

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF WESTCHESTER
PROGRAM 2018-2019**

Approved on June 7, 2018

VOTER SERVICE

Prepare, publish and distribute nonpartisan information on registration, voting, candidates, ballot issues and elections.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Coordinate, conduct, and/or review voter registration actions and provide education services when requested.
2. Help plan and sponsor candidate meetings for countywide offices.
3. Coordinate gathering of candidate information by local Leagues for inclusion in the *Voters Guide* and *vote411.org*.
4. Utilize and promote the *Vote411.org* website as an on-line service for voters in Westchester County for the Primary Elections in June and September and the General Election in November.
5. Prepare and distribute the printed *Voters Guide*.
6. Coordinate League participation at Naturalization Court to welcome and distribute voter information to new citizens.
7. Continue as a liaison to and support for the Fair Campaign Practices Committee for Westchester County.
8. Develop advocacy and civic engagement training programs for use with membership and the general public.
9. Develop a database of all elections for public office that are held by villages, towns and cities of Westchester.

ISSUES

The order of the following items does not denote priority and thus leaves the League (LWVW) the flexibility to act as situations warrant.

I. COUNTY GOVERNMENT

A. BUDGET

Review, analyze, and take action on the Westchester County budget as a fundamental tool for implementing county government policy with particular emphasis on League positions, both past and in development.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Search for and monitor progress on the recommendations we have made in past budget statements.
2. Monitor the budget adoption process, with emphasis on the interaction between the executive and legislative branches of County government.
3. Continue to urge improvements in the format of the County operating and capital budgets in order to make them as transparent as possible.
4. Critically examine both the operating and capital budgets as soon as they are available, enlisting all available avenues of information gathering. Pay particular attention to estimated revenue streams, such as sales tax forecasts, and to proposed funding of pension costs and union contract settlements. Focus on the impact of proposed allocations on existing government programs and services on which the LWVW has particular positions. These would include, but would not be limited to, our support of fair and affordable housing, both as sought in the Consent Decree/Housing Settlement Agreement and as needed in general; our particular concern for the work done by the Board of Elections; and our concern for County support of essential human services, the environment, and infrastructure.

This committee works closely with the Executive and Legislative Branches Committee, which may have recommendations that could have budget implications.

B. EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES

Monitor and take action on the operation of the Westchester County Government with particular attention to all matters that affect issues with which LWVW is concerned, financial matters, the election process and the items listed below.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Help educate voters on where and how to vote, and make recommendations for modernization of the voting system. Support any measures that would prevent the Board of Elections (BOE) commissioners from simultaneously serving as the heads of their respective political parties. Review with the BOE any new elections issues that might develop.
2. Promote redistricting measures that would preserve municipal boundaries, standards of compactness, and contiguity that would be consistent with federal requirements for population equality.
3. Continue working to promote county-wide revaluation, supporting those municipalities and communities that have been undertaking reassessments and urging others to do the

same. Help educate the public on the many merits of regularly updating property tax reassessment in order to achieve a more open, predictable, and equitable system.

4. Monitor any moves to consolidate municipalities and/or municipal services, applying the LWVNY criteria established in 2009.
5. Support non-adopted recommendations made by the County Charter Revision Commission, such as appointment (rather than election) of the County Clerk.
6. Continue to work for the development of a mass transit capability on the new Tappan Zee Bridge.
7. Monitor the contracts of Playland and monitor the progress on Playland's overall development
8. Assist in monitoring County government processes in the development of the County budget and critiquing its actions within our purview.

C. HOUSING AND LAND USE

Monitor and take action on land use, with particular emphasis on its development for housing of all types, in collaboration with LWVW committees on County Government and Environment, the Pace Land Use Law Center and local Leagues.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Continue monitoring the Consent Decree/Housing Settlement Agreement, which should have been completed by December 31, 2016 and sought to affirmatively further fair and affordable housing in the 31 eligible communities cited in the 2009 Agreement (but is not expected to be completed and/or approved by the Court-appointed Monitor or the Federal Court until about September 2018).

2. Advocate for further development of fair and affordable housing for all income levels, ranging from homeless shelters to workforce home ownership in all geographical areas of the County. Monitor the actions of the Housing Opportunity Commission and the Board of Legislators' Labor and Housing Committee. Participate, as appropriate, in other collaborative housing initiatives that seek to further the development of fair and affordable units, such as the Westchester Workforce Housing Coalition. Encourage more League and community members to participate in the Pace Land Use Leadership Alliance workshops, when offered.

3. In anticipation of action by the Administration and Board of Legislators resulting from the Request For Proposal for a new Housing Needs Assessment for the County issued in May 2018, we look forward to new initiatives by the private sector and the County's Not-For-Profits, which should also re-energize development of Affordable Housing for all income levels and merit new attention by the LWVW.

