

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Honorable City Council
FROM: John Brand, Senior Management Analyst JB
DATE: July 24, 2007 (CC Meeting of 8/01/2007)
SUBJECT: Consider League of California Cities Grassroots Network Program

BACKGROUND

In 2001, the member cities of the League of California Cities (LOCC) approved the formation of a professionally staffed Grassroots Network Program. The purpose of the Grassroots Network Program is to provide support on legislative issues and ballot measures. In concert with city officials, grassroots staff works with legislators, media outlets, and community-based organizations in support of city priorities. The Grassroots Network Program is funded by a 50% increase in the dues of league member cities.

DISCUSSION

The LOCC resolution establishing the Grassroots Network Program stipulated that the League membership vote of the continuation of the program following an initial five-year period. The League board of directors has scheduled that election for September 8, 2007 at the Annual Conference Business Meeting in Sacramento.

Membership surveys (attached) show high ratings for the League Grassroots Network Program. The League has identified a number of the program's accomplishments (also attached) including the passage of Proposition 1A in 2004 with an 84% approval by the voters. As indicated, the Grassroots Network Program is paid for by member dues. The approved City Council budget for FY 2007-2008 includes an appropriation of \$11,964 that is sufficient to pay the City's share to participate in the continuation of the Grassroots Network Program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve Continuation of the Grassroots Network Program.

Attachments

**A SPECIAL REPORT TO THE CITIES OF CALIFORNIA
From the League Board of Directors**

"Celebrating Five Years of Success With The League Grassroots Network Program"

Dear Colleagues:

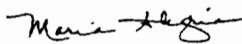
The passage of Proposition 1A in 2004 with an 84 percent approval rating represented a milestone for city governments because it stopped the continuing raids by the state on city revenues. This was one of the highest rates of voter approval of any ballot measure in the history of California—a fact many observers attribute to the premium voters place on local public services and the fevered grassroots support that backed the ballot measure.

The overwhelming level of grassroots support in passing Proposition 1A marked a return on a very important investment made by California cities in 2001 to develop a strong and professionally staffed Grassroots Network Program. After five years, this program boasts an impressive track record and is unmatched by few organizations in the nation.

The Grassroots Network Program was originally approved overwhelmingly in 2001. The resolution approved stipulated that the League membership would vote on its continuation following an initial five year pilot period. The League board of directors has scheduled that election for September 8, 2007 at the Annual Conference Business Meeting in Sacramento.

This packet of information is designed to assist your city in making its decision on this question. Please feel free to contact the League staff, any board member or me if you have any questions. We look forward to discussing this issue with you and, if the membership agrees, continuing the excellence in protecting the cities of California that the Grassroots Network Program has helped us achieve.

Sincerely,



Maria Alegria, President
Mayor, Pinole



Jim Madaffer, 1st Vice President
Council Member, San Diego



Heather Fargo, 2nd Vice President
Mayor, Sacramento



Ron Loveridge, Immediate Past President
Mayor, Riverside



Christopher McKenzie
Executive Director

Grassroots Network Reauthorization

Background

In the summer of 2001, the membership of the League held an historic vote to consider amending the League bylaws to approve the establishment of a new program known as the “Grassroots Network,” financed in total by a 50% increase in the dues of League member cities. The vote was held by mail ballot, and the support for the proposition was overwhelming: (94%) among the 326 (or 68%) of eligible cities that cast votes by mail ballot. The proposition approved also contained a sunset date, discussed below.

2007 Membership Survey

The League engaged APCO Insight, an independent research firm, to conduct a confidential opinion survey to help the League understand members’ expectations and attitudes towards the League’s legislative and ballot measure advocacy, especially grassroots activities. This is the third in a series of surveys conducted to evaluate the Grassroots Network. A baseline was established in 2001. A survey to measure progress was conducted in 2004. The most recent 2007 survey assesses how members view the contributions of the Grassroots Network before a decision is made about the future of the program at the upcoming Annual Conference. The survey also identifies areas where improvement can propel the program to greater effectiveness.

