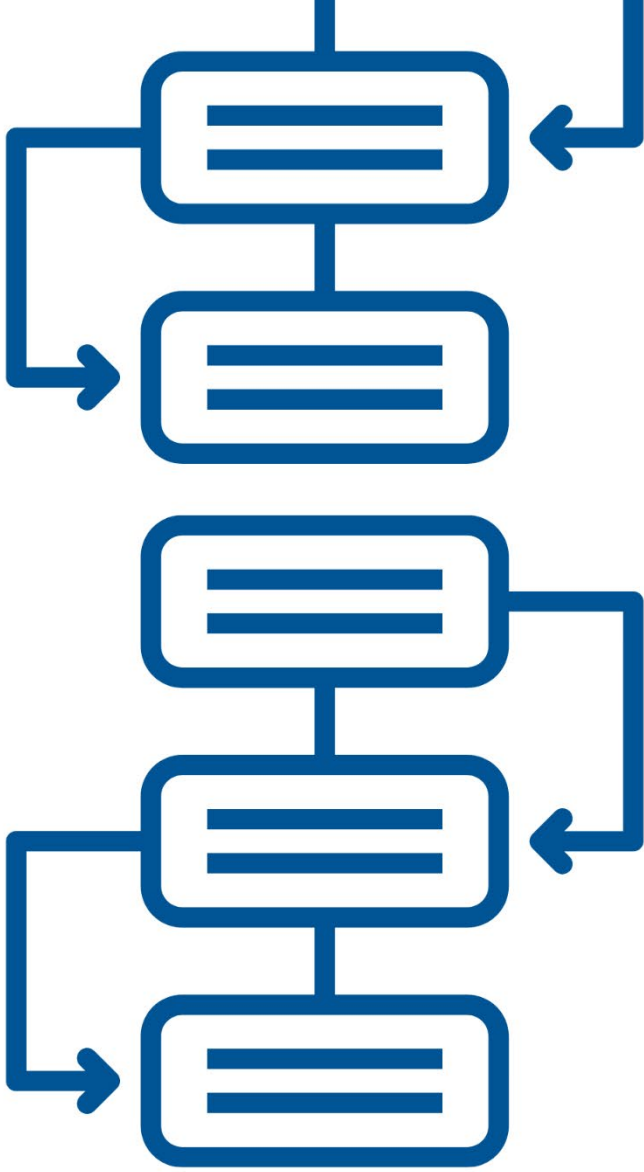


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**LWW<sup>®</sup>**

# Policies and Procedures

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON  
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON EDUCATION FUND

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this policies and procedures document is to ensure that the League of Women Voters of Washington and the LWVWA Education Fund comply with state and federal regulatory requirements. It informs members and the public how the League operates and provides consistency for League practices. It helps to hold leaders and members accountable and helps identify anomalies so they may be addressed. Finally, it reinforces the League culture of transparency and accessibility.

## **LWVWA Board of Directors Governance**

The League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) and the LWVWA Education Fund are nonpartisan organizations. LWVWA Board members manage and supervise the business, affairs, and activities of the LWVWA subject to the instructions of the LWVWA convention. The Board plans and directs the work necessary to carry out programs on selected governmental issues as adopted by the convention.

The details of Board member responsibilities and jobs are available in the *LWVWA/Education Fund Board Member Handbook*.

## **LWVWA Board Portfolios**

The LWVWA Board of Directors is organized using a portfolio director system. The purpose of this system is to provide focus for directors and ensure responsibility to the members for League programs and mission work. It is one way of organizing Board work but not the only way.

The directors may be assigned portfolios that identify an area of League work for which they are responsible. Portfolios may include Communications, Voter Services, Fundraising and Development, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Advocacy, Special Projects, Events, Outreach, Membership (also Membership, Engagement and Leadership Development, or MELD), Civics Education, Program, or others as needed. Job description details are in the Board Handbook and are available in SharePoint and on the LWVWA website

## **Action Policies and Procedures**

Authority for taking action is vested in the Board of Directors, with oversight provided by the President, the Advocacy Portfolio director, and the issue chair (person who leads the legislative effort).

## **Criteria for Action**

Action must be based on:

- current program positions and/or League principles. A decision to take legislative action must consider legislative priorities adopted by the Board of Directors and the following factors:
  - resources available including: time restrictions, member interests and support, adequate finances and community resources;
  - evaluation of the pros and cons of the issue;
  - strategic and political factors.

## **Board Responsibilities**

The Board of Directors establishes legislative priorities prior to each legislative session. In establishing priorities, the Board should seek input from the local Leagues and Units-at-Large (UALs).

The Board of Directors must approve any major new action or strategy taken in the name of the League, especially one committing the membership as a whole. The Board should be notified of continuing action on existing positions at Board meetings, through the Legislative Newsletter, special mailings or otherwise.

The Board of Directors must resolve major questions of conflicting positions and interpretations. Where time constraints do not allow Board consideration of conflicting positions, the Advocacy Portfolio Director or the Executive Committee may resolve the conflict. Reasonable efforts should be made to notify Board members and other League members involved with the issue at the state level.

The Board of Directors may employ one or more lobbyists and establish terms of employment, including required attendance at Board meetings and Advocacy Team meetings as appropriate.

## **Lobbying**

Any League member lobbying on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Washington must adhere to the League's conflict of interest and nonpartisan policies, copies of which must be provided by the Advocacy Portfolio director prior to any lobbying activity and be updated annually.

Board members, Lobby Team chair, and issue chairs who are employed by or serve on the Boards of other organizations should be guided by the following rules to ensure that the League's effectiveness and credibility are not undermined by misunderstanding and confusion on the part of legislators, state officials and their staffs.

- On issues that are not a part of the League's legislative priorities, Board members, Lobby Team chair, and issue chairs must be scrupulous in avoiding the impression that they represent the League.
- On issues that are a part of the League's action agenda, Board members and issue chairs must take care not to represent both organizations unless specifically authorized to do so because similar positions may differ in important details.
- As the League's principal spokesperson, the President may not lobby for another organization.
- Members of the Board of Directors and issues chairs may not lobby for a position in opposition to or in conflict with a national or state League position or for another organization.
- League members may testify before committees on any subject, provided they do not identify themselves as representing the League unless instructed to do so by the state President, state advocacy director, or an Advocacy issue chair with permission of the President or advocacy director.

- Members may speak on behalf of League positions provided they quote from *Program in Action*, the Legislative Newsletter, or individual Issue papers.
- League members responding to calls for action from the League may lobby as individuals.

### **Speaking for the League**

The President is the spokesperson for the League of Women Voters of Washington. Spokespeople for the LWVWA cannot hold partisan offices.

The President may delegate this responsibility to other members by reason of special expertise, qualification, or appropriateness.

Letters to legislators and state officials, letters to the editor, and press releases written on behalf of the state League concerning state action must be approved by the President and the Local Leagues should be consulted by the President/Advocacy Portfolio Director prior to sending an opinion or advocacy piece to the local League's media. state Advocacy Portfolio director (for terminology and consistency with the *Program in Action*) with a copy included in the consent agenda of the next Board of Directors meeting.

### **Role of State League in Local Action**

The state League may take action on local issues of statewide significance based upon state League positions after notification and consultation with the effected local Leagues.

Any local League may request state League assistance on a local issue of statewide significance or an issue which affects more than one local League.

### **Role of Local Leagues in State Action**

Local Leagues and individual League members are encouraged to participate in state legislative action. The local League's action chair or local League President's designee is the liaison with the state League's Advocacy Portfolio director.

### ***Action at the Local Level Under State Positions***

A local League program is intended to cover issues that fall within their own territorial governmental jurisdiction. Local Leagues may not act outside that jurisdiction except in consultation with the state League or affected local Leagues.

A local board may agree, without permission from the state Board, to use state positions as authority for local action. The state Advocacy Portfolio director or Advocacy Team leader should provide assistance as requested.

Because of the possibility that local Leagues may differ in the positions they have developed on various issues, action at the state level on local positions is rare. A local board may agree, without permission from the state Board, to use a local position as authority to take action on a state measure provided:



- The measure applies solely to the proposing League’s jurisdiction.
- The state Board is notified of the proposed action and the action strategy.

## **Procedures for Action**

### *State Legislative Action*

The LWVWA President, state Advocacy Portfolio director, Lobby Team issue chair, and any contract lobbyist should subscribe to the Legislative meeting schedule. Weekly Lobby Team chair responsibilities are included in the LWVWA Lobby Team Handbook on the LWVWA SharePoint site.

### *Testimony*

Testimony must be nonpartisan and free of inflammatory language. Copies of final testimony should be provided to the Administrative Director and Secretary for inclusion in the next Board of Directors meeting consent agenda as part of the League’s records. Copies of letters to legislators and state agencies should be sent to the Administrative Director and Secretary for inclusion in the next Board of Directors meeting consent agenda as part of the League’s records.

