

League of Women Voters of Florida
League of Women Voters of Florida Education

IN
FLORIDA
LEAGUE

Policies and Procedures
of the
Board of Directors

LWVF Publication No. 1232

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League of Women Voters of Florida/League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund
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Contents

Welcome.....	3
Non-Partisan Policy.....	4
Conflicts of Interest.....	4
Diversity Policy.....	5
Responsibilities & Procedures for State Board Members.....	6
Responsibilities & Procedures for Off-Board Members.....	11
Managing Program Portfolios.....	13
Representation on Other Boards or Groups.....	16
Participation in Legal and /or Administrative Proceedings.....	16
Policies & Procedures for Interaction Between LWVF & Local Leagues.....	18
LWVFEF Debate Policy	21
Taking Action.....	22
Coalitions.....	25
Revenue Sharing Policy.....	27

Welcome to the Board

Congratulations on your election or appointment to the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Florida. More and more you will begin to see a bigger picture of the League's operations and functions at national, state and local levels. You will see how often local Leagues look to the state board for guidance and leadership, and develop a greater appreciation of the need to nourish local Leagues.

As a state League leader, you are expected to produce an incredible range of results, including representing the organization during public testimony on state issues, defining and explaining state versus local issues, overseeing the generation of revenue and analyzing how it will be used, training leaders for tomorrow, and generally watching over the health and welfare of local Leagues, which reflect upon the state League as a whole.

Each Board member brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table and makes a valuable contribution to the Board as a whole. Working with League members from around the state brings a diverse perspective on the League experience. Shared problems and shared solutions as well as the creation of new, exciting goals evolve through an amazing democratic process. Sharing in leadership will bring you stimulation and provocative challenges. With the League's mission always in the forefront, your individual vision and leadership will be sought by members throughout the state as well as other members on the Board.

Accepting a directorship implies and brings with it certain responsibilities and requires a certain amount of time. Along with your responsibilities comes great satisfaction in knowing you played a part in assisting the League in carrying out its mission. Most of all, it is hoped you will enjoy your leadership role and the many rewards that come with it.

In Florida League is intended to assist you and provide guidance in carrying out your responsibilities and meeting your leadership goals. Please be sure to read it thoroughly, and keep it in your Board notebook, as you will find most of your questions answered here.

Non-Partisan Policy

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote informed and active participation in government through education and advocacy. The League is non-partisan in that it does not support or oppose any political party or candidate; it is political in that it takes positions on selected public issues after member study and agreement.

The League recognizes the role of political parties in our form of government and believes that participation in their activities is an essential ingredient of citizen responsibility. While the League urges its members to be politically active, certain constraints are necessary in order to maintain our non-partisanship which has always been a major source of strength for the League. It is the cornerstone of our Voter Service Program: candidates appear at our events because they trust our forums will be fair and impartial and they know they will be treated with respect. Candidates give information to the League because they know it will not be used for partisan purposes. This reputation for fairness and independence accounts for the confidence placed in our positions by interested citizens, other organizations, and the media.

Individual Board members must recognize that as a result of close identification with the League, they have a special responsibility to see that their activities do not create a partisan impression. The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Florida has established the following guidelines:

- Each Board member is responsible for maintaining the non-partisanship of the League.
- Each Board member is expected to differentiate between his/her personal opinions and League positions.
- Board members may attend public political meetings but not private political meetings, or advise or work for parties or candidates, make financial contributions to parties or candidates, or state preferences for parties or candidates in writing or in speech. Board members are expected to resign upon declaring an intention to be a candidate or work for a public office.

Adopted August 2003; Re-adopted July 2007

Conflicts of Interest

General Standards for Directors *

1. Directors must discharge their duties as directors in good faith and in a manner they reasonably believe to be in the best interest of the corporation.

2. A director may rely on information, including financial data, if prepared or presented by an officer or employee of the corporation whom the director reasonably believes to be competent in the matters presented; legal counsel, public accountants, or other professionals or experts; or a committee of the board which the director is not a member of if the director reasonably believes the committee merits confidence.

Conflicts of Interest; Improper Personal Benefits

1. A director must disclose any conflicting relationship or interest in any matter to be considered by the Board of Directors (or committee). An interested director will be counted in determining the presence of a quorum, and although the interested director may vote, her or his vote cannot be the deciding vote (that is, the votes cast for the action must be sufficient without counting that director's vote).
2. Under the Florida law, a director may be held personally liable for, among other things, a transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit, either directly or indirectly. Florida law provides a "safe harbor" and generally states that a director is deemed not to have derived an improper personal benefit from a transaction if the conflicting circumstances were disclosed or known to all directors voting on the matter, and the transaction was authorized, approved or ratified by a majority of the disinterested directors (and the transaction is not otherwise illegal).

*Officers are also directors by virtue of their office.
Source: Fla. Statutes SS 617.0831, and 617.0832 (1997)

Diversity in Membership

The League of Women Voters of Florida, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVF on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

The LWVF recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. The LWVF subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

Responsibilities and Procedures for State Board Members

State board members share a total Board responsibility, are responsible for an assigned portfolio (either administrative or program) and carry out consultant duties to two or more assigned local Leagues.

