



AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS IN THE FREDERICKSBURG AREA

Background

The League of Women Voters of the Fredericksburg Area (LWVFRA) adopted a study in 2017 on the relevant problems and issues for low-income seniors in Planning District 16 (Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline and King George Counties and the City of Fredericksburg). The study included an examination of current and future low-income senior population projections, existing federal, state and local programs, and housing support options in other Virginia jurisdictions. The League used a consensus process to determine how local governments in Planning District 16 could effectively begin to address our area's identified affordable housing needs.

The League's Position

The League of Women Voters of the Fredericksburg Area believes that it is becoming increasingly necessary for local governments to take a more prominent role in assuring that there are affordable housing options for low-income senior residents in Planning District 16. Local government jurisdictions are in a position to consider a variety of actions and to act independently or collaboratively to meet the current and future housing needs of our low-income seniors. The LWVFRA recommends the following practical and affordable actions because they can be accomplished without additional state legislative approval and have the potential to increase the affordable housing options for low-income seniors in a relatively short period of time.

The League supports:

- Revisions to local zoning ordinances to allow expanded house-sharing options and accessory dwellings for low-income seniors.
- A consortium (contiguous units of local governments with a binding agreement) of the City of Fredericksburg with a sufficient number of counties to meet the population requirements of the HUD Home Investments Partnership Program (HOME), so that the area can compete for the funds allocated to the Commonwealth, with the understanding that participating jurisdictions will provide a ¼ match of the HOME funds received.
- A local Housing Trust Fund composed of one or more local government jurisdictions in Planning District 16, with a dedicated funding source in order to leverage private and public financing to develop and/or rehabilitate affordable housing projects that benefit low-income seniors.
- A land bank to acquire and maintain surplus, foreclosed or abandoned properties, then transfer them back to responsible ownership and productive use in accordance with local government housing priorities, including affordable housing for low-income seniors.
- A timely update of the Affordable Housing Task Force Mid-Year Report (George Washington Regional Commission, September 26, 2008), with particular emphasis on the low-income senior population.
- An "Affordable Housing Advisory Committee" for Planning District 16 that includes broad community representation to evaluate recommendations and proposals developed by The League and other civic organizations, in addition to serving as a coalition to help set priorities for action and advocacy.