

# Policies & Procedures

A Manual for State  
and Local League Boards

*Revised 2010*

*League of Women Voters of Texas  
League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund*



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*Adopted as revised by the League of Women Voters of Texas Board of Directors  
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**INTRODUCTION**

Leagues develop policy statements to assist the officers and board of directors in implementing bylaws. Policies are reviewed annually by the board of directors, revised as needed, and adopted by the board. Bylaws and policies together provide the organizational framework for the League and describe the accepted ways of work.

In addition to policies, this guide includes descriptions of procedures, such as appointment of issue chairs (page 14), which are done time after time in a routine way and therefore are treated in the same manner as policies. Detailed information for many procedures can be found in a variety of publications from the League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) and the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund (LWV-TEF). LWV-TX bylaws, charter, and Catalog of Publications are included in the LWV-TX *League Directory & Handbook*. Other publications containing policies and/or procedures include:

- *A Guide to Voters Guides for Local Leagues* (LWV-TEF)
- *Handbook for Local League TEF Projects* (LWV-TEF)
- *State Board Handbook* (LWV-TX)
- *Trustees’ Handbook for the Education Fund* (LWV-TEF)

*Policies and Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards* can assist a local League in its understanding of how truly interrelated the levels of League are. Further, it can also serve as a guide to the areas of work where policy statements are necessary and useful.

**SECTION 1. POLICIES RELATING TO THE PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT**

**1.1 Nonpartisan Political Policy.** Members of the state and local League board shall adhere carefully to the nonpartisan political policy of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS).

Specific procedures to implement this policy include:

The president, the program vice-president, the Voters Service director, and others the public strongly identifies with the League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) or the local League, such as the Executive Director, shall avoid political activities that may give the appearance of partisanship.

Other state and local board members are encouraged to participate in political activities but must first consult the board if they are in doubt as to whether their activities could compromise the League’s nonpartisanship.

A board member shall NOT run for office in a partisan race or accept a partisan appointment.

A state board member may accept appointment to, or run for, a LOCAL political office if

- a. the election does not require a party affiliation;

- b. the board of the local League involved gives approval; and
- c. the state League board approves.

Individuals serving as issue chairs shall avoid activities that could compromise the League's nonpartisanship. They are encouraged to participate in political activities but must first consult the board if they are in doubt as to whether their activities could compromise the League's nonpartisanship.

The LWV-TX Nominating Committee shall explain to prospective board nominees the League's nonpartisan political policy. The state board shall explain to prospective off-board appointees the nonpartisan political policy.

**1.2 Diversity Policy.** LWV, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of LWV-TX on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

LWV-TX recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWV-TX subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWV-TX affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its board, staff, and programs.

**1.3 Public Relations.** The state board president is the official spokesperson for LWV-TX. Official League statements shall be made only by the president or by a member authorized by the president. Local Leagues should state in their local policies **the president is the official spokesperson for LWV-XX**, or a designated League member authorized by the president.

League membership lists shall not be made available for non-League use without prior approval of the state or local League board. Gender-neutral language shall be used whenever possible in LWV-TX communications.

**1.4 Public Boards, Commissions and Committees.** The League shall take the initiative in recommending people to serve on appointed public boards, commissions and committees. The president shall be consulted on all recommendations. The full board shall approve recommendations if time permits. League members shall have priority for League support over other candidates with similar qualifications.

When a League director or off-board chair is appointed to a state board or commission, the state League board shall decide whether or not he/she shall resign any League position(s) due to potential conflict of interest.

## **Section 1.5 Voters Guides**

### **1.5.1 Local and State League Responsibilities.**

**1.5.1.a** LWV-TEF will produce a *Voters Guide* which includes all statewide candidates and/or ballot issues. LWV-TEF may also cover candidates for regional office whose regions cover large areas, such as Courts of Appeals judges and State Board of Education members. When reproducing the LWV-TEF *Voters Guide*, local Leagues may exclude those regional candidates who will not be on their local ballot.

**1.5.1.b** Local Leagues will produce a *Voters Guide* which includes candidates and/or ballot issues which will be on the ballots in its designated area. These will include candidates for U.S.

Representative, state Senator and Representative, county, city, school board, and/or other district elections. If any jurisdiction overlaps two or more local League areas, those Leagues should work together to eliminate confusion. Refer to *League Handbook and Directory* (LWV-TX) for a list of shared U.S and state districts.

**1.5.1.c** For additional information and policies, refer to *A Guide to Voters Guides for Local Leagues* (LWV-TEF), *Voters Guides Best Practices* (LWVUS), and *Handbook for Local League TEF Projects* (LWV-TEF). Note that local *Voters Guides* for candidates may be paid for with Education Fund money but do not require prior approval or supervision by TEF, but *Voters Guides* for local ballot issues published in a pro/con format do require prior approval and supervision by TEF.

### **1.5.2 Other Policies Relating to Voters Guides.**

**1.5.2.a Nonpartisan policy:** The League's nonpartisan policy should always be printed in a prominent place on the front page of the *Voters Guide*. Questions for candidates should be fair, balanced and nonpartisan.

**1.5.2.b Presidential candidates:** A *Voters Guide* for these candidates may only be produced by LWVEF and is copyrighted; therefore it may be published only within the guidelines required by LWVUS. LWV-TEF will publish the LWVUS Presidential *Voters Guide* only if LWVUS guidelines allow LWV-TEF to tailor it to conform to the Texas ballot.

**1.5.3 Instructions to candidates:** As soon after the filing deadline as possible, explicit instructions and questions are sent to candidates in a traceable form (USPS delivered, signed mail receipt, or email request return receipt option). Clearly articulate the ground rules for inclusion in the League's *Voters Guide*, e.g.:

**1.5.3.a** Word limitations so candidates know that any responses over the word/character limit will be truncated at that number (include rules for counting/printing words, numbers, symbols, abbreviations, dates, caps, boldface, italics). If the answer is cut, it is indicated with slash (///) marks.

**1.5.3.b** No editing for spelling or grammar mistakes so candidates can not say their answers were changed by the League.

**1.5.3.c** What will be printed if the candidate does not respond, i.e. "No response from the candidate."

**1.5.3.d** References to opponents or specific persons are not allowed. General references to other political parties may be allowed. If a response is deemed inappropriate, the entire response will be deleted. The candidate will be notified in advance of the *Voters Guide* publication and given the opportunity to amend the response before the publication deadline. In place of the inappropriate response, the guide will state, "Candidate's response did not meet the criteria listed in this *Voters Guide*."

**1.5.3.e** References to a candidate's website address should not be allowed as part of the candidate's response. However, a League may publish a complete list of all candidates' website addresses in their *Voters Guide* in the interest of providing information to the voter.

**1.5.3.f** These rules should be summarized in the *Voters Guide*. A copy of the LWV-TEF's instructions to candidates may be requested by contacting the state office.

**1.5.4 Unopposed candidates:** Leagues should decide in advance whether to include unopposed candidates. Space limitations may dictate their exclusion, but their responses may be important in providing information to the voter, especially in *Voters Guides* placed on League websites.

**1.5.5 Write-in candidates:** In statewide races, write-in candidates must file a declaration of write-in candidacy with the Secretary of State and their names are posted in the polling place. However, their names are not on the ballot; so their responses are not included in the LWV-TEF *Voters Guide*. Local Leagues may develop a policy to include local write-in candidates in their *Voters Guide* if the filing

deadline permits the inclusion of all candidates. This local policy will not apply to regional candidates included in the LWV-TEF *Voters Guide*.

