



*For more information, please read the **PUBLIC POLICY ARTICLE**, pages 4 and 5.*

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Vision: Equity for all
Values: Nonpartisan, Fact based, Integrity, Inclusion & Intersectionality

AZ – AAUW STATE BOARD 2026-2027

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***AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls
through research, education, and advocacy.***

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As your President, I want to applaud all branch officers and their members for working hard to further AAUW's mission of championing women's rights for equity, access to quality education and inclusiveness. Your local branches support local schools, advance women's voting rights and provide valuable civic engagement programs such as supporting women's scholarships and other women's organizations like Arizona Women in Higher Education. Our board is committed to supporting your initiatives through allocating funds for community action grants, branch special projects and encouraging cross-pollination of branch initiatives.

Over 100 years ago, strong women, such as yourself, lectured, wrote, marched and lobbied to achieve, at that time, a "radical change" to the Constitution - women's right to vote. We are again, in a defensive position for voting rights, reproductive rights, and other attack on our liberties. The journey for equity continues!

In this era of political polarization, it becomes increasingly more challenging to defend our rights without intervening partisanship. However, we refuse to be distracted by chaos! We focus on the issues and strive to impact the challenges to undermine our rights under the Constitution. Advocacy is local, engaged upon at the state and branch levels!

AAUW National is hosting monthly Liaison meetings with the state Presidents and President Elects to share National's initiatives, and ask where we need help. Please let me know if your branch is struggling with any issues and I will communicate them at the next monthly meeting. In addition, National is also conducting monthly Liaison calls with the state Public Policy chairs. By reaching out to the various state board members, National is striving to better understand where they can provide assistance to our members.

Over the last few years, the Fall Forum has been an opportunity to listen to impactful speakers, and network between branch officers and members. This year, scheduling the Fall Forum has been a challenge. Based on the Spring Forum survey suggestions and the scheduling challenges, the decision was made to forego the 2026 Fall Forum. This change will allow more time for branches and individuals to focus on engaging in mid-term election activities and for the planning committee to develop a powerful and impactful 2027 Spring Forum.

I look forward to a fun and productive year.
Beverly Byrd
President, AAUW Arizona





PUBLIC POLICY 2026

by Betsy Flaten and Mary Linnemann
Public Policy Co-Chairs



NO KINGS: VOTE EARLY | SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

For over a year, millions of people have come together to send a clear message:

In America, we have no kings.

No Kings - Vote Early is the next step -

this is not purely a protest, it is a day of nonpartisan voter participation

For generations, everyday people have changed the course of this country by organizing, marching, and voting. Power does not belong to billionaires, strongmen, or politicians who believe they are above accountability. Power belongs to the people, but only if we use it. On **October 17**, we are making sure all eligible voters know their options for how to vote, have a plan to vote early where local law allows, and are ready to make their voice count. Join us.

Local organizers and volunteers are coordinating events that range from carpools and canvassing, to pumpkin-carving and block parties with food trucks, to “honk and wave” sign-waving demonstrations—designed to mobilize neighbors to cast their ballots together during the early voting period. Check out [nokings.org/host-toolkit](https://www.nokings.org/host-toolkit) for more information.

For resources go to <https://www.nokings.org/nkve-resources>

AAUW is in agreement with the candidates and recommendations by SOS AZ and Education Forward. We are encouraging members to go onto the website [sosarizona.org](https://www.sosarizona.org) for the SOS AZ endorsed statewide guide. It lists the candidates for both the Legislature and School Boards. It also recommends a NO vote on all propositions and a guide to bonds and overrides. School Board candidates can always use a donation. Consider a sign in your yard.



Save Our Schools Arizona 2026 Ballot Guide

SOSAZ Endorsed Statewide Candidates *VOTE FOR ALL*



Katie Hobbs
Governor



Kris Mayes
Attorney
General



Adrian Fontes
Secretary
of State



**Dr. Teresa
Leyba Ruiz**
Superintendent
of Public Instruction



Nick Mansour
State
Treasurer

Statewide Propositions - Vote NO on ALL



Prop 320

Unfunded mandate that adds zero dollars to AZ classrooms while punishing Arizona kids and cutting teacher pay → NoOn320.com



Prop 318

Invades student privacy and turns teachers and coaches into gender inspectors, setting up endless lawsuits against kids, families, and schools → No318.com



Prop 144

Restricts our voting rights and would all but end our right to vote by mail → ProtectTheVoteAZ.com



Prop 142

Political attack on diversity, equity, and inclusion
→ WillOfThePeopleAZ.com

Vote No to Protect Students, Schools & Voting Rights

BRANCH SPECIAL PROJECTS

by Amy Perlick



AAUW Arizona encourages branches to support their local communities while furthering the mission of AAUW. If branches become aware of a need in their community that will advance equity for women and girls, they are encouraged to apply for a Branch Special Project grant.

