



Leaders Guide to LWVUS Program Planning 2026 - 2028

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Program Planning Timeline



What is League Program?

LWVUS Program is the education and advocacy platform that the League membership adopts at each biennial LWV National Convention. The goal of the LWVUS Program Planning process is to achieve a collective agreement around how LWV will move our mission forward over a two-year period.

Current LWVUS Positions can be found in [Impact on Issues](#).

During January and February 2026, local and state Leagues and ILOs conduct Program Planning meetings and make Program recommendations in a local or state general membership meeting or board meeting. During this time, Leagues are also asked to identify LWVUS positions that they use in education, advocacy, and lobbying. Leagues share this information with LWVUS through the official Program Planning survey form, which is open from January 15, 2026 to March 10, 2026. A sample copy of the questions is [linked here](#). This is not the official survey form, but it includes all the questions.

LWVUS Program consists of three parts:

- Action to implement League Principles;
- Study or concurrence on a governmental issue to develop new Positions or to update existing Positions; and,
- Action on government issues.

League Program is the grassroots method by which LWV supports our mission through education and advocacy. All League action, advocacy, and education is based on support for League Positions and League Principles. League action in support of League Positions may be taken only in those areas where there is “member understanding and agreement.” For purposes of Program, “member understanding and agreement” means members have developed a shared understanding of the issue *and* reached agreement on the position. In other words, we advocate only on issues that members have studied, deliberated, and formally adopted at convention.

Please note: LWVUS is responsible for determining all advocacy strategies, actions, and messaging at the national level. This ensures that the work across the League is consistent, coordinated, and aligned with the national League’s position. Also, resolutions and legislative priorities are handled through separate processes and thus are not part of Program planning. Program Planning focuses specifically on identifying the issues our members want the League to study or take action on in the coming biennium.

LWVUS Principles and Program Bylaw XII and DEI Policy

The Program Planning process is outlined in Article XII of the LWVUS Bylaws:

ARTICLE XII, LWVUS BYLAWS

Sec. 1. Principles. The Principles are concepts of government supported by the League and are the authorization for adoption of national, state and local program. They may be amended by the convention in the same way as program is adopted under Section 2 of this Article.

Sec. 2. Program. The program shall consist of action to implement the Principles and those governmental issues chosen by the convention for concerted study or concurrence and action.

A. Local and state League and ILO boards shall make any program recommendations to the national board by a date, set by the board, that is at least three months prior to the convention.

B. The national board shall consider these recommendations and formulate a proposed program which shall be sent to the presidents of local and state Leagues and ILOs at least six weeks prior to the convention.

C. Any League that plans to propose the adoption or amendment of a national League position by concurrence with a position statement of another League or Leagues shall submit the recommendation to the national board as specified in Section 2A of this Article. Any League, or the national board, that plans to propose the adoption or amendment of a national League position by concurrence with a position statement of another League or Leagues on the floor of convention shall send the proposed position statement, background information, including pros and cons on the issue and an explanation of the rationale for using this form of member agreement, to all Leagues at least six weeks before convention.

D. The convention shall adopt a program by a majority vote on each subject presented to it. A program recommendation submitted by a local or state League or ILO by the date set by the national board as specified in Section 2A of this Article but not proposed by the national board may be adopted only if its consideration is ordered by majority vote of the convention and the vote on adoption comes on a following day. A two-thirds vote is required to amend or adopt a national League position by concurrence on the floor of convention.

Sec. 3. Program Action. Leagues may act on national program only in conformity with positions taken by the LWVUS. Members may act in the name of the LWVUS only when authorized to do so by the appropriate board.

Incorporating Our DEI Policy

During the Program Planning process, Leagues should intentionally think about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). A DEI lens simply means asking: *How will this process feel for*

people from different backgrounds? Whose voices are included and excluded? Are there barriers that might keep someone from participating fully? Applying a DEI lens is a way of examining the process to address perceptions from a variety of voices and perspectives, and what, if any, barriers may exist that prevent it from being equitable or inclusive.

