



The VOTER

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

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President's Report by Starlyn Brown

When you hear the League of Women Voters, what comes to mind? What do you think we do? What do you think we stand for?

Our best known activity is the election Voter Guide. Often when I'm meeting someone and say I'm the President of LWVCNM their response is "Oh, you produce the Voter Guide, I use it every election!" That's it. While the Voter Guide is a core election activity, we are **so much more**.

We defend Democracy. We do that through defending voter rights, defending election integrity, voter education, focusing on issues, observing boards, councils, and commissions, partnering and collaborating with other organizations, voter registration, and civics education. We pay attention, we participate, and we shine a light based on issues.

It is crucial that we stay nonpartisan. I included the definition of what this means on Page 2. Here's a preview – **We are Nonpartisan, Not Neutral.** We stick to the issues. We don't endorse or support candidates, we don't participate in actions directed at specific elected officials. If there is not a position at the National, State, or LWVCNM level that addresses an issue, we stay silent. Keep in mind, there are many positions.

Our voice is respected because of our adherence to our nonpartisanship. We have credibility, we have trust. When we say something or act, many people pay attention. And yes, we do say things and we act.

As individuals we are multifaceted. We have opinions, we pay attention to many things, our priorities change, our capacity to engage waxes and wanes. I know we have many members that belong to and are active in other organizations. I applaud you for your involvement in those organizations.

I am also grateful that you believe in the League and believe Defending Democracy matters. Please continue to help us educate current voters and the next generation of voters. You are a vital part of that education. I am always surprised by what people don't know. As an example, a lot of people are unaware that there are municipal elections this fall. These elected officials matter and affect our everyday lives. Another example, many aren't aware that New Mexico is the LAST State that does not pay its legislators. This greatly reduces the number and varying viewpoints of New Mexicans that can afford to be Legislators.

I encourage you to read LWVCNM communications, attend our educational offerings, and join us for our social events, all opportunities to learn the depth of our mission and to share what you have learned and participated in with your friends, family and neighbors.

We are Nonpartisan, Not Neutral

Remaining nonpartisan does not mean staying silent. When democracy itself is under threat, voter access is restricted, or misinformation spreads, the League has a responsibility to speak out clearly and forcefully. Our nonpartisan commitment means the League acts based on our policies and principles, not because of political parties.

We advocate for fundamental rights and freedoms regardless of which political party is in power or which officials are responsible. Focusing on our issues, not affiliations, strengthens our voice and credibility. We hold true to our mission without being beholden to any political agenda.

Why Nonpartisanship Matters

In times of division, maintaining our nonpartisan identity helps build trust across communities. It ensures that we remain a credible, reliable voice for voters — *all voters*. It positions the League to lead efforts that transcend political divides, focused on the American and moral ideals that unite us rather than the partisan battles that seek to divide us.

Nonpartisanship requires care, consideration, and balance, especially when political tensions are high. But it is essential. It is what makes the League's work powerful, resilient, and enduring.

Voter Services Report By Jill Crawley

LWVCNM has been very active educating and registering new voters throughout Central New Mexico. We registered 88 new citizens at the most recent Naturalization Ceremony on Friday, May 9, 2025. This is such a fun and uplifting experience for our volunteers. LWVCNM will continue to attend these events throughout the year.

We also attended the Heart of ABQ Wellness and Economic Fair on Saturday, May 24, 2025 where we registered 7 new voters. This event allowed us to meet many people as well as volunteers from other organizations. We are very excited to have a table at ABQ Pridefest this year on Saturday, June 7, 2025. We hope this event will allow us to provide voter registration and education to a large number of individuals.

Our League will also be attending the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Resident Orientation - Resource Fair on Monday, June 23, 2025. This is a great way to reach out to recently hired UNM residents and doctors who may be new to our community and seeking voting information and registration services.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who have made our events successful this year. For many of us, registering voters and educating individuals is a positive way to help save our democracy.

SPRING INTO SUMMER with a LWVCNM HAPPY HOUR!

When: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 • 4 PM—7 PM
Where: Steel Bender Brewery, 8305 2nd St NW,
Los Ranchos de Albuquerque

Join your League friends at this industrial-chic taproom featuring beer, wine, cider and a full menu of pub grub.