Total Board Responsibility:

1. **Adhere to the LWVF non-partisan policy.**
2. **Attend all Board Meetings** – Arrive on time and stay to the end. The State Board should consider asking for the resignation of a director who misses two consecutive Board meetings, or major portions thereof. Serious consideration should be given to the fulfillment of responsibilities.
3. **Come prepared** – Read minutes, treasurer’s financial report, and other material sent in the Board Brief to each director before the meeting. As much committee work as possible should be done prior to meetings. Report the outcome of committee work, not the details.
4. **Adhere to Deadlines** – Submit Board Reports, Board Briefs, and Presidents Mailings, and any other items by established deadlines.
5. **Make decisions based on objective, thoughtful consideration** – Do not hesitate to ask questions. Your input is important.
6. **Promote League financial health** – Be mindful of the Board’s fiduciary responsibilities. Decisions should reflect consideration of the financial well-being of the organization and responsibilities toward local Leagues. Participate in fund raisers. Develop a budget for your area of responsibility.
7. **Share responsibility** – Some program and administrative responsibilities are shared by the entire Board. Examples are: formulating calendar, developing and setting League goals, setting legislative priorities, approving consensus questions and position statements, and assisting with workshop and conferences as requested.
8. **Testify** – When requested, testify at legislative hearings.
9. **Serve on committees** – Directors are assigned to standing committees. Often, directors are requested to serve on ad hoc committees during Board meetings or at other times, for example: wording consensus questions, evaluating consensus results, planning convention or council workshops, legislative seminar, voter service, reading committees, budget and bylaws committees.
10. **Appointments to public boards/commissions** – LWVF may encourage and recommend LWVF directors and other League members for appointment to statewide or regional commissions, boards or other appointive positions if approved by the State Board. Appointees serve as individuals rather than as formal representatives of the League unless the position was offered to the organization. When serving on such boards or commissions, it must be clearly ascertained in each case whether the appointee is representing LWVF or himself/herself.
 - If the seat is for LWVF, the Board may appoint a new representative when the Board member’s term of office has ended.

- Board members asked to serve as an individual shall notify the Board of their appointment. The League title may be listed for identification purposes but not in any promotional manner.

11. Materials needed:

1. Keep the following materials in a notebook:

- Minutes—LWVF,LWVFEF (for previous 12 months)
- Treasurer’s Reports---LWVF, LWVFEF (for previous 12 months)
- Budgets & chart of accounts for current year
- LWVF & LWVFEF Bylaws (most recent revisions)
- Strategic plan
- *In Florida League*
- Calendar for current League term
- Study and Action, current online edition, LWVF
- *Impact on Issues*, current online edition, LWVUS
- *League Basics*, current online edition, LWVUS
- Education Fund Accrual Grants Manual
- List of local League presidents
- List of State Board Off-Board members
- List of State Board consultant assignments
- List of national Board members

2. Materials to keep on hand:

- Consultant Kit
- Publication catalogs LWVF and LWVUS
- *Capitol Reports* (current session)
- Supply of LWVF/LWVFEF postcards, letterhead and envelopes (various sizes)
- Reimbursement forms
- Handouts for local Board orientations:
 - “For the New and Not so New Board Members,” LWVF pub #1203
 - “Education Fund Accrual Grants Manual,” LWVFEF pub #2300

12. Writing Responsibilities:

1. **Board Brief** - This internal document is used to communicate information to other directors in preparation for Board meetings. It contains two types of information: 1) a summary of activity in portfolio areas to pass on for general knowledge, and 2) explanation, background information, options, as well as a recommendation, on issues requiring a Board decision. There is no need to report the same information at the Board meeting. All reports are sent to the secretary for transmittal to Board members prior to the Board meeting.

2 **Presidents Mailing** - Due usually every month to the president by established deadlines. Send by email to the president first for approval. The PM includes any information of interest to your portfolio area that would be useful to local Leagues.

3. **Board Report** - The Board Report includes calendar dates and the president’s wrap-up of various Board proceedings not covered by portfolios. The Board Report also lists motions made and passed at Board meetings for LWVF and LWVFEF. Program chairs should write brief summaries of decisions made in their area of responsibility and reasoning for action taken.

4. **The Florida Voter** - Articles are assigned by the president. Directors are encouraged to suggest possible articles that would be timely and of interest.
5. **Correspondence** - Any letters necessary to conduct your assignments.
6. **Committee guides/publications** - As needed or appropriate for portfolios or as requested.
7. **Legislative background material** - If a portfolio is legislative priority.
8. **Testimony** - To be presented to legislature or other governing body.
9. **Biennial report** - A summary of the last two years of portfolio activities for the convention booklet.
10. **Study and Action** Program chairs update their portfolio chapters by established deadlines for reprinting after each convention.

13. Reimbursement for Official Duties:

1. **Portfolio** - Committee and portfolio expenses as budgeted (phone, postage, supplies, necessary travel).
2. **Transportation** - Mileage at the approved rate per mile for travel to and from Board meetings, consultant trips and official LWVF business. Includes tolls, parking fees, and coach airfare, where necessary.
3. **Accommodations** - Hotel room (double occupancy) for Board meetings and other Board functions. There shall be no reimbursement for a hotel room when visiting local Leagues. Hospitality should be provided by the local League. With budget consideration, exceptions may be made for special circumstances.
4. **Per Diem** - Meal allowance for Board meetings at approved rate per day.
5. **Stipends and honoraria** - Board members may not individually accept and retain personal stipends, grants, honoraria, or fees for service or projects in the name of LWVF/LWVFEF. Such monies may be accepted and retained as reimbursement for expenses incurred.
6. **Procedure for reimbursement:**
 - Complete reimbursement request form and send to office with receipts.
 - Indicate purpose for each item on form, e.g. program, administrative, consultant.
 - Send separate reimbursement request forms for LWVF and LWVFEF.
 - No reimbursement will be provided for expenses submitted after three months of receipt of bill. Every effort should be made to submit bills by the end of each fiscal year or before April 15.

