



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

***Women's  
Advisory Board***

**2013 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.

## **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 of the impact on women in Mecklenburg County. Each topic is briefly presented with recommendations for action by the Board of County Commissioners.

The report also includes information on the 2013 Women's Equality Day celebration. This is a significant women-focused event that is hosted by the WAB.

## WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY CELEBRATION

The fourth annual Women's Equality Day hosted by the Women's Advisory Board was entitled "Women's Equality Day Celebration: Race and Privilege: Uniting and Strengthening Women in Mecklenburg County." The event was held on August 26, 2013 at the Levine Museum of the New South in celebration of the Women's Rights Movement from its inception in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 to modern day Mecklenburg County. The aims of this event were to bridge differences and create a space for honest, positive dialogue about our commonalities as women across racial, ethnic, and economic differences.

Mecklenburg County citizens, community members and leaders gathered to network and participate in a workshop and discussion led by Dr. Deborah J. Walker. Pat Cotham, Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, brought greetings to the event and Brigida Mack, WB-TV anchor, served as the Master of Ceremonies.

The majority of the costs for this event were met through generous sponsorships and the remaining costs were funded by the county budget:

### Donations Deposited

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Charlotte Alumni Chapter	\$300
Fashion and Compassion	\$150
John Autry for District 4	\$75
Symmetry Behavioral Health Systems, LLC	\$75
Committee to Elect Ken Harris	\$75
Committee to Elect Nancy B Wiggins	\$75
Moore and Van Allen, PLLC	\$150
The Charlotte Chapter, The Links, INC	\$100
John and Kathi Knier	\$150
Mark Frietch	\$75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,225</b>

## Expenses Paid

Levine Museum of New South	\$320
Delectables by Holly	\$1,458
Plummer Graphics	\$108
TOTAL	\$1,886

### Mecklenburg County Contribution: \$661

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 Celebration play an important role in our community. It facilitates a community dialog platform that would otherwise not exist.

Attendees were asked to complete an event survey to provide feedback on the overall quality of the WED and input on issues of interest to women in Mecklenburg County.

### Key Survey Findings WED 2013:

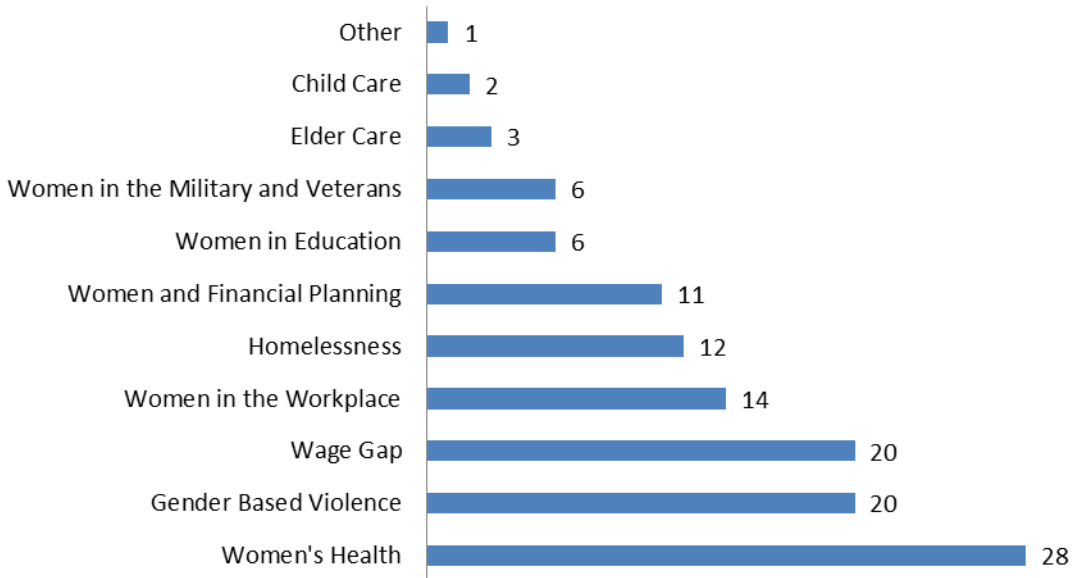
- 42 Respondents
- 95% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the event.
- 100% of respondents said they would come again.
- 100% of respondents said they would recommend this event to friends
- 18 respondents would be interested in serving as a volunteer for the Women's Advisory Board

The survey asked participants what topics that they felt were of great cause to women in Mecklenburg. The results of this survey led the WAB to select the top 5 categories for this year's annual report: Gender Based Violence; Women in the Workplace/Discrimination; Women's Health; Wage Gap; and Women & Homelessness.

