



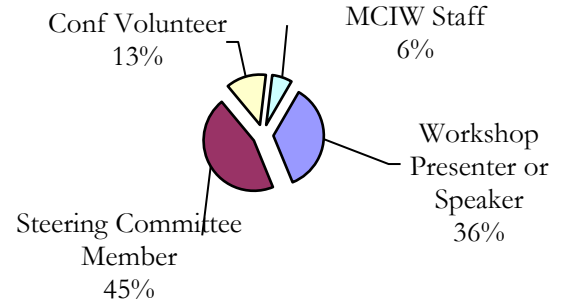
Summary Results of Women Moving Forward Conference 2023

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 October 21, 2023. The evaluation surveyed 91 women from MCIW¹ and 31 non-MCIW attendees, including members of the steering committee, presenters, speakers, and conference volunteers.²

Characteristics of MCIW Attendees (N=91):

- Age: 35 years old (ranging from 20 to 65)
Race: 53% Black; 1% Hispanic; 1% Asian, 40% White, 5% Other
Children: 75% have Children;
Of those with Children: Average 2.5 Children (range 1 to 6)
Of those, 1.70 children (range 0 to 4) are under 18 years old
Marital Status: 62% Never Married;
7% Never Married but Lived with Someone as Married;
11% Married; and 20% Divorced, Separated or Widowed
Returning to: Baltimore City 37%; Baltimore & Surrounding Counties 19%; Eastern Shore 12%; Western MD 13%, Southern MD 1%, DC Metro Area 13%, Out of State 5%

Figure 1: Non-MCIW Attendees – Primary Role (N=31)



The theme this year was Plan Your Best Hand; Your Journey Has Just Begun. Conference activities included a keynote address by Donna Bruce on restoration and healing, three workshops conducted throughout the day (covering a total of 6 topics), and a lunch panel including three returning citizens who provided experience and advice on their journey. The conference concluded with two “Walking In My Shoes” speakers sharing their successful transition from prison to home. Evaluation results of these activities are below.

Table with 4 columns: Workshop Topic, N, Rank, Scale Score. Rows include topics like 'Stacking the Deck on My Healthcare', 'Embracing Self Doubt', 'Me & My P.O. (Probation/Parole Officer)', etc.

Workshop Topics: Generally speaking, workshops were well received by all conference attendees, as evidenced in the table above. The top three ranking workshops were “Me and My PO”, “Are My Finances and Credit a Stacked Deck?” and followed by “Playing My Best Hand on Social Media”.

1 Only available to women who had been incarcerated for over 10 years.

Speakers: The keynote, lunch plenary panel, workshop presenters, and closing session speakers were also well received. Of the non-MCIW attendees who responded to this question, 90% agreed that the speakers and workshop presenters were prepared and knowledgeable. 100% agreed that a morning keynote, the closing keynote speakers, and the lunch panel discussion should be included in future conferences. Among the MCIW attendees, 100% were satisfied with the speakers and workshop presenters.

Speakers and workshop presenters also provided feedback on their conference experience and 82% agreed there was sufficient time to cover the material. Most (over 91%) 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 (99%) reported that they felt more confident about returning to their community, were more hopeful about their future, and 100% were ready to develop their re-entry plan of action. The majority (over 94%) also reported that as a result of attending the conference, they learned useful coping skills, better understand their healthcare options, and are more aware of resources available to them once released.

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

- *“How to move forward with new life after release.”*
- *“I can still go back to my career with a felony.”*
- *“My past doesn't define my present.”*
- *“PO [Probation Officers] are part of my support.”*
- *“Use my resources when get released.”*
- *“Believing in myself and getting rid of the self-doubt.”*
- *“Checking [my] credit score has no effect on credit.”*
- *“Build a support system.”*
- *“Get therapy when I leave for Post-Prison PTSD.”*
- *“How reentry effects everyone in my life.”*
- *“Set goals and know that my life isn't pointless.”*
- *“That there are people that want to help.”*
- *“To make sure my home plan is solid.”*
- *“Be more compassionate with myself.”*
- *“Be successful in any, and everything (embrace my journey).”*
- *“Inspiration from people who have been in my shoes.”*
- *“Never count myself out.”*
- *“You can overcome anything (change is possible).”*

Conference Feedback

Overall, the MCIW attendees were happy with the conference – 100% were satisfied or very satisfied. In addition, 4% of attendees when asked what they liked best about the conference said “Everything” while 9% said the people they met at the conference. The majority (68 of 91) 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 23 who did respond, 21% noted that there was not enough time, while 12% felt there was too much time spent on a particular topic, and 2% wanted additional resources that were not available (e.g., by topic or geographic area). Additionally, 100% of the MCIW attendees reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that people at the conference treated them with respect.

Of all participants -

- 100% 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:

- *“Be more prepared. Stay focused on my goal and what I'm trying to do.”*
- *“I will approach my PO with a better attitude; I will do better with my finances; I will learn to trust myself and rely on my own thoughts.”*
- *“Keep pushing through life and know it's going to be a struggle to get where I wanna be in life.”*
- *“Start working on my goals and triggers now and when I get home, I will know how to handle things different.”*
- *“Use all my resources, know that I am not alone”*
- *“Will implement change in my life when I leave by putting things in motion.”*
- *“The people I met, their stories, and the inspiration and hope they gave me.”*

¹100% (91 of 91) 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. Scale responses ranged from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), thus higher values indicate a more positive response.

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.