If the Lobby Team issue chair is unable to testify at a legislative hearing and would like another issue chair to do so, the issue chair should take the responsibility for preparing the testimony. In an emergency, the issue chair may provide the main points and concepts to a designated League member, but the content of the testimony is the issue chair’s responsibility.

Whoever testifies on behalf of the League has the latitude to shorten or edit the written testimony to fit the time constraints and context of the legislative hearing. The Communications Portfolio director is available for editing but changes may be made due to circumstances.

The Lobby Team issue chair is responsible for preparing written supportive materials such as position papers and talking points. The issue chair should consult the contract lobbyist before these materials are completed.

### *Communication Network*

Activating a network of local-level leadership is a responsibility shared by the Advocacy Portfolio director or designee and the Lobby Team issue chairs. The network includes local League action chairs (through the Advocacy Portfolio director), MELD facilitators, and the local League presidents. Communications may or may not be in the *Legislative Newsletter*, depending on timing.

### *Strategy Disagreements*

If a disagreement occurs between the Lobby Team issue chair and the lobbyist on strategy—such as appropriate positions for the League to take under particular circumstances, whether a hearing requires League testimony, what that testimony should be, and how leaders should interact with other organizations covering the issue—the Advocacy Portfolio director’s position

will prevail. The lobbyist may appropriately convey their opinion and recommend strategies and actions, but the final decision shall be made by the Advocacy Portfolio Director.

Should a disagreement between the Lobby Team issue chairs and the lobbyist remain unresolved, either party may contact the state President for assistance and/or mediation.

#### *Action in New Directions*

In the event that legislative action is planned that will be taking a significant new turn or following a new direction, the Lobby Team issue chair should clear this with the Advocacy Portfolio director or the President. The Advocacy Portfolio director or President will determine whether this new direction needs Board approval. If Board approval is required, the Advocacy Portfolio director or President will expedite that process.

In the event of “late-breaking news” in which an immediate decision needs to be made, if the Advocacy Team issue chair cannot reach the Advocacy Portfolio director or the President, they should use their best judgment after consultation with one of the vice presidents, guided by League positions and past actions on the issue.

#### *Legislative Newsletter*

The *Legislative Newsletter* is published weekly during legislative sessions as determined by the Board of Directors and the editor. The *Legislative Newsletter* should include status reports on key legislative issues, the League’s position in brief on each issue, the rationale for the League’s position, and direction for member action. The newsletter may include calls for action from the national League.

Lobby Team issue chairs, the contract lobbyist, and individuals designated to follow certain issues should submit articles to the editor using the agreed-upon process. The editor may edit material submitted for publication in consultation with the writer and/or the Advocacy Portfolio director. The President or their designee is responsible for final review of *Legislative Newsletter* contents and may delegate this responsibility.

The *Legislative Newsletter* is distributed to LWVWA members and by subscription. Copies of the *Legislative Newsletter* are distributed to members or others who subscribe to it. Copies of the *Legislative Newsletter* may be distributed to legislators, the governor, media representatives and others.

#### *Legislative Lobby Team*

The state legislative Lobby Team, chaired by the state Advocacy Portfolio director or their designee, consists of the President, the contract lobbyist(s), the *Legislative Newsletter* editor, Lobby Team issue chairs with legislative action priority responsibilities, and League members serving as volunteer lobbyists or observers.

Local League action or advocacy chairs and/or the state Advocacy Portfolio director are encouraged to participate with their legislative action committee.

Lobby Team meetings are open to all League members. The Advocacy Portfolio director or lead of the committee/team should be notified if guests (non-Lobby Team members) will be attending. Like all League committee or team meetings, work addressing the functioning of the group is not intended to include visitors or observers unless specifically invited to help with the functioning of the group. The state Advocacy Portfolio director must provide notice of the schedule of Lobby Team meetings to local Leagues.

Observers monitor legislative hearings and/or work sessions and report to the Lobby Team (the issue chairs), the contract lobbyist, or the state Advocacy Portfolio chair.

Volunteer lobbyists testify on behalf of the League under the direction of the state Advocacy Portfolio director, the contract lobbyist, the Lobby Team issue chair, or the President.

### *Legislative Interviews*

After each general election, the state League in cooperation with the local Leagues may interview state legislators and members of Congress to determine their opinions on selected issues of interest to the League.

Local League boards share responsibility for meeting and interviewing state legislators within their geographical jurisdiction. Interviews may be scheduled on an individual basis or through an event involving all legislators within the jurisdiction. The local League's state Board liaison, action chair, or their designee is welcome to attend the event and report to the state Board of Directors.

State Board members and local Leagues within a congressional district share responsibility for interviewing members of Congress.

A state Board member should participate in interviewing U.S. senators. Interview questions may include questions suggested by local League members and/or direction from the national League. The state Advocacy Portfolio director in cooperation with the LWVUS legislative advocacy committee or team will coordinate development of the questionnaire and interview procedures.

### *Public Disclosure Commission Reporting*

The Board ensures that Public Disclosure Commission requirements are met by the contract lobbyist.

### **Guidelines for Participating in Coalitions and Membership in Other Organizations**

A coalition is defined as an alliance that brings together individuals and/or groups for joint actions toward a common goal; it is limited and clearly defined and is not meant to be a lasting relationship. A coalition is a Board-approved collaboration with a formal coalition that has a website where the League logo would be displayed. Participation should meet the following criteria:

- The group's major goals must be consistent with League position(s) and priorities. There need not be a League position on every issue with which the group is concerned, however, the aims of the group must not conflict with League positions.
- Participation will bring added effectiveness to accomplishing the League's goals.
- The group's member organizations should be organizations with which the League can work effectively. The League should have confidence in the leadership of the group and may serve in a leadership capacity.
- The group complies with state and federal laws, agrees to adhere to a democratic decision-making process, and to provide adequate notice of meetings and minutes of meetings to member organizations.
- The group understands that the League may take action on its own, consistent with coalition purposes or the purposes of the organization.
- The League must be able to withhold its name or involvement in certain actions of the coalition (such as candidate endorsements) and yet still remain a coalition member if it so desires.
- The League will not participate in a coalition or an organization where the primary purpose is to endorse or oppose candidates for public office.
- The League should be aware of the time, personnel, and financial commitment required; these expenditures (staff, volunteer hours, cash and in-kind contributions) should be worth the investment.

#### *Procedures for Initiating Participation*

The state Board must approve participation in a coalition or membership in another organization. The President, in consultation with the Board or Executive Committee, must make participation in writing for League representation in all coalitions; the President sends the coalition a letter telling them who is designated be the League representative.

The LWVWA may initiate coalitions if sufficient resources are available. The Advocacy Portfolio director or a designated League representative will be the liaison to the Board of Directors. The LWVWA may initiate a coalition using the coalition membership guidance to invite members.

Where timing is critical, the Executive Committee may approve participation in a coalition. In such case, the Board must be informed at the next regularly scheduled meeting or through a Board communication.

The coalition or the League member seeking the League's participation in the coalition should complete the standard coalition membership form (see website or Advocacy Handbook on the LWVWA website) for consideration by the Board and/or Executive Committee.

If a coalition wishes the LWVWA to co-sign or sign onto an advocacy letter, a request to the Board of Directors should be submitted for approval. The LWVWA may write its own letter instead of signing onto a coalition letter.

### *Communication with Local Leagues*

The state League must inform local Leagues of its participation in state coalitions or membership in other organizations.

### *Responsibilities of the League Representative*

The League representative to a coalition should participate actively in coalition meetings and activities. The League representative must report to the state Board and/or Executive Committee on a regular basis on the nature and status of activities.

The League representative must seek advice from the President, Advocacy Portfolio director, Executive Committee and/or the Board of Directors should issues arise regarding League policies or positions.

### *Annual Review*

The Board of Directors should review, evaluate, and approve participation in all coalitions and membership in other organizations annually prior to the council or convention based upon the above criteria.

### *Guidelines for Co-sponsorship of Events and Activities*

In determining whether the League should co-sponsor an event or activity, the President, in consultation with the Board or Executive Committee, shall consider the following criteria for approval (see form or advocacy handbook on the LWVWA SharePoint site):

- The request was submitted in a timely fashion.
- The subject matter of the event or activity is consistent with League principles, positions, and/or League program.
- The League can fulfill expectations for membership attendance, financing, visibility, and publicity.
- The event or activity is well-planned, nonpartisan, and objective in its approach.
- The League is aware of funding sources and other relevant information.
- Co-sponsorship of events and activities initiated by the League should involve the other groups in planning early and in a meaningful way.
- Co-sponsorships should include diverse groups so that the League joins with those who support the public policy, not partisan, interests of the League.

### *Guidance on Co-signing Letters*

The Board of Directors approves co-signing and signing onto letters from coalitions and groups requesting LWVWA agreement and the President co-signs the letter.

