December Forum Addresses King County Homeless Crisis
by Lauren Pixley

Homelessness is a complex, multifaceted issue that impacts an indeterminate number of people. Most estimates come from point-in-time counts, which take place annually on a single night. These counts are thought to be underestimates, with the true number of individuals experiencing homelessness every calendar year up to two or three times higher than what is reported due to the discrete nature of the data. This complicates the study of and response to homelessness, but general trends are still clear.

For example, people of color are disproportionately represented among the population of individuals experiencing homelessness, compared to the general King County population, and may experience longer wait times for housing placement. LGBTQ+ folks (especially youth) and victims of domestic violence are also at an increased risk of experiencing homelessness. Seattle is estimated to have the third largest population of individuals experiencing homelessness in the United States, despite initiatives such as the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County, which was set into motion in 2005.

There are several factors that are thought to be associated with homelessness in Seattle and King County, including lack of affordable housing, increasing rent prices in comparison to wages, mental health and addiction, cost of healthcare, zoning laws, tax structure, to name a few. Because of the wide range of risk factors, the response has been highly specific to different needs, which has led to a splintering of funding to many different recipients. King County and the City of Seattle have recently taken steps to unify the response effort by merging city and county resources and strategies.

December’s Forum includes panelists who can speak to these upcoming structural changes and several of the factors mentioned above. We hope you will join us for a meaningful discussion about the ways in which we can move forward together.

Resources
All Home, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness (2019): http://bit.ly/AllHome2019

League of Women Voters of Seattle, Ending Homelessness in King County (2007): http://bit.ly/2QOgVrx


King County Executive’s Office, Bringing the Region Together to Fight Homelessness: Seattle and King County Unveil New Authority to Unify Response Systems and Services (Sep. 4, 2019): http://bit.ly/KChomelessrelease
Connecting with the Leadership

by Christy Wood, LWVSKC 1st Vice President/Development Chair

Nearly five years ago I was on social media complaining about some political thing or two, as one does. The actual complaint has long left my memory, but the impact has stayed with me because it led me to the League of Women Voters. As I was spewing my discontent, my friend (a League member in Michigan) responded. “Stop complaining and start doing. Join the League of Women Voters!”

Her comment wasn’t that succinct, and I think she was a little harder on me when she commented, but either way her comment led me to join and engage with this amazing organization. An organization that every month takes my breath away when I see all that we are doing.

For the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County, October and November are always some of our busiest months. This past October and November were no different: Not only did we aggressively register new voters so they can participate in the general election, but we organized several election-related events, such as Ballots & Baristas, candidate and issue forums, and GOTV activities.

Now more than ever, our members are taking the League’s transformation to heart, moving our work forward in new and exciting ways. And in the background, like a squirrel gathering nuts to sustain itself through the winter, the Board is hard at work strengthening our financial footing. As Development Chair, that means looking at our funding streams and finding ways to raise funds that don’t rely solely on our members, but we do still need your help to close the year out strong. Any support is asked and appreciated. We have several options:

Join the Leadership Circle donor program. This three-year pledge program provides important operational funding that helps us with the day-to-day expenses of running the League’s mission, programs and services. Anyone can join, and three-year commitments start at $720, which is only $240 a year or just $20 a month!

Give a yearly gift of $5, $15 or even $150. Every donation helps us fund the important work we have ahead of us like advocating for campaign finance laws, supporting policies to help combat climate change, and achieving election reform and fair and equitable taxing structures.

Host a house party or buy a gift membership for a friend.

As we near our 100th birthday, your support can mean that one day in the future another person will be complaining about some political thing or another and the League will be there to inspire them to learn more and act on the issues they care about, just like it was for me those few years ago.

I look forward to expanding the League’s development programs. Look for fundraising updates in future issues of The Voter. If you have questions or would like more information on the Leadership Circle donor program, please do not hesitate to contact me at development@seattlelwv.org.
The League of Women Voters frequently presents public forums on issues of public interest. Visit the LWVSKC website, seattlelwv.org, for the most up-to-date information about forum times and locations. Some past forums have been televised and can be accessed from the resources page of the website.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS DECEMBER FORUM

A number of complex and interrelated factors underlie King County’s struggle to end homelessness, including housing affordability, mental health and addiction, the cost of healthcare, and our zoning and tax laws.

