

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF METROPOLITAN DES MOINES
LOCAL PROGRAM 2022-23
Amended April, 2017
Adopted at Annual Meeting, 2022

CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A PROGRAM

1. Does it come within the principles of the League of Women Voters?
2. Is it a problem which can be met through government?
3. Will it give League members valuable experience in citizen action?
4. Is it timely?
5. Is it an issue worthy of members' time and efforts, and one about which the League can do something?
6. In view of Program commitments – local, state and national, does the League have sufficient personnel, experience, and funds to carry out the proposals?
7. If a support item, is there member agreement on the question?
8. Are developments in the next few years likely to require action?
9. Can members be kept up-to-date without too heavy a workload?

2022-2023 PROPOSED LOCAL PROGRAM

- 1) **LOCAL GOVERNMENT** - The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Des Moines supports a form of local government that will minimize duplication of efforts and services; provide area-wide management of efforts and services whenever feasible; encourage city/county cooperation and/or consolidation and support citizen participation in planning.

The League recognizes the importance of the Metropolitan Advisory Council which is now operating under a Memorandum of Understanding. Action to support:

a) Police, fire and emergency medical service

- i) Continue with the coordination and or consolidation of police, fire and emergency medical services within the metropolitan area.

b) Cultural Opportunities - All Cities in Polk County should contribute to the costs of maintaining and supporting those facilities used by all citizens. The county should contribute with its share based upon the number of persons living in unincorporated areas of the county.

c) Parks and Recreation - Continue the coordination and support of metropolitan communities in planning, development and maintenance of major parks and recreational facilities. An organizational structure should be established to assist cities of the county in planning, development and maintenance of major parks and recreational facilities in the county, including those within city boundaries.

d) Transportation - A greater variety and flexibility to transit services, both public and private of Des Moines metropolitan area citizens to meet their work, recreational and social needs.

e) Continue the support of DART, Des Moines Area Regional Transport Authority, to provide regional services. We encourage other metropolitan communities to provide transportation services or to coordinate with DART.

f) Des Moines Water Works – League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Des Moines supports DMWW mission to provide quality water in reliable quantities so as to protect public health. League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Des Moines will monitor the DMWW Board’s efforts to provide regional services. League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Des Moines supports involvement by the citizen’s impacted by DMWW and opposes state mandated regionalization of water services. Independent water boards should only be disbanded through a referendum of the citizens in those communities.

2) **COUNCIL/MANAGER/WARD GOVERNMENT** Action to support:

a) Council/manager form of government for Des Moines

b) Election of the mayor by a vote of the people

i) A combination of at-large and ward representation on the council with flexibility in the number of council members to be elected from and by wards, but with an equitable balance between ward and at-large representation.

3) **POLK COUNTY JAIL – FACILITIES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES** - Action to support:

a) Policies and procedures

i) Assuring the safety of all persons using the jail: the Board of Supervisors should appropriate funds for any safety modification, determine responsibility for the deficiencies in the facility and take appropriate action to recover the costs.

ii) Promoting the equipping, staffing, and utilization of the Health Services Department when needed and as intended when the facility was designed.

iii) Assuring equal treatment of all arrested persons. Staff is to be assigned to provide 24-hour service in appropriate divisions of the jail operations.

iv) Providing coordination of appropriate counseling and support services for inmates and their families

4) **LAND USE** - Action to support:

a) The Polk County Comprehensive Land Use Policy that protects fragile lands and prime agricultural lands.

b) The development of uniform standards for building codes, subdivisions and site plan ordinances throughout the cities and unincorporated areas of Metropolitan Des Moines.

5) **BROADLAWNS MEDICAL FACILITIES (BMC) HEALTH CARE FOR THE MEDICALLY INDIGENT**

The medically indigent of Polk County should receive a level of health care commensurate with their needs. Care should be provided by licensed health care professionals, locally whenever possible, and in the most cost-effective manner. BMC currently serves the majority of these persons. Action to support:

a) Provision of social services as an integral component of health care in purchase of service contracts.

b) Continued use of Broadlawns as an outpatient facility, retaining its specialty clinics. We have no one to monitor the BMC Board which is now transparent in its actions.

6) **TAX BASE SHARING** The League of Women Voters of Metro Des Moines supports tax base sharing. Current economic growth depends upon balanced multiple, interrelated factors and recognizing the need for regional economic development programs. Any tax base sharing proposal should seek means to:

- a) Decrease fiscal disparities between local communities;
- b) Enhance effective land use;
- c) Generate additional tax base for communities which are experiencing a static or declining tax base; and
- d) Consider the extraordinary needs of a central city in the provision of metro-wide services The tax base sharing proposal should include new development only in commercial and industrial properties as a part of the common pool. Prior to support of a metropolitan voluntary tax base sharing proposal by the LWVMDM, a study and analysis of the fiscal impact on all affected communities must be conducted by an objective, knowledgeable source, with the results of such a study made public.

Key issues which should be included in the analysis are:

- a. The effect of various contribution rates upon individual communities
- b. The effect of various distribution formula factors, including incentives for continued local growth plus recognition of population and tax capacity;
- c. The effect of various base years on the common pool;
- d. The analysis of the effects and potential problems associated with the allowance of exempted areas from inclusion in the common pool; and
- e. The flexibility to permit negotiation and compromise among municipalities involved.

7) **TAX EXEMPT AND GOVERNMENT – OWNED PROPERTY** - The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Des Moines supports revisions to Chapter 427 of the Iowa Code that would diminish the impact of tax-exempt properties; Chapter 427 of the Iowa Code defines tax exempt and government-owned property. The tax base of the City of Des Moines is severely impacted by a disproportionate amount of tax exempt and government – owned property.

8) **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING**

- a) A permanent household hazardous waste collection site within the metro Des Moines area should be continued with regular collection hours to make disposal of such material safer and more convenient. Recycling should be encouraged in the Metro Des Moines area to maximize the amount of recyclable collected.
 - i) Curbside collection of recyclables is preferred over drop-off recycling to maximize citizen participation.
 - ii) If drop off centers are used, they should be conveniently located, sufficient in numbers and will maintained.