



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF MICHIGAN

Annual Report

July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023





Annual Report

July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

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Communications

"Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchasable voice in government."

*Carrie Chapman Catt, 1917
Founder, League of Women Voters*

Co-Presidents Message

When our fiscal year began on July 1, 2022, the League was deep into planning for the midterm elections. *Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy* was mission work that drove activities of LWVMI membership – electrifying our grassroots power.

Preparing for the November, 2022 election meant active voter registration events, dozens of candidate forums, and voter guides. Newly re-drawn state and congressional districts provided another opportunity for the League to educate voters about Michigan's new Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. The League is the most trusted source of non-partisan election information, and it showed with robust attendance at our candidate forums and record numbers who viewed our on-line Voter Guide (VOTE411) and over 119,000 print copies.

The LWVMI held a forum for the Michigan Supreme Court candidates, at which all the candidates participated. In addition, the state-guided Observers, covered all 83 counties to observe the County Board of Canvassers certify the 2022 election. The Board of State Canvassers certification was observed as well. Then, a first in a long time, a recount was held for Prop 2 and 3. League members observed this process as well.

Three proposals were on the November ballot, all of which we supported:

Proposal 1 – Transparency and Term Limits. We were a coalition partner of the group that sponsored the proposal.

Proposal 2 – Voting Rights Protection. Having collected 23,000 signatures to get this on the ballot, we continued to advocate at events to encourage VOTE YES! on Prop2.

Proposal 3 – Reproductive Rights for All. LWVMI was an active proponent for this measure that stands as a foil to the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

To educate voters on the proposals on their ballot, we held training sessions for members who then delivered the information to voters in townhalls. After LWVMI members collected petition signatures to help get Proposal 2 on the ballot, efforts were re-focused to advocate for Michigan voters to vote YES. Members were trained to present to groups throughout the state, to answer press and media queries, to participate in press conferences, and to use social media to spread the word. Michigan Voters passed all three proposals with significant margins.

We continue to ask more of our members and they continue to meet the challenge. Our Board of Directors has formed support networks that meet frequently with members involved in voter services, communications, treasurer duties, leadership (local League presidents and unit leaders), membership, and observer corps. These networks have given members an opportunity to share challenges and successes to improve our League and to better serve the public.

The Board of Directors completed a strategic plan in March, 2023, which will guide us for the next year. You can review it at lwvmi.org

In League,



Paula Bowman, Co-President



Christina Schlitt, Co-President

Voter Services Judy Florian, VP Voter Services

Election years dictate a busy time for the League. Below are some of our activities:

MI Vote Matters HS Registration Challenge: The purpose of this program with nonpartisan partner organizations, was to increase young voter knowledge and participation in the election process. Schools strived for the highest voter registration rate and earned recognition from the Secretary of State and Department of Education for the percentage of eligible seniors who registered or pre-registered. Many of our local Leagues across the state worked with the high schools to assist with their voter registration activities.

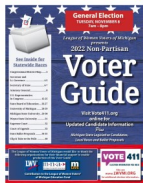
Coalition Partners: Our nonpartisan coalition partners continue to be very important relationships with LWVMI and help us broaden our scope with populations that may be unaware of the League, VOTE411 and our voter guides. Throughout the year, we participated in Clerk Engagement and Election Protection/Rapid Response programs under the leadership of Promote the Vote. Through these continued partnerships we received new and updated information, help with recruiting poll workers and Board of Canvassers observers, and engaged with and supported our local clerks.



Calhoun County LWV members registering voters with other partners on Juneteenth

GOTV Postcard Project: Fifteen local Leagues participated in our first ever Get Out the Vote (GOTV) project for the November 2022 election. Our target population was newly registered, first-time voters. Through our partnership with Michigan Voices, we obtained mailing lists from the Voter Activation Network (VAN), which interfaces with the Michigan's Qualified Voter File. LWVMI reimbursed local Leagues for postage and printing through grant funding. A total of 16,050 postcards were mailed statewide.

State Voter Guide: We developed and printed a record high 119,145 voter guides. Thirty local Leagues distributed these guides in their communities. We also have a statewide network of libraries who distributed a large number of guides, along with many coalition partners, including ACLU, Common Cause, Michigan Voices, Disability Network, Michigan League of Conservation Voters, Michigan Non-Profit Association, MLive, and Oakland Forward, among others. We shared a link to the digital version with all local Leagues to put on their websites and developed a Quick Response (QR) code of the Guide for local libraries.



