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ALL BOARD MEMBERS

Use of this Tool

The president should read this in its entirety. Each job title section indicates who should receive copies of that material. The intent is that pages be copied and given to local League board and committee members as a job description. Local League boards may desire to modify the job descriptions as needed.

All Board Members

The key to a successful League lies with the local board and:

- how well the board communicates with its membership on local, state, and national issues
- the degree to which the board manages League affairs so that all League members have opportunity to participate.

As a board member, you not only assume specific duties, but you also share in the responsibility of the entire board for local League operations.

Remember that the League is a grassroots association. Members should expect to have an influence on what happens in the local League; in order to do so, they must be kept well informed by the board on what the League is doing. The board at all times takes into consideration members' wishes and suggestions.

First Steps

- Meet with your predecessor and gather all materials pertinent to your specific responsibility. Familiarize yourself with the materials you have received. Check state and national publications for pertinent materials not already in your files. If you have no predecessor, the president can provide guidance on how to proceed. ***Plan to use the “how to” publications available, rather than expending energy learning your job through trial and error. State board members can be excellent resources!***

- Acquire necessary resources. Some vital tools for all board members are:

The B.O.S.S. (Book of State Stuff) - This resource contains all current Publications of LWV-TX. Each local League should have a copy and when updated publications are sent to the president, he/she should replace the outdated copies. The outgoing president should make sure that the B.O.S.S. is given to the new president.

LWV-TX Information - All local League board members should receive *LWV-TX Information* which is distributed by e-mail. It contains information that the local League board members need to know and/or do and can be distributed to local League committee members as needed by e-mail. This is available to all local League board members and committee chairs if e-mail addresses are sent to the state office.

LWVUS Leader's Update - Another must is the LWVUS Leader's Update which contains up-to-date information from LWVUS and the national board. It is available from the national office.

Suggested Tools - See the “Suggested Tools” at the end of each board or committee position described in *Fundamentals for Local League Boards* for other materials available.

- Read ***In League***, 2002 edition, an essential LWVUS publication, especially Section 6, “Board of Directors.” Read all of *In League* at your earliest opportunity. It is designed to give you the “big picture” of League board work.

- **Determine material and reports** you are expected to send to state and national offices. Most are noted in “Essential Checklist—What to Send to Whom” LWV-TX *League Handbook and Directory*, published each summer.
- **Attend local or regional training** provided by LWV-TX and ask questions. If you have the opportunity, confer with board members from other local Leagues who hold your same position. Also, the person holding your office on the state board can be a valuable asset.
- **Do you have an ongoing committee?** If you did not inherit an ongoing committee, ask the membership chair to help you recruit one. Do not just ask for volunteers; **active recruiting usually produces the best results**. Even with an ongoing committee, rotation of a few new members to the committee each year is advisable. Call a meeting of your committee for planning purposes as soon as possible.

Board Meetings: Important to the Health of the Local League

- ☉ **Be Prepared.**
 - √ Reading *in advance* the previous board minutes, the agenda, any state and national materials, memos and mailings, and all other materials sent to you.
 - √ Review plans and progress with your vice-president before each board meeting in order to determine what board decisions are necessary for your activities and how much agenda time will be required.
 - √ *Bring a specific plan and recommendation to the board for approval.* Prepare your report in writing with an **extra copy for the secretary**.
 - √ Do not use board time for committee work. Appropriate use of board time makes it possible for the entire board to be present throughout and for each board member’s concern to receive full attention.
- ☉ **Be Present.** Contact the president or vice-president if you absolutely cannot attend. If you cannot attend, prepare reports in writing for the board meeting.
- ☉ **Be Prompt** Arrive on time and stay until the meeting adjourns. Total board responsibility demands that *all* board members take part in every decision.
- ☉ **No Sidebar Exchanges.** Avoid private conversations during board discussions. Grant the person who has the floor the same consideration you expect when it is your turn.

BETWEEN BOARD MEETINGS

- Accomplish tasks you have agreed to do involving your committee.
- Involve members not on the board for specific tasks. Doing everything yourself invariably leads to exhaustion or burnout. It also denies experience to interested members and inhibits development of future League leadership.
- Attend as many general membership and unit meetings as possible. Board members’ attendance at meetings is one of the best ways to demonstrate board concern for your local League. Unit discussion meetings are especially valuable. In these small groups, each board member has the chance to become acquainted with League members. This face to face encounter opens the door to communication from the board to the member and from the member to the board. At all general and unit meetings, avoid the temptation to interact only with other board members.



SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION CHART

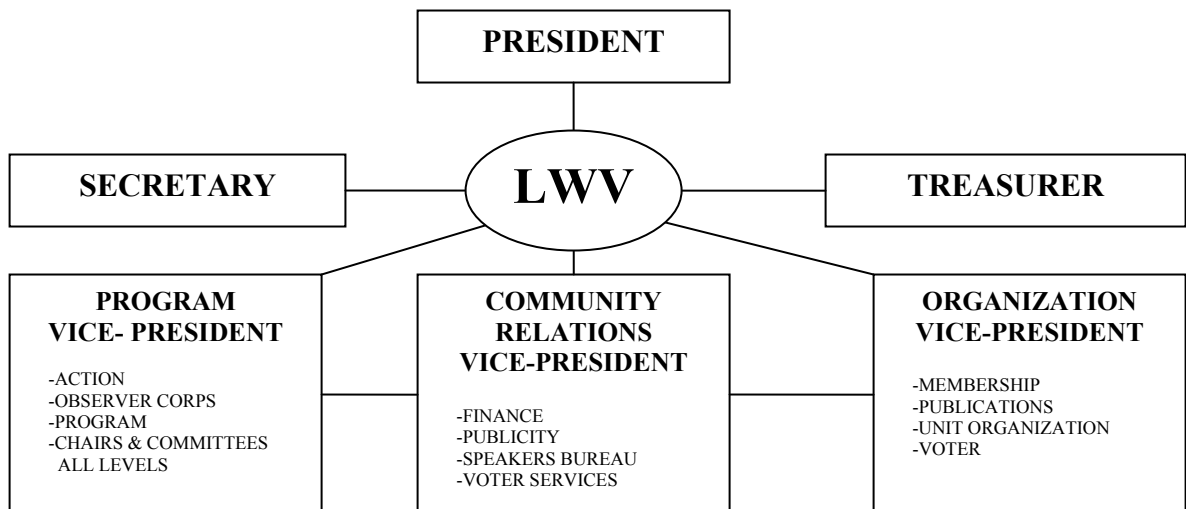
This organization chart is flexible. Each League should prepare its own organization chart, based on its preferred format.

Varying terminology is used for some board positions. For example, some Leagues prefer Community Relations Vice-President to Public Relations Vice-President; some Leagues choose Public Relations chair to Publicity chair.

Leagues may spread some of the responsibilities by adding other positions such as Telephone chair or Historian.

Budget and Bylaws are usually off-board committees that report to the board. The Policy committee is a committee of the board.

The Nominating Committee is entirely disassociated from the board but should confer with board members individually as to skills needed.



LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENT

You have been elected president of your local League of Women Voters, probably one of the most demanding but rewarding volunteer offices you can hold. You have been chosen because of your leadership abilities and, most likely, you have served in one or more other positions on your League board. There are a number of things you can do to meet the demands of the job while making it an exciting and rewarding experience without having to devote all your waking hours to it in the process.

As president, you are the leader of a team—the board of directors. All members are important, but the vice presidents should be particularly so to you. Vice-presidents help in managing the total League effort by assisting in planning board meeting agenda and keeping in touch with the activities of those directors reporting to them. Also particularly important is the treasurer who manages budgets and money, and the secretary who, besides keeping minutes of board meetings, can help with files, distribution of mail, and correspondence. If you are able to work well with these officers, organize the information flow and delegate responsibilities, your job will be pleasurable rather than onerous.

It is crucial that you delegate many jobs. It is not healthy, either for you or for your fellow board members for you to take on others' responsibilities, remember that board members will approach a job differently than you would, you must give them the opportunity to do their jobs at their pace.

Always remember that the League is a volunteer organization.

One of the greatest pleasures of being president is that you will grow in self-confidence and assurance, in tact, tolerance, patience, and perspective. With your help, others on your board will also develop these admirable qualities. Never forget to be generous with praise and approval.

As president, you are also the symbol of the League to the public. Grace and diplomacy, together with knowledge of the League's program and purpose, are key ingredients in this facet of your job.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO MANAGING THE PRESIDENCY

- This should be the only major volunteer office you undertake for the term you have accepted.
- If most materials from the national and state organizations, and the public come to your home, establish a filing and paper distribution system; as well as a system for distributing e-mails. You *must* disseminate materials from state and national quickly or you will be buried under paper. Some of our larger Leagues have separate offices, making the president's job easier to organize. Files can be kept there and it can serve as a center for distributing paper to members.
- If possible, have a League phone separate from your home phone, with an answering machine to take calls when you are unable to do so.
- Answer e-mails, letters and calls promptly.
- With your board, prepare a League calendar for the year which includes all important dates. The state League calendar for local Leagues should be included.
- Read and share information from the *LWV-TX Information* and *LWVUS Leader's Update* which will come to you by e-mail.
- Have a working knowledge of all other board members' responsibilities.
- Attend and participate in all local, regional and state training sessions. Remember, there is always something new to learn.

When the job seems too much for you, ask yourself:

- Who could help make phone calls? Answer letters? Attend the coalition meetings?
- Are the vice-presidents doing their job? Do you need to visit one-on-one with one or more?

- Can I separate unfinished business into categories? What can I do next week, next month?
- Which tasks can be delegated? What can I politely decline to do?
- Am I utilizing available outside help? Leadership training from the state League? A state board member? Another local League president?
- Have I read and applied the information in *President's Counselor* (LWV-TX) and the other state and national League "how-to" publications?
- Will stepping back and taking a deep breath help? Sometimes a brief break and a new view will help move an activity along and give you a fresh perspective.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

B.O.S.S. (Book of State Stuff)

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

President's Counselor, 2005 edition.

Program Perspectives, current edition

LWV-TX local and/or regional training (see the **League Handbook & Directory** for contact person)

LWVUS Publications

Impact on Issues, current edition

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LOCAL LEAGUE SECRETARY

As local League secretary, you are assuming responsibility for the accurate, historical record keeping of your local League (and of its Education Fund if your League has its own). Your principal responsibility is taking minutes at all board meetings, at the annual meeting, and at any general meeting when League business is conducted. You need not take minutes at program or other general meetings, unless requested by your president or local board.

MINUTES

The minutes become the **legal records** and the history of your organization(s). Therefore, the minutes need to include, *at a minimum*, the following information.

- **Always record the name of the League, type of meeting, date (month, day, and year), location of meeting, presiding officer, and the time the meeting is called to order.**
- For board meetings, list members present and absent, and any guests. At other meetings, such as the annual meeting, indicate the number of members and guests present.
- **Any changes to the minutes of the previous board meeting are carefully recorded in the minutes of the current meeting. A statement that the minutes were corrected is not sufficient: the corrections must be noted.**
- Minutes must provide a factual record of motions, the maker of the motion, and the eventual disposition of the motion. The minutes should state the exact wording of the motion and the name of the maker of the motion. The name of the person who seconds the motion is not necessary. It is a good idea to request motions in writing so there is no question concerning the wording of the motion made.
- **Minutes should contain a summary of the pros and cons relating to the motion. Once the vote is taken, minutes should reflect whether it passed, failed, or died for lack of a second. Record the number of “yes” and “no” votes when requested to do so. (Individuals may request to have their vote recorded in the minutes.) For ease in locating motions in the minutes, it is helpful if the motions that passed are underlined and bolded. Defeated motions can have the word “defeated” bolded.**
- Many Leagues’ decisions are made by general consent or agreement rather than a motion and should be recorded as such.
- **If the budget is amended or an unbudgeted expenditure is approved by general consent, such action is specified in the minutes.**
- At the conclusion of meetings, record the time of adjournment.

