

Fundamentals for Local League Boards

Revised 2016

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

The logo consists of the letters 'LWV' in a bold, blue, serif font. A thick, red, brush-stroke-like underline is positioned beneath the letters, starting from the left and extending towards the right.

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PREFACE

Congratulations and welcome to the board of directors of your local League. You are about to embark on one of the most exciting volunteer jobs you will ever have. Your commitment to the League, your willingness to carry out its purposes, and your belief that citizens can make a difference are as important to your success as a board member as is your ability to learn your position and do it well. This handbook is designed to help orient you to the board. You will find the handbook useful many times throughout your tenure of office. Local League boards may desire to modify the job descriptions as needed.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Introduction

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

- how well it communicates with its membership on local, state, and national issues; and
- 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.

In the interest of openness and transparency, all officers, board members, and staff (if any) shall annually sign a conflict of interest form and include current employment and current service on other boards of directors, whether or not deemed a conflict of interest. The form will be provided by the president at the first board meeting of each fiscal year. In addition, officers, board members, and staff (if any) are expected to recuse themselves from decisions related to personal interests.

First Steps

- Meet with your predecessor for guidance and transition of ongoing responsibilities. If you have no predecessor, the president can provide guidance on how to proceed.
- Gather 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. Plan to use the guides and 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:
 - *LWV-TX Action News!* Contains information from the state board that local League board members need to know and action items to implement. It can also be forwarded to local League committee members as appropriate.
 - *LWVUS The League Update*. Contains up-to-date information from LWVUS and the national board. Any League member can subscribe to this electronic newsletter.
 - Suggested tools. See list at end of each board or committee position described in this handbook.
- Read *League Basics*, an essential LWVUS publication, that is designed to give you the big picture of League board work. Especially relevant is Section 4. Board of Directors. Read all of *League Basics* at your earliest opportunity. It is available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

- Determine the materials and reports that you are expected to send to state and national offices. See the Essential Checklist—What to Send to Whom published in the LWV-TX *League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas* available at www.lwvtexas.org/Publications.html
- 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 chair 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 League

- **Be prepared.**
 - ✓ Read *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.
 - ✓ Avoid using board time for committee work. Appropriate use of board time makes it possible for the entire board to be present throughout the meeting 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 board members take part in every decision.
- **Be attentive—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.

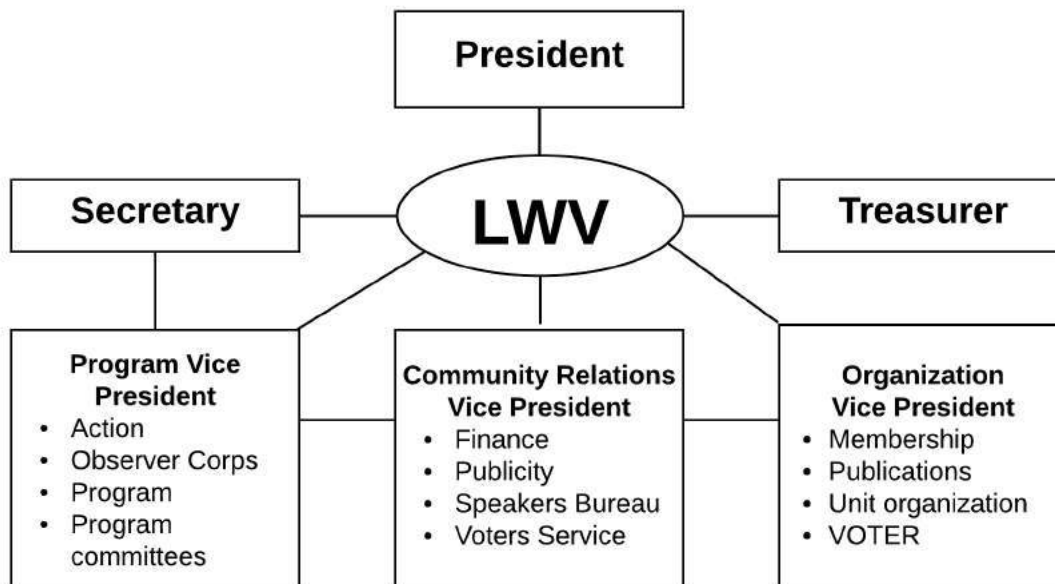
Between Board Meetings

- 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 Organizational Chart

- This suggested organizational chart is flexible. Each League should prepare its own organizational 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 historian.
- Budget and bylaws committees are usually off-board committees that report to the board.
- The nominating committee is entirely disassociated from the board but should confer with board members individually as to skills needed.



A Streamlined League

Some Leagues may need a more focused, flexible, streamlined organizational structure than the traditional structure suggested above in order to accommodate changing lifestyles, busy schedules, and limited resources. A streamlined League focuses on the mission-critical activities of the League while retaining volunteer engagement, consensus-based decision making, and nonpartisanship to empower citizens and shape better communities. A streamlined League leads through small, focused teams that reduce leadership pressures. The national League developed a toolkit specifically to aid local Leagues in designing a streamlined League and resources to plan and carry out events in a streamlined, but highly visible way: *ABCs for a Streamlined League*.

Suggested Tools for a Streamlined League

LWVUS Publications—available at
<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/book/abcs-streamlined-league>
 ABCs for a Streamlined League
 ABCs Appendices

LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENT

The president is the presiding officer of the organization, providing leadership in carrying out the mission and work of the League of Women Voters in the local community and emphasizing priorities set by the board of directors. The president coordinates interaction among officers, committees, and members so that organizational activities achieve maximum impact.

Preface

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.

Always remember that the League is a volunteer organization. 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.

One of the greatest pleasures of being president is that you will grow in self-confidence, tact, tolerance, patience, and perspective. With your help, others on your board will also develop these admirable qualities. Remember always 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

1. This should be the only major volunteer office you undertake for the term you have accepted.
2. Establish a filing and distribution system for materials from the national and state Leagues, the public, and emails. You *must* disseminate communications from the state and national League quickly to prevent a backlog. Some of the larger Leagues have a business office, making the president's job easier to organize communications with members and others.
3. If possible, have a League telephone that is separate from your home phone, with an answering machine to take calls when you are unable to do so.
4. Answer emails, letters, and phone calls promptly (within 12-24 hours).
5. With your board, prepare a League calendar for the year that includes all important dates. The LWV-TX calendar for local Leagues should be included. It is available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/calendar-local-league>

6. Ensure that at the first board meeting of each fiscal year, officers, board members, and staff (if any) sign a conflict of interest form and include current employment and current service on other boards of directors. Maintain a file of the forms to document IRS criteria for nonprofit organizations.
7. Read and share information from the LWV-TX *Action News!* and LWVUS *The League Update* that will come to you by email.
8. Have a working knowledge of all other board members' responsibilities.
9. Attend and participate in all local, regional and state training sessions. Remember, there is always something new to learn.
10. When the job seems too much for you, ask yourself:
 - a. Who could help make phone calls? Answer letters? Attend the coalition meetings?
 - b. Are the vice presidents and other officers doing their job? Do I need to visit one-on-one with one or more of them?
 - c. Can I separate unfinished business into categories? What can I do next week, next month?
 - d. Which tasks can be delegated? What can I politely decline to do?
 - e. Am I using available outside help? Leadership training from the state League? A state board member? Another local League president?
 - f. Have I read and applied the information in the LWV-TX *President's Counselor* and the other state and national League guides and publications?
 - g. 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 for President

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas
Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards
President's Counselor
Program Perspectives: A Guide to League Issues

LWVUS Publications

Impact on Issues—available at <https://tinyurl.com/yc3rk5fh>

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

Local League Secretary

The secretary maintains the minutes of meetings at which local League business is conducted. The minutes of meetings become the legal records of history of the organization.