- ✚ A Branch Special Project grant supports a project, activity, program, sponsorship, or worthwhile opportunity that a branch feels would benefit the community and advance the mission of AAUW.
- ✚ Branch Special Project grants are for a maximum of \$1000.
- ✚ Branches may apply for one grant per fiscal year (July 1-June 30) and may not apply for the same grant more than once.
- ✚ The AAUW Arizona Board of Directors will evaluate submitted proposals according to the approved criteria and determine the amount of funding.
- ✚ Applications must be submitted to the Branch Special Projects Chair no later than two weeks prior to an AAUW Arizona Board of Directors meeting, to be considered at the upcoming Board meeting.
- ✚ Meetings are held the third Wednesday in July, September, November, January and March.
- ✚ No applications are considered at the May meeting.
- ✚ The Branch Special Projects Application includes more specific grant information, guidelines, and criteria. You can find it under “What We Do” on the AAUW Arizona website.

**For additional questions, please contact the
Branch Special Projects Chair
Amy Perlick, at branchspecproj@gmail.com**

Échale Ganas, Mija. But at What Cost? A Gen Z Latina's Perspective on Latina Equal Pay

by Alexandra Mora Medina

Alexandra Mora Medina is a first-time guest writer for the AZ Sun. She is an AAUW Northwest Valley scholarship recipient. She earned an Associate of Arts from the Maricopa County Community Colleges and a bachelor's in journalism and mass communication from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University in May 2022. In May 2025, she graduated with her master's degree in Bilingual Journalism from the University of Arizona. She currently works as the Communications and Events Coordinator for Creative Inquiry at the University of Arizona.

I recall my parents reminding me every day before school, “Échale ganas,” meaning work hard or give it your all. It's a common phrase in Hispanic/Latine households, used to motivate someone to work hard in school, a job, or life.

At an early age, I was taught that education was a pathway to opportunity. The game plan: Go to college. Get a degree. Build a career. Create a life with more opportunities than the generation before you. So, I followed that path.

I started at Estrella Mountain Community College, then transferred to Arizona State University, where I studied journalism. I volunteered, held officer positions for a few clubs, worked as a student reporter, took on internships and fellowships, and eventually went to graduate school at the University of Arizona to study bilingual journalism. I didn't wait until graduation to start my career, either. I began working in communications at the University of Arizona while I was still finishing my master's degree, both full-time.

Looking back, I realize just how much of my life has been shaped by the idea that if I worked hard enough and kept learning, I could create opportunities for myself and earn more money. In high school, teachers and counselors reaffirmed this idea. They encouraged us to strive for a master's degree and even a Ph.D.

I was told that a college degree would open doors and that hard work would be rewarded. Yet, my generation has entered adulthood in a workforce where a degree does not necessarily guarantee financial security, where loyalty to an employer does not always lead to advancement, and where young workers are increasingly asking what their labor is actually worth.



For me, that question becomes even more personal when I think about **Latina Equal Pay**.

According to the National Women's Law Center, in Arizona, Latinas

working full-time, year-round typically earn 57 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men. Nationally, that figure is 58 cents.

Fifty-seven cents? Is this what my parents meant by “Échale ganas, mija, para mejorar tu vida,” to work hard to improve your life, only to earn 57 cents for every dollar?

(Please follow the link below to read the complete article.)

[Alexandra's Complete Article](#)



East Mesa

by Janice Dill, President

East Mesa slows down a bit in the summer – many of our members leave the Mesa area. Those who stay in Arizona can be a part of a monthly lunch bunch, and a book club. We are grateful for our members who organize and attend these sessions.

Our 2026-2027 year will start with a general meeting on October 14, to look at the ballot for voting in Arizona. Our goal is to inform our membership as the election draws near. Then a week later, October 21, will be our annual Welcome Back Ice Cream Social. This is an excellent opportunity for members to invite friends and neighbors. We present the benefits of AAUW membership and discuss each of our special interest groups.

Our meeting in November will be Wednesday, November 4. Our speaker will be Norma Huerta, Family Literacy Liaison for Mesa Public Schools. We are excited to continue the partnership we developed with the program. We are excited for the programs and activities planned for the coming year. We continue our scholarship program, and have twelve scholars in our program.

