



APRIL 2022

Co-Presidents' Message: League Is on the Move



Linda Bjella

League of Women Voters of Appleton Fox-Cities 120 N. Morrison St., Suite 101 • Appleton, WI 54911

How does that sound? Pretty exciting, right? On April 1st (no foolin') we officially took possession of the keys to a cooperative office space in the Willems Building in downtown Appleton.

We have a 14 ft. x 14 ft. private office where all the things League members have stored in their basements, closets, and garages can now live. Most importantly, we have a window on the street where we can display a sign that gives us a presence in downtown Appleton. The modest rent is well within our current budget and comes with free internet, some copying privileges, and access to a nice conference room for committee and board meetings. If you'd like to have a tour, contact Marti or Linda. We'd love to show you around!



Marti Hemwall

March has been an incredibly busy month for our Voter Services Team. Other Leagues around the state have taken note of the excellent candidate videos we have posted on our website. Vote411 has a new format and required lots of time and effort to help candidates post their information. We are blessed with an outstanding Voter Services Team that is always looking for new ways to provide reliable, nonpartisan information on voting and candidates.

We have also been busy making preparations for the Annual Meeting on May 19 at Pullman's. We are very excited to be able to gather in person for the first time since 2019. This will be a time to celebrate our League's many accomplishments over the past year and forge a path for the future with some forward-looking bylaws changes and budget goals. We have another strong slate of board members to approve and will have a report from the study committee on their excellent work examining equity in our local health care systems as that study moves into its second year.

Since we had to cancel our Holiday Brunch last December, we will also present our Making Democracy Work Award at the Annual Meeting. You won't want to miss it!

AND we are hosting the Wisconsin League's Annual Meeting in Appleton June 10-11 at the Hilton Paper Valley. This is a great opportunity for our members to see firsthand the amazing amount of work that goes on all over Wisconsin to empower voters and defend democracy. We have invited all the delegates to join us in Appleton's annual Flag Day Parade at 2:00 p.m. on June 11th. You won't miss us in the parade: we have hired the Lamers Trolley which will be all decked out for League!

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League on the Move, continued

While we have much to celebrate, it takes many volunteers to keep our League humming along. The fall election season will be upon us before we know it, followed by another legislative session and our ongoing work of tracking local government. Our work is important and we need you to make it happen. Make sure to check out the many opportunities for how you can get involved detailed in this newsletter. They're earmarked with gold stars.

PROGRAMS: Endings . . .


By Renee Gralewicz, VP Programs

I am looking forward to our April 18th program (5:00 – 6:30, virtual). In preparation I have been spending time researching the diversification of our Appleton area population, especially our Asian American and Pacific Islander families. Needless to say, I will not be able to recount all the histories, yet I will be offering a bit of US political history regarding the challenges our Asian and Pacific Islanders faced along the way, and sadly a few challenges they still face. Please register [here](#) if you have not already done so.

I titled this article “**Endings**” as May is the end of our calendar year. We will close out the year at our Annual Meeting at Pullman’s at Trolley Square on Thursday, May 19. We’ll gather for dinner and friendship while we conduct business. Registration is capped at 50 and will be open soon. You will be able to register from our Club Express site by scrolling on the main page until you come to “Upcoming Events.”

We need your participation at the Annual Meeting. We haven’t been in shared space for well over a year and it will be wonderful to meet you in person, again. We’ll be voting on bylaws changes, new Board members, and the current Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) healthcare study. You will receive access to the Annual Meeting packet which includes the annual reports from Board members.

- **September** — We would like to offer a panel explaining and discussing the potentials of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which are the Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provided by the U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury) to help local governments recover from the Coronavirus pandemic.
- **October** — We are considering a panel exploring local housing issues.
- **November** — We hope to have a presentation regarding local immigration issues and populations.
- **December** — This will be our Holiday Brunch.
- **January 2023** — We’ll once again have a Lively Issues conversation.
- **February 2023** — The DEI Study Group will present possible positions for consensus. A Legislative Town Hall will be scheduled during the 2023 legislative session.
- **March and April 2023** — TBD

 **We are looking for folks who can assist with planning one or more of our events, including the Annual Meeting. Welcome people at registration, help with set-up, sell Swag, handle a roving microphone, plan presentations. League membership not required. Be part of the fun by emailing program@lwwappletonfoxcities.org**