Preface

As local League secretary, you are assuming responsibility for the accurate, historical record keeping of your local League (and 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.

1. Include a heading at the top of your minutes stating your full League name and state, for example, LWV-Lubbock, Texas.
2. Always record the name of the League, type of meeting, date (month, day, and year), the location of meeting, presiding officer, and the time the meeting is called to order.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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. (It is not necessary to record the name of the person who seconds the motion.) It is a good idea to request motions in writing so there is no question concerning the wording of the motion made.
6. Minutes should contain a summary of the pros and cons relating to the motion without names of those voicing their views. 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.
7. Many Leagues' decisions are made by general consent or agreement rather than a motion and should be recorded as such.
8. If the budget is amended or an unbudgeted expenditure is approved by general consent, such action is specified in the minutes.
9. At the conclusion of meetings, record the time of adjournment.
10. 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.

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.

As you prepare minutes, ask yourself these questions:

1. Will these minutes make sense to a board member who was absent?

2. Will someone reading these minutes 2 or 20 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."

Local Leagues secretaries and member-at-large-units should email a copy of the board minutes to sll@lwvtexas.org as soon as the minutes are approved. Transmission of annual meeting minutes should include the following:

- Board of directors list with contact information (elected and appointed)
- Budget as approved
- Bylaws as approved
- Local program as approved
- Policies as approved
- Workbook

Suggested Tools for Secretary

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas

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

Recording Present History: Guidelines for Local League Secretaries

LWVUS Publications

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

Local League Treasurer

The treasurer manages local League funds and the budget adopted by members at the annual meeting. In addition, the treasurer interprets the budget and the financial status of the local League to the board of directors and membership.

Responsibilities

1. Promptly deposit receipts (dues, contributions, sales, etc.) and pay bills to keep your League's credit good.
2. Keep books that provide a systematic record of all income and expenditures.
3. Prepare and present either a simple treasurer's report or budget analysis at each board meeting and at your annual meeting.
4. Send per-member-payments (PMPs) to state and national on time.
Note. Per member payments must be up-to-date for local League members to be voting delegates at state and national convention.
5. File reports as required by state and national Leagues, the state of Texas, and the IRS.
 - a. Every League is required to file an IRS Form 990 each year (990-EZ, 990-N or other, depending on your League's legal structure or nonprofit status). Board members should review completed forms before submission and prior to your IRS filing deadline.
 - b. The following must be on file and up-to-date with the Office of the Texas Secretary of State:
 - i. Articles of incorporation
 - ii. Statement of Change of Registered Office or Registered Agent or Both by a Corporation, Limited Liability Company or Limited Partnership
6. Following the annual meeting, provide the secretary with a copy of the adopted budget for transmittal to the state office.
7. 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.
8. Participate as a member of the executive committee of your local League.
9. Ensure that the treasurer's books are reviewed annually, either by an outside auditor or by an audit committee appointed by your board.
10. Maintain records and files as specified in the Record and Document Retention schedule. Archive documents at the board specified location that is accessible to your community.

Getting the Job Done

1. Register your signature at the banks and other financial institutions holding your League's accounts.
2. If your president is newly elected, ensure that the president's 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.
3. If your League requests that you be bonded, do so promptly.
4. Obtain all materials from the previous treasurer and review them together.
5. Read and understand *Money Matters Made Easier: Handbook for Local League Treasurers*. It provides details for handling most facets of your job and includes a suggested calendar designed for treasurers.
6. In addition to your regular local accounts, you are responsible for all activity related to funds on deposit with the LWV-Texas Education Fund.

7. An important key to success: Do not get behind in your work! Set aside at least 1 day a month to pay bills and post receipts and expenditures, and 1 day to balance your books, prepare reports, etc.
8. The LWV-TX treasurer is a wealth of information and a wonderful resource.
9. Membership records and reports.

If one of your responsibilities is membership records, consult *Money Matters Made Easier: Handbook for Local League Treasurers* for information.
10. Political action account
 - a. 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.
 - b. The section entitled, "If Your League Spends Money to Lobby," in *Money Matters Made Easier: Handbook for Local League Treasurers* provides some background.
 - c. The required forms and filing deadlines are available from the office of the Texas Secretary of State. Not all local Leagues have these accounts.

Suggested Tools for Treasurer

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas

Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers

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

LWVUS Publications

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

LWVUS Webinars

Tips and Treasures for Treasurers (1 hr.) —available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/tips-and-treasures-treasurers>

Local League Vice Presidents

Vice presidents coordinate the work of the League through working relationships with committee chairs within their areas of responsibility and ensure that the work is accomplished efficiently. Vice presidents develop future League leaders by providing them with guidance and motivation.

Preface

Responsibilities of each vice president are generally defined in local League bylaws. Some bylaws denote vice presidents numerically, i.e. first, second, and third, while others designate by areas of responsibility, such as program, community (or public) relations, organization. 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.

Vice presidents are invaluable aides to the president. 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. Their detailed knowledge of League activities enables them to help plan a realistic agenda for board meetings.

Regular contact by the vice presidents with committee chairs prior to board meetings will avoid the use of board time for what should be committee work. It is also important for the president to meet with vice presidents periodically to review and evaluate work in their areas of responsibility. 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 *Action News!* and the LWVUS *The League Update*. With almost all materials now sent via email, disseminating information is usually easy. Keeping committee chairs fully informed is vital to making their board or off-board service valuable and rewarding.

Vice President Responsibilities as a Coordinator

1. Help committee chairs develop membership for committees.
2. Ensure that planning for each committee occurs early in the League year.
3. Attend meetings of assigned committees and provide help when necessary.
4. Follow closely activities of each committee.
5. Substitute for a committee chair in an emergency.
6. Help the president decide which items require discussion and/or decision at board meetings and the agenda time required.
7. Encourage committee chairs to delegate and share responsibility for the overall work of the League.
8. Promote cooperation among committees.
9. Encourage committee chairs to communicate with their LWVUS and LWV-TX counterparts.
10. Help committee chairs determine which suggested tools to obtain.

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. In League, program is comprised of the selected governmental issues chosen by the membership at local, state, and national levels for League study and action.

Options

The responsibilities of the program vice president are varied. Reading to remain knowledgeable takes a fair amount of time. In order to balance workloads, 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 a larger number of committee chairs.

