

Executive Summary

Response Rate

Our overall response rate was 47.6%. Of the 86 active members on the date of the survey, 41 responded to the survey.

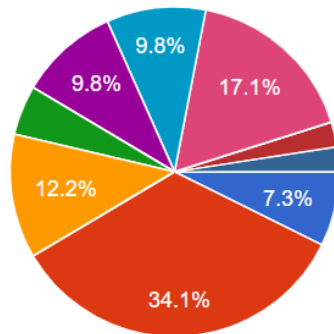
Key Findings

- The largest percentage (34.1%) of respondents said they joined LWVDC because they “wanted to be politically active and engaged with a nonpartisan organization.” The next highest (17.1% of respondents) said they joined because they “wanted to learn about various political and public policy topics, e.g. attending meetings, joining book club.” (See Question #1.)
- We met or exceeded the expectations our members had when they first joined LWVDC. (See Question #2.)
- Our members value the educational aspect of our meetings, both the quality of presentations and the variety of topics covered. (See Question #3.)
- Our meeting time is a challenge for many people and people acknowledged that is largely driven by the library location.
- 92.7% of respondents said they plan to renew their membership!
- The respondents identified 4 clear priority activities:
 - Registering voters (82.9%)
 - Organizing and holding candidate forums (70.7%)
 - Organizing and holding other voter education events, e.g. public issues forums (70.7%)
 - Bringing in subject matter experts to discuss relevant topics to Dakota County (68.3%)
- Registering voters was hands down the activity area in which people want to volunteer (87.8%).
- Many of our members don’t want to lead or co-lead in any capacity (46.3%).
- Barriers identified to greater engagement included:
 - “I’m too busy in my personal and/or professional life. I don’t have more time to give.” (31.7%).
 - “I travel a lot and/or I’m a snowbird, so I’m gone for extended periods of time.” (24.4%).
- Most of the respondents (80.5%) said the frequency of our meetings is “about right” with regular meetings occurring monthly.

Full Report – Question by Question

Question #1

What was the **primary** reason you joined League of Women Voters of Dakota County (hereafter LWVDC)? ("Other" allows you to add something not listed.)



- Overall legacy and reputation of LWV
- Wanted to be politically active and e...
- Wanted to help organize voter educ...
- Wanted to connect socially with like...
- Wanted to help register voters
- Wanted to be involved in my comm...
- Wanted to learn about various politi...
- I was a member of another LWV ch...

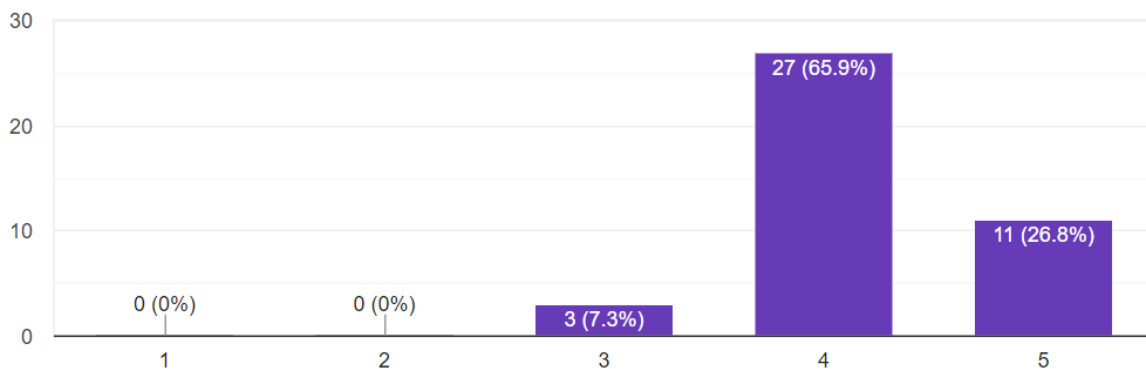
▲ 1/2 ▼

- My mom has been a long-time League member and she inspired me to join.
- I came to my first meeting because I wanted to be part of an organization that protected voters rights. I joined because I was so impressed with the 5 principals that we went over at my first meeting. I felt like those princip...

▲ 2/2 ▼

Question #2

How well has LWVDC met the expectations you had when you first joined this chapter?



Question #3

Please tell us more about how LWVDC has exceeded, met, or fell short of your expectations.

