



PROGRAM PLANNING KIT

2025-2027

RESPONSES DUE MONDAY FEBRUARY 24



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA
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WHAT IS IN THIS KIT FOR ME?

Now	During the Meeting(s)	After the Meeting(s)
★ What Is Program Planning?	★ Virtual Meetings: Setting a Welcoming Tone	★ Response form due February 24, 2025
★ State League Discussion Group & Webinar	★ Your Meeting Agenda	★ Local program planning— don't forget to do this, too!
★ Build, Diversify, & Generate Fresh Ideas	★ Points to consider as you choose Issues for Emphasis	★ LWVC Convention
★ Entice Participation: Sample Article and Social Media Posts		★ Resources

INTRODUCTION

The League was born out of advocacy. Over seventy years of tireless campaigning for women's right to vote culminated in the formation of the League of Women Voters just six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified.¹

Prior to winning the right to vote, many women spent their entire lives working for the betterment of society. The abolition of slavery, education, labor protection, child welfare – all issues they cared passionately about. But their capacity to impact change depended on whether they could convince men to vote on their behalf. They wanted to be able to directly pass laws that would address the issues they cared about. The fight for the right to vote was intended to expand the ability of women to do more than education and engage in direct advocacy. And when the League was founded, one of the first steps taken was to draw up a Program of Action – to pick the issues they cared most passionately about and motivate people – women – to vote.

When we look back on what League members were most concerned about in 1924, what do we find? Members were fighting barriers to voter registration and voting, particularly for women and young people. They were working on the corrupting role of money in politics. They worked to protect workers in the labor market, particularly women and children. And they were deeply concerned about water.

Today, over a century later, League members all over California are engaging in that same process. We're deciding on a Program of Action to identify the issues we'll be working on tirelessly over the next two years. The League has a long history as an activist grassroots organization. Program Planning is the nuts and bolts required to continue our battle to defend Democracy.

¹ It must be noted that the 19th Amendment didn't win the right to vote for all women. Women of color were left behind for decades afterwards.

WHAT IS PROGRAM PLANNING?

In League, “**Program**” consists of the body of issues we choose for study, education, and action at local, state, and national levels. Program can include both education and advocacy work.

The LWVC Program planning process occurs every two years in advance of our state Convention.² It is part of what makes the League a grassroots organization; each League member has the opportunity to influence the selection of issues on which 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 would never skip voting in an election; you shouldn’t skip the League’s equivalent. Program planning is your voice!

The process starts now with your **local League Program planning**, the meeting(s) at which you and 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.

Your goal is to **propose up to three “Issues for Emphasis”** to the state League. These reflect your League’s priorities and may be based on current League work or on new topics you believe the state League 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 **recommended Issues for Emphasis are due no later than February 24, 2025** (early submissions welcomed). 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 2025-2027 for review.

The program planning process culminates in the delegates’ adoption of the statewide program at our 2025 convention. In 2025 the Convention general sessions will be from June 21-22, with workshops and caucuses happening June 17-20 (schedule pending). Every member is encouraged to attend - keep an eye out for more information that will be posted [at this link](#). Please contact us at program@lwvc.org if you have questions or concerns.

² All the information here is about Program planning for state-level League positions and priorities. Please also remember that you need to do Program planning for your local positions and priorities. National program planning guidance and resources are available [here](#).

Making Democracy Work: An Equity Lens

The League of Women Voters of California applies an “equity lens” by analyzing what we do from the perspective of how it impacts underrepresented individuals and communities. Program planning offers an excellent opportunity to develop representative League leadership and add rich, diverse perspectives to your work. While non-members can’t participate in the consensus portion of Program planning, they can be part of the meeting.

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 who are young, Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, have disabilities, are in the LGBTQI+ community, or otherwise underrepresented.

