



Member Handbook

LWV[®]



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
of Licking County, Ohio**

2020-2021





Welcome to the League of Women Voters of Licking County!

We are grateful to you for joining us. We hope this handbook will be helpful in answering any questions you may have about the League – who we are, what we value, what we do. If you still have questions, contact any of our officers or board members.

The goal of the LWVLC is to empower the citizens of Licking County, Ohio to shape better communities locally, regionally, and nationally.

We are part of the National and Ohio Leagues of Women Voters. Our policies, principals, and values are in alignment with those espoused at both levels.

The LWVLC is a nonpartisan political membership organization, which:

- Acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.
- Builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- Engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/793452750827816/>

Website: <http://lwvlickingcounty.org/about/>

Email: lwvlickingcounty@gmail.com

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The League of Women Voters of Licking County

PO Box 285

Granville, OH 43023



"I have long been impressed with the efforts of the league to educate voters and help insure free and fair elections. I joined the league to further this work as we all must fight for these freedoms if they are to stay in place. League work is also enjoyable and fun!"

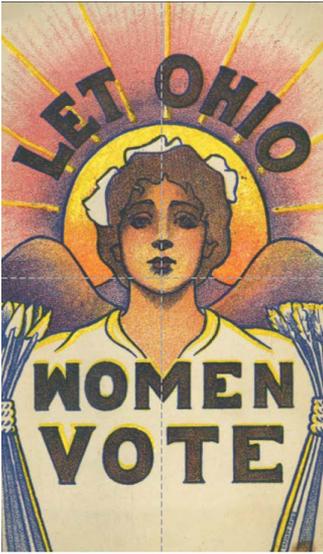
Tom Hall, Newark

LWVLC Principles

The League of Women Voters of Licking County believes:

- in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States;
- that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible;
- that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination;
- that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among its different agencies and levels;
- that responsible government is responsive to the will of the people;
- that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems; and
- that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of an international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

Our History



The National League of Women Voters (LWVUS) was officially founded in Chicago on February 14, 1920 by Carrie Chapman Catt, just six months before the 19th amendment was ratified, and women won the vote. Formed by the suffragists of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters.

After it passed in the House and Senate, the final hurdle for the 19th Amendment was ratification by the states. As anti-suffrage groups still fought to oppose ratification, suffrage leaders mobilized to continue their pressure campaign in the states. Ohio ratified the Amendment on June 16, 1919. Finally, the Amendment was ratified in Tennessee and officially

made law on August 26, 1920.

It was then, and is now, a nonpartisan organization. LWVUS founders believed that maintaining a nonpartisan stance would protect the fledgling organization from becoming mired in the party politics of the day. However, members were encouraged to be political themselves, by educating citizens about, and lobbying for, government and social reform legislation.

Over the last century, we've fought for election protection, democratic reforms, and equal access to the ballot—all while maintaining our commitment to nonpartisanship and fostering an informed electorate. As we look into our next hundred years, we aim to build power for the next generation of women leaders and voting rights activists.

The League of Women Voters of Licking County sprang to life in August 2017 at a general meeting in Newark, Ohio attended by about 40 women and men. It welcomes anyone in the county who wants to learn about political issues and support the democratic process through civic discourse, voter registration, and voter education.

The League is not entirely new in Licking County. Previously, it thrived for decades as the Licking County League of Women Voters (compare the wording to our current name) but disbanded in the 1990s. Now after more than 20 years it reappears to address the challenges and opportunities of a new political era.

