



## **STATE BOARD HANDBOOK**

Adopted March 11, 2024

Updated March 10, 2025

**League of Women Voters of Virginia**

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This handbook compiles policies, procedures, and practices essential to the work of the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA) Board and its collaboration with local Leagues. This edition of the handbook was originally adopted by the Board on March 11, 2024. Information may be added to the handbook at the discretion of subsequent Boards. When policies or practices included in the handbook are updated (by Board action, as needed), the handbook will likewise be updated. The handbook will be made available electronically to any member of the LWV-VA. Consistent with the League's commitment to the environment, the handbook is produced only in electronic format.

## **Questions & Help**

If you have questions about this handbook, please contact the President of LWV-VA at [president@lwv-va.org](mailto:president@lwv-va.org) or Ann Lloyd Breeden, editor, at [annlloyd@lwv-va.org](mailto:annlloyd@lwv-va.org).

## **Acknowledgments**

LWV-VA is grateful to Virginia local Leagues, past LWV-VA Boards, and the League of Women Voters of Texas for helpful models that provided the foundation for this handbook.

## **Amendments**

The policies, procedures, and other content of this handbook reflect approval by the LWV-VA Board. Substantive amendments, and particularly any new policies that are incorporated, require the affirmative vote of a majority of the state Board. Once the Board approves or amends a policy, the handbook will be updated accordingly without further action by the Board. Non-substantive amendments (including updating links, aligning the handbook to current approved practice (e.g., resources or practices of LWVUS, LWV-VA), adding established facts and procedures, correcting typos or factual errors, etc.) may be done at the discretion of the President and the designated handbook editor.

## Table of Contents

I.	Fundamentals: Mission, Key Policies, Governance Documents	4
II.	LWV-VA Board	9
III.	Advocacy	21
IV.	Voter Education	31
V.	Program/Studies	38
VI.	Communications	41
VII.	Convention and Council	46
VIII.	League Governance, Local League Board Responsibilities, League Organization, and Levels of League Membership	52
IX.	Financial Administration and Operations	61
X.	Personnel, Interns, etc.	70
XI.	LWV-VA DEI Plan	73
XII.	Appendices	
	Appendix I: Basic Parliamentary Procedure Guide	75
	Appendix II: Current Local League Legislative Priority Request Form	77
	Appendix III: Sample Reimbursement Voucher	78
	Appendix V: DEIB Toolkit	79
	Appendix V: Amendments to Handbook	88

## **I. Fundamentals: Mission, Key Policies, Governance Documents**

### **A. LWVUS & LWV-VA Mission/Vision/Values Statements**

*Mission:* Empowering voters. Defending democracy.

*Vision:* We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

*Value:* We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

### **B. Nonpartisan Political Policy**

#### **1. LWV-VA Board<sup>1</sup>**

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote the informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League is nonpartisan in that it does not support or oppose any political party or candidate; it is political in that it takes positions on selected governmental issues after member study and agreement.

The purpose of this policy is to assure the credibility of the League of Women Voters of Virginia as a nonpartisan organization. Only to the extent that the public and its elected officials are convinced of the League's genuine nonpartisanship will the League be able to render effective voters service efforts and gain a wide base of support for its positions on governmental issues.

A state board member must recognize that, as a result of close identification with the League, they as a special responsibility to see that their activities do not create a partisan impression. Any member who has doubts about appropriate activities must consult the President or the board.

#### **STATE BOARD MEMBERS MAY:**

- Attend informational political functions.
- Attend, but not host, fundraising events for candidates or parties.
- Vote in primaries and attend party mass meetings in the absence of a primary.
- Serve as an election official.
- Accept an appointment to a non-elective governmental office, board, or commission, provided there is no conflict of interest, based on the LWV-VA Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Run for or hold any nonpartisan elective office.

#### **STATE BOARD MEMBERS MAY NOT:**

- Contribute financial support to a partisan candidate or a political party.
- Run for or hold any partisan elective office or run for delegate to a political party convention. A board member who plans to do so should formally resign from the board no later than the time of filing for the election. She or he may not serve on the board again for the remainder of the League year, or for a minimum of six months.

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<sup>1</sup> The LWV-VA Nonpartisan Policy was last amended in 2011.

- Endorse, publicize, or work for any partisan local, state, or national candidate or any political party in a way that publicly identifies the board member with the partisan candidate or political party. This includes hosting an event for a candidate, holding an official position in a political party, circulating a nominating petition for a candidate, signing letters or making phone calls on a candidate's behalf, and using bumper stickers, yard signs, buttons or other paraphernalia endorsing a candidate or political party.
- Hold office in an organization that endorses partisan candidates for public office.

The political activities of a board member's spouse or other family members should be considered separate and distinct from the board member's own activities and are not covered by the above policies.

The state board will be responsible for interpretations of the above policies.

The above policies do not apply to off-board administrative, program, or action chairs or to individuals holding League-related appointments to public bodies or coalitions. These individuals should review their personal situation and determine how strongly non-League members identify them with the League. Based on this review, these individuals should use discretion in their political activities. Any of the aforementioned individuals who are involved in visible partisan activities should not testify at public meetings or lobby for the League.

The President, the Voters Service Director, the Legislative Coordinator, the Associate Legislative Coordinator and the Advocacy Director should be particularly aware of activities that could compromise the League's nonpartisanship, and should consult the board if they have any doubts about such activity.

2. Issue Chairs:  
shall avoid activities that could compromise League nonpartisanship;  
are encouraged to participate in political activities but must first consult the Board if they are in doubt as to whether their activities could compromise League nonpartisanship.
3. Local Leagues  
Each local League board should formulate a nonpartisan policy that best reflects existing conditions in its League, as well as the political climate and traditions in its community.
4. Regular Review  
As a best practice, Leagues should review nonpartisan policies annually to ensure member understanding.

*LWWUS Resources:*

[Developing and Implementing a Nonpartisan Policy](#)  
[Criteria for League Participation in Marches & Events](#)

### C. DEI Policy

The LWV-VA, its Board, and local Leagues and their Boards adhere to the [LWV US DEI Policy](#) which follows:<sup>2</sup>

Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, or marital status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission/achievements as well.

### D. Structure and Bylaws

LWV-VA comprises two entities:

The League of Women Voters of Virginia Operating Fund, a 501(c)(4); and  
The League of Women Voters of Virginia Education Fund, a 501(c)(3).

The LWV-VA Board serves as the governing board for both entities.

The Bylaws for each entity can be found here:

[LWV VA Operating Fund](#)  
[LWV VA Education Fund](#).

### E. Conflict of Interest Statement and Disclosure Form<sup>3</sup>

The following pertains to members of the state Board and is for use by local League boards as appropriate:

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

*Adopted August 14, 2023*

The standard of behavior for the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA ) is that all board members and volunteers scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of LWV-VA on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

Each board member has a duty to place the interest of LWV-VA foremost in any dealings with LWV-VA and has a continuing responsibility to comply with the requirements of this policy.

No member of LWV-VA board of directors, or any of its committees, shall derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, by reason of their participation with LWV-VA.

Each individual shall disclose to LWV-VA any personal interest that they may have in any matter pending before LWV-VA and shall refrain from participation in any decision on such

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<sup>2</sup> Updated by LWVUS Board on January 24, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Adopted by LWV-VA Board on August 14, 2023.

matter.

No board member may obtain for themselves, or for members of their immediate family, or for other organizations of which they are also a board member or a key staff member, a material interest of any kind from their association with LWV-VA.

The materials, products, designs, plans, ideas, and data of LWV-VA are the property of LWV-VA and may not be given to an outside firm or individual except through normal channels and with appropriate authorization.

If conflicts of interest arise from the employment, business interests, or other activities, interests, or obligations of a board member, they must be brought to the attention of LWV-VA board for discussion and resolution. The board member shall not be present for any discussion or vote in connection with the matter. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not present during the discussion and decision on the matter.

Board members may not serve on the boards of partisan organizations. While the LWV-VA Board may encourage and assist LWV-VA members to secure appointments to nonpartisan, public government boards, commission, and committees, unless clearly designated, appointees are not official representatives of LWV-VA.

LWV-VA board members who are employed by, or who serve on the boards of other organizations, may find it necessary to lobby legislators on a variety of issues. Board members shall not lobby for a position in opposition to or in conflict with an LWV-VA position. On issues where LWV-VA has no position, they must be scrupulous in avoiding the impression that they represent or have the support of LWV-VA.

Board members may not accept stipends, grants, or fees for service for any LWV-VA projects because they sit on the policy-making board that is responsible for administering the grant.

#### DISCLOSURE

Each board member will receive a copy of the policy at the beginning of their term of office at the first meeting of the duly elected board of directors. The policy shall be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the duly elected board of directors.

Each LWV-VA board member shall, upon their appointment to the board of directors, submit a Disclosure of Interest Statement using the attached form. The LWV-VA president shall be responsible for collecting such statements. In the event that there is a material change in the information given in an individual's disclosure statement, they shall report the change promptly to the LWV-VA president, and file a new form with the LWV-VA president.

#### VIOLATIONS

If the LWV-VA board of directors has reasonable cause to believe that a board member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the board member of the basis for such belief and afford the board member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the board member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the board of directors determines that the

member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

I understand that the purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the decision-making process of the League of Women Voters of VA (LWV-VA), to enable our constituencies to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the reputations of volunteers and board members.

This written disclosure will be kept on file, and I will update it as appropriate. During the course of meetings or activities, I will disclose interests in any transaction or decision where I, any member of my family, my employer, or close associates (including my business or other nonprofit affiliations) may receive a benefit or gain.

I am not aware of any relationship, interest, or situation that might result in, or give the appearance of, having an interest that could be construed as being in conflict with the interests LWV-VA, except possibly the following:

For-profit corporate directorships, positions, and employment with:

\_\_\_\_\_

Non-profit positions:

\_\_\_\_\_

Memberships in the following organizations:

\_\_\_\_\_

Contracts, business activities, and investments with or in the following organizations:

\_\_\_\_\_

Other relationships and activities:

\_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge receipt of the LWV-VA Conflict of Interest Policy and agree to be bound by it. I will promptly inform the LWV-VA president of any material change in the information provided in this statement.

Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## II. LWV-VA Board

### A. Board (and off-Board) Roles and Responsibilities

The process for election of Board officers is codified in Article IV, Section 1 of the Bylaws. The essential responsibilities of Board officers are defined in the Bylaws. The roles of Board officers, Board members, and off-Board positions may evolve with organizational needs. Current (2023-2025) roles and responsibilities are as follows:

#### **President**

1. Preside at LWV-VA meetings, including LWV-VA Board meetings, statewide meetings, etc.
2. Serve as the official spokesperson for LWV-VA:
  - a. Speak for the League orally and in all written communications;
  - b. Be lead spokesperson lobbying the General Assembly.
3. Promote and represent the League, focusing on communication of the League's important role statewide.
4. Foster leadership development and succession.
  - a. Work closely with the First Vice President to ensure smooth transition in case of need, emergency;
  - b. Work with Executive Committee and local League presidents to identify and mentor future League leaders.
5. Make plans and set goals for LWV-VA together with the LWV-VA Executive Committee and Board, set LWV-VA policies.
6. Co-ordinate work of administrative, educational, and advocacy committees
7. Oversee League funds and fundraising.
8. Maintain and update all official documents in the President's google drive.
9. Administer and update the State Planning Calendar housed on the President's google drive; create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the President position, to be stored on the President's google drive and provided to successor.
10. Work with the event coordinator to assure smooth organization of all events include WLRTs, League Day, Pre Session, Council and Convention.
11. Per action by the state Board in October 2023, the President (already authorized to carry out budgeted expenditures) may commit to non-specific budgeted expenditures of up to \$250 without seeking Board approval; all such expenditures must be reported to the Board at the next meeting. The Board may revoke the delegation at any time.
12. Assures all minutes, newsletters and Council/Convention Booklets are saved on website and archived yearly at the Library of Virginia.
13. With appropriate Board members and Issue Group leaders, coordinates activities for MALs.

#### **First Vice President**

1. Be prepared to step into the President's job in case of the President's absence, resignation, etc.
  - a. Communicate regularly (weekly) with League President to be up to date on League actions, projects, personnel.
  - b. Know and have password access to important League functions, such as Zoom, Eventbrite, etc.

- c. Know and develop relationship with key League partners and expand partnerships/
  - d. As needed, have access to and help develop with the Executive Committee LWV-VA'S planning calendar.
- 2. local Leagues
  - a. Design and facilitate programming (including training) to help align local League leaders with state goals and foster coordination among Leagues (e.g., in advocacy).
- 3. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the First Vice President position, to be stored on the First Vice President's google drive and provided to successor.

## **Second Vice President**

- 1. Internship Coordinator
  - a. Work with President and LWV-VA Board to recruit and oversee hiring spring/summer interns, student development, and implementation of the program. Work collaboratively with League members seeking interns. Aids and supports both students and members.
  - b. Act as the liaison between LWV-VA and the educational institutions (the student's faculty sponsor, the school's career center director, and/or career counselors) or students (3-4 hours per week).
  - c. Manage the Youth Council Program.
- 2. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Second Vice President position, to be stored on the Second Vice President's google drive and provided to successor.

Note: Often either the First or Second Vice President is also the event coordinator. If they do not fulfill this job, then an event coordinator needs to be selected by the Nominating committee as a Board or off-Board position.

## **Treasurer<sup>4</sup>**

Responsible for administering the League's finances and maintaining financial records; maintaining two separate funds for LWV-VA: Education Fund and Operating Fund; must have experience with accounting/bookkeeping, including knowledge of QuickBooks or other appropriate software and familiarity with other non-profits and non-profit financial issues.

- 1. Budget and Reporting
  - Analyze budgeting and accounting reports for the purpose of maintaining expenditure controls.
  - Prepare budget reports and present at monthly LWV-VA Board meetings.
  - Report finances annually to membership.
  - Organize and lead a Budget Committee to prepare biennial budget for the State Convention (late winter/early spring) and ED Fund Budget for Council.

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<sup>4</sup> This section combines the July 2023 position description and the "Guidelines for Treasurers" from the 2015 LWV-VA Handbook (hereafter, "2015 Handbook").

- Keep monthly tally of money spent on portfolios and do not pay voucher if Board member has exceeded budget.
  - Identify any problem areas of nonpayment.
  - Recommend approval or disapproval of requests for unbudgeted expenditures.
2. Records
- Maintain all Treasurer files and details in Treasurer google drive and maintain paper files as needed.
3. Bank Accounts
- Sign bank authorization cards and provides for President to sign.
  - Ensure LWV-VA EF contributions are kept in separate account.
  - Maintain separate accounts and prepare accounting reports for all LWV-VA grants monies.
  - Collect and deposit League funds; disburse payments as needed. All funds of the state League shall be deposited to the credit of the state League in FDIC protected banks and financial institutions. The President and/or Treasurer of the state League are the authorized signatories on the accounts of the state League and may authorize additional signatories for special accounts.
4. Tax/Audit/Regulatory
- Obtain appropriate legal and accounting advice and professional services to ensure the League meets all filing and reporting requirements, including:
    - a. IRS Form 990 annual filing
    - b. Incorporation annual reports and fees
    - c. Annual completion of Virginia Office of Charitable and Regulatory Program (OCRP) Form 102 by November 15, including fundraising reporting.
  - Prepare and file two separate tax reports (October and November); file any other state/federal tax forms as needed.
  - Work closely with auditor for annual audit.
5. Reimbursement
- Distribute vouchers to Board members for use in reimbursement and handle reimbursement payments.
6. Transition/Custody
- Change accounts (EIN, PayPal) from departing Treasurer/officers to newly elected officers when transition occurs.
7. Fundraising
- Notify President to write "thank you" for contributions.
  - Issue a timely official tax receipt for all contributions. The receipt should contain the following information:
    - a. The amount of cash contributed
    - b. Description of any property received
    - c. Statement that donor received no goods or services in return for contribution
    - d. In case of goods donated, a good faith estimate of the worth of the donation. (Individual gifts of \$250 or more are not deductible as non-profit contributions unless a donor receives proper written documentation. A donor's cancelled check is no longer considered adequate documentation. A receipt for tax purposes should be issued for gifts of any amount, however, and a gift acknowledgment (thank you) letter should also be sent.)

- e. Ensure funds raised for specific educational projects are used to satisfy PMP obligations.
8. Monitor & replenish funds in the Bulk Mailing Permit if applicable.
9. Calendar: Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Treasurer position, to be stored on the Treasurer's google drive and provided to successor.

*(See additional information in Section IX: Financial Administration and Operations.)*

### **Secretary**

1. Attend and record minutes at LWV-VA monthly Board meetings, special meetings, and Convention and Council.
2. Ensure minutes are archived on google drive and accessible to League members, working with President to place on website.
3. May, at direction of President, act as archivist to assure all minutes, newsletters, and Convention/Council booklets are sent yearly to the Library of Virginia.
4. Maintain accurate records of all official LWV-VA actions, including changes in LWV-VA Board membership.
5. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Secretary position, to be stored on the Secretary's google drive and provided to successor.

### **Membership Director**

1. Provide a welcoming face to new members and supports the needs of individual members.
2. Report to the Board monthly on statewide membership.
3. Keep up to date on LWV-US Transformational Plan, in coordination with Board Transformational Liaison.
4. Provide recognition certificates for Life Members of LWV-VA.
5. Maintain the roster of Members-at-Large (MALs) and Leagues-at-Large.
6. Coordinate Membership Chair meetings/trainings.
7. Conduct membership enrollment, renewal, and transfers.
8. Works with the President to identify new MAL Leagues and other ways to grow diverse membership.
9. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Membership Director position, to be stored on the Membership Director's google drive and provided to successor.

### **Advocacy Director (or Co-Advocacy Directors)**

1. Serve as League's senior lobbyist: Lead and coordinate lobbying for the annual General Assembly Session, including advocacy alerts, scheduling testimony, etc.
2. Work with LWV-VA Executive Committee and Issue Group Leaders to determine LWV-VA legislative priorities for the General Assembly Session.
3. Assists in coordinating Issue Groups; if Issue Group and Task Force Coordinator position is established, oversee that position.
4. Identify Pre-Session, WLRTs, and League Day speakers with assistance of Issue Group leaders and State Events Coordinator (or person serving in that role) and relay that information to the President.
5. [Register annually as a lobbyist](#) in May. Registration expires annually on April 30. Registration is required for organizations with lobbying expenses exceeding \$500 annually. Should a change in the Advocacy Director or Co-Director occur during the course of the year, the registration will be updated accordingly.
6. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Advocacy Director position, to be stored on the Advocacy Director's google drive and provided to successor.

*(See additional information about Issue Group Chairs and Issue Groups in off-Board positions section below.)*

### **Voter Services Director**

1. Lead the state effort to provide best-in-class voter services across the commonwealth, including:
  - a. VOTE411
  - b. High school voter registration
  - c. Oversee National Voter Registration Day activities.
2. Lead monthly Voter Services calls for all voter service leaders of local Leagues to alert them to upcoming developments and to encourage sharing of information.
3. Assist local Leagues with voter services activities.
4. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Voter Services Director position, to be stored on the Voter Services Director's google drive and provided to successor.

### **Strategic Transformation Director**

Serve as primary point of contact for LWV-VA with LWV-US on issues relating to its Transformational Plan, scheduled to be implemented at launch in 2025. Communicate information to local League leadership and state Board as needed.

### **DEI**

1. Assure that DEI is a part of all of the work that LWV VA does.
2. Suggest effective trainings for leaders and members of LWV-VA and local Leagues.
3. Coordinate with the First Vice President in efforts to reach new groups and engage new partners.
4. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the DEI position, to be stored on the DEI position's google drive and provided to successor.

### **Policy Books and Training**

1. Develop (with committee) policy books for League leaders to facilitate their work.
2. Work with the President and First and Second Vice Presidents to develop trainings for local League leaders.
3. Once a year, review policy books.
4. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Policy/Training position, to be stored on the Policy/Training position's google drive and provided to successor.