Randomly selected mayors, council members and city managers were asked to complete the 2007 survey. Each participant had the option of completing the questionnaire in hard copy or online. The findings will allow for statistical comparison among various functional, city size and regional categories. City officials not selected for the sample but who wished to participate were given an opportunity to provide input.

Responses were received from 467 city officials, a strong 31% response rate. The consultant received 257 mailed questionnaires and 210 responses were completed online. Some key findings:

- City officials are more involved with the League than they were in 2004.
- Nine in ten members rate the job the League is doing as excellent or good.
- E-mail is the preferred communication vehicle for receiving information on grassroots action.
- Seven in ten respondents are familiar with the Grassroots Network.
- About three-quarters of respondents say they are familiar with their regional representative.
- Compared to five years ago (prior to the Grassroots Network), 84% of respondents feel that their efforts on pending legislation and state budget issues have become more effective.

Vote to Reauthorize Program Set for September 8

Article XVII of the League bylaws requires that the membership reauthorize the program by no later than December 31, 2007 or it shall be discontinued by December 31, 2008. At its February meeting, the board approved holding that election at the General Assembly of the Annual Conference. This will happen on September 8, 2007. A resolution to be submitted by the board of directors to extend the program is attached for your consideration and approval. Also, attached is a packet of information for your review and approval that will be sent to each member city, including an overview of the results of the latest member satisfaction survey.

Grassroots Network Program Accomplishments

Since its inception the League's Grassroots Network of 15 field staff have provided critical support on legislative issues as well as ballot measures. The following is a partial list of accomplishments of the Grassroots program during this period.

- **Increased Participation and Effectiveness.** Participation by city officials at League events and activities has increased substantially as a result of grassroots activities and staff. This involvement has led to the League membership having increased effectiveness on city priorities at the state and federal levels. League Conferences and regional Division meetings have increased attendance significantly.
- **Stronger Partnerships.** The League's Grassroots Network Program has strengthened partnerships with many other organizations including organized labor, chambers of commerce and the business community, environmental organizations and other community based organizations, increasing the League's credibility and clout on statewide issues.
- **Credible Threat to Go to Ballot.** Greater participation and improved partnerships have supported fundraising activities for the League's political action committee, CITIPAC. This fundraising effort has strengthened the League's bargaining position and helped establish the organization and its members as "players" on statewide policy issues and ballot measures.
- **Prevented Cuts in City Funding.** The program played a central role in the League's legislative efforts to prevent a state takeover of local government revenues in the 2002 state budget process. Similar efforts in subsequent years have been successful as well.
- **Retained Local Land Use Authority.** In 2002, 2005, 2006 and 2007 the Grassroots staff organized opposition to help defeat a number of legislative proposals designed to curb local authority on affordable housing development and place into state law severe punitive penalties on local government
- **Protected the Local Sales Taxes.** The program was a key factor in defeating legislation in 2002 to redistribute local sales tax revenues.
- **Promoted Funding for Affordable Housing.** The Grassroots Network staff helped support city efforts to pass Proposition 46 in 2002. This was a statewide bond measure for affordable housing.
- **Protected Transportation Funds.** In 2002, the League Grassroots Network staff also served as a powerful part of the on-the-ground, organizing team for the passage of Proposition 42 on the statewide ballot. This proposition was the first step taken to protect and dedicate sales tax on motor fuels for transportation programs at both the state and local levels.