## **Board Policies**

### **Advocacy Policy**

The purpose of the advocacy policy is to guide action to be aligned and consistent with League positions and principles. Board members may not lobby for a position in opposition to or in

conflict with a national or state League position. If a conflict arises due to a position the state League has taken on a ballot measure, and the Board member chooses to work in opposition to the League position, they must either take a leave of absence until after the election or resign from the Board of Directors.

### **Agenda Protocol Policy**

Any item proposed for inclusion on the LWVWA Board meeting agenda should be received by the President and Secretary in writing no fewer than 10 days prior to the Board meeting at which it is to be presented. The agenda template is available on the [Documents page](#) of the [Board Meetings](#) section of the LWVWA SharePoint site.

### **Board Meeting Attendance Policy**

All LWVWA Board officers and directors must regularly attend meetings of the Board of Directors. The purpose of the attendance policy is to ensure that governance and decisions include the perspectives of all the portfolio directors elected by delegates and appointed by the Board of Directors. Three consecutive absences from a Board meeting without a valid reason shall be deemed a resignation.

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to ensure ethical management of the organization. No Board member, staff, or committee member may participate in any decision-making process when they have a financial or other private interest, direct or indirect, personally or through a member of their immediate family, that may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of the League of Women Voters. This prohibition is absolute, even if the person with the potential conflict believes they can be fair and objective despite the conflict. The conflict of interest policy shall be reviewed at the first meeting of new duly elected directors, annually with all staff and each new person appointed to the Board of Directors, and by committees in appropriate circumstances.

A potential conflict of interest may exist under the following circumstances:

- Where there is a parallel and/or conflict between Board responsibilities and private or public employment, and there is an appearance that the Board member is advancing their personal interests by virtue of their position on the Board.
- Where a Board member, or a member of their immediate family, has allegiance to another organization or entity and there is an appearance that the interests are competing.
- Where there is a financial, private, or personal interest, direct or indirect, that is incompatible with the proper discharge of League responsibilities or that would impair independence of judgment.

Any potential conflict must be disclosed to the Board, the committee, or a committee designated by the Board. When there is doubt as to whether a potential conflict exists, the matter shall be resolved by a vote of the Board, the committee, or a committee designated by the Board, excluding the person with the potential conflict.

The person with the potential conflict may participate in discussion and/or provide written information regarding the matter but may not participate in the decision-making process. The person with the potential conflict must excuse themselves from the room during the final vote.

The meeting minutes must reflect disclosure of a potential conflict of interest and that the interested person was not present during the final vote.

### **Conflict Resolution Policy**

The purpose of the conflict resolution policy is to provide a process for resolving conflicts and/or complaints among LWVWA board, committee members and/or the lobby team in a fair and impartial manner. Conflicts should be resolved in a timely manner and a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lens must be applied to the process and the resolution. The detailed processes to be utilized is set forth in Appendix C.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy**

The purpose of the DEI policy is to ensure that the League is operating as a democracy and modeling what it advocates. The LWV is an organization fully committed to DEI in principle and in practice. DEI is central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policymakers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, Native or Indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation, and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

### **Nonpartisan and Non-League Involvement Policies**

The purpose of these policies is to protect the credibility of the LWVWA as an organization that does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. Only to the extent that the public and its elected officials are convinced of the League's genuine impartiality toward candidates for elective office will the League be able to render effective voter service activities and gain a wide base of support for its positions on governmental issues.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to promote the informed and active participation of citizens in government. This means the League does not support or oppose candidates for public office and acts only on issues chosen by the membership for study and action. The League believes that political parties are essential to the American system of government and participation of informed citizens is beneficial to the political parties and to the system. Consequently, the League encourages its members as individuals to be active in the political parties, in finding and supporting candidates for public office, and in seeking election to public office.

### *Board Member Non-League Political Participation*

Members of the LWVWA Board of Directors may be politically active as individuals. However, they may not work on partisan issues or for candidates unless they make it clear that they are representing only themselves and not the League. Members of the LWVWA Board may belong to boards, commissions, and committees as a way to extend the League's influence, and the Board should encourage and assist League members in securing appointments to government boards, commissions, and committees.

Board members may serve on advisory boards except in cases where a dual identity (LWV/other responsibilities) may cause problems or confusion in the Board member's responsibilities to the League. If a serious conflict arises between the two entities, the Board member must make a choice between the two positions.

Board members not specified in the following subsections may be politically active as individuals. However, they may not work for candidates unless they make it clear that they are representing only themselves and not representing the League of Women Voters.

### *Elected Office*

The LWVWA President, Advocacy Portfolio director, Lobby Team chair, issue chairs, and Voter Services Portfolio Director shall not run for nor hold any elected office. The same policy applies to those who represent the President or who speak for the League in an official capacity. Other Board members may not run for, nor hold, state elective office but may run for local office if such an office is nonpartisan by definition and after consultation with the LWVWA Board and the local Leagues involved. If the state Board or the local League objects to the Board member running for that office, the Board member may accept such counsel or resign from the Board in order to seek public office. The reason for this provision is that such conflict may be perceived as affecting performance of the state officer involved. The same policy applies to those who represent the President, who speaks for the League in an official capacity. They will not be party officers, run for a partisan office, or make campaign or political party donations.

### *Political Party Office*

The President and state Board members may not serve as an officer in a political party. This includes serving as a precinct committee officer. Board members and those representing the League are discouraged from any visible partisan party activity during their term. The same policy applies to those who represent the President, who speaks for the League.

### *Political Party Activities*

The President, the Advocacy Portfolio director, the Lobby Team chair, issue chairs, and the Voter Services Portfolio director may not participate in any partisan political activity during their term of office on the state Board because they are highly visible leaders who must embody the principle of the nonpartisan policy of the League of Women Voters. Other Board members may participate in political campaigns and party politics in a carefully thought-out response to their visible positions as state Board members. All Board members need to be mindful of the importance of the League's nonpartisan policy and endeavor to protect the



League's public image as it relates to this matter. The same policy applies to those who represent the President, who speaks for the League, as well as issue chairs.

### *Campaign Contributions*

The President, the Advocacy Portfolio director, issue chairs, Lobby Team chair, and the Voter Services Portfolio Director should refrain from attending fundraising events and making contributions to the campaigns of candidates for any office or to political parties or other entities contributing to such candidates. The political activities of a spouse or relative of a Board member are to be considered separate and distinct from the activities of the Board member. The same policy applies to those who represent the President, who speaks for the League in an official capacity.

### *Social and Other Media*

A Board member shall not indicate their political affiliations or candidate preferences at any level of government in the media, including social networking sites or other public venues that also prominently identify them as a member of the LWVWA Board.

Where the foregoing policies do not resolve the question of nonpartisanship, Board members and those representing the League should present questions about specific situations to the President or the state Board.

### **Records Retention Policy**

The purpose of the historical record retention policy is to help transition from one Board to another and establish compliance with the RCW and IRS requirements to maintain and retain records of all fiscal and program activities funded by the LWVWA Education as well as to provide an institutional memory for the LWVWA and LWVWA. Fund Education. This includes the Board minutes and project files that provide references to past practice. No records addressed in this policy shall be disposed of without instruction from or approval of the Treasurer. Any records that are confidential in nature must be shredded or similarly destroyed. Nonconfidential records may be recycled.

### *501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) Records*

The following procedures apply to managing the LWVWA 501(c)(4) and LWVWA Education Fund 501(c)(3) records:

- All records and documents pertaining to donors, grants, grant agreements, contractors, or any other financial, statistical, or other pertinent records, and supporting documentation, shall be retained for a period of at least seven (7) years after the final expenditure report (closeout) for the fiscal year.
- All records of nonexpendable property shall be retained for a period of at least seven (7) years after final disposition of property.
- Employee records will be kept for seven (7) years and one (1) year after employee termination. Complaint and investigation documents will be kept at a minimum until the claim is resolved. The insurance company or legal representative will advise.

- All records pertaining to applicants, registrants, eligible applicants/registrants, participants, and applicants for employment shall be retained for a period of not less than three (3) years from the close of the fiscal year. Such records must be maintained as whole record system. Complaint and investigation documents will be kept at a minimum until the claim is resolved. The insurance company or legal representative will advise.
- Electronic records shall be appropriately stored with access identified in the office manual, with access provided to the Board of Directors.

### **Reimbursement Policies and Procedures**

The expense reimbursement policy applies to LWVWA and LWVWA Education Fund leaders who are part of a work group, team, or committee whose application the Board has approved and for which an allocation for travel, lodging, and supplies is in the adopted budget. It may include, but is not limited to, LWVWA Board members, Advocacy Team members, study committees, MELD coaches, and project managers. Volunteers can be reimbursed for expenses incurred while attending state and national meetings and doing League work, as detailed in the following. All reimbursements are subject to availability of allowable funds in the appropriate budget line.