We all need to take a deep breath, kick back, and relax together.
Just drop in. No RSVP needed.

Check out Steel Bender at steelbenderbrewyard.com

Join us for the **Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series**

JUNE EDUCATIONAL MEETING Thursday June 12th, at Noon



WHERE: LWVCNM Offices Conference Room, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, ample parking available;
In person (members and guests only); Zoom (members and general public)

TOPIC: "Affordable Housing - Beyond the Unhoused"

SPEAKER: Ms. Markela Clinton, Community Engagement Coordinator, Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement and Ms. Maria Wolfe, Homeless Innovations Officer, Health, Housing and Homelessness Department, City of Albuquerque

Ensuring affordable housing options for people of all income levels is crucial for a well-functioning economy. Securing a safe, affordable place to call home is the cornerstone on which all other successes are built. Unfortunately, the greater Albuquerque area is experiencing a housing affordability challenge and homelessness crisis that impacts all of us. In tight housing markets, rental units affordable to low-income households are often occupied by households with higher incomes and households with less financial assets will be pushed down (or out) of the affordable housing ladder into homelessness. (cont.)

According to three recent housing studies: the *2023 New Mexico Affordable Housing Needs Assessment* from Housing New Mexico; the *National Low Income Housing Coalition's (NLIHC) 2024 Out of Reach* study; and the *City of Albuquerque's 2024 Housing Needs Assessment*, the need for affordable housing in our State is at a critical juncture. These studies are posted on the LWVCNM website (<https://www.lwvcnm.org/affordable-housing-and-homelessness-initiatives-information/>).

The Housing New Mexico-authored study estimates that 43% of New Mexico renters are cost-burdened (i.e. spend more than 30% of their income on housing), and an additional 22% are severely cost-burdened. NLIHC's Out of Reach study states that in Albuquerque a two-bedroom apartment at the fair market rent of \$1,134/month would require a wage of \$23.50/hr for a 40-hour work week.

To address housing affordability and homelessness issues, the 2025 New Mexico Legislative session saw a significant increase in housing legislation introduced to address a wide variety of housing needs and issues in New Mexico. LWVNM responded to these challenges by expanding the Affordable Housing position to include a broader array of housing issues for which we can advocate.

Please join us for an informational update and discussion on Thursday, June 12 regarding the Mayor's Housing and Homelessness Initiative.

The presentation will cover:

- city funded programs and partners,
- encampment response procedures,
- rental assistance and case management,
- the Gateway to Housing system, and
- plans for the development of more affordable housing.

Speakers: Markela Clinton, Community Engagement Coordinator

in the Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement for the City of Albuquerque. In this role, she works directly with residents, neighborhood associations, and city departments to promote inclusive participation in local government and ensure city initiatives reflect community priorities. She has a background in public service, having previously held positions with the New Mexico State Legislature, the Office of the District Attorney, and statewide advocacy campaigns supporting affordable housing and voter engagement.



Maria Wolfe, Homeless Innovations Officer, Health, Housing and Homelessness Department, City of Albuquerque,

brings public, private, non-profit and education experience to facilitation, project planning, program development and strategic planning. Formerly the Public Safety ECHO Coordinator for the City of Albuquerque, Maria builds multi-disciplinary solutions and brings these skills to address the needs and challenges of people who are unhoused.



July LWVCNM Educational Meeting

LWVCNM is pleased to announce former NM Senator Dede Feldman will be the guest speaker for the July LWVCNM Educational meeting and will address **“Impacts of Federal Funding Cuts to Healthcare and Education in NM.”**

The hybrid meeting, Thursday, July 10th at noon, will again meet in-person at the LWVCNM office conference room at 6739 Academy Blvd NE and will be recorded for those with scheduling conflicts.

Report on the LWVCNM Annual Meeting



The Annual Meeting on May 10th at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) was well attended. Many thanks to everyone that attended this important business meeting. The IPCC was a wonderful place to have our meeting and was a nice change from hotel locations. The buffet was excellent, and the Native American Storyteller was engaging.



