



**Fall 2019 Local League Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Survey  
Assessment of Findings**

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Thank you to all 20 local Leagues, who responded to the first DEI survey from the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. This assessment and forthcoming DEI Toolkit with relevant resources would not be feasible without the dedication of local leadership. We are grateful for all the time and energy you devote to ensuring the right and freedom to vote and participate in our democratic system.

Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are ongoing and necessary processes. As the American public and consequent electorate grows increasingly diverse, so does the need to extend accessibility to the ballot for all eligible voters in a nonpartisan manner. In the US, the median voter turnout holds at approximately 60% in nonpresidential cycles and only grows 5-6% in the corresponding even numbered years.

What barriers, institutional and otherwise, prevent higher turnout and participation? What steps can local Leagues take to alleviate roadblocks to voter registration, participating in democracy, and outreach growth? To address these questions, it is vital to periodically take time for self-reflection in order to ensure that our environments are welcoming and relevant to everyone in our communities.

The Community Alliances Committee (CAC), views its role to be that of mutual assistance to local Leagues as we learn together what DEI means and how to mobilize it on the ground. We are all on this learning curve together. The adoption of the LWVWI's DEI policy<sup>1</sup> is one self assessment tool for our 20 local Leagues that will provide a baseline for our learning

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**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.** LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy. (Adopted November 2018; revised June 2019)

journey. It is for this reason the CAC has requested data on the adoption status of LWV's DEI policy.

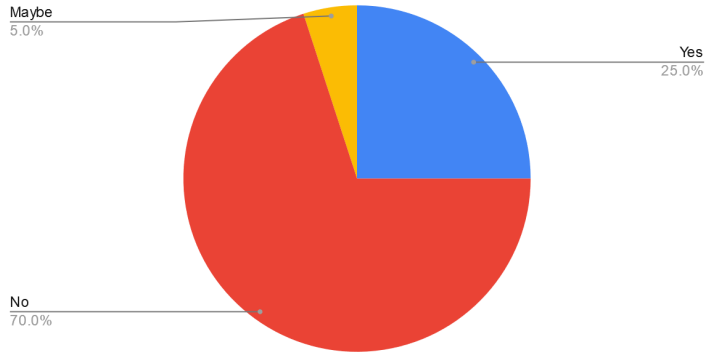
All 20 local Leagues contributed to this survey thereby providing an extensive overview of where everyone is on their DEI path. Currently sixteen, 80% of responding local Leagues, adopted a DEI policy similar to that of the LWVWI and LWVUS. The remainder are currently in the process of adopting or writing their own version. The CAC will follow up and identify the projected adoption date or determine what assistance the CAC can provide. Recognition for the need of a DEI lens is an important beginning step in building the foundation for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion which will grow the League's institutional strength.

The majority of self-reported responses from local League leadership indicated that their general, local membership is growing more diverse. Every local League's self-assessment and self-reporting is a reflection of their unique understanding of their communities and definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As all self reported data have limitations on validity, similarly the methodology by which this data was sourced is subject to the limitations of each individual's capacity. This is not unique to this survey but it is necessary and vital to understand these limitations, in order to see where local Leagues are standing in terms of DEI capacity. Additionally, the participants' demographics affect response biases.

All responding local Leagues are pursuing pathways towards increasing diversity in general membership. Five local Leagues specifically offered scholarships with free or flex memberships to decrease the financial barriers to participation. Additional Leagues began tiered membership fees. Successful efforts to broaden local League connections include inviting speakers of color, different faiths, and different socio-economic backgrounds, as well as working in high schools and senior centers. Additionally, moving the locations of committee and board meetings and varying meeting times increased participation of young people and those who work or have school schedules to consider. As Leagues continue to broaden their outreach, we will be able to better catalog which efforts create positive, conscientious impact.

All local Leagues responded that they work with and are tied to other organizations within their communities. However, less than a third have looked into reciprocal memberships with other organizations. This may be one of several new approaches for potential growth in outreach as these neighboring organizations may have constituents who do not overlap with local League membership.

Has your local League looked into reciprocal membership with other organizations?

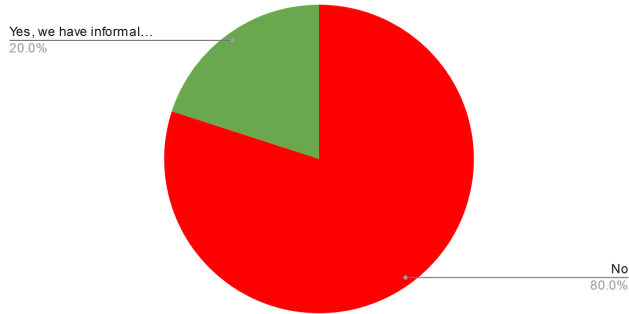


Coordinating with other local organizations may help local Leagues reflect the diversity of their respective communities. When asked “Is your local League leadership/board reflective of community’s demographics?” only 20% responded in the affirmative. At this point in time, it appears the majority of Leagues could work on this issue as the data suggests that only 4 of 20 local Leagues reported diverse boards. While there is self-reported growth of diversity, equity, and inclusion in general membership, greater inclusion eventually needs to extend to those with decision making power.