Responsibilities

1. Oversee the work of committee chairs in area of responsibility. For example:
 - a. Action committee chair
 - b. Observer corps chair
 - c. Program committee chair(s)
2. Develop an annual plan for program activities early in the League year.
 - a. Assist the president in choosing people to manage the various program items.
 - b. Consult with each program chair before the year's calendar is finalized.
 - c. Develop the plan in cooperation with the board of directors.
 - d. Meetings related to:
 - i. Local, state, and national consensus
 - ii. Current studies (balance local, state, and national program)
 - iii. Local program planning (annual)
 - iv. State and national program planning (usually in even years)
 - e. Balance the types of informational meeting formats (e.g., speakers, panels, discussion, field trips)
3. Assist program chairs in performing their duties effectively.
 - a. Act as a liaison between the board and program committees and among program chairs.
 - b. Train program chairs.
 - c. Attend committee meetings, especially those held early in the League year, and consults with chairs about committee activities.
 - d. Funnel information from state and national Leagues to appropriate program committees.
 - e. Encourage chairs to communicate with state and national counterparts.
 - f. Remind committees how they interrelate with overall League activity.
 - g. Make program committees aware of the resources and tools available to them.
 - h. Helps develop membership for program committees.
4. Work closely with the *VOTER* editor to make sure program materials are prepared for the *VOTER* on schedule and that follow-up reports of program meetings are covered.
5. Prepare briefings for discussion leaders in association with appropriate program chairs.
6. Recommend action in cooperation with action chair, appropriate program chair, and president.
7. Help plan any public meetings related to program items.

8. Keep current local summaries of program positions or statements.
9. Prepare material on program planning (local, state, or national) for *VOTER* or arranges for its preparation.
10. Ensure annual reports on program are completed and submitted as appropriate.
11. Read and share information from the *LWV-TX Action News!* and *LWVUS The League Update*.

Suggested Tools for Program Vice President

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas

See section entitled, "Taking Action: Guidelines for Local Leagues."

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

See section entitled, "Advocacy and Local Leagues."

Program Perspectives: A Guide to League Issues

LWVUS Publications

Impact on Issues—available at <https://tinyurl.com/yc3rk5fh>

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

LWVUS Webinars

League Program 101 (1 hr.) —available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-program-101>

Community Relations Vice President

The community relations vice president visualizes and communicates the potential public relations value of all local League activities. The community relations vice president coordinates and oversees the work of committees under the community relations umbrella.

Preface

The major responsibility of the community relations vice president 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.

The community relations 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.

Responsibilities

1. Oversee the work of committee chairs in area of responsibility. For example:
 - a. Finance or fund development chair
 - b. Publicity chair
 - c. Speakers bureau chair
 - d. Voters service chair
2. 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.
3. Attend meetings of all committees in your area of responsibility and provide help when necessary.
4. Stay abreast of plans and activities of each committee.
5. Fill in for a committee chair in an emergency.
6. Help each committee decide what needs discussion and decision at board meetings and the agenda time required.
7. Encourage committee chairs to share responsibility for the overall work of the League.
8. Contact committee chairs prior to each board meeting to determine agenda items and avoid using board time for committee work.

Goals of Community Relations

1. **Visibility**—keeping the community aware that your League is an effective group promoting citizen participation in government
2. **Effectiveness**—Establishing and maintaining good working relations with the media, as well as with other community organizations, business leaders, public officials, and citizens in general
3. **Recruitment**—Informing prospective members and the public of League activities and inviting their participation

Implementation Strategies and Tactics

1. **Traditional media** contacts: newspaper, radio, television
 - a. *News release*—Use these to announce public meetings, candidate forums and debates, new publications, and other regular activities. (Pages in this handbook relating to publicity chair describe production of a good news release.)

- b. *News conference*—When your League is featuring someone prominent, making a major announcement, or launching an action campaign, the news conference is an appropriate approach.
 - c. *Candidates forum*—Public and/or televised forums are a primary source of positive publicity for your League. The forum is a solid source of hard news of your League's making.
 - d. *Letter to the editor/op-ed piece*—If brief and well written, these are effective means of creating or maintaining interest in League issues and persuading others to action.
 - e. *Public service announcement*—Public service television and radio announcements offer free, effective publicity for your League.
2. **Social media**—Facebook, Twitter, and other
 3. **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.
 4. **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.
 5. **Voters service 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.
 6. **Action campaign**—Ranging from statements at public hearings to an all-out effort on a local issue, advocacy in the 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.
 7. **Speakers bureau**—Community appearances at schools, organizations, 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.
 8. **Invitations**—Invite League contributors, public officials, and representatives of neighborhood associations, and other organizations with similar interests to appropriate League functions.
 9. **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 for Community Relations Vice President

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas

See section entitled, "Social Media, Websites, and the League Way"

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

See section entitled, "Guidelines for LWV-TX Social Media."

Social Media and Web Sites—Available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/social-media-web-sites>

LWVUS Publications

Online Communications—Available at <https://tinyurl.com/y7v8ehf7>

Social Media Tools—available at <http://lwv.org/member-resources/social-media-tools>

Twitter Cheat Sheet—Available at <http://lwv.org/content/twitter-cheat-sheet>

Organization Vice President

The organization vice president coordinates the organizational committees' activities so that they interact with each other and the program and community relations committees.

Preface

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

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.

Responsibilities

1. Oversee the work of organizational chairs in area of responsibility. For example:
 - a. Membership chair
 - b. Publications chair
 - c. Unit organization director or unit coordinator
 - d. *VOTER* editor
2. Conduct an orientation and planning meeting with organization chairs (or perhaps all chairs, depending on size and organization of the League) early in the League year.
 - a. Explain your role as coordinator.
 - b. Define channels of communication within the organization area.
 - c. Review and clarify each chair's role and responsibilities.
 - d. Preview anticipated activities and deadlines for the year.
 - e. Assess the degree of mentoring or training needed for new chairs.
3. Maintain communication with organization chairs.
 - a. Stay abreast of plans and activities of each chair/committee.
 - b. Provide consultation as needed.
 - c. Contact chairs before board meetings to determine agenda items and time required for board discussion and decision.
 - d. Following board meetings:
 - i. Inform off-board organization chairs of board actions relating to their areas of responsibility immediately following the board meeting.
 - ii. Discuss follow-up required by each chair, whether on- or off-board.
4. Attend meetings of all committees in your area of responsibility and provide help as needed. Substitute for a committee chair in an emergency.
5. Develop a distribution system for appropriate information to each chair in your area of responsibility.
 - a. It is critical that chairs receive memos and publications in a timely manner.
 - b. Share information from the LWV-TX *Action News!* and LWVUS *The League Update* pertinent to each chair.
 - c. Advise and remind chairs of dates and deadlines.

6. Bring to the attention of the president and board pertinent information related to organization matters from the LWV-TX *Action News!* and LWVUS *The League Update*.
7. Look for new and different ways the organization team can improve the overall work of the League.

Additional Responsibilities

Based on size and specific needs of your League as well as your time and interest, one or more of the following may become your responsibility.

1. 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.
2. Update local League job descriptions following review and consultation with on- and off-board chairs.
3. Evaluate board and League activities throughout the year.
4. Arrange for appropriate training of the local League board members, committees, and individuals.
5. Undertake special projects as the president and board may direct.

Suggested Tools for Organization Vice President

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas
Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards

LWVUS Publications

ABCs of a Streamlined League—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/book/abcs-streamlined-league>

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

LOCAL LEAGUE COMMITTEES & CHAIRS

Action Committee Chair

The action chair informs local League members of official action taken by the local League. The action chair encourages members to take similar action as individuals, not as League members.

Preface

In the League of Women Voters, action is the final step in the process of choosing program, studying the issue, 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 an important League function. It implements our mission as an organization "...that influences public policy through education and advocacy." Action also provides high visibility for the League in the community.

All action should be a cooperative effort. The action chair and program chair should work together to prepare all statements, letters, or other action for approval by the president (and sometimes the board of directors) in advance of the action. 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.

