



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF FLORIDA

Welcome to the Starting Point!

A Guide to Organizing New Leagues

THE MISSION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

*Encouraging informed and
active participation in
government*

*Working to increase
understanding of major public
policy issues*

*Influencing public policy
through education and
advocacy*

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(Manual revision date September 1, 2009)



WELCOME TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FLORIDA

Congratulations on the formation of a new LWVF Member-at-Large (MAL) Unit. The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower individuals to shape better communities worldwide. By joining the League, members can gain the information and skills they need to become effective participants in government. Belonging to an active local League and/or MAL Unit offers additional opportunities to take part in the democratic process. For the organization as a whole, new members and new Leagues mean fresh ideas, innovative approaches to resolving public policy concerns, and ongoing sources of leadership.

Accepting a leadership role in your new LWVF MAL Unit brings with it certain responsibilities along with great satisfaction in knowing you played a part in assisting the League in carrying out its mission. Most of all, it is hoped you will enjoy your leadership role and the many rewards that come with it.

The LWVF “Welcome to the Starting Point: A Guide to Organizing New Leagues” is intended to assist you and provide guidance in meeting your unit’s leadership goals. Information in this manual is compiled from the following resource materials: LWVUS Starting Point-A guide to Organizing New Leagues (pub #263), League Basics and information provided in the tools for leaders’ section LWVUS website, LWV of Oregon-Starting Point: A Primer for New MAL Units (2008), LWVF All About Member-at-Large Units (pub #1240), LWVF In Florida League Policies and Procedures of the Board of Directors (pub #1232) and the LWVF Bylaws.

We are delighted that you have joined the League and truly hope that you will enjoy your association with our unique organization.

Cordially,

The League of Women Voters of Florida
Board of Directors
Deirdre Macnab, President
September 1, 2009



WHAT IS A MEMBER-AT-LARGE (MAL) UNIT?

The League of Women Voters is organized on three levels – national, state and local – with inter-League regional organizations (ILOs) in some metropolitan areas. Recognized local Leagues function in some 1,000 communities throughout the United States. In areas where there is not a local League, or an individual selects not to choose membership in a local League, interested persons can join as Members-at-Large (MALs). A Member-at-Large automatically becomes a member of the state and national League. A group of MALs may become a local League by first becoming a MAL Unit under the direction of the LWVF Membership Chair.

Member-at-Large Units are those groups which have been so recognized by the LWVF. The Board of Directors has responsibility for the establishment of Member-at-Large Units. For this purpose, the Board may organize a group of members-at-large in a community in which no local League exists and shall recognize the group as a Member-at-Large Unit when it meets the state requirements. The Board shall withdraw recognition from a Member-at-Large Unit for recurrent failure to meet the requirements for recognition as a Member-at-Large Unit. All funds held by a Member-at-Large Unit from which recognition has been withdrawn shall be paid to the LWVF.

(Article V.Sec.3a, b, c - Member-at-Large Units)

Since the MAL Unit is an entity of the state League and therefore covered by state League bylaws, no formal Unit bylaws are necessary. MAL Units will however want to develop policies to cover certain aspects of their operations. The state League mentors can assist Unit leaders in drafting policies to help them respond to difficult situations that could compromise the group's nonpartisan reputation (*see Appendix 2 page 12-14*).

The following list gives the initial steps for becoming a MAL Unit:

1. The idea for forming a new League arises, either through citizen inquiry or board initiative.
2. A nucleus of interested citizens is recruited.
3. State mentors are appointed and confer (in person, by phone) with the interested group. In some cases mentors can also be designated from a nearby local League.
4. An informational planning meeting is held, and the decision to proceed is made.
5. Preparations for an organizational meeting are made.
6. The organizational meeting is held, and requirements for recognition as a MAL Unit are met (nonpartisanship policy; required number of paid members; leadership team selected; geographic area to be served is identified and incorporated into the name of the MAL Unit).

