

UNITE AND RISE 8.5 SERIES

## POWER PLAYBOOK 3

# Building Power Through Partnerships

NOVEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026



We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

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## 1



## About Unite and Rise 8.5

On May 1 and in response to declaring a constitutional crisis, the League of Women Voters launched the Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative, which **aims to mobilize 8.5 million people**, harnessing the power of voter engagement as a fundamental part of our democracy.

Unite and Rise 8.5 is more than a campaign; it's a movement-building strategy. Each 90-day arc connects us, grows our collective capacity, and pushes us closer to a democracy that truly reflects the people it serves. By centering women, partnerships, and power, we are building not just for this election cycle, but for the generations to come.

**Playbook 1 (May – July): *Shifting Power Narratives*** invited us to reframe how we talk about democracy, moving away from fear toward possibility.

**Playbook 2 (August – October): *Holding Power Accountable*** gave us the tools to confront injustice and demand transparency.

**Playbook 3 (November – January): *Building Power Through Partnerships*** carries this work forward by showing how we multiply impact through partnerships and collective action, ensuring our movement not only resists threats but grows stronger in the process.

# 2

## Four Pillars of Unite and Rise

**1**

**Legal & Policy Advocacy:** Challenge unconstitutional actions through litigation, advocate for electoral integrity reforms at state and federal levels, fight voter suppression, and protect due process.

**2**

**Public Mobilization & Coalition Building:** Organize millions of people for quick activations and longer-planned activist campaigns, uplift local voices, and partner with grassroots, national, and international organizations.

**3**

**Civic Education & Engagement:** Launch public awareness campaigns, expand voter registration and turnout efforts, host educational forums, connect policy to real-life impact, and equip people with tools to act.

**4**

**Democracy Resilience:** Build lasting infrastructure to protect democratic values and institutions for the long haul.

# 3

## Guiding Values: Stronger Together

In this campaign, we understand power as the collective ability of people to shape the decisions, systems, and futures that affect our lives. Partnerships make that possible. No movement for democracy can thrive without developing coalitions rooted in women's leadership, strengthened by inclusion, and expanded through connections beyond our existing networks.

- **Women-Led, Democracy-Focused**

At the center of this playbook is our belief in women's power to transform democracy. Women-led organizations bring lived experience, resilience, and bold leadership that are essential to building durable movements. By anchoring our partnerships in women's leadership, we strengthen our democracy's vision and values.

- **Inclusive Partnerships**

True power grows when diverse voices are welcomed to the table. Inclusive partnerships ensure that ideas, strategies, and resources reflect the full spectrum of our communities – not just those already in our networks. This approach builds trust, deepens legitimacy, and makes our collective action harder to ignore or dismantle.

- **Expanding Reach Beyond the Base**

To build a resilient, anti-authoritarian movement, we must reach beyond our traditional supporters. By engaging thought partners from media, business, technology, faith, and academia, we open new pathways into communities not yet connected to our work. Each new partnership multiplies our ability to educate, mobilize, and inspire.

**4**



## Power in Partnership

### NEW! Grassroots Power Partners

Women-led groups working together at the grassroots level have the transformative power to drive sustainable change, amplify voices, and strengthen democracy in our communities.

**We are excited to share our Grassroots Power Partners for Unite and Rise 8.5:**

<p><b>JODY RABHAN</b> National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)</p>	 <p>ncjw National Council of Jewish Women</p>
<p><b>GLORIA BLACKWELL</b> American Association of University Women (AAUW)</p>	 <p>AAUW</p>
<p><b>MARGARET MITCHELL</b> Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA)</p>	 <p><b>YWomen VOTE   YWCA IS ON A MISSION</b></p>

Together, our organizations will create a powerful ripple effect that fosters resilience, equity, and collective action for a more inclusive and participatory democracy. Like the League, our Grassroots Power Partners have state and local chapters ready to collaborate and build momentum in the months leading up to the 2026 midterm elections.

### NEW! Unite and Rise 8.5 Advisory Committee

The LWVUS Advisory Committee for the Unite and Rise 8.5 campaign is a hand-picked group of leaders across key industries who share a passion for democracy and a desire to make an impact in this urgent moment of our country’s history. By drawing on the expertise of editors, business strategists, technologists, faith leaders, and scholars, we don’t just widen our reach – we sharpen our vision.

