

Program Planning 2024-2025

What is League Program?

League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Program is the education and advocacy platform that the League membership adopts at each biennial LWVUS National Convention. The goal of the LWVUS Program Planning process is to achieve collective agreement to how the League will move our mission forward for the next two years.

During January and February 2024, local and state Leagues conduct Program Planning exercises and make Program recommendations in a local or state general membership meeting or board meeting. Our January unit meetings give members the opportunity to participate in the process. During this time, Leagues are also asked to share information on how their work will impact the Campaign for Making Democracy Work® and to identify LWVUS positions that they intend to use in education, advocacy, and lobbying. Leagues share this information with LWVUS through the Program Planning survey, which is open from January to mid-March 2024.

LWVUS Program consists of three parts:

- Action to implement League Principles;
- Study or concurrence on a governmental issue to develop new Positions or to update existing Positions; and
- Action on government issues.

League Program is the grassroots method by which the League supports our mission through education and advocacy. All League action, advocacy, and education are based on support for League Positions and League Principles. League action in support of League Positions may be taken only in those areas where there is member understanding and agreement.

Local and state Leagues make any program recommendations to the LWVUS Board at least three months prior to the national convention. The LWVUS shall consider these recommendations and formulate a proposed program which shall be sent to the presidents of local and state Leagues at least six weeks prior to the convention. At the national convention delegates will vote and adopt a program by a majority vote on each subject presented to it.

Recommended LWVUS Program: The Campaign for Making Democracy Work®

The LWVUS Board recommends that Program 2024 – 2026 continue the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®, which includes:

- Voting Rights
- Improving Elections
- Money in Politics
- Redistricting
- Abolishing the Electoral College

At Convention 2022, delegates voted to support a program that would fully utilize core League

Positions on Voting Rights and Election Reform. The main goal of the Campaign for Making Democracy Work® is to ensure a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all voters. Leagues at every level continue working to protect and advance voting rights and election reform at this critical time for our democracy, as well as to fight efforts in Washington, DC, and state legislatures to suppress voters.

As to the future, the League's programmatic work is more important now than ever due to the dysfunction of Congress, the increase in anti-voter legislation across the country, and the rise in international conflicts that connect to domestic issues. The League continues to work together at the local, state, and national levels to advance these priorities in the face of increased challenges.

Incorporating Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy during the Program Planning process, Leagues should incorporate an emphasis on DEI into our work. A DEI lens is a way of examining the process as to how it is perceived by a variety of communities, voices, and perspectives, and what, if any, barriers may exist that prevent it from being equitable or inclusive of everyone. A key part of applying a DEI lens is ensuring that all members feel informed and included in Program Planning.

LWVLC Local Program Planning

Program Planning is the process for identifying local issues for study or restudy, review and update, or concurrence. For a local study, a committee researches and studies a government issue and writes a report. The report is then presented to units to discuss and reach consensus on the policy's implication. Results are shared with the board. In some cases a consensus committee will draft a new position statement or update for the board to review and propose to the membership at the annual meeting.

Besides consensus, a League may act on a position reached through concurrence. Concurrence is reserved for issues for which further study would be redundant. A league's membership may concur with the recommendations of a League task force, resource or study committee, decisions reached by the board, or positions of other leagues.

A League may take action under existing local, state, and national League positions. Through an update, members can be better informed and understand the local aspects of an issue. A new study is not required. An update can be research for informational purposes or updating language.

As unit members consider program topics for 2024-2025, the following **criteria** need to be considered and met:

- Does the issue fall within League Principles? (2023/24 Directory, Page 17)
- How does studying the issue reflect the League's mission?
- Is the issue of critical importance locally and is it timely?
- Will the issue generate opportunities for education and advocacy?
- Is the issue a manageable topic to study? Will there be strong member interest?

- Is the issue one that can be addressed by appropriate government action?
- Will the study of the issue help our League work with individuals and organizations that represent different viewpoints, ages, racial or ethnic identities, or other diverse groups that are underrepresented in our League?

Presenting the Program Proposal

At our January unit meetings, members will propose topics in such a way that the issue is presented in a clear and concise manner. Proposals should be carefully worded to include focus and scope. The focus is a general title for the proposal, and the scope defines the issue to be studied. The scope may be defined more thoroughly once a study committee is formed.

At the February board meeting the proposed topics will be presented to the board, and the board will then decide which will be recommended to the members to vote on at the annual meeting.

Good examples of focus and scope:

Focus: Impact of AI on democracy

Scope: Impact of AI on democratic processes such as voter registration, voting, and redistricting,

Focus: The state of local news and journalism

Scope: Available resources for community members to be informed on local issues.

Evaluating existing programs

Unit members will also be considering existing local positions. Each unit will have a survey with a set of positions to review, discuss, and decide to **retain, drop, update, or restudy**.

Definitions for the LWVLC survey, included on the next page.:

Retain: means keep a position as it is; no change.

Drop: means to remove the position completely from our local positions. All further advocacy will be discontinued and cannot be included in the program without a new study.

Update: means to study the position topic for informational and educational purposes and or to update the language.

Restudy: means to research and review a position with the potential to change it. (The current Recall study is an example.)

The LWVLC survey results will be compiled and presented to the board and then recommended to the members for consensus at the annual meeting.

Material prepared by Sharon Amasha and Linda Ferdowsian and proofread by Merle Bottge.

