

**League of Women Voters of the Umpqua Valley  
Proposal for a LWVOR Study 2005-2007**

**Title**

Homeless Youth In Oregon

**Scope**

Research the number and conditions of homeless youth in Oregon, with emphasis on contributing causes, medical, housing and educational needs. Identify the skills and support services homeless youth need to leave streetlife-- and to lead sustainable lives avoiding a lifelong homelessness\*. Examine programs and proposals for meeting these needs, including state, county, private and faith-based programs and proposals. Identify "best practices" solutions in urban and rural settings wherever they are operating. Clarify the legal structures that affect the lives of homeless youth. Make recommendations for actions to be taken.

**Outlook for Work**

- A. Local Leagues will participate by gathering the information outlined in the scope in their counties. You know your counties and your communities, but lists and suggestions will be outlined to guide this process. (The county Commissions on Children and Families have begun this process and the report from the Task force on Homeless and Runaway Youth is available.) This examination will cover what is known, what is unknown, what exists, what is needed.
- B. Identify the local partners interested in working out solutions.
- C. Financing issues will be considered at various levels.
- D. The state committee will visit, examine and describe "best practice programs" in both urban and rural settings with the assistance of those who find them in their locations. The Every Member material compiled and produced by the state committee will present a picture of the situation throughout Oregon.
- E. The committee will provide statements or questions that will lead to concurrence or consensus and a chosen course of action.

\* We found it prudent to focus on the needs of the homeless youth (safety, shelter, food, education and skill building, counseling and mentoring, and independence) rather than on the stressors they have walked away from (physical and emotional abuse, substance abuse, lack of success in school, domestic violence, familial distress and mental illness).