



LWVC Program Planning 2019-2021
PROGRAM PLANNING KIT

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I. WHAT IS PROGRAM PLANNING?

In League, *Program* is the issues that we choose for concerted study, education and action at local, state and national levels. Program can include both education and advocacy work.

The Program Planning process is part of what makes the League a grassroots organization; each League member has the opportunity to influence the selection of issues where the local, state, and national League will focus time, talent and money. It takes the enthusiasm and interest of our members to keep our program vital. You’d never skip voting in an election; you shouldn’t skip the League’s equivalent. The program planning process is your voice!

The process starts now with your local League Program Planning, the meeting(s) at which you and your fellow members propose the areas on which you’d like to focus your local energy, the energy of other local Leagues in California, and the resources of the state League (staff, board, consultants, and other volunteers) over the next two years.

The Issues for Emphasis your League proposes as priorities may be based on current League work or on new topics you believe we should focus on. One or more of your choices could be a new study, an update of an existing LWVC position or concurrence with an existing or proposed position. Your League’s response is due no later than March 4, 2019. The LWVC board will review all the responses from Leagues across the state, make their recommendations, and then send local Leagues their Recommended Program for 2019-2021 for review.

The program planning process culminates in the delegates’ adoption of the statewide program at our May 31-June 2 convention in Pasadena. Every member is encouraged to attend; find out more on our [Convention blog](#).

Please contact us at advocacy@lwvc.org if you have questions or concerns.

LWVC-PROGRAM-PLANNING GOOGLE GROUP; WEBINAR

Join the Google discussion [group all about LWVC Program Planning](#).

It's a place to encourage others to join your cause, try out an idea, discuss various proposals, find help to refine a rough idea. Bring your ideas—we'll have a great League discussion! All League members are invited to join. Please invite your members: announce it in your newsletter, on your Web site, and in meetings.

You can also join us for a webinar on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 6:30 p.m. [Register here](#) to learn more and have your questions about the process answered. Afterward, we'll post a recording of the webinar on the [program planning Web page](#).

II. PROGRAM PLANNING TO GROW THE LEAGUE: LWVUS GUIDANCE ON OPPORTUNITIES

The LWVUS has provided [tips for your program planning meeting\(s\)](#), to inspire you to make them fun and productive and use them to attract new members, get attention, and develop leadership in your League. We highly recommend you check them out and use what is applicable to your League. Program planning is a great opportunity, so make the most of it!

III. SAMPLE ARTICLE AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Sample article for your newsletter or website:

The League is a truly grassroots organization that sets its agenda through the Program Planning process. As members, this is our chance to help choose what we want California's and the League's future to be.

Join us at xxx on xxx, when we'll be discussing League policy and positions at the state level. Where should the League focus its energy over the next two years?

What are the issues of concern to us here in _____? Where is there a need for legislative activity and other advocacy, both in Sacramento and in our city or county?

Advocacy is a key League activity year-round. For example, we supported or opposed 7 of the 11 statewide ballot measures in November, and in addition, many bills we supported—from climate change to voting rights—were signed into law.

What will we do to participate in the LWVUS Campaign to Make Democracy Work? Should we focus on community education? Where does the census fit in to our priorities? Was there an issue on the ballot this year on which you wished the League had been able to take a stand—so that we should have a new or updated study?

This is your opportunity to make your voice heard. Join us!

Ideas for social media:

- The League sets its agenda through the Program Planning process. You voted in November because you care about our political future; now you need to come make your voice heard about what you want California's and the League's future to be.

- Help the LWV plan how to Make Democracy Work in California and in our communities.
- You voted in November because you care about our political future; now you need to make your voice heard about what you want California's and the League's future to be.
- What are the areas of concern to us here in _____? Join us to discuss how to address them!
- What issues should the LWV emphasize in the next two years for advocacy or community education?
- Was there an issue on the ballot this year on which you wished the League had been able to take a stand? Join our discussion about issues to study!
- If you want your voice to be heard, then attend the Program Planning meeting. It's the start of the grassroots process, and the place for each of us to make our opinions heard.

