



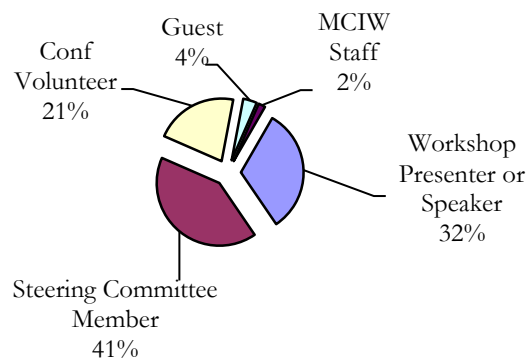
Summary Results of Women Moving Forward Conference 2017

Choice Research Associates conducted an evaluation of the Women Moving Forward Pre-Release Conference at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) in Jessup, Maryland on April 8, 2017. The evaluation surveyed 93 women from MCIW¹ and 56 non-MCIW attendees, including members of the steering committee, presenters, speakers, and conference volunteers.²

Characteristics of MCIW Attendees (N=93):

- Age:** 36 years old (ranging from 20 to 63)
- Race:** 39% Black; 2% Hispanic; 49% White, 9% Other
- Children:** 81% have Children;
Of those with Children: Average 2.5 Children (range 1 to 6)
Of those, 1.68 children (range 0 to 6) are under 18 years old
- Marital Status:** 61% Never Married;
2% Never Married but Lived with Someone as Married;
12% Married; and 25% Divorced, Separated or Widowed
- Returning to:** Baltimore City 23%; Baltimore & Surrounding Counties 25%; Eastern Shore 17%; Western MD 15%, Southern MD 6%, DC Metro Area 9%, Out of State 4%

Figure 1: Non-MCIW Attendees – Primary Role (N=56)



In addition to employment preparedness, money management, parenting, and successful reentry strategies, conference activities included: Keynote speaker Tonier “Neen” Cain, three workshop breakout sessions (covering a total of 14 workshop topics), lunch, an improv show, line dancing, and Chris Wilson as the Closing Speaker. Attendees were also provided a variety of handouts in their conference bag, and upon release they were to receive a USB flash drive containing a variety of resource materials. Evaluation results of these activities are below.

Workshop Topic	N ³	Rank	Scale Score ⁴	Workshop Topic	N ³	Rank	Scale Score ⁵
Interview to Income*** <i>Presenter: Fred Chandler and Interviewers</i>	59	4+	4.53	Health & Chronic Illness Mgmt** <i>Presenters: Alisha Saulsbury, Bronnyn Hunter, Aliya Weberman, & Susan Shin</i>	26	9	4.42
Legislative & Community Issues <i>Presenters: Maryland Commission for Women & Out For Justice</i>	16	12	4.16	Can't Find a Job? Entrepreneurship!** <i>Presenters: Gerald Grimes, Thomas Luginbill, & Michelle Sullivan</i>	35	2	4.67
Creating a Foundation for Your House <i>Presenters: Jocelyn Alexander & Thalia Bishop</i>	18	11	4.21	Painting Your Walls the Color of Money** <i>Presenter: Michelle Singletary</i>	21	7	4.50
Building Within Your Budget <i>Presenters: Lee Bachu & Robin Nelson</i>	18	1	4.69	P.A.R.E.N.T.S & Goal Digging <i>Presenter: Marcy Jackson</i>	31	10	4.28
Wiring 21 st Century-Comm & Tech <i>Presenters: Colbi Alexander, Chris Comer & Tony Shropshire</i>	17	8	4.44	Housing, Utilities, and Other General Resources <i>Presenters: Josh Pedersen, Michelle Kelly, Elizabeth Morse, & Katherine Coates</i>	33	6	4.51
MD Probation and Parole & District Attorney** <i>Presenters: William Stevens, Lisa Thomas, Sara Nurse & Sonya Gomes</i>	36	3	4.54	Stocking Your Kitchen – Transportation & Food** <i>Presenters: Clayton Roberts, Vanessa Bright, & Latine Halstead</i>	21	13	4.03
Mediation and Legal Affairs <i>Presenters: Rodney Mitchell, Brandon Booth & Leah Berry</i>	8	4+	4.53	Self-Care - You're on the Second Level Now! <i>Presenter: Carol Overton</i>	18	14	3.91

** Topic offered in 2 breakout sessions *** Topic offered at all 3 breakout sessions + Ranking Tied

Workshop Topics: Generally speaking, workshops were well received by all conference attendees, as evidenced in the table above. The top three ranking workshops was “Building Within Your Budget”, followed by “Can’t Find a Job? Entrepreneurship!” and “MD Probation and Parole & District Attorney”.