14. General information about director meetings:

1. **Waiver of notice** - Notice of a meeting of the State Board need not be given to any director who signs a waiver of notice either before or after the meeting. Attendance of a director at a meeting constitutes such a waiver (without the requirement of writing) unless the director states, at the beginning of the meeting, or promptly upon arrival at the meeting, any objection to the transaction of affairs because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. (Source: Fla. Stat. #617.23 91997)
2. **Action by directors without a meeting** (Consent in lieu of meeting) - Any action that would be taken at a director's meeting may be taken without a meeting if the action is taken by all members of the board (or of the committee), as evidenced by their written consent describing the action taken and signed by each director or committee member (unless the articles of incorporation or the bylaws provide otherwise). The consent has the effect of a meeting vote and may be described as such. (Source: Fla. Stat. #617.0823 (1997))

Financial Responsibilities

1. It is the duty of each member of the Board to help set financial policy, to develop and approve the budget, to delegate implementation of the financial policies and the budget to the treasurer, and to monitor financial outcomes.
2. When planning League functions, sufficient income should be budgeted to equal if not exceed the expenses.

Portfolio Responsibilities

Refer to “Managing Program Portfolios,” next section.

Consultant Responsibilities

Know the content of the Consultant’s Kit - It will provide answers to most questions. Information about the Leagues to which you are assigned should be in the local League consultant file. If further information is needed, contact the immediate past consultant. Call the local League president to introduce yourself. Ask if there are questions or problems. Establish rapport. The consultant is a friend or helper, not an adversary, admonishing parent or dictator. Encourage communication.

Responsibilities:

1. Make a phone call to assigned League presidents after each Board meeting. Inform the president of any information, dates or deadlines they may not be aware of and would not get until they receive the Board report. The consultant interprets State Board actions. A list of items to be reported will be reviewed at the end of each Board meeting.
2. Read the assigned Leagues’ *Voters* and give feedback to the local League via phone or note.
3. Explain the importance of Board orientations and offer to do one. Plan with the president to ensure it meets the particular needs of the local Board.
4. Consultants may be invited to meetings of assigned Leagues or asked to assist in some way. Make every effort to meet requests.
5. Communicate with the State Board membership director and/or chair:
 - After each contact with each assigned League e-mail a report to the membership director/chair. Forms are available for this purpose.
 - Special problems may require a phone call to the director and/or chair to discuss the situation and formulate necessary action.
 - Make contact by phone or e-mail at least once a month.
 - Notify the director of any special problems.

Relationship between President and Directors

General:

1. All directors must assume total responsibility for the work of the Florida League, but the president is charged with final responsibility. Therefore, all questions in doubt should be forwarded to the president.
2. The president is the Board liaison with state office. Any questions or concerns relating to the office or office personnel, if they cannot be answered by the office personnel themselves, should be addressed to the president.
3. All officers report directly to the president. The officers form the Executive Committee, which is authorized to make certain decisions between regularly scheduled Board meetings.

Materials that should be *cleared* through the president:

1. Any correspondence (other than asking for information) with elected officials. The president usually signs, but the portfolio chair may sign.
2. Any correspondence that is being mailed to all local League portfolio chairs. If it will be mailed through the state office, use same procedure as #6 below.
3. Any correspondence to an individual local League president of a substantive nature.
4. Any correspondence about which you have a doubt, question or concern.
5. Reports for Presidents Mailing are sent to the President by e-mail by established deadlines.
6. The Presidents Mailing includes any information of interest to your portfolio area that would be useful to local Leagues.

Materials that should be *copied* to the president:

1. Inter-Board correspondence of a substantive nature.
2. Correspondence from an elected official or head of a state agency that is sent directly to a Board member (if it is sent through the state office, president will be sent a copy).
3. Substantive correspondence from local League presidents or members (see #2)
4. Any other correspondence deemed appropriate.
5. Reports from committee meetings.

Note: Proposals, consensus questions and items for the Board to consider at the next Board meeting should be sent to all Board members in the Board Brief for review.

Relationship Between Board Members and Office

Board members and office staff share a common goal of implementing the missions of the organizations. In support of that goal, the following tasks are examples of the partnership between Board members and staff. The president prioritizes work in the office.

What a Board Member can expect from the office:

1. Weekly mailings when appropriate.

2. Stationery and other supplies. This can be done through material distribution at Board meetings and upon request.
3. Copy and distribution of materials as requested. Give as much time as possible so office staff can meet individual needs and deadlines.
4. Retrieval of information from LWVF/EF files and assistance in obtaining information from LWVUS.
5. Any requested reports such as quarterly local League PMP data and MAL status.
6. Notification of office hours, staff vacation, and a calendar of planned deadlines for submitting material for Board Briefs, making reservations for Board meetings, arrangements with hotel for central billing to LWVF, etc.
7. Timely e-mailing of Board meeting information: hotel reservation information, etc.
8. Special assistance to Board committee chairs in planning and preparing for state meetings, legislative seminar, council/ convention, conferences. Copies of council/convention manuals are on file in the office and are sent upon request to board members serving as coordinator for these events.

What a Board Member should do to assist office staff:

1. Each Board member is one of several Board members to which office personnel must respond. In essence, the office staff has several bosses. All requests weigh equally unless of course they are time sensitive.
2. Be familiar with scheduled office hours.
3. Send materials to be typed and distributed by office in a timely fashion.
4. Adhere to deadlines for monthly Presidents Mailings, Board Briefs, Board Reports, special meetings and/or projects, etc. Submitting materials late can delay mailings that contain other time sensitive information.
5. Be aware of peak work load time for the office and allow for longer turn-around times. Crunch times are generally just before state meetings and when the legislature is in session.
6. When possible, send request via e-mail. If a phone call is necessary, then follow up with a memo of confirmation.
7. Clearly label all material and correspondence as to proper distribution/disposition.
8. Put a date on everything.
9. Notify the office of extended dates when you will not be available.

Responsibilities for Off-Board Chair for Issues for Action

1. Will not attend LWVF board meetings unless agreed to by both parties.
2. Become thoroughly familiar with assigned topic.
3. Recruit and organize a committee.
4. Prepare brief written status reports for LWVF to be included in Board Briefs. They will be submitted by e-mail to the secretary and should advise of any action, success, or failures. A current calendar will be provided.

