2020 WOMEN’S VOTE CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE MANUAL

Prepared by

WVCI
Congratulations! You have embarked on a journey to celebrate the Women’s Vote Centennial. In 1920, women gained the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and in 2020 communities and states throughout our nation are celebrating the centennial.

The Women’s Vote Centennial Initiative is a collaboration of women-centered organizations working to coordinate and amplify the centennial celebrations across the nation. Several communities and states have commemorated the centennial of their state giving women the right to vote (pre 1920), and others are now preparing for 2020 and beyond. In this guide we outline several ways you can add your community to the list by organizing, educating and celebrating. Below you will find more detailed descriptions of individual projects. Please feel free to reach out to us or the project organizer for more information.
TOWARD EQUALITY

ORGANIZING

WORK WITH ESTABLISHED GROUPS

There may be organizations which are already planning activities in your state or community. The WVCI is working to help identify those groups, and the more we publicize our efforts, the easier it will be to find each other. We recommend you connect with existing groups first, before starting a new initiative. The League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women and other organizations in many states are planning 2020 activities. To find other existing groups, check the How Women Won the Vote Gazette and/or the WVCI website.

PUT TOGETHER A COALITION OR START A COMMISSION

In 2017, Congress passed legislation creating the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission and provided a $2 million appropriation for the group. Stay connected with WVCI for updates on the Commission.

Activists have created several state commissions. Check the WVCI website for a list of local and state suffrage projects to get involved with one in your area. Consider creating a centennial commission in your state or a coalition of interested groups. Ask what you can do.

BUILD A MONUMENT

A monument (or statue, plaque, stained-glass window, artwork, etc.) can be a lasting commemoration honoring the accomplishments of women.

The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial will commemorate the 5 million women from every state, race and nationality who fought for 72 years to win the constitutional right to vote. Located in Occoquan, Virginia, where many suffragists were jailed and force fed, it will commemorate the full 72 fight for women’s suffrage. For those who still want to have their or a designee’s name engraved on the Donor Wall, the date has been extended to October 31, 2020; a minimum $1,000 contribution is required. Donations can be made online through this website or by check. Also, naming rights are still available for major design elements. The dedication has been indefinitely postponed. See their website for updates.

The Virginia Women’s Monument Commission was started in 2010 and is scheduled to complete a monument honoring the contributions of 12 outstanding women who made significant contributions to Virginia in 2019.
Other monuments include the Ida B. Wells monument in Chicago, Tennessee statues, stained glass of Susan B. Anthony, Suffrage Monument in US Capitol, and the Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony statue in Central Park, New York.

If you know of pieces of suffrage history in your area, The National Women’s Suffrage Marker Program offers grants to erect roadside markers commemorating women’s suffrage people, places, and things. For more information, click here.

JOIN WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE TRAILS

National Votes For Women Trail

In honor of the 2020 centennial, the National Collaborative for Women’s History Sites is leading the effort to develop a nation-wide Votes for Women Trail. The Trail will highlight the role of each state in the 72-year battle to achieve women’s suffrage. This project is truly a grassroots effort. A coordinator in each state will lead efforts to find and to research sites that have a history with the women’s suffrage movement. The volunteers enter that information into a comprehensive database that will be used to populate an interactive nationwide map, which will represent a more complete story of the struggle for women’s suffrage. Check them out.
HIRE A SPEAKER FOR A SCHOOL

The best way to engage students in the celebration of women’s victory is to include it in their school curriculum. Work with your local school system to include professors or local experts to share their expertise on women’s history as it relates to the lessons in different grade levels. See the WVCI website for classroom resources on women’s suffrage.

Schools welcome volunteers. Your group might offer to read suffrage-related books to elementary school classes and later donate the books to the school library. A list of suffrage-related books can be found on the WVCI website.

HOLD AN EVENT OR START A SERIES

Public libraries and historical societies are always interested in new programming ideas. Contact the staff at some local institutions and encourage them to schedule suffrage-related programs to celebrate 2020. For example, libraries across the country have hosted events with Laura F. Keyes’ portrayal of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Questions to address: Who were the suffrage supporters in your state? How did they help win passage of the 19th Amendment? What did they do? Where did they work? What still needs to be done today?

For a list of performers and speakers on women’s history topics, see the National Women’s History Alliance website (look at the top and click on “Performers/Speakers”) or the WVCI website.

FIND INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN’S HISTORY IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR STATE

Libraries, state and community history museums, university special collections and archives are great sources for local women’s history. In addition, contact any area historic sites or landmarks for specialized information. Established women’s groups may also have information on local history. Check the WVCI list of books about state woman suffrage efforts on the 2020centennial.org website.
SHARE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Social media is an excellent way to educate others about the centennial. Follow the WVCI on social media, share, and then create your own content relevant to your state using the official hashtag #2020Centennial.

Consider using one of the following in addition to #2020Centennial to share experiences when posting: #TowardEquality, #SuffrageAt100, #RightToVote,#WomenDisobey, #GetRadical,#Vote100, #WomenInPolitics, #HerStory,#FeministFriday, #WomenVote

Facebook: www.facebook.com/2020Centennial/

Twitter: @2020Centennial

Instagram: 2020Centennial

WORK WITH A YOUTH GROUP

Ensuring young people understand the importance of early suffragists and women’s rights advocates is an essential part of our work for the centennial and beyond. Encourage organized youth groups to include what women did. Consider approaching your local Boys and Girls Club and Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts to interest them in the suffrage movement. Girl Scout Troops in some states offer a suffrage patch for members to earn.

The National Park Service has a Junior Suffragist booklet which can be found here and the Girl Scouts have a Suffrage Centennial Toolkit here.
PUSH FOR LEGISLATION/PROCLAMATIONS

What better way to pay homage to the work needed to pass the 19th Amendment than to support additional legislation promoting women’s rights? Encourage lawmakers to commemorate the centennial with a proclamation as well as a state commission. Consider identifying legislators who may be interested in introducing a bill.

The New York State commission bill provides an example for the establishment of a commission.

The National Women’s History Alliance provides a sample proclamation on their website.

Examples of resolutions can be found through the Library of Congress.

Look up your state’s legislative history on suffrage. Information can also be found in the Gazette. http://www.nwhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018_gazette_web.pdf
HOLD AN ISSUE-RELATED SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENT

Women’s rights activism often occurs in conjunction with advocacy for other issues. Consider holding a forum to educate your community on economic or social justice issues and incorporate suffrage and other women’s rights issues. See the [NWHP Women’s History 2020 Gazette](https://www.nwphp.org) for examples.

HOLD A PARADE/EVENT IN YOUR CITY TO CELEBRATE RATIFICATION

On June 1919, Congress passed the 19th Amendment and sent it to the states for ratification. Several communities are launching their centennial activities with a parade or event to commemorate the passage of the amendment in their state.

Check the date your state ratified [here](https://www.nwphp.org).

ENCOURAGE EXHIBITS AT MUSEUMS/OTHER VENUES

Several museums and institutions in Washington DC and elsewhere are already planning women’s suffrage exhibits. Encourage others. Consider supplementing current exhibits or encouraging museums to add additional pieces highlighting women’s history. Encourage friends and family to provide suffrage artifacts (pins, sashes, etc.) for display.

See the [WVCI website](https://www.wvci.org) for a list of current and future exhibits.

PRODUCE ART

Art is an excellent and creative way to educate our communities about suffrage. Consider creating something new or commissioning artists to draw, paint, write, sculpt, act, direct or honor a person, event or theme associated with women’s rights.

A few examples are:
- [Her Flag](https://www.nwphp.org)
- [The Black Suffragist](https://www.nwphp.org)
- [It's My Party](https://www.nwphp.org)
- [Underpin & Overcoat](https://www.nwphp.org)
RECREATE A HISTORICAL EVENT

Cities across the nation hold reenactments to commemorate their history. Work with your locality to include a reenactment of a significant women’s history or local suffrage event, or enhance the role of women in an already planned event such as a Fourth of July parade. If you wish to hire a performer, the National Women’s History Alliance website includes a directory of performers, listed nationally and by state. Many do presentations related to suffrage.

EQUALITEA

Tea has traditionally been a way for women to socialize and organize. Consider hosting an “equalitea” to educate your community about the suffrage movement or honor local women leaders. Cookbooks were another way suffragists spread the word. Consider a “Suffrage Feast.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADAPTING

The Covid-19 pandemic presented many challenges for those who had plans to celebrate the 2020 Centennial, but there are creative ways to adapt and overcome these challenges.

Consider hosting virtual events, such as Zoom discussions or Facebook Live webinars, if in-person events had to be postponed or cancelled. See the WVCI website for a calendar including virtual events or to watch recordings of past webinars.

Most suffrage exhibits created digital versions that can be accessed easily online. See the WVCI website for a list of online exhibits.

Be sure to check back often for updates on ideas for activities. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Anna Laymon at Anna.Laymon@nationalwomansparty.org.

GET INVOLVED.