

THE VOTER



This Newsletter is published by and for the League of Women Voters of Yakima County PO Box 723, Yakima, WA 98907

On the Web at:
<https://lwvyakimacounty.org>

January, 2026
Vol. 27, No 1

We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional lands of the fourteen Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

Core Principles

MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

VISION

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

VALUE STATEMENT

The League believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

Leadership Team

- Cindy Olivas, President
- Barb Schultz, Secretary
- Janis Luvaas, Treasurer and Membership
- Karri Livingston, Voter Services Chair
- Kitty Jubran
- Steve Hill
- Criss Bardill, The Voter Editor
- Joy McKinney
- Lana Barnes

Meeting on the first Monday of the month at 4:30 pm at the YWCA located at 818 W Yakima Ave, Yakima, WA 98901 in the second-floor conference room. **All members are welcome!**

Calendar

Monday, Feb. 2 **LWVYC Leadership Team Meeting**, 4:30 PM. Online and in person at YWCA, 818 W. Yakima Ave., Yakima.

Thursday, Feb. 5 **LWVYC Voters' Service Committee meeting**, 1:25. Starbucks, 5906 Summitview Ave., Yakima.

Monday, Feb. 9 **LWVYC New Member Orientation Meeting**. 11 AM. North Town Coffeehouse, 32 N. Front St., Yakima.

Tuesday, February 10 **Ballots for Special Levy Elections Due**. Ballots already mailed to voters in Grandview, Mt. Adams, Union Gap, Wahluke, Wapato, West Valley, and Zillah School Districts, and Naches Park and Rec District.

Tuesday, Feb. 10. **LWVYC Give Out Valentine's Cards to Our Alliances Event**. 12:30 PM at Essencia's Artisan Bakery, 4 N. 3rd St., Yakima. Fun chance to mingle.

Wednesday, Feb. 24. **Get to Know Artificial Intelligence**. (Media & News Literacy Zoom Workshop.) 6:30 PM. Information and registration at [LWVWA.org](https://www.lwvwa.org) events calendar.

Know Your League

Check these websites to more fully understand your League:

Our local Yakima County League:

<https://lwvyakimacounty.org/>

Our Washington State League:

<https://www.lwvwa.org/>

Our National League:

<https://www.lwv.org/>

700+ Leagues across the US

1Mil+ members & supporters

9 million voters reached in 2024

100s of voting rights victories

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Getting Out the Vote Matters with This League

As I have been busy becoming involved with other organizations in our communities, I am listening to what community members are saying. I heard about medical and mental health care (including lack of access, no insurance, and high costs), affordable housing/homelessness, fentanyl abuses, limited financial aid for higher education, ICE attacks in our communities, cutting of police and fire department budgets, closure of a Senior Center that provide social wellness services, voting ID restrictions, environmental and climate change concerns, water shortages and usage, recycling, transgenders in sports, food hunger, and economic dispersity affecting Yakima County's communities' health, safety, and wellbeing. All these issues are Yakima County concerns. As a League that promotes voting and education to our communities, how do we provide this? Can we improve our outreach into communities that we do not live in?

Also, I have been putting out questions to diverse members of our community about voting or not voting. For voters it is all about responsibility and keeping our right to vote. It is about protecting the Constitution that structured our government with levels of checks and balances that would keep our country free of authoritarian or dictatorship rule. For non-voters the choice not to vote is disheartening to hear. Responses such as, "Why vote?" "Our votes don't count", "Our local representatives don't listen", "No one cares what I think", and last, "It's a waste of time". As you are reading this, are you thinking (as I do) that citizens have a lack of belief or trust that democracy can work, especially during these challenging times? If I can put one word to the lack of voter turnout, it is "discouragement". There was one constructive response from a young male of voting age. His response was, "I don't know 'who' or 'what' to vote for." He needed resources and information.

So, let's think of voting as having the power to make positive changes to Yakima County. When the community engages in action and goes out to vote that is power! Voting is the one thing that does not cost eligible citizens to do. Register to vote. It is free! People need to know that votes do count, especially when it comes to local elections and community services for today and the future. Our voices are also vital in getting others engaged to vote. How are those connections evolving?

What role can the League of Women Voters of Yakima County play to show our support for all our neighboring communities? A goal this year is that the League of Women Voters of Yakima County will work with other community organizations throughout the valley in getting nonvoters to become engaged. We can speak about the importance of an issue affecting them so they understand the pros and cons. As our mission states: Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy. So, let's get out the vote (GOTV)! This is a huge task and a responsibility that needs community effort, involvement, and working alongside our alliances.

