



Common ground. Common good.

The Latest from the League

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

Welcome to our 2023 Spring Newsletter!

As I think back on the last few months at Citizens League, so many wonderful moments stand out: Visiting with hundreds of friends at the Civic Celebration; meeting our 2023 Capitol Pathways interns; working with program alumni to design our new Connect + Impact model. I'm energized by our current work and excited about what's ahead! I hope this spring newsletter offers you deeper insights into the ways Citizens League is creating unique spaces to bring different perspectives together and find great solutions.

We invite you to join us and get more engaged this year!

- Participate in educational policy events and workshops, or organizational member events.
- Get involved in a research or study project, including our *new* Connect + Impact policy labs piloting in late 2023.
- Connect with the Capitol Pathways program as a participant, host, or guest speaker.
- Celebrate civic leadership and our MN community at the annual Civic Celebration and other events.
- Support the Citizens League's mission and initiatives with a contribution.

Thank you for investing in this journey with us. Together we are making a difference.

Kate Cimino, *Executive Director*



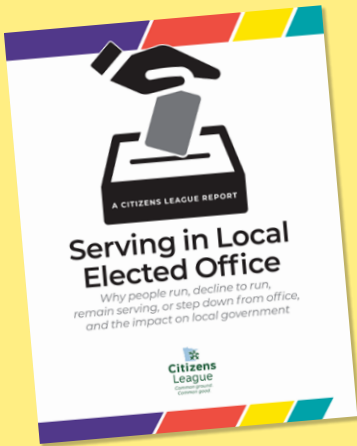
Connect + Impact: Designing a new way for people to be involved in public policy

This year, Citizens League has been working on a *new program* that we are really excited about called **Connect + Impact** – a nimble, and accessible approach to community-led policy engagement. Building on Citizens League's longtime engagement practices and our impactful "study committee" approach, Connect + Impact will add a tool to our policy toolbox and provide a way for more people to be involved, learn about public policy and see their role in it.

Through Connect + Impact, many small groups of individuals, from a variety of communities, backgrounds, and perspectives, could move through a collective experience where they'll connect to a specific issue, exchange values and insights, suggest new ideas, and recommend next steps. Through this re-imagined model, people can connect across differences, and see their work and input translated into policymaking. Importantly, people will find a sense of belonging and connection that is increasingly threatened in today's world.

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JOIN US on June 8
for the End of Session
Celebration. [See details on page 3](#)



Serving in Local Elected Office: A Citizens League Report

What responsibility do each of us have in ensuring a healthy civic climate, where people of various backgrounds have both the desire and the ability to run for office confidently and serve their communities effectively? This recent Citizens League report summarizes what we learned from 80 local civic leaders about why people run, decline to run, remain serving, or step down from office, and the impact on local government. It is our hope that this report contributes to robust conversations about local governance, and spurs actions to support this unique and vital aspect of civic life. Read the full report here: citizensleague.org/localoffice

Connect + Impact: Designing a new way for people to be involved in public policy *(continued)*

Over the course of our 70-year history, Citizens League has been known for our intensive “study committee” model, which brings people together to tackle difficult policy issues by reviewing trusted data and information, exchanging perspectives, and developing recommendations. While this model has made significant impacts, we have seen that traditional study committees alone are not sufficiently inclusive, accessible, or scalable to truly meet the moment of today. Meanwhile, there is a great hunger among individuals to become more involved in their communities in productive, purposeful ways, and be able to see the impact of their efforts.

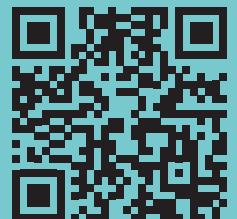
Deeply informed and intentionally co-created with community members, our new Connect + Impact model is being designed to engage even more people in learning about and sharing their voice in public policy. Over the past six months, a Design Team of five selected Capitol Pathways alumni have worked with staff as co-designers to imagine and formulate the basic structures of the Connect + Impact model. Next, the Design Team and Citizens League staff are leading targeted community listening sessions to gain feedback from a variety of stakeholders including Capitol Pathways alumni, Board members, community partners, organizational members, individual supporters, past participants in Citizens League study committees, among others. Guided by community input, we will then pilot groups of “policy labs” that will engage on a specific policy issue. We’ll be piloting our new Connect + Impact policy groups later this year so please stay tuned for more on ways to get involved.

Donations Make a Difference

There are many ways to support our work through both current gifts and future commitments. By including a charitable gift in your will, you can ensure that your support of the League has a lasting impact.

At the end of 2022, Citizens League gratefully received a legacy gift from the estate of **Charles “Chuck” Denny**. With this generous gift, Citizens League is able to advance our civic engagement work in Minnesota in Mr. Denny’s memory.

Whenever you give to the Citizens League, you transform hope into action. We can’t do this work without the support of donors like you! Go to citizensleague.org/support or use the QR code:





“Because of my experiences, I am now able to envision a possible career in youth intervention programs. This pathway will allow me to focus on criminal justice policies and work at a local non-profit once I complete my college degree.”

***– Melody Her,
2023 Capitol
Pathways Intern***

Capitol Pathways: Activating Young Policy Leaders

As you read this, our 8th Capitol Pathways student cohort is completing their immersive internship experiences. With the combination of legislative and career readiness training alongside hands-on policy learning experiences with our host organizations, they are now better prepared to advance their careers and play a role in impacting public policy in Minnesota.

With the long-term goal of making Minnesota state government more representative of our diverse communities, Capitol Pathways is the only paid internship program in Minnesota that creates a policy career pathway for college students who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Since the program’s founding in 2016, over 260 students have now participated in Capitol Pathways, many of whom continue to pursue careers and other opportunities in policy and government including lobbying, advocacy, further education, and elected office.

Learn more about this year’s Capitol Pathways cohort at citizensleague.org/capitolpathways



Capitol Pathways End of Session Celebration

Join us to celebrate the conclusion of the eighth year of Capitol Pathways with an in-person event on June 8, 2023! Find details and register online here: citizensleague.org/CapitolPathwaysCelebration

2023 Civic Celebration Brings Together Community

On March 16th, a diverse array of civic leaders, policy thinkers, and community builders gathered to honor **Kathleen Blatz**, former Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota State Legislator, and **Edwina García**, former Minnesota State Legislator and Richfield City Council Member and to celebrate the power of bringing community together.

Save the date – **March 21, 2024** – and plan to join us next year!