Because the Domestic Violence Advisory Board exclusively deals with community issues surrounding gender based violence, we do not cover this topic in our annual report, but instead offer the following link to the DVAB website:

<http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/communitysupportservices/womenscommission/aboutus/advisoryboards/pages/dvab.aspx>

## Top Issues that Impact the Women of Mecklenburg County (according to WED 2013 Survey)



### Recommendation:

- The continuous financial and public support of the annual Women's Equality Day event by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners is critical.

## **WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **Summary of the Problem or Issue**

Over the past 50 years women have made remarkable strides in augmenting their representation within the United States workforce. In 1964, women comprised nearly 40% of the U.S. labor force (up from 32% in 1948). Today, women make up 47% of the North Carolina labor force and are attaining college-level degrees at a faster rate than men (Status of Women in North Carolina, 2013). Yet while this increased participation of females is valuable to the overall workforce, it remains that women are simply not achieving senior management positions at the same rate as their male counterparts (Storrie, 2012). This lack of visibility and participation of women in key decision making roles jeopardizes Charlotte's ability to grow its economy to its full potential, as well as attract and retain key companies to the southeast market.

Furthermore, the influx of females within the labor force has shifted the childcare paradigm for working mothers and families. Research shows that the affordability, availability, and reliability of child care affect women's employment options especially for mothers of younger children. In the long run, this negatively affects the rate of career advancement and wage increases for working mothers (Meyers & Jordan, 2006). The burden of childcare often keeps women out of the workplace or discourages women from opportunities of advancement in the workplace. Perhaps most disturbing is that childcare subsidies within Mecklenburg County are not being received and are underutilized (Hess, Hegewisch, Yi and Williams, 2013)

### **Charlotte, North Carolina**

Female representation within senior managerial and executive positions simply makes good business sense. A Thomson Reuters study found that organizations which are ahead of their peers in breaking the glass ceiling tend to have share prices that outperform their competitors, particularly in difficult market conditions (Chanavat, n.d.). Additionally, a 2007 McKinsey study found that organizations with a higher percentage of women in top management positions had a 17% higher growth in stock prices and a 1.1% larger return on equity (Landis et al, 2011). Yet women are simply not making gains within the leadership positions of Charlotte's business community. Organizations failing to target women in recruiting, development and retention strategies may miss their bottom-line goals (Storrie, 2012).

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR Briefing Paper, 2013) reports that in the Charlotte area women are less likely than men to work in management positions (9% compared with 13%), and that women and men tend to work in different professional fields. The Charlotte area has higher levels of employment in management, business, and financial occupations than the state as a whole, and women in this area are more likely to work in these occupations than in North Carolina overall (15% compared



with 13%). Women in the Charlotte area, however, are less likely than men to work in these fields (18% of employed men work in management, business, and financial occupations). Women in the Charlotte area are also less likely than men to work in computing, architecture, and engineering professions (2% compared with 7%), but more likely to work in education and health care practitioner and technical occupations (17% compared with 4%). Women in the Charlotte area are much more likely than men to work in office and administrative jobs (21% compared with 7%), while men are considerably more likely than women to work in construction, installation, and repair occupations (17% compared with .5%).

In the Charlotte area, as in the state as a whole, the labor force participation rate is much higher for women with dependent children (under age 18) than for all women. Seventy-five percent of mothers with dependent children are in the workforce, which is a higher proportion than for all women but still substantially lower than for men with dependent children (96%). This suggests that women are more likely than men to cut back on employment when they are parents.

