

**group 4 - cover sheet for
LWVOR and LWVPDX 2021-2022 PROGRAM PLANNING**

Re Homelessness, affordable housing, community residential facilities

Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 1 pm

Doreen Binder and Donna Cohen, discussion leaders

LWVOR POSITIONS

Social policy - Homeless youth, p 29

Social Policy - Housing national position criteria for housing supply, p 29

LWVPDX POSITIONS

Social policy - Housing, p 8

Social policy - Affordable housing financing and administration, p 8

Social policy - Community Residential Facilities, p 9

Regional issues - Regional planning and governance, p 12

- Urban growth management, p12

One of the LWVOR Legislative Action Team 2021 session priorities:

SUPPORT STRATEGIES TO ASSURE HOUSING FOR ALL by increasing investments in rental assistance, affordable and homeless housing, preservation, new units and home ownership.

If there is a topic for which there is no LWVUS, LWVOR or LWVPDX position, the League cannot advocate for public policy changes on that topic. If your group believes we need a position on a topic, you may suggest a study or concurrence with a position from another state or local League. A study, restudy or concurrence must be approved by the membership before it is adopted.

You also may suggest forming a LWVPDX Interest Group for topics related to positions about which members want to learn or presenting an educational event on any public policy topic.

Group 4 - LWVOR positions related to *Homelessness and affordable housing*

Housing - National Position Criteria for Housing Supply (undated), p 29

The following considerations can be applied to programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family:

- A. The responsibility for achieving national housing goals rests primarily with the federal government, which should:
 - Assure that our economic system is functioning to produce and maintain sufficient decent housing for citizens at all income levels;
 - Compensate for any failure or inadequacy of the system by building, financing, renting and selling homes to those citizens whose housing needs are not being met;
 - Give a variety of incentives to local jurisdictions to encourage them to provide within their boundaries an adequate supply of decent housing for low- and moderate-income groups;
 - Withhold federal funds from communities that fail to encourage such housing.

- B. State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.

- C. Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs.

- D. When families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.

- E. Government programs providing subsidies to the building, financing and insuring industries for housing for lower-income families should be evaluated in terms of units produced rather than in terms of benefits accruing to these industries.

- F. Government at all levels should develop policies that will assure sufficient land at reasonable cost on which to develop housing and that will assure fulfillment of

other goals such as access to employment, preservation of open space, environmental cleanliness and beauty, and other aspects of a suitable living environment.

G. Regional and metropolitan planning should be promoted to prevent haphazard urban growth, and housing for low- and moderate-income families should be provided as apart of all planned neighborhoods or communities.

H. Lower-income families should not be segregated in large developments or neighborhoods. As their economic status improves, lower-income families should be enabled to continue to live in the same units as private tenants or as homeowners, if they are so inclined.

I. Housing should be designed to meet human needs and should be built with amenities that will encourage economic integration within apartment buildings as well as neighborhoods.

J. Publicly assisted housing should be included in viable, balanced communities, with provision for quality public services and facilities, including schools, transportation, recreation, etc., that will encourage integration and stability.

K. Zoning practices and procedures that will counteract racial and economic isolation should be promoted.

L. State and local governments should adopt and enforce:

1. Uniform building codes with standards based on performance;
2. Housing codes to protect the health and safety of all citizens.

M. State and local tax structures should be examined and revised to:

1. Benefit communities that build housing for lower-income families;
2. Encourage private owners to improve their homes; · Reduce speculative land costs.

N. Government, industry and labor should encourage innovative building techniques to reduce the cost of housing production.

O. Rights of tenants to negotiate for proper maintenance, management of facilities and services should be protected.

P. Housing programs should be administered by individuals trained for the jobs and sympathetic with the needs of their clientele.

Q. Citizen groups should participate in the development of publicly assisted housing programs by:

1. Evaluating performance;
2. Activating nonprofit sponsorships;
3. Supporting legislation;
4. Developing public awareness of housing discrimination and need.

See **Position Implementation** (1991 - 2019) of the National Housing Policy, p 178 of the LWVOR *Issues for Action 2019*

Homeless Youth - position adopted 2007, p 29

Parents are legally responsible for their children. When parents are unable to fulfill that responsibility, the League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that communities and governments at all levels have a responsibility to provide programs and services to meet the needs of runaway and homeless youth.