Training for Election Workers: *Bystander Intervention & De-Escalation Training*, developed by LWVUS, was conducted prior to the November 2022 election with 31 of our local League poll workers, watchers and challengers attending. The focus of the training was to provide support to election personnel or voters facing harassment and intimidation, knowing voter's rights at the polls, nonviolence and bystander principles, best practices and tactics, and role play scenarios. Feedback from attendees was very positive.

19th Amendment Project: LWVMI worked with the Muskegon Intermediate School District on a project-based learning program for 4th grade students. The students read *The Hope Chest* by Karen Schwabach, a book about women's suffrage and the passing of the 19th Amendment. Nine League volunteers met with the 4th grade students and teachers via Zoom and provided information on the League, elections, and voting. All volunteers reported a very rewarding experience not just for them, but for the students and teachers.

Membership Camilla Davis, VP Membership

Membership in LWVMI continues to grow. In January, 2023, we had 2725 members, 27 Independent Leagues 3 Member-at-Large State Units, and 3 Geographic Units that are mentored by a League adjacent to them. In June, we were delighted to approve the application from the Greater Grand Rapids Area LWV for independent League status.

We have continued to reach out to local Leagues to provide support to membership leaders. The Membership Leaders' Network meets monthly and includes an information segment, and then an opportunity for membership leaders to share their successes and challenges. Average participation per meeting has been members from 25 Leagues.

A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team offered sessions on how to implement DEI in a local League, using the DEI lens to evaluate League policies and programs, how to recognize implicit bias, and how to have difficult conversations with individuals of different beliefs or backgrounds.

A Zoom meeting was held for Leagues located in the northern part of Michigan to offer the opportunity to share successes and challenges with each other.

The Membership and Leadership Development program continues to support local Leagues. Experienced League members offer support to local Leagues, MAL State Units, and Geographic Units by sharing best practices for recruiting new members, increasing visibility in their community, and developing leadership.

- Michigan Leagues**
- Berrien/Cass Counties
 - Copper Country (with Gogebic Geographical Unit)
 - Dearborn/Dearborn Heights
 - Delta County
 - Detroit
 - Eastern UP MAL State Unit
 - Flint Area
 - Grand Haven Area
 - Greater Grand Rapids Area
 - Grand Traverse Area (with Crawford County Geographical Unit)
 - Grosse Pointe
 - Holland Area
 - Jackson Area
 - Kalamazoo Area (with Calhoun County Geographical Unit)
 - Lansing Area
 - Leelanau County
 - Livingston County
 - Macomb County MAL State Unit
 - Manistee County
 - Marquette County
 - Midland Area
 - Mt. Pleasant
 - Northeast Michigan
 - Northern Lower Michigan
 - Northwest Wayne County
 - Oakland Area
 - Saginaw County
 - Tecumseh/Lenawee Co. MAL State Unit
 - Troy
 - Washtenaw County



Members of the Marquette League participate in a community parade

Advocacy Susan Smith, VP Advocacy and Judy Karandjeff, Advocacy Committee Chair

This past year, LWVMI had six advocacy goals:

1. Support the passage of Proposal 2022-1, which changed the term limits requirement and added transparency requirements for state elected officials.
 - The Advocacy Committee recommended, and the LWVMI Board approved the support of Proposal 2022-1, which passed in November 2022.
 - The Constitutional Amendment requires the Legislature to pass implementing legislation by December 31, 2023. As of June 30, 2023, no bills were introduced.
2. Support the passage of Proposal 2022-2, which added certain voting rights to the state Constitution.
 - LWVMI was an active member of the Promote the Vote Coalition that worked for the passage of Proposal 2022-2, which passed in November 2022.
 - Following its passage, the Advocacy Committee reviewed implementing bills and recommended action to the LWVMI Board.
 - LWVMI testified at Committee Hearings and participated in press conferences in support of the implementing legislation.
3. Support the passage of Proposal 2022-3, which added Reproductive Rights to the Constitution.
 - LWVMI was a member of the Reproductive Freedom for All Coalition
4. Support the passage of National Popular Vote Legislation that would enable Michigan to join the National Popular Vote Compact. LWVMI was an active member of the NPV-Michigan Coalition, engaging in the following:
 - Participated in press conferences
 - Testified at committee hearings
 - Participated in a media campaign, including social media
 - Sent *Action Alerts* to members
 - Conducted a workshop for League members at 2023 State Convention
 - Encouraged local Leagues to give educational town halls to their communities
5. Continue to Monitor the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC).
 - A team of trained League volunteers continued to observe and report on MICRC meetings.
6. Encourage Local Leagues to Engage in Local Advocacy.