- The education is great. I enjoy the fact that I've met so many people.
- I haven't had a chance to get super involved yet, but it seems like exactly what I was hoping to find.
- meetings are user-friendly, members are very welcoming to new members/interested individuals. volunteer opportunities are online sign up
- Presentations have been excellent.
- In order to be politically informed it is necessary to 1. Be educated and informed 2. Brief speakers for educational purposes 3. Dialogue between members with the goal of hearing each other. Better Angels tried to foster this kind of dialogue
- I am only a very recent member. I have not been able to participate much yet as other commitments are still winding down.
- I had very little understanding of how LWV operates as an organization when I joined via the LWV Minnesota website, so frankly, I didn't really have any expectations and didn't even know that there was a local league in Dakota County.
- I thought I was joining LWV to help educate people on the need to vote, providing voter education on issues, etc. I was surprised and amazed by how much I've learned through the various guest speakers and policy forums. I was also impressed in my first meetings by how many articulate and well-informed people were involved! Paula is amazing as a leader. Her organizational abilities, and the organization of the LWV overall, far exceeded my expectations. Volunteering at a Citizenship ceremony was amazing!
- The monthly education offerings are mostly interesting and informative.
- LWVDC has met my expectations. I wish there were two of me so I could participate in everything the League offers.
- I have received a balanced education from monthly meeting presenters in matters related to the Constitution, elections, voter motivation, etc.
- Most of the meetings are on interesting topics and I've learned new things. Helping registering voters at high schools has been a fun a fulfilling experience.
- I think LWVDC does good work and has made an impact in the community, e.g. voter registration at the high schools and holding candidate forums. Our public forums have been good too. The speakers have been really good, and I like the variety of topics we've covered. Two things that kept me from giving a "5" are lack of member engagement (it's always the same people) and the position statements of LWV which don't seem very nonpartisan.
- A very dedicated core group of individuals who get a lot done; only improvement would be to have more members and more members involved.
- LWVDC exceeded my expectations considering it has only been in unit status. Amazing website, informative meetings and speakers, many candidate and issue forums, aggressive voter registration, etc. The only area that is weak is building a cohesive membership that is ready to continue the legacy created thus far.
- The ways to be involved are so numerous and interesting that they exceed my expectations.

- It has just been impossible for me to make any of the monthly meetings. I was able to volunteer at one event but have not been able to do anything else. I normally work until at least 6 pm, in West St Paul. I just cannot get to Burnsville.
- Programming has been outstanding, informative, educational and useful.
- Exceeded - I have made real friends and I wasn't expecting that. I have also very much enjoyed everything I learn at the meetings when we have speakers and forums. I also like volunteering at events - it makes me feel like I'm part of the process and not just a bystander.
- Meetings are run extremely well, volunteering options are well defined
- I really like the presentations about various local government things, like having some of the county commissioners, the elections/city clerk's folks, discussions of what the Met Council is and its purview. Also, the voter outreach has been great.
- Excellent educational meetings - I've learned a lot from the many speakers LWVDC has brought in.
- Enjoyed the speakers, the panel discussions, the socializing with politically interested people.
- LWV has come a long way since I was a member in 1986. I am proud of how it is moving forward.
- Outstanding leadership, fantastic involvement in the community, great on educating the public
- I always thought it was about voter registration, but I have learned so much more.
- Was hoping for more opportunities to take action in local community, and on national issues.
- I've been very happy with the observer core status updates and the presentations have been good.
- It gets me out on cold winter evenings.
- Have enjoyed learning about public policy and the leagues positions on policy.
- They couldn't find my membership information the first two years. MN State League showed my dues as paid.
- Lots of good discussion about issues and non-partisan approaches
- I wanted to get more info about voting procedures, candidates and wanted to increase my knowledge about issues the LWV care about. The LWVDC met all these expectations.
- The leadership, especially Paula is very well spoken.
- Very informative meetings, developing relationships with people on both sides, non-biased events that show both sides of the issues. (However, a few have fallen short of that.) The candidate forums are very well done, and they provide a much-needed opportunity for voters to compare candidates without the strong bias and antics of the media.

Question #4

What do you like best about being a member of LWVDC?

- Learning about what is going on in my community, state and country.
- Learning about important topics in a nonpartisan group
- non-partisan
- Meeting people and learning about the various topics
- The work we do with voter registration, citizenship support and local news
- The ability to learn about past and future issues that of great interest to our community and the ability to stay active. Also love talking and exchanging ideas with like-minded woman.
- I appreciate the outstanding speakers who have conveyed valuable information.
- Being able to participate in the dissemination of information that is helpful to individuals in participating in our democracy.
- Access to speakers and registering new citizens to vote
- The guest speakers, learning about policies that shape US current events in a non-partisan format, having a positive outlet for my frustrations and disappointment in the 2016 election (e.g. why did so many women decide not to vote!) I loved volunteering at a Citizenship Ceremony!
- The speakers and connecting with the other members.
- Learning about various issues and topics that I don't always research on my own, or in some cases, really even know about. The locally focused panels are particularly interesting.
- Being able to learn from and contributed to LWVDC/registering voters at Naturalization ceremonies
- See above and I've met great people.
- The people and the mission.
- Associating with a group of like-minded individuals.
- Meeting with members from different backgrounds.
- The chance to register voters and the outreach through forums and speakers. I always learn a lot and feel inspired to engage others.
- A venue for becoming better informed and being of service.
- I believe in the mission
- Learning something new at each meeting.
- Being part of an organization that protects voter's rights on a national level. (and volunteering at events)
- Lots of opportunities to get involved
- As odd as it sounds, being a part of an organization with such a long and lustrous reputation.
- The meetings, candidate forums, policy forums
- The speakers, registering young voters
- The younger members and male participation
- educating its members and the public, emphasis on voter registration and rights, knowledge and interaction of the members