INITIAL MEETINGS

The **first meeting** is an important step in learning more about formal League involvement. Representatives of the League (typically from/or assigned by the state Board) will be available to work with the group as mentors. The purpose is threefold: to introduce the League, to discuss the MAL Unit process, and to plan an organizational meeting if there is sufficient interest in becoming a MAL Unit. Everyone present during this planning session should contribute an extensive list of friends, neighbors, business associates and community leaders to receive personal invitations to the organizational meeting, and plans to publicize the meeting should be developed.

If there is sufficient interest, an **organizational meeting** may be held to generate wider community interest in the League, recruit additional members, select a leadership team, adopt a nonpartisanship policy and outline a calendar of activities. The date and time selected for the organizational meeting should be convenient for the widest audience possible. Choosing a site that is open to the public can help attract potential members from outside the group's immediate circle of friends and colleagues.

The mentors from the state League will play a key role at this point by helping the members identify and reach out to all segments of the community as they prepare to launch their new group. The organizational meeting sends an important signal about the League's commitment to reflecting the concerns of all citizens. It gives the group an opportunity to share leadership and chart the League's future with diverse community members, enhancing the organization's ability to bring about positive change within that community.

Before adjourning this organizational meeting, everyone attending should be invited to join the League on the spot, if they have not already done so. At this point the MALs should strive to meet the minimum requirements for recognition by the LWVF as a MAL Unit. Once minimum requirements have been met, the MAL Unit can be officially recognized by the LWVF Board of Directors.

LWVF Minimum Requirements for MAL Unit Recognition:

Becoming recognized as a MAL unit is an important and encouraging step for a new group and signifies their official status as part of the larger League organization. Units are every bit as important as recognized local Leagues and play an important part in their communities. A MAL unit offers members an opportunity to experience the invigorating climate of the League and provides an organization that furthers the League's purposes. It allows for interchange of ideas and discussion among local members as well as in the community. In summary, to become recognized by the LWVF Board of Directors, a unit should provide evidence it has:

- Enrolled a minimum of 6 paid members
- Designation of state League mentors
- A name for the MAL Unit designating the geographic area it will serve
- Adoption of a nonpartisanship policy
- The following leadership positions filled: Chair/President, Vice Chair/President, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Chair
- Planned meetings or activities for the first few months.

Membership Dues

Annual membership dues, in the amount determined by the LWVF State Board, are made payable to LWVF and forwarded to the state League office by the unit Treasurer.

Dues are renewable on the member's enrollment anniversary. Any member whose dues are not paid within two months of an

anniversary date will be dropped from the membership roster.

When two or more members reside at the same address in a common household, they may pay an annual Household Membership (annual membership for one member and one half the annual memberships for each subsequent member).

ROLE OF MENTORS

- Consult with and advise Unit Leadership on all aspects of League activities on a regular and ongoing basis.
- Work with Unit to develop membership recruitment activities.
- Provide training on how LWVF and LWVFUS positions are developed.
- Coordinate learning opportunities with surrounding local Leagues.
- Facilitate program calendar development and implementation.
- Work with Unit to develop budget.
- Provide monthly progress report to LWVF Membership Chair.
- Attend as many Unit activities as time permits.
- Attend first Annual Meeting.
- Receive copies of all e-mail and materials sent to new MAL Unit.
- Submit reports as required to the state League office.

ROLE OF LWVF STATE OFFICE

- Provide Leadership materials such as Study and Action and how to access the LWVF and LWVUS website materials and information.
- Work with Unit Chair/President to set up membership roster.
- Enroll new members in the Unit Membership Database.
- Maintain Unit Membership Roster in the National Membership Database
- Add Unit Chair/President to all state contact lists.
- Pay the LWVUS PMP for the MAL Unit members. The amount is the same for local Leagues. State and national PMP is established by delegates to state and national conventions.

ROLE OF UNIT CHAIR/PRESIDENT

- Represent Unit at local, state and national events.
- Speak on behalf of the unit to the public. All public statements require prior approval by the mentor. Another member of the Unit may be designated on behalf of the chair/president with approval of the mentor.
- Preside over meetings.
- Set meeting agendas.
- Develop Unit policies and procedures.
- Develop and maintain Unit budget (delegate to Treasurer).
- Provide copies of activities and minutes to mentors and LWVF state office as requested. (can be delegated to Unit Secretary).
- Maintain up-to-date membership roster and update as needed with LWVF (can be done by Unit Treasurer).



IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR UNIT DEVELOPMENT

All League groups, whether they are working toward becoming a local League or they expect to continue as a MAL Unit, should be encouraged to give attention to:

- Membership growth
- Diversity
- Program work
- Voter service
- Financial stability
- Communications

Membership Growth

Increasing the size of their membership should be a major first-year goal for the leaders of any newly recognized MAL Unit. Their state League mentors should encourage them to:

- Set a specific numerical goal for membership growth.
- Identify community groups and individuals to target for recruitment.
- Design a program of activities that will generate community interest and attract new members.
- Schedule activities at times and in places that are convenient and inviting to the widest audience possible.
- Build a membership recruitment component into every activity, including a brief presentation about the League and an invitation to everyone present to join the League.
- Develop a system for following up with those who express an interest in the League.
- Develop a system for following up with all new members to help them find a level of involvement that suits each one.

Diversity

An integral component of the MAL Unit's plan for membership growth should be strategies to recruit a membership that reflects the diversity of the community. League members at every level recognize that diverse perspectives are necessary for responsive and responsible decision making, and inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to be an effective voice for all citizens. Adopting a diversity policy and developing diversity strategies are important first steps towards achieving this fundamental goal.

The multi-year plan of action to achieve diversity in the League adopted by the LWVUS/EF will concentrate first on achieving racial and ethnic diversity but will also include technical assistance to Leagues to ensure that all programs and meetings are barrier-free for members with disabilities.

Key steps for MAL Unit leaders in meeting the challenge of achieving diversity:

- Make a personal commitment to diversity.
- Develop a written policy that affirms the MAL Unit's commitment to diversity.
- Identify and learn about groups with diverse perspectives in the community.
- Set goals for increased diversity and develop an action plan to achieve these goals.
- Identify opportunities to network and collaborate with diverse groups in the community,
- Establish an environment that is welcoming and supportive of all members.

Program Work

League program consists of member and community education, study, action, and other activities. A meaningful and compelling program is essential to the success of any League group. Our program is what we offer our members; it's what attracts others to join us; and it's what we do for our communities. Through its education and advocacy work, the new Unit will be helping fulfill the League's goal: to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The Unit members' first step in planning their program activities for the year is to select the issue(s) they want to address. Choosing issues that are timely, and that need public discussion, and that are of vital concern to the community will help attract an audience and establish the group as an organization that can make a real difference.

Among the program topics the group should consider are those issues targeted for emphasis at the state and national levels, particularly if one or more of them is generating a lot of community interest. Another option is to focus on a purely local issue that can then serve as a means for the new members to learn about the structure and operations of their local government. A thorough understanding of the governmental decision-making process is key to effective citizen education and advocacy.

The range of topics from which to choose is considerable, and the Unit may be tempted to adopt an overly ambitious agenda. The state League mentors can play an important role in helping a Unit focus its energies and develop a program of activities that matches the resources and sends a coherent message about the League's purpose. It is essential that MAL Unit leaders notify the mentors of all programs, forums and action priorities that the MAL Unit intends to undertake, in

order to ensure that the non-partisanship policy and other applicable League procedures are followed. Specific limitations for studies and action activities for MAL Units are provided on the following page.

After identifying the issues they wish to explore, the membership can plan the activities they will undertake in working on these issues. Possibilities include:

Member and Community Education

- **Hot Topic meetings with a guest speaker.** This could be a local government official discussing an issue of community concern or a state League leader talking about one or more state or national League program priorities.
- **Discussion group.** Members may want to meet to explore one or more public policy issues in depth, perhaps as a follow-up to a presentation by a guest speaker.
- **Tours and visits.** Attending a city council meeting (preceded perhaps by a discussion with two or three city officials about the issues on that evening's agenda) can help League members learn about how their local government works. A visit to a landfill, a public works project, or a social service agency can make public policy issues come alive.
- **Community forums.** A panel of speakers with a range of perspectives can help citizens learn about possible solutions to a critical governmental issue and how they can make their own opinions heard.
- **"Know your community" project.** It is suggested that one of the first projects for a new League group is an in-depth study of their community, gathering information on the structure and procedures of the various governmental bodies within their jurisdiction.

