

Program League of Women Voters Montana April 2024- March 2025

Approve Existing Positions: Every year, each League takes formal action to approve the positions it has adopted over the years. There was no action to update any of the League's positions over the past year. The existing positions can be found at:

<https://my.lwv.org/montana/positions>

Program Focus: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Check that all Leagues have the language on DEI in their bylaws. Assist and encourage local Leagues to do DEI trainings and adopt DEI language in local League goals, policies and procedures. Encourage outreach to diverse groups with emphasis on Native Americans, young people, also rural areas and those with disabilities and other diverse groups from DEI statement. Use a land acknowledgement statement at the beginning of every League meeting. Learn about and stand up to threats against diversity, equity and inclusion.

Program Focus: Making Democracy Work

Support for National action: Individual members contact their members of Congress and the President to follow through on Actions taken by National. State officers forward National League President updates and calls to action from LWVUS to local leaders and members as needed. Begin "Moonshot" campaign to eliminate the Electoral College. Also, ongoing campaigns such as the ERA and national voting rights legislation.

Support for Montana Constitution: public education and defense of the framework for democracy contained in the Montana Constitution. Work in collaboration with Friends of the Montana Constitution and other organizations to engage Montanans in learning more about their constitution and appreciating the rights and responsibilities we share. Engage in advocacy work and lawsuits as necessary.

Voting Rights and Voter Protection in 2025 Legislative Session and Interim

Committees: Support positive reforms such as online voter registration for all, portable voter registration within each state, and reforms to provisional voting, and to oppose any bills that curtail voting rights. Defend existing voter rights if needed during the 2025 session. Monitor and participate in Interim Committees related to voting and elections. Participate in lawsuits as necessary to defend state Constitution. Continue cooperation with Pro-Democracy Working Group.

Money in Politics 2025 Legislative Session: Lobby in legislature according to League positions on bills affecting the Commissioner of Political Practices and other money in politics bills. Support federal legislation.

Voter Registration: Coordinate with local Leagues to expand voter education and registration efforts, with a special focus on voters who are between the ages of 18 to 29,

voters who have been formerly incarcerated, voters who are part of any minority demographic groups in Montana, and new citizens.

Voter Education: Inform people about existing on-line voting resources as part of our election voter registration and voter outreach, such as the Montana Secretary of State website, VOTE411 and FollowtheMoney, as well as the data site on campaign finance from the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices. Provide public education on what has changed since the 2023 Legislature. Work in coalition to counter misinformation about Montana's election system and safety of voting. Fundraise and collaborate to secure state-wide VOTE411 for 2024 election season.

Program Focus: 2025 Montana Legislative Session: Continue to monitor proposed bills during the session for potential state League lobbying and testimony. Write statewide Guest Editorials as needed.

Program Focus: Climate catastrophe: provide public education in collaboration with other organizations on climate forecasts, what can be done.

Program Focus: Public education and support for woman's rights (ERA) and a woman's right to choose.

Program Focus: Eliminate the Electoral College. Provide public education on the National Popular Vote Compact and other policy options that would be more reflective of the popular vote.

Program Focus: Engaging young people in civics education. Implement Voter Girl program with Girl Scout Council and support civics education in the schools including Harvard Case Study Project and Suffrage Timeline.

Program Focus: Local Government Review coming up for vote in primary election 2024. Encourage local Leagues to offer public education on Local Government Review. Engage in public education about review commissions work if approved in League communities.

Program Focus: Reduce divisiveness in public discourse. Work with Braver Angels or similar program to train League members and hold workshops on public non-polarizing discourse.

POTENTIAL STUDIES FOR 2024-2025:

Local Government City and/or County form of Government: encourage local Leagues to study their form of local government starting in fall of 2023, to be prepared for vote in 2024.

Review and consider Update of League Position on Education: including research on impact of Supreme Court decision allowing public funds to go to private schools.

Mental Health Provision in Montana: Expand work done as part of the Criminal Justice Study to assess status and how to improve mental health services for Montanans.

Ranked Choice Voting: Research and develop position for LWV Montana on ranked choice voting proposals, such as CI126 and CI127, for consideration at the 2025 LWV MT Convention.

Action Plan:

1. Implement DEI at state and local League levels. Learn about and stand up to threats against DEI.
2. Prepare for and be present to stand up for minority groups when needed.
3. Encourage local Leagues to work in support of initiatives in their local communities with organizations that expand the diversity of the League's outreach to groups underrepresented in League activities. Encourage local League to diversify their membership where practicable.
4. Encourage members to track and respond to Action Alerts taken by LWVUS and LWV Montana using Outreach Circle
5. Track Interim Committees and other sources of proposed legislation and testify on draft bills as needed to prepare for the 2025 Legislative Session.
6. Prepare for and implement legislative Action Team through end of session, to monitor bills, prepare League Action Forms and Action Alerts, and coordinate LWVMT testimony at state legislature.
7. Encourage local Leagues to be active in voter registration efforts, with high school students and civics education in part through the Suffrage Timeline, and the MT LWV Youth Voter Project, and with individuals who have been formerly incarcerated in the justice system, and with new citizens. Encourage local Leagues to be members of the MT LWV Voter Services Committee.
8. Implement Voter Girl program with Girl Scout Council.
9. Recruit sponsor to pay for statewide VOTE411 participation in 2024.
10. Implement VOTE411 statewide in 2024 in collaboration with local Leagues.
11. Monitor and participate in Interim Legislative Committee(s) Studies on issues affecting strength of democracy in Montana.
12. Work with Coalition of groups to counter voter suppression, unconstitutional laws passed by the 2023 Legislature, including lawsuits.
13. Collaborate with Friends of the Montana Constitution, other organizations to promote public understanding and engagement with Montana's Constitution.
14. Continue Public Education events on Climate forecasts, necessity for action.
15. Research and provide public education on eliminating the Electoral College, adopting the National Popular Vote Compact and other policy options that would be more reflective of the popular vote.

16. Implement public education on Local Government Review in anticipation of primary election in 2024 and continued education in League communities that approve study commissions.
17. Implement working groups to research and update League position on public education if needed, and on mental health services, with eye to adopting needed revisions to the positions at next Convention.
18. Continued public education and action to support pro-choice and ERA.
19. Engage League in Brighter Angel workshops.