



# *State Program Planning Guide*

**2019 – 2021**

***Due: March 7, 2019***

## **Why Participate in State Program Planning?**

Every two years local Leagues, Units and Members-at-Large (MALs) have an opportunity to propose areas of focus for LWVMA Program and Action for the next biennium. Please make state program planning part of your winter activities. **Your input is critical.**

## **Important Dates**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 12/14/2018 | Board determines Action Priorities, possible studies, concurrence, restudy  |
| 1/28/2019  | Program Planning Guide to local Leagues for review and recommendations  |
| 3/7/2019*  | Local Leagues/MALs submit program and action recommendations to LWVMA   |
| 4/4/2019   | LWVMA Board develops program and action recommendations   |
| 4/26/2019* | LWVMA Board distributes its program and action recommendations plus any non-recommended proposals to local Leagues for review prior to Convention |
| 5/17/2019* | Local Leagues/MALs suggest changes or additions to LWVMA Board-recommended program to LWVMA   |
| 6/7-8/2019 | Adoption of LWVMA Program for 2019-2021 at Convention   |

\*Dates defined by bylaws.

<https://lwvma.org/member-resources/program-planning/>

### **Recommended steps for Local Leagues and Units**

1. **Make a plan for state program planning with your League/Unit.** Generally an individual or a small group will coordinate program planning, which involves reviewing the materials, leading a discussion, and reporting back to LWVMA.
2. **Hold your program planning meeting.** The meeting can be a special meeting for interested members, part of a board meeting, incorporated into local program planning, or through a teleconference.
3. **Report to LWVMA.** Complete and submit the Local League Recommendation Form. See section below on submitting the form.

### **Recommended steps for Members-at-Large**

As League members, Members-at-Large may also give input to State Program Planning. Complete and submit the Member-at-Large Recommendation Form (see section on submitting the form below).

### **Materials for Program Planning**

Available at <https://lwvma.org/member-resources/program-planning/>

- State Program Planning Guide
- Local League and MAL Recommendation Forms
- Appendix of LWVMA Program Positions 2019.
- Full version of *Where We Stand*, the LWVMA program book
- Full version of *Impact on Issues 2016-2018*, the LWVUS program book

### **Areas of input from Local Leagues, Units and Member-at-Large**

1. **Action Priorities** – areas to focus action **within current positions**
2. **New study, review and update of current LWVMA positions, concurrence** – areas to change or create **new positions**

### **Local League Discussion and Participation**

Using the Program Planning Recommendation Form will help keep track as your League members discuss options.

To help you get started, the LWVMA Board and the Legislative Action Committee (LAC) have developed some suggestions for action priorities and studies. The LAC is composed of our legislative specialists, who are aware of past legislation and legislation in the works and can suggest studies in areas where we currently have no or limited positions.

We encourage your League to add your own priorities or study areas on the recommendation form. These suggestions are not necessarily actions or studies that will finally be recommended to the Convention. The action priorities that are approved at Convention reflect LWVMA's priorities, but do not preclude the State League from taking action in other areas as situations warrant.

## Action Priorities

Consider what broad, general subject areas the State League should focus its energy on. We would concentrate on legislation, programs and actions in these areas. The Action Priorities adopted at the 2017 Convention were Improving Elections, Promoting Civic Education and Engagement, Climate Change and the Environment, and Equality and Justice.

Some suggested action priorities for 2019-2021 are listed below, with possible actions to take in those areas. Feel free to suggest others.

### Board-Suggested Action Priorities:

- Improving Elections  
Such as advocating for Election Day registration, ranked choice voting, actions resulting from LWVMA ballot question process study, campaign finance reform, election security
- Informed Voters and Civic Education  
Such as informed and active participation in government and understanding major public policy issues, including online voters' guide, Daniel Scharfman grants to local Leagues, candidate forums, student video contest
- Government for the Common Good  
Such as education, transportation, gun safety, health care, and meeting basic human needs
- Climate Change and the Environment  
Such as reducing carbon emissions to ensure a sustainable future by educating our members and the public, supporting legislation and other actions, and establishing regional collaborations; land and water use
- Equality and Justice  
Such as women's issues, protecting immigration, criminal justice, and income disparity

## New Studies, Concurrence, and Review and Update of Current LWVMA Positions

A study is required to develop a League position where none exists, or where the current position is no longer supported or requires updating.