Responses, is local leadership diverse?	COUNT
No	10
Somewhat	6
Yes	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>20</b>

As local Leagues continue with the process of increasing diversity, incidences of bias, unconscious or otherwise, will occur. As such, it might be beneficial to set up more formal methods to acknowledge that these kinds of interactions occur, and to follow through with action steps to learn from and to prevent their repetition. We must be mindful to ensure we create places where anyone and everyone feels safe to express their concerns and report potentially harmful incidents. We also want to encourage full civic participation and engagement while ensuring no barriers are created that would be unintentionally discriminatory.

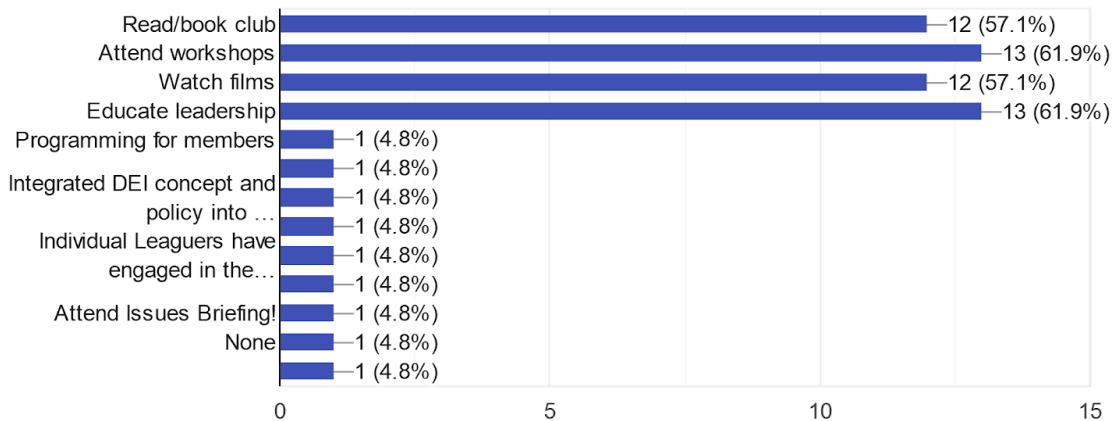
Does your League and its members have pathways to report incidents of bias within your League?



Independently, the overwhelming majority of local Leagues took steps to broaden their perspectives and worked to learn more about histories different from their own, as well as how to advance racial, gender, and socioeconomic justice. It is important to continue to recognize gaps in our knowledge, and to continue to pursue ways to remediate or address these gaps.

Which of the following--if any--has your League done to learn about histories often skipped in school about what marginalized groups experience ...and socioeconomic justice? Check all that apply.

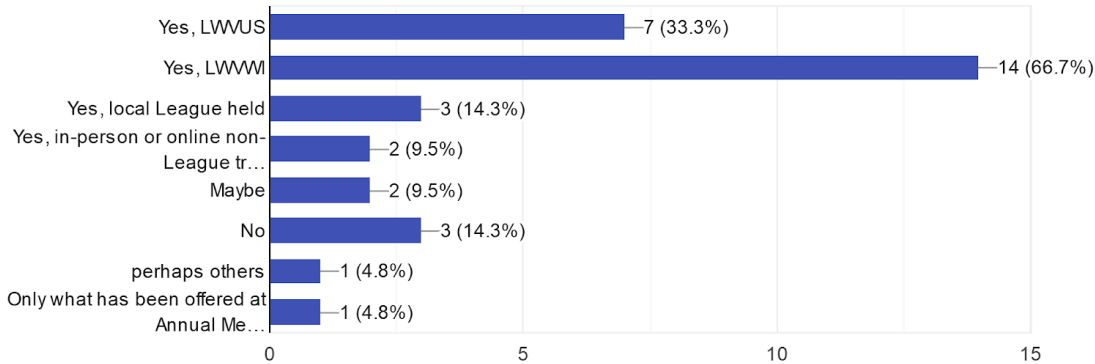
21 responses



In addition to these efforts, the majority of local Leagues participated in LWVWI and or LWVUS training. It is important, therefore, that the national and state League leadership continue its commitment to support local leagues in their DEI efforts.