Fair Maps: SCOTUS Upends WI Redistricting

By Linda Bjella, Co-President

On March 23, the US Supreme Court (SCOTUS) issued a decision that requires the Wisconsin Supreme Court to revisit its decision selecting Governor Evers' maps. This unsigned order from the "Shadow Docket" has thrown our state's election process into chaos. The Wisconsin Elections Commission had already begun the process of notifying clerks and candidates about the new district maps when the decision was announced. That work now must be put on hold until the Wisconsin Supreme Court provides clarification to the high court. It was a shocking development considering that the high court declined to intervene in similar cases in Alabama, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania citing the closeness to the election deadline.

It is important to note that the SCOTUS did NOT reject the Governor's maps outright. It accepted his Congressional District maps. It did not "throw out" the Governor's state senate and assembly maps either as many new outlets have reported. The high court focused on the districts in the Milwaukee area and wants to see more evidence to justify the addition of one more majority minority district in the Milwaukee area. There are currently six of these districts, and the Governor's maps proposes a seventh. According to Mel Barnes, a staff attorney with Law Forward, there is ample evidence to support an additional majority minority district and that will be provided to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. (Here is a [link](#) to an excellent 13-minute video from the Fair Maps Coalition where she explains this.)

The best outcome would be for the high court to accept that evidence and agree to allow the Governor's state senate and assembly maps to remain in place going forward. While these maps are not really fair, they are the best option available under the "least change" approach mandated by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

The second-best option would be to redraw the cluster of districts in the Milwaukee area reducing the number of majority minority districts from seven to the current six. This would allow the remainder of the 33 state senate and 99 assembly districts to stay the same in the rest of the state.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court has precious little time to rectify their maps in the eyes of the US Supreme Court. The main controversy over redistricting centers on the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which requires that places where there is a concentration of people of color have a district in which they have an opportunity to elect a representative from their community. Is the high court looking to dismantle that landmark law entirely?



ACTION: Local Gov'ts Ponder ARPA Funds

By Nancy Jones, Executive Action Team/League Member

ARPA BASICS

As part of the passage of the March 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program has provided \$350 billion to state, local, and Tribal governments across the country to support their response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency.

According to U.S. Department of Treasury, "The SLFRF program provides governments across the country with the resources needed to: fight the pandemic and support families and businesses struggling with its public health and economic impacts; maintain vital public services, even amid declines in revenue resulting from the crisis; and build a strong, resilient, and equitable recovery by making investments that support long-term growth and opportunity."

Recipients may use SLFRF funds to:

- **Replace lost public sector revenue**
- **Respond to the far-reaching public health and negative economic impacts of the pandemic**
- **Provide premium pay for essential workers**
- **Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure**


The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provide substantial flexibility for each jurisdiction to meet local needs within these four separate eligible use categories.


SOURCE: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds>

FOX VALLEY LOCAL CHOICES

Not surprisingly, given this unexpected influx of funds with no pre-established process attached, each local government has handled their ARPA funds differently. Some acted quickly, with a focus on "rescue," while others determined to wait until the Final Rule was published by Treasury in January. Among the significant changes in the Final Rule is a major simplification for thousands of recipients through the \$10 million revenue loss standard allowance.

Public input is a requirement for any program or project receiving federal funds under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Some jurisdictions had a robust process for gathering public input, and others are just beginning their planning. Here's a run-down on choices in the Tri-County area.


 **Outagamie County** – Outagamie County decided very quickly to allocate 10% of the \$36.5 million for grants for small businesses and non-profits. The county's [ARP Dashboard](#) provides a detailed look at grant recipients. During summer 2021, the county hosted eight stakeholder community engagement sessions and conducted an online and randomly mailed survey to hear about the impact of the pandemic on residents. County residents identified broadband access as a top concern; additional major issues were workforce development, access to affordable child care, mental health concerns, affordable housing, food access, and lost revenue. Detailed planning to address these needs is currently underway. Outagamie County has been very transparent about its process and allocations from the start.


