

Feb.
2026



EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

THE INFORMED VOTER



Leadership Message - LET US BE CLEAR

by Jan Quinlan, President

The League of Women Voters of Appleton-Fox Cities has been proud of our Legislative Town Halls held virtually since 2020. Of our nine Town Halls, eight were bipartisan, a testament both to our elected representatives and to the issues-oriented nature of the events. After almost every Town Hall, I have personally thanked each legislator who participated for their civil responses. That is, up until February 2, which marked a departure from what we have come to expect.

What happened?

Question 3 of this Town Hall concerned two competing bills facing Wisconsin legislators: one which prohibits cooperation with ICE, the other which requires it. We asked where our legislators stood on these proposed bills and how they saw the relationship between federal, state, and local governments in immigration enforcement.

One of the legislators used his time to spread mis- or disinformation about what had happened in Minneapolis. Audience members called this out by posting comments in the Q&A. Why were we allowing untruthful information? Later the same legislator used name-calling in responding to our question about an independent redistricting commission. Audience members again called out his uncivil, inflammatory response and a number left the broadcast because of it.

Our Town Hall had become a platform for political tactics we denounce: mis- and disinformation and name calling. While Town Hall forums are not debates where we correct legislators or challenge their answers in real time — this behavior was unacceptable.

What will we do about this?

1. I have personally contacted the legislator requesting a meeting. At that time I will share with him the reactions of his constituents during this year's Town Hall, specifically calling out what was untruthful and what was uncivil.
2. We have formed a Board Task Force to discuss future Town Halls and how we can proactively regulate against this behavior.
3. We have posted a disclaimer on our webpage where the Legislative Town Hall recording is available.

Let me be clear. We will not tolerate those tactics during future Town Halls. While we want to continue to provide a neutral platform for our elected representatives to share their legislative priorities — name-calling and dissemination of mis- and disinformation will not be permitted.

My apologies to those of you who were offended that evening. We will make every effort to ensure this does not happen again.

LEGISLATIVE TOWN HALL



REP. DEAN
KAUFERT



REP. LEE
SNODGRASS



REP. RON
TUSLER

The League wishes to thank the state legislators who participated in the February 2 Legislative Town Hall, as well as those who submitted questions, and all who tuned in to the virtual event.

A recording of the event can be viewed [here](https://youtu.be/KSxmGBIwPVw):
<https://youtu.be/KSxmGBIwPVw>

IMPORTANT NOTE: The League disavows any inflammatory language, or mis- or disinformation expressed during responses to questions posed during the recent Legislative Town Hall. This behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The League's intent is to provide a fair opportunity for state legislators and the public to engage in civil, factual conversation about legislative priorities for the current session.

Forward,





February Voter Registration Training & April Elections

By Jacqui Klimaszewski
 Voter Services Vice President
voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org



Voter Registration Training

If you need training, **sign up NOW** for the **Thursday, February 26 Zoom** session. Brian Post will take you through everything you need to know and provide a "job aide" with reminders. Starting time is **6:30 p.m.** There are numerous handouts available to the folks we help and these will be explained. He will also emphasize the nonpartisan nature of the League in doing this type of tabling. This is also available as a refresher for anyone who has previously had training. To get on the list email voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

APRIL 7 ELECTION --- IMPORTANT DATES FROM VOTER SERVICES ---

More in-depth information can be found at:
<https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Voter-Deadlines>

Please note this important change regarding the deadline for the Absentee Ballot to be returned:
 The postmark on the ballot is no longer the deciding factor as to whether the vote can be counted or not. The absentee ballot **MUST BE RECEIVED by the clerk BY 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, or it will NOT be counted.** Given the post office routing changes, please **get your ballot mailed AT LEAST A WEEK before the election.**

March 17 Absentee ballots sent to voters with active request already on file.

March 18 (1) Deadline to Register by Mail or to register on-line at MyVote.Wi.US. Your voter registration form, along with **proof of residence** must be postmarked to your **municipal clerk** no later than March 18, 2026. Find your Municipal Clerk's Contact Information here.

(2) Deadline to **Register to vote online.** - Voters who are able to match their name, date of birth, Wisconsin Driver License or State ID number, and address with the Wisconsin DMV can register to vote online through March 18.