### **Events Coordinator (whether a separate role or performed by a VP)**

1. Plan special events, WLRTs, League Day, and Pre-Session.
2. Coordinate Council and Convention.
3. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Policy/Training position, to be stored on the Policy/Training position's google drive and provided to successor.

### **Program Director**

1. Maintain and update official LWV-VA Positions, including history, ensuring that these policies are easily accessible online for League Members.
  - a. Provide the current Word and PDF documents to the webmaster for posting;
  - b. Present changes approved by the Board to the Convention and notify the webmaster of changes following the Convention.
2. Work with LWV-VA Study Committees, providing guidance, a suggested timeline and mentoring to ensure the success of the two-year studies that lead to LWV-VA policies.
3. The Program Director will facilitate communication among local Leagues about activities on program issues as needed. Activities may include:
  - a. Contributing articles to the LWV-VA newsletter, *The Virginia Voter*.
  - b. Communicating with local League program chairs, including providing information on studies and development of positions
  - c. Suggesting state-level presentations on issues and assisting in coordinating them in collaboration with other members.
4. Maintain a copy of all backup work for program studies in the LWV-VA office and on Program Director google drive.
5. Create, update, and maintain a calendar of important dates and deadlines related to the Program Director position, to be stored on the Program Director position's google drive and provided to successor.

### **Fundraiser (future position)**

*(Note: See additional information about Board member records retention responsibilities below: E. Guidelines for Correspondence and Preservation of Files.)*

## ***Off-Board Positions:***

### **Communications Coordinator**

1. Work with the President to develop social media campaigns.
2. Serve as podcast coordinator or enlist and oversee podcast coordinator as needed.
3. Assist local League leaders with Canva.

### **Newsletter**

Works with the President to produce the monthly newsletter.

### **Website Coordinator**

1. Updates the website.
2. Distributes advocacy alerts. (This can be done by the newsletter person as well.)

### **Issue Group Chairs and Issue Groups**

1. Issue Group Chairs
  - Recommend action supporting League positions in their assigned areas, with approval and guidance of the Advocacy Committee chair and the President.
  - Implement recommendations approved by the Advocacy Committee chair and/or President.
  - Educate League members on the issue through forums, articles in the *Virginia Voter*, etc.
  - Preserve minutes of their meetings on the LWV-VA shared google drive (and website, if appropriate).
  - Coordinate testimony writing and giving with the members of the Issue Group, run meetings of the Group as needed.
  - Meetings: The Issue Group chairs will meet jointly with the President and Advocacy chair throughout the year. Suggested months for meetings:
    - April: to discuss the budget
    - September: legislative priorities due for consideration by the state Board
    - October: preparation for legislative session (talking points due; pre-session/WLRT speaker invitee recommendations submitted to First VP)
    - November: preparation for pre-session and legislative session finalized
    - January/February: during the General Assembly session, meetings will be held on a weekly basis as needed and monthly at minimum.
2. [Issue Groups](#)

As of February 2025, LWV-VA has the following Issue Groups and task forces:

  - a. Affordable Housing
  - b. Child Care
  - c. Domestic and Gun Violence Prevention
  - d. Education
  - e. Environment
  - f. Physical Health Task Force



- g. Redistricting: paused
- h. Reproductive Health
- i. Transparency
- j. Voting & Elections (includes Elections Security, Money in Politics, and Voter Access).

League members may join any group by filling out this form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeYfvbs8zJSIjvSSwW0VK3P6PLgef-RSDm6Xi2nfNmQC7pXfg/viewform>

## B. Executive Committee

As provided in Article V, Sec. 7 of the Bylaws, an Executive Committee may act on behalf of the state Board on matters that cannot be postponed until the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President (or co-Presidents), Vice Presidents, Treasurer, and Secretary. The President has the discretion to refer items to the Executive Committee or the full Board between the Board's regular meetings. Any decision made by the Executive Committee must be recorded in minutes and reported at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

## C. Board Operations and Meetings<sup>5</sup>

- The President shall determine the dates and places for state Board meetings with consideration for the cost of the meetings and convenience of all state Board members. The state Board will meet a minimum of four times per year and more frequently as needed to conduct meetings. Meetings may be conducted virtually, **with the exception of two meetings per year which must be held in person.** All electronic meetings of the Board, issue groups, and task forces will be held on the state Zoom account. Members wishing to present business to the Board should ask the President to be included on the agenda and submit a relevant written report or proposal for including in meeting materials. When the deadline for requesting time on the agenda cannot be met, notify the President prior to the meeting and adjustments to the agenda will be made as appropriate.
- Board meeting materials, including a meeting agenda, background materials for agenda items as available, minutes of the most recent meeting, a Treasurer's Report, and other compiled written reports of Board and off-Board members, shall be made available before each board meeting electronically at least one week prior to the meeting. Each Board member should prepare for the meetings by reading carefully, in advance, the agenda and accompanying material, and contribute to the discussion by making pertinent points in an effort to achieve well-balanced policy decisions.
- State study item chairs, the Nominating Committee Chair, and other Off-board positions are encouraged to attend Board meetings, though attendance is not required unless they are listed on the agenda.

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from the 2015 LWV-VA Handbook and the LWV-Texas handbook.



- Board members unable to attend a meeting should notify the President.
- Unexcused absences (those not approved by the President) from two consecutive Board meetings, or three unexcused absences from Board meetings in a biennium, shall be considered a resignation from the Board. The Secretary shall record absences at the direction of the President. The president shall notify the Board member in writing of each unexcused absence.
- Board meetings are open to all League members.
- Topics and/or issues should only be discussed and voted on if the Board or League member responsible for the topic/issue is present at the Board meeting.
- The Board may vote by email on pressing matters between Board meetings, if necessary.
- Board members are serving as members of the League and not in their professional, executive, or administrative capacity.
- Orientation for a new Board should be held as soon as possible in the League year.
- The State Board may consider and adopt a calendar and distribute it to the local Leagues in July of each year.
- Rosters and local League Board directories (in the form of the State League Directory) will be distributed annually to the Board.

#### D. Parliamentary Procedure

- [LWV US Parliamentary Guidelines](#)
- Appendix I: Basic Parliamentary Procedures Guide<sup>6</sup>

#### E. Guidelines for Board Communications and Preservation of Files

The recordkeeping policy for LWVUS records is available [here](#). Another resource is the National Council of Nonprofits' [Document Retention Policy for Nonprofits](#).

In general:

- All state Board members should communicate about Board-related business via their LWV-VA email account and use the shared LWV-VA google drive associated with that email account for Board-related documents. All State Board members shall preserve their documents in the shared LWV-VA drive. The email and document archive will be made accessible to future Boards to assist in transitions between Board members and officers.
- To preserve the long history of the state League, all newsletters, minutes, and other important documents such as Convention/Council booklets, advocacy alerts, and news of special events are deposited at the Library of Virginia. **In January of each year**, the President shall designate either the Secretary or other member of the Board to collect these items and deposit them at the Library.
- Local Leagues should adopt a retention and archiving schedule of records and documents as applicable. local Leagues will make arrangements for archiving records in a location that is readily accessible in their local community. If assistance is needed, contact the LWV-VA President.

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook.

The full **LWV-VA Guidelines for Correspondence and Preservation of Files**<sup>7</sup> are as follows:

Copies of all official correspondence should be sent to the President. In addition, copies of official correspondence relating to program or action items should be sent to the Program Director or Action Coordinator; copies of official correspondence relating to organization matters should be sent to the Organization Director, if there is one. Correspondence may be e-mail, letters, computer files, or paper files. Electronic files should be stored specifically on the LWV-VA google drive, to which access will be transferred to subsequent LWV-VA Board members. The President and Treasurer should also preserve a duplicate of their electronic records on either a portable hard drive or another cloud-based storage repository to ensure records are preserved in the event the google drive fails.

1. **State President** or the office keeps the following files (electronic and/or paper):
  - a. One copy of each year's annual reports intact
  - b. State Board, Council, and Convention minutes for permanent file (paper)
  - c. Certified copy of the Virginia League's charter (paper)
  - d. One year's files of local League minutes and *Virginia Voter* if there is not a Board liaison for that local League (files may be electronic)
  - e. Copies of resource materials produced by State program item, action item, and *Voters*
  - f. Service chairs and their committees (electronic or paper)
  - g. Administrative files of League activity (electronic)
  - h. Deeds of Gifts to the Library of Virginia archives
  - i. Insurance policy papers
  - j. Office lease
  - k. Website contract
  - l. List of passwords
  - m. State Corporation Commission (SCC) filing papers
  - n. Lobbyist report copies to SCC
  - o. A copy of all publications issued
  - p. All agreements with partner organizations
  - q. All information pertaining to litigation or possible litigation
  - r. Any other information deemed necessary
  - s. A State Planning Calendar for the next President
2. **State League Secretary** shall preserve (paper and electronic) the permanent file of all minutes taken during their term of office (Board (operating fund and ed fund), Convention, and Council minutes)
3. **State League Treasurer** shall preserve as a permanent file (paper and electronic) from their time in office all Treasurer's Reports, all LWV-VA budgets from their term of office, records of tax filings, the Treasurer Information sheet, and all contracts and MOUs.

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted in March 2024 from the 2015 Handbook.

4. **State Advocacy Chair** shall preserve electronically as a permanent file all advocacy alerts, testimony, and minutes from Issue Group meetings during their time in office. In addition, all testimony and advocacy alerts will be available on the website for at least two years.
5. **State Events Coordinator** shall preserve electronically as a permanent file all planning documents for Council/Conventions, WLRT's, League Day, and Pre-Session during their time in office.
6. **Other Board members** will keep their own portfolios in a permanent file (paper and/or computer) that they will cull before turning over to their successor. Files older than 5 years should be sent to the archives.
7. All paper files should be backed up by google drive files if at all possible; pertinent google drive files also are turned over to each successor at the end of that Board member's term.

#### F. Guidelines for Board-Established Program Committees and Task Forces<sup>8</sup>

A committee, issue group, or task force does the work assigned to it by the Board. References to committees below will also pertain to task forces. The committee's members, duties, terms of office, and reporting requirements are defined by the Board/President. All committee members will also be League members. Working materials for committees and task forces should be furnished by the secretary. The materials could include:

- List of committee members with addresses and phone numbers
- Statement of motion, problem, or task referred to the committee
- Instructions from the Board/President
- Reports of similar committees or pertinent information
- Relevant policies, rules, or decisions relating to the committee's work
- The nature of the report and due date
- Budget (if any) and requirements for spending.

The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees except the Nominating Committee; as such, the President has full voting rights on the committee and access to the committee's meeting, materials, and minutes.

The committee chair, issue group leader, or task force coordinator calls the meetings and submits a plan of work for consideration and discussion. A majority of members is required for an official vote, as is a quorum.

#### G. Guidelines for Special Projects<sup>9</sup>

1. Responsibilities of the LWV-VA Board
  - a. Determines all policies connected with the project
  - b. Grants approval for conducting project
  - c. Appoints the project director and committees

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<sup>8</sup> Adapted in March 2024 from the 2015 Handbook.

<sup>9</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook.

- d. President and secretary sign all contracts
- e. Treasurer receives all money, pays all bills and keeps all financial records
- f. Board receives and evaluates final report
- g. State Communications Director may be called upon to handle publicity for special projects.

## 2. Responsibilities of Special Project Chairs

- a. Prepares a detailed project request to be considered by the Board. The request shall include:
  - b. statement of topic to be addressed.
  - c. justification for the League's participation in this project
  - d. goals and objectives
  - e. procedures, timetables, target audience, other cooperating groups or organizations
  - f. budget for equipment, supplies, postage, overhead, estimated number of volunteer hours and effort required, possible funding
  - g. feasibility of carrying out project (present restraining and supporting forces).
  - h. Submits project progress reports, and final evaluation for the state Board.

## H. Board Members and Local Leagues

Board members are encouraged to be active in their local Leagues. However, it is expected that the state level of the League will be the primary focus of their League volunteer time.

Board members should limit attendance at local League board meetings other than that of their own local League to those occasions when the local League agrees to include the visit on its agenda.

## I. Board Nomination and Elections

The composition and responsibilities of Nominating Committee in identifying and recommending candidates for election to the state Board are outlined in Article IX of the Bylaws. The Nominating Committee will give careful attention to identifying and recruiting a diverse field of candidates for the Board. The process for election of six directors at convention is outlined in Article IX. As provided in Article V, Section 1, elected members of the Board may appoint up to six additional directors.

As a courtesy, the state League Nominating Committee should, prior to naming a nominee for a state Board position, notify the nominee's local League President.

### III. Advocacy

#### A. Action & Advocacy Policy<sup>10</sup>

This policy applies to all advocacy activities based on state League positions in order to influence any branch of state or federal government. The state Board directs overall advocacy efforts by adopting goals and choosing legislative priorities; assigning issues; determining how, when, and by whom strategies shall be developed and implemented; entering into litigation (in consultation with LWVUS); resolving conflicts among local Leagues regarding jurisdiction or action that cannot be settled otherwise; and directing local League advocacy to state government.

##### *League Action*

When the League speaks or acts publicly, it does so through “official League channels” ONLY. It is important that the League “**speak with one voice**” which means that action at any level of League must not contradict positions or action of other [higher] levels of League (i.e., local positions cannot contradict regional, state, or national positions).

Of course, any member may express her/his opinion as an individual, and members are encouraged to do so. When speaking at a public meeting, addressing a public official, or writing to or in the media (newspaper/blog/social media), they must do so as an individual, not as a member of the League of Women Voters unless the President of that respective League has authorized it.

#### 1. Action at the State Government Level

Action to obtain support for League positions includes oral and/or written testimony to members of the General Assembly, committees of the Virginia General Assembly, the Governor, Commonwealth agencies, Commonwealth commissions, Commonwealth-level meetings and public hearings, and contacts with Commonwealth officials.

**Responsibility for Action and Advocacy:** All action at the state governmental level in the name of the LWV-VA is the responsibility of the LWV-VA Board. **Only the President, a director, or other League member designated by the President may speak for, or act on behalf of, the LWV-VA.** (Note: If LWV-VA has a lobbyist or paid field worker, they may act on issues agreed upon annually by the Board as “Action/Legislative Priorities” with approval of the President. local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large may act on state governmental issues only when authorized to do so by the state President and only in conformity with, not contrary to, the position taken by the LWV-VA. Individual members may act in the name of the League only when authorized to do so by the state Board.

**Each local League and League-at-Large may send a communication from the local League or League-at-Large,** or take whatever other official action is requested, in response to League Action Alerts (an official communication originated by the League that asks members to act about a specific issue covered by LWV positions). The LWV-VA may also request that local Leagues and Leagues-

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<sup>10</sup> Taken from 2015 Handbook.

at-Large ask their members to contact Commonwealth officials and speak as individual citizens, but not as League members, on issues of concern to the LWV-VA. The LWV-VA may send League Action Alerts directly to League members throughout Virginia.

Advocacy on LWV-VA positions: On some occasions, local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large may be asked to engage in advocacy activities to implement LWV-VA positions at the local level such as surveying or researching whether certain aspects of the position that are supported by Virginia legislation are being carried out in local agencies. This advocacy activity must be approved by the LWV-VA Board before being communicated to the local Leagues or Leagues-at-Large. Advocacy differs from “lobbying” in that there is no specific legislation being considered by the General Assembly (no bill number) or U.S. Congress at the time the advocacy activity is being requested; if current legislation is being considered, the activity is called an Action Alert.

**The Basis for LWV-VA Action:** Action at the state level must be based on LWV-VA or LWVUS positions and/or principles. If there is some question about whether a contemplated action is authorized under an LWV-VA or LWVUS position, clearance and clarification will be sought from the LWVUS.

**LWV-VA Action at the State Governmental Level Initiated by Local Leagues, Leagues-at-Large, and ILOs:** Before a local League, League-at-Large, or ILO initiates action at the state governmental level based on national, state, ILO, or local League positions, the local League, Leagues-at-Large, or ILO Board must obtain LWV-VA Board approval. In considering whether to grant permission, the following criteria will be applied:

- a. Does the issue or legislation relate to other local League or Leagues-at-Large and other cities, towns, or counties in the state?
- b. Is there a conflict in position between local Leagues within the Commonwealth?
- c. Would such action be in conflict with current LWV-VA or LWVUS positions?
- d. Is a local League studying the issue with an eye toward state member agreement?
- e. Is the issue divisive within the state?

If all the answers to the above questions are negative, the Board will probably grant permission, particularly if the legislation is clearly local. If the issue or legislation applies across the state, the Board may also grant approval in some cases. In cases where time for approval is too short for Board review, and if approval seems routine, the President may grant approval for local League, MAL, or ILO action without Board approval.

**Guidelines for Acting at the Commonwealth Government Level Based on Local Positions:** If the Board grants permission to a local League, Leagues-at-Large, or ILO to contact Commonwealth government officials to promote a local League or (in the case of Leagues-at-Large) LWV-VA position, the following applies:

- a. The local League, League-at-Large, or ILO may share with its legislators the research and results of the LWV-VA or local League study on the issue and request that they submit it to the appropriate legislative committees;
- b. The local League, League-at-Large, or ILO may testify to the standing committees of the legislature if the bill applies only to its respective city or cities, town(s), or county or counties. The local League, League-at-Large, or ILO should send a copy of its testimony to the LWV-VA office before the hearing(s) and report to LWV-VA on responses by the legislators. With specific LWV-VA Board approval, a local League or League-at-Large may also testify on bills that apply statewide. Knowing that testimony is frequently changed during the hearing before delivery of the testimony, a final copy must be provided to LWV-VA together with the report on responses by legislators. All testimony will be posted on the LWV-VA website in a timely fashion.
- c. The LWV-VA will maintain an action e-mail list that will consist of members of local Leagues, Leagues-at-Large, and MALs to be used for distribution of Action Alerts and pertinent information on a timely basis for Action participation.

LWV-VA's formal Action Alerts or Calls-to-Action to local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large generally pertain to proposed legislation related to the adopted priority issues, but they can include issues that arise during the legislative session or in the interim.

## 2. Action at the Federal Government Level

In response to Action Alerts issued by LWVUS, the LWV-VA has primary responsibility for contacting U.S. Senators and all members of the House of Representatives from Virginia. local League presidents and Leagues-at-Large Chairs should also contact Virginia's U.S. Senators and their respective members of the U.S. House of Representatives in response to LWVUS Action Alerts whenever possible.

local League and Leagues-at-Large should communicate to their members LWVUS Action Alerts to contact their congressional representatives (both Senators and representatives) from their districts. The members should act as individuals and not in the name of the League.

**Action Alerts on Federal Government Level Initiated by LWV-VA, Local Leagues, or Leagues-at-Large:** With LWVUS approval, the LWV-VA, local Leagues, and Leagues-at-Large may contact federal officials about proposed federal legislation that directly affects the Commonwealth or a local area.

Local and State Presidents should use this form to communication with LWVUS to request this action. Local president's need to inform the State President if they are sending a request to LWVUS (<https://www.lwv.org/federal-action-request-form>).

## **Action and Advocacy If No Position**

LWV-VA, local League, League-at-Large, and ILO leaders (officers, Board members, or off-Board chairs) may not advocate in opposition to a LWVUS or LWV-VA position. If the LWVUS or LWV-VA has no position on the issue, they may testify as individuals only.



### 3. Legislative Priorities

Each year the LWV-VA Board canvasses local Leagues, MALs, and Leagues-at-Large and our Issue Groups for suggestions on legislative priorities for the next General Assembly session. The Board selects the priority issues based on input from the local Leagues, Leagues-at-Large, and state Board members. The priorities establish the framework for LWV-VA action on legislation throughout the year.

Local Leagues will be notified no later than March of every year to complete the **legislative request form (see Appendix II)**. Leagues may discuss these issues at their annual meetings if desired. The completed forms must be returned to the state President no later than the following July.

Issue Group Leaders will present their legislative priorities to the Advocacy chair no later than July 15 of every year.

The State Board will approve all legislative priorities at the August Board meeting.

