

League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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# Program for Action

2001-2003

A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota

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#### INTRODUCTION

To the League of Women Voters, *Program* means those issues chosen by the members for study and action. At each level of the League--national, state or local--Program includes items adopted for current study, and carefully worded, study-based consensus positions that lead to action.

State Program is selected by League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) members in individual units through proposals to their local boards of directors, who send the proposals to the state Board. The state Board then formulates a recommended Program of old, new and/or amended items consisting of those most frequently mentioned. All items, whether recommended or not, may be discussed, amended and adopted or rejected at the biennial state Convention.

Following adoption of the Program, research committees are formed to prepare study information on new items. In small units and at large meetings, members weigh the pros and cons of issues to reach consensus on each study item. The state Board receives the consensus reports from the local Leagues, determines areas of agreement, and formulates position statements. Only after consensus is reached and a position is formed can the League take action. The state Board also evaluates specific legislation and decides what action should be taken. There are two kinds of action: 1) developing public support for League positions; 2) supporting specific measures and policies which promote a League position or opposing those which threaten it. The process works similarly for the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL), except that the Program items have regional significance and are chosen and studied by members in the metropolitan area.

Leagues at all levels may "concur" with a position of another League either within Minnesota or in another state. A possible concurrence study is considered at state Convention in the same manner as any other Program item. Study materials developed for the original study may be used and are supplemented by the committee overseeing the concurrence study. The LWVMN position on Prevention of Violence, for example, was originally adopted by the LWV-Minneapolis and concurred with by Leagues throughout the state.

Included in this booklet are summaries of the 2001-2003 Programs of the LWVMN, of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the CMAL, which consists of the local Leagues in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. For each LWVMN Program item on which a position has been reached, you will find:

- a summary of the position, along with a brief statement of the relevant LWVUS position, if there is one (all in boldface);
- details of the LWVMN position, including the date when consensus was reached on each section; and
- a history of League and governmental action on the topic since 1990. <u>Prior history will be found in *Positions for* Action 1999-2001.
  </u>

LWVMN positions have been grouped according to LWVUS classifications: Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. Exceptions to these groups are Education and Criminal Justice, which LWVMN retains as separate categories. To emphasize the fact that the state League often acts on national positions, summary statements of LWVUS positions have been included where appropriate.

League members throughout the state promote public support for positions by talking with legislators and community leaders; attending precinct caucuses and participating in the political process; and using the media, public meetings and personal contacts to tell their story. Local Leagues may take action themselves if the action is consistent with national, state and/or CMAL positions; their membership is informed and in general agreement; and, when the action affects other Leagues, they confer prior to taking action.

The state Board takes official action in the name of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. This action may consist of writing letters, personal lobbying of members of the Legislature or executive agencies, testimony at legislative hearings, holding press conferences, or any other measure deemed useful by the Board. Individual Leaguers speak for themselves only and not as League members unless directed to do so by state, national or local League boards.

The League of Women Voters strongly endorses citizen involvement in the political process. It encourages League members to participate in the political party of their choice. The League itself is nonpartisan; LWV, as an organization, does not support candidates or political parties. State Board members are restricted to low-level partisan political activities and may not run for party-designated public office.

For more complete information on the Program of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the reader should see *Impact on Issues*, 2000-2002 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).

#### LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWVUS and LWVMN Programs, League Principles may be the basis for state and local League actions. The Principles have served two functions according to LWVUS Bylaws: 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local Program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate League board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

League Principles are as follows:

- The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.
- The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.
- The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation; promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest; share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare; promote a sound economy; and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.
- The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

#### PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

#### Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of Minnesota

#### I. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Judiciary:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

**Corrections:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

**Selection of Judges:** Support present system of selection and retention of appellate and district judges with certain modifications. Oppose allowing candidates to accept and use endorsement by political parties.

#### II. EDUCATION

Equal Opportunity: Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance and ensure adequate financing of public schools.

Financing of Education: Support of equal access to a good public education for all Minnesota children.. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

**Collective Bargaining and Tenure:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

**Library Funding:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

#### III. GOVERNMENT

Citizen Rights: Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections. Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

Organization of Government: Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and Executive Branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of timely redistricting based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies; opposition to a unicameral state legislature.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments; and support of voter approval by a majority of those voting on the question.

Oppose most forms of voter initiative and referendum and recall of members of the legislature and state constitutional officers.

Oppose term limits for members of the legislature and state constitutional officers.

Financing State Government: Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on broad-based taxes and user fees. Support of an evaluation of each individual revenue source to determine if it is competitive with other states, efficient, equitable, progressive, reliable, responsive and simple. Support of a broad-based sales tax with exemptions for essential items. Support of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing services provided by local governments and as a partial funding for education. Support of a corporation franchise tax competitive with other states. Support of achieving social goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. Support of the principle that state legislation mandating local government action should identify sources of revenue. Support of long-term financial management, budget projections and budget reserve.

State Government Spending: Belief that a longterm vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions. Support of the following broad goals, in order of priority: provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities; provide basic level of health and human services; protect natural resources; encourage economic selfsufficiency; provide for public safety; provide highquality post-secondary educational opportunities; and preserve open spaces. Support of the use of specific criteria when faced with the need to limit spending, i.e. curtailing subsidies for sports teams and convention centers, maintenance of existing infrastructure over increased infrastructure, tax relief targeted to low-income households and providing services first to the most needy.

Firearms: Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. Opposition to an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution granting to an individual the right to bear arms. Support for the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

Water Resources: Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

**Solid Waste:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste and ensure safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

Air Quality: Support measures to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.

Land Use: Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local levels, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

Agriculture: Support of a system of sustainable agricultural production which provides safe, healthful food and which preserves and protects the state's human and natural agricultural resources and enhances the environment. Support of a state policy which promotes research and technical assistance in farming practices and rural economies that improve the economic viability of family farms, environmental health and the quality of life of family farmers and their communities.

#### V. SOCIAL POLICY

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### FAMILY ISSUES

Family Violence: Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support for improved services for the victims.

**Child Support:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

Child Protection: Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services.

Child Health: Support access to comprehensive prenatal and child health care.

Child Care: Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

Housing: The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing. Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Support of incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of disincentives to local units of government that do not promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of revision of the tax system to narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner-occupied residential property; reduction of the tax rate on rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households; encouragement of maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderateincome households.

Mental Health: Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community-based services that are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services.

**Violence Prevention:** Support for violence prevention programs in Minnesota.

Alcohol and Tobacco Use: Support statutes, ordinances, enforcement efforts and public funding designed to promote chemical health and reduce illegal use of alcohol and tobacco.

Support educational programs to improve chemical health and prevent illegal use of tobacco and alcohol starting in elementary school and continuing in middle and high school.

# Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of the United States

#### I. REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.

#### Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation:

Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

#### **Individual Liberties**

Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices** 

Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

#### Congress and the Presidency

**Congress:** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

**The Presidency:** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

# DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation

Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and representation in both houses of Congress.

#### **Election Process**

**Apportionment:** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Campaign Finance: Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

**Election of the President:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

#### **Fiscal Policy**

Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

#### **Gun Control**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

#### **Voting Rights**

Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

#### II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.

#### **Arms Control**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

#### Military Policy and Defense Spending

Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

#### Trade

Support systematic reduction of tariff and nontariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

#### **United Nations**

Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.

#### U.S. Relations with Developing Countries

Promote US policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

#### III. NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources and provides sound agricultural policy.

#### Resource Management

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and longrange planning with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

#### **Environmental Protection and Pollution Control**

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with the maximum protection of the public health and environment.

#### **Public Participation**

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

#### **Agricultural Policy**

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

#### IV. SOCIAL POLICY

Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, achieve universal health care coverage at reasonable cost, promote the well being of children, and combat discrimination, poverty and violence.

#### Child Care

Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

#### Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of all children.

#### **Equality of Opportunity**

Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

#### **Health Care**

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all US residents and controls health care costs.

#### Meeting Basic Human Needs

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

#### **Gun Control**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

#### **Urban Policy**

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

#### **Violence Prevention**

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities;
- coordination among agencies and levels of government;
- · adequate financing;
- effective enforcement;
- well defined channels for citizen input and review.

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

#### JUDICIARY

LWVMN Position: Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

#### Details

#### Support of:

- administrative reforms that expedite justice:
   establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate
   appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and
   streamline judicial administration; additional staff for
   prosecution, public defenders and legal services when
   such needs are established; statewide guidelines on
   bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and
   procedures; use of technology in administration; use of
   juries in civil cases only by request.
- methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- the development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

#### CORRECTIONS

LWVMN Position: Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

#### **Adult Corrections Position Details**

#### Support of:

- correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders.
   Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.
- recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.
- ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

#### **History of State Action**

In 2000 LWVMN submitted written testimony to the Senate Crime Prevention Committee in support of a statewide integrated criminal justice information system. The bill to provide for sharing information between agencies was signed into law.

#### **Juvenile Justice Position Details**

- a program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- the availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as

- including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.
- the consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

#### **Sentencing Position Details**

#### Support of:

- a presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff.
- consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances.
- the use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities.
- sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender.
- sentencing taking into consideration:
  - ⇒ the need for drug counseling
  - ⇒ whether the offender has a marketable skill
  - ⇒ academic training of the offender
  - ⇒ need for psychiatric treatment
  - ⇒ restitution when appropriate
  - ⇒ the availability of a residence and/or employment
  - ⇒ resolution of the causative situation

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, time off for good behavior, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

#### SELECTION OF JUDGES

LWVMN Position: LWVMN supports the present system of selection and retention of appellate and district court judges with certain modifications. LWVMN strongly opposes allowing candidates for appellate and district judge to accept and use endorsements by political parties. (1999)

#### **Details Selection of Judges**

- A candidate for judge at the appellate or district court level should have at least five years experience as a practicing attorney;
- The state government should be required to publish voter information on all candidates running for judicial office:
- The governor should be required to appoint appellate and district court judges from among the nominees provided by the selection commission;
- LWVMN strongly favors retaining the incumbency designation on judicial ballots. (1999)

#### **EDUCATION**

(See Social Policy section for additional positions.)

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

LWVMN Position: Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.

#### Details

 Support of correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards. (1967)

#### FINANCING OF EDUCATION

LWVMN Position: All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

#### Details

- the concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current education financing system should support:
  - ⇒ provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education; (1983) until the State of Minnesota can ensure consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state, the LWVMN supports the continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes; (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between students: pupil unit weighting, poverty,

- special education for various handicapping conditions, gifted and language differences (ESL and LEP); (1991)
- ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between school districts: scarcity, training and experience, desegregation and transportation; (1991)
- ⇒ using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding; (1983)
- ⇒ encouragement of financial efficiencies; (1983)
- ⇒ requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies. Such expenditures must be approved by the state Department of Education; (1991)
- ⇒ allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability; (1983)
- ⇒ reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments; (1983)
- ⇒ the gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue; (1991)
- ⇒ maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seek alternative funding sources for many. (1983)

#### Opposition to:

- continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction; (1983)
- state funding of cost of living differences between districts. (1991)

#### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TENURE

LWVMN Position: Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

#### Details

#### Support of:

- collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
  - ⇒ require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations.
  - ⇒ require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures.
  - ⇒ allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public.
- the present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- the school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community

- advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should be required by the state.
- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
  - ⇒ require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated.
  - ⇒ retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers. (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities.)
  - ⇒ require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when they must make staff dismissals due to reduction of positions. Such factors include recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the district, and special expertise of the individual faculty member.
- retention of state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

LWVMN does not support extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes *mandatory* negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

#### LIBRARY FUNDING

LWVMN Position: Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

#### Details

- increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions--85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal--to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax.
- substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) but less than the current 91%), in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs.
- an increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), based on the belief that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens.
- an increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS).

- distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds.
- four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them.
- the sharing of resources; using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services.

LWVMN opposes cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Equal Opportunity: In 1980 LWVMN published What's the Score in Minnesota, a project to monitor equality of opportunity for women in athletics in public schools. In 1995 and 1996 LWVMN joined several other organizations in a letter to the Legislature opposing making danceline an interscholastic sport..

In 1993 LWVMN lobbied in support of maintaining measurable standards to determine racial imbalance. LWVMN opposed the wholesale repeal of many education rules and mandates which was proposed during the 1993 session. We urged an interim review to assure that no loss of equality of opportunity resulted. We continued to support human relations training for school staff and programs for health and violence prevention. Legislative rules that we advocated retaining included gender equity in sports, and the Inclusive Educational Program Rule which requires each school district to create a plan for multicultural, gender-fair, disability-sensitive curriculum. The League was instrumental in developing the latter rule.

Finance: LWVMN opposed a limited demonstration voucher plan which could be used for private or independent schools because of our concern that use of public money for private K-12 education erodes the financial support of public education. In 1996 the LWVMN actively opposed school vouchers for K-12 education; the League believes the focus of state resources should be on continuing to improve the system that serves all children.

During the 1989 session LWVMN supported the Alliance for Commitment to Education in their proposal for school funding. We opposed shifting more of the burden for the cost of special education onto the local districts as proposed in the Governor's budget. During the Special Session called in September 1989 to consider property tax reform, LWVMN supported the increased state responsibility for school funding as a way to assure less reliance on local property wealth for school programs.

Financing education was restudied in 1991 and the consensus updated. During the 1991 session the LWVMN's goal was to support funding at an adequate level. We also supported supplemental funding to correct racial imbalance. We opposed funding alternative education in non-sectarian schools. In 1992 we supported the American Indian post-secondary grants and the school breakfast program.

The League lobbied in 1997 in support of legislation to expand programs for reading readiness. The bill required early reading instruction to be a mandatory part of curriculum for teacher candidates and provided challenge grants to schools for early intervention reading instruction. The legislation was rolled into the Omnibus Education Finance bill. The 1997 bill was vetoed by the Governor because it did not include his requested increase in tax deductions and tax credit for education expenses. The League contacted the Governor urging him to sign the bill,. A special session convened in June 1997 passed a bill including tax credits and doubling deductions for private school tuition.

In 1998 LWVMN opposed a proposed voucher plan for students in K-12. The plan did not pass. The 1999 legislative session considered abolishing the Profiles of Learning . LWVMN cautioned that this would be a retreat from meaningful statewide standards. The proposal failed.

#### GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.

#### **CITIZEN RIGHTS**

LWVUS Position: Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate participation in government decision making. (1974, 1976)

#### PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

LWVUS Position: Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Citizen Rights: In 1995 the LWVMN was a member of the Information Access Policy Discussion group which sponsored legislation to make it easier to access information via the rapidly emerging cable and phone line technology.

In 1996 LWVMN was very involved in a debate to continue the dual-track airport planning process so that citizen groups could provide input to the decision process. Legislation to abort the process was successful, despite League efforts.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choice: LWVMN has worked in coalitions to monitor state developments on reproductive choice. In the fall of 1989 LWVMN became a member of the MN Alliance for Choice, encouraging local League members to help with a Choice Attitude Survey conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota.

During the 1990 legislative session LWVMN focused on opposing legislation which would have made abortions illegal in Minnesota. During the 1991 session, League worked with the Alliance for Choice to emphasize preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the abortion rate in Minnesota as set forth in the Minnesota Women's Consortium's <a href="Pervention.">Pervention.</a> Not Prohibition campaign. This campaign was rated as an effective advocacy and educational tool.

The 1992 session offered the opportunity to lobby for the Family Planning Special Services Grant which increased funding to low-income people for abortions.

During the 1993 session LWVMN worked to pass the health clinic access bill assuring the right of unimpeded approach and departure from abortion clinics. In 1994 League's efforts were focused on ensuring that abortion and other reproductive services were included in the health care reform bill and opposing legislation intended to place restrictions on the right to abortion.

In 1995 the League was involved in deleting an amendment called the Woman's Right to Know from the Welfare Reform Bill. During the 1996 session the LWVMN closely tracked over 35 anti-choice bills waiting to attach as amendments to other legislation. Efforts to limit reproductive choice were proposed in both 1998 and 1999. LWVMN lobbied successfully against these proposals that were attached to important bills.

#### **ELECTION LAWS**

LWVUS Position: Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. (1970, 1976)

LWVMN Position: Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

#### **Details**

Support of:

- centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials. (1961)
- extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration. (1961)
- extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration. (1972)
- rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots. (1972)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Election Laws In 1995 the League was asked to provide testimony on elections to the Election Division of the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee. The League testified on what is right and wrong with the current election process and on our general position on elections and the campaign process. The Growe Commission, an 18-member bipartisan commission of which LWVMN President, Kay Erickson, was a member, published its report on Electoral Reform.

During the 1995 session the League testified in support of appropriating money to produce and mail 3 voter guides: to the caucus, to the primary and to the general election. The League assured the legislators that such guides can be produced in a non-partisan way, in a manner similar to our production of voter guides, and offered to produce the guides. Funding was not forthcoming.

In 1996 the LWVMN supported an unsuccessful attempt to authorize mail ballots in special elections for the increased accessibility to the voting process which it provides in elections with traditionally low voter turnout.

School District Election Laws: League members reached consensus in 1972 and lobbied for a bill which passed in 1973, simplifying absentee balloting, requiring rotation of candidates' names on non-partisan ballots, and forbidding election day campaigning or solicitation of votes within 100 feet of a polling place.

Presidential Primary: In 1991 the League supported adding a presidential primary in addition to caucuses and supported a bill to clarify issues of candidate withdrawal to help elections be more "voter friendly." A primary was held in 1992, with League support and involvement at the polls. However, due to an insufficient voter turnout a primary was not held in 1996.

Term Limits: LWVUS Convention 1992 adopted a motion "to amend the Government position of the LWVUS national program to allow state and local Leagues to use national positions and principles to take action against term limits for state or local officeholders." At the January 1993 Board meeting, LWVMN voted to oppose term limits for the legislative branch of Minnesota state government. LWVMN in 1994 established an "opposition to legislative term limits fund" and worked in coalition with such organizations as Common Cause, AFL-CIO, League of Minnesota Cities and MEA to successfully oppose the placement of a term limits measure on the ballot.

In 1995 the League voiced its strong opposition to both national and state efforts to adopt term limits legislation. As an alternative to term limits, the League supported successful legislation to rotate committee chairs. Limiting the number of years a member can be chair allows new ideas.

Permanent Absentee Voter Status: During the 1990 session LWVMN supported the enactment of a bill establishing permanent absentee voter status for eligible voters who are permanently unable to go to the polling place on election day due to illness or disability.

#### **CAMPAIGN PRACTICES**

LWVUS Position: Action to improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process. (1973)

LWVMN Position: Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

#### Details

Support of:

- the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates. (1961)
- judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns.
   (1972)
- reduction of the amount of money spent on campaigns.
   (1972)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has been active on this subject since 1961.

LWVMN has supported efforts to limit fundraising events for legislators during sessions each year since 1985. The 1990 Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting principal campaign committees and "friends of" committees from holding fund-raisers during a regular legislative session.

During the 1995 session LWVMN lobbied hard to keep the current ethics law, and in the end was successful. There were several attempts to weaken the laws passed the previous year. In particular an attempt to create a loophole was monitored by League lobbyists.

The 1999 legislative session saw a renewed effort to relax the gift ban with other campaign finance changes. LWVMN testified in opposition and the measures failed to get out of conference committee. LWVMN supported a proposed measure to prohibit lobbying by former legislators for one year after leaving public office. The measure failed.

The League continues to work to make the federal election process more open and equitable. Recent national action has focused on support for legislation mandating public financing for congressional elections and placing limits on the size of donations that political action committees can give to candidates. Leagues continue to apply the position in working for campaign reform measures at the state and local levels.

In 1993 LWVMN supported action by the legislature to improve campaign finance laws in Minnesota. Working with a coalition

formed by Common Cause, a reform measure passed which decreased financing from political action committees, lobbyists and large donors for candidates for state office and encouraged increased participation by small donors and the general public. The measure also eliminated abuses of the system by prohibiting "friends of" committees, the transfer of funds between candidates, disallowed public subsidy for unopposed candidates and prohibited caucus fund-raisers during legislative session. Recognizing the incumbent advantage, first-time candidates for state office are permitted to increase their spending limit by 10%. For the first time contribution limits were placed on candidates for local office.

To provide funding for these changes, more emphasis was placed on public financing for state-office candidates. The check-off system remains with an additional state appropriation. Small contributors may receive a one-time reimbursement from the state for a contribution to a candidate running for state office.

In 1996, in conjunction with Common Cause, local leagues lobbied US representatives in support of a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill in the House of Representatives: voluntary spending limits; reduced cost ways for candidates to communicate with the public; controls on "soft-money" contributions'; limits on large individual contributions; and cuts in the amount of PAC donations.

The League issued a statement in 1997 regarding our position on campaign finance reform measures considered in Congress.

LWVMNEF moderated a town meeting on campaign finance (attended by Senator Wellstone, Representatives Gutknecht, Ramstad, Luther and Vento), at which the League was able to present our position directly to some of our elected officials.

At the state level, LWVMN lobbied against the relaxation of a gift ban included in campaign reform legislation passed in 1994. We urged legislators to avoid the perception of undue influence at a time when the public is asking for continued reform.

In 2000 legislation was introduced in both houses that would provide candidates with the option of full public financing. The bill also placed limits on the size of contributions individuals and PACs can give to political parties and legislative caucuses. The bill did not reach either floor for a vote. In 2001 LWVMN joined the FACE (Fair and Clean Elections) Coalition to promote the bill introduced in 2000. Vigorous advocacy was presented in both houses and there were press conferences, letters to legislators, committee testimony. The League remains a co-sponsor of the FACE Coalition..

#### OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

LWVUS Position: Governmental bodies (should) protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Open Meetings:** The 1990 legislature passed a bill which applies the requirements of the open meeting law to the Legislature. (Caucuses of members from the same party are excluded.)

**Open Records:** LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials since such classification impedes the public's right to know.

#### ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

LWVUS Position: Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972) Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution. (1976) Action to support reapportionment of congressional and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. (1966, 1972)

LWVMN Position: Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of timely redistricting based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies. Opposition to a unicameral state legislature.

#### **Details**

#### Support of:

- legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess. (1955, 1968)
- a post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature. (1955)
- changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature.
- measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a

- simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification. (1947, 1962)
- regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
  - ⇒ compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group.
  - ⇒ public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action.
  - ⇒ prompt judicial review. (1979)

Opposition to:

⇒ Unicameral legislature (1999)

#### III. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

LWVMN Position: Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

#### Details

Support of:

- the continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory).
- the continuation of compulsory voter referenda on constitutional amendments.
- strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on:
  - ⇒ time span for collecting signatures
  - eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions
  - ⇒ percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures
  - ⇒ size of vote required for passage
  - ⇒ procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum
  - ⇒ contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns (1980)

#### Opposition to:

- direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes.
- optional and compulsory referenda on statutes; no agreement on petition referenda on statutes.
- Voter recall of members of the legislature and state constitutional officers, no agreement on recall of judges or appointed officials

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Redistricting: During the 1991 session, LWVMN worked with a coalition to support timely redistricting of the state legislature. As in previous redistricting efforts the legislative process was contentious and the resulting plan controversial. A final plan was mandated by the court, thus reinforcing the need for a bipartisan redistricting commission. In 2001 the House, Senate and a Governor's advisory redistricting commission presented widely differing plans and failing a compromise in 2002, the court will again establish Congressional and legislative districts.

Initiative, Referendum and Recall: In the 1999 session a constitutional amendment to establish Initiative and Referendum for both statutes and constitutional amendments passed the House but died in the Senate. LWVMN joined a coalition to defeat the amendment.

The League Action Committee and the State Board reiterated its 1979 position against recall. A bill, including recall enabling legislation, passed during the 1996 session, to place on the November ballot a question to include recall as part of the constitution. The amendment passed but LWVMN raised many procedural questions both before and after the passage.

Unicameral Legislature: In 2000 a strong effort was put forward to introduce a constitutional amendment to establish a unicameral legislature. LWVMN opposed it by testifying before committees, sending letters to legislators who were members of key committees, issuing action alerts and participating in a rally at the Capitol. The bill did not pass.

#### IV. FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

LWVMN Position: Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system that is equitable, competitive with other states, progressive and reliable. Support of long-term financial management, projections and a budget reserve. (1995)

- a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees.
- the following criteria for evaluating individual revenue sources and the overall revenue system:
  - ⇒ Competitiveness: Allows Minnesota to compete with other states and nations as a location of economic activity, recognizing that the revenue system is only one of many factors involved in location choice and that the level and effectiveness of public services affects competitiveness.
  - ⇒ Efficiency: Maintains a reasonable relationship between administration and compliance costs and the amount of revenue generated.
  - ⇒ Equity: Imposes a similar revenue burden on taxpayers in like circumstances.
  - Progressivity: Requires that those with a greater ability pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes.

- ⇒ Reliability: Provides a stable source of revenue.
- ⇒ Responsiveness: Adjusts to changes in economic conditions and reflects long term growth.
- ⇒ Simplicity: Is understandable to the taxpayer.
- a progressive individual income tax with a graduated rate schedule.
- a broad-based retail sales tax with exemptions for essential items to reduce the impact on low-income persons.
- the use of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing for services provided by local governments and a partial source of financing education (see the Financing Education position.).
- a corporation franchise tax which is competitive with other states providing a comparable level of public services. The LWVMN supports a corporation franchise tax which equitably taxes all corporations earning profits from their business activities within the state.
- the use of other sources of revenue, such as user fees and special assessments, for funding specific activities and projects. These charges should be assessed with a sensitivity to the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system.
- achieving social policy goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. If deductions, exclusions and credits are granted, they should be:
  - Evaluated on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system;
  - Determined to be the most cost-effective means of achieving the intended purpose;
  - 3. Reviewed periodically to justify continuance.
- the distribution of state-collected revenues to local governments based upon the following principles:
  - ⇒ It is appropriate for state and local governments to share in the cost of services provided by local governments that benefit all Minnesotans.
  - ⇒ If necessary, state funding may be used to assure that local community services are available on an equitable basis.
  - ⇒ The state should not impose statutory limits on local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for local community services.
  - ⇒ Programs which distribute state-collected revenues to local governments should enhance the equity, progressivity and efficiency of the overall revenue system.
  - Once enacted, promised distributions of statecollected revenues to local governments should be a reliable source of revenue to local governmental units.

- the principle that state legislation mandating local governments to provide specific services should identify adequate and appropriate revenue sources.
- long-term financial management of all state government funds.
- consideration of long-term projections of revenue and expenditures when making budget decisions.
- an adequate budget reserve, established during good economic times, to be used in recession years to sustain expenditures for necessary services.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Since the mid '50s the LWVMN has studied the financing of state and local governments. Early studies focused on the property tax, resulting in LWVMN support of property tax reform.

In the October 1989 Special Session, the Legislature enacted a property tax reform bill which began to restructure state-local finances. The goal was for the state to fund state-mandated programs and for property tax to support local programs. For example, starting in 1991, the state funded income maintenance programs formerly paid for by state and local money. In 1990 the state also assumed district court administration and certain other court costs. Other features of the bill were changes in property tax rates, a decrease in the number of rates, and more detailed property tax statements. LWVMN supported the bill's effort to break the link between local property tax and state mandated services.

In 1999 the Legislature had to determine what to do with large surpluses. LWVMN lobbied the legislative leadership and the Governor to retain a healthy reserve and invest in long-range programs for Minnesota citizens rather than returning all the surpluses to the taxpayers. LWVMN also lobbied to use the one-time tobacco lawsuit funds for tobacco cessation and medical programs. In 2001 the State again enjoyed huge surpluses and a significant Tax Reform Bill was passed which will reduce the local property tax levies for education. The state will assume more educational costs but local governments will lose state grants. The aim is to tie taxes more exactly to the controlling arm of government.

At the end of 2001 the surplus has largely disappeared and the new tax realignment has yet to be tested.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

#### I. Broad Goals

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) believes long-term vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions. The League strongly supports the following broad goals: (by priority)

- Provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities for Minnesotans
- 2. Provide for a basic level of health and human services for all Minnesotans
- 3. Protect the state's natural environment
- 4. Encourage economic self-sufficiency
- 5. Provide for the public safety
- Provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities for Minnesotans and

7. Preserve the state's open spaces (i.e., parks, state buildings).

LWVMN also supports the following goals:

- Ensure that all Minnesotans receive a basic level of local public services without regard to individual or community wealth
- 2. Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit
- Create a business climate that will allow MN businesses to compete nationally and internationally and
- 4. Ensure timely resolution of court cases

LWVMN does not support the goal of limiting state and local expenditures to a legislated percent of personal incomes.

#### **Spending Priorities**

LWVMN believes that the highest priority areas for state spending are the following:

- 1. K-12 (regular) education
- 2. Health Care
- 3. Environmental protection

When considering specific proposals requiring choices, the League believes that some components of state spending should be given higher priority than others.

#### **Relative Priority**

Regular education over vocational education
Vocational education over special education
Special education over community education and recreation
Health care and family support over nursing home care
Environmental protection over parks and recreation
Roads and transit over highway patrol
Job-related economic security over business incentives
Property tax relief related to income over Homestead and
Agricultural Credit Aid (HACA)

HACA over Local Government Aid

The court system and law enforcement over correctional institutions

#### III. Criteria for Limiting Spending

When the state finds it necessary to limit spending, LWVMN supports use of the following criteria (by priority):

- State subsidies for sports teams, convention centers, and similar projects should be among the first items to be curtailed
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure should take precedence over expenditures to increase the infrastructure
- Property tax relief programs should be directed to those with lower household incomes
- Services should be provided first to the most needy citizens
- Eligibility guidelines for public services should be adjusted to increase individual responsibility

The League opposes the following:

 Making across-the-board cuts first, as a way to allocate funds

- Placing more reliance on non-government organizations (such as churches and not-for-profit organizations) to deliver services
- Reducing state funding for higher education and increasing reliance on tuition
- Allowing services for the elderly to take precedence over those for children

#### IV. Efficiency

The League supports enhancing efficiency and cost effectiveness in the provision of quality government services. To this end, the League strongly supports:

- 1. Emphasizing prevention over treatment of problems,
- 2. Encouraging inter-governmental cooperation.

The League also supports:

- Providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers of child-care services and housing assistance
- 2. Giving government employees more flexibility and incentives to manage the way they do their jobs
- Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results
- 4. Encouraging competition (private-private, public-private and public-public) to enhance efficiency

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota does not support providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers for K-12 education.

#### VI. FIREARMS

LWVUS Position: Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons. (1990)

LWVMN Position: Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. (1990)

#### Details

Support of:

- · licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons
- registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons
- a waiting period for the purchase of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons
- a waiting period as preferable to an instant computer background check
- a ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts
- mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm

- the concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence
- stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms
- the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows

#### Opposition to:

 an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWVMN does not support or oppose an instant computer background check.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Following the adoption of the LWVMN position in 1990, LWVMN members played a key role at the LWVUS Convention in the adoption of a gun control position through concurrence with the Illinois position.

In January 1991, LWVMN joined "Citizens for a Safer Minnesota," a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to: supporting legislation regulating availability of military assault weapons and handguns; educating Minnesotans about the causes of and solutions for gun-related violence; promoting awareness that gun-related violence is not just a crime issue, but also affects public safety, child protection, health and the educational climate as well.

The Coalition lobbied successfully in 1992 for legislation that would prohibit handgun permits from being granted to persons with a history of domestic assault; and in 1993, for the Omnibus Crime Bill which enacted a statewide ban on carrying rifles in a public place, a ban on kits that would convert semi-automatics to full machine guns, and legislation that would permit municipalities to regulate gun shops through zoning laws. The Child Accident Protection Bill passed; this requires adults to store loaded weapons away from children and enhances penalties for guns in schools and drive-by shootings.

The League, as part of Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, lobbied unsuccessfully in 1996 to raise the age from 14 to 18 as the threshold for adults to store loaded weapons away from children .In 1993 LWVMN successfully lobbied members of Congress for passage of the Brady Bill after several years of effort. In 1995, the League lobbied representatives to stop the repeal of the Brady Bill. League lobbyists were active in opposition to a proposal to place a "Right to Bear Arms" amendment on the ballot.

In 1996 the League actively lobbied against an amendment to the Omnibus Crime Bill which would ease the restrictions to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon. During the 1997 session the League closely followed two bills proposing a weakening of the concealed weapon legislation. Neither bill actually passed out of committee, but each threatened to be attached as an amendment to other legislation.

In 1999and 2001 LWVMN lobbied successfully against an expanded right to carry concealed weapons and to limit local control of gun shop zoning. The issue of carrying concealed guns arose again in 2001 and came close to succeeding. Persistent lobbying in opposition by LWVMN and Citizens for a Safer MN

Coalition took the form of many letters to legislators, action alerts and rallying.

#### VII. NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

LWVUS Position: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)

#### WATER RESOURCES

LWVMN Position: Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)

#### Details

Support of:

- state water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility for water resources. Support for statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water. Support for policies which:
  - ⇒ recognize regional differences in supply and use.
  - integrate both ground and surface water management.
  - ⇒ integrate quality and quantity management.
  - provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
  - ⇒ consider future use (of water resources).
  - ⇒ promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
  - provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
  - ⇒ distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- a state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
  - continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
  - ⇒ provide for education and technical assistance.

- require specific conservation plans from those who propose interbasin transfers.
- ⇒ provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices. Support for rate structures which encourage conservation. Support for user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management.
- interbasin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only
  if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for
  present, future and instream needs. Decisions to
  transfer water should consider environmental effects,
  future water needs of basin of origin and conservation
  practices of the receiving basin.
- clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers. This process should include at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
- ⇒ Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers.
- ⇒ uniform legislation among Great Lakes states.
- ⇒ federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval.
- interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions.
- ⇒ increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission procedures

#### AIR QUALITY

**LWVMN Position:** Support measures to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.

#### SOLID WASTE

LWVMN Position: Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste and ensure safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

#### Details

- state government's taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills.
- measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers.
- flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards. (1973)

#### LAND USE

LWVMN Position: Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### Details

Support of a state plan that should:

- be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways).
- be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies.
- require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control.
- recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control.
- require impact statements of major public and private development.
- provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units.
- provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances
- provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies. (1975)

#### AGRICULTURE

LWVUS Position: Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

LWVMN Position: Support of a system of sustainable agricultural production which provides safe, healthful food and which preserves and protects the state's human and natural agricultural resources and enhances the environment; research and technical assistance in farming practices and rural economies that improve the economic viability of family farms, environmental health, and the quality of life of family farmers and their communities.

#### Details

#### Support of:

- · family-owned, moderate- and small-sized farms
- research directed to moderate- and small-sized farm operations
- · beginning farmers
- innovative practices and crops for moderate- and smallsized farms
- · access to markets for all producers
- providing crisis supports based on need (crisis understood to be an event beyond the farmer's control such as a natural disaster)
- monitoring contracts for the protection of farmers
- ensuring that corporate farms be held liable for their share of losses, environmental damage, public health hazards, etc.
- · incentives for sustainable farming practices
- incentives for contributions to clean water and air, healthy soil and conservation of wildlife
- incentives for the preservation of agricultural land
- shared liability for environmental damage (caused by agriculture) between farmers and businesses under contract.
- stricter standards for animal confinement operations (based on concerns for both animals and human health as well as ethical issues relating to the treatment of animals)

In order to promote the stability of rural communities, support of:

- · community and regional planning
- education (retraining, farm management, marketing, etc.)

- infrastructure
- livable wages for workers
- crisis assistance
- development of leadership skills
- · networking with farmers and community leaders
- · research into viable and sustainable rural communities
- exports should be promoted as long as this does not hold priority over promotion of a local/regional food system
- Research into genetically modified foods is supported
  if the purpose of such research is to ensure the longterm safety of GMO food and crops, to advance basic
  research knowledge, to benefit sustainable agricultural
  practices and to serve the public good

Note on terms used: "Family farm" generally implies that the family owns and lives on the land, provides most of the labor, assumes the economic risk, and makes management decisions.

According to the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, sustainable agriculture seeks to balance three long-term goals: quality of life (to satisfy personal, family, and community needs for health, safety, food and happiness); environment (to enhance finite soil, water, air and other resources; economics (to be profitable). In any given situation, the most sustainable choice is the one where the net effects come closest to meeting all three goals.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Water: In 1995 the League closely monitored some legislators' attempts to relax Wetlands restrictions. The session ended without changes. In 1996 the LWVMN actively participated with the Wetlands Coalition to monitor the changes to the Wetlands Protection Act. The League wanted to keep the "no-net loss" policy on drainage ditch repair and construction..

Air: Since 1981 LWV has worked to strengthen and readopt the National Clean Air Act; a bill passed in 1990.

LWVMN has supported acid rain controls at both the state and national levels, and continues to monitor the acid rain situation both in Minnesota and other areas of the country.

Solid Waste. .During the 1989 session LWVMN supported passage of amendments to the waste management statute fostering an integrated waste management system through reduction and reuse, waste recycling, yard waste composting and resource recovery. A portion of the fees charged for disposal of solid waste is used to assist counties in their waste reduction efforts. LWVMN also supported proposed ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring that food packaging be returnable, degradable of recycled, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on implementing these ordinances.

From 1990 to 1993 LWVMN supported legislation designed to reduce packaging waste through fees including container deposit. We also supported provisions which had mandatory recycled content requirements for products.

In 1991 we opposed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Citizens Board's granting of a permit for the Dakota County's incinerator based on LWVUS' seven minimum conditions necessary to support an incinerator.

Hazardous Waste: LWVMN supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Since 1984 when Minnesota became a part of the Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact, LWVMN has joined with other midwest state Leagues to monitor siting of a low level radioactive waste disposal site.

In 1997 and again in 1999 LWVMN and other states opposed the transport of nuclear wastes through the heavily populated areas of the state without a clear nuclear waste disposal program from the federal government.

LWVMN opposed the Northern State Power Company's request in 1992 to the Public Utilities Commission to grant a Certificate of Need for dry cask storage of high-level radioactive waste at the Prairie Island facility. This was based on Minnesota Statute Sec. 116C.72, which requires legislative consent to create a high-level radioactive waste facility in Minnesota. In 1993 a Minnesota Appeals court upheld that position. Our opposition was based on the process rather than the facility. LWVUS has granted permission for LWVMN to oppose the storage facility as proposed by NSP.

Land Use: In 1997 the League lobbied for mandatory state planning which would require the units of government to coordinate their plans with neighboring communities. A softer version of the bill was passed, merely recommending planning and providing assistance to those localities who choose to do it.

**Energy:** The LWV continues to support conservation and development of alternatives to fossil fuels.

Agriculture: The LWVMN position adopted in 2001 was immediately used to lobby against a bill appropriating \$192,000 to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for a court ordered Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a large hog operation. LWVMN believes this subsidy sets a dangerous precedent.

LWVMN also opposed a bill (which passed) expanding nuisance liability protection for farm operations.

From July 1998 through January 2002 a LWVMN representative participated in the working of the Citizen Advisory Committee for the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS)on Animal Agriculture. The purpose was to help the state of Minnesota understand the issues and controversy surrounding animal agriculture and to produce recommendations for public policy. The recommendations are to be ready for the 2002 legislative session

In September 2001 LWQVMN testified at a public hearing of the GEIS in support of the policy recommendations for animal agriculture put forth by the Citizen Advisory Committee which were consistent with League positions.

#### SOCIAL POLICY

Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

LWVUS Position: Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

LWVMN Position: Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### Details

#### Support of:

- the principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government. (1951)
- antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination. (1957)
- the principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private. (1961)
- adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services. (1961)
- state legislation to ensure services for Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding Indian lives and property are to be made by the Indians themselves. (1963)
- a state agency of Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds. (1963)
- the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. (1967)
- life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens. (Convention 1983)

#### FAMILY AND CHILD ISSUES

#### FAMILY VIOLENCE

LWVMN Position: Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support for improved services for the victims.

#### Details

#### Support of:

- a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse.
- more advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence.
- · more shelters for battered women.
- a complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services.
- a continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.
- provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence.
- a coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1980)

#### CHILD SUPPORT

LWVMN Position: Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

#### Details

#### Support of:

- efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families.
- · efforts to adequately publicize available services.
- providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner. (1982)

#### CHILD PROTECTION

LWVMN Position: Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)

#### **Details**

#### Support of:

 the assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect.

- a Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children.
- funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser.

#### CHILD HEALTH

LWVMN Position: Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)

#### **Details**

#### Support of:

- public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children.
- publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level.
- publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- ensuring adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness.

#### CHILD CARE

LWVUS Position: Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.

LWVMN Position: Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)

#### **Details**

#### Support of:

- adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children.
- public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand.
- policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide

- adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers.
- providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child.

#### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

LWVMN Position: Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)

#### Details

#### Support of:

- the Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
- increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.
- a prevention curriculum that includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents.
- health care providers publicizing the necessity of prenatal care and the locations of free and low cost health services.

#### HOUSING

LWVMN Position: The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

#### **Details**

Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderateincome households. Specifically support programs that:

- increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities;
- preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock;
- prevent homelessness;
- promote rental housing subsidies.

Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low-, low- and moderate- incomes. Support disincentives to local units of government that do not promote such a mix of housing opportunities.

Support revising the tax system to:

narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property;

- reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households:
- encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households.

#### **HEALTH CARE**

LWVUS Position: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other US health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. (1993) (See 'National Program At a Glance' for full position.)

#### MENTAL HEALTH

LWVMN Position: Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

#### Details

#### Support of:

- adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client's needs, yet accountable to the public.
- a range of appropriate housing options for persons with mental illness.
- a commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs.
- a coordinated system of quality assurance (including standards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response.
- continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living

conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers.

#### PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

LWVUS Position: Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

LWVMN Position: Support for violence prevention programs in our community.

#### Details

- educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This would include support for:
  - ⇒ government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes;
  - ⇒ local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula;
  - ⇒ use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula;
  - ⇒ training for child care providers.
- a requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training.
- the use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality.
- efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence.
- allocation of public moneys in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior.
- the following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations.
- efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise selfrestraint in the promotion of violence.
- efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexuallyviolent pornography.

#### ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO USE

**LWVMN Position:** LWVMN supports educational programs that advance improved chemical health

#### **Details**

#### Support of:

- Ongoing programs, starting in the elementary school and continuing in the middle and high school.
- Regular, continuing education for adult educators, coaches and school administrators
- Alternatives to suspension for alcohol and tobacco violations in the schools.
- Allocation of public funds for state and community initiatives to prevent illegal alcohol and tobacco use.
- Consistent city and school guidelines for adults who chaperone youth activities.
- State laws, city ordinances and law enforcement efforts designed to promote chemical health and reduce illegal alcohol and tobacco use. (Convention 1999)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Antidiscrimination and ERA: In 1993 LWVMN joined the coalition "It's Time Minnesota" which lobbied successfully for the inclusion of sexual preference in Minnesota's anti-discrimination legislation.. A LWVMN lobbyist served on Governor Carlson's 1994 task force on gays and lesbians, instrumental in passing the Human Rights Amendment.

During the 1990 session LWVMN lobbied in favor of clearer definitions of an equitable compensation relationship, provisions for reviewing and accepting plans by the Department of Employee Relations, and penalty provisions. The revised measure was passed and signed into law.

Family Violence: The League lobbied for legislation incorporated in a 1996 crime prevention bill to fund visits to homes and nurseries. The visits provide early intervention in abusive situations, given that the number one indicator of criminal behavior is child abuse.