V. IDEAS FOR YOUR MEETINGS: SETTING A WELCOMING TONE

- Make sure new members and guests are welcomed. Yes, guests are welcome although they cannot contribute to the consensus that your members reach. Program planning is a great way to introduce prospective members to how the League works.
- Always consider food. You might have a soup bar, dessert buffet, wine and cheese, whatever fits your time of day. One League does a "chocolate everything" party.
- Some Leagues combine program planning with their holiday party.
- Timing: Schedule public meetings for the evening and for at least a two-hour period to ensure community members can attend after work. Weekend meetings should also be considered.
- Childcare: Offering childcare can be very helpful, especially if you have members who may not be able to afford to hire a babysitter for the event.
- Location: The locations should be easy to access by public transportation and provide ample parking. You can encourage more diverse participation by holding meetings in underrepresented neighborhoods, particularly at sites familiar to members of the community.
- Accessibility: Meeting locations should be accessible to people with disabilities.
- Social media: Twitter and other forms of social media can be used to engage those unable to attend the meeting as well as those in the room. A robust social media plan includes communication before, during, and after the meeting. Consider creating a Twitter hashtag that will allow people to follow the conversation and submit questions in real-time. Advertise the hashtag during the meeting and encourage participants to use it to engage and educate their communities. Be sure to follow up and answer any questions posed via social media.

VI. WHAT'S NEW FOR 2019-2021 PROGRAM PLANNING

- The adoption of program at the LWVC convention has two parts: 1) decisions on retaining or dropping the current LWVC positions, and 2) adoption of priorities for the coming biennium—the Issues for Emphasis. For the second time, we are **taking a new approach** as we ask Leagues for their input to the LWVC board's choice of a recommended program for 2019-2021.

- In 2016, we started a new pattern; we are **not** asking that you discuss and recommend retaining, dropping, or updating each LWVC position. Instead, we're asking you to spend your time considering where our focus should be in the next two years. The LWVC board will consult our subject specialists—the people who guide our work in the various program areas—about retaining or dropping the positions. (Of course, we always welcome any suggestions your League would like to send us. There's a space for comments at the end of the [online response form](#), or you can send an email message to advocacy@lwvc.org.)
- With that in mind, the basic goal for your meeting(s) is to decide on your League's recommendations for Issues for Emphasis—those timely and critical issues on which League resources for study, action, and community education will be concentrated.

VII. YOUR MEETING AGENDA

We suggest you structure your agenda in this general manner:

1. ***Discuss League positions and recent program work. What do we know is already on our plate? What opportunities have been identified? Will priorities change as we address new circumstances?***

While reviewing all adopted positions is no longer a requirement, you might open your discussion by considering some LWVC positions and how we have used them. [Our summary](#) of recent LWVC action can serve both as background for your discussion of priorities and information about any positions you might want to consider for updating or dropping. Remember that state and local League program work also relies on LWVUS positions; consult the LWVUS publication [Impact on Issues](#).

Recognizing work already on our plate and other areas where we see opportunities to have an impact: Refer to our [Notes on Ongoing Work and Opportunities](#). The national Campaign for Making Democracy Work adopted at the LWVUS convention in June 2018 will be part of the LWVC's and local Leagues' focus in the coming year. Be sure to discuss how your League would want to participate in these efforts.

Also think about recent LWVC work in several program areas that is likely to merit continuing advocacy, community education, and/or study. And finally, take a look at new opportunities and challenges that our state and local communities may be encountering; are there areas where our priorities should shift?

2. ***Proposed concurrence position***

Since the 2017 LWVC convention, a group of League members has been meeting to talk about policing and criminal justice in California and how the League can impact state and local policy. That group is proposing a position to be adopted via concurrence. You can learn more about the concurrence policy [here](#). If your League supports one or more proposed concurrence, please indicate your support in question 9 on the online response form.