- **Signature Gathering for Proposition 65.** The League's Grassroots staff coordinated the gathering of over 100,000 signatures to place Proposition 65 on the 2004 state ballot. This measure would have protected local government revenues from further raids by the state legislature and governor. More importantly, it became the critical leverage needed to negotiate Proposition 1A that was ultimately passed by the voters of California.
- **Passed Proposition 1A on the 2004 State Ballot - Saving \$1 Billion Annually.** Almost 85 percent of California voters approved a measure to protect local government sales tax, property tax and VLF revenues on the 2004 state ballot. The Grassroots Network staff played a pivotal role in producing overwhelming editorial support for Proposition 1A across California, building a strong coalition of supporting organizations and community groups, and organizing press opportunities in support of the measure. If Proposition 1A had not been enacted and the legislature continued along its predictable path, we estimate that the cities of California would be losing just over \$1 billion annually, growing over time.
- **ASAE Award of Excellence.** In 2005 the League's Grassroots Network Program received the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Award of Excellence for its grassroots campaign on Proposition 1A.
- **Focus on Redevelopment.** The League has established a formal partnership with the California Redevelopment Association designed to build community-based and media support for redevelopment activities in local communities. This partnership relies heavily on the League grassroots network and staff to execute its mission.
- **2004 Infrastructure Bond Measures.** The League's grassroots organization worked on both the legislative passage of the largest infrastructure bond packages ever passed in the nation, as well as the campaign to secure voter approval of Proposition 1A – E and Proposition 84. Proposition 1B alone will pump a minimum of \$1 billion into city street and road repairs over the next few years.
- **NO on Proposition 90 Campaign.** The League's Grassroots Network Program led the field operations against Proposition 90 on the November 2006 ballot. This measure was an extremely destructive proposal that would have dramatically crippled local government land use authority and squandered tax payer money on uncontrolled development. The measure was defeated after a very targeted and strategic campaign effort.
- **Fundraising for CITIPAC.** The Grassroots staff heads regional efforts to raise money for CITIPAC, the political action committee for California's cities. This PAC is used to fund campaigns to pass or oppose ballot measures affecting city priorities.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: What is the League's Grassroots Network Program?

A: It is a program that was approved in 2001 to better focus the League's lobbying efforts on behalf of cities through a statewide, professional field staff. In concert with city officials, grassroots staff utilizes strategic contacts with key legislators on priority city issues, delivers League messages to appropriate media outlets and organize community-based organizations in support of city priorities.

Q: Why Did the League Start a Grassroots Program?

A: A strong grassroots program is one of three essential elements needed to achieve success in an organization's lobbying effort. This is especially true in California. The grassroots program was started to strengthen the League's lobbying effort, primarily aimed at stopping the state from taking local government revenues to meet state general fund shortfalls.

Q: Is the League Grassroots Program Permanent?

A: No. When the League first adopted the grassroots program, the conditions of approval required a review of the program after five years and a subsequent vote of the League membership to approve the program permanently. A membership vote on the program is scheduled for the 2007 League Annual Conference in Sacramento. Each year the board of directors reviews the program to determine if it remains successful.

Q: Do Other Statewide Associations Have Grassroots Programs?

A: While other associations use grassroots strategies in their organization's lobbying efforts, the investment in the League's grassroots program is unique in its scope and effectiveness in California as well as across the nation. Many other associations contact the League to request information on the Grassroots Network.

Q: Has the League Grassroots Network Program Been Successful?

A: Three surveys of the League's membership have confirmed a very high rate of satisfaction among the membership for the program. Beyond this, the program was instrumental in the successful passage of Proposition 1A in 2004. This measure prevents the state from taking local government revenues; the program has been successful in other ballot measures including one to protect local government transportation revenues (Prop 42), another to pass a housing bond for affordable housing projects (Prop 46) and the program was a key factor in the defeat of a recent ballot measure (Prop 90) that was a serious threat to local government land use authority. In addition, the program has been successful in numerous battles over legislation in the California state legislature.

Q: Will A Dues Increase Be Necessary to Extend the Grassroots Network Program?

A: No. The program is funded through dues approved in 2001 to pay for the addition of 15 new professional field staff members. No dues increase will be necessary if the program is extended since its funding is now absorbed by the base League dues.

Q: Now that Proposition 1A Passed, Do We Need this Program Anymore?

A: Yes. Despite the passage of Proposition 1A in 2004, the legislature has endless avenues to threaten local government authority and revenues. To terminate this program would essentially return the League and the cities of this state back to a position of extreme vulnerability. It would be a big step backward in the development of political clout for the cities of California.

Q: Has the Grassroots Program Improved the Political Standing of Cities?

A: Yes. When combined with a strong lobbying team and the “credible threat to go to the statewide ballot” on key city issues, the Grassroots Program has improved the capacity of the League to partner with the legislature, governor and other key organizations around the state. These new and stronger relationships have been productive in other arenas, the most important being the League’s ability to affect legislation threatening local government authority.

