Local League To Do’s (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- Market early voting website (www.nyearlyvoting.org) and distribute materials
- Join us in Buffalo on Nov. 16 to celebrate our centennial!
- Plan a local event (even informal hosting at a bar or member’s house) on Tuesday, Nov. 19, to raise a glass and celebrate the actual founding date of the state League!
- Register for League Day at the United Nations (Dec. 4)
- Organize meeting to discuss Constitutional Convention position update and return response form by March 1, 2020

President’s Report: Suzanne Stassevitch, lwvnypres@lwvny.org

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The 2019-2021 LWVNYS September board meetings included board trainings and a review of a 5-year Strategic Plan for the state organization. The strategic plan has been in the works for over 2 years using surveys, focus groups, board and committee discussions. The strategic plan that will guide our work through 2024.

Our goals include the heart of our great work; Voter Participation, election and ethics reforms, promoting youth participation and civics education and building our infrastructure to support statewide outreach and a fully supported professional staff. Action initiatives will be detailed by appropriate leadership for each Goal or category in the next several months.

The 5-year Strategic plan will give us the basis for a case statement for development and a fundraising plan, a broad view of the organization for board and leadership recruitment, a basis for our DEI Action plan and targets and benchmarks we can use to evaluate our work, our capacity and our impact.

Does your local League have a strategic plan? The process of developing a plan helps bring focus to our work. On November 5, 2019, when you are thinking about, what next? Try strategic planning!

DEVELOPMENT

We have established a Development Committee at the state League to advise and review ongoing development plans, strategies and fundraising initiatives. A Big thank you to the members from across the state who have agreed to serve: Susan Wilson (Hamptons), Mary Hussong-Kallen (Rochester), Kathy Stein (St. Lawrence County), Margie McIntosh (Cattaraugus & Allegany Counties), Kate Jankowski (Rensselaer), Nancy Rosenthal (SW Nassau and state Board rep), Laura Ladd Bierman (State Executive Director and Co-Chair) and me (NYC and Co-Chair).

LWVUS is providing more support for fundraising at all levels. Check out the LWVUS Fund Raising Modules and share them with your development committee, build out fundraising workshops or share with your full board.
STATE BOARD RESIGNATION
We will miss LWVNYS Board Director Carol Mellor who has stepped off the state board. Her efforts as grassroots director to promote LWVNYS positions and her tough questions for board members and committees she sat on will be missed. Thank you for all of your tremendous work for the LWVNYS.

CELEBRATE!!!
What will YOU and your League be doing on November 19, 2019? We encourage Leagues across the state to raise a glass, cut the cake or celebrate together 100 years of activism of the League of Women Voters of the state of New York.

Local Leagues are the heart of our grassroots tradition and we celebrate our Leagues across the state and all they have accomplished in the last 100 years. On this day 100 years ago the LWVNYS began its tenure as a leading advocate for universal suffrage and building a community in New York state of an informed and engaged population in their government.

Executive Director: Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org

Early Voting – Oct. 26 to Nov. 3
The state League office has been filled with boxes during this past few weeks as we have been printing the early voting brochures in English, Spanish, Bengali, Korean and Chinese, and then a separate insert for each of the 62 counties in NYS that identifies where and when people in that county can vote early. For your information, 34 counties in NYS have only one early voting poll site as required by the statute and their population; 18 counties have multiple early voting poll sites and voters can go to ANY site in their county; and, 9 counties, including the 5 boroughs or NYC, Albany, Suffolk, Orange and Westchester, have assigned voters to specific poll sites to vote early. The important notice to tell people is that if they vote on the regular Election Day, November 5, they MUST go to their usual poll site, not one of the early voting poll sites. Flyers and a press release on the League’s activities and website (www.nyearyvoting.org) are attached; please share widely. The foreign language brochures are available on the early voting website, as well as links to each individual county’s early voting poll sites and times.

To report on the funding we received from LWVUS, please email me (Laura@lwvny.org) a list of places where you distributed the brochures, inserts and hung the flyers, especially if you did it in new places for your League and emphasized underserved or low-voter-turnout areas. What other organizations did you partner with to educate the public and market the early voting information? This info will help to acquire funding for future projects, too. Thanks.

