



LWVIL BIENNIUM REPORT 2021-2023

President's Overview

Executive Committee

Development Committee

Finance Committee

Governance Committee

Human Resources Committee

Voter Service Committee

Communications Committee

Issues & Advocacy Committee

PRESIDENT'S OVERVIEW

Two years ago, LWVIL members entrusted the board with the well being and future of the LWVIL and the work of the Biennium—the board energetically stepped up to the responsibility.

Together as a collective, the board worked to be even better stewards of the organization and the mission. And the word that's key there is—*together*. In order to best achieve our external mission successes, we also had internal foci. We continued our internal focus to form ourselves into a highly functioning, professional body, dedicated to upholding our fiduciary responsibilities and therefore to upholding the mission.

For two years, we worked toward our board goal to achieve much needed operational efficiencies and organizational sustainability and three related objectives:

- 1) Advance communication products and methods, to increase mission impact, member connections and participation
- 2) Address LWVIL's financial health and operations to ensure sustainability of the organization
- 3) Define the relationship between, and the roles and responsibilities of, state and local leagues

At one year into life in a pandemic, we continued to incorporate technology which was new to our organization. We capitalized on virtual gathering tools such as Zoom to build more equitable and inclusive approaches to member participation and mission-focused outreach across our state.

We found that the technology facilitating our work of educating communities and creating voters, was a pathway to increasing equity and accessibility. Virtual events were inclusive, allowing people from all over our state to be present, participate, learn. We were able to expand our reach and impact, building connections through roundtables and offering more trainings than ever before. Local League leaders reported feeling more connected to other Illinois Leagues, from north to south, east to west. As one leader from southern Illinois said, "LWVIL opened a door to connecting with other leaders - now we feel like we are part of something bigger. It was hard before, when our only connection was a monthly newsletter"

Throughout the biennium, we sought input from membership to best determine priorities and address needs for elevating the mission across our state. We gathered as members and leaders for brainstorming and feedback. The board asked and members answered. You all responded with observations, ideas, new questions and we heard you. We learned from each other.

Our collaborations led to development of supports for local leagues to reduce the amount of time local Leagues spend on administrative, communications, and program related tasks

- new guidance materials and resources
- refinement of established training experiences and creation of new ones
- access to experts via webinars and consultations

We made those experiences and resources available through live zoom gatherings as well as recordings and materials available 24/7 via the members section of the LWVIL website.

In this Biennial transition, the outgoing board delivers a highly functioning professional organization, with established efficient procedures, a lean and balanced budget, and three on-going directors who carry a wealth of organizational knowledge and professional skill and experience.

We are confident that the new board is in a strong position to continue to advance the LWVIL in empowering voters and defending democracy.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

CHALLENGES

- Pandemic: ongoing adaptations to promote safety and equity
- Simultaneous operation and expense of two businesses
- Unexpected resignation of executive director
- Unexpected resignation of treasurer
- Onboarding of new treasurer
- Ongoing discovery of operations & procedural deficits
- Reduced donation activity across nonprofit world: pandemic related
- Reduced opportunities for cultivating donor relationships and fundraising :pandemic related

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued and expanded virtual options for gathering
- Provided technology access and financial support to local leagues for virtual gatherings
- Led board assessment of organization needs at all levels
- Directed board identification of biennium goals, objectives and strategy
- Guided board committees in implementation of initiatives including
 - New website platform
 - Resources and guides for local League functions and responsibilities
- Guided and supported board committee chairs and committee members in execution and growth of mission work
- Worked with board committees to support production of annual Issues Briefing events
- Illinois Voter Guide expansion
- Worked with LWVUS staff as needed to address administrative matters and functions
- Worked with pro bono legal counsel and tax consultant as needed for support to address tax related regulatory, employment and contract matters
- Worked with Human Resources Committee: onboarding for executive director, organization compliance with state regulations and employment law
- Worked with Finance Committee to:
 - Design and implement onboarding process for new treasurer
 - Complete assessment of local league compliance with federal tax status
 - Facilitate correction of revoked tax status for multiple local leagues
 - Design and implement finance function training opportunities for local League presidents and treasurers
- Designed and completed onboarding and training for new executive director
- Worked with Human Resources committee to identify needs for management of operations after resignation of executive director
- Led donor relationship cultivation efforts with individuals, businesses
- Developed and maintained relationships with legislators and leaders of coalition partners and like-minded organizations
- On call with securing resources and advising local League leaders with individual community situations
- Managed response to outreach from local league leaders, members, nonmembers, organizations with proposals, concerns
- Provided guidance to two MAS units working to achieve local league status, subsequently achieved local league status
- Provided oversight, guidance and training to leaders of one MAS units and early stage local Leagues