- For events that LWVWA and LWVWA Education Fund Board members are expected to attend, such as the LWVWA convention and council, and at least one of the LWVWA Action Workshops or lobby events each year), the cost of registration, travel, and lodging (based on one-half of the cost of double occupancy, mid-range accommodation) may be reimbursed. Meals outside of those included in the event agenda are not reimbursable. Per-member reimbursement amounts (for mileage, registration, and lodging) for Board member attendance at the LWVWA council and convention shall be established when the budget for the respective event is adopted. Board member costs for mileage, registration and lodging should be factored into the total cost of the Board expenses budget. This policy also extends to LWVWA nominated officers and directors.
- LWVWA Board members selected as delegates to represent the state League at the LWVUS convention or council shall be reimbursed for the costs of conference registration fees, lodging (based on one-half of the cost of double occupancy, mid-range accommodation), transportation, and other expenses, as preapproved in writing. Delegates to the LWVUS conference or council selected by the LWVWA Board must request reimbursement for all or part of the expenses for attending the LWVUS convention and/or council on forms established for such reimbursement by the respective 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) treasurers. Delegate(s) are responsible for a report back to the LWVWA/LWVWA Education Fund Boards of Directors. LWVWA Board members may also be reimbursed for a share or all of the cost of registration, travel, and lodging (based on one-half of the cost of double occupancy, mid-range accommodation) related to short-term activities, workshops/seminars/educational conferences they attend corresponding to their respective roles and issue areas, in order to gain more knowledge, to the extent that there is budget available. Expenses must be planned for and included in the budget.

- LWVWA Board members may be reimbursed partially (\$.20/mile) for the cost of travel to the Board meeting (including mileage and lodging based on one-half of the cost of double occupancy, mid-range accommodation). Reimbursements for the Board of Directors meetings is made through a request to the 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) Treasurer (form on the LWVWA SharePoint site). The LWVWA/Education Fund Boards may specify other allowable expenses prior to attendance at event/meeting. Carpooling is encouraged.
- League members who are engaged in state committees may be reimbursed for transportation and other preapproved expenses associated with these activities. These expenses should be included in the current biennial budget.

#### *Pre-Event Reimbursement Approval*

To qualify for reimbursement, attendance must be preapproved. Requests for reimbursement shall be submitted to the LWVWA President in advance of the proposed conference and/or travel, for action by the Board no later than the Board or Executive Board meeting that precedes the conference. Since conference agendas may not be available during the budget process, a general line item for “conferences” would need to be included by the proposing committee. Once the specific agenda is available, then attendance is submitted for consideration. Consideration needs to be made to allow all committee members to have equal access to reimbursement funds. Requests for reimbursement should include the following information:

- Purpose of the meeting, which must be consistent with the (c)(3) or (c)(4) mission statements and allow the attendee to educate the League membership on the topic. Reimbursement will come from the appropriate budget.
- Official conference agenda with details on dates, place, and costs. For (c)(3) funding, the agenda must be deemed educational.
- Rationale for attendance, that is, why the League should pay for this and how this activity will benefit the League.
- Outline for method of reporting back to the Board and for providing education to League members.

#### **Post-Event Report**

All approved participants shall prepare a written report to the full Board following the event, describing the information gained from participation. A report should be submitted (within a reasonable time if it does not accompany the reimbursement request) to the Board of Directors and appropriate groups.

The report may be made available to the membership through newsletters and other networks. The report should include the following:

- **Name:** Identify the audience for the paper.
- **Date written**
- **Contact for briefing note:** Include your phone number and email.

- **Issue:** A short statement signifying the issue or subject.
- **Background:** Information and context for any past events and if any previous action had been taken.
- **Present status:** Explain the present scenario. Mention the ones involved and the decision made for and against the situation and other relevant details.
- **Essential information:** Provide an unbiased summary of the developments, facts, and key considerations.
- **Recommendations/options:** Provide evidence-based reactions and state the pros and cons.
- **Conclusion:** Reinforce the issue of the briefing document, if appropriate.

### **Expense Reimbursement Process**

In order to be reimbursed for expenses, the League member must complete an Expense Reimbursement Form (on the League SharePoint site) and submit it to the appropriate leader or the LWVWA President for consideration. If there is a budget line for the expense, the Portfolio Director can approve the expenditure. If the request is for additional funds for the category, the request goes to the Board of Directors. The reimbursement policy includes the following process:

- The request is presented to the Board if necessary. If the individual is present when making the request, that individual shall leave the room during board deliberation and vote.
- Each member who attended the event shall submit a reimbursement form as required by the Treasurer following the event for other eligible costs.
- Items that are in the approved budget will be paid after the member submits a reimbursement claim and the required report is submitted to the leader and/or the LWVWA President. If expenses submitted are 10% above the budgeted amount, the additional amount must be approved by the Board.
- Workshops, seminars, and educational conference sessions may be approved by a committee chair or leader, upon request from the member, provided there are funds in a line item in that committee's budget and all committee members have had equal opportunity to access designated reimbursement funds. If the committee chair is making the request, approval needs to come from the LWVWA Board. Committee chairs with budget line items are responsible for them.
- Prepayment of expenses may be requested with Board approval.
- Travel, lodging, and supplies not included in this policy (an Education Fund Grant, for example) should use the same process and parameters.
- LWVWA and LWVWA Education Fund Board members and others who do not desire reimbursement for eligible costs should submit approved expenses on the Treasurer's Reimbursement Form and indicate that it is a donation.

### **Whistleblower Protection Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations for the LWVWA and the LWVWA Education Fund contractors or employees or others who may report improper action taken by officers and employees. The LWVWA and LWVWA Education Fund Education Fund contractors

or employees, or other persons, are encouraged to report improper action taken by LWVWA and LWVWA Education Fund officers and employees and shall be protected against retaliation for having done so.

#### *Improper Action Defined*

An improper action is defined as an action taken by any LWVWA or LWVWA Education Fund employee or officer in which there is a violation of a federal, state, or local law or regulation, abuse of authority, a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety or a gross waste of organizational funds. Improper action does not include personnel actions, including employee grievances, complaints, appointments, promotions, transfers, assignments, reassignments, reinstatements, restorations, reemployments, performance evaluations, reductions in pay, dismissals, suspensions, demotions, violations of collective bargaining or civil service laws, and alleged violations of labor agreements or reprimands.

#### *Procedures for Reporting*

An employee, contractor, or other person who becomes aware of improper action should report the action to the LWVWA President. If the reporting person reasonably believes the improper action involves the President, or that reporting to the President would be inappropriate, the person may report the action to the Secretary. The reporting person will be required to put the report in writing, stating in detail the basis for the belief that an improper action has occurred. In an emergency, which is a circumstance that if not immediately changed may damage persons or property, the person may report the improper action directly to an appropriate government agency with responsibility for investigating the improper action.

The President or Secretary, whomever receives the report, shall ensure that prompt action is taken to properly investigate the report. The investigation shall be conducted as confidentially as possible and until the investigation is final, the identity of all persons involved shall be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law, unless the reporting person authorizes the disclosure of their identity in writing. When the investigation has been completed, the entity receiving the report shall advise all parties involved in the investigation of a summary of the results of the investigation, except that personnel actions taken as a result of the investigation may be kept confidential.

#### *Protection Against Retaliatory Actions*

LWVWA and LWVWA Education Fund officials and employees are prohibited from making any adverse change in the terms and conditions of a contract or of an employee's employment because the contractor or employee has in good faith reported an improper action in accordance with this Policy. A reporting person who believes that they have been retaliated against for reporting an improper action may obtain protection under this policy by providing a written notice to the Executive Committee no later than 30 days after the occurrence of the alleged retaliatory action. The Executive Committee shall respond to the notice within 30 days of receipt of the notice. After receiving the response from the Executive Committee, the employee may request a hearing before the Executive Committee, after which the decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.

### *Responsibility for Implementation*

The President is responsible for implementation of this policy and shall post this policy where all employees will have reasonable access to it, shall make it available to any employee upon request, and shall provide it to all new hires as part of their orientation. Each employee shall sign a receipt of having read and been oriented on this policy and procedure. This policy shall also be made part of any contract entered into by the LWVWA Education Fund.

### **Communications Policy**

The League uses online communications (website, social media, *In League*, *The Evergreen Voter*, the *Legislative Newsletter*, email lists, op-eds, and toolkits) to further its mission and to communicate across a broad geographic area to both members and the general public.

### **Style Guidelines and Branding**

The LWVWA has a number of style manuals, including an extensive state style guide, to ensure that all documents produced by the LWVWA are grammatically correct, consistent, and present the League as a professional organization. The League follows Associated Press style, for the most part. League text and documents must adhere to the following guides, which are on the LWVWA website on the [Resources for Local Leagues](#) page. The originals for the LWVWA documents are in SharePoint in the [Communications Documents](#) folder.

