**LWVWA POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**REGARDING STUDIES**

(Updated February 2023)

**State Studies and the Study Committee**

At the first Board meeting following a convention, the Board shall determine the eligibility of new studies for Education Fund support. A project approval request form, including a description of the project, proposed budget, and sources of funding shall be completed and submitted to the LWVWA Education Fund Board for approval. Project approval must be obtained before soliciting funds.

If eligible, state studies are done by the Study Committee, which shall be open to all members. Committee membership shall represent more than one point of view and shall include a state Board liaison.

**League Study Checklist**

Before a study can be funded, it must adhere to the following checklist:

• Have clear member support for adoption of the study item.

• Board approval of an appropriate member agreement process.

• A study process open to all members.

• Development of good consensus questions or a concurrence statement.

• Background information that enables members to learn about the issue.

**Study Committee Responsibilities**

The committee shall agree on a plan of study, which will include an outline of the areas to be covered, questions to be asked, and a plan of work, which will include an agenda for the committee and a timetable. The committee may narrow, but not expand, the scope of the study as adopted by the convention delegates. The committee should be aware of the time, money and resources available to complete the study. The state Board liaison will present the plan and any major changes to the Board for approval and comment.

**Study Committee Chair**

The President shall appoint the committee chair. The chair should be a person who can be objective, without promoting a personal viewpoint on the issue. Committee chair responsibilities include:

• Providing notice to committee members and the state League of committee meetings and activities.

• Ensuring that committee meetings are conducted in a courteous, objective, nonpartisan manner.

• Ensuring that the study has been reviewed for technical accuracy by outside nonpartisan sources and/or members with special expertise in the area.

• Supervising production of the study

**State Board Liaison**

The President shall appoint a Board member to serve as liaison between the Board and the Study Committee. The liaison’s responsibilities may include:

• Providing information to the committee about available staff support and budgetary limitations.

• Distributing to the committee state League policies governing Study Committee organization, responsibilities, and study publication for committee discussion.

• Presenting a plan of study and timetable to the Board for approval on behalf of the committee and periodic progress reports.

• Presenting proposed consensus questions to the Board for comment and approval. • Reporting any changes in the plan of study to the Board for approval.

• Performing other functions as requested by the President or the Board.

• Ensuring a budget has been created and approved.

**Study Committee Meetings**

The Study Committee should meet periodically, in addition to communication by appropriate technology, email, and mail, to discuss and review the status of the study, issues that arise and changes to the plan of study and timetable. Meetings may include speakers from a variety of perspectives, tours, or other activities.

**Research and Study Process** The committee as a whole is responsible for gathering and organizing research and information about an issue and planning its use. The committee should examine all sides of an issue so that the information presented to members will be balanced, objective, and nonpartisan. The committee may provide original research; build on existing resources, such as government studies, reports, and legislative or executive solutions to a particular issue; use information prepared by other sources, such as libraries, newspapers or websites; as well as adapt and supplement materials developed by other Leagues.

**Study Format**

Studies should be standard in appearance, providing appropriate recognition of the League, the Study Committee, the editor, and the Reading Committee.

The length of the study should depend upon the complexity of the issues and available resources. The state Board liaison should bring any differences to the Executive Committee or the Board for resolution.

**Consensus Questions**

The committee must submit proposed consensus questions to the Board for consideration through the state Board liaison. Final approval of consensus questions rests with the Board of Directors.

**Study Committee Editor**

The President, in consultation with the Board or Executive Committee, may appoint an editor for the study. The editor should be an individual who can be fair and objective in performing their duties. The editor is responsible for making sure the report adheres to LWVWA and standard publishing styles and practices. The editing process is performed before the report is sent to any graphic designer, if one is used. Otherwise, the editor is responsible for formatting the report. The Board, in consultation with the state Board liaison, may specify the editor’s additional responsibilities as well as interaction with the reading committee.

**Reading Committee**

While final authority for study content rests with the Board, this responsibility may be delegated to the Reading Committee.

A Reading Committee consisting of at least three members with diverse interests and degrees of experience shall be appointed by the President to review the study. The President shall appoint one of the members to serve as chair, or may designate the program portfolio director to serve as facilitator for the committee.

Reading committee members shall review the draft submitted by the study editor or the Board for bias, balance, style, clarity, accuracy, organization, and whether the report is within the scope adopted by the convention. Proposed changes must be returned to the study editor or the Study Committee chair for evaluation and/or implementation. The final draft shall be re-read and approved by the Reading Committee before submission for publication.

Differences between the Reading Committee and the editor or Study Committee chair that cannot be resolved shall be brought to the Board or the Executive Committee for a final decision.

**Publication of State Studies**

State studies funded through the LWVWA Education Fund must comply with IRS regulations governing 501(c)(3) organizations. Specifically:

• The study must be educational in nature and prepared in an objective, nonpartisan manner without advocating a particular position on an issue.

• The study must be designed to serve the general public, not League members exclusively.

• The study and study resources cannot be used to promote League membership.

**Copyright**

The Executive Committee or the Board shall determine when to apply for official copyright. Copyrighted publications are to include a statement similar to the following:

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without permission of the publisher.

Release of copyright, or permission to reproduce League studies or materials, must be approved by the Executive Committee or the Board. Requests for release must be made in writing, stating the purpose or use and why it is necessary to reproduce the material. Approval in writing by the Board or Executive Committee must include conditions for the release.

**Sale and Pricing of Study**

Selecting a printer should be made on the basis of price, quality, convenience, and dependability. Recycled paper should be used whenever possible. Online publications may be offered.

The cost to local Leagues should cover all actual costs, including overhead. A selling price should be suggested that enables local Leagues to receive a stipend for handling sales at the local level if they so desire. Bulk orders received in advance of publication may be sold at a discount, which reflects the reduced cost per copy realized by any large press run.

All sales are taxable unless the purchaser designates in advance that the merchandise is for resale. Non-League purchasers must provide a resale tax number.

**Study Committee Continuing Responsibilities**

The committee may continue as an action or advocacy committee after consensus has been reached (see next section). Advocacy is the 501(c)(4) activity. The committee is open to new members at any time. Any proposals for action must be coordinated through the state portfolio director or if there is no portfolio director responsible for the issue, through the League President or designee.

**Reaching Member Agreement: Consensus and Concurrence**

Following publication of a study, the League holds consensus meetings where members who have read the study answer questions about the study material; these answers are then collected and consolidated to form an official opinion and to frame a League position, based upon which the League may take action for or against specific legislation.

Consensus is member agreement reached after study and discussion; it is not a simple majority, nor is it necessarily unanimity, rather, it is the overall sense of the group as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. Consensus is also not a vote or a poll. However, a show of hands may be used to determine the sense of the group. Only members who actually participate in the consensus process may affect the results. The consensus process includes the following:

• Clear information for members about the process to be used for member agreement.

• A member agreement process conducted in an atmosphere of trust.

• Committee development of a draft statement of position, based upon analysis of member responses.

• Board evaluation of whether agreement has been reached.

• Board discussion and adoption of a final statement of position.

• Maintenance of records for future understanding of agreement.

**Consensus Procedures**

All Leagues shall use a consensus form provided by the LWVWA Education Fund. Consensus reports from local League unit meetings shall be submitted to the local League Board. They shall not be sent directly to the LWVWA or to the state Study Committee.

• The reports from the local League and unit meetings shall clearly indicate whether or not consensus was reached. If a question is left blank, say why, for example, “we did not reach a consensus” or “we did not have time to deal with this question.”

• The local League Board shall compile and approve the consensus statement based upon its review of the consensus reports from the local Leagues.

• The consensus form submitted to the LWVWA shall include the name of the local League, date of the Board meeting, and number of local League members participating in the consensus meetings. If any other papers are submitted, they should be firmly attached to the consensus form.

• The local League Board shall submit the consensus statement to the LWVWA. All consensus reports from the local Leagues shall be submitted to the LWVWA as attachments to the consensus statement approved by the local League Board. This may be accomplished electronically by attaching the form to an email from local League or completing a form.

The state Study Committee shall prepare a proposed statement of position based on the compilation of data from the local Leagues’ consensus to be submitted to the State Board for review, discussion, and final approval. The state Study Committee’s data compilation sheets should be attached to the report to the State Board.

**Concurrence**

Concurrence is member agreement with a position or statement adopted or proposed by another League or League group. Delegates to the state convention or council may concur with recommendations of a state study or action committee, decision or statements recommended by a League Board, or positions adopted or proposed by another League or Leagues.

Concurrence is appropriate when:

• The questions are straightforward and easily answered.

• The subject is familiar to most people.

• Members want to reaffirm support for an existing position after an update process.

• Only small changes to a current position are needed.

• A current position needs clarification.

• One League wishes to consider adopting a position reached by another League.

**Concurrence Procedures**

Any League may make recommendations to the state Board for adoption or amendment of a state League position by concurrence. If a local League intends to propose adopting a new state position by concurrence based upon a local study, the study perspective must be broader than a local focus on any particular issue.

To be considered part of the recommended program for the convention and to have background materials included in the convention packets for delegates, the local League must give notice of its intent to propose the adoption or amendment of a state League position by concurrence two weeks before the state Board meeting at which program recommendations are considered and adopted.

Any League proposing the adoption or amendment of a state League position by concurrence at a convention must send background information to the state Board and a copy of the local study with an explanation of the rationale for using this form of member agreement. Studies proposed for concurrence less than three weeks prior to a convention will generally not be considered for inclusion in the recommended program unless local Leagues have received copies of the proposal.

The state Board will consider any proposal to adopt or amend a state League position by concurrence received three weeks prior to a convention. The state Board may modify its recommended program and include the proposal as presented or as amended by the state Board.

Any proposal to adopt or amend a state League position by concurrence requires a 3/5 vote for adoption on the convention or council floor.