

League of Women Voters Solano County

2021 Program Planning Final Report

Submitted by Craig Paterson

Summary

League of Women Voters Solano County (LWVSC) members met via Zoom internet conferencing on Wednesday, January 24, 2021 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM for their annual Program Planning session. Seventeen (17) members of LWVSC participated in the session... fourteen (14) from beginning to end.

LWVSC President Niles Medders convened the meeting and provided technical Zoom support. Program Planning & Events (PP&E) Co-Chair Craig Paterson prepared materials for the planning session and stepped the participants through the two-hour interactive sequence of activities including polling, small group conversations, and plenary sharing by participants.

At the end of the session, three (3) program priorities were chosen in a Zoom poll from a list of six (6) issues the participants had elected to discuss. These priorities will be proposed for adoption at the Annual Membership Meeting.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Racial Inclusiveness/Justice/Equity | 91.67% |
| 2. Voter Rights/Education | 50.00% |
| 3. Climate Change | 33.33% |

Preparation

Guidance for this year's program planning was provided by League of Women Voters California (LWVC) in the fall of 2020. Through the LWVC website and an informative webinar, we received a two-part mandate for our session.

1. Submit up to three "Issues for Emphasis" to LWVC by March 1, 2021; and
2. Seek and include community input in our 2021 program priority decision process. The LWVC focus was "Making Democracy Work: An Equity Lens."

"In that spirit, we encourage you to front end diversity, equity and inclusion in program planning by proactively reaching out to both League members and partners in your community."

To fulfill the second request from LWVC, the PP&E committee created what we called the "Listening Project 2021." (Please refer to the information overview that is included with this report for details of our outreach efforts.)

We invited “Community Partners” to join this outreach effort through the newsletter, a newspaper article, our website, social media, and word of mouth.

Just before the program planning session, we had received issue recommendations from eight (8) Community Partners. A total of 42 individuals were reported as participants in *Listening Project 2021* small groups in Solano County.

While we asked for demographic information about these small group conversations, most respondents provided only partial data. Our goal was to broaden our information base across the county for a more inclusive and diverse view of the issues facing the voters of Solano County. Unfortunately, we cannot claim success with this goal due to insufficient data. We can report though that we did hear from both members and non-members for input into our list of potential issues for 2021.

We received 36 issue recommendations from our Community Partners... all proposed issues were included in a spreadsheet. They were presented to program planning participants in three (3) lists... each sorted in a unique way to share a multi-dimensional view of them in relation with each other. One list was sorted by the “Scope” of the issue... county, regional, state, or national. One list was sorted by the “Priority Given” by the *Listening Project 2021* groups... those issues presented with no priority were given a rating of 10 to place them at the bottom of the list. The final list was an alphabetical sorting of all identified potential issues. (Please refer to the Listening Project lists that are included with this report for details.)

Program Planning

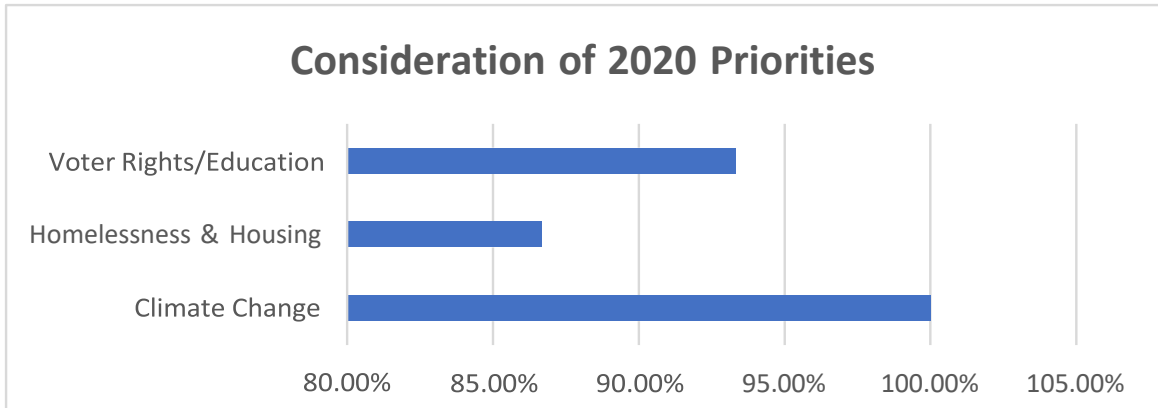
After the welcome, agenda review and meeting agreements were completed, the program planning process began with fifteen (15) voting participants and two (2) meeting administrators.