The LWVMI Advocacy Committee:

- Supported several Network Groups of local League members to encourage sharing of ideas and programs on advocacy issues. Groups included the Environment, Money in Politics and Firearm Safety.
- Hosted quarterly meetings of local League members interested in Advocacy. Members of the Advocacy Committee reported on legislation they were following that was of interest to the League, such as election laws, firearm safety and the environment.
- Sent *Action Alerts* to local League members.

Communications Committee **Kathy Poore, Director**

The purpose of the Communications Committee is to serve Leagues in their pursuit of serving the public, and to assist with both external and internal communication needs.

A network of local League members involved in producing newsletters, handling social media and managing websites began to meet monthly. The network shares ideas and resources on local practices and requests additional training on some technology or acceptable practices in the League.

Key achievements this year were the creation of a LWVMI's Communication Guidelines, a video highlighting the importance of our Action Alerts to members, and tutorials on League policies. Efficiency, clarity of messaging and the consistency of always speaking with one voice are the goals.

Observer Corps **P. David Allen II, Director**

The Observer Corps in our local Leagues continue to flourish. League members observed dozens of public meetings, including those for township trustees, school boards, city councils, library boards, county commissions and zoning boards. Periodic network meetings for observer corps members around the state were held via Zoom.



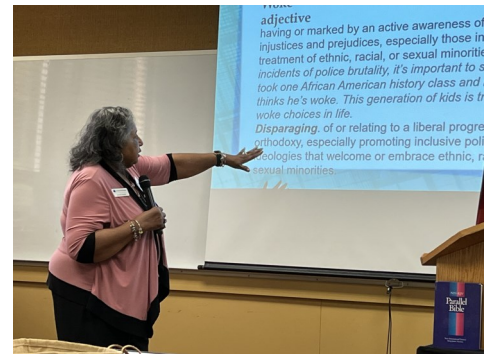
Lansing Area LWV members observe the Recount in December, 2022

Our post-election observer program of the county Board of Canvassers grew in 2022. Trained observers monitored county Board of Canvassers as they certified elections, serving as a stabilizing presence during this public process and alerting election authorities of any threats. Following the November, 2022 local certifications, the League immediately joined the team of observers of the unusual state recount of the ballot proposals. Members were trained on this new process and reports of disruptive or illegal actions were delivered to the authorities.

2023 State Convention

LWVMI held an in-person state convention in Lansing near the end of May, 2023. Delegates from all over the state elected new officers, passed budgets for the next 2 years, approved a bylaw change, and approved LWVMI's program for the next biennium. In addition to the business of the League, delegates could choose to attend several workshops from those offered: Gun Safety, LWV Engagement with Communities of Color, National Popular Vote, Censorship Including the Avoidance of Black History, New Leaders Boot Camp and Creating a LWV Unit on a College Campus.

At our Saturday evening banquet, we also cheered for several members who were given prestigious awards for their extraordinary achievements. The weekend convention was attended by 167 delegates representing their local Leagues and all left with a reenergized commitment to the League's mission of Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy.



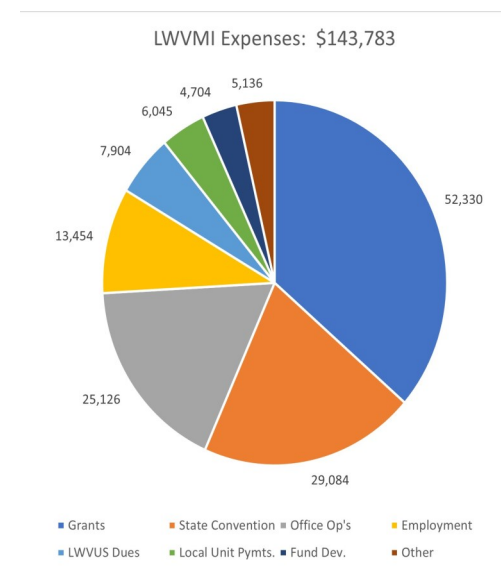
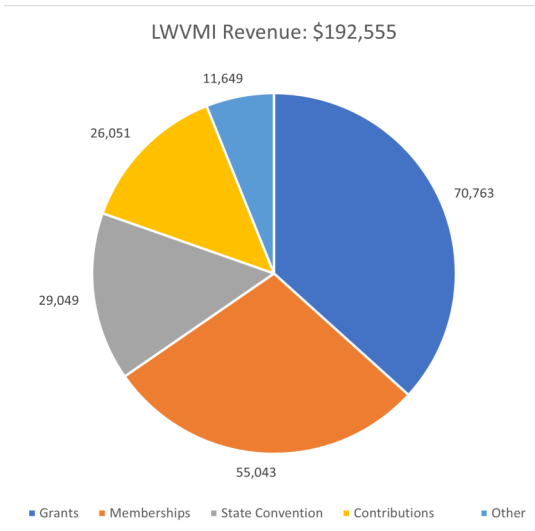
Leading a discussion on censorship at a Convention workshop.

