

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO
6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109

MONTHLY CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT
by
KAREN DOUGLAS AND DONNA SANDOVAL

The November 2nd Albuquerque municipal election was the major Fall, 2021, activity involving LWVCNM volunteers. The contentious Mayoral election did not result in a runoff election, but two City Council seats do require runoff elections. Sandoval County elections are scheduled for March, 2022, and LWVCNM will provide similar support to their electorate.

Hardcopy Bernalillo County Voter Guide completion by Karen Wentworth's committee was followed by a well-organized distribution effort, managed by Lani Desaulniers, that began October 13. Seven LWVCNM volunteers made calls to confirm distribution locations, and 16,000 hardcopies were distributed. Calls to the LWVCNM office to request the Voter Guide began in early October, and the number of requests exceeded the number of hardcopy Voter Guides available prior to the November 2nd election date. Vote411.org was the online resource for Bernalillo, Torrance, and Valencia county elections.

The November 10th LWVCNM membership meeting speaker, Katherine Trujillo, Special Projects Coordinator and Educational Consultant with the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General, offered many tips for alerting residents to potential fraudulent attempts to seize their assets or identities. Continuing discussion by LWV members featured other instances in which unsuspecting residents were not sufficiently wary, resulting in loss of valuable information or items without sufficient research regarding the source.

The November 9th LWVCNM Criminal Justice Reform panel discussion featured APD Deputy Chief Garcia, Albuquerque Community Safety Department Director Ruiz-Angel (ACS sends civilian responses to 911 call involving mental health, homelessness, and substance

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LWVCNM Leadership**Co-Presidents:**

Karen Douglas
Donna Sandoval

1st Vice President/

Vote411.org:

Karen Wentworth

2nd Vice President/

Membership:

Cassandra Spacek

3rd Vice President/Program:

Jennifer Black

4th Vice President/

Development Committee Chair:

Vacant

Treasurer:

Denise Blood

Secretary:

Ashley Benning

Voter Services Chair:

Cyprian Devine-Perez

Voter Guide Distribution:

Lani Desaulniers

Sustainability/Climate Change:

Jeanne Logsdon

Office Manager/Webmaster/

Zoom Host:

Starlyn Brown

Advocacy Team/Observer

Corps:

Alan Ramos

LEAGUE CALENDAR

All of the following are Zoom meetings. Members will receive invitations on the LWVCNMTopics listserv. Anyone who does not receive an invitation can email president@lwvcnm.org. If you need help with Zoom, please reach out to our Zoom host, Starlyn Brown, at sbrown@unm.edu

LWVCNM regrets that December 9th luncheon unit meeting has been cancelled due to unavailability of the planned speaker. We wish each of you a joyous Holiday season with loved ones, and look forward to seeing you at these January events:

January 4 (Saturday), Time TBD—Meeting of volunteers interested in working on the next Voter Guide, in preparation for the March, 2022, elections in Sandoval County.

January 13 (Thursday), noon—Dick Mason & Kathleen Burke of Fair Districts New Mexico will join us to discuss the redistricting process and the results of the December redistricting special session of the Legislature.

January 22 (Saturday), morning—LWVCNM Program Planning meeting. We will consider the California Position on Criminal Justice Reform. Members may also propose other studies leading to development of new Positions for advocacy.

The deadline for the monthly Voter remains the 15th of each month. Please submit your articles to Anne Pierce-Jones, **VOTER** editor, at apiercejones@outlook.com.

OFFICE HOURS

Closed until further notice due
to Covid concerns.