- Oversight, guidance and support for leaders of two local leagues working to expand boundaries, subsequently achieved expanded boundaries
- Promoted LWVIL mission and organization with nonprofit organizations, newspaper editorial boards; authored op eds, LTEs, radio interviews, advocacy and lobbying statements
- Designed and facilitated training opportunities for local League leaders
- Worked with Finance and Communications committees to design and implement local league treasurer training
- Attended monthly LWVUS monthly state leader meetings; for leadership education and training, national organization and developing/maintained relationships with peers in other states
- Designed and facilitated education session for local leaders regarding LWVUS Structure Transformation
- LWVUS Convention 2022:
 - Represented LWVIL in person at 2022 LWVUS Convention
 - Worked with LWVUS board members, Transformation Task Force on member education
- Designed local League leader engagement, education and support processes including
 - Monthly virtual meetings We Meet Wednesdays offered day and evening options
 - Twice month Leaders Edge email publication which communicated education and training materials and opportunities, identified and provided access to resource materials, provided administrative support and compliance reminders
- Led board work to produce 2023 Biennial convention
- Represented state league on:
 - Just Democracy Coalition;
 - Publish ERA Coalition Task Force

NEXT STEPS

- Lead revision of strategic plan with emphasis on generative, long term planning
 - Continue to work with board committees to maximize LWVIL visibility and amplify impact of local Leagues
 - Develop succession planning initiatives customized for state board and local league boards of varying size
 - Determine next goals related to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, including developing a charter for a board committee or committee of the whole.
 - Use virtual tools to maximize local League opportunities for statewide member networking, participation and representation
 - Develop program for nonmember donor/major gift development, including messaging and annual report for use in donor relationship building
 - Continue partnership development with leadership of Illinois-based organizations
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Allyson Haut, President
Kathy Kenny, VP Voter Service
*(Laurie Rose, VP Governance, resigned
11.20.2022)*
Rosemary Heilemann, VP Issues & Advocacy
(Jenny Grochowski, Treasurer through 2.28.2022)
Maria Pasquesi, Treasurer began 2.25.2022
Cate Williams, Secretary

Per the Bylaws Article VI. Section 3. Executive Committee. The executive committee shall exercise such power and authority as may be delegated to it and shall report on all actions taken by it between regular meetings of the board of directors. The executive committee shall review the performance of the Executive Director annually.

CHALLENGES

- Small board size resulted in minority of board members not involved in executive committee
- Discovered deficiencies in organization operations and procedures
- Unexpected resignation of Executive Director, February 2022

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Addressed Executive Committee functions via board as committee of the whole due to small board size
- Collaborated with Human Resources Committee to create and institute performance review process for the Executive Director position
- Completed assessment of office and staff functions and efficacy, operations related functions and board committee needs, with Executive Director
- Completed needs and costs assessment for organization staffing, organization expenditures

NEXT STEPS

- Return to usual Executive Committee staffing and functions
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DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Allyson Haut, President
Sara Kurensky, Communications
*(Laurie Rose, VP Governance, resigned
11.20.2022)*

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Ensuring the fiscal health necessary to support the organization mission through cultivation of major gifts, sponsorships, recurring donors and fundraising
- Create content for donor cultivation messaging materials

CHALLENGES

- Unexpected resignation of executive director
- Pandemic restrictions on in person meetings and events
- Absence of organization messaging materials
- Understaffed committee due to unexpected resignation of board committee member

