

2023-2028 LWVWA/EF Strategic Plan

What problems were addressed by the 2017 LWVWA Strategic Plan?

A primary concern was keeping the board of directors and staff. The lobby team was not very connected to the board, and there was a general lack of knowledge among board members about the scope of the League. The mailing lists, contact lists and document storage was disorganized, complicated, and obscure. This made integration and building on initiatives difficult. It also made providing state-wide events cumbersome. The board needed to address how to manage during the COVID-19 emergency and the reluctance to meet in person after it was revoked. This situation required new procedures, and the transition to a new board necessitated a revision of the policies and procedures so people could understand how to work together. There was also a concern from some local Leagues that the state board might be intruding on the autonomy of local Leagues.

What is the current situation regarding members and the public?

Member Values:

Voter Rights, nonpartisanship, education/civic education

Within a year of joining, members believe that the local (84%) and state (71%) Leagues are nonpartisan in practice. Western Washington members are less sure that the state League is nonpartisan.

Member Impressions:

Members used these words to describe League: **Resource, Dedicated, Active, Influential, and Advocate**

Public Impressions:

A random sample of the Washington public impressions include **Knowledgeable, Active, Nonpartisan, and a group working towards Fairness and Equality on Voting and Civil Rights, Strong, and Liberal. Of the population under 40, fewer than half recognize or know the League brand. More than half of those over 40 know it.**

Members' Most Fulfilling League Experience:

Facilitating voting participation, informing voters, running or participation in event or training sessions, and civic course/education.

Members' Idea of the League's Best Future:

Includes **different ages, cultures, political party, and race; improved reputation/public recognition, expanded civics education program, cross-Leagues connections, and state guidance.** To achieve this, members believe **increased technology, public events, volunteer recruitment, and collaboration** with other likeminded organizations are useful strategies. This success will be characterized by an **increased and more active membership, greater diversity,** and more effective collaboration with other organizations and among Washington local Leagues.

The goal of the strategic plan is to make democracy work by implementing the following strategies:

Impacting LWVWA Members and the Public Regarding Democracy, Advocacy, and Engagement

Members believe civic education, voter services, and public policy are the best ways to have an impact. This varies, however based on age, where members live, how long they have been in the League, and whether or not they have been in a leadership position(s).

- Educate members and the public about civic education, voter service, advocacy, and League service as part of member orientation and ongoing local programs.
- Use a variety of communication channels to inform, educate, and engage the public.
- Educate and maximize local resources by producing state-wide events (including studies) for members, the public, and coalition members.
- Promote League positions and processes with members, other associations, and decision- makers.
- Deploy a Redistricting Strategy.
- Strengthen governmental accountability through tracking and sharing among members and the public local League Observer Corps activity.
- Develop and implement a democracy outreach program to educate and build membership. It should include multiple on-ramps to those under 40 ages including high school, trade, and college students with advocacy, voter service, and civic education portfolios. Expand engagement with diverse coalition members, to under-represented groups.

Networking Members, Supporting Local Leagues, Maintaining Coalitions and Allies

Members believe increased diversity of membership and group collaborations, and support of local League's leadership development and membership recruitment are the best strategies to Facilitate Local League Work. The primary motivations for keeping involved in the League include promoting an informed electorate, learning, and discussing issues and being a trusted source of information. Members thrive on events/education. Members are more likely to have joined because of a personal interaction (still true). People (2/3 of members) join when there is a life changing event: graduation, retirement, new city. More than half LWVWA members have less than 5 years in League, 26% were born in Washington, 92% have bachelor's degrees or higher). Many have diverse family members. Members say schedule conflicts, not feeling qualified, logistical obstacles, not enough knowledge about the activities, and not being asked are the main reasons for not participating in state League activities.

- Reinforce a welcoming, diverse, inclusive, equitable culture and the League's grassroots uniqueness. Use conventions, councils, and local practices so individual members and groups can express their concerns and interests and have them addressed. Reinforce League requirements as opposed to preferences.
- Encourage members to serve in different capacities through their years of membership, assuming some years members will be more active than others. Lead by sharing and teaching leadership and using leadership ladders.
- Network local leagues so similar committee chairs (team leads, etc.) and affinity groups learn from each other. Ensure local Leagues can share ideas and practices. Committees and teams should be used as leadership development as much as goal accomplishment. The task of groups is as important as the relationships within the group. Foster groups to share ideas to ensure relevant, effective action.

- Connect LWVWA with other state-wide groups, allies, and coalitions to act with diverse, equitable, and inclusive democratic practices. Encourage local engagement with underrepresented groups and sharing lessons learned.
- Support local Leagues through civic education grants, training, models, and training.
- Use coalitions to increase and demonstrate LWVWA DEI commitment, inform members of these relationships.
- Nurture healthy relationships with coalitions and review the relationship regularly for effectiveness. Acknowledge LWVWA is not always in the lead role, but offers expertise and volunteers as appropriate, based on the needs of coalition members or ally. Take advantage of coalition expertise on behalf of League members.

Building Capacity by Training Members for Leadership, Understanding Issues, Using Appropriate Technology, and Engaging Youth

- Update LWVWA/EF structure as needed, include definition of relationships with democracy groups and WA Association of Non-profits, Washington Coalition for Open Government, Fix Democracy First, and Executive Branch of state government.
- Address need for staff including technology support, development and fundraising, and democracy outreach, through new hires, contract support, and other mechanisms.
- Acknowledge LWVWA/LWVWAEF is a working board.