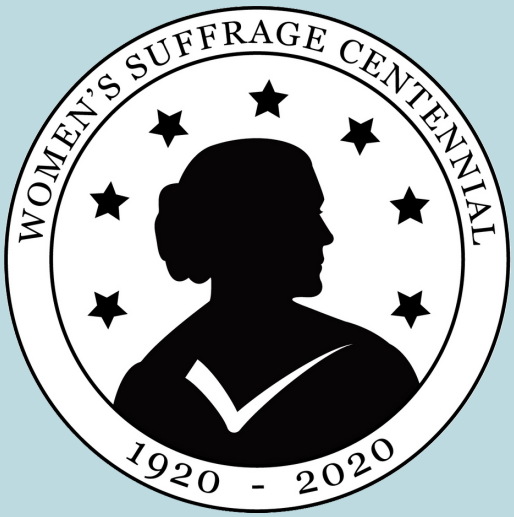
1920 2020

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

*The Official Commission Commemorating 100 Years of Women's Right to Vote*




## OUR MISSION

The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (WSCC) was formed by an act of the U.S. Congress, S.847, to commemorate and coordinate the nationwide celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and to educate the American people about the efforts and undertakings of the women's suffrage movement in the United States in a nonpartisan fashion.

# CENTENNIAL PLANNING TOOLKIT

This guide provides background on the 19th Amendment and ideas for centennial events and activities. Have an event scheduled? Email us at staff@womensvote100.org and we'll add it to our website.


## I. ABOUT THE 19TH AMENDMENT

## II. COMMEMORATIONS IN EVERY STATE, COMMONWEALTH, AND TERRITORY

## III. CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES: IDEAS AND EXAMPLES

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# I. THE 19TH AMENDMENT

From 2019-2020, the United States will celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women's constitutional right to vote.

Suffragists began their organized fight for women's suffrage (meaning the "right to vote") in 1848 when they demanded the franchise during the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. For the next 72 years, women leaders lobbied, marched, picketed, and protested for the right to the ballot. The U.S. House of Representatives finally approved the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment," which guaranteed women the right to vote, on May 21, 1919; the U.S. Senate followed two weeks later, and then the 19th Amendment went to the states for ratification. Thirty-six states needed to approve the Amendment for it to become part of the Constitution. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th and final state needed to ratify. U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby issued a proclamation declaring the 19th Amendment ratified and part of the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920, forever protecting American women's right to vote.

Today, more than 68 million women vote in elections because of the courageous suffragists who never gave up the fight for equality.

## AMENDMENT XIX

THE RIGHT OF CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES TO VOTE SHALL NOT BE DENIED OR ABRIDGED BY THE UNITED STATES OR BY ANY STATE ON ACCOUNT OF SEX.

# II. COMMEMORATIONS ACROSS THE U.S.

**To ensure that every U.S. state, commonwealth, and territory commemorates its own role in the history of women's right to vote during the centennial of the 19th Amendment, the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission recommends that across the United States:**

**1) Governors sign Executive Orders** to: i) commemorate their state's ratification of the 19th Amendment, ii) recognize their state's role in the historical women's suffrage movement, iii) celebrate August 26, 2020 as the centennial of women's constitutional right to vote, and iv) declare the 100th anniversary of their state's ratification date as the start of "The Year of Women" in their state. Find your state's ratification date on page 8.

Governors may also choose to sign an Executive Order forming a commission charged with planning commemorative events and activities for the suffrage centennial in their state.[1]

**2) Legislatures pass joint resolutions** to: i) commemorate their state's ratification of the 19th Amendment, ii) recognize their state's role in the historical women's suffrage movement, iii) celebrate August 26, 2020 as the centennial of women's constitutional right to vote, and iv) reaffirm their state's commitment to the 19th Amendment and to uplifting the voices of women in their state. For states that did not ratify until after the 19th Amendment was signed into law on August 26, 1920, consider passing a joint resolution on Women's Equality Day on August 26, 2020 to show your state's enthusiastic support of women's right to vote today.[2]

To show solidarity on the day of the vote, legislators can wear a yellow rose on their lapels when passing the resolution.[3]

**3) Capitol buildings and Governor's Residences are lit up in gold** on your state's ratification anniversary and on August 26, 2020. Gold was one of the official colors of the historical campaign for women's suffrage, symbolizing the path to victory.

