



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

## LWV CHICAGO

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LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF CHICAGO

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHICAGO

## 2017-18 YEAR OF ENGAGEMENT

Last year LWV Chicago committed to build on recent growth in membership and actively engage members and the communities we serve through education, advocacy, and voter service. In the last 12 months we have accomplished a great deal. In preparation for this election year, we expanded our ranks of Deputy Voter Registrars, organized voter registration events, hosted candidate forums, and widely disseminated information about voter registration procedures as well as the March Primary Election. We successfully advocated for financial accountability of city government and recognition of civil and women's rights leader Ida B. Wells. We held informational programs on issues that matter to residents of the City of Chicago, ranging from the environment to health care to criminal justice. This Annual Report provides an overview of our many accomplishments in four areas: Election 2018, Focus on Current Issues, Outreach, and Eye on City Government. The report illustrates our continuing commitment to Making Democracy Work.

# YEAR IN SUMMARY

## Strategic Highlights

In this Year of Engagement LWV Chicago strengthened existing bonds and set out to forge new ones with members, minority communities, civic, political, and women's groups, and government representatives. The League held periodic Orientation programs for new and prospective members as well as Drinks and Dialogue socials, initiated the League Connector program for new members, and formed the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. It reached out to community groups to spur discussion and find solutions for problems confronting our city and our electoral process: getting out the vote, reaching disenfranchised voters, bridging our divided communities, assuring fiscal accountability for our schools and city government. The League also increased media exposure with articles or op-eds published in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Chicago Woman*.

## Financial Highlights

Income has increased steadily since 2016, driven largely by steady growth in membership. Operating fund totals rose from \$10,400 in 2016 to \$20,100 in 2018 as member totals more than doubled over that period. While foundation grants and individual contributions went unchanged (\$10,000 and \$1,250, respectively, over the last three years), the League attracted new sources of income to its Education Fund in 2018 through a challenge grant (\$4,300), memorial and individual contributions (\$1,700), and foundation grants (\$750).

Financial performance for the State of the City Luncheon and Fundraiser has been consistent. The event raised between \$6,000 and \$10,000 for events in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Return on investment was \$0.40, \$0.41, and \$0.68 for the three annual events, totals that are in keeping with national ROI trends for non-profit organizations of around \$0.50. Ticket sales also were consistent, averaging 127 total, and audiences were predominantly League members or guests. Overall expenditures have been relatively constant; most outlays over the past three years have been based on previous totals. Website development and an event planning consultant were the largest new expenditures (totaling \$6,000) for 2017-2018.

## Operating Highlights

Membership continued to increase. Membership more than doubled in 2016-17; it rose again in 2018. Attendance at public programs increased. Nearly 380 individuals attended the five free Chicago in Focus programs in 2017-18. Overall, program attendance rose by 26 percent, and it was evenly divided between members and nonmembers. Briefings on timely topics, such as the safety of the city's drinking water, Election 2018, the high cost of prescription drugs, and the opioid crisis attracted standing room-only audiences. A new website and social media presence have improved outreach and internal communication. A comprehensive needs assessment, generously donated by League member and W4Sight consultant Molly Mangan, is streamlining information management and administration. Continuing participation in leadership training, grant writing, and Membership Leadership and Development is providing a solid foundation for improved operations going forward.

*"A friend and I were both feeling helpless about the political situation. [You've] shown us that we have options. It's a perspective-changer." --New member at League Orientation*

# ELECTION 2018

LWV Chicago currently has nearly 110 Deputy Voter Registrars. DVRs have been actively registering voters at one-time events as well as through five ongoing voter registration programs.

**Events.** DVRs registered voters at several locations on National Voter Registration Day in 2017, during the Women’s March and the March for Our Lives early in 2018, as well as at designated registration events. **More than number totals:** After handing out approximately ten motor/voter forms at the Women’s March in January, League DVR Ed Hanlon helped a woman in a three-generation group register her granddaughter to vote. While registering nine new teen voters at After School Matters, a 17-year-old who felt he was not mature enough to understand issues and candidates’ views nonetheless was encouraged to register, “a tangible sign that teens are motivated,” Hanlon said.

