



Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

MEMBER HANDBOOK

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the League of Women Voters!

You are now a member of a historic, vital, and influential organization. For more than 100 years, the League of Women Voters has been a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters nonpartisan policy: “The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.”

“At our core, nonpartisanship is not just a policy — it’s a bedrock principle that defines who we are at the League of Women Voters. As a membership organization committed to empowering voters and defending democracy, we do not support or oppose political parties or candidates. Our focus has always been,

and will continue to be, on the issues that matter to our communities: ensuring fair elections, protecting voting rights, and strengthening our democratic institutions.”

[Read more about staying nonpartisan in a divisive political climate.](#)

2. Our Mission, Vision, Values, and History

Mission:

Empowering voters. Defending Democracy.

Vision:

We envision a people-powered democracy, actively dismantling systemic racism and removing all barriers to full participation in our government, to ensure New Jersey’s diverse communities are empowered to build political and community power.

Values:

- Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Integrity and Respect
- Education, Empowerment, and Engagement
- Transparency and Accountability
- Community, Collaboration, and Belonging

To read more about our values, click [here](#).

[LWVUS DEI Statement](#)

Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity, or marital status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture but our reputation and the organization's mission and achievements as well.

History:

Founded in 1920, just months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the League of Women Voters grew out of the women's suffrage movement. Our founding members fought tirelessly for the right to vote. Since then, we've continued to support democracy by educating voters, advocating for voting rights, and promoting policies that

improve our communities and the democratic process. For more information on our history click [here](#).

3. How the League Operates

The League of Women Voters operates at three levels: local, state, and national. Each level works together to achieve common goals while addressing issues specific to their respective areas.

- **Local Leagues:** Focus on grassroots (community-level) engagement, voter education, and advocacy on local policies.
- **State League:** Addresses state legislation, coordinates statewide programs, and supports local Leagues. lwvnj.org/. See [Study and Action](#) for LWVNJ advocacy positions.
- **National League:** Provides broad guidance, policy priorities, and national advocacy on key issues. LWV.org. See [Impact on Issues](#) for LWVUS advocacy positions

The League is a "grassroots" organization, meaning that every member participates in making the policy decisions of the League. Members participate and make decisions through local League annual meetings, state conventions, and the national convention. Boards of Directors and the officers who are responsible for carrying out these decisions are chosen by members.

While we are nonpartisan, we encourage all members to be politically engaged as individuals. Nonpartisan policies limit certain political activity for League members in leadership positions.

4. Member Benefits

- **Educational Resources:** Access to publications, research reports, and information on key policy issues.
- **Advocacy Opportunities:** Participate in efforts to influence local, state, and national public policies.
- **Community Engagement:** Collaborate with like-minded individuals to host or attend educational forums, candidate debates, and public meetings.
- **Leadership Development:** Opportunities to build your leadership skills

through local and national initiatives, including running for local league offices, joining committee work, and debate moderator training.

- **Voting Rights Advocacy:** Be part of our ongoing efforts to protect and expand voting rights.

5. Member Rights and Responsibilities

As a member, you have the right to:

- Participate in all League activities, programs, and events.
- Vote on decisions regarding policies and initiatives at local, state, and national levels.
- Run for leadership positions and serve on committees or the board.

You also have the responsibility to:

- Uphold the League's nonpartisan stance and mission.
- Actively participate in the League's activities to the best of your ability.
- Stay informed about key issues and contribute to discussions and advocacy efforts in alignment with the League's positions. See 3, "How the League Operates."

[Review the "Member Rights and Responsibilities" policy here.](#)

We also encourage active participation from all members. Whether it's volunteering for an event, leading a discussion, or contributing to a project, every bit of involvement makes a difference.

6. Ways to Get Involved

There are many ways to get involved. Here are a few key opportunities:

- **Voter Registration and Education:** Help organize voter registration drives, participate in voter education campaigns, or assist with candidate forums and debates.
- **Advocacy and Lobbying:** Take action and support the League's policy positions by advocating for issues such as voting rights, election reform, climate change, and more.
- **Public Forums and Events:** Attend, help host, or learn to moderate educational events, including town halls, candidate forums, issue panels, and community discussions.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Take on leadership roles at the local or state level, join committees, or run for board positions within the League.
- **Research and Writing:** Contribute to the League's research efforts by helping

to draft reports, policy briefs, or articles for publication.

- **Local Community Meetings:** For example, observing as a League member, Council, Zoning, Board of Education, Planning Board, and other governing bodies
- **Interviewing Elected Officials (as requested by the State League)** as local voting constituents
- **Participating in Local, State, and National League Studies**

7. Current Advocacy Committees

At the state level, the League's work is divided into key program areas, which include but are not limited to:

- **Government:** Expanding access to the ballot box, eliminating barriers to voting, and ensuring fair election laws.
- **Education:** Working to support a strong public education system and promoting a deeper understanding of democratic principles and active citizenship through education.
- **Natural Resources:** Advocating for policies that address climate change, clean water, and sustainable energy.
- **Social Justice:** Tackling inequality and advocating for policies that promote justice, fairness, and equity for all.
- **Women and Family Issues:** Strengthening women and family-centered policies such as reproductive justice and maternal health, sexual education, childcare, and elder care.
- **Immigration:** Advocating and addressing public policies that affect NJ immigrants and communities.

Local Leagues may establish committees for these advocacies or other issues needed for the areas they serve.

8. Communication and Resources

Stay informed and connected with the League with the following:

- **League Website:** Our website provides up-to-date information on events, programs, and important issues. You can find resources, reports, and publications at lvnj.org/
- **Email Newsletters available:**
 - [Sign up here](#) for LWWUS alerts
 - [Sign up here](#) for LWWNJ alerts
 - LWWNJ Advocacy Newsletter (quarterly)
 - LWWNJ Impact Report (Annually)

- Voter Services Newsletter
- LWVUS League Update (bi-weekly)
- **Social Media:** Follow us on social media platforms to stay connected with the latest discussions and advocacy efforts.
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVNJ>
 - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/lwvnj>
 - Tik Tok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@lwvnj>
 - Bluesky: <https://bsky.app/profile/lwvnj.bsky.social>
- **Local Meetings and Events:** Attend regular meetings to network with other members and participate in planning local activities.

9. I have a few more questions:

Q: How much time do I need to commit?

A: Your level of involvement is up to you. We welcome all levels of participation, whether it's attending occasional events, joining a committee, or taking on leadership.

Q: How can I start advocating on issues I care about?

A: Explore our program areas, participate in advocacy training sessions, or reach out to your local league for guidance on how to get involved in advocacy efforts.

Q: Can I run for office while an active member of my League?

A: Most members can run for public office. However, certain leadership positions cannot. Please refer to your local League's nonpartisan policy for specific guidance.

Q: Is the League partisan?

A: No, the League is strictly nonpartisan. We do not support or oppose any political party or candidate. We focus on policies and issues that align with our mission of making democracy work.

10. Contact Information

To join the League today, go to: <https://portal.lwv.org/>

If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact us at the LWVNJ office: (609) 394-3303 or <https://www.lwvnj.org/footer/contact-us>.

Thank you for joining the League of Women Voters! Together, we are making democracy work better for all.