Q: How Does the League Get City Officials’ Feedback on the Program?

A: Since 2001, the League has conducted three membership satisfaction surveys, focused on the perceptions of city officials about the League’s programs, particularly the Grassroots Program. The survey completed in spring of 2007 revealed strong support for the program and the League’s services. Some highlights are:

- City officials are more involved with the League than they were in 2004.
- Nine in ten members rate the job the League is doing as excellent or good.
- Seven in ten respondents are familiar with the Grassroots Network.
- About three-quarters of respondents say they are familiar with their regional representative.
- Compared to five years ago (prior to the Grassroots Network), 84% of respondents feel that their efforts on pending legislation and state budget issues have become more effective.

**RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE RENEWAL OF THE LEAGUE GRASSROOTS
NETWORK PROGRAM**

Source: League Board of Directors

Referred to:

WHEREAS, until 2004 the cities of California were faced with continual actions by the legislature and the administration to take city revenues and use those revenues to counter deficits in the state general fund; and

WHEREAS, this repeated action by the legislature and the administration seriously threatened the ability of local government to deliver essential public services to local communities; and

WHEREAS, in 2001 the Board of Directors and membership of the League of California Cities took actions to strengthen the effectiveness of the League and to prevent the year-after-year erosion of local public services; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the League overwhelmingly supported the establishment of the League's Grassroots network program and the accompanying dues increase to hire and support 15 new, professional grassroots staff positions in the organization; and

WHEREAS, the Grassroots network program in the League has been a key factor in the League's efforts to secure passage of Proposition 1A in 2004 that placed an effective constitutional restraint against the state continuing to take local government revenues to help meet state fiscal problems; and

WHEREAS, the League grassroots network program has been effective in other statewide ballot measures battles including Proposition 42 in 2002, protecting transportation money for transportation purposes; and Proposition 46 in 2002, enacting a statewide bond measure for affordable housing; and the most recent defeat in 2006 of Proposition 90 that threatened to squander taxpayer money and negate local land use decision-making authority; and

WHEREAS, the League grassroots network program has proven to be an effective tool in support of the League's legislative program; and

WHEREAS, the League's grassroots network program is known as one of the preeminent grassroots programs in the country; and

WHEREAS, Article XVII, Section 3 (c) of the League bylaws provides that the membership of the League shall be asked to vote before December 31, 2007 on the continuation of the Grassroots program beyond December 31, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the League Board of Directors desires to hold this election at the Annual Business Meeting of the League scheduled to be held in on September 8, 2007 in conjunction with the 2007 Annual Conference in Sacramento; and

WHEREAS, the League Board of Directors respectfully urges each city to support continuation of the grassroots network program because of its proven effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the extension of the grassroots network program will not cause a dues increase for cities since support for the program is now part of the base budget of the League of California Cities; and now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the League of California Cities, assembled in annual Conference in Sacramento, September 8, 2007, that the Grassroots Network Program, first established by the member cities of the League of California Cities in 2001, be continued and operated in accordance with the bylaws of the League of California Cities.

Third and Final Member Satisfaction Survey Results Show High Ratings for the League and the Grassroots Network

Background:

In just five years, the Grassroots Network has become an integral part of the League's effort to restore and protect local control for California cities. This innovative program put 15 Regional Representatives on the ground across the state in 2002 to bring the presence and impact of cities to bear on the legislative process and statewide ballot measures. The Regional Network is designed to serve as a liaison strengthening the connection between city officials and the League to accomplish common objectives. The League has a collaborative relationship with city officials working to help them focus their message and ensuring an effective role for city officials in the shaping of public policy affecting cities at the state and national level.

Some of the many accomplishments made possible by the Network include the passage of Proposition 1A in 2004 to protect local revenues and the defeat of Proposition 90, a ballot measure that would have seriously eroded land use powers, in 2006.

From the outset, city leaders understood the sizable impact the Network would have in executing the League's mission. However, the League also committed to an independent assessment every few years to measure how well the new program served the organization's members. APCO Insight has just conducted the third and final survey of membership satisfaction with the League and the Network. We had a phenomenal response to the survey and found the results very positive.

