Carolina makes the trafficking of a minor a distinct crime but children identified as a victim of sex-for-hire don't get the same level of protection. Forty percent of trafficking victims identified in North Carolina in 2010 were under 18 years of age.

North Carolina has several commercial sexual exploitation laws, including the promotion of prostitution of a minor, participating in prostitution of a minor, first- and second-degree sexual exploitation of a minor and employing a minor in an obscene act.

"They didn't have trafficking laws, or if they had a trafficking law, it didn't deal with commercial sex ...or didn't distinguish between children and adults," Smith said.

The study also found differing penalties for traffickers in North Carolina courts and the federal standard of 10 years to life. In North Carolina, a conviction for facilitating trafficking or commercial sex trade of a minor carries a sentence of 58-73 months.

The National Association of Attorneys General, made up of 51 top state law enforcement officials from across the U.S., has made stemming the flow of human trafficking a top priority.

"In our understanding of human trafficking, we are today about where we were with the problem of domestic violence about 40 years ago – low levels of awareness, low levels of law enforcement response, almost no services for victims," NAAG President and Washington state Attorney General Rob McKenna told NPR.

Human trafficking is often a misunderstood crime among law enforcement and the general public, and experts aren't sure how many people are victimized annually. McKenna told NPR estimates start at around 100,000 in the U.S. Human trafficking is second only to narcotics as one of the most lucrative and fastest-growing crimes across the globe, according to United Nations and U.S. data⁸.

Mecklenburg

Sex trafficking is typically under identified, under reported and not prosecuted as 'trafficking'. Women arrested for prostitution are often sex trafficking victims, and yet they are arrested and prosecuted rather than the pimps who traffic them. Accurate and meaningful statistics for NC and Mecklenburg are not available as there is no central depository, and only the few cases that are identified, reported and prosecuted are publicized.

US Statutes Related to Human Trafficking

18 USC 1590: Human Trafficking; 18 USC 1591: Sex trafficking of children or by force, fraud, coercion; 18 USC 2421: Transport any person in interstate or foreign commerce for intent to engage in any sex act; 18 USC 2422: Coercion or enticement of any person to travel to engage in any sex act; 18 USC 2423 (a) and (b): Transportation of minors with intent to engage in any sex act; 18 USC 2241(c): Aggravated sexual abuse (crossing state lines to engage in any sex act with a minor); 18 USC 2251: Sexual exploitation of children/ Buying and selling of children. Many others also exist.

NC Statutes Related to Human Trafficking

North Carolina passed a bill in 2007 which makes human trafficking a felony and offers state assistance to victims. Some related statutes are NC 14-43.10: Definitions related to human trafficking; NC 14-43.11: Human Trafficking; NC 14-43.12: Involuntary Servitude; NC 14-42.13: Sexual Servitude.

A Recent high-profile Conviction

October 2009- Sentencing of sex trafficker Jorge Flores-Rojas was sentenced to 24 years in federal prison "Jorge Flores-Rojas pleaded guilty to trafficking two minor girls, including an undocumented Honduran national, for the purpose of causing them to engage in commercial sex acts in Charlotte and the District of Columbia. He also pleaded guilty to transporting an adult woman across state lines to force her to engage in commercial sex acts. The evidence at sentencing showed that he repeatedly sexually and physically abused at least one of his minor victims. Flores-Rojas was sentenced to 24 years in prison for his crimes"⁵.

A Recent high-profile Arrest - Jan 11, 2012

A 40-year-old Mexican national accused of operating a brothel in Charlotte pleaded guilty Wednesday to sex-trafficking charges. Filemon Guzman-Martinez pleaded guilty to transporting individuals in interstate commerce for prostitution, enticing individuals to travel in interstate commerce for prostitution and unlawful transportation of an alien. Guzman-Martinez is accused of operating a residential brothel on Southampton Road in Charlotte.... One of the prostitutes who worked for Guzman-Martinez told law enforcement officers that she had eight to ten customers each day, according to prosecutors. "The defendant stated that the prostitutes, who came from various states in the United States, agreed to stay with him about one week at a time, and he transported them to and from other locations to work as prostitutes," prosecutors said. Read more here:

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2012/01/12/2918440/man-pleads-guilty-to-sex-charges.html#storylink=cpy>.

