

UNITE AND RISE 8.5 SERIES

## POWER PLAYBOOK 4

# Deepening Electoral Power

FEBRUARY – APRIL 2026



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

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## About Unite and Rise 8.5

On May 1, 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*** demonstrated how we can multiply impact through partnerships and collective action.

**Playbook 4 (February – April): *Deepening Electoral Power*** helps us reach new audiences and deepen partnerships within our communities as we employ strategies and resources to protect, engage, and turn out a record number of voters for the upcoming primary and general elections.

# 2

## Four Pillars of Unite and Rise 8.5

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

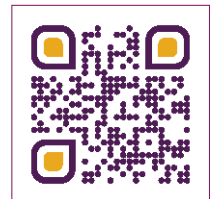
## Deepening Partnerships

As we strive to attract new audiences and encourage participation in the 2026 elections, we continue to build on Playbook 3's focus of partnering with women-led grassroots partners at AAUW, NCJW, and YWCA to develop powerful, intentional, and impactful partnerships. In this phase, we will expand and activate these partnerships specifically around shared electoral engagement efforts. Working in partnership provides opportunities to expand our reach, elevate the visibility of our efforts, and amplify our collective impact.

Visit the League Management Site to access previous partnership trainings, including:

### Laying the Groundwork: Building Sustainable Partnerships

This training introduces Leagues to the core steps of partnership-building: how to identify and reach out to potential allies, establish trust, and sustain relationships over time.



### National Partnerships for Local Engagement

This webinar explores the networks and audiences of our three Grassroots Power Partners — Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), and American Association of University Women (AAUW) — along with the civic programming each has planned for 2026, and how state and local Leagues can leverage these partnerships on the ground to expand our impact.

Reach out and begin the conversation with your local area chapters:

- YWCA: Use the [YWCA Locator](#) to find your local affiliate contact info.
- NCJW: NCJW prefers to make introductions through its national office. Please reach out to [partnerships@lwv.org](mailto:partnerships@lwv.org) to get connected through national to your local section.
- AAUW: Use the [AAUW Branch Locator](#) to find your local AAUW Branch or contact [Advocacy@aauw.org](mailto:Advocacy@aauw.org) to be put in touch.