### 4. Contacting Legislators

Local Leagues, MALs, and Leagues-at-Large should establish a procedure for contacting their members of the General Assembly when requested to do so by the LWV-VA. Members of the Leagues should be prepared to respond as quickly as possible by contacting their legislators. The League members lobby their legislators as individuals.

Local Leagues, MALs, and Leagues-at-Large may hold candidate forums which include seated members of the General Assembly. They may also hold pre and post legislative sessions with members of the General Assembly.

For other events with members of the General Assembly or the Virginia Executive department please refer to the Event Policy (see below.)

### 5. Key Activities and Timeline

- a. Program Planning
- b. Local Leagues have program planning meetings in January for local issues and to recommend program changes for the State. In years that the State has a Convention, all recommendations from local Leagues regarding new program studies must be given to the State Board Program Chair by the February Board meeting.
- c. [Legislative Priorities](#) (approved by state Board in August annually)
- d. These are priorities based on LWV-VA and LWVUS policies for which the League will advocate during the General Assembly Session. See above for the dates local Leagues and Issue Groups must provide input to the State Advocacy chair.
- e. [Pre-Session](#) (First Wednesday in December. This has been a virtual event since 2020.)
- f. This is a one-day program in which LWV-VA partners are invited to share their legislative priorities. It is open to the public. LWV-VA priorities are also presented. The State Events Coordinator will work with the Issue Group and Advocacy Chairs to develop a list of invitees. All invitations are issued by the State Events Coordinator.



- g. [Women's Legislative Roundtable \(WLRT\)](#) (January-March) (see pp. 25-26 for Guidelines for WLRT)
- h. League Day (our day of Advocacy normally held at the mid-point of each General Assembly session). During League Day, attendees will be given talking points created by the Issue Groups as well as "leave behinds" to give to legislators. This will be coordinated by the Issue Group coordinators (if any) at the direction of the Advocacy Chair. The State may assist local Leagues who need help coordinating meetings with their members of the General Assembly. The Advocacy Chair will arrange for the League to be recognized on the floors of the House and Senate of the General Assembly at the opening of the Session that day. The Advocacy Chair, Event Coordinator, and President arrange speakers and agenda for the day.
- i. [Testimony](#) (During General Assembly) Coordinated by Issue Group Coordinator, Advocacy Chair and approved by the President.
- j. [Advocacy Alerts](#) (During General Assembly) Coordinated by Issue Group Coordinator, Advocacy Chair and approved by the President. The Advocacy Chair must check daily calendars for hearings and floor activities to assure that these are done as far in advance as possible.

#### 6. Timeline for Virginia General Assembly

The Virginia legislature, known as the General Assembly, consists of the Senate and the House of Delegates. This branch of government makes and changes the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. There are 140 legislators: 40 Senators and 100 Delegates. Senators serve four-year terms and Delegates serve two-year terms.

The General Assembly convenes each year on the second Wednesday in January. In even-numbered years, the session is held for 60 days. In odd-numbered years, the session is held for 30 days (although frequently extended to 45 days). The General Assembly reconvenes on the sixth Wednesday after adjournment of the regular session for the purpose of considering the Governor's recommendations and vetoed legislation. Bills that become law at a regular session are effective the first day of July following adjournment of that session unless otherwise specified. From time to time, the Governor may also call for the General Assembly to convene for a special session.

#### B. Guidelines for the Women's Legislative Roundtable (WLRT)<sup>11</sup>

1. The purpose of the Women's Roundtable is to provide a forum for all, involving legislators and policy experts, to exchange information, materials, and ideas among groups and individuals, especially League members, with concerns for legislation affecting women and families.
2. LWV-VA sponsorship of the WLRT should be reviewed annually. Format (including day and time) should also be reviewed: WLRTs were virtual from 2020-2021, from 2022 forward they were hybrid events.
3. The Advocacy Chair will seek a legislator-sponsor of the WLRT. This sponsorship is the key to continuing LWV-VA leadership, enables WLRT to schedule meetings in General Assembly conference committee rooms, and ensures WLRT inclusion in the House and Senate calendars.

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<sup>11</sup> Adapted from the 2015 Handbook.

4. The LWV-VA President, or her surrogate, will lead the meeting of WLRT. The President, Event Coordinator, and Advocacy chair will prepare an agenda and a summary of pending legislation, if possible, and try to elicit input from all participants. Specific legislation can be tracked through the [Legislative Information Service \(LIS\) system](#) on the General Assembly website and [Richmond Sunlight](#). The State Event Coordinator will issue all invitations to speakers.
5. The Advocacy Chair will assure that all members of the General Assembly receive an invitation to stop by or send staff to WLRTs.
6. Protocol for conducting the WLRT dictates that arriving legislators receive precedence over non-legislative speakers when speaking with the group, since they have limited time for participating in the WLRT.
7. It is important to have legislators from both political parties to speak whenever possible, to ensure the non-partisan status of the League.
8. Each WLRT will address a legislative priority of the League.
9. Issue Group leaders will, as able, emcee the WLRT addressing their topic and provide a review (and information sheet) on the legislation they are tracking that session. They or a member of their group will act as back-up for the week their topic is addressed in case a speaker cannot attend at the last minute.
10. WLRT schedule and date for League Day will be finalized by the President and Advocacy chair no later than November 1 of every year.

### C. Collaboration with Other Organizations

#### 1. Coalitions<sup>12</sup>

##### a. Guidelines for Joining Coalitions

League action is accomplished in many ways. Combining forces for joining action toward limited and well-defined objective can double or triple League impact.

**Joining a coalition is a state Board decision.** Before the LWV-VA Board decides to join an action coalition, Board members should fully understand the commitment involved (time, money, resources) and should, if possible, plan to play a leadership role (on a steering committee, for example) in order to influence the activities of the coalition. The goals, if not the motivation, of the League and the coalition must not conflict.

If the coalition decides to endorse candidates after the League has joined, the League should, at a minimum, issue a statement dissociating itself from that aspect of the coalition's work, or the League may decide to withdraw. If the coalition concentrates its activities on supporting or opposing candidates or if League goals diverge from those of the coalition, the League should not participate.

The state Board should weigh the following guidelines when considering joining a coalition:

- 1) The coalition's major issues should mesh with League positions though there need not be a League position on every issue with which the coalition is concerned.

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<sup>12</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook.

- 2) The major goal of the coalition should be in accord with adopted League priorities, or the goals should be ones the League expects to work to achieve in the future. The coalition must be non-partisan and may not endorse candidates from only one party for office.
- 3) The coalition's activities should bring added effectiveness to the overall efforts to achieve the League's organization, advocacy, or educational goals.
- 4) The coalition members should be organizations with which the League can work effectively. The League should have confidence in the leadership of the coalition and may serve in a leadership capacity.
- 5) Expenditures for work with the coalition (including volunteer time, as well as cash and in-kind expenses) should be worth the investment.
- 6) It must be determined how much time will be required from the League and if the League has volunteers to provide that time, and also if the work will involve local Leagues and if they will agree to cooperate. Ideally, LWV-VA would appoint a representative to each coalition it joins.
- 7) The League representative to a coalition must have prior approval of the state League President before making any formal or public statement of League positions on a specific issue. If the League disagrees with the majority opinion of the coalition, the League should dissociate itself and issue a public statement of the League's dissent.
- 8) It must be determined how much funding will be required from the League, if the League has the funds or can get them, and from what source(s).
- 9) It must be determined how much expertise will be required from the League and if the League can provide it.
- 10) To ensure the full effectiveness of LWV-VA participation in any coalition, the LWV-VA representative to the coalition must be available to do the required work within a coalition, to report regularly in writing to the Board on coalition activity, to be involved in decisions, and actively to engage LWV-VA membership in that coalition-related activity.

b. Sample Letter to Organization/Coalition upon Joining

Date:

To:

The League of Women Voters of Virginia is pleased to be able to cooperate with (name of organization or coalition) on (project's name/purpose). However, the League must do so under the following conditions:

- 1) The League of Women Voters of Virginia is strictly nonpartisan and does not endorse political parties or candidates. If (organization/coalition) in any way endorses a candidate or a party at some future time, the League will respectfully withdraw at that time.
- 2) If a decision is reached by the (organization/coalition) that conflicts with a League position, the League reserves the right to issue an opposing statement and/or to withdraw from participation. To this end, you are requested to keep the League informed of all activities that might affect our concerns.
- 3) (Name of organization or coalition) shall never use the League's name or logo on statements, letters, press releases, publications, or any other

materials without prior League consent. Such consent is required each time the group wishes to use the League name or logo. The Issue Chair, Advocacy Director, and President before the League name or logo shall approve a request is used.

We look forward to working with (organization/coalition) to (purpose of cooperation) under the aforementioned conditions.

Sincerely,  
President  
League of Women Voters of Virginia

## 2. Guidelines For Cooperation with Other Organizations<sup>13</sup>

- a. Co-Sponsoring A Meeting (Board decision)
  - 1) Issue must be one on which we are placing at least moderate emphasis
  - 2) Other organization must be known to be responsible
  - 3) Guidelines for procedures must be clearly written and approved by representatives from both organizations
  - 4) Our representative should be involved in decisions
  - 5) Cost should be weighed against benefit.
- b. Lending Our Name to Another Organization (Board decision)
  - 1) Issue must be one on which we are placing at least moderate emphasis
  - 2) Other organization must be known to be responsible
  - 3) Must offer us something we could not as easily attain on our own
  - 4) Name must be lent for only one specific purpose, not general use
  - 5) LWV-VA support must be reviewed annually.
- c. Acting Independently on an Issue at the Request of Another Organization (Item chair and President decision with report to Board)
  - 1) Issue must be one on which we are placing at least moderate emphasis
  - 2) Value to us should be weighed against time and money involved.
- d. Disseminating Information from Another Organization to Our Members (Item chair and President decision)
- e. Providing Information to Other Organizations (Item chair and President decision)
- f. Participation in Roundtables
  - 1) Issue must be one on which we are placing at least moderate emphasis
  - 2) Sole function must be exchange of information and ideas
  - 3) Roundtable must have bylaws or operating guidelines.

## 3. League Participation in Marches & Events

LWVUS: [Criteria for League Participation in Marches & Events](#)

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<sup>13</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook.

#### D. LWV-VA Event Policy (including speaker invitation guidelines)

This policy applies to internal issue group events and public events and helps protect the reputation of the LWV of Virginia.

*Approved June 24, 2021; Amended November 8, 2021; March 24, 2024*

Local Leagues, Leagues-at-Large, or members may not host an event billed as an event of the League of Women Voters of Virginia.

No local League will invite Virginia executive branch officials to their events without approval by the LWV Virginia Board via the President. Local Leagues may invite their members of the General Assembly to educational events and candidate forums. Before inviting members outside of their geographical borders, the State Board and the local League represented by that member(s) must approve.

Working with Declared Candidates: The LWV-VA will not invite any candidate qualified by ELECT currently running for local or state office to participate in any event within forty-five days of the primary election in which they are running, or sixty days before the general election in which they are running. In the case of a special election, no qualified candidate will be invited within forty-five days of it. If someone has been invited and qualifies for a sudden special election that will take place within the forty-five day limit, the Board will make the decision as to their participation.

Before any Issue Group hosts an event or establishes a subcommittee to work on an event (whether alone or with a partner organization) they must send a written outline at least 8 weeks\* in advance of proposed event date to the President, Issue Group Coordinator, and the State Events Coordinator with the following information:

- Purpose
- Date or date range
- Proposed speakers
- Cost
- Location (or virtual)
- Whether it is a League member only or public event
- Marketing campaign
- Partner organizations invited to co-host or participate
- What other resources the issue group will share to attendees following the event (data, recordings).

Issue Group events will be coordinated with the State Events Coordinator. The state League will sell tickets through its Eventbrite account only and, if held virtually, will be done so through the League Zoom or other media account as will all planning events. Official promotional materials must be approved by the state President and distributed only by the approved channels of the LWV Virginia.

Contracts for speakers or meeting sites must be signed by the President or person designated by them.

Planning and marketing of an event will begin only after the event is approved by the

LWV Virginia Board via the President. The group working on the event will check in with the State Events Coordinator at least once a week in a manner the coordinator establishes to meet benchmarks for a successful and organized event.

*If the event is being produced by LWV Virginia issue groups, they will give the Advocacy Chair the name(s) and brief bio (or link to bio) of each proposed speaker. If approved by the President, the Advocacy Chair will work with the group to issue the invitation.*

All event attendees will receive an event evaluation created in conjunction with the State Events Coordinator.

The coordinator of the event will give the State Events Coordinator a follow up report containing the following information:

- The number of volunteers involved in the event;
- The number of attendees broken down by League and non-League members;
- The number of partner organizations involved;
- Problems encountered and ideas for improving future events.

This report is due two weeks after the event.

*\*If an issue or study group wishes to host a speaker(s) for an issue/study group-member only, closed event for the purposes of education of its members, it may present the request for Board approval four weeks in advance.*

## IV. Voter Education

### A. [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org)

Vote411 is overseen by the LWV-VA Voter Services Director (VS Director). The VS Director may annually request Board approval to provide funding for entering all Virginia races into Vote411.

1. Assigning Races in an Election. The VS Director will assign races to local Leagues, based on their jurisdictions, as soon as practicable before the start of an election's Early Voting. These assignments relate to Vote411 responsibilities and other voter education. Any Virginia race not assigned to a local League will be managed by the VS Director. All statewide offices will be managed by the VS Director. Presidential elections are managed by LWVUS.
2. Setting Up Races in Vote 411. The VS Director will determine whether and which of the local Leagues will be responsible for setting up one or more races in their jurisdictions in Vote411.
3. Outreach to Candidates. As soon as possible after the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) candidate filing deadline for the election race, the assigned local League or VS Director will reach out to each qualified candidate (whether or not opposed) for all assigned races, using the Vote411 mail tool.
  - a. Questions for Candidates. The VS Director will develop the candidate questions, and seek Board approval, for these races: all statewide races, all General Assembly races, and all Congressional races. local Leagues will draft local issue questions for their assigned races and are encouraged to work with the VS Director for appropriate language. Questions for candidates should be open ended, non-leading, fair, balanced, and nonpartisan. For examples, see: [Sample Questions for Debates and Voters' Guides](#).
    - 1) Editing. No editing for spelling or grammar mistakes is permitted, so candidates cannot say their answers were changed by the League. As appropriate, the VS Director or local League may reach out to an assigned race candidate to encourage responses.
    - 2) No Response from Candidate. If the candidate does not respond by the publishing deadline, they will be listed with the notation "*No response received by the print deadline.*" If submitted after the publishing deadline, their information will be included.
    - 3) References to Opponents, Parties. Negative references to opponents (including office holders) or specific persons are not allowed. General references to other political parties may be allowed.
  - b. No Candidate Races; Write-in Candidates. For some races, there will be no qualified candidates or someone will seek voters to write-in a candidate's name (not permitted in primaries). Races are set up in Vote 411, even if there are no qualified candidates (an explanation should be included in the Race Description). Names of write-in candidates, whether or not announced, are not included in Vote411, and a write-in candidate is not contacted.



## B. Printed Voters Guides

Printed or electronic Vote411 Voter Guides may be produced. The Vote411 guidance above applies.

### 1. Publication Guidelines

- a. Non-partisan Statement. The League nonpartisan policy should always be printed in a prominent place on the front page of a League voters guide: *"The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any political party or candidate."*
- b. Copyright and Reproduction
  - 1) An LWV-VA or local League Voters Guide should be copyrighted. Copyrighted materials of the LWV-VA or its local Leagues may not be reprinted without permission.
  - 2) If the state League Voters Guide is reproduced by local Leagues, Leagues-at-Large, newspapers, or other organizations in any media, print or electronic form, it must be attributed to the state League and include the statement of League nonpartisanship: *"The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any political party or candidate."*
  - 3) The Voters Guide content concerning candidates and/or issues must be reproduced in its entirety, except that regional races not on the local ballot may be omitted.
  - 4) VOTE411.org and other online Voters Guides are subject to the same copyright policies as printed Voters Guides.
  - 5) Where possible, materials will be provided in Spanish or other languages appropriate and beneficial to the Virginia voting population.
- c. Publication and Distribution of Printed Voters Guides
  - 1) Voters Guides may be published and distributed in hard copy and can be made available online through local League websites.
  - 2) Free copies of Voters Guides may be distributed by LWV-VA or local Leagues to selected local libraries, including areas not served by a local League or League-at-Large.
- d. Advertisements
  - 1) LWVUS [Voters Guide Advertising Guidance](#) must be followed.
  - 2) A membership ad for the League may be included in the Voters Guide. However, a 501(c)(4) League shall not place membership information funded with 501(c)(3) Education Fund money.

## C. Candidate Debates and Forums Supported by LWV

### 1. State and Local League Responsibilities

- a. The state League is responsible for organizing debates or forums for statewide offices, such as governor and U.S. senator. A forum coordinator should be appointed by the Voter Services Director and approved by the President.
- b. Local Leagues need state Board approval to sponsor debates or forums in their areas involving statewide offices. Where appropriate, the state League will invite local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large to co-sponsor forums or debates involving candidates for statewide office.
- c. Local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large have responsibility for debates or forums for U.S. representative, state senator, state representative, regional candidates, and all local candidates in their areas.



- d. Local Leagues should have a written forum and debate policy, including rules, procedures and criteria, and it should be reviewed annually. Leagues-at-Large use LWV-VA /LWVUS policies.
- e. Since election laws change, the state League will ascertain before each election cycle information regarding any election law changes from the Federal Election Commission ([www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)), the IRS ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)), the Federal Communications Commission (<https://www.fcc.gov/>), and the Virginia Department of Elections office, and will consult with local counsel as needed.

## 2. General Guidelines for All Debates and Forums

- a. Forums and debates must be nonpartisan and ensure that all participating candidates will be treated fairly and equally.
- b. All candidates for the races included on the ballot must be invited to participate. Only qualified candidates should be allowed to participate, and no substitute may stand in for a candidate.
- c. A letter of invitation should include the criteria for participation, debate/forum format and rules, candidate's acceptance of format and rules, and a waiver for League distribution of debate content. It should be sent to candidates in a traceable form (USPS delivered with signed mail receipt or email returned mail receipt).
- d. The language of the waiver for distribution should be: *"The debate or forum content is the property of the LWV, and permission must be sought to rebroadcast the debate or forum in its entirety or to print excerpts. Candidates must agree that no portion of the debate or forum will be used in a political advertisement."*
- e. Issues of interest to the general public must be included.
- f. The meeting must be open to the public, in a place that is accessible and will not seem to exclude some potential audience, unless conducted for broadcast-only purposes or using a digital platform.
- g. Donations from candidates or political parties should not be solicited or accepted.

## 3. Live Streaming Guidance

- a. Identify the League: Display a podium sign with logo or a banner in front of the candidate table or across the back of the stage showing the League name.
- b. Use tent cards or place cards for each candidate with the LWV logo and their name.
- c. Nonpartisan Statement. The moderator shall provide a very brief introductory and closing message stating the date and name of the League and that this is a nonpartisan candidate forum being published unedited.

## 4. Federal Regulation Federal Elections Commission: [FEC regulations for Federal elections](https://www.fec.gov/); Internal Revenue Service: <https://www.irs.gov/>; Federal Communications Commission: <https://www.fcc.gov/>.

- a. The Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulates the conduct of corporate, labor and nonprofit organizations in federal elections, including both 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations. While these rules are not required to be followed for state and local elections, all Leagues should adhere to them as much as possible.
  - 1) Debate: FEC regulations define a debate as an event that (a) includes at least two candidates, (b) is staged in a way that does not promote or advance one

candidate over another, and (c) allows the candidates to appear concurrently, in face-to-face confrontations, with opportunities to respond to each other.

2) Forum: The FEC defines a forum or other non-debate candidate appearance as a place, meeting, or medium where ideas and views on particular issues are exchanged.