Study

- **State/national studies.** MAL Units are encouraged to take part in state or national League studies under way and in the related member agreement process.
- **Local study.** If the group's goal is to eventually become a full-fledged local League, it is recommended that **a study of local government, or some aspect of local government, be completed before undertaking any other local study and before full local League status is granted.**

Members may also use local study material developed by another League in the state as a basis for an examination of an issue from the perspective of their own community. This study will enhance members' ability to represent the League in the community. The mentors should work with the group in the development of the scope of this study. When the study of local government is completed, then the program for the year should incorporate a presentation of the study as well as member consensus.

As a rule, the group may not take on any other study until the group establishes full Local League status. Exceptions to this may arise, especially in small communities, although state board approval would be required.

Action

- **State/national action alerts.** Units are encouraged to respond to action alerts from the state and national levels.
- **Local action on state/national positions.** With permission and guidance from the state League mentors, the group may apply a state or national League position to local issues and take appropriate action.
- **Local action on local positions** generally does not occur during the MAL Unit stage. Only full local Leagues may take action based on positions derived from study and member agreements.

Other Activities

- **Observers.** The MAL Unit may form an observer corps to attend and report on local government meetings.
- **State/national program planning.** MAL Units may help set the state and national League agendas by taking part in the program planning process.

Voter Service

Providing election-related services was one of the original purposes of the League's founders and continues to be a key activity of League groups everywhere. The state League mentors will work closely with the Unit to ensure that it maintains strict nonpartisanship in conducting any and all voter service projects.

Among the voter service activities the group may want to consider are:

- Registering voters and disseminating registration and voting information.
- Conducting a get-out-the-vote campaign.
- Sponsoring candidate meetings or debates.
- Sponsoring pro/con forums on ballot issues.
- Compiling local voters' guides/candidate questionnaires; distributing those and state guides/questionnaires.
- Publishing a local directory of elected officials.

Financial Stability

The MAL Unit must be adequately financed in order to operate and carry out its goals. As the members make their plans for the year, the state League mentors can help them develop a budget showing the expenses they expect to incur and the sources of anticipated income. Since members-at-large join by paying dues to the state League (except those who have joined as nationally recruited members), the new MAL Unit will need to decide whether it wishes to assess additional local dues to help support its activities. The budget should be adopted subject to the approval of the LWVF Board, since it is up to the Board to oversee the financial plans for the MAL Unit. If the budget is amended, the LWVF Board needs to approve the amendment(s).

MAL Units also are encouraged to seek financial support from the community at large. This will become easier to do as the group begins to gain visibility and recognition through its voter service and citizen education projects. The state League mentors can help by sharing successful fundraising experiences of other League groups and by explaining how tax-deductible contributions may be made.

Communications

As they grow in strength and numbers, Units are encouraged to publish a regular newsletter to keep members informed about meetings and other organizational issues. Funding will have to be provided for in the Unit's budget. The mentor can help by sharing examples of attractive and interesting newsletters published by other League groups. The Unit leader can be added to the mailing lists of local Leagues.

Visibility for each activity on the MAL Unit's agenda should be built into every project. External communications are essential to the success of each individual activity and to the long-term growth of the new League group. Consider:

- Regular announcements of League meetings in the local newspaper's calendar of events, on local radio and on TV, as well as on a variety of community bulletin boards.
- Letters to the editor.
- News releases, particularly when new leaders are selected.
- Creating and maintaining a web site for the MAL Unit.

SUGGESTED JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR A MAL UNIT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Outlined below is a set of suggested responsibilities for each member of the MAL Unit leadership team: a chair/president, vice-chair/president, treasurer, secretary and membership/events chair. The team could be expanded to include a program chair or voter service chair who would then handle those responsibilities. Or various tasks may be delegated to other members.