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## Reaching New Audiences

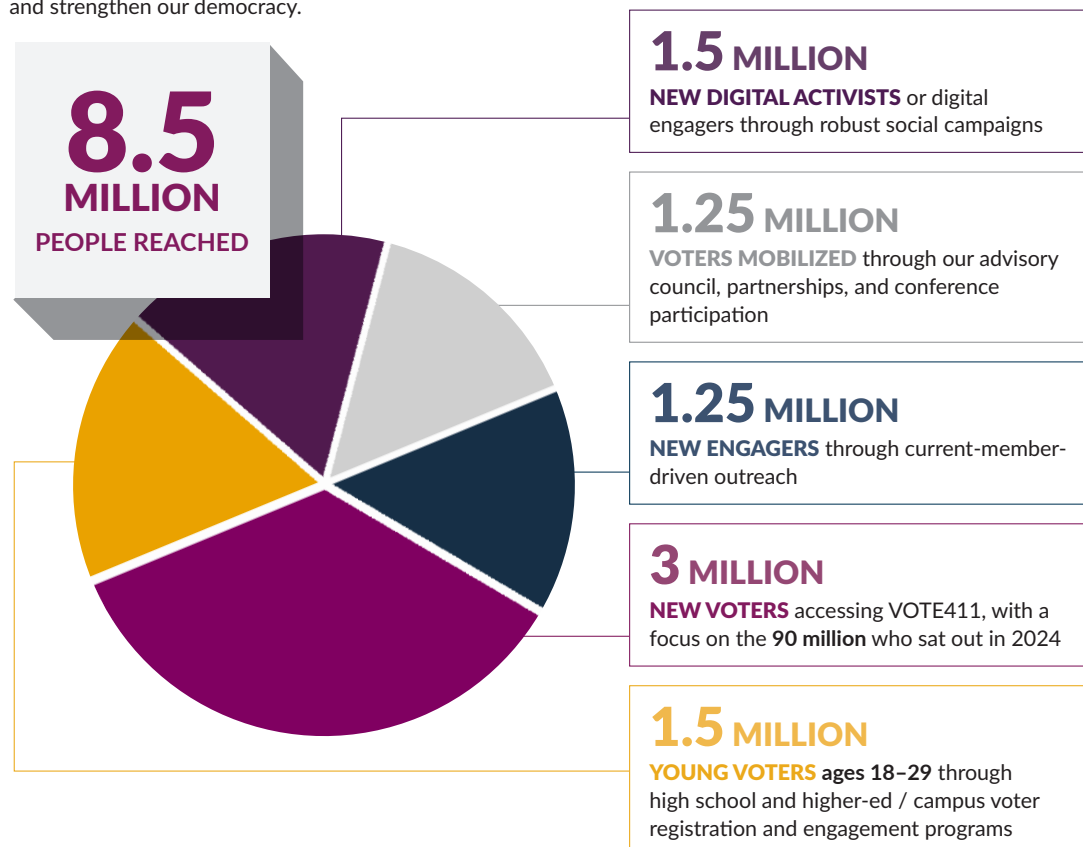
Engaging 8.5 million additional eligible voters beyond 2024 participation levels will require creative and diversified outreach strategies. Our focus is on deepening our work with partners and trusted community spaces to reach voters who did not turn out in 2024 — newly eligible voters, those who sat out past elections, and the nearly 90 million eligible voters who did not participate. Doing so will require meeting people where they are: through family and social networks and in spaces we haven't consistently organized before — faith communities, neighborhood gathering places, schools, and other local hubs — while also engaging undecided but persuadable voters who are open to democratic values.

### Unite and Rise 8.5 Mobilization Goals

#### UNITE & RISE 8.5

#### How We Will Get There

Reaching **8.5 million people** is ambitious — and it's possible because of the power of local Leagues. Together, we have a clear vision for who we need to reach and how we'll do it. By engaging people through multiple community-based pathways — conversations, partnerships, education, and action — local Leagues will help build a layered, people-powered movement. Each connection adds up, and together those efforts create the voter power needed to protect and strengthen our democracy.



## The Local League's Role in Getting There

The chart that follows shows how the national 8.5 million voter goal translates into meaningful, achievable goals at the state and local level. Every conversation, registration, and action taken by a local League contributes to this collective effort. When the work is shared, the impact multiplies — and no single League is carrying the load alone. By breaking the national goal into state targets, and then into local League goals, we turn ambition into action and ensure every League knows how their work directly fuels our shared success.

### A simple way to calculate your League's goal

To estimate your local League's share of the work, start with your state's new voter activation goal. Then divide that number by the total number of active local Leagues in your state.

If your state's goal is  
**100,000 newly activated voters** and  
 there are **10 local Leagues**, each  
 League would aim to activate  
 approximately **10,000 voters**.

$$\text{State goal} \div \text{Number of local Leagues} = \text{Local League goal}$$

$$100,000 \div 10 = 10,000$$

Note: Local goals can (and should) be adjusted based on capacity, partnerships, and community context. What matters most is forward movement together. Leveraging the power of partnerships will be key.