- b. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates radio, television, and cable broadcasters. Under its regulations, a broadcaster that permits a candidate for any public office—federal, state, or local—to use its facilities must provide all other legally qualified candidates for the same office with equal opportunities for use.
- c. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules provide that 501(c)(3) organizations “may not participate or intervene, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.” **This prohibition applies to campaigns for public office at all levels—federal, state, and local.** A violation of IRS rules could jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the 501(c)(3) organization responsible.

## 5. Candidate Participation Guidelines

- a. Virginia Qualification. Candidates must satisfy all requirements to be on the ballot, according to the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT).
- b. Federal Race Candidate Participation Guidelines
  - 1) A debate or forum must have at least two candidates for each federal office. An empty chair debate (where only one candidate is present) cannot be held as it can be considered by the FEC as an in-kind contribution or providing “something of value” to a federal candidate and thus subject to the prohibitions of federal election laws. A single candidate for a federal office may not be a speaker at a debate or forum.
  - 2) A debate or forum should not start if only one candidate for a federal office is present. If the debate or forum includes several races, the other races may begin while waiting for the late candidate.
  - 3) If a candidate declines, cancels, or does not appear, the debate or forum may proceed if more than one candidate for the federal office is present. If only one is present, the debate or forum for that office must be canceled. The moderator may present any factual reasons given by the candidate without editorial comment. If the candidate who canceled provides a statement, the moderator may read it. If no reason is given, the League should state that it was contacted by the candidate or the campaign and told the candidate would not be able to appear. The League can state that no reason was given for canceling.
  - 4) Attempts may be made to reschedule the debate or forum.
  - 5) If a candidate refuses to participate, the League president may submit a letter to the editor of local/statewide newspapers stating that candidates are expected to participate and if they do not, they are denying the community an opportunity for public education about them and the issues.

## 6. Guidelines for Statewide Debates

- a. Only a person qualified in accordance with Virginia law to have their name printed on the ballot by the Virginia Board of Elections (ELECT) will be invited to participate

- in LWV-VA sponsored candidate events.
- b. If the LWV-VA Board should choose to organize itself for debate planning purposes for statewide elections, especially for senatorial and gubernatorial contests, the following should apply: a) seed money in the LWV-VA operating budget, and b) appointment in January, of statewide election years, of a committee from the Board to explore the possibility of holding an LWV-VA sponsored debate and a point person (Debate Chair) appointed by the Voter Services Director with approval of president to head the committee.
  - c. Allow 6 to 9 months lead time for exploration and preliminary planning. LWV-VA budget should include a minimum of \$1,000 for seed money to investigate debate possibilities.
  - d. Members of a preliminary planning committee, to include Voter Services Director, Debate Chair, Fund Raising Chair (if applicable), and Communications Director, should be appointed in January. The Board should set a date for the planning committee to report on preliminary responses from possible candidates, availability of funding, recommendations for site and project director, possible coalition partner, and at which time the Board should make the final decision as to whether or not to proceed with a debate.
  - e. To facilitate a clear understanding between the state League and local Leagues in the area of the debate site, a Memorandum of Understanding as to the responsibilities of each should be developed after negotiations between the state League and the local Leagues or coalition partners.
  - f. The Debate Chair is responsible for planning and implementation of the debate. It decides on goals, explores participation with all potential nominees, develops criteria for candidate selection, secures an advisory committee, approves the budget, secures funding and consultants, and plans format, location, and media coverage with approval by the President.
  - g. Total budget should be realistic for travel, telephone, publicity, etc. and should include TV or media transmission costs.
  - h. The Fund Raising Chair could consider requesting contributions to fund specific items in the budget.
  - i. An advisory committee appointed in the early stages of planning has potential value in lending prestige and influence as well as fulfilling its advisory role dealing with funding, format, broadcaster, publicity, etc. One meeting is probably all that is necessary.
  - j. Consultants may be appointed as necessary. It is important to have on-call an attorney familiar with communication law. A TV consultant and a political consultant might also be considered.
  - k. Negotiations with the candidates should be conducted:
    - 1) by the Voter Services Director, Debate Chair, and one or two members of the steering committee at a neutral site;
    - 2) with a written debate package proposal presented to candidates as early as possible after nomination, to serve as agenda for the first meeting;
    - 3) with the steering committee having decided what is negotiable and what is not;
    - 4) by following up the initial meeting with either an agreement ready for signature or a Memorandum of Understanding listing items that are still under negotiation, stating those items that were agreed upon will not be open to

further negotiation unless all parties agree, and asking for immediate response in writing as to available dates. If a second negotiating session is required, establish date at close of first meeting;

- 5) by certified mail in the case of significant correspondence, agreements, and invitations.
  - l. Negotiations with the broadcaster (prime carrier): Develop an understanding of the prime carrier's responsibilities and record it in a Memorandum of Understanding. Transmission statewide should be secured early enough for publicity purposes to develop an audience.
  - m. Moderator and panelists need not be limited to reporters and commentators; columnists and academicians should be considered. A well-known moderator is a plus; use of a moderator only should be considered. (Refer to LWVUS training material on format.)
  - n. It is desirable to have a debate site that meets needs as a physical facility with TV coverage needs: a pressroom with TV monitors, telephone, and ideally internet service; dressing rooms for candidates; and seating for a live audience.
  - o. If invitations are used, they should be shared equally by each candidate and the League. Agreement on numbers should be in writing. Doors should close at announced time; 15 minutes before debate is probably enough unless prime carrier requires more time.
    - 1) Media coverage should include initial press conference announcement, and this may be sufficient unless controversy develops. Plans for publicity should be developed including op-ed pieces by consultants, letters to the editor, press releases, etc.
    - 2) Formal acknowledgment should be given to all who contributed to the debate.
    - 3) Report and evaluation from the steering committee and project director should be presented to Board no more than 2 months after the event.
7. Co-Sponsorship of Debates and Forums
- a. Co-sponsors cannot endorse or be affiliated with a candidate or ballot issue and must be approved by the League Board. Any group whose leadership has made public statements for or against any candidate, which is known to support a candidate informally, or that advocates for an issue on the ballot should not be asked to be a co-sponsor. An exception can be made if both of the two major political parties (Democratic and Republican) are co-sponsors.
  - b. The League should take the lead in contacting the candidates, negotiating disputes, and controlling the format for a forum that is co-sponsored. The League should provide the moderator and timekeeper or should approve of them in advance. The moderator should not be identified as a member of a political party or a friend of one or more of the candidates.
8. Candidate Debates and Forums Sponsored by Others
- a. A League may moderate a candidate forum sponsored by another organization as long as the forum conforms to League procedures and principles to ensure a nonpartisan event. The League should provide the sponsoring organization with information about its requirements for candidate forums, including inviting all candidates, allowing equal time for all candidates, placement of any candidate

materials, videotaping, etc.

- b. The sponsoring organization cannot endorse or be affiliated with a candidate or ballot issue and must be approved by League leadership. The League should not moderate a forum for any group whose leadership has made public statements for or against any candidate, which is known to support a candidate informally, or that advocates for an issue on the ballot.
- c. The sponsoring organization may take the lead in contacting the candidates and planning the date, time, and location, although the League may provide help upon request. The format of the forum should be agreed upon by the League and the sponsoring organization.
- d. The League should provide the moderator, timekeeper, and question screener, if possible. The moderator should not be identified as a member of a political party or a friend of one or more of the candidates. Additional volunteers may come from the sponsoring organization.
- e. Broadcast Policies
  - 1) A radio, television, or cable broadcaster must not edit the debate or forum, and it must be broadcast in its entirety, either live or reasonably soon after the debate. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires that a debate or forum must include at least two candidates. The exception is news media reporting on the event.
  - 2) Candidates are not allowed to use or edit the recording for campaign purposes.
  - 3) Candidate cell phones must be turned off. The moderator should announce that unauthorized videos are not allowed because the FCC requires that the debate must not be edited and must be broadcast in its entirety, except by media reporting on events.
  - 4) The content of the recording belongs to the League and its co-sponsors. Any use of the recording requires the approval of the League with the caveat that it must be broadcast in its entirety. The recording can be posted in written or streaming audio/video on a League website or another website if approved by the League. It can be broken into segments as long as all segments are available.

## 9. Additional Resources

### a. LWV-VA Candidate Event Toolkits

[Candidate Forum Toolkit](#)

[Organizing a "Candi-dating" with Candidates Event Toolkit](#)

### b. LWV-US and Other League Guidance

[LWVUS FAQ's: Candidate Forums-Debates](#)

[Hosting Virtual and Hybrid Candidate Debates & Forums](#)

[LWVUS Empty Chair Debate Tips](#)

[LWV US Guidelines for State and Local League Debates Including "Empty Chair" Debates](#)

## V. Program/Studies

### A. Program Responsibilities

The LWV-VA Bylaws (Article X, Section 2) establish:

The program of the LWV-VA shall consist of action to implement the Principles and those state governmental issues chosen for concerted study or concurrence and action by the convention or, if recommended by the board, the council. Information on governmental issues designed for member information and education may be prepared and disseminated by the board at any time.

### B. Program Adoption

1. Local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large Propose New Studies, Concurrence,<sup>14</sup> and Updates to Positions
  - a. Local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large provide all members with the opportunity to make recommendations for new statewide program studies or changes to existing LWV-VA positions at the program planning meeting in January of a year in which there is a state Convention.
  - b. Boards of local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large vote on recommendations based on member input and submit them to the Program Chair by the last day of February of the year in which there is a state Convention ([Program@lww-va.org](mailto:Program@lww-va.org)).
  - c. Issue Groups must submit recommendations to the state Program Chair by the last day of February in the year in which there is a state Convention.
  - d. All groups should show a willingness and member commitment to work on the study if adopted.
  - e. All of the following criteria should be considered by a local League or League-at-Large before recommending a new study or update or concurrence:
    - Will LWV-VA goals be achieved with this position?
    - Is the position still relevant?
    - Is the position applicable to current public policy issues or concerns?
    - Have circumstances changed?
    - Are there new laws that impact this position?
    - Is the position clear?
    - Is there still member understanding and agreement concerning this position?
    - Can the issue be resolved by government action? At what level? Does the League already have a position at any level that could address the specific issue? Can the League's involvement make a difference? Is there enough enthusiasm for the topic? Do we have the resources (both monetary and human) to work on it?
2. Local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large Propose Adoption of New Positions by Concurrence  
Local Leagues planning to propose adoption of new positions by concurrence at the Convention must submit their intentions to the state Program Chair by the last day of February in the year in which there is a state Convention.

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<sup>14</sup> For information about the Concurrence process, see p. 51.



3. State Board Recommends New Study, Changes in Positions, or Restudy
  - a. The Program Chair presents program recommendations for a new study, concurrence, or review to the state Board based on recommendations from Issue Group Chairs and from local Leagues at the March Board meeting in the year in which there is a state Convention.
  - b. The state Board votes to adopt the proposed program.
  - c. After the March Board meeting, the Program Chair informs the local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large who proposed the program that it was adopted by the state Board.
  - d. The state Board informs all local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large no later than 30 days before the Convention or statewide conference of the proposed program that will be voted on at Convention.
4. Convention Delegates Vote on New Study, Changes in Positions, or Restudies.

Delegates vote first on the proposed studies and changes to existing program positions recommended by the Board before voting on any non-recommended items approved for consideration.
5. For studies and updates on positions, a study Committee is established for each issue (if there is more than one) to undertake the study or studies and should follow these steps once a study chair is appointed:
  - a. Invite other League members around the state who are interested in the issue to join the study committee;
  - b. Create a timetable and outline of activities to accomplish within the two year timeframe;
  - c. Share information with Program Chair and all Leagues through the monthly newsletter and other means;
  - d. Research the history and substance of the issue, including the various points of view;
  - e. Prepare a report with consensus questions at the end of the first year of study that is shared at LWV-VA Council meeting;
  - f. Program Chair notifies local Leagues that the study is ready to be presented to the Leagues for consensus discussions;
  - g. Study Committee presents to local Leagues and helps with consensus discussions from August through November of the second year;
  - h. Study Committee and Program Chair review results of consensus discussions and drafts positions for Board review and approval by January of the second year;
  - i. Once Board approves final position statement at February Board meeting, Program Chair notifies local Leagues of final position to be adopted at Convention.

### C. Additional Program Considerations

From time to time, other state Leagues may request that local and state Leagues adopt their positions by concurrence and/or ask the LWVUS to adopt that state's position by concurrence. When this occurs, the Program Chair may present the request to the Board for adoption. Depending on the complexity of the issue, the Program Chair may schedule an educational presentation of the issue and position for all Leaguers in the state to learn about the issue. The Program Chair will relay this information to the Local Program Chairs

and request that they place the issue on the agenda for consideration at their annual program planning meeting in January of even years.

#### **D. Participation in LWWUS Studies**

The Program Chair will also coordinate LWW-VA participation in any LWWUS studies.

#### **E. Additional Resources**

[LWWUS Leaders Guide to LWWUS Program Planning 2022-2024](#)

[LWWUS Impact On Issues 2022-2024](#)

[LWWUS 2024-2026 Program Planning Instructions](#)

[LWWUS Program Planning Glossary](#)

[LWW-VA Program Page](#)

[LWW-VA Positioned for Action Page](#)

LWW-VA Concurrence Procedure (see p. 51)



## VI. Communications

### A. League Spokesperson

1. State Board
  - a. The state Board President is the official spokesperson for the state League.
  - b. The President may also authorize a designated League member as a spokesperson.
2. Local Leagues
  - a. Official statements are made only by a League President, or by a League member authorized by the President.
  - b. Local Leagues should state in their local policies: "The President is the official spokesperson for [name of local League], or a designated League member authorized by the President."
3. Leagues-at-Large
  - a. Official statements shall be made only by the League-at-Large President or team leader, or by a League member authorized by the President or team leader.

### B. Approvals

State League publications or online material for public distribution or for distribution to local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large shall be submitted as draft documents to the President for Board review and approval.

### C. Brand Standards/Use of Logo

All Leagues shall follow [LWVUS brand standards](#) and ensure that the LWV brand is represented correctly, consistently, and professionally whenever it appears in print or online.

### D. Gender-neutral Language

Use gender-neutral language whenever possible in League communications.

### E. Photography, Video, and Audio Recordings

1. Use of Footage of League Events by Other Entities

For in-person, virtual, or hybrid events, LWVUS recommends that debate or forum moderators issue a verbal statement at the beginning of the event to this effect: "Recordings of this event, whether in-person or on a digital device, may not be used without the express written approval of the League. The League will only allow audio/video of this event to be broadcast in its entirety, except by the media reporting on the event. No portion of the forum in a political advertisement." This statement should also be written in the description of the virtual event and candidates should be asked to agree in writing prior to the event that they will not use any footage/images of the program in political advertisements.
2. Waiver/Notice Templates (for Those Who May be Captured in a Recording)

Use the LWVUS waiver/notice templates when conducting photo shoots and video/audio recordings of League events. It is important to use these forms in order to protect the League's right to photos and audio/videos recorded for organic and promotional use, such as website, social media, print, etc. Please share your League event photos with us at [Communications@lww-va.org](mailto:Communications@lww-va.org).

### 3. Use of Images/Compliance with Copyright Laws

- a. Your own images: You have ownership of photos you take. If you are photographing or filming non-League individuals at events or in public, use our photo release forms to get written permission and keep them on file as long as you keep the photographs.
- b. Images from the LWVUS Flickr site: All of these images are owned by the League of Women Voters and licensed for use by local and state Leagues. The historical images that LWV owns are in a separate historical images album on that Flickr site and Leagues may use these for League content.
- c. Free stock photos from legitimate websites that are licensed for public use: It is important to adhere to any usage/credit/permissions requirements associated with these images. Some images require an image credit to the website or photographer.

### F. Social Media: Guidelines and Resources

[LWVUS: Social Media Guide](#) is a valuable resource. State and local League accounts should:

- use the full name of the League (i.e., League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_) and be as consistent as possible across social media channels
- use your League's official email addresses (not a member's personal email address) to set up social media accounts
- use the official logo in avatar and postings and follow LWVUS brand standards and VOTE411.org brand standards
- ensure that the LWV brand is represented correctly, consistently, and professionally whenever it appears
- use consistent hashtags (e.g., #LWV, #LWVVA, #LWV (LOCAL LEAGUE))
- heed copyrights and fair use regulations
- post frequently providing valid, relevant, and useful content
  - only facts can be posted on Facebook or Twitter
  - It is recommended that during the legislative session, at least one tweet per weekday be posted
- follow and share LWVUS, LWVVA, and other local League's posts
- ensure posts reflect support for or do not oppose League issue positions
- be nonpartisan

### Additional Resources

[LWV-US Nonpartisanship on Social Media Guidance](#)

[LWV-US Nonpartisan Messaging Guidance](#)

Administrators should listen and respond to questions and feedback in a timely manner.

#### *Authorized Administrators/Users*

Only the LWV-VA President can post on Facebook or Twitter without approval from anyone else. All others must first obtain approval from the LWV-VA President before posting. The President appoints administrators for state social media and determines who may post for the League without approval.

Local Leagues should decide who will be administrators of their social media accounts and who will be allowed to post on League social media account

#### G. Newsletter: *The Virginia Voter*<sup>15</sup>

The League has a method of regular communication with members. It also distributes its newsletter to appropriate community leaders and to prospective members. To facilitate a uniform image of the League, the newsletter is called *The Virginia Voter* and features the League logo.

The League newsletter includes schedules of meetings, information on League positions, action alerts, 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 newsletter contains a welcome to new members with a brief write-up on each one.

The newsletter is sent monthly via electronic means on the first day of every month. The Newsletter Editor will give the final copy of the proposed newsletter for each month to the President for approval no later than the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month.

#### H. Website<sup>16</sup>

The League's website, [my.lvv.org/virginia](http://my.lvv.org/virginia), is useful to members and the public, well-designed, easily navigable, well-publicized, and updated regularly. Opportunities to link the League's website to allies, coalitions, cosponsors, partner organizations, media sites, and government (election/auditor) websites are explored to further the reach of the League and to make contacting the League easier and more convenient.

1. The website should adhere to the Leagues, mission, goals, and purpose.
2. Webpages are considered a publication and should follow the same guidelines or approval as other League publications.
3. The League should be identified on each page (using text as well as a graphic identifier) to prevent copying without attribution.
4. An e-mail address should be on every index page to allow for inquiries from users.
5. No phone numbers, addresses, or personal information of Board members or other leaders should be published without permission.
6. Education and advocacy sections of the site must be distinguished and maintained. Do not link or mix the education and advocacy areas.
7. Links to other sites should be closely scrutinized and accompanied by a disclaimer such as, "Views expressed by non-League links are not necessarily those of the League. These links are provided as a service to visitors."
8. The following are prohibited on a website maintained solely with 501(c)(3) funds or on an area of the homepage that includes voter education (Education Fund) material:
  - Advocacy for a particular position or any legislative or election issues
  - Membership information.

#### I. Guidelines for Publications<sup>17</sup>

Publications planning should be a regular part of the work of each state Board member and off Board chair and of the state Board as a whole. State League publications speak for and about the League, whether their readership consists of League members only or includes a

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<sup>15</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook.

<sup>16</sup> Adapted from the 2015 Handbook.

<sup>17</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook.

wider audience. It is important that they be easily identified as LWV-VA publications and that they maintain a consistently high quality of both text and appearance.