**1.5.6 Membership ads:** A membership ad for the League should be included in the *Voters Guide*. However, it should be paid for with general League funds, not tax-deductible funds. For example, if a *Voters Guide* is 5 pages and the membership ad is a half page, general League funds should cover 10% of the printing and distribution costs.

**1.5.7 Candidate ads:** If advertising is used to fund a *Voters Guide*, ads from candidates, political parties and advocacy groups shall not be allowed. In addition, membership information or announcements from political groups shall not be allowed. Other ads (products, services) may be used, but a disclaimer should be displayed, such as “Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by the LWV of XX.” Candidates should not be listed as donors in the *Voters Guide*.

**1.5.8 Ballot-issue Voters Guides:** League positions on Constitutional Amendments or ballot issues must not be included in the *Voters Guide*. If the League publishes a fact sheet on its position, it should not be distributed so that it appears as a supplement to the *Voters Guide*.

**1.5.9 Publication and distribution:** *Voters Guides* may be published and distributed in hard copy and should also be made available online through local League websites, the LWV-TX website, and the LWVUS website on VOTE411.org. Send *Voters Guides* to the state League at [lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org](mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org), and to LWVUS at [voterinfo@lwv.org](mailto:voterinfo@lwv.org).

## **Section 1.6 Candidate Debates and Forums**

**1.6.1 Leagues’ Responsibility for Holding Debates:** The LWV-TEF is responsible for organizing debates and forums for statewide offices, e.g. Governor and U.S. Senator. Debates affecting statewide offices should not be sponsored by local Leagues without LWV-TX Board approval. Where appropriate, LWV-TEF will invite local Leagues to co-sponsor debates involving candidates for statewide office.

**1.6.2 Local Leagues have responsibility for debates** or forums for U.S. Representative, State Senator and Representative, regional candidates, and for all local candidates. Leagues should have a written debate policy, including rules, procedures and criteria, and review it annually.

### **1.6.3 Purpose and definitions for LWV-Texas Ed Fund Debates:**

**1.6.3.a** The purpose of debates and forums is to educate the public about issues, allow face-to-face comparisons of the candidates and their positions, and stimulate and increase voter interest and participation in the election.

**1.6.3.b** The FEC defines a debate for **federal** candidates as an event that includes at least two candidates and allows them to appear concurrently, in face-to-face confrontations, with opportunities to respond to each other.

**1.6.3.c** The FEC defines a forum or other non-debate candidate appearance as a place, meeting, or medium where ideas and views on particular issues are exchanged.

**1.6.4** To be invited to participate in an LWV-TEF debate a candidate must meet the following criteria:

**1.6.4.a** Requirements of the Texas Constitution and/or the Constitution of the United States,

**1.6.4.b** All requirements to be on the ballot according to Texas election laws, and

**1.6.4.c** Demonstrate significant voter interest and support by being nominated by a recognized political party in Texas, raising sufficient funds to require reporting under FEC rules for federal races, or showing that a formal campaign is being waged by the existence of headquarters and campaign staff.

### **1.6.5 General Policies for Debates/Forums for State and Local Leagues**

**1.6.5.a** Forums and debates must be nonpartisan and ensure that all participating candidates will be treated fairly and equally.

**1.6.5.b** All viable candidates for the races included on the ballot must be invited to participate, and the forum must include at least two candidates. Only qualified candidates should be allowed to participate, and no substitute may stand in for a candidate, either to read a statement or to distribute campaign literature.

**1.6.5.c** A letter of invitation should include the criteria for participation, debate rules, and a waiver for League distribution of debate content. It should be sent to candidates in a traceable form (USPS delivered, signed mail receipt or email returned mail receipt.)

**1.6.5.d** The language of the waiver should be: “The debate or forum content is the property of the LWV and permission must be sought to rebroadcast the debate or forum in its entirety or to print excerpts. Candidates must agree that he/she will not use any portion of the debate or forum in a political advertisement.”

**1.6.5.e** Issues of interest to the general public must be included.

**1.6.5.f** Meeting must be open to the public, in a place that will not seem to exclude some potential audience.

**1.6.5.g** Donations from candidates or political parties should not be solicited or accepted.

**1.6.5.h** Questions should be directed to a place, or all candidates, but not to an individual. The format can be either with oral or written questions. Written questions from the audience should be screened for personal attacks or other inappropriate language.

**1.6.5.i** Candidate literature should be placed at the back or outside the room.

**1.6.5.j** Leagues may provide membership information and orally invite membership.

### **1.6.6 Candidate Participation Guidelines (required for federal offices and advised for state and**

**local races):** Unopposed candidates may not be speakers at a debate or forum. They may be introduced and invited to meet and greet attendees at the end of such meetings.

**1.6.6.a** A debate or forum should not start if only one candidate is present. If the debate or forum includes several races, the other races may begin while waiting for the late candidate.

**1.6.6.b** If a candidate declines, cancels or does not appear, the debate or forum may proceed if more than one candidate for the office is present. If only one is present, it must be cancelled (see exceptions below.) The moderator may present any factual reasons given by the candidate without editorial comment. If the candidate who cancelled provides a statement, the moderator may read it. If no reason is given, the League should state that it was contacted by the candidate or his/her campaign and told the candidate would not be able to appear. The League can state that no reason was given for canceling. Attempts may be made to reschedule the debate or forum.

**1.6.6.c** One candidate for a contested office could appear under the following circumstances:

**1.6.6.c1** If the event is advertised as a forum or other non-debate candidate appearance (such as a meet-and-greet), but not as a debate.

**1.6.6.c2** If the League, but not the League Education Fund, is the sponsoring organization. In this event, no Education Fund money could be used.

**1.6.6.c3** The race is for a state or local office, but not for a federal office.

**1.6.6.c4** The event will not be broadcast.

**1.6.6.c5** If all of these criteria are not met, and if only one candidate for an office appears, that candidate may be introduced but may not speak or answer questions.

(For more specifics, see “Guidelines for State and Local League Debates (LWVUS).)

**1.6.6.d** If a candidate refuses to participate, the League president may submit a letter to the editor of local/statewide newspapers stating that candidates are expected to participate and if they do not, they are denying the community an opportunity for public education about them and the issues.

### **1.6.7 Debate Locations:**

**1.6.7.a For federal-level races,** all non-debate candidate events and appearances (such as “meet-and-greet”) **must** be held at a tax-exempt school, college, or university, if it is sponsored by the League Education Fund. If the event is sponsored by the League, it may be held in another location. Debates may be held at a public (government or school) facility, in-studio television facility, or in a public community facility or retirement home with good public access. (FEC regulation)

**1.6.7.b For non-federal races,** the event may be held in any location that is accessible to the public.

### **1.6.8 Co-sponsorship:**

**1.6.8.a** Co-sponsors cannot have endorsed or be affiliated with a candidate or ballot issue and must be approved by the League Board of Directors. Any group whose leadership has made public statements for or against any candidate, or which is known to support a candidate informally, or that advocates for an issue which is on the ballot should not be asked to co-sponsor.

**1.6.8.b** The League should take the lead in contacting the candidates, negotiating disputes, and controlling the format for a forum that is co-sponsored.

**1.6.8.c** The League should provide the moderator and timekeeper or should approve of them in advance. The moderator should not be identified as a member of a political party or a friend of one or more of the candidates.

### **1.6.9 Broadcasting a debate or forum:**

**1.6.9.a** A radio, television or cable broadcaster must not edit the debate or forum, and it must be broadcast in its entirety, either live or reasonably soon after the debate. The debate or forum must include at least two candidates (FCC requirements). The exception is news media reporting on the event.

