

## LCW / YWW Policy Statement on Political Participation

Recently there have been questions about whether participants in Yes We Will and/or staff members of Lawrence CommunityWorks – the lead sponsor of YWW – can participate in the fundraising process for candidates. The answer is **"YES!"**

First, let us clarify that as a campaign and an organization, YWW and LCW are **completely nonpartisan**, dedicated to providing the most accurate information available about every candidate, and serving as a forum for all candidates' voices equally. No YWW or LCW member is allowed to promote or recruit for a particular candidate at YWW or LCW events. No LCW resources, equipment, space, or time may be used to promote or support a particular candidate. Moreover, if: 1) you are a candidate yourself; 2) you are paid by a candidate for campaign work; or 3) you hold an official role in a campaign (campaign chair, treasurer, etc), then you may NOT participate in YWW activities (planning meetings, door-knocking, etc.) – although you may of course attend events such as Mixers and Candidate Forums.

HOWEVER, a core value of YWW, clearly stated in our Pledge and Campaign Statement, is **participation**. YWW encourages full participation by as many people as possible in the political process. An essential part of this process is to choose and support a candidate: join a campaign, donate money or time to candidates, or raise money from others. Forbidding such activity is neither legal nor ethical, and a violation of the right of all citizens to participate in the democratic process. **As private individuals, outside of LCW and of YWW**, many members (including staff and board) are supporting a wide variety of candidates. As private individuals, they are not only free but encouraged to do so. This is part of our mission of empowering the people of Lawrence.

## LCW Statement of Local Investment

Many people know that LCW invests in the people and places of Lawrence. But some people wonder, "As a nonprofit organization, does Lawrence CommunityWorks pay taxes? And how much money does LCW get from the government, particularly the City?"

### *Paying Taxes*

As a nonprofit, LCW is not required to pay any taxes. However, as part of our commitment to this City, we DO choose to pay substantial taxes and contribute in this way (among many others) to the public good. LCW owns 19 properties that are either developed or in development, as community centers, office space, or affordable housing. **In 2008 we paid \$158,765 in annual taxes** on these properties—most of which were tax-delinquent before we bought them—which are owned through a number of corporate entities, including Reviviendo Housing LLC, Nuestra Casa LLC, and others. Because of the current difficult economic climate and tight resources, we have chosen to request a small abatement from the City on our upcoming tax bill, which will reduce the amount we pay to **\$146,463**.

### *Operating Funds*

LCW receives little operating support from public sources. Our operating budget – what it costs us to pay staff, keep the doors open, develop projects, and run programs – is approximately \$2.8 million dollars. Of this amount, less than \$300,000 – about 10% - is public money. \$37,500 of this public money is given to us by the City of Lawrence. \$17,500 is CDBG money – about 1/2 of 1% of our budget. We raise the rest from private sources - including foundations, corporations, and individuals – and thus bring about \$2.5 million of new private investment into this City each year. We use this money to run our programs for hundreds of Lawrence families, and to pay our dedicated staff, 80% of whom live in Lawrence.

### *Real Estate Funding Sources*

LCW also receives public money to fund our real estate development work, particularly our housing work. Over the last ten years we have invested \$24 million in developing rental housing for working families, new homeownership opportunities, and community facilities for Lawrencians. This money has come from a mix of public and private sources. It includes about \$4.5 million dollars – a little less than 20% - that has been awarded to LCW by the City of Lawrence over the last ten years. This is mostly Federal money that comes to the City earmarked exclusively for affordable housing development, and that is exactly what we use it for.

### *Leveraging Private Investments*

Finally, LCW also works to support homeownership in Lawrence and to educate first-time homebuyers. Since 2005, LCW-educated homebuyers have leveraged over \$23 million of private investment in Lawrence, buying 122 homes in the City and thus contributing to the local tax base.