



The National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) and a number of volunteer groups and individuals will come together to host the eighth annual “*MCI-W: Women Moving Forward Conference*” on Saturday, April 8, 2017, a day of education, social activities and employment interview counseling for women scheduled to release from the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W) within the next nine months. MCI-W, Maryland’s only state prison for women houses over 800 women from counties throughout Maryland, including Baltimore City. This endeavor is the only one of its kind in the state of Maryland.

These women, mothers to an estimated 300 children (many of whom are in foster care), will face a number of obstacles as they attempt to rejoin society. Several studies have shown that the vast majority of prisoners cite assistance finding employment as one of their greatest needs after release. Therefore, the event will focus on a series of interactive sessions covering the women’s priorities: employment, the availability of affordable housing, healthcare, education, addiction treatment, mental health, family reunification, and personal finances.

The conference is designed to help empower the women with information to make a successful reentry to society and live successful, productive lives. The attendees will be provided with a host of resources for housing options to apply to with institutional case managers; opportunities to practice employer interviews at the conference; and learn of addiction programs to assist in recovery maintenance, giving the participants the confidence to face the prospect of reentry with confidence.

The primary goal of the conference is to provide critical resources to a specific audience in a manner that is positive, encouraging and educational. Additional goals are as follows:

- provide women prisoners with information regarding resources available upon their release, increasing confidence about a successful re-entry
- provide support to women in prison within nine months of release and to let them know that people care

This event is a collaboration of legal and lay professionals, headed by the NAWJ to help empower women pending release with information to make a successful reentry to society and live productive lives.

We hope that you will support our work through a tax-deductible financial contribution. This is your opportunity to make a difference in the lives of women leaving the prison system so that they may have the necessary tools to make a difference for their families, their communities and themselves. There is no state funding for this project and without your support, this important event would not be possible.

To serve as a partner in this endeavor, please see enclosed sponsorship form. If you have any questions, please contact LaShanta Harris, at LaShantaRHarris@yahoo.com or 202-285-6311.