**1.6.9.b** Candidates are not allowed to use or edit the footage for campaign purposes.

**1.6.9.c** Cell phones must be turned off. The moderator should announce that unauthorized videos are not allowed because the FCC requires that the debate must not be edited and must be broadcast in its entirety, except by media reporting on events.

**1.6.9.d** The content of the tape belongs to the League and any use of the tapes requires the approval of the League with the caveat that it must be broadcast in its entirety. The footage can be posted in written or streaming audio/video on the League’s website or another website if approved by the League. It can be broken into segments as long as all segments are available.

(Also consult the LWVUS publications “FAQ’s Candidate Forums-Debates,” and “Guidelines for State and Local League Debates,” available at [lwv.org](http://lwv.org).)

## **1.7 Guidelines for League Websites**

The Internet can be a very useful tool for distributing League information. Guidelines for the creation and/or maintenance of any League website are:

**1.7.1** The website should adhere to the League’s mission, goals, and purpose.

**1.7.2** Web pages are considered a “publication” and should follow the same guidelines for approval as other League publications.

**1.7.3** The League should be identified on each page (using text as well as a graphic identifier) to prevent copying without attribution.

**1.7.4** An e-mail address should be on every index page to allow for inquiries from users.

**1.7.5** No phone numbers, addresses, or personal information should be published without permission.

**1.7.6** Education and advocacy sections of the site must be distinguished and maintained. Do not “link” or “mix” the education and advocacy areas.

**1.7.7** Links to other sites should be closely scrutinized and accompanied by a disclaimer such as, “Views expressed by non-League links are not necessarily those of the League. These links are provided as a service to visitors.”

**1.7.8.** The following are prohibited on a website maintained solely with 501(c)(3) funds or on an area of the homepage that includes voter education (Education Fund) material:

**1.7.8.a** Advocacy for a particular position or any legislative or election issues

**1.7.8.b** Membership information

## **1.8 Guidelines for social media such as Facebook and Twitter:**

**1.8.1** Only facts can be posted on Facebook or Twitter.

**1.8.2** Only the LWV-TX President, VP-PR, VP-Advocacy, Advocacy Outreach Director, Issue Coordinators, Website Committee Chair, and state office staff can post on Facebook or Twitter without approval from anyone else.

**1.8.3** During the legislative session, at least one tweet per weekday needs to be posted.

## **1.9 Coalitions, Collaborations and Affiliations**

LWV-TX and/or LWV-TEF membership in coalitions, collaborations and affiliations with other groups shall be approved by the state board. Coalition, collaboration and affiliation membership shall be reviewed annually, and local Leagues shall be informed of coalitions, collaborations and affiliations that the state League chooses to join. Joining or resigning from a coalition, collaboration or affiliation shall be a decision of the board.

**1.9.1** Definition of Terms:

**1.9.1.a** Coalition: a group with which the League works that is organized around a specific issue or issues and in which the League has an equal opportunity for input into a group’s agenda.

**1.9.1.b** Collaboration: a group or groups with which the League may conduct a single activity, like a forum or survey, or a specific reform effort, like a sunset or campaign finance reform.

**1.9.1.c** Affiliation: a group with which the League may lobby and from which the League receives information or newsletters but does not determine the agenda.

**1.9.2** The coalition, collaboration or affiliation’s major issues should mesh with League position on every issue of coalition, collaboration or affiliation’s concern. The aims of the coalition, collaboration, or affiliation must be nonpartisan and must not conflict with League positions.

**1.9.3** The coalition, collaboration or affiliation’s activities should bring added effectiveness to the overall efforts to achieve the League’s organizational, advocacy or educational goals.

**1.9.4** Members of a coalition, collaboration or affiliation should be organizations with which the League can work effectively. The League should have confidence in the leadership of the coalition, collaboration or affiliation and may serve in a leadership capacity.

**1.9.5** Expenditures for work with the coalition, collaboration or affiliation, including staff and volunteer time as well as cash and in-kind expenses, should be worth the investment.

**1.9.6** The League representative to a coalition, collaboration or affiliation of which the League is a member must have the prior approval of the state League president or designee before making any formal or public statement of League position on a specific issue. If the League disagrees with a majority opinion of the coalition, collaboration or affiliation, a public statement of the League's dissent should be issued.

**1.9.7** If the coalition, collaboration or affiliation in any way participates in partisan activity (i.e., opposing a candidate or party), then the League shall withdraw from the coalition, collaboration or affiliation.

**1.9.8** League participation in a coalition, collaboration or affiliation and the representative to the coalition, collaboration or affiliation should be approved annually by the LWV-TX board.

**1.9.9** The coalition, collaboration or affiliation shall never use the League's name on statements, letters, press releases, publications or any other materials without prior League consent. Such consent is required each time the coalition, collaboration or affiliation wishes to use the League name.

**1.9.10** Local Leagues should have a statement in their local League policies regarding membership in local and regional coalitions, collaborations and affiliations.

## **SECTION 2. POLICIES RELATING TO MEMBERS AT LARGE, MAL UNITS, AND LOCAL LEAGUES**

### **2.1 Relation of LWV-TX Board to Local League Boards.**

**2.1.1** The Services to Local Leagues (SLL) Committee of the state board has primary responsibility for providing training to local League leaders.

**2.1.2** Members of the state board are expected to give state League responsibilities priority over local League obligations. Serving on both state and local boards simultaneously may result in conflicting priorities.

**2.1.3** LWV-TX board members should limit attendance at local League board meetings to those occasions when the local League agrees to include the visit on its agenda.

**2.2 Members at Large (MALs).** Individuals who do not reside in the geographic area of a local League may be members at large of the LWV-TX or may choose to join a local League.

**2.2.1** The SLL Committee recommends an amount for MAL dues to the LWV-TX Budget Committee. The state board then approves an amount in the proposed budget. Convention delegates adopt a budget that includes the amount of MAL dues.

**2.2.2** Member information and MAL dues shall be forwarded to a local League when an individual who has joined the League as a member at large resides in a local League area.

### **2.3 Member at Large Units (MAL Units).**

**2.3.1** The state board authorizes the establishment of a MAL Unit, composed of members at large living or working within a common geographic area who have indicated an interest in organizing as a unit and a willingness to meet requirements established for MAL Units. MAL Units shall be

established in those communities where feasible. Feasibility is determined jointly by the SLL Committee and the members at large in the community and then approved by the state board.

**2.3.2** The state board adopts annually the minimum number of members at large required to establish a MAL Unit. The state board appoints an advisor to work closely with each MAL Unit for as long as the state board deems it essential to that MAL Unit's understanding of the organization.

**2.3.3 MAL Units shall meet the following requirements:**

**2.4.3.a** Maintain the current minimum paid membership set by the state board.

**2.4.3.b** Conduct an Annual Meeting to adopt a budget and elect officers: chair, secretary, and treasurer.

**2.4.3.c** Assign responsibility for membership development, fund development, and Voters Service.

**2.4.3.d** Meet regularly—four officer meetings and four membership meetings annually.

**2.4.3.e** Publish, at least quarterly, a newsletter or appropriate substitute.

**2.4.3.f** Provide training for the unit officers at least once every two years.

**2.4.3.g** Conduct a community analysis as defined in the LWVUS publication *Know Your Community*.

**2.4.3.h** The MAL Unit Chair shall not actively campaign or work in a campaign on behalf of a local candidate or local ballot issue during the term of office.