- I like being informed and hearing multiple positions on issues.
- The other members are wonderful.
- meeting with other women in the community.
- Meeting new people.
- Guest speakers and other members
- Being informed about local issues.
- I am confident we will register voters, but we haven't yet
- Interacting with members.
- Interesting programs; good info I probably would not have known otherwise
- I've really enjoyed volunteering for the naturalization ceremonies and the school board forums
- I like the guest speakers and the topics have helped me learn more about government.
- Becoming more informed and developing relationships with people on both sides of the political spectrum.
- Being able to participate in voter registration and being updated on Dakota County issues

Question #5

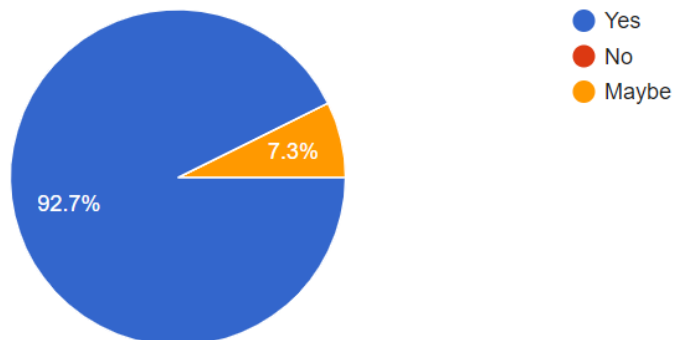
What do you like least about being a member of LWVDC?

- Some of the attendees/members want to change the league to their personal beliefs.
- It's hard for me to make it to meetings
- it's more my own dislike of night driving and not LWVDC-day meetings would be just as hard with work obligations.
- Winter meetings!
- Social half hour needs to be reworked. Due to library hours and members trying to get to meetings along with set up, there is no effective conversation between all members. Round table discussions do not happen often
- n/a
- The small group discussions
- Sometimes it feels as though we spend so much time learning and educating that we spend relatively little time taking action on the issues we discuss.
- I would like to see more young people within the ages of 20-40 at the meetings.
- I can't think of anything I don't like. I guess I wish the meetings didn't start so early. It's difficult to get dinner between getting off work and getting to the meeting on time.
- Needs to be 2 hours.
- Well, since the library has changed hours, I don't like the early start times of the monthly meetings.
- The lack of membership interest in and commitment to organizational leadership
- The times of the meetings.
- I wish more people were involved. It seems the same people carry the load all the time. I'd like some other people to volunteer more...or at least show up.
- Maybe we're interested in too many things for the number of members we have.

- Not many male members
- Wish we had more time at meetings. There is usually not much opportunity for speaker q and a, or for members to “connect” afterward.
- The difficult choices about how to use my limited time at LWVDC.
- location of events
- I feel like a slacker at times because leadership is not one of my strengths.
- the stress of trying to find time to follow through on ideas
- Nothing yet
- I think if we can recruit and retain a more reflective population compared to the county that would be great. Also, there is a lot more I'd like to do but can't because meetings that are being Observed are during the workday, or voter registration drives as well.
- Hmm. I like most things. Not as interested in the general LWV mailings/info.
- I am a community involved person and cannot take on any more leadership positions. I do assist at some of the League events. But I feel badly that I can't do more.
- N/A
- would like the meetings to be held back at Galaxy Library
- I cannot think of anything.
- Feeling like I listen to lots of speakers, register voters, and don't do much else.
- can't think if anything
- Cold evenings.
- My schedule has prevented me from being as involved as I would like to be.
- The Pro-Life Action Network heavy influence on the group.
- N/A
- Nothing really
- Can't think of anything
- The meeting times are challenging to make
- I can't think of anything.
- Contributing to and being part of an organization that promotes policies that I do not agree with.
- Driving to meetings in winter evenings

Question #6

Do you plan to renew your LWVDC membership at your next renewal date?



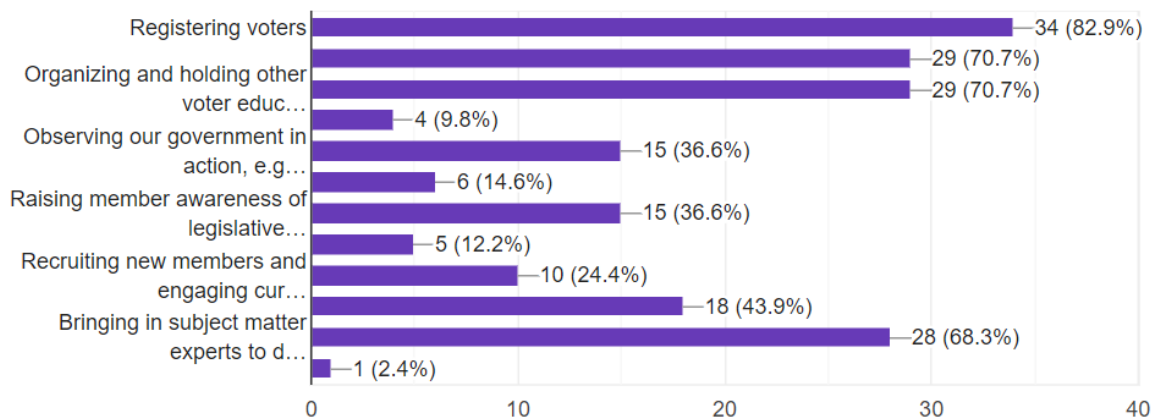
Question #7

If you answered "no" or "maybe" please tell us why you answered that way.

