



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LA PLATA COUNTY, COLORADO

www.lwvlaplata.org

Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

LWV LA PLATA COUNTY MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

2021 – 2022

The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt on February 14, 1920 to support women's right to vote

Who are we?

LWV of La Plata County

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County is a nonprofit, non-partisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government; works to increase understanding of major public policy issues; and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We believe that every citizen should be protected in their right to vote.

Our members, women and men ages 16 and up, volunteer their time year-round to achieve our goals, through voter education, services, and lobbying for our policy positions and values. We never endorse, support or oppose any political party or candidate but we advocate for public policy based on our mission.

We maintain a secure website (hosted by Club Express) www.lwvlaplata.org. Members can renew and new members can join on-line.

Information to the public is also disseminated through our social media accounts on Facebook www.facebook.com/lwvlaplata.org/ and Twitter [@lwvlaplata](https://twitter.com/lwvlaplata).

LWV La Plata is a non-profit 501C3 organization.

National League of Women Voters

We are a member of the national League of Women Voters (LWVUS), based in Washington, D.C. LWVUS was formed when women finally gained the right to vote in 1920. Throughout the League's nearly 100-year history and working in all states, the League focus has been to expand participation and give a voice to all Americans. **It never endorses, supports or opposes any political candidate or political party.** However, LWVUS is a political organization that uses its substantial influence and legal capacities to advocate for policy positions that are central to our mission. Website: www.lwv.org

State League of Women Voters of Colorado



We are also a member of the state League of Women Voters of Colorado (LWVCO). LWVCO supports member Leagues throughout the state, both financially through grants, and with resources such as the Ballot Issues Pamphlet. LWVCO advocates for state issues based on state League positions and Values with an active Legislative Action Committee, which consists of trained volunteer lobbyists who work to influence the Colorado General Assembly on selected bills based on League positions and values. Website www.lwvcolorado.org

Vision Statement

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone who subscribes to the purpose and policies of the League. Voting members must be at least 16 years old. More than 150,000 members and supporters of the League participate in its activities in every state, and in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. Associate Memberships are available to individuals under the age of 16.

Non-Discrimination

The League seeks to reflect the diversity of the broader community. There are no barriers to participation in any activity on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status, military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, socioeconomic state, or citizenship.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

LWV La Plata is an organization fully committed to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy. We believe that working for diversity, equity and inclusion is rooted in justice for all.

Nonpartisanship

The League never supports or opposes candidates, factions, or political parties. However, the League may act in support of, or in opposition to, selected governmental issues which it has studied. League members, as individuals, are encouraged to be active participants in politics. The League's nonpartisanship policy is fundamental to its trusted reputation. All members should understand the nonpartisanship policy of their local League.

What does this mean for our members?

Individual League members are encouraged to be politically active. However, when they participate in partisan activities, they may not identify themselves as League members. A



League will be a strong and effective political force to the degree that it can deal with and accept controversy and live with uncertainty. Keep in mind that conflict of interest may arise between a “board” member’s paid employment and her or his role in the League. No member (including officers) may speak for the League unless they have first obtained review and approval by a majority of Administrative Team of the proposed statement. Certain individuals who have high public visibility as officers or leaders of the League (Key Members) are restricted from partisan activity. Many of our members are public figures and elected officials and we encourage members to partake in the political process, keeping in mind the above caveats.

What Does the League Do?

Voter Education

Our mission is to ensure that all citizens are informed about the voting process and their right to vote. We do this by:

- Registering Citizens to vote
- Presenting information on all sides of issues in candidate and ballot issue forums, educational events, and distributing ballot issue pamphlets
- Encouraging participation in government
- Publishing candidate and election guides in print and online. VOTE 411.org is a one-stop online election guide developed by the League

Advocacy

The league advocates for public policy on issues that are central to our mission, and that we have studied and reached consensus. These issues can be national, state or local.

A local LWV cannot take a position on an issue or advocate for or against an issue without the League first having studied that issue at the local, state or national level. All local LWVs can use positions at the state and national level to support advocacy on local topics.

Topics for local study are proposed at a program planning meeting, or to the board, in writing, at any time up until the board meeting prior to 30 days before the annual meeting, usually held in May or early June.

Proposed topics include a short (written) summary of the proposed study, including its scope. Members may submit any local issue that can be impacted by La Plata County voters that members feel the LWV needs to be able to weigh in on. The LWV may or may not already have a position relating to the topic or the member may feel the current position needs updating. Once that position is approved, the League provides education to the public.