Find out more: LWVO.org; LWVUS.org

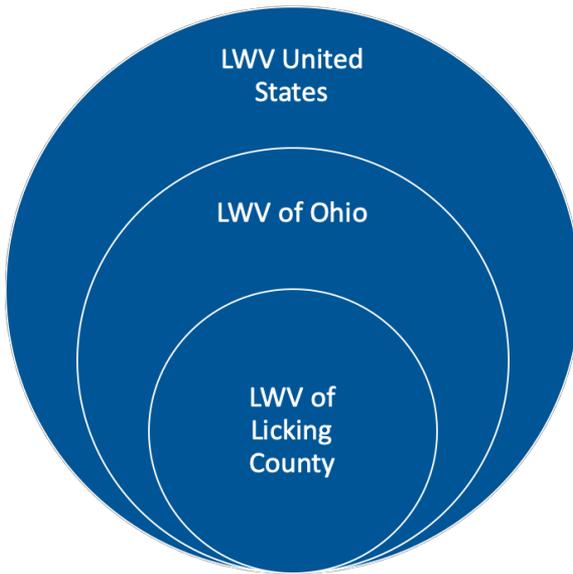
“I joined the League of Women Voters for my three daughters' futures and for my family's past. My Great Aunt Mabel Cory Costigan was an active member of the National League of Women Voters in 1920 and I feel honored to continue our family's legacy. I most appreciate the League's Observer Corps that empowers local citizens to monitor local governmental meetings and report back to the community. But mostly, I love the friendship and comradery with other members.”

Bryn Bird, Granville

The League Organization

The League of Women Voters is a multi-level organization. When you join locally, you are also a member of the State and US League. Each level plays a role in **Making Democracy Work**.

- LWVUS: Establishes positions on key issues based on state consensus. Lobbies federal office holders on behalf of those issue. Advocates for and defends democratic principles. Maintains support tools, such as Vote411. Supports state leagues in education, advocacy, and legal action.
- LWVO: Establishes positions on state issues based on consensus across Ohio Local Leagues. Lobbies state office holders on behalf of those issues. Advocates for and defends democratic principles. Manages media communication on state actions. Facilitates annual Statehouse Day and other informational initiatives. Supports local leagues in education, advocacy, and legal action.
- LWVLC: Seeks to educate our community on local issues and candidates. Organizes voter registration drives. Manages local Vote411 information. Facilitates candidate forums.



At each level, the League is governed by volunteer officers and boards of directors. LWVLC is required to:

- Maintain bylaws, the first three articles are mandated by LWVUS.
- Maintain a nonpartisan policy.
- Conduct an annual meeting.
- Hold regular Board meetings.
- Meet financial obligations.

The LWVLC Leadership

The Leadership of the LWVLC consists of the elected offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers work with an active Board of Directors, many of whom also serve as committee chairs.

Current officers and board members are listed on our website:

<http://lwvlickingcounty.org/about/>.

Membership

Membership parameters are set at the LWVUS level. LWVLC has further defined the memberships for operating and budgetary purposes. Dues are set or confirmed at the Annual Meeting. Annual memberships are renewed on an individual, rolling basis.

Individual Members. Persons at least 16 years of age who pay annual dues to the LWVLC are voting members. When joining LWVLC, they automatically join the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) and the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS).

Household Memberships. When two or more persons reside at the same address in a common household, they may join as a unit and pay dues in common. Within the household, one member is designated as primary and the second as additional. Supplementary members (over the primary and additional) pay a reduced membership fee. Each household member, whether primary or additional, enjoys voting rights and also belongs to LWVO and LWVUS.

Student Members. Students, defined as 16-25-year olds enrolled full or part time in accredited schools, pay annual dues at a reduced level and enjoy voting rights.

Life Members. Members of the LWVLC for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues.



“The League has always been a critical “connector” for me. Through the League I learn about important local, state, and national issues, develop my leadership skills, take positive action in in my community—and make good friends in the process.”

Carol Apacki, Granville

LWVLC Activities

Voter Service and Citizen Information

At all levels, the League is perhaps best known for its services to voters. We register people to vote and encourage participation in government. We sponsor candidate forums, provide voting information, and work to get out the vote. The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate for elective office, but does speak out on legislation and ballot issues on which it has a position based on study and consensus (a key word for League, it means a meeting of our minds, not a vote). League also encourages its members, as individuals, to take part fully in the political process.

