

Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour
Charles County
College of Southern Maryland – La Plata, Maryland
May 23, 2017, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hosted by the Charles County Commission for Women, the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour traveled to the beautiful campus of the College of Southern Maryland La Plata where a crowd of almost 30 people gathered to talk to the Maryland Commission for Women about the concerns of women and girls in their community.

The evening began with welcoming remarks by Angela Owens, Treasurer of the Charles County Commission for Women, followed by an open forum on the challenges facing women in this southern Maryland region.

The attendees at the forum included individuals and representatives of women's and community advocacy organizations. They identified a wide range of issues and challenges for the women of Charles County, selected those they thought were most important, and discussed possible remedies.

The attendees listed a total of 23 challenges facing the women of Charles County. Each participant was given five "votes" to place beside the issues they thought were most important. Two issues tied for first place, two for second and two for third, so the group identified its top six issues, and then discussed actions that could be taken to address those six issues:

1. Need for better paying jobs in the county, jobs that pay a living wage

- a. Change the image of Southern Maryland
- b. Locate the headquarters of one of the state government's agencies here
- c. Locate the headquarters of one of the federal government's agencies here
- d. Provide tax incentives to encourage businesses to locate in Charles County and to hire people who live in Charles County
- e. Encourage balanced economic growth to encourage maintain the locally-owned small businesses while attracting large employers as well.
- f. Increase the number degrees offered at the College of Southern Maryland so that students are offered preparation for careers where there are job opportunities.

1. Need for more programs for youth including life skills training and healthy relationships

- a. Establish comprehensive programs for youth
- b. Provide mentors for youth in the schools
- c. Offer life-skills training for youth
- d. Get parents more involved
- e. Provide more grant funds for non-profit organizations
- f. Develop transportation for before and after-school programs
- g. Establish a county government Office on Youth

2. Lack of Resources for Women Veterans including housing & services for those with children

- a. Provide funding
- b. Develop assistance with the transition from military to civilian life
- c. Locate veterans service provider agencies to Charles County

2. Lack of behavioral health services for drug abuse and other mental health issues.

Create a coordinated service system, from intake to discharge, regardless of Insurance coverage

3. Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

- a. Establish a “one-stop-shop” family justice center that provides multiple services to victims of family violence all in one place
- b. Enact tougher laws
- c. Eliminate the use of peace orders; issue protective orders consistently
- d. More funding for safe havens/shelters for victims and families
- e. Examine the provisions of the International Violence Against Women Act and implement those sections that would apply to Maryland

3. Equal Pay for Equal Work

- a. Require transparency in employee salary information
- b. Organize more advocacy on this issue

The chart on the next page lists all the issues that were identified during the course of this public forum and shows the number of votes each one received from those in attendance as they considered the priority level of each issue in comparison to the others.

Number of Votes	Issue
14	Need for better paying jobs in the county, jobs that pay a living wage
14	Need for more programs for youth, including life skills training and healthy relationships
9	Lack of behavioral health services for drug abuse and other mental health issues
9	Lack of resources for women veterans including housing & services for those with children
7	Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
7	Equal pay for equal work
6	Affordable Housing
6	Transportation and traffic congestion
5	Need for women to mentor and support other women
4	Access to higher education for all-income families and the debt resulting from student loans
4	Lack of a NICU and other health service provision in Southern Maryland
3	Resource inequities across the state
3	Women caring for elderly parents (“daughter care”)
1	Over-taxing and over-regulating businesses in Maryland
1	Lack of affordable child care
0	Need for trauma-informed training for service providers
0	Sex trafficking
0	Eligibility levels are too low for benefits such as TCA and child care
0	Negative images of women as portrayed in the media
0	Bullying in the schools
0	Single mothers – difficulty accessing resources
0	Need to keep older school facilities up to date
0	Incarcerated women
93	23 Issues

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Charles County: Voices of Maryland Women

Photo Album