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Cultivated in-kind donor relationships
 - Katten Muchin Rosenman, LLP
- Designed and implemented annual appeals targeting members and nonmembers at calendar year-end, fiscal year end, organization anniversary and relevant mission related dates
- Created Committee goals and objectives, plan for future well staffed committee

NEXT STEPS

- Review, amend as indicated and implement committee plan to recruit for off board committee members with relevant professional expertise
 - Develop donor relationship maintenance/management program
 - Develop nonmember donor cultivation program including invitation only experiences
 - Collaborate with communications committee for creation of:
 - Donor cultivation messaging materials
 - Annual report
 - Planned giving program materials
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FINANCE COMMITTEE

Maria Pasquesi, Treasurer, began 2.25.2022
Allyson Haut, President
Kathy Kenny, board member
(Jenny Grochowski, Treasurer through 2.28.2022)

The Finance Committee monitors the financial performance of the two LWVIL entities, the LWVIL and the LWVILEF, and recommends modifications to financial policies and/or procedures as deemed necessary. The Finance Committee also provides oversight for the annual audit of the two entities' financial statements. The Finance committee monitors the overall cash flow to cover the operations of the organizations, and also must review the cash flow between the two LWVIL entities.

Revenues for the LWVIL are primarily the PMP income from local Leagues. The PMP revenues and contributions to LWVIL do not cover all the expenses for the organization. Fundraising is primarily performed through LWVILEF to generate additional income needed to cover program and administrative costs. The two entities have certain shared costs, such as salary, rent and overhead expense. Other activities are attributed to one entity or another.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Ensure adequate cash flow for the operations of the two entities' LWVIL/LWVILEF
- Ensure board committees each prepare a budget and operate within their budget
- Work to streamline accounting functions and finance related functions
- Assist local Leagues with tax-exempt status issues
- Support and monitor local League compliance with federal tax, and regulatory items, as well as state regulatory items as indicated by local league tax status
- Review, update and revise policies dealing with LWVIL and LWVILEF finances
- Educate and maintain the board understanding regarding the LWVILEF Endowment which is a restricted fund with a growth requirement
- Educated board regarding specific LWVILEF Endowment policies and procedures
- To "live within our means"

CHALLENGES

- Planned budget deficits of FY22 (\$36,580) and FY23 (\$25,360)
- Paying \$45,000 per year for unnecessary office rent/overhead, items not needed to fulfill LWVIL's mission. Current base office lease has been determined to be unbreakable by legal counsel.
- Paying extra \$20,000 per year to operate 2 organizations 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(30) when all functions can be achieved within one 501(c)(3) entity
 - (extra costs: audit, tax return, bookkeeping, accounting, software, insurance)
- Extra Board and Treasurer time to govern 2 organizations: significant
- Change in Treasurer in FY22

OTHER FACTORS/RESULTS

- Unexpected resignation of executive director reduced salary costs
- Outsourced bookkeeping/reporting/account payable/billing functions
- Stock market performance: 2022 affected endowment fund balance negatively
- FY 23 is expected to show a combined surplus of over \$14,000 (revenue \$14,000 more than expenses, not including investment income and gains)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- LWVIL/LWVILEF are living within their means. Healthy reserves.
- Completed financial audits, reviews and tax filings in a timely manner
- Payroll Protection Program loan of \$40,255 forgiven
- Cash position is healthy due to \$83,000 in donations/bequests
- Converted from desktop to online accounting software
- Outsourced accounting/reporting/accounts payable/billing function
- Oversight of outsourced accounting services and in-kind professional legal services
- Converted to online disbursements, billing and receipts
- Achieved accurate monthly financial statements
- Addressed weakness in financial internal controls and segregation of duties
- Eliminated significant unnecessary overhead costs, including downsizing office space
- Oversight for local Leagues with revoked tax status, assisted a local League in regaining tax exempt status
- Monitoring of 990N filings resulted in no Leagues losing tax exempt status during this biennium
- Created and provided resources to local Leagues
 - Training for local League treasurers: responsibilities, requirements, and regulations
 - Local League Annual Fiduciary Checklist
 - Detailed instructions to complete IRS Form 990N
 - Promoted through communications channels and posted on website
- Completed fiscal agency for / administration of Jo Daviess County grants
- Revised LWVIL Endowment policy
- Conducted annual reviewed of LWVIL Endowment policy and understanding that the Endowment is a restricted fund with a growth requirement

