INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDITING: This document was created by a local League for their members and, as such, included many components that were specific to their League. Please feel free to edit this document as appropriate to your League and members. In particular, the text in red highlights areas for local edits, such as your League’s name or dues, or information that may or may not also apply to your League. We recommend making those edits as needed, changing the font color back after doing so, and removing any extraneous text (including this note) before sharing with members.



[can replace with League’s logo]

**Framing our Future**

**LWV Membership Changes**

**A Summary of Upcoming Changes**

**Prepared for Members of [LEAGUE]**

In 2025, LWVUS will implement significant changes to League membership and dues structure. This summarizes the changes for [LEAGUE] members and provides context for required bylaws changes that we will vote on at the June 13 Annual Business Meeting.

The transition should be seamless for members. When your membership comes due, please continue to renew at our website or by sending a check as usual. We’ll let you know when the changes are implemented. **No action is required from members right now.**

Why LWVUS Is Making Changes

These changes are part of the Structure Transformation Plan adopted in 2022, which is rooted in the League’s Transformation Journey that began after the 2016 national convention.

In the current phase of the Plan, the League is Framing Our Future, building power by building out the framework that will carry us forward for the next hundred years.

* Building League power at every level is necessary to fulfill our mission of Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy.
* Vital work happening at the state and local levels could benefit from increased support.
* Changing the pay requirement will open Leagues to a more diverse, expansive membership by removing barriers to membership.
* Too much time and talent are spent on duplicative administrative efforts.

Current Membership and Dues Payment Structure

1. League members join the local League of their choice, and each local League has its own mechanism for joining and renewing.
2. Every local League sets its own dues amounts.
3. Every local League sends Per-Member-Payments (PMP) to the national and state Leagues.
4. LWVUS does not require PMP for Life Members or Student members.
5. The required PMP payment to LWVUS for additional members in a household is one-half that of the PMP required for the first member.

These are the current dues and PMP for [LEAGUE]:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Membership Type** | **[LEAGUE]**  **Dues** | **PMP to**  **LWVUS** | **PMP to**  **[STATE LEAGUE]** |
| Members | $ x | $ 32 | $ x |
| Additional Member in Household\* | $ x | $ 16 | $ x |
| Student | $ x | $ 0 | $ 0 |
| Life Member (50 years or more) | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 |

\*Note: Bylaws do not define Additional Member in Household as a Membership Type but as a payment category.

**Changes to Membership Categories and Dues Mechanisms**

1. Members will join and renew through one national platform, with a link available at any League website. Members will be able to select the League they join, as they do now. ChapterSpot is the name of the membership platform. A QR code will facilitate easy joining access at community events.
2. There will be a mechanism for automatic renewals.
3. Membership types will include:

* Members
* Life Members

1. The Student membership type will be discontinued.
2. Household memberships will be discontinued. (That is, the payment category Additional Member in Household will be discontinued.)

**Changes to Dues Amounts**

1. Individuals will be encouraged to pay a standard rate of $75.
2. There will be optional higher join tiers of $150, $250, $500; members in all tiers are equal in rights, responsibilities, and standing, regardless of the amount dues paid.
3. There will be a pay-what-you-can option where members can choose their own dues amount, with a minimum of $20.
4. Although the payment category for an Additional Member in Household will be discontinued, a member joining from the same household as an existing member can choose to pay half of the recommended amount under the pay-what-you-can model.
5. There will likely be a method for members to join at an amount below the $20 floor, at the option of the local League, which would be responsible for the $20 minimum dues and would define eligibility parameters. This means [LEAGUE] could choose to continue offering free or lower cost student memberships and payment support.

Changes to the Dues Split and Flow of Dues

1. Local Leagues will no longer make Per-Member-Payments (PMP) to the national and state Leagues. Instead, the national League will send local and state Leagues their portion of each dues payment shortly after it is made. This will be handled electronically through the Stripe payment platform.
2. With the new dues split, LWVUS will receive a smaller percentage of dues and both state and local Leagues will receive larger percentages:

* 20% to local Leagues
* 47% to state Leagues
* 33% to the national League

For comparison, these percentages reflect the current dues split:

* With individual membership dues at [$DUES], [LEAGUE] currently retains $x or x%, and that amount is reduced further by credit card and processing fees; locals across the League retain 12%
* State Leagues currently receive 37%
* LWVUS currently retains 51%

1. The new dues split will also apply to dues payments for the higher join tiers.
2. State and local Leagues will be responsible for credit card fees at the same rate as the dues split.

**Changes to Donations at Time of Joining or Renewal**

Donations by members at the time they join or renew are a significant source of income to [LEAGUE]. The platform development plans include a way to enable convenient donations directly to local Leagues at the time of joining or renewal but separate from dues. Updates will be provided as development continues.

What Will Stay the Same

1. Membership renewal dates will continue to be the same from year to year.
2. People will still be able to join and renew from a link at the local website.
3. People will still be able to join with a check (although online renewal will be encouraged).
4. Additional members in a household can choose to pay half of the recommended amount under the pay-what-you-can model.
5. Local members will continue to be members at all three League levels: [local League], [state League], and LWV of the United States.

How the Changes Will Help LWV Build Power

1. Joining with a link that will be available on any League website simplifies joining, reducing the frustration of searching for a local League or visiting the national site and then having difficulty finding a local League. LWVUS can also more effectively encourage membership through social media, and a QR code will make it easier for people to join at community events.
2. By removing barriers to participation, the pay-what-you-can model will encourage more members and a more diverse membership. LWVUS expects the higher join tiers to finance the pay-what-you-can model.
3. The new dues split allocates a larger percentage of dues to state Leagues. This is intended to build their capacity to exercise political power within their legislature, support professional paid staff, build organizing strength, and support local Leagues to simplify our federated structure.
4. Our local League will retain a larger percentage of dues to finance local work.
5. LWVUS expects the new membership system to reduce administrative work for roster managers, membership chairs, and treasurers.

Local Impact and Questions

1. LWVUS predicts 3/4 of local Leagues will come out financially ahead from the start, and LWVUS will make up any shortfall in membership dues collected for two years.
2. [Description of current financial situation of local League and what this means for members]
3. [LEAGUE] will need to monitor the impact of losing local donations at the time of joining or renewal and adjust if necessary. We really don’t know the combined net impact of all the changes –receiving a larger percentage of each dues payment, potentially attracting more members, and the loss of the ability to encourage local donations at the time of joining and renewal.

Note: LWVUS says the dues split will be clear on the join page and that it is working to find a solution that will make donating easy. Many Leagues currently offer memberships at higher tiers and/or encourage donations at the time of joining or renewing. Leagues have made clear to LWVUS their concerns about losing these abilities.

1. LWVUS has not yet determined what kind of data the membership system will collect.
2. [Any additional local concerns, such as if the League is considering switching to a ChapterSpot website]

[LEAGUE] appreciates the good intentions upon which the new membership structure is based and supports the work of our national League as it works to implement these changes to drive us forward. [Of course, this is optional but was included in the document created by a local League and may serve to reassure members that we are one League and remind them of why we are undergoing this transformation.]

Questions? Please send an email to [email].

Reminder: Members are not required to do anything different right now, and we will keep you informed of implementation progress.

03/14/2024