The Chair/President

- Schedules periodic meetings of the leadership team to plan activities and evaluate the well-being of the Unit. Chairs meetings of the leadership and the Unit.
- Speaks for the League. Only the chair/president, or a member designated by the chair/president, may speak for the League, and all public statements, news releases and other forms of communication with the public require prior approval of the MAL Unit mentors.
- Directs fundraising efforts. Checks first with the state League mentors to ensure that the activity complies with state and IRS regulations.
- Circulates news of the Unit through the media.
- Maintains the Unit's files.

The Vice-Chair/President

- Assists the Unit chair/president and fills in for her/him when necessary.
- Arranges for meeting places and refreshments, if desired.
- Fosters membership participation and growth.
- Prepares and distributes new member packets.

The Secretary

- Keeps minutes of business meetings and distributes them in accordance with the wishes of the group.
- Sends a copy of the business meeting minutes to the state mentor and state League office.
- Notifies the mentors and the state League office of changes in leadership.
- Prepares and submits required reports.
- Notifies members of meetings and activities.

The Treasurer:

- Handles local income and expenses: keeps financial records in a manner consistent with the Unit's budget format; and submits an annual treasurer's report to the Unit, state mentor and state office.
- Collects dues and transmits them to the state League office along with the returned membership application or renewal form.
- Keeps membership roster and promptly notifies the state League office of any changes. Submits all changes to the state League office for the yearly January 31 membership count.

The Membership/Events Chair:

- Responsible for directing the efforts to recruit and retain members.
- Enlist a small committee of two or three, including Board leaders to draw up a plan for three to four months.
- Present "Hot Topic" Luncheons as a venue to attract new members, discuss timely issues, and bring a spotlight to the League and its work.
- Put "Hot Topic" speakers on the front page of your newsletter with a photo.
- Encourage members to invite their friends, family, and neighbors to these events (it's a perfect venue to bring friends who might be interest in joining the League).

MOVING TOWARD TRANSITION TO A LOCAL LEAGUE

The leaders of a MAL Unit that is aiming for local League recognition will need to give attention to fulfilling certain requirements. The state League mentor plays a very important role in helping the group keep track of the tasks that need to be accomplished, providing sample materials and advice whenever needed.

The state Board is responsible for deciding when a MAL Unit has met the necessary requirements for requesting that the LWVUS recognize the group as a local League. In making its request, the state board will be affirming that the MAL Unit has fulfilled all League requirements approved by delegates to national convention and any additional requirements that may have been set by the state League.

LWVUS REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

(This is an excerpt from the LWVUS publication League Basics which contains essential policy and organizational information applicable to every local and state League. The complete document plus additional information can be found on the League website www.lwv.org)

In order to maintain its status as part of the League of Women Voters, each local League is required to:

- **Have bylaws, the first three articles of which should be consistent with those of the LWVUS. The remaining articles must provide for democratic procedures.**
- **Establish and maintain a nonpartisan policy.**
- **Hold an annual business meeting of the membership.**
- **Hold regular board meetings.**
- **Meet its financial obligations (per member payment) to the state and national levels of the League and adopt a financial plan for sustainability and for carrying out the League's mission to its community.**
- **Have a plan for membership growth and retention that encourage a membership as diverse as the community.**
- **Act in ways that are consistent with League principles, positions and policies.**

Women — and men (since 1974) — who are citizens and at least 18 years old may join the League as voting members. Associate (non-voting) membership is available for younger people and non-citizens. Joining at any level of the organization automatically confers membership at every level, and with that membership comes the opportunity to make an impact on local, state, regional and national public policy issues.

(Best practices corresponding to each of the above requirements are listed in the Tools for Leaders section of the League Website.)



APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE UNIT POLICY SHEET

Since the MAL Unit is an entity of the state League and covered by the state League bylaws, no formal Unit bylaws are necessary. MAL Units will, however, want to develop policies to cover certain aspects of their operations. The state League mentors can assist Unit leaders in drafting policies to help them respond to difficult situations that could compromise the group's nonpartisan reputation.

The following list of topics and sample policy statements are provided to assist MAL Unit leaders in developing a set of policies appropriate to their group.

