



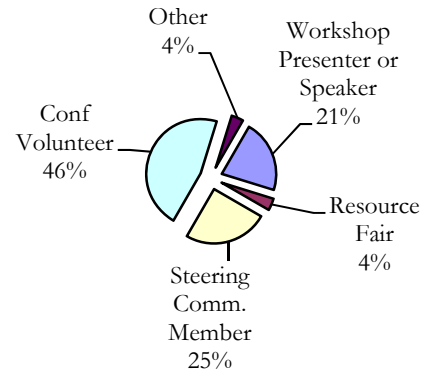
Summary Results of Women Moving Forward Conference 2013

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 26, 2013. The evaluation surveyed 134 women from MCIW¹ and 28 non-MCIW attendees, including members of the steering committee, presenters, speakers, employers, resource fair participants, and conference volunteers.²

Characteristics of MCIW Attendees (N=134):

- Age:** 36 years old (ranging from 20 to 68)
- Race:** 48% Black; 5% Hispanic; 42% White, 5% other
- Children:** 79% have Children;
Of those with Children: Average 2.8 Children (range 1 to 6)
Of those, 2.5 children (range 1 to 8) are under 18 years old
- Marital Status:** 59% Never Married;
9% Never Married but Lived with Someone as Married;
13% Married; and 19% Divorced, Separated or Widowed
- Returning to:** Baltimore City 32%; Baltimore & Surrounding Counties 18%; Eastern Shore 10%; Western MD 11%, Southern MD 7%, DC Metro Area 9%, Out of State 13%

Figure 1: Non-MCIW Attendees – Primary Role (N=28)



Conference activities included: Keynote speaker Christopher Wilson, two breakout sessions (covering 16 workshop topics), a resource fair (which included a scavenger hunt, 2 mini-workshops), lunch, a fashion show and motivational dance performance, practice job interviews, and a plenary session of formerly incarcerated women sharing their re-entry success stories. Evaluation results of these activities are below.

Workshop Topics: Generally speaking, workshops were well received by all conference attendees, as evidenced in the table below. The three ranking workshops were “Credit matters and Entrepreneurship” and “My Life, My Needs, My Journey” (tied for 1st), followed closely by “Counting Dollars and Sense” and “Post-Release Legal Issues”. Among the MCIW attendees,³ 8% stated the workshops/speakers were what they liked best about the conference, while 9% of the participants identified the workshops as their least favorite activity.

Workshop Topic – Breakout Session I	N [#]	Rank	Scale Score ⁵	Workshop Topic – Breakout Session II	N [#]	Rank	Scale Score ⁵
# No More Drama Mama! <i>Presenters: Teresa Vogt and Alfreda Robinson-Dankins</i>	23	13	4.02	#1 My Life, My Needs, My Journey <i>Presenter: Jocelyn Tate</i>	10	1	4.80
#2 Credit Matters and Entrepreneurship <i>Presenter: Lorie Woodruff</i>	20	1	4.80	#2 Healing from Trauma <i>Presenter: Bea Zipperle, LCSW-C</i>	20	8	4.53
#3 Post-Release Legal Issues <i>Presenter: Rodney Mitchell</i>	20	3	4.75	#3 Working Together to Stop Domestic Violence <i>Presenter: Jocelyn Skinner</i>	14	5	4.68
#4 Mindfulness Meditation: Tools for Life! <i>Presenter: Carole Clem</i>	17	10	4.50	#4 Counting Dollars and Sense <i>Presenter: Mythili “Lee” Bachu</i>	13	2	4.77
#5 Avoiding the Grip of Gangs <i>Presenter: Tony Avendorpb</i>	9	7	4.61	#5 A Bit of G.R.I.T.! <i>Presenter: Teresa Vogt</i>	13	12	4.17
#6 Finding a Path Past Addictions <i>Presenter: Lilly Dorsey</i>	18	4	4.69	#6 Moving from Dependence to Independence <i>Presenter: Nancy Gibson</i>	19	7	4.61
#7 Preparing Your Parenting Plan <i>Presenter: Mary Jackson</i>	18	11	4.33	#7 Getting Ready for the Outside While on Inside <i>Presenter: Katherine Coates</i>	15	6	4.63
#8 Educational Opportunities <i>Presenter: Cheneda Kane</i>	17	9	4.52	#8 Restart Your Life: Health and Chronic Illness Management <i>Presenter: Amy Kalman RN</i>	11	10	4.50

Suggested future workshop topics were provided by 38 (28%) of MCIW attendees, including custody and parenting issues, rape and sexual assault survivors, legal issues, substance abuse and recovery; dealing with anger, relationships, health and exercising, housing, and apprenticeships. Of all participants, 14% felt the workshops were not long enough.

