



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK

STATE VOTER

Planting Seeds for What Comes Ahead September 2026

As autumn begins, we hope you will enjoy a fresh start into this busy season. We wish those who are returning to work and school a seamless transition. We thank you all for your efforts to greater engage and educate your communities in civic affairs. Elections continue to approach so we urge you all to continue your initiatives and help prepare for a successful voting season. We look forward to a strong fall where we empower voters and help increase voter participation



State Leaders Message

Nancy Rosenthal, President,

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Erica Smitka, Executive Director, erica@lwwny.org

As of September 1, we are **63 days** from Election Day. As we near Election Day, we know that the rules and laws around our elections are top of mind for most voters. This past month, litigation between the federal government and the LWV of Massachusetts has had many voters wondering if laws around casting a mail-in ballot have changed.

Right now, nothing has changed for New York voters or mail-in voting. Voters should continue to make their voting plans, follow New York's rules and deadlines, and return mail ballots as early as possible.

The following messages are critical for us to get out to voters ahead of the midterms:

Make a plan to vote:

- Vote early in person from October 24th–November 1st, or in person on Election Day, November 3rd.
- If voting by mail, apply for your ballot as soon as possible and return your ballot as soon as possible.

Our work continues on voter education, registration, and mobilization efforts. National Voter Registration Day is September 15th. For Leagues tabling or doing outreach that day, please have handouts with Early Voting dates, times, and locations for your county so voters have the information they need to make their plans.

We are 63 days out. Let's build on the momentum of August 8 and keep our message simple, consistent, and focused on helping every voter participate.

In League,
Nancy and Erica



LWVNYS Board Announcements

Voter Services

Jane Colvin, 2nd Vice President/ Voter Services

On August 11th we kicked off a new campaign at LWVNYS called *Defending a Democracy Under Siege*. Until election day we will be meeting bi-weekly with representatives from Leagues across the state to talk about critical get out the vote resources, ideas, and updates that will impact our work. This is a Statewide effort to streamline our work, empower and energize the work we are doing on the ground. Thank you to all of our local Leagues participating in these calls! We look forward to our next meeting on September 8th at 6pm.

Pushing back on mis and disinformation is going to be a critical piece of our get out the vote efforts this fall! We wanted to boost a helpful election messaging guide from LWVUS to help educate, reassure, and motivate the public. It's perfectly timed to equip you for National Voter Registration Day (September 15) and during National Voter Education Week (October 5-9). Check it out here: [Messaging Guidance for 2026 Midterm Elections](#).

Every eligible voter should be able to register, get the facts, cast a ballot without unnecessary obstacles, and trust that the system works for them. Below is a sample of what you'll find inside the guide:

- An easy “formula” for talking about the election: what's at stake → what it means for voters → how LWV is helping → what someone should do next. Appropriate wording is provided for a two-sentence social post or a five-minute conversation, or something in between.
- Talking points organized around four questions voters commonly ask — Can I participate? What do I need to know? Will my vote be protected? What can I do
- Guidance on tone, especially when news is moving fast. That way we can stay calm and factual, verify before sharing, and keep our nonpartisan voice clear.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Regina Tillman, 3rd Vice President/ Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

I am pleased to repeat the announcement of the *new* LWVUS live and interactive webinars on the topic of “DEI,” beginning in September 2026. They will include subject matter experts in the fields of equity and equality work, as well as leadership. The intent is to **“help shape the next phase of DEI learning and capacity building across the League.”**

Those lucky enough to have attended the DEI trainings held by LWVNYS during the April 2026 Regional Trainings will recognize the title of the first session being presented by the LWVUS on September 16. It looks remarkably similar in its reference to the *consideration of “how the League has always done it”* in order to evaluate where and how best to make some changes.

So, for us, September 16 is a great time and place to again pick up on our organizational development and self-development in “DEI” concepts and practices. You are all encouraged to sign up for the three additional sessions that follow through October, addressing the other LWVUS core “DEI” pillars.

Questions? Check with your own Local League's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director or Committee Chair. Our statewide DEI Committee members will also be discussing the content of each session to ensure that all LWVNYS feedback and potential implementation are considered. Want to join us as your Local League's representative on this Committee? Check with your president and have them contact me at rmt370@gmail.com, with the subject heading: **State DEI Committee**.

Click [here](#) to read the full DEI Committee report

SAVE THESE DATES!

NEW LWVUS DEI Training!

Incorporating the Four Core “DEI” Pillars

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 3–4 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 30, 3–4 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 4–5 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 28, 3–4 p.m.

Go to the [LWVUS Calendar](#) to sign up!

Local League Support

Marjorie McIntosh, 4th Vice President/ Local League Support

As summer comes to a close, some of us are looking forward to cooler temperatures. I find the change of seasons to be a welcome burst of color and love sweaters!

Education is and always has been the bedrock of our organization and we are exceptional at reaching out to our families, neighbors and friends to provide accurate and trusted information in a variety of creative ways. The Local League Support Committee looks forward to the quarterly regional meetings and reading all about the local efforts from our League friends and we often share ideas across leagues and replicate projects.