After the meeting Bill Stimmel, Director of the Indian Pueblo Entrepreneur Complex (IPEC) spoke about the IPEC and then led several members on a tour of the facility. Jennifer Black did an amazing job organizing and making all the arrangements for the meeting.

Actions taken at the Annual Meeting included approving changes to the Bylaws and Policy and Procedures. Revisions to the 2025-2026 budget were presented and approved.

Six serving Board members and three new Board members were elected. We even had three members volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee.

LWVCNM Calendar Planning scheduled for June 14th 2025

Karen M. Douglas VP/Program

LWVCNM will host our annual Calendar Planning Meeting on Saturday, June 14, 10 AM—Noon via Zoom only. Join other LWVCNM members to discuss the issues impacting our communities and nation to select Topics for our upcoming 2025-26 Educational Meetings.

We have been very fortunate with the number of members attending our 2023-24 monthly hybrid program meetings which have expanded into an opportunity to mingle with other members joining the in-person events at our CNM offices and meeting facilities. This has been so well received that our 2025-26 meetings will also offer these social gatherings supplementing our educational programs.



LWVCNM needs your ideas and recommendations for topics and speakers for monthly educational meetings scheduled September 2025—August 2026. This helps LWVCNM understand the issues you find most pressing or topics requiring greater attention for the upcoming LWVCNM program year. During our 2024-25 program meetings LWVCNM continued with the successful hybrid meetings introduced June 2023 to promote increased participation.

LWVCNM has addressed several topics where prior knowledge was lacking: Native American Governance; PFAS – the forever chemical present in our upholstery, fabrics, soils, cookware, with decreasing federal regulation; the LWVUS Moonshot Goal: Abolition of the Electoral College; and the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the 2024 Election. These educational meetings promote LWV member consideration of issues which may warrant future advocacy and study

Watch for Zoom information in upcoming Topics announcements. If you can't join us but have recommendations, please contact Karen Douglas- douglaskm@alumni.stanford.edu (505-263-3297).

LWVCNM needs your involvement to offer timely and informative monthly educational programs addressing the needs of our community.

**What's Up Next?
Save-the-Date**



**Wednesday,
July 23rd**

**The LWVCNM Book Club meets the 4th Wednesday of each odd-numbered month.
Join us for the July session.**

New members are always welcome! If you are not able to complete a book before the session, no worries. . . join a session and complete the book at your convenience! Great conversation, light snacks, and a way to better get to know LWVCNM members.

We will announce the July title in an upcoming Hot Topics email.

Date: Wednesday, July 23
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: LWVCNM Office Conference Room, 6739 Academy Rd NE
Title: *TBD*

Contact Janet at 505-401-2052 for questions.

Volunteer Opportunities

Because Democracy is not a Spectator Sport....

We need your skills, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to the myriad of projects always underway. From simple clerical tasks to grass roots advocacy, ongoing or project-by project, we can fit your interests to a volunteer job. Expanding our volunteer base is a top priority of LWVCNM.

How to Find Out More About Volunteering? It's easy! Contact us at :

(505) 884-8441 or lwvcnmoffice@gmail.com Leave a message with your name/phone number and expressing your interest in finding out more about volunteering. We'll contact you to match your interests/skills with a volunteer position, explain tasks involved, review time commitment for various positions, and offer training where needed.



LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:
Starlyn Brown

1st Co-Vice Presidents/Voter Guide:
Karen Wentworth & Lani Desaulniers

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Director/Webmaster/Zoom Host: Linda Miller

Voter Guide Distribution: Lani Desaulniers

Advocacy Team/Observer Corps:
Karen Wentworth

Volunteer Coordinator:
Linda Miller

If you need help with Zoom,
please reach out to Zoom host, Linda Miller,
lmiller@unm.edu

Please submit your articles for the monthly Voter by
the 15th of each month to Michal Mudd at:

VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com

LWVCNM CALENDAR

June 3rd (Tuesday) 4 pm – 7 pm

LWVCNM Spring into Summer Happy Hour
Steel Bender Brewery, 8305 2nd St. NW

June 7th (Saturday)

Pridefest Voter Registration

June 11th (Wednesday) 5:00 pm

LWVCNM Board Meeting, In Person.
All members welcome.