1. Committee chair or other Board member presents recommendation for publication to the Board, including purpose, subject, scope, readership, publication date and financing plan.
2. Board or Executive Committee approves, rejects, or requests more information about the proposed publication. Board approval of a proposed publication should include subject, scope, general format and length, publication date, estimated budget and financing, distribution plan, assignment to a committee responsible for writing the material, and appointment of a reading committee. The production manager may be asked to estimate printing costs at this time.
3. Writing committee prepares first draft of the text after thorough discussion of the subject matter to be covered, style appropriate to readership, etc. Although the actual writing may be assigned to one or two persons, the entire committee should participate in drafting an outline of the material, deciding style, etc. They should consult with the production manager if technical information is needed.
4. At least three months before publication date (unless a longer time is requested for a major publication) writing committee submits draft of text to the state office for duplication and distribution to reading committee members, state President, and subject area coordinator.
5. If the reading committee recommends major changes in the text after reviewing it for completeness, organization, objectivity, clarity, usefulness, readability, etc., a conference should be set up between the reading committee chair, writing committee chair, and subject area coordinator to work out differences and prepare a second draft. At least two months before the publication date the second draft, or the first draft with minor recommendations noted, is sent to the production manager and state President.
6. The production manager prepares a final text, editing for style, consistency, etc., and a layout and graphics. These are submitted to the writing committee and the state President for final approval.
7. Production manager proceeds with production of the publication.
8. Publications chair arranges for distribution of publication. When appropriate, PR Chair should be involved in planning publicity about the publication.
9. All publications must carry a date and the number of copies printed.

#### J. LWV-VA and Local League Communications

Communication between the LWV-VA and the local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large is imperative and a two-way street. The LWV-VA cannot help the local League if we do not know what is happening. Below are charts to show how information flows between the State Board and the local Leagues and vice versa.

The President, Treasurer, Voter Services Director, Membership Chair, and Transformation Chair will meet monthly with their local counterparts to inform them of updates. Other Board and off Board members – such as but not limited to the Social Media Coordinator and Advocacy Chair may also meet monthly with local League counterparts, or as directed by the President.

## K. Additional Communications Resources

A range of LWVUS communications resources, including talking points, templates and graphics, images, and messaging toolkits can be found [here](#). These include:

- A suggested [messaging calendar](#)
- [Vote 411 sample posts](#)
- [Templates and graphics](#)
- [Talking points](#)
- [Press release guidance](#)

## L. Privacy

### 1. Website

The League is committed to the privacy of our members and website users and will follow the [privacy policy found on our website](#). The LWVUS privacy policy can be found [here](#).

### 2. Use of Membership Lists

LWV-VA, local Leagues, and Leagues-at-Large lists shall not be made available for non-League use without prior approval of the state or local League board. They will not be used for distribution to any candidate or entity supporting political parties or candidates and for other partisan purposes.

Any published membership lists should include the following statement “Any use of this list for non-League purposes must be approved by the state or local League board.”

It is recommended that permission from members be obtained prior to including any member names and contact information in a published membership list.

## VII. Convention and Council

Article VII of the Bylaws provides for the place, date, composition, and other requirements of the biennial Convention. Article VIII provides the same for the biennial Council.

### A. Convention

#### 1. Responsibilities and Planning

The state President shall organize a statewide Convention committee with a Committee chair and a Board Liaison.

The state League Board shall:

- Approve the budget, including registration fees for delegates and observers
- Approve the convention hotel
- approve all special events
- approve all speakers
- approve the schedule of events and order of business.

The host and state Leagues shall

- consult regarding fundraising activities associated with the convention.

Details about Convention and Council planning, including the planning calendar, are provided in the [Convention/Council Manual](#) (updated in 2024).

#### 2. Composition (LWV-VA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2)

The convention shall consist of: a. delegates chosen by the members of local Leagues in the number provided in Sec. 4 of this Article; b. the Presidents of local Leagues and chairs of Leagues-at-Large or an alternate in the event the President or chair is unable to attend; c. the members of the Board of Directors of the LWV-VA; d. LWV-VA off-board committee chairs with portfolios; e. one delegate chosen by the board of each ILO; and f. delegates, chosen by the board of the LWV-VA, to represent the members-at-large not organized in a League-at-Large, in the number provided in Sec. 4 of this Article.

#### 3. Financial Policies & Registration Procedures<sup>18</sup>

- a. No reimbursement from state League funds or Convention funds shall be made for those registered as local League delegates or observers authorized by the local League board.
- b. No registration fees shall be paid by those whose expenses are being reimbursed from the Convention account or state League accounts.
- c. Prior to each Convention, the state Board shall determine whether the budget permits any reimbursement of those off-Board leaders encouraged but not requested to attend. Unless the Board directs otherwise, reimbursement for such expenses shall come from the Convention budget.
- d. The Convention parliamentarian shall be reimbursed from the Convention budget for actual expenses as approved by the state Board. The parliamentarian shall be offered a stipend that is reasonable and customary, for services rendered as long

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<sup>18</sup> Based on LWV-Texas Handbook.

as they are a professionally registered parliamentarian. The parliamentarian shall register for the state Convention as an observer.

- e. Special guests' expenses shall be paid as agreed upon at actual cost to the guest from the Convention account unless otherwise specified by the state Board. Guests shall register as observers.

#### 4. Resolutions Policy and Procedure<sup>19</sup>

Resolutions on urgent matters of public policy express the will of the LWV-VA Biennial Conventions during the time of its convening. Any registered delegate to the Convention, seconded by another registered delegate, may offer a resolution.

There are two forms of resolutions: issue-driven resolutions on a specific topic of import to the League; and courtesy resolutions used to honor a long-time member who has passed or who has achieved something of excellence.

**Committee.** At least three weeks before the Convention (and preferably six weeks), the President will appoint a Resolutions Committee consisting of a minimum of three registered Convention delegates with local leadership or state Board experience. The LWV-VA President will name the Chair.

**Criteria.** Resolutions shall meet the following criteria:

1. Comply with this Resolutions Policy and Procedure.
2. Be consistent with LWV-VA and LWVUS principles and positions.
3. Address a single, topical issue pertinent to Virginia that (a) requires governmental action at the state level; or (b) pertains to the internal administration of the League; and (c) can be implemented using existing League resources.
4. Does not circumvent the program planning process.
5. Resolution language is clear, specific, stated affirmatively, and its intent is not subject to potential misinterpretation.

Note: This process and criteria shall not apply to courtesy resolutions.

#### **Submissions.**

Delegates are strongly encouraged to submit proposed resolutions together with background material at least three weeks before the start of Convention but no later than 1:30 p.m. on the first formal day of the Convention. Submitted material shall:

- Include the pros and cons of the resolution
- Include an explanation for choice of a resolution as an appropriate method to implement LWV-VA Program and assurance that it carries member understanding and agreement. LWV-VA shall post material submitted on the LWV-VA website with Convention information and e-mail the link to all members registered at the Convention.
- Be as close to final form as possible. (See sample resolution below.)

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<sup>19</sup> In March 2025, the existing "Resolution Policy and Procedure" replaced here the Resolutions Policy taken from the 2015 Handbook.



This is not required for courtesy resolutions. For courtesy resolutions, information about the person and their accomplishments in and outside of the League are required. Presentation of the proposed courtesy resolution must be submitted [using this google form](#) (send to [info@lwv-va.org](mailto:info@lwv-va.org)).

**Open Meeting.** The Resolutions Committee shall meet at *[5:00 p.m., Saturday, June 14, 2025, in Meeting Room 1]*, between the two plenary sessions of the Convention to hear from proponents who have submitted resolutions.

**Deliberation.** The Committee will deliberate in executive session and decide by majority vote. The Committee shall assure that suitable resolutions conform to carry into effect the submissions referred to it. The Committee shall recommend appropriate action on each to the Convention.

**Action by Convention.** The Resolutions Committee chair will move to adopt each resolution recommended for approval by the Resolutions Committee. Delegates will have the opportunity to debate each recommended resolution. Following debate, the LWV-VA President will call for a vote. A majority vote is required to adopt a resolution. Delegates may override, by a two-thirds vote, the decisions of the Resolutions Committee regarding resolutions.

**Resolution Format.** Resolutions should be no more than one page. The format for proposed resolutions is as follows.

**League of Women Voters of Virginia 41st Biennial Convention Resolution**  
**on \_\_\_\_\_**

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters has a Position on .....adopted on (date) which states.....;

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ is a key tenet of the League, and is necessary for \_\_\_\_\_;

*[As many WHEREAS clauses as needed can be added within the one-page limit; at least one should state why the resolution is necessary beyond simply having a position.]*

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_;

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_;

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**  
**That the League of Women Voters of Virginia reaffirms**  
**that \_\_\_\_\_.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President, LWV-VA  
Chair, Resolutions Committee  
Secretary, LWV-VA

## 5. Rules & Procedures<sup>20</sup>

A motion to adopt these rules will be made at the opening plenary session. Amendments may be offered at this time and require a majority vote to adopt.

The rules, as proposed or amended, require a two-thirds (2/3) vote for adoption. To suspend a rule at a later time requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

- a. Admission to the Convention shall be limited to persons displaying official badges, which must be worn at all meetings of the Convention.
- b. Delegates, non-voting members, and visitors shall sit in designated areas.
- c. Only accredited delegates representing local Leagues, Leagues-at-Large, and ILO and LWV-VA Board members may vote.
- d. Only delegates and those authorized by the chair or the delegate body may address the Convention.
- e. In debate, no person shall speak more than once until all others who wish to speak have done so; no person shall speak more than twice on the same motion, debate shall be limited to two minutes per speaker unless other procedure limits take precedence.
- f. Each speaker shall use a microphone and announce their name and League when addressing the Convention.
- g. Main motions and amendments of substantial length must be in writing on paper included in the folders or obtained from the ushers. One copy shall be sent to the presiding officer and one copy shall be retained by the maker of the motion.
- h. When a vote is in progress, the doors to the meeting room shall be closed and no one may enter or leave.
- i. Only announcements that relate to the business of the Convention or the welfare of the participants shall be made.
- j. The procedure for program adoption shall be as follows:  
A program item that is submitted by a local League at least three months before Convention, but not proposed by the state Board, may be adopted only if its consideration is ordered by majority vote of the Convention at the first plenary session and the proposal receives a three-fifths (3/5) vote at a subsequent session (this is considered a "not-recommended" program item).
  - A motion to consider any concurrence statements must receive a majority vote by delegates on the first day and two-thirds (2/3) vote to amend or adopt a state League position by concurrence on the floor of Convention on the second day during program consideration.
  - At the plenary meeting on Saturday, the proposed [recommended] LWV-VA program for the next two years shall be presented by an LWV-VA Board member. Questions for clarification only will be in order. No motions or debate are in order at this time. Delegates may move for consideration of not-recommended issues received by the deadline with their presentation limited to three minutes. A delegate may request a statement from an LWV-VA Board member as to why an item was not recommended, with a limit of two minutes for the answer.

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<sup>20</sup> Taken from 2015 Handbook.

- Proposals for concurrence consideration may be presented at this time. In order to make such a motion, a League must have met the conditions required for concurrence prior to convention.
  - After all of the not-recommended items have been offered, the vote for consideration of each item will be taken in the order in which the items were presented for consideration. Announcement of the vote result shall be made immediately after the vote on each item.
  - Debate and action on not-recommended program items and the proposed program will take place at the Sunday plenary session. A three-fifths (3/5) vote is required to adopt not-recommended items, except that adoption of an item for concurrence requires a two-thirds vote (2/3). A simple majority vote is required to adopt recommended program items.
- k. The minutes of the Convention shall be approved by the LWV-VA Board after review by a committee of two or three members appointed by the President to review and correct the minutes.
  - l. Voting Procedures during Plenary Sessions: Each delegate receives vote cards at the credentials table. The red and green vote cards are numbered 1-4, with green=yes and red=no. Generally, the first vote on an issue is a voice vote or sometimes a standing vote. If the outcome is not clear, then there may be a vote where delegates count off person by person. If the outcome remains unclear, there will be a card vote. The President will indicate the number of the card to be used and will announce the instructions for the vote. The appropriately numbered card must be used or your vote will be invalidated. The Elections Committee appointed at the first plenary session is responsible for collecting the voting cards, counting them, and reporting the results to the President.
  - m. Each delegate representing a local League, or League-at-Large, shall be entitled to vote only if that League has met its per member payment responsibilities. Representatives from Leagues not paid in full will not have the privilege of the floor, the right to vote or the right to make motions unless a special consideration is given by the Convention. The convention shall be the sole judge of whether a delegate is qualified to vote.
  - n. Thirty percent of the possible number of voting delegates, other than members of state Board, shall constitute a quorum provided that a majority of local Leagues are represented.
  - o. Announcements shall be made only by persons designated to do so.
  - p. No smoking in Convention meeting rooms.
6. Cell phones shall be turned off or muted during the plenary, workshops, caucuses, and banquet. Concurrence Policy and Procedures.<sup>21</sup> Concurrence is the act of agreeing with or concurring with a statement or position. A decision-making technique used by the League for some time, concurrence can work in several ways. Groups of League members or League boards can concur with (1) recommendations of a resource committee, task force or unit group; (2) decision statements formulated by League boards; or (3) positions reached by another League or Leagues. (*League Basics*, 9-17.)

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<sup>21</sup> Taken from 2015 Handbook, with slight modifications.

- a. Concurrence Process for Convention
  - 1) A local League or League-at-Large or Issue Group that wishes to propose an item for concurrence on the floor of convention must begin by submitting its recommendation to the state board by the last day of February before convention, as part of the program-planning process.
  - 2) Any League Board or LWV-VA study committee or task force that plans to propose the adoption or amendment of a state League position by concurrence on the floor of Convention shall give notice to the state Board of its intention to do so by the last day of February before Convention.
  - 3) Background information, including pros and cons and the rationale for using this method, must be submitted to the state board with the proposal.
  - 4) A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required to amend or adopt a state League position by concurrence on the floor of convention.
- b. Concurrence Procedures

In order for concurrence to be considered at convention, the following steps must be taken:

  - 1) The item must be listed among either the recommended or non-recommended program items for Convention (i.e., it must have been proposed as part of the program planning process).
  - 2) The LWV-VA Board decides either to recommend or disapprove the item, using the criteria established for program adoption, and approves the wording of the concurrence statement.
  - 3) Background information, including pros and cons, and the rationale for using this method, must be sent out to local Leagues and Leagues-at-Large or to the general membership at least six weeks before Convention.
  - 4) Only members of the League can approve or disapprove the concurrence statement, and the **LWV-VA Board will determine whether concurrence has been reached**, based on its evaluation of the reports from local Leagues and/or participating members.

## B. Council

Council is held in years when LWVUS has a National Convention. It shall be held in accordance with Section VIII of the LWV-VA Bylaws and planned in accordance with the procedures in the [Convention/Council Manual](#).

## **VIII. League Governance, Board Responsibilities, Organization, and League Levels and Membership**

### **A. Governance and Board Responsibilities Resources**

1. [League Basics](#): A helpful overview of League organization, governance, and other operational issues provided by LWVUS.
2. [League Responsibilities Policy](#): LWVUS resource outlining broad responsibilities of LWVUS, state Leagues, and local Leagues; process for resolving questions and concerns at various levels; and an FAQ about various requirements.
3. [League Governance Checklist](#): LWVUS list of foundational governance documents, tax documents, etc. for local Leagues.
4. [New local League Starter Kit](#): LWVUS guide to starting a new League, including sample MOU language between the state and local League.
5. [Building an Effective Board of Directors](#): LWVUS Trainings
6. [For the New and Not So New Board Members](#): LWV of California overview of local League Board member responsibilities
7. [Guide to LWVUS Services to local Leagues](#)
8. [LWVUS Parliamentary Guidance Summary](#)
9. local League Bylaws: The first three articles of all local League bylaws must be consistent with those of the League of Women Voters of the United States. (See [League Basics](#), p. 3)
10. [Organizing Resources to Build Power](#): LWVUs grassroots organizing information, including LWVUS training resource.
11. [Understanding LWVUS' DEI Policy](#)

### **B. League and Other Organizational Levels: Formation, Recognition, and Good Standing**

LWV-VA Bylaws (Article VI) provide for the formation of local Leagues, Inter-League Organizations (ILOs), and Leagues-at-Large (similar to what LWVUS refer to as MAL Units, MALU, or Member-at-Large units, a state-recognized group of Members-at-Large in an area where there is no local League). The state Board must approve the formation of any new local League, ILO, or League-at-Large. The formation of local Leagues and ILOs also requires recognition by the LWVUS Board but no approval is needed for a League-at-Large/MALU.

1. Current local Leagues, ILOs, and Leagues-at-Large As of February 2025, the LWV-VA has 14 local Leagues:
  - LWV of Charlottesville Area
  - LWV of Arlington and Alexandria City
  - LWV of Fairfax Area
  - LWV of Loudoun County

- LWV of Richmond Metro
- LWV of Lynchburg
- LWV of Montgomery County
- LWV of Falls Church
- LWV of South Hampton Roads
- LWV of The Prince William-Fauquier Area
- LWV of Williamsburg
- LWV of Washington County
- LWV of Fredericksburg Area
- LWV of the Northern Shenandoah Valley.

As of March 2024, LWV-VA recognizes one ILO: the League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area [LWVNCA], which comprises the District of Columbia League and those Leagues in Maryland and Virginia surrounding the nation's capital.

As of February 2025, LWV-VA is working to establish a League-at-Large in Roanoke.

## 2. Board Liaisons

The State Board may establish Liaisons to local Leagues especially to Leagues that do not have representatives on the State Board. These liaisons do not have to be LWV-VA Board members, but if they are off-board, must file a report monthly with the Board on their activities, any problems or questions, etc.

### a. Liaison Mentoring Guidelines

- 1) A local League's mentor or liaison can lend the needed helping hand to overcome obstacles or to further the League's whole being in ways that are meaningful to that local League.
- 2) Some of the areas where the liaison can provide support are:
  - a) Membership
    - How to keep the official membership roster current
    - How to use the roster to full advantage
    - How to plan a Membership Retention and Recruitment Policy (See LWVUS [Becoming a More Welcoming League](#) guidance)
    - How to carry out that policy.
    - Understand of LWVUS and VA Local positions
  - b) Provide Guidance to the Board
    - How to fundraise (including use of resources on LWVUS website)
    - How to make the website work for the local League
    - Keeping the Board informed about activities of LWVUS and LWV-VA
    - How to be visible
    - Role of the treasurer (ensuring filing the 990 and other necessary forms)
    - Understanding their incorporation status
    - What should go into minutes
    - How to do a local study
    - How to conduct a consensus meeting
    - Insurance needs/review of policies.

- Bylaw and policy review
- c) Provide guidance related to Voter Service including how to conduct forums/debates
- d) Provide guidance about newsletter content and recipients
- e) Suggest other publications that might increase their visibility in the community, such as Guides to Elected Officials or bookmarks with information about their League.
- b. Tips for Liaisons
  - 1) Be available for consultation when needed. Contact the local League (LL) president stressing your availability.
  - 2) Become acquainted with the LL and the community it serves. Learn as much as possible about any past challenges, its contributions, and the leadership that has shaped it in order to understand why it functions as it does.
  - 3) Maintain close contact with the LL president. Make sure they know of approaching state deadlines and has up-to-date and accurate information. Read the local newsletter and minutes monthly. Offer assistance in areas where it appears to be needed or contact another Board member who can help. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" but know where to go to get answers.
  - 4) Attend at least one meeting, other than a board meeting, during the year. A meeting on Program, unit or general, is a good way to learn how well the League is functioning. Contact the president before your visit.
  - 5) There is no single blueprint for the liaison. local Leagues differ. Leadership differs. The consultant should recognize these differences and adjust her approach accordingly. The role is not to provide ready-made answers but to make suggestions to help the League develop its own ideas, as long as they are within the framework of the basic principles and procedures of LWV-VA.
  - 6) Flexibility and adaptability are important. Consider the circumstances relating to the League. What is considered to be standard operating procedure in one League may be impossible or unnecessary in another. Refrain from saying "In my League...."
  - 7) It can be counter-productive to attend too many meetings. Too frequent visits may foster dependence on the consultant or be a source of annoyance if the League thinks the consultant is monitoring too closely.
  - 8) Stress the importance of a strong, cohesive statewide and national League. Try to de-emphasize the "we-they" syndrome (we as the LL and they as the LWV-VA Board). Also, stress that the LEAGUE has three levels (local, state, and national) that work together to further the mission of education and advocacy.
  - 9) An email or call to the State Membership Director should follow a visit. Reports of specific needs of or concerns about your assigned League are very helpful. State workshops are frequently based on needs of LLs.
  - 10) Consider writing an email to the LL president after a visit to your LL. It gives you the chance to reinforce suggestions, or it might provide an opportunity to mention ideas about how to improve or change procedures rather than appear critical or pushy at the visit.
- c. Leagues-at-Large are assigned an advisor who has additional duties and helps guide them to achieve LL status.
- 3. Process to Initiate Establishment of local League, ILO, or League-at-Large  
Those wishing to pursue the formation of any new local League, ILO, or League-



at-Large should contact the LWV-VA President and Membership Director ([President@lww-va.org](mailto:President@lww-va.org) and [Membership@lww-va.org](mailto:Membership@lww-va.org)).