- Early years leader team was present and visible to membership Shoah was a strong motivator to the average attendee. Education speakers have been excellent but can be watched at home. Something should compel members to attend face to face
- I might look into a different chapter.

Question #8

If LWVDC could only do 5 things from the list of activities below, which five things would you choose?



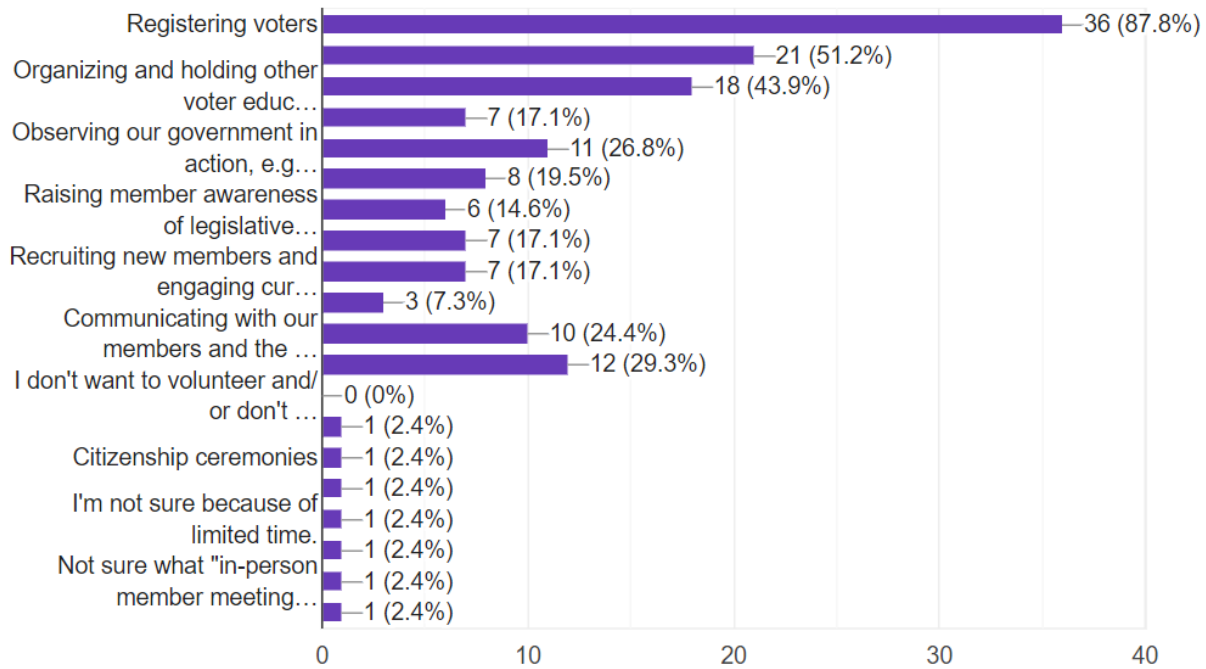
Question #9

Are there any activities you think LWVDC should be doing that we are not? If yes, please share those ideas below.

- Not at this time.
- Not sure if you do any voter registration drives or outward facing events to actively find new members?
- 1. Should meetings be monthly? 2. Should there be speakers for certain months? 3. Should there be socials several times a year? 4. Should some months be table talk topics? 5. Should invited speakers be part of table talk to energize members?
- Possibly selecting activities that might encourage younger members to join.
- Advocacy
- No
- No. The only area where more work should be done is inspiring members to step up to leadership roles. I don't know how you do that besides strongly communicating the need, which has been done. Perhaps dedicating a member meeting to the topic and sending all-member communications to explain leadership roles and responsibilities and emphasizing if members don't step up there will no LWVDC.
- We seem to be doing a wide range of activities and programs already.
- No
- Can't think of any
- N/A
- No
- no
- Plan at least one public forum per year.
- I believe openness in government and voting integrity are as important as voting rights.