The VOTER Editor:

Anne Pierce-Jones
apiercejones@outlook.com

CO-PRESIDENTS' MONTHLY REPORT, continued from page 1...

abuse cases), Disability Rights NM CEO and attorney Houspian (DRNM is an APD Forward/AMICI Steering Committee member), and LWVNM Director and Assistant Professor Alvarez. (See complete panelists' biographies, November VOTER, page 7.) LWVSNM Co-President Kathy Brook, who also serves as NM Program Chair, and Barbara Calef, LWFLA Co-President and LWVNM Second Vice-President, viewed the LWVCNM panel discussion for comparison with their own local League educational events. Rebecca Alvarez represented LWVSFC and was instrumental in panel deliberations. The 28 attendees at the panel discussion included five members of the California Criminal Justice Reform steering committee. (Maxine Anderson also serves as the California Action/Advocacy Chair.) None of the panelists voiced objections to LWVCNM concurrence with the California Position, which includes a detailed Policing Practices sections that is lacking in the current New Mexico Administration of Justice position. Interested LWVCNM members are encouraged to view the November, 2021 (Saturday, November 20, 2021, hybrid meeting) and January, 2022 (Saturday, January 15, 2022, hybrid meeting) LWVNM Board deliberations for consideration of a New Mexico Position. LWVCNM members are also encouraged to attend the January 22, 2022, LWVCNM Program Planning meeting if a local position will be pursued. A May, 2022, Annual Meeting vote by members would also be required prior to adoption of a LWVCNM Criminal Justice Reform Position. (See California Criminal Justice Reform Position, November, 2021, VOTER, pages 4-6.)

Donna Sandoval was featured briefly on KOAT News on November 1st to discuss the importance of voting in the November 2nd elections. She stated, "Voting is our choice in how our government runs. In tight races, every vote counts."

JEDI: The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) committee drafted a survey for members. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are central pillars of LWVNM's mission and strategic plan. To support our DEI goals, we would like to understand more about the composition of our organization and the progress we have made so far.

The first part of the survey addresses demographic identities, with a specific focus on race, ethnicity, gender, LGBTQIA+ identity, disability, and income. We recognize that these are only some of the many ways to define diversity, a concept that can encompass many other human differences. The second and third parts of the survey focus on what local Leagues are doing to promote DEI, and how LWVNM can assist.

We are seeking your personal opinion and perspective regarding the progress your local League and LWVNM are making within the realm of DEI so that we know how to continue the DEI conversation at all levels of the League. All of the information you volunteer will be anonymously reviewed in the aggregate.

LWVCNM Observer Report Summary of City of Albuquerque Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) Meeting, October 19, 2021, 5 to 7 pm

(Submitted by Lani Desaulniers. Meeting agenda & minutes can be found on the MHRAC website.)

Significant issues addressed during this session:

- Update on New Albuquerque Community Safety Dept.—Mariela Ruiz-Angel, Director
 - ◇ Soft launch for department in early September. They are continuing to hire and train new staff.
 - ◇ Mobile Crisis Team—Under ACS since March; services previously provided by APD.
 - ◇ Two new Behavioral Health Response Teams operational—Working 8 am to 5 pm shifts, handling 11 calls daily, some have required dual APD response. Community Responders and Street Outreach are being staffed. Teams are working to make assessments and connect clients to services in the community.
- New Gateway Centers Update—Still in planning stages; awaiting final decision on Conditional Use Zoning.
 - ◇ Homelessness issue may be exacerbated when current Eviction Deadline expires. Current NM Supreme Court Stay extended to January 3, 2022.
- Announcement that current Co-Chairs (Danny Whatley & Rick Miera) will be stepping down after the next meeting. Nominations for their replacements will be solicited from members and the community.

Monthly meetings are held every third Tuesday. Zoom meetings are open to the public. Next meeting: November 16, 5-7 pm.

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES IN OUR CLIMATE ACTION PLAN IN ADDITION TO PUBLIC TRANSIT

Past *Voter* articles on Albuquerque's Climate Action Plan (CAP) reported that 13 of its 50 strategies covered various aspects of transportation, which accounts for 40% of City greenhouse gas emissions. The seven transportation strategies that relate to public transit were described last month. This month, we are examining the other six transportation strategies, which focus on a variety of areas.

Two strategies are oriented to general principles to guide decision making and educating the public:

- Prioritize equity, transparency and accountability when making investments to improve transportation safety.
- Increase public education around greenhouse gas emissions that explain the positive impacts of walking, biking, and public transit (e.g., improved health, personal financial savings, decreased emissions, cleaner air, etc.), as well as the negative impacts of private transportation (e.g., health implications such as asthma, traffic congestion, etc.).