A look at sex trafficking through the eyes of survivors in NC

An insightful video has been produced by UNC-TV featuring NC survivors of sex trafficking and some of the citizens working to assist them. This can be viewed at <http://video.uncvtv.org/video/2160226445/>

The Charlotte Human Trafficking Task Force

The Charlotte Human Trafficking Task Force is a response team whose mission is to identify and rescue victims, create a coordinated law enforcement system to investigate and prosecute these crimes, and to deliver social, legal and immigration services to human trafficking victims in the Charlotte area.

ICE is a member of this task force, as well as others in Asheville, the Greensboro- Triad area, and Raleigh.

ICE works with its partners at the FBI, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the U.S. Attorney's Office, and local/state law enforcement agencies to identify and shutdown criminal organizations that commit and profit from human trafficking.

The Charlotte Human Trafficking Force was featured on WFAE Radio 90.7 "Charlotte Talks" March 8, 2011. The show may be heard at http://www.wfae.org/wfae/19_100_0.cfm?id=7024&action=display

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, January 11

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day was observed on January 11, 2012. Several awareness events took place in Mecklenburg County. The Charlotte Human Trafficking Task Force held a local press conference in the lobby of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center to help raise community awareness regarding various issues related to human trafficking. Participants included Scott Cheney, Supervisory Special Agent, FBI; Brock Nicholson, Special Agent in Charge, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); Coerte Voorhees Captain, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD); Rona Karacaova, Supervising Attorney, Legal Aid of North Carolina, Inc.'s Battered Immigrant Project; Karen Parker-Thompson, Chief Advancement Officer, United Family Services (UFS) and Anne M. Tompkins, United States Attorney, Western District of North Carolina.

An event at UNC-C sponsored by NC Stop Human Trafficking included a screening of the film "Very Young Girls" followed by a panel featuring Charity Magnuson - Executive Director, NC Stop Human Trafficking; Emily Fitchpatrick - Executive Director, On Eagles Wings Ministry; Sandra Johnson - Executive Director, Triad Ladder of Hope; Antonia "Neet" Childs - Executive Director, Neet's Sweets Incorporated, Juanita Miller - FBI Victim Advocate; Ruth Santana - Legal Services of the Southern Piedmont .

NC Stop Human Trafficking

NC Stop Human Trafficking is the newly formed statewide community member coalition whose mission is to eradicate modern day slavery in all its forms. It works to fight human trafficking on multiple levels following the P.A.V.E. model: Prevention, Advocacy, Victim Services and Education/awareness.

Active member groups are in Charlotte, Wilmington, Greenville, Fayetteville, Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, Burlington, Greensboro and Asheville. Student members are at NC State, UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke University, UNC- Greensboro, and UNC-Charlotte.

Investigation & Resources

FBI The FBI is the primary investigating agency for sex trafficking. It works with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and national victim-based advocacy groups in joint task forces that combine resources and expertise on the issue. Victim Specialists (along with victims specialists from the U.S. Attorney Offices and/or other non-government victim assistance service providers) work with human trafficking victims to not only advise them of their rights as victims but also to assure they get the help they need to address their short-term and long-term needs—like legal and repatriation services, immigration relief, housing, employment, education, job training, and child care.

ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) has primary jurisdiction for investigations involving any foreign national or alien (legal or illegal) or cases with an international border. Each year, children worldwide fall prey to sexual predators. These young victims are left with permanent psychological, physical, and emotional scars. ICE targets and investigates child pornographers, child sex tourists and facilitators, human smugglers and traffickers of minors, criminal aliens convicted of offenses against minors, and those deported for child exploitation offenses who have returned illegally.