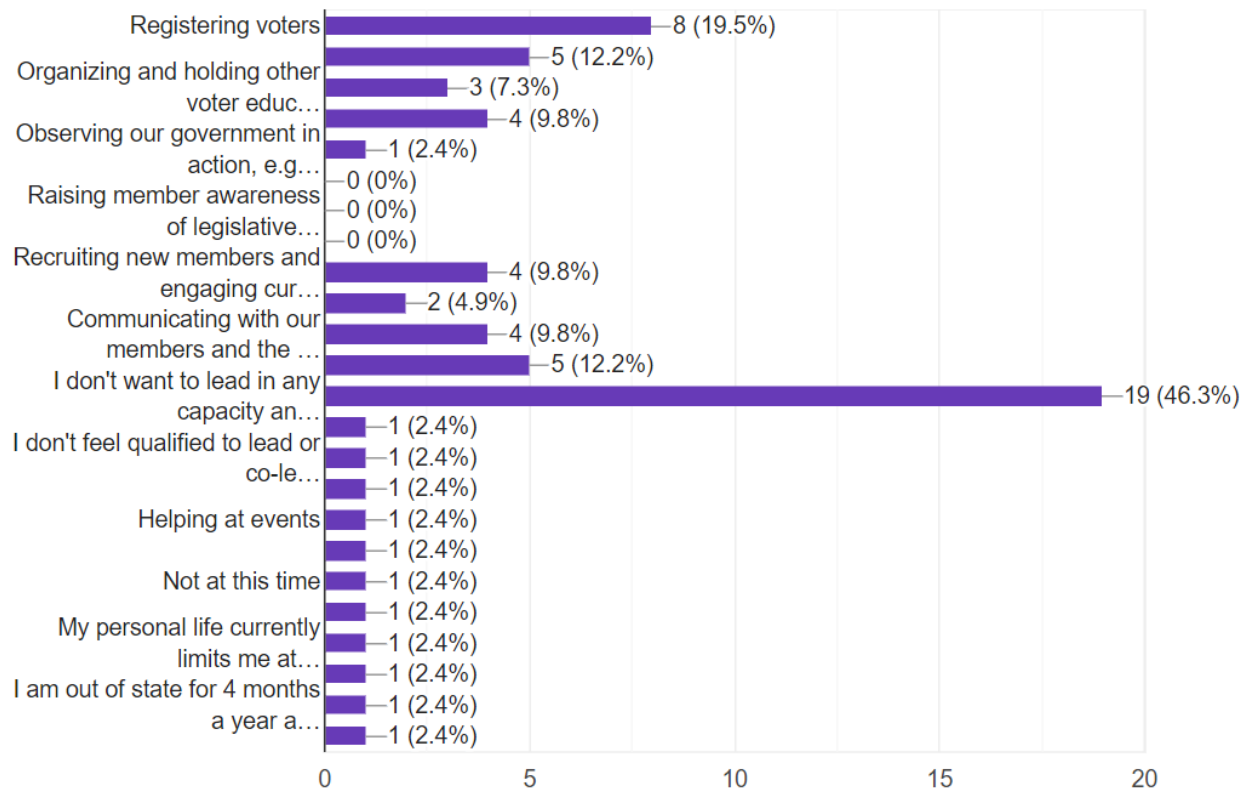
Question #10

For which activities are you willing to volunteer in any capacity?



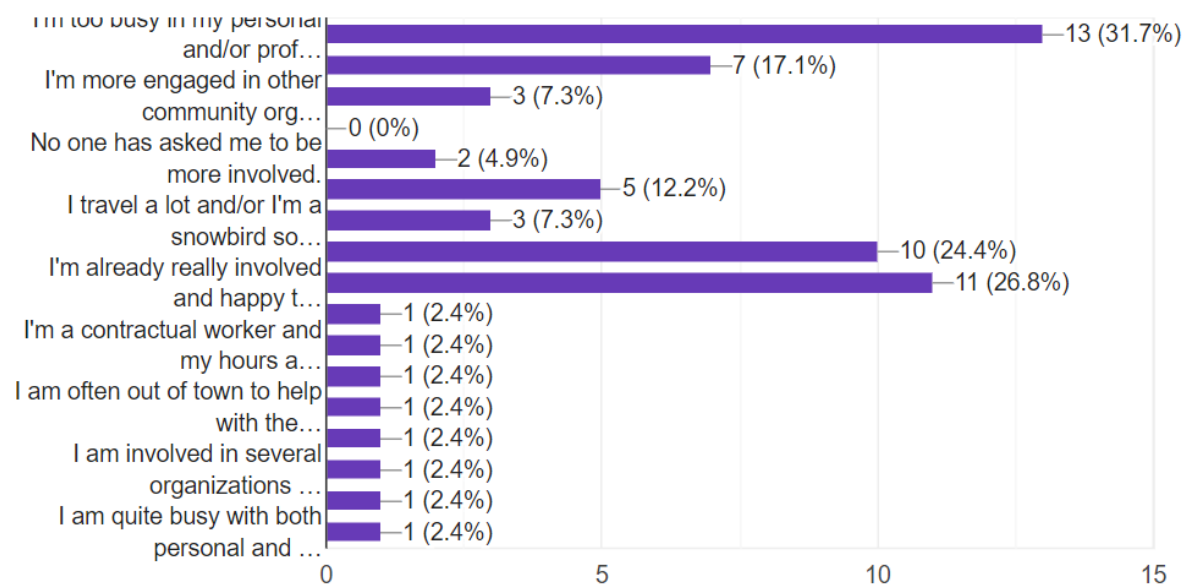
Question #11

For which activities are you interested in serving as lead or co-lead?