In North Carolina, the average fees for year-round, fulltime child care range from \$6,227 (for a four-year-old in a family child care home) to \$9,185 (for an infant in a child care center). By comparison, the average annual tuition and fees for a public four-year college in North Carolina are \$5,685 (Child Care Aware of America, 2012). In the Charlotte area 30,508 children qualify for child care subsidies because their parents earn too little to afford the fees; yet fewer than one in four children receives any subsidized child care in Mecklenburg County (IWPR Briefing Paper, 2013). In many cases, the subsidized childcare may not be useful to women due to its reliability or availability. For example, women who work on weekends or non-traditional working shifts may not have access to affordable childcare.

The lack of affordable child care is a major burden on families in the Charlotte area. In the absence of quality, reasonably priced child care, women may decide to interrupt their tenure in the labor market, reducing their earnings and ability to care for their families and making it difficult to put aside resources for retirement or emergencies. Alternatively, women may have to place their children in low-quality or unreliable care (IWPR Briefing Paper, 2013).

### **BOCC Recommendations**

- Work alongside the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce to encourage and support businesses in their recruitment, training, retention and promotion of female executive staff members.
- Engage key female city and county officials when soliciting companies to relocate to Charlotte.
- Elevate the profile and successes of businesses whose employees includes a higher percentage of women in top management positions.
- Investigate the reasons why eligible mothers and families are not using childcare subsidies.
- Commission organizations like Childcare Resources, Inc. to promote resources and educate constituents on the availability and access to childcare subsidies.
- Ensure alternative affordable childcare is accessible for women who work on weekends or in non-traditional work shifts.

## Priority

Failure to support and encourage female integration within the executive positions of the County's business sector will threaten Charlotte's future economic gains. Female representation in senior leadership positions will not only improve businesses' bottom line, but it will also encourage greater workplace policies that support working mothers and families. Furthermore, the need for affordable and accessible child care options is real. The County must better support working mothers and families by ensuring child care subsidies and adequate child care options are readily available to constituents.

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Landis, D., Predolin, J., Lewis, J., Brousseau, K., & Slan-Jerusalim (2011, November). "In case of emergency, break glass ceiling. The Korn Ferry Institute." Retrieved from [http://stage.kornferryinstitute.com/files/pdf1/In\\_case\\_of\\_emergency\\_break\\_glass\\_ceiling.pdf](http://stage.kornferryinstitute.com/files/pdf1/In_case_of_emergency_break_glass_ceiling.pdf).

Storrie, M. (2012) "The New Business Imperative: Recruiting, Developing and Retaining Women in the Workplace." Retrieved from <http://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/executive-development/about/~media/3A15E5EC035F420690175C21F9048623.pdf>

# WAGE GAP

## Summary of the problem or issue

Despite great strides in education, women in Charlotte-Mecklenburg continue to earn less than men even when working in the same jobs requiring the same level of skill, education and expertise. Data obtained from the National Partnership for Women and Families states women in the Charlotte area are paid 76 cents for every dollar paid to men in the area, amounting to a yearly gap of \$11,906 between men and women who work full time.

The gender wage gap exists in all sectors at all levels of employment and has a significant economic impact on our community. According to an economic impact evaluation sponsored by the Women and Girls Research Alliance at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte, closing the wage gap in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County would increase the county's tax revenue by \$160 million, and expand economic output by \$3.1 billion (Campbell, 2008). Moreover, this increase in women's earnings is estimated to create 28,887 new jobs, increasing overall earnings to Mecklenburg households by \$1.1 billion.

On an annual basis, the wage gap represents an average lost income of \$12,000 per year, slightly less than the average cost of having one pre-school- aged child and one school-aged child in day care (\$15,089)<sup>1</sup> and slightly higher than the average annual rent (\$8,856)<sup>2</sup> charged for an apartment in Mecklenburg County.

What factors contribute to the continuing existence of the wage gap? Over the past 10 years, studies have been conducted by many organizations including The Institute for Women's Policy Research, The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit at UNC Charlotte and the American Association of University Women (AAUW). A recent report by the AAUW concludes that when controlling for multiple factors a wage gap of 5% difference in the earnings of men and women exists one year after graduation<sup>3</sup>. Those factors include educational attainment, GPA, institution attended, occupation, employment sectors and industries, region, number of years on the job, workplace flexibility, age, race and ethnicity, marital status and number of children. If none of these factors explains away the gender wage gap, what does and what can be done to help close the gender wage gap?