Absentee Voting April 7, 2026 Spring Election
 Deadlines: All registered voters in Wisconsin can request an absentee ballot be mailed to them for any reason. To request an absentee ballot on MyVote.wi.gov **click here.** You must provide a photo ID with your absentee ballot request, more information on **photo ID can be found here.**

April 2 @ 5:00 p.m. Deadline to Request an Absentee Ballot- Regular and Temporary Overseas Voters

April 3 @ 5:00 p.m. Deadline to Request an Absentee Ballot- Indefinitely Confined and Military

March 24, possibly through April 5
 In-Person Absentee Voting period. Office hours vary by municipality. Some municipal offices may not offer additional in-person absentee hours Please **contact your municipal clerk for absentee voting hours.**

April 7 @ 8:00 p.m. Deadline to Return Absentee Ballot- If you have already received an absentee ballot, you must return your absentee ballot by mail, or deliver to your municipal clerk. Your ballot must be received by your **municipal clerk** no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day,
 April 7.

A publication of **The League of Women Voters of Appleton-Fox Cities,**
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 Appleton, WI 54912 - USA
 Phone 920-738-7766

Published electronically 9 times annually for members of LWV Appleton-Fox Cities and our communities

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Candidate Forums & Appleton Referendum Info



Candidate Forums

See the info below in the purple box for forums set thus far for March. We are presently working to set up candidate forums for Grand Chute Supervisors 2 and 4.

If there are additional races you would like to see candidate forums or interviews for, please contact voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org. They may be added depending on time and resources.

MARCH CANDIDATE FORUMS

At this point two candidate forums have been scheduled:

(1) APPLETON SCHOOL BOARD
Thurs. March 5 from 6:30-8:00pm
Appleton Public Library,
Mary Beth Nienhaus Room
Community Meeting Room C

All four candidates indicated they will attend. Candidates include:

Nick Ross, Kris Sauter, Jason Kolpack and Michael Janke

To submit questions ahead of time, send to: voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org by February 28.

(2) APPLETON ALDERPERSON DISTRICTS 2 & 8
Tues. March 24 from 6:30-8:30pm
Appleton Public Library,
Mary Beth Nienhaus Room
Community Meeting Room B/C

District #2 Candidates are Vered Meltzer and Charles Brown. District #8 Candidates are Patti Heffernan and Kelly Dempsey.

To submit questions ahead of time, send to: voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org by March 18.

Submit Candidate Questions

If you have any questions for any candidates or positions, please send them to voterservice@appletonfoxcities.org by February 15 or as outlined for the two upcoming forums outlined in the lefthand column.

Questions will be used for forums/interviews and considered for VOTE411 questions. We are sending out VOTE411 questions to most municipalities in Outagamie County and all the school districts. There are a number of contested races for Outagamie County Board (Districts 3, 10, 14, 24 & 25). **This is an opportunity to ask about their stance on County issues.**

AASD Referendum Wording & Info Sessions

"Shall the Appleton Area School District, Outagamie, Calumet, and Winnebago Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$15,000,000 per year for four years, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year and ending with the 2029-2030 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of current operational expenses and operational expenses for additional services for students with mental health needs and students experiencing poverty?"

APPLETON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM

REFERENDUM INFO SESSIONS

The Appleton Area School District invites all community members to attend an upcoming Referendum Information Session. Each session will feature a brief presentation explaining the April 7 operational referendum, followed by time for questions and discussion.

Friday, Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.	Einstein Middle School Commons 324 E. Florida Ave.
Wednesday, Feb. 18, 6:30 p.m.	Virtual Session
Sunday, Feb. 22, 1:00 p.m.	AASD Welcome Center 2701 North Oneida St., Suite C3
Thursday, March 12, 6:30 p.m.	Wilson Middle School Multipurpose Room 225 N. Badger Ave.
Sunday, March 15, 1:00 p.m.	Einstein Middle School Commons 324 E. Florida Ave.
Thursday, March 19, 6:30 p.m.	Virtual Session
Wednesday, March 25, 6:30 p.m.	AASD Welcome Center 2701 North Oneida St., Suite C3

These sessions are designed to share clear, factual information and help community members feel informed and prepared ahead of the spring election. Open to all staff, families, and community residents.

Find more info and virtual session links at www.aasd.k12.wi.us/referendum.

Accessibility requests should be directed to Kayla Malott at malottkayla@aasd.k12.wi.us or (920) 852-5300 ext. 60111 at least 24 hours before the session.



Hundreds of Ways to Help



Time for Volunteering!

The **April 7th** election is rapidly approaching, and the League has numerous voter registration events in the planning stage. It is an ongoing goal for the League to get as many voters to the polls as possible—and the first step is helping them get registered.

