



## Local League Activities Report 2022

The strategic plan for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) includes assessing and increasing our overall impact, including the activities of our local Leagues.

To meet the goals of the strategic plan and give a more complete picture of the League's impact in Massachusetts, LWVMA asked local Leagues to submit an electronic data collection form for each activity throughout the year. Local Leagues reported 412 individual activities including events, election resources, and other activities.

This report highlights and quantifies the impact of local Leagues in carrying out the League of Women Voters' mission: Empowering Voters – Defending Democracy, broadly categorized in three areas:

- Encouraging informed and active participation in government
- Working to increase understanding of major public policy issues
- Influencing public policy through education and advocacy

**EMPOWERING  
VOTERS.  
DEFENDING  
DEMOCRACY.**

The information assembled in this report is based on data collected from Leagues in Massachusetts for their activities between January 1 and December 31, 2022.

Two-thirds of the activities reported were categorized as Voter Engagement or Public Policy/Civic Education. The League of Women Voters was founded in 1920 to empower women, who had earned the right to vote that year, to make informed voting decisions. Although our mission has expanded to empowering *all* voters, supporting informed voting continues to be a major part of our work.

The 43 active local Leagues in Massachusetts serve 149 cities and towns (43% of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts) and provide nonpartisan voter engagement activities to over 2,466,739 registered voters in those municipalities, 51% of all registered voters in Massachusetts.

## Data Collection

Local Leagues were asked to submit a form for each of their activities in 2022. This was the first year for the data collection project. The project will continue in 2023 with a slightly revised form.

A google form was used to collect the data, with specific questions for activities defined as *events*, *election resources*, and *projects/other*. The collected data were reviewed and adjusted for consistency.

Most local Leagues (93%) participated and reported 412 activities.

- 43 Active local Leagues in MA
- 40 (93%) Submitted at least one form
- 412 Activities reported (average per League 10, range 1 to 35)

## Local League Activities Overview

For the purposes of appreciating the breadth of local League activities, they were categorized according to general purpose.

### 412 Activities reported

Voter Engagement	170	41%
Public Policy / Civic Education	106	26%
Community Service and Engagement	43	10%
Advocacy / Cause	37	9%
LWV Members / Visibility	40	9%
Fundraiser	10	2%
Award / Scholarship	7	2%

340 (83%) local League activities were primarily for the benefit of the public.

Local Leagues sponsored most of the activities, but Leagues often co-sponsored or participated in other organizations' activities.

Only sponsor (led the planning and execution of the activity)	250	61%
Co-sponsor (had a role in the planning and execution)	104	25%
A group of local Leagues were co-sponsors	10	2%
League was not a sponsor/co-sponsor but had an identified role in the activity	48	12%

## Using the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Lens

In 2020, all Leagues adopted the LWVUS Diversity, Equity, and inclusion policy. The first paragraph reads:

“The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) 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.”

Local Leagues have been encouraged to view all their activities through a “DEI lens.” LWVUS and LWVMA have provided speakers and trainings to assist local Leagues in this effort.

133 activities (32%) have been identified as working toward our DEI goals as summarized in the table below.

Youth Civic Education	27	20%
Youth Voter Registration	21	16%
Seniors Voter Registration	10	8%
Voter Registration with DEI partner(s)	10	8%
New Citizens Voter Registration	4	3%
Candidate Forum with DEI Partner(s)	8	6%
LWV Table at DEI Event	6	5%
Jail-based Voting	1	1%
Forum, Discussion, Advocacy		
DEI (generally)	14	11%
Race	16	12%
Women	6	5%
Indigenous People	1	1%
Affordable Housing	6	5%
BIPOC Speaker/Panelist	3	2%

About a third of these activities are for the benefit of youth, mostly high school students, and in collaboration with local high schools, colleges, or youth groups. Two Leagues were involved with registering voters at naturalization ceremonies.

Local Leagues have also reached out to organizations that represent diverse populations to partner in forums, community events, and voter engagement. Forty-nine of the 133 activities had community partners such as NAACP, Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition, Amplify groups, and local social justice organizations. LWV had tables at events in recognition of PRIDE, Juneteenth, Indigenous People’s Day, Martin Luther King Day, and Negro Election Day.

## Events Overview

315 (77%) of the activities were considered events. Most local League events were for voter engagement, public policy/civic education, community service and engagement, and advocacy/cause.

### *Event Platforms*

- 135 (43%) Remote (e.g. Zoom)
- 149 (47%) In person
- 31 (10%) Hybrid (both in person and remote)

### *Event Attendance*

- 28,422 attendance at the 315 events in 2022 (average 93, range 4 to 3,000)
- 16,415 attendance at 180 *in-person or hybrid* events (average 98, range 4 to 3,000)
- 12,007 attendance at 135 *remote* events (average 88, range 8 to 1,972)

The 315 events included small League member meetings as well as community events that had a large reach such as a LWV table at fairs and conferences or participating in parades. Forums were more likely to be remote or hybrid, while voter registration events were in person.

## Voter Engagement

Providing nonpartisan and unbiased information for citizens to assist them in making voting decisions continues to be a primary function of local Leagues in Massachusetts. In 2022 voters could participate in three elections: the state primary, state general, and local elections in towns. Cities did not have municipal elections in 2022. Special elections could be held at any time. Voter Engagement activities accounted for 41% of local League activities.