Child Support: LWVMN has supported child support legislation to make services more equitable for non-Public Assistance families and to withhold income automatically for court-ordered support.

Child Protection: LWVMN has worked to support adequate staffing and resources for Child Protection Services at the county and state levels

Child Health: The League took action in support of the Children's Health Plan and expanding pre-natal health care services. In 1997, the League strongly supported a bill to restrict

the sale of tobacco to minors by licensing retailers and setting criteria for display of tobacco products. The legislation was passed and signed into law.

In 1999 LWVMN supported adolescent health clinics.

Child Care: In a coalition the League helped to found, Child Care WORKS, LWVMN has aggressively worked for expansion of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program for low-income parents and development grants to increase the supply of quality child care. The League supported legislation to guarantee an unpaid parental leave.

The League supported a proposal to expand the basic sliding fee program to subsidize low- and middle-income Minnesotans who pay child care expenses. The bill was incorporated into the Omnibus Human Services legislation. The League lobbied for the appropriation of money for crisis nurseries and home visiting programs.

In 1997, the League successfully lobbied for expansion of child care in welfare reform legislation. One provision of the package was to exempt parents with babies under one year from immediate work requirements. Parents will receive a portion of the child care subsidy and be allowed to stay at home with their infant.

**Teenage Pregnancy:** LWVMN testified in 1994 for the inclusion in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill for money to fund a program to teach male responsibility to teen fathers.

Housing: LWVMN lobbied in 1993 in support of a bill that would provide "comprehensive choice" in housing throughout the metropolitan area. The vision was to distribute a full range of housing throughout the metro area enabling very low-, low-, and moderate- income people to live near new entry level jobs opening up in outer ring suburbs.

In 1997 the League followed with interest legislation to increase affordable rental housing through no-interest mortgages or deferred loans. The program received \$16.4 million for the biennium.

In 2000 LWVMN issued action alerts to members urging that TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) funds be used to expand affordable housing programs rather than replace existing funding. New affordable rental housing received \$30 million and \$20 million went to Habitat for Humanity.

Health Care: The national Health Care position arrived just in time to allow crucial lobbying by LWVMN for the establishment of Minnesota's HealthRight legislation in 1992 (now called MinnesotaCare). The League continued monitoring its development in the 1993 legislative session and also monitored rulemaking by the Minnesota Health Care Commission and Department of Health. A primary concern is that the consumers' point of view be included in Commission decisions.

LWVMN is also working with the Health Care Reform Project, a national coalition to promote health care reform at the federal level. Included in any plan the Project supports are: universal coverage and mandatory employer participation; serious cost containment; comprehensive benefits for all; and reform now.

The League concentrated its health care lobbying efforts in 1995 to prevent the erosion of the 1994 MNCare bill and to seek funding for universal coverage.

The League took action on several health care issues in 1997, including a Prescription Drug Fair Competition bill to negotiate lower drug prices for independent pharmacies. The Governor used a line item veto to eliminate the funding to allow the

Department of Administration to negotiate on behalf of the pharmacies. Also, a weakened Patient Protection Act passed and was signed. We had hoped the bill would include an independent appeals process and a strong patient advocacy program, but it certainly is a good beginning.

In 1999 LWVMN wrote to the legislators asking that funds from the tobacco lawsuit be used to establish endowments for the health care of Minnesotans and not be used for tax rebates.

LWVMN joined a new health care coalition in 2000—Seniors and Workers for Quality Coalition. We monitored bills related to patient protection and prescription drug programs for seniors. Legislation passed relating to training for nursing home resident assistants and developing alternative procedures for nursing home inspections. Participation in the coalition during the 2001 session also proved successful. Advocacy efforts brought gains for workers' wages, limits on the use of temporary nursing pools and funding for studying staffing needs.

Mental Health: During the 1993 session the League supported refinements of the Comprehensive Mental Health Act. LWVMN lobbied for community-based homes for persons with mental illness. The League has consistently supported increased funding for community services. We also supported the Anoka Alternatives, a fund to find housing for difficult-to-place persons at Anoka Regional Treatment Center. We supported the closing of Moose Lake Regional Treatment Center and increased funding for community services for those clients. LWVMN also supported innovative employment programs in the community which will be an ongoing concern.

In 1995 the League provided testimony in support of a bill to create delivery system pilots which would pool the resources of regional treatment centers with community dollars. In 1996 the League lobbied successfully for the continued funding for five Coordinated Employment Projects. The projects provide job counseling for persons with mental illness. In 1997, the League lobbied for the additional employability projects.

Bridges, a temporary housing program for persons with mental illness, was expanded in the 1997 after strong lobbying from the League. Other mental health issues that arose during the 1997 session included a cost of living increase for mental health employees, and additional funding for the relocation of Regional Treatment Centers staff into community services.

Legislation to implement the recommendations of the Supreme Court Civil Commitment Task Force was successful in 1997. Funding was made available for a civil commitment training and resource center.

In 1998 and 1999 LWVMN lobbied for expansion of the Bridges Program and the Employability Program. LWVMN issued action alerts to members on a number of issues in 2000: employability projects, housing, prescription drug programs and adequate wages for community health workers. Advocacy efforts during 2001 for many bills included action alerts, letters to legislators and newspaper editors and committee testimony. Among successes were expansion of the civil commitment criteria, increased wages for mental health workers and \$1 million to save the supported employment projects.

Prevention of Violence: In coalition with the Minnesota Attorney General, the Violence Against Women Coalition, the Citizens Council, the Battered Women's Coalition and other groups, LWVMN has lobbied successfully for violence prevention programs at the Legislature. Minnesota now has among other innovations: anti-violence curricula in its schools with funding provided to districts that offer such curricula in grades K-12; an

Office for a Violence Free Minnesota, which coordinates state-wide efforts in violence prevention; foundation grants specifically targeted to violence prevention programs; and in Ramsey County, an urban, county-wide Community Action Plan using a multi-faceted approach to end family violence. Delegates to LWVUS Convention in 1994 concurred with LWVMN violence position in its essentials following a campaign led by Minnesota delegates.

Minnesota American Indians: In the 1993 session LWVMN supported legislative ratification of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians agreement regarding the 1837 Treaty rights to hunting, fishing and gathering by the band. Legislative ratification would have honored the rights of the Ojibwe, protected the environment and avoided a costly court fight. The Legislature failed to act and the agreement was sent to trial. The federal Court of Appeals has ruled in favor or the band following an appeal by the State of Minnesota of the federal district court's ruling also in the band's favor.

**Alcohol and Tobacco Use:** The 1999 LWVMN Convention adopted by concurrence the Edina LWV's Alcohol and Tobacco Use position.

#### COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES

The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an interleague organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental issues of metropolitan concern.

#### METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

CMAL Position: Support of the development of the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provisions for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL supports retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council with greater use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993)

Details fifed, stages

CMAL supports:

- · retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area.

- ⇒ The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials. (1969, 1976, 1993)
- an open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office; establishment of a removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population.

In the event that it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports nonpartisanship of candidates, with availability of public financing, with selection of the chair made by the council members from among their number; maintaining population as the basis for districts, election of Council members at the same time as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law), continuance of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation. (1976, 1993)

#### HOUSING

CMAL Position: Support of the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

#### HEALTH

CMAL Position: Support of the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)

## FUNDING/FINANCING FISCAL DISPARITIES

CMAL Position: Support for area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970) The integrity of the area-wide pool used in the sharing of fiscal resources should be maintained with no exceptions. (1997) Loans from the pool should be discouraged and if made should not be forgiven. (1997)

#### FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

CMAL Position: Support for operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

#### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
  - uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ a responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies.
- improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
  - ⇒ the establishment of a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs.
  - ⇒ regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing.
  - ⇒ regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials.
  - ⇒ responsible administrative procedures.

#### SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

CMAL Position: Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by the school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

#### HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

CMAL Position: Support for local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support for the preparation of a local "Blueprint for Action." (1989)

#### **Details**

#### CMAL supports:

 the provision of a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area. (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service.)

- local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging.
- the provision of additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary.
   CMAL supports flexibility in the provision of these services. Providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these.

#### LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CMAL Position: CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment; (2) use public investment to the best advantage; and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.)

#### Details

#### CMAL supports

- channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern.
- preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities.
- using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life.
- the Metropolitan Council should be authorized to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them.

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

CMAL Position: Support for a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

CMAL Position: Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

#### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities.
- Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited water supply availability through approval of amendments to land use plans.
- Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority.
- Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region.
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

#### SOLID WASTE

CMAL Position: Support for the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery.

#### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

Water Resources: CMAL adopted at its 1993 convention a study of Regional Government Structures and Management Efforts to Provide an Adequate, Safe Water Supply. Their report, Water Supply: A Regional Perspective, was released in January 1995.

Solid Waste: In 1985 CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council and State Legislature. It supported mandatory source separation, cautioned against total reliance on high tech solutions to waste management, and supported the 1990 deadline for cessation of landfilling of unprocessed mixed municipal wastes. Subsequent legislation mandated the 1990 deadline, but source separation remains voluntary unless mandated by individual metropolitan counties..

#### TRANSPORTATION

CMAL Position: Support of the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system's majo capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position in Impact on Issues, p. 59-60.)

#### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- various modes of transportation, both public and private: ridesharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system.
- transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking, and feeder services; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares.

#### COUNTY GOVERNMENT

CMAL Position: Support of measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support of measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)

#### **Details**

- Accountability of a governmental body is obtained by the effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. While accountability to the citizenry is recognized as a responsibility of all governments, CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved as well as to participate in the election process. Accountability of county government would be increased by the following (but not limited to):
  - public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including, for example, citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities.
  - ⇒ systematic and objective evaluation of county programs.
  - ⇒ creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board; ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meeting; dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments; and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set.
  - regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government.
  - ⇒ full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections.

The Metropolitan Council is viewed as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are

viewed as administrators, implementers, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.

January 2002

#### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA

550 Rice Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103 Phone: (651) 224-5445 Fax: (651) 290-9415

E-mail: lwvmn@mtn.org

# I.

# General Information

# Contents

General Information
Using the State Board and Staff

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I. 3-4

### LWVMN GENERAL INFORMATION Services Available to Local Leagues

#### Portfolio Updates 2001-2002

As President, you will receive one complete copy of *Portfolio Updates 2001-2002* and a second copy (printed only on one side) to be distributed to each of your Board members. You may order additional copies from the state office at \$4.00 each including postage & handling.

Abbreviatio	ns
CIA	Citizens in Action (workshop)
CMAL	Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues
DPM	Duplicate Presidents' Mailing
EF	Education Fund, or LWVMNEF or LWVEF (LWVUS Education Fund)
Focus	An educational meeting with speakers on a timely topic
LL(s)	Local League(s)
LWV	League of Women Voters
<b>LWVMN</b>	League of Women Voters of Minnesota
<b>LWVUS</b>	League of Women Voters of the United States
PMP	Per Member Payment paid by LLs to LWVMN or LWVUS

#### Post Board Mailings and Subscriptions

After every LWVMN Board meeting you will receive a mailing consisting of:

 Board Memo/President's Mailing - mailed first class to LL presidents, co-presidents and subscribers. LL Presidents receive two copies, one of which will have copy on one side only so that it may be cut up and distributed to appropriate portfolio chairs. Your LL is strongly encouraged to order additional complete subscriptions for each LL Board member.

This mailing also contains an assortment of materials such as event registration packets, publications, program materials, flyers, etc. and a routing sheet telling you what to do with each piece. Please open, scan, sort, distribute, file and/or toss.

 Subscribing by e-mail: If you wish to receive the Board Memo by e-mail, please contact the office at 651/224-5445 or at office@lwvmn.org for details.

#### Subscriptions (LWVMN)

Order from the state office. Subscription order forms on last page of the Portfolio Update.

Board Memo only: \$7.50 (also available via e-mail)

Duplicate Presidents' Mailing, including Board Memo: \$15.00 (not available via e-mail)

Capitol Letter: \$10.00 (also available via e-mail for \$8.00)

#### **State Board Meetings**

State Board Meetings are open meetings. Dates are on the Calendar. Please feel free to visit at any time. If you have business to bring before the Board, notify the President two weeks in advance, except in an emergency.

#### Membership/Voter Changes

It is vital that membership changes--new members, transfers, drops or changes of address and/or name--be reported promptly to LWVUS and LWVMN. Use the LWVUS Voter Membership Information Change Form for these changes, sending the original to LWVUS and a copy to LWVMN. New members are discouraged by delays in receiving their newsletter, and relatives of deceased members do not appreciate receiving reminders.

#### Membership Reports/Roster -- DEADLINE JANUARY 12, 2002

You have received your spring and summer membership roster from LWVUS. Remember to send any changes or additions you make on those rosters to LWVMN. The fall roster will be mailed in November. That will include the PMP Summary sheet. A copy of that sheet and a copy of your entire roster should be sent to LWVMN -- deadline January 12, 2001. (Your 2002-2003 LWVMN PMP will be based on the January 12, 2002 count.)

#### It is extremely important that LLs send this report!

Be sure that one person on your Board-- the Treasurer, Secretary or Membership Chair--takes responsibility for sending the membership report to LWVUS and LWVMN.

#### State Office Hours and Staff

Hours:

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Address:

550 Rice Street St. Paul, MN 55103

Telephone:

Metro Area 612/224-5445

Outside Metro Area ONLY, 1-800/663-9328

FAX:

651/290-2145

e-mail:

office@lwvmn.org

Home Page

www.lwvmn.org

Staff, full time:

Sally Sawyer

**Executive Director** 

Andrea Lex

Director of Development and Communications

Staff, part time

Georgeann Hall

LWVMNEF Bookkeeper

LWVMN Bookkeeper

Laurie Boche

Outreach/Field Service Coordinator, Martin Grant

Kathy Kolb

Action Coordinator

**Project Directors** 

Eydie Kargas

Marketing; Voter Guide Mental Health Project

Susan Anderson Janet Gendler

**Judicial Project** 

#### **Copying Service**

LWVMN offers copying service to local Leagues at the state office.

Cost.

\$.06 per copy, 10% discount of LL bill is over \$5.00 in a given month

Paper Colors:

white, green, blue, canary, buff, orchid, ivory or your letterhead if 20# stock

Size:

8½ x 11 or 8½ x 14 (legal)

Sides:

one or both sides

Metro Area LLs:

Call for an appointment to use the copier and do your own copying.

#### **LWVMN and LWVMNEF Publications**

Order publications and free publications from the state office. If publications are mailed, a postage and handling fee is charged.

#### **LWVUS Publications**

The state office does not have LWVUS publications for sale. Order from LWVUS, 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. LWVUS phone number is 202/429-1965. Web site address is: http://www.lwv.org

#### USING THE STATE BOARD AND STAFF

Whether you are new to the League, new to your position on the local board, or an experienced Leaguer in need of information or support, the members of the LWVMN State Board and the staff of the state office will be happy to listen to your questions and concerns and to answer them if we can. We are also local League members and are united in our concern for the health and strength of all local Leagues. No question is too basic. We've all been there. Just ask.

#### Written Material from LWVMN:

Every local League president and co-president or local contact person has or will receive a copy of the *President's Notebook*, the *Portfolio Updates*, the LWVMN Board Mailings and *Capitol Letter*. They contain information about the plans, the portfolios, and the resources available from the state League.

- The President's Notebook contains information on basic League procedures, policies, and
  calendar planning. Feel free to organize it as you prefer, but please look it over carefully and
  use it the information as you need it.
- The Portfolio Updates will arrive shortly after the new State Board is elected. It contains
  information from each of the board members on the plans for their portfolios, how those
  plans may affect your local League, and information that may be useful to those holding
  similar positions on the local level.
- The LWVMN Board Mailing is sent to local presidents following each State Board meeting seven or eight times a year. The Board Memo contains information about state board
  decisions and actions, updated information from board members on their portfolios, and an
  updated calendar. It is one of the most important ways we keep you informed about what is
  going on at the state level. (A second copy for division among local board members is
  included.)

The packet may also include information on voter service events, action workshops and alerts, project director opportunities, the state study, workshops, conventions and meetings, or material that local Leagues would like to have all of us know about. Please open promptly because some of the material is time sensitive and distribute the information to those who need it. Once you have looked it over and taken what applies to your League, throw the rest away. No one needs or wants a big pile of stuff that collects guilt or dust!

 Capitol Letter is written by the Action Committee to keep you up to date on advocacy at the Legislature.

#### How to Ask for Information, Advice or a Visit:

Phone: 1-800-663-9328 (outside of Metro area) or 1-651-224-5445

Fax: 1 651-290-2145 Email: office@lwvmn.org

- All state board members are available to answer questions in the area of their portfolios or to visit your League. Each league has a list of state board addresses and phone numbers if you would like to call directly. The state office staff will also take and refer messages.
- The Field Service staff and board member are available for visits to your League for board training or problem solving. Please call the state office to arrange a visit.
- The staff is willing to help you in any way they can. Sally Sawyer, Executive Director, is a
  gold mine of information and a sympathetic voice in time of doubt or concern. Andrea Lex,
  Development Director, is the enthusiastic voice of the Education Fund. Call her with
  questions about using yours.

#### **Serving on State Committees:**

One of the best ways to gain an overview of the League, to acquire new knowledge and skills, and to work with other great League members is to participate at another level. All are welcome to join any of the following:

- If you are interested in Twin City metropolitan area issues, the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues would love to have your participation.
- If you are interested in the topic of the state study, consider joining the Study Committee.
- If action is your thing, the State Action Committee always needs members who will follow
  an issue at the state legislature. Internships give you a chance to learn the ropes before you
  testify on your own.
- The Voter Service Committee always needs local League members. This committee plans, sets policy and implements all voter service projects for statewide candidates.
- The Member Resources Committee is concerned with the vitality of all aspects of local Leagues and outreach projects, including LOTT. More local input would be great.
- The Development Committee plans for the fiscal health of the League by raising corporate and foundation funds as well as individual contributions, as well as determining a fundraising event. They welcome your ideas and presence.
- The Technology Committee reviews policies and processes for LWVMN Web site and advises office on computer hardware and software.
- The Communications Committee will oversee marketing, public relations, Voter and other publications.

# • II. Local President's Planning Calendar

## Contents

Local President's Planning Calendar Who Sends What, Where and When? League Project Form II. 1-5

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II. 8

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PRESIDENT'S PLANNING CALENDAR

# MAY Full State PMP due May 15th if LL wants 5% discount Obtain Board approval of appointed directors Appoint two Board members to serve on the Nominating Committee Transfer files to new Board members Plan/do new Board orientation Review minutes of annual meeting May request Board training or a visit from state Board member (form provided) Attend State Convention (odd years) or Council (even years) JUNE State PMP Due June 1st, if paid Quarterly Please send the State office the following information right away: List of Board members with addresses, e-mail addresses and phone numbers (form provided) Please include the chair of the Nominating Committee Adopted local program and positions

- 3. Minutes of the annual meeting
- · Do Board orientation if not done in May
- · Review and adopt a nonpartisan policy for Board Members
- Send board members to Board Orientation and Training (if offered by LWVMN)
- Set goals for the year
- Have Board members review the LWVMN Outlook and decide who will be responsible for the information
  in each category. If your organization does not follow that of the State board, decide who will read Board
  Memo sections such as Action, Voter Service, Membership, etc. Determine how information will be
  distributed to the Board.
- Have the Treasurer order subscriptions to Duplicate President's Mailing, Board Memo and other
  publications as needed.
- Make plans to hold a calendar planning meeting for the coming year.
- Send a copy of your LWVUS membership corrections to LWVMN
- Attend LWVUS Convention (even years)

л :	DLY Develop a draft calendar including such activities as Program, Action, Voter Service, Membership, Public Relations, Finance Drive and special Events. Be sure to include social/fun events! Review Spirit of Democracy guidelines with Board Hand out Board member timelines (form provided for copying)
Al	UGUST
· ·	Set plans for the year based on the Board timelines Is it useful to call or arrange for a meeting of other local League presidents in your area before this meeting so that you can discuss ways to cooperate - perhaps in voter service events, speakers, joint projects, etc. Begin to implement public relations and membership activities - send a press release about any membership events and your fall calendar. Begin to recruit members to serve on all committees.
•	August 1st deadline for Martin Grant applications for candidate forums in even years
SI	EPTEMBER State PMP due the 1st. Hold Membership Kick-off (if not held in August) Send a copy of LWVUS membership roster update to LWVMN Continue to recruit committee members for all planned activities
0	CTOBER  Hold orientation for new members  Hold candidate forums or voter service events for election  Schedule state study meeting for October, November, January or February

N	OVEMBER  Have the Board review and update job descriptions for use by the Nominating Committee  Prepare for Program/Lively Issues meeting in December or January. Plan articles for Voter. Assign committee.  November 6 <sup>th</sup> –Election Day (local elections).  Hold legislative interviews before January 2002.
D	State PMP due the 1st Have Nominating Committee place notice in bulletin seeking suggestions from the members for possible local Board nominees Appoint Bylaws Committee to review local, state or national bylaws Appoint local Budget Committee Plan or hold Program/Lively Issues meeting - local, state, national, and CMAL Membership activity Send a copy of LWVUS roster and Summary Report to LWVMN
J.	ANUARY Appoint chair and begin planning for annual meeting Nominating, Budget and Bylaws Committees meet Program/Lively Issues meeting - local, state, national or CMAL - if not held in December Membership rosters dues to LWVUS with copy to LWVMN

FI	EBRUARY Nominating Committee completes proposed slate of officers and Board members Board considers local program, bylaw changes and budget Send any proposed bylaw changes to state office for comment Submit state/national/CMAL program and bylaw changes to appropriate office
M :	ARCH Spirit of Democracy information due to LWVMN by March 31 <sup>st</sup> . Print proposed slate of officers and directors, local program, budget and bylaw changes in your bulletin at least one month before your Annual Meeting. State PMP due the 1st.
A	PRIL
•	Hold Annual Meeting this month or next Attend state convention (odd years) or Council (even years)

#### President's Calendar:

#### WHO SENDS WHAT, WHERE AND WHEN?

Who	What	Where	When
Voter Editor	Local Voter	1 to State Office 1 to assigned LWVUS board member 1 to each designated local League (see Outlook)	Each Issue
Secretary	Board Minutes	1 to State Office	Each Meeting
Treasurer or Membership Chair	Membership Roster with drops and adds	1 to LWVUS 1 to State Office	June, Sept. & Dec. June, Sept., Dec. & March
Treasurer	State PMP	to State Office	June 1, Sept. 1, Dec. 1, & March 1 or all by May 15 at 5% off.
Treasurer	National PMP	to National Office	as requested
Action Chair	Responses to State Action Alerts	1 to State Office	When answered
Action Chair	Responses to US Action Alerts	1 to LWVUS 1 to State Office	When answered
President	-Board List -Adopted local Program -Minutes of Annual Meeting	1 to State Office	Early June
President or Committee Chair	Request to use Ed Fund Account	to State Office	Before starting the project - see Ed Fund Guidelines
	Consensus	to State/National/CMAL	On or before published deadline

tion Needed:	Person Responsible	Date Due	Status
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Year:

Portfolio: Person in charge:

League Project:

# III. Outlook Calendar

#### **Contents**

LWVMN *Outlook* Calendar (replace as updates arrive)

III. 1-4

#### OUTLOOK CALENDAR 2001 - 2002

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota office is located in the Minnesota Women's Building (MWB), at 550 Rice Street in St. Paul. Meetings are frequently held in the LWVMN Office or in meeting rooms in the MWB.

- +This is a preliminary calendar for 2001-2002; a revised version will be sent to Local Leagues following the June 16<sup>th</sup> LWVMN Board Retreat.
- +Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues hold Quarterly meetings, generally the third Thursday of the month, in September, January, March and May. Check revised Outlook Calendar for 2001-2002 meeting schedule.
- + Watch for further information in Presidents' Mailing, sent to local League Presidents and Duplicate Presidents Mailing (DPM) subscribers following state board meetings.

#### May, 2001

#### 4-5 - LWVMN Convention, Holiday Inn New Ulm

- 10 CMAL Annual Convention
- 15 Judicial Independence Assessment responses due at LWVMN office (not from LLs)
- 17 Legacy Circle Luncheon, Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- 28 Memorial Day Observed LWVMN Office Closed

President's Notebook with Preliminary Outlook Calendar for 2001-2002 & Portfolio Updates to be available at Convention and mailed to those local Leagues not in attendance; if not available at Convention, President's Notebook will be sent in June.

## MAY S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

#### June, 2001

- 1 First Quarter PMP Due to LWVMN
- 9-13 LWVUS Council, Washington, D.C.
- 16 LWVMN Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m.
- 20 5:30 p.m. Local League Board Orientation/Training, MWB, St. Paul
- 23 10:00 a.m. Local League Board Orientation/Training, Park Rapids
- 29 Presidents' mailing to local League Presidents/subscribers Revised Outlook Calendar for 2001-2002 & Portfolio Updates will be included in this mailing. VOTER schedule and state committees meeting schedules

#### July, 2001

- 4 LWVMN Office closed for July 4<sup>th</sup> observance Revision of LWVMN Program for Action for 2001-2003 over summer
- + Committees meet as needed; LWVMN will set committee meeting schedule late summer/early fall; New state study committee organized over summer National Voter features article/surveys on labor, political, religious and human rights re Trade position

LWVMN Office hours for July may be adjusted; watch for further information.

# S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

#### August, 2001

- 11 LWVMN/EF Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m., MWB
- 16 Presidents' mailing to local League Presidents/subscribers
- 26 Woman Suffrage Anniversary

Annual Appeal for the LWVMN Education Fund begins

+ Fall Workshop schedule announced in President's Mailing Fall Focus on Judicial Independence information?

#### S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

AUGUST

#### September, 2001

- 1 Second Quarter PMP Due to LWVMN
- 3 Labor Day LWVMN Office Closed
- 21 Leagues submit comments to LWVUS re Trade position to tradeupdate@lwv.org

National Voter, Sept./Oct.to feature Impact of liberalized trade on developing countries And governance issues such as sovereignty and transparency.

Fall Workshops schedule to be announced early summer; will include information on new state study, Judicial Elections training.

Annual Appeal for LWVMNEF continues

LWVMN Committees: Action, Member Resources, Development, Voter Service, new study begin meeting on regular basis.

#### October, 2001

#### OCTOBER

S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 8 Columbus Day - LWVMN Office Open, no postal service

Fall Workshops, September, October; watch for information for schedule.

LWVMNEF Annual Appeal phonathons scheduled.

#### November, 2001

#### 

25 26 27 28 29 30

- 6 Election Day
- 16 Presidents' mailing to local League Presidents/subscribers
- 22 Thanksgiving Day LWVMN Office closed
- 22 LWVMN Office closed
- + Legislative Interview packets to LLs (if Action Committee decides to do them
- + Annual Appeal for LWVMNEF continues
- + Citizens in Action Workshop information to local Leagues
- + Revisions to How to Make a Difference: A Citizen's Guide to State Government Concurrence kits re Trade from LWVUS sent to state and local Leagues late Fall

#### December, 2001

- 1 Third Quarter PMP due to LWVMN
- 20 26 LWVMN Office closed for holidays
  - + LOTT Planning
  - + Citizens in Action workshop flyer mailing this month
  - + Annual appeal follow up for 2001
  - + Local League conduct legislative interviews, or in January
    Proposed New Trade Position appears in December/January National Voter

30 31

#### January, 2002

- JANUARY

  S M T W T F S

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  6 7 8 9 10 11 12

  13 14 15 16 17 18 19

  20 21 22 23 24 25 26

  27 28 29 30 31
- 1 Happy New Year! LWVMN Office closed Legislature Convenes
- 12 LWVMN/EF Board Meetings, 10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m., MWB
- 14 Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's Birthday Legislative Interviews Due
- 17 Presidents' mailing to local League Presidents/subscribers
- 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday—LWVMN office closed
- + Local Leagues are advised to schedule Trade Concurrence Meetings in January or February
- + LOTT 2001 Seminar
- + How to Make a Difference revised and published
- + Citizens in Action Workshop in late January or early February.

  LWVUS Program Planning in December/January

#### February, 2002

- 14 Susan B. Anthony's Birthday
- 17 Presidents' Day LWVMN Office open, no postal service
- 18 First Call to LWVMN Council
- + Local Leagues schedule Trade Concurrence meetings in Jan. or Feb.

#### March, 2002

- 1 Fourth Quarter PMP due to LWVMN Office
- 9 LWVMN/EF Board Meetings, 10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m.
- 15 Presidents' mailing to local League Presidents/subscribers
- 31 LWVMN/EF fiscal year ends
- + Fundraising public policy event/dinner?
- + LWVUS Trade Concurrence deadline this month, to be announced.

# MARCH S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

#### **April**, 2002

+ Fundraising public policy event?

LWVMN Council?

# APRIL S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

#### S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

MAY

26 27 28 29 30 31

#### May, 2002

LWVMN State Council?

+ Legacy Circle luncheon/dinner

#### June 2002

JUNE
S M T W T F S
1
2 3 4 5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20 21 22
23 24 25 26 27 28 29
30

+ LWVUS Convention

# IV Portfolio Updates & Board List

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V.

## LWVMN Fundamentals

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LWVMN Bylaws\* - to be sent following revision by 2001 Convention Local League Presidents\* - to be sent after update

#### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF U.S.

#### Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

#### Vision, Beliefs and Intentions

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters of the United States is a nonpartisan political membership organization, which:

- acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.
- builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is a nonpartisan public policy educational organization, which:

- builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- studies key community issues at all government levels in an unbiased manner.
- enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

#### We believe in:

- respect for individuals.
- the value of diversity.
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities.
- the power of collective decision making for the common good.

#### We will:

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism.
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public.
- take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership and programs.
- acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

#### **Principles**

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsible to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that effect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## A MEMO TO LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS AND BOARD DIRECTORS

From Anne Borgen, past LWVMN Board Field Service

Congratulations! Your role on the Board is an important one for your League and your community. If this is a new experience, there are many sources of help as you learn the ropes. One of the best sources can be your own experienced League members--never hesitate to ask questions. Another source is the state League. Both the LWVMN office staff and the Board are happy to offer a sympathetic ear, advice, and support. Don't hesitate to call. Every League should also have a copy of *In League* a national publication that explains much about your roles.

#### What does the Board of Directors do?

The Board role is a dual one.

First, as the governing body of the League, the Board is jointly responsible for:

- · setting policy for League activities in accordance with the Bylaws,
- planning a calendar of activities for the year,
- · leadership in recruiting members and fund raising,
- · determining if consensus has been reached on a study,
- · setting goals and evaluating the year,
- · developing a budget and overseeing use of League funds.

Second, most Board members also have a more specific role such as Voter Service, Action, Public Relations, Membership, Voter Editor, Study Chair, President, Secretary or Treasurer. In that role it is your job to carry out the tasks assigned to that portfolio, obtain Board approval as necessary, and keep the Board informed. It is also your responsibility to keep a file on your portfolio and to pass it on to your successor.

**Setting policy:** 

The good name of the League rests in your hands as the Board. You are responsible for protecting and enhancing the League's effectiveness and credibility as an organization. There are some League basics that we all need to know and follow. Some specific steps you can take include:

- Write, adopt, and follow a nonpartisanship policy that is clear to you, your members, and the
  public. The League never supports political parties or candidates for any public office even
  if the position is not partisan. (Sample policies are available.)
- Encourage all of your members to participate in study and consensus because the credibility
  of our position on issues depends on widespread grassroots participation.
- Make sure that the Board and all members understand that the League speaks with one voice
  when making public statements. Individuals always have the right to disagree personally,
  but personal and partisan opinions must be put aside when speaking for the League on its
  positions. (The usual spokesperson is the president although others may be designated.)
- Make sure that all members understand that League public education activities and League advocacy activities must be clearly separated and identified. League positions are never stated during an education event such as a candidate forum, informational public meeting or public training sessions for would-be candidates or lobbyists. The League's purpose in such events is to impart nonpartisan information and/or skills to others.

Leagues may, of course, train their own members to take action on League positions and lobby public officials on those issues. Especially in communities where League members are well known, it must be clear that action is the other side of our mission from voter service---still nonpartisan, but political in the sense that you are now seeking support for the organization's position on an issue.

#### Planning:

As you plan for the year ahead it is important to identify activities that will serve the community, make membership in the League meaningful for your current members, and help to attract new ones. Very few people in today's world have time or interest in "make work" of any kind. Let your plans be guided by the real needs, problems and opportunities in the community you serve.

Use the Outlook Calendar and the President's Planning Calendar from the state League as you plan your local calendar. The Portfolio Update (biennial publication following Convention) and the Board Memo (7 or 8 times a year) also provide information and dates that you will want to know.

Plan a local study if possible. Studying an issue of importance to your community does take time, but it is one of the best membership tools for your league because it gives you visibility. Not every study has to start from scratch -- consider applying the study of another League to your own community. Minneapolis, for example, has done a study on teenage health care. Use some portion of the national League's Making Democracy Work for a look at civic knowledge and practice in your town. Use the current state study (whatever the Convention has chosen) to look at that issue in your area.

Inviting knowledgeable speakers to address an issue at League meetings and/or public meetings is one way to provide interesting information to your members and the public. In good League fashion be sure to include more than one perspective on an issue. Invite other community groups to co-sponsor or attend.

Candidates for public office usually expect the League to provide forums before an election. It is a great service to your community and provides visibility too. (The state League has *Guidelines* for your use in planning candidate events.)

Observing public meetings serves as an effective reminder to public officials that meetings must be open and accessible. If you are short of members able to observe, try concentrating on one board, commission or council each year. You will be more visible and your members will learn what is going on in at least one area.

Your plans should match the interests and time of your members. No League has to do everything, but you do need to have enough meetings and projects to give meaning to membership. Include new members in your plans. It may be faster to do a project using the "old hands," but that doesn't build confidence and commitment for the future.

Schedule time for fun. Whether you hold an annual party, meet at breakfast, lunch or dinner on a regular basis, or just encourage laughter along with thoughtfulness at your meetings, League should provide social pleasure as well as serious purpose for its members.

Make sure everyone is welcome and everyone is welcomed.



#### **MEMO**

#### **BEST PRACTICES**

To:

All League Presidents and DPM Subscribers

From:

**LWVUS Membership Committee** 

Date:

August 1993

Re:

Best Practices: Suggested Guidelines to

Supplement the Requirements of Leagues

At the 1986 LWVUS Convention, delegates voted the following measures and enforceable requirements to be fulfilled by Leagues in order to receive or maintain recognition:

The League must have bylaws, the first three articles of which must be consistent with those of the LWVUS. The remaining articles must provide for democratic procedures.

The League must establish and maintain a nonpartisan policy.

The League must hold annual business meetings of the membership.

The League must hold regular board meetings.

The League must contribute to the financial support of the League as a whole.

Any advocacy pursued by the League must be consistent with League principles, positions and policies.

In a discussion of these requirements in spring 1993, the Membership Committee recognized that fulfilling the requirements alone does not assure a smooth-running and viable League. We also recognize that Leagues employing certain practices that both enhance and supplement the requirements are usually the more successful Leagues.

We want to share with you a listing of "best practices" as demonstrated by Leagues of different sizes and geographic location. This is by no means a comprehensive list, nor is it meant to be a "do this" list or a guilt trip; rather, it is meant to be a way of sharing techniques of running a League successfully, born of League's actual experiences.

A draft of Best Practices was shared with Council '93 attendees. Many commented that this was a helpful guide for local Leagues; they also had the opportunity to make suggestions regarding content. A number of their suggestions have helped to make this a better and more useful listing.

Best Practices can be used in a variety of ways. You may want to read it over yourself, mentally checking where your League is already successfully practicing some of these techniques or where your League might want to consider trying a new method of operation. A League board could use Best Practices as a basis for discussion as it gets organized for the year ahead. In fact, a local Best Practices could be developed as a guide for present and future boards.

#### August 1993

#### League of Women Voters of the United States

## BEST PRACTICES SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

In this listing of Best Practices, the numbers 1 through 6 are the official requirements for Leagues as voted by the 1986 LWVUS Convention. Following each item is suggested implementation—the optimal level of operation.

1. The League must have bylaws, the first three articles of which must be consistent with those of the LWVUS. The remaining articles must provide for democratic procedures.

Best practices: The bylaws are reviewed annually by a committee to check actual practice for conformance and to consider possible amendments prior to the annual meeting.

2. The League must establish and maintain a nonpartisan policy.

Best practices: The League board reviews and discusses its nonpartisan policy yearly after the annual meeting or at its first organizational meeting. At a minimum, "visible" chairs are not involved in partisan activities. Each League considers it own community and its political environment when stating specific allowed and prohibited activities. The board's policy is printed in the local League bulletin each year.

3. The League must hold annual business meetings of the membership.

Best practices: The League holds an annual business meeting of the membership to vote on budget, bylaw changes, local program and to elect officers and directors. In order to encourage member attendance and participation, there is a "special" aspect to this meeting--a speaker, an award to a member or community leader, a time for attendees to socialize prior to the business.

4. The League must hold regular board meetings.

Best practices: The League holds regular monthly board meetings with written agenda and minutes distributed ahead of time. For better and more efficient meetings, a timed agenda is used, which provides opportunities for developing plans, acting on committee recommendations and evaluating progress and results.

5. The League must contribute to the financial support of the League as a whole.

Best practices: The League has sound fiscal management; promptly pays per member obligations to state and national levels of League; budgets are set to provide adequately for the implementation of League program and activities.

The League has an annual treasurer's report and review of financial records.

The League's dues are set realistically to cover annual state and national per member payments, plus some income for the League itself. In addition, the League aggressively pursues outside income through a finance drive or fundraiser in order to achieve the mission of the League.

Any advocacy pursued by the League must be consistent with League principles, positions and policies.

Best Practices: The League first sets priorities for timely action on positions and then takes action.

The League responds to action alerts from other levels of League and encourages grassroots member involvement in action where appropriate.

The League has developed an understanding of the appropriate level of government at which action may be taken; when in doubt, the state or national office is consulted. When appropriate the League coordinates action with other affected Leagues.

The League informs its members and the community of action taken through a variety of means (e.g., electronic media, newspaper articles, fact sheets).

Numbers 7 through 20 describe characteristics of healthy Leagues, followed by suggested guidelines for optimum practices that League boards may decide to adopt.

7. The League develops plans and evaluates activities.

Best Practices: The board holds an organization meeting after the annual meeting to plan the League calendar for the year ahead. Plans are developed that include an outline of specific activities for each month and the board member/committee responsible for each. The board's responsibility includes an evaluation of each activity. Plans and evaluations are included in written reports submitted to the board for future planning.

8. The League has a membership sufficient to maintain League viability.

Best Practices: The League has a Membership Chair and Committee that develops a plan each year to attract new members and to encourage their participation. League leaders are assigned specific new members to make contact with them and encourage their involvement. The president makes a welcoming phone call to each new member.

New members are invited to a special program to orient them to the League's basic organizational structure, history, present activities and opportunities for participation.

A card file or computer data file of the membership is updated regularly with information on members' special interests, achievements and League involvement; this file is shared with the Nominating Committee as positions need to be filled.

9. The League shows evidence of an aggressive annual membership recruitment and retention plan.

Best practices: The League grows in membership, carries out specific plans to make its membership as representative as possible of the community, and provides a variety of opportunities for members to participate in deciding and carrying on League activities and goals. Board members always carry membership information with them, ask others to join and, "talk up" the League in general.

Nationally recruited members receive a letter of welcome and are included on the bulletin mailing list; they are invited to join the local League well in advance of their dues lapsing.

Annual renewal notices are sent out several months in advance; personal phone calls and other methods of contact are used to follow up nonresponses several weeks before the due date.

#### 10. The League holds regular membership meetings.

Best practices: Monthly meetings are held on issues of League concern or under study. These meetings are both informative and participatory for League members. The League provides opportunities for League members to interact socially also.

#### 11. The League has compiled a study of its community and uses and updates it periodically.

Best practices: The League reviews its "Know Your Community" material at least every ten years to help identify community needs and areas for possible study or action. Necessary revisions are made to update the information. The League uses this material as part of its new member orientation each year.

The League undertakes formal publication of its community guide if publication provides community visibility or serves as a fundraising tool.

#### 12. The League carries out citizen education/voter service activities.

Best practices: The League works to increase citizen participation in the election process on all levels by undertaking election-related voters service (i.e. registration drives, get-out-the-vote campaigns, election guides, candidate forums).

The League undertakes citizen education efforts on issues of importance to the community, not necessarily ones on which the League has positions. This can take the form of holding public forums, distributing fact sheets or publications, running a media campaign, or organizing discussion groups. Such activities are often done in cooperation with another organization.

#### 13. The League establishes positions on public policy through member participation and agreement.

Best practices: The League selects at least one program item at each level of the League for study and/or action. The League has study and consensus meetings on at least one state and national item per year when appropriate. When possible, Leagues share responsibility for study committee activity and consensus meetings with neighboring Leagues in order to lessen the workload on individual Leagues.

The League has a plan for periodic review of its local program positions and updates its membership on these positions through meetings or bulletin articles.

#### 14. The League publishes a bulletin or Voter.

Best practices: The League has a method of regular communication with members. It distributes its bulletin to appropriate community leaders and to prospective members.

The League bulletin includes schedules of meetings, information on League positions, action alerts, Report from the Hill information and any other items necessary for a member to be informed and to act effectively; it avoids reprinting information from every-member League publications (e.g., state and national Voters). The bulletin contains a welcome to new members with a brief write-up on each one.

#### 15. The League adopts a budget.

Best practice: The League's Budget Committee recommends the adoption of a budget that reflects the League's priorities for the year and basic support for operating the League, including attendance at state and national conventions.

### 16. The League sends representatives to regional, state and national League meetings and to training opportunities.

Best practice: The League encourages all members, especially current and potential board members, to attend workshops, conferences, councils and conventions to increase skills and broaden knowledge to enhance the work of the League.

#### 17. The League encourages flexibility of its administrative structure.

Best practices: The League modifies its board structure; if necessary, it reduces the size of the board and eliminates nonessential portfolios as appropriate. The League makes an effort to reduce time demands on board members, emphasizing the policy-making role of the board. The League schedules meetings to accommodate both the board and members' work schedules.

#### 18. The League submits reports to state and national as requested.

Best practice: The League president takes responsibility for completing report forms on time or requests the appropriate board member to do so, checking on the follow-through.

#### 19. The League has an active Nominating Committee.

Best practices: The committee is active throughout the year, working to ensure the vitality of the League by identifying the leadership potential of new members. The committee has an up-to-date file on all members, noting present and past League positions of leadership, special community and personal interests. The committee encourages "assistant" chairs of committees in order to build a leadership bank.

#### 20 The League has high visibility in the community.

Best practices: The Public Relations Chair is chosen for writing ability, energy and enthusiasm for the League. Persistence and creativity are shown in seeking coverage in all forms of print and electronic communications (e.g., cable, local access, college TV and radio stations and trade association publications).

Photographs of League events accompany news articles and appear in the local papers whenever possible. Regular members, in addition to board members, are shown in these photographs.

Letters to the Editor are frequently used to inform the public of local, state or national League issues.

All League news articles close with information on how to join the local League and whom to contact for further information on the subject of the article.

The League is listed in the local phone book.

# VI.

## Resources for Presidents

#### Contents

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LWV Audio/Video Catalog	VI. 4-7
Board Memo and DPM Subscription Form	VI. 8

#### TIPS FOR LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS

Welcome and congratulations to all new and continuing League Presidents! The following tips are offered to help you organize, prioritize, delegate, file and communicate. Not all tips are for all Presidents, but you may find some that save time and energy for you and make your job more fulfilling and fun.