Location	Total Voting Eligible Population	Unite & Rise Mobilization Goal (3.5%)
United States	244,666,890	8,563,341
Alabama	3,851,818	134,814
Alaska	534,612	18,711
Arizona	5,389,840	188,644
Arkansas	2,225,513	77,893
California	26,008,952	910,313

Location	Total Voting Eligible Population	Unite & Rise Mobilization Goal (3.5%)
Colorado	4,431,349	155,097
Connecticut	2,666,824	93,339
Delaware	773,380	27,068
District of Columbia	517,352	18,107
Florida	16,494,837	577,319
Georgia	7,760,407	271,614
Hawaii	1,038,796	36,358
Idaho	1,446,228	50,618
Illinois	9,020,606	315,721
Indiana	5,071,615	177,507
Iowa	2,365,182	82,781
Kansas	2,127,448	74,461
Kentucky	3,365,030	117,776
Louisiana	3,325,888	116,406
Maine	1,134,693	39,714
Maryland	4,419,071	154,667
Massachusetts	5,163,699	180,729
Michigan	7,645,405	267,589
Minnesota	4,285,809	150,003
Mississippi	2,175,783	76,152
Missouri	4,662,988	163,205
Montana	897,964	31,429
Nebraska	1,420,287	49,710
Nevada	2,261,177	79,141
New Hampshire	1,122,920	39,302
New Jersey	6,428,021	224,981

Numbers are based on the University of Florida's 2024 Election Lab data.



Location	Total Voting Eligible Population	Unite & Rise Mobilization Goal (3.5%)
New Mexico	1,558,389	54,544
New York	13,867,180	485,351
North Carolina	8,140,132	284,905
North Dakota	589,501	20,633
Ohio	8,947,886	313,176
Oklahoma	2,956,347	103,472
Oregon	3,208,533	112,299
Pennsylvania	9,904,635	346,662
Rhode Island	827,146	28,950
South Carolina	4,129,733	144,541
South Dakota	681,957	23,868
Tennessee	5,345,960	187,109
Texas	20,152,824	705,349
Utah	2,378,578	83,250
Vermont	526,015	18,411
Virginia	6,374,775	223,117
Washington	5,645,581	197,595
West Virginia	1,389,555	48,634
Wisconsin	4,484,824	156,969
Wyoming	442,437	15,485

Numbers are based on the University of Florida's 2024 Election Lab data.

# 5

## Deepening Electoral Power: A 90-Day Guide

As we aim to drive record turnout and ultimately strive to mobilize 8.5 million additional eligible voters in support of an inclusive democracy, we must bolster our traditional efforts by using bold and creative approaches to reach new audiences and deepen collaboration and partnerships within our communities. In the face of growing threats to voting access, these activities are intended to equip Leagues with strategies to protect, engage, and turn out voters for the upcoming primary and general elections.

The primary season is a critical opportunity to engage communities that typically experience low voter turnout. With fewer demands on voters' attention, an unusually high number of congressional retirements, and mid-cycle redistricting creating more competitive races, the League is well-positioned to have a meaningful impact on increasing voter participation.

# February



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



## KEY (4 PILLARS)

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

## Black History Month

- 14 League turns 106. Events happening nationwide.
- 16 Presidents' Day
- 27 Anniversary of SCOTUS upholding Nineteenth Amendment

## Preparation: Building Voter Readiness

Prepared voters are empowered voters. February is about preparation. This includes acquiring voter lists for Get Out the Vote work, meeting with local elections officials, hosting community conversations on key community concerns, and determining what new information voters need to know if election laws have changed since the last federal election. It also means reminding

voters about mail-in ballot return deadlines and processes, encouraging voters to register to vote, asking them to check — and re-check — their voter registration status, and encouraging them to check their primary dates and vote early using the tools available through [VOTE411.org](https://VOTE411.org). Several states have registration deadlines and mail-in and early voting processes that begin this month and in the coming months. By preparing together, we reduce barriers and strengthen our collective confidence in impact.