Two strategies specifically deal with walking and bicycling, which were selected by over 40% of survey respondents as the most important changes that could be made to improve how to get around the City:

- Invest in City-funded sidewalk improvement for safety and accessibility for all users and especially people with limited mobility.
- Improve and create bike and walking infrastructure, especially in low-income and older neighborhoods.

The final two strategies relate to electric vehicles:

- Sustain efforts to convert city fleet vehicles to electric where feasible.
- Promote rideshare options with electric vehicles, prioritizing increased options for frontline communities.

How is the City implementing these strategies so far? Two notable areas of progress relate to the sidewalk and bicycle strategies, which dovetail directly with the City's ongoing commitment to enhanced roadway safety in Vision Zero.¹ Projects that enhance safety can often increase the likelihood that people will use upgraded infrastructure. Project examples include adding and widening sidewalks, making all sidewalks ADA-compliant, and clear designation of bike lanes. Emphasis is placed on the needs of vulnerable communities and vulnerable individuals (such as the disabled, seniors, and children).

Another area of progress is the transition of City-owned vehicles to electric (EV) and low-emission (LEV). The first EV was added to the City fleet with in 2019. By early 2021, 42 such vehicles were in use. The goal is 65% of the light duty fleet to be converted to EV and LEV by 2025 as funds become available to replace older vehicles and install EV charging stations. The "ZEV First" policy gives procurement priority to (1) electric (zero emissions), (2) plug-in hybrids, (3) hybrid-electric, and (4) alternate fuel or demonstrated lowered emissions (to allow for emerging innovations).

■ Submitted by Jeanne Logsdon, Environment & Natural Resources Committee

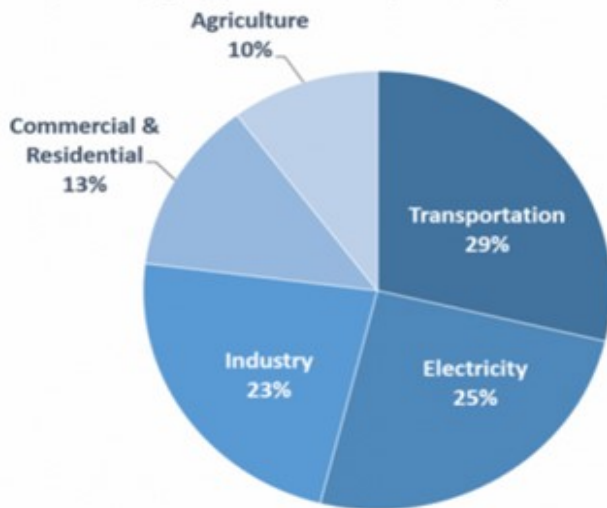
¹ "Vision Zero is a commitment to create safer streets for all, regardless of our age or ability, whether we are walking, riding a bicycle, using a mobility device, driving, or taking transit. It is used around the world to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all." (*Albuquerque Vision Zero Action Plan*, p. 8)

Electric Vehicles -- State of the State

In July 2021, *Car and Driver* stated, “After almost a decade of hype, there are some signs that the electric-vehicle revolution is finally coming to pass.” And not a moment too soon. Transportation comprises 29% of the greenhouse gas emissions in the US. And while buses and trains work well in many dense urban environments, New Mexico is BIG and very rural. In fact, in 2014, NM was in the top 5 for miles driven per person.

Total U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Economic Sector in 2019

<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>



Total Emissions in 2019 = 6,558 [Million Metric Tons of CO2 equivalent](#). Percentages may not add up to 100% due to independent rounding.

Electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming more popular in New Mexico. The recent Albuquerque NM Drive Electric Week drew at least 500 people and included 35 vehicles (such as Teslas, VWs, Mustang, Porsche, Chevy, Nissan, Harley-Davidson). More auto companies are bringing out EVs in the next 2 years. The City is encouraging local dealerships to be “electric ready” with a new training and education program.