At the League’s free December forum, hear from expert panelists on King County’s challenges and successes in this arena.

At publication, panelists include Jennifer Alderman of Snohomish County Human Services; Debbie Carlsen of LGBTQ Allyship; Zachary DeWolf and Felicia Salcedo of All Home; and King County Council Member Jeanne Kohl-Welles.

Thursday, December 5, 2019
7 to 8:30 p.m.
1111 Harvard Avenue, Seattle
During the last several weeks of the November election, you may have learned that there was a last-minute injection of cash into certain City Council races. Such spending can have a disproportionate impact on local elections, especially when polls indicate it will be a close contest between candidates.

The League has long favored election laws that promote a government that is truly representative and accountable to all of its constituents. That vision is incompatible with the kind of undue influence that can arise from unchecked campaign contributions.

In 2017, St. Petersburg, Florida passed a groundbreaking ordinance instituting major campaign finance reforms at the local level. The new law caught the eye of Seattle democracy advocate Cindy Black. She followed up with the proponents of that ordinance and with the support of her organization, Fix Democracy First, set to work drafting a similar law for Seattle.

The product of that effort now has a name: The Clean Campaigns Act. Sponsored by City Councilmember Lorena González, the ordinance is expected to come before the City Council for a hearing before end of the year. The ordinance would reduce the influence of money in politics by:

- Eliminating independent expenditures or contributions from corporations with significant foreign influence as determined by its percentage of shareholders overseas;
- Capping independent expenditures from any single person or organization at $5,000 per election cycle;
- Mandating disclosure of all advertising and other costs by independent expenditures, candidates, and advertisers; and
- Creating Limited Contributor Committees to permit grassroots fundraising above the $5,000 cap when certain criteria are met.

The Clean Campaigns Act directly aligns with local, state, and national League positions. Research has shown that when candidates accept large donations, it creates an appearance of impropriety that reduces our faith in elections, suppresses voter turnout, and makes the public believe that elected officials are beholden to special interests. Given widespread concerns about the integrity of our elections, this law is urgently needed.

The League is thrilled to be partnering with Fix Democracy First and Councilmember González to shepherd this ordinance through the Council. Expect to see more information about hearing dates and an upcoming Action Alert with specific requests. In the meantime, gather your pens, print your postcards, and buy your stamps!

For more information or to get involved directly with this effort, please contact Heather Kelly, Action Chair, at action@seattlelwv.org or 415-516-1201.
LWVS-KC Announces Book Club and Town Hall Collaboration

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County is pleased to announce its inaugural Book Club selection, with a concurrent author talk at Town Hall.

As a continuation of our December program on Homelessness, we will be reading Catching Homelessness: A Nurse’s Story of Falling Through the Safety Net by local author and UW Professor, Josephine Ensign.

Then on Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 2 p.m., Professor Ensign will present an author talk at Town Hall, followed by a private reception with the League.

This is a public event, but the League has a limited number of complimentary tickets available. These are on a first-come, first-served basis. For tickets, please contact your unit leader or email ticket requests to Roslyn@seattlelwv.org. Please be sure to specify how many tickets are being requested.

This edition of The Voter includes questions for discussion at January unit meetings, based on Catching Homelessness. A special thanks to Vicky Downs for suggesting this title and for providing the discussion questions.

1. How does the Southern evangelical Christian value system affect Ensign’s way of life?
2. What seems to give Ensign a sense of self-worth? What seems to diminish it?
3. What are some of the aspects of being homeless that were unknown to you before reading this book?
4. What did you find the most emotional aspect of this story? Why?
5. How is Seattle different from the Richmond described in this book?
Census 2020: Funding and Redistricting
by Cathy O’Shea, LWVSKC Treasurer

There is lots of talk about why the Census is so important. First, population counts are the basis for federal funding that goes to states and local governments and communities. Second, there is the issue of fair representation through redistricting or apportionment—the process of dividing the number of seats in the House of Representatives among the 50 states based on their population.

While outside the scope of this article, there is also the huge impact to government, business, and individuals for the data about who we are and where we live. For example, using the Census for marketing purposes or to discover something about our genealogy. This article will focus on government funding and redistricting.

