

# **FINAL PROGRAM PLAN 2024-2025**

**The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Newton recommends adoption of the following Program for 2024-2025:**

- All positions approved by the membership at the June 2024 Annual Meeting and listed on [www.lwvnewton.org](http://www.lwvnewton.org).
- LWVN members are encouraged, through its board, to make our collective voices heard by advocating for our local legislative priorities and important issues of public policy as [CITIZEN LOBBYISTS](#).

## **Actions & Priorities in support of our position statements**

### **1. Elections & Voter Service:**

- A. Ensure transparency regarding the work of the Election Commission through the implementation of our Observer Corps.
- B. Educate Newton residents regarding the election process and early voting opportunities.
- C. Create and implement a 12-month voter registration and Get-Out-the-Vote plan. with a focus on new voters that are representative of the city's diverse socio-economic and racial populations, through attendance at various locations around Newton and online, (e.g. NHA and other housing developments, the Farmer's Markets, Village Days, high schools, and college events etc.) and cooperate with state efforts to increase voter participation.
- D. Create opportunities to help Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and other historically underrepresented and marginalized members of our community engage in issues and advocacy at local, state, and national levels, and to have equal access to voting (e.g. mail-in voting and early voting).
- E. Organize, manage, and cooperate with LWVMA and other local Leagues to sponsor forums for contested state offices in the 2024 election and state ballot questions. We will partner with NewTV and other media outlets and incorporate technology as appropriate.
- F. Recognize and celebrate the work of Newton's poll workers each year.
- G. Create a robust Don't Just Stand There Run program for the 2025 municipal elections.

## **2. Municipal Government**

### **A. Education**

Educate the community about how the local executive and legislative branches set priorities and how the decision-making model impacts budget decisions. Educate the community on the municipal budget processes and finances (city and school).

### **B. Transparency**

The League strongly believes that transparency and accountability in government at all levels is vital for a wide variety of reasons: to encourage civic engagement, to measure goal achievement and evaluate results, to improve services and outcomes, and to track and monitor the actions of governmental bodies and elected officials. In furtherance of that objective, LWVN engaged in an assessment and study of Newton's municipal transparency and accountability. A final study report of that assessment is being produced. LWVN will follow-up on that report by taking action to ensure that the recommendations for increased transparency and accountability are enacted to the greatest extent possible.

### **C. Accountability/Oversight**

- Encourage citizen participation in city government.
- Review Community Preservation Act (CPA) applications and review how CPA funds are being utilized by the city in relation to the purpose and intent of the CPA. It is our intent to continue a focus on CPA proposals with a flexible and consistent methodology in how we accomplish this goal.
- Observer Corps: Identify members who will monitor governmental bodies for information of importance to the League and the community/state and advise the board of opportunities for action based on League positions.

### **D. Civility**

Develop a plan that engages a diverse set of community groups, leveraging the National Institute of Civil Discourse and Northeastern University resources and other resources, in order to model and facilitate thoughtful and impactful conversations.

## **3. Racial & Social Justice**

A. Develop an Action Plan to advance understanding of racial justice issues.

B. Encourage the education of our members on fundamental aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB).

C. Utilize and implement tools provided by the LWVUS DEI training modules and other applicable resources to ensure members understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.

D. Assess our programming, and adjust as needed, to encourage and welcome the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and other historically underrepresented and

marginalized populations in Newton to participate in all of LWVN programs and activities.

- E. Work to create opportunities for meaningful partnerships with affinity groups representing historically underrepresented and marginalized members of our community through inclusive engagement and community capacity-building.

#### **4. Climate Action & Sustainability**

- A. Partner with other local Leagues and community organizations, (e.g. Green Newton, Newton's Citizens Commission on Energy, Bike Newton, etc.) to educate residents and lobby for environmental state and local legislation.
- B. Educate and update our community on Newton's Climate Action Plan.
- C. Educate and update our community on issues related to environmental and sustainability issues (including trash removal, recycling, composting, water conservation, storm water drainage, flood mitigation, and tree removal).

#### **5. Education**

- A. Build on the successful efforts of our 2020 and 2023 Civics Challenge by organizing and promoting community wide civics challenges annually. The goals of the civics challenges are to foster a greater understanding of government, increase voter participation and engagement and build community on a non-partisan basis.
- B. Examine how the Newton Public Schools (NPS) budget, policies, and program meet the needs of Newton's diverse student population.
- C. Engage members and the community on local, state, and national education positions related to goals of the League.

#### **6. Land Use and Housing Production & Stability**

- A. Advocate for local zoning reform in harmony with established local, state, and national League positions and criteria on housing.
- B. Stay informed of local land use and housing proposals, be prepared to make comments, ask questions, support or oppose according to LWV positions.
- C. Examine and work with the state League to support state level housing and zoning legislation.
- D. Advocate for federal, state and local public funding to develop housing for very low and extremely low income families. The housing should include services which will enable the families over a period of years to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Those services should be provided by persons trained in mentoring and counseling and should include (but not be limited to) increased access to health care and childcare; access to

transportation; basic or remedial education and job training; and financial literacy training.

**Actions and Priorities in support of the viability of the organization**

1. Raising the visibility of LWVN with timely thought leadership on issues of importance to the city.
2. Growing and diversifying LWVN membership and the Board.