As soon as possible after the meeting, the minutes need to be transcribed. Minutes should list either last names only or full names of those attending, making motions, etc. Your president may want to review the minutes prior to being sent to your local board members and the state office. **Please include a heading on your minutes stating your full League name and state, for example “LWV-Lubbock, Texas”.**

Attach to the minutes any reports distributed at the meeting or referred to in minutes, a separate treasurer’s report, finance drive report, or information that supports a motion.

Local Leagues and MAL Units should e-mail a copy of the minutes to lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org as soon as the minutes are reviewed.

As you prepare minutes, ask yourself these questions:

- *Will these minutes make sense to a board member who was absent?*
- *Will someone reading these minutes two or twenty years from now understand what took place and why, when it occurred, and who “Joan” was? Remember it is best to use last names or the entire name such as “Joan Smith”.*

Your minutes will be read by the LWV-TX president, the LWV-TX Organization vice president, and the local League liaison as soon as they are received. If your minutes are not clear or if you have reported exciting news, you may receive a note or phone call.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (Please check your local League’s files for current publications.)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

Recording Present History: Guidelines for Local League Secretaries, June 2004

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LOCAL LEAGUE TREASURER

As local League treasurer, you hold a most important position, for you are the manager of your local League funds and budget as adopted by the members at the annual meeting. You are also responsible for interpreting the budget and the financial status of your League to the board and to the membership—not an easy task!

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Promptly deposit receipts (dues, contributions, sales, etc.) and pay bills to keep your League's credit good.
- Keep books which provide a systematic record of all income and expenditures.
- Prepare and present either a simple treasurer's report or budget analysis at each board meeting and at your annual meeting.
- Send per-member-payments (PMPs) to state and national on time.
- E-mail your adopted budget to the state office and national office immediately following your annual meeting or send three (3) copies to the state office and one (1) copy to national; file other reports as required by state and national Leagues, the state of Texas and the IRS.
- Participate in the budget making process. You will be appointed as a member of the Budget committee, but you may not serve as the chair.
- Participate as a member of the board in the management of your local League.
- See that the treasurer's books are reviewed annually, either by an outside auditor or by an Audit committee appointed by your board.

GETTING THE JOB DONE

- Register your signature at the banks and other financial institutions holding your League's accounts.
- If your president is newly elected, see that his/her signature is registered also, so in the event of your absence or incapacity, there is another person authorized to carry on League fiscal matters; some institutions require additional signatures.
- If your League requests that you be bonded, please do so.
- Obtain all materials from the previous treasurer and **review them together**.
- Read and understand *Money Matters Made Easier: Handbook for Local League Treasurers, 2004 edition*. It provides details for handling most facets of your job and includes a suggested calendar designed for treasurers.
- In addition to your regular local accounts, you are responsible for all activity related to funds on deposit with the LWV-TX Education Fund.
- **An important key to success: do not get behind in your work!** Set aside at least one day a month to pay bills and post receipts and expenditures, and one day to balance your books, prepare reports, etc.
- The LWV-TX treasurer is a wealth of information and a wonderful resource.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Membership records and reports.** If one of your responsibilities is membership records, consult *Money Matters Made Easier: Handbook for Local League Treasurers* for information.
- **Political Action Account** You may also be asked to be the treasurer for your League's Political Action Account. If you wish to assume this responsibility there is no conflict with your position as the League's treasurer—you are just the

treasurer for two separate organizations. The section entitled “If Your League Spends Money to Lobby”, in *Money Matters Made Easier: Handbook for Local League Treasurers* provides some background. The required forms and filing deadlines are available from the Secretary of State’s office. Not all local Leagues have these accounts.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (Please check your local League’s files for current publications.)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers, 2004

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LOCAL LEAGUE VICE-PRESIDENTS

Responsibilities of each vice president are generally defined in local League bylaws. Some bylaws denote vice president numerically, i.e. first, second, and third. While others designate by areas of responsibility, such as program, community (or public) relations, organization, and some Leagues may have an Action vice president instead of an Action Chair, etc. Bylaws should not contain a detailed job description, as areas of oversight for which each vice president is responsible may change with administrations, depending on arrangements most suitable to each board organization.

The vice president's role as coordinator is of primary importance. By establishing a good working relationship with the committee chairs working within the area of his/her responsibility early in the year, the vice president can help to insure that the work of the League is efficiently accomplished. The vice president's effectiveness in providing guidance and motivation is an important element in developing and training future League leaders.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS COORDINATOR:

- Help committee chairs develop membership for committees.
- Sees that planning for each committee occurs early in the League year.
- Attends meetings of his/her assigned committees and provides help when necessary.
- Follows closely activities of each committee.
- Substitutes for a committee chair in an emergency.
- Helps the president decide which items require discussion and/or decision at board meetings and the agenda time required.
- Encourages committee chairs to delegate and share responsibility for the overall work of the League.
- Promotes cooperation among committees
- Encourages committee chairs to communicate with their LWVUS and LWV-TX counterparts.
- Helps committee chairs determine which suggested tools to purchase.

Vice presidents are invaluable aides to the president. Their detailed knowledge of League activities enables them to help plan realistic agenda for board meetings. Regular contact with committee chairs prior to board meetings will avoid the use of board time for what should be committee work. It is important for the president to meet with vice presidents prior to each board meeting, or at least occasionally, to review and evaluate, but this group should never act as an executive committee to make independent decisions or take action outside the purview of the total board.

Each vice president should receive the *LWV-TX Information* and the *LWVUS Leader's Update*. With almost all materials now sent via e-mail disseminating information is usually easy. *Keeping committee chairs fully informed is vital to making their board or off-board service valuable and rewarding.*

As a group, the vice-presidents are in a unique position to view the overall work of the organization and to stimulate ideas for improved board operations and expanded League activities in the community.

PROGRAM VICE-PRESIDENT

The program vice president coordinates and supervises all program activities of the League and works with the president and board of directors to provide a balance of League activities.

Plan for program activities should be made early in the year, in cooperation with the board, and should include:

- Scheduling meetings on state and national consensus items in time for board approval and submittal by deadlines.
- Scheduling meetings on local consensus.
- A meeting for state program planning and national program planning, usually in even years.
- Planning meetings on current studies, with a balance of national, state, and local program.
- A balance of kinds of programs, i.e. speakers, panels, discussion meetings, field trips.

In developing plans, the program vice-president should assist the president in choosing people to manage the various program items, and then should consult with each program chair before the year's calendar is finalized.

To assist program chairs in performing their duties effectively, the program vice-president...

- Acts as a liaison between the board and program committees and among program chairs.
- Trains program chairs.
- Attends committee meetings, especially those held early in the League year, and consults with chairs about committee activities.
- Funnel information from state and national Leagues to appropriate program committees.
- Encourages chairs to communicate with state and national counterparts.
- Reminds committees how they interrelate with overall League activity.
- Makes program committees aware of the resources and tools available to them.
- Helps develop membership for program committees.

In addition, the program vice president...

- Works closely with the *VOTER* editor to make sure program materials are prepared or ordered for the *VOTER* on schedule, and that follow-up reports of program meetings are covered.
- Prepare briefing for discussion leaders in association with appropriate program chairs.
- Recommends action in cooperation with action chair, appropriate program chair, and president.
- Helps plan any public meetings related to program items.
- Keeps current local summaries of program positions or statements.
- Prepares material on program planning, local, state, or national, for *VOTER* or arranges for its preparation.
- Makes sure annual reports on program are completed and submitted as appropriate.
- Should receive *LWV-TX Information* and *LWVUS Leader's Update*.

OPTIONS

The responsibilities of the program vice-president are varied. The time required for reading to remain knowledgeable takes a fair amount of time. In order to balance work loads, some Leagues elect two program vice-presidents—one to handle state and national programs; the other to supervise the local program. Other Leagues divide the program load in a less formal manner. Consider what seems to work best for your particular situation so that this most important responsibility receives the attention it needs. Program vice-presidents in larger Leagues have extra coordination responsibilities with unit discussion groups and larger number of committee chairs.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications).

LWV-TX Publications

B.O.S.S. (Book of State Stuff)

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

Program Perspectives (current edition)

LWVUS Publications

Impact on Issues, current edition

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



PROGRAM CHAIR

(Also suggested reading for Program Vice-President)

Under the direction of the program vice president, program chairs coordinate all activity relating to a specific program issue. A committee of local members interested in the issue should be recruited to assist you. The number on the committee may depend on the size of your League, or whether the issue is an active study or an action-only issue.

At the beginning of the League year, the plans for the program issue must be coordinated with the program vice-president for integration into the League program calendar.

Whatever your program, a local, state, or national issue, as committee chair, you will:

- Schedule committee meetings with a prepared agenda.
- Assign specific tasks to committee members; for a local study, this includes assigning research topics and personal interviews with local officials.
- Distribute appropriate study materials.
- Decide if a public meeting is warranted on a program issue and, if so, suggest a speaker to the board.
- Set committee deadlines according to consensus dates.

As a resource committee, you and your committee will:

- Decide how many and what type of meetings are most appropriate for presentation of your issue to League members.
- Choose materials to be distributed to members and how, (i.e. with *VOTER*, e-mails, special mailing, etc).
- Prepare consensus questions and a discussion outline for local study items.

In Leagues where a number of units cover the same materials simultaneously, the program chair is expected to conduct a briefing session for unit and/or discussion leaders, making sure each unit has a program resource person present.

If your program item is a study, consult with the program vice-president as to the procedure for organizing a study and reporting consensus. After your report is approved by the board, prepare an article for the local *VOTER* describing the results of the local study. **The results of state and national studies are not reported in the local *VOTER*.**

Finally, in consultation with the action chair or the program vice president and the board, the program chair determines appropriate League action to be taken.

Regardless of the specific program issue, all program chairs should:

- Research League files for previous work on the issue.
- Collect and organize information for your local directory or handbook.
- Familiarize yourself with basic tools available from LWVUS or LWV-TX and your local League
- Read *LWV-TX Information* and *Legislative Newsletter* (when legislature is in session), and *LWVUS Leader's Update*.
- Take advantage of opportunities for action.
- Develop ideas for future study
- Keep up with the issue by reading, including the media and internet.

- Contribute to the local League publication that includes current and historical background as well as consensus statements for all local studies.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

Program Perspectives, current edition

LWVUS Publications

Impact on Issues, current edition

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



ACTION (ADVOCACY) VICE-PRESIDENT (THE ACTION CHAIR)

(Also suggested reading for Program Vice-President)

In the League of Women Voters action is the final step in the process of choosing program, studying, and reaching consensus. It is one of the most exciting and productive aspects of the League. The action chair is a separate position on the board in larger Leagues. In many Leagues action is a responsibility of the program vice president. Wherever the responsibility rests, it is a most important League function. It implements a part of our purpose "...to act on selected governmental issues" and provide high visibility in the community.

All action should be a cooperative effort. The action chair and program chair should work together to prepare all material; approve all statements, letters, or other action, with the president (and the board of directors if possible). Action letters should be produced with care by the action chair. Background on program positions and techniques for implementing action are covered in the tools listed below. Many of these should be in your local League files, consider acquiring others as needed.

As action chair, it is also your responsibility to keep League members informed of official action taken by your League and to encourage the members to take similar action as individuals. This is usually accomplished through articles in your local VOTER.

Action falls quite easily into two parts, local and legislative action. A separate individual may handle each if this works best in your League.

LOCAL ACTION

Every effort should be made to seek all possible ways to influence local governmental bodies in support of local League positions and appropriate state or national League positions.

- If you are responsible for local action, you need to familiarize yourself with local program positions, and state and national positions that can be applied to local situations.
- Read *LWV-TX Information* and *Legislative Newsletter* (when legislature is in session), and *LWVUS Leader's Update*.
- Keep an eye on the daily news for opportunities to present these positions and maintain contacts with local government officials. An observer corps can also be a valuable link to local government bodies.
- Be sure to keep adequate records, copies of your letters, testimony, statements, etc., because no one else will have this information on file. This provides valuable background for future use and an historical record of your League's action activities.

