

Where We Stand – Local League Positions

LWV Central Kane County Affordable Housing Position

2004 Consensus: The LWV of Geneva-St. Charles supports governmental and community efforts to ensure affordable, safe, and decent housing for the citizens of our towns. During the year 2004-05, the Affordable housing committee in Geneva and St. Charles will examine strategies for improving the supply of affordable housing in Geneva and St. Charles and will recommend appropriate action in this area.

ACTION: March 4, 2004. Kane County Housing Action Coalition was formed with the leadership of the LWV Geneva-St.Charles league.

MISSION: The Kane County Housing Action Coalition (KCHAC) is a network with broad-based grassroots participation that advocates for affordable and fair housing in Kane County.

VISION: KCHAC organizes advocacy efforts by:

- Identifying issues and needs

- Raising public awareness on the issues
- Collaborating with regional, statewide, and national advocacy efforts

- Networking through the exchange of education and information.

Additional information at: Housing Action Illinois <http://www.housingactionil.org/>

Kane County Housing Action Coalition

Kane County Housing Action Coalition's 2006-07 Value Statement and Action Agenda

1. We believe that state and local housing policy should include all persons regardless of income.

- We supported the passage of Senate Bill 2290, The Comprehensive Housing Planning Act and support the continued progress of the Governor's Housing Task Force. Action Steps: We will monitor the Task Force reports and recommendations and its impact on Kane County.

- We support efforts by individual municipalities to address the affordable housing needs of its citizenry by adopting policies that will increase the supply of affordable housing. Action Steps: We will monitor the progress of the St. Charles' housing commission. We will meet with local government representatives to encourage them to establish policies to increase the supply of affordable housing. We will report on the accomplishments of the Kane County communities on a yearly basis.

2. We believe that everyone is entitled to safe, decent and affordable housing.

- We support the ability of all individuals regardless of source or amount of income to be able to live in areas of high economic opportunity. Action Steps: We will encourage local units of government to adopt source of income protections as part of their human rights protection. We will support efforts to adopt source of income protections on a state level. We will monitor the Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) compliance with the Housing Opportunity Tax Abatement program for landlords participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program. We support efforts to create local rent subsidy programs such as the one managed by Lazarus House.
- We support efforts to effectively deal with the jobs/housing mismatch in the Chicago Metropolitan area. Action Steps: We will promote REACH Illinois and actively recruit employers to participate.
- We support community integration for persons with disabilities. Action Steps: We will support efforts to integrate persons with disabilities into their communities.
- We supported the creation of the Safe Homes Act that provides protections to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in limited circumstances in their rental housing situation. Action Steps: We will support an education campaign and will support efforts to amend the legislation to provide increased protections.
- We support alternatives to the eviction process. Action Steps: We will support a state campaign to create a model program.

3. We believe additional funding is necessary to increase the supply of affordable housing.

- We support the Rental Housing Support program. Action Steps: We will monitor the application process. We will encourage organizations in Kane County to apply for the funds. We will meet with the county to determine what the additional \$1 being collected is being spent on.
- We support efforts to increase the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and oppose efforts to decrease funding. Action Steps: We will support a campaign to modify the Real Estate Transfer Tax to increase funding. We will notify our elected officials of our objections if there is a proposal to decrease funding.
- We support efforts of local developers to increase the supply of affordable housing in our communities. Action Steps: We will provide developers with letters of support. We will investigate additional action steps we can take as a coalition.
- We support efforts to create a National Housing Trust Fund. Action Steps: We will participate in the campaign to create a Trust Fund and will meet with our elected federal officials when necessary.
- We oppose efforts to decrease federal resources for affordable housing. Action Steps: We will monitor activities on a federal level and will meet with our elected officials when necessary.

LWV Central Kane County Mental/Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disability Position

Approved by the LWVCKC Board April 6, 2016

Position: The League supports a fully funded comprehensive and coordinated system of treatment, supports, and services for people with mental and behavioral health challenges and/or intellectual/developmental disabilities throughout Kane County. Funding must be adequate to meet the scope and intensity of needs. This funding should include support from state, county, township, and municipal governmental bodies. In addition, affordable housing, affordable and accessible transportation, job training, case management, respite, and social and recreational services need support. Entry into this system should be facilitated by comprehensive and coordinated sources of information that help with finding the most appropriate service providers in the local community. Funding decisions from all sources should be based on data indicating best practice strategies and supports, which lead to the best health outcomes. Alternatives to incarceration must be available for people who have mental and behavioral health challenges and/or intellectual/developmental disabilities. The current crisis in Illinois' finances is contributing to the needs in these areas.