The first question was: Which of our existing 2020 program priorities are worthy of consideration again for 2021? Vote for as many as you feel are worthy.

- Climate Change
- Homelessness and Housing
- Voter Rights/Education

Prior to the opening of the poll, PowerPoint slides were shared that showed the *Listening Project* issue recommendation that could fit under each of the existing priorities as a broad category. In this way, the broad categories were given more clarity and definition from our community outreach efforts.

A Zoom poll was opened for voting... and the results shown when everyone had voted.



With this vote, all of our 2020 program priorities advanced in consideration for 2021.

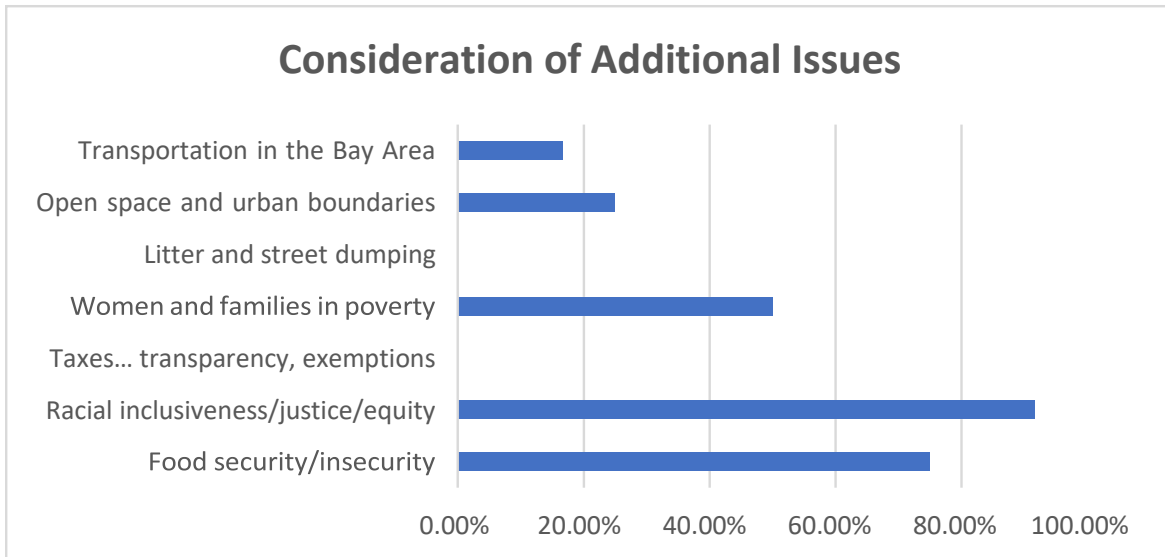
Next... small group discussions were organized and given their assignments. Two Zoom breakout groups were created with an automatic split of the participants. Both groups were asked to consider the three program priorities from 2020 using the Issue Decision Criteria that accompanied the agenda. They were given 20 minutes to discuss these issues and were asked to have a recorder be prepared to share a summary of their conversation.

At the end of their 20-minute deliberations, the groups were brought back together for brief reports.