June 12th (Thursday) 12 Noon

LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM

Topic: “Affordable Housing - Beyond the Unhoused”

Speakers: Ms. Markela Clinton, Community Engagement Coordinator, & Ms. Maria Wolfe, Homeless Innovations Officer, see pp. 3-4

June 14 (Saturday) 10 am - Noon

Annual LWVCNM Calendar Planning Meeting
via Zoom only. See p. 6 for more info.

July 2nd (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

LWVCNM Board Meeting, ZOOM until further notice. All members welcome.

July 10th (Thursday) 12 Noon

LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM

Topic: “Impacts of Federal Funding Cuts to Healthcare and Education in NM”

Speaker: former NM Senator Dede Feldman

July 23rd (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

LWVCNM Book Club
See Book Club link on LWVCNM webpage
& Hot Topics notice

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting 21 Apr/5 May 2025 Mary Mulvany / Janet Kirkpatrick

All nine councilors were present at the Apr 21 and May 5 meetings. Councilors: Louie Sanchez – District 1, Joaquin Baca – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Nichole Rogers – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Dan Champine – District 8, Renée Grout, District 9.

General Information:

Both meetings began at 5pm and adjourned after midnight due to a full agenda and the number of people who signed up for public comment. Public comment was limited to one minute per person at both meetings.

Housing

Housing Forward Fund Report

At the April 21 meeting, Health, Housing & Homelessness Director Montoya provided an update of how the Housing Forward Fund has been used. The report is available at the following link: [EC-25-355](#)

Farolito Senior Affordable Housing Project [EC-25-360](#)

At the April 21 meeting, the Council unanimously approved the second supplemental agreement for the Farolito Senior Community Development Agreement between the City and Sol Housing. This agreement provides for construction of 82 residential units using \$3million in additional America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The project shall remain an affordable housing project for a 20-year period. The project is located at 10501 Central Ave NE.

Somos Affordable Housing Project [EC-25-361](#)

At the April 21 meeting, the Council unanimously approved an agreement between the City and Sol Housing for the Somos Apartment Project. This agreement provides for construction of 70 residential units, 59 of which will be for affordable housing. The project shall remain an affordable housing project for a 20-year period. It is located at 7200 Central Ave SW.

Distressed Lodging Property Ordinance [O-25-75](#)

At the May 5 meeting, the Council passed legislation requiring lodging establishments that are not in compliance with City ordinances to implement enhanced operational requirements, including recording a lodger's identification (ID).

This created discussion among the councilors about the difficulty of getting and keeping IDs for some people. Councilor Sanchez said that with the amount of help available to get IDs, everyone should have one. During the public comment on this measure, a member of the public who stated they had been trafficked pointed out that the first thing a trafficker does is take someone's ID. Another member of the public confirmed this experience and felt insulted by the discussion. After the public comments were over, Councilor Sanchez responded they should have reported it to the police when IDs were taken.

The measure passed by a vote of five in favor (Bassan, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, Peña) to four opposed (Baca, Champine, Rogers, Sanchez). (*cont.*)

Development

Quality of Life Enhancement Fund [O-25-77](#)

At the May 5 meeting, Councilor Baca proposed a measure to put forth a ballot measure to voters which would designate 0.375% gross receipts tax (GRT) to create a quality of life enhancement fund. The funds would be designated for building a performing arts center. Other councilors proposed amendments which would divert the funding to other projects and in the end the measure was defeated by unanimous vote. During the general public comment period, two people spoke in favor of the measure. No comment was allowed during discussion of the actual measure, Although Councilors Bassan and Lewis disagreed about whether public comment should be allowed before or after amendments, no comment was allowed during discussion of the actual measure. Instead, after the vote was taken, comment was allowed on a companion administrative measure prior to its withdrawal. At that time six members of the public spoke in favor of the performing arts center.



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission May 2025 Karen Wentworth

Present: Frank Baca, Barbara Baca, Walt Benson, Eric Olivas. Excused: Adriann Barboa

Bernalillo County Commission Focuses on Public Safety and Housing

Bernalillo County Commission has passed a billion dollar budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 that prioritizes public safety and housing. Next year, the Sheriff's Office and the Fire and Rescue Department together will make up about 31% of the county budget.