**Voter Registration Programs.** LWV Chicago has coordinated voter registration campaigns in high schools, colleges and universities, senior living facilities, libraries, and Cook County Jail. With their Chicago Votes partners and others, they have registered 1200 detainees. Before the March 20 Primary Election, LWV Chicago and other volunteers spent three days at the jail sorting 5500 envelopes containing applications to register to vote and apply for vote-by-mail ballots. LWV and other volunteers helped detainees who had completed absentee ballot applications cast their votes in a private voting booth on March 10 and 17. Cook County Jail Voting coordinator Julie Shelton reports that approximately 30 LWV members have participated in registering voters at the jail.



**Legislation.** Members of the South Side Unit were actively involved in preparing legislation that would require all Illinois counties to facilitate voting for detainees awaiting trial. Catherine Mardikes and Julie Shelton attended meetings with the drafters and supporters of the legislation and offered input. They and other members of the South Side Unit have been tracking the bill’s progress through the legislature. At this writing, the legislation passed both the Illinois House and Senate and is awaiting Gov. Bruce Rauner’s signature.

# FOCUS ON ISSUES

LWV Chicago's public education programs have become increasingly popular. Nearly 380 people attended one of the Chicago in Focus lectures, half of whom were not affiliated with the League or its partner, the Union League Club of Chicago. The attendance total in 2018 was 26 percent higher than in 2017.

## Timely Topics

Chicago in Focus and Saturday informational Briefings could not have been timelier. Less than six months after Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart reported on CBS TV's *60 Minutes* that half of the jail population doesn't belong in incarceration, he explained to a 100-plus Chicago in Focus audience why the jail system fails both the inmate population and society at large. At the same time the city of Chicago was suing the federal Justice Department over policies directed toward Sanctuary Cities, ACLU attorney Rebecca Glenberg explained how city ordinances protect and welcome immigrants. In the face of an epidemic of opioid-related overdoses and deaths (a 163-percent increase citywide between 2014 and 2017, according to the city Fire Department), Rev. Alexander Sharp of Clergy for a New Drug Policy described public health responses for the city and county. A month after the *Chicago Tribune* reported brain-damaging levels of lead in the tap water feeding hundreds of homes across the city, attorneys David Mueller and Nancy Loeb discussed ways individuals can protect their households and advocate for stronger drinking water standards. Less than a month before Illinois State Board of Education officials recommended independent monitoring of special education programs in Chicago Public Schools, speakers at a Saturday Briefing discussed the effects of special education regulations in the classroom. Also covered in lectures and Briefings:

- Tax Increment Financing, a constant source of controversy and confusion over the \$400 million a year property tax and development program
- The high cost of prescription drugs, which account for 11 percent of all health care dollars
- Illinois Primary Election turnout, voting security, and voting procedures
- The Cook County Hospital System and the citizens it serves

MONTH	PROGRAM	SPEAKER	TOPIC
September	Chicago in Focus	Sheriff Tom Dart	Unjust Incarceration
	Briefing	Annie Logue	League 101
October	Chicago in Focus	Rebecca Glenberg	Chicago as a Sanctuary City
	Briefing	Tatia Laforme, Tanya Anthofer	Tax Increment Financing
November	Chicago in Focus	Hil Hammock	Cook County Hospital System
	Briefing	Rev. Alexander Sharp	Opioid Crisis
January	Chicago in Focus	Board of Elections' Officials	Election Turnout
	Briefing	Thomas Gochenour	High Costs of Prescription Drugs
February	Briefing	LWV Voter Service	Primary Election
March	Briefing	CPS principal and teacher	Special Education Regulations and the Classroom
April	Chicago in Focus	Howard Learner	Chicago's Pedway
	Briefing	Environmental attorneys	Drinking Water Safety

# OUTREACH

## Membership

LWV Chicago has been actively engaging with members as their numbers rise. (The total number of members increased from 143 in 2016 to 279 at the end of 2017; another 85 new members joined in the first six months of 2018.) League leaders have held three Orientation programs for new and prospective members, and leaders of each of the League's seven Units hold monthly meetings for members in their neighborhoods.