Anyone in any of the NYS local leagues is welcome to contact their regional facilitator, Kathleen Stein, Judie Gorenstein, Jane Colvin, Dare Thompson or Mary Croxton or can reach out to me, Margie McIntosh at cattarauguslww@gmail.com with any questions, concerns, or if you are extremely excited about a local project or event and just can't wait to share! We will do our best to listen, suggest solutions and be excited with you.

We hope you have all found some time to take a deep breath and enjoy some summer fun with friends and family. This may be the calm before the storm of election season - but we will be ready!

Transformation

Patty MacLeish, Director

In February 2025—eighteen months ago—the new LWV membership system went live! In the next few months, members who in the past would have renewed in January will be receiving renewal notices under the new system. I hope navigating the portal now comes easily to those who use it. What I'd like to do now is update you on what membership will be focusing on going forward.

- In September LWVUS Membership will publish a “Membership Toolkit.” All League leaders who focus on membership issues should find it helpful. Let me know what you think.
- New members who do not fill out the interest list when joining will be contacted again and nudged to respond. We hope this will give local Leagues a better idea of members' interests.
- For those of you in leadership roles, the [Administrators' Guide](#) is now on the Membership portal itself and easily accessed there. As a member, you may find that using the guide's search function will help you with most problems that come up.

I hope those of you who are new to the role of treasurer or membership know that I am here to help, if you do have a problem; email me at transformation@lwwny.org. All questions and comments are welcomed. One member's recent question about Life membership will bring about a change in how a member's portal page is set up.

Click [here](#) to read the full Transformation Committee report.

Updates from the State League



LWVNYS Welcome Brochure

As we welcome in new members to our organization every day, it is important that they are well informed on how the League works on each level.

LWVNYS has updated our NYS Welcome Brochure for our New Members to have a complete guide on how the League is organized and how members can participate. Here you may find a useable brochure to distribute to new members.

A Quick Report from the NYS Election Commissioners Association Conference

Last week, we attended the New York State Election Commissioners Association Conference and spoke with Commissioners across the state about our work and their biggest concerns in the lead up to the November election. Commissioners are most worried about voter education and confusing messaging/news that is making it difficult for voters to know their rights before they head to the polls. See below for a list of resources from LWVNYS to help get the word out. Check out our social media platforms on Instagram and Facebook @lwvny for digital posts!

LWV NYS Election Handouts for Voters

We'd like to boost the following materials available on the LWVNYS website as helpful tools for voters.

- First Vote: [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Your Right to Vote: [Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- Your Right to Vote: [College Students](#)
- Your Right to Vote: [Individuals Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- Your Right to Vote: [Individuals with Criminal Convictions](#)
- Voter Guide Part I: [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Election Security: [Why NYS elections are safe and secure](#)
- Election Security: [What happens to your ballot?](#)

VAN Training: Scriptwriting for Door-to-Door Canvassing

On August 5 our LWVNYS VAN Chair, Monica Ferguson hosted the second part to our 2-part VAN/ GetThru training session on how to develop and use scripts in MiniVAN for successful face-to-face voter engagement. Thank you to all who attended!

If you missed "Part I: Scriptwriting in VAN" where we included practical applications for phone banks, click [here](#) to view all materials and if you have any questions you can reach Monica at lwvny.van@gmail.com.

Important Election Dates

Here are election dates we should be aware of during this election season

- **National Voter Registration Day:** September 15, 2026
- **Disability Voting Rights Week:** September 14–18, 2026
- **Voter Education Week:** October 5–9, 2026
- **Election Hero Day:** October 20, 2026
- **Vote Early Day:** October 24, 2026 (also the last day to register to vote in New York State)
- **Early Voting Period:** October 24–November 1, 2026
- **Election Day:** November 3, 2026, polls open 6am–9pm

2026 Voter Guides

As election season rapidly approaches, it is our shared responsibility to ensure that voters are well informed and prepared to participate in the democratic process.

2026 Voter Guide, Part 1 is still available for purchase in English and Spanish. If your local League has not yet placed an order, please complete the [purchase request form](#) to reserve your copies. Part 2 of the 2026 Voter Guide will be available by the end of September, so stay tuned for additional information.

Make a Plan to Vote Cards

Check out our new make a plan to vote cards for the 2026 Election [here](#)! These will soon be available and sent out to local Leagues to be used as a flyer to get out the vote this November.

Observer Corps

Join us for our next Statewide Observer Corps meeting on **September 3rd**. These meetings will focus on helping you and your local League to grow your Observer Corps as well to share efforts and observations from across the State. Register [here](#).



VOTE 411



Election Protection Taskforce

Join the League and our partners to create an Election Protection Taskforce during this election season. We are recruiting volunteers across New York State in partnership with the NAACP and Common Cause to support nonpartisan election observation efforts. Volunteers will serve within their own counties, helping to observe polling locations during early voting and on Election Day. Thanks to all of you who joined us to kickoff this work on August 12th!

