

LWVKC MEMBERSHIP GUIDE

LOCAL POLICY

Revised 5/16/2019

MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Non-partisanship – The League of Women Voters of Kent County is a non-partisan organization. Although general members are encouraged to be active in party politics, members representing the League to the public are expected to conduct themselves in such a way as to preserve the League's non-partisan public image. Nevertheless, Board Members and lobbyists (except President and Voters Service Chair) **may**:

- ☒ Sign nominating petitions
- ☒ Attend functions of political parties or candidates
- ☒ Serve in a capacity not visibly partisan that contributes to the election process (e.g. clerk of election)
- ☒ Contribute to the campaigns of candidates of their choice

Board Members and lobbyists **may not**:

- Ø Be a committee person for a political party
- Ø Serve in an elective office
- Ø Run for office
- Ø Work in any federal, state, county, municipal or school board election campaign

Membership – A League should reflect the diversity of its local community in the membership, and the issues that the members address should reflect the diverse community.

- ▶ The Membership Directory is for the use and convenience of the members. Its use by other organizations or groups must have Board approval. It should be updated and issued annually.
- ▶ Annual Member Dues are payable beginning July 1st of each year. Dues must be paid by October 1st each year to maintain membership.
- ▶ New members joining between April 1 and June 30 will have dues applied for the following fiscal year.
- ▶ A limited number of member scholarships may be awarded on a yearly basis by the LWVKC Board to assist members or prospective members as needed, according to agree upon qualifications.

Board – The Board consists of the elected officers, six elected directors, and appointed directors as needed to carry out program and portfolio responsibilities. Each Board member, regardless of portfolio or office, shares in making policies, planning and carrying out League activities. Each board member must have access to electronic communications.

- ▶ Board meetings will be scheduled monthly on the fourth Tuesday, except for July and December. Date of November meeting may need to be adjusted because of Thanksgiving.
- ▶ Elected Board members and appointed Portfolio Chairs are expected to attend Board meetings that are scheduled.

- ▶ “Portfolio” is a responsibility for coordinating an activity or program in a specific area, such as “Observer Corps.”
- ▶ Potential conflict of interest will be weighed in considering portfolio and/or project assignments.
- ▶ Local and State Board meetings are open to all League members.

Budget and Expenses

- ▶ Budget overruns must be approved by the Board and adjustments made to the total budget, if a specified overrun is approved.
- ▶ All out of pocket expenses should be reported to the Treasurer whether reimbursement is requested or not.
- ▶ Time and mileage are not reimbursable.
- ▶ Treasurer must be notified of all purchases for which s/he will receive a bill.

Finance

- ▶ Any League member seeking services or funds for a League project from any current or potential contributor must notify the President or Finance Chair prior to making the contact.
- ▶ Only the State League should contact statewide companies.
- ▶ Letters may be sent to individuals and businesses in Kent County to encourage contributions, mention activities, and to explain the difference between the Education Fund and the General Fund.
- ▶ Contributions to the League general fund are not tax deductible. However, donations to the Education Fund of LWV are deductible.
- ▶ Those who make reservations for unit meeting luncheons but do not attend, are required to reimburse LWVCK for the cost of the meal/event. This Policy will be stated on all event flyer/announcement RSVP forms.
- ▶ Our fiscal year shall correspond to that of LWVUS.

Local Newsletter

- ▶ The Organization shall publish a local newsletter to be called “**THE VOTER.**”
- ▶ The Board should approve voter ads. Classified ads may be considered.
- ▶ Material written for or enclosed in **The Voter** should be league related. Nothing should be included in **The Voter** unless authorized by the President and/or the Board. Printed informational matter from another organization should not be included on a regular basis.
- ▶ Prospective members should receive complimentary copies of **The Voter** for at least three months or at the membership chair’s discretion.
- ▶ Ad sponsors shall receive a complimentary copy of **The Voter**, and a form to use if corrections are needed.

Advertising

Only previously approved advertisements will appear in LWVCK printed material or online sites.

Action

- ▶ Within National guidelines, League of Women Voters of Kent County can take local action on local issues, with courtesy notification to State Board prior to taking action.
- ▶ State-level action on any issues can be taken by LWVCK only with prior approval of the State President and/or Action Chair; written copy of such action be sent to the State President.

Candidate Meetings and Debates – In order to retain its status as a nonprofit, tax exempt organization, the League of Women Voters is required to abide by regulations promulgated by the Federal Elections Commission [Sec. 110.13(b)], the Federal Communications Commission [Sec. 315(a)] and the Internal Revenue Service [Revenue Ruling 86-95] for groups sponsoring appearances of candidates for elective office. Consequently, should only one candidate for a particular office appear, the League cannot provide the opportunity for him or her to participate in the debate.