Fellowships & Grants

Since 1888, AAUW has been one of the largest funders of women's graduate education, research and community projects, and investing in women who go on to change the world.

Green Valley

Gerry Peterson, Co-President

We are excited to start our new year. Our monthly programs are set through May. This month's speaker will be Tiffani Jaseph, 2026 AZ Teacher of the Year. Tiffani is a special education teacher in the Sahuarita Unified School District.

This spring we were successful in setting up a scholarship program within the Pima College Foundation. One advantage of this is that donations to the fund are tax deductible. This summer we awarded nine scholarships to Pima Community College students. The funds have been provided through the generosity of our members as well as through a fundraising luncheon in April.

Our board met last month to review AZ AAUW priorities and set goals for our branch for the coming year. We will focus on growing our membership and retaining members, prioritizing public policy education and initiatives, and reviewing our methods of supporting educational opportunities for women and girls. We are pleased that our state grant for Keeping Girls in School will, once again, provide sanitary supplies and underwear for girls at the local Continental School. Through the generous support of our members, we have extended the program to other Title 1 schools in our community.

This fall we have added a memoir writing interest group, with several enthusiastic members. Interest in this program was prompted by the presentation to our branch last year by Bonnie Boyce-Wilson and Deborah Hansen, **We Made History**.

Northwest Valley

Shelby Merwin, President-Elect

Summer Survivors and Planning for a New Year

During the summer months, a hearty crew of about 20 members gathered monthly from May through August at local restaurants to catch up and stay connected. We call these gatherings our **Summer Survivors Luncheons**—a fun way to maintain the friendships and social connections that are so vital to women's well-being, as well as a place to bring new potential members to hear about AAUW-NWV. While enjoying our summer lunches, several committees were also hard at work, eagerly planning for the 2026–2027 year ahead.

Our newly formed **Fundraising Committee** met regularly throughout the summer to develop new opportunities to raise money for our scholarship fund. We are exploring several **mini-fundraisers**, including selling 50/50 raffle tickets at another organization's monthly Bingo event. This year, we are also taking on a new major fundraiser: a Murder Mystery Party!

Our newly formed **Membership Committee** is also looking ahead, with plans to host New Member Coffees and attend Newcomer's meetings at community recreation centers throughout our area.

Our **Program Committee** has engaged speakers for our monthly meetings, beginning with the League of Women Voters at our September 17 General Meeting.

Our newly expanded **Rio Team**, a College Liaison Committee focused on Rio Salado College, is building on our branch's relationship with this adult-focused college right in our backyard. We will continue our efforts to support the Rio Salado student community by collecting donations for the school

pantry and providing vouchers to cover the cost of GED exams.

Our Book Clubs have resumed their monthly meetings as of September.



Looking ahead, our **Scholarship Committee** hopes to expand our scholarship presence at this college.

The **Rio Team** is looking to deepen our understanding of ELL (**English Language Learning**) and other educational needs affecting women and girls in this community.

Through this growing partnership, we hope to identify meaningful ways our branch can support students as they pursue education, new opportunities, and brighter futures.



Grassroots Feminism in Higher Ed:
Building Coalitions for Women's
Rights

Scottsdale

Laraine Rodgers, President

Scottsdale AAUW begins our 2026–2027 year with much to celebrate—and much ahead.

Our leadership team has been busy since July, working collaboratively under newly approved job descriptions that clarify responsibilities while encouraging the teamwork that makes our branch strong. President-Elect Linda Nance led development of those descriptions with Board input and has already completed another major undertaking: preparing our new membership directory for publication. Membership VP Jane Adrian spent the summer connecting personally with members, confirming information and learning more about the AAUW experiences and values they share with prospective members.

We will officially welcome everyone back on September 19 for our first member meeting since May. With Arizona's November 3 general election approaching, our opening program features a speaker from the League of Women Voters. The timing couldn't be better: early voting begins and early ballots are mailed October 7.

Meanwhile, Scottsdale AAUW never really took the summer off. Members gathered for our Summer Lunch Bunch, while the North Scottsdale Book Group continued meeting via Zoom. Our regular Lunch Bunch and Books, Etc. return this fall.

Most exciting is the final tally from our 2025–2026 Adopt-A-Book program. Led by Linda Nance and supported by our members, **775 books** were donated for the **641 Pre-K through fifth-grade students at Tavan Elementary School**.

New Program Leader Theresa Webber worked alongside Linda during the final stages and helped distribute the books—providing a wonderful transition for one of our signature community programs.