VOTE411

Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF), VOTE411.org is a “one-stop-shop” for election-related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information on all aspects of the election process. A key component of VOTE411.org is the polling place locator, which enables users to type in their address and retrieve the poll location for the voting precinct in which that address is located. The League has found that this is among the most sought-after information in the immediate days leading up to, and on, Election Day.



Action and Advocacy

Program means the issues chosen by the members at any level of League for study and for action. It includes the positions that have been taken on issues over the years. Since some of these positions are many years old, they must be re-examined every two years and changed, dropped, or accepted by current members.

The program of the LWVLC shall consist of action to implement the principles, priorities and designated issues, as established at the annual business meeting, for concerted study and action, provided that, as a condition of recognition by the state and national boards, the LWVLC shall act only on existing local positions or state or national positions. The board shall recommend to the membership, at the annual meeting, a program of work focused on the local community. Program of work, as used in LWVLC bylaws, may be in the form of observing local government, advocating on a local issue, or educating the membership and the community on the structure and services of local government. The annual meeting may adopt the board's recommended program or any similar program of work provided that any so adopted by the LWVLC meets the mission and goals of the LWVLC.

This year (2020-2021) our program continues with efforts around our core mission, To Make Democracy Work through member outreach, voter registration, and voter education, including [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org).



Committees and Other Projects

For information about how to get engaged, you can find Chair and contact information about our committees and activities on our website:

<http://lwvlickingcounty.org/about/>,

Email lwvlickingcounty@gmail.com or call 740-525-2287.

Development

Establish an annual fundraising plan; organize events; the committee may elect to pursue grants to support specific initiatives.

Educational Events

Plan, sponsor, and organize events designed to inform the community about key issues within our county.

Membership

Develop a membership recruitment and engagement plan; record and welcome new members.

Nominating

Solicit and receive nominations for officers and directors; submit a report prior to the annual meeting listing nominations.

Social Events

Organize social events; publicize upcoming events; capture pictures and comments for social media.

Voter Education

Support the development and promotion of Vote411.org; organize candidate forums and discussions.

Voter Registration

Organize National Voter Registration Day; plan, manage, and track voter registration events.

Observer Corps

The purpose of an Observer Corps is to observe government meetings. Protecting our right to know is integral to the health of our democracy. Decisions that determine how our schools will be run, at what level community safety programs will be funded, and how land in our towns will be used impact our lives and are vital to our well-being. These kinds of decisions need to be made with public input and oversight.

The Ohio 2020 Sunshine Laws Manual

https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Legal/Sunshine-Law-Publications/2020-Sunshine-Manual_WEB.aspx)

provides key definitions, such as “What is a Public Office?”, that guide who can be observed, how records are requested, and other critical information before engaging with public representatives.

The LWVLC developed an Observer Corps in 2019. Two county, public entities were identified for observation: County Commissioners and LC Department of Health. Policies and procedures are based on the LWVUS: Observing Your Government in Action (https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/lwvuf_observingyourgovernment.pdf).

A reporting form is completed by each identified Observer Corps member monitoring a meeting. It includes logistical information and the following key items:

- Adequate discussion of issues
- Agenda posted before the meeting
- Adequate opportunity for public input
- Appearance that some items were discussed in closed, rather than open, session
- Background information available to the public
- Identification of any procedural concerns
- Identification of any issue of special import

Mentoring

The high school mentoring program was initially developed with grant funding from the Women's Fund. This program aims to connect high school girls with political leaders in our communities to serve as role models and encourage youth civic engagement. In the academic year 2018-2019, our pilot program included six young women from local high schools.

The program has required that participants design and evaluate their program experiences with guidance and support from their mentors; participate and reflect on at least three political activities; communicate regularly with their mentor; register and plan to Vote (based on eligibility).

Participants receive student memberships to LWVLC.

Volunteering

Many volunteer opportunities have been reduced during the pandemic. Even while operating with COVID-19 safety considerations, we have continued to register voters, send postcards to young voters, publish a voter guide on Vote411.org, and write letters to the editor. Volunteer. Get engaged.



