

Poverty in Latah County, Idaho in 2024

The League of Women Voters of Moscow (LWVM) recognizes poverty as a dynamic, multi-faceted problem in Latah County. As such, and consistent with the National League's policy positions called out in its 2022-2024 Impact on Issues Guide, we advocate for and support policies and social welfare programs to prevent and reduce poverty in our region.

Such policies and programs include those that facilitate: incomes sufficient to meet basic needs, including decent affordable housing, and reliable access to nutritionally adequate food; opportunities for basic education, job training and employment; efforts to provide support services such as affordable, quality childcare and early childhood intervention; access to health resources; and convenient access to energy efficient, environmentally sound transportation (https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf).

The LWVM 2024 poverty study update concludes that the extent of local poverty has not been fully recognized, that access to resources has been inconsistent, and that too many of those in need are underserved. Utilization of public and private-sector resources can help identify and serve people in need by providing information on what assistance is available and helping them secure it. We encourage promotion, coordination and full utilization of government and philanthropic resources to assist low-income people, and coordination of eligibility rules and phaseouts, so those receiving multiple benefits do not lose them simultaneously.

Specifically, the League of Women Voters of Moscow will...

In the area of housing:

- endorse programs that enhance the availability of appropriate and safe housing for the homeless, especially homeless families in Latah County
- advocate for more housing for low-income residents
- advocate for more programs to prevent housing insecurity and relieve causative elements
- advocate for more emergency shelters for inclement weather, and policies and funding to enable them

In the area of food insecurity:

- support expansion of all programs that support providing meals to children and adults who are food insufficient
- encourage legislation that would address the regressive sales tax on food
- advocate for local food facilities for collection and distribution of foods and the receipt of monetary donations for those purposes
- encourage development of a centralized system to outsource management of SNAP/EBT and Double-Up Food Bucks Programs at farmers markets that want it

- advocate for additional secure drop-off locations to safely transfer food from donors and distributors to food banks and meal sites in communities throughout Latah County

In the areas of education and job training:

- support career-technical training, apprenticeships in skilled trades, career guidance in public schools, and cooperation among secondary education providers and workforce training partners
- advocate for job training and retention in healthcare-related fields

In the areas of employment and the economy:

- advocate for the Idaho Legislature's setting a state minimum wage that is higher than the 2017 federal minimum wage and with automatic adjustments based on scientifically valid indices linked to the cost of living in Idaho
- advocate for development of a light industrial park to broaden the economic base and provide job-training opportunities in Latah County

In the areas of childcare, early childhood education and out-of-school programs:

- advocate for measures to identify individuals and families who are eligible for assistance programs that affect children
- advocate for increasing the eligibility of individuals and families for programs that affect children and expand the parameters for eligibility
- advocate for a county-level childcare ordinance, starting with standards and regulations relating to health and safety
- advocate for more government investment in childcare and early childhood education, including, but not limited to, higher wages and scholarships and student loan forgiveness for degrees and certification in early childhood education
- encourage public and private leaders to facilitate access to start-up, maintenance, and expansion capital for childcare providers and early childhood educators

In the areas of healthcare and eldercare:

- advocate for transportation services to enable access to health facilities in our community, especially for low-income and medically underserved people, including people with disabilities
- support programs that would increase the number of professionally licensed and/or certified healthcare providers in the State of Idaho
- support and encourage the expansion of Medicaid
- advocate for increased funding for Department of Health and Welfare and institutions that deliver healthcare services to maintain adequate staffing

- advocate for availability and funding for the training/certification of in-home paraprofessional caregivers, transport service workers, and nonclinical healthcare support staff
- advocate for maternal healthcare as an essential part of women's healthcare
- advocate for lowering the cost of prescription medications
- advocate for community programs and healthcare services to help at-risk elders
- advocate for adult day care services in Latah County
- advocate for affordable, universally accessible housing for older residents who seek to age-in-place near supportive services and infrastructure

In the area of transportation:

- advocate for an increased number of fixed routes in bus service in Moscow and a mechanism to fund them
- support the establishment of public transportation to outlying communities in the region
- support transportation fuel assistance and car/light truck acquisition subsidy programs for low-income individuals
- support incentive programs for replacing fuel-inefficient vehicles with fuel-efficient ones for low-income individuals
- advocate for expanding ADA paratransit and other demand-response transit services, including for non-medical purposes, and a mechanism to fund them
- advocate for expanding outreach to inform and encourage the public to utilize public transit

More information can be found in the League of Women Voters Study of Poverty in Latah County, Idaho in 2024.

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