

LWV CHICAGO VOTER NEWSLETTER SPECIAL EDITION



CHICAGO MUNICIPAL ELECTION PREVIEW

In the next few weeks, citizens of the city of Chicago will elect a new mayor, City Council, City Clerk, and City Treasurer. This article provides an overview of the mayoral and aldermanic elections.

MAYOR

Of a total of 21 candidates who initially filed to run for mayor last November, 14 remain in the race as of January 17. This year's race attracted the most candidates since at least 1901, according to the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners. Chicago's next mayor faces a number of critical [issues](#), including pension liability, school closings, and crime. A short summary of these issues can be found [here](#).

CITY CLERK

The City Clerk is the official record keeper for the City Council. The position is important to government transparency because the clerk is responsible for keeping and making official records and legislation accessible. At this writing there are three candidates for this position.

CITY TREASURER

The City Treasurer is the custodian and manager of all cash and investments for the City of Chicago, the four City employee pension funds and the Chicago Teacher's Pension Fund. The Treasurer serves on the boards of these pension funds as well. The Treasurer's Office also manages many programs that promote economic development in Chicago. At this writing there are three candidates for this position.

ALDERMAN

The Chicago City Council is responsible for adopting the city budget; approving mayoral appointees; levying taxes; and making or amending city laws, policies, and ordinances. For the upcoming election:

- **212** candidates filed to run in the 2019 city council election
- **45** incumbents are seeking re-election. Races for the 20th, 22nd, 25th, 39th, and 47th wards are open.
- **4** incumbents faced no opposition at the filing deadline.

The City Council faces a number of [issues](#), including the availability of affordable housing, aldermanic privilege, and tax increment financing. A short summary can be found [here](#) (link to news page of website).

ELECTION DATES

Jan. 28-Feb. 25: As of this writing, early voting is set to begin on January 28. That date may change. Early voting will continue at the Loop "super site," 175 W. Washington St., through February 25.

Jan. 29: Deadline to mail or deliver paper voter-registration application (Form 275).

Jan. 30-Feb. 25: Grace period registration and same-day voting.

Feb. 10: Online voter registration deadline.

Feb. 11-25: Early voting at 51 selected sites.

Feb. 21: Last day to apply for Vote By Mail ballot. Ballot must be postmarked by **Feb. 26**.

Feb. 26: ELECTION DAY (6 am-7pm). Vote or register and vote only at your local polling place.

Any candidate who wins a majority of votes on Feb. 26 shall be declared elected. If no candidate wins a majority of the votes for a particular office, the top two vote-getters will compete in a run-off election on Apr. 2.

BALLOT INITIATIVES

There are no citywide referendum questions on the ballot. Ballot initiatives may appear on precinct ballots.

LWV CHICAGO IN THIS ELECTION

As a nearly 100-year-old non-partisan education and advocacy organization, LWV Chicago has been working to ensure that all citizens will be informed voters in the coming election. Following is a summary of some of the League's activities.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

In preparation for the 2019 Municipal Elections, the League asked all candidates for elective office to complete a brief questionnaire to gather information voters could use to evaluate the candidates' views and positions. Answers to these questions will appear in the [Illinois Voter Guide](#), a service provided by the League of Women Voters of Illinois that allows constituents in every ward to learn about the individuals who are running for city offices and help voters make their decision at the ballot box.

The questionnaire asked mayoral, city clerk and treasurer and aldermanic candidates:

1. Should Chicago have the option of public financing of municipal elections as other major cities do? Why or why not?
2. What steps would you take to address the severe lack of affordable housing across the city?
 - 2a) One option for addressing this problem is to change the way affordable housing decisions are made. Would you agree to shift the responsibility for locating affordable housing units from the ward level to the city level? Please explain your answer.
3. Do you believe that high-quality neighborhood schools should be an option for all students in their neighborhoods? If you do, and if they are not available in all neighborhoods, what steps need to be taken to assure that they are?
 - 3a) Another option is to place a moratorium on the creation or expansion of charter schools. Would you support this option?
4. Enrollment in Chicago Public Schools declined significantly in 2018 and 2017, continuing a trend that began in 2003. What steps, if any, would you take to avoid closing more schools?
 - 4a) How would you achieve greater use of underused school facilities in areas with declining populations?
5. How would you address the issue of lead water pipe service lines and the safety of the water supply to homes and public and private buildings?

See the LWV Chicago website for [more information](#) about these questions and the issues they address.