- ☐ **Invite 1–3 power partners to host pop-ups** at locations where you might reach new audiences, such as community colleges, transit hubs, faith communities, with friends and family, and sporting events.
- ☐ **Utilize VOTE411 poster templates** to create customizable voting resources for your community.
- ☐ **Meet with local elections officials.** Deepen your relationship with local elections officials to build an effective partnership and address difficult issues if they arise. Find ways to educate your community about potential issues.
- ☐ **Promote “Make Your Voting Plan”** checklists. Encourage members to help neighbors confirm their registration, know their polling place, and set reminders.
- ☐ **Hold virtual or in-person workshops.** Teach communities the basics about how primaries work in their state and why they matter. This is a great opportunity to partner with local elections officials.
- ☐ **Utilize existing [Action Kits](#)** to host community conversations about relevant issues.
- ☐ **Host a “Monthly Friend Bank,”** engaging League members and partners to focus on the most important electoral aspects (e.g., register and/or check your registration, and/or learn early voting options and tips, and/or learn about the candidates and Election Day information).

# March



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](#)

## Women's History Month

- 7 Anniversary of Bloody Sunday
- 8 International Women's Day
- 9-13 Civic Learning Week
- 26 Anniversary of SCOTUS Rucho arguments
- 31 International Transgender Day of Visibility

## Participation: Powering the Base Together

Democracy thrives when we act together. Primaries begin this month, and we continue to deepen our partnerships and relationships to expand and energize our communities to vote, where appropriate, and lay the groundwork for midterms together. Eight months ahead of the November midterm election — and with several states holding primaries this month — we demonstrate that democracy is a collective responsibility and a shared act of hope.

- ☐ **Organize a “Vote Together” event.** Coordinate carpools, walk-to-the-polls groups, or faith-based voting on Sundays.
- ☐ **Host a “Family Voting Pledge” drive.** Encourage households to commit to voting together and share photos/stories.
- ☐ **Utilize VOTE411 postcards** to mail voting reminders to family members who may live in other states.
- ☐ **Host a “Monthly Friend Bank,”** engaging League members and partners to focus on the most important electoral aspects (e.g., register and/or check your registration, and/or learn early voting options and tips, and/or learn about the candidates and Election Day information).
- ☐ **Create a “Community Polls Pack.”** Distribute flyers or social graphics with digital links to VOTE411’s polling place locator, early voting dates, and accessibility resources.

# April



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
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- Daily Democracy Practice

Arab American Heritage Month

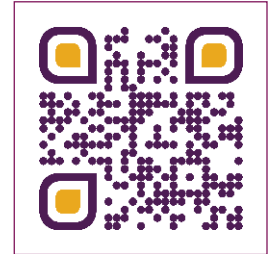
National Volunteer Month

- 16 DC Emancipation Day
- 19–25 National Volunteer Week
- 22 Earth Day

## Protection: Building Community Election Corps

Our power is safeguarded when we protect the process itself. In April, we focus on creating local “Election Corps” to monitor elections, share accurate information, and help communities know what to expect. Protecting democracy requires vigilance. When we do this work together, we build resilience against disinformation and attempts at suppression.

- ☐ **Recruit a local “Election Observers” team** of 5–7 people. Train volunteers to monitor polling locations and report issues.
- ☐ **Host a community information session** to share what voters can expect (e.g., ID laws, ballot procedures, accessibility options). This is another great opportunity to partner with your local elections officials. VOTE411 offers information on all state-specific laws.
- ☐ **Distribute “Know Your Rights at the Polls” cards** in English, Spanish, and other languages spoken locally.
- ☐ **Partner with local media and faith/community leaders** to counter misinformation and amplify trusted election resources.
- ☐ **Plan a “Ballot Party”!** Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to complete their ballots together! For friends who might be planning to vote in person, encourage them to use VOTE411 to pick the candidates that will best represent them and talk together as a group about their choices.
- ☐ **Host a “Monthly Friend Bank,”** engaging League members and partners to focus on the most important electoral aspects (e.g., register and/or check your registration, and/or learn early voting options and tips, and/or learn about the candidates and Election Day information).



## Resources

Full resources, toolkits, and trainings for Leagues to work with partners on this micro-campaign can be found on the League Management Site at [lww.org/PowerPlaybook4](https://lww.org/PowerPlaybook4).



## Milestones and Measuring Success

Over these 90 days, our milestones will measure:

- **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, partnerships formed) and qualitative stories that capture the spirit of building power through coalition.