5. Prepare brief written status reports for LWVF to be included in Presidents Mailings. They will be submitted by e-mail to the president.
6. Write Action Alerts as needed and submit via email to LWVF president and action chair for approval. LWVF reserves the right to edit for clarity.
7. LWVF will send Action Alerts to all local Leagues and distribution list via e-mail.
8. Action Alerts should include bill numbers, name and sponsors if available. The Action Alert should contain brief background information pertinent to the issue and the nature of action that the League wants members to take.
9. Only the president or a member designated by the president may speak for LWVF. Letters, press releases, speeches, etc. put forth in the name of the League shall be approved by the President before release.
10. Action with coalition groups must be governed by the guidelines set forth in the LWVF policies and procedures guide, *In Florida League*, and in the LWVUS guide, *League Basics*.
11. LWVF is available to provide consultation to Off-Board chair regarding any proposed action if necessary.
12. LWVF will provide staff assistance when approved by the president. Staff assistance may include typing, copying and mailing.

Responsibilities for Off-Board Chair for Legislative Priority

The term of the Legislative Priority Chair will commence with appointment by the LWVF President prior to the legislative session and terminate after the adjournment of the regular session of the Florida Legislature.

1. Will not attend LWVF board meetings unless agreed to by both parties.
2. Become thoroughly familiar with assigned topic.
3. Prepare brief written status reports for LWVF to be included in Board Briefs. They may be submitted by e-mail to the secretary and should advise of any action, successes, or failures.
4. Prepare brief written status reports for LWVF to be included in Presidents Mailings. They will be submitted by e-mail to the president.
5. Write Action Alerts as needed and submit via e-mail to LWVF president and action chair for approval. LWVF reserves the right to edit for clarity.
6. LWVF will send Action Alerts to all local Leagues and distribution list via e-mail.
7. Action Alerts should include bill numbers, name and sponsors if available. The Action Alert should contain brief background information pertinent to the issue and the nature of action that the League wants members to take.
8. During the session, reports and calls for needed action may be included in the weekly publication, *Capitol Report*. Such weekly reports must be submitted electronically to the coordination consultant for inclusion every Friday of the session at a time determined by the consultant.

9. Only the president or a member designated by the president may speak for LWVF. Letters, press releases, speeches, etc. put forth in the name of the League shall be approved by the president before release.
10. Action with coalition groups must be governed by the guidelines set forth in the LWVF policies and procedures guide, *In Florida League*, and in the LWVUS guide, *League Basics*.
11. LWVF is available to provide consultation to Off-Board chair regarding any proposed action if necessary.
12. LWVF will provide staff assistance when approved by president. Staff assistance may include typing, copying and mailing.

Managing Program Portfolios

Program portfolio represents the study and action priorities of the League of Women Voters of Florida. Directors with program portfolio are hereafter called *program portfolio chairs*. Programs portfolio chairs may be in the **study and consensus mode**, the **monitoring and action** mode, or both.

General Guidelines:

1. Become as knowledgeable about the subject as possible.
2. Begin a clipping file and develop a reading list.
3. Become an “expert” on portfolio:
 - Contact the previous portfolio holder to maintain continuity, receive materials, and obtain any suggestions.
 - Become familiar with the history and positions in *Study and Action* (LWVF) and *Impact on Issues* (LWVUS).
 - Read through past files, including past Presidents Mailings, Board Reports, and LWVF Minutes.
4. Establish contact with appointed off-Board chairs.

An effective way to deal with a complex portfolio is to form a committee that can assist with ideas, help with research, or serve as a sounding board. It can be as small as one other person, or as large as necessary to do the job; it can be off-Board members, local League members, or a combination of both.

Record Keeping:

1. Keep complete files, especially consensus reports.
2. Weed out material not necessary to the continuation or historical aspect of the portfolio before files are turned over to a successor.
3. Send to State office for filing and/or storage material not needed currently but that must be retained. **Note:** Materials more than 10 years old are sent by the office to the Archives located at the University of Florida Library in Gainesville.

Monitoring and Action:

1. Learn where the action is and follow all activities, committee meetings, etc., associated with the portfolio. This can be a difficult process. Consult action chair.
2. If you need time on the Board meeting agenda (usually for issues requiring a Board decision), well before the board brief deadline notify the president of the topic and amount of time needed.
3. Keep the Board informed about potential legislative priorities and items of continued interest and recommend to the action chair potential legislative process by the published deadline.
4. Recommend, in coordination with the action chair when appropriate, activities such as sponsoring forums and issuing informational publications that will inform League members and/or the general public about issues of importance to the portfolio.
5. Understand the relationship between the lobbyist and program portfolio chairs (refer to lobbyist contract). Legislative priorities assigned to lobbyist are handled differently from those handled solely by program portfolio chairs.
6. Review and classify legislative priority bills based on League positions to give direction to the lobbyist. Bills can also be obtained on the Florida Senate and House websites.
7. Supply lobbyist with position papers and background information on priorities connected with the relevant issues in the portfolio.
8. Set goals and plan a program for the coming year to include:
 - A study plan (if a study is to be done).
 - Study material, committee guides and/or reference lists to be prepared.
 - Monitoring activities.
 - Opportunities and strategies for action, in consultation and coordination with the action chair.
 - Information dissemination (publications, *The Florida Voter* articles, fact sheets, position statements for lobbyist, forums, round tables, etc.).
9. Know the portfolio's local League counterparts. They can be called on for help with special research projects and can be considered part of the committee. Keep on file pertinent articles clipped from local bulletins.
10. Know what coalitions, if any, the portfolio is associated with.

Writing Responsibilities

1. Write informative articles for *The Florida Voter* and send helpful suggestions and information to Leagues in the President's Mailing.
2. Draft correspondence as required by portfolio activities (cleared through program/action chair) or requested by the president. Signature of president alone is usual; however, program portfolio chair and president may sign if they feel both signatures will be more appropriate and/or effective. Copies of all communications should be sent to the office.
3. Prepare Action Alerts when appropriate. These require approval of president and action chair. Copies of all Action Alerts should be sent to the president, action chair and LWVF office.