A number of factors likely to contribute to the gender wage gap include discrimination in pay, hiring and

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<sup>1</sup> 2010 Average Annual Fees for Children in Child Care Centers. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit Data Portal. [www.womenssummit.uncc.edu](http://www.womenssummit.uncc.edu)

<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Chamber of Commerce. <http://charlottechamber.com/quality-of-life/livability-homes-for-any-lifestyle>

<sup>3</sup> "The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap, 2012 Edition" American Association of University Women. <http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/upload/simpletruthaboutpaygap1.pdf>

promotions, occupational segregation and the lack of Federal legislation that would prohibit wage discrimination and provide funding for education, regulation, enforcement and restitution.

**Can this issue be addressed by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners? If so, how?**

- Conduct a pay equity audit at the County level and eliminate pay disparity between male-dominated and female-dominated jobs requiring comparable levels of education and expertise
- Improve transparency in salaries of County Employees
- Support Equal Pay Legislation at all levels
- Support initiatives aimed at educating women in negotiation skills
- Identify and support women’s education in non-traditional, male- dominated fields
- Support initiatives, organizations and businesses that educate the community about the impact of the gender wage gap

**Priority**

The gender wage gap has tremendous economic and social consequences for our community. In taking a leadership role in efforts to close the wage gap for women in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Region, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners can join the ranks of the local, state and federal decision makers who support initiatives at the forefront of ensuring “Equal Pay for Equal Work.”

**References**

Campbell, H. S. (2008). “Women, Work and Wages in Mecklenburg County: An Economic Impact Assessment February 2008.” Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit.

<http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/upload/simpletruthaboutpaygap1.pdf>

<http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/pay-equity-and-discrimination>

[www.womenssummit.uncc.edu](http://www.womenssummit.uncc.edu)

# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Summary of the problem or issue

The Mecklenburg County Women's Health Advocacy Commission reported on various concerns which arose from poor access to healthcare for women and girls in Mecklenburg County for the 2012 fiscal year. Constraints were, in part, due to lack of proper health insurance coverage, inefficient transportation and ever-increasing healthcare costs. These were major barriers for women to gain access to the most basic healthcare, and especially for women suffering from chronic illnesses.

Findings were based mainly on 2009-2010 data available from the US Census Bureau, the Harvard University School of Medicine and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Teen pregnancy continues to be a significant challenge in the community. In addition, we found that Alzheimer's disease and depression were more common in women than in men and the major cause of death was cancer. The study also revealed that certain chronic illnesses were more manageable, even potentially preventable, if adopting a consistent healthy life style that includes healthy, eating habits and regular exercise.

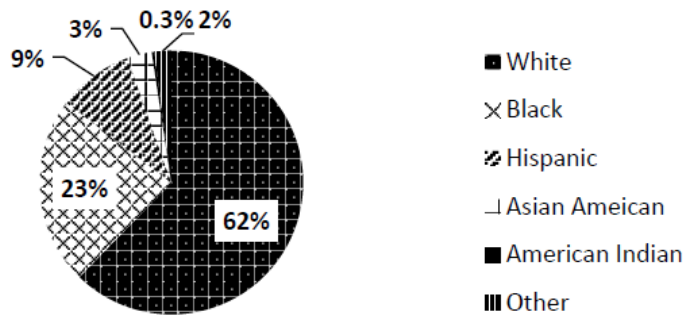
According to the Mecklenburg County Health Department (2010)<sup>ii</sup>, the top 10 illnesses that affect county residents are as follows:

Disease	Mecklenburg County	North Carolina	United States
Cancer	1	1	2
Heart Disease	2	2	1
Alzheimer's Disease	3	6	6
Stroke	4	4	4
COPD	5	3	3
Unintentional Injury	6	5	5
Kidney	7	8	9
Influenza/Pneumonia	8	9	8
Diabetes	9	7	7
Septicemia	10	*	*

According to the 2006-2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance, obesity is less evident in women than in men. However, weight management is the most urgent preventative health measure in both genders and begins with a good plan, motivation, government and community support, programs and resources made available to women.