Volunteers will have multiple training opportunities and use a standardized observation checklist to document polling place conditions, such as accessibility, wait times, and other aspects of the voting experience. The observation process does not include reviewing or verifying vote counts or voter totals. **Trainings will be in September so keep an eye out for more info!**

Please fill out this google form to indicate your interest in volunteering.

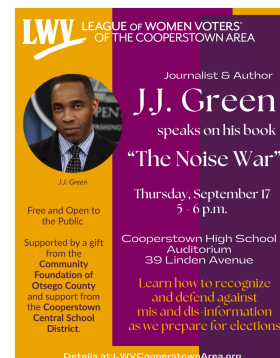
[Sign Up Here](#)

Local League Happenings

Check out these updates from our Local Leagues!

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area-

Journalist and Author J.J. Green will be visiting Cooperstown to talk about his book "The Noise War". He will speak about election mis- and dis-information and how to combat it. This will occur at Cooperstown Highschool on **Thursday, September 17**. For more information on J.J. Green and this event you can view the flier attached, or read the press release from the Cooperstown League [here](#).



The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island & North Fork- The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island & North Fork is hosting a virtual discussion with two election law experts, David Becker and Jerry Goldfeder, on **Wednesday, September 30, at 6:30 p.m.** Titled "Voting Rights and the 2026 Midterms:

Election Challenges, Threats and Integrity,” the forum will be led by our Government Committee chair Andrea Gabor, the Bloomberg Professor of Business Journalism at Baruch College CUNY.

Becker is the founder and executive director of the nonpartisan, non-profit Center for Election Innovation & Research (CEIR) based in Washington D.C. Goldfeder is the director of the Voting Rights and Democracy Project at Fordham Law School and also chair of the American Bar Association’s Election Law Committee.

All are invited to view the forum live that night at

www.youtube.com/c/SeaTVSouthampton and also starting the next day.

The League of Women Voters Cortland-

The Cortland League has had a busy summer, with tabling events throughout the community and postcards sent to 543 young people who recently turned or will soon turn 18. The League also launched its year-long **“Cortland Votes”** project, centered on the message **“Voting is People Power!”** The goal is to engage for-profit and nonprofit organizations across Cortland County in a community-wide effort to increase voter participation.

The campaign builds on a 2024 SUNY Cortland study showing that nearly four times as many 60–69-year-olds voted in local elections as 20–29-year-olds. The League is reaching out to local organizations, developing advertising, and providing “Lightning Tabling Kits” for members to use at events. The project will focus on this November’s elections while also laying the groundwork for next year, when all Cortland County legislators and City of Cortland councilmembers and the mayor will be up for election.



The League also continues its **Dinner & Discussion** events at the CNY Living History Center. Last month, local newspaper editor Amanda Caridi and columnist Frank Kelly led a well-attended discussion about the connection between local news and democracy. The League hopes to feature a speaker in October on barriers to voting and ways to overcome them. Members are also working on the local **VOTE411** guide; of the 23 local elections this year, only one is competitive, and the League hopes to host a forum for that race.



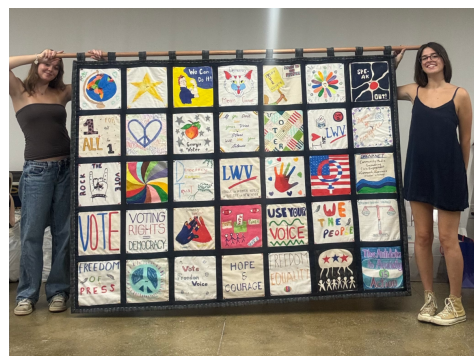
The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region-

On Mon Aug 10, the Dutchess County legislature issued a [proclamation](#) to the LWV Mid-Hudson Region commending us for our community service. Anna Shah (Dutchess County Legislator, Poughkeepsie), who initiated the effort, led the ceremony. She was joined at the podium by all of the women Dutchess County legislators, each of whom read a section of the proclamation aloud. When the

reading concluded, the LWVMHR representatives were invited up to the front by Yvette Valdes Smith (Legislature Chair) to receive the proclamation. It was a lovely moment and great for us to be so recognized. Our work matters. Click [here](#) to read more.

The League of Women Voters of the City of New York-

The League of Women Voters of the City of New York, led by summer intern Lillian Gale, hosted a “Civic Quilt Build” at Grace Church, where community members design personalized tiles exploring what democracy means to them. Upon completion, 35 unique contributions will be woven into a larger tapestry to be displayed at the NYC League’s headquarters. The project was featured on Bronx Net; you can see the coverage [here](#).



Under federal receivership, the Rikers Island Remediation Team submitted a Remediation Action Plan in July. The New York City League of Women Voters issued a response letter to the Remediation Manager highlighting four areas that could be more strongly addressed, including working with state and city agencies, programming with an emphasis on civic education and voting, health and safety repairs, and the inclusion of more voices of justice-impacted individuals. The full letter can be read [here](#).

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