Background:

The following statements describe the situation in 2016 and present justifications for the position.

- **Funding:** Currently, the payment for many services occurs through Managed Care Organizations, either through private insurance plans or through public programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare. Funding for services has become available for a larger percentage of the population under the Affordable Care Act, but overall funding continues to be inadequate and should be increased. Both private and public benefits have limitations. Many private insurance plans require high out of pocket payments that may be impossible for individuals to meet. Individuals on Illinois' Home and Community Based Medicaid Waivers (HCBW) are initially placed on waiting lists for services, and may have to travel far from their communities in order to receive services. Waiting list time for HCBW services averages more than 10 years in Kane County. In addition, Medicaid reimbursement rates set by the state continue to be extremely low, and have not been increased in over a decade. Funds granted to service providers by state, county, township, and municipal bodies have largely remained the same or have decreased, and these funds are typically limited by legislation and referendum. Available services vary greatly by location in Kane County. Additional support from all levels of government and from donors to not for profit organizations is needed. Some geographical areas lack funding through 708 boards, 377 boards, or county health departments.
- **Housing:** There is a serious shortage of affordable housing options and this especially impacts individuals with serious/chronic mental illness and individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities given their life long conditions. Illinois lags the nation in de-institutionalization and is operating under three consent decrees to accelerate this process. However, there continues to be a critical need for affordable housing, supported housing, and Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs). Progress in this area is delayed by a lack of funding and, in some situations, by community resistance to CILAs.

- Other supports and services: Many additional services, such as affordable and accessible transportation, job training, case management, respite for caregivers, and social and recreational services are underfunded and unavailable to many. The services that are available vary widely from place to place. Kane County lacks a sufficient number of fixed bus routes and paratransit services, especially west of Randall Road. When these services are not available, this again especially impacts individuals with serious/chronic mental illness and individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.
- Access to services: There are no comprehensive and coordinated sources of information about how and where to seek services, and these should be created. The 211 phone system, which operates in all but two states, would provide help in finding appropriate local services and in navigating private insurance companies and public supports such as Medicaid. In addition, an easily accessed on-line resource, either publicly supported or supported through public/private partnership, would also provide guidance in these areas. Transition planning from school services to adult services should be coordinated and enhanced.
- Evidence based practices: Some data supported intervention programs, such as the diversion of offenders to Treatment Alternative court (TAC), have begun to be adopted, and this process should be increased. All intervention programs and individual services used should be data supported, with a continued and increased focus on health outcomes (instead of health encounters). Best practice interventions such as Critical Incident Training (CIT), Mental Health First Aid, and Assertive Case Management should be used county wide.
- Current crisis in state finance: State grants funding psychiatric services and supportive housing for homeless and mentally ill residents were discontinued in July, 2015. The failure to reinstate these grants or to refinance them through Medicaid will result in expensive and unnecessary hospitalizations and incarcerations. In addition, state grants funding respite care, autism services, supportive and supervised housing, and crisis and emergency services for the uninsured have been suspended since July, 2015, due to the lack of a state budget. Most providers have continued to provide services since then, but are beginning to exhaust their financial reserves. The failure to reinstate this funding will also result in expensive and unnecessary hospitalizations and incarcerations.

Financing of Public Higher Education Position (March, 2017)

The Central Kane County League supports sustained allocation of state funds for public higher education that will provide quality postsecondary programs throughout the state. Objectives for adequate public funding should be to:

- Provide affordable educational opportunities which foster global competitiveness for the people of Illinois and their employers
- Eliminate and prohibit barriers to funding higher education: constitutional, statutory, and regulatory
- Invest in capital construction and long-term maintenance of higher education facilities
- Attract, maintain, and retain quality teaching staff

In addition, the League supports sustained funding to attract, support, and retain qualified Kane County students through:

- State-funded, need-based financial aid
- State-funded merit-based scholarships
- State-funded grants paying for research assistantships
- State-subsidized internship