At our voter registration assistance events, we also supply information about the voting process, absentee voting, how to find nonpartisan information on candidates, as well as explaining why some of the positions are important. This is significant in the spring elections because there are lots of candidates in lots of different races and it can get very confusing for voters.

SIGNING UP IS EASY

Sign-up announcements will be sent either through an email from the League advertising the upcoming event with a link to Signup Genius—

OR you will receive an invitation directly from Signup Genius

OR you can sign up from this newsletter using the hearts below!

In February and March there will be HUNDREDS—yes, HUNDREDS of volunteer opportunities! Here are the basics:

APPLETON PUBLIC LIBRARY	APPLETON HIGH SCHOOLS	DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES	SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES
<p>3rd Saturday of every month</p> <p>3 people needed</p> <p>click here to sign up</p>	<p>Appleton East, West, North and Central High Schools will all have voter registration assistance events during a flex time in early March</p> <p>at least 3 people needed per school</p>	<p>Feb. 25 -Mar. 18 there will be approximately 276 open slots for volunteers. We have 3 shifts a day during the week and 1 on Saturday that each need two volunteers.</p> <p>click here to sign up</p>	<p>TBD</p> <p>Some of the events are still in the planning stages—but these are some opportunities to get started.</p> <p>When you click on the links, all the dates and times will appear for that event and you can choose the ones that work for you.</p>

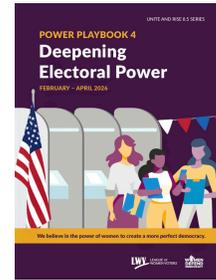
These do not count any requests that we get from organizations that would like us to help register voters- OR places we offer to come that we feel would benefit from voting information.

See—wasn't that easy? 😊 Looking forward to working with all of you at these and other events as they are planned! Any questions? Contact: voterservice@lwwappletonfoxcities.org



Mobilizing 8.5 Million Nationally Mobilizing 7,000+ Voters Locally

Nancy Jones
Action Vice President
action@lwvappletonfoxcities.org



UNITE & RISE

The League's ongoing Unite & Rise 8.5 Campaign, designed to mobilize 8.5 million people and harness the power of voter engagement, is focused on deepening electoral power. The goals of the current micro-campaign from now through April are to deepen partnerships, reach new audiences, build voter readiness, and build community election corps.

(See Power Playbook 4: Deepening Electoral Power for more details.)

Our League's Unite & Rise Team has four workgroups that have been convening partners and reaching out to eligible voters. Each workgroup leader has contributed the following updates on their respective activities and plans.

To take part in any of these activities, offer your creative talents, or just to learn more, email action@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

1. Arts & Visibility - Kim Schiedermayer

We're bringing the Constitution front and center by carrying a banner of the preamble in the Memorial and Flag Day parades. Each Saturday during the Farmer's Market on the History Museum at the Castle lawn, the banner will be displayed with a long canvas community members can sign to show their support for what the Constitution says. At the same time, several hands-on art/craft activities for all ages will be available to express sentiments, observations, hopes for life as defined in the Constitution.

An exhibit of community members' projects also may be shown in a public space (tbd).

We welcome volunteers to march in the parades, bring ideas for hands-on art/craft projects, and all who want to help at the History Museum on Farmer's Market Saturdays.



2. Civic Education & Gaming - Sue Abrahamson

Interested in helping with one or more of these efforts? We'd love to hear from you!

After the success of our fall Issues Briefings on Our Constitutional Crisis, the Civic Ed & Gaming Workgroup is gearing up for Election Year 2026 — and we need your help!

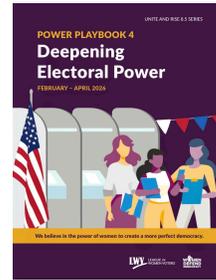
We're working to reach unreached voters through creative, community-based efforts, including:

- Spring voter registration at FVTC and Lawrence University
- High school visits to help new voters feel confident casting their first ballot
- Promoting Vote411.org with yard signs and postcards to encourage people to make a plan to vote
- Civic trivia nights with local trivia masters using League-provided questions
- Ongoing voter registration at the library, DMV, and Farmers Market

Our Unite & Rise goal is ambitious — mobilizing 7,000+ local voters — but together, we can make it happen.