- a. Local League: A local League is organized around a single municipality or as an area League encompassing more than one governmental jurisdiction. Area Leagues may include one or more counties or a large metropolitan area. The LWVUS form to be completed by the state Board related to requesting recognition of a local League can be found [here](#).

The LWVUS [New Local League Starter](#) Kit includes information about starting a new League, including sample MOU language between the state and local League.

LWVUS criteria for recognition of local Leagues (taken from the New local League Starter Kit) include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing a leadership group, consisting of chairperson and at least 2 other members.
- Membership attendance in member orientations
- Establishing a nonpartisanship policy and DEI policy, subscribing to League positions, respecting other Leagues' jurisdictions; appropriately using the name of LWV.
- Working in partnership with the state (or national) League to uphold business best practices to minimize risk and liability, such as IRS reporting.
- Having:
  - Bylaws
  - Memorandum of Understanding, including agreements on:
    - IRS Reporting Status
    - Money Flow
    - Liability Coverage.

- b. ILOs: Members enrolled in local Leagues may organize ILOs in order to promote the purposes of the League and to take action on county, metropolitan, or regional governmental matters. Those wishing to pursue the formation of any new ILO should contact the LWV-VA President and Membership Director.

c. Leagues-at-Large

The state Board may authorize the establishment of Leagues-at-Large as units of the state League in communities where circumstances dictate such organization. The state Board adopts from time to time the minimum number of state members required to establish a League-at-Large and rules and procedures for the formation and operation of a League-at-Large. Leagues-at-Large are new or established Leagues where LWV-VA takes on administrative functions in order to serve the mission of empowering voters and defending democracy in their community. Leagues-at-large may be provided LWV-VA resources, such as mentors, training, membership, LWV-VA bylaws, policies, guidelines, and financial management policies to avoid typical start-up steps of establishing bylaws,

incorporating, seeking non-profit status, and establishing financial management policies. A coach/advisor may be assigned to work with the new League-at-Large. Once the state Board approves a League-at-Large, the League, in consultation with the state Board, may apply for official recognition through the assignment of a League ID by LWVUS. State members wishing to explore establishing a League-at-Large should contact the LWV-VA President and Membership Director or designated coach/advisor.

Leagues-at-Large must, at minimum:

- Follow League nonpartisanship policies.
- Support the League mission of empowering voters and defending democracy in their community.
- Promote the League through newsletters, social media, voter education events, etc.
- Conduct an annual meeting to adopt a plan including any funding requirements and select a leadership team.
- Meet regularly in person or virtually—a minimum of four membership meetings annually.
- Support and never oppose League positions.
- Provide annual report and leadership contact information to the state Board by June 30 annually.

#### d. League-at-Large Formation Guidelines<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the requirements outlined above, the LWV-VA Board has adopted the following Guidelines for the Formation of a League-at-Large. The intent of a tiered approach is to encourage organization and growth to support the League and community.

#### League at Large Growth Tiers

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Tier</b>	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Approx # of members</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
1	Start-up	LWV VA bank account No official ID MOU with LWV-VA	5-15	Chair
2	Growth	Bank Account Simple Budget Official ID MOU with LWV-VA Annual Budget	15-25	Chair Vice chair Secretary Treasurer
3	Prep for local League	Bank Account Official ID MOU with LWV-VA Bylaws drafting in progress Insurance plan	At least 15 (or the minimum specified by LWVUS)	President Vice-president Secretary Treasurer

<sup>22</sup> These Guidelines were adopted by the LWV-VA Board in February 2024 and amended in March 2024 and March 2025. The Guidelines would also be applicable to Member-at-Large Units (MAL Units or MALUs), should the LWV-VA Board choose to establish them.

## **Guidelines for the Formation of a League-at-Large**

A LWV-VA League-at-Large is an established entity of the LWV-VA Board and is answerable to it. The official name of a League-at-Large may be chosen at the time the unit is authorized and is recommended to be "League of Women Voters of Virginia, \_\_\_\_\_") with the blank filled in by the county, city, or other jurisdictional identifying description followed by "League-at-Large."

A League-at-Large Unit may be started by initiative of the LWV-VA Board, by request of an LWV-VA member-at-large, or by request of a local League.

Note: Leagues-at-Large will not have bylaws, but will operate under LWV-VA bylaws. Leagues-at-Large also will not have bank accounts or an EIN number. All reporting and roster activities will be handled by LWV-VA and funds will be administered by LWV-VA.

### **Part I: Development of Member-At-Large Units**

1. The idea for forming a new League entity arises through citizen or member inquiry, or by LWV-VA Board initiative if there is no established independent League geographically nearby.
2. Persons interested in forming a League-at-Large are required to join LWV-VA.
3. At the time of initial inquiry or initial identification of a community by the LWV-VA Board, a League-at-Large coach/adviser will be appointed by the Membership Director with Board input. The League-at-Large coach/adviser will be the resource, motivator, and monitor for the initial effort to establish a League-at-Large. The coach/adviser will also monitor the League-at-Large's progress and periodically report back to the Membership Director and the LWV-VA Board.
4. Once a nucleus of interested people is identified, an informational meeting is organized by the Membership Director, the League-at-Large coach/adviser, and the interested people. The informational meeting includes discussion of:
  - the non-partisan policy of the League of Women Voters and its application in practice.
  - the requirement of LWV-VA Board approval for any action the group takes in the name of the LWV.
  - the level of interest and commitment of interested persons.
  - potential leaders.
  - recruitment of members.
  - next steps.
5. An organizational meeting is held when at least 5 people in the jurisdictional area have joined LWV-VA. The initial organizational meeting includes:
  - selection of a leadership committee/board to include chair, vice chair, secretary, and, if needed, treasurer.
  - review of the LWV-VA bylaws, under which the League-at-Large will operate.

## Part II: Recognition of Leagues-at-Large

The LWV-VA Board may recognize a group of LWV-VA members as a League-at-Large at any time if the group meets these conditions:

1. It has at least 5 LWV-VA members.
2. It has adopted the state's non-partisan and DEI policies.
3. It is operating in compliance with LWV-VA bylaws.
4. Procedures are in place for the LWV-VA Board to administer the funds of the League-at-Large.
5. The League-at-Large has developed a simple income/expense budget for managing its finances.
6. Recognition is recommended by the Membership Director and the designated coach/advisor.

## Part III: Operation of League-at-Large

### 1. Finances

- The fiscal year of League-at-Large is that of LWV-VA (July 1-June 30).
- LWV-VA will determine startup funding for a new League-at-Large based on the number of current members.
- The League-at-Large will follow LWVUS policies and procedures on handling membership dues.

### 2. Activities

League-at-Large are encouraged to participate in the following activities in preparation for becoming an independent League:

- Distribute state and nationally published League voter service materials.
- With permission from the LWV-VA Board, publish local voter service material.
- With permission from the LWV-VA Board, conduct candidate forums.
- Participate in state and national program planning and report conclusions to LWV-VA on both state and national programs.
- Circulate information through a newsletter, website, and social media.
- Engage in advocacy. League-at-Large members are encouraged to join and participate in statewide issue groups.
- Develop a membership recruitment, retention, and engagement plan; hold regular membership meetings, including an Annual Membership meeting.
- Develop a voter service activity plan for the community the League-at-Large serves.
- Develop a plan for programming for the community the League-at-Large serves.

#### Part IV: Recognition as Local League

Until a League-at-Large has a minimum of 15 members and sufficient volunteers to form and sustain a functioning board, it will not be considered for application to become a local League. (Requirements for a local League to achieve and remain in good standing are outlined below. In addition, local Leagues must adhere to the state League's non-partisan and DEI policies.)

#### Part V. Dissolution of a League-at-Large

A League-at-Large may disband upon request of a majority of the members of the League-at-Large or the determination of the LWV-VA Board. All funds held by the disbanded League-at-Large will be paid to LWV-VA.

#### 4. Changes to Original League Name or Structure<sup>23</sup>

A change in the name or organizational basis (e.g., geographical scope) of a local League or League at large requires the approval of the state Board and national League. Following approval of the locally recommended change in name or basis of organization by the local membership at an annual meeting, the local League/League at large shall forward the appropriate forms to the state board for its consideration, approval and recommendation to LWVUS.

#### 5. Good Standing

Local Leagues shall meet the following minimum requirements to remain in good standing:

- a. Adopt and adhere to local League bylaws.
- b. Conduct an annual meeting to adopt a budget and elect officers.
- c. Meet regularly as defined by local League bylaws.
- d. Provide state League training for officers periodically.
- e. Send the LWV-VA President their annual meeting report to their members.

In the event of recurrent failure of a local League to remain in good standing, the state Board shall recommend to the national Board that it withdraw recognition of the local League (Bylaws, Article VI, Section 1.b). Similarly, the state Board shall recommend to the national Board that it withdraw recognition of any ILO or League-at-Large that does not fulfill state League requirements (Article VI, Sec 2.b, Sec 3.b).

#### 6. Withdrawing Recognition

The process for withdrawing support is as follows:

- A meeting of the members of the local League shall be called by the local League board of directors or League-at-Large leadership team for the purpose of discussing and voting on disbandment.
- If the local board or leadership team is unwilling to call such a meeting, the state board shall call the meeting and notify the local members. The local president shall be notified of the intention to call such a meeting with the local

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<sup>23</sup> Sections 4-6 are based on the LWV-Texas Handbook

League.

- Members shall be told the purpose of the meeting and that absence from the meeting shall be considered a silent vote to disband unless the member communicates otherwise prior to the meeting.
- Upon a vote by the membership to disband the local League or League-at-Large, the state board shall request the national board to withdraw recognition.
- Remaining local League or League at large funds, securities, and assets shall be handled in accordance with the local League by-laws.

### C. Membership Levels

Membership eligibility and types of membership are established in Article III of the Bylaws. Those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or become a state Member-at-Large.

Resources for members:

[LWVUS Member Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#)  
[Membership Guide](#)

## IX. Financial Administration and Operations

The Board bears the legal responsibility for a League's funds. In order to carry out this responsibility, LWV-US advises that procedures should be in place to ensure:

- Financial records are accurate, up-to-date and documented.
- Appropriate internal controls are in place.
- No single person has complete control over financial transactions.
- Access to computerized financial records is limited through use of a password.
- Computerized records are backed up on a regular basis, with off-site storage.
- Financial records are periodically reviewed or audited.

### A. Budget and Financial Requirements for Operating and Education Funds<sup>24</sup>

1. The Operating Fund budget must provide for an operating reserve approximately equal to at least two months' operating expenses. (See also: reserve policy below.)
2. Grants, contributions and other monies earmarked for the Education Fund are kept entirely separate from general funds. They may be used only for appropriate activities as specified by the Internal Revenue Service for 501(c)(3) educational organizations. These would normally involve citizen education and voters service activities and may never include use of such funds for action or lobbying activities.
3. Except as provided in the fund's approved budget, Board approval is required for the expenditure of both Operating and Education Fund monies for any expenditure above \$250. In 2023, the Board formally delegated authority to the President for unbudgeted expenditures of up to \$250 each with the understanding that each expenditure must be reported to the Board at the following meeting and the delegation is revocable by the Board at any time.
4. The Boards of the LWV-VA and LWV-VA Education Fund are required to provide and exercise adequate internal controls to safeguard the organization's funds, especially in the absence of a separation of financial responsibilities. To this end, a Board member designated by the President and who is not a signatory on the accounts must verify the consistency of the Treasurer's reports with the bank and other fund account statements at the time each quarterly Treasurer's report is presented to the Board.
5. Board members are reimbursed for their approved expenditures in carrying out LWV-VA and LWV-VA Education Fund activities, including mileage and hotel room costs (shared room) to attend Board meetings and official LWV events, but do not receive compensation.
6. Each Board member and committee and administrative chair is responsible for:
  - Keeping an accurate record of expenses incurred in carrying out her/his LWV-VA activities including committee members' expenses.
  - Providing the budget committee with actual expenses for the year to date and anticipated expenses for the following year for use in preparation of the

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<sup>24</sup> Adapted from draft included in 2015 Handbook materials.



proposed budget for the ensuing year.

- Submitting vouchers with receipts to the Treasurer, noting which fund and budget line item should be charged.
- Accounting for any expense money that is to be contributed by submitting a voucher, receiving reimbursement and then making a separate contribution to the Operating or Education Fund.
- Discussing with the Treasurer any proposal that has financial involvement of more than \$100 or exceeds the budget allotment before submission to the board for approval.
- Consulting with the Treasurer, prior to conducting a League activity, regarding its tax implications and financial requirements.

7. The League is best served by undesignated contributions to either of its funds. The following recommendations deal with those contributions that are earmarked specific purposes.

- All proposals for outside funding for specific projects must have the approval of the Board.
- When earmarked contributions are received, either singly or in combination, for publications, the following rules apply:
  - The contributions must be acknowledged in the publication as "Funded (Partially Funded) by a contribution from..."
  - Publications must carry the statement: "The content of this publication is determined solely by the LWV-VA."
  - All contributors of earmarked funds/services must be informed in writing of these policies.
  - Plans regarding outside funding and/or extraordinary publications or distribution of a study should be made at least three months before the study must be made available to League members or the public.
  - The editor of a study (usually the committee chair) should not be the principal contact in negotiating with potential contributors.

## B. Revenue and Budget

LWV-VA is a non-profit organization financed by dues payments, contributions, and public and private grants for special projects. Dues and contributions to the Operating Fund are not tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund are tax deductible.

### 1. Revenue

*This section of the Handbook will be updated to reflect the Transformation structure upon its implementation.*

### 2. Budget

#### *LWV-VA Operating Fund*

As established in Article XII, Sections 3 and 4 of the Bylaws, the LWV-VA operating budget is prepared by a committee appointed by the state Board for that purpose at least three months before Convention or Council. The Treasurer shall be, *ex officio*, a member of the budget committee, but shall not be eligible to serve as chair. The Board shall submit to the Convention and Council for adoption a budget for the next fiscal

year. A copy of the budget shall be sent to the presidents of local Leagues and ILOs and to the chairs of Leagues-at-Large at least four weeks before the convention or council. A budget shall be adopted by a majority vote of the convention or council.

The Board monitors expenditures in relation to budget through Treasurer's Reports provided at each monthly Board meeting. In their own areas of oversight, the state board and those appointed to off-board positions should monitor their expenditures to ensure that they do not exceed their budget.

#### *LWW-VA Education Fund*

The Board of the Education Fund adopts its annual budget and monitors expenditures in relation to budget through Treasurer's Reports provided at each monthly Board meeting. In their own areas of oversight, the state board and those appointed to off-board positions should monitor their expenditures to ensure that they do not exceed their budget.

#### *Local League Budget/Financial Guidance Resources*

- LWWUS general guidance on financial responsibilities is provided in [Money Matters](#).
- LWW of Texas provides [Money Matters Made Easier for Local Leagues](#).

### **C. Reserves**

Sufficient funds should be placed in reserve to meet state League operating expenses for a two-month period.

The Board should approve a dollar figure for these reserve funds at the beginning of each fiscal year, and that amount should be kept in interest-bearing and/or fixed-income account(s).

#### *Withdrawals from reserves*

- Withdrawals from reserves for current operations are limited to a sum equal to 5% of the average of the past 3 years' market value of the assets.
- Within this limit, the Board shall annually set an amount, if any, to be withdrawn by the Treasurer as needed to meet specific League obligations.
- The Board may authorize additional withdrawals from reserves.
- If funds are withdrawn in case of emergency, they shall be restored as soon as possible.

### **D. Guidelines for Vouchers And Reimbursement Procedure<sup>25</sup>**

State Board members, those elected or appointed to off-board positions, and staff (as relevant) may request full or partial reimbursement from general operating funds for actual expenses incurred in the performance of their League duties, within the constraints imposed by the budget. Those eligible to seek reimbursement shall submit a voucher (**for voucher, see Appendix III; google form available [here](#)**) and supporting documentation to the League Treasurer to receive reimbursement and should submit similar information to document expenses for which they are not

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<sup>25</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook and the LWW-Texas Handbook.

requesting reimbursement. When those eligible choose not to be reimbursed, they must document their actual expenses and note that they are making an in-kind contribution.

1. Board members should submit vouchers for out-of-pocket monthly expenses to the Treasurer at State Board meetings or by e-mail or mail. Receipts for all items, including postage, copying and telephone, must be either scanned and sent by e-mail or sent by mail. Date and mileage must be provided when requesting reimbursement of mileage to attend League events as a member of the Board.
2. Treasurer should make reimbursement once a month with a single check. It is usually appropriate for Board members to charge items within budgeted amounts to their credit cards and seek reimbursement. Copies of the redacted credit card statement should be provided.
3. In order to be reimbursed, each Board member should keep track of all expenses for the month and itemize them by budget category on a voucher, using a form provided by the Treasurer.
4. Treasurer should verify all arithmetic and check to see that all receipts are attached.
5. Board members should give Treasurer any cash received, e.g. for the sale of publications, or submit a personal check for the amount.

#### *Reimbursement rates*<sup>26</sup>

1. Actual expenses incurred in the performance of League duties, within the constraints imposed by the budget, will be reimbursed at the following rates:
2. Telephone, postage, photocopying, and essential supplies: at actual cost.
3. Travel: Travel by public transportation at actual cost including tips. The least expensive means of transportation that is feasible shall be used. In January of every year, the Treasurer shall update the vouchers provided for staff and member use with the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate for League travel. Board member travel may be reimbursed or make an in-kind donation at the rate per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.
4. Parking, tips, fees: Parking and necessary tips and fees are reimbursed at actual cost with receipt.
5. Lodging: Lodging is reimbursed at actual cost, allowing one-half room per person unless the board directs otherwise, or unless a single room is required when traveling alone on League business. If a single room is not required but is desired by the traveler, they will receive reimbursement for one half room cost.
6. Meals and incidental expenses: Budgetary constraints do not permit reimbursement of meals and incidental expenses. Meals and incidental expenses while away from home overnight are tax deductible as in-kind contributions to the League at current IRS/U.S. General Services Administration amounts and guidelines.
7. Registration fees for conferences/workshops: at actual cost.
8. Other types of actual expenses if the board permits:

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<sup>26</sup> Based on the LWV-Texas Handbook.

9. Project Budgets: State board members, those elected or appointed to off-board positions, may request reimbursement from funds at the rates listed in the project's budget. Such budgets shall be based on actual costs. Reimbursement requires documented expenses.

#### **E. Tax Status and Treasurer's Responsibilities: 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(3)**

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 501(c)(4) for recognition of their exempt status, though some find it desirable nonetheless.

Tax status granted by Internal Revenue Service does not exempt from collecting and rebating Virginia Sales and Use tax on items resold. Corporate and individual contributions made to a 501(c)(3) are tax exempt from federal taxes and are tax deductible for the donor. A 501(c)(4) not-for-profit organization is exempt from federal taxes but contributions to it are not tax deductible for the donor.

##### **1. IRS Form 990**

###### **a. LWV-VA and LWV-VA Education Fund**

The President and Treasurer will ensure that the appropriate Form 990 is filed annually for both the League of Women Voters of Virginia and the League of Women Voters of Virginia Education Fund Inc.

###### **b. Local Leagues**

LWVUS provides guidance to local Leagues on [Filing the IRS Form 990-N](#) (the 990-N is for Leagues with less than \$50K in annual income).