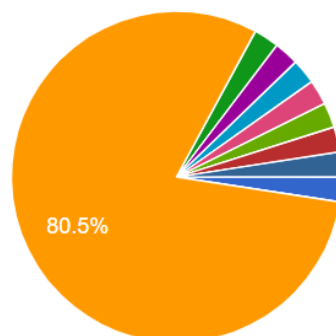
Question #12

What gets in the way of you being more engaged with LWVDC?



Question #13

LWVDC currently holds member/public meetings once per month. Is that meeting frequency...



- Too often - we should consider quarterly
- Not often enough - I'd like meetings more often
- About right
- Too often but perhaps fewer winter meetings
- There should probably be at least 9 meetings per year
- I'm not sure about this. If we continue with monthly meetings, I'd like to see more public meetings
- Monthly or every other month seems fine
- Since I cannot make the meetings, I don't have an opinion

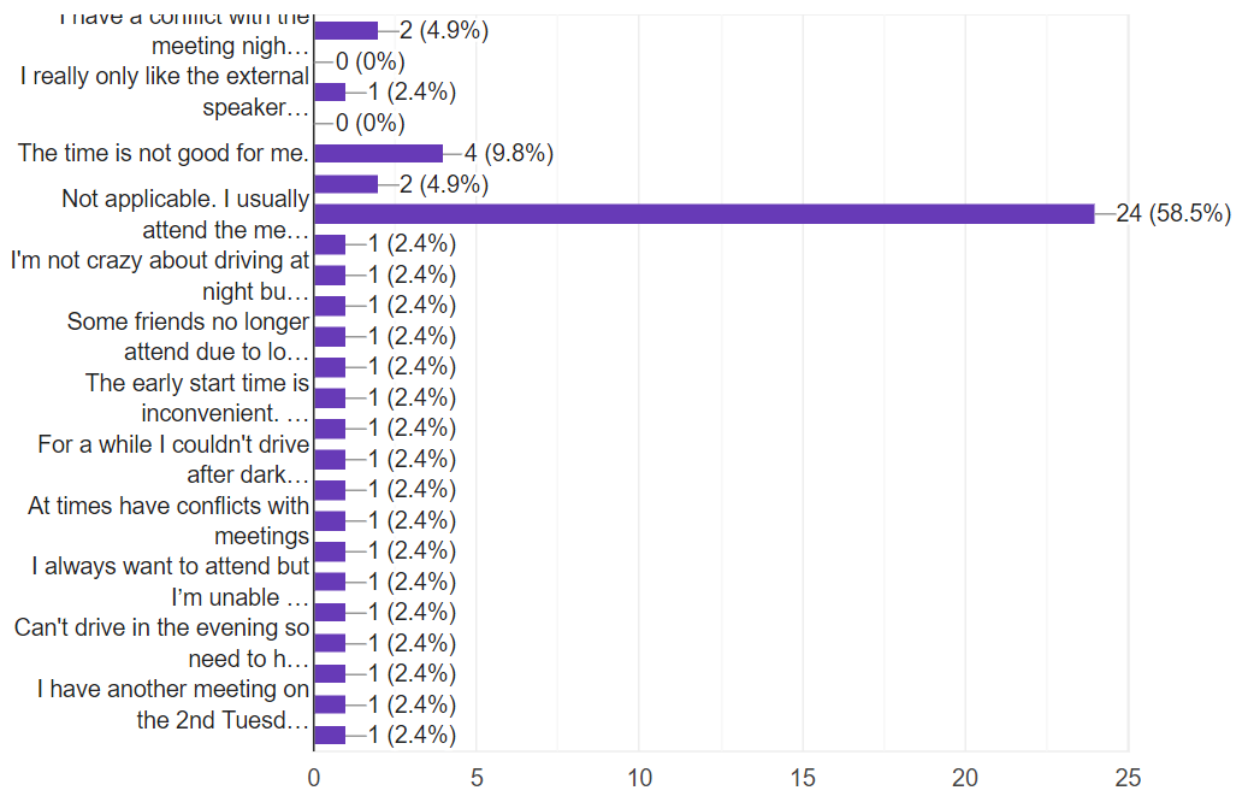
1/2

- 8 meetings per year is plenty
- Either every month or every other month would be fine.

2/2

Question #14

Attendance at our monthly member/public meetings is diminishing and we want to understand why. Please let us know what gets in the way.



Question #15

What ideas do you have to change our monthly member/public meetings to attract more people?

- I do not know
- Do some social-only meetings or activities besides just the monthly member meeting, maybe? Or host a short orientation once in a while for new/interested members to figure out the lay of the land
- live stream?
- Fewer meetings
- 1. Identify key action months 2. Identify places and months for social events 3. Identify key responsibilities and do them well. What is a general membership topic and what is a spin off group (book club)?
- mentioned below
- Have them less frequently.
- Focus more on attracting members of the public rather than LWV members.