- LWVWA Style Guide: The main guide to use.
- LWVWA Glossary
- LWVUS Style Guide: Old and outdated. But has some standard style guidelines to follow, such as *always* using an article before the name *League* when used as a noun (the League, the LWVWA).
- LWVUS Brand Standards
- LWVUS Facebook Guidelines
- LWVUS Twitter Guidelines
- LWV Image Guidelines: Includes links to sites for royalty-free images
- [Vote 411 Branding](#)

### **Lists**

The LWVWA maintains various lists, including media lists, committee lists, interest group lists, and leadership lists, which help facilitate the exchange of information among members, the local Leagues, and the public. The Administrative Director maintains the database of names and e-mail addresses of the various lists.

### *Rules and Norms of LWVWA-Sponsored Lists*

List participants are encouraged to make use of the information gained from the list to take action in their own names.

No information on LWVWA lists may be interpreted to be a request to take official League action, unless so stated by the appropriate persons, such as the state President, state Advocacy or other Portfolio Directors.

The LWVWA discussion lists shall be open to a free exchange of information as long as the source is clearly identified. List users may post any item of interest to League members, including, but not limited to topics such as membership, action or information on League positions.

Portfolio directors who maintain lists should approve use of their lists by others.

Information going out to League members and/or the public should be approved by the appropriate portfolio director.

#### *LWVWA Group Messaging Guidelines*

List users must send their name to the person maintaining or running the group.

List participants whether League members or not and shall identify themselves by name and group affiliation on all postings.

The subject line of the message must be informative and descriptive to allow users to choose which items to read or delete based on personal interests. The intention is to keep the list from being considered junk mail or an irritant of any kind.

Items posted must clearly show the source of the information at the top of the item.

Messages must be nonpartisan, nonderogatory, noninflammatory, and nondiscriminatory.

Messages must be related to the subject of the list and must be consistent with the mission and goals of the LWVWA.

The last item in any posting must be the name, affiliation, and position (if appropriate) of the person posting the message. For example, a League member must list their name and League affiliation for information exchange.

When replying to a message, the user must use the same subject line so all pertinent information can be kept together. The user may choose to reply to the list or only to the sender.

With the exception of LWVUS or LWVWA calls to action, no information may be interpreted to be a request to take official League action.

#### *Sharing Membership Lists and Personal Data*

The LWVWA membership roster is made available to Board members, portfolio directors, and committee chairs for League purposes.

The LWVWA will not share, rent, sell, or trade membership lists or personal data with a third party.

## **LWVWA Newsletters**

The LWVWA publishes three newsletters:

- Newsletter for members and the public: It goes to both League members and anyone in the public who signs up for it. It includes articles of general voter interest to the public but not information relevant only to League members. [Archived back issues](#) are openly available on the LWVWA website.
- Newsletter for LWVWA members only: It goes only to League members and includes League-focused articles, information, and resources concerning League management and events. [Archived back issues](#) are available in the Members section of the League website.
- *Legislative Newsletter*: Published weekly by the Advocacy or Lobby Team annually during the legislative session, January through April. It is accessible by nonmembers in the Advocacy section of the LWVWA website.

### *Submitting to the Newsletters*

Submissions are emailed to the Communications Portfolio Director or designee, who acts as the newsletter editor and edits for length and clarity. Submissions deadlines are published on the LWVWA website. Submissions must include the following:

Completed article (if multiple people must approve an article, this should be done prior to submission)

- Article headline
- Author's name, title, and League affiliation
- Links to external websites, if applicable
- Optional: photo with caption and photographer's name. Make sure that any graphics used adhere to League guidelines regarding copyright. See the [LWV Image Guidelines](#).

In addition to submitting an article about an event, ask people to use this [online form](#) to add your event to the [LWVWA events calendar](#).

## **Opinion Pieces**

Opinion pieces include op-eds and letters to the editor. Letters to the editor can come from either the state League addressing a statewide issue or a local League regarding a local issue.

When a letter from the LWVWA concerns a local issue, it is best if the letter to a local newspaper comes from a local resident. The LWVWA might co-author the letter, but a local name has a better chance of getting into a local newspaper.

Local Leagues should be informed in advance about LWVWA opinion pieces (op-eds) and letters to the editor from the state League in their area's press, and state communications should be sensitive to local issues and concerns. The President makes the final decision.



When a local League writes a letter concerning a state issue, the LWVWA Board must approve the local League's letter on that state issue. The local League sends the letter to the LWVWA President, who submits it to the Executive Committee, with comments from the Action Chair of the local League. The LWVWA Advocacy Portfolio Director, lead issue chair, and the Communications Portfolio Director all review the letter as well.

When the LWVWA sends a letter to the local media, the local League is sent a copy so that the local League had promote it to its members.

With op-ed pieces the LWVWA President contacts the local President, and both frequently work on the op-ed piece together.

### **Press Releases**

Most often, press releases will come from portfolio directors or the Advocacy Team, but they must be edited for League style, professional tone, and to make sure the language is clear (uses plain English). The administrative director maintains the list of media contacts and sends press releases out. Refer to the *Communications Portfolio Functions* for specifics about writing press releases.

### **Social Media Policies**

The League uses online communications to further its mission and to communicate in a broad geographic area to many people, both League members, coalition and partner organizations, and the public. Social media posts must be in general agreement with League positions and strategies. Posts may include items about local League events, mentions of the League in the media (including letters to the editor and opinion pieces), discussions and webinars from our partner organizations or other organizations about League-related issues as long as they are nonpartisan and educational.

The LWVWA uses the following social media platforms:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

The Administrative Director and the Communications Portfolio Director have access to these platforms and can designate co-administrators as necessary. Established guidance and specific information about posting to social media is in the following documents:

- Communications Portfolio Functions
- LWVUS Social Media Toolkit
- LWVUS Facebook Guidelines
- LWVUS Twitter Guidelines

## Toolkits

Toolkits provide information and resources that local Leagues can use for their own projects and presentations. Toolkits can include everything from handouts to social media and press release/op-ed text and graphics, to PowerPoint presentations, FAQs, and talking points. Toolkits are available on both the LWVUS and the LWVWA website:

- [LWVWA Toolkits](#)
- [LWVUS League Management Site](#)

## *Toolkit Process*

If someone creates a new toolkit, the process for getting a toolkit on the League website to share with other local Leagues includes a review of the documents by the following:

- Related Board portfolio director: Reviews for appropriate and correct content.
- LWVWA President: Reviews along with the Board portfolio director for appropriate and correct content.
- Communications Portfolio Director: Reviews the documents for grammar, League style and voice, and makes sure the colors and template adhere to League style.

After the toolkit is completed, it must be vetted and accepted by the Board before being posted to the LWVWA website. The associated portfolio director and the LWVWA President promote the toolkit through their statewide meetings with local League leaders, and the Communications Portfolio Director promotes the toolkit through the TMIL newsletter, and the LWVWA Communications Facebook page. The toolkit is maintained by the appropriate portfolio director.

## **LWVWA Website ([lwwwa.org](http://lwwwa.org))**

The purpose of the LWVWA website is to:

- Promote the mission of the League.
- Provide information for members and attract new members.
- Increase the League's visibility and uniform image at the local, state, and national levels.
- Provide resources and information to members and the public.
- Strengthen citizen knowledge of government in Washington state
- Help citizens better understand major public policy issues and become active and informed participants in their communities and government.

The LWVWA website also includes pages about the LWVWA Education Fund, including information about citizen education, study, and projects, which are the responsibility of the Education Fund and governed by Education Fund policies. For information regarding the LWVWA Education Fund, visit the [Financial Resources page](#) on the LWVWA website.

In order to reach these goals, the LWVWA website will:

- Provide useful and accurate information for both members and nonmembers as determined by the Board in consultation with appropriate League decision-makers
- Create pages that are visually compelling and consistent with the League's image in writing and style, as defined in the [LWVWA Style Guide](#).
- Write and format text that is easy to read and in line with [Plain Language](#) guidelines.

The LWVWA web pages must *not* contain any of the following:

- Political advertising by candidates, political parties, or their affiliates.
- Advocacy for a particular position on any legislative or election issue except those approved by LWVWA.
- Membership information due to privacy issues.

### **Webmaster**

The webmaster (Administrative Director) maintains the LWVWA website. Each section of the website (including links) is the responsibility of the appropriate portfolio director, unless otherwise specified. In unspecified areas, the President shall designate a responsible person. Materials posted on the website will be edited for accuracy and style by the Communications Portfolio Director, unless otherwise designated.

### **Linking Policy**

Action/advocacy pages may link to websites of organizations, coalitions, and events that meet one or both of the following criteria:

- Are in general agreement with League positions and strategies.
- Are appropriate government or nongovernment entities that provide balanced background information.

The LWVWA Education Fund webpages may link to resources used in studies.