Before taking action on a local position at the state or national level,

- review the requirements in "Taking Action: Guidelines for Local Leagues", included in the *LWV-TX League Handbook and Directory*. Also consult the LWVUS publication, *In League*, especially the section entitled, "Program: Study and Action",
- consider other options for action such as joining a coalition or influencing community opinion through op-eds, press conferences, press releases, a speaker's bureau, publications, taking part in a rally, etc.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

- Handling legislative action means responding to state and national Action Alerts. It also means reading the LWV-TX *Legislative Newsletter* and LWVUS *Reports from the Hill*, and highlighting the information from these publications in your local *VOTER*, if timely. Written letters sent by mail are said to be the most effective means of communicating, but e-mail is acceptable.
- When an Action Alert is received from LWVUS, send an official communication in the name of the local League and send copies to both the national and state offices. When the request for an action comes from LWV-TX send an official communication, with a copy to the state office.
- If the same communications is sent to a number of people, a single copy is sufficient, provided a list of others receiving the communication is attached. Substantive replies should be summarized or copied and sent to the national office if it relates to congressional action or to the state office if it relates to Texas legislative action. If you do not respond to the request for action, send an e-mail explaining the reason why to the appropriate League office, state or national.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (Check your League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

Program Perspectives, 2006-2008

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002 LWV-US

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



OBSERVER CORPS

(Also suggested reading for the appropriate vice-president)

An observer corps is a useful League undertaking. Observers provide League visibility to government officials, report to League members on governmental activities, and may provide the impetus for future League action, particularly on local issues.

The observer corps chair works under the direction of the advocacy or program vice-president but is not necessarily a member of the board. An ideal chair has a basic knowledge of League program areas, recognizes the value of the corps, and radiates enthusiasm.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OBSERVER CORPS CHAIR:

- Determines, in consultation with the board, which governmental bodies or agencies should be covered and sets priorities depending on volunteer strength and interest.
- Recruits League members willing to observe. Encourages participation through VOTER articles and personal contact. Observing a city council, school board, etc. is a particularly good introduction for new League members.
- Trains observers. In the training, the responsibilities of the observer, listed below, should be covered. Training workshops can be conducted. Some Leagues prepare instructions sheets and report forms for observers.
- Provides League buttons or badges for each observer.
- Sends a letter (approved by the president) on League letterhead to the proper official indicating the presence of League observers, and introducing the individual(s).
- Encourages and assists observers and provides for substitutes when needed.
- Keeps in touch with the observers on a regular basis and passes on pertinent information obtained by the observers to the appropriate program chair and/or to the board.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OBSERVER:

Preparation for Observing:

- Have an understanding of the responsibilities of the entity being observed, particularly as it relates to League program and positions.
- Know the names of the members of the council, court, board, or agency; the time, place, and format of the meetings.

Procedures while Observing:

- Observe only. Do not talk with officials or the media. If questioned by either about the League's position or point of view, politely but firmly state the policy that only the president speaks for the League (unless you have been authorized to do so). Do not pursue personal interests at any time while observing for the League.
- Dress appropriately, and if available, wear a League button or badge.

- Be prompt.
- Identify yourself to the chair, secretary, or clerk of the meeting, if it seems appropriate to do so.
- Obtain an agenda for the meeting.
- Keep an impartial and respectful attitude at all times. The League will be judged by your actions.
- Take notes on subjects relating to League issues and other subjects of significant importance.

Reporting

- Alert the appropriate program chair or the observer corps director if League issues were discussed; a phone call may suffice. If discussion was extensive prepare a written report for the board or e-mail the board a summary.
- If the issue would be interesting to members, write an article for your next VOTER.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



COMMUNITY RELATIONS VICE -PRESIDENT

As the community relations vice president, your responsibility is to visualize the potential public relations value of everything your League does. You are also responsible for overseeing committees and responsibilities under the community relations umbrella.

Responsibilities generally included under community relations:

- Voter Services
- Public relations
- Publicity
- Fund development
- Production, promotion and distribution of League publications
- Member recruitment efforts
- Speakers Bureau

Your responsibility is to make other board members aware of the ways to build the League's image in the community. Everything the League does can influence the way the League is seen by the community. Therefore, all board members should consult with the community relations vice president for suggestions and assistance with their projects.

COORDINATOR

A vice president's role as coordinator is of primary importance. Establishing a good working relationship with the chairs of committees within your areas of responsibility can insure that the work of the League is efficiently accomplished. The vice president's effectiveness in providing guidance, supervision, and motivation is an important element in developing and training future League leaders. You should receive by e-mail the *LWV-TX Information* and *LWVUS Leader's Update*. If you are not receiving this information, ask your president about them. Develop a distribution system for appropriate information to each chair in your area of responsibility. It is critical that committee chairs receive memos and publications in a timely manner.

Other ways you will coordinate:

- Attend meetings of all committees in your area of responsibility and provide help when necessary.
- Stay abreast of plans and activities of each committee.
- Fill in for a committee chair in an emergency.
- Help each committee decide what needs discussion and decision at board meetings, and the agenda time required.
- Encourage chairs to share responsibility for the overall work of the League.

Regular contact with committee chairs in advance of board meetings will avoid the use of board time for what should be committee work.

Goals of Community Relations

- **Visibility**
Keeping the community aware that your League is an effective group promoting citizen participation in government.

- **Effectiveness**
By establishing and maintaining good working relations with the media, as well as with other community organizations, business leaders, public officials, and citizens in general.
- **Recruitment**
Informing prospective members and the public of League activities and inviting their participation.

Implementing Your Goal

- **Media contacts: newspaper, radio, television**
News releases. Use these to announce public meetings, candidate forums and debates, new publications, and other regular activities. (Pages in this handbook relating to Publicity chair describes production of a good news release.)

News conferences. When your League is featuring someone prominent, making a major announcement, or launching an action campaign, the news conference is an appropriate approach.

Candidate debates. Public and/or televised debates are a primary source of positive publicity for your League. The debate is a solid source of “hard news” of your League’s making.

Letters to the editor and op-ed pieces. If brief and well written, letters to the editor and op-ed pieces are effective means of creating or maintaining interest in the League issues and of persuading others to action.

Public service announcements. Public service television and radio announcements offer free, effective publicity for your League.
- **Paid or in-kind advertising**
Don’t overlook the value of a well-designed graphic and prominent placement of display advertising. An ad in your local newspaper may provide potential for promoting your League.
- **Posters, flyers, brochures**
Colorful, well-designed announcements of meetings, voter service activities, and membership or fundraising campaigns can attract those who aren’t attuned to the media. Displayed in libraries, supermarkets, community centers, schools, and other public places, they reach a segment of the population not otherwise served.
- **Voter Services activities**
Voter registration drives, get-out-the-vote campaigns, distribution of *Voters Guides*, candidate forums and debates, discussion of ballot issues all are unmatched in reaching the general public.
- **Action campaign**
Ranging from statements at public hearings to an all-out effort on a local issue, advocacy in public interest offers ideal occasions for boosting League visibility. See to it that your president or others who give statements at public hearings have copies for the officials and for the media. If possible, you or the publicity chair should go along to handle the distribution.

- **Speakers Bureau**
Community appearance at schools, organization, and churches offer excellent opportunities to sell membership in the League, to solicit contributions, or to simply make the League better known in the community. Other public appearances may include announcements about voter registration, *Voters Guides*, an upcoming meeting, etc. to other community groups.
- **Invitations**
Invite League contributors, public officials, and representatives of neighborhood associations, and other organizations with similar interests to appropriate League functions.
- **Website**
A well-designed website that provides information on your League can be a real asset. The information presented must be up to date and monitored regularly to insure accuracy as well as timely information. This is an excellent place to post announcements of meetings, *Voters Guides*, positions papers, as well as a calendar of events.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



FINANCE OR FUND DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

(Also suggested reading for all board members)

Fundraising is vital to Leagues of all sizes. Continued success in raising money in a community comes through commitment of the League Board and competent, complete organization of fundraising efforts under the direction of a finance or development chair. The finance chair is a special kind of person, one who enjoys working with people, has enthusiasm for the work of the League and can transfer this enthusiasm to others.

Finance Plan

A good fundraising plan is first of all diversified. That is, it relies on a variety of sources of funding, including members (both dues and contributions), other individuals, businesses, corporations, sales of items and service, special fundraising events, and perhaps even private foundations. This is why financing the League requires the help of many individuals—the entire board and every member. The more people who will commit to help with fundraising, the more successful the efforts will be. Remember, too, that the gains from fundraising efforts are not always money alone. Every mailing, special project, or event helps raise the League’s visibility and attract new members. Potential donors find projects to educate citizens attractive for special funding.

Finance Campaign

Every League, regardless of size, should have a finance campaign. A finance campaign asks the community for financial assistance for the operation of the League in return for what the League contributes to the community. A campaign may be held once a year, though most Leagues find it expedient to have some aspects of fund solicitation carried out year around. Some companies ask that requests for funds come at certain times of the year that may or may not coincide with League fund drives.

The League board is ultimately responsible for funding the League. They should draft a case or rationale for supporting the organization, help to develop the prospect list of potential sources to be solicited, and take an active part in all fundraising efforts. The board should assure that accurate and complete records are kept of both fundraising costs and income. The finance chair plans and organizes the campaign, recruits a committee and workers, and provides support and knowledge. In some Leagues co-chairs share the overall responsibility. Administrative details, such as printing and record keeping, may be handled by one person, solicitations by another.

One source of help with fundraising is the LWV-TX board training module on fundraising, which includes tips for planning a campaign, approaching corporations, solicitation letters, acknowledgements, and record keeping. Consider the various ways to produce professional letters; consult a copy shop for ideas. Money spent on professional looking letters and brochures is more than recovered in increased contributions.

Begin by developing a prospect list; ask your board and members for names of people they feel are sympathetic to the League. Remember that people give to people, so that personal contacts are essential to fundraising. It has been said that fund development is really “friend making”.

Classify prospective donors by potential for giving. Potential contributors of larger gifts deserve a higher level of attention, which means cultivating; a personalize letter, a telephone call, and a visit. You can cultivate a potential contributor in the same ways you recognize established ones, through mailings, special invitations, and other special attention. Building a relationship is vital to fund development. And after the solicitation is sent, be sure to send an

acknowledgement, even if the answer is “no”. A brief telephone call can also help to build future loyalty from the potential donors.

Carefully nurture your contributors (and prospective contributors) throughout the year by sending them copies of the *Voters Guide*, brochures, *When You Go to Austin* and *Your Elected Officials*, *VOTERS*, and other League publications. Invite them to special League functions, such as candidate forums and rallies, meetings with speakers, or membership functions. This special attention keeps your supporters aware of how their contributions are being used to make your city a better community.

OTHER WAYS OF RAISING MONEY

Most Leagues supplement community contributions through other means. Below are some other suggestions for raising money:

- Sell advertising in *VOTER*
- Sponsor events, such as a roast, festival, or seminar, and charge admission in excess of cost
- Sell UNICEF cards
- Hold a garage sale, bazaar, silent auction, or other sale
- Make contractual arrangement services such as a school for election workers
- Seek in-kind contributions—services such as free printing, free use of space for office or meetings, new or used equipment.
- Sell League guides to local governments, *Voters Guides*, or program publications
- Use members’ homes as “bed and breakfast” for special local events.

Before undertaking sales of services or items, read the LWV-TX publication *Money Matters Made Easier: Handbook for Local League Treasurers* for information on sales taxes and reports. Your treasurer should have a copy of this and be able to help you understand the information.

EDUCATION FUND MONEY

“Hard money”, or contribution that is not tax deductible, is the preferred type of donations in that it can be applied to virtually any area of League activity—administrative, advocacy on issues, or educational. In contrast to the flexibility of hard money, tax-deductible, “soft money” is restricted in its use. According to the Internal Revenue Code, it may be used only for League projects that are purely educational and do not present a League position on issues.

