

# Frequently Asked Questions

## WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE INDIANA WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL?

- To inspire Hoosiers to think, read and talk about the history and significance of women's suffrage
- To drive and discover scholarship about women's suffrage and political participation in Indiana
- To highlight Hoosiers who played a role in the suffrage movement in Indiana and nationally
- To encourage everyone to vote and engage fully in the democratic process
- To inspire civic action and persistence

## WHAT ARE THE BIG IDEAS YOU WANT HOOSIERS TO THINK, READ AND TALK ABOUT?

- Today, women's suffrage seems like an obvious component of democracy. One hundred years ago, it was a controversial idea that even some women opposed. Championing it required courage, perseverance and organized activism.
- The centennial of women's suffrage is an opportunity to honor the Hoosiers who played a role in the suffrage movement.
- Like all social movements, suffrage was an imperfect process. Activists disagreed over strategy and tactics, and women of color and working-class women didn't always have a seat at the table. One of the lessons is that forming "a more perfect union" is and always has been messy.
- While the 19th Amendment gave women access to the voting booth, the struggle for full equality continues. Today, we all can learn from the women who fought for the vote as we fight to ensure equality for all.
- As we acknowledge the impact suffrage had on women, we also should consider where our laws, culture and institutions might be keeping others from fully engaging in our democracy.
- The role of Hoosiers in the suffrage movement is a story that isn't fully known or told. This is Indiana's opportunity to delve into that history and capture it for future generations.

## WHO'S BEHIND THE INDIANA WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL?

Women across the state have been looking forward the centennial of women's suffrage for a while, planning local and regional efforts to mark this important anniversary. A few organizations stepped up to focus these efforts and create resources that could be used by anyone around the state, while allowing local and grassroots organizations to carry forward their plans. The catalyzing organizations are Indiana Humanities, The Propylaeum of Indianapolis, The Indiana Historical Society and the Indiana Historical Bureau.

## IS INDIANA STATE GOVERNMENT INVOLVED?

Elected officials, including Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, and leaders of various state agencies, such as the Indiana Bureau of Women and the Indiana Historical Bureau, have supported efforts to commemorate the suffrage centennial. HB 1394, introduced by State Rep. Sharon Negele (R-Attica), would create the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission. It passed unanimously out of the House and now goes before the Senate.

## ARE HISTORIANS INVOLVED?

An interdisciplinary group of scholars in history, political science and gender studies, as well as professionals working in museums, archives, and history organizations are advising the Indiana Women's Suffrage Centennial. Dr. Anita Morgan of IUPUI wrote the overview essay that appears on the website. If you are an Indiana-based expert on the history of women's suffrage and political participation, in Indiana or nationally, and would like to propose a talk for the speakers bureau, contact [contact@indianasuffrage100.org](mailto:contact@indianasuffrage100.org).

## RESTRICTIONS STILL REMAINED IN MANY PLACES THAT PREVENTED BLACK WOMEN FROM VOTING IN 1920. IS THIS SOMETHING YOU PLAN TO ADDRESS?

We absolutely plan to talk about this important facet of the suffrage movement in Indiana and nationally, and to invite Hoosiers to reckon with this complicated history. It's why, in all of our planning, we've included historians, political scientists, scholars of gender and race, and grassroots and community organizations to help us craft our key messages and other activities. What has emerged out of these conversations, in addition to a lot of goodwill and relationship-building, are key messages that recognize the significance of the 1920 milestone, while also acknowledging that not all women effectively gained the right to vote and that the battle for equality and even something as basic as the right to vote, is ongoing. We've also very deliberately chosen to emphasize the idea of a commemoration rather than a celebration.

To better understand this history and document how it played out in Indiana, one of our key areas of focus for the commemoration is to advance scholarship. May Wright Sewall Fellowships will support research on how Indiana women shaped and were shaped by politics, leading up to and after the 19th Amendment, with a particular focus on research on these questions in relation to women of color and working-class women. It's one important way we think we can use this centennial commemoration to discover more stories that deepen and complicate our knowledge of the past.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Everyone can help to commemorate the centennial of women's suffrage in Indiana. Here are 8 ways Hoosiers can engage:

- 1. Read all about it:** Delve into the history of the suffrage movement in Indiana. Dr. Anita Morgan's essay on the website is a great place to start.
- 2. Advance scholarship:** Our understanding of Hoosiers' role in the women's suffrage movement could be so much greater. May Wright Sewall Fellowships are available to fund research about women's political participation, including in the movement for suffrage, in Indiana. Visit the website to learn more.
- 3. Vote:** Claim your rightful place in the voting booth. Check your registration and find your polling place.
- 4. Get active:** Attend a rally, join a group advocating for a cause near to your heart, contact your elected officials to make your voice heard. Go online to find out who represents you.
- 5. Ask your elders:** Talk with women and men who came of age during the women's equality movement of the 1960s and 1970s about their memories, experiences and lessons. Know a story that others should hear? We're accepting proposals for a new speakers bureau of talks about women's suffrage and political participation in Indiana; visit the website to learn more.
- 6. Teach your children:** Share what you have learned about women's suffrage with younger generations, and encourage them to carry the legacy forward. The teacher toolkit on the website includes primary sources and a list of suggested readings for kids and teens.
- 7. Join the statewide commemoration:** Visit the online calendar to learn about women's suffrage centennial events across Indiana.
- 8. Create a commemoration event:** Organize a women's suffrage commemoration event in your community. The resources page of the website has toolkits, logos and more to help you. Then, add your event to our online calendar.

## WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR FUNDING?

Lilly Endowment, Inc. and Hillenbrand have each contributed funding to underwrite the research fellowships, the speakers bureau, a new traveling exhibit and the website and other communications pieces. All of the partners are contributing most of the labor in-kind because we are passionate about this important anniversary. If you would like to make a contribution to support our efforts, contact [contact@indianasuffrage100.org](mailto:contact@indianasuffrage100.org).

## I HAVE QUESTIONS. WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT?

Email [contact@indianasuffrage100.org](mailto:contact@indianasuffrage100.org) and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.