NEXT STEPS

- Monitor financial performance compared to budget
 - Advise new and/or struggling local Leagues on finances and/or tax exempt status
 - Continue developing needed policies, including policies on cash reserve and internal control
 - Continue to manage 2 organizations at significant extra financial cost and board/Treasurer time
 - Continue to live within our means!
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GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

(Laurie Rose, VP Governance, resigned
11.20.2022)

Cate Williams, Secretary

Linh Nguyen, appointed to board 04.08.2023

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Update the board policies and guidelines ('the Board Book')
- Provide governance and onboarding training for the board
- Develop onboarding and offboard materials for board members
- Oversight of board committee charters and appointments
- Provide guidance to the Nominating and Bylaws committees

CHALLENGES

- Lack of resource capacity noted for all board committees throughout biennium
- All three governance committee members served on **several** other committees
- Executive director resignation
- Board members spent more time on operations due to unfilled Executive Director position
- Executive committee took on significant operational responsibilities; met weekly in FY21

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

UPDATED BOARD POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- Coordinated with communications committee to post updated policies on the LWVIL website

BOARD TRAINING

- All members of the LWVIL Board completed BoardSource online training in 2021, obtaining a "Certificate of Nonprofit Board Education"

DEVELOPMENT OF ONBOARDING AND OFFBOARDING MATERIALS

- Completed exit interviews for two of the three Board members who resigned
- Outlined onboarding and offboarding materials (to be completed)

BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

GUIDANCE FOR NOMINATING, BYLAWS and HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEES

- Governance is responsible for the board's operational effectiveness
- Cate Williams served on Human Resources committee; provided guidance for board effectiveness

NEXT STEPS

- Continue focus to review, update and revise the Board Book
 - Seek board training opportunities, particularly in fiduciary responsibilities and fundraising
 - Provide governance mentoring and assistance to local Leagues
 - Provide board training and materials for local Leagues
 - Develop recruitment of offboard committee members for all committees
 - Develop recruitment and succession plan for future board members
 - Return to oversight role and complete updating of policies and materials
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HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Chair, Cate Williams, Secretary
Barbara Hayes (LWV of Homewood Flossmoor)

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Created in February 2020 by the board of directors to handle items related to Human Resource issues and add support for the executive director; ensure compliance with law and regulations related to employees; stay current on all current best practices in the industry.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

- Consulted with pro bono legal team from Katten Muchin Rosenman, LLP regarding necessary updates
- Worked with The Society of Human Resource Professionals

PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

- Completed in October 2020 for current staff
- Added goal setting for both staff and board of directors
- Focus on fair, equitable evaluations based on goals and skill building

NEW STAFF

- Consulted with pro bono legal team from Katten Muchin Rosenman, LLP regarding necessary updates
- Researched and authored position description
- Evaluated hours needed
- Hired staff

NEW PAYROLL PROCESSING SOFTWARE

- Research and recommended to obtain functions for tracking hours allocated toward mission work
- Necessary for certain types of grants

NEW TELEPHONE SYSTEM

- Reviewed, recommended, selected, and trained staff
- Reduces monthly cost by \$150
- Increases productivity and service to League members and general community.

NEXT STEPS

With the addition of this committee, we continue to carry out fiduciary duty and make LWVIL a safe and welcoming place to work and grow with the League. The work of the committee for the next biennium is to provide appropriate support functions to staff.

