



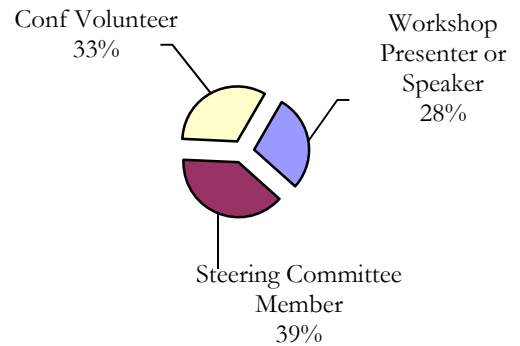
**Summary Results of Women Moving Forward Conference 2016**

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 23, 2016. The evaluation surveyed 108 women from MCIW<sup>1</sup> and 46 non-MCIW attendees, including members of the steering committee, presenters, speakers, and conference volunteers.<sup>2</sup>

**Characteristics of MCIW Attendees (N=108):**

- Age:** 36 years old (ranging from 20 to 64)
- Race:** 45% Black; 7% Hispanic; 44% White, 4% Other
- Children:** 77% have Children;  
Of those with Children: Average 2.5 Children (range 1 to 6)  
Of those, 1.65 children (range 0 to 7) are under 18 years old
- Marital Status:** 54% Never Married;  
3% Never Married but Lived with Someone as Married;  
18% Married; and 24% Divorced, Separated or Widowed
- Returning to:** Baltimore City 38%; Baltimore & Surrounding Counties 20%; Eastern Shore 16%; Western MD 6%, Southern MD 9%, DC Metro Area 9%, Out of State 2%

**Figure 1: Non-MCIW Attendees – Primary Role (N=46)**



In addition to employment preparedness, money management, education, parenting, and successful reentry strategies, the conference focused on mental health, trauma, and wellness. Conference activities included: Keynote speaker Alisha Saulsbury LCSW-C from the TAMAR program, three workshop breakout sessions (covering a total of 14 workshop topics), lunch, a talent show, and Thomas Lane Jr. as the Closing Speaker. Attendees were also provided a list of domestic violence and mental health resources 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 <sup>3</sup>	Rank	Scale Score <sup>4</sup>	Workshop Topic	N <sup>3</sup>	Rank	Scale Score <sup>5</sup>
Job Interviewing 101 – Part I & II* <i>Presenters:</i> Mary Pat Donelan & Fred Chandler	24	1	4.89	Getting to the Best You – Hope and Wellness <i>Presenter:</i> Alisha Saulsbury	16	6	4.68
Being Money \$mart*** <i>Presenters:</i> Monica Mitchell , Mary A. Pereira & Penny Miliman	31	10	4.57	Getting Ready for the Outside While on the Inside <i>Presenter:</i> Katherine Coates	22	5	4.73
Employment: Try, Try, Try again...for what? *** <i>Presenter:</i> Cheryl Canfield	33	8+	4.59	Let Your True Colors Shine <i>Presenter:</i> Dr. Sujata Ives	16	7+	4.60
Probation and Parole: Finish Successfully*** <i>Presenters:</i> Kimberly McGriff and William Stevens	38	7+	4.60	Family Reunification: What does “I’m not selfish” mean?/ I Still Care <i>Presenter:</i> Pastor Carol A. Overton-Saunders	22	8+	4.59
Walking in My Shoes** <i>Presenter:</i> Mary Joel Davis	41	4	4.75	Mindfulness Meditation: A Tool for Life <i>Presenter:</i> Carole Clem	13	11	4.19
Healthy Parenting: Reconnecting through the Brokenness** <i>Presenters:</i> Lashonia Thompson & Charnal Moody	26	3	4.76	Education: From Basic Skills to Post-Secondary Degrees <i>Presenter:</i> Cheneda Kane	25	2	4.79
My Life, My Needs, My Journey** <i>Presenters:</i> Jocelyn Alexander & Thalia Bishop	30	9	4.58	Dare to Dream <i>Presenter:</i> Rev. Valerie S. Pearson	31	7+	4.6

\* Double Session \*\* 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 were “Job interviewing 101”, followed by “Education: From Basic Skills to Post-Secondary”, and “Healthy Parenting”. Among the MCIW attendees,<sup>5</sup> 33% stated the workshops/speakers were what they liked best about the conference, while 9% of the participants identified the workshops/speakers as their least favorite activity.

Suggested future workshop topics were provided by 52 (48%) of MCIW attendees, including substance abuse and recovery/addiction, mentoring, and successful relationships. Most frequently, women wanted more information on housing, employment, and educational opportunities. Of all participants, 17% felt the workshops were not long enough.

**Practice Employment Interviews:** The practice employment interviews were provided in a double workshop session and during this workshop, interviewers provided suggestions on how to improve interviewing abilities, including non-verbal cues. Eleven women attended this workshop, and in their evaluations, over 95% 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, 82% agreed or strongly agreed that the keynote speaker and 91% felt the closing speaker should be included in future conferences. All (100%) were satisfied with the workshop presenters and 94% of MCIW attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the speakers.

Speakers and workshop presenters also provided feedback on their conference experience and most (over 85%) 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 (96%) reported that they felt more confident about returning to their community, and 98% 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, and know more about educational opportunities, 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, 90% of participants advised they learned how to manage stress.

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

- *“Budgeting and managing my bank account & money”*
- *“Believe in yourself and make something of yourself”*
- *“Make eye contact at job interview”*
- *“My triggers”*
- *“Plan goals, not wishes”*
- *“No matter where you go you will always take yourself with you”*
- *“How to communicate with my family”*
- *“How to deal with Parole & Probation”*
- *“I learned new ways to be encouraged and boost my confidence”*
- *“Networking w/ the people that can get me the help I need once released”*
- *“Together we can, but alone is dangerous, so mentor the next woman if possible”*

**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 14% said the people they met at the conference. The majority (71 of 108) 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 37 who did respond, 32% noted that there was not enough time and 16% 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 -**

- 95% 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 finding out more about the organization and what services they have for me”.*
- *“Reach out for hope and not go back to selling drugs for money”.*
- *I will use every resource given to me. There was so much that I did not know was available to me. Especially regarding my education. I am so excited to use what was given to me.”*
- *“To apply the info that was given to me. If you don't apply info, it is not going to help you”*

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<sup>1</sup> 87% (108 of 124) of MCIW attendees completed an evaluation form.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.