**2.3.4** The state League shall supply to each MAL Unit, without charge, 500 state *Voters Guides* or one electronic copy of the state *Voters Guide* for each statewide election.

**2.4 Full League Status.**

**2.4.1 Minimum requirements for local Leagues.** Local Leagues shall meet the following minimum requirements to remain in good standing:

**2.4.1.a** Adopt and adhere to local League bylaws.

**2.4.1.b** Pay the current Per Member Payment (PMP) set by the membership at state convention in a timely manner.

**2.4.1.c** Conduct an Annual Meeting to adopt a budget and elect officers.

**2.4.1.d** Meet regularly as defined by local League bylaws.

**2.4.1.e** Provide state League training for officers periodically.

**2.4.2** To achieve full League status, a MAL Unit shall have:

**2.4.2.a** Existed for at least one year.

**2.4.2.b** Exhibited membership growth and retention.

**2.4.2.c** Provided at least one leadership training session.

**2.4.2.d** Accomplished at least one successful finance campaign that involved more than one activity and included community support.

**2.4.2.e** Exhibited nonpartisanship.

**2.4.2.f** Maintained board stability.

**2.4.2.g** Completed the *Know Your Community* study.

**2.5 Withdrawing recognition from local Leagues and MAL Units.**

**2.5.1** A meeting of the members of the local League shall be called by the local League board for the purpose of discussing and voting on disbandment.

**2.5.2** The state League shall be notified of the intention to call such a meeting. If the local board is unwilling to call such a meeting, the state board shall call the meeting and notify the local members.

**2.5.3** Members shall be told the purpose of the meeting and that absence from the meeting shall be considered a silent vote to disband unless the member communicates otherwise prior to the meeting.

**2.5.4** Upon a vote by the membership to disband the local League, the state board shall request the national board to withdraw recognition.

**2.5.5** Remaining local League or MAL Unit funds shall be handled in accordance with LWV-TX bylaws.

**2.6 Local League Bylaws.** Local Leagues shall be reminded annually in October that:

**2.6.1** The first three articles of all MAL Units, local, and state bylaws must be consistent with those of the League of Women Voters of the United States;

**2.6.2** Proposed revisions of local League bylaws shall be submitted to the state bylaws chair for review and comment at least two months before the local League annual meeting.

**2.7 Changing the Organizational Basis of a League.**

**2.7.1** A local League is organized either as a municipal League based around a single municipality or as an area League encompassing more than one governmental jurisdiction. Area Leagues may include one or more counties or a large metropolitan area.

**2.7.2** A change in the name or organizational basis of a local League requires the approval of LWV-TX and LWVUS.

**2.7.3** A study of the proposed new area to be served by the local League must be conducted and presented in writing to the state board.

**2.7.4** Following approval of the locally recommended change in name or basis of organization by the local League membership at an annual meeting, the local League shall forward the appropriate forms to the state board for its consideration, approval and recommendation to LWVUS.

**2.8 Cooperation Among Local Leagues in the Same Political Subdivisions.**

**2.8.1** If a League is considering a study that, if a position is reached, would lead to action before a political entity shared by other local League(s), it must notify those Leagues of the possible study in time to allow them to consider whether or not they wish to participate in the study. Ideally, such studies should be jointly considered and jointly adopted.

**2.8.2** When two or more Leagues are in the same political subdivision, reciprocal approval is required before taking action before shared governing bodies.

**2.9 Consensus/Concurrence in Local Leagues.** Local League boards shall determine the process by which consensus/concurrence is reached in their local Leagues in keeping with the procedures found in *LWVUS League Basics*.

### **SECTION 3. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES FOR THE STATE BOARD**

**3.1 Board Meetings.**

**3.1.1** The president shall determine the dates and places for state board meetings with consideration for the cost of the meetings and convenience of all state board members. The written reports of on-board and off-board members to be included in the preboard report shall be in the state office at the time designated in the adopted calendar.

**3.1.2** Unexcused absences from two consecutive board meetings or three unexcused absences from board meetings in a biennium shall be considered a resignation from the board. The Secretary shall record absences at the direction of the President. The President shall notify the board member in writing of each unexcused absence.

**3.2 Board Administration.** An Executive Committee of the state board may be created to act on behalf of the state board between its regular meetings on items requiring a decision that cannot be postponed until the regular board meeting. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Treasurer, Secretary, and the Vice Presidents. The President has the discretion to refer items to the Executive Committee or the full board between the board's regular meetings. A majority of the Executive Committee members shall constitute a quorum.

**3.3 Board Nominations.** The LWV-TX Nominating Committee should, as a courtesy, prior to contacting any potential new state board nominee, notify the potential nominee's local League president.

**3.4 Conflict of Interest.**

**3.4.1** Members of the state board and trustees of LWV-TEF shall not receive compensation, such as salaries or stipends, for services rendered, nor shall they sell professional services or products to LWV-TX/LWV-TEF. (In a not-for-profit organization, it is inappropriate for those who govern to receive material compensation for performing the services they have deemed necessary to carry out the mission of the organization.)

**3.4.2** The Executive Director shall not be a member of the state board. (It is considered inappropriate for those earning a salary or fee to be a part of the decision making body that hires, fires and determines salary and benefits.)

**3.4.3** Members of the state board and trustees of LWV-TEF may accept modest honoraria or gifts for speeches or other activities rendered to others on behalf of LWV-TX/LWV-TEF. Other honoraria or gifts shall be given to LWV-TX/LWV-TEF.

**3.4.4** In any matter in which a state board member or a member of her/his family has a substantial financial interest, the board member shall refrain from participating in the discussion prior to a vote, refrain from attempting to influence the outcome of a vote, and abstain from voting.

**3.5 Program**

**3.5.1** Program VP presents program recommendations for a new study, concurrence or review to state board based on recommendations from issue chairs and from local Leagues in program planning.

**3.5.2** State board formulates their recommendations for a new study, changes in position or restudy of a state position and sends this proposed program to the presidents of local Leagues and chairs of MAL units at least thirty days before Convention or statewide conference.

**3.5.3** Any program recommendation submitted at least three months prior to convention, but not included in the Board's proposed program, may be brought to the convention floor for consideration by a local League or the state board. A motion to consider requires a majority vote. If consideration passes, the vote to adopt must be held on the following day. A two-thirds vote is required to adopt a non-recommended study, to amend a state position, or to adopt a state position by concurrence on the floor of the convention.

**3.5.4** Any League that plans to propose the adoption of a new position or amendment to a state position by concurrence on the floor of the convention must give notice of its intent to do so at least six weeks before the convention. This notice shall be sent to the state League, which will forward it to all local Leagues and MAL units.

**3.5.5** The League that gave notice of intent must then send background information, including pros and cons on the issue, and a rationale for using this form of member agreement to the state office at least thirty days before the convention. The state office will forward this information to all local Leagues and MAL units.

**3.5.6** Convention delegates vote first on studies and any recommended changes proposed by the state board, then on any item voted consideration.

**3.5.7** Positions resulting from efforts to reach consensus/concurrence shall be approved by the state board of directors after careful consideration of consensus or concurrence reports, including majority and minority opinions, submitted by all local Leagues, MAL Units and MALs that responded by the announced deadline.

**3.5.8** Members at large and MAL Units are encouraged to participate in state and national studies. The combined results of isolated MALs shall be considered as the consensus or concurrence of one local League.

**3.5.9** When a MAL consensus/concurrence report on a national study item or on national program planning cannot be approved by the full board, it may be approved by the LWV-TX Executive Committee.