The county will add 22 new employees to the payroll – most of them in the behavioral health division, if they can find qualified candidates. In spite of raises built into the budget for employees, the county still has up to 40% vacancy rates in some areas. One notable budget increase here is the additional \$6 million dollar appropriation to the University of New Mexico Hospital contract for mental and medical treatment of inmates at the Metropolitan Detention Center.

As part of its expanded housing program, the commission announced it is preparing to issue Project Revenue Bonds for \$28.9 million dollars for a new multifamily affordable housing project at 701 Coors Blvd. NW. The project will involve construction of 128 new units and the developer estimates it will serve 448 residents. A public hearing will be held later in May on the project.



**Sandoval County Commission regular meeting
April 23, 2025
Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)**

Present: Michael Meek (Chair, video), Jordan Juarez (Vice Chair), Joshua Jones, Katherine Bruch, Jon Herr

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No topics for which the League has an advocacy position were taken up during this meeting.

Additional Comments

Sandoval County Commission Website

<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



**Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative Commission
(MRGHC)
Affordable Housing Report for June, 2025
Janie McGuigan**

The MRGHC met at 3:00 pm, Thursday, April 24, 2025 at the MRCOG Board Room. All MRGHC Commissioners were present at the meeting: Talia Friedman, Dan Majewski, Lawrence Rael, Ian Robertson and Steve Anaya. Other public officials present were Marcos Gonzales, Executive Director of the Bernalillo County Economic Development Department; Joseph Montoya, Deputy Director of Housing, City of Albuquerque; and Barbara Baca, County Commissioner. Also present was Kelly O'Donnell, PhD, consultant to the MRGHC.

Agenda Item Updates: The minutes for February 3 and March 17, 2025 were reviewed and approved. The Memorandum of Understanding for reporting City funding to the MRGHC was approved as an action item. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Baca made a brief presentation on the activities of MRGHC representatives during the 2025 Legislative Session. She stated that the MRGHC requested \$179K for Homeless Services, Transitional Housing and Affordable Housing via a collaborative advocacy effort led by both the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. These efforts yielded an allocation of \$110M set aside in HB2 which was designated by the Governor to be sent to the Department of Finance and Administration and subsequently to the Department of Workforce Solutions for allocation to local governments. The funds will be available during State FY 25 and FY26.

(cont.)

Ms. O'Donnell presented the Analysis and Recommendations paper that she developed for the MRGHC. The paper assessed powers in the MRGHC's Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and provided a list of core functions that the MRGHC could undertake going forward. Importantly, the analysis of the JPA relative to the Affordable Housing Act determined that the MRGHC cannot receive and disburse funding on behalf of the City and County, i.e. each governmental entity will need to receive and manage its own allocations.

The core functions that Ms. O'Donnell recommended included: (1) Convening of regional stakeholders to facilitate collaboration, align policy and coordinate funding; (2) Research and Analysis for needs and gaps in affordable housing; cost effectiveness of subsidized housing for homelessness and housing insecurity as well as program evaluation and performance metrics; and (3) Outreach and Education to educate the public and build support for more equitable housing policy. The recommended next steps for the MRGHC include: a) convening the City and County staff to prioritize projects for funding; b) assist and support the establishment of the new Bernalillo County Housing Development Department; c) develop a Strategic Plan and; d) hire an Executive Director.

The next MRGHC meeting date will be Thursday, May 22, 2025 @ 3pm at MRCOG Board room.

Interested in learning more about local government and sharing your knowledge with League members? Become a LWVCNM Observer. Contact Karen Wentworth, Advocacy/Observer Corps Chair, kwentworth17@comcast.net

DID YOU KNOW?

Congressional Representatives Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.-02) and Ryan Zinke (R-MT-01) have created a bipartisan congressional coalition to save America's public lands.

New Mexico statewide municipal elections are gearing up to take place this fall, and election day is on November 4. LWVCNM will produce online Voter Guide PDFs for the elections in our four counties.

Stay informed about misinformation and disinformation by reading the websites or signing up for emails from these two organizations:

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

<https://newslit.org/>



**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.