#### ORGANIZE:

- 1. Use a **portable** notebook as a journal for jotting ideas, making lists, taking notes of phone calls and meetings, recording dates for meetings.
- 2. Have Board training either by yourself or with a State Board member. Be sure Board members understand their responsibilities and know what you expect of them.
- 3. Use an expandable file with tabs for each Board member to distribute mail.
- To save time and resources use LWVUS and LWVMN positions and publications whenever appropriate to your priorities.
- 5. Use the *Outlook* Calendar and the Local League President's Planning Calendar as you plan your local League calendar.

#### PRIORITIZE:

- No League has to do everything. what issues are important to your members and your community? Choose two or three areas and spend time discussing with your Board goals and activities for the coming year. Be realistic about members' time limitations and commitment to League activities.
  - Cooperate with neighboring Leagues whenever possible on studies, candidate events, membership events, and public meetings.
  - 3. Divide projects and jobs into small, well-defined pieces. Many members will gladly take on small one-time job that they can do well and quickly.
  - 4. Membership is a top priority and responsibility of the entire Board.

#### **DELEGATE:**

- 1. Do not try to do everything yourself. Part of your job is helping other members to develop their leadership skills.
- 2. Involve members who are not on the Board in activities such as off-board committees, specific projects and fund raising. Try to discover what issues members, especially new ones, are interested in , and put them in touch with the appropriate committee chair.

#### FILE

- 1. Keep working files close to your working area.
- 2. Keep a list of filing categories visible by your files.
- 3. Be generous in your use of file folders; buy in quantity at office supply store and reuse.
- 4. Label folders, one side or tab only, so that they are returned to the file the same way each time. Add materials at the front of the folder, keeping the contents in chronological order.
- 5. Cross reference material that fits in more than one category by putting a note in other files, locating the material.
- 6. Mark material that can be thrown out after a time, before you file it.
- 7. Save space by writing on material already filed instead of adding another sheet to the files.
- 8. Always date and identify material with your League name.
- 9. Take time to weed the files as soon as a project or study is finished.

- 10. Weed the files at least once a year.
- 11. Keep material only if it is pertinent to your:
  - -function as a Board members
  - -particular portfolio
  - -personal interest

If it is not, chuck it or pass it on.

12. Open mailings promptly. Scan the material; save what applies to your League; note what needs prompt attention and get that to the appropriate person; toss the rest.

#### **COMMUNICATE**

- Your president's message in your local League bulletin sets the tone for your League. Be
  upbeat, encouraging, celebrate successes, promote coming events, thank everyone who helps
  with League work, encourage teamwork.
- 2. Send your bulletin and board meeting agenda and minutes to LWVMN.
- Call LWVMN office with your concerns or problems. State Board members want to help
  whenever they can. Your board members should contact their counterparts at the state level
  when they have questions.
- Please return forms LWVMN sends requesting information about your League. That
  information is used to plan work, share news of events with other Leagues, and to get ideas
  from you on programs, procedures and policies.
- 5.Attend statewide and regional meetings and encourage your members to do the same. We learn from each other and appreciate that we are involved in a great organization that is larger than our own local League.

#### **LWV PUBLICATIONS**

(Resources for local Leagues)

#### From LWVUS:

Publications are available through the LWVUS Resource Catalog, September 2000, (pub#131). Call or write for a free copy of the catalog.

League of Women Voters

1730 M Street, NW

Washington, DC 20036-4508

Tel: 202/429-1965 Fax: 202/429-0854 E-mail: lwv@pmds.com

#### You should have these resources:

LWVUS Board List, address, phone number and fax number of LWVUS office.

In League (Guidelines for League Boards - pub. #275)

Impact on Issues: A Leader's Guide to National Program (pub. #275)

Meaningful Meetings (pub. #319)

Simplified Parliamentary Procedures (pub. #138)

LWVUS Bylaws (pub. #381)

Presidents Packet (mailed in summer)

#### From LWVMN:

Outlook Calendar for 2001-02

Portfolio Updates for 2001-02

State Board List

President's Notebook

Program for Action

LWV in Action (to be published 2001-2002)

League-L-Ease

LWVMN Bylaws and LWVMN Policies

Sample Local League Board Agenda and Meeting Minutes

Annual Meeting Planning Guide

How to Use your LWVMN Education Fund: A Guide for Local Leagues

A Guide for the Nominating committee

Guide to Local Program Planning

Candidate Forum Guidelines

How to Make a Difference (LWVMN Lobbying Manual)

Capitol Letter (published during the legislative session, mailed to local League Presidents and subscribers)

List of Audio/Visuals available from LWVMN Office

Membership Guide (a "how to" for membership chairs)

#### From Local League:

**Board List** 

Membership Roster

**Job Descriptions** 

**Board Policies** 

Budget

Bylaws

Calendar for the Year

Committee List

**Program Positions** 

**Expense Vouchers** 

CATEGORY	VIDEO NAME	DATE	PRODUCER
VIDEO TAPES			
Action	Access to Excellence - Joe Nathan	1985	LWVGV
Action	America Needs a National Handgun Policy		
totion	America's Children - Their Future (Sarah		
Action	Rosenbaum)		LWVMN
Action	Child Protection Issues (Ember Reichgott)		LWVMN
1011011			Planned
Action	Choice Action Minnesota		Parenthood MN
Action	Citizens in Action - 2 copies	1985	LWVMN
Action	Ethics Lobbyist Workshop	Jan-89	LWVMN
Action	Gov't Op & Vet Affairs Unicameral Meeting	10/13/99	
Action	LWV Newsmaker - Unicameral Legislature	12/11/99	
Action	MN 's Children Communicators Workshop	3/11/87	
Action	STOP Term Limits - Kay Erickson	3/16/94	LWVMN
Action	Take Back the System	1992	LWVUS
Action	Unicameralism	rept de	
Action	We the People - Legislative Process		LWV Minneapolis
Celebrations	19th Amendment 75th Anniversary at MN State Fair	8/26/95	LWVMN
Celebrations	Lifetime Salutes from LWVUS Convention	2000	Lifetime Television
Debates	Debates	8/28/98	LWVMN
Debates	Gubernatorial Debate at Blake School - 2 copies	10/27/98	LWVMN/WCCO
Debates	MN Presidential Debate - In a League by Itself		U of M
Debates	Presidential Debate #2	1992	
Debates	Senatorial & Gubernatorial Debates	1994	LWVMN
Debates	U.S. Senatorial Debate	1996	
Debates	U.S. Senatorial Debate: Wellstone - Boschwitz	1990	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Aids - Public Policy - Response to a Killer, Part 1 of 2	Oct-87	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Aids - Public Policy - Response to a Killer, Part 2 of 2	Nov-87	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Beginning at Home: Tackling Household Hazardous Wastes	May-86	LWV - Mass.
Focus/Studies	Bringing Health Care Back Home - Part 1	3/19/85	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Bringing Health Care Back Home - Parts 2&3	3/19/85	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Changing Faces, Changing Communities - Community Circles on Issues of Immigration	2000	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Choices for the Future: Spring Focus, Tape 1 of 2, 2 copies	1996	LWVMN

Focus/Studies	Choices for the Future: Spring Focus, Tape 2 of 2, 2 copies	1996	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Citizens Guide to MN Fiscal Policy, 2 copies	1994	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Domestic Violence forum	10/19/93	LWV BPOMG
Focus/Studies	Drinking Water: Quality on Tap		LWV - Michigan
Focus/Studies	Federal Budget Deficit		
ocus/Studies	Financing Education in MN	1990	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Firearms - Focus	10/26/89	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Firearms - Focus, 3/4" format	10/26/89	LWVMN
COUG/ Ctudios	Thousand Todas, or Floring	10/20/00	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Indians in Minnesota Panel Discussion	May-85	Convention
Focus/Studies	Indians in Minnesota Panel Discussion	11/19/97	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Indians in Minnesota - Two Programs	Jul-85	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Indians in Minnesota - Two Programs, 3/4" format	Jul-85	LWVMN
	Judicial Elections Forum - St. Thomas	5/1/98	LWVMNEF
Focus/Studies		5/1/96	
Focus/Studies	Juvenile Justice - Part 2 of 2 - Focus		LWVMN
Focus/Studies	LWVMN Health Panel	-	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Mental Health - Keynote & Providers Viewpoint, Part 1 of 2	4/19/88	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Mental Health - Consumer Advocate Perspective, Reactor Panel & Policy Maker/Admin Perspective, Part 2 of 2	4/19/88	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Pay Equity Part I: The Quiet Revolution (Linda Berglin, Nina Rothchild & Phil Riveness)		LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Pay Equity Part II: How the State Stands Ready to Help w/Implementation (Nina Rothchild)		LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Pay Equity Part III: Historical Roots of Pay Equity (Clarks Chambers)		LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Pay Equity Part IV: Getting Pay Equity Going (Zwemke, Farmer, Robinson, Fogaerts)		LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Protecting MN Children: Public Issues - part 2	Mar-86	LWVMN
ocus/Studies	Protecting MN Children: Public Issues - part 1 & 3	Mar-86	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Reaching for the American Dream: Economic Policy for the Future - 2 copies		LWVMN
ocus/Studies	The Third World Challenge to U.S. Policy	1985	LWVUS
Focus/Studies	Tim Penny - Financing State Government		LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Tools for Drinking Water Protection		LWVMNEF
Focus/Studies	Trash		LWV Crystal/New Hope
Focus/Studies	Unicameral Legislature, Legislative Interviews	2000	LWV St. Cloud Area
History	How We Got the Right to Vote, 3/4" format		
History	Interview with Percy Maxim Lee, LWVUS 5th President	4/31/95	LWVUS

#### **AUDIO-VISUAL CATALOG**

History	Motor Voter Bill Signing Ceremony	1992	LWVUS
History	One Woman, One Vote	1995	PBS
History	Passing the Torch, 2 copies	8/30/95	LWV
1			
Membership	Convention Gala Video - Membership Explanation	1994	LWVUS
Membership	LWV Training Teleconference	11/18/89	
•	Membership Development: Flexible Strategies - 2		
Membership	copies	1992	LWVUS
Membership	PSA, one VHS, one 3/4" format		LWVMN
Membership	Something Special, 3/4" format	12/8/86	LWV Illinois
			Pew Charitable
Misc.	Americans Discuss Social Security		Trusts
			Pew Charitable
Misc.	A National Town Hall - Social Security		Trusts
			M.B. Hoffman
Misc.	A Public Voice: Governing America	1993	Prod.
Misc.	Decision Making - via Satellite - with workbook	10/13/90	LWVMN
			LWV St. Louis
Misc.	Diversity		Park
	Equal Justice for All? MN Guidelines for Fixed		2000
Misc.	Sentences, Parts 1 & 2, 3 copies	10/18/83	Morning Program
	Equal Justice for All? MN Guidelines for Fixed	(State	1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
Misc.	Sentences, Parts Part 3, 3/4" format	10/18/83	LWVMN
	Equal Justice for All? MN Guidelines for Fixed		
Misc.	Sentences, Parts Part 4, 3/4" format	10/18/83	LWVMN
Misc.	Fiscal Disparities, 3/4" format, 2 copies	4	Rochester LWV
Misc.	Follow the Dollars: MN Telecommunications Funding	1995	MTN
Misc.	Health Care Security: Challenge to America	1993	DNC
Misc.	Human Needs	1000	5.10
Misc.	League of Women Voters	10/13/90	
Misc.	Legislature Changes Part 1 of 2, 2 copies		LWVMN
Misc.	legislature Changes Part 2 of 2		LWVMN
Misc.	LWVUS Stff Video - Council 1999	1999	LWVUS
Misc.	Mr. Justice Brennan (Supreme Court)	1996	PBS
Misc.	Mr. Madison's Constitution & the 21st Century	1987	LWVUS
Misc.	Norm Coleman: The Only One		
Misc.	Panel		
Misc.	Plugging Along #1	1991	MTN
Misc.	Revolving Door - Lobbyist Gifts Interview		Common Cause Nebraska
Misc.	Roger Mudd Report on Health Care	1994	Jefferson Center

Misc.	Rural Teens & Sexuality (Dr. Barbara Yawn)		
	The Common Good: Social Welfare and American		Dick Young
Misc.	Future	1990	Productions
Misc.	The Constitution and the Courts	5/24/87	LWVUS
Misc.	We the People - Meeting Basic Human Needs	10/27/87	
Voter Service	Candidates - Citizens Jury		LWV Duluth
Voter Service	Citizens Jury: Tough Choices "Sacrifices"	Jan-93	Jefferson Center
Voter Service	Citizens Jury - "Highest Calling"	1991	
Voter Service	Every Vote Counts, 2 copies	Mar-82	LWVMN
Voter Service	Every Vote Counts, 3/4" format	Mar-82	LWVMN
Voter Service	First Vote (includes study guide)	1991	LWVMN
Voter Service	First Vote - A Video on Citizenship & Voting		People for the American Way
Voter Service	Joan Higinbotham on Almanac	8/22/86	LWVMN
Voter Service	KSTP - TV PSAs	1986	KSTP -TV
Voter Service	Minnesota Caucus Training, 2 copies	1987	LWVMN
Voter Service	Minnesota Citizens Forum	5/7/88	KTCA-TV
Voter Service	Northern MN Candidate Citizens Jury	1990	LWV Duluth
Voter Service	PSA	1986	
Voter Service	PSA by Candice Bergen	3/8/94	LWVUS
Voter Service	PSA - National version, 2 copies	Apr-92	LWVUS
Voter Service	Road to Election Day 1996, 3 copies	1996	LWVMN
Voter Service	Road to Election Day 2000	2000	LWVMN/KSTP
Voter Service	Road to Election Day 2000, Loop, 2 copies	2000	LWVMN/KSTP
Voter Service	Road to Election Day 2000, 3/4" format, 2 copies	2000	LWVMN/KSTP
Voter Service	Running & Winning: Getting Started	1998	LWVUS
Voter Service	Vote? What Difference Does it Make?	1998	U of M
Voter Service	WCCO PSA	1996	WCCO-TV
Voter Service	Why Bother Voting		PBS
Voter Service	You Can Vote	-	LWV Michigan
AUDIO TAPES			
Celebrations	Molly Ivans - Excerpt of 75th Anniversary Gala Speech, 3 copies	2/15/95	MPR
Focus/Studies	Choices for the Future - Tape 1 of 3	4/17/96	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Choices for the Future - Tape 2 of 3	4/17/96	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Choices for the Future - Tape 3 of 3	4/17/96	LWVMN
Focus/Studies	Unicameralism, Rep. Tom Rukavina	10/12/99	Citizens League
Focus/Studies	Unicameralism, Rep. Ember Reichgott Junge	10/5/99	Citizens League
League	Go for the Gold		Sunrise Media

#### **AUDIO-VISUAL CATALOG**

League	Influencing Other People Panel, Side B - Welfare Reform Address		Sunrise Media
League	The Fundraising Letter - Roger Craver		Sunrise Media
League	Making Community Change Panel		Sunrise Media
League	Volunteerism in the 1990's Panel		Sunrise Media
League	What's Working in the League Today - Panel		Sunrise Media
Membership	Acquisition/Renewal of Members Panel		Sunrise Media
Misc.	Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, LWVUS President, "Bridge Building in a Divided Culture"	3/4/99	MPR/Westminste r Forum
Misc.	Kay Erickson, LWVMN President on MPR	10/3/94	MPR
Misc.	A Voice for Citizens - LWV 75th Anniversary Song	6/16/95	
Misc.	Our Pride & Passion - LWV Song, 2 copies	6/16/95	
Misc.	Plenary Address - Patricia Schroeder	1988	LWVUS
Misc.	Plenary Address #3 - Nancy K. Austin		Sunrise Media
Misc.	Working Women - Tape 1 of 2, 2 copies		LWVMN
Misc.	Working Women - Tape 2 of 2, 2 copies		LWVMN
Voter Service	MN Compact		MNN Radio
Voter Service	MPR Citizens Forum		MPR





#### THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

550 Rice Street • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103 Phone 651-224-5445 • Fax 651-290-2145

TO:

Local League Presidents and Board Members

FROM:

Carol Frisch, President

RE:

Board Memo and DPM subscriptions for 2001 - 2002

DATE:

May 5, 2001

It's time to order your League's subscriptions for Board Memos and DPMs. As local League President, you do not need to order the Board Memo for yourself; however, each local League will receive only two copies of the Board Memo. One is for the use of the President and one will be included in the Presidents' mailing and is to be separated and distributed to other Board members. This is a very important League resource. Please consider entering a subscription for <u>each</u> Board member. As President, you will receive a President's Mailing automatically. **Co-Presidents will also receive a President's Mailing.** 

Please list all subscriptions for Board Memo and Duplicate President's Mailing on the spaces below and return the form to the LWVMN office, 550 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN 55103 no later than Aug. 31, 2001.

Board Memo subscriptions cost \$7.50 year for six issues mailed lst class directly to the subscriber's home. If a member wishes to receive the Board Memo via e-mail, the cost is \$7.50 (place e-mail address on address line).

The Duplicate President's Mailing, consisting of Board Memo, selected enclosures and one complimentary copy of each new LWVMN publication, costs \$15/year for six issues. DPMs are **not** available via e-mail.

#### Subscriptions for 2000 - 2001:

LWV of	
Total number of Board Memos ordered x \$7.50 = \$_	
Total number of additional DPMs ordered x \$15 = \$	
Check # in the amount of \$ is enclosed	sed. (Please circle either BM or DPM)
Name & Address or e-mail:	
Name & Address or e-mail:	BM DPM

## VII Board Meetings/ Training

#### Contents

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Tips/Motivation	VII. 5-6

## BOARD TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES from LWVMN

The League of Women Voter's unique mission as a nonpartisan political organization that carries out both education and advocacy requires thoughtful consideration of how we educate newer members and boards.

#### **Board Orientation:**

Board training workshops offer local Leagues an opportunity to prepare their leadership to carry out the functions that provide stability and credibility for the League. Such orientation sessions are available to all local Leagues upon request. Workshops generally last from 1 to 1 1/2 hours and cover the general duties of the board, the role of individual portfolios, nonpartisanship policies, and planning for productive meetings. If you have specific problems, needs or requests, we will try to address those as well. LWVMN may offer a board orientation and training, so check with the LWVMN office for more information.

#### **New Member Orientation:**

League is a relatively complicated organization for new members to understand. We have three levels - local, state and national-and a two part mission of advocacy and education which must be kept carefully separate and conducted in a scrupulously nonpartisan way. While most Leagues no longer have the luxury of close mentoring relationships between experienced and new members, every League does need to plan for some orientation and support for newer members.

If your League is able to provide its own orientation, that is the best way. If you cannot, please call to ask for help.

#### How to schedule an orientation:

Board training is the responsibility of LWVMN Member Resources Committee and the Field Service staff, but all LWVMN Board members may be asked to help if they are needed. If you would like to schedule an orientation for your new board or new members please call, fax or Email the state office.

Telephone: 651-224-5445 or call toll free at 1-800-663-9328.

Fax: 651-290-2145

E-mail: office@lwvmn.org

Please check with the office eas soon as you have possible dates in mind. We can't always make your first choice, but we will try to if we can.

#### **BOARD BASICS**

#### Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

- Develop and maintain League's mission and policies by making decisions and organizing activities with the entire board.
- Maintain fiduciary responsibility by developing a financial plan, overseeing fund development and administering funds.
- Plan, oversee and manage service to local Leagues, voter services, program and education.
- Maintain the legal responsibilities of the League.

#### Job Description for Board Members

- Understand and maintain the League's non-partisan policy.
- Attend Board meetings (give notification if unable to attend).
- Assist in overall planning and decision making of the board.
- Serve as committee chair/member.
- Assist in fundraising activities.
- Attend state and regional League meetings.
- Support and attend League activities.
- Promote and explain League in the community.
- Promote membership.

#### **Duties of Board Members**

- Review assignment/portfolio with predecessor and discuss past and ongoing projects.
- Maintain a board notebook.
- Form committee, if appropriate, and maintain any necessary committee and/or portfolio file with reports, publicity, memos, clippings, etc.
- Carry out any specific assignments.
- Meet deadlines (e.g. publicity, bulletins, state/national reports, etc.).
- Prepare brief reports and/or bring plans to board for discussion and decisions.
- Obtain board approval prior to taking action.
- Provide information for bulletin when appropriate.
- Seek committee members from general membership.
- Train successor and pass on files.

#### TIPS FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The leader does not need to be an expert or even the most knowledgeable person in the group; the ability to manage the discussion is much more important than knowledge of the issue. In fact, content experts tend to have a difficult time staying in the leader role.

However, the leader should be the most well-prepared person in the room. This means thorough familiarity with the reading material, reflection about the directions in which the discussion must go, knowledge of the people and personalities in the group, and a clear understanding of how the concurrence will work.

#### II. BEGINNING

- 1. "Beginning is half," says an old Chinese proverb. Set a friendly and relaxed atmosphere from the start. Introduce yourself: talk about your background and reasons for agreeing to moderate the discussion. All participants should then be asked to introduce themselves. They could say something about their League background and why they are interested in the study, for example.
- 2. Start and end on time. People who make the effort to come on time are punished by having to wait for late-comers to arrive.
- 3. **Designate a recorder**. The recorder keeps notes and records your League's response to the concurrence form.

#### III. MANAGING THE DISCUSSION

- Keep discussion focused on the session's topic. Don't force the group to stick to the topic too rigidly, but don't allow the discussion to drift.
- 2. **Keep the discussion moving along**. When a point has been fully discussed, don't allow the group to beat it into the ground. Move on to something else.
- 3. Do not allow the aggressive, talkative person or faction to dominate. One of the most difficult aspects of leading is restraining domineering participants.
- 4. Draw out participants. Do not allow anyone to sit quietly in the corner or to be forgotten by the group without an attempt to reach the person. Create an opportunity for each participant to contribute.
- 5. Be an active listener. You will need to truly hear and understand what people say if you are to guide the discussion effectively.
- 6. Stay neutral and be cautious about expressing your own values. As the leader you have considerable power with the group. If you throw your weight behind the ideas of one faction, your effectiveness in managing the discussion will be diminished.
- 7. Use conflict productively and don't allow participants to personalize their disagreements. Do not avoid conflict, but try to keep it narrowly focused on the issue at hand. Conflict in a discussion can be exciting, but conflict of personalities is destructive. Since everyone's opinion is important,

- participants should feel comfortable saying what they really think even if it's unpopular. If the group starts to gang up on someone, or if you sense that some participants may be afraid to express their views, remind the group that it's important to respect everyone's right to be heard.
- 8. Be prepared to intervene to help participants clarify vague or confusing statements. Make sure jargon is translated into terms everyone can understand.
- 9. Don't be afraid of pauses and silences. People need time to think and reflect. Sometimes silence will help someone build up the courage to make a valuable point.
- 10. Do not allow the group to make you the expert or "answer person." Don't set yourself up as the final arbiter. Let the group decide what it believes and correct itself when a mistake is made.
- 11. Don't always be the one to respond to comments and questions. Encourage interaction among the group. Participants should be conversing with each other, not just with the leader.
- 12. Synthesize or summarize the discussion occasionally. It is helpful to consolidate related ideas to provide a solid base for the discussion to build upon. A look back over territory that has been covered provides a sense of what has been accomplished.
- 13. A little humor can go a long way. A gracious joke or wry comment can be particularly useful if the atmosphere becomes tense and can pep people up when the discussion is lagging.
- 14. Watch the time and move the discussion along when necessary.
- 15. Ask hard questions. Call attention to points that have not been mentioned or seriously considered, whether you agree with them or not. Encourage someone to play devil's advocate, if necessary.
- 16. Be aware of how your questions are directed. Varying your questions by directing some toward particular participants and others to the group at large can help you manage the discussion.
- 17. Utilize open-ended questions. Questions such as, "What other possibilities have we not yet considered?" do not lend themselves to short, specific answers and are especially helpful for drawing out quiet members of the group.
- 18. Avoid leading questions. The leader who asks "Are you uncomfortable with this line of reasoning?" rather than "What do you think of this line of reasoning?" may be interjecting her/his own opinion.

#### IV. Wrapping Up

- 1. Thank everyone for participating.
- 2. Remind them of the date and time of the next meeting, if there will be more than one.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAST AND EFFICIENT BOARD MEETINGS

#### **▲ START ON TIME**

Start meetings on time, even if a quorum is not yet present (minutes, correspondence, reports that require no decision from the board can be dealt with until quorum is present). Ask board members to call if they will knowingly be late.

#### ▲ FOLLOW A WRITTEN AGENDA

Ask members to submit agenda items by a deadline, then prepare and mail agenda to members prior to the meeting.

#### ▲ FOLLOW GENERAL PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Even the most basic attempts will aid in maintaining order, hearing discussion and reaching appropriate decisions.

#### ▲ SET TIME LIMITS

Agenda items should have designated time limits and the chair should make every attempt to follow these.

#### ▲ MOVE THROUGH THE AGENDA

A lengthy discussion can be postponed until later in the meeting, following necessary business. Routine committee reports can be placed at the end of the meeting and, if necessary, held over if time runs out.

#### L END ON TIME

The duty of the chair is to keep the meeting within the stated time limits, unless the board agrees to extend the duration of the meeting or table items until a future meeting.

#### TIPS

The opportunity for socializing or informal discussion is very important in any organization, but plan for it ahead or after the scheduled meeting time so that those who must leave on time may do so.

Pre-planning by committee chairs is important, so that reports are concise. Submitting a written motion ahead of time may be helpful. It can be amended by the board as necessary.

Listen carefully. The board is responsible as a whole for policy decisions, so be sure to understand the issues and options.

Ask questions directly of the person giving the report, not your neighbor, and don't carry on a private conversation.

Outside speakers should be given a specific amount of time and, if possible, be scheduled on a meeting day when the agenda is not lengthy.

If some reports have been skipped one month because of time, the chair should try to start the reports with them the next month so that the same ones aren't always left out.

#### **MOTIVATION**

These are basic to any leadership system -- from benevolent dictatorship to participative leadership, they should not be ignored, regardless of leadership style or other motivating factors.

Individuals usually produce more when they know ...

- · What they are supposed to do.
- What authority they have.
- What their relationships are with others.
- · What constitutes a job well done.
- · What they are doing exceptionally well.
- · Where they are falling short.
- · What they can do to improve.
- · They will receive just rewards.
- . That their work is of real value.
- · That leadership has a genuine concern for them.
- That their superior is anxious for them to succeed and progress in a way that is personally rewarding.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA\*926 J STREET\*SUITE 1000\*SACRAMENTO CA 95816\*916-442-7215/FAX 916-442-7362

# VIII. Laws and Regulations

#### Contents

IRS Rules	VIII. 1-2
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Ethical Practices Rules Concerning Elected Officials	VIII. 5
Federal Disabilities Act	VIII. 6-7

#### IRS RULES

#### IRS Rules Regarding Non-Deductibility of Contributions

Any solicitation for contributions NOT going to the Education Fund must contain a conspicuous and easily recognized statement that contributions to the organization are not tax-deductible. This includes contributions, membership dues, gifts, voluntary assessments, stock, securities, property or voluntary services. In soliciting these funds you must state their non-deductibility clearly and in a place where it will be noticed by the recipient.

Wording on solicitations to businesses can be slightly different because a business may choose to deduct a contribution as an ordinary and necessary business expense, e.g., public relations.

Sample wording for solicitations to businesse	s might be:
"Contributions to the LWV of	are not deductible as charitable
contributions for tax purposes but may be	deductible as an ordinary and necessary
business expense."	
Sample wording for solicitations to individua	ls might be:
"Contributions to the LWV of	(or dues for membership in the
LWV of are not de	ductible as charitable contributions for tax
purposes."	

#### IRS Rules on Deductibility of Payments by Patrons of Fundraising Events

Local Leagues can use fundraising events to solicit deductible gifts for the Education Fund if they follow certain soliciting and reciting practices:

- > To be tax deductible, a payment must be an outright gift without tangible compensation. When a person buys an item, no gift has been made because the payment is the purchase price. To qualify as a gift, it must be shown that the payment exceeds the fair market value of whatever is received and that amount may be deducted.
- > An admission price is not tax deductible because the payment is not considered a gift. If the price is intended to be in part a gift and in part the purchase price of admission, you must state how much is fair market value and how much is a gift. This must appear on the solicitation and on any ticket or receipt.
- > Where the event is reasonably comparable to events for which there are established charges for admission, such as theatrical or athletic performances, the established charges should be treated as fixing the fair market value of the admission. If the amount paid is the same as the standard admission charge, there is no deductible contribution.
- > The amount of a payment exceeding the value of an event or article received is tax deductible. Even if the event and/or articles are donated they cannot be deducted if the rate charged equals their fair market value. If the price is higher than the fair market value, and this is made clear, then the difference is tax deductible.

- > To claim a deduction, the donor must be able to show a gift was made in excess of the fair market value of the goods or services received. The charity must disclose fair market value for each item and include it in a brochure or catalog if one is printed.
- > The price of a raffle ticket is not deductible, and the prizes are subject to income tax.

#### **Requirements Concerning Acknowledgments**

#### These requirements apply to contributions received on or after Jan. 1994:

- A charity must provide a donor with a written acknowledgment for a contribution of \$250 or more to include with the individual's 1040 tax return. The acknowledgment must state the amount of any cash contribution, a description of any property contributed and whether the charity provided any goods or services in exchange for the contribution. If there was an exchange, the charity must also provide a good faith estimate of the value of those goods or services.
- > If a charity receives more than \$75 from a contributor and the sum is partly a contribution and partly a payment for goods and services provided by the charity, the charity must give the donor a written statement that includes a good faith estimate of the value of the goods or services and informs the donor of the actual amount which may be considered a charitable deduction.

#### THIRD-CLASS POSTAL REGULATIONS

(Source: LWVUS, 1995)

Postal regulations allow advertising in third-class nonprofit periodicals, with a few important exceptions. The key word here is periodical. To be exempt from advertising restrictions requiring that ads be "substantially related" to the work of the organization, Leagues must make sure that their mailings meet the content criteria for a periodical publication. Most League mailings already meet those requirements, and if they don't, it should be fairly easy to make the changes to comply. But there are a few blanket prohibitions on certain types of advertising. See below.

#### **Content Requirements for Periodical Publications**

To qualify as a periodical publication and thus be exempt from the "substantially related" test, the material mailed must meet the following requirements.

- Have a title. The title must be printed on the front cover page in a style and type that make it clearly distinguishable from other information on the page.
- Be formed of printed sheets. It may not be reproduced by stencil, mimeograph or hectograph. Any other duplication process is permitted.
- Contain an identification statement on one of the first five pages that includes the following elements:
  - † Title.
  - † Issue Date (this may be omitted here if it is on the cover page).
  - † Statement of frequency showing how many issues are to be published each year and what regular intervals (e.g., monthly; quarterly; monthly except July and August, etc.).
  - † Name and address of the nonprofit organization, including street number, street name and zip.
  - † Issue number (every issue should be numbered consecutively--e.g., Volume 3, #8); This info can be on the cover page instead of the identification statement.
  - † ISSN Number (International Standard Series Number) or USPS Number (United States Postal Service Number) if applicable. Some Leagues may have these numbers. They are not required if you don't have one.
  - † Subscription price, if applicable.
- · Consist of at least 25 percent nonadvertising matter in each issue.

As noted, most League bulletins already meet most if not all of these criteria. If yours does not, you should make the necessary modifications.

#### **Advertising Restrictions for Periodical Publications**

In 1991, the Postal Service adopted regulations restricting three specific kinds of advertisements. For the most part, these regulations were rarely enforced, by indications are that this is changing. One League in California already has had a problem with this issue. These regs prohibit material that "advertises, promotes, offers, or, for a fee or consideration, recommends, describes or announces the availability of":

- Any insurance policy.
- Any travel arrangement.
- Any credit, debit or charge card or similar financial instrument or account.

In other words, Leagues' bulletins mailed at the third-class nonprofit rate may not include ads for insurance agencies, travel agencies or financial institutions. These institutions may act as sponsors (e.g., "The Joe Smith Insurance Agency is proud to support the League of Women Voters of Anytown") but they may not take ads ("The Joe Smith Insurance Agency—Offering Home, Auto and Life Insurance for 25 Years. 555-1212") If you mail at the third-class rate and you have such advertisers now, you should convert them to "sponsors" or drop the ads. As mentioned, this is not a new regulation, but it is being newly enforced, at least in some areas. Most of us were not even aware it was it was in the regs until now.

#### ETHICAL PRACTICES RULES CONCERNING ELECTED OFFICIALS

FROM CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE BOARD
1997 HANDBOOK FOR LOBBYISTS AND LOBBYISTS PRINCIPALS
(Full text available from LWVMN)

(For further information see the Board's website at www.cfboard.state.mn.us.)

#### **PROHIBITIONS**

#### **Contingent Fees**

No person may act as or employ a lobbyist for compensation that is dependent upon the result or outcome of any legislative, administrative, or metropolitan governmental unit action.

#### **Certain Gifts**

A lobbyist or lobbyist principal is prohibited from giving gifts to officials including:

- money:
- · real or personal property;
- a service;
- a loan;
- a forbearance or forgiveness of indebtedness; or
- · a promise of future employment

<u>UNLESS</u> the lobbyist or lobbyist principal receives consideration of equal or greater value in return. Minn. Stat. §10A.071

#### **Exceptions**

The prohibitions do not apply to the following gifts if not prohibited by other law:

- · political contributions to a state candidate;
- services to assist an official in the performance of official duties, including providing advice, consultation, information, and communication in connection with legislation and services to the official's constituents;
- · services of insignificant monetary value;
- plaques or similar mementos recognizing the individual's services in a field of specialty or to a charitable cause;
- trinket or memento of insignificant value;
- informational material of unexceptional value;
- food or beverage at a reception, meal, or meeting away from the official's
  place of work provided by an organization before whom the official appears
  to make a speech or answer questions as part of a program.

#### Additional Exceptions

The prohibition does not apply if the gift is given:

- because of the official's membership in a group, a majority of whose members are not officials, provided an equivalent gift is given to the other members of the group; or
- by a lobbyist or lobbyist principal who is a member of the official's family, unless the gift is given on behalf of someone who is not a member of the official's family.

#### FEDERAL DISABILITIES ACT REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Title III of the Federal Disabilities Act under the section on Public Accommodations requires that an American Sign Language/English interpreter for the hearing impaired be provided upon request at an event to which the general public is invited. A public candidate forum or public meeting is such an event. To be in compliance with the law your candidate forum publicity should include a statement that "a qualified American Sign Language/English interpreter will be provided for hearing impaired persons who request one by (date)\_\_\_\_\_." If no requests are received by the date specified, that is the end of it. If there is a last minute request, we are required to make a reasonable attempt to meet it.

If it is not possible to provide this service because no interpreter is available or your League does not have or cannot raise the money, the forum can go on as planned, but legally we may be required to show that we did try to comply. Keep a written record of the request and what you did to meet it dates, times and the names of people with whom you spoke.

We are not in this alone and there are resources to help groups meet this new law. Minnesota has a regional network of interpreter referral centers - a list of those numbers is provided on p. VIII. 7 along with information on interpreters. These centers provide free referral service to help you find an interpreter who can meet the needs of the person(s) requesting one. Other possible requests could be for large print, tactile or oral interpreters. The referral center can explain this for you.

The first step after receiving a request is to call the center. Tell them the kind of request and the date, time, place and expected duration of your meeting. They will find an interpreter for you if possible and can also direct you to possible sources of funding in your area.

Qualified American Sign Language/English interpreters are trained in the translation of English to American Sign Language, a visual language with a totally different syntax. They usually work as independent contractors. Their rates vary, but you can expect a two hour base rate of \$45 to \$70. Prices beyond the first two hours also vary. It is possible that you may need to have more than one, since they need a break after 45 minutes. Some may be willing to work pro bono or to reduce their rates for a volunteer group such as League.

You already know that public events need to be held in buildings and rooms that are accessible to the disabled. This law extends access to those who have other problems. While it adds another level of complexity to your planning, the regional referral centers should minimize the amount of extra time it will take.

#### ARRANGING INTERPRETER SERVICES

#### 7 COUNTY METRO AREA

#### INTERPRETER REFERRAL CENTER

located at:

Minnesota Foundation for Better Hearing and speech

METRO: 651/224-6548 V/TTY (Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

#### **EMERGENCY AFTER HOURS** (evenings, weekends and holidays) 952/936-2891 V/TTY

Greater Minnesota interpreter referral regions and phone numbers are listed below.

#### When requesting an interpreter, be prepared to provide the following information:

- Date & Time Needed
- Estimated Length of Session
- Location
- Type of Situation

- Number of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Participants or Name(s) of Individual(s)
- Payment Procedures
- Name, Address and Phone Number of Contact Person for
  - Confirmation

#### GREATER MINNESOTA INTERPRETER REFERRAL SERVICES

Contact the Interpreter Referral 800 number serving your county

Lac Qui Parle

#### Northern Minnesota Area:

Northeast RSC and Upper Northwest RSC Regions 1-800-456-3839 V/TTY

Counties Served:

Aitkin St. Louis Marshall Carlton Beltrami Norman Cook Clearwater Pennington Itasca Kittson Polk Koochiching Lake of the Woods Red Lake Lake Mahnomen Roseau

#### Southwestern Minnesota Area

Southwest RSC Region 1-800-456-5852 V/TTY

Counties Served:

Blue Earth Lincoln Pipestone Redwood Brown Lvon Chippewa Martin Rock Cottonwood Sibley Murray Faribault Nicollet Watonwan Jackson **Nobles** Yellow Medicine

#### Central Minnesota Area

Northwest RSC and Central RSC Regions 1-800-456-7589 V/TTY

Counties Served:

Renville Becker Isanti Sherburne Benton Kanabec Big Stone Kandiyohi Sterns Cass McLeod Stevens Meeker Chisago Swift Todd Clay Mille Lacs **Crow Wing** Morrison Traverse Douglas Ottertail Wadena Grant Wilkin Pine Hubbard Wright Pope

#### Southeastern Minnesota Area:

Southeast RSC Region 1-800-456-2021 V/TTY

Counties Served:

Dodge Houston Rice Fillmore Le Seuer Steele Freeborn Wabasha Mower Goodhue Olmsted Waseca Winona

From: MN Dept. of Human Services Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division Metro RSC 130 E. 7th St., St. Paul, MN 651/297-1316 V; 651/297-1313 TTY

## IX.

## Finances/ Fundraising/ Development

#### Contents

Tax Status of League of Women Voters of Minnesota &

League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund IX. 1

(Also see How to Use your LWVMN Ed Fund: A Guide

for Local Leagues, pages 1 & 2)

Financing Your League Year

IX. 2-4

Paying PMP with Education Fund Money (See How to Use your LWVMN Ed Fund: A

Guide for Local Leagues, page 5)

How to Use your LWVMN Ed Fund: A Guide for Local Leagues

IX.

#### FINANCING YOUR LEAGUE YEAR

#### **Finance Campaign**

An annual finance campaign is a must for all Leagues. The campaign brings you visibility in your community as well as raising money for your League activities. That community presence will reap benefits in membership and public relations in addition to adding dollars to your bank account. Those dollars will allow you to do more for your community. Remember, you get a greater dollar return for less time and effort in a finance campaign than in any other kind of fundraising.

#### Steps to a Successful Finance Campaign

- 1. Get an enthusiastic Finance Chair.
- 2. Emphasize total Board support of the campaign.
- 3. Get a Finance Committee.
- 4. Set a goal and a deadline to wrap up the campaign.
- 5. Research and target prospective donors.
- Begin with the most likely prospects--your Board, members, former and present donors, and those with League contacts.
- 7. Send a letter to donors and prospects requesting a specific dollar amount.
- 8. Train your volunteer solicitors.
- 9. Make phone and in-person follow-up calls.
- 10. Thank all donors.
- 11. Recognize all donors and solicitors.
- 12. Throughout the year, keep donors informed of League through your bulletin, meeting announcements and/or publications of interest to that donor.
- 13. Congratulate yourselves on your success.

#### Tips for a Successful Fundraiser

- Research and plan a fundraiser that will appeal to your members to work on and support. Be sure that you have total Board support.
- 2. Be sure that it will appeal to your constituency (whoever is to attend, pay, etc.)
- 3. Keep your expenses low to keep risk of loss low.
- 4. Be sure that the dollar return will be worth the time and effort expended by members.
- 5. Don't forget the FUN in fundraiser.

#### The LWVMN Education Fund: Why and How to Use it.

Tax deductible dollars to the Education Fund are generally easier to raise than regular contributions to your League. Those dollars enable your League to do any Voter Service or Citizen Information project in your community.

To qualify to use Ed Fund money, your project must be:

- · Objective and factual, not involved in League positions;
- Educational:
- · Designed to serve the public;
- Approved by the LWVMNEF prior to starting the project.

**Examples of Education Fund Projects** 

- Know your Community/Local Government and Community Services booklet
- · Local Citizens in Action publication
- Local Election Hotline/Voters' Guide/candidates' meetings
- Bulletin reimbursement for percentage devoted to education
- Placemats for restaurants, posters, yard signs to get out the vote.
- · Town meetings/public meetings.

#### **Fundraising Within Your Boundaries**

The intent of this policy is to maximize the fundraising capabilities of all Leagues in Minnesota.

The LWVMN's policy for local Leagues on soliciting contributions is as follows:

Local Leagues should solicit funding from individuals and businesses/corporations, civic and other groups who give financial support within your geographic boundaries (unless they live outside the area but have ties to your League). If you feel there is an overriding need to go beyond your geographic boundaries, please adhere to the following policy:

- 1. If you approach a corporate/business, civic or other group located where there is a local League chapter, call the president of that local League and inform them of your plans.
- 2. If you are soliciting funds of \$2,500 or more from **any** foundation or corporate giving program located in Minnesota, report your plans to the Director of Development at the State League Office.
- The LWVMN will report to the local Leagues on fundraising solicitations made of Minnesota corporations and foundations.
- Collaboration and cooperation among League is encouraged. For major fundraising efforts a local League and the state League should consider joint approaches to foundations or corporate giving programs.

Please contact Andrea Lex, Director of Development, LWVMN at 651/224-5445. A local League President list is available from the state Office at 651/224-5445.

#### Partial Payment of PMP with Tax-Deductible Money

Each local League has the **option** to raise up to 50% of its per member payment (PMP) in the form of tax-deductible contributions to the LWVMNEF. LWVMNEF will establish a separate LWVMNEF PMP Account for each local League that requests to use a tax-deductible contribution to pay PMP.

Funds that have been raised for designated educational projects and deposited in your LWVMNEF account cannot be used to pay your PMP obligation. Specifically designated funds must be used: Your League must explain to donors that their contribution will be used for "general unrestricted purposes, including payment of PMP" See page 7 of How to Use Your League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund: A Guide for Local Leagues.

#### LWVMNEF Fundraising: Local League Participation

Annual Appeal - A Statewide fund drive is held every Fall. A letter is sent to members and non-members asking for a contribution. A phonathon is held as a follow-up to the letter. Local Leagues are invited to participate and share the funds that are raised as a result of their efforts. Watch for notices regarding sign-up in August and September. LWVMNEF Local League Sharing Policy: 25% of individual gifts of \$50 and above are deposited in the local League Education Fund account when donors ask that their contribution be shared with the local League.

Corporate Fundraising - Minnesota corporations are solicited for contributions throughout the year both for unrestricted grants for general operating support and for grants to specific LWVMNEF projects. Local League Sharing Policy: 10% of an unrestricted corporate gift is deposited in the Education Fund account of the local League in that corporations' headquarters community.

Benefit – Every other year a state League benefit is held for purposes of fellowship and fundraising. Watch for announcements in late fall/early winter.

Planned Giving - Endowment funds for both LWVMN and LWVMNEF have been established as well as a planned giving program to provide long term financial support. Potential donors are advised that they have options for giving to various levels of League. The Legacy Circle - The Legacy Circle is a recognition society for all those who have made the state League a beneficiary in their wills or made arrangements for a planned gift or made an outright gift of at least \$1,000 to the Endowment Funds. A special luncheon is held annually to recognize all members of the Legacy Circle.

#### Tax Status of LWVMN & LWVMNEF

#### LWVMN

Two nonprofit tax categories apply to the League of Women Voters. The 501(c)(4) is the membership organization at the local, state and national level. It is the part of the League that carries out membership activities and does lobbying on issues. Your dues are contributions to a (c)(4) and are not tax deductible.

#### LWVMNEF

A 501(c)(3) is an educational organization which can seek and receive tax deductible donations for nonpartisan projects intended to serve the public. In Minnesota the only local League currently with its own 501(c)(3) is Minneapolis. The national and state Leagues each have one. The Education Fund is governed by the same board of directors as the state League acting in a second role. We have separate meetings, minutes and bookkeeping. All League projects in either tax category must be nonpartisan and support neither candidates nor political parties. Education Fund projects must also provide information to the public that does not refer to our own positions as an organization. Such projects provide information and leave the conclusions to the reader or listener.

It is the Education Fund that carries out state projects such as candidate forums, the voter guide, the civics curriculum, the Citizens in Action workshops, and publications such as the study on state spending, the legislative booklet, *How to Make a Difference*, and *Indians in Minnesota*.

#### **Local Education Funds**

The state League also accepts, holds, and disburses funds donated to local Leagues for educational projects. The process does require a paper trail and prior approval by your local board and state committee. Every League has material on the process to follow and the forms to use. Those funds may be used for any projects that meet the criteria. (See How to Use Your Education Fund: A Guide for Local Leagues)

## HOW TO USE YOUR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA EDUCATION FUND:

#### A GUIDE FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

Revised April 2001 League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund 550 Rice Street, Suite 201 St. Paul, MN 55103 651/224-5445 651/290-2145 (FAX) Email: office@lwvmn.org Website: www.lwvmn.org

#### HOW TO USE YOUR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA EDUCATION FUND

#### INTRODUCTION

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund (LWVMNEF) was established in 1983 as an educational arm of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. It qualifies under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization that may accept contributions that are considered to be tax deductible for the donor. Under the Local League Accounts Program, local Leagues solicit local contributions to their account in the LWVMNEF and obtain grants from the LWVMNEF for approved educational projects in their communities.

LWVMNEF monies may only be used to provide objective information and education to the public about citizenship and issues of concern to citizens.

Each local League account is kept separate and is never commingled with the state LWVMNEF account.

The following guidelines for local Leagues outline steps to follow in soliciting contributions and in applying for and administering LWVMNEF grants. They include specifics on procedures required by the Internal Revenue Service to protect donors and the LWVMNEF.

Approval is not needed to solicit money for the LWVMNEF, but approval of an appropriate project is required before a grant can be made to your League.

Please reproduce and use the forms attached to this Guide:

Form A-1 Deposit slip

Form A-2 Local League Application for Approval to do a Project

Form A-3 Financial Report for Education Fund Grant

Form A-4 Project Request to Purchase LWVMNEF Publications

#### HOW TO OPEN AND MAKE DEPOSITS IN YOUR LEAGUE ACCOUNT

Send a donor's check made payable to the LWVMNEF directly to the state office:

League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund 550 Rice Street

St. Paul, MN 55103

Enclose a deposit slip, Form A-1, for proper credit to your League's account. The check may be from your League, a corporation, a foundation, a member or an individual. The check may be for any amount. There is no minimum deposit required and no service fee charged. However, interest on local League and state League accounts is kept by LWVMNEF to go towards administrative costs incurred by the Fund.

A check made out to LWVMNEF must never be deposited in your local League account in your community, but must be sent directly to your LWVMNEF account.

If a check from a donor is incorrectly made out to your local League, your Treasurer must endorse the check over to LWVMNEF.

You will receive a notice of your League's account balance in the LWVMNEF after every deposit or withdrawal.

It is up to each League to thank its contributors for donations.

#### PROJECT APPROVAL - SOME GENERAL RULES

There are two routes you may take:

Solicit tax-deductible funds and send them to the LWVMNEF before you have a project in mind. OR Request approval for a project first, and then solicit tax-deductible funds for the specific project.

- 1. To obtain some or all of the funds being held on deposit for your League you must complete and submit Form A-2 Local League Application for Approval to do a Project.
- 2. Prior LWVMNEF approval is required before a project is undertaken. This means that before a publication is printed or a public meeting is held, you must have submitted a project request and obtained permission to fund the project from your LWVMNEF account. This step is necessary to assure that any expenditure involving tax-deductible monies meets IRS requirements. Approval cannot be granted for a project already completed.
- 3. A one-time project must be completed within a year of approval, unless special permission is obtained for a longer period.
- 4. Approval must be obtained yearly for continuing projects.

#### CRITERIA FOR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE PROJECTS

- 1. The project must be educational in nature, designed to serve the general public and not exclusively League members.
- 2. The project should provide objective information and analysis.
- 3. There should not be any advocacy of League position or action.
- 4. The project cannot attempt to influence the outcome of legislation.
- The project cannot contain any information that appears to take sides in a currently controversial issue.
- 6. The project must not be for membership recruitment or retention.
- 7. The project must be approved before it is funded with tax-deductible money.

LWVMNEF Board approval is not a value judgment of a project but an assessment as to whether the project meets 501(c)(3) IRS requirements.

Fill out Form A-2 Local League Application for Approval to do a Project and mail it to the state office at least three weeks before you plan to begin the project. When doing the Project Budget, remember it is a guide to the costs and income of the project. Final costs may be higher or lower than anticipated in the project budget.

#### TOTAL BOARD PLANNING

- Plan your educational activities with your board at the time you are considering your regular League annual budget or doing calendar planning.
- 2. Define, develop and describe the project(s).
- Several board members should be involved in the planning and project execution. But assign
  one person the responsibility for submitting the request, accepting and accounting for grant
  monies and making the financial report.
- 4. Get estimates for expenses.
- 5. Approach potential contributors with the project proposal. You may obtain funding from one source or several.

#### SOME IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

- A Voter service/citizen information projects: voter guides, booths, candidates meetings, badges and posters, or citizen information services such as an answering machine or telephone information service.
- 2. Publications: Know Your Community, Your Elected Officials, Facts and Issues (with no mention of League position) or other information of interest to citizens.
- 3. Public meetings, such as seminars, conferences or workshops
- 4. Radio or TV programs
- Publication purchase and distribution: purchase of national League publications for distribution to schools, libraries, members and the general public; purchase and distribution of state League educational publications such voter guides, research publications, How To Make A Difference, Indians in Minnesota etc.
- Percentage of material in local League bulletin which is devoted to voter service or citizen information.

If your project is for your bulletin, use Form A-2 Local League Application for a Project. Check the "publication" box. Under "Details of project" include:

- The % of bulletin space you plan to devote to voter service or citizen information.
- The number of issues of the bulletin to contain such information.
- · Description of contents.

Use Form A-3 Financial Report for Education Fund (How To Get Your \$ Back) for reimbursement of these expenses for the bulletin. You must attach a copy of each issue with all voter service and citizen information highlighted. Figure the percentage that information is of the total bulletin. List entire cost for publishing and distributing the bulletin. Request reimbursement of EF money for the figured percentage of that total amount.

#### GETTING YOUR MONEY BACK

The money for project expenses - money you solicited and deposited - is returned to your League after the project has been approved and the necessary funds are on deposit.

- Use Form A-3 Financial Report for Education Fund Grant (How To Get Your \$ Back) to
  request the funds. State the amount required since it might be different from your original
  estimate. If you do a publication with your project, send two copies of the publication to
  LWVMNEF. You will receive a check about two to three weeks after your written request is
  sent.
- You pay your local bills with the grant. They are not paid by the LWVMNEF. It is not necessary to send copies of invoices to the LWVMNEF, but keep them for your records.
- Money cannot be advanced. The grant money will be sent when requested if sufficient funds are in your account.

- 4. Funds can be withdrawn before completion of the project by submitting Form A-3 periodically during the project. Simply note on the form that the project is on-going and delete "Final" from the title.
- If more funds are withdrawn than are spent on the project or a profit is made, the balance must be returned to your local League LWVMNEF account for use on another project.
- In the case that a local League is disbanded, the balance of that League's LWVMNEF account will revert to the state LWVMNEF account.

#### LWVMNEF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As you carry out the project, remember to include a credit line on the publica notices acknowledging the participation of LWVMNEF. You may also wish	tion or in meeting
donor. On a publication you could state "Prepared by the League of Women	
, published by the League of Women Voters of Minnesot	
and (partially, if this is the case) financed by contributions from	" A program
could say, "This seminar is conducted by the League of Women Voters of	and
has been made possible by a contribution fromto t	he League of
Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund." If the project is a service, ac	knowledgment may
be made in a publicity release or other announcement. If the project is only p	
through the LWVMNEF, then this may be noted in the acknowledgment as in	ndicated above.

#### CHECKLIST

- 1. Send in Form A-2, Local League Application for Approval to do a Project at least three weeks in advance of starting date of the project.
- 2. LWVMNEF Board approves project, if it meets criteria, and notifies you.
- 3. Upon notification of approval, raise "restricted" money and begin project.
- 4. Acknowledge LWVMNEF where appropriate.
- 5. Send in Form A-Final Report of Local League Project (How to Get Your \$ Back) with two copies of publication when project is completed.
- 6. Pay bills, keeping all financial records.
- Send any profits back to your local League LWVMNEF account for this or another of your projects through the LWVMNEF.

#### HOW TO BUY PUBLICATIONS WITH LWVMNEF MONEY

For LWVMNEF Publications: Publications published by LWVMNEF may be purchased with money in your local League account. Fill out Form A-4 Project Request to Purchase LWVMNEF Publications, all three sections, in order to request the purchase, order the publications and receive a cash advance. You will receive a check from your LWVMNEF account (cash advance) in order to pay the invoice received with the publications. You then send a check from your treasurer to LWVMNEF. This exchange of funds is necessary on the advice of our accountant. A bookkeeping transfer from one account to the other is not satisfactory.

For Publications of Other Organizations: Publications published by another organization, including other levels of League, must meet the same IRS criteria as for Projects. Prior approval of LWVMNEF is necessary before purchase. Fill out Form A-2, Local League Application for Approval to do a Project and send it to LWVMNEF prior to purchase.

#### PARTIAL PAYMENT OF PMP WITH TAX-DEDUCTIBLE MONEY

Each local League has the OPTION to raise up to 50% of its per member payment (PMP) in the form of tax-deductible contributions to the LWVMNEF. Any request over 25% must be approved by the treasurer on a case by case basis. LWVMNEF will establish a separate

LWVMNEF PMP Account for each local League that requests to use a tax-deductible contribution to pay PMP.

Funds that have been raised for designated educational projects and deposited in your LWVMNEF account cannot be used to pay your PMP obligation. Specifically designated funds must be used: Your League must explain to donors that their contribution will be used for "general unrestricted purposes, including payment of PMP."

Steps for making Partial Payment of PMP with tax-deductible money:

- Ask your donors to make their checks payable to LWVMNEF. Explain that their contribution will be used for general unrestricted purposes, including per member payments to the State and National League.
- 2. Each year, send LWVMNEF, attn. Development Director, a copy of your current fundraising letter which states that part of the contribution may be used for PMP.
- 3. Use Form A-1 Deposit Slip to send donors' unrestricted contributions to the LWVMNEF.

  BE SURE TO CLEARLY INDICATE THAT THE DEPOSIT IS INTENDED FOR YOUR

  LWVMNEF PMP ACCOUNT.
- 4. To withdraw funds from your PMP account to make a payment: Send LWVMNEF a request to transfer \$\_\_\_\_\_ (up to 50% of the PMP obligation) from your local League's PMP Education Fund account to LWVMNEF unrestricted funds for partial payment of PMP.
- 5. To withdraw funds from your PMP account to make a payment to national for your national PMP: fill out a Form A-2 Local League Application for Approval to do a Project. After approval of application, request a check from your PMP account to be made out to LWVEF and then send it on to national as your PMP following the directions from LWVUS.

#### LWVMNEF SHARING POLICY WITH LOCAL LEAGUES

#### **Corporate Contributions:**

Unless otherwise specified by the donor, your local League will receive 10% of an "unrestricted" contribution of \$500 or more raised by the state League for the LWVMNEF from a corporation in your community or the equivalent of what it received before, whichever is greater.

#### **Annual Appeal Individual Contributions**

For the LWVMNEF Annual Appeal, your local League will receive 25% of an "unrestricted" contribution of \$50 or more if so requested by the donor.

Form A-1 April 2001

League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund

Date of Local League Board Approval:

#### LOCAL LEAGUE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO DO A PROJECT

#### (This application must be submitted at least three weeks before the project begins.)

To:	LWVMNEF 550 Rice Street	From:	LWV of
St. Paul, MN 55103			Name/Treasurer:
	Phone: 651/224-5445		Address:
	Fax: 651/290-2145 e-mail: office@lwvmn.org		
	e-mail. office@iwvinii.org		Phone:
			Date:
Who	is responsible for the project?		Portfolio
Title	and Date of the Project:		
	(Criteria for Education	on Fund Projec	ct Approval are listed on reverse side of this page.)
Two	e of Project:	975	
тур			
	Conference Attendance		
	Publication	Ť	
	Meeting to Educate the Publi	c on an Issue	
	Candidate Forum		
	Voter Reimbursement		
those of co	de the planning committee, participe by LWVMNEF, include a sample plumn inches devoted to citizen education.	ants, program a copy and the di cation and vote	ts, authors, timetable and distribution. <b>Meeting</b> applications should and materials. For applications to distribute publications other than istribution plan. For <b>Voter reimbursement</b> , calculate the percentager service.  ect? What is the need in the community?)
Deta	ils of the Project (Please be specifi	ic; attach additi	onal page if necessary.):
7 march 200			
Who	is the project designed to serve?	Who will ben	efit from the project?
Proi	ect Budget: (Basic Outline)		
\$100 V.S.	Projected Expenses (A):		
	Income to be raised for this Proje	oct (R):	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	Requested Education Fund Grant	(A minus B):	e

#### CRITERIA FOR EDUCATION FUND PROJECT APPROVAL

- 1. Project must educational in nature, designed to serve the general public (not exclusively League members).
- Project should provide factual, objective information and analysis, and not take sides on a controversial issue.
- 3. There must be no mention or advocacy of LWV positions or actions.
- 4. Project must not be for membership recruitment or retention.
- 5. Project must be approved before tax-deductible money is solicited for its funding (or before any previously raised money is spent).
- 6. Project must be approved by the local League Board of Directors before submission of the project to the LWVMNEF Board of Directors.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT FOR EDUCATION FUND GRANT

(How to Get Your Money Back)

To: LWVMNEF 550 Rice Street St. Paul, MN 55103 Phone: 651/224-5445 Fax: 651/290-2145 e-mail: office@lwvmn.org	From: LWV of
The following is a final report of the	e grant made for expenses incurred in connection with:
	(Title of Project from Form A-2)
Expenses:	
Facility	\$
Speakers	
Printing	
Distribution	
Promotion	
Volunteers	
Office & Overhead	
Other (	J
<b>Total Expenses for Project:</b>	s
Less Income Raised Locally fo	r this Project:
Request from Education Fund	Account: \$

Please send this report and two copies of any material published in connection with this project to LWVMNEF.

#### PROJECT REQUEST TO PURCHASE LWVMNEF PUBLICATIONS

St. Par Phone Fax: 6	MNEF ice Street al, MN 55103 : 651/224-5445 :551/290-2145 : office@lwvmn.or	From:	-		
	Ü		Phone:		
			Date:		
Title of Public	cation to be Purcha	sed:			
(If for resale,	heck here  the local League continuity this order)	ollects and pays the sales tax	at end of calendar year - and thu	s does not pay sales tax for	r purchase from
		LWVMNEF	PUBLICATION ORDER FORM		
All publicatio	ns are mailed librar	ry rate unless otherwise speci	ified.		
Will pi	ck up at the office	Mail First Class	Other (	)	
ľ	LWVMNEF	1		Unit	TOTAL
QUANTITY	PUB#		TITLE	PRICE	PRICE
		Total Public	cations Cost		
		Sales Tax (	7% in St. Paul, 6.5% MN)		
	×		Handling (to be added by office)  e billed to local League)		
Note: Local I			ROM LOCAL LEAGUE EDUCATION	FUND ACCOUNT	
			Date _		
Requests cash	advance of \$		the purchase of LWVMNEF publ		
(For LWVM	N office only)				<b>美洲</b> 自動機
Approved on	(date)	Cash (\$	) advanced on (amount)	by	
Publication s	ent (date)	by Billed by I	Invoice #on_	by(date)	
Local League	Account reduced	by \$	Balance in local League Account	S	

X.

## Action

#### Contents

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"10-Minute Activist" Information	X. 5
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2002 Capitol Letter Subscription Form	X. 7

Local Positions
Impact on Issues - LWVUS
Program for Action - LWVMN

These three represent the basis of all LWV action. Be sure you have them.

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA ACTION GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

These guidelines are designed to ensure that the League speaks with one voice. The Board of Directors of LWVMN is the final authority in action policy when resolving conflicts if more than one local League is involved or when state LWV policy is involved. Remember that when taking action it should be made clear that all League action is nonpartisan. Action addresses issues rather than candidates or political parties.

#### I. ACTION ALERTS

From time to time local Leagues receive calls to action from the LWVMN and the LWVUS. These may be in the form of an Action Alert from the state or national League, giving background information on an issue together with action strategies and instructions. Action suggestions also appear in the Capitol Letter, MN Voter, Report from the Hill, and in other communications from the state or national League. All Leagues are strongly requested to carry out the suggested action.

- II. LOCALLY INITIATED ACTION: Local Leagues may want to initiate action. Local action by Leagues is vital and is encouraged.
  - A. The decision to take action which will affect only your community rests with your local board if certain requirements are met: In deciding to take action based on a local position, the Board must consider whether the contemplated action falls within the relevant position and whether the local position is consistent with the position of other levels of LWV. The Board will also want to consider whether members understand and support the action and whether the action would be effective in the community.

Local Leagues may take positions in their communities based on positions from other levels of League, and consultation with a Board member from that level may be helpful in planning action strategy. If action affects other area Leagues, and there is an inter-league organization such as Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues, that level of League must be consulted before any action is taken.

B. Action that would affect more than one League requires consultation with the Boards of the other Leagues involved. The procedure to be followed will depend on the complexity of the issue and the number of Leagues involved. If only two or three Leagues are affected, all should agree (or have not objection) to the plan of action. If more than three Leagues are involved the LWVMN legislative coordinator or Action Committee should be consulted. A substantial majority of the Leagues involved must agree to the contemplated action. This consultative arrangement is necessary to ensure agreement on the interpretation of positions, to coordinate activities of the different levels of League, and to enhance the effectiveness of League action campaigns.

C. Action that would involved contact with a state government official requires consultation with the LWVMN Legislative Coordinator or state Board president. This consultation is necessary in order to keep LWVMN informed about all state-level advocacy efforts and to ensure that there is no conflict with other LWVMN action.

Local Leagues may take action on the state level under a local position if all three of these conditions are met:

- 1. The legislation must not be statewide in scope;
- Every affected local League must be notified of the proposal prior to any action;
- Such action must be approved by the State Board or the State President, Legislative Coordinator and Program Chairs prior to any action.
- D. Action that would involve contact with government officials at the national level requires consultation with the national LWV office.

As with state-level action, the local League must clear plans with the relevant level of League. You may call the LWVUS office directly or you may contact the appropriate state program chair or LWVMN Legislative Coordinator for guidance. In general, permission to act at the national level may be limited to those issues included in the LWVUS Advocacy agenda.

(These guidelines are adapted from those of LWV-Illinois)

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA COALITION GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

A coalition is a temporary alliance for a specific purpose.

#### 1. When should LWV join a coalition?

A coalition membership is most useful to the LWV when it is a temporary alliance for some specific issue. It is best if the LWV serves as a founding member of a coalition so that LWV principles will be a basis for the structure. Membership in any coalition must be approved by the action chair(s) or committee and LWV Board of Directors.

Special attention should be paid to any potential coalition's funding, decision-making apparatus, nonpartisanship and communications within and without. It is particularly important that we determine that we are not lending the credibility of the LWV to a questionable coalition. At the time of joining a coalition the structure for formal withdrawal should be in place.

As a condition of joining a coalition, LWV reserves the right to withdraw the use of our name if we are not in agreement with a proposed statement of action.

It is possible for LWV to take part in loose networking arrangements with other organizations that allow us to act on an ad hoc basis and do not use the LWV name as an agreeing participant. While League members may attend networks or organizational meetings of many kinds, no endorsement of the group or its objectives is possible or may be inferred without approval by the appropriate level of LWV. (See Action Guidelines) It is necessary for the action chair(s) and the LWV president to review and approve. League delegates to networks may speak not as individuals but only as members of LWV.

#### 2. How should we function within a coalition?

LWV should never join a coalition unless a LWV delegate is in regular attendance at all decision-making meetings of the coalition and decisions must reflect LWV principles. When attending coalition meetings the LWV delegate must not speak as a individual but with the voice of the LWV. Communications within the coalition and with the LWV through the delegate are of paramount importance.

Any spoken or written testimony issued by the coalition must be seen and approved by the appropriate action chair and LWV president. (Even with prior approval it should be noted that press conferences are innately dangerous since words can be taken out of context and the press sets the agenda.)

It is important to keep LWV priorities first in the mind of the representative to the coalition. It is easy to become impassioned with the topic or cause and oversubscribe the League's resources and/or limits of commitment. The LWV is a multipurpose organization with finite finances and personnel and bound by member consensus.

#### 3. When should LWV leave a coalition?

Coalitions should be evaluated as a matter of course each time dues are requested and approved by the appropriate LWV Board of Directors. If the specific purpose desired by the League has been achieved, if the coalition is expanding to new issues and achieving an independent identity of its own or if the LWV no longer has the time or resources to monitor the coalition by active and continued personal participation it is time to withdraw.

Withdrawal from a coalition should always be done in writing and the reasons should be stated explicitly. Withdrawal should be done on positive terms so that future communication and cooperation are possible. State that a coalition is moving beyond permitted bounds of LWV participation as determined by our grassroots consensus or that it is not possible for us to take part in partisan activities or that we cannot afford the resources to continue. It should never be done as a criticism of the coalition but only as a statement of our limitations. We do not want to foster rumors about our withdrawal or nonparticipation in a coalition. The same contacts that were made to announce the taking part in the coalition should be used to announce the withdrawal and the reasons for doing so.





550 Rice Street • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103 Phone 651-224-5445 • Fax 651-290-2145

#### 10 MINUTE ACTIVIST

Make your voice heard on League issues that matter to you! Join Leaguers around the state as a Ten Minute Activist during the 2002 Legislative session. Fill out and return this form and we will notify you when action is needed on those issues you select. You may be contacted 0-6 times per year. You can respond with a postcard, phone call, or e-mail. This is an important part of our advocacy!

YES! I	WANT TO BE A TEN	I-MINUTE ACTIV	/IST!
Name:	<u></u>		
Address:			
State: Zip:	Congressional District:	Legislative Di	istrict:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:	
I prefer to be contacted by: Phone		48	
1974	Issues I will take acti	on on:	
Financing Gov't/Taxes	Prevention	n of Violence	Criminal Justice
Election/Campaign Reform	Firearms		Health Care
Family and Children's Issues	Natural Re	esources	Mental Health
Equity Issues/Civil Rights	Housing		Education
Reproductive Rights/ Teen Pregnancy Initiative and Referendum		and Referendum	Judges
Redistricting			Unicameralism
Mail to: LWVMN, 55 Quest	0 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN ions? Call 800/663-9328	V 55103 or FAX to 65 or 651/224-5445.	1/290-2145
If you wish to receive the <b>FREE</b> we For the Senate BRIEFLY call 651/29 800/657-3550.	ekly House and Senate pul 96-0504; for the House SE	blications, call: SSIONS WEEKLY of	call 651/296-2146 or
CAPITOL LETTER SUBSCRIPT	TON: Mail / E-mail (ci	ircle one)	
I would like to subscribe to the mailing 6-8 issues (\$8.00 for e-mail on I originate and the first state of	l version) with the latest	inside information f	rom the League lobbyists

#### 2002 LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP APPLICATION

Learn how to lobby on League positions. Intern training is tentatively set for January, 2002 plus attendance at the Citizens in Action Conference in early 2002. After the training you'll join the Action Committee to promote League's Action Agenda at the State Capitol.

Name:	1) 	
Address:		
LWV member? Yes / No (circle one)		
Local League:	©	
Why do you want to be a legislative intern?		
What kind of experience do you bring to this	job?*	
	1 10	
How does a legislative internship fit in with y	our personal goals?	
What kind of time commitment can you make	e to lobbying?	*
Hours: Days: Weeks:_	Flexible?	(Y/N)
Please circle your area(s) of interest:		
Education	Election Laws	Women's/Children's Issues
Mental Health	Campaign Reform	Violence Prevention
Taxes/Financing Gov't.	Term Limits	Environment/Nat. Res.
Health Care	Redistricting	Firearms
Criminal Justice	Initiative/Referendum	Housing
Agriculture	Civil Rights/Equality	Unicameral Legislature

SUBMIT APPLICATION AT ANY TIME. APPLICATION DEADLINE IS DECEMBER, 2001. APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED AS RECEIVED.

<sup>\*</sup> You need no previous lobbying or legislative experience. We learn by doing and no one is asked to lobby without experience first as an intern with a seasoned LWV lobbyist.

## CAPITOL LETTER



#### THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MINNESOTA

550 Rice Street • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103 Phone 651-224-5445 • Fax 651-290-2145

Volume XXVII

To:

Local League Boards

From: President Carol Frisch

Action Chair Helen Palmer

The CAPITOL LETTER will be published six to eight times during the 2002 Legislative Session. It will keep you informed on League supported issues and their progress at the state Capitol.

#### **ACTION TO TAKE:**

Fill out this form and send it with your check for \$10 for each hard copy subscription and \$8 for each e-mail subscription to: LWVMN, 550 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN 55103 by January 15, 2002. If you would like to receive your Capitol Letter via e-mail, fill in your e-mail address in place of you address.

NAME		ADDRESS/E-MAIL	CITY	ZIP
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Note: Local League Presidents automatically receive a CAPITOL LETTER. For all other subscribers, subscriptions must be renewed in June/July of each year.

XI.

## Membership

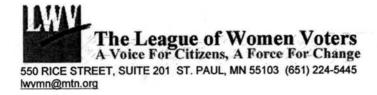
#### Contents

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LWVMN Diversity Statement	XI.2
Copy of current LWVMN membership brochure	XI.3-4

#### MEMBERSHIP IDEAS

- 1. List your League in the Phone Book.
- 2. List your League with the Chamber of Commerce.
- 3. List the names of your League's contact person(s) in any correspondence, PSA, article or brochure to let potential members know who to call.
- 4. Be sure to put your League's membership coupon in all written articles and brochures.
- 5. Always carry with you and distribute League membership information. Sign new members on the spot whenever possible. Take check and give to the Treasurer.
- 6. Assign Board members to follow up by phone with every person with whom your League comes in contact.
- 7. Assign Board members and other League volunteers to make reminder calls to every member who has not paid her or his dues by their due date to remind them.
- 8. Remind your members to invite friends to League meetings and programs, and then be sure to ask the guests to join. Sign them up as new members on the spot whenever possible.
- 9. Develop a brief but informative description of what your League does. This is a good companion piece to go with your generic membership brochure.
- 10. Ask all interested guests, friends and even the public (where possible) to join. They won't know you want them as a member unless you ask.
- 11. Be responsible for **name tags** at every League event. You may know each other, but a new member or guest needs them for quite a few times.
- 12. Stay in touch with members. Make sure their community accomplishments are acknowledged.
- 13. Announce new members at Board meetings, give them jobs, get them buddies.
- 14. Develop and update a file of prospective members.
- 15. Assign volunteers to work membership recruitment tables at school fairs and town functions. Make certain League literature is available. Sign up new members on the spot.
- 16. Help keep your roster up-to-date. Send national new memberships and list changes whenever they occur. Don't let them pile up!

These are just a few tried and true ideas on how to recruit and retain members in your League. If you would like to speak to someone from the state League about ideas for recruiting or retaining members, please call Miriam Simmons at 651/439-2062.



#### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Minnesota in its membership. . .and strives to overcome barriers of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability in the activities of the organization.

I'd like to make a difference by joining

### THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Name	
Address	
Home phone	
Work phone	
E-mail	
Check your choice:	
Regular membership	\$50
Household membership	\$75
Limited income/student	\$25
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550 Rice Street, St. Paul MN 55103

Phone: 651-224-5445 • 800-663-9328

Fax: 651-290-2145

E-mail: lwvmn@mtn.org • www.lwvmn.org



## DEMOCRACY...maybe if we ignore it, it will just go away.



Democracy in our time is under attack.
Sound byte journalism is taking the place
of open debate. Attack ads and negative
campaigns too often shout down solid issue
oriented politics.

The public's attention is

caught, but little is learned. Media consultants and special interests manipulate the flow of information while the forces of money politics work feverishly to protect

their own rights - often at the expense of the people.



The key to democracy is a government in which we all take part. Yet so many of us forget that democracy is not a spectator sport. It's a living thing that must be nourished to survive.

What can you do?

#### Join THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS.

Since 1920 THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

has stood for freedom: Freedom to vote.
Freedom to understand the issues, to serve
and be served, no matter how rich or
how poor.



Our mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government.



Our message is simple. Free and open access to information is as important today as it ever was. Educating everyone about the issues of the day, about the political process and how to make informed choices is a job the League takes very seriously.

#### How do we do it?

We sponsor debates.

We hold open forums on local, regional and national issues.

We register voters and encourage everyone to get involved in democracy.

We focus on education.

We find new ways to bring information to people, but rely on the tried-and-true as well.

We support community dialogues and on-line discussions.

We publish and distribute voter guides based on balanced information.

#### If we don't do it, who will?

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS is a nationwide group of women and men who care about democracy. Like you, we're citizens who want to keep the power of

democracy in the hands of the people.
We're the original grassroots citizen network. Strictly nonpartisan, we don't support candidates. We support issues. We support legislation. We

focus on the future by tuning in to issues that affect us all. In so doing, we help shape public policy.

Join us and learn, teach, participate.

Lend your support. Do as much or
as little as you want. But know as a
member you help bolster American
democracy. You help build your community through knowledge, education



and participation. You help protect the precious liberties so easily confused in this age of disinformation.

From your back yard to the nation's capital, democracy lives. Let's work together to keep it that way.

We need you with us! Join Now.

## XII.

## Public Relations

#### Contents

How To:	Write & Deliver a Successful Speech	XII. 1
	Write an Effective Press Release	XII. 2
	Prepare for & give Great TV and Radio Interviews	XII. 3
	Set Up & Be Prepared for Editorial Board Meetings	XII. 4

## HOW TO WRITE AND DELIVER A SUCCESSFUL SPEECH

- Find out in advance who your audience will be (what kind of group you will be addressing, number expected to attend, what the group may want you to talk about, if they want to ask questions after your speech). Know what the occasion of the meeting will be.
- 2. Never speak longer than 15 to 20 minutes, if possible. Audiences used to the fast pace of TV programming tend to have very short attention spans.
- 3. Wear comfortable, businesslike clothes. Solid colors are good, especially if local television stations cover your speech; loud, clashing colors and prints "jump around" on TV. Avoid large, clanking jewelry; podium microphones pick up the "jingling" sounds. Avoid wearing bright white on television as sometimes it will glare. Bring copies (10) of your speech for your host and for media.
- Decide what message you wish to convey in your speech. Write it in a brief sentence.
   Decide the key arguments of your message. Include short anecdotes, one or two short paragraphs long, to illustrate your points.
- 5. If you think your audience will be likely to disagree with your point of view, list the potential significant objections and write a strong, two-sentence rebuttal to each one. Then turn the rebuttal around and make it into a positive, factual statement.
- 6. Make sure your "message sentence" is at the top of the speech, and use the entire second paragraph of your speech to expand your sentence (keep it short). If your speech is covered by the media, you must have your most important points at the very beginning of the speech. Most media have to leave early to catch deadlines and other events.
- 7. Your last paragraph should be a strong finish. Never say "In conclusion" or "To sum up" or anything predictable. It can be appropriate to pause and say "Thank you" at the conclusion of the speech.
- 8. Read your speech aloud and time it for length. Make sure it has plenty of short sentences and active verbs, and that you can read it easily without stumbling or running out of breath.
- 9. Decide if you will read from note cards or from paper at a podium. Leave lots of white space in your final copy; don't cram the pages from top to bottom. Double space your lines for easier reading. Practice reading your speech aloud. Pitching your voice lower and enunciating makes for better projection.
- 10. Save your speech for future use. If you have the chance to use it or part of it for a completely different audience, you will save a lot of time. Rework the speech for a new audience. Even politicians particularize their stump speeches for each event.
- 11. Now that you have researched, written and given a great speech, use it for other purposes. You could publish it in your League bulletin or shorten it and submit it as an op-ed to your local newspaper.

#### HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE PRESS RELEASE

- Make certain that the press release includes WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and sometimes HOW in the first paragraph. Make the verbs active and the subject concrete. cover the most important facts first and follow with details.
- 2. Give your press release a catchy title, e.g. "VOTING RIGHTS BILL VETOED ON NATION'S BIRTHDAY." Write the heading as if it were the headline you'd like to read in the paper. Write a lead sentence that makes it tough to stop reading.
- Be sure to include a contact name and telephone number on the top right hand corner of the page. List a number that will be answered by a live person -- even if that includes both home and work numbers.
- 4. Don't forget to include the date of your release on the upper left hand corner of your release. Write: "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2001."
- 5. Include a good quote from your League president or spokesperson. Be sure to include this person's exact title with the full name of your League. Sentences in quotes should be short and to the point, e.g. "This is a victory for democracy ... citizens are the big winners today."
- 6. Proof everything at least twice. If your press release looks disorganized and is badly written, the League's image will suffer.
- Try to limit your press release to ONE PAGE. Reporters hate getting long faxes. If you
  need to include more information and facts, send your release by mail, or by e-mail if the
  media prefers that method.
- 8. At the bottom of the first page write "more" if necessary, otherwise write "end" or use the symbol "###" or "30".
- 9. If you expect congressional action on a League issue or know of an upcoming event that you will want to respond to, write a press release in advance. This will allow you to respond immediately to an event and get more coverage.
- 10. If a major event warrants an immediate and more lengthy response from your League, write a one page statement from your League president. Use the title: "Statement by (League president), President of the LWV of (state/county).
- 11. Never editorialize in press releases. Do not write, for example, that a speaker is fascinating. Let the reporter decide whether this was or was not the case. Keep your opinions and judgments within the quotes.
- After sending your release, make follow-up calls to specific reporters. Make sure they
  received your release.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND GIVE GREAT TV AND RADIO INTERVIEWS

- 1. Never go to a media interview without reading the morning's newspapers. You should be very well-informed.
- Be sure to watch the TV program and host that will be interviewing you before you appear on the program. Get to know the style and format of the show. Do the same for radio shows.
- 3. Focus on no more than two or three major points to make during the interview. For each point be sure to have two or three good facts to back it up. Don't let the reporter's questions get you off track. Keep coming back to your major points. Don't forget the reason you are there. Be prepared for the "difficult questions."
- 4. Listen carefully to the reporter's questions. Always answer by coming back to the main points you want to make. Never answer with a simple yes or no. Never say "no comment." It makes you sound guilty. The easier you make it on the reporter, the more likely she/he is to have you back.
- 5. Don't use technical jargon. Be friendly. Avoid long sentences. Remember, you want to be quoted!!
- Never get upset or lose your temper with a reporter. You want the media on your side. Maintain a sense of humor. If the reporter is antagonistic, use your charm. Keep cool.
- 7. You represent the League. Don't give personal opinions that might compromise the organization. Never go "off the record." And never make partisan statements -- even if prodded -- or your quote could end up as a headline in tomorrow's paper.
- 8. You have a serious message to deliver. Don't dress too flashily. Stripes, checks and white are no good on TV. Don't wear dangling jewelry. Don't fiddle on camera. Assume microphones are on at all times. Assume you are on camera until they tell you you aren't!
- 9. Maintain good eye contact with reporters. Ignore the camera. Speak clearly and distinctly in a normal conversational tone.
- 10. Remember, you know more about the League than the reporter. You've got the upper hand!! If the reporter wants facts and figures you don't have -- tell her you'll get back to her with the information and go back to making your important points. If you are not sure about a fact or figure, DON'T USE IT! You want the media to rely on you as a reliable source of nonpartisan facts.
- 11. If possible, try to obtain a tape of your performance. Review it. Get a friend to critique it. Correct your mistakes in the next interview.

For Events Get on AP/UP's day books - send to editor one week ahead - call to follow up.

## HOW TO SET UP AND BE PREPARED FOR EDITORIAL BOARD MEETINGS

- The purpose of editorial board meetings is to establish a good relationship with your local/state newspapers. They might not agree with all your positions, but they should know who you are and respect your work.
- 2. Another important goal of editorial board meetings is to encourage the newspaper to write an editorial in support of a League issue or campaign. The editorial board could also decide to publish a Q&A based on their discussion with you at the meeting.
- 3. Call the senior editorial writer at your state/local newspaper a week to 10 days in advance. Tell her/him that you would like to come in to talk with the editorial board to discuss the League's issue priorities/project/campaign. Time the meeting around your project or key legislative action in Congress.
- 4. If the editor is not so keen on the idea, suggest that you send her/him a press packet on the issues/event that you would like to discuss and make a follow-up call. Get editorial writer's e-mail or direct phone number, fax number and mailing address. If the paper is small, suggest a meeting with the paper's publisher or editor, or an informal get-together over coffee or lunch.
- Find out what positions the newspaper's editorial board has taken on League issues. Get copies of those editorials from the newspaper's librarian. Read them carefully before meeting.
- 6. Before you attend the meeting, arm yourself with useful facts and figures. Be prepared to get the usual "difficult questions" on the League (see insert). Don't be intimidated. They want to hear what you have to say. Have an agenda.
- 7. Limit the number of people you bring to the editorial board meeting to two or three. Reconfirm the meeting one day before. Send your local or state League president with your League's project manager/issue expert. Be sure to leave your business cards, with contact phone numbers.
- 8. Write up an agenda for your meeting. List the points or issues you would like to cover. Distribute the agenda and fact sheets on the League's campaign or issues at the beginning of the meeting. Explain why you are there and why your issue or campaign is important. Invite questions from editorial board members during your presentation.
- 9. Make a follow-up call after the meeting to find out if they plan an editorial. Be sure to get a copy if they do. If they write a negative editorial, ask for space to place an opinion editorial or op-ed, stating your position.

## XIII.

## Voter Service

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#### A CANDIDATE MEETING CHECKLIST

Once you have made the decision to sponsor a candidates meeting give yourself as much time as possible for planning. A good place to start can be with the determination of the date that candidate filing closes and the date of the election. Criteria for candidate participation should be in place before the filing deadline and your event should be held at least one week before the election. If you will be co-sponsoring the event with other Leagues or organizations, you will probably need to begin planning earlier. If you plan to use Education Fund money, remember to apply well before you begin the project.

	1.	Determine what election(s) to cover.
<del></del>	2.	Appoint a coordinator. One person who will keep track of what has been done and serve as the contact person for the candidates.
	3.	Review your League's nonpartisan policy.
	4	Develop criteria for candidate participation before filing closes. Have the Board formally adopt them.
	5.	Select a preliminary format based on the kind of election and number of candidates.
	6.	Develop ground rules by which the forum will be run.
	7.	Investigate possible dates for the forum. Check for conflicts in school, church, political or athletic events. Select a date. (Having an alternate date, if possible, can be useful if one or more candidates cannot attend on your first choice.)
	8.	Investigate sites. Check for appropriate size, wheelchair accessibility, location and parking. Ask if the building has liability insurance to cover such events.
	9.	Announce your League's intent to hold a candidates event to all candidates for that office. Include statement of purpose, criteria, date, time, place and the name of your contact person. (See page 10B)

	10.	Mail invitations to candidates who meet your criteria as soon as possible after filing closes. Invitations need to give both the method and deadline for response. Include ground rules, format, a consent form if your event will be broadcast, your policy on empty chair debates for this event and the name and number of the contact person. (If you will be inviting all the candidates to appear, steps 9 and 10 may be combined.)
	11.	Find a moderator
	12.	Arrange for broadcasting if that is your intent. Review FCC guidelines.
<u></u>	13.	Invite any panelists as soon as you know the date and format.
	14.	Develop and implement a publicity plan. Publicity needs to include information about the provision of an American Sign Language/English interpreter upon request in accordance with the Federal Disabilities Act. (See page 10a.)
<del></del> 8	15.	Determine how you will develop questions for the forum and write some extra ones in case you run out! A useful forum depends on good questions designed to elicit thoughtful responses not political rhetoric.
()	16.	Refine the format and prepare a script for timers, broadcasters, moderator and any panelists.
	17.	Prepare a program for the audience.
	18.	Recruit timers, ushers to gather questions from the audience if needed, greeters for the candidates and someone to oversee the physical setup for the event. Prepare name tags or nameplates for participants.
	19.	A week before the event check with the candidates, moderator, broadcaster and site to confirm all plans.
-	20.	On the day of the forum the coordinator, moderator and all other helpers should arrive early to cope with any glitches. Start and run on time.
	21.	Send thank you notes as needed. Remember to thank yourselves for your own hard work on behalf of the voters!
( <del></del>	22.	Evaluate the event and file all relevant material.

#### **VOTER SERVICE RESOURCES**

#### **Some Voter Service Resources**

LWVMN: (651-224-5445)

- "The Road to Election Day", a 14 minute video outlining the election Process in Minnesota.
- Candidate Forum Guidelines,, available from LWVMN for \$8.00.
- Public Candidate Forums A Checklist for Sponsors is available for \$2.50.
- · List of League Moderators
- · Voter Information Packets
- · Video tapes of various voter service topics
- · LWVMN website at www.lwvmn.org

LWVUS: (LWVUS, 1730 M Street, Washington, DC 20036 or 202/429-1965).

- Making a Difference: A Voter Service Citizen Information Handbook LWVUS #330, \$2.00.
- · How to Watch a Debate #819 for \$.50 and
- Pick a Candidate #259. LWVUS, 1730 M Street, Washington, DC 20036 or 202/429-1965.
- Get Out the Vote #1051 (One copy available for loan from LWVMN)

## This is a sample of the LWVMN nonpartisan Policy. You may adapt the statement for your own use.

#### LWVMN POLITICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

6/94

The nonpartisanship of the League of Women Voters is the basis of our public credibility and must be carefully maintained. All members bear responsibility for maintaining the League's reputation for fairness and objectivity. The discussion of nonpartisan policy should be a part of new board orientation.

The mission of the LWV is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League is political and takes action on selected governmental issues after membership study and agreement. It encourages members to be informed participants in political activity, but as a nonpartisan organization, it does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

All members are encouraged to seek elective or appointive office in government as well as responsible positions in the private sector. To avoid any perceived or actual conflict with the nonpartisan integrity of League, the following restrictions are accepted:

#### LEAGUE ACTION

A Board member may not speak publicly or work against a League position.

