



The League of Women Voters of New York State
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

State Board Updates **March 2022**

Local League To Do's (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or fax 518-465-0812)

- Schedule a local League meeting in Feb, March or April, 2021, to discuss the proposed principles of a new position on election administration structure; **responses due May 1**
- Register to attend one of the Regional Training Workshops in or Scarsdale (**Apr 2**) or Ithaca (**Apr 9**) using attached form or online at: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/HOhq-CqnO8wQHsms7-w8Kg .

Calendar

- February-April, 2022: Schedule a local League meeting to discuss the proposed principles of a new position on election administration structure; responses due May 1.
- April 2: Regional Training in Scarsdale
- April 7, 7:00 pm: Tackling NY's Climate Emergency ([click here to register](#))
- April 9: Regional Training in Ithaca (rescheduled)
- May 22-25: Students Inside Albany Conference
- June 23-26: LWVUS Convention

President's Report, Judie Gorenstein, judieL728@aol.com

It has been nine months since the LWVNY convention in 2021 when I was elected to be president of the LWVNY. This month for the first time we were able to hold and in person board meeting. We were also able to hold two Regional Training Workshops in person with the remaining two (Scarsdale and Ithaca) scheduled for the first two Saturdays of April. Everyone was so happy to be actually in the same room (something looking back we may have always taken for granted). There was so much to share, so many conversations to be had, so many people to greet and so much to accomplish, I did not want to take the time for my introduction to the workshops and so am including some of my comments here.

Every League has similarities:

- Every League has bylaws with the first three articles identical to the bylaws of LWVUS (as required)
- Every League has the same mission: to encourage informed and active participation in government, increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence policy through education and advocacy

- Every League has adopted a policy of nonpartisanship in which the League can never support or oppose any political party or candidate
- Every League has adopted a policy of DEI and is working on being more Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive
- Every League has a board.
- Every League has members. Members are the most valuable asset of the LWV

Leagues also have differences:

- They are located in different types of communities (rural, urban, suburban)
- They are different sizes.
- They have different board structures .
- They are in different financial condition

LWVNY is committed to working with all our Leagues and having all our Leagues work together. The workshops we planned are ones that board and staff believe will help you all do your work. We have prepared power points to provide information and stimulate conversation but just as we rely on our local Leagues and members to do the legwork, we will be relying on you to share ideas and what your League is doing and asking questions. Conversations could and should be the spark of some new ideas. We all need to work together and learn from one another, so each and all continues to grow, gaining strength, visibility and power to empower voters and protect our democracy. We all have seen this year how fragile democracies can be, first on Jan 6 in Washington, DC, and this past month with the invasion of Ukraine. Our mission has never been more important that it is now.

Over the past nine months, I have been so impressed by what the board and our local Leagues are doing and how well we all are working together, but we cannot stand still. We need and can continue to do more. This January I was disappointed to learn that total membership had decreased by 9% from Jan. 31, 2021 to Jan 31, 2022. Since then our membership has increased. As I said earlier, our members are the biggest asset of our Leagues. But getting new members is not all that is important. It is also important to train and get new leaders. Leadership cannot be static, which is why your nominating committees are so important. Membership and leadership is not the work of just the board. It is the work of every member which is why the membership leadership workshop has been scheduled first and the one that everyone will be attending. During this workshop, you will learn about the importance of the Ask.

The workshops already held have been successful. I want to thank all the people who have already attended and shared their ideas. I am looking forward to the regional workshops and meeting many of you in Scarsdale on April 2 and in Ithaca on April 9. It is not too late for members to still register and attend.

Although meeting in person is wonderful, over the past two years we have learned how beneficial zoom and virtual meetings can be. LWVNYS Council will be held on zoom on June 7. More information will follow.

State Office

Order your paper copies of the updated First Vote (English or Spanish), and four of the five Your Right to Vote series (Homeless Individuals, College Students, Individuals Convicted of Crimes and/or

in Prison/Jail, and Individuals with Physical Disabilities) which have all been updated and reprinted. The new versions are posted on the state website and paper copies may be ordered from the state League. Email Aimee@lwvny.org to place your order and we can invoice your local League.

Regional Training Workshop, Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org

It's not too late to still attend one of our regional training workshops. Attendees at the two already held have commented on how helpful, energizing and fun the workshops have been. Come join the fun in Scarsdale or Ithaca. **Registration form is attached or you can register online at: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/HOhq-CqnO8wQHms7-w8Kg .**

Dates and Locations:

April 2, Downstate Area \$25

Scarsdale Woman's Club, 37 Drake Road, Scarsdale

April 9, Ithaca \$15 (rescheduled because of snow storm)

Coltivare (Tompkins Co Community College Culinary Center), 235 S Cayuga St, Ithaca

Schedule

9:30-10:00 coffee and welcome

10:00–11:00 Full workshop for all (It's All About the Ask: Tactics for Increasing Membership and Cultivating Leadership)

11:15-12:15 Two workshops

12:15-1:00 Lunch

1:15-2:15 Two workshops

2:30-3:30 Two workshops

Workshop Sessions:

It's All About the Ask: Tactics for Increasing Membership and Cultivating Leadership

Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. That's our mission. To further this mission we need strong, sustainable Leagues. And that requires all of us to get involved in attracting prospects, welcoming and mentoring new members, checking in with inactive ones, and identifying leadership candidates. Our best tool is The Ask:

- Ask others to attend a League program,
- Ask others to join,
- Ask members how they want to get involved, and
- Ask engaged Leaguers to take leadership positions

The 411 on Vote 411: A Beginners Guide to the New Platform (Hands-on Workshop)

Explore the new Vote411 platform (League's electronic voter guide). This workshop will walk through a step-by-step guide to setting up your local elections and will answer your questions on the new system. Bring a laptop so you can navigate the platform along with us (laptop not required).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Past, Present and Future

We will look at some of the “isms” that hang over our collective past, both as a country and a national organization. Thereafter, attendees will be guided in a conversation on the efforts made in recent

months, both on an individual basis and by their local Leagues, in overcoming the marginalization that has placed the soul of democracy at increasing risk.

Engaging Youth Through Civic Collaborations

While the pandemic has limited our traditional abilities to get into schools, that doesn't mean we have to stop engaging the youth! Learn how to engage the next generation of voters online, in person, and everything in between even if you can't get into the classroom.

Zooming into 2022: How to Successfully Host a Virtual or Hybrid Candidate Forum

Discover various methods for hosting candidate forums in the digital age. This workshop will discuss best practices for hosting a virtual, hybrid or in-person forum.

Hacking Social Media: Getting the best use out of your League's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts

Learn about different social media platforms, their quirks, and how to "hack" the algorithm. This workshop will explore the uniqueness of each social media platform and explain how your League can use them to your advantage.

Let's Take Action: How, When and Why?

You or your local League is passionate about an issue and wants to advocate and lobby. When is the correct time? How best to advocate? And, how does taking action vary based on local, state or national issues? Come learn more about advocacy.

All attendees are required to show proof of vaccination and booster and be willing to wear a mask.

Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy, sally.s.robinson@gmail.com, and Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Deputy Director, Erica@lwny.org

Legislative Priority Summary:

The State League sent out the form for the 2022 legislative priorities late November 2021. The forms were due February 1st, 2022. 19 Leagues submitted their top three legislative priorities. The top three priorities (in ranked order) are election law, natural resources, and healthcare.

Pre-Budget Advocacy Summary and Budget Update:

On Saturday, March 14th the two one-house budgets were released. Unfortunately, we saw some mixed results as it relates to our pre-budget advocacy focus on ethics reform, funding elections, and making voting easier. Our work paid off regarding "Turn on the TAP" as funding to restore TAP for incarcerated individuals was included in both the Senate and Assembly one-house budgets.

Funding Elections

The Assembly concurs with the Executive Budget allocation of \$30.4M in funding for the State Board of Elections.

The Senate budget added \$10 million for assistance to local Boards of Elections for costs including continued implementation and expansion of early voting.

The Senate modified the Executive recommendation of \$30.4 million by adding \$5 million to establish an Office of Voting Rights, pursuant to a Chapter of the Laws of 2022. This is an early provision to include funding for the passing of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

Ethics Reform

Limited action was taken on ethics reform in the one house budgets. Both the Assembly and the Senate did not add additional funding to reform the agency nor did they include the Executive Proposal for an entirely new Ethics Commission.

Making Voting Easier

The Assembly did not include the Executive proposal to expand the voter registration period by requiring local boards of elections to process any applications received no later than 10 days before an election and postmarked no later than 15 days before.

The Assembly did not include the Executive proposal to require local boards of elections to establish one or more poll sites on college campuses whenever a contiguous property of a college or university contains 300 or more registered voters.

The Senate did not include the Executive proposals to reduce the deadline to register to vote from 20 days before an election to ten days and to reduce the required postmarked date on a registration form from 25 to 15 days before an election, and the proposal on polling places on college campuses having already passed legislation to make these changes earlier this year.

State Budget Advocacy:

This month the League advocated for funding for ethics reform and budget transparency in the New York State budget. In March, the League along with several other good government groups submitted an op ed to the Times Union in an effort to push for JCOPE reform. The op ed was published in the Times Union on March 6th and in Newsweek on March 8th. In the weeks prior to the one-house budget release it became apparent that there was not a major focus on ethics reform in either the Senate or Assembly. This letter was submitted as a call to action for both Hochul and the Assembly and Senate to ensure that they prioritize holding public officials accountable by overhauling JCOPE, improving campaign finance scrutiny, bolstering the power of the inspector general, and eliminating the pay-to-play culture.

[https://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Put-overhauling-JCOPE-on-state-s-must-do-16980326.php?utm_campaign=CMS%20Sharing%20Tools%20\(Premium\)&utm_source=share-by-email&utm_medium=email](https://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Put-overhauling-JCOPE-on-state-s-must-do-16980326.php?utm_campaign=CMS%20Sharing%20Tools%20(Premium)&utm_source=share-by-email&utm_medium=email)

On March 2nd, the League submitted a memo to Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie to urge them to reject the Governor's Fiscal Year 2023 Executive Budget proposals that would give the Executive broad and unilateral powers, and to amend other proposals to better define their uses and oversight. See letter here:

https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Group-letter_Extraordinary-Budget-Powers_03022022.pdf

On March 24th, the League signed on to a memo with the several watchdog organizations and the Citizens Budget Commission which was sent to Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie. The memo urges them to include basic financial tables once they have reached

consensus on the budget in order to allow for more transparency and accessibility. The letter will be posted on our site shortly.

