Poverty in Minnesota
Study Proposal 07.04

1. Describe your project idea, including clearly defining the problems and specific policy questions to be addressed.

Identify factors that keep traditional communities of color in poverty at higher rates than immigrant groups. Specifically the poverty rates for African Americans and Native Americans whoch are the highest have held steady for the last 15 years while other groups (Hispanic & Asian) poverty rates have been falling in MN.

2. Why is this problem important?

Because these 2 groups of people have not shown any progress in moving from poverty while other groups have. Africna Americans in MN have a significantly higher rate of poverty as compared to the national average for this group.

3. How could the Citizens League make a unique contribution?

In 1977 the Citizens published a report on barriers to climbing out of poverty which are still very relevant today. The League is in a unique position to state that the problems have not changed and the current policies have not made any real progress in helpng these two groups. The League can also use the study committee process to identify factors that are different between immigrants and non-immigrant people of color that have an impact on moving out of poverty.

4. What are prospects that project would yield recommendations that could be implemented and have a major impact on the problem?

Very good; in fact the 1977 report contins many recommendations that have not been implemented but are stil relevant as evidenced in the fact that a 2006 report by MN Taxpayer's League contains many of the same recommendations.

5. Explain how this problem can be addressed by data, research, and reason? Identify probable sources for data and research.

Data - The Marginal Tax Rate program can be piloted to gather actual data on real people (in partnership with Pilot City) and thereby provide proof of how the welfare wall functions on real people.
Research - bring to surface other subjective issues that cobtribute to groups staying in poverty. May show that the current approaches don't even begin to address major factors in problem.

6. Explain how this proposal can be framed without partisan bias.

Moving people out of poverty has no partisan bias; we should be focused on identifying what keeps people in poverty and structuring a system that actually accomplishes moving them out of poverty. The funds are already being spent; we should make recommendations to have the system structured to better use the current funds.

7. Why would this project be attractive to members?

Because it connects past work by the league that is still relevant to today. It engages communties that the league wants to reach out to. It is a persistent, widespread problem to a larhe segment of our population.

8. How would this project reach out to under-represented segments of the community?

Through partnering with various community organizations that work in these communties. By partnering wth other people currently working on poverty (i.e. Northway Comm. Trust)

9. What is the potential for making this issue visible to a broader public? Why?

Very good; there seems to be alot of "buzz" around poverty right now. The MN Taxpayer's "Disincentive to Earn" project could be the vehicle to make the welfare wall "real" to policy makers.

10. What resources—funding, experts, etc. might be available to support this project?

Minneapolis Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation.