



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

6739 Academy Rd. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109 lwvcnm.org (505) 884-8441

President's Report

September 17th is Constitution and Citizenship Day – a day that reminds us of both our nation's founding framework and the rights that define us as a nation.

This day has an evolving history. In 1940, Congress established "I Am an American Day," first observed in May. By 1952, it was renamed "Constitution Day" and moved to September 17, the anniversary of the Constitution's signing in 1787. In 2004, Congress reaffirmed its importance by renaming it Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, recognizing the inseparable connection between our governing charter and the people it serves.

You have probably heard or read the preamble to the Constitution many times, but here it is again.

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

These words are not abstract. The Constitution is the foundation of our democracy, carefully designed to limit power, divide authority among three branches, and safeguard the people against abuse. I find it interesting that abuses of power were acknowledged in 1778 as a threat and the separation of powers is foundational and enshrined in the Constitution.

The Bill of Rights, ratified in 1791, added protections we still rely on today: freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly; protection against unlawful searches; and guarantees of fairness and justice in our courts.

But rights endure only if they are defended. Freedoms we take for granted are under attack—from restrictions on speech, to attacks on citizenship, to attacks on voting rights, to limits on press freedom, to challenges against religious liberty and equal justice. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights are not relics of the past. They are promises to every American—promises we must continue to fight for.

This Constitution and Citizenship Day, let us do more than commemorate history. Let us recognize our responsibility. Democracy does not preserve itself. Our rights do not endure on silence. To honor this day is to speak up, to stay engaged, and to defend the freedoms that belong to We the People.

Join us for the Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series

SEPTEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING Thursday Sept 11th, at Noon and 6:30pm



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

TOPIC: Navigating the New LWV Membership Online Dues Payment System

SPEAKER: Elizabeth Shields

Many members will be receiving renewal notices from LWVUS during the coming weeks. In our September Monthly Meeting, we will be explaining how to renew, online and in person. Feel free to bring your laptop.

For most LWVCNM members, their renewal date is October 1. Therefore, there is no need to renew immediately upon receipt of the renewal notice - it is just a reminder that renewal time is approaching.

Important Dates for Membership Renewal

September 1 – second email reminder from LWVUS, members should start renewing now

October 1 – third email reminder from LWVUS, Official Renewal Date

November 15 – late email reminder from LWVUS

December 1 – member is made inactive if dues are unpaid

Your reminder email is from membership@lww.org with the subject heading 'Renew Your League of Women Voters Membership'. Check your spam or junk folder if you do not receive this email.

*NOTE: Please DO NOT combine donations or contributions with your dues payments whichever payment method you choose. Please make donations **separately** using the Donation button on the LWVCNM web site (lwvcnm.org) or by sending a check to LWVCNM, 6739 Academy Rd. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque NM 87109-3352. This avoids processing fees that the online system deducts.*

This description of the new payment system is divided into two parts; Part 1 describes the online renewal process; Part 2 describes the process for paying by check to LWVUS.

Part 1: Online payment using LWV portal

If you are familiar with shopping online this is similar, payment is by credit card or bank account.

When you open your renewal reminder from LWV, click on the link to [LWV Member Portal User Guide](#) for a short 3 page introduction to the LWV portal and the renewal process.

When you are ready to renew, click on the Join/Renew button on the reminder email. Then enter your email address on the screen that pops up and click on 'Continue with email'. Check your email for a confirmation code from LWV. It will contain both a button to click and a confirmation code. Use either one to access the portal.

On the portal you can check your profile to make sure the information is correct, then select the dues amount you wish to pay. (note: if you are adding a second member the payment will be the same for both members). The recommended amount is \$75. The minimum amount is \$20.

Skip the next page for Contributions.

Follow the prompts to pay by credit card or bank account. You may then update your profile information and respond to questions that LWVCNM has posted regarding your interest in the League.

Part 2: Paying dues by check made out to LWVUS

This part is for members who do not use email or prefer to pay by check.

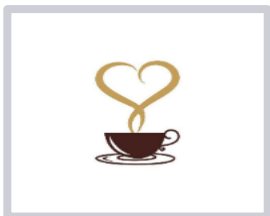
When you are ready to renew on or before October 1, write a check to LWVUS for the dues amount only (\$75 is recommended and \$20 minimum). Fill out the information form from LWVCNM web site or sent to you from LWVCNM, including any changes in address, phone number or email address. Send the form and the check to LWVCNM, 6739 Academy Rd, Suite 124, Albuquerque NM 87109-3352.

Office volunteers will process the payment by accessing the LWV portal, renewing your membership, downloading a 'Pending Member Payment form, and mailing your information form, the check and the pending payments form to a bank for processing, after making copies of all documents.

As you can see this is a time-consuming task, so we strongly urge members to renew their dues online, if possible.

Our Educational Monthly Meeting on September 11th will describe the new dues payment system in detail and answer questions. In addition, the Drop-In Coffee at the League Conference Room on Saturday, September 20th will focus on answering members' questions and assisting with renewals.

Saturday Morning



Drop-In Coffee!

GOT A QUESTION?

NEED AN ANSWER?

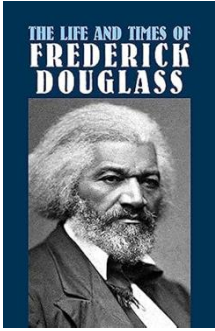
Come to our Saturday Drop-In Coffee on **September 20th from 10 am -12 noon** at the **League Conference Room, 6739 Academy Rd, NE Albuquerque.**

Meet League members who are informing voters, monitoring local government actions and agencies, promoting civic education, and encouraging transparency in government. Tell us your concerns about issues that affect us all. Together we can explore ways for you to become involved in helping to resolve them.

See you on July 12th between 10 – 12 noon for coffee, tea or a beverage of your choice, and good information on ways to have an impact.

For more details, call/text or email:

Pam Wilson	505-331-0936	wilsonpj51@hotmail.com
Dina Hennessy	505-453-9725	dinahennessy@gmail.com
Liz Shields	559-578-5670	elizs44@yahoo.com

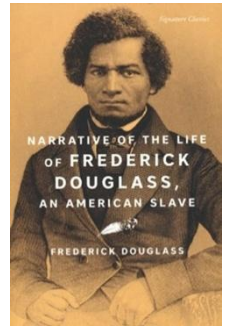


**What's Up Next?
Save-the-Date!
Wednesday, Sept. 24th**

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



The group selected the following title for the September meeting:

Date & Time: Wednesday, September 24 @ 5:30 pm

Location: LWVCNM Office Conference Room. - 6739 Academy Rd NE

Title: **The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass**

Frederick Douglass wrote three autobiographies from which to choose:

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. Written in 1845, seven years after his freedom.
- *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Written in 1855.
- *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Written in 1881.

Compilations of all three are available.

Contact Janet at 505-401-2052 for questions.

Local Elections Matter

Historically, the turnout for Municipal Elections is very low. The elected officials make decisions that affect our lives every single day. Sometimes these elections are won by only 100 or two hundred votes. LWVCNM is out there registering voters and spreading the word to VOTE. We have 10+ confirmed voter registration events in September. Our Voter Registration Agents (VRAs) are very, very busy.

You can help by spreading the word and encouraging people to vote in these elections.

We are also spending hours gathering candidate and ballot issue information and populating the VOTE411.org website. PDF's will be available to voters to review and educate themselves about candidates and their answers to questions.

The first, little known election is the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, better known as MRGCD. Only property owners along the Rio Grande can vote in this election which makes it confusing. Early voting begins September 15th election day is October 7th. See flyer page 5.

Early Voting for the Municipal elections begins October 7th and election day is November 4th.

**MIDDLE RIO GRANDE
CONSERVANCY
DISTRICT**

ELECTION DAY IS

OCTOBER 7TH

**EARLY VOTING
STARTS SEPTEMBER 15TH**

**CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT THE
CANDIDATES HAVE TO SAY
ABOUT CHANGING CONDITIONS
IN THE RIO GRANDE?**

**GET ALL THE INFORMATION YOU
NEED AT VOTE411.ORG**



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO**

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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

Sept 3rd (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
LWVCNM Board Meeting,
ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome.

Sept 11th (Thursday) 12 Noon and 6:30pm
**LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM**
Topic: **Navigating the New LWV Online
Membership System**
Speaker: **Elizabeth Shields**

Sept 20th (Saturday) 10 am – 12 noon
Saturday Morning Drop-in Coffee Hour
at the **League Conference Room,**
6739 Academy Rd, NE Albuquerque

Sept 24th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
LWVCNM Book Club
“The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass”
See info on p.4 or the Book Club link
on the LWVCNM webpage
& Hot Topics notices

Oct 1st (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
LWVCNM Board Meeting,
ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome.

Oct 9th (Thursday) 12 Noon
**LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM**
Topic: **TBD**

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting

Aug 4, 2025

Mary Mulvany /Janet Kirkpatrick

All nine councilors were present at the 4 Aug meeting. 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:

The council does not meet during July.

The city of Albuquerque holds elections for council districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 in November. Louis Sanchez is not seeking reelection as District 1 councilor. He is running for mayor. The current councilors in districts 3, 5, 7, and 9 are seeking reelection. Lists of individuals running for the council seats and mayor are listed at the following link: [CABQ Candidate Information](#)

Executive Session

At the beginning of the meeting the City Council went into executive session for 40 minutes to discuss a matter separate from the public forum. The matter relates to a resolution passed in March: [R-25-122](#) Establishing Minimum Staffing Requirement for Albuquerque Fire Rescue, Rescue Apparatus. The legislation requires that all fire department engines are staffed with two paramedic firefighters. This is a change from the City's current practice. The mayor filed suit against the City Council on this issue, which is pending in court. The issue was also referred to the Intragovernmental Conference Committee (ICC). The ICC ruled in July that "The council does not have the power under the City Charter to specify staffing requirements." The exact focus of the City Council's executive session discussion is unknown.

General Public Comment

Members of the public were allowed one minute to speak, rather than the customary two minutes. Twenty-eight members of the public spoke on a variety of topics:

- the lack of comments being allowed on the City Council's YouTube and GovTV recordings,
- concerns about Federal ICE agents operating in Albuquerque. Nine individuals stated they would like City Council to pass ordinances requiring accountability from ICE such as proof of identity and signed warrants,
- five individuals spoke about safety and sanitation concerns with the homeless encampment at Quirky Books. Council members Lewis and Sanchez asked questions of the administration about this situation. The Chief Administrative Officer stated that citations have been issued to the business owner, who has appealed in court.

Near the end of the public comment period, Council President Bassan asked someone in the audience to sit down. We could not see that person due to the camera angle of the video recording and are unsure if the individual was causing a disturbance. In response to Council President Bassan's repeated instructions to sit, other members of the audience rose from their seats to stand.

Bassan then announced a 30-minute recess. Upon returning from the recess, Bassan welcomed everyone back from the Council's dinner break.

Affordable Housing

Councilor Baca sponsored resolution [R-25-177](#), appropriating \$7.5 million in funding from the state for two affordable housing projects in his district (the downtown area). Ten members of the public spoke in support of the projects. Three spoke against it citing process issues. The council unanimously passed the resolution and it was sent to the mayor for signature. The projects:

- Lomas Towers Apartments (\$5 million) Converts the fourteen story Wells Fargo building downtown into 100-120 apartments for residents earning 80% or less of the area median income. Lincoln Avenue Communities/Geltmore LLC/Fairview Housing Partners.
- The Romero (\$1.9M) Sixty-nine affordable housing units in Barelmas for residents earning 30%-80% of the area median income. Palindrome/Barelmas Community Coalition.
- Gizmo Elevator Renovation (\$0.5million) and Gizmo Façade Renovation (\$43k). Gizmo Artspace Project converts a large downtown building into a hub for local art and business and will include six affordable housing units for youth transitioning from incarceration. Includes on-site counseling.

Administration Q&A

Council meetings include a segment called Administration Question & Answer during which councilors ask specific questions of the various departments. Department heads, or a designee, attend the meetings. Councilors usually provide the questions in advance. It was noted by several Councilors that there was no representative from Albuquerque Police Department available to answer questions.



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

August 4, 2025

Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Commission focused on Housing and Mental Health

All commissioners were present.

Bernalillo County is slowly shifting priorities. A decade ago, the county spent most of its revenue on infrastructure such as the University of New Mexico Hospital, the Metropolitan Detention Center, sewer and water lines and road construction, parks and community centers. That is slowly shifting to include a greater emphasis on the welfare of people in the county.

A decade ago, the county did not spend much money on mental or behavioral health of residents, but a collapse of the state system for mental health providers forced the county to recreate a mental health system for local residents.

At the August 4 commission meeting, commissioners approved the expenditure of \$2 million in Opioid Settlement Funding to expand the capacity of small and medium providers of mental health services through a request for proposals process. The Crossroads Substance Abuse Prevention Program was also granted \$4.8 million to expand prevention and intervention programs and therapy programs in

the Albuquerque Schools. In addition, the commissioners voted to turn 10 contractor positions into full time county positions with health benefits to help manage the growing number and complexity of programs.

A decade ago, Bernalillo County also spent relatively little on housing, but this year the county aggressively and successfully lobbied the New Mexico Legislature for funds to assist developers in providing apartment housing for various groups.

Here's how the county would like to use money they receive from the statewide appropriation:

- Dennis Chavez/98th St. - Tierra Linda Apartments
- 701 Coors Blvd. NW - West Mesa Ridge-A Apartments
- 200 Lomas Blvd. NW - Lomas Tower Apartments
- I-40/Louisiana Blvd. - Uptown Connect Apartments

Preservation/Expansion priority projects

- 2818 4th Street NW – Poblano Place Apartments
- 517 Gold Ave. SW – Mehran Loft Apartments
- 1811 Lead Ave. SW – Don Quixote Apartments

Transitional Apartments

- 411 McKnight Ave. NE – Comfort Inn Hotel
- 1520 Candelaria Rd. NE – Days Inn Hotel
- 1315 Menaul Blvd. NE
- 101 Texas SE – Tiny Home Expansion

Purchase and Development Financing

- 410-450 Rio Bravo Blvd. SW – Aldea del Rio

There is no guarantee these projects will be completed. Completion depends on funding and other factors. The projects are part of Bernalillo County's goal to house a thousand people over the next year.

Additionally, commissioners approved a Project Revenue Bond for the Albuquerque Housing Authority to refurbish 42 existing apartments and to build 46 more units at 60th Street NW and Knott's Landing Court.

A Project Revenue Bond does not use taxpayer funds. It is a long-term property tax break mechanism usually used to fund new construction. The project will be named Casitas del Camino.

Commissioners also converted 5 contractor positions in the Housing Department into permanent positions with the county.

Commissioners also heard a quarterly report from the University of New Mexico Hospital CEO who said the hospital closed out the 2025 fiscal year with a thirty million dollar deficit.



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

July 23, 2025

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

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

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Mental Health and Funding

UNM Sandoval County Regional Medical Center (SCRMC) manages trauma and behavioral health programs funded by mill levies.

The level-3 trauma unit recently received its 3-year designation. The unit most commonly treats injuries caused by falls in people 65 or older, vehicle ejections, and assaults. The percentage of trauma patients treatable at SCRMC rather than being transferred was 70% this year.

Two recent initiatives not funded by mill levies include:

- a Behavioral Response Team that can be dispatched Monday – Thursday, noon - 10PM when someone calls the Suicide Prevention Hotline (988).
- a RRPD Crisis Intervention Team that includes a hospital clinician.

UNM is working to expand the behavioral health workforce in the state.

UNM Care (indigent healthcare) is expected to quadruple in the future due to Medicaid cuts.

As background: The LWVNM expects states to adequately fund mental health care programs that address the needs of children and the homeless, in addition to other residents. The LWVCNM supports mill levies as a means of funding such health care.

