

IV. SOCIAL POLICY

Housing (2001, 1989)

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.

Housing and Homelessness in Multnomah County (2023)

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.

Affordable Housing Financing and Administration (1981)

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)

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.

Teenage Girls at Risk (1995)

The League of Women Voters of Portland, Oregon supports equal access to appropriate services for at risk girls and boys. These services should be comprehensive in nature and should include outreach, treatment and follow-up.

We support:

- Appropriate services that include consideration of gender, developmental phase, intellectual capacity, cultural identification, sexual orientation, as well as mental and physical clinical considerations.
- A comprehensive service directory plan that includes outreach, emergency services, case management, individual and family counseling, housing and follow-up. Effectiveness of these programs should be evaluated periodically.
- Emphasis on early detection and prevention of child abuse.
- The teaching of parenting skills.
- Strategies to prevent teenage pregnancy which include the following: school-based health centers, sex education programs, teacher training, and the availability of a range of contraceptives at the school-based health clinics.
- Group homes and improved foster care for youth under age 16 in need of housing. Group homes as part of transition services for youth leaving residential treatment programs.
- Gender specific drug and alcohol treatment programs.

Juvenile Justice (2006, 2003, 1997)

1. The general goals and characteristics of the juvenile justice system should be to:

- Protect the public.
- Stress programs for prevention, early intervention and treatment for delinquents and at-risk youth. These programs should provide care, guidance, treatment and control to promote the child's welfare.
- Provide fair and impartial procedures.
- Promote personal responsibility and accountability for one's delinquent acts.
- Reform and rehabilitate offenders.
- Promote swift and decisive intervention.
- Maintain an open and accountable system.
- Stress alternatives to detention or incarceration.

2. We believe that mandatory minimum sentencing for a broad range of juvenile crimes is not a desirable goal of the juvenile justice system. The justice system should have some flexibility to consider a youth's family circumstances and personal history. There should be guidelines for sentencing to encourage equal sentences for equal offenses, but these should not be mandatory.
3. We support the adoption of a "second look" concept for 15- to 17-year-olds convicted of Measure 11 offenses. The purpose of this "second look" should be to encourage rehabilitation. The decision to reduce a sentence should be made in a court hearing before a judge and based on testimony from a panel of professionals acquainted with the case.
4. Although the over-representation of minorities in the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice system is due in large part to societal problems, we agree with justice officials that the justice system should work to correct this imbalance in the following ways suggested by Krisberg and Austin in their publication *Reinventing Juvenile Justice*:
 - Increase the ethnic balance in law enforcement, probation and court agencies.
 - Require cultural sensitivity training for police, probation officers and judges.
 - Establish drug treatment programs and make them readily available.
 - Create job training and placement programs.
 - Increase involvement of minority communities in police work.
 - Establish family support services in minority communities.
 - Build mentoring programs for at-risk youth.
5. Services of the justice system, such as parent effectiveness classes, should be extended to family members of youth involved with the justice system. Punishment of parents for the acts of their children should occur only after all other efforts have proved ineffective. An array of possible penalties in addition to financial fines should be available to provide a flexible response to gaining parental cooperation.
6. Youth under the age of 18 should not be subject to automatic waiver to adult court. Youth under 15 should be assumed incapable of understanding the legal system adequately to stand trial in adult court.

All other juveniles should be evaluated for their competency to stand trial before being turned over to the adult court system.