The Annual Meeting

Each Local League must hold an annual meeting to elect officers and adopt the Program for the next year. LWVLC holds its annual meeting in April of each year. All members are encouraged to attend. A quorum must be present to conduct business.

League Lingo

ACTION: Promoting the League's positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media and the public.

ACTION ALERT: Action alerts are how we inform and mobilize people on critical and timely policy issues. These may be activated by a request from the LWVUS or LWVO to take action in support of a League position.

ANNUAL MEETING: Local year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaw changes and adopt a budget and program of work for the next year.

CONSENSUS: Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

CONCURRENCE: Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members or by another League.

CONVENTION: A state or national League meeting held every other year at which delegates elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt program, make bylaw changes and adopt a budget, usually for one year. Local Leagues send delegates to state convention; local and state Leagues send delegates to national convention.

COUNCIL: An assembly of delegates held in alternate years to adopt a budget and assess program developments. Local Leagues send delegates to state council, state Leagues send 6 delegates to national council.

EDUCATION FUND: The tax-deductible arm of national, state and large local Leagues, handling funds to be used only for educational purposes, not for action on issues.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER: A person who has been a member for 50 years or more. Life members are excused from dues payment and their Leagues pay no per member payment (PMP) for them.

ILO: Acronym for an Inter-League Organization, formed by local Leagues within a county, metropolitan area or region to act on issues that are beyond the local League area in scope.

LOBBY CORPS: The LWV of Ohio Lobby Corps consists of member volunteers across the state who work to track and influence state-level policy. Their dedication and hard work have allowed the League to be active and effective in improving the lives of Ohioans for almost 100 years.

MAL: Acronym for Member-At-Large, a member who resides outside the area of, and is not enrolled in, a local League.

MAL UNIT: A state-recognized group of Members-At-Large, in an area where there is no local League

PMP: Acronym for Per Member Payment, the amount of money paid to the LWVUS and the state League on behalf of each member.

POSITION: A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.

PRINCIPLES: Governmental standards and policies supported by the League as a whole. They constitute the authorization for adoption of program at all levels.

PROGRAM: Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state and national levels for study and action.

PROGRAMS: Plans for speakers, discussion or other activities for League meetings.

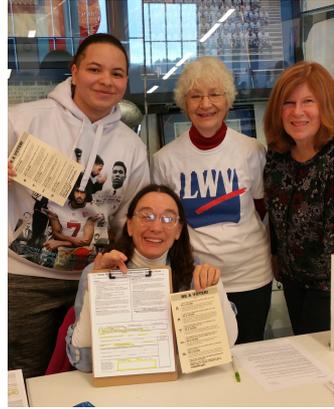
UNIT: Groupings of members within large local Leagues to provide more opportunity for discussion. Units may be time-oriented (day, evening, lunch hour), geographically oriented, or both.

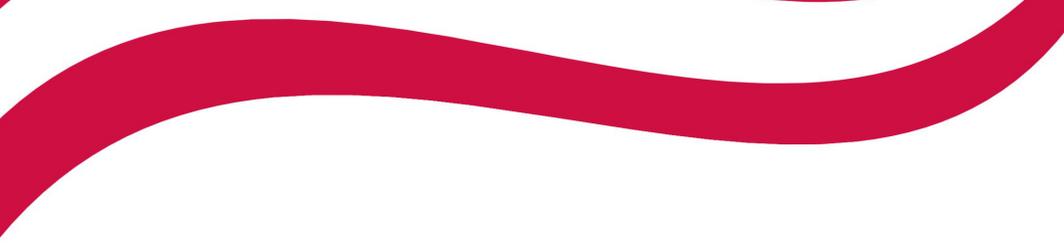
VOTE411.ORG: Our online voter guide (<https://www.vote411.org>).

VOTERS' GUIDE: Nonpartisan publication giving candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues.

VOTER SERVICES: Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and to encourage their participation in the political process. Registering voters and presenting factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and election issues are basic voter services activities.







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