Don’t be afraid to raise tax-deductible money; LWV-TX established its Education Fund to operate for educational purposes within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code. Some contributors will make donations only if they can claim an income tax deduction. Unless your local League has its own Education Fund, you must request that tax-deductible contributions be made to LWV-TX Education Fund. Your League may then request those funds for special educational projects or for purchase of LWV-TEF publications such as *Voters Guides*. Consult the *LWV-TEF Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Local Leagues* for advice on raising, depositing, and using tax-deductible funds.

STATE AND NATIONAL FUNDRAISING

Directors and trustees of LWV-TX and LWV-TX Education Fund solicit contributions from corporations and other organizations that have statewide and/or nationwide operations. This solicitation is done only with the approval of the local Leagues located in the area of the prospective contributor. LWVUS and LWVEF directors and staff may also solicit funds in

your area. The LWVUS/EF formula for sharing contributions with local League applies only to unrestricted contributions of \$1,000 or more.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE FUNDING

The *Texas Election Code* regulates money contributed and money spent for campaigns and ballot issues. Funds used to campaign on ballot issues should be solicited specifically for that purpose, and it is strongly advised that these funds be kept in a separate bank account. Refer to *Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers* for specific details on management of a political action fund.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

Capital Ideas: Fundraising Tips for Local Leagues

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers, 2004

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



PUBLICITY CHAIR

(Also suggested reading for the Community Relations Vice-President)

In some Leagues, the publicity chair is responsible only for newspaper publicity; radio and TV are handled as a separate committee, but most Leagues combine all publicity. The community relations vice president will guide and assist you in your job. A committee can be helpful.

Below are listed some of the “how-to’s” to make your job a little easier.

CONTACT THE MEDIA

As soon as possible after becoming publicity chair, make calls or visits to introduce yourself and to learn deadlines and to whom articles should be released. At the newspaper your contact might be the city editor or the political editor. At the radio or television stations, ask for the news director. Make a list of media contacts, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Find out if they prefer to receive news items by e-mail or a hard copy. Let them know about major upcoming events and ask what kinds of stories interest them.

TARGETS FOR PUBLICIZING THE LEAGUE

- Newspapers are probably your best source of continuing publicity. Give them meeting notices if there’s a Calendar of Events column, and regular news stories. When you have an idea for a feature story or editorial, jot down the key points or interesting details and present them to the appropriate editor for consideration. Do not forget the advantages of minority newspapers, weekly papers, Shoppers News, etc.
- Many people listen to the radio while driving, working or just relaxing. Send stations short news items or public service announcements (the latter are similar to commercials). Since the type of audience varies with the kind of music or program featured, consider the audience you want to reach before trying to set up an interview or participate in a panel discussion.
- Television may publicize or cover your larger events, do a special interview, or schedule you on a local “talk show”. When you have an event or project that lends itself to visual coverage, call ahead of time to present your ideas for a news feature.

WHAT IS NEWSWORTHY?

- Membership events
- Programs with outstanding speakers
- Legislative meetings
- Candidate forums or debates
- Voters Guides distribution
- Voter registration
- Survey being conducted for a study item
- Finance drive kickoff
- Anniversaries or milestones
- Members chosen for a state or national League post or as delegates to state or national Convention
- Action taken on a position
- Reaction to a news development relating to League program
- Annual meeting

All are newsworthy and there are many more! After annual meeting, submit a story to newspapers listing new officers elected, program items adopted, explanations of new studies, and any awards given. Enclose picture of your new president. Also consider news features—environmental project, a member who’s been in League for forty or fifty years, a Girl Scout troop you’re helping learn more about government, a member whose research or volunteer work for League has led him or her into an interesting career.

HOW TO PRODUCE A GOOD NEWS RELEASE

- **FORMAT**
Always type your news releases. Double space and use one side of the paper only. Keep sentences concise, stories limited to one if possible. Leave space at the top for a headline, but don't compose your own. At the top right put the date and either "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" or "FOR RELEASE ON (date)". At the top left give the League's name, your name and position and your phone number. If sending to several media get copies made. Do send your president a copy and keep one for your files.
- **CONTENT**
Get the details from the board member planning the activity. Be sure plans are firm, details accurate, and names spelled correctly. Get a statement from the president or appropriate chair about the purpose of the event, and put that in quotation marks.
- **WRITING**
The "lead" or first paragraph should get the reader's attention and contain the most important point of your story. Include the "who, what, when, where, why and perhaps the how" in the first two or three paragraphs. Remaining paragraphs should be written so that each is of less importance than the preceding one. Include the League's nonpartisanship policy and membership information, and be sure to mention "The public is invited to attend." or "The meeting is open to the public." when that is the case.
- **PHOTOS**
Photos are attention-grabbers! Submit black and white, billfold-type pictures of upcoming guest speaker(s), or ask if they have one on file at the paper. When action is involved, ask the editor if they'll take a picture of the League members working on the finance drive, distributing Voters Guides, or demonstrating the use of voting machines.
- **BEFORE MAILING**
Give each news release to at least one other person to proofread. Read a copy of each news release to the president to make sure everything conforms to League policy.
- **FOLLOW-UP**
Many of your stories will be used only once by the media. However, for a major event you will want to submit a news story two to three weeks prior to the event for initial publicity. A few days before the event, send the same media a shorter article containing key facts, thank them for their previous publicity, and ask them to run a "reminder" to the public. Early the morning of the event, call to invite a reporter to cover the event, stating briefly why you think it would be of interest to their readers.

PROTOCOL AND PRACTICALITIES

Mailing, e-mail, or delivering news releases in person.

Mailing saves time but personal contact is better. If mailed, confirm receipt of the release and offer to answer questions. For a major event, you will receive better coverage by hand-delivering your releases and personally explaining to the editor or reporter why you feel this is of special importance. Check with your area media to see if they prefer that news releases be sent via e-mail, some do as this makes it easier for them to use the releases.

Appearances and attitude

Be positive, courteous, and diplomatic when promoting the League. Dress for success—business-like and professional. Be appreciative of time and space given by the media, remembering they also have time and space for sale.

Be considerate to media personnel

- Be concise. Remember reporters have deadlines. A simple “Do you have a minute or are you on a deadline?” will reveal how much time you have.
- Being pushy or insistent usually works to your disadvantage. Be understanding if they’ve sent all of their reporters out to cover catastrophes and there’s no one left to handle your story.
- Deal equally with all forms of media. Submit releases to all area TV and radio stations. Mail or hand-deliver to all media the same day.
- Agree to an interview unless you are unprepared to give the League’s reaction to a news development. If you have not received prior approval, explain to the media you will contact your president, vice-president, or appropriate chair and call back to set up an interview. Please make arrangements as soon as possible, keeping in mind that the media are in the business of daily, not weekly news. Be grateful they thought of the League!

Create and maintain good public relations.

Make available extra copies of news releases for media at candidates forums and other League-sponsored public meetings.

LEAGUE HISTORY (Scrapbook)

It is often the responsibility of the publicity chair to keep the League’s scrapbook. Display it at the annual meeting and at other appropriate times. It should include substantive articles from the newspaper and appropriate memorabilia. Pictures taken by you or others at annual meetings, conventions, statewide conferences, or workshops greatly add to the appeal of a League scrapbook. Remember that this is the history of your local League. Some public libraries archive local League materials. LWV-TX materials are stored at Texas Tech library.

It is apparent that you have a lot to do, but good planning will make your job easier. The rewards to your League are well worth the time and effort you contribute.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



VOTER SERVICE CHAIR

(Also suggested reading for Community Relations Vice-president)

When citizens seek nonpartisan, unbiased, and factual voter education, the League of Women Voters comes to mind. The philosophy of the League is to provide information to citizens so they can make informed decisions. The Voter Service chair may be the most visible position on the local League board.

The Voter Service/Citizen Education VS/CE committee responsibilities include:

- Preparing *Voters Guides* before an election
- Conducting voter registration drives
- Sponsoring candidates forums and interviews
- Providing up-to-date information on registration and voting procedures
- Providing year-round assistance through a variety of brochures, forums, workshops, meetings, speakers, to help citizens understand, use, and participate in the many aspects of government and politics at all levels.

The VS/CE chair works under the community relations vice president. Depending on the size of your League and the extent of VS/CE projects, your League may want to divide responsibilities among two or more chairs. For instance, *Voter Guides*, other election related activities, and non-election citizen information projects can each have a separate on or off board chair. All may be under the umbrella of the VS/CE chair, or may work directly under the community relations vice president. Each local League should select the combination that works best in their local situation.

However VS/CE responsibilities are organized, it is important

- to know your community and its needs,
- to know the amount of time members will have to give to the many possible VS/CE projects.
- to set up a “calendar of work” and coordinate your activities with other League projects for the year.
- to evaluate each request in light of the priorities you have set.

VOTERS GUIDES

The majority of Leagues in Texas produce local *Voters Guides*. Below are some suggestions.

- Set up a calendar for each election and **start early**.
- If you share candidates with another League, cooperate with each other so that those candidates receive only one questionnaire; make sure the candidates know of your joint efforts. If this is not possible, advise the candidate in your cover letter that they may receive a questionnaire from another League in the area.
- The state League publishes a *Voters Guide* for statewide candidates in primary and general elections, and for state constitutional amendment elections. Leagues may buy these Guides for distribution alone, or for insertion in a local Guide. Some Leagues integrate the state and local material into one Guide. When this is done, the format, but **not** the content, of the state Guide may be changed; the state copyright **MUST** be included. Local Leagues may purchase a camera-ready copy or computer disks.

- If a newspaper publishing your Guide refuses to accept the state League questions for statewide candidates, a local League may use different questions **ONLY** if they are approved by the state Voter Services director and the candidates are so advised. **The state League strongly discourages this practice and urges local Leagues not to give in when a newspaper makes this suggestion.**
- LWV-TX's *A Guide to Voter Guides for Local Leagues* contains additional information.

BALLOT ISSUES

If a local League provides explanatory or pro/con information on city charter amendments or referenda, or on proposed state constitutional amendments, the Voters Services chair is involved. If your League takes on a position on any of these, another person must be in charge of the advocacy activity and expenses must be paid through a locally organized political action committee (PAC) in accordance with Texas campaign financing laws. Refer to *Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers*; your treasurer will have a copy.

USE OF EDUCATION FUND MONEY

Local Leagues having money on deposit with the LWV-TX Education Fund may use these funds to purchase state *Voters Guides* and education fund publications, as well as for local Voter Service activities. The requirements are covered in the *LWV-TX Education Fund Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Local Leagues*. Your president or treasurer will have a copy.

PUBLICATIONS

Please e-mail a copy of each *Voters Guide* and VS/CE publication your local League produces to the state League office. Your *Voters Guide* will be placed on the website on your local League page.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

A Guide to Voters Guides for Local Leagues

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers,

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



SPEAKERS BUREAU

(Also suggested reading for Community Relations Vice-President)

A speaker's bureau provides direct contact between the League and the community. It is an ideal way to promote growth in three areas: a body of citizens informed on government; understanding of the league itself; and support for a League position. The need for speakers is present in every community and a speaker's bureau is one of the most effective methods we have to fulfill our purpose.

How to Organize a Speakers Bureau

The board of directors takes the initiative by appointing a speakers bureau chair. The chair may serve in an on-board or off-board position and, in either case, is directly responsible to the community relations vice-president. It is recommended that an assistant be selected. The chair has five jobs.

- Choose the topics with help and approval from the board.
- Recruit a corps of speakers (resource people or past leaders are a good source).
- Train the speakers
- Operate the bureau
- Sell the bureau in the community

Choosing the Subjects.

Limit the topics to those within the League's scope; Voter Service, local, state and national program. General topics such as "The Woman's Role as a Citizen" or "What is your Political I.Q.?" bring League work to the attention of the audience. Keep current educational and legislative objectives in mind.

Recruiting Speakers.

Every member is a potential speaker, but quite often members will not volunteer, unless they are offered a training session and are not asked to make too many speeches. In some cases, a "resource" person may go along to answer detailed questions for which a speaker is not prepared.

Training Speakers.