4. Prepare press releases, when appropriate, for distribution to local Leagues in Presidents Mailing and/or the Press Center in Tallahassee. All press releases must be approved in advance by the action chair and the president.
5. Write a Convention Report to be printed in the biennial convention workbook. The report should include a summary report of the two years just completed. (This task is easier if a running summary record of activities is kept. A Strategic Plan can be used as a tool to assess activities and progress.)
6. Update the relevant portion of *Study and Action* biennially, after each LWVF convention. The update is due by the deadline set by the publications chair (usually at the first Board meeting following convention). The program portfolio chair that has been in charge of the item is responsible for the update. The new chair may add information if needed.
7. Assist the president to prepare briefs and develop testimony to be presented to the legislature or other governing bodies.
8. Fulfill other requirements as outlined in “Responsibilities and Procedures for State Board Members”.

Study and Consensus:

1. Prepare for Board approval the consensus questions League members are to answer based on the study item and scope adopted at convention as well as recommend deadlines.
2. Prepare a timeline for Board approval to complete the study and undertake consensus.
3. Prepare material to be provided to League members to assist them in reaching a consensus. This material may range from a simple fact sheet to comprehensive background information, *Florida Voter* articles and bibliography.
4. Compile consensus results and present for Board approval along with a recommendation for wording of positions.

Off- Board Chairs:

1. The president may appoint off-Board chairs to monitor and alert the Board of any new activity on the many and complex positions held by the LWVF, relieving LWVF directors of an overly heavy workload while keeping cost at a minimum.
2. A program portfolio chair may recommend a League member to be appointed as an Off-Board chair.
3. Appointment is approved by the Board. The off-Board chair usually serves a term concurrent with the appointing Board.
4. Off-Board chairs must report to the program chair if the program area is under one of the “umbrella” portfolios. If the program area is separate from any other portfolio, the off-Board chair reports to the program /action chair directly.
5. Requirements:
 - Report and work under the direction of an on- Board program portfolio chair.
 - Report on activities through the on-Board portfolio chair and in Board Reports.
 - Keep complete files for the specific area of the portfolio.
 - Interpret State Board positions to local Leagues under direction of on-Board chair.

1. Activities:

- May be asked to speak for LWVF or testify at hearings for LWVF.
- May be asked to write articles for *The Florida Voter*.
- May be asked to write testimony to be presented to legislature or other governing body.
- May be asked to prepare background material for local Leagues, LWVF Board, legislative priorities, lobbyist, etc.
- May request action under the direction of the on-Board program portfolio chair who then takes the request to the action chair, president and Board if necessary.

2. Reimbursement:

- If specifically requested to appear at Board meetings, will be reimbursed according to guidelines for on-Board member.
- Will be reimbursed for other expenses following approval by on-Board director and when appropriate funds are in budget.

Representation on Other Boards or Groups

1. When a League member accepts appointment to a board, group or committee, it should be clearly understood by the League member, as well as the board or organization, whether the member is representing LWVF/EF or the member herself/himself.
2. There must be Board approval of the representation.
3. The general goals of the organization and the League should be similar. If the goals conflict, there should be no representation from League.
4. The League representative should read the appropriate section(s) of *Study & Action* (and subsequent update material) and know the LWV positions and principles.
5. The League representative should make no statements that are in conflict with LWVF policy as expressed in *Study & Action* (and subsequent update material) or with the current action agenda. Discussion, suggestions and questions are always permitted.
6. The legislative priorities of LWVF must be kept in mind by the League representative before agreeing to any action of the board or organization.
7. The League representative should report in writing to the Board or as otherwise directed by the Board.
8. Although the committee or board on which the League is being represented is not considered a coalition, the section on “Joining Coalitions” contains useful information on League representation with other organizations.

Participation in Legal and /or Administrative Proceedings

These guidelines are intended to assist the LWVF (or LWVEF) in deciding whether or not to join in litigation and/or administrative proceedings initiated by another organization and/or individual. They can also serve as a resource to local Leagues.

The LWVF should consider the following:

1. The goal of the litigation and/or administrative proceeding and whether the issue and goal is in accord with LWVF principles and positions.
2. Whether the League's participation is critical to the outcome of the litigation and/or administrative proceeding.
3. Whether the individuals who are parties to the litigation and/or administrative proceeding are organizations whose purposes are compatible with those of the League.
4. Whether the individuals who are parties to the litigation and/or administrative proceeding are known to the organizations who are also parties to the litigation and/or administrative proceeding. These individuals should have a record of action consistent with League principles, and a commitment to the proceedings.
5. Timeliness of the issue.
6. Possible alternative remedies to be sure litigation and/or administrative proceedings are the best course of action.
7. The potential ramifications of the litigation and/or administrative proceeding are the best course of action.
8. The financial implications to the parties; the League's financial responsibility; cost of attorney fees if not handled pro bono; and potential sources of financial support.
9. The involvement in this litigation and/or administrative proceeding vs. other League priorities. Determine the cost/benefit ratio. For example, the cost in people, time, money, research demands, and trade-off with other priorities against the benefit of creating a positive change in public policy, good public relationships, and better cooperation between organizations.
10. The League, as a party to the litigation and/or administrative proceeding, should have full authority to review and approve all legal documents in advance of their filing.
11. All parties should agree that no official statements will be made using the name of the League without the expressed consent and participation of the president or president's designee.
12. A member of the League's Board of Directors should take responsibility for representing the League in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the litigation proceedings and/or administrative proceedings.
13. A majority of the Board of Directors must agree that the League should participate.