STATE LEAGUE DISCUSSION GROUP AND WEBINAR

The state League hosts an [LWVC Program planning Google discussion group](#).³ It’s a place to encourage others to join your cause, try out an idea, discuss various proposals, and 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 using various modalities including announcing it in your newsletter, through social media, on your website, and in meetings.

You can also [join us for a webinar](#) on **Monday, December 9, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.** [Register online](#) to learn more and have your questions about the process answered. Afterward, we’ll post a recording of the webinar on the [Members' Only under Program Planning](#).

USING PROGRAM PLANNING TO BUILD, DIVERSIFY & GENERATE FRESH IDEAS

The LWVUS offers [tips for your program planning meeting\(s\)](#), to inspire you to make them fun and productive and use them to bring in different perspectives from your communities, attract new members, get attention, and develop leadership in your League. They were written pre-COVID, but many elements are still useful. Check them out and use what is applicable to your League.

As we noted earlier, while non-members can’t participate in the consensus portion of program planning, they can be part of the meeting. To broaden your ideas and recommendations, we urge you to include both local League members and partners in your community who are young, Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian American, Native

³ To join the discussion group please sign into a GMAIL account and then click “ask to join” so that we can add you. If you’re having trouble, please email sjorgensen@lwvc.org

Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, have disabilities, are in the **LGBTQI+** community, or are otherwise underrepresented.

ENTICE PARTICIPATION: SAMPLE ARTICLE AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Sample article for your newsletter or website.

The League is a grassroots organization that sets its agenda through the “Program planning” process. This is a chance for League members and friends to help choose our priorities in education and advocacy and determine what we want for the future of California and our League.

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 took positions on [ballot measures in November](#) and advocated on a [plethora of bills](#) over the course of the legislative session.

What will we do to participate in the [LWVUS Campaign to Make Democracy Work](#)? Should we focus on community education? Where does local redistricting fit into our priorities? What critical issues do you see emerging that perpetuate the widening wealth gap between people with great wealth and those who have lower incomes? This is your opportunity to make your voice heard. Join us!

Ideas for social media.

- Join the League as we decide on our priorities for the next two years! You voted in November because you care about our political future; now make your voice heard and help set our agenda through the “Program planning” process.
- Help the LWV plan how to Make Democracy Work in California and our communities.
- What are the areas of concern to us here in _____? Join us to discuss how to advocate and educate on those issues!
- 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 to help design the impact we will have for the next two years, then attend the Program planning meeting. It’s the start of the grassroots process and the place to voice your opinions.

PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS

The 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.

The state League's biennial adoption of a Program at the LWVC Convention has two parts.

1. Decisions on retaining or dropping the current LWVC positions.
2. Adoption of priorities for the coming biennium—the Issues for Emphasis.

In 2016 we changed our protocol and are no longer asking local Leagues to 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 over 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 program@lwvc.org.

IDEAS FOR YOUR VIRTUAL MEETINGS: SETTING A WELCOMING TONE

Many of us are still conducting business virtually. Here are some ways to make those interactions more engaging.

- Schedule some time for people to socialize, to catch up with longtime acquaintances, and meet a few new people. Ask an inclusive icebreaker question. If you expect a large group, consider scheduling time in smaller groups (break out rooms). These could be randomly assigned, and change after 10-15 minutes, so people have time to chat with a variety of people. Use polls to get input for some of the proposals. Here are a few resources to run an engaging online meeting. [Zoom Recs for Running Engaging Online Events](#) and [How Smart Leaders Create Engagement in Zoom Meetings](#).
- Welcome new members and guests. Yes, guests are welcome although they cannot contribute to the consensus that your members reach. Program planning is a great way to engage community partners and friends of the League, and to introduce prospective members to how the League works.
- Make it a party! Some Leagues combine program planning with their holiday party. You can create a festive atmosphere by playing music or suggesting that people bring some food or drink to the event.
- Schedule public meetings for evenings or weekends to expand their inclusiveness. If you're doing it in-person, consider making childcare available.
- Here's a [resource](#) to help ensure that your online meetings are accessible to people with disabilities.
- 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 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. Here is a suggestion for a hashtag to use: “#PlanOurPrioritiesLA (or #PlanOurPrioritiesSF, etc.)