## Collaborations

The League joined other coalitions of grassroots organizations for the Women's March, March for Our Lives, and March to the Polls; it was one of the beneficiaries for the Pink Hat Run and a cosponsor at the Chicago Foundation for Women Summit in October. LWV Chicago was one of 37 organizations to support the Chicago Metro History Fair. The first of its kind Voter Summit, held in conjunction with UIC, brought together 60 community organization representatives to discuss ways of getting out the vote. *Photos: Left: Drinks & Dialogue; Center: Pride Parade, Jo-Elle Munchak, Sarah Bury, Sameena Mustafa; Right: Women's March*

## Diversity

A task force of members launched a series of activities to better serve the breadth and depth of League members and reinforce its commitment to diversity. The group's first action was to gather baseline information via a survey of 300 members. Of the 96 respondents, 13% identified as people of color, 26% as under age 55, 10% as LBGTQ, 55% as Christian or Jewish, 42% as nonreligious or having another faith, and 75% as having a master's degree or doctorate. **"The work of diversity and inclusion requires a comprehensive approach and strong partnerships. Our impact has spread to all areas of the League, most visibly at the recent State of the City fundraiser, which featured a diverse lineup of speakers and media partners."**— Sameena Mustafa, Cochair, Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.

### Committee on Diversity and Inclusion

Following the survey, the board approved a formal committee, co-chaired by Sarah Bury, Sameena Mustafa, and Chris Ruys, with plans to accelerate the mission so LWV Chicago reflects the diversity of the city it serves.

### Takeaways

Among the takeaways from the first committee meeting:

- A follow-up survey slated for fall 2018
- Working with Units to add diversity to the Board
- Partnerships with community groups to host events that spur dialogue

# EYE ON CITY GOVERNMENT

LWV Chicago Committees have been monitoring city government operations and advocating for change. The City Government Committee attended eight days of hearings on Mayor Rahm Emanuel's 2018 budget, interviewed aldermen to gain their perspectives on the budgeting process, and helped generate support for a city ordinance that would promote efficient and economical decision-making by requiring a comprehensive financial analysis of any proposal affecting city finances. The ordinance passed the City Council on May 25.

The Evening Education Committee has been investigating ways to ensure greater financial oversight of the Chicago Board of Education, including a legislative requirement for an independent finance and audit reviewing body, formal training of Chicago Public Schools board members, and monitoring state budgetary issues involving school financing.



## Ida B. Wells Campaign

LWV Chicago spearheaded an effort to rename Balbo Drive in honor of Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Since November 2017, League members have been meeting with aldermen and their staffs. A working group of members from the South Side Unit, including Molly Bartlett, Robin Charleston, Helene Gabelnick, Claire Hartfield, Nicole Johnson, Jacqueline Kirley, Catherine Mardikes, Melanie Norstrom, Jane Ruby, Julie Shelton, and Diana White, met with aldermen whose wards include Balbo Drive. Aldermen Sophia King and Brendan Reilly on May 25 introduced an ordinance that would change the name of Balbo Drive and garnered support from 25 aldermen. In late June chair of the City Council Transportation Committee Ald. Anthony Beale (9<sup>th</sup>) announced that Congress Parkway would be renamed for Ida B. Wells. On July 19 the City Council's Transportation Committee voted unanimously to rename Congress Parkway for Ida B. Wells. "I look at this as a legacy that each of us can leave to the future generations of Chicago," said Reilly. The full City Council made it official soon after.

# ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

In the wake of the spurt in growth of membership since the end of 2016, LWV Chicago has been presented with both opportunities and challenges. The League is responding by evaluating its organizational structure, administrative support, and technology requirements.

