WHAT DOES THE LWV STAND FOR?

Our mission is empowering voters and defending democracy.

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate. We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. 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.

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

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Last updated July 2025

WELCOME

TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

www.lwvma.org

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MASSACHUSETTS

WHAT IS THE LWV?

Established in 1920 as women were gaining the right to vote, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan grassroots organization open to individuals of all ages. The League encourages active and informed participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The LWV neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate for elective office, but it does take positions on matters of public policy. The League operates at the local, state, and national levels in every state, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

WHAT IS THE MASSACHUSETTS LEAGUE?

The League of Women of Massachusetts (LWVMA) is active and involved at the state level. LWVMA, a 501 (c)(4) organization, strives to promote and defend a healthy democracy and supports our members and local Leagues to do the same. Through its sister organization, the LWV, Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Fund, a 501 c (3) organization, the League empowers voters through voter services and civic engagement.

WHAT IS A LOCAL LEAGUE?

A local League serves a geographic region such as a city or town, group of cities and towns, or county. A Unit is similar to a local League in function, but it is not an autonomous local League, and serves as part of LWVMA or another local League. Units may become Leagues after being recognized as such by the national LWV.

The mission, vision, and values of all LWVs are the same, but local Leagues have their own bylaws, treasury, program, and communications. Visit www.lwvma.org to see a list of all local Leagues and Units in Massachusetts or email lwvma@lwvma.org.

BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Keeping Informed on Issues You Care About

Every member receives a subscription to their local newsletters, state e-newsletters, and publications of the League of Women Voters of the United States, along with invitations to meetings, Action Alerts, and other information about League events and concerns. Valuable information can be found on the website of LWVUS (lwv.org), LWVMA (lwvma.org) and local Leagues have their own websites. Follow LWVMA, and perhaps your local League, on Facebook (@lwvmass), X (@lwvma), Instagram (@lwvma), and BlueSky (@lwvma). LWVMA has a YouTube Channel (@lwvma) that stores recorded meetings, webinars, and videos.

Join In—Make a Difference and Learn

There are many opportunities to be an active League member—just find your fit! You might like voter engagement, such as registering voters, organizing candidate forums and preparing voter information. If organizing is your skill, help with planning an educational forum. If you want to get out there and advocate, join an interest group with others who share your passion.

At the state level, you can join committees to match your interest (i.e. voter engagement, membership, studies, a legislation specialist and more!). Joining a study committee is a way to learn about a specific issue and pass on your knowledge to fellow members.

There are also needs for running a well-managed, largely volunteer, grassroots organization such as: budgeting, fundraising, planning, writing, communications (newsletters, website, and social media), public relations, organizing refreshments—whatever your skill, the League needs you!

To learn more, email lwvma@lwvma.org. To get involved at the local level, contact your local League.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

The League of Women Voters offers a wide range of opportunities for involvement at the local, state, and national level, depending upon your availability and level of interest.

Some members support League activities with their dues alone, some attend social events and educational forums, some volunteer for time-limited projects, and some organize major projects or assume board positions.

The level of involvement is up to you. See the section on benefits and opportunities to learn more about getting involved.

HOW DOES LWV FINANCE ITS WORK?

The League of Women Voters is a non-profit organization that relies in part on membership dues to support its activities. Local (if applicable), state and national Leagues share the dues payments collected when a member joins or renews.

Because membership dues do not cover all their activities, each level of the League may also fundraise. Support comes from members, nonmembers, and the public.

EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY.

Voter Service and Citizen Education

- LWVMA encourages active and informed participation in government through:
- Candidate forums and debates
- Voter registration drives
- Voters' guides with nonpartisan information on candidates
- Resources on elections and voting
- Educational forums on public policy issues

Advocacy

League advocacy is based on study and member consensus. The process of study and consensus is a unique feature of the League. Members choose an issue to study, then through consensus form League positions. The state League advocates for specific legislation and public awareness on matters of public policy based on our positions from these studies. Local Leagues may advocate for issues in their community.

LWVMA Advocacy and Action Areas

The Legislative Action Committee of LWVMA is responsible for identifying, following, and advocating for bills before the State Legislature in the following general areas.

- Affordable Housing
- Basic Human Needs
- Children and Families
- Civics Education
- Climate Emergency
- Criminal Legal System
- Elections and Voting
- Education Policy
- Good Governance
- Gun Violence Prevention
- Health Care
- Immigration
- Natural Resources
- Racial Justice
- Transportation
- Women's issues

For further information visit lwvma.org/advocacy.

ONE LEAGUE AT THREE LEVELS

The LWV operates at the local, state, and national levels. LWV is a dues-paying organization, and joining automatically confers membership at the other two levels. Membership is open to any person who subscribes to the goals and mission of the LWV.

- **There are over 40 local Leagues and Units** (newly formed Leagues) serving over 2.5 million registered voters in 155 cities and towns across the state.

- Those who live in an area without a local League or Unit, may join as a "member-at-large" to engage with the state and national Leagues.

League Governance

Local, state, and national Leagues each have bylaws and other policy documents that are compliant with state and national guidelines. They have a governing body such as a board of directors or steering committee. The governing body is responsible for managing the activities of the League as well as for a specific area such as program, voter service, membership, finance, public relations, publications, action, and advocacy.

LWVMA is governed by a board of directors, which includes officers and directors elected or appointed. Members of the LWVMA board serve two-year terms and elections are held annually at the LWVMA convention (in odd years) and the LWVMA Council (in even years).

Committees

LWVMA and local Leagues primarily accomplish their work through committees. Standing committees carry out the LWV's work in voter engagement, membership, budget, communications, nominating and advocacy.

A study committee researches a public issue of interest chosen by the membership at the state convention or a local League annual meeting. After a period of research and preparation, it is the study committee's responsibility to present facts to the members, who decide whether there is a consensus (substantial agreement of members) to establish a position upon which the League can take action. Studies may be conducted at the local, state or national level.

Meetings

• Each local League determines its own schedule of meetings. The governing body usually meets about once a month.
• Each local League holds an annual meeting to elect officers and adopt local program, bylaws, and budget. All members can and should attend the annual meetings, which might also include a guest speaker, a dinner, presentation of awards and recognitions, or review of the year's activities.

Conventions

• A national convention is held in even-numbered years.
• LWVMA convention is held in odd-numbered years.

Both conventions are comprised of delegates who represent local LWVs in numbers proportionate to their membership. Any League member is eligible to serve as a convention delegate. Observers and guests may attend but may not vote. Delegates debate and vote on program, budget, and bylaws, and elect officers for the next biennium.