Mobilizing 8.5 Million Nationally
Mobilizing 7,000+ Voters Locally

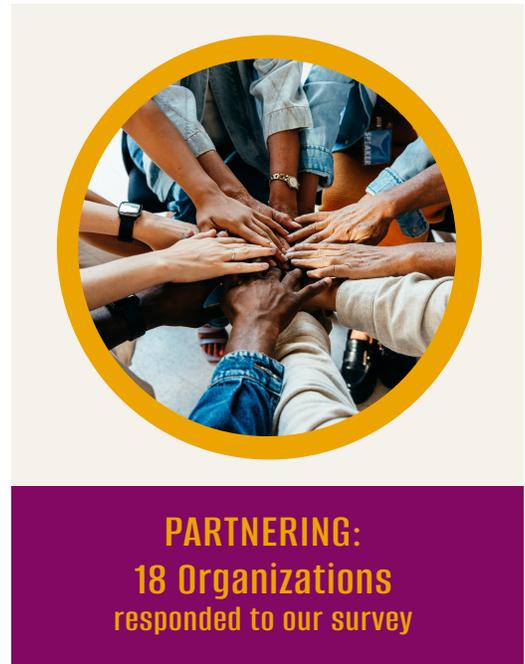


3. Coalition Building - Nancy Jones

We have created a directory of organizations willing to partner in a variety of ways including: sharing events and action opportunities, contributing stories of local impact, hosting training events, and sharing information on specific legislative proposals. This directory was compiled using data from our December 4 Convening Survey.

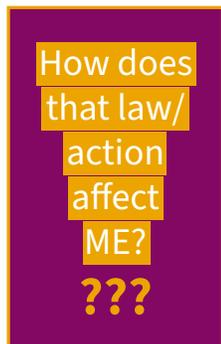
A second convening in late January resulted in: agreement on a purpose statement; sharing the directory and lists of organizations interested in various potential areas of collaboration (see above); informing the group about the faith-based Palm Sunday Path and Faith 250 campaigns that may encourage new civic engagement; and deciding on a secure communication platform.

Partnering organizations will continue to meet and look for ways to collaborate to defend democracy, civil rights, and programs that support the well-being of all area residents.



4. Media & Storytelling - Kathy Voigt

The Media/Storytelling Workgroup will play a prominent role in soliciting, collecting, documenting, and telling of how actions by the administration and Congress impact local individuals and communities. This team will develop a simple template for organizations and individuals to record and summarize the actions and resources that are being underfunded, under staffed or ended as a result of federal directives and the people whose lives are affected. This will become a repository for the stories and quotable sources.



Workgroup members stressed the need to protect the identities and privacy of the story subjects for safety. The workgroup will use the experience and connections of the group to advise on which communications outlets might be likely to report these stories.

Three team members attended a recent “Meet the Media” panel hosted by the Heart of the Valley Chamber. They were able to reconnect with *Post-Crescent* Editor Taima Kern and to meet Aaron Holbrook, assistant news editor for *InSight* Publications, and suggest how the League and its collaborating organizations could be reliable story sources for breaking news context and in-depth articles. Tips shared in this presentation also could be used to offer media relations training for small organizations. Resources were shared for “Know Your Rights” trainings for participants in demonstrations and marches.



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Kathie Kinnaman
Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion Director
dei@lwwappletonfoxcities.org



DEI UPDATES

The DEI Committee is working to branch out, and at our last meeting there were many ideas and a lot of enthusiasm:

We are compiling a list of businesses and restaurants in the Fox Valley that are owned by immigrants and/or minorities. The lists are for the use of committee members who want to patronize such places.

We are exploring serving a LWV-sponsored meal at Pillars.

There was also some interest in attending the meetings of other organizations in the Fox Valley, just to be visible and find out if there are ways we can support them.

Committee members are invited to spend one morning bagging clothing at the check-out counters of the Community Clothes Closet.

JOIN US!

Our next DEI meeting will be **Tuesday, March 3** at the **Long Cheng Marketplace, 1804 S. Lawe Street, Appleton.** The meeting will start at **1:30 p.m.**, but **arrive early if you want to get some food first.**

Are you interested in discussing homelessness in the Fox Valley?



XE54 - A WINE BAR & COCKTAIL LOUNGE
February 18
Wednesday at 6:00pm
1350 W. American Dr., Neenah

The DEI Book Share group will discuss *There Is No Place for Us Here: Working and Homeless in America* by Brian Goldstone.

This book is highly recommended by the *New York Times*. New members to the group are always welcome. Didn't read the book? Join us for the great conversations!