Funding

There is an abundance of sometimes conflicting information about how much funding King County receives as a result of Census numbers; sources are cited at the end of this article for reference. The U.S. Census Bureau found that 132 federal programs used Census Bureau data to distribute more than $675 billion in funds during fiscal year 2015. (This is for the entire country, not just Washington.) Here are the top 10 programs cited:

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<td>Medical Assistance Program</td>
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<td>HH Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</td>
<td>USDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicare Part B Physicians Fee Schedule Services</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highway Planning and Construction</td>
<td>DOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Pell Grant Program</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>National School Lunch Program</td>
<td>USDA</td>
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<td>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher</td>
<td>Housing and Urban Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title 1 Grants to Local Educational Agencies</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Grants to States</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>Health</td>
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Note: HH is Health and Human Services and ED is Dept. of Education.

These programs are primarily concerned with human services and education; they often benefit the hard-to-count communities.

According to a George Washington University study, in 2016 Washington received more than $16.6 billion in funding from 55 of the largest federal spending programs guided by data derived from the 2010 Census. That figure averages out to $2,300 per person in 2016.

Redistricting

Redistricting occurs after each Census at the federal level and with the cooperation of several other government authorities. Spoiler alert: Washington State is not expected to experience a change in the number of federal legislators representing our state. However, there will likely be changes at the state, county and city levels. The State of Washington will undertake a redistricting of all state districts. The City of Seattle will redistrict in 2022; recently The Seattle Times reported on the changing demographic of Seattle’s City Council districts (link below). King County will realign district boundaries in 2021.

Final Thoughts

People are energized about the Census—it’s about money and power. It’s also about human services and taking care of our communities. Be a Census Ambassador!

Sources


2020 Census
King County COUNTS

continued on next page
January Program Open House Preview
by Chelsea Jordan

Is there something happening in the Seattle-King County area that you think the League hasn’t paid enough attention to or doesn’t have a position on? Do you have a passion for a particular area of public policy that you would like to look into? The January Program Open House will be your time to shine!

This year we’ve already had so many interesting and informative forums—we would love to continue the trend next year. So far King County Elections Chief of Staff, Kendall LeVan Hodson, came to review recent changes to our voting and election laws, and then we heard from a panel of King County Juvenile Detention and community stakeholders about the issues facing juvenile justice in our area. Most recently, we’ve learned about how climate change will impact King County and what we can do about it.

Committees and Units are encouraged to discuss and come up with plans for the League’s 2020-2021 programming schedule. We will be looking for a number of presenters to show the rest of the League your ideas at the January Program Open House on Thursday, Jan. 9th. You can review our current positions at seattlelwv.org/advocacy and our past studies at seattlelwv.org/league-studies.

Please contact Chelsea Jordan at chelsjor@outlook.com for more information or if you’d like to submit a program idea/plan.

Board Briefs: November 2, 2019
Janice Camp, LWVSKC Secretary

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County and Education Fund Boards met on November 2, 2019. What follows is a summary of the meetings.

- Cathy O’Shea presented the Treasurer’s report; the annual financial review of the (c)(4) has been completed and the review of the (c)(3) will be completed within the month.

- With regard to Programs, the Board is considering partnering with LWV Tacoma-Pierce County on a redistricting Forum; the December forum will be on Homelessness; the LWV 100th Birthday Party has been tentatively set for February 10 at Town Hall (the Development committee is in need of volunteers to help plan the Birthday party). The Birthday Party will replace ‘Voices of Democracy’ event this year.

- Roslyn continues to work with Units to increase their participation and engagement.

- The next Action Workshop will be December 7th.

- Cindy Black with Fix Democracy First gave a presentation to the Board about a proposed Seattle ordinance to limit financial contributions to political campaigns.

- Fundraising efforts including membership renewals and Year-end and Leadership Circle asks.

- The Communications Committee is looking for more members to help produce The Voter and update the LWVSKC website.

- Board policies are receiving a biennial review with suggestions for developing guidance for meeting planning and diversity and inclusion.

If there’s anything you think the Board should cover in their meetings, please let us know!