Polling Place Locations

Sandoval County has lost some polling sites and affected precincts have been reapportioned to other locations, not all of which are geographically close. One member of the public asked about the loss of the polling place at Cochiti Pueblo – the building there is undergoing remodeling and no other sites are available. The tribe has sovereignty over requesting polling sites and has not requested an alternate site.

The County Clerk's office is continuing to seek additional sites in Rio Rancho. The County will include a clause in their lease agreements for new sites that would allow the County to sublease them to the Rio Rancho for city elections as well. The Commission approved the existing sites and the County will amend the resolution as they find new sites.

As background: The LWVNM supports accessible voting centers.

Additional Comments

UNM Sandoval County Regional Medical Center

The UNM Sandoval County Regional Medical Center quality rating has increased from a D to a B since Fall 2023. Hospital Board of Trustees oversight (quality & more) – county advisor and backup positions open. Considering candidate, Eric Lujan.

Labor relations – a collective bargaining agreement is in place with the Int'l Assoc of Machinists & Aerospace workers. SCRMC is negotiating an agreement with the American Federation of Teachers/United Health Professionals of NM.

SCRMC has decreased dependence on temporary nurses. Their largest current staffing need is radiation technologists.

Senior Nutrition

The Senior Nutrition Service Incentive Program will experience a funding reduction of \$88,000 for the coming year due to fewer state and federal funds.

Sandoval County Commission Website

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



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

August 13, 2025

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

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

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Poll Locations

Sandoval County has added two additional polling locations. More locations will be added in 2026. The original polling place at Cochiti Pueblo that is being remodeled is now expected to serve as a polling place for one day in 2025. The County is still considering additional sites in Rio Rancho.

As background: The LWVNM supports accessible voting centers.

Additional Comments

Sandoval County Commission Website

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



Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative (MRGHC)

Regular Meeting - Affordable Housing Report

August 2025

Janie McGuigan

The MRGHC met at 3:00 pm, Thursday, July 24, 2025 for a regular meeting at the MRCOG Board Room. Three of five MRGHC Commissioners attended: Talia Friedman (Chair), Dan Majewski, and Steve Anaya. The MRGHC Commissioners approved the July meeting Agenda and the Minutes from the June 26 meeting.

(cont.)

The next discussion item was related to the MRGHC Bylaws. The members continued their discussion from the June meeting to include the need for consistency in content between the JPA (Joint Powers Agreement) and the Bylaws; and, also to set term length and staggered terms of office for Commissioners; the need for other MRGHC Officers beyond a Chair and Secretary; and, the ability to establish Standing committees as deemed necessary. The Commissioners also discussed the need to obtain Directors and Officers (D & O) insurance.

Next was a presentation on Santa Clara County, California's, *Destination Home* program by County Manager Cindy Chavez. Ms. Chavez was directly involved in the program prior to coming to Bernalillo County. She explained that the program had several components/approaches including: funding impactful strategies, incubating new programs, doing public policy and advocacy, community engagement and research and evaluation. An overarching philosophy of the program was cross-sector collaboration across local government, elected officials, philanthropists, service providers and housing developers to ensure a coordinated approach.

Through Ms. Chavez' and MRGHC commissioners' conversations with Sarita Nair, Secretary of Workforce Solutions, the following approach has been developed to utilize \$100,000 in capital outlay funds from the 2025 NM Legislative Session. Short term, the focus will be on gap financing of immediate shovel-ready housing projects; purchasing existing housing for rehab and embed of low to moderate income units; and creating a rapid re-housing and transitional housing program for homeless households. Long term the County will be positioned to build new affordable housing.

Lastly, at the end of the July 24 meeting, the MRGHC agreed to meet in Special session on July 28 to review and approve an employment agreement with Ms. Yasmine Armstrong for the Planning and Operations Director of the MRGHG. The Special meeting was held, the employment agreement was approved, and a start date and orientation process will begin on August 4 for Ms. Armstrong.

The next MRGHC meeting date will be Thursday, August 28, 2025 @ 3pm at MRCOG Board Room.

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 lwvcnoffice@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.



**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.