- A **new study** involves research to provide a balanced view of the facts and issues on a public policy topic, followed by an effort to reach member agreement by consensus.
- **Review and update** of part or all of an existing position can determine if changes are needed.
- **Concurrence** is developing a state position by adopting the position of another state or local League.

### New Study/Review and Update of Existing Position

When proposing studies or reviews, it is important that your League take into consideration:

- LWVMA studies must be limited to state-level issues.
- Before proposing a new study, review LWVUS *Impact on Issues* and LWVMA *Where We Stand* to be certain we have no current positions on which to base action.
- When considering an issue for study or review, answer the following questions:
  - Would a study of this issue result in a position that could be used to influence legislative or state government policy?
  - Is this an issue on which legislative action is needed?
  - Will this issue still be timely when the study is completed in two or more years?
  - Is this an issue that would attract participation from the community and our members?
  - Is this an issue that could entice new members or increase the diversity of our participating members?

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- **Will your League, Unit or MAL be willing to get involved – including having some of your members serve on a study committee –and make a commitment to study the issue?**
- Most studies require two years to complete, from setting up the resource committee, preparing material for local Leagues and analyzing consensus reports, to writing the new position.
- The work associated with studies can only be completed successfully with the commitment of a team of volunteers. The level of member interest expressed will be a strong factor in the Board's decision to recommend a particular study.

The LWVMA board and LAC have no suggestions at this time for new studies or positions to be reviewed and updated, but welcome your suggestions.

### **Concurrence**

State Leagues may develop positions on issues by adopting positions other state or local Leagues have arrived at after the study process. As an example, at the 2013 state Convention, LWVMA adopted the California League's transportation position as the Massachusetts transportation position as a way of updating the Massachusetts position.

If your League would like to recommend LWVMA consider concurrence with another League's position, please include the issue you are considering and as much information as possible on the existing position you are recommending concurrence with, especially the name of the League which developed the position and a copy of that position. Adopting a position by concurrence requires a two-thirds vote of the Convention.

The LWVMA board and LAC have no suggestions at this time for positions to be adopted by concurrence, but welcome suggestions.

### **Submit State Program Planning Recommendation Form**

- Local Leagues and Units: submit the Local League Program Planning Recommendation Form
- Members-at-Large: submit the Members-at-Large Program Planning Recommendation Form
- The forms are available at <https://lwvma.org/member-resources/program-planning/>.
- Download the form, edit the word file to include your responses, and email the form as an attachment to [program@lwvma.org](mailto:program@lwvma.org).
- **The deadline for submitting the forms to LWVMA is March 7, 2019.**

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Price, [kprice@lwvma.org](mailto:kprice@lwvma.org).

### **What happens to Your Submitted Information?**

The Program and Action Co-Chairs will review all the completed forms and summarize the information. The LWVMA Board will determine which studies, reviews and updates, and action priorities to recommend for vote at Convention. In recommending any study or review, the Board will consider the cost of the study, interest from local Leagues and members, likelihood of successful completion, and whether the League can make a unique contribution by adopting a position in the area studied.

The Board will then send its recommendations for program and action to all local Leagues for review by April 26, 2019. Leagues may suggest changes or additions at this time, which will be considered by the Board prior to Convention. A League can propose a study, review or action item not recommended for a vote at Convention as long as it was submitted to the Board three months before the Convention (March 7, 2019).

The membership will vote on proposed studies, reviews, and action priorities at the Convention. Once the program for the biennium is adopted, committee(s) will be formed to carry out that program.