#### PARTISAN ACTIVITY

Directors in *highly visible positions* such as president, voter service chair and action chair may not undertake any action which would publicly identify them with partisan activity. They may not run for public or party office or publicly support campaigns at the regional, state or national levels.

Directors may not run for *national or state* elective office. Should they choose to run for <u>local</u> office, they will first consult with the State Board and notify the local Leagues affected.

Directors may not be *highly visible* in the campaign of any candidate running for US Senate, Congress, or for MN executive or legislative office. They may make contributions to candidates and work on local campaigns. Directors not in highly visible positions may hold positions in a political party at any level with Board approval, after consideration of possible conflicts of interest.

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

#### APPOINTED OFFICE

Directors may accept appointment to commissions, boards, or committees where such service would not be in conflict with League program. If a member is acting as a LWVMN representative, the appointment must be approved by the LWVMN Board of Directors. It must be clear to all whether the member is acting as a League representative or as an individual.

The Board shall review this policy annually and update it as necessary.

#### UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLAINING "NONPARTISAN BUT POLITICAL"

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League is political and takes action on selected governmental issues after membership study and agreement. It encourages members to be informed participants in political activity, but as a nonpartisan organization, it does not oppose or support any political party or candidate.

One of the problems that Leaguers all encounter sooner or later is a confused, dismayed or angry friend, neighbor, funder, or legislator who says, "How can you support that (bill - legislation - policy) if you are nonpartisan?" The following paragraphs may provide you with some ideas for replying to such questions.

The League is indeed nonpartisan in both parts of our mission --education and advocacy. We never support political parties or candidates for public office even if that office does not carry political party designation.

In our education role, we provide nonpartisan information to others with the understanding that they will use that information to make their own decisions. We do not state our own positions as an organization. We encourage others to register, to vote, and to communicate policy priorities to those in public office. To accomplish that goal, we provide information or training on voting procedures, candidates, issues, effective lobbying or even running for office. Candidate forums are a highly visible example of our education role.

We are also nonpartisan in our advocacy role, although we are political in the sense that we seek to affect the outcome of legislation or policy. The League's positions on issues are based on study and consensus by our members. When we work with public officials on legislation or policies that address our concerns on an issue, it is because of their position on that issue, not because of their party affiliation. It is in this role that we conduct legislative interviews.

To avoid the possible perception of partisanship, we ask our most visible leaders such as the president and voter service chair to refrain from political activity or active partisan support during their terms of office. League board members are asked to resign or take a leave of absence if they run for public office. While we encourage women and minorities to run for office, we are careful not to imply support for them over other candidates when they do so.

Clearly not every Leaguer agrees with every position. While we cherish the right to disagree as individuals, when we speak for the League in public, we speak only from League positions.

### Political Yet Nonpartisan

"In the League of Women Voters we have an anomaly; we are going to be a semi-political body. We want political things; we want legislation; we are going to educate for citizenship. In that body we have got to be non-partisan and all-partisan. Democrats from Alabama and Republicans from New Hampshire must work for the same things."

Carrie Chapman Catt at the League's founding in Chicago, 1920

The choice made in 1920 to neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office continues today to ensure that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics. The nonpartisan policy has added strength to the League's position on issues. It has made possible wide acceptance of League voters service and other educational activities.

At the same time, the League is a political organization and encourages member to participate fully in the party of their choice. It is an advantage to the League to have politically active members and, equally important, it can be a personally satisfying experience. The same is true for members' paid employment, which also might give rise to conflicts of interest.

Each League's board of directors is responsible for drafting and carrying out the League's nonpartisan political policy in its community, keeping in mind that everything the League does should be measured against the yardstick of nonpartisanship (see Appendix A for samples). The board also is responsible for seeing that both its members and the public understand the League's nonpartisan policy. The goal, of course, is to ensure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization. Establishing and maintaining a nonpartisan policy is one of the six basic requirements for League recognition. (See Chapter 4.)

#### Controversy

The League's nonpartisan stance doesn't not mean that the League should not get involved in controversy on issues it has chosen for study, consensus and action. A League will be a strong and effective political force to the degree that it can deal with and accept controversy, live with uncertainty and avoid using its nonpartisan political policy as a shield for not getting involved. Sometimes, the public accuses the League of violating its nonpartisan policy because of what is viewed as a partisan stance on a controversial political topic. You can deal with this by explaining that the League takes stands on issues but not on candidates.

#### **Coalitions**

Joining a coalition is an effective use of resources to work on an issue, yet Leagues are sometimes concerned that coalitions to which they belong may eventually endorse candidates. This need not always keep you out of a coalition the League might otherwise join, but it is important to think through the ramifications for the League's policy of not supporting or opposing candidates for political office. If a coalition that the League belongs to or is considering joining will concentrate its activities on supporting or opposing candidates, then the League should not participate.

## Applying the Nonpartisan Political Policy in Your Community

To avoid public confusion, Leagues should formulate a nonpartisan political policy that includes specific guidelines to govern the political activities of their board and off-board members. And keep in mind, too, that conflict of interest may arise between a board members paid employment and her or his role in the League; potential conflicts of this kind should be brought to the attention of the board (see below). To help Leagues that want to update their current policies or write new ones, samples of nonpartisan political policy statements developed by Leagues are included in Appendix A.

In keeping with the League's grassroots philosophy, each board determines a policy that best reflects existing conditions in its League, as well as the political climate and traditions in its community. These are key points to consider in this process:

- b The sensitivity or visibility of specific board assignments or functions;
- p The extent to which the public identifies a board or off-board member's activities with those of the League;
- An overall assessment of the League's credibility as an effective nonpartisan political organization in the community;
- b The visibility associated with a specific activity (ranging from participation in partisan social affairs to signing petitions or serving as a campaign manager).

Of course, a general policy can never cover every situation and the board will need to deal with specific cases as they arise.

Since times and conditions change, it is essential that boards discuss their nonpartisan political policy annually and update it as necessary. The ideal time to review your League's implementation of the nonpartisan policy is soon after the new board is selected, rather than when a crisis has arisen. Clarify the policy-making role of the board as a whole, as well as individual responsibilities. Even if no changes are necessary, the review is important, both to educate board members and to clarify areas that might cause conflict or confusion later.

#### **Developing a Nonpartisan Political Policy**

In drafting or reviewing your League's nonpartisan political policy, keep in mind that guidelines should be positive in approach, emphasizing what board members may do rather than what they may not do. This is the philosophy underlying the decision of delegates to Convention '72 who determined that the political activities of a spouse or relative of a board member should be considered as separate and distinct from the activities of the board member.

#### **Party Affiliation**

Board members usually have party affiliations and should certainly carry out the responsibilities of every voter in exercising the franchise, including the responsibility to become informed about candidates.

#### **Elective (Public) Office**

While board members generally may not run for elective office, the definition of what constitutes an "elective" office varies in our grassroots organization. For example, New England town meetings consist of elected representatives, but League board members sometimes run for these offices. Members of charter commissions and delegates to state constitutional conventions are often elected, yet many Leagues allow board members to run in these elections. Here again, it is extremely difficult to make a blanket statement to cover all situations, especially since running for office is a natural outgrowth of League training. Each League, therefore, will have to decide on its policy and judge each situation as it occurs.

If a board member declares for an elective office other than one determined permissible by the League, the board decides when the member should resign from the board. The wording of the public notice of the resignation should, if possible, include the name of the person succeeding to the board position and should avoid the appearance of endorsing the resigning board member's candidacy. Resigning from the board doesn't not mean resigning from the League. Nor does it mean that the board member cannot serve on the board later on; the board decides when that is appropriate.

#### **Public Commissions and Committees**

The League sometimes takes the initiative in recommending people to serve on appointed public commissions and committees. Board members are often asked to serve on such committees, either as individuals or as representatives of the League. Such service enables League leaders to further League program goals. However, even if a League member represents the League on a commission, the board is not bound to support that commission's recommendations. If the recommendations differ from or cover more points than the League's positions, the board should clarify the League stance and what it does and does not endorse in the commission's report. If the commission's conclusions are unacceptable to the League, this can also be noted and explained.

#### Conflict of Interest Policy

Keep in mind that conflict of interest issues may arise that affect the League's overall image and credibility n the community. Your board may want to establish a conflict of interest policy that applies to board members' paid employment, service on other boards, personal lobbying, and so on. As with a nonpartisan political policy, the approach should be positive, while safeguarding the League's interest.

#### Notes About Non-Partisanship

Registration and get-out-the-vote drives are conducted by many different groups, both partisan and nonpartisan. While the political parties and campaign organizations supporting candidates obviously take great care to keep their drives nonpartisan, either because it is required by law, or because it enhances the public credibility of the drive -- or both.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, requires that any registration drive conducted or sponsored by a corporation, labor union or trade association must be nonpartisan (or held in conjunction with a nonpartisan organization). The Internal Revenue Code mandates the strict nonpartisanship of all registration and get-out-the-vote activities by organizations eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions under Section 501(c)(3) of the code. Under federal law, many materials produced for use in connection with a registration or get-out-the-vote drive aimed at the general public (as opposed to an organization's employees or members) must contain the names of all sponsors of that drive.

A nonpartisan organization does not support, oppose or provide aid to any candidate for public office or any political party. Nonpartisan registration and get-out-the-vote drives may be aimed either at the general public or at a generally defined population group such as young adults or minority citizens. In a nonpartisan drive, registration and voting assistance, information and materials must be offered and made available to all. Such a drive may not be aimed only at those known to support one candidate or political party.

Nonpartisan organizations that take stands on issues (even though they do not support or oppose candidates or parties) should take care to separate their advocacy activities from their registration and get-out-the-vote efforts. They should not, for example, distribute information about their positions on issues at the same time and place where they are registering voters. The separation of these activities becomes increasingly important as the election approaches and candidates become identifies with certain stands on issues.

With special care, issues can be used effectively and in a nonpartisan way to motivate citizens to register and vote. A voter education effort that alerts citizens to the importance of taking part in government decisions directly affecting their lives gives voters a personal stake in voting. For example:

- If you are registering voters in a food stamp line, you might point to the federal government's responsibility for providing or withholding funds for social services.
- Efforts aimed at senior citizens would stress the importance of issues such as Social Security and health care benefits.
- □ Voter education drives targeting young people could discuss government funding for student financial aid.

To preserve nonpartisanship, however, these issues must not be identified with the policies or positions or any parties or candidates, including incumbents. In addition, special sensitivity is required when you are working with a coalition. Groups working together should be aware of the constraints on organizations that wish to or must remain nonpartisan. Coalition leaders should not be personally or publicly identified with any candidate or political party. Organizations should issue clear directives and guidelines to guard against overzealous or misguided efforts by local groups or individuals -- activities that may cross the line between nonpartisan activities and many be embarrassing or illegal.

Volunteers should be instructed that they must not wear campaign buttons or make their personal views about candidates, parties and issues known in any way while they are engaged in nonpartisan registration or get-out-the-vote activities. Any campaign materials or literature should be removed from an area where non-partisan registration is taking place. Similarly, volunteers providing transportation or child-care services for voters during a nonpartisan get-out-the-vote drive should refrain from indicating their views on any candidate or party. If voters request information about candidates, you can offer them nonpartisan voters guides or official sample ballots issued by election officials, or you can refer them to campaign or party headquarters.

In addition, registration and get-out-the-vote drives that are funded by private, tax-deductible foundations must meet certain conditions under the Internal Revenue Code. It is recommended that you seek legal advice if you have any questions about your status and special requirements that might apply to your get-out-the-vote efforts.

Remember: Rules about nonpartisanship should be seen not as impediments to any effective drive but as an opportunity to reinforce the message that voting is good for all Americans -- and good for democracy.

XIV.

## Spirit of Democracy

#### **Contents**

Information sheet on Program
Spirit of Democracy Form 2000-2001
Spirit of Democracy Form 2001 - 2002
(To be sent after Convention 2001)

XIV. 1 XIV. 2-6

## Spirit of Democracy Awards

The  $S_{pirit}$  of  $D_{emocracy}$   $A_{wards}$  program is designed to provide achievable goals for local Leagues. By achieving these goals Leagues will have some guide lines which will promote healthy Leagues and also be granted recognition for achieving these goals.

It is our intention that every League who chooses should be able to be recognized. Ideally, <u>every</u> League would be recognized. Because of the diversity of both size and health of local Leagues, there are three categories of awards.

1. Pioneer of Democracy Has achieved at least 8 goals in four

different categories.

2. Leader of Democracy

Has achieved at least 15 goals in seven

different categories.

3. Champion of Democracy

Has achieved at least 25 goals in ten

different categories.

Leagues will be contacted throughout the year for status reports. Bulletins will also be reviewed to determine qualification for an award.

The final report is simple. Just write a *brief* description of the event or attach a lengthier report or sample of a product to the worksheet. (Make sure to indicate which category and the corresponding item number. If there is press coverage please attach a copy of any articles as well.) If the category involves conventions or meetings, just list the names of the League members who attended.

Deadline for the final report: March 31, 2001

Good Luck and Have Jun!!

## Spirit of Democracy Final Report 2000-2001

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION & DATE OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT

#### **ACTION**

- Hold training to either establish an Observer Corps or recruit new participants.
- 2. 10% of membership is signed up as a 10-Minute Activist.
- Conducts Legislative Interviews and turns in to LWVMN office.
- 4. Recruits a Lobbyist Intern for state level.
- 5. Has a system in place to respond to "Call to Action" alerts.
- 6. Lobbies/works on local issues

#### **AGRICULTURE STUDY**

- Invites community to participate in ag study program.
- Hold local League meeting on issue with speakers.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION & DATE OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT

#### COMMUNICATION

- 1. Publishes a newsletter.
- 2. Sets up/updates a web site.
- Establishes relations with local media about League events.
- 4. Is broadcast or published via local media, excluding local bulletin.

#### CIRRICULUM

- Promotes use of LWVMN civics curriculum in local school(s).
- Conducts in-service for teachers on curriculum.

#### **DEVELOPMENT/FINANCE**

- 1. Participates in fund-raiser for state.
- 2. Raises funds for local Ed Fund.
- Does an annual fund-raising drive/ event for local League.
- Is creative in finding new ways of fundraising.
- 5. Has a comprehensive financial plan.

#### **GENERAL**

 Has at least one member active on a state committee (Action, Voter Service, Development, Study, Member Resources, etc.).

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION & DATE OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT

#### **GENERAL** (continued)

- Conducts diversity training for board members.
- Members attend LWVMN training sessions.
- 4. Conducts a board orientation.
- 5. Works with other groups (or Leagues) on a regional event.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

- Captures and involves new members on committees.
- Encourages board participation by a broad spectrum of members.
- Limits or staggers board terms to Promote participation by broader membership base.
- 4. Has a youth member on board.
- Has board meeting to discuss leadership issues with facilitator.

#### L.O.T.T.

#### (Leaders of Today and Tomorrow)

- Has reviewed the meaning and purpose of L.O.T.T. with membership.
- Has encouraged or enabled a young woman to participate in the L.O.T.T. seminar.
- 3. Has held a fund-raiser for L.O.T.T.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION & DATE OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT

#### L.O.T.T. (continued)

Provides a scholarship for a L.O.T.T. participant.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

- Holds diversity training for all membership.
- 2. Increases membership by 10%.
- Conducts a new member orientation/training.
- Conducts focus groups regarding membership and inclusiveness.
- 5. Has a membership plan in place to increase and retain membership.

#### **PROGRAM**

- Holds one meeting regarding health care reform initiative.
- 2. Representatives attend Council.
- One or more delegates are sent to state convention.
- 4. Conducts Lively Issues.
- Conducts and/or publishes one local study.
- Holds at least one program which encourages youth involvement in government/civics.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION & DATE OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT

#### **PROGRAM** (continued)

- Sends one or more delegates to LWVUS convention.
- Participates in one state and one LWVUS program.
- Holds at least three public meetings (in public settings), excluding candidate forums.
- 10. Incorporates diversity strategies into programs.

#### **VOTER SERVICE**

- Conducts at least two candidate forums.
- 2. Conducts a voter registration drive.
- Registers voters at local high school, college, and/or technical school.
- 4. Participates in d-net program.
- Collaborates with school to hold mock elections.
- Has at least one registered moderator available to area Leagues for their candidate meetings.
- Members volunteer for LWVMN Election Hotline.



LAWY

League of Women Voters of the United States

Special acknowledgement to Clarissa Cherry, Kristi Zappie-Ferradino, Cheryl Graeve, Monica Sullivan and others who have contributed to the success of this publication.

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Order from the LWVUS, 1730 M St., NW #1000, Washington, DC 20036 Phone 1-888-287-7424 e-mail: lwv@pmds.com

Pub. #152, \$3.00, plus shipping and handling

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#### League of Women Voters President's Packet

No one person is able to perform all of the tasks of leadership. The important thing is not that we as individuals cover all the bases but that we work collectively to do so. As we work to enable others to succeed, we will guarantee the success of the League.

The President's Packet and Post-Board Summaries are designed to supplement In League, our basic leadership handbook. A Post-Board Summary is sent to you after LWVUS/LWVEF board meetings. It is a source of current information for League leaders such as LWVUS/LWVEF board decisions and calendar updates. The information sent to League presidents and DPM subscribers is also posted on the member section of the League's website.

National board liaison assignments are included in this *Packet*. With some exceptions, board members serve as liaisons with Leagues-state, local and ILO-from states in their home geographic region. Please alert those who do your mailings to include your board liaison on your League's mailing list. If you have questions or need additional information, please call the LWVUS office or your assigned board member for assistance.

We look forward to working with you as the League continues to lead the battle to spread the franchise and ensure democracy!

Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, Ph.D. President/CEO

#### The President and the League's Mission

Enjoy your term as president of the League! As president, you set the tone for the entire membership of your League. A successful leader learns from the past and looks to the future with optimism and creativity—and with a willingness to try new approaches.

Enthusiasm, tact, humor and flexibility are perhaps the four most valuable assets you can bring to your job. Your confidence and genuine enthusiasm for the LWV's mission and program will be reflected in the attitudes of the board and the membership. If you let members know that their contributions are valued and that their ideas and energy are needed, they will become more active members.

Avoid the trap of making decisions alone or of doing someone else's work. It sometimes seems easier to do the work than to delegate, but as a leader one of your most important jobs is to train new leaders. When you, as president, receive acclaim for jobs well done by the League, share the feeling of accomplishment and give praise, credit and encouragement to others whenever possible. And while some board decisions may turn out to be mistakes, you can use the opportunity for good board discussion, constructive analysis and evaluation and planning for the future.

The LWV is a volunteer organization that does a professional job. Expect excellence and enable others to achieve it. As a League leader, you empower others to define and to accomplish goals—personal goals and the goals of the League as an organization. Listen to your members, maintain an arena for healthy exchange of ideas and plans, and provide opportunities to set and evaluate goals and develop and implement strategies.

Remember always that you are not alone. Neighboring Leagues often are willing and eager to work together with you. And your state League is there to help, as are the national board and staff. League leaders are all partners in their commitment to the League and we all depend on each other.

#### Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

#### Vision, Beliefs and Intentions

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters of the United States is a nonpartisan political membership organization, which:

- acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.
- builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is a nonpartisan public policy educational organization, which:

- builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- studies key community issues at all government levels in an unbiased manner.
- enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

#### We believe in:

- respect for individuals.
- the value of diversity.
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities.
- the power of collective decision making for the common good.

#### We will:

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism.
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public.
- take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership.
- acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

#### **Core Values:**

- We are a nonpartisan political membership organization.
- We believe that grassroots initiatives and consensus building are the strengths of our organization.
- We believe that our organization models the principles of good governance.
- We consider well before taking action and prepare well before beginning to act.
- We believe that citizenship requires knowledge, as well as the ability and will to act.
- We believe that the responsibility of good government rests on the shoulders of its citizens.
- We believe that the rights of citizens at home and abroad are interdependent.

## Nonpartisanship and Your League

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We take action on public policy positions established through member agreement. We are political, but we do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

Each League's board of directors is responsible for carrying out the League nonpartisan political activity/conflict of interest policy in its community, keeping in mind that everything the League does should be measured against the yardstick of nonpartisanship.

Now that more and more League members are employed outside the home, we must pay increasing attention to potential conflicts of interest as well as to maintaining the League's nonpartisanship. The national board's policy has two parts: a Nonpartisan Political Activity Policy and a Conflict of Interest Policy. Both are reviewed and adopted by each new national board.

The ideal time to review your League's implementation of the nonpartisan policy is at the orientation meeting for your new board, when you clarify the policy-making role of the board as a whole, as well as individual responsibilities. It is important to review the nonpartisan policy before specific cases come up. Even if no changes are necessary, the review is important, both to educate board members and to anticipate situations that might cause difficulty later. All situations should be considered on a case-by-case basis; for example, is a key committee chair likely to run for political office?

Once the review is complete, you may wish to publish the policy in your bulletin. It is important, however, that the general membership understand that members are encouraged to be politically active. The code of behavior that the board sets for itself applies only to board members and, possibly, to certain off-board chairs.

Here are some basic elements that should be included in your board's nonpartisan political activity policy:

- A statement of the nonpartisan nature of the organization.
- Guidelines on permissible activities for board members.
- Restrictions on certain board positions.
- A policy on how to handle resignations when board members resign to engage in political activity.
- A procedure for an annual review of the policy by the board.
- The date the policy was last reviewed/revised.
   See the following page for a suggested guide for board discussion of the nonpartisan policy statement (courtesy LWV of Pennsylvania).

#### Suggested Discussion Guide on Nonpartisan Policy

Consider the following types of candidates as you discuss each section: single-party candidates; cross-filed candidates; candidates without party designation; candidates for policy-making office; candidates for non-policy-making office.

- 1. Should board eligibility, or eligibility for specific board portfolios, be affected by:
  - Running for office?
  - Being an elected official?
  - Filling a visible role in a candidate's campaign?
  - Working on a candidate's campaign behind the scenes?
  - Being appointed to political office?
  - Circulating nominating petitions/distributing campaign materials?
  - Family members who are active in partisan politics?
- 2. Should a specific period of time elapse after having been politically identified by one of the above activities before being elected or appointed to the board?
- 3. Should board eligibility be affected by having an official position in a party organization or in an organization endorsing candidates for public office?
- 4. Should board members be allowed to donate money to political campaigns? Any amount? An amount less than that which might be recorded on a contributors list?
- 5. Should board members be allowed to attend social events, when the purpose is to:
  - Announce candidacy?
  - Raise money for candidates?
  - Hear a candidate's position on issues?
- 6. Should off-board members with known political affiliations be permitted to represent the LWV before the public in any way, including:
  - Registering voters?
  - Being involved in candidates meetings/debates making the meeting arrangements?- being moderator? screening questions?
  - Being official LWV observers at government meetings?
  - Testifying for the LWV before government panels?
  - Lobbying in the name of the League?

7. Should nominating petitions be circulated at League meetings?

**Note:** While a LWV's written policy may not go into such detail, each item should be discussed by the board. The secretary should include a record of the discussion in the minutes. The nonpartisan policy that is agreed upon should be distributed to board members, published in the newsletter and a copy sent to the state League office.

#### League Requirements

The 1986 LWVUS convention amended the LWVUS bylaws to replace the word "standards" with the word "requirements." The convention also approved a set of requirements for local, ILO (Inter-League Organizations) and state Leagues intended to be specific enough to be enforceable. The 1994 LWVUS convention voted to revise the requirements slightly and to add one regarding membership and diversity. These requirements are to be seen within the framework of the League's Mission Statement.

#### Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

#### Requirements

- The League must have bylaws, the first three articles of which must be consistent with those of the LWVUS. The remaining articles must provide for democratic procedures.
- 2. The League must establish and maintain a nonpartisan policy.
- 3. The League must hold an annual business meeting of the membership.
- 4. The League must hold regular board meetings.
- 5. The League must meet its financial obligations to the state and national levels of the League.
- The League must have a plan for membership growth and retention that encourages a membership as diverse as the community.
- 7. Any advocacy pursued by the League must be consistent with League principles, positions and policies.

These requirements may be supplemented by additional requirements as determined by each state League (e.g., a numerical standard for the formation of a LWV MAL Unit). They must be met for League recognition and are to serve as a continuing gauge of a League's health and well-being.

You, as a local League president, are responsible for seeing that your League satisfies these requirements. Please consult with your state League immediately if you have concerns about fulfilling the requirements. Your national board liaison is, of course, available to counsel with you and with your state League.



#### Diversity in the League - Policy and Implementation

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

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

The LWV affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of America in its board, staff and programs.

In October 1992, the national boards of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters Education Fund established the following value as one of their primary goals in seeking to position the organizations to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a renewed sense of purpose.

"The League will be the leading membership organization in having fully embraced, implemented and maintained total diversity in both membership and programs."

Standards on Diversity and Pluralism In 1992, the LWVUS and LWVEF boards adopted standards that affirm their long-held belief in and commitment to diversity and pluralism in their values and practices, and pledged that there shall be no barriers to participation in any of their activities.

The directors, trustees and staff of the LWVUS and LWVEF recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making, and subscribe to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values they uphold.

The national League's standards on diversity cover many groups of people not currently represented in any significant numbers within the League, even though the individuals agree with the League's principles. The national boards recognize that achieving diversity within the League will be a long-term process that must be carefully managed to assure success. Therefore they determined that the plan of action to achieve diversity would focus on race and ethnicity first and then take on a broader scope after substantial progress in these areas has been made.

#### Beliefs

There are barriers, both procedural and attitudinal, within the League that operate against
diversity, particularly in the area of membership, and these are also barriers to membership
growth in general. The League cannot claim to represent the informed views of American
citizens unless its membership more closely reflects America's diversity.

- The League cannot ask that government institutions be fair and open if it is not willing to take steps to make its own organization more fair and more open.
- Considerable efforts are needed to achieve membership growth within the League, and since
  there is significant overlap in the actions needed for membership growth and for increasing
  diversity, a focus on diversity will produce a fortunate by-product of membership growth.
- It is time for the League to move beyond its intellectual commitment to diversity and into action to achieve diversity.
- A diverse League will require increases in racial and ethnic diversity, gender diversity, the number of lower income members, the number of members in the workforce, members who are younger and older (retired) and members with disabilities.
- League programs have sufficient breadth to appeal to a wide diversity of interests and members but need to be appropriately marketed to diverse audiences nationwide.
- In order to succeed, it is essential that the League move toward diversity through a step-bystep program, carefully targeted in stages, because achieving diversity is a large job and the steps taken to reach out to various populations will be different.

#### Approaches League leaders will:

- Develop a plan of action to achieve diversity in the League that will concentrate first on achieving racial and ethnic diversity and will include technical assistance to Leagues to ensure that all programs and meetings are barrier-free for members with disabilities.
- Participate in diversity training sessions throughout all phases of the plan of action and retain
  outside professional assistance, especially in the beginning stages of the plan of action, so
  they can receive ongoing support and guidance in their work to understand and become
  comfortable with the complexities of achieving diversity.
- Serve as models by implementing the techniques learned in the training to move the League toward achieving and maintaining diversity.
- Dedicate resources each fiscal year to enable the LWVUS and LWVEF to conduct diversity training and to produce resource materials for state and local Leagues that are responsive to their needs.
- Establish an appropriate committee or task force structure to provide continuity of effort, to
  ensure that the plan of action is carried out and to solicit feedback from state and local
  Leagues on their own progress to achieve diversity.

In June 1999, the task force first offered a number of premises that should guide the League's work to build diversity in membership and programs. They include:

- One size does not fit all. Leagues will require different kinds of help and resources to further their commitment to diversity.
- Diversity, broadly defined, must be an integral part of the League's strategic direction and made a part of everything the League does.

- Leadership must demonstrate ongoing commitment to promoting diversity.
- Building greater capacity for grassroots organizing and development throughout the League is essential. State and local Leagues should be encouraged to network and share resources to help implement diversity and build momentum for change.
- The League already has numerous diversity-related accomplishments to celebrate and build on.

Based on recommendations submitted to the board, by members, the task force identified "bottom line" recommendations that should be addressed first:

- Establish an information clearinghouse. A online clearinghouse was launched April 2000 by the national office. To gather information, a diversity questionnaire was included in the September/October issue of *The National Voter* and in the member section of the League's website.
- 2. Develop a diversity training module. A training module was completed and is available for field service to state Leagues.
- 3. Implement the first annual leadership training academy, with emphasis on diversity, in fall 2000.
- 4. Establish an application process for state and local Leagues interested in training that identifies each League's differing needs and requirements.
- 5. Support diversity pilot projects.

The LWVUS/LWVEF offers publications discussing diversity issues. These include:

Creating Communities of Inclusion-Highlights lessons learned by Leagues on how to create a broad-based community coalition. Offers models and guidance to organizations and community activists on what works (Pub. #1077, \$3.00).

1999 Diversity Toolkit-The toolkit is designed to be practical, with suggested steps and examples, but also flexible enough to meet the varying needs of Leagues in different circumstances. The toolkit is comprehensive and includes many strategies that Leagues can use to address diversity (Pub. #1090, \$3.00).

#### How to Use the Diversity Toolkit:

A Guide, Not a Recipe Book

The League of Women Voters Diversity Toolkit is designed to be a comprehensive overview of building a diverse organization. It is not a recipe book—you do not need to fully complete one step before starting another. Adapt the suggestions for your goals and needs.

Getting the most from the Toolkit:

- Do not expect to master all of the *Toolkit* before you engage in any diversity work. Instead use the *Toolkit* as a knowledgeable guide, ready to offer suggestions when you need them. We suggest approaching the *Toolkit* as a resource for the areas most relevant to your League.
- Begin by reviewing *Build the Foundation for Change* and *Know Your Community*. These two sections lay the groundwork for any diversity-related work and can be helpful in membership building that you may do. Diversity is not just *out there*—we are all part of diversity. Take some time to explore your own awareness and leadership, how to be an ally, who is in the community, and what they care about.
- Then turn to the section that most interests you. Each topic is covered in just a few pages. Most sections provide general tips on how to approach the topic, examples of successes from Leagues across the country, and worksheets to guide you through assessment, planning, and action. Read each short section entirely to get an overview of the topic. Then review the material again, perhaps with other interested League members, and develop an action plan.
- You don't need to complete each point or answer every question in each section. You may need to adapt steps or suggestions to your particular situation. Assess, plan, and act. Expect to make mistakes—that's part of the process, and it's how you will develop expertise. Whatever action you take, be sure to keep records and chart progress. Evaluate your experience and the lessons you've learned.
- The Toolkit is a resource that you can turn to again and again. As you begin work in
  one subject area, you may find you need to return to the Toolkit for pointers on a
  related topic. Review what you need when you need it. For more in-depth coverage of
  a topic, refer to the Resource Guide for a listing of related material.

Please provide any comments on the *Toolkit* to the LWVUS Field Support Department using the feedback sheet provided at the end of the Toolkit. If you need assistance in implementing any of the suggestions, or to order a copy of the *Toolkit*, contact the LWVUS Field Support Department (202-429-1965).

Thank you in advance for the commitment you are making to build a League that represents the United States of today and tomorrow.

#### **Promoting Diversity**

Here are the steps Leagues are taking to successfully promote diversity. This general framework should be adapted for your League's specific needs and goals. See inside for ideas on how to adapt this process.

**Know Your Community** Understand the changes in society and your area. Learn the compelling interests of diverse constituencies. Learn how the League is viewed by your members and by the community.

**Build the Foundation** Understand diversity's components. Consider your vision, strengths, areas for growth. Build awareness of your own culture and style. Set goals for yourself. With self-awareness, you will be better able to work with others.

Start here

#### Form Partnerships

Dialogue with diverse groups about the concerns of their constituencies. Work with other organizations to maximize the reach of each group.

#### Choose Issues with Legs

Work on issues that motivate members and potential members from diverse groups. Choose projects that will make a concrete, visible difference in the community.

#### **Build the Organization**

Increase the capacity of the League to make a difference.

#### Membership Development

Find out what motivates people to join organizations. Actively and constantly recruit people from diverse communities. Create flexible ways to involve volunteers with limited time.

#### **Fundraising**

Learn fund-raising skills. Build the financial stability of the League by using a variety of approaches throughout the community.

#### Get the Word Out

Develop a strategy to publicize the good work of the League throughout the community.

#### Don't Give Up

Remember, change takes time. Be willing to persevere. Find the people who will support you. Change can be challenging for people; let them know you appreciate their fears. As more people see the benefits of diversity. momentum will build!

Don't Wait, Evaluate Diversity is more than a single project: it's an ongoing process. Make learning from your efforts integral to your work. Immediately

apply lessons learned

to the next endeavor.

Diversity depends on renewing the process. Once you've taken action you can build a stronger foundation, learn more about your community, build new programs and evaluate, again and again.

## a

an take to promote diversity.

For more ideas and how-to details, refer to the Diversity Toolkit. of activities

can take some of these actions.

Every League

Here

# IF YOU AND YOUR LEAGUE CAN ONLY DO A LITTLE.

- Form a League study group around diversity
- Attend a diversity awareness training session
- Consider what it means to be a leader and an ally on diversity
- - Learn about what other Leagues are doing

## Know Your Community

- consider their impact for the Read the social trends and
- profile of your from the Census Bureau or another source. Obtain
- concerned about other groups League 1 ethnic g Talk to five community activists who are not I and ask what community issues they are most activists who are not and (if possible, talk to people of racial than your own).
  - while a few League members you have not seen in out what they're thinking about the League.

## Form Partnerships

Set up a lunch meeting with a member of one community organization that is involved in diversity-related work. Find out what the organization is doing. Ask if the League might to next. of who to talk for assist. Ask Organize a out wha

# IF YOU AND YOUR LEAGUE CAN DO MORE.

- · Form a diversity task force
- Develop a written League diversity policy
- initial organizational assessment Conduct an
  - goals for the next four years Set diversity
- in the Resource Guide regarding some of the
- community? Are there policies discourage full participation of local of your community. Who lives where? Why? Does government reflect the entire community? Are there or practices that promote or discourage full particip and diversity-related Study the population or practices that pr different groups?
- community to Talk to a dozen people throughout your discover their most important issues

to

- Conduct an all-member survey of your League to determine
- community organizations Talk with members of several
  - Invite all of the groups together to assess community concerns and opportunities to work together.
- worksheet in the *Toolkit* to identify for the League. estions and v questions Or Use the c

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other

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diversity in

Choose Issues

with Legs

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Build the Organization Membershin	ation . Read "Recognite Why Others Cas Langland " Diames Land	
Development	the points made are relevant for your League.  • With a few other members, brainstorm as many ideas as you can to recruit new members and keep members actively involved.  • Implement at least one of the new ideas. Refer to the resource guide for additional information.	<ul> <li>Form a membership commutee</li> <li>Develop challenging goals and a two-year plan for recruiting new members throughout the community.</li> <li>Review at least one project and rethink how to better incorporate new and diverse volunteers.</li> <li>Have coffee or lunch with every new member. Ask them what they are most interested in.</li> </ul>
Fundraising	<ul> <li>Read section and one of the books in the Resource Guide.</li> <li>Look for a training workshop in your area on fundraising or grant writing.</li> </ul>	Form a fundraising committee.     With a few other members, brainstorm as many new ideas as you can for fundraising.
Find the Right Forums and Ger the Word Out	Distribute League material to local libraries, bulletin boards and/or service agencies around town.     Advertise League events in news weeklies and newsletters serving diverse neighborhoods.	Meet with the editorial boards of at least 2 area media outlets that serve diverse constituencies. Ask them what issues their audience cares about most. Tell them about the League     Identify a few people who will write letters to the editor identifying themselves as League members.
Don't Give Up	<ul> <li>Identify at least one other person (even if she or he is not a League member) who will cheer you on.</li> <li>Set small goals and celebrate when you reach them.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Attend a training on conflict resolution</li> <li>Begin meetings of the diversity task force with a review of the vision and the progress you're making.</li> </ul>
Don't Wait, Evaluate	<ul> <li>While planning an activity, determine what will define success.</li> <li>At the end of an activity, ask what worked, what didn't and what improvements can be made next time.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Conduct mid-course check-in sessions to determine whether activities are on track and if adjustments are needed.</li> <li>Keep a record of all evaluations your League conducts.</li> </ul>

**LWVUS Communications Guide** 

National Office Address: 1730 M Street, NW, Washington DC 20036-4508

National Office Telephone: 202-429-1965

National Office Fax: 202-429-0854

President's Answer Line (PAL): 800-424-2937

E-Mail lwv@lwv.org

Website www.lwv.org

We encourage you to use the **President's Answer Line** (PAL 800-424-2937), the toll-free number for the exclusive use of League presidents and board members.

So that the volume of calls does not exceed our ability to handle them quickly and effectively within our budget, we ask that you not publicize this customer service toll-free number. We want to help you fulfill your role as a League leader.

When you call, you will be asked to record a brief message that will be directed to the appropriate staff person for reply. We will respond to calls within two working days, Monday through Friday. When you call, please be ready to give:

- Your name (please spell out)
- Daytime telephone number with area code
- League name with state
- A brief question

**Note:** Please do not use this line to place publication orders. Please contact LWVUS Publication Sales at 1-888-287-7424, via fax 301-206-9789 or via e-mail lwv@pmds.com

#### TO HELP US KEEP IN TOUCH

send one copy of each unless otherwise indicated

LOCAL LEAGUES send	TO LWVUS	TO BOARD LIAISON
Bulletins	X	the IX of and provide the
Post-Board Mailings	X	
Substantive Publications	X	
Annual Report	Field Support	
Convention Workbooks	Field Support	
Copy of Studies	Field Support	
Bylaws/Nonpartisan Policy	X	
Letters to Congress & Replies	Lobbying	
Membership Changes	Database Serv	vices
ILOs send	TO LWVUS	TO BOARD LIAISON
Bulletins	X	X
Bylaws/Nonpartisan Policy	X	
Copy of Studies	Field Support	

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STATE LEAGUES send	TO LWVUS	TO BOARD LIAISON
Bulletins	X	X
Post-Board Mailings	X	X
Substantive Publications	X	
Annual Report	Field Support	to I I was seen a property of
Convention Workbooks	Field Support	t index.
Copy of Studies	Field Support	t and we
Bylaws/Nonpartisan Policy	X	
Letters to Congress & Replies	Lobbying	
Membership Changes	Database Ser	vices

DC, Virgin Islands, Hong Kong and Puerto Rico send

	TO LWVUS	TO BOARD LIAISON
Bulletins	X	X
Post-Board Mailings	X	X
Substantive Publications	X	
Annual Report	Field Support	
Convention Workbooks	Field Support	
Copy of Studies	Field Support	
Bylaws/Nonpartisan Policy	X	
Letters to Congress & Replies	Lobbying	X
Membership Changes	Database Serv	vices

#### LWVUS SENDS TO PRESIDENTS OF LOCAL AND STATE LEAGUES AND ILOS.

- One Presidents Mailing subscription with an additional Presidents Mailing subscription sent to co-president if applicable. (state Leagues with an office address different from the president's may request one free additional mailing).
- <u>Duplicate Presidents Mailings (DPM)</u> are available for \$35 per year. Leagues are
  encouraged to order several DPM subscriptions in order to facilitate communication within
  the board and provide materials for distribution among appropriate board or committee
  members. The DPM is also available to download off of the members only section of the
  LWVUS website.
- Leaders Resource Catalog, the comprehensive listing of resources for leaders. (Additional copies available free through Publication Sales.)
- Upon request in a convention year, free *Directory of Leagues*. Make request to LWVUS Database Services.
- The Field Support Department provides limited quantities membership materials to Leagues at no charge.
- A copy of Best Practices (available on the internal section of the LWVUS webpage).
- Information also is provided on the member-only private resource section of the LWVUS web site (www.lwv.org). To access this section, click on the "members area" button on the homepage and enter your generic username: <a href="https://lwv.ncg">lwv</a> and then enter your generic user password: carriecatt.

## LWVUS and LWVEF Board of Directors/Trustees, 2000-2002

#### PRESIDENT & CEO/CHAIR Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, Ph.D.

1730 M St., NW #1000 Washington, DC 20036 W: (202) 263-0530 F: (202) 429-0854

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BUDGET COMMITTEE
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Shaker Heights, OH 44122
H: (216) 751-0370

Gerry Cummins 6841 S. Clermont Dr. Littleton, CO 80122 gerry.cummins@prodigy.net LWVCO office phone: (303) 863-0437

Angie Kinnaman 320 8<sup>th</sup> St. Rawlins, WY 82301 akinnmn@trib.com

Board members who sit on Budget Committee: Shirley Eberly Mary Ann Burtt

LWVUS staff liaisons to Budget Committee: Zaida Arguedas, Deputy Director Greg Leatherwood, Dir. of Oper.

Nominating Committee
Jean Matsuura, Chair
35 Tea Tree Ct.
Hillsborough, CA 94010
gmat@concentric.net
H: (650) 342-3113
F/H: (650) 342-3117

Nancy Granda 4619 Longfellow Ave. Tampa, FL 33629 NANCY.GRANDA@newideas.sdhc.k12.flus H: (813) 837-8879 F/H: (813) 272-2632

Nancy Mahr 28028 Ella Rd. Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275 H: (310) 377-0735 F/H: (310) 377-9475

Jan Wilbur 10130 Whiteside Lane Houston, TX 77043-4303 H: (713) 465-7289 F/LWV of Houston: (713) 784-2984

Board member who sit on Nominating Committee: Faye Sinnott Marie Brown Rosetta Davis

LWVUS staff liaison to Nominating Committee: Danielle Brown, Executive Secretary

UN OBSERVER
Doris Schapira, Main Observer
5 Ferncliff Terrace
Montclair, NJ 07042
Doris.schapira@worldnet.att.net
H: (973) 746-5153
F/H: (973) 746-8085

## LWVUS/LWVEF Board Team Assignments 2000-2002

The President/Chair is ex-officio member of all teams of the LWVUS Board of Directors and the LWVEF Board of Trustees, except the LWVUS Nominating Team. The Executive Director is ex-officio member of all teams that include staff.

