



State Program Planning Guide

2021 – 2023

Due: March 25, 2021

Why Participate in State Program Planning?

Every two years local Leagues, Units, and Members-at-Large 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

- 12/14/2020 Board determines Action Priorities, possible studies, concurrence, restudy
- 1/04-08/2021 Program Planning Guide to local Leagues for review and recommendations
- 1/12/21 Videoconference about Program Planning (7:00 pm)
- 3/25/2021* Local Leagues submit program and action recommendations to LWVMA
- April LWVMA Board develops program and action recommendations
- 5/14/2021* LWVMA Board distributes its program and action recommendations plus any non-recommended proposals to local Leagues for review prior to Convention
- 6/4/2021* Local Leagues suggest changes or additions to LWVMA Board-recommended program to LWVMA
- 6/25-26/2021 Adoption of LWVMA Program for 2021-2023 at Convention

*Dates defined by bylaws.

Recommended steps for Local Leagues

1. **Attend a webinar.** A webinar will be held January 12, 2021 at 7:00pm to review the goals and materials for program planning. Registration info will go out in early January.
2. **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. *Members-at-Large respond as individuals, on their own response forms.*
3. **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.
4. **Report to LWVMA.** Download the report form from the website (<https://lwmva.org/member-resources/program-planning/>) and email to program@lwmva.org.

Materials for Program Planning

- This Guide, with information for local Leagues and Report Form
- Full version of *Where We Stand*, the LWVMA program book
<https://lwmva.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Where-We-Stand..pdf>
- Full version of *Impact on Issues* 2018-2020, the LWVUS program book
<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/LWV-impact-2020.pdf>

Areas for Local Leagues Input

1. **Action Priorities and Action Goals** – 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 at the end of this guide will help keep track as your League members discuss options.

To help you get started, the LWVMA Board, the Legislative Action Committee (LAC), and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI) have developed some suggestions for action priorities and goals. 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 response 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 2019 Convention were Improving Elections, Informed Voters and Civic Education, Climate Change and the Environment, and Equality and Justice.

Some suggested action priorities for 2021-2023 are listed below, with action goals in those areas. Feel free to suggest others.

Program Planning Categories

First and foremost, we will develop an Action Plan to encourage understanding of racial justice issues by Massachusetts Leagues. We will

- *Encourage the continued education of our local League members on fundamental aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion*
- *Utilize and implement tools provided by the LWVUS DEI training modules and other applicable resources to ensure members understand and are committed to achieving racial equity*
- *Assess our individual local League programming, with Black people, Indigenous people, and all people of color (BIPOC), and other marginalized representatives in mind, to ensure diversity that represents the inclusion of all of our community and further advances racial equity*
- *Work to create opportunities to meaningfully partner with BIPOC and underrepresented members of our communities through inclusive engagement and community capacity-building*

As we advocate for the action priorities and goals accepted at Convention or added as circumstances demand, we will always use the lens of DEI.

Action Priorities and Goals:

Action Priority: Improving Elections

Action Goals

- Advocate for election reforms including same-day voter registration and making permanent vote-by-mail and other early voting measures with the improvements which have been identified
- Encourage corrections officials to facilitate voting for eligible incarcerated people
- Follow up on results from LWVMA ballot question process study

Action Priority: Informed, Engaged, and Authentic Voters and Civic Education

Action Goals

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- Continue to encourage informed and active participation in government and understanding major public policy issues. On-going actions include: Online voters' guide; Lotte E. Scharfman citizen education grants to local Leagues; candidate forums; student video contest; civic trivia events
- Support civic education in schools, promoting the LWVMA Civic Education Curriculum: funding for civic education still needs to be secured; some features of implementation don't begin until 2022

Action Priority: Climate Emergency and Sustainable Environment

Action Goals

- Advocate for passage of comprehensive climate legislation that addresses the scope, scale, and urgency of the climate crisis
- Track implementation of major, comprehensive climate legislation
- Support regional collaborations, such as the Transportation and Climate Initiative
- Work for improved public transportation as a way to decrease greenhouse gas emissions

Action Priority: Government for the People

Action Goals: Healthcare

- Educate public about healthcare coverage
- Advocate for single-payer universal healthcare coverage legislation for all residents of Massachusetts
- Advocate for legislation to strengthen and extend reproductive rights as needed