**3.6 Program Review.** LWV-TX shall follow LWVUS guidelines for adoption of program (see By-laws article X, Section 2). In addition, the following procedures will be used to ensure a systematic review of all current positions:

**3.6.1** During state program planning, local Leagues, issue chairs or the state board can make recommendations for positions that need to be reviewed, updated, or amended.

**3.6.2** At the spring or summer board meeting following program planning, the state board chooses position(s) for Program Review. This decision should be based on:

**3.6.2.a** Local League recommendations for position update.

**3.6.2.b** Any relevant discussion or debate during Convention program adoption.

**3.6.2.c** Length of time since the position has been reviewed.

**3.6.2.d** Current legislative positions.

**3.6.2.e** Recommendations from issue chairs.

**3.6.3** State board selects a Program Review committee. Effort should be made to include:

**3.6.3.a** Current and former issue chairs for the position.

**3.6.3.b** Members of the original study committee.

**3.6.3.c** Others with knowledge of the subject.

**3.6.3.d** Program VP (ex officio).

**3.6.4** Program Review committee reviews the selected positions in depth. The committee will do research and perhaps interview other experts. Criteria for the review of the positions include:

**3.6.4.a** Have LWV-Texas goals been achieved with this position?

**3.6.4.b** Is the position still relevant?

**3.6.4.c** Is the position applicable to current public policy issues or concerns? (Have circumstances changed? Are there new laws that impact this position?)

**3.6.4.d** Is the position clear?

**3.6.4.e** Is there still member understanding and agreement concerning this position?

**3.6.5** The options open to the committee with regard to all or any portions of the position are:

**3.6.5.a** Retain as is. (needs board approval)

**3.6.5.b** Retain with editorial changes. (needs board approval)

**3.6.5.c** Formulate new position statement for member concurrence if there is a change of intent. (needs member approval)

**3.6.5.d** Recommend a re-study for the following biennium. (needs member approval)

**3.6.6** Program Review committee makes recommendations to the State Board. The Board votes on the committee's recommendations, and if member concurrence or restudy option is approved, it is given to the convention or statewide conference for a vote.

**3.7 Appointment of Issue Chairs.** The procedure for reappointment of issue chairs is as follows:

**3.7.1** During the last two months of each biennium (immediately after state Convention), the following people will consult and determine which issue chairs will be recommended for reappointment during the next biennium: incoming and outgoing presidents, program vice-presidents, advocacy vice presidents, and other directors, as appropriate.

**3.7.2** Immediately following this consultation, a letter will be sent over outgoing president's signature to those being recommended for reappointment:

**3.7.2.a** Remind them that their two-year term is ending.

**3.7.2.b** Thank them for their service.

**3.7.2.c** Advise them that the outgoing "administration" is recommending to the incoming that they be re-appointed.

**3.7.2.d** Ask them to contact the incoming program or advocacy vice-president prior to the first meeting of the incoming board to say whether they would accept reappointment.

**3.7.3** To those not being recommended for reappointment, a letter will be sent over the outgoing president's signature:

**3.7.3.a** Remind them that their two-year term is ending.

**3.7.3.b** Thank them for their service (and personalize to the extent possible by including their accomplishments).

**3.7.4** At the first meeting of the new board, the Citizen Education and Advocacy Committees will report to the entire board which incumbent issue chairs have been recommended for reappointment and which have not been recommended for reappointment.

**3.8 Distribution and Review of *LWV-TX/LWV-TEF Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards.***

**3.8.1** Copies of this policy guide shall be sent, after each revision, to state Board members, issue chairs, members of the Nominating and Budget Committees, local League presidents, MAL Unit chairs, MAL Unit advisors, those who provide leadership training for local Leagues, and the staff.

**3.8.2** This policy guide shall be reviewed and adopted by the state board in the middle of each biennium. At the end of each biennium, any addenda shall be published.

**3.9 Editing.**

**3.9.1** Material for public distribution or for distribution to local Leagues and MAL Units shall be edited and cleared according to procedures found in the current edition of the *State Board Handbook*.

**3.9.2** For all future state League publications, the following shall appear in whichever format is appropriate: “For permission to reprint, contact the League of Women Voters of Texas (or) the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund.”

**3.10 State Office Environment.** In order to promote a health-conscious environment and to protect our investment, the office space owned by the LWV-TEF and rented by LWV-TX shall be a smoke-free environment. The workplace shall be free of illegal drugs and all firearms.

**3.11 Record and Document Retention.**

**3.11.1** The schedule for retention and archiving LWV-TX and LWV-TEF records follows the end of this document.

**3.11.2** Archives of LWV-TX and LWV-TEF are located in the library of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

**3.11.3** Local Leagues should adopt the retention and archiving schedule of records and documents as applicable. Local Leagues will make arrangements for archiving records in a location that is readily accessible in their local community.

## **SECTION 4. FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### **4.1 Local League Support of the LWV-TX.**

**4.1.1** The LWV-TX receives a portion of its income from local Leagues through a per member payment (PMP)/minimum support payment approved by convention delegates. Local Leagues’ support payments shall be paid in full by June 15 of each LWV-TX fiscal year or during the fiscal year on the following schedule:

**4.1.1.a** First payment due in the state office by July 31. At least one-fourth of total PMP shall be paid by this date.

**4.1.1.b** Second payment due in the state office by October 31. At least one-half of total PMP shall be paid by this date.

**4.1.1.c** Third payment due in the state office by January 31. Three-fourths shall be paid by this date.

**4.1.1.d** Fourth payment due in the state office by March 31. Full amount shall be paid by this date.

**4.1.2** Local Leagues may pay up to 50% of their state PMP from their Education Fund account. Local Leagues that maintain Education Fund balances with LWV-TEF should make requests in writing to the Treasurer or state office for this purpose.

**4.1.3** State services may be discontinued to a local League that fails to settle in full its PMP account by the end of the state League’s fiscal year (May 31). The decision to suspend services shall be made by the state Board on a case-by-case basis.

**4.1.4** Only delegates from local Leagues that are current in their PMP payments will be allowed to vote at convention or the statewide conference.

### **4.2 Student Members.**

**4.2.1** Student members must be enrolled in an accredited high school or enrolled for at least six semester credit hours per semester as an undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited college or university. It is the responsibility of the local Leagues to verify that the person applying for membership is a qualifying student.

**4.2.2** LWV-TX grants a \$10.00 reduction in state PMP for each qualified student member based on the membership roster submitted by local Leagues to LWVUS in February of each year.

**4.3 Members at Large and MAL Units.** The Services to Local Leagues (SLL) Committee recommends publications for beginning MAL Units to be provided by LWV-TX.

**4.4 Budget.** The state board and those appointed to off-board positions shall monitor their expenditures to ensure that their budget allocations are not exceeded. Prior to the LWV-TX Budget Committee meeting, input regarding the following year's budget shall be sought from state board members, issue chairs, off-board committees, and staff.

**4.5 Reserves.** Sufficient funds shall be placed in reserve to meet LWV-TX/LWV-TEF operating expenses for a six-month period. The state board shall approve a dollar figure for these reserve funds at the beginning of each fiscal year, and that amount shall be kept in interest-bearing account(s). If funds are withdrawn in case of emergency, they shall be restored as soon as possible.

**4.6 Contracts.** Contracts with agencies, organizations or businesses for services rendered by state board members or other representatives of the LWV-TX on behalf of the League shall be in the name of the LWV-TX, not the individual. Usually the Executive Director or the president of LWV-TX is the authorized signatory on all contracts, letters of agreement and other official documents.