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 as well as state and national positions that can be applied to local situations.
- Read information from the LWV-TX *Action News!*, LWVUS *The League Update*, and *Legislative Newsletter* (during years when the Texas Legislature is in session).
- 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 LWV-TX *League Handbook* section entitled, "Taking Action: Guidelines for Local Leagues." Also consult the LWVUS *League Basics* 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 League action alerts. A letter written on stationery with a letterhead is the most effective means of communicating with legislators and may be sent electronically.

- When an action alert is received from LWV-TX or LWVUS, send an official communication in the name of the local League to the designated recipient and an electronic copy to sll@lwwtexas.org.
- If you do not respond to the request for action because you have concerns about the action, you may wish to discuss your concern with your LWV-Texas board liaison, the appropriate issue chair, or the chair of the state Advocacy Committee.

Suggested Tools for Action Chair

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas

See section entitled, "Taking Action: Guidelines for Local Leagues."

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

See section entitled, "Advocacy and Local Leagues."

Program Perspectives: A Guide to League Issues

LWVUS Publications

Impact on Issues—available at <https://tinyurl.com/yc3rk5fh>

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

Budget Committee

The Budget Committee formulates a monetary plan to accomplish the goals and activities the local League wishes to accomplish.

Composition

1. A chair, usually off-board, who provides guidance and coordinates the work of the committee
2. Local League treasurer, who provides estimates of expenses using past records
3. Finance chair, who organizes the fundraising campaign to support the budget
4. President-elect (if your League uses this system), who gains a knowledge of financial structure
5. Two or three more appointed from the membership who are knowledgeable in particular areas
6. President, as ex officio, acts as an advisor

Board of Directors' Responsibilities

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

Budget Committee Responsibilities

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. 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 currently 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 the board	The proposed budget is then presented to the board for its review, possible revisions, and approval. The budget committee chair 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 <i>VOTER</i> or annual meeting workbook at least 1 month prior to the annual meeting. It is presented for adoption by the budget chair at the 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 <i>VOTER</i> and/or the handbook.
Transmission to state office	After adoption, the local League secretary submits the entire adopted budget electronically to the state office (sll@lwwtexas.org), along with other Annual Meeting materials.

Special Circumstances

1. 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.

2. Per Member Payments (PMP)

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 proposed by the state or national budget committee and be prepared to revise the budget either upward or downward at the annual meeting. Should the local annual 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.

3. 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 in the Education Fund and \$500 expenses for voters 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.

Suggested Tools for Budget Committee

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers

See section entitled, "Budgeting."

Other

Community Toolbox Chapter 43, Section 1. Planning and Writing an Annual Budget—available at <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/finances/managing-finances/annual-budget/main>

Bylaws Committee

The bylaws committee reviews local League bylaws annually to facilitate effective functioning of the organization.

Preface

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. Proposed revisions of local League bylaws shall be submitted to the state bylaws chair for review and comment at least 2 months before the local League annual meeting.

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 nonboard member, and a chair selected from either the board or general membership.

Responsibilities

1. Review and propose changes to local League bylaws.

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 local League board are then submitted to the LWV-TX Governance Committee chair for review and comment.

2. Seek approval by local League membership.

Proposed changes that have been approved by the LWV-TX Governance Committee are then presented to the membership in accordance with local League bylaws concerning amendments. The membership may amend, adopt, or reject proposals at the annual meeting. Please note that a bylaw takes effect immediately, unless otherwise specified.

3. Distribute amended bylaws.

After the annual meeting, electronic copies of the bylaws as amended are sent to the state office, national office, and national liaison. All local League members should receive copies. However if the changes are minimal, some Leagues publish the information in their newsletter requesting that members update their copies.

Additional Responsibilities

1. Review state League bylaws

The local League 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. See LWV-TX calendar for dates.

2. Review local policy guide.

The local League bylaws committee should review the local League 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 League newsletter.

Bylaws Calendar for Local Leagues

Date	Event
Aug 31	Deadline for local Leagues to appoint bylaws committee
Oct 31	Deadline for local League bylaws committee to recommend to the local League board of directors any changes in local League bylaws related to alignment of first three articles of local league bylaws with those of the LWVUS
Dec 31	Deadline for early submission of proposed changes in local League bylaws to the chair of the state Governance Committee
Jan 31	Deadline for chair of the state Governance Committee to notify local League of approval/concerns of proposed amendment(s) to local League bylaws to Leagues that met the early submission deadline
Annual meeting	Local League members vote on proposed amendments to each section of the local League bylaws by two-thirds majority. A two-thirds majority is defined as at least two thirds of those present and voting, unless otherwise specified by the local League rules.
June1	Deadline for submission of amended local League bylaws to the state office at sll@lwwtexas.org and chair of the Governance Committee

Finance or Fund Development Chair

The finance or fund development chair oversees financial development, including special fundraising events.

Preface

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.

Responsibilities

- Develop and implement an annual plan for financial development.
- Acquire and cultivate local donors, including local corporate and foundation donors, not solicited by the state or national Leagues.
- Write or assign and edit fundraising letters and proposals.
- Coordinate direct mail campaigns.

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, although 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, cochairs share the overall responsibility. Administrative details, such as printing and record keeping, may be handled by one person, solicitations by another.

Multiple sources of help with fundraising are referenced at the end of this section. 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 with a personalized 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, the *VOTER*, 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, such as:

- Sell items, for example:
 - Advertising in the *VOTER*
 - League guides to local governments, voters guides, or program publications
 - UNICEF cards
 - Raffle tickets (in compliance with Texas raffle regulations/guidelines)
- Sponsor events, such as an annual luncheon, roast, festival, or seminar, and charge admission in excess of cost
- Hold garage sale, bazaar, silent auction, or other sale
- Make contractual arrangements for 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
- Use members' homes as a bed and breakfast for special local events

Education Fund Money

Hard money—contributions that are not tax deductible—is the preferred type of donations in that they 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, tax-deductible contributions 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 *Handbook Local League TEF Projects* for advice on raising, depositing, and using tax-deductible funds.

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 for Finance or Fund Development Chair

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

Capital Ideas: Fundraising Tips for Local Leagues

Handbook for Local League TEF Projects

Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers

LWVUS Publications

Fund Development Tips—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/fund-development-tips>

Fundraising 101—The League Way—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/fundraising-101---league-way>

Fundraising 101 Webinar—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/manage-your-league/league-finances>

Internal Case for Support and Sample Letter—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/internal-case-support-and-sample-letter>

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

See section entitled, "Development."

Ten Essential Elements of a Fundraising Letter—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/10-essential-elements-fundraising-letter>

Membership Committee

The membership committee recruits and retains members for the local League.

Preface

Membership outreach maintains the health and wellbeing of the local League. Keys to success for the membership committee 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. The membership chair is not expected to undertake this task alone but should work with a committee.

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.

Keeping membership information up to date and reporting the membership count before deadlines is important. In some Leagues, the treasurer handles these tasks; in others, particularly larger Leagues, a special membership administrator is appointed. The local League per member payment (PMP) is determined by the membership count in the national database on January 31 of each year for the following fiscal year.

Goals

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

Responsibilities of the Membership Committee

1. Recruitment

Recruitment requires perseverance and 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.

2. Orientation

Orientation 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, voters service 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.

Orientation sessions should be offered as often as necessary. 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.

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. 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.

