

# Citizens League

## Mission, Vision, and Approach

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### Mission

The Citizens League is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that empowers people to engage in civic life and public policy, to make Minnesota a better place to live and work for everyone.

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### Vision

Through our work:

- Minnesotans of all backgrounds, parties, and ideologies are engaged, inspired and empowered to take an active role in public policymaking, fueling Minnesota's ability to implement innovative and effective policy solutions.
  - The Citizens League is a relevant and respected policy resource and a trusted convener, focused on solving current and future problems, building civic capacity, and earning the ongoing support of our Minnesota community.
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### Our Approach

The Citizens League is unique in how we approach policymaking. We:

- **Believe public policy happens everywhere**, not just in government institutions and the public sector. "Public policy" happens at the Capitol and in government chambers, and also in businesses, nonprofits, communities, congregations and families. The most important public policy issues of our day need engagement from all types of institutions and individuals.
- **Bring diverse perspectives and people together.** We know that engaging people across ideology, background, race & ethnicity, geography, sectors and parties produces better solutions. We work with Minnesotans from a wide variety of communities and sectors to understand important public policy issues and identify the roles each stakeholder has in contributing to solutions. We believe there is positive societal value in creating and sustaining connections across differences.
- **Seek insights from research, data, and lived experiences of individuals and communities to inform our programming and our policy recommendations.** The Citizens League seeks out rigorous research and diverse, trusted sources of information to shape our work. We seek ways to center the lived experiences of those most impacted by public policies, who are vital partners in defining the problem and crafting sustainable solutions. We recognize that everyone has a lens or a perspective they bring to policy work, and we seek to honor these perspectives.

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### Our Approach

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- **Acknowledge that there is a historical context to all policies, systems and structures,** which invite new approaches to move forward. Not all groups or people have been part of designing existing policy; both intentionally and unintentionally, people most impacted by issues have often been absent from the problem-solving table. The Citizens League recognizes this context (including how it has shaped our own organization's history), and we continually seek deeper engagement to create innovative and impactful policy solutions.
- **Operate with transparency and humility.** We aim to use a process and practices that build trust among all stakeholders, so that our outcomes and policy recommendations are similarly rooted in trust. Our staff and board commit to continually learning and growing in our work.
- **Advance policy solutions in collaboration with a broad base of support.** We aim to build coalitions and networks to move good ideas forward, even in a fractured political and policy landscape. The Citizens League balances policy idealism with political pragmatism – exploring bold and innovative ideas, and identifying achievable actions with the most meaningful impact.
- **Disseminate policy information and programming in ways that are accessible to a broad range of stakeholders.** Our work connects systemic policy issues to the real stories of Minnesotans impacted by these policies. We strive to make our work as accessible as possible to people across income level, geography, race and ethnicity, and ability.
- **Recognize the tension and impossibility inherent in the very concept of finding a singular solution that serves all people.** However, we will always strive to welcome, acknowledge, and respect discussions that bring to light important nuances to policy conversations.

*Approved by the Citizens League Board of Directors, March 2021*

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Learn more at [citizensleague.org](https://citizensleague.org)