- A brief explanation of the purpose of the bureau and the policies that guide it.
- Pointers on how to build a speech and other professional advice from speech experts.
- Discussions within subject areas to determine the points to be covered and the method of presentation.
- Demonstration speeches including helpful points on poise, attire, etc. and,
- Comments and helpful tips from past speakers.

Operating the Bureau

Day-to-Day operation is the joint responsibility of the speaker's bureau chair and bureau speakers.

Responsibilities of a Speaker Bureau Chair:

- Take requests from organization representative. Note subject, date, time, place, name of organization, and name and phone number of representative. Remember that organizations needing a speaker often need direction in defining a topic.
- Contact a speaker (topic, geographic location, etc. are considerations in selection). Provide the speaker with pertinent information. Request that the speaker call or e-mail the representative of the organization and notifies you when the contact has been made.

- Help the speaker obtain the publications and materials needed for preparing the speech and for handouts.
- Remind the speaker of the engagement a few days before the date.
- Check to see how the speech went. If there were problems or suggestions, note them for future use.
- Keep a record of members on the speaker's bureau, their qualifications, and on their topics.
- Build a file of sample speeches and keep speech files in order
- Recruit speakers, speechwriters; and advocate for the speakers bureau!

Responsibilities of Speakers:

- When accepting a speaking engagement, note the time, place, etc on your calendar.
- Call the organization's representative to confirm the engagement and to obtain pertinent information such as directions to the meeting place, the nature of the group, the program schedule, the length of time they wish you to speak, whether there will be time for a question-answer period, is there a stage or podium, microphone, and about special equipment you may need.
- Check to see what information is already available on the topic, including any tapes, audiovisuals, etc. Speakers Bureau files, program, and Voter Service files generally contain a wealth of information, both general and specific.
- Study your information thoroughly, prepare your speech (personalize a prepared speech so it sounds like you and is directed to the intended audience), make good notes, practice. BE PREPARED!
- Arrive promptly at the designated place and meet the person in charge of the meeting.
- Let the speakers bureau chair know how the speech went, and return promptly any materials borrowed from the files.
- Keep a copy of your speech and provide one for the bureau files.

Selling the Bureau's Services.

Letters, bulletins, and clever post cards can be used to contact other organizations. These should include facts about the bureau and subjects available, titles of speeches with a brief description.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



ORGANIZATION VICE-PRESIDENT

The vitality and growth of your League depends to a great extent on the organization vice-president and the committees under the organization umbrella. A general knowledge of all organizational committees, good planning, and a certain amount of volunteer time will assure your success.

UNDERSTANDING THE JOB

Understanding begins with a thorough knowledge of local League bylaws, policy guide, organizational structure, and customs. Your specific duties may be spelled out in the bylaws; the structure identifies the committees you oversee.

You are the board member with the primary responsibility for coordinating organizational committee's activities so they interact with each other and the program, advocacy and community relations areas.

CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES

- Familiarize yourself thoroughly with the various committees under the organization umbrella as well as the other committees. While all vice-presidents encourage coordination among committee chairs, the organization vice-president has a special responsibility to ensure this occurs. The more you know, the more comfortable you will be while doing your job. Utilize your local League organization chart, job descriptions, *In League* (LWVUS), *Fundamentals for Local Leagues Board* (LWV-TX), and communications from state and national offices.
- Establish a relationship with board members and off-board chairs working with you. A meeting of all chairs early in the League year to explain your role as coordinator will be productive. This meeting can provide an opportunity to understand each chair's job, to see that all chairs understand their responsibilities, and to define channels of communication within the organization area.

Communication must be maintained among you and your committee chairs. Involve as many members as possible. Many short, one-time jobs are usually preferable to fewer, longer commitments.

- Before board meetings, contact chairs to determine the agenda and time required for board discussion and decision.
- After board meetings inform committee chairs, especially off-board chairs of actions relating to their responsibilities.
- Advise chairs of dates and deadlines
- Bring to your president's and board's attention organization memos/information included in mailings from the state, *LWV-TX Information*, and *LWVUS Updates*.
- Look for new and different ways the organization team can improve the overall work of the League.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Meet early in the year for planning with organization chairs (or perhaps all chairs, depending on size and organization of the League)
- Serve as consultant for organization chairs (membership chair, publications chair, *VOTER* editor, Unit chairs and others).
- Attend meetings of organization committees when possible.
- Train organization chairs, as necessary.

- “Pinch-hit” for a committee chair in an emergency.
- Bring to the attention of organization committees resources, tools, and opportunities.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Based on size and specific needs of your League, and your time and interest, one or more these “extras” may become your responsibility.

- Maintain the local League calendar, keeping it current for unit, committee, and general meetings as well as important community events, legal and school holidays, elections, etc.
- Update local League job descriptions following review and consultation with board and off-board chairs.
- Undertake special projects as the president and board may direct.
- Evaluate board and League activities throughout the year.
- Arrange for appropriate training of the local League board, committees and individuals.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

(Also suggested reading for Organization Vice-President)

This is one of the most important responsibilities for the health and well-being of the local League. The membership chair has the responsibility of finding ways to recruit and retain members for the League of Women Voters. Keys to success include knowledge of the League, enthusiasm, administrative ability, patience and persistence, along with guidance from the organization vice-president and full cooperation from the board of directors. As membership chair, you should not be expected to undertake this task alone, but should work with a committee.

GOALS

The goals of the membership committee should be designed to:

- Secure and maintain a membership large enough to carry out total League program and activities.
- Promote the understanding of League procedures and policies.
- Give each member the opportunity to contribute individual talents in a satisfying League experience.
- Keep current members interested and involved by offering them opportunities to become active, involved members.

In Leagues with units, the membership chairs of the units may make up the membership committee of the League. If the League does not have units, a membership chair and committee should be appointed from the membership.

The following aspects of membership can be assigned to individual committee members or combined in ways so that all areas are being addressed.

- **Recruitment**
This requires perseverance and working year-round attention. The reasons for joining the League are many. Emphasis on recruiting friends and neighbors is usually the best beginning. The visibility of the League in the community helps, and this depends on a combination of good public relations, backed by good speakers, attractive publications, special open meetings of community interest, and League services to the community.
- **Orientation**
This is the follow-through to successful recruitment. The opportunity for a new member to be brought up-to-date on League program positions, background information leading to those positions, Voter Services activities, and information explaining how the League functions should be made available soon after joining. Orientation leads to familiarizing the new member with the League's purpose, the member's role in the League, and the League's programs. Many Leagues schedule a special orientation session for new members where they can socialize with current leaders and other new members. Time for socializing is very important. Orientation sessions should be offered as often as necessary. Assigning an experienced League member to act as a mentor to a new member is an additional way to help orient the new member to League procedures. In addition to special meetings, orientation can be a part of a regularly scheduled general or unit meeting, or can be handled through person-to-person contacts.
- **Member Involvement**
This aspect of membership should begin with presenting each new member with a "kit" containing a membership list, a board list, program information, local League bylaws and policy, a membership card (if available), an interest questionnaire or opportunity sheet, and perhaps a local League history. The questionnaire, upon being completed, becomes part of the member's record, and should be updated periodically. This information is then funneled to the appropriate committee chair, who should take the initiative to invite newcomers to meetings of the committee. Finding the right spot for **each** member ensures a satisfying League experience and is the best way to keep members. While a desired goal is to involve every member, it

should be recognized that some people join to support the League, but not necessarily to be active. *These silent partners should be welcomed and encouraged, since they give the increased power of larger membership.*

- **Retention** This involves devising ways to keep track of all members to make them feel a part of the organization and is as important a part of membership as getting new members. In order to encourage member involvement, try various creative ideas such as organizing a telephone tree for meetings or responding to calls for actions, encourage carpooling to League meetings, plan several social events each year (the League is sometimes considered “to serious”), have board members contact lapsed members to encourage them to rejoin, and find out why memberships are not renewed.

In addition to the above, the membership chair is responsible for providing opportunity for interested individuals to join at functions sponsored by the League. In some Leagues, responsibility for the social aspects of the annual and other general membership meetings is a function of the membership committee. These activities provide an excellent opportunity to involve new members by requesting that they assist you by doing one, specific task.

The membership chair should suggest to the community relations vice president and the board ideas for improving the visibility of the League in the community. The chair should also arrange to display League literature and publications at all meetings and public events. Use the board as a team to share in the opportunity and challenge of making your League the kind of organization that people will want to join.

In many Leagues, the membership chair has the responsibility for maintaining records of renewal dates for membership of members and reporting membership to LWVUS. Working with the treasurer ensures that an accurate record is kept. Additions and corrections **are reported using a national database provided by LWVUS**. Keeping membership information up-to-date and reporting before deadlines is important. In some Leagues, these tasks are handled by the treasurer; in others, particularly larger Leagues, a special “membership administrator” is appointed. Remember, the local League PMP (per member payment) is determined by this information.

Your counterpart on the state board is ready to provide assistance in various matters, and will appreciate reports of what you are doing. You will find membership suggestions in the VOTER and in LWV-TX Information. Sharing experiences with other Leagues will help the membership grow throughout Texas.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



PUBLICATION CHAIR

(Also suggested reading for Organization Vice-President)

Publications are one of the most valuable of League services to members and the public. The publications chair promotes, orders, and distributes or sells publications and, in some Leagues, may oversee production of local publications. The publication should know which publications are available and how much they cost, and should work with the board and appropriate chairs to see that the right ones are on hand when needed.

Publications for Members

Publications are usually provided for members as a part of League study and action. The cost should be built into the budget or funding should be found.

Not all state and national publications will be covered by the budget. The membership can be kept informed of other publications in a variety of ways, such as a brief review in the monthly *VOTER* or attractive displays at League unit and general meetings. At League meetings there should be a supply on hand to sell, or a plan to take orders.

Publications for the Public

Most League publications are appropriate for sale to the public. Sample copies to local organizations, professional-appearing displays in public places, at general meetings, candidate forums, etc, are just some of the ways to reach a wider audience. League speakers should carry copies of selected issues to give away or sell to their audience.

Publications to Contributors

Contributors to the League should receive carefully-selected League publications from time to time. *Voter Guides*, listings of elected officials, *Facts & Issues*, and similar publications are appropriate.

Publications for the Board

The president receives a free copy of newly produced publications from both LWV-TX and LWVUS. On both the state and national League website, many publications are made available to purchase or download. This publication, *Fundamentals for Local League Board*, lists tools useful to holders of different responsibilities. Chairs should ask that appropriate tools be ordered for them after they have reviewed their files. *The Publication chair advises the committee chairs on ordering helpful tools.*

IMPLEMENTING YOUR GOALS

A working committee is always helpful. In some Leagues, each discussion unit has a publications chair; these chairs can function as your distribution network committee as well as promotion advocates for publications. Share the work of setting up displays, selling publications, or taking orders at Leagues functions. Individual committee members may be asked to take on one or more of the specific tasks.

Every publications chair should have on hand the most recent catalogs from the state and national Leagues. The LWV-TX *Catalog of Publications* is included in the current *League Handbook and Directory*, published every summer. Extra copies of catalogs are available from both national and state upon request. If your local League has publications available, you will be responsible for preparing a local catalog as well. Become familiar with the content of the catalogs, as well as various discounts for quantity orders. Remind your local board of these advantages.

The publications chair should be the only person responsible for ordering publications for your League. Therefore, you will not only have to place orders, but arrange for the payment, check orders for accuracy as they are received, and arrange for their proper distribution. Ask your treasurer to help you set up a system to keep track of distribution, as well as sales of publications and subscriptions, sales tax receipts, mailing costs, discount orders, and budget allocations.

A current inventory of publications on hand is very important. Periodically review your inventory and make recommendations for disposing of obsolete publications.

PRODUCING PUBLICATIONS

In some Leagues, production, promotion, and distribution of local publications are the responsibility of the publications chair. If so, you will need to prepare or update your local League catalog.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



UNIT ORGANIZATION DIRECTOR

(Also suggested reading for the Organization Vice-President)

The League unit is the heart of League activity. A unit is a group of League members and guests, meeting at regular intervals, principally to discuss and study League program at all three levels, local, state, and national. The unit is organized to provide small group interaction. Exchange of ideas and information, basic to League program study, is easily encouraged in the unit. It is also a forum for enlisting participation in voter service and other League activities and for voter education. The unit provides a means of communication between the members and the board of directors.