Let's all work together to make a difference that will make positive changes in Yakima County and the Yakama Tribal Nation. Let's understand our diverse community's needs. Let's help those people who have less than us know they are valued citizens and deserve the right to vote.

If democracy is dear to our hearts, this should be a strong reason why we empower people to vote and defend democracy. It's time to spread our mission far and wide to diverse populations of people. It's time to speak with our communities about what matters to them and encourage them to vote. Let's strengthen our communities. Get out the votes! Voting matters!

As the president of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County, I am asking all members to join in to make a difference in our communities. Let's connect with others. I am asking other like-minded organizations to work together with us to form strong alliances. Let's get our communities voting again. Let's gather voters together who care about their community to advocate for local decisions that will benefit all to become stronger. I know the League of Women Voters of Yakima County does care. I know that I do, too.

Cindy Olivas, President
LWVYC

POSTSCRIPT TO MEMBERS FROM PRESIDENT CINDY

Members, I emailed a survey to you around January 6th, asking for your input about interests and passions that would engage you to be involved. We all joined the League for a reason. What is yours? Also, I asked about groups you are involved with that might be a good fit for us to expand voting power. Once you submit the survey it will come to me. Your input will only be shared with the Leadership Team. It takes about 8 minutes or so to complete. Please respond to the survey today and submit it. It's not too late.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION (and CONNECTING)

Saturday, Jan. 24 **Yakima Advocacy Day.** 9 AM to 3 PM. 511 N. 44th Ave., Yakima.

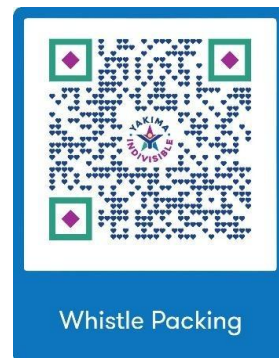
Yakima Indivisible will be participating in Yakima Advocacy Day with our like-minded friends. For details, see the flyer at the end of this newsletter. Our League will be tabling at this event!

Saturday, Jan. 24 **Yakima Indivisible No-Host Social.** 4 to 8 PM. The Public House on University Parkway, Terrace Heights.

Join others at The Public House on University Parkway in Terrace Heights for a casual gathering of like-minded people in these challenging times. There will be no formal program as this is an opportunity to reflect, vent, and connect. Our December social was well attended, and the feedback was positive about this venue.

Saturday, Jan. 31 **Whistle Packing.** 10 AM to Noon. Glenwood Square, Room 310 (above Zesta Cucina), 5110 Tieton Drive, Yakima.

League members are welcome to join Yakima Indivisible in collaborating with YIRN, Yakima Immigration Response Network, to produce hundreds, if not thousands, more whistle packets for use in ICE encounters or potential raids. There will be room for about 75 people to assemble packets, so please use this link: <https://www.mobilize.us/dashboard/yakimaindivisible/event/888692/> or the QR code to sign up and let us know you will be coming. This is a fun and relaxing way to engage in friendly conversations with others who are civic minded.



Wednesday, Feb. 4, **Black History Program,** 6 PM at Henry Beauchamp Community Center, 1211 S 7th St, Yakima. No further information currently available.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Washington State League of Women Voters has scheduled their LWVWA Council for the weekend of June 5, 6 and 7, in Lacy, Washington. Registration information will become available soon. Watch the LWVWA website and future newsletters for registration and event information.

Begin planning now to gather with League members from around the state, participate in great workshops, and get a good shot of renewed enthusiasm for our work empowering voters and defending democracy!

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT UPDATE

The WA State Legislative Session began January 12 to introduce new bills for the upcoming year. If you have not been involved with what is happening in the legislation, this is the time to check out the initiatives being presented by your state district representatives. Follow the newsletter from LWVWA for links and actions that you can take. Use your voice to get other people involved. This session will end on March 12, 2026.

In my opinion, voices speaking out to local representatives can make a difference, as well as voting. Unless you are participating in the LWVWA Lobby week, you and others must contact your local representatives as private citizens. You do not need to set up an appointment.

If you would like to speak on LWVWA's positions to a bill with our representatives, as a member of the Yakima County League, please contact me ASAP. We need to set up a date and time to meet with our district representatives. A meeting would be set up for a 15-minute slot via zoom with a representative. We would need to discuss and prepare a plan to present a position on a bill that is important to the league. I also have a training video provided by the WA League Lobby Team.

Yakima County is divided into two districts. We have District 14, with parts of Yakima City, Union Gap, the Tribal reservation and Lower Valley. The District 14 Senator is Curtis King; Representatives are Debbie Manjarrez and Gloria Mendoza. District 15 covers parts of Yakima, Selah, Moxee, and Benton County. This area is represented by Senator Nikki Torres, with Representatives Jeremie Dufault and Chris Corry.

Cindy Olivas

President LWVYC

ABOUT US

(from League of Women Voters of Washington State Website)

DEI POLICY

Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity, or marital status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission and achievements as well.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR HISTORY

The League was founded in 1920—just months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment—by American suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt. While fighting for the 19th Amendment and lobbying Southern senators, she famously claimed, “White supremacy will be strengthened, not weakened, by women’s suffrage.” Even during the Civil Rights movement, the League was not as present as we should have been. It wasn’t until 1966 that we reached our first position to combat discrimination. Today, we invite all people, regardless of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, or race, to join us as we commit to righting the wrongs of our past and building a stronger, more inclusive democracy. To read the full statement: <https://www.lwv.org/blog/facing-hard-truths-about-leagues-origin>

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The LWVWA acknowledges that the land known as the State of Washington is on the homelands of Native peoples who have lived here from time immemorial and who have long resiliently resisted the ongoing harms of colonialism. The LWVWA expresses its deepest respect for and gratitude towards these original and current caretakers of the region. While we honor the past, we will diligently work to listen to and amplify the voices of Indigenous people, to partner with tribes and Indigenous people on policy and other issues important to their welfare, to educate the public about tribal/treaty government and welfare issues and to respect the sovereignty of tribes and their rights to self-determination.

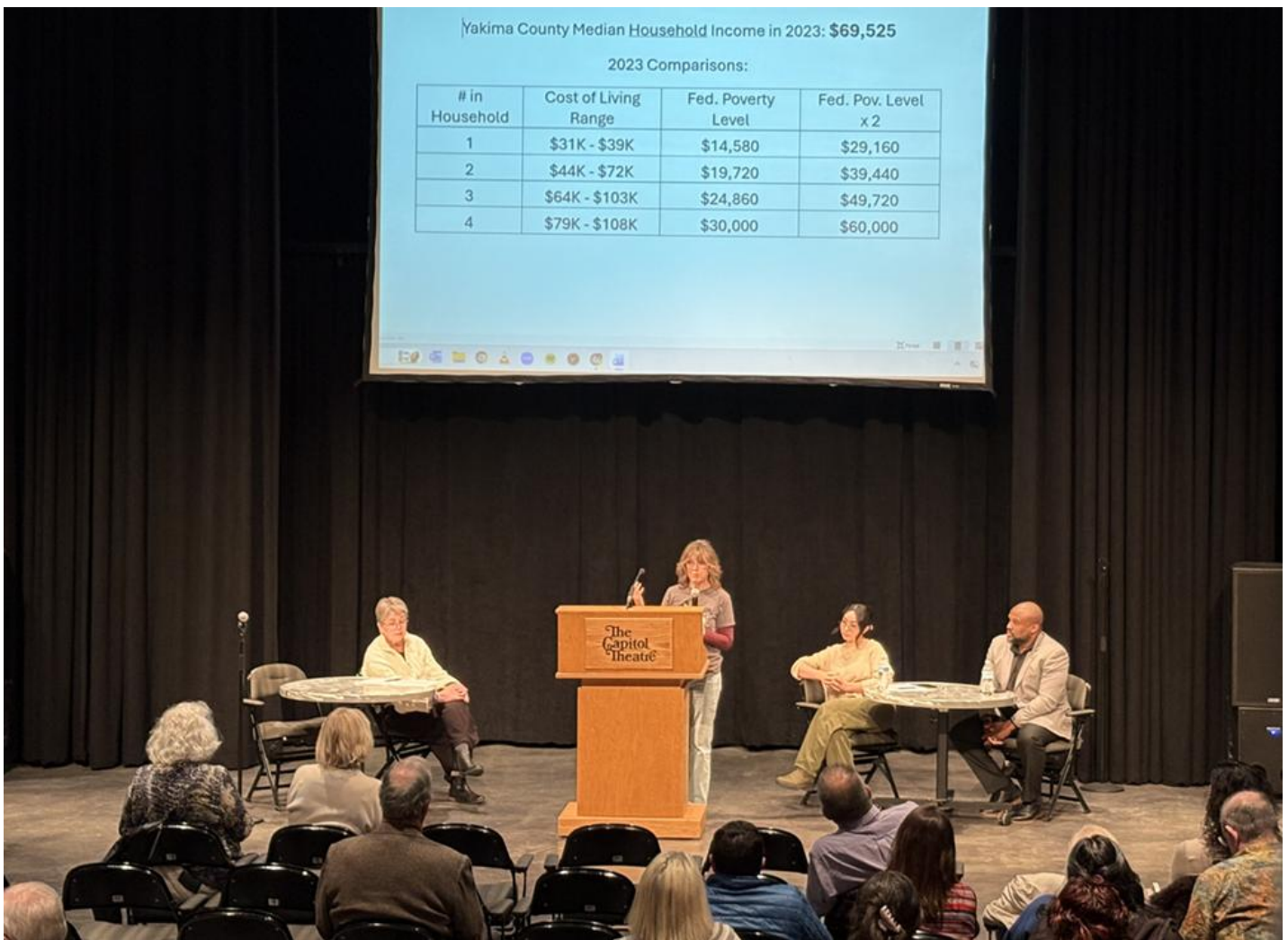
INSPIRATIONAL FILM FOLLOWED BY PANEL DISCUSSION

The League of Women Voters of Yakima County provided voter education and a voter registration opportunity at a recent event at the Capitol Theatre. On January 10th, Yakima Indivisible, a local volunteer group with the goal of uniting for democracy, hosted a film showing of the Robert Reich documentary, *The Last Class*.

Mr. Reich was the Labor Secretary under President Obama among other government roles, but his lifelong career and passion has been teaching. The film follows his last class taught at the Berkeley UC campus, about wealth and income inequality. His comments address current concerns that threaten democracy.

After the film, panelists discussed the local impact of income inequality. (See photo below.)

The LWV of Yakima County had a table of materials at the event, and some of the youth who were there took information about voter registration.



Angie Gerard, center at podium, moderates a panel commenting on impacts of local income inequality. Panelists include, left to right, Rhonda Hauff, Neighborhood Health Services; Esther Magasis, Yakima County; and Anthony Peterson, OIC.

YAKIMA ADVOCACY DAY 2026



JUSTICE FOR THE HEALTH & WHOLENESS OF OUR VALLEY



**9 TO 3
SATURDAY
1/24/26**

***ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE * HEALTHCARE EQUITY *
*IMMIGRANT SOLIDARITY ***

FIGHTING HOMELESSNESS & FOOD INSECURITY

Join us to learn how advocacy groups are advancing environmental justice, healthcare equity, immigrant solidarity, food security, solutions to homelessness, along with many other pressing community issues. Discover how you can take part in meaningful action for the common good.

***ENGLEWOOD CHRISTIAN CHURCH
511 NORTH 44TH AVE, YAKIMA WA***



Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Yakima



WASHINGTON
CONSERVATION
ACTION



Rural Americans United



NAACP
Yakima County

REGISTER <https://www.tfaforms.com/5207445>

INTERPRETATION AVAILABLE *LUNCH PROVIDED**



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA COUNTY, OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____
Street Address City State Zip Code

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Understanding the demographics of LWV's membership base helps us progress in our value of being a fully inclusive organization. Please fill out as much of the following info as you are comfortable with:

Gender: _____ Pronouns: _____ Race/Ethnicity: _____ Birth Year: _____

DUES AMOUNT

Please select the dues amount you wish to pay. The recommended rate is \$75.00, but you may choose an amount below that, down to a minimum of \$20.00. Higher dues payments help to allow some members to pay below the recommended amount but do not grant additional benefits. Attach a check payable to the League of Women Voters of the United States.

\$75.00/year \$150.00/year \$250.00/year \$500.00/year

Choose your own amount (minimum \$20.00): _____

The amount you choose to pay in dues will be split between your local, state, and national League. Would you like to make an additional donation exclusively to your local League?

Yes No Amount: _____

Pay by credit card or bank account online by clicking on the join/renew form on our website's [Join Page](#) or scanning this QR code:



To pay by check: fill out this form and mail to:
LWVYC, PO Box 723,
Yakima, WA 98907

ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBERS?

Do you have a household member wishing to join or renew LWV membership? Please complete an additional form and send in with additional dues, thank you!