

**PROPOSAL TO ADOPT A HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY
POSITION BY CONCURRENCE WITH
THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEAGUE POSITION ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

The LWVC Housing and Homelessness position was approved for adoption by concurrence at the Housing Interest Group’s meeting on 3-20-23. If it is approved at the May 24, 2023 LWVPDX Annual Membership Meeting, it would be added to our local positions as **“Housing and Homelessness in Multnomah County.”**

The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) position may be viewed here: <https://lwvc.org/position/housing>. The wording of the proposed concurrence is the same as the wording in the LWVC position, except that references to state and Californians have been deleted or replaced by words that refer to our local governments or residents in Multnomah County. A reference to the California State Constitution was also deleted. The new words are indicated with bold type and underlining in the proposed concurrence below. Small variations in punctuation and formatting are consistent with a formatted copy of the position on page 32 of the 2020 pdf version of the LWV of California positions which can be viewed [here](#).

We also note the League of Women Voters of Portland must check and work with LWVOR or LWVUS when advocating about state or national public policies and/or legislation. We can only act independently on local governmental issues.

PROPOSED “HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY” POSITION

Position in Brief:

Support of equal opportunity in housing.

Support of measures to provide programs to increase the supply of safe, decent, and adequate housing for all **Multnomah County residents**.

Support for action at all levels of **local** government for the provision of affordable housing for all **Multnomah County residents**.

Details:

1. Programs and policies to provide equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. An overall plan for development with integration of housing, land use and transportation and with attention to factors such as natural resources and basic human needs.
3. Financial assistance in the form of grants, loans, tax incentives and other means to encourage housing construction and rehabilitation.
 - a. Broad guidelines for use of these funds with more local decision making.
 - b. Use of fiscal incentives and disincentives to encourage enforcement of housing law.
 - c. Enforcement of use of redevelopment set-aside funds for low- and moderate-income housing.
4. Standardization and modernization of local building and zoning codes to conform with **applicable** codes that:

- a. **are** enforced by trained inspectors
 - b. encourage new and innovative building materials and methods that can be used to cut housing construction costs
 - c. encourage the use of density bonuses; mixed, cluster and inclusionary zoning; second units; infill development; air rights; and increased density along transportation corridors.
5. Protection of the rights of both tenants and landlords.
 6. Removal of barriers that inhibit the construction of low- and moderate-income housing.
 7. Education of local communities concerning **the** need for affordable housing and methods by which this can be attained.

BACKGROUND ON THE SELECTION OF THIS LWVC POSITION

The January 2023 Program Planning discussion on Mental Health and Related Housing Issues, led by Anne Davidson and Jason Renaud, recommended that the Housing Interest Group find a housing position from another League with which we could concur. There was frustration with the lack of a position specifically focusing on local housing problems. With this, a search commenced for a League position from another state or locality that addressed more specific and current issues than are addressed in our local, state, and national positions on housing.

RATIONALE, PROS, AND CONS FOR CONCURRENCE WITH THE LWVC POSITION

The Program Planning and Housing Interest Groups found insufficient interest in organizing a new LWVPDX study on Housing. After a nationwide search of state and local League positions on housing, it was determined that the LWVC position was most applicable to our locality. This is particularly true because it can be combined with the LWVUS housing-related positions and LWVOR *Land Use, Homeless Youth, and Adult Mental Health in Oregon* positions.

Pros: In addition to providing a broad local position on housing, concurrence with the LWVC position would

- fully recognize the protection of the rights of both tenants and landlords, beyond the rights of fair housing as specified in LWVUS position.
- enlarge support for infill development and for density bonuses—an incentive-based tool that permits a developer to increase a building’s size in exchange for including affordable housing units or paying into an affordable housing fund.
- remove barriers to development of low- and moderate-income housing construction.

Cons:

- The LWVUS positions of *Equality of Opportunity (Fair Housing Criteria)* and *Meeting Basic Human Needs (Criteria for Housing Supply)* have been effectively used by the LWVPDX Action team for years. Although the language could be updated, three LWVPDX positions, *Housing, Affordable Housing Financing and Administration, and Community Residential Facilities* are still relevant and useful. The LWVPDX Action team also uses the LWVOR *Land Use* position supporting Statewide Land Use Goals, including Goal 10, *Housing*.
- There is concern that the LWVC position’s support for funding moderate-income housing may conflict with the emphasis in the LWVUS position and in current LWVPDX advocacy for prioritizing funding for low- and extremely low-income housing.
- The LWVC position does not address core reasons for homelessness.