The unit organization director, in cooperation with the board of directors, has primary responsibility for establishing units, providing leadership for them, and planning the overall agenda for the meetings. In smaller Leagues, where there are fewer or no units, the organization vice-president or the entire board may assume these responsibilities. The establishing, functioning, and dissolving of units, is a total board responsibility.

The unit organization director should participate in the yearly planning process by:

- Suggesting a variety of unit meeting times and places convenient to the greatest number of members, e.g.: day/night, public meeting rooms/churches/lunch spots, weekday/weekends.
- Cooperating with program chairs on general meeting topics and speakers, in order to enhance discussion at unit meetings, as well as bring increased attendance.
- Encouraging coverage of the full League spectrum in unit meetings. During calendar planning, the unit organization director should encourage unit formats which give opportunity for involvement beyond program discussion, e.g.: action (letter writing campaign), voters services (questions for *Voters Guides*), new member orientation.
- Considering the value of scheduling one or more sets of unit meetings that allow each unit to plan and carry out an activity of its own choosing; a study relating to the unit area, a speaker or go-see tour on a topic of particular interest to that unit, a special voters service project. Such variety is particularly popular in Leagues that encompass several communities or school districts.

As unit organization director, it is your specific responsibility to:

- Train unit leaders, discussion leaders, and other unit officers.
- Organize monthly briefing sessions for the unit leadership in conjunction with the program chair.
- Publicize the time and place of unit meetings in the *VOTER*/website.
- Provide unit leaders with announcements and sign-up sheets as directed by the board.
- Prepare and distribute attendance and discussion report forms to unit leaders.
- Obtain completed forms from unit leaders and forward forms or information to appropriate chairs.
- Maintain records of unit meeting attendance. In addition, the number of members participating in consensus/concurrence should be reported to the board and **recorded in the minutes.**
- Communicate with unit leadership and help solve problems.
- Encourage units to assume individual supplementary activities: e.g., a consciousness-raising social function, voter service activities.
- Actively search for opportunities to create new units in different areas of the community.

The unit structure includes the following officers.

- **Unit Leader**
This is the administrative officer of the unit, who promotes unit attendance, acts as a liaison between the local board and the members, and provides a friendly atmosphere at meetings, making members and guests welcome and encouraging discussion. The unit leader is responsible for arranging meeting places and ensuring that a member of the program resource committee whose topic is to be discussed will attend.
- **Discussion Leader**
The discussion leader is there to guide discussion in a manner conducive to a free exchange of ideas. A basic, though not necessarily extensive, knowledge of the topic, a respect for each individual's right to opinions, and a liking for people are all required of this officer. The discussion leader is expected to attend briefings if they are held.
- **Unit Membership, Publications, and Telephone Chairs**
These jobs are filled if the size of League and unit warrant it. The unit membership chair could be responsible for finding meeting places, keeping attendance records, and contacting new members.
- **Recorder**
This officer takes notes on the discussion and helps to summarize at the end of the meeting. Some units have a permanent recorder and notebook; others rotate the job among members of the unit throughout the meeting year. It is essential that a recorder be appointed for any discussion leading to consensus, with various shades of opinions noted, including conclusions and consensus of the meeting.

The unit organization director, or chair, oversees the proper and smooth functioning of the units where League membership and citizenship become an active experience.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



THE VOTER EDITOR

(Also suggested reading for Organization Vice-president)

The VOTER is the basic, and for some members, the only line of communication within the local League. It tells the members (as well as the state and national boards) what is happening. To the new member, it explains "League" in clear, simple terms. To the active member, it tells what is going on daily, where help is needed, and when. To the member who cannot attend meetings regularly, it is a lifeline to what is being done by the League.

The VOTER is the visible expression of a League.

- The board of directors plans the overall content, sets publication deadlines, and approves its general format.
- The *VOTER* editor instructs writers, solicits articles, edits copy, and composes the pages.
- The *VOTER* committee assists in production and mailing, tasks such as word processing or desktop publishing, label preparation and application, and sorting and mailing.

The VOTER Production

- The masthead should be distinctive with *VOTER* in all caps.
- The format should be orderly, lively, and readable.
- The content should be well written, interesting, up beat, informative and accurate. It should consist primarily of news about League activities, but "outside" news relating to League concerns or community news that points up areas for possible future program study is appropriate. The *VOTER* is also a means to educate the readers about League procedure. Articles about consensus, program and action, for example are appropriate.
- Editing of the *VOTER*, at a minimum, should be done by the *VOTER* editor and president or someone designated by the president. An accurate publication is important to the credibility of the League.

The president and board of directors are responsible for choosing the *VOTER* editor. It is recommended that this be a board position, but an off-board *VOTER* editor, under the direction of the organization vice-president, is an option that may be necessary for your League.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

Practical VOTER Production: Helpful Tips for Editing & Production

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LOCAL LEAGUE BYLAWS COMMITTEE

A committee to review local bylaws should be appointed early in the League year. The bylaws committee is important to keep the local League running smoothly. Three members should be sufficient: one board member, one non-board member, and a chair selected from either the board or general membership.

After reviewing suggestions for changes from the local League board and members, the committee is at liberty to propose or not to propose any bylaw changes. Any changes it does propose should be brought to the local board early in the fall, probably no later than the October meeting. Proposed changes approved by the board are then submitted to the state League bylaws chair for review and comment. Deadlines for this submission are noted in the “Essential Checklist-What to Send to Whom”, included in the *LWV-TX League Handbook and Directory*, published each summer.

Proposed changes are then presented to the membership in accordance with local bylaws concerning amendments. The membership may amend, adopt, or reject proposals at the annual meeting. Note that bylaw take effect immediately, unless otherwise specified.

After the annual meeting, three copies of the bylaws as amended are sent to the state office and one to the national office. All members should receive copies. However if the changes are minimal, some Leagues publish the information in their **VOTER** requesting that members update the copy they have.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Usually the bylaws committee is charged with reviewing state and national League bylaws in alternating years, and recommending changes. Such changes as the local board approves are submitted for consideration to the state or national League board. The bylaws committee chair should insure that this process is completed in time to meet deadlines for submission of proposed amendments. Please see LWV-TX calendar for dates.

The bylaws committee should review the local policy guide as required by that guide. Any changes are submitted to the local board for approval, edited, and approved again, then published in the local *VOTER*.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LOCAL LEAGUE BUDGET COMMITTEE

(Also suggested reading for president, vice-presidents, treasurer, and the Finance Committee)

A budget reflects in dollars and cents the goals and activities your local League wishes to accomplish. The budget committee has the task of formulating a plan for these objectives expressed in terms of money.

The Local League Board's responsibilities to the Budget Committee

- Select members of the budget committee immediately following the annual meeting.
- Help build understanding, interest, and support for the budget among League members.
- Recommend to the budget committee suggestions of what should be included in the budget.
- Review, amend, and approve the proposed budget prior to presentation to the membership.
- Monitor income/expenditures in relationship to the budget.

Composition of The Budget Committee

The budget committee consists of

- a chair, usually off-board, who provides guidance and coordinates the work of the committee
- the local League treasurer, who provides estimates of expenses using past records
- the finance chair, who organizes the fund-raising campaign to support the budget
- the president-elect (if your League uses this system), who gains a knowledge of financial structure
- two or three more appointed from the membership who are knowledgeable in particular areas.
- the president, as an ex-officio member, acts as an advisor.
- the LWV-TX treasurer who is a good source of information for planning budgets.

Responsibilities of the Budget Committee

Planning The chair should call a meeting in summer or early fall to discuss the role of the committee, and present the budget structure and goals of your League. Assignments should be made for gathering information relating to specific items for the new budget; and a timetable for receiving data, committee meetings, and board review should be established to ensure that the proposed budget is submitted to members by the deadline.

Input Committee chairs and board members should be asked for concrete suggestions. A simple request form might be used that could include the budget account they are presently responsible for and its current level of funding, as well as columns indicating budget request amounts divided into necessities, and optional items. Those responsible for accounts that generate income should be asked to submit realistic estimates.

Synthesis After receiving input, the budget committee meets to formulate a proposed budget taking into account all requests, realistic cost, per-member-payment (PMP) to LWV-TX and LWVUS, and realistic estimates of income from membership dues, publication sales, and fund raising. A good budget also includes some uncommitted funds for contingencies.

Update The budget explanation should be updated for efficient use by the incoming board.

Presentation to Board The proposed budget is then presented to the board for its review, possible revisions, and approval. The Budget committee should be prepared to explain and defend any changes from the previous year's budget.

Presentation at Annual Meeting The proposed budget should be mailed to members in the *VOTER* or annual meeting workbook at least one month prior to the annual meeting. It is presented for adoption by the budget chair at annual meeting. The presentation should be brief, but interesting and imaginative.

Publications After adoption, the entire adopted budget should be published in the local League *VOTER* and/or the Handbook and Directory

Special Circumstances

Dues

Check your bylaws or policy sheet well ahead of annual meeting to see what the method is for changing your dues in case change is needed. Sometimes, it is necessary to be prepared with two budgets in case a dues change is proposed and does not pass.

Per-Member Payments

The amount of state or national per-member payment (PMP) is not always known at the time the budget is prepared. A budget committee should use the figure as proposed by the state or national budget committee, and be prepared to revise the budget either upward or downward at the annual meeting. Should this meeting be held prior to state or national convention, the budget should be adopted subject to change by the board to allow for the new figure.

Education Funds

Special care is called for in budgeting for the use of tax deductible education funds to be sure they are used for educational purposes and that they are separated out in your budget explanation. For example, if you have budgeted \$100 income FROM RESERVES DEPOSITED WITH EDUCATION FUND and \$500 expenses for voter service, the explanation should spell out "\$100 for *Voters Guides* to be paid by Education Fund". This also should be pointed out to the incoming treasurer and voters service chair so that applications can be made to the LWV-Texas Education Fund trustees far enough in advance for their review and approval. The LWV-TEF Treasurer can be a source of information for budgeting funds.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LOCAL LEAGUE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

For any local League to be effective, it must have good leadership. Local League bylaws usually provide that a nominating committee has the responsibility of identifying and recruiting those willing and capable of serving as its officers and directors. While members may always make nominations from the floor during annual meeting (with permission of the nominee), reliance on floor nominations has never been the most effective method of ensuring quality leadership for any organization.

Duties of the Nominating Committee

Local bylaws should describe the basic duties of the committee, which are to produce a slate of nominees to serve as new officers, directors, and the elected members of the next nominating committee. The committee only nominates directors and officers and nominating committee members. The committee may make suggestions regarding committee assignments, but only the board should assign individual committee responsibilities.

Like all committees, the nominating committee must organize its work, hold meetings, and communicate with the membership as a whole. In addition to producing nominees for presentation at the annual meeting, the committee should be prepared to make recommendations for filling vacancies on the board at any time during the League year if the board requests this service. Seeking leadership in all areas of League activity is the committee's year-round responsibility.

If possible, the committee chair will provide a copy of *In League* (LWVUS), *Fundamentals for Local League Boards* (LWV-TX), and the local bylaws to each committee member prior to their first meeting. The chair should ensure that copies are available for reference during committee meetings. Nominating committee members will want to educate themselves about their duties, the League itself, and the members from whom they will select nominees.

Who Serves on the Nominating Committee?

Each local League's bylaws should state who serves on the nominating committee. Typically the nominating committee consists of five people: a chair and two members elected at the annual meeting, plus two members appointed by the board very soon after the annual meeting. (Usually the two board members will not be serving in positions this nominating committee will be filling.)

Check the local bylaws also for explanations of how to handle vacancies on the nominating committee that may occur before it completes its work. Remember that the off-board/board ratio should be preserved when filling vacancies on the nominating committee. The president does not serve on this committee and should not attend its meetings or exert influence on its members. If a local League employs paid staff, they should not serve on the nominating committee, because it is inappropriate for staff to have influence over the selection of those who can hire, supervise, and release them.

