



Guidelines for Program Working Groups (revised July 26, 2023)

Working groups of the LWVSC are networks among local Leagues focused on a particular position (such as ERA or redistricting) or a cluster of related positions (health care, education, environmental policy). A working group may be created by state board soliciting members and leadership from local Leagues or it may arise from an active local group in one League that is interested in or at least willing to broaden its network in order to be more effective in educating members and the public on these issues. The guidelines below describe the LWVSC expectations of such working groups.

While members can advocate as individual constituents, official statements on behalf of the League must, as always under the One Voice policy, come from local League leaders on local issues and from state League leaders on statewide issues.

Working groups can be defined around issues for which LWVUS or LWVSC has adopted positions. The highest advocacy priorities of LWVSC fall within the *LWVSC Program & Action Agenda* under either Electoral Democracy or Effective State and Local Government. These are the positions, previously defined by LWVUS as the “Making Democracy Work” campaign, that we prioritize and for which we often take the lead at the State House. However, LWVSC has positions in a number of other areas where we are not necessarily the most expert or the most focused compared to other groups, particularly in women’s issues, education, environment, and health care. We work on those issues in cooperation with our partner organizations.

The VP for Issues and Action is responsible for inter-organizational partner coordination and should be consulted regularly by working groups through the Director for State Program. We support a network of fellow advocacy groups and coalitions of which LWVSC is a part to the extent that we share objectives. These groups and coalitions are particularly important when they have greater expertise and recognition in a subject area than the League. LWVSC support includes working together with these partners to avoid confusing, inadequately informed, or even incorrect messaging to the public and decision-makers. The LWVSC board is the sole authority responsible for coordinating with other organizations in coalitions and partnerships.

LWVSC encourages and supports collaborative work in informing League members and the public about the issue. Working groups can support League positions by exploring issues and sharing information among the membership and with leadership at local and state levels. Working groups can help to inform members as a network linking local Leagues and share information publicly through member publications, social media, letters to the editor and assistance to local Leagues in developing educational public forums and programs.

Here are guidelines set by state board for developing and operating a working group.

1. The initiative to form a working group may come from one or more local Leagues or from the state board.
2. Each group should have two facilitators from two different local Leagues, one of whom may be appointed by the state board to be an issue specialist. (An issue specialist is an off-board appointed position that acts as a “watchdog” on state positions in an area where that person has some relevant interest and expertise.) An issue specialist reports to the state board through the Director for State Program.
3. Facilitators should invite every local League to designate one or more members to serve on the working group. There should be no more than three members in a working group from any individual League.
4. Working groups report to the state board through the Director for State Program.
5. The primary purpose of the working groups is to develop local initiatives for educational and grassroots advocacy to the public on our positions in their respective areas and to encourage statewide collaboration among local Leagues in this work. To that end, working groups may undertake any or all of the following:
 - Develop specific programs for members and the general public and training for local Leagues in their program area, to be shared statewide when feasible;
 - Develop and maintain a list of resources for local League use in programs to be shared statewide via direct communication, blogs, web site, etc.;
 - Monitor the LWVSC website presence in their program area and work through their facilitators and the website manager to ensure that the information is kept current;
 - Provide occasional articles of interest to the SC VOTER;
 - Provide assistance to state board if asked in identifying speakers for LEAD, Convention and /or Council in their area of interest;
 - Develop blogs, suggest information for LWVSC messages to members, write local letters to the editor, and/or suggest statewide LTE’s, Facebook postings, or other outreach activities to the state board through the Director for State Program when appropriate, all with the purpose of informing the public as widely as possible;
 - Review and recommend changes and updates to state League positions in their program area and submit those recommendations through the Director for State Program and/or the VP for Issues and Action to encourage local Leagues to consider these recommendations in the biennial process of state league program planning;
 - Report to Council and Convention on their work

Implementation

The Director for State Program in collaboration with the VP for Issues and Action will name the facilitators for each group after working with interested local Leagues to identify and recruit them. In addition, each local League board will be encouraged to recommend at least one person from its League to serve on each working group.

Once a working group has two facilitators from different Leagues and representation from at least five Leagues, the facilitators will convene a meeting (in-person, virtual, or combination) to lay out their plan of work and set priorities. After each biennial convention, the state board will identify working groups for the next two years to support program and action. In most cases, existing working groups will be continued into the following two years.