Specification, term of office and method of selection of the MAL Unit's leaders. The leadership of the [NAME] MAL Unit shall consist of a chair/president, a vice-chair/president, a secretary and treasurer. They shall be elected for a [1 or 2 year] term at the spring general business meeting of the membership.

Diversity policy statement.

The [NAME] mal Unit affirms its belief in and commitment to diversity, inclusiveness and collective decision making. There shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity. Further, the [NAME] MAL Unit affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of the community in its membership, its leadership and its programs.

Guidelines for joining coalitions.

Membership of the [MAL] Unit in any coalition shall be undertaken only when the coalition's major goals are in accord with the League's mission and when membership

would bring added effectiveness to the League's efforts to achieve its advocacy or education goals. Coalition members must be approved by the leadership team.

Restrictions on the use of the membership list outside the League. The membership list of the [NAME] MAL Unit and the LWVF membership list, in any form, may not be provided to any other organization or group without the expressed permission of the State Board.

Restrictions on circulating of petitions at MAL Unit meetings. Candidate petitions may be circulated only after the meeting has adjourned, in an area separate from the meeting room, and in a manner that does not create the impression that the League endorses that candidate. Other petitions may be circulated with the permission of the leadership team and with an explanation of the League's position in regard thereto.

Restrictions on announcements on behalf of other groups at MAL Unit meetings or in the Unit newsletter. Announcements on behalf of other organizations may be made at Unit meetings or in the Unit newsletter only with the permission of the leadership team.

Announcements on behalf of candidates at MAL Unit meetings. No announcement on behalf of any candidate for elective office shall be made at any League meeting.

Designation of spokesperson for the Unit. The Unit chair/president is the official spokesperson for the Unit unless she/he designates another member to speak. Unless authorized otherwise, members lobby in their own names, not in the name of the League.

APPENDIX 2: DEVELOPING A NONPARTISANSHIP POLICY

It is the responsibility of every League group to formulate and adopt a nonpartisanship policy to guide the political activities of its leadership team. The purpose of the policy is to assure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization which does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. Establishing and maintaining a nonpartisanship policy is one of the seven LWVUS requirements for League recognition.

A nonpartisanship political policy should include the following basic elements:

- A statement of the nonpartisan nature of the organization.
- Guidelines on permissible activities for members and leadership positions.
- Restrictions on certain leadership positions.
- A policy on how to handle resignations when a member of the leadership team resigns to engage in political activity.
- A procedure for an annual review of the policy by the leadership team.
- The date the policy was last reviewed/revised.

Suggested Discussion Guide

As the leadership team develops a policy that will protect the League's credibility as an effective nonpartisan organization in the community, members should consider the following factors:

- The political climate and traditions in the community.
- The sensitivity of specific portfolio (e.g., president or chair, voter service).

- The extent to which the public identifies (or may identify) a member's activities with those of the League.
- The visibility associated with specific political activities.

See also League Basics and the current President's Packet for additional information and guidance on developing a nonpartisanship policy.

Sample Nonpartisanship Policy Statement for a MAL Unit

The organizational structure of a MAL unit is simpler than that of a Local League so its policy may be brief and form part of its policy guidelines.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization. It does not support or oppose candidates for public office, but it does encourage its members, as individuals, to participate actively in the political process. Members of the leadership team for [NAME] MAL Unit recognize that, as a result of their close identification with the LWV, they have a special responsibility to see that their activities do not create an impression of partisanship. They will use discretion in any political activity, ascertaining in advance from the state board that such activity will not comprise the nonpartisanship of the League.

LWVF/LWVFEF Governance

Affirmed July 2009

Nonpartisan Political Activity Policy

League board members' experience equips them for public life — both for elective and appointive office in government and for responsible positions in the private sector. The external contacts, skills and experience that leaders bring to the League, in turn, benefit and enrich the League as an organization.

The LWVF/LWVFEF board believes that board members should not only be allowed, but also encouraged, to seek and accept non-League positions that confer these mutual benefits. At the same time, the board recognizes the necessity of imposing a few basic limitations on board members' political activity in order to protect the nonpartisan reputation of the League.

With this objective in mind, the LWVF/LWVFEF board adopts the following guidelines.