 **City of Appleton** – The city hosted two ARPA listening sessions and considered a proposal for ARPA funds as part of the 2022 budget process. The budget allocated about half of Appleton's \$14,759,070 to: recoup COVID-related expenses; replace a portion of lost revenue; finish lead service line


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ACTION: AARP Funds, continued


abatement; improve broadband access in the library reconstruction project; provide direct community partner support to non-profits; and contracting a consultant to develop the “Category 2” needs identified by city residents. Those Category 2 needs are: early childhood development; housing affordability; local economic recovery; social infrastructure, belonging and neighborhoods; community wellness, mental health and violence prevention; and arts, culture and educational institutions.

 **Calumet County** – Calumet County tapped into the expertise of Child Care Resource and Referral and the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce to address the negative impacts of the pandemic. In late December, Calumet County allocated \$689,783 for an Early Childhood Stabilization Program to shore up the child care industry and workforce in the county and \$50,000 for economic development services of its \$9.7 million total ARPA funds.

 **Town of Grand Chute** - The town began its ARPA allocation process with a workshop in mid-January and began with a list of projects prepared by town staff including painting the water tower, improvements to the town hall, software upgrade and sanitary sewer projects. The workshop did not include a public comment opportunity. The town has \$2.3 million in ARPA funding.

 **City of Neenah** - Neenah will receive \$5.55 million in ARPA funds. According to *The Post Crescent*, Mayor Kaufert proposed using: \$4 million, spread over the next three years, to help pay for police and fire operating costs; \$300,000 for improvements to Shattuck Park; and \$50,000 for optical fiber at Arrowhead Park. The mayor also suggested some of the remaining \$1.2 million be used as seed money for a senior center. Before approving the 2022 budget, the Common Council added \$175,000 to the budget for pedestrian and parking lot improvements at Kimberly Point Park and \$25,000 for a pedestrian route along North Park Avenue using ARPA funds. The additions came after the council removed \$200,000 in ARPA funds that were reserved for converting the Shattuck Park fountain into a splash pad, and the rest of the funding will be raised privately. **NOTE:** Repeated calls to the City of Neenah inquiring about ARPA allocations have been unsuccessful. This information is gleaned from *The Post-Crescent* 10-28, 11-19-21

 **City of Menasha** – Like the Town of Grand Chute, the city of Menasha recently held a Common Council workshop to continue planning its ARPA allocations. The city’s initial allocations (11.5%) were for police radios and tasers. The workshop involved consideration of the following potential projects: radio replacement for Police and Fire; IT security; Sanitary Sewer Relay Project; Hands On learning space at the Elisha D. Smith Library; Jefferson Park Master Plan implementation, and creation of a Menasha Business Improvement District (BID). However, Menasha did include opportunity for public input at its workshop. The workshop was the only planned opportunity for residents to weigh in on the use of \$1.5 million in ARPA funds, according to the clerk’s office.

 **City of Oshkosh** – In September, Oshkosh decided to use 75% of its nearly \$21 million in ARPA funds for infrastructure and 25% for community proposals. The city determined that “the top priority for ARPA funds be infrastructure projects already scored and included in the Oshkosh Capital Improvements Program” and the “next priority should be projects/programming suggested via the city’s public input process.”

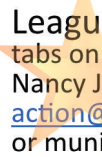
WHAT LEAGUE MEMBERS NEED TO KNOW

- Where public input has been robust, policy-makers have responded. If your own municipality or county is just getting started, encourage your elected officials and county/municipal staff to sincerely seek community input.
- Our League has participated in community engagement opportunities in Outagamie County and the City of Appleton and has shared written comments with the Town of Grand Chute.

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ACTION: AARP Funds, continued

- Some local organizations, e.g. [First 5 Fox Valley](#), have been encouraging collaboration between local governments. F5FV has proposed dedicating a portion of ARPA funds to an [Early Childhood Investment Fund](#).
- The ARPA allocation process will be active and ongoing for the next year or two. All funds need to be allocated by the end of 2024. Active monitoring in many jurisdictions will be needed all along the way as general plans move to detailed programs and projects.

 League observers and our partners in the [Equity Network](#) have been working to keep tabs on the local ARPA process, and more eyes and ears are needed. Please contact Nancy Jones at newiequitynetwork@gmail.com or League Action VP Jan Quinlan at action@lwvappletonfoxcities.org if you are willing to monitor/observe in your county or municipality.