**4.7 Personnel Policies.** The board of directors, acting upon the recommendation of the Fiscal Management and Administration (FM&A) Committee, has the responsibility to hire and release the Executive Director. Further description of personnel policies and procedures is found in *LWV-TX Personnel Policies and Practices*.

**4.8 Purchasing and Contracting.** When practical, two or more cost estimates shall be obtained when an expenditure of more than \$500 is anticipated.

**4.9 Fiscal Management.**

**4.9.1** All funds of LWV-TX and LWV-TEF shall be deposited to the credit of the state League in banks and financial institutions recommended by FM&A for approval by the board.

**4.9.2** The president and/or treasurer of LWV-TX and the chair and/or treasurer of LWV-TEF are the authorized signatories on the accounts of the state League. The president/chair and treasurer may authorize additional signatories for special accounts.

**4.9.3** The president/chair, treasurer and Executive Director of LWV-TX/LWV-TEF shall be bonded.

**4.9.4** If new accounts are needed or accounts are to be moved, the institution(s) shall be recommended by FM&A for approval by the board. Authorized signers shall be the president/chair, treasurer and any others whom they may jointly designate.

**4.9.5** At least quarterly, the LWV-TX/LWV-TEF treasurer shall provide state board members with a budget analysis. Any expenditure significantly in excess of a budget allocation and any revision of the budget must be approved by the state board.

**4.9.6 LWV-TX/LWV-TEF Fundraising.** The LWV-TX board of directors, the LWV-TEF trustees and staff shall be responsible for developing the solicitation sources for funding the state League budgets.

**4.10 Solicitation Requests in MAL and Local League Areas.** When a prospective source for state funding is within the geographic boundaries of a local League, the state League shall inform the local League(s) prior to the solicitation and coordinate solicitation with any local League’s planned or pending solicitation.

**4.11 Investment Policy.**

**4.11.1 Preamble:** All funds, restricted or unrestricted, are held by the Board of Directors/Trustees as fiduciaries (stewards) for carrying out the mission of the League. The following investment, objectives, and directions are to be judged and understood in light of the overall sense of stewardship.

**4.11.2 Delegation:** The Board of Directors/Trustees has delegated supervisory authority over its financial affairs to the Fiscal Management & Administration (FM&A) Committee. FM&A is responsible for regularly reporting on investments to the full board. In carrying out its responsibilities, FM&A and its agents shall act in accordance with these Investment Policies and all applicable laws and regulations. The Directors/Trustees reserve to themselves the exclusive right to revise the Policies and/or to grant exceptions to the Policies where appropriate.

**4.11.3 Objectives:** The primary investment objective is to preserve and protect League assets by earning a total return for each fund appropriate to each fund’s time horizon, liquidity needs and risk tolerance. The secondary objective is to appreciate the total value of the portfolio over time, exclusive of growth derived from investments.

**4.11.4 Asset Mix:** Asset mix is the primary determinant of the League’s portfolio performance. Asset mix may be changed from time to time based on the economic and security market outlook as well as income requirements. The overall risk level of assets, in terms of potential for price fluctuations, should not be extreme. The primary means for achieving such risk profiles are:

- 4.11.4.a** A balanced diversification between equity and fixed income investments;
- 4.11.4.b** Careful control of the risk level within each asset class through avoidance of over-concentration and by not taking extreme positions against the market averages; and,
- 4.11.4.c** A degree of emphasis on stable growth rather than capital gains.

**4.11.5 Recommended Asset Mix among Equities, Common/convertible, Fixed Income, U.S. and corporate, Short Term Cash and no more than one-year notes**

	Equities Common/convertible	Fixed income U.S. & corporate bonds	Short Term Cash and No more than one year notes
Short Term Reserves	0%	0-50%	50-100%
Long Term Reserves	50-90%	10-50%	0-15%
Endowment*	50-80%	15-50%	5-20%
Education funds held for local Leagues	0%	0%	100%

\*Endowment is defined as the principal of gifts and bequests accepted with donor stipulations that (a) the principal is to be maintained intact in perpetuity, for a specified period or until a specified event occurs, and (b) only the income on the fund’s investments may be expended by general purposes specified by the

donor. Income is defined as a rolling 3-year average of the value of the fund plus the average of the interest and dividends accrued in those three years.

The actual investment limits shall be determined within these limits by FM&A.

**4.11.6 Investment Restrictions:**

**4.11.6.a** The Portfolio must be invested at all times in strict compliance with applicable laws and regulations and all investment decisions shall be made in accordance with the “Prudent Person Rule”.

**4.11.6.b** All investment must be US dollar denominated.

**4.11.6.c** Commercial paper must be rated in the two highest quality classes by Moody’s Investor’s Service, Inc. (P1 or P2) or Standard and Poor’s Corporation (A1 or A2).

**4.11.6.d** Negotiable certificates of deposit shall be limited in principal amount to FDIC or FSLIC insurance ceilings.

**4.11.6.e** Not more than 5% of the voting securities of a corporation may be owned.

**4.11.6.f** No securities may be purchased on margin or leverage.

**4.11.6.g** No short sale transactions shall be made.

**4.11.6.h** Transactions in financial futures and options are prohibited.

**4.11.6.i** No more than 25% of the portfolio shall be invested in any one industry at cost.

**4.11.6.j** No more than 5% of the portfolio shall be invested in securities (including debt and equities) of one corporation at cost.

**4.11.6.k** Securities that are traded only in foreign markets shall not be included in the portfolio.

**4.11.6.l** Only securities listed on the New York Stock Exchange, the American Stock Exchange or the NASDAQ Over-the-Counter market shall be included in the portfolio.

**4.11.6.m** All equity investments will satisfy minimum quality rating of B by Standard and Poor’s or a 3 safety rating by Value Line.

**4.11.6.n** No funds ranked below average by Morningstar may be considered.

**4.11.6.o** Investment in structured notes is prohibited.

**4.11.7 Investment Criteria Based on Mission or Social Responsibility:** LWV-TX/LWV-TEF intends to invest in companies whose business conduct is consistent with League goals and beliefs. Therefore, FM&A will use its best efforts to avoid investing directly in the securities of any company known to participate in businesses the board deems to be inconsistent with the goals and beliefs of the League.

**4.11.8. Reporting Requirements:** The performance of the portfolios with regard to this policy statement will be monitored by FM&A on at least a quarterly basis by:

**4.11.8.a** Reviewing the assets and net cash flow of the portfolios.

**4.11.8.b** Discussing the current economic outlook and investment plans.

**4.11.8.c** Reviewing the current asset mix and compliance with this policy statement and authorizing any redirection of cash flow, transfers of assets, or sales/purchases to ensure such compliance within 12 months.

**4.11.8.d** Receiving and considering statistics on the investment performance.

**4.11.8.e** Reviewing significant revisions to the expected long-term trade-off between risk and reward on key asset classes, dependent on basic economic/social/political factors.

**4.11.8.f** Reviewing shortcomings of the policy that emerge in its practical operation.

**4.11.8.g** Annually, the Board shall be provided with detailed information about:

**4.11.8.g1** Asset allocation,

**4.11.8.g2** Investment performance,

**4.11.8.g3** Future investment strategies, and

**4.11.8.g4** Any other matters of interest to the Directors/Trustees; and a summary of all transactions in each fiscal year, together with a report of investment performance for the year of the portfolios.

**4.11.9 Cash Flow Requirements:** FM&A will be responsible for providing adequate liquidity to meet the League's cash flow requirements in accordance with Board/Trustee policy.