The planning process then turned to the *Listening Project* issue recommendations that did not fit under one of the existing priorities as a broad category. Four new broad categories were proposed in PowerPoint slides for consideration. In addition, three stand-alone issue recommendations were included for a total of seven items in the next Zoom poll. The new categories were:

- Food security/insecurity
- Racial inclusiveness/justice/equity
- Taxes... transparency, exemptions
- Women and families in poverty

The instructions for this poll were different. In order to prioritize among these new categories and stand-alone issues, participants were asked to vote for **three** out of the list of seven items. Again... the poll was opened for voting and closed when all participants had completed the poll.



Three items were chosen for further consideration from these poll results:

- Racial inclusiveness/justice/equity
- Food security/insecurity
- Women and families in poverty

Zoom breakout groups were created again for consideration of these categories using the Issue Decision Criteria. Groups were given another 20 minutes for deliberation and asked to report back with a summary of their conversation at the end of that time.

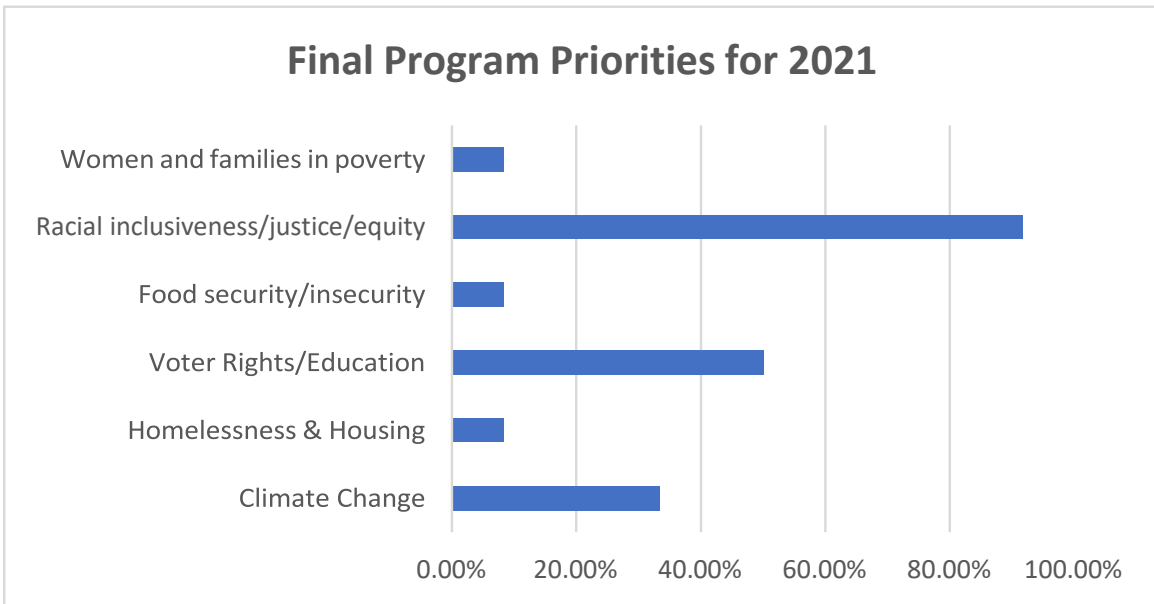
The groups were brought back together for their brief reports on their second issue deliberation session.

Before the final poll was opened, participants were invited to briefly state their personal top priority along with their reasons for support. Each person was limited to a 30-second “sales pitch.”

The instructions for the final poll asked participants to vote for **two** out of the list of these six items.

- Climate Change
- Homelessness and Housing
- Voter Rights/Education
- Racial inclusiveness/justice/equity
- Food security/insecurity
- Women and families in poverty

The final poll was opened to identify the 2021 program priority recommendations. One participant had a technical problem with the poll... that person's vote was shared with the administrator via private Zoom chat to be included in the final tally.



The poll results were conclusive in identifying the top three priorities. These issues will be forwarded to the general membership for adoption at the Annual Membership Meeting. In addition, they were reported to LWVC as our recommended “*Issues for Emphasis*” at the LWVC convention in the summer.

