

Citizen Participation Position as Adopted by the Board Spring 2004

The League of Women Voters of Bellingham/Whatcom County believes that Citizen Advisory Committees perform a valuable service in representing citizens' views to governmental bodies and communication information to the general public.

We believe that the following characteristics lead to successful citizen advisory committees:

- Clear definition of purpose/mission statement
- Set terms of office
- Term limits
- Regularly scheduled meetings
- Fair selection process
- Diversity with balanced representation of the community
- Two-way communication between the committee and the parent agency
- Agendas and minutes accessible to the general public.

Where appropriate, appoint committees for specific projects with limited duration.

To increase the effectiveness of CAC's it is very important for agencies to provide new member orientation so that members have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities.

Suggestions to agencies to encourage more citizens to serve on boards and committees and increase the effectiveness of their involvement include:

- Maintaining a website, publicizing vacancies, encouraging people to apply, having open houses and traveling displays, and getting media to give more public recognition of advisory boards' actions.