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Chair: Kathy Kenny, VP Voter Service
Chair: Melissa Lieb, board member
Jan Dorner, Helene Gabelnick, Patti Lackman,
James Manrique, Anne Mathews, Rob Parks,
Julie Shelton, and Sue Swaringen

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Encourage voter education, registration and turnout
- Work with local League Voter Service leaders
- Implement Illinois Voter Guide in 4 elections
- Provide moderator, observer and forum training
- Review candidate participation and pollwatcher policies
- Develop a mock election toolkit
- Measure voter service impact

CHALLENGES

- External misinformation regarding LWV non partisanship
- Achieving consistent local League candidate forum format and moderator performance
- Providing access to voter service training statewide

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SUPPORT FOR/COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL LEAGUE VOTER SERVICE TEAMS

- Training
 - Zoom platform increased reach to our 42 local Leagues.
 - 6 Moderator trainings, 98 trainees (Jan Dorner)
 - 6 Forum trainings, 157 trainees (Melissa Lieb)
 - 8 Observer Corp trainings, 193 trainees (Jan Dorner)
 - 5 Illinois Voter Guide trainings, 94 trainees (Kathy Kenny)
 - Writing Unbiased Questions training, 49 trainees (Kathy Kenny)
 - Protecting Pre-Trial Citizens training, 20 trainees. Guest speakers from Chicago Votes and LWV Chicago (Julie Shelton/Patti Lackman)
 - Instituted an Election Training Day for local Leagues
- 10 Roundtables - with local League Voter Service leaders before and after elections
- Partnered with Communications to update LWVIL website Voting and Elections section
 - Illinois Voter Guide promotion materials
 - Voting Basics
 - Election Calendar to share
 - Candidate Forum, 3 elections, including forum dates and 228 linked forum videos
- Partnered with Communications to update LWVIL website League Resources section
 - Candidate Participation policy (revised)
 - Poll Watcher Policy (created)
 - GOTV Idea Guide and GOTV Toolbox (created)
 - Mock Election toolkit (created)
 - SB825 high school voter registration education requirements
- New legislative/judicial districts; created spreadsheet to facilitate coordination of local Leagues around new shared districts
- Updated Local League/LWVIL Voter Service Shared Resource Center (SRC) (over 300 local League leaders view, contribute and use)
 - Mock Election toolkit
 - Voter Service calendars: training, elections, IVG, and forum planning

- Social media toolkits
- Spreadsheet - new legislative/judicial districts; Leagues in each district
- Summaries of changes to the election law
- Forum policies/procedures; How-to's for a forum on Zoom
- Sample forum questions for state, local, judicial races
- List of League trained moderators
- Calendar to schedule use of the LWVIL webinar platform
- Provided Zoom webinar platform to local Leagues for forums and other events
- Conducted 3 Voter Service Impact Surveys
- Contributed content to the 2 monthly LWVIL newsletters (*Member Bulletin* and *News You Can Use*) and the bimonthly *Leader's Edge*
- Provided daily advice and guidance for local League leaders and outside organizations inquiring about voter service issues

ILLINOIS VOTER GUIDE

- Over 2,000,000 candidate page views in 4 elections.
- Coverage of 100% of federal, state, and local candidates on the Illinois ballot during Primary and General elections, including all judicial candidates (excluding write-in candidates)
- Coverage of all Municipal candidates on Illinois ballot (cities > 10,000 population)
- Coverage of all school board candidates on Illinois ballot
- Coverage of all referendums/measures in Illinois during Primary and General elections.
- Make a Plan to Vote feature with your unique early voting/election day locations/dropbox/directions(map)/times/sample ballot
- Tracking your VBM ballot feature was added where available
- For the last 4 elections, IVG covered 12,057 candidates; over 6,625 races; 32 unique local Leagues submitted candidate questions/emails for IVG covering 2091 candidates with 982 responses.

FORUMS LINKED IN ILLINOIS VOTER GUIDE AND ON LWVIL WEBSITE

- LWVIL Communications provided forum slides toolkit for local Leagues
- Local Leagues held forums via Zoom/Facebook/in person; posted on Illinois Voter Guide, LWVIL & local League websites, Facebook, Youtube and live tv and radio
 - 2022 Primary and General Election - produced 100 forum videos and 228 statement videos, covering 474 candidates.
 - 2023 Consolidated elections - produced 128 forum videos and 5 statement videos, covering 625 candidates
- LWVIL and LWV Chicago partnered with ABC7 and Univision for 3 debates, coordinating ground rules, invitations, questions and candidates contracts:
 - 2022 GOP Illinois Gubernatorial Primary - 6 candidates
 - 2023 Chicago mayoral race debate - 9 candidates
 - 2023 Chicago mayoral runoff race debate - 2 candidates
 - Invited more than 20 community groups to sit in the studio audience. Several groups were chosen to ask the candidates their question on air, including LWV Chicago.
- LWVIL co sponsored mayoral debate hosted by Access Living