#### **4.12 Gift Acceptance Policy**

**4.12.1** The purpose of these guidelines for accepting gifts are to establish rules for accepting gifts to the League; to protect the interests of the donor, the League, and program or event named as the beneficiary of a gift; and to assist in structuring gifts to the League to provide maximum benefits to the donor and the League.

**4.12.2 General guidelines:** The provisions of this policy apply to all gifts made or offered to the League. The League welcomes expressions of interest and financial support regardless of size or form, from any individual, family, business, corporation, foundation or similar source. Gifts to the League of Women Voters of Texas are not tax deductible; gifts to the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund or to the Endowment Fund of LWV-TEF are tax deductible.

**4.12.3 Types of Gifts.** Commitments to the League and/or payment of same may take the form of one, or a combination, of the following:

**4.12.3a** Personal gifts by cash, check, credit card

**4.12.3b** Corporate matching gifts

**4.12.3c** Corporate or foundation grants

**4.12.3d** Multi-year pledges

**4.12.3e** Appreciated securities or other readily marketable personal assets (which are sold as soon as possible.)

**4.12.3f** In-kind goods and services

**4.12.3g** Real estate: Before accepting any gift of real estate, the League shall perform a due diligence review of the property, including a title search and a Phase I environmental review. The inspection must be made by a licensed environmental consultant, who must certify, within the context of a Phase I Site Assessment, that no contamination exists before the property may be accepted. The inspection should be performed in general conformance with the scope of ASTM Practice E1 527. The expense of inspection must be borne by the donor unless an exception is approved by the board of directors. Any expenses associated with the transfer of the property to the League or any due diligence must be borne by the donor.

**4.12.4 Criteria for accepting gifts of real estate.** Gifts of real estate are acceptable only after the following criteria are met:

**4.12.4a** It has been determined that no reasonable possibility exists that the property could be contaminated by toxic waste.

**4.12.4b** An appraisal satisfactory to the IRS gift substantiation requirements has been completed and the League and donor have reached an understanding as to the valuation of the property.

**4.12.4c** Debt, insurance, homeowners' association fees, property taxes, and other carrying costs have been assessed as to the effect on the advisability of taking the gift.

**4.12.4d** Appropriate steps have been taken to determine if any other liabilities might attach to the property such as leases, contracts, or servitude.

**4.12.4e** All pertinent information regarding the property is supplied by the donor. This would include names of owners and co-owners (and percentage ownership), recent tax statements, address and/or legal description, and description of current use.

**4.12.4f** Donor must convey all his/her undivided interest in the real estate, including any mineral interests.

**4.12.4g** The League may recover any costs of managing real estate by charging a fee that is determined by the schedule set by the Board of Trustees.

**4.12.4h** The donor must be willing to bear the costs associated with the gift of real estate, such as legal fees, real estate commissions, management fees, and expenses for due diligence, title searches, and appraisals.

**4.12.4i** The board of directors must approve any exception.

**4.12.5 Review by Counsel.** The League will seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts when appropriate. Review by counsel shall be sought for:

**4.12.5a** Transfers of closely held stock.

**4.12.5b** A gift of residence or farm with a retained life interest.

**4.12.5c** Documents naming the League as trustee.

**4.12.5d** Gifts involving contracts.

**4.12.5e** Transactions with potential conflicts of interest that may invoke IRS sanctions.

**4.12.5f** Other instances in which advice of counsel is deemed appropriate by the gift acceptance committee.

#### **4.12.6 Restrictions.**

**4.12.6a** The League accepts both restricted as well as unrestricted gifts provided that donor restrictions do not significantly diminish the value of the gift and are consistent with the stated mission, purposes and priorities of the League. As a general rule, unrestricted gifts of cash and marketable securities allow the board of directors the greatest flexibility in directing resources toward those programs that can best strengthen the organization and advance its mission.

**4.12.6b** Generally, the League cannot accept gifts that entail significant additional expense for their present or future use, maintenance or administration. Gifts other than cash and marketable securities will be evaluated with the following criteria in mind:

**4.12.6b1** Is the gift consistent with the mission of the League?

**4.12.6b2** Is the property marketable?

**4.12.6b3** Are there undue restrictions on the use, display or sale of the property?

**4.12.6b4** What are the risks and costs associated with accepting the gift?

**4.12.6b5** Do any restrictions on the gift outweigh the potential benefits to the League?

**4.12.6c** If the value of the gift other than cash or marketable securities exceeds \$5,000, the donor must have a qualified appraisal performed and submitted to the IRS. Gifts valued at \$5,000 or less may be reported at the value declared by the donor or qualified expert. The League will comply with all current IRS regulations regarding charitable contributions.

#### **4.12.7 Gift Recognition.**

**4.12.7a** The League will acknowledge and recognize all gifts appropriately and promptly. The League acknowledgement will inform the donor of any benefits provided in exchange for the contribution. Goods and services provided will be considered insubstantial as long as the fair market value of the benefits does not exceed the limits set by the IRS.

**4.12.7b** The gift record of a donor whose gift is matched by his/her company will be credited for the total amount of his/her individual gift plus the corporate matching gift.

**4.12.7c** Upon request the League will provide gift receipts meeting IRS substantiation requirements for property received by the League as a gift. However, except for gifts of cash or publicly traded securities, no value shall be ascribed to any receipt or other substantiation of a gift received by the League.

#### **4.12.8 Confidentiality.**

**4.12.8a** Gifts will be acknowledged in the League's publications unless the donor request anonymity.

**4.12.8b** However, all information concerning prospective and current donors, including names and addresses, names of beneficiaries, nature and value of estates or other assets, and planned gift provisions shall be kept strictly confidential by the League, its volunteers, and its staff.

**4.12.8c** With discretion, however, and if the donor grants permission, authorized personnel may use selective information for purposes of referral, testimonial or example.

**4.12.9 Donor Responsibilities.** The ultimate responsibility for asset evaluations, tax deductibility, and/or similar federal, state and/or local compliance issues rests with the donor and any advisors that the donor shall secure. The League recommends that all donors consult with their own legal tax counsel when planning all gifts, especially non-cash gifts or future planned gifts.

**4.12.10 Gift Acceptance Committee.**

**4.12.10a** Members of the gift acceptance committee shall consist of the president of the board of directors, the treasurer of the board of directors, the vice president for public relations of the board of directors, and anyone else appointed by the board of directors.

**4.12.10b** The gift acceptance committee is charged with the responsibility of reviewing all non-cash gifts and restricted gifts made or offered to the League, properly screening and, with the advice of counsel where needed, accepting those gifts that are deemed appropriate. The gift acceptance committee will make recommendations to the board of directors on gift acceptance issues as required. The board of directors must approve any gifts that carry potential legal or financial liabilities for the League.

**4.12.10c** The president or her designee shall have authority to sign planned giving agreements on behalf of the League. Any agreement that does not meet the conditions of this policy shall require the approval of the board of directors. The board of directors reserves the right to accept (or in cases where necessary, to decline) any commitment or gift that is offered to the League.

**4.12.11 Changes to Gift Acceptance Policy.** This policy shall be reviewed every three years by the board of directors of the League of Women Voters of Texas and the board of trustees of the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund.

**4.13 Reimbursement.**

**4.13.1** State board members, those elected or appointed to off-board positions, and staff may request full or partial reimbursement from general operating funds for actual expenses incurred in performance of their League duties, within the constraints imposed by the budget and according to policies found in Sections 4.15, at the following rates:

**4.13.1.a** Telephone, postage, photocopying, and essential supplies at actual cost.

**4.13.1.b** Travel by means of public transportation at actual cost including tips. The least expensive means of transportation that is feasible shall be used.

