



2024-25 PROGRAM

The LWVW is committed to the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). We commit to evaluating all activities with a DEI “lens,” meaning with regard to how that event or process is perceived by a variety of communities, voices, and perspectives. We will look for, and strive to eliminate, the presence of barriers that prevent the project/event/policy from being equitable or inclusive of everyone.

VOTER SERVICE

Prepare, publish, and distribute nonpartisan information on registration, voting, candidates, ballot issues and elections with consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices, as determined by national LWV. In all endeavors, collect data to evaluate our programs.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Coordinate local leagues to participate in the online production of our Vote411.org site including: administer the account, liaise with LWVNY, reach candidates for information, promote candidate forums, and publicize vote 411 widely for all County and local elections
2. Coordinate, conduct, partner and/or review voter registration actions and provide education services to other groups when requested.
3. Increase GOTV (Get Out The Vote) efforts through the ILO and through local leagues.
4. Work with Westchester Board of Elections to publicize and facilitate election law changes.
5. Assist local leagues with Candidate Events. Plan and produce county-wide forums and others as requested.
6. Liaise and support the Fair Campaign Practices Committee for Westchester County.
7. Coordinate League participation at Naturalization Court to welcome and distribute voter information to new citizens.
8. Coordinate educational programs on the recent redistricting and the resulting new maps at all levels of government.

ISSUES

The order of the following items does not denote priority and thus leaves the League (LWVW) the flexibility to act as situations warrant.

I. COUNTY GOVERNMENT

A. BUDGET

Review, analyze, and take action on the Westchester County budget as a fundamental tool for implementing County government policy, with particular emphasis on League positions.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Search for and monitor progress on the recommendations we have made in past budget statements.
2. Continue to monitor the budget adoption process, with emphasis on the interaction between the executive and legislative branches of County government.
3. Continue to urge improvements in the format of the County operating and capital budgets to ensure a better understanding by the general public.
4. Critically examine both the capital and operating budgets as soon as they are proposed, enlisting all available avenues of information gathering, with continuing attention to progress being made on scheduling completion of various capital projects, to estimated revenue streams such as sales tax forecasts, and to funding of pension costs and union contract settlements. Focus on the impact of proposed allocations on existing government programs on which the LWVW has particular positions. These would include, but would not be limited to, our support of fair and affordable housing; our particular concern for the work done by the Board of Elections; and our continuing encouragement of County support of essential human services, the environment, and infrastructure.

B. EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES

Monitor and take action on the operation of the Westchester County Government with particular attention to all matters that affect issues with which LWVW is concerned, financial matters, the election process and the items listed below.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. In collaboration with the Voter Service committee, help educate voters on where and how to vote, make recommendations for modernization of the voting systems. Review and act on relevant LWVNY positions, including that which would prevent Elections Commissioners from simultaneously serving as heads of their respective political parties. Discuss with the Board of Elections issues and possible problems in relation to voting reform.
2. Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation. Take an active role, in collaboration with LWVUS, LWVNY, and LWVW Voter Service, regarding redistricting measures that would preserve standards of compactness, and contiguity that would be consistent with federal requirements for population equality, with consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices.
3. Work to promote county-wide revaluation, supporting those municipalities and communities that have been undertaking reassessments and urge others to do the same. Educate the public on the many merits of regularly updating property tax assessments in order to achieve a more transparent and equitable system.
4. Assess any moves to consolidate municipalities and/or municipal services, applying the LWVNY criteria of 2009.
5. Lend support to items recommended in 2013, but not legislatively adopted, by the Charter Revision Commission on which we reached consensus. This includes the appointment, rather than the election, of the County Clerk.
6. Follow the progress of Playland's overall development, including contracts.
7. Monitor County environmental initiatives that impact our air quality, energy use, land use, waste management, and water quality.

II. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The League of Women Voters of Westchester Youth Engagement encourages youth to become active and informed participants in government through voter registration, voter education, voter rights and advocacy training. The LWVW wants to ensure that young voices are heard, and that these new leaders are civically prepared for the future.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Organize, revitalize, and empower youth members, to include high school and college students 16 - 24 years of age, with continual growth strategies to address the transitional nature of youth membership.
2. Network and coordinate more closely with identified high school administrators and teachers from programs, *Running & Winning* and *Students Inside Albany*, and local League Voter Service committees to encourage student League membership.
3. *Develop and Implement a Voter Registration Day in* high schools for pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds for early voter registration and registration for 18+ students.
4. Partner with local colleges and student organizations to establish a strong Youth Engagement - College Campus Program (CCP) focusing on ages 18-24 with a focus on voter registration, voter education, voter rights, advocacy training and providing access to informative materials, and Get Out the Vote messaging.
5. Continue collaboration with the LWNYS Youth Committee and with LWNYS Youth Coordinators to engage students in League programs by developing a database of local youth programs and volunteer groups.
6. Streamline membership process and integration into local and county league activities for youth members.
7. Engage youth to boost social media messaging on important and emerging issues.
8. Encourage youth members to join and participate with other LWVW committees or special events: County Government; Environment; Voter Service, Social Media, and Candidate Forums.
9. In collaboration with the Yonkers School Board District, during school year 2023-24, develop and pilot an experiential learning journey to further reinforce County students who have completed their civics readiness education and received their *NYS Seal of Civic Readiness*. (Note: The *Civics Readiness Initiative* was piloted across New York State high schools in 2021-22, with ten Westchester County schools participating. For 2022-23, all state schools are eligible to participate and must apply to do so.)

III. ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

As a nonpartisan political organization, the League of Women Voters of Westchester will study issues, advocate, and educate the public on important issues that pertain to the local communities in Westchester County. Suggested advocacies listed are subject to change, with potential revisions, additions, or deletions as needed.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. New York State Equal Rights Amendment
2. Redistricting of Legislative Maps as needed
3. Environment:
 - a. Ban Release of Radioactive Waste into Hudson River (S5181/A5338)
 - b. Bigger Better Bottle Bill (S237/A6353)
 - c. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Act (S4246/A5322)
4. Voting and Elections:
 - a. Absentee Ballot Illness Expansion (A3291)
 - b. 10-Day Voter Registration Implementation (S2381/A5007)
 - c. Mandatory Training Curriculum for Poll Workers (S587/A268)
 - d. Plain Language Ballot Initiative (S1381/A1722)