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 [LWVC Advocacy Wrap-Up 2024](#) can serve 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 LWWUS positions; consult the LWWUS 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](#) was amended to add language around abolition of the Electoral College, and readopted at the LWWUS convention in June 2022. It will be part of the LWVC’s and local Leagues’ focus in the coming year. Be sure to discuss how your League plans 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. **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:

- Community education about an issue.
- Advocacy on an issue.
- 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).
- An update study of an issue on which the LWVC already has a position.

- 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 and ask them to 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** to the [online response form](#) by February 24, 2025.

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?
- 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 this is a topic for study, will the issue still be timely when the study is completed in several years?

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

A Study

A “**study**” is the process of gathering information for discussion by members with the aim of reaching consensus and establishing a position.

An Update Study

An “**update study**” is 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 [LWVC Study Policies with Timelines for May 2025 Adoption](#) derived

from the [LWVC Policies and Procedures at P-13](#). You may also want to consult [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. “Concurrence” is the act of agreeing with or concurring with, a position reached by another League, or study committee, task force, or board. If your League would like to suggest that delegates to Convention 2025 adopt a position by concurrence, it is important that you follow the [procedure for concurrence](#) from [LWVC Policies and Procedures at P-12](#). Another useful resource that outlines the process is [Concurrence as an Alternative to a Study](#).

PROGRAM PLANNING RESPONSE FORM DUE FEBRUARY 24, 2025.

Please submit your League’s response using our [online response form](#) no later than February 24, 2025. In addition to background information about your League and how you arrived at your recommendations, we ask you to:

- List your recommendations for Issues for Emphasis on which the League should focus in 2025 – 2027 along with names of members who would be willing to work on those issues; and
- Tell us whether you support adding a new position through the concurrence process.

The online form will help us efficiently compile and evaluate all the responses, 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 a [Word version of the survey](#) to download.

DON'T FORGET 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.

LWVC CONVENTION

The Program planning process culminates in the delegates’ adoption of the statewide program at our statewide convention June 21-22, 2025.⁴

The LWVC Board of Directors will propose a Recommended Program based on this program planning process. That Program will be announced on March 31, 2025 via the Local League Presidents’ Google Group. Please share that with your members.

NEW! Traditionally at the Convention delegates may ask that an item that was not included in the Recommended Program be added to the Program. It is called

⁴ This year the LWVC general sessions are from June 21-22, with workshops and caucuses happening June 17-20 (schedule pending).

“Considering a Not Recommended Item.” This can still occur but (this is the **NEW!** part) only if you inform the Board of Directors of the request **no later than on April 14, 2025** by sending an email to program@lwvc.org. The proposed item must be one raised during the program planning process. You will receive the complete list of items suggested along with the Recommended Program at the end of March so you have access to that information. The email requesting the inclusion of the item must include:

1. The subject line reads “Not Recommended Item”
2. The exact wording of the item that appears in the list of items suggested during the planning process must appear in the body of the email, and
3. An explanation of the reasons for proposing the item must appear in the body of the email. This explanation must be less than 500 words. It will appear in the Convention Workbook.

The ability of delegates to adopt an item that does not appear in the Recommended Program remains intact but the process is streamlined so that time is not spent in the Plenary Session of the Convention explaining and re-explaining how this all works. The “Not Recommended Item” motion will be listed in the Convention Workbook when it is released one month before the Convention.

RESOURCES

1. [LWVC Action Policies and Procedures](#) (updated 2024)
2. [LWVUS Impact on Issues 2022-2024](#)
3. [LWVC Advocacy Wrap-Up 2024](#). Highlights of LWVC advocacy work done in the past year.

QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS?

If you have questions or suggestions, please contact program@lwvc.org.