All testimony and actions taken are on the state website at: <https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/our-work/legislative-action>.

BOE Study Concurrence:

A reminder that local Leagues have been asked to vote on the BOE and voting for the incarcerated concurrence by May 1st. Please reach out to the State League with any questions.

Voter Services, Nancy Rosenthal, VP for Voter Services, **nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com**

Leagues are gearing up for the upcoming election season! At the regional trainings, there have been discussions on the how to's for hybrid candidate forums. Leagues we hope will be holding more hybrid forums in 2022, meaning holding simultaneously in-person and virtual events. Reaching as many voters as possible is always the goal!

Remember that for all candidate events for Federal offices, a request to LWVNY must be made to organize the event. Also, for both Federal and all other offices (state Assembly and Senate), if districts overlap with other League's geographic area, Leagues must talk with each other and at least ask if the other League would like to collaborate; at a minimum, it is hoped that the other League will help advertise the event. Both of these policies are to ensure that candidates do not receive requests from multiple League and have to choose – League should coordinate and ask together which will also increase the chance for participation by the candidates.

The Toolkit for Candidate Forums is excellent reading on this and so much more! Seasoned members handling candidate forums will benefit from a refresh with reading the toolkit again! It's almost second nature to forget some of the many details included in the toolkit.

All local Leagues have access to vote411.org and are ready to use its new format for the 2022 election cycle. At the regional trainings, Milly Czerwinski and Erica Smitka from LWVNY are leading workshops on using vote411.org. This year as usual, LWVNY will handle the federal and state offices including congressional and the statewide and NY Assembly and NY Senate races. Local Leagues will be asked to assist if candidate(s) do not respond to requests to participate in [vote411](http://vote411.org). Local leagues are also asked to help market Vote 411 when it is live. Thanks again to a donor, local Leagues incur no fees to have access to vote411.org!

The VS Committee members continue to periodically reach out to the local Leagues and the VS representatives in order to offer support, answer questions, and gather information that helps the committee and Board determine best our next steps.

County Redistricting, Milly Czerwinski, Milly@lwvny.org

The State League has held regional meetings with redistricting delegates from each local League in order to get an idea on what each county's redistricting process will entail, where they are in the process, how their Leagues are planning to participate, and how the State League could assist them. Individual meetings were then held with Leagues that requested further assistance.

Local Leagues have been sent the County Redistricting guide and have been encouraged to send it to their members. Local Leagues were also advised to reach out to Jeff Wice from the New York Law school if they had any questions or needed further assistance. Jeff Wice had previously offered his assistance to local Leagues at the County Redistricting event hosted by the State League in late January. Educational materials, such as redistricting games, videos, and mapping program tutorials have also been sent to Leagues who have requested them.

Students Inside Albany Conference, Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org

We are planning for the Students Inside Albany Conference – it will be different than in the past because of pandemic restrictions and the operations at the Capitol, but we believe it will still be an educational and fun experience for all students. All local Leagues are urged to make sure the students **and** parents know and agree to the following:

- All students will be required to show proof of being vaccinated and boosted based on CDC recommendations just prior to SIA commencing (right now that is 2 vaccines and booster – could be more by May 22);
- All students must wear a mask over their nose and mouth at all times in public or common areas; and
- All students will be sharing a hotel room with another student.

Local League Support Committee, Joy Rosenzweig (joyrose6@gmail.com) and Kathy Stein (kstein1@twcny.rr.com), Co-Chairs

The Local League Support Committee prepared a PowerPoint presentation for the Membership/Leadership Workshop at the Regional Trainings. Different Committee members will be presenting the program at different locations. Audience response was gratifying at the Rochester workshops.

The Committee has also worked with the persons interested in starting a MAL Unit in Great Neck to organize an informational meeting on February 13. Twenty-eight people attended, of whom seven were NYS Board members. Margie Macintosh (President of LWV of Cattaraugus-Allegheny MAL) has agreed to mentor the new group. At the meeting, the general principles and processes of the League were explained, examples were given of the kinds of issues on which the LWVNY was currently working, and the requirements for starting a MAL Unit were laid out.

The Great Neck organizers have a meeting scheduled for March 23 to sign up members and draw up the necessary bylaws, non-partisan and DEI policies.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force: Regina Tillman (rmt371@live.com) and Crystal Joseph (crystal.y.joseph@gmail.com), Co-Chairs

DEI Task Force Co-chairs, Regina Tillman and Crystal Joseph are starting to organize an educational event for this spring. Look for upcoming registration and event information.

From LWVUS

Registration is open for LWVUS Convention June 23-26 in Denver and virtually. See the agenda, how to register and more at: <https://www.lwv.org/manage-your-league/council-convention> .