



Framing our Future LWV Membership Changes

A Summary of Upcoming Changes

In 2025, LWVUS will implement significant changes to League membership and dues structure. This summarizes the changes for members and provides context for any required bylaws changes.

The transition should be seamless for members. When your membership comes due, please continue to renew in the usual way. We'll let you know when the changes are implemented. **No action is required from members right now.**

Why LWVUS Is Making Changes

These changes are part of the Structure Transformation Plan adopted in 2022, which is rooted in the League's Transformation Journey that began after the 2016 national convention.

In the current phase of the Plan, the League is Framing Our Future, building power by building out the framework that will carry us forward for the next hundred years.

- Building League power at every level is necessary to fulfill our mission of Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy.
- Vital work happening at the state and local levels could benefit from increased support.
- Changing the pay requirement will open Leagues to a more diverse, expansive membership by removing barriers to membership.
- Too much time and talent are spent on duplicative administrative efforts.

Current Membership and Dues Payment Structure

1. League members join the local League of their choice, and each local League has its own mechanism for joining and renewing.
2. Every local League sets its own dues amounts.
3. Every local League sends Per-Member-Payments (PMP) to the national and state Leagues.
4. LWVUS does not require PMP for Life Members or Student members.
5. The required PMP payment to LWVUS for additional members in a household is one-half that of the PMP required for the first member.

Changes to Membership Categories and Dues Mechanisms

1. Members will join and renew through one national platform, with a link available at any League website. Members will be able to select the League they join, as they do now. ChapterSpot is the name of the membership platform. A QR code will facilitate easy joining access at community events.
2. There will be a mechanism for automatic renewals.
3. Membership types will include:
 - Members
 - Life Members
4. The Student membership type will be discontinued.
5. Household memberships will be discontinued. (That is, the payment category Additional Member in Household will be discontinued.)

Changes to Dues Amounts

1. Individuals will be encouraged to pay a standard rate of \$75.
2. There will be optional higher join tiers of \$150, \$250, \$500; members in all tiers are equal in rights, responsibilities, and standing, regardless of the amount dues paid.
3. There will be a pay-what-you-can option where members can choose their own dues amount, with a minimum of \$20.
4. Although the payment category for an Additional Member in Household will be discontinued, a member joining from the same household as an existing member can choose to pay half of the recommended amount under the pay-what-you-can model.
5. There will likely be a method for members to join at an amount below the \$20 floor, at the option of the local League, which would be responsible for the \$20 minimum dues and would define eligibility parameters. This means a local League could choose to continue offering free or lower cost student memberships and payment support.

Changes to the Dues Split and Flow of Dues

1. Local Leagues will no longer make Per-Member-Payments (PMP) to the national and state Leagues. Instead, the national League will send local and state Leagues their portion of each dues payment shortly after it is made. This will be handled electronically through the Stripe payment platform.
2. With the new dues split, LWVUS will receive a smaller percentage of dues and both state and local Leagues will receive larger percentages:
 - 20% to local Leagues
 - 47% to state Leagues
 - 33% to the national League

For comparison, these percentages reflect the current dues split:

- Local Leagues currently keep an average of 12%
- State Leagues currently receive 37%
- LWWUS currently retains 51%

3. The new dues split will also apply to dues payments for the higher join tiers.
4. State and local Leagues will be responsible for credit card fees at the same rate as the dues split.

Changes to Donations at Time of Joining or Renewal

Donations by members at the time they join or renew are a significant source of income to many Leagues. The platform development plans include a way to enable convenient donations directly to local Leagues at the time of joining or renewal but separate from dues. Updates will be provided as development continues.

Other Highlights

1. Membership renewal dates will be the same from year to year. A member will be asked to renew a year from the date of their last renewal.
2. People will be able to join and renew from a link at the local website, as many can now.
3. People will still be able to join with a check (although online renewal will be encouraged).
4. Additional members in a household can choose to pay half of the recommended amount under the pay-what-you-can model.
5. Local members will continue to be members at all three League levels: local League, state League, and LWW of the United States.

How the Changes Will Help LWW Build Power

1. Joining with a link that will be available on any League website simplifies joining, reducing the frustration of searching for a local League or visiting the national site and then having difficulty finding a local League. LWWUS can also more effectively encourage membership through social media, and a QR code will make it easier for people to join at community events.
2. By removing barriers to participation, the pay-what-you-can model will encourage more members and a more diverse membership. LWWUS expects the higher join tiers to finance the pay-what-you-can model.
3. The new dues split allocates a larger percentage of dues to state Leagues. This is intended to build their capacity to exercise political power within their legislature, support professional paid staff, build organizing strength, and support local Leagues to simplify our federated structure.
4. Local Leagues will retain a larger percentage of dues to finance local work.
5. LWWUS expects the new membership system to reduce administrative work for roster managers, membership chairs, and treasurers.

Local Impact and Questions

1. LWVUS predicts 3/4 of local Leagues will come out financially ahead from the start, and LWVUS will make up any shortfall in membership dues collected for two years.
2. Local Leagues will need to monitor the impact of losing local donations at the time of joining or renewal and adjust if necessary. We really don't know the combined net impact of all the changes – receiving a larger percentage of each dues payment, potentially attracting more members, and the loss of the ability to encourage local donations at the time of joining and renewal.

Note: LWVUS says the dues split will be clear on the join page and that it is working to find a solution that will make donating easy. Many Leagues currently offer memberships at higher tiers and/or encourage donations at the time of joining or renewing. Leagues have made clear to LWVUS their concerns about losing these abilities.

3. LWVUS has not yet determined what kind of data the membership system will collect.
4. Local Leagues can also consider adopting free website and mass-email tools through ChapterSpot.

Questions? Please send an email to membership@lww.org.

Reminder: Members are not required to do anything different right now, and we will keep you informed of implementation progress.

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