League Day at the United Nations: Climate Change
The state League is again organizing its Day at the United Nations. On December 4, 2019, we have arranged for tours of the UN facility, lunch in the Delegates’ Dining Room and briefings by UN experts on the topic of Climate Change. The cost is $120 for the day which we do understand is expensive, but this barely covers the costs for the day. We also have a bus coming to and from Albany for an additional $50 for those upstate who would like to join us! The registration from is attached – please share and encourage all to attend this fascinating day.

State League’s Centennial Celebration: November 16 in Buffalo
On November 16, 2019, the League of Women Voters of NYS will be 100 years old and the League’s Education Foundation is hosting our 100th Anniversary Celebration at The Buffalo History Museum! The Buffalo History Museum is a generous co-sponsor of our event and will have a suffrage exhibit at this time.

At the celebration, we are thrilled to be honoring:
- Kathleen Hochul, Lt. Governor of New York State and her husband, William Hochul, Jr., Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary to Delaware North Companies,
• Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner, President, SUNY Buffalo State,
• Alice Jacobs, President, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, and
• Ariel Palitz, Senior Executive Director, Office of Nightlife for New York City

Invitations are now being developed but mark your calendar to join us in Buffalo to celebrate ourselves!

**Organ Donor Registrations**

For a few years, we had a grant from the NY Alliance for Donations to educate the public about the need for organ donors in NYS and encourage people to sign up as organ donors when they complete the voter registration form. We are the only state in the country in which people can sign up as organ donors on the same form as the voter registration form. We no longer have the grant, but for those of you who are organizing voter registration drives, materials and information about organ donation is attached to this email. A list of OPOs (organ procurement offices) and contacts is included – this staff often is willing to help staff a voter registration table and answer people’s questions about organ donations.

**Advocacy: Sally Robinson, sally.s.robinson@gmail.com**

**Constitutional Convention Position Update**

At the State Convention in June, the delegates approved an update to the State League’s position on a Constitutional Convention. The purpose of this update is to determine whether there is member agreement on deleting the first sentence of the League’s 1993 Constitutional Convention position, as revised June 2015.

The first sentence to be deleted is below:

“The League of Women Voters of New York State does not support or oppose the holding of a constitutional convention.”

Attached you will find the materials for consideration by your local League of this update:

• Current Constitutional Convention Position
• Background and Other Information
• Update Form to be Returned to the State League office by March 1, 2020

**NYS Commission on Public Financing**

The state League did present testimony before the NYS Commission on Public Financing in New York City in September. See testimony attached.

**Voter Services: Judie Gorenstein, judiel728@aol.com**

Voter Service Survey is coming to you all next week! Please Having a voter service committee this year has enabled us to accomplish all we have done these past three months. Below is the updated voter service report that was emailed to all voter service chairs earlier this month. The toolkits for Voter Registration and GOTV were attached and are attached again. The feedback we have received so far is positive. There have been several emails and phone calls from different Leagues making certain as they plan or if necessary cancel candidate events that they are following our policy and guidelines.

Within the next two weeks we will be completing our toolkit for candidate events, our voter service 2019 survey and scheduling a voter service teleconference. We look forward to all working together to meet challenges and fulfill our goal of not only this year engaging and educating citizens but also increasing voter turnout.

**Update From Voter Service Committee**

Because of the many election law reforms that were passed last spring, we have been updating our voter service materials including **First Vote** and **Your Right to Vote in New York** brochures. They are currently being
redesigned and will be available later this month electronically and hopefully printed, if funding is secured. All the material will be on our website.

An updated voter registration toolkit is attached. Local Leagues have all been successful in holding voter registration drives. Many have trained and are training new volunteers and also other groups. As always it is important that we not only are nonpartisan but perceived as not supporting or opposing any political party. We hope this toolkit will help in your endeavors and that you will consider looking for new venues in underserved communities and networking with groups in these communities.

Voter registration is important but is only the first step in getting out the vote. The state League has been encouraging Leagues to put forth a greater effort in turning out the vote. Some of our Leagues have done this, identifying areas those underserved areas where turnout is the lowest and coming up with strategies to not only register voters but get them to the polls. Other Leagues have tried different methods to either engage or contact voters. We have included their strategies and ideas in a Get Out The Vote Toolkit, which is attached. GOTV begins at voter registration drives and like voter registration, takes planning and effort. It is important that Leagues have a plan and designate not only how but who will do the follow up. We hope that not only will this toolkit help you increase turnout in your communities, but will inspire you to try new ideas and strategies that you will share with the state League which will then be added to this toolkit.