Has your local League's leadership participated in any LWVUS, LWVWI, or other online DEI trainings?

21 responses



The following are the responses from the local Leagues on how the state office can provide more resources and support. We will use your feedback to provide local Leagues with greater DEI resources: best practices regarding nonpartisanship, particularly on the issue of reaching out to more conservative, white populations; how to be continuous learners regarding DEI; language guidance and training on gender identification and LGBTQIA+ terms, LGBTQIA+ voting rights/voter naming, gendering, and photo ID help; support from LWVUS regarding visual materials- posters, photos, logos for social media and literature distribution/flyers, general public information cards; how to identify DEI areas where local Leagues can be more involved, provide concrete examples of what other Leagues or other organizations are doing related to DEI and voting; more workshops/speakers/forum/book/video resources, messaging the League's mission to groups unfamiliar with the LWV; a DEI go-to resource page for local Leagues on the LWVWI website; provide local Leagues a demographic survey template; more bilingual and Spanish language materials; recognizing other forms diversity can take; how to promote/attract more diverse membership; ideas of how to attract members and keep them engaged; provide training resources and funds to help us move forward with DEI policies; removing the PMP for all members joining at the \$25 or lower dues level would help local Leagues to become more equitable for a larger number of members.

A few local Leagues responded that their local governments have not done enough to make voting more accessible. We know how vital the innumerable hours local volunteers put on the ground are. Nonpartisan voter outreach is the crux of LWV efforts and it is important to grow capacity and infrastructure so we can reach broader audiences that may have been previously overlooked or mislabeled as hard to reach. When trust and respect is earned, even once-a-year events can develop into multiple outreach opportunities as participants share their positive experiences with others in their network. That is why partnerships that bridge divides help to build a more inclusive environment which will strengthen civic participation.

With that said, the following page lists multiple partnering organizations local LWV work, or have worked, with. We appreciate the hardwork and dedication of volunteers who cultivated this incredibly broad array of relationships and continue the fight toward greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the democratic process.

The CAC would appreciate your feedback on this summary. We would also appreciate any other comments and contributions you would like to share. We are on a learning curve together and looking forward to greater, more effective collaboration. Thank you.

**Partners and organizations local Leagues work/worked with, possible resources  
for your local League to pursue!**

ACLU African-American GOTV Collective: Jack and Jill, Sigma Gamma Rho, Links Milwaukee, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	Local high schools
African Heritage Inc	Local Historical Societies
AIDS Walk	Milwaukee Black Firefighters Association
All of Us and other community health outreach programs, centers, and orgs	Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition
American Association of University Women (AAUW)	Municipal/county/city clerks
APIA/Vote	NAACP
Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) Coalition: representatives from membership organizations of Japanese-Americans, Philipino-Americans, Chinese Americans, and the Milwaukee Hmong Health Consortium	National Conference of Puerto Rican Women
BLOC (Black Leaders Organizing Communities)	Naturalization ceremonies
Casa Hispana	Neighborhood alliances, community associations
Centro Hispano	NeWaukee (millennials)
Churches, temples, synagogues and other places of worship	Porchlight
Climate change orgs	Primary schools (during PTA meetings)
Coalition on the Lead Emergency (COLE)	Public housing
County jails	Public libraries
County/city health events and partnerships	Public transportation (voter ed handouts)
COVO (Coalition of Voting Organizations)	Puerto Rican Fest
Delta Sigma Theta	Reservations
Disability Rights Wisconsin	Salvation Army housing
EXPO (Ex-incarcerated People Organizing)	Senior centers, nursing homes
Fair Maps Coalition	Shopping malls

Farmers' markets	St. Vincent's food service days
First Nations and Indigenous partnerships	Trades/tech schools
Food pantries	Transitional housing
Forward Action	Tribal gaming commissions
Girl Scouts	UMOS- United Migrant Opportunity Services
Girls Inc.	United Way
Housing shelters	Urban League
International Institute Islamic Society of Milwaukee	Urban Underground
Journey House	Voces de la Frontera
La Causa	Vote Riders
Lake Valley Camp	Voto Latino
Latinx community partners and orgs	Wisconsin Alliance of Retired Citizens
Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT)	Wisconsin Conservation Voters
League of United Latin American Citizens	Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition (WDVC)
LGBTQIA+ Seniors	Wisconsin Voices
Literary councils	WISDOM and MUM (Madison-area Urban Ministry)
Local Chambers of Commerce	Women in STEM, UW Society of Women Engineers
Local colleges, universities, and community colleges	Women's shelters
Local government Departments of Civil Rights and Diversity	YMCA
Local government diversity fairs	YWCA