3. Member involvement

This aspect of membership should begin with presenting each new member with a welcome letter and packet (e.g., membership list, a board list, local program, bylaws, and an interest questionnaire or opportunity sheet. (This information can be provided electronically.)

The completed questionnaire 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, given the increased power of larger membership.

4. Retention

Devising ways to keep track of all members to make them feel a part of the organization 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, encouraging carpooling to League meetings, planning several social events each year (the League is sometimes considered too serious), having board members contact lapsed members to encourage them to rejoin, and finding out why memberships are not renewed.

Responsibilities of the Membership Chair

1. Conduct meetings of the membership committee.
2. Maintain records of members' contact information and renewal dates.
 - a. Additions and corrections are reported using the LWVUS national database.
 - b. Working with the treasurer ensures that an accurate record is kept.
3. Provide opportunities for interested individuals to join at functions sponsored by the League.
4. Coordinate new member orientation.
5. Facilitate social aspects at membership meetings, the annual meeting, and other League events.

Suggested Tools for Membership Chair

LWVUS Publications

Creating a More Welcoming League—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/creating-more-welcoming-league>

Hosting Events That Attract a Younger Audience (Webinar)—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/hosting-events-attract-younger-audience>

Welcoming New Members and Engaging Leaders—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/welcoming-new-members-and-engaging-leaders>

LWVUS Webinars

Storytelling for Recruitment and Engagement (1' 10")—available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gdRdTPXLHY&feature=youtu.be>

Young People and the League: Where Do We Go From Here? (1 hr.)—available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7B8BbYWk3g&feature=youtu.be>

LWVUS Templates

LWV Membership Brochure (template)—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/lwv-membership-brochure-0>

Membership Renewal Letter Template—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/membership-renewal-template-local-leagues>

New Member Prospect Letter Template—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/new-member-prospect-letter-template>

New Member Prospect Letter Template (Election Season)—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/new-member-prospect-letter-template-election-season>

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee produces a slate of nominees for League officers, directors, and the elected member of the next nominating committee.

Preface

For any local League to be effective, it must have good leadership. Local League bylaws usually provide that a nominating committee is responsible for 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.

Leadership development does not happen accidentally. The nominating committee should work with the board to identify future leaders and 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.

Like all committees, the nominating committee must organize its work, hold meetings, and communicate with the membership as a whole. Seeking leadership in all areas of League activity is the committee's year-round responsibility. Nominating committee members will want to educate themselves about their duties, the League itself, and the members from whom they will select nominees.

Nominating committee deliberations are confidential. Discussions should be open and honest but never aired outside the committee.

Duties of the Nominating Committee

1. Produce a slate of nominees to serve as officers, directors, and the elected members of the next nominating committee.
2. The committee may make suggestions regarding appointed directors, other appointed positions, and committee assignments, but only the president and/or the board should assign individual committee responsibilities.
3. Make recommendations for filling vacancies on the board at any time during the League year if the board requests this service.

Membership of 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

1. 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.
2. 4 months before Annual Meeting
 - a. 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.)
 - b. The committee should begin early in the year to discuss potential new leaders among themselves. The process of determining whom to ask and then asking and receiving replies is an important and fairly time-consuming process.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. The committee might consider interviewing current board members for suggestions about potential leaders and talents or skills needed by the board.
 - iii. 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.
 - c. Before adjourning the first meeting, the committee should:
 - i. Review local bylaws to determine when the nominating committee report must be sent to the board and members prior to the annual meeting.
 - ii. Schedule the next meeting.
3. 3 months before Annual Meeting
 - a. 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.
 - b. Whom should the committee consider?
 - i. The committee should pick members willing and able to be policymakers for the local League.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Special attention should be given to the League's nonpartisan policy in each candidate's evaluation.
 - v. Committee discussions should be frank and include careful regard for any inherent problems.
 - c. 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.

4. 2 months before Annual Meeting
 - a. Work continues until the slate is completed. Committee members interview potential nominees as previously assigned.
 - b. How is the best way to ask?
 - i. 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.
 - ii. 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 job description for the position they are being asked to accept.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Discussion with each candidate should always include careful explanation of the League's nonpartisanship policy.
5. 1 month before Annual Meeting
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
6. Annual Meeting
 - a. The nominating committee chair presents the slate of nominees to the membership at annual meeting and moves election of the slate.
 - b. 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.

Suggested Tools for the Nominating Committee Chair

LWVUS Publications

Little Green Book...A Guide to the League's Nominating Committee—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/little-green-book-guide-leagues-nominating-committee>

Observer Corps Chair

The observer corps chair coordinates and provides leadership to the local League observer corps under the direction of the program vice president.

Preface

An observer corps is a useful local League undertaking because observers provide League visibility to government officials, report to members on governmental activities, and may provide impetus for League action, particularly on local issues. An ideal chair has basic knowledge of local program, recognizes the value of the observer corps, and radiates enthusiasm. The chair works under the direction of the program vice president but need not be a member of the board of directors.

Responsibilities of the Observer Corps Chair

1. Determine, in consultation with the board, which governmental bodies or agencies should be covered; set priorities depending on volunteer strength and interest.
2. Recruit League members willing to observe. Encourage participation through VOTER articles and personal contact. Observing a city council, school board, etc. is a particularly good introduction to the League for new members.
3. Train observers. In the training, the responsibilities of the observer, listed below, should be covered. Some Leagues prepare instructions sheets and report forms for observers.
4. Provide League buttons and name badges for each observer.
5. If customary, send a letter (approved by the president) on League letterhead to the proper official indicating the presence of League observers and introducing the individual(s).
6. Encourage and assist observers; provide for substitutes when needed.
7. Keep 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

1. Preparation for observing
 - a. Understand the responsibilities of the entity being observed, particularly as it relates to League program and positions.
 - b. Know the names of the members of the council, court, board, or agency; the time, place, and format of the meetings.
2. Procedures for observing
 - a. 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.
 - b. Dress in appropriate attire; wear a League button and name badge.
 - c. Be prompt.
 - d. Identify yourself to the chair, secretary, or clerk of the meeting, if it seems appropriate to do so.
 - e. Obtain an agenda for the meeting.
 - f. Keep an impartial and respectful attitude at all times. The League will be judged by your actions.
 - g. Take notes on subjects relating to League issues and other subjects of significant importance.
3. Reporting
 - a. Complete an Observer Corps Report Form and sent to the observer corps chair.

- b. 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 email the board a summary.
- c. If the issue would be interesting to members, write an article for your next VOTER.

Suggested Tools for Observer Corps Chair

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

Program Perspectives: A Guide to League Issues

LWVUS Publications

#36 Observer Corps—available at <http://lwv.org/content/36-observer-corps>

ABCs for a Streamlined League: Appendices—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/book/abcs-streamlined-league>

See Appendix H. Observer Corps

Impact on Issues—available at <http://lwv.org/content/impact-issues-2014-2016-online-edition>

Observing Your Government in Action—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/observing-your-government-action-guide>

Policy Committee Chair

The policy committee reviews the local League policy guide and suggests needed changes to the board of directors for approval.

Preface

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 specified in the policy guide.

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.

- Every League should have a nonpartisanship policy appropriate for the League's community. The state League Nonpartisan Political Policy found in *Policies and Procedures*, Section 1.1, may be used as a template, but each League needs to decide for itself what makes sense in its community.
- 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 and care should be taken that they are consistent with one another. Both sets of policies should be sent to the membership.