The Board of Directors is responsible for planning and directing action. The League and members (as individuals) take action on adopted League positions by:

- Sponsoring forums and informational events for members and the public
- Encouraging and facilitating Voter Registration
- Supporting or opposing legislation - emails provide information for Calls to Action
- Lobbying (State and National Leagues) including testifying in public hearings
- Sharing information through social media, League websites and League publications such as the LWVCO *Legislative Letter*
- Bringing Judicial action as necessary

Our Positions

The Local, State, and National positions can be found on the League of Women Voters of La Plata County website under the Members menu and include wide-ranging topics of vital public importance such as voting rights, money in politics, health care, the environment and immigration.

Local Committees and Teams

Voter Services

The Voter Service Team is the most public face of LWV LPC. Its work is the bedrock of the League: Candidate forums, voter registration events, unbiased voter education, and Get Out The Vote campaigns. They also provide online unbiased candidate and ballot issues information at VOTE411.Org and at ballot issue education presentations. The work we do in voter service and voter education is evidence of how vital the League is.

Advocacy

Advocacy subcommittees are created depending on the issues endorsed by the membership during the annual Impact on Issues meeting held in February.

Communications and Technology Team

The Technology Team is responsible for the website, social media, and virtual event management. The Webmaster is responsible for keeping the website up-to-date on a frequent basis with Voter Information, Advocacy alerts and other news as appropriate. This team is also responsible for posting items to Facebook and Twitter to encourage public participation, and for monitoring comments to ensure that our guidelines are met. The team is responsible for managing and hosting virtual events through our Zoom account, and for managing our Vimeo account.

Membership Team

This team is responsible for monitoring member renewals and joins and providing monthly data to the BoD; for maintaining the membership databases at local and national levels; emailing information to members; providing dues and donation updates to the treasurer; and for



providing and monitoring volunteer opportunities using the League website. They also coordinate emailings to members and to the public using the website emailing feature.

All Member Meetings

Back to League

These meetings are generally held in the month of September. During this meeting we feature a guest speaker, outline our upcoming activities, and have some social time with our members.

Impact on Issues Meeting

These meetings are generally held in the month of February to review current issues and programs, to determine if there are any issues members would like to study during the upcoming year, and to decide upon our advocacy teams.

Annual Meeting

Held towards the end of our fiscal year (May or June) during which any changes to bylaws are presented to the membership for approval, as well as the proposed annual budget and slate of officers.

Conventions

National Convention: The membership or the Board of Directors, at a meeting before the date on which the names of the delegates must be sent to the National office, shall select delegates to that convention in the number allotted to the League of Women Voters of LaPlata County, under the provisions of the Bylaws of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

State Convention: The membership or the Board of Directors, at a meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the State Office, shall select delegates to that convention in the number allotted to the League of Women Voters of the LaPlata County, under the provisions of the Bylaws of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Financial Administration

Fiscal Year: The Fiscal Year of the League of Women Voters of LaPlata County shall commence on the first day of July each year.

Dues: Annual Dues shall be in accordance with the amount established at the Annual Membership Meeting. Membership expiration dates for new members who join after the 2021 Annual Meeting will be based on their join dates. Membership expiration dates for all League members who joined prior to the 2021 annual meeting will be based on their renewal dates. Members who fail to pay dues one month following their renewal date will be dropped from the active roster. A change in the amount of dues may be recommended by the Board of Directors, submitted to all members at least two weeks before the annual meeting and



approved by a two thirds vote of those voting members present and voting at the annual meeting. The LWV LPC shall make a national Per Member Payment (PMP) in the amount to be determined by the LWVUS and a Per Member Payment to the state League to be determined by the LWV of Colorado.

Budget: A budget for the ensuing year shall be submitted by the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting for adoption. The budget shall include support for the work of the League as a whole.

The Treasurer collects and receives all monies due and shall disburse the same as directed by the adopted budget or upon order of the Board of Directors at their regular meetings, and present an annual report to the membership. The Treasurer maintains a bank account and debit card for the League.

Board of Directors

Powers and Duties:

The Board of Directors shall have full charge of the property and business of the organization, with full power and authority to manage and conduct same, subject to the instructions of the general membership.

The Board of Directors meets monthly and reviews the budget, plans events, and other agenda items as appropriate.

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Website www.lwvlaplata.org

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Our Partners

Foreign Policy Association/Great Decisions

Fort Lewis College Political Science Department

Durango Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW)