

League of Women Voters of Hancock County Indiana: Narrative

Mission statement: The League of Women Voters Hancock County (LWVHCIN), a nonpartisan civic organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of basic policy issues, and serves the public through education and advocacy. **The goal of the League of Women Voters Hancock County is to educate and register voters. The League works to accomplish its mission and vision in a collaborative manner at the grassroots level.**

The League of Women Voters Hancock County began its organizational formation early in 2017, becoming an official county chapter of the national body with the election of the LWVHCIN Board of Directors in May 2018. **Since its inception, the LWVHCIN has been actively engaged in two of its most important commitments: voter registration and forums on those issues that most impact citizens at the local level.** We have been most successful in our voter registration drives with the county high schools; and we have hosted several issue and candidate forums that attracted large audiences. In each, a robust Q&A by citizens attending confirmed that when offered an opportunity, citizens will gather to hear and participate in forums focused on those issues that matter to their daily lives. Citizens are looking for forums that offer credible, fair, unbiased and evidence-based information versus the too often sensational inflammatory and clearly biased views and opinions that dominate social media.

The 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote, was ratified nearly 100 years ago, and this is our celebration of this historical event. If not the League, then who would be offering these critical non-partisan educational opportunities to Hancock County citizens and beyond? This takes resources that will enable us to grow our membership and outreach that allows this young chapter to say ‘yes’ to those requests for voter registration drives and candidate and issue public forums across the county.

In our first year as an official chapter, in-kind contributions by LWVHCIN Board and members was over 40% of our total revenues. This speaks to the passion by our Board and members; however, it is not sustainable. We see a natural partnership with the Tourism Commission for this fundraiser because our work supports the county, too. This fundraiser also promotes the Tourism Commission’s aim of bringing those outside the county into Hancock County.