**4.13.1.c** Travel by private car will be reimbursed at current Internal Revenue Service guidelines. Parking and necessary tips and fees are reimbursed at actual cost. Staff travel may be reimbursed at the rate allowed for business travel by the Internal Revenue Service.

**4.13.1.d** Lodging at actual cost, allowing one-half room per person unless the board directs otherwise, or unless a single room is required when traveling alone on League business.

**4.13.1.e** Meals at a maximum of \$5 for breakfast, \$10 for lunch, and \$15 for dinner.

**4.13.1.f** Convention scheduled meals at actual cost.

**4.13.1.g** Child care at actual cost up to a maximum of \$25 per day.

**4.13.1.h** Registration fees for conferences/workshops at actual cost.

**4.13.1.i** Other types of actual expenses may be reimbursed if the board permits.

**4.13.2** State board members, those elected or appointed to off-board positions, and staff may request reimbursement from RESTRICTED funds at the rates listed in the project's budget. Such budgets shall be based on actual costs in keeping with IRS tax-deduction allowances and the League's conservative attitudes toward spending.

**4.13.3** Only those REQUESTED to attend Convention, a state board meeting or a committee meeting may request reimbursement at the rates allowed. If attendance relates to a project supported by restricted funds, reimbursement shall be according to the project budget.

**4.13.4** Those eligible to seek reimbursement shall submit vouchers and supporting documentation to the League treasurer to receive reimbursement and should submit similar information to document expenses for which they are not requesting reimbursement. When those eligible choose not to be reimbursed, they may document their actual expenses without regard to the limits established for reimbursement as long as the expenses are reasonable and customary.

#### **4.14 Financial Policies and Registration Procedures for Convention.**

**4.14.1** No reimbursement from state League funds or Convention funds shall be made for those registered as local League delegates or observers authorized by the local League board.

**4.14.2** No **registration fees** shall be paid by those whose expenses are being reimbursed from the Convention account or LWV-TX or LWV-TEF accounts.

**4.14.3** The **Nominating Committee chair and Budget Committee chair** are requested to attend Convention. Depending on the nature of business in a given year, the board may request other off-board leaders to attend. Unless the board directs otherwise, reimbursement for such expenses shall come from the Convention budget.

**4.14.4** Prior to each Convention, the state board shall determine whether or not the budget permits any reimbursement of those **off-board leaders** encouraged but not requested to attend. Unless the board directs otherwise, reimbursement for such expenses shall come from the Convention budget.

**4.14.5** The state board shall invite **nominees** to the new state board to Convention and shall determine in a given year which of their expenses may be reimbursed from LWV-TX or Convention accounts. Any nominee who accepts such reimbursement must attend as an observer authorized by the state board rather than as a local League delegate.

**4.14.6** The Convention **parliamentarian** shall be reimbursed from the Convention budget for actual expenses as approved by the state board. The parliamentarian shall be offered a stipend of \$50-\$100 per day for services rendered as long as he or she is a professionally registered parliamentarian. The parliamentarian shall register for Convention as a visitor.

**4.14.7** **Board members'** expenses for Convention are reimbursed from the Board Meeting line item of the LWV-TX budget. Board members shall register as LWV-TX delegates.

**4.14.8** When the **Nominating Committee meets** at a statewide conference, the expenses relating directly to the committee meeting may be reimbursed from the Nominating Committee line item of the LWV-TX budget, as long as committee members register as observers authorized by the state board.

**4.14.9** Expenses of the host League **co-chairs** for Convention shall be reimbursed from the Convention account at the rates set for state board members. The co-chairs shall register as observers authorized by the state board.

**4.14.10** Special **guests'** expenses shall be paid as agreed upon at actual cost to the guest from the Convention account unless otherwise specified by the state board. Guests shall register as visitors.

**4.14.11** LWV-TX **staff** requested by the state board to attend Convention shall not pay the registration fees. Expenses shall be reimbursed from the Board Meeting line item of the LWV-TX budget. Staff shall register as observers authorized by the state board.

## **SECTION 5. CONVENTION AND STATEWIDE CONFERENCE**

### **5.1 In addition to Convention rules, the following shall apply:**

**5.1.1** The president shall appoint one of the Board members to chair the convention committee. The chair will report committee recommendations to the Board and work with the host League as a liaison.

**5.1.2** LWV-TX shall choose the Convention hotel.

**5.1.3** LWV-TX shall adopt the budget, including registration fees for delegates and observers.

**5.1.4** LWV-TX shall approve all special events.

**5.1.5** LWV-TX shall invite all speakers.

**5.1.6** LWV-TX shall develop the schedule of events and order of business.

**5.1.7** A host League and LWV-TX shall consult regarding fundraising activities associated with Convention.

**5.2** A statewide conference may be called by the State Board, the purpose of which shall be determined by the interest and needs of members, local Leagues, MALs, and state board.

## **SECTION 6. LEGISLATIVE POLICY**

**6.1** This policy applies to all advocacy based on League positions by LWV-TX in order to influence any branch of state or federal government. The LWV-TX board directs overall advocacy efforts by adopting goals and choosing legislative priorities; assigning issues; determining how, when, and by whom strategies shall be developed and implemented; entering into litigation; resolving conflicts among local Leagues regarding jurisdiction or action that cannot be settled otherwise; and directing local League advocacy to state government.

**6.2 Advocacy Committee.** The Advocacy Vice President chairs the Advocacy Committee. With the participation of the issue coordinators and the issue chairs, the Advocacy Committee shall develop and recommend legislative priorities to the Board for adoption and shall ensure local League and member involvement.

**6.2.1** Implementation of legislative priorities is the responsibility of the Advocacy VP, the issue coordinators and the issue chairs with the concurrence of the president.

**6.2.2** Testimony and other written statements, as well as Action Alerts and *Legislative Newsletter* articles, shall have prior approval of the Advocacy VP and the president.

**6.2.3** Issue chairs have the primary responsibility for recommending and implementing action in their areas in conformance with this policy.

**6.3 Advocacy and Local Leagues.** Per LWV-TX Bylaws, Article X, Sec. 3, local Leagues or members may take action in the name of the League to influence state government only when authorized to do so by LWV-TX.

**6.3.1** Action Alerts or other requests for action provide automatic authorization to act as directed.

**6.3.2** A local League that wishes to initiate its own action before a state elected official or governmental body must first obtain authorization from the LWV-TX Advocacy VP and the President. If the proposed action would affect other local Leagues, the LWV-TX Advocacy VP shall advise the local League whether or not they must first obtain clearance to act from those Leagues.

**6.3.3** If the state Advocacy VP grants a local League permission to lobby a state legislator using a **local** League position, the following applies:

**6.3.3.a** The local League can lobby only on a bill affecting their area. If an amendment to the bill changes the scope (no longer local but statewide), the local League cannot lobby for the bill.

**6.3.3.b** The local League must always specify that they represent their local League when lobbying for the position. If they are asked about the state League position, the local League must tell them the state League has no pro or con on the issue.

**6.3.3.c** The local League may lobby any local state legislator, but if they lobby a non-local legislator they must inform the Advocacy VP. (If they give testimony in committee they will need to talk with other legislators.)

**6.3.4** Leagues **must not** take action in opposition to state or national program positions. LWV-TX **must not** take action in opposition to national positions.