1. There must be at least two candidates for the office in question present at the same time in order for a candidate to be allowed to participate in the debate. No stand-ins for the candidates will be allowed.
2. No videotaping of candidates during the meeting will be allowed except by established media.
3. The order or appearance by the candidates will be determined by a random choice method.
4. All candidates for a particular office who are qualified to be on the State of Delaware Ballot should be invited to participate.
5. Invitations to statewide candidates for participation in any debates must have prior approval from the LWV President and/or the Voters Service Chair.
6. LWV-KC reserves the right to review any and all campaign literature, and reject for distribution and display any considered libelous.
7. At each Candidates Night, an LWV-KC member will be assigned to monitor the display table. Ushers should be able to request any disruptive persons in the audience to be quiet or leave the room.
8. Printed copies of these guidelines are to be available at the door of the debate room.
9. All other procedures will be found in the statement League of Women Voters of Delaware, Policies and Procedures.

Contacting Legislators and/or the Public

- ▶ Members do not speak “for the League,” but as individuals.
- ▶ A person who represents the League of Women Voters to any legislature must be authorized by the LWV-DE and be registered with the General Assembly as a League lobbyist.
- ▶ All communications undertaken in the name of the League (written or oral action, invitations, interviews, etc.), must be approved in advance by the President or designee. In most instances, letters go out over the signature of the President and the portfolio chair who authors the letter.

Policies and Procedures and Bylaws

- ▶ These documents should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.
- ▶ Member questions, comments, or suggestions should be directed to the President of League of Women Voters of Kent County.

LOCAL PROGRAM

KENT COUNTY ZONING

Support the Kent County Comprehensive Zoning Plan, particularly its relationship to the local environment and to county development; support county recycling efforts.

WATER STANDARDS AND WASTE DISPOSAL STANDARDS FOR KENT COUNTY

Support adequate water quality and waste disposal standards for Kent County.

RACISM AND RACE RELATIONS

Support the YMCA-sponsored Study Circles on Racism and Race Relations and the work of Dover Human Relations Commission to encourage community dialogue on racism and race relations with the goals of eliminating stereotyping and encouraging broad grassroots participation in the discussion of local issues.

HEALTH CARE IN DELAWARE

Support universal access to affordable health care.

In the event of the conversion of non-profit health care institutions to for-profit status, we support the creation of an independent foundation to direct funds generated by the conversion to serve the health care needs of Delaware's uninsured and underinsured citizens.

STUDY ITEMS

DELAWARE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Examine and study the changes currently taking place in Delaware's criminal justice system with special attention to sentencing and probation guidelines, mandatory arrests and sentencing, determination of levels of incarceration, the death penalty, equal access to criminal defense, racial profiling, domestic violence, juvenile violence, prisoner rehabilitation, and women's incarceration issues. The goal of this ongoing investigation would be to determine the effectiveness of Delaware's criminal justice system in providing fair and adequate treatment before the law and in reducing recidivism.

WATER QUALITY IN DELAWARE

Examine and study issues of water quality in Delaware with a focus on available resources, groundwater pollution, aquifer contamination, agricultural and industrial runoff and the interaction of environmental concerns and the Delaware economy. The goal of this study would be to arrive at a position that would balance the needs of economic development and environmental sustainability with respect to Delaware's water resources.

HEALTH CARE IN DELAWARE

With support taken from the state position, examine evolving Delaware health care issues as they arise in the areas of quality, access and accountability, including the Opioid Crisis and End of Life Options.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Evaluate the extent to which county and local governments conduct business in a way that ensures maximum transparency to public scrutiny. Consider alternative methods of electing public officials.

CHILDREN AT RISK

Study the problems of children at risk in Kent County with the goal of supporting policies which improve the lives of these children.

1. Become familiar with local agencies, governmental and non-governmental, working to solve these problems.
2. Examine the problems unique to the children of incarcerated women.

RECYCLING

Examine and study recycling in Delaware.

LAND USE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Evaluate the effectiveness of the Kent County Comprehensive Plan in the areas of Housing, Transportation, Recreation, and Environmental Impact. Determine the range and scope of “affordable housing” as it is applied under the Kent County Comprehensive Plan. Examine the issue of Homelessness in Dover/Kent County.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Examine and study “green solutions” for energy and environmental issues, to include wind power, solar power, and recycling, among others.