OTHER IMPORTANT VOTER SERVICE ACTIONS

- Protected voter access by convincing the State Board of Elections to eliminate misleading wording on the statewide online voter registration portal (elections.il.gov)
- the last 2 weeks before an election. Existing wording stated that voter registration was CLOSED 2 weeks before an election. New wording clarifies that ONLINE voter

registration is closed, but voters may still register in person at an early voting site or their election day polling place.

- Attended bi-monthly Promote the Vote coalition meetings of 20 organizations with a mission to help get out the vote. Promoted making a plan to vote and educated voters through the Illinois Voter Guide. LWVIL Communications created a series of graphics to spread voting messages to hard-to-reach communities using social media.
- Media:
 - Joan Esposito's radio program (WCPT) 2 interviews to promote election participation and the Illinois Voter Guide
 - Accepted newspaper interviews to discuss election education
 - Appeared on Rainbow Push Saturday Morning Forum television program to discuss Illinois Voter Guide.
 - Interview with Brenda Schory Kane County Chronicle on Candidate Forum participation

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

- Always Empower Voters and Defend Democracy
 - Ensure ALL local Leagues take part in annual trainings
 - Leverage the combined communication power of 42 Leagues to convey our message
 - Raise the profile of Illinois Voter Guide and add more native language translations
 - Encourage more Observers in local Leagues; more training
 - Facilitate resource sharing between local Leagues
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MEMBERSHIP

Responsibilities were met/exceeded by Board president, officers and directors.

GOALS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Mentored and provided operations/mission support and guidance for three MAS units working to become local leagues; two MAS units achieved local League status as approved by LWVUS
- Worked with data manager for annual review of efficacy of MAS unit membership join and renewal procedures
- Provided operations/mission support and guidance regarding membership, US Roster, and tax status application functions to several newer local Leagues
- Provided guidance and support and facilitated process for two local leagues seeking to expand boundaries; both approved by LWVUS
- Advised and supported existing local Leagues with various membership and status situations

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

- Provide support to Leagues in formation - MAS units and newly formed full League status
- Stay up to date on LWVUS Transformation
- Assess membership trends, correlated factors and potential barriers to membership

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Sara Kurensky, Director
Rosemary Heilemann, VP Issues & Advocacy
Sophie Mucciaccio (LWV of Chicago), staff
(Roberta Borrino, Director, resigned 3.15.2022)

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- New website (continuation of goal from previous biennium)
- Review and true-up all organization e-mailing lists so as to better leverage capacity of tools
- Regular data updates with LWVUS Roster integration
- Maintain leadership contact lists
- Enhance communications with local Leagues and community at large
- Establish social media posting frequency
- Formalize process/procedures for monthly publications
- Formalize process for all LWVIL events: graphics, invitation, promotion, registration, attendance and post-event surveys

CHALLENGES

- Small committee
- New tools with learning curves (SquareSpace)
- Pandemic and online events resulted in major increase in communications support
- Four elections in 10 months increased activity: public education, Voter Service events and local League support

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Increased use of cohesive graphics and messaging on all LWVIL materials to solidify LWVIL identity and increase visibility. Provided input and message guidance for all board committees. Provided local Leagues and partner organizations with tools to amplify LWVIL advocacy and voter education.

MAILING LISTS/DATA MANAGEMENT

- Maintained accurate membership lists for equitable & effective communication
- Updated local League leadership lists quarterly
- Completed data clean up of US Roster and LWVIL membership management tools - NEON and Constant Contact
- Monthly integration of US Roster, NEON and Constant Contact
- Press/media mailing list established in Constant Contact
- Newsletter reminders for local Leagues regarding membership updates in US Roster, including leadership "active" status
- Created US Roster update instructions for local Leagues

NEW LOGO TREATMENT for LWVILEF

- Created three designs, all approved by LWVUS communications
- Used in Illinois Voter Guide