Finances

Denise Hartsough, LWVMI Treasurer and Judy Karandjeff, Assistant Treasurer

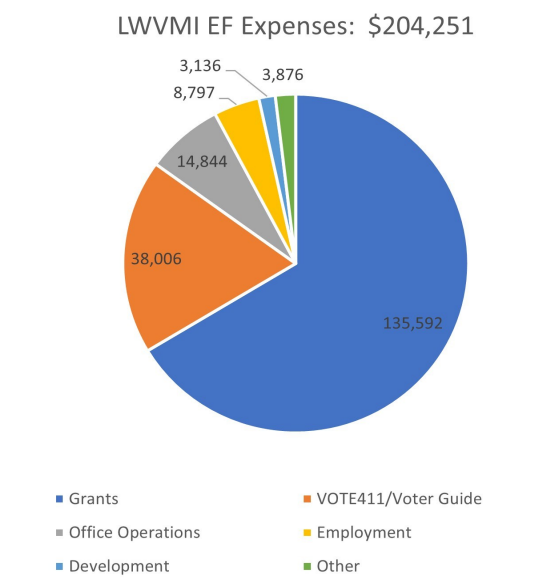
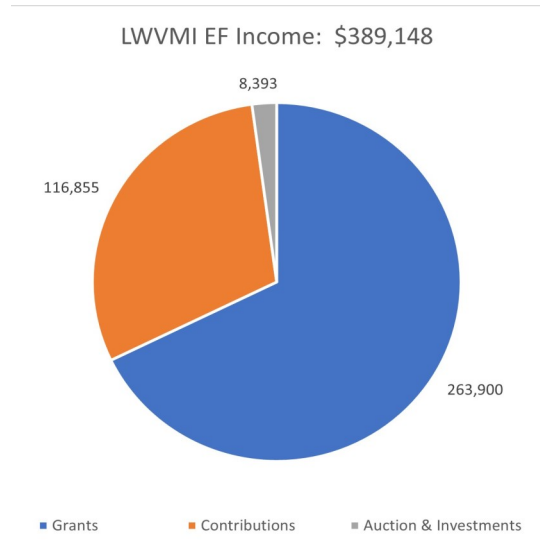
LWVMI (501c4)

Grants comprised over a third of LWVMI's revenue and expenses this fiscal year. As planned, revenue and expense for the State Convention balanced. The LWVMI office operates and is staffed thanks to the dues paid by local Leagues (State Per Member Payment--PMP) and donors' generous gifts. PMP and gifts covered operational expenses. Some grant revenue was yet to be expended in 2022-23, which created a surplus at year-end.



LWVMI Education Fund (501c3)

The Education Fund serves as the vehicle for the League's voter education and protection efforts, which attracted a large amount of grant funding this fiscal year. Grant expenditures were the single largest expense, followed by \$38,006 for VOTE411 and the Voter Guide. The Education Fund reimbursed the State League for its share (40%) of office operations and staffing costs. Some grant revenue was yet to be expended in 2022-23, which created a surplus at year-end.



Thank you!

Without the financial support of our members and friends, our League work would not be as impactful. We are grateful to all who have made financial and in-kind donations during this past year. We are pleased to recognize our generous donors on these pages.

Note: 14 donors wished to remain anonymous.

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Be a part of the League's future

Please consider Including a gift in your will or trust to sustain the League. Donors will be honored with membership in the Belle Brotherton Legacy Circle. Members of the Belle Brotherton Legacy Circle continue to empower voters and defend democracy by naming the League in their will or trust. What will be your legacy? For more information call the LWVMI office at 517-484-5383 or make a gift at lwvmi.org

League of Women Voters of Michigan

600 W. Saint Joseph Street, Suite 3G
 Lansing, MI 48933-2288



*Florence Belle Brotherton
 was the first president of the
 League of Women Voters of
 Michigan*