# III. CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES

**To ensure that Americans across the country have the chance to celebrate 100 years of the 19th Amendment, the WSCC recommends using the following list of event and activity ideas to help plan centennial commemorations in your state, commonwealth, or territory:**

## Local Resolutions and Executive Orders

Using the templates found on the WSCC website, pass resolutions and issue executive orders in your local governments and councils to commemorate your community's role in the women's suffrage movement.[4]

## Light Buildings in Gold

On the 100th anniversary of the date your state ratified the 19th Amendment (see page 8) and on the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment becoming law (August 26, 2020), light up your capitol buildings, executive residences, town halls, city halls, courthouses, universities, schools, museums, community centers, and other buildings and landmarks across your state, commonwealth, or territory with gold floodlights or spotlights.

## Rename a Street in Honor of a Suffragist

Change the name of a street in your city after suffragists who fought for the right to vote in your city or state. For example, the city council in Cambridge, Massachusetts voted in April 2019 to rename two streets after suffragists Harriet A. Jacobs and Gertrude Wright Morgan.[5]

## Display a Suffrage Exhibit

Create an exhibit about your community's suffrage story using the archives of state and local historical societies, libraries, and museums. Display exhibits in state capitols, city halls, town halls, museums, or other community centers. For example, the Wisconsin Historical Society opened an exhibit in the Wisconsin State Capitol building in March 2019.[6]

Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

# CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

## Gold Fireworks set to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic"

At your State Fair, County Fair, or other community gathering, include a display of gold fireworks set to the song "Battle Hymn of the Republic," with lyrics written by suffragist Julia Ward Howe in 1861.[7]

## Performances by Orchestras and Ensembles

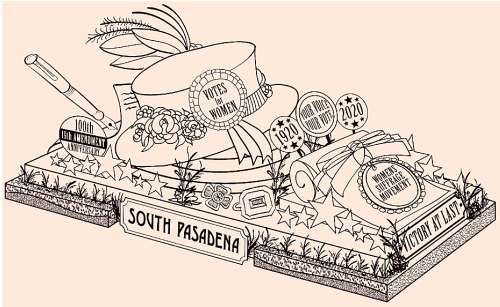
Hold a "Women's Vote 100" or "Suffrage Centennial" concert featuring female composers, patriotic pieces, or music from the suffrage movement, which can be found online through the Library of Congress.[8] Record videos of full or impromptu performances to share on social media featuring women artists.[9]

## Film Screenings

Hold film screenings on capitol lawns or in parks throughout your state, featuring commercial films focused on women's empowerment, such as *A League of One's Own*, or historical dramas or documentaries focused on the women's suffrage movement, such as *Iron Jawed Angels* or *Suffragette*.

## Suffrage Float Contests

Request proposals or hold a competition for a suffrage-themed float to include in state and local parades, such as Fourth of July parades and school an university homecoming parades. For example, the city of South Pasadena, California selected a suffrage float for their "Tournament of Roses" parade.[10]



Proposed South Pasadena float, courtesy of the *South Pasadena Review*.

## Microbrew and Wine Label Contests

Hold a microbrew competition to select your state's official suffrage centennial microbrew. Hold the competition at your State Fair, with your governor and suffrage centennial commissioners or committee members as judges. Or, hold a similar competition to name your state's official suffrage centennial wine.

# CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

## Community Murals

Hold a contest to select a design for a suffrage-themed mural to go up in your community. Invite students, families, and community members to participate in painting the mural. For example, the city of Atascadero, California held a mural contest for Women's Equality Day in 2017.[11]

Courtesy of the *Atascadero News*.

## Suffrage Art Projects

Participate in the Susan B. Anthony House's 2020 Quilt Project,[12] or start your own quilt or other textile project in your community. Visit the WSCC's "Suffrage Sisters" YouTube channel to find more suffrage centennial arts & crafts activities to do with students or with your family.

## Suffrage Centennial Races

Hold a suffrage-themed 5K, 10K, or marathon around your state's ratification anniversary or leading up to August 26, 2020. For example, the National Park Service is holding a "Race to Ratification" 5K on June 9, 2019.[13] Also, Arkansas is planning a "Suffrage Sprint & Stroll" for August 24, 2019.[14]

## Suffrage Centennial Ornament

Design an official state or community suffrage centennial ornament.

## Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon

Work with Wikipedia to plan an "Edit-a-Thon" focused on your state and local suffrage history.[15] For example, the Washington State Historical Society held an Edit-a-Thon during which scholars, students, and community members could "create or improve Wikipedia pages related to Washington State's suffrage history." [16]

# CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

## Suffrage Debates and Oral Presentations

Hold a mock Seneca Falls Convention for students to discuss the inclusion of women's right to vote as a resolution in the Declaration of Sentiments,[17] or hold a mock legislative debate and vote on ratification of the 19th Amendment on your state's ratification anniversary (see page 8), or hold a mock trial based on the trial of Susan B. Anthony after she voted illegally in a presidential election in 1872.[18]

## Suffrage Essay Contests

Hold an essay contest for students on topics related to your state and local suffrage history, such as highlighting suffragists from your area or your state's or community's role in the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

## Wear Suffrage Gear to Parades

March in state and community parades wearing suffrage sashes,[19] "Votes for Women" buttons, and yellow rose pins. Carry banners in celebration of the 19th Amendment. For example, The Official Kansas Suffrage Celebration is asking people to join them in sashes and pins in the 2019 Riverfest Sundown Parade in Wichita.[20]

Courtesy of the National Museum of American History.

## Provide Suffrage Gear at Events

Distribute suffrage sashes, "Votes for Women" buttons, and yellow rose pins at state and local fairs and community events.

## Start a Suffrage Book Club

Form a book club that reads and discusses books about the women's suffrage movement. Post photos of your book club group and share what you learn on social media using the hashtags #WomensVote100, #SuffrageSisters, and #SuffraGents.

# CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

## Plant Yellow Roses and Share on Social Media

Plant yellow roses in your home, school, or community gardens and share photos on social media using the hashtags #WomensVote100, #SuffrageSisters, and #SuffraGents.

## Spread the Word on Social Media

Highlight your state and local suffrage stories on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram using the hashtags #WomensVote100, #SuffrageSisters, and #SuffraGents. Share historical photographs or post photos from suffrage centennial events. Visit www.WomensVote100.org, the "Suffrage Sisters" YouTube channel, and @WomensVote100 on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to find content to share and retweet. On Snapchat, create your own suffrage centennial filter,[21] especially on your state's ratification anniversary (see page 8).

# IV. STATE RATIFICATION DATES

**May 21, 1919** The U.S. House of Representatives passes the 19th Amendment.
**June 4, 1919** The U.S. Senate passes the 19th Amendment, and it goes to the states for ratification. Thirty-six states must ratify for the Amendment to become law.
**June 10, 1919** Wisconsin
**June 10, 1919** Illinois
**June 10, 1919** Michigan
**June 16, 1919** Kansas
**June 16, 1919** Ohio
**June 16, 1919** New York
**June 24, 1919** Pennsylvania
**June 25, 1919** Massachusetts
**June 28, 1919** Texas
**July 2, 1919** Iowa
**July 3, 1919** Missouri
**July 28, 1919** Arkansas
**August 2, 1919** Montana
**August 2, 1919** Nebraska
**September 8, 1919** Minnesota
**September 10, 1919** New Hampshire
**September 30, 1919** Utah
**November 1, 1919** California
**November 5, 1919** Maine
**December 1, 1919** North Dakota
**December 4, 1919** South Dakota
**December 15, 1919** Colorado
**January 6, 1920** Kentucky
**January 6, 1920** Rhode Island
**January 13, 1920** Oregon
**January 16, 1920** Indiana
**January 27, 1920** Wyoming
**February 7, 1920** Nevada
**February 9, 1920** New Jersey
**February 11, 1920** Idaho
**February 12, 1920** Arizona
**February 21, 1920** New Mexico
**February 28, 1920** Oklahoma
**March 10, 1920** West Virginia
**March 22, 1920** Washington
**August 18, 1920** Tennessee
**August 26, 1920** The 19th Amendment is signed into law.