Recommended Program: Women Defend Democracy: Democracy Under Siege

Women Defend Democracy: Democracy Under Siege

On April 17, 2025, LWVUS declared that the United States was entering a constitutional crisis. As such, the LWVUS Board affirmed that the foundational principles that have sustained our democracy – checks and balances, the rule of law, free and fair elections – were facing direct and sustained threats. The League called on all Americans to stand with us in this extraordinary moment to Unite and Rise to save our democracy.

Through the 2025 inauguration of President Trump, the League advanced our Campaign for Making Democracy Work®. Now, as we enter the 2026–2028 biennium, our democracy is under coordinated attack from multiple fronts—and the League of Women Voters is uniquely positioned to fight back by engaging and mobilizing voters nationwide. For more than a century, the League has shone as the “mighty political experiment” that our founding mothers intended. Our mission has never been so important as it is today as we work to engage and mobilize voters to protect our democracy, which George Washington, in his first inaugural address, called an “experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.”

To that end, the LWVUS board recommends adoption by the 2026 Convention of a campaign, **Women Defend Democracy: Democracy Under Siege**, to empower the organization to act decisively to protect and defend our democracy. The campaign will focus on *Voting Rights, Election Protection, Redistricting, Individual Liberties, Immigration, and The Presidency*.

The League has already embarked on a Women Defend Democracy campaign to continue our work to protect and expand voting rights and hold accountable those who seek to undermine democratic principles and processes. In the next biennium, it is even more important for us to join together to engage and mobilize voters across the country to oppose attacks that strike at the very core of our democracy and democratic institutions. By building on Women Defend Democracy and our decade of accomplishments under the Campaign for Making Democracy Work, we will be well positioned to take action in these exceptionally challenging times.

The six prongs of the proposed program include:

- Voting Rights

- Election Protection
- Redistricting
- Individual Liberties
- Immigration
- The Presidency

2026 and Beyond

As we look to the future, the League's programmatic work is more critical than ever. Our democracy faces deepening hyper-partisanship in Congress, a surge in anti-voter legislation and policies nationwide, heightened instances of executive overreach and constitutional violations, and a growing set of international conflicts that directly influence domestic issues.

As we confront these challenges, the League remains steadfast. Local and state Leagues and LWVUS continue to work in concert to advance our priorities and defend the integrity of our democratic system.

Program Planning Resources

League Update

Make sure that you are [subscribed to the League Update](#), a biweekly resource newsletter from LWVUS. Leading up to Convention 2026, the League Update will include additional information on Program Planning and Convention. This newsletter is the primary vehicle for keeping up to date on Program Planning deadlines, resources, and webinars.

Webinars

To assist Leagues in preparing for 2026 Convention, LWVUS launched a three-part webinar series on Program Planning. Webinars are open to all active League members and might be especially helpful for individuals who complete the 2026 Program Planning Survey.

- Choosing LWVUS Program 2024 – 2026 | [November 19, 2025](#)
- Nuts & Bolts of Program Planning Meetings | Jan. 21, 2026 [Sign Up Here](#)
- From Here to Convention | TBA March-April 2026

Program Planning Groups.IO

Join the [Program Planning Groups.IO discussion group](#) to learn more about Program Planning and Women Defend Democracy: *Democracy Under Siege*, as well as consider

proposals from state and local Leagues. You can post questions and exchange views with other League members.

Survey Form

[A PDF preview of the Program Survey is available on the League Management Site. The official online survey will be available on January 15, 2026.](#) Only responses via the online form will be accepted, but the PDF provides all the questions that your League will need to answer and can help you prepare.

Program Planning Glossary

Review the [glossary of commonly used terms](#) in Program Planning and Convention debate. The goal of the glossary is to help ensure that all Leagues and Convention delegates are grounded in a clear understanding of terms associated with Convention and League Program.

LWV Positions: *Impact on Issues*

Impact on Issues includes all current LWVUS positions, and you can access it on the [League Management Site](#).

The Summary of Public Policy Positions, which is part of *Impact on Issues*, can be found on pages 12 – 18. This provides a general, broad listing of the areas in which we have positions, along with a concise summary.

Program Planning Contact

Should you have questions about program planning that are not addressed in these resources, feel free to email progplan@lwf.org to reach a member of the Program Planning Committee or staff. We welcome questions on the Program Planning process, Program bylaws, webinars, League Positions, and guidance for Leagues to promote an issue for consideration to other Leagues.