Notes:

- The involvement of the LWVF Education Fund is limited to litigation that is in the public interest. LWVFEF cannot participate in any lobbying activity or effort to accomplish through the courts anything that is being attempted through legislation or referendum.
- The League should keep careful records that would help defend itself against a charge of filing a frivolous law suit.

Policies and Procedures for Interaction Between LWVF and Local Leagues

Function:

State - The State Board is responsible for implementing the mission and policies of LWVF. Board members represent the League as a whole and are not representatives of their respective local Leagues. It is the responsibility of the State Board to help local Leagues function as effectively as possible and to administer state program.

Local - Local Leagues have the responsibility to function within the guidelines of LWVF policy. They also have the responsibility to keep LWVF informed about their activities.

Voters:

State - Each local member shall receive *The Florida Voter*. A copy is also sent to each state president and the Florida liaison on the LWVUS board.

Local - One copy of each local League Voter should be sent to each State Board member, each local League president, the state office, and to the designated LWVUS consultant.

Communications:

State – Internal - It is the responsibility of the State Board to involve local Leagues in statewide activities and inform Leagues about LWVF activities through *The Florida Voter*, Presidents Mailings, and the LWVF website.

State – External - Only the president, or designee, may speak on behalf of LWVF. The State Board is responsible for preparing and distributing news releases concerning LWVF activities and positions.

Local – Internal - When a local League corresponds with LWVUS or has substantive correspondence with another local League, copies of the correspondence should be sent to the state office.

Local – External - Only the president, or president's designee, may speak on behalf of a local League. If a local League wishes to issue a publication on a state program item or position (including voter service materials), a draft with complete contents should be sent to the state office in advance of publication. Material prepared by the State Board for public distribution may not be altered without authorization from the state president.

Consensus Reports:

State - It is the responsibility of the State Board to determine if there is consensus on statewide studies, and to articulate as well as publish the resulting position.

Local - A copy of consensus and concurrence reports on national and state program should be sent to the state office. Local Leagues may not publish results of their individual consensus on state and national studies.

Invitations/Questionnaires to Statewide Officials and Candidates:

State - LWVF is responsible for preparation of questionnaires to candidates for statewide office and for providing an explanation of statewide ballot issues.

Local - To prevent jeopardizing statewide events, local Leagues should consult with the LWVF president before issuing invitations to statewide officials or candidates (governor and cabinet members). Refer to LWVFEF Debate Policy herein.

Membership Rosters:

State

- The LWVF state office is responsible for maintaining an accurate and up-to-date list of state members at large in the LWVUS data base.
- The LWVF and/or the LWVUS membership list, in any form, may not be provided to any other organization or group without the expressed permission of the State Board.
- When other organizations request that LWVF include their material in our mailing, they will be asked for a financial contribution to cover mailing and reproduction costs. Contents of the printed material, as well as the willingness of the organization to cover the cost, will be reviewed by the president, who will authorize (or not authorize) inclusion of the material.
- The LWVF state office advises the relevant local Leagues of any discrepancies found in the LWVUS National Membership database.

Local

- Local Leagues are responsible for inputting and maintaining up-to-date and accurate local League membership data into the LWVUS National Membership Database.
- A local League will convert any discrepancies in its membership list (in the LWVUS National Membership Database) observed and reported to the local League by the LWVF state office (the state office has viewing access to the information inputted by local Leagues).

Minutes/Financial Reports:

State - Local League presidents receive a Presidents Mailing after each State Board meeting. It is posted on the LWVF website.

Local - One copy of local League minutes and financial reports should be sent to the state local League consultant after each local League Board or Annual meeting.

Publications:

State - A copy of each new publication and a supply of publications catalogs will be provided to each local League.

Local - One copy of local publications should be sent to LWVF office and the state local League consultant.

Per Member Payments:

State

- The State office will send PMP quarterly statements to each local League.
- The state Board contributes to the financial health of LWVF through statewide fundraising.

Local

- The amount is based on a figure agreed upon by vote of the delegates at LWVF Convention or Council multiplied by the local League's membership in the National Membership Database on January 31 of each year.
- Timely payment of PMP to LWVF is expected. If payment is not received by the end of the quarter following the due date, the state office staff will notify the local League and advise the State Board of the League's delinquency and that League's plans to meet its obligation.

Annual Report:

State - LWVF mails to each local League a Vitality Assessment form in order to assess the health and welfare of the local League. The LWVF uses this form to study trends, new ideas, compliance with requirements, projects in which local Leagues are involved, and the need for training or short/long range planning in certain areas.

Local – Local Leagues use the Vitality Assessment form to communicate problems and success to the state League. It is also used at the local level for comparing yearly reports and progress in particular areas.

Administration of Education Fund Accrual Grants:

State - An EF accrual project review committee composed of the chair, treasurer, president and appropriate program chair or other State Board member reviews each project proposal by local Leagues. The Accrual Grants Manual guides reviews of proposals.

- All proposals and determinations are reported to the EF Board.
- Exception: Litigation proposals shall be a matter of total State Board determination. In an emergency, the Executive Committee is empowered to make a decision.

Local – Local Leagues with Education Fund Accounts on deposit with the LWVFEF can submit project proposals by mail to the state office or electronically by e-mail to the state office in advance of the project. The state office will confirm receipt of the project proposal and distribute to the Accrual Grant Committee for approval and processing. Allow two weeks for consideration and notification from the committee. Forms and electronic filing instructions are available on the website. Refer to the Accrual Grants Manual for details. Manuals are available through the state office for \$2.00 plus shipping and handling.

LWVFEF Debate Policy

Statewide election events - It is the policy of the League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund that sponsorship of debates, town meetings or forums concerning statewide elections for governor, cabinet members and U.S. senators is reserved for LWVFEF. This will prevent participants from having to respond to multiple invitations from the League at different levels of the organization and ensure that standards set for conducting such events by LWV(US)EF and LWVFEF are met. Events for U.S. Representatives may be sponsored by local Leagues.