Results Provide Key Insights into League's Effectiveness:

APCO's research method included a mixed mode survey with mailings to 1500 randomly selected League members with a sizable response rate. The results show over the course of the three surveys a steady progress in terms of level of awareness of the Grassroots Regional Network and its impact. This is significant because it reflects the thorough approach the League took to develop and implement the Network.

The survey results provide a number of very important and interesting findings. Responders say that the League is accomplishing its mission of advocating on behalf of California cities and protecting city revenues. The percentage of members rating the League's job as excellent has more than doubled since the first survey in 2001. The three surveys also show that our members have become more involved with the League over the years.

Two of the most important functions of Regional Representatives serve is forming coalitions and organizing rapid response teams to address legislation. A majority of responders reported the Network plays a critical role in defeating challenges to local control and imposing unfunded mandates on local government. Almost 70% were familiar with the Network and of those responders 95% had a favorable impression of the program. And on a scale of one-to-10, the

program was given a score of 8.4 for effectiveness of forming coalitions that support legislation that benefits all cities.

Testimonials Show Satisfaction with Network's Impact:

Multiple responders mentioned that the Network gives cities a unified voice in Sacramento. Here is a selection of a few things the responders had to say about how their cities have benefited from the Grassroots Network Program.

“We’re a tiny city and therefore must have partners in whatever programs/ideas we want to see move forward. The League provides a forum for us to accomplish this. Without the League and its activities we would have little if any impact on the state.”

“Legislature awareness and clarification has been most beneficial. 1A campaign was the most significant contribution to our town’s vitality.”

“Keeping us current, involved, and tuned in.”

“Interaction with our League representative has always been of tremendous value. She’s always available and gets us the info quickly and always keeps us informed.”

“Our city and our region have benefited greatly due to increased projections for local revenues. Also, the increased relationships which have developed, further our goals.”

“Yes, the city’s awareness and the response to the legislature has been dramatically improved with the Grassroots Network. I don’t know how we could exist without it.”

“Proposition 1A was awesome and would not have happened without the Network.”

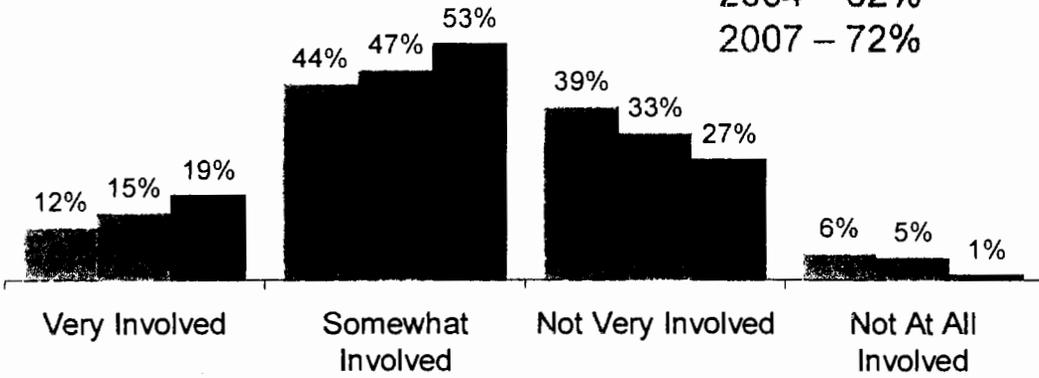
How this Report will be Used in the Future:

Now that the third and final APCO survey is complete city officials should be impressed with the assessment of the Network. The accomplishments of the Network as communicated by a majority of survey responders, suggests that it is making a substantial difference. In addition to the overwhelming responses and satisfaction, there were some comments on how our organization can improve. This information is valuable and will help us make the program even stronger, ensuring that the needs of all of our members are met. We are committed to continuing to improve the Network and wish to thank everyone who participated in this process.