1. **Elected Office.** The President and Voter Services Chair shall not run for, nor hold, any elective office. Other board members shall not run for, nor hold, state elective office but may run for federal and local office, regardless of party designation, after consultation with the LWVF/LWVFEF board and with the president of the affected local League. League members shall be considered candidates upon establishing campaign accounts.

2. **Political Party Office.** The President and Voter Services Chair shall not serve in any position in a political party. Other board members shall not serve in political party positions at the state level and shall abide by their local Leagues' political activity policies regarding holding federal and local party positions.
3. **Campaign Contributions.** The President and Voters Services Chair may not attend fundraising events or make campaign contributions for candidates. Other board members may attend fundraising events and make campaign contributions for candidates at any level.
4. **Political Campaigns.** The President and Voter Services Chair shall not chair or administer fundraising or political campaigns, chair a campaign event or work in a significant way in the campaign of a candidate for office at any level. Other board members may not undertake such activities for candidates for state office but may do so for candidates for federal or local office after consultation with the president of the affected local League.
5. **Additional Clarification.** Board members shall present questions about specific situations to the LWVF/LWVFEF board where the foregoing policies do not resolve the question.

This policy shall be reviewed and readopted by the LWVF/LWVFEF board at the beginning of each new biennium.



Sample Nonpartisanship Policy Statement for a Local League

The League takes action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. However, it shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

Recognizing that the League experience uniquely equips members for public life and wishing to encourage them to utilize their special knowledge and abilities, non-board members are encouraged to participate fully (as individuals) in party politics. The activities of certain board members, however, must be limited to preserving the League's nonpartisan reputation.

The president, voter service director and any other board member whose position is deemed sensitive shall not run for, or hold, elective office. When a board member declares for an elective office, the member shall resign from the board.

Public notices released by the League announcing the resignation of a board member to run for elective office should be carefully worded to avoid the appearance of endorsing the resigning board member's candidacy.

Board members shall not undertake any action that will cause them to be identified publicly as supporting any candidate for office or any political party.

The president, voter service director and holders of other board positions deemed sensitive shall not participate in any political campaign in any way. No board member shall chair or administer political campaigns or campaign events, or work in a significant way in a candidate's campaign.

A board member may serve on any public board, commission, committee, or coalition; however, that board member does not represent the League unless officially designated a League representative by the board.

A board member may not speak in an official capacity, or work in any way, against a League position.

The political activities of a spouse or relative of a board member are to be considered separate and distinct from the activities of the board meeting.

This policy shall be reviewed each year at the board's organizational meeting following the annual meeting.

APPENDIX 3: GUIDELINES FOR LEAGUE WORK ON ISSUES

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. To stay true to our mission and our nonpartisanship and to acknowledge the challenges of working in a multilevel organization, we have developed a number of policies and procedures that govern our program work:

- The League must have a position before it takes action.
- League positions are derived from member study of issues selected by members and from member agreement obtained through consensus or concurrence.
- League studies examine all sides of an issue, providing balanced and fair information that members use as the basis for deciding what governmental changes are needed.
- The chair/president is the official spokesperson for a MAL Unit unless she/he designates another member to speak. Unless authorized otherwise, members lobby in their own name, not in the name of the League.
- Local studies focus on issues that can be addressed by local government.
- MAL Units may use locally adopted positions or relevant state or national positions to lobby their local elected officials.

- We never lobby as League members in opposition to a League position, but, as individuals, we are free to lobby as we choose.
- The program work at each level of the League is directed by the board at that level.
- Leagues are asked to respond to action alerts from the state League and the LWVUS. To lobby at the state or national level when lobbying has not been requested by the board at that level, Leagues seek permission from the appropriate level before acting.
- The League speaks with one voice, coordinating action with other affected Leagues, or other levels of the League, when need arises.

The goal of League program work is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide. We recognize that broad-based citizen involvement is key to resolving the complex problems that confront our society today. In carrying out our program activities, therefore, we seek to engage both our members and our fellow citizens in the process of bringing about positive change.

The League is trusted to provide the public leadership needed to help citizens play a meaningful role in the governing process.