#### **F. Review of Records<sup>27</sup>**

The Treasurer manages League assets and organizes all records, receipts, and invoices in preparation for the budget review which takes place at the end of each two-year Board term. Reviewer(s) should verify a representative sample of dues and contributions agree with records. Also, verify that a sample of recorded expenses agrees with corresponding vendor invoices and checks and assure bank statements are reconciled, that purchases are properly approved and that blank checks are safeguarded.

Reviewer(s) should verify that treasurer has filed required reports or returns on timely basis and prepares a written report to Board. Board member makes motion to accept the results of the reviewer. Leagues can get current advice and information from through national League at <https://my.lwv.org/virginia>. The reviewer must have strong experience and expertise in accounting and League procedures.

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<sup>27</sup> The remainder of this section is taken from the 2015 Handbook.

## G. Insurance

General liability insurance is offered to LWV-VA and non-incorporated local Leagues through Auto Insured, which provides a limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and annual \$2,000,000 limit. LWV-VA has Directors and Officers Insurance with Affinity Non Profit Incorporated. Local Leagues must obtain their own liability insurance and all local Leagues must obtain their own Directors and Operators Insurance if they wish to have it.

## H. Purchasing and Contracting

Article IV, Section 2 of the Bylaws addresses the signature of contracts and other instruments. Any contract valued at \$15,000 or more must have the signature of the President and at least one other Board member.

## I. Fundraising and Grants and Gift Acceptance Guidelines

### 1. Guidelines Development & Fundraising<sup>28</sup>

Fundraising at the state level is the responsibility of the Development or Finance Director (if any) and the entire state Board. At least one fundraising letter should be mailed to the membership annually. In addition, an intentional effort should be made to reach out to major donors in a separate solicitation annually.

- a. The state League will notify the local League when a solicitation letter is sent to an organization located, in its area.
- b. Unless they opt out, the local League in the area of solicitation will receive a percentage of the contribution as determined by the Board.
- c. In order to receive the percentage, the local Leagues must appoint one or two active members to the state fundraising committee and share information on corporations or individuals in the area to solicit.
- d. These development guidelines do not apply when:
  - The state League solicits money on its own for a state project, e.g. the ballot issues or study publications that benefit all local Leagues.
  - An individual, corporation, organization, or foundation approaches LWV-VA with funds that have not been solicited.
  - Or for a general Giving Tuesday or Cross Over solicitation.
- e. No local League should solicit funds outside the local League's jurisdiction.
- f. All state Board members should make a continuous effort to:
  - Supply information on potential contributors (individuals, businesses, corporations, foundations and others).
  - Supply information on foundation and government grants.
  - Report personal contacts that might lead to either immediate or future support for the League's activities.
  - Identify League projects and services that might provide a monetary return.
  - Identify potential purchasers of League services.

### 2. Guidelines For Memorial, Legacy & Special Gifts Funds<sup>29</sup>

- a. Notice of existence of the Memorial and Special Gifts fund should be placed in

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<sup>28</sup> Adapted from the 2015 Handbook.

<sup>29</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook.

- the *Virginia Voter* at least once a year.
- b. Memorial and Special Gifts Fund form should include:
    - The State Treasurer's name and state office address;
    - Explanation for deductible and non-deductible gifts;
    - Name and address of person to be notified of gift; and
    - Name and address of donor.
  - c. The Treasurer should report the gift to the President and the state Board noting any restrictions on the gift.
  - d. The President writes a letter of acknowledgment to the family of the honoree and a thank-you note to the donor, noting tax -deductibility, as proof for tax purposes. Donations will be acknowledged in the *Voter*, but no specific amounts will be listed.
  - e. Treasurer records all gifts in the Special Gifts and Memorial Fund Book and reports them to the editor for inclusion in the *Voter*.
  - f. Unless specifically voted otherwise by the LWV-VA or LWV-VA Education Fund Board, all donations received in memory of or to honor League members will be placed in a general memorial fund and used to support specific LWV Education Fund activities as determined by the Board. Unless the Board votes otherwise, there is a two-year time limit for the expenditure of special memorial funds.

### 3. Guidelines For Grants<sup>30</sup>

#### SECTION I - ACCEPTING TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

In order for an individual, corporation or private foundation to make a tax-deductible contribution to the League of Women Voters of Virginia the donation must be to the League of Women Voters of Virginia Education Fund (a tax-exempt, or 501(c)(3) non-profit organization). The 501(c)(3) designation refers to the section of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code that describes the types of organizations that qualify for tax-deductible contributions.

It is important to realize that, unlike the League of Women Voters of Virginia Education Fund (LWV- VA EF) the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA) and all but two local Leagues DO NOT possess a 501 (c)(3) tax status. Instead, they are classified by the IRS as 501(c)(4) non-profit organizations, because their primary mission is a lobbying and political one.

#### SECTION II - EDUCATIONAL PROJECT CRITERIA

A project funded through the LWV-VA EF must meet the following criteria:

##### 1. It must be educational

The project must be completed for the purpose of informing the public in a fair and objective manner. Through this project, the League cannot advocate a particular position on legislation or urge any action to affect legislation. It can advocate for an issue absent specific legislation. Additionally, the project cannot involve work with political parties or candidates for office, other than voter service activities.

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<sup>30</sup> Taken from 2015 Handbook, where policy was dated 11/05.

2. It must reach a diverse audience

The project must be designed to serve the general public, not League members exclusively. Thus, internal membership materials (including newsletters) would not qualify.

Special Note About "In-Kind" Contributions

"In-kind" contributions such as equipment, materials, or services cannot be considered as tax- deductible contributions. A business that wishes to make such a gift might instead consult an accountant or attorney to investigate classifying the gift as a deductible business expense.

SECTION III - GRANT GUIDELINES

A. SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

1. Solicit funds for a specific project and/or other educational projects. When soliciting funds for a specific project a voters' guide or debate, a statement should be included that funds raised will be used also to complete other educational projects. This is important in the event the League raises more funds than are needed for the specific project. If it has been clearly stated to contributors that funds could be used also for other educational projects, LWV-VA-EF is not bound to use the money for the specific project only. It is important to spend funds in accordance with the purposes or uses described in funding appeals.
2. Project approval from LWV-VA-EF Board.  
Before a grant application is filed or funds solicited the project must be approved by the LWV-VA-EF Board.

B. PROJECT AND BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

- a. Develop an educational project. Examples of possibilities follow:
  - Voters service and citizen information projects, such as candidate forums and debates.
  - Publications which provide information on services, organizations, and government agencies; Facts for Voters, Legislative Directory that lists elected officials, or publications which discuss issues in a balanced manner with no mention of League positions.
  - Public meetings such as seminars, conferences, or workshops.
  - Radio or TV programs, as well as slide, film and video presentations that discuss issues in a balanced manner.
  - Purchase and distribution of LWVEF publications or of educational publications by other Leagues and other qualified services.
  - Litigation of public interest lawsuits that are not in aid of any lobbying activity (or that do not attempt to accomplish through the courts anything that is being attempted through legislation or referenda).
  - Activities or materials related to LWV-VA EF studies.
- b. Develop a realistic budget. The project budget should include the following:



1) Direct costs

Readily identifiable expenses specifically for the project such as printing, editing, layout, postage, supplies, distribution, promotion, phone charges, out-of-pocket expenses of volunteers, etc. The purchase of equipment may be included provided the equipment will be used for educational projects ONLY.

2) Indirect costs or overhead costs

General operating expenses that must be covered in order to complete a project. Examples of these expenses include rent, equipment usage, monthly telephone service charge, and utilities. A portion of these expenses can be attributed to the project based on use.

C. FINAL REPORT

A final report should be submitted by the project manager to the LWV-VA-EF Board no later than two months after completion of the project. This report should include a description of how the project was administered and a listing of all expenditures. Copies of any materials produced through the project (leaflets, fact sheets, publications, guides etc.) should accompany the final report.

D. INCOME GENERATED THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

If income is generated from the project (i.e. through registration fees, sales of books or videos) those funds may be used only for educational purposes. Checks should be made payable to LWV-VA-EF and deposited in the LWV-V A-EF account to be used for future, approved educational projects.

E. CREDITS ON PUBLICATIONS

Credit the LWV-VA EF and donor on project material. When a publication is printed for community distribution or a program prepared for a meeting or seminar, credit should be given to the LWV-VA-EF and donor. (Note: Double check whether the donor(s) wants credit line. Some donors prefer to remain anonymous, thus would not want their name listed on project materials.)

Credit lines should read:

- Publication: "Published by the League of Women Voters of Virginia Education Fund and financed by contributions from (name of donor(s))."
- Service: Acknowledgement may be made in a press release or other announcement.
- Program: "This seminar is conducted by the League of Women Voters of Virginia and has been made possible by a contribution from (name of donor(s)) to the League of Women Voters Education Fund."

Note: If the project is only partially funded by a donor(s) then this may be noted in the acknowledgement as indicated above.

## X. Personnel, Interns, etc.

### A. Staff Positions

#### LWV-VA

The Board, if adequate needs arise and adequate funding is available, may hire and release employees to assist the state League in carrying out its mission. The Board is responsible for approving the compensation (including any benefits) of any employee. Day-to-day oversight and management of the performance of any employee is the responsibility of the President or the President's designee (e.g., the Treasurer might appropriately oversee a staff member administering finances). The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate personnel policies are developed and implemented.

### B. Student Interns

LWV-VA offers a paid student internship program, overseen by a designated Board member (currently the Second Vice President). The Board establishes a budget line item for intern stipends. Paid student interns participate in work activities that serve only their own educational interests and do not regularly perform the routine work of the organization on a recurring basis.

The **LWV-VA Internship Policy**<sup>31</sup> and application process is as follows:

The League of Women Voters of Virginia offers interested individuals over 18 years old an opportunity to serve as interns on various projects. If requested, League interns can earn hours for service learning/civic engagement. Student interns will receive appropriate documentation of hours and tasks accomplished as required by their academic programs.

Internships run from Jan to May, May to September and September to December. Interns will receive a stipend of \$550 for the semester they work.

#### Why Should I Apply?

- Gain valuable experience with a nationally respected nonprofit organization
- Receive strong letters of recommendation upon completion of internship
- Build your resume to improve employment opportunities
- Learn about voter education and registration
- Learn about the Virginia General Assembly
- Learn about the electoral process and the role of the local, state, and U.S. League of Women Voters.

#### Responsibilities and Assignments

Each internship is planned based on individual circumstances, time, and skills, and involves a collaboration that engages the intern and the LWV-VA member-mentors. Most interns work remotely and are mentored by LWV-VA Board members. Some interns work directly with issue groups engaged in research, education and problem solving related to voter education and outreach.

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<sup>31</sup> Adopted by the Board in February 2024.

## General Assignments

- Social media communication projects
- Website and data systems technical support (VOTE411)
- Legislative research
- Community outreach
- Voter registration and education
- Special projects.

## How to Apply

To apply, send a resume and short cover letter with letter(s) of recommendation to [secondvp@lwv-va.org](mailto:secondvp@lwv-va.org). The cover letter should answer the following questions: Why are you interested in working with the League? What areas of work interest you? What school do you attend? What year are you in? When are you available to work? Please make sure to title the subject line: "Internship Application." If you have any questions about the internship, application process, or for further information, please email Erni Bridges at [Secondvp@lwv-va.org](mailto:Secondvp@lwv-va.org).

## C. Youth Council

In addition to its Internship Program, LWV-VA sponsors a Youth Council (established February 2024).<sup>32</sup>

Public engagement, especially with students, has a greater chance of success if it includes our students and community leaders who can help bridge any divide between students and our local government. This is why we have started our Youth Council, which is open to people ages 16-21.

Our goal is to initiate programs and projects that will benefit our youth and our communities. Youth Council Members will be full members of the League of Women Voters involved in all aspects of our work. However, we will rely on them to message our work in a way that appeals to people of their generation. This is not all inclusive. If we have a student with a specific idea, we should allow that to be considered. We want to foster a spirit of imagination.

Youth Council members will:

- Assist with local Leagues voter registration – the League closest to them or they can try to work on areas where we have no local Leagues to see if we can get into those schools
- Social media videos, graphics.
- GOTV on their campus at their schools
- Pre-registration of 16-year-olds and registration of young people
- Conduct youth candidate forums in conjunction with their local or State League
- Website update – they will have a page on the website to share information

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<sup>32</sup> The Youth Council was approved by action of the Board in January 2024.

- Establish Local Chapters on their college campuses
- Visits to legislators during Session – learning the legislative process – and helping with advocacy.
- Partner with youth groups that are working with our partner organizations
- Outreach to other youth groups regarding the League
- Assist with ongoing programs for which we may need assistance on state level.
- Participate in the Speakers Bureau

Youth Council members may apply to the Nominating Committee to be members of the State Board.

#### D. Speakers Bureau

LWV-VA may organize a Speakers Bureau to present nonpartisan education on our legislative priorities, civic education and other topics to further the goals of Democracy. [LWVUS guidelines](#) should be followed.

## **XI. LWV-VA DEI Plan**

The LWV-VA Board adopted the following DEI plan in February 2025:

### **Embracing Diversity, Advancing Equity, and Fostering Inclusion in the League of Women Voters of Virginia**

Mission Statement: To create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of the League of Women Voters of Virginia, regardless of race, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or socioeconomic status.

#### **A. Goals**

1. Diversity
  - a. Increase representation of underrepresented groups in the League of Women Voters of Virginia.
  - b. Promote cultural competency training for members.
  - c. Develop diversity-focused programs and initiatives.
2. Equity
  - a. Identify and address systemic disparities in League policies and practices.
  - b. Implement equitable policies and practices in the League.
  - c. Ensure equal access to offices, opportunities, resources, and services.
3. Inclusion
  - a. Foster inclusive meetings, events, and activities.
  - b. Support diverse businesses and entrepreneurship.
  - c. Encourage civic engagement, partnerships, and participation.

#### **B. Objectives**

1. Develop and implement diversity and inclusion training programs.
2. Increase diversity in nominating and procurement practices.
3. Establish diversity and inclusion metrics and benchmarks.
4. Conduct regular equity assessments and address disparities.
5. Create inclusive meetings and events.
6. Support diverse community organizations and initiatives.
7. Develop language access plans for limited English proficiency populations.
8. Ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

#### **C. Strategies**

1. Community Engagement: Partner with diverse community organizations and stakeholders.
2. Policy Reforms: Review and revise policies as needed to promote equity and inclusion.
3. Education and Training: Provide ongoing diversity and inclusion training.
4. Data Collection and Analysis: Track diversity and inclusion metrics.
5. Accountability: Establish accountability mechanisms for diversity and inclusion efforts.
6. Assist local Leagues in creating and implementing DEI policies and programs.

#### D. Inclusion Metrics

Objective Key Performance Indicators:

1. Diversity metrics (membership, leadership, procurement).
2. Equity metrics changes in state and local League policies and practices.
3. Community feedback and engagement

#### E. Implementation and Evaluation

1. Establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office.
2. Develop a DEI Advisory Committee.
3. Conduct regular progress evaluations.
4. Adjust strategies based on evaluation findings.

#### F. Timeline

- Short-term (0-12 months): Develop DEI plan, put money in LWV-VA budget for DEI, establish DEI Office, and launch diversity and inclusion training.
- Mid-term (13-24 months): Implement policy reforms, establish diversity and inclusion metrics, and conduct equity assessments.
- Long-term (24+ months): Evaluate progress, adjust strategies, and continue to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This outline provides a foundation for Virginia's DEI efforts. It's essential to engage stakeholders, monitor progress, and adapt strategies to ensure meaningful and lasting change. For additional information, see the DEIB Toolkit in Appendix IV.

## Appendix I:

### Basic Parliamentary Procedure Guide<sup>33</sup>

#### Putting A Motion on the Floor

To make a motion or amend a motion, a delegate must go to the microphone, be recognized by the presiding officer, state his/her name and local League, then state the motion (or amendment to the motion). The motion (or amendment) is seconded from the floor. The presiding officer then places the motion before the assembly for discussion. The delegate may speak to the motion (or amendment) first. Note: Once a motion is placed before the assembly by the presiding officer, it is under the control of the assembly and does not belong to the delegate making the motion. For example, it cannot be withdrawn later without permission of the assembly.

#### Seconds to Motions

It is not necessary to agree with a motion to second it. A second only implies that there is more than one person who wishes to discuss the motion. Therefore, if a motion is coming from the Board or committee, it does not need a second from the floor.

#### Amendments to Motions

A motion that is on the floor may have two amendments pending at one time. However, the first amendment must relate to the main motion and the second amendment must relate to the first amendment to the motion.

#### Refer or Postpone

A motion to postpone or refer to a committee can be made while a main motion or an amendment to a main motion is pending.

#### Close Debate

A delegate must go to a microphone and move to close debate (call previous question). The motion needs a second. There is no discussion, and it takes a two-third (2/3) vote of the delegates present and voting to pass. After the motion to close debate is approved, there will be an immediate vote on the pending motion.

#### Table a Motion

A motion to table ("lay on the table") should not be used to kill the motion on the floor and should not be used to postpone consideration of the motion.

#### Point of Order

If a delegate believes there was a breach of parliamentary procedure, she/he may rise to a point of order. If the point of order refers to an action made by someone other than the presiding officer, the delegate should give the presiding officer time to correct the problem before interrupting with the point of order. If a delegate wishes to make a motion and is not sure how to proceed, the delegate should ask the presiding officer.

#### To Limit or Extend Debate (debatable, two thirds vote (2/3))

This motion is used when debate needs to be limited as to time or number who wish to be heard, or extended in time, etc.: *I move that debate: be limited to one minute per speaker, be limited to*

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<sup>33</sup> Taken from the 2015 Handbook; original source unknown.



*five speakers pro and five speakers con, be extended to ten more speakers, one minute each etc.*

### **Miscellaneous Motions**

The following motions have no rank and are usually “incidental” to the business pending or to Convention operations. Some may interrupt other business. There is no debate or vote, and motions are usually ruled upon by the chair.

- **Question of Privilege** - this motion relates to the comfort of the delegates or operation of the assembly.
- **Parliamentary Inquiry** - this motion is used to ask for direction or procedure to accomplish a parliamentary maneuver.
- **Point of information** - this motion is used to seek urgent information necessary before decisions can be made.
- **Division of the Assembly** - This requires a standing vote if the voice vote seems inconclusive. A single delegate “calls for a division” and does not need to use a microphone but must be heard. If a counted vote seems necessary, the delegate makes such a motion, which requires a second and a majority vote.
- **To Reconsider a Vote** - This motion can be made only by a delegate who voted on the prevailing side and on the same or next day as the vote it proposes to reconsider. The motion can be moved within the time limits, although the vote on the motion may be delayed until a more appropriate time if other business is pending. This motion is usually debatable and requires a majority vote. If the motion to reconsider is adopted, the original motion is again before the delegate body as though a decision had not been reached. A vote can only be reconsidered once. Approved bylaw amendments may not be reconsidered.

## Appendix II:

### Current Local League Legislative Priority Request Form

#### Local League Legislative Priority Request Form

Please return to [President@lww-va.org](mailto:President@lww-va.org) by July 1.

Local League Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

If your League wants to make suggestions for our advocacy for 2025 please complete this form and return it to me. Remember, there must be a LWV VA or LWV US position to support advocacy.

Ranked Choice Voting Time – rank the priorities that you wish the State League to advocate on in the 2025 Session – 1 being most important to you. It isn't necessary to complete all of them but be sure to rank your highest choice with 1– and then down from there.

- Affordable Housing \_\_\_\_\_
- Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice \_\_\_\_\_
- Child Care \_\_\_\_\_
- Domestic Violence \_\_\_\_\_
- Education (public) \_\_\_\_\_
- Environment \_\_\_\_\_
- Gun Violence Prevention \_\_\_\_\_
- Physical Health Care \_\_\_\_\_
- Reproductive Health \_\_\_\_\_
- Voting & Elections (includes Elections Security, Money in Politics, and Voter Access)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have other suggestions on issues you feel we should be advocating on? (These issues must have LWV-VA or LWVUS positions already in place.)