1. Racial Inclusiveness/Justice/Equity 91.67%
2. Voter Rights/Education 50.00%
3. Climate Change 33.33%

Before the session ended, it was expressed by several of the participants that the three final issues that were not chosen as program priorities could possibly be considered as a group for further study.

The 2021 Program Planning session ended slightly ahead of schedule at 8:55pm.

League of Women Voters Solano County

Listening Project 2021

“Community Partners” Information

Thanks so much for your interest in this unique project. Actually... this project is a bit of an experiment in community listening. The League of Women Voters (LWV) only expanded to include all of Solano County in 2019, so we're eager to hear the voices of residents from across the county as we encourage civic engagement with our singularly non-partisan practices.

Here's what we're asking you to do as a **Community Partner** in the LWV Listening Project:

- Between February 1 and February 15... convene a small group meeting for a conversation to identify *“issues of interest, concern and urgency”* in the lives of your small group participants. Groups are probably best with 3-12 participants... with virtual meetings for your safety.
- By February 17... provide feedback from your small group meeting to us for inclusion in our report to LWV Solano County members in preparation for our annual program planning session in late February.

We recognize that this might be a lot to ask in a short timeframe, so we're also trying to make our Listening Project as user-friendly as possible. Here are a few guidelines you might find to be helpful:

- ✓ Convening a Listening Project conversation from an existing group will probably be the easiest and quickest way to start. Also... most existing groups have already created a sense of trust among the members, so participants can feel comfortable in sharing.
- ✓ Technical assistance is available from LWV members if needed in holding virtual meetings.
- ✓ As participants identify *“issues of interest, concern and urgency,”* there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. We're hoping to hear from as many diverse voices as possible.
- ✓ *“Issues”* will be most helpful in our LWV planning if they are stated in 10 words or less.
- ✓ If your group has the interest and time to prioritize its list of *“issues,”* that will add yet another helpful level of information to our planning session. But... this is optional.
- ✓ A form will be provided for your feedback. We will also ask you to provide some basic demographic information about your group to deepen our understanding of your data.
- ✓ A Listening Project report will be compiled with *“issues”* from all participating groups. As a Community Partner in this effort, you will receive a copy of this report. In addition, you will be invited to a Zoom session specifically for Community Partners to discuss the report.
- ✓ All *“issues”* will be presented to LWV members for consideration at our annual program planning session. At this session, members may add more *“issues”* to the total list of options. They will then discuss their options and will conclude by prioritizing *“issues”* to determine LWV Solano County **“Issues for Emphasis.”** Please note... your group's *“issues”* may or may not be chosen as one of our 2021's highest program priorities... but they will all be listed.
- ✓ Background information about LWV is available at these websites:

[LWV Solano County website](#)

[LWV California website](#)

Contact Craig Paterson if you have questions about the Listening Project: patersoncc@gmail.com

The League of Women Voters Solano County is listening!