Very / somewhat

2001 – 56%
 2004 – 62%
 2007 – 72%

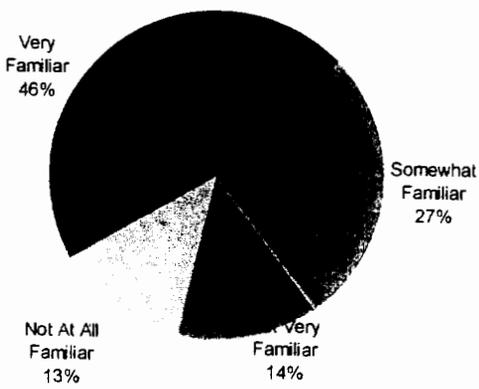


2001 | 2004 | 2007

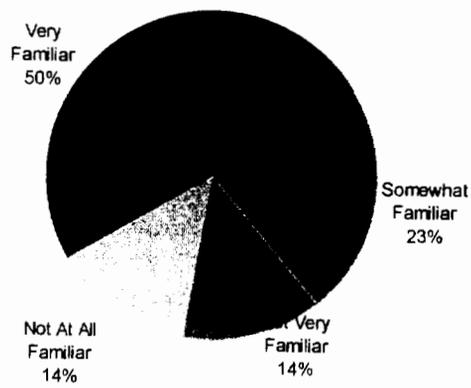
Q3. In general, how involved are you, personally, with the League of California Cities?



2004
 73% familiar

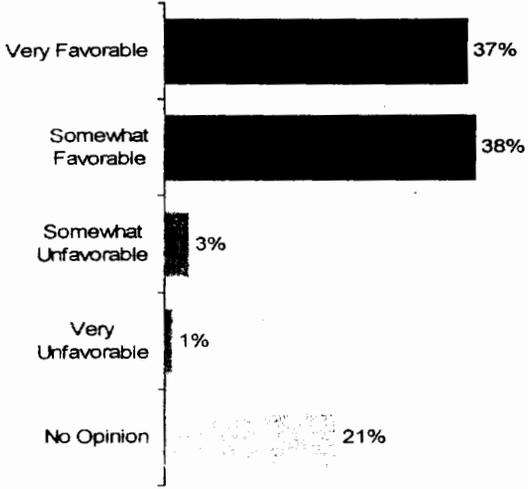
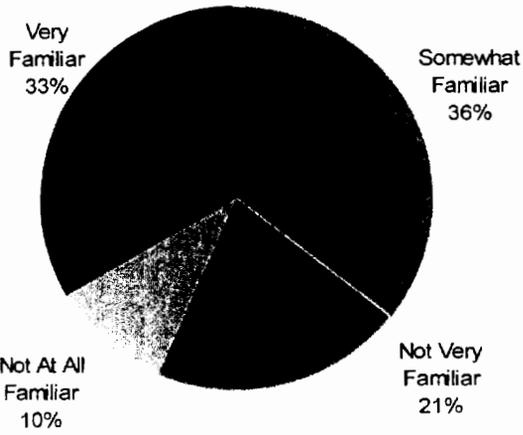


2007
 73% familiar

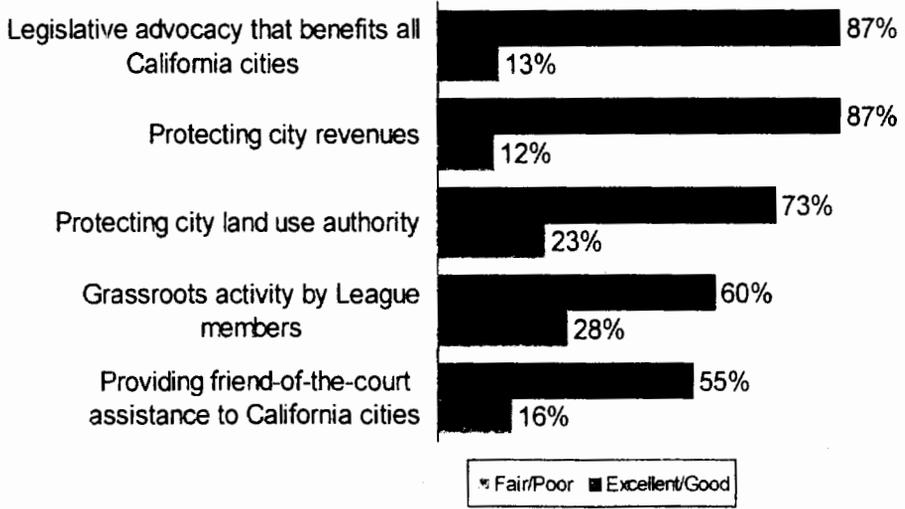


Q15. How familiar are you with your Regional Representative?