Suggested Timetable for Committee Activities

Very soon after being elected, the chair should set a date for the first meeting of the committee and inform the president of the date so it is included in the official printed calendar of activities for the ensuing year. At the same time, the chair should ensure that the board has appointed the requisite number of board member to serve on the nominating committee and ask all committee members to review guidelines for their work in the local bylaws and policies. Committee members should also review positions to be filled and the responsibilities of each position.

- **Four Months Before Annual Meeting** The first nominating committee meeting should be at least four months prior to the annual meeting. (Some committees meet in the fall for the initial meeting and then not again until January.) Committee members should be assigned to attend board, unit, and general meetings, and workshops to observe and become familiar with members who are potential leaders and likely candidates for service on the board. They should begin early in the year to discuss potential new leaders among themselves. Remember: *Nominating committee discussions should be open and honest, but never aired outside the committee.*

The committee should have a specific plan to involve the general membership in the process of identifying its leaders. This might be done by initiating member input through notices in the *VOTER*, or by distributing nominating forms at unit meetings. The process of determining whom to ask and then asking and receiving replies is an important and fairly time-consuming process.

The committee might consider interviewing current board members for suggestions about potential leaders and talents or skills needed by the board.

Before adjourning, the committee should review local bylaws to determine when the nominating committee report must be sent to the board and members prior to the annual meeting. The next meeting should be scheduled.

- **Three Months Before Annual Meeting** At this meeting, committee members will want to discuss what they have observed and learned about who their potential leaders might be, so that all are familiar with likely candidates for office.

Whom should the committee consider? The committee should pick members willing and able to be policy-makers for the local League. They should try to achieve a board that is representative of the general membership in its composition, with women and men members, members with different ethnic or racial backgrounds, and some balance between new board members and experienced ones.

The committee should not limit its consideration to persons who have served well in the past, but should attempt to bring into leadership roles members who have never been on the board before. Rotation in office is the best way to ensure the Leagues will grow and develop new leadership.

Committee discussions should be frank and include careful regard for any inherent problems. *Special attention should be given to the League's nonpartisan policy in each candidate's evaluation.*

Before adjourning, the committee should begin to list prospects and one or two alternates for each position and assign who will interview each prospect to determine availability. The committee chair should be notified as each acceptance to be considered for a board position is secured.

- **Two Months Before Annual Meeting** Work continues until the slate is completed. Committee members interview potential nominees as previously assigned.

How is the best way to ask? Committee members should be enthusiastic when asking someone to serve on the local League board! Discussion with the candidate should include emphasis on the importance of the position he/she is asked to fill and the opportunity the nominee will have to make a contribution to the League and to broaden his/her own League experience.

Although it's important for nominating committee members to be persuasive when recruiting nominees, it is equally important for them to be candid in explaining the expected workload. If at all possible, each candidate should receive a copy of the pages from *Fundamentals for Local League Boards* describing the position they are being asked to accept. It should be made clear that a board member is expected to attend any board training that is scheduled, to attend all board meetings, to help develop and sustain a strong membership and financial base for the local League, and to attend as many of the local League functions as possible.

Discussion with each candidate should always include careful explanation of the League's nonpartisanship policy.

- **One Month Before Annual Meeting** As a courtesy, the nominating committee usually presents its proposed slate to the board before making the public announcement in a *VOTER* article or the annual meeting workbook. The board does not take any action on the report, as the nominating committee is responsible to the membership as a whole rather than the board. The chair or designated committee member will then prepare a nominating committee report including the proposed slate and forward the same to the *VOTER* editor or the editor of the annual meeting workbook to be published in accordance with local bylaws. The article should state the right of the membership to present additional nominations from the floor, with consent of nominees.
- **Annual Meeting** The nominating committee chair presents the slate of nominees to the membership at annual meeting and moves election of the slate. If the nominating committee has done its job well, the result will be a local League with competent leadership that effectively informs and involves citizens in government.

Developing Leadership

Leadership development does not happen accidentally. The nominating committee should work with the board to identify future leaders. The nominating committee may suggest to the board potential, future leaders. The board would then be responsible for providing opportunities for growth such as chairing committees, participating in workshops, and attending state and/or national League meetings.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

Fundamentals for Local League Boards, 2007

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LOCAL LEAGUE POLICY COMMITTEE

(Also suggested reading for all board members.)

One of the first responsibilities of the board of directors as a new League year begins is to review the local policy guide and make any necessary changes. A committee of the board is generally charged with this review and brings its recommendations to the full board for discussion and decision. When the policy guide has been approved it should be sent to every member. This annual review should be specific in the policy guide.

Forming Policy

In forming policy strive for

- flexibility and away from rigidity. Board policies that are too restrictive can seriously inhibit the League's ability to secure the commitment of its best leadership. Try to keep specific restrictions to a minimum.
- policies that enable rather than constrict.
- simple, clear language.

The local board is free to develop whatever policies it feels are necessary, as long as the League's nonpartisanship is preserved and policies are not in conflict with local bylaws. If dues amounts and dues collections procedures have been removed from the bylaws, these should appear in the policy guide. A policy regarding the use of the membership roster is frequently included.

Remember that a policy guide is only that—a *guide to decision making*. In the final analysis, it is the responsibility of the board to study each situation and consider what is best for its League.

Some Leagues have a set of policies for board members separate from the policy guide for the general membership. Both sets of policies should be sent to the membership, and care should be taken that they are consistent with one another.

Optional Responsibilities

Early in the year at a board meeting, the policy committee should review important policies. For example, the president is the spokesperson for the local League unless the president delegates this authority to another member. The committee may also choose to review nonpartisanship policies of the League. Such a review helps eliminate doubt about general League operation for board members as well as policy committee members.

SUGGESTED TOOLS: (check your local League files for current publications)

LWV-TX Publications

League Handbook & Directory (current edition)

Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, 2005

LWVUS Publications

In League, 2002

Please contact LWV-TX and LWVUS for other appropriate publications



LWV-TX SUGGESTED STYLE SHEET

*Designed for VOTER editors, board members, office staff,
and all other League members who deal with the written word.*

PROOFREADING

The League has a reputation for publishing thoroughly researched, carefully written documents. This image can be clouded, however, if a League publication contains typographical errors, for readers are likely to suspect that carelessness in presentation reflects inaccuracy of content. Accurate proofreading is critical.

Ideally, every publication should be proofread at least twice by two separate people, and one of the proofreading should involve someone's reading aloud from the original copy while another person scans the printer's proofs, copy for reproduction, etc. No one is infallible, and sometimes omissions can be detected only by painstaking comparison of the text with the original manuscript.

In a perfect world, the proofreading of a League publication would never be done only by its author/editor or typist. The author's/editor's mind tends to stray from what is literally before him/her into what is being said (the content); the typist's eyes are glazed from having traveled this route before. In order to produce error-free work, a second proofing is necessary by a careful person who has never seen the copy before.

But IF you are the only warm body around, and the *VOTER* (or other publication) must be printed, collated, folded, stapled, and mailed out within hours, THEN steel yourself, for accurate proofreading requires careful word-by-word reading.

Initially, read the copy *aloud* for continuity, content, and context. Secondly, scan each line for odd spacing and errors in punctuation. Scan left to right on the first line and right to left on the next, continuing down the page. Next, read the document backwards proofing each word. Transposition errors are easily found using this method. Finally read it again from the beginning to end.

Remember the League's reputation, and *focus!*

RULES OF USAGE

(Note: Italics in the following sections are utilized to call attention to the examples.)

Abbreviations

In an abbreviation with internal periods, do not include spaces after the internal periods. **Examples:** 10 *a.m.*; *U.S.* policy; Washington, *D.C.*; *i.e.*; *Ph.D.* However, when typing initials in personal names include spaces after the periods. **Example:** *M. E. Harris.*

Apostrophes

These have two main uses: possessives and contractions. Because contractions are to be avoided in formal writing, be concerned with possessives. Possessives are formed by adding an apostrophe and the letter *s* to a singular noun. **Examples:** *proofreader's pen*; *Burns's poems.*

If the noun is plural ending in *s*, add only a final apostrophe. **Example:** *all local Leagues' responsibility*

For plural nouns not ending in *s*, add *'s*. **Example:** *women's*

A common error is to write *it's* for *its*. The first is a contraction, meaning *it is*. The second is a possessive. **Example:** *It's a wise child that knows its own parents.*

Do not use an apostrophe in the following terms commonly used by the League:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>candidates meeting</i> | <i>county commissioners court</i> | Voters Guide |
| <i>candidates questionnaires</i> | <i>presidents mailing</i> | Voters Service |
| <i>citizens committee</i> | <i>Speakers Bureau</i> | |



Commas

In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma between each term and before the connective word.

Examples: *She opened the letter, read it, and made a note of its contents.
red, white, and blue*

Use a comma to set off quotations. **Example:** *Then she said, "How about the budget?"*

When writing dates, use commas to set off the day, month, and year.

Example: *Tuesday, November 3, 1992.*

Dashes

A hyphen is not a dash--and vice versa. The dash is made with two hyphens (on a typewriter) without a space before or after. Use a dash to set off an abrupt break or interruption, and to announce a long summary.

MATTERS OF FORM

Hyphens

When two or more words are combined to form a compound adjective, a hyphen is usually required. Do not use a hyphen between words that can better be written as one word: *waterfowl*, not *water-fowl*. Your common sense will guide you, but a dictionary is more reliable. Most words beginning with these prefixes are not hyphenated: *anti, bi, co, extra, hyper, inter, intra, mid, mis, multi, non, out, over, post, pre, pseudo, re, semi, sub, super, trans, ultra, un, and under*.

Examples:

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>antitrust</i> | <i>misgovern</i> | <i>reenact</i> |
| <i>bipartisan</i> | <i>multilateral</i> | <i>semiannual</i> |
| <i>cosponsor</i> | <i>nonvoting</i> | <i>subcommittee</i> |
| <i>extralegal</i> | <i>outdated</i> | <i>superhighway</i> |
| <i>hyperconscious</i> | <i>oversimplify</i> | <i>transcontinental</i> |
| <i>interracial</i> | <i>postwar</i> | <i>ultramodern</i> |
| <i>intrastate</i> | <i>preexisting</i> | <i>unconfirmed</i> |
| <i>midsummer</i> | <i>pseudoscientific</i> | <i>underdeveloped</i> |

However, prefixes are hyphenated before a capitalized word (*inter-League, non-League*), a figure (*post-1990*), or an element of more than one word (*anti-constitutional-revision forces*).

Prefixes that are usually hyphenated include *all-, quasi-, self-, and vice-*.

Examples: *all-inclusive quasi-legislative self-determination vice-chair*

The treatment of words ending in the suffix *-wide* varies. **Examples:**

| <u>Hyphenate</u> | <u>Do not hyphenate</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>city-wide</i> | <i>statewide</i> |
| <i>county-wide</i> | <i>nationwide</i> |
| <i>area-wide</i> | <i>worldwide</i> |

More examples:

Hyphenate

*clear-cut goals**

*four-year term**

*program-making functions**

in-kind

Do not hyphenate

nonpartisan

bylaws

cannot

percent

Write as separate words

member at large (when referring to a specific person)

under way

Vice President (of the U.S.)

* A compound modifier (e.g., adjective + past participle, cardinal number + unit of measurement, phrase used as adjective, an object + present participle) is hyphenated when preceding the noun. But an adverb ending in -ly + participle or adjective is always open before the noun. **Example:** *richly deserved praise.*

Numerals

Use figures to express dates, hours, street numbers, decimals, measures, percentages, volume, chapter, and page numbers. **Examples:** *July 28, 1992; Vol. II; 12:05 p.m.; Chapter V; 21 Baker Street; page 83; .3715; 73% or 73 percent; 80 degrees.*

Use figures to record uneven sums of money, and numbers over one hundred except when the numbers can be written as two words. **Examples:** *\$4.19; 122; five thousand.*

Be consistent in your use of numbers within a document; do not, for example, spell out a number which can be expressed in two words (*fifteen thousand*) and later use figures for the same kind of number (*20,000*).