## Needs Assessment

For a period of two months at the beginning of 2018, W4Sight, LLC, conducted a pro bono needs assessment of LWV Chicago. Consultant and League member Molly Mangan reviewed internal documents, attended meetings, and interviewed members of the board, committee chairs, and members and made a series of recommendations to improve the structure and function of the League. In response, LWV Chicago has:

- Evaluated and purchased an information management system that will improve internal processes and communication, create a centralized member database, simplify event management, streamline accounting and payment functions, coordinate document management, and integrate smoothly with external communication tools.
- Begun a review of the overall organizational structure to more clearly define board and committee roles; facilitate communication among board members, committee chairs, unit leaders, and members; and achieve a more equitable division of labor.
- Set in motion a process for determining administrative needs and ways of obtaining ongoing support.

## Analytics

### Social Media

LWV Chicago's social media presence expanded significantly in little over a year. To improve both the extent and quality of engagement, League member Jenny Grochowski conducted a social media audit at the end of 2017. The audit found that all social media vehicles gained followers. While Facebook's growth was faster than that of Twitter (an increase of 324 for Facebook versus 208 on Twitter), Twitter has more followers (636 versus 426). In comparison with other Leagues, LWV Chicago has a smaller number of Facebook followers, and it has fewer social media followers than Leagues in other major cities. All League open rates (33 to 46 percent) are well over the industry average of 19 percent. The monthly Voter newsletter has the highest click rate (11 percent). Overall, event promotions have the lowest open rates and announcements have the highest.

### Website

After painstaking review and revision, a new website was launched in June. The website has more photos, better links to events, and data that can be collected from submitted forms. The website can accommodate more information and updates, is easier to navigate, and will be a center for League communications.

## Publicity

The 2018 State of the City Luncheon and Fundraiser captured wide media coverage. As a result of pro bono publicity provided by Chris Ruys Communications:

- WGN-TV and ABC 7 ran live interviews with League President Annie Logue
- ABC 7, Chicago Woman, and Chicago Defender became event sponsors
- Advertisements appeared on ABC 7's website and in Chicago Woman and Chicago Defender
- Articles appeared in Chicago Woman and Chicago Defender
- Local media hits appeared in Independent Bulletin, Windy City Times, Lawndale NEWS
- Facebook posts or website mentions appeared on Persistlist.org, IntelligentEvent.org, Hammer Social Justice, Politico Illinois, Chicago Public Square, Chicago Women Take Action, Chicago Activism



# WHO'S WHO IN THE LEAGUE

At the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Chicago on June 9, 2018, twelve officers and board members were reelected and two new members were elected.

## Executive Committee for 2018-2019

President -- Annie Logue

Vice President -- Catherine Mardikes

Vice President -- Cathy Potkay

Vice President -- Karen Sandrick

Secretary -- Nancy Kelly-Martin

Treasurer -- Pat Vogtman

## Directors

Nancy Brandt

Sarah Bury

Bernice Fortini

Helene Gabelnick

Patricia Graunke

Margaret Herring

Sameena Mustafa

Melanie Norstrom

Jane Ruby

Rae Sokolow

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## Thanks to sponsors who helped make our 2017-18 year a success

Davee Foundation

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Illinois Women's Institute of Leadership

Union League Club of Chicago

Riverside Printing

## Thanks to the State of the City speakers

Evelyn Diaz, Heartland Alliance

Zachary Fardon, King & Spaulding

Natalie Morales, WBEZ

Juan Salgado, Chancellor, Chicago City Colleges

## Thanks to State of the City sponsors

Media:

ABC7

Chicago Defender

Chicago Woman

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Margaret Herring

Esta Kallen

Annie Logue

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Jane Ruby

Sharon Alter

Event consultant:

Joel Massel

The League of Women Voters of Chicago is proud of the achievements its members have made over the last 12 months as we completed our Year of Engagement. We look forward to taking on new challenges as we 2018-2019. Our goal: to make Every Citizen an Informed Voter.