Among the MCIW attendees,⁵ 28% stated the workshops/speakers were what they liked best about the conference, while 3% of the participants identified the workshops/speakers as their least favorite activity. Suggested future workshop topics were provided by 33 (35%) of MCIW attendees, including substance abuse and recovery/addiction, transitional housing, and career/job related topics. Women also mentioned mentoring, stress management, health care and record expungement. Of all participants, 20% felt the workshops were not long enough.

Practice Employment Interviews: The practice employment interviews were provided in all 3 workshop sessions and during this workshop, interviewers provided suggestions on how to improve interviewing abilities, including non-verbal cues. Thirty-nine women attended this workshop, and in their evaluations, over 90% of attendees agreed:

- They learned something in the practice interview that they could use in a real interview
- They would be able to use what they learned in a real interview
- They were more confident about their ability to interview and were better prepared for a real interview.

Speakers: The keynote speaker, workshop presenters, and closing session speaker were also well received. Of the non-MCIW attendees who responded to this question, 95% agreed or strongly agreed that the keynote speaker and 78% felt the closing speaker should be included in future conferences. Among the MCIW attendees, 100% were satisfied or very satisfied with the keynote and workshop speakers.

Speakers and workshop presenters also provided feedback on their conference experience and most (over 87%) agreed there was sufficient time to cover the material and to answer questions from the participants. 100% said they would like to return and participate in the WMF conference in the next year.

Lessons Learned

Among the MCIW women who completed this section of the survey, most (100%) reported that they felt more confident about returning to their community, and were more hopeful about their future as a result of attending the conference. The majority (over 90%) also reported that, as a result of attending the conference, they were more confident about how to manage money, substance abuse and mental health treatment programs, family reunification, ways to improve their overall wellness, and other resources available to them once released. In addition, 96% of participants advised they know how to explain their incarceration in a job interview.

When asked what they had learned that day, MCIW attendees stated:

- *“How to “sell” myself at an interview”*
- *“How to complete my parole successfully”*
- *“To be ready to accept change”*
- *“I learned a lot about health, mental illness”*
- *“Info about pantries, Goodwill services”*
- *“Making plans, have goals”*
- *“Self-care stress relievers”*
- *“Manage money”*
- *“Breathing exercises help with anxiety”*
- *“That I can do better for myself”*
- *“Where to go for health insurance”*
- *“How to start a business”*
- *“Ways to fix my credit”*
- *“Never ever give up”.*

Conference Feedback

Overall, the MCIW attendees were happy with the conference – 100% were satisfied or very satisfied. In addition, 10% of attendees when asked what they liked best about the conference said “Everything” while 17% said the people they met at the conference. The majority (58 of 93) of MCIW attendees didn’t indicate there was anything they disliked about the conference or stated they liked everything. For what they least liked about the conference, of the 60 who did respond, 37% noted that there was not enough time and 3% wanted additional resources that were not available (e.g., by topic or geographic area). Additionally, 99% of the MCIW attendees reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that people at the conference treated them with respect.

Of all participants -

- 97% agreed or strongly agreed the conference was well organized; and
- 99% said the conference should be held annually.

MCIW attendees were also asked how they would use the information provided at the conference:

- *“I will take the information I learned to strive to be a better person in the community”.*
- *“Use it every day”.*
- *“Work hard and focus”.*
- *“Taking advantage of the information I learned about and being determined in making something positive out of it”*

199% (93 of 94) of MCIW attendees completed an evaluation form.

² Percentages provided throughout only include those respondents who answered the questions and are thus not necessarily percentages of all attendees. This includes MCIW Attendees and Non-MCIW Attendees.

³“N” is the number of people in attendance at that particular workshop who completed the questions on the evaluation form.

⁴ Workshop Topic scale scores are the average scores of two scales. The first scale contained responses by MCIW attendees and combined the average score for two questions: 1) the workshop topic was useful and 2) future conferences should include this topic. The second scale contained responses from non-MCIW attendees and averaged three questions: 1) the workshop presented was accurately described, 2) the instructor was prepared and knowledgeable, and 3) the subject matter was communicated successfully.

⁵ Questions concerning what MCIW attendees liked best and liked least about the conference were open ended questions to allow for maximum feedback. Of those who completed these questions, the data were recoded so that one activity was selected for each respondent. In many cases this was the first activity listed, or the respondent included a qualifying statement that made it clear which was the most liked/least liked aspect of the conference.