

# 2025 Member Handbook

## Welcome

League of Women Voters Naperville is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government, and works to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government. The League works to influence public policy through citizen education and advocacy.



**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

(630) 277-9582 [www.lwvnaperville.org](http://www.lwvnaperville.org)

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Instagram

The League adheres to [League of Women Voters of Illinois](http://www.lwvil.org/) (<http://www.lwvil.org/>) and [League of Women Voters of the US](http://www.lwv.org/) (<http://www.lwv.org/>) policy positions.

# Now That You Have Joined – What Next?

We hope that you will use your membership as a chance to become more involved in your community and to meet others who share your interests and concerns. Some of our members just want to stay informed and join us at our variety of events.

**Some members are ready to get more involved.**

## Our Activities and How You Can Get Involved

Join us for our Monthly Ideas Forum Meetings on the second Wednesday of most months. We'll have updates on activities and generally a speaker of local interest. Currently, the meetings will be held by Zoom.

We have a variety of activities that rely on volunteers' ongoing commitment. We have other one-time opportunities that might fit your schedule better. Please read through the opportunities below to see which might be a good fit for your skills, interests, and time availability.

### Voter Service

#### What Is Voter Service?

The Voter Service Committee coordinates activities that are designed to provide voters with unbiased, factual information that can be used as a basis for understanding the election process. These activities include conducting candidate forums and updating Vote411.org for each election cycle, birthday boxes for students turning age 18 and thereby eligible for voter registration, get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts, and other events that might present themselves as opportunities to support our Voter Service mission.

### Voter Registration



**Susan Marshall, Voter Outreach Director**

[lwvnaperville.voterservice3@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice3@gmail.com)

Many of our members are deputy registrars as voter registration is a key component of our mission. Typically we hold registration events throughout the

year, and you'll have many opportunities to help out. Contact our Voter Outreach Director to learn how easy it is to become a deputy registrar and fulfill a key part of our mission. Once you are trained, this ongoing effort typically requires a few hours a couple of times a year based on your availability.

## National Voter Registration Day

League of Women Voters of Naperville is a partner in [National Voter Registration Day](#), a nonpartisan civic holiday celebrating our democracy. According to the National Voter Registration Day website, “Since its kickoff in 2012, the holiday and its team of thousands of Partners have worked to get over 6 million Americans registered to vote in time for their next trip to the ballot box.”

National Voter Registration Day is typically celebrated in September. The day has been endorsed by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED), the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), and the National Association of Election Officials (The Election Center). For more information about how you can help, please contact our Voter Outreach Director.

## Birthday Boxes



**Annette Smith**

[prspt@aol.com](mailto:prspt@aol.com)

Birthday boxes are distributed to high school students turning age 18 in hopes of turning them into lifelong voters. The boxes contain important information about how to register, the importance of voting, and how to vote if the student goes away to college or university. They also contain handwritten notes wishing the student a “happy birthday.” Volunteers are needed throughout the year to write notes, assemble the boxes, deliver and distribute the boxes to the schools in Districts 203 and 204, review and generate new ideas for the boxes, and revamp the contents as needed. This ongoing effort involves 2-4 hours of volunteer work 3 or 4 times per year. Interested members can contact Annette Smith at [prspt@aol.com](mailto:prspt@aol.com)

## VOTE411



**Gail Ryan, Voter Service Director, Vote411 and High School Educational Programs**

[lwvnaperville.voterservice2@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice2@gmail.com)

VOTE411.org is a nonpartisan online voter guide brought to you by The League of Women Voters Education Fund. It allows voters, based on their address, to see what’s on their ballot, check their voter registration, and discover upcoming candidate forums in their area. Our Vote411 team enters local information, contacts candidates, verifies information, works with the website administrator, and more. In recent years, the League has partnered with local high schools to educate students about the voting process. Please contact [lwvnaperville.voterservice2@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice2@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping. Much of this work can be done from home at your convenience.