COMMITTEE	STAFF		
OUTREACH	- 50 A ST. 10 17 (0 C) TV C (1 C) TV C (1 C)		
Rosie Stephens, Chair	Cheryl Graeve, Senior Director, Field		
Margaret Brown	Support, extension 306		
Olivia Thorne			
Joan Paik	Library Lectronic Instruments (192)		
Eleanor Revelle	THA multipakseuM		
Rosetta Davis	WORREST STREET, TANGERAR		
Janis Hirohama	Turkin Military or Iranous Pilling		
FUND DEVELOPMENT/INVESTMENT			
POLICY	annual amiliana		
Mary Ann Burtt, Chair	Carol Daugherty, Senior Director,		
Faye Sinnott	Development, extension 336		
Marie Brown	STRATION PLANNING		
Linda McDaniel	Greg Leatherwood, Senior Director,		
Shelia Martin	Operations, extension 308		
Shirley Eberly	tomi2 evol1		
Carol Scott			
EDUCATION FUND	FROCESAN PLANNING		
Janis Hirohama, Chair	TBA (Senior Director of Programs)		
Margaret Brown			
Carol Scott	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY		
Olivia Thorne	II Sulvere Maritor)		
Mary Ann Burtt	La La Lamora Carrier		
Rosie Stephens			
Marie Brown	TEADE UPDATE		
ADVOCACY	Olfaran Taruata		
Linda McDaniel, Chair	Lloyd Leonard, Director of Lobbying,		
Joan Paik	extension 302		
Eleanor Revelle	AUGUS STUDY		
Shirley Eberly	Shelut Martini		
Shelia Martin			
Faye Sinnott	ELECTION SYSTEMS		
Rosetta Davis	Jour Paul		
BUDGET COMMITTEE			
Linda Lalley, Chair	Zaida Arguedas, Deputy Executive Director		
Gerry Cummins	extension 351		
Angie Kinniman	Greg Leatherwood, Senior Director,		
Shirley Eberly	Operations, extension 308		
Mary Ann Burtt			

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COMMITTEE	STAFF
NOMINATING COMMITTEE	THE RESERVED TRAINING
Jean Matsuura, Chair	Danielle Brown, Executive Assistant,
Nancy Granda	extension 530
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Jan Wilbur	Control of the state of the sta
Rosetta Davis	White polynomics at an entry pullbary
Faye Sinnott	The state of the s
Marie Brown	THE PROPERTY OF
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	N
Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, Chair	Nancy Tate, Executive Director, extension
Margaret Brown	TBA
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Shirley Eberly	Thomas Penalty 1970 Co.
Mary Ann Burtt NATIONAL VOTER LIAISON	THE RESERVE THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF THE
	Monica Sullivan, Director, Publications.
Faye Sinnott	
GOVERNANCE	extension 332
	TBA
Margaret Brown	IBA
STRATEGIC PLANNING	TDA TWOME SIEM
Margaret Brown	TBA
MARKETING/PR/PUBLICATIONS	Dall Dall Company
Faye Sinnott	Paul Boertlein, Senior Director,
	Communications, extension 331
PROGRAM PLANNING	WALLOW HAD AND THE STREET
Carol Woodward Scott	Betsy Lawson, Senior Lobbyist,
Productive Spine Value III	extension 329
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	NAME OF STREET
(ListServ Monitor)	Jackie Mildner, Senior Director, DNet,
Olivia Thorne	extension 308
TRADE UPDATE	month and the
Eleanor Revelle	Lloyd Leonard/new staff TBA, Director
UN UPDATE	of Lobbying, extension 302
Eleanor Revelle	Tana Iwas Samul
DRUG STUDY	All result was self-
Shelia Martin	Lloyd Leonard, Director of Lobbying,
	extension 302
ELECTION SYSTEMS	Tuya Sunnou
Joan Paik	Lloyd Leonard, Director of Lobbying,
	extension 302
CONVENTION/COUNCIL	Link Laller, Tielt
Carol Woodward Scott	Zaida Arguedas (extension 351)
The state of the s	Natalie Testa, Manager of Events,
	extension 314
	CAUCIDION STA

COMM	ITTEE TO THE TOTAL	STAFF		
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OVERSIGHT RESPONS	SIBILITIES	Alabama: Rosette Davis Alaskar savarana Alaskar savarana Muse Henry		
Health Care	Sheila Martin	Kirsten Nokes, extension 320		
Global Democracy	Rosetta Davis	Carol Daugherty, extension 336		
	Y . YY! 1	Vienter Malan automaion 220		
Civic Participation	Janis Hirohama	Kirsten Nokes, extension 320		
Civic Participation Campaign Finance Reform	Janis Hirohama Linda McDaniel	Lloyd Leonard, extension 302		
Campaign Finance Reform				
	Linda McDaniel	Lloyd Leonard, extension 302		
Campaign Finance Reform DC Voting Rights	Linda McDaniel Joan Paik	Lloyd Leonard, extension 302 Lloyd Leonard, extension 302		

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## LWVUS Board of Directors/LWVEF Board of Trustees Liaison Assignments 2000-2002

Alabama:	Rosetta Davis	Montana
Alaska:	Marie Brown	Nebraska
Arizona:	Janis Hirohama	Nevada:
Arkansas:	Rosetta Davis	New Har
California:	Margaret Brown	New Jers
Colorado:	Eleanor Revelle	New Mex
Connecticut:	Shelia Martin	New Yor
Delaware:	Shelia Martin	North Ca
DC:	Olivia Thorne	North Da
Florida:	Mary Ann Burtt	Ohio:
Georgia:	Rosetta Davis	Oklahon
Hawaii:	Janis Hirohama	Oregon:
Hong Kong:	Margaret Brown	Pennsylv
Idaho:	Marie Brown	Puerto R
Illinois:	Linda McDaniel	Rhode Is
Indiana:	Linda McDaniel	South Ca
Iowa:	Carol Woodward Scott	South Da
Kansas:	Carol Woodward Scott	Tennesse
Kentucky:	Linda McDaniel	Texas:
Louisiana:	Margaret Brown	Utah:
Maine:	Faye Harned Sinnott	Vermont
Maryland:	Olivia Thorne	Virginia:
Massachusetts:	Faye Harned Sinnott	Virgin Is
Michigan:	Eleanor Revelle	Washing
Minnesota:	Faye Harned Sinnott	West Vir
Mississippi:	Rosetta Davis	Wisconsi
Missouri:	Carol Woodward Scott	Wyomin
*		

Montana:	Shirley Eberly
Nebraska:	Eleanor Revelle
Nevada:	Janis Hirohama
New Hampshire:	Shelia Martin
New Jersey:	Shelia Martin
New Mexico:	Janis Hirohama
New York:	Joan Paik
North Carolina:	Mary Ann Burtt
North Dakota:	Shirley Eberly
Ohio:	Eleanor Revelle
Oklahoma:	Rosie Stephens
Oregon:	Carol Woodward Sco
Pennsylvania:	Joan Paik
Puerto Rico:	Mary Ann Burtt
Rhode Island:	Faye Harned Sinnott
South Carolina:	Olivia Thorne
South Dakota:	Shirley Eberly
Tennessee:	Linda McDaniel
Texas:	Margaret Brown
Utah:	Shirley Eberly
Vermont:	Joan Paik
Virginia:	Joan Paik
Virgin Islands:	Mary Ann Burtt
Washington:	Rosie Stephens
West Virginia:	Olivia Thorne
Wisconsin:	Rosie Stephens
Wyoming:	Marie Brown

Mail for LWVUS board members should be sent to the LWVUS office, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-4508. Your letter will be routed to the appropriate staff person, who will forward a copy to the board member and begin any research needed for a response.

## **LWVUS Office: Where to Direct Your Questions**

TOPIC	Contact Person	Phone	E-Mail
Membership Recruitment/ Retention/Renewal	Kristi Zappie-Ferradino	311	KristiZ@lwv.org
Roster/Database Changes	Debbie Stephens	345	DStephens@lwv.org
Establishing/Maintaining Leagues/	Kristi Zappie-Ferradino	311	KristiZ@lwv.org
Bylaws	Kristi Zappie-Ferradino	311	KristiZ@lwv.org
Field Support/Training	Cheryl Graeve	306	CherylG@lwv.org
Field Service Requests/Schedule	Kristi Zappie-Ferradino	311	KristiZ@lwv.org
Address Changes for Presidents Mailing	Lela Sallis	321	LSallis@lwv.org
Address labels/diskettes/	Lela Sallis	321	LSallis@lwv.org
DPM Subscriptions	Lela Sallis	321	LSallis@lwv.org
Budget/Finance/Tax Inquiries	Greg Leatherwood	308	GregL@lwv.org
Per Member Payment/Accounting	Bea Mozon	317	BMozon@lwv.org
Convention/Council Information	Natalie Testa	314	NatalieT@lwv.org
Convention/Council Registration	Natalie Testa	314	NatalieT@lwv.org
Publication Orders	1-888-287-7424		lwv@pmds.com
Publishing information/Advice/Reprints	Monica Sullivan	332	MonicaS@lwv.org
Postal regulations/Advice on publishing	Monica Sullivan	332	MonicaS@lwv.org
or special large order discounts  The National Voter contents/Advertising	Bob Adams		NationalVoter@lwv.org
LWV Website/Web Advice	Gretchen Knell	333	GKnell@lwv.org
Public Relations Information/Advice	Paul Boertlein	331	PBoertlein@lwv.org
Fundraising Information/Advice	Carol Daugherty	336	CDaugherty@lwv.org
Planned Giving/Pooled Income Fund	Carol Daugherty	336	CDaugherty@lwv.org
Direct Mail Fundraising	Rose Simmons	337	RoseS@lwv.org
State and Local League Grants	Clarissa Cherry	353	CCherry@lwv.org
Get Out the Vote/Youth Vote/	Kirsten Nokes	320	KNokes@lwv.org
Debates DNet/Online Voter Education	Jackie Mildner	318	JMildner@lwv.org
Campaign Finance Reform	Grassroots Lobby		grassrootscoord@lwv.org
Health Care	Kirsten Nokes	320	KNokes@lwv.org
Patients' Bill of Rights	Betsy Lawson	329	BLawson@lwv.org
DC Voting Rights	Lloyd Leonard	302	LloydL@lwv.org
Motor Voter (NVRA)	Mary Brooks	301	MaryB@lwv.org
Envir. Issues/Natural Res.	Carol Daugherty	336	CDaugherty@lwv.org
Grassroots Lobbying	Grassroots Lobby		grassrootscoord@lwv.org
Emerging Democracy Programs	Jean-Patrick Guichard		JPGuichard@lwv.org
Requests for LWVUS President to speak at events	Danielle Brown	530	DBrown@lwv.org

## National Staff Organization

The LWVUS/LWVEF office is organized into four major divisions: Program, Communications, Development and Operations. The Program Division unifies the staff working on all League projects and promotes cross-functional team work on our priority issues. The creation of a Communications Division, which incorporates publishing and public relations, is intended to enhance our media outreach, to strengthen our message development and delivery and to heighten the visibility of the League in all media. The Development Division is responsible for securing resources to keep the national program running and to support grassroots development activities as much as possible. The Operations Division is responsible for our financial management, human resources and administrative services.

#### **Executive Administration**

Executive Administration oversees the day-to-day operation of the League office, and supports the Board Directors of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the Board of Trustees of the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF).

#### **Program Division**

The Program Division includes the Field Support Department, and the Lobbying Department. Focusing especially on support for local and state Leagues, Program Division staff will work to connect and showcase the work of Leagues and heighten League visibility in communities across the country.

The Field Support Department covers two primary areas: organizational development and community activism. The Organizational Development arm in the Field Support Department provides many of the services formerly done in the Member Services Department. The Field Support Department is responsible for efforts to strengthen the League network, assist with the member record system, support of conventions and council, membership recruitment and retention, training and leadership development, technical assistance to Leagues, organizational services, bylaws and electronic listservs. In addition, it works with state and local Leagues to assess their needs, develop and provide appropriate skills training and provide mechanisms to share information among Leagues. The Community Activism arm works with local and state Leagues on community organizing and engagement with special emphasis on civic participation and GOTV projects and D-Net.

The Lobbying Department leads our federal lobbying work and provides information to state and local Leagues about priority legislative issues. Responsible for developing and implementing strategies for lobbying on LWVUS priorities and advancing program priorities. Legislative Action staff coordinates grassroots lobbying activities of local and state Leagues, the volunteer national Lobby Corps, and the Grassroots Lobby Corps.

#### **Communications Division**

The Communications Division focuses on enhancing the League's visibility and effectiveness at all levels. It includes Media Relations and Publishing. Responsible for LWVUS and LWVEF printed and electronic publishing, including editing, production, marketing and sales of all publications. These include *The National Voter*, the contents of the LWVUS/LWVEF website and the President's Mailings.

#### **Development Division**

The Development Division works with corporations, foundations, major donors and direct mail supporters to bring needed finances to implement the League's impact, visibility and organizational development goals. This year, the Development Department is taking on new corporate outreach efforts as well as enhancing the League's major donor program and strengthening the direct mail program. Development staff works with the field support staff in the Program Division to recruit new members and to give state and local Leagues help in their development efforts. Responsible for expanding the financial resources of the LWVUS and the LWVEF. Includes managing donor records, direct mail fundraising, major gifts, corporate and foundation grants, and planned giving. Also provides fundraising assistance to Leagues.

#### **Operations Division**

The new Operations Division includes the Human Resources and Administration Department and the Finance and Accounting Department. The Human Resources and Administration Department provides support services to the LWVUS and LWVEF office, including employee recruitment, mail services, reception, telephone service, equipment maintenance, office supplies, central filing, computer systems support and training. The department also maintains information on members, donors, member/donors, subscribers and Leagues. This data is stored on a mainframe computer at an outside service bureau. The department is beginning preparations to enable Leagues to update their member information using the Internet.

The Finance and Accounting Department is responsible for budget preparation and management of all accounting and financial functions of the LWVUS and the LWVEF, including the LWVEF's restricted funds. Responsible for financial management and budgets of the LWVUS and LWVEF. Includes financial reporting, banking, investments, payroll, billing and per member payment (PMP) collection.

## Working Together to Fund the League

The following is the LWVUS and LWVEF Policy for Sharing Corporate Gifts with State and Local Leagues.

The LWVUS and LWVEF will cooperate and work with state and local Leagues to maximize corporate contacts and contributions. Training, consultation and communication among all levels of League in the cultivation, solicitation and acknowledgment of corporate contributions are essential to reach the LWV fundraising potential in this area. (Approved by the national board April 1987.)

General support contributions of \$1,000 or more made to the LWVUS or LWVEF by a corporation or corporate foundation are shared 10 percent with the state League and 10 percent with the local League where the contribution originates. Contributions from associations or other membership entities are exempt from this revenue-sharing policy. Unusual circumstances that cannot be anticipated concerning corporate or corporate foundation general support contributions will be decided on a case-by-case basis by an ad hoc subcommittee of the Development Committee. Its decision will take into consideration prior relations between the donor and the League at all levels. Restricted contributions are not shared with state or local Leagues unless so stipulated by the donor. Donations from private foundations cannot be shared unless so designated by the foundation. (Revised 4/94 and 7/95.)

If an Inter-League Organization (ILO) performs the fundraising function for its member Leagues, it is the responsibility of the ILO and the appropriate local League to determine the disposition of the local share. (Adopted April 1987.)

#### CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

\*Local and state LWV bulletins should encourage members to check with their employer (or spouse's employer) to see if the employer will match contributions to the LWVEF at local, state and/or national levels. If you have questions or would like advice on corporate matching gifts programs that can increase an individual's contribution to the League, call the Development Division at 202-429-1965.

#### LOCAL SOLICITATION OF FOUNDATION GRANTS

National projects are funded at the national level of the League. The LWVEF seeks funds and in-kind contributions from foundations and corporations for projects that are national in scope. In addition, the LWVEF seeks general support from national-level corporations and foundations; the LWVUS also seeks corporate contributions for projects and general support. On occasion and in consultation with the national League office, a League may approach a national-level funder. To avoid duplication

of effort, call the Development Division at 202-429-1965 before making any initial contact with the funder.

#### WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY-

DIRECT MAIL: SHARING DONOR NAMES WITH STATE LEAGUES

Once a year, the national board offers a "window of opportunity" for state Leagues to request LWV non-member donor names. This list can only be used one time each year during the month of May.

#### PLANNED GIVING

The LWVEF planned giving program is designed to help raise funds for all levels of the League. The program promotes giving options that have tax advantages, such as bequests, gifts of stock, real estate or other assets, as well as gifts that return lifetime income to the donor.

# Telemarketing Program Reinstating Lapsed Members

The lapsed member telemarketing program is geared toward re-instating lapsed members who have not held any level of active membership for more than a year. LWV depends on League membership and the best prospects are those who were at one time a member of the League. The objective for this program is to re-instate as many lapsed members as possible.

#### 1. When will calls be made?

Generally, calls for this program occur twice per year, in the Fall between August and October and in the Spring between March and May. For more information, contact the Development Division at 202-429-1965.

#### 2. Who will be calling the lapsed members on behalf of LWVUS?

The LWVUS has contracted with Angeles Communications- Los Angeles, California. This telemarketing firm has provided excellent telemarketing service on telemarketing programs. Angeles Communications is currently registered in all states to perform telemarketing solicitations on behalf of the LWVUS.

#### 3. What is the theme of the script?

Generally, the theme/topic for the script will focus on the overall importance of why the League of Women Voters exists and the importance of engaging the democratic process. Without League membership, there is no League of Women Voters.

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#### 4. Who will be selected to participate in this telemarketing program?

If a member has been inactive for 16 months or more and is flagged inactive on our database file, they will be selected to receive a phone call. As you know, the LWVUS depends on state and local Leagues to send updated information to the LWVUS Database Services Department to ensure that our database is as current and accurate as possible.

#### 5. Will there be checking procedures set in place to make certain that only lapsed members are being called?

Yes, there are checking procedures in place, to make sure that we are only calling lapsed members. However, if the LWVUS has not received updated information on lapsed members who have reactivated their membership at the state or local level, there is a small chance that reactivated members will be called.

#### 6. Will lapsed members in all states be called?

Yes, all states will be called that have lapsed members residing in their state.

#### 7. How lapsed does a member have to be in order to receive a phone call?

We will be calling lapsed members who have not held any level of active membership for at least 16 months.

#### 8. How long will the telemarketing program last?

Telemarketing programs usually last between six to eight weeks.

## 9. Will lapsed members be asked to reactivate their membership at the national level?

Yes, if lapsed members decide to reactivate their membership with the League, they will be made a national member, unless they request otherwise.

## 10. Will lapsed members be able to reactivate their membership at the state/local Leagues?

Yes, lapsed members will be able to reinstate their membership at the state/local League. However, the lapsed member will be instructed to contact the state/local League directly.

## The Following Are Sample Questions/Comments You May Receive:

#### Is this a legitimate telemarketing firm?

Yes, Angeles Communications is a legitimate telemarketing firm and they are registered in all states to perform telemarketing on behalf of the LWVUS.

#### I received a phone call but I am already an active local member.

We have checking procedures in place to make sure we are only calling lapsed members. However, there will be a small percentage of reactivated members who receive this phone call because information regarding their reactivation was not received or updated to the LWVUS database. The callers at the firms are trained to handle such contacts.

#### Is it OK to give my credit card number over the phone?

Yes, it is OK for the member to give their credit card number to the caller. However, if anyone is uncomfortable doing so, they can send a check or mail their credit card name, number and expiration date to the LWVUS.

If you have other questions or concerns, or receive any questions that you can not answer, please call Rose Simmons at 202-429-1965 ext. 337.

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## **Per-Member Payment Information**

#### Important Points to Remember and Share with Your Treasurer

The Per-Member Payment (PMP) is the way Leagues satisfy the requirement to support financially the national level of our three-level organization. PMP is the major source of income for the LWVUS, supporting advocacy, membership and organizational activities, *The National Voter*, convention and council, and national board and committee meetings. The LWVUS board recognizes and *appreciates* the significant commitment Leagues make when they pay their PMP.

#### Calculating the PMP Obligation

Your League's PMP obligation for fiscal year (FY) 2000-2001 is based on the January 2000 membership count of paid-up members as reported to the LWVUS in January 2000 by means of the verified summary sheets. Invoices showing these member numbers were sent to you in July 2000.

- The LWVUS sends each League its membership roster twice a year. Changes received from Leagues can immediately be reflected on the next roster. Be sure to send your state League a copy of any changes sent to the LWVUS.
- A PMP rate of \$21 was set by Convention 2000 for fiscal year 2000-2001 (July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001 and FY 2001-2002).

#### **Student PMP Rate**

Convention 2000 adopted a new discounted PMP rate for League members who are students. The rate for student member is \$10.50, half that of other members; this rate is intended as an incentive to encourage students to join the League.

#### **Special Considerations in Figuring PMP Total**

- Honorary life or 50-year members. Those who have been members for 50 years or more are full voting members but are excused from the payment of dues. No LWVUS PMP is charged.
- Nationally recruited or renewed members. No LWVUS PMP is charged for nationally recruited members (NRM) or for members who renew through the LWVUS.

The budget for FY 2000-2001 includes funds to provide local and state Leagues a \$5 rebate for each nationally recruited member for NRM's reported on the

January 2000 summary sheet. Leagues will receive this rebate as a separate check during the fall of 2000. The rebate is a means of dues sharing from the national to the local/state level to help defray the cost of providing services to these members.

• Members in a common household. When two or more members reside in the same household the full PMP is charged for the first member and one-half PMP for each additional member. (Only one copy of *The National Voter* is sent to each such household.)

Convention Voting Rights. In order to retain the right to vote at national convention, Leagues must have made full payment for the LWVUS PMP.

#### **PMP Billings**

The billing Leagues receive at the beginning of the fiscal year reflects the amount due for the entire current fiscal year at the PMP rate voted by delegates to the LWVUS convention. This invoice takes into account the special cases listed above in which your League pays part or no PMP at all. Leagues receive balance forward statements each quarter, until the PMP obligation is paid in full. The quarterly balance forward statement indicates payments made and total now due (or credit balance, if any).

#### Payment of the PMP is Not Optional Nor Subject to Local Amendment.

PMP should be paid in full at the beginning of the fiscal year, or on a regular quarterly basis (in July, October, January and April). Balance forward statements will be sent to those who pay quarterly.

#### How To Pay

Keep one copy of the invoice or balance forward statement for your files and return the second copy with your PMP in the return envelope marked "Per Member Payment Enclosed." Be sure to note on the check that it is for PMP. Per member payments to the LWVUS are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes. Leagues may satisfy up to 25 percent of their PMP obligation by raising tax-deductible contributions for the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) (see below).

PMP payments are attributed first to any outstanding balance. That is, if your League has a debt carried forward from a previous year, that debt is cleared before payments are attributed to the current year. Check your statements and call the accounting office immediately if you have questions about your account.

## Satisfying Part of the PMP Obligation by Raising Tax-Deductible Contributions

Your League may raise unrestricted contributions of tax-deductible money to the LWVEF, a 501(c)(3) organization, in place of up to 25 percent of your PMP and receive a credit for that amount on your PMP. If you wish to satisfy more than 25 percent of the PMP with tax-deductible contributions, send a letter to the Assistant Coordinator of Organizational Development, explaining why you need to exceed the 25 percent limit.

Tax-deductible contributions made to your local League, either for your general educational purposes or specifically for payment of this 25 percent tax-deductible portion of your PMP, may be used for this payment. However, if your donor restricts the gift for some other specific purpose (e.g., publication of a local voters' guide) you may **not** use any portion of that gift for PMP payment.

#### **Process**

- Ask your donors to make their checks payable to the LWVEF. Explain that their contribution will be used for general unrestricted purposes, including satisfaction of PMP. Do not deposit these checks into your League's bank account.
- Send donors' unrestricted contributions to the LWVEF (in batches of at least \$50, if possible). Your LWV thus acts as a transmittal agent.
- Send the PMP statement with the check(s), clearly indicating that satisfaction of PMP is intended.

In the event a donor mistakenly writes a check to your LWV rather than to the LWVEF, be sure not to deposit the check into your bank account. Instead, ask the donor either to reissue the check to the LWVEF or provide you with a written statement authorizing its deposit into the LWVEF account. If you mistakenly deposit such a check into your LWV's bank account you may write a check to the LWVEF for the sum of the contribution, however it must be accompanied by a written statement from the donor that the funds should be transferred to the LWVEF.

Your treasurer must keep accurate records of each donor's name, date of check, amount received and date transmitted to the national office. All money designated for the LWVEF received from contributors should be recorded in a separate account in your treasurer's books. It is the responsibility of the local or state League to acknowledge such contributions with receipts and thanks. Any legal question that may arise in conjunction with donation records, amount and payment procedures must be handled by the local or state League involved.

It is very important to remember that, because of legal considerations, funds raised for specific educational projects and deposited in your LWVEF Grant Service account cannot be used to satisfy your PMP obligation. If a donor made a contribution toward your League's specific educational project, it is not appropriate to use that money for another purpose, such as paying your PMP. According to LWVEF Grant Service guidelines, once funds are deposited in your Grant Service account, they can be withdrawn only to cover expenses associated with completing educational projects.

#### Optional Insurance Coverage Available to Leagues

The LWVUS cannot afford to provide group insurance coverage for all Leagues at this time. However, we have arranged to make general liability and D&O policies available for purchase by Leagues desiring to do so.

General liability insurance policies are offered to Leagues by Travelers Insurance Company. The policies provide a limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate limit. The policies also provide \$10,000 of personal property coverage at a location designated by the League, \$1,000,000 hired and non-owned automobile coverage, and \$10,000 of employee dishonesty coverage. The annual premium is \$333 per League in most states. There are several exceptions, and in those states the annual premium would be \$750. Leagues can negotiate to adjust these limits as required.

The directors and officers policies are offered by Federal Insurance, part of the Chubb Group of insurance companies. Directors and officers insurance provides protection for wrongful acts of the board (subject to the terms and conditions of the policy). The application for coverage requires Leagues to provide financial data, copies of by-laws, publications, etc. The minimum premium for a \$1,000,000 limit of coverage with a \$2,500 deductible is \$850. The premium fluctuates based on the size and activities of each League.

Leagues should evaluate whether to purchase insurance based on their own activites, financial circumstances and factors such as the passage of the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997. We believe the coverage and premiums offered are reasonable. Leagues should shop around for the best price on insurance coverage. Leagues may be able to obtain similar coverage from local insurance providers at a lower cost.

The policies are offered through the LWVUS' agent, Hilb, Rogal, and Hamilton Company of the District of Columbia, 2275 Research Blvd., Suite 300, Rockville, Maryland 20850. Leagues interested in finding out more information about these

policies should contact HRH Insurance directly. The League's contact at HRH Insurance is Karen Earp, (800) 800-2860 or (301) 948-2422.

#### **Government Reporting Requirements**

All Leagues are responsible for adhering to government reporting requirements. Reporting requirements vary between Leagues because of different activities undertaken, income levels, state and local regulations, etc. States and local jurisdictions have different reporting requirements so it is not possible for the national League to provide information to state and local Leagues and ILOs on these requirements. Additionally, the federal and many state, regional and local governments have recently changed, or are in the process of changing tax laws to raise additional revenues, and previously exempt activities may now be taxed.

It is incumbent on each League to obtain appropriate levels of legal and accounting advice and professional services that will enable them to meet all reporting requirements.

Among the agencies (but not limited to) that require regular reports and/or payments are: Internal Revenue Service; Secretaries of States offices; Attorneys General offices; departments of tax, finance and revenue; worker's compensation; unemployment insurance; charitable games and lottery boards/commissions (for charitable games or vendors licenses).

Often the most difficult determination to make with respect to taxable income is whether the income-producing activity is "related" to the organization's exempt purposes. Leagues are encouraged to get current advice and information on the "UBIT" (Unrelated Business Income Tax) law.

#### IRS Disclosure and Acknowledgment Requirements

League treasurers, membership chairs, finance directors and special event coordinators will be particularly interested in recent IRS regulations that affect dues, solicitations and contributions. Questions should be directed to the Director of Finance and Administration at the national office.

#### Acknowledgment of Charitable Contributions of \$250 or More

Gifts of \$250 or more are not deductible as charitable contributions unless the donor receives and maintains written acknowledgments. State and local Leagues should send written thank-you letters for all education fund donations of \$250 or more, containing the following information:

- the amount of cash contributed;
- a description (not the value) of any property received;
- a statement that the donor received no goods or services in return for the contribution, if that is the case; or,
- a description and "good faith estimate" of the value of any goods or services the donor received in return for the gift, if the donor received goods or services of more than "insubstantial value" see below.

The \$250 limit applies to education fund gifts made on the same day; the limit is not cumulative. A donor's canceled check is no longer considered adequate documentation.

#### Disclosure Requirements for Quid Pro Quo Contributions to Charities

Charities that receive a quid pro quo contribution, meaning a contribution of more than \$75 partly in exchange for goods or services, must give the donor an estimate of the value of the goods or services and must tell the donor in writing that only the excess of the contribution over the value of the goods or services is tax-deductible.

The quid pro quo rules apply only to education funds and other charities, not to state and local Leagues.

For example, a donor contributes \$90 to a local League education fund to attend a fundraising dinner; the dinner has a fair market value of \$50. In this case, \$40 would be deductible. Because the contribution received exceeds \$75, the League would need to disclose to the donor that only the excess over the \$50 value of the dinner is tax-deductible. This would usually be accomplished by printing the disclosure on the dinner ticket or invitation.

The disclosure rule for quid pro quo donations does not apply to token items of insubstantial value provided to donors. Newsletters and similar works (other than commercial-grade publications, such as those containing articles written for compensation and paid advertising) are treated as having an insubstantial value.

#### Disclosure Requirements for League Dues and Fundraising Solicitations

Unlike education fund gifts, donations to Leagues are not deductible for tax purposes as charitable contributions. This should be clearly stated in any solicitation materials.

A small number of League members who belong to the League for bonafide business reasons may be entitled to deduct a portion of their dues as a business expense. However, with the passage of the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993, the portion of dues and other contributions which pays for lobbying costs is no longer deductible as a business expense. To comply with the law, local Leagues must do one of the following:

- Establish to the satisfaction of the IRS that the League receives 90 percent or more of its dues, contributions and similar payments from persons not entitled to deduct such payments. (The IRS hasn't issued its final regulations explaining how this should be done. Pending further guidance, local Leagues should consider obtaining written statements from their members to document that 90 percent of dues and contributions are received from persons not entitled to deduct such payments. State Leagues may be able to satisfy this requirement by documenting that they receive 90 percent or more of their income from local League per member payments.)
- Document that lobbying expenses do not exceed \$2,000 in a particular tax year. (Consult with your local accountant or tax advisor on the calculation of lobbying expense.)
- Provide members with a "reasonable estimate" of the amount of dues and contributions allocable to nondeductible lobbying. The notification must be provided at the time dues, contributions and similar amounts are assessed or paid.
- Pay a proxy tax equal to total nondeductible lobbying expenses, multiplied by the highest corporate tax rate (currently 35 percent).

Almost all Leagues are classified for tax purposes as nonprofit civic organizations. This classification confers a number of legal and regulatory benefits. Income that Leagues generate that is directly related to their mission is exempt from federal income tax. Civic organizations may engage in extensive lobbying efforts to influence legislation, whereas charitable organizations must comply with substantial restrictions on lobbying. Unlike charities, civic organizations are not required to file with the IRS for recognition of their exempt status, though some find it desirable nonetheless.

## THE ON-LINE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

#### LWVUS/LWVEF Websites

#### MEMBERS ONLY WEBSITE

The LWVUS/LWVEF website address is www.lwv.org. Many state and local Leagues maintain their own websites; the LWVUS/LWVEF site includes links to all other known League websites. The website also includes a member section targeted specifically to League leaders and members. Click the "Members Only" button on the homepage and you will be asked to enter a username and password. When prompted, enter the generic username: lwv. Then enter the generic password: carriecatt. Please save this information for future reference. Much of the information included in the Presidents/DPM Mailings is available in this section. Other basic information for managing and nurturing your League also is there, such as a copy of the Member Information Change Form (MICF), for Leagues to use. Since this is a member section, please do not promote or publicize it outside the organization.

#### LEADERS WEBSITE

Along with launching a new public website, the LWVUS now has a secure website just for state and local League presidents and other grassroots League leaders. This area is a subdomain of the main LWVUS site. You will not be able to enter this site from the main LWVUS site. The URL for the LWV leaders website is: leaders.lwv.org. (Note that the address does NOT start with www.)

When you go to this site, you will be prompted for a username and password. The username for the site is **leaders** and the password will be **grassroots**. Please keep this information confidential among League presidents and other key LWV leaders.

We plan to use the leaders site a great deal in the future to communicate with state and local League presidents and other LWV leaders. Please let us know how we can make this site most helpful to you. We want to work with LWV leaders to build a communications tool for the network of League leaders that is focused on helping us all be more effective. The leaders website will include a Feedback Form for your input. Please be patient with us, however; some good ideas may take more time and resources to implement than others!

#### Listservs

A listserv is an e-mail-based mailing list that can take several forms. The LWV listservs are either discussion lists or announcement lists. A discussion list is a forum where any member of the list can send an e-mail to a central place. The listserv program then copies that message and sends it to each member of the listserv. Currently, the LWV discussion

listservs are unmoderated, meaning that the e-mails are not read or edited before being sent out to the list members.

The LWV Announcement listservs function to provide the listserv members with information from the LWV on specific topics. Only the list manager can post to these listservs.

A list of the currently active LWV listservs is available in the Members Area of the LWVUS/LWVEF website (www.lwv.org). Click on the Online Grassroots Network to join any of the listservs.

#### Listservs currently available

#### Discussion Listservs

#### Outreach Listserv - lwv-outreach@lists.client-mail.com

This on-line forum is a general discussion and Q&A forum for any questions pertaining to membership in the LWV and membership recruitment and retention outreach. Open to all members.

#### Campaign Finance Reform Listserv - lwv-cfr@lists.client-mail.com

This list encourages focused conversation on campaign finance reform among committed activists nationwide.

#### President's Listserv - lwv-presidents@lists.client-mail.com

This list is for LWV state, local and ILO presidents.

#### Announcement Listservs

#### The Grassroots Lobby Corps - lwv-glc@lists.client-mail.com

The network receives e-mail lobby requests from the LWVUS for quick, targeted and sometimes last-minute lobbying on priority issues before critical congressional votes.

#### Media listserv - lwv-media@lists.client-mail.com

The press list is intended as a service for members of the press who cover public policy issues.

#### What's New Mailing List - lwv-whatsnew@lists.client-mail.com

Provides users with the latest news about the League as quickly and efficiently as possible.

#### Members listserv - lwv-member@lists.client-mail.com

Provides members with the latest news about the League as quickly and efficiently as possible. This list will include League member specific information as well as general League information.

#### OTHER LISTSERVS OWNED BY LWV MEMBERS:

**LWV Topics Listserv:** This forum is a general LWV discussion group that covers any topics dealing with the LWV or its programs or issues. Owned by Mary Howarth, LWV Michigan.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to: lwvtopics-subscribe@egroups.com
Put nothing in the subject area and only your name in the message area. To unsubscribe send a blank message to: lwvtopics-unsubscribe@egroups.com

**LWVWebmasters Listserv:** This is a discussion group from League members working on or interested in creating websites. Owned by Olivia Thorne, LWV Pennsylvania.

To subscribe: Send an e-mail message to <a href="www.ebmasters-on@libertynet.org">www.ebmasters-on@libertynet.org</a> (nothing needs to appear in the subject or message sections)

You will receive a reply asking you to click on reply to confirm your subscription to the list. To unsubscribe, send any message to: <a href="mailto:lwwwebmasters-off@libertynet.org">lwwwebmasters-off@libertynet.org</a>

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# Building Your Online Tool ...The GLEARINGHOUSE!

For years League Leaders have requested some means of sharing information and success stories. In response to that request, the LWVUS has created an online place for Leagues to share information. It's an online tool, called the CLEARINGHOUSE! It is an internal, searchable "library" of activities, publications, studies, issues, for Leagues around the country.

This is your tool and it's essential that you build it to become a meaningful resource:

#### State, ILO, and Local Presidents

- Designate an administrator (maybe someone interested in communication, who does your voter, etc.) and call for your password.
- Help spread the word in your area to make use of the Clearinghouse.
- Run a short story in your Voter or publication about the Clearinghouse.
- At one of your meetings walk your leadership through the Clearinghouse (through an online demonstration or get some screen shots printed off to help walk your team through the benefits and use of the Clearinghouse).

## **Clearinghouse Guidance**

#### Where can we find it on the website?

In the Members Only section of the League website at: www.lwv.org/members/clearinghouse.html. (Remember, to acc

www.lwv.org/members/clearinghouse.html. (Remember, to access the Members Only section of the website, the username is lwv and the password is carriecatt.)

#### How do we start?

- 1. Your League should identify one person to be responsible for posting information to the clearinghouse.
- Your League's contact person should get in touch with LWVUS Database Manager Lela Sallis to receive a password. Lela can be reached at <u>Lsallis@lwv.org</u> or 202-429-1965, ext. 321.
- 3. After receiving the password, your League's contact person can access an online training section, or we can mail a short manual on how to load information into the clearinghouse. It is a very simple process, but only those with a password can enter the administrative site.

- 4. Once into the administrative site, League contacts can add and edit information about their League. The password allows your League's contact to change or add information about YOUR League only. No one else can accidentally change the information on your League.
- 5. Any technical challenges or questions should be directed to Lela Sallis.

Can anyone change the information about my League?

No, only your League's officially designated clearinghouse contact can receive your League's password from the LWVUS and can then change your information. Each password is designated for a particular League. Your League's password enables your contact to post information about your League ONLY.

#### Are there training materials available?

Yes – your contact person will be able to access online training in the clearinghouse administrator site. We also are including a hard copy manual for your administrator to refer to. You can also get coaching from the LWVUS staff – call (202) 429-1965.

#### Who is eligible to post information to the Clearinghouse?

Any state League, Inter League Organization (ILO), Member At Large (MAL) unit of the State, local League or student unit can post information to the Clearinghouse

#### What information can be posted?

Information your League wants to share with other members and Leagues about your official League activities, including updates on your debates, publications, local, state and national projects, studies, training opportunities, etc.

### What policies govern the clearinghouse?

All regular League policies are applicable to the clearinghouse. For example, all information posted must be related to official League activities only and must follow League nonpartisan policies. If you have any questions, please contact the LWVUS.

#### Don't forget to update!

The new League Clearinghouse is an important tool for all Leagues. Its value will grow as we all work to build the database over time. The more information we share with each other in timely way in the months and years ahead, the more useful it will be for everyone.

# STARTING AN EDUCATION FUND ACCOUNT WITH THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Leagues have increased their attention on raising funds from outside resources. Therefore, Leagues have considered establishing education funds in order to attract support from donors who want to give tax-deductible contributions. The IRS defines all state and local Leagues as 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations; donations to them are not tax-deductible. However, an education fund is a non-profit organization allowed to solicit contributions that are tax-deductible for educational purposes, as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS.

The League of Women Voters has an education fund that is available to all Leagues through the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). It was established in 1957 as a separate, tax-exempt organization with a 501(c)(3) tax status. The purpose of this service is to allow Leagues to obtain tax-deductible funding for educational projects while at the same time relieving Leagues of administrative burdens connected with maintaining an educational fund.

#### How to start an education fund account with LWVEF:

- 1. Contact Clarissa Cherry, Assistant Coordinator of State and Local Grants, to obtain necessary information and forms. You may contact her via e-mail at ccherry@lwv.org or (202) 429-1965 x 353.
- 2. Send contributions and raised funds payable to the LWVEF with a completed Deposit Form. Make sure to put the amount of the contributions on the first line, indicating that the money be placed in the "League Grant Service Account indicated at the top of the form." Once the money has been deposited and the account has been updated, a Deposit Notice will be sent.
- Apply to the LWVEF for an educational project approval by completing the Project Approval Request Form. Approved projects will be sent a Project Approval Notice.
- 4. Once approval has been granted, and if sufficient funds are already in the account of the League making the request, a check will be disbursed upon receipt of a completed Withdrawal Form including the project number. The check may take two to three weeks to be sent depending on when the form reaches the national office. Once the withdrawal has been updated in the League's account, a Withdrawal Notice will be sent. If there are not enough funds in the account, the League must make additional deposits to the account using the Deposit Form.

After funds have been disbursed and the project has been completed, fill out a
Project Final Report. The project will be closed in the corresponding League's
account and a Project Final Report Notice will be sent.

In order to use the grant service for funding, the projects must meet IRS and League criteria.

#### IRS Criteria:

- 1. The projects must be educational. The project must be completed for the purpose of informing the public in a fair and objective manner. The League cannot advocate a particular position on legislation or urge any action to affect legislation (federal, state, or local). The project cannot involve the development of a League position by consensus or other form of agreement nor can it promote a League position. The project cannot involve work with political parties or candidates for office, other than nonpartisan voter service activities. It cannot influence the outcome of an election
- 2. The project must serve the general public, not League members exclusively.
- 3. The project cannot be at all related to League membership activities. The project's resources cannot be used to support the membership recruitment or membership maintenance activities of the League. Education fund resources cannot be used to promote League membership. Therefore, internal membership materials do not qualify for funding.

#### The League Criteria:

- The project cannot be started before the approval application is submitted and approved. LWVEF trustees must ensure that it will meet IRS and LWV criteria.
- 2. The project must not give direct grants to outside organizations.
- 3. The project must be nonpartisan.
- 4. If your project generates income, the income must be used for educational purposes only.
- 5. The LWVEF must be properly credited.

## LWVUS Membership/Donor Database Q & A

#### 1. What information is in the LWVUS Database and why is it maintained?

The LWVUS database contains the name, address, membership status and contribution status of more than 130,000 active members and supporters. The greater the number of League members and donors, the stronger our organization's clout is with Congress.

The LWVUS database contains individual member and donor information, as well as, League-specific information, i.e., name, home address, e-mail address and phone number of the president; address, e-mail address, phone and fax numbers of the League office; and number of members. The LWVUS sends periodic Presidents Mailings and Duplicate Presidents Mailings (DPMs) to state, local and Inter-League Organization (ILO) presidents. These mailings contain program and voters service material, legislative action alerts, Post-Board Summaries and convention and council information. League membership rosters are sent in separate mailings twice a year.

#### 2. What is the role of state and local Leagues in maintaining a membership list?

Since about 93 percent of the membership information initiates at the state and local League levels, it is imperative that state and local Leagues send new and changed information to LWVUS Database Services as soon as possible. League leaders must take this proactive role to ensure their members are on the LWVUS database.

#### 3. What is the LWVUS responsibility?

The LWVUS maintains and protects the database information with the services of a computer service bureau. Working hand in hand, state and local Leagues and the LWVUS maintain as clean a database as possible.

#### 4. Why does the LWVUS send everything to the president?

The LWVUS relies on state, local and ILO presidents to distribute materials to other League leaders as appropriate. It is, therefore, critical that changes in state and local League presidential status be sent immediately to LWVUS Database Services.

## 5. Can my League order membership diskettes and labels from LWVUS Database Services?

Membership record information is available on diskettes and labels. See next page for ordering information.

### **LWVUS Labels and Diskettes Price Chart**

#### LABELS

For all mailing label orders there is a \$45 base charge for the first 1000 names. For each additional 1,000 names add \$12.

# of Labels	1-1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001-5000	5001-6000	6001-7000	*Over 7001
Price	\$45.00	\$57.00	\$69.00	\$81.00	\$93.00	\$105.00	\$117.00	

Add \$12.00 for each additional 1,000 names.

#### DISKETTES

#### 1. ASCII

There is a base charge of \$25 for the first diskettes. Each diskette holds 4,000 records. For Leagues ordering more than 4,000 records, there is a charge of \$10 for each additional diskette.

	1 Diskette	2 Diskettes	3 Diskettes	4 Diskettes	5 Diskettes	6 Diskettes
# of Names	1-4000	4001-8000	8001-12000	12001-16000	16001-20000	20001-24000 *Over 24001
Price	\$25.00	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$55.00	\$65.00	\$75.00

• Add \$10.00 for each additional 4,000 names

#### 2. Dbase

There is a base charge of \$25 for the first diskette. Each diskette holds 1,000 records. For Leagues ordering more than 1,000 records there is a charge of \$10 for each additional diskettes.

	1 Diskette	2 Diskettes	3 Diskettes	4 Diskettes	5 Diskettes	6 Diskettes	
# of Names	1-1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001-5000	5001-6000	*Over 7001
Price	\$25.00	\$35.00	\$45.00	\$55.00	\$65.00	\$75.00	

· Add \$10.00 for each additional 1,000 names.

To order labels or diskettes please call LWVUS at 202.429.1965 and ask for Database Services or email your order to: lwv@lwv.org

Your order must include:

Your name
 League name and file number

Address where order is to be shipped Daytime telephone number

2. Type of labels: Chesire or Pressure-Sensitive

3. Member Categories to be omitted

NOTE: Prices do not include shipping and handling.

## Nationally Recruited Members (NRM) Q&A

#### 1. What is a nationally recruited member?

A nationally recruited member (NRM) is a full member of the League who is recruited by and pays membership dues to the LWVUS office. The League is a three-level organization and regardless of the level at which an individual joins the League, the member belongs to all three levels - local, state and national. If there is no local League available, the member is a state member-at-large (MAL).