My own journey from the 2014 lease of a Nissan Leaf (81 mi range) to a Tesla (300 mi range) is a small snapshot of the industry’s struggle to survive and thrive. After years of range anxiety, inhospitable dealerships, and “broken” or blocked charging stations, I finally made the jump to Tesla in 2019. It has a supercharger network, moderately expensive options (<\$50k) and is a car company eager to sell to EV customers. The week I got my blue Model 3, we drove it to Los Angeles. It mapped out our course for charging and we found the handful of 20-to-50 minute breaks refreshing. Some-

times I think of it as a very nice computer on wheels. It updates automatically, I easily charge on a 110 outlet at home, and while it’s charging on our cross-country travels, we can watch Netflix or play games, take a bio break, or walk.

Driving electric hits a homerun for Climate Action: 1) You’re not burning gas and still traveling so emissions are reduced in the transportation sector. 2) No one is burning gas to bring you the gas, so emissions are reduced in the industry and transportation sectors. 3) No one is leaking methane (natural gas) to extract oil and make your gas, so emissions are reduced in a seriously undercounted sector, waste. And bringing it *home!* 4) You have a clean garage. No oil or transmission fluid spills; exhaust fumes are eliminated. So your own personal environment is healthier.

Yes, range anxiety is still a concern, but more charging stations are being built locally and nationwide as a result of the Volkswagen settlement, realization of increasing demand, and opportunity knocking. Several apps like Plugshare help you locate them. It still takes extra effort to buy an electric car. Tesla has had problems until recently because it didn’t have a local dealership. Dealerships have been slow

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Electric Vehicles—State of the State, continued....

to offer the full range of EVs. Add the current chip shortage and supply chain issues, and availability is a big challenge. But we must power through and keep focus on what's important to human life: Air—clean air to breathe, water—clean water to drink, and soil—clean, productive soil to grow healthy food.

If you're interested in more local guidance, there is an *Electric Vehicle Enthusiasts of New Mexico* Meetup in addition to the *Tesla Owners' Club of New Mexico* Facebook group.

Submitted by Athena Christodoulou, Environment & Natural Resources Committee

PLEASE BE GENEROUS WITH YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

As the year end draws near, please include the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico in your charitable contributions. LWVCNM is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, so your donation will qualify as a tax-deductible contribution.

Yes, we all pay dues, but the dominant portion of our dues goes to fund LWVNM and LWVUS, and the token that is left over cannot support our activities. I know many of us volunteer for LWVCNM. My own contribution is to act as Observer to the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, which I do most Wednesdays, and then send out an email report. There are many more volunteers, and our League would not exist without them.

Money is needed to fund our office and the cost of printing the Voter Guide. Next year, there will be a primary election in June, as well as the November general election. Our County Clerk helps us distribute the Guide, a vital voter resource. Vote411 will also be available, but voters are comfortable with the printed Voter Guide and depend on it to help them make informed decisions before voting. It is important to continue providing this service. While I have attended many Zoom meetings since March, 2020, there have been very few in-person meetings, so there has been a substantial reduction in those important face to face events where League Voter Registrars can sign up new voters. Next year it will be vital to use face to face opportunities to sign up new voters.

Now, let me share something with you regarding New Mexico voter registration. At year-end 2020, there were 1.359 million registered voters in New Mexico. In September, 2021, that number had dropped to 1.337 million. I attribute the decline to COVID-19, which has sharply reduced personal contacts and the ability to sign up new voters.

Thus, LWVCNM's Voter Registrars will have a busy 2022 once there is a "Green Light" to allow more personal contacts and outreach with schools and organizations to register new voters. We all have time, but we will need some printed materials to help in the process...And these cost money.

So, let me close with a request that you be generous with your donation. The League will need the money to increase voter turnout and to promote stronger civic participation. Personally, I feel that a day without contacting an elected official is a wasted opportunity.