League of Women Voters Solano County

Listening Project List... Sorted by Scope

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Priority Given *</i>	<i>Issues Reported</i>
County	5	Climate change... effects on our local communities
County	3	Climate... air and water quality
County	10	Climate... air quality... Benicia and Solano
County	3	Climate... reduce threat and affects of wildfires
County	2	Districts in Solano County... understand, map, and educate
County	3	Food insecurity
County	1	Food security in Solano County... research, educate, advocate
County	1	Homelessness
County	1	Homelessness... with focus on women and families
County	2	Housing... lack of affordable housing
County	2	Housing... lack of affordable housing for older women
County	4	Housing... more affordable units
County	10	Litter and street dumping... prevention & clean-up
County	2	Open Space policies in Solano County... protect urban boundaries
County	3	Racial equity in housing and homeownership
County	1	Taxes... transparency and accountability
County	10	Voter education... young adults
County	4	Voter registration... support outreach to register new citizens to vote
County	2	Women and families in poverty
County	2	Women in poverty
Region	10	Transportation in SF Bay Area... local and regional coordination
State	10	Business incentives... encourage and retain small and big business
State	10	California income tax breaks for retired military
State	10	Desalination... update on feasibility for more sites
State	10	Exodus from California... root causes and solutions
State	10	Property tax exemptions and transfer... educate and repeal Proposition 19 (2020)
State	10	Property tax exemptions... educate and protect on Proposition 13 (1978)
USA	10	Immigration reform... merit-based policies... attract and retain skilled workers
USA	10	Nuclear power... update on feasibility of modern power plant construction
USA	10	Racial inclusiveness
USA	4	Racial justice... reduce systemic racism and the ways it continues
USA	10	Service requirement... promote for US unity and increased public service
USA	10	Vote by Mail... move to universal vote by mail
USA	3	Voting districts... end political gerrymandering across all states
USA	1	Voting rights... restore voting rights across all states
USA	1	Voting... <i>Citizens United</i> reversal... end corporate spending in political campaigns

** If no priority number was given, the value was assigned as 10*

League of Women Voters Solano County

Listening Project List... Sorted by Priority Given

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Priority Given *</i>	<i>Issues Reported</i>
County	1	Food security in Solano County... research, educate, advocate
County	1	Homelessness
County	1	Homelessness... with focus on women and families
County	1	Taxes... transparency and accountability
USA	1	Voting rights... restore voting rights across all states
USA	1	Voting... <i>Citizens United</i> reversal... end corporate spending in political campaigns
County	2	Districts in Solano County... understand, map, and educate
County	2	Housing... lack of affordable housing
County	2	Housing... lack of affordable housing for older women
County	2	Open Space policies in Solano County... protect urban boundaries
County	2	Women and families in poverty
County	2	Women in poverty
County	3	Climate... air and water quality
County	3	Climate... reduce threat and affects of wildfires
County	3	Food insecurity
County	3	Racial equity in housing and homeownership
USA	3	Voting districts... end political gerrymandering across all states
County	4	Housing... more affordable units
USA	4	Racial justice... reduce systemic racism and the ways it continues
County	4	Voter registration... support outreach to register new citizens to vote
County	5	Climate change... effects on our local communities
State	10	Business incentives... encourage and retain small and big business
State	10	California income tax breaks for retired military
County	10	Climate... air quality... Benicia and Solano
State	10	Desalination... update on feasibility for more sites
State	10	Exodus from California... root causes and solutions
USA	10	Immigration reform... merit-based policies... attract and retain skilled workers
County	10	Litter and street dumping... prevention & clean-up
USA	10	Nuclear power... update on feasibility of modern power plant construction
State	10	Property tax exemptions and transfer... educate and repeal Proposition 19 (2020)
State	10	Property tax exemptions... educate and protect on Proposition 13 (1978)
USA	10	Racial inclusiveness
USA	10	Service requirement... promote for US unity and increased public service
Region	10	Transportation in SF Bay Area... local and regional coordination
USA	10	Vote by Mail... move to universal vote by mail
County	10	Voter education... young adults