A recent study indicates that insurance is a predominant issue in NC, particularly within the immigrant female population. Just 53% of women, age 18–64 in North Carolina have coverage, compared to 82% of native-born women of the same age range. The proportion of immigrant women and men with health insurance coverage in the state is much lower than in the nation as a whole. In the United States, 65% of immigrant women and 57% of immigrant men have health insurance coverage (Figure 2) <sup>vi</sup>

**Figure 1. Distribution of Women and Girls by Race and Ethnicity in the Charlotte Metropolitan Area, All Ages, 2008–2010**



Basic Demographic Statics for Women and Girls			
	Charlotte Metropolitan Area	North Carolina	United States
<b>Total Population</b>	1,701,239	9,561,558	309,349,689
<b>Number of Women and Girls All Ages</b>	873,723	4,905,216	197,294,247
<b>Median Age of All Women and Girls</b>	36	38	39
<b>Population of Women Age 65 and Older</b>	12%	15%	15%
<b>Distribution of Women Girls by Race and Ethnicity, All Ages</b>			
<b>White, Not Hispanic</b>	62%	65%	64%
<b>Black Not Hispanic</b>	23%	22%	13%

<b>Hispanic</b>	9%	8%	16%
<b>Asian American, Not Hispanic</b>	3%	2%	5%
<b>American Indian Not Hispanic</b>	03%	1%	1%
<b>Other, Not Hispanic</b>	2%	2%	2%
<b>Proportion of Women and Girls Who Are Foreign-Born All Ages</b>	10%	7%	15%
<b>Proportion of Women Who Are Married Aged 18 and Older</b>	51%	50%	49%

**Can this issue be addressed by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners? If so, how?**

The recommendation to the BOCC is to help ease women’s health care by working to improve overall health care in the county by making it affordable and setting in place more regulations and supervision of the service providers.

- Continue improving access to affordable health care in Mecklenburg
- Additional regulation and oversight for service providers
- Target Nutritional Education 18+ demographics to lower obesity rates in adults and children
- Advocate for increasing Social Services Block Grant, assisting public programs benefiting Alzheimer patients and their families

**Priority**

The 2012 State of the County Health Report indicates that Healthcare costs in Mecklenburg County continue to grow, adding major burdens and stress to constituents that are already affected by economic challenges. The Affordable Care Act, changes in Medicaid enrollment and allowable billing for prevention services will most likely impact hospitals and providers as well as the healthcare safety net. It has been reported locally that planning is being set in place to address these issues. However, readiness, capacity and effect are yet to be effectively implemented.

**References**

Census.gov 2010. Web. Jul. 2012.

[http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10\\_DP/DPDP1/0500000US37119](http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10_DP/DPDP1/0500000US37119)

<sup>i</sup>Mabry, E Winters. MD. “Mecklenburg County: 2012 State of the County Health Report.” (2012): 12-44 Print.

<sup>iii</sup>Stabley, Susan. “Charlotte to end Gold Rush Orange Line service July 1.” *Bizjournals.com. Charlotte Business Journal.* 25 June 2013. Web. 25 Nov.

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<sup>iv</sup>Hartmann, Heidi, President and Barbara Gault. Vice-President "The Institute for Women's Policy Research." *Status of Women in North Carolina 2013: Continued Progress and Persistent Challenges* (2013) 39-41 figures 1 and 2. Print.



# Homelessness

## Summary of the problem or issue

Homelessness occurs when an individual or family lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Oftentimes, homeless individuals are forced to sleep in places not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, in a shelter or transitional housing locations, including hotels or motels.

In January 2013 the County's point-in-time count identified 2,418 homeless individuals in Mecklenburg County including 1,411 women and children – or 58 % of the homeless population. Furthermore, inconsistencies in defining homelessness at the federal, state and local level result in the inconsistent deployment and access to services for homeless women and families.