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## What's Ahead

To help Leagues plan ahead, this brief preview of future micro-campaigns highlights upcoming efforts designed to build momentum over time, support local planning, and align our collective work around key civic moments.

**Playbook 5: People Power Summer (May–July).** This campaign continues our election preparation work while highlighting the many ways individuals and communities can fight for an inclusive democracy. Activities will also connect to the 250th anniversary of the United States.

**Playbook 6: Power Rising (August–October).** This final micro-campaign brings together the relationships, partnerships, and communities we have built throughout the year into a coordinated surge of action. During this period, Leagues will activate the people they have already engaged, meeting them where trust has been established, to amplify our collective voices. Anchored by a League-wide activation around the anniversary of the *Voting Rights Act* in August, and carried through the fall in partnership with allies, this moment will build momentum toward November and underscore what is at stake in the midterm elections.

**November: Protecting and Claiming People Power.** The final phase of our work centers on both defending democracy and affirming the power of people to shape our future. In the days leading up to Election Day (from November 1 through Election Day), Leagues will help create visible, community-centered moments that celebrate participation and elevate the collective impact of our work. This can include voter visibility efforts, countdown to Election Day activations, community check-ins and ride-to-the-polls coordination, social and digital storytelling that lifts up voters and volunteers, and public reminders that every vote matters and will be counted.

Following Election Day, we will remain vigilant and prepared to protect our collective power by responding to and defending against attacks on ballot counting, election results, and democratic processes. Together, these final actions ensure that the energy we have built throughout the year carries through Election Day and beyond — grounded in trust, solidarity, and an unwavering commitment to democracy.





## Navigating Nonpartisanship

### During Election Cycles

When candidates are running for office, our nonpartisan stance is clear and firm: we do not endorse or oppose any candidate or political party. Through state and local voter guides and VOTE411, Leagues work to solicit and publish responses from tens of thousands of candidates on issues that matter most to communities.

These questions cover topics such as **voting rights, climate change, reproductive rights, resource management**, and other issues that affect people’s daily lives. By providing voters with clear, factual information about where candidates stand, hosting nonpartisan candidate forums, and working to ensure every eligible voter can access the ballot, we empower voters to make informed choices based on their own values — not ours.

### With Elected Officials

Once candidates are elected, they become public servants responsible for representing all their constituents, regardless of party. Holding elected officials accountable to the public interest is not partisan; it is essential to a healthy democracy.

When we advocate for or against policies, we do so based on our longstanding positions and our commitment to strong democratic institutions, not party affiliation. We engage with elected officials across the political spectrum to support fair and effective election administration, share expertise and insights, and facilitate civic participation through efforts such as election observation programs. In all of this work, we advance voting rights, democracy protection, and good governance without favor or bias.

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## Closing Inspiration

As we move into this next phase of Unite and Rise 8.5, I want to return to what grounds our work. We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy. That power is visible every time women step forward to protect the vote, welcome new voices into our civic life, and ensure that our elections reflect the will of the people. This moment asks us to lead with clarity, purpose, and resolve.

At the same time, this movement is bigger than any one group. Everyone who believes in democracy — across generations, identities, and communities — has a role to play. This moment calls on all of us who share these values to stand together, lead with clarity and purpose, and act with resolve. When we do, we don't just defend democracy — we strengthen it.

Deepening electoral power means committing to the full arc of the work, from preparation to participation to protection. It calls us to strengthen partnerships, reach voters who have been excluded or overlooked, and equip communities with the tools they need to participate confidently in our democracy. Through this playbook, we focus our energy where it counts, showing up consistently and working together to expand access and trust.

I invite you to carry this work forward with determination and heart. Every voter you help prepare, every relationship you build, and every election you help safeguard strengthens the foundation of our democracy. This is how women turn collective effort into lasting power.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Stewart'.

**Celina Stewart, Esq.**  
CEO, League of Women Voters