3. ***Issues for Emphasis: Here's your opportunity to select issues you'd like the League to prioritize for***

the next two years.

Think both short and long term. Where should we engage, where can we make a difference? How will we go about that? The choices are:

- a. study of an issue (a traditional study or possibly a concurrence with a position reached by another League or the recommendations of a resource committee)
- b. an update study of an issue on which the LWVC already has a position
- c. community education about an issue
- d. advocacy on an issue
- e. any combination of these—for example, advocacy on one aspect of an issue while another aspect is being studied or updated; or a combination of action and community education on the same issue.

Consider **asking** well-versed, experienced members to act as resources. You could invite different people to report on various program areas: briefly explain how League positions have been used in the past, what has kept them from being able to act on issues important to your community, and what they would like to do if they had more direction or support.

Submit your **recommendations** in the [online response form](#) (see Section IX below).

VIII. POINTS TO CONSIDER AS YOU CHOOSE ISSUES FOR EMPHASIS

Criteria to consider in choosing priorities:

- Is this an issue that would attract participation from the community and our members? Would it entice new members? diverse members?
- Is this an issue on which legislative or regulatory action is needed? Will political realities permit effective government action during the next two years?
- If this is a topic for study, will the issue still be timely when the study is completed in several years?
- Does this issue involve a need not being well met by other groups?
- Is there member interest and commitment to this topic?
- Could the League play a significant role in impacting community concern and/or public policy decisions on this issue? Does it further our long-term vision and impact?
- Do we have the capacity (staff, members/volunteers, funds, project management) to take on this issue? Is it an issue that will attract financial support?

If you want to propose a new study or an update of a current position, consider these definitions and resources:

STUDY: The process of gathering information for discussion by members with the aim of reaching consensus and establishing a position.

UPDATE: A study of limited scope to reevaluate an existing position in light of new information, changed circumstances, and/or conflict with another League position. The goal is consideration of a change in position.

Be familiar with the [policies for the study process](#) adopted by the LWVC Education Fund board. You may also want to consult LWVC's [How to Direct a State Study](#) before making this recommendation, as you will be asked to provide names of members willing to work on the study.

Adopting a position by concurrence: If your League would like to suggest that delegates to Convention 2019 adopt a position by concurrence, it is important that you follow the [procedure for concurrence](#) approved by the state League board in 1995.

IX. PROGRAM PLANNING RESPONSE FORM DUE MARCH 3, 2019.

Please submit your League's response using our SurveyMonkey [online response form](#) no later than March 4, 2019. In addition to background information about your League and how you arrived at your recommendations, we are asking you to:

- list your recommendations for Issues for Emphasis on which the League should focus in 2019 – 2021 along with names of members who would be willing to work on those issues
- tell us whether you support adding a new position via concurrence.

The online form will help us compile and evaluate all the responses most effectively, so please let us know if you need help using it. If you would like to collect your members' ideas on a printed form during your meeting, here is [one you can use](#).

X. LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING

All the information given here is about program planning for the LWVC—for the state-level League positions and priorities. Please also remember that you need to do program planning for your local positions and priorities, and make sure that your members understand how important their voices are in all of these activities.

XI. LWVC CONVENTION MAY 31 – JUNE 2 IN PASADENA

The program planning process culminates in the delegates' adoption of the statewide program at our May 31 – June 2 convention in Pasadena. Every member is encouraged to attend; find out more on the [Convention blog](#) (www.lwvc.wordpress.com). We will be posting more information there as it becomes available; keep checking the blog, the [LWVC Leaders Updates](#), and the lwvc.org [Upcoming Events](#) page.

XII. RESOURCES

1. LWVC [Action Policies and Positions](#)
2. LWVUS [Impact on Issues 2016-2018](#)
3. [LWVC Legislative Roundup](#)

A summary of the LWVC work done in the past year in the California legislature.

If you have questions or suggestions,
please contact Joanne Leavitt or Dora Rose

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