



# BUILDING POWER TOGETHER

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A STRATEGIC PLAN TO  
RENEW AND  
TRANSFORM THE  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF NEW JERSEY

**2023 - 2026**

ABRIDGED VERSION

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# Executive Summary

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is committed to taking bold action to empower voters and defend democracy, and to standing courageously with New Jersey's most vulnerable and oppressed residents as they seek equity and justice. Voting is the catalyst for achieving economic, social, and racial justice. This makes the League's fight to protect and expand voting rights essential for New Jersey residents. The League's power and influence must grow as never before if it is to be effective in responding to this critical moment for our democracy. The purpose of this strategic plan is to create a roadmap for the renewal and transformation of the League.

This strategic plan seeks to:

- prioritize initiatives that advance a multiracial, multicultural, accessible, inclusive, and equitable democracy;
- ignite growth in membership and support by building a more inclusive culture and an infusion of diverse perspectives;
- and strengthen LWVNJ's impact by increasing capacity and expanding support.

This strategic plan will allow the League to become even stronger and more diverse, to make an impact at every level of government, to establish new community partnerships and coalitions, to promote fair and equitable policy change, expand its expertise in voting rights and other vital issues, and further provide essential services to empower New Jersey voters.

# Introduction

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is an actively nonpartisan organization and is among a very small number of groups in New Jersey with a strong federated structure, enabling it to benefit from a true grassroots orientation. The League's long history of activism and integrity has positioned it as one of the most well-respected nonprofit organizations in New Jersey, while its commitment to organizing, planning, and perseverance has made it one of the most effective advocacy groups in its work at both the State and local levels.

The League has worked to support voting rights since its founding in 1920, but the importance of the League's mission to empower voters and defend democracy has never been more critical than it is now. Protecting voting rights and defending fair elections have become urgent priorities in New Jersey and all across the country. Recognizing the importance of this historic moment, the League seeks to grow its power to become an even more effective force in empowering voters and in pursuing transparency, accountability, and equity across New Jersey.

To initiate this strategic planning process, the League undertook a rigorous and comprehensive process to assess the organization's position among similar organizations, identify the views of internal and external partners regarding the League's potential for growth and impact, and develop a compelling direction for the League to become a stronger, more visible organization. As part of the planning process, consultants from the Br'Island Group were retained.

# Mission, Vision, and Values

## OUR MISSION

Empowering Voters.  
Defending Democracy.

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## OUR VISION

We envision a people-powered democracy, actively dismantling systemic racism and removing all barriers to full participation in our government, to ensure New Jersey's diverse communities are empowered to build political and community power.

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## OUR VALUES

### **Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

We center the voices of the communities we serve and seek justice for those most often impacted by systemic racism and oppression in our democracy.

### **Integrity and Respect**

We courageously stand in our nonpartisanship, centering the rights of voters over the power of politicians and political parties. We are committed to treating all individuals with respect and dignity.

### **Education, Empowerment, and Engagement**

We build community power through emboldening (extra)ordinary people to gain knowledge and skills, get engaged, and lead.

### **Transparency and Accountability**

We foster trust through an open, accountable, accessible, and visible decision-making process. We take accountability for our mistakes and celebrate our growth.

### **Community, Collaboration, and Belonging**

We prioritize collaboration, community, and belonging through strengthening partnerships with individuals and organizations that share our values and goals.



# BUILDING POWER TOGETHER:

## *A Strategic Plan to Renew and Transform LWVNJ*



“Our society will not be free and just until the most vulnerable people are able to access [needed] resources, and nothing short of bold action will ensure a truly equitable democracy.”

*Jennifer M. Howard, MD, MPH  
LWVNJ President*

# STRATEGY 1

**Prioritize programs and advocacy that advance a multiracial, multicultural, accessible, inclusive, and equitable democracy.**

## **GOAL A: Expand voting rights and strengthen democracy through a prioritized and proactive policy agenda.**

- Prioritize campaigns to advance pro-voter reforms
- Lead the fight for government transparency and ethics
- Pursue reforms that advance a more representative democracy
- Analyze emerging democracy policy issues to identify potential League priority campaigns
- Strengthen internal League capacity to advance democracy reforms

## **GOAL B: Increase the impact of the League's voter services efforts by expanding the electorate, speaking with one voice, and providing voter education in every district.**

- Develop standard and consistent voter services communications for use across League levels
- Provide high quality voter education materials to New Jersey's diverse communities
- Improve voter turnout for low-propensity and marginalized voters
- Foster greater candidate accessibility and accountability

## **GOAL C: Pursue equity and racial justice issues.**

- Expand relationships with partner organizations with shared equity and racial justice priorities
- Foster authentic relationships with legislators and decision-makers to increase impact
- Create framework to analyze equity impact of advocacy items

## STRATEGY 2

**Ignite growth by building a more inclusive culture throughout the League of Women Voters of New Jersey for an infusion of diverse perspectives.**

**GOAL A:** Foster a more accessible and inclusive culture throughout the League to encourage engagement, broaden participation, and increase impact.

