Citizens League Structure for Policy Engagement and Advancement

The Citizens League has three committees for framing and advancing policy work:

- Policy Advisory Committee
- Executive Committee
- Board of Directors

There are three basic stages for Citizens League policy work:

- Framing or pre-work
- Developing solutions
- Advancing solutions

Policy Advisory Committee

The Policy Advisory Committee advises the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors on policy decisions and offers opportunities to evaluate potential policy projects and contribute to policy work. The Policy Advisory Committee is open to all Citizens League members and is co-chaired by members of the Board of Directors. An active group of approximately 25-30 members attend monthly meetings with some regularity, while committee notices and information are currently sent to about 90 Citizens League members.

The Policy Advisory Committee is the first group that we typically engage in a policy discussion. Some of the functions of the Policy Advisory Committee include:

- Reviewing and evaluating study proposals that come in through the web form
- Providing volunteers for small group activities to frame and advance Citizens League policy. Small groups have included:
    - Standards and Practices
    - Tax Policy
    - Medical Care Advancement
    - Transportation Advancement
    - Policy Open House Planning
    - Instant Runoff Voting Advancement (Short-Term Policy Group)
    - Judicial Selection Advancement (Short-Term Policy Group)

On advancement efforts for recent policy work, we typically invite broader participation than just the Policy Advisory Committee. We typically invite those who have served on a study committee or the entire Citizens League email list.

Policy Advancement

When Citizens League policy frameworks and solutions have the opportunity to advance, members are invited to be involved in decision making based on recent policy work. Recently, groups have assembled on transportation and medical care. Policy positions can be advanced that are the product of a study committee, a short-term policy group, or a convening effort. Policy advancement requires ongoing assessment of how the Citizens League framing of a policy area

relate to current policy discussions. Policy advancement applies to work produced by study committees, convening efforts and short-term policy groups that reinterpret old recommendations.

Study Committees

A Citizens League tradition for more than 50 years, study committees offer an opportunity for engaged members and organizations to produce policy frameworks and solutions. The Citizens League is currently finishing an Immigration and Higher Education Study Committee. Study committees on water policy and poverty will begin in 2008. We are making the process by which we frame study committee work more deliberate and more effective. Building more relationships at the front end of the process to help us focus the committee charge and assemble an effective study committee is a key part of the process. Some of the engagement efforts and tools that we have learned about through MAP 150 will become ways that we frame study committee work to broaden the input into our work.

Study committee charges and reports are approved by the Board of Directors.

Convening Efforts and Workshops

In some cases, a process that builds relationships in order to produce policy solutions is the most effective course. This can be less about new policy ideas and more about implementation of existing good ideas that are politically difficult to implement. The Minnesota Mental Health Action Group (MMHAG) is an example of a project where the Citizens League convened a broad group of stakeholders to agree and act on existing ideas for policy solutions in a committee structure. Our current effort on long-term care is based more on convening stakeholders in a workshop structure. Convening efforts and workshops can also be a way to frame study committees that follow.

Board approval when appropriate.

Short-Term Policy Groups

The Citizens League has 56 years of amazing policy history. Small groups of engaged members review historic policy work, meet to discuss, and offer recommendations in the context of today's policy decisions. A proposed statement on judicial selection is currently before the Citizens League Board. The Policy Advisory Committee decides whether or not the Executive Committee should consider work from short-term policy groups.

With the development of a Citizens League electronic policy library, we will encourage members to self-organize around areas of interest and bring their work to the Policy Advisory Committee for review. This will allow us to better advance historic work.

Propose that Executive Committee receive the authority to approve and that all Board members be invited to these meetings.