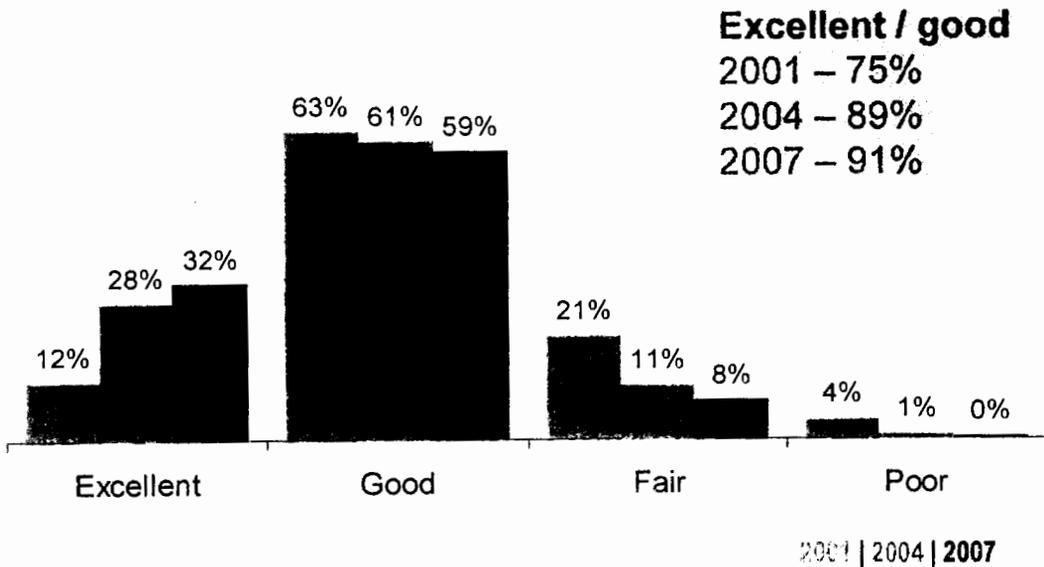
Not asked in 2001



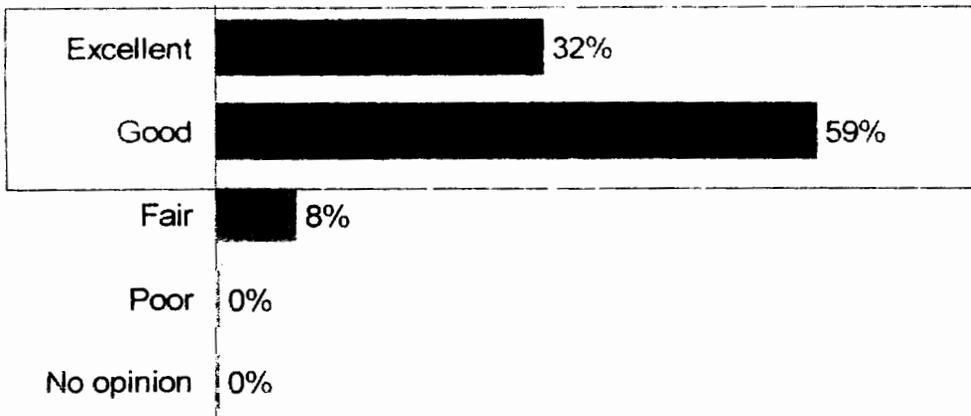
Q13. How familiar are you with the Grassroots Network?
Q14. From what you know, what is your impression of the Grassroots Network?



Q2. How do you rate the job that California Cities and the League are doing in working with California cities?



Q1. Generally speaking, how do you rate the job the League of California Cities is doing in working with California cities?



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