II. ENVIRONMENT

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and protection of water resources.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Through the LWVW annual county budget review process promote the care, acquisition and preservation of open space by the County that will not compete with land for fair and affordable housing.
2. Monitor and take action on any proposals that impact sewage and stormwater management.
3. Promote public education on environmental issues with emphasis on water quality, storm water management, septic systems and sewers.
4. Take action to address climate change and sustainability issues with special attention to greenhouse gas emissions, alternative resources, energy conservation, an effective countywide septic management plan, Indian Point Nuclear Plant, pipeline expansions and compressor stations, the Westchester County Airport, and a mass transit component on the new Tappan Zee Bridge.
5. Promote pollution prevention and reduction with emphasis on support for countywide [reduction of pesticides and other hazardous chemicals;] promote the LWVW gardening brochure Green Lawns Blue Water, which is on the LWVW website.
6. Support measures to improve environmental management by county government.
7. Monitor meetings of the Board of Legislators' committees relating to the environment.
8. Promote legislation to encourage use of reusable bags at point of purchase.
9. Educate the public about food waste and food insecurity. Monitor the upcoming Westchester County government study on sanitation practices including the Food Scrap Program and how it impacts the overall County sanitation program and services it provides to local Towns.

III. WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Monitor and take action on issues concerning women's and children's development, health, safety and welfare in coordination with LWVNY.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Support initiatives aimed toward improving women's and children's access to healthcare and safety measures in cooperation with other organizations and coalitions dedicated to these goals, including gun control regulations and measures to counteract human trafficking and sexual abuse and harassment.
2. Work in coordination with the county budget review to examine funding for programs promoting women's and children's health and safety issues, with particular emphasis on funding libraries, after-school programs, health clinics and day-care services.
3. Support and alert members to child-care initiatives to improve availability and quality of

services with particular concern for the disabled.

4. Act as a liaison between public officials and the LWVW and remain informed on proposed or contemplated legislation. Lobby legislators as appropriate.

IV. HEALTH CARE

Gather and disseminate information, as needed, about the structure, functions and initiatives at the county, state and national levels of our health care system. Track the progress of key legislative bills, with action alerts in accordance with League positions. Maintain contact with the groups working to improve health care and make recommendations in regard to cooperating with such groups to co-sponsor their events.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Promote single-payer, universal health care and grassroots public awareness of its benefits. Hold public forums, lobby lawmakers in Albany, write op-ed articles and letters to the editor, collect signatures on petitions, make presentations to community groups and work together with the Campaign for New York Health advocating for the New York Health single-payer bill.
2. Monitor a number of health care concerns such as: the allocation of medical resources to underserved areas, health promotion and disease prevention, school- based health services, women's health issues such as women's rights for freedom of choice, cuts to the Tobacco Control Program, end-of-life issues, pain management, long-term care and prescription drug expenses.

V. DIVERSITY ISSUES

Monitor and take action on issues concerning health, safety and well-being of members of diverse groups; support measures to reduce discrimination involving bias against a person's race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, or disability; and promote involvement of women in public service and elected office.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Sponsor Running and Winning and explore involvement in other similar programs.
2. Reach out to seek collaboration with other community groups, especially those representing diverse groups in the county.
3. Sponsor student(s) to attend the LWVNY's Students Inside Albany program.

VI. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Promote the enhancement of communications between the local Leagues and the LWVW through an ongoing exchange of ideas and the implementation of joint initiatives. Provide training to enhance overall skills to ensure success.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Continue to conduct bi-monthly meetings with League Presidents to explore ideas and implement initiatives concerning but not limited to membership development, increasing visibility, youth development programs, reduction of duplicate efforts and fund raising.

2. Introduce a Know Your Government program with an advocacy training component which incorporates a response to the growing interest in civic engagement.
3. Train local League members to organize and moderate candidate meetings.
4. Coordinate assignment of moderators for candidate meetings sponsored by local Leagues and other qualified organizations.
5. Partner with the local Leagues to develop outreach programs that cross-promote initiatives taking place throughout the County.
6. Reach out to members to urge their continued involvement through membership in a local League.

VII. LEAGUE OPERATIONS

Enhance the effectiveness of the LWVW while focusing on the goals as outlined by the Executive Committee and this Program. Promote the effectiveness of local Leagues, their leadership and their membership.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK

1. Enhance League visibility through programming, interaction with local leagues and publicity and communications with traditional media as well as our website lwvw.org, Facebook and Twitter and publishing regular communications with membership via Constant Contact.
2. With the assistance of the Pro Bono Partnership update the Education Foundation from a private foundation to a public charity. Explore the consolidation of our 501(c)4 entity into the 501(c)3 Education Foundation, thus reducing costs and eliminating redundant requirements.
3. Focus on opportunities for fund raising and actively pursue grant opportunities for Voter Service and educational programming. Conduct the annual appeal for contributions to both LWVW, Inc. and LWVWF, Inc.
4. Promote the enhancement of communications between the local Leagues and the LWVW; facilitate the reduction of duplicate efforts at the local level; encourage the development of commonly needed programming, e.g., advocacy training modules and new board orientation meetings.
5. Optimize use of office facilities and volunteers.
6. Update documentation of board, officer and committee job descriptions and committee/program calendars.
7. Orient and mentor new LWVW board members and off-board committee members.
8. Encourage and support local Leagues in providing orientation for new and returning board members including a separate workshop for nominating committee members.