Seeking to end this criminal activity and protect children worldwide, ICE developed Operation Predator, an initiative to identify, investigate and arrest child predators and sexual offenders. Operation Predator draws on ICE's unique investigative and enforcement authorities to safeguard children.

More information about ICE HSI Operation Predator can be found at <http://www.ice.gov/predator>.

ICE Charlotte office of investigations: (704) 679-679-6140; National hotline: 1-866 866-DHS DHS-2-ICE; Kelly Harrison, Special Agent, Office: 704-679-6194, kelly.harrison@dhs.gov

FBI Charlotte FBI office: (704)377-9200 Supervisory Special Agent Brock Nicholson; Juanita Miller, FBI Victim Advocate

The Charlotte Human Trafficking Task Force <http://charlottehumantrafficking.org> Amanda Hinnant, Staff Attorney, Legal Aid of North Carolina, Battered Immigrant Project, amandar@legalaidnc.org

NC Stop Human Trafficking, Charlotte Regional Director- Elyse Hamilton charlotte.ncstop@gmail.com

National Trafficking Hotline - The Polaris Project, 1.888.3737.888 (National Human Trafficking Resource Center)

Recommendations:

- An in-depth commission study of the problem of sex trafficking should be undertaken in Mecklenburg County to determine the scope and size of the problem, particularly as it pertains to women and girls.

- Trafficking laws should directly address commercial sex.
- CMPD and the Mecklenburg County Sherriff's office collect and share statistics regarding number of arrests and investigations
- CMPD and the Mecklenburg County Sherriff's office should have mandatory officer training and written protocols based on best practices that mandate and outline procedures for identifying and investigating possible sex trafficking when adults are suspected of or arrested for prostitution.
 - Since Most human trafficking cases start at the local level. Local and state law enforcement officers may unknowingly encounter sex trafficking when they deal with homeless and runaway juveniles; criminal gang activity; crimes involving immigrant children who have no guardians; domestic violence calls; and investigations at truck stops, motels, massage parlors, spas, and strip clubs. Below are some specific recommendations for local law enforcement:

Patrol Officers

- Document suspicious calls and complaints on a police information report, even if the details seem trivial.
- Be aware of trafficking when responding to certain call types, such as reports of foot traffic in and out of a house. Consider situations that seem similar to drug complaints.
- Look closely at calls for assaults, domestic situations, verbal disputes, or thefts. These could involve a trafficking victim being abused and disciplined by a trafficker, a customer having a dispute with a victim, or a client who had money taken during a sex act.
- Locations, such as truck stops, strip clubs, massage parlors, and cheap motels, are havens for prostitutes forced into sex trafficking. Many massage parlors and strip clubs that engage in sex trafficking will have cramped living quarters where the victims are forced to stay.
- When encountering prostitutes and other victims of trafficking, do not display judgment or talk down to them. Understand the violent nature in how they are forced into trafficking, which explains their lack of cooperation. Speak with them in a location completely safe and away from other people, including potential victims.
- Check for identification. Traffickers take the victims' identification and, in cases of foreign nationals, their travel information. The lack of either item should raise concern⁶.

Detectives/Investigators

- Monitor Web sites that advertise for dating and hooking up. Most vice units are familiar with the common sites used by sex traffickers as a means of advertisement.
- Conduct surveillance at motels, truck stops, strip clubs, and massage parlors. Look to see if the girls arrive alone or with someone else. Girls being transported to these locations should raise concerns of trafficking.
- Upon an arrest, check cell phone records, motel receipts, computer printouts of advertisements, and tollbooth receipts. Look for phone calls from the jailed prostitute to the pimp. Check surveillance cameras at motels and toll facilities as evidence to indicate the trafficking of the victim.
- Obtain written statements from the customers; get them to work for you.
- Seek assistance from nongovernmental organizations involved in fighting sex trafficking. Many of these entities have workers who will interview these victims on behalf of the police.
- After executing a search warrant, photograph everything. Remember that in court, a picture may be worth a thousand words: nothing else can more effectively describe a cramped living quarter a victim is forced to reside in.