Policy Guidelines

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

Optional Responsibilities

As part of orientation for new board members, the policy committee should provide an overview of important policies. Such a review helps eliminate doubt about general League operation for board members as well as policy committee members.

Suggested Tools for Policy Committee

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas
Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards

Other

Southern Virginia Higher Education Center. Policy Review Guidelines—available at <http://www.svhhec.org/downloads/policy-resources/320-policy-review-guidelines/file>

Program Committee

A program chair coordinates all activities related to a specific program issue, under the direction of the program vice president.

Preface

At the beginning of the League year, the plans for program issues must be coordinated with the program vice president for integration into the League program calendar. A committee of local members interested in each specific issue chosen for study or action should be recruited by the program chair, working closely with the president. The number on the committees may depend on the size of the League and whether the issue is for study or action.

Responsibilities of the Program Chair

1. Be knowledgeable of the League program process.
2. Review League files for previous work on the issue.
3. Keep up-to-date with the issue by reviewing:
 - a. Related literature, in print and electronically
 - b. Traditional and social media sources
 - c. *LWV-TX Action News!* and *Legislative Newsletter*; *LWVUS The League Update*
4. Attend relevant community meetings and task forces.
5. Distribute agenda prior to program committee meetings.
6. If the program item is a study, consult with the program vice president as to the procedure for organizing a study and conducting consensus.
7. Assign specific tasks to committee members; for a local study, this includes assigning research topics and personal interviews with local officials.
8. Set committee deadlines according to consensus dates.
9. At the completion of the study, prepare a written report of the results for approval by the board of directors. Following board approval, prepare an article for the local *VOTER* describing the results of the study.
10. Distribute appropriate study materials to the membership.
11. In large Leagues, a number of units will cover the same study 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.

Responsibilities of the Program Committee

1. Produce a credible, in-depth, unbiased exploration and documentation of the issue from multiple viewpoints.
2. Decide how many and what type of meetings are most appropriate for presentation of your issue to League members.
3. Choose materials to be distributed to members and the channels for distribution (*VOTER*, emails, special mailing, etc.).
4. Prepare consensus questions and a discussion outline for local study items.
5. Participate in consensus process (discussion leader, recorder, and resource person).
6. Develop ideas for future study.

Suggested Tools for Program Chair

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Program: Study to Action in Ten Steps

LWVUS Publications

Guidelines for LWVUS Studies—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/guidelines-lwvus-studies>

LWVUS Webinars

League Program 101 (1 hr.)—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-program-101>

Publicity Chair

The publicity chair publicizes local League activities in order to increase awareness in the community that the League advocates and fosters citizen participation in government.

Preface

In some Leagues, the publicity chair is responsible only for traditional media (newspaper, radio, and television). Social media (Facebook, Twitter, et al.) are handled as a separate committee. The community relations vice president will guide and assist you in your job. A committee can be helpful.

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 or update an existing list of media contacts, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. Find out if they prefer to receive news items by email or a hard copy. Let them know about major upcoming events and ask what kinds of stories interest them. Remember, your president needs to approve media articles prior to submission.

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 as well as 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 newspapers, shoppers' papers, 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
- Candidates forums or debates
- Voters guide 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 the annual meeting, submit a story to newspapers listing new officers elected, program items adopted, explanations of new studies, and

any awards given. Enclose a photo of your new president. Also consider news features—an environmental project, a member who's been in League for 40 or 50 years, a Girl Scout troop you're helping to learn more about government, a member whose research or volunteer work for League has led to an interesting career.

About News Releases

Format. News releases should be limited to 400-500 words. At the top left in bold and uppercase font, write FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL [DATE]. At the top right, list your League name and contact information: name of contact person and position/title and contact telephone number, contact email, website, and mailing address.

The headline should be short (one-phrase or one-sentence), eye-catching, and communicate what you want the public to know. A subheadline is optional. Below the headline/subheadline, identify the location and date of the story: city, state, and complete date (month, day, year).

The last line of the page contains the word END in uppercase, bold font and centered on the line. Immediately below this line and centered, type ### or the word count.

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. Be sure to mention that "The public is invited to attend" or "The meeting is open to the public" when that is the case. Include the League's nonpartisanship policy and membership information at the bottom of the page.

Photos. Photos are attention-grabbers! Submit photos 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 distribution. Give each draft news release to at least one other person to proofread. Gain approval of each news release from 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 2 to 3 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

Distribution: mail, email, or hand deliver? Personal contact is best. 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 email; some do, as this makes it easier for them to use the releases. Make copies of news releases available for media at candidates forums and other League-sponsored public meetings.

Appearances and attitude. Create and maintain good public relations. 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 that 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 the person has.

- 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 releases 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!

Scrapbook: A History of the League

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 University library in Lubbock.

Suggested Tools for Publicity Chair

LWVUS Publications

Media Outreach Tips—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/media-outreach-tips>

Media Tips: Maximize Your Visibility!—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/lwvus-media-tips-maximize-your-visibility>

Membership Leadership Development Handbook—available at

www.lwvtexas.org/Member_Outreach.html

See Chapter 3 for sections entitled, "Media Outreach" and "Tips on Working With the Media."

Other

AP Style News Release Guide—available at

<http://salinecqc.org/promote-saline-toolkit/pr-materials/>

Writing and Formatting Tips for News Releases—available at

<https://ireach.prnewswire.com/tips.aspx>

Speakers Bureau Chair

The chair of the speakers bureau coordinates speakers bureau events, recruits and trains speakers, and promotes the speakers bureau in the community. The chair develops topics with the assistance and approval of the board of directors.

Preface

A speakers 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 speakers bureau is one of the most effective methods we have to fulfill our purpose.

The speakers bureau chair may or may not serve on the board of directors. But in either case, the chair is directly responsible to the community relations vice president. It is recommended that an assistant be selected. Day-to-day operation is the joint responsibility of the speaker's bureau chair and bureau speakers

Responsibilities

1. Choose the topics with help and approval from the board.

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

2. Recruit a corps of speakers.

Resource people or past leaders are a good source. Every member is a potential speaker, but members might not volunteer unless they are offered a training session and are not expected 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.

3. Train the speakers.
 - a. Provide a brief explanation of the bureau's purpose and guiding policies.
 - b. Share pointers on how to build a speech and other advice from speech experts.
 - c. Discuss subject areas to determine points to be covered and presentation method.
 - d. Demonstrate speeches including helpful points on poise, attire, etc.
 - e. Share comments and helpful tips from past speakers.

4. Promote speakers bureau services.

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

5. Operate the speakers bureau.
 - a. Responsibilities of the chair
 - i. Take requests from other organization's representatives. 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.
 - ii. Contact a speaker (topic, geographic location, etc. are considerations in selection). Provide the speaker with pertinent information. Request that the speaker call or email the representative of the organization and notify you when the contact has been made.