- Hold them later in the evening, so working people can attend more easily.
- How about a token reward for every time someone brings a friend who hasn't attended a meeting before? Like a candy bar or \$2 Caribou/Starbucks or DQ gift card?
- Lose the "Women" from the title.
- I'd prefer a later start time, although I understand this is difficult due to the library schedules. Topics that have current value are my favorite but must be tricky to plan with the need to have an agenda set months in advance. Perhaps an "active" meeting a couple times a year where LWVDC could perform a community service and then meet in a local brewpub/eatery afterwards for social time.
- It seems that an engaging speaker on a hot topic draws the larger attendance.
- Time is too early because of library hours. Maybe we could negotiate with the library.
- Keep the subject matter experts and the variety of topics but expand the time to allow for more interaction and discussion.
- Partner with other organizations to bring in speakers; if we continue to have monthly meetings, have a partnered meeting quarterly or so.
- Not sure
- I wish I had some ideas. I want the LWVDC to "succeed" in remaining viable and relevant, but don't know what else can be done. Perhaps finding meeting venues that don't have the time restrictions the libraries impose?
- Would a school location give us more continuity? I am fine with rotating sites, but it may confuse some people.
- I wish we had options other than the library because of their change in hours.
- Have a portion of the meeting set aside for members and visitors to be in a small group and do something - answer something, brainstorm, ... - it could be very quick but just a chance to feel connected and engaged. And with Observer Corps - I would appreciate a quick synopsis on any important topic in Dakota County vs the Observer Corps telling us about the importance of the meetings.
- Send an email reminder
- Co-sponsor meetings with other groups? Though that might pull from an already engaged population.
- Start at a later time
- Continue to have panels/speakers.
- It is early, maybe another place to meet
- none
- Reach out to those that have missed two consecutive meetings.
- Offer people some options to help with issues. If having an Immigration speaker, what are the ways we can help immigrants?
- perhaps make them more interactive engaging discussion.
- Keep
- Ad in Sun Current inviting anyone interested is invited.
- Small Plate Hot Food Appetizers
- No suggestions

- Perhaps more interaction among members during the meetings.
- At meetings, limit time individual members can report to no more than 2 min and use a timer
- Somehow amplify more on social media when the monthly meetings are and the agenda for each meeting
- I think when you have an interesting topic/speaker and send out an email with the information it helps increase attendance. I have passed on information about speakers and have had guests come to the meetings.
- I think the partisan policies have created a reputation for the League of being another arm of the DFL, and this has turned away a lot of women who would otherwise be interested in joining. People on both sides are getting very tired of the hostility and division caused by polarization and promoted by the media.
- If the Burnsville Library or other community meeting place that is close to where most LWVDC members are located has the technology for hosting videoconferencing, it might help. I know that would help me during winter evening meetings. I am experienced in attending and participating in video conferences.

Question #16

What topics are you most interested in hearing about, whether at our monthly member/public meetings or at LWVDC-hosted public issues forums?

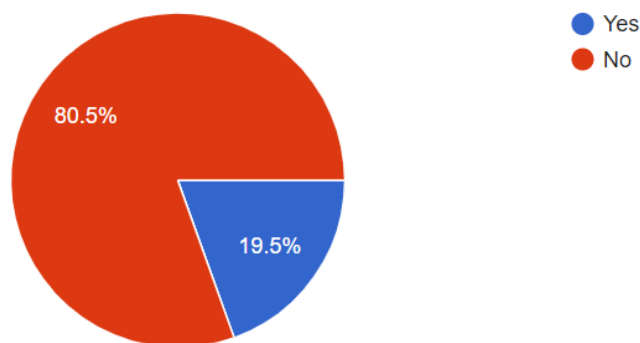
- Census, expanding the vote, engaging voters and inspiring turnout, local issues
- impact of national issues/legislation on local policy/community
- Policies in Minnesota/Dakota county/ Apple Valley regarding women's issues, housing, child poverty, housing etc.
- Between local issues and statewide efforts, we seem to have too much to do with too few people
- I'm interested in anything that is going to impact our lives, but we might want to focus on issues that impact mostly younger families as we try to attract new, younger members.
- Anything that has to do with voting, governmental policies, local, state and national policies.
- Lobbying, campaign finance, Dakota County Board governance, issues regarding K-12 education, the impact of the media, environmental issues, over-incarceration and other criminal justice issues.
- Education, Voter suppression, Climate change, Immigration, Redistricting
- Immigration, what it takes for an immigrant to become a citizen, school funding (maybe Jeff Solomon, retired ISD 196 financial officer), the economy/how the Federal Reserve Board and Fed Reserve Banks work, County issues such as how to attract a labor force - I hear that several county projects can't get started because contractors can't find sufficient laborers to start the projects,...
- Immigration, voter id, current legislation,

