January is also the time for Leaguers thoughts to shift towards Program Planning for LWV US and local Leagues.

From LWV US:

Dear League Leader:

In the coming months, state and local Leagues and ILOs (Inter-League Organizations) across the nation will have the opportunity to offer program planning input for the 2018-2020 biennium. The program planning process is one of the important ways we focus our grassroots work to align the organization on our issue priorities and our mission. See LWVUS Bylaws, Article XII, Principles and Program, for requirements for the program planning and adoption process. Program planning will culminate with adoption of a program of education and action at Convention 2018 in Chicago, IL.

When the LWVUS Board met in October of 2017 we agreed that our mission focused work must continue, which is why we are recommending the Leagues continue the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®. Our work to champion voting rights is more important now than ever. At the local, state and federal level, League leadership on voter protection and mobilization, election reform, campaign finance/money in politics and redistricting is at the heart of the League’s mission and our future.

At the same time, the League of Women Voters is undertaking a transformational journey to strengthen our brand and establish a continuum to engage new and future activists around the League’s core issues. As we head into our 100th anniversary, we need to grow our mission impact to support our work and make a lasting impact on our democracy.

We are asking Leagues across the country to consider seizing the opportunity to meet this critical challenge by continuing to focus our programmatic efforts around the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®. To that end, we suggest that, during your program planning efforts, you not add new national studies or reviews to the agenda for the 2018-2020 biennium.

Program Planning is being coordinated by Karen Nicholson and the Education and Advocacy Committee of the LWVUS Board. Should you have questions about program planning and the process, you may email Karen at knicholson@lwv.org.

Program Planning is an essential League tool for focusing and prioritizing our work and insuring that League resources, human and financial, from our grassroots volunteers to our professional staff, are engaged where they have the most impact. The deadline for submitting Program Planning Report forms is March 1, 2018. All forms must be submitted electronically.

I invite you to review the Leaders Guide to LWVUS Program Planning 2018-2020. This guide provides information about the program planning process, reports on our activity in voting rights, election reform, campaign finance/money in politics and redistricting in the current biennium, and presents our recommendation for education and action in the next two years.

Thank you for participating in this very important process.

In League,

Chris Carson
President

Program Planning 2018-2020 Leaders' Guide

In this Issue:
- Program Planning: Message from LWVUS President, Chris Carson
- Program Planning: The basics of Program Planning adapted from Sherry Zachry's article in the LWV Fairfax newsletter. Used with permission)
- Letter from the President
“League Program” has a different meaning from deciding who will be the speaker for an event or which monthly informational topic to discuss. League Program is defined as: the process by which positions are adopted (selecting an issue - program planning, studying the issue, reaching consensus / concurrence, formulating the position) and adopting a program (which includes existing positions that are re-adopted) at a Convention or Annual Meeting. It is that adopted “program” which will guide the respective League’s focus for the next biennium. The biennial League Program includes both study and action and sometimes can be composed entirely of advocacy and lobbying (action) on a specific League’s positions.”

“The League’s adopted positions are used to influence public policy (advocacy and lobbying) at all levels of government—national, regional, state and local. LWVUS says: “League advocacy is based on member study and agreement on selected issues and involves concerted efforts to achieve public policies consistent with League positions. League lobbying promotes or opposes specific pieces of legislation.” (From LEAGUE BASICS: 10. Advocacy)”

When considering items to propose, in addition to the discussion questions, be guided by the following: Is there widespread member interest? Is this a timely issue? Is government action the most effective way to address the problem? Are there members willing to work on the issue? The Discussion Questions for this month, posted at the end of this article, consist of things to consider when suggesting ideas.”

Be sure to check with your local League for meetings concerning Program Planning at national and local levels. Take some time to review your local League Positions as well as these resources from LWV US:


### From the President

_Sue Lewis_

**January** – a time for looking back and looking forward (see Janus, the Roman God).

**Looking Back**, we had a very successful Pre-Session Roundtable on Dec. 6 – the new venue accommodated over 90 interested leaguers and coalition partners, with new and familiar faces. You’ll find a good write-up of the day on our website, contributed by a member of the Fredericksburg Area League (LWVFRA). At our meeting prior to the event, the board approved recommending to LWVUS that they be recognized as moving from a MAL Unit to a full league. Welcome!

Also in December, the November election continued to make headlines, with four recounts ordered, and as of this writing, no definitive answer as to how the House of Delegates will be governed. Our Legislative Directory will have many changes, and it looks like it will be a very last-minute endeavor.

**Looking Forward**, we are finalizing plans for our weekly Women’s Legislative Roundtables (WLRT’s); most of them will be at the Credit Union Home Building where we had the Pre-Session. We’ll have to see how easy it is going to be to get the legislators to leave the Pocahontas building and walk two blocks to our space. We may be relying more on ourselves and coalition partners for updates on legislation.

The date for League Day is set for February 7, and AAUW will be joining us for lunch at the Berkeley Hotel; our usual lunch spot, the Tobacco Company, has had a fire and is no longer in use. Keep your eyes open for registration information for that. There will be extra rooms set aside at the Berkeley Hotel for those who want to come in the day before due to travel concerns. Information on that will be included.

The Legislative Coordinators are busy making plans for coverage of committees and sub-committees by their team of “observers”. If you have one day a week that you could spend at the General Assembly, they will be glad to give you an assignment!

This Voter Express has lots of program information – I hope your local leagues will participate in the LWVUS Program Planning before the March 1 deadline.

I hope everyone had had a happy holiday season! Get ready for the New Year!

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### WLRT Schedule

- January 17th
- January 24th
- January 31st
- February 7th, League Day
- February 14th
- February 21st
- February 28th