- iii. Help the speaker obtain the publications and materials needed for preparing the speech and for handouts.
 - iv. Remind the speaker of the engagement and the need to confirm logistics a few days before.
 - v. Check to see how the speech went. If there were problems or suggestions, note them for future use.
 - vi. Keep a record of members on the speaker's bureau, their qualifications, and on their topics.
 - vii. Build a file of sample speeches and keep speech files in order.
 - viii. Recruit speakers and speechwriters; and advocate for the speakers bureau!
- b. Responsibilities of speakers
- i. When accepting a speaking engagement, note the date, time, place, etc. on your calendar.
 - ii. 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, whether there is a stage or podium, microphone, and who will provide special equipment you may need.
 - iii. Check to see what information is already available on the topic, including any tapes, audiovisuals, etc. Speakers bureau files, program, and voters service files generally contain a wealth of information, both general and specific.
 - iv. BE PREPARED! 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, and practice, practice, practice.
 - v. Arrive promptly at the designated place and meet the person in charge of the meeting.
 - vi. Let the speakers bureau chair know how the speech went, and return promptly any materials borrowed from the files.
 - vii. Keep a copy of your speech and provide one for the bureau files.

Suggested Tools for Speakers Bureau Chair

Community Toolbox Chapter 20, Section 10. Developing a Speakers Bureau—available at <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/provide-information-enhance-skills/speakers-bureau/main>

Unit Organization Director or Unit Coordinator

The unit organization director, in cooperation with the board of directors, establishes units, provides leadership for them, and plans the overall agenda for the meetings.

Preface

Large local Leagues may form units to facilitate active participation by League members. A local League 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 voters service and other League activities and for voter education. The unit provides a means of communication between the members and the board of directors.

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.

Responsibilities

1. Participate in the annual planning process.
 - a. Suggest a variety of unit meeting times and places convenient to the greatest number of members (e.g., day/night, weekday/weekends; public meeting rooms, churches, lunch spots)
 - b. Cooperate with program chairs on general meeting topics and speakers in order to enhance discussion at unit meetings as well as bring increased attendance.
 - c. Encourage coverage of the full League spectrum in unit meetings. During calendar planning, the unit organization director should encourage unit formats that give opportunity for involvement beyond program discussion (e.g., action [letter writing campaign], voters services [questions for voters guides], new member orientation).
 - d. Consider 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 (e.g., a study relating to the unit area, a speaker or go-see tour on a topic of particular interest to that unit, or a special voters service project). Such variety is particularly popular in Leagues that encompass several communities or school districts.
2. Oversee the proper and smooth functioning of the units so that League membership and citizenship become an active experience.
3. Train unit leaders, discussion leaders, and other unit officers.
4. Organize monthly briefing sessions for the unit leadership in conjunction with the program chair.
5. Publicize the time and place of unit meetings.
6. Provide unit leaders with announcements and sign-up sheets as directed by the board.
7. Prepare and distribute attendance and discussion report forms to unit leaders.
8. Obtain completed forms from unit leaders and forward forms or information to appropriate chairs.
9. Maintain records of unit meeting attendance.

The number of members participating in consensus/concurrence should be reported to the board and recorded in the minutes.
10. Communicate with unit leadership and help solve problems.
11. Encourage units to assume individual, supplementary activities (e.g., a consciousness-raising social function, voters service activities).
12. Search actively for opportunities to create new units in different areas of the community.

Unit Officers

1. Unit leader

The unit leader 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.

2. Discussion leader

The discussion leader is there to guide discussion in a manner conducive to a free exchange of ideas. A basic, although 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.

3. Unit membership, publicity, 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.

4. 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.

Suggested Tools for Unit Organization Director

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

League Handbook: Vital Information for League Members in Texas
Policies & Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards
Program Perspectives: A Guide to League Issues

LWVUS Publications

Impact on Issues—available at <http://lwv.org/content/impact-issues-2014-2016-online-edition>

League Basics—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-basics-download>

VOTER Editor

The editor of the local newsletter coordinates publication of the VOTER for the local League.

Preface

The *VOTER* is the visible expression of the League. 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 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.

Roles

- 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 distribution, as well as tasks such as word processing or desktop publishing.

Guidelines

1. The masthead should be distinctive with *VOTER* in all caps.
2. The format should be orderly, lively, and readable.
3. The content should be well written, interesting, upbeat, 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.
4. 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.

Suggested Tools for *VOTER* Editor

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

Practical *VOTER* Production

LWVUS Publications

Newsletter Editor—available at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/newsletter-editor>

Voters Service Committee

The voters service committee chair coordinates and supervises all League voters service activities in the local community, providing leadership in educating citizens about candidate views, ballot initiatives, and a range of specific critical public policy issues.

Preface

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 so that citizens and residents can make informed decisions. The voters service chair may be the most visible position on the local League board.

Depending on the size of the League and the extent of voters service projects, your League may want to divide responsibilities among two or more chairs. For instance, voters guides, other election-related activities, and nonelection citizen information projects can each have a separate on- or off-board chair. All may be under the umbrella of the voters service chair or may work directly under the responsible vice president. Each local League should select the combination that works best in their local situation. No matter how voters service responsibilities are organized, it is important to:

- Know your community and its needs.
- Know the amount of time members will have to give to the many possible voters service projects.
- Set up a calendar of work and coordinate your activities with other League projects for the year.
- Evaluate each request in light of the priorities you have set.

Voters Service Committee Responsibilities

1. Prepare voters guides before an election.
2. Conduct voter registration drives.
3. Sponsor candidates forums and interviews.
4. Provide up-to-date information on registration and voting procedures.
5. Provide year-round assistance through a variety of brochures, forums, workshops, meetings, and speakers to help citizens understand, use, and participate in the many aspects of government and politics at all levels.

Voters Guide Tips

1. Set up a calendar for each election and start early.
2. 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.
3. The state League publishes a voters guide for statewide candidates in primary and general elections and 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 voters guide. When this is done, the format, but not the content, of the state voters guide may be changed; the state copyright **MUST** be included. Local Leagues may purchase a digital copy or electronic file.
4. If a newspaper publishing your voters 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.

Ballot Issues

The voters service committee may produce a voters guide that provides explanatory or pro/con information on city charter amendments or referenda. 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*.

Use of Education Fund Money

Local Leagues having money on deposit with the LWV-Texas 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 *Handbook for Local League TEF Projects*.

Distribution of Publication to State Office

Submit a copy of each voters service publication to the state office at sll@LWVTexas.org

Suggested Tools for Voters Service Committee Chair

LWV-TX Publications—available at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/publications>

Guide to Candidates Forum for Local Leagues

Guide to Voters Guides for Local Leagues

Policy on Candidates Forums

Policy on Voters Guides

Handbook for Local League TEF Projects

Money Matters Made Easier: A Guide for Local League Treasurers

Voter Education Best Practices (7 tutorials) <https://my.lwv.org/texas/best-practices-gotv>

LWVUS Publications

Candidates Night Script—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/candidates-night-script>

High School Voter Registration Training Manual (3rd ed.)—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/high-school-voter-registration-training-manual-3rd-edition>

Host a Debate Watching Party—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/host-debate-watching-party>

New Lesson Plan: High School Voter Registration—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/new-lesson-plan-high-school-voter-registration>

Presidential General Election Voters' Guide—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/presidential-general-election-voters'-guide>

Sample Questions for Debates and Voters Guides—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/sample-questions-debates-and-voters-guides>

Voter Registration Media Alert Template—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/voter-registration-media-alert-template>

Voters Guide: Advertising Guidance—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/voters'-guides-advertising-guidance>

Voters Guide Manual—available at

<http://lwv.org/content/voters-guide-manual>

LWVUS Webinars

Moderating Debates LWV Style (1 hour)—available at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ergv_ztJXjs&feature=youtu.be

New Voter Registration Training Webinars—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/new-voter-registration-training-webinars>

Voter Registration Best Practices (1' 10")—available at

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/voter-registration-best-practices-webinar>

LWV-Texas Style

Proofreading

The League has a reputation for publishing thoroughly researched, carefully written documents. If a League publication contains typographical, grammatical, or stylistic errors, the reader may think that carelessness in presentation reflects inaccuracy of content. Thus accurate proofreading is critical.