You have two options for making your donation:

1. Mail a check to the LWVCNM office, located at 6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109
2. Visit the LWVCNM website to donate online: <https://www.lwvcnm.org/support/#paypal>

—Submitted by George Richmond, Former Board Member & 4th Vice President, LWVCNM

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION OBSERVER REPORT

DECEMBER, 2021—PNM-Avangrid Merger

In early November the Hearing Examiner issued his opinion that the proposed merger should be turned down as the negatives outweighed the positives. The two parties and over 20 interveners may file their responses and the case is likely to appear before the PRC in December. Clearly PNM + Avangrid want to get the deal done so let's see how they can make it work. The one party opposed to the merger would like the State of New Mexico to buy PNM just as Los Angeles County provides electric power to residents there...but then, that started over 100 years ago..

For those of you who may wish to read the full Hearing Examiner's opinion, around 280 pages, here is a link to the decision...or just read the summary...

PRC hearing examiner rejects PNM-Avangrid Winter is coming: ABQJournal Newsletter

webmaster@abqjournal.com

In 2011, a February storm resulted in serious strains at NM Gas who had to "shed load" or in terms we can understand, a lack of gas forced the company to turn off customers. (Not in Albuquerque but in rural areas.) As a result, NM Gas built more storage in NM and increased the size of its pipeline from Albuquerque to Santa Fe. While a good step in the right direction, the winter storm of February 2021 caused huge problems in Texas, where many lost power and hundreds of lives were lost as well, and gas prices surged 100X during a few days. NM Gas is recovering these charges of a 30-month period so as not to hurt its customers financially. In Texas, the PUC has asked its utility clients to "do their best" to prevent future problems. What that is and will it work? Next TX cold spell we will find out. Still, there are three power grids in the US, one covers the Eastern States so that if there are sudden power needs, utilities can buy or sell power to one another. The same goes for the Western States and Pacific Gas & Electric in CA takes advantage of that plan, as fires in CA have severely damaged their grid system. However, TX still keeps in one state grid. El Paso Electric which serves the lower third of New Mexico, is a member of the Western Grid.

Vice Chair Commissioner Maestas, a Professional Engineer before he was elected, has worked hard to improve the processes of the PRC. Also, the PRC has applied for additional funding, as have all state agencies, to better fund their operations. For the PRC, this means filling several vacancies that have existed for years because of lack of funding. Also, in March of this year, the PRC lost their offices and had to operate virtually. In September they were able to move into new offices in Santa Fe and their work processes have improved.

Going forward, there are a number of critical challenges facing NM that the PRC is working on. Regulating some aspects of the telephone industry is a part of its role and where NM is short, as all states are, is providing affordable Broadband or Internet services to rural areas. School kids, businesses and families must be connected to the Internet, but as the markets are small, no internet provider will build the system needed so NM, and other states must, with Federal Funding, some of which may come from recent legislation just passed. However, the actual construction will be slow to come. In the meantime, school kids have to scramble to find connections to keep up with their school work. Improving schools in NM cities is one thing but for the rest of the state, a major challenge. The 20 or so rural electric co-ops will benefit but slowly and so economic development out of the larger cities/towns will be slow in coming.

Making the changeover from coal fired plants to renewable generation plus the grid system to move the power will continue for many years as renewable power companies need to get right of way access for their lines, which is very difficult now.

Two remaining issues are the build out of charging stations for electric vehicles and "smart meters" for time of day pricing of electric power. The technology is here and will improve, however, a key question is how and when do consumers pay for these additions.

So, regardless of how the proposed PNM merger works out, NM needs more generating capacity for both current needs and future growth.

Submitted by George Richmond, LWVCNM Observer for the NM Public Regulation Commission

LWVNM Workshop: Effective Citizen Advocacy at the Legislature

Special Focus on the Budget and Taxes

Saturday, December 11, 2021, 10 a.m. to Noon

Zoom Webinar, Open to the Public. Register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81453530596?pwd=QldFTWpXemYzUFJOaGRheWhtd085UT09>

Learn tips from legislators and an experienced lobbyist about how to interact with legislators, speak at hearings, and advocate for your cause. Speakers include Senator Gay Kernan (R-Hobbs; Ranking member, Tax, Business, & Transportation Committee), Representative Susan Herrera (D-Embudo; Member, House Appropriations & Finance), and Linda Siegle (longtime lobbyist who focuses on lobbying the Legislature for non-profits and on strategic planning). Note that this is training on the legislative process. Questions about positions on specific issues will not be permitted. Also, should the workshop conflict with activities of the December special session, LWVNM will work with the panelists to reschedule. Questions: Email act@lwvnm.org

VOTER GUIDE FOLLOW-UP

Is there still an election in progress?