- Create leadership models and opportunities that allow for increased engagement for members of all ages, genders, and background
- Increase Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training throughout the organization

**GOAL B:** Build power through a stronger and more diverse League to increase impact.

- Increase the size, diversity, and geographic reach of League membership
- Increase member engagement through a renewed focus on League activism and organizing

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*“Helping to make information available around voting and elections. With so much misinformation, that is a really good thing.”*

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*“I have a fundamental belief in democracy. I’ve chosen this organization to invest my time and energy to promote democracy.”*

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## STRATEGY 3

**Strengthen LWNJ's impact by increasing capacity and expanding support.**

### **GOAL A: Strengthen the League's organizational capacity to achieve its policy goals.**

- Enhance visibility, recognition and public awareness for the League and strengthen its reputation
- Generate \$1 million in sustainable annual revenue by FY 2026
- Build and sustain professional staff team
- Increase leadership training across the League designed to build leadership bench, policy areas, and deepen commitment
- Strengthen League of Women Voters Board of Directors

### **GOAL B: Streamline administrative and organizational demands on local Leagues to increase their efficiency, sustainability, and impact.**

- Reduce administrative burdens on local Leagues by increasing capacity at the state level to support state-administered local Leagues



# Organizational Capacity

Currently, the League has sufficient organizational capacity, including excellent Board and staff leadership, as well as a strong membership base to begin undertaking this strategic plan. In order to achieve the plan's ambitious goals, the League must continue to grow its capacity by strengthening staff and leadership, growing its membership, and increasing financial support.

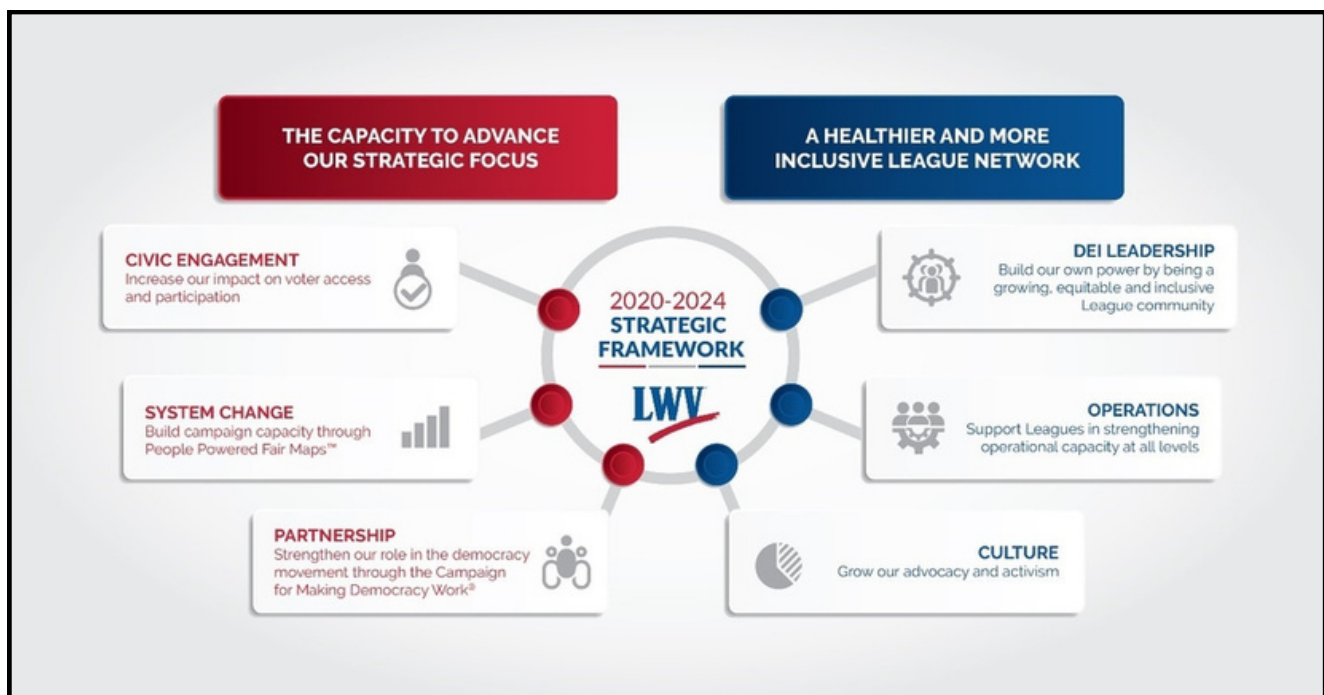
The League has a proven track record of success in this regard. Over the past five years, the League has experienced a 210% increase in fundraising for the Education Fund (501c3) and a 94% increase in support for the League of Women Voters of New Jersey (501c4). Additionally, the League's membership in New Jersey over the past six years has grown by 46%. These are remarkable rates of growth, particularly given the declines experienced by state Leagues in some other parts of the country.

