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AAUW
of Illinois

connection

From the President

Connection is developing into the tool it was meant to be. Each month more and more branches are sharing their programs and membership activities with all of the AAUW-IL membership. Branches are reaching out to each other – in a sense of camaraderie and inclusiveness. We are being role models for each other as we strive for equity for women and children.

Morton Branch celebrated of their 50th Anniversary at their Program Meeting November 11th. A history of the Branch was presented with lots of pictures of members at various events they have sponsored. They recently applied for a Local Engagement Grant (LEG) in early fall to host a membership drive. They recruited seven new members!! Congratulations to them!! They continue to be the strong, active branch they were in 1975. Please use the [application on the website](#) if your branch would like to be considered for a Local Engagement Grant.

Laura Desmarais
aauwilpres@gmail.com

2026 AAUW-IL Convention | Save the date!

[Hilton Garden Inn](#)

April 24-25, 2026 in Rockford, IL

It's official, we have a confirmed date and location! Mark your calendar now so you can join members from across the state.



Kathy Battee-Freeman (Springfield) & Jo-An Takamoto-Sabonjian
(Waukegan)
Co - Vice Presidents - Programs

Public Policy

As you can tell from all types of media outlets, the big policy news for the past 43 days has been the government shut down, the longest in history. Things began to reopen when the President signed the Continuing Resolution (CR) that was passed by both houses of Congress.

A quick look at the CR. The measure includes the final FY 2026 appropriations bills for Veterans Affairs, Agriculture (including FDA); and the Legislative Branch. This three-bill package makes full-fiscal year appropriations available for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This means that they are funded until September 30, 2026 when the fiscal year ends. The CR provides time to approve other budgets with funding for other agencies running through January 30, 2026. In addition the CR assured back pay for all furloughed government workers, includes language that reverses layoffs the administration implemented during the government shutdown, and prevents any cuts until the end of January. It also assures a vote on the health care tax credits under the Affordable Care Act by the

commenting on federal rules and guidelines, appearing at the Supreme Court, partnering in the "No Kings" movement; and endorsing coalition letters that align with our member affirmed Public Policy on important policy issues impacting women's access to education and economic security. For more information visit <https://www.aauw.org/resources/news/media/>

National hosted a webinar, "Working in Coalition: Building Power through Partnerships" on November 6, 2025, featuring a brilliant panel of AAUW members who spoke to their successes, challenges, and lessons learned from working in coalition. Please see the webinar recording and resources below to help you start — or strengthen — your branch's coalition work for gender equity.

View the webinar recording: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/webinars/>

Check out AAUW's new resource on building coalitions: <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2025/11/Working-in-Coalition-Building-Power-through-Partnerships-Resource.pdf>

What's Happening in Illinois?

Lawmakers passed two-dozen bills during their annual fall veto session that ended Friday, Oct. 31. None dealt specifically with AAUW priorities, but it can be noted that they included a measure that will empower the state's Department of Public Health to issue vaccine guidelines amid federal uncertainty. Other areas addressed were immigration, labor, energy, and transit policies in Illinois. They return to session in January. To prepare for this we, with assistance from the Jane Addams Branch hosted a webinar "Witness Slips & More" that provided an introduction to the updated <https://ilga.gov/> website and the filing of witness slips that we will ask you to do for specific legislation as it is brought forth in Springfield. You can view a recording of the webinar at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBsipyH8bA>.

We, working in collaboration with the Naperville Branch, are also planning an AAUW IL Lobby Day in Springfield. It will be held with a coalition partner "Time to Care," during the spring session. Details will be coming shortly, but please let us know of your interest and start making plans to attend. It is important to raise our voices in support of state policy issues impacting women and girl's access to education and economic security.

Thanks for your support of public policy efforts.

Your voice. Your power. Your impact.

Ken Olson and Karen Kortsch, Co-Directors of Public Policy

Branch News



Please join the AAUW Jane Addams Branch and Northwest Suburban Branch on Tuesday, December 9, at 4 pm for a discussion of *The Paris Novel* by Ruth Reichl. A feast for the senses, this novel is a testament to living deliciously, taking chances, and finding your true home.