- I enjoy the legislative focused topics. I also think locally relevant topics are very key to our existence. We should strive to be an outlet for ensuring democratic principles are being appropriately exhibited in our community. So, any local issue that has some steam might be good for a public issue forum.
- climate change/tax policy U.S. & MN/election protections/bias or not in education K-12 and beyond
- The ones we've held have been very good.
- Campaign finance reform, solutions to partisan gridlock, engaging younger people in civics and politics, immigration reform.
- I think we should spend more time at meetings planning and organizing our activities. For example, a group interested in Observer Corps could decide which county meetings are important to attend and then decide who would attend what meeting.
- Election Laws
- Dakota county issues, public interest topics such as the recent meeting about the role of media, becoming more educated about how decisions get made in our county, voting district, state legislation.
- redistricting updates, barriers to voter registration and voting, voter profiles and voting trends
- Violence prevention, women's reproductive rights, voter suppression, climate change
- I have found the topics presented to be very interesting. Reports and educational talks on both State and local issues are interesting. The ethics of journalism was terrific.
- voting rights, the electoral college, effective ways to encourage people to vote (get out the vote campaigns that work),
- Census, policy ideas and info,
- Met Council, things the County Commissioners are working on, perhaps a state-wide issue?
- Policy issues such as health care, environment, etc.
- Current political issues, local political issues
- It was many years ago and the process has changed
- I like what is being done.
- I'm pretty open.
- Protecting & Restoring the Vote, Justice/Prison reform, Income inequality
- process
- More voter registration events
- So many...Money in Politics, Gerrymandering, Voter suppression issues
- Observer Corp and Voter Participation
- No suggestions
- Engaging people in voting; helping with education of citizens
- MN based issues from our State Legislature and how we can be of influence. Perhaps schedule a Better Angels meeting that encourages/helps us learn how to talk to people with very different political views.
- Voter rights, how and why there is voter suppression

- I would like to hear more about the positions the LWV are taking on issues and what they are doing to make their positions known. Also, how effective have the LWVs been in influencing government. How can individual members help promote the LWV position?
- More info on the various state and county departments and what their responsibilities are and how they are structured. The one on School Budgets was very interesting.
- I am most interested in access to voting and voters' rights, and in what I can do to promote independent redistricting bodies.

Question #17

Have you ever been a member of another LWV chapter anywhere in the country?



Question #18

If you have belonged to another LWV chapter, please share any recommendations based on your previous experience.

- They broke the chapter into smaller units to meet (some met in day, or rotated, etc.) less frequent meetings
- That chapter struggled too with getting people involved beyond just the "regulars." That chapter had really strong connections within the city structure, e.g. human rights commission, etc. It made for some natural allies and partners for programs. LWVDC should explore who else in the county might be good partners.
- We met in an open roundtable format rather than an audience-speaker format. There was more conversational engagement among members.
- I was 40 yrs. younger so don't remember a lot except there was a strict time limit for individual members to either give their area report OR speak to an area of concern just discussed. If a reaction to speaker was either complete agreement or obvious disagreement, encourage people to speak and make them aware a timer will go off. It forces focused and concise comments. If lots of controversy, break into small groups and let people talk to each other. Use the Better Angels model.

- I was very active in the LWV of Milwaukee County (Wisconsin) initiative to encourage nonprofit organizations to provide voter information to their constituents and to help them register to vote.

Question #19

Is there a way that you would like to contribute your time, talent, or expertise either inside our organization or externally with the community that has not been presented so far? If so, please say more about that.

- n/a
- No
- I have been very active in the past. If the unit attains League status, I would be willing to help on a fundraising team.
- n/a
- N/A
- Not at this time.
- Depending on timing, I can help write grant proposals to support LWVDC priorities.

Question #20

What other feedback would you like to provide to the LWVDC leadership team as we consider our future?

- none at this time
- Thank you for accepting a role on the leadership team.
- When all results are tallied from the survey. Take the time to discuss with membership
- I worked my entire career at a high paced financial institution in the highly regulated pension industry and never even knew about this organization until after I retired. We need to figure out a way to attract women like me who are most likely also raising a family. I wonder if you currently have a program where you meet with woman where they work in Dakota County? The biggest companies?
- The LWVDC team is amazing! Thanks for all you do!
- I appreciate the dedication of the leadership team very much!
- You should be proud of all you have accomplished. The current leadership has exceeded my expectations in many ways.
- n/a
- I think the leadership team has done a great job
- Usually try to make all of our meetings, but at times have conflicts.
- N/A
- Thank you for the many hours you give to making LWVDC happen.
- I know some women are losing interest because they want the league to be more partisan.

- Contact your members via email and ask for a reply for confirmation of their attendance 3-days before each meeting.
- Think things are progressing nicely
- I think you all do a terrific job.
- 1) More actively reach out to minority communities in Dakota County, 2) Narrow the areas of policy work because it appears to me that the LWVDC is spread thinly by trying to tackle as many policy areas as it does.

Question #21

Your responses to this survey are anonymous unless you provide your email address below. Please provide your name and email address if you would like someone to follow-up with you regarding your ideas and/or interest in volunteering.

Eight members provided contact information in response to this question. It is not included here in order to maintain their privacy.