775 books were donated for the **641 Pre-K through fifth-grade students at Tavan Elementary School.**



Behind all of this are Board members and volunteers planning programs, managing finances, communicating with members, recording our work and keeping the branch moving forward.

**We're ready to
reconnect, learn, serve—
and begin another year advancing
AAUW's mission together.**

Southeast Valley

Joyce Ellenbecker, President

September 22, 2026, is the fall equinox--the end of summer and beginning of the Snow Bird migration back to Arizona. The summer was quieter without them and we welcome their return.

However, we have not been sitting on our hands. The Board has been meeting monthly on Zoom, preparing for the new year. The transition to a new board has been smooth. The Publicity Chair has outlined a plan for the year.

The Program Chair has created a schedule for the year. The Scholarship Committee has been meeting to evaluate what changes may be needed to strengthen our program.

To maintain a continuity of activity interest groups have been meeting: two book groups, lunch bunch, bridge group, Mah Jongg group, and Happy Hour group. Our summer project was supplying necessities for the Chandler-Gilbert Community College Coyote Cupboard. These groups provide an opportunity to meet and socialize with other members. This helps to build connections to further our mission.

This October the Sun Lakes community holds Open Houses for clubs and organizations to inform residents of what activities are available. We will have a table at two of them.

Congratulations, Zeyna. Zeyna Pruzhanovsky has been appointed to the **Chandler Unified School District Governing Board** beginning January 1, 2027. Zeyna is an active member of the South East Valley Branch.

Congratulations!

Tucson

Dawn Armstrong, President

The Tucson Branch has collaborated with The League of Women Voters of Southern Arizona to host eight presentations, titled **“What’s On My Ballot?”** at area libraries to help the public understand the propositions that voters will see on their ballots this fall. Additionally, 38 other organizations requested public or private presentations!

Public Policy Chair Judith Lyle worked on a team to distill proposition information into "regular" language aiming to clarify what each proposition means and how a vote of “yes” or “no” would impact Arizonans, thus, empowering voters to make informed choices.

President Dawn Armstrong collaborated on a presenter training program to help those going out into the community feel safe while clearly communicating the **“What’s On My Ballot?”** details. Member Shirley Muney will present, while various others will staff tables to promote our Branch.

We secured a Branch Special Projects Grant to help pay for the printing costs of marketing flyers, Voter Checklist & Tips Sheets, and event posters. Nonpartisan and unbiased, these Presentations will cover the eight Arizona-wide propositions, two Pima County propositions, and two City of Tucson propositions on the ballot for the November 3, 2026, general election.

Please see . . .
What’s On My Ballot
scheduled at area Tucson
libraries on the next page.



Get Ready to Vote

Prepare for the November 3rd Election

Join us for

What's On My Ballot

A Presentation of the Arizona
2026 Ballot Propositions

Non-partisan and unbiased information.

*Our goal is to empower voters in
making informed ballot choices.*

- Mon 9/28 at 1:00pm - Sahuarita Library
- Wed 9/30 at 4:00pm - Flowing Wells Library
- Wed 9/30 at 1:30pm - Kirk-Bear Canyon Library
- Thurs 10/1 at 5:30pm - Valencia Library
- Thurs 10/1 at 1:00pm - Sam Lena South Tucson Library
- Fri 10/2 at 1:00pm - Joyner-Green Valley Library
- Mon 10/5 at 4:00pm - W. Anne Gibson-Esmond Station Library
- Sat 10/10 at 11:00am - Nanini Library

More information at: ReadySetVoteTucson.org





2026 Fall Forum Announcement



The Fall Forum has been an opportunity to meet old friends, make new friends, experience interesting activities, hear insightful speakers and network with other branch officers and members.

This year, scheduling the Fall forum has been a challenge. Based on the 2026 Spring Forum survey suggestions and these challenges, the decision was made to forego the 2026 Fall Forum. This will allow more time for individuals and branches to focus on engaging in mid-term election activities and their branch initiatives.

Providing the planning committee with additional time to plan the 2027 Spring Forum will enable the committee to incorporate your suggestions and provide a powerful and impactful event.

We look forward to an exciting and impactful Spring Forum.

ARIZONA SUN

Four issues—Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer—of The Sun are published each year.

Newsletter Editors

Dorothy Alexander – ddalexander13@gmail.com – 317-607-8856

Rosemary Dougherty – rosemary4@cox.net – 623-760-8479

USEFUL LINKS

AAUW Arizona State - <https://www.aauwarizona.org/>

AAUW National - <https://www.aauw.org/>