On any appropriate page, the LWVWA website may link to "general interest" websites, as determined by appropriate League decision-makers. The LWVWA website must indicate when a link leads to an external website, and link only to websites that do not block or hamper a user's ability to return to the LWVWA site after following a link from our site. Links that lead to non-League web pages should be clearly indicated and indicate that the League does not endorse the contents of any pages to which it links. Linked websites must meet some or all of the following criteria:

- nonpartisan
- strategic (in accordance with overall League goals and priorities)
- diverse
- related to content on LWVWA website
- reciprocal (the other site agrees to link to the LWVWA site) 1-17-22

## **Development Policies**

Funding and development, whether solicited or offered, must be consistent with the purpose, nonpartisan policy, and goals of the League. Development must be consistent with priorities approved by council/convention or other approved projects. Administration of state-wide programs, including budgetary obligations, resides with the Board of Directors through a Portfolio Director. Only in unusual circumstances will the LWVWA accept restricted donations.

## **General Practices**

Fundraising and Development is the responsibility of the Board of Directors. Funds are raised for both advocacy 501(c)(4) and education 501(c)(3). A Board member is responsible for leading the work that involves fundraising campaigns as well as an overall development strategy. As a three-level organization, consideration is made to coordinate with local Leagues and the LWVUS. Fundraising practices should encourage voluntary giving and should not apply unwarranted pressure. The following policies and procedures apply to fundraising:

- Descriptive financial information for all Form 990 reported income and revenue-generating activities conducted must be disclosed upon request or referred to 990 access for this information.
- Fundraising expenses in relation to the contribution received should be considered in project budgets, including a portion for office support staffing costs.
- Any request by a donor for confidentiality must be honored.
- Targeted solicitations must include a clear description of the programs and activities for which funds are requested.
- In any direct contact solicitation:
  - Indicate their relationship to the League.
  - The caller must identify the benefiting organization, whether it be the League or the LWVWA Education Fund.
  - Specify the programs (including general fund) and activities for which funds are requested; general fund for either 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) or a specific targeted project or event.
  - If asked, the actual or anticipated income or goal amount (that is, we hope to raise \$XX amount).
  - No fundraising for specific projects may occur without the approval of the board of directors

## **Coordination**

The state League, in order to avoid duplicating local efforts, will notify the local League in whose area of organization business or foundation fundraising contacts are planned prior to the contact.

## **Committees**

The purpose of a committee is to serve the Board and to allow League members to discuss issues of interest, coordinate overlapping work of portfolio directors and/or portfolio committees, and make recommendations to the LWVWA Board of Directors.

Portfolio directors are expected to work with a group (committee/team) in order to develop membership for leadership, encourage broad perspectives in decision-making, and ensure the sustainability of their area. Committees must have a purpose, process, a desirable outcome or result, a director chair or co-chair, a group of people identified as the committee, team, task force, or group.

Committees formed to do statewide work that are not led by a Board member must have a Board liaison who meets with them regularly and communicates committee and Board perspectives and decisions.

Some committees may prefer to call themselves *teams*. The following apply to committees:

- The LWVWA President appoints the chairs or co-chairs of committees.
- The committee chair facilitates meetings and appoints a recorder to provide a written summary of committee discussions. Summaries of meetings are to be sent to all committee members as soon as possible after the meeting and included in the regular LWVWA/Education Fund Board meeting materials.
- The chair establishes the agenda with input from any member. Time will be allowed at the end of the meeting for open discussion.
- Membership will consist of portfolio directors, committee members, and League members who have expressed interest in the topic and who are willing to make a commitment to participate on a regular basis. The President is an ex officio member.
- Meetings will be held regularly on days and time as established by the committee, with special meetings called by the chair as needed.
- Decisions will be made by consensus with all members in attendance participating. Consensus means that everyone can live with the decision, not necessarily agreeing 100%. If no consensus can be reached, a majority vote of those members in attendance will forward a recommendation to the Board.
- A minority report may be included. Decisions will be sent to the President of the Board by the portfolio director.
- League members who are not regular committee members may attend and participate in discussion at the chair's discretion. Guests provide information or act as a resource on the discussion of an issue.
- All reimbursements are subject to availability of allowable funds in the appropriate budget line. Refer to the [Reimbursement Policies and Procedures](#) section for information about reimbursable expenses.

### **Budget Committee**

In even-numbered years, the President shall appoint a Budget Committee consisting of the Treasurers and at least two other persons. The Budget Committee shall consider anticipated sources of income and expenses with particular attention to funding of studies that may be approved at the state convention. The Education Fund budget is considered in conjunction with the LWVWA budget and adopted by the Board of Directors prior to the state convention.

At the first Board meeting of the calendar year (January) following the LWVWA convention or council, the committee shall present a proposed budget for the next biennium. After the Board approves the budget, copies shall be forwarded to the LWVWA President and Treasurer. The draft budget may be used as a source of information for 501(c)(4) budget development.

### **Financial Management**

Checking account signature privileges shall be maintained for the President, Treasurer, and one or more other officers or directors. Instructions regarding investments shall be transmitted to brokers and financial managers by the Investment Treasurer or an “authorized signer.” Account statements from brokers and financial managers shall be accessible to the Treasurer and members of the Investment Committee. The LWVWA Education Fund is a publicly supported charitable organization qualified for exemption from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). IRS rules require that at least 1/3 of the total annual income must be derived from contributions by the general public (includes membership) and that a continuous and bona fide program for soliciting such funds must be maintained.

### **Investment Committee**

The President of the Education Fund shall appoint an Investment Committee of no fewer than three and no more than seven persons. Membership in this committee shall not be restricted to current members of the Board, but be given to persons with knowledge and/or experience in financial matters. One of the members shall be the Education Fund Treasurer. Nominations may be submitted whenever a vacancy occurs, terms of service are not fixed, and committee members serve at the pleasure of the Education Fund Board. The length of the term shall be five years.

The Investment Committee meets approximately four to six times per year, at times agreed upon by committee members. The committee shall provide regular performance reports to the Board, evaluate the League’s Investment Policy as needed, and make timely recommendations to the Board whenever substantive changes are required.

### *Endowment Fund*

The Endowment Fund was established in 1997 by a gift from a generous donor family and grew with subsequent additional contributions. The Investment Committee reviews the Endowment Fund’s portfolio and makes decisions regarding the purchase and sale of securities in accordance with the goals and requirements of the “Investment Policy for Endowment Funds” (on the LWVWA SharePoint site). For historical background on the Endowment Fund, see [Appendix B](#). The *Investment Policy for Endowment Funds* guidelines are also located on the LWVWA SharePoint site.

### *Investment Objectives*

The Investment Committee attempts to align investments with League values as represented by League positions.

The fund seeks long-term capital growth utilizing securities that are most likely to preserve principal with risk commensurate with the goal of obtaining a minimum return of 5% plus the rate of inflation and the cost of the management fees.

#### *Investment Guidelines*

In order to achieve a prudent level of portfolio diversification, the securities of any one company should generally not exceed 10% of the total and no more than 20% of the account should generally be invested in any one industry. Individual treasury securities may represent up to 25% of the total account.

Allocation of the funds shall be revisited at least annually with recommended changes presented to the Board for approval. Target allocations are: 35% fixed income (plus or minus 15%), and 65% equities (plus or minus 15%) as warranted by market conditions, with a preference for mutual fund investments.

The fixed income-producing portion may include:

- U.S. and non-U.S. government and agency securities
- Corporate notes and bonds (“investment grade” and “high yield”)
- Corporate notes and bonds (“investment grade” and “high yield”)
- Mortgage-backed bonds
- Cash equivalents.

The preferred stock portion may include:

- Preferred stocks of U.S. and non-U.S. companies
- Convertible preferred stocks
- Exchange-traded funds (ETFs)

Equity securities may include:

- Common stocks of U.S. and non-U.S. companies
- Convertible notes and bonds
- Exchange-traded funds (ETF's)
- American depository receipts of non-U.S companies

Prohibited assets and transactions include:

- Futures contracts
- Private placements
- Options
- Short selling
- Margin transactions
- Derivatives
- Hedge funds

### *Board Responsibilities*

The LWVWA Education Fund Board is responsible for maintaining appropriate insurance to cover Investment Committee members and activities.

### *Funds Transfer*

Upon instruction from the Investment Committee, any member of the committee designated as “Authorized Individuals” may transfer funds between accounts and make purchase and sale transactions regarding the various mutual funds and money market type funds and other investments. The Education Fund Treasurer may not be designated as an “Authorized Individual.”

In order to react to rapidly changing market conditions, the Investment Treasurer may, at their discretion, transfer or reinvest up to \$10,000 without prior approval of the Investment Committee, but must seek ratification of this action at the next meeting of the committee.

### *Endowment Fund Withdrawals*

The Endowment Fund is a source of funds for use by the LWVWA Education Fund organization as needed, with the following caveat: Withdrawals from the Endowment Fund may vary from 0% to 5% of the assets as determined on the last day of the prior fiscal year, depending on the needs of the organization, funds available and the committee assessment of market conditions. This percent may be increased if 60% of the Board approves said increase and written instruction with rationale is provided to the Investment Committee.