Outside perspectives help us see blind spots, test assumptions, and connect with communities that might otherwise be overlooked. When we welcome diverse thought partners, we expand our imagination and impact. This is how we build a coalition big enough – and bold enough – to transform democracy.

This Committee will act as the national League of Women Voters’ primary strategic advisors during the campaign’s expansion. They will guide League leadership on opportunities for greater impact and leverage their networks to promote Unite and Rise 8.5, thereby boosting the campaign’s visibility.

## UNITE AND RISE 8.5 *Advisory Committee Members*



**ERICA CHENOWETH**  
*Political Scientist and Activist*



**SHERI COLLINS**  
*Director Sales and Marketing Speaking Division The Shark Group*



**ERRIN HAINES**  
*Managing Editor the 19th*



**BISHOP DWAYNE ROYSTER**  
*Executive Director Faith in Action*



**LARISSA MAY**  
*Founder and Executive Director #HalfTheStory*

## 5

## Building Power Together: A 90-Day Guide

Partnerships are essential to building the kind of resistance that can withstand ongoing threats to democracy. Together, we will reimagine what a truly representative democracy can be. Playbook 3 carries us through three months of building power, each with a distinct theme.

# November

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**KEY (4 PILLARS)**

- Legal & Policy Advocacy
- Civic Education & Engagement
- Public Mobilization & Coalition Building
- Democracy Resilience\*  
Daily Democracy Practice

- 3** Election Hero Day
- 4** Election Day
- 11** Veterans Day
- 18** Laying the Groundwork: Building Sustainable Partnerships (Tuesday Training Webinar at 3pm ET)
- 25** International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

## Laying the Groundwork: Building Sustainable Partnerships

- Build Trust** – With your League members, brainstorm what being a “reliable partner” looks like. Create a short checklist (e.g., always follow through on commitments, communicate clearly, show up when invited) to guide future collaborations.
- Start a Conversation** – Introduce yourself to at least one organization this month and suggest a short meeting to learn about each other’s work.
- Attend or Join a Partner Event** – Participate in one partner’s public event as a League representative. Wear your pin, introduce yourself, and follow up with a note of gratitude afterward.

### TUESDAY TRAINING

#### Laying the Groundwork: Building Sustainable Partnerships Tuesday, November 18, 3 - 4pm ET

Strong partnerships don’t just happen; they are built with intention. This training will introduce Leagues to the core steps of partnership-building: how to identify and reach out to potential allies, establish trust, and sustain relationships over time. Participants will gain practical tools for beginning outreach, learn strategies for showing up as reliable partners, and explore ways to grow collaborations that benefit both the League and community organizations. By laying this groundwork now, Leagues will be better positioned to build lasting partnerships that expand reach, deepen impact, and center the voices of those historically excluded from full participation in our democracy.

# December

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**KEY (4 PILLARS)**

- Legal & Policy Advocacy
- Civic Education & Engagement
- Public Mobilization & Coalition Building
- Democracy Resilience\*  
[Daily Democracy Practice](#)

- 2** Giving Tuesday
- 15** Bill of Rights Day
- 16** National Partnerships for Local Engagement  
(Tuesday Training Webinar at 3pm ET)

## National Partnerships for Local Engagement

- Reach Out to a Local Partner Chapter** – Connect with your local NCJW section, AAUW branch, or YWCA. Introduce your League, mention the national partnership, and explore a small joint activity that builds shared visibility.
- Share the Spotlight** – Use your League’s newsletter or social media to feature a partner organization’s work. Highlight their efforts and tag them to show public support.
- Co-Host a Grassroots Pop-Up** – Co-host a table or pop-up at a school, library, or holiday market. Share materials from both groups and highlight how women-led organizations are working together for change.

### TUESDAY TRAINING

#### National Partnerships for Local Engagement

*Tuesday, December 16, 3 - 4pm ET*

Learn about our national Unite and Rise 8.5 partnerships and how state and local Leagues can leverage these relationships on the ground to expand our impact. Participants will gain a greater understanding of LWVUS’ national partnerships strategy, as well as receive tips, tools, and actionable next steps to start building these relationships at the local level.