We are in the process of doing final edits to our candidate events toolkit. We have carefully considered concerns some Leagues verbalized regarding Empty Chair Policy and the directions to the board at the convention regarding the title given to this policy as well as how it can be applied to multi-seat races. While keeping the requirements of this policy the same, we are giving Leagues flexibility on what they name it or how they refer to it.

The requirements for any candidate event:
- Includes two or more candidates for each race
- Is staged in a way that is fair to all participating: the format does not promote or give an advantage to one candidate over the other(s).

You may call policy:
- Empty Chair;
- Empty Chair: Two or More Candidates for Each Race Must Be present; or
- You can just refer to it as candidate event policy and state requirements.

In assessing whether local Leagues should independently apply this policy to multi-seat races, a primary concern was adherence to the League’s non-partisanship and perception of non-partisanship. Local Leagues and ILOs will be most aware of partisanship in their communities and can make the decision and act accordingly regarding multi-seat races to avoid any appearance of partisanship. We recognize that the races with multiple seats and multiple candidates can raise particular challenges and while leaving decision to local Leagues as to applying policy, we encourage them to contact Judie Gorenstein or Laura Bierman for ideas on how to handle.

We hope the candidate event toolkit will be available within the next two weeks and will contain all if not most of the information you have been requesting, including templates of on how to handle situations arising from the Empty Chair: Two or More Candidates Must Be Present. Remember, that it is important to have, review, and mail your League’s written event policy to candidates. Remember too as you plan your candidate events, that due to early voting you may want to schedule events earlier than in the prior years. Attached are the revised guidelines for candidate events that reflects concerns local leagues brought up during convention.

We know that as you read all the new materials and as you prepare for your events, there will be many questions. We will be scheduling a teleconference call for voter service chairs and/or presidents as soon as
the Candidate Event Toolkit is completed and distributed. As always, you can contact Judie Gorenstein or Laura Bierman with questions or concerns. Together we can do so much.

**Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI): Regina Tillman, rmt370@gmail.com**

What is different about DEI today? Although we have had a Diversity-Equity-Inclusion Policy for some years, both nationally and at local levels of the League, today we are looking for ways to transform policy into dynamic actions… actions that actually get the results we all subscribe to in our policies, and done in the spirit in which those policies were intended.

At the national and state level, our DEI policy begins with: “LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, 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.” It goes on to say that, “there will be no barriers to participation…” However, clearly there must be barriers because our membership make-up does not sufficiently reflect the populations we are a part of.

The plan? We will begin with recruitment of local members to join me on a DEI State-wide Task Force. We will have more specifics shortly to suggest which individuals to key in on for your selected representative. This Task Force will assist in developing the first LWVNYS Action Plan for DEI.

Please look for the announcement soon asking for your submission of a contact for your local League on DEI implementation. Actions have already begun to be taken at the local levels and we will also seek them out to see what is working. It is the hope of the state Board that all Leagues of NYS will join us in the creation of our very own roadmap to transformation while we continue to pursue the creation of a more perfect democracy!

**Education, Youth and Civics Programs: Crystal Joseph, campus@lwvnyc.org**

As we move into a new school year, I am excited to share that young people in New York State are thinking of creative ways to encourage civic engagement and work alongside their peers to tackle issues of diversity, equity and inclusivity. In August, I was invited to a “Y Vote” campaign lead by a 2019 SIA participant, Elizabeth Lopez. The Town Hall served as a resource hub of information on the importance of the ever-changing voting demographic and also centralized the importance of social movements as a catalyst for change. As an event participant, I had the privilege of attending activation stations. In short, the stations were a comprehensive source of information for campaign interest areas. The focus this year amongst the Gen Z cohort included: Criminal, Environmental, Gender and Immigration Justice. I look forward to learning more about the actionable steps each local League is taking in support of the next generation of voters. Please use this time to begin to think of creative ways young people in your region can come together and support educating and informing the voting population. Email me any thoughts you have on reform trends happening in your local League community. I look forward to learning more about your upcoming youth projects.

**From LWVUS**

LWVUS has a wealth of information on the 2020 census. Use their materials and suggestions as we work to get people counted. See the toolkit here: [https://www.lwv.org/League-management/voting-rights-tools/census-action-kit](https://www.lwv.org/League-management/voting-rights-tools/census-action-kit)