MEMBERSHIP INFO

Linda Bjella
Membership Director
membership@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

During the past month, we have welcomed four new members:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Margaret Kraus from Neenah | Cathy Staeven from Neenah |
| Jennifer Larsen from Appleton | Tim Trauger from Appleton |
| Jean McKnight from Menasha | Don Voigt from Harrison |
| Julie Meitzen from Kimberly | |

Our membership now totals 175 and our organization is truly representative of Appleton AND the Fox Cities!

Thanks for all our members who have recently renewed. The new membership platform maintained by LWV US is becoming more streamlined, but it is still a work in progress.

If you have any difficulty renewing your membership, please let us know by sending an email to membership@lwwappletonfoxcities.org.



BE SURE TO HAVE THESE EXCELLENT PROGRAMS ON YOUR CALENDAR

Jan Smith
Program Director
program@lwvappletonfoxcities.org



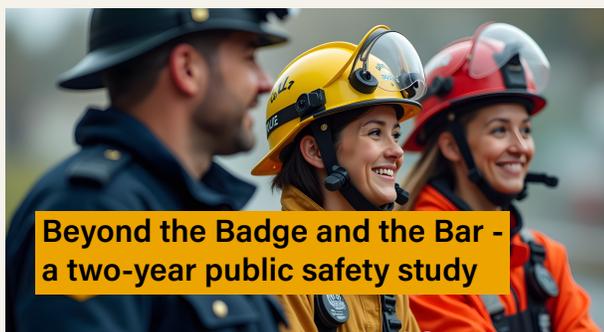
MORE ON THE HORIZON

Since the year began, your League has been actively engaged in the community and has several upcoming programs you may want to get on your calendar, as there will be more exciting things on the horizon.

On **March 2**, from **6:30-8:00 p.m.** we meet in the **Mary Beth Nienhaus Community Room A** to **review the findings of the Public Safety Study**. We will track consensus on our discussion of these important issues to craft new Public Safety positions for our local League.

If you want further info before attending, please view our presentation "**Beyond the Badge and Bar: A Two Year Study Report**" on YouTube.

There is no charge, but *please register through the calendar on the website, lwvappletonfoxcities.org.*



ORGANIZED BY JOSHUA, ESTHER, RUTH, FREE, & LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF APPLETON-FOX CITIES

LIFE AFTER INCARCERATION:

A REENTRY SIMULATION

Could You Survive Life After Incarceration?

Step into the shoes of someone returning to society after incarceration in this powerful, eye-opening simulation. Over the course of four simulated weeks, you'll face the real-life challenges of securing housing, finding employment, accessing social services, and avoiding violations all while trying to rebuild your life. This immersive experience offers a rare glimpse into the systemic barriers formerly incarcerated individuals encounter daily. It's emotional, humbling, and sure to change the way you think about reentry and second chances.

MARCH 16
REGISTRATION 5:45-6:00
SIMULATION 6:00-7:30
PANEL 7:30-8:00

REGISTRATION REQUIRED



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
724 E SOUTH RIVER ST
APPLETON, WI 54915

LEARN MORE ON THE REGISTRATION PAGE PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!





BE SURE TO HAVE THESE EXCELLENT PROGRAMS ON YOUR CALENDAR



POLLINATORS & WATER QUALITY

In celebration of **Earth Day**, LWVFC will meet on **April 20** from **6:30-8:00 p.m.** at the **Girl Scouts of the Northwestern Great Lakes Region offices** to examine some of the important issues currently making environmental headlines in the state. **Pollinators and Water Quality** is a broad topic, and there are two fantastic speakers to make sense out of this. **Sean Strom is an Environmental Toxicologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, specializing in fish and wildlife**, and **Shannon Faust Dick is the President of Wild Ones and UW-O Environmental Sciences professor.**



LIBATIONS WITH THE LEAGUE

By now, you should have received an invitation to our celebratory event, Libations with the League, on February 12, from 4:00-6:00 p.m., at Mondo! On the River. Let us know you are coming by registering on the website, and feel free to bring a friend. **Rideshares or carpooling recommended due to limited parking space.** It was enjoyed by all last year, and its worth repeating.

Libations with the League

Do friends ask you about the League? Invite them to come along! Friends and prospects are welcome.

Mondo! On the River

425 W. Water Street, Suite 100, Appleton
 Thursday, February 12
 4 to 6 p.m.
 Pizza • Cash Bar • Cake
 No reservations needed