### **Voter Registration**

- 73 Voter registration activities
- 758 Voters registered

Local Leagues held 73 voter registration activities. These were either targeted to a group such as high school students, new citizens, incarcerated people, seniors, etc.; or to community members through tabling at community events or conferences. One League reached out to eighteen-year-olds through mailed postcards.

Local Leagues noted that because of successful state programs such as automatic voter registration at the RMV and 16-17 year old pre-registration, most eligible residents encountered at League registration events were already registered. League members instead assisted the public with determining if they were properly registered, helping them with online voter registration, and answering questions or providing materials about voting and upcoming elections.

## **Candidate Forums**

50 Local League Candidate Forums

20 State Primary and General Elections Candidate Forums (Fall 2022)

2,168,098 Voters Served

30 Local (town) Elections Candidate Forums (Spring 2022)

455,608 Voters Served

Hosting candidate forums is an important role filled by local Leagues. In 2022 most forums were conducted remotely, usually with Zoom. Most were recorded by local cable television stations, posted on websites, and advertised with social media and press releases, making them available to over 2 million voters.

Groups of local Leagues collaborated on 20 candidate forums for State Senate, State House, Governor's Council, County Sheriff, County District Attorney, and County Commissioner.

## **Ballot Question Forums**

Local Leagues joined together to present ballot question forums for the 2022 state-wide ballot questions.

## **Voter Guides**

Voter Guides included candidate information, responses to questions posed to the candidates, and may include information on how, where, and when to vote.

LWVMA created the State Primary and State General Election Voter Guides, VOTE411. Local Leagues shared the link to VOTE411 on their websites, newsletters, and social media.

For local elections (towns only in 2022), nine local Leagues produced their own Voter Guides. Collectively, these had the potential to reach 173,791 registered voters.

Four local Leagues published the Voter Guide in a local newspaper, one mailed it to all residences, and all posted the Guides on their websites. One League created a Voter Guide app.

## **Other Voter/Election Resources**

- Ballot question resources
- Community Meeting on how to vote
- How to Run for Office guides or recorded workshops
- "Get Out the Vote" resources such as lawn signs, banners, letters to the editor, newspaper articles, social media post, public service videos
- Transportation to the polls
- "I Voted" stickers handed out at the polls

## **Public Policy / Civic Education**

Public Policy/Civic Education activities accounted for 26% of local League activities. The events were primarily forums on local, state or national issues. In 2022, five local Leagues were involved in Civic Education projects and events at middle schools and high schools. This number is likely to increase in 2023 as more schools become more aware of the recent Civic Education Law.

## **Community Service and Engagement**

Community Service and Engagement activities accounted for 10% of local League activities. Although almost all local League activities could be categorized as a service to the community, this category includes a wide array of activities local Leagues perform to assist the community and local government such as Town Meeting support, local studies, educational forums on town governments and budgets, participating as a League in local events, distributing a community newsletter, and local television shows.

## **Advocacy / Cause**

Advocacy/Cause activities accounted for 9% of local League activities. Several Leagues reported sending letters to or appearing before Select Boards, City Councils, or Town Meetings advocating for League positions on local issues, and forums on issues such as racial justice, climate change, etc.

Several local Leagues met with their state legislators to discuss bills before the legislature, especially those supported or opposed by LWVMA. In 2022, local Leagues held 18 meetings with legislators.

## **Other Activities**

Other activities included LWV Annual Meetings, meetings for League members, projects to increase the Leagues' visibility, fundraisers, and awards/scholarships. These activities tended to be underreported in 2022, because in the first year of data collection, Leagues were unsure about whether to report these types of activities.

Eighteen local Leagues reported annual meetings. Every local League should have an Annual Meeting, but there was some confusion about whether these should be reported.

Other meetings for members were social events, book groups, developing materials to distribute at tabling for prospective members, new member events, League planning, and affinity groups.

Several Leagues give awards to League members or town leaders and give scholarships to graduating seniors or others. Seven Leagues reported awards and scholarships. These activities are likely underreported.

## **Fundraisers**

All local Leagues raise funds through the assessment of dues and through direct donations. In addition, seven local Leagues participated in the LWVMA phonathon. These Leagues made 1,194 calls to League members asking for donations to LWVMA. Local Leagues received 10% of the funds raised through their calls. Local Leagues also held fundraisers such as selling/delivering takeout food and producing and selling a cookbook. League fundraisers may also benefit other organizations, such as the local food pantry, or may be for specific projects, such as a voter guide or scholarships.

## **Addressing LWVMA Strategic Goals (2021-2024)**

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts established strategic goals in its 2021 Essential Strategic Plan (<https://lwvma.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ESP.FINAL.pdf>). The 412 local League activities were categorized according to these goals. It should be noted that one of the goals, Cultural Change, involves collecting data from local Leagues. Every League submitting data is therefore contributing to the completion of that goal.

Note: Many activities help meet more than one goal, therefore the total is more than 412.

133	(32%)	Diversity/Inclusion
397	(96%)	Growing the League
412	(100%)	Cultural Change
13	(3%)	Fundraising
365	(89%)	Education and Advocacy

## **Acknowledgement**

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## **2023 Data Collection**

The 2023 Data Collection form and materials can be found on the LWVMA website at <https://lwvma.org/toolkits-for-members/data-collection-measurement-evaluation-toolkit/>.