# APPENDIX

**1.** Download a suffrage centennial Executive Order template here: https://www.womensvote100.org/resolutionsandorders

**2.** Download a suffrage centennial Joint Resolution template here: https://www.womensvote100.org/resolutionsandorders

**3.** Learn about the yellow rose's role in the suffrage movement here: https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-man-and-his-mom-who-gave-women-the-vote

**4.** Download templates for suffrage centennial Executive Orders and Joint Resolutions here: https://www.womensvote100.org/resolutionsandorders

**5.** "City renames streets to honor women's suffrage." *Cambridge Chronicle*. April 18, 2019. https://cambridge.wickedlocal.com/news/20190418/city-renames-streets-to-honor-womens-suffrage

**6.** "Wisconsin Historical Society: New Exhibit in the State Capitol Rotunda." *Downtown Madison*. April 19, 2019. https://downtownmadison.org/wisconsin-historical-society-new-exhibit-in-the-state-capitol-rotunda/

**7.** Learn about Julia Ward Howe and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" here: https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/january-28/

**8.** Find sheet music related to the suffrage movement on the Library of Congress website: https://www.loc.gov/collections/womens-suffrage-sheet-music/about-this-collection/?loclr=blogmus

**9.** Post videos to social media and tag the WSCC on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with the handle @WomensVote100. Use the hashtags #WomensVote100, #SuffrageSisters, and #SuffraGents.

**10.** Kilby, Sally. "2020 South Pas Float to Commemorate Women's Right to Vote." *South Pasadena Review*. April 12, 2019. https://southpasadenareview.com/2020-south-pas-float-to-commemorate-womens-right-to-vote/

**11.** Giuffre, Beth. "Community members contribute to 'The Women's Republic' Mural." *Atascadero News*. October 20, 2017. https://atascaderonews.com/article/community-members-contribute-to-the-womens-republic-mural

**12.** Learn about the 2020 Quilt Project here: http://www.susanbanthonyhouse.org/2020quiltproject/index.php/about/

**13.** Learn about the "Race to Ratification" here: https://www.nps.gov/bepa/planyourvisit/r2r.htm

**14.** Learn about the "Suffrage Sprint & Stroll" here: https://runsignup.com/Race/AR/LittleRock/SuffrageSprintStroll

**15.** Learn how to plan a Wikipedia "Edit-a-Thon" here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_run_an_edit-a-thon

**16.** Learn about the Washington State Historical Society's suffrage centennial "Edit-a-Thon" here: https://www.suffrage100wa.com/events/womens-suffrage-centennial-wiki-edit-a-thon

**17.** Blakemore, Erin. "Five Things to Know About the Declaration of Sentiments." *Smithsonian Magazine*. June 8, 2016. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/five-things-know-about-declaration-sentiments-180959352/

**18.** Learn about the trial of Susan B. Anthony here: https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/eyewitness/html.php?section=3

**19.** Suffrage sashes reflected the colors of the suffrage movement, including purple, white, and green and purple, white, and gold. Find an example of a historical suffrage sash here: https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_509474

**20.** Make your own suffrage sash, "Votes for Women" button, or yellow rose pin. Or, search online to purchase reproductions.

**21.** Learn how to create a Snapchat filter here: https://www.snapchat.com/create