November Education Committee Minutes
submitted by Meg Van Wyk

Those who attended the League’s Education Committee in November discussed different models of delivering advance learning in King County school districts. The discussion was based on an article written by the Northwest Gifted Child Association called “Peeling the Onion: Equity in HiCap” (Highly Capable Programs), which is available at http://bit.ly/NWGCA/doc. The discussion centered on the meaning/definition of equity, a key question that many districts are grappling with.

The committee also discussed how districts redefine assignment areas, and observations about school board candidates campaigns and elections. On November 21, several committee members went to Olympia for a study session on charter schools presented by the Northwest Gifted Child Association (NWGCA) and update the LWVSKC website.

Join a League committee or volunteer for an event—many hands make light (and lighthearted) work!
King County Connects — Announcements

Great Decisions Group to Convene on February 4, 2020

Great Decisions is a nationwide discussion program on world affairs that is organized by the Foreign Policy Association.

The Great Decisions model involves participants reading a briefing book, watching a DVD, and meeting in local discussion groups to talk about a series of predetermined topics.

The topics for 2020 include:

• Climate Change and Global Order
• India and Pakistan
• Red Sea Security
• Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
• U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle
• China’s Road into Latin America
• The Philippines and the U.S.
• Artificial Intelligence and Data

Vicky Downs is hosting the local Great Decisions discussion group, which will have its first meeting on Tuesday, February 4, 2020.

The group will meet every other Tuesday for a total of eight meetings; the final meeting will take place on May 12, 2020.

The group will meet at 909 E. Newton Street in Seattle. Door opens at 7 p.m.; the meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and adjourn at 9 p.m. Please RSVP to Vicky at 206-328-3926 if you would like to attend.

The Great Decisions briefing book and other materials are available through the FPA’s website at https://www.fpa.org/great_decisions/ or by calling 800-628-5754 (ext. 246).

League of Women Voters Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC), in both its values and practices, affirms its beliefs and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

LWVS-KC recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVS-KC subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization’s ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWVS-KC affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, staff and programs.

Seattle City Councilmember Lorena González Seeks at Seattle Action Workshop

It’s time to gear up for Action! Councilmember González will talk about addressing the threat of corruption in our elections. González is the sponsor of Seattle’s Clean Campaigns Act, a proposal which would end huge contributions from super PACs, block campaign donations from foreign-influenced corporations and provide greater transparency to Seattle elections. Other speakers include Mike Pellicciotti (LD 30) for the legislative perspective, and Anne Levinson, former Chair and current Commissioner of the Public Disclosure Commission.

LWVWA’s local Action Workshop includes speaker and panel presentations, issue breakout sessions, and lunch. Lunch and all materials are included in the registration fee.

Saturday, December 7, 2019
Registration and networking at 9 a.m.; workshop from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Avenue, Seattle

To register online, visit: https://lwvwa.org/event-3555819. On-site/day-of registration fee will increase to $40. Discounts are available for youth, and a limited number of scholarships are available if the registration fee would be a barrier to your participation. Scholarship applications are due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3rd; apply at the link above.

Clean and Affordable Energy Conference on December 2

by Raelene Gold, LWVWA Lobby Team Energy Issue Chair

Energy from renewable sources is a priority for the League of Women Voters of Washington. In last year’s state legislative session, we supported a 100% clean energy bill that passed; the bill mandated that all electricity sold in the state come from renewable wind, solar, geothermal or hydropower by 2045. Currently there are many changes happening in the Northwest’s electric grid and at the financially challenged Bonneville Power Administration that will have a large impact on climate change, electric rates, the environment and the economy.

To help understand these changes and future innovations, the LWVWA is a member of the Northwest Energy Coalition and a Community Partner for the Coalition’s Clean and Affordable Conference. The event takes place on Monday, December 2nd at the HUB on the University of Washington campus in Seattle. Expert panelists will explore a new vision for the Northwest electric system in which the integration of emerging customer-side resources will enable utilities to manage electricity supply and demand, and hopefully achieve an efficient, affordable, low-carbon energy system.

For information about the conference and to register, visit www.nwenergy.org. For discounts and scholarships for the conference, email Kat Plimpton at kat@nwenergy.org.
Units Unite Us: How Are We Doing, and What About Those Four F’s?
by Roslyn Duffy

With all of the changes the League and our units have witnessed in the past few years, at times we might feel challenged to answer the question, “Why would someone want to come to a unit meeting?” (This can be true of committee meetings, forums, and other events, too). That answer is coming into focus in many ways.