### *Endowment Fund Additions*

The LWVWA Education Fund Board may add monies to the Endowment Fund. Before making that decision, the Education Fund President should discuss the proposed addition with the Investment Committee, particularly because of IRS rules that affect the use of the Endowment Fund.

### *Investment Manager*

The committee may, at its discretion, recommend that the Education Fund use the services of an investment manager. A qualifying investment manager must be a registered investment advisor under the Investment Advisors Act of 1940 and/or have professional education and experience in investments and financial matters. It is desirable that each investment manager provide, in writing, acknowledgement of fiduciary responsibility to the Board.

### *Amendments*

These policies may be amended with the approval of the President and by a vote of 60% of the total Board.

## **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.

### **LWVWA Education Fund**

The LWVWA Education Fund Board reviews and oversees the approvals of requests from local Leagues for two sources of funds: local League projects using their own funds on deposit with the LWVWA Education Fund, and Civic Education Fund grants.

The Education Fund Board may delegate responsibility for educational projects to a related organization. Publications (print or online) of work done solely by the Education Fund shall state, "Produced and published by the League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund." Publications (print or online) of work done by a related organization with financial backing of the Education Fund shall state, "Published by the League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_ and funded by the League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund."

Grants may be made to related organizations for educational projects. Unused funds for multiyear and ongoing projects may be held by the related organization and applied to the following year's work.

The LWVWA Education Fund is especially interested in awarding grants to projects with some of the following characteristics (however these elements are not all required):

- Projects that target groups not typically reached by the League or groups representing areas of diversity.
- Projects using nontraditional methods of reaching voters such as mock elections or student projects.
- Projects that utilize alternative new forms of communication such as text messaging, blogs, web sites and social networking.
- Projects that develop new coalition partners.
- Projects that increase League visibility in the community and attract new members.
- Projects where a local League has a financial need.
- Projects that could have applicability to other local Leagues.

- Projects that include other local Leagues or involve cross local League collaboration.
- Projects that leverage other funding, especially for larger projects.
- Projects that can be completed within 12 months.

It is important that the project application describes how it will get the desired outcome, especially if it is a complex project. If contractors are used, there should be some explanation as to how the contractor(s) were selected. It should be emphasized that the above characteristics are not criteria, just preferences.

### **Approval of Local League Project Requests**

A project review committee, composed of the Treasurer and two members and an alternate appointed by the President, shall review and approve request for Local League Projects. The alternate will conduct the review when the Treasurer or one of the members is absent or recused. Review Committee actions will be reported to the Board by the Treasurer at the next regular meeting. This is for use of the local League's own funds to ensure appropriate IRS 990 compliance.

Simplified approval and withdrawal requests for the following may be accepted upon receipt and reported to the Board by the Treasurer at the next regular meeting:

- They Represent You (TRY) publications
- Payment of 50% of PMP to LWVUS Education Fund.
- The President and Treasurer may approve time sensitive Local League Projects (Resolution, March 13, 2003)

### **Local League Education Fund Accounts**

#### *Interest*

A local League with a balance in excess of \$10,000 over six months receives 75% of the interest earned on the account. No interest is paid on smaller accounts. The small amounts of interest retained by the Education Fund helps to cover expenses incurred in managing the accounts.

#### *Withdrawal*

A local League that wishes to create its own Education Fund may request withdrawal of its remaining funds with the LWVWA Education Fund in a letter to the LWVWA Education Fund with the following:

- The exact amount of money to be transferred to the new local League Education Fund.
- The new local League Education Fund's articles of incorporation.
- An indication that the transferred money will be used in accordance with IRS 501(c)(3) requirements.
- Is signed by the president and treasurer of the local League making the request.

### **Civic Education Fund and Challenge**

The Civic Education Fund, established in January 2007 with a gift of \$50,000 from anonymous donors, included a “challenge” to the LWVWA Education Fund to raise cash, stocks, or pledges (of no more than three years duration) by December 15, 2007. Funds raised were matched by \$50,000 from the donor, meeting the goal of a Civic Education Fund of \$150,000.

The purpose of the Civic Education Fund is to provide money for projects to be managed by the LWVWA Education Fund. The funds are intended to enable the League to greatly enhance programs and projects designed to engage Washington students and adults in understanding their government and becoming active participants in their democracy. The funds are to be used for online civic education services, for the further development and distribution of *The State We're In: Washington* and other printed materials, and for forums, presentations, and similar activities that enable people in communities throughout the state to receive balanced information on public policy issues of importance to them.

Funds from the challenge and the match may be expended in equal portions over five years, beginning January 1, 2008. Income from the funds may be expended as needed. The original contribution of \$50,000 is to become part of the LWVWA Education Fund endowment as of January 1, 2013.

### **Guidelines for Civic Education Grants**

All local Leagues are invited to apply for Civic Education grants from the LWVWA Education Fund. This fund is available to help Leagues connect with their communities and engage citizens in the democratic process. Leagues with great ideas and not much money can receive funds to implement their ideas. Procedures for grant applications can be found in the [Your Education Fund Handbook](#).

Projects must meet the IRS criteria described on page 5 of the [Your Education Fund Handbook](#) (must be educational, objective, and nonpartisan and may not advocate for a particular position), as well as the following grant guidelines.

#### *Grant Limits*

During each fiscal year (July 1–June 30) \$2,000 in grant money is available to each local League until the Civic Education Grant Fund is depleted. Grants can be awarded as a single grant or two or more smaller grants. For extraordinary outreach projects, the annual limit per local League can be increased. The grant limits were amended by the LWVWA Education Fund Board in August 2018.

### **LWVWA Education Fund Scholarships**

Scholarships for short-term activities, workshops, seminars, etc. may be granted if their purpose is consistent with the LWVWA Education Fund mission.

### **Administrative Management**

The LWVWA is an equal opportunity employer and provides a workplace free of discrimination on the basis of race, creed, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. It is the aim



of the League to provide a satisfying work environment, adequate compensation and fringe benefits, and opportunities for the growth and development of its employees. The Board has formally adopted two personnel manuals, one for part-time employees and one for full-time employees.

### **Administrative Director**

The hiring of the Administrative Director will be done by the President with approval of the Board of Directors using these Policies and Procedures of the organization. A statement of job description, work hours, salary, vacation, and fringe benefits are to be provided at the time of hiring and reviewed annually. Additional personnel will be hired by the President or designee (Administrative Director). The rules regarding party participation apply to all regular employees.

The Board may authorize grants or fees for services contracts for projects or activities if the project is consistent with the League's nonpartisan policy and is either educational in nature or consistent with the League's program or priorities.

### *Financial Criteria*

The anticipated income to the state League should be proportionate to the overall size of the project and to the support services provided by the state office, including the volunteer time of any officer or Board member. The project budget must include: income sources, expenses and an appropriate division of any fees received between the state League, any participating local League, and the project manager, if paid.

### *Project Supervisors, Directors, and Managers*

The Board may authorize payment of compensation in a reasonable amount for a project director or manager if services cannot be secured from League volunteers. The project director or manager must consult with the project supervisor as outlined below.

To ensure accountability, adequate oversight and adherence to League principles and policies, an officer, employee, or member of the Board must be appointed to serve as project supervisor for each project contract. The project supervisor must submit progress reviews to the Board of Directors at regular intervals as set by the Board.

### *Selecting a Project Director or Manager*

The Board or a designated committee is responsible for selecting or appointing a project director or manager. The project director or manager must be a member of the League of Women Voters who, by virtue of expertise and/or League portfolio, is an appropriate choice for the position. The project supervisor may serve as the project director or manager. If the project director or manager is to be compensated for their services, a description of the project and a detailed job description must be provided to local Leagues to afford an opportunity for all interested League members to apply. Where time constraints do not allow distribution of the project description and detailed job description to local Leagues, the Board or a designated committee must take steps to identify League members qualified to fill the position.

### *Role of the Project Director or Manager*

In addition to performing the responsibilities outlined in the job description, the project director or manager must:

- Consult with the project supervisor (Portfolio Director) before making major decisions or in the event a conflict or controversy arises.
- Prepare a project director's report evaluating the success of the project in accomplishing its goals.
- Provide information to the Treasurer for preparation of a project financial report.

## **Appendix A: Complying with IRS Requirements—League History**

### **IRS Form 1023: Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code**

Form 1023 was filed in consultation with Lori Dunsmore, attorney with Perkins Coie. (An audio tape of the meeting on August 14, 1997, is available in the office and a transcript can be e-mailed.) The focus of her advice was “I do not believe that the 501(c)(3) Board should be controlled by the 501(c)(4) Board” and “(c)(3) Board members have a fiduciary obligation and liability consequences for making sure that they act properly . . . not only to the organization but to the government as well.”