I know it feels like we've just completed a municipal election, but that doesn't mean another election isn't about to begin. Candidates for mayor and city council in Rio Rancho, Bernalillo, Cuba, San Ysidro, and Corrales will have to declare their candidacy by mid-December, and early voting begins on February 1, 2022, for all the incorporated communities in Sandoval County.

The Voter Guides are one of the biggest ongoing projects of the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. This is the way we educate voters about the candidates and issues they will be voting on. In 2022, we will need more volunteers than ever, because we plan to do online guides for both the primary and general elections. Here's how you can get involved.

Detectives

Candidates officially declare their candidacy with the New Mexico Secretary of State, but we've found that many candidates give incorrect information on their official forms. This year we plan to send teams of detectives to talk with candidates at the party nominating conventions to get contact information directly from the candidates. You can volunteer for one morning, or you can volunteer to call and do internet research to help us connect with candidates. Most work will be done in March and April, 2022.

Volunteers to learn and work with VOTE411 software

The U.S. League of Women Voters has proprietary software that allows voters to look up their own ballots and see questions and answers from candidates in their districts. We need people willing to learn the software and help with data entry. Most work will be done in April/May and in August/September to prepare for the elections. You will be able to work from home.

Bureaucracy Hackers

This is a statewide election in 2022. We will need volunteers to help us get the wording of constitutional

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Voter Guide Follow-Up, continued...

Amendments, state bond issues, county bond issues, and possible ballot questions. These things are not always on the websites, so volunteers may have to wiggle their ways through the bureaucracy to find the information. Most work will be done in August, 2022.

Communicators

The League has social media platforms, and we need a publicity director to help us figure out what to post and when and how to better publicize the work of the Central New Mexico league. This is an ongoing, not-too-intense job.

Candidate Forum Moderators, Question Sorters, and Timekeepers

We will train volunteers on how to manage candidate forums, how to work with audiences to keep the questions for the candidates fair and non-partisan, and how to keep the candidates on time. Training will be in the spring. Most forums are held in May, the month before the June primary, and in October, the month before the November election.

Candidate Question Designers

We will work in small groups to create questions for the candidates. In 2022, we will be voting for Governor, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Attorney General, Legislative candidates, County Commission candidates, and judges. This work will be done in groups, at the LWVCNM office, during February and March.

Candidate Herders

Not every candidate answers our questions right away, and some are downright resistant. We need people who can gently persuade busy candidates that the best way to get us off their backs is to answer our questions. This work takes place in April and August.

Proofreaders

We need people to proofread both VOTE411 and the hardcopy Voter Guide. This will take a few hours in September.

GENERAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH LWVCNM

There are dozens of ways to get involved with the League. You can spend a little time with us, or a lot. It might be the most important thing you do next year. We only need to look around at our friends and family to figure out how important voter education is. We need your help to keep democracy strong in New Mexico. It's really a perk that you get to work with smart, interesting people to do a difficult and necessary job.

Here is one current volunteer opportunity:

We are looking for someone to observe the Albuquerque City Council's meetings. This can be done from your home computer. The League is interested in anything that has to do with the way Albuquerque residents vote. Being an observer is easy, since the meetings are recorded and you can review them at your leisure. At the same time, it will help the League keep us with what is happening at the City Council. Please contact Karen Wentworth (email kwentworth17@comcast.net) if you are interested.



6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124
Albuquerque, NM 87109

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico, a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization is a nonpartisan political organization, that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy by education and advocacy.

APPLICATION FOR LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

Mail above information to LWVCNM, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109, along with annual dues as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| First member of household | \$65 |
| Each additional member of household | \$33 |
| Student member (proof required) | \$12 |