#### 2. What benefits of membership does an NRM receive?

An NRM receives the same benefits as any other member: *The National Voter*, the state LWV newsletter and local bulletin and also may buy LWVUS publications at a member discount. An NRM may serve as a voting delegate to state and national conventions and councils.

#### 3. How do new NRMs get assigned to the appropriate state and local League?

The LWVUS assigns new NRMs to the appropriate state and local Leagues by computer. The computer matches League zip codes with each new member's zip code and assigns the member to the League with the appropriate zip code.

#### 4. How do state and local Leagues know when they have a new NRM?

New member activity reports are sent to state and local Leagues quarterly.

#### 5. How can an NRM be converted to a state or local League member?

Local and state Leagues can invite NRMs to renew locally before their expiration date, thereby converting the NRM to a state or locally renewed League member. The LWVUS sends the first renewal notice to NRMs during the month their membership is due to expire. Local and state Leagues should consider a renewal strategy that begins a few months before a NRM's expiration date.

#### 6. How is an NRM inactivated (dropped)?

Since the LWVUS receives the dues payment of the NRMs, only the LWVUS can inactivate or drop an NRM for failure to renew.

#### 7. How do state and local Leagues know when a NRM is dropped or inactivated?

Inactivation activity reports are sent to local and state Leagues quarterly.

#### 8. What is the schedule for mailing renewal notices to the NRMs?

The first in a series of four renewal notices is sent the month the membership expires, with the other notices mailed on a monthly basis thereafter. For example, if a member

has a membership expiration date of October, the member receives her/his first renewal notice from the LWVUS in October, the second renewal notice in November, etc. Local and state Leagues are encouraged to begin asking NRMs to renew locally a few months **before** their expiration date.

#### 9. What is the member code for an NRM?

The member code for an NRM is "N" for Nationally Recruited Member. Local Leagues cannot add an "N" member because NRMs, by definition, pay their dues to the LWVUS. If an "N" member renews locally, the member code should be changed from an "N" to an "R" for renews locally. The member codes are printed on the twice yearly member rosters.

#### 10. What about the membership form in *The National Voter*?

The National Voter is sent to all members and every donor who has contributed \$25 or more to the LWVUS or LWVEF. As part of our overall goal to increase membership and strengthen the League, we include a membership coupon in each issue of *The National Voter* that can be used by anyone to join the League. These members are nationally recruited but we urge local and state Leagues to renew them locally.

## 11. What is the LWVUS Per Member Payment (PMP) obligation of local Leagues for NRMs?

State and local Leagues do not pay LWVUS PMP on NRMs because NRMs do not pay dues to them. When an NRM renews locally, however, the local League does pay PMP to the LWVUS for that member.

#### 12. What is the policy on Distribution of League Member Names?

It is LWVUS board policy not to give, rent or exchange member names with other organizations or companies for the purpose of solicitation of any type. This policy applies to all active members, including those who also are donors. The names of donors only are rented or exchanged with other organizations in order for the League to receive names of potential donors and members.

13. Do Leagues receive a rebate for a National Recruited Member (NRM)? The budget for FY 2000-2001 includes funds to provide local and state Leagues a \$5 rebate for each nationally recruited member for NRM's reported on the January 2000 summary sheet. Leagues will receive this rebate as a separate check during the fall of 2000. The rebate is a means of dues sharing from the national to the local/state level to help defray the cost of providing services to these members.

# Most Frequently Asked Questions about LWVUS Rosters

Q. When does a person become a member of the LWVUS?

A. When a person pays their dues to either the LWVUS or to their state or local League.

Q. When should a local and/or state League notify the LWVUS of a new member?

A. Immediately upon receiving notification of a new member, complete a Member Information Change Form (MICF) and return it to Database Services at the LWVUS. You can also send the information via the member section of the LWVUS website. The Internet address is (www.lwv.org).

Q. Can a member join more than one local or state League?

A. League policy does not allow for a person to belong to more than one local or state League. A member who desires to support more than one League may do so in the form of volunteer and/or financial support. This person is referred to as a "supporter." However, that member should not be listed on that League's official roster and is not required to pay PMP dues.

Members who wish to be considered "supporters" of Leagues should first join the League in their local area. That member will be listed on that roster and pay PMP dues to their state League and the LWVUS.

Leagues who have "supporters" should keep these names in a separate database from the one that makes up their roster from which PMP is collected. Leagues who have "supporters" should not report this information on their official LWVUS roster. Reporting a "supporter" as a member creates two separate member records in the LWVUS database and could eventually result in the member being dropped completely.

Q. Does the LWVUS have a student member category?

A. At this time, the LWVUS does not have a student member category. Convention 2000 and the 2000-2001 budget includes a provision that the per member payment for a member who is a student, shall be equal to one-half the per member payment amount determined at convention. At this time, the National per member payment is \$21. A student is defined as an individual enrolled either full or part-time in an accredited institution. Furthermore, there is a credit equal to \$10.50 (one-half of the per member payment) on the July PMP Invoice to Leagues who report student members on their end of year summary sheet. The LWVUS supports the formation of student units and programs throughout the country. For more information, contact LWVUS Field Support at 202-429-1965.

Q. When should a League send in an MICF to the LWVUS?

A. Anytime there is a change in a member's status. There is no need to wait for a roster mailing to return MICFs. The sooner a MICF is received, the sooner the member can begin receiving mailings from the LWVUS.

Q. Is there such a term as "carrying" a member on the roster until his/her dues are paid?

A. A League should <u>never</u> carry members who have not paid their dues. Members who have not paid should be dropped from a roster and then reinstated when they pay. A MICF is used to reinstate a member. (Although this may seem like extra paperwork on the part of the League, it may save the League the responsibility of paying a PMP for a member who has not paid his/her dues.)

Q. Of the two rosters that are mailed throughout the year, which roster is a League's PMP based on?

A. The Fall roster which is mailed in November. This roster and summary sheet are due at the LWVUS by January 12, 2001. This roster and summary sheet are used to create the official January 12 count for fiscal year 2001-2002; whereby PMP is billed in July of 2001. A signed summary sheet that is returned to the LWVUS by the deadline will help to assure a correct PMP invoice.

Q. Why haven't the changes I've sent to the LWVUS been reflected on the current roster?

A. Roster changes are made at specific intervals. To make certain the changes are processed and reflected on your next roster, return the roster by the deadline.

#### Member Roster Calendar

2000	-2001 MEMBER ROSTER CA	LENDAR
LWVUS deadline:	Corrections will appear on:	Mailed to Leagues on:
September 8, 2000	Fall Roster	November 10, 2000
January 12, 2001	Spring Roster	March 9, 2001
	Summer Activity Reports	July 6, 2001
September 7, 2001	Fall Roster	November 9, 2001
January 11, 2002	Spring Roster	March 8, 2002
	Summer Activity Reports	July 12, 2002



## **Bringing Democracy to the Digital Age**

DNet is an easy-to-use, interactive online service that provides one-stop shopping for all election and campaign information. Voters can access this national network at anytime to locate information on candidates, issues, ballot measures and political parties at the federal, state and local levels.

The number of Americans using the Internet is growing exponentially. Polls show that potential voters use the Internet as a source of election information when making their voting decisions. DNet's goal is to increase voter participation by providing thorough, balanced and impartial information. Through DNet, candidates address a broad range of issues and engage in an on-going interactive public debate.

DNet's nationwide network of electoral information is made possible through the trusted partnership of the League of Women Voters Education Fund and Grassroots.com. The League of Women Voters, the premier national grassroots organization, has an impeccable reputation for presenting thorough and impartial election information. Grassroots.com is a nonpartisan, private company whose mission is to reconnect Americans with their political system in an open, nonpartisan online community. The collaboration of these two organizations results in a resource that reaches into communities and addresses the issues foremost in the minds of American voters.

#### Features:

The heart of DNet is a database of textual statements, which candidates can directly and remotely update, and voters can access according to their interests. Using an ID and password, candidates enter issue statements on any issue they wish. Their position is automatically entered in a Candidate Grid, which indicates their position with a large red check and states "no comment" opposite their opponents' names. The candidates' positions are emailed to their opponents who are thereby encouraged to submit statements as well. DNet's database allows candidates to upload and continually update their statements directly.

#### DNet will allow voters to:

- ✓ Find the offices and candidates on your ballot by entering a zip code
- ✓ Access candidate information, issues statements, debates, endorsers, bios, contact information, pictures, web sites and e-mail
- ✓ View a master calendar of election-related events in your area
- ✓ See candidates' positions on issues in DNet's easy-to-use grids
- ✓ E-mail the candidates with questions, comments, indicate an interest in volunteering or donating to a campaign
- ✓ Find official ballot information
- ✓ Find political party information
- ✓ Find campaign finance information
- ✓ Find general voting and Election Day information, including absentee ballot information, registration information, etc.

#### History

Originally created by the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) and now operated in conjunction with Grassroots.com, DNet was launched during the 1996 presidential elections and has provided in-depth coverage of hundreds of campaigns. In conjunction with the LWV and other regional participants, DNet has covered elections for U.S. President, the U.S. Congress, statewide offices, state legislative offices, local offices and ballot measures. Launched nationally as part of Web White and Blue Day on October 6, 1998, DNet's "hit rate" jumped from 16,000 hits a day to a high of 768,000 hits a day on election day. In total, DNet received more than 5.5 million hits for the 1998 general election cycle.

- · Click name for candidate info
- · Clickissue for all positions
- · Click check @ for position
- See grid instructions

see debate bios	Sanitation in the Emerald City	dis aster relief	Flower shortage in Munchkin land	Repaying the yellow brick road	crime
Soarecrow	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
<u>Tin Man</u>	Ø	Ø	No Comment	Ø	Ø
Dorothy Gale	Ø	Ø	No Comment	No Comment	Ø

Next 5 Issues

As the white noise surrounding elections grows, Americans are tuning out in greater numbers. Voters want information on issues that matter to them, not just attacks and the latest polls. We must reconnect citizens with the political process and restore their faith in government. DNet uses innovative, cutting-edge technology to give citizens the information they want, when they want it. A more informed public is more engaged, more active and more likely to participate.

Only the League of Women Voters, with its grassroots network of volunteers, and in its partnership with Grassroots.com, can provide such rich campaign content down to the local level. Tens of thousands of candidates will participate in 2000, offering voters unprecedented ability to engage their candidates and view on-going debates on hundreds of issues that impact the public nationally, regionally and, most importantly, locally.



The League of Women Voters 1730 M Street, NW Washington, DC 20036-4508 tel. 202.429.1965 • fax 202.429.0854 www.lwv.org •dnet@lwv.org



Grassroots.com
440 Jessie Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
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www.grassroots.com dnet@grassroots.com

www.dnet.org



#### WELCOME TO THE DEMOCRACYNET

The DemocracyNet (DNet) is a partnership of the League of Women Voters Education Fund and Grassroots.com. This nonpartisan, interactive online system provides voters with a one-stop shop for all election and campaign information. Voters use this network to locate information on candidates, issues, and ballot measures. As a Local Administrator you will work with candidates and Ballot Measure Groups throughout the election cycle to assist them in utilizing DNet, and maintain other site information such as: voting information, ballot measures, calendars, news, office-holders and information about the Affiliate Organization to which you belong.

#### **Getting Started**

- 1. Log in to the Internet and type in www.dnet.org/admin
- 2. Sign in with your username and password (These must be entered exactly as they appeared in the original email usernames and passwords are case sensitive)

#### Welcome Screen

The text on this page is very helpful in understanding the way the site works.

The tool bar above the welcome text lets you get: Help, Contact Your Affiliate Manage or Manage Your Profile (change your email and password)

The Localities assigned to your affiliate are listed at the bottom of the page.

3. Click on the locality to want to administer

#### Locality Screens - Site navigation

Above the "You are working in the locality:..." you will see "Home>" and the name of the locality you are in; as you move through the site this line changes to reflect where you have been and where you are. This is very helpful in reminding you how you arrived in a particular spot on the site.

On the blue sidebar on the right-hand side of the screen, you will see a list of Work Rooms. Use these to move from one area of administration to another.

4. Click on the workroom in which you would like to enter information.

#### Work Rooms

Offices & Candidates
Ballot Measures
Site Sections
Manage Endorsers
Parties
Choose Another Locality

Once you choose a Work Room, you will either have to follow the on screen instructions or a different side bar will appear that has a list of functions. All clickable text appears in blue. It's that easy!

#### **Getting Specific:**

#### Create an Office in DNet

- 1. Select the "Offices and Candidates" work room
- 2. Click on "create a new office"
- 3. Enter the office name and description and click "continue"
- 4. Select the election type (general, special etc.) and date
- 5. Place this office in the hierarchy of offices in this locality and click "finish"

#### Create a Candidate in DNet

- 1. Select the "Offices and Candidates" work room
- 2. Click on the office for this candidate
- 3. Click on "candidates" (in the function column on the right)
- 4. Click on "Create a New Candidate" and review the current list
- 5. Enter candidate name and administrative contact info
- 6. Select candidate political party and notification date

#### Enter a Candidate Bio

- 1. Select the "Offices and Candidates" work room
- 2. Click on the office for this candidate
- 3. Click on "candidates" (in the function column on the right) and select the candidate's name
- 4. Click on "edit profile"
- 5. Click on "Candidate Bio" and then "continue"
- 6. Enter Bio in the text box and click "continue" and then "finish"

#### **Enter Candidate Contact Information**

- 1. Select the "Offices and Candidates" work room
- 2. Click on the office for this candidate
- 3. Click on "candidates" (in the function column on the right) and select the candidate's name
- 4. Click on "Edit Contacts"
- 5. Click on "Official Campaign Contact"
- 6. Enter candidate's web site, email, address, phone and fax and then click "finish"

#### **Enter a Candidate Statement**

- 1. Select the "Offices and Candidates" work room
- 2. Click on the office for this candidate
- 3. Click on "candidates" (in the function column on the right) and select the candidate's name
- 4. Click on "Edit Statements"
- 5. Click on the issue for this statement (or create a new issue)
- 6. Click on "Create a Statement", enter the statement text and click "finish"

If you want to see how your work looks to the voting public, follow these easy steps:

- 1. Enter www.dnet.org into the Internet
- 2. Enter a Zip Code for the office you are working on
- 3. Click on the office to see the grid
- 4. Click on a name for background information (bio, picture and contact information), or click on a check mark to see the position statements you've entered.

For more details about how to enter this and other information into DNet see the Local Administrator User Guide.



# EMPOWERING CITIZENS

A GUIDE TO INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY



League of Women Voters of the United States

This publication was written by the members of the 1994-96 LWVUS Advocacy Committee: Pat Brady, Chair; Terry McCoy, Eleanor Revelle and Diane Sheridan.

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Order from the LWVUS, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 Phone 202-429-1965 • Fax 202-429-0854

Pub. # 1053, \$5.00, plus shipping and handling. ISBN 0-89959-393-3

# Empowering Citizens A Guide to Influencing Public Policy

The business of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide. We believe that informed and active citizens, joining together to explore common problems and identify shared goals, can resolve the tough issues that confront our communities, our nation and our world.

## Strengthening Your Community Through League Program

We work to build this civic capacity through League program. We study and educate our members and our communities about public policy concerns, we encourage public discussion of these problems and citizen participation in resolving them, and we take action to achieve solutions that contribute to the benefit of all.

The League is uniquely qualified to provide the public leadership needed to help citizens play a meaningful role in the governing process. Balance, fairness, a commitment to including all voices, and a belief in the power of collective decision making for the common good mark our approach to issues and our efforts to connect people to government.

Our program—our education and advocacy work—is the key we use to open the door to participatory democracy. It gives our members and our fellow citizens the information, the skills and the opportunity to influence the outcome of policy debate and shape the future of their communities. By helping people address the issues they care about, the League provides tangible proof that citizen participation can make a real difference.

## Strengthening Your League Through Program

A meaningful and compelling program strengthens Leagues as well as their communities. People are seeking answers to public problems and they're looking for ways to have a positive impact. Leagues that are addressing vital issues in ways that offer a real possibility of making change will attract members and keep them invested in the organization. A dynamic and inclusive program builds LWV membership, enhances visibility, fosters diversity and attracts the resources needed to make the League an effective force in the community.

This packet is designed to help League leaders in developing and implementing such a program. It is especially recommended to those responsible for program planning or calendar planning, those directing a League study, citizen education or action project, and those conducting community dialogues or facilitating collaborative processes in the community.

## **CONTENTS**

These materials have been printed so that each section can be easily distributed to the members responsible for the different parts of your League's program work.

#### 1. THE BIG PICTURE

An important overview of the guiding principles that govern all aspects of the League's program work. For all League leaders.

#### 2. CHOOSING AN ISSUE

Suggestions for selecting issues for League attention that will engage your members and your community. An important framework for local, state and national program planning.

#### 3. DETERMINING THE LEAGUE'S ROLE

Questions to consider in deciding how to address an issue selected for League attention—whether study, community dialogue, citizen education or action. A key resource for program planning.

#### 4. ORGANIZING FOR WORK ON AN ISSUE

Basic steps to follow in conducting any League program work. For anyone chairing a study, community dialogue, citizen education project or action campaign.

#### 5. ENSURING THAT ALL VOICES ARE HEARD

Suggestions for identifying, involving and collaborating with all interest groups in addressing an issue of community concern. For all those involved in League program work.

#### 6. CONDUCTING A STUDY

A step-by-step guide to conducting a League study. An essential tool for study committee chairs.

#### 7. PROMOTING COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Techniques for bringing citizens together to resolve a community problem. Important background for facilitating community dialogue.

#### 8. EDUCATING AND INVOLVING CITIZENS

New approaches to educating your community about an issue of public concern. For all board members at calendar planning time and for anyone chairing a citizen education project.

## 9. TAKING EFFECTIVE ACTION

Ideas for managing your League's ongoing action responsibilities and special tips for planning and implementing a targeted action campaign. A useful resource for your action chair, observer chair, public relations chair and newsletter editor. Required reading for those spearheading a League advocacy initiative.

#### 10. GUIDELINES FOR TAKING ACTION

An overview of ways to involve members in LWVUS advocacy efforts, and guidelines for taking action at all levels of government. An indispensable resource for presidents and action chairs.

## 1. THE BIG PICTURE

Empowering citizens to shape better communities is central to the **Mission** of the League of Women Voters. This nonpartisan mission underlies all LWV program work, from education, to advocacy, to working with others to solve problems collaboratively. The League's work is guided by the **Vision**, **Beliefs and Intentions** that derive from the League's **Principles**, six broad concepts of good government.

Public policy issues are the League's focus, whether we are conducting citizen education projects or writing legislation. We work on issues of concern to our communities, seeking government change. Today, with anger and disillusionment fueling apathy and antipathy to politics, our communities need us more than ever.

When citizens get involved and make a difference, they become empowered. The League can provide citizens the key—the information and the opportunities to make democracy work at home, in their state, across the nation and around the world.

#### Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

### Vision

To empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

### **Beliefs and Intentions**

- We act after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.
- · We build on citizen participation in the democratic process.
- We engage communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.
- We believe in respect for individuals; the value of diversity; the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities; and the power of collective decision making for the common good.



Empowering Citizens: A Guide to Influencing Public Policy

League of Women Voters of the United States

We act with trust, integrity and professionalism; operate in an open and effective
manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public; take the
initiative in seeking diversity in membership; and acknowledge our heritage as we
seek our path to the future.

## **Principles**

The Principles are broad concepts of good government that originated early in the League's history. As prescribed in the LWVUS bylaws, the Principles provide the foundation for adoption of program and for taking action at all levels of the League.

- The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.
- The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.
- The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

### Hallmarks of League Policies and Procedures

Based on the legacy of the Principles, and guided by our mission and vision, the League follows policies and procedures that protect its unique, respected role in the community.

#### Nonpartisan But Political

The League is a political organization, promoting civic responsibility and working for governmental change. Therefore, it takes positions on public policy issues. But the League is steadfastly nonpartisan. It does not support or oppose any political party or candidate, whether the candidate is running for a partisan or nonpartisan office. Each League has

policies to ensure that its most visible leaders avoid activities that would lead to even the appearance of partisanship by the League. Other members of the League are encouraged to be politically active in the party or cause of their choice. Being nonpartisan but political often is misunderstood, but it is central to the League's mission, whether we are doing education or advocacy.

#### A Living Laboratory of Democracy

The League was founded as a living laboratory of democracy, to provide a place where members can learn the skills of citizen involvement for their own use and for training others.

**Three-Level Organization** We are a three-level organization, structured to parallel the national, state and local levels of government. The three levels of the League are integrally linked. A member of a local League automatically is a member of the appropriate state League and of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Consensus and Grassroots Leadership Like government, the League is founded on the consent of the governed. Our emphasis is on consensus and grassroots leadership. The League adopts issues to study through member agreement and, after that study, develops positions on public policy issues. On the national level of the League, biennial conventions are the decision-making body. Representatives of local and state Leagues come to convention informed of their constituents' wishes but open to what they will learn in debate, just as we expect of our elected representatives. Directly at the local level, and indirectly through convention delegates at the state and national levels, members elect the Board of Directors and Nominating Committee and adopt the program, budget and bylaws.

**Study Before Action** We believe in becoming informed before we get involved. We study issues in a balanced and unbiased fashion before we develop positions. We take action based on the positions we develop through member study and agreement. We look at the impacts of the action we wish to take on specific issues so that we speak knowledgeably when we appeal to government officials to bring about change.

Multi-Issue Approach The League is a multi-issue organization. We take the broad view of issues, not the narrow, single-issue approach. The League focuses on the general areas of government, international relations, social policy and natural resources. When developing positions for action and when deciding what action to take, the League makes decisions based on all of our positions that relate to a specific issue.

#### Focus on Public Policy Issues

The League focuses its work on public policy issues. It is our work on issues that makes us relevant to our community, whatever that community is. People join the League because of an interest in public policy in general or in a special issue in particular. People support the League's work for many reasons—because of the positions we take, our ability to educate people about issues or candidates' views on issues in an unbiased way, and our skills at

bringing together community members with divergent viewpoints to address issues of community concern.

The League's work on public policy issues is directed toward government action. That action could include passage of laws, promulgation of regulations and policies, provision of adequate budgets and staffing, enforcement of laws and regulations, planning and citizen involvement opportunities.

With the loss of confidence in government that afflicts so many communities in our time, many efforts to find solutions to community problems include recommendations for voluntary action by individuals, organizations or businesses. Obviously, both government and voluntary action are needed to help shape better communities. The League encourages—and indeed exemplifies—voluntary action, but the League's energy is directed toward governmental change.

## League Roles in the Community

Sometimes we are educators. Sometimes we are advocates. And sometimes we bring others together to solve problems collaboratively. Shaping better communities can take all three tactics.

#### **Education and Voters Service**

Over the years, Leagues have built up high credibility and visibility by providing citizens with accurate nonpartisan services and information on elections and on public policy issues. Public trust in the League's commitment to factual, unbiased information is a source of pride for League members. Leagues can provide a valuable service by educating citizens about important issues facing the community. If the community faces a growing crisis in child neglect or abuse, for example, the League might undertake a citizen education project to raise public awareness of the issue. Citizens who understand the scope of the issue and the various points of view about how to address it will be in a good position to help shape a positive community decision.

Leagues are perhaps most well known in many communities for providing citizen education at election time. The League's voters service activities can include information on how to register and vote, information on candidates and their positions on issues, and information on ballot issues. More and more Leagues are providing this information electronically as well as in print, through voter hotlines, online bulletin boards and League web sites on the Internet.

Like all League education, voters service activities must be strictly nonpartisan and scrupulously fair. Voter education must be kept separate from League positions on issues; it must be kept separate from member recruitment. It cannot include action to change or enact election laws, but it can include efforts to improve the administration of elections under current law and regulation as well as public courses on lobbying.

See Section 8 for more.

#### Advocacy

The League must have a position before it takes action. Advocacy, or action, begins when Leagues select an issue for concerted study, followed by member agreement through consensus or concurrence. It is a tenet of League program that local League program focuses on issues that can be addressed by local government, state League program addresses state-level issues, and the LWVUS program addresses national issues.

For example, after studying the range of services for abused and neglected children in its area, League members may reach agreement that a local Department of Child Protective Services is urgently needed. That position is then adopted and forms the basis for any advocacy the League wishes to take to bring about the changes called for in the position. Thus, the League might launch an action campaign focused on establishing and funding the needed Department of Child Protective Services. The campaign could include direct lobbying of city council members; working with a coalition of other groups to mount a grassroots letter-writing effort; radio, television and print ads; and so on.

The process of study, arriving at positions and advocating for specific public policy changes happens at all three levels of the League. All positions should be reviewed periodically to assess whether they are still valid and relevant and whether member understanding of the position still exists. Positions are then reaffirmed, amended or dropped, based on official action by a League's membership or board. See Sections 6, 9 and 10 for more.

### **Community Dialogue**

In some cases, a League decides that the role of facilitator is the most constructive one to play. If an issue has segments of the community up in arms and dialogue has degenerated to name-calling or stonewalling, the League might choose to act as the "third party neutral" to bring a range of community members together to diffuse the tensions, establish communication and work to develop win-win solutions.

See Section 7 for more.

#### Summing Up

The League of Women Voters plays many roles in the community. When your League decides on a particular role on a particular issue at a particular time, it is important to make it clear to members and the community whether that role is education, advocacy or neutral facilitation. It is not easy to play more than one role on the same issue, but the League has done so for all of its history.

# 2. CHOOSING AN ISSUE

## **Setting Priorities**

In determining its program of work, each League must decide which issues have priority status to its members and for its community. Although the League is a multi-issue organization, no League can work effectively on all issues at the same time. Thus, setting priorities is one of the first tasks of Leagues at all levels.

In addition to the wise use of resources, both financial and personal, success is more likely when activity is targeted rather than spread over a number of issues. Focused action enables the League to effectively get its message to legislators, the press and the public, without distraction or conflict from peripheral issues.

Nonpriority issues can be addressed on an as-needed basis, where perhaps writing a letter of support or signing onto a petition can be done without taking energy from the chosen priorities. Participating in coalitions can be one way of addressing such issues.

Working together to achieve a goal also applies to Leagues working together on regional, state or national issues. It is important that members support the priorities adopted by a local League board. Similarly, it is important that local Leagues take part in chosen state and national League priorities. Broad grassroots participation by League members and leaders is the key to achieving success on League program.

## Selecting an Issue

Choosing an issue to work on is the first big step to influencing public policy. In determining its program of work, each League first selects those issues that offer it the greatest opportunity to play an effective part in empowering citizens to shape better communities worldwide. This is no easy task. As members of a multi-issue organization that addresses public policy problems at all levels of government, we have a formidable range of topics from which to choose in deciding how to pursue our mission.

We work in the general areas of government, social policy, natural resources and international relations. And while it seems simple to say that our structure calls for local Leagues to work for changes that local government can make, for state Leagues to work for changes that state government can make, and for the national organization to work for changes the federal government can make, the effectiveness of state and national League work depends ultimately on the work of local Leagues and individual members. All League work—at all levels of the organization—depends on effective grassroots participation.



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So what's a local League to do when there are more opportunities to influence public policy than it can handle? Use the program planning process to choose issues. Reach out beyond the League to identify issues of concern to the community. Consider some basic questions in selecting an issue for League work.

## Program Planning: The Way the League Chooses Its Issues

League members choose issues for work, and consider what role their local League should play in an issue, during the local program planning process. They also decide which items to recommend as regional, state and national program priorities during the program planning processes conducted by the state League and the League of Women Voters of the United States. The program planning process helps each League decide how its work during the next League year (or biennium) will make its community, state, nation a better place to live. Local program planning focuses on local government issues, state program planning on state issues and national program planning on federal issues. The process culminates when the program is adopted at the annual meeting or convention—but an effective League program begins with selection of a compelling issue.

## Reaching Out to Identify Issues of Concern

Recognizing that the ability to influence public policy and to engage fellow citizens in the political process relies on working with others, Leagues build networks within the community and ask other groups and individuals what they consider to be pressing issues. Reaching out to the community during the process of selecting an issue for League attention helps Leagues construct a compelling program, lay the groundwork for eventual community collaboration, and open communication links with others who want to shape a better community.

### Techniques for Identifying Issues of Concern to Your Community

- Consider how the issues being emphasized by the state League and the LWVUS can be worked on in your local community.
- Invite representatives from a variety of interest groups to a meeting to discuss the pressing issues facing your local community. Find out what they are doing (or what they know others are doing) to address these problems. Ask which aspects of the problem need attention.
- Invite government officials and staff to meet with the League to share their thoughts about
  the critical issues facing the community, plans under way to address those problems, and
  any thoughts on the role the League can play in helping the community achieve change on
  the issues.
- Attend meetings of one or more other community groups to learn what issues are on their agendas and to see whether there are opportunities for collaboration. Or call leaders of these groups for this information.

- Make it clear to all you contact that you are seeking advice. Don't promise that the League
  will work on every issue. The program planning process has only just begun, and the
  League must set its own program and priorities, based on information received from a
  variety of sources.
- Thank those you contacted. Let them know what the League decides to work on after the annual meeting or convention.

### Questions to Consider in Selecting an Issue for League Work

- These questions can be useful in your information-gathering interviews, and they also can be used to focus the discussion at a program planning meeting.
- What are the options?
- Which issues are of such vital concern to our members and our community that they demand attention now?
- Which issues give people a sense that they can bring about change to make the community, the state, the nation a better place to live?
- Which issues will benefit from the League's special expertise or perspective?
- Which state or national League issue priorities are hot issues in our community?

### Narrowing the Options...

- What evidence do we have that this is a current issue of concern?
- Who is concerned about this issue?
- What currently is being done about this issue and by whom?
- Can we build on work being organized by the state League and the LWVUS?
- Is there a real possibility that citizens working on this issue can bring about positive change?
- Will League work on this issue have a measurable impact on our community, state or nation? How will we tell?
- Will working on this issue give the League good opportunities to collaborate with other groups and individuals in our community?

- Can the League gain members, visibility, clout or financial support by working on this issue?
- Will our community, state or nation be a better place because of our work on this issue?

Remember that exploring issues with the broader community and analyzing the potential need for League involvement is an ongoing process, not a one-time event.

If a critical issue arises after the program planning cycle has been completed, an emergency study item can be adopted if a provision for doing so is included in your League's bylaws. In the case of citizen education or an action campaign, the board has the authority to change the calendar to respond to changed circumstances.

## Special Considerations for Area Leagues

Area Leagues include more than one unit of local government within their boundaries; for example, the Tri-County Area League may include 11 cities and parts of three counties, whereas the Metro City League next door may include one city and one county. Area Leagues face special challenges in selecting issues of community concern because they often contain many communities with very different needs and personalities. The League's members may come from only a few of the communities within its boundaries.

An area League ideally will find an important issue that affects the entire area and that members can work on in all of the jurisdictions within its boundaries. Sometimes, however, the hot issue is in only one local jurisdiction or special district within the area. Members living within the affected jurisdiction play the principal role in identifying, adopting and working on the issue of concern to their local community. In doing so, the League board needs to keep the membership informed and to consider whether the solution in one community is creating a problem for another. Local bylaws and policy should provide a process for allowing action in one entity of the area League while assuring that the rest of the area is considered as positions are taken. The position and subsequent action apply only to the jurisdiction studied, but members outside the jurisdiction can be asked to concur with the position.

# 3. DETERMINING THE LEAGUE'S ROLE

Once members have decided that an issue of public concern requires League attention, they must determine what role the League should play in addressing that issue. A range of options is available, including study, action, community dialogue and citizen education. The circumstances surrounding an issue—needs of the community, goals of the League, timeframe for action, complexity of the subject, political reality, resources available—help determine the most appropriate approach for the League to take.

## Basics for Determining the League's Role on an Issue

- What approach offers our League the best opportunity to help empower citizens to shape a better community (however we define community)?
- · What approach will be the most effective in helping our community resolve this issue?
- · What approach will provide the best opportunities for collaborating with others?
- What approach will be most likely to involve our members and attract new ones?
- What approach best matches external political realities and our internal resources?

Each of the four methods of working on an issue of concern are valid and effective means of pursuing the League's mission. When would each approach be the most appropriate?

#### Study (See Section 6)

The goal of a study is to reach member agreement on an issue so that the League may *act*. The need for government action, a need for the League's special expertise and strong member interest are among the factors that would make a study an appropriate way to begin to address an issue of community concern.

Before adopting a local LWV study, members should review existing local positions as well as state League and LWVUS positions to see whether any are applicable to the issue under consideration. One of these positions may offer adequate opportunity for action if supplemented by updated local research.

In considering whether a study is the best way to address an issue, ask:

Does the LWV already have a position?



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- · Does the LWV already have a position?
- Is there a government solution to the problem?
- · Will the community look to the League for its position on the issue?
- · Is there enough time to do a study and then act to influence the resolution of the problem?
- · Will political realities permit effective action?
- · Is this the appropriate level of the League to address this issue?

#### Action (See Sections 9 and 10)

Influencing public policy through direct action makes League membership exciting and rewarding. Action always is the goal of the League's study process. It builds on the expertise and insights gained over the months of examining the issue. Member understanding and strong support are essential for successful action.

In deciding whether legislative action is the best way to address an issue, ask:

- · Are the timing and the political realities right for success?
- Does the community expect or need the League to be a player on this issue?
- Will League action on this issue make a significant difference?
- Could a focused, targeted action campaign enhance LWV visibility and stature?
- · Do our members understand our position and our action goals?
- How can we best use our resources and member power to take effective action?

#### Community Dialogue (See Section 7)

When interest groups in the community seem to be at an impasse in resolving a problem or when the community would benefit from structured discussion of a tough issue, the League can play an important role in bringing the stakeholders together to find common ground. In such situations, the community may need the League's consensus-building skills and fair-minded approach to issues rather than an advocate for a particular point of view.

In deciding whether community dialogue is the best way to address an issue, consider:

• Can the League help the community resolve this issue by serving as a neutral facilitator?

- · Will the stakeholders welcome the League as a facilitator?
- Do we have the expertise within our membership to manage a community dialogue project?
- Does the League have a position on this issue? How will that affect our ability or credibility to serve as a facilitator?
- Are we comfortable helping to resolve an issue on which we have no position?

#### Citizen Education (See Section 8)

Before citizens can resolve a public policy issue, they often need a chance to become better informed and to define the problem in their own terms. A citizen education project can help the community understand the complexities of the issue and encourage people to participate in reaching a solution. An effective education project also can lay the groundwork for successful advocacy later on.

In considering whether a citizen education project is the best way to address an issue, ask:

- Does our community need help in understanding this issue and its possible solutions?
- · Will the community look to the League for this information?
- Is there enough time to develop and implement our project before the community must make a decision on the issue?
- Is it more important to help citizens understand this issue than to advocate our League position at this time?

#### **Program Planning**

Determining the best role for the League to play in addressing an issue of concern is an integral part of the formal program planning process. The method for approaching an issue should be spelled out in recommending any item for adoption by the League. This helps members picture the League's agenda for the coming year, assess its impact on League resources, and decide whether and how they can participate. It also can help the community know what to expect form the League.

Here are some examples of program items as they might be worded to indicate the League's role in working on a local issue:

- A study of the financing of Elmwood School District #55.
- A community dialogue project on the question of homeless shelters in Elmwood.

- · A citizen education campaign on health care needs and services for teenagers in Elmwood.
- · An action campaign to secure expanded services for children at risk in Elmwood.

Leagues also may make decisions about their roles in addressing regional, state and national program items once the program priorities for those levels are set. Each League knows best what its own resources and member interests are as well as what its community needs. This knowledge helps the League set goals and outline a program of work for the coming year. A League may decide, for example, that its members and community are ready for concerted action on a state program priority but are looking for objective information on a national item.

And remember: The League's role in addressing various issues is likely to change over time. A League that spends a year educating its community about the local impact of a national issue may decide the following year that the time is ripe to pursue community action on the issue.

# 4. ORGANIZING FOR WORK ON AN ISSUE

#### League Premises

You've chosen an issue, and you have determined what role the League will play. Before going any further, it is necessary to review some basic League tenets.

#### Nonpartisanship

The bylaws of every League state that "the League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate." This does not mean the League doesn't take positions on issues. It means that League positions are based on the issues themselves and not on the parties or persons who may agree or disagree. Getting candidates and incumbents to express themselves on an issue or conveying the League's position on an issue does not constitute endorsement of or opposition to any candidates or political party. The League was designed to be different—both political and nonpartisan—and this can be an unfamiliar concept to some people.

#### **Balance and Objectivity**

Another consideration is to make sure all sides or perspectives of the chosen issue have been examined and considered. If you have chosen a study as the League role, you must make sure that you look at all sides of the issue, with sufficient attention to unpopular or counter-intuitive points of view, so that the final product is balanced and objective. If your chosen role is community dialogue, balance is provided by ensuring participation by representatives of all involved segments of the community—especially those groups or individuals usually considered to be in opposition to League positions. Citizen education and voters service also call for broadly balanced and objective information to be presented so that all sides of an issue are fairly represented.

#### Advocacy

Since advocacy, or legislative action, is taken on the basis of member agreement reached after study and consensus or concurrence, balanced presentation already has occurred, and, therefore, action is taken to achieve the goals of the League's position.

#### Goals

The next step is to choose your goals. They should include both short- and long-range objectives. A long-range goal for realistic planning purposes could be five years; a



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short-term goal could be one year. This is a helpful distinction because it allows people to see the bigger picture of what you would really like to see happen, but also focuses on achieving something soon.

Now is the time to decide what you want to achieve. Consider organizational goals in addition to the specific issue-related goal you desire.

For example, one long-term goal always should be to strengthen your League. It's not wise to get into a situation where League resources are depleted or community goodwill has been completely dissipated by your current activity. You continually want to build a healthy, strong structure—because there will be future battles to win.

A key component of strengthening your League is to recruit and train members. For example, your goal might be a 15 percent increase in membership, with 15 percent people of color, or developing ten new activists, or training three activists to be future League leaders, or cultivating five new contributors. Think about the nature of your campaign or project and how you can use the visibility and excitement it generates to help you make your League stronger.

Finally, consider your issue goals. What do you want to achieve? How will you know you have succeeded?

- Goals should be simple to understand; they should be specific; they should be straightforward and clearly stated.
- Goals should be measurable, so that you can note your progress.
   Most importantly, you should know when you have won.
- Goals should be achievable. Although it is important to dream, and free-wheeling brainstorming is an important tool, your goals should be based on the experience and competence of your League.
- Goals should be realistic. Be sure they are based on an accurate assessment of conditions.
- Goals should be timely. Make sure there is enough time to achieve them, and get to work in time to make a difference.

#### **Plans**

Now that your goals are set, the next important step is to develop a plan.

One of the first decisions is who is to be involved in working on this issue. The basic planning group may be a standing committee, an ad hoc committee or the League board. It also may involve people from other organizations or it may be a formal coalition of groups interested in the issue. (For more on coalitions, see Section 5, Ensuring That All Voices Are Heard.)

GOALS SHOULD BE

SIMPLE
MEASURABLE
ACHIEVABLE
REALISTIC
TIMELY

#### Roles

Board The LWV board directs all activity and bears the final responsibility for success.

Committee Chair The committee chair must be objective; work well with people, both League members and nonmembers from other organizations; coordinate activities and people; keep adequate records and files; and make regular reports to the board.

Committee The committee directing a study, a community dialogue or an education campaign should be balanced; that is, it should not be dominated by adherents of one point of view. The committee directing an action campaign, on the other hand, should be deeply committed to the League's advocacy goals. All committees should be large enough to get the work done but small enough to be effective and accountable.

**Membership** Success in any project is possible only with the direct involvement and commitment of League members.

Your leadership group, whether it is entirely within the League or involves other people or organizations, should go through the planning process as a team. All involved must contribute to and feel comfortable with the plan. Within the League, the board is the responsible body, so the entire board should feel responsible for the success of your effort.

Work backward from the date of your event or action and construct a detailed timeline to ensure that all elements of your plan are accounted for. List known dates (deadlines, events, legislative sessions, elections, etc.) and plan around them. List each task and estimate how long to allow for each. Mark a calendar to show what happens when.

Now also is the time to determine who will take responsibility for what. Designate the person in charge of the overall project and persons to manage the various tasks or components. Do not dilute responsibility and accountability, but do involve a large enough group to get things done. It is best to assign responsibilities as part of the initial planning process, while everyone is committed and the sense of mission is fresh.

After your plan is completed, you are ready to begin the program activity itself. However, you should periodically review your plan to make sure you are on track. Stick to the calendar unless you find it completely unrealistic or something happens to change it. If that is the case, regroup with your original leaders to assess the situation. As new events and opportunities arise, you can measure these against your plan and decide whether they fit in or if they will get you off track. As you go along, be sure to note and celebrate each small success. This will encourage those involved to stay committed to the long-term goals.

#### Visibility

Whatever your goals, your effort must be visible in the community. That means involving the media. Begin by identifying all available media outlets, including print (dailies, weeklies, regional or neighborhood newsletters or magazines), cable outlets, public television stations, network affiliates and independent stations, as well as radio stations with news or community affairs departments. Organize a media list that includes names and title of contacts, phone numbers and deadlines. The LWVUS publication, *Guide to Getting Good Media Coverage* (Pub. #1000, \$2.00) provides very useful basics about effective media techniques, including:

**Press Release** The most common tool for communicating with the press. Use your League letterhead and include the names and phone numbers of League press contacts. Be sure all your facts are correct, and make your points clearly, forcefully and succinctly.

**Press Conference** Call a press conference only when you are really making news. Time it to take advantage of press deadlines or television news times.

**Press Kit** It should include a factsheet on the League and its leaders, an LWV contact name, a press release about the project, a background piece on the issue, and any other relevant information, such as a list of coalition partners, endorsements, newsclips.

# 5. ENSURING THAT ALL VOICES ARE HEARD

Broad-based citizen involvement is key to resolving the complex problems that confront our communities. All segments of the community have a role to play in defining and working for the common good. The League mission is to promote the informed and active participation of citizens in government; engaging citizens in League program work helps to further our mission.

#### **Knowing Your Community**

An essential part of community action is knowing your community. That means more than surface knowledge about geography, government structure, ethnic and socioeconomic data. It means finding out what the power structure really is and includes hard information on political forces and party strength. Look at the ethnic, religious and organizational alignments that determine who influences whom—and on what issues. Be aware of group conflicts: town/gown, union rivalries, etc. Look at the economic base of the community, including sources and distribution of wealth and any possible changes on the horizon.

Involving the key elements of your community in an issue helps build lasting solutions to problems. These will include individuals and organizations who are affected by a particular problem, those who have responsibility for solving the problem, those whose perspective may lead to a solution to the problem and those who have a particular interest in the problem. Including these diverse viewpoints and experiences will help strengthen League program work, from studies to community dialogue, citizen education and advocacy.

To identify the voices that need to be heard, consider the following questions:

- Who can help define the problem?
- Who is affected by the problem? What are the views of diverse members of the community?
- Who can help develop solutions to the problem? Who has a special expertise or perspective?
- Who is part of the cause of the problem?
- Are there hidden power structures affecting the issue that you can identify?
- Who will be responsible for implementing solutions to the problem?



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- · Who can block the solutions? Who controls the resources for implementing the solutions?
- · Who will be affected by the solutions?