The financial relationship of the 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) Boards was explored on July 1, 1998, in a meeting of Myra Howrey, 501(c)(4) Treasurer, and Dorris Martin, 501(c)(3) Treasurer, with John P. Johnson, CPA. Notes of the meeting are available by e-mail.

The IRS response to our application came in the form of a Provisional Determination Letter dated January, 15, 1997. Following satisfactory annual Form 990 reports, we received a Determination Letter without provisions on September 13, 2000.

### **IRS Form 5768: Election/Revocation of Election by an Eligible Section 501(c)(3) Organization to Make Expenditures to Influence Legislation**

This form was filed on October 20, 1999, upon recommendation of the attorney. There is no intent to lobby.

### **IRS Publication 557: Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization**

Publication 557 discusses the rules and procedures for organizations that seek recognition of exemption from federal income tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Publication 557 states the qualifications of a publicly supported organization:

“ . . . an organization will qualify as publicly supported if it normally receives at least one third of its total support from government units, from contributions made directly or indirectly by the general public, or from a combination of these sources.”

### **IRS Form 990A: Public Charity Status and Public Support**

Public support is reported annually (with a five-year compilation) as part of IRS Form 990A. This form, which provides the reasons and support for public charity status, is attached to Form 990 or Form 990-EZ

### **IRS Form 990-EZ: Short Form, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax**

In 2010, the IRS ruled that “an organization that has gross receipts of less than \$500,000 and total assets of less than \$1,250,000” may file Form 990-EZ” (including Schedule A). This form requires a statement of the “organization’s primary exempt purpose” and a statement of the program’s accomplishments.

The IRS requires:

- That completed Form 1023 and Form 990 for the three most recent years be available to the public at the primary office of 501(c)(3) organizations.
- That donors of \$250 or more receive acknowledgement for their IRS records.
- That “fair value” be indicated when donations are solicited in conjunction with a luncheon or similar activities.

## **Appendix B: Endowment Fund History**

The Endowment Fund was established in 1997 by a gift of \$150,000 from an anonymous donor family and an agreement by the family to match contributions and pledges from other donors of up to \$100,000 by August 1, 1998. It was agreed that pledges could be paid over a period of five years. Conditions for the match were met and, in September 1998, the additional \$100,000 was received from the donor family.

The Education Fund/Endowment/Investments gives about 5% to the biannual budget and in addition have set aside money for Education Fund grants to locals throughout the years.

An Investment Advisory Committee consisting of then President Liz Pierini, Lael Braymer, Nancy Miller, and Dorris Martin conducted interviews with three potential investment managers on January 2 and 22, 1998. On February 11, 1998, the Investment Advisory Committee met to set goals, establish guidelines, and select the manager. On May 14, 1998, the Board approved the recommendation of the committee in selecting Mike Ernst of Smith Barney as investment manager and adopted the "Investment Policy for the Endowment Fund." Mike Ernst served from July 1, 1998, until June 30, 2000, when the Board accepted the committee's recommendation that our agreement be terminated and that part of the funds be invested with a mutual fund family such as Vanguard. Mike Ernst was most helpful in implementing this decision, and we continue to seek his advice concerning investments.

At its meeting on July 13, 2000, the Board passed a motion "that the Investment Advisory Committee's name be changed to the Investment Committee and that the committee be given authority to execute changes with regard to all investments." Members of the Investment Committee were Lael Braymer, Dorris Martin, and Nancy Miller.

The 2015-16 Endowment Committee consisted of Dorris Martin and Linnea Hirst, co-chairs, and members Lael Braymer, Barrie Austin, and R. Peggy Smith (then LWVWA Education Fund Treasurer).

### **Uses of the Endowment Fund**

A donor family stated on several occasions their wish that funds be used liberally as needed to further the goals of the Education Fund.

"The Investment Policy" provides for "withdrawal that may vary from 0% to 5% of the assets per fiscal year depending on funds available, the needs of the organization and the committee's assessment of market conditions."

### **IRS Public Support Rule**

A publicly supported organization must receive one-third of its total annual income from contributions by the general public (calculated on a four-year rolling basis). This restriction must be kept in mind so that growth of the endowment (and its income) is never allowed to jeopardize the Education Fund's status.

## **Appendix C: Conflict Resolution Process**

### **1. Preamble**

There are occasions in which League members have issues among themselves that they cannot resolve easily. The intent of this policy is to provide a process by which conflicts may be resolved at the lowest level or with the assistance of a third party if necessary and in a way that is consistent with League of Women Voters values and principles.

As an organization whose mission is to preserve democracy and enable voters, the League of Women Voters of WA (LWVWA) strives to provide procedures for its own members that enhance democratic values, allow broad participation, and incorporate a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) lens to its actions. LWVWA encourages members to strive to first work out issues among themselves before appealing to leadership.

If leadership is approached to assist in resolving an issue, the LWVWA goal is to work expeditiously with the parties and any necessary investigation to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

### **2. Applicability**

2.a. This policy applies to members of the Board of Directors for both of the LWVWA organizations, the 501(c)(3) and 501 (c)(4) organizations; members and chairs of LWVWA committees, and the lobby team.

2.b. For conflicts between local League members, members should contact their local League and follow its process.

### **3. Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- “LWVWA” is the League of Women Voters of Washington.
- “Member” is a person who is a member in good standing with the LWVWA.
- “BOD” is the LWVWA Board of Directors of the (c)(3) and (c)(4) organizations.
- “Director” is a member who is currently serving as a member of the BOD.
- “President” is a Member who is currently serving as President of the LWVWA.
- “Volunteer” is a Member who volunteers on a state committee.

## **4. Process**

### **4.a. Step 1. Informal Process**

There are many reasons for disagreements or conflict among League members. Often this is a result of incomplete communication, misunderstanding or different expectations or experiences. The League encourages any members who find themselves in a conflict with other members to attempt to resolve the conflict themselves through active listening in face-to-face meetings in person or virtually.

The most successful conflict resolution conversations are ones that occur as close as possible to the precipitating issue and in which the issue is identified and agreed upon by both parties, the differences in approaches are identified, the reasons for the respective approaches are described, and the members develop strategies for addressing those differences. Understanding the underlying “why” of a conflict – or the interests (needs) of each party – is generally the most important factor in developing resolution.

Documenting an agreement reached through this informal process can be helpful. Even if it is just an email between the parties confirming the agreement, that will serve as a reminder and can ease subsequent interactions if recalled.

Should this process be unsuccessful or in the event that there is some reason that either or both parties are uncomfortable undertaking this informal approach, then Step 2 would be used.

### **4.b. Step 2. Formal Process**

1. In the event that a conflict cannot be resolved between and among the members involved, the following process shall be used. In any case, the request to use this process should be made promptly. All complaints shall be investigated in an unbiased, impartial, confidential and timely manner; and all affected parties must be involved and all be given a voice.
2. The complaint will be considered in the context of existing policies, established procedures, and applicable legislation. Complaints shall be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible.
3. A written request shall be submitted to the LWVWA President. The request shall identify the issue, define the differences to the extent possible, describe any process used to date to attempt to resolve the conflict and name the parties.
4. Upon receiving a request to assist in resolving a conflict, the LWVWA President shall meet with the parties to investigate the issues and interests and work to facilitate a resolution of the matter between the parties.
5. If the conflict is between a member and the President, or if the President is unable to resolve the matter between two members, the member may submit the request to the

First Vice President, who shall then investigate the issues and interests and work to facilitate a resolution of the matter between the parties.

6. If the conflict is between a member of the Executive Committee and the President or another Executive Committee member, the request shall be submitted to another member of the Board of Directors.
7. The President or other officer who receives the complaint (the investigative officer) shall meet with the parties and investigate the matter and shall respond within two weeks, unless the parties are notified that additional time is needed. In that case, an estimate of the time needed shall be provided.
8. There may be times when the President or investigative officer believes more clarification is needed or feels the issue warrants an independent perspective. In that case, the President or that officer may call in a third party to investigate the facts or assist with conflict resolution.
9. Once the President or investigative officer has completed their investigation, they shall work with the parties to reach an agreement that will resolve the matter. The agreement shall be put in writing and signed by the President or investigative officer and all parties, a copy of the signed agreement shall be provided to each person and a confidential copy shall be filed at the League office.
10. If there is no resolution, the President or investigative officer may request assistance from the national League.

#### 4.c. Step 3. Policies and Procedures.

When a conflict resolution indicates that a change in policies and procedures is needed, such a change shall be recommended to the Board of Directors by the President or Board member who worked with the parties.

#### 4.d. Training.

LWVWA shall provide training for the President and all Board members on conflict resolution at least once per biennium in order that these procedures shall be conducted impartially and appropriately.

### 5. References

[LWVUS Member Rights & Responsibilities Policy](#)

[LWVUS Membership Leadership Development Handbook](#), Managing Conflict, pp. 117-121