Fashion Show: The fashion show is always a highlight of the conference for many of the participants. Among the non-MCIW attendees who attended the fashion show and completed an evaluation form, 95% strongly agreed that the fashion show should be included in future conferences. Among the MCIW women, 12% stated the fashion show was what they liked best about the conference.

Practice Employment Interviews: Thirty-three women participated in the practice job interviews. During the interview, interviewers provided suggestions on how to improve interviewing abilities, including non-verbal cues. In their evaluations, 100% 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.

Resource Fair: MCIW attendees had the opportunity to attend the resource fair. The resource fair was set up so that the women could pick up a variety of resource materials from each table, and talk with representatives from numerous state and local agencies. In addition, the resource fair included a scavenger hunt, which was geared toward asking the women to locate resources they would need upon their return home, to engage with the conference visitors and to participate in one or more of two mini-workshops conducted simultaneously in the corners of the gymnasium. When asked, 12% of MCIW attendees stated the resource fair, resources and/or information provided were what they liked best about the conference.

Comments from MCIW attendees indicated general satisfaction with the resource fair, with 95% reporting the resource fair was useful to them, 90% stated there were enough different types of resources at the fair and 85% said that the scavenger hunt helped them to take advantage of the resource fair and 92% found the mini-workshop topics interesting. However, a number of MCIW attendees expressed a desire for a greater variety in types of resource information (e.g., housing, mental health, and parenting) and in the number of resources from other geographical regions (e.g., Baltimore City, Western Maryland, Eastern Shore).

Among the non-MCIW attendees who attended the resource fair and completed an evaluation form, 70% agreed the scavenger hunt should continue as an activity in future conferences, while 69% felt the same about the mini-workshops, and 83% affirmed future inclusion of practice job interviews in the conference.

In addition, 100% of the resource fair vendors believed there was enough time to talk to the women about the resources, 40% felt that the scavenger hunt helped the women to take advantage of the resource fair, and 93% stated they would be interested in returning next year. Among the 15 resource providers who completed the survey, 14 provided a handout and 13 provided a gift or promotional items. Comments and suggestions from vendors included a desire for more information about what to expect including what they could bring into the facility and what was an appropriate give-away item; several also noted the need for more diverse resources for the women.

Speakers: The keynote speaker, workshop presenters, and plenary session speakers were also well received. Of the non-MCIW attendees who responded to this question, 95% agreed or strongly agreed that the keynote speaker and 67% felt the plenary session should be included in future conferences. Most (88%) were satisfied with the conference speakers and presenters. Likewise, over 96% of MCIW attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the keynote and plenary speakers, and with the workshop presenters. Finally, 41% of the MCIW attendees stated the keynote, plenary and/or workshop presenters were their favorite part of the conference.

Lessons Learned

Among the MCIW women who completed this section of the survey, most (98%) reported that they felt more confident about returning to their community, and 100% were more hopeful about their future as a result of attending the conference. The majority (over 95%) also reported that, as a result of attending the conference, they were more confident about how to manage money, how to present themselves in business clothes, and know more about educational opportunities, substance abuse and mental health treatment programs, family reunification, and other resources available to them once released.

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

- *“That things won't work if you don't want them to”*
- *“Take responsibility for my crime”*
- *“Keep my head held high despite my background”*
- *“How to conduct myself properly in interviews”*
- *“Being aware and smart about the company I keep”*
- *“Where to go for help”*
- *“I am still amazing”*
- *“It won't be easy but it can be done”*
- *“There is hope beyond MCIW”*

Conference Feedback

Overall, the MCIW attendees were happy with the conference – 99% were satisfied or very satisfied. In addition, 13% of attendees when asked what they liked best about the conference said “Everything” while 14% said the people they met at the conference. The majority (88 of 134) of MCIW attendees didn’t indicate there was anything they disliked about the conference. For what they least liked about the conference, of the 46 who did respond, 37% noted that there was not enough time and 20% wanted additional resources that were not available (e.g., by topic or geographic area). Additionally, all of the MCIW attendees reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that people at the conference treated them with respect.

Of all participants -

- 99% agreed or strongly agreed the conference was well organized; and
- 98% said the conference should be held annually.

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

- *“By asking for help when I get out”*
- *“Make my dreams turn into success”*

¹ 89% (134 of 150) 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.

³ 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.

⁴“N” is the number of people in attendance at that particular workshop who completed the questions on the evaluation form.

⁵ 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.