In order to help families stay together, prevent youth homelessness, and reduce the need for more expensive future services, the LWVOR supports providing services such as family crisis counseling, child care, parenting education, mental health and addiction treatment, low-cost housing, and health care.

When youth are separated from their families, the LWVOR supports providing services to these youth, such as shelter, food, education, health care, mental health and addiction treatment, plus outreach to encourage youth to use services. Older youth need additional services, such as assistance with independent living skills and with finding employment and more permanent housing.

These services may be provided by government or by private organizations that receive government and/or private funding. Coordination of these services is necessary to avoid duplication and service gaps. Youth should be served regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

All levels of government should have funding responsibility for preventive and supportive services to families and homeless youth. Private organizations are encouraged to provide funding and services. Government funds should be adequate and allocated according to demonstrated need. Agencies must show that their programs are effective.

Additional LWV references re Homelessness:

Health Policy - Adult Mental Health in Oregon

Adopted January 1987; Educational Update 2001*; language update 2008**

A. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a comprehensive and integrated adult mental health services delivery system in Oregon which:

1. Includes both community and state programs and facilities;
2. Provides for coordination of local and state mental health planning based on regular needs assessments;
3. Provides funding by a coordinated mix of federal, state, local, and private sector

dollars; and

4. Includes state budget allocations that reflect service priorities jointly determined

by Community Mental Health Programs and the state Addictions and Mental Health Division.

B. The League supports the concept of care, treatment, and support in the least restrictive environment possible which:

1. Ensures continuity of care and humaneness; and
2. Balances the rights and safety of individuals with mental disorders, other interested parties, and society in general.

C. The League believes that the mental health delivery system should include:

1. Adults with:

- a. Mental and emotional illness; and
- b. Alcohol and drug addiction.

2. **Services that focus on recovery of the individual through use of evidence-based crisis intervention and ongoing support. These services could include alternatives to hospitalization, early intervention, residential services, supportive housing, and services delivered by peers in sufficient mix and quantity to afford an acceptable quality of life for consumers and their families.**

3. Mental health service providers, administrators, advocates, consumers, their families, and lay citizens as participants in:
 - a. Service delivery planning;
 - b. The evaluation of services; and
 - c. The provision of community education.
- D. The League supports an adult mental health civil commitment process which:
 1. Ensures statewide consistency in the application of commitment statues;
 2. Provides for adequate and equitable investigation and examination; and
 3. Protects the rights and needs of all interested parties.

The League of Women Voters® of Oregon Page 162
Social Policy **Updated for language changes only in the position statement—no position change.

See Position Implementation - Adult Mental Health (1987 - 2019), p 162 of the *LWVOR Issues for Action*

Mental Health Services for Children and Youth Adopted January 1975

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a coordinated plan for comprehensive mental health services for all levels of need to children and youth provided under the direction of a single state service agency responsible for basic state standards. We support the appropriation of consistent and sufficient funds to implement state- mandated programs.

- A. A well-coordinated comprehensive mental health service delivery plan should cover such concerns as:
 1. Community level services that are accessible, visible, and available to all income levels through a graduated fee schedule;
 2. Community level programs that provide early diagnostic and referral services, 24- hour emergency care, treatment services and facilities, aftercare, and follow-up care;
 3. The development of preventive programs;
 4. Coordination of all levels of government and all public and private agencies working with children;
 5. Standards of training for all personnel appropriate to job placement;
 6. Consistent state funds supplemented by all available resources, public and

private;

7. Utilization of all local resources;

8. Basic state standards which encourage quality treatment and care while permitting alternative programs.

B. The League of Women Voters further supports consistent and sufficient state funds for special education programs in the public school, including:

1. Programs based upon the child's individual needs;

2. Special training for teachers working with disturbed children.

Position History and Implementation - Children's Mental Health

The two-year study emphasized evaluation of treatment services, juvenile correction programs, and special education in the schools at the state and local level.

Group 4 - LWVPDX positions relevant to homelessness and affordable housing

Housing (2001, 1989), p 8

City, County and private sectors should continually monitor changes in the population needing affordable housing and address their housing needs.

Criteria to be used when selecting areas for neighborhood revitalization should include neighborhoods: a) at risk of further deterioration; b) showing some evidence of stability, citizen involvement and community support; c) having a community focal point, such as a school, park, community center and/or convenient transportation.