- Look for advertisements in local newspapers, specifically the sports sections that advertise massage parlors. These businesses should be checked out to ensure they are legitimate and not fronts for trafficking⁶.

References

¹ <http://www.routledgesociology.com/books/Human-Sex-Trafficking-isbn9780415576789> (accessed July 19, 2010).

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Child Victims of Human Trafficking What does the human trafficking of children look like in the United States?

³ The North Carolina connection to human trafficking, WBTV Jan 15, 2010

⁴ Human Trafficking Cases Up 600 Percent In NC – Group Working To Provide Help; September 14, 2011 / Copyright 2011 by WXII12.com <http://www.wxii12.com/news/29183937/detail.html#ixzz1k2VQeYr6>

⁵ Department of Justice Press Release, October 24, 2009

⁶ FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin March 2011; Human Sex Trafficking by Amanda Walker-Rodriguez and Rodney Hill

⁷ Human Trafficking of Immigrant Women, Girls on Rise in North Carolina, Published January 21, 2011; Latino.fonews.com

⁸ Study: N.C. lax on human trafficking Laws don't have bite, advocacy group contends, Published Thursday, December 29, 2011, The Charlotte Post, article by Herbert L. White

ANNUAL WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY: INSPIRE, LEAD, CELEBRATE

The second annual Women's Equality Day hosted by the Women's Advisory Board "Annual Women's Equality Day Celebration: Inspire, Lead, Celebrate." The event was held on August 22, 2011 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 215 community members gathered to network and learn more about the Women's Rights Movements. Erica Bryant, WSOC-TV anchor moderated a panel discussion featuring:

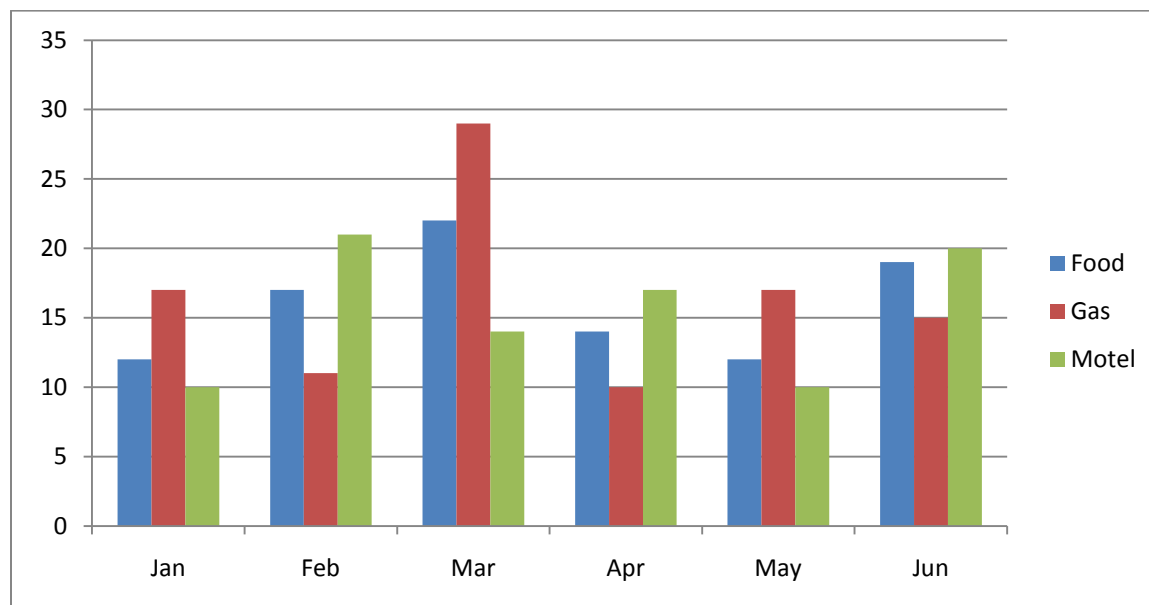
- Women's Legal Rights: Elizabeth J Caviness, Caviness Law Firm, PLLC.
- Mecklenburg's Women's Agenda Past and Present: Betty Chafin Rash, Retired, Former City Council Member, Charlotte.
- Women's Health Status: Cheryl S. Emanuel, MS, CSAPC. Community Health Administrator, Mecklenburg County Health Department.