## Candidate Forums



**Anne Mathews, Voter Service Director**

[lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com)

Our forums have been online utilizing Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube. This virtual delivery model allows us to reach numerous community members at their convenience. Following our mission of being nonpartisan:

- We only use league-trained moderators from outside of the district
- League adheres to all LWVUS and Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulations; we do not hold ‘empty chair’ forums
- All named candidates on the ballot are invited
- Each candidate has equal time for statements and to answer identical questions

Candidate forums are held during appropriate election cycles. Forums require contacting candidates, writing unbiased questions, creating publicity, setting up the technical side of a forum, scheduling moderators, training timers, and more. If you’d like to help out with forums and other candidate events, please contact our Voter Service Director at [lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com).

## Poll Watching

Poll watching during early voting, on election day, during the counting of mail-in ballots, and election count verification helps to make sure voters’ rights are protected. They cannot interfere in disputes but can call in assistance. Some issues poll watchers can bring to the attention of election judges and county election officials include:

- Electioneering – i.e. active campaigning and solicitation of votes by a candidate, candidates, or party workers in the polling place or within the 100-foot campaign-free zone of the polling place
- Interfering with the voting process
- Voters who try to leave the polling place with a ballot
- Excessive law enforcement presence (**Voter Suppression**)
- Impersonating a registered voter
- Handing out cash or payments for votes
- Anyone tampering with voting equipment
- Anyone Illegally casting votes
- Harassment of the election judges or Harassing the voters

LWVN’s Voter Service team provides required training and credentials to interested members. If interested, please contact the Voter Service Director at [lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com).

## Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

Get-out-the-vote activities typically occur around election time and can include writing postcards, drafting ads for airplay on local college radio stations, and organizing student Mock Elections with the help of County Election Divisions. Voter Service coordinates these efforts and invites to members to participate. Please contact the Voter Service Director at [lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com) for more information.

## Issues and Advocacy Committee



**Eileen Rico, Issues and Advocacy Director**

[lwvnaperville.advocacy@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.advocacy@gmail.com)

The Advocacy Committee exists to promote awareness and action on League positions and issues. This is achieved in numerous ways. When applicable, action alerts from national, state, and local Leagues are shared by email, published on our website and/or in the monthly *Voter* newsletter. An advocacy component on relevant topic issues and/or current events is featured at every LWVIL-sponsored Lobby Day in Springfield, IL. In addition, we actively collaborate with the League committees to educate them on the legislative process, identifying effective ways in which to advocate, and developing targeted messaging skills.



## Defend Democracy Drop-In (DDDI)

**Barbara Sullivan, Defend Democracy Drop-In Director**

[lwvnaperville.advocacyassist@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.advocacyassist@gmail.com)

Defend Democracy Drop-Ins (DDDI) are held most months to provide an opportunity for members and their guests to:

- Learn about the pro-democracy issues supported by the League of Women Voters
- Take action on issues while simultaneously learning effective advocacy and lobbying skills
- Take action empowering voters and encouraging them to exercise their vote

Contact the Issues and Advocacy Director at [lwvnaperville.advocacy@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.advocacy@gmail.com) with questions and look for DDDI invitations in your email.

## Environmental Issues

Environmental issues are one of our ongoing areas of focus. League of Women Voters of Naperville has a long history of advocating for local environmental issues; from founding curbside recycling in Naperville, to working for cleanup of lead shot at Sportsman's Park, to advocating for a sustainable energy source that will free Naperville from its dependency on coal power.

## Event Programing

**Julie Kulak, Events Director**

[lwnnaperville.eventschair@gmail.com](mailto:lwnnaperville.eventschair@gmail.com)

Volunteers help plan and produce monthly programs (the Monthly Ideas Forum meeting mentioned above) that line up with timely events and reflect LWN annual program concerns, e.g. Climate Emergency. If you'd like to help out with our monthly programs, please contact our Events Director at [lwnnaperville.eventschair@gmail.com](mailto:lwnnaperville.eventschair@gmail.com).