VOTER SERVICES: Efforts Expand to New Footprint

By Brian Post & Jacqui Klimaszewski, Voter Services Team

Your Voter Services team efforts to provide voter education expanded this past election to match our local League's new name! The team produced candidate forums and interview videos and responses from candidates to Vote411 that included elections outside of Appleton for the first time. Here's the list of what they provided to our community:

- **Candidate Interviews/Forums**
- **AASD School Board Interview**:-all participated
- **Grand Chute District #4** participated
- **Appleton City Council** - District #4 Forum and District #10 Interviews
- **Outagamie County Supervisors**-District #19 Forum; from the 5 other contested races, one of the candidates declined or did not respond.


VOTE411

We have provided more information than EVER before and have a solid base for future elections. Some, especially Outagamie County and Grand Chute races, had never been covered in this way before, so this is new to many candidates. We had a **48% response rate!**

- **AASD School Board**: all responded
- **Appleton City Council**: All candidates were invited; some who didn't respond already participated in a forum and others were in uncontested races.
- **Grand Chute Town Supervisors**: Both candidates in #2 responded and candidates in #4 participated in a forum.
- **Outagamie County Supervisors**: All candidates were invited for contested and non-contested races.

Voter Education remains a key product we offer to our community. If you are interested in helping our community learn about candidates in an election, contact us here: voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org.

The Voter Services Team Wants You!

 The Voter Services team is offering opportunities for you to help promote voting in our community. We are active in producing our own and attending community events to register voters. We also produce candidate interviews/forums, and populate Vote411

VOTER SERVICES: We Want You, continued

with candidate views on questions our League members want to know about. We offer involvement at any level you are interested in:

Leader - Have an idea you'd like to try? Put together your proposal, plan it, organize it, execute it — we'll supply the volunteers.

Event Volunteers - Willing to help execute and participate in an event/activity? Let us know — we try to make the time commitments and activities "bite sized" to fit your schedule.

Participants - Just want to learn about voter services and offer ideas/expertise? Join our Voter Services team meetings - once a month for an hour.

VOTE411—Researching candidate information and/or uploading the information. Training will be provided on the VOTE411 program. This is a contribution that you can do from your home computer!

We offer training on Voter Registration in Wisconsin for anyone interested! Contact us here: voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org.

DEI: Study Group Sets Stage for Next Phase

By Renee Gralewicz, VP Programs

We've concluded our year of study, and as expected, we could not come to any conclusion regarding advocacy in such a short time. Our first year of investigation focused on organizations and their offerings. Our proposed second year will consist of reading healthcare organizations' reports and conducting interviews. You'll learn more about this when the Annual Meeting packet is distributed.

Our year of study proved to be challenging as we worked hard to narrow down what was a very broad topic with many complex elements. We started by focusing on local healthcare organizations and their services. Our proposed second year will consist of research into the guiding documents of local healthcare organizations, and conducting interviews with individuals and professionals who've had experience with these organizations and services. The Annual Meeting packet will include information on the work already underway, and set the stage for the proposed next phase. Whether this is a topic familiar to you or this is new, please read about this League study.

Guidance: Land Acknowledgement Resources

On Monday, April 4, members of the Community Alliances Committee (CAC) of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI) conducted a zoom program to help explain the Understanding Land Acknowledgements Guidance Document. LWV Appleton-Fox Cities members Renee Gralewicz and Jeanne Roberts assisted in drafting the document and the zoom program.

Both the document and the video are available on the LWV WI website at <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/article/land-acknowledgement-guide>. A direct link to the video is available at: <https://youtu.be/UDiuoOVHZ4c>.

Program: AAPI Heritage Conversation April 18

In anticipation of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month in May, join LWV Appleton-Fox Cities as we welcome members of our local AAPI community to discuss their experiences in the Fox Cities in the context of the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. We look forward to hearing the perspectives of Yee Lee Vue, Maiyoua Thao, Pa Lee Moua, Monica Rico and Irene Strohbeen. Register [here](#) for this Zoom event on **Monday, April 18 from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.** You may also register on our [website](#) by scrolling down the main page and clicking on the event information.

'Want Adds' for Those Who Want More

If you're looking for a way to "add" more to your League membership, have we got connections for you! Our League has a lot going on, and as we expand into more communities, the more opportunities we have to offer for member engagement and participation.

We have the honor of hosting the LWV Wisconsin state convention in June, and we encourage you to attend *and volunteer*. We'll be sharing details of the theme, great panelists, and ways to vote on state League business. Why not be a part of the fun as well as the business! Sign up for our hosting crew.