# January

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**KEY (4 PILLARS)**

- Legal & Policy Advocacy
- Civic Education & Engagement
- Public Mobilization & Coalition Building
- Democracy Resilience\*  
[Daily Democracy Practice](#)

- 19 MLK Day
- 20 Partnering for Voter Engagement Ahead of 2026 Elections  
(Tuesday Training Webinar at 3pm ET)

## Partnering for Voter Engagement Ahead of 2026 Elections

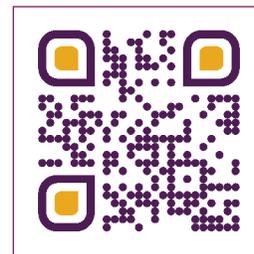
- Campus Kickoff** — Reach out to nearby college, university, or high school student government organizations or affinity groups to plan a spring voter registration or education event.
- Celebrate New Citizens** — Partner with an immigrant-serving group or naturalization ceremony host site to welcome and register new citizens. Share voter registration information and League resources and encourage new citizens to bring family members.
- Host a Guardian Event** — Join a labor group, disability advocates group, or faith-based coalition to host a community forum about voting access. Address barriers facing citizens in the state (e.g., new voting law or redistricting maps that might impact voting power).

### TUESDAY TRAINING

#### Partnering for Voter Engagement Ahead of 2026 Elections Tuesday, January 20, 3 – 4pm ET

Partnerships, activities, and tips for expanding voter engagement among students, justice-impacted people, and naturalized citizens to expand the franchise in 2026 elections. Together, we’ll explore: student engagement and how to build community with campuses and youth-led organizations to energize new and first-time voters, collaborating with advocates beyond traditional democracy partners to protect voting rights and make civic participation more accessible, and naturalized citizens by partnering with immigrant-serving groups to reach new naturalized voters even in the face of new challenges.

# 6



## Resources

Full resources and toolkits for Leagues to work with partners in this micro-campaign can be found on the League Management Site at [lww.org/PowerPlaybook3](http://lww.org/PowerPlaybook3).

# 7

## Milestones and Measuring Success

Over these 90 days, our milestones will measure not only what we do, but how we do it together. Success will look like:

