



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN

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Poll Worker Recruitment Project to Target Students and Communities of Color

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI) is launching the first step of a statewide poll worker recruitment effort. The Poll Worker Recruitment Project, starting in Dane County for the Spring 2007 elections, will address the need for more poll workers, encourage students to become active participants in government, and make the election day workforce more representative of the population. The project will be expanded statewide between now and the presidential elections in Fall 2008.

Municipal clerks are finding it difficult to recruit enough new poll workers to support the laudable efforts of our election day workforce. New voting equipment has created a need for poll workers with computer skills and knowledge to set up polling stations and to answer voter's questions about the new electronic machines.

Being an election worker is a positive experience for students as well as for their colleagues at the polls. An experienced poll worker informed the League that the student workers at her polling place were indispensable in the Fall 2006 elections, helping to set up and take down the heavy voting equipment. LWVWI Executive Director Andrea Kaminski was a poll worker in Michigan during her high school years. "I've never forgotten the conversations I had with the other poll workers that day," she says. "I saw firsthand how dedicated they were to administering a fair election. It made me understand how precious the right to vote is for every American."

Through educational and promotional activities, the Poll Worker Recruitment Project will encourage students and minority individuals to work at the polls on election day. The project will showcase, support and encourage practices that many municipalities have already introduced to make working at the polls easier for those with family and employment commitments. Poll workers can usually work half-days or, in some cases, even shorter shifts. Some employers support the election day workforce by giving employees time off for working at the polls.

At age 16 and above, high school students with good grades and permission from their parents and school may be poll workers, even though they are too young to vote. The Poll Worker Recruitment Project will recruit such students to be paired with experienced poll workers at the precincts.

Minority populations and communities of color are consistently under-represented as voters. The Poll Worker Recruitment Project will facilitate more welcoming polling stations, by recruiting a more diverse election day workforce. The League encourages all citizens to become informed voters, and believes that a more representative election day workforce will support a more representative electorate.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin will be working with the Dane County League and in cooperation with the Madison City Clerk to recruit and train poll workers for the Spring 2007 elections in Dane County. In the following months, the Poll Worker Recruitment Project will be expanded statewide with the help of our 22 local Leagues and our members in communities around the state.

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The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is a nonpartisan political organization that promotes informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. There are 21 local Leagues in Wisconsin. Call the state League at (608) 256-0827 for more information.