- Women's Economy Status: Chia-Li (Jolly) Chien, Chief Strategist Officer, Value Growth Institute and Women's Advisory Board Member.

All costs associated with this event were met through sponsorships and the county budget. The event actual spent 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. The continuous financial support of the annual Women's Equality Day event by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners is critical. This facilitates community dialog platform otherwise does not exists. A proposed budget for 2012 is provided in Figure 2 below.

A survey was conducted after the event and the WAB had 51 out of 215 attendees who responded to the survey. Out of the 51 that responded to the survey, 31 attendees also provided comments and a few of those are listed below. Two charts are also provided from the survey:

- "I feel that this event should take place every quarter - for discussion, and membership drive. Maybe on the anniversary (August) keep it as it's been catered - but get together for discussions - maybe this needs to be held on a Saturday afternoon."
- "I would suggest group breakouts that address specific topics. Groups then make recommendations for sub-committees to develop specifics for implementation. "
- "More information on Mentors. Have women there from different fields who would like to mentor. Have time for women to talk about history of the rights of women and the suffering they endured."
- "To support and promote candidates that support women and children issues."
- "Q&A - great! Perhaps have 3-minute limit to make time for more Q&A and less grandstanding."
- "I found everything to be great! I enjoyed the food and this was very good, because some are coming from work and the heavy Hors d'Oeuvres was satisfying, thank you for everything being FREE. Continue to be encouraged in what you are doing...a great job!"



*** How likely are you to attend this event again?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Very likely			46	88.4%
Somewhat likely			4	7.6%
Neutral			1	1.9%
Somewhat unlikely			0	0.0%
Very unlikely			1	1.9%
No Responses			0	0.0%
Totals			52	100%

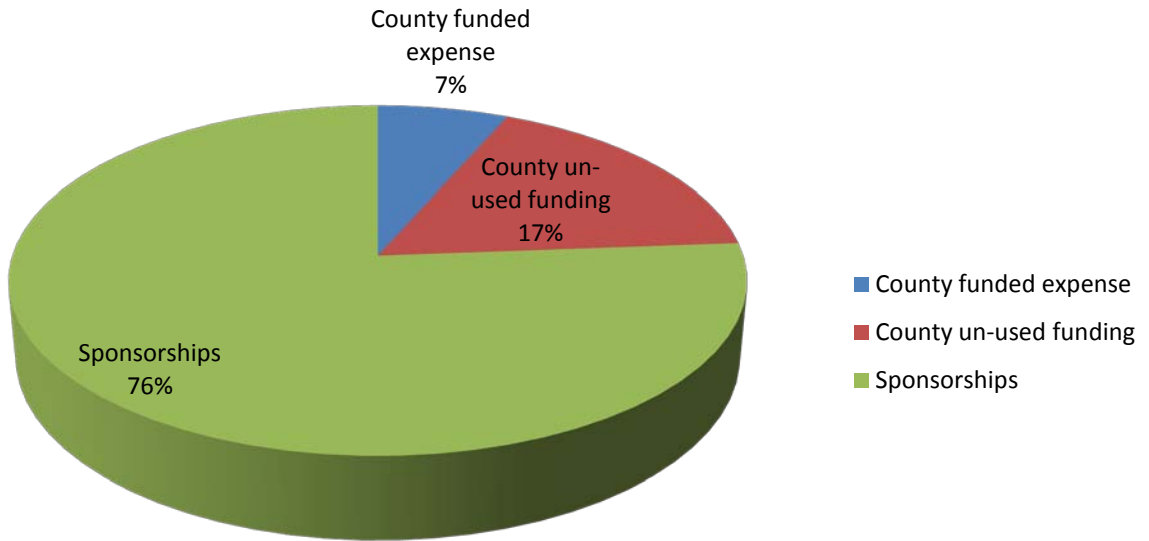
Recommendation:

- To continue to provide funding for the annual Women’s Equality Day Celebration for 2012 at \$1,500.00.