ILLINOIS VOTER GUIDE



LWVIL's Voter Guide helps voters find information about candidates and

referenda on their ballots. For the Chicago municipal elections in February, the Voter Guide will focus on the offices of the mayor and City Council. It will present each candidate for public office, his or her educational background and experience, endorsements, and positions of issues. The [Voter Guide](#) links individual voters to the offices for which they will can ballots based on their location.

The [Voter Guide](#) was done in keeping with the League's goal of providing comprehensive, nonpartisan information about every candidate. It includes publicly available information, candidate photos and bios as well as issue stances and endorsements. A full description of the way LWVIL constructs the Voter Guide may be found [here](#).

VOTER REGISTRATION



LWV Chicago members have been busy registering voters and distributing election

information in preparation for this election. Over 150 students at the City Colleges of Chicago were registered to vote on the first day of classes. Voter registration [opportunities](#) will be available at candidates' forums.

VOTER RESOURCES

Information you may want to share with others about voting:

To apply to vote online: ova.elections.il.gov/

To verify registration, find a polling place and/or district, apply for or check the status of a Vote By Mail ballot, get general voting information and news: [Chicago Board of Elections](#), chicagoelections.com, 312-269-7900.

Community Partnerships Lead to Successful 47th Ward Aldermanic Forum

By Chris Ruys



An informal partnership between the League of Women Voters of Chicago and four other community groups resulted in a highly successful 47th

(Joining ROTC at Lakeview High School are League volunteers Tana Durnbaugh, Dietrich Klevorn, Chris Ruys, and Pat Wilder.)

Ward Aldermanic Forum on January 15 at Lakeview High School. The organizations were the 47th Ward Clergy Coalition, Forward Chicago, Indivisible Lincoln Square, and North Center Neighborhood Association.

More than 400 adults and students filled the auditorium to hear nine candidates discuss their views on city and Ward issues during an uninterrupted two-hour discussion.

"It was a true collaboration," said Pat Wilder, the Chicago League member who with Tana Durnbaugh and Chris Ruys helped coordinate the event. "So often one or two people do all the work. Not this time."

Volunteers handled logistics with the high school while others took responsibility for local communications, live streaming of the event, organizing the volunteers and signage. Students who were part of the Mikva Challenge, civics classes and the ROTC, created a palpable sense of energy as they helped set up the room, seat guests and register voters.

The League brought structure to the forum with ready-made printed materials, including forum ground rules, sample invitation letters to candidates, and candidate broadcast agreement letters. Indivisible, which agreed to remain non-partisan throughout the campaign, arranged for veteran Chicago broadcaster Ken Davis to moderate the discussion. A concerted effort went into creating questions that would elicit answers to show how the candidates would solve community problems. Pastor Jason Coulter, who heads the Coalition, said it all when he wrote this note of thanks to the committee: "I do a lot of work in coalition, and sometimes it makes you want to pull your hair out. But this experience with

our planning group was the exact opposite. It gave me joy and satisfaction and served an important function for our community and our democracy. If there is another opportunity for us to partner, let's do it!"

CANDIDATE FORUMS

In addition to the forum held on January 15, LWV Chicago is working with other organizations to hold a number of forums that host candidates for alderman in several wards. See the website for details on [upcoming forums](#).

WTTW LAUNCHES 2019 VOTERS' GUIDE TO CHICAGO ELECTIONS



WTTW has launched a [2019 Voters' Guide](#) to the election of Chicago mayor, City Clerk, City Treasurer, and aldermen, an online resource designed to inform voters about the candidates running for office in the February 26 election. Each candidate has a page on the Voter's Guide website that includes biographical information, information about the office, their vision for the office as well as the most pressing issues facing constituents and how they will address them. The updated [guide](#) will be live soon.

Each candidate was given two minutes of air time to speak to voters about where they stand on the issues, why they feel they are best qualified for the office they are seeking, and what they intend to do if elected or re-elected. The messages were recorded at the WTTW studios at no cost to the candidates.

LWV Chicago provided volunteers during 16 days of videotaping. They included Robin Charleston, Tana Durnbaugh, Mia Furlong, Helene Gabelnick, Marnie Gielow, Sarah Lincoln, Annie Logue, Catherine Mardikes, Shirley Michaelson, Carol Paulini, Chris Ruys, and Susan Sosin.

[WTTW](#) is the PBS member station in Chicago, committed to creating and presenting unique media content across distinct television and digital channels.