In September, we introduced the 4 F’s of successful meetings: fun, friendly, focused, and fired up. (*I’ve switched the order, because I realized that fun needs to get more respect!)

True, we work with serious and challenging issues, but there are ways to have fun, too. (Ask a unit leader about that gerrymandered pie!) For many units, December meetings often include more social time. Potlucks, cookie exchanges, and time to simply enjoy one another’s company. Our regular meetings can include fun as well. It would be great to hear how each unit solves this challenge.

Being friendly means both being welcoming and staying connected. Don’t leave those November visitors dangling in the wind. Please be sure to contact them and invite them back. Include them in emails and tell them about The Voter so that they can learn more about our League.

The communication loop (see graphic above) we’re developing and a whole list of agenda possibilities that are now available for the unit meetings offer giant steps in the direction of getting focused as a unified League. Unit heads also regularly share their individual agendas with one another, which is both encouraging and inspiring.

Finally, the more we get these three F’s right, the fired up part naturally follows. We have so much to do, and doing it together makes us stronger. After all, our passion is what brought us together in the first place!

That fired up part is also the fuel needed for our Adopt-a-Voter efforts to light a fire of enthusiasm for others. Wouldn’t 100% voter turnout be a wonderful way to celebrate the League’s 100th anniversary?

March On!
Board & Committee Contacts

Term | Executive Committee | Phone | Email contact
--- | --- | --- | ---
2019-21 President | Alyssa Weed | 206-329-4848 | president@seattlelwv.org
2018-20 1st VP - Development | Christy Wood | 206-707-3845 | development@seattlelwv.org
2019-21 2nd VP - Action | Heather Kelly | 206-329-4848 | action@seattlelwv.org
2017-19 Secretary | Janice Camp | 206-329-4848 | janice@seattlelwv.org
2018-20 Treasurer | Cathy O’Shea | 425-753-4182 | treasurer@seattlelwv.org

Directions: Go into the Park through the North entrance at 74th and drive EAST toward water. At the STOP sign, turn LEFT to park in front of the Brig, or RIGHT, for more parking.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

Queen Anne/Magnolia/Ballard (Day Unit) – Kerry Peterson
10:00 a.m. Contact unit leader for info bmqaday@seattlelwv.org 206-619-0867

NOT MEETING IN DECEMBER

Bellevue/Kirkland/Redmond – Cathy O’Shea
12:00 p.m. Kirkland Library 308 Kirkland Avenue coshea120@gmail.com 425-753-4182

Issaquah – Judy Love
10:00 a.m. Issaquah City Hall Coho Room, 2nd Floor 130 E. Sunset Way judysteveL@gmail.com 425-417-8600

Mercer Island – Toni Okada and Julie Sarkissian
9:30 a.m. Emmanuel Episcopal Church 4400 86th Avenue SE td.okada@yahoo.com juliesarkissian@hotmail.com 206-232-1418 206-236-2953

N. King County – Judy Deiro and Sally Corbett
7:00 p.m. Third Place Commons Lake Forest Park judy.deiro@gmail.com sallycorbett@comcast.net 425-820-9096 206-356-3459

University House/Wallingford – Janet Kime
2:00 p.m. University House San Juan Room 4400 Stone Way N. (Seattle) kraftyjanet@comcast.net 206-588-0988

UNIT TIMES AND LOCATIONS SUBJECT TO CHANGE; PLEASE CHECK WITH UNIT LEADER.

UNIT TIMES AND LOCATIONS SUBJECT TO CHANGE; PLEASE CHECK WITH UNIT LEADER.
LWVSKC DECEMBER FORUM:
Homelessness

Thursday, December 5
7:00 p.m.

Seattle First Baptist Church
1111 Harvard Ave (at Seneca)
Seattle, WA 98122

Free and open to the public

A number of complex and interrelated factors underlie King County's struggle to end. At the League's free December forum, hear from expert panelists on King County's challenges and successes in this arena. Panelists include: Jennifer Alderman of Snohomish County Human Services; Debbie Carlsen of LGBTQ Allyship; Zachary DeWolf and Felicia Salcedo of All Home; and King County Council Member Jeanne Kohl-Welles.