PUBLICATIONS: INTERNAL & EXTERNAL

- Increased audience open rates by average of 14% over last biennium, currently well beyond industry standard
- Content and schedule defined by audience. Articles written and generated to reinforce identity of each publication
 - *News You Can Use*: community+LWVIL members, circulation 6900+/-, average open rate 50%
 - *Member Bulletin*: members only, circulation 3500+/-, average open rate 60%

- *Leader's Edge*: local League presidents, provides guidance & advice on the business of League management, circulation 80+/-, average open rate 80%
- New format created to emphasize advocacy, 2022
- New format created for election information, 2022
- Created pre-election publication for voting rights education

WEBSITE

- Content continually updated throughout biennium
- Dynamic content on landing page to reflect educational programs/registration, advocacy and linked calls to action
- Webinars and meeting recordings posted for consistent education
- Additional update management: Action Alerts, Bill Tracker; events calendar
- Added *News from LWVIL* page for LWVIL newsletter articles; source for news items for local Leagues to download and use in their publications
- Created new format for Issues Briefing page; easy access to speaker biographies & materials
- Organized League Resources page; partnered with all board committees to update and brand materials
- Updated Where We Stand with searchable Table of Contents
- Added Candidate Forum page; included forum dates and forum recording links
- Added downloadable voter education graphics for public use

SOCIAL MEDIA (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

- Increased posting frequency and promotion of LWVIL events
- Increased use of original content
- Began tracking engagement

ELECTION-RELATED

- Partnered with Voter Service to create *Get Out the Vote Idea Guide*
- Partnered with Voter Service to create *Get Out the Vote Toolbox*; provided new graphics and & local League templates for IVG promotion, voter education, and candidate forums
- Updated Illinois Voter Guide (IVG) landing page throughout election(s) season(s)
- Graphic integration of IVG landing page and lwvil.org website
- Provided guidance/training for local League presidents regarding media interaction and response to misinformation about LWV nonpartisanship

ISSUES & ADVOCACY

- Action Alerts: created new template for more rapid formatting, posted on website
- Partnered with Issues & Advocacy chair to create:
 - *A Guide to Issues & Advocacy for Local Leagues*
 - *How to get involved in advocacy and lobbying: LWVIL resources for local Leagues*
- Program Planning, updated 8 publications
- Legislative Interviews, updated 5 publications
- Educational Events; created graphics, managed promotions and registrations for 5 events

COALITION WORK & OUTREACH

- Promote Equity: Attended monthly meetings, designed multiple outreach campaigns around online education events
- Promote the Vote: Attended monthly meetings, increased LWVIL visibility by designing multiple voter education campaigns featuring Illinois Voter Guide QR code for distribution by coalition partners

- Souls to the Polls: provided individual designs featuring Illinois Voter Guide on request for various organization

ONLINE EVENT CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

- Issues Briefing (two annual events)
 - Partnered with Issues & advocacy
 - Built production calendar to establish expectations
 - Created graphic campaign for all materials, managed promotions in LWVIL publications and social media
 - Built website pages to accommodate speaker materials & recordings
 - Registration and link management for multiple sessions
 - Maintained visual identity on virtual event platforms with branded slides and speaker backgrounds
 - Emailed registrants links to follow up materials/recordings
- Convention 2023
 - Created graphic campaign for all materials
 - Built all convention materials for distribution to delegates
 - Built new webpage incorporating graphic campaign
 - Managed delegate registration and delegate communication platform
 - Created graphics & promotions for delegate events (3)
 - Created Convention slides and built 7 slide decks to align with run of show
 - Provided direction and stage manager function for Zoom Management Company
- Lobby Day (virtual) 2023
 - Designed specific new graphic, incorporating state border and 6 issue graphics
 - Created action strategy: take action depending on the time you have available
 - Built new website page to facilitate action strategy
 - Promoted in LWVIL publications, and on social media platforms
 - Designed promotion flyer for distribution by partner organizations
 - Quadrupled website traffic on virtual Lobby Day