## Book Group



**Rachel Thomas**

[redsparrow16@hotmail.com](mailto:redsparrow16@hotmail.com)

Book Group holds Zoom discussions on the third Friday of each month at 12:30 pm *and* the following Tuesday at 7 pm, with both

groups discussing the same book. The schedule of dates and books to be read for the year are listed at [www.lwnnaperville.org/events/](http://www.lwnnaperville.org/events/). Participating in Book Group is a great way to read and discuss topical non-fiction and also to become familiar with the LWN Naperville and some of its members. We ask you to register for the discussions at the League [website](http://www.lwnnaperville.org) or in the *Voter*, the monthly email newsletter. There is no obligation to either be a LWN member or to attend each month. Come when time and interest allow. For more information, contact Rachel at [redsparrow16@hotmail.com](mailto:redsparrow16@hotmail.com).

## Social Media



**Social Media Director, Allison Casey**

[lwnnaperville.socialmedia@gmail.com](mailto:lwnnaperville.socialmedia@gmail.com)

Social Media includes all types of electronic communication, including the website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Threads. Volunteers with interest and expertise in any of these areas are welcome. Volunteers in this position also often help with print media needs.

## Membership

Membership, Staci Beck

[lwvnaperville.membership@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.membership@gmail.com)

The Membership team reaches out to new members to welcome them to the League, give them information about involvement opportunities, and provide information about committees and events. Membership also conducts regular and intentional outreach to current and potential members.

## The Voter Newsletter



Kay Severinsen, Newsletter Director

[lwvnaperville.thevoter@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.thevoter@gmail.com)

The League newsletter, *The Voter*, goes out monthly via Mail Chimp. Individuals submit material and *The Voter* editor assembles the material, designs, completes, and schedules the newsletter. Contact the Newsletter Director at [lwvnaperville.thevoter@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnaperville.thevoter@gmail.com) with comments, questions or to volunteer.



# League Essentials

## League Calendar Guideline

January	Annual Program Planning process begins
February	Program Planning meeting; State Issues Briefing, an LWVIL event
March	Legislator Interviews
April	Lobby Day in Springfield
April/May	Candidate forums as needed
May/June	Annual meeting, ChapterSpot sends out membership renewal notices
June	Convention (state/national alternate years)
July	League year begins
June/July	New board orientation
September	Candidate forums - based on election cycle

## Meet the Board

President	<b>Julie Niles</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.president@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.president@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	<b>Donna Cheesebrough</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.vicepresident@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.vicepresident@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	<b>Bill Vernon</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.treasurer@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.treasurer@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	<b>Linda Mabee</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.secretary@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.secretary@gmail.com</a>
Issues and Advocacy	<b>Eileen Rico</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.advocacy@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.advocacy@gmail.com</a>
Defend Democracy Drop In	<b>Barbara Sullivan</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.advocacyassist@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.advocacyassist@gmail.com</a>
Membership Director	<b>Staci Beck</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.membership@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.membership@gmail.com</a>
Voter Service Director	<b>Anne Mathews</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.voterservice@gmail.com</a>
VOTE411 Director	<b>Gail Ryan</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice2@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.voterservice2@gmail.com</a>
Voter Outreach Director	<b>Susan Marshall</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.voterservice3@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.voterservice3@gmail.com</a>
Events	<b>Julie Kulak</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.eventschair@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.eventschair@gmail.com</a>
Social Media/Website	<b>Allison Casey</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.socialmedia@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.socialmedia@gmail.com</a>
Director At Large	Annual opening to person interested in learning about board operations	

### Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee Chair	<b>Marcia Patterson</b>	<a href="mailto:lwvnaperville.nominating.chair@gmail.com">lwvnaperville.nominating.chair@gmail.com</a>
Nominating Committee	<b>Shirley DeCorte</b>	<a href="mailto:sdecorte1@gmail.com">sdecorte1@gmail.com</a>



## Board Meetings

Meetings are open to all members. Contact the Board President for more information at [lvwnaperville.president@gmail.com](mailto:lvwnaperville.president@gmail.com).

## Important League Information

- The League is nonpartisan.
- The League of Women Voters of Naperville was founded in 1956. LWVUS was founded in 1920, just prior to the passage of the 19th Amendment. League of Women Voters is the direct modern descendant of the National American Women's Suffrage Association which fought for and won the right for women to vote.
- **Mission:** Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.
- League is a grassroots organization. The League is not a *top-down* organization.
- We do not endorse or oppose political parties or candidates for public office. Ever.
- We partner with other nonpartisan organizations.
- The League takes action on issues where we have adopted a position arrived at by study and consensus.
- Membership is open to men (since 1974) and anyone 16 or older.
- Archives are maintained at North Central College.

## LWV Naperville Program for 2025-26

The League program is the education and advocacy platform that we adopt to move our mission forward.

League principles and positions on public policy issues are included in the LWVUS [Impact on Issues](#).

### Final Approved Program Plan 2025-26

#### 1. Organize and implement responses to issues on local, state, and national levels through local actions as appropriate

Responses include, but are not limited to:

- Letters to the editor
- Speaking to city council
- Witness slips
- Rallies
- Lobby Day, lobbying legislators
- Defend democracy drop-ins

#### 2. Advocate for issues that are important to Naperville, DuPage County, and Will County

- Educate and encourage the public to engage in the actions of city government
- Organize and implement responses to local city and county developments as appropriate
  - alone or in partnership with other non-partisan organizations (*includes advocacy for the DuPage Heritage Gallery*)

#### 3. Advocate for Naperville energy concerns and other environmental issues

- Educate voters about the source of their electricity

- Support greater transparency and accountability from IMEA (Illinois Municipal Electric Agency) and IMUA (Illinois Municipal Utility Agency)
  - Support good governance and transparency from the city on energy concerns
  - Monitor city and state legislation as it affects Naperville
  - Monitor other environmental concerns as needed
- 4. Support election integrity and ballot access in Will and DuPage Counties**
- Continue to monitor and shed light on the election processes of DuPage County and Will County to support free and fair elections
  - Continue to observe elections and ballot processing, e.g., poll-watching
- 5. Engage in studies that affect Naperville (vote to investigate with a timeline attached)**
- Ranked Choice Voting (near completion)
  - Gun Violence Prevention
  - Federal Judiciary

## League of Women Voters of Illinois Recommended Program for 2025-27

Every two years, the 41 local Leagues that comprise League of Women Voters of Illinois make recommendations on **official LWVIL positions** ahead of the biennial convention. Details are provided in [Where We Stand 2023-25](#). LWV Naperville supports the proposed program focus of LWVIL as outlined in Where We Stand 2023-253. This positioning document covers the following issues for the state of Illinois:

Every two years, the 44 Leagues that comprise the League of Women Voters of Illinois make recommendations on the official LWVIL Program ahead of the biennial convention. This year, LWVIL is asking local Leagues to provide input on the proposed LWVIL Program.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois' Program is comprised of two parts:

- Part 1 – **LWVIL Principles and Positions as documented in [Where We Stand](#)**. *Where We Stand* accumulates all past studies and approved changes to the positions on which our advocacy and lobbying efforts are based.
- Part 2 – **LWVIL Program Pillars**, which describe the positions that will be the focus area of LWVIL for the next two years while taking advantage of other opportunities to create social change with high impact legislation.
  - Pillar #1: Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy (examples: voting rights, civil rights, good government, election process)
  - Pillar #2: Promoting Equity of Opportunity (examples: educational funding, healthcare including reproductive rights, ERA, employment)
  - Pillar #3: High Impact Legislation (examples: environment, community safety, housing)

**Following is a summary of the proposed LWVIL program priorities:**

**DEFEND DEMOCRACY**

- Ensure citizen's rights to vote
- Protect Civil Rights (free speech, press, assembly)
- Promote government transparency and accountability (includes ethics reforms, open meetings, privatization of common good services)
- Promote representative government by the people, and one person, one vote (includes fair legislative districts, campaign finance reforms, electoral college)

**EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

- Promote fairness and equitable access (includes criminal justice, environmental justice, public education, healthcare, employment and basic needs)
- Promote non-discrimination with equal application of rights and laws (includes women's rights/ERA, reproductive freedom, immigration, LGBTQ discrimination, racism)

**HIGH-IMPACT LEGISLATION, EMERGING ISSUES, AND LITIGATION**

- Support legislation that is judged, after board vote, to be of sufficient impact on society or quality of life that it warrants League support. (For example, opposing a bill that allows selling off and destroying forest preserves.)
- Oppose a bill on a matter that we did not anticipate at the time our priorities were established. (Examples might include: Introduction of a bill that supports teaching the bible in Illinois schools; Introduction of a bill that eliminates Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) requirements.
- Defend (with litigation) current laws that are consistent with our positions. (Examples might include: Sanctuary Cities for the unborn; failures of government to enforce laws against red-lining or minimum wage.)

**League of Women Voters of Illinois Summary of Proposed 2025-2027 Program Priorities Explained**

Why is LWVIL selecting these program items for 2025-2027?

- Defending Democracy is the core of LWV's stated mission.
- Equity of Opportunity is a core component of LWV's stated vision.

## League of Women Voters US Program for 2024-2026

For informational purposes, following are the [LWVUS priorities](#) :

- LWV Naperville supports the proposed program focus of the US League, continuing the Campaign for Making Democracy Work® (which includes Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Redistricting, Money in Politics, and Direct Election of the President).
- LWV Naperville also supports adding the climate change threat to the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®.
- The proposed rationale is as follows: *Climate change threatens our democracy. Climate change is fueling extreme weather -- heat, wildfires, flooding, drought causing food shortages, creating refugees, threatening the biosphere, and impacting our economy, health, and national security. LWV must push harder for immediate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to preserve civilization.*

## Notable League of Women Voters of Naperville members

League of Women Voters of Naperville values and learns from the experience of our members.

**Becky Simon:** Becky is LWVIL president for the 2023-2025 term. She is a former president and Issues and Advocacy Director for the Naperville League.

**Bev Parker:** Bev is a former LWV Naperville Board member and a 50-year member of The League.

**Judy Brodhead:** Judy was a member of Naperville City Council and a professor at North Central College.

**Mary Ellen Barry:** Mary Ellen is a League member, past president of LWVIL, and past member of the Board of Directors of LWVUS, and a 50-year member.

**Barb Billardello:** Barb is a 50-year member of The League.

**Peg Price:** The late mayor of Naperville was our city's first and so far only female mayor. Peg was also a League member who lived true to the League's mission by being active in civic affairs.

## How The League of Women Voters Is Organized

- LWV Naperville is both a 501(c)3 for voter service and a 501(c)4 for issues advocacy and education.
  - LWV Naperville acts as a 501(c)3 when we conduct voter education, such as candidate forums and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts. Our funds for this are held by LWVIL in an Education Fund.
  - LWV Naperville acts as a 501(c)4 when we advocate for issues where we have a position, such as the Equal Rights Amendment and the assault weapons ban.
- League of Women Voters has organizations at the national, state, and local levels. Your League of Women Voters of Naperville membership also makes you a member of League of Women Voters of Illinois and League of Women Voters of the U.S. Local Leagues work on local issues and concerns.
- DuPage Area Leagues: League of Women Voters of Naperville works together with DuPage Area Leagues on areas of common interest. Leaders meet monthly. Aurora Area, Central Kane County, Downers Grove-Woodridge-Lisle, Elmhurst, Glen Ellyn, Naperville, Roselle-Bloomingtondale, and Wheaton.

- ILO memberships: Inter-League Organizations are formal League entities. Naperville belongs to the League of Women Voters of the Upper Mississippi River Region (LWVUMRR) <https://www.lwvumrr.org> and League of Women Voters of the Lake Michigan Region (LWVLMR) <https://www.lwvlmr.org>.
- LWV Naperville Annual Meeting: Every year in late May or early June, LWV Naperville holds an annual meeting to elect new officers and amend bylaws. These meetings are open to all members.
- LWVIL and LWVUS hold biannual conventions in alternating years. LWVUS conventions will be held in even-numbered years. LWVIL conventions are held in odd-numbered years.

## **The League of Women Voters Bylaws and Policies**

Please go to our website at [lwvnaperville.org](http://lwvnaperville.org) for our bylaws and other policies.