

November Unit meeting materials-Urban Policy survey:

Here are the materials for the Urban Policy survey that LWVWI is conducting. Please review them and be prepared to respond to the survey questions at your November Unit meeting. If you are unable to attend the November unit meeting and are interested in participating in this survey, please complete the questions and forward your responses to Edith Sullivan no later than November 23, 2015. (etsesq@aol.com or 1802 Monroe St. # 204, Madison Wi 53711-2023)

Included in this packet are:

- The questions from the state league
- The current state position
- The national position

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has developed a survey for local leagues to obtain feedback and recommendations on the current position, including such aspects as the title and scope of the position and its adequacy for effective action at the state and local levels. LWVWI will propose a revision for consensus and adoption at 2016 Annual Meeting.

In brief, our units' responses are due to Edith Sullivan no later than November 23, to give her time to get them to the state league by the deadline of December 1, 2015. After the state league's committee reviews the responses, it plans, by 01.08.2016, to send a proposed revised position to local leagues for discussion. Local league comments on the proposed revision are due to the State Office 02.29.2016.

The State Board will then review the recommendations of the state committee and decide whether or not to recommend the revision to the state Annual Meeting. The Delegates to the Annual Meeting will vote on whether or not to adopt the proposed revision.

...which brings us to this **Exceptional Opportunity** to have a special **All Units** meeting sometime in early to mid-February 2016 to review the proposed revision and send our comments to State by Monday February 29, 2015. Exact date, time & place will be set after we know how many will be interested in attending. (No issues forum is scheduled for February, and therefore regular unit meetings will not be held)

In November, please let your unit leader know if you are interested in participating in this special February meeting. We should have at least one person from each unit to give appropriate feedback. Or, if you answer the survey questions without going to the meeting, please contact Edith Sullivan (etsesq@aol.com; 608-230-5881) if you are interested in participating in the Special Meeting. Many thanks!

STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The Survey Questions:

Before responding to this survey, please review the state and national positions on Urban Policy:

State position: <http://www.lwvwi.org/IssuesAdvocacy/SocialPolicyUrbanPolicy.aspx>

National position: <http://lwv.org/content/social-policy-0> (please note the last digit is zero, not letter O)

1. Your name and League:
2. How did your League approach this questionnaire?
 - A membership meeting
 - A membership survey
 - Feedback from units (if your League has units)
 - A study committee
 - A Board meeting
 - Other _____
3. Has your League attempted to use the LWVWI Urban Policy position in the past two years for your advocacy?
 - Yes
 - No
4. If you answered Yes for the last question, did you find the position to be adequate or inadequate for advocacy? Do you have any comments?
5. If you found the position to be inadequate, why?
 - The provisions in the position are outdated.
 - You did not feel it applies to your community.
 - Other _____
6. Some League members have noted that every provision of our state Urban Policy position could apply to any declining and distressed Wisconsin community. Should the name of the position be changed to something broader, that encompasses all communities in the state?
 - Yes, change the name of the position.
 - No, leave it as Urban Policy
 - If yes, what name would you suggest or recommend?

7. The current members of the Position Update committee have discussed the possibility of cross referencing related LWVWI positions such as Land Use, Transportation, Healthcare, Employment and Housing as part of the update. Would you find the position more useful for advocacy if this occurred?
 - Yes
 - No

If yes, what positions should be linked? _____

8. Can your League designate a member to serve on the Urban Policy Position Update Committee? Meetings will be by teleconference, with work via email or file sharing between meetings. The Committee's work will wrap up when it presents a revised position to the State Board in March 2016.

If yes, please provide an email address:

9. Other comments or suggestions for the Urban Policy Committee?

(State)

Urban Policy

Promote the fiscal well-being and the quality of urban life.

Support of the following positions and measures:

The state government should develop a policy to improve urban fiscal and growth management.

State aids should be targeted to both declining and distressed Wisconsin communities. In grant allocations further consideration should be given by state agencies to distressed rural communities, as well as distressed cities.

Wisconsin's urban policy role should emphasize measures that enhance the local economic base. The use of aid for particular programs is considered essential to the encouragement of local development programs. Supportive services through technical assistance from state agencies should be available.

Appropriate programs in housing, education, and job training should be available to complement measures intended to enhance the economic base. The overall goal is to create or preserve productive, self-reliant neighborhoods and communities.

For a historical view of the state policy, please find the link on our website: lwvdanecounty.org with the study materials for the November forum.

The League's Position (National). For some history please find the link on our website lwvdanecounty.org with the study materials for the November forum.

Statement of Position on Urban Policy, as Announced by National Board, June 1979 and revised by the National Board in 1989:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that it is in the national interest to promote the well-being of America's cities.

Sharply targeted federal assistance to distressed cities should be central to this policy. The federal government should give highest priority in urban policy to measures that enhance the economic base of cities. The League also favors supplementary federal aid for cities in distressed fiscal condition and grants for particular program areas as strategies to counter the problems of hardship cities.

The fiscal health of cities depends on the active cooperation of all levels of government. The federal government should provide incentives to encourage states to take an active role in promoting the fiscal viability of their cities.

The League is committed to an urban environment beneficial to life and to resource management in the public interest.

Further Guidelines

Economic Development Assistance

The cornerstone of a national urban policy is a commitment to helping cities achieve economic strength. Federal programs to encourage private reinvestment in central cities should counter an eroding tax base and provide jobs for the inner-city unemployed. Therefore, the League supports the following federal strategies:

- Target community development programs to cities most in need.
- Encourage businesses to locate or expand in distressed cities through such financial incentives as investment tax credits, loan guarantees, subsidies for hiring the long-term unemployed and interest subsidies.
- Expand middle-income housing while not diminishing attention to low-income housing needs.
- Target federal purchasing and location of federal facilities in distressed cities.

General Financial Assistance

The League supports a variety of federal strategies, including direct general assistance, targeted to distressed cities. Such a program should include aid to counter recession. In providing federal aid for particular program areas, grants offer city governments the best opportunities to meet local needs.