Co-sponsorship of events by local Leagues - Under special circumstances, local Leagues may be permitted to take an active role in conducting debates, town meetings or forums for statewide candidates under the following guidelines:

- When a local League has been approached to co-sponsor such events, the local League must obtain permission from LWVFEF.
- The co-sponsors agree with established LWVF and LWVFEF rules for conducting such events. *These guidelines/criteria must be carefully reviewed and adopted prior to issuing invitations.*
- LWVFEF has the option of appointing a member to oversee the event.
- The co-sponsorship name in such circumstances would be the League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund.

Note: Local Leagues may sponsor or co-sponsor debates/forums for any group of local candidates, including those for U.S. Representatives, without approval from LWVEF. When the district lines cross local League boundary lines, the other local League(s) should be notified. The following rules and guidelines may be adapted to local events.

Criteria for Candidate Selection to appear in a Debate -

Only those statewide candidates who meet the following criteria will be invited to participate:

- The candidate must meet the eligibility requirements of the Florida and the United States constitutions.
- The candidate must show evidence that a formal campaign is being conducted with campaign headquarters, campaign staff, position papers on multiple issues, and campaign appearances.
- The candidate must demonstrate significant voter interest and support as evidenced by being a candidate for a major party on the ballot in the general election.

OR

1. By receipt of at least ten percent of support in one or more statewide nonpartisan public opinion polls or surveys conducted at least 15 days prior to the debate.

OR

2. The League may consider other factors that, in the League's good faith judgment, may provide evidence of substantial state wide voter interest in a candidate, e.g., the candidate has widespread voter support as shown by the fact that campaign contributions come from a substantial number of persons throughout the state of Florida.
- Use extreme care when excluding any candidate from League-sponsored or co-sponsored statewide debates. One court recently ruled that "support of 10% of voters was not an appropriate criterion for entry into a public political debate." The FEC, FCC and IRS rules must be carefully reviewed and adhered to.

Taking Action

The strength and integrity of all League action is based on the decisions of informed members. When a position is reached, the League speaks with one voice --- the voice of a substantial majority--- and the minority abides by that decision. Leagues may, of course, decline to take action at any government level and maintain a public silence. But a League may not take action in opposition to official League positions. **Only the president or president's designee speaks for the League. Members may act as individuals in support of or opposition to League positions, but they must make it clear that they are acting on their own behalf and not on behalf of the League unless authorized by the appropriate Board to represent the League.**

The most effective action occurs when Leagues act at whatever level of government is most appropriate. For example, on a statewide issue, the most effective action occurs when local Leagues, acting in concert, lobby their own state legislators. Because legislators are most responsive to their own constituents, it is rarely effective for a local League to lobby a legislator representing a different area. For this reason, one of the most important criteria in adopting a study is whether the issue can best be addressed at the level of League that would undertake the study.

To ensure agreement on the interpretation of positions, to coordinate activities of the different levels of the League, and to enhance the effectiveness of League action campaigns, local Leagues are encouraged to consult with the State Board about their action plans. As discussed below, **consultation is *required* whenever (a) the intended action would affect the jurisdiction of other Leagues and/or (b) a local League wishes to act at the state or national level on an issue which has not been the subject of a state or national call to action.**

Action at Local Level

Action that would affect only the local community requires approval of the local League board only.

Local Position – In deciding to take action based on a local position, the Board should consider:

- Whether the contemplated action falls within the relevant position.
- Whether the members understand and support the action.
- Whether the action would be effective in its community.

State, Inter-League Organization (ILO), or National Position-

Local Leagues are encouraged to take action in their communities on local issues based directly on positions from other levels of League. Consultation with a Board member from the League level may be helpful in planning action strategy.

Involvement in the Absence of a League position- Issues can arise quickly in a community where League input would be helpful but a lengthy study process leading to a local position is not feasible and there is no applicable position at another level of League. Local Leagues can help resolve such issues and play a dynamic, visible role in the community in a number of ways. For example, they may:

- Bring diverse constituencies together to define the problems and facilitate common solutions.
- Sponsor public hearings.
- Provide objective research and education on the community issue.
- Sponsor education forums.

When a League is involved in a community issue without the basis of a formal position, it is critical that League representatives remain objective and neutral. The League's role is to help the community reach consensus or air differing viewpoints in a calm, objective atmosphere. In this case, this is not considered "action" and could therefore qualify as a Voter Service or Education Fund project.

Action at Regional Level

Action that would affect the jurisdiction of more than one League requires consultation with the Boards of the other local Leagues in the area involved - The procedures to be followed will depend on the complexity of the issue and the number of Leagues involved. If only two or three Leagues are affected, all should agree (or have no objection) to the plan of action. If more than three Leagues are involved, there should be consensus on the contemplated action. A member of the State Board may be contacted for guidance.

Action at State Level

Action that would involve contact with state government officials requires approval by the state Board - If a local League is contemplating state-level action that has not been requested by the State Board, the state action chair must be contacted.

Legislation affecting only the jurisdiction(s) of the League wishing to act - The contemplated action may be based on positions from any League level and, as a general rule, will be given clearance by the State Board. Consultation is needed, however, not only to keep the State Board informed about all state level advocacy but to ensure that there is no conflict with other LWVF action and to ensure that the action proposed is based on complete and current information. For example, in the course of a day in the Legislature a bill may be amended one or more times, and the League may contact only its own legislators unless it has requested and received permission from other Leagues to lobby their legislators.

Legislation affecting jurisdictions beyond the League wishing to act -

1. If the basis for the contemplated action is a state or national position, the State Board will evaluate the proposed action in the context of its legislative priorities. Clearance will be given if there is no conflict with other LWVF action.
2. If the basis for the contemplated action is a local position, the State Board will exercise extreme care to determine whether to approve such action. While using a local position as the

basis for state-level action should not circumvent the state program-planning process (through which changes to current state positions or new study items may be proposed), there are occasional circumstances when a local League may wish to pursue such action.