Spell out ordinal numbers within copy. **Examples:** *twenty-first century, Tenth Street, second term*

Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence. **Example:** *Twenty-six local Leagues responded.*

Quotations

American authorities are agreed on the following relationships between quotation marks and other punctuation:

Always place commas and periods inside quotation marks. **Example:** *She said "four," not "five."*

Always place semicolons and colons outside quotation marks. **Example:** *The following men figured in Roosevelt's "kitchen cabinet": Adolph Berle, Harry Hopkins, and Raymond Moley.*

Question marks, exclamation points, and dashes are placed inside or outside final quotation marks, depending on the situation. They are placed inside when they apply only to the quotation. They are placed outside the final quotation marks when they apply to the entire statement. **Examples:** *Why did he say, "Your position has been made abundantly clear"?*; *The senator asked, "What did you intend to do with the funds?"*

Titles

When typing League publications, italicize or underline the word *VOTER* all in caps (the *National VOTER*, the *Texas VOTER*, this *VOTER*). Italicize or underline other League titles:

We Support; President's Counselor.

General rules: Italicize or underline titles of publications (books, newspapers, magazines, brochures, reports, etc.). Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in periodicals and newspapers, titles of essays and individual selections in books, and the titles of unpublished works (dissertations and theses, lectures, papers read at meetings, etc.).

Ellipsis

Ellipsis marks (. . .) indicate that part of a quoted passage has been omitted. If the omission occurs at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence, use three spaced periods (i.e., a space before each period and after the last). If the last part of the sentence is omitted, or if whole sentences are omitted, place a terminal period after the last word quoted, with three spaced periods following.

Example: *Fourscore and seven-years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation . . . dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged . . . We are met on a great battlefield of that war.*

GUIDE TO CAPITALIZATION

Act, when used as a part of a law's title--the National Voter Registration Act; **but**--the 1992 *act*, the *act*.

Administration, if referring to the federal executive department and standing alone; **but** the Bush *administration*.

amendment, unless referring to a specific constitutional amendment--the 19th *Amendment* (to the U.S. Constitution); the Equal Rights *Amendment*.

annual meeting

bill

Board, when referring to a League *board* of directors **and** used as part of a proper name--the LWVUS *Board* of Directors, the *Board* of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Texas; **but** the national *board*; state *board*; the Austin-Area League *board*; off-*board* position.

budget

bylaws, it is the job of a bylaws committee; **but** *Bylaws Committee* of LWV-TX.

chair--Water Commission *chair*, membership *chair*; Budget Committee *chair* Betty Smith *city council*, the *council*; city council member; **but** *Houston City Council*.

Committee, if used as part of a proper name--Nominating *Committee* (of the Waco Area League); Senate Appropriations *Committee*; **but** *committee*, if used as a part of a common noun or as a substitute for a proper name--resource *committee*; the *committee*.

Congress; *Congressman* Frost; your *Congressman*; **but** *congressional* action; MC=member of *Congress*.

Constitution, with name of state or country--the U.S. *Constitution*, the Texas *Constitution*; **but** state's constitution; *constitutional*.

*Convention**, when referring to national and state League *Conventions* and used without a definite article--delegates to *Convention*; **but** the state (League) *convention*, the *convention*.

*Council**, when referring to a League *council* and no definite article is used--pending *Council* action, LWV-TX *Council*.

County, when used as part of a proper name--Collin *County*; **but** the *county*; *county* commissioners court.

Democrat, *Democratic Party*; **but** *democratic*, when referring to the common people or based on the principles of *democracy*.

electoral college (except when referring to it as a League program topic--see Note below); the *college*; the *electors*.

executive, except when referring to the President of the U.S.--*executive* department, *executive* branch; *executive* privilege.

federal

government--U.S. *government*, the *government*; **but** U.S. *Government* Printing Office.

Governor George W. Bush; **but** the *governor*.

House of Representatives; Speaker of the *House*; **but** the lower *house* of Congress; both *houses* of the state legislature.

judicial branch

*League** of Women Voters; the *League*; local *Leagues*.

legislative branch

Legislature, when used as part of a proper name--the 75th *Legislature*; the Texas *Legislature*, **but** the *legislature*.

local--*local* government; *local* League.

Mayor Kirk Watson; **but** the *mayor*.

national--*national* government; *national* League budget.

Party, when used as part of a proper name--the Republican *Party*; **but** the *party*, political *parties*.

President (of the U.S.); *President* Darlene Hicks of LWV-TX; **but** *presidential* candidate, *presidential* election; Mary Wilson, LWVUS *President*; the national League *president*.

*Principles**, when referring to the concepts of government supported by the League as a whole that constitute the authorization for adoption of League program.

Program, when referring to a specific adopted *program* of a specific League--the 1998 *Program* of the League of Women Voters of Corpus Christi; **but** *program* item, *program* chair, national *program*. Also see note below.

Representative Sherri Greenberg; House of *Representatives*; **but** a *representative*.

Republican, *Republican* Party; **but** *republican*, when referring to a *republic*.

resolutions; **but** SJR 20 (Senate Joint Resolution 20).

seasons of the year--not capitalized (*spring*, *summer*).

sections of the U.S.--capitalized (the *South*, the *Midwest*); **but** *northerner*; *southern* California; a trip *south*.

Senate; *Senator* Judith Zaffirini; **but** a *senator*; *senatorial*.

State of Texas; **but** *state* government; the **state**; *state* League office.

titles of publications--capitalize first and last words and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions (*as*, *if*, *before*, *since*, etc.). Lower case articles, coordinate conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *for*, *or*, *nor*, *yet*), and prepositions, regardless of length, unless they are the first or last words of the title. Lower case the *to* in infinitives.

Units as in MAL *Units*, the Johnson Co. Member-at-Large *Unit*.

*Voters Service**

Note: A League program item is capitalized--Voting Rights chair; the *Financing State Government* item.

*Traditional League usage



COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

Affect is to impact; *effect* is to cause or the result of an action.

Allude to a book; *elude* a pursuer.

Alternate means every other one in a series; *alternative* means one of two possibilities.

Among refers to three or more; *between* refers to only two.

Anxious means fearful; *eager* means enthusiastic.

Bring something to a location; *take* something from a location.

A *capital* is a city; a *capitol* is a building.

Convince should always be followed by *that* or *of*, never by *to*; *persuade* may be followed by any one of the three.

Ensure is to guarantee or protect; *insure* is to provide an insurance policy for; *assure* is to provide emotional comfort.

Hopefully is correct only when modifying a verb. Often you can replace *hopefully* with *I hope, you hope, we hope*, etc. **Correct:** *I hope* it will be finished tomorrow.

Incorrect: *Hopefully* it will be finished tomorrow.

A *house* is a structure only. A *house* does not become a *home* until someone lives in it and endows it with emotional associations.

Farther serves best as a distance word, *further* as a time or quantity word. Example: "You chase a ball *farther* than he can; he can pursue a subject *further*."

To *imply* is to suggest; to *infer* is to figure out.

Initials are pronounced as individual letters (*EPA*); *acronyms* are pronounced as a word (*TARAL*).

In terms of and *basically* are legitimate terms, but much overused orally to buy "thinking time." Avoid unless precisely required.

It's is a contraction for *it is*; *its* is the possessive form of *it*.

Less refers to quantity, *fewer* to number. Example: "My weight is *less* than his because I weigh *fewer* pounds."

Savings means an accumulation. Example: This is my life *savings*. *Saving* is the act of saving, or the result of such an act. Example: Careful budgeting resulted in a substantial *saving* of appropriated funds.

Use the pronouns *that* and *which* selectively, not interchangeably. *That* is the defining or limiting pronoun; *which* is the non-defining or nonrestrictive. Example: The welfare program *that* has been most praised is Head Start. The Medicare program, *which* is federally funded, has been widely discussed.

Verbal pertains to words; *spoken* refers to oral words only.



WRITING TIPS

1. Focus the document

- a. Identify and write for your readers
- b. Identify and state your purpose

2. Organize your ideas

- a. Use a maximum of seven points at each organizational level
- b. Place major ideas first
- c. List points in descending order of importance or chronologically
- d. Preview or summarize key ideas
- e. Begin long documents with an abstract (overview without interpretation)
- f. End long documents by repeating major ideas
- g. Place details & explanation in the middle
- h. Use headings to signal organization

3. Emphasize important ideas

- a. Repeat key words and ideas
- b. Use bold type
- c. Use boxes
- d. Use headings & lists

4. Encourage visual understanding

- a. Use a serif typeface large enough to be easily read
- b. Double space between paragraphs
- c. Use headings in bold and/or larger type
- d. Use white space
- e. Use accurately labeled graphics, charts, and other visual aids

5. Write for easy reading

- a. Use short sentences and paragraphs. (Maximum: 15 words per sentence and 7 lines per paragraph)
- b. Write simple, direct, clear sentences
- c. Eliminate unnecessary words and sentences
- d. Avoid overuse of prepositional phrases
- e. Use strong, descriptive nouns, adjectives, and adverbs
- f. Use active verbs when possible
- g. Avoid negatives (such as “not”) when possible
- h. Eliminate ornate or fancy language
- i. Avoid cliches, metaphors, and foreign language phrases
- j. Avoid sexist and inaccurate pronouns
- k. Use parallel construction

For more thorough explanations consult a recent college English textbook or collegiate or unabridged dictionary. A manual of style is usually included in the supplements at the back.



LEAGUE LINGO

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Action | Expression of League positions to government officials by the president or his /her authorized representative. |
| Action Alert | Request from state or national League to take action at a specific time in support of a League position. |
| Calendar | Plans by board of directors for the League year for League program and other activities. |
| Concurrence | Agreement of the League members with a position reached by a small group or another League. |
| Consensus | Collective opinion of League members on a particular subject. |
| Convention | State and national meetings held biennially in which delegates adopt program, elect officers, adopt a budget, and act on proposed bylaws changes. |
| Council | National meeting held in the years between conventions in which a limited delegate body adopts a budget for the coming year and may discuss program. (only state Leagues send delegates to Council). |
| Education Fund | The tax-deductible arm of the League of Women Voters in which education funds may be established at all three levels of League, but are discouraged at the local level because of the legal requirements involved. |
| F&I | Acronym for <i>Facts and Issues</i> ; publications containing information on program consensus studies. |
| LWV-TX Information | Communication sent to League leaders (presidents, board members, MAL members, program chairs, etc.), e-mailed and free, that contains current important information. If the state office has the e-mail address, any member may receive this free). |
| Household member | Refers to households in which there are two members or more members. The PMP for the each additional household member is assessed at half the PMP rate at state and national levels. Local dues may or may not follow this pattern, based on decision of the local League. |
| MAL | Acronym for member at large, a League member residing outside local League areas. A MAL member may belong to an organized MAL Unit. |
| MAL Unit | A group of members at large who become a formal group with officers, bylaws, and policies and who provide service in their community. |
| Nonpartisanship | League policy of never supporting or opposing any candidate or political party. |
| Orientation | Basic background material provided in writing or at meetings to help members understand League purposes, policies, and procedures. |
| PMP | Acronym for per member payment; the amount of dues paid to state and national on behalf of each member. The amount of PMP is determined by delegates to state and national Conventions and is assessed based on the membership count as of January of each year. |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Position | League's point of view, arrived at through member study and consensus (or concurrence). |
| Program | Selected governmental issues chosen by the membership at local, state, and national levels for study and action. |
| Unit | Division of membership into groups of a size that will provide maximum participation by members in discussion of League program and activities. Most larger Leagues have units. |
| VOTER | Newsletter for members and other subscribers; published by local, state and national Leagues. |
| Voters Guide | Nonpartisan publication including candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues or pro/con information on propositions or amendments. |
| Voters Services | Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and to encourage their participation in the political process. Registering voters and distribution of Voters Guides are the two most basic Voter Service activities. |