Action Goal: Gender Rights

- Advocate for strengthened and extended rights for all LGBTQ residents of Massachusetts
- Ensure that the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion are applied to all marginalized groups

Action Goals: Education

- Develop and advocate for strategies to improve educational access and learning experiences for marginalized communities
- Reaffirm our commitment to affordable and accessible post-secondary education
- Maintain "Education funding reform" because pandemic has disrupted the funding

Action Goals: Meeting Basic Human Needs

- Establish partnerships with local organizations to improve access to healthy food and sustainable nutrition by focusing on resources that counteract food deserts
- Advocate for affordable housing
- Work to prevent cuts in spending on public transportation, needed to enable all residents to reach jobs, grocery stores and medical appointments

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Action Goals: Pandemic Recovery

- Advocate for coordination of resources to mitigate the societal and economic impact of the pandemic
- View the amplified and exacerbated inequities as an opportunity to examine and change laws, institutions, and conventions involved in the creation and perpetuation of these inequities
- Prioritize aid and support to those in disadvantaged positions

Action Priority: Justice

Action Goals: Racial Justice

- Take action to identify, educate, and advocate to eradicate systemic racism in the state of Massachusetts as it exists in education, housing, employment, healthcare, and every aspect of American life, since such racism and socio-economic inequalities have marginalized, discriminated against, and harmed Black people, Indigenous people, and all people of color (BIPOC)
- Make applying a racial justice lens to examine both explicit and implicit racial justice implications a required step before League approval of any proposed legislation, project, or report
- Review and study the Massachusetts state seal and motto in order to ensure Indigenous Americans are treated with respect; support legislation and actions to ban public schools from using Native American mascots

Action Goals: Criminal Justice

- Support legislation to reform sentencing, probation and parole policies
- Invest in rehabilitative and re-entry services
- Promote alternatives to incarceration
- Consider in all criminal justice legislative efforts how laws will address racism within the criminal justice and police systems

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.

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- 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?
 - **Will your League 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 Your League's State Program Planning Recommendation Form

Download the form at the end of this document, complete it, and email to program@lwwma.org.

The deadline for submitting the forms to LWVMA is March 25, 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact Marie Gauthier, mgauthier@lwwma.org, or Susan Millinger, smillinger@lwwma.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.

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The Board will then send its recommendations for program and action to all local Leagues for review by May 14, 2021. 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 25, 2021).

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.

**LWVMA PROGRAM PLANNING RECOMMENDATION FORM
2021-2023**

League of Women Voters of _____ Date: _____

Name of Person submitting the Form _____

Phone # _____ Email Address: _____

Deadline for submitting recommendations is March 25, 2021

Please submit Recommendation Form by email to program@lwvma.org. Download the form in Word from the LWVMA website: <https://lwvma.org/member-resources/program-planning/>.

ACTION PRIORITIES:

Action Priorities are the broad, general subject areas the state League should focus on. LWVMA will concentrate, though not exclusively, on legislation in these areas and take action as issues come up.

Do you agree with the action priorities proposed on pages 3-5 of the State Program Planning guide?
(circle one) Yes No

What priorities would you suggest replacing and what would the replacement action priorities be?

List your League's recommendations for Action Goals. Remembering that the League's resources are limited and our efforts should not be spread among too many categories, **please limit your recommendations to 10.**

NEW STUDY:

List your League's recommendations for any new studies, provide a brief description of the scope and intent of each study, and indicate your membership's willingness to participate in the study. You can also indicate if your League is not interested in a new study now. **Please limit your recommendations to no more than two studies.**

REVIEW AND UPDATE OF AN LWVMA POSITION:

List your League's recommendations for updating current positions, describe why your League thinks reviewing the position(s) is necessary, and indicate your membership's willingness to participate in the review and update. **Please limit your recommendations to no more than two reviews.**

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CONCURRENCE:

Please list any suggestions for positions to be adopted by concurrence with a position developed after study by another state or local League. 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 the exact wording of that position.

We are also interested in your recommendations for improving the Program Planning materials or process:

FORM DUE MARCH 25, 2021

program@lwmva.org