3. In such cases, the League will be asked to prepare a request for permission to act to be distributed to all affected Leagues. The request should include a description of the type, goals, impact, and outline of the contemplated action, including which legislators the League proposes to lobby and, to the greatest extent possible, the general effect of the proposed action on other local Leagues. The state program action chair will review the request prior to distribution. The State Board will evaluate the responses of the local Leagues and determine whether to grant permission to act. Points the board will consider include:

- Is the legislation permissive or binding?
- What are the geographic impact, level and visibility of the contemplated action?
- Is the issue divisive at any level?
- Is there conflict with any local or state League position?
- Do any local Leagues object to the proposed action and why?

Action at National Level

Action that would involve contact with government officials at the national level *requires approval by the National League* - If a local League is contemplating action at the federal level that has not been requested by the national board, plans must be cleared with LWVUS through direct contact with the LWVUS office. If there are questions, the appropriate state legislative/program specialist or the program or action chair may be contacted for guidance.

Joining Coalitions

League action is accomplished in many ways. Combining forces for joining action toward a limited and well defined objective can double or triple League impact. Joining a coalition is a Board decision. However, before the League 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 will concentrate its activities on supporting or opposing candidates, or if League goals diverge from those of the coalition, the League should not participate.

The following guidelines should be weighed by the Board of Directors 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. The aims of coalition must not conflict with the League positions.
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 should be non-partisan and must not endorse candidates for office.
3. The coalitions' 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 staff and volunteer time, as well as cash and in-kind expenses) should be worth the investment.
6. 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 dissension.
7. 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).
8. It must be determined how much time will be required from the League and if the League has volunteers to provide it - also, if it will involve local Leagues and will they agree to cooperate.
9. It must be determined how much expertise will be required from the League and can the League provide it.

Sample letter to Organization/Coalition upon Joining

Date

TO:

The League of Women Voters 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 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.

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

Sincerely,

President
League of Women Voters of Florida

LWVF/LWVFEF Coalitions, Partnerships & Memberships -Updated July, 2007 - Everglades Coalition, Florida Women’s Consortium, Advancement Project, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, Children’s Defense Fund (thru LWVUS), Citizen’s Coalition for Public Schools (for Voucher complaint 1999), Clearinghouse on Human Services, Communication Health Action Information Network (CHAIN), Congressional Conference on Civic Education (LWVUS), Florida ERA Legislative Coordinating Council, Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc., Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, Floridians for Fair Elections, Growth Management Coalition, Justice at Stake (thru LWVEF), Redistricting Reform Working Group (thru LWVUS).

LWVF/LWVFEF Representation on Boards/Commissions/Committees -Special Committee on Judicial Evaluations, South Florida Water Management District Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC).

Organizations with Common Interests -ACLU, Acorn, American Cancer Society, Clean Water Network of Florida, Coalition for Comprehensive Tax Reform, Common Cause, C(3) Table, Environment Florida, First Amendment Foundation, Florida Association of Women Lawyers, Florida Audubon Society, Florida Bar, Florida Coastal & Oceans Coalition, Florida Consumer Action Network, Florida Council for Social Studies, Florida Forum, FPIRG, Human Services Coalition of Dade County, Kid Care Coordinating Council, Kids Voting USA, LEAF, Leroy Collins Institute at Florida State University, NAACP, 1000 Friends of Florida, Panhandle Citizens Coalition, People for the American Way, Reubin O’D. Askew Institute at University of Florida, Save the Voters Voice, Sierra Club, The Ocean Conservancy, Voices for Florida’s Children, WildLaw (Florida Office).

Revenue Sharing Policy

Sharing State Level Contributions with Local Leagues

Goal:

1. To achieve the highest possible level of funding for the League as a whole in Florida.

2. To increase non-dues financial support of LWVF/LWVFEF and League programs and activities.
3. To encourage and help local League fund raising efforts.
4. To simplify and combine efforts for fund raising among both levels of the League in Florida.

Solicitation Policy:

1. Local Leagues will be sent a list of companies that LWVF/LWVFEF intends to solicit in their area prior to the solicitation and local Leagues will be encouraged to participate in the efforts.
2. Major statewide corporations and foundations or regional headquarters of national corporations will be targeted by LWVF/LWVFEF for contributions.
3. Local Leagues are not prohibited from soliciting any company in their area.

Revenue Sharing Policy:

1. The local League will receive 10 percent of any unrestricted contribution received by LWVF/LWVFEF from a donor located within its area. However, the local League will receive **no less** than the amount it received from the donor's most recent contribution to that local League providing that donation was received not more than three years prior to the current contribution.
2. When the local League **assists** in the solicitation, e.g., makes a joint call, provides a contact or information and background on contact, or makes a follow-up phone call at a LWVF/EF request, the local League will receive 15 percent of an unrestricted contribution. Again, the local League will receive no less than the amount it received from the donor's most recent contribution providing that donation was received not more than three years prior.
3. In applying this sharing policy, LWVF/LWVFEF is required to abide by IRS requirements. Contributions made to LWVFEF cannot be diverted to general use and, therefore, LWVFEF contributions to be shared will be deposited in that local League's Education Fund accrual account or, if one has been established, in the local League's own Education Fund account.
4. The LWVF/EF development director will assist local Leagues in obtaining restricted funds for major local League projects. Requests will be considered on an individual basis. This provision is to insure that local Leagues are not cut off from large corporate donors who might contribute to special projects of a local nature but who would otherwise be more likely to make a state level contribution.
5. Any situation not covered by these provisions or any perceived inequity arising from revenue sharing should be referred to the state development director for LWVF/LWVFEF consideration.