*** What is your level of satisfaction with the event?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Very satisfied			38	73.0%
Somewhat satisfied			11	21.1%
Neutral			2	3.8%
Somewhat dissatisfied			1	1.9%
Very dissatisfied			0	0.0%
No Responses			0	0.0%
Totals			52	100%

Women's Equality Day In-kind and Monetary Revenues & Expenses



County funded expense	\$ 414.25
County un-used funding	\$ 1,085.75
Sponsorships	\$ 4,800.00

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 and children in Mecklenburg County are domestic violence, the economic status of women, and affordable housing/homelessness.

Progress has been made on several of the recommendations provided by the WAB in the 2010 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.
- Continue to support Equal pay in women and people of color in Mecklenburg County.
- Ensure that women have equal representation on appointed committees that impact the economic growth of Mecklenburg County.
- County to encourage organization(s) to apply for special SBA Women centers grant to support new women businesses creation.
- To advocate, support or develop "Trust in Transition for Women Warriors" on the specific needs of female veterans.
- Provide the homeless women with life skills training.
- Provide better medical care for women who are homeless.
- Provide better education programs for those women who are homeless to make them aware of what is currently available to them.
- Acknowledge that women represent the fastest growing number of recently discharged veterans in the U.S. military in order to better anticipate what their needs.⁴
- Examine the issue of female homelessness with the understanding that the needs of female veterans frequently differ from those of the civilian female population.
- Track the number of homeless female veterans that live in Mecklenburg County separately from the number of homeless male veterans.
- Follow the recommendations of the DVAB.
- Support funding opportunities for a supervised visitation/child exchange center.
- Continue support for larger shelter and hotel rooms when the United Family Services shelter is full.
- Support funding opportunities for United Family Services to provide comprehensive victim services throughout the protective order process.
- Increase funding to ensure all citizens in Mecklenburg county seeking elder care and caregiver support services are served.
- Increase awareness of the elderly care and caregiver support programs offered by Mecklenburg county that are available to assist women of low –to-moderate income
- Explore the possibility of providing/funding a resource center (walls or virtual) to assist adults charged with the care of their elders navigate and access resources easily.

- 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.
- Continue to fund programs to promote healthy lifestyles throughout the county.
- Increase accessibility to county health department clinics and other services.
- Promote healthy eating and living habits and encourage everyone to get more exercise.
- In order to more accurately represent the community of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, efforts should be made to ensure equal gender representation across boards and commissions.
- To diversify the applicant pool, a formal statement should be included on the board/commission application and city/county website that encourages equal gender representation.
- A formal hierarchy of boards and commissions should be created to evaluate gender disparity on more prestigious boards/commissions viewed as political stepping stones.
- Increased transparency in the appointment process.
- Annual reports should be conducted to monitor the status of female representation on boards and commissions in the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.
- Inquiries should be made into which boards and commissions have the most influence on policy-makers and local governance. Is there equal gender representation on these boards and commissions?
- Develop a mentoring program for women who are currently serving on boards and commissions to encourage other women to become more actively involved.
- An in-depth commission study of the problem of sex trafficking should be undertaken in Mecklenburg County to determine the scope and size of the problem, particularly as it pertains to women and girls.
- Trafficking laws should directly address commercial sex.
- CMPD and the Mecklenburg County Sherriff's office collect and share statistics regarding number of arrests and investigations
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- Look for advertisements in local newspapers, specifically the sports sections that advertise massage parlors. These businesses should be checked out to ensure they are legitimate and not fronts for trafficking⁶.
- To continue to provide funding for the annual Women's Equality Day Celebration for 2012 at \$1,500.00.

THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP 2011

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