## Charlotte

Though homelessness remains a chronic problem within Mecklenburg County, several efforts implemented over the past several years have helped to reduce the number of homeless individuals. Launched in 2009, federal Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) was funded by the American Reinvestment Act to alleviate the recession in 2009. The federal government appropriated \$1.5 billion nationally to be used for rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention. The city of Charlotte received \$1.9 million in federal funding to be used to alleviate homelessness in the local community over a three-year period. The city partnered with Crisis Assistance Ministry, a local nonprofit agency, and the Workforce Initiative for Supportive Housing formed Project HOPE. Volunteers, social workers, and housing coordinators placed homeless households in affordable, adequate housing. The program was funded in Charlotte-Mecklenburg between 2009 and 2012 and provided services for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing efforts.

Over a three-year period, 1,353 total individuals and 717 households were served in Mecklenburg County. Up to 35 percent more women were served than men. While the majority of participants entered the program literally homeless, upon exit from the program in 2012, the majority of participants were stably housed, and no participants met the definition of homeless. By providing stable housing options, HPRP programs greatly aid in the prevention of future homelessness. HPRP prevents homelessness by quickly re-housing homeless individuals and families, giving rental assistance, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and hotel vouchers. The rapid rehousing program also provides much needed ancillary services such as outreach, credit repair, and legal services.

### *Local Facts about Homelessness:*

- The January 2013 point-in-time count identified 2,418 homeless individuals in Mecklenburg County including 744 children, 667 women, and 1,007 men.
- Homelessness occurs when an individual or family lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

- Homelessness is often caused by the inability to pay for housing.
- Some women become homeless as a result of domestic violence
- The homeless population sleeps in homeless shelters, transitional housing, cars, parks, sidewalks, and streets.
- The number of unsheltered homeless women in Mecklenburg County declined by 75.9% from 2009 to 2013.
- Persons meeting the definition of Imminent Risk of Homeless as of January 30, 2013: 681 adult men, 103 adult women, 52 children=836 at risk of imminent homelessness. Includes 29 veterans.
- Based on the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness, CMS served 4,770 homeless children for the 2012-2013 school year.

It is evident that services focusing on the most chronically homeless are proving effective. Additional systematic support should be offered to children and families captured within the bandwidth of the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness.

#### **BOCC Recommendations**

- Support 'housing first' initiatives that target children and women populations
- Support HUD priority for rapid re-housing, diversion, and ending chronic homelessness
- Connect school social workers to existing support resources (Second Harvest, Urban Ministry, etc.) for children and families living in emergency/seasonal and transitional housing or who are unsheltered

#### **Priority:**

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners can remain vigilant and consistent in addressing this problem to reduce homelessness, especially for children.

#### **References**

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2013. UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. *Homelessness and Rapid Re-Housing in Mecklenburg County Report*.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, we find that progress has been made on several of the recommendations provided by the WAB from former Annual Reports; however, this year's report indicates continued challenges. We recognize the significant efforts of the Mecklenburg BOCC 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:

- Promote equality in the workplace with regard to recruitment, training, promotion, and wages
- Promote flexibility in the workplace to enable women to work and be care givers
- Providing childcare especially to women of low income and low education (and investigation into the reasons why more low-income mothers do not take advantage of childcare subsidies)
- Conduct a pay equity audit at the County level and eliminate pay disparity between male-dominated and female-dominated jobs requiring comparable levels of education and expertise
- Improve transparency in salaries of County Employees
- Support Equal Pay Legislation at all levels
- Support initiatives aimed at educating women in negotiation skills
- Identify and support women's education in non-traditional, male- dominated fields
- Support initiatives, organizations and businesses that educate about the impact of the gender wage gap
- 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
- Support 'housing first' initiatives that target children and women populations
- Support HUD priority for rapid re-housing, diversion, and ending chronic homelessness
- Connect school social workers to existing support resources (Second Harvest, Urban Ministry, etc.) for children and families living in emergency/seasonal and transitional housing or who are unsheltered
- Funding for the WAB Annual Women's Equality Day Celebration at \$2,500

## THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP 2013

- Stephanie Gryder: Chairperson
- Linda Webb: Vice Chair
- Melissa Duscha: Secretary
- Sandra Johnson: Parliamentarian
- Jaclyn Blair
- Heather Blake
- Shanita Britton
- Jaime Daniell
- Beverly Hunt
- Yvonne McJetters
- Mariana de Jesus Nunez
- Nancy Plummer
- Cynthia Pride
- *Peter Safir: Community Support Services Staff*