#### Reaching Out to the Community

Since you are working on a topic of interest to your community, you need to make sure that people in your community have a part of the action. Involving all interest groups in problem-solving is key to building better communities. Some suggested approaches:

- Assess the demographics of the community and decide what perspectives are key to your issue. Consider race, ethnicity, language, age, political subdivisions, gender, special needs, religious interests, civic groups, economic status, business and commercial interests, labor organizations, and elected and appointed offices. Other distinctions may be pertinent to your area or your issue.
- Consider local geographic differences, such as urban/suburban/rural, uptown/downtown, opposite sides of the river, especially if some areas traditionally have felt "imposed upon" or left out.
- If appropriate to your issue, build in a youth component. Young people represent an important part of the community, and they can add a special energy and a unique perspective.
- Also consider targeted outreach to new citizens and to groups that traditionally have not
  participated in political affairs. Outreach opportunities, depending on your issue, can include new subdivisions of the community, areas of public housing, individuals participating in youth activities such as sports and rock concerts, retirement communities, colleges
  and universities, hospitals and perhaps even jails.
- It is especially important to identify those whose interests are affected either directly or indirectly by your issue of choice—the stakeholders. Your local government planning office,
  the local newspaper or library may have helpful information in this regard. Even the telephone book can help. Use your imagination and research ability to search for contacts.
- Determine if any of the stakeholders have formal or informal organizations. Newspapers
  often list meeting times of various community groups. Get in touch with these groups;
  join; attend some of their meetings; get to know the people as well as their concerns and issues. LISTEN to their definition of the problem and their proposals for solution. Let them
  know that you are interested in learning from them.
- Meet individually with groups that are particularly pertinent to your issue. Explore means
  of working together to increase community involvement and understanding.
- Convene a public meeting to discuss your issue/plans.

- Alert the press so that your public meeting gets publicity. Not all interested people are
  members of groups, so cast a wide net to attract those who aren't affiliated. Use a variety
  of means (print, radio/TV, electronic bulletin boards, word of mouth) to get your message
  out, since people get information in different ways. It may take time to engage people.
  Working on a local issue is often a citizen's first experience with political participation.
- Invite all interested parties to participate in your project, campaign or activity. Involve
  them in the planning, so they have an opportunity to help shape a plan of action and
  become invested in making it work.

#### **Working in Coalition**

Joining with other groups in a coalition often makes good sense. It adds clout and is a way to organize the sort of community outreach discussed above. It can increase the number of workers and the possibility of additional funds for your effort. Working in coalition can expand the League's knowledge of the community and provide valuable contacts—and potential members.

The decision to form (or to join) a coalition for work on an issue is one to be made by your League's Board of Directors. If you decide on a coalition approach to working on your issue, make sure the other involved groups buy into the goals you have set for that issue. It is necessary to set the groundrules early in the planning process in order to avoid later misunderstandings and disagreements. Member organizations of the coalition should be those with which you can work effectively. They should understand and agree to abide by the League's nonpartisanship. Because of the need for the League to maintain strict nonpartisanship, it is best not to include groups that are inherently partisan—for example, a political party—or one that consistently supports candidates, in a League coalition.

# 6. CONDUCTING A STUDY

Your League has determined that a study is necessary to address an issue of concern. In order to proceed with the study, the issue must first be presented to the appropriate level of the League in the program planning process. The appropriate board defines the issue as succinctly as possible, identifying the problem to be addressed and the scope of the proposed study. This information is submitted to members by the deadline specified in the bylaws and is voted on at the annual meeting or the convention. The wording of a proposed issue may be amended at the annual meeting or convention, provided the substance is not changed. In the course of program discussion and adoption, members can direct the board on the scope of inquiry, timing, emphasis and ways to handle the study. The board takes this advice into account in planning for the year.

Action, based on a position on which there is informed member agreement, always is the ultimate goal of a League study. The board decides what method to use in seeking member agreement. The possibilities include consensus through group discussion, questionnaires or telephone polls, and concurrence. The method chosen will depend on the nature of the issue and circumstances in the League. The board sets the groundrules at the beginning of the study so that members will understand the process.

#### Steps in Reaching Member Agreement

- 1. Clear member support for adoption of the study item.
- 2. Board approval of an appropriate member agreement process.
- 3. A study process open to all members.
- 4. Development of good consensus questions or concurrence statement.
- 5. Background information that enables members to learn about the issue.
- **6.** Clear information for members about the process to be used for member agreement.
- 7. A member agreement process conducted in an atmosphere of trust.
- **8.** Committee development of a draft statement of position, based on analysis of member responses.
- 9. Careful board evaluation of whether agreement has been reached.



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- 10. Board discussion and adoption of a final statement of position.
- 11. Maintenance of records for future understanding of agreement.

Consensus/group discussion is the technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement. Member agreement emerges from the give-and-take of group interaction and exchange of views. It is a process whereby members come to substantial agreement; it is the sense of what the group supports—not a vote, not a census, not a simple majority and not necessarily unanimity. Consensus is a process that builds agreement rather than polarizing the participants; it involves participants who are representative of the whole membership and ends up with the best decision for all involved, or at least a decision everyone can "live with." It is most appropriate to use consensus when a study item is complex, and especially when it is both complex and controversial.

A questionnaire or other direct member agreement technique is another option. Individual member questionnaires can be mailed to members or a tear-off can be put in the League newsletter. There can even be responses to LWV programs presented on television or in the newspaper.

A telephone poll is another way to discern member attitudes on an issue. It can be used either for the total membership or for a representative sampling. Be sure that members know the dates the calls will be made and the questions they will be asked so they will be prepared.

Concurrence is the act of agreeing with—concurring with—a statement or position that already has been developed. It can work in several ways: League members or League boards can concur with recommendations of a resource committee or a unit group, with decision statements formulated by the League board, or with positions reached by another League or Leagues.

Concurrence is appropriate when. . .

- the questions are straightforward and easily answered.
- the subject already is familiar to most people.
- members want to reaffirm support for an existing position after an update process.
- only small changes to a current position are needed.
- · a current position needs clarification.
- one League wishes to consider adopting a position already reached by another League.

#### **Getting Organized**

After the board decides on the method of member agreement, the study process is turned over to a study committee. This can be either a standing committee or an ad hoc group. The committee's first task is to establish a timeline and a workplan, based on the stated scope of the study, and to parcel out the tasks, according to each member's interests and available time.

The primary work of the committee is to research the issue, present balanced information to the members for their consideration, compile and analyze member responses, and draft a position statement based on those responses for consideration by the League board.

Early on, the committee members will want to decide how they will communicate with each other. Progress can be shared via telephone, faxes or e-mail, in addition to face-to-face meetings.

Gathering information must begin early and may continue all during the study as new sources are discovered. Possible sources include:

- · Official records, transcripts or minutes of public meetings.
- Observation of public meetings where the issue is being discussed.
- · Media reports, if the issue is a hot topic.
- Interviews with all interested parties.
- · Tours of related sites.
- · Surveys/polls.
- · Studies done by other groups or individuals.
- Books, academic research, journal articles, opinion pieces.

In all probability, the hardest task will not be gathering information, but sorting out the most relevant information for presentation to members.

#### **Educating Members and the Community**

Good study information is equally important, whether a League is using a consensus process or a concurrence process. Of course, it is essential that all background information for the study be unbiased and present all sides of the issues.

The committee can use a number of ways to share information with members, and perhaps the wider community as well. Articles in the League's newsletter as well as informational meetings are possibilities. Convening a panel of the interested parties or holding a town meeting can help create public interest in the issue. Another option is to publish a background publication or factsheet for distribution to members and the interested public.

#### **Preparing for Member Agreement**

In reaching consensus, formulating good consensus questions is critical. Consensus questions are a particular kind of discussion question used to find areas of member agreement as a basis for action. As the committee reads, reports, discusses and digests, it will note recurring questions that identify where the basic choices lie.

For a concurrence process, the committee already will have a position statement and the question for members is whether they agree or disagree with the statement.

#### **Tips for Writing Consensus Questions**

Ask for a public policy decision rather than a technical one.

"How willing are you to pay higher rates for improved trash collection and recycling?" (Provide a list of responses, such as Very, Somewhat, Not at All, etc.)

NOT: "Should the city buy Brand X or Brand Y garbage truck?"

Ask for a point of view rather than for factual information.

"Who should make broad policy decisions concerning waste management: professional staff, elected officials or the people directly?"

NOT: "What public agencies have the responsibility for trash management?

Avoid a focus that is too specific or too general.

Positions based on questions that are too specific become unusable if circumstances change. Positions based on questions that are too broad don't give the board enough guidance for action.

Make questions short and simple, but do not elicit a simple "yes" or "no" answer.

Be sure questions are not biased or don't suggest a "right" answer.

Avoid emotionally loaded language.

#### **Reaching Member Agreement**

Traditionally, Leagues reach member agreement during one or more discussion meetings. During consensus meetings, committee members in attendance should be careful to be

objective and refrain from injecting their own opinions in the discussion. As "experts," they should be considered "resources," not participants in the discussion.

Once the meetings have been held or the responses received, the study committee tabulates the areas of agreement or disagreement, analyzes the information and develops a draft position to be forwarded to the League board.

#### Tips for Writing a Position Statement

- Positions should be written in relatively broad terms, not just to reflect a current situation.
- Areas of strong member agreement should be stated clearly and emphatically. If member
  agreement has not been clearly reached on some points, sometimes including qualifying
  words, such as "most" or "some," or carefully ordering priorities, will most accurately
  reflect members' responses.

#### **Final Steps**

After the League board receives the committee's report, it discusses the responses and the draft statement of position. The board must assure that member agreement has been reached and that the position accurately reflects that agreement. After discussion and possible amendment, the board formally adopts the new local League position and announces it to members (typically through the LWV newsletter) and the community. If the position is newsworthy, the board issues a press release or holds a press conference.

Keep in mind that these final steps apply only for new *local* positions. When your local League participates in a state or national League study process, your responses are sent to the appropriate state board or to the national board, which then formulates the position based on responses from *all* responding Leagues. The resulting position statement is then announced to members and the public by the state League or the LWVUS.

# 7. PROMOTING COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Dialogue among the cast of stakeholders involved in an issue is an essential step to resolving conflicts in a way that meets the needs of the variety of people who live in any community.

When a League promotes community dialogue, it builds upon traditional LWV citizen education activities. Current League positions may offer the opportunity to foster community dialogue, but so may a hot issue on which the League has no position but is seen as a respected third-party neutral facilitator. Contacts made during community dialogues build relationships that bring new members to the League, enhance the visibility of the League and its work, and encourage financial contributions.

Community dialogue is a form of conflict management. The purpose of a public policy dialogue generally is to determine what policy changes are needed to address the issue of concern, with those involved in the dialogue later serving as advocates for the agreements reached. In the course of determining the need for government action, the dialogue group often identifies voluntary activities that also would also help resolve the issue. While the League's mission directs its work toward government action—such as legislation, regulation and budgeting—voluntary efforts to address a community issue often can help build public understanding of the problem and an opportunity to determine whether government change is needed.

Many community issues would benefit from a well structured, nonconfrontational dialogue facilitated by a League. For example, siting of often-controversial facilities such as halfway houses and waste management facilities, and development of a future plan for the community are all fraught with conflicting viewpoints and needs—and a natural place for the League to play a role in fostering community dialogue.

Peaceful resolution of community concerns builds a community's confidence in itself, fostering a sense of hope that problems can be solved, and countering the apathy and sense of futility that often prevail. Citizens that successfully resolve a controversial issue are empowered to shape a better community in the future.

With a study process that seeks balanced information and diverse viewpoints, the League often makes contacts with a variety of players in the public policy arena, creating a network that makes the League a natural facilitator of community dialogues. Respected by interest groups on all sides of an issue, the League often is perceived by community members as a neutral organization, even when it has taken an advocacy position. Leagues can build on this reputation for neutrality by organizing a community dialogue around an issue of concern.



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#### **Options for Fostering Community Dialogue**

Banking on its reputation for being fair and balanced, the League has options for engaging in community dialogue to address public policy issues:

- Convene stakeholders and participate in the dialogue as a member of the dialogue group.
- · Convene stakeholders and serve as the neutral facilitator for the group.
- Participate as an advocate in a dialogue group convened by another party.
- Serve as the neutral facilitator for a dialogue group convened by another party.

Facilitation can be successful only if the range of stakeholders believe the facilitator is fair and neutral. Thus it would be unlikely that a League would conduct an advocacy campaign on an issue at the same time that it is serving as the neutral facilitator for a community dialogue on the issue. There are no hard and fast rules, so the League board must explore options thoroughly and wisely to determine which role to play and whether it is advisable to play more than one role at a given time on a given issue.

#### Shaping Better Communities Through Community Dialogue

- · Identify the issue that is a community concern.
- Assess community interest in the issue and in dialogue.
- Convene a reasonably small, diverse group, chosen in terms of point of view on the issue, background and demographics.
- Get organized—define the mission, develop at least simple groundrules for working together, determine who is in charge of what, and decide how to communicate with your constituencies and the public.
- Have the group members identify the problem. Discuss the issues, giving everyone time to share frustrations and expectations so others understand their concerns. Probe participants' views to determine their fundamental interests. Share the facts needed to create a common base of knowledge about the topic.
- · Prioritize the concerns to determine where to focus of the dialogue.
- Develop (by consensus) goals to address the issues, based on participants' underlying interests, rather than on their positions on this specific issue.
- · Brainstorm options for solutions that address the issue and achieve the goals.

- · Analyze the pros and cons of the options.
- · Seek additional facts, if needed.
- · Identify areas of possible agreement; discuss and modify until consensus is reached.
- Determine whether to record areas where consensus was not reached, documenting the competing recommendations that could not be resolved.
- · Develop a plan for carrying out the recommendations on which consensus was reached.
- Communicate as agreed to during the process and communicate the results at the end.
- · Acknowledge the work that everyone has put into the effort to shape a better community.

#### **Tips for Convening Stakeholders**

- Gather a few knowledgeable League members to brainstorm a list of players on the issue. Possibilities include elected officials or their staff, heads of interest groups with different perspectives on the issue, others who have a stake in this issue. Be sure to include some "nontitled" people in your list, the kind to which others turn to find out what is going on in town. Don't worry if your initial list is short, because it will grow as people suggest others you should contact.
- Devise a list of questions to ask people as you assess interest and identify possible dialogue group members.
- Call people on the list, tell them the League is thinking of forming a dialogue group, and ask for their advice.
- Find out how your contacts feel about the issue, who they
  think are the key people or organizations to involve, and
  who might be good to serve on an organizing committee.
  In general, ask them how to make the group a success.

#### Facilitator's Tasks

Convenes group

Manages group process

Organizes group's work

Plans and runs meetings

Builds consensus

Records

Trains group members in consensus or whatever method is being used

Evaluates project

- Gather facts on the demographic diversity of your community (from a planning agency, school district, or chamber of commerce) and be sure your calls are reaching a broad audience of potential stakeholders.
- Select a dialogue group that adequately represents the community as a whole.

#### Groundrules for Community Dialogue Groups

A community dialogue directed toward solving a community problem will bring together a diversity of participants with competing interests. Taking time initially to develop groundrules for working together allows the group to focus more successfully on the issue without getting caught up in disputes over procedural items.

Often, an organizing or steering committee can be used to draft the groundrules for the group and select the members. Alternately, the dialogue group itself can develop its own groundrules. While it is tempting for the convener or facilitator to draft the rules in isolation, the process of determining the process often develops the relationships among group members and provides their first success at consensus.

When the issue is complex and the dialogue is likely to continue for many months, or the group is envisioned as ongoing rather than ad hoc, it is worth the time to develop extensive groundrules. When the issue can be addressed in a relatively short time, the convener and facilitator may determine some of the groundrules in advance and make adherence to them a condition of participation.

Groundrules should cover such fundamentals as why the group exists; what it will do and not do, how members will be selected, and replaced if necessary, the "lifespan" of the group, when and where it will meet, how the meetings will be conducted, appropriate behavior and financial arrangements.

#### **Training and Resources**

Workshops on facilitation often are offered at LWVUS conventions and councils and as part of LWVEF workshops.

State government offices of dispute resolution offer training. While usually directed to private rather than public policy disputes, the skills are transferable. Printed resources include the following:

- · How to Make Meetings Work, Michael Doyle and David Straus
- · Getting to Yes, Roger Fisher and William Ury
- · Getting Past No, William Ury

# 8. EDUCATING AND INVOLVING CITIZENS

Encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government is fundamental to the League's mission. Citizen education projects that help people explore pressing public policy issues and find meaningful ways to participate in the problem-solving process help build civic responsibility, and shape better communities and a better country.

#### **Getting Organized**

In planning a citizen education project, you will want to answer four important questions:

What are our goals? Perhaps you want your community to recognize and address a particular problem. Perhaps your community needs solid information about an upcoming referendum, or a directory of services for children, or greater diversity on its boards and commissions. Defining the goal(s) of your project is critical to the rest of your plans.

How will we measure the results of our efforts? Deciding how you will measure your success will guide your choice of strategies. Will you look for a tangible new program or perhaps an increase in some measure of civic involvement? Do you want to attract participation from all segments of your community? Could you ask for feedback from readers of your newspaper and newsletter articles or from a television audience?

Who are our target audiences? Identifying the group(s) you hope to reach will help you determine project activities and decide how to craft your message. If your focus is a referendum, will you target groups who are underrepresented in the electorate? If your goal is broader civic participation, will language, meeting times, meeting places and cosponsors be important considerations?

Who will be our community partners? Groups whose mission is directly related to the focus of your project are logical choices. Working with organizations that represent your target audience(s) is another important strategy. But don't overlook any sector of the community—civic groups, business, government and individual citizens. All have an interest in confronting and solving shared problems.

#### Working with Others

Collaboration is a proven means to expand your resources and your reach into the community. Approach potential partners early in the planning process so that their insights can enrich the project and a common vision can develop.



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**Team up with business.** Employers know that a strong community is good for business. As project partners, they bring an important perspective to public problems, can help sell the project to friends and colleagues, and often are interested in promoting citizen education and civic participation within their workforce. They also will be interested to know that contributions to your citizen education project can be tax-deductible if given through a League education fund.

Join forces with the media. The information revolution is bringing enormous changes to the news business, at the same time that the public is becoming increasingly alienated from civic life. In response, some news directors are looking for ways to reconnect with their readers, listeners and viewers. They are experimenting with more citizen-oriented news coverage, focusing on the issues that citizens identify as important, and facilitating public discussion of problems facing the community. An innovative civic journalism project can be an exciting and highly effective component of a citizen education campaign. A media partner can help focus public attention on a community problem, promote public dialogue about possible solutions and illuminate the diversity of perspectives in the community.

Enlist the next generation. Schools and youth organizations make good partners. A student project can draw community attention to a problem, engage families in every neighborhood in discussing possible solutions, and give future voters an opportunity to voice their opinions to elected officials and the community.

Connect with other community groups. People respond best to people they know. Teaming up with a variety of diverse organizations will link the League with people outside its traditional network and help ensure that the project matches the needs and interests of the broader community.

#### **Getting Your Message Across**

- You will need to use new techniques to engage today's citizens in the political process.
   People want to play a role in shaping their community, but they need to see how they can make a difference and how civic participation can fit into their lives.
- Make use of a variety of communications media and educational events. People have different learning styles and are attracted to different kinds of activities.
- Fit into people's already-full schedules. To reach busy parents, for example, plan a citizen education event that the whole family can attend.
- Go where the people are. Take advantage of fairs, festivals, sidewalk sales, concerts and other community-wide events to attract citizen attention to your project.
- Enlist the help of allies from your target groups. Ask a young adult to help you plan an event that will appeal to his or her friends. Ask a member of a minority or ethnic group for help on crafting effective messages.

- Take advantage of electronic communications technologies to reach larger and less traditional audiences. Many communities are establishing local computer networks (freenets) and even providing Internet access through terminals available to the public in libraries and community centers. Citizen education projects that take advantage of these new online systems will be able to provide information fast, keep it up-to-date more easily and make it available around the clock. Leagues that are still mastering this new technology may want to seek a partner with online expertise. And if your community does not yet have a freenet or public access to the Internet, perhaps establishing a computer network could be a component of the League's citizen education project.
- Design a hands-on project. Leagues can encourage both their members and other citizens
  to play a more active role in addressing community concerns by sponsoring projects that
  provide direct experience with public policy problems. Examples include sponsoring
  household hazardous waste collection programs, forming a coalition to establish a homeless shelter, and conducting surveys of the accessibility of community services and programs. In planning such an activity, Leagues will want to think about how they will direct
  members and citizens toward involvement in a long-term solution.

# 9. TAKING EFFECTIVE ACTION

#### **Taking Action**

The League of Women Voters was founded in advocacy, and action continues as a major focus for Leagues at the local, state and national levels. Building better communities often requires effective advocacy, and every League will find important action opportunities that will improve the community, build citizen involvement and increase the strength of the League.

The goal of action, or advocacy, is to influence public policy to shape better communities. Action can take many forms, depending on the issue and the circumstances. Often League action takes the form of lobbying, monitoring and litigating.

There are many opportunities for effective action. Most Leagues find it helpful to have an Action Chair or Advocacy Chair, someone who is responsible for planning, organizing and implementing effective local action. Often the Action Chair also coordinates responses to state and national Action Alerts, working with the League president for her official response and encouraging League members to write or call in their own names to build a large and effective lobbying response.

There are many methods for involving the membership in action. These may include printing national, state and local Action Alerts in the League's newsletter, having a regular action column in your newsletter, making sure that possibilities for action are part of every League meeting and encouraging members to write letters-to-the-editor.

Timing often is critical. One means of generating quick responses from members is to develop a phone tree. And, as more and more members gain access to e-mail, the phone tree concept can be adapted to computers to alert members of the need for action.

#### Lobbying

Action and advocacy are general terms denoting support of a political cause. Lobbying is a specific form of action, consisting of efforts to affect legislation by directly contacting legislators or their staffs, in person, by telephone or in writing. It does not include testifying before legislative committees or presenting written materials for the public record, though you will want to do these things if they will be effective.

Although testifying may seem like the ultimate lobbying, it often is more effective to have a hand in shaping a proposal before it comes before a legislative body. Investigate the possibilities of drafting what you want directly or through a supportive legislator.



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Timing is an important part of your strategy. It does little good to be too early or, even worse, too late on an issue. It's important to be knowledgeable about the process and about when your issue will be up for consideration.

Finally, sometimes the public needs to be "lobbied" in order to help bring an issue to center stage, perhaps through public forums or a media campaign.

#### Tips on Lobbying

- Know your issue, including the pros and cons. Be able to explain why the League is in favor or opposed even though there may be valid points to be made on the other side.
- Always be truthful and do not hide any information. Legislators do not want to be "blind-sided."
- If necessary, agree to disagree. There will be other issues when agreement may be possible.
- Do not be abusive or confrontational. While elected officials need to be responsive to the public, they do not have to do what you want.
- Listen. You may get valuable information on the issue from a different perspective, or learn about the opponents' case.
- When meeting with an office holder, have ready a one-page factsheet on the League's
  position that you can leave behind.
- If writing or testifying, keep your discussion as brief as possible. Choose your best arguments.
- Don't guess if asked a question to which you do not have the answer. It's perfectly acceptable to agree to research the information and get back to them.
- If possible, refer to a specific piece of legislation and state clearly what the League would like to see happen.
- Always remember to write a thank-you note after an appointment.
- Contact officials after a vote has been taken, thanking them for their support, if appropriate.

#### Establishing and Maintaining Good Relationships with Elected Officials

Over the years, your League will want to have an impact on many different issues. Your effectiveness will be increased if you have a good working relationship with your elected

officials. Get to know your legislators and other officials, including party leaders, preferably before you want something.

- · Invite them to speak at your meetings.
- · Ask them to your social functions and attend theirs.
- Get to know the staff; they can give you access and they often wield considerable influence.
- Supply elected officials with League publications and send them news clips on their special interests as well as the League's.
- Set up files on each elected official, including their stances on issues as well as biographical and personal information.
- Use contacts and leverage—of the board and of members—to get to know officials important to the League's positions.

#### Mounting a Targeted Action Campaign

For a priority action issue, consider a targeted action campaign. This is a major, focused effort over a period of time, which will involve League members and seek widespread community support and involvement. Many Leagues find that an action campaign is not only the best way to improve their communities, but that it also builds and energizes their membership and builds relationships with other organizations in the community.

As in any major League effort, it is important that you define the goals of your action campaign and make your plans with care and specificity. (See Section 4, Getting Organized for Work on an Issue.)

#### **Seeking Change**

The first step in an action campaign is to decide what you want to accomplish. Does your community need to reform the campaign finance practices in elections to the legislative or executive branches of government? Do voter participation rates need to be improved? Are there environmental or social needs that must be met? The answers will vary for each community and League, but setting your goals for change is the all-important first step that will guide you as you target your actions, set your tactics, get your message out and develop the resources —information, volunteers and funds — that will be essential to success.

Often it will be very easy to determine what you want to accomplish because a specific problem will present itself. Other times, a great deal of thought and discussion will be needed. In either case, you will want to specifically define your policy goals and set clear action messages. Involving your membership and other concerned organizations can be an important part of this process.

It's important to think through the motivating ideas behind your campaign. How will your campaign improve your community? How will it appeal to decision makers, the public, League members, other organizations, the media and possible funders?

Your objectives may change over the course of an action campaign, and sometimes compromise will be needed, but as long as you are clear about your motivation, policy goals and action messages, it will be possible to make the other decisions that will be needed as part of the campaign.

#### **Target**

This is the person or group who can give you what you want. THE TARGET IS NOT THE OPPONENT. The target is the person(s) who can sign the order or cast the vote. It is important to define the target correctly; pushing against the wrong door makes for futile action and a failed campaign.

The target is the person or group you must research; you should know as much as possible about the target(s), including financial resources, friends, vulnerabilities, likes and dislikes, philosophy, background, family. Research should tell you how best to influence your target(s). For example, is a target up for reelection or committed to a position that would cause him or her to lean one way or the other on your issue?

Decide how you can gain influence over your target(s). For instance, for an elected official, votes are a source of power. In most cases, publicity is a source of power.

If you can't find a direct way to influence the target(s), it may be possible to work through someone else who can, such as a family member, constituent or campaign contributor of the target. That person then becomes your secondary target.

#### **Tactics**

It's important to focus your resources, so you can bring sufficient pressure to achieve your goals. Look for leverage points. The object here is to get the target(s) to take the action you want, not necessarily to agree with your League on everything.

Effective tactics include lobbying, letter-writing campaigns, presentations to other organizations, distributing fact sheets, petitions and media events. The menu of tactics you choose will depend on your goal, the political situation in your community, and what you have learned about your target(s).

Power works when it is massed; you will want to show large numbers on your side, either directly or indirectly. For example, one person outside city hall with a sign is not likely to achieve change. But an effective message on the sign, and advance notice to the media, could generate press coverage, which could trigger a public outcry in the form of letters, phone calls and personal contact with those in power.

Sometimes tactics are called for that are outside the traditional letters and phone calls, in order to get attention for your issue. For example, a California League tied red strips of cloth onto dead branches along a highway to call attention to a needed environmental act. It generated attention among the public and press, and it was successful.

In devising your tactics, remember to stay within the comfort level of your members. Not everyone is willing to lie in front of trucks or chain themselves to a fence. If you plan something too extreme, your volunteers may not show up. Remember too that you are trying to move public opinion. Consider what your tactics will say about your League and its members. You will fare better if public opinion is with you.

#### **Players**

As you develop and implement your action plan, you will want to keep the players in mind:

Members Have your members received information so they understand the League position on this issue? Have you motivated them to care about it sufficiently to volunteer their time and possibly their money? Have you provided tasks appropriate to each member—simple tasks such as letter writing for those who cannot volunteer lots of time and sophisticated tasks for those who wish to be deeply involved?

Constituents Who cares about this issue? How can they be motivated and organized to help your effort succeed? They are usually the people most affected. (See Section 5: Ensuring that All Voices are Heard, for information on finding and contacting groups of interested people.)

Allies These are people and groups who are on your side, or can be persuaded to join or aid your effort. Identifying allied groups is particularly important if you decide to pursue a coalition. Decide where to find them and how they can be wooed to your cause. Even if you decide against a forming or joining a coalition, people in these groups can be useful allies.

**Opponents** These are people and groups on the opposite side of your issue. It is important to determine who they are and to estimate their tactics and arguments. This information will help you rebut their arguments and be prepared to counter their actions quickly.

#### Media

To be successful, an action campaign often must be visible in the community. Be sure to build a media component into your plans from the beginning. Review the LWVUS's *Guide to Getting Good Media Coverage* (Pub. #1000, \$2.00) for how-to information.

#### Resources

An important step in an action campaign is to assess and then develop your resources. What does your League (or coalition group) have in terms of:

**Public Support** Does the public support your action goals? How can you mobilize that support, either through the media or through action tactics? How can you build public support? What messages should you use, how should your action goals be formulated? Are there different "publics" that view your issue differently? How can they be mobilized?

Volunteers Does the League have a standing committee to manage this activity or should you form a special committee? How will you help your members participate in mounting an effective campaign? How can you use the campaign to gain new members, who may help do the work? How will you keep volunteers motivated if the campaign is lengthy? Do your members buy into this issue, and will they work on it? Are there willing volunteers from your coalition partner groups, or can you find volunteers from the community who will do the necessary work? Be specific about the availability of and organizing of volunteers, including the types of jobs that will need to be done.

Contacts Does your League or your coalition have contacts in public offices or in other places where they might be useful? Should you start or join a coalition to advance your cause? Do your members have contacts—social, business, familial—that will be helpful?

Money How much money do you have available? If you are working in coalition with other groups, what funds can your coalition partners contribute? Are there benefactors in the community who will donate to your cause? Would your efforts be compromised by such a donation? If money is scarce, can you mount a fundraising campaign quickly enough for your action campaign? To some extent, extra volunteers, donors and contacts can substitute for money, but do make a realistic judgment of the situation.

**Technology** Does your League have or have access to any equipment that might be needed to carry out the campaign? Can you find donors for computers, cameras or other equipment you may need?

#### Caveats

Remember to abide by the League principle of nonpartisanship. You will be working for an issue; although the target may be a politician or office holder, your attention must be directed to the issue and not to the person. Your research into that person's background is to move him/her on the issue and should not be directed specifically at the office holder. Remember, there are few permanent friends or enemies in politics. There are many examples of legislators who have consistently voted against League positions for years but then have voted with us on a key issue.

Be careful to obey all federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning lobbying and lobby disclosure. You may be subject to a lobbyist fee and registration requirement; if that is the case, check to see if a public interest or nonprofit exemption is available.

Congress passed the Lobbying Disclosure Act in 1995. In brief, a League is required to register under the act if, during a semiannual period (January-June or July-December), it makes expenditures in connection with *federal* lobbying activities in excess of \$20,000 and the League has an *employee* who makes at least two lobbying contacts and devotes 20

percent or more of her or his time during the period to lobbying. The law contains complex definitions of "lobbying contacts" and "lobbying activities." It is unlikely that any state or local League fulfills the stipulated conditions. Leagues that have any concerns about the act should consult their own legal counsel.

Be sure to check your detailed plan and calendar periodically during your campaign (see Section 4, Getting Organized for Work on an Issue). Adjust the plan as necessary. Check in with other committee members to make sure things are on track, and help your members and volunteers to stay motivated. If you have planned well, each piece of the plan will seem small enough to do and yet as the weeks go by, you will begin to see real progress.

#### **Evaluation**

- Rate your success; what worked, what didn't. If something didn't work, don't consider it a
  failure, but make a note for next time.
- Celebrate your success by throwing a party. Regardless of the action outcome, you will
  have achieved group solidarity, learned a lot and made friends. Be sure you thank participants in your campaign. Also, don't wait to celebrate until the end of a long campaign;
  celebrate successful steps or projects as part of your overall effort.
- Alert the press. Put your best food forward; stress the number of participants, the number and range of coalition partners, the success you achieved.
- Remember action is a process; file your reports and prepare for your next project.

#### Monitoring and Observing

Once your League has successfully lobbied for a piece of legislation, it's time to activate a monitoring process to be sure that the legislation is put into effect. It's important to develop well supported data if remedial action is called for.

**Monitoring** is systematic citizen oversight—keeping watch on the executive branch to see if a law is being implemented properly and to document cases when it is not.

**Observing** is sitting in on meetings of public bodies to watch what they do. It is useful for Leagues to organize an Observer Corps so that public agencies such as the city council, school board, zoning commission or others can be observed systematically. Volunteers can be recruited to attend meetings on a rotating basis. They can then report back to the board if action is taken that requires League attention.

If your League has an Observer Corps, its members may be able to assume the monitoring function. Often, just knowing that interested citizens are watching encourages public officials to proceed with effective implementation.

#### Litigating

Litigation—going to court—may be necessary when effective legislation is in place but if it is not being implemented fully or properly, or if legislation has gone beyond constitutional boundaries.

Litigation always requires a lawyer. Often members or friends of the League who are lawyers are willing to help at reduced fees or even pro bono. Going to court can be extremely effective in achieving change, in calling public attention to a problem and in building pressure for change. Sometimes public officials quietly welcome a court order, to get them "off the hook" if an action is politically unpopular.

# 10. GUIDELINES FOR TAKING ACTION

#### **Taking Action on National Issues**

The League's national advocacy agenda is every League's and every member's business. Every state and local League president has a formal responsibility to send an official League letter or to take whatever other official action is requested, in response to every LWVUS Action Alert. If someone else drafts the letter, the League president will then simply check it for general content and League policy before signing. A mailgram, telephone call, telegram or e-mail message also can serve as the official communication.

Concerted, focused action by all Leagues is important to achieving success on our national issue priorities. If a League board chooses not to respond to an Action Alert, the League president should send a letter to the LWVUS stating the reason for its decision. A League may NEVER take action in opposition to an LWVUS position.

#### **Guidelines for Action**

- Leagues should focus their action where it will be truly effective—on their own members of Congress (MCs).
- When contacting members of Congress, remember that the president is the official spokesperson for the League; she or he may designate someone else to play that role, in accordance with that League's policy. Members speak in their own name.
- The best communication to federal policy makers reflects local thinking and cites examples
  of local situations. It would be helpful for a League to develop a local person to become an
  "expert" on a priority issue and to become a source of local information on that issue for
  their MC so that his or her staff can call when they need help.
- Make sure to refer to a bill by number or name, if at all possible.
- If you are aware of a legislator's previous position or action on the issue, refer to it in your lobbying.
- Send copies of the official letter to the state League and to the LWVUS Coordinator of Grassroots Lobbying.



Empowering Citizens: A Guide to Influencing Public Policy

League of Women Voters of the United States

#### **LWVUS Action Services and Opportunities**

The LWVUS provides a number of services to Leagues and members to get them in on the action.

**Hill Bulletin** Published quarterly in *The National Voter*. Gives a synopsis of LWVUS action on priority action issues and suggests "what you can do" to achieve the League's goals.

Action Alerts Sent to local and state League presidents and Duplicate President's Mailing (DPM) subscribers at critical times in the legislative process. Action Alerts call on Leagues and League members to take immediate action on a key issue and provide to Leagues the necessary substantive and political background. Each state and local League president has a formal responsibility to send an official League letter or to take whatever other official action is requested in response to every LWVUS Action Alert.

Lobby Corps This group of dedicated volunteer lobbyists in the Washington, DC area regularly visit the offices of members of Congress, coordinating with the LWVUS board and staff lobbyists. They take the League message to the Hill, distributing letters or factsheets, meet with members of Congress or their staffs, and report back what they have learned. Lobby Corps members are assigned to represent specific state Leagues, and they keep in contact with the LWV presidents of their assigned state Leagues.

**Grassroots Lobby Corps** A network of League activists around the country. They respond to lobby requests by writing, phoning, faxing or e-mailing message to their members of Congress under the direction of area leaders who work closely with the Grassroots Chair and the LWVUS Coordinator of Grassroots Lobbying. To join, call the LWVUS Public Affairs Division at 202-429-1965.

**Member Mailings** Brief alerts to encourage lobbying on a top priority issue that sometimes go to all League members in targeted states or congressional districts before an especially important vote.

**League ActionLine** This message is recorded weekly and provides an update on national legislation and what action you can take. Just call the LWVUS at 202-429-1965 for the latest.

LWVUS Web Site The League's web site on the Internet includes Action Alerts, congressional testimony and other useful information on League action on national issues. The text of the weekly League ActionLine message is uploaded onto the web site regularly. The URL (address) for the League web site is http://www.lwv.org/~lwvus/

The LWVUS Coordinator of Grassroots Lobbying This staff person acts as a liaison between League lobbyists on Capitol Hill and local and state Leagues. This person works with League members and activists in targeted states and congressional districts to help develop and implement grassroots lobbying strategies. If you want to talk about lobbying

strategies for your member of Congress (MC) or need up-to-date information on priority issues, call the Coordinator of Grassroots Lobbying at the LWVUS, 202-429-1965.

#### **Action on Nonpriority Issues**

If a state or local League wants to act at the national level under an LWVUS position on an issue that has not been designated a priority League issue, clearance must be sought from the LWVUS. A letter stating what action is contemplated, the position on which it is based, the rationale for the action and a copy of the proposed letter or communication should be sent to the LWVUS. The LWVUS will then investigate the situation and give permission if the proposed action is consistent with League positions and does not conflict with other ongoing advocacy work.

Occasionally, a League wishes to take national action on the basis of a state, local or Inter-League Organization (ILO) position. If no LWVUS position exists, the League should write to the LWVUS board outlining its program position and how it relates to the federal legislation, and describing what action is planned. Local Leagues and ILOs also should enclose a letter of agreement from the state board(s) approving the action. If the LWVUS board approves the request, then the state or local League may contact its own members of Congress only.

#### Taking Action at Other Levels of the League

- Local Leagues and members are encouraged to support their state League efforts. Without back-up from Leagues around the state, a state president's voice sounds mighty lonely in the halls of the state capitol.
- State Leagues provide services similar to those of the LWVUS to involve local Leagues and members in state action strategies, and each develops its own system for coordinating action.
- Local Leagues and ILOs should consult with their state boards before taking action at the state level that has not been suggested or authorized by the state board.
- Local Leagues should send copies of all communications to state legislators to the state League.
- When a local League's action crosses city limits or state lines into another League's jurisdiction, it is necessary to work closely with the affected League(s) to develop a cohesive action plan.
- It is a good idea for Leagues to communicate with their neighboring Leagues on their respective action agendas; this will help identify areas of mutual interest and head off any possible conflicts.

# Spirit of Democracy Awards 2002-2003

# Spirit of Democracy Awards

The **Spirit** of **Democracy Awards** program is designed to provide achievable goals for local Leagues. By achieving these goals Leagues will have some guidelines which will promote healthy Leagues and also be granted recognition for achieving these goals.

It is our intention that every League who chooses should be able to be recognized. Ideally, <u>every</u> League would be recognized. Because of the diversity of both size and health of local Leagues, there are three categories of awards.

1.	Pioneer of Democracy	Has achieved at least 8 goals in four different categories.
2.	Leader of Democracy	Has achieved at least 15 goals in seven different categories.
3.	Champion of Democracy	Has achieved at least 25 goals in ten different categories.

Leagues will be contacted throughout the year for status reports. Bulletins will also be reviewed to determine qualification for an award.

The application is simple. Just write a *brief* description of the event or attach a lengthier report or sample of a product to the worksheet. (Make sure to indicate which category and the corresponding item number. If there is press coverage please attach a copy of any articles as well.) If the category involves conventions or meetings, just list the names of the League members who attended.

Spirit of Democracy Awards will be presented at Convention 2003 in Duluth on May 30, 2003.

Deadline for the application: March 31, 2003

Good Luck and Have Fun!!

# Spirit of Democracy Award Application 2002 - 2003

\*\*THIS IS FOR LEAGUE ACTIVITY FROM APRIL 2002 TO MARCH 2003\*\*
(must be submitted to LWVMN by March 30, 2003)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION & DATE OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT

#### **ACTION**

- Hold training to either establish an Observer Corps or recruit new participants.
- 10% of membership is signed up as a 10-Minute Activist.
- Conducts Legislative Interviews and turns in to LWVMN office.
- 4. Recruits a Lobbyist Intern for state level.
- Has a system in place to respond to "Call to Action" alerts.
- 6. Lobbies/works on local issues.

#### PROGRAM (continued)

- Participates in one state and one LWVUS program.
- Holds at least three public meetings (in public settings), excluding candidate forums.
- Incorporates diversity strategies into programs.

#### **VOTER SERVICE**

- Conducts at least one candidate forum (if local election year).
- 2. Conducts a voter registration drive.
- Registers voters at local high school, college, and/or technical school.
- 4. Participates in d-net program.
- Collaborates with school to hold mock elections.
- Has at least one registered moderator available to area Leagues for their candidate meetings.
- Members volunteer for LWVMN Election Hotline.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

- Holds diversity training for all membership.
- 2. Increases membership by 10%.
- Conducts a new member orientation/training.
- Conducts focus groups regarding membership and inclusiveness.
- Has a membership plan in place to increase membership.
- Has a membership plan in place to retain membership.
- Holds a party or open house to welcome and recruit new members.
- Actively seeks out members in diverse communities by going out to those communities.
- Provides information for members in local bulletin.
- 10. Holds events in public places.

#### **PROGRAM**

- One or more delegates attend Council (even years) or Convention (odd years).
- 2. Conducts Lively Issues.
- Conducts and/or publishes one local study.
- Holds at least one program which encourages youth involvement in government/civics.
- One or more delegates attend LWVUS Council (odd years) or LWVUS Convention (even years).

#### **LEADERSHIP**

- Captures and involves new members on committees.
- Encourages board participation by a broad spectrum of members.
- Limits or staggers board terms to promote participation by broader membership base.
- 4. Has a youth member on board.
- Has board meeting to discuss leadership issues with facilitator.

#### L.O.T.T.

(Leaders of Today and Tomorrow)

- Has reviewed the meaning and purpose of L.O.T.T. with membership.
- Has encouraged or enabled a young woman to participate in the L.O.T.T. seminar.
- 3. Has held a fund-raiser for L.O.T.T.
- Provides a scholarship for a L.O.T.T. participant.
- Has worked with L.O.T.T. committee to co-sponsor mini-L.O.T.T. seminar.
- Has provided workers or speakers for L.O.T.T. events such as the seminar, Jr. Citizen Day, Fundraiser.

#### **GENERAL**

- Has at least one member active on a state committee (Action, Voter Service, Development, Study, Member Resources, etc.).
- Conducts diversity training for board members.
- Members attend LWVMN training sessions.
- 4. Conducts a board orientation.
- Works with other groups (or Leagues) on a regional event.
- Provides volunteers to work at a state or regional event.

#### **IMMIGRATION STUDY**

- Invites community to participate in immigration study program.
- Holds local League meeting on issue with speakers.
- Sends one or more representatives to Council panel on immigration study.
- Participates in consensus and returns report to LWVMN by 3/15/03.
- Disseminates immigration study information In community through articles, brochures, etc.

#### COMMUNICATION

- Publishes a newsletter.
- Has set up a web site and updates it regularly.
- Establishes relations with local print, radio, broadcast and cable media for publication and coverage of League events.
- Has arranged for broadcast or published visibility in local media: editorials, public access programs, letters to editor, etc.

#### CURRICULUM

- Promotes use of LWVMN civics curriculum in local school(s).
- Conducts in-service for teachers on curriculum.

#### DEVELOPMENT/FINANCE

- 1. Participates in fund-raiser for state.
- 2. Raises funds for local Ed Fund.
- Does an annual fund-raising drive/ event for local League.
- Is creative in finding new ways of fundraising.
- 5. Has a comprehensive financial plan.
- Raises funds from local members and board members.
- Has 100% participation by local Board of Directors.