The League has also achieved remarkable success in its programs and services. Most recently, the League achieved historic results in New Jersey's redistricting efforts through what became a far more open and inclusive process. The League is already preparing to play a key organizing and advocacy role in the next redistricting exercise, which will follow the 2030 decennial census. As one outside observer noted, this initiative demonstrated that the League clearly "punches above its weight" on every issue it seeks to address.

***"The League is very persistent. We don't give up easily. I think the success of the League rests on its credibility, which rests on its track record to continue as a non-partisan organization for more than 100 years and through periods of hyper-partisanship. That is truly remarkable."***

# Insights from LWVUS “Structure Transformation Plan”

The League of Women Voters of the United States has categorized the activities included within its national strategic framework into those which (a) build capacity to advance the League’s strategic focus and (b) build a healthier and more inclusive League network to advance its mission.



LWVNJ’s strategic plan is consistent and complementary to the League of Women Voters of the United States strategic framework. The League of Women Voters is positioned for success at all levels of the organization.

# Opportunities for Transformation

Successful implementation of the strategic plan will:

- Leverage the grassroots strengths of the League while responding quickly and consistently with one voice.
- Create a culture that is welcoming, inclusive, trusting and attuned to the needs of today's members, to encourage membership growth.
- Position the League as active, engaged, and courageous to galvanize a diverse membership body.
- Increase public awareness of the League's mission and what it accomplishes in communities across New Jersey.
- Address the perception that the League does not reflect the demographic makeup of New Jersey, by highlighting the League's successes and commitment to advancing inclusivity.
- Support and sustain an aggressive fundraising effort that enables the League to grow its organizational capacity.
- Ensure that the League's track record as a leading racial justice organization matches public perception.

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey's record of advocacy has consistently reflected its commitment to pursue racial justice, as has its active partnerships with other leading racial justice organizations. The League's challenge in this area is based on its limited organizational visibility. A strategic commitment to advance a multiracial, multicultural, accessible, inclusive, and equitable democracy is worthy of appropriate public acknowledgement. The League will strive to communicate this message more effectively.





# Conclusion

This strategic plan is designed to significantly enhance the League's impact at this time of great peril to our democracy, growing threats to voting rights, and persistent racial injustice. The work and impact of the League in advancing its mission throughout New Jersey has never been more important.

The League has committed to building the organization's power over the next three years to vigorously strengthen democracy, zealously pursue the right to vote, and collaboratively advance racial justice. To do so, the League has developed strategies that will: (1) prioritize programs and advocacy that advance a multiracial, multicultural, accessible, inclusive, and equitable democracy; (2) ignite growth by building a more inclusive culture throughout the organization for an infusion of diverse perspectives; and (3) strengthen the League's impact by increasing capacity and expanding support. Together, these strategies will result in a renewed and transformed LWVNJ.

The League recognizes that it will need to approach this work pragmatically to ensure an agile strategy management approach. The League will do so by ensuring that organizational focus and efforts are targeted to advance the League's mission and to meet its fiduciary obligations.

Despite the many challenges facing our democracy, the League's success in implementing this Strategic Plan is likely to result in enormous benefits for our state and our communities. The League's bold action will, indeed, foster a more equitable democracy. As LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Turner has said, "the League has the power to make our country a better place for all. As we educate, advocate, and litigate, we work tirelessly to fight injustices. That is what we do as the League of Women Voters: we fight for voters and for our democracy, and we do it with passion and integrity."



# Acknowledgements

Building Power Together: A Strategic Plan to Renew and Transform the League of Women Voters of New Jersey is possible because of the dedication of the many individuals that supported the strategic planning process. LWNJ extends its deepest gratitude to the Board of Directors, the Strategic Planning Committee, the League's Program/Policy and Board Committees, the staff, our consultants the Br'Island Group, and the many League members and local League leaders who participated in strategic planning sessions and interviews to provide their insights.

## **League of Women Voters of New Jersey Board of Directors**

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