Items Specific to League Style

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

- candidates forum/meeting/questionnaires
- citizens committee
- county commissioners court
- presidents mailing
- speakers bureau
- voters guide
- voters service

Guide to Capitalization—Traditional League Usage

Act when used as part of a law title (National Voter Registration Act); **but** act when used as a common noun (the act, the 1992 act)

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

amendment unless referring to a specific constitutional amendment, such as the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or the Equal Rights Amendment

annual meeting

bill

Board when used as part of a proper name (LWV-TX Board of Directors); **but** the state board or off-board position

budget

bylaws when used in general, such as "It is the job of a bylaws committee..." **but** the LWV-TX Bylaws Committee

chair such as the Water Commission chair, membership chair; **but** Chair Betty Smith

city council the council, city council member; **but** Houston City Council

Committee if used as part of a proper name (LWV-TX Nominating Committee, U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee); **but** committee if used as a common noun (any nominating committee) or substitute for a proper name (the committee)

Congress when referring to the U.S. House and U.S. Senate together; **but** your congressman and congressional action; Representative or Rep. is the preferred title before the name of a U.S. House member

Constitution when used as a proper name, such as the U.S. Constitution or the Texas Constitution; **but** state constitution or constitutional

convention when used as a common noun, such as state convention or the convention; **but** Convention if referring to a specific national or state League convention **and** used without a definite article (the), such as "delegates to Convention"

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

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

electoral college the college or the electors (except when referring to it as a League program)

executive executive department, executive branch, executive privilege; **but** Chief Executive when referring to the President of the United States

federal government U.S. government, the government; **but** Federal Reserve Board, U.S. Government Printing Office, or writing about the Federal Government in its official capacity

Governor Governor Miriam (Ma) Ferguson; **but** the governor

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

judicial branch

League League of Women Voters, the League, local Leagues

Legislature when used as part of a proper name (the 75th Legislature, the Texas Legislature); **but** legislature or legislative branch

local local government, local League

Mayor Mayor Kathy Whitmire; **but** the mayor of Austin

national national government, national League budget; **but** National League of Cities

Party when used as part of a proper name (Green Party); **but** a party, political parties

President of the United States, LWV-Texas President Jane Doe; **but** presidential candidate, presidential election, 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 League program (LWV-TX Program 2016-18) and the name of a League program item (Voting Rights or Campaign Finance); **but** program items, program chair, national program

Representative Representative Frances (Sissy) Farenthold, House of Representatives; **but** a representative

Republican when referring to a member of the Republican Party; **but** republican when relating to the nature of a republic

resolution when used as a common noun; **but** Senate Joint Resolution 20 (SJR 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 of the United States, U.S. Senate, Senator Margie Neal; **but** a senator, senatorial

state when a common noun, such as state government, the state, state office; **but** State of Texas

titles of publications

- **Capitalize:** First word, last word, all proper names and pronouns; verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, subordinate conjunctions; the first word after a colon or dash, and words longer than three letters
 - Are, As, Before, Beyond, Because, Either, Hers, His, If, Our, Since, Their
- **Lower case:** Articles, coordinate conjunctions, and prepositions, regardless of length unless they are the first or last words of the title
 - a, an, and, at, but, by, for, in, nor, of, on, or, so, the, to, up, with, yet

Unit Rio Grande Valley Member-at-Large Unit; **but** a member-at-large unit or our three units

Voters Service Voters Service Program, Vice President of Voters Service; **but** voters service activities

League Lingo

action Promotion of a League position on local, state, and national public policy issues to government officials, the media, and the public by the president of the League or an authorized representative

action alert Request from the state or national League to take action at a specific time in support of a League position

Action News! A monthly electronic newsletter sent by LWV-Texas to League members in Texas

advocacy Arguing in favor of a cause, an idea, or a policy (does not necessarily involve lobbying)

annual meeting A local League year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaws changes, and adopt a budget and program of work for the next year

calendar Plans by the board of directors for the League year for League program and other activities

Capital Corps League members from the Austin area who assist issue chairs with legislative visits, testimony, and other state League advocacy efforts

concurrence A method of adopting a position reached through consensus by another League; Leagues can also concur with the recommendations of a resource committee or decision statements formulated by a League board of directors

consensus Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole; reached through objective study and discussion of an issue, not a vote

convention A state or national League meeting held biennially in which League delegates adopt program, elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt a budget, act on proposed bylaws changes, and conduct other business

council (national) A biennial meeting of League delegates to adopt a budget and review program, held in years between conventions and with a more limited representation

education fund A publicly supported, nonmembership organization to which tax-deductible donations can be made; LWV-Texas Education Fund was established in 1966 to operate exclusively for educational purposes in the area of government and public policy. It also holds tax-deductible donations made to local Leagues and makes grants to the state and local Leagues to carry out the educational purpose of the League

Facts & Issues (F&I) A balanced, unbiased, nonpartisan report authored by a study committee that reflects a diversity of views on the study topic and summarizes the facts as well as alternatives for change in public policy

household member If more than one member of a household is a member of the League, each additional household member is assessed half the per member payment for dues by the state and national Leagues; local dues may or may not follow this pattern

issue chair A League member who monitors a specific LWV-TX position and educates others about it, promotes its visibility, and advocates on its behalf

life member A person who has been a League member for 50 years or more; life members are excused from dues payment, and their Leagues pay no per member payment for them

lobbying communicating with elected officials (or their staff) to urge a position on a pending piece of legislation; always involves advocacy

member-at-large (MAL) A member who resides outside of, and is not enrolled in, a local League

member-at-large unit A state-recognized group of members-at-large in an area where there is no local League who become a formal group and provide League service in their communities

nonpartisan The League does not support or oppose political parties or candidates for public office at any level, including candidates who may be a League member

Observer Corps League members who attend governmental meetings, note what happens at the meetings, and report back to the League and community to promote government transparency and accountability and ensure that citizens are aware of decisions that impact their lives

orientation Basic background material provided in writing or at meetings to help members understand League purposes, policies, and procedures

per member payment (PMP) The amount of dues paid to the state and national Leagues on behalf of each member; determined by delegates to the state and national conventions; assessed based on the membership count on January 31 of each year

political The League studies public policy issues and advocates for change in government policy and legislation without regard to political party

position A statement of the League point of view on a public issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus, concurrence) and approved by the appropriate board of directors; used as the basis for League action

program Selected governmental issues chosen by the membership at local, state, and national levels for League study and action

program planning The process through which members suggest (a) a new topic for study, (b) review of a current position for a possible update, or (c) an amendment to a current position, or (d) a new position to be adopted by concurrence

programs Planned, coordinated activities (speakers, discussion, et al.) at League meetings, often for a specific purpose

unit A subdivision of a League with a large membership; provides maximum participation by members in discussion of League program and activities

VOTER A League newsletter for members and others; published by local and state Leagues

voters guide (VG) A nonpartisan publication that includes candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues or pro/con information on propositions or amendments

voters service (VS) Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and encourage their participation in the political process; registering voters and presenting factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and election issues are the two most basic voters service activities