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

- Continued reinforcement of communications role in strategic development of all LWVIL messaging & materials, both internal & external
- Continued reinforcement of access, equity and inclusivity of LWVIL information
- Graphic update/redesign to continue integration of state outline
 - Strengthen visual cohesion & LWVIL identity for newsletters, website, social media landing pages, etc.
 - Provide template/system to provide local Leagues with a way to promote their local identity with LWVIL materials
- Design templates and style guide for all LWVIL materials
- Develop communications training module for local Leagues
- Provide communications toolkits for local Leagues
- Partner with board committees to create annual report
- Formalize procedures for communications requests to ensure consistency of message
- Continue website updates to include regular reports and updates from Issue Specialists
- Continue to define everlasting production calendar - standardize timeline around recurring League events

ISSUES & ADVOCACY

Chair: Rosemary Heilemann, Vice President
Chair: Jean Pierce, board member

ISSUE SPECIALISTS and COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sarah Bury (LWV of Chicago) Climate Change: Water
Kathy Cortez (LWV of Palatine) Affordable Housing
Ann Courter (LWV of Oak Park/River Forest) Fiscal Policy, Education funding
Laura Davis (LWV of Palatine) Climate Change
Hilary Denk (LWV of Downers Grove/Woodridge/Lisle) Lobby Day
Lorri Grainawi (LWV of Arlington Heights/Mt. Prospect/Buffalo Grove) Mental Health, Affordable Housing
Allyson Haut (LWV of Wilmette) Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Equal Rights Amendment
Rosemary Heilemann (LWV of Deerfield) Redistricting
Jan Kay (LWV of Wheaton) Social Policies
Janet Kittlaus (LWV of Glenview/Glencoe) Criminal Justice, Juvenile Justice, Death Penalty
Bill Koehl (LWV of Central Kane County) Climate Change
Paula Lawson (LWV of Glenview/Glencoe) Redistricting
Donna Limper (LWV of Roselle/Bloomingtondale) Campaign Finance/Ethics Reform
Jim McGrath (LWV of Palatine) Gun Violence Prevention
Howard Miller (LWV of Central Kane County) Gun Violence Prevention
Jean Pierce (LWV of Central Kane County) Education Funding
Julia Utset (LWV of Chicago) Secretary

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Update Where We Stand
- Revise and update the Issues and Advocacy Section of the LWVIL website
- Plan and execute annual Issues Briefing
 - Develop strategies to expand audience
 - Target issue choices to youth
 - Invite youth leaders as panelists
 - Utilize relevant marketing messaging and vehicles
- Increase community visibility of League issues
- Provide templates for letters to the editor
- Provide links to LWV monthly newsletters
- Add coalition membership listing to website

CHALLENGES

- Finding committee leadership

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ADVOCACY 2021-22

- Signed on to 5 Initiatives (Letters, Webinar, Testimony)
- Filed 3 witness slips
- Issued 16 Action Alerts

ADVOCACY 2022-23

- Signed on to 9 Initiatives (Fact Sheets, Press Release, Resolution, Letters, Testimony, Amicus Brief, Webinars)
- Filed 13 Witness Slips
- Issued 19 Action Alerts

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Issues Briefing 2022, online,
 - 220 registered
 - 12 topics
- Issues Briefing 2023, online
 - 165 registered
 - 8 topics
- Organized 4 Educational Webinars: Explaining the Budget, Explaining Invest in Kids, Firearms Restraining Order, Pretrial Fairness
- Initiated Round Table discussions/updates
 - 3 addressing local Board disruptions;
 - 3 Addressing Issues and Advocacy at the Local Level
- Legislative Interviews
- Worked with Communications Committee on Lobby Day 2023 (virtual)
- Created list of local League I&A Leaders
- Created Shared Resource Center of Local League Positions
- Program Planning: videos and written materials for local Leagues
 - 19 Leagues participated representing 1827 members
 - 300 members participated

NEXT STEPS

- Explore ways to improve timeliness of advocacy communications with membership
- Work with the Communications Committee to provide Issue Specialist legislative updates on the website in a user friendly way
- Expand committee membership to cover more issues and to ensure tasks are covered
- Continue to build LWWIL's strong educational and advocacy presence in our state

[READ ISSUES SPECIALIST BIENNIUM REPORTS](#)