Do you have issues for which there are no positions, but your League would like to advance as a possible study? \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks.

### Appendix III:

### Sample Reimbursement Voucher

FY2022-2023					
<b>Name of Claimant:</b>			<b>Date:</b>		
<b>Address reimbursement check to be sent:</b>					
Date Expense Incurred	Specify EF or OF	Budget Account / Grant Name	DESCRIPTION OF EXPENSE (When, What, Who, Purpose)	Payable Amt	In-Kind Amt
	OF	NA			
			<b>Total Expense:</b>		
1. Provide copies of receipts for non-mileage expenses claimed. 2. For joint costs of OF & EF meetings, Treasurer will divide shared costs. Submit only 1 voucher. 3. In-Kind is considered a donation and is not paid to the Claimant. 4. Mileage (\$.14/mile), tolls and parking fees, to and from Board meetings, liaison trips and other official LWV-VA business. Include names of Board members riding with you. 5. Printing from personal computer \$0.10/pg b/w; \$0.25/pg color 6. Accommodations, when shared, include name of roommate. 7. Submit claims for reimbursement within 30 days of the event or incurring the expense.					
Please mail or <b>email</b> expense claims with receipts to:					
Treasurer, LWV-VA					
Name					
Address					
Address					

## **History**

At its founding over 100 years ago, the League of Women Voters did not embrace diversity and inclusiveness, a practice sadly reflective of a society that continued to segregate and discriminate against non-white members of the community. The League, as it looks to be both transformative and to address historic racism, is today committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in principle and in practice and weaving this throughout our organization, our work, and our actions. In our work, implementing DEI strategies will help everyone thrive and create growth for the League and our membership. A DEI lens will allow us to examine everything that we do and remove barriers that may exist that prevent the League from being equitable or inclusive of everyone. This toolkit will provide resources and guidance, plus help share best practices over time, to move us toward more effective DEI strategies. We recognize each League looks different and has their own way of doing things, so please use this as a tool to build your own road map towards a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization.

## **Key Terms from LWV**

We have summarized the definitions of these words. For the full LWV definitions, please see [here](#).

### *Diversity*

All of the similarities and differences among people, not limited to gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or Indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, appearance, language, accent, ability status, mental health, education, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, and political perspective or affiliation. Diversity exists in relationships between people. Teams and organizations can be diverse, but individuals cannot.

### *Equity*

Equity is an approach that divides resources to make sure that each person has a fair chance to succeed. It considers that people have different access to resources because of systems of oppression and privilege. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society. Equity seeks to balance these disparities.

### *Inclusion*

Inclusion refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational and societal goals.

While an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group is not always inclusive. Being aware of unconscious or implicit bias can help organizations better address issues of inclusivity.

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<sup>34</sup> Adapted from LWV California Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Guide and LWVUS resources.

### *DEI Lens*

A way of examining a program, process, product, etc. with regards to how it is perceived by a variety of communities, voices, and perspectives, and what, if any, barriers may exist that are preventing it from being equitable or inclusive of everyone. We can apply a DEI Lens to every League's work and operations.

### **LWV-VA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Self-Assessment**

The process to build a more inclusive organization begins with self-reflection, analysis, and understanding on a personal as well as on an organizational level. To assist in this path, we've identified some tools and resources which are located in the resource section. One of these is a Harvard University collaboration, Project Implicit, which helps identify implicit bias. The test helps provide insight into internally held beliefs which we may not even be aware of.

### *Re-examining Processes & Procedures*

#### Local League Questions

##### 1. General Questions:

- Do you have a DEI team or task force that is charged with looking at how to weave DEI throughout your work.
- How is your board continuing to have discussions about, and learning more about issues of racism, implicit biases, and structural and institutional policies which have historically kept communities of color and low-income people from participating fully in society? How do you celebrate the diversity of ideas and people?
  - Holidays, culture, and foods of people who provide new ethnic richness to the community
  - Events and programs affecting and/or impacting disadvantaged communities
  - Spotlights on League members who exemplify and provide leadership around our work on DEI
  - Spirit of the League Awards acknowledging diverse leaders and volunteers or folks who work on DEI
- Has your League committed to improving diversity?
- What goals has your League created to hold itself accountable?

##### 2. Leadership

- Who are your leaders and board members?
  - Is there diversity? Young members, members from communities of color, members from disadvantaged or often misaligned groups.Members from areas of your community which have historically had no voice?
  - What barriers to bringing in diversity are there?
- Who are your volunteers? Committee chairs and members? Actively engaged in League work?
- Who are your interns and (where applicable) paid staff?
- What are you doing to mentor, train, and support your next generation of leaders?
- Are the folks on the nominating committee diverse or do they have goals to nominate a diverse pool of candidates?
- Has the nominating committee reviewed membership and the wider community to find candidates who represent a diversity of views and backgrounds?

##### 3. Membership

- Is there an orientation or onboarding for new members to welcome them and help acclimate them to League?

- Are there opportunities for socializing and community building?
- Are there opportunities for feedback and open communication?
- Are leaders constantly mentoring upcoming leaders and sharing power? These may be non-traditional ways to mentor, so be creative and innovative in thinking about how to engage and support newcomers into the League.

#### 4. Events:

- Are all meetings on the calendar with contact information in time for sufficient notice?
- Is your League responding to current events and partnering on rallies/events?
- Are there barriers to attending events?
  - Language barriers?
  - Physical barriers?
- Who are your speakers, presenters, and panelists? Are they representative and reflective of the community's diverse population?
- Who are you inviting to attend? (local electeds, community groups, community partners, etc.)
- What images are you using in your presentation? This is important: those images can reinforce stereotypes of who the League is!
- How are you starting each program? (welcome, recognition of Native American land, introductions with gender pronouns, etc.)
- Are you setting aside time to build community at the beginning of each meeting to check-in or welcome new members?
- How are people introducing themselves? (name, pronouns, position?)
- What types of food options are offered? (vegetarian, gluten free, halal, etc.)
- Annual Meeting: Are you considering all of the questions above for your annual meeting? This can be an opportunity to bring new folks in.
- Program Planning:
  - Are you picking issues that are relevant to everyone in your community or just those in power?
  - Are there issues that you can focus on that might bring in a more diverse membership?

#### 5. Communication

- Does your League have a DEI policy and definitions that it's adopted? See the LWVUS DEI Policy [here](#).
- Are those definitions and policies on your website, social media, etc.?
- Do you trumpet your work around DEI to the community?
- Do you have diversity in your pictures, writers, contributors, and content?
- Note: Although these things are important, it's important to do the work throughout your organization, otherwise this is just tokenism.

#### 6. Questions for Individuals

These are some questions to ask at your meetings and events and reflect upon afterwards:

- Who is speaking? Who isn't?
- Can you help lift or amplify the voices of others?
- Do you speak up when you see someone being treated unfairly because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or background.

## 7. Voter Services

- Are the members on your Voter Services team diverse? Studies have shown that people are more likely to vote or register to vote if the person approaching them is from their community.
- Are you reaching out to all of the areas that your League covers and focusing on communities that are typically underrepresented.
- Are you leveraging your partnerships to reach underrepresented communities and letting them lead the charge?

### **Collecting Demographics: Why, How, and What to Do with the Data**

Demographics are important because collecting such data will help measure how successful your League is in bringing in new members from diverse communities as well as new young members. They measure who and what kind of people are involved in your League. These questions are a vital way to measure progress in terms of diversity and inclusion. Google forms is one great way to collect this information and you can automatically take that data and put it into charts and graphs.

#### *Tips on How to Use Surveys to Get Valuable Demographic Information*

1. Make it anonymous. If you're looking to unveil certain broad trends or patterns in your League you should consider making your survey anonymous. The fact is many people are cautious about revealing information they consider private. In case your survey is anonymous, make sure to emphasize that.
2. Briefly explain the background of your survey. Include a brief introduction to your survey in which you would clearly state its purpose. Reassure people by sharing exactly how you'll be using their information. Mention how you plan to keep the data private and anonymous.
3. Make it easily accessible. As we live in a digital world, you need to make sure your survey is available to be filled out online. You can consider using LeadQuizzes to create your surveys, you can easily integrate with some of the most popular apps and services, embed your survey to your website, send it via email, and share on Facebook or other social media. You can also help folks who are not able to access a virtual survey by calling them.
4. Make it brief. Shorter surveys are easier for people to complete. It also might be a good idea to indicate the total number of questions at the very beginning of the survey, as well as the approximate time it might take to complete.

#### *Demographic Basics*

These are some suggestions for demographics to ask for. It is not required, but this is vital information for Leagues and increasing diversity. Some questions may be harder to ask and they are all up to the League's discretion for what to ask. Nothing is mandatory, so people can ask and answer as they feel comfortable.

##### 1. Age

Questions about age are a part of almost every demographic survey. That's because age is a powerful data to segment your audience by. You can ask for their specific age or give age groups like 25-30 and 31-35, etc.

##### 2. Ethnicity (Race)

A sensitive (and politically-charged) subject but asking about race is necessary. It is probably best to create checkbox-type questions and a write in portion, which allow respondents to check multiple answers. This is especially important because many countries are melting pots of different races and cultures. As with all sensitive demographic questions, it's important to give



respondents a write-in box option and a “prefer not to answer” option.

### 3. Education

Knowing members’ levels of education can help understand the best way to communicate more effectively. In most cases, education demographic questions ask about the highest level of education or the highest degree obtained by an individual. This is useful to identify which demographics you aren’t reaching.

### 4. Availability and Schedule

It is important to know this because it gives an idea of people’s flexibility and how busy they are. This could include their priorities and when they are available for League meetings or participation.

### 5. Household income

Asking about household income may be considered a bit less invasive than asking about an individual’s income. It can provide a sense of understanding, recognize any barriers to entry and help with fundraising.

### 6. Gender and Sexuality

This is useful to know who is involved and see if there is involvement with the LGBTQ+ community.

### 7. Ability

When knowing people’s abilities allows your League to better accommodate those who are differently abled it helps better serve them and understand strengths as well as limitations to better accommodate them.

### 8. Language

Knowing people’s primary language and any other languages they speak is valuable for the future.

## **Applying a DEI Lens to Recruit and Retain Members**

One of the ways in which we can be a more inclusive organization is by recruiting diverse members as well as put into place procedures that help retain them. Recruiting members is about building relationships and making the League easily accessible. Retention is about helping new members feel comfortable, welcome, connected, and not overwhelmed. The following are some questions to ask yourself:

### *Outreach*

- Do you regularly partner with diverse organizations or groups (academic, youth, religious, social, etc.)?
- Do you send a representative to your partners’ meetings? Keeping up these relationships can help others outside of League become familiar with your League and its work.
- Sometimes it can take a while for someone to feel ready to join. Are you staying in touch with prospective members, answering their questions, and inviting them to events without being too pushy?

### *Recruiting Materials*

- Do your recruiting materials need to be updated? Do they look outdated or overly wordy? You should have something you can hand people to invite them to join.
- Is the website easy to navigate? Can folks pay online? Are you asking for their interests in the membership application?
- Is it time to upgrade your membership system?
- Are you using social media to recruit new members?

### *Accessibility*

- Fees
  - Are you offering free student memberships?
  - Is there a sliding scale option or a way for people to join at a reduced fee?
  - Is your League membership fee a barrier for those who may not have the discretionary resources to join?
  - Are there other options your League can provide to encourage participation from outside the “usual” League sphere?
- Locations
  - Are the places where you have your events wheelchair accessible? Are there ramps, elevators, lifts, etc.?
  - If you’re holding events at night, have you considered organizing carpools for those who are uncomfortable driving at night.
  - Do you offer childcare, a babysitter share, or activities for young children at the event or meeting?
  - Can you provide an interpreter for deaf or non-English speaking participants?

### *Onboarding Members*

- Do you send a welcome email or call new members?
- Is there an orientation session (virtual, pre-recorded or in person) that helps new members get acclimated?
- Do you have any materials that explain the structure of your League, issues you focus on, calendar of events, or other materials that will acclimate new members?

### *Micro-tasks*

- Do you have easier, bite-sized tasks that are well defined so that new members can feel comfortable joining in without getting too overwhelmed. Too often we throw new members into the deep end and ask them to join the board or take on a leadership position before they feel ready.
- Do your tasks/roles have written position descriptions?
- Are you letting the members determine their own capacity? Be careful about assuming that someone may be too busy or unable to complete a certain type of task.
- Are you making assumptions about the type of tasks your new members want to/are able to do? (e.g. giving younger members tech-related jobs)?

### *Membership Team*

- Do you have a membership team that helps with recruitment and retention?
- Do you have a buddy system or something that allows new members to connect to the organization?

- What tools do you have in place to support your team's work? Do you have a spreadsheet with new members to keep track of them?

### *Support New/Different Ideas*

- Are you too focused on maintaining the "League Way"? Old systems, old ways of thinking and performing -- let's toss some of those away and be truly transformative in our work, opening up ourselves to new ideas and thinking about HOW we do our work. Don't be afraid of trying something new. If it works, great. If it doesn't, readjust and try again or move on and learn from that experience.
- Even if the idea is different from what we usually do, maybe the rules need to change.
- If you need to disagree with an idea, are you clear about why the idea won't work? Are you still supportive of the person who shared the idea?

### **Creating Collaborative Partnerships: Opportunities to Listen, Learn, and Build Bridges**

Partnerships with different organizations are valuable because they can strengthen your League. It is important to build these connections, especially with diverse organizations, because this expands the reach of your League and promotes engagement and builds relationships with community groups and other nonprofits which work well in communities of color and disadvantaged communities, building our understanding of their issues. Below are some questions to consider as you start to find and build these partnerships. Success stories have been included to give some ideas for partners and demonstrate how beneficial they can be. These partnerships can help achieve goals and connect with more people, which will benefit everyone.

### *Guiding Questions*

- Does the partner conform to our nonpartisan policies?
- Does this partnership reach a different or new group of people that you don't work with now?
- Have you identified trusted messengers to partner with to connect with the community?
- Are you listening to your partners about issues and concerns that they have?
- Will this benefit both parties in the partnership?
- What are your goals as partners?
- Does this partner value DEI?
- How can you make sure this connection will be continuous?

### *Successful Partnerships*

- NAACP Virginia
- Virginia Interfaith Coalition
- Virginia Tribal Conference
- Virginia Immigrant Rights Coalition
- Delta Sigma Theta
- Zeta Phi Beta
- Virginia Alliance on Mental Illness
- REVUP Virginia
- Equality Virginia
- Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance
- Nolef Turns

## Curated Resource List

There are many videos, webinars, training modules and also success stories from Leagues across the nation.

### *Self-reflection, implicit bias, and internal work*

It's important to have insight into yourself and your League as part of the initial journey towards building diversity, equity, and inclusion. Compassion is a valuable tool in this journey for both you and others.

- [Gauging Implicit Bias](#) This tool asks questions and evaluates responses to provide some possible insight into your own implicit bias. This tool was designed by Project Implicit, which is a "non-profit organization and international collaboration between researchers who are interested in implicit social cognition: thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control.
- [Toward Love, Healing, Resilience & Alignment: The Inner Work of Social Transformation & Justice](#) by Sheryl Petty, Kristen Zimmerman, and Mark Leach. This is a longer article that dives into the complex nature of inner work and how it translates to holistic outer transformation. It is an in-depth read that demonstrates the importance of inner work improving outer work. This tool is beneficial because it looks at all these smaller ideas from a broader perspective.
- We're All Problematic. . .But Here's How to Work Through the Issues We Perpetuate by Lin Kaatz Chary.
- [So you don't think race, equity, diversity, and inclusion are relevant to your mission](#). Very readable and concise argument as to why DEI is important.

### *Historical context to current inequity in the US*

- *The Color of Law*, by Richard Rothstein. Discusses historical implementation of systemic racism in housing.
- [How Unjust Social Structures Help Some but Harm Others](#). This article explains how structural inequalities are woven into our society. It builds on how these inequalities turn into privilege that is used as a form of power against others. It is an approachable look at these complex topics.
- [Historical Trauma and Cultural Healing](#). The site gives information on historical trauma including a five-minute video. There are guiding questions for the video and links to additional resources. This is a good tool because it explains how historical trauma connects to people today and how it is perpetuated in society.

### *Barriers to change and overcoming them/Bringing about an Equitable Society*

- [Champions for Change: Upending Structural Racism and Barriers to Equity Barriers](#) by Yodit Mesfin Johnson. This is a short article about a Washtenaw County-based nonprofit support organization that strives to empower and improve the impact of fellow nonprofit leaders and could address the racial leadership gap. The article focuses on how important it is to upend structural racism and put people of color in leadership positions. It is informative and to the point.
- [What Does an Equitable Executive Leadership Transition Look Like?](#) The article is about nonprofits and their civic role. Suarez discusses how nonprofits can have beneficial transfers of power and how to keep things equitable. It goes in depth on different models including a new model that will continue promoting equity.
- [Intent vs. Impact: Why Your Intentions Don't Really Matter](#) by Jamie Utt. This an informative article about intent, impact, and privilege. It addresses all these topics in a clear way. It is important to understand these things and know that the change is rooted in listening. When people realize the difference between someone's intent and their impact it will help them realize that these things are not always the same.

- [Breaking Generational Cycles of Trauma](#) by Brandy Wells. In this TED Talk, Wells speaks on her experience as an African American woman who grew up without a present father and how this affected her as a mother. She covers how your childhood connects with your adult mental health. Wells discusses the importance of uncovering your traumas to break the cycle and leave a better legacy. Her main focus is challenging the old ideals for parenting, thinking with a mental health framework, and parenting with comfort not fear.
- [Gem Droppin' with Amanda Seales: White Savior vs Ally](#). Amanda Seales explains the difference between white saviors and allies. This video is a good tool because it uses humor to approach a difficult topic. Seales acknowledges privileges white people have and how mainstream media portrays allies incorrectly.
- [So, You Call Yourself an Ally: 10 Things All 'Allies' Need to Know](#) by Jamie Utt. The article summarizes another piece by Mia McKenzie about acting like an ally instead of saying you are an ally. It covers the importance of being an ally that will help people not help themselves. The term is not something simple, it is an action that people choose to do every day. This piece is very eye-opening because it challenges people who consider themselves allies to reevaluate their practices.
- [Examining Cultural Competency in the Nonprofit Organization](#) by Lawanda Horton-Sauter. This article defines cultural competence and other important terms. It is a valuable resource because it mentions how to address specific issues and improve cultural competence. The piece is concise and easy to understand.
- [Fakequity](#). Blog about what is equity and what is "fakequity" which the writers define as equity without action. Several thought-provoking posts.
- [How to Push DEI Conversations Out of the Comfort Zone](#) by Chera Reid & Jara Dean-Coffey. The article is a clear list of ways to push pass your comfort zone when it comes to DEI. It is insightful because it is from two African American women authors. This piece has good tips to approach these conversations from a different perspective.
- [A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment](#). The article is so useful because it shows why this is important, while giving tips and factors to consider when writing an Indigenous land acknowledgment.
- [CSULB Land and Territorial Land Acknowledgments](#). This document is an important tool because it explains what these are and why it is applicable. It includes samples and resources, which makes it easy to learn more about this.
- [Beyond Acknowledgments](#). The guide includes many tools like podcasts, blogs, organizations, library guides, and ally resources. It is useful because these tools can further tutor people about land acknowledgments.

## Appendix V: Amendments to Handbook

*This appendix is a cumulative record of amendments to the Handbook.*

February 2025: Factual updates (e.g., number of local Leagues in Virginia, dues process changes as a result of Transformation); incorporation of plans/policies previously adopted by Board (e.g., DEI Plan, update to Youth Council overview); and addition of a section on Board Liaisons to local Leagues. (Approved by Board at February 2025 meeting)

March 2025: Revisions to Leagues at Large Section. (Approved by Board at March 2025 meeting); updated Convention section to incorporate existing Resolution Policy and Procedures)