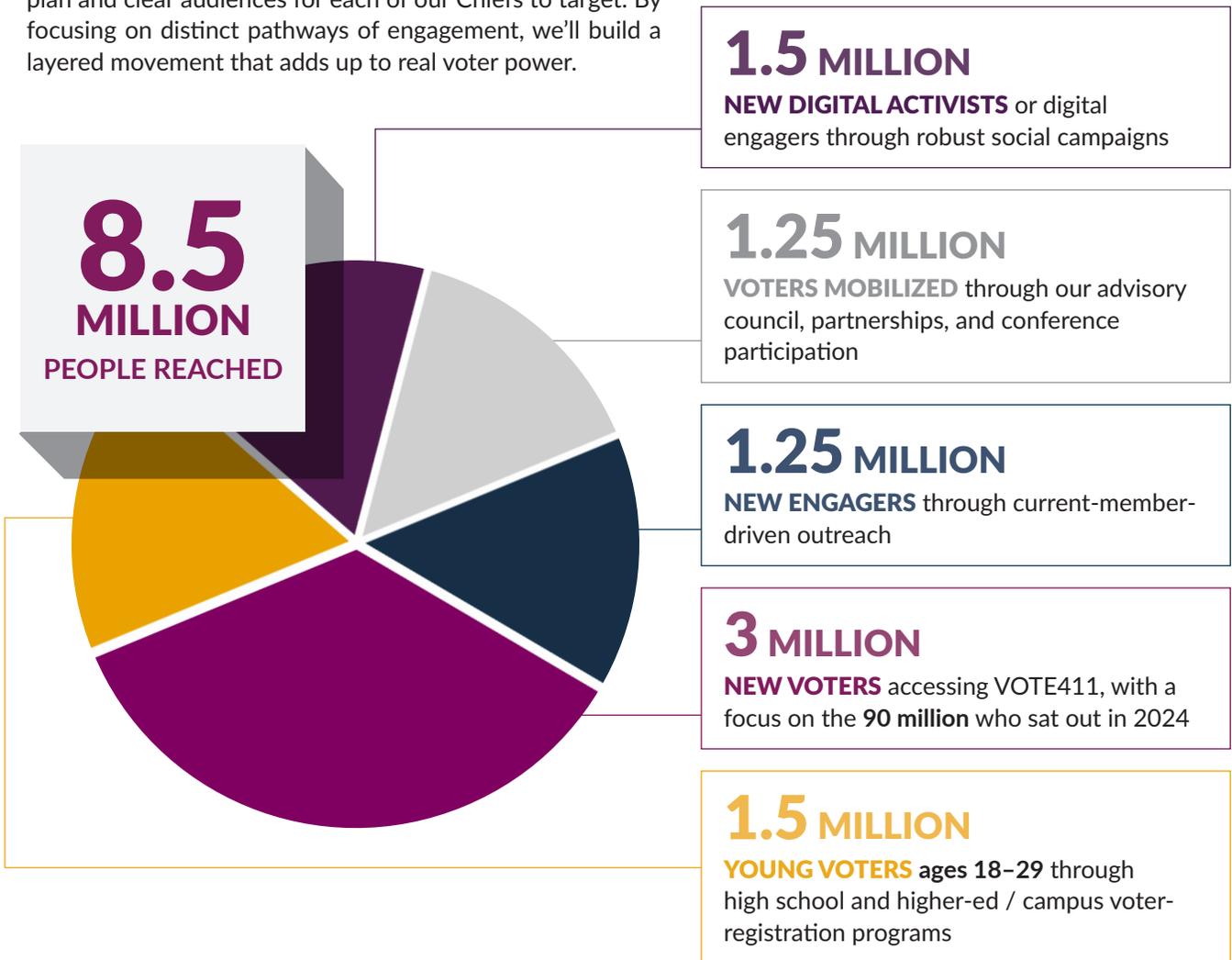
- **Engagement:** the number of members and partners participating in events, trainings, and coalition activities.
- **Reach:** how far our message travels through new partnerships, communities, and digital media platforms.
- **Impact:** tracking voter registration efforts, community election corps formed, and stories of collective action that inspire replication.

We will measure progress with a mix of quantitative data (participation counts, registrations, partnerships formed) and qualitative stories that capture the spirit of building power through coalition.

**UNITE & RISE 8.5**

**How We Will Get There**

Reaching **8.5 million people** is ambitious, but we have a clear plan and clear audiences for each of our Chiefs to target. By focusing on distinct pathways of engagement, we'll build a layered movement that adds up to real voter power.



## 8



## Navigating Nonpartisanship with Partners

The League's nonpartisan foundation is clear: We neither support nor endorse political parties or candidates for office. This principle is integral to our credibility and ensures our voice rises above the partisan noise. At the same time, our nonpartisan stance should not prevent us from pursuing meaningful partnerships that help advance our mission.

Building coalitions and seeking new allies is essential to growing power. By thoughtfully evaluating potential partners and exercising good judgment, Leagues can and should engage broadly without compromising our nonpartisan values. Nonpartisanship does not mean isolation; it means showing up with integrity, building relationships that expand our reach, and keeping our commitment to voters and democracy at the center of all we do.

Additional guidance for Leagues about nonpartisanship and partnerships can be found on the [League Management Site](#).



## Closing Inspiration

As we close this chapter of Playbook 3, I want to return to the belief that grounds all our work: We believe in the power of women to change democracy. This is not just an aspiration. This is a truth proven by history. Time and time again, women have led movements that expanded freedom, protected rights, and reshaped what is possible in this country. Today, that legacy continues with every League member and partner who dares to imagine a stronger, more inclusive democracy for everyone.

Building power is not the work of one organization or one moment. It is a collective effort that multiplies when we work together. Through the Unite and Rise 8.5 campaign, we are proving that partnerships rooted in women's leadership and inclusion can carry us through today's challenges and prepare us for a brighter future ahead.

Only together will we rise above division, resist authoritarianism, and grow a democracy that truly reflects us all. Because when women lead, democracy wins.

Yours in service,

**Celina Stewart**

CEO

League of Women Voters of the United States