Please register to attend: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/UP_FGckTSXWc0lsWfieTUw
Guests are welcome!

Next book discussions:
Jan 27: *Soldiers and Kings* by Jason De León
Feb 24: *The Wedding People* by Alison Espach
Questions? Contact Kate Skegg at aauwJaneAddams@gmail.com

The Jane Addams Branch invites you to our online Holiday Book Chat on Thursday, December 18, at 7 pm Central Time:

Registration required: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/J2BWLkzOQXOAIYHVzkDMeQ>

Join us from home with your favorite festive beverage & tell us about **Books You Love**. You can't decide which books? Here are some conversation starters:

- What was your favorite book when you were a child?
- Was there a book you felt you needed to hide from your parents?
- Name a book you've bought for the cover.
- Is there a book that changed your life?
- A book you're going to write?

Questions? Contact Kate Skegg at aauwJaneAddams@gmail.com

Schaumburg AAUW at the Market

On Halloween the Schaumburg Branch set up shop at the final Schaumburg Farmer's Market of the season. The village provided us with a table and space for two hours at the entrance to the Market. A half dozen members helped reach about 200 market attendees during that time with the new information about the pay gap and AAUW advocacy efforts in this and other areas. We distributed packets with a small Pay Day candy bar (a Halloween treat) and a small card with the current pay difference and a QR code to the info on the AAUW site and another with info about the Branch and a QR linking to a page on joining AAUW. There was generally good interest among the folks we talked to. Hopefully the QR codes will make it an easy way for them to contact us.

The Schaumburg branch appreciates the grant support of the AAUW-II with LEG funding for our Equal Pay project.



Anita Walls shared this on Facebook recently:

I am so incredibly proud of our branch and the work we've done to share the Dignity Index throughout our state. Rosie McVay, Pat Hendrix, Chris Bruun, and Maureen Brandon are a powerhouse team of leaders who have spread the insight and wisdom of the Dignity Index. We all had the honor to participate in the first ever Dignity Index Summit....and Rosie accepted well-deserved recognition for creating the spark (and showing the power of a single magnet) Congratulations to all of these women, to our AAUW **Batavia, Geneva & St. Charles Branch**, to AAUW Illinois, Inc., and to AAUW for believing in the power to change and heal divisions.



The Wheaton Glen Ellyn Branch STEM Program

The Wheaton Glen Ellyn Branch of AAUW's goal is to enrich the Wheaton-Glen Ellyn community with STEM activities through three programs. STEM is very important in today's world, providing young girls with the opportunity to explore science. Our branch established a STEM outreach program in 2017 with library workshops at both the Wheaton and Glen Ellyn Public Libraries. Each month we have a new science topic and experiment for about 20 students in grades 2-6. Topics range from learning about static electricity to building a tensegrity structures.

Currently, we have expanded our outreach to include not only library workshops but also a new program called "Science Girls on the Go." The Science Girls on the Go program was developed in 2020 during Covid. This novel approach allowed us to continue to encourage and inspire STEM projects with girls while maintaining social distancing and lowering the risk of spreading the Covid virus. Free science enrichment kits for K-12 girls are placed into little science houses (like little free libraries). Our branch currently has three science houses, two in Wheaton and one in Glen Ellyn. Each science house contains

We have gained a following in our community, and we are now being asked to provide science demos at elementary schools in the area.

You don't have to have a scientist to host programs like this. We are proud to share this "Science Girls on the Go" with other branches in Illinois as well as branches throughout the U.S. Our branch will share the experimental document with you and a list of materials needed for each kit. Assemble a team, set a meeting and start stuffing your kits. We are happy to get you started in providing young girls in your community with the opportunity to explore science.

Fran Kravitz
AAUW Wheaton Glen Ellyn Branch STEM Chair

If your branch has a program or recognition or an idea you'd like to share, please [email Jennifer Urich](#) by the 14th of each month.

Our Mission: Gender Equity & Economic Security
Our Values: Intersectionality Inclusive Intergenerational Empowering
Our Focus: Economic Security Education Advocacy



Our mailing address is:
AAUWILConnection@gmail.com

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