** If no priority number was given, the value was assigned as 10*

League of Women Voters Solano County

Listening Project List... Sorted by Issue

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Priority Given *</i>	<i>Issues Reported</i>
State	10	Business incentives... encourage and retain small and big business
State	10	California income tax breaks for retired military
County	5	Climate change... effects on our local communities
County	3	Climate... air and water quality
County	10	Climate... air quality... Benicia and Solano
County	3	Climate... reduce threat and affects of wildfires
State	10	Desalination... update on feasibility for more sites
County	2	Districts in Solano County... understand, map, and educate
State	10	Exodus from California... root causes and solutions
County	3	Food insecurity
County	1	Food security in Solano County... research, educate, advocate
County	1	Homelessness
County	1	Homelessness... with focus on women and families
County	2	Housing... lack of affordable housing
County	2	Housing... lack of affordable housing for older women
County	4	Housing... more affordable units
USA	10	Immigration reform... merit-based policies... attract and retain skilled workers
County	10	Litter and street dumping... prevention & clean-up
USA	10	Nuclear power... update on feasibility of modern power plant construction
County	2	Open Space policies in Solano County... protect urban boundaries
State	10	Property tax exemptions and transfer... educate and repeal Proposition 19 (2020)
State	10	Property tax exemptions... educate and protect on Proposition 13 (1978)
County	3	Racial equity in housing and homeownership
USA	10	Racial inclusiveness
USA	4	Racial justice... reduce systemic racism and the ways it continues
USA	10	Service requirement... promote for US unity and increased public service
County	1	Taxes... transparency and accountability
Region	10	Transportation in SF Bay Area... local and regional coordination
USA	10	Vote by Mail... move to universal vote by mail
County	10	Voter education... young adults
County	4	Voter registration... support outreach to register new citizens to vote
USA	3	Voting districts... end political gerrymandering across all states
USA	1	Voting rights... restore voting rights across all states
USA	1	Voting... <i>Citizens United</i> reversal... end corporate spending in political campaigns
County	2	Women and families in poverty
County	2	Women in poverty

** If no priority number was given, the value was assigned as 10*

League of Women Voters Solano County

2021 Annual Program Planning

Wednesday, February 24, 2021... 7:00 to 8:30pm

Agenda Notes:

Welcome

Agenda Review... outcomes and roles

League of Women Voters California

Our League program planning responsibility in 2021 is two-fold:

1. Propose up to three *"Issues for Emphasis"* to the California League by March 1, 2021; and
2. Determine local League program priorities for the next year.

In addition to these responsibilities, LWV California (LWVC) strongly recommends the application of *"Making Democracy Work: An Equity Lens"* in the program planning process.

"In that spirit, we encourage you to front end diversity, equity and inclusion in program planning by proactively reaching out to both League members and partners in your community."

Background Materials

To do our program planning work, we can refer to three sources:

- ✓ 2020 Program Priorities
 - Climate Change
 - Homelessness and Housing
 - Voter Rights/Education
- ✓ LWV Positions List... existing positions of National LWV & LWV California
- ✓ Listening Project 2021 List... sorted by scope, priority given, and issue

Discovering 2021 Program Priorities... working in Zoom online meeting platform

- Initial survey... set the context for small group conversations
- Small group conversations on issue choices
- Small groups report back to all participants
- Second survey... focusing in on several options
- Small groups meet again to identify benefits and tradeoffs of issues
- After all issue meetings are completed... a 1-minute 'sales' pitch will be shared by each issue group before the whole membership.
- All members 'vote' for their top choices... top 3 are 2021 priorities

Final Remarks and Next Steps

ISSUE DECISION CRITERIA... How to Choose and How to Share

LWV POLICY ALREADY IN PLACE? A policy position is already in place at either the national or California level of LWV as a basis for approaching this issue in a non-partisan and comprehensive manner.

RELEVANT? Public policy decisions are already pending or are expected on this issue where LWVSC can provide educational and/or advocacy efforts.

IMPORTANT? This issue includes decisions where the basic human welfare of families and individuals is at stake... focusing particularly on those who are the most vulnerable.

SOLANO COUNTY-CENTRIC? This issue is specifically relevant and important in all or part of Solano County... Vallejo, Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, Dixon, Rio Vista... and unincorporated areas.

TIMELY? This issue will be discussed by the public, so LWVSC can effectively impact public deliberation with education and advocacy.

STAKEHOLDERS? This issue will be of interest to and discussed by a wide range of stakeholders, not just a few small groups.

LWV SOLANO COUNTY OUTREACH? This issue will enhance the outreach opportunities of LWV Solano County to add new members and increase in visibility among the public.