Gold stars in this issue denote our volunteer "wants." You decide how to "add" your talents and interests to the mix. Here's a list of these connection points. Check off where you want to plug in, snap a picture of this form with your phone, and email to our Membership Director, Cindy Fallona, at membership@lwwappletonfoxcities.org. Cindy will connect you with team leaders who will get you started.

I "Want" to "Add" My Talents to the League!

Name _____ Email _____

___ LWV WI Annual Meeting (June 10 -11; Paper Valley Hilton Hotel): registration table, Parade of Leagues, speaker timekeeper, Parliamentary oversight, circulate roving mics, count votes and ballots, greet and assist guest speakers and panelists in main and break-out sessions, etc.

___ Flag Day Parade: coordinate/decorate the Lamers trolley, help League parade participants in Flag Day Parade (June 11); wear white and march with our League

___ Observer Corps: be the League's eyes and ears on local government; work from the comfort of your own home; free training

___ Events Team: choose from setup, program duties, registration/welcome table, sell swag items, etc. at the Annual Meeting, Women's Equality Day, or the Holiday Brunch

___ Programs Team: choose topics & presenters; coordinate day-of details; sell swag

___ Voter Services: register new voters; recruit business partners; help market the League to new audiences; join our planning team; training is free!

___ Interview candidates for local public office; submit questions for candidates; time sessions; record videos & post to web and social media; etc.

___ League Annual Meeting (May 19; Pullmans): 2 volunteers needed to staff a Membership table; arrive 45 min. prior to event to set up; check in attendees; pack up Membership materials at end of event

___ Town Halls: monitor audience questions, tape the conversation; serve as timer

___ Social Media: adept at Facebook, Twitter, etc.? Identify and create messages, create strategies, take charge of one social media platform

___ Awards Team: solicit entries, review candidates, select recipient of Making Democracy Work Award(s), contact artist to create award

Complete this form. Snap a photo with your phone. Email to membership@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

MEMBER ALERT: Create Your Member Profile!

Our new League website — lwvappletonfoxcities.org — is now the entry point for you to manage your membership information, and access information on programs, news, Action alerts, and ways to get involved at any time. It also is where the League manages our membership database.

Less than 50% of our members have set up their Member Login accounts! This becomes a real issue when they try to register for programs and events. Club Express, the web program in which the website is created and functions, will only let a person register for events as a Non-Member if they do not have a Member account!

Your email might view messages from Club Express as junk until you add it to your contacts; that's the first step. When you see a CE email, do not ignore it — open it as it will contain a temporary password which you will need to set up your account. Once you have that temporary password, you will then create a new password of your choosing.

Think of a strong password, including upper and lower case letters, numerals and symbols. Don't give away personal information in your password. Use clues you will easily remember — and save this password where you can easily find it! Click [Member Login](#) to create your account.

In your account, you will be able to select areas of League activities of interest to you, activities or tasks you'd like to be part of, and ways we can communicate with you. You choose how your membership will work for you.

If you have questions, email membership@lwvappletonfoxcities.org for assistance. Please do it now!

LWV WI: 'What's Undermining Our Courts' Forum

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is holding its second virtual forum as part of its Fair Court Series. The program, "What's Undermining Our Courts," aims to educate Wisconsinites about issues like dark money and lack of recusal rules for judges, which compromise the independence of state courts.

WHAT: Fair Courts: What's Undermining Our Courts?

WHEN: Wednesday, April 13, 2022, from noon to 1:00 pm

WHY: Wisconsin has some of the highest special interest spendings in the Courts, according to studies by the Brennan Center. Often the money and people who give it are undisclosed. Alongside this, Wisconsin does not have any recusal rules that require a judge to step aside when dealing with a case of potential bias. The League has a long-standing position of advocating for measures to make our state courts more transparent, independent from partisan influence, and just for everyone.

WHO: Panelists include Prof. Edward Fallone, an associate law professor at Marquette University; Lisa Graves, Executive Director of True North Research; and Jay Heck, Executive Director of Common Cause Wisconsin. The panel conversation will be moderated by Joy Cardin, former Wisconsin Public Radio talk show host.

Panelists will take questions from the audience. For those who cannot make the live event, the recording will be uploaded on the League's website and YouTube channel.

WHERE: [Register](#) to be a part of this virtual forum.