We support a variety of means to encourage private investments in low-income housing, such as tax abatement, tax credits, low-interest loans and grants.

We favor consolidation of City, County and private agencies involved in housing within the City of Portland. Benefits derived from the consolidation include: less duplication, cost efficiency, convenience to the public, shared knowledge and heightened awareness of the importance of adequate housing.

Affordable Housing Financing and Administration (1981), p 8

The League of Women Voters of Portland supports:

- Retention of single-room-occupancy (sro) housing units and support by the City of Portland for rehabilitation for existing units;
- Retention of downtown low-income housing supported by federally subsidized loans, Community Development Block Grants (cdbg), and federal rent subsidies;
- Encouragement of privately developed, middle-income housing downtown through incentive low-interest loans;
- Avoidance of building closures for building and fire code violations by: a) establishment of a hearings officer position with authority to enforce the code and, b) provision of low-interest loans to building owners for complying with code;
- Consolidation of information on the availability and location of subsidized housing in a master list, which could be located with Home Forward (formerly named Housing Authority of Portland);
- Sufficient housing expertise within the Planning Commission to facilitate effective attention to housing issues in Portland.

As a general policy, the League of Women Voters of Portland does not favor city acquisition of buildings for low-income housing or sro units. Only if all other means for retaining low-income housing or buildings of historical importance have failed, should the city purchase such property. The League recommends that some entity other than the city administer buildings acquired in this manner.

The League favors financing of any such building acquisitions by tax increment funds, housing and Community Development Block Grants or revenue bonds.

Community Residential Facilities (2007, 1977), p 9

The League of Women Voters of Portland supports the use of Residential Care Facilities for socially dependent individuals as defined by state law, Residential Training Facilities for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities and Residential Treatment Facilities for individuals with alcohol and/or drug dependence and those with mental and/or emotional disorders.

The League supports Community Residential Facilities for individuals with a criminal history provided clients are carefully screened and monitored and consideration is given to the impact on the community.

Community Residential Facilities are licensed by the State. Standards should provide for quality staffing, facilities and care.

Regional Planning and Governance (1996), p 12

The Leagues of Women Voters of Portland and Clackamas County believe the following issues are of regional concern:

- **Growth management** - affordable housing, long-term planning, parks/open space, urban growth boundaries/densities, economic development
- **Natural systems management** - water, air quality, solid waste/recycling
- **Regional infrastructure** - transportation including ports and airports, sewers, storm water drainage
- **Human services and amenities** - arts, libraries, education, health service, mental health
- **Public safety** corrections, police, emergency preparedness.

We believe that efficiency, political feasibility, and economy should be determining factors in cooperative efforts among local governments.

Intergovernmental agreements are one method of resolving issues that local governments cannot solve by themselves.

We believe that the entire area benefits from having regional attractors for arts, sports, and recreation. User fees and hotel-motel taxes should be part of the funding for these facilities.

Urban Growth Management (2000, revised 1994, 1992), p 12

The Leagues of Women Voters of Portland and Clackamas County support the concept of the Urban Growth Boundary (ugb), including designation of urban reserve lands for future needs. The ugb should be difficult to change to ensure well-managed growth. Metro should work closely with local jurisdictions to ensure that funding is identified for planning, infrastructure, and services to urban reserves.

Requests for amendments to the ugb should be allowed from Metro, counties and cities with jurisdiction, and landowners. Notice of proposed amendments should be provided to the petitioners, affected property owners, cities and counties, neighborhood associations, and the Land Conservation and Development Commission (lcdc). In addition, notice must be published in local newspapers.

Public hearings should be held at all stages of the amendment process, including the city/county level before that governing body makes its recommendation, the Metro hearings officer, the Metro Council before its final decision, and the Metro Council when it hears an appeal. Notice of public hearings should be sent at least 30 days before the scheduled hearing.

The Leagues of Women Voters of Portland and Clackamas County support the concept of Regional Urban Growth Goals and Objectives. We support the development and maintenance of functional wildlife and recreation corridors to create metropolitan greenspace. We also support retention and development of well-planned economic communities, which can include the following components: a mix of housing options, employment, social services, industry, and amenities.

Existing urban land should undergo continuous redevelopment and infill where appropriate.